

Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

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May 12, 2025

Town of Warner
Zoning Board of Adjustment
5 East Main Street
Warner, NH 03278

Re: Development of Regional Impact: "CATCH Housing"

Dear Members of the Board of Adjustment,

We have reviewed the material transmitted for the CATCH Housing multi-family application and have evaluated the regional impacts of the proposal. It is the understanding of CNHRPC that this Development of Regional Impact (DRI) consists of a special exception and a variance application seeking to permit a 48-unit development at Route 103 in Warner.

As you know, RSA Chapter 36:54-58 deals with the review of Developments of Regional Impact. Section 36:55 lists a series of characteristics that "could reasonably be expected to impact on a neighboring municipality." This review is therefore focused only on the factors listed in the RSA and includes the following:

- I. Relative size or number of dwelling units as compared with the existing stock.
- II. Proximity to the borders of a neighboring community.
- III. Transportation networks.
- IV. Anticipated emissions such as light, noise, smoke, odors, or particles.
- V. Proximity to aquifers or surface waters which transcend municipal boundaries.
- VI. Shared facilities such as schools or solid waste disposal facilities.

Finally, it is important to note that if the application is approved, it would require site plan approval by the Warner Planning Board. Some of the recommendations may be better addressed at the site plan level, but in the event the Planning Board does not typically require the recommended studies, etc., the ZBA should request them instead. CNHRPC recommends presenting a copy of this memorandum to the Planning Board for their records.

CNHRPC's review of the proposal:

- I. Relative to the number of dwelling units - CNHRPC understand that 48 units are proposed. The project would increase the total number of housing units in Warner by 4.1% based on a 2023 total estimate of 1,394 units. In perspective this would amount to a 0.4% increase in the total number of dwelling units when all the 11,585 units are considered in the surrounding communities, and less than one tenth of one percent (0.01%) of CNHRPC's total regional housing stock.

- II. Transportation networks - The site is located directly on NH Route 103, a regional transportation corridor while I-89 Exit 9 is very near the site. A conservative estimate for trip generation would be 308 new average daily vehicle trips per day based on ITE Land Use Category Low-Rise Multi-Family Category. This is a conservative estimate since this project could be classified as a LUC 221 Mid- Rise Multi-Family with a lower trip generation rate. There is a high probability of a considerable number of pedestrian trips instead of vehicle trips to the nearby retail, restaurant and service businesses as well as for employment at said establishments. A NH DOT Park and Ride lot is located across NH 103 from the site facilitating ride sharing from the project and the region. A high percentage of one-bedroom units appear to be proposed which usually generate fewer trips.

A Traffic Study by a professional Traffic Engineer would be helpful to provide clarification of the expected traffic generation, directional distribution, intersection turning movements and level of service, and driveway site distances.

While not a significant regional concern, the applicant is proposing a sidewalk on site along to the site driveway which will align with North Road and a sidewalk along NH 103 to the west property line, which would facilitate pedestrian movement and reduce traffic on NH 103. A crosswalk should be provided across NH 103 at an appropriate location, and the sidewalk should be continued at a minimum to the eastern drive of Dunkin Donuts. This could be considered at the Planning Board as part of Site Plan approval.

- III. Anticipated Emissions & Noise - As a residential development, there would be no anticipated noise and emissions following construction.

- IV. Proximity to shared aquifers or surface waters - The site is adjacent to a Conservation Easement along the Warner River on an adjacent property. The site is partially encumbered by the 100-year floodplain and wetlands associated, with the Warner River. There is a limited amount of fill proposed in the 100-year floodplain, but it appears to be more than compensated by the excavation for the stormwater treatment pond. This needs to be verified through the site plan review process. Revegetation of the south side of the site where disturbed by constructed needs to consist of native vegetation that will support the water quality and habitat values of Warner River Corridor. A small amount of wetland will be disturbed to facilitate the construction of both on and off-site drainage adjacent to NH 103. This minor wetland impact needs to be mitigated through the site plan and the wetland permitting process.

The drainage design appears to have been based on a stormwater study and needs to include as part of the site plan submittal to the Planning Board.

- V. Shared facilities (schools, sewer, water, emergency response agreements) - A recent study by the NH Housing Finance Authority indicates that a residential building with five or more units contributes 0.16 students to the school system per unit.¹ This suggests the development could add about eight (8) children to the school system. This is also supported by the high percentage of one-bedroom units proposed. The Kearsarge Regional School District has seen, like most rural school systems, declining enrollments in recent years.

¹ *From Homes to Classrooms*, NH CDFA, September 2024; Page 35, Figure 5.15: https://www.nhhfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/From_Homes_To_Classrooms_2024.pdf

Warner is also part of the Capitol Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact and emergencies on site could involve responses by surrounding communities if they were large enough, or if multiple emergencies were occurring in Town. Comments from the Warner Fire Department would be expected during the site plan review process.

In summary, CNHRPC believes that there may be regional impacts because of transportation networks and surface water. Based upon this, CNHRPC recommends that:

1. III. Transportation networks - A traffic study could be provided for the proposal to clarify the extent of any local or regional impacts and identify any mitigation that may be needed at the time of submittal to the Planning Board during site plan review.
2. V. Proximity to shared aquifers or surface waters - A stormwater study needs be provided for the proposal as part of the site plan approval process. If not part of the normal review process particular attention should be paid to the impact of 25 and 100-year storm events since existing terrain contours indicate that this site receives a substantial amount of offsite drainage from NH Route 103 and properties immediately to the north.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this development. Please contact CNHRPC at 603-226-6020 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S. Henninger", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Stephen Henninger
Project Planner

