

Canterbury Plan for Tomorrow Visioning Session, October 11, 2022

Exit 17, Exit 18 and NH 106 Commercial/Industrial zones

Those present at the Exit 17, Exit 18 and NH 106 Commercial/Industrial zones Community Visioning Session expressed an appreciation for the current state of Canterbury while still exhibiting a willingness to promote change carefully. The group saw significant opportunity for development at each of the locations discussed. It was clear that many in attendance would like to promote development including housing in a manner that is sustainable and scalable. Tactics such as mixed-use development and zoning changes to include both light industrial as well as commercial were suggested multiple times and met with general, but not complete, support.

The Exit 17 area discussion included a discussion of mixed use and multi-family housing to promote the vision of a walkable area with services and stores. The Exit 18 location was considered a prime location for the promotion of business or light industrial development. The redevelopment of the gas station that previously existed as well as new visions such as EV charging or an agricultural processing facility were all met in a positive fashion. The vision for the NH 106 area was still in development and less clear. It was anticipated that future changes at the New Hampshire Motor Speedway would help inform the direction of this area in Canterbury. Future modifications to zoning in this area to allow for a wider range of development was considered a good preparation strategy.

Exit 17 area

- The US4 roundabout improvements are in place and are helpful from Old Boyce Road.
- Mixed use could work well at Exit 17. There is increased vibrancy with an area that has stores, restaurants, and potentially housing. Commercial uses can drive the need and demand for housing in the area, especially workforce/affordable housing.
- The “Town Center” concept of mixed use/higher density zoning could be beneficial.
- The area is now more walkable with stores and services. US4 will have a pedestrian beacon light; and Concord will maintain the roundabout in the winter.
- Housing is in short supply for employees of local businesses.
- Affordable housing for seniors needs to be near services.
- Rezoning may be necessary to address development pressures.
- Community septic systems can serve mixed use development. The capability of septic and wells related to density was discussed.
- Protecting the aquifer is essential to preserving the quality of a future public water supply. Concerns were noted regarding development along the river and water quality.
- Concerns were raised about traffic, crime, and impacts to home values and town culture relative to more intense development in the area.
- Changes to the Commercial Zone could impact adjacent residential zones. The ZBA recently approved a duplex housing project in the vicinity of Exit 17 to the east of I-93. There are some concerns raised by abutters regarding the scale and location.

Exit 18 area

- The former gas station site's environmental conditions could be assessed in the future to determine if there are any issues regarding redevelopment. Tax benefits and brownfields funds could help foster the site's redevelopment.
- The gun range is located nearby.
- There is the potential for 17 more acres that may be commercially zoned and prime for development.
- Business or light industrial opportunities: Gas station site redevelopment, Electric vehicle (EV)s charging with station or café, Local Agricultural processing site with farmer's market
- Potential changes in zoning: modify industrial to commercial or a mix of light industrial/commercial – increase the number of uses and engage potential developers regarding potential uses. Higher densities and a mix of uses in this area is desirable, though it would need to be scaled to Canterbury's community character.
- The industrial zoning designation was originally due to the rail being in the area and it was seen as a way to promote development.
- Lack of infrastructure (water, sewer, broadband, etc.) is a significant impediment for development.
- Large vacant parcels near the exit offer an opportunity for commercial and industrial development. The rezoned Industrial Zone could also be used for mixed use/residential uses.
- Concerns were noted regarding development constraints in the Exit 18 area.
- A solar farm was a potential development near Exit 18.

NH 106 corridor

- Storage units have recently been approved by the Planning Board along the corridor.
- There does not appear to be significant development pressure along the corridor at this time.
- There are a number of large parcels that present opportunities for future economic development.
- A limiting factor is the New Hampshire Motor Speedway and its parking and traffic conditions. However, changes are anticipated for the racetrack as attendance has declined over the years.
- There is an opportunity to modify the zoning in the area to include both light industrial/commercial to allow for a wider range of uses.
- Could be a good location for electric charging stations.
- Hydroponic farms could be a good use.
- A campground developer looked a land in the area.

General Comments

- Identified need for more affordable housing for aging population, children returning to their hometown, and the workforce
- Home occupations are an appropriate tool to provide housing and economic development.

- The Economic Development Committee should be revived.
- Concerns about abutters and neighborhood impacts of development.
- Striking the right balance of the level and type of development was discussed:
 - Attracting enough to improve the town but not overwhelm the facilities.
 - Achieving vibrant areas without altering the town's character.
 - Developing at a sustainable size and rate.
- What is Affordable? Affordability is impacted by lot size, frontage requirements and house sizes.
- Concerns about housing stock for downsizing seniors as well as adult children to stay in Canterbury as they start their own families.
- Cluster housing is an underutilized option.
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are a good tool to add housing units.
- Consider the update of the table of uses (overall zoning ordinance).