

MacFadden Property Sketch Plan

Cornwall Conservation Commission Update

May 26, 2022

Our comments consider the impact of the proposed MacFadden subdivision on the continued viability of the property as wildlife connectivity habitat.

The current revision of the Sketch Plan that decreases the number of lots from four to three, would likely benefit wildlife by reducing the impacts of the proposed development in the project area. The fewer number of proposed lots in the revised application plus the relocation of the building envelope of Lot 3 to the edge of the forest area will reduce the loss of forest. The forest to the east of Bardon Drive is now entirely contained in Lot 1.

The importance of the property for wildlife was verified by two landowners at the May Sketch Plan Meeting. Living to the northwest and to the south of the applicant, they reported frequent sightings of wildlife, including larger mammals. The property's forests and shrublands connect the north end of Middlebury Swamp with numerous forest patches of Cobbs Corners to the west and south, the forested areas across Route 30 to the northwest, and the Ledge Creek area to the north and make it possible for wildlife to utilize this larger area for food and shelter.

The proposed septic sites for both new house sites are in adjacent forest areas and would necessitate the clearing of trees. Knowing the extent of the clearing required to install the proposed septic systems would be useful in assessing the potential impact of forest loss in these areas. In their current proposed locations, the impact would be minimized if the removal of trees was limited to the septic sites leaving the remaining forested areas intact. In addition, leaving intact the important shrublands' area at the southern end of Lot 3 could mediate the impact of habitat loss from the proposed septic site to the north. See attached trail camera documentation of frequent wildlife in this area over a two-month period (1/12/21 to 3/14/21).

Attached: "Trail Camera Documentation of Wildlife Usage."

Cornwall Conservation Commission Comments

April 26, 2022

The Cornwall Conservation Commission is offering preliminary comments on the proposed subdivision of the MacFadden property located at 625 VT Route 30 in Cornwall based on the brief site visit conducted by M. Dodge and D. Burns on April 21, a landscape analysis of GIS maps, local trail camera documentation, and information from the 2015 Ecological Inventory of Cornwall by Brett Engstrom.

The central portion of the property, approximately one third of its total area, is a mixed secondary forest which likely provides a travel corridor for wildlife to move back and forth from the northern end of Middlebury Swamp across Bardon Drive to the numerous forest patches around Cobbs Corners to the west and south. This forest also links with forested areas across Route 30 to the northwest and with the Ledge Creek area on the north.

Of the three proposed new house locations, only one appears to directly impact this forest area. The Lot 2 house site is located in an open unforested area, and the Lot 4 house site is located within but near the perimeter of the forest area.

The Lot 3 house site, as currently proposed, is well within the forested area and likely would involve extensive removal of tree cover resulting in a significant reduction of the width of the corridor and therefore its value as a travel route for wildlife.

We encourage the applicant to consider relocating the Lot 3 house site to the northern end of the parcel thereby preserving the greater part of the forest between it and the existing house on Lot 1.

To further maintain the current level of habitat connectivity, it will be important that the owner of Lot 1 preserve the existing forest on its north side and that the future owner of Lot 4 preserve the remaining woods around the proposed house site as well as the open space elsewhere on the property.

Mary Dodge
Don Burns