

Questions and Concerns Regarding the Proposed Featherwood Development

We appreciate the opportunity to ask questions regarding the proposed Featherwood development. Our concerns focus primarily on public safety, traffic, flooding and groundwater conditions, pedestrian and bicycle access, municipal responsibilities, and the long-term costs and impacts of the development.

We respectfully request specific answers identifying **what improvements will be required, who will be responsible for them, how they will be funded, and whether they will be conditions of development approval.**

I. Traffic and Intersection Safety

1. Netherwood Road Traffic

The proposed development is expected to generate approximately 500 additional daily trips to and from West Netherwood. Increased traffic will affect the **entire length of Netherwood Road**, not simply the section immediately south of the Featherwood subdivision.

What traffic-control, roadway, and intersection improvements are planned to provide safe and efficient traffic flow from the Village's section of Netherwood Road at the east end, through the Town's section, and ultimately to the western intersection with Fish Hatchery Road?

Will these improvements be required as conditions of development approval and completed before the corresponding phases of the development are occupied?

2. Netherwood Road/Fish Hatchery Road Intersection

The traffic study evaluated only two Village intersections, while the projected development's traffic will place additional pressure on the already busy and awkward Netherwood Road/Fish Hatchery Road T-intersection.

What analysis has been conducted specifically for this intersection under full build-out conditions?

Does the Village, Town, or County have plans, funding, or a timetable to improve this intersection? If not, why is the existing intersection considered adequate for the projected increase in traffic?

3. Worst-Case Traffic Conditions

Has the Village evaluated the **worst-case traffic scenario**, including full development build-out, peak-hour traffic, existing traffic, school or park traffic, and traffic from future development in the surrounding area?

If such an analysis has been completed, what were the results and what improvements were recommended?

4. Emergency Access

How will emergency vehicles access every portion of the proposed development if Netherwood Road or another primary access route is blocked by flooding, snow, an accident, construction, or another emergency?

Are there redundant emergency access routes, and will those routes remain available under all foreseeable conditions?

II. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

5. Pedestrian Crossings of Netherwood Road

How will the developer and Village ensure that pedestrians can safely cross Netherwood Road to reach destinations on the south side, including locations frequently used by children and seniors, such as Village Park, the library, and other community facilities?

Will marked, high-visibility, illuminated, or otherwise enhanced pedestrian crossings be required?

6. Access to Highlands of Netherwood Park

Will the Village or developer be required to provide a safe pedestrian and bicycle connection between the new neighborhood and Village Park in the Highlands?

Will lighted, high-visibility crosswalks or other traffic-calming measures be installed across Netherwood Road? If not, what specific alternative safety measures will be provided?

7. Bicycle Safety at Fish Hatchery Road

A young resident who rides his bicycle to Highlands of Netherwood Park to play and practice soccer asks:

“Can anything be done to make the Netherwood Road/Fish Hatchery Road intersection safer for bicyclists? It is not safe now.”

Has a bicycle and pedestrian safety assessment been conducted for this intersection? If so, what specific improvements is recommended?

Will bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements be required as part of the Featherwood development?

III. Flooding, Groundwater, and Stormwater

8. Lake Barney Flooding

The Lake Barney Stormwater Management Study prepared for the City of Fitchburg in 2020–2021 identified methods for addressing the severe flooding experienced from 2017 through 2020.

Fitchburg has indicated that it currently has no ongoing projects or planned actions associated with the study's findings or recommendations.

Given that the historical flooding risks remain, what specific measures will the developer and municipality require to protect Featherwood residents from dangerous water-covered roads, flooding, and potential property damage?

Will these measures be completed and demonstrated to be operational **before homes are occupied**?

9. Groundwater Conditions

The City of Fitchburg has identified fluctuating and potentially high groundwater levels across substantial portions of the proposed subdivision.

What specific safeguards will the Village require to prevent another “**Florida Avenue**” **situation**, in which homes are constructed during dry conditions but later experience flooded streets, yards, or basements during wet periods?

Will groundwater levels be monitored before, during, and after construction?

10. Demonstration Under Severe Conditions

What evidence demonstrates that the proposed stormwater and groundwater-control systems will remain effective during conditions comparable to the 2017–2020 Lake Barney flooding events?

Has the Village evaluated the combined worst-case scenario of **full development, heavy rainfall, high groundwater, and flooding occurring at the same time**?

If so, what were the results?

11. Long-Term Responsibility for Flooding

If the proposed drainage or groundwater-control systems prove inadequate after homes have been occupied, who will be responsible for correcting the problem and paying the costs?

What financial guarantees or continuing developer obligations will remain in place to protect existing residents, new residents, and Village taxpayers?

IV. Roads, Utilities, and Municipal Responsibilities

12. Road “Islands”

The proposed Featherwood development appears to create roadway “islands” without direct connections from existing Town roads to East Netherwood and the Trussler subdivision.

Will the Village assume responsibility for maintenance, snow plowing, emergency access, drainage, and other municipal services for these roads?

If so, what conditions must be met before the Village accepts that responsibility?

13. Long-Term Municipal Costs

What new long-term costs will the development impose on the Village for:

- road maintenance;
- snow removal;
- stormwater management;
- drainage;
- emergency services;
- pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; and
- other municipal services?

Who will pay those costs, and have they been incorporated into the Village's long-term financial planning?

14. Curb and Gutter

Will the Village and developer be required to install curb and gutter on **both sides of Netherwood Road wherever the Village has jurisdiction or approval authority?**

If not, which sections will be exempt, and what is the justification for those exemptions?

15. Construction-Phase Safety

What requirements will be placed on the developer during construction to prevent construction traffic, mud, erosion, flooding, debris, and temporary roadway conditions from creating safety problems for existing Netherwood Road residents and other road users?

Who will monitor compliance, and who will be responsible for correcting problems?

16. Water and Sewer Connections

Will the Village offer residents along Netherwood Road, between the Highlands and Alpine, the opportunity to connect to municipal water and sewer as part of this development?

If connections are not offered, why not?

Will the Village consider providing these connections in conjunction with any right-of-way or access needed for a multipurpose trail, particularly given the Town/Village land configuration created by the development?

V. Land Configuration and Tax Islands

17. Potential Tax Islands

The proposed Featherwood development appears to create long peninsulas of Town land that could function as tax islands. The proposed connection along the northern edge of Featherwood appears to consist largely of marshland.

How does this configuration comply with the prohibition against creating tax islands?

Please identify the specific statute, ordinance, intergovernmental agreement, or other legal authority that permits this configuration.

18. Future Responsibility for Isolated Land

Who will ultimately be responsible for providing municipal services to the isolated or peninsula portions of Town land created by the proposed development?

Has the Village evaluated the long-term financial and service implications of this configuration?

VI. Development Conditions and Accountability

19. Timing of Infrastructure Improvements

Will roadway, drainage, pedestrian, bicycle, and intersection improvements be completed **before the corresponding phases of homes are occupied**, or can homes be occupied before those improvements are completed?

If improvements can be delayed, what guarantees will ensure that they are ultimately completed?

20. Responsibility and Funding

For each proposed traffic, pedestrian, bicycle, drainage, flooding, and infrastructure improvement:

- Which governmental entity has jurisdiction?
- Which entity will be responsible for implementation?
- Who will pay for the improvement?
- What is the anticipated timeline?
- Will the improvement be a condition of development approval?

21. Protection of Existing Residents and Taxpayers

Finally, once the development is completed and its infrastructure is accepted by the Village, who will be responsible if the roads, drainage system, pedestrian facilities, intersections, or other infrastructure prove inadequate?

What financial guarantees, maintenance agreements, or developer obligations will remain in place to protect **existing residents, new residents, and Village taxpayers from unforeseen costs**?

We respectfully ask that these questions be answered with specific commitments rather than general assurances that issues will be addressed during future engineering or development reviews. The goal is to ensure that public safety, flooding protection, transportation infrastructure, and long-term municipal costs are adequately addressed **before development approval and before residents are placed at risk.**