

Hampton company C3I eyes Exeter for new facility

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EXETER – A Hampton Company that builds flight deck software for Navy ships is looking to relocate to Exeter, according to Economic Development Director Darren Winham.

C3I, Inc. has been located on Merrill Industrial Drive in Hampton for between 10 and 12 years, but has been on the lookout for a new location for six months, president Mike Curry said Thursday. Curry was due before the Exeter Planning Board for a design review on Thursday night.

"The building we're currently in is in the process of being sold and we decided that with this confluence of events, it looked like a really good time to branch out and build our own facility dedicated to my engineering and production departments," he said.

Commerce Way, within the industrial Epping Road area, would be the perfect spot for C3I's new 12,000-foot facility for a variety of reasons, according to Curry.

"It's a beautiful plot of land, it's entirely wooded, in an industrial park, with no residential anywhere near it and the other companies up there are all complementary to the kind of business we do," he said. "I like the environment. I like the locale."

The proposed location abuts the town forest and does intrude upon the bike trail network many enjoy but Curry said Thursday that he has a plan to keep Exeter cyclists happy.

The facility's access road will parallel the trail, and Curry said that he plans to have gravel parking spaces installed on the property for cyclists with the trailhead moved from the Commerce Way cul-de-sac to an area adjacent to the new parking spaces.

"This would benefit the town for a whole bunch of reasons," he said. "There won't be a whole bunch of cars parked along the cul-de-sac, off the main road."

Also, Curry said, moving cyclist parking to the lot would make for safer passage for tractor trailers servicing other industrial businesses in the neighborhood.

"I'm also a biker and I don't want to see people lose the ability to use that trail network," he said. "I think it will be very easy for people. From where the back of our proposed parking lot ends, it's a very short connection into the trail network ... I think we're onto something here."

Winham Thursday called the bike path plan "a really cool thing for a person coming into our community to do."

Curry said that all the infrastructure his company needed, including water, sewer, power and natural gas already run up Commerce Way, and it will merely be a matter of connecting the new facility to them.

Winham said Thursday that he considers the long-in-the-works plan, should it receive Planning Board approval and move forward, "a colossal win for the Town of Exeter."

"This is exactly the kind of business we've been trying to get up there," he said. "It's a huge win for Economic Development in this town"