



# City of Concord, New Hampshire

Mayor James P. Bouley

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Concord, NH 03301

(603) 225-8500

December 21, 2022

William Cass, Commissioner  
NH Department of Transportation  
7 Hazen Drive, PO Box 483  
Concord, NH 03302-0483

Dear Commissioner Cass:

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) presented an update on the I-93/I-89 Bow-Concord Project (the "Project") at a City Council Meeting held on October 11, 2022. The proposed project has the potential to improve both economic development throughout the City and the region, and all modes of transportation safety throughout the community.

After lengthy discussions and weighing all public input received, the Concord City Council expresses its support for the project and offers the following requested modifications to the NHDOT, upon which the City's support is predicated upon.

The requests are as follows:

## Exit 12

Subject to review of final designs and maintenance details, the NHDOT's proposed conceptual improvements of a dual roundabout design to Exit 12 are acceptable. The City Council requests that the NHDOT use industry standard design principles with significant attention to incorporate safe access for bicyclists and pedestrians through the proposed roundabouts at this location, including crosswalks and flashing beacons.

The City Council requests that the NHDOT consider the impacts of the highway noise to the abutting neighborhoods in the area of Exit 12, and incorporate measures necessary to ameliorate unreasonable additional noise impacts.

## Exit 13

The City Council supports the NHDOT's proposal to provide additional turn lanes at the north bound off ramp, as well as at the intersection of Manchester Street / Old Turnpike Road / Black Hill Road. The City Council is of the opinion that these improvements are valuable to the City within the context of transportation and economic development. The City Council requests that the NHDOT install safe crossings and appropriate lighting for bicycles and pedestrians at all two-lane approaches and exits at this location. Right turn on red should not be allowed at the traffic signal for the right turning traffic so that bicycles can safely travel, and the location should include walk signals for pedestrians.

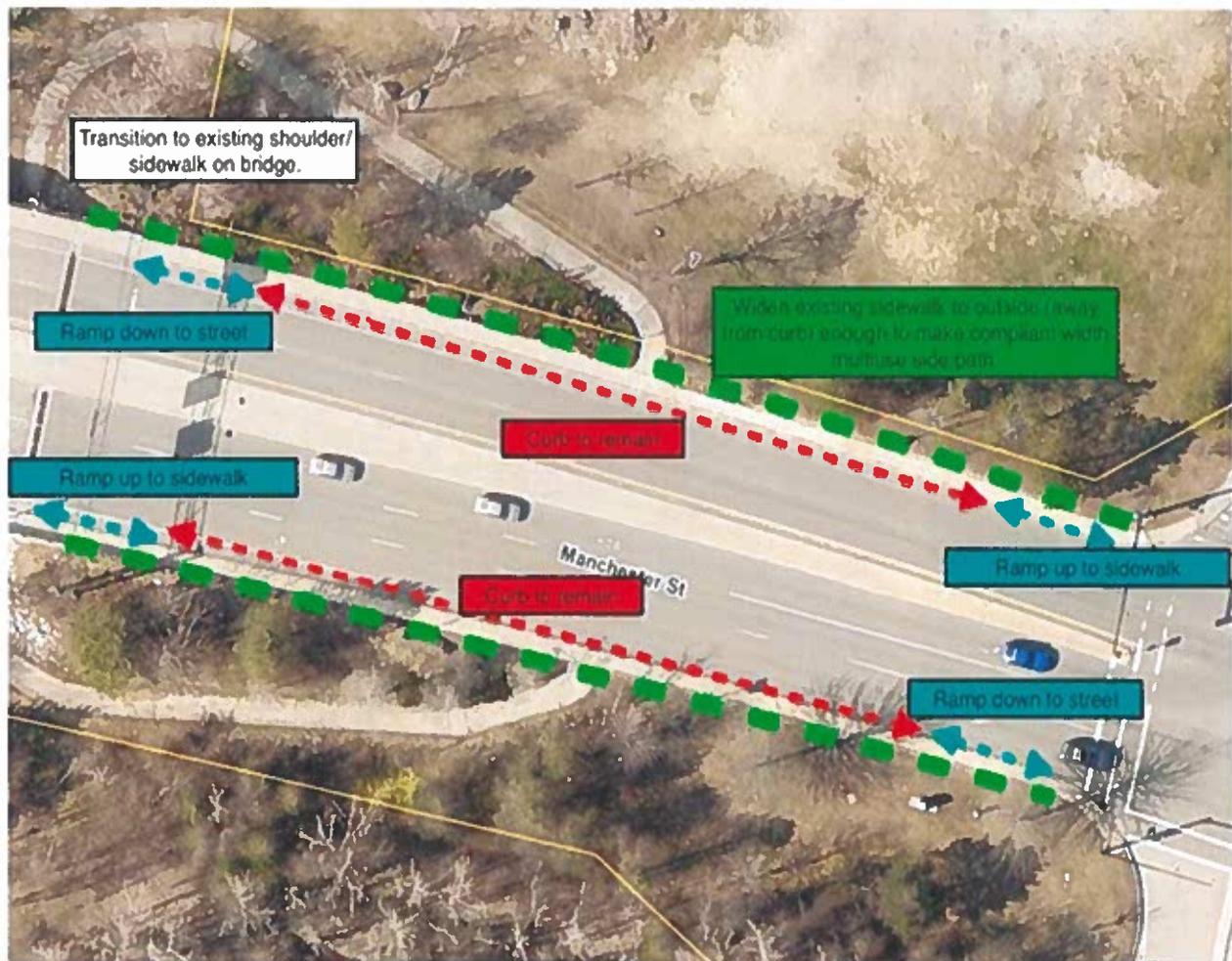
The City Council advocates for safe bicycle transitions between the trail system and street system, connecting Manchester Street users to the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT).

This could be accomplished by the addition of bicycle curb ramps and 10-foot wide multi-use paths extending from the existing paths beneath the Manchester Street Bridge to the intersection with Old Turnpike Road, as shown on the figure below.

The City Council requests that the NHDOT incorporate connections to the MRGT within the existing right-of-way in the area of Black Hill Road. Doing so will facilitate a continuous route for the MRGT from the Concord / Pembroke municipal boundary to Terrill Park and beyond.

The City Council requests that the existing pedestrian ramp from Basin Street be reconfigured to tie into Manchester Street in a safer location.

The City Council requests that landscaping be added to this area, particularly additional tree plantings. In addition, lighting in all areas of the bridge should be installed for the safety of all travel modes.



Exit 14

*Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT) / Loudon Road*

The inclusion of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail through Exit 14 provides a significant improvement for users of the trail and links the trail to downtown and further expansion to the north.

The City Council requests that NHDOT's proposed typical section for Loudon Road, through the limits of the Project, be revised so as to be consistent with the proposed improvements across the Loudon Road Bridge with a 14-foot wide shared-use path on the north side and 6-foot wide sidewalk on the south side. Consideration should be given to beautifying the Interstate bridge over Loudon Road, as well as constructing sloped abutments versus vertical retaining walls to open up this area, thus making it more inviting for pedestrians. This bridge is a gateway connecting the Heights to Downtown and should be appropriately designed. See examples below:



The City Council requests that the design details of all intersection trail crossings use industry standard design principles to incorporate safe access for all users.

Regarding the proposed configuration of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT), the City Council requests that NHDOT further analyze MRGT Concepts A, C and F; and/or a combination of the three.

NHDOT should also account for the following as part of the project:

- Signal timing of the Loudon Road/Centre Street intersection with increased pedestrian activity;
- Rights-of-Way impacts to the Holiday Inn on the corner;
- Aesthetics of the ramp in Concept F (specifically, TPAC recommends a structure as opposed to large retaining walls);
- That all alternatives be configured to work with the City's envisioned design for the Storrs Street extension, including a potential roundabout at the Main Street connector; and,
- Specific detailed streetscaping should include lighting, landscaping, benches and local art and culture in the design, particularly in the bridge and entryway areas.

#### Storrs Street Extension North

One of the challenges for the I-93 corridor through Concord is the amount of local traffic which uses the highway to traverse the City. Improvements to the local roadway system may help to mitigate this circumstance. As such, the City accepts the NHDOT's offer to relocate the State of New Hampshire's Lincoln Line Corridor, at the State's expense, to facilitate future construction of Storrs Street Extension North by the City. Towards this end, the City is prepared to cooperate with the State relative to granting of property rights over City owned property to facilitate said rail relocations, provided the State is prepared to grant the City ownership of surplus property resulting from relocation of the Lincoln Line rights-of-way located between Loudon Road and Horseshoe Pond Lane. City ownership of said residual surplus railroad property will be necessary for the City to construct Storrs Street Extension North. Further, the City is also prepared to design / construct Storrs Street North so as to facilitate a future at-grade railroad crossing over Storrs Street North Extension when / if highspeed rail is implemented in the future.

#### Stickney Ave (Right-in, Right-Out)

The City Council understands that Concord Coach and Concord Area Transit (CAT) have concerns with the access restrictions which would result from the proposed right-in, right-out configuration at this location. In addition, associated impacts to the Ralph Pill Plaza, and that the proposed reconfiguration of this intersection would necessitate the need for U-turns at other busy intersections in the area are of concern. Therefore, the City Council requests that this location remain as a full access, signalized intersection.

#### Stickney Avenue (New Intersection with South Commercial Street / Constitution Avenue)

The City Council conditions its support on the State extending Stickney Avenue northerly so as to create a new intersection with South Commercial Street and Constitution Avenue. This will

improve the local transportation network, especially once Storrs Street North Extension is constructed by the City in the future.

#### North Bound On-Ramp

The City Council requests the addition of an unsignalized north bound on-ramp for westbound traffic only helping the traffic flow on Loudon Road.

#### Exit 15

The City Council supports the proposed design of the interchange at Exit 15, as it will eliminate multiple conflict points and replaces four red listed bridges, all important to safety improvements.

The City Council requests that the NHDOT include streetscape and design features on I-393/US Route 202 between Commercial Street and North Main Street. The transition from interstate to city streets is most notable at the intersection and said improvements would beautify this important gateway into the City, as well as provide a visual cue to motorists that they are leaving the Interstate and approaching the local street network. Signature lighting amenities should be added to make note of this important location. Said improvements would also encourage the reduction of speeds as vehicles approach the intersections with Commercial Street and North Main Street.

#### Additional Items

So as to improve upon the image of Downtown Concord from the interstate highway, the project should include landscaping features, strategically placed decorative fencing, lighting treatments and creative art along the highway to draw attention to the downtown. Wayfinding signage and historic information should be included.

#### Interstate Widening

The Bow-Concord I-93 widening project, as currently proposed, will have significant impacts on the City of Concord. As such, the City appreciates that the NHDOT has agreed to update its traffic study to ensure that current traffic volumes are reflected and that predicted traffic growth is based on the actual traffic in the last several years. Any widening will directly impact the city and its residents and businesses, so it is important to ensure that any widening proposed is necessary. A genuine reconsideration of the number of lanes proposed is critical to ensuring support for this project.

The City Council requests that the NHDOT evaluate the reduction of the Interstate's footprint and number of lanes associated therewith, while still meeting purpose and need of the project.

#### Deck Park/Pedestrian Bridge/River Connection

The City's 2006 Opportunity Corridor Master Plan, which was prepared in part to articulate the City's suggestions to the NHDOT relative to the Interstate 93 project as envisioned at that time, included a large deck park and various improvements to the Merrimack River corridor to promote pedestrian access and recreation associated. These improvements were specifically predicated on the acquisition and redevelopment of the Brixmor Shopping Plaza, and other

adjacent properties, by the NHDOT so that the highway could be relocated westerly away from the river. The City notes that these real estate acquisitions are not part of the NHDOT's Project at this time. In addition, the improvements suggested by the 2006 Opportunity Corridor Master Plan also contemplated depressing the elevation of the highway, as well as significant modifications of the CSX railroad at this location, to facilitate development of the "deck park". The City Council has received a significant amount of public testimony regarding the concept of the deck park and related river connections, as articulated in the 2006 Opportunity Corridor Master Plan. In the event the City Council undertakes a feasibility study and associated conceptual designs of a potential "deck park" over portions of the Interstate (likely between Exits 13 and 14), as well as a potential pedestrian bridge associated therewith across the Merrimack River, including pedestrian connections to the river related thereto; the City Council requests the assistance of NHDOT expertise in the exploration and conceptual development of alternatives.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. The City of Concord looks forward to continued collaboration with the NHDOT on this very important project.

Sincerely,



James P. Bouley  
Mayor

JPB/sms