



# CITY OF CONCORD

## REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer

**DATE:** June 25, 2026

**SUBJECT:** United State Department of Transportation (USDOT) Bridge Investment Program (BIP) Federal Grant Application – Loudon Road Bridge (NH Route 9) over the Merrimack River (Bridge #163/111) – Requested Letter of Support

### **Recommendation:**

1. Accept this report; and,
2. Authorize the City Manager to submit a letter of support to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) regarding a Bridge Investment Program (BIP) federal grant application to fund improvements to the Loudon Road Bridge over the Merrimack River in Concord.

### **Background:**

The Loudon Road Bridge (NH Route 9) over the Merrimack River (NHDOT Bridge Number 163/111) is one of twenty-two municipally-owned bridges that the City of Concord maintains. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) conducts routine bridge inspections and in 2015 added Loudon Road Bridge to its Municipal Red List of Bridges due to observed condition.

In FY2020, City Council appropriated funds for the preliminary design of the repair/rehabilitation of Loudon Road Bridge; and, in FY2023, City Council appropriated funds for the design, permitting, and acquisition of right of way. This project has been included in the State's Ten Year Plan, and the funding split is 80% State/Federal funding and 20% City bond funds. In September 2023 a Project Agreement was signed between the City of Concord and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), which confirms the funding commitments to implement a bridge rehabilitation and widening project for the Loudon Road Bridge over the Merrimack River.

An Engineering Study was completed in December 2021; and, in March 2026, a Preliminary Design (60%) was submitted to NHDOT for review and comment.

## **Discussion:**

In May 2026 the USDOT Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity through the Bridge Investment Program (BIP). The NHDOT has chosen to apply for grant funds through the BIP to help fund the Loudon Road Bridge project and has requested that the City submit a letter of support to USDOT. As stated in the attached letter from NHDOT, BIP federal grant funding would provide enough funding to increase the project scope to include certain desirable improvements that would not normally be able to be funded by the Local Public Agency (LPA) federally funded bridge program that NHDOT administers. Although the total cost of the project would increase if the BIP grant funds are awarded, NHDOT has committed to reducing the City's match requirement from 20% to 10%, if this funding is realized and the project scope is increased. Although the project scope would increase, there are no expected delays to the current project schedule or implementation timeline as a result of this potential funding source change should the grant application be successful, as is described in further detail below. Also, there are no additional grant requirements that would be added to the project as a result of a potential BIP grant award beyond the normal federally funded bridge rules and regulations currently being applied to this City-managed federally funded bridge rehabilitation project. Finally, NHDOT has assured that there is no risk to losing current project funding by supporting this grant application, as the September 2023 Project Agreement between the City of Concord and NHDOT confirms their funding commitment to implement a bridge rehabilitation and widening project for the Loudon Road Bridge over the Merrimack River.

During their review of the Preliminary Design (60%), NHDOT identified two major improvements that were proposed to the City for efficiencies during construction: (1) perform full widening on only the south side of the bridge rather than split on both sides; and (2) replace all existing steel girders rather than repairing/repainting and using haunches to reestablish a normal crown across the new bridge deck. Although these improvements may have benefits for efficiencies during construction, and will result in greater project value for the City, these improvements result in significantly higher cost to the project and would not be affordable without additional federal funding, such as BIP grant funding. Constructing the bridge widening on only the south side of the bridge reduces the efforts that would otherwise be needed on the north side, such as abutment extensions/new wingwalls and associated micropile foundations, pier widening and associated temporary cofferdams, as well as the temporary bridge trestle to construct the bridge widening. However, if the widening occurs on only one side, more work will be needed on the roadway approaches to the bridge to ensure proper lane alignment, which will add to the project scope and cost. Replacing all existing steel girders would increase the service life of the bridge and provide significant time savings during construction; however, at additional cost to the project. These improvements would add significant value to the project and reduce construction time; and, although there may be minimal increases in time needed for additional design and permitting, the overall project delivery schedule will not be delayed. And, with NHDOT's commitment to an 80-10-10 funding split, the City's cost share would actually be reduced if the BIP federal grant funds were awarded. Therefore, staff recommends supporting the application for BIP federal grant funds.

Acceptance of the attached resolution will authorize the City Manager to submit a letter of support to the USDOT regarding a BIP federal grant application for the Loudon Road Bridge over the Merrimack River.

Attachment: NHDOT Letter Requesting BIP Grant Application Letter of Support dated 6/23/26