

MEMORANDUM - I-93 WIDENING

TO: Jim Bouley (City Mayor); Janice Bonenfant (City Clerk); Jason Ayotte (NH DOT)
CC: Karen Hill (City Engineering); Stacey Brown (Ward 5)

BY: Ron Rayner, P.E. (Retired) Date: November 14, 2022
Credentials: B.S. Civil & M.S. Environmental Engineering

RE: Public Testimony - Review Comments – I-93 Widening/Expansion & MRGT Extension;
Concord – Exits 12 thru Exit 15 (Aug. 9th - 2022 Public Hearing & You Tube Video)

I have previously reviewed the You Tube Video from the August 9th, 2022 P. Hearing in it's entirety & submitted review comments, dated September 13, 2022, to the City Engineer, City Mayor & TPAC, Karen Hall & Jason Ayotte. Those comments addressed Exits 12 thru 15 in addition to alternate routing for the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (MRGT). The comments & suggestions for Exits 12 thru 15 remain the same today, as when they were first submitted back in September. But my focus today will be solely on the MRGT Extension thru downtown Concord.

MRGT Extension & Ft. Eddy Rd.

I believe that this project offers considerable potential for increased recreation for drawing both residents & tourists to our downtown business areas. In developing my earlier recommendations for the MRGT, I had one primary focus: that was to avoid an at-grade pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Ft. Eddy Rd. & Loudon Rd. Why-? Because that intersection today, as we all know, is quite busy. Yes - there is an existing pedestrian signal & crossing there today, but in my frequent passing thru that intersection, it has limited use. Now, consider the increased volume of traffic some 8 to 10 years down the road when the highway widening is all said & done & finally complete. No doubt traffic counts will be even higher. And over the ensuing years following highway completion, consider the popularity & increased number of users that will come to the area just because of the MRGT. I strongly feel that if an at-grade pedestrian crossing remains, that increased traffic flow coupled with increased users on the MRGT will inhibit the smooth flow of traffic & lead to traffic congestion & lots of frustration amongst all users. That is why my alternate routing scheme previously presented took a circuitous route, largely thru parcels of private property – to avoid an at-grade crossing. True, it did have some challenges, so it was rejected.

OK - time to move on to Plan B. What's that-? In looking at various maps & aerials of that area, I believe (and hope) that it is possible to devise a plan that would allow the MRGT to be carried on the N. side of a new Loudon Rd bridge (as presently envisioned) and rather than proceeding forward with an at-grade crossing on Ft. Eddy Rd., I'm suggesting a bifurcated approach – a split or fork in the trail that would allow some users to travel down the East side of Ft. Eddy Rd. with a ramp and elevated section that would pass over Ft. Eddy Rd. for those users who want to connect with businesses on the West side of Ft. Eddy Rd and/or downtown Concord. The elevated section would then ramp down and reach grade in the area just east of the existing Ex. 14 N. on-bound ramp in the grassed area next to Uno's. Once the pathway has crossed Ft.

Eddy Rd., one could walk down the West side of Ft. Eddy – or – proceed forward thru a tunnel passing under the new widened highway to reach downtown areas & businesses. If enacted, it would have three at-grade pedestrian crossings following its passage over Ft. Eddy; they would include the new Ex. 14 N on-bound ramp, the Ex. 14 off-ramp & Stickney Avenue. All three of these crossings would have far less traffic than Ft. Eddy Rd. itself.

Easy -? NO - Not at all, and spacing would no doubt be tight, but I believe it's doable. Depending on how final design details emerge, relative to layouts, elevations and grade requirements for handicap accessible ramps, we need to think outside the box. We need to be visionary & cognizant of future users, both vehicle & MRGT users that will only increase in numbers in the future. I would be more than happy to meet w/City officials, NH DOT and/or McFarland Johnson (designers) to present the conceptual details of this Plan.

Thank You

Ron Rayner, Resident & Retired Engineer