



Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail

Hike It! Bike It! Like It!

Mayor James Bouley and Concord City Councilors
c/o Concord City Clerk
41 Green Street
Concord, NH 03301

July 28, 2016

Re: Capital Improvement Program, Item 543, Merrimack River Greenway Trail Project

Dear Mayor Bouley and City Councilors:

Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (FMRGT) is a non-profit corporation, founded with the goal of developing and facilitating the construction of a paved multi-use walking and bicycling trail along the Merrimack River in Concord. When completed, the Merrimack River Greenway Trail will connect the Northern Rail Trail in Boscawen and regional trails to the south. It will be a critical link through the state capitol that will create a continuous trail from Lebanon to Salem. The Northern Rail Trail is currently completed from Boscawen to Lebanon, and 15 miles of paved trail are completed or under construction between Concord and Salem.

There have been several recent developments with the project, leading to our request to advance certain Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds into an earlier budget year.

Phase I of this project contemplates an approximately one quarter mile long boardwalk linking Terrill Park to the City land south of the Concord Post Office on Loudon Road. The U.S. Department of the Interior has awarded the City a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant in the total amount of \$200,000, which includes a matching share of \$100,000, donated by FMRGT. Construction of part of the trail and boardwalk is expected to begin later this year.

The Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), managed by the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT), has traditionally been a major source of trail project funding, both in New Hampshire and nationwide. After a few years of uncertain funding, the TAP program was recently reauthorized and announced for distribution. We are hoping that the City, with FMRGT's assistance, applies this year for a TAP grant in the maximum amount of \$1,000,000, which would include \$800,000 in Federal funds and the required \$200,000 matching share, which FMRGT anticipates raising.

MRGT.org | info@MRGT.org | 11 South Main Street, Suite 400 | Concord, NH 03301 4846
*Board of Trustees: Greg Bakos, Steve Epstein, Chris Kane, Dick Lemieux, Dick Mark,
Kelly Ovitt Puc, Jim Owers, Claudia Prendergast, Craig Tufts, Alex Vogt, Tina White*

As you know, the City is now planning substantial improvements to Terrill Park over the next two years. These improvements and the trail will augment each other.

Finally, although not directly connected to Phase I of the project, on May 3, 2016, Pan Am Railways notified the city that it intends to abandon and discontinue use of more than six miles of its rail line north of the city center. This would allow for an important connection of the trail from near the Pierce Manse to the Northern Rail Trail in Boscawen.

The NHDOT will be looking for a tangible commitment by the host community when ranking the various proposals. We believe the actions outlined below will provide this assurance and will give Concord a competitive advantage.

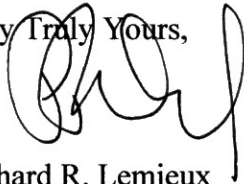
The Concord Capitol Improvement Program (CIP) already includes expenditures related to the MRGT; however they are not budgeted until FY2022. The entry includes \$2,000,000 divided between "General Donations" of \$400,000 and "Other State" of \$1,600,000. We are requesting that the CIP be amended in response to the recent Federal funding developments.

We propose and request CIP 543 be split as follows. The first entry would be in FY2018 stating "Other State" of \$800,000 reflecting the TAP grant amount, "General Donations" of \$100,000 for the FMRGT share and "General G.O. Bonds of \$100,000" for the City share. The second entry would remain in FY2022, funded in the same proportions as the FY2018 portion.

As you know, this proposed CIP amendment is not a binding commitment of funds by the City. It is our hope and plan to raise all the matching funds through private donations. Approval of this request by Council would demonstrate to the NHDOT in evaluating the TAP grant application that the city does stand behind this project. Consistent with all grant funding projects, we understand that an appropriation resolution and public hearing fixing the grant contribution amounts will be required.

We have discussed this request with City Engineer Ed Roberge. FMRGT would be happy to meet with you, the City Manager, and/or other staff to discuss this request and the progress of the trail at your convenience.

Very Truly Yours,



Richard R. Lemieux
President