



TOWN OF BOW

Board of Selectmen

10 Grandview Road, Bow, New Hampshire 03304

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Chairperson, Interstate 93 Improvement Project (Bow-Concord T-A000(018) 13742
C/O Peter Stamnas, Director of Project Development
The State of New Hampshire
Department of Transportation
PO Box 483
Concord, NH 03302-0483

December 14, 2018

Re: Proposed I-89/I-93 Redesign

Dear Mr. Stamnas:

The Town of Bow has serious concerns and opposition to much of the latest design for intersection of I-89 and I-93. I am writing on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, the Bow Planning Board and all other departments of the Town of Bow ("Town" or "Bow"). The Town's concerns with the design by the Department of Transportation ("NHDOT") are identified separately for ease of reference.

1. NHDOT MODELING HAS INACCURATE ASSUMPTIONS

The NHDOT modeling failed to recognize the Town's zoning in the area surrounding the I-89 Exit 1. In 2016 the Bow Planning Board drafted an ordinance for a new mixed use zone district adjacent to Exit 1. The zoning was approved by over 85 % of the voters in town in March 2017. NHDOT had actual knowledge of the zoning change because a draft of the zoning amendment was promptly provided to NHDOT immediately after the Planning Board discussions in 2016. The final version was also forwarded to NHDOT. The zoning for this area allows for much needed multifamily housing in the region and is designed to attract and retain millennials by permitting a mixture of uses in a more urban environment. The proposed Exit 1 design being put forth now was based on a land use model with rural zoning that only permitted single family homes on lots with a minimum of 2 acres. Absent an analysis of the zoning that has been in place for almost two years, projections for traffic and the overall impact of the new Exit 1 design are meaningless.

As designed, the latest proposed highway layout would disrupt if not destroy the planned development of that area. Another copy of the zoning map and ordinance for this area is attached to this letter.

2. NHDOT MODELING FAILED TO CONSIDER IMPACT ON BUSINESS CORRIDOR

Over the past several decades, a section of Route 3A running south from the I-89/3A interchange to the Hooksett town line has attracted many new trucking-related businesses due to the configuration of the interstate highway. The proposed design will eliminate direct access from I-

89 to Route 3A, which will put these businesses at a significant disadvantage. The impact to these businesses should be thoroughly evaluated before such a drastic plan is proposed. To date, no such evaluation has been conducted.

3. THE DESIGN IGNORES LOCAL IMPACT

The design would introduce a signalized intersection at the end of I-89 Exit 1, in the middle of a residential area. Presently, that road is used almost exclusively by passenger vehicles from Bow. The latest design would radically change the use and nature of that section of the Town without any of the added benefits of economic development. The traffic lights would exclusively serve the federal highway system.

The light would be operated twenty four hours a day on a road with a significant grade. The introduction of a traffic light on such a steep grade would introduce risk to drivers at all hours of the day and night, especially during periods of inclement weather.

With the elimination of direct access to Route 3A from I-89, traffic from I-89 to Route 3A would 1) exit I-89 via Exit 1, 2) turn left at a new traffic signal, 3) pass under I-89 to another new signal light, 4) turn right on a yet to be constructed bypass, 5) travel to another new signal light, 6) turn left again, and 7) finally reach Route 3A. This configuration would introduce significant traffic onto local roads, and have it pass through an economic development zone with no discernable benefit to drivers. That traffic would include a significant number of large trucks that serve businesses on Route 3A south of the existing intersection of I-89 and Route 3A.

The reconfiguration of I-89 Exit 1, and the elimination of direct access from I-89 to Route 3A will introduce additional traffic on local roads as drivers use exit 1 to access 3A via Short Street and Grandview Road in Bow, which would be a far less convoluted route for any traveler. This would introduce an unnecessary and unreasonable burden on Town resources and roadways.

4. LACK OF SOUND BARRIERS

While the proposed redesign is in recognition of increased traffic demands, the proposal does not include any sound barriers in Bow. The I-93 route south of I-89 abuts an area of dense housing, yet there are no sound barriers in the plan. The proposed exit from I-89 to I-93 south would be within feet of residential units, yet there are no sound barriers in the plan.¹ Notwithstanding a study that established sound impact on the residential areas, there was no attempt to mitigate the impact.

5. PHOTOSIMULATIONS NEEDED TO EVALUATE IMPACT

Property owners abutting the proposed layout deserve to see photosimulations so that the impact to their respective properties can be fully evaluated. This has been requested a number of times, but has not yet been provided.

Of particular note is a historic structure on Valley Road that served as the Town's primary general store for many years. The store ceased operation in 1971 a few years after Exit 1 was originally built, but it is still a well-maintained, historic commercial structure. The new overpass

¹ Bow notes that the only sound barriers included in the plan would be north of I-93 exit 15, with no residential housing nearby.

appears to loom over this building, but a photosimulation has yet to be provided so that the impact can be evaluated. The former car dealer immediately to the north suffered a similar negative impact when Exit 1 was originally built; that structure is now proposed to be demolished with the new layout. Owners of properties impacted deserve to see photosimulations to better judge the overall impact.

The Town respectfully requests that NHDOT *not* proceed with additional planning for the intersection before a new, comprehensive modeling is performed that includes recognition of the existing zoning in Bow in the area surrounding I-89 Exit 1. In particular, the Town believes the modeling must reasonably project the build-out of the area adjacent to Exit 1 based on the Town's Zoning Ordinance.

Sincerely,

David Stack
Town Manager

cc: Mr. Ted Gatsas
Senator Kevin Cavanaugh
Representative Mary Beth Walz
Representative Gary Woods
Representative Samantha Fox