

A photograph of a forest stream with sunlight filtering through the trees. The stream flows through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and rocks. The sunlight creates a bright, shimmering effect on the water's surface.

A Residents Guide to Understanding the
The Circumferential Highway

Aka Hudson Boulevard

June 2019

Organized, researched and written by
Hudson Alliance for Responsible Development

Table of Contents

[Why is the Circumferential Highway being revitalized?..... Pg 3](#)
[Actions by the Hudson Conservation Commission..... Pg 3](#)
[Why was the Hudson Alliance for Responsible Development Created?..... Pg 4](#)
[Importance of Saving Open Spaces..... Pg 4](#)
[What is the purpose of Circumferential Highway?..... Pg 5](#)
[Proponents of the CH plan argue its benefits..... Pg 6](#)
[Opponents of the CH plan argue serious consequences..... Pg 6](#)
[Where does the EPA stand on this?..... Pg 6](#)
[Strong Concerns from Regional Experts..... Pg 9](#)
[What happens if the project passes?..... Pg 12](#)
[Suggestion 1: Protect the land as Open Space..... Pg 13](#)
[Suggestion 2: All Terrain Vehicle Park..... Pg 16](#)
[Suggestion 3: Paved biking trails..... Pg 18](#)



[Attachment 1 \(Resident Comments\)..... Pg 23](#)
[Attachment 2 \(House Bill 2018\)..... Pg 25](#)
[Attachment 3 \(Wildlife Habitat Land Cover\)..... Pg 26](#)
[Attachment 4 \(Wildlife Habitat Ecological Condition\)..... Pg 27](#)
[Attachment 5 \(Conservation Focus Areas\)..... Pg 28](#)
[Attachment 6 \(Recent News Happenings\)..... Pg 29](#)

Why is the Circumferential Highway being revitalized?

In May 2018, Board of Selectmen Chair Roger Coutu announced the successful incorporation of the CH into the New Hampshire's 10-year plan. In meeting minutes obtained Chairman Coutu noted:

“it’s been 20 years in the making for the town. I’ve worked on this for 10 years... We’re very pleased to announce that the Senate Transportation Committee on the House amendment to HB2018, they amended the Bill by replacing Section 3 with the following ... “Department of Transportation – Town of Hudson. The Department of Transportation is authorized to work with the Town of Hudson to plan, engineer, and construct a roadway compatible with turnpike standards within the southern portion of a circumferential highway right of way between NH Route 3A and NH Route 111 in Hudson. Planning, engineering, and construction shall be funded solely with town funds... Article 17, Authorizes the Department of Transportation to plan, engineer, and construct a highway in Hudson with town funds (New Hampshire Legislative Assembly, 2018 Session).”

In 2018, the Town of Hudson allocated funds to write a grant, submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation for help in building Hudson Boulevard (former Circumferential Highway) To view the full grant proposal, go to [Hudson Boulevard Narrative](#) Page. While the grant application was still pending, the Board of Selectman created a warrant article to approve funding for the Hudson Boulevard. The grant was not approved, which resulted in the warrant article being removed, and the issue became dormant once again.

The project was resurrected again in May of 2019, when the Town Engineer went to the Board of Selectmen to request an additional \$9,900 to write and submit a second grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for help fund the Hudson Boulevard (former Circumferential Highway). The grant amount, if fully awarded, would be for \$25,000,000, the total cost of the current Hudson Boulevard is \$46,000,000. The request was approved by BOS, Selectwomen McGrath and Roy voted against spending the 9,900. Selectman Morin, Martin and Coutu voted in favor. The grant application is in progress currently. It is anticipated that, if the grant is awarded, the Board of Selectman will vote to put the remaining funding as a warrant article at the next election.

Actions by the Hudson Conservation Commission

Over the decades this project has been alive, The Hudson Conservation Commission has discussed and reviewed the impacts of the highway build while also conducting site walks of the corridor. More recently, in 2018, Members of the Conservation Commission responded to the Hudson Boulevard grant application by attempting to discuss the implications of this project at a Conservation Commission meeting. They were silenced by the Board of Selectman and Town Officials, citing reasons that it was the not the right or responsibility of the Conservation Commission to intervene or oppose the highway project. Despite this, some members of the Conservation Commission continued to research impact of the project and even explored alternatives that would potential protect and preserve a portion of the highway corridor for pedestrian, bicycle and recreational usage.



The Conservation Commission officially requested recreational usage of the parcels in the interim of the build, however the Town Engineer intervened and rejected the agreement between the Conservation Commission and the NH DOT Bureau of Right of Way. The Board of Selectman and Town Engineer felt that the recreational usage would undermine their efforts to build a highway. The members of the Conservation Commission received written reprimands, citing Right to Know violations, however more likely an attempt in retaliation to their oppositional work. As of July 2019, all efforts and actions by the Conservation Commission have been silenced, blocked, and effectively they are prevented from discussing this project in public.

Why was the Hudson Alliance for Responsible Development Created?

After the efforts of the Conservation were impeded, members of the community decided to take it upon themselves to research the project, share information, and organize efforts against the build of the Hudson Boulevard project. Hudson Alliance for Responsible Development (HARD) formed in 2019, when a group of concerned citizens organized to make the public aware and to inform residents about the plans for the Circumferential Highway (AKA Hudson Boulevard), which has been an issue facing our town since 1959. Many Hudson citizens have spoken out in opposition to the highway project, expressing concern over lack of planning in our town, and erosion of our Town's rural character. In addition, 2019 represented a positive year for wide public support for the preservation of open space, evident by the March Town Meeting 2019 warrant articles with passed with overwhelming majority.

This momentum toward responsible growth made the founders realize that there was a need for a citizen group that would monitor and inform fellow citizens about planned developments and related issues in Hudson. As a result, HARD was formed and its mission statement and by-laws were drawn up and adopted.

Importance of Saving Open Spaces

Open space is an important priority for Residents of our Town. Open space can be defined as land that is set aside to perpetuate its capacity, sustain native plant and animal communities, protect watershed functions, provide recreation and education opportunities, and/or preserve historic resources (Cook, 2012).



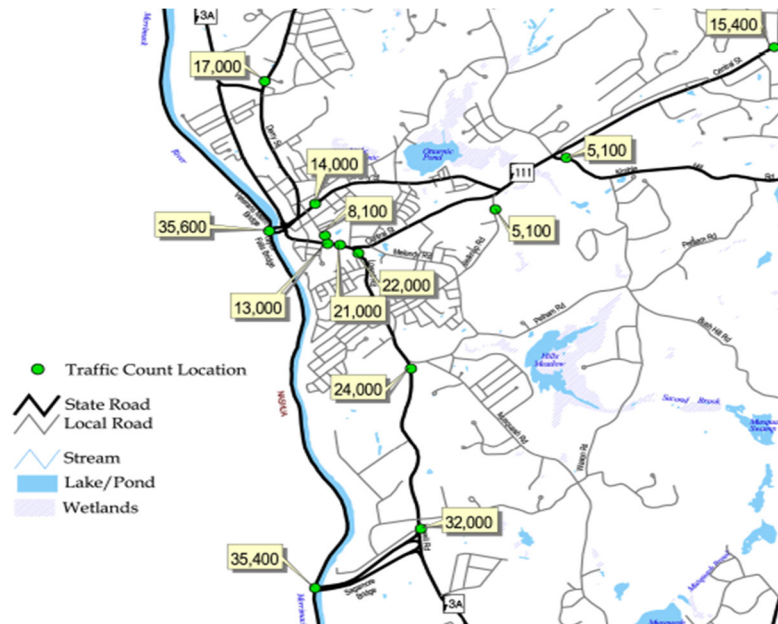
Additionally, close to 90 percent of the surveyed residents replied that Hudson does not have enough open space, and 60 percent were willing to spend tax dollars on acquiring new lands. Aquifers/drinking water, ponds & streams, and quality of life were ranked of highest importance for land protection (Cook, 2012).” Recommendations set forth in the 2006 Hudson Master Plan repeatedly call for the increased protection of Water Resources, Watersheds, Forests, and Natural Resources in our Town. Protecting and preserving open space is a documented priority supported by the Residents of this Town.

What is the purpose of Circumferential Highway?

The purpose of the CH highway build is to reduce local traffic congestion in Hudson NH. Ever since the CH highway project was initiated in the '50s; traffic mitigation has been the driving force. Most recently, the increased population and rapid development in southern NH, coupled with the commuter demand for quicker commuting times (with help from apps such as Waze and Google Maps) have all put more stress on local roads in town. As the commercialization of Hudson's 3A corridor continues to expand additional stress will be felt on local traffic patterns as well. The proposed benefits to the CH highway would be to shift traffic congestion to an efficient route around much of Hudson's commercial and residential properties.

How congested traffic in Hudson? In a society where time is precious, traffic data gathered within the Congestion Management Report, by the NRPC, for NH 3A outlined a commuting delay of 2 minutes and 25 seconds northbound and 3 minutes 26 seconds southbound from the NH/MA state line to Central St in Hudson NH during AM peak period. A northerly commute that should take 8 minutes 27 seconds during AM peak periods, now takes 10 minutes 52 seconds as an example. PM commutes do not seem any better with an average of a 3 to 5-minute delay for the same stretch of roadway (Nashua Regional Planning Commission, 2018).

One of the main purposes of the CH highway was to help mitigate traffic concerns across the Taylor Falls/Veterans Memorial bridges. These bridges saw approximately 37,000 annual average daily trips.. The Sagamore bridge in Tyngsborough as also starting to see a large increase in traffic concerns with 25,000 annual average daily trips in 1995. A few years later in 2002 traffic volumes had increased to nearly 37,000 annual average daily trips. This was partially eased with the construction of the exit 2 off ramp from the Everett Turnpike which constructed another bridge over the Merrimack river.



The traffic that Hudson continues to experience is partly due to where the bridges are located crossing the Merrimack. Currently the Bridges that span the river flow traffic from NH 3A, NH 102, and NH 111. Traffic studies done at the intersection of Chase Street/Ferry Street (NH 111)/Derry Street (NH 102) operates at Level of Service F during both the morning and afternoon peak hours. These results conclude that the intersections fail to be efficient at peak commuting hours causing longer traffic delays. Traffic has not increased much since 1995, thus meaning any additional growth in traffic was being diverted to the Sagamore bridge. The Sagamore bridge has since been updated in the past 5 years to accommodate this. The NRPC white paper notes that "there is sufficient capacity on the Sagamore Bridge to accommodate this traffic diversion". Although due to this new flow of traffic, there is now increase congestions in the southern part of Hudson including NH 3A, Wason Road and Kimball Hill Road (Circumferential Highway "White Paper", 2003).

Proponents of the CH plan argue its benefits

Town officials write in their recent grant proposal for the “Hudson Boulevard” that there is a critical need to reduce congestion and improve safety and quality of life within portions of Hudson by creating a new route around the congested portions of the Town (Town of Hudson, 2018). Ultimately the most recent version of the CH project plan highlights a reduction in traffic mitigation to Hudson at the urging of some local residents who have complained about road safety and traffic congestion.

Safety is also benefit as the grant proposal writes that existing traffic congestion leads to a number of crashes and near misses throughout both municipalities. It also leads to motorists using alternate routes to avoid the congestion that occurs along the state roads, as well as the main roadways in Hudson and Nashua. Vehicles are diverting through residential streets, including those adjacent to the proposed project.

Lastly, If the CH project proceeds to a full or partial build, Hudson as a community will benefit from temporary jobs for various construction-oriented companies in the area from logging operations, operation of heavy equipment road machines, and need of bridge architects to landscape engineers. Various permits through the state and federal agencies will be needed to be pursued and paid for as well. All said and done, the project could last anywhere from 5 to 10 years to complete in its entirety.

Opponents of the CH plan argue serious consequences

There is concern that if this project proceeds to a full or partial build it will not reduce traffic congestion significantly There is also concern that the CH has potential to attract out of town traffic and increase traffic congestion overtime as it would likely encourage new commuters and commercial freight transportation to utilize this new shortcut to Rt 111. There is concern that if a highway were to pass through a significantly undeveloped area of land, currently zoned as G1, it would open the doors to more development in Hudson and further compact its traffic congestion problems. That is in part why the goal of reducing traffic congestion is considered to be not significant.

Another category of relates to the agreement Hudson has entered into with the state of NH as part of the 10 year plan. The NHDOT has made it clear to the town that they reserve the right to construct the full four- lane, median divided, Circumferential Highway in the future should they choose to do so. This future two lane roadway would include grade separated interchanges and tolling infrastructure to pay for the construction and maintenance of the overall highway facility.

Where does the EPA stand on this?

In October of 1994, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a Proposed Determination To Prohibit or Restrict the Use of Wetlands and Other Waters as Disposal Sites for the Nashua-Hudson Circumferential Highway in Nashua, Hudson, Litchfield, and Merrimack, NH. An excerpt of the *direct impacts to wildlife*; the project as currently proposed by DOT would directly fill approximately 40 acres of wetlands. Destruction of wetland acreage correlates with loss of functions and values including habitat destruction, reduced primary and secondary productivity and alteration of hydrological functions. The CH would also cross 18 streams, causing the direct loss of 3,000 feet of stream bed, place 200 acres of roadway on top of fourteen different high yield aquifers, and eliminate 600 acres of undeveloped upland habitat. The EPA report also writes; all of the full build alternatives described in the EIS would cause similar long term impacts to the environment. Therefore, the



following summary is generally applicable to the other full build options as well. Ultimately the proposed project would disrupt high quality aquatic ecosystems already experiencing stress from encroaching development in southern New Hampshire. The large direct loss of wetlands would cause the death and displacement of wildlife and reduce water quality functions. Uncommon species would suffer the most, especially area sensitive animals, species dependent on riparian habitats, and smaller animals that are either less mobile or depend on vernal pools.

“FRED SALVUCCI, Brighton, MA: Fred is recognized for his masterful skill as a tactician and broker on behalf of the environment in transportation issues. His counsel and behind-the-scenes networking was an invaluable resource for EPA on the Nashua Circumferential Highway project (McIntyre, 16 From Massachusetts Receive EPA Awards, 1996).”

When a project of this magnitude is put forth, there are certain government agencies that are required to review the proposed plans. How each agency gets involved and at what point is beyond this report. The fact of the matter is that The Environmental Protection Agency was called in to review the CH build in the early 1990’s.

In 2018, Mark Kern was interviewed and shed some light on the process in which the EPA followed during those years. After the EPA reviewed the impacts the proposed highway would create, they determined that significant damage would occur to one of southern New Hampshire's largest open spaces. The decision was made to write a Letter of Intent to possibly invoke the 404(c) under the Clean Water Act (this is similar to a “veto” or power to reject plan). The Clean Water Act gave the EPA enough reason to authorize the 404(c) due to the projects primary and secondary impacts, proposed fragmentation of many open spaces and because this region has many prime vernal pools. Vernal pools are extremely important to the environment based on their ability to harbor much of the ecosystems life.

“Sometimes called woodland pools, these wetlands provide a unique habitat that supports a diverse collection of organisms. Most of these organisms rely solely on this habitat for their life cycles. Although ephemeral wetlands are frequently overlooked in the regulatory arena, these special types of habitat provide a multitude of benefits that are necessary to a healthy functioning forest ecosystem (Upper Susquehanna Coalition, n.d.).”

The first step in the 404(c) process is the Letter Of Intent.

This step is generated at a regional level. Fortunately, the CH project was put on hold soon after the release of the Letter Of Intent. Although technically the 404(c) process still required three more steps before it could be official complete. These steps would have included the Proposed Determination (State level), The recommended Determination (Regional level), and the Final Determination (federal level). Additionally, when the 404(c) is initiated, the Army Corp of Engineers cannot proceed with their work.

Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers

Intent to Prepare a Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Circumferential Highway Project—Nashua, Hudson, Litchfield, and Merrimack, New Hampshire

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The New England District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announces its intent to prepare a Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Circumferential Highway Project—Nashua, Hudson, Litchfield, and Merrimack, New Hampshire. The Corps of Engineers will be evaluating a permit application for the proposed work under section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the proposed action and the SEIS should be addressed to Mr. Frank DelGiudice, Senior Project Manager, New England District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751. Phone: (978) 318-8832.

“Based on existing information, we believe the highway will cause severe adverse impacts to the aquatic environment, contrary to EPA's 404(b)(1) guidelines. Thus, EPA recommends project modification or permit denial. As noted above, we consider the proposed project to be a candidate for a prohibition under EPA's §404(c) authority. We do not elect to initiate §404(c) proceedings at this time because of our confidence that the Corps will share our concerns and not grant a permit for this proposed project. We do believe, however, that it is prudent to alert your office, NHDOT, and others of the depth of EPA's concerns about the proposal” (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993). The report noted that the bulk of the projects purpose was to help divert traffic to and from the Nashua area. Due to this, bridges were proposed for northern access and southern access into Hudson. It was clear at the time that a major reason for the CH project was to encourage development and access to the lands in the southern region.

"The failure of the proposed circumferential highway to provide traffic congestion relief or meaningful air quality benefits underscores the failure of the applicant to adequately consider transportation demand management measures and smaller scale construction projects (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993)."

Along with the projects poor traffic mitigation efforts the EPA report went on to explain that that current proposal for the CH project would most certainly add to development in the area. Like the saying goes “if you build it, they will come”. By building an access road through one of southern NH’s largest areas of open space, it would most certainly allow the development of land locked parcels in the direct area, as well as provide easier access for development of the existing backroads currently in place.

“As proposed currently, the Circumferential Highway would be one of the most damaging highway projects proposed in the past decade in New England, resulting in unacceptable adverse environmental impacts. Construction of the Circumferential Highway would drastically alter aquatic systems flowing into the Merrimack River and cause severe adverse impacts to wetland functions and values, such as water quality protection and fish and wildlife habitat. While these aquatic systems are currently being stressed by development pressures, they remain of relatively high quality. By fragmenting a variety of interconnected wetlands, streams and uplands, the project would cause adverse impacts far beyond the foot print of the fill. Furthermore, the project would likely foster, or at a minimum accelerate, the rate of new development in the affected area, thereby leading to additional, secondary losses of wetlands (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993).”

Another argument the EPA strongly voiced was that the projects had very little alternative options and alternative research. The EPA criticized the plans and made it known that the applicant seemed to only favor the full build. Base on the regulations at the time, reasonable alternatives with proper factual backing needed to be provided with the projects application in order to determine which options had the most positive results with the least amount of environmental damage.

“EPA referenced both the council on Environmental Quality’s regulations implementing NEPA at 40 CFR 1502.14(a) which requires a rigorous exploration and evaluation of all reasonable alternatives, and the 404(b)(1) guidelines’ provision that only the least environmental damaging practicable alternative be permitted. Reasonable (NEPA) and practicable (404) alternatives are those which are available and feasible from the technical and economic standpoint; they are not limited to those that are desirable from the standpoint of the applicant (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993)”.

Strong Concerns from Regional Experts

EPA leads opposition to the CH project as the primary federal permitting agency, with authority derived from Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and EPA approval is based upon Section 404b(1) guidelines. Consequently, EPA's most keen attention is focused on the potential wetland encroachment as was evident from the 1984 version of the plan. In 1984, the plan was scrutinized with regards to the lack of consideration of alternatives for the Southern segment of the highway, the crossing of the Pennichuck Reservoir in the northern segment, and the absence of the specific mitigation plan for unavoidable wetland impacts. The US Army Corps of Engineers was subsequently required to further study alternate solutions where environmental resources, specifically the impacts to wetlands, are minimized. NH DOT initiated the revised DEIS evaluation process that specifically called for rigorous examination of all reasonable and practicable alternatives, as required by NEPA and the Clean Water Act 404.

When the rDEIS was published in 1993, by US Corps of Engineers and NH DOT, it was again met with the same intense scrutiny as its opponents found disappointment in the lack of rigorous examination of alternatives which fundamentally resulted in same exact conclusion as delivered in 1984. Despite the additionally solutioning for alternates less impactful to the wetlands and wildlife, The NH DOT once again announced its preferred plan as full build (alternate 8) the most environmentally destructive option. The same as their recommendation from 1984. In contrast, the US Corp of Engineers indicated it believes a combination of alternatives constitutes the least environmentally damaging full build option.

The EPA offered this statement in response to the rDEIS and recommendations by NH DOT:



"Based on the information included in the rDEIS, the EPA believes the proposed CH would violate the EPA's 404b(1) regulations for the discharge of dredged or fill material to waters of the US. Construction of any of the full build alternatives would cause or contribute to significant adverse impacts to the aquatic environment, including wetlands, in violation of 230.10 c of the guidelines. Moreover, the applicant has failed to adequately explore a full range of alternatives and has not overcome the presumption that there are less environmentally damaging practical alternatives. Hence, the project does not comply with the regulatory requirements pertaining to the analysis and selection of alternatives. Finally, as no mitigation plan has been prepared, the project does not comply with 230.10(d) of the guidelines. In

light of the avoidability and severity of the impacts, the EPA opposed issuance of the 404 permit and regards the proposal as a candidate for prohibition or restriction under the 404c of the Clean Water Act." (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993).

The NH DOT and its supporters acknowledge that the full build option (Alternate 8) is the most environmentally impactful option, however they contended that all new alternatives in the rDEIS would fail to meet project objectives to reduce traffic congestion in Nashua and Hudson business districts.

State agencies joined in opposition to the rDEIS with strong statements of concern. The State of NH, Fish and Game Department asked that the full build alternatives be completely dropped from any further consideration in light of the severe adverse effects to aquatic systems and wildlife habitats. In addition, The United State Department of Health and Human Services wrote in their statement that:

“We share concern expressed in the DEIS regarding protentional impacts to the Pennichuck water supply and/or watershed...the differences in traffic volume between the full build alternative are not significant, potential environmental and public health impacts should significantly influence selection of the preferred alignment for the proposed project” (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993).

Some of the fiercest opposition to this project came from Regional Entities such as the Audubon Society of New Hampshire and Conservation Law Foundation. Both agencies criticized the NH DOT and US Corps of Engineers failure to build a long-term strategy for reducing traffic congestion and explore a comprehensive range of transportation solutions.

Audubon ultimately responded in their letter with:

“The decision to build the NHCH, with the goal of reducing congestion, will result in serious disappointment and the necessity to do later what should be done now: develop a strategy for implementing transportation control measures (TCM), multi model system improvements, and the entire range of transportation demand management (TDM) and system management (TSM) opportunities... (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993)”

And they go to state that:

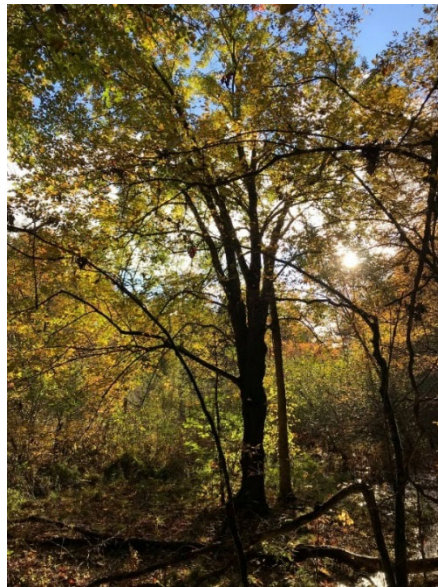
“The rDEIS seems determined to conclude that the very best way to spend \$180-200 million to relieve automobile traffic congestion in the Nashua-Hudson region is on a new four lane highway around the east side of the area. We must vigorously disagree. Since that analysis has not been done, there is every reason to believe that the \$200 million, spent in that way, instead of on the highway, would provide better mobility, a cleaner environment, and a higher quality of life generally for people in the Nashua-Hudson areas.....We opt for a No Build alternative” (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993).

The Conservation Law Foundation argued in their letter of opposition that the NH DOT full build solution represented an old solution of highway construction that has long since passed, now a new era has emerged, and this project would do right to follow it. Furthermore, the Conservation Law Foundation found that even if the full build was realized it was failing to meet its objectives to reduce traffic congestion, stating that:

“The environmental impacts of this project would be enormous. While creating only temporary, minor relief to traffic congestion, this new highway would encourage more dispersed development, more vehicle trips, and greater levels of ozone smog...although the stated purpose of the project is to relieve congestion in the Nashua and Hudson central business districts and improve east/west movement, it fails to significantly improve traffic in long run’ (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993).

Ultimately, The Conservation Law Foundation argued that what the NH DOT represent old solution that have been proven not to work:

The NHDOT's proposal to construct a new highway in the Nashua/Hudson area reflects that Departments engineering/highway bias and unwillingness to advance into a new era of transportation policy and planning...In past decades, highways were built without regard for their enormous environmental and human consequences. City neighborhoods were sacrificed to the highway's illusion of unlimited personal mobility. Wetlands were filled for highway construction. Degradation of waterbodies by toxic runoff from pavement continues. As highways have allowed traffic to reach further into suburban and rural areas, patterns of housing and commercial development have been dispersed, resulting in the loss of forests, wetlands and wildlife habitat. The greatest irony of the highway era was that it defeated itself; it is now recognized that "more highways do not bring mobility -- new highways tend to generate new congestion (Downs) Highways have attracted development away from cities and created new and longer vehicle trips, which in turn has generated ever increasing traffic, air pollution, greenhouse emissions, and an apparent need for more highways...we can no longer build our way out of traffic congestion (Downs) Redirect focus of transportation planning to moving people, not cars. Strategies to reduce single occupant automobile use are better -- and often more cost -effective -- at relieving congestion than expansion of highways. (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993)"



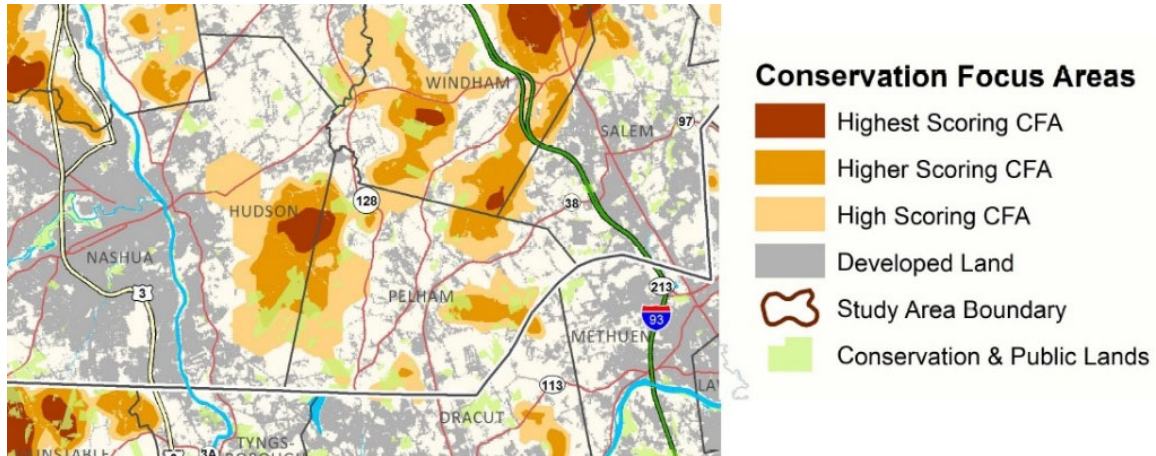
The same sentiments are found in the Hudson Master Plan from 2006, it was recommended that the Town of Hudson work with the NRPC and NH DOT to plan for and promote alternative modes of transportation.

Opposition at the local level came from neighboring towns like the Town of Merrimack Planning Board and Board of Selectmen, who both expressed dissatisfaction at the process to contrive less damaging alternatives and the lack of collaboration with neighboring towns to include accurate and fair information (Environmental Impact Statement, 1993).

There were 43 citizens who wrote letters of opposition in response to the rDEIS with varying subjects of concern. Citing a range reasons noise pollution, impact to water supply, impact of filling valuable wetlands, an actual *increase* in congestion, as well as serious quality of life issues with radical changes to the surrounding neighborhoods of the proposed corridor.

What happens if the project passes?

From an environmental standpoint, the concerns regarding the impacts to wetlands and wildlife habitat in the Southern Segment between NH3-A and NH 111 in Hudson are very serious. That area of Hudson contains one of the three remaining forest blocks greater than 500 acres in the NRPC region. The Air Quality Impact, Aquatic and Water Quality Impact as well as Wildlife impact remain to be an ever more pressing concern for Southern New Hampshire as these valuable resources see tremendous impacts from human development and population growth. In the Conservation Focus Area map above, nearly the entire area of the full build alternate option is in the highest and higher scoring of conservation focus.



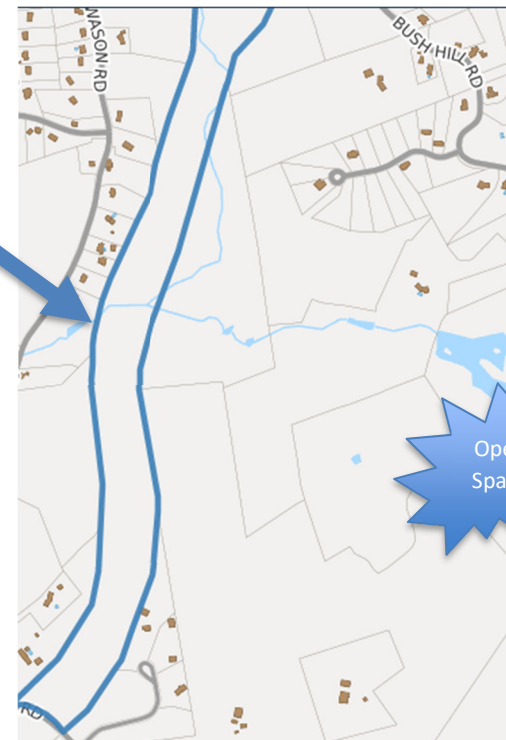
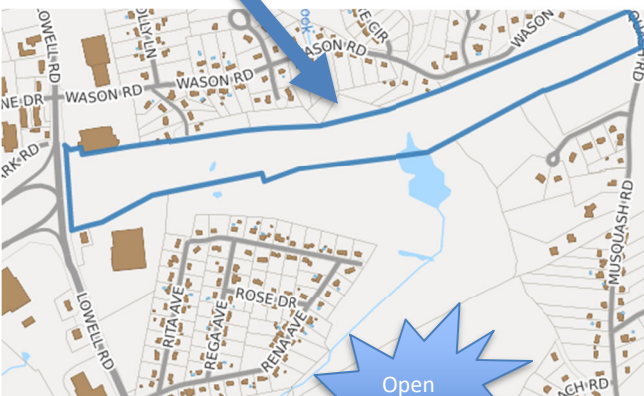
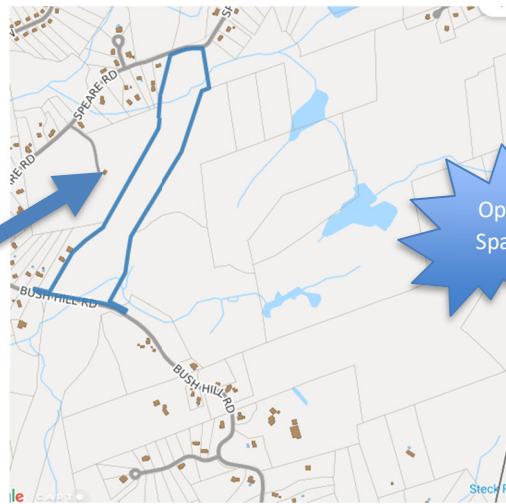
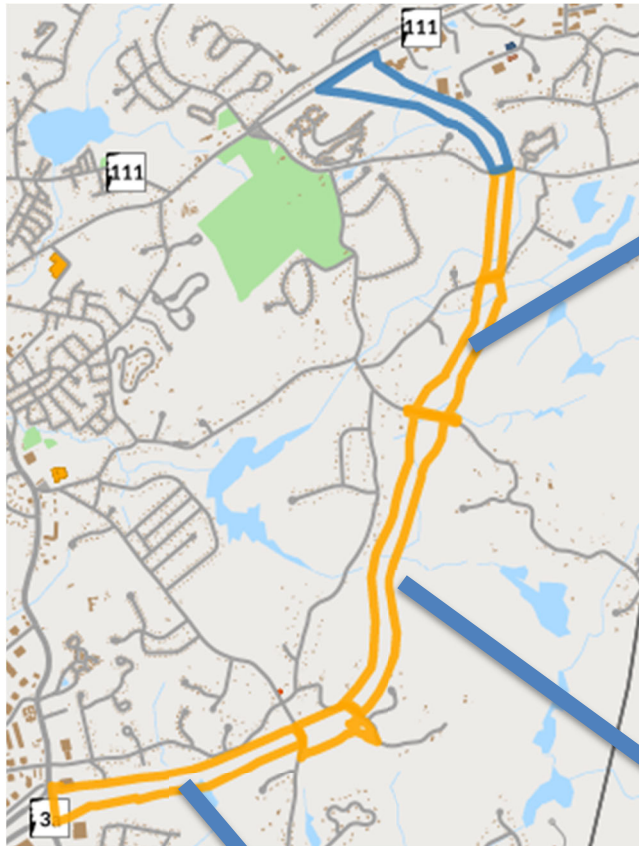
Moving forward, even if the build scope and designs of the CH project were to change slightly, the project will still require a new supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This wetland permit would then be commented on by the EPA. Although it's not clear at this point, many large projects in NH are required to have an Executive Order to be part of the Infrastructure process. This can take upwards of 2 years and usually an additional 6 months more for project permits to finalize. Furthermore, the state would need to submit a 303(d) report to the EPA which would outline any impaired water bodies affected by annual road salt (recorded as Total Maximum Daily Load – TMDL)

Suggestion 1: Protect the land as Open Space

If the town were to maintain the land as protected open space it would amount to approximately 273 Acres of land (Reference below). This would be the largest parcel of conservation land the town would own, and most likely one of the largest parcels in southern New Hampshire. Additionally, there are numerous private parcels abutting the CH land. Many of these private parcels are currently land locked and difficult to develop. These additional parcels, if protected, could add another 300-400 acres of open space in the region. With nearly 600-700 acres of open space, you can image the type of wildlife that could be sustained. That's close to one square mile of land!

Parcel 222-44 = 64 Acres
 Parcel 218-1 = 22.5 Acres
 Parcel 212-22 = 75 Acres

Parcel 194-5 = 37.5 Acres
 Parcel 186-14 = 19 Acres
 Parcel 169-15 = 55 Acres



“Overall, close to 90 percent of the surveyed residents replied that Hudson does not have enough open space, and 60 percent were willing to spend tax dollars on acquiring new lands. Aquifers/drinking water, ponds & streams, and quality of life were ranked of highest importance for land protection.”

New Hampshire currently ranks 9th nationally in terms of quality of life according to CNBC’s America’s Top States for Business 2013 rankings. This statistic comes from the fact that many high tech workers enjoy, not only a paycheck, but quality of life as well. One study noted in the “NH Return on Investment in Conservation Report” said that job attractiveness increased by 33 percent in a community where the quality of life was higher. What does this mean for Hudson? It means that by protecting our towns character through the restriction of large developments and the protection of our natural habitats, we can expect to see more high tech workers appreciate Hudson as a place to call home. 94% of college students and recent college graduates stated that the quality of life is the reason they plan to stay in NH. Further proving that if Hudson focuses on maintaining its quaint appearance, we will have a better chance at attracting new, young, educated talent.

The Concern

While reviewing the Hudson, NH Master Plan from 2006, you will see that Hudson ranks extremely low on the amount of conservation land currently protected compared to surrounding towns.

TABLE 1: Local Land Designations

	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Rec./Cons.	Institutional	Other	Vacant
Amherst	43%	2%	1%	12%	2%	5%	35%
Brookline	38%	2%	0%	9%	1%	3%	47%
Hollis	43%	1%	0%	19%	0%	0%	37%
Hudson	48%	3%	6%	5%	5%	7%	26%
Litchfield	40%	3%	0%	12%	3%	15%	28%
Lyndeborough	9%	0%	0%	2%	1%	3%	85%
Merrimack	39%	2%	5%	15%	1%	0%	38%
Milford	28%	2%	2%	7%	1%	0%	59%
Mont Vernon	43%	0%	0%	10%	1%	7%	39%
Nashua	40%	6%	6%	6%	10%	11%	21%
Pelham	50%	3%	1%	10%	1%	5%	31%
Wilton	29%	1%	2%	8%	2%	4%	55%
Region	37%	2%	2%	10%	2%	5%	42%

Source: NRPC GIS database.

“Hudson contains very few permanently protected conservation lands. Approximately 1,100 acres, or 5.9% of Hudson’s total land area of 18,773 acres is protected either through public ownership or private conservation efforts.”

Furthermore;

“Many of these parcels currently have no permanent means of protection... Research in the Assessing Department indicated that many of the Town-owned parcels in Hudson do not have deed restrictions for permanent protection as conservation land... The preservation of these parcels is of tremendous importance to the protection of watersheds, farms and forests, wildlife habitats, greenways, trails and scenic vistas in the Town. It is recommended that the Town take appropriate action to ensure that these parcels are permanently protected from future development or any adverse activities on the parcels.”

Protecting Hudson's Open space has positive impacts on all residents in more than one way. The "Trust For Public Land" association has stated that



"An economic analysis of the return on New Hampshire's investment in land conservation through a variety of state programs that funded land acquisition statewide, and found that every \$1 invested in land conservation returned \$11 in natural goods and services to the New Hampshire economy."

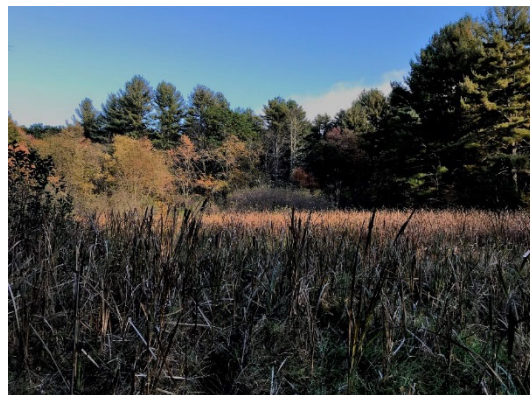
If a 100% return on investment is not enough, then maybe we should talk about the expense the town incurs when the land is developed. As noted in the "New Hampshire's Return On Investment In Land Conservation" report from 2014;

"Land conservation also saves New Hampshire communities money through avoided costs on expensive infrastructure and other municipal services required by residential property owners, such as schools, police, and fire protection. Studies of eleven New Hampshire communities compiled by the American

Farmland Trust found that open spaces and working farms and forests require on average only \$0.56 in services for every \$1 paid in taxes, while residential lands require an average of \$1.12 in services. New Hampshire communities recognize the importance of balancing growth and conservation in a way that maintains fiscal health."

There are many benefits to protecting the land as it is. It keeps the ground filtration characteristics of our local watershed intact, it can act as mitigation for major rain storms by absorbing the influx of water through the natural ponds, swamps and brooks while also acting as a counterbalance for other development in the area. As previously undeveloped land is being turned into residential homes throughout town, there is a need to balance that growth with permanently protected open space. The protected open space increases the value of homes in town due to the town being more desirable to live in. Additionally, it blocks the potential for more development which becomes a major expense to the town. As more residential homes are built, costs will continue to increase for things such as roadways, police, fire, school, town officials etc. By protecting this parcel, you are also secondarily protecting the other parcels currently landlocked as well, allowing for a massive habitat to be sustained.

"Protecting open space will preserve the quality of life in the town, allowing Hudson to grow without losing the integrity of the Town's natural resources. Hopefully, as a result, twenty or fifty years from now the Town will retain a substantial portion of that rural character which might have attracted residents to this area in the first place." (Cook, 2012)



[Suggestion 2: All Terrain Vehicle Park](#)



Although All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) traffic is forbidden on private property, conservation property and town land without expressed written permission, there are some ATV trails twisted throughout the CH project lands today. Although these activities are most certainly frowned upon, if not illegally; these trails may provide for an alternate option to the CH project moving forward. With a little structure, some liability coverage, and innovative leadership, there is most certainly some potential to capitalize on this outdoor activity in a responsible way and may even garner the potential for economic benefits.

Currently, there are very few, legal, ATV parks in the state of NH. The two major parks, that host legal ATV riding, are Jericho Mountain State Park in Berlin NH and Clough State Park in Weare NH. Although there are certainly other similar parks in the northern part of the state these are the most frequented by southern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts residents. These parks bring in a consistent flow of outdoor enthusiasts throughout the year. With the construction of proper parking lots for safe loading and unloading of vehicles, there is minimal stress on the local roadways and neighborhoods.

The vast number of trails provided on these parcels are nothing short of impressive. Backed by the Army Corp of Engineers, these trails include long bridges, rubber matted hill accents and gravel banked turns. If you have ever been to one of these parks you can't go without noticing the great lengths the Army Corp has taken to reduce environmental damage while still allowing outdoor lovers to appreciate nature. Although the Army Corp does conduct much of the trail design, there are countless other Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) groups and clubs that volunteer to maintain the parks as well. These clubs can get some of their funding from the state OHRV fees, as well as member dues, allowing for trail signs, repairs, and regrading when necessary.

"Riding Off Highway Recreational Vehicles (OHRV) (ATV's, UTV's and trail bikes) is an increasingly popular trail use in New Hampshire. Through the cooperative efforts of landowners, volunteer organizations, and the State, roughly 1200 miles of trails are open for summertime OHRV riding. The trail system includes several multi-use Recreational Rail Trails throughout the state that are owned/managed by New Hampshire., many that are part of the local OHRV club network, and an integral piece of the overall OHRV Trail System within the state. New Hampshire is also home to the largest interconnected trail network within the northeast, one of the largest in the country, Ride the Wilds. A national destination, this system affords riders access to restaurants, shops, gas, and other destinations, while allowing them to view the state's breathtaking scenery."
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/activities/ohrving>

In the past few years, Merrimac New Hampshire has had an interesting success in this recreational department. The Jonathan Simeone Memorial ATV park was donated and opened on a 26 acre parcel which includes recreational trails and a small terrain park for local riders to enjoy. In this case, the park is only accessible to town residents through the acquisition of a local transfer station sticker.

In order to understand how these parks operate, Chris Gamache from the New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources was interviewed for added clarification. The number one concern with many ATV parks is the liability to the town potentially faces with accidents. Mr. Gamache was quick to respond with legal reference to RSA508:14 / 212:34 as well as OHRV 212-A:5 / 215-A:5.

“Landowner Liability Limited – I. An owner, occupant, or lessee of land, including the state or any political subdivision, who without charge permits any person to use land for recreational purposes or as a spectator of recreational activity, shall not be liable for personal injury or property damage in the absence of intentionally caused injury or damage.”

To further ease residents about the potential liability concerns, the Parks and Recreation division within the New Hampshire Bureau of Trails has the ability to insure the property at a state level in order to relieve the town of any undue risks.

What is the benefit of this all? ATV trails will certainly cause less damage than a 2 or even 4 lane highway at a minimum to the surrounding environment. This same comparison can also be referenced in relation to noise pollution. Limited ATV traffic during reasonable operating hours will most certainly be less than a busy roadway with traffic lights and busy commuters. Maintaining legal OHRV/ATV trails means that there are state grants and even state OHRV funds that could be made available for maintenance and upkeep. With the potential to be one of the largest trail systems in southern New Hampshire, this option could very well increase revenues on surrounding businesses. Everything from gas stations, to breakfast restaurants and even small engine repair shops.

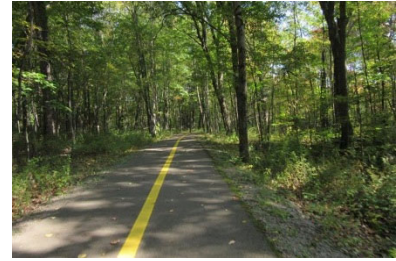
Today’s world of ATV riders seems to be changing from the past stereotypes. As these types of vehicles get more expensive, and registrations and fees become more necessary to ride; only individuals with a reasonable amount of free finances can participate. This means that a majority of organized riders are in their late 20’s and even into their 60’s. Structured charity rides with a few hundred riders can generate anywhere from \$10,000 to \$100,000\$ (Reference: The New England Classic Charity Ride for Cystic Fibrosis). These type of events can bring great tourism for any local community.



Note from the Author: In fact, it should be noted, for whatever its worth, that this writer grew up riding ATVs in the woods. Along with fishing and hiking, riding ATVs was one of the major reasons why I fell in love with the outdoors. My passion for the outdoors, and my appreciation for community service has lead me to dedicated much of my free time to protection open space and sharing the same experiences with others. Although ATV traffic can be seen in a negative light based on the possible environmental impacts, giving our future generations a reason to appreciation the environment, is certainly priceless.

Suggestion 3: Recreation trails

The addition of Benson's Park in Hudson NH has been an undisputed value-add to the surrounding community. Not only does it give regional residents a place to walk, play, meet, relax and enjoy the outdoors, but it increases the value of the surrounding area due to the fact that many people would love to live near such a beautiful place. What would be even better than a gorgeous park, a paved rail trail that could allow for even more recreational activity to and from the park.



A potential paved or unpaved recreation trail would allow an alternate mode of transportation for local residents to and from the park. This would not only alleviate the need for additional motor vehicle parking, but it would even be reducing commuter pollution. Furthermore, if the other end of the trail ended around commercial parking lot, it would allow for even more access to both outdoor recreational features. There is even potential to connect the recreational trail over the sagamore bridge from Nashua, which could be a way to decrease single occupancy motorist who could use this recreational trail system as a way to commute to and from work.

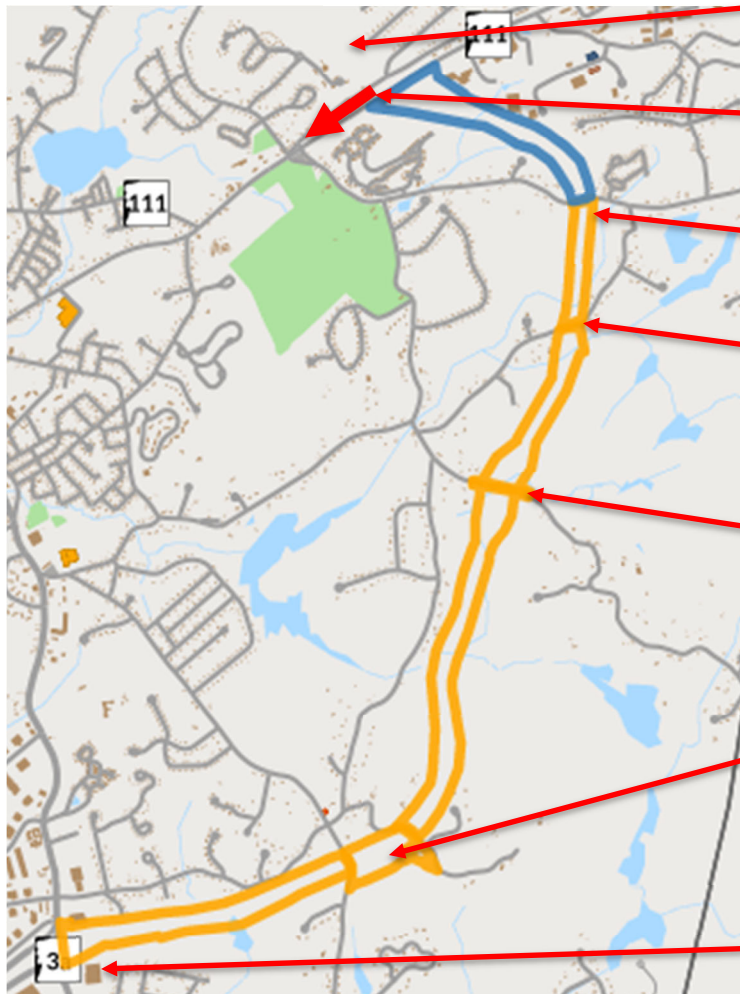
Unfortunately, there is not many businesses currently in the area in and around the proposed CH project land. In an action of compromise, it could very well be proposed that select sections of the proposed CH project land could be sold for specific commercial development. Business such as outdoor sports centers, breakfast restaurants, lunch stops, historical museums, and even trinket shops. If the Hudson Nh Planning Board was in agreement, they could also require that the construction of these commercial facilities would also have to help pay for some of the public trail amenities such as outdoor bathrooms or bike stands and even pavement sections. This would allow riders, walkers, and other similar outdoor lovers to enjoy some exercise while also contributing to our local commerce.

“**T**HREE NEW GIFT SHOPS HAVE RECENTLY OPENED, ANOTHER BIKE SHOP, A JEWELRY STORE, AN ANTIQUE AND USED FURNITURE STORE, A THRIFT SHOP, A WENDY'S RESTAURANT AND A PIZZA AND SANDWICH SHOP HAVE ALSO CROPPED UP...ALL THIS IS HAPPENING, AND ONLY WITH THE PROSPECT OF THE TRAIL OPENING IN JULY...THERE IS AN AIR OF EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION NOW WITHIN THIS COMMUNITY. SOMETHING CONNELLSVILLE HAS NOT FELT FOR MANY YEARS.”

— CHRIS WAGNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE GREATER CONNELLSVILLE CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE, PENNSYLVANIA

As a win-win for everyone involved:

- **Local residents:** Increased home values for access to said trail and ease of access into Benson's park. They will however need cope with the increase in foot and bike traffic in the area.
- **Town residents:** Will get the benefit of saving money on the alternately proposed CH high project. The will also see an increase in home value being in a town that appreciates open spaces and innovative new cultural developments. On the downside, a small increase in taxes may be necessary to help pay for the maintenance of such a park.
- **Town Officials:** Will be praised for initiating such a modern project that gives back to society. Hudson would be a prime example of how towns should prepare for the future by saving open spaces and helping the health of its local population. The town budget would also see an increase from the commercial taxes and the sale of a few small select parcels within the CH project lands.
- **Business Owners:** Will be able to be a part of one of the most innovative projects Hudson has ever seen. They will have access to a stream of outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers who would be more than willing to support the local economy as a “thank you” for letting them use the area.



Land set aside for the CH project which could extend the rail trail north into Litchfield

A short trail from the proposed CH parcel straight to Benson's Park for easy connect ability and access

One of the highest points in Hudson. A great area for a potential viewing tower and visitor center

A location on either side of the road for a small commercial business. Slightly restricted by water ways, might sustain a cute breakfast place nestled in the woods and rural area.

The crossing at Bush Hill has some prime area for small commercial buildings such as bike shops, sports store or even farmers market store

The widest section of the CH land. May sustain larger commercial buildings which could help pay for part of the trail and/or trail maintenance. Additional rail trail parking could be a potential as well.

The official rail trail would end at Walmart, Goodwill and Market basket area. This could bring more customers to these businesses. The trail could also allow users to continue on across the bridge into Nashua with proper street crossings.

The Economic Benefits of RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Studies are confirming that trails and green space are important community assets that can help spur economic development. From urban home buyers preferring to live along or near a trail to bicyclists and hikers making their way from town to town in a rural area, trails attract people and dollars.

TRAILS AS AN ECONOMIC BOON

Tourism and recreation-related revenues from trails and greenways come in several forms. Trails and greenways create opportunities in construction and maintenance, rentals (such as bicycles, kayaks, and canoes), services (such as shuttle buses and guided tours), historic preservation, restaurants, and lodging. Community leaders and planners are now using trails as important parts of overall strategies for economic revitalization and building and strengthening local businesses.

- On the Virginia Creeper Trail, a 34-mile trail in southwestern Virginia, locals and nonlocals spend approximately \$2.5 million annually related to their recreation visits. Of this amount, nonlocal visitors spend about \$1.2 million directly into the local economies.¹
- The 45-mile Mon River trail system in Morgantown, West Virginia, is credited by the Convention and Visitors Bureau for revitalizing an entire district of the city, with a reported \$200 million in private investment as a direct result of the trail.²
- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection Office of Greenways & Trails estimates an economic benefit of \$2.2 million annually from the 16-mile St. Marks Trail.³

PROPERTY VALUES

A National Association of Homebuilders study found that trails are the second most important community amenity that

potential homeowners cite when choosing a new community. Trails were cited by 57 percent of prospective buyers in a 2004 survey by the association, ahead of public parks and outdoor pools.⁴ Additionally, the study found that “trail availability” outranked 16 other options including security, ball fields, golf courses, parks, and access to shopping or business centers.

Those home-buyer preferences translate into increased property values and enhanced tax revenue for communities that incorporate trails into planning. In a study on the impact of trails on adjacent property values in Indianapolis, researchers found that the overall impact of trails on property values was estimated at more than \$140 million dollars.⁵

Other examples include the following:

- In Austin, Texas, increased property values associated with a single greenway were estimated to result in \$13.64 million of new property tax revenue.⁶
- The Shepard's Vineyard housing development in Apex, North Carolina, added \$5,000 to the price of 40 homes adjacent to the regional greenway – and those homes were still the first to sell.⁷
- Land adjacent to a greenbelt in Salem, Oregon, was found to be worth about \$1,200 an acre more than land only 1,000 feet away.⁸
- In Dallas, developers report that there is a 25% premium for properties adjacent to the Katy Trail.⁹

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RESOURCES

American Trails hosts a website at www.AmericanTrails.org that is a comprehensive online source for information regarding trails and greenways. They also have compiled a list of studies and publications regarding the economics of trails: <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/economics/index.html>.

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy maintains a website that also has a number of publications related to the economic impacts of trails. The site can be found at <http://www.railstotrails.org/index.html>.



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ATTACHMENT 1:

Kristen Sullivan While it is tough to pay for things we need, I am adamantly opposed to paying for this road which will take away from the open spaces in our town, leading to even more development, more traffic problems, and even more taxes.

Love · Reply · 1d · Edited

22

"Widening of Route 3A in Hudson has lessened the traffic congestion, too."
"According to the plans, the highway would go mostly through Hudson as well as sections of Litchfield and Merrimack, necessitating the seizure of homes and the filling in of wetlands. In 1993, an EPA report came up with an "intent to veto" the project, all but killing the full highway. Of particular concern has been the impact on Pennichuck Brook watershed, a series of ponds and creeks along the Nashua/Merrimack border."
I am fully against filling in NH wetlands and taking residents homes. After 49 years here, I would much rather support our schools with my hard earned money. If you don't like the traffic move further North and build your heart out. Don't screw up our little town with

Beth Partridge I totally agree. And did James tell you about the homes that the state will take to build the new four lane highway? Or the massive destruction of gorgeous land in NH? We live in NH for a reason. When you build a four lane highway through a town, eventually it changes the town. Exits will be built eventually, developers will build more, more strip malls, more gas stations, more pizza for all.

Like · Reply · 1d

6

Zach Lane My vote is NO! I own a home on Kimball Hill Road and this would probably help my commute to Route 3 and I still don't want it! I'd rather sit in traffic than destroy the wetlands and wildlife along that route. I'm very happy to hear that the majority agrees!

Like · Reply · 1d

8

Catherine Fraser-Dery Want to decrease the traffic problems, Put in a commuter rail in Nashua or Windham etc. the rail lines already exist been there for years can fix them and put them back into operation, without destroying more of nature. ~ And then you could have a rail line straight into Boston and having new lines run along already existing roadways....avoiding the congestion and lessen the impact on nature as well as lessening pollution etc. The solution is not to build more things but to use what is already there to fix a problem. ~

Like · Reply · 1d

10

Richard Bourbeau Heres my opinion im an outdoorsman and a electrical contractor to much development and i dont care if it saves your commute you dont like your commute move leave the land alone

Like · Reply · 22h

4

Fred Giuffrida Then stop over developing. This is only going to make the town worse.

Love · Reply · 1d

9

Charl Oakley If we build this, the town will grow. Traffic will get worse. Trust me, I moved out of a town that was smaller than Hudson that had a bypass built and the town exploded in growth with green space devoured by developers. All within 20-25 years. If you ... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 1d · Edited

5

Lyndsay Nicole Yes, yes, yes!! There are already so many wooded areas of town being torn down for more developments. It feels like we're losing the Hudson I've always known and loved! 😞

Like · Reply · 1d

8

Sheryl Drouin Gaudette Lyndsay Nicole I totally agree with u I moved here for the nice forest. Now everywhere I look developments r being put up & 3a is starting to feel like 101a in Nashua with all the lights.

Like · Reply · 1d · Edited

4

adage is so fitting "If you build it, they will come."

6

Tammy Anstey Croft I agree, we have so much wildlife across the street from my house (I'm on copper hill). The trails go on and on, and there a lot of people that use them. This goes through, I will never be able to sell my home

Like · Reply · 1d

3

Sandy Polvere Russo No - stop building condos and homes in every available spot in Hudson. All these new residents bring in one, two or three more cars.

Like · Reply · 1d

8

David Long My vote would hinge on one aspect of this.
Is this TRULY an attempt at road decongestion - like the Broad Street Parkway? Or is it an excuse for more development?
If they keep the 'boulevard' at JUST that - a connector from 111 to 3A and the highway, I'm for it.
If it's an excuse to sell off more tracts of land and succumb to the phenomenon of "induced demand", I'm against it - because we'll be right back where we started before too long.

Like · Reply · 23h

1

Richard Bourbeau Not trying to be disrespectful or a ——— i just disagree on destroying more land for convenience and greed and it would also def be sold to builders as well its a town not a city lets keep it that way

Like · Reply · 22h

4

Mark Scanlon I hear ya..we've lived here 20 years. Planning is horrible. All of a sudden new developments are popping up.

Like · Reply · 21h

1

Tammy Anstey Croft Daniel Hoagland I agree, the whole reason we bought the property and built in this spot, was for the view, the woods, and peace. So our taxes will go up and the property value would definitely go down, replacing the woods with another lowell road.

Like · Reply · 3d

1

Catherine Fraser- Dery It appears MANY do not want it and frankly want what we have left of the woodland saved. I live off kimball Hill on the proposed route....Have for over 30yrs.... I do not want a highway running in my backyard NO and my neighbors do not either. As seen in the many responses seen here on this thread. There are other choices then putting a highway through my neighborhood and destroying what little is left, Shepards Hill was built taking acres upon acres of land away. Driving our beautiful animals out. We used to have deer in the woods behind my home, wild turkeys, no more, porcupines, foxes, and many other beautiful animals, all gone. By the way James what area of town do you live in? How are you going to be effected by this highway? Does it come through your backyard? It is the WRONG choice for Hudson... Maybe you can sell it to Nashua they already lost all their green space minus Greeley Park, all that is left over there pretty much, they have streets named for trees since the trees are now long gone. We don't want that for Hudson.

Like · Reply · 2h · Edited

Danny Carlo I'm against it simply for the fact that it's destroying tons of land, that virtually will never be restored. This isn't the next Lawrence, Nashua or Lowell. Make due with what we have; it's plenty.

Like · Reply · 3d

Danny Carlo They are proposing a minimum of a 75ft footprint (wide). That's absolutely devastating to the existing wildlife and natural balance. A housing community was put up in my own backyard before we moved out. we had deer that would come right up to the house, and I loved getting pictures on my trail camera. After construction started, we never saw another creature again. They tore down so many trees that used to line my old backyard.

Like · Reply · 3d

Mel Gannon 🤔 Add to our taxes or possibly build a Toll. Toss in all kinds of Destruction. drop in a lump of the Construction chaos. As the mixture comes to a boil you see the Inhabitants and zoning issues rise to the surface and pop. My question is. Will whipped cream and a cherry come with that S**T sundae?

Haha · Reply · 3d

Zach Lane For the record, I'm against this project. I'm against destroying the woodlands and displacing wildlife. I'm against raising tax dollars to pay for it. I will vote no. The residents of Hudson need to do a better job of getting to the polls and actually cast votes against these concepts. Voting no on Facebook is one thing. Actually going to vote is another thing. Hudson's poor voting attendance record is inexcusable.

Like · Reply · 3d

Charl Oakley James I know you mean well and want what is best for the town but check out Londonderry and that huge new development if you need a closer example. Check out Merrimack and other towns that have exploded in unrestrained growth all in the name of progress. Yes, James the road will solve traffic for all of 3 months and then we will be back at square one with more people, and traffic. Then the next time we take a breath another bond for the town to build more schools for the kids, etc. etc. I could go on and on. Boom, there goes our property taxes and people will be forced to sell because they can't afford the property taxes. All this would happen because a bunch of people thought only \$300 more a year in taxes wasn't so bad. Hudson is a sweet spot in a sea of very high property taxes, look next door to Windham and their very high tax rate. This will hurt current residents on fixed incomes who helped make this town great. I think we can all agree Hudson is the best town and we all want what is best for our current residents.

Like · Reply · 1d

Brandon Allen Is this the ravine at the top of wason road? I hate to see the rapid deforestation taht has been happening, especially in Londonderry if any of you have seen.

I have been walking the trails at the top of trigate near the two towers for 10 years, it will be an arrow through my heart to see this land develop any further

Like · Reply · 4d

ATTACHMENT 2:

**CHAPTER 358
HB 2018 - FINAL VERSION**

15Mar2018... 0806h
15Mar2018... 0888h
05/03/2018 1807s
05/03/2018 1824s
05/03/2018 1932s
23May2018... 2049-CofC
23May2018... 2116-EBA

2018 SESSION

18-3034
06/01

HOUSE BILL **2018**

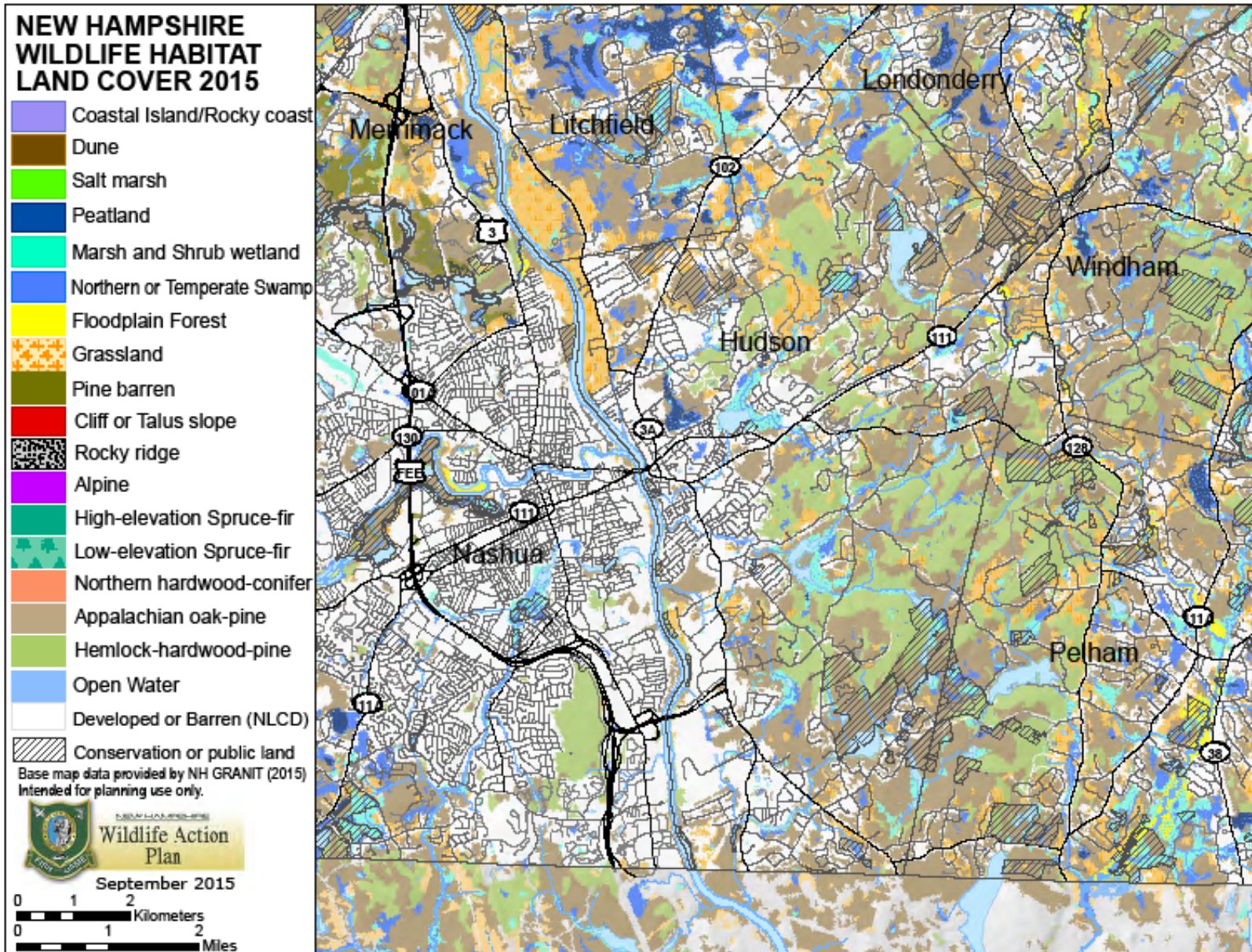
AN ACT relative to the state 10-year transportation improvement program, establishing a committee to study the removal of the Merrimack tolls, and establishing a committee to study driveway permitting.

SPONSORS: Rep. McConkey, Carr. 3

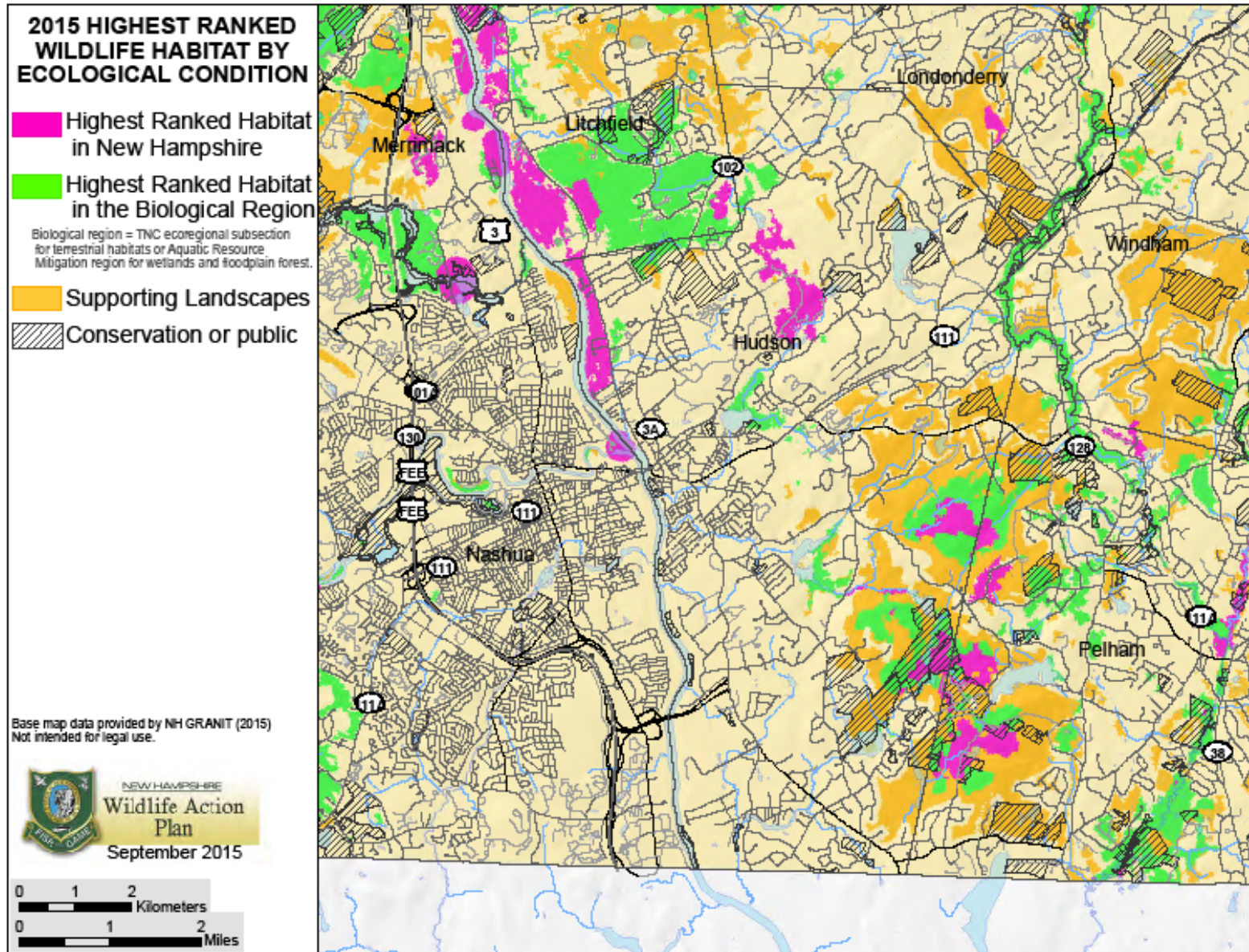
COMMITTEE: Public Works and Highways

358:19 Department of Transportation; Town of Hudson. The department of transportation is authorized to work with the town of Hudson to plan, engineer, and construct a roadway compatible with turnpike standards within the southern portion of a circumferential highway right-of-way between N.H. Route 3A and N.H. Route 111 in Hudson. Such authority shall remain in effect until June 30, 2022. Planning, engineering, and construction shall be funded solely with town funds.

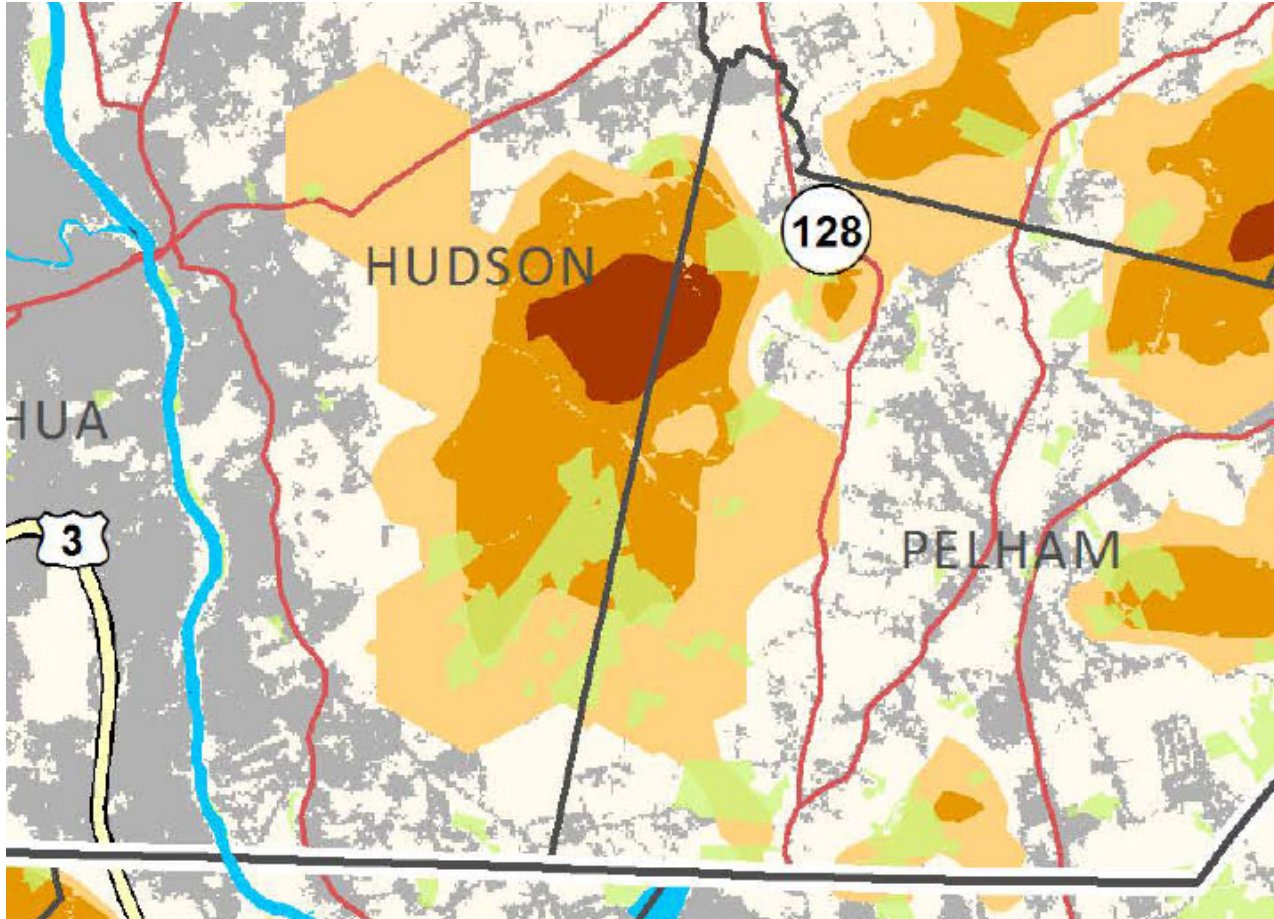
ATTACHMENT 3:



ATTACHMENT 4:



ATTACHMENT 5:



Conservation Focus Areas

-  Highest Scoring CFA
-  Higher Scoring CFA
-  High Scoring CFA
-  Developed Land
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Conservation & Public Lands

ATTACHMENT 6:

Most Recent Media Happenings



“CHRIS WILLIAMS, Nashua Telegraph, Nashua, N.H.: Chris's insightful daily coverage of the Nashua Circumferential Highway project enabled his readers to get the true story and thereby be informed participants in the environmental review process for the project. (McIntyre, EPA, 1996)“

In 2012, the Telegraph reported that Hudson was contemplating the probability of partnering with a local developer to develop the CF highway. This could allow for a sharing of the costs associated with the build. Cashell was noted as saying “It’s going to have to take a huge commitment on the towns part, along with the private section”. Thomas Monahan, a local developer, said he would like to see the traffic plan work for the 3A corridor. Hudson’s Town Planner at the time mentioned that the 450 acres of the Green Meadows golf club could be developed as well. The article also noted that the preliminary study that Nashua Regional Planning Commission conducted, estimated a “ballpark” price of 38 million dollars (Place, 2012).

Hudson - Nashua: East-West Connectivity

Project History:

- East west travel across the Merrimack River has been under discussion and study for 50 years.
 - 1st item of 1st meeting of NRPC developing a crossing of the Merrimack River
- The Circumferential Highway project:
 - Undergone extensive study and permitting through the regulatory process
 - Carried through several revisions of the Ten Year Plan
 - 2003 - 2012 Plan included \$124 Million in turnpike funds for the project
 - Removed from the Ten Year Plan in the 2007 update

In 2013, reports from the Union Leader highlighted that “town officials are working to breathe new life into a plan to build a byway between route 3 and 111”. At the time, Rick Maddox, chairman of the Board of Selectmen in Hudson stated that “traffic is already a pressing problem in town because of the potential for the construction of large industrial parks off Rt 102”. Maddox further said that “things are definitely going to get busier in the next few years”. Selectmen Roger Coutu said a huge priority now would be to “convince the state to take a serious look at the route 3 and route 111 corridor”. Coutu continued by saying “right now, I think it would be best for the town if our legislative contingent could meet with the DOT and go over facts and figures” (Garofolo, 2018).

“I move for the Planning Board to forward a letter to the Board of Selectmen, expressing their appreciation for the work the Conservation Commission conducted at the request of Board of Selectmen Chairman, Richard Maddox, and pertaining to the environmental issues of concern regarding the Conceptual Circumferential Roadway; and further, that said letter make reference in support of the Conservation Commission’s recommendations. In particular, that a thorough environmental assessment be conducted by a qualified party(ies) within the roadway corridor, relative to determining the environmental feasibility of constructing the subject road.” (Staff Report, 2014).

The thought to re-initiate the CH highway plan hit the public yet again in March of 2018. On March 12th numerous residents from the Burns Hill Road area came before the Selectmen to discuss traffic concerns. Robinson Smith, a resident of the Burns Hill area for 14 years said that “I’ve only seen the

progress get worse...It has been a continuous barrage of vehicles use the road as a cut through". He further commented that "we need a sustainability plan otherwise somebody will get hurt". Board members proclaimed worries about the influx of vehicles on major roadways due to things such as mixed-use residential complexes with more than 200 units under construction currently (Guilmet, 2013). Although the conversation touched upon various issues such as automobile speed, police enforcement, and reduced speed limits, the Board of Selectmen recommended that the residents reach out to the New Hampshire Department Of Transportation, the various state representatives in the area and even the governor. They inferred that many of these concerns would have been handled by the CH highway helping to alleviate the traffic in southern Hudson and thus the safety concerns of the residents. The board said "there is only so much they can do" and that the "state dropped the ball" in reference to the CH highway being removed from the states 10 year plan.

" this past fall we have been trying to work with the Governor's office to reopen if you will to get the circumferential highway back on the Master Plan to really address the overall traffic situation in the south part of Hudson. It's only going to get worse when across the bridge completes all those apartments (Board of Selectman , 2018). "

In April 2018, the Area News Group posted an article about the latest developments with the CF highway. The article went on to mention that the current Board Of Selectmen Chair, Robert Coutu, went to concord to push for the CF highway plans to be part of the states 10 year plan. A feat that has yet to be accomplished in the past. This would bring the project from simply conversation, into possible action. The article did make note of the heavily contested past of the CF highway in regard to the seizure of homes, impacts to the watershed, and backfilling of prime wetlands (Krzeminski, 2018).

In a October 2018 Board Of Selectmen's meeting, additional details started coming to light. It was clarified that the project was estimated at 45 million dollars with a small possibility that 25 million dollars may come from the federal government as a grant. The size of the highway was slated as a two-lane road with the possibility of expansion to 4 in the future. There would be a need for an updated NRPC traffic study to support the current need for the project and confirm its important back on the states 10-year plan. Although the project did make the 10-year plan in 2018 yet again, it was only added with strict stipulations that the town would incur the costs of construction. The town financial department also contributed to the conversation by stating that the average Hudson household would pay an increased 117\$ the first year and 336\$ for the next 29 years. Future costs would also include maintaining the road on top of construction costs (Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting, 2018).

"358:19 Department of Transportation; Town of Hudson. The department of transportation is authorized to work with the town of Hudson to plan, engineer, and construct a roadway compatible with turnpike standards within the southern portion of a circumferential highway right-of-way between N.H. Route 3A and N.H. Route 111 in Hudson. Such authority shall remain in effect until June 30, 2022. Planning, engineering, and construction shall be funded solely with town funds." (New Hampshire Legislative Assembly, 2018 Session).