

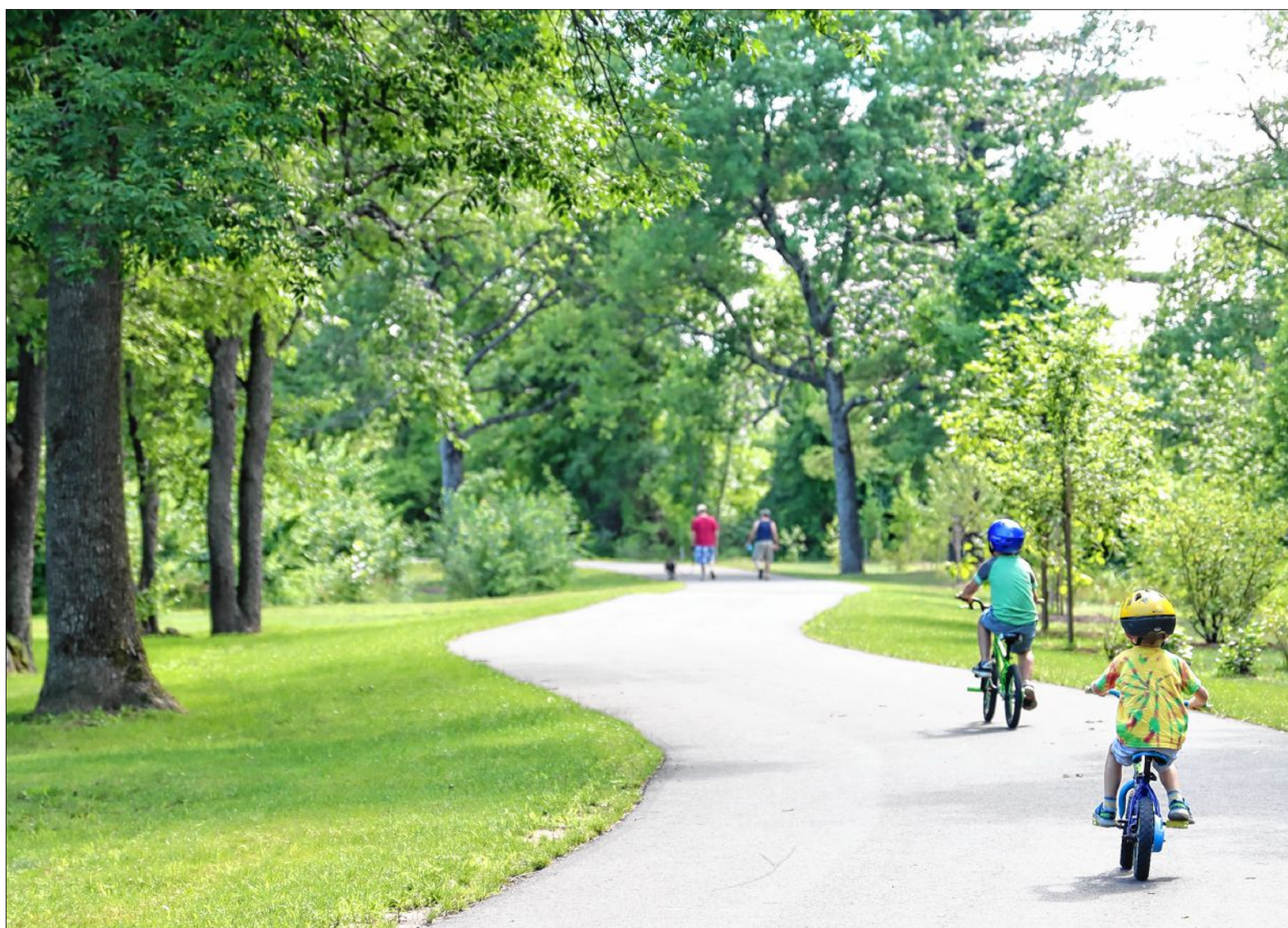
NEWS YOU WANT TO KNOW

This is the right time to think big on I-93 changes

Concord has been envisioning improvements since the 1990s

The deadline to come to a consensus on the final design for I-93 improvements through Bow and Concord is fast approaching. The City and NH DOT have been working closely to reach that consensus in a way that can meet the needs of the city, while improving driver safety, and eliminating the weekend logjams that have been getting worse over the years. After many years of delay, the recent influx of federal infrastructure dollars has moved this project to the front burner.

The Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce continues to stay engaged and has been weighing in for decades. The widening project has the potential to impact Concord in a very big way, and can be either very positive or detrimental to the city. The "Concord 2020" initiative (tagline, "Make no little plans") took a deep dive into this project, beginning in the late 1990s. Years later under the leadership of local architect Chris Carley, the Chamber conducted a community charette envisioning ways to improve Concord's image from I-93 through improved landscaping, strategically placed decorative fencing, creative use of lighting, and other ideas. That initiative was dubbed "Concord's New Front Door". The city, the Chamber and many others have been participating in public forums hosted by NH DOT as new design iterations have emerged. The Merrimack River Greenway Trail has been incorporated into the plan. The right-of-way has been established, giving the city a much better idea of the possibilities for redevelopment of the "Opportunity Corridor", which includes the land between downtown Concord and the highway from Exit 12 to Exit 16. The full scope of the project includes improvements from Exit 1 on I-89 through I-93 North just past Exit 15, and extends down I-393 through Exit 1. The current plan pays particular attention to the many interchanges from Exit 12 through Exit 15. There are several dangerous "bob and weave" situations when entering or exiting I-93. Under the current design, the highway itself will go from four lanes to six lanes, with improved



Christine Vigneault, Trustee, FMRGT

The I-93 expansion project includes plans to create a connection between the Merrimack River Greenway Trail and Concord's downtown.

feeder lanes at the interchanges.

The Chamber Board of Directors received a preview of this project at a special meeting on August 9, which allowed the Chamber to share our goals for this major development and ask questions. The Chamber has consistently weighed in on three significant issues. These include:

- Meaningful access to the Merrimack River from downtown Concord.
- Improving Concord's image from I-93, making the city a more attractive stop for visitors.
- Improved way-finding and signage, directing travelers into Concord for shopping, dining, entertainment, etc.

At a public hearing on November 14, the City Council heard testimony from a number of groups and individuals, including the Chamber. A common thread was the desire to create a meaningful connection between downtown Concord and the river. A "deck" concept, which would provide both

a green space as well as a bridge access over the highway to the river from downtown, has been discussed since the "Concord 2020" initiative. This has been done in other communities. It is an ambitious concept, but one which the Chamber believes should be fully vetted. The City Council has authorized the City Manager to seek requests for proposals from consultants regarding a feasibility analysis and potential design of the deck concept.

The DOT encourages businesses to stay informed and involved in this project, and share feedback during a short comment period. Permitting is slated to begin this year, and bridge improvements will begin soon (there are four red listed bridges within this project's boundaries). Major construction is slated to start in 2026.

There are still many details that need to be ironed out. As this project progresses, DOT and the City of Concord will host public meetings for community input. The

Chamber will continue to stay engaged, advocating for businesses and community members who will be impacted by this project. One of our goals is to keep our members informed. You can learn more by monitoring the project website at i93bowconcord.com.

This major development will reshape Concord and impact the city for decades. The Chamber is excited to help businesses be a part of this planning process, and help key leaders make decisions that will make a lasting mark on New Hampshire's capital city.

Look for News You Want to Know here in *The Concord Monitor* once a month.

Incorporated in 1919, New Hampshire's state capital chamber of commerce—the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce—develops economic opportunities, strengthens the business climate and enhances quality of life in the Capital region.

Holiday Business After Hours with the Chamber and CYPN

Monday, December 12 from 5:30-7 p.m.

The Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce and Concord Young Professionals Network (CYPN) are joining forces for their annual holiday networking party! December's Business After Hours takes place at the Grappone Conference Center, which will be sparkling with holiday décor and a special light display from The New England Holiday Light Co. The Duprey Companies will present a spread of festive treats for you to enjoy while networking. The best part? We're waiving the registration fee so that you can support the Capital Region Food Program with a monetary gift! Learn more and register online at concordnhchamber.com.

Welcome New Members!

Cents and Balance, LLC; Complete Clean LLC; Launch NH; LegalShield; Movement Mortgage, Lisa Anderson NMLS 640460; NH Future Business Leaders of America; Pinnacle Mortgage Corp.; Project S.T.O.R.Y.; R.A. Benson Associates, LLC; Sanborn Diversity Training Solutions, LLC. Learn more about these organizations on the Chamber's online Membership Directory at concordnhchamber.com.

Support Chamber members

Welcome to a partnership between the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce and the Concord Monitor. Published at least once per month, these pages feature exclusive news and updates from the Chamber to the Greater Concord community. It's also a great way for readers to connect with Chamber members that are invested in the community and the economic health of the Capital Region.

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