



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Highway  
Administration**

**Massachusetts Division**

55 Broadway, 10th Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02142

April 27, 2007

Mr. Bernard Cohen  
Secretary  
Executive Office of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza  
Boston, MA 02116-3969

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Merrimack Valley  
Planning Commission

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-MA

***Subject: Andover/Wilmington/Tewksbury  
Proposed Lowell Junction Interchange***

Dear Secretary Cohen:

As you are aware, our Washington Headquarters Office has been reviewing the subject Interchange Justification Report (IJR). By Memorandum dated April 5, 2007 (copy attached), added access to Interstate 93 in the Lowell Junction area has been conditionally approved on an engineering and operational analysis basis.

It should be noted that of the three preferred alternatives (Alternatives 3, 4 and 9) presented in the IJR, only Alternate 3 meets all of the criteria contained in the FHWA Interstate Access Modification Policy. As currently presented, Alternatives 4 and 9 do not fully meet the FHWA policy criteria due to current local land use and zoning issues which preclude local access (connection to a public road) on the west side of I-93 (Alternative 4), or requiring the unreasonable, circuitous routing of local traffic desiring to utilize the interchange (Alternative 9).

To address these issues, additional coordination between the impacted stakeholders is required to further develop a mutually acceptable design concept(s) that meets local and regional planning needs. We believe this can be best accomplished during upcoming planning and environmental processes should you choose to move this project forward.

For your information, the specific steps required to advance this interchange project are as follows:

- 1) The interchange project must be included in the regional and statewide transportation plans of the affected Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) – Boston, Merrimack Valley and Northern Middlesex. The applicable provisions of 23 CFR 450, as recently revised, shall apply.
- 2) The transportation conformity (Air Quality) requirements of 40 CFR parts 51 and 93 shall be fulfilled.

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3) The requirements of 23 CFR 771 (National Environmental Policy Act of 1969) will need to be addressed. Based on our review of the preferred alternatives presented and in consideration of any newly developed interchange concepts as a result of the additional stakeholder coordination envisioned above, the evaluation of environmental impacts and the assessment of potential mitigation measures should be accomplished under a jointly developed (State/Federal) environmental document.

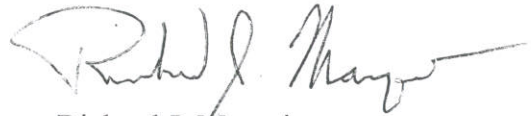
Only upon satisfactory completion of the above, can we grant final approval to the new interchange in the Lowell Junction area.

Also, the IJR highlights the fact that I-93 will experience significant traffic congestion in the design year even with the proposed interchange and additional traffic lanes in place. We recommend that additional transportation system improvements and/or expanded capacity be further explored to address the projected deficient operation of the Interstate as part of the overall metropolitan planning process.

We look forward to working with you and the staff at MassHighway on this important transportation infrastructure improvement project.

Sincerely yours,

Stanley Gee  
Division Administrator



By:

Richard J. Marquis  
Assistant Division Administrator

Cc: Commissioner Luisa Piaewonsky w/attachment  
Mr. David Anderson – MHD Chief Engineer w/attachment  
Mr. David Mohler - Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization w/attachment  
Mr. Dennis DiZaglio - Merrimack Valley Planning Commission w/attachment ✓  
Mr. Robert Flynn - Northern Middlesex Council of Governments w/attachment

Attachment



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of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

*Rick King John*

# Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION:** Massachusetts- Added Access  
I-93 Lowell Junction, Tewksbury

Date: April 5, 2007

From: Frederick G. Wright, Jr.  
Executive Director

*FGW*

To: Stanley Gee  
Division Administrator  
Cambridge, MA

*SG 4/17/07*

*[Signature]*

In Reply  
Refer To: HIPA-1

The Interchange Justification Report for the subject project transmitted by your memorandum to Mr. King Gee, dated November 16, 2006, supplemented by your memorandum to Mr. Dwight Horne, dated March 20, has been reviewed. This interchange is proposed to reduce congestion at adjacent interchanges, improve traffic operations on local roads, and expand development opportunities.

Based on an engineering and operations analysis, the addition of a trumpet interchange (Alternative 3) on I-93 to serve Lowell Junction is acceptable. If there are no major changes in the proposed design, final approval may be given upon completion of the environmental process. We concur with your recommendation that the future projected deficient operation on I-93 be addressed through investigation of transportation system improvements and/or expanded capacity, as part of the metropolitan planning process.

Should you have any questions, please contact William Prosser, at (202) 366-4853.

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