



January 11, 2021

William Cass, P.E.
Assistant Commissioner
New Hampshire Department of Transportation
PO Box 483, 7 Hazen Drive
Concord NH 03302-0482

RE: NH Route 110/Urban Compact Conversation

Dear Assistant Commissioner Cass:

On behalf of the City of Berlin, the Berlin Industrial Development & Park Authority (BIDPA) and the Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce (AVCoC), we are collectively writing to share the recommendation of each of our boards to NHDOT in follow up to the recent and on-going conversations between the City of Berlin and NHDOT about Route 110. Each of our organizations have a lot invested in the development of Route 110, especially near Jericho Mountain State Park. Collectively, we feel strongly that expanded access for ATV traffic will help spur further economic development along the Route 110 corridor that is vital for the Berlin economy and we think there is a simple solution that warrants thoughtful consideration by NHDOT.

We have spent a considerable amount of time listening to landowners and developers in the area near the entrance to Jericho Mountain State Park. After many conversations, lots of back and forth about responsibilities and calls for action, we believe there is something that can be done in a more efficient manner that will allow for the much-needed economic development efforts underway to continue in a timely, responsible and safe manner. A key component to being able to facilitate development of the Route 110 corridor involves ATV access and the existing speed limit which is described further below. While revisiting the speed limit on this stretch will facilitate additional development, it is important to recognize that many of the access requests received have been from landowners within this short distance who are seeking direct access to the state park from their properties.

Currently, the speed limit changes to 50 miles per hour a little less than one half mile from the Park's entrance. The City of Berlin, BIDPA and AVCoC are respectfully proposing that NHDOT move the current 50 mile per hour speed limit sign from its current location near Dalton Mountain Motor Sports to just west of the entrance to Jericho Mountain State Park.

It is approximately 2,600 feet and opens up access to several landowners who have been seeking direct access to Route 110 and to Jericho Mountain State Park. BIDPA is willing to pay for the costs associated in infrastructure changes for new signage and costs to move and install such signage associated with this change. AVCoC, which has a large membership in the Berlin/Gorham area, as well as a large social media following of not just its membership but also the OHRV community, is willing to help with the community outreach in educating the community (both the OHRV and the non-OHRV) to the changes and help get the word out to make the transition a smooth and above all a safe one. We feel this small adjustment can make a huge difference to the Berlin economy and in



advancing on-going development opportunities while still being facilitated in a safe and responsible manner.

Further, if the NHDOT is amendable to such a modification, it is important to recognize that this proposal is not necessarily in lieu of the original discussion involving the City of Berlin taking ownership of this stretch of road. Rather, we view this as the first of several milestones that would be documented between the parties and reviewed along the way with an intention of the City of Berlin taking responsibility for the roadway once both the City and NHDOT have reached an agreement satisfactory to both parties. We would ask for a commitment from NHDOT that access by OHRV's would continue until such a time as the City takes responsibility.

We know there are multiple of factors to consider when speed limits are set, and along Route 110 these include truck traffic, road design and the fact that this is a major east-west highway that moves many different types of traffic and travelers. We also know Route 110 has an unusually large amount of right-of-way width and good sight distance in most areas along the roadway including this area. We have watched concessions made along major roadways in communities around us to move ATV traffic to different areas of a community that put ATV traffic in with heavily traveled, high volume roadways – so we know that with strong traffic controls, community education and a commitment to safety, there are ways to make new traffic patterns possible for the betterment of a community's wellbeing. We ask that NHDOT consider this proposal to see if we can achieve the same here in Berlin.

We have developed this proposal with direct feedback from the business community and those developers and landowners who have been prompting the City to take action and they feel positive about the collaboration. The City of Berlin, BIDPA and AVCoC thank you for your careful consideration and stand ready to help make this change reality. We look forward to working with NHDOT to design a practical solution that meets the needs of all stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Mayor Paul Grenier, City of Berlin

Michael Caron, Chair, Berlin Industrial Development & Park Authority

Bronson Frizzell, President, Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce