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The 20 mile stretch of I-93 being expanded is coming along “one exit at a time” - by Hugo Overdeput

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The 20 mile stretch of I-93, between exits 1 and 5, that is being expanded is coming along “one exit at a time.”

The I-93 widening project has triggered an economic revitalization of the area resulting in the proposal and development of several major projects along the interstate, starting with exit 1 at the New Hampshire/Massachusetts state line.

The Town of Salem is buzzing about Tuscan Village, which is located on the former Rockingham Race Track. This mixed-use development, between exits 1 and 2, is maximizing the opportunities provided by the new Large Scale Redevelopment Ordinance. The ordinance allows for normal zoning regulations to be waived for lots over 25 acres. The purpose of the ordinance is to create a well-planned and integrated development with a mixture of uses, which in turn stimulates economic growth for the area.

Tuscan Village was recently granted conditional approval for the conceptual design and work is already underway on some of the projects previously approved by the planning board, including a few of the townhouse and apartment structures. The 170-acre development will consist of around 100 townhouses, more than 250 apartments, a hotel, movie theater, supermarket, shops, restaurants, and business and medical offices.

The impact of such a large development is immediate. New businesses are already popping up along South and North Broadway/Rte. 28. For example, the newly renovated Rockingham Plaza off South Broadway is undergoing some major changes. The building on the pad site, currently home to Denny's, will be demolished and rebuilt into a 7,700 s/f dual-use building, which will house a Panera Bread with a drive-thru and a Verizon Wireless store.

Driving up to exit 3 on I-93, the town of Windham is proud of the development of Gateway Park. This 360,000 s/f mixed-use development will be home to class A commercial space, including office, R&D/technology, medical, and retail, as well as townhouses. Gateway Park has started clearing the

lot and recently signed Citizen's Bank, Precious Nails, and a wireless communication store. The "Live, Work, Play" concept is designed to attract and retain the millennial generation.

One of the major projects at exit 4 is the new proposed Exit 4A. The new exit should alleviate and improve the traffic along Rte. 102 from Broadway into downtown Derry. It would also feed directly into the Woodmont Commons development, a 600 acre mixed "urban village" concept. The plan combines streetscapes, retail, office, housing, and green space, echoing the "Live, Work, Play" concept that is gaining popularity.

Construction happening along exit 5 includes Wallace Farm, a brand new apartment complex sitting on 25 acres, and Blue Bird Self-Storage, which broke ground for its new facility just off the southbound exit ramps.

Poultry Products Northeast is currently in front of the planning board with a proposed 110,000 s/f facility on Jack's Bridge Rd. This area right off exit 5 is home to Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Harvey Building Products, Penske, and American Tire Distributors. The new building would combine Poultry Products' two locations into one facility, bringing the 190 current New Hampshire employees together, and simultaneously position the company for growth.

There is no doubt in my mind that the widening of I-93 will continue to be a strong economic boost for the region and as such, attract new companies, create quality jobs, and bring greater wealth to southern New Hampshire.

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