

MaineDOT Virtual Public Involvement Comment Summary

Project Name: Berwick, Route 9/Saw Mill Hill & School Street Intersection Improvements

WIN: 024647.00

Description: The project includes a re-configuration of this intersection to improve the safety of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians in this area.

Date: 07/08/2021

Level of Support: In Favor

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Topic(s): Safety, Bike and pedestrian accommodations, Traffic

Comment: Saw Mill Hill and Rt 9 intersection desperately needs a Stop Sign on Rt 9 to allow vehicles to get out of Saw Mill. Also, as a walker I feel like I'm going to get plowed over because crosswalk is not visible and cars from rt 9 don't have to currently stop. Then you have cars coming over bridge that fly through same intersection.

Date: 07/20/2021

Response Type: e-mail

Response By: Gerald Dostie

Response:

Saw Mill Hill and Rt 9 intersection desperately needs a Stop Sign on Rt 9 to allow vehicles to get out of Saw Mill. **It is not recommended to have a stop sign that close to a signalized intersection as it can cause issues with signal timing, increased vehicle congestion, and leads to safety concerns for pedestrians looking to cross the road.**

Also, as a walker I feel like I'm going to get plowed over because crosswalk is not visible and cars from rt 9 don't have to currently stop. Then you have cars coming over bridge that fly through same intersection. **Regarding pedestrian safety, the Maine DOT is looking to install curb bump outs and a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the mid-block crossing (by the former fire station) to increase pedestrian visibility and safety. Based on the comments received during the public process, the Maine DOT will investigate the possibility of including a second pair of RRFB's at the mid-block crossing of School Street adjacent to Saw Mill Hill.**

Date: 07/08/2021
Level of Support: In Favor
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Topic(s): Traffic
Comment: Please do the Berwick sawmill project

Date: 07/16/2021
Response Type: e-mail
Response By: Gerald Dostie
Response: Thank you for the positive feedback

Date: 07/08/2021
Level of Support: Not In Favor
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Topic(s): None provided
Comment: No no no Leave it alone We do not need this

Date: 07/16/2021
Response Type: e-mail
Response By: Gerald Dostie
Response: Thank you for your feedback. It will be considered in the decision to proceed, modify, or cancel the project.

Date: 07/08/2021
Level of Support: In Favor
Response Requested: Do not send me a response
Topic(s): Safety
Comment: Its passed time we fix this intersection. This looks well thought out

Date: 07/09/2021
Level of Support: In Favor
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Topic(s): Safety
Comment: I approve and support MaineDOT's Berwick, Route 9/Saw Mill Hill & School Street project. The aspect that I love about MaineDOT's Berwick, Route 9/Saw Mill Hill & School Street Project is that ME 9 will be realigned which will improve sight distance.

Date: 07/16/2021
Response Type: e-mail
Response By: Gerald Dostie
Response: Thank you for your comment in favor of this project

Date: 07/10/2021
Level of Support: Not In Favor
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Topic(s): Safety, Bike and pedestrian accomodations
Comment: Do i understand this right that the flashing light pedestrian crossing is only to be at the crosswalk near the old fire station??? Shouldn't the 2 crosswalks at Sawmill have the flashing pedestrian crossing also?? That's where people cross ALL THE TIME. That's where there is a safety issue. Also, the only parking spots preserved will be 3 spots across the street from old fire station? The ones on the right side heading up school street will be gone? That's going to become problematic with the intended construction of stores, a park, and apartments in the old Prime Tanning site. We will need as much parking as possible. Losing parking spaces seems like very short sighted thinking. It seems like this plan is for benefit of cars more than pedestrians, to try to speed them through instead of slowing them down. I thought that initially, a couple years ago, a small rotary was proposed. A rotary would be much more effective at slowing traffic than making the street straighter. If that's not possible, why not reinstall the stop sign going south on School St? It was at the Sawmill intersection. A stop sign with a pedestrian crossing button with flashing lights crossing School St to the bank. Stop signs are much more effective at slowing traffic than making the road a straightaway . Plus, they are much less expensive. I really wish this was a written proposal available instead if a video. It's hard to follow. I'd like to see in writing so I don't miss information or misunderstand.

Date: 07/20/2021
Response Type: e-mail
Response By: Gerald Dostie
Response:

Unfortunately, we are limited in the number of letters/words that we can send to you as a response. As you asked several questions, i have provided the following responses to each question:

This project is based upon a recommendation from the Berwick Downtown Vehicle, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Study initiated by the Town of Berwick, and completed in 2019. The Study identified the installation of a rectangular-rapid-flashing-beacon (RRFB) solely at the crossing near the former Fire Station. MaineDOT will look into the possibility of the installation of a second set of RRFBs (or relocate the ones from the crossing near the former Fire Station) to the School Street midblock crossing at Saw Mill Hill Road. A set of RRFBs crossing Saw Mill Hill Road at the reconfigured intersection should not be necessary due to the proposed geometric improvements.

The 2019 Study recommended providing wider sidewalks on both sides of the School Street, narrowed travel lanes with sharrows for bicycles (bikes and vehicles share the road), and parking on the northwest side of the road only. Due to the lack of available right of way, on-street parking could not be accommodated on both sides of School Street. Please note, there will be additional off-street parking available within the Old Prime Tannery site that will help address the parking needs generated by the new construction within the site.

The intent of this project is to redesign the intersection in a manner that improves vehicular/pedestrian/bicyclist safety, provides dedicated and easily visible pedestrian routes and crossings, and provides enough space for future bicycle routes through the Town.

I am not aware of the rotary concept. Once again, this project is based upon the 2019 study which did not include a rotary.

I am not aware of the history behind the removal of the stop sign. However, it is not recommended to have a stop sign that close to a signalized intersection as it can cause issues with signal timing, increased vehicle congestion, and leads to safety concerns for pedestrians looking to cross the road. The proposed design complies with current design standards and includes provisions for traffic calming and increased pedestrian/bicycle safety.

I will send a pdf of the project directly to your email for you to view

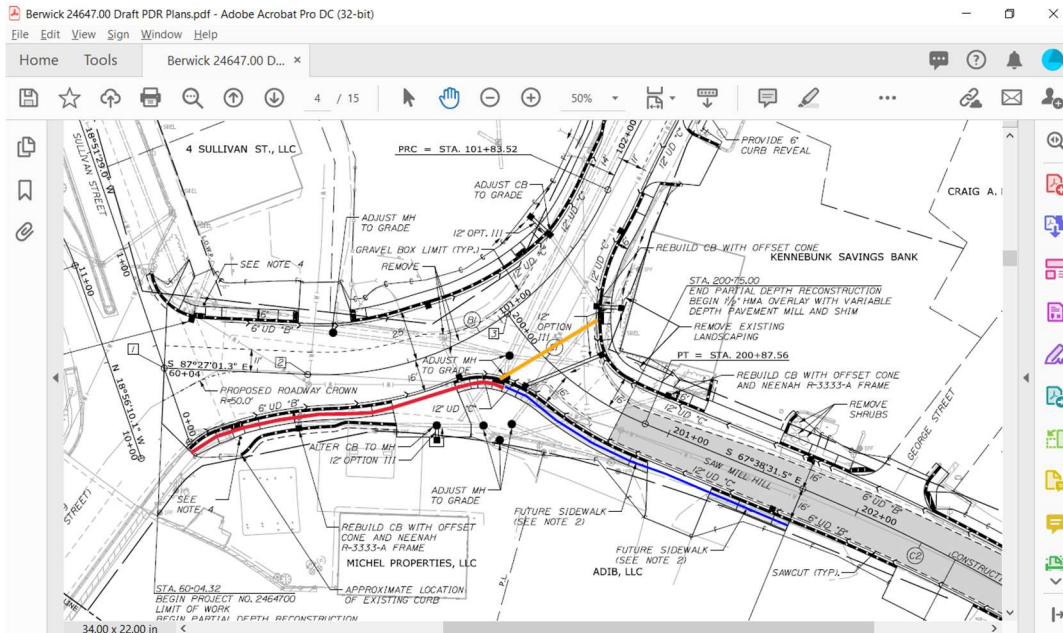
Date: 07/15/2021
Level of Support: Neutral
Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail
Topic(s): Bike and pedestrian accommodations
Comment: Seems like the right time to include a sidewalk on the south side of the Saw Mill Hill intersection--hope that will be seriously considered.

Date: 07/16/2021
Response Type: e-mail
Response By: Gerald Dostie
Response:

Thank you for your interest in this project and question regarding a sidewalk on the south side of Saw Mill Hill Road. The current design includes the reconstruction of the existing sidewalk from the end of

the bridge easterly to the new proposed crosswalk across Saw Mill Hill Road at its intersection with School Street. As our policy does not allow us to build a sidewalk that does not connect into an existing sidewalk or to a destination, the sidewalk ends at this crossing. However, this design does take into consideration the possibility of a sidewalk extension along the south side of this road should there be a future project to construct a sidewalk to a destination such as Moulton street or beyond.

The plan below shows the proposed new sidewalk in red, proposed future sidewalk extension in blue, and the proposed crosswalk in orange



Date: 07/15/2021

Level of Support: Not In Favor

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail

Topic(s): Safety, Traffic

Comment: i have lived in berwick for 50 years and to me that intersection has never been a problem . you people talk about safety has anyone done there research on how many accidents involving cars and or pedestrians have happened in that intersection i personally feel that money could be spent on better things

Date: 07/20/2021

Response Type: e-mail

Response By: Gerald Dostie

Response:

This project is based upon a recommendation from the Berwick Downtown Vehicle, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Study initiated by the Town of Berwick and completed in 2019. That study included research

into the crash history of the intersection over the most recent three-year period (2015-2017) and determined that the intersection was not a high crash location (HCL) as it only had 5 crashes and a critical rate factor (CRF) of 1.37. For an intersection to be classified as a high crash location it would require 8 or more crashes and a CRF of 1 or more over the most recent three-year period. Since the study was completed, the intersection has been listed as a high crash location once (2018), with 2019, and 2020 being one (1) or two (2) crashes shy of the classification. There was also a vehicle/bicycle crash in 2010 and a vehicle/pedestrian crash in 2016 at this location

Date: 07/30/2021

Level of Support: Neutral

Response Requested: Respond to me by e-mail*

Topic(s): Traffic

Comment: I may have misunderstood- but I would like to see the two turn lanes extended up past the old fire station. I often find traffic is backed up there and if those making a right hand turn could exit faster I think it would greatly improve things. I believe the town already owns that "corner".

**Comment was received outside of the comment period*