



TOWN OF DURHAM
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Town Planner's Review
Wednesday, April 29, 2020

XV. Other Business

• **Route 4 Exit Ramp**

- I request the Planning Board or any individual members share any comments about this proposed project. Comments could also be provided at the May 13 meeting.

Please note the following:

- 1) NHDOT is planning for the signalization of the westbound exit ramp off Route 4 onto Route 108. They have requested that the Town provide comments about the proposal, particularly regarding environmental issues but I will submit comments regarding any aspect of the project.
- 2) I am requesting comments from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, Traffic Safety Committee, Town staff, and any other party who would like to comment. I will put all of the comments together in a letter to NHDOT by May 15, their deadline for comments.
- 3) This packet includes a letter from NHDOT soliciting comments (addressed to Andrew Corrow, HDC chair) and excerpts from the plan set. I included only small copies of selected drawings. The plan set can be seen in full on line at this link: <https://www.ci.durham.nh.us/planning/transportation-issues>.
- 4) Here are excerpts from a note that I received from Marc Laurion, Senior Environmental Manager at NHDOT.
 - Thank you for your interest in the project. I have coordinated with our Bureau of Highway Design and our Project Manager on you questions. Here are our responses:
 - Advertisement for the project is currently scheduled for August 25, 2020, with construction anticipated to begin in the Spring of 2021 and completion in the Fall of 2021.
 - Tree clearing will occur above the rock cut to accommodate scaling of the rock face. This is located approximately 20 feet above the Westbound Off Ramp. Approximately 0.1 acre of trees are anticipated to be cleared. There is no proposed clearing at the intersection of the US Route 4 Ramps and NH Route 108, nor at the DMS sign on Westbound US Route 4.

(over)

- I have attached a complete Preliminary Plan set for your use. Please note that this is still a Draft as the design is not yet complete and they are not appropriate for construction. The limits of clearing above the rock cut is identified in the plan set on Sheet 13.

5) There will be some tree clearing on the side of the exit ramp near Riverwoods. I will ask for more information about this. I have let Riverwoods know about the plan. Here is a pertinent condition from their site plan approval:

“Route 4 buffer. In the event that NHDOT removes a significant portion of the tree buffer on the southerly side of the site, adjacent to the westbound exit ramp of Route 4, then the Planning Board shall make a determination as to whether the project building and/or retaining wall is significantly more visible. If the Planning Board makes such a determination, then the applicant will submit an evergreen planting plan for the area between the face of the retaining wall and the NHDOT boundary for the purpose of creating a tree buffer which will be similar, but not necessarily identical, to that which existing prior to when NHDOT removed the trees. Baseline photos, showing the tree buffer, once construction is complete, will be attached to these conditions of approval as part of the as-built package. Additional photos may be provided by the applicant to show the tree buffer immediately prior to the NHDOT cut. The Planning Board shall then review the planting plan and may accept comments from the tree warden and the public although no public hearing will be required. The applicant shall be required to install, at its own expense, the evergreen planting plan approved by the Planning Board. Planning Board approval of the plan shall not be unreasonably withheld.”