



**TOWN OF DURHAM**  
8 NEWMARKET RD  
DURHAM, NH 03824-2898  
603/868-8064  
[www.ci.durham.nh.us](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us)

**Town Planner's Review**  
**Wednesday, May 6, 2020**

- VI. **Route 4 Exit Ramp.** Discussion about offering comments to NHDOT about plans to add a signal at the westbound off ramp of Route 4 onto Newmarket Road, clearing of 250 feet of rock along the exit ramp, and installation of a fixed dynamic message sign. Riverwoods is discussing building a sidewalk from Stone Quarry Drive to Old Piscataqua Road which would affect this project.
- 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) In the letter from NHDOT they describe the project as “installation of signals at the ramp terminus of the US Route 4 westbound ramps with NH Route 108, machine scaling and clearing of 250 linear feet of the rock cut face along the west-bound US Route 4 off ramp, and the installation of a fixed dynamic message sign along US Route 4. All work will occur within the existing NHDOT ROW.” 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.
  - 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.

- 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.”

6) I understand from Mike Lynch, Public Works Director, that Riverwoods is now planning on building a sidewalk from Stone Quarry Drive to Old Piscataqua Road to accommodate their residents. It makes much sense for NHDOT to coordinate improvements at the interchange with the proposed sidewalk construction.