

I-395/Route 9 Study Update

Larry Adams

1/21/2014 6:14 PM

To: Brewer City Council; Brewer City Manager; Councilor Beverly Uhlenhake; Councilor Joseph Ferris; Councilor Kevin O'Connell; Deputy Mayor Matthew Vachon; Mayor Jerry W. Goss; Eddington Board of Selectman and Town Manager; Carol Woodcock / U.S. Senator Susan Collins; Elizabeth Montgomery Schneider MacTaggart / U.S. Senator Angus King; Representative Arthur Verow - District #21; Representative David Johnson - District#20; Rosemary Winslow / U.S. Congressman Mike Michaud; Senator Edward Youngblood - District#31;

Good evening to all.

The latest MaineDOT I-395/Route 9 Transportation Study Update:

From: "Charette, Russ" <Russ.Charette@maine.gov>
Date: Friday, January 17, 2014 3:54 PM
To: <albromley@roadrunner.com>; <john.bryant@amforem.biz>; <John@HoldenMaine.com>; "Linda Johns" <ljohns@BrewerMaine.gov>; <robk@bactampo.org>; <townofeddington@roadrunner.com>; <SBost@BrewerME.org>
Cc: "Cassandra Chase (Cassandra.Chase@dot.gov)" <cassandra.chase@dot.gov>; <Mark.Hasselmann@FHWA.dot.gov>; <RPLane@laneconstruct.com>; <wricker@bangordailynews.com>; "Plumpton, William M." <wplumpton@GFNET.com>; "Rollins, Scott" <Scott.Rollins@maine.gov>; "Getchell, Chip" <Chip.Getchell@maine.gov>; "Devin, John" <John.Devin@maine.gov>; "Thebarge, Steven" <Steven.Thebarge@maine.gov>; "Ham, Eric" <Eric.Ham@maine.gov>; "Bostwick, Richard" <Richard.Bostwick@maine.gov>
Subject: I-395/Route 9 Transportation Study Update

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services still has some additional work to complete the Biological Opinion (BO) for the study. In an effort to be able to advertise 2014 construction season projects in a timely manner, MaineDOT requested that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services prioritize their efforts to complete the environmental processing for those other projects due to be constructed this year before completing the BO for the I-395/Route 9 Transportation Study. That effort has been completed and the next priority for the USFWS staff is to complete the BO for the I-395/Route 9 study so that the Final Environmental Impact statement on the project can be completed. Once we receive the Biological Opinion we can finalize the FEIS and submit it to FHWA for review and approval. Once we receive the Biological Opinion I will send out an update on the project.

In other information, you may have heard that the MaineDOT Work Plan for 2014-2015-2016 has been completed. The Work Plan lists work that MaineDOT will perform in the next three years. The Work Plan is located on our website at the following link where you can either download the whole Work Plan, interactively look at the projects in a specific Town, or view the projects on an interactive map. <http://maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/> You will note that the I-395/Route 9 Study is not in the Work Plan for the next three years and cannot be scheduled for any future design work until a Record of Decision is received.

Please let me know if anyone has any questions.

Russell Charette – Project Manager
Russell D. Charette, P.E.

I ask that our Legislative Delegation please have Mr. Charette clarify his statement: *You will note that the I-395/Route 9 Study is not in the Work Plan for the next three years and cannot be scheduled for any future design work until a Record of Decision is received.* I found his statement to be somewhat confusing and in my cynical mind maybe a little-bit misleading.

While it is true that the I-395/Route 9 Study is not in the current version of the Work Plan, the Record of Decision is only months away. Once the FEIS is finalized and distributed for review, the ROD can be issued 30 days later. The ROD is the final step in the EIS process and the start of final engineering and acquiring properties leading to construction.

If the statement by Mr. Charette is considered an absolute, it would seem to indicate that the project would be placed on hold until 2017. However, I find it hard to believe that the MaineDOT and the FHWA intend to wait three years to continue work on this project, especially with the opposition against it; I believe that following the ROD, the MaineDOT and the FHWA will actively pursue additional funding and this project will be included in an amended version of the current Work Plan. That is why clarification of his statement is so important. Please prove me wrong...

Circulate the FEIS / Section 404 application

[Close \[X\]](#)

MaineDOT and the FHWA will distribute the FEIS / Section 404 application for review. The FEIS / Section 404 application will be available during the 'wait period' for a minimum of 30 days before the Record of Decision is issued.

Record of Decision

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MaineDOT and the FHWA will prepare and distribute a Record of Decision (ROD) for the study. The ROD is the final step in the EIS process. The ROD identifies the selected alternative, presents the basis for the decision, identifies the alternatives considered, specifies the "environmentally preferable alternative," and provides information to avoid, minimize and compensate for environmental impacts.

Next Steps

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Initiate final engineering design, complete applications and receive permits, and other next steps. Following the ROD, MaineDOT and the FHWA can proceed with the initiation of final engineering design, the completion of permit applications, the acquisition of property, and construction. As this process could take several years to complete, as part of final engineering design, MaineDOT and the FHWA would work with the towns to develop a plan to protect the corridor of the selected alternative, including the area of its intersections and interchanges, from further development.

Another statement needing clarification: *In an effort to be able to advertise 2014 construction season projects in a timely manner, MaineDOT requested that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services prioritize their efforts to complete the environmental processing for those other projects due to be constructed this year before completing the BO for the I-395/Route 9 Transportation Study.* With a known \$300 million (\$100 million/year) shortfall in funding for the current 3 Year Work Plan, does that mean that the 2014 projects will be completely funded by taking away funding from 2015 and 2016 projects? Or in other words, 2014 projects are now fully funded and the projects scheduled for the years 2015 and 2016 face a shortfall of \$300 million (\$150 million/year). Once again, I must strongly suggest that the \$61 million to be spent on this unviable connector project would be better spent on the unmet needs of our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my views, Larry Adams