

Executive Summary

The following executive summary was developed with assistance from the Stillwater Avenue Advisory Committee and BACTS. Old Town, Orono and other surrounding communities, along with the University of Maine are excited about revitalizing and improving a critical corridor of the area, serving thousands of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists every day and creating a gateway to the communities and University. The purpose of the study is to provide a “complete streets” environment where there is a balance between all modes of transportation.

This study dovetails with efforts by the MaineDOT who are currently working on design plans for the bridges over the Stillwater River, which could blend seamlessly into upgrades along the Stillwater Avenue corridor.

The full technical report, including backup material, essential data, and various options considered and evaluated, is extensive and included with this study. This Executive Summary focuses on the end results and the positive direction the Advisory Committee and BACTS identified for improving the corridor for all modes of travel.

Included in this study are plans depicting revisions to the two key signalized intersections as well as the links between them. Listed below, from south to north, are brief discussions of essential modifications:

- The signalized intersection of Bennoch Road and Stillwater Avenue would be improved through upgrading an antiquated signal system, providing pedestrian accommodations including a new “blank out sign” and leading pedestrian interval; making geometric improvements and discontinuing of Franklin Street, the fifth leg into an already confusing intersection.
- Traveling north from the intersection with Bennoch Road, a center turn lane is introduced, allowing vehicles turning onto and off from driveways and side streets such as Spring Street to do so more safely and without interfering with through traffic along Stillwater Avenue. Edge lines would be introduced along Stillwater Avenue to provide a shoulder for bicyclists to ride and may have the added benefit of potentially slowing Stillwater Avenue traffic.
- Both Spring Street approaches to Stillwater Avenue would be reconstructed to remove existing confusing islands and provide better guidance with new channelization islands.
- A new mid-block crosswalk is proposed at the end of Free Street, supplemented with ADA landings, and new striping and flashing beacons actuated by the crossing pedestrian to alert motorists of the crossing pedestrian.

- Separate from this project, but a critical component, the MaineDOT will be replacing the Stillwater Avenue bridges with a single travel lane in each direction, shoulders to accommodate bicycles, and a sidewalk on the westerly side to accommodate pedestrians.
- Upgrades are also proposed from the new bridge to the College Avenue signalized intersection. The cross-section would be widened to provide for two travel lanes in each direction, shoulders for bicycles, and a sidewalk along the westerly side of Stillwater Avenue to support the sidewalk on the new bridges.
- The intersection of Stillwater Avenue and College Avenue would see significant improvements, including: Upgrades to the antiquated signal equipment (including emergency pre-emption and transit priority); the Stillwater Avenue northbound approach would be widened for an additional through lane with associated receiving lane; the College Avenue westbound approach would be widened to provide two left turn lanes with associated receiving lane and new pedestrian accommodations would be provided on each corner with well striped crosswalks. In addition, an existing dysfunctional left turn lane into McDonalds would be replaced with a functional center turn lane that can be used by all the businesses in the immediate area on that leg of the intersection.
- Bicycle lanes are proposed to be added throughout the study area to better accommodate bicycles and make them more visible to vehicular traffic.

This study represents the first step in a multi-step process. As identified previously, the MaineDOT is currently designing the bridges across the Stillwater River. The next step for the improvements identified in this study is to collect survey and utility information and complete construction drawings.