

## **ROUTE 88 INTERSECTION PROJECT**

### **Public Comments received via e-mail and phone through October 5, 2020**

#### **1. September 10: Kristen Knupp**

Hello,

I would like to add my input to the debate around the intersection at Rte. 88 and Johnson Road for the meeting tonight. I drive often on Rte 88 as well as ride my bicycle often during the summer months on Rte 88 to and from the Portland Yacht Club, as does my 13 year old son. I also jog on Rte 88. I have seen it from all these perspectives.

I have been aware for several years that the situation on Rte 88 is dangerous. Many drivers drive over the speed limit, especially during the morning and evening commuting hours. Many cars and trucks use Rte 88 as a way to avoid the traffic lights on Rte 1, so it is a cut through where they want to drive as quickly as possible I drive the speed limit and have had many drivers behind me become angry that I am not going faster.

In addition, we all know because we can all see, that there are many walkers, runners and cyclists on Rte 88. I have seen people walking with baby carriages on Rte 88. The combination off heavy traffic with speeding vehicles alongside walkers, runners and cyclists is a tragedy waiting to happen. It only takes one driver who is driving too fast and not paying attention to have a tragic accident. It is our responsibility to do something to address this situation.

The intersection with Johnson road and Rte 88 is particularly concerning. I witnessed two very near accidents in July 2020 when speeding vehicles traveling from the north towards the south on Rte 88 nearly hit vehicles turning left from Johnson Road onto Rte 88. The vehicles on Rte 88 had to slam on their brakes to avoid hitting the turning cars. On another occasion a large truck traveling over the speed limit nearly hit a garbage truck that was stopped on Rte 88. These are common occurrences.

In addition, it is very difficult for bicycles traveling on Rte 88 to cross the intersection with Johnson Road. I feel very unsafe crossing and have to wave to the drivers of cars to ensure that they see me. I worry about my 13 year old son riding his bicycle on Rte 88. I know many parents who will not allow their children to ride bicycles on Rte 88 which is essentially a neighborhood road with many residences on and near it.

I would like to see a reduced speed limit to 25 MPH near the Johnson Road intersection, as well as either a 4 way stop or a traffic light. It is very unsafe for cars, cyclists and pedestrians as it is now. Please do something to address this situation.

## **2. September 23: Cooper (last name unknown)-phone call received by Theo Holtwijk**

I talked with “Cooper” (last name unknown). He lives in Cape Elizabeth and rides a bike frequently through Falmouth. He suggested that Falmouth may want to consider along Route 88, not a sidewalk, but a path just like the one that exists for 3-4 miles on Shore Road in Cape Elizabeth.

He described the path to me. It is 5 or 6 feet wide and has compacted gravel. It is separated from the road by 1 or 2 feet. It has no curbing.

Cooper feels that such a path would give walkers a safe place to walk and allow passage for bicyclists as well. The less experienced bicyclists ride on this path and the faster ones stay on the road.

## **3. September 23: Sheila Mayberry**

I am wondering if you can raise the idea of a stop sign again. I don't know if more public awareness around this problem would increase the popularity of this option. Also, perhaps a speed bump in the area along with 25 mph limit.

## **4. September 23: Matt Blake**

I live off Town Landing Road.

Citizens and neighbors are not traffic engineers! Decisions in this matter should not be based on polling a small group of self-selected participants, IMHO. Getting a sense of the community sentiment is great, but be careful of under-representation, and their lack of knowledge of what is actually effective.

The physical speed controls (speed tables, roadway narrowing, etc) , if they are effective, should be presented as ways to “enforce” the speed limit at the intersection, without requiring more police labor. The traffic engineers and police need to tell us how effective these road features are in the other areas where they are used. The fact that these ideas “polled” low, with high negatives, in the earlier session does not mean that they should be ignored. I heard a lot of sentiment agreeing that something like a 25mph speed limit around the intersection would be desirable. The speed tables (or road narrowing) potentially could make that 25mph speed limit “enforceable” without requiring police enforcement. If it is true that these work well, it should be presented as complementary feature in combination with a lower speed limit. Speed tables (or road narrowing) is not a solution on its own, which is how it has been presented.

The parking at TLM is the biggest single problem, as mentioned by a few people. But other things are significant.

An idea not discussed: use the Brown property (originally slated to be parking) to park boat trailers, etc. Rework the 4 boat trailer parking slots in the lot across from TLM to be 6, or so, car spots. Make 2 or 4 of the spots short term parking (15 or 20 minutes). Prohibit parking in front of TLM, or make it parallel parking, as suggested. That should help appease the TLM owner.

Under-grounding the utilities to remove all utility poles in the area was presented as a safety solution (too avoid blocking the sight lines). It was unfairly characterized in the meeting as for aesthetics. Signage with flashing lights is not an answer. It just adds more confusion and distraction. There is already too much going on at that intersection.

I did not hear anything about an effort to get traffic off Rte 88 and on to Rte 1. Less traffic on Rte 88 will make it safer for bikes and pedestrians. Many out-of-the-box ideas could be examined: toll on 88 (EZ-Pass); lower speed limit along more of its length, add traffic calming features. The Rte 88 corridor is residential and getting pretty dense. Rte 88 is no longer the sole highway to Yarmouth.

I thought it interesting that a Cottage Ln resident wants the sightline on the NW corner fixed, but does not think the SE corner sightline (TLM parking) should be touched for fear of affecting the market. I guess he values the morning coffee there. For those of us exiting from Town Landing Road several times a day, we love the coffee too, but the pickup trucks and vans make it very difficult to see down Rte 88, as you know.

I have spoken to Mary Beth about this, and I know she wants to help where she can. If you make some short additional term parking available across the street (as described above), it seems like that could help this situation a lot.

I am confused/surprised why you have T.Y. Lin on this effort, but we do not see an engineering analysis (cost-benefit analysis, analysis of effectiveness, with an overall assessment and ranking) of all the ideas presented with respect to the town's objectives (enhanced safety, aesthetics, etc.), plus some additional ideas, or variations, that they should be bringing to the table. The polling, while interesting, does not really provide much insight into what will really make a difference.

I was happy to see the utility pole removed a couple weeks ago. It would be nice to eliminate the other pole.

I don't understand the desire for a sidewalk down Town Landing Road. What is driving that (besides a poll)? Has the traffic on the road increased much in the past 60 or 70 years?

## **5. September 24: Maribeth McLaughlin**

You did a great job moderating the forum last night. It was very informative so thank you. I realize that this is a big project and that it could be a while for it to be accomplished due to funding issues. But I was wondering if I could suggest another similar project for future consideration. I am new to the area so I am sorry if this idea has already been discussed.

I believe that Route 88 is used by bikers and walkers mainly for exercise. More and more people are using walking and bicycling for alternative transportation. I would like to suggest that roads linking shopping, restaurants and businesses to neighborhoods and housing areas could be updated to encourage this. Bucknam road is an important link to the main downtown area of Falmouth. I believe that there are many Falmouth residents who would use alternative transportation to access Falmouth businesses if Bucknam road was more conducive to other modes of travel. The Route 9/Middle Road/Bucknam Road/Falmouth Road intersection is a heavily used intersection which does not have crosswalks. It would be a benefit to the community if there was a walkable/rideable path to the library, park, ice rink, movie theater, shops and restaurants located in the downtown area.

## **6. September 24: Anne Staples**

First, I would have emailed more of the members, but finding an email listing on the town website is difficult. So I have addressed this to those that emails were easily available for.

I listened to the forum last night regarding the Town Landing Rd/Rt. 88 intersection. I also participated in the last Forum, back in Dec. (if memory serves me correctly) Thank you for doing this.

I have lived on Pitt St, off Town Landing for over 30 years.

My initial impression of these meetings was that we had a problem at that intersection and it was deemed a “high crash” intersection. I thought we were trying to address how we could reduce the number of accidents. At the initial forum we came up with many ideas. Those ideas seemed to have gone away at this recent forum.

What I heard last night was more pedestrian friendly solutions to Rt. 88 (ie sidewalks, crosswalks, flashing lights, etc) All are valid (I walk and cycle on Rt. 88 and would welcome more sidewalks) As was stated, all come at a very high cost, of which the town cannot afford at this time. (totally understandable given the circumstances we are in – pandemic)

What was not really addressed by the town was the Rt. 88 and Town Landing Rd intersection. As you know sight lines are the major problem there. While I understand it is very hard for the owner of Town Landing Market to compromise her customers and make them walk to the store from across the street parking or elsewhere, we still need a solution.

I have been thinking of this all morning and feel I have come up with a very easy (and hopefully not too expensive) solution.

### **Install a traffic light at the Rt. 88, Johnson Rd, Town Landing Rd intersection**

This traffic light would be sensitive to know when cars are on Johnson Road and Town Landing Rd, and the light would change to accommodate vehicles on Town Landing Rd and Johnson Rd., that are turning or proceeding across the Rt. 88 intersection. We would no longer have to be concerned that we cannot see what is coming because of the cars parking at Town Landing Market—the traffic light would stop the traffic !!! Sounds like a win/win for the owner of TLM, and for the vehicles pulling out of Town Landing Rd.

I hope you will seriously consider this solution as it seems to solve the issue.

Again, the problem at that intersection is the sight lines pulling out of Town Landing Road. While all the other “things” (crosswalk flashing lights, sidewalks, speed tables etc) would be nice, they come at a cost.

I’d be curious to know the cost of said traffic light and the installation. And if it’s a matter that involves the DOT, I’m sure they would like to reduce traffic accidents at this intersection.

I know we can come up with a workable solution for all involved.

## 7. September 24: Robert Ryan

I participated in the Zoom meeting last evening and spoke briefly afterwards about the improvements proposed to the intersection of Town Landing/Johnson Road & Route 88. I wanted to amplify and elaborate on my comments after listening to other speakers in the Q&A session. I own the home at 284 Foreside Road, which has been in my family since 1966.

I would like to reiterate that passive efforts that are inexpensive and require no enforcement are preferable to active measures, or measures that do require enforcement. Given that there were no questions about the Depot Road intersection, I will address the colloquy regarding the Town Landing/Johnson Road & Rt. 88 intersection.

First, trimming the trees located on the western side of Route 88 north of the intersection makes eminent sense. This is a low cost measure that provides greater visibility and requires no "enforcement" (in my opinion, the landowners should be obligated to perform this effort at their expense). Indeed, the large tree at the northwest corner of this intersection corner is so overgrown that anyone driving a box truck or large pickup would engage the leaf canopy when making a right-hand turn onto Johnson Road from southbound Route 88.

Second, a passive sign informing drivers that there is a crosswalk ahead *might* be helpful, although it would be of some interest to determine if any of the accidents involved tourists or residents unfamiliar with the intersection before installing additional signage.

Third, if pedestrian access and safety is, in fact, an issue of concern at the intersection, the concept of a passive lighted crosswalk sign on 88 within sight of the intersection as a tertiary measure would be inexpensive and might alert individuals who are not paying attention to their driving of a crossing pedestrian.

Finally, while there have been nine (9) incidents in the past three (3) years, it does not appear that any of the incidents involves bicyclists or pedestrians (December 11 Presentation - Slide 7/110). Indeed, the majority do appear to be related to the northwest corner by southbound traffic on 88, which may point primarily to the foliage issue addressed in number one above. Given that none of the incidents involve bicyclists or pedestrians, I am somewhat askance regarding the few comments made by residents last evening that live within walking distance of Town Landing Market ("**TLM**") but pointed to the parking as an issue. While the parking may be considered a "difficult" location to navigate, it does not appear to be the cause or even an associated factor in the 9 previous incidents. TLM has been a community fixture longer than my family has resided in Falmouth (over 50 years) and parking at that location is both essential and desirable. The participants who are troubled have other options (those who live off of Town Landing Road can drive up Ramsdell Road if they are uncomfortable navigating around the parking at the intersection). Bicyclists can ride southward towards Depot Road or if unable to traverse the intersection comfortably, walk their bicycles. Indeed, those who raise the concerns likely never drive to TLM, given that they are well within walking distance.

To reduce the parking at TLM would be economically devastating and impair access by residents who pass TLM (and/or who may live in Cumberland Foreside or beyond walking distance) on their way to and from Portland for work. The forum was designed to address what is nominally considered a dangerous intersection by statistical methods as a result of crashes, not to alter property for the convenience of

those who do not own it or otherwise control same. I would note, however, a point was made that might be further followed up with the owner. Large trucks, SUV's and vehicles that are lengthy *might* be "encouraged" to park across the street or along Rt. 88 in the parking area on the east side south of TLM. I can understand that individuals who are driving smaller cars (or who are not comfortable behind the wheel) may be tentative when pulling out of Town Landing and faced with a F-250 size vehicle parked at the corner of TLM. I suspect the owner of TLM would be happy to place an informational sign "encouraging drivers of such large vehicles to park on the Town Landing Side of her lot, or elsewhere. This should be voluntary, however, and not mandatory.

Thank you managing the polling last evening and for providing the opportunity to comment further, I would ask that you share this with Theo, Chief Kilbride, and anyone else who you feel might wish to review my comments. I can be reached at this e-mail or my number below if anyone employed by the town wishes to discuss this e-mail. With all best wishes and kind regards, I remain,

#### **8. September 29: Anne Wood**

I appreciated the survey that you conducted the other night regarding Rte 88 and its intersections with Town Landing and Depot Road. You did well.

I do have a few comments:

- a couple of the choices didn't give me the opportunity to say which part(s) of a statement or listed choices I disagree (or agree!) with.
- Police and speeders: we who walk Rte 88 observe other dangerous driving habits in addition to speeding, some of which have prompted us to literally have to jump into the bushes. These include drivers swerving into and/or driving in the bike lane, drivers driving distractedly, drivers talking on cell phones, drivers texting. The scariest times and areas are between Mill Creek and Town Landing, and observable daily.
- Sidewalk: I think the choice should be YES for sidewalks for the safety of pedestrians (see above), but not necessarily all the way from Cumberland to Rte 1. Due to its expense, perhaps the raised sidewalk could be instead done in phases: starting with from the Fire Station to Handy Boat area as a top priority. (I realize there is already a bit of sidewalk from Johnson to Underwood Park)
- Lowering the speed limit to 25 from Cumberland to Depot Rd. is NOT a good idea. People will speed anyway. Instead, if the speed is to be reduced to 25 it should be in a short, concentrated area such as north and southbound from the Fire Station to Underwood Park and southbound in the Skillins area to Depot Rd.
- Town Landing Store is a wonderful asset. I hesitate to suggest anything that might cause it to lose any business.
- Town Landing parking lot on Johnson Road: exiting traffic causes a lot of confusion for drivers and pedestrians. Redesign the parking lot on Johnson Rd either (a) to close off the exit onto 88 and have all parkers both enter and exit from Johnson Road or (b) change the current parking lot exit to an entrance only with exit on Johnson Road. This would simplify the number of places a driver (Rough 88, Johnson Rd, Town Landing) has to (or should) look before proceeding .
- "Your speed is xx" signs placed on Rte 88 north and southbound well before Town Landing Rd. might help get peoples' attention to slow down.

- Painting a crosswalk from the head of Ramsdell Rd to Underwood Park might also help slow northbound traffic a bit, and allow for safer passage of pedestrians going to and from the Park.
- Additionally, paint striped lines in the southbound bike lane at Ramsdell/Underwood so that cars won't swerve around southbound cars turning left into Ramsdell Rd and potentially hit pedestrians and bicyclists. (This swerving to go around turning cars happens frequently).
- The coronavirus has caused a very large increase in foot traffic all along Rte 88 and many of its side loop roads, and includes many strollers and small children. Hopefully these measures will make it safer for all.

Thank you.