

## Bangor intersection has the most crashes in Penobscot County

Charles Eichacker | December 23, 2020 | [Click here to view online.](#)



Bangor-area transportation officials are considering improvements that would lessen the number of crashes at the intersection of Odlin Road and Interstate 395 in Bangor, which had the most crashes of any intersection in Penobscot County from 2017-19. Credit: Linda Coan O'Kresik / BDN

Penobscot County's most crash-prone intersection in recent years has been the busy confluence of I-395, Odlin Road and outer Hammond Street in Bangor. As a result, the city has started looking at how to make the interchange safer.

Between 2017 and 2019, 55 crashes were reported in the intersection — which has a traffic light and is heavily used by trucks going to nearby industrial sites and pedestrians and vehicles heading to nearby hotels and restaurants as well as Bangor International Airport — according to a new draft study from the Old Town engineering firm Sewall. However, just 18 percent of those crashes resulted in injuries.

The study was requested by the city of Bangor and commissioned through the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System, a regional nonprofit that evaluates projects that may receive state and federal funding.

In the study, Sewall recommended improving the flow of traffic through that intersection by adding double left-hand turning lanes in two areas: on the eastbound section of Hammond Street and the southbound section of Odlin Road.

The firm also recommended adding rumble strips onto I-395 westbound and the exit ramp from the southbound lanes of I-95, as the area where they merge was the location of a significant portion of the crashes.

More than half of the crashes in that intersection involved one vehicle striking the rear-end of another, and 14 of those rear-end collisions happened as drivers had to rapidly reduce speed as they approached the intersection on westbound I-395, according to the most recently available state data. During those same years, another 17 crashes happened in a neighboring intersection, as drivers exited the southbound lanes of nearby I-95 southbound and merged onto I-395 westbound.

Other crashes from those years in the Odlin Road and I-395 intersection were the result of drivers running red lights, sideswiping other vehicles or running off the road.

Representatives from Sewall and the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System presented the draft report at a meeting of the Bangor City Council's infrastructure committee on Tuesday night and will incorporate any public comments into the final version.



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The city would then be able to request state and federal funding for the project, and the regional transportation group would evaluate it and decide whether to move into the queue of regional projects to help fund, according to Dianne Rice-Hansen, transportation project manager at the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System. If it goes through that process, the “very earliest” it could be started is 2024, she said.

It would cost between \$1.5 million and \$2 million to add the double turning lanes on Odlin Road and Hammond Street, according to preliminary estimates in the Sewall study.

As part of the study, the firm considered how several different approaches would change the intersection over the next decade. For example, it modeled how converting the intersection from a traffic light to a roundabout would affect traffic, but it found that change could actually add new delays and would be more expensive, at an estimated cost of \$4 million to \$5 million.