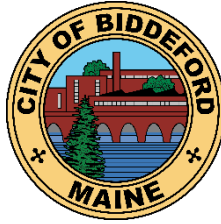

CITY OF BIDDEFORD, MAINE

From: James Bennett, City Manager
City of Biddeford, Maine
205 Main Street
Biddeford, Maine 04005



Phone:
207-284-9313

Email:
james.bennett@biddefordmaine.org

PRESS RELEASE

Biddeford Transportation Alternatives and South Street Connections Study

Final Public meeting November 28 on proposed South Street connection to Biddeford Exit 32

BIDDEFORD (November 9, 2022) — Since last fall, a study has been underway in Biddeford to consider the benefits and costs of transportation improvements in the area around Turnpike Exit 32. These include adding a new road linking the southbound Exit 32 Turnpike ramp and Route 111 to South Street via the new Maine Water Company road west of downtown. The study was initiated by the City of Biddeford but jointly funded by the City, the Maine Turnpike Authority, and MaineDOT.

On Monday, November 28 at 6 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers and via Zoom, the public will hear final draft recommendations regarding a new road and have the chance to speak up regarding pros and cons. The link to the meeting is

<https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/94908729674?pwd=b0VoMVh4amlWFSR0lzc2tqVlQydz09> (Webinar ID #949 0872 9674, Passcode #437527). Participants will be able to ask questions and make comments live, either in the Council Chambers or via Zoom. For those who may not be able to comment at the meeting, a draft report will be available at www.biddefordmaine.org/rte111alternativesstudy, and comments can be made online or dropped off at City Hall through December 9, 2022.

Maine Turnpike Authority currently plans to upgrade Exit 32 in 2028, which will allow southbound travelers heading towards Sanford to exit farther west on Route 111. This will reduce traffic at the Route 111 intersections at Exit 32, Walmart, Home Depot and Gateway Plaza, and Biddeford Crossing. It also would provide the opportunity to link a new southbound ramp and Route 111 to the new Maine Water Company road ending on South Street.

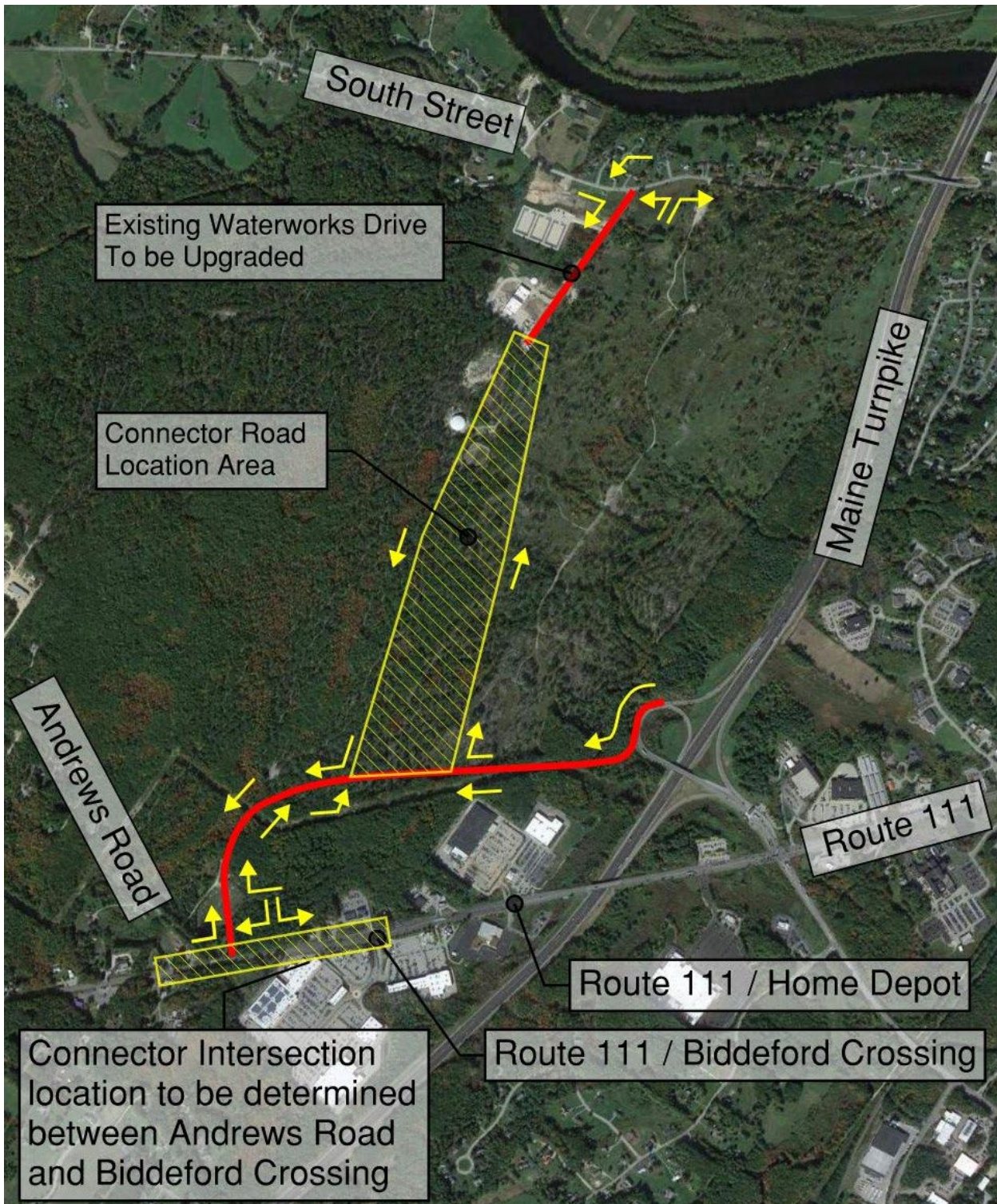
According to Greg Mitchell, Economic Development Director for Biddeford, the City is assessing the transportation benefits of the Maine Turnpike Exit 32 Ramp Extension and the South Street Connector with other major planned downtown transportation projects to improve community-wide mobility, including bicycle, pedestrian and green space livability enhancements. A key component of this work is to reduce the amount of non-local vehicular traffic using local streets to access the Maine Turnpike and other key corridors.

“Two major efforts are underway right now,” Mitchell said. “One is transportation-based, with a focus on improving people’s ability to safely and enjoyably bike and walk in town. We are also looking to enhance existing transit service, which includes existing free shuttle bus service looping through the downtown and Route 1 and Main Street in Saco. There will be a strong emphasis on greenspace and downtown livability,” he explained. “The second effort is the Future Land Use section of the new Comprehensive Plan. The Comp Plan is still very much in progress, working toward resident-identified goals of conserving the City’s natural resources and rural landscapes, concentrating housing and services to reduce the need to drive, and establishing vibrant neighborhoods.”

Mitchell strongly encouraged those interested in the South Street study to view a pair of PowerPoint presentations on these two planning efforts, which were presented at a recent City Council-Planning Board work session. Both are available on the Biddeford Route 111 Transportation Alternatives/South Street Connections Study web page on the city web site: www.biddefordmaine.org/rte111alternativesstudy.

Since the last public meeting in June, additional analysis has been performed on current and future traffic flow, current and projected congestion, environmental resources affected by a new road, and other possible ways to manage congestion, including transportation system and demand management improvements. In considering alternatives, the study will also keep in mind what funding might be reasonably available for any future project.

For those who want to gain a more thorough understanding on the details and data that have informed this study, the draft alternatives report will be available on Friday, November 18 at www.biddefordmaine.org/rte111alternativesstudy. Those who want to receive a direct link to the report when it becomes available can provide their email address anytime via the comment link on that site. Comments on the report will be accepted through December 9, 2022.



Caption: Planned Maine Turnpike Exit 32 Southbound Exit Ramp extension with potential location of new connector road to South Street as proposed in Biddeford Transportation Alternatives and South Street Connections Study