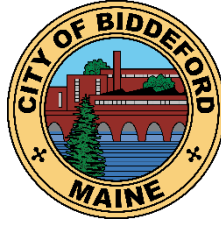


CITY OF BIDDEFORD, MAINE

From: James Bennett, City Manager
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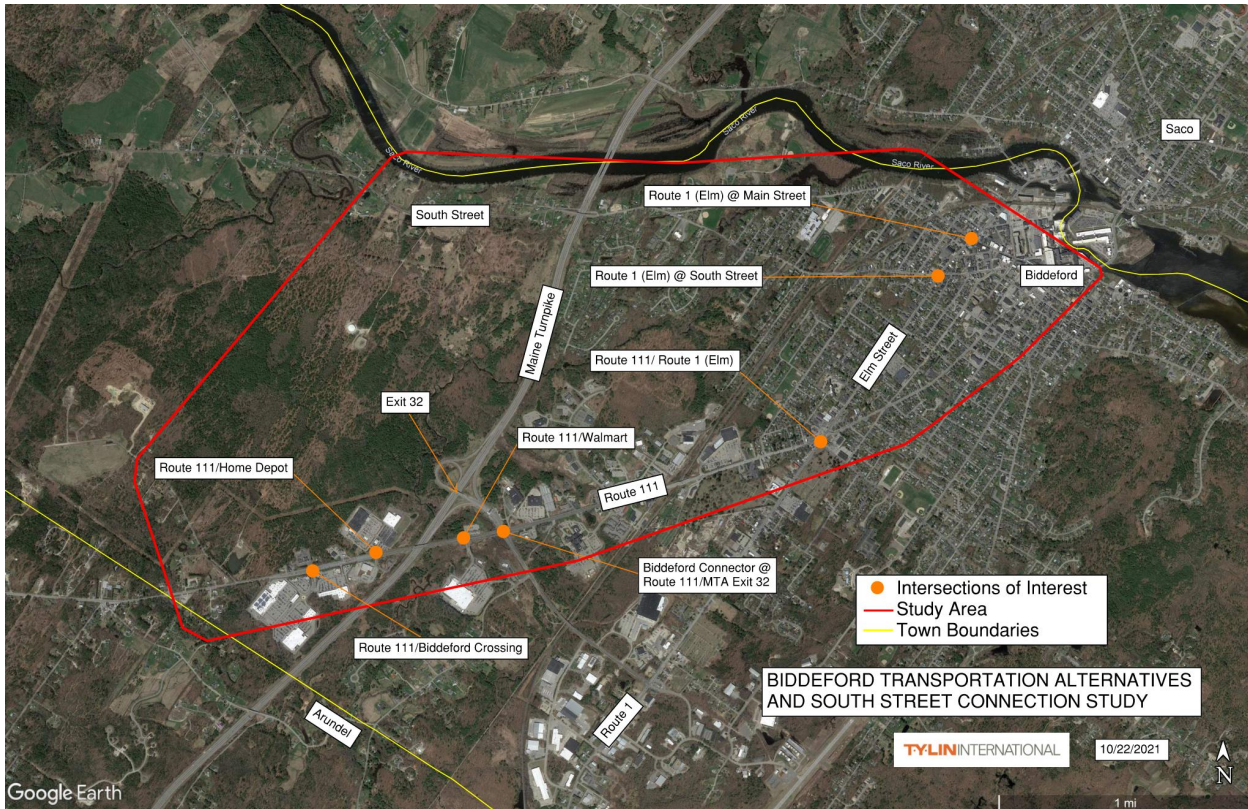


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PRESS RELEASE

Biddeford Public Meeting June 22 on South Street Connection to Exit 32
Maine Turnpike Authority plans to upgrade Exit 32 interchange



Study area: Biddeford Transportation Alternatives and South Street Connections Study

BIDDEFORD (June 3, 2022) – Those commuting along the Route 111 corridor in Biddeford regularly experience congestion, especially in the evening. City officials have expressed concern regarding the challenge of traveling to and from Maine Turnpike Exit 32 from the downtown. On Wednesday, June 22 at 6:00 pm the City of Biddeford will hold a second public meeting to hear more feedback on the options available to improve traffic flow in this area.

The Biddeford Transportation Alternatives and South Street Connections Study, which is assessing conditions along Route 111 from west of the Maine Turnpike to downtown Biddeford, is also looking at a potential new road connection running north-south between Route 111 and South Street west of the Turnpike. Partnering on this effort are the City of Biddeford, Maine Turnpike Authority, and the Maine Department of Transportation. A video providing an overview of the study is available now at <https://www.biddefordmaine.org/exit32alternativesstudy>.

The Turnpike Authority has already approved a plan to upgrade Exit 32, allowing travelers heading west along Route 111 to exit farther west along that route. This upgrade, scheduled to be completed in 2028, will reduce the number of vehicles in the Exit 32/Biddeford Connector/Route 111 intersection during peak travel times.

Since the last public meeting in December, data for multiple configurations has been gathered on current and future traffic flow, current and projected congestion, environmental resources affected by a new road, and other possible ways to manage congestion, include 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.

The public is being asked to weigh in on such questions as:

- Would a South Street connection be a more convenient route to downtown?
- How important is it to reduce traffic on May Street, a common short-cut route to Route 111?
- The area between the new Maine Water Company access road and Exit 32 is under consideration for an almost 200-unit modular housing development. How important is it to protect the remaining land from further development?
- Should a new road if built include sidewalks and bike lanes?
- Is the potential public cost of a new road and other improvements worth the traffic reduction over the long term?

A preliminary report of the study findings to date will be available the week prior to the public meeting at <https://www.biddefordmaine.org/exit32alternativesstudy>; the website is designed to make it easy for people to ask questions or make comments about the study directly online.

The public meeting will take place in the Biddeford City Hall Council Chambers from 6:00 p.m. through 7:30 p.m. on June 22. For those who prefer, there will also be a remote option via Zoom, with registration and access to the meeting available at https://biddeford.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_32zkzF6jRqy0xR8klgqqTg. Participants will be able to ask questions and make comments live both in person and online.

A final public meeting will take place this fall to present final study data and draft recommendations. Those interested in receiving meeting updates can sign up at <https://www.biddefordmaine.org/exit32alternativesstudy>.

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