

## Route 236 traffic proposals going public soon

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KITTERY, Maine -- A joint study between the towns of Kittery and Eliot to analyze unsafe parts of Route 236 is moving along, as the consultant speaks with nearby property owners and a public meeting is on the horizon.

The study, launched last fall, seeks to preserve existing roadway capacity, facilitate through-traffic and minimize congestion while providing safe vehicle access to new and existing development along Route 236.

The \$29,000 study, funded in part by the Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System, a tier of the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission, looked at Route 236 from Stevenson Road in Kittery to Beech Road in Eliot. It's estimated that 18,000 cars travel on the route per day.

Over the last several months, consultant Gorrill Palmer has analyzed the traffic speeds, turning movements, volume patterns and anticipated impacts from future development along Route 236. A team has developed various design and traffic management strategies to address identified issues, such as concerns raised around entering and exiting Aroma Joe's Coffee at 89 Route 236. That stretch does not have turning lanes or a traffic light for multiple entrances to businesses, or to turn onto Fernald and Bolt Hill roads.

Access to and from Fernald Road and Mac Kenzie Lane have been noted as troublesome and sometimes unsafe.

On Monday, Kittery Town Manager Kendra Amaral said Gorrill Palmer has given both towns preliminary draft recommendations, which could have potential impacts on property owners relative to adjusting entrances and exists as well as narrowing, widening, or shifting to make turning pockets work. They're currently in the process of speaking with property owners about the possible changes.

Amaral said the study has reaffirmed that in accordance with state Department of Transportation and federal standards, signalized intersections are not warranted on Route 236.

Based on the consultant's recommendations, Amaral said, Route 236 would see a "reconfiguration," rather than major facelift. She mentioned traffic-calming strategies, medians, turn pockets, landscaping and striping.

Route 236 is a state-owned road, which is scheduled to be paved within the next year. Amaral said there are no cost estimates yet for the work recommended by the study.

"Once we get estimates, we'll look to see if there is a way to seek state support, phasing, or if it requires contribution from the individual communities," she said.

Though no date has been picked, a public meeting on the study's results will be held in early summer.