

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New congestion study needs public input on South Berwick's future

SOUTH BERWICK - The Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC) has secured funding through the Kittery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a Feasibility Study to look at reducing traffic congestion in downtown South Berwick. SMRPC and the MPO have acquired the services of Sebago Technics to carry out the study.

SMRPC announced that a meeting would take place at 7 pm December 1 at the South Berwick Town Hall to hear from the public regarding their vision for the downtown.

According to SMRPC Transportation Director Tom Reinauer, "This is the very first step towards solving the problem of congestion in South Berwick. The goal of the study - which will take about nine months - is to identify several possible long-term solutions. We are just getting started, and are looking now for broad public input."

"Our first goal is for the public to agree on the specific outcome they are looking for in terms of the traffic situation in town. Once we understand that, we can all start considering solutions that move us in the right direction."

Roberta Orsini, Interim Town Manager for South Berwick, added that it is the study's ultimate goal to develop recommendations that can be enthusiastically endorsed by the town and stakeholders. "Given the challenges of the funding environment, we need to be able to agree on what the best and most realistic answer is if we want to be able to move to the next step."

Reinauer said that the next step would mean a go-ahead from the Maine

Department of Transportation to fund a full-fledged National Environmental Policy Act study, which is required if a project is to earn Federal funding.

The public is encouraged to attend this important meeting.