

Article on the January 20th Public Workshop on Seacoast Online

York County transportation workshop aims for improved Rte. 109 corridor

A more efficient Route 109 with a higher speed limit was identified at a Jan. 20 Sanford Town Hall workshop as a top priority to help economic growth throughout central York County.

By Casey Sullivan csullivan@seacoastonline.com January 21, 2011 9:23 AM

The workshop was put together as part of the Central York County Connections Study, a joint effort of the Maine Department of Transportation and Maine Turnpike Authority. The study's focus is on identifying areas to initiate long-term transportation changes in Kennebunk, Wells, Ogunquit, Sanford and surrounding towns.

Improvements to Route 109, which runs between Wells and Sanford, would promote better access from the Maine Turnpike to industrial buildings considered to be of high importance to the local economy, residents said at the workshop.

Sanford Town Engineer Charlie Andreson proposed the idea of creating a new corridor from the Maine Turnpike to where routes 109 and 99 meet. He said a "parallel" road to Route 109 would allow for a more direct passage to the turnpike. He also said that creating a new road would allow for a higher speed limit in the non-residential areas.

"That would make the most sense, but at the same time, it's preposterous," said Assistant Sanford Town Engineer Mike Casserly, referring to the wetlands the road would have to pass through if it were constructed.

The idea to add a connecting roadway from the Maine Turnpike to Route 109 was one recurring point of discussion amid a variety of concerns addressed at the workshop. Other issues discussed included improving public safety, identifying areas of environmental importance and changes in transit use.

In the end, residents at the workshop chose job growth as the most important goal for MDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority to work toward in making any changes to the county's transportation systems.

"(York County) doesn't have a very wide draw as far as job attraction in the region," Uri Avin, of the New York-based engineering and planning firm Parsons Brinckerhoff, said at the workshop.

Avin said as many as 55-percent of York County residents work outside the county.

The study's public outreach coordinator, Carol Morris, of Morris Communications, said the transportation study is now posted online at www.connectingyorkcounty.org and will be available for public input over the next four months.