

LOCAL NEWS

Newman Springs roundabout project moves forward

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MIDDLETOWN — Monmouth County is pushing ahead with plans to build a roundabout in front of Brookdale Community College in the Lincroft section of Middletown to alleviate congestion along Newman Springs Road.

The Board of Freeholders recently voted to hire Schoor DePalma, Manalapan, to act as inspectors to oversee construction, which is expected to start in the spring, said Monmouth County Engineer Joseph M. Ettore.

Schoor DePalma was awarded a \$96,035 contract. The county expects to award a contract for construction of the roundabout by the end of the year.

A roundabout is smaller than a circle, with slower-moving traffic.

Plans call for the work to start in March and be completed by July, Ettore said.

Ettore said construction could cause delays "but at no point do we anticipate full closure of county Route 520 (Newman Springs Road)."

The project, the result of a 24-month study of a 4-mile stretch of Route 520, is the first to advance from several studies to improve Newman Springs Road traffic flow.

County engineers are considering ways to improve traffic flow along Route 520 from the Holmdel boundary at Crawford's Corner Everett Road to Shrewsbury Avenue in Red Bank.

Building the roundabout will enable the county to remove the traffic signal in front of Brookdale, Ettore has said. Eliminating the signal will help prevent traffic westbound on Newman Springs Road from backing up, making it easier for motorists to make left turns off the county road.

The project will improve safety and traffic flow in front of the college. A roundabout decreases the potential for head-on and right-angle collisions and lessens the severity of crashes, Ettore has said.

The roundabout is designed for traffic to flow at 20 mph, and traffic entering the roundabout has to yield to the right.

The project was designed with an exit ramp into Brookdale for traffic traveling east on Newman Springs Road so vehicles will not have to enter the roundabout. There also will be a ramp for traffic leaving the college heading eastbound on Newman Springs Road.

Improvements to Route 520 have been under consideration for years, Ettore said. In 2002, hundreds of people turned out at a meeting to urge county officials to reject a consultant's preliminary recommendation to widen Route 520.

Members of the Lincroft Village Green Association, a residents group, did their own

research and found an expert in roundabouts, Michael J. Wallwork, president of a traffic engineering firm in Orange Park, Fla.

The county had considered several alternatives for the Newman Springs Road entrance into Brookdale, including building a jug handle, said Ettore, who has credited the Village Green Association for proposing the roundabout.

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