

Residents oppose proposal to widen Route 520

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CORRESPONDENT

Instead, they seek traffic control measures, speed limit reduction

MIDDLETOWN — Residents of the township's Lincroft section not only vigorously oppose widening any part of Route 520, is being considered by the county, but advocate a number of measures they contend would lessen and better control traffic through the area.

A two-hour public meeting on the proposal Tuesday night at Brookdale Community College Performing Arts Center drew about 150 residents from Lincroft and the surrounding area.

The Monmouth County Department of Engineering is considering elements of a planning and engineering study it commissioned that recommends, among other projects, widening

portions of Route 520 through Red Bank and in front of the Lincroft Elementary School.

The study's recommendations also include widening Middletown-Lincroft and Swimming River roads, and building jughandles at the Phalanx Road intersection and the Brookdale Community College entrance from the county road.

The Lincroft Village Green Association, composed of residents, presented a number of alternative recommendations.

The recommendations are based on a study by Charles R. Carmalt, a professional planner with expertise in traffic management, who was hired by the association.

The study also recommends some changes outside the area, including a new parkway exit at Tinton Avenue in Tinton Falls and a parkway overpass to reconnect the two sections of Riverdale Avenue that were separated by the parkway years ago. This will provide traffic bound for Brookdale with access to Swimming River Road.

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CAROL BAKER

MEMBER, LINCROFT VILLAGE GREEN ASSOCIATION

The recommendations call for reducing the 40-mph speed limit throughout the zone, from Garden State Parkway Exit 109 to the Brookdale entrance, and a series of traffic control measures throughout the area.

These include installing marked and signalized pedes-

trian crosswalks, improvements to most retail parking areas throughout the business zone, and the construction of several landscaped center aisles throughout the areas.

“The changes would emphasize that this is a village area and would encourage driv-

ers to slow down,” Carol Baker, an association member, said.

But Alex DeSevo, a local attorney, argued that the widening would violate the township's master plan by making the entire length of Route 520 a major through-route.

“We should be prepared to sue,” he said.

Mayor Patrick W. Parkinson, also attended the meeting, said the Township Committee opposes the widening but would support many of the changes.

“I believe that the county officials are prepared to listen to us,” he said, but suggested that the group's study be prioritized and supported by cost estimates of the various proposed improvements.

Tinton Falls Mayor Ann Y. McNamara quickly criticized these suggestions.

“It's like jumping out of the frying pan into the fire,” she said, noting that borough residents would be opposed to them because of the large traffic increase they would bring. She also said residents of Riverdale Avenue would not support the overpass.