

# OPINION

A10

## Don't stall road upgrade

If Monmouth County officials were looking for consensus on the Route 520 traffic study recommendations at last week's public hearing in Lincroft, they got one: Every resident in the room was against the plan.

For the sake of improved safety and traffic flow in the area, project opponents need to show a willingness to compromise.

The study, commissioned by the county Department of Engineering, made a series of recommendations that included widening portions of Route 520 — a major east-west artery — through Red Bank and in front of Lincroft Elementary School and building jughandles at the Route 520 intersections at the Brookdale Community College entrance and

Phalanx Road. It also proposed widening portions of Middletown-Lincroft and Swimming River roads.

Many of the concerns raised at the hearing, which was attended by about 150 members of the Lincroft Village Green Association, are well-founded, including maintaining the character of the neighborhoods. Suggestions offered by residents for improving vehicular and pedestrian safety are sound, including speed limit reductions and construction of more sidewalks and more visible crosswalks.

But some of their proposed alternatives, including the construction of new exits off the Garden State Parkway and Route 18, and a parkway overpass, offer no realistic chance for immediate relief. And the grand scale of those alternatives suggests a recognition that something substantial needs to be done, but at the expense of other neighborhoods.

One of the main reasons for the proposed improvements in Lincroft is to discourage motorists frustrated by the frequent backups on Route 520 from taking shortcuts through nearby residential streets. That should remain a priority. Half-measures at Middletown-Lincroft and Swimming River roads won't be sufficient; compromises at Phalanx Road and the Brookdale entrance seem more feasible.

The county and representatives from the residents' group need to work together to find sensible, affordable solutions. Failure to find common ground can only result in delays and possible costly litigation. The county should heed residents' legitimate concerns, but it should not lose sight of the need to smooth the ride for the 20,000 motorists who use that stretch of Route 520 each day.

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***Compromise is  
needed on  
proposed Route  
520  
improvements.***

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