

BASKING RIDGE, NJ — Somerset County's proposed roundabout at the intersection of Allen Road and Somerville Road is being opposed by the Bernards Township Committee.

The Committee passed a resolution on Tuesday night opposing the plan that was proposed as a solution to help improve safety at the four-way stop intersection and reduce accidents and traffic delays.

The County held a [Public Information Center virtually in June](#) presenting the roundabout which requires a "very long construction period of at least 12 months and the proposed construction will also require long detours at various times during construction," according to the township's resolution. Residents of the Hills development served by Allen Road expressed their opposition and concerns for the proposed roundabout.

"Basically, at the end of the day, we heard from a lot of the residents up in the hills and the vast super ultra-majority wanted absolutely nothing to do with this roundabout," said Mayor James Baldassare. "That being the case we are not going to go forward with it and it's really just that simple."

Somerset County had been engaging with the community on proposed safety improvements to the intersection of Allen Road and Somerville Road in Bernards since the spring of this year, and "appreciate all the input and ideas the public has provided," according to Somerset County Spokesman Nathan Rudy.

The County had previously received a federally funded grant from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) specifically for the design and construction of a roundabout at the intersection. What will happen next is up in the air.

"This week the Bernards Township Committee provided their official input on the proposed safety improvements and their recommendations this week, and the County are including their input at this time as we make decisions on the final outcome of this proposal," said Rudy.

Baldassare noted that certain things still need to be done to improve the intersection going forward such as adding a traffic signal.

"A traffic signal can also reduce accidents and delays but with less construction impact, shorter overall construction time and minimal detours if any," according to the resolution.

All the committee members voted yes to the resolution with Janice Fields abstaining. Fields said she abstained because she felt the roundabout was a better idea than having a streetlight.

"The roundabout keeps the flow of traffic continuous. But streetlights are more city-like," said Fields.

Sherry Nelson, who lives on Smoke Rise Road connecting to Allen Road, thanked the township committee for the resolution.

"My neighbors in the hills thank you also. We are all very upset about this. So, we are happy to have this passed tonight," said Nelson.

Nelson also noted that there are still safety issues along Allen Road such as speeding, cars driving around pedestrians in crosswalks, and cars driving over the double yellow lines to pass.

"We do need more police enforcement up there," said Nelson,

Baldassare said he would reach out to the police department to help cut down on speeding in the area.

Officer In Charge Jon Burger told Patch the police department had already stepped-up enforcement in the area and recently conducted a "pedestrian safety enforcement up there."

Here is some data provided by Bernards Police, on the roadway since June 1:

1. 385 traffic stops
2. 73 traffic enforcement/radar specific details

3. 201 motor vehicle summonses or warnings issued. This enforcement total is double the next most enforced roadway in town, which is Mt. Airy Road.
4. On Oct. 6, Traffic Services Division and Patrol Division conducted a crosswalk/pedestrian enforcement detail on Allen Road at Amherst Drive during AM rush hour (8 a.m. to 9 a.m.). The decoy officer was able to successfully cross 42 times, 4 violators were stopped and issued warnings, and one of the violators was also issued a summons for a cellphone violation while operating a vehicle.

"Moving forward the police department will continue to heavily enforce traffic violations on Allen Road. For officer safety, once the weather improves additional crosswalk/pedestrian enforcement details will be conducted. Traffic safety and enforcement on Allen Road is always a top priority for the police department," said Bernards Police Lt. Michael Sweeney.