

State Route 34 and County Route 537 intersection upgrades to start Fall 2017



(Photos: Peter Ackerman)

APP.COM - FREEHOLD - Monmouth County saved nearly \$4 million on a project to fix its "most congested intersection" that is expected to start this Fall in Colts Neck.

The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders awarded a \$17.5 million contract to upgrade the intersection at State Route 34 and County Route 537 to Rencor, Inc. of Somerville.

The Intersection of State Route 34 and County Road 537, which has been called the most congested in the county. Local officials say the upgrades will make traveling the road significantly faster for motorists. "It's impassible. You can't move on it," said Freeholder Director Lillian Burry, who began pursuing upgrades 19 years ago when she was a member of Colts Neck Township Committee. "It is truly amazing to me for it to come to fruition," she said.

New Jersey Department of Transportation still needs to sign off on the contract, because it involves upgrades to a state road.

Route 34 sees 20,000 vehicles daily while another 17,000 vehicles travel along Route 537 each day.

The project will:

- Widen Route 34 to six lanes approaching the intersection, including exclusive left and right turn lanes, two through lanes and two receiving lanes.
- Widen Route 537 to include an exclusive left turn lane, a through lane, a thorough/right turn lane and two receiving lanes.
- Replace the traffic signal and upgrade pedestrian improvements.
- Replace the Route 537 bridge located about 120 feet west of the intersection, which was initially built in 1920 and is in serious condition.
- Replace the Route 34 bridge located about 400 feet north of the intersection.
- Upgrade storm water management, aimed at minimizing environmental impacts in the area.

The project will take about **two years** to complete once it starts, but roads will remain open to motorists throughout, Monmouth County Engineer Joe Ettore said.

Colts Neck Mayor Russell Macnow told freeholders the township appreciated the effort after they unanimously approved the work. "This is going to go a long way to help the residents of Colts Neck and residents of the county," he said.