

# The Capital South County

## Task force decides on roundabout for Deale

By E.B. FURGURSON III Staff Writer

The task force studying options to improve traffic flow at the intersection of routes 256 and 258 in Deale has decided on a roundabout without service roads to adjacent businesses.

At a meeting last week, the panel of residents and business owners settled on that choice over two others presented by State Highway Administration officials.

Now SHA engineers must configure the concept to fit within the state right-of-way, avoid two wetland spots and streamline turning into and out of businesses in the area.

District transportation engineer Martin Cohn said that omitting the service roads on the east side of Deale-Churchton Road was the least costly option and avoids the environmental impacts of the other two.

But challenges do remain.

"The biggest concern is the access to Century 21 and the BB&T Bank," he said. "We really have to take a look at the circulation on that property that is further complicated by the bank's drive-through."

The circle idea surfaced four years ago as part of the Deale-Shady Side Small Area Plan. It suggested that a traffic circle would enhance the "entryway" to Deale as part of a facelift along 1.2 miles of Route 256 from the Rockhold Creek bridge to Bay Front Road.

A panel of residents had just begun studying options for the \$3 million project, such as sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and bike lanes, when the plug was pulled in January 2003 due to state financial woes.

But public pressure resurrected the traffic circle idea and funding for conceptual work and design was found last year.

"We have the design money. Now we have fight for the funding to build it," said Del. Bob Costa, R-Deale, a member of the task force.

Funding to finish the circle, likely the same size as the one on Route 2 in Lothian, will come from the state's new "Priority Places" program, which supplanted the Neighborhood Conservation Program slashed last year.

Mr. Cohn dismissed suggestions that installing a traffic light at the intersection would be quicker and cheaper, saying congestion and safety are not concerns there, according to state standards.

More than 9,000 cars passed through the intersection last year.

Panel member Richard Worth, who headed the transportation committee during SAP deliberations and backs the roundabout, said a traffic light, aside from looking bad with all the poles and wires, "only protects those willing to stop. Too many consider it a curiosity ... A yellow light is a signal to speed up instead of waiting another two minutes."

He's convinced that a traffic circle will force everyone to slow down.

"It is a winner all the way around," he said. "It will look better and work better."

---

pfurgurson@capitalgazette.com

*Published June 24, 2004, The Capital, Annapolis, Md.  
Copyright © 2004 The Capital, Annapolis, Md.*