

West Windsor Bicycle & Pedestrian Alliance

Sept. 12, 2006

Board of Trustees

Ken Carlson,
President
Chris Scherer,
1st Vice President
Susan Conlon,
2nd Vice President
Meg Chicco,
Secretary
Sandy Shapiro,
Treasurer
Bruce Ellsworth
Janet Greenman
Daryl McMillan
Alison Miller

Advisory Board

Dan Gerstenhaber,
Chairman,
West Windsor Bike Fest
Alan Hershey,
Chairman,
NJ Trails Association
Barry Keppard,
Transportation Planner,
Greater Mercer TMA
Giuliano Chicco
Web consultant
Robert Kenny, Esq.,
Counsel

To All Concerned:

About twenty residents turned out on a cold and rainy evening on September 5th 2006 for an awareness-raising and educational walk along the "S" curve on Alexander Road in West Windsor by the D&R Canal. The walk was sponsored by the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance (WWBPA) <http://www.princetonol.com/groups/wwbpa> and was intended to provide an opportunity for local residents to brainstorm about potential improvements to this notoriously dangerous stretch of roadway. There have been numerous automobile accidents in this section of road, particularly in wet road conditions. Furthermore, there is no bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure whatsoever along the Alexander Road S curve, making navigation of this road by bicycle or by foot particularly hazardous.

Among the participants at the Sept. 5th event were five Trustees of the WWBPA, four members of the West Windsor Town Council, a candidate for Town Council, the Chairman of the Princeton Sidewalk and Bikeway Advisory Committee, a transportation planner from the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association and residents of West Windsor, Princeton, and Lawrenceville. West Windsor Township has recently made some interim improvements to the roadway, namely the re-stripping of the lines of the road, and other future interim plans include the addition of overhead lighting at two locations on the curve. West Windsor Township has also approved funding for longer term improvements, which will occur over the course of three years, starting with an initial engineering study. The WWBPA and area residents have been advocating for improvements to be made to the roadway since the tragic death of Rebecca Annito in an automobile accident at the S curve in the fall of 2005. Although we are glad to see the re-stripping of the road and plans for some additional improvements, the WWBPA thought it would be important to walk the S curve with area residents in order to come up with a series of recommendations for both short-term and long-term improvements for the roadway. The collected recommendations of the participants are as follows:

Short-term improvements:

- Include traffic calming measures to reduce the speed of traffic, which in general is too fast for the curve. Suggestions would include the placement of flexible plastic pylons along the center line of the road.
- Conduct a traffic study as soon as possible with the aim of reducing the speed limit.
- Place a flashing yellow caution light as you approach the curve from either direction.
- Increase the density of reflectors along the lane divider and add reflectors along the road edges.
- Cut branches along the south side of Alexander Road to make the existing dirt path more accessible.
- Add road surface treatments to create a less slippery roadway.
- Include Princeton University as a stakeholder in both interim and long-term improvements to the roadway.

Long-term improvements:

- Develop a macadam off-road pedestrian path on the south-side of the road that would extend from the existing path at the Princeton border to Canal Pointe

The West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to promote bicycling and walking in West Windsor Township, emphasizing access, education, mobility, and safety

P.O. Box 625, West Windsor, New Jersey 08550
www.princetonol.com/groups/wwbpa

- Blvd. ADA compliance for this path would have to be taken into account to ensure handicap accessibility.
- Construct bike lanes on both sides of the road, with connectivity to Princeton and to Canal Pointe Blvd.
 - Maintain the S curve but make changes to create a safer roadway environment for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. There is a fear that straightening the road would increase travel speeds. In fact, there was a suggestion to make the curves a little tighter (increased road curvature) to make motorists slow down even more.
 - Narrow the travel lanes to slow traffic.
 - Include lighting for both the roadway and for pedestrians. Pedestrian-scale lighting would encourage both bicycling and pedestrian activities and would increase the feeling of safety and security.
 - Develop a dedicated bicycle-pedestrian path closer to the Dinky rail line that could serve as an additional route for residents to travel safely by bicycle or by foot in this area of the township. Such a path would not obviate the need for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations along the S-curve, but would provide an additional safe route for bicyclists and pedestrians in this area of the township. The WWBPA has been advocating for such a dedicated bicycle-pedestrian route between the D&R Canal and the Princeton Junction Train Station with a dedicated bicycle-pedestrian bridge over Route 1 in the vicinity of the Dinky Rail Line. A petition with over 500 signatures in favor of this bridge and path can be found at <http://www.petitiononline.com/rt1brdg/petition.html>. The DOT has agreed to conduct a feasibility study for the bicycle-pedestrian bridge and path as part of the Penns Neck Bypass project.
 - Organize an Alexander Road Curve Coalition that would be involved in the process to improve the roadway. This Coalition, as suggested by a member of Town Council, could meet quarterly or semi-annually with prominent stake-holders, namely representatives from the WWBPA, the Princeton Sidewalk and Bikeway Advisory Committee, as well as West Windsor Township, Princeton Borough and Township, Princeton University, Mercer County and NJDOT.

We know that the long-term improvements will take time, officially up to three years, but we would strongly suggest that the timetable for the road improvements be expedited as much as possible for this dangerous section of roadway. The recommendations for improving this roadway will provide not only safer access but hopefully encourage more people to access this roadway by bike or on foot, for purposes of commutation and recreation.

There was also considerable interest for a regional meeting of bicycle and pedestrian advocates to focus on common areas of concern such as the Alexander Road S curve. It was offered that the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association will organize such a regional meeting in the coming months.

We hope that we can all work together to help make these much needed changes to this heavily traveled and dangerous stretch of road and make this roadway more accessible and safe for travel by all modes of transportation. We feel this walk was successful in achieving our goal of getting feedback from area residents on improving this roadway. Additional walks are planned. The next one will be Tuesday, October 10th at 8AM, where we will “commute” by foot from the Sherbrooke development across from the Acme on Rt. 571 to the Princeton Junction Train Station. We hope to be joined once again by concerned residents and town officials.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Carlson,
President, West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance.