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Members of West Windsor Township Council  
Gary Davies, Transportation Consultant for West Windsor  
John Madden, Transportation Consultant for West Windsor

The West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance (WWBPA) is concerned about bicycle and pedestrian facilities and safety in the Princeton Junction Redevelopment Area (RA). We sent a memo to the Planning Board, Township Administration and Township Council outlining our bicycle and pedestrian recommendations on Jan. 22 and presented it to the Planning Board that evening. This memo is in response to the comments made by Transportation Consultant Gary Davies at that meeting.

**Bike Lanes**

Goal Four of the Redevelopment Plan stresses that the RA be bicycle-friendly. We strongly feel that to make the RA bicycle-friendly, bike lanes must be included on all roads in the RA, as stated in our memo of Jan. 22. WWBPA recommends bike lanes for all arterial and collector roads. In the current plans, only Washington Road is shown having bike lanes, although at the Jan. 22 meeting Mr. Davies stated that Vaughn Drive will also have bike lanes (we welcome this change). We feel strongly that Alexander Road must have bike lanes as well since it is a major access road into the RA. Mr. Davies also commented that, since all other roads in the RA are low-volume local roads and will have on-street parking, they should not have bike lanes because of a potential conflict between the bikes and parked cars. We'd like to address these comments.

We contend that the roads within the RA are not local roads from a usage standpoint, particularly during peak commuting hours. On page 107, the main street promenade and the road sections connecting Alexander Road to Vaughn Drive through the roundabout are also listed as collectors (as Vaughn Drive is), rather than local roads. Following our recommendation that arterial and collector roads have bike lanes, these roads should have bike lanes. This need is particularly clear for Main Street (listed on page 107 as a minor collector) and

the Station Road loop which will comprise a major bike-commuting route carrying bicyclists from Washington Road, the Sarnoff east campus, and Vaughn Drive to the train platform area. Even the road sections listed as local on page 107 have characteristics (such as high density residential and retail development as well as large parking garages serving the train station) that defy comparison with existing local roads.

If we are serious about encouraging bike commuters, access to the train station must be made as safe as possible. With thousands of motorists driving through the RA on their way to and from the various parking garages, the roads within the RA will be busy during peak commuter hours and will function as collector roads between the parking garages and Alexander and Washington Roads. Moreover, this is precisely the time when bike commuters will be traveling through the RA, heading to the train platform area from various neighborhoods outside the RA. Therefore, bike lanes are needed on all roads within the RA for the safety of these bike commuters, especially when it is dark during commuting hours.

In addition, the Main Street area will be a major destination for those adults and children who wish to bicycle to its many retail stores and community attractions. These more casual bicyclists are likely to be uncomfortable riding in traffic, so bike lanes are necessary to allow bicyclists of all abilities to travel safely around the RA.

With respect to Mr. Davies' comment about the relative lack of safety for bicyclists when combining bike lanes with on-street parking: This is simply not true. Several transportation planners with expertise in bicycle/pedestrian planning, with whom we have consulted, say it is generally accepted that it is safer to have bike lanes on roads with parallel parking than to force bicyclists to operate in the travel lane. A 2005 study funded by the City of Cambridge, MA (available on its Web site\*) concludes bike lanes "were effective at influencing bicyclists to ride farther away from parked cars than when no pavement markings were present." Also, in "before and after" surveys, the Cambridge Study found that the presence of bike lanes dramatically increased drivers' awareness of bicyclists on the street. There are countless examples of bike lanes on roads with on-street parking throughout the country.

In Philadelphia alone, there are over 200 miles of streets with bike lanes, and most are streets with parallel parking. Since streets in the RA will either be reconstructed or represent new construction, care must be taken to optimize the road design. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommends a minimum width of 12' for the combined parking and bike lane, and preferably 13' or 14'. There is a safety concern because of the door zone (the area where an opening door poses a hazard to a bicyclist). One solution is New York City's 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Complete Street design, which moves the bike lane next to the sidewalk and puts the parking next to traffic. Alternatively, Charles Carmalt, Pedestrian and Bicycle Coordinator for Philadelphia, suggests marking the bike lane 6' wide and the parking lane 7' wide, rather than the conventional 5' and 8' widths. Some cities are experimenting with a variety of markings to establish a 2' buffer between the parking lane and the bike lane. This can be achieved by providing two parallel stripes, one 7' from the curb and the second 9' from the curb. Bike lanes on roads with on-street parking also provide other benefits: They help guard against drivers sideswiping parked cars, and they provide a small, clear zone for pedestrians walking out between parked cars.

### **Pedestrian Promenade**

Mr. Davies commented that a pedestrian promenade won't succeed since potential store owners won't like the lack of car traffic outside their stores. We strongly disagree with this viewpoint. There are many examples of successful pedestrian promenades; one is the highly successful and vibrant Church Street Marketplace in Burlington, Vermont. Having a pedestrian promenade on Main Street

The WWBPA is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to promote bicycling and walking in West Windsor Township and neighboring communities, emphasizing access, education, mobility, and safety.

will create a unique retail experience, where adults and children can safely walk and shop. In contrast, having vehicles circulating in the central area of the RA will isolate the narrow public space from the shops, rendering it pedestrian-unfriendly, perhaps even unusable for small children, depending on how narrow it actually is. Pedestrian improvements can alternatively consist of traffic calming by centering the promenade between the bordering streets, thus creating a town square, since the current straight thoroughfare between Washington Road and Vaughn Drive encourages high speed traffic. Vehicles should then be routed one-way around the public space, with appropriate crossings at each block, at both cross-street intersections and on the sections without road intersections, at equal intervals.

We feel strongly about these recommendations and hope that they are followed. Providing bike lanes throughout the RA will encourage bike commuting and the use of bicycles for pleasurable trips to Main Street. A pedestrian-only promenade will create a unique sense of place and will draw many potential customers to a safe and vibrant retail area. If you have any questions about our recommendations, please do not hesitate to ask us.

Sincerely,

Ken Carlson  
President, on behalf of the Board of Trustees

\* [http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/et/bike/bike\\_hamp\\_study.pdf](http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/et/bike/bike_hamp_study.pdf)