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REPORT OF THE WEST WINDSOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ALLIANCE TO WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP COUNCIL ON THE PRINCETON JUNCTION REDEVELOPMENT PLAN February 20, 2009

The Board of Trustees of the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance (WWBPA) has been reviewing the Redevelopment Area plan for Princeton Junction with specific focus on its elements related to bicycle- and pedestrian-friendliness. Based on the plan released to the public on January 13, 2009, we submitted two memos outlining our recommendations to the West Windsor Township Planning Board, dated January 22 and January 28, and participated in the Planning Board review meetings on January 22 and 29. In addition, we participated in the Township Council meeting on February 2, and submitted two memos to Township Council, dated February 9 and February 18, updating our recommendations based on public comment by officials and professional staff, as well as meetings with individual Township Council members.

Executive Summary

WWBPA has been following the progress of the Princeton Junction Redevelopment Plan with a mixture of hope and concern: hope to achieve at long last significant improvement in the ability of residents to walk and bike safely around town and concern that this promise, central to public acceptance of redevelopment, will not be realized.

We will recognize success when we see a significant increase in the number of bicycle and pedestrian commuters, and when adults and children of all ages and abilities feel safe walking or bicycling to the Main Street promenade area.

Goals

Since the redevelopment plan will overlay or supersede the West Windsor Master Plan, we recommend the inclusion of its goals B and C regarding alternative circulation modes and networks, with the same weight as roadway requirements (i.e., no more or less conceptual or illustrative than roadways).

We recommend that the WWBPA be consulted in the design of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Main Street Promenade

As currently shown, the Main Street Promenade area is unfriendly to pedestrians, and will encourage high-speed through traffic, since it serves the commuter rail station parking garages as well as retail and local residential traffic, and lacks bike lanes or other traffic-calming features. We recommend centering the promenade between bordering streets, creating a “town square”, and routing traffic one-way around this public space. We recommend no streets cross through the promenade, leaving a contiguous open space and four local roads that end in a T intersection on the square.

Bike Lanes

Consistent with the Master Plan, we recommend bike lanes on all collector and arterial roads. Since the last master plan update, many jurisdictions have implemented, and we recommend, a new configuration that places bike lanes between the sidewalk and parked or moving cars, and includes a two-foot marked buffer space between the bike lanes and the cars.

Road classification determines the need for bike lanes. If the above-mentioned “town square” concept is accepted for the promenade area, the only roads designated as local in the Redevelopment Area (RA) would be the four roads that end in a T intersection on the square. All other roads are either collector or arterial roads, since they are used to serve regional commuter parking garages, as well as commercial retail and/or office traffic, rather than exclusively local neighborhood residents. If these local roads do not end at the Main Street Promenade, but rather continue through the promenade to serve the parking garages, they should be designated collector roads.

NJDOT's Bicycle Compatible Roadways and Bikeways guidelines recognize three groups of bicyclists: advanced, basic and children. Advanced cyclists often prefer bikeway facilities on the roadway, while basic and child bicyclists prefer bikeways that are physically separated from the roadway. We believe the recommended configuration will be a superior alternative for all bicyclists and will obviate the need for multi-use paths parallel to the streets.

Bicycle Parking

We recommend following NJDOT Bicycle Compatible Roadways and Bikeways design guidelines for bike lockers and racks. In addition, WWBPA recommends bike racks on each block within the Main Street area and for each separate office or retail building within the redevelopment area.

Multi-Use Trails

Multi-use trails, rather than pedestrian-only paths, are recommended through the Acme woods, to the Penn's Neck neighborhood, over the train tracks at Washington Road and in the tunnels under the train tracks. In addition, multi-use trails, rather than bicycle-compatible shoulders, are recommended adjacent to all BRT-dedicated roadways.

Multi-use trails do not substitute for bike lanes due to the higher risk of collisions at driveway and roadway intersections, among other reasons. Per the Master Plan, they are recommended “along roads with more than two travel lanes,” in “locations with relatively few driveway and roadway intersections” and “along railroad tracks, in parks, along river or stream banks, and similar areas.” These criteria match some sections of the February 3 Conceptual Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan but not others.

A multi-use trail shown on Figure 4 of the Master Plan, Bikeway and Multi-Use Trail Facility map, connecting the Ellsworth Shopping Center to Stobbe Lane, should be added to the RA Plan.

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.

Sidewalks

Where there are no multi-use trails, we recommend sidewalks on all new and existing roads, meeting the standards of the Smart Transportation Guidebook and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Open Space Access and Connectivity to Existing Neighborhoods

We recommend that every effort be made to provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access between existing neighborhoods and the Redevelopment Area. We recommend that any developer of properties within the Redevelopment Area contribute to funding bicycle and pedestrian improvements (i.e., bike lanes, sidewalks and multi-use trails) that will affect these connections.

The RA open space adjacent to the Penn's Neck neighborhood (District 5) is isolated from the Main Street area residents by the Vaughn Drive arterial plus the BRT roadway. Access should be improved by extending the recommended multi-use trail from the Penn's Neck neighborhood along the Dinky tracks to meet the path along Vaughn Drive shown on the Bicycle/Pedestrian plan. Pedestrian crossings from the town center area to this path must be designed to enable safe access to the open space.

The plan shows a trail from behind Acme through woods owned by Schlumberger. If Schlumberger remains opposed to public access to their property, we recommend routing the bicycle and pedestrian multi-use trail from the Acme shopping center to Borosko Place.

The intersection of Scott Avenue and Wallace Road, at the edge of the RA, is a dangerous intersection for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. The pedestrian crossing needs to be relocated, and the dangerous pedestrian issues on Scott (extremely wide road, no sidewalks on lighted side of street, no connection to area where it is safe to cross) need to be addressed quickly.

If a cul de sac is constructed where Old Bear Brook Road meets Alexander Road, we recommend assuring continued bicycle and pedestrian access.

AMENDMENTS

WWBPA recommends the following amendments to the Plan:

Page 29, Goal 1, Policy 2, change from "roads" to "**roads and bikeways necessary**".

Add: "Per the Master Plan, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are considered to be an integral part of the roadway structure, and as such are an important part of the capital improvement program. Cost of such facilities should be included in the Off-Tract Road Assessment Program."

Page 31, Goal 2, Policy 1.b.: Context sensitive road design and traffic calming techniques should be employed to soften the impact of regional through traffic in residential areas of the Redevelopment Area.

Add: "The only roads designated as local in the RA are the four roads that end in a T intersection on the square. All other roads are either collector or arterial roads. If these local roads do not end at the Main Street Promenade, but rather continue through the promenade to serve the parking garages, these roads shall be designated collector roads."

Page 34, Goal 4, amend to:

“The Redevelopment Plan will remediate the traffic congestion within, around and through the redevelopment area, will incorporate Vaughn Drive as a through-traffic collector, will utilize traffic-calming on roadways where potential conflicts with bicyclists and/or pedestrians exist, will include sidewalks and bicycle lanes, and will encourage public transit.”

Page 34, Goal 4, Policy 2, amend to:

“Street, roadway and associated bikeway infrastructure will be planned and constructed in an orderly sequence that is tied to both the staging of land development within the Redevelopment Area and the availability of funding as discussed in Policy 6. The table entitled Required Roadway and Bikeway Infrastructure for Redevelopment Area Districts, the map entitled Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan and seven maps entitled Required Roadway and Bikeway Infrastructure illustrate the roadway and bikeway segments and intersection improvements that will be required in conjunction with development in each of the Redevelopment Districts.”

Please note the attached revised Required Roadway and Bikeway Infrastructure for Redevelopment Area Districts, updated Bicycle / Pedestrian Plan and staging maps revised to include recommended bicycle facilities.

Page 35, Goal 4 Policy 2.e, amend to close Old Bear Brook to **“vehicular traffic, while maintaining pedestrian and bicycle access,”**

Page 36, Goal 4 Policy 4, change to:

Continuous sidewalk/trail and bicycle connections shall be provided throughout the Redevelopment Area and to adjacent neighborhoods and open space.

- a. Bicycle lanes as part of the street structure shall be installed for all roads designated as arterials or collectors, according to the definitions in the Township Master Plan’s Circulation Element. Based on these definitions, roads or streets shall be designated as collectors or arterials if they regularly carry traffic that serves other than local residents, for example commuters going to or from parking garages, or customers of retail merchants. Bike lanes will be constructed in a configuration that places the bike lanes between the sidewalk and parked or moving cars, and includes a two-foot marked buffer space between the bike lanes and the cars.**
- b. The Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan details the required pedestrian and bicycle facilities, which shall be constructed concurrently with the associated or adjacent roadway.**
- c. A non-automobile connection, wide enough to serve two-way bicycle and pedestrian traffic, between east and west sides of the railroad is essential to creating a sense of place in Princeton Junction.**
- d. Continuous and wide sidewalks and pedestrian ways shall be provided on both sides of all streets and roadways of the Redevelopment Area, including Route 571, to ensure that pedestrian circulation and mobility are enhanced throughout the area, meeting the standards of the NJDOT Smart Transportation Guidebook and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines. Multi-use trails can substitute for a sidewalk on one side of the street but not both.**
- e. Per NJDOT Bicycle Compatible Roadways and Bikeways design guidelines, bicycle storage**

lockers should be located near each boarding location, and bike racks should be located under a shelter. All facilities which provide parking to the public should provide parking for bicycles at the rate of one bicycle parking space per 10 automobile parking spaces for the first 100 parking stalls and one bicycle space for every 20 beyond that. In addition, sheltered bike storage racks shall be provided on each block within the main street retail area and for each separate office or retail building within the redevelopment area.

- f. Multi-use trails shall be constructed according to the Bicycle / Pedestrian Plan. Per the master plan guidelines, they are appropriate “along roads with more than two travel lanes”, in “locations with relatively few driveway and roadway intersections” and “along railroad tracks, in parks, along river or stream banks, and similar areas”, but they do not substitute for bike lanes, due to the higher risk of collisions at driveway and roadway intersections, among other reasons.
- g. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities shall be designed in consultation with the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance.
- h. Consistent with Goal 5, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods shall be constructed such that bicyclists and pedestrians have safe access to and from the Redevelopment Area.
 - I. Access to the Penn’s Neck neighborhood shall be improved by constructing a multi-use path from the Penn’s Neck neighborhood along the Dinky tracks to meet the multi-use path along Vaughn Drive, as shown on the Bicycle / Pedestrian Plan. Pedestrian crossings from the Main Street Promenade area to this path must be designed to enable safe access to the open space.
 - II. Pedestrian access to Berrien City and other adjacent neighborhoods shall be improved by narrowing the Scott Avenue roadway and affecting other necessary improvements to achieve continuous sidewalks and lighting on both sides of Scott Avenue between Wallace Road and Alexander Road. In addition, the pedestrian crossing at Scott Avenue and Wallace Road shall be relocated to the west side of Scott Avenue, crossing Wallace Road on the west side of the Kiss and Ride driveway, and continuous sidewalk connections shall be provided between this crossing and Scott Avenue. Sidewalks shall be provided on both sides of Wallace Road between Alexander Road and Route 571. Traffic calming on Wallace Road shall be further improved by the addition of bicycle lanes and a marked two-foot buffer, and a prominent mid-block crossing from the Station area across Wallace Road. Any new design of the Kiss and Ride on the east side of the tracks should minimize potential conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists by the extensive use of traffic-calming techniques.
 - III. Pedestrian and bicycle access to the neighborhoods bordering Bear Brook Road shall be maintained in the event a cul de sac is constructed on Old Bear Brook Road near Alexander Road, so that bicyclists and pedestrians have direct access from Old Bear Brook Road to Alexander Road.

Page 45, Goal 11, Policy 1, add:

“The Main Street Promenade will be centered between bordering streets, creating a town square, and traffic will be routed one-way around this public space. No streets will cross through the promenade, leaving a contiguous open space and four local roads that end in a T intersection on the square.”

Page 45, Goal 11, Policy 3, amend to:

Provide a layout of buildings, open spaces and parking lot edges that encourage pedestrian and bicycle circulation with sidewalk and pathway interconnections, including the use of a roadway configuration that places bike lanes between the sidewalk and parked or moving cars, and includes a two-foot marked buffer space between the bike lanes and the cars and provides connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods.”

Page 53, add:

Goal 15

In keeping with the Township Master Plan Circulation Element Goals B and C, encourage alternate circulation modes and networks (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, mass bus transit) to minimize local auto traffic trips, and to increase opportunities for recreational bicycling and walking. Create a pedestrian and bikeway system that makes walking and cycling a viable alternative to driving, and which improves bicyclist and pedestrian safety.

Policy

1. This plan incorporates by reference all policies of the Township Master Plan Circulation Element Goals B and C.

2. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be designed in consultation with the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance.

Page 99, RP-7 District intensity, bulk and other regulations, change “pedestrian paths to **“multi-use trails.”**”

Table entitled Required Roadway Infrastructure for Redevelopment Area Districts:

Change title to **Required Roadway and Bikeway Infrastructure for Area Districts**

Add column, titled “Adjacent Multi-Use Trail Width (feet)”

Add rows for Multi-Use Trails:

District 5 Bikeways (heading)

Multi-Use Trail from Penn’s Neck Neighborhood

District 7 Bikeways (heading)

Multi-Use Trail from Ellsworth Shopping Center to Stobbe Lane

Cross Tracks Multi-Use Trail

Acme Shopping Center to Station Multi-Use Trail

Sarnoff Woods Multi-Use Trail

Changes with additional data are provided in revised table.