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Group's planned walk to target dangerous WW street crossing

By: Molly Petrilla , Staff Writer

Clarksville Road considered the likely scene of the next pedestrian fatality

WEST WINDSOR — With its high speed limit and lack of crosswalks, the stretch of Clarksville Road between Avalon Watch and Village Shoppes could likely be the scene of West Windsor's next pedestrian fatality.

That is the view of the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance, which is sponsoring a group walk along the stretch of roadway at 6 p.m. Thursday.

The walk is meant to raise awareness of the busy section of road, which lacks pedestrian amenities such as crosswalks and street lights, alliance President Ken Carlson said.

"There's really no safe means to cross the street there, (but) you'll see people crossing and taking their lives into their own hands," said Mr. Carlson, who passes the area daily on his way home from work.

According to Mr. Carlson, the problem is "a complicated one," stemming largely from the NJTransit bus that lets Avalon Watch residents off across the street from their homes, forcing them to brave a crossing of the busy road.

While Mr. Carlson said county officials told him they are aware of the issue, they have also said that the high speed limit presents a challenge for calming traffic in the area, and it would therefore be difficult — and possibly pointless — to install a crosswalk.

Though he admits the area presents a "Catch-22," Mr. Carlson said he would like to see the county and township undertake "a real focus on the problem."

He added, "The problem exists, and people are at risk. There has to be some

way to create a solution. Leaving it the way it is is just a recipe for disaster. Someone's going to get killed."

Mr. Carlson said he has invited Avalon Watch residents, township and county officials and other members of the alliance to Thursday's event, which he scheduled for a time when the sun will have set and the bus will be dropping off passengers.

The group will be there "observing the conditions and hopefully brainstorming to address the situation," Mr. Carlson said, adding that the alliance will hold its monthly meeting following the walk.

The Clarksville Road event is the third walk the alliance has hosted this fall. The first took place at the Alexander Road S-curve on Sept. 5, and the second between Sherbrooke Drive and the Princeton Junction train station on Oct. 10. Mr. Carlson said the walks have drawn between 10 and 20 participants.

Following the Clarksville Road walk, Mr. Carlson said the alliance's next walk will likely take place in the spring at the Canal Pointe Boulevard crossing to MarketFair shopping center.

In the meantime, the alliance will continue to meet on the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. in the Township Municipal Center to brainstorm ideas for making the township more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.