

WEST WINDSOR & PLAINSBORO NEWS

Walking to the Park Now Easier

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Crossing Route 571 to get to Community Park just got a little easier, as the county installed “Walk” and “Don’t walk” indicators at the road’s intersection with Slayback Drive on April 11, and crosswalks are expected to be painted there in the next week or two, says West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance president Ken Carlson.

The recent renovations are part of the non-profit alliance’s recommendations for better bicycle and pedestrian access in that area to Community Park, which recently opened a dog park, and also is home to a skate park and the public pool. The intersection is heavily traveled by pedestrians and children, especially during the spring and summer months, Carlson says.

The other recommendations for the intersection — which include the need for a crosswalk across Slayback Drive itself, another crosswalk across 571 on the east side of the intersection, and a paved path connecting that crosswalk to allow people to cross Route 571 and access the community pool — were presented to the council in March.

And the alliance’s recent activity is just the beginning of a busy schedule of events hosted by the alliance this spring, including its first “West Windsor Walks” event of the year to be held on Tuesday, May 13, during the evening rush hour to point out difficult conditions that pedestrians and cyclists encounter along Bear Brook Road and at the crossing of the Alexander Road at Bear Brook Road/Vaughn Drive. The walk will begin at the Estates at Princeton Junction, run along Bear Brooke Road through the Windsor Haven development, and end at the intersection of Bear Brook and Alexander roads.

The improvements to the Slayback Drive and Bernt Midland Boulevard intersection were made after the alliance did a walk of the location in March. “We realized how bad the intersection really is,” Carlson said. “There’s also the Trolley Line Trail — the new bike trail that comes through Community Park and comes out and continues across 571,” he said.

On the list of the short-term recommendations the alliance made to council was the idea to take advantage of the county’s re-stripping program. “We have a very good relationship with the county engineer, and we asked him if he would consider putting this location on his list,” Carlson explains. In addition to needing more information, he also needed a letter from the township stating that officials supported the idea, which was done.

“We’re very excited to see the county make these changes,” Carlson said. “They were very prompt with these improvements. That will be the first really safe pedestrian crossing at Route 571 to get to Community Park.”

The additional recommendations to the township also include moving the push-button signal closer to the sidewalk at the intersection, so people on bicycles and in wheelchairs can access it more easily, he said. “For us, bicycle and pedestrian safety is a priority,” he says. “It isn’t a ‘nice to have.’ It’s a ‘must have,’ especially when children are involved,” he said.

In addition to the West Windsor Walks event, a slew of other events have been planned this spring. For a complete list of these events, to see the association’s newsletter, and to find out more about the recommendations for the Slayback/Route 571 improvements, log on to www.wwbpa.org.

