

Good news about Schalks Crossing bridge

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Silvia Ascarelli of WW Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance

The West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance is delighted that Plainsboro is working hard with Amtrak to replace the Schalks Crossing bridge by 2012 and to add bike lane and sidewalks on the bridge (The Princeton Packet, Aug. 21). This will be a major improvement for those who bike, jog and walk on the bridge, and will encourage others to walk or bike to Plainsboro Town Center.

But this is not the only area bridge that needs to be made friendlier for cyclists and pedestrians. We encourage Amtrak to begin planning the same improvements for the bridge over the Northeast Corridor Rail Line on Clarksville Road in West Windsor, particularly with the construction of the Jewish Community Center, the development of West Windsor Gardens (a 350-unit apartment complex off Clarksville Road), and improvements to Meadow Road. All will make the bridge even busier than it is today.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), in its 2007 study "Taming Traffic," warned of the dangerous conditions on the Clarksville Road bridge. And the 2008 West Windsor Master Plan Reexamination Report noted, "A pedestrian bridge should be installed on [the] Clarksville Road Bridge over the railroad."

Despite being barely wide enough for cars and including the dangerous S-curve that encompasses the bridge, pedestrians and cyclists brave crossing the bridge to many motorists' surprise and horror. The bridge is on a key route that is one of the busiest roads in the township, that ultimately links the Princeton Junction train station to Quaker Bridge Mall, and includes two schools. There is a very significant motivation to walk or bike along this road, but the bridge is the major obstacle.

Silvia Ascarelli of West Windsor

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