

# West Windsor Bicycle & Pedestrian Alliance

November 11, 2007

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## **Recommendations from October 9, 2007 educational walk of Cranbury-Wallace and Princeton-Hightstown Roads**

On October 9, 2007 during the evening rush hour, over thirty West Windsor residents, including four members of Township Council, took part in an educational look at the intersection of Cranbury-Wallace and Princeton-Hightstown Roads. The walk was organized by the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance (WWBPA) and was part of a series of public outreach walks, "West Windsor Walks," to examine conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists on local roads.

We were also joined by Mercer County Engineer, George Fallat. Mr. Fallat's presence was important since both Cranbury Road and Princeton-Hightstown Roads are county roads. The group assembled at the clock tower at PNC Bank and we proceeded to observe conditions at this very busy intersection. In the span of two hours, we watched over sixty bicycle and pedestrian commuters make their way through this intersection. We interviewed many of the commuters, and listened to their complaints, experiences and ideas. We witnessed two near misses where cars came very close to striking pedestrians. The group examined and discussed the serious flaws regarding the intersection with respect to access, mobility and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Also the group considered possible immediate short-term steps as well as potential larger-scale projects.

The intersection was explored a year ago by the WWBPA and recommendations were drafted and presented to the Township and the Township Council, the County and the State. Also, a letter pointing out the dangers of the intersection was sent to Mayor Hsueh by local resident Joshua Waterman (this letter has since been published in the WW-P News). In the past year, nothing has been done to improve conditions at this location. In the opinion of the WWBPA, the intersection of Cranbury-Wallace and Princeton-Hightstown Roads is the most dangerous intersection for pedestrians and cyclists in the township.

## **General Existing Conditions:**

The existing conditions for both pedestrians and cyclists at the intersection of Cranbury-Wallace Roads and Princeton-Hightstown Road are extremely dangerous. There is a striking lack of sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, and bike lanes on these busy roadways. The almost complete lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities represents a lost opportunity, since this intersection is a few hundred feet away from the Princeton Junction Train and an estimated 60-80 pedestrians

brave this intersection every rush hour on their way to and from the station. There is only one crosswalk at the intersection: on the south side, across Princeton-Hightstown Road. The crosswalk is not very visible, the pedestrian-activated crossing light does not work, and there is no curb cut or connecting sidewalk on the east side (the former gas station). There are no crosswalks across Cranbury and Wallace Roads, nor is there one on the north side of the intersection across Princeton-Hightstown Road, where many pedestrians cross and where there are curb cuts and sidewalks on either side of the road.

There are opportunities to improve the intersection, with a new Rite-Aid development on the southeast corner of the intersection. Sidewalks will be added along the frontage of the property on Princeton-Hightstown Road and Cranbury Road. Unfortunately, no other bicycle and pedestrian improvements to the intersection will come as a result of the development. Only a left hand turning lane from the bridge will be added, which will actually remove a curb in the middle of the road which pedestrians currently use as refuge. Also the County is working on their plans to improve Princeton-Hightstown Road, a long-term project that has been discussed for years but that has yet to result in any bicycle and pedestrian improvements to this road.

### Recorded observations and recommendations:

#### Observations:

- There is only one crosswalk painted in this intersection. The existing crosswalk is not very visible, there is no curb cut on the east side of the crosswalk, and the pedestrian-activated signal is not functional
- Sidewalk on north side of Wallace Road is in serious dis-repair
- Many pedestrians cross Princeton-Hightstown Road at north side of intersection where there are sidewalks but no crosswalk
- Many pedestrians cross Wallace Road from the north to the south side without the benefit of a crosswalk
- There are no sidewalks on the bridge over the Northeast Corridor Rail Line
- A pedestrian crossing in the only existing crosswalk was nearly struck by an automobile as the vehicle backed up
- A pedestrian was nearly struck by a car as the pedestrian crossed Cranbury Road. The car was making a right onto Princeton-Hightstown Road and did not stop as it made the turn. Claimed they did not see the pedestrian

#### Recommendations from participants:

##### Crosswalks:

- Stripe additional crosswalks at Wallace and Cranbury Raods, and at the north side, across Princeton-Hightstown Road. Use reflectors in crosswalks
- Improve existing crosswalk on south side of Princeton-Hightstown Road (add reflectors to stripes)

##### Sidewalks:

- Repair sidewalk along north side of Wallace Road from intersection to train station entrance
- Construct sidewalks along Cranbury Road from intersection to Sunnydale Way. County willing to give its right of way to township
- Construct sidewalks on bridge over the Northeast corridor rail line.

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## Traffic Calming:

- Slow speed of traffic on Princeton-Hightstown Road and on bridge
- Consider traffic calming on Cranbury Road. Mr. Fallat suggested that this could be a good candidate for a County grant

## General Pedestrian Safety:

- Repair non-functioning pedestrian activated signal; ensure that the push-button is accessible for those in a wheelchair
- Increase overhead street lighting
- Add bright yellow pedestrian crossing signage
- Improve sight distance for cars driving down the bridge by removing signs and trees on northwest corner of intersection
- Install "yield to pedestrian" signs at corners of intersections
- Place "no right turn on red" sign at the base of the bridge for eastbound cars approaching the intersection. Preventing cars from making a right on red will ensure the safety of pedestrians crossing at Wallace Rd.
- Add pedestrian refuge islands
- Curb cuts: All crossings need ADA-compliant curb cuts. Check existing curb cuts to determine ADA compliance

## Complications:

- The intersection is under the jurisdiction of the State
- The intersection is non-ADA compliant. Once any improvements are made to the intersection, a major overhaul of the intersection would have to be initiated

## Opportunities:

- Apply for state funding to improve bicycle-pedestrian access to transit facilities

## Missed Opportunities:

- The County and Township missed an opportunity to negotiate pedestrian improvements to the intersection as a result of the Rite Aid development.

## Next Steps:

- County: County Engineer George Fallat will convene a meeting with Township Engineer, NJ DOT representative, Jim Coyle, Ken Carlson, and Heidi Kleinman to discuss what can be done
- Township Council: Review site improvement plans for Rite Aid to make sure that the proposed changes do not put pedestrians further at risk

There is a dramatic need to make immediate improvements to pedestrian and bicycle safety at the intersection of Wallace-Cranbury Roads and Princeton-Hightstown Road. The WWBPA considers this intersection to be the most dangerous intersection for pedestrians and cyclists in the township. If there is a continued failure to make the necessary improvements it just a matter of time before a serious accident occurs involving a pedestrian or cyclist. We implore the Township, County, and State to get

beyond jurisdictional boundaries and make the much needed improvements to this intersection on behalf of area residents.

Sincerely,

Ken Carlson, President,  
West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance (WWBPA)

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the WWBPA and the members of the public who participated on this educational walk.