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November 27, 2009

To: Township Council Members, Mayor Shing-Fu Hsueh, Marvin Gardner, Pat Ward, Robert Hary, Brian Aronson, Francis Guzick, Sam Surtees  
cc: WWBPA Trustees

Re: West Windsor Needs Bicycle-Friendly Roundabouts

The West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance (WWBPA) is concerned that the planned roundabout at Old/Bear Brook Roads will suffer the same deficiencies as the Alexander Road roundabout. Following up previous letters regarding these concerns and recommended solutions,<sup>1</sup> this letter aims to clarify some misunderstandings that surfaced at the public hearing November 23, 2009. We look forward to working with township officials to amend the appropriate master plan element(s) and/or ordinance(s) to make West Windsor's bicycle and pedestrian facilities safer and friendlier, especially for casual and child bicyclists.

WWBPA welcomes the use of roundabouts, which are nationally and internationally recognized for creating calmer traffic and fewer collisions. These safety benefits do not necessarily apply to bicyclists, however. The Federal Highway Administration notes roundabout "crash reductions are most pronounced for motor vehicles, less pronounced for pedestrians, and equivocal for bicyclists, depending on the study and bicycle design treatments."<sup>2</sup> The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) notes "Bicyclists are vulnerable users of roundabouts and consideration should be given for their accommodation."<sup>3</sup>

WWBPA's primary recommendation is to include bicycle lanes and a shared-use path along busy roads such as Bear Brook Road, with ramps at the roundabout between them, to allow bicyclists who are not comfortable riding in traffic an alternate way to navigate the roundabout.

At the public hearing, Township Council relied on several mistaken assertions, such as that this design is nonstandard, and that New Jersey has its own standards. Our previous letter's reference to other states' acceptance of this design was even held up as proof. The opposite is true - NJDOT's Roadway Design Manual uses national reference documents describing this design, but is silent on New Jersey specific roundabout standards.<sup>4</sup>

For example, the Federal Highway Administration notes that "Some roundabouts may have a ramp that leads to a widened sidewalk or a shared bicycle-pedestrian path that runs around the perimeter of the roundabout."<sup>5</sup> Ramps such as those recommended are clearly shown in the illustrations throughout the document. AASHTO notes "Generally there are three ways to accommodate bicyclists in roundabouts: 1) in mixed flow with vehicular traffic, 2) along separate bicycle paths, and 3) on bicycle lanes along the outside diameter of roundabouts (not currently recommended)."<sup>6</sup>

WWBPA's other recommendations also follow standards, except where explicitly noted. The primary exception is our advocacy for bike lanes between the curb and parked cars in mixed-use retail or main street areas. These facilities, sometimes called cycle tracks, are currently nonstandard but undergoing testing in many locations in this country, and are standard elsewhere in the world. WWBPA strongly feels that this configuration enables safer bicycling for casual and child riders who may otherwise not feel comfortable biking in these busy areas.

Respectfully,

Jerry Foster  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance

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1. <http://wwbpa.org/action/policy-recommendations/> , Bicycle-Friendly Roundabout for Old Bear Brook and Bear Brook Roads, Letters to Township Council, Mayor, et al., November 10, 2009 and November 20, 2009, and Alexander Road Roundabout: Signage Recommendations, Letter to the Mayor, et al., January 21, 2009
  2. Roundabouts: An Informational Guide, Chapter 5: Safety, page 103, <http://www.tfrc.gov/safety/00-0675.pdf>
  3. Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities – 1999, page 64, [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/docs/b\\_aashtobik.pdf](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/docs/b_aashtobik.pdf)
  4. <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/eng/documents/RDM/>
  5. Roundabouts: An Informational Guide, Chapter 2: Policy Considerations, page 47, <http://www.tfrc.gov/safety/00-0672.pdf>
  6. Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities – 1999, page 64, [http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/docs/b\\_aashtobik.pdf](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/docs/b_aashtobik.pdf)