

## Local Traffic and Safety Bicycle/Pedestrian Committees

### Spotlight on West Windsor Township, NJ

Bicycle and pedestrian advocates throughout the nation campaign tirelessly for issues such as decreasing obesity rates, reducing pollution and minimizing one's environmental footprint, primarily by encouraging biking and walking in communities and advocating for a shift in transportation culture. The West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance is one of these passionate groups, dedicated to influencing such positive change in New Jersey.

The West Windsor Alliance is a non-profit corporation with over 300 members that was established in January 2006. This successful grassroots model of bicycle and pedestrian advocacy centers around the mission of promoting bicycling and walking in West Windsor by emphasizing access, increased mobility options, education, and safety.

### The ABC's of Successful Bicycle/Pedestrian Committees

Generally, there are three key prerequisites to create a successful advisory committee, such as in West Windsor -- a well-defined group purpose, structure, and function. Elements of a given committee's **purpose** typically include determining a committee mission statement, laying out goals and objectives, and developing a clearly defined role, especially with regard to the type of advocacy work to be pursued.

The group **structure** determines the operating procedures of a committee. Operating procedures and structure may be more formal, with members appointed by a governor or other high level official and structured around specific committee bylaws and membership requirements. Conversely, group structure and operation may be more informal, with the committee organized around an ad-hoc group of professionals and community members committed to a defined mission, such as improving the bicycle and pedestrian environment. In terms of membership though, most groups seek a cross section of individuals representing the organizations responsible for pedestrian and bicycling related issues in their community; this type of targeted membership adds credibility to the group and helps to achieve its goals.

In terms of group **function**, work activities and related efforts, local traffic or bicycle and pedestrian committees have the ability to shape their scope of work by:

- Conducting surveys of current facilities and recommending improvements to the local governing body
- Serving as a sounding board for the community on pedestrian and bicycle issues
- Petitioning the government for changes in policy and law through letter writing, blogs, press releases and advocacy rallies/



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