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Alexander Road's dangerous S-curve to get some attention

By: Courtney Gross , Staff Writer

About one year after fatal accident, West Windsor has begun to take action

WEST WINDSOR — With the first-year anniversary of a fatal accident approaching, the township has begun to take action to improve the safety conditions of the notorious Alexander Road S-curve between Route 1 and the Delaware & Raritan Canal.

When the Township Council passed a capital improvement and bond ordinance this month, funding was allocated for initial improvements to the heavily used road that connects West Windsor and Princeton. The township has already completed yellow striping in the middle of the thoroughfare, Mayor Shing-Fu Hsueh said, and white striping along the edges.

Also, over the next three years, Mayor Hsueh said, the township will be studying Alexander Road to determine repairs needed to improve safety conditions on an extended basis. Both short-term and long-term goals for the road are being taken into consideration, he added.

"One of our top priorities is to keep our roadways safe," Mayor Hsueh said. "We indicated last year this was one of our top priorities."

In this year's capital budget, Township Engineer Jim Parvesse said, \$35,000 was set aside to study the roadway and determine what specific repairs should be made. In both 2007 and 2008, \$125,000 will be allocated for the section of Alexander Road between Canal Pointe Boulevard and the Princeton Township border.

This year, Mr. Parvesse said, was the first budget that set aside funding for the S-curve.

Sometime in the next month, Mr. Parvesse added, two new overhead lights will also be in place along the S-curve.

Last September, 14-year-old Stuart Country Day School student Rebecca Annitto was killed in a car accident on the curve. The accident, which occurred under slick conditions, brought the road's dangerous features once again to light.

Although many residents are encouraged by the roadway's recent revamp, some are disappointed by the amount of time it took for the township to make even minor improvements.

Susan Conlon, second vice president of the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance, an offshoot of the township's former pedestrian and bicycle task force, said the S-curve has been on the group's agenda for years.

The alliance, like the mayor, is pushing for long-term improvements as well as repairs that could be undertaken immediately, such as proposed overhead lighting, she said.

"That particular location is in such critical need of attention," Ms. Conlon said.

Other concerns have been raised over the lack of access for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the S-curve area. The curve, which is near the border of West Windsor and Princeton, does not have sidewalks or a bike path, Ms. Conlon said. On the Princeton side, she added, those facilities are included.

"It's a missing link," Ms. Conlon said of the absent sidewalks. "If we can provide better access

to people to get that connection, it would really be a tremendous improvement," she added.

The West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance will be sponsoring a walk in September that focuses on the needed bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the township, members said. The walk will visit the S-curve and residents will have the opportunity to discuss immediate and future repairs.

Some residents pushing for improvements to the roadway recognize hazardous corridors not only raise safety concerns, but also can create legal liabilities.

After the fatal accident last year, a claim was filed giving the Annitto family an extension to file a lawsuit, Township Attorney Michael Herbert said. The family's deadline is September 2007, he added.

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