



P.O. Box 625
West Windsor, NJ 08550

wwbikeped@gmail.com
www.wwbpa.org

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March 6, 2015

To: Mercer County Freeholders

CC: Mercer County Executive Hughes, West Windsor Township Mayor Hsueh, West Windsor Township Council, Henry and Eileen Murphy

Re: Stop Pedestrian Fatalities on Mercer County Roads

Dear Freeholders,

Last Thursday, February 26, 2015, Jerry Foster, a transportation safety expert, encouraged you to support pedestrian crossing improvements where the D&R Canal Path crosses Washington Rd / CR571, where two West Windsor residents were seriously injured last October, after being struck by a car as they waited on the shoulder to cross.

The West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance supports these improvements and crossing improvements for Clarksville Rd / CR638 at Hawk Drive, where a pedestrian was struck and killed by a car while crossing at the unmarked crosswalk at night, also last October.

In his remarks, Mr. Foster described the pedestrian fatality epidemic: New Jersey is one of the Federal Highway Administration's Pedestrian Focus States,¹ due to persistently high pedestrian fatalities, which last year increased 28% over 2013.² Also, seniors are heavily over-represented in pedestrian fatalities (88 of the 170 pedestrian fatalities in 2014 were 50+).³

When questioned as to the reasons, he allowed for the possibility of "statistical variation" in the number of pedestrian fatalities, and noted that Mercer County's pedestrian fatalities were "not that bad" compared to other New Jersey counties (11th of 21).⁴

With respect to Mr. Foster's expertise (I am he), those answers displayed the very attitude that creates the problem – that traffic fatalities are inevitable.

No people need to die on our roadways - zero motorists, zero pedestrians, zero cyclists – none. Instead of the gradual safety improvements of the past, adopting a Vision Zero approach will half our traffic fatalities. If we choose to be aggressive, like Sweden, we can cut fatalities in half again.⁵

As Sweden's Vision Zero architect reports, the experts are the main barriers to improvement.⁶ Don't listen to the expert Jerry Foster, listen to this Jerry Foster. Please don't accept any traffic fatalities - support

Complete Streets motorist, pedestrian and cyclist safety improvements at all known trouble spots.

Let's treat highway fatalities just like we treat aviation or railway fatalities. Zero is the only acceptable number.

Sincerely,

Jerry Foster
President
West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance

¹ http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_focus/images/focus_cities_states.png

² http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/01/2014_nj_traffic_deaths_spike_after_2013_record_low.html

³ http://www.njsp.org/info/fatalacc/pdf/swfcs2_14.pdf

⁴ http://www.njsp.org/info/fatalacc/pdf/ptccr_14.pdf

⁵ <http://www.citylab.com/commute/2014/11/the-swedish-approach-to-road-safety-the-accident-is-not-the-major-problem/382995/>

⁶ <http://www.citylab.com/commute/2014/11/the-swedish-approach-to-road-safety-the-accident-is-not-the-major-problem/382995/>