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December 8, 2023

To: Hemant Marathe, PhD, Mayor, West Windsor Twp.
West Windsor Twp. Council President Andrea Mandel,
Council Vice President Michael Stevens,
Council Members Sonia Gawas, Linda Geevers, Martin Whitfield
cc: Marlena Schmid, Business Administrator, West Windsor Twp.
Francis A. Guzik, PE, CME, Director of Community Development, West
Windsor Twp.

Re: Response to Rabbit Hill Road Fatality

Dear Mayor Marathe and Council Members:

Like others in town, the board of the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance (WWBPA) is heartbroken over the death of a 12-year-old girl after she was hit by a car as she crossed Rabbit Hill Road.

We stand with area residents in [their requests for a number of safety improvements](#) to the road and surrounding area.

In particular, we ask the West Windsor Township administration and Council to install rapid-flashing pedestrian beacons (RRFBs) at the intersection of Rabbit Hill Road and Abbington Lane/Bennington Drive as quickly as is practical. The rapid-flashing beacons installed elsewhere in town have made motorists much more aware of people in the crosswalk.

We also urge the administration to post a sign for “pedestrian crossing ahead” to alert northbound motorists from Princeton-Hightstown Road. Rabbit Hill crests shortly north of Bear Brook, and motorists are then quickly at the intersection of Bennington and Abbington. Given the visibility constraints, they need an extra warning.

In addition, we urge the administration and council to set aside \$60,000 a year for RRFBs in the annual capital budget, similar to standing line items for sidewalk repairs, new sidewalks, and bike lanes. We have previously recommended the installation of RRFBs in several places, most recently at Penn Lyle Road and Canoe Brook Drive. Our list is by no means exhaustive, and even at \$60,000 a year, it will take the township many years to tackle this job.

While we appreciate that the Council recently approved an ordinance to lower the speed limit on much of Rabbit Hill to 40 mph and to narrow the traffic lanes to 11 feet, we remain concerned that this may not be enough to sufficiently slow drivers. We urge the administration to continue to monitor speeds along Rabbit

Hill and consider low-cost design changes involving paint as needed. Paint has been effective elsewhere in nudging motorists to slow down, and the WWBPA would be pleased to offer examples if needed. In addition, use any additional flexibility provided in the upcoming edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to further reduce the speed limit beyond the level driven by the 85th percentile. The survival rate for pedestrians struck by vehicles driving 40 mph is shockingly low, particularly as people increasingly drive SUVs rather than lower-profile sedans.

We also ask Council to upgrade its resolution [2010-R175](#) in support of Complete Streets to an ordinance similar to [Hopewell Borough's](#) and to adopt a Vision Zero resolution like [Princeton](#). "Complete Streets" is a street design policy to accommodate all road users of all abilities, be they pedestrians, cyclists, public transit riders, or motorists. "Vision Zero" provides a framework for reducing traffic deaths to zero while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all.

Lastly, we recognize that infrastructure and policy changes should be accompanied by everyone doing their part to prevent collisions – motorists driving slower and walkers, runners, and cyclists wearing reflective gear so they will be seen sooner. None of us want another tragedy like this one.

Respectfully,

Anne Clifton
President