

PennDOT District 5
Assistant District Executive for Design
1002 Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18101

March 8, 2012

Dear Sir,

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware of the concerns of the Maidencreek Township Board of Supervisors in regards to the installation of a roundabout at the intersection of Route 222 and Tamarack Blvd. After careful review, the Board feels that a roundabout is not the solution to the congestion problem on Route 222 and installation of one will add to existing congestion, storm water and safety concerns.

Congestion:

Roundabouts can increase delays at intersections where high volume roads and low volume roads meet (Federal Highway Administration Publication FHWA-RD-00-067 June 2000, section 2.1.3). Traffic on the busier road would normally not have to stop if the junction were signalized, because the traffic signals would provide a green signal to the busier road the majority of the time. Introduce that same traffic volume to a roundabout and now each vehicle on the busier roadway must stop and yield to the traffic in the roundabout increasing congestion and slowing traffic on Route 222. We are concerned that people are going to become confused when approaching the roundabout causing traffic to slow or they will do something unexpected which will in turn cause an accident that causes delays. We understand that vehicle accidents are statistically less severe with roundabouts, but an accident will still snarl traffic. Additional concern is warranted considering the high volume of truck traffic using Route 222. Truck movement through the roundabout with other merging vehicles when the truck can or can not stay in a single lane is a formula for disaster.

It is a genuine concern of the Board of Supervisors that this plan to install a roundabout will hurt the businesses already established along Route 222 and hinder future commercial

development in the corridor. Any additional congestion or a lack of gaps in the traffic flow caused by the roundabout will make it difficult to enter and exit the existing driveways between Route 73 and Tamarack Blvd. It is imperative that a plan for future improvements to the intersections of Route 222 at Schaeffer Road, Evansville Road and Pleasant Hill Road be developed in conjunction with the improvements being proposed now for Route 222 and Tamarack Blvd. We can not accept a “we will deal with that later” attitude. The land surrounding both the Schaeffer Road and Evansville Road intersections is zoned for commercial development. A traffic signal permit application was submitted in 2005 for the intersection of Route 222 and Evansville Road but has not been approved. Sketch plans for two properties near the intersections have been developed that include big box stores, banks, restaurants and gas stations. Such uses will make signalization a necessity. It benefits everyone for Penn DOT to take a proactive approach and plan for the inevitable commercial development in this area. Documentation by the Northern Berks Regional Police and numerous residents’ complaints received by the Board of Supervisors of vehicles using the center lane excessively and at a high rate of speed is an issue that will be exacerbated when transitioning from five lanes to three lanes.

Storm Water:

There is an existing storm water problem in this area which has not been corrected by PennDOT. The pipe beneath Route 222 is clogged and does not allow storm water to flow where it was intended to go. North of the intersection near Evansville Road, there has been flooding of the road during severe storms. While the current storm water conditions still need to be corrected, will the existing storm water detention basins at CVS be removed to construct the roundabout? How will Penn DOT control the storm water in a system that is already overburdened and not functioning properly?

Safety:

Because Maiden creek Township and Richmond Township are home to an active Mennonite Community in addition to many cyclists who participate in local cycling clubs, there is a significant amount of bicycle traffic in the Township. Of concern is the higher rate of cyclist crashes at roundabouts. A New Zealand study of reported crashes between 1996 and 2000 shows that cyclists were involved in 26% of the reported injury crashes at roundabouts, compared to 6% at traffic signals. The most common roundabout crash type for cyclists, according to the New Zealand study, involves a motor vehicle entering the roundabout and colliding with a cyclist who already is travelling around the roundabout. The next most common crash type involves motorists leaving the roundabout, colliding with cyclists who are continuing further around the perimeter of the roundabout.

As Penn DOT moves forward with their process, the Board of Supervisors asks that they consider improving Route 222 to five lanes from the Bypass exit ramp and widen the intersection

of Route 222 and Route 73 to five lanes with turning arrows. The Township believes that construction of a roundabout at Tamarack Boulevard should be eliminated or at the very least postponed until further study and planning in conjunction with the Township can occur to develop a plan that addresses the safety of our residents and the economic development along Route 222. Thank you for your time and consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

Joseph Rudderow III, Chairman
Maidencreek Township

Claude Beaver, Supervisor
Maidencreek Township

David Franke, Supervisor
Maidencreek Township