

Cyclists question safety on North Avenue, Army Trail

By Jennifer Chapin Harris
Staff writer

A group of DuPage County bicyclists is working with other organizations in the area to ask county officials to ensure pedestrian safety along such byways as North Avenue, and Army Trail and Rohlwing roads.

"We are hoping for some retrofitted crossings at the major intersections on North Avenue and possibly a pedestrian bridge like the one planned for Lake Street in Roselle [and] Bloomingdale," Glendale Heights resident Don Kirchenberg, who chairs the Friends of the Great Western Trail, wrote to the county.

"North Avenue has expanded for several miles without any provisions made for surface crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists," he said. "People play a game of 'Frogger' to cross the road."

Kirchenberg said the organization has also written letters to the state legislature and village officials about the matter.

"We're seeking to provide for

safe pedestrian crossings when Army Trail [Road] gets expanded next year," he added. "Pedestrians and bicyclists should be included in any expansion plans."

Kirchenberg said he saw an experienced bicyclist get hit by a vehicle and seriously injured while crossing North Avenue at President Road.

"The problem is these intersections have traffic moving at all times," he said.

"We are putting in sidewalks and pedestrian signals at all the pedestrian cross walks so there should be places for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross Army Trail Road," said DuPage County Engineer Chuck Tokarski.

Tokarski said North Avenue is a state road maintained by the Illinois Department of Transportation and therefore not under his jurisdiction.

"The county and local villages need to put in sidewalks and then the state will put in crosswalks" if local officials request it, Kirchenberg said. "We need the villages, county and state to work together for

safety on North Avenue."

Efforts to reach IDOT officials for comment were unsuccessful.

There is "a lack of crosswalks and pedestrian signs" along North Avenue, said Ed Barsotti, executive director of the League of Illinois Bicyclists. He would like to have paved shoulders or side paths or wide outside lanes installed in order to accommodate bicyclists along the road.

Barsotti said most traffic accidents involving bicyclists occur at intersections, particularly if a car makes a right turn in front of a bicyclist in the right-hand lane. While bicyclists hurt in accidents can have a range of injuries, Barsotti said head injuries are particularly common.

Friends of the Great Western Trail was formed last year and has about 100 members.

For more information on County construction projects, call (630) 682-7000. For more information about Friends of the Great Western Trail, send an e-mail to FrdmsGrtWstnTrl@aol.com.

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