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NORTHJERSEY.COM: GLEN RIDGE

## Glen Ridge passes Complete Streets policy

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2012 LAST UPDATED: THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 2012, 1:32 AM BY ERIN ROLL STAFF WRITER

GLEN RIDGE VOICE

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It has been a goal in Glen Ridge Borough to make its streets safer, and to encourage more people to walk or take public transit.

On Monday, Glen Ridge became the latest town in New Jersey to adopt a Complete Streets policy.

The program encourages U.S. municipalities to make streets safer and more convenient for everyone, including pedestrians, bicyclists, mass transit users and motorists.

Councilwoman Elizabeth Baker sponsored Glen Ridge's Complete Streets resolution. It would require new street projects or repairs to be pedestrian-friendly, where feasible.

Montclair and Bloomfield also have Complete Streets policies, and former Montclair Mayor Jerry Fried was present that night to thank Glen Ridge's council for their efforts.



ERIN ROLL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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Glen Ridge Councilwoman Elizabeth Baker, left, chats with former Montclair Mayor Jerry Fried prior to the borough's Complete Streets adoption.

"It's a really important document for Glen Ridge to be adopting," Fried said.

Essex County, he said, has been a leader in New Jersey for Complete Streets efforts. "And by adopting this policy, I think Glen Ridge has taken a very forward step," Fried said.

He added that a Complete Streets policy makes a town eligible for certain grants and funding sources, such as the Safe Routes to School program. "It's kind of a foot in the door for a lot of things," Fried said.

Ridgewood Avenue is scheduled to be re-paved in 2013. Since Ridgewood is a county road, Baker sent a proposal to Essex County asking for improvements that would make the street safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The proposal includes requests for new crosswalks at certain intersections, and bike insignia on roadside to designate bike lanes. Baker also wants the county to re-program the traffic Follow Us



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lights at the intersection of Bloomfield Ridgewood avenues, one of the most accident-prone intersections in Glen Ridge.

Earlier on Monday, Baker mentioned that the schools had done programs such as the Walking School Bus, where children walk to school in groups along a designated route.

She estimated that more parents would allow their children to walk to school if the parents could be assured that the streets were safe.

And the goal is not just to work on improving streets in Glen Ridge, she said, but to work in tandem with the county and neighboring towns on making a safe network of streets.

Glen Ridge is the 31st municipality in New Jersey to become involved with Complete Streets, Fried said. "And that's really good, because you guys are getting in early."

Fried recently became involved with Ambassadors in Motion, a pilot program that the state Department of Transportation is working on with Rutgers. The program encourages municipalities to take steps to make their streets safer for pedestrians and mass transit users.

Most of Glen Ridge's smaller streets, Fried said, could already be considered complete streets, in that they are mostly safe for pedestrians and bikers.

Ideally, Fried said, engineers and planners need to take all users into account when designing a street. Usually, he said, engineers tend to think of cars first and pedestrians second.

"We have a lot of residents in both our towns that walk," Mayor Peter Hughes said, such as to local business or houses of worship. "And that's what's really nice about our towns."

Fried agreed. "The more people who are on bikes, the less people who are in cars, and the better it is for people who need to park."

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