Councilwoman Kepert Gets Green Light on Complete Streets
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Farmingville, NY September 21, 2010 - Councilwoman Connie Kepert passed progressive legislation last night that will establish a sustainable complete streets policy which accommodates all road users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.

Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. There are many ingredients to complete streets that include sidewalks, bike lanes, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and more. "I have been fighting for bicyclist and pedestrian safer roadways for decades," said Kepert. Councilwoman Kepert underscored that a quarter of the people who die in traffic accidents are pedestrians, which is more than twice the national average. Kepert also highlighted both the health and environmental benefits of making it safe and convenient to walk or cycle. A National Institute of Medicine on childhood obesity found that 43% of people with safe places to walk met recommended activity levels, whereas, among individuals without safe places to walk only 27% met recommended activity levels. The environment is also a winner by simply increasing cycling from 1% to 1.5% of all trips in the U.S. would save 462 million gallons of gas each year.

"This legislation will ensure a safer environment for pedestrians and will expand recreational opportunities for our residents," said Supervisor Mark Lesko.

A Federal Highways Administration Safety review found that streets designed with Complete Streets features improve safety for all users. In May 2003 Newsday published a 12 day series of articles entitled "Death on the Roads". This series reported that an average of five people die on Long Island roads per week, that's 260 people per year, which is the equivalent of a Boeing 757 crashing annually, and its more than 5 times the number of murders that occur annually on Long Island.

Sid Bail, a civic leader in Wading River, stated that he, like other seniors, who walks on town roadways are faced with unsafe conditions, such as lack of dedicated spaces for pedestrians. "This is a step in the right direction. We need our elected officials to lead the way toward making our streets safer and user friendly for everyone," stated Mr. Bail.

William Stoner, Associate State Director for Livable Communities for AARP, spoke in support of Kepert's legislation. "AARP is pleased that Brookhaven Town has joined other communities across the state by passing a Complete Streets resolution," "Accessible roadways and sidewalks are not only a critical link in our transportation system, they are also vitally important to helping older adults stay connected to their community, access essential services, and give back to their communities," stated Mr. Stoner.

Ryan Lynch, Long Island Coordinator for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, also spoke in support of Complete the Streets. "Brookhaven's adoption of a complete streets policy is just another indicator of the growing demand for more and safer transportation options", said Ryan Lynch "The Town board should be commended for supporting a more balanced transportation system and for promoting safer streets for all users of Brookhaven's roads," concluded Mr. Lynch.

On an unfortunate note, a bicyclist was killed on Middle Country Road on the very evening Complete Streets resolution passed.