

# THE TWO RIVER TIMES™

## Fair Haven Cycling Safety on the Fast Track

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*Editor's note: Fair Haven has joined the Crossroads Editorial effort for greater pedestrian and cyclist safety*

**FAIR HAVEN** – Mayor Benjamin Lucarelli is pedaling hard to improve cycling safety.

Lucarelli, who has been advocating for a designated bicycle route along county-controlled roadways through the Two River area for the past year, is stepping up his efforts to have it come to fruition and to push greater education efforts for all who use the roadways.

“If we want to remain a desirable place this is what we have to do,” Lucarelli said of his efforts to win support from county, state and federal entities to establish the route.

The mayor traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the March 12 U.S. Department of Transportation’s Mayors’ Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets program, joining about 120 mayors from around the nation for a daylong series of conferences putting forth Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx’s professed agenda to work with municipalities and states to improve

safety for pedestrians and cyclists. There, Lucarelli said, he garnered valuable information and networking information about various programs and what other communities are doing.

Lucarelli said he's gotten the support of the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition, which is drafting an addendum to be used with the state Division of Motor Vehicle driver's manual, outlining laws pertaining to cycling safety which the DMV has agreed to incorporate in its next printing.

The state Department of Transportation has offered to cover the engineering costs for the path and the Two River Council of Mayors, an informal monthly gathering of area mayors, has endorsed the bike path project, as well, Lucarelli said.

"I'm gathering up steam and the political will and concerned citizens in the Two River area and getting them behind this," he said.

Plans are in the works to have a bike rodeo for children and parents in a number of area towns later this spring to assist in educating youth.

What remains, the mayor added, is getting the formal backing of the county Board of Chosen Freeholders, who would have to approve and move forward with the path plan. He has discussed it with Freeholder Serena DiMaso who has expressed support but the full board has yet to take any action.

DiMaso did not return a phone call seeking comment for this story.

Lucarelli, an avid cycling enthusiast, had proposed that the county, as they repair and repave county roads, stripe off and stencil six-foot sections on the roadway shoulders, designating it for bicycles.

The plan would be to connect 11 Two River communities, starting in Red Bank and heading east to Sea Bright and then south on a portion of Ocean Avenue/State Highway 36, then heading back toward Red Bank, forming a loop of approximately 50 miles, that will provide some protection for those cycling for recreation and transportation on what is some fairly heavily traveled roadways.

Eventually, Lucarelli said he envisioned it connecting with the Henry Hudson Trail, with paths through the county's Bayshore and western portions.

Former Shrewsbury Borough Councilman Thomas Menapace, an avid cyclist, and Fair Haven resident and community activist Gail O'Reilly, agreed to lend their support to his efforts and to help navigate government bureaucracy.

O'Reilly said, "This topic has been percolating for a long time" and that now the "time has come" to move forward with it.

Fair Haven Borough Councilman Jerome Koch was killed last fall when struck by a vehicle while riding his bike in the borough.

Would bike paths have saved Jerome's life?" Maybe not," Lucarelli said. "But if we raise awareness and get everyone to understand motor vehicles are not the only thing on the road, we'll be better off."

*—By John Burton*