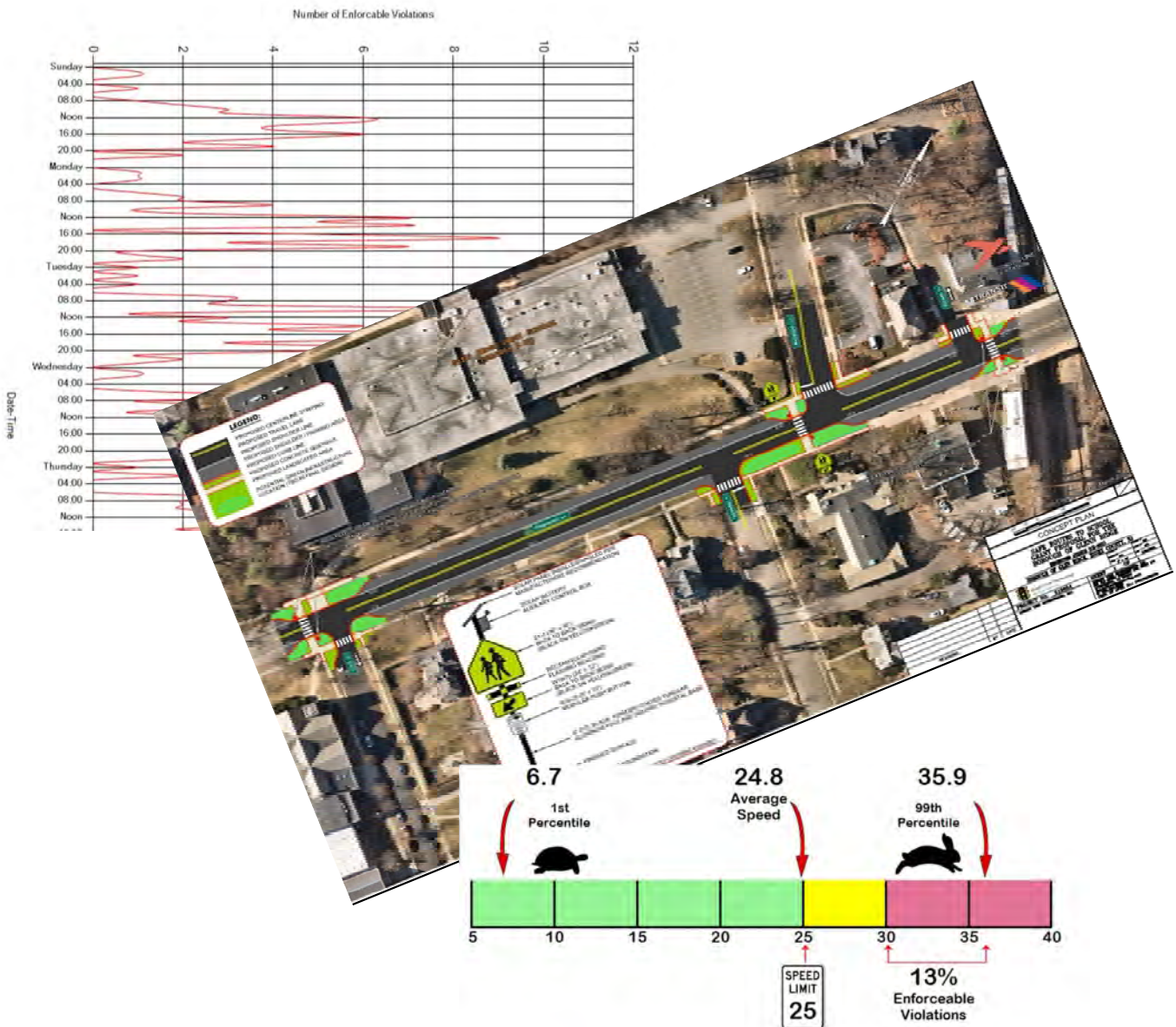# Borough of Glen Ridge
2024 Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Report

Borough of Glen Ridge
2024 Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Report

September 2024

Community members have identified pedestrian safety and vehicular circulation as a top priority for improvement within Glen Ridge. As your Mayor, I have been working with the Council and Borough employees to plan and implement pedestrian safety improvements to ensure the well-being and security of our students, commuters, runners, walkers, and cyclists. In addition to individual efforts, the Borough of Glen Ridge is committed to implementing traffic calming measures, enhancing pedestrian and traffic infrastructure, increasing traffic enforcement, and providing educational resources for drivers to promote safer roadways for all residents. Together, we can create a culture of traffic safety that protects and preserves the well-being of our community.

The Glen Ridge Council and I are committed to enhancing roadway safety in our Borough, recognizing the evolving traffic landscape. We are proud that the Borough is once again being nominated for a Gold Level Award from the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Program by the New Jersey Department of Transportation. This program acknowledges schools and municipalities dedicated to improving pedestrian and cyclist safety, offering opportunities for grants and advancing safety initiatives. These accolades also contribute to our efforts in Sustainable Jersey, earning points towards maintaining our Silver Status in this statewide sustainability initiative and securing additional grants.

With guidance from our Traffic Officer at the Glen Ridge Police Department and input from residents, we continuously assess traffic safety across all Borough streets, including through the use of our traffic engineer consultants. Our approach encompasses education, engineering enhancements, and enforcement. To support this endeavor, we have upgraded several intersections and are actively planning further improvements. Together, we are committed to creating safer roadways for the benefit of our entire community.

I am pleased to provide this report updating the community on these efforts.

Mayor Deborah Mans

<u>Wildwood Avenue at Ridgewood Avenue/Baldwin Avenue at Ridgewood Avenue:</u>

In light of concerns from the public regarding pedestrian crossings at the above listed intersections, our traffic officer observed that the root cause of the issue was vehicles overtaking in the parking lane on Ridgewood Avenue to the right of vehicles waiting to make a left-hand turn or stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross the roadway at a crosswalk. Drivers, attempting to go around the stopped vehicle in front of them, had their view of the crosswalk blocked as they drove through it, sometimes resulting in pedestrians crossing over Ridgewood Avenue to be struck by vehicles in the crosswalk.. As a result, the pedestrian crossing markings were enhanced with thermoplastic reflective paint, and pylons (shown below) were installed to prevent passage of vehicles on the right.

<u>Hillside Avenue at Clark Street:</u>
After residents brought traffic concerns regarding the pedestrian safety crossing over Hillside Avenue at Clark Street, a traffic study was conducted by our traffic officer, in consultation with a traffic engineering firm. The study included traffic volume and crash data collection, an all-way stop analysis, and a summary with recommendations. These recommendations included:
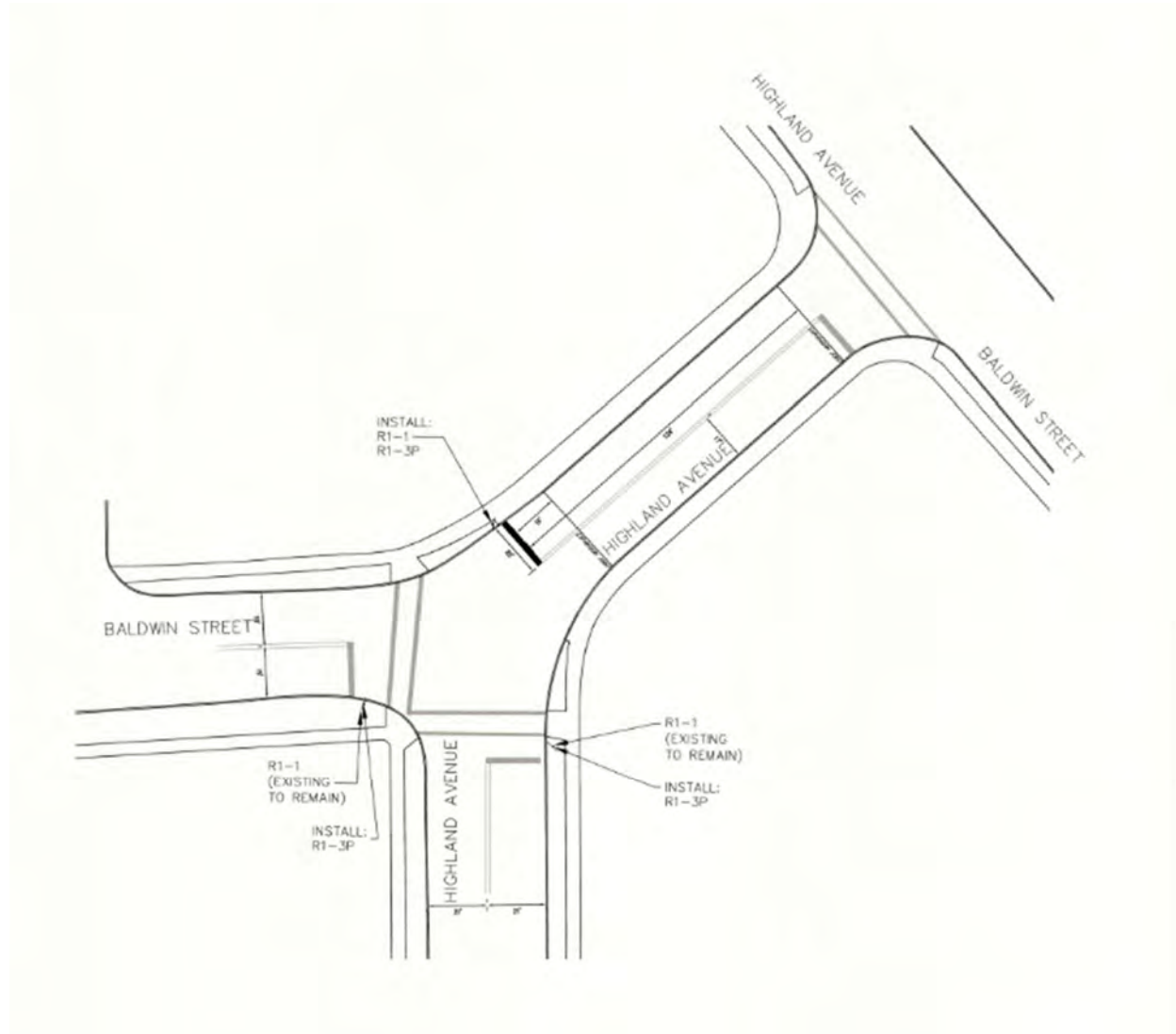
- All-way STOP control
- Striping of parking aisles to better define the travel lane width
- Installation of international crosswalk pattern for all pedestrian crossings
- Installation of No Right Turn and No Left Turn signs on Hillside Ave towards at the one-way Clark Street eastbound approach
- Additional speed limit signs
- Pylons and two additional "DO NOT ENTER" signs on Clark Street

Following the study, the Borough implemented the all-way stop. Additionally, motion-activated lighted stop signs were installed in order to alert drivers of the new stop location along Hillside Avenue. This intersection is also on a list of locations to have reflective thermoplastic paint deployed in order to enhance the visibility of the stop signs as well as the crosswalk, both on Hillside Avenue and Clark Street. Additional signage indicating the one-way nature of Clark Street is pending.

Highland Avenue at Baldwin Street:

A resident reported pedestrian safety concerns on the west side of the Highland Avenue Bridge, on Highland Avenue at the intersection of Baldwin Street. A traffic study was conducted by our traffic officer, in consultation with a traffic engineering firm. The study recommended adding an additional stop location on the west side of the bridge (westbound towards Baldwin Street), and corresponding road paint to increase awareness of the stop location. A motion-activated flashing stop sign was installed at this new stop location, and this intersection is on a list of locations to have reflective thermoplastic paint deployed in order to enhance the visibility of the stop sign and crosswalk on Baldwin Street.
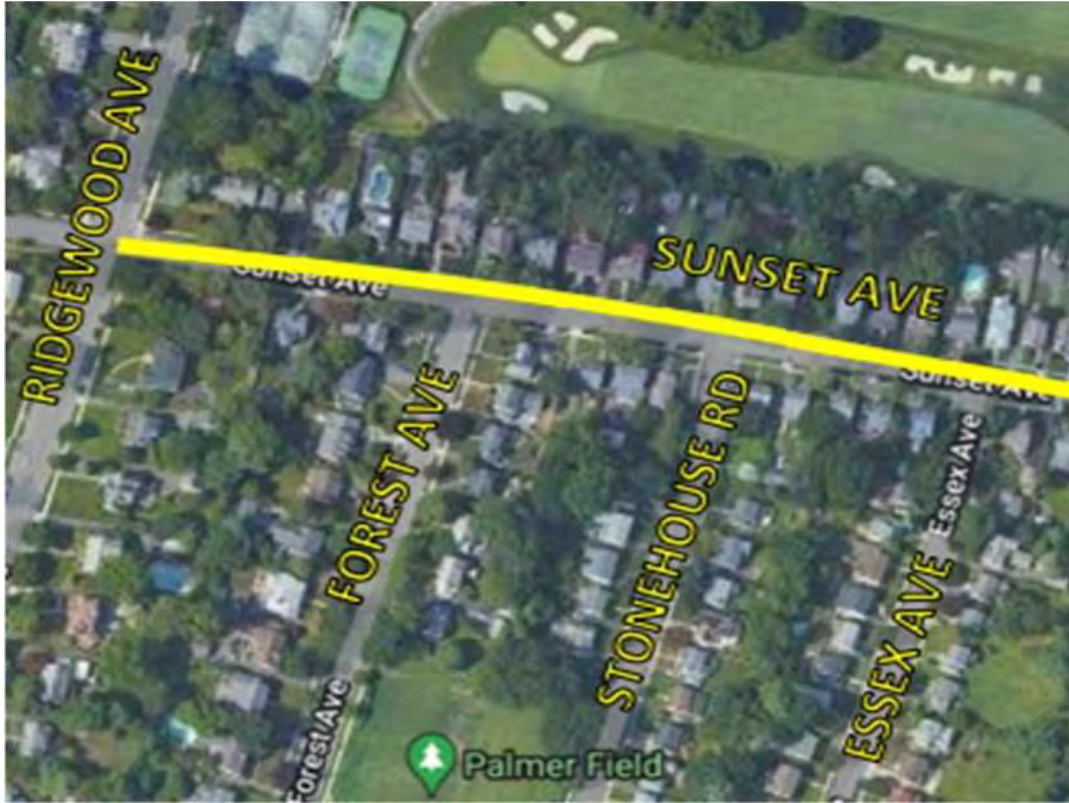
Glen Ridge Avenue:

A traffic survey was conducted on Glen Ridge Avenue regarding speeding. The result of the survey revealed that 85% of all traffic exceeded the posted speed limit. Our traffic officer and traffic engineering firm reviewed the area and developed a concept plan to address the speeding issue. Recommendations that were implemented for this roadway included enhanced painted speed reduction markings along the entire length of the road and enhanced signage alerting motorists to the reduced speed at the curve, as well as the upcoming stop location at Glen Ridge Avenue and Highland Avenue.

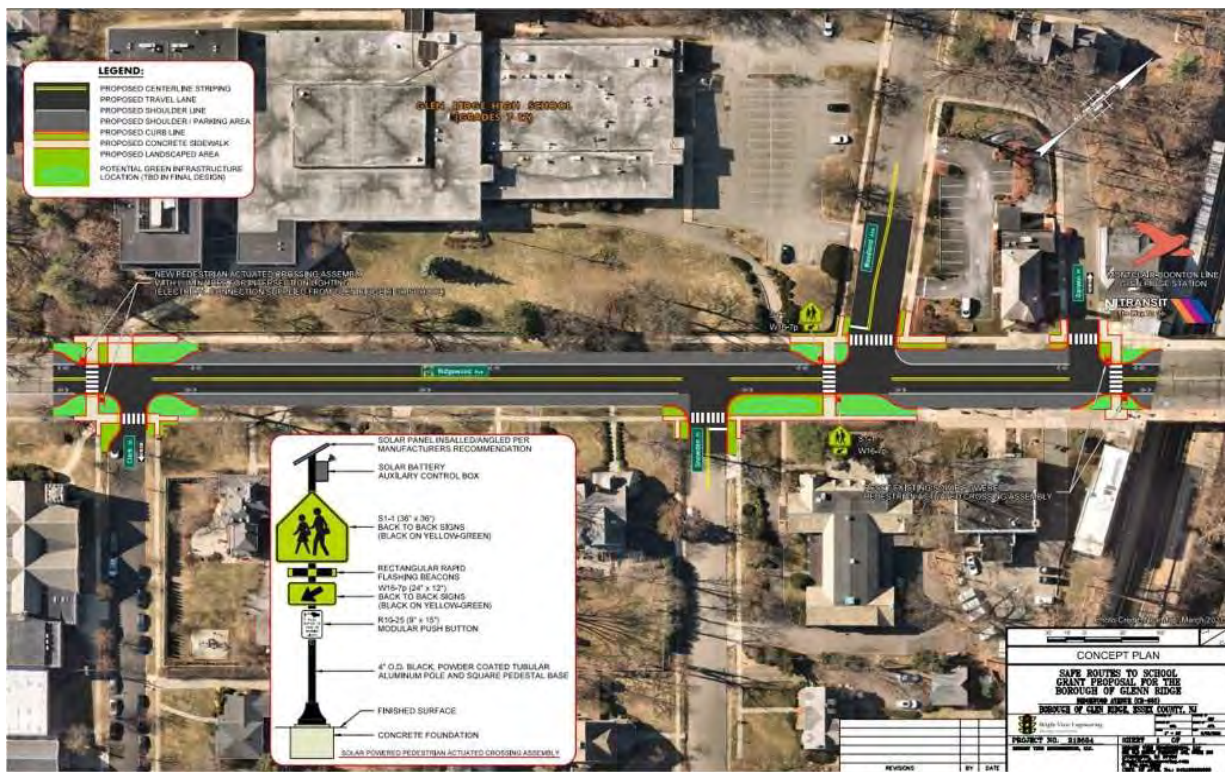## Locations Identified for Future Improvements

Sunset Avenue:

Based on residents' concerns, a traffic survey was conducted on Sunset Avenue regarding speeding on the roadway. The Glen Ridge Traffic Unit conducted multiple comprehensive traffic studies, which were shared with a traffic engineering firm for review and upgrade recommendations. After reviewing the traffic studies and collaborating with the traffic engineering firm, a decision has been made to install a three-way stop at the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Forest Avenue. Additionally, speed humps will be installed on Sunset Avenue. The project is expected to be completed in 2025.

Ridgewood Avenue Corridor from Bloomfield Avenue to Clark Street

The Borough has secured a federal Safe Routes to School grant for pedestrian improvements along Ridgewood Avenue, spanning the section of road from Bloomfield Avenue to Clark Street near the Middle and High School. Improvements include curb bump outs to minimize the distance for pedestrians and students to cross Ridgewood Avenue and provide an impingement in the roadway to minimize the speed of traffic and prohibit vehicles from overtaking on the right in the parking lane. New pedestrian flashing beacons will be installed at the intersections of Clark/Ridgewood and Woodland/Ridgewood. Additionally, improved roadway markings will be implemented. The Borough is working with the state and its design engineers to develop engineering plans in conformance with the federal grant requirements. Community outreach will continue on this project as our work with the state moves forward.
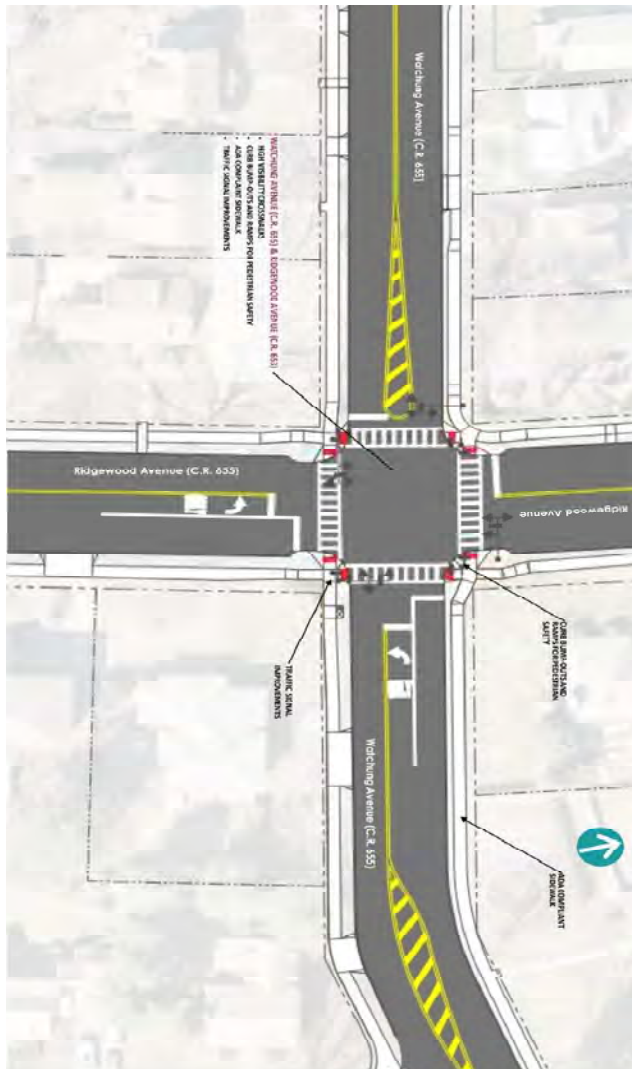
County Intersection Improvements:

The Borough requested intersection improvements for all county road intersections in the jurisdiction. Essex County Engineering has approved upgrades to the following intersections:

- Ridgewood Avenue at Watchung Avenue
- Ridgewood Avenue at Bay Avenue
- Ridgewood Avenue at Belleville Avenue
- Ridgewood Avenue at Bloomfield Avenue
- Ridgewood Avenue at Washington Street

Watchung Avenue at Ridgewood Avenue:

Ridgewood Avenue at Watchung Avenue is the first county intersection slated for improvement, with construction tentatively starting in 2025. The Safety Improvement Concept Plan was presented at the public meeting of the Mayor and Council on February 26, 2024 (preliminary design plan below). Comments were heard from the public and our local engineers are working with county engineers to finalize the plan.

Glen Ridge Police Department Traffic Unit:
The Glen Ridge Police Department regularly uses traffic calming tools, such as radar-activated speed signs, in response to speeding complaints. Nine in-depth traffic studies using advanced data collection technology were conducted between September 2023 and July 2024. In collaboration with engineering firms, they have analyzed safety concerns and overseen infrastructure improvements, including the establishment of a new 4-way intersection at Hillside Avenue at Clark Street.

But one of the most significant enhancements the Police Department has undertaken, with the support of the Mayor and Council, is the establishment of a Traffic Officer position. Since its launch on August 7, 2023, Sergeant Matthew Perigo, the Glen Ridge Traffic Officer, has actively pursued initiatives to enhance traffic and pedestrian safety. Over the past year, his efforts have been multifaceted, encompassing a range of activities such as:

- delivering presentations on traffic safety and drivers education at Glen Ridge High School
- addressing upwards of 40 traffic complaints from residents by reaching out directly to them
- devoting almost 300 hours of focused traffic enforcement in critical areas
- liaising with AAA and securing state-funded traffic enforcement grants
- seeking out innovative and effective traffic safety initiatives.

Sergeant Perigo has been busy! From August 7, 2023, to July 31, 2024 he conducted 1,398 motor vehicle stops and carried out 399 traffic details or patrols. Unfortunately, some of our own neighbors have been stopped, so we know we need to continue our efforts on driver education for our residents. In summary, the proactive measures and diligent enforcement efforts of the Sergeant Perigo has significantly contributed to enhancing traffic safety within the community through greater communication with residents, focused efforts on pedestrian safety, and increased enforcement measures.