

# School Travel Plan for Campbell Elementary School and Edgar Middle School Metuchen, NJ

JUNE 2016



# School Travel Plan for Campbell Elementary School and Edgar Middle School Metuchen, NJ June 2016

Prepared by:

Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc.

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## Introduction

The School Travel Plan for Campbell Elementary School and Edgar Middle School was prepared by Keep Middlesex Moving Transportation Management Association and the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University. Campbell and Edgar Schools and the Borough of Metuchen were interested in creating a school travel plan to document how students are getting to school now, and to explore ways to support and encourage walking and biking to school for health and community while increasing student safety. In addition, the plan will identify infrastructure improvements that are eligible for grant funding, and will earn the schools credit towards the Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification program.

## The School Travel Plan

A School Travel Plan outlines a community's intentions for enabling children to engage in active transportation (such as walking, bicycling, skateboarding, etc.) to and from school. A SRTS School Travel Plan "maps out" how to improve pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from school to increase the number of students who walk and bike to school and to improve safety. A School Travel Plan identifies the following:

- Where students currently walk and bike
- Where students would walk and bike if they could
- What changes need to be made so that students can and will walk and bike to school

The School Travel Plan summarizes short term solutions for immediate action and implementation as well as long term actions that may require further planning.

## Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal, state and local effort to create safe, convenient and enjoyable opportunities for children to walk and bicycle to and from school each day. Improving safety for children while walking and bicycling to school is a central mission of the statewide SRTS program. The goal is to encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to and from school through an approach that combines the 5E's: encouragement, education, enforcement, engineering and evaluation.

Benefits of the SRTS program stretch beyond the school day. SRTS can also play a critical role in reversing the nationwide trend toward physical inactivity, childhood obesity, and diabetes. Walking and bicycling to school contributes to a wide range of benefits including: less roadway congestion, less gasoline fuel consumption, cleaner air, and healthy and happier children. Increased physical activity for children through activities such as walking and bicycling to school increases academic performance, and children arrive to school ready to learn.

## About Keep Middlesex Moving

Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc. (KMM) is Middlesex County's nonprofit transportation management association. KMM is affiliated with the Middlesex County Improvement Authority. Since 1988, KMM has partnered with commuters, employers, local, county, and state government to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality.

KMM's Safe Routes to School program promotes walking and biking to school through events and promotions while working to educate children in grades K-8, and their parents, on walking and bicycling safety. The program sponsors walk to school days, walking school buses, and contests, delivers walk and bike safety assemblies in schools, and organizes bicycle education events in partnership with schools and community groups. In addition, the program serves as a resource for communities looking to conduct their own educational events, or to apply for grants to make their streets safer.

### [About the NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center](#)

The NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center (NJSRTS RC) is a partnership between and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) which is within the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. This sustainable partnership was established to provide services, training, coordination, and technical assistance directly to regional planning associations, organizations, and local and regional governments. The NJSRTS RC was expanded to form a partnership between NJDOT and all eight of New Jersey's Transportation Management Associations (TMAs). The NJSRTS RC provides support by offering services, training, oversight, and technical assistance to all eight of NJ's TMAs.

The NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center focuses on:

- Enhancing the capacity of Transportation Management Association (TMA) staff by providing training, guidance, support, discussion opportunities, and information sharing regarding the technical aspects of Safe Routes to School;
- Encouraging increased participation in education, encouragement and enforcement activities throughout the state of New Jersey;
- Facilitating policy-level discussions to increase linkages between active transportation and public health; and
- Providing technical assistance directly to New Jersey communities and schools.

More information about the NJSRTS RC can be found on the website at [saferoutesnj.org](http://saferoutesnj.org).

### [Acknowledgements](#)

The NJ Safe Routes to School Program, provided by Keep Middlesex Moving and the NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center, is sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation with funding from the Federal Highway Administration.

The Metuchen School Travel Plan was made possible by the support and engagement of the Metuchen School District and the Borough of Metuchen.

## School Descriptions

Metuchen School District serves the Borough of Metuchen, located in the heart of central New Jersey in Middlesex County. Metuchen School District is comprised of four schools with a population of about 2,100 students: Moss School, Campbell Elementary School, Edgar Middle School, and Metuchen High School. Moss School houses a special needs pre-school and the half day Kindergarten program (AM and PM); Campbell Elementary School serves students in grades 1-4, Edgar Middle School serves students in grades 5-8, and Metuchen High School serves students in grade 9-12.

### Campbell Elementary School

Campbell Elementary School serves approximately 640 students in grades 1-4. Campbell School is located at 24 Durham Ave. in a residential neighborhood, a block from of the borough's Main St. (County Route 531) and a few short blocks from Middlesex Ave. (State Highway 27). Friendly's restaurant is a few blocks from the school, and following Main St. south across Middlesex Ave. is the borough's downtown business district with many stores, restaurants and the NJ Transit train station. Campbell School's hours are from 8:30 AM - 2:55PM. School doors open to students at 8:15 AM and after school clubs meet from 2:55pm-3:40pm. A before school program with breakfast is offered on-site at 7:00 AM, and an after school care is offered until 6:00 PM.

### Edgar Middle School

Edgar Middle School serves approximately 770 students in grades 5-8. Edgar School is located at 49 Brunswick Ave. in a residential neighborhood adjacent to Edgar Park and walking distance to the Metuchen Municipal outdoor pool and the Metuchen YMCA. Main St. (County Route 531) is also a few blocks from the school. Edgar's school hours are 8:00 AM – 2:31 PM. A after school program called The Zone offers a variety of activities until 6:00 PM.

### Existing SRTS Efforts

Metuchen has engaged in a number of efforts that support walking and bicycling to school, including:

- Edgar and Campbell Schools participate in International Walk to School Day in October.
- Campbell School conducts "Walking Wednesdays," where students are encouraged to walk to school every Wednesday. Participation is tracked via a web-based sign up form.
- Edgar School conducted an anti-idling campaign in 2015-2016 to improve air quality.
- First graders at Campbell School work with Safety Ambassadors from the Rutgers Biomedical Sciences hospital trauma center.
- In spring 2016 a bicycle safety presentation was held at Campbell Elementary School followed by a bike rodeo for fourth graders.
- The Borough participates in the Street Smart education campaign to reduce pedestrian collisions through driver and pedestrian education.
- The Borough received a competitive SRTS grant from the NJ Department of Transportation to enhance signage and striping at five crosswalks.
- The Borough passed a Complete Streets policy in October 2013.
- The Borough is conducting a Complete Street study through a NJDOT consultant grant. The study will be completed in the fall of 2016.
- The Police Department distributes coupons as a reward for helmet use.



- The Borough has installed orange crosswalk flags at seven locations. Pedestrians can use these flags to signal drivers and increase their visibility.
- Campbell Elementary School achieved bronze-level certification for the NJ Safe Routes to School Recognition Program in May 2016.



*Figure 1 - Campbell School Bike Rodeo led by Peter Bilton from Keep Middlesex Moving*

## Working Group

The Metuchen Schools Working Group for the School Travel Plan includes representatives (Principals, teachers, parents) from Campbell Elementary School and Edgar Middle School within the district, representatives from the Borough (borough administrator, code enforcement, police) and community members (parents, residents). See Table 1 – Metuchen Working Group Members. The Working Group met three times throughout the School Travel Plan process.

Both Campbell and Edgar Schools have enrolled in the Sustainable Jersey for School certification program; Green Teams are established at each school; and there are Green Team members who are working to achieve actions to qualify for Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification. As a result, Campbell and Edgar Schools were interested in implementing a School Travel Plan to fulfil a Sustainable Jersey for Schools action requirement, to map safe routes for children to walk to school and to identify infrastructure improvements for the Borough to repair and implement as well as apply for potential grant funding.

The first meeting was on March 3, 2016 when an introduction to the School Travel Plan process was made, current assets and barriers were listed for enabling and encouraging students to walk and bike to school, a review of strategies surrounding the five E's of SRTS (Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement and Evaluation) was conducted, and next steps, deliverables and timelines were discussed.

The next meeting convened on April 28, 2016 after each school performed a walk assessment consisting of separate groups for Campbell Elementary School and Edgar Middle School. Each school group walked a designated route around the school, recording their observations with notes and photographs.

The third meeting with the working group was on May 23, 2016 to identify and discuss findings from each of the walk assessments, review actions, prioritize strategies, and determine short and long term next steps.

The Working Group was also given the opportunity to review, add, and make changes to this school travel plan before finalizing.



*Table 1 – Metuchen Working Group Members*

Member Name	Organization/Title	Role/Responsibility	Contact Info
Edward Porowski	Campbell Elementary School / Principal	Campbell School lead	eporowski@metboe.k12.nj.us
Linda Donohue	Edgar Middle School / Teacher	Edgar Middle School lead	lmdonohue@metboe.k12.nj.us
Gerard Redmond	Metuchen Public Schools / Buildings and Grounds	School facilities	
Jennifer Maier	Metuchen / Borough Administrator	Borough lead	jmaier@metuchen.com
Christopher Cosenza	Zoning Official	Borough alternate	ccosenza@metuchen.com
Cpl. Kenneth Bauer	Police Department	Traffic safety	mpdtrafficsafety@yahoo.com
Alyson DuTemple	Resident, Environmental Commission, Sustainable Jersey for Schools	Campbell and Edgar Middle parent	alyson.dutemple@gmail.com
Tyreen Reuter	Resident, Traffic and Transportation Committee	Campbell parent	ayersallenhouse@msn.com
Tara Matise	Resident	Edgar Middle parent	matiset@gmail.com
Cara Cuite	Resident, Bike-Walk Metuchen	Edgar Middle parent	Cara.cuite@gmail.com
Trish Sanchez	NJ SRTS Resource Center	SRTS program support	trish.sanchez@ejb.rutgers.edu
Peter Bilton	Keep Middlesex Moving	SRTS program support	pbilton@kmm.org

## Maps and Community Background

### Metuchen Borough and Schools

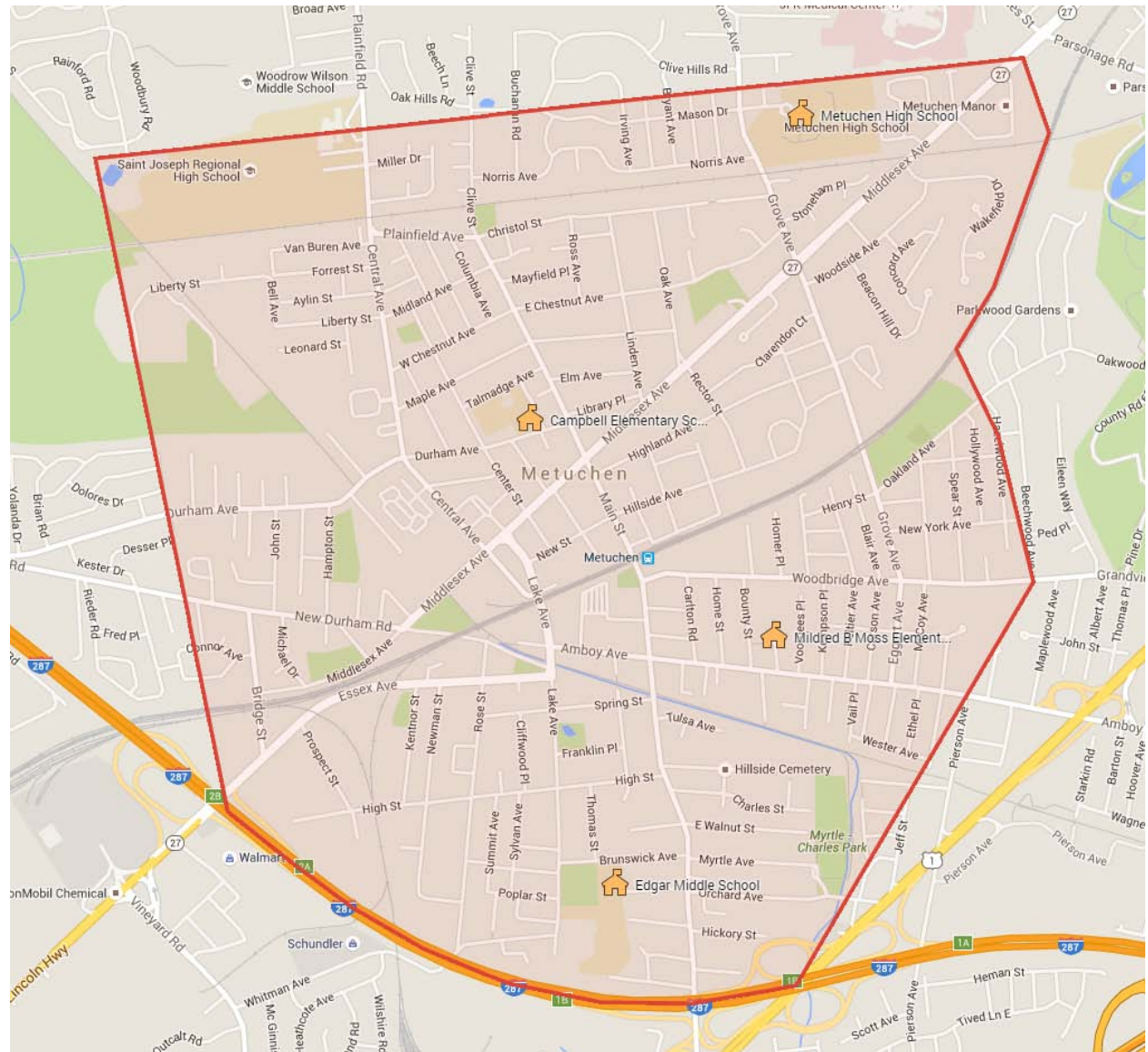


Figure 2 - Metuchen Borough and Schools

Metuchen School District serves the Borough of Metuchen, located in the heart of central New Jersey in Middlesex County. Metuchen, roughly 2.8 square miles, has a thriving downtown with tree-lined streets, local merchants, personalized services, and direct and convenient railroad service to New York City as well as Newark, New Brunswick and Trenton. Known as “The Brainy Borough” because of the many professionals, artists, educators and literary figures who lived there, Metuchen developed primarily due to its location and access to key transportation routes via the NJ Transit rail line as well as within two miles of several of NJ’s major transportation arteries: the NJ Turnpike, the Garden State Parkway, Interstate Route 287, U.S. Highway 1 and State Highway 27.

Metuchen is served by four public schools:

Mildred B. Moss Elementary School	16 Simpson Place
Campbell Elementary School	24 Durham Ave.
Edgar Middle School	49 Brunswick Ave.
Metuchen High School	400 Grove Ave.

All residents are located with two straight-line radial miles of all schools.

### Crossing Guards

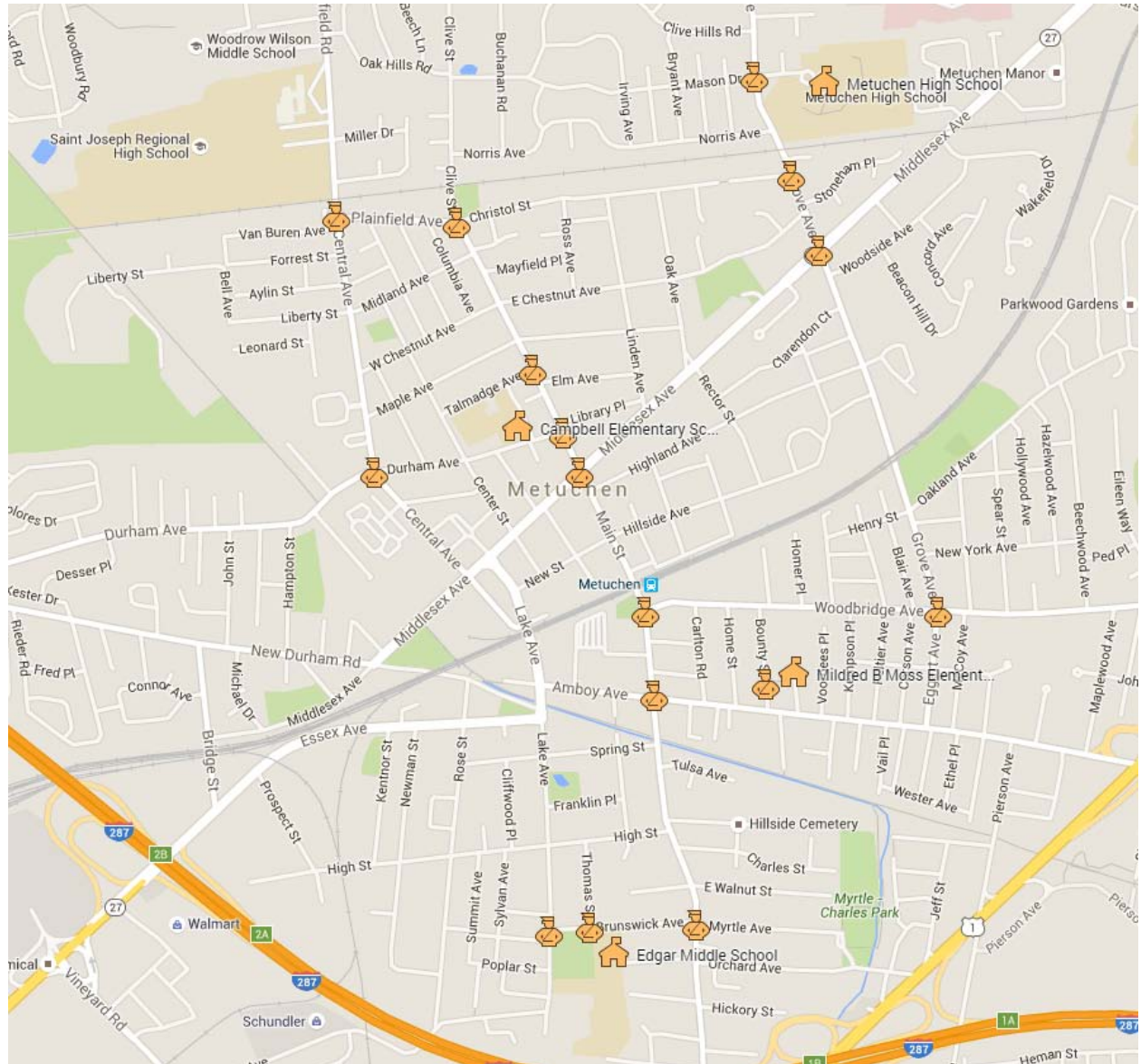


Figure 3 - Crossing guard locations

The Borough of Metuchen employs 16 crossing guards to serve three of its school sites – Campbell, Edgar and the High School. Crossing guards are stationed at the following locations:

1. Central Ave. @ Christol
2. Main St. @ Plainfield
3. Main St. @ Talmadge
4. Main St. @ Durham
5. Main St. @ Middlesex
6. Main St. @ Woodbridge
7. Main St. @ Amboy
8. Main St. @ Brunswick
9. Brunswick @ Thomas
10. Bounty @ Hunt
11. Grove @ Mason
12. Lake @ Brunswick
13. Grove @ Christol
14. Durham @ Central
15. Grove @ Middlesex
16. Grove @ Woodbridge

### Pick-up/Drop-off Locations

At Campbell School, buses are loaded and unloaded on Durham Ave., and special education buses are loaded and unloaded directly in front of the school via the school's driveway on Talmadge St. Students being driven to school can be dropped off on Talmadge St. in front of the school, however they are not permitted to use the school's driveway. Students walking to school may enter the front doors on Talmadge St. or the doors adjacent to the playground. Students who are not bused are released from the doors along the playground.

At Edgar School, buses are loaded and unloaded using the circular driveway in front of the school on Brunswick Ave. There is a separate lane for drivers to drop off their students along Brunswick Ave. Students may enter and leave through various doors around the school.

### School Busing

State mandated busing must be provided for students who live more than two miles from a K-8 school. Since the Borough of Metuchen is roughly 2.8 miles, only a handful of students qualify for mandatory busing to Edgar School. Because Campbell Elementary School is situated in the center of the town, no students currently live more than two miles from the school, and therefore no Campbell students received mandatory busing this past year.

Courtesy busing or non-mandated busing is provided by the district for some students. Students who live within approximately a half mile radius of Campbell Elementary School (also considered non-busing zone) are not eligible for courtesy busing (See Figure 3). Students who must cross Middlesex Ave (State Highway 27) or Central Ave. (County Route 531), which are both streets with high traffic volumes and speeds, are eligible for courtesy busing. Edgar Middle School students who live approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius around the school are not eligible to receive courtesy busing (See Figure 4). Edgar students who live beyond the railroad tracks or who must cross Amboy Ave. (County Route 501) or Woodbridge Ave. (County Route 660) both with high traffic volumes and speeds are eligible for courtesy busing.



The Metuchen Board of Education contributes about 75% of the total cost of the busing and parents pay a registration fee and the remaining 25% of the cost of the busing. Students who receive free or reduced lunches are eligible to receive free courtesy busing if they live outside the non-busing zone. Approximately 67% of the students at Campbell Elementary are bused, and about 54% of the students at Edgar Middle School are bused.

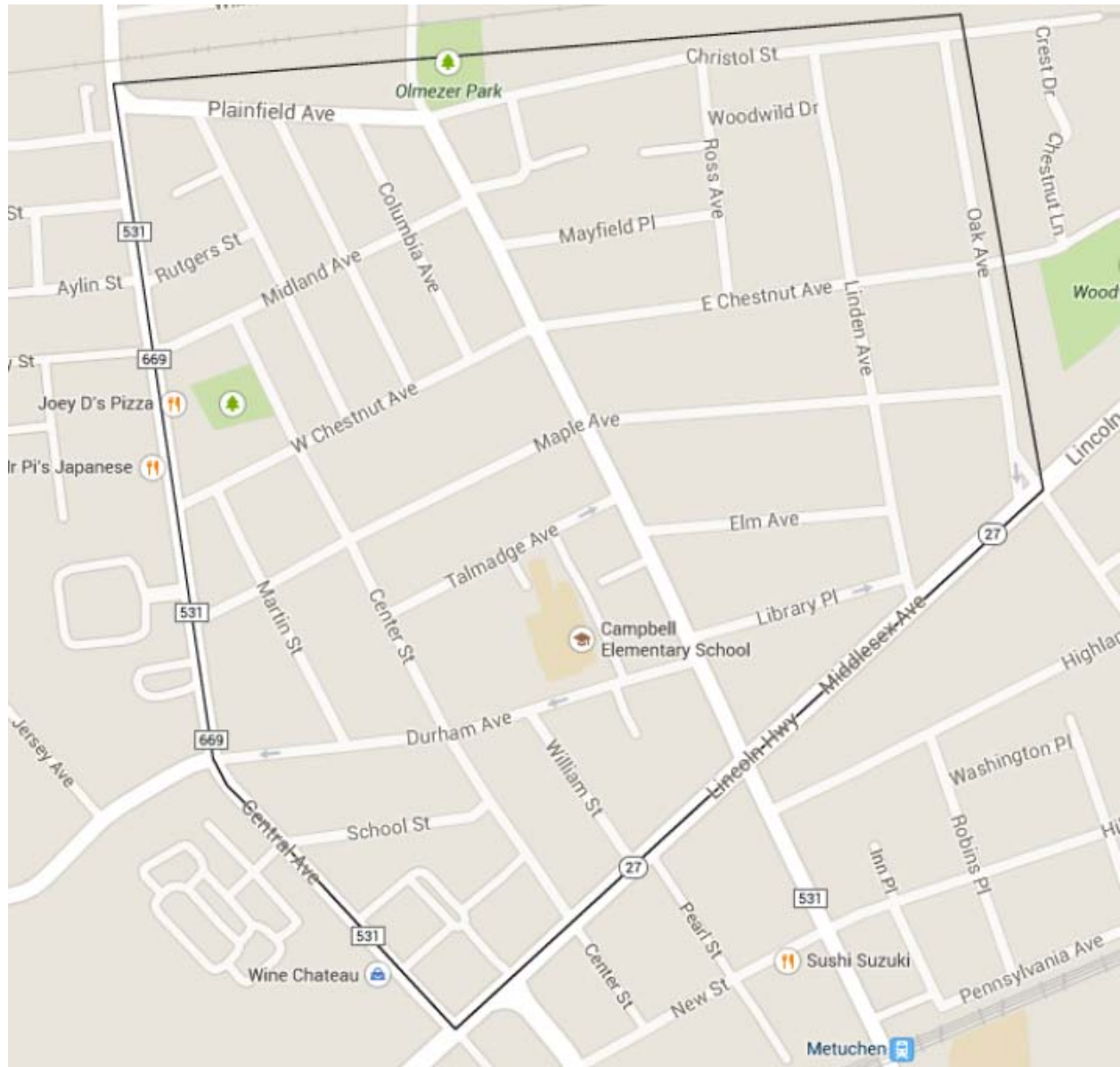


Figure 4 - Campbell School non-busing area. Source: Metuchen School District



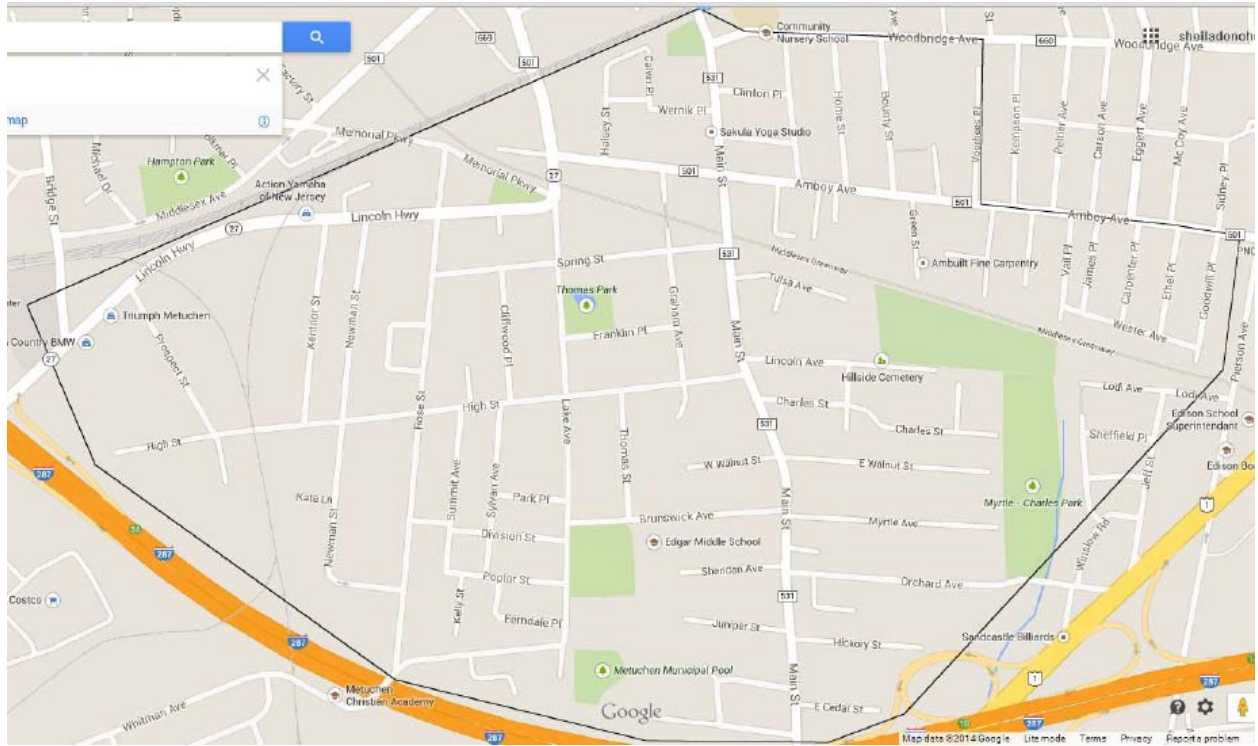


Figure 5 - Edgar Middle School non-busing area. Source: Metuchen School District

## Destinations

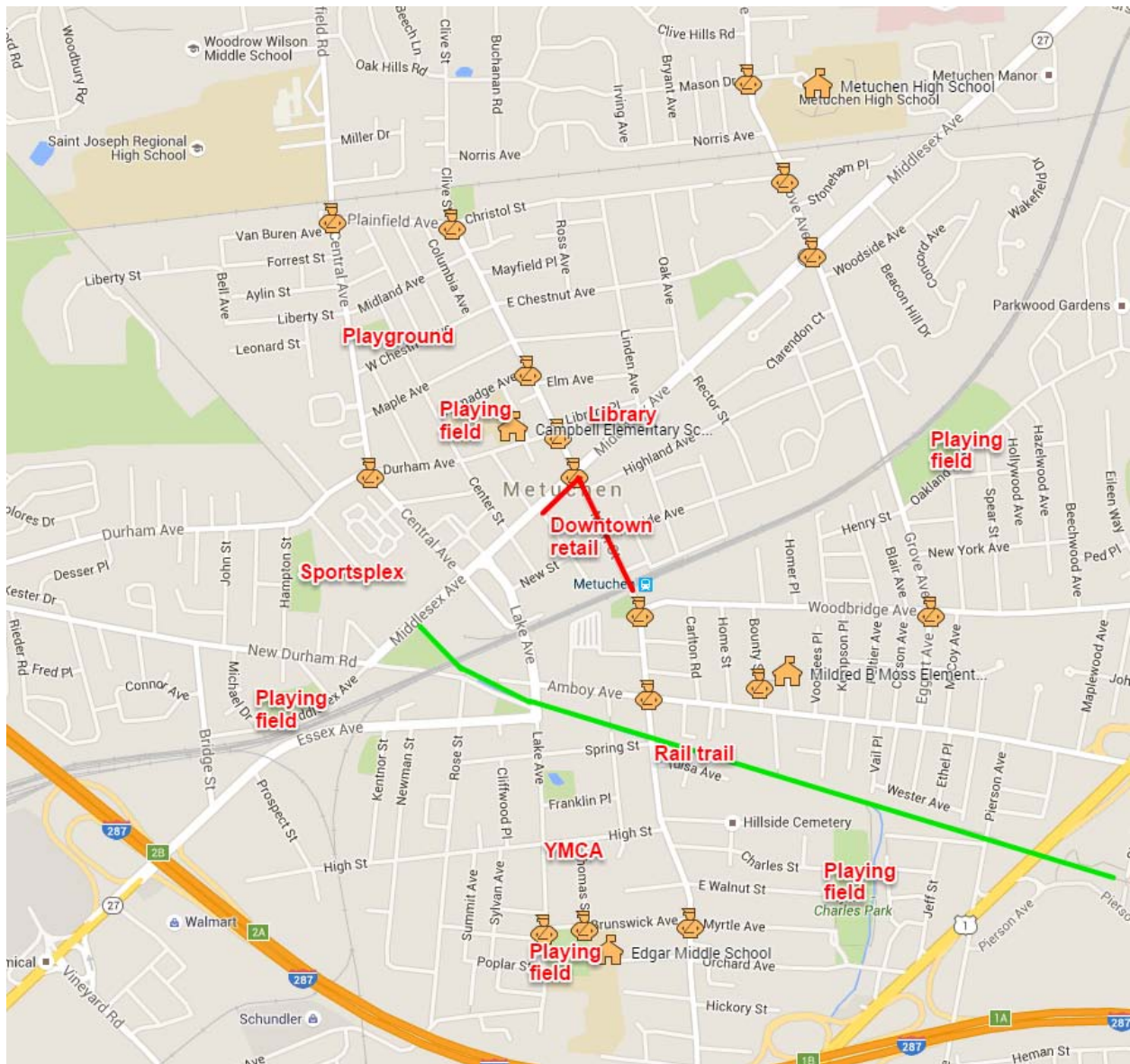


Figure 6 - Selected youth and family destinations

Students and their families make recreational and utility trips before and after school. Main St. between Middlesex Ave. (State Highway 27) and Woodbridge Ave. is the core Main Street, with food, retail shops and services. Other smaller retail nodes can be found on Main St., Middlesex Ave. and Amboy Ave. Playing fields can be found adjacent to Edgar and Campbell Schools as well as in municipal parks scattered around the borough. The YMCA, located on Lake Ave. at High St., offers after school programs. Edgar School students walk the one block via Thomas St., while younger students are bused from Campbell School. The Middlesex Greenway rail trail and the municipal library are other potential after school destinations.

North-south routes through the borough are limited by active and historic rail lines (Amtrak Northeast Corridor and Middlesex Greenway) and the busy roads Essex Ave./Lake Ave./Middlesex Ave. (State

Highway 27). Main St., New Durham Rd., and Amboy Ave. are also challenging for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross.

### Speed Limits

Motor vehicle speeds affect both the safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists. Local streets in the borough have a speed limit of 25 MPH. New Durham Rd. (County Route 501) has a speed limit of 35 MPH, while Amboy Ave. (also County Route 501) has a speed limit of 30 MPH from Lake Ave. to Bounty Rd, and 35 MPH from Bounty Rd. to the municipal border. County Route 531 has a speed limit of 30 MPH on Main St., and 35 MPH on Plainfield Ave.

## Walk/Bike Barriers and Opportunities






Information on barriers to walking and bicycling to school, and opportunities to improve the frequency, convenience, and safety of walking and bicycling were collected from a number of sources. Initial meetings with Principal Ed Porowski and Edgar Middle School teacher Linda Donohue were informative. Meetings and conversations with the Working Group generated useful observations and ideas, both about specific locations and about more general opportunities and challenges that face the school community as a whole. Student travel tallies paint a picture of who is walking and biking today. Walk assessments conducted by the Working Group in the neighborhoods of the two schools recorded existing conditions on the streets of Metuchen, with an emphasis on sidewalks and road crossings.

This information is presented here as a summary of walking and biking to school at Campbell and Edgar Schools. Infrastructure-related issues, such as streets, sidewalks, and school facilities, are presented separately from non-infrastructure issues, such as educational programs, school policies, and community events that can serve to either encourage or discourage walking and biking.

### Student Arrival and Departure Tallies

Student Arrival and Departure Travel Tallies document how children travel to and from school and are taken by teachers for two or three days (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) during one week. Travel Tallies were taken at both Campbell and Edgar Schools. Tallies were taken in February 2016.






**Campbell Elementary School**, which includes students in grades 1-4 (ages 6-10), had the following results from the student arrival and departure travel tallies taken in February 2016:

	Arrival	Dismissal
	53% Students bused	50%
	40% Students driven	43%
	6% Students walked	6%
	0.1% Students biked	0.1%
	0% Students carpooled	0%

Based on the travel tallies, about half of the Campbell students get bused to and from school; of the remaining half of the Campbell students, most get driven to and from school, and 6% walk to and from school. Even fewer bike and no one car pooled when this tally was conducted. Weather conditions during this week were sunny and overcast therefore did not seem to be a factor.

**Edgar Middle School**, which includes students in grades 5-8 (ages 10-14), had the following results from the student arrival and departure travel tallies taken in February 2016:

## Edgar Middle School

	Arrival	Dismissal
	45% Students bused	42%
	35% Students driven	27%
	17% Students walked	27%
	0.7% Students biked	1%
	2% Students carpooled	4%

Based on the travel tallies, just over 40% of the Edgar School students get bused to and from school; about a third of the students are driven to school; most of the remaining third of the students walk to school with very few bicycling and a few carpooling to and from school. Weather conditions during this week were not available.



## School Policies

The Metuchen School District has the following three policies listed in their website related to active transportation:

Nutrition policy:

<http://www.metuchenschools.org/metuchen/Policies%20and%20Regulations/POLICY%208505%20School%20Nutrition.pdf>

Dismissal policy:

<http://www.metuchenschools.org/metuchen/Policies%20and%20Regulations/POLICY%208601%20Pupil%20Supervision%20After%20School%20Dismissal.pdf>

Safety Patrol:

<http://www.metuchenschools.org/metuchen/Policies%20and%20Regulations/POLICY%205860%20Safety%20Patrol.pdf>

The nutrition and dismissal policies are mandated policies from the NJ Department of Education. The Pupil Supervision after School Dismissal policy states that no students in grades K-2 will be released to walk home unless parent or legal guardian or escort designated by parent or legal guardian is present. No students in grades 3-4 will be released to walk home unless released to parent/ legal guardian or escort designated by parent/legal guardian or a signed permission is received from the parent/ legal guardian allowing the student to walk home unescorted. The policy further states that the practice of a third or fourth grade student walking home unescorted is strongly discouraged and shall only be allowed at the discretion of the building Principal on a case by case basis. Any parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a pupil attending a district-operated school or program in grades 5-12, where the pupil is not eligible for district-provided transportation or is eligible and elects not to use district-provided transportation after dismissal may request in writing that the school not release the pupil to walk home after dismissal unless the pupil is released to the parent(s), legal guardian(s) or designated escort(s). Otherwise, students not bused in grades 5-12 are dismissed from school independently.

The Safety Patrol was instituted as a means of preventing accidents, instructing students in good habits and providing opportunities for leadership for students in grade four. Members of the school safety patrol may be assigned to control and direct student traffic on school grounds, on school buses, on sidewalks and paths adjacent to the street or roadway, and across streets and roadways. No school safety patrol member shall be permitted to direct or place himself or herself in the path of vehicular traffic. Students must obtain permission from parent or legal guardian and attend a training program.

The district also has a Wellness Committee/Green Team listed on their website ([metuchenschools.org](http://www.metuchenschools.org)) which was instituted in 2012 with the following goals:

- Provides families, teachers, staff and students information about what the district does to improve health and academic success of its students
- Ensures districts health policies are implemented
- Collects information (data and perspectives) as needed about buildings, environment, food options, activity levels, and special health needs

- Enables health priorities to be established that reflect the needs of the students

### Students with Disabilities

Encouraging children, including those with disabilities, to be physically active and to participate in Safe Routes to School is a vital component of the program. All students in the district, including students with disabilities and special needs, are encouraged and welcome to participate in Safe Routes to School programs, and no student is excluded from any events. Program coordinators, whether from inside or outside the District, should be proactive in working with school staff to provide the accommodations necessary for an inclusive event or program.

### Non-Infrastructure Barriers and Opportunities

Non-infrastructure refers to education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation programs. At the first working group meeting in early March, members identified the following non-infrastructure related assets to walking and bicycling:

- Crossing Guards
- Downtown
- Safe neighborhoods
- Small, walkable community
- Community Involvement (Street Smart, Complete Streets, Bike-Walk Metuchen)

Barriers to walking and bicycling related to non-infrastructure that were identified in the working group meeting included:

- Weather, particularly cold, wet, snow
- Child safety issues (abduction)
- Heavy school backpacks
- Heavy musical instruments
- Start/Dismissal times of the schools are tight making it difficult to go to and from schools
- Early start times at schools
- Extra time is needed and planned to walk to school
- Lack of Crossing Guards in some areas

Resulting from this list based on feedback the working group, the following non-infrastructure strategies were discussed based on the five E's of SRTS:

#### Encouragement:

- Walking Wednesdays at Campbell are successful. Mid October saw the most participation. Winter months were not as popular but picked up in the spring.
- Perhaps a police escort should be removed from walk to school days unless there is a very large number of students for safety purposes otherwise students may not walk without assistance from the police.
- Campbell School is interested in a bike to school day after a bike rodeo in the spring.

- Contests for walking and bicycling to and from school may be unfair for the students who are bused and cannot participate.

#### Education:

- Bike police patrol could implement a bike event.
- Bike rodeo and bike to school day at Campbell in the spring.

#### Engineering:

- Map safe routes to school and post on the website or distribute to parents. Possibly paint paw prints for kids to follow the safe routes to school.
- Propose improvements for remaining NJDOT SRTS grant funds and close out the grant before applying for next round of grants.
- Consider applying for SRTS grant funding in the Spring 2016.

#### Enforcement:

- More crossing guards are needed in high speed areas.

### Infrastructure Barriers and Opportunities

Characteristics of the streets, sidewalks, paths and buildings that make it easier or more difficult to walk and bike to school are presented here. At the first Working Group meeting on March 3, 2016, the group identified these opportunities:

- Designate recommended walking routes and promote to parents.
- Pursue bicycle lanes.
- Pursue extending the Middlesex Greenway trail.
- Consider applying for NJDOT SRTS grant funding in the Spring 2016.

In addition to Working Group discussion, walk assessments provided information on the physical infrastructure that students use on their walk or bike to school.

### Walk Assessments

Walk assessments are tools to help schools, parents, students, and the community identify barriers that may make it difficult or dangerous for children to walk or bike to school. These assessments evaluate the sidewalk, road, and neighborhood conditions around the school, and identify key safety improvements that can make walking and biking a safer and easier way to get to school.

Members of the Working Group conducted walk assessments of Edgar and Campbell Schools on April 28, 2016. Participants separated into two groups and met at their assigned school. The groups then

followed a walking route through the school neighborhood. During the walk, participants recorded their observations of the walking environment with photographs and notes.

*Campbell Elementary School*

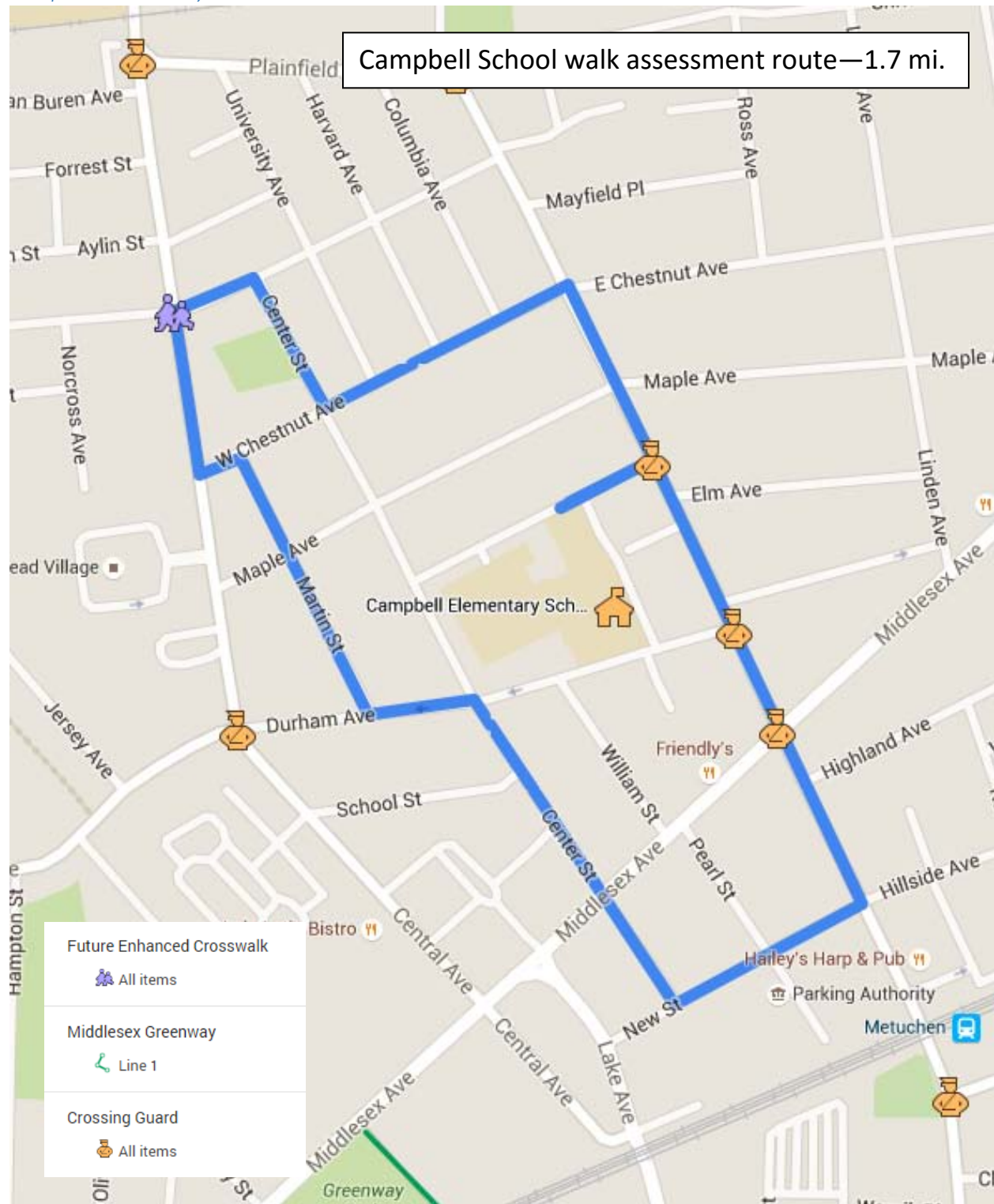


Figure 6 - Campbell Elementary School walk assessment route

Assessment participants observed these issues in the Campbell School neighborhood:

1. Main St. at Talmadge Ave. – missing curb ramps
2. Crosswalk paint wear
3. Durham Ave. – storm water drainage issues
4. Durham Ave. at Main St. – Verizon property maintenance
5. W. Chestnut Ave. and Maple Ave. at Center St. – no crosswalks
6. Sidewalk uplift and maintenance
7. Overgrown vegetation
8. Talmadge Ave. drop-off traffic



*Figure 7 - Lack of curb ramps and pole obstruction at Main St. at Talmadge Ave.*





*Figure 7 - Crosswalk paint wear*



*Figure 8 - Verizon property maintenance at Durham Ave. at Main St.*





*Figure 9 - Lack of crosswalks at W. Chestnut St. at Center St.*

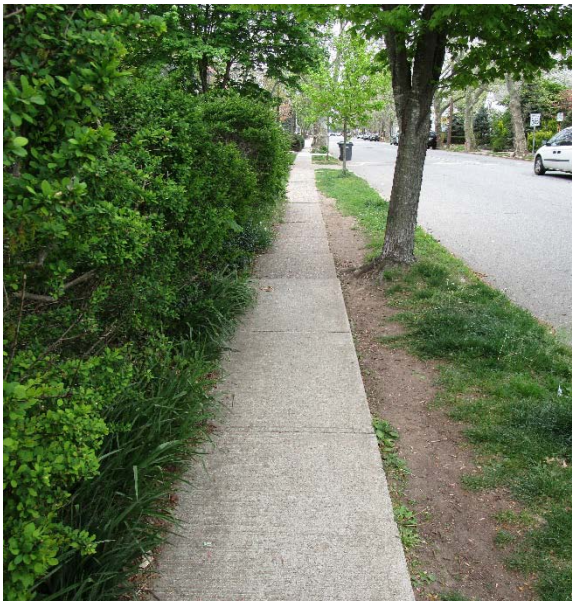


*Figure 10 - Pavement condition in crosswalks at main St. at Durham Ave.*





*Figure 11 - Uplifted sidewalk*



*Figure 12 - Overgrown vegetation*

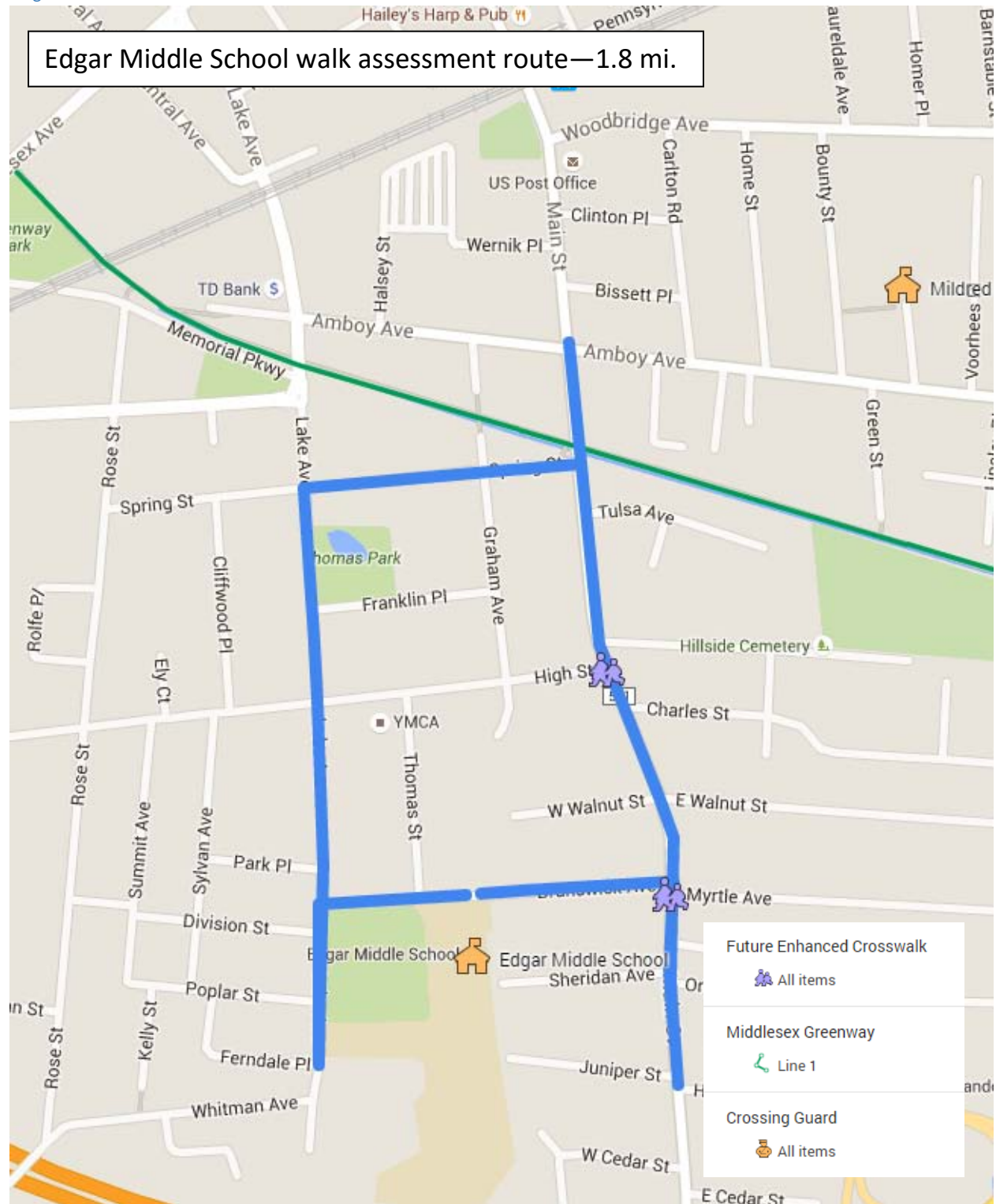
*Edgar Middle School*

Figure 13 - Edgar Middle School Walk Assessment Route



Assessment participants observed these issues in the Edgar School neighborhood:

1. A worn path indicating where students walk at the school entrance
2. Crosswalk paint wear
3. Pavement condition issues at crosswalks
4. Sidewalk uplift and maintenance—especially slate sidewalks
5. Overgrown vegetation
6. Sidewalk obstructions and worn crosswalk paint at Amboy Ave. and Main St.



*Figure 14 - Edgar School driveway and sidewalk*





*Figure 15 - Edgar School driveway and sidewalk*



*Figure 16 - Good maintenance at Lake Ave. at High St.*



Figure 17 - Pavement condition in crosswalk at W. Walnut St. at Main St.

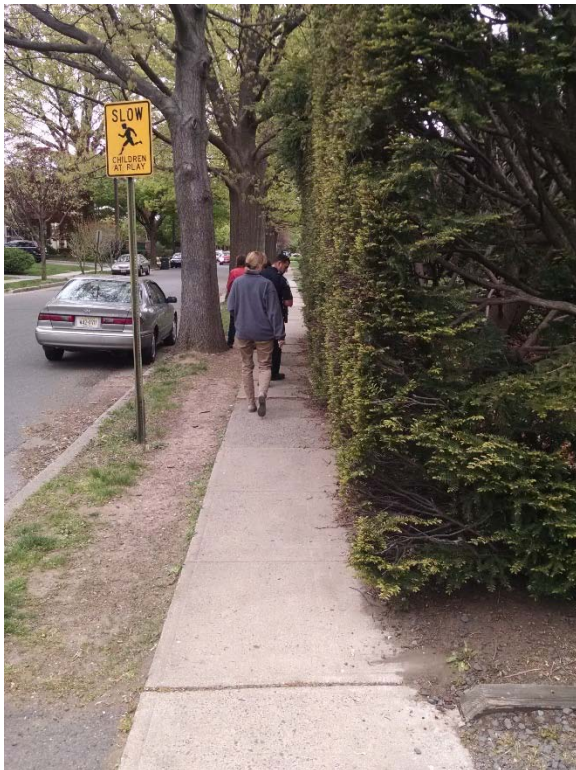


Figure 18 - Overgrown bushes at Thomas St.





*Figure 19 - Sidewalk uplift on Thomas St. (left); sidewalk slope on Spring St. between Lake and Graham (right)*



*Figure 20 - Amboy Ave. at Graham St., a popular crossing for middle school students*



Figure 21 - Amboy Ave. at Main St. – sidewalk obstructions and worn crosswalks

### Summary of Infrastructure Issues

Walk assessment participants collected observations of the walking experience and pedestrian facilities around the two schools. Maintenance issues on publicly-maintained right-of-way, such as paint wear and potholes, can be addressed through routine maintenance. The timing of the assessment, at the end of the winter season, probably contributed to these issues. Similarly, maintenance issues at Edgar School can be addressed by the school district. Issues identified on Middlesex Ave. (State Highway 27), Main St. and Amboy Ave. would require the support and coordination with state and county agencies who have jurisdiction over those roads.

Vegetation growth into the sidewalk was observed around both schools, and could be addressed by the property owners via municipal code enforcement. Sidewalk uplift, a common problem in neighborhoods with good street tree cover, was particularly prevalent around Edgar School, and could be addressed through a combination of code enforcement, municipal grants, and/or property assessments.

Although not a focus of this assessment, a lack of on-street bike facilities were noted.

### Main St. and Center St. Improvement Concept

At the request of the Borough, KMM prepared pedestrian improvement concepts for Main St. at the intersections of Durham Ave., Elm Ct., and Talmadge Rd., and Center St. at Talmadge Ave, Maple Ave. and Chestnut Ave. These proposed improvements are described in Appendix A – Campbell Elementary School Pedestrian Safety Concepts and are intended to address Working Group concerns about the large volume of Campbell School student crossings at these locations.



Main St. locations would receive a combination of curbed and painted bulb-outs to narrow the crossing distance for pedestrians, higher-visibility warning signs, and refreshed striping. Pedestrian curb ramps with detectable warning surfaces would be installed, where they are not present.

Center St. locations would receive painted crosswalks, and pedestrian curb ramps, where they are not present.

#### Main St. at Plainfield Ave. Improvement Concept

In response to a Working Group member concerns about pedestrian movements at the intersection of Main St. and Plainfield Ave., KMM prepared two sketch concepts that would enable the installation of crosswalks at all intersection approaches while maintaining motor vehicle turning movements. Option A would enlarge an existing traffic island to create a pedestrian refuge, while Option B would remove the island and right turn slip lane to simplify the intersection for all users. A traffic engineering assessment could determine the feasibility of these concepts, and county support would be required for implementation.

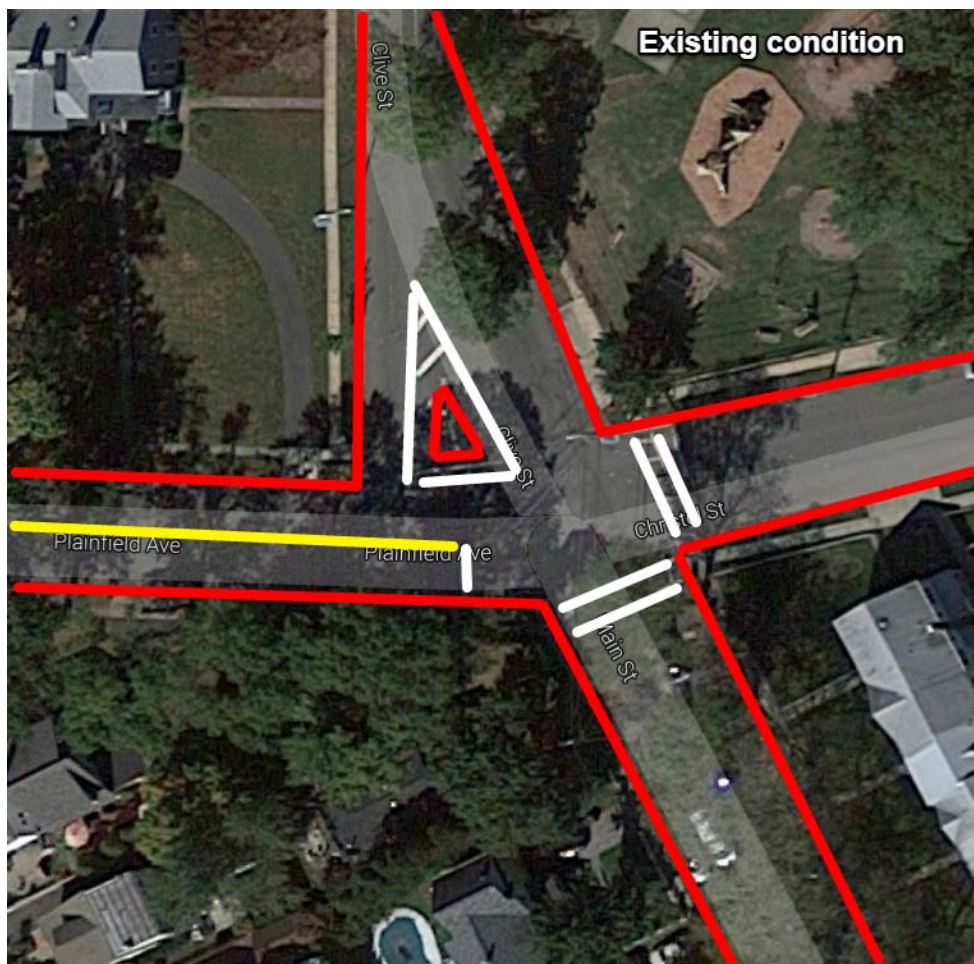


Figure 22 - Main St. at Plainfield Ave. existing condition



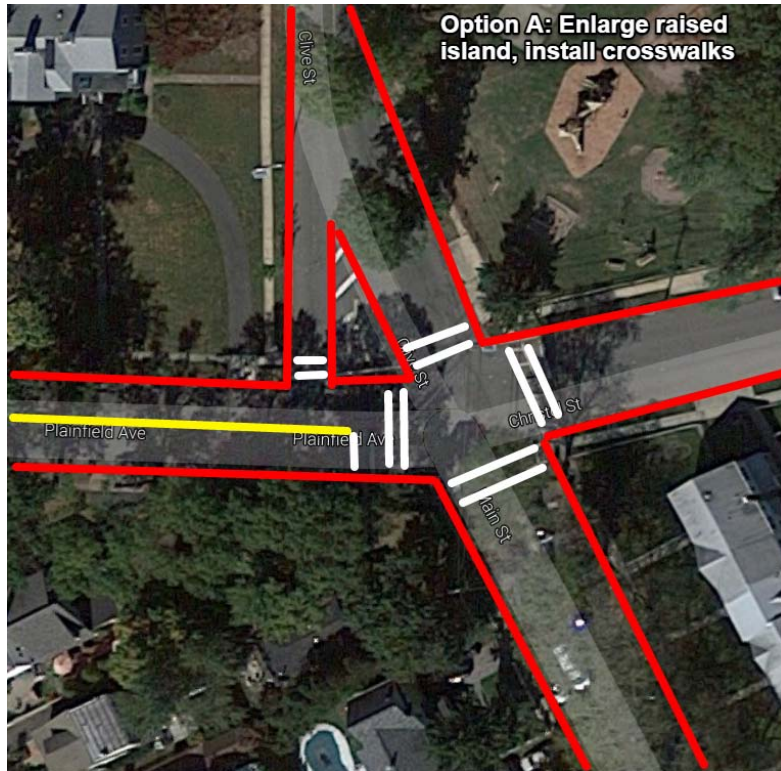


Figure 23 - Option A, Main St. at Plainfield Ave.

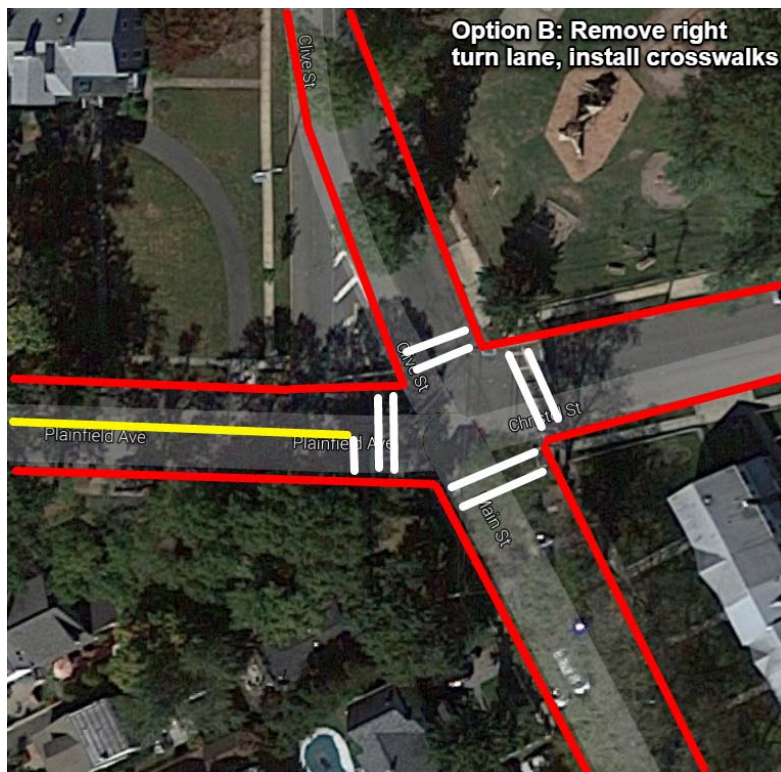


Figure 24 - Option B, Main St. at Plainfield Ave.

## Goals and Actions

### Priorities

Throughout the planning process, the following actions emerged as high priorities among community representatives:

1. Municipal/county maintenance Issues
  - Repaint worn crosswalks
  - Repair pavement where damaged in crosswalks
  - Repair damaged truncated dome pads
2. Property owner maintenance issues
  - Repair or replace uplifted sidewalks
  - Trim vegetation
3. Provide more bike racks at Edgar School
4. Provide bike education to Edgar School students
5. Install bicycle lanes
6. Designate walking routes/grow walking school buses
7. Continue walking Wednesdays/walking promotion at Campbell School

### Recommended Actions

The following recommended actions were presented at the May 23<sup>rd</sup> Working Group meeting and refined based on feedback. Next steps were undertaken immediately for some of these actions. Others are annual, season, or otherwise ongoing activities.

*Table 2 - Education and Encouragement Actions*

Program/Improvement	Responsible Party/Person	STATUS/Next Actions	Timeline	Cost
Walk to School Day—Campbell	Campbell	ONGOING Plan for next school year	Bi-annual	Low
Walk to School Day—Edgar	Edgar	ONGOING Plan for next school year	Bi-annual.	Low
Walking Wednesdays—Campbell	Campbell	ONGOING Plan for next school year	Fall/Spring	Low
Bicycle Rodeo—Campbell	Campbell, KMM, NJ SRTS Resource Ctr.	Completed May 17, 2016	Annual	Low
Bicycle Education—Edgar	Edgar, KMM, NJ SRTS Resource Ctr.	Investigate interest and scheduling	2016-2017	Low
Walking School Bus—Campbell	Parents	Plan outreach for next school year	Ongoing	Low
Walk & Bike Safety Assembly—Campbell	Campbell, KMM	Completed May 17, 2016	Annual	Low
Designate walking routes—Campbell	Campbell, Police, Parents			Low

Safety Ambassadors—Campbell	RWJUH, Campbell	ONGOING	Annual	Low
Coupons for helmet use	Police	ONGOING	Summer	Low
Bike Rodeo—Farmer's Market	Bike-Walk Metuchen, KMM	Determine interest for Spring 2017	Occasional	Low

*Table 3 - Engineering Actions*

Program/Improvement	Responsible Party/Person	Next Actions	Timeline	Cost
Sidewalk repair by property owner	Borough	Code enforcement	2016	Low
Develop sidewalk repair program	Borough	Investigate Borough-sponsored options	2016-2017	High
Crosswalk re-striping	Borough	Maintenance	2016	Low
Pavement repair	Borough	Maintenance	2016	Low
Pedestrian facility improvements on Main St. in the vicinity of Campbell School	Borough, County	Apply for NJDOT SRTS grant	June 2016	Low (grant)
Crosswalk striping on Center St. in the vicinity of Campbell School	Borough	Maintenance	2016-2017	Low
Pedestrian facility improvements at Main St. and Plainfield Ave.	Borough, County	Engineering assessment		High
Crosswalk painting on Center St.	Borough	Paint crosswalks on Center St. in the vicinity of Campbell School	2016	Low
Bike and skate racks—Campbell	School District, Sustainable Jersey for Schools Committee	Investigate cost; investigate grant opportunities		Mid
Bike and skate racks—Edgar	School District, Sustainable Jersey for Schools Committee	Waiting on Sustainable Jersey grant	2016-2017	Mid
Bike assessment	Working group, KMM, NJ SRTS Resource Center, Bike-Walk Metuchen	Evaluate interest; schedule	Fall 2016	Low
Assess locations for bicycle lanes	Borough, County, NJDOT	Complete streets study is ongoing; funded by NJDOT	Study complete Sept. 2016	Low (grant)
Install bicycle lanes	Borough, County, NJDOT			Mid
Install high visibility crosswalks with signage	Borough, NJDOT	Design & engineering underway.		Low (grant)

*Table 4 - Enforcement Actions*

Action Item	Responsible Party/Person	Next Actions	Timeline	Cost
Speed enforcement	Police Department	ONGOING		Mid
Assess crossing guards locations/ relocate as needed	Police Department, Borough, School District		2016-2017	Low

## Evaluation

Determining participation in walking and bicycling to school program, how many children walk and bike to and from school, as well as understanding concerns from parents, community members, and school and borough staff are important factors for measuring the level of involvement in Safe Routes to School programs. Evaluating the progress of the School Travel Plan involves understanding what works and how best to plan for future infrastructure improvements. Since implementation of some of the goals and actions resulting from the School Travel Plan may be long-term, tracking progress provides benchmarks and rationale for continued investment. Ideally, evaluations should be completed each year while walking and bicycling routes to school in order to check the quality of the surrounding neighborhood's infrastructure. Measurements suggested include:

- **Periodic walk/bike assessments** of the surrounding neighborhoods near all the schools to document current and new issues.
- **Periodic student arrival and departure travel tallies** at each school to continue to monitor how students get to and from school.
- **Periodic parent surveys** collect information about how their children travel to and from school and what barriers they face. Keep Middlesex Moving and the NJSRTS Resource Center can facilitate administering the survey online or via paper in both English and Spanish as well as tabulating the results of the survey.
- **Track student participation** in walking and bicycling to school events such as the Walk to School Days, Walking School Buses, bike rodeos and pedestrian and bicycle safety presentations.

An annual meeting of the working group should be conducted to review these data, review progress on the School Travel Plan actions, and look for new opportunities to adjust SRTS programming and seek new street safety investments to encourage walking and biking to school.

## Summary

The Campbell Elementary and Edgar Middle School Travel Plan was developed to address the continued desire to improve walking and bicycling throughout the borough, the concerns about existing safety issues due to road crossings and the infrastructure gaps in the community.

The Metuchen School District and the Borough of Metuchen are committed to on-going encouragement and increasing the number of children who walk and bike to school through safety improvements and programs that encourage active transportation to and from school and educate students about pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Implementation of this plan and the sustained success of efforts to increase walking and bicycling to school will require continued partnership not just between the borough and the schools but also among local and regional organizations. Infrastructure improvements must be employed alongside hands-on education and encouragement programs to maintain the momentum towards achieving the goals set forth in this travel plan.



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## Appendix A – Campbell Elementary School Pedestrian Safety Concepts

# Memorandum

To: Jennifer Maier, Metuchen Borough Administrator

From: Peter Bilton, Keep Middlesex Moving

Date: June 3, 2016

Re: Campbell Elementary School Pedestrian Safety Improvement Concepts

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Based on input from the School Travel Plan working group, KMM selected five intersections in the vicinity of Campbell Elementary School for proposed pedestrian safety improvements. Improvement concepts are described below. Directional abbreviations—NB for northbound, EB for eastbound, etc.—are used. Concepts should be evaluated by a civil engineer for their feasibility, considering road geometry, drainage, cost, adherence to design guidelines, and county approval.

1. Main St./County Route 531 at Durham Ave.
  - Install curb bulb-out on NB Main St. to slow Main St. traffic and reduce pedestrian crossing distance. Permanent concrete curb or temporary rubber curb may be used.
  - Install painted bulb-outs on SB Main St. before and after Durham Ave. to delineate no parking/no driving zone and to visually narrow the intersection. Consider installing flexible bollards to reinforce this zone.
  - Replace existing school crossing signs (S1-1) on NB and SB Main St. with high-visibility version. Consider edge-illuminated version. Solar alternatives are available.
  - Consider installing School Advance Crossing Assembly (school crossing sign S1-1 with "AHEAD") on NB and SB Main St. approaches to Durham Ave.
  - Refresh crosswalk striping and consider a high-visibility design.
  - Install detectable warning surface (truncated dome pad) at NW and SW corners of intersection.
  - Enforce vegetation maintenance code on Durham Ave.
  
2. Main St./County Route 531 at Elm Ct./Elm Ave.
  - Install curb bulb-out on NB Main St. to slow Main St. traffic and reduce pedestrian crossing distance. Permanent concrete curb or temporary rubber curb may be used. The existing parking restriction striping may serve as a guide for locating this curb.
  - Install painted bulb-outs on SB Main St. before and after Elm Ct. to delineate no parking/no driving zone and to visually narrow the intersection. Consider installing flexible bollards to reinforce this zone.

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- Install curb ramps at crosswalk termini on NB Main St.
  - Consider replacing curb ramps on SB Main St.
  - Refresh crosswalk striping and consider a high-visibility design.
3. Main St./County Route 531 at Talmadge Ave.
- Install pedestrian curb ramps on Main St.
  - Install a curb bulb-out on NB Main St. to slow Main St. traffic and reduce pedestrian crossing distance. Permanent concrete curb or temporary rubber curb may be used. If a physical curb cannot be used due to the location of residential driveways, install a painted bulb-out.
  - Install painted bulb-outs on SB Main St. after Talmadge Ave. to delineate no parking/no driving zone and to visually narrow the intersection.
  - Refresh crosswalk striping and consider a high-visibility design.
  - Given the proximity to the school, school crossing signs may be more appropriate than the existing crosswalk warning signs for the NB and SB Main St. approaches to this intersection.
4. Center St. at Talmadge Ave.
- Paint crosswalks.
  - Install curb ramp on SB Center St.
5. Center St. at Maple Ave.
- Paint crosswalks.
  - Install curb ramps to assist crossing the EB Maple Ave. approach to the intersection.
6. Center St. at W. Chestnut Ave.
- Paint crosswalks.