

# NJ SRTS URBAN DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

Grace A. Dunn Middle School

## Safe Routes to School

### Travel Plan



*in association with*  
The National Center for Bicycling and Walking  
The Alan M. Voorheese Transportation Center



*April 2009*



# GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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### INTRODUCTION

Grace A. Dunn Middle School is one of 6 schools in Newark, Trenton and Camden that participated in New Jersey Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Urban Demonstration Program in 2008. The program aims to empower inner city school communities with tools and strategies to overcome barriers to walking and bicycling to school by addressing the needs that are important and specific to them. Through this program, the NJDOT provided Grace Dunn Middle School and the City of Trenton with a project team led by The RBA Group (RBA) and including the National Center for Bicycling and Walking (NCBW) and the Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) at Rutgers University. Each of the 6 school communities that participated in the Urban Demonstration Program took part in a collaborative problem solving approach to identifying their community's specific issues and assets, which include what they as individuals bring to the table. An important aspect of Grace Dunn Middle School's SRTS Program is that it enables the school community to take ownership and achieve the goals specific to getting their kids to school safely on foot or bicycle.

Utilizing the NJDOT's New Jersey SRTS Travel Plan Guide, Grace A. Dunn's SRTS Travel Plan contains the six required elements of a "complete" travel plan:

1. School Description
2. SRTS Task Force and Partnerships
3. Barriers & Opportunities to Walking and Bicycling
4. Map of the School Neighborhood
5. Action Plan
6. Program Evaluation and Monitoring

This Safe Routes to School Travel Plan is a working document intended to set priorities for increasing the number and safety of students walking and bicycling to school. In so doing, this Travel Plan will serve as a basis for the organizing and funding of those priorities and will (hopefully) be replicated across Trenton and in other areas of New Jersey.



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### SCHOOL DESCRIPTION



#### Grace A. Dunn Middle School

Location:

401 Dayton Street (Grand Street and Virginia Avenue)

School District:

Trenton City

Grade Levels:

6<sup>th</sup> –8<sup>th</sup> grades

Student Population:

686

### Student Travel Mode

Grace A. Dunn Middle School is the only middle school within the school district that has a bilingual education program. With this designation they receive students from all areas of the city; therefore, there is no defined catchment area.

There is no crossing guard currently assigned to the school for assistance at the various intersections during arrival and dismissal.

The official hours of instruction at the school are 8:20am – 3:00pm. The school's breakfast program begins at 7:30am and their afterschool program runs from 3:00pm – 6:00pm.

Driven:	32%
Walk:	53%
Bike:	0%
Car Pool:	7%
School Bus or: Public Transit	8%
<i>Percentage of current student travel to and from school</i>	



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### SRTS TASK FORCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

A key element in the process was to conduct outreach efforts to the city and school communities and establish a Task Force for each school. The aim was to engage active community groups and local organizers who will support and sustain the SRTS program over time. In Trenton, the Task Force is comprised of the Trenton Public School District, Planning Department, Public Works Department, Police Department, the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Agency and a Community Liaison. The key contact for the Grace Dunn Middle School is Principal Maryann Klaus.



Task force members attended a program awareness meeting to receive an overview of SRTS and the Urban Demonstration Program while helping the project team gather insight to specific issues/concerns within the school community. This insight helped to facilitate the development of the program at each school as each representative identified issues that they believe compromise the safety of their students on their way to and from school.

### Partner Organizations

Organization	Role/Responsibility	Contact
Grace A. Dunn Middle School	Programmatic Activity and Implementation	Maryann Klaus <i>Principal</i> Grace A. Dunn Middle School (609) 656-4708 <a href="mailto:mklaus@trenton.k12.nj.us">mklaus@trenton.k12.nj.us</a>
Trenton City	Programmatic Activity and Implementation	David Weathington <i>Assistant Superintendent of Student Services</i> Trenton Board of Education 609-656-4900 ext 5753 609-902-9203 (mobile) <a href="mailto:dweathington@trenton.k12.nj.us">dweathington@trenton.k12.nj.us</a>
Trenton City	Engineering Project Implementation	Andrew Carten <i>Director</i> Trenton Division of Planning 609-989-3502 <a href="mailto:acarten@trentonnj.org">acarten@trentonnj.org</a>

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<b>Organization</b>	<b>Role/Responsibility</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Trenton City	Programmatic Activity and Implementation	Senor Juan Martinez <i>Community Liaison Coordinator</i> Trenton Board of Education 508 Lamberton Street Trenton, NJ 08611 609-656-4900 x5666 609-647-4368 (mobile) <a href="mailto:senormart@aol.com">senormart@aol.com</a>
Trenton City	Enforcement/Safety Education	Luis Medina <i>Detective</i> Trenton Police Department 609-989-4091 (mobile) (609) 947-9578 <a href="mailto:lmolina@trentonpolice.net">lmolina@trentonpolice.net</a>
Trenton City	Engineering Project Implementation	Hoggarth Stephen Trenton Public Works Department 609-989-3350 <a href="mailto:hstephen@trentonnj.org">hstephen@trentonnj.org</a>
Greater Mercer - Transportation Management Agency	SRTS Program Assistance/Resource	Cheryl Kastrenakes Greater Mercer TMA 15 Roszel Road, South Suite 101 Princeton, NJ 08540 609-452-1491 <a href="mailto:ckastrenakes@verizon.net">ckastrenakes@verizon.net</a>

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### BARRIERS & OPPORTUNITIES TO WALKING AND BICYCLING

The information gathering process for the Grace A. Dunn Middle School followed a series of steps conducted by the project team including stakeholder interviews, data collection, student travel surveys, neighborhood mapping, visual preference surveys and a community workshop. Together, these steps allowed the project team to develop a list of preliminary recommendations to the school neighborhood to improve conditions for students on their way to and from school.

#### Stakeholder Interviews

On January 15, 2008, the Grace Dunn Middle School participated in a Trenton Task Force SRTS program awareness meeting jointly with the Joyce Kilmer Elementary School – another NJDOT SRTS Urban Demonstration Program school in Trenton. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the participants with background on the NJ SRTS Urban Demonstration Program and to interview key stakeholders who might provide valuable insight to the issues students face during their trip to school and potential resources that might be available to address those issues.

Through the interviews, the project team discovered that there are existing programs in Trenton that can be supportive of Grace Dunn’s SRTS program. For instance, the Mayor along with the Assistant Superintendent of the Trenton Public Schools developed a “Safe Corridors” Program in the spring of 2007. This program focuses on having parent volunteers to guard children as they walk on their way to and from school. These parents would be the eyes and ears of the school routes and would be able to communicate with police in the case of an event. This program would be coordinated through the Mayor’s Anti-Gang Initiative.

Some significant concerns revealed by stakeholders were the almost daily exposure of kids to bullying, gang recruitment, drug dealers, theft, fighting and heavy traffic on their journey to and from school. Students use alleys as shortcuts on their way home from school and it is along these alleyways that fighting occurs. These alleyways can also be a corridor for loiterers. Although the Safe Corridors program would establish certain businesses as “safe havens” along the route, many of the business owners are fearful of the predators themselves. It is because of this after-school behavior that the police department tries to have additional presence at the school during dismissal.

Some areas of concern (“hot spots”) were identified. They include:

- Along Dayton Street
- Intersection of Lalor Street and Route 129
- Intersection of Cass Street and Route 129

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### Data Collection

Using readily available data, the project team was able to collect demographic information, city mapping, public transit bus stops, school enrollment, crash data/statistics, and crossing guard locations. Key sources of information gathered included a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) base map of Trenton from the City's Planning Department and crash data/statistics from Plan4Safety at the Transportation Safety Resource Center at Rutgers University. Information on school bus routes was also obtained from the Trenton Public Schools Transportation Coordinator and was used as the base for defining the boundaries of the school catchment area. This information will help clearly describe the physical and demographic characteristics of the school and to identify where solutions to safe walking and bicycling are needed. Summaries of demographic and crash data are as follows:

### *Demographic Information*

The Grace A. Dunn Middle School is located in Trenton, New Jersey. Trenton is a dense, urban city located in Mercer County along the Delaware River. With a diverse population, estimated at 83,923<sup>1</sup>, it serves as both the County Seat and the State Capital. Trenton City is also designated an urban center under the New Jersey State Redevelopment Plan. It is also an "Abbott District"<sup>2</sup> and qualifies for both municipal and urban aid funding.

Grace A. Dunn is located in the Franklin Park section of Trenton's South Ward. It is the only middle school in Trenton that offers a bilingual education.

### *Student Demographics*

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Grace A. Dunn</b>	<b>State Average</b>
Hispanic	59%	19%
Black	34%	17%
White	6%	56%
Asian	1%	8%
Native American	<1%	<1%

Source: [www.greatschools.net](http://www.greatschools.net), NJ Department of Education, 2006-2007

### *Student Subgroups*

	<b>Grace A. Dunn</b>	<b>State Average</b>
Students participating in free or reduced-price lunch program	76%	27%
Percentage of students with IEPs (Individualized Education Program)	18%	12%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	16%	4%

Source: [www.greatschools.net](http://www.greatschools.net), NJ Department of Education, 2006-2007

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder; GCT-T1 2006 Population Estimates Table, [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

<sup>2</sup> The term "Abbott" is used to distinguish the 31 school districts in New Jersey selected by the Court and the Legislature to receive financial assistance from the State to implement Court-mandated remedies for equal educational practices in disadvantaged communities.



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### *Home Languages of All Students*

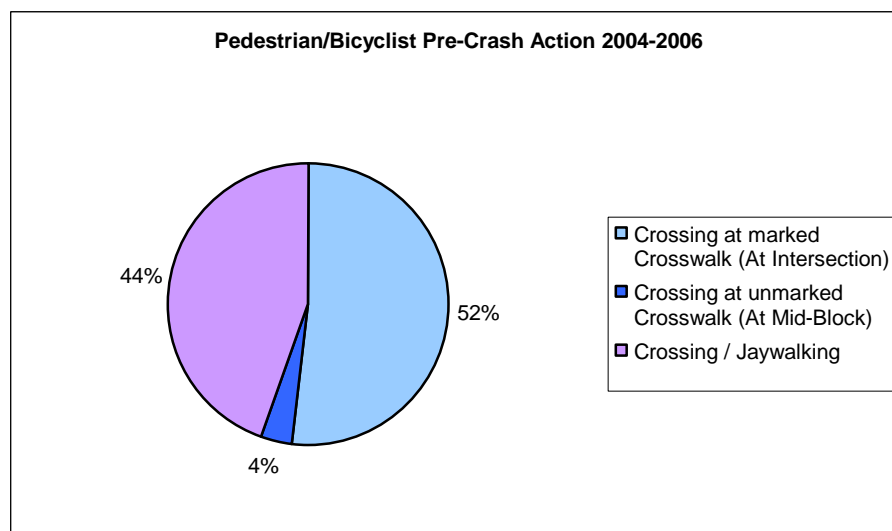
Language	Grace A. Dunn
English	48%
Spanish	36%
Other languages	16%

*Source: www.greatschools.net, NJ Department of Education, 2006-2007*

### *Crash Data*

The project team reviewed crash data provided by the Plan4Safety<sup>3</sup> at the Transportation Safety Resource Center at Rutgers University for the three-year period covering January 2004 – December 2006. For the 2-mile square area surrounding the school, the review was conducted where incidents of crashes involving either a pedestrian or a bicyclist were occurring and the type of action that the pedestrian or bicyclist was performing prior to being hit. The same data was analyzed by the number of accidents that occurred each day of the week, to determine the number of crashes that are occurring around the school area on days when children may be in school.

A total of 36 accidents occurred within the 2-mile radius surrounding the Dunn School during the years 2004-2006. 35 of the 36 accidents involved an injured pedestrian, none of which were fatal. This information was useful in determining where infrastructure improvements might be needed.



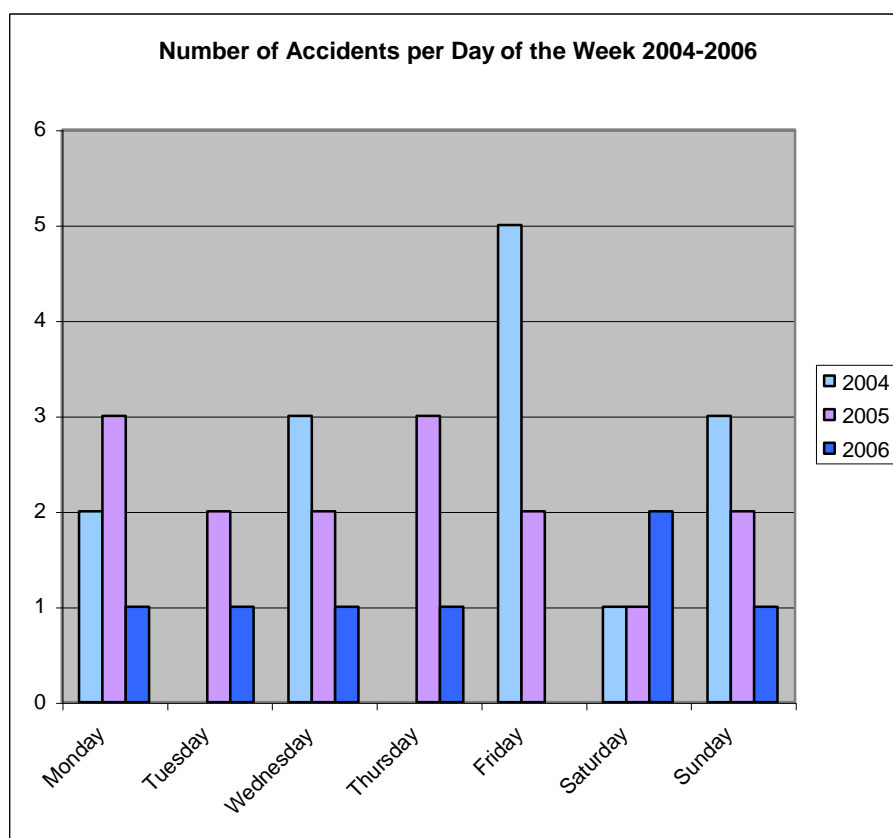
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<sup>3</sup> Plan4Safety is a NJDOT sponsored program that offers a tool to transportation professionals to filter and analyze Statewide Crash Records for more detailed and place-based analysis

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### Student Travel Surveys

The project team also gathered information from classroom surveys using a student travel tally form developed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School. The student travel tally form is intended to help track the number of children walking and biking to and from school through the use of a “hands-up” classroom survey. These student travel tally forms were handed out to each Principal at the program awareness meeting on January 15, 2008. Students in each classroom of the Dunn School were asked how they got to school each morning, and how they will get home after school. After the teacher read each mode of travel, students raised their hand for the teacher to count which mode they used or intend to use. These surveys were conducted over the course of two weeks during the weeks of May 5<sup>th</sup> – May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Weather during these two weeks ranged from the mid 60s to the low 80s for the am and pm during week 1 and the low 50s to the upper 70s for the am and pm of week 2 with light rain falling on several afternoons and heavy rain falling on only one afternoon.

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The data from each classroom was tallied and analyzed, using the National Center for Safe Routes to School's "Data Tools" System<sup>4</sup>, to reveal the number and average/percentage of students that traveled by each mode. A morning and afternoon comparison was also done to compare whether students are using the same mode of travel to arrive and depart from school.

On average, 53% of the students walk, 32% are driven to school, 7% carpool and the remaining 8% take the bus or public transit to school.

A summary of results from these surveys are noted on the following pages:

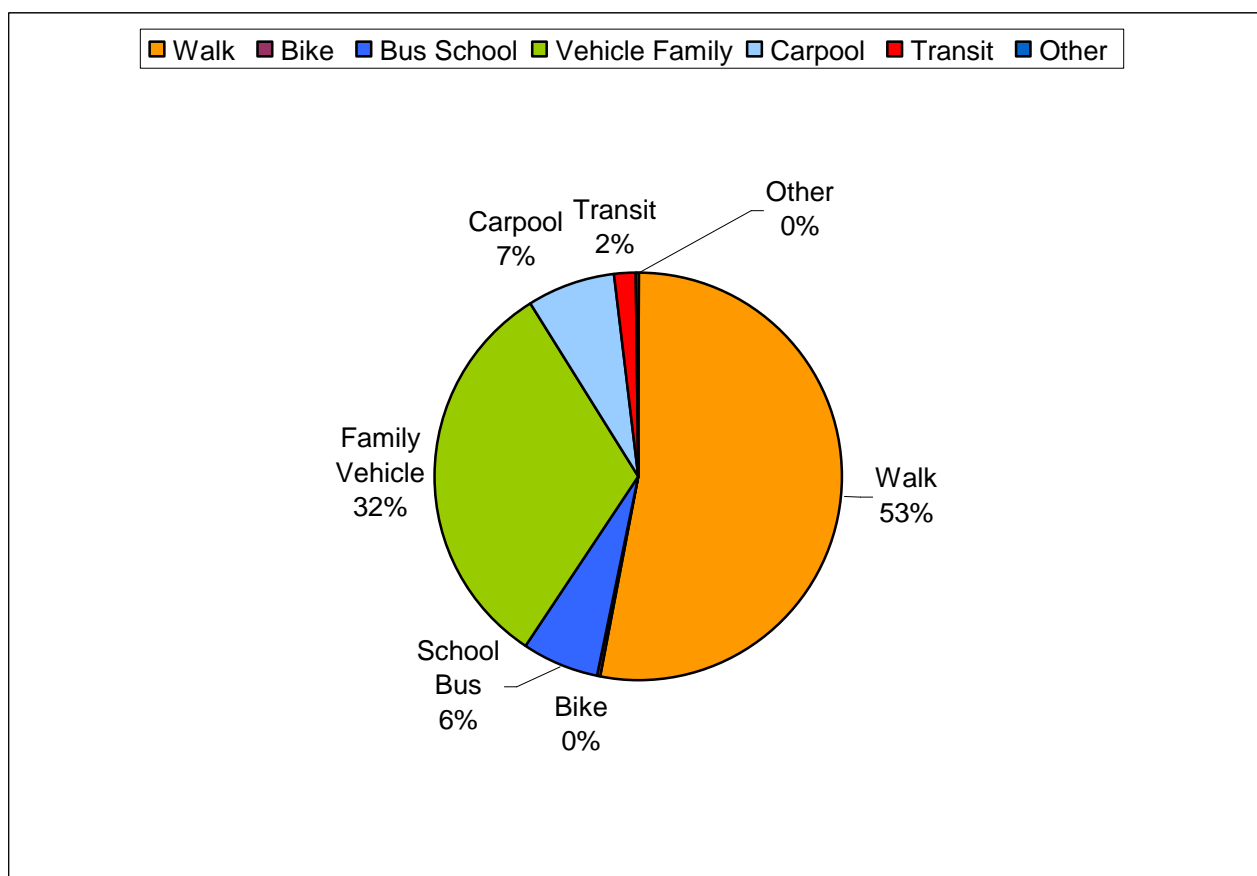
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<sup>4</sup> [www.saferoutesinfo.org/tracking](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/tracking)

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### Student Traveling by each Mode (averaged across all reported days)



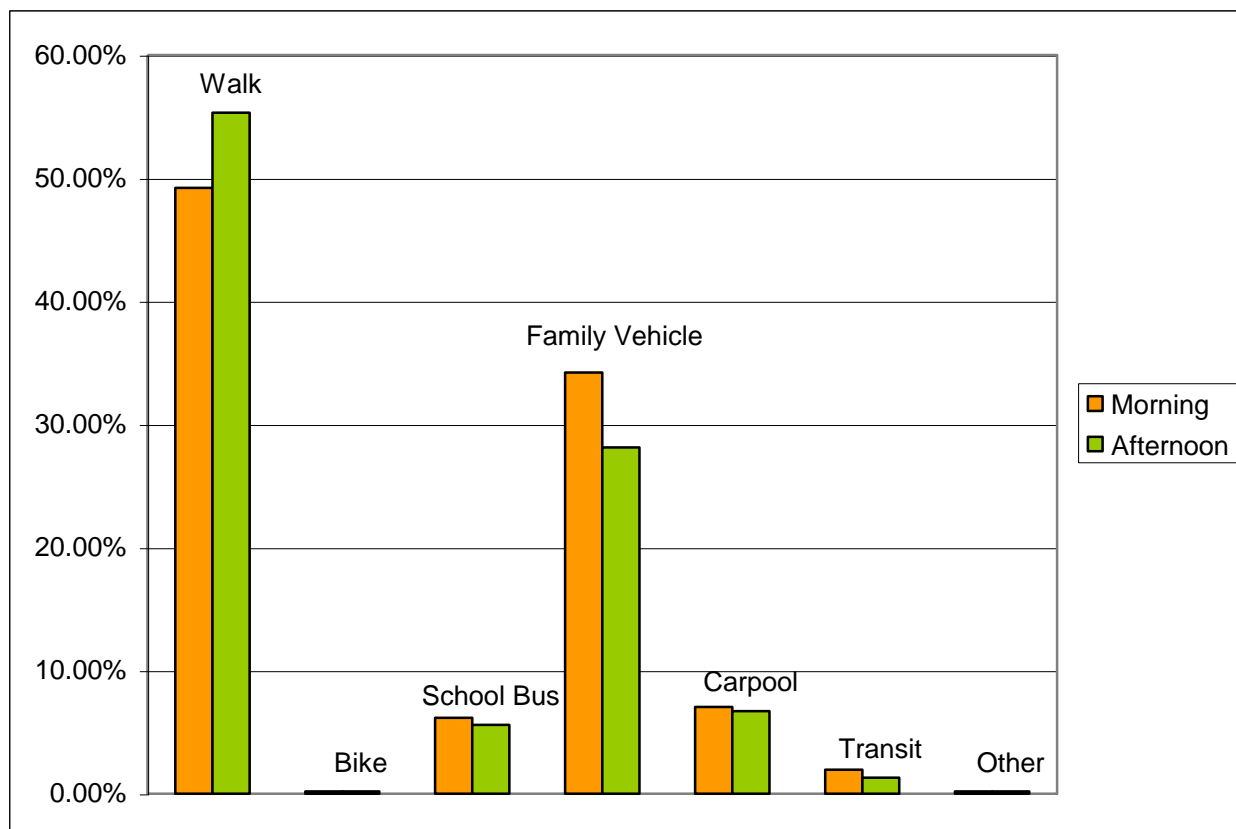
	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Average	96	0.33	10.83	57.5	12.67	3	0.33
Percent	53.14%	0.18%	6.00%	31.83%	7.01%	1.66%	0.18%

**Average daily number of students: 180.67**

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**Morning to Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison (by percent)**



	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	49.21%	0.18%	6.17%	34.22%	7.05%	1.94%	0.18%
Afternoon	55.31%	0.19%	5.59%	28.12%	6.70%	1.30%	0.19%



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**Summary Table (Totals)**

	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Walk</b>	<b>Bike</b>	<b>School Bus</b>	<b>Family Vehicle</b>	<b>Carpool</b>	<b>Transit</b>	<b>Other</b>
Tues AM	11.25	5.2	0	0.7	4.05	0.9	0.3	0
Tues PM	9.65	5.8	0	0.65	2.2	0.7	0.1	0
Wed AM	11.95	6.1	0	0.7	3.85	0.9	0.2	0.05
Wed PM	11.2	6.25	0	0.6	3.25	0.75	0.15	0.05
Thur AM	5.15	2.65	0.05	0.35	1.8	0.2	0.05	0
Thur PM	6	2.8	0.05	0.25	2.1	0.35	0.1	0

**Summary Table (Percentages)**

	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Walk</b>	<b>Bike</b>	<b>School Bus</b>	<b>Family Vehicle</b>	<b>Carpool</b>	<b>Transit</b>	<b>Other</b>
Tues AM	223	46.64%	0.00%	6.28%	36.32%	8.07%	2.69%	0.00%
Tues PM	189	61.38%	0.00%	6.88%	23.28%	7.41%	1.06%	0.00%
Wed AM	236	51.69%	0.00%	5.93%	32.63%	7.63%	1.69%	0.42%
Wed PM	221	56.56%	0.00%	5.43%	29.41%	6.79%	1.36%	0.45%
Thur AM	102	51.96%	0.98%	6.86%	35.29%	3.92%	0.98%	0.00%
Thur PM	113	49.56%	0.88%	4.42%	37.17%	6.19%	1.77%	0.00%

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### Neighborhood Mapping

Following the data collection, the project team arranged to meet any available members of the Task Force at the Grace Dunn Middle School to perform a field investigation around the school. This field investigation was conducted on April 1, 2008 from 7:30 am to 9:30 am to observe arrival at the Dunn School. Summaries and results of these collection efforts and field investigation are as follows:

The weather conditions on this day were overcast with intermittent rain, temperature in the upper 40's.

### *Observations of the Physical Conditions/Built Environment*

Observations were made of the physical conditions (built environment) all around the school; parking patterns and restrictions; auto and foot traffic and circulation. Special note was taken of the traffic/crossing hot spots noted at the program awareness meeting:

- Along Dayton Street
- Intersection of Lalor Street and Route 129
- Intersection of Cass Street and Route 129
- There are school crossing signs posted on Dayton Street along the southbound approach.
- There are no school crossing signs along Grand Street.
- Private vehicles stopped or parked blocked the curb.
- Localized drainage issues around the school area – the most pronounced was a large puddle at the southwest corner of Grand Street at Dayton Street, in the curb ramp/crosswalk area.

### *Observations Noted at Arrival*

- Almost all students access the school building on Dayton Street adjacent to Grand Street (auditorium entrance). This entry is approximately 40' south of Grand Street.
- Most students walked south on Dayton Street or east on Grand Street. Some students walked east on Smith Street.
- Students walking east on Grand Street -- almost all walked directly to the school gate south of the intersection. Almost no students used the crosswalk.
- Three buses dropped off students on Dayton Street in front of the school (northbound).
- Two short buses each had several students; one full size bus had 3 students (said to be typical).
- One school bus picked up students on Grand Street east of Dayton.

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- One disabled student was expected and 1 school staff was assigned to assist them up the steps into the building.
- School buses stop in the travel lane along Dayton Street.
- Approximately 50 cars dropped off students between 8:00 – 9:00 AM.
- Most drop-off occurred on Dayton Street in front of the school (northbound).
- Close to the school start time drop-off occurred on both sides of Dayton Street.
- Many vehicles double parked/stopped on Dayton Street.
- Students were also dropped off on Grand Street both east and west of the intersection with Dayton Street. Many of these drop offs occurred in the travel lane area along this thru street.

#### *Additional Observations around Grace Dunn School*

- Sgt. Cartagena noted that South Broad Street is a designated route to school and the police department may have the routes mapped.
- Smith Avenue is frequently used by pedestrians.
- Fights often occur after school along Smith Avenue.
- The extent of school security, during dismissal, is limited to the school property.
- Police Department often prioritizes having a patrol car in school areas during dismissal times.
- Along NJ Route 129 there are two difficult crossings at both Lalor Street and Cass Street. These intersections involve an at grade railroad crossing in addition to a 4-lane crossing.

#### Community Workshop

The final step in Grace A. Dunn's information-gathering process was a community workshop, sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The workshop took place at the Grace A. Dunn Middle School, Trenton, NJ on May 27, 2008 from 4 to 7 pm and included teachers, police and community leaders, each taking part in a hands-on brainstorming process about resources to make students' trips to school safer and one that they might prefer to make on foot instead of in a car.

Although the three-hour community workshop was held late in the day, the project team got an early start and spent the entire school day with students, observing arrival and dismissal and in a classroom session getting their perspective on their trip to school. The student perceptions set the context for the evening's discussion.

#### *Student Arrival*

The project team arrived at Grace A. Dunn Middle School to observe student arrival. Student arrivals were noted to be very disbursed, starting at 7:30 am and continuing to

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about 8:45 am. Students arrived via school bus, walking, taxi, and private motor vehicle. One bicycle was chained to a fence on the school grounds.

Based on observations of the current conditions and behaviors, as well as the session with the 6<sup>th</sup> graders, three priority areas have been identified to highlight in this summary report. Note: The observations of the students were corroborated by participants in the afternoon's community workshop.

The three safety *hot spots* are:

1. School Zone/Dayton Street. Several problems were noted at this location. Briefly, the following are of concern: school buses that do not pull to the curb to discharge students; jaywalking by students and adults; and the high volume of traffic on Dayton Street, including delivery trucks, throughout the arrival time window.
2. Crosswalks and intersections in the school's vicinity.
  - The crosswalks around the school are poorly marked, usually with two lines of paint if they are marked at all. Most are faded, including the mid-block crossing where Smith Street meets Dayton Street. This mid-block cross – which is in front of the school – has warning signs on only one approach on Dayton. (This crosswalk should receive high priority for improvements. High visibility marking and advance warning signs should be added to the unmarked approach – at a minimum.)
  - Most intersections in the neighborhoods are two-way stops. The project team had the opportunity to experience these intersections from the perspective of driver and pedestrian. The intersections are hazardous to both. The two-way stops are not marked as two-way stops. Drivers familiar with the environment, rarely stop before the stop sign, instead, pulling several feet into the cross street to see oncoming traffic (parked motor vehicles create visibility problems at nearly every intersection). The car is often blocking the crosswalk while making this maneuver. Thru traffic can travel for several blocks without meeting a stop sign. This street configuration results in speeds unacceptably high for a residential area.
3. South Broad Street. This is a difficult street to cross and to walk along. Students must cross four lanes of high speed traffic. Students walking along the street pass auto-centric businesses with a constant stream of vehicles crossing the sidewalk to enter and exit the parking lots. Several people reported the corridor as a high crime area.

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#### *Classroom Session*

At 9:30 am, the project team met with two classes of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in the school library. Thirty students participated in the session. Roughly half of the students identified themselves as regular walkers; none were bicyclists.

The session with the students lasted over an hour, during which time students participated in a visual preference survey, they were asked about obstacles to walking and bicycling in the neighborhood, and were solicited for their suggestions on how to improve the journey to school.

The students identified the following obstacles to walking:

- Long distance to walk to school.
- Difficult intersections to cross (two-way stop signs and the intersections on South Board Street).
- Students did not like walking past liquor stores, bars, and other locations where people loiter.
- “I might get jumped” was cited as a reason by several students for not biking to school.
- Parents do not want their children walking. One student was interviewed before the community meeting who was waiting for a ride from his mother. He lived only a few blocks from the school, yet he reported that she did not want him walking.

The students recommended the following changes for the neighborhood:

- Trash cans for the neighborhood.
- People should stop littering.
- Repairing the broken sidewalks.
- Widening the sidewalks and moving them away from the street.
- Benches.
- Flowers and trees to make the street a better place to walk.
- Better lighting to feel safe at night.
- Better enforcement at stop signs.
- Better bus shelters with windows, benches, and that are litter-free.
- Crossing guards at all corners.
- Better crosswalks.
- Bike racks, locks, and helmets so students can ride to school.
- More parks/ places to play/ better playground.
- Starting a garden club.

At the conclusion of the session, the students were informed that their ideas would be presented to the adults at that afternoon’s community workshop.



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#### *Community Workshop*

The evening community workshop was scheduled from 5 pm to 6:30 pm. The school's auditorium had been designated as the meeting location, but upon examination, the room proved too large to hold an effective meeting, and the meeting was moved to the school library (signs were posted directing people to the new meeting location). Food and refreshments were advertised.

The meeting commenced at 5 o'clock with the school's principal, a teacher, two representatives of the city, a detective from the Trenton Police Department, and the project team. Unfortunately, the meeting was not attended by any parents, students or community representatives.

Note: The meeting was publicized extensively, so the poor turnout was a surprise. The school staff mentioned that the low turnout was likely due more to the fact that most parents were still working, than to a lack of interest in Safe Routes to School. The advice offered for future meetings was to construct them around the students' safety needs, and using that to entice parents to attend a workshop.

The project team had prepared a PowerPoint presentation for the meeting, but due to the small size of the group, and their pre-existing knowledge of Safe Routes to School, the decision was made to forego the presentation and to, instead, gather around the maps of the school for a discussion of local conditions, countermeasures, and available resources to address problems identified.

The following areas of concern were identified:

- Speeding is a problem on all streets. South Broad is especially bad. Drivers go 40 mph, and the speed limit is 25 mph. This may be due to improper signage, a wide open road, general disregard to the area in which they are traveling, or all of these reasons.
- The school has received 23 notices of Megan's Law (registered sex offender living within 0.5 miles of the school).
- The Principal noted several "hot spots" along routes frequently traveled by her students.
  - High school students harass and (occasionally) end up in physical altercations with Dunn students on South Broad between Liberty and Chestnut.
  - Female students are not comfortable walking past the bars on South Clinton Avenue due to harassment by bar patrons and others who loiter.
  - Alleys are problem areas. Graffiti and vandalism occur in the alleys. Students stash weapons in the alleys.
  - Prostitution occurs on South Broad Street between Dye and Liberty.

## GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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- Crime remains a concern for the students who participated and in the neighborhood, in general. The following resources were identified by Detective Medina as ways to respond to crime:
  - There are crime cameras positioned throughout the school and neighborhood.
  - The community groups and police have a strong working relationship. When a concern is reported, it is promptly addressed by the Police.
  - Police respond to concerns about speeding by parking speed trailers on the problem street. Cameras are being installed to catch red light runners.

The turnout for the workshop was disappointing. From the project team's observation of the neighborhood, of arrival and dismissal of students, the comments of the students, and the comments of those who did participate in the community meeting, there is clearly work to be done. Speeding is a problem. Loitering and bullying are problems. The neighborhood is not a pleasant place to walk.

One possible explanation for the low turnout was offered by the Detective: The neighborhood used to be much worse. Both he and the Principal noted that crime has gone down in the Southern District due to the neighborhood associations (started by the Police Department in response to crime) and aggressive law enforcement. The Principal also noted that many of the "problem" students were no longer enrolled at Dunn. The neighborhood associations have shifted their concerns for more mundane matters or have gone away altogether.

The meeting adjourned at 6 pm. The workshop was an early step in what should be an on-going program to make it safer and better for students to travel on foot or by bike to Grace A. Dunn Middle School.

### **Preliminary Recommendations**

Recommendations, where appropriate, are provided as options for the Grace A. Dunn Middle School to consider while implementing its Safe Routes to School plan.

#### ***Engineering***

- Clearly define and enhance school zones with reduced speed limit and strong yellow-green school advance warning signs.
- Enhance/designate school routes with signs, pavement markings or in-ground medallions/wayfinding markers.
- Relocate the gate to the auditorium entrance closer to Grand Street along Dayton Street. This will reduce mid-block crossings by dictating the desired line to an

## GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

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appropriate crossing location. A short sidewalk segment will be required for direct access to the school entrance.

- Define bus zone and drop-off/pick-up zones. Provide signs to inform motorists of appropriate areas and policies.
- Provide ADA compliant access to the school.
- Provide new or enhance existing high visibility crosswalks along school zone and designated school routes.
- Provide pedestrian safety and traffic calming (horizontal and/or vertical elements) along Dayton Street and South Broad Street.

#### *Education*

- Conduct community wide outreach, possibly with flyers detailing SRTS programs and benefits. This could help to reach both school families and the general population.
- The neighborhood should be informed of any designated school routes, and priority given to helping those who need assistance with snow removal or other sidewalk maintenance. The village should consider taking on responsibility of snow removal along safe routes to school sidewalks.
- The health benefits of conducting a SRTS program should be included in teacher training programs and in the student curriculum.
- Parents and students should be educated about the established drop-off and pick-up procedures.
- Walking school bus options should be distributed to school families.
- School walking event information could be circulated with municipal utility or tax bills. This would help to reach all residents, not just the families with students currently in the school system. The school newspapers could also be utilized as a means to circulate information about major events.
- NJ Transit should provide Operation Life Saver information for at-grade rail crossings (Route 129 at Lalor Street and at Route 129 and Cass Street).

## GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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#### *Encouragement*

- The City should define recommended walking routes between major residential areas and the school. This would passively encourage families to have the students walk more often. The recommended walking routes could be displayed both on paper maps that can be easily shared with the school community and installed physically on the ground with pavement markings, and/or with signs.
- Develop a Safe Routes to School Committee that will lead the effort to expand school access safety and coordinate preparing any grant applications and administering the SRTS program.
- Prepare for and participate in the International Walk to School Days.
- Conduct a preference survey to determine what families would like to see and have available as choices for their school commute.
- Establish walking school buses. (Safety in numbers! Walk with family and other students.)
- Establish “Frequent Walker Card” system. This is similar to “Frequent Flyer Mile” programs, and can be a great motivator.
- Conduct a bicycle rodeo. This could include stations about bicycle safety, helmet and bicycle fit, rules of the road, handling skills and numerous other safety topics.
- Consider establishing a “Golden Sneaker” award that would be circulated between the classrooms that achieve the highest participation rates for walking or bicycling to school. This will require ongoing travel mode surveys. Some schools opt for a “stinky sneaker” alternative – students should choose what will be a better motivator.
- The City could consider taking on snow removal responsibility along identified routes to school.



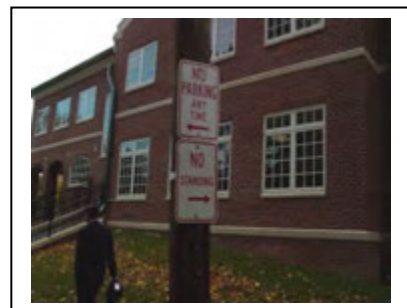
## GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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#### *Enforcement*

- Police should assign a crossing guard at the intersection of Dayton Street and Grand Street.
- Clear parking regulation signs should be posted at all intended drop-offs and pick-up locations at each school to better define and support the drop off and pick up procedures. This helps to keep motorists self enforced, without excessive police presence required or misunderstanding or confusion in the school area roadways.
- Consider issuing warnings, rather than citations for first offenses. Include education materials about the dangers of speeding or other violations, especially in the school area.
- Police could conduct a series of pedestrian stings, to strongly reinforce that Trenton takes its motor vehicle laws and pedestrian rights seriously. This should be considered to be repeated approximately every six weeks until driver behavior is perceived to be more respectful of pedestrian's right to travel safely.
- Police presence should continue to be maintained at major pedestrian crossing locations such as Dayton Street and South Broad Street. This will help to passively encourage drivers to obey the laws, and expect that they are being monitored.
- Police should also work within the school system to educate students on bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Prioritize/enhance police presence in areas of loitering, undesirable behavior and vacant buildings/properties in school neighborhoods during school commute times. Encourage police to walk or bike these routes.





## GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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#### *Evaluation*

- Conduct a survey to define mode choice (number and percentage of students who walk or bicycle to school) so that there is a base line to reference when assessing the success of future efforts.
- Conduct school commute time parking studies to evaluate effectiveness of SRTS programs.
- Conduct a preference survey to determine what families would like to see and have available as choices for their school commute.
- Conduct tracking exercises for distances students walk both on-line and in the classroom.

# GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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### Photo Documentation

#### GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL



Dayton Street



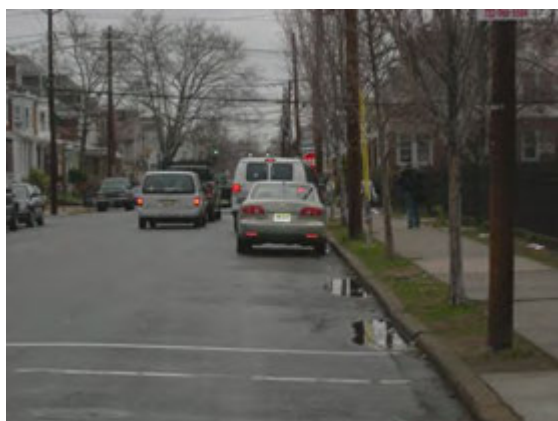
Dayton Street



Grand Street

Traditionally striped crosswalks at the intersection of Dayton and Grand Streets

Improper unloading of students in the middle of Dayton and Grand streets



Cars parked, during school hours, in the “No Parking During School Hours” zone

## GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

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Drainage issues force students out of crosswalk at intersection of Dayton and Grand Streets

No curb cut at the main school entrance at the intersection of Smith Avenue and Dayton Street



“No Parking During School Hours” sign

# GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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### MAPS OF THE SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD

The maps in this section illustrate the existing conditions in the neighborhood of the Grace A. Dunn Middle School, the Barriers and Opportunities students face walking to school, and some Neighborhood Recommendations to improving facilities so their trips are safer.

Map 1. Barriers and Opportunities

Map 2. Neighborhood Recommendations



# NJ SRTS Urban Demonstration Program

## Grace A. Dunn Middle School, Trenton NJ

### Barriers & Opportunities

August 2008



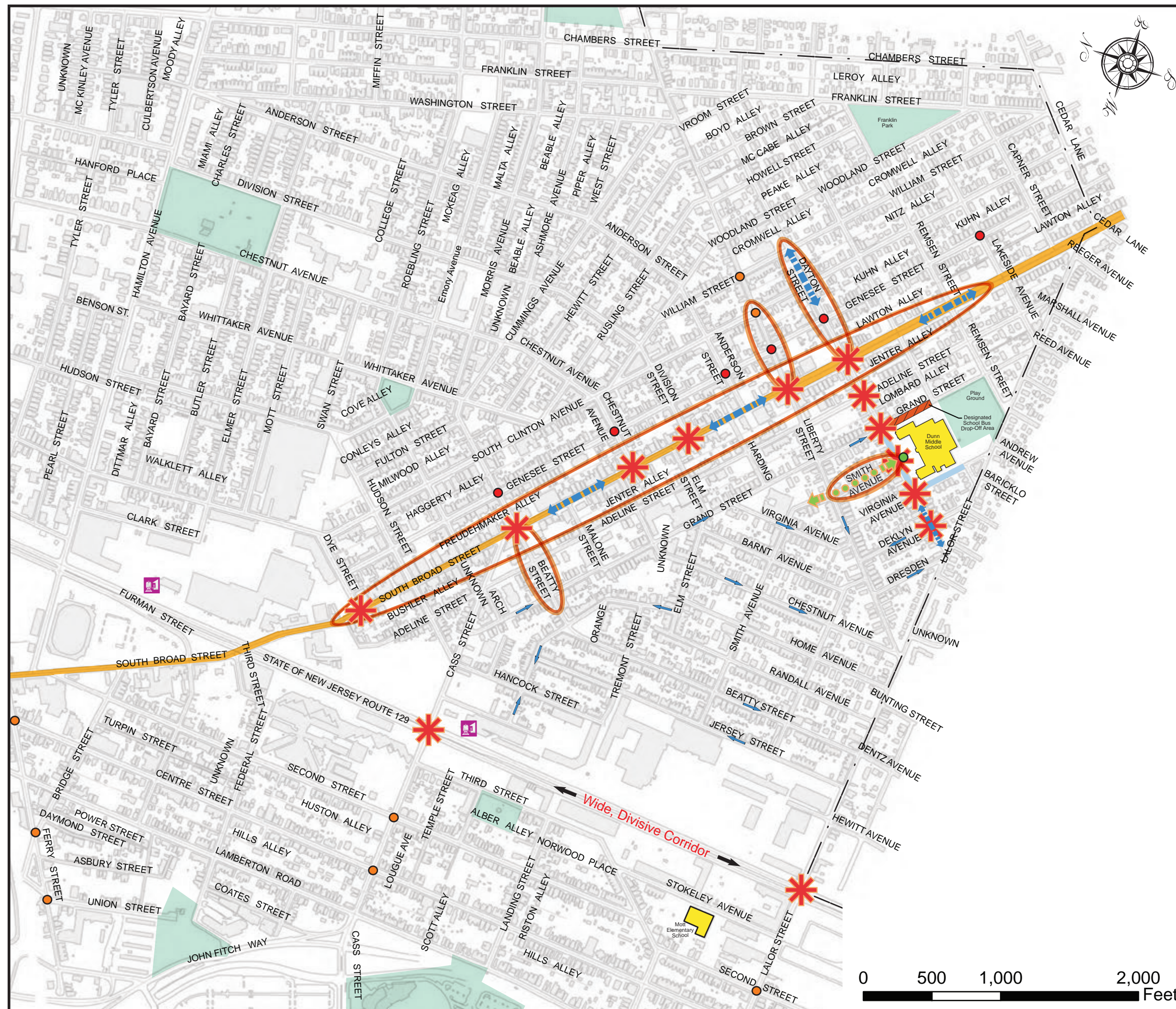
## LEGEND

### Existing Conditions

- School
- Park
- Public Bus Stop
- Crossing Guard
- Observed School Bus Stop
- Rail Station
- One-Way Street
- City Limit Line
- Unofficial Drop-Off Area

### Barriers & Opportunities

- Loitering/Undesirable Behavior Hotspot
- Difficult Crossing
- City Designated School Route
- Frequent Pedestrian Activity
- Perceived Speeding





NJ SRTS Urban Demonstration Program  
Grace A. Dunn Middle School, Trenton NJ  
Neighborhood Recommendations

August 2008



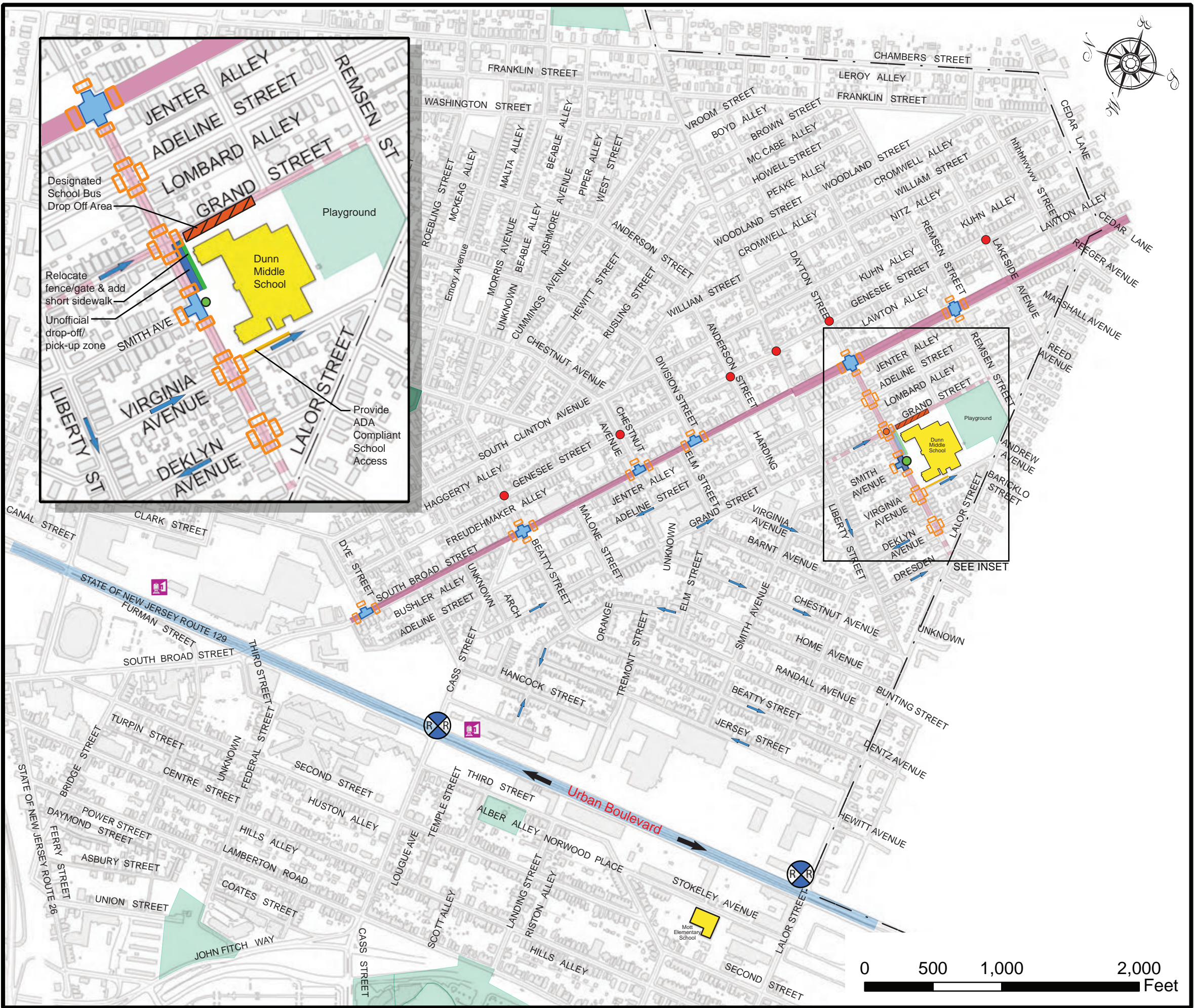
LEGEND

Existing Conditions

- School
- Park
- Public Bus Stop
- School Bus Stop
- Rail Station
- One-Way Street
- City Limit Line

Neighborhood Recommendations

- High Visibility Crosswalk
- Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming
- Rail Crossing Information
- Provide Crossing Guard
- Enhanced School Zone
- Enhanced School Route
- Unofficial Drop-Off & Pick-Up Zone
- Relocate Fence/Gate & Add Short Sidewalk
- Provide ADA Compliant Access to School





## GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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#### ACTION PLAN

This plan of action for implementing the Grace A. Dunn Middle School SRTS program is intended to increase safety for students on their walk to and from school and when appropriate, encourage more students to walk. The table below identifies those actions, a responsible party for implementing them, a time frame and a level of cost.

#### *Engineering*

Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clearly define and enhance school zones with reduced speed limit and strong yellow-green school advance warning signs.</li></ul>	Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Enhance/designate school routes with signs, pavement markings or in-ground medallions/wayfinding markers.</li></ul>	Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide ADA compliant access to the school.</li></ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Define a bus zone and designate a drop-off/pick-up area and provide signs to inform motorists of appropriate areas and policies.</li></ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide new or enhance existing high visibility crosswalks along school zone and designated school routes.</li></ul>	Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relocate the gate to the auditorium entrance closer to Grand Street along Dayton Street. This will reduce mid-block crossings. A short sidewalk segment will be required for direct access to the school entrance.</li></ul>	School	Short-Term	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide pedestrian safety and traffic calming (horizontal and/or vertical elements) along Dayton Street and South Broad Street.</li></ul>	Municipality	Short-Term	Medium

**GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ**  
**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN**

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*Education*

Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct community wide outreach, possibly with flyers detailing SRTS programs and benefits. This could help to reach both school families and the general population.</li> </ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The neighborhood should be informed of any designated school routes, and priority given to helping those who need assistance with snow removal or other sidewalk maintenance.</li> </ul>	Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The health benefits of conducting a SRTS program should be included in teacher training programs and in the student curriculum.</li> </ul>	School/ PTO	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and students should be educated about the established drop-off and pick-up procedures.</li> </ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking school bus options should be distributed to school families.</li> </ul>	School/ PTO	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School walking event information could be circulated with municipal utility or tax bills. This would help to reach all residents, not just the families with students currently in the school system. The school newspapers could also be utilized as a means to circulate information about major events.</li> </ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NJ Transit should provide Operation Life Saver information for at-grade rail crossings (Route 129 at Lalor Street and at Route 129 and Cass Street).</li> </ul>	Municipality	Short-Term	Low

# GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

### *Encouragement*

Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City should define recommended walking routes between major residential areas and the school. This would passively encourage families to have the students walk more often. The recommended walking routes could be displayed both on paper maps that can be easily shared with the school community and installed physically on the ground with pavement markings, and/or with signs.</li> </ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Safe Routes to School Committee that will lead the effort to expand school access safety and coordinate preparing any grant applications and administering the SRTS program.</li> </ul>	School/ PTO	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for and participate in the International Walk to School Days.</li> </ul>	School/PTO/ Municipality	Short-Term	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a preference survey to determine what families would like to see and have available as choices for their school commute.</li> </ul>	School	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish walking school buses. (Safety in numbers! Walk with family and other students.)</li> </ul>	PTO/ School	Mid-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish "Frequent Walker Card" system. This is similar to "Frequent Flyer Mile" programs, and can be a great motivator.</li> </ul>	PTO/ School	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a bicycle rodeo. This could include stations about bicycle safety, helmet and bicycle fit, rules of the road, handling skills and numerous other safety topics.</li> </ul>	PTO/School/ Municipality	Mid-Term	Low

**GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ**  
**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN**

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<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider establishing a “Golden Sneaker” award that would be circulated between the classrooms that achieve the highest participation rates for walking or bicycling to school. This will require ongoing travel mode surveys. Some schools opt for a “stinky sneaker” alternative – students should choose what will be a better motivator.</li> </ul>	School	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City could consider taking on snow removal responsibility along identified routes to school.</li> </ul>	Municipality	Mid-Term	Medium

***Enforcement***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police should assign a crossing guard at the intersection of Dayton Street and Grand Street.</li> </ul>	Police	Short-Term	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear parking regulation signs should be posted at all intended drop-offs and pick-up locations at each school to better define and support the drop off and pick up procedures. This helps to keep motorists self enforced, without excessive police presence required or misunderstanding or confusion in the school area roadways.</li> </ul>	Municipality/ School	Mid-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider issuing warnings, rather than citations for first offenses once school routes are established and shared with the community. Include education materials about the dangers of speeding or other violations, especially in the school area.</li> </ul>	Municipality/ Police	Short-Term	Low

**GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ**  
**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN**

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<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police could conduct a series of pedestrian stings, to strongly reinforce that Trenton takes its motor vehicle laws and pedestrian rights seriously. This should be considered to be repeated approximately every six weeks until driver behavior is perceived to be more respectful of pedestrian's right to travel safely.</li> </ul>	Police	Short-Term	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police presence should continue to be maintained at major pedestrian crossing locations such as Dayton Street and South Broad Street. This will help to passively encourage drivers to obey the laws, and expect that they are being monitored.</li> </ul>	Police	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police should also work within the school system to educate students on bicycle and pedestrian safety.</li> </ul>	Police/ School	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize/enhance police presence in areas of loitering, undesirable behavior and vacant buildings/properties in school neighborhoods during school commute times. Encourage police to walk or bike these routes.</li> </ul>	Police/ School	Short-Term	Low

***Evaluation***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a survey to define mode choice (number and percentage of students who walk or bicycle to school) so that there is a base line to reference when assessing the success of future efforts.</li> </ul>	School/ PTO	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a preference survey to determine what families would like to see and have available as choices for their school commute.</li> </ul>	School/ PTO	Short-Term	Low

## GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Conduct school commute time parking studies to evaluate effectiveness of SRTS programs.</li></ul>	School/ PTO	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Conduct tracking exercises for distances students walk both on-line and in the classroom.</li></ul>	School/ PTO	Short-Term	Low

*Note: Engineering projects defined as "short-term" are generally high priority, critical connections, or projects that do not require an intensive design effort. "Long-term" projects are either lower priority or will require additional design efforts to prepare construction documents and bid the projects. Programmatic actions may require target dates for implementation. Projects estimated to be "low cost" are generally "short term" projects that may include signing and striping or other low-impact construction activities. A "high cost" project would generally be considered "long term" and would include activities like roadway reconstruction, utility relocation, and projects that have right-of-way impacts.*

*Non-engineering projects costs are based on the anticipated labor effort and are generally defined as: Low = less than 2 days, Medium = 2-5 days, High = More than one week.*



## GRACE A. DUNN MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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#### PROGRAM EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Utilizing the NJDOT SRTS Toolbox Fact Sheet, “EVALUATING YOUR SRTS PROGRAM” as a guide, Grace A. Dunn Middle School will conduct classroom/student hands-up travel pattern surveys and parent/caregiver take-home attitudinal surveys to evaluate its SRTS Program over time.

Travel Mode Surveys –The Grace A. Dunn Middle School will measure the number of children walking and bicycling to school by conducting Travel Mode Surveys once a year. For younger aged children, the teacher could incorporate the survey in the lesson plan and by asking for raised hand responses and tabulating the overall classroom results with the students in a bar chart. The results will be evaluated yearly to show if there has been a shift in the number of children walking and bicycling to school.

Parent/Caregiver Survey – The Grace A. Dunn Middle School will administer a take-home survey to determine, from a parent/caregiver perspective, the overall environment for walking and biking, why children do not walk or bike to school, and how attitudes change as a result of SRTS Programs.

Other program evaluation methods can include monitoring the timing of drop-off dynamics around the school, parking studies, and distance tracking exercises. These methods are described further in the ACTION PLAN section of this Plan.

- \* The Grace A. Dunn Middle School will utilize the services of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University to tabulate survey data.