

# NJ SRTS URBAN DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

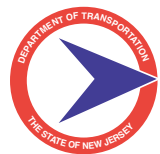
## Joyce Kilmer Elementary School

# Safe Routes to School

## Travel Plan



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



*April 2009*



# JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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### INTRODUCTION

Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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 Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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 Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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, Joyce Kilmer'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



#### **Joyce Kilmer Elementary School**

##### **Location:**

1300 Stuyvesant Avenue (Whittlesey Road and Cadwalader Drive)

##### **School District:**

Trenton City

##### **Grade Levels:**

Pre-K – 8<sup>th</sup>

##### **Student Population:**

663

### **Student Travel Mode**

The school catchment area for students attending Joyce Kilmer Elementary School is approximately 1.91 square miles, where all students live within 2 miles of the school.

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

The official hours of instruction at the school are 8:20am – 2:50pm. The school's breakfast program begins at 7:30am and ends at 8:15am while their afterschool program runs from 3:00pm – 6:00pm.

Driven:	45%
Walk:	33%
Bike:	0%
School Bus:	17%
Public Transit or Car Pool:	5%
<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 Trenton's Assistant Superintendent of Public Schools, Director of Planning, Senior Planner, Community Liaison Coordinator, Department of Public Works, Police Department, Greater Mercer Transportation Management Agency, and the Board of Education. The key contact for the Joyce Kilmer Elementary School is Principal Deborah Giddens-Green.



Task force members attended a program awareness meeting to receive an overview of the 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
Joyce Kilmer Elementary School	Programmatic Activity and Implementation	Deborah Giddens-Green <i>Principal</i> Joyce Kilmer Elementary School 609-656-4802 609-396-9413 fax <a href="mailto:dgreen@trenton.k12.nj.us">dgreen@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>

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<b>Organization</b>	<b>Role/Responsibility</b>	<b>Contact</b>
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>
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:lmedina@trentonpolice.net">lmedina@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 Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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 Joyce Kilmer Elementary School participated in a Trenton Task Force SRTS program awareness meeting. 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 to Joyce Kilmer'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 that on a daily basis, kids are exposed to bullying, gang recruitment, drug dealers, shootings and speeding traffic on their journey to and from school. If there is a conflict between kids, they take it into Cadwalader Park where there is no supervision.

Most children that attend Kilmer are dropped off either by family vehicle or school bus but there are a significant number of children that do walk to school. Many children experience bullying, harassment and robbery as they return home from school. 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. Homeowners are also concerned about the security issue that arises with the introduction of a designated route of travel in front of their homes.

Some areas of concern ("hot spots") within the school neighborhood were identified. They include:

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- Stuyvesant Avenue
- Intersection of Parkside Avenue and West State Street
- Cadwalader Park
- Sullivan Way

### **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 to clearly describe the physical and demographic characteristics of the school and to identify where solutions to safe walking and bicycling are needed. It can also be used in preparing a school travel plan to help determine the likelihood of success for SRTS strategies and how the SRTS program will fit into the culture and philosophy of the school and community. Summaries of demographic and crash data are as follows:

### ***Demographic Information***

The Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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 a designated 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.

Joyce Kilmer is located between the Hillcrest and Hiltonia sections of Trenton's West Ward across from Cadwalader Park. Within a ½ mile of the Kilmer school is a 96-acre campus for the New Jersey Division of Mental Services that houses both the Trenton Psychiatric Hospital and the Ann Klein Forensic Center. The Ann Klein Forensic Center serves people who have been determined by the courts to be not guilty by reason of insanity or incompetent to stand trial or who require special security measures due to the nature of their illness. The Trenton Psychiatric Hospital is a residential unit, with a 400-bed capacity, for treating mentally ill patients.<sup>3</sup> The New Jersey Department of Corrections also has a

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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.

<sup>3</sup> New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health Services



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facility adjacent to the school property, which is a juvenile correctional facility as well as a women's safe haven.

### *Student Demographics*

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Joyce Kilmer</b>	<b>State Average</b>
Black	96%	17%
Hispanic	3%	19%
White	<1%	56%
Asian	<1%	8%

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

### *Student Subgroups*

	<b>Joyce Kilmer</b>	<b>State Average</b>
Students participating in free or reduced-price lunch program	72%	27%
Percentage of students with IEPs (Individualized Education Program)	12%	12%
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	n/a	4%

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

### *Home Languages of All Students*

<b>Language</b>	<b>Grace A. Dunn</b>
English	99%
Spanish	<1%
Other languages	<1%

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

### *Crash Data*

The project team reviewed crash data provided by Plan4Safety<sup>4</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.

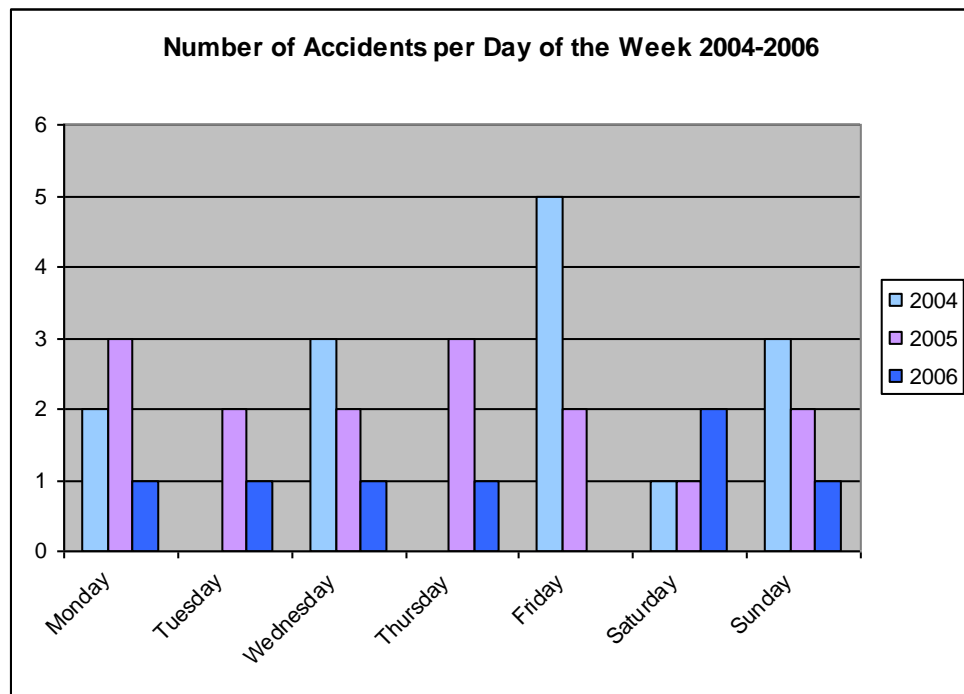
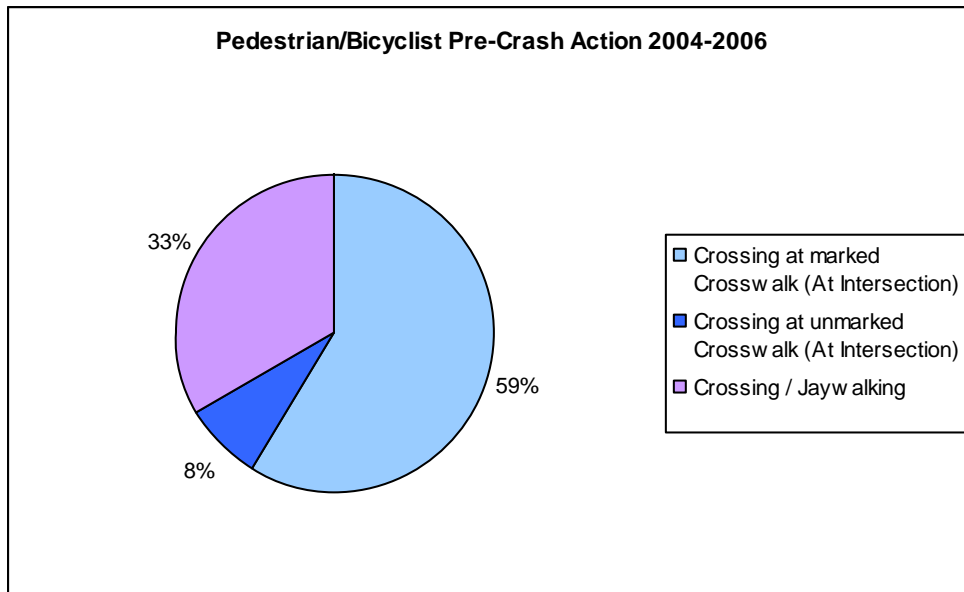
A total of 24 accidents occurred within the 2-mile radius surrounding the Kilmer School during the years 2004-2006. 22 of the 24 accidents involved an injured pedestrian, none of which were fatal. This information was useful in determining where infrastructure improvements might be needed.

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<sup>4</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 Kilmer 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 three weeks during the weeks of February 4<sup>th</sup> – February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Weather during these three weeks ranged from the mid 40s to the upper 50s for the am and pm during week 1, lower 20s to the lower 40s for the am and pm during week 2 and the upper 20s to the upper 30s for the am and pm of week 3 with light rain falling on several afternoons and light snow falling on only one afternoon.

The data from each classroom was tallied and analyzed, using the National Center for Safe Routes to School’s “Data Tools” System<sup>5</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, 45% of the students are driven to school, 33% walk, 17% take the school bus and the remaining 5% travel by public transit or carpool.

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

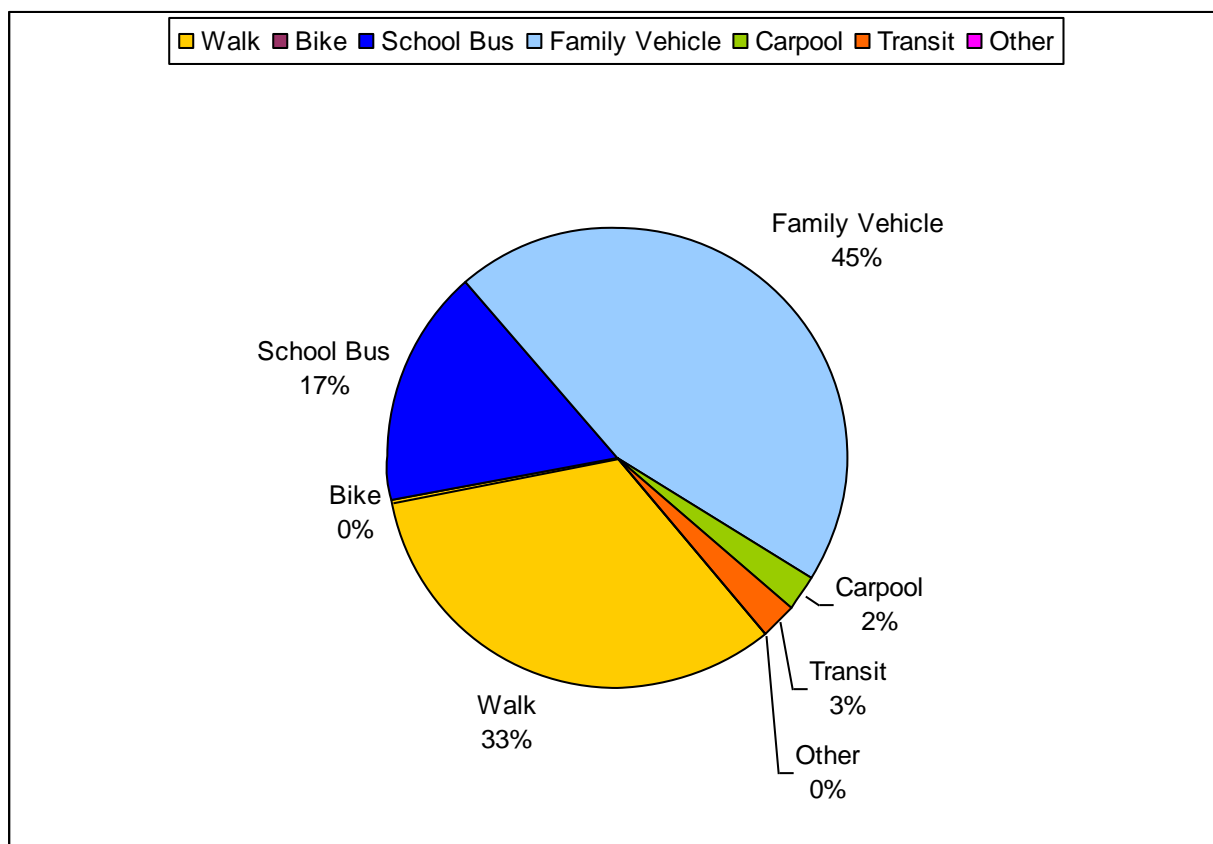
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<sup>5</sup> [www.saferoutesinfo.org/tracking](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/tracking)

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



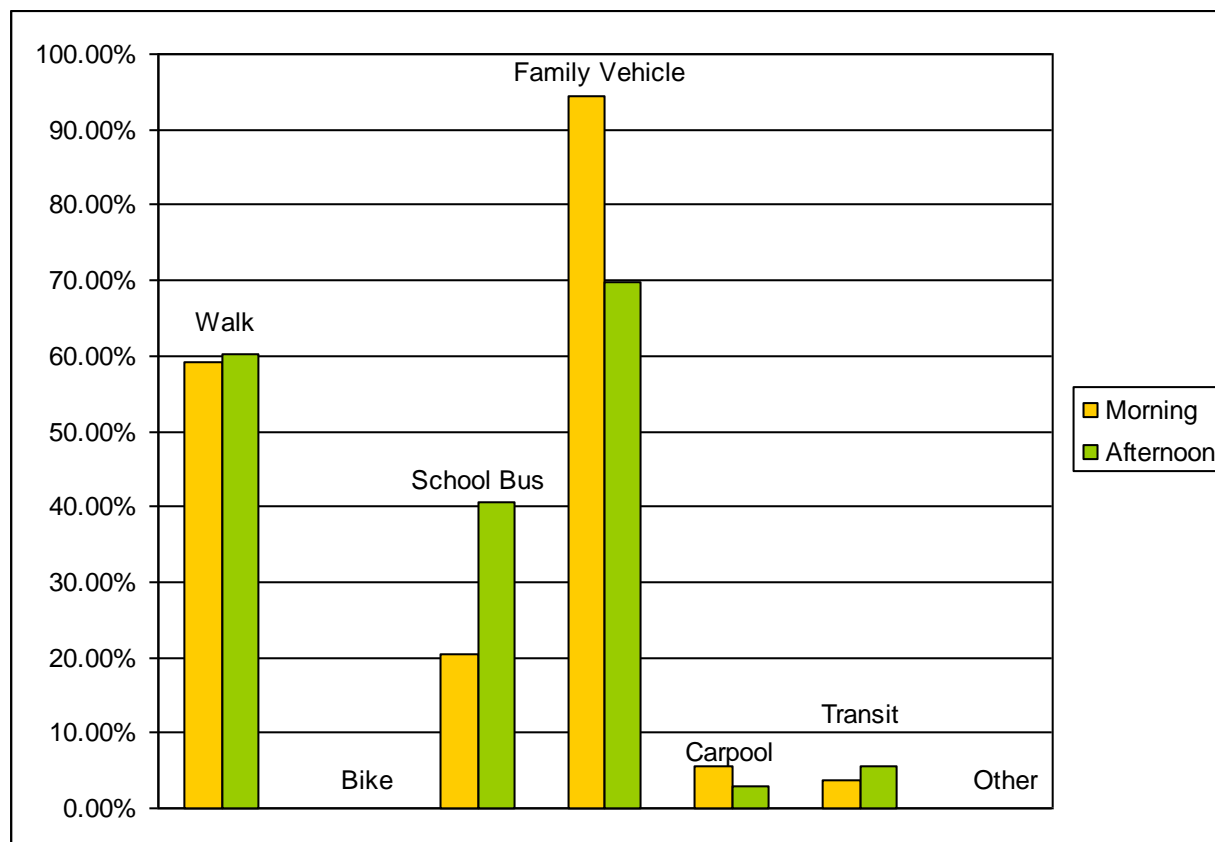
	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
<b>Average</b>	53.50	0.00	27.33	73.67	3.83	4.17	0.00
<b>Percent</b>	32.9%	0.00%	16.82%	45.33%	2.36%	2.56%	0.00%

Average daily number of students: 162.50

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



	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	59.11%	0.00%	20.45%	94.42%	5.58%	3.72%	0.00%
Afternoon	60.22%	0.00%	40.52%	69.89%	2.97%	5.58%	0.00%



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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	153	108	0	36	180	9	6	0
Tues PM	153	114	0	76	129	5	8	0
Wed PM	98	43	0	17	66	6	4	0
Wed PM	98	40	0	31	51	3	7	0
Thur AM	18	8	0	2	8	0	0	0
Thur PM	18	8	0	2	8	0	0	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	339	31.86%	0.00%	10.62%	53.10%	2.65%	1.77%	0.00%
Tues PM	332	34.34%	0.00%	22.89%	38.86%	1.51%	2.41%	0.00%
Wed PM	136	31.62%	0.00%	12.50%	48.53%	4.41%	2.94%	0.00%
Wed PM	132	30.30%	0.00%	23.48%	38.64%	2.27%	5.30%	0.00%
Thur AM	18	44.44%	0.00%	11.11%	44.44%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Thur PM	18	44.44%	0.00%	11.11%	44.44%	0.00%	0.00%	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 Joyce Kilmer Elementary School to perform a field investigation around the school. This field investigation was conducted on April 1, 2008 from 2:00 pm to 3:45 pm to observe arrival at the Kilmer 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:

- Intersection of Stuyvesant Avenue and Whittlesey Road
  - Intersection of Stuyvesant Avenue and Hillcrest Avenue
  - Intersection of Parkside Avenue and West State Street
  - Intersection of Sullivan Way and Cornwall Avenue
  - Along Cottage Place between Beechwood Avenue and Whittlesey Road
  - Cadwalader Park
  - Trenton Housing Authority
- 
- There were no posted signs at Cottage Place or Woodside Avenue.
  - There are two non-operational, solar-powered driver feedback signs on Stuyvesant Avenue both east and west of the school. Officer Maldonado noted that they are not powered up because no one knows how to activate them.
  - There are school crossing signs in the pavement on the approach to the schools at the crosswalk of Stuyvesant Avenue and Whittlesey Road.
  - The posted speed limit along Stuyvesant Avenue is 25 mph though cars appeared to be traveling at higher speeds.
  - Traffic along Stuyvesant Avenue included cars, public buses and school buses.

### *Observations Noted at Dismissal*

- Many students cross mid-block on Whittlesey Road to continue walking down Cottage Place. According to Detective Maldonado, residents on Cottage Place complain of rambunctious behavior by students such as "keying" cars, jumping on cars, and kicking over trash cans.
- Some students cross mid-block on Stuyvesant Avenue to the park – defying the crossing guard.

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- Most students walked from the school down Whittlesey Road and used the crosswalk at Stuyvesant Avenue with the assistance of the crossing guard and continued southeast on Stuyvesant Avenue.
- Some students exited from the side entrance of the school, by opening the metal gates, and then proceeded to cross/run across Stuyvesant Avenue to the sidewalk on the park side.
- Students stage in the gym prior to dismissal.
- All students are dismissed at the same time with the exception of the bused students who are released early.
- Intermittent parent pick-up and stopping.
- Parents that picked their children up via vehicle traveled down Whittlesey Road towards Stuyvesant Avenue and, due to sight distance, needed the assistance of the crossing guard to make either a right or left turn.
- The crossing guard also assisted buses in their exit from Whittlesey Road onto Stuyvesant Avenue due to the issue of sight distance and vehicles speeding along Stuyvesant Avenue.
- All dismissal occurs at the back of the school into the parking lot.
- There were a number of buses specifically for the after school programs. Those noted were the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Family Guidance and YWCA.
- There were approximately 13 buses dedicated to students going directly home.

#### *Additional Observations around Joyce Kilmer School*

- Trenton Psychiatric Hospital is located within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the school.
- One crossing guard at Whittlesey Road and Stuyvesant Avenue assigned to the Jefferson School but crosses students from both schools.
- Kilmer and Jefferson Schools are located on the same parcel of land and share the parking lot.
- Jefferson Elementary School has a staggered arrival and dismissal to try to alleviate some of the congestion.
- Sidewalk in front of the school along Stuyvesant Avenue has no buffer.
- Trenton Public Housing Authority complex located approximately 0.7 miles from the school. This is the site of gang activity in the form of violent crimes and was the site of a homicide on the say of the field assessment.
- School is located next to the Department of Corrections.
- Detective Maldonado noted that the crossing guard has come close to being hit more than a few times.
- Terri Jenkins, Trenton Public Schools Transportation Coordinator noted that there is a pedestrian overpass that leads from Stacy Park over Route 29 to S. Lenape Avenue but students do not use it. She also noted all students west of Route 29 get hazard busing. NJ Transit used to run a “special” bus on S. State Street from “the Island,” as a courtesy to those residents. The school board would buy the bus tickets in bulk

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but now the parents must buy the tickets from the school which = approximately \$20/week. Currently, all special education students get bused to school.

- Fights often occur in the park - usually older students from other schools.
- There is a small zoo located along Cadwalader Drive by Stanley Avenue.
- The Delaware and Raritan Canal Towpath runs through Cadwalader Park.
- Cadwalader Park is a hot spot. It is the site of sexual assaults and predators, assaults, etc.
- There is one park ranger who calls in park incidents to the police.
- In Cadwalader Park the police have two cameras set up on the poles by the pedestrian footbridge that crosses over the Delaware River.
- NJ Transit bus #609 travels along Stuyvesant Avenue Quick Headways.
- Street width across Stuyvesant Avenue at Renfrew Avenue is ~38'.
- There is parental concern about Kilmer students that live on "The Island" and must cross Lee Avenue and Route 29 with no crossing guard.

### Community Workshop

The final step in Joyce Kilmer's information-gathering process was to hold a community workshop, sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The workshop took place at the Joyce Kilmer Elementary School, Trenton, NJ on June 17, 2008 from 4 to 7 pm and included parents/caregivers, 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 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*

Based on the student travel surveys, the majority of students (45%) are dropped off to school by a family vehicle. This behavior was witnessed and substantiated by the project team during their observation of student arrival. Students are dropped off on streets all around the school and all along the school driveway. This school driveway is a main area of concern. It surrounds the school creating a moat like effect. This area is dominated by the automobile and feels more like a street than a driveway. Cars enter the school driveway from both ingresses at Whittlesey Road and Stuyvesant Avenue without reducing their speed. The wide driveway and rolled back corners make this possible. The crossing guard noted that she has a hard time slowing cars down that travel along Stuyvesant Avenue.

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The project team also observed a good number of students that walk to school. These students ranged in ages and either walked in pairs or in larger groups.

#### *Classroom Session*

As arranged by Principal Green, the project team met with sixteen students from Mrs. Weiss' 4<sup>th</sup> grade class. Out of these sixteen students, eight walk to school regularly. Students were given a brief background of the Safe Routes to School program and were asked about obstacles to walking and bicycling in their neighborhood. Specifically, they were asked, "Do you feel safe walking to school/in the neighborhood around school?" The responses noted are as follows:

- No, "weird" people will kill you.
- Cadwalader Park is not safe.
- People, strangers, guns – steal your stuff.
- Street too small – cars might hit you. They told a few stories about kids they knew who were hit or brushed up by cars. Their perception was/is that the street is not wide enough for cars and people – that's why kids are getting hit.
- Bikes get stolen.
- Kids have guns.

The overall concern of the students is the fear of what other people might do to them.

Principal Green was also present during the classroom discussion and noted a few concerns of her own since taking over as Principal in the winter semester of 2007. She cited the "Green Store," a convenience store on Stuyvesant Avenue that is painted green, as a problem. She also noted several of the following reasons to explain why students don't walk to school:

1. Distance – this is not purely a neighborhood school; kids come from other parts of Trenton
2. Events/friction in the neighborhood
3. Cadwalader Park is a safety concern
4. One student was hit by a car
5. Gangs/fear of gangs concerns people

Students also participated in a visual preference survey and were shown several slides and asked what they would prefer to see in their neighborhood. Their responses are noted as follows:

1. 1<sup>st</sup> Bus stop – beautiful. Grass is cut, chairs, trash cans, no graffiti, and no litter. They didn't like the bus stop with the bench near the street – "not good because its next to the highway. Car could hit you."



## JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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2. Bench is dirty. Nowhere to sit. No curb. Wrappers, trash, leaves; tree in middle of sidewalk. – They were very good at picking up the negatives in the slides. Some of the positives were viewed as negatives, for example lights mounted on a building. These could be bad according to the students because they could fall on you.
3. They identified what they thought were nice streets and thought they were good for business.

The project team, working to further stimulate students' discussion, gave students the opportunity to be "Mayor for the Day." As mayor, it was their job to redesign areas of public use like sidewalks, neighborhoods, intersections, and streets in way that would make them feel more comfortable and safe.

If they had mayoral power, here are the changes that students would like to see instituted in their school neighborhood:

- Walk to school with parent, friend (not alone)
- More crossing guards
- More space to walk in
- More police authorized signs
- Security cameras
- Separation between cars and people walking

Following those exercises, students led the project team on a walk around their school neighborhood. Frequent stops were made along the way to discuss problem areas. The students pointed out several issues:

- Vacant lot on Woodside Avenue and Whittlesey Road should be a baseball field or park
- No crosswalk on Cottage Place and Beachwood Avenue
- Vacant lot on Beachwood Avenue doesn't feel safe
- Broken sidewalks are common

#### *Community Workshop*

The afternoon's community workshop began at 4 pm in the Kilmer School's Cafeteria. The workshop was attended by the school's principal, several teachers, members of the general school community, the region's Transportation Management Association (Greater Mercer TMA), the Trenton Police Department, the Trenton Planning Department, and the Trenton Public Works Department. After introductions of both the project team and audience members, the goals of the workshop were discussed. This working meeting was prepared in a three-hour format in order to successfully complete the goals of:

- Providing an overview of the SRTS Program and the NJDOT Urban SRTS Program
- Discussion of the best practices of SRTS programs

## JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

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- Actively engage the community, in discussion primarily hinged on issues pertaining to communal safety including pinpointing locations of specific hazards, barriers and security concerns;
- Providing data and a plan of action for the school task force and school travel plan

The project team gave a brief introduction to the Safe Routes to School program, and reviewed the State of New Jersey's efforts to date – including mention of the Urban Demonstration Program in the other pilot cities. This was followed by an hour-long interactive PowerPoint presentation on best practices for Safe Routes to School programs. The presentation consisted of five parts: 1) Incomplete infrastructure 2) Traffic 3) Traffic control signals and intersections 4) Land use 5) Personal safety and comfort.

The purpose of the presentation was to stimulate discussion of local barriers to walking and bicycling within the Kilmer Elementary school neighborhood. The project team supplemented the presentation with anecdotal information from their earlier discussion with students and their own observations of the school's arrival and dismissal. All participants received a handout with the results of the student travel surveys, as conducted by the teachers in February 2008, to provide them with a snapshot of how students currently travel to school. It was noted that this data serves as an effective measuring tool in evaluating the success of the program goal, which is to get more children walking to and from school.

#### **Preliminary Recommendations**

Recommendations, where appropriate, are provided as options for the Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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.
- Stop signs should be posted at Cottage Place and Woodside Avenue.
- Restrict standing/stopping/parking along travel lane and have curbside bus pick-up/drop-off only and make this restriction clear with designated signs.
- Move all parent pick-up/drop-off to a new designated area in the current parking lot.

## JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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- Define bus zone and drop-off/pick-up zones. Provide signs to inform motorists of appropriate areas and policies.

#### *Education*

- Reach out to NJ Transit to have a safety representative on the Safe Route to School Committee.
- 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 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.

#### *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.



## JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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- 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.



#### *Enforcement*

- Assign a crossing guard to the Joyce Kilmer School.
- 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 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.



## JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

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- 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 Stuyvesant Avenue and Whittlesey Road. 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.
- Activate driver speed feedback signs on Stuyvesant Avenue.



### *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.
- Monitor the timing of drop off dynamics around the school campus. This can help to evaluate the effectiveness of the staggered school start time policy.
- 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.



# JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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### Photo Documentation

#### JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Students run mid-block across Stuyvesant Avenue to Cadwalader Park

Students cross mid-block from the school's side entrance across Stuyvesant Avenue to Cadwalader Park



Traditionally striped crosswalk at the intersection of Whittlesey Road and Stuyesant Avenue

One of two non-operational driver speed feedback signs along Stuyvesant Avenue



## JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

### SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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The width and lack of striping along Stuyvesant Avenue makes it more susceptible to speeding

Parents await dismissal at various spots in the parking lot



Cars parked in area, sectioned off by cones, intended for school bus loading and drop-off

# JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY 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 Joyce Kilmer Elementary School, the Barriers and Opportunities students face walking to school, and some Neighborhood Recommendations to improving facilities so their trips are safer.

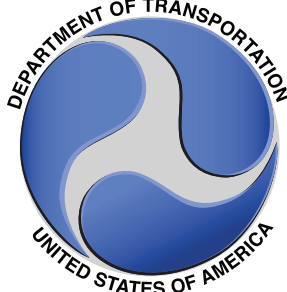
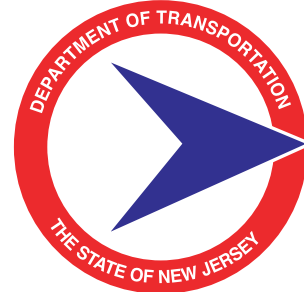
Map 1. Barriers and Opportunities

Map 2. Neighborhood Recommendations



NJ SRTS Urban Demonstration Program  
Joyce Kilmer Elementary School, Trenton NJ  
Barriers & Opportunities

August 2008



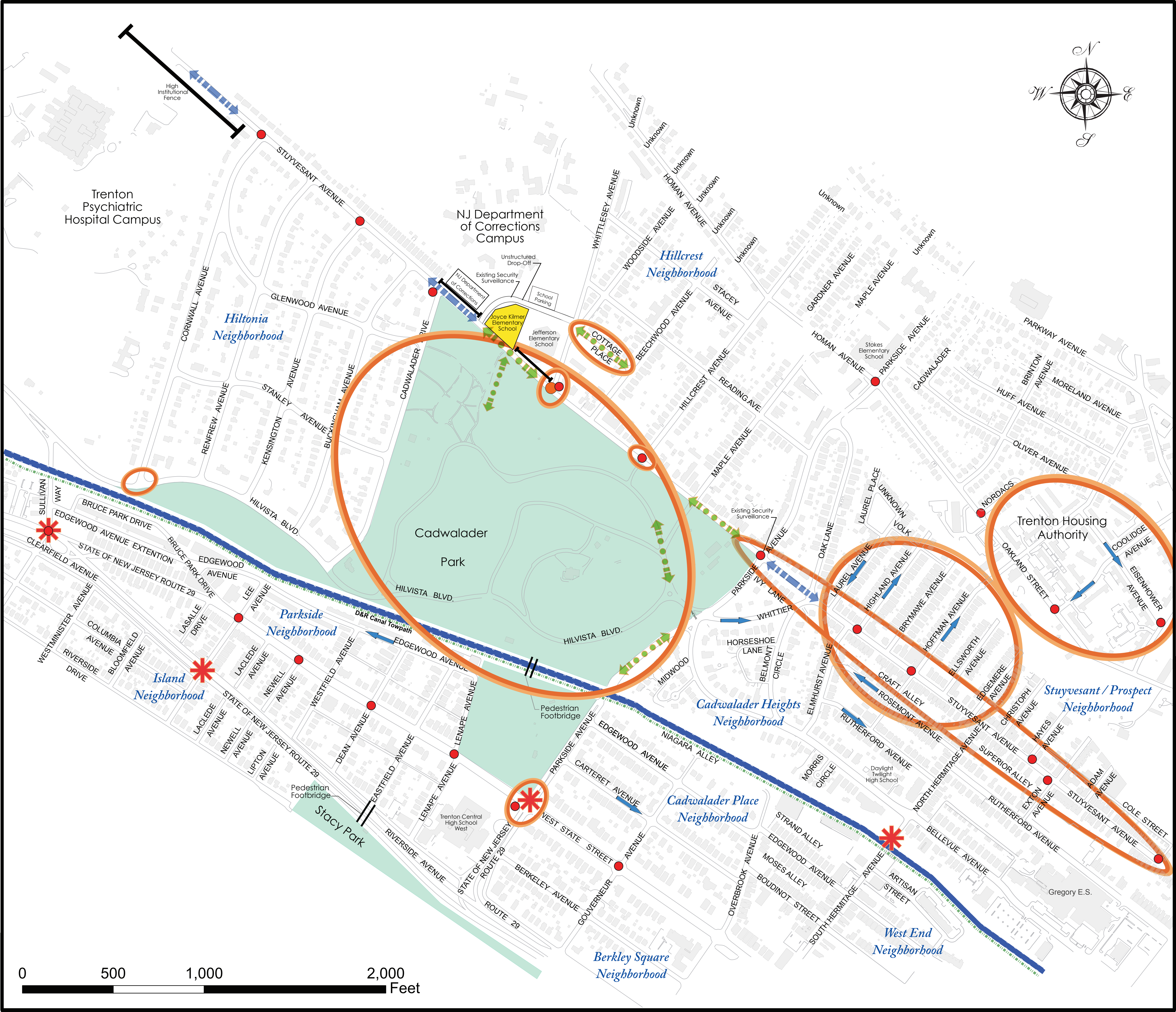
LEGEND

Existing Conditions

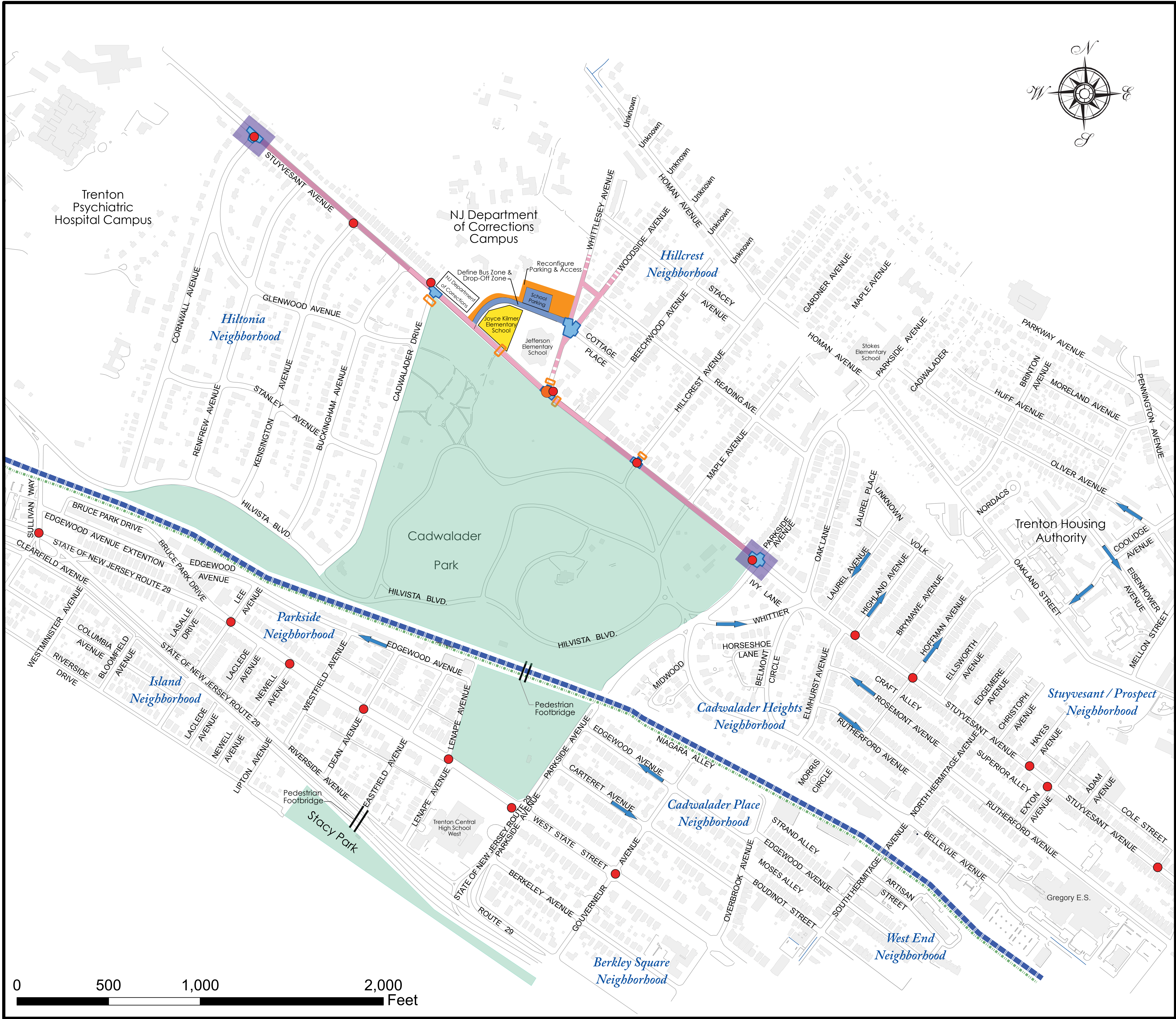
- School
- Park
- Public Bus Stop
- School Bus Stop
- Crossing Guard
- One-Way Street
- Delaware & Raritan Canal
- Delaware & Raritan Towpath

Barriers & Opportunities

- Loitering/Undesirable Behavior Hotspot
- Difficult Crossing
- Perceived Speeding
- Frequent Pedestrian Activity

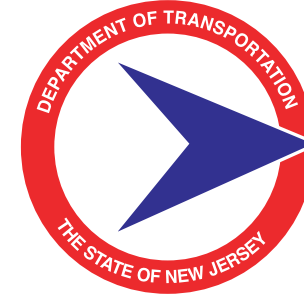






NJ SRTS Urban Demonstration Program  
Joyce Kilmer Elementary School, Trenton NJ  
Neighborhood Recommendations

August 2008



LEGEND

Existing Conditions

- School
- Park
- Public Bus Stop
- School Bus Stop
- Crossing Guard
- One-Way Street
- Delaware & Raritan Canal
- Delaware & Raritan Towpath

Neighborhood Recommendations

- High Visibility Crosswalk
- Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming
- Enhanced School Route
- Enhanced School Zone
- Define Bus Zones and Drop-off Zones
- Reconfigure Parking and Access
- Gateway Treatment



# JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

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### ACTION PLAN

This plan of action for implementing the Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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>Stop signs should be posted at Cottage Place and Woodside Avenue.</li></ul>	Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Restrict standing/stopping/parking along travel lane and have curbside bus pick-up/drop-off only and make this restriction clear with designated signs.</li></ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Move all parent pick-up/drop-off to a new designated area in the current parking lot.</li></ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Define bus zone and drop-off/pick-up zones. Provide signs to inform motorists of appropriate areas and policies.</li></ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	Low

#### *Education*

Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reach out to NJ Transit to have a safety representative on the SRTS Committee.</li></ul>	School/ Municipality	Short-Term	Low
<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

# JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
<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

### *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	Short-Term	Low

**JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY 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>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
<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

# JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

### Enforcement

Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign a crossing guard to the Joyce Kilmer School.</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
<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 Stuyvesant Avenue and Whittlesey Road. 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

# JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TRENTON, NJ

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
<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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activate driver speed feedback signs on Stuyvesant Avenue.</li> </ul>	Municipality	Short-Term	Low

### Evaluation

Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
<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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the timing of drop off dynamics around the school campus. This can help to evaluate the effectiveness of the staggered school start time policy.</li> </ul>	School/ PTO	Short-Term	Low
<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.*

# JOYCE KILMER ELEMENTARY 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, Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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 Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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 Joyce Kilmer Elementary 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 Joyce Kilmer Elementary School will utilize the services of the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University to tabulate survey data.