

Pinelands Regional Junior High School



Little Egg Harbor, NJ School Travel Plan August 2018

Prepared by Greater Mercer TMA



NEW JERSEY
Safe Routes to School



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Introduction

Pinelands Regional Junior High School is located in Little Egg Harbor (Ocean County), NJ. Students at PJHS are comprised of students from four sending districts: Bass River, Eagleswood, Little Egg Harbor and Tuckerton.

The junior high is situated along Nugentown Road across from Pinelands High School and the Pinelands Alternative School. Giffordtown Lane, a major connection between Nugentown Road and Rt. 9 has a pedestrian-level speed of 30mph. However, narrow shoulders and lack of sidewalks create a walking and cycling challenge. A walkability audit, a hazard identification walk with school staff, planners, and engineers, was conducted and recommendations for the 2018 Safe Routes to School grant were compiled.

The following school travel plan, identifies background and context about the school, observed traffic hazards, some suggested improvements and an estimated timeline/cost breakdown.

Goals

Using the “Six E’s” of Safe Routes to School (Evaluation, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Equity), Greater Mercer TMA would like to increase the number of bicycle riders and walkers at Pinelands Regional Junior High School and to do so safely.

School Description

Pinelands Junior High School Description

- Address: 590 Nugentown Rd, Little Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08087
- For the 2017-2018 school years, there were 793 students in grades 7 to 9:
 - 235 seventh
 - 261 eighth
 - 229 ninth
 - 68 ungraded/special needs
- The Pinelands Alternative School educates about 50 students in grades 7-12.

Due to an extensive construction project, the high school building is closed for the 2018-2019 school year and a split schedule configuration is bringing both high school and junior high school students into the JHS building. Seventh-graders will be sent to Frog Pond Elementary.

- JHS Arrival: School begins at 7:25am. 7th-grade Frog Pond 7:35am arrival.
- JHS Dismissal: A normal school day dismisses at 2:05pm. Frog Pond 1:47 pm Dismissal
- JHS reduced-day lasts from 7:25am to 11:55pm. Frog Pond 7:35am to 11:38am.

Current Safe Routes to School Programming

- 2018 Safe Routes to School grant application
- September 2017 Safe Routes to School presentations for Frog Pond Elementary students
- Frog Pond Elementary entries for GMTMA's bookmark contest

Working Groups and Partnerships

Organization	Contact
Voorhees Transportation Center	Sean Meehan Project Manager 848.932.2860 smeehan@ejb.rutgers.edu
Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association	Jerry Foster Transportation Safety Educator 609.452.1491 x 227 jfoster@gmtma.org
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T and M Associates	Gerald Paige Grants Manager T and M Associates Gpaige@tandmassociates.com
T and M Associates	Jason Worth LEHT Engineer T and M Associates JWorth@tandmassociates.com
Pinelands Regional School District	Dr. Melissa McCooley Superintendent MMcCooley@prsdnj.org
Pinelands Regional School District	Stephen Brennan School Business Administrator sbrennan@prsdnj.org
Pinelands Regional School District	Nick Talarico Business Manager/Transportation NTalarico@prsdnj.org

Partnerships

- Pinelands Regional School District
- Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association
- T and M Associates

Existing Conditions- Maps

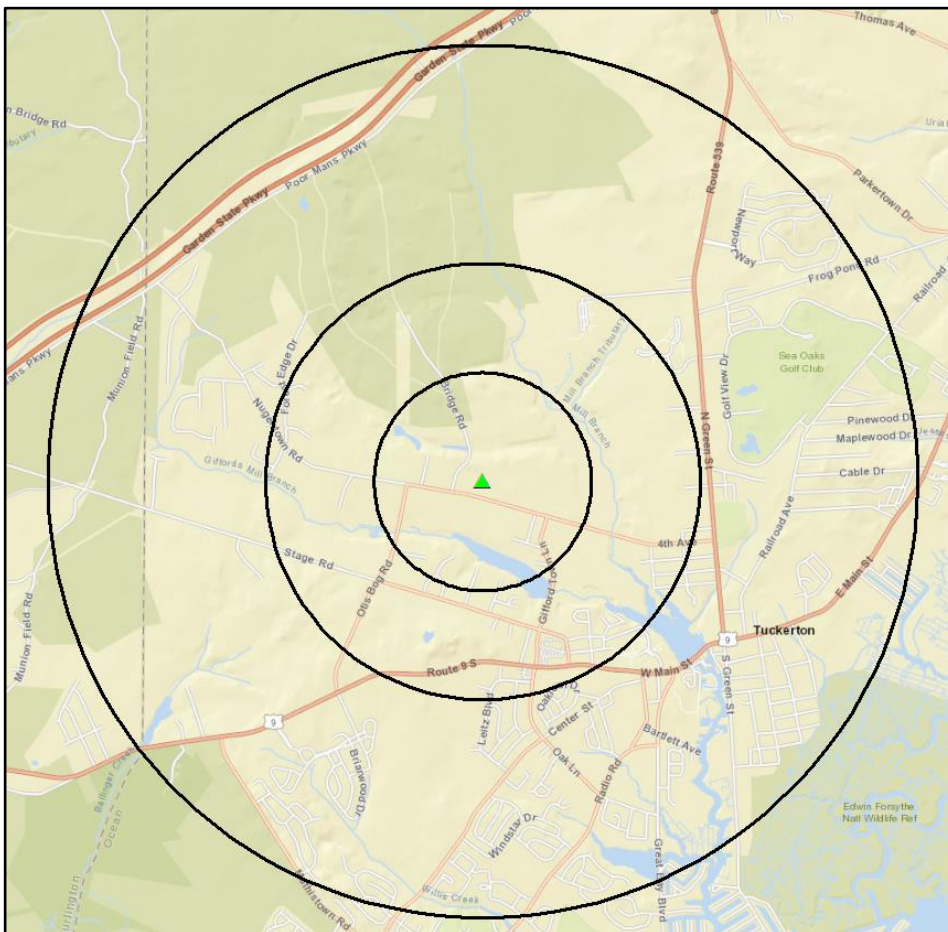
Fig 1. School Neighborhood

Pinelands Junior High School is located at 590 Nugentown Rd, Little Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08087.

The school is located directly across the street from Pinelands High School in Ocean County.

Little Egg Harbor is sandwiched between Rt. 9 and the Garden State Parkway.

Transportation is supplied to students who reside in four sending districts: Bass River, Eagleswood, Little Egg Harbor and Tuckerton.



½ mile, 1 mile, 2
miles respectively.
Source: ArcGIS

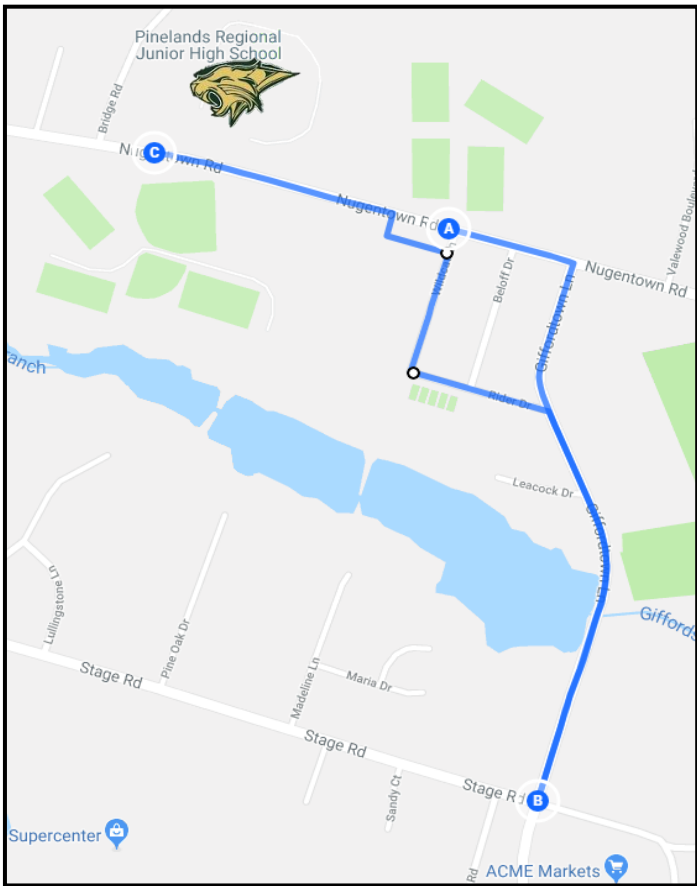


Fig 2. August 3, 2018 Walkability Route

The walkability audit was conducted by GMTMA, Pinelands School Administration, and T and M Associates.

The route began at the administration building (A), along Giffordtown Lane to Stage Rd/Giffordtown Lane, back along Giffordtown Lane, Rider Drive through the high school, and back to the school on Nugentown Road (C).

Photographs taken on the audit are used in the recommendation section found below. The group was able to observe traffic flow, road safety hazards, model/ideal fixes, and brainstorm new traffic safety improvements.

Source: Google MyMaps

Fig. 3 School Drop-Off

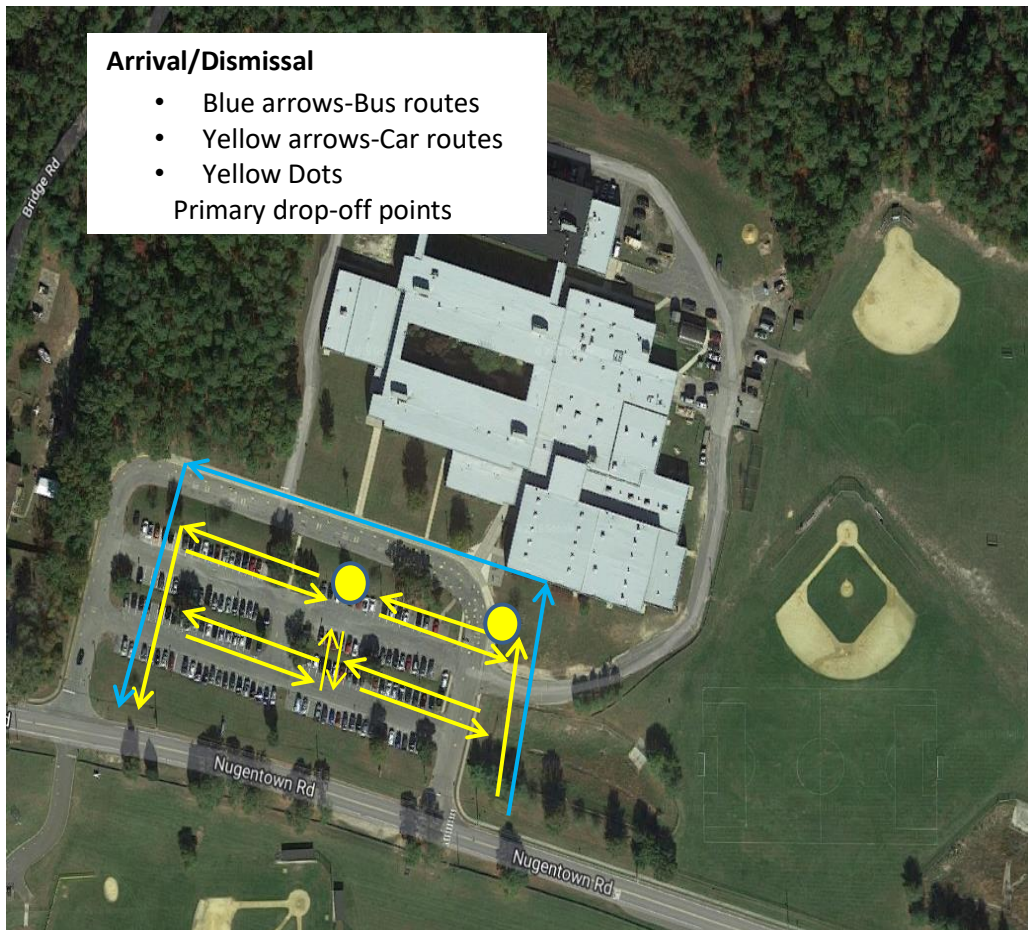
Visitor Parking

Select spaces are located in the front of the school.

Crossing Guards

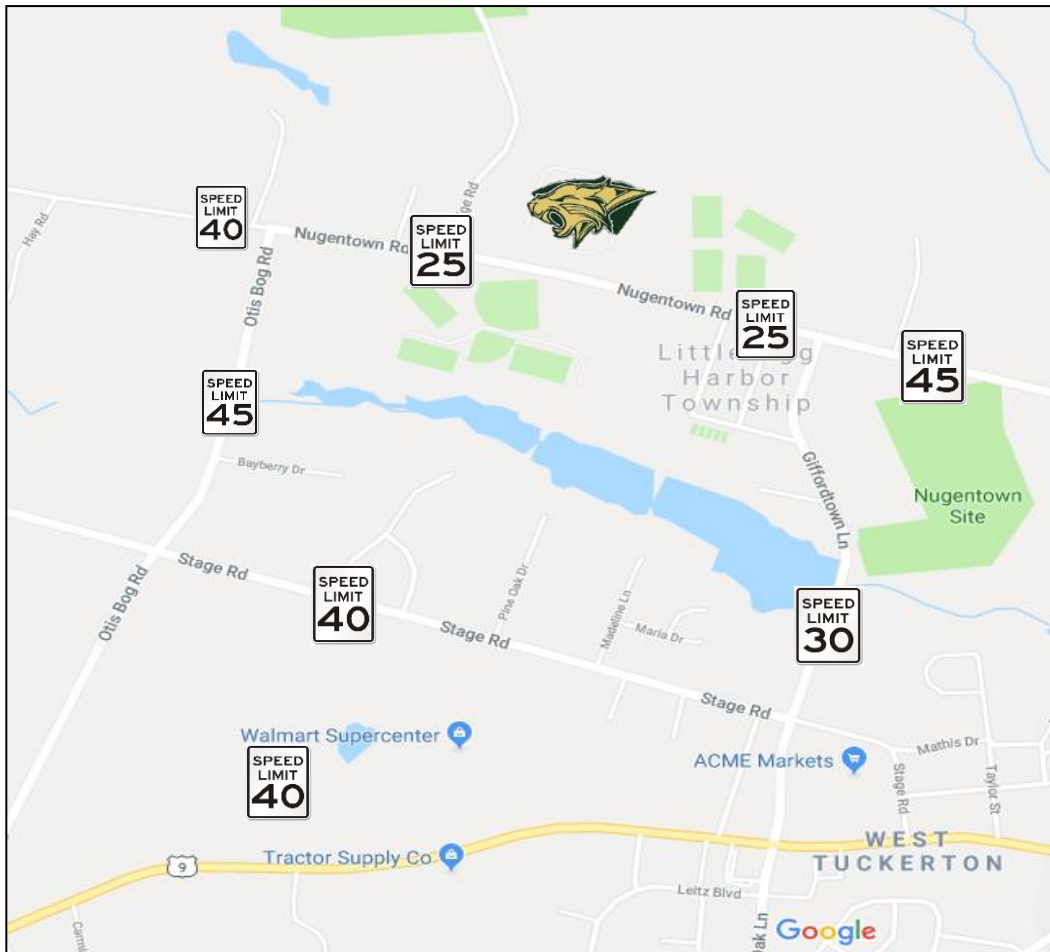
At the moment, there are no crossing guards stationed at the school.

Source: Google Maps



Walk/ Bike Barriers and Opportunities

Fig 5. Area Speed Limits



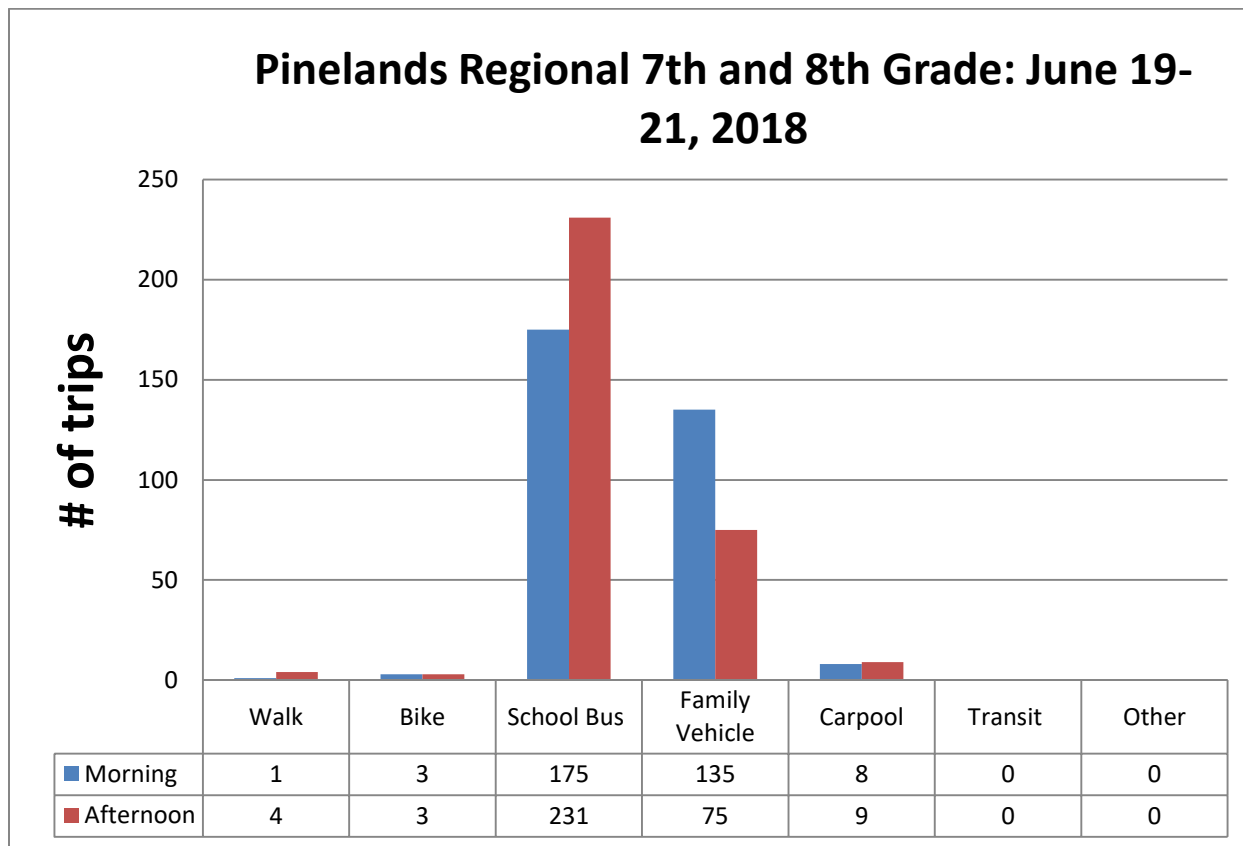
Source: Google Maps

Travel Tallies

In June 2018, travel mode tallies were taken in classrooms at Pinelands Junior High School. For three days (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) June 19-21, the students were asked “How did you arrive at school today?” and “How do you plan to leave for home after school?” The students then raised their hands and were counted for each travel mode: walk, bike, school bus, carpool, take a family vehicle, transit or other. Over the three days percent of student travel modes were recorded and the results can be found in the charts below.

It is important to note that 7th-grade mode choice may change in 2018-2019 as students are being transported to Frog Pond Elementary. However, this is a temporary arrangement.

Table 1. PJHS Travel Tallies



Currently, most of the school rides on buses, especially in the afternoon. Increasing and improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure may inspire those in family vehicles to try a more sustainable mode. Infrastructure upgrades could potentially affect buses sent on “hazard” routes.

School Policies¹

OUR MISSION:

To provide safe, secure and efficient transportation to and from school for all students residing in our district.

The student's primary residence is used to determine the closest bus stop and bus route assignment.

For shared custody situations, the parent identified as PRIMARY in Pinelands student database will determine which residence should be used for transportation. Multiple bus stops for multiple residences is not permitted.

VENDORS:

Durham School Services 609-296-0400

Hartnett Transit 732-370-5999 or 609-698-3281

* There is no guarantee from year to year that transportation will continue to be provided.

For the 2016/2017 school year, transportation is provided through a direct contract between Pinelands School District and Durham School Services.

¹ <http://www.pinelandsregional.org/new-transportation>

Pinelands Regional School District currently arranges transportation services for eligible non-public and choice school students in grades K-12 who reside within the four sending districts (Bass River, Eagleswood, Little Egg Harbor and Tuckerton).

Pinelands Regional School District has shared service agreements in place with Bass River, Eagleswood and Tuckerton Elementary Schools to supply student transportation to those schools.

HALF-DAY: if Pinelands schools are in session for only half a day late buses will be made available at 2:00 PM & 3:15 PM, at the discretion of the School Principals. Please check with your coach or club advisor for any specific date.

Students dropped off at Pinelands for after-school activities may either take one of the late buses home or provide their own transportation

Pinelands provides curb-to-curb services for special needs students who have an IEP which requires that a student ride a small bus.

Safe Routes to School-Disabled Student Inclusion

- Maintenance of current ADA-compliant pads and addition of pads to sidewalks to enable access during Walk to School events
- Adjust safety presentation styles for those with ADHD and other learning obstacles
- During schoolwide walk audit events, tailor routes for special needs students
- Train the Trainers approach- Pass along safety education to the aides who have to tailor educational needs based on individual student plans
- Look into funding sources for purchasing specially-tailored bicycles for disabled.

August 3, 2018 Walkability Audit

As mentioned above, a walkability audit team included members from GMTMA, Pinelands School Administration, and T and M Associates. Please consult Figure 2 for the route map.

Photographs from the audit illustrate the current conditions and are grouped in street or intersection clusters.

Captions include traffic safety recommendations and concepts.

NUGENTOWN ROAD

Fig. 6 & 7 Crosswalk Between PJHS and PHS



The school's entrance has positive safety features such as its high-visibility sign and crosswalk with a ladder configuration.

However, painted lines do not correspond with any sloped curb cut or ADA domes. As seen in Figure 7 below, footprints in the dirt indicate use. A flashing beacon or raised crosswalk could be placed here to increase driver awareness of the pedestrian crossing.

Seventh and eighth grade students cross here to access the Alternative School (on the high school side). A sidewalk extending from the PJHS crossing to the Alternative School would be fitting. A dirt path on the grass indicates pedestrian use already.



Greater indication that drivers are in a school zone could be also considered. A pole-mounted speed display could be placed along each eastbound and westbound side in order to discourage speeding.

Drivers also abruptly slow to 25mph from 40 or 45 mph (see Figure 5). Signage or warning lights should be implemented to alert of the upcoming changes.

Street Trees along Nugentown could also create a more pleasant aesthetic.

GIFFORDTOWN LANE

Fig. 8 & 9 (Southbound) Shoulders



The 30mph speed limit is appropriate for pedestrians. Pole-mounted speed displays could be useful to discourage speeding.



Worn paths on the grass indicate pedestrian use and the need for sidewalks. It may also indicate a sense of uneasiness as they walk away from traffic. Sidewalks would be very beneficial to link Nugentown Road and sidewalks past Stage Rd/Giffordtown Lane. At the very least, shoulders should be widened.

Fig. 10 Bridge and Bog (Southbound side)



The bridge is freshly-painted and well-maintained.

PJHS students take class field trips down to view the bog; therefore safe connectivity to the school is imperative.

Fig. 11 Multi-Use Path (Southbound)



A multi-use path is found along Giffordtown Lane. The asphalt itself could be repaved because cracks can cause issues for wheelchairs or strollers. The path is narrow as well and can only accommodate a single walker across.

It would be ideal to connect this path the entire length from Nugentown Road to the Stage Road/Giffordtown Lane intersection.

Fig. 12 New Sidewalks (Southbound)

New sidewalks between Stage Rd/Giffordtown Lane and Route 9 are well-maintained. They would be ideal for the previously mentioned sections along Giffordtown Lane.



STAGE ROAD/GIFFORDTOWN DRIVE

Fig.13 Typical Brunswick Avenue Profile



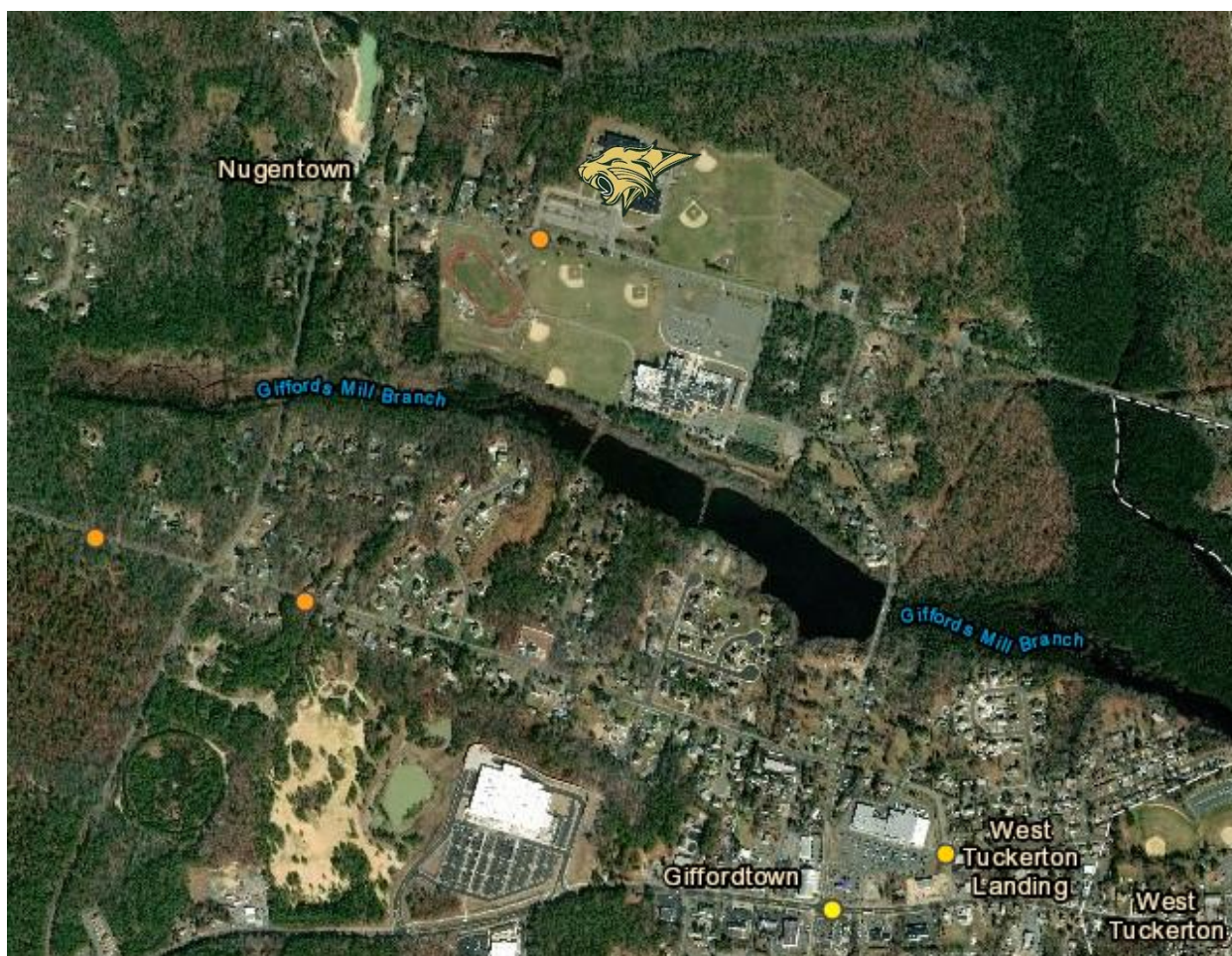
Stage Road and Giffordtown Road features a 4-way stop sign. The crosswalks have a higher-visibility configuration and overhanging red lights are helpful to drivers.



Fig. 14 PJHS Front Entrance

Cars parked along the entrance were idling during the audit. A “No Idling” sign or campaign could be useful. In general, there is a visibility risk with large cars blocking students. Yellow paint and “No Parking” signs may assist with that.

Fig. 16 PJHS-Vicinity Pedestrian and Cyclist Crash Data 2006-2016



Red= Incapacitating Injury, Orange= Moderate Injury, Yellow= Pain 2006-2016.

Source: NJDHTS

A full list of MLK Elementary vicinity cyclist and pedestrian crashes from 2006-2016 is listed in Appendix A.

Goals and Actions

This plan of action 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. Many actions identified as “short-term” and “low cost” can make a big difference in a short time and can be accomplished with the help of local partners.

Cost estimates are for planning purposes only – a professional engineer should prepare the actual estimates used for grant application. These estimates were prepared using the SRTS Implementation Cost sheet prepared in 2017 to support the grant application process.²

Table 2-6. Cost Estimates

Engineering			
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	(Estimated ₁) Cost + Labor
Pole-mounted Driver Speed Feedback Sign along Nugentown Road	Ocean County	Medium Term	\$10-12K each
School Crossing Words- Thermoplastic	Ocean County	Short Term	\$200/word
Various Crosswalks - Thermoplastic	Ocean County	Short Term	\$2K/crosswalk *30- \$60K
Sidewalks along Giffordtown Lane 5 ft.- 100 ft. long	Ocean County	Medium Term	\$6K*3= \$18K
Street Trees along Nugentown Rd	District	Medium Term	\$900 each
Curb Ramps and ADA domes	Ocean County	Medium Term	\$7,500 each
Raised Crosswalk in front of PJHS	Ocean County	Medium Term	\$8,200
Asphalt to repave Multi-use path along Giffordtown Lane	Ocean County	Medium Term	\$250/foot
No Idling Signs	District	Short Term	\$15 each

² <http://www.saferoutesnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SRTS-Costs-August-2017-update.pdf>

Education			
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
Educate students, family members, bus drivers and school employees about drop-off/ pick up zones. Make sure everyone knows the best way to keep students safe and to quickly dismiss students from school.	School, School District	Short Term / Ongoing	Low
Increase community outreach about the health benefits of walking and biking to school.	School, PTO	Short Term	Low
Conduct community wide outreach about Safe Routes to School actions such as walking and biking safety.	School, GMTMA	Short Term/ Ongoing	Low
Establish a program to encourage students to walk and/or bike to school. Examples: Golden Sneaker Award, Walking Wednesday, Walking School Bus, Bike Train	School, GMTMA	Short Term/ Ongoing	Low
Educate community and responsible parties about snow removal on sidewalks near schools.	Public Works	Short Term/ Ongoing	Low

Encouragement			
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
Establish main walking routes, safety corridors, walking school buses – safety in numbers.	School, PTO, GMTMA, Community Groups	Ongoing	Low
Conduct Student and Parent survey to see what actions and rewards could encourage them to walk to school more – and feel safer walking to school.	School, PTO, GMTMA	Short Term	Low

Enforcement			
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
Enforce speed limits (in general and specifically in school zones), pedestrians walking safely, drivers watching for pedestrians especially at times when students are going to/ from school.	Police	Ongoing	Low / Medium
Enforce motorist compliance with crossing guard instructions	Police	Ongoing	Low / Medium
Enforce parking laws.	Police	Ongoing	Low / Medium
Conduct structured crosswalk enforcement campaign.	Police	Ongoing	Low / Medium

Evaluation			
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
Conduct periodic travel mode choice surveys (teacher tallies)	School	Annual	Low
Conduct bikeability audit of walking area	School, Township, GMTMA	Short Term	Low
Tour the areas with school, township and TMA personnel to identify areas for improvement	School, Township, GMTMA	Short Term	Low

*Explanation of funding- Greater Mercer TMA is funded through the New Jersey Department of Transportation to offer advice and assistance in starting safe Routes to School programs and projects. Greater Mercer TMA can help with walk and bike to school events, walking school bus programs, youth bicycle and pedestrian education, school travel plans, and surveys that provide evaluation and feedback on local programs.

Evaluation

Task Force Timeline

Greater Mercer TMA will be in discussion with participating organizations about implementation progress.

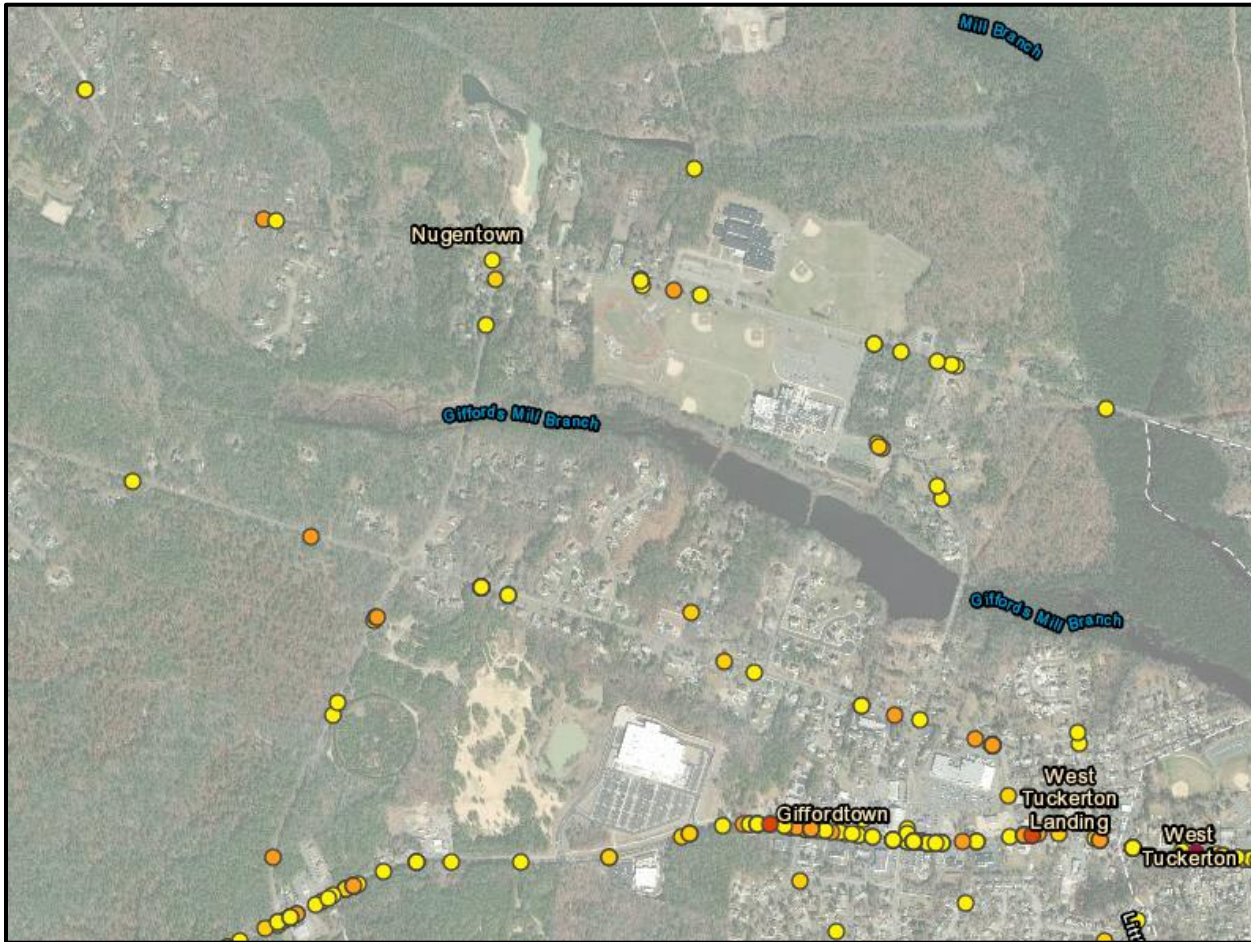
Conclusion

Pinelands Junior High School has potential to increase the number of walking and biking students. According to the travel tallies, 44% of students took a family vehicle or carpool in the morning. This increase in idling, traffic, drop-off delays can be reduced by making traffic safety conditions around the school safer and more enticing for students to walk or bicycle.

In the short term, school zone markings and high-visibility signage along Nugentown Road would signal to drivers that a school lies nearby. Sidewalks along Giffordtown Lane would connect to Route 9 and serve students who live in the nearby neighborhoods.

In summary, traffic safety improvements are welcome modifications that will not only increase the safety of the neighborhood surrounding Pinelands Junior High School, but slower speeds can boost the community feeling in town.

Appendix A: Pinelands Junior High School Proximity Pedestrian and Cyclist Crashes from New Jersey Department of Traffic and Highway Safety, 2006-2016



Appendix B: FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures

The Federal Highway Administration is promoting safety through proven roadway design features.

For a full list, see: <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/>

The following local examples show bicycle and pedestrian safety features from the list of countermeasures and should be considered when analyzing traffic safety solutions.

Refuge Islands

Link: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/ped_medians/



- Reduces pedestrian crossing distance
- Greater pedestrian visibility
- Narrower lanes reduces driver speeding
- Flashing beacon alerts drivers
- Islands can be landscaped

Clarksville Rd, CR638, West Windsor NJ

Roundabouts

Link: <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/roundabouts/>



- Raised splitter island raised to form a pedestrian refuge
- Reduction in severe crashes
- Urban, rural, suburban options

George Dye Rd and Estates Blvd, Hamilton NJ

Hybrid Pedestrian Beacon (HAWK Signal)

Link:

https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/ped_hybrid_beacon/



- Pedestrians can cross midblock or uncontrolled intersections
- Pedestrians activate the signal
- Motorists stop completely

State Road 35, Seaside Heights NJ

Road Diet

Link: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/road_diets/

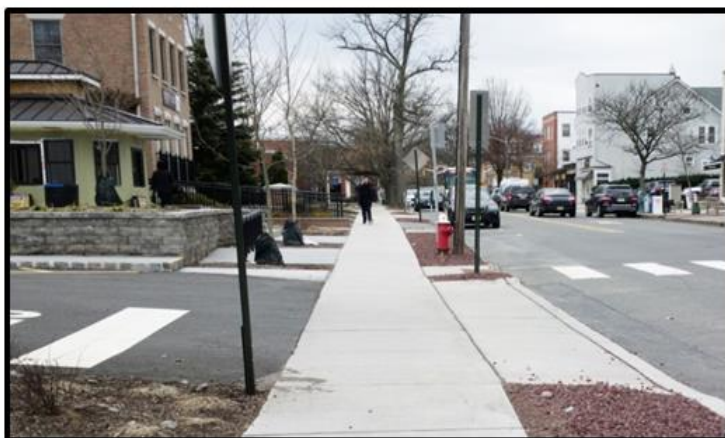


- Reconfigure four general travel lanes:
 - Two general travel
 - Center turn lane
 - Bike lanes

West Windsor, NJ

Walkways

Link: <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/walkways/>



- Shared-use paths
- Streetscaping opportunities

Nassau Street, Princeton NJ

Leading Pedestrian Interval

Link: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/lead_ped_int/



- Pedestrian given time prior to motorist green signal

Nassau Street, Princeton NJ