

# Hedgepeth – Williams Middle School and Paul Robeson Elementary School Trenton, NJ School Travel Plan



Prepared by Greater Mercer TMA

With Assistance from Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center; Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and NJ Partnership for Healthy Kids



**NEW JERSEY**  
Safe Routes to School



### Hedgepeth – Williams Middle School Description:

Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School is located at 301 Gladstone Avenue Trenton, New Jersey. For the 2013-2014 school year, it houses approximately 470 students in grades 6-8. Hedgepeth-Williams is one of five middle schools in the Trenton Public School District. The school day runs from 8:20am to 2:50pm, but a large number of students arrive early for breakfast which begins at 7:50am. There are many after school programs and clubs (soccer, math, robotics, tutoring, etc.) There is also the Greg Grant Program that dismisses between 6 and 6:30pm.

### Paul Robeson Elementary School Description:

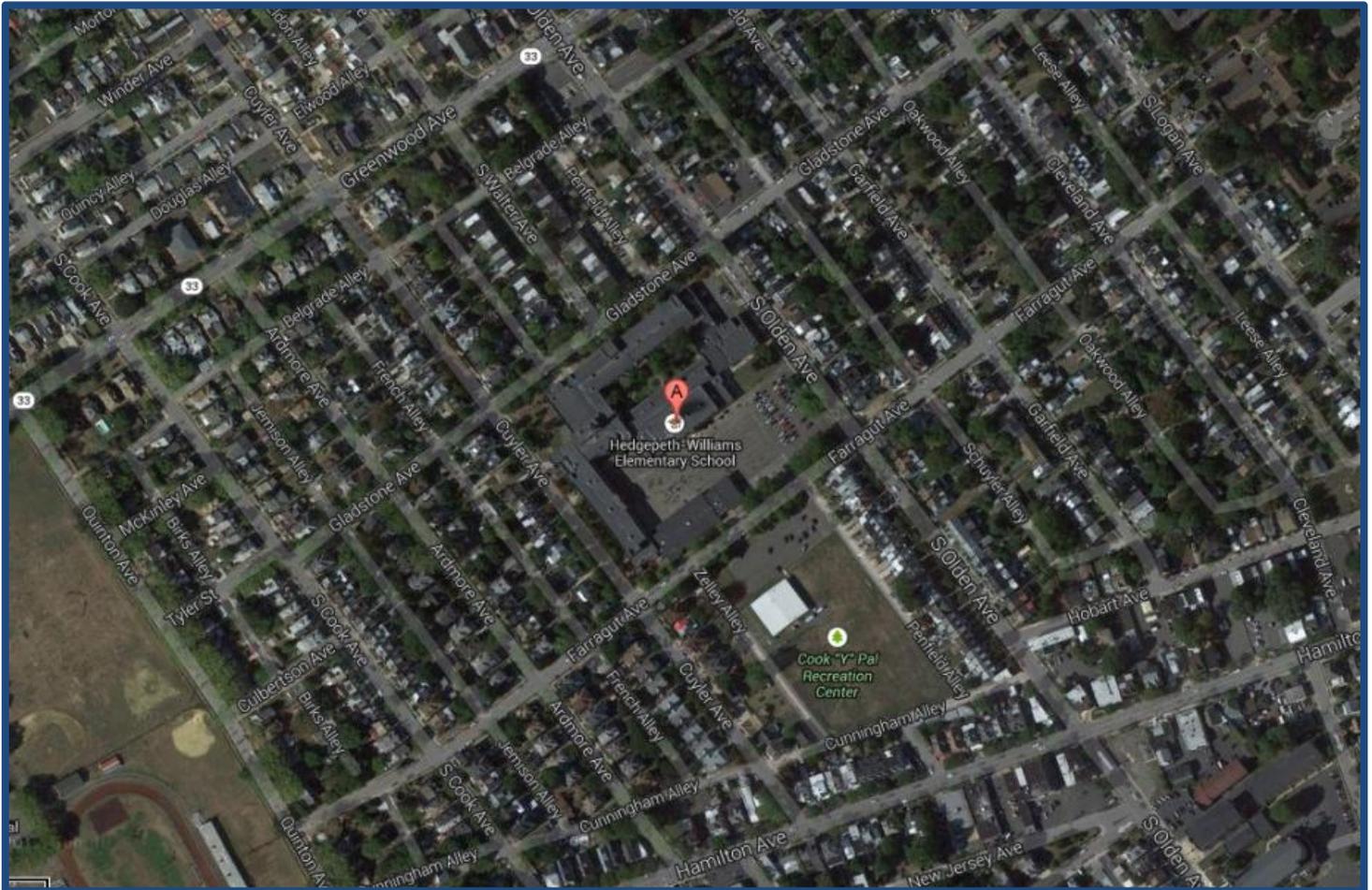
Paul Robeson Elementary School is located at 350 Cuyler Avenue Trenton, New Jersey. The unlisted school phone number is 609.656.4920. Robeson Elementary is on the same campus as Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School, but is operated as a completely separate school. For the 2013-2014 school year approximately 600 students are registered in grades K-5. The school day runs from 8:40 through 3:15, but many students arrive for breakfast which begins at 8:10. There is an after school Greg Grant Program which runs until 6 or 6:30 and it is unknown if it is a combined program with Hedgepeth-Williams or if it is separate.

### Working Groups and Partnerships:

| Organization  | Role/ Responsibility | Contact   |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Westminster Presbyterian Church                         | Community Partner    | 1140 Greenwood Avenue, Trenton<br>609.695.8025  |
| Living Hope Church                                      | Community Partner    | 401 Farragut Avenue, Trenton<br>609.392.3830  |
| Verlina Reynolds-Jackson<br>Councilwoman of the Ward    | Community Partner    | 609.989.3146<br><a href="mailto:vreynolds-jackson@trentonnj.org">vreynolds-jackson@trentonnj.org</a>  |
| NJ Department of Transportation                         | Key Partner          | Elise Bremer-Nei<br>Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator<br>609.530.2765<br><a href="mailto:elise.bremer-nei@dot.state.nj.us">elise.bremer-nei@dot.state.nj.us</a> |
| NJ Partnership for Healthy Kids-<br>Trenton             | Key Partner          | Marissa Davis<br>Project Manager<br>609.278.9677<br><a href="mailto:mdavis@trentonymca.org">mdavis@trentonymca.org</a>  |
| Voorhees Transportation Center                          | Key Partner          | Sean Meehan<br>Project Manager<br>848.932.2860<br><a href="mailto:smeehan@ejb.rutgers.edu">smeehan@ejb.rutgers.edu</a>  |
| Greater Mercer Transportation<br>Management Association | Key Partner          | Aly Dyson<br>Sustainable Transportation Associate<br>609.452.1491 extension 237<br><a href="mailto:adyson@gmtma.org">adyson@gmtma.org</a>                               |

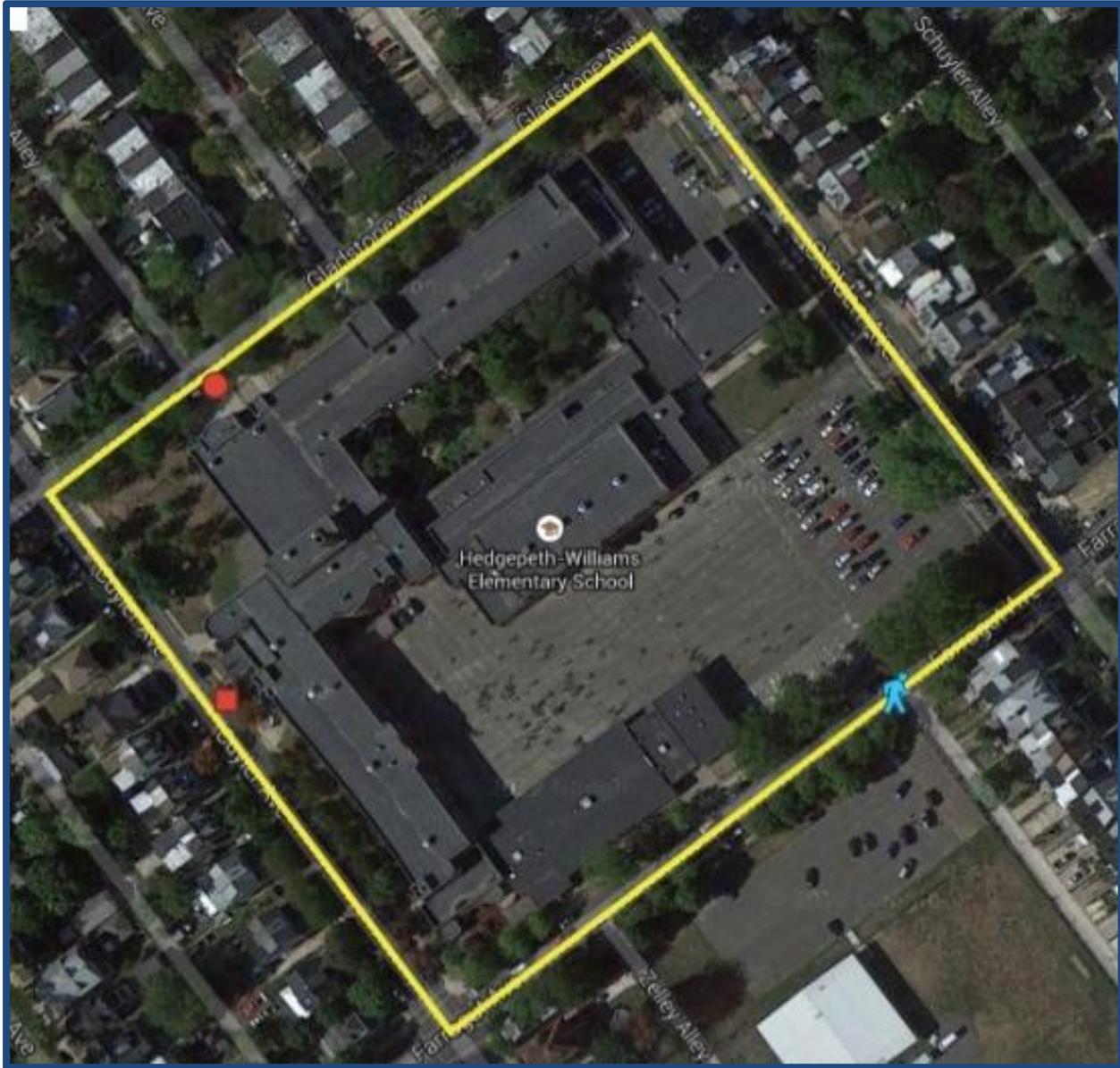
## School Neighborhood:

Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School and Paul Robeson Elementary are on a combined campus off of Gladstone Avenue in Trenton. They are surrounded by residential neighborhoods, local stores, the Living Hope Church Empowerment Center, Pal Recreation Center, and Trenton Central High School. The Schools are seen below, marked as A.



Hedgepeth-Williams & Robeson Schools (A) and surrounding neighborhood

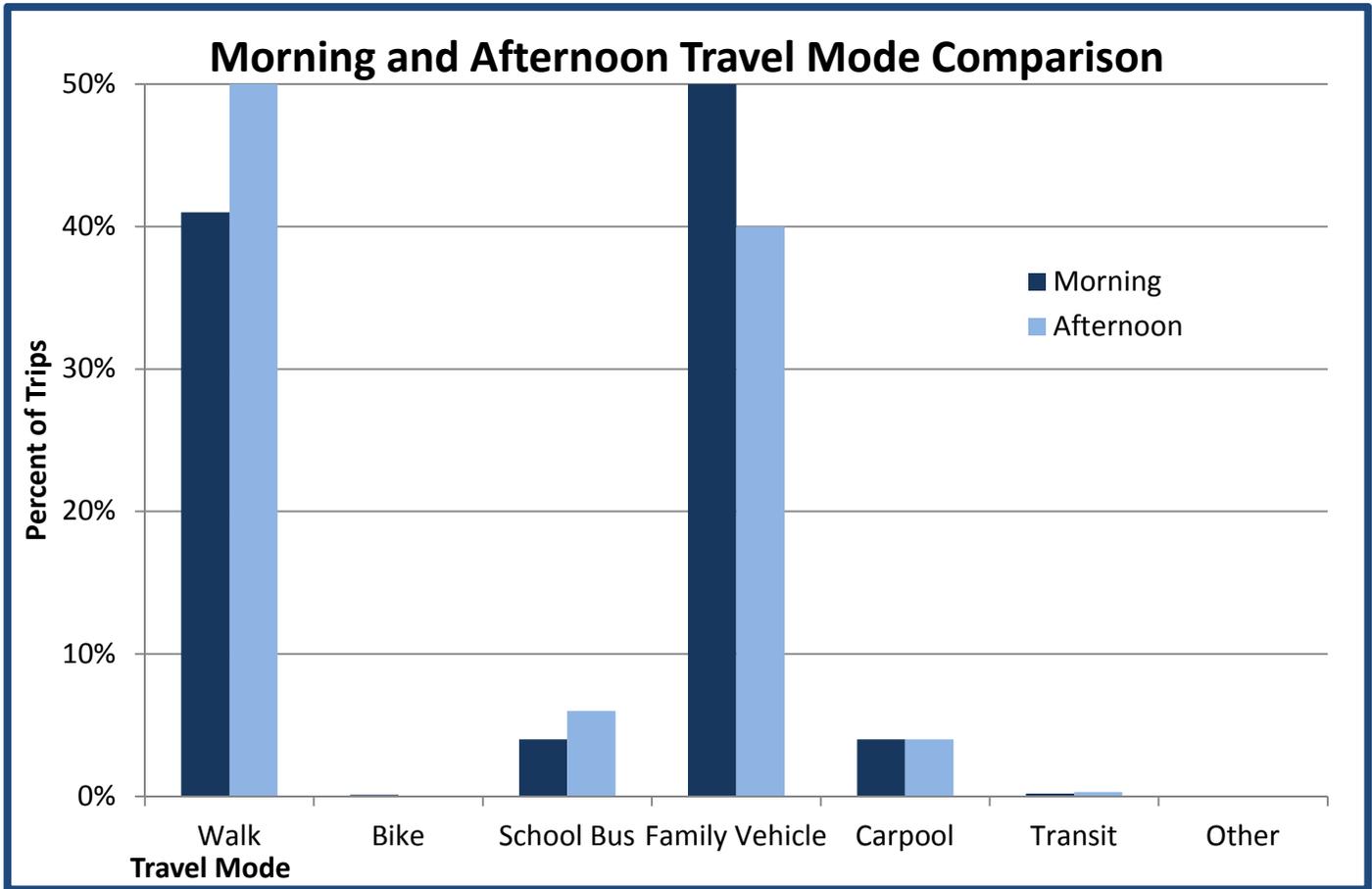
The school entrance for Hedgepeth-Williams is located on Cuyler Avenue (Red Circle- on map below) and on Gladstone Avenue for Robeson School (Red Square- on map below). All students use these entrances whether they are dropped off by bus, car or if they walk. Student drop off and pick up by personal vehicle is supposed to happen in the Living Hope Church parking lot which requires the students to cross Farragut Avenue with a crossing guard (Blue Person) and then walk through the teacher parking lot to get to their school entrance. Though the Living Hope Church parking lot is the official drop off and pick up point, many students are dropped off and picked up on all four streets surrounding the school (Yellow Lines).



School entrances(Hedgepeth-Williams: red circle, Robeson: red square, crossing guard (blue person) by assigned drop off location, and where students are actually dropped off/ picked up (yellow line)

#### **Walk and Bike Barriers and Opportunities:**

In April 2013, a Travel Mode survey was conducted for students at Hedgepeth-Williams school. Prior to the 2013-2014 school year the building now serving as Paul Robeson was operated as solely the Hedgepeth Williams School. Forty-one percent of students walk to school in the morning and 50% walk home. Another 50% of students get a ride in a family vehicle in the morning and 40% get an afternoon ride. About 4% of students ride the school bus. As shown in the graph below, approximately half of the students walk to and from school while the other half get a ride in a family vehicle.



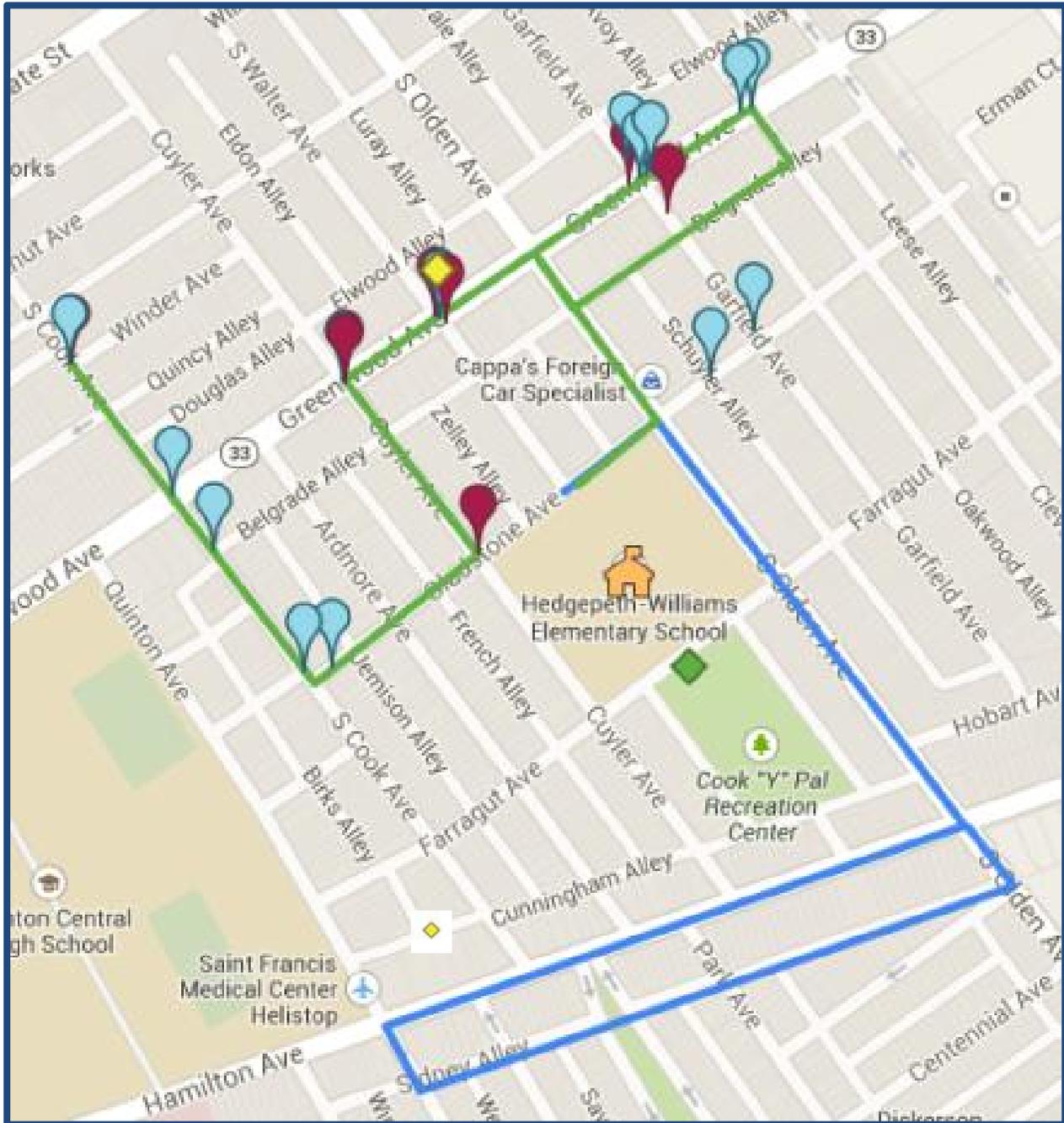
| Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison |                 |      |      |            |                |         |         |       |
|--|-----------------|------|------|------------|----------------|---------|---------|-------|
|  | Number of Trips | Walk | Bike | School Bus | Family Vehicle | Carpool | Transit | Other |
| Morning                                      | 882             | 41%  | 0.1% | 4%         | 50%            | 4%      | 0.2%    | 0%    |
| Afternoon                                    | 898             | 50%  | 0%   | 6%         | 40%            | 4%      | 0.3%    | 0.2%  |

The Trenton Board of Education Transportation Policy 8600 is defined by New Jersey State Law. This indicates that elementary students that live more than 2.1 miles or secondary students that live more than 2.6 miles from school are eligible for transportation. Students living closer to school are not provided transportation unless the student’s route is deemed hazardous by the Board of Education.

Two Walking routes were evaluated around Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School on June 8, 2013. The routes have been labeled by color on the map below; green and blue. The routes were assembled through information gathered from project partners and through consideration of pedestrian crash data gathered for the surrounding school neighborhood.

The pedestrian crash data from the surrounding school neighborhood was collected from 2003-2011. During that time period, there were 24 crashes within the area around the school, and 7 of the 24 crashes involved individuals under the age of 18. The locations of the crashes can be seen in the map below.

## School Crash Data and Community Partners Map



- 🏠 Hedgepeth-Williams School
- 📍 Crash Victim
- 📍 Crash Victim < 18 years old
- ◆ Living Hope Church

On June 8, 2013, project partners and volunteers from the Westminster Presbyterian and Living Hope Churches walked the designated green and blue routes through the neighborhood surrounding Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School and Paul Robeson Elementary school, conducting a walkability assessment. Walkability assessments are tools to help a community identify barriers that may make it difficult or dangerous for children to walk to school. These assessments evaluate the sidewalk, road and neighborhood conditions around the school, and identify key safety improvements that can make walking a safer and easier way to get to school. While conducting the walkability assessments, the volunteers

took pictures and wrote notes about what they saw. After completing the walkability audits, the groups from each route summarized their observations. The observations and selected pictures below help illustrate what the volunteers recorded.

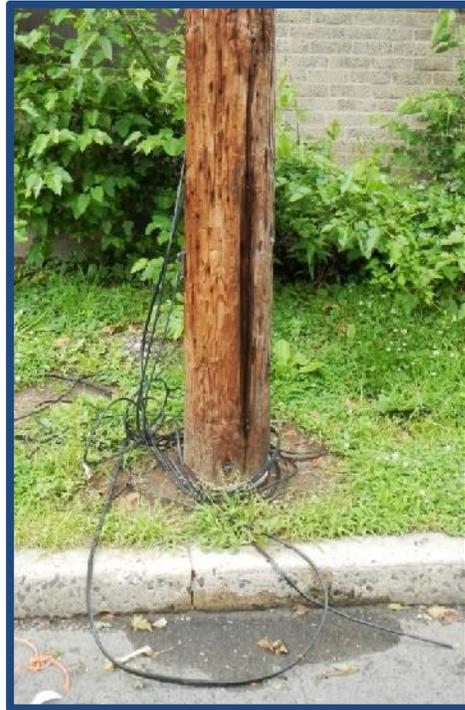
#### **Blue Route Observations:**

- Broken sidewalks; portions lifted by tree roots
- Pot holes in alleys
- Low-hanging trees and shrubs obscuring sidewalks
- Lack of curb cuts
- Abandoned houses
- Missing street signs
- Very few speed limit signs
- No school zone signs
- Speeding cars
- Minimal pedestrian lighting; existing lighting too dim; some lighting was obscured by trees
- Very difficult to cross Greenwood Avenue
- Missing crosswalks
- Sidewalk obstructions: mailbox in the middle of the corner
- SUV drove by and bullied us and told us to stop taking photos
- Very few pedestrian crossing signals
- Drainage issues at alleys and corners
- Obstructed views: cars pulled out far into intersections to be able to see
- Utility markers in sidewalks were tripping hazards
- Lack of recreation areas
- Hanging utility cables
- Greenwood & Olden: large and wide driveway with lots of traffic in and out
- No “sense of safety” in the neighborhoods
- The closer we walked to Trenton High, the nicer the walk got and the more well-kept properties seemed.
- Some areas of sidewalk had new concrete
- Many private homes very well maintained

#### **Green Route Observations:**

- Sidewalks were cracked, raised, tripping hazards
- No ADA accessibility at crosswalks
- Low hanging trees and foliage, some blocking signs
- Invisible crosswalks
- Faded and missing bumpy pads
- Live wires on sidewalks/streets
- Cars parked halfway on sidewalks
- Inadequate lighting
- Long driveways taking up large portions of sidewalks
- Very long crosswalks
- Broken pedestrian signs
- Parking in front of fire hydrants and driveways
- Pedestrian signs are not by the crosswalks

**In Need of Improvement:** Live wires on sidewalks and streets (Blue)

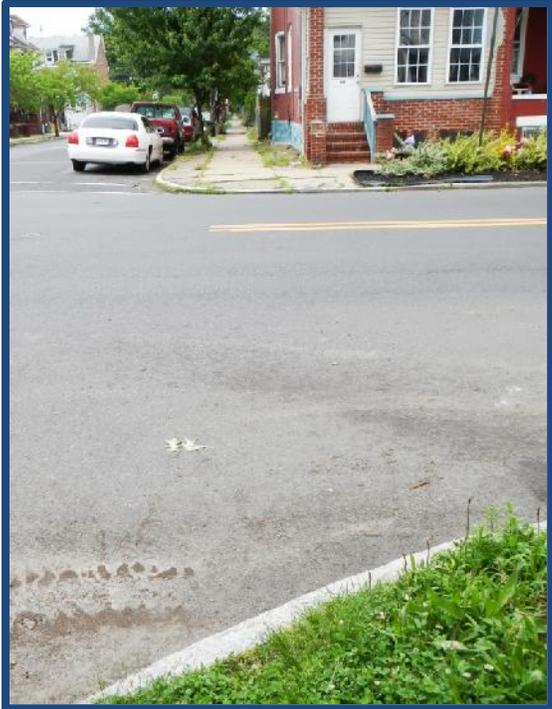


**Good:** Neighborhood watch program and sign encouraging riders not to litter at the bus stop show evidence of neighbors invested in the community. (Blue)



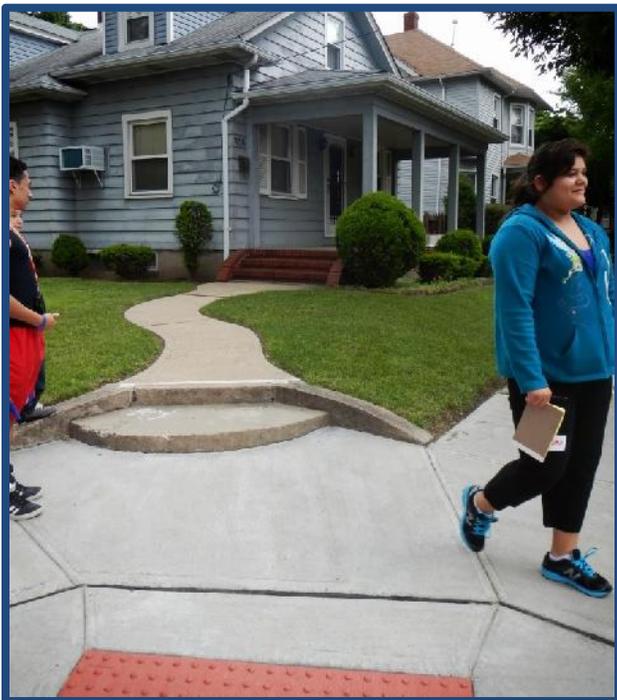


**In Need of Improvement:** Missing curb cuts and bumpy pads. (Green)

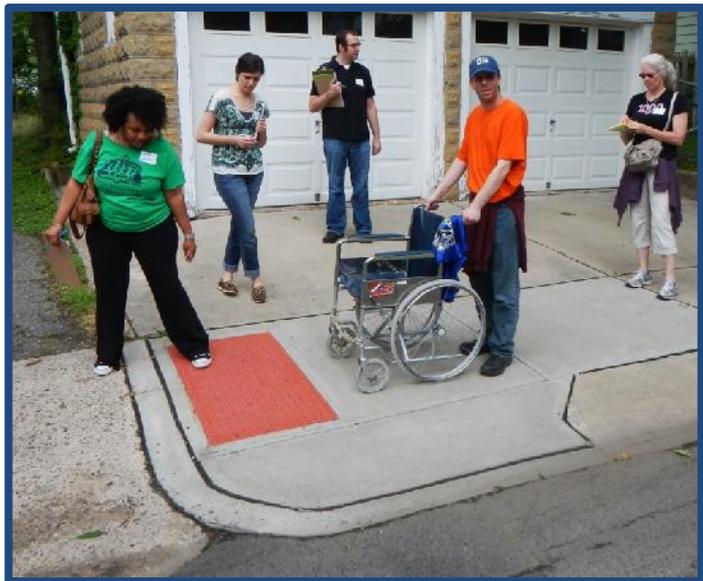


**In Need of Improvement:** cracked, raised, broken, and missing sidewalks (Green)





**Good:** Some areas with new sidewalks, including bumpy pads. (Left Blue, Below Green)



**In Need of Improvement:** Many fading and/or missing crosswalks (Green)





**In Need of Improvement:** Cars parked on sidewalks (Blue)



**Good:** Some well - marked crosswalks with school crossing signs. (Blue)

**In Need of Improvement:** Broken fence on school property/desire path indicates many students are crossing mid-block to get to the store across the street. (Blue)



**Good:** Many well-kept properties in the area help to contribute to a pleasant walking environment. (Blue)





**In Need of Improvement:** Low –hanging trees and shrubs obscuring sidewalks and signs (Blue)



**In Need of Improvement:** Sidewalk obstructions



**In Need of Improvement: Broken sewers and drainage issues, especially at corners. (Left Blue, Bottom Green)**



**Evaluation- Goals and Action Plan:**

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.

| <b>Engineering</b>  |  |                   |             |
|---|--|-------------------|-------------|
| <b>Action</b>   | <b>Responsibility</b>                      | <b>Time Frame</b> | <b>Cost</b> |
| Define and enhance school zone. Need additional and replacement signage for speed limit, crosswalks, school zone and advance school zone warning signs. | City Public Works, Trenton School District | Short Term        | Low         |

|   |   |                       |            |
|---|---|-----------------------|------------|
| Increase the number of crosswalks and fix current crosswalks including pavement stripes, signage, ADA accessibility, flashing crosswalk signs and push to walk buttons and pedestrian signals.  | City Public Works   | Short Term – Mid Term | Low-medium |
| Assess all sidewalks  | City Public Works, School, PTO, Community Groups, GMTMA             | Short Term            | Low        |
| Address clogged and broken storm sewers and drainage issues along routes to school  | City Public Works   | Short –Mid-Term       | Medium     |
| Clear blocked sidewalks and obscured signage blocked by trees, shrubs, and weeds. Prioritize improvements along school routes.  | City Public Works   | Short- Term           | Low        |
| Fix or replace all sidewalks that are not in are in good condition. This includes fixing broken and replacing missing sidewalks, cutting down overgrown foliage that blocks sidewalk or creates dangerous blind spots, making sidewalks ADA accessible.       | City Public Works   | Mid-Term              | Medium     |
| Define drop-off/ pick up zones for buses and family vehicles. Make drop off procedures convenient so that most family members dropping off and picking up students use them. Identify possible other locations that are more user friendly to family members. | School, Trenton School District, City Office of Engineering, Police | Short Term            | Low        |
| Work with utility companies to ensure that downed wires are fixed.  | City of Trenton, Utilities  | Short -Term           | Low        |
| Fix and improve broken fencing on school property to discourage unsafe crossing.  | School, Trenton School District                                     | Short Term            | Low        |

| <b>Education</b>   |                                 |                   |             |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| <b>Action</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b>           | <b>Time Frame</b> | <b>Cost</b> |
| 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, Trenton School District | Short Term        | 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 education about walking and biking safety.  | School, GMTMA               | Short Term/<br>Ongoing | Low |
| Educate community and responsible parties about snow removal on main thoroughfares to school.   | City Public Works           | Short Term/<br>Ongoing | Low |
| Involve the community in a discussion about how to create a “sense of safety in the neighborhood.”<br>Work with the community to develop and implement discussion outcomes. | Community<br>Groups, School | Ongoing                | Low |

| <b>Encouragement</b>   |   |                   |             |
|--|---|-------------------|-------------|
| <b>Action</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b>                                 | <b>Time Frame</b> | <b>Cost</b> |
| Establish main walking routes, safety corridors, walking school buses – safety in numbers. Create a map of these routes and corridors to distribute to the school community as part of the welcome back to school mailing.                           | School, PTO,<br>GMTMA,<br>Community<br>Groups         | Ongoing           | Low         |
| Participate in an active Safe Routes to School program including not only education, but encouragement events including walk and bike to school days, “golden sneaker” contests, and other innovative events to encourage safe walking and bicycling | School, PTO,<br>GMTMA,<br>Community<br>Groups         | Ongoing           | Low         |
| Conduct a bicycle rodeo to encourage safe bicycling to school. This could include stations about bicycle safety, helmet and bicycle fit, rules of the road, handling skills, and numerous other safety topics  | PTO, School,<br>Police,<br>Community<br>Groups, GMTMA | Short-Term        | Low         |
| Conduct a community clean-up day focusing on routes to school to encourage parents, students, and other community members to improve their neighborhood and come together to support their children.   | School, PTO,<br>Community<br>Groups                   | Short Term        | Low         |

| <b>Enforcement</b> |                       |                   |             |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| <b>Action</b>      | <b>Responsibility</b> | <b>Time Frame</b> | <b>Cost</b> |

|   |                                 |                        |     |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----|
| Enforce speed limits (in general and specifically in school zones), pedestrians walking safely – no jaywalking etc., drivers watching for pedestrians especially at times when students are going to/ from school.              | Police, City of Trenton         | Ongoing                | Low |
| Enforce parking laws- no parking on sidewalks, in front of hydrants, and driveways.   | Police, City of Trenton         | Ongoing                | Low |
| Enforce laws about businesses blocking sidewalks with signs and equipment. Creates a danger when drivers and pedestrians can't see each other.  | Police, City of Trenton         | Short Term/<br>Ongoing | Low |
| Prioritize and enhance law enforcement presence in vicinity of Hedgepeth-Williams and Robeson Elementary.   | Police                          | Ongoing                | Low |
| Clear parking regulation signs should be posted at all intended drop-off and pick-up locations to better define and support procedures. This can help with community self-enforcement, not requiring excessive police presence. | School, Police, City of Trenton | Short Term/<br>Ongoing | Low |

| <b>Evaluation</b>   |                       |                        |             |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Action</b>   | <b>Responsibility</b> | <b>Time Frame</b>      | <b>Cost</b> |
| Conduct periodic mode choice surveys (number and percentage of students who walk or bicycle to school) to better understand any changing travel patterns and to target and assess future efforts. | School, PTO<br>GMTMA  | Short Term/<br>Ongoing | Low         |
| Conduct Student and Parent outreach to see what actions, programs, and rewards could encourage them to walk to school more – and feel safer walking to school.                                    | School, PTO,<br>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.