

Monument 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



Monument Elementary School Description:

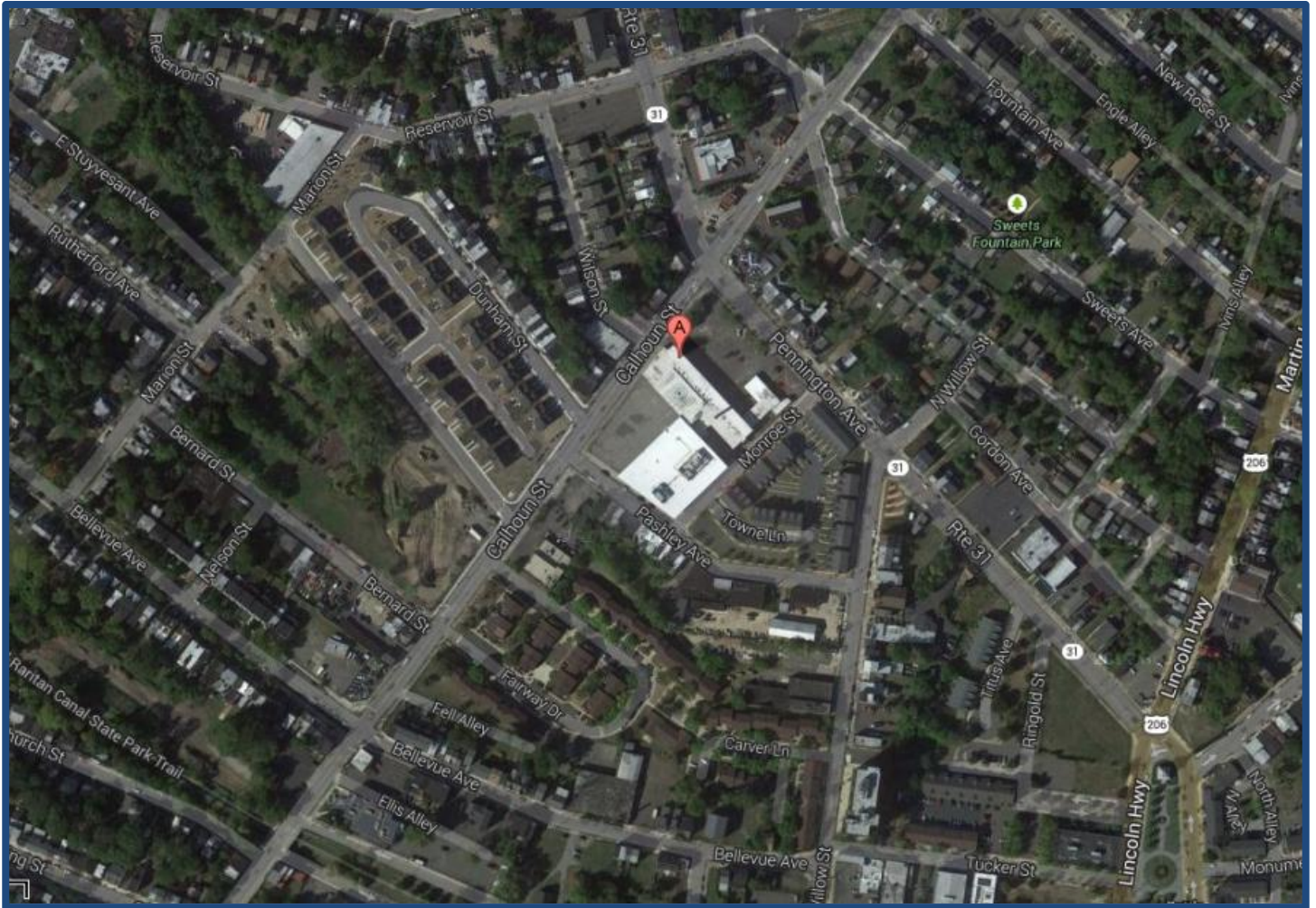
Monument Elementary School is located at 145 Pennington Avenue Trenton, New Jersey. For the 2013-2014 school year it houses approximately 400 students in grades K-5. Monument is one of fifteen elementary schools in the Trenton Public School District. The school day runs from 8:45am to 3:15pm, but a large number of students arrive early for breakfast which begins at 8:10am. There are also after school clubs for part of the year that dismiss after 3:15pm and the Boys and Girls Club dismisses at 6:10pm.

Working Groups and Partnerships:

Organization	Role/ Responsibility	Contact
HighRollaz SC	Community Partner	Hoggarth Stephen Principal Traffic Analyst 609.989.3612
Living Powerful/ In Her Shoes	Community Partners	Mother and student
A Better Way	Community Partner	Andrew Carten acarten@ecityworks.com
Shiloh CDC	Community Partner	340 Calhoun Street, Trenton 609.695.2448
Union Baptist Church	Community Partner	301 Pennington Ave, Trenton 609.392.2245
Isles Inc.	Community Partner	10 Wood Street, Trenton 609.341.4700
Center for State Policy and Health	Community Partner	
NJ Department of Transportation	Key Partner	Elise Bremer-Nei Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator 609.530.2765 elise.bremer-nei@dot.state.nj.us
NJ Partnership for Healthy Kids- Trenton	Key Partner	Marissa Davis Project Manager 609.278.9677 mdavis@trentonymca.org
Voorhees Transportation Center	Key Partner	Sean Meehan Project Manager 848.932.2860 smeehan@ejb.rutgers.edu
Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association	Key Partner	Aly Dyson Sustainable Transportation Associate 609.452.1491 extension 237 adyson@gmtma.org

School Neighborhood:

Monument Elementary is off of Pennington Avenue in Trenton. It is immediately surrounded by businesses, corner stores, churches and some residential areas. The School is seen below, marked as A.



Monument School (A) and surrounding neighborhood

Pick up and drop off at Monument occurs in the parking lot off of Pennington Avenue. Most students dropped off by a personal vehicle are dropped off here. In the afternoon, pickup not only occurs in the parking lot but also all along Pennington Ave, the blue line. Parents park on both sides of the street and wave to their children to come to them, including across the street. The students that are dropped off use the Pennington Ave. Entrance. Students that walk to school come from all sides and mostly use the Calhoun Street entrance while buses use Pashley Ave. to Monroe Street.

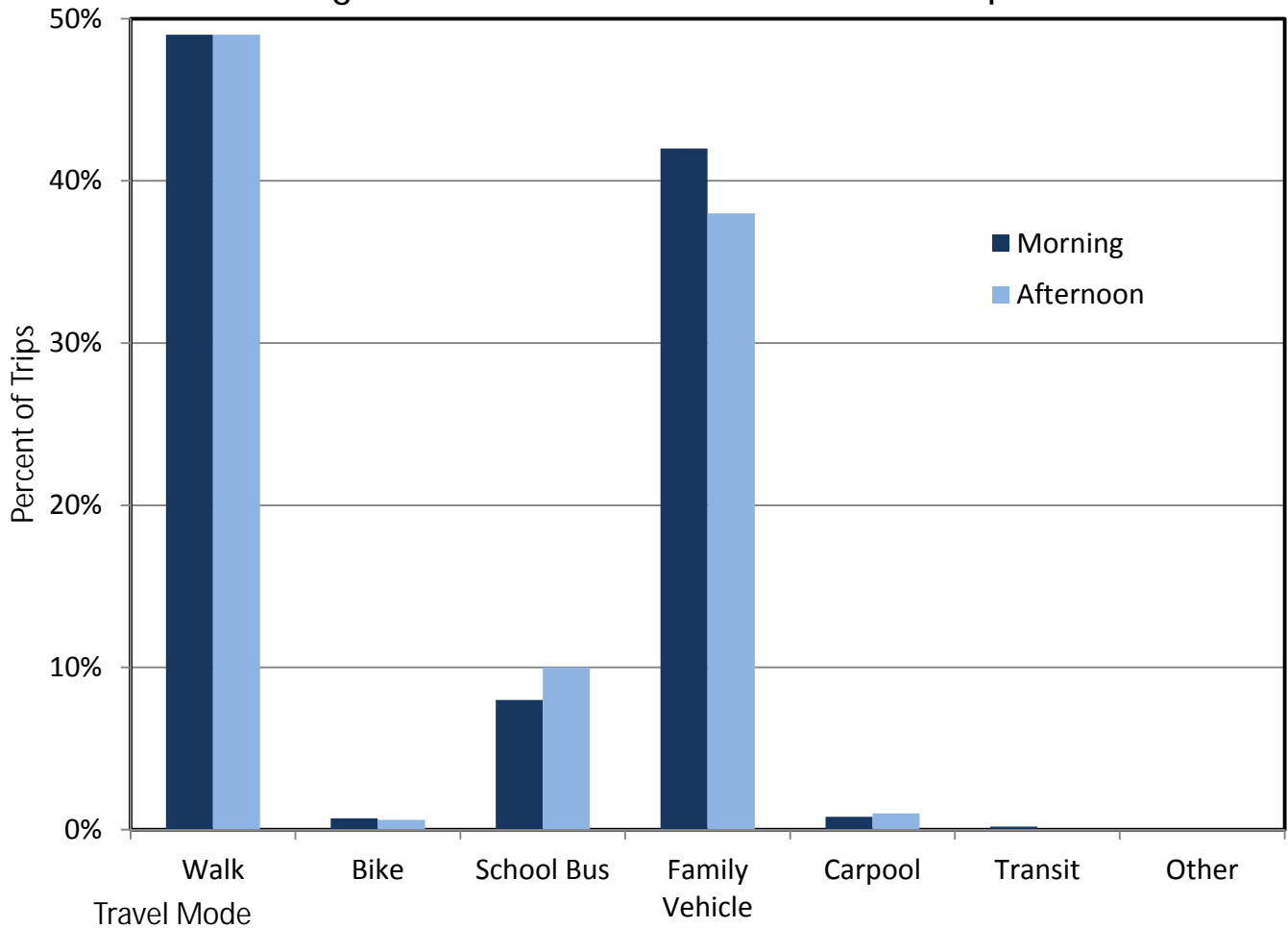


Students are often dropped off and picked up along Pennington Ave (blue line) instead of in designated parking lot.

Walk and Bike Barriers and Opportunities:

In April 2013, a Travel Mode survey was conducted for students at Monument. Forty-nine percent of students walk to and from the school. Another 42% of students get a ride in a family vehicle in the morning and 38% do in the afternoon. Only 10% or less students ride the school bus. As shown in the graph below, almost half of the students walk to and from school making walking safety an important issue that needs to be addressed.

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison



Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison								
	number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	591	49%	0.7%	8%	42%	0.8%	0.2%	0%
Afternoon	526	49%	0.6%	10%	38%	1%	0%	0%

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.

Four Walking routes were evaluated around Monument Elementary School on June 8, 2013. The routes have been labeled by color on the map below; blue, green, red and purple. The routes were assembled through information gathered from Community Partners and through consideration of pedestrian crash data gathered for the surrounding school neighborhood. The map below also shows the locations of community partners, Shiloh CDC and Union Baptist Church.

On June 8, 2013, project partners and volunteers from the Union Baptist Church and Shiloh CDC walked the designated blue, green, red, and purple routes through the neighborhood surrounding Monument 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.

Red Route Observations:

- Poorly maintained sidewalks in need of repair
- Lack of crosswalks and/or faded crosswalks along entire route
- No speed limit signs, cars speeding
- Multiple abandoned properties
- Pennington & Calhoun: pedestrian crossing lights not working properly
- No street signs, missing pedestrian signs
- Not enough lighting
- Barbed wire along route, hanging low over sidewalk
- Missing bumpy pads and curb cuts
- Broken sidewalks, tripping hazards
- Pennington Avenue could use bike lanes or sharrows
- Issues with broken and poorly maintained utility poles
- Bus stops with no bench or shelter
- Unnecessary curb cuts
- Lots of debris and trash

Green Route Observations:

- Calhoun, Prospect: wide streets with few speed limit signs. No traffic calming. Lots of speeding cars.
- All sidewalks had tripping hazards
- Several areas with very tall grass
- Lots of unmarked or poorly marked and maintained crosswalks
- School zone was unmarked
- Broken utility poles and pole boxes; hanging wires
- Abandoned houses
- Reservoir: no sidewalk, street in disrepair
- Trash all along the route
- Curb ramps too high for wheelchairs, strollers
- Scary dog behind low gate
- One good new crosswalk
- Some flowers and trees
- People took interest in what we were doing; positive response

Purple Route Observations:

- Only one speed limit sign along whole route
- Many abandoned houses and lots
- Poor sidewalk maintenance (ponding, cracks, heaving)
- Missing and faded crosswalks
- Poison ivy
- Lots of garbage and stench of garbage
- Manholes: raised and uneven
- Missing covers and exposed wires on light signal poles

- Missing pedestrian signals and buttons
- Non- ADA compliant crosswalks
- Parked cars on the sidewalk, businesses using the sidewalk (Western Auto)
- Long driveways (Getty station)
- Alleys are overgrown and neglected

Blue route Observations:

- Sidewalks in poor condition
- Inadequate handicapped accessibility – missing ramps, curb cuts, and truncated domes
- Speeding cars. Speed limit should have been 25; cars were going 40-45
- No signage by the firehouse
- Weeds in the sidewalks
- No push buttons or pedestrian signals at crosswalks
- Lots of abandoned houses
- Hanging wires
- Camden Street: dead zone – both sides bad – had to walk in the street
- Drainage issues at intersections
- Two gas stations: entrance and exits not marked; lots of cars going in and out
- Lots of trash along the route
- Locked parks
- Faded bumpy pads
- Truck parked on the sidewalk
- Missing and faded crosswalks
- Large utility boxes blocking sidewalks
- Sidewalk next to the school was in disrepair
- Nice crosswalk and signage by Shiloh Baptist Church; good ADA accessibility
- Sign saying there was going to be improvements (Reinvestment Act)
- Speed bumps into the neighborhood



In Need of Improvement: Missing sidewalks
(Red)



In Need of Improvement: Litter problem.
Many garbage clogged sewer grates. (Blue)





Good: Some well-marked school crossings.
(Red)



In Need of Improvement: Broken sidewalk
needing repair. (Above Blue, Left Purple)



In Need of Improvement: Drainage issues needing attention. Top left, Red; Top right, Blue; bottom left, Blue; bottom right, Purple)





In Need of Improvement: Missing crosswalks. (Purple)

Good: Construction investment in the area. (Blue)



In Need of Improvement: Deteriorating storm sewers becoming a hazard. (Purple)



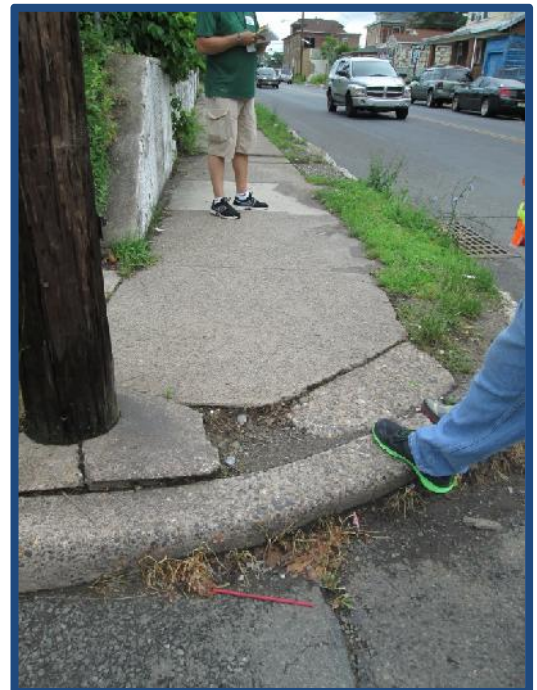
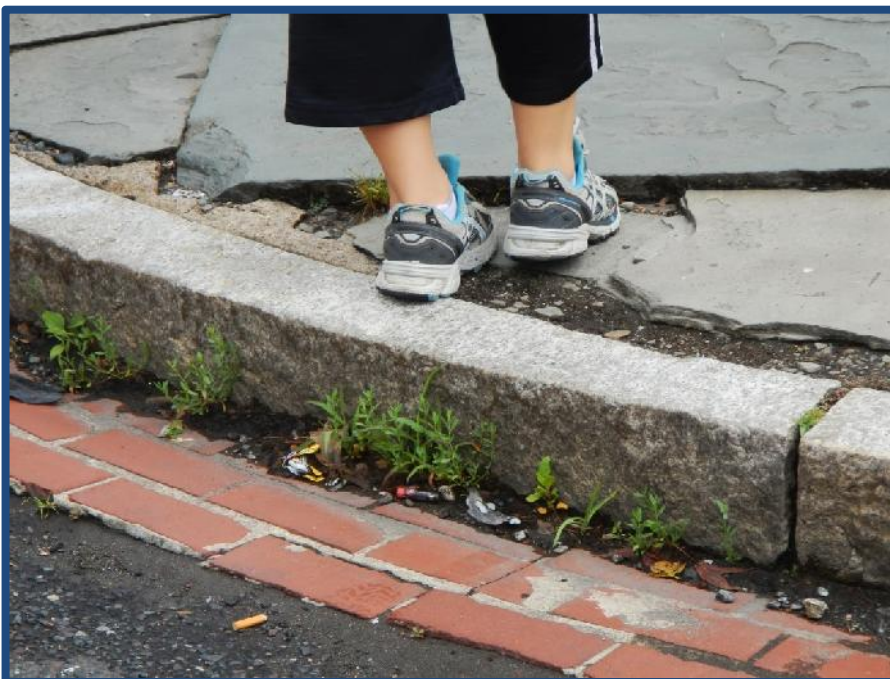
In Need of Improvement: Broken utility box with no cover has created a hazard. (Green)



In Need of Improvement: Missing utility covers expose wires to weather and debris, collect garbage (Purple)



In Need of Improvement: Faded crosswalks need repainting. (Red)



In Need of Improvement: Missing ADA curb cuts. (Above Blue, Right Purple)



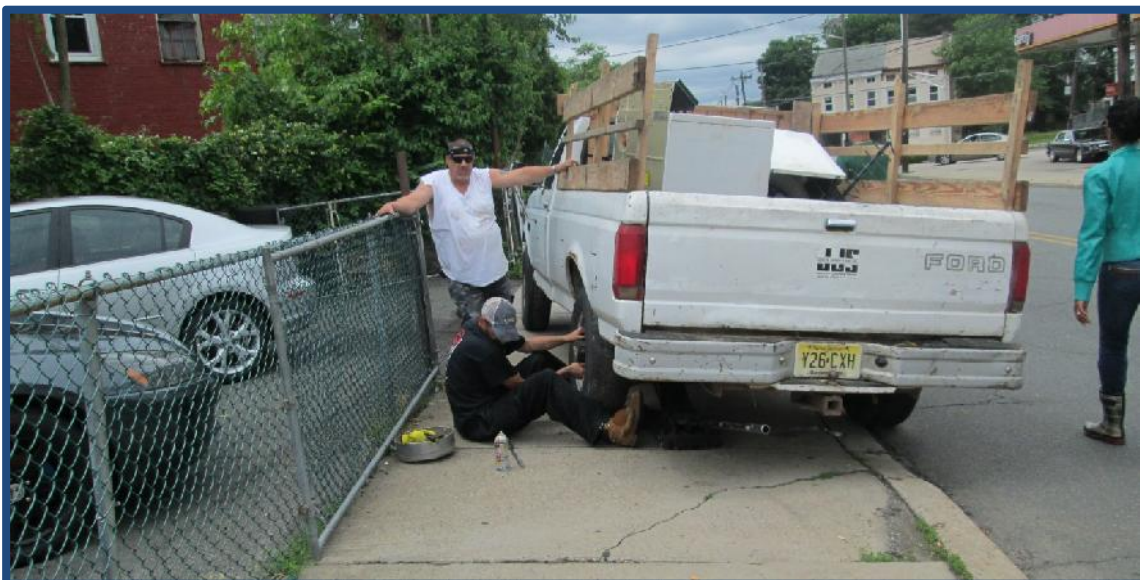
Good: Some recently restriped crosswalks with bumpy pads and curb cuts. (Blue)

In Need of Improvement: Areas with overgrown trees, shrubbery, and vegetation – including poison ivy. (Above Purple, Right Red)





In Need of Improvement: Cars parking on and blocking sidewalks is a common practice. (Top left, Blue; Top Right, Red; Bottom, Purple)





In Need of Improvement:
Missing bumpy pads and
bumpy pads that need
replacing. (Purple)

Good: Well-kept homes and
properties show evidence of
neighbors invested in the
community. (Purple)



Evaluation/ 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.

Engineering			
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
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	Medium
Assess all sidewalks and	City Public Works, School, PTO, Community groups, GMTMA	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
Remove barbed wire that is hanging low over the sidewalk.	City Public Works	Short Term	Low
Fix flooding issues that may include but are not limited to removing mud and trash from sewer grates.	City Public Works	Short Term	Low
Fix broken and poorly maintained utility poles.	City Public Works, Utility Company	Short Term	Low

Improve pedestrian environment in front of the school to make it more welcoming. Simple actions may include planting trees and flowers and cleaning up trash.	School, PTO, Community Groups	Short Term	Low
Bike lanes or sharrows along Pennington Avenue could make cyclists safer and encourage additional cyclists in the neighborhood.	City of Trenton	Mid-term	Low
Define drop-off/ pick up zones for buses and family vehicles. Make sure walkers have a clear way on and off of school property that does not involve dodging buses and personal vehicles.	School, Trenton School District	Short Term	Low
Speeding was reported as an issue on multiple routes. The area of Calhoun and Prospect was specifically reported to contain wide streets with few speed limit signs. Traffic calming techniques such as bulbouts, speed tables, radar feedback signs or even striping could improve this situation.	City of Trenton	Mid-Term	Medium

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, 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/ Ongoing	Low

Educate community and responsible parties about snow removal on main thoroughfares to school.	City Public Works	Short Term/ Ongoing	Low
Involve the community in a discussion about how to create a “sense of safety in the neighborhood.” Work with the community to develop and implement discussion outcomes.	Community Groups, School	Long Term	Low

Encouragement			
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
Establish main walking routes, safety corridors, walking school buses – safety in numbers. Map and distribute to the school community in welcome back to school mail prior to the start of the school year.	School, PTO, GMTMA, Community Groups	Ongoing	Low
Participate in an active Safe Routes to School program including not only education, but events to encourage students to walk and/or bike to school. Examples include Golden Sneaker Award, Walking Wednesday, Walking School Bus and other innovative events to encourage safe walking and bicycling.	School, PTO, GMTMA, Community 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, Police, Community 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, Community Groups	Short Term	Low

Enforcement			
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
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 and City of Trenton	Ongoing	Low
Enforce parking laws- no parking on sidewalks, in front of hydrants, and driveways.	Police and City of Trenton	Ongoing	Low
Enforce laws about businesses blocking sidewalks with signs equipment, and vehicles. Creates a danger when drivers and pedestrians can't see each other.	Police and City of Trenton	Short Term/ Ongoing	Low
Enforcement of property laws. Alleys are overgrown and neglected – hold owner responsible.	City Public Works	Short Term	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.	Police, City of Trenton, School	Mid-Term	Low

Evaluation			
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
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 GMTMA	Short Term/ 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, 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.