

Woodrow Wilson 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



Woodrow Wilson Elementary School Description:

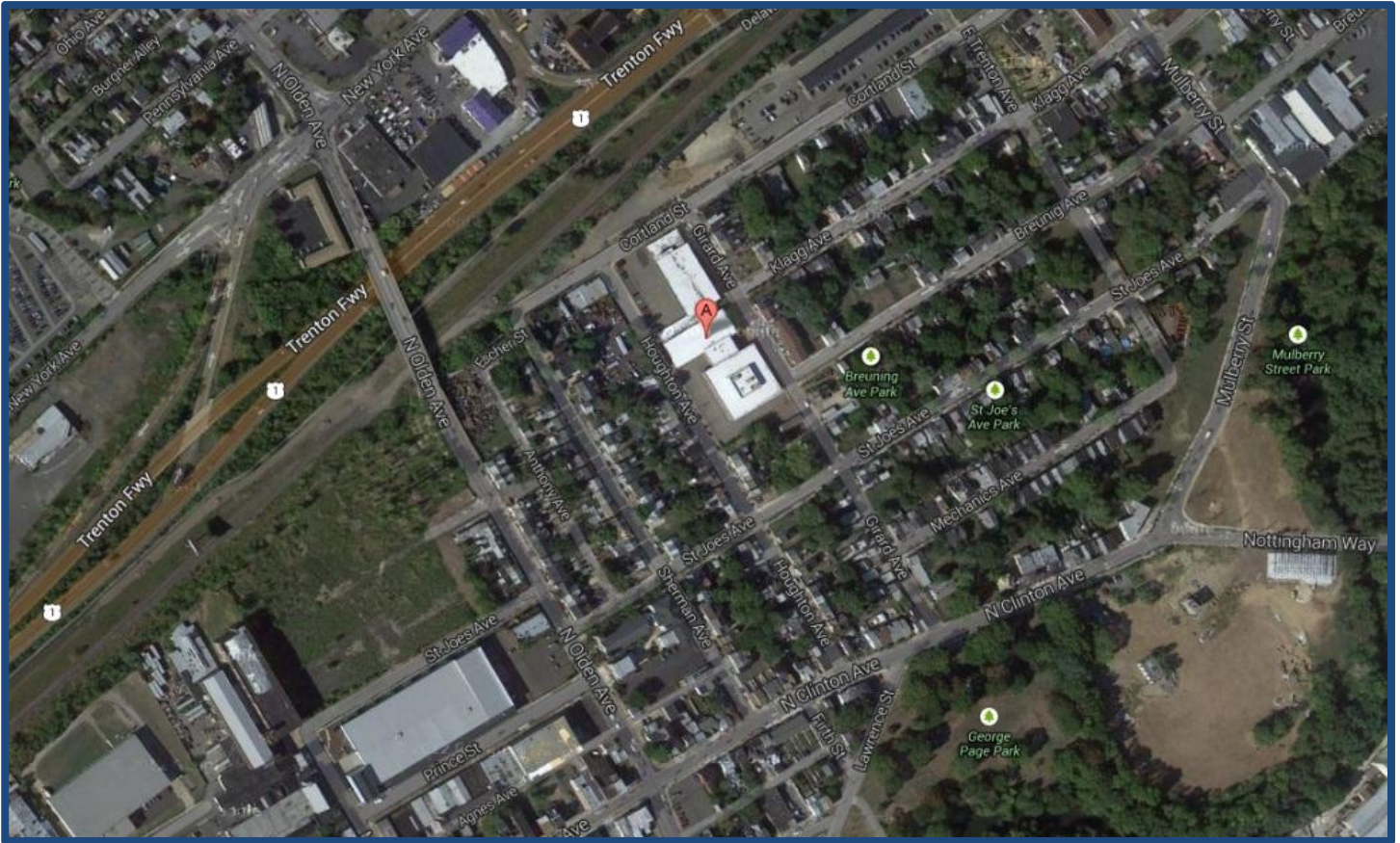
Wilson Elementary School is located at 175 Girard Avenue Trenton, New Jersey. For the 2013-2014 school year it houses approximately 400 students from grades K-5. Wilson is one of fifteen elementary schools in the Trenton Public School District. The school day lasts from 8:45am to 3:15pm, but a large number of students arrive early for breakfast which begins at 8am. There is also an after school program that dismisses at 6pm. All students participating in the after school program must be picked up by an adult.

Working Groups and Partnerships:

Organization	Role/ Responsibility	Contact
City of Trenton	Community Partner	Hoggarth Stephen Principal Traffic Analyst 609.989.3612
Residents	Community Partners	Mother and student
East Trenton Collaborative/ NJPHK-Trenton	Community Partner	Andrew Carten acarten@ecityworks.com
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:

Wilson Elementary is between Girard Avenue and Houghton Avenue in Trenton. It is surrounded by residential neighborhoods, train tracks, Route 1, a water treatment facility, pocket parks and nearby is George Page Park. George Page Park is a nice place for families to go and children to play, but it is difficult to get to because it is on the far side of North Clinton Avenue. Cars speed very quickly on this road and there are no clearly marked crosswalks. The School is seen below, marked as A.



Woodrow Wilson School (A) and surrounding neighborhood

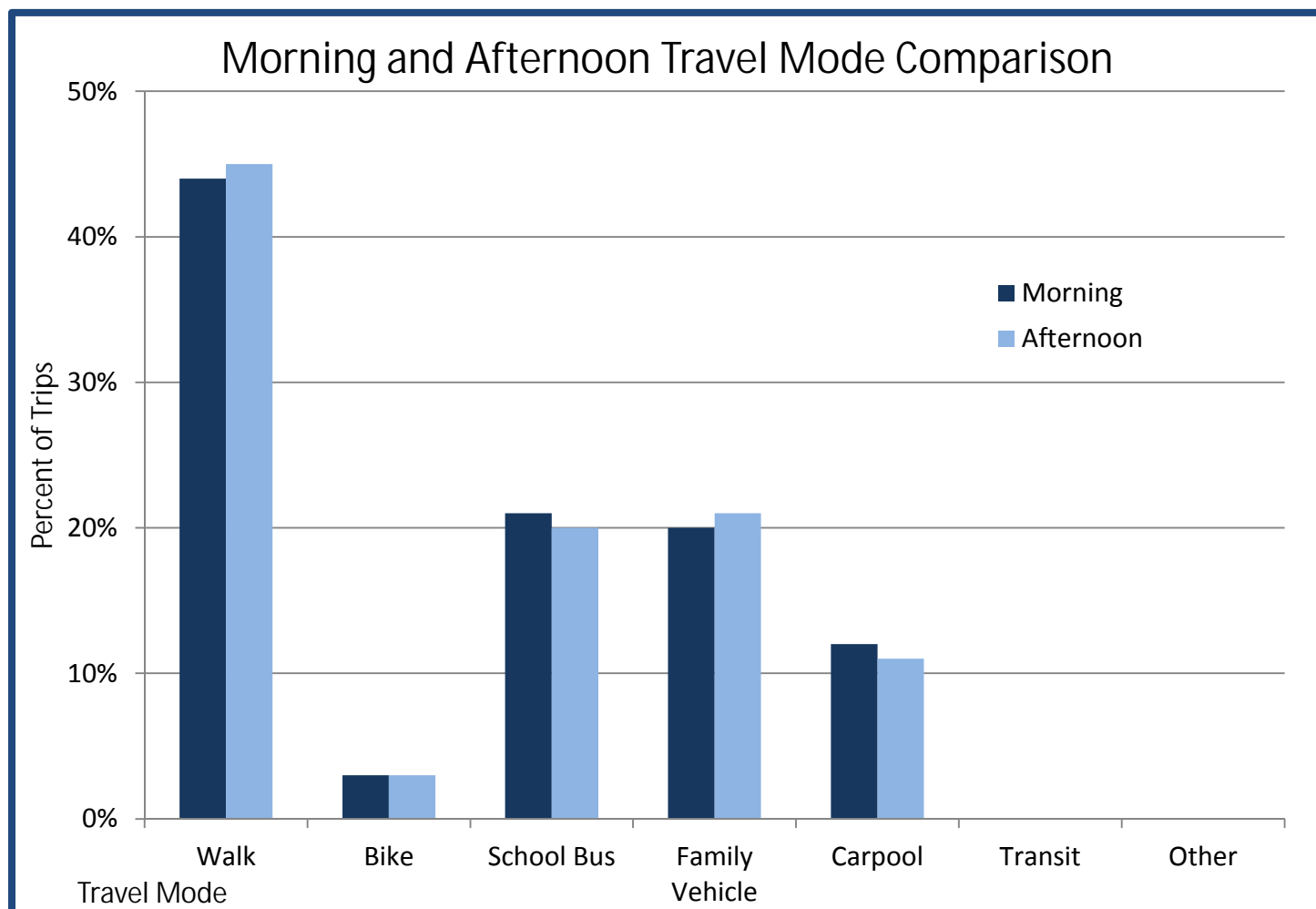
Parents drop students off on all sides of the school (red line – on map below). There is no one primary location that the parents use to drop off or pick up students. Parking at Wilson is on both the Girard Avenue and Houghton Avenue sides of the school as indicated by the green dashed lines. When teachers pull in or out of parking spaces, they cross the sidewalk next to the school. There is no single driveway, it is a long parking lot that parallels the road and the sidewalk is used as a driveway along the entire route. The afternoon bus line up occurs along the blue dash/dot line on Houghton Avenue. All of the different modes of travel make the area right around Wilson Elementary School a busy place at arrival and dismissal time.



Wilson school: Red line is the morning and afternoon parent drop off/ pick up, green dashed lines are teacher parking (where they need to drive across the sidewalk to get in/out), blue dashed/ dot line is afternoon bus line up.

Walk and Bike Barriers and Opportunities:

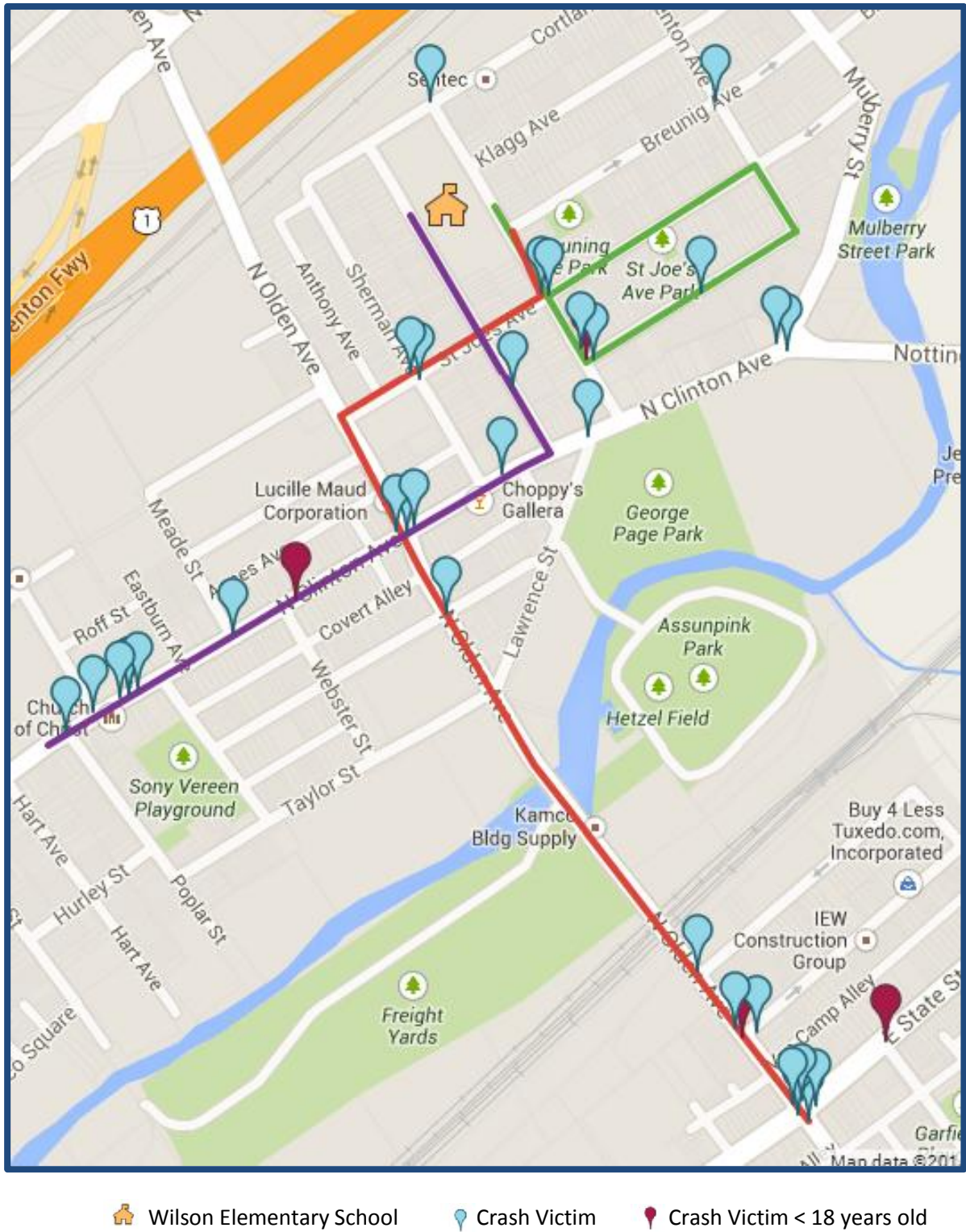
In April 2013, a Travel Mode survey was conducted for students at Wilson Elementary. Forty-four percent of students walk to and from the school. Another 20% of students get a ride in a family vehicle in the morning and afternoon. About 20% of students ride the school bus. As shown in the graph below, 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								
	number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	395	44%	3%	21%	20%	12.0%	0%	0%
Afternoon	400	45%	3%	20%	21%	11%	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.

Three Walking routes were evaluated around Woodrow Wilson Elementary School on June 12, 2013. The routes have been labeled by color on the map below; green, red and purple. The routes were assembled through information gathered from project partners and through consideration of pedestrian crash data gathered for the surrounding school neighborhood. The blue and red points on them map represent locations of pedestrian crashes that occurred in the surrounding school neighborhood between the years 2003 and 2011. During that time period, there were 34 crashes around the school; 4 of them involved a pedestrian under 18 years old.



Walkability Assessment and Observations:

On June 12, 2013, project partners and Safe Routes to School regional Coordinators from the State's eight Transportation Management Associations walked the designated green, red, and purple routes through the neighborhood surrounding Wilson 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.

Purple Route Observations:

- Clinton Avenue: major crossing hard to cross, no speed limit signs, no traffic calming. Cars speeding. No access to park across the street.
- No road striping or crosswalks
- Very little pedestrian crossing signage
- Missing street signs
- No way to cross street to get to the park
- Sidewalks badly in need of repair; many broken sidewalk pieces are dangerous
- Inadequate lighting
- Lots of debris, hanging wires, broken telephone poles, dangerous abandoned properties, broken storm grates
- Car repair shop blocking sidewalk
- Inadequate ADA ramps at crosswalks
- Broken truncated domes
- No way to cross street to access community center
- Impromptu sidewalk businesses (tables) blocking sidewalks
- One building's staircase is blocking sidewalk
- No trash or recycling cans except one broken one obstructing the sidewalk
- No signage around the fire station
- Overgrown foliage blocking sidewalk
- Curb slope needs adjustment
- There were well-striped crossings parallel to North Clinton
- There were areas with good sidewalk widths (8' – 12')
- Community art/murals added to the community sense of place

Red Route Observations:

- Bad blind corner at Courland & Houghten
- No speed limit signs, no street signs, no school zone signs
- Significant trash along routes; no trash/recycling bins
- Missing crosswalks
- At Olden & North Clinton the crosswalks are "funky" and the pedestrian signs are facing the wrong way
- Green Acres lot needs mowing and maintenance
- Hanging wires on Olden near the bridge
- Lots of speeding cars and cars riding right through intersections
- Car parked on the sidewalk on Olden
- Scary dog at blacksmith shop
- Missing sidewalk sections everywhere
- Abandoned properties on Olden and throughout the neighborhood

- Railroad bridge on Olden in disrepair
- Inadequate ADA compliance – missing curb cuts, bumpy pads, etc.
- Not many pedestrian signs
- No pedestrian lighting. Especially near bridge.
- No law enforcement presence
- Holes in road surfaces, dangerous sewer grates
- Sewer grates filled with mud: probably causing flooding
- Bad truck parking garage – an active driveway with no signage and no way to see pedestrians when entering and exiting on Olden.
- Difficult to cross Olden
- Church sidewalks were in good condition
- Large play area at school
- Pedestrian signal at Olden & North Clinton was present and working

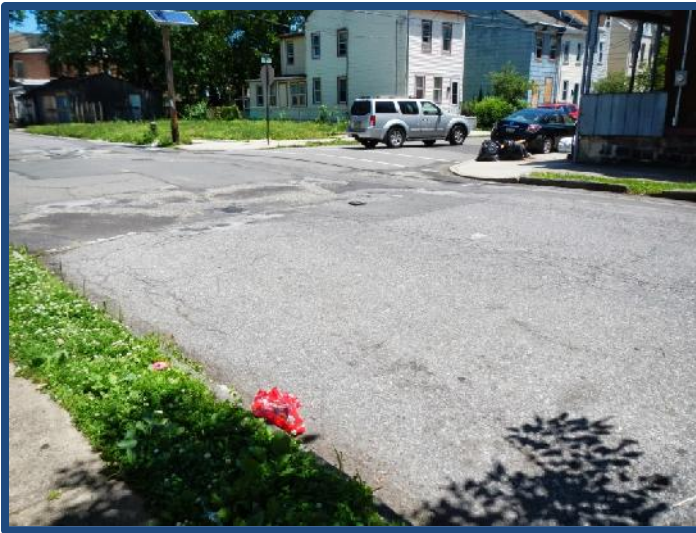
Green Route Observations:

- Crosswalks at intersections are faded or non-existent. Non-existent at Clinton & Girard
- Lack of ADA compliance at intersections; missing curb ramps
- Missing sidewalk pieces; tree roots uprooting sidewalk
- Brick/slate transition of sidewalk is uneven and broken
- Corner of Trenton and Mechanic has no sidewalk, a blind curve, and parking too close to street corners
- Gang tags at a crash site
- Appliance repair store: appliances being moved across the sidewalk; broken TVs in the street
- Trash in the street, blocking sewer drains
- Burned-out buildings: many deteriorating; one wall is collapsing at 76 Mechanic
- General inadequate maintenance in row houses; railings falling apart; broken glass and windows
- Some street curbs are high and uneven
- Corner of Girard & St. Joe's has no sidewalks
- Pedestrian environment in front of school (front entrance) is unpleasant
- Crime: gang activity in the park; apparent drug corner by bodega
- Abandoned lots: overgrown, lots of trash
- One-way streets not clearly labeled
- Homes along route: in need of repair; no city oversight of ordinances
- Utilities: splintered pole with nails sticking out; pole with crossed, random wires.
- Closed, boarded-up library (historic building, pre-Civil War). Lot is a junk yard.
- Need a crossing guard at North Clinton/Girard corner



In Need of Improvement: Cars parking on and blocking sidewalks both at the school and in front of neighborhood businesses. (Top Green, Bottom Purple)





In Need of Improvement: Missing and faded crosswalks need repainting.
(Top Left Red, Top Right Green, Above Red, Middle Right Green, Bottom right Purple)





Good: Areas of wide sidewalk in good condition, near St. Joseph's Church. (Red)

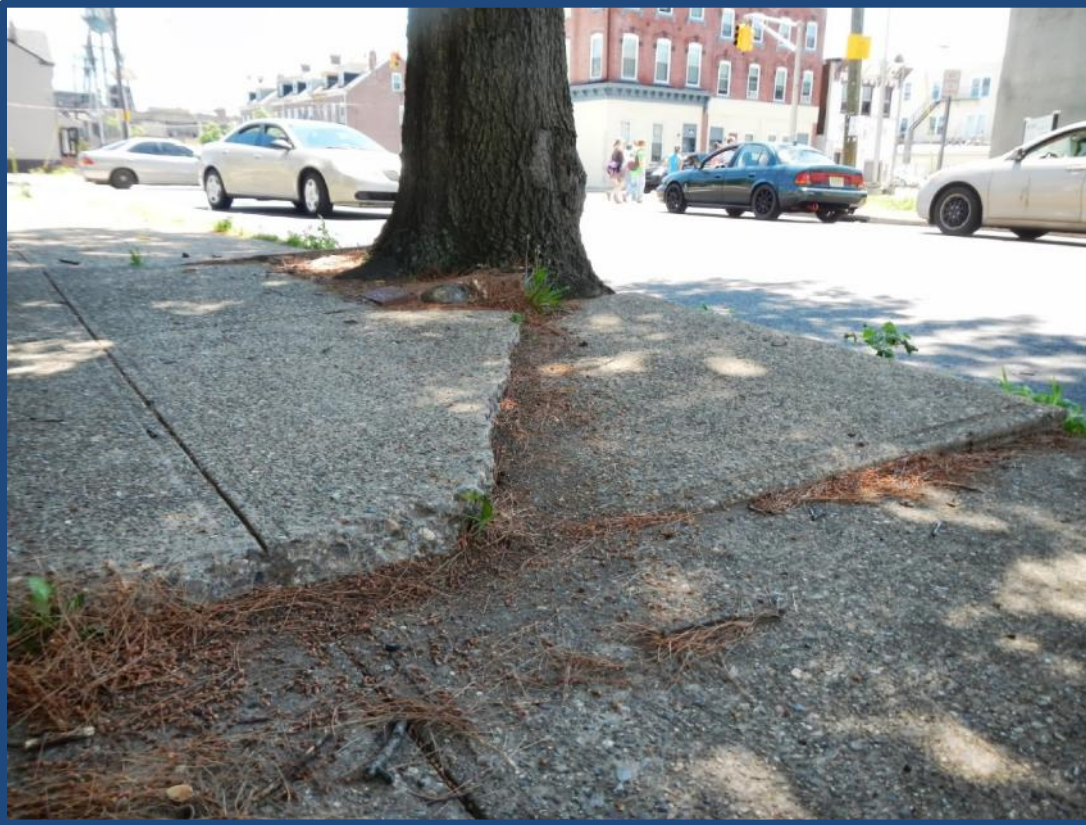


In Need of Improvement: Litter problem. Many garbage clogged sewer grates. (Green)



In Need of Improvement: Many areas missing sidewalks. (Top and Middle Green, Bottom Purple)





In Need of Improvement: Many areas of sidewalk in need of repair. (Red)





In Need of Improvement:
Many corners missing
curb cuts and bumpy
pads. (Purple)

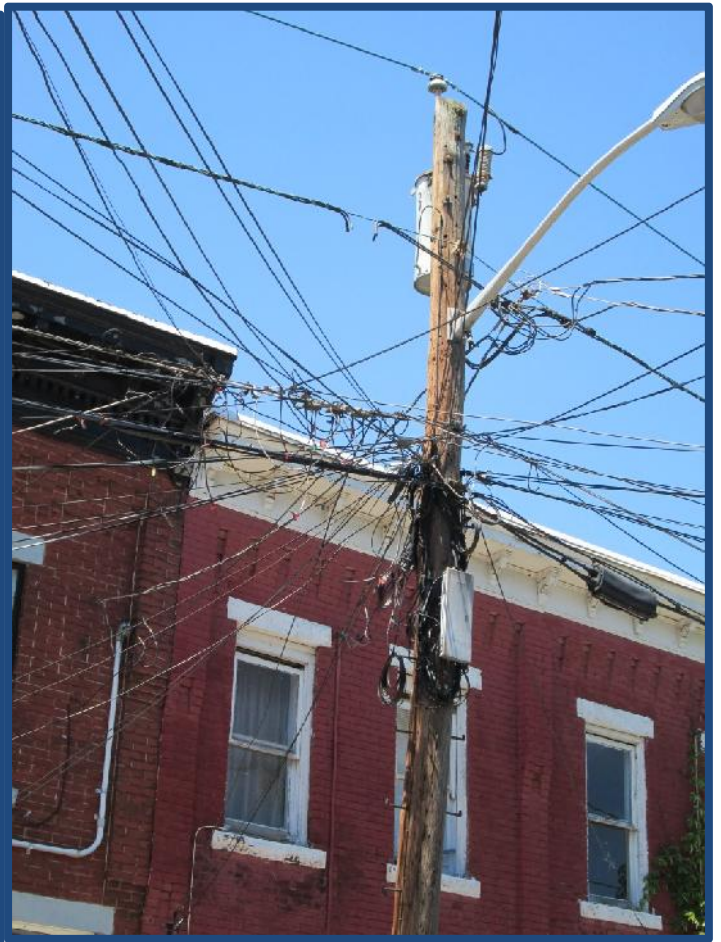
In Need of Improvement:
Bumpy pads that need
replacing. (Purple)





Good: Well marked crosswalk, North Olden Ave. and North Clinton Ave. Freshly painted crosswalk with curb ramps and bumpy pads at North Olden and Dickson Street. (Purple above, Red below)

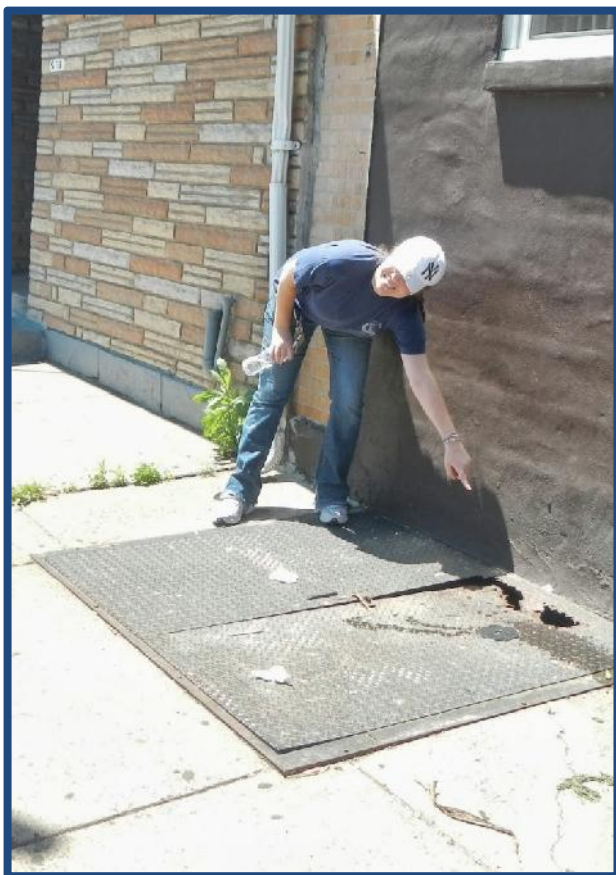




In Need of Improvement: Hanging wires and broken utility poles. (Purple)



In Need of Improvement: Trash blocking sidewalks. (Left Purple, Below Green)



In Need of Improvement: Broken sidewalk doors creating hazards. (Purple)





Good: Pedestrian signal at North Olden and North Clinton in place and working. (Red)

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

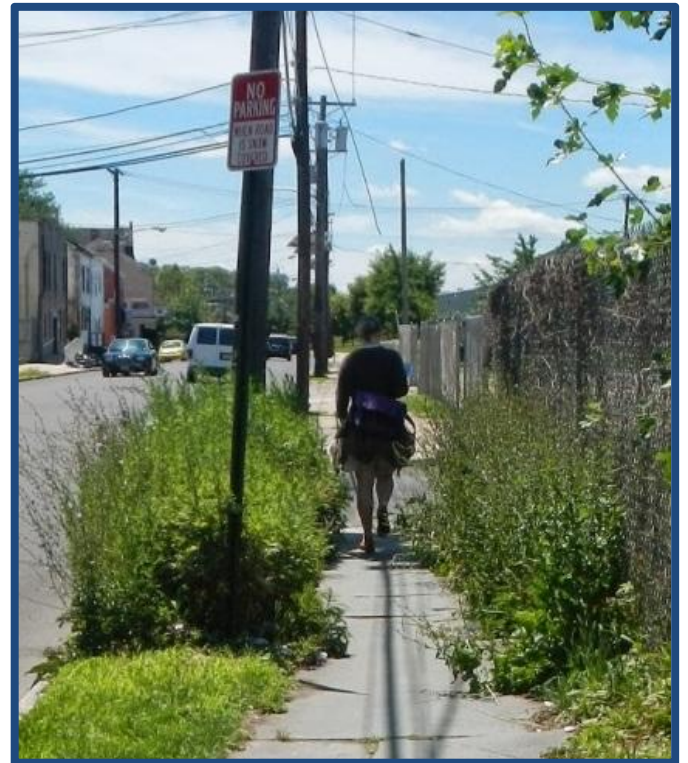




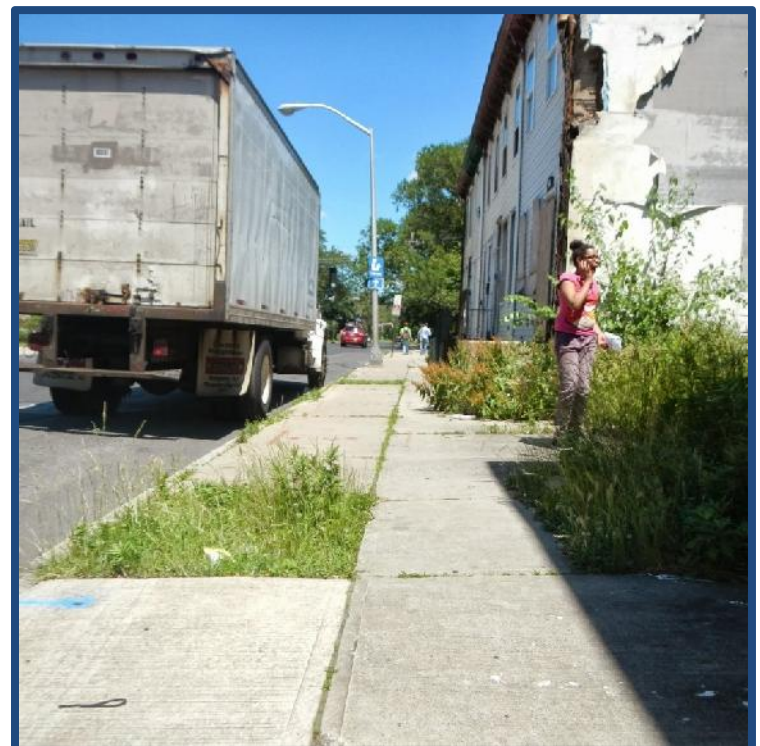
Good: Neighborhood park space. (Green)

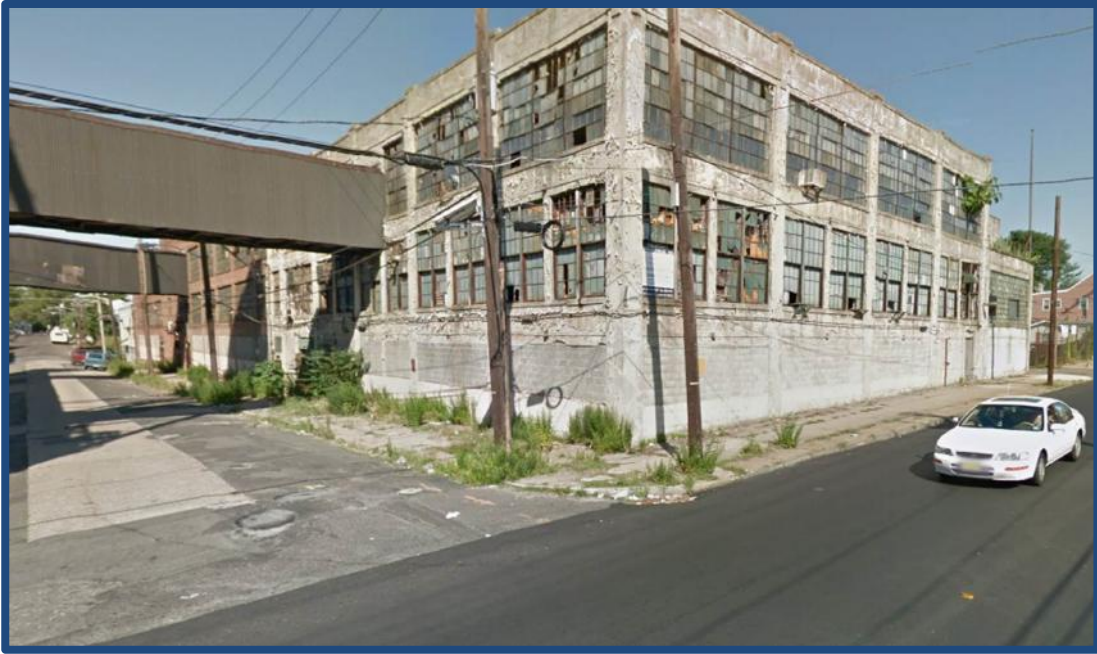
Good: Mural helps make an attractive walking environment and adds to community sense of place. (Purple)



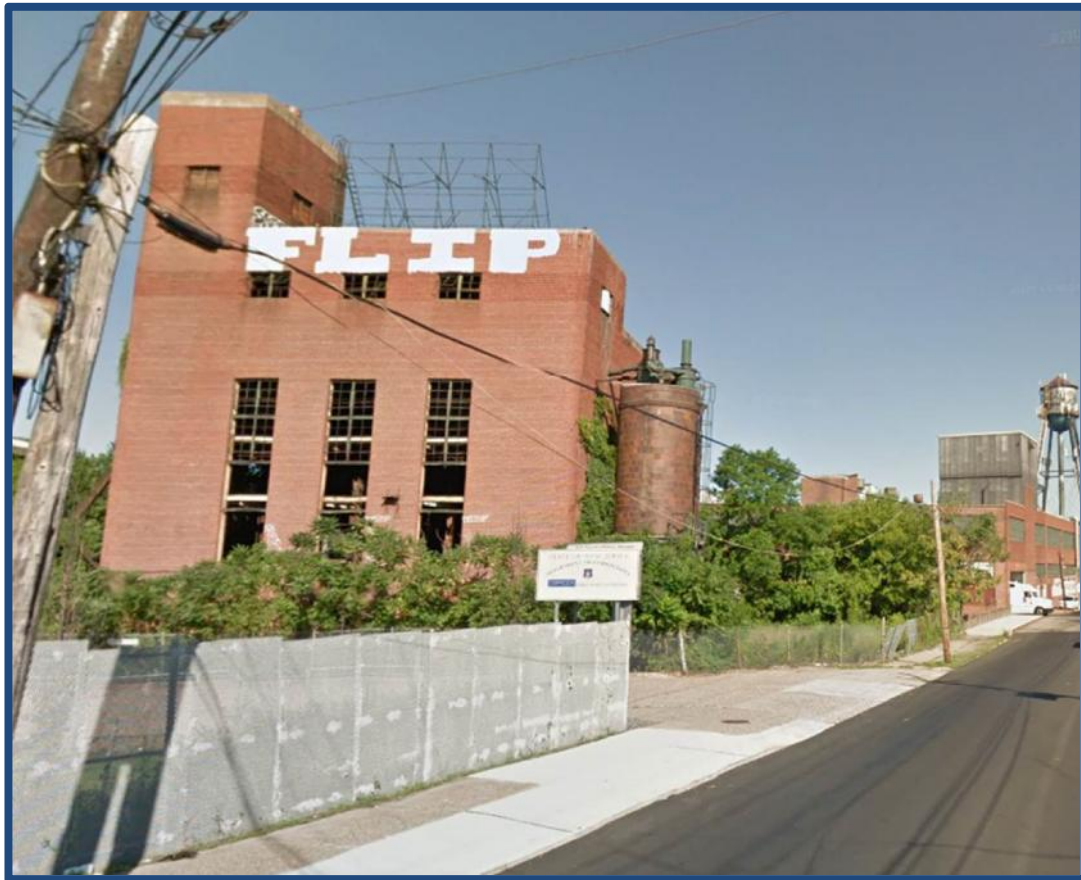


In Need of Improvement: Overgrown trees, shrubs, and greenery blocking sidewalks (Purple)



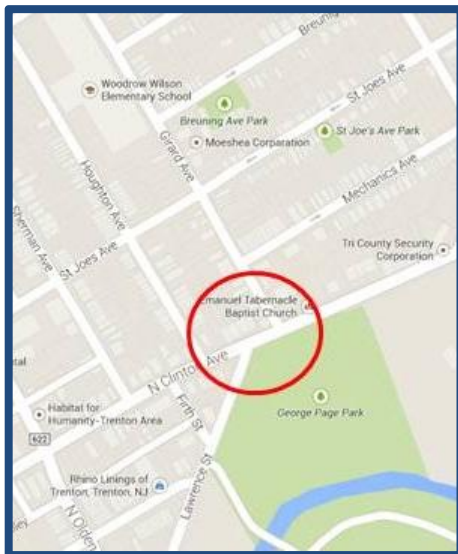


In Need of Improvement: Abandoned properties create unpleasant and intimidating walking environment along North Olden Avenue. (Red)





In Need of Improvement: Railroad bridge along North Olden Avenue creates an unpleasant and intimidating walking environment along North Olden Avenue. Sidewalks are broken and uneven, vegetation is overgrown, high fences and opaque bridge walls create an isolating environment that separates pedestrians from view. (Red)



In Need of Improvement: Crossing N. Clinton Ave to George Page Park/Assunpink Park is difficult due to high motor vehicle speeds and a skewed intersection.

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.

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/ Long Term	Medium
Assess all sidewalks.	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
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

Improve the railroad bridge on North Olden Avenue. Sidewalks need to be fixed and made even, vegetation should be cut back, and opportunities for eliminating the high fences and opaque bridge walls that create an isolating environment and separates pedestrians from view should be investigated.	City of Trenton	Mid-term – Long Term	Medium
Work with utility companies to ensure that downed wires are fixed and covers on light/utility poles are re-installed.	City of Trenton, Utilities	Short 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	No
Speeding was reported as an issue on multiple routes. The area of North Clinton Avenue was specifically reported to contain wide streets with few speed limit signs. Traffic calming techniques such as bulbouts, speed tables, or striping could improve this situation.	City of Trenton	Mid Term	Low
Traffic and engineering study for improving crossing N. Clinton Avenue to neighborhood parks.	City of Trenton	Long Term	Medium-High

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
Speak with community and public works about the importance of keeping up with outdoor maintenance. It becomes a safety issue if not conducted regularly.	City Public Works, Community Groups	Long 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. Encourage community to place trash in garbage cans and/or areas that will not block the sidewalks on trash collection days.	PTO, School, Police, Community Groups, GMTMA	Short Term	Low
Encourage community to take action against crime and gang activity in the park- where students could be playing outside. Discourage drug activity near corner Bodega where students frequent.	Police, Community Groups	Ongoing	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 abandoned property laws. Buildings and properties that are vacant still need to be taken care of.	City Public Works	Ongoing	Low
Increase law enforcement presence seen especially in vicinity of Wilson 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.	Police, City of Trenton, School	Mid-Term	Low
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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.