

NEW JERSEY SAFE ROUTES

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE



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Foreword

Remember your first bicycle?

My bike was bright red and fast, and it gave me the freedom to go places. I had neighborhood friends to hang out with, trade bikes, try new skills, and ride around town. I was lucky that I could enjoy riding around my neighborhood safely. Not everyone has that experience.

In 2003, the New Jersey Safe Routes to School program was created prior to the federal established program in 2005 to build an understanding of the benefits of the program. Since 2011, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), the Safe Routes Resource Center at Rutgers University, and the Safe Routes Coordinators from New Jersey's eight Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) – the three pillars of the New Jersey Safe Routes Program - have worked together to make that experience available to everyone by making biking and walking safer in all communities. NJDOT is pleased to present the 2021 New Jersey Safe Routes Strategic Plan that builds on that history of accomplishments.

Undoubtedly, the year 2020 brought the state, nation, and the world unprecedented challenges. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact everyday life, a reinvigorated movement for social justice challenges our society and institutions to confront shortcomings related to equity. The Safe Routes Program is dedicated to meeting these challenges in New Jersey.

The Safe Routes non-infrastructure program has adapted by developing new resources and leveraging innovative technology in creative ways, always with the goal of keeping New Jersey's youth safe, active and healthy. Continuing demand for improved pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure is being addressed through stronger partnerships with local entities and focused plans supporting more walkable and bikeable neighborhoods. Difficult conversations about the role of enforcement in the program have led to renewed program commitment to be welcoming and inclusive to all.

A hallmark of the statewide Safe Routes program has been the fostering of mutually beneficial partnerships for continued growth and success. The TMA Safe Routes Coordinators work collaboratively with schools, towns, organizations and nonprofits, offering technical assistance and support in 21 counties and 565 municipalities, to develop and implement programs and events to encourage and enable students, parents and others to walk to and from school and within their community. The NJ Crossing Guard Training Program, Safe Routes Academy, Sustainable Jersey, and Sustainable Jersey for Schools coordination have expanded and strengthened, and continue to set an example for other Safe Routes programs nationally.

The development of the Safe Routes Strategic Plan included participation of an Advisory

Group composed of stakeholders with a variety of backgrounds, interests, and specialties. This collaborative process concentrated priorities of the program into goals and performance measures that more closely align with an expanded vision and mission.

The Safe Routes Strategic Plan supports the goals and objectives of NJDOT's 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan. This alignment of goals demonstrates the important role the Safe Routes Program plays in New Jersey's efforts to improve safety for all roadway users.

Moving forward, there will continue to be challenges. Some can be anticipated while others cannot. What I do know is that the three pillars of the Program - NJDOT, the NJ Safe Routes Resource Center at Rutgers University and our Safe Routes Coordinators at New Jersey's eight TMAs - will remain steadfast in our commitment to the safety and health of New Jersey's youth and their communities. I hope you will join us!

William Riviere

Safe Routes to School Coordinator
Bureau of Safety, Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs
New Jersey Department of Transportation

Acknowledgments

The New Jersey Safe Routes Program, supported by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, is a statewide initiative with a mission to partner with schools and communities to prioritize and implement opportunities for people to walk, bike, or travel by other wheeled devices. By focusing on improvements to support active travel by youth, we believe we can create conditions that are safe, healthy, equitable, and appealing for all.

The New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center assists public officials, transportation and health professionals, and the public in creating safer and more accessible walking and bicycling environments for children in New Jersey through education, training, and research.

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Thank
You!

1. Introduction

Health and safety are essential for everyone. A healthy community is one in which all residents have access to conditions that support optimal health and well-being and where systems, resources, and policies are in place to ensure that inclusion, racial equity, affordability, stability, safety, political capital, and justice for all are consciously interwoven into the cultural fabric. A crucial thread that ties it together is mobility and transportation. Active transportation, which includes walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized forms of travel, has been proven to boost health and happiness. In 2015, the US Surgeon General's *Step it Up!* Call To Action encouraged the nation to "increase walking by working together to increase access to safe and convenient places to walk and wheelchair roll and to create a culture that supports walking for Americans of all ages and abilities."¹

The New Jersey Safe Routes program is committed to fostering a healthy, fun, safe, inclusive, and equitable community by promoting active transportation and safety education for youth of all races, ethnicities, abilities, religions, and from all economic backgrounds. Actively commuting to school is linked to greater academic success and improved physical and mental health. Fostering health may sound like a common goal for many programs, but the work to accomplish it takes time and effort. Individuals and families make the decision to walk or bike based on many factors, including safety and neighborhood design. Streets designed with accessible sidewalks and bicycle paths, safe crossings, and destinations within a shorter, walkable distance contribute to healthier, lifelong habits and reduce the burden and associated complications of many chronic diseases. However, there are often barriers to walking and/or bicycling to places in addition to schools like parks, work, shopping, transit, and other daily destinations.

Many areas of New Jersey lack sidewalks and protected bicycle lanes. Driver speeds often far exceed speed limits and cause safety concerns, especially for youth and older adults. Destinations for food, education, recreation, healthcare and other necessities are often too far to walk and in areas with no transit connections. Communities have identified crime, harassment, bullying, and other forms of disorder as dangers to children walking and bicycling in their neighborhoods. Lack of consistent educational programming to teach safe walking and bicycling skills, including on-bike education, can leave children and parents without the know-how to navigate neighborhoods safely. In addition, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), low-income communities, immigrant and refugee communities, people with disabilities, persons who experience homelessness or housing insecurity, the LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming communities, and women often face additional active transportation barriers related to their experiences and cultural biases. The New Jersey Safe Routes program recognizes that there is no "safe" in Safe Routes without committing to the advancement of racial and other dimensions of social justice and equality through Safe Routes programming.

About this Plan

This document summarizes a fresh look at the current statewide New Jersey Safe Routes to School program as part of a strategic planning process. With the addition of a new Advisory Group as well as updating the mission and vision statements, a set of goals and objectives were created to help shepherd the program into the next decade. Much has changed since the effort began, including the onset of an ongoing worldwide health pandemic and heightened focus on social justice and equity issues. This plan helps ensure the New Jersey Safe Routes program delivers service equitably and builds safe communities for everyone.



2. The New Jersey Vision is Safe Routes for All

Safe Routes for All provides safe and equitable access to active transportation for people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods throughout New Jersey.

Through the longstanding and successful partnership between the NJDOT, the New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center and the state's eight Transportation Management Associations, Safe Routes programs have continued to grow and flourish throughout the State. As the program begins a new decade, it is necessary to consider where we have been, where we are now, and where we want and plan to go.

Since the completion of the last New Jersey Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan update in 2012, there has been a growing movement to recognize the social determinants of health, in that economic, environmental, and social forces contribute substantially to our health, well-being, and life expectancy as much as individual behavior, genetics, and access to healthcare. While the focus of the Safe Routes to School program has been historically about making it safer and easier for children to walk and bike to school, just walking and bicycling to school is not enough. Children need to be able to interact with their community safely. Children need more than a sidewalk to school; they need active transportation networks that provide a variety of destinations and mobility options, enhance safety, encourage independence, and increase opportunities for physical activity that lead to better mental and physical health. Balanced transportation systems, which offer a mixture of transportation services, are critical to healthy communities.

Historically, the Safe Routes to School program has operated under a paradigm that seeks to advance change through the 5 E's in Safe Routes programming, which stands for engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation. While the program's intention has been and will continue to be "where it's safe, get kids walking and bicycling; where it is not safe, make it safe," the meaning of safe is being expanded. The New Jersey Safe Routes program will continue to value and incorporate the 5 E's. However, we are embracing a new framework focused on achieving what we have termed SAFE programming.

SAFE: Sustainable, Accessible, Fair, and Engaging Routes to Lifelong Health

This SAFE framework represents Sustainable, Accessible, Fair, and Engaging routes to lifelong health. In the context of the SAFE framework, Sustainable means that Safe Routes planning must be well-designed and supported by all affected constituencies, including but not limited to schools, parents, youth, municipalities, local law enforcement, and elected officials. Accessible means that Safe Routes programming must be developed to be inclusive

Sustainable
Accessible
Fair
Engaging



of youth of all abilities, races, ethnicities, gender identities, religions, and economic backgrounds. Fair means that Safe Routes programming and planning should account for any unique needs of all potential users, whether those needs are based on neighborhood, economics, race, differing abilities, or gender identity. Finally, Engaging means building relationships and sustaining and nurturing community partnerships in ways that promote authentic and meaningful connections.

Recognizing the role in creating healthier, more equitable communities, the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center will expand our reach by promoting safe routes everywhere and safe routes for all. A modification in name to the NJ Safe Routes Resource Center reflects this shift in emphasis. As mentioned in the Introduction, our primary focus will continue to be children and youth, and promoting and enhancing safe routes to school will remain a key priority, but we recognize that children do not only walk to school. By expanding our focus to incorporate all aspects of youth active travel, we will serve as a resource to ensure that students get the help they need to navigate their communities effectively and safely. In general, active transportation improvements for children are beneficial for everyone. Expanding our focus will empower the Safe Routes Resource Center to create more walkable and bikeable communities for children and other vulnerable populations, including older adults, people with disabilities, low-income communities, and communities of color.

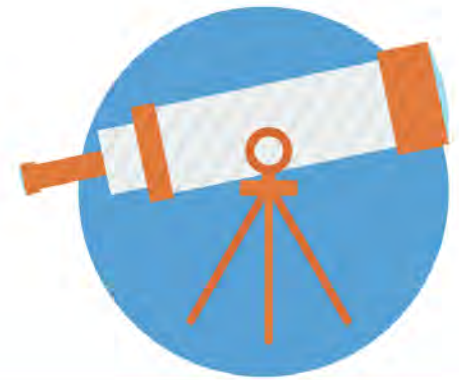


3. New Jersey Safe Routes Program Mission and Vision

NEW JERSEY SAFE ROUTES PROGRAM VISION

The NJ Safe Routes Vision is Safe Routes for All

Safe Routes for All Provides safe and equitable access to active transportation for people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods in New Jersey.



NEW JERSEY SAFE ROUTES PROGRAM MISSION

The NJ Safe Routes Mission is to partner with schools and communities to prioritize and implement opportunities for people to walk, bike or travel by other wheeled devices. By focusing on improvements to support active travel by youth, we believe we can create conditions that are safe, healthy, equitable, and appealing for all.

4. About the New Jersey Safe Routes Program

The Safe Routes program is a federal, state, and local effort that creates safer and more appealing conditions for walking, bicycling, and using other wheeled active transportation devices as a healthy part of everyday life by:

- Enabling and encouraging children and youth, including those with disabilities, to travel by foot, bike, and other wheeled devices,
- Making walking and bicycling a safer and more appealing transportation option, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age, and
- Facilitating the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety for people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution.

Safe Routes projects can involve physical improvements to the environment as well as encouragement and educational programs to promote more walking and wheeling in and around the community.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation supports the New Jersey Safe Routes program through funds provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

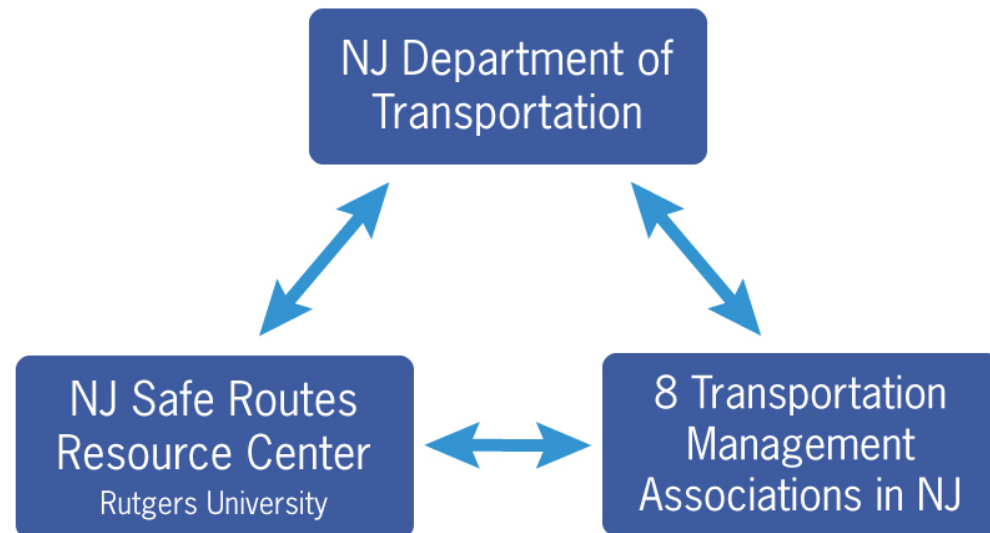
Three pillars of the New Jersey Safe Routes Program

The **New Jersey Department of Transportation** provides funding to schools and communities to improve walking and bicycling conditions through the Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grant Program. Non-infrastructure Safe Routes programs are funded by NJDOT and provide technical assistance through the following:

- The **New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center** at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey assists public officials, transportation and health professionals, and the general public in creating a safer and more accessible walking and bicycling environment through primary research, education, and dissemination of information about best practices in policy and design. The Safe Routes Resource Center supports the development of sound policies and procedures, provides education, outreach, technical assistance, and training to Safe Routes Regional Coordinators and local champions interested in implementing programs, and assists with program

evaluation efforts. The NJ Safe Routes Resource Center also develops and implements the New Jersey Crossing Guard Training and Resources Program, which provides research-based training and tools for crossing guards and the traffic safety officers who supervise them.

- The **Safe Routes Regional Coordinators** in each of the state's eight Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) located throughout New Jersey offer free technical assistance for Safe Routes educational programs, events, guidance, and resources in communities from all 21 counties.

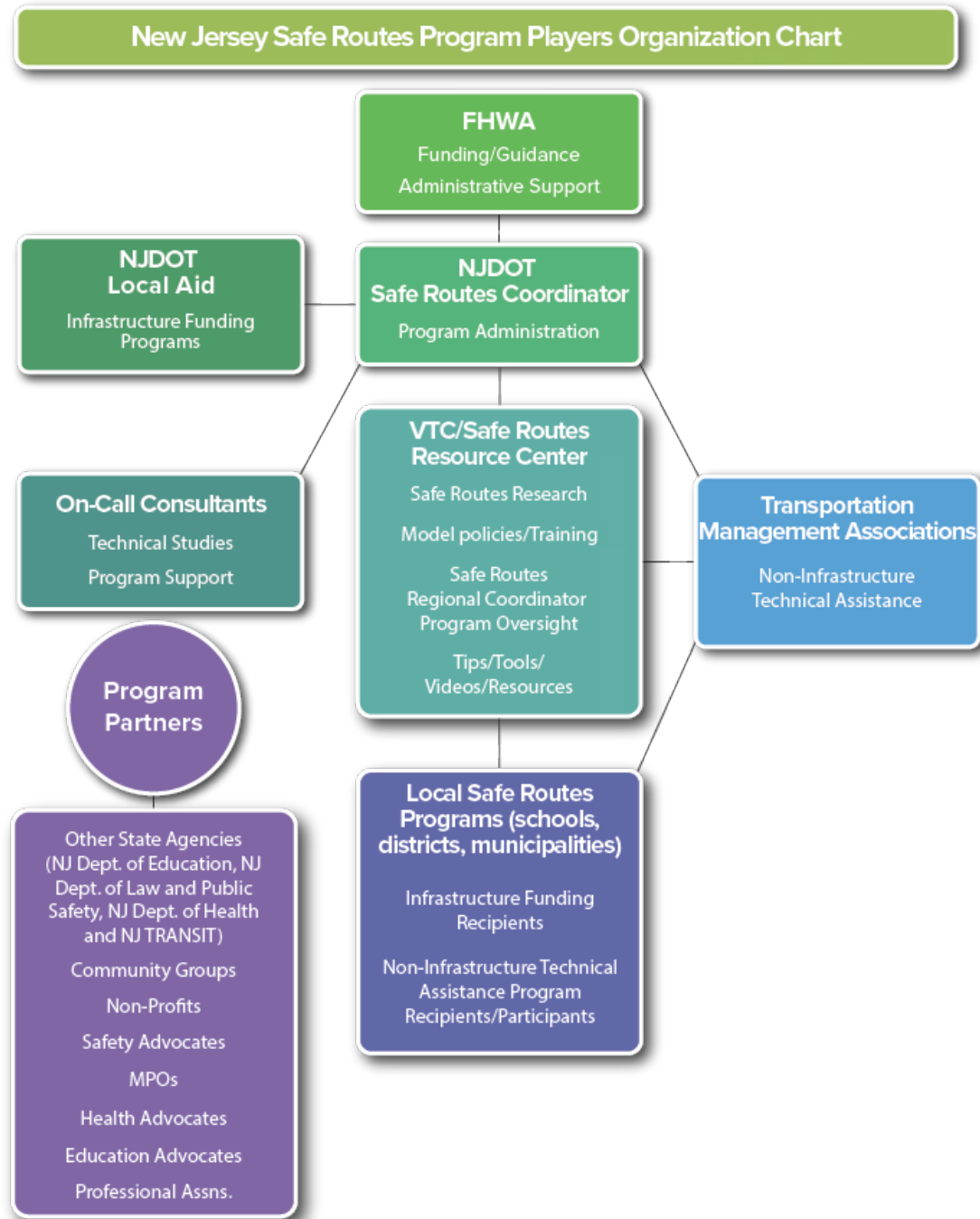


About the New Jersey Department of Transportation

The mission of NJDOT is to provide a world-class transportation system that, among other things, enhances the quality of life for residents and the traveling public. NJDOT is responsible for planning and coordinating federal and state transportation projects. Within NJDOT, the Office of Safety Programs merged with the Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs and is currently the Bureau of Safety, Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs. This Bureau oversees the Safe Routes non-infrastructure programs through funding of technical assistance provided by the NJ Safe Routes Resource Center and TMA Regional Coordinators. The NJDOT Division of Local Aid and Economic Development and the Local Aid Resource Center support communities with their applications for federal grant assistance through the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside program and previous grant recipients through the project delivery process with the goal of creating a connected and efficient transportation network. The program provides funding for projects and activities, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, and Safe Routes to School projects, among others.²

About The Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University

Located within the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (Rutgers-VTC) is a national leader in the research and development of innovative transportation policy. Within Rutgers-VTC, several practice groups and other transportation research initiatives, including the Safe Routes Resource Center and the NJ Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center, provide state of the art research and technical assistance to communities and partner organizations throughout the state.



Find Your Safe Routes to School Regional Coordinator

About New Jersey's Eight Transportation Management Associations (TMAs)

TMAs are nonprofit organizations that collaborate with businesses, commuters, county and local governments, and state agencies to implement programs that reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Funding for the TMAs is provided, in part, by the Federal Highway Administration, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, New Jersey Department of Transportation, and NJ TRANSIT. Each TMA provides services to a county or regional area of New Jersey. Some counties are split and serviced by multiple TMAs.



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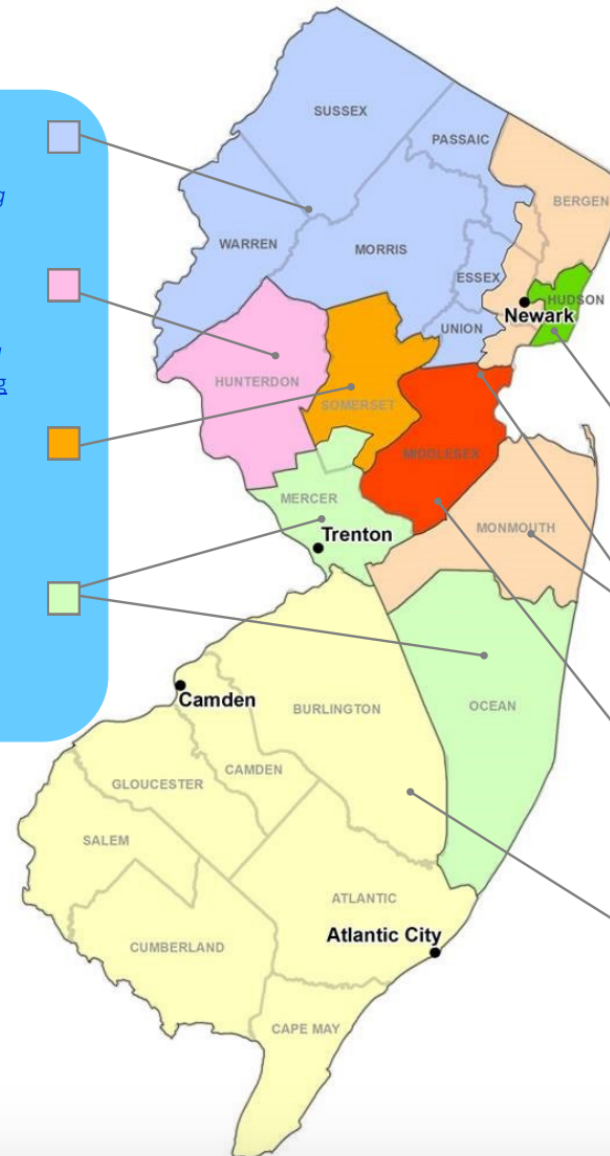
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5. Program History

Infrastructure and Non-Infrastructure Grant Programs

Program Origins

The New Jersey Safe Routes to School program predates the creation of the federal program. As early as 2000, the NJDOT, through its Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs, along with a statewide Technical Advisory Committee, utilized “on-call” consultant support to develop a state Safe Routes to School Program. The goal was to build a common understanding of the benefits of Safe Routes to School programs among state agencies, regional and local jurisdictions, advocacy organizations, and professional disciplines. With the advent of the Federal Program established under Section 1404 of the Federal Transportation Funding Legislation of 2005, Section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), NJDOT adjusted its Safe Routes to School efforts to conform to federal requirements and named a full-time Safe Routes to School Coordinator to oversee the program in 2006.

In addition, the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center was established in 2006 and has since been housed at, and managed by, the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University. The mission of the New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center is to assist public officials, transportation and health professionals, and the public in creating a safer and more accessible walking and bicycling environment through primary research, education, and dissemination of information about best practices in policy and design.

2006 Strategic Plan

In 2006, NJDOT developed and adopted its first Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan to establish an operational framework to guide NJDOT in

administering the Safe Routes to School program and federal funding.

While the original 2006 Safe Routes Strategic Plan affirmed a broad vision for the statewide Safe Routes to School program, certain challenges emerged as the program matured. These included the need to increase the level of non-infrastructure Safe Routes to School activities and distribute more Safe Routes to School funding to underserved and disadvantaged communities. In an effort to address these concerns, NJDOT implemented the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Technical Assistance Program in September 2011. This cooperative venture involves New Jersey’s eight Transportation Management Associations and the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center at Rutgers. Prior to 2011, state Safe Routes to School funds were made available to schools and municipalities for both infrastructure (construction) and non-infrastructure (programmatic activities) projects. The statewide Safe

Routes to School funding program has historically been oversubscribed, and there has consistently been an imbalance in program requests, with more requests for infrastructure funding than for non-infrastructure funding under the first three grant funding rounds in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

A key reason for limited non-infrastructure grant requests involves the difficulty related to managing federally funded non-infrastructure activities, especially the coordination of efforts required between municipalities and schools. To address this imbalance and remove the burden of managing smaller non-infrastructure grants from schools and municipalities, the Non-Infrastructure Technical Assistance Program began funding the Transportation Management Associations in 2011 to proactively reach out to schools, local and regional governments, and other organizations to provide them with a variety of free Safe Routes to School non-infrastructure technical assistance services with research, training, and



oversight from the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center. While infrastructure grants continue to be offered through NJDOT, non-infrastructure funding is directed through the Transportation Management Associations to provide free services to schools and municipalities, with a focus on outreach efforts in underserved and disadvantaged communities to ensure an equitable distribution of services, support, and guidance.

2012 Strategic Plan



With the Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Technical Assistance Program in place, NJDOT launched another strategic planning process in 2011 to revisit and revise the program's mission, vision, and goals and to more fully incorporate New Jersey's eight Transportation Management Associations into the program. At the same time, New Jersey was reevaluating the first Strategic Plan, federal lawmakers in Washington, DC, were signing a two-year, \$105 billion national surface transportation spending package that weakened federal support for bicycling and walking. The spending bill, The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, also known by the acronym MAP-21, eliminated Safe Routes to School as a stand-alone program. Instead, it was folded into a larger program called "Transportation Alternatives," funded at just over \$800 million a year, reflecting a 33 percent cut from \$1.2 billion. Although no longer

federally required to do so, states could continue to offer Safe Routes to School programs, but with less federal support. Recognizing both the demand and inherent value of the program, New Jersey has continued to fund Safe Routes to School, and the 2012 New Jersey Safe Routes to School Program Strategic Plan Update has served as the guiding document.

NJDOT Funding for Safe Routes to School

Following the first three federal Safe Routes to School project grant rounds in 2007, 2008, and 2009, NJDOT has continued to make infrastructure funding available in partnership with the State's Metropolitan Planning Organizations through a grant solicitation that occurs approximately every two years. Specifically, infrastructure grant solicitations have occurred in 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 (see Table 1).

As infrastructure grant rounds have continued, the non-infrastructure program has expanded and evolved, along with the challenges and needs associated with the program. Under the 2012 Strategic Plan, NJDOT, the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Research Center, and the state's eight Transportation Management Associations became the three pillars guiding the program forward. This current Strategic Plan update will build upon the success of the Non-Infrastructure Technical Assistance Program and provide each of these three pillars with the vision, goals, and guidance necessary to ensure that the New Jersey Safe Routes to School program continues to thrive and serve as a national model of success.

Table 1 - NJDOT Safe Routes Infrastructure Grant Rounds

NJDOT Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grant Rounds		
Grant Year	Number of Grants Awarded	Total Amount Awarded
2007	29	\$4,159,060
2008	31	\$4,007,000
2009	41	\$5,409,100
2012	24	\$5,639,000
2014	24	\$6,328,200
2016	17	\$6,182,000
2018	18	\$8,629,000

The New Jersey Safe Routes Program is a Highly Ranked National Model

Since 2006, Rutgers-VTC staff have not only established a new statewide program to create safer conditions for children walking and bicycling but also developed the program to strengthen its reach and outcomes. Two recent national evaluation reports rank NJ's Safe Routes to School program as one of the top programs in the country. Both the 2019 Safe Routes to School Program Census Project National Program Assessment Report and the 2018 State Report Cards on Support for Walking, Bicycling, and Active Kids and Communities highlight the strengths of the New Jersey Safe Routes to School program, especially in comparison with other state programs across the country. Both reports specifically highlight and commend New Jersey program elements, including commitment to Complete Streets implementation, the depth and breadth of the non-infrastructure planning and technical assistance components of the NJ program, and its focus on serving high-need communities. The key elements contributing to these strides are found in the three pillars of the NJ Safe Routes Program: commitment to safety by NJDOT; Rutgers-VTC staff expertise in design, education, training, policy, research, and evaluation; and local community relationships and technical expertise provided through the state's eight TMAs.

The Safe Routes to School Program Census Project 2019 National Program Assessment Report offers an overview of Safe Routes to School programming on both the state and local levels. The report includes a survey of Safe Routes to School programs nationwide and highlights strengths, challenges, and opportunities in an effort to better inform future program support. In its discussion of statewide programs, the 2019 National Program Assessment Report considers four topic areas: (1) policy, planning, and design, (2) active transportation funding, (3) SRTS supportive practices, and (4) school siting and design. New Jersey performed well among all state programs, ranking high in each of these categories. New Jersey is one of only nine states



that provide two or more clear actionable steps to support the implementation of a Complete Streets policy. New Jersey is also one of 16 states that provides special consideration for high-need communities and one of six states that matches funds for high-need communities.

The second report, Making Strides 2018 State Report Cards on Support for Walking, Bicycling, and Active Kids and Communities, provides a state-by-state ranking of Safe Routes to School programs that score states in four categories: (1) Complete Streets and active transportation, (2) Safe Routes to School and active transportation funding, (3) active neighborhoods and schools, and (4) physical activity. In 2018, New Jersey ranked among the top 10 states for Complete Streets and active transportation. Key elements for this category include support for a Complete Streets policy as well as goals, design, and planning for active transportation. New Jersey ranks among the top 16 states for Safe Routes to School and active transportation funding, with programs that improve infrastructure near schools and provide funding

for non-infrastructure programming. For the active neighborhoods and schools category, which considers how states support the creation of neighborhoods and schools that encourage physical activity, New Jersey ranks second. Impressively, New Jersey ranks seventh out of fifty when all categories are combined.

Partnerships and Mutually Beneficial Programs

The success of the New Jersey Safe Routes program has relied upon partnerships with other programs, initiatives, and coalitions that support safe walking and bicycling in New Jersey communities. These mutually beneficial relationships have played and continue to play an important role in the advancement of the New Jersey Safe Routes program's vision to provide safe and equitable access to active transportation for people of all ages and abilities, and make New Jersey's Safe Routes program a national leader.

Stakeholders are connected to the Safe Routes program through a wide variety of interests, concerns,

and backgrounds, only some of which were initially triggered by transportation-related issues. One of the greatest strengths of the NJ Safe Routes program has been its ability to forge strong, sustainable partnerships with leaders from other sectors who have developed a keen interest in Safe Routes programming but have been introduced to the program through other concerns including health, wellness, equity, and the environment. Partnerships with bicycle and pedestrian advocates, local, regional and state nonprofits, education, engineering, and planning professionals, and local, county, and state governments have grown and expanded into relationships with new organizations and initiatives that have complementary goals and activities.

The NJ Safe Routes program will continue to work with existing partners and programs, including the following, as well as identify and forge new opportunities and partnerships as the program adapts, changes, and grows.

NJ Crossing Guard Training and Resource Program

New Jersey's more than 6,800 crossing guards play a vital role in the lives of children who walk and bike to school each day. At the same time, the crossing guard position is one of the most dangerous municipal jobs due to the potential for slips, trips, falls, and crashes involving motor vehicles. To address safety concerns for crossing guards and the children they assist, Rutgers-VTC has been conducting research on crossing guard training as well as developing and implementing a statewide comprehensive Crossing Guard Training Program. With funding from NJDOT and the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, Rutgers-VTC introduced the New Jersey Crossing Guard Training Program in 2013 to train and provide numerous resources to crossing guards and their supervisors. The training program has reached over three-quarters of the New Jersey municipalities that employ school crossing guards, while the crossing guard supervisor train-the-trainer class continues to be highly rated by participants. Notably, classes continued to be offered virtually during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.



Sustainable Jersey and Sustainable Jersey for Schools Coordination

The New Jersey Safe Routes program and the Sustainable Jersey program have a long history of mutual support and collaboration toward the shared goal of enabling New Jersey communities to become healthier, more resilient, and more walkable and bikeable now and into the future. Staff from the Safe Routes Resource Center lead and direct the Sustainable Jersey Land Use and Transportation Task Force, which undertakes several initiatives including updating current Sustainable Jersey actions, proposing and creating new actions, and addressing issues, opportunities, and resources. The Safe Routes Resource Center further assists with updating actions for the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program and reviewing and approving three rounds of actions related to active transportation for both Sustainable Jersey programs.



Safe Routes Academy

The Safe Routes Academy provides a forum for the community of people and organizations – education, public health and safety, transportation, local planning, engineering, local and regional governments, and public works – who share an interest in increasing the visibility and reach of the NJ Safe Routes program.

The inaugural Safe Routes Academy event was successfully held in coordination with the 2017 NJ Bike and Walk Summit hosted by the NJ Bike and Walk Coalition. The Safe Routes Academy features hands-on, interactive sessions designed to help communities enable and encourage safe routes to parks, transit, shops, restaurants, employment, schools, and recreation in an effort for communities to become more walk and bike-friendly for all users of all abilities. One of the well-received sessions of the Safe Routes Academy focused on information, tips, strategies, and resources to secure funding and grants for more walkable and bikeable communities. Building upon this effort, the Safe Routes Resource Center has continued offering grant information and tips by conducting, in collaboration with NJDOT Local Aid, a series of grant training workshops, including online webinars to accommodate restrictions for in-person gatherings due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.”

Complete and Green Streets

Historical and ongoing discrimination is directly related to people’s opportunities for health and well-being, and therefore needs to be addressed through policy. In partnership with professionals in the health, environmental, environmental justice, economic development, and transportation sectors, Safe Routes Resource Center staff was instrumental in leading the creation of the new Complete and Green Streets for All Model Complete Streets Policy and Guide released in 2019 by NJDOT.

The new model policy highlights a broad range of benefits, incorporates Green Streets and Zero Deaths strategies, boosts equity, recognizes positive economic, environmental, and public health outcomes, and presents a path for moving from policy to implementation. Training sessions showcase how the incorporation of transparency, accountability, and fairness in transportation expenditures and project selection for Complete Streets policies is transforming local decision-making as well as how the new policy is changing the process by requiring project checklists, evaluating benchmarks, and providing meaningful public engagement.

Zero Deaths Initiatives

Coalitions at the national, state, and local levels are working on three initiatives, *Vision Zero*, *Road to Zero*, and *Toward Zero Deaths*, to eliminate traffic-related fatalities across the United States. *Zero Deaths* initiatives offer a comprehensive reassessment of road safety that treats all traffic fatalities and severe injuries as preventable while providing safe, accessible, and equitable transportation options for all. Safe Routes and Zero Deaths initiatives both offer systematic ways to respond to injuries and fatalities by taking a public health approach to addressing poor road design and dangerous driver behaviors. Both initiatives create space for a conversation around safety priorities and identifying populations most at-risk.

Zero Deaths and Safe Routes initiatives can be used to accomplish mutual goals. Often Safe Routes programs provide a bottom-up approach that starts with parents, students, and community members concerned with dangerous conditions for children, while *Zero Deaths* initiatives often begin with a commitment from the mayor or other elected officials. Safe Routes and *Zero Deaths* initiatives address road safety through policies and plans, such as Safe Routes Travel Plans. These plans identify barriers and opportunities for prioritizing improvements for students walking and bicycling to school as well as outline equity-focused and specific, data-driven steps to create transportation systems that prioritize safety, efficiency, and accessibility for all users.



6. Program Timeline from 2005-2020 with Key Milestones

2000

NJDOT initiates a Pedestrian Safety Program to provide municipalities with funding for the construction of pedestrian improvements



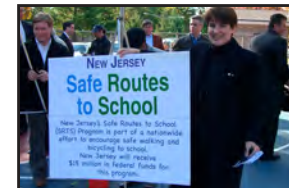
2003

NJDOT's Office of Pedestrian and Bicycling Programs along with an advisory committee initiates development of NJ's Safe Routes to School Program, targeting municipal infrastructure and establishing a set of statewide goals and targets



2005

Passage of SAFETEA-LU federal transportation funding legislation establishing the federal Safe Routes to School Program
First demonstration project which developed Action Plans in three NJ communities



2008

Second round of federal Safe Routes to School project grants in NJ



31 Grants
\$4M

2007

First round of federal Safe Routes to School Project Grants in NJ
Demonstration project developing Action Plans in urban areas



29 Grants
\$4.15M

2006

Passage of the "Terrell James' Law" in NJ, requiring highway entrance and exit ramps at least 1,000 feet from K-12 schools
New Jersey releases its first Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan
NJDOT officially designates its first full-time Safe Routes to School State Coordinator

2009

Launch of Sustainable Jersey actions for Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets
Third round of federal Safe Routes to School project grants in NJ
NJDOT passes a Complete Streets Policy



41 Grants
\$5.40M

2010

Passage of the "stop and stay stopped" for pedestrians in crosswalks law



2011

Initiation of NJ Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Technical Assistance Program funding all 8 TMAs to work directly with communities



24 Grants
\$5.63M

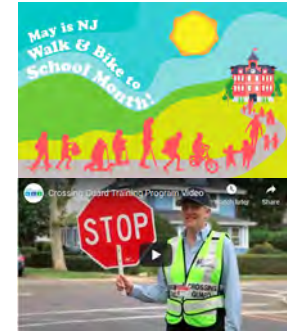
2012

Round of federal Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grants in NJ
New Jersey releases its second Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan.
Launch of the NJ Safe Routes to School Recognition Program



2013

NJDOT establishes the first New Jersey Walk and Bike to School Month in May.
Statewide Crossing Guard Training and Resources Program established
Launch of Safe Routes educational and safety video resources



2018

Round of federal Safe Routes to School infrastructure grants in NJ

18 Grants
\$8.62M



2016

Round of federal Safe Routes to School infrastructure grants in NJ
First New Jersey District-wide School Travel Plan
First Annual Safe Routes Academy

17 Grants
\$6.18M



2014

Round of federal Safe Routes to School infrastructure grants in NJ
Launch of partnership with Sustainable Jersey for Schools and related actions

24 Grants
\$6.32M

2019

Release of the NJ Model Complete and Green Streets Policy and Guide



2021

New Jersey releases its third Safe Routes Strategic Plan

7. Strategic Planning Process

The New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center focused on implementing an inclusive and robust strategic planning process over 12 months. To accomplish this goal, the team conducted a series of interviews with other state Safe Routes programs, examined several Safe Routes to School strategic plans from other programs outside New Jersey to identify best practices, organized and convened a strategic plan advisory group comprised of informed participants who could share their expertise and review plan elements, implemented a SWOT analysis exercise with NJ TMA Safe Routes coordinators, and fielded a survey and questionnaire with members of the public on the Safe Routes program. The New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center made a concerted effort to ensure that the Strategic Plan aligns with priorities and objectives embedded in the state's various transportation safety plans, including the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Strategic Plan Advisory Group



In early 2020, the NJ Safe Routes Resource Center convened an advisory group to provide input for the Strategic Plan process. The advisory group comprises over thirty members representing entities including NJDOT, New Jersey's three MPOs, TMAs, New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition, local advocacy groups, Sustainable Jersey, Tri-State Transportation Campaign,

AAA, Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey, and other supporters of pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Advisory Group participants responded to an online questionnaire prepared by the Safe Routes Resource Center on Strategic Plan draft goals, objectives, and performance measures prior to initial meetings. NJ Safe Routes staff incorporated participant comments into plan revisions and obtained additional feedback on revised goal and objective language during online Advisory Group meetings. Comments from these meetings were considered in the development of the final Draft Strategic Plan goals, objectives, and performance measures. Advisory group members reviewed the final draft and offered additional comments via email and through the second round of advisory group meetings.

Advisory Group members provided suggestions that were instrumental to refining and clarifying the language in the Strategic Plan document. The following are some of the key considerations offered:

1. Clearly define the audience for Safe Routes education efforts.
2. Include health and environmental benefits language.
3. Reference other wheeled devices like scooters.
4. Expand language to include parents, guardians, school staff, and other community members.
5. Identify active travel as healthy, every day, sustainable forms of transportation.
6. Address equity—use language that includes people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods.

Program Interviews and Alignment with State Safety Plans

Interviews with Other State Safe Routes Programs

As a kickoff to updating the Strategic Plan, staff from the NJ Safe Routes Resource Center reached out to key contacts locally, statewide, and nationally to gather information about Safe Routes to School programs and identify programmatic changes and trends (both positive and challenging), priorities, funding, and best practices. In total, outreach was conducted with eight programs/stakeholders, including Safe Routes programs in Michigan, Minnesota, and New Hampshire, and representatives from Project for Public Spaces, Active Transportation Alliance, the National Center for Safe Routes to School, Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, and Toole Design Group.

Principal points below describe the objectives of Safe Routes Programs as shared by contacts:

- Create a cultural shift to walking and bicycling one project at a time.
- Build awareness of the Safe Routes program.
- Hold events to engage students in Safe Routes.
- Support infrastructure projects that have benefits for the public.
- Integrate an equity component into Safe Routes and reach low-income and minority communities.
- Find ways to sustain programs in school districts and communities.
- Develop programs and events that focus attention on issues/concerns with the route(s) to school.
- Build partnerships with purpose.
- Look at the community as a whole, not just travel route(s) to school.

Many of the observations made in these interviews are relevant to the NJ Safe Routes program. The incremental nature of non-infrastructure programming can lay the groundwork for a cultural shift that recognizes walking and bicycling, not only as alternative transportation, but also as a principal means of navigating routes to school and other destinations throughout a community. This community approach makes program sustainability more likely based on a shared commitment among school leaders, municipal officials, community organizations, and others to improved safety for all. Both walking and bicycling events and infrastructure improvements build awareness among community members. The interviewees also emphasized the continuing, but often unfulfilled, obligation for Safe Routes programs to reach communities of need. In total, the contributions of the interviewees have been considered in the development of the Strategic Plan goals and objectives.

Safe Routes Nationwide Strategic Plan Review

The Safe Routes staff also examined a number of Safe Routes to School strategic plans from the National Partnership, three states, and five cities. The following are the principal goals found in most of the Safe Routes program plans:

- Promote awareness of Safe Routes programs.
- Support local Safe Routes efforts and develop capacity in communities to launch, maintain, and sustain programs.
- Develop strong partnerships.
- Advance social equity.
- Influence policy development to improve safety and promote active transportation (e.g., Complete Streets policies or school district walk and bike policies).
- Increase the number of children walking and bicycling to school.

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership Strategic Plan from 2016 to 2021 provides four focus areas: (1) improving policies, programs, and infrastructure, (2)

advancing social equity, (3) partnering with purpose, and (4) ensuring sustainability. Within each of the four areas, goals are outlined. Minnesota's Plan is structured under similar headings, as is Colorado's Plan, with the addition of a goal to establish a user-friendly grant-making approach. Virginia's Plan includes additional program elements for project implementation and management, close-out, evaluation, and measurement.

Several city plans describe partnerships among the Safe Routes program, the school district, and other municipal and county organizations. Most of these plans organize proposed actions under the headings of some or all of the E's (Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Empowerment). Equity appears as a separate E or is considered within each E. The work plan is often in the form of a matrix that summarizes recommended actions with strategy type, description, projected timeline, cost (low-medium-high), and lead/partners identified.

Strategic Plan Alignment with NJDOT Plans

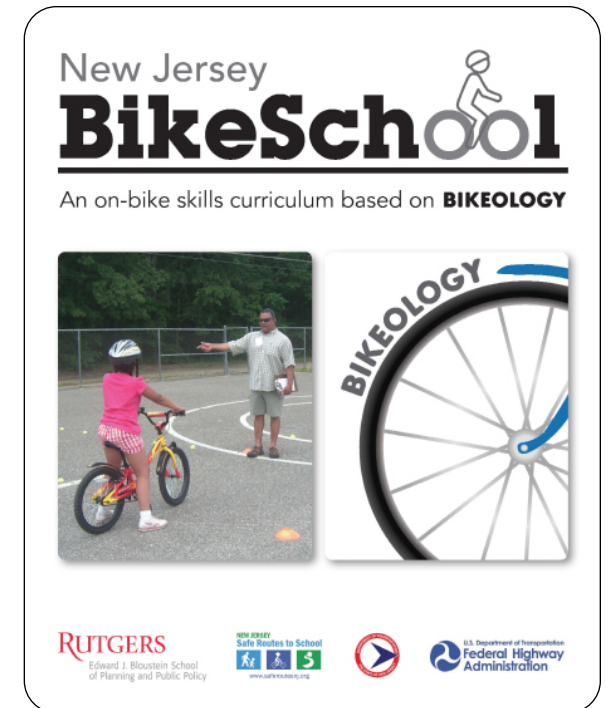
NJ Safe Routes staff reviewed the state's transportation safety plans to note priorities and common objectives and align the NJ Safe Routes Strategic Plan goals, objectives, and performance measures with these existing plans. The plans considered in the process are:

- 2016 New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- 2016 New Jersey Bicycle Safety Action Plan
- 2014 New Jersey Pedestrian Safety Action Plan
- New Jersey 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan

In particular, the Safe Routes Strategic Plan aligns with several NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan emphasis area strategies as follows:

Education

- Provide bicycle and pedestrian safety curriculum and training.



- Inform the public about the benefits of and safe practices for bicycling and walking.
- Provide training on bicycle and pedestrian grant opportunities.
- Fund non-infrastructure projects.

Collaboration and Partnerships

- Work with state agencies, local public agencies, and the health community.
- Provide outreach and support to entities outside of the transportation community.

Information and assessment

- Improve traffic and infrastructure inventory data.
- Conduct safety audits.
- Integrate health and equity into safety analysis.
- Explore vehicle speed enforcement.
- Improve performance measures.

Infrastructure

- Identify and map high-risk locations for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Assess and identify underserved communities with high bicycle and pedestrian safety needs.
- Inventory bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Complete Streets

- Improve and strengthen Complete Streets policies and implementation.



Questionnaires, Surveys, and SWOT

TMA Safe Routes Coordinator SWOT Analysis

In July 2019, Safe Routes Coordinators at New Jersey's eight Transportation Management Associations completed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis of the NJ Safe Routes Program.

Notably, participants shared many program strengths, such as diverse program benefits, and opportunities for program enhancement. Regarding opportunities, key commentary focused on the value of diversifying and expanding community collaborations and partnerships, as well as permitting the program to serve all youth, including high school age students, and parents. Weaknesses communicated focused on factors related to limited funding and TMA staff time, both of which negatively impact program sustainability.

Threats similarly focused on funding issues hindering program sustainability, as well as competition and

prioritization among other school initiatives. The table below summarizes key comments under each heading.

Safe Routes Coordinator SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent core message; the primary goal of helping children encourages public support. • Diverse program benefits attract a range of advocates and potential partners. • TMA-supported non-infrastructure projects build stronger Safe Routes programs, which strengthen funding applications for infrastructure projects. • Diverse projects allow TMAs to make a difference, including influencing policy change. • Substantial information and a variety of resources to offer (e.g. School Travel Plans, technical assistance) • NJ Safe Routes Recognition Program fosters relationships, expands reach of program message, increases participation, and rewards excellent programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited time/availability affects engagement with towns and/or school districts. • High turnover of TMA Safe Routes staff • Assumption that the program is anti-busing • Perception that TMA services are of low value/quality because they are free • Inability to work with high schools on safe routes to bus stops or safe routes to parks projects limits program impact • Limited sustainability of school and municipal programs • Difficulty accessing and engaging disadvantaged communities • NJ Safe Routes Recognition Program requires significant TMA staff effort but provides too little incentive for participants.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow work with high schools, and expand to include all youth transportation. • Expand to direct programs for parents and increase district-wide programming. • Support collaboration with organizations focused on health and wellness, sustainability, environment, and social justice. • Encourage TMAs to share successful resources, activities, and initiatives among themselves. • Quantify TMA technical assistance and assign a monetary value for the assistance. • Grow statewide bicycle culture and promote walking and bicycling as real transportation and not just an "alternative". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertain funding and limited resources hinders reach to towns/schools. • Limited funding for infrastructure improvements hinders program influence. • Competition with other programs and priorities at the school level • School staff and champion turnover undermines program sustainability.

Safe Routes Survey and Questionnaire

The Safe Routes Resource Center collected and analyzed feedback from stakeholders, including advocates and program participants, on the Safe Routes program using two instruments: 1) a questionnaire distributed at the 2020 NJ Safe Routes Academy and 2) an online survey launched in April 2020. Both instruments collected feedback on how people view the NJ Safe Routes program, including the benefits of the program, program impacts, current needs not being met by the program, and priorities for the future. A total of twenty-two questionnaire responses and twenty-three online survey responses were reviewed. Key points from the feedback include:

- Safer walking environments are the most valued program benefit.
- Benefits of Safe Routes programs extend beyond children in grades K-8 to the public, and specifically to teens.
- Program goals considered most important focused on nurturing strong partnerships, empowering a network of local champions (parents, students, elected officials, school staff, etc.), and fostering and promoting a safe and accessible transportation network.
- Safe Routes education and programs have the most impact; participants would like more outreach and new events and resources.

The 2020 Strategic Plan incorporates much of this valuable feedback in its goals, objectives, and performance measures, which emphasizes the importance of Safe Routes training and education programs, the value in establishing and nurturing strong partnerships, and the need to foster and promote safe and accessible transportation networks for usage by all.



8. Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures of the Program

Program goals, objectives, and performance measures, aligned with the vision and mission, were updated from the 2012 Strategic Plan. In total, five goals with associated objectives and performance measures were identified. The objectives and performance measures encompassed input from the Advisory Group and TMAs and provide direction to the program for the next five years.

DEFINITIONS

GOALS

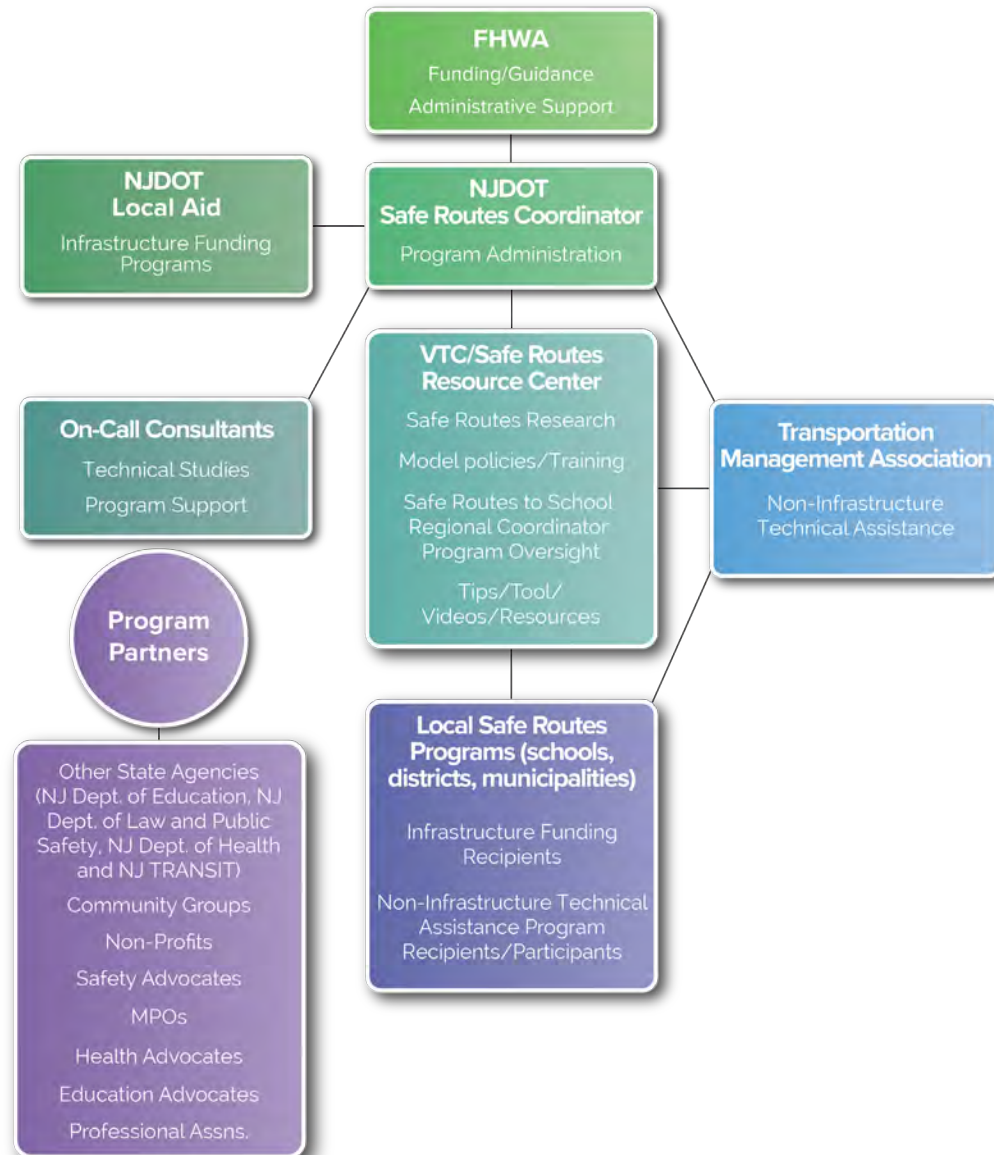
Long-term aims intended to achieve the vision

OBJECTIVES

Concrete, measurable attainments

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A means of evaluating the progress made toward the objectives



GOAL 1

Educate about safe walking, bicycling, and other active transportation and encourage usage as a healthy part of everyday life.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures

Objective 1.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Increase the number of youth and other community members walking, bicycling and using other wheeled active transportation devices.	Percentage of student population walking, bicycling, driven or bused pre- and post- infrastructure grant implementation	School and School District-driven data collection (Student Travel Tallies), NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of schools conducting Student Travel Tally or Parent/ Caregiver Survey	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of participants included in the NJ Safe Routes Recognition Program	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Review changes in walking and bicycling via available transportation data	
Objective: 1.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Increase the number and type of Safe Routes training and educational programs.	Number, type and location of all training and academy events held by TMAs and NJ Safe Routes Resource Center	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of people attending training, educational, and academy events and programs	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of officers trained in Crossing Guard Train-the-Trainer Program	NJ Crossing Guard Training and Resources program housed at the NJ Safe Routes Resource Center
Objective: 1.3	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Increase the number of schools and communities adopting and implementing policies, plans, and practices that support the Safe Routes program as everyday, lifelong activities.	Number and location of communities and schools assisted by TMAs	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of participants included in the NJ Safe Routes Recognition Program	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Percentage of schools and municipalities that advanced their Safe Routes Recognition Program level	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of Safe Routes Travel Plans	TMAs and NJ Safe Routes Resource Center review of Sustainable Jersey and SJ for Schools actions

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures

Objective: 1.3 (cont.)	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Increase the number of schools and communities adopting and implementing policies, plans, and practices that support the Safe Routes program as everyday, lifelong activities.	Number of schools and municipalities that received points for bicycle and pedestrian actions as part of the Sustainable Jersey and Sustainable Jersey for Schools Certification Program.	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center review of Sustainable Jersey and SJ for Schools actions
	Number of Schools and Districts with supportive policies for walking, bicycling and other wheeled active transportation devices, as part of the Sustainable Jersey for Schools Certification Program.	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center review of Sustainable Jersey and SJ for Schools actions, TMAs

GOAL 2

Prioritize health and equity for people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods in program implementation.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures

Objective 2.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Redefine "disadvantaged communities" to support equitable distribution of resources.	Identification and adoption of a new data source to better support a new, more equitable definition.	NJDOT
Objective: 2.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Support fair and equitable engagement of and program delivery to "disadvantaged communities."	Identification, mapping and analysis of potential health outcomes using new "disadvantaged communities" definition	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, NJ Dept of Health SHAD (State Health Assessment Data).
	Number of "disadvantaged communities" participating in the program	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of "disadvantaged communities" contacted	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of "disadvantaged communities" that applied for Safe Routes funding	NJDOT.
	Number of travel plans that cover "disadvantaged communities"	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of Safe Routes infrastructure grants awarded to "disadvantaged communities"	NJDOT
	Number of Safe Routes infrastructure grants successfully implemented by "disadvantaged communities"	NJDOT

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures		
Objective: 2.3	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Research integration of health, equity and sustainable practice in educational and engagement materials to promote active transportation.	Creation of a strategy/approach to integrate health and equity into educational and engagement materials and resources in consultation with health, education, and other professionals	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
Objective: 2.4	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Incorporate healthy and equitable best practice into decision-making.	Creation of a diverse advisory group that addresses social, racial and environmental justice inequities and guides discussion for data, education and engagement program practices	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of municipalities and school districts with Sustainable Jersey Anti-idling Action points	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center review of Sustainable Jersey and SJ for Schools actions

GOAL 3

Nurture strong partnerships and cultivate a network of local, regional, and state champions throughout New Jersey to advocate for actions and policies that encourage Safe Routes for all.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures		
Objective 3.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Develop and strengthen partnerships and enhance coordination with individuals and/or organizations with similar goals and collaborate toward the mutual benefit of all programs.	Number of presentations and participation at meetings, conferences, workshops and other events	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of active partnerships	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of Safe Routes Academy events and attendees	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center
Objective 3.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Improve planning and policy development for Safe Routes.	Number of counties/municipalities with Bicycle/Pedestrian or Circulation Plans and Complete and Green Streets Policies that address Safe Routes elements and municipalities with supportive Safe Routes programs	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center review of Sustainable Jersey actions
	Number of School Travel Plans	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center review of Sustainable Jersey actions, TMAs

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures

Objective 3.2 (cont.)	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Improve planning and policy development for Safe Routes.	Number of school district Safe Routes policies passed including those that receive Sustainable Jersey points	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center review of Sustainable Jersey and SJ for Schools actions, TMAs.

GOAL 4

Create, foster and promote a safe, accessible and coordinated transportation network that enables people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods to choose active transportation.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures

Objective 4.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Promote Complete and Green Streets, ADA compliance, and engineering and design best practices to support active transportation throughout the state.	Number of Complete and Green Streets policies, including those that receive Sustainable Jersey action points	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
Objective 4.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Encourage infrastructure improvements that treat traffic fatalities as preventable through sustained funding and supportive programs.	Number and location of NJDOT Safe Routes Infrastructure grants awarded	NJDOT
	Number and location of walk, bike, and road safety audits, including those that receive Sustainable Jersey action points.	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of temporary and permanent infrastructure changes completed, submitted, and awarded points under Sustainable Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Action	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center review of Sustainable Jersey Actions
Objective 4.3	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Increase the number of communities adopting and implementing policies, plans and practices that address connected networks and coordinated routine maintenance.	Development of resources and materials that promote connected networks and coordinated routine maintenance to improve areas for walking, bicycling and using other wheeled devices	NJDOT, Safe Routes Resource Center

GOAL 5

Develop and disseminate research, information and best practice resources.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures

Objective 5.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Create tools and guidance to promote safe walking, bicycling, and active travel as healthy, sustainable forms of transportation.	Number of new Safe Routes tools and resources developed, including materials in languages other than English	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number and location of technical assistance services provided	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Creation of resources to help coordinate with local, regional, and state government to plan and implement improvements	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
Objective 5.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Expand messaging and information exchange with the public through events, programs, websites, and social media outreach.	Number of events and programs	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Number of newsletter subscribers	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center.
	Social media outreach and number of website hits (posts, likes, shares, etc.)	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center. TMAs.
Objective 5.3	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Conduct research and report on safety and program best practices.	Number of new research efforts undertaken	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center
	Analysis of pedestrian, bicycle and/or other wheeled device crashes reported in school zones, as available	NJDOT, Safe Routes Resource Center, Safety Voyager/Crash Analysis Tool
	Identification and completion of continuing and emerging research tasks, in consultation with NJDOT	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center
	Advising on program options and funding sources to continue and enhance the Safe Routes Non-Infrastructure Program	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center
Objective 5.4	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Monitor and evaluate the reach and effectiveness of the Safe Routes Program.	Annual evaluation report documenting baseline data for selected performance measures	NJ Safe Routes Resource Center, TMAs
	Continuation of advisory group to monitor performance, identify program needs and prioritize programmatic next steps	NJDOT, NJ Safe Routes Resource Center

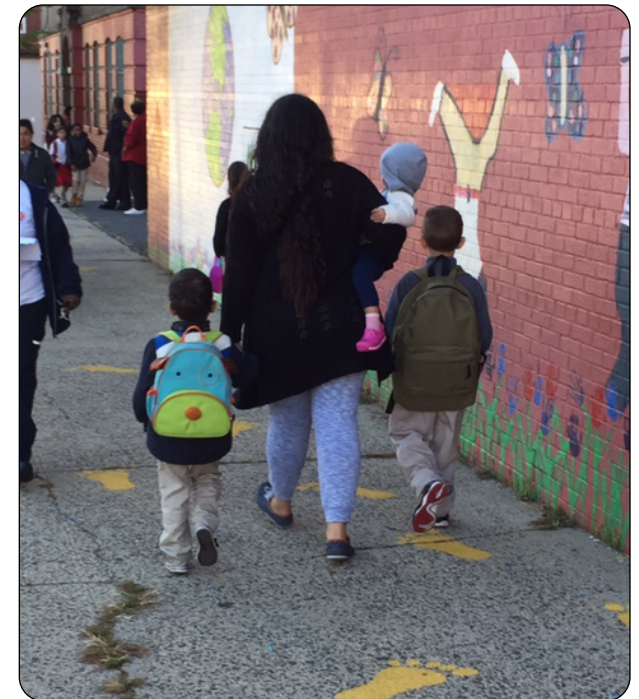
New Jersey's 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan

New Jersey's 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) is part of a comprehensive state effort to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on New Jersey's roads over the next five years. The plan is motivated by a belief that no deaths on New Jersey roads are acceptable and moving toward zero deaths is achievable through safety countermeasures, technological advancements, and a positive culture of safety. To this end, the SHSP has established a goal to reduce fatalities, serious injuries, and total injuries each by 14% over the next five years. The 2020 SHSP is further defined by seven emphasis areas: 1) Equity, 2) Lane Departure, 3) Intersection, 4) Driver Behavior, 5) Pedestrians and Bicyclists, 6) Other Vulnerable Road Users, and 7) Data. Each emphasis area includes goals, objectives, and strategies for reducing roadway fatalities and injuries.

There is considerable overlap between the goals of the SHSP and the Safe Routes Strategic Plan, as shown in the following tables. The Safe Routes goals and objectives included in these tables are the same, while the performance measures reflect the connections between SHSP strategies and the goals of the Safe Routes program. The significant alignment between the two plans demonstrates the importance of the Safe Routes program to the SHSP. By encouraging non-motorized travel and addressing safety, especially for children, the Safe Routes program is crucial to realizing the SHSP's vision.

NEW JERSEY

2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan



GOAL 1

Educate about safe walking, bicycling, and other active transportation and encourage usage as a healthy part of everyday life.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures Aligned with the 2020 NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Objective 1.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Increase the number of youth and other community members walking, bicycling and using other wheeled active transportation devices.	Tracking development of traffic and infrastructure data inventory through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Data Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Data Emphasis Area Strategies (page 53) Create a pedestrian and bicyclist database that captures volume and infrastructure.
Objective: 1.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Increase the number and type of Safe Routes training and educational programs.	Assisting in content updates to materials and tracking development and implementation of education/training for drivers through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Driver Behavior Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Driver Behavior Emphasis Area Strategies (page 37) Create a Safety Culture in New Jersey by reviewing existing education programs led by government, schools, insurance industry, health industry and non-profit advocacy organizations. Assess current media campaigns to reduce aggressive driving and make recommendations.
	Assisting in content updates to materials and tracking the number of people attending comprehensive traffic safety curriculum training through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Other Vulnerable Users and Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area teams	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Other Vulnerable Users Emphasis Area Strategies (page 49) Develop a plan to prepare and incorporate traffic safety education training, content to protect crossing guards as well as children walking to school. Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area Strategies (page 42) Provide comprehensive pedestrian and bicyclist safety education for students (K-12 and higher education) who walk or bike to school or bus stop. Review the Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Program and provide recommendations for improvement. Implement a comprehensive traffic safety curriculum in elementary schools. Develop pedestrian and bicyclist educational programs focused on teachers, parents, and volunteers at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.
Objective: 1.3	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Increase the number of schools and communities adopting and implementing policies, plans, and practices that support the Safe Routes program as everyday, lifelong activities.	See Safe Routes Performance Measures on Page 20-21 of this report.	

GOAL 2

Prioritize health and equity for people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods in program implementation.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures Aligned with the 2020 NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Objective 2.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Redefine "disadvantaged communities" to support equitable distribution of resources.	Tracking development of a methodology/approach for assessing/identifying underserved communities and locations with high ped/bike safety needs through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area Strategies (page 43) Consider equity issues related to pedestrian and bicycle crashes. Develop an approach for identifying and assessing high-risk pedestrian and bicyclist safety locations in underserved communities.
Objective: 2.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Support fair and equitable engagement of and program delivery to "disadvantaged communities."	See Safe Routes Performance Measures on page 21 of this report.	
Objective: 2.3	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Research integration of health, equity and sustainable practice in educational and engagement materials to promote active transportation.	See Safe Routes Performance Measures on page 22 of this report.	
Objective: 2.4	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Incorporate healthy and equitable best practice into decision-making.	Tracking integration of health and equity considerations into safety analyses through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Data Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Data Emphasis Area (page 52) Goal 4: Integrate health and equity considerations into safety analyses. Objective 1: Develop alternate methods to assess health and equity factors related to crashes.

GOAL 3

Nurture strong partnerships and cultivate a network of local, regional, and state champions throughout New Jersey to advocate for actions and policies that encourage Safe Routes for all.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures Aligned with the 2020 NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Objective 3.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Develop and strengthen partnerships and enhance coordination with individuals and/or organizations with similar goals and collaborate toward the mutual benefit of all programs.	See Safe Routes Performance Measures on page 22 of this report.	
Objective 3.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Improve planning and policy development for Safe Routes.	See Safe Routes Performance Measures on page 22-23 of this report.	

GOAL 4

Create, foster and promote a safe, accessible and coordinated transportation network that enables people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods to choose active transportation.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures Aligned with the 2020 NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Objective 4.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Promote Complete and Green Streets, ADA compliance, and engineering and design best practices to support active transportation throughout the state.	Tracking implementation of NJDOT ADA Transition Plan through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area Strategies (page 42) Convene a group to develop strategies to facilitate ADA implementation by all agencies.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures Aligned with the 2020 NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Objective 4.1 (cont.)	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Promote Complete and Green Streets, ADA compliance, and engineering and design best practices to support active transportation throughout the state.	Tracking implementation of NJDOT Complete Streets Task Force through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area team	NJDOT Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area Strategies (page 42) Strengthen Complete Streets Implementation by state, county, and municipal governments. Establish a Complete Streets Task Force to improve complete streets integration on state, county, and municipal projects, assess implementation by municipalities, gather lessons learned, and share best practices.
	Tracking inventory of bike/ped facilities from completed construction projects through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Data Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Data Emphasis Area Strategies (page 53) Improve the inventory of recently constructed pedestrian and bicyclist facilities.
Objective 4.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Encourage infrastructure improvements that treat traffic fatalities as preventable through sustained funding and supportive programs.	Assisting in content updates to materials and tracking education of local governments on bicycle and pedestrian grant opportunities through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area Strategies (page 42) Provide recommendations to improve local governments awareness of pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure grant opportunities.
	Tracking implementation of NJDOT quick response safety audits through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area Strategies (page 42) Provide recommendations for a program to perform quick-response road safety audits immediately following pedestrian and bicyclist crashes.
Objective 4.3	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Increase the number of communities adopting and implementing policies, plans and practices that address connected networks and coordinated routine maintenance.	Assisting in the development of a strategy/approach for updating Residential Site Improvement Standards and Municipal Land Use Law, and identifying other opportunities to improve guidance to address active transportation through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area Strategies (page 42) Establish a task team to develop a strategy for updating Residential Site Improvement Standards. Review the State Highway Access Management Code and identify opportunities to provide greater pedestrian and bicycle safety. Review the Municipal Land Use Law and provide recommendations to strengthen it to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety.

GOAL 5

Develop and disseminate research, information and best practice resources.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures Aligned with the 2020 NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Objective 5.1	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Create tools and guidance to promote safe walking, bicycling, and active travel as healthy, sustainable forms of transportation.	See Safe Routes Performance Measures on page 24 of this report.	
Objective 5.2	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Expand messaging and information exchange with the public through events, programs, websites and social media outreach.	See Safe Routes Performance Measures on page 24 of this report.	
Objective 5.3	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Conduct research and report on safety and program best practices.	Identifying and mapping high-risk/high-crash pedestrian and bicycle locations, and developing a methodology/ approach for assessing/identifying underserved communities and locations with high ped/bike safety needs, through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Intersection and Driver Behavior Emphasis Area teams	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Intersections Emphasis Area Strategies (page 30) Improve signalized and unsignalized intersections that are at high risk for pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries. Recommend improvements for identification, mapping, and prioritization of intersections on all roads with a high risk of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries. Develop recommendations on how to encourage and create county and municipal Local Safety Plans. Provide recommendations for implementation of road safety audits on county and municipal roads in underserved communities. NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Driver Behavior Emphasis Area (page 38) Identify underserved communities with an overrepresentation of fatalities and serious injuries and develop a driver behavior education strategy for these communities.
	Assessing current practices nationally for automated speed enforcement in school and work zones through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area (page 42) Assess current practices nationally and provide recommendations for automated speed enforcement in school and work zones as well as vulnerable road user laws.

New Jersey Safe Routes Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures Aligned with the 2020 NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Objective 5.3 (cont.)	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Conduct research and report on safety and program best practices.	Proposing program options and funding sources to continue and enhance the Safe Routes NonInfrastructure Program and providing them to NJDOT management through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area Strategies (page 42) Provide comprehensive pedestrian and bicyclist safety education for students (K-12 and higher education) who walk or bike to school or bus stop. Review the Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Program and provide recommendations for improvement. Implement a comprehensive traffic safety curriculum in elementary schools. Develop pedestrian and bicyclist educational programs focused on teachers, parents, and volunteers at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.
	Improving data and performance measures through participation in the NJ Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area team	NJ 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan Pedestrians and Bicyclists Emphasis Area Strategies (page 43) Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety data and performance measures. Develop performance measures to evaluate the completeness and quality of pedestrian and bicyclist networks, including such factors as levels of traffic stress, infrastructure condition and completeness, ease of use.
Objective 5.4	Performance Measure	Source of Information
Monitor and evaluate the reach and effectiveness of the Safe Routes Program.	See Safe Routes Performance Measures on page 24 of this report.	

9. Future of Safe Routes in New Jersey - Challenges and Reflections beyond 2020

Developing a culture of walking and bicycling not as alternative transportation, but as a principal means of navigating to community destinations such as schools, parks, trails, greenways, libraries, transit, and other key places, requires more than encouraging words; it involves a commitment to supportive policy and changes in land use and the built environment. The future of the Safe Routes program will require addressing significant issues like climate change, implementation of smart practices in land use and development, collaboration with partner organizations to improve messaging, and the use of diverse resources for outreach and events. Based on information gathered from interviews with other state programs, conversations with New Jersey's TMAs, comments from the Strategic Plan Advisory Group, and trends in transportation and mobility, several guiding principles and programs were identified as being crucial to the success of the New Jersey Safe Routes programs over

the next five to ten years.

The Impact of COVID-19 and Other Pandemics on Mobility

The New Jersey Safe Routes program has thus far responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by developing more online training and video resources, in addition to new methods that enable continued work on research, technical assistance, and engagement. Assuming that restrictions related to the pandemic will remain in place through at least mid-2021, future Safe Routes activities will be defined by the ongoing need for online resources and virtual events. Remote learning will not disappear entirely with the end of the pandemic, and the same is true for the increased rates of walking and bicycling that have resulted from the lockdown. The Safe Routes program will expand safety training and support for infrastructure improvements to encourage continued and new active transportation among all users.

Infrastructure Improvements that Promote Safety, Sustainability, and Equity **Climate Change, Resiliency, and Complete and Green Streets**

There is a critical link between transportation fuel usage, air quality, and climate. In New Jersey, the transportation sector is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and accounts for more than forty percent of total statewide greenhouse gas emissions. As the threat of climate change grows, designing both Green Streets and Complete Streets is increasingly important. New stormwater rules from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection adopted in 2020 include a requirement that green infrastructure must be used to meet stormwater management standards for water quality, groundwater recharge, and quantity control. In 2019, NJDOT released a new Complete and Green Streets Model Policy and Guide for municipalities and counties to use when creating or updating their policy. Safe Routes will provide ongoing encouragement and technical assistance to support communities with adopting or updating policies and implementing infrastructure that prioritizes a healthy environment for youth, low-income communities, and communities of color.

Zero Deaths Initiatives and Safe System

New Jersey has a history of being federally designated as a Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Focus State due to the high numbers of pedestrian or bicycle-involved fatalities.³ Yet roadway deaths are preventable.

The Safe System approach envisions a state where people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities who drive, bicycle, walk, use public transit, and use mobility devices can safely coexist on our streets



without risk of harm. Reaching zero deaths requires the implementation of a Safe System approach; which differs from other approaches to road safety by addressing “upstream” systemic issues with infrastructure design. If safety problems persist, the responsibility returns to the system designers and policymakers to ensure safe conditions. Individuals should still follow the rules, laws, and policies to help create safer travel conditions. However, when a Safe Systems approach is taken, the inevitability of human mistakes is anticipated and accommodated, resulting in less severe injury crashes. Creating child-friendly infrastructure, policies, action plans, and educational messages based on the Safe Systems premise is a focus of the program. Safe Routes programs emphasize children’s safety as a priority in the Safe System approach, Zero Death action plans and initiatives by engaging youth and families in a culture of road safety and creating safer spaces through road design that saves lives and reduces injuries.

Racial Equity and Social Justice

All residents in a community – regardless of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, gender identity, income, or ability – should be able to engage in active transportation in a safe and healthy environment to meet their daily mobility needs. In addition, New Jersey residents, including youth, should feel empowered to meaningfully participate in decision-making, especially when it affects their health and safety. Equity in Safe Routes programs recognizes that barriers to participation are different for people depending on many factors that influence opportunities and outcomes. For example, children from lower-income families are twice as likely to walk to school as children from higher-income families, with the former often facing greater personal and traffic safety risks.⁴ Children are especially vulnerable to adverse health effects caused by exposure to pollution. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased awareness of the discrepancies in access to healthcare, education, employment, and transportation among different populations. Prioritizing Safe Routes program implementation in low-income areas can have a

significant impact on improving safety.

Recent Environmental Justice law enacted in New Jersey⁵ highlights the need to correct historical injustices to the state’s most vulnerable residents, including a high number of environmental and public health stressors in low-income communities and communities of color. One of the benefits of conducting a school district-wide travel plan for walking and bicycling is using demographic and safety data to identify the areas with the most need. This is a starting point, and continuing efforts to identify communities of greatest need and respond with education and infrastructure improvements will help to promote equitable decision-making and distribution of funding

and other resources.

Expanding the Program’s Influence on Youth Travel

Youth Travel

Young people walk, bike, and use other wheeled devices not only to get to school, but also to parks and recreation areas, transit, employment, and other locations in their communities. Expansion of the Safe Routes program to address infrastructure throughout communities will support safety, physical activity, and healthy lifestyles among youth.



⁴ McDonald, N. Critical Factors for Active Transportation to School Among Low Income and Minority Students: Evidence from the 2001 National Household Travel Survey. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 34.4 (2008): 341-344

⁵ NJ Department of Environmental Protection, Environmental Justice Law, Policy and Regulation, New Jersey Environmental Justice Rulemaking Title 13, Chapter 92, C.13:1D-157 <https://www.nj.gov/dep/ej/policy.html>

Safe Routes to School Bus Stops

In accordance with state law, all public elementary school students in grades K-8 who live more than two miles from their school and all public secondary school students in grades 9-12 who live more than two-and-a-half miles from their school are entitled to school bus transportation. In addition, many New Jersey school districts provide busing for students who reside within the district's geographic limits at their own discretion and expense. School Transportation Supervisors, employed by the school district or through a private contractor, are responsible for safety in bus routing and establishing school bus stops. However, since safety along roads is the municipal, county, or state responsibility based on road jurisdiction, the student's route between home and the school bus stop and the on-street characteristics of the bus stop waiting area also influence student safety around traffic. Currently, the Safe Routes program does not include safe routes to bus stops. However, when conducting school travel plans, walk and bike audits, etc., parents and students often note school bus stop safety concerns. Also, TMA Safe Routes Coordinators and members of the Strategic Plan advisory group mentioned safe routes to bus stops as areas in need of program expansion, especially in lower-income rural areas.

Safe Routes to High Schools

Currently, the Safe Routes program focuses primarily on children in grades K-8. Expansion of the program to include high school students will encourage these community members to use active transportation, engage in physical activity, and choose walking or bicycling over driving. Addressing the commuting needs of high school students, for example, through district-wide school travel plans, will improve the safety of these students, and by extension, all community members.

Beyond improving safety, involving youth in community-based change presents a multitude of other benefits, including creating stronger bonds between community members, supporting the

development of future leaders, and imparting the skills necessary to form lifelong walking and bicycling habits. Expanding the Safe Routes program to include high school students will allow them to better understand and more fully participate in solutions to key issues, such as sustainability and climate change, that will only become more prominent throughout their lifetime.

Access to Parks, Trails, and Greenways

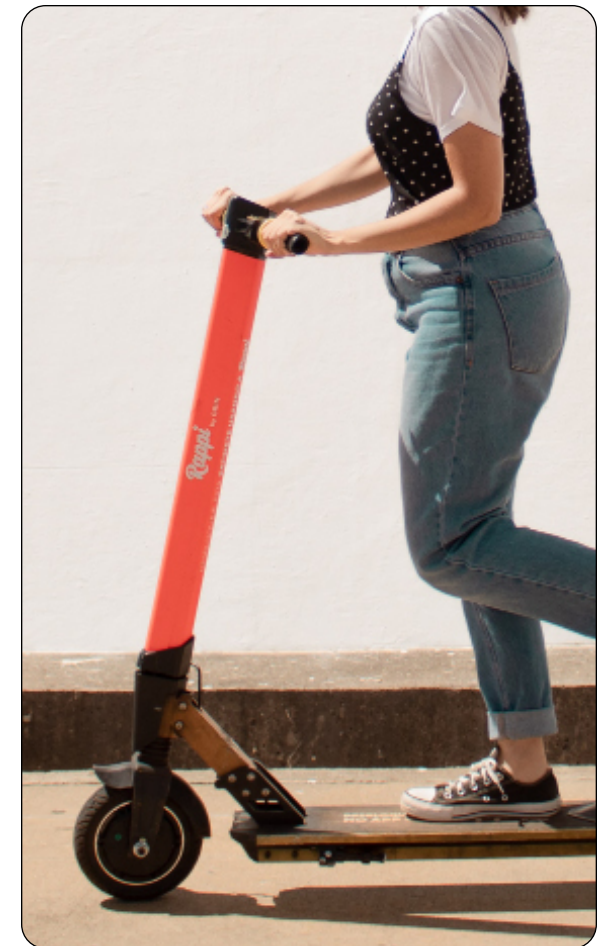
Broadening the scope of the Safe Routes program to address access to places of recreation, especially for youth, will contribute to a more holistic approach to supporting community health and safety. Safe Routes to Parks and the 10-Minute Walk Campaign are two nationwide initiatives that seek to increase safe and equitable access to parks. The 10-Minute Walk Campaign, which is led by the non-profit Trust for Public Land, recognizes the role of open space in promoting mentally and physically healthy communities and aims to ensure that every person in America has access to a park within a 10-minute walk from where they live. Safe Routes to Parks is a campaign by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) that encourages multimodal access to parks for people of all ages and abilities. The NRPA campaign emphasizes the importance of parks that are located close to where people live, are safe and free of vehicular traffic, are comfortable and attractive places to spend time, and are well-maintained and programmed.

High-quality parks, trails and greenways foster physical and social health within a community, and safe access to these vital resources is especially important for children, the elderly, and those without cars. By leveraging ongoing initiatives, the Safe Routes program can create partnerships with local Departments of Parks and Recreation to plan and implement programs and infrastructure that encourage active transportation to and from places of recreation.

Micromobility

Micromobility options, including e-scooters, e-bikes, and bike and scooter shares, are becoming more

prevalent in communities throughout the state. Because micromobility options are both inexpensive and convenient, they can be extremely beneficial for and attractive to young people, empowering them to learn to navigate their communities independently. At the same time, youth must be properly trained to safely use these forms of transportation to protect themselves and pedestrians. By expanding existing bicycle education programs to incorporate e-scooter and e-bike safety, the Safe Routes program will enable youth to safely take full advantage of micromobility transportation options that support their health and develop their sense of independence.



Improving the Future with Technology

The future of transportation will include technological advances that enable people to connect with and track their physical health and social activities, breathe cleaner air, address climate change issues, and navigate to destinations with safer mobility options. New advances in technology will allow widespread recording of personal habits and daily activities, and using these new data collection techniques and datasets will refine how decisions are made regarding changes to the built environment. A few advances are already taking hold, including improved online mapping tools for public health and environmental data, collection of information and public input through crowdsource mapping, the roll-out of electric motor vehicles, bicycles and scooters, the development of connected and autonomous vehicles, the use of app-based micromobility and ride-sharing services, the application of online meeting tools like live captions and automatic text or voice translation, the use of drones and droids for deliveries, and new measurement tools for environmental concerns like air quality and carbon footprint calculators. For example, Greater Mercer TMA rolled out an updated New Jersey Walking School Bus phone app that helps families create walking groups and measures activities such as miles walked and CO2 saved. Employing technology to solve every-day transportation needs will be part of the Safe Routes program.

Sustained Funding

Congress established the Safe Routes to Schools Program in 2005 as a part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). State Departments of Transportation are designated by the federal legislation as the lead state agency through which funding is channeled. In 2012, the spending bill, known by the acronym MAP-21, eliminated Safe Routes to School as a stand-alone program but allowed states like New Jersey to maintain it as a separate sub-allocation. Safe Routes was folded into a larger

program called “Transportation Alternatives” at that time and remains under that designation. The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act passed in December 2015 represented the first comprehensive, long-term surface transportation legislation since 2005’s SAFETEA-LU. Transportation Alternatives funds continue to provide roughly fifty percent of all the federal funds for walking and bicycling programs. The two types of projects eligible for Safe Routes funding are infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure activities.

It is anticipated that the next federal surface transportation reauthorization for highway and transit programs will be considered in 2021. Funding and programs expected to be included in the new bill include addressing climate change and resiliency needs with new grant programs and carbon emission reduction

requirements, establishing federal and state vehicle miles traveled pilot programs, updating equity provisions focused on low-income and transit-dependent communities, and instituting mandates on addressing vulnerable user safety in states and areas where fifteen percent or more of all fatalities are vulnerable users such as bicyclists, walkers, and people using mobility devices. Sustained institutional support for Safe Routes programs in New Jersey will be a challenge as the next federal surface transportation reauthorization makes its way into law. Safe Routes advocates and supporters around the state will be charged with demonstrating the value of the program to New Jersey’s youth, strengthening local programs, and working with communities to develop stronger plans for better funding applications. Partnerships with agencies and organizations that share core values with the NJ Safe Routes program will be crucial to the program’s success.

By strengthening programs and partnerships, the New Jersey Safe Routes program plans to meet and address the challenges of the next decade and successfully implement its vision of access to active transportation for people of all ages and abilities from all backgrounds and neighborhoods throughout the State of New Jersey.



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NEW JERSEY SAFE ROUTES

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

