

NETCONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



TRAVEL PLAN

January 2024



NEW JERSEY
Safe Routes



**Avenues
in Motion**

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NETCONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MISSION

Netcong, a tradition to nurture, inspire, empower, and achieve, by all, for all.

INTRODUCTION

Netcong Elementary School completed their first School Travel Plan in 2006. In 2016, they updated their Travel Plan to show the many improvements to the walking and bicycling environment around the school. Around that time, sidewalks were installed along Prospect Street, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon solar lights were installed at the mid-block crossing in front of the school on College Road, and the PTA ran regular 'Walk and Roll Wednesdays' plus an annual Bike Rodeo.

This School Travel Plan is a thorough update to the 2016 Travel Plan, highlighting many updates and activities. While retaining the original history and documentation from previous Travel Plans, this Travel Plan includes all updates since 2016, and also includes maps at different scales representing the town, crossing guard locations, sidewalks, crosswalk locations and the school drop off zone. This Plan reflects how the School continues to highlight safer routes to school, encourage students to become physically fit, and reduce vehicular traffic in the community. It address both student health and the environment. The Netcong Elementary Board of Education continues to find ways to improve the overall health and safety of the pupils traveling to and from school.

WORKING GROUP

This plan was prepared by the Netcong Elementary School Superintendent and administration, the Borough Administrator, the Netcong PTA, the Netcong Police Department, the Borough Engineer, and staff from Avenues in Motion.

GOALS

- To encourage students to walk/cycle to school
- To provide students with the life skills on how to safely walk and bicycle
- To improve the safety of our students as they travel to and from school
- To improve the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to school
- To help lessen the motor vehicle congestion and pollution around the school
- To keep children and parents healthy
- To raise awareness of daily health
- To encourage health habits for life
- To play a part in improving the environment

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

NETCONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
26 College Road - Netcong, NJ 07857

GRADE LEVELS: PreK-8

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT:

2020-2021	283
2021-2022	277
2022-2023	295

SCHOOL HOURS: 8:15 am – 3:07 pm
Breakfast is offered at 7:45am



Netcong Elementary School is a small school in a town of approximately 3,375 residents located in Morris County, NJ. The school is situated on a hill in the center of the Borough. For a small town about a mile square, the Borough is surrounded by several major highways including Routes 46, 183, 206, and 80. A NJ Transit commuting rail line also bisects the town. Netcong School is a Choice District and accepts students to the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program.

From 2000 to 2010, Netcong experienced a 25.9% population change, which is much greater than the percent population change of both Morris County and New Jersey. This positive population change is largely attributed to the influx in the Hispanic population, which experienced a 178.8% population change from 2000 to 2010 and continuing with a 40.4% population change from 2010 to 2012. While much of the population increase in Morris County and New Jersey is also attributed to the increase in the Hispanic population, the percent change of the Hispanic population in Netcong is much larger.

Compared with municipalities in the three county area (Morris, Sussex & Warren), Netcong has one of the highest percentages of families living below poverty at 14.2%. Median household income is \$52,280, which is well below the state average of \$70,165. Recent findings from the Community Needs Assessment from Atlantic Healthcare/North Jersey Health Collaborative found one in five adults in Morris County is obese with high rates among low-income children (18.1% obese.)

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of students enrolled in Netcong's K-8 school receive free and reduced meal (FARM) subsidies, one of the highest percentages in the county. Additionally, 21% percent of households in Morris County are considered "ALICE" (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). Per capita income is significantly higher (almost double) for Asian and White individuals than for Hispanic/Latino and Black or African American individuals. While Morris County as a whole is highly educated, with 93% of adults having a high school degree or higher and 50% having a bachelor's degree or higher, those living in Netcong with a high school degree is 86% and bachelor's degree or higher is only 17%.

EXISTING SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to walk or bike to school daily. The school has a rich history of Walk and Roll to School Events and Encouragement Activities. One Wednesday during almost each month students can walk on their own or join walking school buses and get backpack charms for participation in Netcong Walk and Roll Club events. Each event has a theme like the *Turkey Trot* in November, *Save the Endangered Stinky Sneaker* in May, *Spare the Air* in April and *Be a Walk and Roll Star* in June. In addition, Netcong Elementary PTA volunteers work with Avenues in Motion and Northern NJ Safe Kids to support a Bike Rodeo once per year, which include free helmets with helmet fitting, a fix-it station for children's bicycles, and skills drills for the students. The Netcong Walk and Roll Club and annual bike rodeos have been on-going since 2009 and the reason for receiving the NJDOT Safe Routes to School Gold Award in 2015, 2018, and 2021. Since the last update of this Travel Plan the school has additionally instituted regular pedestrian and bicycle education classes for all of their students given by Avenues in Motion Staff. These classes include *Ready to Walk and Roll* for K-2nd grade students, *Traffic Safety Town* for 3-5 grade students and *Bike Driver's Ed* for 6-8 grade students.

Netcong successfully used \$143,000 of the 2007 NJDOT federal Safe Routes to School funding on the construction of sidewalks along Prospect Street and adding bicycle racks at the school. The project was completed in the summer of 2008, just in time for the 2008-2009 school year. When NJDOT replaced the Rt. 46/Rt.183 traffic circle with a 4-way intersection, Netcong and NJDOT worked together to address connections along a popular walk to school route. Infrastructure improvements included adding pedestrian signal across Rt. 46 at Center and Main Streets and adding paint and striping to the crossing at Rt. 183 and Maple Ave where pedestrians and the crossing guard complained of near misses.

The Working Group identified many problematic behaviors around the school that were unsafe and addressed them in collaboration with the borough and the Police Department. Here is a list of improvements since 2016:

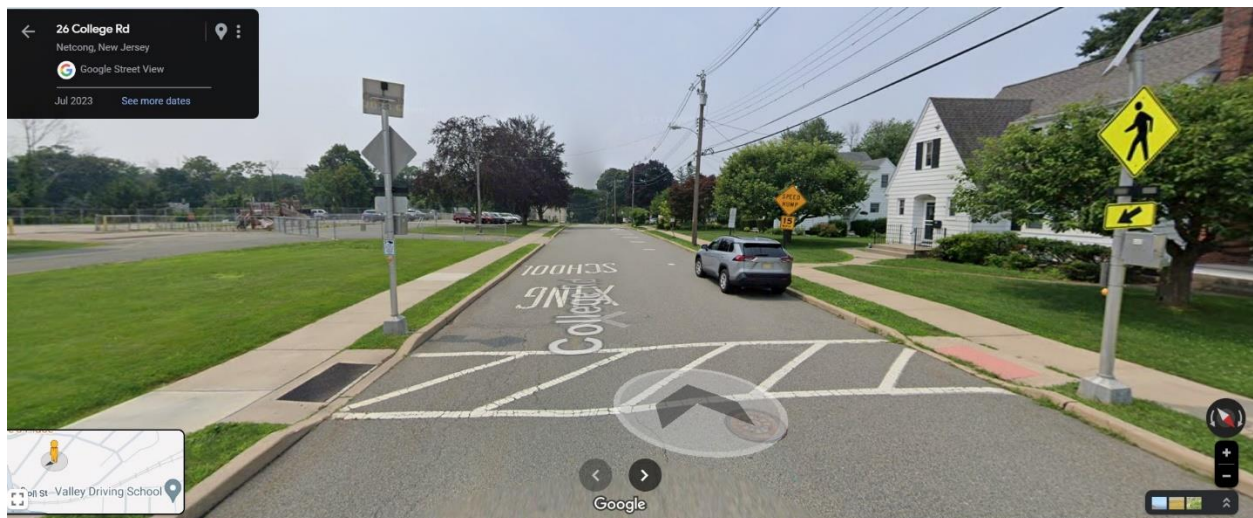
Netcong produced an instructional video for the entire school community in 2023, showing pedestrians where to walk and how to use the crosswalk properly. It also provided instructions for parents on safety around dropping kids off and picking kids up safely. They encouraged as many kids as possible to walk to school to ease the

congestion at arrival and dismissal times. In addition to the crossing guards, the school posts a security officer and three additional staff to monitor the safety of pedestrians around school arrival and dismissal.

Netcong Police observed many unsafe behaviors among drivers and pedestrians alike and sent a letter to families outlining the laws and policies around walking, crossing the street, parking and walking in the crosswalk. They regularly spot check the school on foot, in marked and unmarked cars, and have issued many citations for unsafe behaviors to help curb unsafe behaviors.

In addition to the many ongoing non-infrastructure activities at Netcong, there have been several infrastructure updates since 2016:

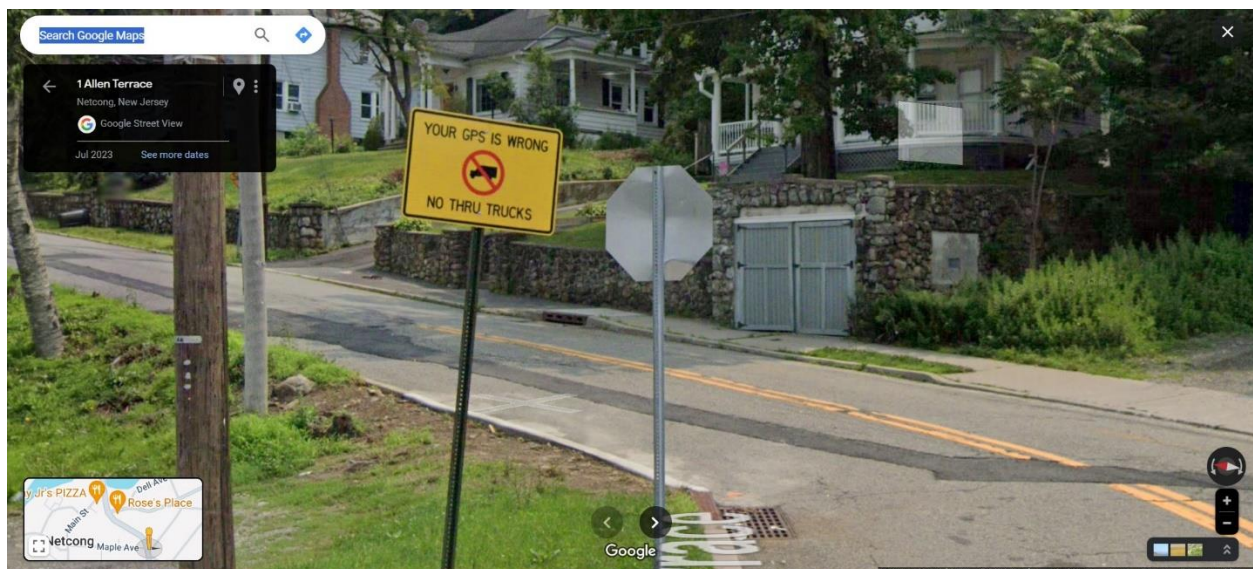
On College Ave, speed humps were constructed not long after the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon was added at the main crosswalk in front of the school.



A Flashing Stop Sign was added at the corner of College Ave and Stoll to reduce cars speeding through the intersection.



Allen Terrace was made off limits to trucks to reduce the amount of commercial traffic cutting and speeding through the neighborhood.



Speed humps and a Radar Speed Sign were added to Allen Terrace to slow down speeding cars.



Do Not Enter and One Way Signs were posted to turn Prospect Ave into a One Way Street between Alan Street and Allen Terrace to reduce traffic, speeding, and cars turning onto Prospect too quickly without slowing for the large amount of children walking up this street.



Additionally, speed humps were installed along Stoll Street.

ALLEN STREET WALKABILITY AUDIT

In 2016, the Working Group conducted a Walkability Audit on Allen Street. Many improvements were made on the basis of this audit, but some challenges remain. Improvements are noted below.



Allen St & Rt. 183/Ledgewood Ave.

2016 (Left): The length of the crossing and the wide turning radii make this one of the most difficult crossings in town. Most drivers only slow to make a right-turn from Rt. 183 onto Allen Street. There is a need for a pedestrian countdown signals and high visibility crosswalk striping at this crossing. In addition, either corner bollards that reduce the turning radii or a pedestrian refuge would decrease the unprotected crossing distance.

2024 (Below): Ladder Crosswalk has been painted, no other improvements.



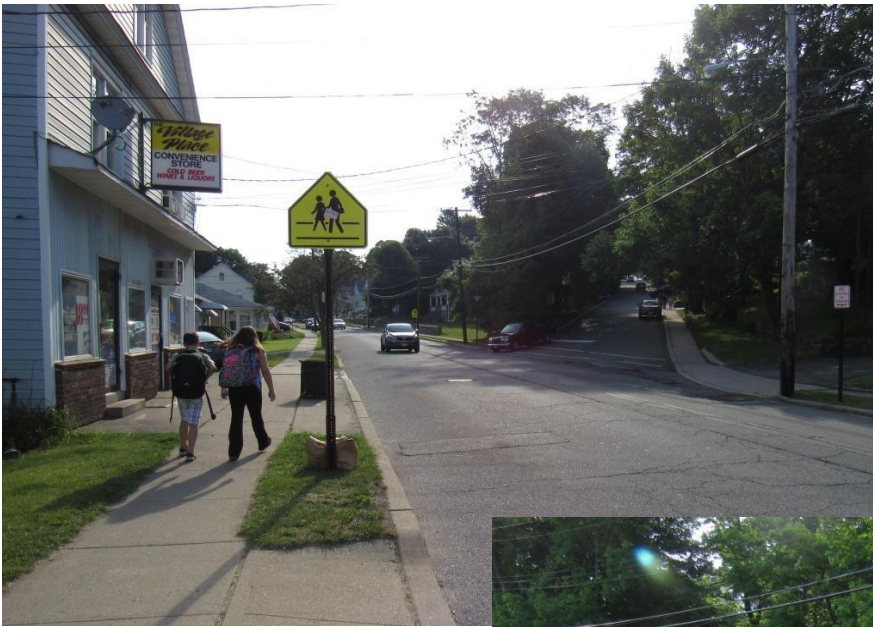
Allen St. & Dell Ave.



2016 (Left): Need for ADA compliant curb cuts where the slope of the ramp is not too steep, truncated dome pads, high visibility crosswalk.

2024 (Below): Crosswalk updated, now faded. New truncated domes.





Allen St. & Prospect Ave.

2016 (Left and Below): This intersection needs crosswalk and all ADA improvements. Installing flexible bollards would shorten crossing distance and prevent drivers from parking within 25ft. of the crosswalk on either side.



2024 (Below): All ADA improvements made, high visibility crosswalks installed. Additionally, Prospect was made a One Way street between Allen St and Alan Ter, prohibiting cars from turning onto Prospect from Alan St.





Allen St & Water St.

2016 (Left): Move crosswalk to corner so it is not mid-block and a driver's view of pedestrians is not blocked by a pole.

2024 (Below): Crosswalk removed and relocated to the corner of Allen St and Prospect





Allen St. & Kings Rd.

2016 (Left): Need for ADA compliant curb ramps and high visibility crosswalk striping. Add stop and stay stopped in-street crosswalk sign (MUTCD 7B.12)

2024 (Below): ADA compliant curb ramps and high visibility crosswalk installed





Allen St. & Stoll St.

2016 (Left): Wide curb radii contributes to issues with drivers not slowing to make a stop before turning onto Allen St. Crosswalk striping and curb extensions to tighten the turning radius are needed.

2024 (Below): Crosswalk installed.



Allen St. at Netcong Boarder



2016: At the Netcong boarder with Roxbury, there is a need to slow driving speeds to obey the 25 mph speed limit, provide bicycle compatible shoulders and add a sidewalk.

2024: No improvements.

EXISTING REGULATIONS

Netcong is a walking District, there is no District provided bus service to the students. All the students in the District either walk or bike to school or are passengers in vehicles. A few students use busing provided by a nearby daycare center. The amount of students traveling to and from school causes a great deal of congestion in front of the school. This traffic also causes congestion to the state and county roads that run through the Borough.

In 2009, the ban on bicycling to school was changed to a policy, which allows fourth graders and above to ride bikes to school. At that time new bicycle racks were installed by the Board of Education building and are frequently used.

Netcong's Council was an early adopter of a Complete Streets policy. The Borough's policy was adopted in 2010 shortly after the NJDOT's award-winning policy was adopted. In 2011, the Complete Streets Coalition named Netcong's policy as one of the top policies in the nation adopted in a small or rural municipality. Netcong is one of 31 designated Transit Villages in NJ. Since receiving state designation in 2005, Netcong has been working to redevelop the area around the train station to increase housing within walking distance of shops, jobs, offices, restaurants and Netcong Elementary School using design standards of transit-oriented development (TOD).

HOW STUDENTS TRAVEL TO SCHOOL

Student Arrival and Dismissal Travel Tallies were conducted in 2006, 2016, and 2024 using the forms from the Voorhees Transportation Center for Safe Routes to School. Teachers conducted counts by asking students to raise their hands to indicate how they arrived at school and how they plan to leave the school. Students chose from “walk,” bike,” “school bus,” “family vehicle,” “carpool,” “transit,” and “other.” Teachers conducted surveys during the week of December 4, 2006, the week of May 9, 2016, and the week of December 11, 2023.

Numbers may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Bikers may be underrepresented in 2023 because of weather conditions during the time tallies were taken.

	2006		2016		2023	
	Arrival	Dismissal	Arrival	Dismissal	Arrival	Dismissal
School Bus (Private)	<1%	<1%	3%	1%	0.80%	2%
Students are Driven	63%	50%	60%	50%	65%	56%
Students Walk	20%	28%	33%	39%	32%	39%
Students Bike	0%	0%	0.70%	2%	0%	0%
Carpool (>1 family)	16%	19%	4%	7%	3%	4%
Transit & Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

TRAFFIC SAFETY BARRIERS & OPPORTUNITIES

Several major highways connect to or pass through Netcong making it very difficult for children to walk or bike to school as many of the routes cross business driveways along the highways. A NJ Transit commuter rail line runs through Netcong near the back of the school. Students often cut across the train tracks to walk to and from school (See ½ mile radius map.)

The roads outside of Netcong School are residential and have sidewalks. Recent improvements on College Road include a pedestrian activated, rectangular rapid flash beacon at the mid-block crossing. Allen Street is county road where there is significant large truck traffic and drivers often speed above the 25 mph limit. Ledgewood Avenue (Route 183) is a state highway that bisects the town where the speed limit is 35 mph. Parents and students complain of near-misses with drivers while crossing Ledgewood Avenue and Allen Street.

The parking lot in the front of the school and the fenced-in area adjacent to the playground on the South side of the building are for staff only. There is parking available in the spaces in the front of the Staff Lot on the side of the building, behind the school adjacent to the Board of Education building and on College Road. On the south side of the building there is also a “drive-through” where parents are to remain in their vehicles and pull up to the fenced in area for their children to get either in or out of the vehicle.

IDEAS FOR ADDRESSING TRAFFIC SAFETY CONCERNS

1. Stripe high-visibility, ladder crosswalks & add ADA curb ramps and truncated dome pads where missing.
 - College Rd. & Prospect St. **(Completed since 2016)**
 - Hillside Ave. & Prospect St.
 - Stoll St. & Prospect St.
 - Allen St. & Prospect St. **(Completed since 2016)**
 - Move crosswalk across Allen St near Water Ave to the actual intersection **(Completed since 2016)**
 - Allen St. & Kings Ave. (add stop & stay stopped signs to center median) **(Crosswalks and ADA curb ramps and truncated dome pads completed since 2016)**
 - Allen St. & Stoll St
 - Dell Ave & Water St.
 - Route 183 & Route 46 (crosswalks are already faded)
2. Add high-visibility, ladder stripped painted crosswalks where currently unmarked crosswalks exist.& add ADA curb ramps and truncated dome pads:
 - Allen St & Prospect St. (both legs of intersection) **(Completed since 2016)**
 - Main St and Rt. 183 **(Completed since 2016, intersection also has RRFB installed)**
3. Install radar feedback signs on each side of the road:
 - Allen St. near Prospect St.
 - Allen St. near Koclas Dr in vicinity of speed limit change to 25 mph
 - Dell Ave near DiRenzo Park
4. Make intersection of Allen St & Rt. 183 permanent “no right turn on red” on all legs. See page 3 of [NJDOT Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Toolbox](#).
5. Add stop and stay stopped in-street crosswalk signs (MUTCD 7B.12)
 - Rt. 183 & Maple Ave.
 - Allen St. & Kings. Ave.
6. Add pedestrian countdown timers and add additional ADA push buttons:
 - Rt. 183 & Allen St.

7. Route 183/Maple Ave/Allen Terrace

- Add pedestrian hybrid beacon (HAWK signal) or Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) warning device to un-signalized intersection.
- Stripe high visibility ladder crosswalks
- Add flexible bollards as curb extensions crossing Rt. 183.
- Add pedestrian lighting approx 10 feet ahead of crosswalk on Rt. 183.
- Add stop and stay stopped in-street crosswalk signs (MUTCD 7B.12)
- Fix flashing warning beacon along Rt. 183

8. Add flexible bollards to delineate no parking area/increase sight distance for crosswalks (daylight crosswalks)

- College Ave mid-block crosswalk in front of school
- Allen St. & Prospect (along with high visibility crosswalk)

Example, [NJDOT School Zone Design Guide](#)

Also see page 4 of [NJDOT Pedestrian Safety Action Plan](#)

When does "when children are present" apply?

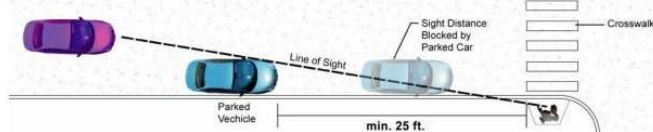
"When children are present" does not apply at all times in a school zone. The Superior Court of New Jersey has determined the lower speed limit in a school zone is only applicable (1) during school hours, but only during recess, when children are clearly visible from the roadway, or (2) when children are going to or leaving school during opening or closing hours of school (State of New Jersey v. Floyd A. Beierle (1999)). The reduced school zone speed limit does not apply outside of these times.

Regardless of the time of day or year, drivers should always be alert and on the lookout for children when driving near schools, parks or other attractions.

What other traffic laws relate to school zones?

Restricting parking in advance of crosswalks and corners improves visibility of the crossing for both drivers and pedestrians. According to N.J.S.A 39:4-138, parking is not permitted:

- within an intersection;
- on a crosswalk;
- within 50 feet of a "stop" sign; or
- within 25 feet of the nearest crosswalk or side line of a street or intersecting highway or within 10 feet of the nearest crosswalk or side line of a street or intersecting highway, if a curb extension or bulb-out has been constructed at that crosswalk.



Recommended Parking Setback for Sight Distance. Image: The RBA Group

Criteria for Safe Speed Limit Design

According to N.J.S.A. 39:4-98, when designating reasonable and safe speed limits for a street under its jurisdiction, as part of an engineering and traffic investigation, a municipality or county shall consider, but not be limited to, the following criteria: crash history; residential density; the presence, or lack, of sidewalks; the prevalence of entry and exit ways for business and commercial establishments; whether school children walk adjacent to the street on their way to and from school; the proximity of recreational or park areas, schools, community residences, family day care homes, child care centers, assisted living facilities or senior communities; and input from the school district and other community representatives.



The City of New Brunswick has begun installing plastic pylons in the no-parking area, a practice called "daylighting." The cost of purchasing and installing the standard-use pylons is minimal and can be done in-house with little delay. Image: VTC

9. Add shared lane marking (sharrows) to Dell Ave. See Section 9C.07 of the 2009 MUTCD or install Bicycles May use Full Lane signs (MUTCD R4-11)

10. Add vertical reflective strip to STOP signs (MUTCD 2A.21)

11. Add sidewalk along Allen Street at Netcong boarder. Fix broken and heaved sidewalk along Allen Street. Add sidewalk on Route 46 to connect to Netcong Heights.

12. Reduce sweeping curb radii that barely require vehicles to slow when making right turns at intersections

- Rt. 183 & Allen St.
- Stoll St. & Allen St.

**For Rt. 183
& Allen St.**

Example



Add pedestrian
countdown timers
& additional ADA
push buttons

Add crosswalk on
Ledgewood Ave

Add pork chop/
pedestrian refuge
island Option A.
paint (ok)
Option B. concrete
with mountable
curbs (best)

Add ergonomic
crosswalk across
Allen St.

NETCONG - SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GRANT RECIPIENT 2016

In 2016, Netcong was awarded a Safe Routes to School Grant in the amount of \$243,000 from the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority for Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Improvements. Netcong also received Design Assistance from GPI. Design Assistance Services, which are complete as of August 2024, address pedestrian mobility and safety deficiencies for children walking to and from Netcong Elementary School, as well as drainage issues, pedestrian visibility, and curb ramp deficiencies. Improvements include:

- New Sidewalks and Curbs
- High Visibility Crosswalks
- Rapid Flashing Beacon Warning Signs
- Radar Actuated Speed Limit Feedback Signs
- Speed Tables
- High Visibility Crosswalks
- Curb Ramp Upgrade

The infrastructure has not yet been installed.

WHAT NETCONG SCHOOL IS ALREADY DOING

- The Administration encourages parents and students to walk to school and use the Crossing Guards and marked crosswalks. The Administration created a video on walking and drop off safety that was sent to the entire school community in 2023.
- The Administration regularly patrols outside before and after school.
- The school encourages healthy ways of traveling to school through participation in the Netcong Walk & Roll Club, posters, education, and assemblies.
- The Administration is in frequent contact with the Borough's Police Department regarding issues with speeding and failure to follow proper pick up and drop off procedures. The police spot checks the school and issues traffic violations. Police issued a letter to the entire school community in 2023 informing them of policies and their intent to patrol and enforce.

WHAT NETCONG SCHOOL CAN DO (Education and Encouragement)

- The Administration will write to the parents to suggest that their children walk, bicycle or carpool as much as possible to and from school.
- The School District will continue to promote monthly Netcong PTA Walk & Roll Club events including International and statewide "Walk to School Day" events.
- The Administration will continue to work with the PTA, Borough Police Department, Northern New Jersey SafeKids and Avenues in Motion to run annual bicycle rodeos.

- The School District will promote walking to school by organizing bicycle and pedestrian lesson plans and education programs.
- The School District will work with Netcong Police Department and leverage school and municipal websites and social media to provide public anti-idling law education to parents, school staff, community members and delivery trucks/commercial vehicles.
- The School District will work with Netcong Police Department and leverage school and municipal websites and social media to provide education on traffic laws including no texting, cell phone use, stop and stay stopped for pedestrians and obeying crossing guards to school staff, parents and community members.
- The School District can circulate the School Travel Plan report.

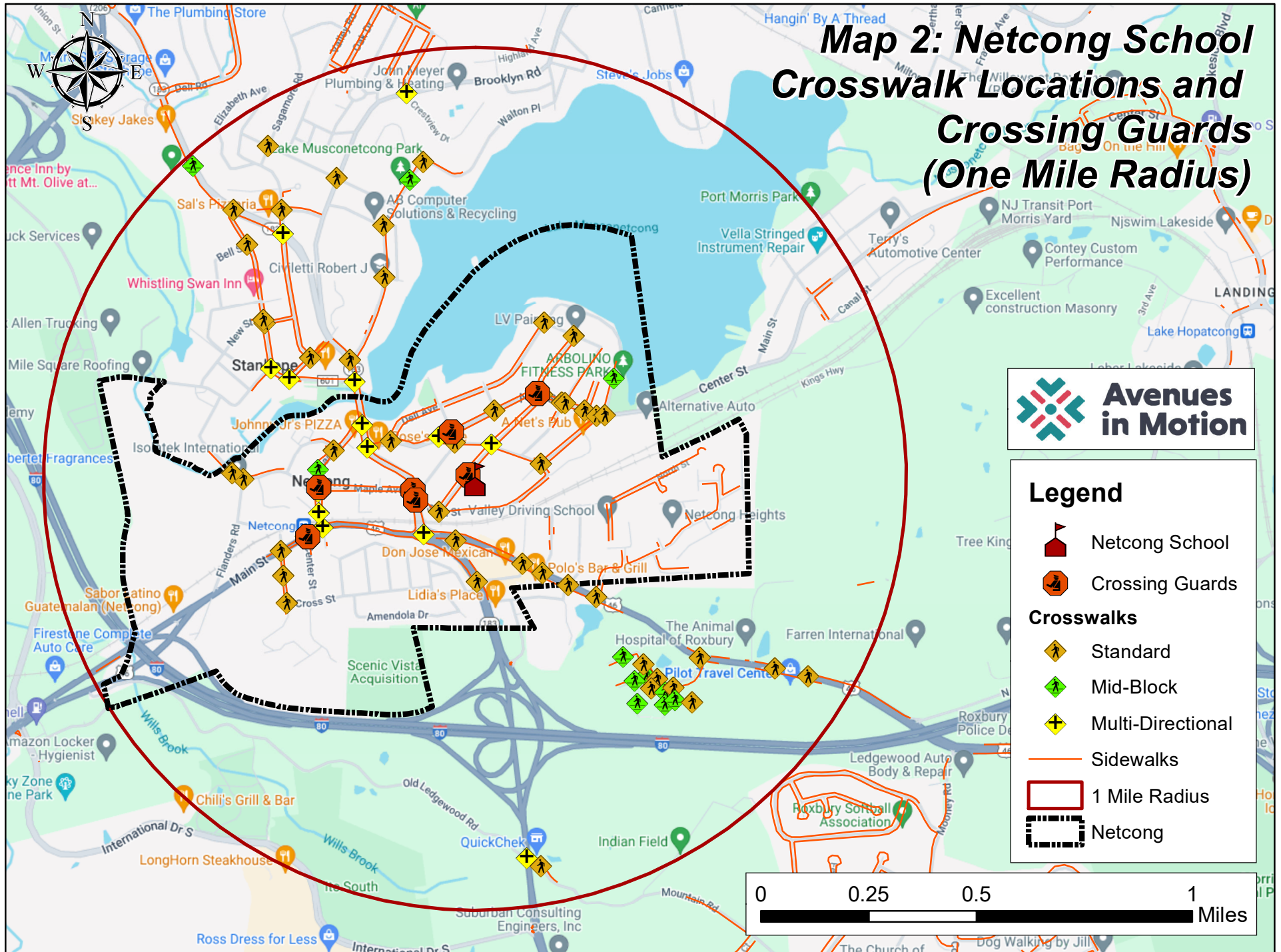
WHAT NETCONG BOROUGH CAN DO **(Engineering and Enforcement)**

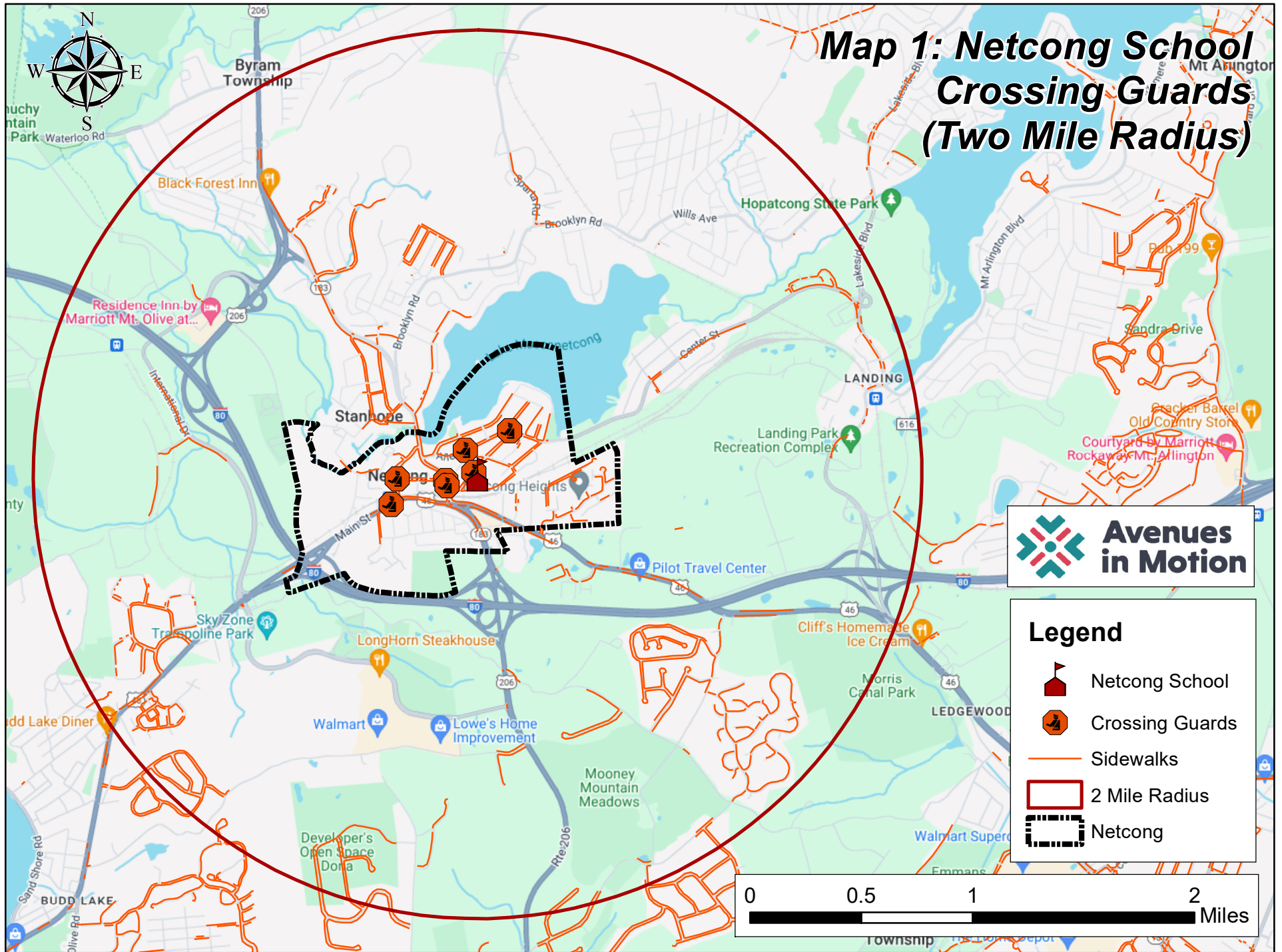
- Improve signage for school routes throughout the Borough.
- Continue quality training and placement of the Crossing Guards.
- As needed, work with property owners to improve and repair sidewalks along school routes.
- As needed, reach out to property owners with untrimmed bushes/overgrown trees, which may block drivers' view and make it difficult to see pedestrians.
- Work with Netcong Police Department to enhance enforcement of speeding violations, failure to stop and stay stopped for pedestrians in crosswalks, and parking violations.
- Define and improve crosswalks with more visible striping.
- Restricting parking in advance of crosswalks and corners to improve visibility of the crossing for both drivers and pedestrians by painting the curb yellow and adding plastic pylons in the no-parking area within 25 feet of the crosswalk.
- Continue cooperation between the School District, Police Department and the Borough on events like the annual Bike Rodeo and monthly Walk & Roll.
- Work with the School District and Netcong Police Department and leverage school and municipal websites and social media to provide public anti-idling law education to parents, school staff, community members and delivery trucks/commercial vehicles.
- Work with the School District and Netcong Police Department and leverage school and municipal websites and social media to provide education on traffic laws including no texting, cell phone use, stop and stay stopped for pedestrians and obeying crossing guards to school staff, parents and community members.
- Work with Morris County to make pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements along Allen Street.
- Work with NJDOT to explore the feasibility of traffic safety recommendations for Routes 183 and 46.
- The Borough can circulate the School Travel Plan report.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Working with the Police Department, the Borough will conduct speed studies prior to and after implementation of infrastructure improvements.
- The School District will conduct the student arrival and departure travel mode survey after infrastructure improvements are made to determine if there are changes to how children travel to and from school.
- Working with the Police Department, the Borough will monitor crash data to understand changes over time.
- The School District and Borough will periodically review the actions in the Travel Plan and continue to make improvements.
- The Netcong PTA will continue to monitor the number of students participating in Walk and Roll to school events and the annual Bike Rodeo.

Map 2: Netcong School Crosswalk Locations and Crossing Guards (One Mile Radius)





Map 3: Netcong School Crossing Guards and Drop Off Zone (Half Mile Radius)

