NJDOT & Youth Advisory Board Video Concept Challenge: "My Community, My Mobility, My Future"

Purpose:

Every traffic death is preventable and unacceptable. Through the **New Jersey Target Zero initiative**, the state has established a goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2040 through a coordinated, data-driven approach that prioritizes safer transportation systems for **ALL** roadway users. A central component of this effort is the **Safe System Approach**, which recognizes that people make mistakes and that communities must be designed so those mistakes do not result in death or serious injury.

Achieving this vision requires a new generation of leaders, problem-solvers, designers, planners, engineers, and advocates who can imagine a future where everyone can travel safely, regardless of age, ability, transportation choice, or neighborhood. The “My Community, My Mobility, My Future” Video Concept Challenge invites teens to share their vision for communities where getting around independently is safe, accessible, and easy by exploring how planning, engineering, design, technology, and community investment can create environments where walking, bicycling, and public transportation are safe, convenient, and attractive transportation options.

A special emphasis of this challenge is focusing on **Safe Routes to School**. High School students have unique transportation needs and need to be safe traveling independently, especially to school, but also to jobs, sports practice and games, libraries, parks, and other community destinations after school. Participants are encouraged to imagine a future where high school students like them have safe, accessible, and connected transportation options that support independence, health, opportunity, and mobility.

All entries must be submitted online by Friday, December 18, 2026.

Submissions:

Questions should be emailed to srts@ejb.rutgers.edu.

Theme:

Create a video concept that answers the following question:

What do I want my community to look like to make walking, bicycling, and micromobility safer, especially for teens traveling to and from school, activities, jobs, and transit?

Think like a planner. Think like an engineer. Think like a designer. Think like a marketer. Most importantly, think like someone helping build the New Jersey of 2040, where everyone gets home safely. Think beyond signs and rules. Instead, imagine how communities can be designed to support safety and mobility through:

- Safe and connected routes to middle and high schools.
- Street design and engineering
- Complete Streets and connected networks

- Sidewalks, bike lanes, and protected facilities
- Safe crossings and intersection design
- Transit and first-mile/last-mile connections
- Accessibility for people of all ages and abilities
- Community planning and land use
- Micromobility solutions

Contest Goals:

The contest seeks to:

- Amplify youth voices in transportation planning.
- Advance Safe Routes to School solutions that address the needs of high school students.
- Encourage creative thinking about community design.
- Generate innovative ideas for future transportation investments.
- Use youth generated ideas to create professionally produced videos that can inform and inspire local communities.

Target Audience:

Your video concept should be targeted toward your peers, other high school students.

Final Products:

Participants submit video concepts that tell the story of their vision for the future of mobility in their community. Winning entries will be developed by professional video producers into:

- 30 - 60 second social media friendly videos

Contest winners will be credited for their ideas and invited to participate in the production process when feasible.

Contest Rules:

1. Eligibility

- Open to Nikhil Badlani Foundation Youth Advisory Board students.
- Individual and team submissions are permitted.
- Entries must be the original work of the participant(s).

2. What to Submit

Participants should submit a written video concept (up to 1,000 words). The focus is on the idea and the vision. What is the story you are trying to tell? What do you hope to see in your community in the future? We will work with you to translate your idea into a final video.

All entries must be submitted by Friday, December 18, 2026.

3. Required Prompt

Entries must address the following prompt:

"What do I want my community to look like to make walking, bicycling, and micromobility safer, especially for teens traveling to and from school, activities, jobs, and transit?"

Participants should describe:

- What changes they would make.
- Why those changes matter.
- Who benefits.
- How their idea helps create safer, more welcoming streets and public spaces.

4. Content Guidelines

Strong entries may address:

Planning

- Walkable community design
- School access and safe travel to and from school
- Transit-oriented development
- Connections between destinations

Engineering

- Protected bike lanes
- Sidewalk improvements
- Better crossings
- Traffic calming
- Street lighting

5. Prohibited Content

Submissions **may not**:

- Blame victims or individuals who have been injured.
- Suggest that safety depends solely on personal choices.
- Mock, stereotype, or target any group.
- Include violent, hateful, discriminatory, or inappropriate content.
- Focus solely on enforcement or punishment.
- Promote unsafe behavior.

6. Judging Criteria

Category	Weight
Creativity and Originality	25%
Vision for Community Improvement	25%
Understanding of Planning and Design Solutions	20%
Potential Impact	15%
Storytelling and Communication	15%

7. Bonus Considerations

Additional consideration may be given to entries that:

- Include diverse community perspectives.
- Address accessibility needs.
- Consider all ages and abilities.
- Integrate environmental sustainability.
- Highlight community partnerships.

8. Awards

Winning video concepts will be chosen by staff from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the NJDOT Safe Routes to School Resource Center. Winning concepts will receive:

- Meeting with filmmakers to finalize the concept.
- Professional production of concept.
- Featured credit to the concept creators in the final video.
- Participation of the concept creators in the production process when feasible.

Winning and Second Place applicants will receive a financial award for use by their YAB Chapter (Award to be announced shortly!)

9. Estimated Project Timeline:

- Concepts: submitted via website form by December 18th
- Selection: Mid-late January
- Meeting to finalize concepts with students – Early – Mid-February
- Production – Late-February - March
- Finalization and award – April/May

10. Ownership and Permissions

- Participants retain ownership of their original concepts.
- By entering, participants grant organizers permission to adapt concepts into professionally produced videos.
- Organizers may edit concepts for length, clarity, accessibility, and production requirements while preserving the original intent.

11. Questions?

Email staff at the NJDOT Safe Routes to School Resource Center:

- srts@ejb.rutgers.edu
- Visit: https://www.saferoutesnj.org/