

Highland Park School Travel Plan



June 2016

NEW JERSEY
Safe Routes to School



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Highland Park School Travel Plan

June 2016

Prepared by:

Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc.

NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center at the
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the Federal Highway Administration***



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Introduction

The Highland Park School Travel Plan was prepared by Keep Middlesex Moving Transportation Management Association and the New Jersey Safe Routes to School Resource Center at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University. The Highland Park School District and the Borough of Highland Park were interested in creating a school travel plan to review walking conditions for the district's primary, elementary and middle schools, develop a plan for infrastructure improvements in order to potentially apply for grant funding, as well as complete an action for Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification. Highland Park is a considered a walking community for students and residents.

The School Travel Plan

A School Travel Plan outlines a community's intentions for enabling children to engage in active transportation (such as walking, bicycling, skateboarding, etc.) to and from school. A School Travel Plan "maps out" how to improve pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from school to increase the number of students who walk and bike to school and to improve safety. A School Travel Plan identifies the following:

- Where students currently walk and bike
- Where students would walk and bike if they could
- What changes need to be made so that students can and will walk and bike to school

The School Travel Plan summarizes short term solutions for immediate action and implementation as well as long term actions that may require further planning.

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal, state, and local effort to create safe, convenient, and enjoyable opportunities for children to walk and bicycle to and from school each day. Improving safety for children while walking and bicycling to school is a central mission of the statewide SRTS program. The goal is to encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to and from school through an approach that combines the 5 E's: encouragement, education, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation.

Benefits of the SRTS program stretch beyond the school day. SRTS can also play a critical role in reversing the nationwide trend toward physical inactivity, childhood obesity, and diabetes. Walking and bicycling to school contributes to a wide range of benefits including: less roadway congestion, less gasoline fuel consumption, cleaner air, and healthy and happier children. Increased physical activity for children through activities such as walking and bicycling to school increases academic performance, and children arrive to school ready to learn.

About Keep Middlesex Moving

Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc. (KMM) is Middlesex County's nonprofit transportation management association. KMM is affiliated with the Middlesex County Improvement Authority. Since 1988, KMM has partnered with commuters, employers, local, county, and state government to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality.

KMM's Safe Routes to School program promotes walking and biking to school through events and promotions while working to educate children in grades K-8, and their parents, on walking and bicycling safety. The program sponsors walk to school days, walking school buses, and contests, delivers walk and bike safety assemblies in schools, and organizes bicycle education events in partnership with schools and community groups. In addition, the program serves as a resource for communities looking to conduct their own educational events, or to apply for grants to make their streets safer.

About the NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center

The NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center (NJSRTS RC) is a partnership between and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) which is within the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. This sustainable partnership was established to provide services, training, coordination, and technical assistance directly to regional planning associations, organizations, and local and regional governments. The NJSRTS RC was expanded to form a partnership between NJDOT and all eight of New Jersey's Transportation Management Associations (TMAs). The NJSRTS RC provides support by offering services, training, oversight, and technical assistance to all eight of NJ's TMAs.

The NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center focuses on:

- Enhancing the capacity of Transportation Management Association (TMA) staff by providing training, guidance, support, discussion opportunities, and information sharing regarding the technical aspects of Safe Routes to School;
- Encouraging increased participation in education, encouragement and enforcement activities throughout the state of New Jersey;
- Facilitating policy-level discussions to increase linkages between active transportation and public health; and
- Providing technical assistance directly to New Jersey communities and schools.

More information about the NJSRTS RC can be found on the website at saferoutesnj.org.

Acknowledgements

The NJ Safe Routes to School Program provided by Keep Middlesex Moving and the NJ Safe Routes to School Resource Center is sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation with funding from the Federal Highway Administration.

The Highland Park School Travel Plan was made possible by the support and engagement of the Highland Park School District, the Borough of Highland Park, and Highland Park parents and residents.

School Descriptions

Highland Park School District is a diverse community serving over 1,500 students in four schools: Irving Primary School serves Pre-Kindergarten through grade 1 students; Bartle Elementary School serves students in grades 2-5; Highland Park Middle School serves students in grades 6-8, and Highland Park High School serves students in grades 9-12. The district has a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) comprised of parents and educators to provide support and services to parents of special education students within all schools in the district. SEPAC mission is to advocate for high-quality special education programs and services, advise on special education issues, assist the Educational Services department in identifying needs, and encourage and facilitate communication and support among the community. Students with special needs are included and able to participate in physical activities such as extracurricular sports, clubs and SRTS events and programs.

Irving Primary School

Irving Primary School serves approximately 310 students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1st grade. It is located at 121 S. 11th Avenue in a narrow residential neighborhood of single family homes between State Highway 27 and Woodbridge Ave. (County Route 514), and abuts Woodbridge Ave., a commercial and residential thoroughfare. School hours are 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM for Kindergarten and 1st grade. Half-day Pre-K is provided at 8:30 AM – 10:55 AM and 12:30 AM – 2:55 PM. The district offers before and after school care programs for Kindergarten and 1st grades at Irving School from 7:15 AM - 8:15 AM and 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM. A breakfast program is offered from 7:00-7:45pm at varying prices based on need.

Bartle Elementary School

Bartle Elementary School serves approximately 460 students in 2nd through 5th grades. It is located at 435 Mansfield St. within the south side residential neighborhood of single family homes, duplexes, and garden apartments. The school is located adjacent to the police and fire stations and across the street from Borough Hall and the Senior/Youth Center. School hours are 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM, with the earliest permitted arrival for the regular school day at 7:45 AM. The district offers before and after school care programs at Bartle School from 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM and 2:30 PM – 6:00 PM, and a breakfast program is offered from 7:00 AM – 7:45 AM, at varying prices based on family need.

Highland Park Middle/High School

Highland Park Middle School and Highland Park High School reside on the same campus. The middle school serves approximately 345 students in 6th through 8th grades. It is located at 330 Wayne St., within the north side residential neighborhood of single family homes and duplexes, two blocks from the main street of Raritan Ave. (State Highway 27). It is co-located on a single campus with the high school, serving approximately 500 students, and the two schools share some classrooms and locker rooms, the outdoor sports complex, auditorium and cafeteria. School hours are 7:58 AM – 2:50 PM. For purposes of this School Travel Plan, representatives and students from the Middle School participated since the NJ Safe Routes to School program serves students in grades K-8. This Travel Plan would also benefit the high school students who walk and bike to and from school since both of the schools are located on the same campus. A breakfast program is offered at both the middle and high school from 7:30-7:45 AM, at varying prices based on need and served in the high school cafeteria.

Existing SRTS Efforts

Highland Park has engaged in a number of efforts and programs that support walking and bicycling to and from school, including:

- Bartle and Irving Schools participate in International Walk to School Day in October.
- Bartle and Irving Schools each hold a walk to school day event during NJ Walk and Bike to School Month in the spring.
- First grade students at Irving School work with Safety Ambassadors from the Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences Hospital trauma center.
- Walking school buses take children to Bartle and Irving Schools. These parent-led walking groups have been organized and maintained informally by parent for many years.
- From 2012-2015, the Borough conducted a sidewalk replacement program. Sidewalk inspections were conducted throughout the borough, and sidewalks in violation of code due to uplift, cracks, or other condition issues were identified. Property owners with deficient sidewalks were given the opportunity to have the deficient sidewalk sections replaced through a Borough-approved contractor at a discounted rate, or to repair the problem themselves.
- The Borough of Highland Park adopted their Complete Streets policy in 2013.
- Within the past several years, the Borough of Highland Park completed major pedestrian improvements along Raritan Ave/State Route 27 which is the main shopping street. Improvements included new lighting, street trees, plantings, corner living rooms (which also narrows the street crossings for pedestrians), bike parking, benches, tables, kiosks
- In 2014, Highland Park applied for and was awarded a Safe Routes to School infrastructure grant in the amount of \$69,000 for a lighted mid-block crosswalk between Borough Hall and the Highland Park Senior/Youth Center and Bartle Elementary School.
- In May 2015, The Borough of Highland Park, Irving Primary School and Bartle Elementary School were each awarded Bronze-level certification for the NJ Safe Routes to School Recognition Program. Highland Park Middle School was recognized as a First Step recipient for the program.
- In October 2015, the Borough of Highland Park received a Complete Streets Excellence Award at the NJ Complete Streets Summit for their outstanding efforts in implementing Complete Streets and making streets safer for everyone.
- In spring 2016, Safe Kids Middlesex County installed anti-distracted walking stencils on sidewalks around the Middle/High School and placed anti-distracted driving lawn signs. Pre and post pedestrian and driver behavior observations were conducted in conjunction with this effort.

Working Group

The school travel plan process was advised by a Working Group composed of school administrators and teachers, municipal officials and staff, the police department, and staff of KMM and the NJ SRTS Resource Center. Several Working Group members are also residents and parents of children at Highland Park schools. See Table 1 – Highland Park Working Group Members. The Working Group met together three times throughout the School Travel Plan process.

The Highland Park School District has enrolled in the Sustainable Jersey for School certification program; the district has established Green Teams at each school; and the school district has active parents and green team members who are working to achieve actions to qualify for Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification. As a result, Highland Park School District was interested in implementing a School Travel Plan to fulfil a Sustainable Jersey for Schools action requirement, to map safe routes for children to walk to and from school and to identify infrastructure improvements for the Borough to repair and implement as well as apply for potential grant funding.

The first meeting was on March 3, 2016 and included an introduction to the School Travel Plan process, a discussion of current assets and barriers for enabling and encouraging students to walk and bike to school, a review of strategies surrounding the 5 E's (Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement and Evaluation), and next steps, deliverables and timelines were discussed.

The next meeting convened on May 3, 2016 immediately following the walk assessments, which consisted of three separate groups for each of the three K-8 schools. Each school group walked a designated route around a school, then all three groups assembled at Irving school where each group summarized issues and concerns from their walk assessment.

The third meeting with the Working Group was on May 25, 2016 to identify and discuss findings from each of the three walkability assessments, review actions, prioritize strategies, and determine short and long term next steps.

The Working Group was also given the opportunity to review and make any edits and additions to this school travel plan prior to finalizing.

Table 1 – Highland Park Working Group Members

Member Name	Organization/Title	Role/Responsibility	Contact Info
Anthony Benjamin	Bartle School/Principal	Bartle lead	abenjamin@hpschools.net
Kelly Freeborn	Irving Primary School / Principal	Irving lead	kfreeborn@hpschools.net
Jennifer Osemwegie	Middle School / Principal		josemwegie@hpschools.net
Aisling Stodolski	Bartle School / Teacher		astodolski@hpschools.net
Sarah Kirk	Bartle School / Guidance Counselor		skirk@hpschools.net
Dara Botvinick	Middle School / Teacher	Middle School lead, Sustainable Jersey for Schools	dbotvinick@hpschools.net
Tracey Maiden	Bartle School / Teacher	Sustainable Jersey for Schools	tmaiden@hpschools.net
Jose Curbelo	Highland Park Police Department	Police Dept. representative	jcurbelo@hpboro.com
Susan Welkovits	Highland Park / Council President	Elected official, Borough liaison	welkovitshp@gmail.com
Scott Brescher	Highland Park / Code Enforcement		sbrescher@hpboro.com
Jon Whiten	Resident	Irving parent representative	jwhiten@gmail.com
Fern Goodhart	Resident	Complete Streets Committee	fwgoodhart@hotmail.com
Trish Sanchez	NJ SRTS Resource Center, Rutgers	SRTS program support	trish.sanchez@ejb.rutgers.edu
Peter Bilton	Keep Middlesex Moving	SRTS program support	pbilton@kmm.org

Maps and Community Background

Highland Park Borough and Schools



Figure 1 - Highland Park Borough and Schools

Highland Park School District serves Highland Park, New Jersey, a borough of two square miles and 14,000 residents located on the Raritan River in Middlesex County. It is primarily a residential community, noted for the population of faculty, staff and students of nearby Rutgers University, and a strong Jewish community. State Highway 27 (Raritan Avenue) passes through the town and is also the main shopping street. NJ Transit and Amtrak rail stations are located in adjacent New Brunswick and Edison; both stations are within walking distance from the town.

Highland Park is served by four public schools located on three campuses:

Irving Primary School	121 South 11 th Avenue
Bartle Elementary School	435 Mansfield Street
Highland Park Middle/High School	330 Wayne Street

All residents, with the exception of some apartment residences on Cedar Lane in the northwest of the borough, are located with a 2-mile walking distance of all schools. The entire borough is within two straight-line miles of all schools. Residences along River Road and Cedar Lane north of the Amtrak Northeast Corridor rail line receive hazard busing due to the lack of sidewalks through the River Rd. underpass under Amtrak.

Crossing Guards

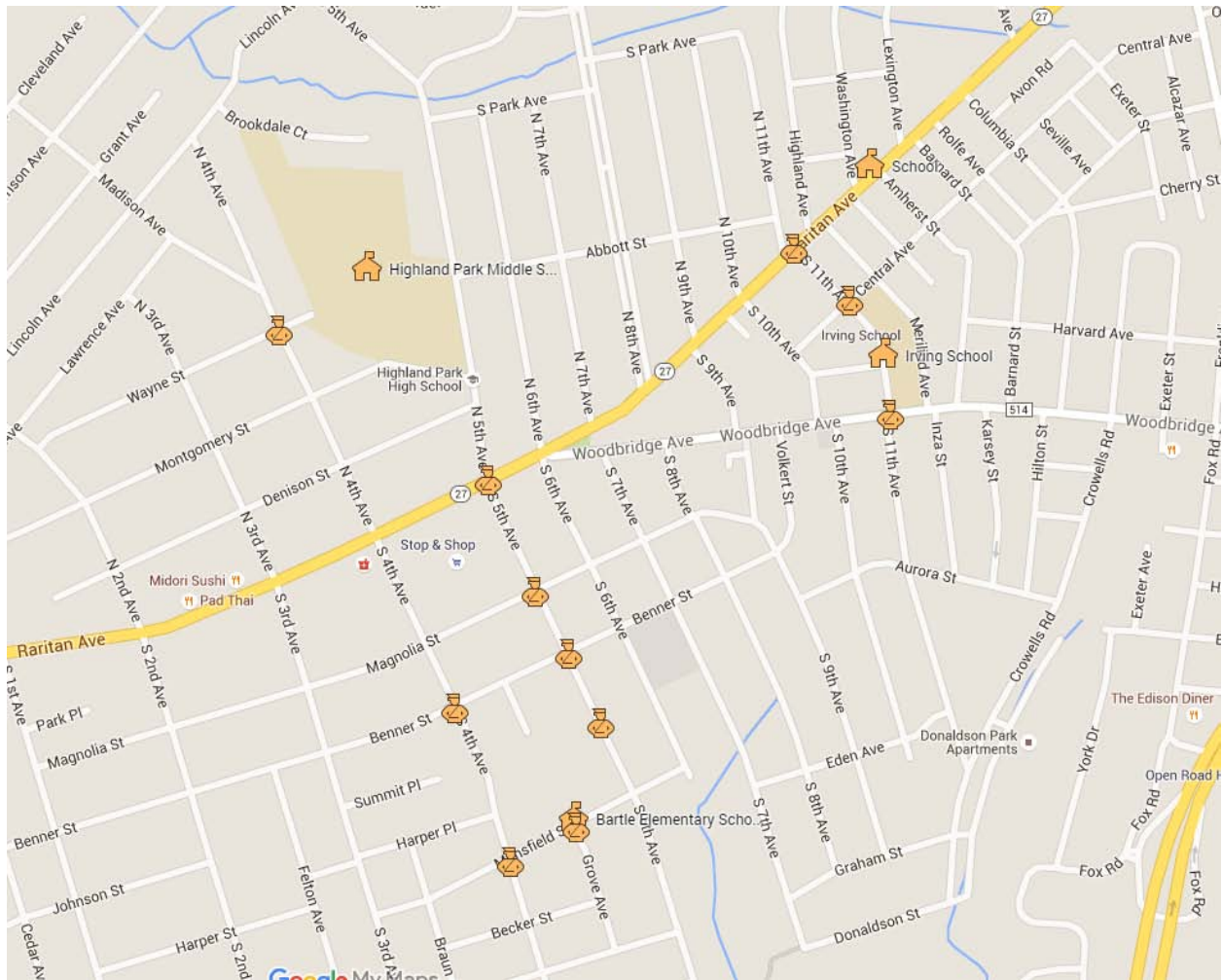


Figure 2 - Crossing guard locations

The Borough of Highland Park employs eleven crossing guards to serve its three school sites. Crossing guards are stationed in the morning from 7:30-8:45am and in the afternoon from 2:20-3:20pm. Crossing guards are positioned at the following locations:

1. So. 5th Ave. in front of the police and fire station

2. Grove and Mansfield St.
3. So. 4th Ave. and Benner St.
4. So. 5th Ave. and Benner St.
5. So. 5th Ave. and Magnolia St.
6. 5th Ave. and Raritan Ave.
7. No. 4th Ave. and Wayne St.
8. Raritan Ave. and 11th Ave.
9. Central Ave. and So. 11th Ave.
10. So. 11th and Woodbridge Ave.
11. So.4th and Mansfield Street

Pick up/drop off locations

Irving School: Students can be dropped off/picked up at Irving School via hazardous/courtesy bus provided by the district, walking/bicycling or motor vehicle. Buses are loaded and unloaded on the Merilind Avenue side of Irving School. Irving students can be dropped off at the school between 8am-8:30am through the front doors of the school on South 11th Avenue. Cars may drive up to the front of the school where a school staff person will escort the student into the school. South 11th is one way from Central Avenue to Woodbridge Avenue between the hours of 8am-8:30am and 2:45-3:15pm. A crossing guard is stationed at the corner of South 11th Avenue and Central Ave to assist with crossing the intersection due to the large volume of cars dropping off and picking up. In order to participate in the “drive through” pick up at Irving, parents/guardians must pre-register with the front office at Irving School and receive a hang tag for their car. The crossing guard at South 11th and Central will only permit cars with the hang tag to drive their motor vehicles in front of the school for pick up. Drop off does not require a hang tag. The hang tag lists the number assigned to their student; students wait in the lobby until their number is called; and once their number is called, the student is escorted into the car. Walkers are dismissed in the gymnasium of the school at 3pm where students line up with their class and upon signing the dismissal list are released to their parent/guardian/designated person.

Bartle School: Bartle School and the Highland Park Police Department have established procedures for controlling the drop off/pick up of students by car. During arrival and dismissal Mansfield St. is temporarily converted to one way westbound between S. 5th Ave. and Grove Ave. All drop off/pick up traffic must then turn left onto Grove Ave., which temporarily becomes one way between Mansfield St. and Becker St. Mansfield St. is restricted to bus traffic between Grove Ave. and S. 4th Ave. during this time. The drop off/pick up zone on Mansfield St. is for 2nd and 3rd grade only, who enter through the main entrance. Fourth and 5th grade students arrive and are dismissed from the side entrance on S. 5th Ave. It is the school’s policy that 2nd and 3rd grade students be dismissed to a parent, guardian or designee. Fourth and 5th grade students are dismissed in their own, unless the parent/guardian requests otherwise.

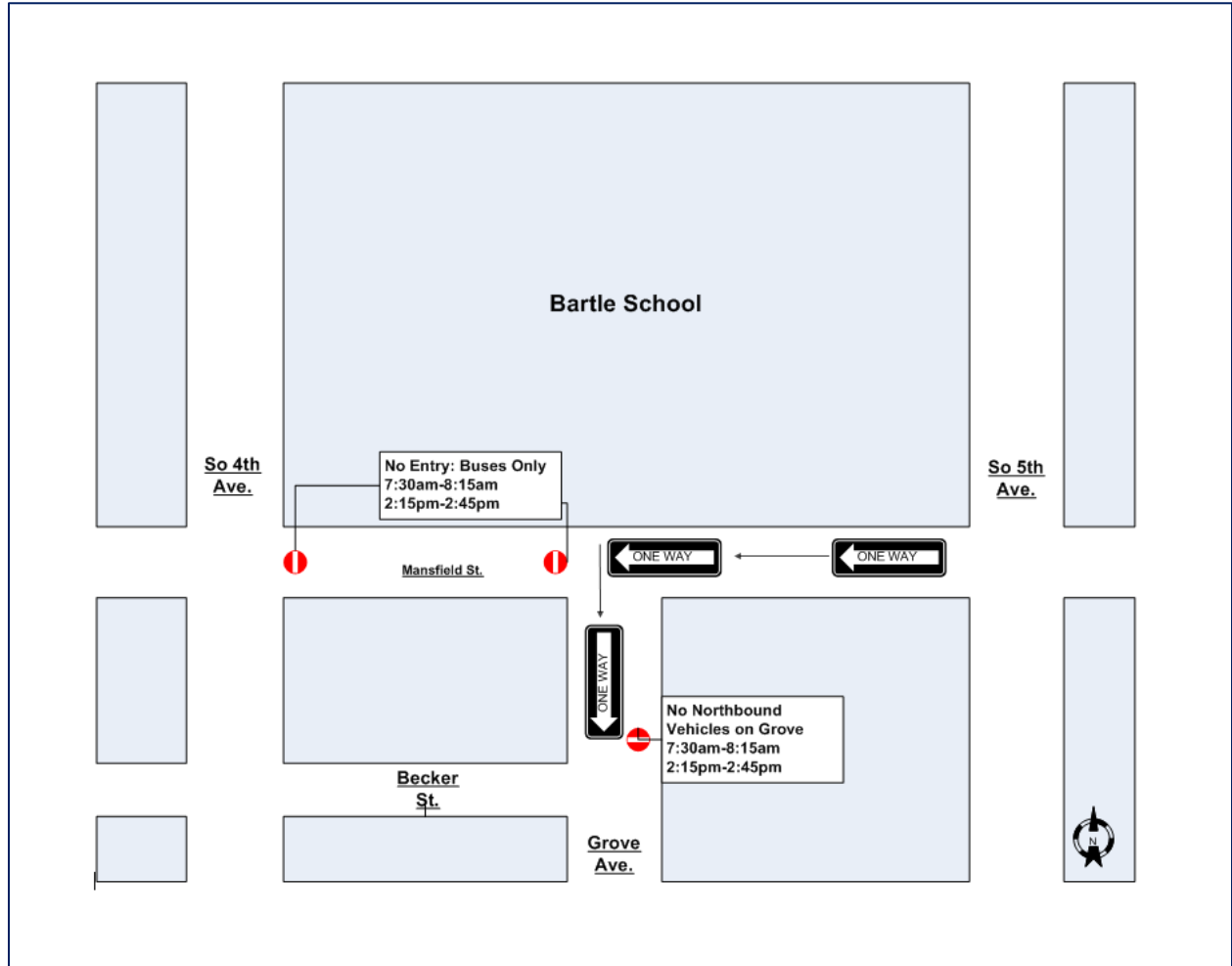


Figure 3 - Bartle School drop off/pickup diagram, courtesy Bartle Elementary School

Highland Park Middle School: Students who are bused are loaded and unloaded in the circular driveway at the front of the school on Wayne Street. Parents/guardians are also permitted to drive up and drop off their students using the circular driveway on Wayne Street. Motor vehicles are only permitted to make a right turn when exiting the entrance to the Middle School for safety purposes both at drop off and pick up. A crossing guard is stationed in the intersection in front of the school at Wayne Street and North 4th Ave. Cars are permitted to enter the circular driveway to pick up their student but must coordinate with their child to avoid idling in front of the school. Students walking to school may enter through the front doors or the side door facing the athletic field. Student walkers may exit through the exit doors on all sides of the middle school. Band and orchestra rehearsals begin at 7am on Mondays-Thursdays each week which may contribute to more students being dropped off via motor vehicle in the mornings.

programs which extend from school dismissal to 6:00 PM. Playgrounds are also located at the Middle/High School, Karsey Street Park, and Donaldson County Park.

Where students live

Student home addresses, with names redacted, were provided by the school district and mapped by KMM for review by the Working Group. These maps are not included here to preserve student privacy. As a residential community, student homes are geographically distributed across the borough. A greater number of students live south of Raritan Ave. (Route 27). The highest density of student homes can be found in the apartment complex in the vicinity of Crowell's Rd., in the southeast of the borough, and the apartment complexes along Cedar Ave. in the northwest of the borough.

Speed Limits

Raritan Ave. (Route 27) has a speed limit of 30 MPH between River Rd. and 8th Ave., and speed limit of 40 MPH between 8th Ave. and the municipal boundary at Brookhill Ave. River Rd., a county roadway, has a speed limit of 35 MPH. Woodbridge Ave. (County Route 514) and all local streets in the borough have a speed limit of 25 MPH.

Walk/Bike Barriers and Opportunities

Information on barriers to walking and bicycling to school, and opportunities to improve the frequency, convenience, and safety of walking and bicycling were collected from a number of sources. Initial meetings with the school principals and Superintendent were informative. Meetings and conversations with the Working Group generated useful observations and ideas, both about specific locations and about more general opportunities and challenges that face the school community as a whole. Student travel tallies paint a picture of who is walking and biking today. Walk assessments conducted by the Working Group in the neighborhoods of the three schools recorded existing conditions on the streets of Highland Park, with an emphasis on sidewalks and road crossings.






All this information is presented here as a summary of walking and biking to school in Highland Park. Infrastructure-related issues, such as streets, sidewalks, and school facilities, are presented separately from non-infrastructure issues, such as educational programs, school policies, and community events that can serve to either encourage or discourage walking and biking.

Student Arrival and Departure Tallies

Student Arrival and Departure Travel Tallies document how children travel to and from school and are taken by teachers for two or three days (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) during one week. Travel Tallies were taken at all three K-8 schools. HP Middle School tallies were taken in January 2016; Bartle and Irving Schools had tallies taken in February 2016.

Irving Primary School which includes the youngest students in grades pre-K through grade 1 (ages 3-6) had the following results from the student arrival and departure travel tallies taken in February 2016:






Irving Primary School

	Arrival	Dismissal
 Students bused	11%	9%
 Students driven	66%	41%
 Students walked	21%	46%
 Students biked	0.8%	2%
 Students carpooled	2%	2%

Based on the travel tallies, Irving students predominately get driven to and from school, although students walking home from school almost doubled even though the weather during the week the tallies were completed included sun, rain, overcast and snow. Irving School offers a drop off and pick up line for motor vehicles directly in front of the school making it easy for students to get to school and to get picked up from school via car which may contribute to the high number of students being driven to and from school. Irving School students are the youngest in the district (ages 3-6), and age and weather were factors in whether students walked and biked to and from school

Bartle Elementary School which includes students in grades 2-5 (ages 7-11) had the following results from the student arrival and departure travel tallies which were taken in February 2016:

Bartle Elementary School






	Arrival	Dismissal
	16% Students bused	12%
	55% Students driven	51%
	19% Students walked	29%
	0% Students biked	0%
	10% Students carpooled	8%

Based on the travel tallies, Bartle students predominately get driven to and from school, although students walking home from school increased from 19% to 29%, and the weather during the week the tallies were completed included sun, rain, overcast and snow. Bartle School offers a drop off line for motor vehicles directly in front of the school making it easy for students to get to school via car which may contribute to the high number of students being driven to school. During dismissal at Bartle, the

street in front of the school on Mansfield Ave is closed to motor vehicles, and students in grades 2-3 who are not bused are dismissed through the front door to a parent or designated adult. Students in grades 4-5 are dismissed through the back doors by the playground. This may contribute to more students walking home in the afternoon. Weather was also a factor in whether students walked or biked to and from school. More Bartle students carpool to and from school than Irving students.

Highland Park Middle School which includes students in grades 6-8 (ages 11-15) had the following results from the student arrival and departure travel tallies taken in January 2016:

Highland Park Middle School

	Arrival	Dismissal
	10% Students bused	11%
	41% Students driven	27%
	38% Students walked	52%
	1% Students biked	2%
	9% Students carpoled	8%

Based on the travel tallies, Highland Park Middle School students either get driven or walk to school (41% and 38%), although more than half of the students (52%) walk home from school. Middle School students walked to and from school more than the other two schools, primarily due to age and independence. Weather conditions during the week the tallies were taken included both sun and rain which directly influenced travel mode choice. More students were driven and fewer students walked to and from school when weather conditions were rainy, and during sunny weather conditions, more students walked rather than being driven to and from school. Middle School students carpoled more than Irving School and about equal to Bartle School.

School Policies

Highland Park School District has the following three policies listed on their website (hpschools.net) related to school wellness and nutrition:

Nutrition policy: <http://hpschools.net/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=153916>

Transportation policy: <http://hpschools.net/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=153926>

Dismissal policy: <http://hpschools.net/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=153928>

These three policies are mandated policies from the NJ State Department of Education. The transportation policy includes review and approval from the HP Board of Education of all hazardous bus routes each year in September since all students who live in Highland Park and attend the public schools in the district live within the state mandated busing limits of 2.5 miles for High School students and 2 miles for K-8 students. Hazardous busing is currently provided by the Highland Park Board of Education for students who reside north of the railroad tracks off River Road (CR 622) including L'Ambiance Court, Cedar Lane, Forest Glen Drive, Ella Lane, Leia Lane and Bartle Court, due to no safe, direct route to school (See Figure below).



Figure 5 - River Rd. underpass under Amtrak Northeast Corridor rail

The Pupil Supervision After School Dismissal policy is the state mandated policy for students in grades K-3 who are not eligible for or who do not use district-provided transportation. Principals for their respective buildings develop and implement dismissal plans. The Superintendent is currently working

with the Highland Park Board of Education to develop a Safe Routes to School policy supporting the SRTS program and encouraging active transportation to and from school for all students.

Students with Disabilities

Encouraging children, including those with disabilities to be physically active and participate in Safe Routes to School is a vital component of the program. All students in the district including students with disabilities and special needs are encouraged and welcome to participate in Safe Routes to School programs, and no student is excluded from any events. Program coordinators, whether within or outside of the district, should be proactive in working with school staff to provide the accommodations necessary for an inclusive event or program.

Non-Infrastructure Barriers and Opportunities

Non-infrastructure refers to education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation programs. At the first Working Group meeting in early March, members identified the following non-infrastructure related assets to walking and bicycling:

- Walking School Buses
- Support from the Police
- Staggered start times allows for parents to walk or bike with their children to different schools
- Crossing Guards

Barriers to walking and bicycling related to non-infrastructure that were identified in the Working Group meeting included:

- Stigma about bicycling
- Bike theft (kids need to properly learn how to lock their bike)
- Need for parents to educate about benefits of walking and bicycling
- More crossing guards needed on State Highway 27
- Weather
- Snow and lack of shoveling

Resulting from this list based on feedback from the Working Group, the following non-infrastructure strategies were discussed based on the 5 E's of SRTS:

Encouragement:

- Irving and Bartle schools continue to participate in Walk to School Days at least twice a year
- Walking school buses to Bartle and Irving continue to run
- Consider changing current drop-off procedures, which make it easy for motor vehicles to drop off students directly in front of the schools, to make it less convenient for parents to drive and to encourage more active travel to school.

Education:

- Irving School first graders work with Safety Ambassadors from the Robert Wood Johnson Trauma Center on the importance of wearing helmets.
- Suggestion of a safety assembly for middle school students on bicycle safety. Perhaps include incentives of coupons for food at local businesses, helmets, or bike locks.

- A survey of Irving and Bartle parents who drop off their children via motor vehicles to understand why they do not choose to walk and bike to school was suggested.

Enforcement:

- Police gave away 40 helmets over the summer to children.
- Consider providing an additional crossing guard along State Hwy 27.

Infrastructure Barriers and Opportunities

Characteristics of the streets, sidewalks, paths and buildings that make it easier or more difficult to walk and bike to school are presented here. At the first Working Group meeting on March 3, 2016, the group identified these opportunities:

- Propose improvements for remaining NJDOT SRTS grant funds and close out the grant before applying for next round of grant funding.
- Consider applying for NJDOT SRTS grant funding in the spring 2016.
- Since Highland Park is adjacent to Rutgers' Livingston Campus, the Borough should continue to work with the Rutgers Capital Planning Department on any infrastructure projects that would affect/support/benefit students and residents who are walking and bicycling (potential pedestrian bridge).

In addition to Working Group discussion, walk assessments provided information on the physical infrastructure that students use on their walk or bike to school.

Walk Assessments

Walk assessments are tools to help schools, parents, students, and the community identify barriers that may make it difficult or dangerous for children to walk or bike to school. These assessments evaluate the sidewalk, road, and neighborhood conditions around the school, and identify key safety improvements that can make walking and biking a safer and easier way to get to school.

Members of the Working Group, with the assistance of middle school students, conducted walk assessments of the Irving, Bartle and Middle Schools on May 3, 2016. Participants separated into three groups and met at their assigned school. The groups then followed a walking route through the school neighborhood that ended at Irving Primary School. During the walk, participants recorded their observations of the walking environment with photographs and notes. At Irving School, each group reported their observations and shared their top priorities for improving the walk to school.

Irving Primary School

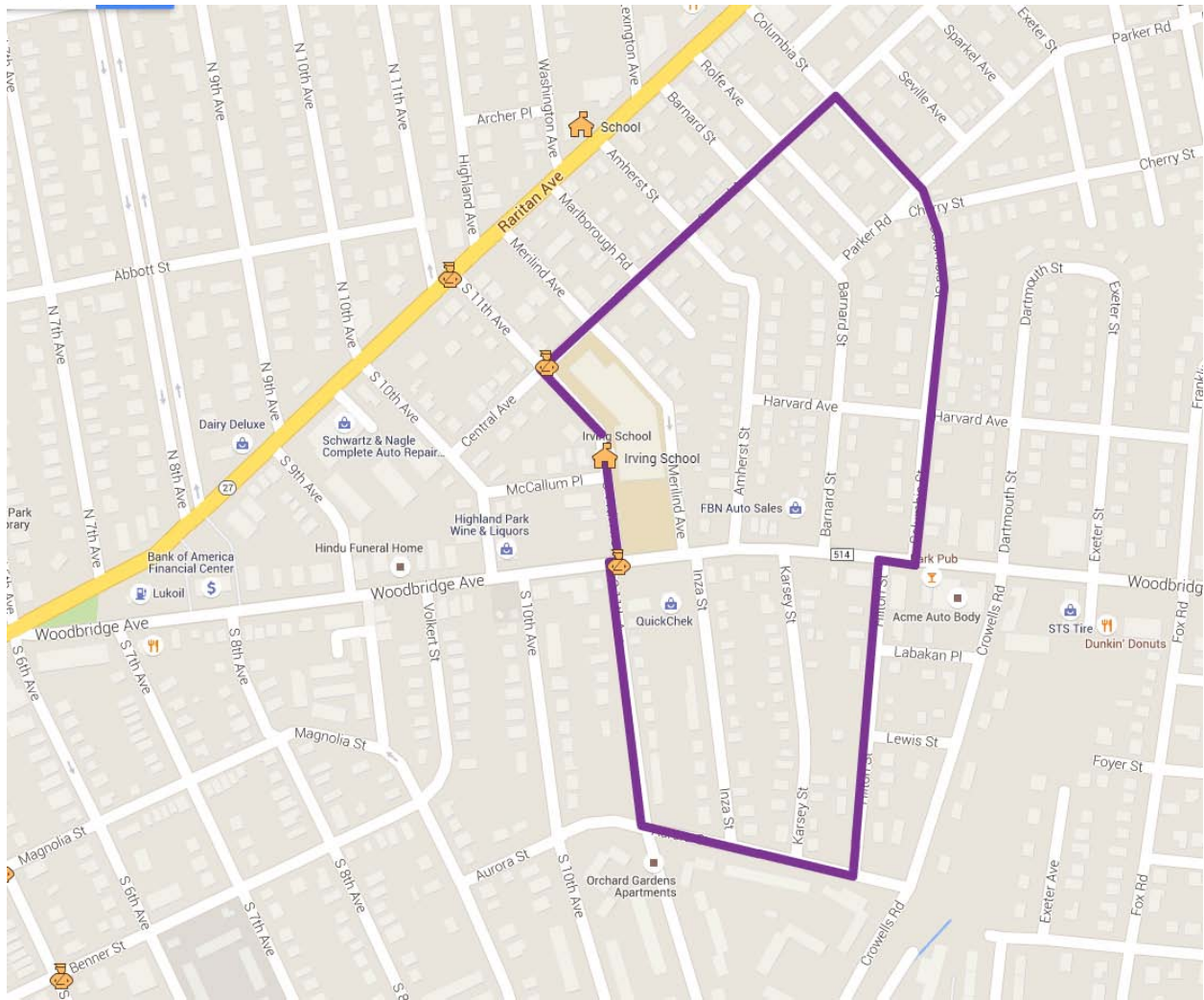


Figure 6 - Irving School walk assessment route

Assessment participants observed these issues in the Irving School neighborhood:

- Some missing curb ramps and sidewalks in the triangle neighborhood
- 11th Ave/ and McCallum crossing
- Drainage on Woodbridge Ave.
- Few crosswalks on Woodbridge Ave.
- Crosswalk paint wear; missing crosswalks
- Overgrown vegetation



Figure 7 - Missing sidewalk and curb ramp with worn path, Central Ave. at Merlind Ave.



Figure 8 - Missing sidewalk at Irving School entrance, S. 11th Ave.



Figure 9 - Drainage issue, Central Ave. at Merlind Ave.



Figure 10 - Irving School entrance, S. 11th Ave. at McCallum Pl.



Figure 11 - Unwelcoming and welcoming sidewalks on Woodbridge Ave.



Figure 12 - Drainage issue, Woodbridge Ave. at S. 11th Ave.



Figure 13 - Wide driveways on Woodbridge Ave.



Figure 15 - Missing curb ramp and worn crosswalk, Harper Pl. at S. 3rd Ave.



Figure 16 - Missing sidewalk and curb ramp, Mansfield St. at Braun Ave.



Figure 17 - Examples of vegetation encroachment and sidewalk uplift in the Bartle neighborhood

Middle/High School

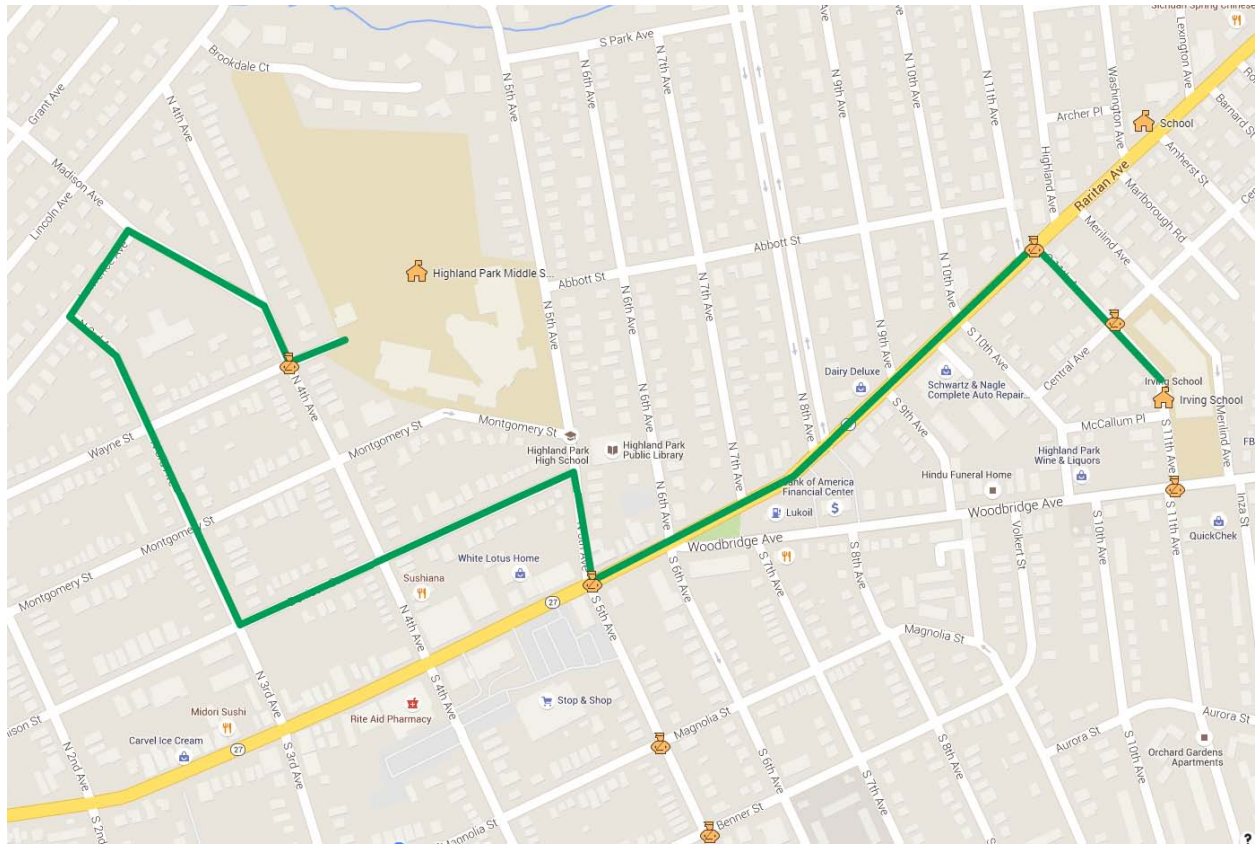


Figure 18 – Middle/High School walk assessment route

Assessment participants observed these issues in the Middle School neighborhood:

1. Missing truncated dome pads at curb ramps
2. Potholes
3. Crosswalk paint wear
4. Lack of sidewalk continuity on Raritan Ave. due to wide driveways
5. Lack of signage for crossings
6. Overgrown vegetation



Figure 19 - Truncated dome pad in disrepair at Middle School entrance



Figure 20 - Crosswalk wear, Lawrence Ave. at Madison Ave.



Figure 21 - Wide driveway, Rt. 27 at 11th Ave.



Figure 22 - Obstruction from sign placement, Middle School entrance

Additional Infrastructure Issues

Members of the Working Group also noted some areas throughout the town not covered during our walk assessments are issues that could impair walking and bicycling to school. Two pedestrian paths that cut through residential properties from Grant Ave to Cleveland Ave exist where children and residents who live in the area use to walk to and from school and to local synagogues. Mid-block crosswalks are painted on Grant Ave., Lincoln Ave., Harrison Ave., and Cleveland Ave. to connect the pedestrian paths and indicate to motor vehicles that pedestrians cross to continue the path. These paths are heavily used and in some areas are in disrepair.



Figure 23 – Pedestrian paths run through residential property between Grant Ave and Cleveland Ave.

The Borough and its engineer reviewed the travel plan and walk assessment and identified the following intersections that are in need of curb ramps and truncated dome pads to make them ADA compliant:

- Mansfield & Grove (The intersection in front of Bartle School)
- Mansfield & South 4th
- Mansfield & Braun
- Harper & Braun
- Harper & South 3rd
- Central & Merilind
- Central & South 11th
- Central & Marlborough
- Central & Amherst
- Central & Barnard
- Central & Rolfe
- Magnolia & South 3rd
- Magnolia & South 6th
- Graham & Grove
- Graham & South 4th

- Benner & South 8th
- Woodbridge Ave & South 10th

Summary of Infrastructure Issues

Walk assessment participants collected observations of the walking experience and pedestrian facilities around the three schools. Several conditions could be addressed by municipal maintenance or code enforcement. Potholes and crosswalk paint wear can be remedied by the Department of Public Works, and vegetative overgrowth can be addressed by the property owner through borough code enforcement. Similarly, maintenance issues at the Middle School can be addressed by the school district.

In general, existing sidewalks and curbs are in good repair, thanks to the borough sidewalk repair program conducted 2012-2015. There are several locations where sidewalks are missing on residential property frontages, and several intersections lack curb ramps. The NJDOT SRTS and TAP grants, or other grants, are an opportunity to address these deficiencies.

Goals and Actions

Priorities

Throughout the planning process, the following actions emerged as high priorities among community representatives:

1. Maintenance Issues
 - Repaint worn crosswalks
 - Repair pavement where damaged in crosswalks
 - Repair damaged truncated dome pads
 - Trim vegetation
2. Install curb ramps at corners where missing in school neighborhoods
3. Provide better bike racks at Bartle and Irving Schools
4. Support and grow walking school buses
5. Install bicycle lanes
6. Provide bike education to Middle School students
7. Conduct motor vehicle speeding enforcement

Recommended Actions

The following recommended actions were presented at the May 25th Working Group meeting and refined based on feedback. Next steps were undertaken immediately for some of these actions. Others are annual, season, or otherwise ongoing activities.

Table 2 - Education and Encouragement Actions

Program/Improvement	Responsible Party/Person	STATUS/Next Actions	Timeline	Cost
Walk to School Day—Irving and Bartle	Irving, Bartle, KMM, Police	ONGOING Next school year	Bi-annual	Low
Walking School Bus—Irving and Bartle	Parents, KMM	ONGOING Plan outreach for next school year	Ongoing	Low
RWJUH Safety Ambassadors—Irving	Irving, RWJUH	ONGOING Plan for next school year	Annual	Low
Walk & Bike Safety Assembly—Irving and Bartle	Irving, Bartle, KMM	Plan for next school year	Annual	Low
Bike train	Parents	Investigate interest		Low
Designate walking routes—Irving and Bartle	Principals, Police, Parents			Low
Bicycle Education—Middle	Middle, KMM, NJ SRTS RC	Investigate interest and scheduling		Low
Helmet giveaway	Police	ONGOING	Summer	Low
Community Bike Rodeo	Police, KMM		Occasional	Low
Incorporate bike/pedestrian safety into P.E. curriculum	HPMS, KMM	Investigate		Low
MS/HS buddy w/ Irving/Bartle Student	All schools	Investigate interest		Low
Survey of parents in English and Spanish on why they choose the mode of transportation to/from school	Irving, Bartle, MS, KMM, NJ SRTS RC	Investigate interest		Low

Table 3 - Engineering Actions

Program/Improvement	Responsible Party/Person	Next Actions	Timeline	Cost
Install high visibility crosswalk signage	Borough, NJDOT	Determine locations		Low; grant funded
Sidewalk repair by property owner	Borough	Code enforcement	2016	Low
Crosswalk re-striping	Borough	Maintenance	2016	Low
Pavement repair	Borough	Maintenance	2016	Low
Install curb ramps near schools	Borough	IN PROGRESS Mapping is underway, Borough intends to apply for NJDOT SRTS grant	2016	Moderate; grant funded
Bike racks—Irving & Bartle	School District, Sustainable Jersey for Schools Committee	IN PROGRESS Bartle principal is seeking funding	2016	Moderate
Signage, striping, and tree trimming at Volkert St. at 9 th Ave. to improve visibility	Borough	COMPLETED Completed June 2016	2016	Low
Bike assessment	Working Group, KMM, NJ SRTS Resource Center, Community members	Evaluate interest; schedule	Summer 2016	Low
Assess locations for bicycle lanes	Borough, municipal engineer	Conduct assessment		Low
Install bicycle lanes	Borough, NJDOT	Waiting on assessment		Moderate
Repave/fix pedestrian paths between Grant Ave and Cleveland Ave	Borough	Determine funding		Moderate
Consider enhanced crossings between Duclos Lane and South 11 th Ave	Borough, County	Conduct assessment		Moderate
Potential Infrastructure changes that would support walking/bicycling between Highland Park and Rutgers Livingston campus (pedestrian bridge)	Borough, Rutgers Capital Planning	Continue conversations	Long-term	High

Table 4 - Enforcement Actions

Action Item	Responsible Party/Person	Next Actions	Timeline	Cost
Speed enforcement	Police Department	Conduct enforcement as needed	Ongoing	Moderate
Relocate a crossing guard to Rt. 27	Police Department, Borough, School District	Conduct assessment of need	2016	Low
Add possible crossing guard on South 6 th in the cut through of the Senior/Youth Center and Borough Hall	Police Department	Conduct assessment of need	2016	Low

Evaluation

Determining participation in walking and bicycling to school program, how many children walk and bike to and from school, as well as understanding concerns from parents, community members, and school and borough staff are important factors for measuring the level of involvement in Safe Routes to School programs. Evaluating the progress of the School Travel Plan involves understanding what works and how best to plan for future infrastructure improvements. Since implementation of some of the goals and actions resulting from the School Travel Plan may be long-term, tracking progress provides benchmarks and rationale for continued investment. Ideally, evaluations should be completed each year while walking and bicycling routes to school in order to check the quality of the surrounding neighborhood's infrastructure. Measurements suggested include:

- **Periodic walk/bike assessments** of the surrounding neighborhoods near all the schools to document current and new issues.
- **Periodic student arrival and departure travel tallies** at each school to continue to monitor how students get to and from school.
- **Periodic parent surveys** collect information about how their children travel to and from school and what barriers they face. Keep Middlesex Moving and the NJSRTS Resource Center can facilitate administering the survey online or via paper in both English and Spanish as well as tabulating the results of the survey.
- **Track student participation** in walking and bicycling to school events such as the Walk to School Days, Walking School Buses, bike rodeos and pedestrian and bicycle safety presentations.

Summary

The Highland Park School Travel Plan was developed to address the continued desire to improve walking and bicycling throughout the borough, concerns about existing safety issue due to road crossings and infrastructure gaps in the community.

The Highland Park School District and the Borough of Highland Park are committed to on-going encouragement and increasing the number of children who walk and bike to school through safety improvements and programs that encourage active transportation and educate students about pedestrian and bicycle safety. The municipality and the school district have a strong working

partnership, and both are fully committed to active transportation as evident through their involvement with NJ Safe Routes to School, Sustainable Jersey and Sustainable Jersey for Schools as well as active green teams at the schools, the Sustainable Highland Park Committee and the Pedestrian/Bike Safety and Complete Street Committee.

Implementation of this plan and the sustained success of efforts to increase walking and bicycling to school will require continued partnership not just between the borough and the schools but also among local and regional organizations. Infrastructure improvements must be employed alongside hands-on education and encouragement programs to maintain the momentum towards achieving the goals set forth in this travel plan. Highland Park has demonstrated its commitment through current and past efforts to creating a community that promotes a healthy and active lifestyle for students and residents as well as providing a safe environment for walking and bicycling to and from school.