Safe Routes To School with TransOptions

2012

Safe Routes to School Travel Plan

Lafayette Avenue School

221 Lafayette Avenue

Chatham, NJ 07928

Grades: 4 – 5

Created: June 2012

**Revised: November 2013*

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Intro:

Chatham Township is located in southwest Morris County and has an area of 9.4 square miles. Lafayette Avenue School is located on Lafayette Avenue that has a 35 MPH posted speed limit west of the school, and a 30 MPH posted speed limit east of the school. During morning and afternoon school hours, the speed limit is reduced in the school zone to 25 MPH. Most of the township does not have sidewalks, however many of the streets with posted speed limits over 30 MPH have them on one side or the other. On the streets with no sidewalks, traffic volume and speed are perceived to be low, but motorist awareness is a concern, especially during morning and afternoon rush hours.

Community Profile: Chatham Township
Population: 10,452 (2010 Census)
Area: 9.4 SQ. Mi. (9.3 Land, 0.1 Water)
Police: Chatham Township Police Department

Working Members:

Ms. Ruth Dekker – SRTS Representative and member of Chatham Borough Environmental Commission

Ms. Cathy Bruzzese – SRTS Representative

Ms. Janet Roffina – SRTS Representative

Ms. Kathy Abbott – Chatham Township Committeewoman

Ms. Cheryl Caggiano - Principal

Objectives of the Travel Plan:

1. To make travel to and from Lafayette Avenue School safer and more efficient.
2. To reduce traffic congestion around the school zone.
3. To encourage travel to school by means other than the car, thus encouraging students to walk as a health option.
4. Increase motorist awareness within the community, making it a safer place to walk and cycle.
5. Educate younger students on the safety elements of walking and bicycling, especially to and from school.

Current School Policy:

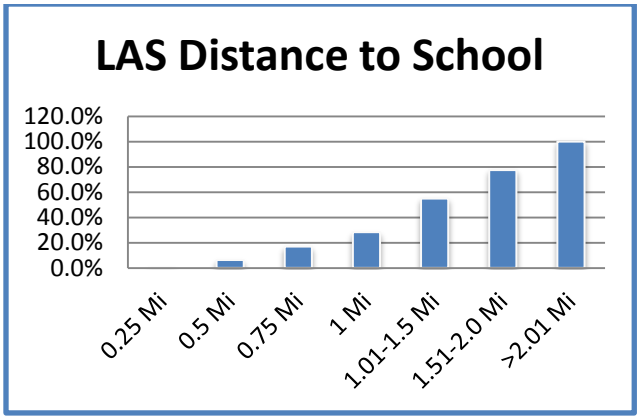
Walking and bicycling are greatly encouraged, not only within Lafayette Avenue School, but throughout the entire school district. There are bicycle racks present at each of the schools for the students and faculty to use, and there is a crossing guard present at the main entrance of the school to assist children crossing Lafayette Avenue. Currently, students whom reside more than 2 miles from their school are eligible for bus transportation.

Efforts to Date: Education and Encouragement

Proximity Analysis:

The School District of the Chathams provided TransOptions with redacted students addresses for the 2011-2012 academic year. TransOptions used the student locations to assess the feasibility of students

walking or biking to and from school, solely regarding distance that they live from their respective school.



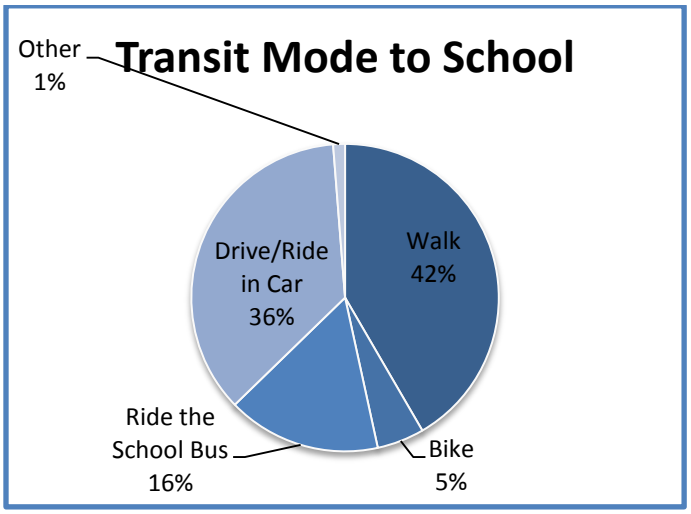
Lafayette Avenue School 4 - 5			
Distance to School		*Percentage*	*Count*
0.25 Mi.		0.5%	3
0.5 Mi.		6.3%	37
0.75 Mi.		16.9%	67
1 Mi.		28.2%	72
1.01-1.5 Mi.		54.9%	169
1.51-2.0 Mi.		77.3%	142
>2.0 Mi.		100.0%	140
		Total	634

This data enabled the Chatham Safe Routes to School Team to estimate the number of students that would be able to walk or bike to school. This also assisted in creating walking routes, as well as identifying the target enforcement areas and locations where infrastructure improvements would be necessary. 28.2% or 179 of the students at Lafayette Avenue School reside within a 1 mile radius.

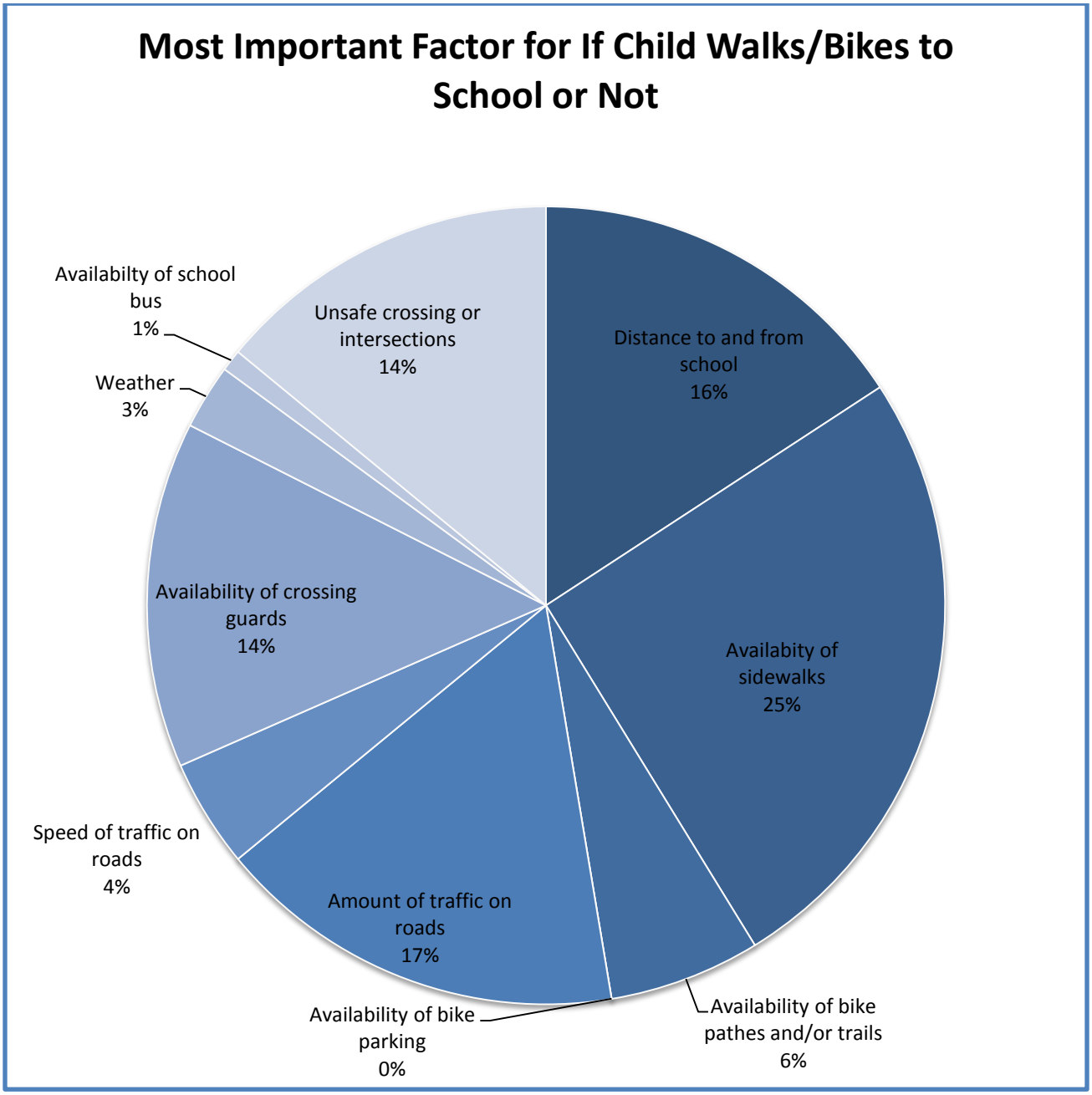
Parent Survey:

A Parent/Caregiver Survey was developed by the NJ SRTS Resource Center at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center as a tool to gather information regarding a student's travel behavior as seen by the parent/caregiver. The goal of this survey is to learn how students travel to and from school and to better understand any issues or concerns that parents have with allowing their child to walk or bike to school. Below is a highlight from the parent survey responses that were collected during the winter of 2011:

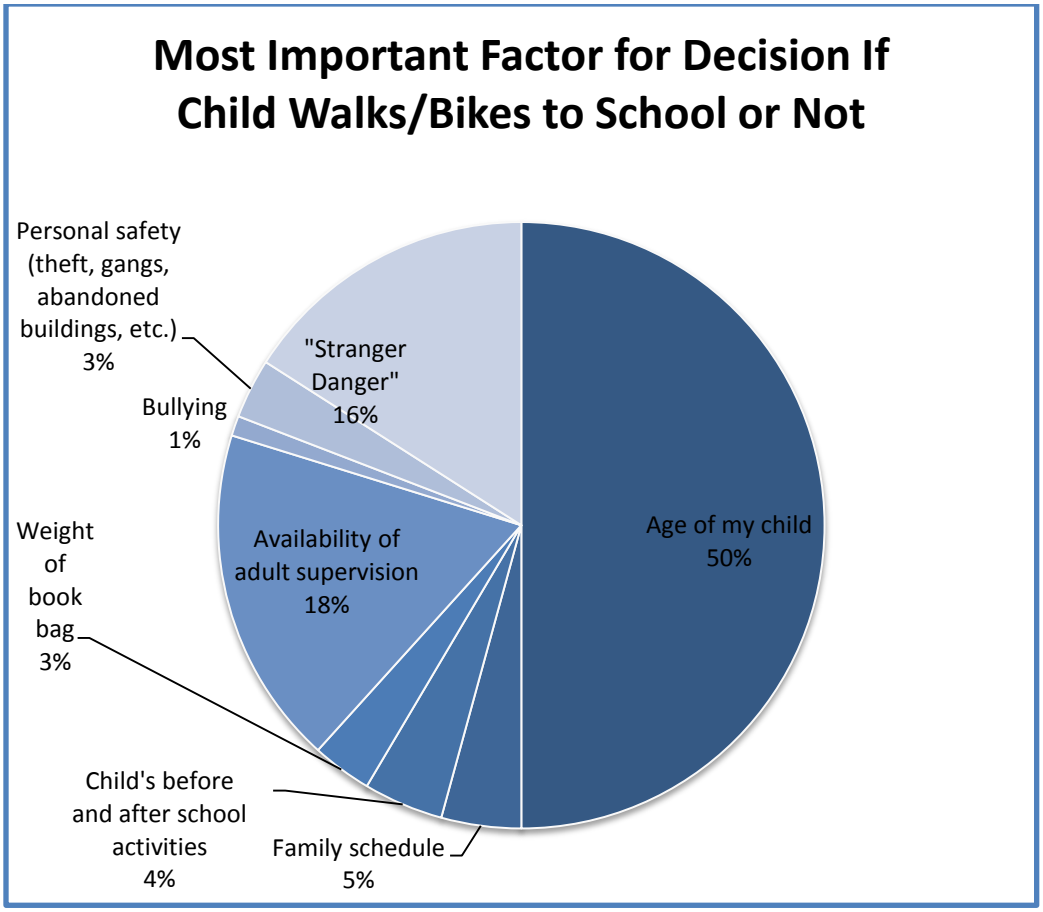
Question 10: (A) How does your child usually get to and from school?



Question 15 (B) Indicate the one factor that is most important in your decision.



Question 16: (B) Indicate the one factor that is most important in your decision. Are there any other important factors in your decision to let your child bike or walk to school?



Travel Tallies:

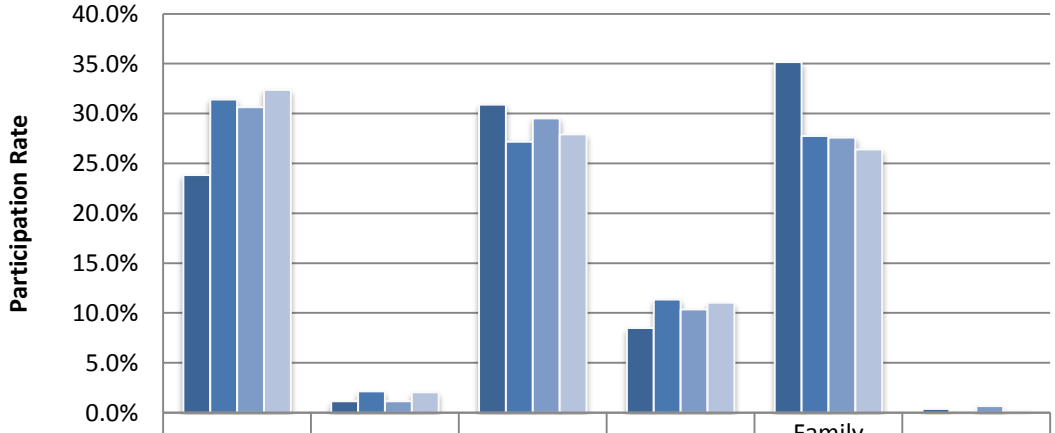
A Student Travel Tally was conducted in the fall of 2011 to form as a baseline snapshot of the student's travel mode to and from school. The tally was created by TransOptions based off of the SRTS National Partnership Tally. The tally is a simple "show-of-hands" collection method where the teacher during the first period of school asked the students how they arrived at school that morning, giving the student the choices of Walk, Bike, Bus, and Carpool with other students, driven alone in a family vehicle, or other (scooter, skateboard, etc.).

The data collected in the tally was completed without the promotion of a walk or bike to school event. We hoped to gather information that would capture the true travel behavior of the school before any encouragement and education efforts were put forth. In the AM from November 7th, 2011 to November 9th, 2011, 429 students had walked to school (23.8%), 21 had biked (1.2%), 556 had taken the bus (30.9%), 153 carpooled with other students (8.5%), 633 were driven alone by a parent or guardian

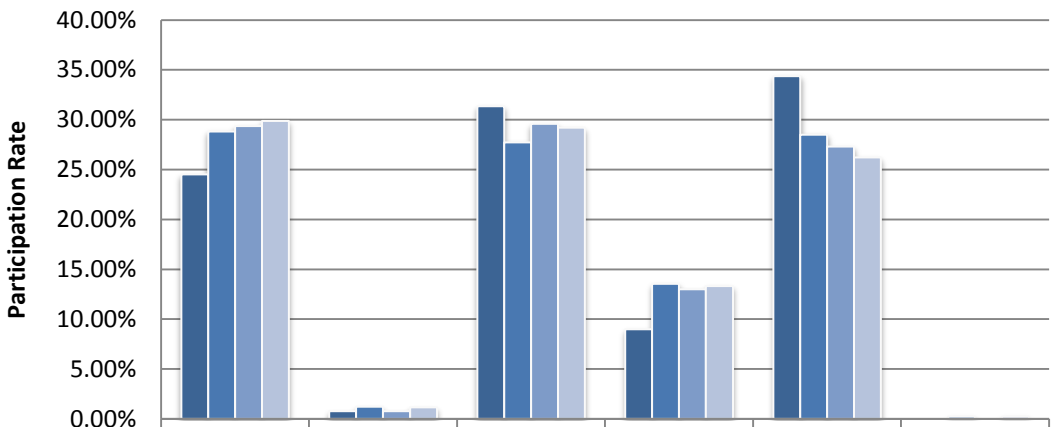
(35.2%), and 7 arrived to school via other means (.04%). In the PM, 552 students had walked home from school (30.6%), 21 had biked (1.2%), 532 had taken the bus (29.5%), 187 carpooled with other students (10.4%), 497 were driven alone by a parent or guardian (27.6%), and 12 arrived home via other means (.07%).

As the school year progressed, the students and their parents were encouraged to walk or bike to school, and where the service was available to them, to take the bus. Also, parents were educated on the New Jersey Pedestrian laws, and a Chatham SRTS Facebook page was created, gathering information from the residents of the community regarding opportunities or constraints their child may face on his or her trip to school. There were also a series of videos that were created in anticipation of Walk and Bike to School Week, which were posted on YouTube, and publicized throughout the school district.

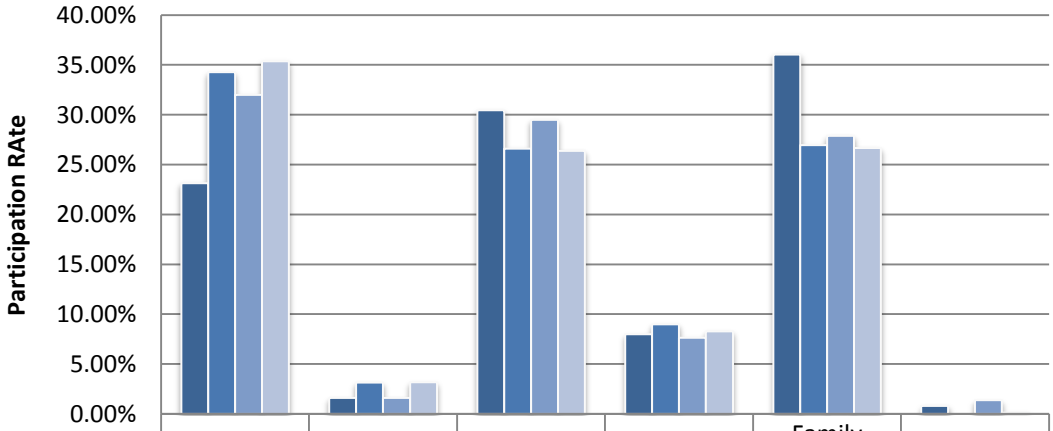
The Student Travel Tally was conducted again during a marketed "Walk to School Week" sponsored by TransOptions. Parents and teachers were encouraged to promote the event to their children and students in the weeks prior to the event. In the AM, from April 24th, 2012 through April 26th, 2012, 544 students had walked to school (31.4% or a 26.8% increase), 37 had biked (2.1% or a 76% increase), 471 had taken the bus (27.2% or a 15.2% decrease), 197 carpooled with other students (11.4% or a 28.7% increase), 481 were driven alone by a parent or guardian (27.8% or a 24.0% decrease), and 2 arrived to school via other means (0.1% or a 71.4% decrease). In the PM, 516 students had walked home from school (32.4% or a 6.5% decrease), 33 had biked (2.1% or a 57.1% increase), 445 had taken the bus (27.9% or a 16.4% decrease), 176 carpooled with other students (11.0% or a 5.9% decrease), 421 were driven alone by a parent or guardian (26.4% or a 9.9% decrease), and 3 arrived home via other means (0.2% or a 75% decrease). The findings of the travel tally are represented below:



	Walk	Bike	Bus	Car Pool	Family Vehicle	Other
Fall AM	23.8%	1.2%	30.9%	8.5%	35.2%	0.4%
Spring AM	31.4%	2.1%	27.2%	11.4%	27.8%	0.1%
Fall PM	30.6%	1.2%	29.5%	10.4%	27.6%	0.7%
Spring PM	32.4%	2.1%	27.9%	11.0%	26.4%	0.2%



	Walk	Bike	Bus	Car Pool	Family Vehicle	Other
Fall AM	24.51%	0.76%	31.34%	9.00%	34.38%	0.00%
Spring AM	28.82%	1.21%	27.72%	13.53%	28.49%	0.22%
Fall PM	29.36%	0.76%	29.58%	13.00%	27.30%	0.00%
Spring PM	29.89%	1.15%	29.20%	13.33%	26.21%	0.23%



	Walk	Bike	Bus	Car Pool	Family Vehicle	Other
Fall AM	23.15%	1.60%	30.44%	7.98%	36.03%	0.80%
Spring AM	34.26%	3.16%	26.61%	8.99%	26.97%	0.00%
Fall PM	32.00%	1.59%	29.50%	7.63%	27.90%	1.37%
Spring PM	35.36%	3.18%	26.38%	8.29%	26.66%	0.14%

*Travel Tallies (2013 Update):

A Travel Tally was conducted at Lafayette Ave. School in October 2013, in order to compare data from 2011. The tally was distributed by the Chatham Safe Routes to School Committee and the format used was composed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School. The tally is a simple "show-of-hands" collection method where the teacher during the first period of school asked the students how they arrived at school that morning, giving the student the choices of Walk, Bike, Bus, and Carpool with other students, driven alone in a family vehicle, or other (scooter, skateboard, etc.).

The data collected in the tally was completed in October and Lafayette Ave. School celebrated International Walk to School Day on October 9th, along with every school within the School District of the Chathams.

Only Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday were recorded. Another graph in Figure 7 shows transport mode during particular weather conditions.

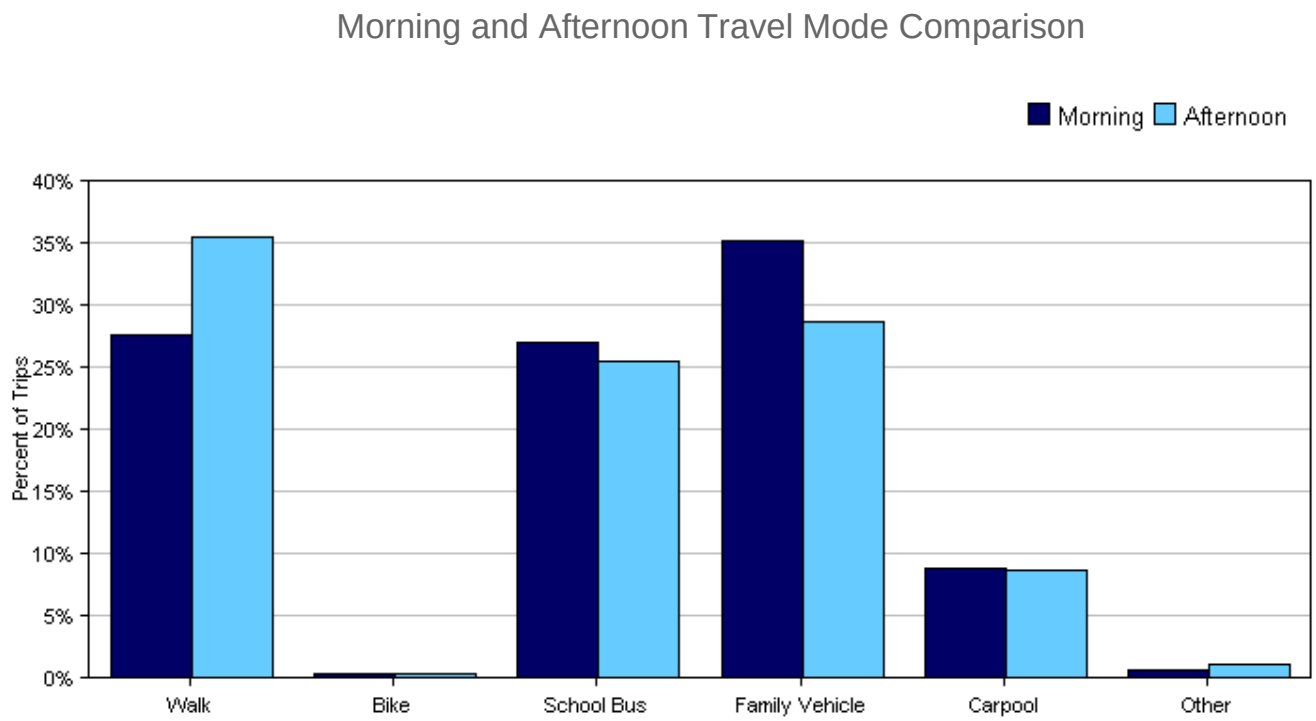


Figure 1-Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	1985	28%	0.4%	27%	35%	9%	0%	0.7%
Afternoon	2016	36%	0.4%	26%	29%	9%	0%	1%

Figure 2 **Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.**

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison by Day

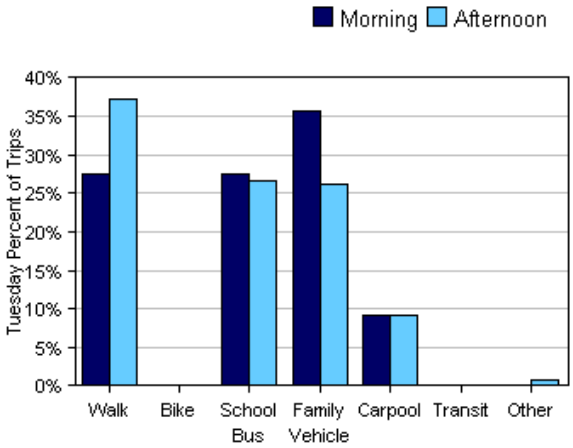


Figure 3-Tuesday

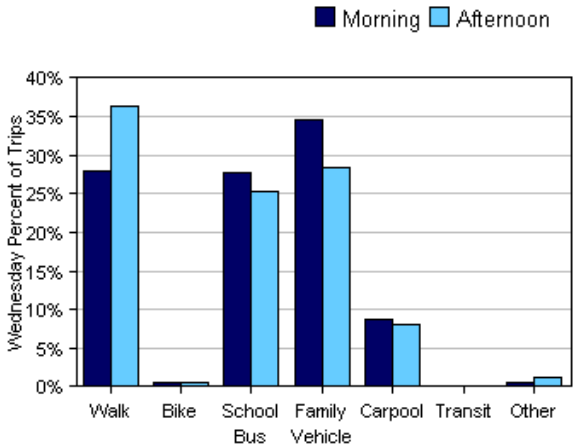


Figure 4-Wednesday

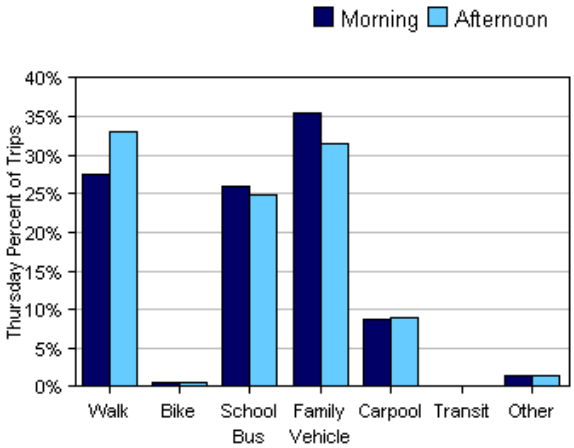


Figure 5-Thursday

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison by Day

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tuesday AM	649	28%	0%	27%	36%	9%	0%	0.2%
Tuesday PM	674	37%	0%	27%	26%	9%	0%	0.7%
Wednesday AM	664	28%	0.6%	28%	35%	9%	0%	0.5%
Wednesday PM	668	36%	0.6%	25%	28%	8%	0%	1%
Thursday AM	672	28%	0.6%	26%	36%	9%	0%	1%
Thursday PM	674	33%	0.6%	25%	31%	9%	0%	1%

Figure 6 **(Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.)**

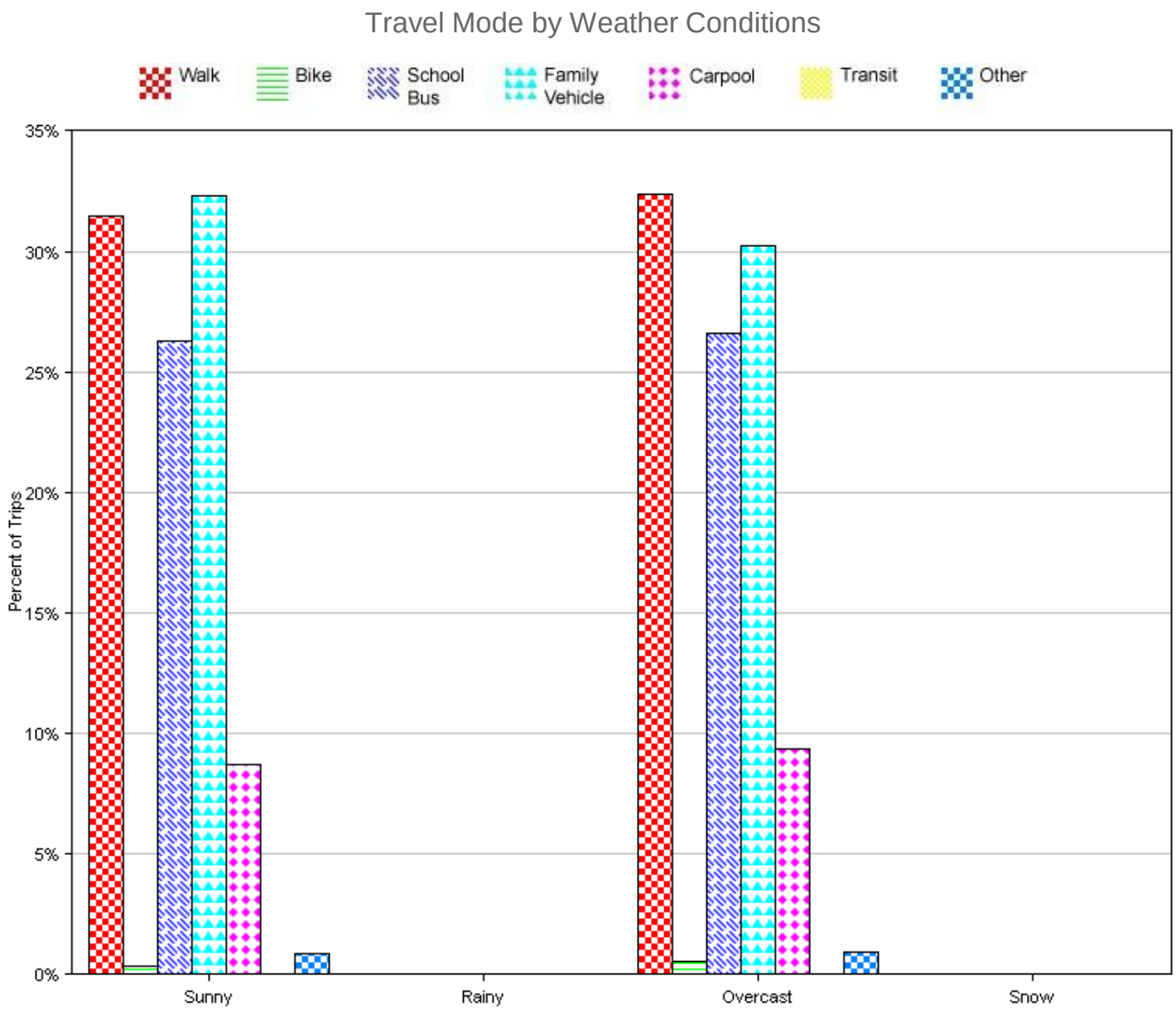


Figure 7-Mode by Weather Conditions

Travel Mode by Weather Condition

Weather Condition	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Sunny	3241	31%	0.4%	26%	32%	9%	0%	0.9%
Rainy	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overcast	760	32%	0.5%	27%	30%	9%	0%	0.9%
Snow	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 8 **(Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.)**

Walk and Bike to School Week April 23rd – 27th, 2012

Photos: A Crossing Guard stops traffic to allow students to cross Lafayette Avenue safely (left); Students gather in the parking lot and receive giveaways for participating in Walk and Bike to School Week (right).

Photos: A full bicycle rack in result of Walk and Bike to School Week (Left); Participating Students riding their bicycles to school (Right).

Bicycle Education Curriculum:

The Bike Safety Specialist of TransOptions developed an in-class off-bike bicycle education program to be taught throughout the School District of the Chathams. The curriculum has been developed to address the different age groups and their ability to comprehend the lesson plan. The program is designed to provide the following educational lessons for the various grade levels:

- Grades 4-6 – One Classroom Lesson, One Gymnasium Lesson
    - Encourage students to want to bicycle more.
    - Importance of the helmet and take home material for parents to learn how to properly fit a helmet.
    - Educate the students about sharing the road and how to look out for cars and other hazards, as well as introducing the concept that a bicycle is considered a car and must follow all of the traffic laws.

- Learn the rules of traffic signals (Stop Sigs, Traffic Lights, One Way signs, Yield Signs) and to teach them the role of the crossing guard by participating in an obstacle course that requires the students to assume the roles of a biker, motorist, and a pedestrian.

TransOptions worked with the Physical Education (PE) teachers at each of the six public schools in Chatham to train them in the bicycle curriculum. Training sessions were coordinated with each of the schools, and instructions were provided to the PE teachers on how to conduct the lesson. This was an educational experience for TransOptions, and provided insight on how to best deliver the message of bicycle safety to students in varying age groups.

Barriers and Constraints:

The Chatham SRTS Committee created a Safe Routes to School email account, as well as a Facebook profile, to solicit information from residents of the community. Both accounts generated a number of responses regarding crosswalks, sidewalks, crossing guards, signage, and maintenance issues that could pose as threats to pedestrians travelling to and from school. Below is a list of the areas of concern that were cited by residents in the community as suggestions to be considered moving forward:

Crosswalk Installation:

- Ramapo Trail and Fairmount Ave
- Fairmount Ave (Multiple locations)
- School Ave and Spring Street

Sidewalk Installation Requests:

- Spring Street
- Longwood Ave
- Lafayette Ave (east of LAS)

Crossing Guard:

- Longwood Ave and Lafayette Ave

Traffic Calming Measures:

- Pedestrian Warning Flashers approaching LAS and CHS
- Pedestrian Crossing signs on Dale Drive
- Reduce speeding and traffic volume on Longwood Ave, Dellwood Ave, Pine Street, and Fairview Ave

Two members of the Chatham Safe Routes to School Team, Janet Roffina and Catherine Bruzzese, volunteered to walk around LAS and take pictures and record observations that could potentially pose as threats to students walking or biking to/from school. Below are sample photographs from the report:

Photos: Corner of Fairview Ave and Lafayette Ave facing Watchung Ave (Left); Facing towards LAS at Fairview Ave and Lafayette Ave, well-worn footpath is noticeable on the left side of the street (Right).

Photos: A well-worn footpath facing LAS at the corner of Fairview Ave and Lafayette Ave. A sidewalk is located across the street from Southern Boulevard to Watchung Ave, there is an evident need for a sidewalk on the East side of the street (Left); A well-worn footpath at the intersection of Watchung Ave and Lafayette Ave (Right)

Photos: A well-worn footpath West of CHS and LAS on Lafayette Ave. (Left and Center); LAS and CHS students utilize Lafayette to walk and Bike to school, however there it only a sidewalk present on the West side of Lafayette Ave, and CHS and LAS are on the East side of Lafayette Ave (Right)

The SRTS Committee also conducted a survey of auto-related accidents that had occurred from 2009 – 2011, focusing on the active commuting times for schools (7:15AM – 8:55AM and 2:02PM – 3:25PM). The results showed that there were a total of 61 accidents that had occurred within a .75 Mi. radius of Chatham Township schools (Southern Boulevard, Chatham High School and Lafayette Avenue School). There was a subtotal of 46 accidents within the .75 Mi. radius of Chatham High School (CHS) and Lafayette School (LAS), where 9 of them occurred directly in front of the school(s). 12 more had occurred on Lafayette Avenue, and there were 25 other accidents occurring on neighboring streets within .75 Mi. from CHS and LAS.

Next Steps:

This was the first year of having a successful Safe Routes to School program in Chatham Township. Lafayette Avenue School, as well as Chatham Township, will continue to promote and encourage students travelling to and from school to do so by means of active transportation. Those students that reside greater than 2 miles from the school are eligible for bus service, and are encouraged to utilize those services.

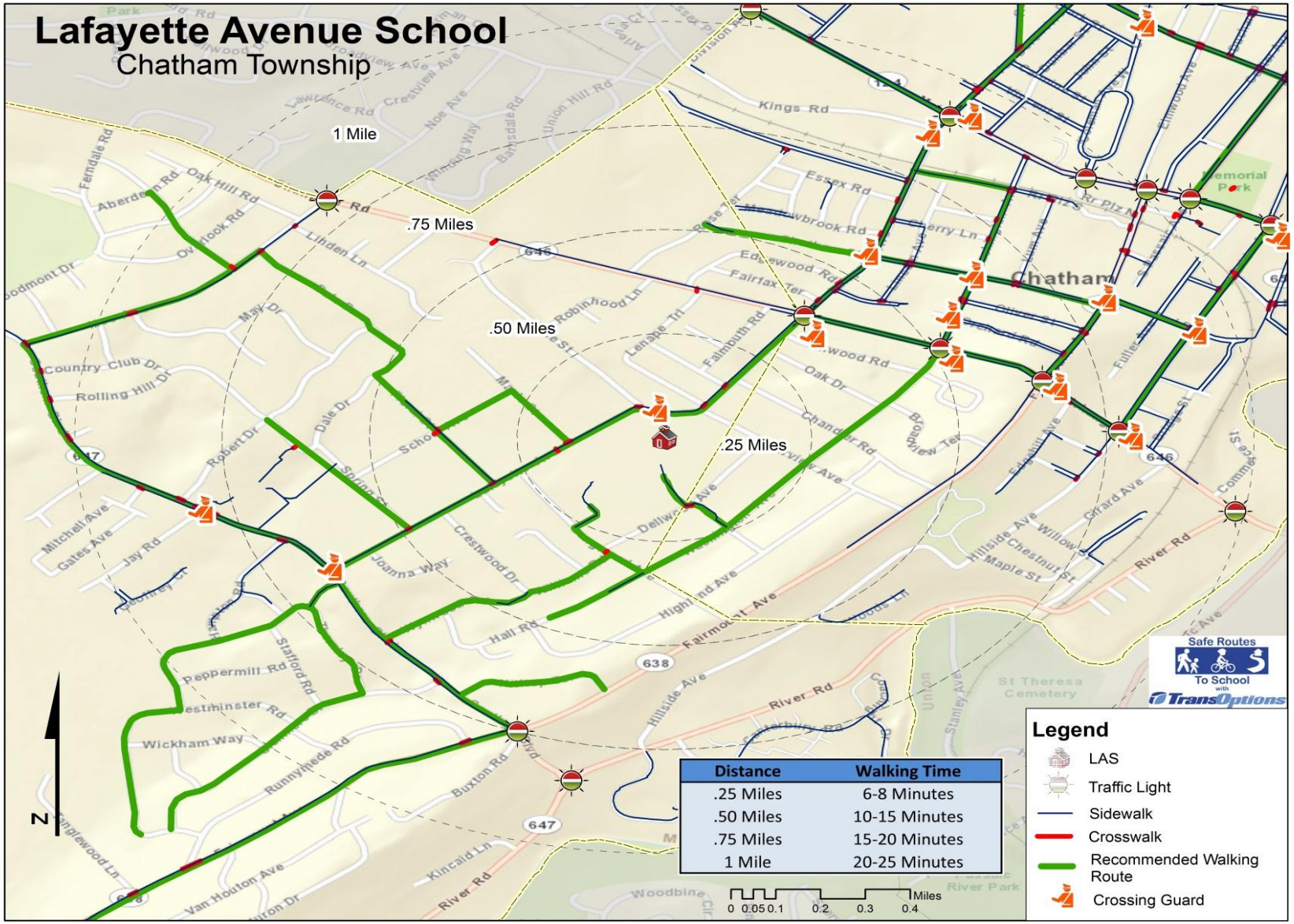
TransOptions hopes to host bicycle and pedestrian education classes at Lafayette Avenue School in the upcoming 2012-2013 school year. TransOptions also hopes to work with the Chatham SRTS Committee, Lafayette Avenue School and the Chatham Township Police to establish Walk and Bike to school days for the upcoming school year. Establishing dates for these events before the school year begins will facilitate in the encouragement and communication to parents and enable those to participate.

Lafayette Avenue School would like to acquire sources of funding for continued promotional items and other encouragement and educational materials to build on the success of the program to date.

Proposed Actions:

Education Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Cost
Pedestrian Safety Classes	TMA	Ongoing	Low
Bicycle Safety Classes	TMA	Ongoing	Low
Printing of Pedestrian Safety Documents for Parents	School/TMA	Ongoing	Low
Encouragement Actions			
Establish relationship with local sponsors	Chatham SRTS Committee	Ongoing	Low
Establish Walk and Bike to School dates for 2012-2013 School Year	School/Board of Education/Township Police/TMA	Fall 2012	Low
Register for International Walk to School Day	School/TMA	By October 3rd	Low
Enforcement Actions			
Speed Enforcement	Chatham Township Police	Ongoing	Low
Yield to Pedestrians at crosswalks	Chatham Township Police	Ongoing	Low
Engineering Actions			
Installation of sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signage	Municipality	?	High
Walkability/Bikeability Audit	School/TMA	2012-2013 School Year	Low
Evaluation Actions			
Student Travel Tally	School/TMA	Fall 2012	Low
Parent Survey	School/TMA	Fall 2012	Low

Map of School



Sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation with funding from the Federal Highway Administration