Safe Routes To School with TransOptions

# 2012

# Safe Routes to School Travel Plan

**Southern Boulevard School**

192 Southern Boulevard

Chatham, NJ 07928

Grades: K – 3

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. Southern Boulevard School is located on a county road that has a 35 MPH posted speed limit. 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. Janice Coviello – SRTS Representative and Chair of Environmental Awareness Committee

Ms. Kathy Abbott – Chatham Township Committeewoman

Mr. Ralph Presapane - Principal

## Objectives of the Travel Plan:

1. To make travel to and from Southern Boulevard 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.

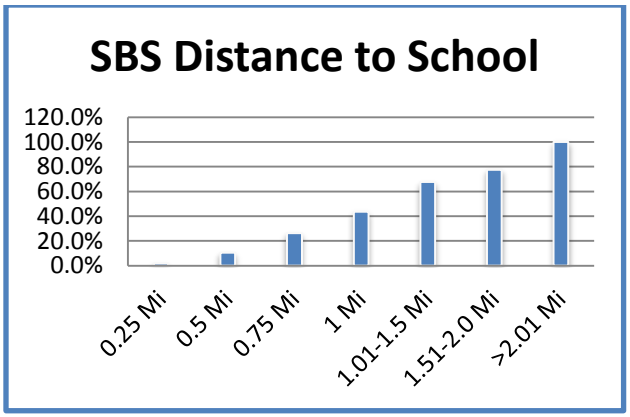
## Current School Policy:

Walking and bicycling are greatly encouraged, not only within Southern Boulevard 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 Southern Boulevard. 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.



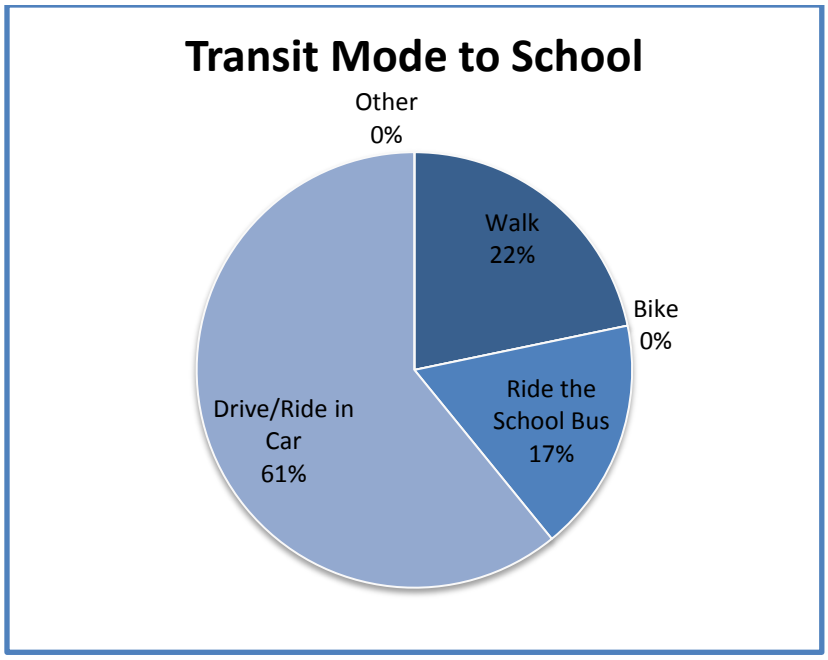

| Southern Boulevard School K - 3 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| *Distance to School* | | *Percentage* | *Count* |
| 0.25 Mi. | | 1.8% | 9 |
| 0.5 Mi. | | 10.6% | 43 |
| 0.75 Mi. | | 26.3% | 77 |
| 1 Mi. | | 43.7% | 85 |
| 1.01-1.5 Mi. | | 67.6% | 117 |
| 1.51-2.0 Mi. | | 77.6% | 49 |
| >2.0 Mi. | | 100.0% | 110 |
| | | **Total** | 490 |

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. 43.7% or 129 of the students at Southern Boulevard School reside within a 1 mile radius.

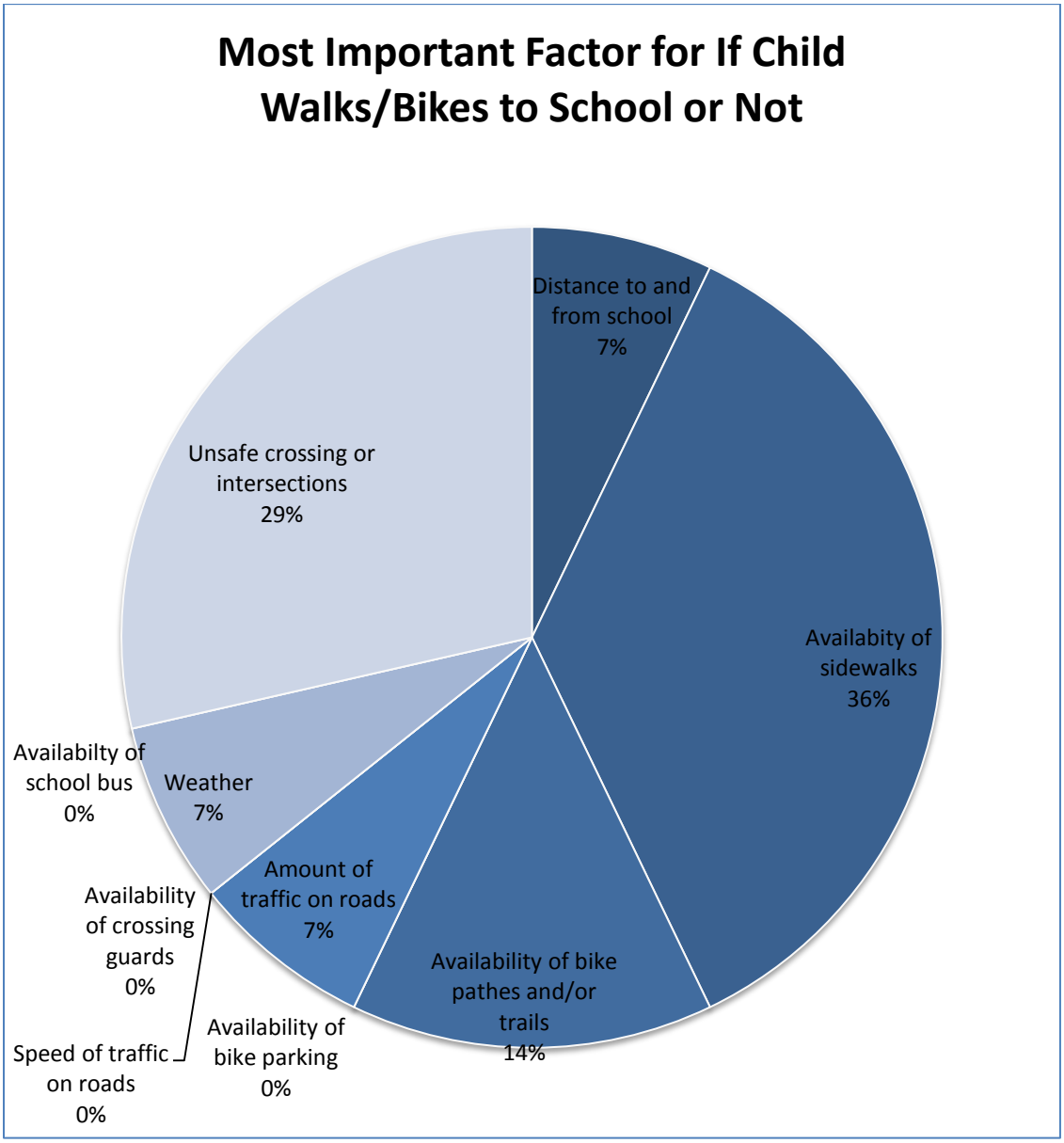
## Parent Survey:

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:

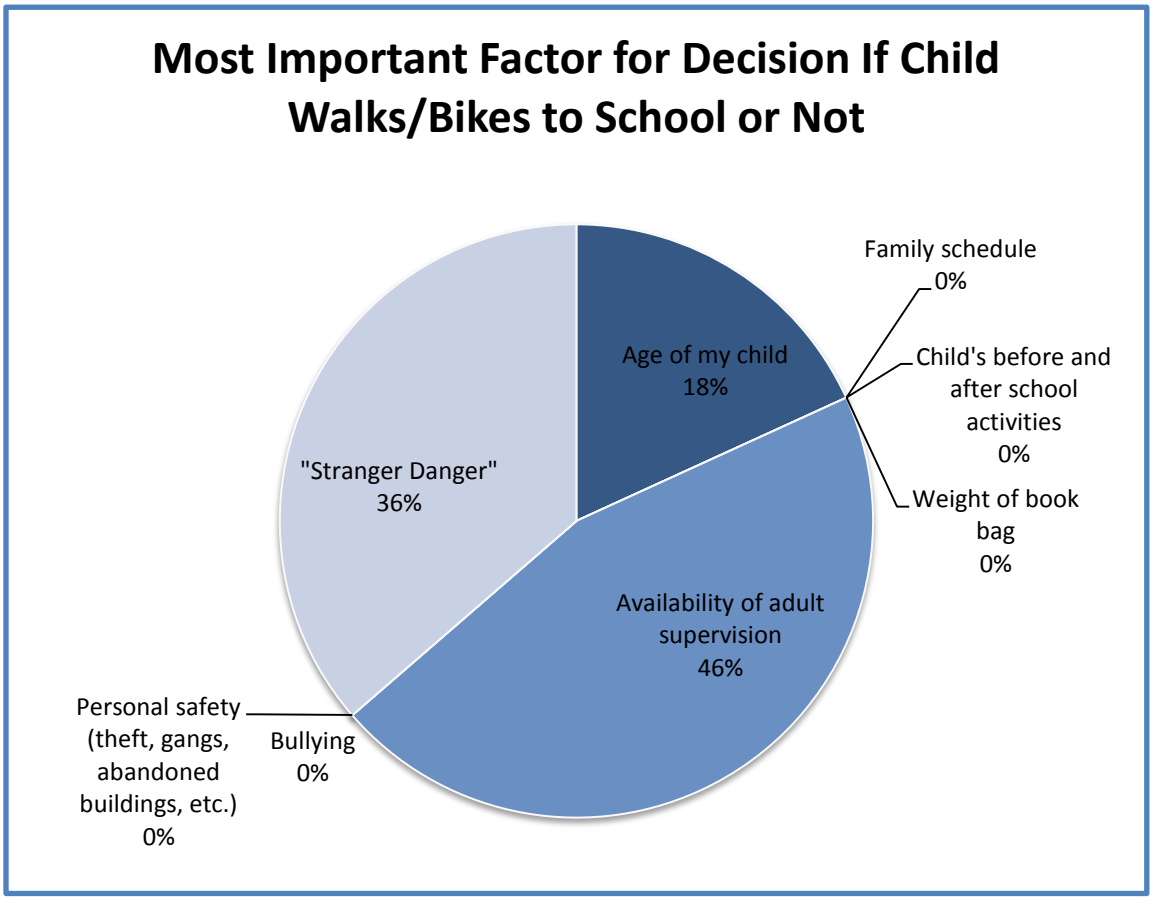
### Question 10: (A) How does your child usually get to and from school?



**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?**

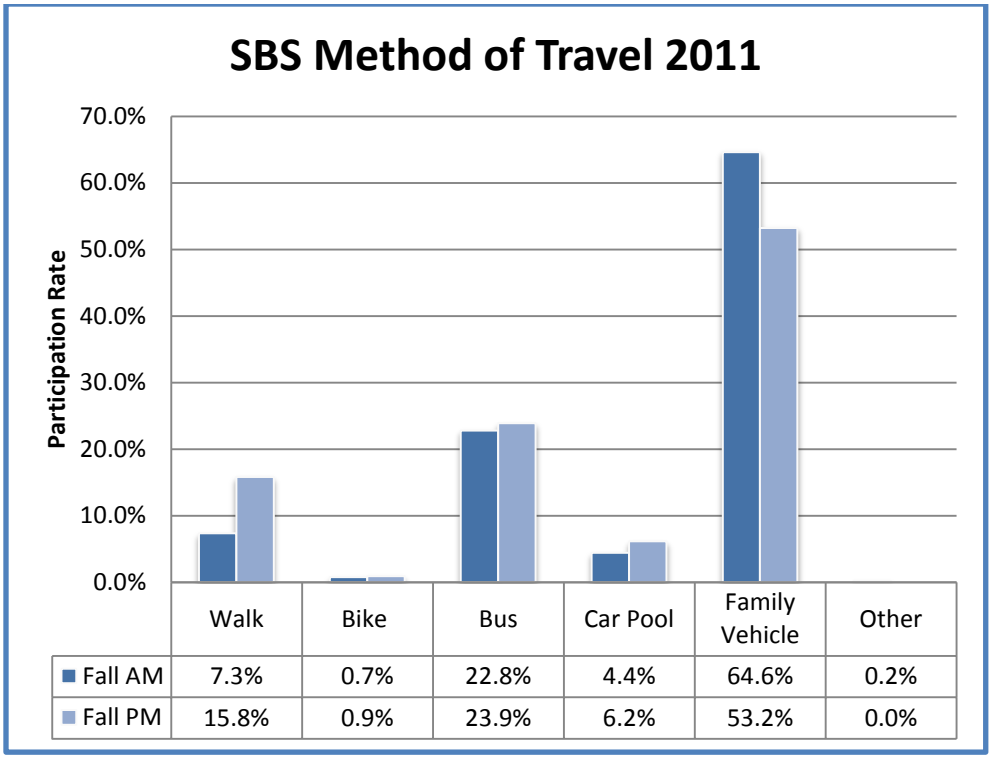



## Travel Tallies:

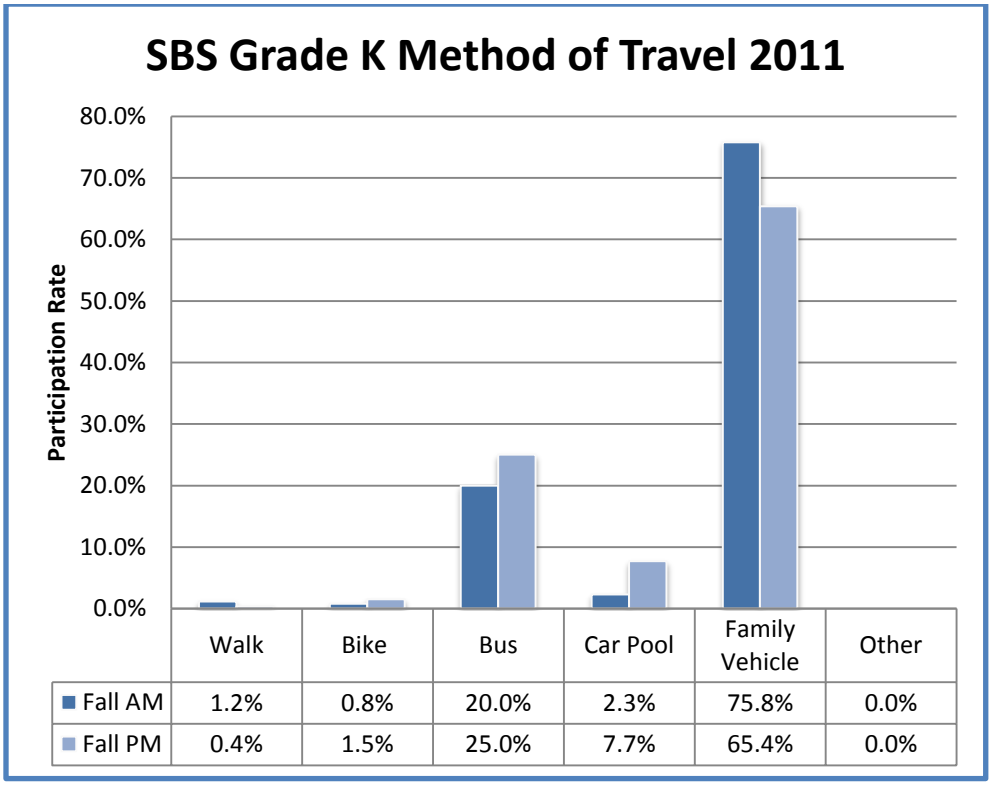
A Student Travel Tally was conducted in the fall of 2011 to form as a baseline snapshot of the student's travel mode to and from school. The tally was created by TransOptions based off of the SRTS National Partnership Tally. The tally is a simple "show-of-hands" collection method where the teacher during 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 16th, 2011 to November 18th, 2011, 80 students had walked to school (7.3%), 8 had biked (0.7%), 249 had taken the bus (22.8%), 48 carpooled with other students (4.4%), 706 were driven alone by a parent or guardian (64.6%), and 2 arrived to school via other means (.02%). In the PM, 172 students had walked home from school (15.8%), 10 had biked (0.9%), 260 had taken the bus (23.9%), 67 carpooled with other students

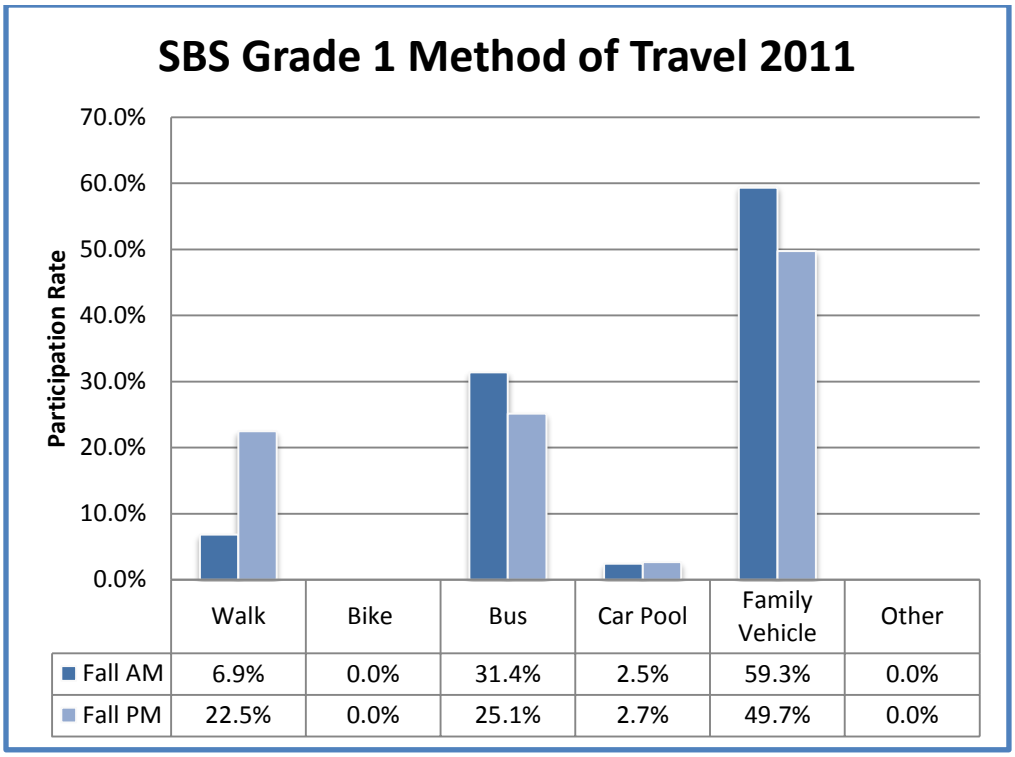
(6.2%), 579 were driven alone by a parent or guardian (53.2%), and 0 arrived home via other means (.00%). The results are further broken down in the charts below.



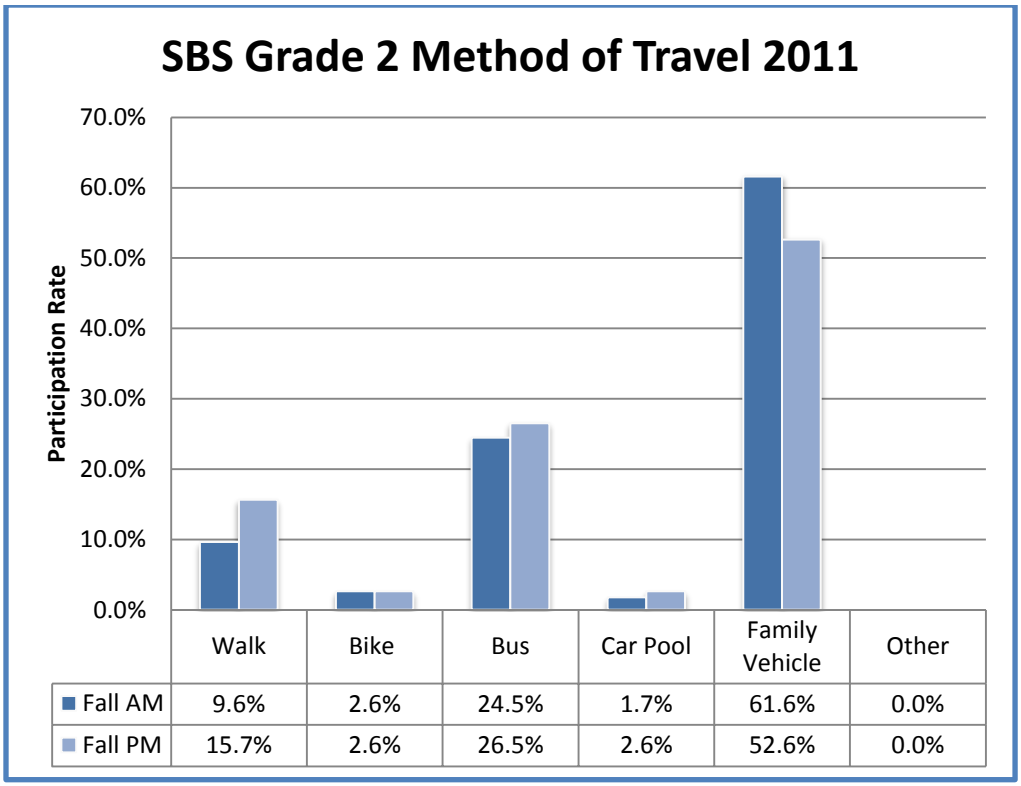

| | Walk | Bike | Bus | Car Pool | Family Vehicle | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fall AM | 7.3% | 0.7% | 22.8% | 4.4% | 64.6% | 0.2% |
| Fall PM | 15.8% | 0.9% | 23.9% | 6.2% | 53.2% | 0.0% |



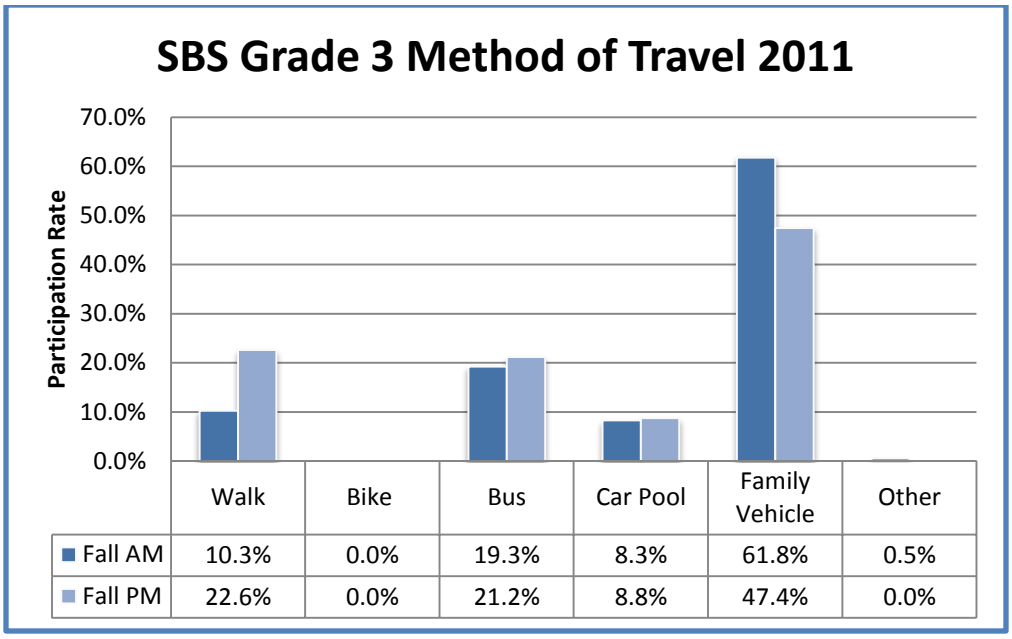

| | Walk | Bike | Bus | Car Pool | Family Vehicle | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fall AM | 1.2% | 0.8% | 20.0% | 2.3% | 75.8% | 0.0% |
| Fall PM | 0.4% | 1.5% | 25.0% | 7.7% | 65.4% | 0.0% |




| | Walk | Bike | Bus | Car Pool | Family Vehicle | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fall AM | 6.9% | 0.0% | 31.4% | 2.5% | 59.3% | 0.0% |
| Fall PM | 22.5% | 0.0% | 25.1% | 2.7% | 49.7% | 0.0% |



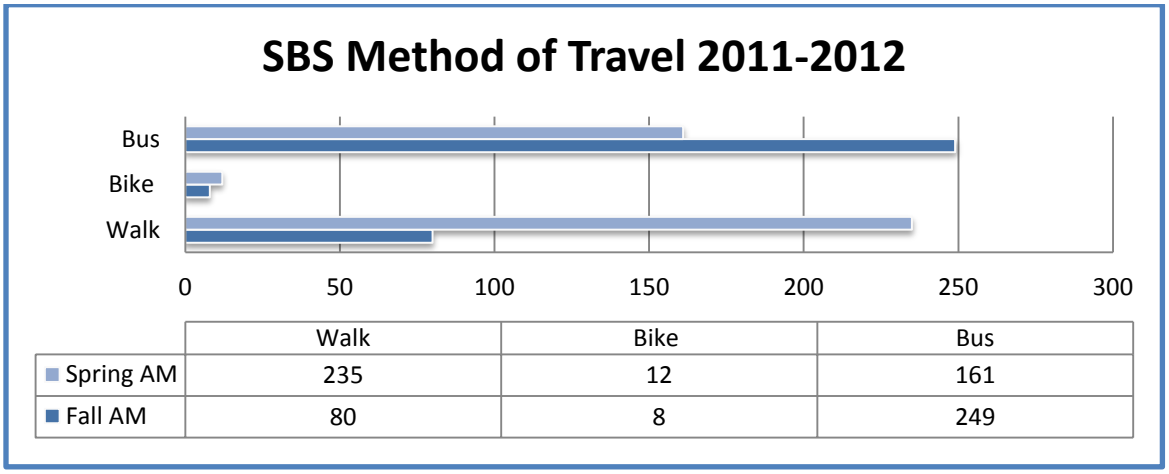

| | Walk | Bike | Bus | Car Pool | Family Vehicle | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fall AM | 9.6% | 2.6% | 24.5% | 1.7% | 61.6% | 0.0% |
| Fall PM | 15.7% | 2.6% | 26.5% | 2.6% | 52.6% | 0.0% |




| | Walk | Bike | Bus | Car Pool | Family Vehicle | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fall AM | 10.3% | 0.0% | 19.3% | 8.3% | 61.8% | 0.5% |
| Fall PM | 22.6% | 0.0% | 21.2% | 8.8% | 47.4% | 0.0% |

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" that was organized by the SBS PTO Environmental Awareness Committee with assistance from TransOptions. Parents and teachers were encouraged to promote the event to their children and students weeks prior to the event. A different tally was conducted that only captured the individuals who walked, biked, or rode the bus to school, as they were encouraged to do throughout the school year. From April 24th, 2012 through April 26th, 2012, 235 students had walked to school (190% increase), 12 had biked (50% increase), and 161 had taken the bus (54% decrease). These details can be seen in the chart below.




| | Walk | Bike | Bus |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spring AM | 235 | 12 | 161 |
| Fall AM | 80 | 8 | 249 |

## *Travel Tallies (2013 Update):

A Travel Tally was conducted at Southern Boulevard 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 Southern Boulevard School celebrated International Walk to School Day on October 9th, along with every school within the School District of the Chatham's.

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

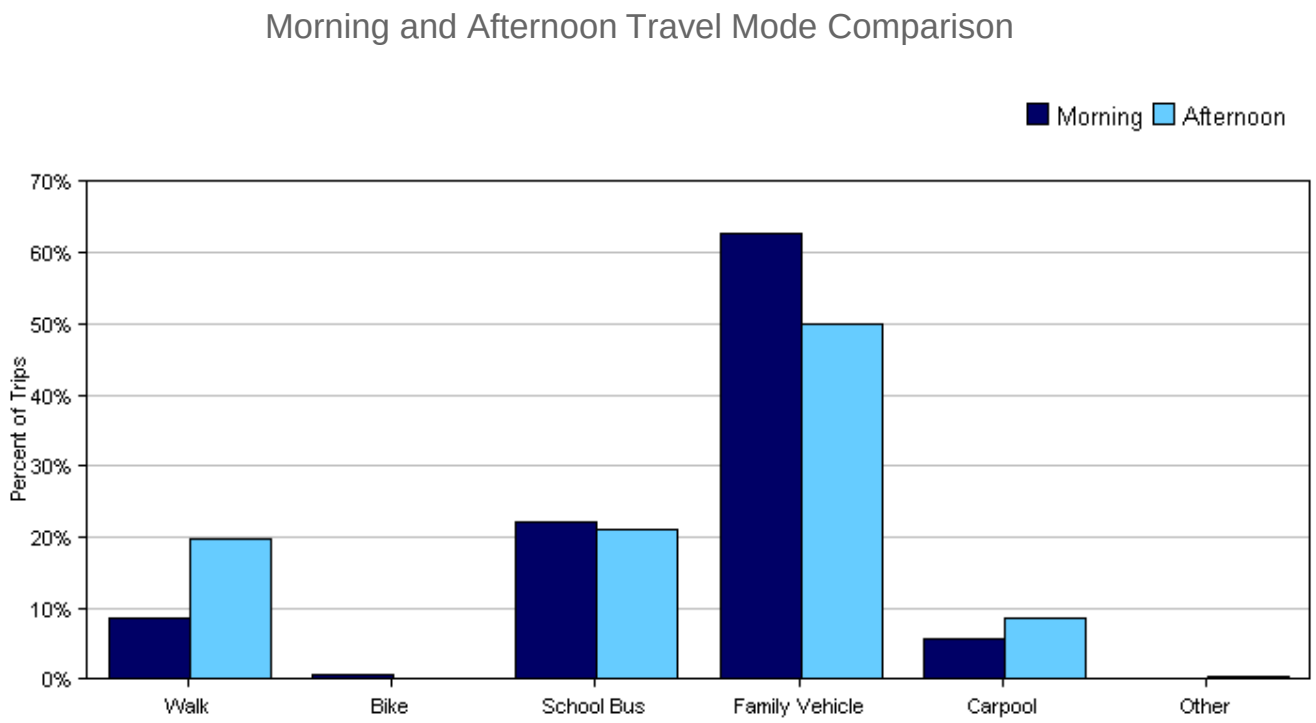



Figure 1-Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

| | Number of Trips | Walk | Bike | School Bus | Family Vehicle | Carpool | Transit | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Morning | 1260 | 9% | 0.6% | 22% | 63% | 6% | 0% | 0.2% |
| Afternoon | 1283 | 20% | 0.2% | 21% | 50% | 9% | 0% | 0.5% |

Figure 2

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

## Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison by Day

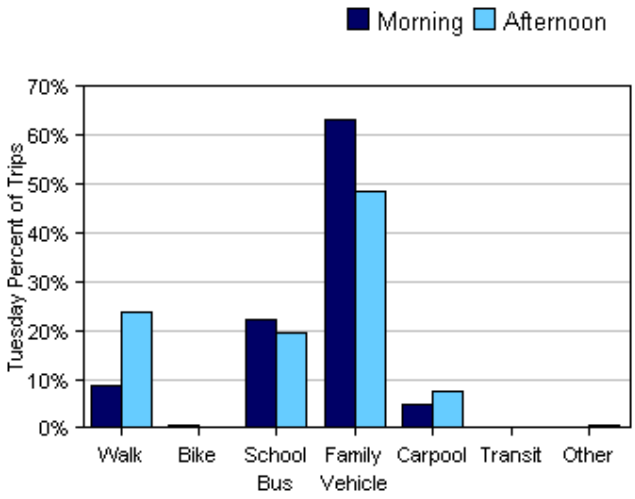



Figure 3-Tuesday

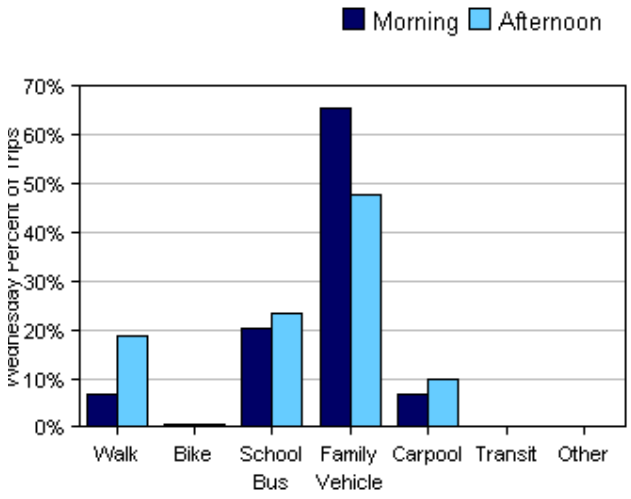



Figure 4-Wednesday

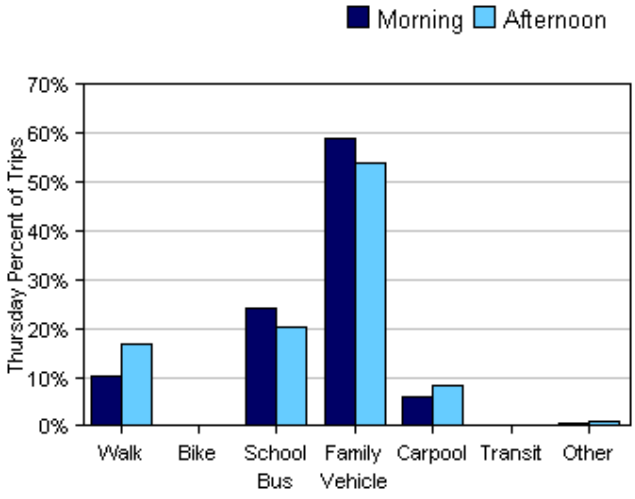



Figure 5-Thursday

## Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison by Day

| | Number of Trips | Walk | Bike | School Bus | Family Vehicle | Carpool | Transit | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tuesday AM | 428 | 9% | 0.7% | 22% | 63% | 5% | 0% | 0.2% |
| Tuesday PM | 422 | 24% | 0.2% | 19% | 49% | 8% | 0% | 0.5% |
| Wednesday AM | 421 | 7% | 0.7% | 20% | 66% | 7% | 0% | 0% |
| Wednesday PM | 424 | 19% | 0.5% | 23% | 48% | 10% | 0% | 0% |
| Thursday AM | 411 | 10% | 0.2% | 24% | 59% | 6% | 0% | 0.5% |
| Thursday PM | 437 | 17% | 0% | 20% | 54% | 8% | 0% | 0.9% |

Figure 6

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

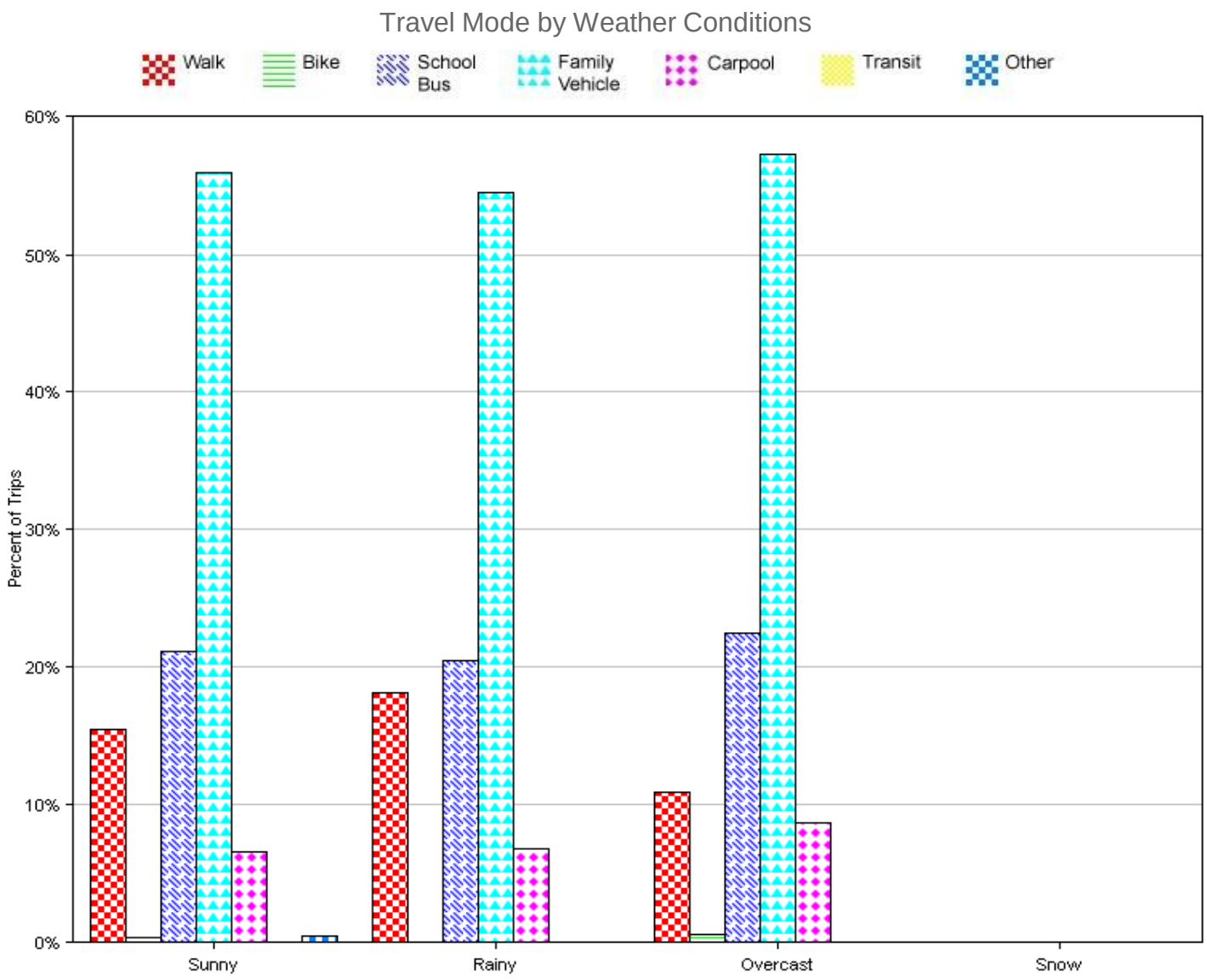



Figure 7-Mode by weather condition

## Travel Mode by Weather Condition

| Weather Condition | Number of Trips | Walk | Bike | School Bus | Family Vehicle | Carpool | Transit | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunny | 1792 | 15% | 0.3% | 21% | 56% | 7% | 0% | 0.5% |
| Rainy | 44 | 18% | 0% | 20% | 55% | 7% | 0% | 0% |
| Overcast | 707 | 11% | 0.6% | 22% | 57% | 9% | 0% | 0% |
| 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: Chatham Twp. Mayor Nicole Hagner with students at SBS during Walk to School Week (Left); Walking School Bus arriving to school during Walk and Bike to School Week (right).*

*Photos: SBS Principal Ralph Pesapane hands students zipper pulls for walking to school during Walk and Bike to School Week (Left); Participating Students signing their names on a wooden cut-out of a person (Right).*

*Photo: Janice Coviello and Chatham Twp. Mayor Nicole Hagner ask students where they live on the recommended routes map, showing them how far they had walked that morning.*

## 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 K-1 – One Classroom Lesson
    - Importance of the helmet and take home material for parents to learn how to properly fit a helmet.
    - Encourage bicycling as a fun and energizing activity.
    - Learn the basic traffic signals (Stop Signs and Traffic Lights) and to teach them the role of the crossing guard.
    - The lesson also includes a take home coloring book that can be used as a take-home homework assignment.
- Grades 2-3 – One Classroom Lesson
    - Importance of the helmet and take home material for parents to learn how to properly fit a helmet.

- Encourage bicycling as a fun and energizing activity.
- 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.
- Educate the students on the environmental and health benefits of bicycling.
- Educate the students about sharing the road and how to look out for cars and other hazards.

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. The SBS PTO did their own online survey of SBS parents, asking them to identify walking and bicycling obstacles they and their children face when traveling to and from school. The three 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:**

- Rolling Hill Drive and Dale Drive
- Ramapo Trail and Fairmount Ave
- Fairmount Ave (Multiple locations)
- Hampton Road and Southern Boulevard
- School Ave and Spring Street

**Sidewalk Installation Requests:**

- Dale Drive
- Spring Street
- Rolling Hill Drive
- Longwood Ave

**Crossing Guard:**

- Southern Boulevard and Hampton Road
- Noe Ave and Dale Drive
- Spring Street (Rear entrance to school)
- Longwood Ave and Lafayette Ave

**Traffic Calming Measures:**

- Pedestrian Warning Flashers at Fairmount and Birch Hill
- Pedestrian Crossing signs on Dale Drive
- Reduce speeding and traffic volume on Dale Drive and Rolling Hill Drive

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 during a total of 408 school days 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 14 accidents within the .75 Mi. radius of Southern Boulevard School, where 1 of them occurred directly in front of the school. 13 more accidents had occurred on Southern Boulevard within .75 Mi. from SBS.

*Photo: (Left) Deteriorating sidewalk/erosion on the southwest side of Southern Boulevard about 400 ft. east of SBS. (Right) Twp. Public Works Department making repairs during the summer of 2012.*

## Next Steps:

This was the first year of having a successful Safe Routes to School program in Chatham Township. Southern Boulevard 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 Southern Boulevard School in the upcoming 2012-2013 school year. TransOptions also hopes to work with the Chatham SRTS Committee, Southern Boulevard 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.

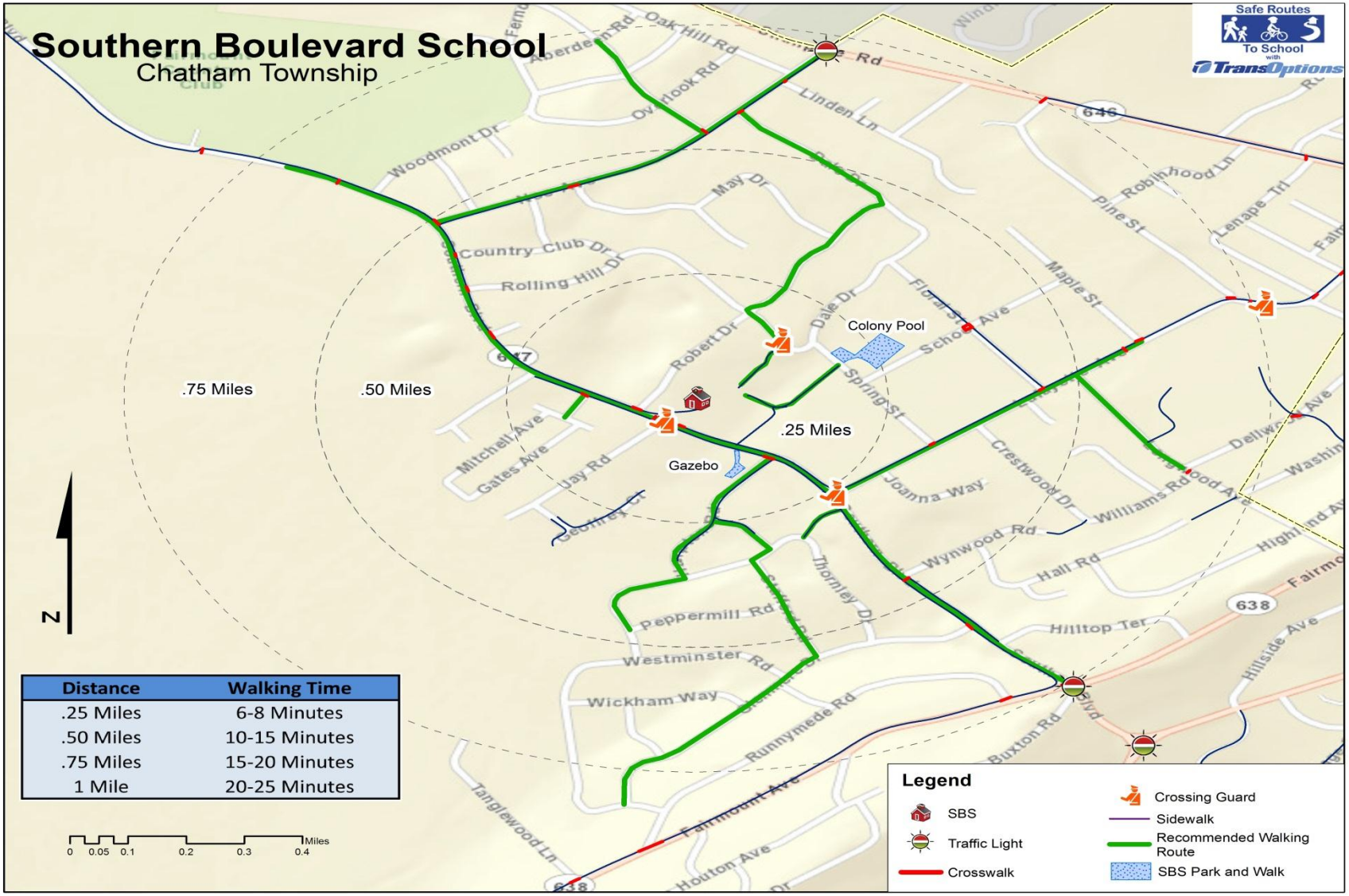
Southern Boulevard School would like to acquire sources of funding for continued promotional items and other encouragement and educational materials to build on the success of the program to date.

## 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** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe** | **Cost** |
| 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