



N E W J E R S E Y  
**SAFE ROUTES**  
 to **SCHOOL**  
 JFK Elementary/Jamesburg Borough

**A C T I O N P L A N B R I E F**

Collaborating for

**School and Borough Launch Safe Routes to School Program**

During the spring of 2005, The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) selected John F. Kennedy Elementary School in Jamesburg to participate in the “Safe Routes to School” (SRTS) demonstration program. SRTS programs involve developing and implementing strategies that promote walking and biking to school to achieve a wide range of benefits for students, school and community. These benefits include improved pedestrian/bicycle access and safety, increased physical activity among students and reduced traffic in the vicinity of schools. SRTS programs are taking place worldwide, and New Jersey is actively supporting SRTS programs in our schools and communities.

NJDOT, along with The RBA Group and The National Center for Bicycling and Walking, worked to demonstrate how communities can collaborate on SRTS improvements through partnerships between municipalities and schools. To launch the program, representatives from NJDOT, Keep Middlesex Moving TMA and the consultant team held a coordination meeting with the JFK School and Jamesburg Borough representatives in August 2005. This meeting established the SRTS team and outlined the responsibilities of each party in holding a daylong workshop. In October, 17 interested teachers, parents, community members and both county and local government representatives participated in the workshop training to identify issues and actions that promote children walking to school. This brainstorming session included on-site observations of students’ arrival and departure, along with discussion of local issues.

Drawing on the results of both the initial coordination meeting and daylong workshop, the consultant team prepared an **Action Plan** for JFK School, highlighting recommendations for a variety of engineering improvements and programmatic activities. The recommendations will guide the school and municipality in supporting an on-going SRTS program, aimed at improving the quality of life for students throughout the township. One of the most important outcomes of the program is establishing a local SRTS Task Force to oversee implementation of the **Action Plan**.



**Vision**

JFK School and Jamesburg Borough envision a Safe Routes to School Program that involves the schoolchildren in production and presentation of educational material; keeps the parents as key players in implementing the **Action Plan**; links the schools to not only residential neighborhoods, but other destinations throughout the borough; reaches the Spanish-speaking community; and changes driver behavior to be respectful of pedestrians.

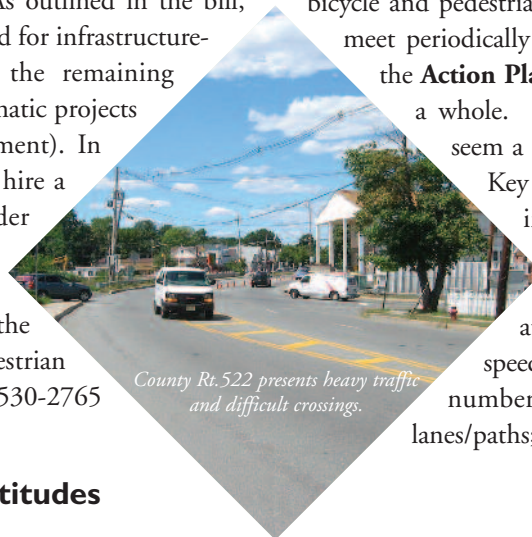
Healthy Kids

The NJ Safe Routes to School Demonstration Program was sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, Bicycle and Pedestrian Unit with technical assistance from The RBA Group and the National Center for Bicycling and Walking. The program seeks to explore effective ways for New Jersey public schools and municipalities to collaborate in launching SRTS activities. The three selected school/municipal teams were Ashbrook Elementary School in Lumberton, John F. Kennedy Elementary School in Jamesburg, and Rand Elementary School in Montclair.



## New Jersey Steps Up Safe Routes Initiatives

After the recent passage of SAFETEA-LU, the federal transportation bill, \$612 million in Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding will be divided among the 50 states based upon student enrollment as determined by the United States Department of Education. Of the allotted monies, \$15 million will come to New Jersey over the next five years. As outlined in the bill, 70-90 percent of SRTS funds can be used for infrastructure-related (engineering) projects, while the remaining 10-30 percent can be used for programmatic projects (education, encouragement and enforcement). In addition, the bill requires each state to hire a full time SRTS Coordinator in order to become eligible for federal SRTS funding. Elise Bremer-Nei will serve as New Jersey's SRTS Coordinator out of the NJDOT Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs. She can be reached at (609) 530-2765 or elise.bremernei@dot.state.nj.us.



## Local Task Force Oversees Ongoing SRTS Program

Implementing **Action Plan** recommendations requires pro-active interest of people in the community – the SRTS Task Force – including parents, teachers, school board members, municipal officials, advocates and others who understand the benefits of bicycle and pedestrian access to schools. This task force should meet periodically to advance the recommendations made in the **Action Plan** and gauge the progress of the program as a whole. Although this gauging of the process may seem a tedious task, it can actually be quite simple. Key indicators of a successful SRTS program include: an increase in the number of children walking/biking to school; a decrease in the number of vehicles present at drop-off and pick-up time; a lower travel speed and/or speed limit near the school; a higher number and/or quality of sidewalks and bike lanes/paths; and a decrease in levels of air pollution.

## Survey Gauges Attitudes

At JFK School, the student survey was distributed in class to all children in grades 3-5, while their parents received the survey via the Friday Folder. Furthermore, the Jamesburg SRTS team chose to survey the district's 200 middle school students. The Jamesburg survey results reflect an existing population that currently walks to school, but does not bike. These survey results demonstrate a positive idea for Jamesburg – the community genuinely appears interested in creating an environment for safe walking and biking to both schools and other destinations. This interest, demonstrated at a young age by students, implies that Jamesburg will be able to successfully incorporate walking and/or biking into everyday life.

## Key Issues

- Safety along county roads
  - Traffic volume, speed and limited crossing locations
- The Jamesburg schools and municipal government discourage biking to school due to traffic safety concerns
- Parking patterns at drop-off and pick-up times at the following locations contribute to unsafe conditions for students who are walking or bicycling:
  - Front Street between Woodland Road and Davison Avenue
  - Davison Avenue between Front and Church Streets
  - JFK School Horseshoe Driveway off Davison Avenue

## School & Community Profile

School Name: John F Kennedy Elementary

Enrollment: 440

Grades: K-5

Setting: Suburban/Rural

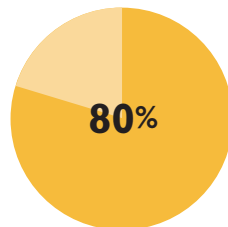
Municipality: Jamesburg Borough

Population: 6,025

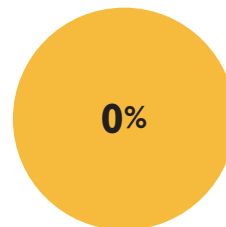
Students living within two miles:



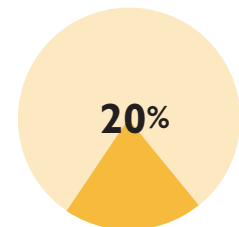
Students walking/biking:






Students being bused:



Students being driven:





-  **RECOMMENDED WALKING ROUTES**
-  **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS**
-  **PROPOSED PATH**

**J.F.K. School, Jamesburg, NJ**  
**Area-Wide Recommendations and Walking Routes**  
 Dec, 2005

### Engineering Recommendations

*Improving the walking and biking environment*

- Stripe a circulation pattern in the JFK School horseshoe driveway
- Install fence at the mid-block area on Davison Avenue
- Define school zones
- Build ramp connecting Front Street and playground
- Stripe intersections with high visibility crosswalks
- Utilize speed trailer and driver feedback signs
- Reconstruct school entrance sidewalks
- Build two segments of sidewalk on Front Street
- Construct path between Half Acre Road and Sand Hill Road
- Stencil a SRTS logo (developed by students) on sidewalks

### Enforcement Recommendations

*Raising driver awareness*

- Reduce speed limits
- Increase enforcement of speed limits on county roads
- Add a circulation element to the Master Plan

### Education Recommendations

*Building understanding that supports change*

- Lead educational assemblies for both parents and students
- Give an SRTS presentation at a Council Meeting
- Ask the students to both create brochures and lead an assembly
- Launch a media campaign
- Develop and distribute fliers that present the benefits of walking
- Provide informative brochures and fliers in the Friday Folder

### Encouragement Recommendations

*Making it fun to walk and bicycle*

- Evaluate what doors are used by whom at drop-off/pick-up
- Implement a supervised drop-off/pick-up program
- Hold “encouragement” contests for local neighborhoods
- Hold a contest for students to develop an SRTS logo/mascot
- Develop and distribute a map of preferred routes to school
- Hold “Fridays on Foot” events, sponsored by the PTA
- Establish an umbrella brigade for rainy days
- Involve the “disconnected” community members in SRTS
- Implement an awards program for crossing guards



# Definitions

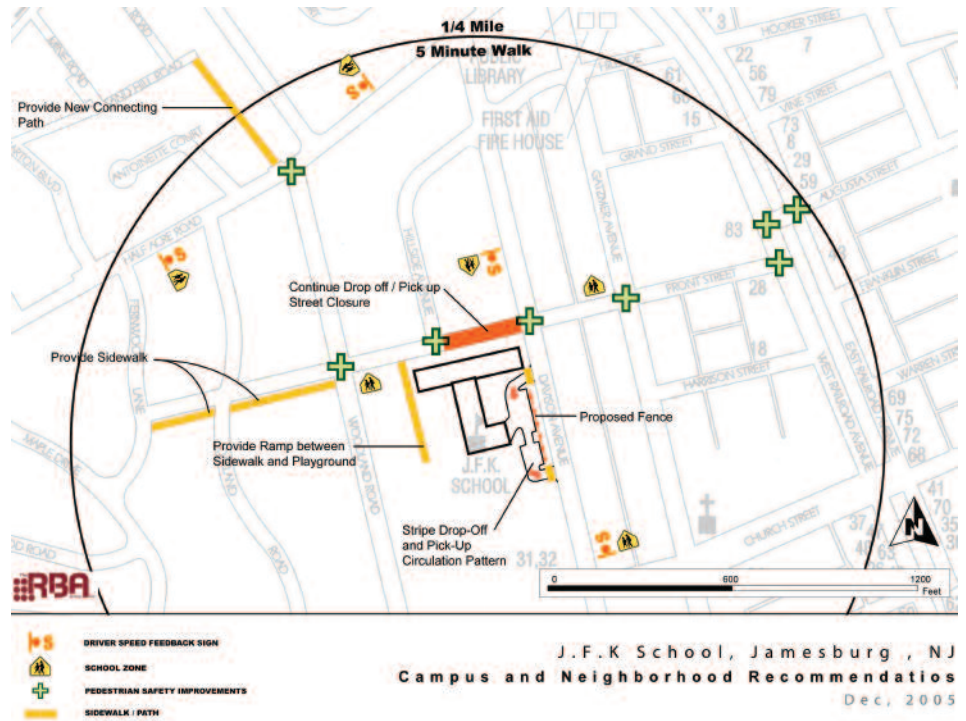
**En·gin·eer·ing:** creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safe and accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.

**En·force·ment:** partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws (i.e. speeding, idling, cell phone, yield-to-pedestrian) are obeyed in the vicinity of schools and initiating community enforcement, such as crossing guard programs.

**Ed·u·ca·tion:** teaching children and parents about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.

**En·cour·age·ment:** using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling to school on a regular basis.

**E·val·u·a·tion:** monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention.



## Campus Improvements

Congestion and motorist-pedestrian conflicts at JFK School’s Davison Avenue “horseshoe” entrance during drop-off and pick-up times lead to unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed solution for this situation calls for implementation of various design elements in and around the “horseshoe” driveway. This would involve the following:

- One-way pick-up/drop-off pattern striping (short-term)
- High-visibility crosswalks across the driveways entrances (short-term)
- New sidewalks across the driveways of the horseshoe (long-term)
- Fence along the back of the sidewalk between the entrances to deter children from crossing Davison Avenue mid-block or at the middle of the horseshoe

In addition, a direct ramp connection should be provided between the west end of Front Street and the JFK School playground area.

## Action Plan

The **Action Plan** recommends priority projects and activities that the school, municipality and community can advance to promote safe walking and biking to school. The **Action Plan** describes current attitudes and existing conditions; desired outcomes of the program and strategies for achieving those outcomes. It can include maps, concept sketches and reference materials that guide implementation of action items. **Action Plan** recommendations reflect the vision and goals discovered through the workshop, survey results and the unique conditions of each school and community. The recommendations range from engineering improvements to programmatic actions (education, enforcement and encouragement).

## School & Community Coordination Team

**Shirley Bzdewka**, Superintendent – Jamesburg School District

**Sean Meehan**, Program Coordinator – Keep Middlesex Moving TMA

**Anthony LaMantia**, Mayor – Jamesburg Borough

Consultant Services: The RBA Group with support from the National Center for Bicycling & Walking and Eng-Wong, Taub & Associates