



Hunterdon County  
Safe Routes to School

# Safe Routes to School TRAVEL PLAN 2010



## Frenchtown Elementary School

Frenchtown Elementary School  
902 Harrison Street  
Frenchtown, NJ 08825  
Grades: K-8



## Introduction

Frenchtown Elementary School is located on a county road within a residential area in the Borough of Frenchtown, NJ. Sidewalks are present, as are striped crosswalks. Speed is posted on Harrison Street/Route 619 at 25 mph. Frenchtown is a walking school district.

**Community Profile:** Borough of Frenchtown

**POPULATION:** 1,433 (2005 estimation)

**AREA:** 1.2 square miles

**POLICE:** Frenchtown Police Department

## Objectives of the Travel Plan

1. To make travel to and from Frenchtown Elementary School safer and more efficient.
2. To reduce traffic congestion around the school.
3. To encourage travel to school by means other than the car.
4. To encourage students to walk to school as a health option.
5. To incorporate travel safety, health and environmental information into the school day.
6. To educate students about safe walking and bicycling behaviors

## Members of the Working Group

- Mr. Dave Bailey, Chief School Administrator
- Ms. Kathy Petro, School Secretary
- Ms. Kate Nugent, School Board President
- Chief Al Kurylka, Frenchtown Police Chief
- Patrolman Paul Murphy, Frenchtown Police
- Tara Shepherd, HART Executive Director
- John Stevenson, HART Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator

## Current School Policy

Approximately 50% of the 136 students walk to school. A little less than half are dropped by car and the remaining 5% ride their bicycle.

## School Efforts to Date: Education and Encouragement

Frenchtown Elementary School introduced a walking school bus program in 2007. One school bus with three chaperones travels down Harrison Street and picks up 20-25 students along the way. The school bus is active in the fall and spring of the year, on Fridays. Frequent walker cards are punched when the students enter the school and incentives such as high-visibility shoe laces and sling bags are distributed periodically.

The walking school bus has been very well received by parents, teachers and students. Approximately 13% of the student population is participating in the walking school bus program. Older students, approximately a dozen, are walking to school regularly, but choose not to join the group.



## Challenges and Opportunities

Concerns continue about the speed of traffic, and the volume of regular truck traffic, near the school.

There is also an ongoing concern about parental behavior with morning drop-offs by car. Parents are directed to drop off children on the curb side of the vehicle directly in front of the school. Compliance with the police directive has been good, some parents are still parking across the street and/or letting children exit the car into the street. The issue is brought to the parents' attention periodically.

A police officer is present on Harrison Street every morning, but his duties are often split between helping the students cross the street and stopping speeders. Most walking students approach the school from Harrison Street because no sidewalks extend to the school from Milford Road.

Residential trash cans, which are often placed on the sidewalk, have been identified as obstacles to students' walking path. Frenchtown's garbage pickup occurs weekly on Fridays and the recycling occurs every other week on Fridays, the same day as the walking school bus.

In Spring 2011, the speed limit on Milford Road, located behind the school, will increase from 15 mph to 25 mph. School administration has expressed concerns about this change and is investigating the potential for a change in the ordinance to allow for "15 mph When Children Are Present" signs to be installed.

The police department will acquire 2 portable speed bumps as part of an active construction project. They plan on placing these near the school after that project is complete. The police department owns a small speed feedback sign and a trailer-mounted variable message sign. They plan on utilizing the feedback sign to monitor speeds on Milford Road after the speed limit change.

Due to age and a recent pipeline project, the surface of Harrison Street, its sidewalks and crosswalks are in need of repair. Hunterdon County currently intends on significantly rebuilding the street during the summer of 2011. HART will find out the status of this project and assist in having the concerns of Frenchtown Elementary included in the designs.

The school has expressed interest in exploring opportunities to formalize the use of an existing alley next to the school for student drop-off traffic. The existing dirt and gravel alley, located on the southern edge of the school property, connects Harrison Street and Milford Road. This alley could be improved (paved) and used in conjunction with a parallel street to create a one-way drop-off loop.

The benefits and potential of this project will be discussed with the Borough and may be considered as a potential project for a Safe Routes infrastructure grant application.



## **Next Steps**

In order to maintain a clear the walking path, information will be distributed to residents on Harrison Street explaining the walking school bus and asking that they place their trash cans on the edge of the sidewalk.

Frenchtown Elementary School has expressed interest in hosting a Bicycle Safety Day on a weekend in Spring 2011. The event would involve a helmet-fitting, a brain-injury prevention demonstration, bike skills activities and a group bike ride on the D&R towpath. Parents will be invited to learn and bike with their children. The community held a similar annual event in the early 2000s.

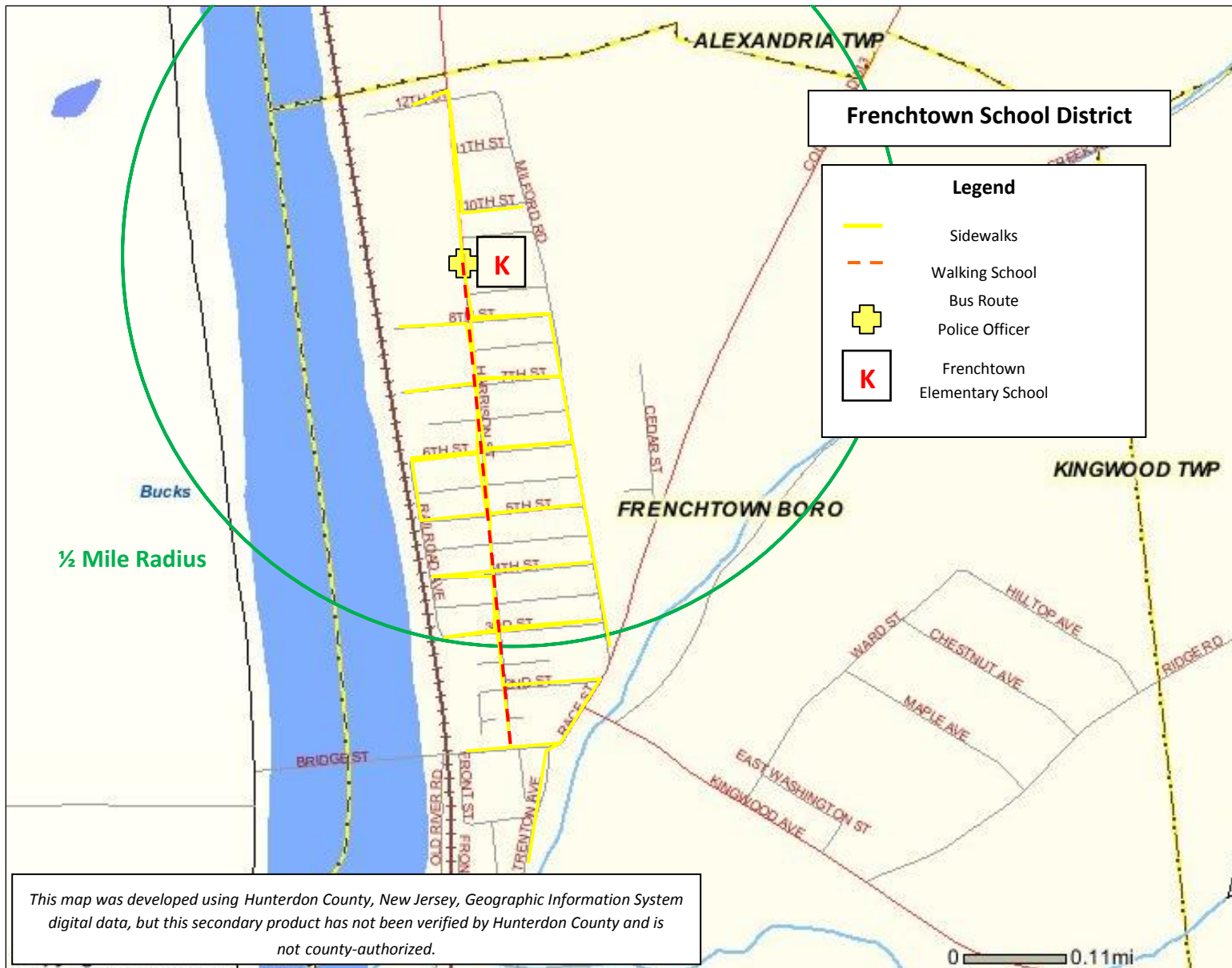
Frenchtown Elementary is considering expanding their frequent walker program beyond the walking school bus to all students. A field trip to a baseball game may be used as a reward for walking. Jack Cust's Diamond Nation, an extensive amateur baseball and softball training facility in Flemington, NJ, has a few days each year where public schools are provided free admission to a game. Frenchtown Elementary is currently investigating the potential for this incentive.

The Frenchtown Police Department will apply for funding to the NJ Division of Highway Traffic Safety for a speed trailer, speed feedback sign and/or portable speed bumps to increase speed enforcement. The same equipment will be sought through Safe Routes to School funding after the State program is reorganized.

The school would like to find sources of funding in order to continue providing promotional items, other encouragement and educational materials to build on the success of the program to date.

## Proposed Actions

<b>Education Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Printing of educational materials for students and chaperones	School/HART TMA	Spring 2011	Low
Print and distribute fliers about garbage cans on walking route	School/HART TMA	Spring 2011	Low
Bike Safety Day	School/HART TMA/Local Police	Spring 2011	Low
<b>Encouragement Actions</b>			
Celebrate International Walk to School Day	School	Annual	Low
Continuation of Walking School Bus program	School	2011	Low
Frequent Walker Program	School	Spring 2011	Low
Baseball Game Field Trip for Frequent Walkers	School	Spring 2011	Medium
<b>Enforcement Actions</b>			
Speed enforcement	Local Police	Ongoing	Low
Stop for Pedestrians at crosswalks	Local Police	Ongoing	Low
Grant Application for Additional Equipment	Local Police/HART TMA	2011	Low
Enforcement of "unload on curb-side" rule	Local Police	Ongoing	Low
<b>Engineering Actions</b>			
Reconstruction of Harrison Street	County	Summer 2011	High
<b>Evaluation Actions</b>			
Student Travel Tally	School	Monthly	Low



*This map was developed using Hunterdon County, New Jersey, Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by Hunterdon County and is not county-authorized.*