

TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN AUDIT

February 2022



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Prepared by:

Township of Hamilton Green Team

With assistance from:

Cross County Connection Transportation Management
Association

Special thanks to:

Community members who filled out the survey or participated
in the audit.

Municipal, county, and state representatives that attended the
audit presentation meeting.

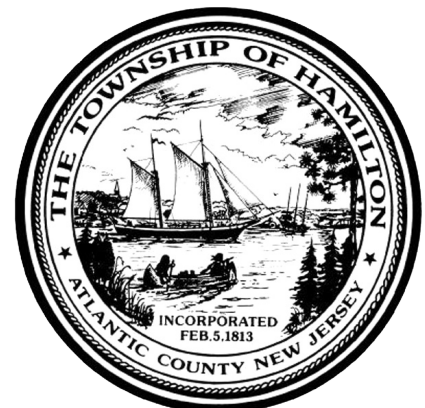


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INTRODUCTION

The Township of Hamilton Green Team sought to conduct a bicycle and pedestrian audit to find opportunities for improvement and earn Sustainable Jersey[†] points. The goal of an audit is to identify barriers and provide recommendations to create safer, more comfortable, and accessible environments for biking and walking in town. It is also the first step to creating a bicycle and pedestrian master plan if the Township wishes to pursue that.

Many benefits are provided with the ability to safely bike and walk within communities including improved health, better air quality, economic vitality, and reduced traffic congestion. Increasing access can also reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and all these benefits are why the Sustainable Jersey program recognizes audits as an important action.

This report summarizes the audit findings and recommendations for next steps. The process consisted of three steps: preliminary data collection, an online public survey, and a field audit.

Preliminary Data Collection

The most recently available crash data at the time of the study (2014-2018) involving pedestrians and bicyclists was analyzed to identify areas of concern and potential field audit locations.

Online Public Survey

A survey was shared through social media to obtain local attitudes and opinions around existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The survey included a mapping

activity where respondents could map locations that they were interested in reaching or concerned about. The results from the open-ended response question and mapping activity helped inform the decision of choosing the field audit locations. There was a total of 78 survey responses. A copy of the survey is in Appendix A.

Field Audit

Community members, Green Team members, and staff from Cross County Connection gathered to walk along a predetermined route and conduct the audit. Participants were given a paper packet to fill out along the way, noting any strengths or deficiencies that were found with bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure. Participants were also prompted to give any personal experiences they had at stops along the route. A copy of the packet can be found in Appendix B.

Key Findings

- There is high interest in walking and biking in the Township, but low levels of both activities
- The destinations with the highest interest to walk or bike to are parks, stores, restaurants, and the library
- The four main themes in the public comments section: unsafe roads, notes about the bike path, adding more sidewalks, increasing bike facilities
- Main findings from the audit in the downtown area: low pedestrian visibility, wide roads, drivers not yielding, inconsistent crosswalk and intersection design

[†]Sustainable Jersey is a program where municipalities and schools can earn points for sustainability actions toward a certification.

DATA ANALYSIS

Crash Data

Crash data for the Township of Hamilton was provided by Cross County Connection. The data was based on police crash investigation reports from 2014-2018. This dataset has some limitations because it does not include unreported crashes or close calls. However, it serves as a useful tool to gauge serious areas of concern for bicyclists and pedestrians in the Township of Hamilton. The locations of the crashes are shown in Figure 1.

Of the 40 crashes, 72.5% (29) of those involved pedestrians and 27.5% (11) involved bicyclists. Additionally, 31% of all crashes resulted in an incapacitating injury or fatality. The percentage of pedestrian crashes and percentage of incapacitating injury/fatality crashes are higher than what is common in South Jersey.

High crash corridors include the Black Horse Pike (Route 322) between Leipzig Avenue and McKee Avenue (from the Hamilton Mall to Hamilton Commons), as

well as Harding Highway (Route 40) between Old Harding Highway and Main Street.

Crash hotspots include downtown Mays Landing and the area in front of the Hamilton Mall.

These three areas were considered for the field audit.

Public Survey

An online survey was created to gather local opinions and attitudes towards biking and walking in the Township in place of a public meeting due to the pandemic. The survey included a demographics section, an open-ended response question, and a mapping activity. It was shared through Facebook, Nextdoor, and email and was open from the beginning of January to the end of February in 2021. There was a total of 78 responses and 71 comments. A copy of the survey is in Appendix A.



Figure 1. Crash hotspots in the Township from 2014-2018

Survey Highlights

Respondent population characteristics include:

- The largest age group represented was 45 to 54 years old. See Figure 2.
- A significant portion (75%) of respondents identified as female.
- Black and Hispanic/Latinx voices were underrepresented, with only 3% of respondents for each even though they each represent 16% of the population.
- 85% of respondents identified as residents of the Township.
- Two (3%) respondents identified as having a disability or impairment that limited their ability to walk or bike.

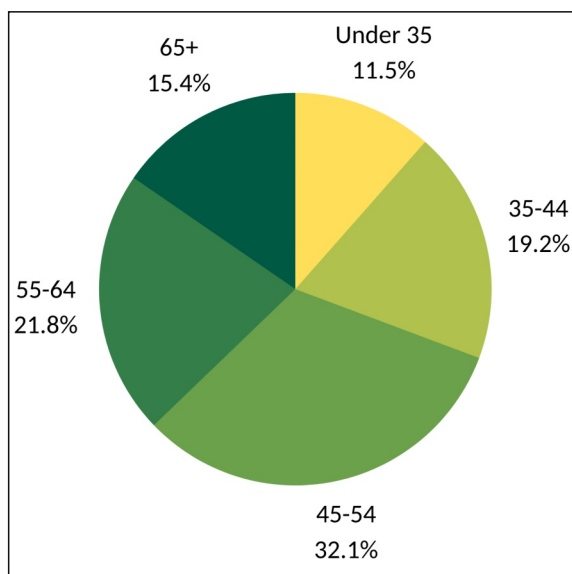


Figure 2. Proportions of survey respondent age

Current Levels of Bicycling and Walking

There are reported low levels of bicycling in town. Almost half (45%) of all respondents never bike on major roads. About 42% said they bike once in a while and 13% bike more than once per week.

Reported levels of walking were higher, with 23% of respondents who said they walk three or more days per week, 13% walk one to two days per week, 33% walk once in a while, and only 31% who never walk on major roads. These results can be seen in Figure 3.

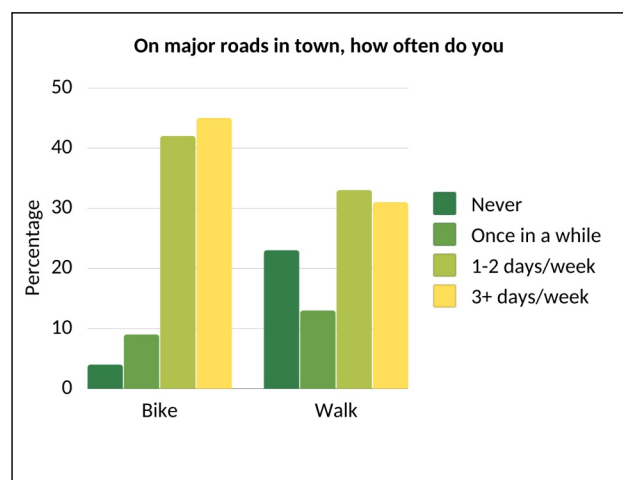


Figure 3. Biking and walking levels

Attitude Toward Bicycling and Walking

Respondents were asked about how they felt about bicycling and walking and were given four choices:

- Comfortable: I will go anywhere
- Cautious: I will go on roads that are somewhat safe
- Interested: I would do it if the roads/sidewalks were better
- Not interested

A majority of respondents were either interested or cautious for both biking (83%) and walking (83%). However, only 3% and 9% were comfortable biking or walking, respectively. These figures do not match the current levels and implies that better infrastructure could be built to make these activities be more comfortable. These results can be seen in Figure 4.

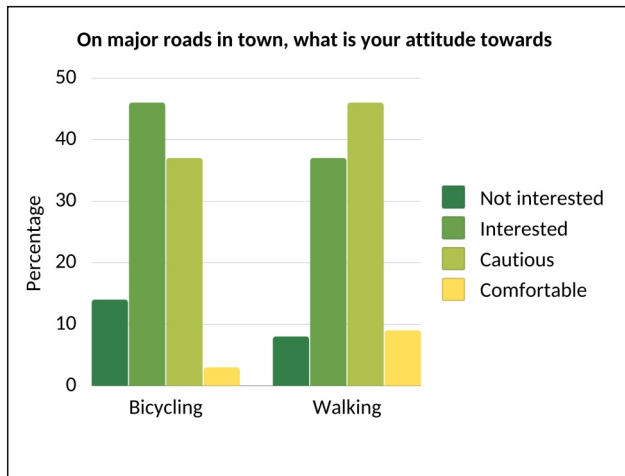


Figure 4. Biking and walking attitudes

Locations of Interest or Concern

The four most popular destinations that respondents were interested in biking or walking to were parks (62%), stores (53%), restaurants (42%), and the library (42%). For a more detailed list, see Figure 5.

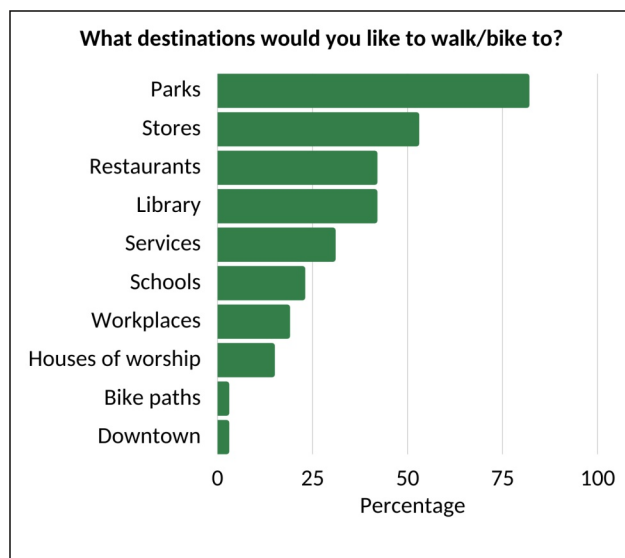


Figure 5. Destinations of interest

As part of the survey, respondents were additionally invited to participate in an online mapping activity. Locations mentioned in the open-ended public comments section were mapped as well. A screenshot of the activity can be seen in Figure 6.

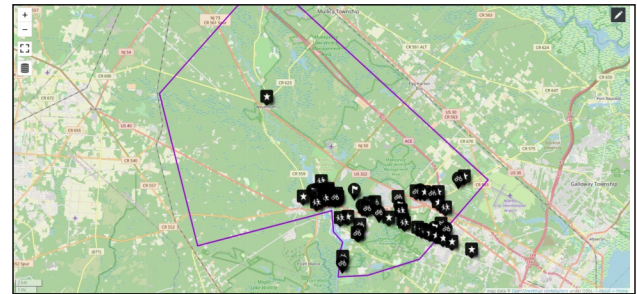


Figure 6. Online mapping activity

A point could be mapped and labelled as one of four categories:

- Pedestrian - Place I'd like to walk to
- Pedestrian - Place I'm concerned about
- Bike - Place I'd like to bike to
- Bike - Place I'm concerned about

All four categories had hotspots around the downtown area, meaning it was a place of concern and interest for both pedestrian and bicyclists. The second area of interest was the bike path, specifically as a place respondents would like to walk to. A comparison of the four categories can be seen in Figure 7.

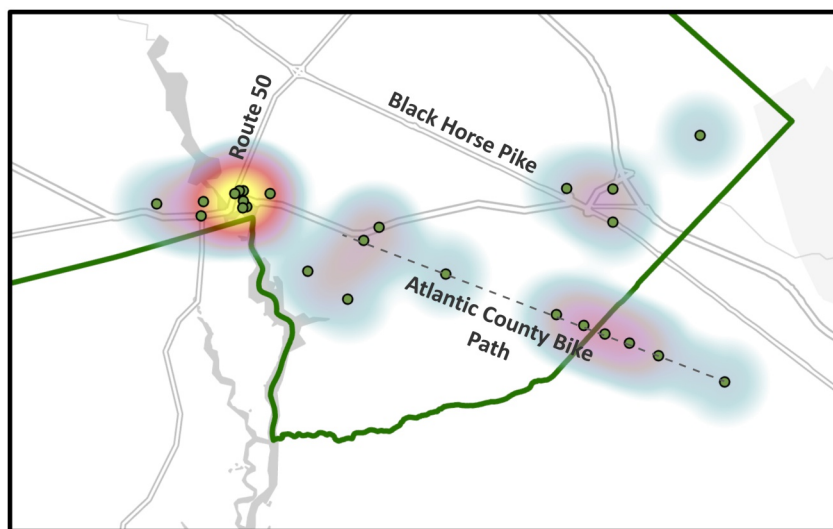
Public Comments

Respondents were asked to share any general or specific thoughts they had on bicycling and walking within the town. There was a total of 71 comments, which mainly revolved around four themes:

Unsafe Roads

The most common comment (42%) was that roads were not safe for walking or biking or it should be safer. From one respondent:

"I prefer to stay on the [Atlantic County bike] path or the sidewalk in a development for safety and security. I've seen too many accidents at the 4 way stop signs



Pedestrian - Place I'd like to walk to



Bike - Place I'd like to bike to



Pedestrian - Place I'm concerned about



Bike - Place I'm concerned about

Figure 7. Hotspots from online mapping activity

and roads are too narrow and I feel unsafe to ride my bike”

Bike Path

More than a quarter (28%) of the comments mentioned the bike path, either saying they used it frequently and enjoyed it or would like to change something. Eight (8) people responded that the path needs lighting to feel safer or the brush was overgrown. Seven (7) people responded that they would either like to see the path extended or have more safe ways to access the path.

More Sidewalks

A quarter (25%) of respondents replied that they wanted more sidewalks or mentioned that the sidewalk network was inconsistent. From one respondent:

“I’m an avid runner. There’s no straight path of sidewalks anywhere in town or leading into town. At one point or another I end up in the road. I would feel much safer if there were more sidewalks.”

Increased Bike Facilities

Almost one-fifth (18%) of comments indicated support for increased bike facilities, either by adding bike lanes or creating wider shoulders on roads. The Township has a very few bike facilities: a bike lane on Tilton Road, a few roads with the “Bike May Use Full Lane” signs, and the County Bike Path. As one respondent puts it:

“Our town is not ideal for bicycles with the major highways not having sidewalks or bike lanes.”

AUDIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Field Audit Methodology

To determine the field audit route, results from the crash data analysis, responses from the open-ended question and the mapping activity were taken in consideration. Given that there is a lot of interest and concern in the downtown area, as well as it being a relatively safer area to walk around as a group, the audit was conducted downtown and the route included locations that generate high walking activity, such as the library, the Atlantic County Court House, and several churches and businesses. A map of the route and stops can be seen in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Audit route & stops

Community members, Green Team members, Township staff, and Cross County Connection staff conducted the audit on May 15, 2021 between 1:00 and 3:00 PM.

Participants were given a paper packet to fill out along the way, noting any strengths or deficiencies that were found with bicycle

or pedestrian infrastructure. Participants were also prompted to give any personal experiences they had at stops along the route. Cross County Connection staff led the audit and post-audit discussion. A copy of the packet can be found in Appendix B.

In general, the overall strengths included:

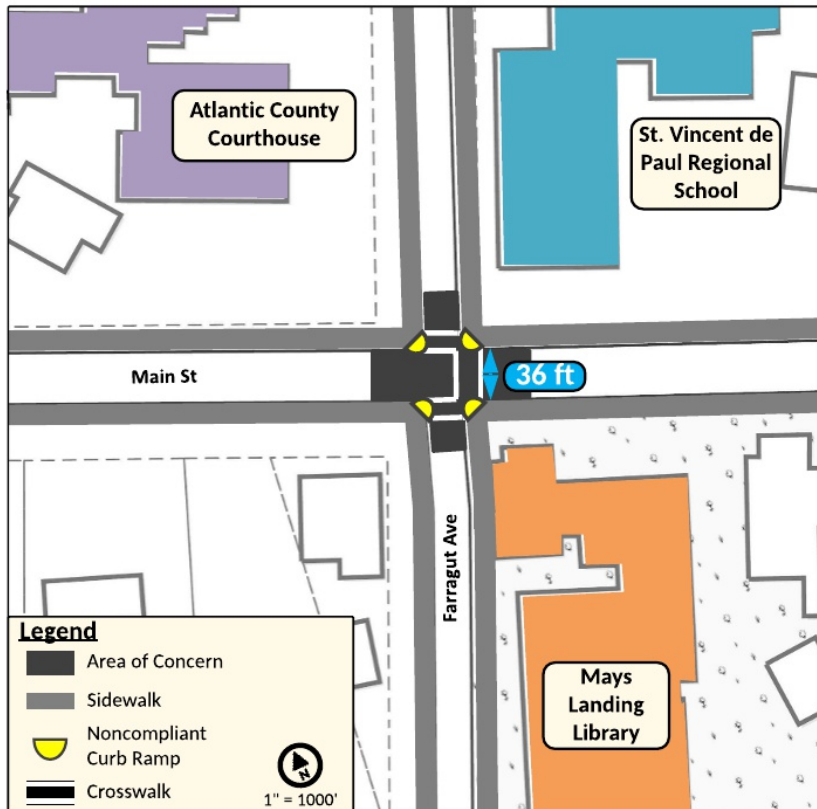
- Sidewalks in good condition
- Large buffers between the sidewalk and the road on at least one side of the street
- Along Main Street:
 - o Sidewalks are wide
 - o Numerous street trees
 - o Plenty of seating and trash cans

The common issues included:

- Low pedestrian visibility
- Roads are too wide to comfortably cross
- Drivers not yielding
- Inconsistent crosswalk and intersection design

For site-specific findings and recommendations, they can be found on the following pages.

Main Street & Farragut Avenue



Existing Conditions

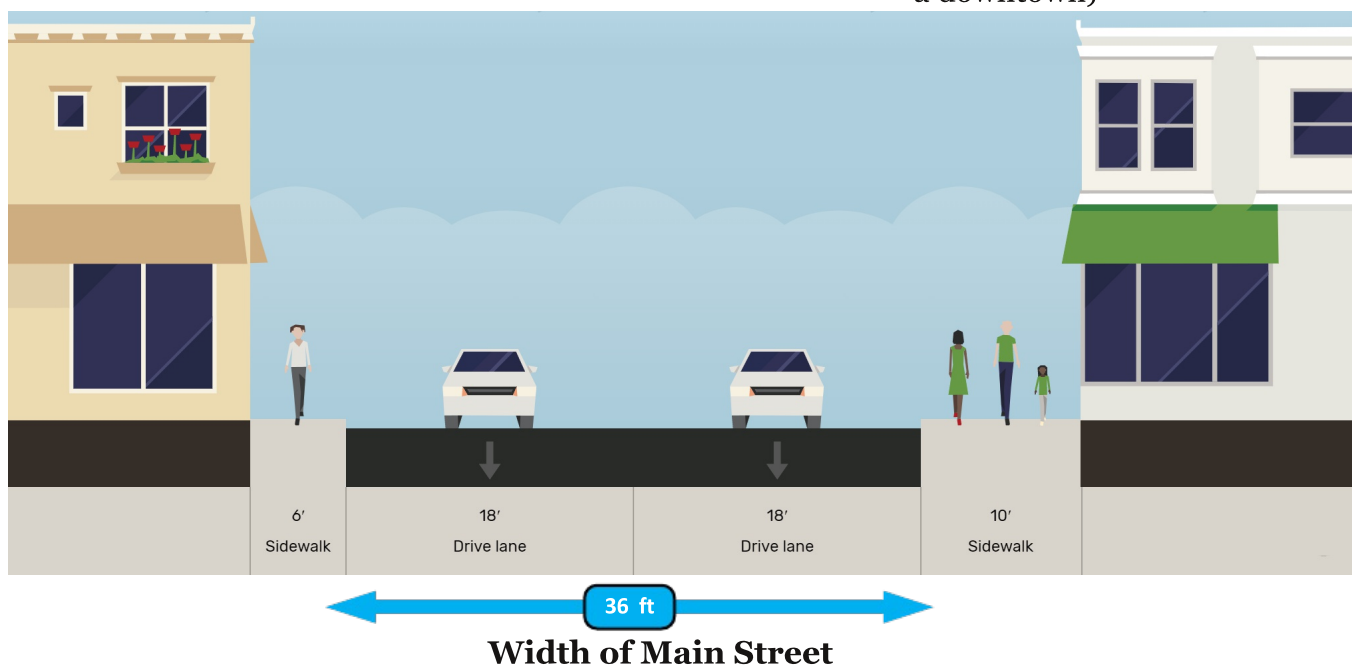
People frequently cross to reach the courthouse, elementary school, and library.

Issues

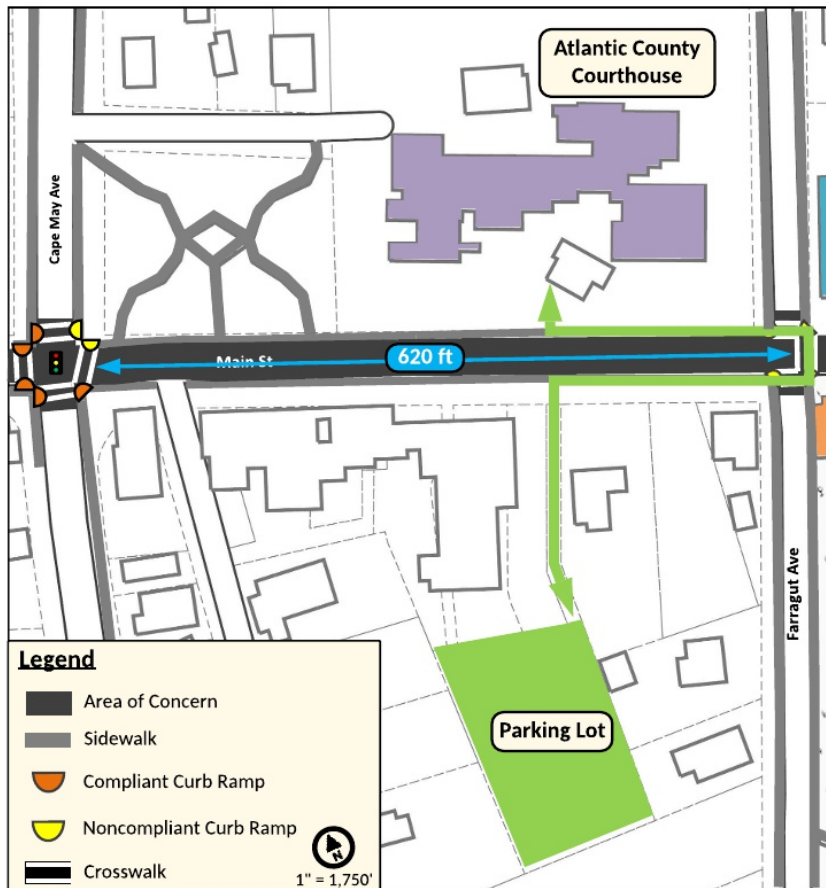
- Non-ADA compliant curb ramps
- Feels unsafe to cross
- Significantly large street width

Recommendations

- Upgrade curb ramps
- Higher visibility crosswalk
- In-street pedestrian crossing signs
- Lane diet (narrowing of lane width to slow traffic. Generally down to 10-11' in a downtown)



Main Street @ Atlantic County Court House



Existing Conditions

People frequently cross mid-block to walk between the courthouse and the parking lot.

Issues

- Long walk to cross the street
- No delineation for parking

Recommendations

- Mid-block crosswalk, rectangular rapid flashing beacon, in-street sign, bump outs with on-street parking
- Striping for shoulder/parking



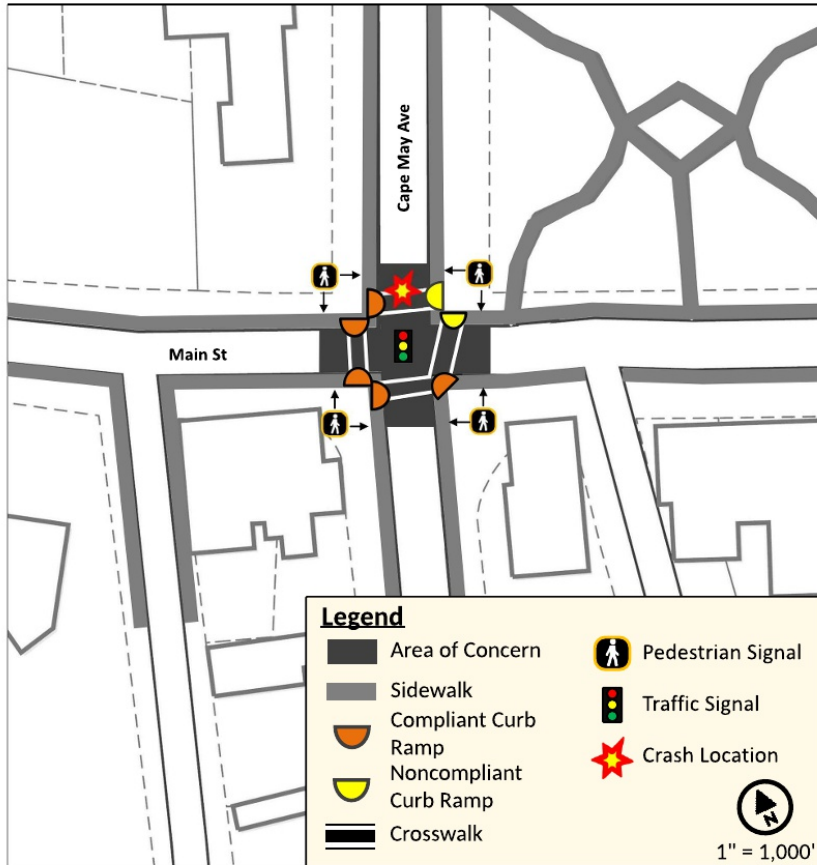
Credit: Google Street View

Mid-block crossing with rectangular rapid flashing beacon on Tilton Road in Northfield, NJ



Wide road with no striping for parking on Main Street

Main Street & Cape May Avenue



Existing Conditions

There is a high rate of vehicles turning north onto Cape May Avenue and there has been a pedestrian crash within the past 5 years

Issues

- Drivers rarely stop for pedestrians crossing in the crosswalk
- Non-ADA compliant curb ramps

Recommendations

- No turn on red during certain hours, higher crosswalk visibility, lead pedestrian interval (signaling pedestrians to cross a few seconds ahead of a green light to increase visibility)



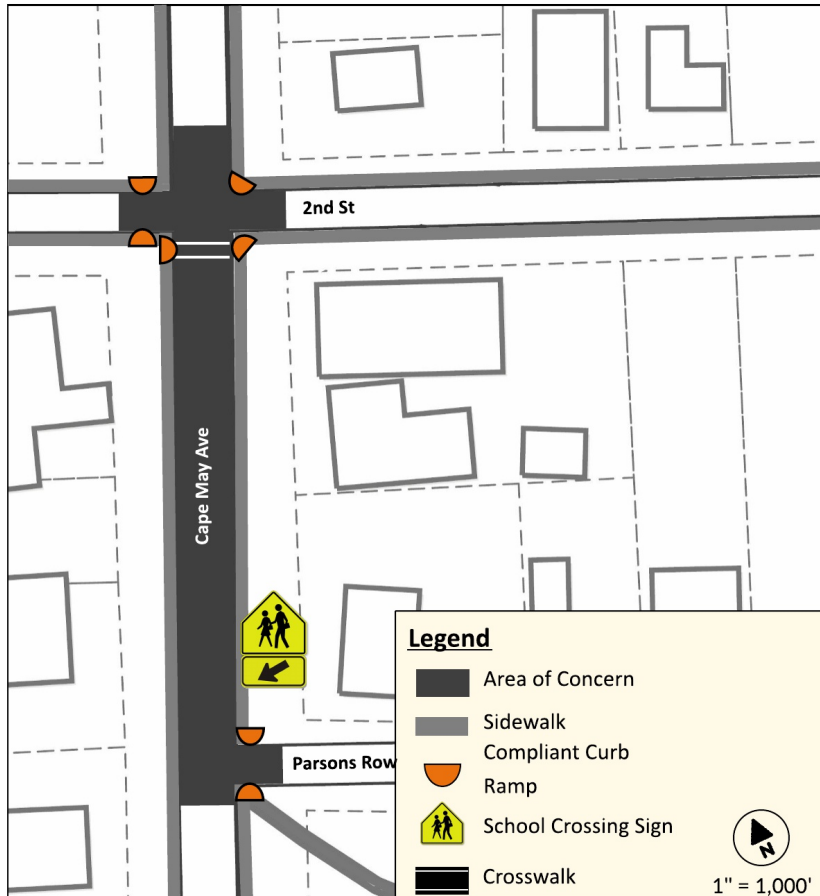
Credit: Google Street View

High visibility "continental" crosswalk on Mill Street



Non-ADA compliant curb ramps at the Main Street & Cape May Ave intersection

Cape May Avenue & Parson's Row / 2nd Street



Existing Conditions

All curb ramps are ADA compliant.

Issues

- Incorrect pedestrian crossing sign bottom
- 2nd st has only 1 crosswalk and no sign

Recommendations

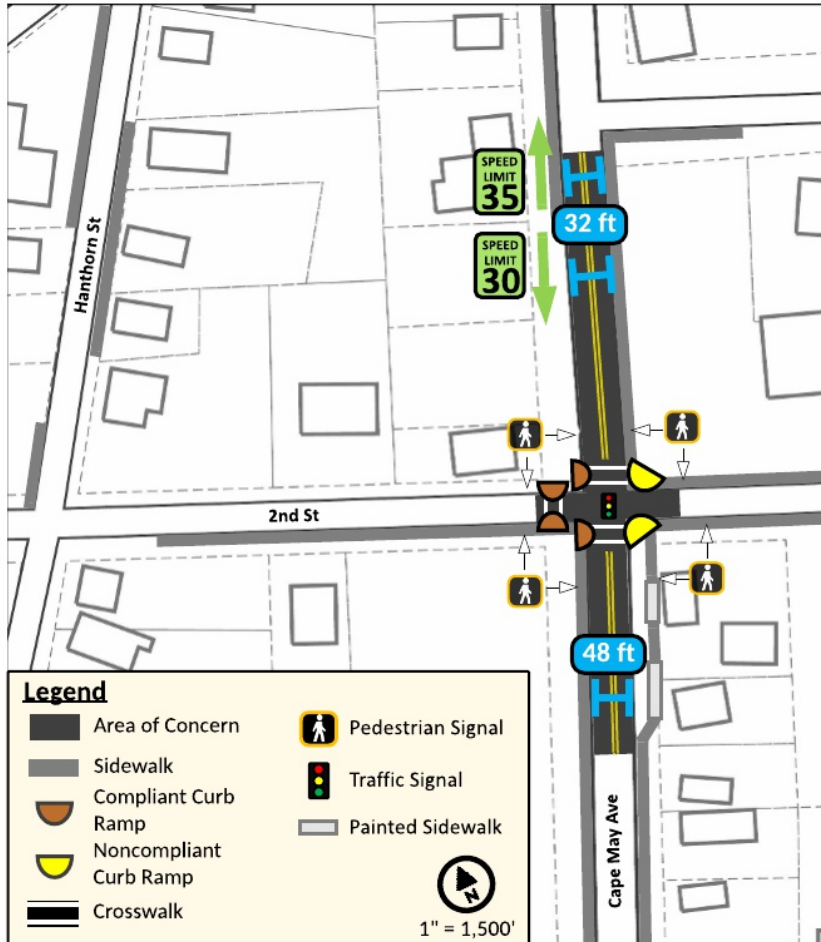
- Change the sign bottom to "AHEAD"
- Add another pedestrian sign at 2nd street with an arrow sign pointing to the crosswalk



Incorrect sign bottom. Should be replaced with the "AHEAD" sign below



Cape May Avenue & 3rd Street



Existing Conditions

During high traffic periods, drivers heading south split into 2 lanes to prepare for the lanes further south by Cape May Avenue & Main Street. There is also an interesting shift in the sidewalk by the gas station*.

Issues

- Context around road doesn't change with speed limit, leading to possible speeding

Recommendations

- Lane diet, gateway sign and/or landscaping
- Bike lanes to reduce street width

*This has been addressed.



Credit: Google Street View

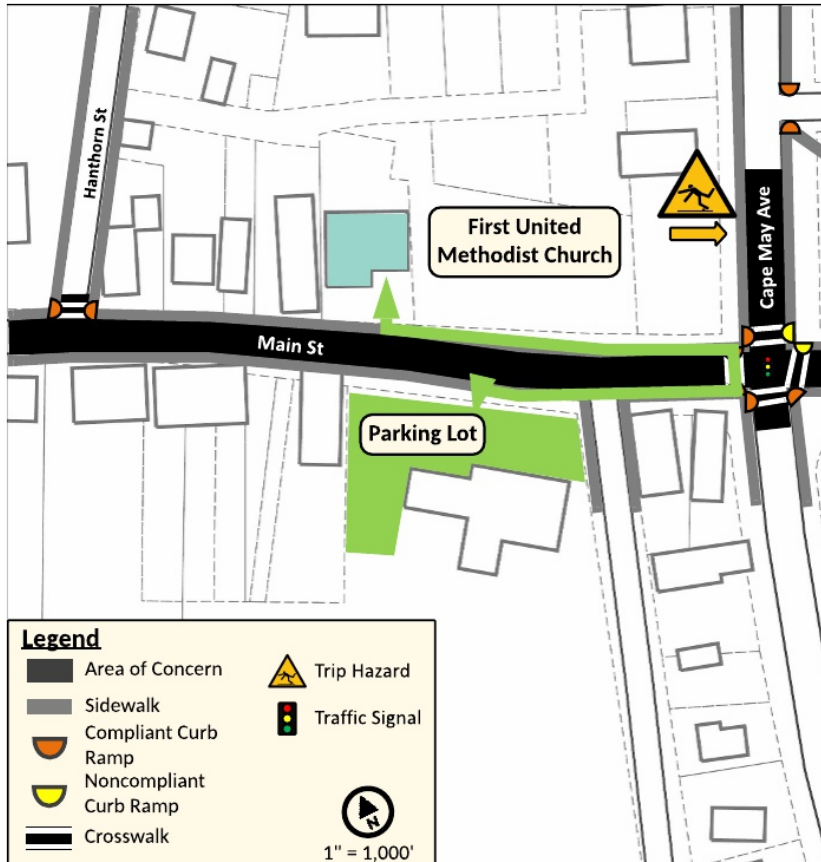
Large road width on Cape May Avenue



Credit: Google Street View

Landscaping in Hammonton help increase drivers' awareness and create a more pleasant walking experience

Cape May Avenue @ Presbyterian Church + Main Street @ First United Methodist Church



Existing Conditions

The sidewalk is lined against multiple trees on Cape May Avenue. People frequently cross between the parking lot and the church.

Issues

- Trip hazard from raised sidewalk edge because of tree root*
- No nearby crosswalk to reach the Methodist Church
- Drivers speeding on Main Street

Recommendations

- Mid-block crosswalk, rectangular rapid flashing beacon

*This has been addressed.



Credit: Google Street View

There is no way to safely cross from the parking lot to the First United Methodist Church without going to the Main Street intersection

CONCLUSION

There is a high interest in walking and biking in the Township of Hamilton, although a majority of residents and visitors find it unsafe to do so. Downtown Mays Landing is one of the most walkable and bikeable locations in the Township because of its low speeds and excellent sidewalk network connectivity. However, as expressed throughout this report, there are still concerns of speeding and yielding and minimal pedestrian crossings.

The Downtown area has great potential to become a pleasant walking and biking environment, especially since there are various attractors, such as the Court House, Library, and many small businesses on Main Street. Improving conditions here would have a significant impact on the community and will hopefully inspire Township officials to improve conditions in other parts of the locality.

Addressing these issues will require collaboration between the Township, the County (which has jurisdiction over Main St), and the State (which has jurisdiction over Cape May Ave). Improvements should be made alongside education and enforcement.

Key Findings

- There is high interest in walking and biking in the Township, but low levels of both activities
- The destinations with the highest interest to walk or bike to are parks, stores, restaurants, and the library
- The four main themes in the public comments section: unsafe roads, the bike path, adding more

sidewalks, increasing bike facilities

- Main concerns in the downtown area: low pedestrian visibility, wide roads, drivers not yielding, inconsistent crosswalk and intersection design

Recommendations

- Higher pedestrian visibility: crosswalks & signs
- Narrower roads: traffic calming, lane diet, shoulder striping
- Increase yielding rate: driver education
- Reconstruct intersections with scheduled maintenance and repaving plans
- Develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan

APPENDIX A

Public Survey Questions

About you

What is your age? *

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65+
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your gender? *

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other: _____



What is your ethnicity? *

- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Latino/Hispanic
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other: _____

What is your relationship to Hamilton Township? *

- ☐ Resident
- ☐ Employee at a business located in town
- ☐ Non-resident visitor (recreational or business)
- ☐ Non-resident commuter (traveling through by foot, bike, or bus)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other: _____

Do you have a disability or impairment that limits your ability to walk or bike? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

On major roads in town, what is your attitude towards *

	Comfortable: I will go anywhere	Cautious: I will go on roads that are somewhat safe	Interested: I would do it if the roads/sidewalks were better	Not interested
Bicycling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Walking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

On major roads in town, how often do you *

	3+ days per week	1-2 days per week	Once in a while	Never
Bike	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Walk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What destinations would you like to walk/bike to? *

- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Workplaces
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Parks
- ☐ Services (Post office, healthcare, etc.)
- ☐ Houses of worship
- ☐ Stores
- ☐ Restaurants
- ☐ Other: _____

Points of Interest in Hamilton Township

We are looking for comments about places you are concerned about or are interested in walking/biking to. There will be a chance to participate in a mapping activity after you have finished this survey. However, if you would also like to write about any concerns, you can do so in the question below.

Please share any thoughts you have about bicycling and walking in town. *

Your answer _____

Conclusion

If you'd like to hear more environmental news in Hamilton Township, would you prefer

☐ Email Newsletter

☐ Website

☐ Facebook

☐ Not interested

☐ Other: _____

If you have any comments, please type them here:

Your answer _____

APPENDIX B

Audit Assessment Form

Mays Landing Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Audit

Thank you for participating in the Mays Landing Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Audit! This form will help guide you through an assessment of the bicycle and pedestrian environment. During the walk you should document:

1. Perceived issues that negatively impact the safety and comfort of pedestrians/bicyclists
2. Things you come across downtown that positively impact pedestrian/bicycle safety and comfort

The Audit Team Leader will guide the discussion and share what typically contributes to a safe walking and biking environment. Please share your opinion! **The audit wants to document YOUR experiences.** Do not hesitate to ask the Audit Team Leader questions. They are here to help and learn from you, the local expert.

Use the following questions to organize your thoughts as we stop to examine locations along the way. There are sheets attached to write down your notes.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR DURING THE WALK

<i>Along the walking path</i>	<i>At street crossings</i>	<i>Bicycling amenities</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are the sidewalks wide enough to accommodate both people and activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups walking, children biking, shopping, restaurants 2. Are there any tripping hazards? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cracked sidewalks, uneven walking surface 3. Are there any obstructions into the walking path? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs, poles, cafe seating, trees, landscaping 4. Is it a comfortable place to walk? Do you feel safe? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty lots, sidewalk lighting, dangerous driveways, buffers from traffic, places to sit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there crosswalks? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they worn, faded or in disrepair? 2. Is there anything else alerting drivers that a pedestrian is crossing the street? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs, street lights, flashing light, curb extensions 3. Is it physically difficult to cross the street? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street is too wide, signals do not allow enough time, missing curb ramps 4. Do driver behaviors make it dangerous to cross the street? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop for pedestrians, speeding, distracted driving, parking too close to crosswalks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is it a safe space for bicyclists to share the road with traffic? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who would be comfortable biking here? 2. Is there anything alerting drivers that bicyclist may be in the street? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs, pavement markings, other visual cues 3. Is there adequate bike parking? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there enough? Is it near places people will bike to? Is it secure? 4. Do driver behaviors make it dangerous to bike in the street? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding, aggressive driving, distracted driving

At the end of today's walk, we will discuss our observations and overall experiences, both good and bad. Your help is greatly appreciated!

Location:
Postives:
Issues:

Location:
Postives:
Issues: