

# East Brunswick, NJ



## STREET SMART December, 2017

Keep Middlesex Moving, Inc.

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**KMM** Keep Middlesex Moving  
MIDDLESEX COMMUTER CONNECTIONS

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Special Thanks To

Mayor Brad J. Cohen

Township of East Brunswick, NJ

East Brunswick Police Department

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Street Smart NJ

# STREET SMART NJ OVERVIEW

Street Smart NJ is a public education and awareness pedestrian safety campaign established by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Northern New Jersey. The program emphasizes safe behaviors between motorists and pedestrians through enforcement and education of municipal and state laws.

The first Street Smart campaigns were piloted in 2013 in Hackettstown, Jersey City, Newark, and Woodbridge. New Jersey was identified as a “focus” state by the Federal Highway Administration because of a high incidence of pedestrian injuries and fatalities, with 170 fatalities occurring in 2015. From 2010-2014, Middlesex County had the fifth highest number of pedestrian related crashes in the state, according to the New Jersey Highway Safety Plan. Since it began in 2013, Street Smart has been implemented in over 60 municipalities throughout New Jersey.

## **The Street Smart campaign has three main goals:**

- Change pedestrian and motorist behaviors to reduce the incidence of pedestrian injuries and fatalities in New Jersey.
- Educate motorists and pedestrians about their roles and responsibilities in order to safely share the road.
- Increase enforcement of pedestrian safety laws and roadway users’ awareness of that effort.

The Street Smart campaign incorporates various messages targeted to motorists and pedestrians in an effort to increase awareness and safety for all residents and visitors within the Garden State.

# EAST BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

East Brunswick is a township in Middlesex County with a population of 47,512 within 22.270 square miles, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The Township is easily accessible via the New Jersey Turnpike Exit 9, State Highway 18, and County roads 527 and 535. As of 2010, 205.94 miles of roadways traverse the municipality.

There is no downtown area in East Brunswick, however there are 17 unincorporated communities within the township with vastly different characteristics, ranging from commercial, residential, and farmland. The major employers in East Brunswick include Hilton Hotel and Brunswick Square Mall (Simon Properties). There is a heavy retail presence along Route 18 and because of its close proximity to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, there is a large concentration of medical practices, physical therapy, and the largest Radiology practice in Middlesex County.



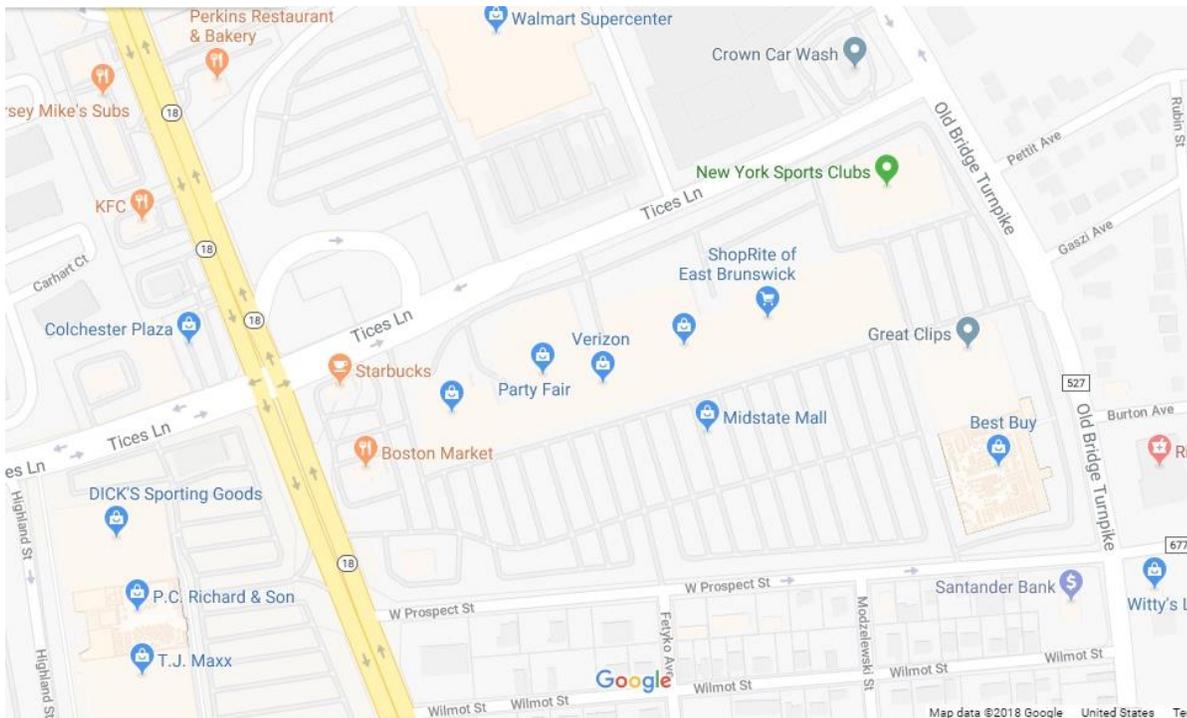
Image1: Courtesy of the NY Times

# EAST BRUNSWICK STREET SMART CAMPAIGN

Between 2015 and 2016 there were three thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight (3,768) vehicle crashes on East Brunswick roadways, with 31 incidents involving bicyclists and pedestrians. One hundred forty-five (145) vehicle crashes occurred around the Mid State Mall area, including three bicycle/pedestrian incidents, according to Safety Voyager, a NJDOT crash data site that provides crash rates for state and municipal roadways. Route 18 was also named one of the most dangerous roadways in NJ for pedestrians by Tri-State Transportation Campaign. From 2012-2014 there were 4 pedestrian fatalities on Route 18, one of which was a 15 year old child.

After extensive discussions with local government officials, it was decided to focus the East Brunswick Street Smart Campaign on one of the many shopping centers within the municipality. Mid State Mall was selected because of its proximity to the East Brunswick Transportation and Commerce Center, which provides 1400+ parking spaces to commuters traveling to NYC. A Walmart and a new residential apartment building are adjacent to the Transportation and Commerce Center. A bus stop on the corner of Tices Lane and State Route 18 attracts foot traffic throughout the day as commuters take NJ Transit Bus lines 815 and 818 into New Brunswick. Retail space with a Kohl's and Dicks Sporting Goods is located on the southbound side of State Route 18 directly across from Mid State Mall.

Mid State Mall contains a Shop Rite, Best Buy, New York Sports Club, Starbucks, numerous eateries, retail stores, nail and hair salons, a dental practice, vision office, urgent care center and a bank. There are entrances on northbound Route 18, Old Bridge Turnpike, Tices Lane, and Prospect Street.



## Why a Shopping Center?

Communities like East Brunswick lack a downtown but have embraced shopping centers and open air malls as “lifestyle” or community centers. These outdoor spaces offer a destination for residents and visitors with eclectic, mixed use offerings, such as eateries, health clubs, residential, and retail shopping. For many communities without town centers, the outdoor shopping center is the new main street where people spend time with friends and neighbors as well as run errands.

A November, 2016 report by the National Safety Council (NSC), a nonprofit organization with the mission of eliminating preventable deaths, reported that there are more than 500 deaths every year in parking lots due to vehicle crashes. The number of crashes spikes during the holiday shopping season, especially on Black Friday, due to the increased number of pedestrians and motorists. The report also showed more than 66% of drivers have admitted to driving distracted in a parking lot, including using a phone and grooming.

On November 28, 2017, a Woodbridge Township pedestrian was run over and killed after he fell in the parking lot of his development because the driver did not see him. One of the responding officers was scheduled to attend a Colonia High School Distracted Driving

presentation to seniors with Keep Middlesex Moving and was called away to the scene. On January 29, 2018, a father was killed in the parking lot of the South Amboy YMCA as he was strapping his young daughter into her car seat because a driver lost control of his vehicle. These are just two recent examples of vehicle crashes in parking lots throughout New Jersey that occurred in the past year.

## Program Timeline

The East Brunswick Street Smart Campaign lasted approximately five weeks with education activities concentrated around the Hanukkah and Christmas holidays, when foot traffic was at its highest. The campaign included a survey and observation of intersections surrounding Mid State Mall, and locations within the mall.

- Pre-Campaign Observation: November 29, 2017
- Pre-campaign Survey: November 29-December 1, 2017
- Street Smart Kickoff Event: December 12, 2017
- Street Smart Education Campaign: December 13-22, 2017

## Study Area

There were six focus areas within and surrounding the mall:

### Route 18 & Tices Lane at Starbucks

This area is heavily traveled by pedestrians due to a NJ Transit bus stop on the corner of Tices Lane and Route 18. In addition, a Walmart is directly north of Mid State Mall and across from a Kohl's and Dicks Sporting Goods store. Pedestrian activity at this intersection is much more active during the day because of the concentration of retail and transportation services in this area. Pedestrian crosswalks show visible fading along Route 18 and Tices Lane, and lighted crosswalk signals are placed at each intersection. The Starbucks is located right at the corner and contains a drive through window. It is very common to see pedestrians cross Tices Lane and cut through the Starbucks parking lot to get into the mall. There are clearly marked crosswalks inside the Starbucks parking lot. One crosswalk is placed in a location that is easily accessible to pedestrians coming from Route 18 and walking into the parking lot. The

other crosswalk leading to the main shopping area is in a location that is not convenient to pedestrians.

### Mid State Mall, AC Moore parking area

The shopping area of Mid State mall near the AC Moore has one painted crosswalk in front of the store, making it convenient for shoppers to use. There are no signals but a removable, plastic crosswalk sign is in the middle of the street and highly visible to vehicles.



### Mid State Mall, ShopRite parking area

Shop Rite is on the eastern side of Mid State Mall, nearest Old Bridge Turnpike. The area around Shop Rite has the highest foot and vehicular traffic in the shopping center. There are two crosswalks directly outside the supermarket, and a plastic crosswalk sign is in the middle of the street.

### Mid State Mall, Best Buy Parking Lot

One of the entrances on West Prospect Avenue into Mid State Mall is located by Best Buy. There is a crosswalk directly in front of the store and a plastic crosswalk sign on a single solid yellow line. Since Prospect is a one way street traveling east from Route 18 to Old Bridge Turnpike, this isn't a heavily accessed entrance. However, vehicles entering the shopping center are usually traveling at a higher speed than at other locations.





### Mid State Mall, intersection between Shop Rite & Frank's Pizza

One of the entrances on West Prospect Avenue into Mid State Mall is located by Best Buy. There is a crosswalk directly in front of the store, a plastic crosswalk sign on a single solid yellow line.

### Mid State Mall, Old Bridge Turnpike Entrance

Old Bridge Turnpike is a 2 lane roadway with double yellow lines that runs parallel to Route 18 along residential and commercial areas. The entrance to the Transportation Center is located on Old Bridge Turnpike, a new residential complex is adjacent to the transportation center, and a new child care center



is across the street from the residential center. The entrance into Mid State Mall is directly across the street from a neighborhood of private homes. Because of the close proximity to the shopping center, many residents will walk across the street into Mid State Mall. However,



there are no painted crosswalks or traffic lights at this entrance, making it difficult for pedestrians to safely cross the street.

## Campaign Signage & Messaging

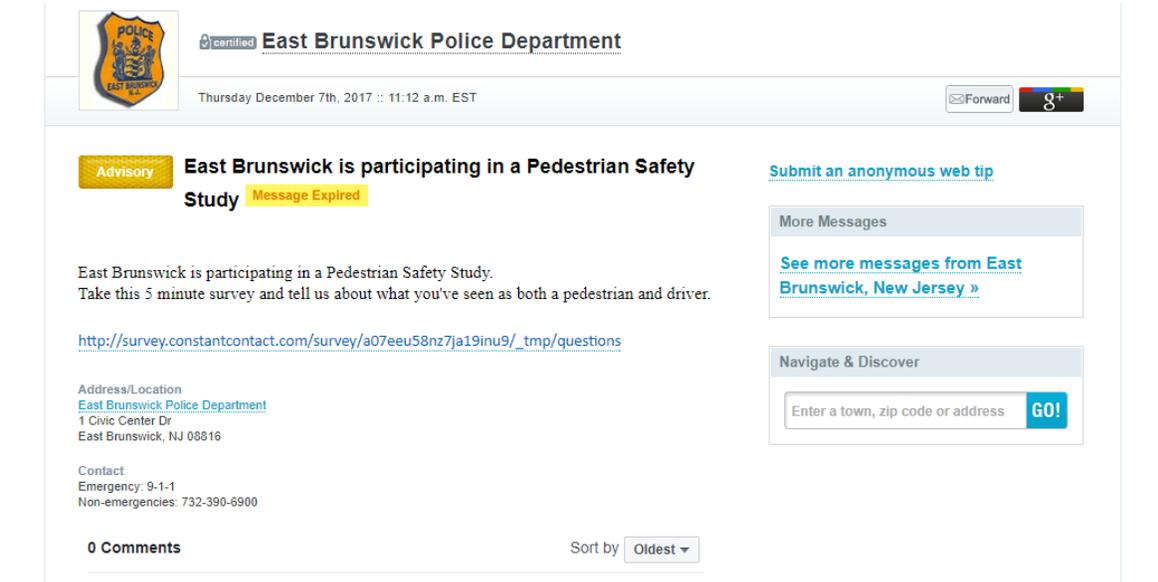
### Printed Materials

The East Brunswick Street Smart Campaign used signage and messaging provided by NJTPA. Coffee sleeves with the Street Smart logo were made available to local businesses along with tent cards and posters. Lawn signs were strategically placed on islands where pedestrian travel was heavy (near cart returns, crosswalks, and curbside). The Parking Lot Safety Tip flier found on the [bestreetsmartnj.org](http://bestreetsmartnj.org) website were printed out and distributed to pedestrians and motorists along with tip cards and palm cards.



## Social Media

The Township of East Brunswick disseminated the Street Smart survey and information via Nixle, East Brunswick Township website, East Brunswick municipal television EBTv, and Facebook.



**East Brunswick Police Department**  
 Thursday December 7th, 2017 :: 11:12 a.m. EST

**Advisory** **East Brunswick is participating in a Pedestrian Safety Study** **Message Expired**

East Brunswick is participating in a Pedestrian Safety Study. Take this 5 minute survey and tell us about what you've seen as both a pedestrian and driver.

[http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eeu58nz7ja19inu9/\\_tmp/questions](http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eeu58nz7ja19inu9/_tmp/questions)

Address/Location  
 East Brunswick Police Department  
 1 Civic Center Dr  
 East Brunswick, NJ 08816

Contact  
 Emergency: 9-1-1  
 Non-emergencies: 732-390-6900

0 Comments      Sort by **Oldest** ▾

Submit an anonymous web tip

More Messages  
[See more messages from East Brunswick, New Jersey »](#)

Navigate & Discover  
 Enter a town, zip code or address **GO!**

## East Brunswick Pedestrian Survey

How safe do you think East Brunswick roadways are, as both a pedestrian and a driver? Take this 5-minute survey from the Township:

by Carly Baldwin, Patch Staff | Dec. 7, 2017 2:02 pm ET

[Like](#) [Share](#)



EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ — It's no secret that East Brunswick roads can be dangerous.

East Brunswick is participating in a Pedestrian Safety Study, and all Township residents are asked to fill out the following survey.

Take this five-minute survey and tell us about what you've seen as both a pedestrian and driver:

[http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eeu58nz7ja19inu9/\\_tmp/questions](http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07eeu58nz7ja19inu9/_tmp/questions)

Image via Morguefile

**Local Experts Bring You Home.**



Sandra Teaser      Yvette Thomson  
 Shuhua 'Amy' Lee      Helena Monroe

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Maureen Berzok  
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HOME SECTIONS OPINION EVENTS CLASSIFIEDS REAL ESTATE DIRECTORY OBITUARIES

## Is Walking Safe in East Brunswick? Here's Your Chance to Share Your Thoughts

By MAUREEN BERZOK  
December 6, 2017 at 3:08 PM



html



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HOME SECTIONS OPINION EVENTS CLASSIFIEDS REAL ESTATE DIRECTORY OBITUARIES



EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ - East Brunswick has recently witnessed some serious, even fatal, accidents at historically troublesome intersections.

There are lots of new places to shop in town, along with upgraded parking lots in front of them, too. Are are people paying attention to how they walk and drive in the new lots? There are texting walkers dawdling through intersections and texting drives unaware of their surroundings, too.

Mayor Cohen and the township administration want to know how easy, difficult, or dangerous it is to navigate East Brunswick. As with all new programs, the Mayor likes to get his information first so that the township can make informed decisions about helping residents and guests to get around town safely and easily. East Brunswick is partnering with [BeStreetSmartNJ.org](http://BeStreetSmartNJ.org) to find out what they need to know.

### Sign Up for E-News

Township Administrator Joe Criscuolo has issued [the attached survey](#) regarding East Brunswick's traffic and pedestrian safety and manageability. He encourages residents to complete this online form.

Completion of the form enters you into a raffle for 2 free tickets to an upcoming performance at East Brunswick's Playhouse 22.

## Educational Campaign

The Township of East Brunswick wanted to engage the public in an educational awareness campaign rather than through enforcement. While Mid State Mall is private property, its geographic location and concentration of pedestrians and motorists throughout the day was an ideal location to conduct a high visibility educational campaign that would urge the public to “check your vital signs” to improve safety on municipal roadways. EBPD is very involved in the NJ Safe Routes to School program within the public school system, and is working with KMM to present a distracted driving program to high school students. In the past the township has invited KMM to present “The Jay Walker Show” to their senior citizen community. The Street Smart campaign is another tool at the disposal of the township officials to remind the public that lives are on the line and it is imperative to obey state and local traffic laws, no matter where you are within East Brunswick.

## Implementation of Street Smart Campaign

### Pre-Observation

Proxy behaviors were observed at each location prior to the kickoff and education and implementation of the campaign.

### Pedestrian Proxy Behaviors:

1. Pedestrians crossing at crosswalk
2. Pedestrians not using crosswalk
3. Pedestrians not watching for back-up lights
4. Distracted pedestrians

### Motorist Proxy Behaviors:

1. Drivers speeding over 15 mph (Ord. No. 87-891).
2. Drivers not stopping for pedestrians in crosswalk
3. Drivers not stopping for pedestrians outside of crosswalk

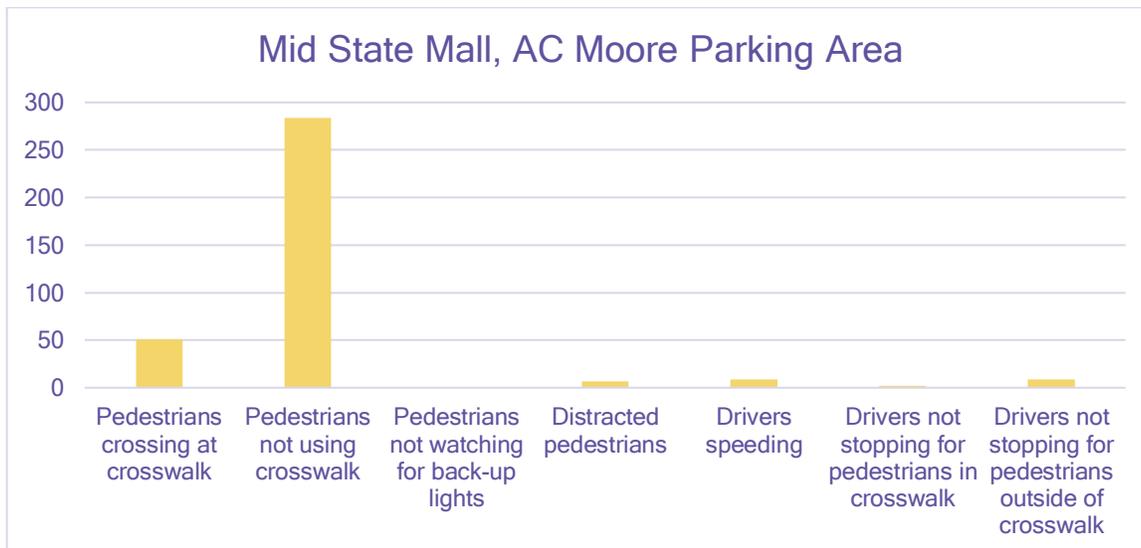
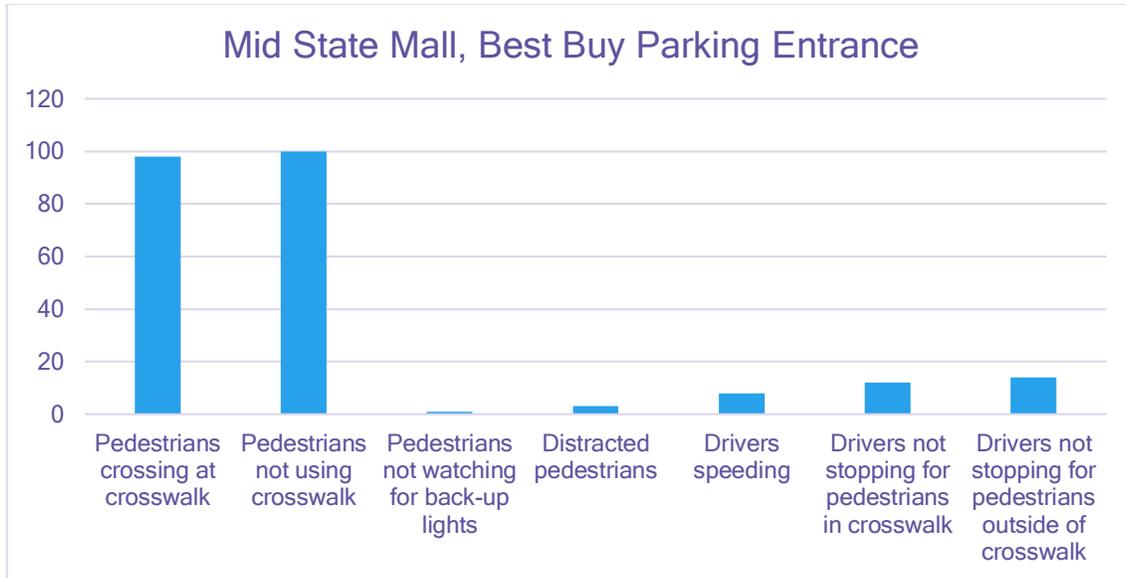
The pre-observation component of the campaign took place on Wednesday, November 29, 2017, one week after Black Friday. KMM staff recorded the observations at six locations within the parking lot.

### **Survey**

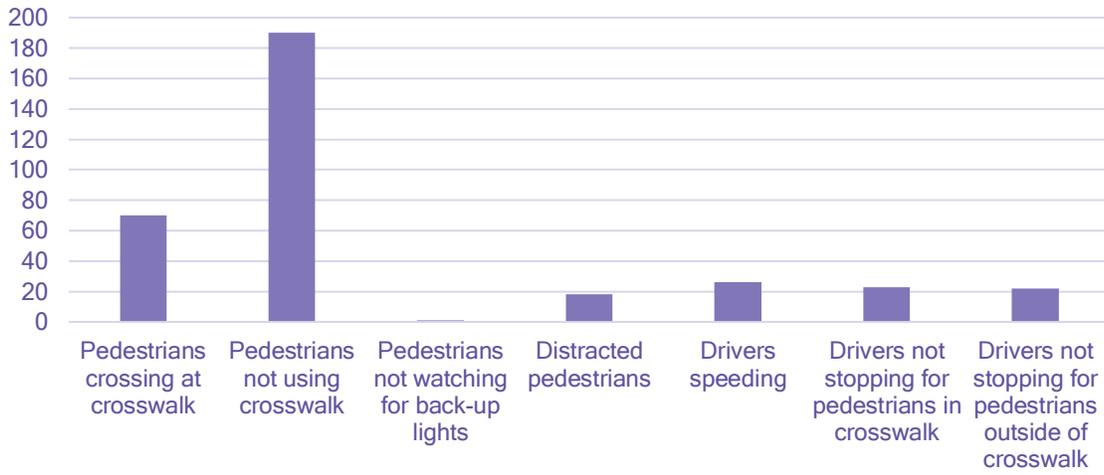
A public survey was disseminated to residents, employees, and visitors of East Brunswick NJ beginning November 20<sup>th</sup>. Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their behaviors and observed behaviors by other motorists and pedestrians within the municipality. The survey was made available through Constant Contact and a link was posted on the Municipal website, sent out via Nixle alert and posted on social media. Survey announcements were made on East Brunswick municipal television, with fliers posted in the Library, and within the Township municipal complex. Surveys were also distributed to residents during community events. Survey respondents were given a chance to receive tickets to a Playhouse 22 production.

# DATA COLLECTION

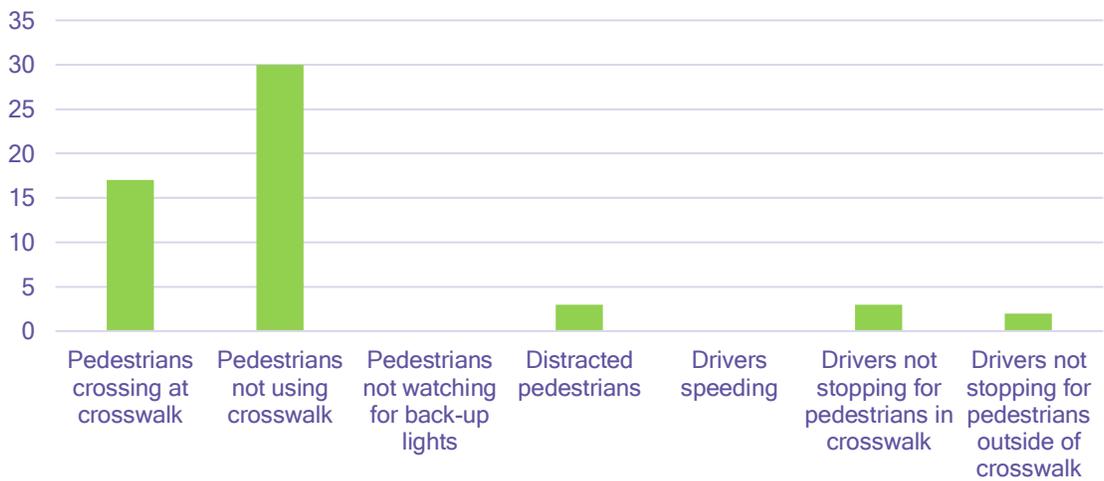
## Pre-Observation



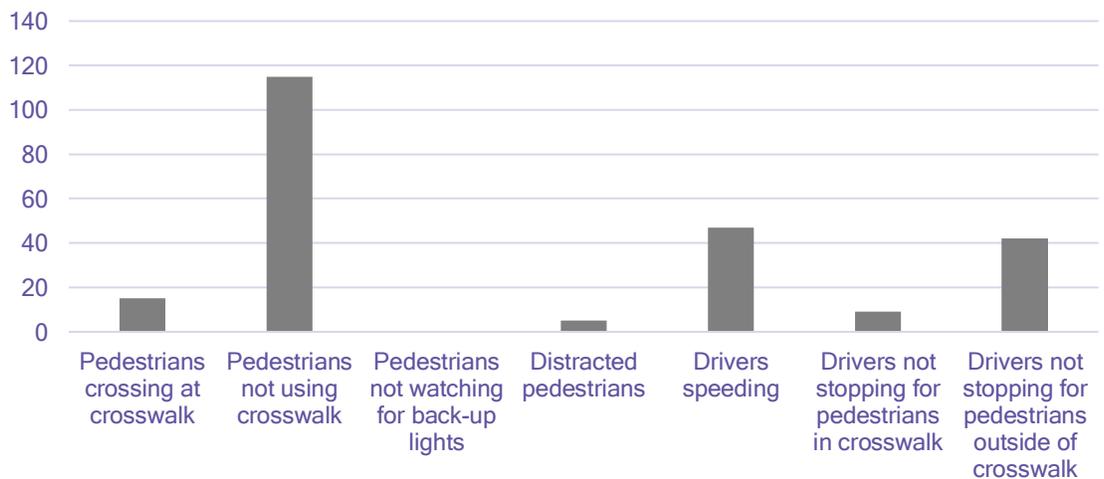
### Mid State Mall, Shoprite Parking Area

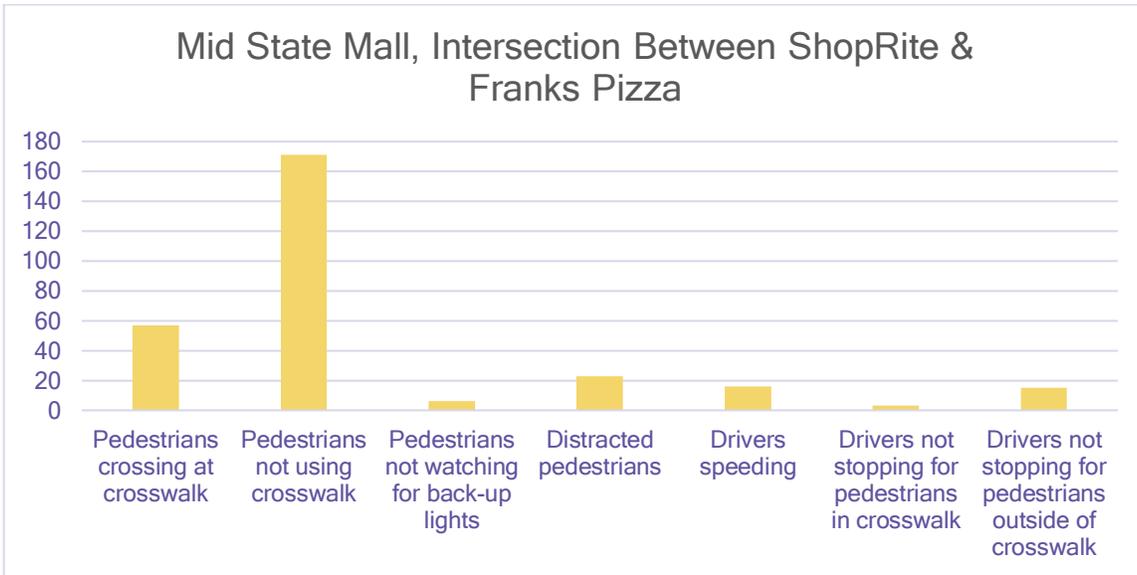


### Route 18 & Tices Lane at Starbucks



### Mid State Mall, Old Bridge Tpk Entrance

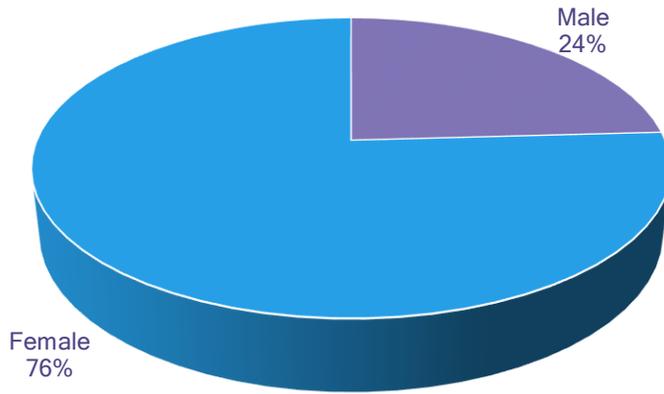




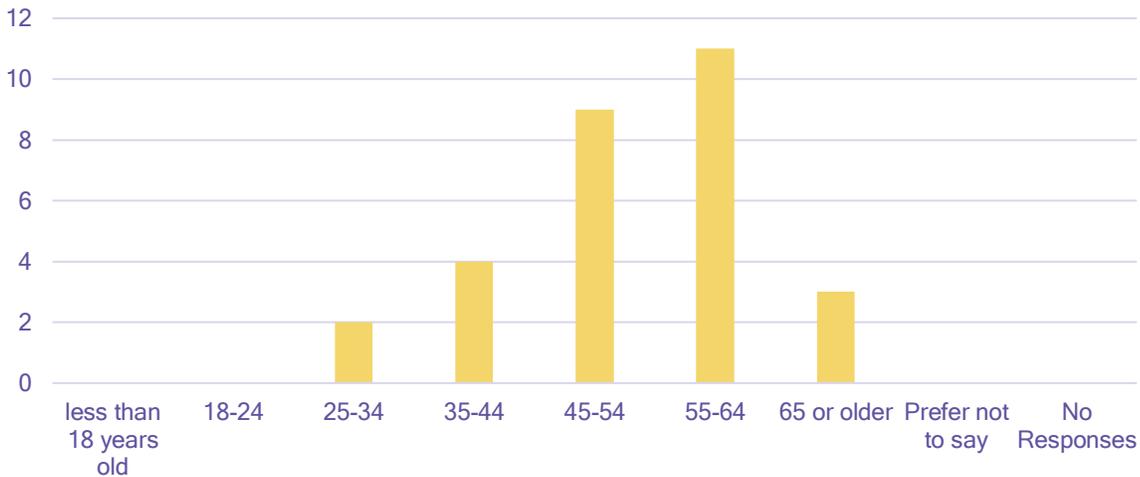
## Survey



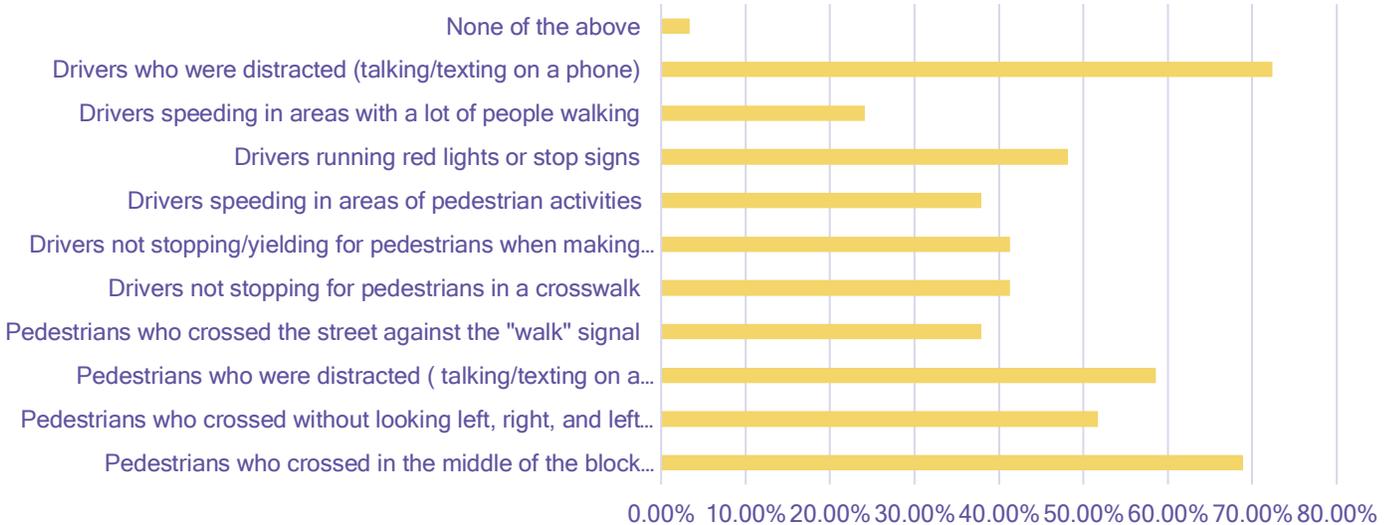
### 2. Gender



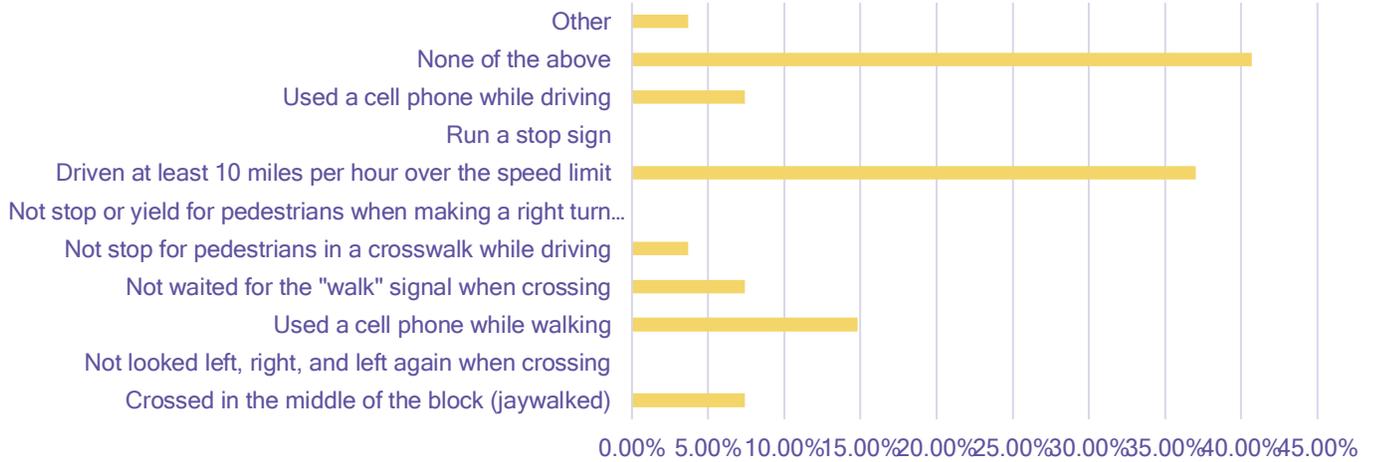
### 3. Please indicate your age group.



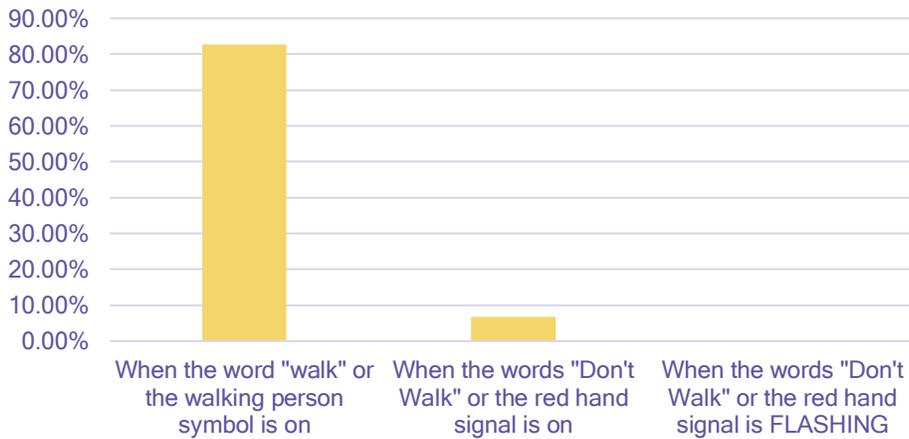
### 4. In the past week in East Brunswick, have you seen (check all that apply)



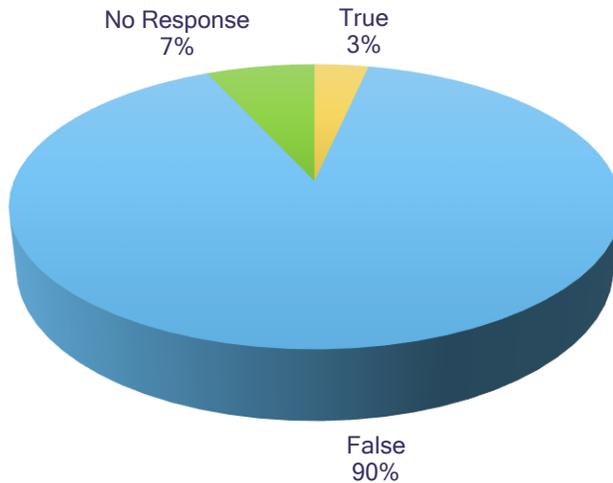
**5. In the past week in East Brunswick, have you, YOURSELF (check all that apply)**



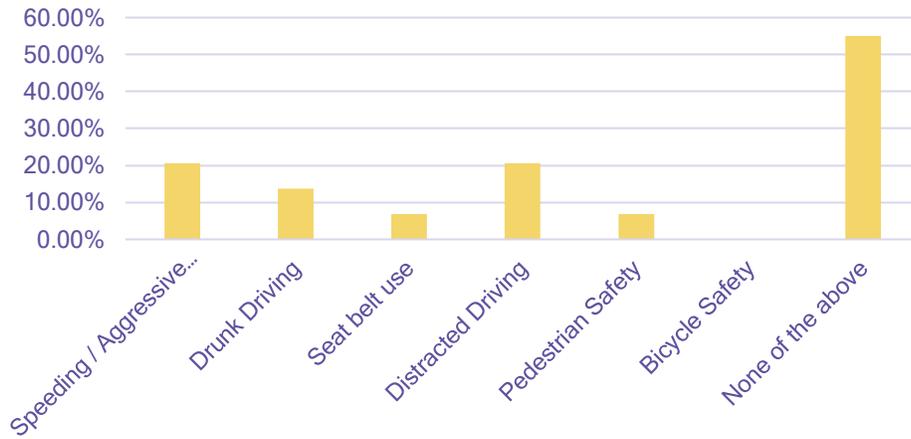
**6. At signalized intersections, when SHOULD a pedestrian begin to cross the street?**



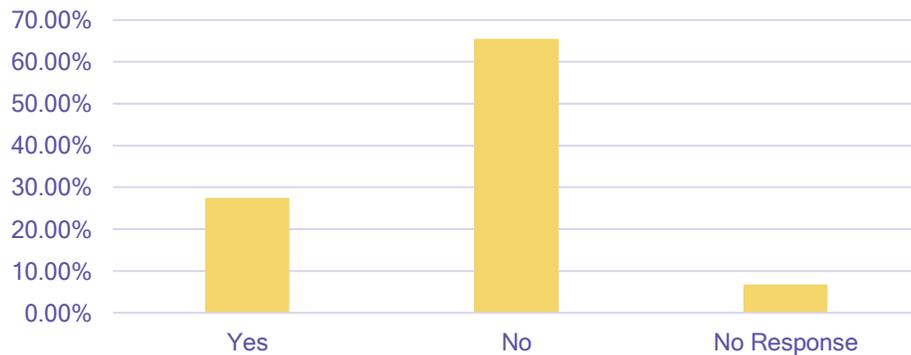
**7. Drivers always have the right of way.**



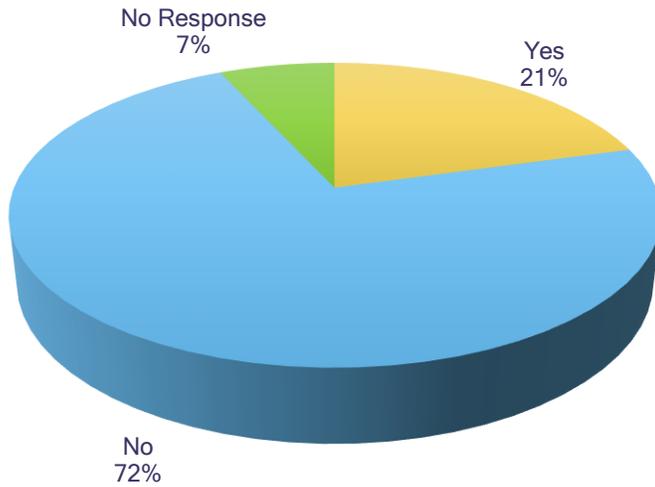
**8. In the past 30 days in East Brunswick have you read, seen, or heard any advertising messages addressing the following:**



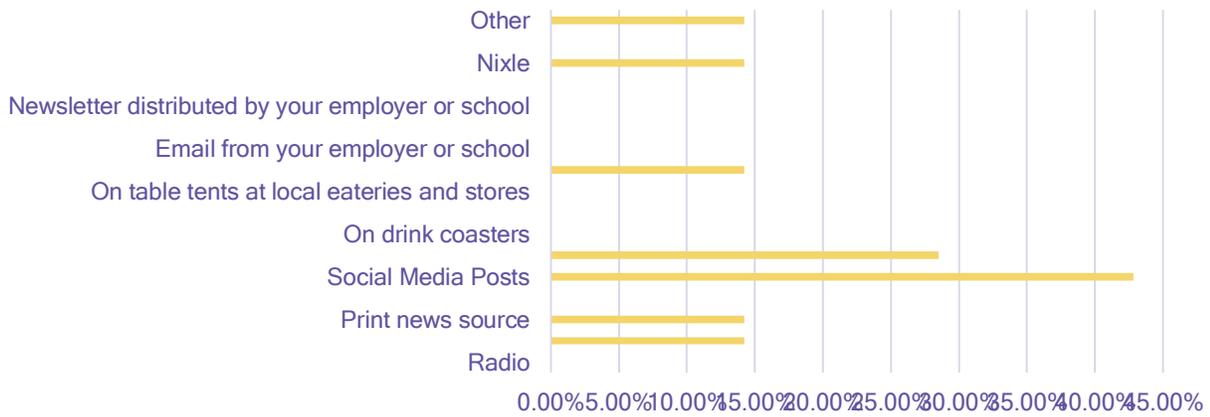
**9. In the past 30 days in East Brunswick, have you seen or heard any advertising message or signage that mentions "Street Smart" and addresses pedestrian safety?**



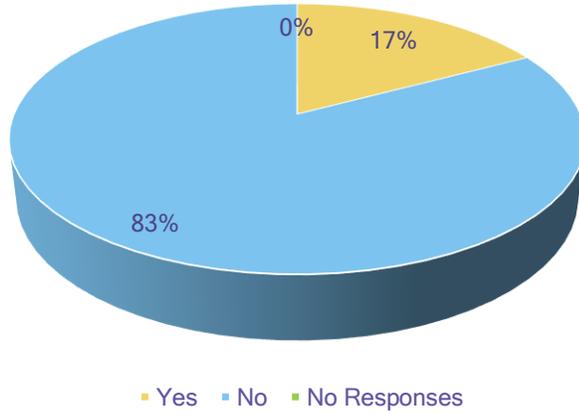
**10. In the past 30 days, have you seen or heard any advertising messages like those listed below:**



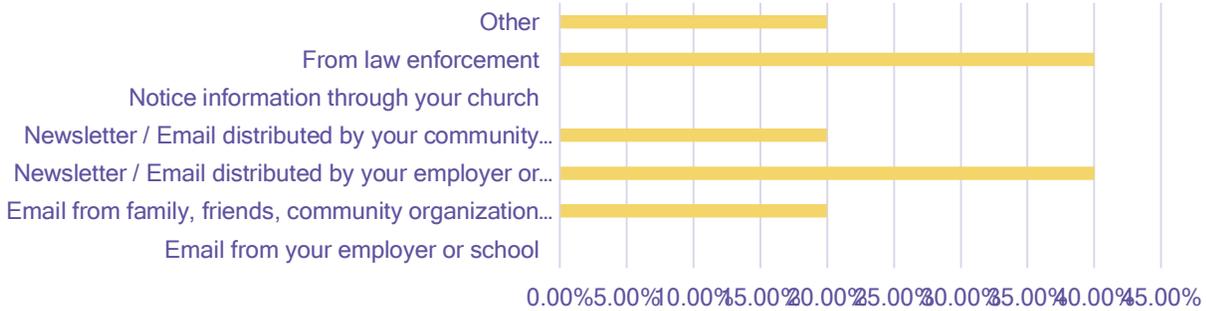
**11. If yes, where have you seen or heard these messages?**



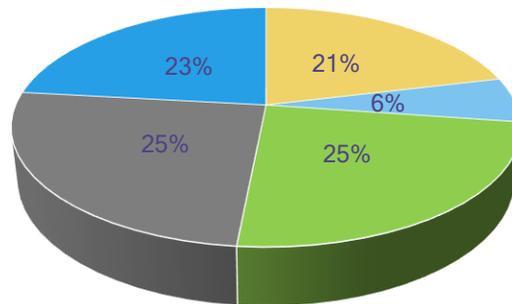
12. In the past 30 days in East Brunswick, have you seen or interacted with anyone who told you about pedestrian safety or gave you information about New Jersey's pedestrian safety laws and/or safe walking tips?



13. In the past 30 days in East Brunswick, have you directly received any information about pedestrian safety information via any of the following sources?

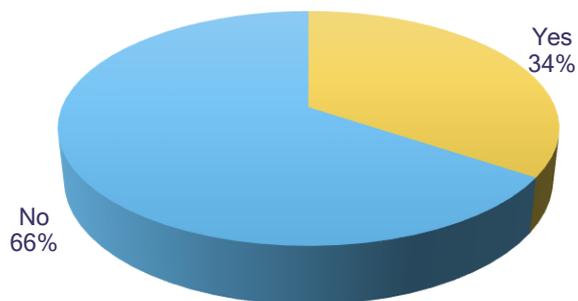


14. To the best of your knowledge, please indicate any/all actions below for which you can receive a ticket in New Jersey.

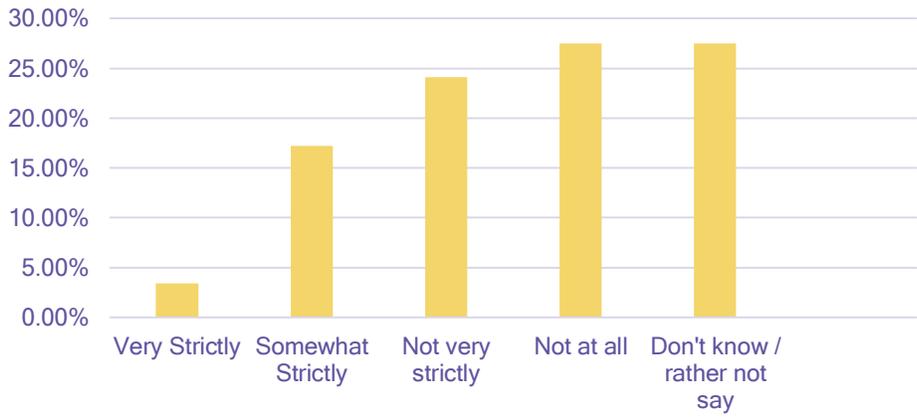


- Crossing the street in the middle of the block (jaywalking)
- Using a mobile device while crossing the street
- Not stopping for a pedestrian in a crosswalk when driving
- Using a mobile device when driving
- Not yielding to a pedestrian when turning (while driving)

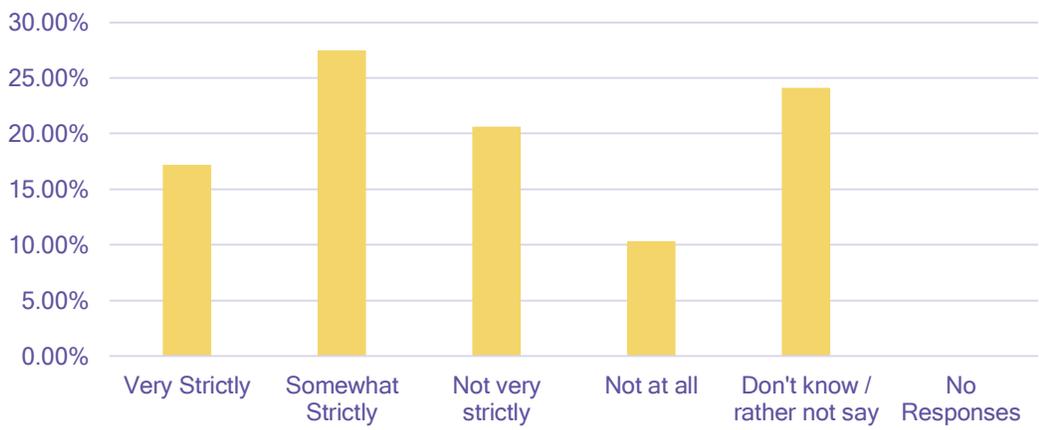
15. Have you recently read, seen, or heard about local police efforts to enforce pedestrian safety laws?



**16. How strictly do you think that police in East Brunswick enforce PEDESTRIAN safety laws, such as jaywalking?**



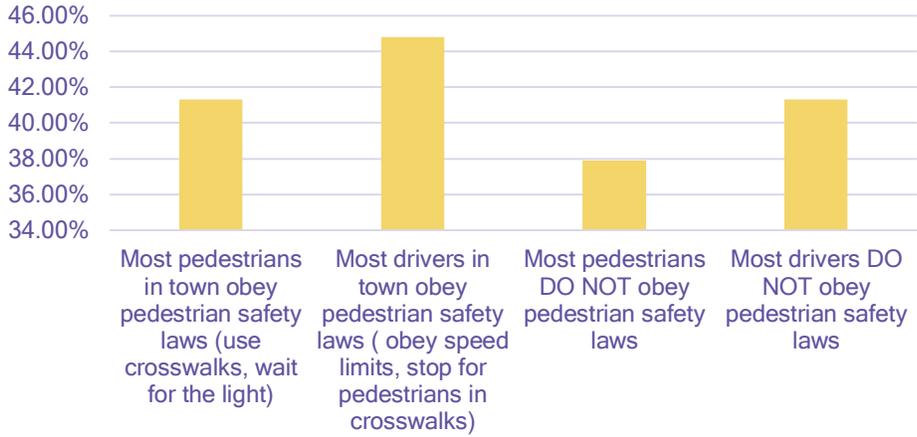
**17. How strictly do you think that police in East Brunswick enforce DRIVER related pedestrian safety laws, such as speeding or stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks?**



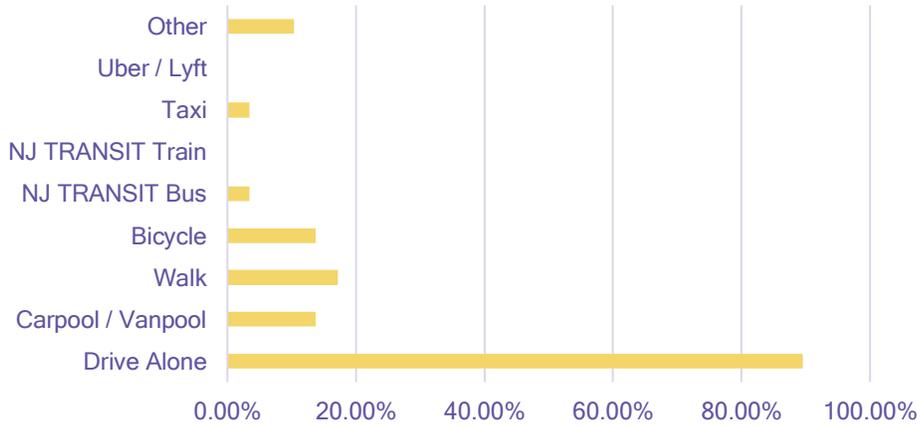
**18. Please rank the following from 1 - 4. One (1) being the most serious and four (4) being the least serious with regards to pedestrian safety in East Brunswick.**

	1 (Most Serious)	2	3	4 (Least Serious)
Distracted Driving (texting or talking on a cell)	97%	0%	3%	0%
Pedestrian disobeying traffic laws ( jaywalking)	21%	34%	21%	24%
Drivers not stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks	45%	34%	21%	0%
Speeding	38%	28%	17%	17%

**19. Please indicate each of the following statements that you AGREE with**



**20. What mode of transportation do you take on a weekly basis? (check all that apply)**



# PRE-OBSERVATION SUMMARY

## Survey

A pre-observation survey was circulated throughout the township from November 22 to December 11. The survey was announced through EBTv, Nixle, surveys were also distributed during township events and posted on Facebook. The majority of survey respondents were between the ages of 45 and 54 years old, female, and residents of East Brunswick.

More than seventy-two percent (72%) those taking the survey indicated they have seen distracted drivers while traveling through the township, and more than sixty-eight percent (68%) said they have seen pedestrians jaywalking. However, forty percent (40%) of survey takers said they did not participate in risky driving behaviors such as texting or using their cell phones, but almost the same number of respondents said they have driven at least 10 MPH above the speed limit.

Most respondents indicated they understand the basic “rules” of the road- pedestrians should cross at a crosswalk when the sign says to walk, and drivers must yield to pedestrians, but they could not recollect seeing messages or signage regarding pedestrian safety. More than twenty-seven percent (27%) of respondents also do not believe pedestrian safety laws are strongly enforced but the same percentage believe motor vehicle laws have greater enforcement within the township.

## Observation

A pre-observation study was conducted on November 29 by KMM staff, one week after Black Friday, the beginning of the holiday shopping season. The observation began at 11:30 AM and lasted two hours to catch the lunchtime rush of shoppers. The weather was clear and unseasonably warm with a high of 64 degrees. Locations were pre-selected based on pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the shopping center.

Pedestrian and vehicle proxies were determined based on the location and the fact that the campaign would be held on private property. Since there would be no enforcement, the proxy

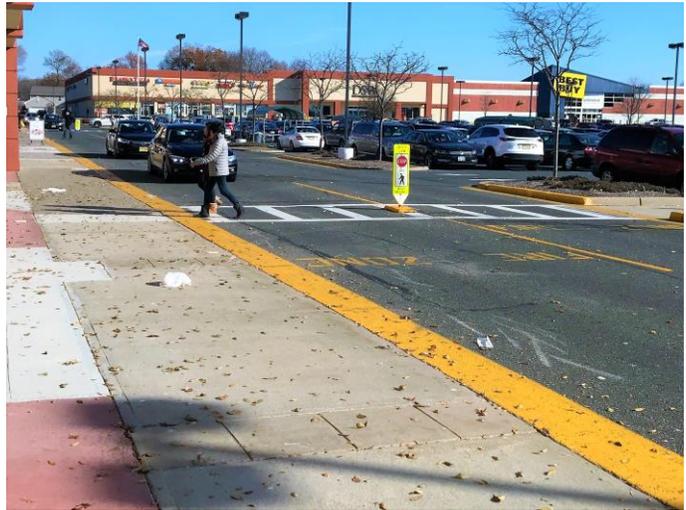
focused on behaviors that can be translated to municipal roadways as well as safety when walking or driving within the shopping center. There are many dangers in a parking lot. Motorists are focused on finding parking spaces that are nearest the establishment they will be patronizing, meanwhile pedestrians are darting in and out of parking spaces and moving around vehicles. In many cases pedestrians cannot be seen as vehicles are backing in and out of spots and pedestrians are bombarded with many distractions, such as shopping/to-do lists, cellphones, and children, can divert attention away from oncoming traffic.

One surprising result from the observation was that pedestrians sought out crosswalks to cross the street. Where crosswalks were available and placed in convenient locations, pedestrians used them, and used them often. We also saw many instances where pedestrians walked towards the crosswalk, even when it was out of their way, to safely navigate the crossing the street.



In entrances to the shopping center, vehicle speeds were much higher than anywhere else within the lot. As observed at Old Bridge Turnpike, where the speed limit is 35 mph, cars would maintain that speed into the shopping center and cars exiting the shopping center would increase their speed with blatant disregard for pedestrians trying to cross the street into the retailers. Even when even when pedestrians were inside a crosswalk many vehicles were unwilling to stop for pedestrians. There were a few instances where the observer witnessed near misses between pedestrians and motorists. In other locations further inside the shopping

center, motorists were more cognizant of pedestrians crossing the street, and gave them the right of way. One reason may be because there were more stop signs and crosswalks within the shopping center so vehicle speeds were maintained to 15 mph.



The entrance to Mid State Mall on Old Bridge Turnpike did not have many crosswalks for pedestrians to safely cross the street from the residential area into the shopping center. The speed limit at Old Bridge Turnpike is 35 mph but it is not uncommon for motorists to exceed that limit. Observations show pedestrians cross that road to get into the shopping center quite regularly during the day to get to NY Sports Club and go shopping, perhaps even more often during the evening and weekend when residents are home from work.



# KICKOFF EVENT

The East Brunswick Street Smart kickoff event was held on Tuesday, December 12, 2017 at 3 PM, outside of Frank's Pizza at Mid State Mall. Brad J. Cohen, Mayor of East Brunswick; Bill Neary, Executive Director for KMM; and Will Yarzab of NJTPA were all in attendance. The event was live streamed via Facebook and was covered by EBTU.



# EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

The education campaign for East Brunswick Street Smart took place on Tuesday December 19 from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM. approximately five hundred (500) palm cards were distributed to shoppers during that time and the public were reminded about the safety rules of the road. Lawn signs were posted in the islands around the shopping center where pedestrian and vehicular traffic was highest and posters were distributed to businesses.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that Mid State Mall is surrounded by residential neighborhoods, there are some improvements that can be implemented to increase safety for pedestrians and motorists.

Place pedestrian crossing signs closer to the entrances of Mid State Mall to help reduce vehicular speed limits entering the shopping center. Add additional crosswalks near store entrances, making them more accessible to shoppers. Post signage reminding pedestrians to watch for vehicles backing up or driving through the lot.

Cars frequently pull up to and stop in fire lanes to pick up and drop off passengers. There are many cases where vehicles will idle in the fire lane while they wait for a shopper within the store. Enforcing the no parking laws for the shopping center can assist in pedestrian safety as these vehicles will usually impede traffic and stop on crosswalks, making it difficult for pedestrians to safely cross the street.

Consideration should also be paid to the areas surrounding the Mall, along Route 18 and Old Bridge Turnpike. A crosswalk near the Old Bridge Turnpike entrance along with pedestrian crossing signs can assist pedestrians crossing the street from the residential area into the shopping center. Crosswalks on Route 18 and Tices Lane are fading, becoming less visible to motorists driving through the intersection. Restriping the crosswalk would help increase safety among pedestrians crossing Tices Lane and/or Route 18 as they catch public transportation or navigate into and around the shopping center.

KMM recommends the Township of East Brunswick and EBPD continue promoting the Street Smart initiative throughout the municipality, within schools, and during community events. Working with KMM's SRTS coordinator to teach children about pedestrian safety will also strengthen the program's message.

# CONCLUSION

The focus of the East Brunswick Street Smart program was to create awareness among pedestrians and motorists about the dangers of driving distracted, speeding, and not obeying local motor vehicle and pedestrian laws. Mid State Mall is on private property, but the location proved to be the perfect environment to reach a large population of residents and visitors that travel within the township.

Parking lots are rife with obstacles, distractions, and dangers that can lead to increases in pedestrian crashes and fatalities. Studies show pedestrian crashes in parking lots dramatically increase during the holiday season which is the reason KMM and East Brunswick chose to focus on Mid State Mall the weekend after Thanksgiving. It is important that educational programs like Street Smart engage the public where they congregate, especially in towns like East Brunswick that do not have Main Streets or other downtown areas. Given the vast differences of each town, there is no one size fits all approach that will work within every municipality in New Jersey. Educating the public on traffic safety laws helps minimize the number of incidents within the municipality and should be the main focus of a state wide initiative such as Street Smart.

The Township of East Brunswick continues to work closely with KMM to improve pedestrian safety through programs such as Safe Routes to School, Paint the Pavement, and Walk to School Day. East Brunswick is a model for other large municipalities within the state that have dedicated themselves to reducing pedestrian and motor vehicle accidents and fatalities within the community.