

BRIDGEWATER STREET SMART NJ PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CAMPAIGN



2025

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DISCLAIMER: RideWise is not an engineering or planning firm/entity. This report is not a formal design, engineering or planning study. This report consists solely of observational data. While not statistically significant, these quantitative observations serve as a guide on ways to make Bridgewater safer and are not official designs or plans.

This report was prepared with funding from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of NJTPA and FHWA in the interest of information exchange. The NJTPA is solely responsible for its contents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2025, RideWise Inc. partnered with the Bridgewater Police Department and the Township to conduct a Street-Smart NJ pedestrian safety campaign; the first to be conducted within Bridgewater. This initiative was launched in response to Bridgewater's history of pedestrian–vehicle crashes, including several resulting in serious injuries and fatalities. The campaign aimed to raise awareness of pedestrian safety following a fatal crash on Union Avenue (Route 28) near the intersection of Finderne Avenue, where a driver struck and killed a pedestrian who was trying to cross the street.

Notably, East Main Street, from Shaw Avenue to Finderne Avenue, has been identified as a priority location in the [Somerset County Local Safety Action Plan \(June 2025\)](#). This recognition underscores the need for targeted safety improvements in the area and aligns closely with the Street-Smart campaign's education and enforcement efforts to enhance pedestrian and motorist safety.

The campaign's education and enforcement phase ran from August 1 through August 31, with pre- and post-campaign observations conducted in July and September. Observational analyses were carried out at three key intersections identified for safety concerns:

1. Union Avenue (Route 28) and Finderne Avenue
2. East Main Street and Finderne Avenue
3. Union Avenue, Foothill Road, and Chimney Rock Road

RideWise conducted observations at these locations before and after the campaign. Alongside observations, RideWise distributed an online survey (see Appendix) during the campaign to gauge the public's opinion on pedestrian and cyclist safety in Bridgewater. Key findings from the campaign include:

- The Bridgewater Police Department issued a total of 5 warnings and 10 summonses. Most of the summonses for drivers were for Using a Cell Phone while Driving.
- RideWise received 13 survey responses from local residents about Bridgewater pedestrian safety. The majority expressed that they do not feel safe crossing at the targeted intersections, citing a lack of sidewalks and aggressive driver behavior as their main concerns.
- Based on the post-campaign observations, distracted driving decreased across all sites, with the most significant reduction at East Main & Finderne. However, instances of aggressive driving, such as speeding and failing to yield, remained present, particularly during peak travel times.

- While some sources use the term "jaywalking," we prefer to refer to it as crossing outside of a crosswalk, whether painted or unpainted. In New Jersey, this type of crossing is legal as long as the pedestrian crosses at right angles (perpendicular to the road) and yields to motor vehicles. Some studies indicate that crossing outside of a crosswalk may be less safe than crossing within a marked crosswalk. During observations, there were instances where pedestrians crossed more than five feet away from the designated crosswalk.
- Cyclist helmet use remained low, though modest improvements were noted, with helmeted cyclists observed at East Main in the post-campaign period.
- E-scooter safety improved, as no helmetless riders were observed during the post-campaign observations.

Additionally, it is recommended that Bridgewater Township and Bridgewater Police collaborate with RideWise on furthering pedestrian safety initiatives moving forward. Future enforcement efforts should be aimed at reducing distracted and aggressive driving.



Numetrics Data

This Crash Summary Report from [Numetrics](#) presents an overview of vehicular incidents in Bridgewater, New Jersey, from January 1, 2020, through July 31, 2025. The data highlights patterns in crash occurrences across major roadways and intersections throughout the township, reflecting areas of higher risk as well as locations where crashes are more dispersed. By examining these trends, the report aims to support traffic safety planning, guide enforcement efforts, and inform strategies to reduce collisions and improve overall roadway safety in the community.

CRASH SUMMARY REPORT

2020 to 2025 Bridgewater Crashes total

Created on August 12, 2025

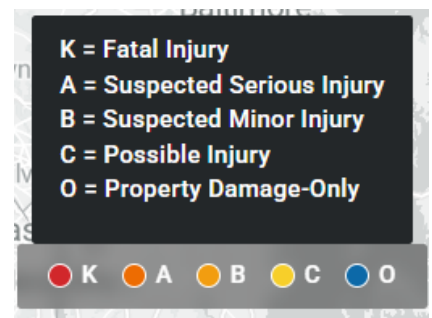
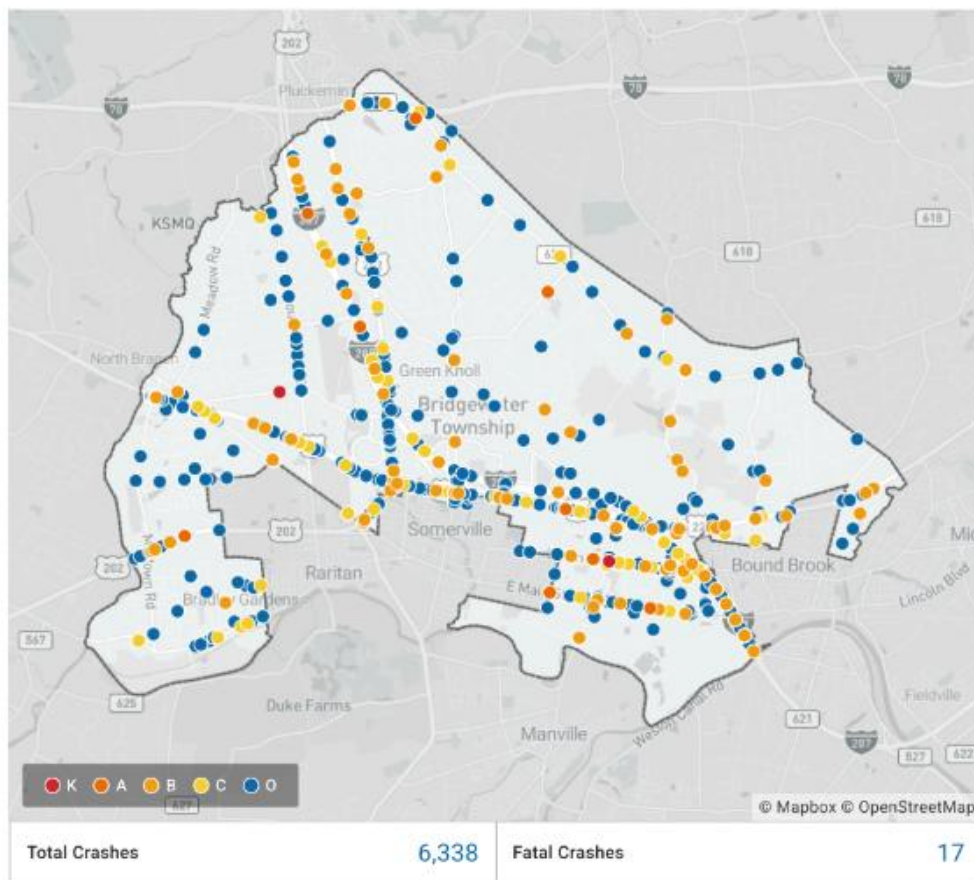
Created by Sarah Chelli

Data extents: January 1, 2020 to July 31, 2025



Applied Filters

County = Somerset Cities / Municipalities - Geocoded only (Geo) = Bridgewater Township



Target Location # 1 – Union Ave (Rt 28) & Finderne Ave

CRASH SUMMARY REPORT

2020 to 2025 Union Ave and Finderne Ave Crashes

Created on August 12, 2025

Created by Sarah Chelli

Data extents: January 1, 2020 to July 31, 2025



Applied Filters

County = Somerset Shape: Polygon



Total Crashes

60

Fatal Crashes

1

Target Location # 2 - East Main St & Finderne Av

CRASH SUMMARY REPORT

2020 to 2025 E Main St and Finderne St

Created on August 12, 2025

Created by Sarah Chelli

Data extents: January 1, 2020 to July 31, 2025



Applied Filters

County = Somerset Shape: Polygon



Target Location # 3 - Union Ave & Foothill & Chimney Rock Rd

CRASH SUMMARY REPORT

2020 to 2025 Union Ave Foothill Rd Chimney Rock Rd

Created on August 12, 2025

Created by Sarah Chelli

Data extents: January 1, 2020 to July 31, 2025



Applied Filters

County = Somerset Shape: Polygon



Total Crashes	137	Fatal Crashes	1
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ENFORCEMENT

The Bridgewater Police Department supported the campaign through ongoing community policing and education efforts. Street Smart NJ campaigns consist of two weeks of “soft” enforcement (police issue warnings) to those not following pedestrian safety laws, followed by two weeks of “hard” enforcement (police issuing summonses). Officers conducted enforcement through vehicle patrols. A total of 5 warnings and 10 summonses were issued throughout the campaign. Below is the breakdown of warnings and summonses issued:

August 1 – August 15, 2025

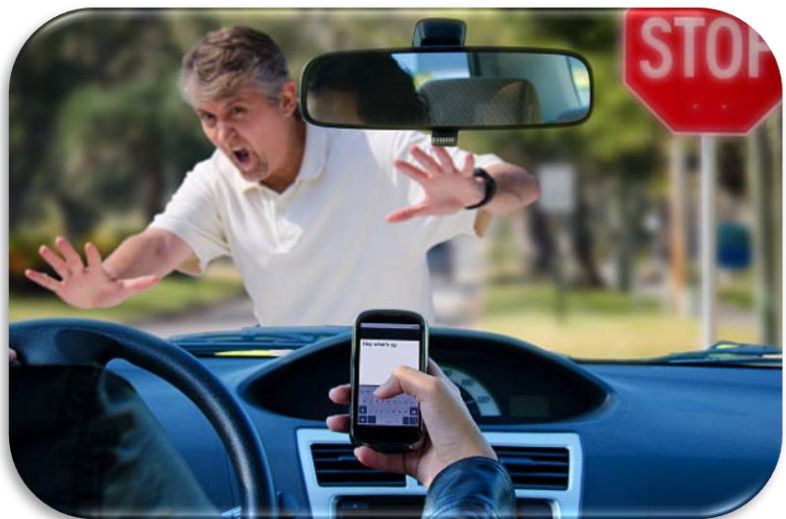
Driver Warnings: 5

- Distracted driving

August 15 – August 31, 2025

Driver Summonses: 10

- Distracted driving



These observations also align with the Somerset County Local Safety Action Plan's emphasis areas, which note distracted driving as one of the most pressing traffic safety issues facing the county.

Education and Outreach

The NJTPA provided RideWise with Street Smart NJ materials to educate the community and spread the campaign's safety messages. These materials included safety tip cards, flyers, signs, and table tents, which were distributed to businesses in the targeted areas.

On August 21, 2025, RideWise hosted a Pedestrian Safety Event at KidStreet, drawing 59 participants including parents, grandparents, and children. The program combined education and fun, with activities designed to teach children safe street-crossing habits and provide parents with an opportunity to share feedback on community safety concerns. Families engaged in interactive lessons, including practicing at a mock crosswalk, while children received safety-themed take-home materials. Face painting added a lighthearted element, creating an energetic and welcoming environment.

Parents and caregivers shared how they currently teach pedestrian safety and offered valuable insights on improvements needed in Bridgewater, expressing appreciation for having a forum to voice their concerns. The strong turnout, nearly double expectations, demonstrated community interest in safety programming. Moving forward, the feedback collected will help guide future initiatives. The success of the interactive activities highlighted the effectiveness of blending safety education with family-friendly engagement.

Throughout the campaign, an online survey was available for residents to share their thoughts about pedestrian safety in Bridgewater (see Appendix). A total of 13 respondents participated.



The main concerns cited were:

1. Pedestrians not feeling safe to cross at targeted intersections due to a lack of sidewalks and signage.
2. Speeding and aggressive driving.
3. Pedestrians crossing outside of the designated crosswalk not at right angles (perpendicular to the road).

These findings highlight the need for safety improvements at these intersections. Addressing driver behavior, enhancing pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks and crosswalks, and installing pedestrian signals could help create a safer and more comfortable environment for people walking.

Intersection Observations

To measure changes in pedestrian and driver behavior, RideWise conducted observations at three locations in Bridgewater before and after the campaign:

- 1) Union Ave (Rt.28) and Finderne Ave
- 2) East Main and Finderne Ave
- 3) Union Ave, Foothill Road, and Chimney Rock Road

To control variables, pre- and post-campaign intersection observations are performed at the same time of day and for the same duration of time. RideWise conducted pre-observations on July 22, 23, and 24, 2025, and post-campaign observations on September 2, 3, and 4, 2025.

The following behaviors were tracked:

For pedestrians:

- Crossing outside of a crosswalk
- Crossing while texting or on the phone
- Deviating from the crosswalk (pedestrian starts in the crosswalk but fails to follow it for the entire crossing)
- Using the pedestrian beacon

For drivers:

- Stopping for pedestrians in crosswalk while turning
- Stopping and staying stopped for pedestrians in crosswalk
- Distracted driving

Across all observed intersections, traffic volumes were extremely high, with 5,600 to 7,100 vehicles passing through each site in just two and a half hours, creating significant risks for pedestrians and cyclists. Distracted driving was a consistent concern, with many drivers seen using phones while moving through Foothill & Union and East Main & Finderne. Gaps in infrastructure, including missing sidewalks near CVS on Union Avenue and near Wawa and Pep Boys on Foothill, as well as the absence of a painted crosswalk in front of Wawa, forced pedestrians into unsafe situations. Risky behaviors were also common among pedestrians and cyclists, including crossing outside of a crosswalk (painted or not painted), crossing against signals, cycling or riding e-scooters against traffic, and frequent lack of helmet use. At Foothill & Chimney Rock, red-light running (mostly by trucks) further highlighted the dangers at these intersections.

During the post-observation period, distracted driving improved at all sites, with the largest reduction observed at East Main & Funderne. Drivers failing to yield or stop for pedestrians decreased overall, suggesting stronger compliance, while pedestrian safety behaviors were mixed: crossing outside of a crosswalk (painted or not painted) decreased at East Main but increased at Foothill & Chimney Rock, and deviations from crosswalks rose at two locations. Cyclist helmet use remained low, though small improvements were noted, including helmeted cyclists at East Main, and e-scooter safety improved, with no helmetless riders observed during post-observations. Overall, these findings indicate that targeted interventions, such as enhanced crosswalks, better sidewalk connectivity, and focused enforcement of distracted driving and red-light violations, could further improve safety for all road users.

Target Location # 1 – Union Ave (Rt 28) & Funderne Ave

Pedestrians			
Category	Pre Observations (7/22)	Post Observations (9/3)	Change
Total pedestrians observed	22	19	↓ 3
Crossing against signal	3	0	↓ 3
Deviating from crosswalk	4	3	↓ 1
Crossing outside of a crosswalk	1	1	–
Crossing legally with signal	–	9	+9

Vehicles			
Category	Pre Observations (7/22)	Post Observations (9/3)	Change
Total vehicles observed	5,679	6,103	+424
Distracted drivers	48	41	↓ 7
Drivers not stopping for pedestrians	3	2	↓ 1
Drivers not yielding to pedestrians	11	0	↓ 11

Cyclists			
Category	Pre Observations (7/22)	Post Observations (9/3)	Change
Cyclists observed	6	6	–
Cyclists without helmets	3	1	↓ 2
Cyclists with helmets	3	3	–
E-scooter riders without helmets	1	0	↓ 1

Additional Notes:

There is a missing sidewalk across from the CVS, which poses a safety concern for pedestrians.
(Photo of the missing sidewalk shown)



At the Union Ave (Rt 28) & Finderne Ave location, overall pedestrian and traffic safety behaviors showed improvement between the pre-observation period on 7/22 and the post-observation period on 9/3. Pedestrian compliance increased, with all observed individuals now crossing legally with the signal, a notable improvement from 3 crossings against the signal previously. Deviations from the crosswalk decreased slightly, while crossing outside of a crosswalk (painted

or not painted) remained unchanged. Vehicle behavior also improved: distracted driving declined, drivers failing to stop for pedestrians decreased, and notably, no drivers failed to yield to pedestrians post-observation. Cyclist safety showed modest gains, with fewer cyclists riding without helmets, and e-scooter helmet use improved to zero incidents without helmets. However, some safety concerns remain, including a missing sidewalk across from the CVS, which could pose hazards for pedestrians. Continued attention to infrastructure improvements, like completing sidewalks and reinforcing crosswalk use, could further enhance safety at this intersection.

Target Location # 2 - East Main St & FINDERNE Av

Pedestrian			
Category	Pre Observations (7/24)	Post Observations (9/2)	Change
Total pedestrians observed	21	23	+2
Crossing outside of a crosswalk	9	3	↓ 6
Deviating from crosswalk	5	6	+1
Crossing against signal	11	2	↓ 9
Crossing legally with signal	—	3	+3

Vehicles			
Category	Pre Observations (7/24)	Post Observations (9/2)	Change
Total vehicles observed	5,703	5,976	+273
Distracted drivers	104	73	↓ 31
Drivers not stopping for pedestrians	1	1	—
Drivers not yielding to pedestrians	6	1	↓ 5

Cyclist			
Category	Pre Observations (7/24)	Post Observations (9/2)	Change

Cyclists observed	6	2	↓4
Cyclists not following rules	6	0	↓ 6
Cyclists with helmets	0	2	+2
E-scooter riders without helmets	2	0	↓ 2

At the East Main St & FINDERNE Ave intersection, overall safety behaviors improved between the pre-observation period on 7/24 and the post-observation period on 9/2. Pedestrian compliance increased, with crossing outside of a crosswalk (painted or not painted), and crossing against the signal both showing substantial decreases, while legal signal crossings appeared for the first time. Deviations from the crosswalk increased slightly, suggesting continued attention is needed in this area. Vehicle behaviors improved, particularly in distracted driving, which dropped significantly, and fewer drivers failed to yield to pedestrians, though the number not stopping remained unchanged. Cyclist safety showed marked improvement, with all observed cyclists now following traffic rules, increased helmet use, and no e-scooter riders observed without helmets. These trends indicate overall positive behavioral changes, though continued monitoring and reinforcement of crosswalk compliance could further enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety at this location.

Target Location # 3 - Union Ave & Foothill & Chimney Rock Rd

Pedestrians			
Category	Pre Observations (7/23)	Post Observations (9/4)	Change
Total pedestrians observed	23	22	↓1
Crossing outside of a crosswalk	3	1	↓ 2
Deviating from crosswalk	3	0	↓ 3
Distracted pedestrians	6	0	↓ 6
Crossing legally with signal	4	0	↓ 4

Vehicle			
Category	Pre Observations (7/23)	Post Observations (9/4)	Change
Total vehicles observed	7,182	8,102	+920
Distracted drivers	126	98	↓ 28

Drivers not stopping for pedestrians	6	3	↓ 3
Drivers not yielding to pedestrians	3	0	↓ 3
Red light runners / unsafe left turns	16	9	↓ 7

Cyclists			
Category	Pre Observations (7/23)	Post Observations (9/4)	Change
Cyclists observed	6	4	↓ 2
Without helmets	5	1	↓ 4
With helmets	1	3	+ 2
Riding while texting	1	0	↓ 1

Additional Notes:

There is a missing painted crosswalk in front of Wawa on Union Ave, which poses a safety concern for pedestrians. *(Photo of the missing painted crosswalk shown.)*



There is a missing sidewalk on Foothill Rd, near Wawa and the Pep Boys sides, creating safety concerns for pedestrians. *(Photo with the missing sidewalk shown)*



At the Union Ave & Foothill & Chimney Rock Rd intersection, safety behaviors showed mixed results between the pre-observation period on 7/23 and the post-observation period on 9/4. Pedestrian behavior improved in several areas, with crossing outside of a crosswalk (painted or not painted), and deviations from crosswalks decreasing and distracted pedestrian incidents dropping to zero. Vehicle behaviors generally improved, with fewer distracted drivers, fewer drivers failing to stop or yield to pedestrians, and reductions in red light running and unsafe left turns, despite an overall increase in vehicle volume. Cyclist safety also showed positive trends: fewer cyclists were observed riding without helmets, helmet use increased, and there were no observed instances of texting while riding. Safety concerns remain due to the lack of a painted crosswalk on Union Ave in front of Wawa and missing sidewalks on Foothill near Wawa and Pep Boys, which pose hazards for pedestrians. Addressing these infrastructure gaps, along with continued education on signal compliance and safe cycling, could further improve safety at this location.

Recommendations



The observations indicate that while safety improved at all three intersections, there are still some clear steps that Bridgewater can take to further enhance the safety of walking, biking, and driving. The most pressing needs are infrastructure fixes. At Union Ave & Finderne, the missing sidewalk across from CVS leaves pedestrians with no safe path. At

Union, Foothill & Chimney Rock, people face the same issue near Wawa and Pep Boys, plus there's no painted crosswalk in front of Wawa. Filling in these sidewalk gaps and adding a painted crosswalk would provide people with safer, more predictable options rather than forcing them into the road. Updating crosswalks with brighter paint, improved signage, or signal timing changes could also encourage people to use them consistently, something that remains a challenge at East Main & Finderne.

At the same time, education and enforcement are just as important as infrastructure. Distracted driving decreased after the campaign, but it still remains a concern, especially with a high volume of vehicles passing through these intersections daily. Continued reminders about putting phones down, stopping for pedestrians, and obeying traffic signals will help keep that trend moving in the right direction. For people walking and biking, emphasizing the importance of crossing with the signal and wearing helmets could make a significant difference, as these behaviors are often mixed. Finally, regular police enforcement at these intersections, focused on yielding, red-light running, and speeding, would strengthen compliance and support safer habits over time.

Other potential funding sources to assist with Complete Streets, placemaking, and infrastructure improvement projects include:

- [NJTPA Complete Streets Demonstration Library](#): The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), in partnership with Hudson Transportation Management Association (Hudson TMA), created a Complete Streets Demonstration Library to support the broader use of tactical urbanism. We assembled a collection of delineator posts, barricades, traffic signs, paints, stencils, barriers, traffic cones, and other materials

available for loan to communities who want to implement a temporary demonstration. Applications are welcomed year-round at any time.

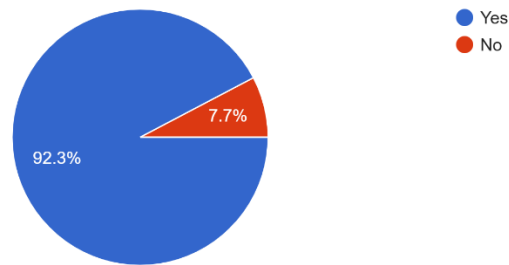
- [NJTPA Complete Streets Technical Assistance Program](#): This program, funded by the NJTPA, supports municipalities by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources to develop Complete Streets-related solutions. Technical assistance is provided through a partnership with Sustainable Jersey (SJ) and the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University (VTC). Selected participants receive free direct technical assistance to complete a task related to advancing a Complete Streets initiative in their community. No direct funding to municipalities is provided.
- [NJTPA Vibrant Communities Initiative](#): This initiative provides targeted support to municipalities, counties, and community organizations in the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) region through technical assistance, placemaking projects, information resources, and workshops.
- [NJTPA Local Safety Program](#): The NJTPA works with its federal partners and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to fund its county and city member subregions for infrastructure improvements to make travel safer. The NJTPA solicits candidate projects from its subregions under two safety funding programs every other fiscal year, the Local Safety and High-Risk Rural Roads programs. Typical projects include new and upgraded traffic signals, road diets, modern roundabouts, pedestrian safety including countdown signal heads, high visibility crosswalks, curb extensions, new and upgraded signs and pavement markings, bike lanes, and other improvements New Jersey is a focus state for Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Intersection Safety.
- [NJDOT TA Set Aside Grant Program](#): The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) program provides federal funds for community-based "non-traditional" surface transportation projects to strengthen the nation's intermodal system's cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects.
- [NJDOT Safe Routes to School \(SRTS\) Grant Program](#): The SRTS program provides federal funds for infrastructure (construction) projects that encourage and enable students from grades K-12 to safely walk and bike to school within 2 miles of the school. Municipalities, counties, schools, and school districts can apply. Eligible SRTS projects include the installation of ADA-compliant sidewalks, bike paths, striping, lighting, signals, and traffic calming improvements.

Appendix

The results for the Bridgewater Survey are as follows:

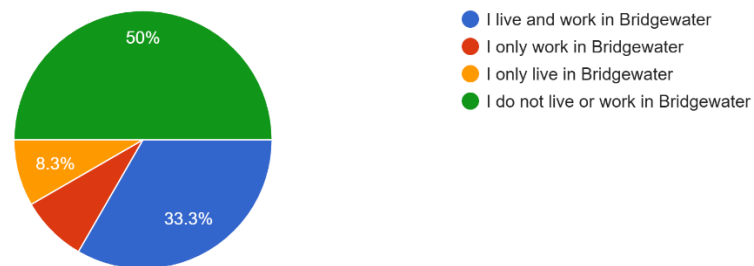
You must be over the age of 18 to take this survey. Are you over the age of 18?

13 responses



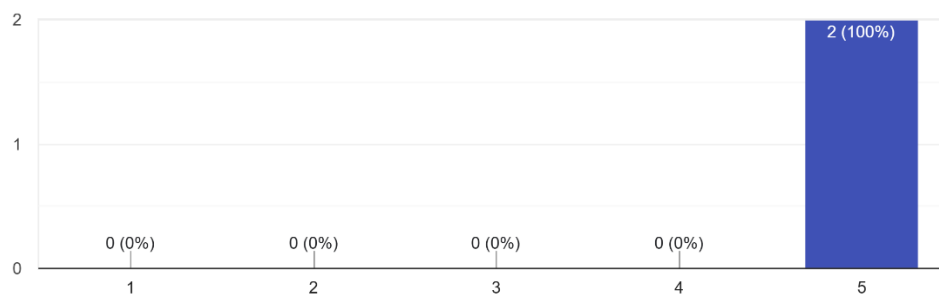
This survey solicits feedback from individuals who live/work in Bridgewater, NJ. Select the statement that best describes you:

12 responses



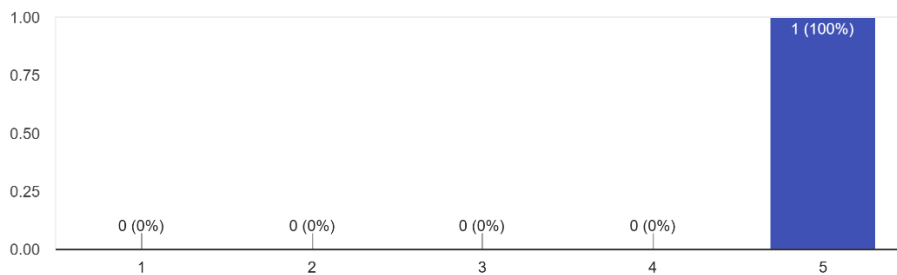
Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all, how safe do you feel walking/bicycling through Union Ave (Route 28) and Finderne Ave?

2 responses



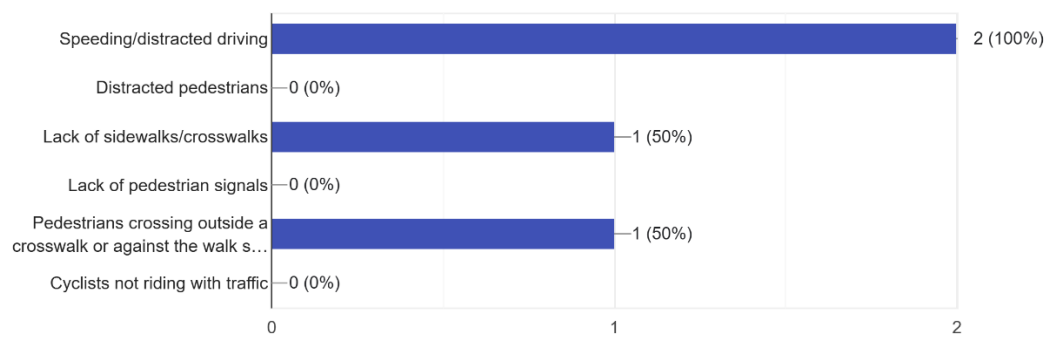
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all, how safe do you feel driving through Union Ave (Route 28) and Finderne Ave?

1 response



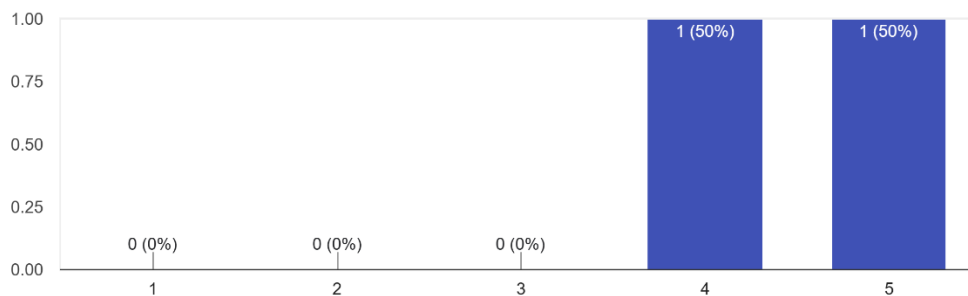
What traffic safety issues concern you the most on Union Ave (Route 28) and Finderne Ave?

2 responses



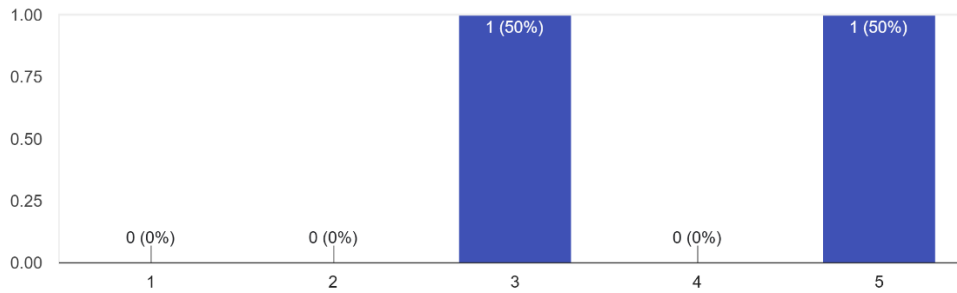
Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all, how safe do you feel walking/bicycling through East Main and Finderne Ave?

2 responses



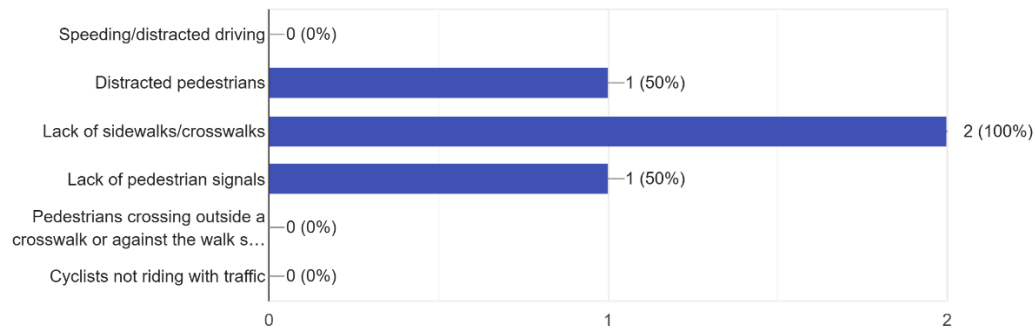
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all, how safe do you feel driving through East Main and Finderne Ave?

2 responses



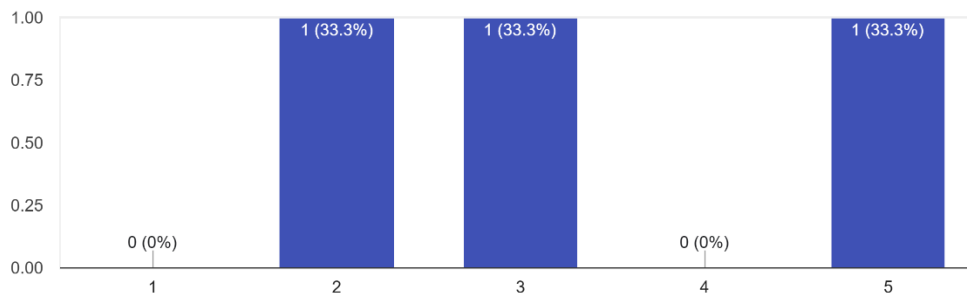
What traffic safety issues concern you the most on East Main and Finderne Ave?

2 responses



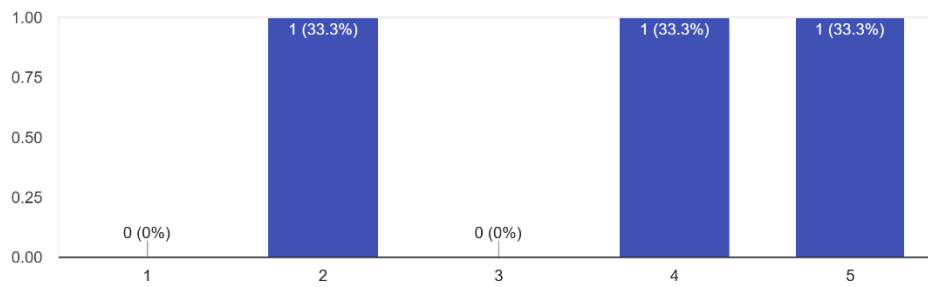
Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all, how safe do you feel walking/bicycling through Union Ave and Foothill Road/Chimney Rock Rd?

3 responses



On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very safe and 5 being not safe at all, how safe do you feel driving through Union Ave and Foothill Road/Chimney Rock Rd?

3 responses



What traffic safety issues concern you the most on Union Ave and Foothill Road/Chimney Rock Rd?

3 responses

