



# MY SCHOOL IN MOTION

**Biking and Walking Audit  
Valley Forge Middle School**



# Walking Audit



## GVF

Created in 1990, GVF, a not-for-profit organization, is dedicated to inspiring mobility choices for ALL. Through our 30+ years of expertise, GVF develops programs and initiatives that help educate and provide alternatives to driving alone, ultimately improving the quality of life for all.

## My School in Motion

Through PennDOT's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Grant, GVF created the program "My School in Motion." GVF partnered with Tredyffrin Easttown School District to bring the program to Valley Forge Middle School.

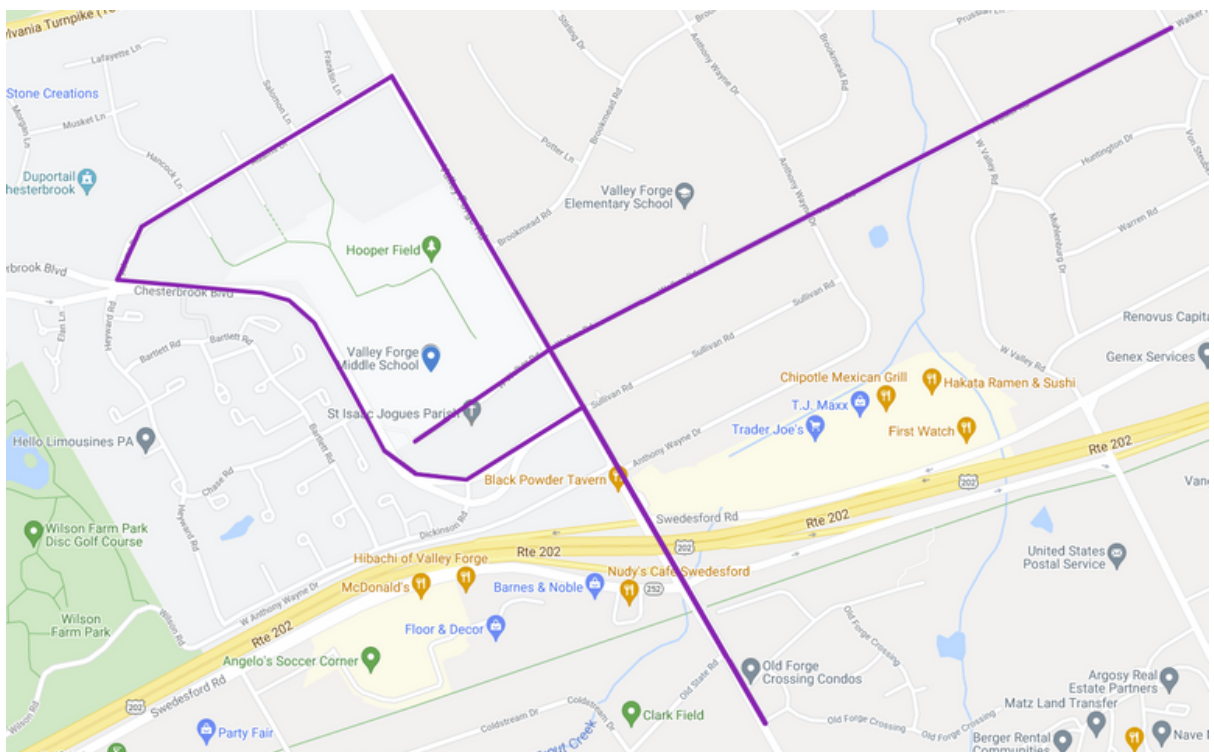
The My School in Motion program was developed to promote safety in walking and biking to school and educate the next generation of commuters on the benefits of walking and biking as an alternate mode of travel.

## Biking and Walking Audit

Biking and walking audits look at the streets, sidewalks, and connections in a neighborhood to assess safety.

As part of the My School in Motion program, an audit of the streets surrounding the Valley Forge Middle School was conducted in June 2021.

This report highlights observations made. Below is a map of the audited streets.





# Survey Results

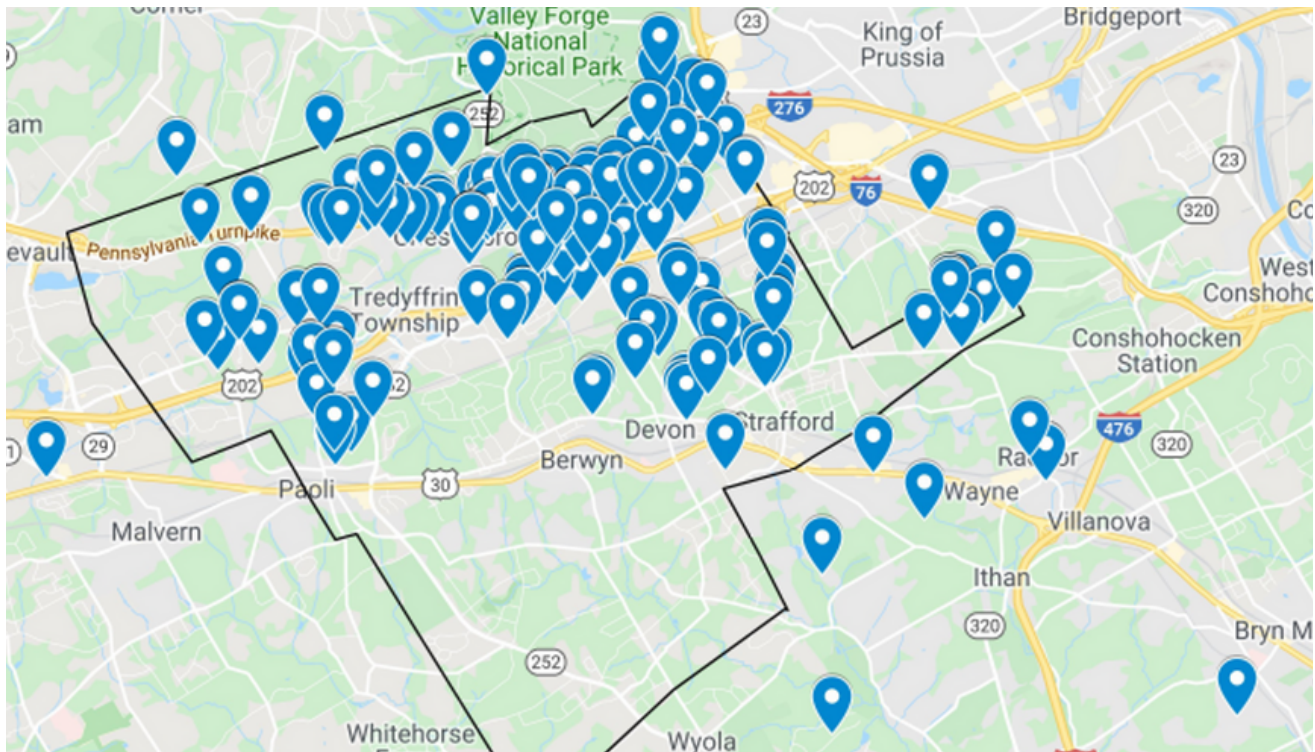


As part of the My School in Motion program, GVF developed a survey for Valley Forge Middle School parents and guardians to assess initial perceptions of their child walking or biking to school.

There were 260 survey responses received, representing 24% of the student population at Valley Forge Middle School.

## Key findings:

- Of the survey respondents, over 33% live within one mile of the school. This shows a large population of students who can walk and bike to school if safe infrastructure is available.



- While the school bus is the predominant mode of travel to and from school, there is a healthy percentage of students who regularly walk or bike to school (16.6%).
- A large percentage of parent responses indicated that they would allow their children in the middle-school age range to walk/bike to/from school unaccompanied by an adult (65%). However, roughly 31% would not allow their children to walk due to safety concerns or distance.

# Survey Results



- When asked to name the issues that affected their decision to allow or not allow the walk/bike mode, parents overwhelmingly cited transportation infrastructure concerns in the following order:
  - Sidewalks or pathways
  - Safety of intersections or crosswalks
  - Distance
  - Speed and volume of traffic

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Distance	68.37%
Convenience of driving	5.58%
Child's before or after-school activities	19.53%
Speed of traffic	64.19%
Amount of traffic	61.40%
Adults to walk or bike with	9.30%
Sidewalks or pathways	82.79%
Safety of intersections and crossings	77.21%
Crossing guards	27.91%
Violence or crime	22.33%
Weather or climate	33.95%
Total Respondents: 215	





Throughout the My School in Motion program, GVF received questions and comments from Valley Forge Middle School students and parents regarding biking and walking routes and safety concerns.

Below is a comment from a Valley Forge Middle School student regarding safety on Valley Forge Road:

"As I briefly discussed with you about North Valley Road, there is no space for biking and walking. This issue was going around in my mind from two years ago when I moved into Lexton Woods, and I found it's not safe for biking and walking as there is heavy traffic. I talked to my mom and was thinking to write a letter to the township, but I'm glad that I'm in the right club now where I can raise my points and solve the issue. The Paoli Station is also nearby and I see a lot of people walk, which is not safe, and I've been scared that there could be a fatal accident. Even a trail is close by, but unfortunately, I cannot walk or go on a bicycle, my mom has to drop me in the car. This is the reason I want to try for Vice President."

Below is a question from a parent of a Valley Forge Middle School student;

"I just watched the walk/bike video, and I love the idea, but I feel like it would be too dangerous from where we live. The Chester Valley Trail along route 202 we can safely get to the Chester Valley Trail, but where is the best/safest way to get from there to the school? West Valley Road has an underpass, but it seems very dangerous for bikers to use to get to the gateway?"



# Valley Forge Road



Valley Forge Road/PA Route 252 is a major roadway that runs alongside Valley Forge Middle School. PA 252 is a four-lane road with a median before changing into a two-lane road approximately .17 miles before reaching the school.

There are residential neighborhoods and a business park along the stretch of Valley Forge Road and an interchange to Route U.S. 202.

Valley Forge Road is a major, busy roadway. The speed limit is 40 MPH.

## Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- Valley Forge Road has no sidewalks except for one path that runs adjacent to the school. The path ends at the end of the school property.
- Students would be expected to walk in the roadway or on the shoulder (which is very narrow) when traveling past the school boundary.
- There are three (3) crosswalks along Valley Forge Road close to the school.
- The closest crosswalk to the school connects Walker Road and West Walker Road.
  - There are traffic signals with crossing markings at this crosswalk, allowing students to cross safely and enter the school when traveling from Walker Road.
- There are no sidewalks connected to the two (2) additional crosswalks near the Gateway Shopping Center and Brookmead Road.
  - Brookmead Road is a residential street that does not have sidewalks. The crosswalk connects to the school path once students have crossed the street. The crosswalk is marked, and school signage is visible. There is no traffic light at this crosswalk.
- The crosswalk closer to Gateway Shopping Center connects Chesterbrook Boulevard, Valley Forge Road, and Sullivan Road. There are traffic lights and markings at this intersection. However, the level of traffic stress is high at this intersection, and there are no sidewalks.

## Biking

- There are no protected bike lanes along this roadway.
- There are no bike lane markings.
- Bikers are expected to use the roadway between available sidewalks.
- Roadway design and vehicle speeds impede bicycle mobility.

# Valley Forge Road



## Summary:

Valley Forge Road is a major, busy roadway with no sidewalks for students to travel safely. The U.S. 202 overpass is located on Valley Forge Road, between the Chester Valley Trail and the school, preventing students from utilizing the trail as they cannot make the last mile connection along Valley Forge Road. Future infrastructure investment to connect the trail to the school would be invaluable.

Valley Forge Middle School has a short trail within the school property, Chesterbrook Trail, which travels to quiet residential streets north of the school. Students traveling in this direction can avoid Valley Forge Road and by using the trail.







Walker Road is a residential road that crosses over Valley Forge Road. Walker Road turns into West Walker Road, where the entrance to Valley Forge Middle School is located. Valley Forge Elementary School is also situated on Walker Road, less than .5 miles from the Middle School.

Walker Road has a 25 MPH speed limit and less traffic stress than Valley Forge Road.

## **Sidewalks and Crosswalks**

- There is a sidewalk on one side of the road.
- The sidewalk travels from Valley Forge Road to Anthony Wayne Drive.
- The sidewalk is in good condition and has a grass median between the sidewalk and the road providing additional safety between pedestrians and cars.
- At Anthony Wayne Drive, the sidewalk stops, and pedestrians must cross the road to where the sidewalk continues on the adjacent side.
- There is a marked crosswalk for pedestrians to cross at Anthony Wayne Drive.
- The sidewalk becomes narrower and, in parts, has overgrown vegetation that could be an obstacle for pedestrians.
- The sidewalk ends at West Valley Road. There is no sidewalk for the remainder of the roadway and no shoulder. Pedestrians are expected to walk on the roadway when traveling from Old Eagle School Road.

## **Biking**

- There are no protected bike lanes
- There are no bike lane markings
- Bikers are expected to bike on the roadway or the available sidewalk.

## **Summary**

Walker Road has a safe sidewalk for approximately 1 mile between the middle school and West Valley Road. Students traveling from residential streets that connect to this portion of Walker Road have a safe route to walk or bike to school.

However, the sidewalk stops at West Valley Road. The only available option to those traveling further east is to walk on the roadway, making it unsafe for students biking and walking.

# Chesterbrook Boulevard



Chesterbrook Boulevard serves as the main road through Chesterbrook, heading south to an interchange with U.S. Route 202 and an intersection with PA Route 252 at Swedesford Road and heading east to another intersection with PA 252 at Valley Forge Road.

Chesterbrook Blvd has a 35 MPH speed limit, and the level of traffic stress is moderate.

## Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- There are no sidewalks along Chesterbrook Blvd.
- There is a grass median in the middle of the roadway and alongside the school property.
- Pedestrians have to walk on uneven grass areas if not in the roadway.
- There is a marked crosswalk over Chesterbrook Blvd from Chase Road to the school property.
- Students entering school property from this crosswalk will find a good-condition path from the crosswalk to the school entrance.
- There is school signage visible along the roadway.

## Biking

- There are no protected bike lanes
- There are no bike lane markings
- Bikers are expected to bike on the roadway.

## Summary

Although there are large green spaces along the roadway for pedestrians to walk, this is not ADA friendly and does not provide safety as a sidewalk.



# Adams Drive



Adams Drive is a residential street that connects Valley Forge Road and Chesterbrook Blvd. It is located behind Valley Forge Middle School. The Chesterbrook Trail connects the school with Adams Drive.

Adams Drive has a 25 MPH speed limit, and the level of traffic stress is low.

## Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- There are no sidewalks along Adams Drive.
- There is a grass median in the middle of the roadway and to the sides.
- Pedestrians have to walk on uneven grass areas or in the roadway.
- There are no crosswalks and no school signage.

## Biking

- There are no protected bike lanes
- There are no bike lane markings
- Bikers are expected to bike on the roadway.

## Summary

Although there are green spaces along the roadway for pedestrians to walk, this is not ADA friendly and does not provide safety as a sidewalk.

The Chesterbrook Trail connection to Adams Drive allows students to avoid the heavily trafficked Valley Forge Road when traveling north. However, once reaching Adams Drive, students must travel along roadways through residential streets as there are no sidewalk connections once the trail ends.





# Recommendations



Valley Forge Middle School provides access to the school property via paths and trails. However, this is not enough to create complete safe routes to school for students who wish to walk or bike. Outside of the school property, students are expected to bike or walk on most roadways surrounding the school, facing several sidewalk gaps.

Below are GVF's recommendations for creating safer routes to school for Valley Forge Middle School students based on the findings of this walking and biking audit:

## **Chester Valley Trail Connection**

By creating a safe last-mile connection between Chester Valley Trail and Valley Forge Middle School, more students would have a safer way to bike or walk to school.

## **Increase Sidewalk Connections**

By installing more sidewalks and fixing sidewalk gaps on roads surrounding the school, students would have safer routes to school.

## **Install Bike Lanes**

Keep students safe by installing protected bike lanes on high traffic roads such as Valley Forge Road. Add marked bike lanes on lower traffic roads.

## **Biking and Walking Pools**

A biking or walking pool is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. Valley Forge Middle School should consider forming bike and walking pools to create safety in numbers with adult supervision.



Examples for protected and marked bike lanes

# Township Priorities



Tredyffrin Township takes an active role in improving connectivity and building a multimodal transportation system within the community. Below are ways the township is working towards the recommendations identified.

## Green Routes Pedestrian Network

In June 2021, Tredyffrin Township adopted a new [comprehensive plan](#). One of the goals listed in the plan is 'Connectivity' stating "support extensions of pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure for increased resident access to parks, open spaces, trails, shopping, transit stations, and other opportunities."

Below are examples of recommendations listed under the [connectivity section](#):

- Fully implement the Green Routes Pedestrian Network, in addition to other pedestrian connections between parks, existing neighborhoods, and other community assets.
- Undertake a "Complete Streets Study" for major transportation corridors to determine what safety and pedestrian enhancements are appropriate

## Gateway Multimodal Transportation Study

The [Gateway Multimodal Transportation Study](#) was funded by the Chester County Planning Commission's Vision Partnership Program (VPP), Regency Centers (owners of Gateway Shopping Center), and Tredyffrin Township.

The primary focus of the study was to evaluate alternatives for closing crucial gaps in the existing sidewalk network and to create a safe pedestrian environment in and around the various intersections, including:

- N. Valley Forge Road and Walker Road, near the entrance to Valley Forge Middle School
- N. Valley Forge Road and Anthony Wayne Drive, near the western entrance to Gateway
- E. Swedesford and W. Valley Roads, near the eastern entrance to Gateway, SEPTA Bus Stop, and the Chester Valley Trail (CVT).

There is currently no further funding allocated for the construction of the recommendations listed in the study. For more information visit: [tredyffrin.org](https://www.tredyffrin.org)

Tredyffrin Township and Chester County Planning Commission are partners of GVF. We look forward to working together, advocating for infrastructure funding to help close connections, and bringing safe biking and walking options to Valley Forge Middle School.

# Resources

Below are resources to assist students with biking and walking to school:

## RUTI

Ruti is a text-message-based, trip planning tool that finds the bike route with the least amount of car traffic or traffic stress.

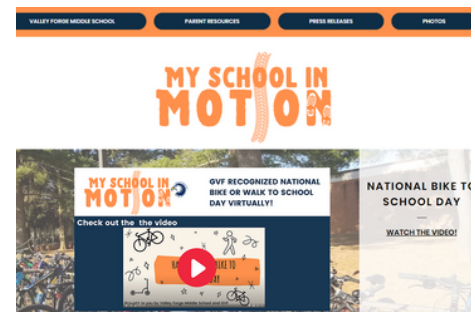
[rutiapp.bike](http://rutiapp.bike)



## SCHOOL IN MOTION WEBSITE

GVF developed the website [schoolinmotion.com](http://schoolinmotion.com) to provide resources and information about the My School in Motion program.

[schoolinmotion.com](http://schoolinmotion.com)



## WALKING/BIKING POOL GUIDE

This guide outlines the benefits of starting a walking or biking pool and points to consider before launching it.

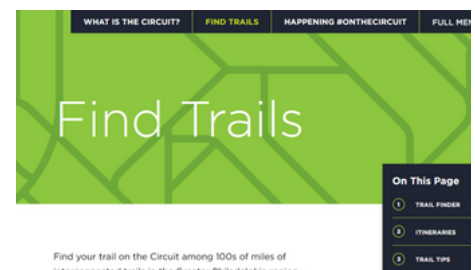
[schoolinmotion.com/parents-resources](http://schoolinmotion.com/parents-resources)



## CIRCUIT TRAILS

The Circuit trails connect our local communities. Visit the website to help plan your trip.

[circuittrails.org](http://circuittrails.org)



## WEARETDM

Information on alternatives to driving alone & for the latest TDM news.

[wearetdm.com](http://wearetdm.com)







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[SCHOOLINMOTION.COM](http://SCHOOLINMOTION.COM)



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