

Celebrating EZ Ride's 2026 Champions for Change



EZ Ride's Annual Awards Luncheon, Champions for Change, brought together schools, municipalities, and community partners on September 24, 2026, to celebrate their work to make transportation safer, cleaner, and more efficient.

This year, EZ Ride recognized 295 Safe Routes to School (SRTS) award recipients including 220 schools and 75 municipalities for activities ranging from safety presentations and community audits to bicycle skills classes and walk- and bike-to-school events. These honorees were among 417 schools and municipalities recognized statewide in 2026.

Throughout the year, these partners worked with EZ Ride to host more than 1,000 safety events, reaching over 76,000 participants across Bergen, Essex, Monmouth, Passaic, and Union counties.

View the [full list of 2026 SRTS Recognition Program awardees](#).

EZ Ride also presented Electric Vehicle Adoption Leadership (EVAL) awards to 11 worksites for their commitment to sustainable transportation. Supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, EVAL is a certification program that recognizes workplace EV charging.

Presenters Stefanie Scharf of Uber Health, Dr. Erick Alfonso of the Belleville Board of Education, and Deputy Mayor Denise Belcher and Lt. Charles Antinori of the Township of Teaneck shared practical insights and examples to inspire others to improve transportation in their communities.

Thank you to our attendees, presenters, and honorees for your continued partnership. We also thank our sponsors - QRyde, Hackensack Meridian Health, NationalHR, HUB International, and Rohrer Bus for making the celebration possible.

Visit our [event website](#) to view and download photos and explore program materials. Congratulations to all our honorees!



Krishna Murthy
President & CEO | EZ Ride

Connecting Belleville: A Shuttle Plan To Improve Transit Access



Belleville Township's Silver Lake station on the Newark Light Rail provides frequent service to Newark Penn Station, a major regional transportation hub with connections to numerous train and bus services.

The Township is working with EZ Ride to plan a Silver Lake shuttle linking residential neighborhoods, local businesses, and park-and-ride locations to the station. High-density residential developments along Washington Avenue and Belleville Avenue are being considered as key stops. The service will be available for a nominal fee to all residents and at a reduced rate for seniors.

The proposed service would operate during peak morning and evening commuting hours, reducing the need for commuters to drive to the station. The Township is exploring public and private partnerships to help fund the service.

"We appreciate EZ Ride's expertise and support in helping us move this project forward, from developing the shuttle plan to preparing our funding application. Together, we are working to improve transit access for residents and support local businesses. We look forward to securing funding and bringing this service to our community," said Brian Banda, Belleville Township Manager.

Interested in starting a shuttle service in your community? EZ Ride can help with service planning, partnerships, and funding opportunities. Contact Kinga Skora at 201-939-4242, ext. 131, or kskora@ezride.org.



Avnish Gupta
COO & General Counsel | EZ Ride

Montclair's Transportation Program for Older Adults: A Success Story



In 2014, Montclair in partnership with private foundations launched an “Aging in Place” program with the goal of transforming Montclair from a good place to live into a great place to grow older. One of their major accomplishments was the launch of a shuttle service in February 2017 to provide rides for seniors and people with disabilities.

The shuttle program was popular and annual ridership increased over the years from 4,300 in 2017-2018 to 7,895 in 2018-2019 before dropping down to 6,351 in 2019-2020 due to COVID-19. Unfortunately, growing concerns about social distancing brought the shuttle program to a grinding halt.

The township decided to replace the shuttle with rides provided by Uber and Lyft. In December 2021, the [***EZ Ryde4Life program***](#) that provides rides using Uber and Lyft was launched as a stop-gap program.

Rider participation in the new program has grown exponentially from 300 riders in 2020 to more than 1,200 riders in June 2026. What began as an emergency response to COVID has evolved into a core transportation program in Montclair providing more than 44,000 trips annually compared to the peak ridership of 19,300 trips provided by the shuttle program and at a slightly lower cost per ride.

The growth in the popularity of the program highlighted a number of advantages that residents appreciated:

- Reservations not needed: Shuttles required 24-hour advance notification to plan the pick-ups and the route. Uber and Lyft eliminated the need to plan for doing so.
- Personal rides: Unlike the shuttle service that was designed to transport multiple riders requiring riders to share the service resulting in additional travel time and restricted routes, Uber & Lyft provided personal rides and shorter travel times.
- Lower Cost: The cost per passenger trip was marginally lower and dropped from \$17.61 to less than \$16.35.

Township-approved participants receive 20 free rides per month within Montclair. Service operates Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturdays, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Riders simply call EZ Ride when they need transportation. Trips to medical appointments outside Montclair require Township approval and must be within Essex County or the City of Clifton.

“Our partnership with Essex County and EZ Ride has made a meaningful difference in our residents’ lives. Residents who once struggled to leave home now have a reliable way to reach medical appointments, participate in community activities, and stay connected. This service gives them greater independence and improves their quality of life. The

continued growth in participation and ridership demonstrates the value of this investment in our community.” – said Judy Hurley, Director of Senior Services in Montclair.

Montclair’s experience demonstrates the benefits of leveraging all available transportation services including Lyft and Uber and making them an important component of the transportation network in the community. Interested in bringing EZ Ryde4Life to your community? Contact Kinga Skora at (201) 939-4242, extension 131 or email kskora@ezride.org to learn more.



Kinga Skora
Deputy Director, Marketing & Sales | EZ Ride

Eatontown: Seven Consecutive Years of Gold Recognition



The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program recognizes schools and municipalities that demonstrate a commitment to bicycle and pedestrian safety through education, encouragement, community engagement, and efforts to create safer streets. This year 295 of the 421 schools and municipalities recognized statewide were nominated by EZ Ride. Congratulations to all the awardees!

One municipality that stands out is the Borough of Eatontown, which has been recognized at the Gold level for seven consecutive years beginning in 2020 reflecting the Borough’s sustained commitment to improving bicycle and pedestrian safety. Eatontown has maintained a consistent focus on safer, more connected streets through its Complete & Green Streets Committee and ordinance, Greenway Plan, youth bike rodeos, and other community safety initiatives.

The Borough also encouraged its public schools to participate in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, and all four schools achieved Gold recognition by conducting safety presentations, encouraging Crossing Guard appreciation events, and Walk and Roll to School Days. The Board of Education adopted a [*districtwide SRTS policy*](#) in 2022 and ensured every school had bicycle racks.

Eatontown translated safety planning into physical street improvements across the borough:

- **Planning & Technical Assistance:** Eatontown secured technical assistance through both the NJDOT Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Assistance Program and the NJTPA Complete Streets Technical Assistance (CSTA) Program to develop its comprehensive bicycle, pedestrian, and Greenway plans.

- **Connecting Local Landmarks:** The resulting plans establish dedicated bicycle and pedestrian pathways linking Wolcott Park, Wampum Lake Memorial Park, and the F. Bliss Price Arboretum and Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Greenway Construction:** Starting in 2020, the Borough secured \$825,000 from the NJDOT Local Aid Infrastructure Fund to build its Greenway and Parks project in three phases.
- **Bike Lane Expansion:** In 2025, Eatontown secured an additional \$203,700 also from the NJDOT Local Aid Infrastructure Fund to install bicycle lanes along Industrial Way West, further expanding safe routes and providing a way for employees to ride to work.

“Eatontown is pleased to be recognized by EZ Ride for our continued commitment to creating safer streets and promoting walking and bicycling throughout our community,” said Mayor Anthony Talerico, Borough of Eatontown. “Maintaining Gold recognition year after year reflects the work of our residents, schools, municipal leaders, and community partners who continue to make bicycle and pedestrian safety a priority. We appreciate EZ Ride’s partnership and the Safe Routes to School program, which helps communities like Eatontown build on our efforts and encourage healthier, safer ways for residents of all ages to get around.”

Gold recognition helps strengthen municipal applications for NJDOT road infrastructure grants, [Sustainable Jersey certification, and mini-grants](#). Interested in making your community's streets safer for walking and biking? Call EZ Ride at (201) 939-4242, Option 3, or email bikeped@ezride.org.



Michael Johnson
Manager, Bike & Pedestrian Program | EZ Ride

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About EZ Ride



At EZ Ride we believe that a safe, affordable & reliable transportation system is vital to maintaining our quality of life and promoting the economic growth of the region. Transportation is a daily concern for commuters who cannot afford to drive to work, for older adults who do not drive a car, and for businesses whose employees and customers may not have easy access to public transportation.

For over 40 years, we have helped people overcome transportation barriers by partnering with businesses and governments to implement transportation programs and services like carpools, vanpools, shuttles, biking & walking programs and even transportation with companies like Lyft and Uber.

Whatever your mobility needs, EZ Ride is here to help
Download Our Capabilities

(201) 939-4242 | info@ezride.org | www.ezride.org



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