

The Transporter



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Transportation Information for Business Executives & Elected Officials in Northern New Jersey & Monmouth County



EZ Ride Awarded Two Mini Grants for NJ Healthy Corner Store Initiative in Plainfield & Asbury Park

The NJ Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI), which is a partnership between the Food Trust, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the NJ Partnership for Healthy Kids, has awarded EZ Ride two mini grants of \$5,000 each to support our efforts to improve access to healthy food in Plainfield and Asbury Park. In some areas, the local bodega is the primary source for purchasing food for residents and snacks for kids. Our goal is to work with such store owners to emphasize the important role they play in the health of local residents, especially school children.

In the City of Plainfield, we are collaborating with the Plainfield Health Department and New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (NJ SNAP-ED) to work with local corner stores to promote the sale of healthy food options. We plan to organize cooking demonstrations and healthy food tastings for students and local residents, provide advertising support for our partner stores, and coupons for the community to buy and try healthier foods. The initiative in the City of Asbury Park will be supported by the City, NJ SNAP-ED, and the members of the Alliance for a Healthier Asbury Park.

For more information, please contact:

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Mr. Menken the first rider to participate in our Ryde4Life program with Lyft driver Orville on the way to the Eatontown Senior Center.



EZ Ride Forges a Partnership with Lyft & Uber to Serve Older Adults

A perennial shortage of volunteer drivers and escalating demand for rides for seniors has led EZ Ride to partner with Lyft and Uber to launch a new program – Ryde4Life. The program is an attempt to address both, the “transportation gap” and the “digital divide,” which are the two pressing concerns as more private, tech-driven transportation services complement or even replace existing public ones. In an effort to serve more needy residents, the new program offers rides throughout New Jersey for individuals aged 50+.

The riders do not need a smartphone to access the service. Instead, they will contact an EZ Ride coordinator using a landline or cell phone to help them access a ride provided by Transportation Network Companies (TNC) like Lyft or Uber. The system will have the ability to add other transportation providers in the future. Rides can be requested in real time or scheduled in advance.

In addition to the fare charged by Lyft or Uber, members will pay a nominal annual fee of \$15 and an administrative fee of \$1 per ride. For qualified riders, EZ Ride will waive the \$1 administrative fee and will also offer a subsidy of \$1 per ride up to a maximum of eight rides per month. There is no limit on the number of rides for people utilizing the services to travel to dialysis appointments. EZ Ride anticipates that 80 to 90 percent of our current 1,000 riders will be eligible for the subsidy. A credit card is required to participate in the program.

In the near future, riders will have access to the new program that may well operate all seven days of the week.

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Communities on the Move...



Establishing a Partnership for a Safer Route to School in Westwood

EZ Ride partnered with the Borough of Westwood and the Westwood School District to improve walking and biking safety in the community.

The Mayor, Superintendent of Schools and borough personnel contacted EZ Ride's Safe Routes to School team in October to conduct a walkability assessment. Borough officials also asked EZ Ride to identify funding options to complete a pedestrian path and to make infrastructure improvements near Berkeley Elementary School. Local officials raised concerns about the number of incidents at Berkeley and Harrington Avenues, where the school is located.

"The school community and I have felt it should be a priority to improve safety for Berkeley Elementary School students and local residents for quite some time. We are very glad to collaborate with EZ Ride's Safe Routes to School team to hold school safety assemblies, promote walk and bike to school days, and some of our students even made a creative video about the importance of safety and walking to be healthy," noted superintendent Ray Gonzalez, Westwood Regional School District. "We are working with the Mayor and borough to apply for SRTS infrastructure grant next year with the hope we will receive funds to install a pedestrian traffic signal at the intersection near the school and to build a pathway through the local park for students to safely commute to and from school."

A team composed of the School Principal, Mayor, City Administrator, Traffic Police Officer, Department of Public Works Chief, Borough Grant Writer, the SRTS

Coordinator and a Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) representative participated in the walkability assessment around Berkeley Elementary School. EZ Ride drafted a School Travel Plan which included recommendations for the District and Borough to promote safety. The proposed solutions include installing a high visibility crosswalk to help children cross into the Westvale Park which is a safe route to the other side of town, a pedestrian traffic signal to help children and parents cross a busy intersection, and a sidewalk to connect the local playground to the school. The information will be used to apply for an SRTS infrastructure grant. The SRTS team also delivered pedestrian safety presentations to more than 400 elementary school students.

"The Borough of Westwood has been very active in promoting the walk-ability of our community, especially in our downtown business district. We have engaged in several major infrastructure improvements that enhance pedestrian safety and also promote and encourage pedestrian activity. The "Safe Routes to School" initiative fits perfectly with Westwood's goals and continued move to making our streets and walkways safe and accessible to points throughout our community; especially our schools and shopping district," said Mayor John Birkner, Jr. "We are very fortunate to have our school administration as a special and committed partner in our efforts."

For more information, please contact:

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Building a Healthier Community and Shaping Long Branch

In the first year of our NJ Healthy Community Network (NJHCN) grant, EZ Ride has been working with the City of Long Branch, the Office of Community and Economic Development, the Business Owners & Merchants Association, the School District, Habitat for Humanity, the Long Branch Concordance, Monmouth Medical Center, and other stakeholders to launch two new initiatives to build a culture of health in Long Branch. In addition to our Safe Routes to School (SRTS) bike and pedestrian programs, we helped support the community garden by providing a greenhouse and garden scale and we also launched our Corner Store Initiative to improve access to healthy food options.

Community Garden Greenhouse

During the summer, EZ Ride received approval to fund a small greenhouse for the community garden program. The greenhouse could be used by the City to grow seedlings to provide to community gardeners for their individual beds as well as the two large community beds.

The garden area includes 49 small garden plots for residents and two large community plots. The Long Branch Concordance Family Success Center works with families who apply and are assigned free garden plots. The center provided parent and child programs on nutrition, hosted a garden party and a health screening event during the summer at the garden. In return, the participating families were required to help others, assist the City gardener, and to maintain and return tools supplied by the City. The results were impressive. In just three short months, from August to October, over 4,000 pounds of fresh produce were harvested from the community gardens.

Corner Store Initiative to Access Healthy Food

We are pleased to report that two corner stores - Sungate Mini Market and Broadway Food Market - have agreed to work with us so far in our Long Branch Healthy Corner Store initiative, which is designed to promote and provide access to healthier food options for the community.

Stores were selected based on their proximity to local schools and multi-family housing as our goal is to encourage children and youth to develop healthier eating habits. EZ Ride plans to help promote these stores by providing coupons for healthy items, hosting food tasting events at these stores, free health screening at the stores, and local advertising.

“The participating stores receive financial incentives and attractive containers to display fresh produce as well as training in selecting and displaying healthy food items,” noted Assistant Director of Economic Development, Robert Goodman. “EZ Ride’s training and tips help store owners to showcase healthy food and snacks and create a better merchandising environment for their customers.”

EZ Ride was also involved in other safety and wellness efforts in the City such as National Night Out, Street Smart NJ, and the redesigning of the EZ Ride shuttle schedule to include helpful information about stops near the Family Health Center, the grocery store and pharmacy and a Spanish language schedule. We look forward to a productive second year of the grant.

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



JOSEPH TOMASKO

Joe has been an EZ Ride volunteer for four years and dedicates one full day a week to provide rides for our seniors. Joe worked for the NJ Commission for the Blind in Newark for 37 years and is a life-long resident of North Arlington.

After he retired, he stayed connected with his personal mission to help people in need. He decided to volunteer with EZ Ride the day he met up with his friend Bob Martinelli, also an EZ Ride volunteer, who told him about the opportunity to help seniors. What he really likes about volunteering at EZ Ride is being on the road and listening to interesting stories that seniors share with him.

In addition to EZ Ride, Joe also volunteers for Queen of Peace Church in North Arlington and a soup kitchen in Newark. Earlier, he also volunteered for the North Arlington EMS. “I am a volunteer at heart,” says Joe.

We would like to thank Joe for his dedication and years of support to help our seniors.

Love to Drive? Contact:

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Comments? Suggestions?

Feel free to forward
your thoughts on
improving the

The Transporter

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Service Updates



Street Smart NJ Campaigns Promote Pedestrian and Driver Safety

Distracted driving and walking are a growing problem in our country and contributed to 4,200 pedestrian fatalities and 70,000 injuries in 2010. Fifty three percent of adult cell phone users admit to a distracted walking encounter. The situation is likely to get worse as more adults and children start using smartphones. Closer to home in New Jersey, the lack of driver attention was the primary cause for more than half of the three million crashes that resulted in 1,600 fatalities for the time period from 2004 to 2013.

In response, the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) launched "Street Smart NJ," a public education, awareness and behavioral change pedestrian safety campaign. The campaign uses outdoor, transit and online advertising, along with grassroots public awareness efforts and law enforcement to promote and enforce pedestrian safety. The campaign supports the state's Toward Zero Deaths vision.

In 2016, EZ Ride distributed over 17,500 Street Smart NJ safety tip cards to schools and communities in Bergen, Essex, Monmouth, Passaic and Union Counties.

We assisted with mini-campaigns in Long Branch, Asbury Park, Manasquan and Little Silver. Schools, police, hospitals, and Chambers of Commerce participated in these campaigns to increase awareness about pedestrian and driver safety. In 2017, EZ Ride will assist in bringing full Street Smart campaigns to Asbury Park, Highlands, Cranford, Hackensack, Elizabeth, and Paterson. To conduct a full Street Smart NJ campaign, EZ Ride staff observe a target intersection before and after the campaign to note the instances of unsafe driver and pedestrian behavior. A report summarizes the efforts and results of the education and enforcement campaign.

Municipalities can apply for a Highway Traffic Safety enforcement grant to pay for staff time spent in enforcing safe walking. The link to apply and get information is <http://www.nj.gov/oag/hts/grants/index.html> and the deadline to apply is April 30. If you are interested in conducting a Street Smart NJ safety campaign in your community, please contact:

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Freebies gallery...

Pedestrian & Driver Safety Tip Cards & Table Tents

Street Smart NJ is a public education campaign launched by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) to raise awareness about pedestrian and motorist laws and reduce crashes and fatalities. In partnership with the NJTPA, EZ Ride offers free informative table tents and safety tip cards.

Key safety messages are:

- Wait for the Walk
- Use Crosswalks
- Heads Up, Phones Down
- Obey Speed Limits
- Stop for Pedestrians in a Crosswalk

FREE safety table tents and tip cards please contact:

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