



NJDOT NEWS



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NJDOT congratulates the 2024 award winners of the New Jersey Safe Routes to School program Initiative encourages walking and biking as healthy alternative

(Trenton) – New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Commissioner Fran O’Connor, the New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center, and New Jersey’s eight Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) are pleased to announce the 2024 recipients of the NJ Safe Routes to School Recognition Program. This year, 354 school and municipal winners are being recognized for their commitment and support of the [Safe Routes to School program \(SRTS\)](#) by enabling and encouraging walking and bicycling in their communities. Visit the NJ Safe Routes Resource Center website for a [full list of all current winners](#).

SRTS is a nationwide initiative supported by NJDOT and DOTs across the country that empowers schools and communities through projects, programs, and events to create safer environments for people to walk, bike, or travel by other wheeled devices.

There are four levels of the program, and each level signifies a school or municipality’s progress toward implementing and sustaining SRTS programs. Each year, schools and municipalities are nominated for recognition in this tiered program based upon their SRTS accomplishments. Recognition is valid for three years. Schools and municipalities that have earned NJ SRTS Recognition and are also enrolled in the Sustainable Jersey certification program can earn points for both programs. [Click here for more information](#).

This year, Belleville was awarded seven Gold-Level SRTS Recognition Awards for their efforts to improve pedestrian and bike access from local roads to Belleville Schools 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10. In addition, the Belleville Middle School is being recognized, again, for their accomplishment in earning a 2023 Gold-Level SRTS Recognition Award.

Since 2022, Belleville has received three grants to implement and support the NJ SRTS Program in their town. The first for \$11,500, the second for \$10,000, and the third for \$962,000. Federal funds were authorized for the third grant on July 10, 2024, which allows work to begin on ADA-compliant curb ramps and sidewalks, curb extensions, high visibility crosswalks, and enhanced school zone signage around every Belleville elementary school, the Belleville Middle School, and the Belleville High School.

Communities that participate in the SRTS programs often benefit from less traffic congestion, better air quality, fewer traffic conflicts near schools, and most importantly, safer, healthier and more active children, according to the New Jersey Safe Routes Resource Center.

"The death of Avyaan Gupta in Parsippany earlier this month is a tragedy, and during my time as Commissioner, I am committed to working with local officials to make the improvements needed to ensure that New Jersey's roads are safe for our children," Commissioner Fran O'Connor said. "The New Jersey Safe Routes to School Program is just one way NJDOT can support communities in their efforts to provide safe access for children walking and biking to school, with \$21.1 million available in federal grants."

"Our team has been working on the issue of pedestrian safety and walkability, and our determination has paid off! The Township is excited to be certified in the NJDOT SRTS Program by meeting all the requirements for the highest ranking "GOLD" certification and advancing our NJDOT SRTS grant application, awarding Belleville \$962,000," Belleville Mayor Michael Melham said. "Thank you, NJDOT Safe Routes to School Program, for your generous grant to repair sidewalks, restripe crosswalks, upgrade ADA compliant curbing, add school zone and safety signage, and build out areas of raised crosswalks, bump outs and curb extensions around our schools and neighborhoods – all for a safer, walkable community!"

"For over a decade, EZ Ride has been administering the Safe Routes to School Program in Bergen, Essex, Monmouth, Passaic, and Union counties, thanks to NJDOT's support," said EZ Ride President and CEO Krishna Murthy. "In the past year alone, we've collaborated with more than 250 organizations, including 179 schools and 73 municipalities. We've organized more than 650 events, ranging from safety presentations and bike classes to poster contests and safety audits, reaching 46,000 students. Notably, 75 percent of our awardees come from underserved communities. At EZ Ride, pedestrian and cyclist safety is a top priority, and we commend Belleville Township and the School District for their dedication to this cause."

To learn more about NJDOT's Safe Routes to School program, find your TMA SRTS Coordinator, and discover how your school or municipality can make your community more walkable and bikeable, please visit www.saferoutesnj.org.

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