

South Orange & Maplewood (SOMA) and Montclair: Celebrate National Bike Month



May is National Bike Month, and we are pleased to highlight two outstanding community initiatives: the Montclair Bike Bus and the SOMA Bike Bus. These programs, led by dedicated parents and supported by their school districts and local municipalities, occasionally receive police escorts to ensure student safety.

What is a Bike Bus

A bike bus or a bike train is a parent or adult-led group ride that follows a scheduled route to school. It offers a fun, healthy, and safe alternative to the traditional car drop-off line, with benefits that extend well beyond the ride.

Why Bike Buses Matter:

- Encourage a healthy, active lifestyle for students and families
- Reduce traffic congestion around schools
- Improve local air quality
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Recognition

Launched in 2022 by a small group of parents, the Montclair Bike Bus set out to make biking to school safer and more accessible. Today, the program includes students from 10 of Montclair's 11 schools, with up to 300 children biking to school on Fridays. Parent volunteers lead each ride, with participation ranging from 5 to 30 students per school.

Inspired by Montclair's success, parents in South Orange and Maplewood launched the SOMA Bike Bus in 2024. This program currently involves 50 student riders from five schools, and interest is growing throughout the district.

These programs are more than just a way to get to school, they're a catalyst for creating a more sustainable and bike-friendly transportation culture. SOMA is working with local officials to advocate for bike lanes and street redesigns to reduce speeding. The community has also launched the SOMA Bike Drive to collect and distribute bicycles, making it possible for more students to participate. Colorful lawn signs promote the SOMA Bike Bus, with proceeds funding reflective safety vests for the volunteer "drivers" and other costs.

"Riding bikes together to school is so much fun, and it's safer for our kids to ride in a group with other students and parents. It's a great way to bring the community together".
Martin Ceperley, volunteer bike bus driver.

Bike buses help schools earn points towards the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Recognition Program and access SRTS infrastructure improvement grants. For example, in 2022, the Township of Maplewood received a \$488,000 SRTS grant to improve pedestrian signals near schools—a direct result of the district's commitment to biking and walking safety.

EZ Ride can provide bike bus training materials and refurbished bikes for students. For more information, please email bikeped@ezride.org or call (201) 939-4242, option 3.



Michael Johnson
Manager, Bike & Pedestrian Program | EZ Ride

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.

EZ Ride is a non-profit organization and in 2013, we were recognized for excellence in serving the needs of the community and named the *Urban Community Transportation System of the Year* by the Community Transportation Association of America.

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