



# The Walk towards Health Starts with a Few Steps... So Let's Walk Together

Posted on March 1, 2016

by Christopher Gonda

[EZ Ride](#)

Plainfield – In NJ, fifty degrees Fahrenheit on any day in February in the usually freezing cold Northeast is far from ordinary. As strange as it is, the weather beckons us to set foot outdoors and *do something*. Whether it is a visit to the store or a short stroll to chat with a friend in the neighborhood, Plainfield residents like to take to their sidewalks, parks and public spaces. From the perspective of a supporter of active transportation, it's refreshing to witness communities come alive when its members step outside. It's not always our first thought while stepping out the door, but when we take to our feet and spend time outdoors, our steps can lead them to better health and wellness.

Similarly, Dr. Vivek Murthy, US Surgeon General opens his [Call to Action](#) by explaining, "There are many reasons to take a walk. We may walk to school, to work, or even to our places of worship. We may walk to help us think better and relieve stress. Often, we may take a stroll in order to spend quality time with the people and the pets we love most. And, throughout history, we've walked and marched in order to make our voices heard and our presence felt." Furthermore, his report "[Step It Up!](#)" brings attention to walking and supports [walkable communities](#).

EZ Ride's Safe Routes to School Team has partnered with Plainfield Public Schools, the City of Plainfield, Rutgers: Voorhees Transportation Center, the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy, to conduct a study to evaluate the city's infrastructure in support of walking and biking to school as one part of our 2016 Healthy Communities Network Grant. 

In addition to improving Plainfield children's on-foot access to school, EZ Ride has received funding from the New Jersey Healthy Communities Network to work with Plainfield Public Schools to participate in the district's health and wellness advisory council. This is a coalition of physical education instructors, school nurses and involved parents who will identify and expand their current 

health and wellness practices in the district. EZ Ride will also outreach to corner grocery stores in Plainfield and recruit store owners to support children with healthier snacks and fresh produce.

By bringing the city, school district, and local corner store owners to the table, a broad health initiative comes together which emphasizes physical activity and nutrition. EZ Ride and Safe Routes to School aim to support Plainfield so that its children and their families will have more convenient access to healthier options.

EZ Ride's Safe Routes to School program is part of a national initiative to encourage more school children to be physically active by walking and biking to school. The program considers the local environment and infrastructure and offers strategies and activities which help communities to overcome the barriers inhibiting walkability.

For more information on EZ Ride's Safe Routes to School activities, please contact Christopher Gonda at [cgonda@ezride.org](mailto:cgonda@ezride.org) or Lisa Lee at [lee@ezride.org](mailto:lee@ezride.org).