

Promoting and Expanding Microtransit



Employers, healthcare institutions, and nonprofit organizations have identified that a significant barrier to workforce development, accessing healthcare and essential services, and economic development is transportation. Furthermore, surveys of community members have also reported that lack of transportation has caused significant hardships including inability to maintain jobs, difficulty accessing medical care — particularly specialty care, and challenges shopping for their everyday needs. Even in areas with some traditional public transportation, lack of access to consistent and affordable transportation is negatively impacting our communities!

NJ ranks 48th in car ownership, and 30-40% of our residents lack consistent access to a vehicle. Statewide studies have identified transportation deserts throughout the state, and, even in communities that have public transportation, an inability for people to traverse within cities or towns — this is known as the challenge with the

last mile. Microtransit bridges the mobility gap by offering flexibility on routes and timing, meeting the individual or family where they are, getting them to their final destination, or connecting them with another mode of transportation that will.

Microtransit is a ‘multi-modal’ connector that not only connects people to where they need to go, but gets people to established bus lines, serving as a feeder for traditional public transit systems. Microtransit, or tech-enabled on-demand transportation, promotes shared rides and overlapping routes, reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions. Integrating energy efficient Microtransit within our state’s transportation network brings increased economic opportunity, operational efficiency, and more access to all New Jersey residents.

To quote Cheryl Kastrenakes, Executive Director of the Greater Mercer TMA, “Public transit flourishes with microtransit surrounding it—it enhances and increases its accessibility... it’s the first and last-mile solution.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Bolster state policy and funding to expand current and facilitate the adoption of new Microtransit projects

- Strengthen Mobility and Transportation Innovation Programs (MATIP) to allow for more communities to pilot and launch Microtransit programs with ramp to access existing, sustainable funding like the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF)
- Pass legislation (currently A4672/S3526) to facilitate additional Microtransit by amending eligibility and criteria for projects and fully fund the proposed appropriation of \$20 million to allow NJ regions to access critical start up and sustaining funding to implement innovative strategies
- Encourage and incentivize emission-free projects to further increase the climate and health benefits of Microtransit programs for communities
- Support electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) and other infrastructure installation throughout the state, seeding pathways for electric Microtransit programs

Partner with municipalities to further maximize the impact of Microtransit

- Promote local needs assessment – community by community – in order to truly develop Microtransit programs that address the communities' needs and link to existing transportation systems (use GOTrenton! case study Appendix A as a starting point)
- Encourage cities and towns to financially invest in supplementing Microtransit initiatives to increase access to residents and other support

Integrate Microtransit services into comprehensive transit plans for communities

- Encourage and incentivize collaboration with NJ Transit (NJT), county based transportation, and Microtransit models to promote integration within routes
- Expand NJT/State transportation coverage to transit deserts by utilizing cost-effective on-demand shuttles provided by Microtransit projects
- Integrate Microtransit into all NJ County's Combined Human Services Transportation plans

