

**Final Report
New Jersey Task Force on
Transportation, Mobility, and Support
Service Needs of Adults with Autism**

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New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education

Vacant

Organizational dedicated to the Advancement of ASD Research, Understanding, and Treatment

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Organizational that Advocates on behalf of Families affected by ASD

The members of Task Force formally thank **Brian Tobin**, Metuchen, NJ of Rutgers University for providing essential support.

Introduction

As per state PL2017 Chapter 53, the State of New Jersey established a task force to study and make recommendations concerning the mobility and support services needs of New Jersey adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Thus, the New Jersey Task Force on Transportation, Mobility, and Support Service Needs of Adults with Autism was established to study and prioritize issues that address the needs and barriers of New Jersey residents on the autism spectrum.

The Task Force was developed from a September 2015 research report conducted by Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey and Autism Family Services of New Jersey titled [*Detour to the Right Place: A Study with Recommendations for Addressing the Transportation Needs and Barriers of Adults on the Autism Spectrum in New Jersey*](#). That research and report were funded by a 2013 grant from the NJ Department of Health and the NJ Governor's Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism. The grant was to research the transportation needs of people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and develop policies, procedures, and accommodations to improve the quality of life of those on the autism spectrum.

The goal of the Task Force is to identify State policies and programs that can be improved to help remove or lessen barriers and enhance access to transportation and secondary support services.

Letter from the Chair

My fellow New Jerseyans:

The New Jersey Task Force on Transportation, Mobility, and Support Service Needs of Adults with Autism is proud to release this final report containing our recommendations addressing the needs of adults with autism, their families, and service providers throughout New Jersey.

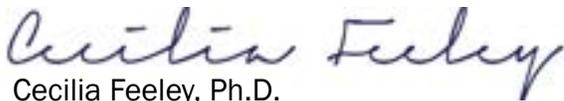
We learned a great deal about the challenges that impact transportation, mobility, secondary support services. After careful analysis and consideration, we were able to identify 14 transportation and mobility-focused recommendations and 8 secondary support-focused recommendations.

We believe that by adopting these recommendations we can improve the quality of life for our fellow New Jersey residents on the autism spectrum.

I, along with my fellow Task Force members and their respective designees, would like to express our gratitude to those who attended our public hearings, our listening session, and submitted testimony through our web portal, as well as all of the community members who contributed to these efforts.

It was an immense honor to be appointed by Senator Stephen Sweeney to serve as Chair of the Task Force. It is a deeply personal issue to me as a mother of a young adult with classic autism as well as a professional who has been working at Rutgers CAIT as the Transportation Autism Project Manager since 2010.

Sincerely



Cecilia Feeley, Ph.D.
Chair

Task Force Background

The Task Force was mandated to review current State policies as they relate to transportation services provided to adults on the autism spectrum who need it to access services including educational, employment, healthcare, and recreation, as well as other daily living activities. The mission included reviewing and evaluating research and literature, including any national best practices, professional standards, or guidelines regarding alleviating transportation barriers and obstacles for adults with autism spectrum disorder and increasing access and availability of autism spectrum disorder related education and employment support services. Additionally, the Task Force members consulted with and evaluated testimony from groups, organizations, entities, and other institutions that care for adults on the autism spectrum or provide services to their families. After gathering relevant and up-to-date information the members developed a series of recommendations to alleviate current and emerging barriers. These recommendations were ranked as per subsection and evaluated on implementation factors, including, but not limited to, the importance to the autism community, cost of implementation, and feasibility of implementation.

Rutgers University Study

The 2015 study, titled *Detour to the Right Place: A Study with Recommendations for Addressing the Transportation Needs and Barriers of Adults on the Autism Spectrum in New Jersey* by Rutgers University, was designed to gain insights about the transportation barriers experienced by the New Jersey adult ASD population. While advances have been made in many fields related to quality of life improvements for persons with Autism, efforts have been more limited in the realm of transportation planning and policy. As a result little was known about the travel patterns, needs, and barriers of persons with ASD. Additionally, this research sought to identify the characteristics and traits commonly found in adults with ASD and their impact upon transportation choices, which in turn affect employment opportunities, community involvement, and overall quality of life.

This research study included four broad components: (a) a review of pertinent literature; (b) interviews with 25 key stakeholders; (c) a survey of 703 adults with ASD and/or their family members regarding transportation barriers; and (d) six focus groups – four with adults with ASD, and two with parents/guardians of this population. Many studies focus on transportation for access to employment, but do not provide an in-depth understanding of the way adults on the autism spectrum travel, their need for travel, or the barriers they face when they need to travel. The Rutgers study bridged a gap in existing literature through stakeholder interviews, the state-wide survey, and focus groups.

The stakeholders generally agreed on the following: that not all adults with ASD have or can obtain the skills required to drive; training for vehicle operators who transport adults with ASD should be improved; there are conflicting views on whether adults with ASD should become more independent; safe travel skills and travel instruction should be taught in school and included in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs); and finally, there is a need to increase awareness among the general population about ASD. The interviewees also agreed that persons on the autism spectrum will likely experience more successful community integration with certain improvements in transportation systems and greater understanding among transportation professionals about the needs of persons with ASD.

The survey demonstrated that persons with ASD have many travel-related concerns and barriers that others do not face. Driving is an option for only a very small proportion of adults with ASD. Even among the small proportion who have a driver's license, very few actually drive regularly. Similarly, using public transit is difficult for a significant number. Although many more adults on the autism spectrum can walk than drive or take transit, even walking in their neighborhoods is a challenge, as many reported having difficulty crossing roads, judging distance, and comprehending direction.

Because of their difficulties with driving, taking transit, and walking, the most common practice among adults on the autism spectrum is to take rides from others, especially from parents, other family members, and friends. Indeed, the survey revealed that adults often have to forgo trips because of the unavailability of persons who can give them rides. Meanwhile, their parents and family members also often forgo other activities, including work, in order to provide transportation to the person with ASD. In addition, adults with ASD experience many difficulties that prevent them from participating in activities that others take for granted, including employment. Because of their disability, some adults with ASD may never be able to use fixed-route transit such as buses and trains. For some, ultimately, travel may only be possible when they can secure rides from others, whether it is from Access Link, county paratransit, voluntary drivers, or agencies that cater to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Focus group participants on the autism spectrum and parent or guardian participants shared a number of concerns and challenges related to using various transport modes for persons on the autism spectrum. All emphasized the critical role that transportation plays in the lives of adults in providing linkage to both meaningful opportunities in their community and enabling the fulfillment of daily living needs, including employment, continuing education, healthcare, and socially-focused pursuits. The adults expressed a strong desire for independence, which they felt they could achieve only with appropriate transportation options. Adults on the autism spectrum and parents or guardians expressed the sentiment that finding feasible transport options was especially challenging in the post-school transition period, as transportation options are limited and information on existing transportation options is difficult to find. Travel instruction was deemed necessary to empower people to safely and independently use the public transit service. Parents noted the need for drivers to be well-trained in transporting their family members. Adults on the spectrum desired service frequency in both peak-

and off-peak hours to enhance the ability to pursue social events and outings. Both parents and adults with ASD lamented that travel instruction was not offered in schools, nor was transportation included in their IEPs.

Critical observations from the Rutgers Study are as follows:

- Essential research must continue on the transportation issues encountered by adults on the autism spectrum both in New Jersey and nationwide.
- Availability of accessible public transportation is crucial for persons on the spectrum as well as for all types of disabilities.
- Adults with ASD mostly travel as passengers of cars driven by their parents or other family members.
- The transition from school to adult services, which usually occurs at age 21, is the most difficult time for adults on the autism spectrum and their parents.
- Safe walking skills remain lacking for many adults with ASD. These include crossing the street with 54% reporting difficulties and judging distances to oncoming traffic with 45% reporting difficulties.
- While driving is viewed as independence for adults on the spectrum, only a small proportion obtain a driver's licenses, and an even smaller percentage drive regularly.
- Perhaps the most important aspect for adults with ASD to live a good quality of life with their desired level of independence would be to improve awareness and acceptance among society at large regarding the characteristics and needs of adults with ASD.

Task Force Activities

The Task Force consisted of the following members:

- Commissioner of Education or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- Commissioner of Children and Families or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- Commissioner of Health or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- Commissioner of Human Services or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- Commissioner of Transportation or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- Secretary of Higher Education or a designee, who shall serve ex-officio;
- Researcher affiliated with the Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, who shall be the chairperson and shall be appointed by the Senate President;
- New Jersey adult resident with autism spectrum disorder, who shall be appointed by the Senate President.

The Task Force met throughout 2018 and 2019 including holding 7 in-person meetings rotating between Trenton and New Brunswick. All were formal meetings with agendas designed to meet the goals of the task force.

All Task Force members representing State Agencies made presentations to the Task Force. The authors of the report “Detour to the Right Place” made a presentation of the study findings. Several state agencies were invited to make presentations. These included the following:

- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (one of the State’s MPOs)
- NJ Transit
- NJ Motor Vehicle Commission
- Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families

As per the statute and to understand the issues and make recommendations, the Task Force heard testimony from persons on the autism spectrum, their families, service providers, and other support personnel. This was done through three public hearings and one public listening session that were designed to gather information regarding the barriers and obstacles adults

with autism spectrum disorder face in their use of the State's transportation infrastructure and system and the need for autism spectrum disorder related educational and employment support services.

The Task Force members thought it was most prudent to hold the public hearings after presentations from the state agency representatives, invited speakers, and university researchers. The Task Force held the hearings at different locations around the state and included the following counties: Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, and Middlesex.

The public hearings and listening session were designed to gather input from as many New Jersey residents as possible. Residents were invited to speak on issues regarding the transportation, mobility, and support service needs of adults with autism. Issues discussed included:

- Public Transit Use
- Driving, Vehicle and Knowledge Tests, Permits, and Licenses
- Paratransit and Community Transit Services
- Pedestrian Issues
- Transportation to Employment, Recreation, Shopping, and Services
- Post-Secondary Education and Support Services for Community Based College and Employment Support Programs

A website to receive public testimony was developed to support the public hearing. The website was open to the public for three months. It was designed to be available in the three most common languages in New Jersey: English, Spanish, and Chinese.

The Task Force also developed a dedicated Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/NJ-Task-Force-Transportation-Mobility-Support-Services-Autistic-adults-242844706393708>.

The Task Force members spent over a year of reviewing current practices, barriers, and opportunities for adults with autism spectrum disorder. After analyzing the testimony of the self-advocates and families together with the information provided by state agencies and scholars, the members identified 22 recommendations under 2 categories – 14 Transportation and Mobility Focused Recommendations and 8 Support Services and Secondary/Post-secondary Focused Recommendations. The recommendations are listed in order of importance to the autism community, cost of implementation, and feasibility of implementation within their respective category.

Public Listening Session

On Friday, October 19, 2018, the NJ Task Force on Transportation, Mobility, and Support Services of Adults with autism hosted a listening session to gather input regarding the current transportation needs for adults with autism. The session was conducted during the lunch at the Autism NJ Conference held in Atlantic City. Autism NJ provided the Task Force with a meeting room to hear from conference attendees. Additionally, Autism NJ included the listening session in the event program. The session was billed as “Transportation Public Hearing: Gathering Public Input on Transportation, Mobility, and Support Service Needs.”

The 2018 Autism NJ conference was attended by over 1300 people, mostly parents and professionals from throughout New Jersey. Several members of the Task Force were attending the conference and volunteered their lunchtime to participate in the listening session.

While the listening session was only advertised to conference attendees, the consensus was to make the time available to hear from the public at a conference where many NJ residents had gathered who are directly impacted by or have a particular interest in ASD.

The information gathered was used to develop and prioritize the Task Force’s recommendations, which was presented to Governor Murphy and the New Jersey Legislature in 2020. All Autism NJ conference attendees were invited to share their input.

Task Force members present at the public listening session included:

- Chair Cecilia Feeley, Ph.D., Rutgers University;
- Rosemary Browne, Assistant Division Director, Children’s System of Care, New Jersey Department of Children and Families; and
- Jonathan Sabin, Director, Office of Autism, New Jersey Department of Human Services.

First Public Hearing

The first Task Force public hearing session was held on Wednesday, October 24, 2018, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. It was held at the Rutgers University Busch Campus—Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation Auditorium, 100 Brett Road, Piscataway, NJ. The session was held during the early evening to provide access to as many people as possible in the New Jersey Central region.

The event was titled “Transportation Public Hearing: Gathering Public Input on Transportation, Mobility, and Support Service Needs.” With the sub-heading “The Governor’s Task Force wants input from New Jersey residents regarding the transportation, mobility, and support service needs of adults with autism.”

Topics addressed by attendees included:

- Personal experiences with using public transit;
- Needing to share about son’s history with the paratransit service Access Link and the county’s community transit services;
- Parent of an adolescent utilizing their educational entitlement expressing concerns about what will happen when the school bus stops coming;
- Professional from a higher education institution that provides services to adults on the autism spectrum expressing concerns about the various support programs at different NJ colleges and universities;
- Parent and non-profit executive discussing the hidden burden that transportation produces for families; and
- Families described feeling overwhelmed by agencies that support adults’ services.

Task Force members at the First Public Hearing included:

- Chair Cecilia Feeley, Ph.D., Rutgers University;
- Jonathan Kratchman, Cherry Hill, NJ, New Jersey adult resident with autism spectrum disorder;
- Chrystal Section, External ADA/504 Coordinator & Special Projects, New Jersey Department of Transportation;
- Damian Petino, LRC Special Education Consultant, Behavior Specialist, New Jersey Department of Education;
- David Free, Acting Director of Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development; and
- Brian Tobin, Volunteer, Administrative Support.

Second Public Hearing

The second Task Force public hearing session was held on Monday, October 29, 2018, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. It was conducted at the Burlington County Human Services Facility, 795 Woodlane Road, Mount Holly, NJ. The session was held mid-evening to provide access to as many people as possible in the New Jersey Southern region.

The event was titled “Transportation Public Hearing: Gathering Public Input on Transportation, Mobility, and Support Service Needs.” It included the subheading “The Governor’s Task Force wants input from New Jersey residents regarding the transportation, mobility, and support service needs of adults with autism.”

Topics addressed by New Jersey residents included:

- Self -Advocate discussing issues with driving, road test, knowledge test, permitting, and licensing;
- Issues involving police and first responders’ interactions with drivers with ASD;
- Parent sharing son’s history with secondary and postsecondary support services that helped him to obtain optimal outcomes of employment and independent living;
- Adult on the spectrum sharing difficult experiences with transportation barriers to employment, recreation, shopping, and other services;
- Service provider relaying the negative and positive experiences of families and adults on the spectrum; and
- School district employee sharing about post-secondary education and support services for community-based, college, and employment support programs.

At the Second Public Hearing, the Task Force was represented by

- Chair Cecilia Feeley, Ph.D., Rutgers University;
- David Free, Acting Director of Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services;
- Rosemary Browne, Assistant Division Director, Children’s System of Care, New Jersey Department of Children and Families;
- Stefani Thachik, Director of Policy and Outreach, New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education;
- Jonathan Sabin, Director Office of Autism, New Jersey Department of Human Services; and
- Brian Tobin, Volunteer Administrative Support.

Third Public Hearing

The third Task Force public hearing session was held on Thursday, November 29, 2018, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. It was originally scheduled for Thursday, November 15, 2018, however, it had to be rescheduled due to snow. This hearing was held at the East Rutherford Community Center, 37 Vreeland Ave. East Rutherford, NJ. This session took place in the early evening to provide access to as many people as possible in the Northern New Jersey region.

The event was billed as “Transportation Public Hearing: Gathering Public Input on Transportation, Mobility, and Support Service Needs.” It included the subheading “The Governor’s Task Force wants input from New Jersey residents regarding the transportation, mobility, and support service needs of adults with autism.”

Topics raised by attendees included:

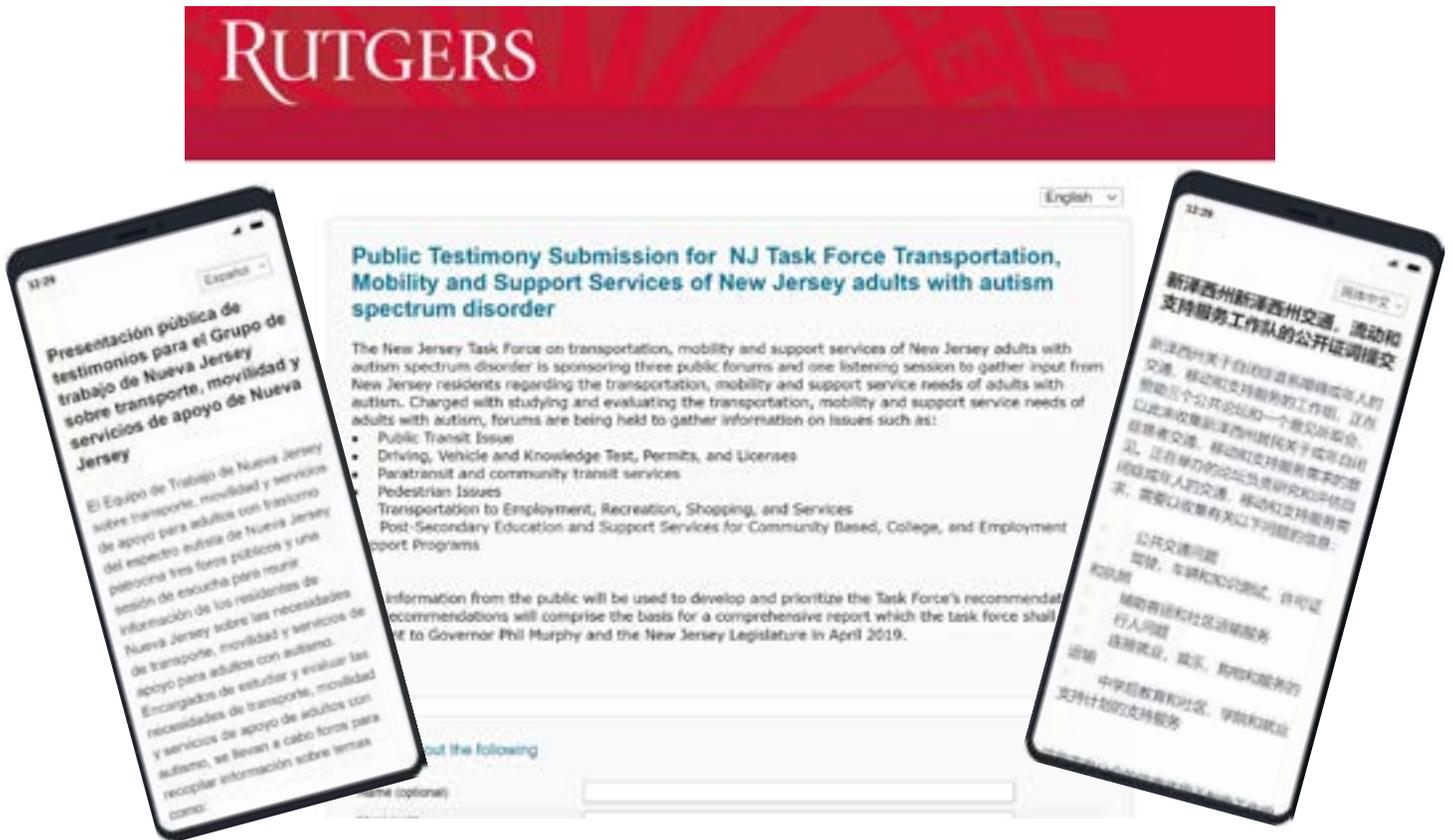
- Experiences with using public transit and sections of the state that lack accessible services;
- Needing to discuss son’s history with the paratransit service Access Link and using the county of residence’s community transit services when traveling to another county;
- Issues with accessing programs and other activities due to lack of transportation;
- Issues with accessing higher education programs due to lack of transit services;
- Sharing of family decision to relocate to a different county to obtain more support services, programs, and a variety of transportation options; and
- Issues faced by pedestrians in getting around communities.

Task Force members present at the Third Public Hearing included:

- Chair Cecilia Feeley, Ph.D., Rutgers University;
- Chrystal Section, External ADA/504 Coordinator and Special Projects, New Jersey Department of Transportation;
- Damian Petino, LRC Special Education Consultant, Behavior Specialist, New Jersey Department of Education;
- Susan Evans, Ed.D. Results Accountability Coordinator, New Jersey Early Intervention System, New Jersey Department of Health; and
- Brian Tobin, Volunteer, Administrative Support.

Public Testimony Website

As part of the public testimony collection, the Task Force set up a web portal using Qualtrics to collect information from the people that would not be able to attend any of the 3 public hearings or the listening session. To be available to the greatest number of participants the portal was available in English, Spanish, and Chinese. The testimony portal was open from mid-October 2018 until the end of January 2019 and 19 people submitted testimony. All of the testimonies submitted via the portal addressed the difficulties that adults on the autism spectrum have in accessing safe and reliable transportation services and the impact this had on their families and their life choices. These testimonies along with the in-person testimony helped shape the Task Force Recommendations.



Transportation and Mobility Focused Recommendations

1 **Ensure that a portion of all transportation research dollars includes transportation and mobility for people on the autism spectrum.** This effort is needed to ensure that when research is being conducted it encompasses the needs of all of New Jersey's citizens, including citizens with transportation challenges such as those with physical, sensory, intellectual, and developmental disabilities like autism. By supporting the needs of this population in the research, NJ will have a forward-thinking holistic approach for all residents rather than back-tracking, retrofitting, and modifying concepts at a significantly higher cost. This will also ensure that all the citizens have the same rights and access.

2 **Provide NJ Transit Reduced Fare Cards to all Access Link customers.** Currently, NJ Transit policy requires different applications for Access Link and Reduced Fare cards. The Reduced Fare Card can be a difficult application process as it requires a medical doctor to fill out part of the form. This is still a requirement even though Access Link has an in-person eligibility screening to determine if a person's disability precludes them from using fixed-route transit independently. The process can be cumbersome and difficult for individuals with autism. NJ Transit has already determined that based on the applicant's disability that the applicant is unable to use fixed-route services independently. However, NJ Transit still requires that same individual to submit a special form filled out by both the applicant and a medical doctor to qualify for a Reduced Fare Card proving the disability. This is a duplication of services (two completely separate disability determination processes) and encourages persons with autism to use the costlier Access Link.

3 **Staff training on working with individuals on the autism spectrum.** It is critical that all vehicle operators and front-line staff, working in all public transportation modes, have specialized training. The training program should be developed, implemented, and targeted to personnel that come in contact with adults with autism. This training is recommended for those operating all types of fixed-route transportation services (NJ TRANSIT, SEPTA), paratransit (NJ Transit Access Link, county, and municipal services), private and volunteer services (NGOs),

and ride-hailing and taxi services (Uber, Lyft, Taxis). Transit agencies and transportation providers must receive targeted training that will enable them to better understand and assist customers on the autism spectrum.

4 **Develop a DDD payment program for NJ Transit and NJ County Paratransit services.** New Jersey should invest in the 21 county community transit providers rather than encouraging a system with costly specialized private providers only because they can bill DDD. The current waiver system discourages the use of the community/county paratransit providers. A recent study, funded by NJCDD, found that over 70% of respondents with developmental disabilities were satisfied users of the county paratransit system. The respondents often commented on the social aspect of using public transit with other members of their community. There are various models throughout the United States including one from Oregon (K-Plan). The Oregon model allocates consumers between \$350 to \$500 a month for community transportation. This allocation can be used for routine travel associated with activities of daily living. Allowing a portion of the DDD budget to be directed to community transport providers would have a net positive multiplier-effect. The benefits to county paratransit services would be increased ridership and a new dedicated revenue stream which could allow for several improvements such as rider-friendly technology, expanded service hours, and expanded service routes. This funding revenue stream could include provisions to develop an inter-county system that will allow riders to cross county boundaries to access employment sites and day programs in neighboring counties.

5 **Ensure driver education programs are inclusive.** School districts providing drivers education programming need to guarantee that opportunities are available to all students in their district, including those in self-contained classrooms or out of district. Driver education programs must be offered to all students that qualify. All students should be invited to in school driver ed programs to obtain the permit. Then if an individual can pass the written test and obtain a permit, they must be able to receive the same access to drivers education programs that all of the other students in the district receive.

6

Create a statewide mobility manager dedicated to adults on the autism spectrum and their guardians, families, caregivers, and service providers.

A mobility manager can identify and help secure feasible transportation alternatives. Establishing a dedicated statewide mobility manager with specialized knowledge of issues associated with autism would allow for uniformity in access to information on transportation services and trip-planning guidance for all of New Jersey residents regardless of location. A dedicated mobility manager will be well informed on public transportation ADA legislation and practices, including Title II Part B of the ADA and Title III on private transportation. The mobility manager could also serve to assist the State and counties with coordination strategies, such as linking regions and connecting people with existing transit services in an economically efficient manner.

7

Update 2-1-1 and add information on how to access various modes of transit.

New Jersey's current 2-1-1 system is out-of-date and primarily directs people with disabilities to use private taxi services that are expensive and not feasible for routine travel. 2-1-1 needs to be updated and include all current modes of public transit available in NJ as well as provide information on how to use the various services. Some transportation systems, such as Access Link, require an eligibility determination before use. Any prequalification's need to be described with the system's contact information and a description of how to start the qualification process.

8

Ensure Intelligent Transportation Technologies are developed for all modes.

Various technologies are available that can improve a person's quality of life as it relates to transportation. For vehicle operators, there are numerous apps and Global Position System (GPS) based navigation programs that help drivers determine the best routes that meet the individual's criteria such as avoiding highways or toll roadways or routes with heavy traffic. This information can be shared as a courtesy to riders. For example, the Go Bus app provides riders of public transit the real-time bus schedule arrival/departure times. Public and/or community paratransit riders rely on the service providers to acquire and utilize existing and emerging technologies that are people-centered to improve service to the customers. Access Link's EZ-Wallet and on-line trip scheduling is an example of technology helping riders. For pedestrians and transition-age students, Mixed and Augmented Virtual Reality street crossing programs can assist with pedestrian skill acquisition.

9 **Conduct a nationwide study to identify and replicate “best practice” models and strategies to make transportation and mobility more accessible for persons with autism.** This effort will include identifying and studying “best practices” and conducting pilot tests on best practices. Upon completion of the research, outreach with transportation providers on the validated methods should be conducted to improve access and mobility as well as secondary support services. This will ensure optimal outcomes for persons with ASD. Some examples of “best practices” could be the widespread adoption of the Paratransit Skills Assessment as well as the reportedly high level of public transit usage by adults with ASD in Chapel Hill, NC.

10 **Create a voucher program using DDD funds for PASS trained ride-hailing or taxi services.** It is recommended that the state provide a system that allows a limited portion of an individual’s DDD budget to be used for state-approved and PASS trained ride-hailing transportation and/or taxi services. This approach will enable individuals with autism to engage in spontaneous and emergency travel. There could be a limited number of trips allotted per month as well as a limited amount of spending on the services. An example is the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council voucher pilot program aimed at increasing access to spontaneous, demand response transportation services such as ride-hailing and/or taxi service. The results of the pilot study were that 70% of the participants stated that their community participation and emotional well-being had improved. Additionally, 54% of the participants reported that their quality of life had been positively impacted by the voucher program.

11 **Conduct a holistic review of current infrastructure design practices and establish models that address the needs of individuals with ASD and/or other developmental disabilities.** Previous research has been undertaken to achieve ADA compliance of the built environment and associated infrastructure components. However, actual design components that can be considered conducive, as well as those considered inhibitive to persons on the autism spectrum, has been limited. This recommendation seeks to address that issue and will focus on a review of current guidelines, principles, and recommendations to ensure that the most autism-friendly and autism-conducive design features are identified.

12 **Ensure that persons with autism are included in Complete Streets.** In New Jersey, the design requirements for infrastructure improvement projects, referred to as Complete Streets, should be evaluated to confirm that all residents are included. The design requirements should be analyzed in combination with the characteristics and traits of individuals with autism that can hinder their ability to travel independently. This work should focus on determining autism-friendly infrastructure improvements to the built environment. Environmental barriers between residences of adults on the spectrum and transit stations/stops are a significant concern for persons with ASD and their families. Research indicates the need for and potential benefits from this recommendation to better serve people on the autism spectrum.

13 **Promote universal design concepts in all state-funded transportation projects.** This effort is needed to ensure that state-funded transportation research and projects are inclusive of people with ASD and other disabilities. It is important that people with disabilities be included on the front-end of a project's design rather than during or post-construction, which often requires costly modifications.

14 **Expand services routes and hours.** Improvement can be done by expanding service hours and routes for both fixed and paratransit services. To expand service routes and hours, transit providers must engage in a continuous dialogue with people on the autism spectrum, their families, and other advocates. It is important to investigate opportunities for service expansion and possible funding mechanisms to support the expansion. While public transportation should not be seen as the only travel mode alternative for people with ASD, expansion of service to areas currently not served or under-served, commonly referred to as transit deserts, will benefit a large proportion of adults with autism, their families, as well their caregivers and service providers.

Transportation and Mobility Focused Recommendation Implementation Matrix

State Agency Lead

DCF = NJ Department of Children and Family Services

DHS = NJ Department of Human Services including but limited to
Division of Developmental Disabilities

DOE = NJ Department of Education

DOL = NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development

DOT = NJ Department of Transportation

MVC = NJ Motor Vehicle Commission

OSHE = Office of Secretary of Higher Education

NJT = NJ TRANSIT

MPOs = Metropolitan Planning Organizations

NJCAM = NJ Council on Access and Mobility

NJCOST = NJ Council of Special Transportation

Transportation and Mobility Focused Recommendation Implementation Matrix

Recommendations	Action Needed	State Lead
1. Ensure that a portion of all transportation research dollars includes transportation and mobility for people on the autism spectrum	Enhance existing programs to be fully inclusive	DOT
2. Provide NJ Transit Reduced Fare Cards to all Access Link customers	Executive Order	Governor's Office
3. Staff training on working with individuals on the autism spectrum	Amend training to include ASD	NJ COST, NJ Transit
4. Develop a DDD Payment Program for NJ Transit and NJ County Paratransit services	Investigate barriers to CMS Vouchers	DHS
5. Ensure drivers education programs are inclusive	Enhance existing programs and policies	DOE, MVC
6. Create a statewide mobility manager dedicated to adults on the autism spectrum and their guardians, families, caregivers, and service providers	Encourage RFA for 5310 for statewide mobility manager	NJ Transit, MPOs
7. Update 2-1-1 and add information on how to access various modes of transit	Update and amend existing service	DOT, NJ Transit
8. Ensure Intelligent Transportation Technologies are developed for all modes	Augment and update current programs	DOT
9. Conduct a nationwide study to identify and replicate "best practice" models and strategies to make transportation and mobility more accessible for people with autism	Review programs that currently exist and identify appropriate ones to replicate	DHS Legislature
10. Create a voucher program using DDD funds for PASS trained ride-hailing or taxi services	Investigate uses of CMS waivers	DHS
11. Conduct a holistic review of current infrastructure design practices and establish models that address the needs of people with ASD and/or other developmental disabilities	Assess current programs and adapt as needed	DOT
12. Ensure that persons with autism are included in Complete Streets	Enhance existing programs	MPOs, Municipalities
13. Promote universal design concepts in all state-funded transportation projects	Identify and adapt training materials and spec requirements	DOT, NJ CAM
14. Expand services routes and hours	Increase funding stream & provide transit incentives	Governor's Office, Legislature

Support Services and Secondary/ Postsecondary Focused Recommendations

1 **Ensure support program consistency within New Jersey higher education public university, state college, and county college system.** New Jersey colleges and universities need to have uniform and consistent service delivery models. Currently, there are significant variations at New Jersey colleges in their support programs. These include different types of funding mechanisms with requiring additional charges to students outside of the standard tuition and fees. With the lack of program standards, individuals with ASD often do not receive the support they require.

2 **Encourage a variety of employment-based outcomes.** Research the relationship between employment, transportation, and secondary support services for adults with autism to ensure that supports and services are evidenced-based and data-driven. New Jersey is an Employment First state and the issues of employment-related transportation and secondary support services must be investigated and addressed. Identifying and analyzing the specific barriers and obstacles, to a diverse range of employment opportunities in the State, is the most appropriate avenue for the successful development of sound strategies to address the issues.

3 **Develop programs for all state agencies to promote self-sufficiency and self-determination.** This effort is needed to ensure that programs developed are those that promote adults on the spectrum to be as independent as possible and to determine and direct their choices in a way that is best for them. In the context of transportation and secondary support services, this includes modes and programs that meet the diverse and varied needs of the full population with a recognition that wants and needs may vary and those variations need to be respected.

4 **Funding provided for contracted transition focused-training by state agencies needs to include transportation and secondary support services as part of the curriculum.** This effort is needed so transition-age individuals on the spectrum are aware of the services available their educational entitlement. Several state agencies currently contract with non-profit agencies to provide transition focused-training programs. These programs must have components to address transportation and mobility issues. Additional training options as well as information on secondary support services are needed for families with children on the

spectrum. This information should also be promoted and highlighted before students age out of educational entitlement.

5

Develop a set of standard practices to support training for college certificate programs and trade schools. Currently, there are many funding inconsistencies for programs and a variety of funding mechanisms. These mechanisms can make accessing post-secondary education and training options difficult for people on the autism spectrum.

6

Person-Centered Plans should include feasible transportation and secondary support services components. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) require person-centered planning and transportation and secondary support services must be part of the CMS plan, as well as in IEPs and/or ISPs. It is important that transportation and secondary support services be included in this planning. The Person-Centered Planning Tool (PCPT) available on the New Jersey Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities website does not include questions about transportation and mobility in the community but there is a question “Is there anywhere you’d like to travel?” The question needs to focus on daily living, short-term, and long-term needs that require transportation. The PCPT should be revised to include substantive and meaningful questions related to transportation and secondary support services. This will enable the user of the tool to consider the vital role they have in meeting the plan goals, as well as achieving positive quality of life outcomes.

7

Improve awareness among the general population about the characteristics of autism. This effort is needed to assist adults on the autism spectrum so that they can more readily achieve successful community integration. The broad and diverse New Jersey autism stakeholder community should work cohesively to improve autism awareness efforts. This should be promoted in coordination among all of the state agencies and state partners. This should include a curriculum that addresses diversity and inclusion.

8

Promote secondary support program expansions so services are offered throughout the state. Currently support programs are available in some colleges and communities. However, they are not offered uniformly throughout the state. Currently, some county colleges do not have specialized support programs. Therefore, residents who need these support programs often travel significant distances outside of their home county to partake in the programs. Meanwhile, others do not attend college due to the higher out-of-county costs and additional travel barriers.

Support Services and Secondary/Postsecondary Focused Recommendation Implementation Matrix

State Lead

DCF = NJ Department of Children and Family Services

DHS = NJ Department of Human Services including but limited to Division of Developmental Disabilities

DOE = NJ Department of Education

DOL = NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development

DOT = NJ Department of Transportation

MVC = NJ Motor Vehicle Commission

OSHE = Office of Secretary of Higher Education

NJT = NJ TRANSIT

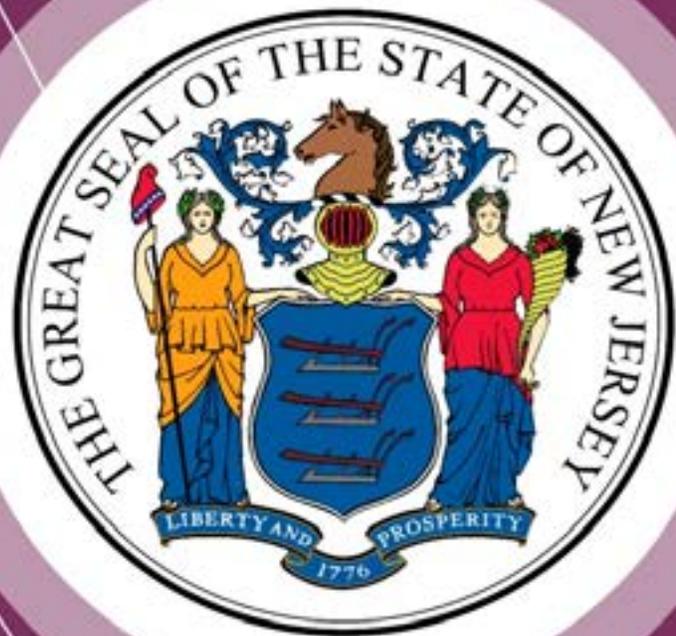
MPOs = Metropolitan Planning Organizations

NJCAM = NJ Council on Access and Mobility

NJCOST = NJ Council of Special Transportation

Support Services and Postsecondary Focused Recommendation Implementation Matrix

Recommendations	Action Needed	State Lead
1. Ensure support program consistency within New Jersey higher education public university, state college, and county college system.	Develop criteria and standards, augment as needed	OSHE
2. Encourage a variety of employment-based outcomes.	Work with existing entities to expand protocols	DOL
3. Develop programs in all state agencies that promote self-sufficiency and self-determination.	Enhance existing programs	DOE
4. Funding provided for contracted transition focused-training by state agencies need to include transportation and secondary support services as part of the curriculum.	Expand and enhance existing programs	DHS, DOE, DCF
5. Develop a set of standard practices to support training for college certificate programs and trade schools.	Establish standards through regulations	Legislature
6. Person-Centered Plans should include feasible Transportation and Secondary Support Services Components.	Develop training modules	DHS
7. Improve awareness among the general population about the characteristics of autism.	Develop educational and outreach protocols	Governor's Office, Legislature
8. Promote secondary support program expansions so services are offered throughout the state.	Augment and update current programs	OSHE



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