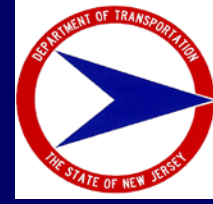


New Jersey Department of Transportation  
Bureau of Research

## Technical Brief

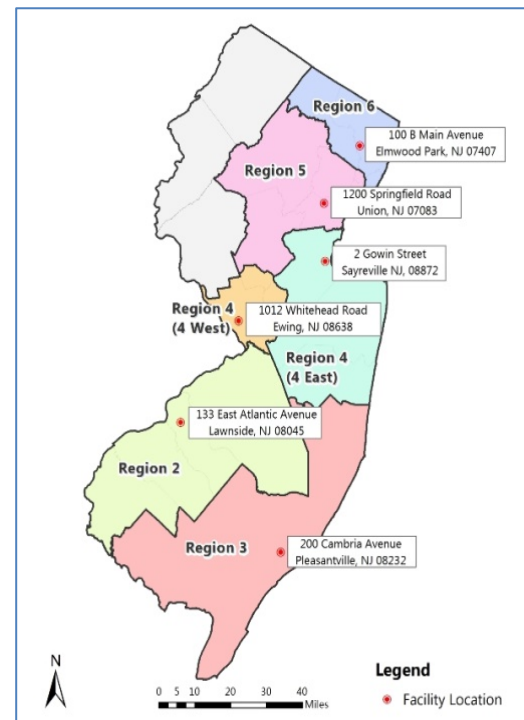


### ADA Paratransit Facility Alternatives

*The Access Link paratransit service is provided by NJ TRANSIT to persons with disabilities through private contractors. Each of Access Link's six operating regions, through contracts for five service regions, contains a facility where vehicles are stored and maintained. All six facilities are currently leased by the private contractors (service providers) from landlords. The primary objective of this study was to assess the advantages and disadvantages of NJ TRANSIT owning one or more of the facilities instead of continuing to lease.*

### Background

Since NJ TRANSIT began to provide Access Link service in the 1990s, the service has been provided through private contractors who have leased the facilities from landlords for the duration of their contracts. Currently NJ TRANSIT provides contracts to the service providers for a period of three years, followed by optional annual contracts for additional four years. Due to the short duration of the contracts and the high growth of ridership and vehicles, service providers have often moved from one facility location to another at the end of each contract. Since changing location involves additional costs for retrofitting buildings and installing equipment at the beginning of contracts, as well as demolition costs at the end of contracts, NJ TRANSIT had to bear substantial costs by having the facilities leased by private contractors. Due to the high costs of leasing and difficulties in frequently finding appropriate properties, NJ TRANSIT is currently assessing the advantages and disadvantages of owning one or more of its Access Link facilities.



### Research Objectives and Approach

This research addressed three primary questions:

- What are the quantifiable advantages of NJ TRANSIT owning one or more of its Access Link facilities instead of following the current practice of leasing the facilities through service providers?

- What would be the ideal locations for establishing Access Link facilities if NJ TRANSIT wanted to own the facilities?
- How have other large transit agencies in the nation assessed the benefits and burdens of owning ADA paratransit facilities and what can NJ TRANSIT learn from their experiences?

In order to answer these questions, several tasks were undertaken, including a review of literature; site visits and interviews with the Access Link facility managers; structured interviews with officials from 11 transit agencies nationwide; forecast of Access Link demand for a 25-year period; development of cost models and comparison of costs of leasing and owning for several actual and potential facilities; GIS-based accessibility analysis to identify optimal locations to establish Access Link facilities in each operating region; and estimation of land costs and construction costs for new Access Link facilities.

## Findings

- The cost models showed that NJ TRANSIT could break even with the leasing costs between 12 and 15 years by owning Access Link facilities, provided that the properties are chosen carefully. According to the estimates, the agency could save between \$6 and \$13 million over a 25-year period per region by owning each facility and potentially save more by holding the properties beyond 25 years.
- The interviews with transit agency officials revealed a high level of satisfaction from ownership of ADA paratransit facilities. Many agencies not currently owning facilities are considering opportunities to own.
- Almost all of the current managers of Access Link facilities are highly supportive of NJ TRANSIT’s ownership of Access Link facilities.

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A final report is available online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/refdata/research/>.  
If you would like a copy of the full report, send an e-mail to: [Research.Bureau@dot.state.nj.us](mailto:Research.Bureau@dot.state.nj.us).

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