

Dear NJ Transit:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your first ever Sustainability Plan! I am the Chair of UU Faith Action NJ's Environmental Justice Task Force and we applaud you for taking this essential step in making New Jersey a safer, cleaner, healthier and more affordable place to live.

We believe that increased use of public transit is the way of the future. To meet the critical climate goals of reducing fossil fuel emissions, but also to improve the quality of life of all New Jerseyans' we must get away from the auto-centric culture that has been encouraged over the years. You hear people complaining all over the state: from long commute times, to traffic congestion to numerous traffic accidents. Driving is stressful and creates air pollution. Roads gobble up precious open space and increase flooding. To say nothing of the financial burden associated with auto ownership. We support any measure that will increase public transit ridership.

UU Faith Action is in complete support of Governor Murphy's goal of reaching 100% of our electricity to come from renewable sources by 2035. We approve of NJ Transit's commitment to that goal and ask that emphasis be put on energy efficiency – thereby reducing the overall need for electricity supply – as well as zero carbon renewable sources. **We oppose NJ Transit's plan to develop a gas fired power plant** in Kearny which is in complete contradiction to this sustainability and decarbonization plan! We support development of a plant powered by renewable energy sources instead.

On Page 17 of the report we'd ask that the first box under **Renewable Energy Use** be changed from "Convert to 100% clean energy by 2050" to Convert to 100% clean energy by 2035 to reflect the quote above it.

We are in complete support of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and would like to see more of it, especially in areas with senior citizen housing developments. Many retired folks prefer not to drive, and others SHOULD not drive, but they need both availability of transit and accessibility.

We'd like you to expand your definition of "accessibility" to include pets. Many trips require bringing your pet with you – whether for a veterinary appointment, a trip to the dog park, a vacation trip or in an evacuation emergency. More and more people have pets and consider them part of the family. We've seen the stories of people who will not evacuate in emergencies because they won't leave their pets behind. This should be considered, not on every transit ride in every situation, but perhaps as an option and even with additional cost.

We Support the **First/Last Mile** concept, and ask that more emphasis be put on ensuring that transit routes link easily to biking and pedestrian trails.

Please expand transit access in Ocean County! For example, a reasonable public transportation option from Toms River to Philadelphia – a major commuting route – is sorely needed, as well as one to Trenton.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Peggy Middaugh

UU Faith Action NJ, Environmental Justice Task Force Chair