COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

October 30, 2026

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Older adult non-medical transportation pilot program in the Towns of Aurora and Lancaster

Dear Honorable Members:

The attached resolution requests authorization for the Department of for the Aging (Department) to amend transportation contracts with the towns of Aurora and Lancaster and provide each with up to $10,000 for the operation of a pilot program, during the period December 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027, to increase non-medical transportation opportunities for their older adult residents.

Should your Honorable Body require any further information, I encourage you to contact Commissioner Randall Hoak in the Department for the Aging. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/mrc
Enclosure
cc: Randall Hoak, Commissioner, Department for the Aging

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Senior Services
Re: Older adult non-medical transportation pilot program in the Towns of Aurora and Lancaster
Date: October 30, 2026

SUMMARY

Approve the attached resolution to allow the Department for the Aging (Department) to amend transportation contracts with the Towns of Aurora and Lancaster and provide each with up to $10,000 for the operation of a pilot program, during the period December 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027, to increase non-medical transportation opportunities for their older adult residents.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No additional County funds are needed. The Department's 163UNMETNEED2627 grant, which is 100% State funded, has existing appropriations in its Transportation Services account (516019), to fund the contracts through March 31, 2027. Funding for the remaining months will be included as part of the Department's 2027 County Budget in the successor grant.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Going Places transportation program provides older adults, who have no other means of transportation, with rides to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and senior centers for congregate meals. The Department performs the central dispatch function for the program, which is a partnership with Erie County municipalities and subcontracted transportation service providers. Medical appointments are the priority for the Going Places program and leaves a limited number of trips for non-medical or group trips on any given service date. Allowing these municipalities the opportunity to increase the number of non-medical and group trips will give more opportunity to serve social and non-medical needs of the residents.

Erie County's aging population is growing and projects to be over 300,000 residents above the age of 60 by 2030. The need for transportation services is also expected to grow, and this pilot program will help inform the Department of the actual need for additional opportunities for non-medical and group transport and how we can incorporate this into our Going Places Transportation Program Model.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Erie County Department for the Aging Going Places Program gives older adults who can no longer drive a way to access their medical appointments, as well as other non-medical trips such as banking, grocery shopping, non-food shopping, employment, volunteer opportunities, and social activities. However, medical rides are scheduled for 2 weeks prior to service date and non-medical trips are scheduled 1 week prior to service date.

For partners with only one vehicle being used for Going Places, non-medical trips on days the client is available can be very hard to come by as there is always demand for medical trip appointments. Increasing access to non-medical appointments helps alleviate social isolation that comes with not having access to a car and the ability to leave your house when you want but also allows our older residents to remain contributing members of the community and not having to go into assisted living or a nursing home.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The Department would not be able to allow for increased access to non-medical trips in these areas. This would also hamper the efforts of future planning, grant writing and partnership opportunities for the Going Places Transportation Program without the ability to analyze the data and the cost benefit of adding additional transportation access in these towns. Which could then be expanded to the rest of our community partners.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Department will take steps to amend the existing contract with the towns of Aurora and Lancaster to allow for the one-time pilot program funds for better understanding of the need and uses for non-medical transportation for older adults in Erie County.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:
THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

Re: Older adult non-medical transportation pilot program in the Towns of Aurora and Lancaster

WHEREAS, the Erie County Department for the Aging (Department) administers the Going Places Transportation Program to improve mobility and promote independence for older adults residing in Erie County; and

WHEREAS, access to transportation for social, educational, recreational, nutritional, and community-based activities is essential to reducing social isolation, promoting healthy aging, and improving the overall quality of life for older adults; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Aurora and the Town of Lancaster currently participate in the Going Places Transportation Program by providing local financial support for the operation of Going Places transportation services within their respective municipalities; and

WHEREAS, both municipalities have expressed an interest in expanding transportation opportunities for older adults through organized non-medical group outings to destinations that encourage social engagement, lifelong learning, recreation, nutrition, wellness, and community participation; and

WHEREAS, the Department has determined that a limited pilot program will provide valuable information regarding utilization, operational feasibility, participant outcomes, and fiscal sustainability before considering broader implementation throughout Erie County; and

WHEREAS, the Department proposes to provide funding in an amount not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) to each municipality to support vehicle maintenance, fuel, insurance, and other eligible operational expenses associated with providing non-medical group transportation during the pilot period; and

WHEREAS, no additional County funds are required as existing budgetary appropriations, through the period ending March 31, 2027, are available in the Department's 163UNMETNEED2627 grant's transportation services account (516019); and

WHEREAS, funding for the remaining months will be included as part of the Department's 2027 County Budget in the successor grant; and

WHEREAS, the Towns of Aurora and Lancaster shall remain responsible for staffing, scheduling, trip coordination, driver supervision, and the day-to-day administration of the pilot program within their respective municipalities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Executive or Deputy County Executive to amend transportation contracts with the Towns of Aurora and Lancaster for the purpose of providing non-medical group transportation opportunities for older adults; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby given that each municipality shall be eligible to receive funding in an amount not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) for vehicle maintenance and operational expenses associated with the pilot program, during the period December 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027; and be it further

RESOLVED, that existing appropriations in the Department's 163Unmetneed2627 grant's Transportation Services account (516019) be utilized to fund the contracts through March 31, 2027, with subsequent months funding to be included in the successor grant as part of the Department's 2027 County budget; and be it further

RESOLVED, that eligible expenses may include vehicle maintenance, fuel, insurance, inspections, repairs, and other reasonable operating costs necessary to provide safe and reliable transportation under the pilot program, as approved by the Erie County Department for the Aging; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town of Aurora and the Town of Lancaster shall be responsible for all staffing, scheduling, trip planning, participant registration, driver management, and daily operation of the pilot program and shall continue to provide the necessary local funding to operate the Going Places vehicle within their respective municipalities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that transportation provided under this pilot shall be limited to organized non-medical group outings intended to promote socialization, recreation, nutrition, education, wellness, and other activities that support healthy aging and community engagement for Erie County older adults; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, if necessary, the County Executive or Deputy County Executive is hereby authorized to execute amendments to the contracts to effectuate adjusted funding levels; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the County Executive's Office, Comptroller's Office, Department for the Aging, Department of Law, Division of Budget and Management, and the Supervisors of the Town of Aurora and the Town of Lancaster.