

Surviving the Storm: Why Transitioning Away from Legacy Systems is Critical in Today's Transit Industry



A Changing Industry

Over the next decade, transportation and healthcare providers will be faced with a confluence of three major challenges, creating a “perfect storm”. As agencies experience increasing financial pressure, shifting demographics and disruptive technology, legacy paratransit software systems are hindering current and future growth. To accommodate surging ridership demands and achieve scalability in an evolving industry, today’s transit providers have been forced to seek out alternative solutions that will allow them to **do more with less**. Ecolane’s solutions allow your agency to reach this elusive financial goal without sacrificing customer service.

While the need to modernize is widely felt across the transportation industry, many agencies have struggled to do so due to a lack of available funding, support, and resources. Although valid reasons may exist for not pursuing more intelligent and sophisticated systems, including a cost barrier to migrate, these perceived switching costs have prevented agencies from realizing the operational, organizational, and cost efficiencies that can be gained through the use of modern paratransit software technology.

In June of 2016, Ecolane and National Express joined forces with the shared goal of delivering a superior experience to transit customers. This partnership combines National Express’ nearly 100 years of leadership in rail, transit, paratransit, and student transportation with Ecolane’s expertise in demand response transit and paratransit solutions to facilitate a broader product and service offering. Both Ecolane and National Express recognize that traditional, siloed approaches to fixed and paratransit routes are not adequate to address the financial, demographic, and technological challenges faced by today’s public transportation industry. To overcome this challenge, Ecolane and National Express have developed the Legacy Advancement Program (LAP) to enable transit providers to advance beyond their legacy systems, achieve seamless mobility, and stay ahead of industry trends.

What is the Legacy Advancement Program?

Designed to help agencies provide safe, reliable, and on-demand transportation and community access in the face of these headwinds, the Legacy Advancement Program enables transit agencies, both public and private, to replace their archaic legacy systems with next-generation technology at a price point that's equivalent to or below existing annual software maintenance fees.

1. Financial

Across the US, government entities and transit agencies are frequently facing the unique challenge of providing higher levels of transportation services with less funding support, continually pushing them to find greater efficiencies within their existing resources. Ecolane DRT, through continuous optimization of schedules, allows public and private entities to repurpose or reduce internal resources required to maintain cumbersome systems and perform manual time-consuming processes; ultimately increasing vehicle capacity to provide more trips and, thus, minimizing the financial strains created by 15-20 year old, inefficient software systems.

2. Demographic

The next ten years will bring key demographic changes that will greatly impact both the demand for public transportation as well as the way in which it's provided. With the vast majority of the 'baby boomer' generation entering into retirement, a substantial increase in the number of individuals living independently and the number of riders with disabilities projected to increase to 72 million by 2025, transit providers will have to adopt systems and technology that will allow them to scale and efficiently and cost-effectively accommodate the increase in demand for transit and paratransit services. On-Demand transportation will become increasingly important as agencies are compelled to offer more dynamic services in the face of these pressures, and Ecolane's patented dynamic response software's ability to re-optimize same-day-of-service scheduling is unique in the industry.

What is the Legacy Advancement Program? (cont.)

3. Technological

The baby boomer demographic is a tech savvy consumer with high expectations for their user experience. Ecolane DRT is uniquely positioned as the industries only truly cloud-based solution to thrive in this environment. As technology continues to advance and be adopted by greater amounts of the population, young and old, transportation providers will need to consider user experience through a mobile perspective while internally focusing on integrating systems to establish efficiencies. The Legacy Advancement Program provides agencies with the opportunity to leverage modern, cloud-based transit technology at a price point equivalent to existing legacy maintenance fees; eliminating the financial and operational barriers often associated with adopting new technology solutions. Ecolane knows about providing first to market solutions. We were first to provide a cloud-based solution, first to implement industry changing Android tablets as Mobile Data Terminals and first to introduce continuous, real-time optimization for routing, without the need of human intervention to start the routing process.

In addition to the financial, demographic and technological challenges Ecolane's DRT helps to address, managers and dispatchers are able to leverage real-time dashboards to impact day of service issues and head off trouble before it happens. Through predictive alerts, agencies are able to handle issues that result in complaints such as late trips, possible missed trips and no-shows.

In partnership with National Express, Ecolane offers today's agencies a multi-national team of technologists, project managers, support personnel, over 25,000 real-world transportation workers, as well as a leadership team with a deep understanding of transit operations, operational efficiency measurement, and transit software implementations. Through this extensive list of financial and operational resources, modern transit agencies are able to proactively address the financial, demographic, and technological challenges of the changing transit landscape without incurring the high upfront costs often associated with a complete system overhaul.

What Size Agency Does the Legacy Advancement Program Address?

Ecolane DRT works with transit providers of all sizes and in all areas, from a small agency in rural Carson City, NV operating with just a few vehicles to a large-scale agency in urban Philadelphia, PA operating with hundreds of vehicles. Additionally, with the ability to provide constant system optimization, deliver real-time scheduling updates, leverage 'shared ride transportation' to maximize the number of passengers per ride, and provide dashboard information that allows transit managers to make decisions that impact and control services instantaneously, Ecolane DRT does something that no other software can do – increase paratransit productivity on the day of service. Ecolane DRT also provides real-time access for customers with many agencies utilizing the SMS text feature to receive notification of imminent vehicle arrival. A statewide Medicaid operation in Nebraska books over 10% of their trips through Ecolane's Self Service Web system, allowing customers or their advocates to book trips, cancel and track vehicle arrivals.

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The Apprehension with Making the Switch

Historically, transit providers have been hesitant to adopt more intelligent and sophisticated technology systems due to a lack of necessary funding and support, or because of the perception that too much time, money, and operational resources had already been invested into existing legacy systems. However, Ecolane's Legacy Advancement Program addresses the financial concerns by eliminating upfront costs. Operationally, Ecolane employs a 3-D approach to transitions by addressing the 3 main areas of software implementations – data, drivers and dispatch. The 3-D approach creates a platform that allows providers to seamlessly transition away from their legacy systems with minimal disruption and costs, allowing organizations to advance beyond their legacy software and realize a more cost-effective, efficient, and productive operation.

Evaluating transit software providers?

Learn what factors you
need to consider...

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How Does the Legacy Advancement Program Work?

To make transitions as seamless as possible, Ecolane provides a one-page pricing summary that explains four basic elements included within the Legacy Advancement Program pricing structure:

1. **Vehicle Pricing**
2. **Mobile Data Terminal Pricing**
3. **Services Pricing**
4. **Annual Costs**

Ecolane provides a 100% discount for items one and two, thus eliminating the barrier to entry for many agencies looking to make a switch.

Success Stories

Interested in seeing first-hand how Ecolane DRT can help your agency address the financial, demographic, and technological challenges faced by today's transportation industry, while simultaneously driving a more cost-efficient and productive operation? Here's a look at a few, of the many, transit providers who have found success with Ecolane:

[Shoreline Metro | Sheboygan, WI](#)

- ✓ Reduced vehicle usage by 25%
- ✓ Increased hourly ridership by 43%
- ✓ Decreased vehicle revenue hours by 27%
- ✓ Reduced daily reporting time from 4 hours to 30 minutes

[Suburban TransNet | Montgomery County, PA](#)

- ✓ Reduced staff hours
- ✓ Improved on-time performance and trips per hour
- ✓ Achieved significant cost savings

[Perry County | Perry County, PA](#)

- ✓ Reduced fuel costs by 40%
- ✓ Performed a higher number of trips at a lower cost
- ✓ Reversed their negative cash flow situation

[Rabbittransit | York, PA](#)

- ✓ \$1M savings since implementing Ecolane in 2012
- ✓ Successfully expanded implementation to absorb 10 surrounding counties into a single call center
- ✓ Increased customer satisfaction by having real time access to vehicle locations and GPS history

Contact Us

Contact us at **(844) 326-5263** today to receive a no obligation quote, a cost reduction calculation based on your key performance indicators, or [request a free software demo](#) to learn how your agency can transform its operational capabilities with our Legacy Advancement Program.