INVOLVEMENT PLAN

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South Jersey
Transportation
Planning Organization

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South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization

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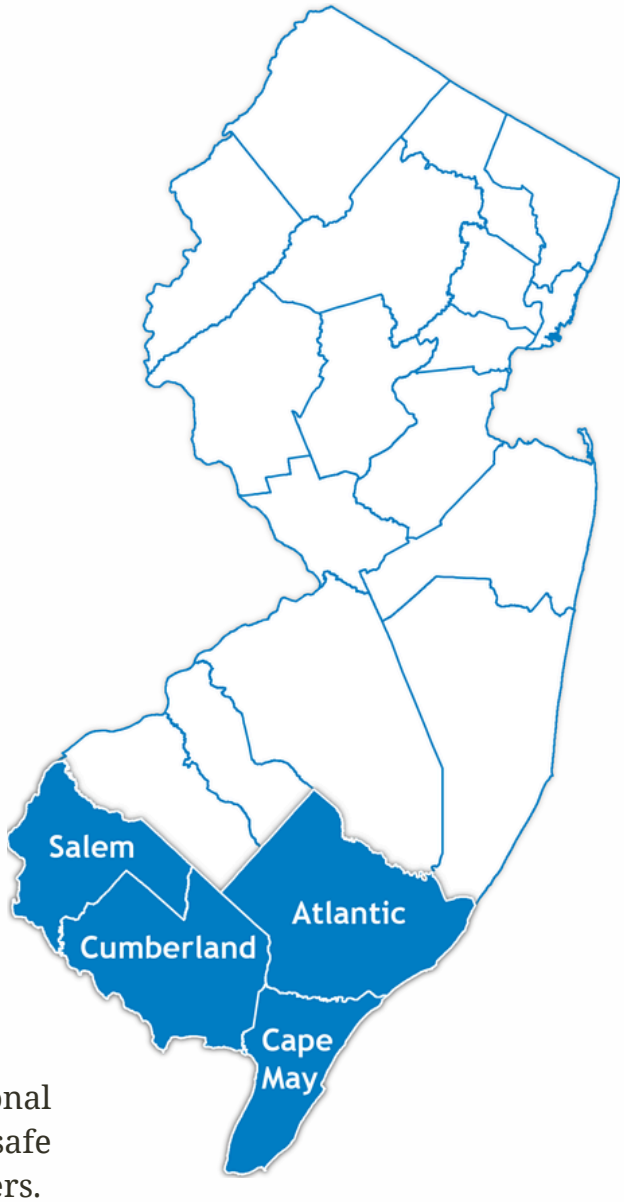
SJTPO is the federally recognized Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the southern New Jersey region, serving Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties. Under federal law, the formation of an MPO is required for any urbanized area (UZA) with a population greater than 50,000, permitting the MPO to carry out transportation planning and decision-making for the UZA(s). Formed in 1993, SJTPO replaced three smaller existing MPOs and incorporated areas not previously served. The formation provided a stronger regional approach to solving transportation problems and brought new opportunities to southern New Jersey. SJTPO is vital to the region, as the MPO serves as a technical resource, provides access to funding, and works to provide a regional approach to address transportation planning and engineering issues.



Four counties, one mission:
to create a transportation system, based on regional collaboration that moves people and goods in a safe and efficient manner, inclusive of all modes and users.

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UPDATES TO THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

[May 28, 2019] This updated plan replaced the PIP adopted in January 2010. This PIP resulted from extensive research into public engagement best practices across MPOs in the county.

[November 23, 2020] This updated plan replaced the PIP adopted in May 2019. The edits better reflect how SJTPO engages with underrepresented populations in the SJTPO region under the civil rights umbrella.

[May 24, 2021] This updated plan replaced the PIP adopted in November 2020. The edits emphasized how SJTPO engages with underrepresented populations in the SJTPO region under the civil rights umbrella by detailing the Multilingual Outreach Services contract. During this time, SJTPO could also hold virtual public meetings for the PIP, but it did not hold any for the November 2020 PIP because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[May 23, 2022] This updated plan replaces the PIP adopted in May 2021. The edits further emphasize SJTPO's work with underrepresented populations. Specifically, this PIP details the translation and interpretation services SJTPO now offers, includes information on SJTPO's new committee, the Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC), and references the Accessibility Brochure.

[September 25, 2023] This updated plan replaces the PIP adopted in May 2022. The edits better reflect the relationship between the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), outline when revisions are necessary, and specify the approval process.

[May 28, 2024] This updated plan replaces the PIP adopted in September 2023. The edits to this PIP seek to better clarify SJTPO's public outreach process and reflect modifications to SJTPO's best practices for public outreach based on updated guidance from SJTPO's federal partners. This latest PIP identifies a change to public meeting requirements associated with the Congestion Management Process (CMP). It also refines the list of libraries that receive specific documents, ensuring at least one library in each county has those documents available for in-library viewing.

[November 2, 2026] This updated plan replaces the PIP adopted in May 2024. This latest PIP identifies a change to paid newspaper advertisements, acknowledges the New Jersey State Language Access Law, and includes minor textual changes for flow and consistency.

1. INTRODUCTION

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) is the federally recognized Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the southern New Jersey region, serving Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties. Under federal law, any urbanized area (UZA) with a population greater than 50,000 must form an MPO to carry out transportation planning and decision-making for the UZAs. In 1993, SJTPO replaced three smaller MPOs and incorporated areas not previously served. This formation provided a more robust regional approach to solving transportation problems and created new opportunities for southern New Jersey. SJTPO is vital to the region, serving as a technical resource, maintaining member agencies' eligibility for federal transportation funds, providing a forum for cooperative decision-making, and coordinating participating agencies' planning activities to support a regional approach to transportation planning and engineering issues.

Federal funding for transportation projects and programs is channeled through the transportation planning process, and an MPO is responsible for maintaining a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process, often referred to as the three Cs. An MPO also provides a forum for cooperative decision-making among responsible state and local officials, public and private transit operators, and the public. An MPO coordinates the planning activities of participating agencies and adopts a long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to guide transportation investment decisions, updated every four years. An MPO is also responsible for capital programming through a multi-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), updated every two years, that includes all federal and state funding for surface transportation projects and programs.

Other critical MPO activities include promoting needed transportation improvements and project development while keeping the public engaged in the planning process. An MPO must ensure the region’s compliance with federal regulations affecting transportation decisions. In meeting federal requirements, an MPO maintains the eligibility of its member agencies and transit operators for federal transportation funds for planning, capital improvements, and operations.

For an MPO, such as SJTPO, with a regional population greater than 200,000, the Transportation Management Area (TMA) designation is assigned. This designation requires additional planning and gives the region a strong voice in setting priorities and implementing projects. The designation also provides access to other resources that can be pooled to address regional problems and qualifies SJTPO for specific shares of federal transportation funds.

SJTPO Structure

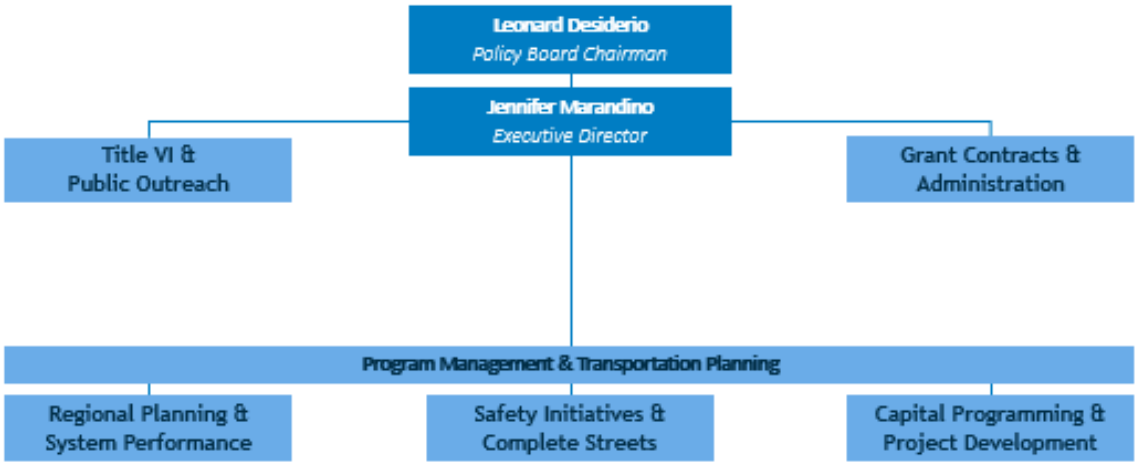
SJTPO's governing body is the Policy Board. It consists of eleven voting members: one elected official from each county government, one municipal elected official from each county,

specifically including the Mayors of Atlantic City and Vineland, and one representative each from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), and the South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA). The Policy Board is informed by recommendations of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a committee of planning and engineering professionals in the region.

The TAC is a thirteen-member committee comprised of each Policy Board member's staff and representatives of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority (NJTA) and the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), South Jersey Economic Development District (SJEDD), Cross County Connection Transportation Management Association (CCCTMA), and the New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy (NJOPA) each have one non-voting representative on the TAC.

The Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) expands SJTPO's public outreach and ensures decision-making is based on diverse, inclusive, and equity-based information and viewpoints. To the greatest extent possible, members reflect the racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, age, geographic, ability, and economic diversity of the four-county region.

The SJTPO Organizational Chart identifies staff roles. Revisions to the Organizational Chart are subject to the review and approval of the Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Board.



2. PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The PIP is an essential reference for transportation professionals who interact with the public and are responsible for implementing a transparent and inclusive planning process. Transportation professionals in the SJTPO region include Policy Board members, TAC members, and SJTPO staff. The PIP additionally serves as a guidebook for the public to help them determine when and how to participate in the transportation planning process.

SJTPO actively seeks to provide a transparent process to ensure that plans and programs include the public to the greatest reasonable degree. SJTPO also aims to create a more meaningful and proactive process. To accomplish this, SJTPO offers reasonable access to information to all segments of the region's population, timely public notice of meetings and comment periods, full access to key decisions, and support for early and continued involvement in the development of the RTP, TIP, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), PIP, and other major plans and programs. In addition, SJTPO understands the need to develop public understanding and support for its activities. To achieve this, SJTPO maintains public involvement procedures, which meet federal guidance and support the following major goals:

- Define a transparent set of guidelines the organization adheres to when conducting public involvement;
- Establish the tools and techniques used to reach the public; and
- Undergo periodic evaluations to determine the effectiveness of SJTPO's outreach practices and updates of the PIP.

The PIP is organized into several sections:

- **Serving the Public: SJTPO's Responsibilities**
  This section outlines the process and procedures SJTPO follows when conducting public involvement efforts. It includes information such as the federal regulations that shape the involvement process, how the public can submit comments, what SJTPO will do with the comments it receives, and how members of the public can get involved in SJTPO's process, among other topics.

- **Opportunities to Engage with SJTPO**
  This section details the tools and techniques SJTPO uses to inform and engage the public in the regional transportation process. More specifically, it includes where to find information, the types of meetings SJTPO hosts, and other ways the public can get more involved.

- **Ensuring Outreach is Fair and Accessible to All**
  This section details SJTPO's efforts to identify and consider the needs of groups traditionally not well-served by the existing transportation system.

- **Having Your Say: Policies and Procedures for Public Comments**
  This section explains how the public can voice opinions and share ideas with SJTPO. It also highlights the minimum number of days each major planning document's comment period must be open to the public and how SJTPO will use the comments received.
- **Evaluating Our Effectiveness**
  This section identifies the tools used to measure both the quantity and quality of public interactions.
- **Appendices**
  This section provides information and links to more resources related to the planning process and federal guidance.

In addition to the PIP, the Public Engagement Guide is another valuable resource for the public, providing an overview of how transportation planning in South Jersey works and how the public can participate in the process.

3. SERVING THE PUBLIC: SJTPO'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Financial support to sustain and advance South Jersey's transportation system comes mainly from federal transportation dollars, which the region's public contributes to through federal fuel taxes. Public involvement in the planning process is necessary to address the needs and concerns of all residents in the four-county region.

To ensure meaningful, proactive participation that improves the decision-making process, SJTPO's public involvement process complies with federal requirements and goals, as described below.

- **Provide adequate and timely notice of public involvement activities, public review, and comment on key decisions.**
  The public must be informed promptly regarding public involvement opportunities. This information will be provided in plain language so the public can easily understand what they need to know or are asked to review. SJTPO will aim to notify the public at least 12 days before any public involvement opportunity through various channels (i.e., email, social media, and/or online legal advertisements) when necessary.
- **Seek out and consider the needs of the people traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system, including low-income and minority households.**
  Transportation planning is most effective when decision-makers consider and seek input from those whose daily lives are largely impacted by how efficiently and safely they can get to work, school, home, stores, and services. To ensure meaningful involvement of traditionally underserved persons and groups in the SJTPO region, such as the elderly population, Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations, and single- or zero-vehicle households, SJTPO drafts plans (i.e., the Title VI Plan, LEP Plan, and Language Access Plan) to support these efforts.
- **Hold public meetings at convenient times and locations that are accessible to all people.**
  Consideration of residents' schedules is vital when hosting public meetings. Apart from the Policy Board and TAC, meetings take place after typical workday hours to maximize access. SJTPO works to hold meetings in facilities that are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible and in locations that are transit accessible when meetings are in-person to the greatest feasible degree. SJTPO makes it standard practice to offer a virtual attendance option for members of the public to participate in meetings hosted by the MPO. SJTPO also provides a toll-free call-in option so members of the public are not charged calling fees for participating in meetings.

- **Use visualization techniques to explain the planning process further.**
  Transportation planning and engineering processes are complex and require many steps. These processes must be presented and discussed intuitively so anyone can understand them and provide feedback. To maximize public involvement and minimize misunderstanding, SJTPO provides information in plain language and often incorporates visuals, such as charts and images.

- **Provide timely and reasonable access to information about transportation planning documents.**
  The public must be provided reasonable access to information necessary to offer meaningful feedback on matters related to the transportation decision-making process. SJTPO has nine documents that are often referred to as "core documents, which serve as the backbone of the transportation planning process. These documents are required by federal law for every MPO and include the PIP, RTP, TIP, UPWP, Access for All Transit Plan, Congestion Management Process (CMP), LEP Plan, Title VI Implementation Plan, and Transportation Conformity. When one of SJTPO's core documents is substantively revised, SJTPO makes the draft version available for public review for at least 30 days, except for the PIP, which is made available for 45 days. In addition, most core documents require a public meeting. If public comments cause any core document to differ significantly from the versions previously made available to the public, comment periods may be extended by at least ten days to ensure the public has the opportunity to review the latest versions before Policy Board approval. Section 6 details comment periods and public meeting requirements. Each document is available on SJTPO's website. SJTPO also makes its core documents available for in-library reviewing at select libraries. To be mindful of library staff resources and limited space, document appendices (unless necessary), executive summaries, and amendments, if applicable, are not printed and transmitted to the libraries. Language is included in the Table of Contents, informing readers that these materials are available on the plan-specific webpages. To view the list of libraries where the planning documents are shared, see Appendix A.

- **Provide information in electronic formats for accessibility and sustainability purposes.**
  SJTPO makes all major documents available on its website for the public's convenience and to support sustainability, since many documents are hundreds of pages long. SJTPO's online Document Library is updated as materials become available.

- **Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input through a two-way communicative process.**
  To maintain an effective and meaningful public involvement process, SJTPO respects and considers all input received. SJTPO collects public input in many ways, including online comment forms, email, fax, direct messages to SJTPO via its social media accounts, and U.S. mail. SJTPO records all comments received during a comment period in the final

document, along with responses from SJTPO and other transportation agencies. SJTPO also encourages two-way communication between members of the public and key decision-makers to consider multiple perspectives. Examples of two-way communication include attending Policy Board and Committee meetings, public workshops, and actively participating on SJTPO's social media platforms. SJTPO works to clarify for the public the best time to comment and the best entity to submit them to, so the public can maximize the impact of their comments.

- **Compliance with federal laws.**
  SJTPO operates without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, age, ancestry, nationality, gender, disability, religion, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, income level, ability to read, write, or speak English, and adheres to all applicable federal laws. SJTPO will work to accommodate all reasonable requests for translation, interpretation, or auxiliary services but encourages requests to be made at least seven days before public meetings to ensure that SJTPO can secure requested services. Other translation requests, such as those for larger documents, will be provided as quickly as possible and may take up to three weeks. Accommodations may include but are not limited to translation services, interpretation services, and closed captioning. For a list of the federal laws, please see the following subsection, Federal Laws for Public Involvement. For a description of each federal law, see Appendix B.

- **Coordinate with the state and local transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes.**
  SJTPO consults and coordinates with agencies and officials when completing transportation planning activities, when appropriate. These regularly include the RTP and TIP. The roles, responsibilities, and key decision points of this consultation and coordination process are detailed in the RTP and TIP. Similarly, SJTPO coordinates with state and local public involvement processes to increase effectiveness and minimize duplication.

- **Coordinate with Federal and Non-federal Tribal Nations.**
  In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470) (NHPA) and its implementing regulations [found at 36 CFR Part 800], federal agencies, such as SJTPO, must consult with any Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization regarding undertakings occurring on or affecting historic properties on its tribal lands. When the SJTPO Draft TIP/Draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) have been prepared, SJTPO coordinates with Federal and Non-federal Tribal Nations via email to inform them of the opportunity to review the documents. SJTPO also offers the opportunity to meet and discuss any questions or concerns the Federal and Non-federal Tribal Nations may have. When the TIP/STIP have been approved, SJTPO will notify the Federal and Non-federal Tribal Nations via email and

provide a link to the documents online. Similarly, when SJTPO's PIP, RTP, and UPWP drafts are approved, SJTPO notifies Federal and Non-federal Tribal Nations by email and provides a link to the documents online. SJTPO does not share draft documents of the PIP, RTP, and UPWP with the tribal nations, consistent with guidance provided by the FHWA-NJ Division. SJTPO maintains an internal database of its communications with Federal and Non-federal Tribal Nations.

- **Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the PIP.**

  The PIP is a living document. It is updated as needed to ensure effectiveness and consistency with federal guidance. The public also provides periodic feedback on the SJTPO's procedures and strategies. In addition, SJTPO has identified methods to evaluate the effectiveness of its public involvement process, as described in Section 7.

Federal Laws for Public Involvement

To conduct public involvement outreach, a core MPO function, SJTPO complies with federal regulations and programs. These regulations and programs shape the involvement process and help improve implementation. For a description of each regulation and program listed below, see Appendix B.

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
- Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991
- Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) of 1998
- Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005
- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) of 2012
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) of 2015
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) or Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021
- Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §450
- Code of Federal Regulations. Title 23, §771.111

4. OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH SJTPO

SJTPO uses a variety of strategies to enhance public involvement for specific activities or to help meet public involvement goals. Staff regularly review and update these strategies to sustain a productive, comprehensive public involvement process. The strategies help disseminate information in both digital and print formats, making it accessible to anyone interested.

Where to Find Information

Public input is essential to SJTPO's planning process, and the public can learn about or influence transportation decisions in many ways. SJTPO uses various channels to reach a broad audience. The recurrent channels used to announce news, updates, and reminders about meetings and events include:

SJTPO Website (www.sjtpo.org)

SJTPO's primary tool for disseminating information is its website, which can be translated into many languages. The SJTPO website includes an overview of the transportation planning process, funding programs, core regional planning documents, an extensive document library, planning studies, and other technical details. Opportunities for public involvement are also available online on the Public Comment webpage.

E-list (Electronic Mailing List)

SJTPO has two e-lists – the Requests for Proposals e-list and the General Information e-list. The RFP e-list is primarily for consultants who want to be informed when SJTPO releases Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or other project-related work opportunities. The General Information e-list is primarily for members of the public and other interested organizations who want to be informed of public meetings and comment opportunities, special events, the release of SJTPO's *On-the-Go* bi-monthly newsletter, career opportunities, and other happenings.

To subscribe to SJTPO's RFP and/or General Information lists, individuals can locate the "Join Our Mailing List" at the bottom of every webpage. The e-lists are free to join, and subscribers can unsubscribe at any time.

Social Media

SJTPO maintains several social media platforms to reach the public and highlight key activities and initiatives. SJTPO uses Facebook, X, and LinkedIn as its three primary social media platforms to share information about upcoming meetings and events, newsletter issues, reminders about public comment periods, staff activities, and other regional transportation planning matters.

Any comment SJTPO receives via social media that adheres to SJTPO's Social Media Policy, also found in Appendix C, will be treated equally to any other comment added to the public record and responded to, as appropriate.

	Facebook	www.facebook.com/sjtpo
	X	https://x.com/sjtpo
	LinkedIn	www.linkedin.com/company/sjtpo
	YouTube	www.youtube.com/channel/UCzdoMUOQ4-umcnlWB5lCxGQ

On the Go, the Official Newsletter of SJTPO

On the Go is an electronic publication released every two months, with six issues produced each year. SJTPO distributes the newsletter through its e-list. To receive the newsletter, locate the "Join Our Mailing List" at the bottom of each SJTPO webpage. Archived and current issues are also available on the News webpage. The website version of the newsletter includes a Google Translate tool, allowing readers from all backgrounds to stay current on SJTPO matters.

Topics covered in each newsletter issue vary depending on what activities are occurring at SJTPO. Readers can expect to learn about projects, programs, meetings, events, public outreach opportunities, and more.

Legal Notices

SJTPO no longer places paid advertisements in the area's local newspapers, unless otherwise required by law. This decision was made following the legislation (S4654/A5878) signed by Governor Phil Murphy in June 2025. The new law reflects a modern approach to the evolving media environment, where most people now get information primarily through digital platforms.

SJTPO has an Announcements webpage. This webpage includes a dedicated Legal Notices section. Legal Notices will be archived for at least one year.

The State maintains a Statewide Legal Notices Listing website. The SJTPO website is listed on this directory.

How to View or Request Documents and Records

To provide reasonable public access to documents and records, SJTPO makes all final draft and final approved plans, programs, and studies produced by SJTPO available for viewing on its website and at the SJTPO office. SJTPO also makes its core documents available for in-library reviewing at select libraries. To be mindful of library staff resources and limited space, document appendices (unless necessary), executive summaries, and amendments, if applicable, are not printed and transmitted to the libraries. Language is included in the Table of Contents, informing

readers that these materials are available on the plan-specific webpages. Appendix A includes a list of libraries where the planning documents are shared, with complete addresses and contact information.

If an individual cannot view documents on SJTPO's website, the SJTPO office, or any participating library in the SJTPO region, noncolor copies may be requested, free of charge. Copies may be picked up at the SJTPO office or mailed at no cost to the recipient. Interested parties can make a request via an online form, also found in Appendix D, or by calling (856) 794-1941.

Attend Public Meetings

Throughout the year, the public and stakeholders have numerous opportunities to engage in SJTPO's planning process. These meetings provide information and a setting for receiving formal comments. SJTPO works to hold meetings at centralized locations, when held in person rather than virtually, and at convenient times, including evenings, to maximize participation from a wide range of the region's public, including those traditionally underserved. SJTPO will provide other accommodations to the greatest degree feasible when requested at least seven days before a public meeting. Accommodations may include but are not limited to translation services, interpretation services, and closed captioning. In January of each year, a schedule of Policy Board meetings for the year ahead is placed on the Announcements webpage under the Legal Notices section. Meeting dates are also posted on the SJTPO website's Calendar. As the year progresses and meetings approach, SJTPO posts reminders on its website, sends them to e-list subscribers, and shares them on social media.

Policy Board Meetings

Policy Board meetings are open to the public and are held at 10:00 A.M. in the SJTPO Conference Room, with the option to attend virtually. The Policy Board members meet six times a year, typically on the fourth Monday, with meetings scheduled bimonthly. The Policy Board holds an annual reorganization meeting in January, at which officers are elected.

Local elected officials from county government, planners, engineers, federal agency representatives, concerned individuals, and other stakeholders often attend Policy Board meetings. A complete list of Policy Board members is posted on the Policy Board webpage.

Members of the public may submit comments prior to the meeting through the general comment form on the website. If attending the meeting, members of the public may comment at the start of the meeting, with each commenter allotted three minutes to speak.

Information for Policy Board meetings is publicized through the e-list, social media, SJTPO's Policy Board webpage, and an annual Legal Notice posted on the Announcements webpage in January.

To allow for adequate notice, agendas and materials are distributed at least 12 days before each meeting. Agendas and meeting minutes are obtainable on the Policy Board webpage.

If there is a change to the approved annual schedule, either the cancellation of an existing meeting or the scheduling of a new meeting, notice will be made at least 48 hours before the date of the canceled meeting or new meeting.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings

TAC meetings are open to the public and are held at 10:00 A.M. in the SJTPO Conference Room, with the option to attend virtually. The TAC typically meets on the second Monday of each month. The TAC holds an annual reorganization meeting in January, at which officers are elected. On occasion, TAC workshops on various transportation-related topics are held.

The committee consists of staff (typically planners and engineers) from each Policy Board member and representatives of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and the Delaware River and Bay Authority. The TAC also invites various other agencies to participate, with specific organizations listed as non-voting members. A complete list of TAC members is posted on the TAC webpage.

Members of the public may comment on agenda items at the start of the meeting, with each commenter allotted three minutes to speak. Meeting notices, agenda packets, and minutes are also available for public viewing on the TAC webpage.

SJTPO publicizes TAC meeting information through social media and its website. To allow for adequate notice, agendas and materials are distributed at least 12 days before each meeting.

Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) Meetings

The Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) is a committee aimed at enhancing the scope of SJTPO's public outreach and ensuring that SJTPO's processes reflect diverse perspectives and community needs. There is no regularly occurring meeting schedule for the COEC. However, meetings will be scheduled in advance and will be open to the public.

Public Workshops

SJTPO hosts in-person and virtual workshop-style meetings that are open to the public as needed. These workshops let attendees learn more about transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian access, freight, and other transportation matters through presentations, displays, posters, and other informational materials. Workshop-style meetings foster one-on-one interactions between members of the public and transportation professionals. Attendees will have the opportunity to comment. SJTPO will record all comments and prepare a written summary, analysis, and report on significant comments received, and use them accordingly.

Other Ways to be Involved

SJTPO welcomes public input at any time. Members of the public can contact SJTPO by calling the office (856-794-1941), filling out the General Comment form on the Public Comment webpage, emailing info@sjtpo.org, faxing (856) 794-2549, direct messaging SJTPO via its social media accounts, and by U.S. Mail. Additionally, the public can engage with SJTPO and participate in the transportation planning process in the following ways.

Request a Safety Program

SJTPO offers a robust series of no-cost safety education programs. Run by SJTPO Traffic Safety Specialists, these programs are designed with a target audience in mind. Each program educates roadway users, drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians about the dangers they may encounter on roadways and shares easy-to-remember methods to improve safety. To view the entire list of programs offered or to request a program, visit the Traffic Safety Education webpage.

Attend Meetings of County Transportation Boards or Committees

Public involvement at the local, county, and subregional levels is also crucial, as these entities own most roadways. Much of the transportation planning process occurs at these levels. SJTPO recommends that the public attend meetings and events hosted by county transportation committees or municipal planning boards. A complete list of transportation contacts is located in Appendix E.

5. ENSURING OUTREACH IS FAIR AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

SJTPO is committed to seeking out and considering the needs of groups traditionally not well-served by the existing transportation system. These include, but are not limited to, the elderly population, minority populations, Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations, zero-vehicle households, and low-income households. SJTPO has formal plans on Title VI and LEP. The plans outline the outreach tools and methods needed to ensure adequate participation from the groups previously mentioned.

Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898 protect individuals from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities.

SJTPO's Title VI Implementation Plan is available on the Title VI webpage. The webpage also provides background on Title VI, SJTPO's policy statement, complaint procedure and form, and the United States Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Assurances.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," relates to public engagement of LEP individuals. An LEP person does not speak English as their primary language and has a limited ability to read, talk, write, or understand English.

SJTPO's LEP Plan outlines the responsibilities of SJTPO regarding the LEP persons and establishes a process for providing assistance to LEP persons for SJTPO programs, activities, and services. The LEP Plan is available on the LEP webpage.

Translation options are available on SJTPO's website. To select a language other than English, locate the drop-down menu at the top of each webpage. Translation is provided for linguistic populations of 1,000 or more that speak English less than very well in the SJTPO region.

If translation or interpretation is necessary for a member of the public to participate in a public meeting, public event, or any other public involvement opportunity, SJTPO has a translation and interpretation firm under contract. SJTPO will work to accommodate all reasonable requests for translation, interpretation, or auxiliary services but encourages requests to be made at least seven days before a public meeting, public event, or any other public involvement opportunity to ensure that SJTPO can secure requested services. Other translation requests, such as those

associated with larger documents, will be provided as quickly as possible and could take up to three weeks.

Strategies to Serve Under-Represented Populations

The Title VI Implementation Plan and LEP Plan comprehensively detail the strategies needed to incorporate under-represented populations into SJTPO's transportation planning process. The strategies to include are as follows:

Identification of Under-Represented Populations using Data

SJTPO uses regional, county, municipal, and Census Block Group data to identify where underrepresented groups are located throughout the region. The information collected helps SJTPO target outreach needs accordingly. Outreach efforts shall occur throughout all planning efforts, including location-specific projects, plans, and studies. Additionally, ALICE data may be used to identify underrepresented groups.

Engagement of Under-Represented Populations using Targeted Strategies

SJTPO is committed to reducing barriers to public engagement, specifically for the under-represented groups in the SJTPO region. Barriers for under-represented groups can include language barriers, wariness of public forums, scheduling conflicts, and limited transportation.

To ensure greater accessibility for the non-English-speaking public, SJTPO has secured a firm that can provide translation and interpretation services on an on-call basis. Information on how to request these services appears at the beginning of every major planning document and is also available across multiple webpages on the website, including the PIP webpage under the "Available Accommodations, Including Translation Services" section.

Children and Teens

SJTPO is proud to offer a robust series of traffic safety education programs, many of them geared toward elementary, middle school, and high school students. Presented by SJTPO's Traffic Safety Specialists, the programs raise awareness of the many risks children and teens face on area roadways and teach simple ways to improve safety. The programs are fun, accessible, age-appropriate, and presented to students in school districts throughout the region.

Young Adults

Young adults are often underrepresented in planning efforts due to inexperience, school-life balance, and limited opportunities. Engagement opportunities for young adults should be social, brief, and held in locations young adults frequent. Engaging young adults through social media is also encouraged.

South Jersey is home to a couple of universities and colleges. Stockton University, located in Atlantic County, offers a Sustainability Program. Directly outside of SJTPO's region, Rowan

University in Gloucester County offers degrees in Planning and Engineering. Building relationships with professors and students in the Planning and Engineering Programs may be beneficial. To date, SJTPO has found that the best way to engage students is to advertise summer internships and allow them to gain firsthand experience working for SJTPO.

Older Adults

Older adults are often involved in community efforts. Despite this involvement, older adults may be underrepresented in planning efforts for many reasons, such as mobility challenges and transportation conflicts. Outreach to older adults should use a variety of formats, including in-person and digital options. If in-person events are held, schedule them during daylight hours and in convenient, ADA-accessible venues.

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities may experience any number of cognitive or physical disabilities. Because the range of possible needs is so broad, SJTPO aims to understand how individuals with disabilities can be excluded from public engagement activities and how to correct such instances.

Outreach to individuals with disabilities should be compliant with ADA requirements. SJTPO always holds public meetings and events in ADA-accessible locations.

Individuals with Limited-English Proficiency

Outreach to LEP individuals should be approachable, highly visual, and conducted in their native language, if feasible. The content made available to these individuals should be easy to share with others through word-of-mouth and relevant to their needs.

SJTPO is committed to ensuring events and publications are accessible and available to all individuals in the region, regardless of English proficiency or native language. When SJTPO distributes public meeting and event notices, it includes information on requesting accommodations, such as translation services. SJTPO will accommodate all reasonable requests for translation, interpretation, or auxiliary services but encourages requests to be made at least seven days before public meetings to ensure SJTPO can secure requested services. Other translation requests, such as those for larger documents, will be provided as quickly as possible and could take up to three weeks.

Racial and Ethnic Groups

Racial and ethnic minorities include people who do not racially identify as white and who face limited opportunities to engage in civic affairs due to a variety of barriers. Racial and ethnic minority groups may include Black, Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Native American.

Racial and ethnic minorities in the SJTPO region are diverse and communicate and engage in varying styles and levels. Outreach to these minority groups should be community-focused, coordinated with local groups and organizations, and consider family needs.

Low-Income Residents

Many low-income people in the SJTPO region balance multiple jobs and face insecurity around shelter, food, and transportation. Low-income residents likely receive information about planning efforts through word of mouth, community organizations, and social media. Effective outreach to low-income people should be convenient and held at different times of day to accommodate work and public transit schedules. Conducting outreach in partnership with Family Success Centers, Community Centers, and other familiar local organizations is advised.

The Use of Federal Funds for Public Involvement Activities

Based on Methods to Improve and Sustain Outreach Equity in the SJTPO Region, it is generally an accepted best practice to provide modest incentives to attract participation at in-person public meetings. These incentives may include:

- food, both in recognition of the limited and precious time of participants as well as acknowledging the fact that most outreach events conflict with mealtimes;
- childcare, to allow parents to participate without having to make difficult decisions regarding childcare and to allow parents to participate with reduced stress; and
- small stipends, not only in recognition of the limited and precious time of participants but also to accommodate the costs associated with transportation to attend in-person events.

As a federally designated organization, SJTPO uses federal funds for all its activities. The "Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making," a United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) publication, states, "Public involvement and participation activities are eligible expenses for most USDOT programs, including both formula and discretionary grant programs." The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 200.432 Conferences, § 200.438 Entertainment Costs, and § 200.75 Participation Support Cost outline how to award funds for incentive-based purchases. In general, federal funds may be used for public involvement activities. However, the public involvement activities must be "necessary" and "reasonable."

SJTPO will evaluate the necessity and reasonableness of incentivizing public outreach activities on a case-by-case basis. As appropriate, documentation will be included in the internal working files for each project or public outreach effort. Incentives may be offered for public involvement activities whose primary purpose is to disseminate technical information "beyond" the MPO Board/Committee. These external activities may include training workshops, public engagement meetings for a draft planning study, or documents in which public outreach is sought.

Below are illustrative examples of when SJTPO could consider documenting the use of federal funds to incentivize public outreach activities. Documentation will be provided as appropriate, whether SJTPO or a consultant leads the public outreach as part of a larger technical study.

Providing Food at Public Meetings

SJTPO aims to hold public meetings outside of typical workday hours to maximize access. Recognizing participants' limited time and acknowledging that most public involvement activities conflict with typical dinner-time hours, SJTPO may determine it appropriate to provide light refreshments at public meetings. To provide light refreshments, SJTPO must document that the refreshments are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the purpose of the public meeting. To document that light refreshments are a necessary cost, SJTPO may compare when refreshments were and were not provided in the past, or document the expense participants may incur if they must purchase refreshments nearby before or after the public meetings. To demonstrate the reasonableness of providing refreshments, staff may compare the type and cost of refreshments with the time commitment and timing of the public meetings. Food at public meetings may be an allocable cost if public involvement is required or recommended during the transportation planning process.

Providing Childcare Services at Public Meetings

Parents/guardians of young children are often an underrepresented group at public meetings. To allow parents/guardians to participate without making difficult childcare decisions and to reduce stress, SJTPO may determine it appropriate to offer childcare services during public meetings. Childcare services may include making SJTPO staff members available to help engage the children in activities (i.e., coloring and drawing) while the parents/guardians participate in the meetings. To provide childcare services, SJTPO must document that the childcare is necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the public meeting. To show that childcare services during public meetings are necessary, SJTPO may note a lack of public involvement from parents/guardians of young children at past public meetings. To show that childcare services are reasonable, SJTPO staff may consider the cost of providing childcare against the anticipated increase in public involvement. Childcare services at public meetings may be an allocable cost if public involvement is required or recommended during the transportation planning process.

Providing Financial Incentives or Reimbursement for Public Involvement Activities

Participants must invest time and effort to take part in the transportation planning process. To recognize the meaningful value participants provide and to cover the costs of transportation to public meetings, SJTPO may determine it appropriate to offer financial incentives or reimbursement for public involvement. To provide financial incentives or reimbursement, SJTPO must document that the financial incentives or reimbursement are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the purpose of the public involvement activities. To show that financial incentives or reimbursement for public involvement is necessary, SJTPO may consider whether participation would be inadequate or unrepresentative without them. Conversely, SJTPO may consider that financial incentives or reimbursement would ensure adequate or more representative public involvement. To determine whether financial incentives or reimbursement are reasonable, SJTPO may compare the costs of providing them with the anticipated increase in public involvement.

Financial incentives or reimbursement for public involvement activities may be an allocable cost if public involvement is required or recommended during the transportation planning process. Financial incentives may include a gift card for participating in a survey.

Translation of Vital Documents / Language Access

As mentioned in Section 6, SJTPO has nine core documents. Core documents require public comment periods, and most require public meetings when substantively revised.

Related to this, SJTPO also has documents that are referred to as vital documents. These documents help residents and stakeholders understand SJTPO's purpose and importance in the four-county region and will be proactively translated into Spanish.

SJTPO also complies with New Jersey's Language Access Law, P.L. 2023, c.263. This law requires State agencies to provide language assistance services and publish a Language Access Plan explaining how the agencies will communicate with individuals with LEP. Under this law, SJTPO has established a list of documents available in English and the top seven languages spoken in the State of New Jersey. These languages include Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Haitian Creole, Gujarati, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish.

The documents listed below are primarily SJTPO's vital documents. This list includes documents SJTPO has deemed related to the Language Access Law and has translated into the additional required languages.

- **Access for All Transit Plan Executive Summary:** The Access for All Transit Plan Executive Summary is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/AccessForAll.
- **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Executive Summary:** The RTP Executive Summary is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/RTP.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Executive Summary:** The TIP Executive Summary is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/TIP.
- **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Executive Summary:** The UPWP Executive Summary is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/UPWP.
- **Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Executive Summary:** The PIP Executive Summary is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/PIP.
- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan**: The LEP Plan is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/LEP.
- **The Public Engagement Guide to Transportation Planning in South Jersey:** The Guide is available in English, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Haitian Creole, Gujarati, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/Guide.

- **Title VI Materials:** Materials that allow the public to understand and exercise their rights under Title VI with regard to SJTPO are available in English, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Haitian Creole, Gujarati, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI.

Limiting Obstacles of Involvement

SJTPO has established the following efforts to remove obstacles to involvement.

Convenient Meeting Times

Consideration of individuals' schedules is vital when hosting in-person and virtual public meetings. SJTPO disseminates meeting information, including location, time, and materials, at least 12 days in advance to allow interested parties to make necessary arrangements. In addition, except for Policy Board and TAC meetings, meetings take place after typical workday hours to maximize attendance.

Transit-Accessible Meetings

SJTPO works to select locations that are transit-accessible to the greatest feasible degree when hosting in-person meetings. Policy Board and TAC meetings take place in the SJTPO Conference Room, which is accessible by New Jersey Transit buses. SJTPO has made it a standard practice to offer a virtual and toll-free call-in option for public meetings.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Provisions

All public notices for planning activities include an announcement that states persons with disabilities will be accommodated. SJTPO will work to accommodate reasonable requests for translation, interpretation, or auxiliary services but encourages requests to be made at least seven days before public meetings to ensure SJTPO can secure requested services. SJTPO will provide other translation requests, such as those associated with larger documents, as quickly as possible, but they may take up to three weeks.

Online Engagement Opportunities

SJTPO will continue to offer online engagement opportunities to accommodate individuals who cannot provide feedback in person. SJTPO will list all engagement opportunities on the Public Comment webpage. Staff will also notify social media followers and e-list subscribers. To subscribe, individuals can locate the "Join Our Mailing List" at the bottom of any SJTPO webpage.

Meeting Recordings Available Online

SJTPO makes public meeting recordings available on YouTube. The public meeting recordings are provided after the public meeting but before the end of the public comment period. This allows members of the public to review the recording and still provide public comments. Recordings are not available for Policy Board or TAC meetings. However, meeting minutes are available in the next month's meeting packet and are reviewed and approved.

Pop-up/Partnering Events

SJTPO will continue participating in pop-up events, as appropriate (i.e., relevant events associated with a planning document or a technical study). Pop-up events benefit members of the public because they do not have to travel to a specific location at a particular date and time. Instead, staff travel to locations and bring all appropriate materials needed to garner feedback. SJTPO will evaluate the appropriateness of pop-up events on a case-by-case basis, depending on the topic, and will be conscientious and respectful of the public's time and purpose for attending the event.

SJTPO will also work to better coordinate with community partners in the SJTPO region. Community partners may include churches, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and Community Centers. As with pop-up events, coordinating with community partners builds relationships, and audiences already trust them.

Preventing Discrimination by Establishing Proper Documentation Procedures through SJTPO's Title VI Implementation Plan

SJTPO must develop a Title VI Implementation Plan. The Title VI Implementation Plan ensures SJTPO's commitment to prevent discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, age, ancestry, nationality, gender, disability, religion, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, income level, and the ability to read, write, or speak English in any of its plans and programs. The Title VI Implementation Plan provides information on implementing a complete complaint procedure. The complaint procedure identifies the reporting requirements for the Complainant (i.e., the individual(s) or group(s) that believe a discriminatory action has taken place) and the Organization (i.e., SJTPO). SJTPO's Title VI Implementation Plan and the complaint procedure are available on the Title VI webpage.

6. HAVING YOUR SAY: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

SJTPO encourages public comments and provides many ways for the public to voice opinions and share ideas with SJTPO.

Public Comment Periods and Public Meetings

A major opportunity for the public to share opinions and ideas is during a public review period. SJTPO will hold a comment period of at least 30 days to review drafts of its core documents. As stated in Section 3, SJTPO has nine documents, often called core documents, because they require public comment periods, and most require public meetings when substantively revised. Specific details for each of the core documents are noted below.

Information necessary for the public to thoroughly understand and comment on each document will be available. This can include public-friendly executive summaries, information posted to SJTPO's website, presentations, flyers and/or project sheets and reports, and links to project websites for comprehensive information.

- **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP):** The RTP is a long-term transportation plan that identifies a high-level vision and outlines transportation projects for at least 20 years. It results from extensive outreach, collaboration, and consensus. The RTP is updated every four years. Draft documents will be available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** The TIP, also referred to as "the list of projects," is an agreed-upon list of projects for which state and federal funds are expected to be spent. The TIP is updated every two years. Draft documents will be available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.
- **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP):** The UPWP, also referred to as "the budget," details all anticipated transportation planning activities to be performed by SJTPO staff, subregions, and member agencies during the fiscal year. The UPWP is updated every year. Draft documents will be available for at least 30 days of public comment.
- **Access for All Transit Plan:** Federally required to be updated every five years, the Access for All Transit Plan identifies the unmet transportation needs and recommends methods to increase service quality and reduce the cost of providing services to the transportation-disadvantaged population in the region. The Access for All Transit Plan serves as the official Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for SJTPO's four counties. Draft documents will be available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.

- **Congestion Management Process (CMP):** The CMP is a federally required process documented in a methodology report that guides how to manage and operate South Jersey's transportation network safely and effectively. Draft documents will be available for at least 30 days of public comment.
- **Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP):** The LEP Plan is a federally required document, updated as needed, that identifies the LEP populations in the region and how SJTPO will work to accommodate their needs in SJTPO's process. Draft documents will be available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.
- **Title VI Implementation Plan:** The Title VI Implementation Plan is a federally required document, updated as needed, that indicates how SJTPO will meet its requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Draft documents will be available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.
- **Transportation Conformity:** The Transportation Conformity document demonstrates transportation conformity of the TIP and RTP with the 2015 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Draft documents will be available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.
- **Public Involvement Plan (PIP):** The PIP is a federally required document, updated as needed, that articulates the rules SJTPO will follow and the processes by which the public can engage in the MPO transportation planning process. Draft documents will be available for at least 45 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.

As noted in Section 3, residents' schedules are vital to consider when hosting public meetings. SJTPO works to hold meetings in ADA-accessible facilities and in transit-accessible locations when meetings are in person, to the greatest feasible degree. SJTPO makes it standard practice to offer a virtual attendance option for members of the public to participate in MPO-hosted meetings. SJTPO also provides a toll-free call-in option so members of the public are not charged calling fees for participating in meetings.

Policy Board and TAC agendas and materials are available 12 days before each regularly scheduled meeting. The public has an opportunity to comment at all regularly scheduled meetings.

If public comments cause any core documents to differ significantly from the versions previously made available to the public, comment periods may be extended by at least ten days to ensure the public has the opportunity to review the latest versions before Policy Board approval. Substantive changes that may justify an additional ten-day comment period include the addition or removal of a section, adjustments to public forms, updates to federal regulations, and other changes that SJTPO deems substantive enough to ask for additional public comment.

Additional Information About the RTP and TIP

The RTP is a long-term transportation plan that identifies a high-level vision, outlines transportation projects for at least the next 20 years, and results from extensive outreach, collaboration, and consensus. The RTP is updated every four years. Draft documents will be available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.

The TIP is an agreed-upon list of projects for which state and federal funds are expected to be spent. The TIP is updated every two years. Draft documents will be made available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.

The RTP guides the TIP, and all federally funded projects in the TIP must be included in the RTP. Each project or phase included in the TIP must be consistent with the approved RTP.[1] To maintain consistency between the two documents, the RTP must be revised whenever the TIP is revised.

As outlined in a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), SJTPO, NJDOT, and New Jersey Transit, found on SJTPO's TIP webpage, there are three types of revisions: Major Amendments, Minor Amendments, and Modifications. Although the MOU was established for TIP revisions, SJTPO will use the same procedures for RTP revisions. To provide full transparency and recordkeeping, all Modifications and Amendments will be posted on the SJTPO website in separate RTP and TIP Trackers found on the respective SJTPO webpages.

Major Amendment

A Major Amendment in the TIP, which must be approved by the SJTPO Policy Board, FHWA, and the FTA, occurs when any TIP/STIP action affects the air quality conformity and requires a new regional conformity determination. The MPO and Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) determines if the change or addition of the project would affect the following, as per the Transportation Conformity Rule.

- Addition of a new project that is non-exempt from conformity analysis unless it is deemed Not Regionally Significant (NRS) or subject to a project-level analysis that would not change the conformity finding;
- Changes the project scope so that it becomes non-exempt from conformity analysis; and
- Changes the project completion date and impacts the conformity analysis year.

[1] As specified in 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450.306 (i).

Public Outreach Procedures for a Major Amendment:

Public outreach for a Major Amendment will include the following steps:

- Institute a 30-day public comment period on the amendment, during which the public can submit written comments.
- Place notification of the public comment period and all relevant information in the dedicated Legal Notices section on the Announcements webpage.
- Place notification of the public comment period on the SJTPO website with an option to submit comments via e-mail.
- Provide similar notification to interest groups (i.e., COEC, Tribal Nations) in the region as appropriate.
- Distribute the document(s) under consideration to the SJTPO's designated libraries.
- A summary of oral and written comments received during the above procedures shall be provided, with responses and staff summaries, in the final Policy Board-approved document(s).
- Following approval by the SJTPO Policy Board, SJTPO will forward the amendment package via e-STIP to NJDOT or New Jersey Transit, requesting approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Minor Amendment

A Minor Amendment, which also must be approved by the SJTPO Policy Board, FHWA, and the FTA, occurs when a change to the TIP does not affect air quality conformity and does not require a new regional conformity determination. This includes the following circumstances:

- Addition of a new project or program that uses federal funds or available prior year balances;
- Deletion of a project or program that uses federal funds in its entirety;
- Addition of a development phase to a project that results in moving all major phases of work out of the TIP;
- Change of funding source for a project in the TIP from the use of non-federal funds to the use of federal funds;
- Exchange of FHWA or FTA funds for a commensurate amount of non-federal funding between the NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT; or

Public Outreach Procedures for a Minor Amendment:

- A proposed minor Amendment will be listed on the agenda for meetings of the SJTPO Policy Board, which are open to the public and advertised at the start of the year in the dedicated Legal Notices section on the Announcements webpage. The Policy Board meeting agendas and supporting documentation will be available for public review on the SJTPO website 12 days before the meeting dates, and the SJTPO's e-list will be notified of the online availability.

- At meetings of the SJTPO Policy Board, the public will be provided with an opportunity to comment on proposed minor TIP Amendments before the Policy Board takes action.

Minor Board Amendment

Board-level action is generally required for specified TIP/STIP amendments or modifications, or when deemed necessary by the MPO Executive Director. If delaying action would result in the loss of federal funding or obligation authority, or affect the August Redistribution Strategic Authorization Plan, the action may be processed as an Administrative Modification with written agreement from all parties. Alternatively, the MPO may convene a special committee or Policy Board meeting for approval. Administrative Modifications must be presented to the Policy Board at its next meeting following implementation.

Modification

A Modification refers to any other smaller revision that does not affect conformity. The MOU defines three classifications of modifications, and they are not listed here because they do not require public comment.

How to Submit Comments

SJTPO prefers comments in written form (as identified below) to accurately respond to all comments. For assistance submitting a written comment, please contact the SJTPO office at (856) 794-1941 or info@sjtpo.org.

Please send all written comments using any of the following methods:

- **Fax**: (856) 794-2549
- **Email**: pip@sjtpo.org
- **Mail**: The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization
  817 East Landis Avenue, 2nd Floor, Vineland, NJ 08360
- **Online form:** General comments are welcome through the "Contact Us with Your General Comments" form found toward the bottom of the Public Comment webpage under the Get Involved tab
- **Social media:** Facebook, X, and LinkedIn*
  * See Appendix D for more information about SJTPO's social media practices.

The public can also comment in person at the following meetings:

- **Policy Board meetings** (scheduled bi-monthly, beginning in January)
- **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings** (scheduled bi-monthly, beginning in January)

- **Public meetings** (scheduled as needed)

Visit the SJTPO website or call (856) 794-1941 to discuss comments with SJTPO staff or to view the current meeting schedule. All comments must be received by the close of the comment period to be explicitly addressed and included in the final plan. SJTPO welcomes general comments at any time and will work to address any comments or questions received.

How Your Comments will be Used

To maintain an effective and meaningful public involvement process, SJTPO will consider all public comments. SJTPO is responsible for coordinating a prompt response to comments. A written summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of all significant comments received during the public comment periods on the nine core documents (PIP, RTP, TIP, UPWP, Access for All Transit Plan, CMP, LEP Plan, Title VI Implementation Plan, and Transportation Conformity), and Major Amendments to the TIP will be provided as part of the final document. All final documents are available on the SJTPO website.

7. EVALUATING OUR EFFECTIVENESS

SJTPO recognizes the need to periodically review the effectiveness of its public involvement programs and methods. SJTPO will use a variety of tools to measure both the quantity and quality of interactions with the public in the four-county region. SJTPO will use the evaluation results to modify practices, as appropriate, to ensure maximum effectiveness. The following are tools that will be used by SJTPO staff to evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement:

Questionnaires, Polls, and/or Surveys

Questionnaires, polls, and/or surveys may be used to gather feedback on topics, such as the usefulness of public meetings or events and the practicality of the techniques used. These materials will be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the public involvement goals.

Examples of when and what types of questionnaires, polls, and/or surveys may be used are listed below.

- **During a comment period to gather input** – Staff may make surveys available through SJTPO's website, e-list, etc., to provide the public with an easy and readily accessible way to submit comments on transportation activities. Staff may use polling questions during public meetings to gather input and keep attendees engaged.
- **Public Involvement Questionnaire** – Staff may distribute a periodic questionnaire to gauge the public's expectations of meetings and events, the effectiveness of current outreach practices, suggestions for improvement, etc.

Assessment of Outreach Tools

SJTPO staff have numerous performance measures to assess its outreach process and effectiveness. SJTPO will monitor the following on a six-month (biannual) basis:

Tool	Sample Evaluation Measure
Website	Number of users; number of new users; number of sessions; number of page views; average session duration
Social media (per account)	Number of followers; change in followers; number of posts; number of impressions; number of mentions; number of clicks
E-list	Number of subscribers; change in subscribers; number of emails sent; number of bounces; percent of emails opened; percent of emails clicked

Public meetings and events	Number of meetings and events; number of individuals notified; number of attendees; location of meetings and events
News "On the Go" articles	Number of articles posted; when posted; topics posted
Questionnaires, polls, and/or surveys	Number of questionnaires, polls, and/or surveys sent; percent completed
Press releases	Number of press releases distributed and published

Consult with Members of the Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC)

The Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) aims to enhance the scope of SJTPO's public outreach and ensure that SJTPO's processes reflect diverse perspectives and community needs. Through its collective membership, the COEC gives staff a direct channel for public and special interest groups to provide input on important subjects, such as developing a safe, effective, and efficient multi-modal transportation system in the SJTPO four-county region. When appropriate, members will work with staff to adapt the organization's public outreach strategies to the specific needs of the SJTPO region's diverse communities and provide feedback on SJTPO plans, activities, and processes.

APPENDIX A. LIST OF LIBRARIES IN WHICH TO VIEW SJTPO DOCUMENTS

County	State Depository Library

Atlantic	• Atlantic County Library – Mays Landing Branch; Reference Department
	  ○ Mays Landing; 40 Farragut Avenue; Mays Landing, NJ 08330
	  ○ Website: www.atlanticlibrary.org/
	• Richard E. Bjork Library at Stockton University; Government Documents
	  ○ 101 Vera King Farris Drive; Galloway, NJ 08205-9441
	  ○ Website: library.stockton.edu/welcome

Cape May	• Cape May County Library; Reference Department
	  ○ 30 W. Mechanic Street; Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
	  ○ Website: www.cmclibrary.org

Cumberland	• Cumberland County Library; Reference Department
	  ○ County Complex; 800 E. Commerce Street; Bridgeton, NJ 08302
	  ○ Website: www.cclnj.org

Salem	• Salem Free Public Library; Circulation Desk
	  ○ 112 W. Broadway; Salem, NJ 08079
	  ○ Website: www.mysalemlibrary.org/
	• Michael S. Cettei Memorial Library at Salem Community College; Reference Department
	  ○ 460 Hollywood Avenue; Carneys Point, NJ 08069
	  ○ Website: www.salemcc.edu/library/

APPENDIX B. FEDERAL LAWS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement in transportation planning has long been a federal requirement for MPOs. Over the years, the regulations, performance standards, and expectations have been amended and reinforced through additional legislation. The purpose of these federal laws is to guide MPOs to seek thoughtful and proactive feedback from individuals and to address issues of environmental injustice. The following are the federal laws SJTPO complies with:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is one of the principal laws that serves as the foundation for SJTPO's public involvement outreach. This act states, "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any programs or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

The second principal law that serves as the foundation for SJTPO's public involvement outreach is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. This landmark civil rights legislation ensures equal opportunity for people with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, and state and local governmental programs and services. The ADA also requires MPOs to host public involvement activities in ADA-compliant facilities and allow individuals access to the information presented.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991

Signed by President George H.W. Bush in December 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) established metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) as they exist today. ISTEA also authorized $155 billion in highway and transit funding over fiscal years 1992-1997.

Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) of 1998

The Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) of 1998 authorized the Federal surface transportation programs of highways, highway safety, and transit from 1998 to 2003.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users or SAFETEA-LU, signed into law by President George W. Bush, was a federal transportation bill that

authorized the federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period, 2005-2009.

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) of 2012

MAP-21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, authorized federal surface transportation spending and programs. President Obama signed the law, and it expired in September 2014.

Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) of 2015

President Obama signed the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which provided long-term funding certainty for MPOs through Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 and outlined public involvement requirements. Regarding public involvement, the FTA summarized the requirements as follows: "A metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is required to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation, and consultation," including throughout the development of its long-range RTP and its TIP. Further, as mandated, the MPO is to provide "adequate public notice of public participation activities; review and comment at key decision points in the development of the [RTP] and TIP; and multiple, accessible participation formats, including electronic and in-person."

MPOs are also required to "develop a collaborative and comprehensive Public Participation Plan, in full collaboration with the public and stakeholder communities, to be used in the development of the [RTP] and TIP, as well as to frame the strategies for public and stakeholder communication and collaboration in all phases of the planning process." To allow the public ample time to review and provide feedback, the MPO must make the PIP available for a 45-day comment period. The comments received are to be documented.

When holding public meetings, the locations must be accessible and convenient if being held in person. Also, provide sufficient notice, with information available online. Notices must also solicit input from traditionally underserved populations, and the MPO must thoroughly consider the input received.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) or Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021

Signed by President Biden in November 2021, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), is a $1.0 trillion infrastructure bill. Beyond expanding infrastructure investment, it increases investment and provides long-term funding certainty for the transportation system through federal fiscal year 2026.

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §450

The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §450, provides planning standards for transportation projects. Specifically, §450.316 states that an MPO must develop and abide by a participation plan that thoroughly engages the public, agencies, and other transportation stakeholders. Further, the federal law notes that the plan should address the MPO's procedures for notifying the public about participation activities, including how the MPO plans to reach all segments of the population and how it seeks public comments.

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §771.111

According to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §771.111, all states that receive federal highway funding must provide the public with "early and continuing opportunities" during the developmental stages of a project to ensure that "social, economic, and environmental impacts" are identified. A public hearing must be held if a Federal-aid project requires substantial changes to right-of-way, road layouts, or functions, negatively impacts an abutting property, or results in any other significant impacts. The public must have reasonable notice of the public hearing. The notice must explain why the hearing is being held, such as the project's purpose, possible alternatives, anticipated impacts, and the procedures for receiving oral and written public comments.

APPENDIX C. SJTPO SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENT POLICY

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) is a government agency that guides the transportation planning process in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties. SJTPO uses social media platforms, primarily Facebook, X, and LinkedIn, to inform interested parties about SJTPO matters.

The following information may be posted on applicable social media pages:

- SJTPO Policy Board meetings and agendas
- Information as it relates to core documents
- Release of Request for Proposals (RFPs)
- Outreach event information and images
- Roadway-related information and statistics
- *On the Go* publications
- Other information, as deemed appropriate by SJTPO staff.

SJTPO encourages the public to share thoughts related to regional transportation on these platforms with the understanding that the comments and opinions expressed do not reflect SJTPO or its employees. All public comments on SJTPO's social media platforms are reviewed and screened in accordance with this policy and may be taken down if deemed necessary.

External User Guidelines

- SJTPO does not allow graphic, obscene, explicit, racial, or otherwise discriminatory comments or submissions, nor does the agency allow comments that are abusive, hateful, or intended to defame anyone or any organization.
- SJTPO does not endorse, support, or promote any private or commercial entity or the information, products, or services on websites that may be reached through external links from SJTPO's social media pages.
- SJTPO does not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.
- All SJTPO social media authors and public commentators must be identified. Anonymous postings are not allowed. Personal responsibility for comments is assumed according to the username and any information provided.
- SJTPO reviews all comments and reserves the right to remove inappropriate messages.

Because social media is a fast-evolving public interface, this policy statement may be amended or modified at any time to ensure its continued use aligns with its intended purpose as a limited forum. Direct questions or concerns about SJTPO's presence on social media to Melissa Melora at mmelora@sjtpo.org or (856) 794-1941.

APPENDIX D. DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS REQUEST FORM

The Documents and Records Request form is not a New Jersey Open Public Records Act (OPRA) form.

SJTPO makes final plans, programs, and studies produced by the organization available for examination on its website and at the SJTPO office.

SJTPO also makes its core documents available for in-library reviewing at select libraries (see Appendix A). These documents include the Public Involvement Plan (PIP), Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Access for All Plan, Congestion Management Plan (CMP), Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan, Title VI Implementation Plan, and Transportation Conformity. To be mindful of library staff resources and limited space, document appendices (unless necessary), executive summaries, and amendments, if applicable, are not printed and transmitted to the libraries. Language is included in the Table of Contents, informing readers that these materials are available on the plan-specific webpages.

If an individual cannot view documents on SJTPO's website, the SJTPO office, or any participating library in the SJTPO region, noncolor copies may be requested, free of charge. Copies may be picked up at the SJTPO office or mailed at no cost to the recipient. Interested parties can make a request by completing the form below, filling out an online form, or by calling (856) 794-1941.

The Documents and Records Request Form can be found on the next page.

South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization

Serving Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties since 1993.

817 East Landis Avenue, 2nd Floor,
Vineland, New Jersey 08360

www.sjtpo.org
(856) 794-1941
(856) 794-2549 (fax)

Jennifer Marandino, P.E.
Executive Director

Leonard Desiderio, *Chairman*
Benjamin H. Laury, *Vice Chairman*
John W. Risley, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Access to Documents and Records Form

Please complete and send to SJTPO by email (info@sjtpo.org), U.S. Mail, fax, or in person at SJTPO's office.

Date requested: _____

Request submitted by: [ ] Email [ ] U.S. Mail [ ] Fax [ ] In person

Name of Requester (Required): _____

Street Address (Required): _____

City/State/Zip (Required): _____

Telephone (Optional): _____

Email (Optional): _____

Records Requested: *Please provide as much specific detail as possible so that SJTPO can identify the information. Please use additional sheets if necessary.*

For SJTPO Use Only

Date Received by: _____

Response Deadline: _____ **Date Response Provided:** _____

Executive Director Signature: _____

APPENDIX E. TRANSPORTATION CONTACTS

SJTPO Subregions

Atlantic County Department of Regional Planning and Development
201 New Rd, Northfield, NJ 08225
Phone: (609) 645-5898
www.atlantic-county.org

Cape May County Planning Department
4 Moore Rd, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
Phone: (609) 465-1080
www.capemaycountynj.gov

Cumberland County Department of Planning
800 E Commerce St, Bridgeton, NJ 08302
Phone: (856) 453-2175
www.co.cumberland.nj.us

Salem County Planning Board
110 Fifth Street, Suite 600, Salem, NJ 08079
Phone: (856) 935-7510 x8414
www.salemcountynj.gov

City of Atlantic City Department of Planning and Development
1301 Bacharach Blvd., 5th Floor, Suite 506, Atlantic City, NJ 08401
Phone: (609) 347-5300
www.acnj.gov

City of Vineland Division of Planning
640 E Wood St, Vineland, NJ 08360
Phone: (856) 794-4000
www.vinelandcity.org

Implementing Agencies

Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA)
2162 New Castle Ave, New Castle, DE 19720
Phone: (302) 571-6300
www.drba.net

New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)
1035 Parkway Ave, Ewing, NJ 08610
Phone: (609) 530-2000
http://www.state.nj.us/transportation

New Jersey Transit (NJ TRANSIT)
Two Gateway Center, 283–299 Market Street, Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: (973) 275-5555
www.njtransit.com

New Jersey Turnpike Authority (NJTA)
1 Turnpike Plaza, Woodbridge, NJ 07095
Phone: (732) 750-5300
www.njta.com

South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA)
Mile Marker 20, Atlantic City Expressway, Hammonton, NJ 08037
Phone: (609) 965-6060
www.sjta.com

Local Public Transportation Services

Atlantic County Transportation Unit
201 Shore Road – Rear Building, 2nd Floor
Northfield, NJ 08225
Phone: (609) 645-7700
www.atlantic-county.org/intergenerational-services

Local Public Transportation Services (Continued)

Cape May County Fare Free Transportation
4 Moore Road, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
Phone: (609) 889-3700
www.capemaycountynj.gov/446/Fare-Free-Transportation

Cumberland Area Transit System
800 East Commerce Street, Bridgeton, NJ 08302
Phone: (856) 691-7799
www.co.cumberland.nj.us/aging/CATS

Cumberland County Department of Workforce Development
3322 College Dr, Vineland, NJ 08360
Phone: (856) 696-5660
www.co.cumberland.nj.us/workforcedevelopment

Mid-Atlantic States Career and Education Center (Salem County)
375 S Broadway, Pennsville, NJ 08070
Phone: (856) 514-2200
wegrowpeople.org

NJ TRANSIT Access Link
One Penn Plaza East, Newark, NJ 07105
Phone: +1 (800) 955-ADA1 (2321)
TTY: +1 (800) 955-6765
https://www.njtransit.com/accessibility/access-link-ada-paratransit

Salem County Office on Aging and Disability Services
110 5th St Ste 900, Salem, NJ 08079
Phone: (856) 339-8644
health.salemcountynj.gov/human-services/office-on-aging

Federal Partners

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) New Jersey Division
840 Bear Tavern Road, Suite 202, West Trenton, NJ 08628
Phone: (609) 637-4200
www.fhwa.dot.gov/njdiv

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region II
One Bowling Green, Room 428, New York, NY 10004
Phone: (212) 668-2170
www.transit.dot.gov/about/regional-offices

Transportation Management Association (TMA)

Cross County Connection
10000 Lincoln Dr E Ste 102, Marlton, NJ 08053
Phone: (856) 596-8228
www.driveless.com

Travel and Traffic

511NJ
Phone: 511
www.511nj.org

APPENDIX F. KNOWING WHO TO CONTACT

From time to time, we all experience issues with the transportation system. We may notice a pothole, a damaged sign, a malfunctioning signal, or overgrown vegetation that blocks the view of an intersection, or we may have a suggestion to improve a roadway or intersection. Knowing the right organization to contact can mean the difference between resolving an issue and staying frustrated. This information is a starting point to help identify the correct organization to contact. Your specific issue may best be addressed by speaking to local public works staff or attending a board or committee meeting.

State-Owned Roadways

The State owns and maintains about 394 miles of interstate highways (such as Interstate 295), US highways (such as Route 40), and State highways (such as Route 49) in the SJTPO region. Any roadways with the signage types shown at right are in the jurisdiction of the State of New Jersey. The State generally maintains the intersection when a State-owned roadway intersects with a county or municipal roadway. For an issue on one of these roadways, contact the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) at 1-800-Pothole or visit the website for the online form.

Authority-Owned Roadways

Authorities own and operate three significant roadways in the SJTPO region. These roadways are separate from the State-owned roadways managed by NJDOT. The Garden State Parkway and New Jersey Turnpike are owned by the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, which can be reached at (732) 750-5300. The South Jersey Transportation Authority owns the Atlantic City Expressway and can be reached at (609) 965-6060.

County-Owned Roadways

Counties own and maintain all roadways numbered in the 500s, 600s, and 700s, which total over 1,400 miles in the SJTPO region. Any roadways marked with signs similar to the one shown here are owned and maintained by a county. Where a county-owned roadway intersects with a State roadway, the State generally maintains the intersection. However, the county generally maintains the intersection where a county route intersects with a municipal roadway.

Municipally-Owned Roadways

Municipalities generally own and are responsible for all of the roadways not addressed above. With over 3,200 miles of roads, if a roadway lacks any of the signage shown above, it is likely

municipally owned. Where a municipally owned roadway intersects with a county or State roadway, the county or State generally maintains the intersection. The State maintains a list of municipal websites.

APPENDIX G. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

The comment period for the Draft 2026 PIP is open from Monday, November 2, 2026, through Thursday, December 17, 2026.

SJTPO will host a hybrid (in-person and virtual) public meeting on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, starting at 6:00 P.M. The public meeting recording will be available to view on the SJTPO YouTube channel.

Public comments are able to be submitted via the following methods:

- **Online comment Form:** PIP webpage
- **Email:** PIP@sjtpo.org
- **Direct message** on Facebook, X, or LinkedIn
- **Questionnaire:** PIP webpage
- **Fax:** 856-794-2549
- **Mail:** PIP Comments, C/O Melissa Melora, 817 East Landis Avenue, 2nd Floor, Vineland, NJ 08360

APPENDIX H. POLICY BOARD RESOLUTION

To be made available after the anticipated Policy Board approval of the PIP in late January 2027.