

Understanding SJTPO

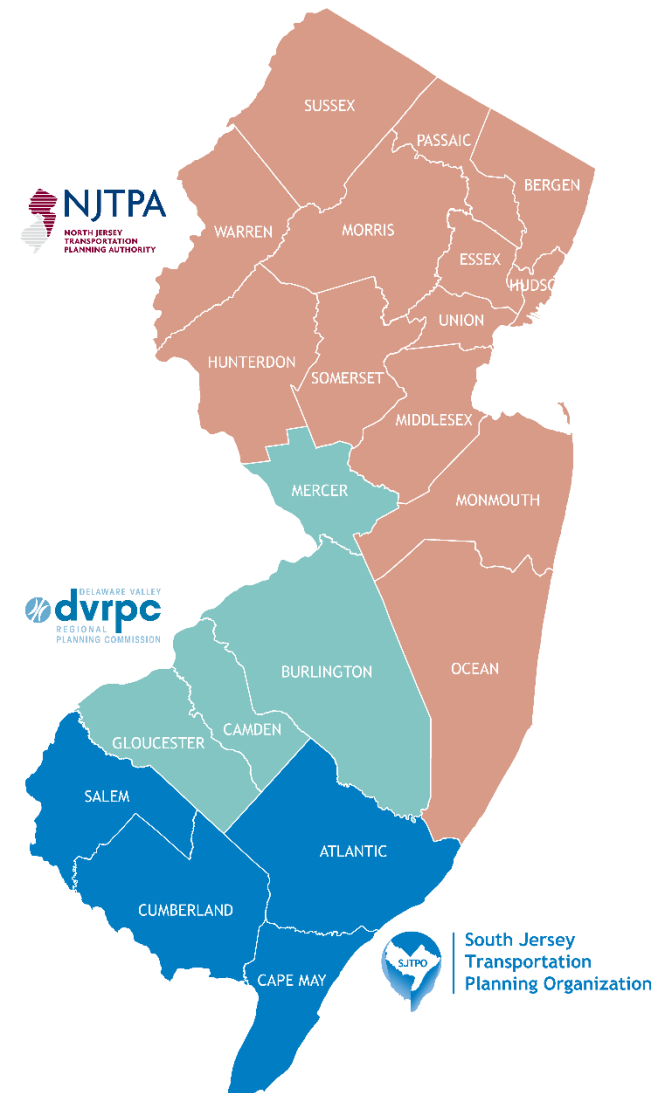
Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
Monday, January 30, 2017



**SOUTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

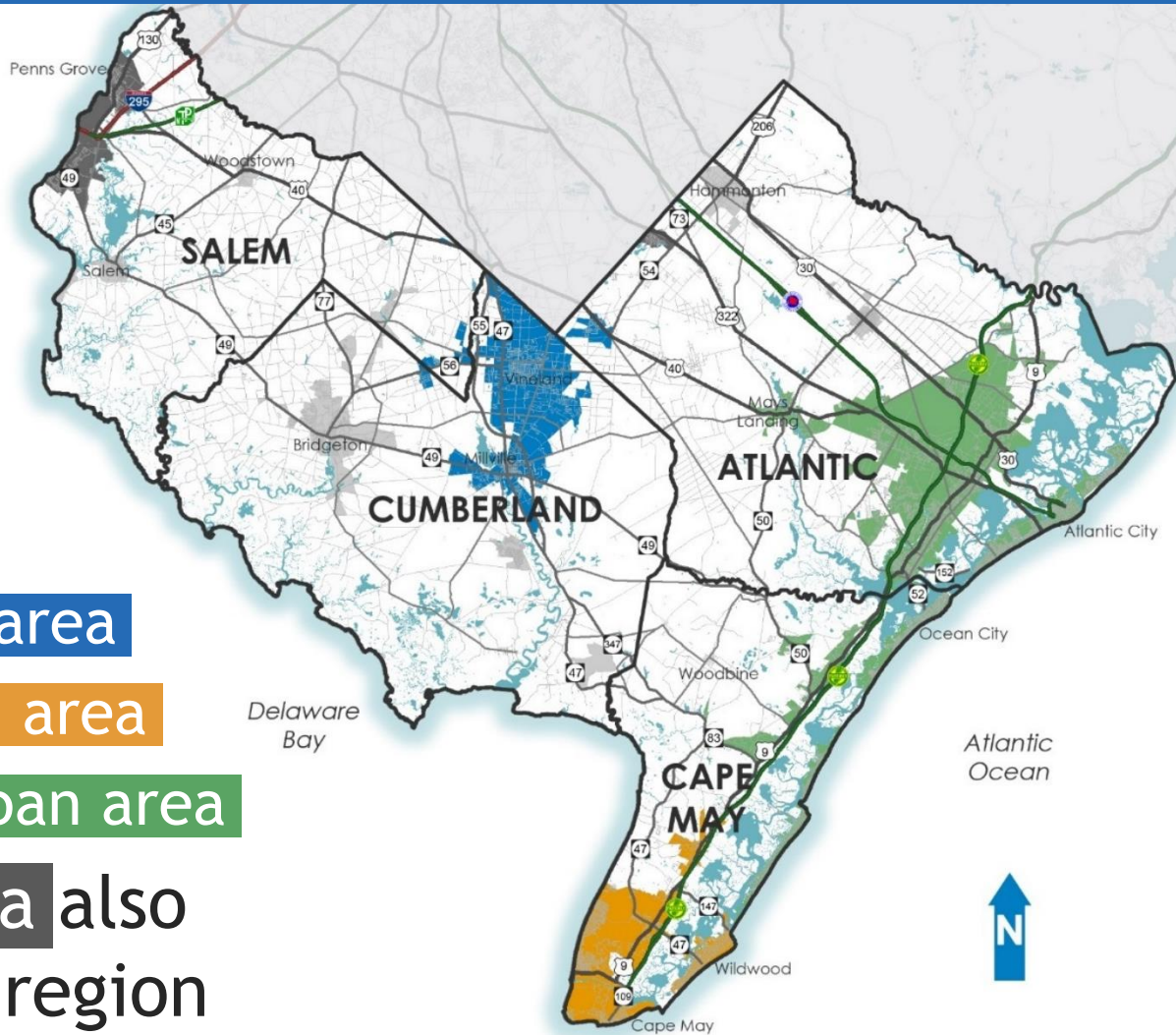
What is the SJTPO?

- A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), as established by federal law
- Formed in 1993, serves Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties
- Brings stakeholders to the table to direct federal transportation dollars to projects and programs
- Required to oversee the “3-C Process” - continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive



What is the SJTPO?

- MPOs are required for urbanized areas with over 50K population
- We have three:
 - Vineland urban area**
 - Wildwood urban area**
 - Atlantic City urban area**
- **Philadelphia area** also crosses into our region



MPOs can differ greatly...

The role of an MPO is determined by the needs of the local area and the will of elected officials

- Some MPOs serve a dual role (i.e. local planning commission, etc.) such as DVRPC in Philly
- Some organizations are aggressive to advance priorities set within the MPO (sustainability, bicycle access, etc.)
- Some organizations serve more of a support/technical role to local jurisdictions' already-present decision-making processes (local elected officials, planning boards, etc.)

This is SJTPO's role

What SJTPO CAN and CANNOT Do

✓ CAN Do:

- Once one of our subregional partners (roadway owner) wants an improvement, we can help them get funding and navigate the process
- Perform studies to inform roadway owners

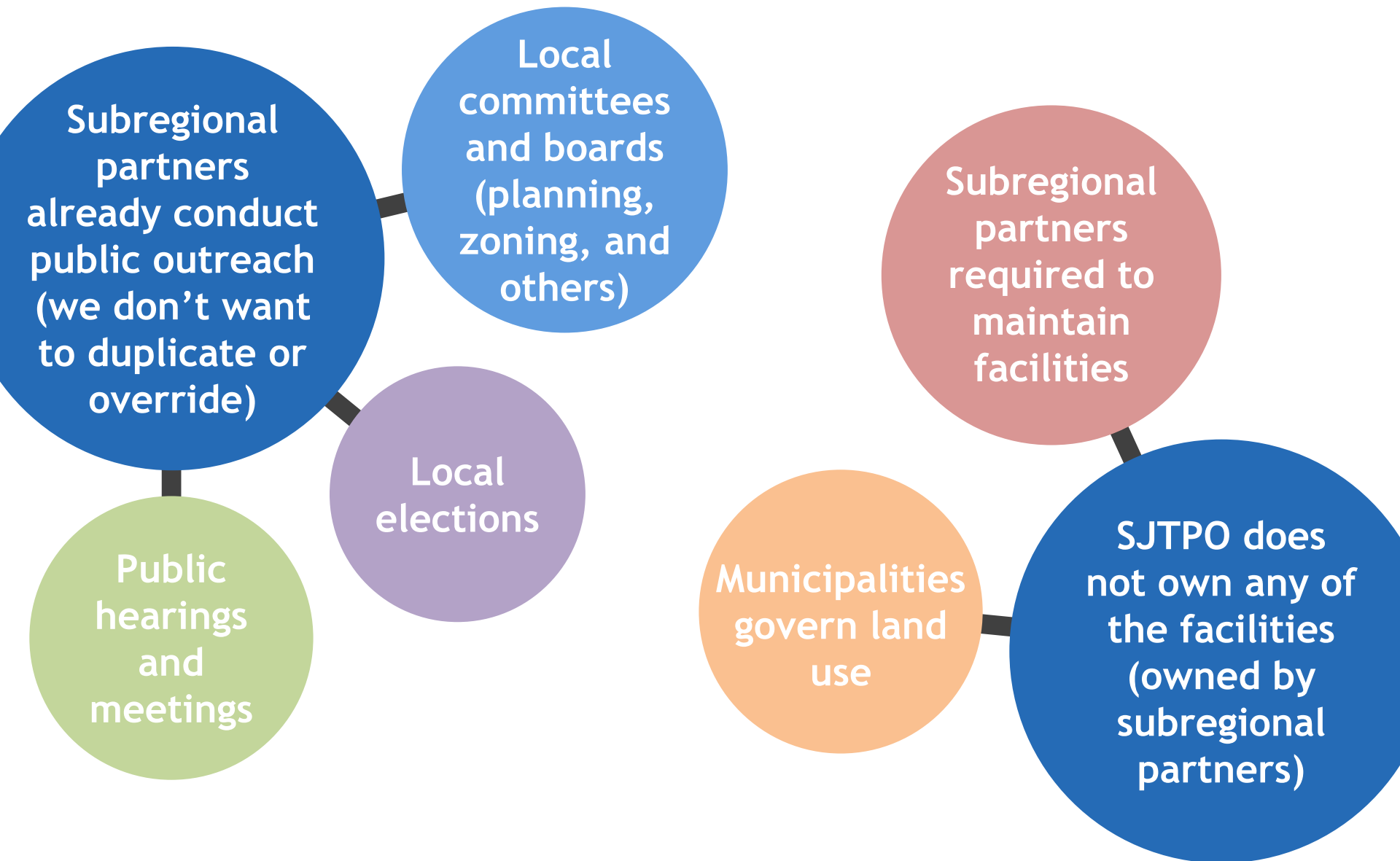
✗ CANNOT Do:

- Decide if a roadway will be changed/improved
- Change transit service
- Maintain roadways (vegetation, potholes, etc.)
- Set speed limits

✓ For the things we cannot do, we have regional partnerships with those who can



SJTPO Doesn't Choose Projects... Why not?



Our Products = Our Process

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

“The Budget”

- Updated every year
- Budgets 1 year out
- Lays out staff priorities
- Identifies technical studies
- Includes subregional efforts
- Funds activities accordingly

www.sjtpo.org/UPWP

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

“Long-Term Vision”

- Updated every 4 years
- Plans 20+ years out
- Provides opportunity to think big and ensure that projects meet regional vision
- Activities should always tie into RTP goals

www.sjtpo.org/RTP



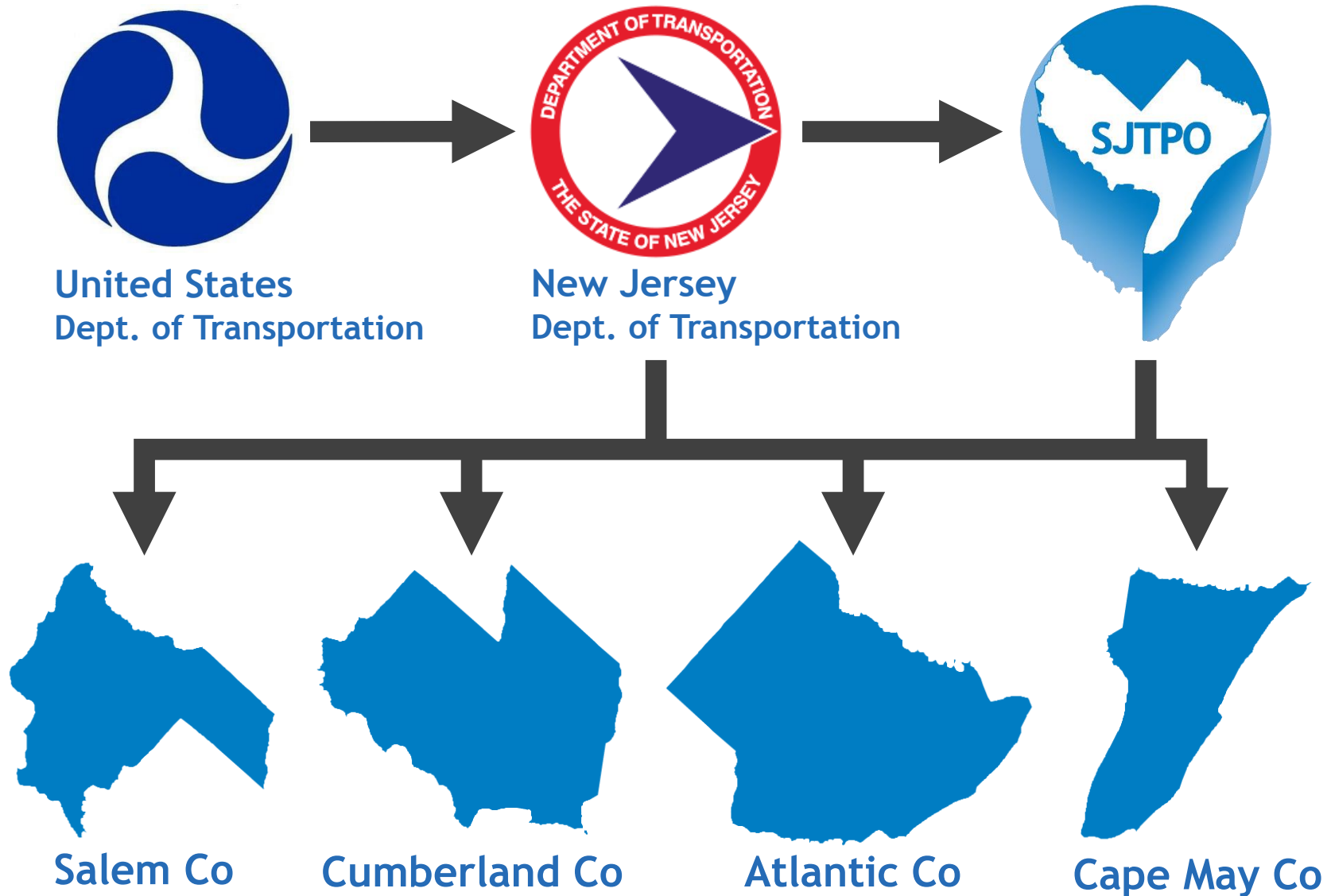
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

“List of Projects”

- Updated every 2 years
- Plans 10 years out
- Assigns funding to move projects forward
- Due to cyclical nature of RTP and TIP updates, **the TIP is essentially the core document for projects**

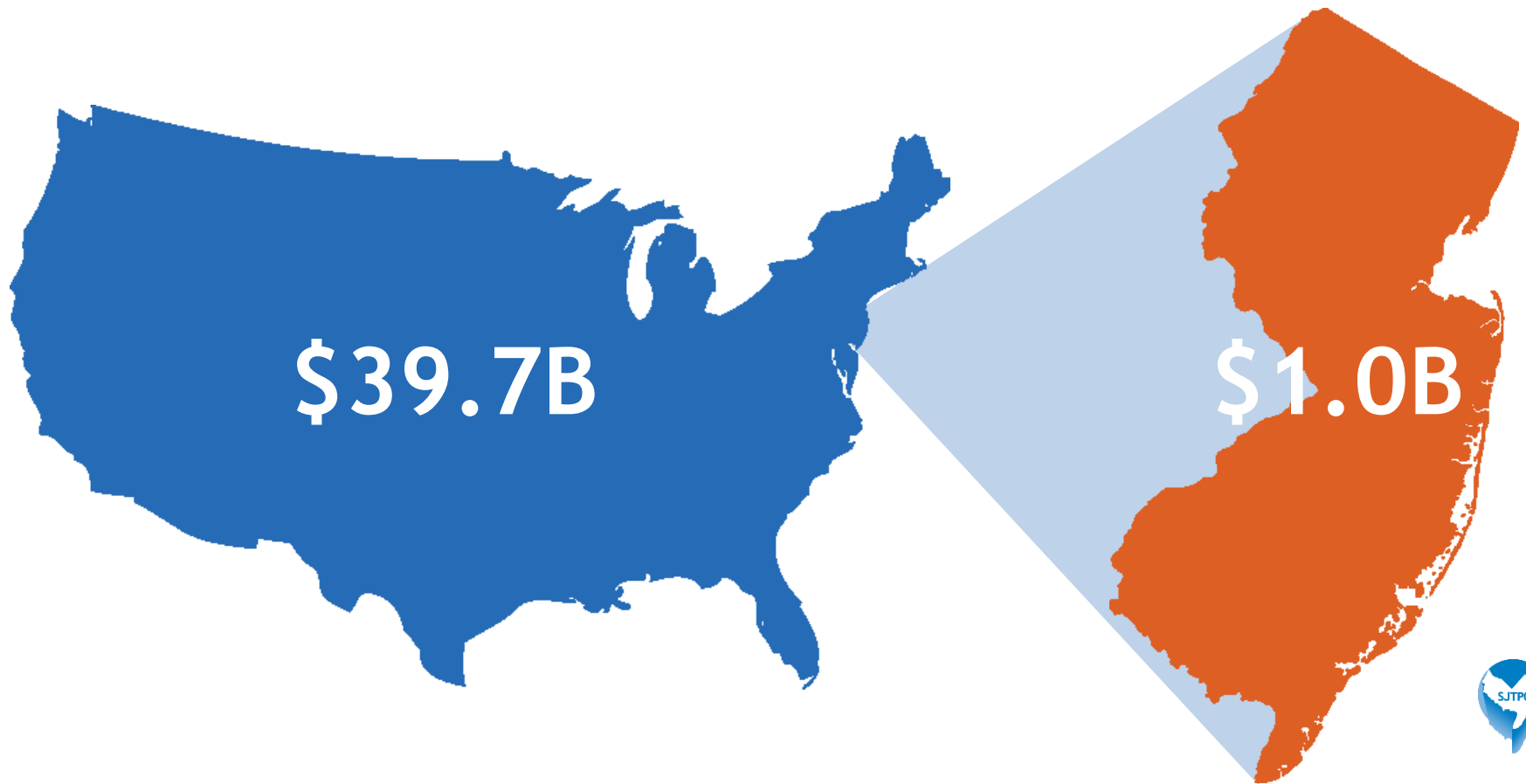
www.sjtpo.org/TIP

Federal Transportation Funding



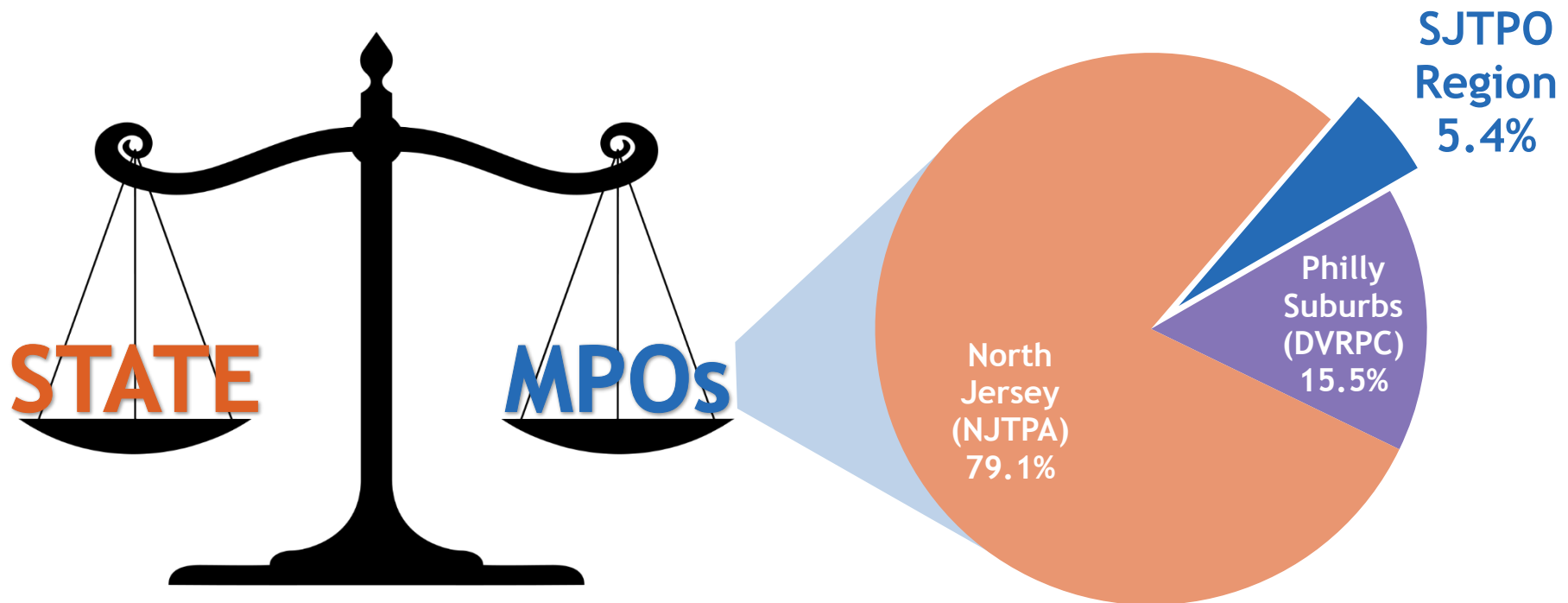
Federal Transportation Funding

Fiscal Year 2016 Federal Transportation Funding via Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, our federal transportation funding legislation



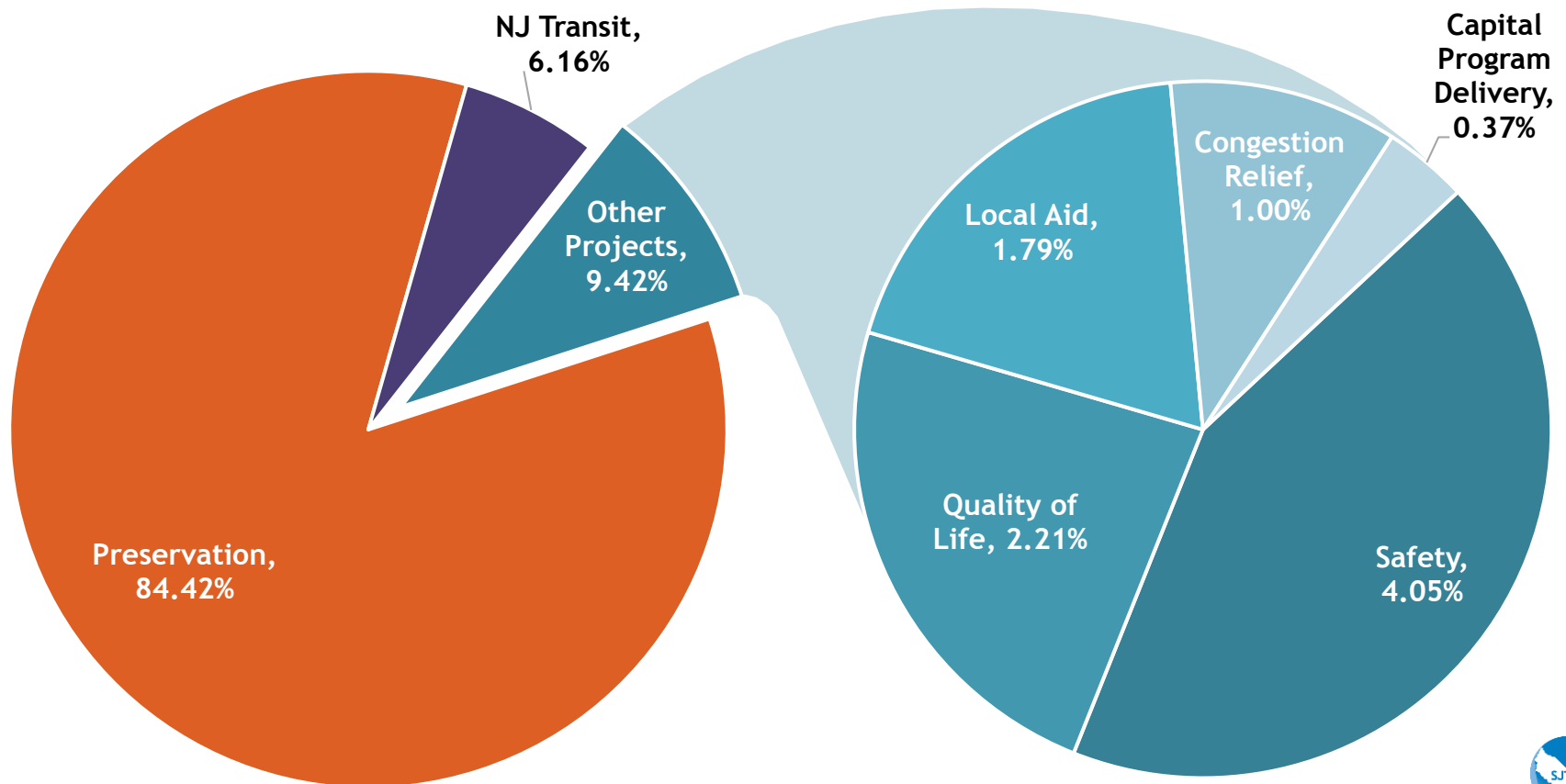
Federal Transportation Funding

The State keeps roughly half of federal funds for projects and programs across the state and determines a distribution of the rest to the MPOs



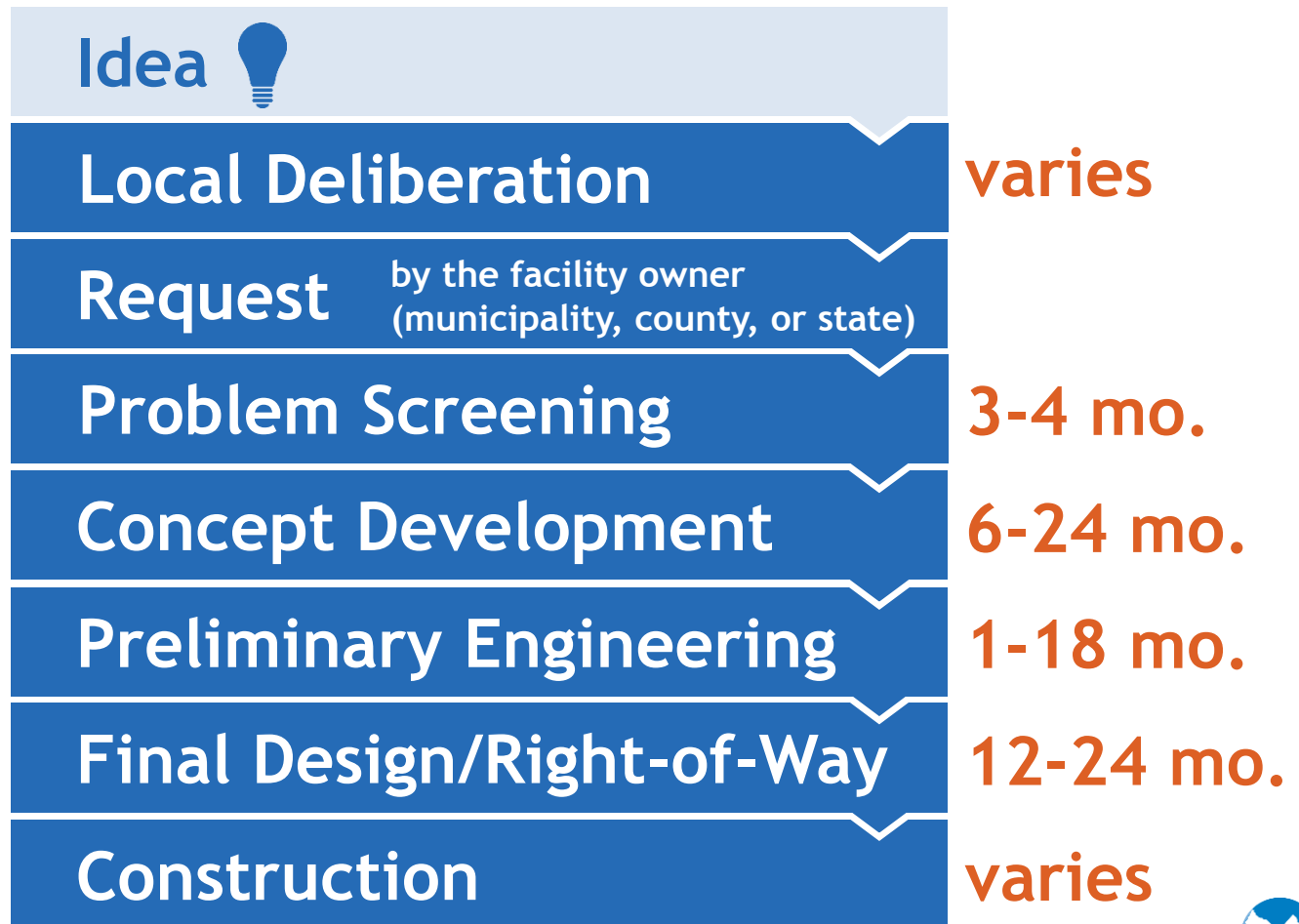
How SJTPO Funding is Spent

Over 90% of FY 2016 funding (TIP) went to maintain the existing system or to NJ Transit



How does a project get built?

The State Process

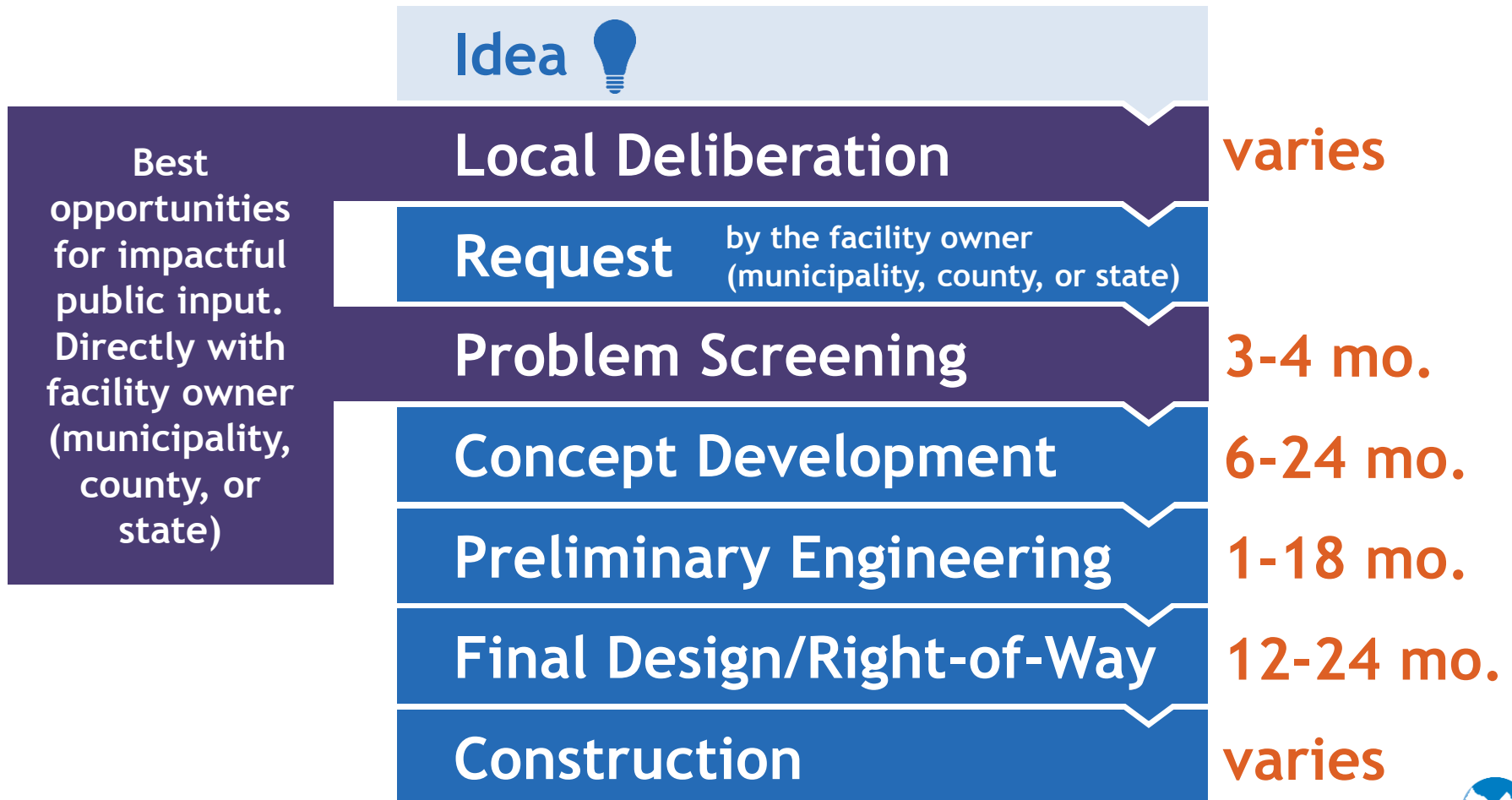


Minimum two years just to BEGIN construction



How does a project get built?

The State Process



So, that's how a project gets built...



How does a project get built?

However...



How does a project get built?

- Most (~84%) of SJTPO's dollars go to system preservation
- For these projects:
 - Selection based on a data-driven process using condition information (ex: Asset Management Systems)
 - Right-of-way, environmental, problem screening, etc. are significantly cut back or completely eliminated
- Full process is still relevant for select efforts
 - Projects that create additional pavement
 - New bicycle/pedestrian facilities
 - Intersection or signal improvements



Why don't we build more bike routes ?

- Staff have limited resources to investigate problems and ideas
- Local opposition to beneficial new practices
 - Staff lack adequate time and resources to educate the public and elected officials
 - Local governments are afraid of litigation
- Local funds do not even cover maintaining the existing system
- Outside funding is limited and really competitive
- Funds come with restrictions or “strings” attached
 - Some will not pay for “recreational” trails
 - Some will not pay for design or right-of-way, but if locals pay, construction funds could be gone when ready



Why don't we build more bike routes ?

- Rigorous environmental regulations
 - Especially in Pinelands or CAFRA (most of our region)
 - Often similar restrictions on new trails as new roads
 - Projects that add pavement are often over-burdensome and local governments often give up
 - Design standards favor “one size fits all” approach rather than facilities tailored to local conditions
 - Maintenance costs (ex: cleaning bike lanes)
-
- Despite this, SJTPO and our partners continue to work to advance good projects, but these constraints impact the speed & number of projects

SJTPO Structure (Per Federal Law)

Policy Board

- Elected officials (11)
- Makes all final decisions
- Meets 6 times per year
- Informed by TAC, staff, and public recommendations

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

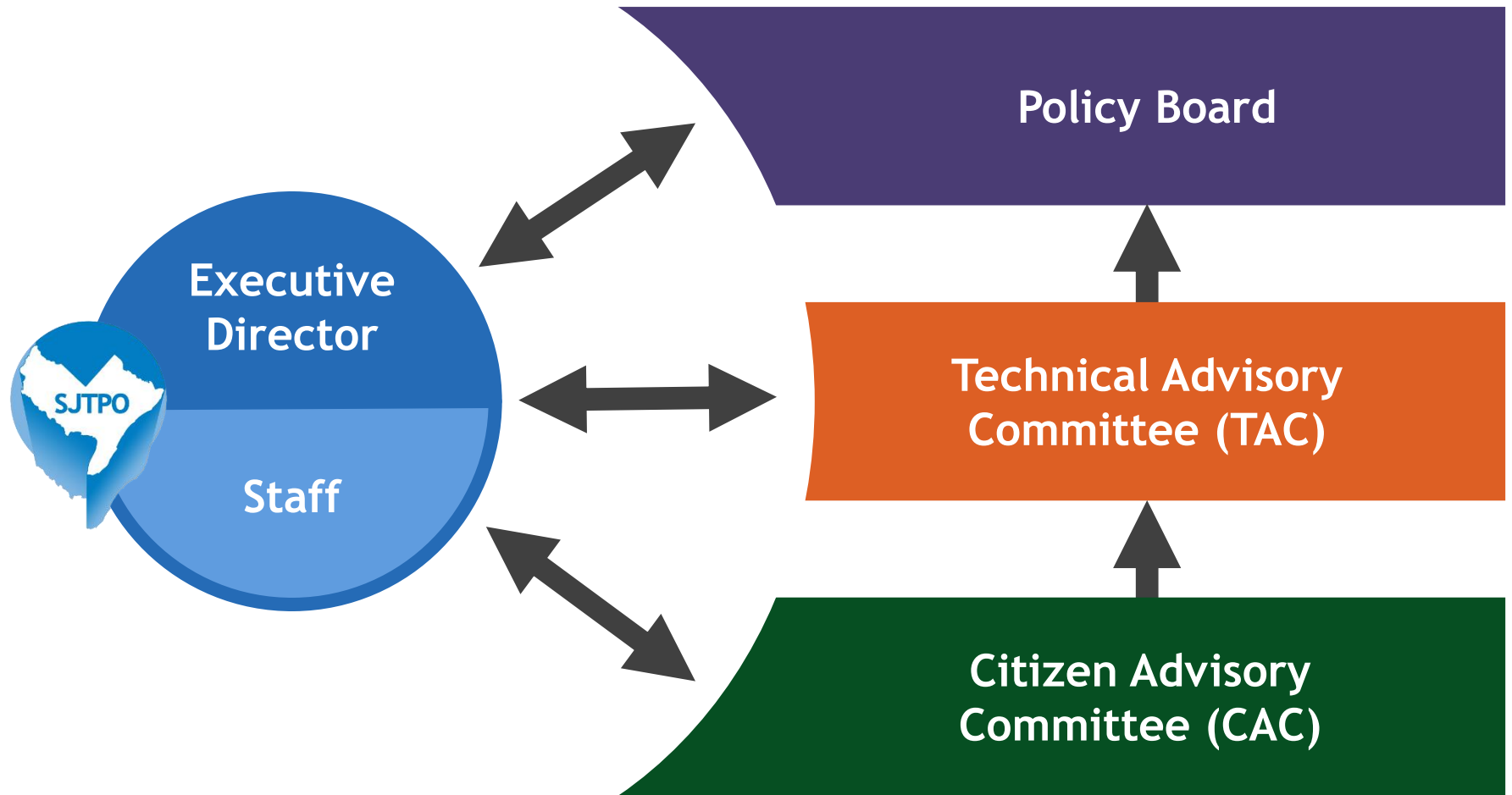
- Planners and engineers
- Makes recommendations to Policy Board
- In-depth discussion of projects and issues
- Meets bi-monthly on average
- Jurisdictions bring their projects and ideas



SJTPO Structure (Per Federal Law)



SJTPO Internal Flow



Public Outreach: Requirements

- Opportunity to comment directly to us on core products
- Provide public notice
- Public meeting on RTP and TIP
- Include a variety of public interests
- Focus on visualization
- Address non-English speaking
- All detailed in the SJTPO Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

“Rules for Outreach”

- Updated as needed
- Identifies outreach requirements SJTPO must follow
- Includes a toolbox of possible outreach strategies
- How to evaluate our performance

www.sjtpo.org/PIP

Public Outreach: Beyond the Minimum

- We hold multiple public meetings and events
 - Target disadvantaged communities
 - Reach out to each county
 - More convenient events/times (tables at fairs, etc.)
- We created the Citizens Advisory Committee
 - Platform to educate about issues and needs
 - Ongoing snapshot of public sentiment
 - Focus group to test and improve outreach
- Website redevelopment and social media
- Develop and expand the public information list
- Videos and interactive maps



SJTPO's Public Outreach Objectives

1 Collect Input on SJTPO Products & Activities

- Core SJTPO Activities
 - UPWP
 - RTP
 - TIP
 - PIP
- Various Technical Studies (per UPWP)
- Other outreach activities, as requested by TAC and Policy Board

2 Educate the Public on initiatives that can improve transportation in South Jersey

- Transportation Planning Process
- Regional needs and constraints
- Funding Opportunities
- Advancing positive transportation countermeasures
 - Bicycle & pedestrian
 - Safety: road diets, roundabouts, etc.

The Citizen's Advisory Committee has an important role in both of these objectives

CAC Role in SJTPO Process

- Serve as an ongoing snapshot of public opinion
- Help us to vet our products and activities
 - Core products (TIP, RTP, UPWP, and PIP)
 - Other products and activities, as needed
- Help us improve our messaging and outreach process
- Serve as a forum to help us educate the public about our process and important issues
- Help us bolster awareness of SJTPO



About SJTPO Video



Available on our YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/0W7QNC8jmzc>