

## Appendix B. Summary of Significant Public Comments and Responses

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**Public Comment Period:** Monday, August 14, 2017 – Friday, September 15, 2017

**Public Meeting:** Tuesday, August 29, 2017

1. **COMMENT:** There is a discrepancy with STP-SJTPO funds as shown in Table 2 (NJDOT Resources) and Table 9 (SJTPO Distribution of Funds – NJDOT & NJ Transit). In FY 2018, Table 2 shows \$11.2M while Table 9 shows \$11.8M for the FHWA: STP-SJTPO funding category. The numbers are different through FY 2027 in both tables. Further inspection of the financial tables reveals there are other similar discrepancies for NJTPA and DVRPC.

**RESPONSE: NJDOT:** *The NJDOT provides additional Obligation Authority to SJTPO for Local Aid Consultant Services and Local Aid Concept Development. Thus, Expenditures in Table 9 would be greater than Resources in Table 2. Furthermore, the STP-SJTPO fund type (now referenced as STBGP-SJ) was not in balance for its planned local projects. Adjustments were made to the Future Projects line item to bring Expenditures for the local projects into balance with STBGP-SJ Resources.*

2. **COMMENT:** Is there any improvement planned at Route 47, Route 9 and the intersection of Route 9 and Route 47 within Middle Township? Over the period from Monday, July 17, 2017 through Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> there was a total of 20 motor vehicle crashes along Route 47 within Cape May Court House, Rio Grande, and the surrounding area. This high frequency of crashes is a problem that should be addressed.

**RESPONSE: NJDOT:** *There are no current planned projects that address safety concerns at the intersection of Route 47 and Route 9. There is a Problem Statement currently under review that identifies a need for pedestrian accommodations on Route 47, from the Garden State Parkway to County Route 162 (mileposts 3.0-4.5). A safety score will be calculated for this location. If warranted, the Problem Screening recommendation will include further investigation of the intersection during Concept Development.*

3. **COMMENT:** Programs with funding across multiple years appear to be missing funding values for certain years.

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *An initial DRAFT TIP was released on August 8, 2017 with a revised DRAFT document made available for public comment on September 1, 2017. It had come to our attention that Programs with funding in each year of the TIP had funding not displayed for certain years due to a technical issue in the underlying database queries. This issue has been resolved, and the revised TIP displays all funding years for all projects. Within Section 2 of the TIP (Regional Highway Projects/Programs) over the 10-year period, a total of \$842.8 million is programmed for the SJTPO.*

4. **COMMENT:** What is meant by the TIP being 'fiscally constrained'?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *Fiscally constrained means that projects requiring partial federal funding cannot be placed in the TIP unless the entire project is shown to be completely funded. For example, a \$100 million bridge project cannot be added to the TIP if only \$10 million in federal funding is available for the project. Many years ago, the TIP did not require fiscal constraint, and as such many projects were simply 'wish list' projects with no proper funding sources identified. Modern TIPs require full funding to be identified for each project.*

5. **COMMENT:** When a project is funded, but then is cancelled, what happens to that money?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *What happens to the money depends on what phase the project was in. If the project was designed with federal funding, and if within a 10-year period NJDOT chooses not to construct the project, then the federal funding spent on design must be paid back. At the end of the federal fiscal year (October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>), federal money not spent by the state is returned to the federal pot, and other states may apply for that funding.*

6. **COMMENT:** Are STP-SJ funds specifically for the four STJPO counties, or for the whole state?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds are allocated to each of the three MPOs, STP-SJ funds (now referenced as STBSP-SJ) is the sub allocation to SJTPO and are utilized to fund local roadway transportation projects in the four-county SJTPO region, including Atlantic City and the City of Vineland. These federal funds are generally used for resurfacing projects, minor intersection improvements, or other projects that do not impact right-of-way. These federal transportation funds must be implemented within one year of being programmed into the TIP.*

7. **COMMENT:** In the table titled 'TIP Funding in FY 2018 (millions)' presented at the public meeting, why are three of the funding sources highlighted?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *The three highlighted funding sources (CMAQ, Safety, and STP-SJTPO) are the funding sources over which the SJTPO has the most discretion. The other funding sources listed in this table are used in the SJTPO region, but are primarily controlled by NJDOT.*

8. **COMMENT:** Has there been studies done to determine how effective rumble strips are in terms of reducing crashes?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *The SJTPO has funded the installation of centerline rumble strips in both Cumberland and Salem Counties using federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). Use of the federal funding source requires a data-driven approach with the goal of reducing fatal and serious injury crashes. Rumble strips are one of the Federal Highway Administration's Proven Safety Countermeasures. Based on research conducted by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), rumble strips have the following documented crash modification factors:*

- *Center line rumble strips on rural two-lane roads: 44% reduction of head on/fatal and injury crashes*

- *Center line rumble strips on urban two-lane roads: 64% reduction of head-on/fatal and injury crashes*
- *Shoulder rumble strips on rural two-lane roads: 36% reduction of run-off-road fatal and injury crashes*

*More information on the efficacy of rumble strips, including a list of research studies, may be found on the FHWA's website*

*[https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/fhwa\\_sa\\_12\\_008.cfm](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/fhwa_sa_12_008.cfm).*

9. **COMMENT:** How are the federal funds allocated to the counties for roadway transportation projects? Is the projects' impact to a community considered along with the scope and cost of the project itself?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *The primary role of SJTPO is to provide access to federal funds across the four-county region in a fair and equitable manner. When a County (or City sub region) submits a project to be considered for federal funds to the SJTPO, they would have already received public input and considered any impacts to the surrounding community. It is the County's role to develop an appropriate cost estimate for the project and establish the scope of the selected project. Most projects funded using STP-SJ dollars are construction projects for which the County utilizes their own funds to design and prepare for construction authorization.*

10. **COMMENT:** When referencing that most funding is used for construction, does this refer to reconstruction of a road or the construction of new roadways?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *Most of SJTPO's Surface Transportation Program funds are spent on the resurfacing or reconstruction of existing roadways and not construction of new roadways. Having shovel ready projects has afforded SJTPO the opportunity to fund projects beyond the initial allocation of federal funds, bringing more money into the SJTPO region than was otherwise programmed.*

11. **COMMENT:** Does SJTPO's TIP Project Selection Process Ranking System list the criteria in order of priority?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *SJTPO's Project Selection Process was developed by a special subcommittee of SJTPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and includes seven categories by which a project is ranked, including:*

1. *Support the regional economy (15 points)*
2. *Improve safety (20 points)*
3. *Reduce congestion and promote mobility (15 points)*
4. *Protect and improve the environment (10 points)*
5. *Preserve and maintain the existing transportation system (20 points)*
6. *Favor projects for more important facilities, services, and programs (15 points)*
7. *Favor cost-effective projects (5 points)*

*The maximum score for each category reflects its relative significance in the ranking process, which is listed alongside each of the seven categories.*

12. **COMMENT:** May comments on the TIP be submitted through the SJTPO website?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *At this time, SJTPO does not have the ability to receive comments directly on our website. Comments can be received in one of several ways; through email at [info@sjtpo.org](mailto:info@sjtpo.org); mailed to the SJTPO office at 782 South Brewster Road, Unit B6, Vineland New Jersey 08361, or sent to SJTPO via fax at (856) 794-2549. Comments were also received at the TIP Public Meeting held on Tuesday, August 29, 2017 at Vineland City Hall.*

13. **COMMENT:** Are the county planning offices (where drafts of the TIP document were sent) open to the public?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *The County Planning offices are open to the public during normal business hours; generally, 8:30AM to 4:30PM.*

14. **COMMENT:** In year's past solicitation for municipal aid funding was received once per year. However, this year the solicitation was done twice, noting that additional funds were available.

**RESPONSE: NJDOT:** *The Local Aid office, at the direction of the Commissioner, advanced the FY 2018 solicitation for municipal aid funding to an earlier time in the fiscal year. This, therefore, is the primary reason two solicitations were done in the same calendar year (2017); one for the FY 2017 solicitation and the second for the FY 2018 solicitation.*

15. **COMMENT:** The amount of time it takes to complete a project is of concern. For example, some bridge projects take two years to complete, which causes extensive detours and lengthy disruptions to traffic. Is there the ability to commission a study to investigate the causes of the excessive time to complete a project?

**RESPONSE: NJDOT:** *The amount of time it takes to "complete a project" varies greatly depending upon project size, scope, and complexity. Currently, there are two methods to deliver Capital Projects; Standard project delivery and Limited Scope project delivery. The standard method is for larger projects with greater complexity. As the name implies, the Limited Scope project delivery method is for projects with a limited scope, such as pavement resurfacing and bridge deck replacement.*

*Once the project is in construction, an additional set of factors comes into play, such as; project location, construction staging, time of the year that the project was let, etc. These construction factors are universal to all DOT/Highway Departments.*

16. **COMMENT:** The use of "smart signals" or signals that are responsive to the presence of a vehicle should be more widely utilized in the area. This would eliminate sitting at a traffic signal, waiting for the signal to change, when there is no traffic on the conflicting approaches, ultimately reducing the impacts on air quality. Is there the ability to identify traffic signals in the four-county SJTPO region that could be upgraded to "smart signals"; identifying the advantages of technology?

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *SJTPO recently completed a consultant-led study to create an inventory of county-owned traffic signals in Atlantic, Cape May, and Salem Counties (Cumberland County*

*already had an inventory of signal equipment). This inventory can be used to identify which signalized intersections should be prioritized for future signal improvements. SJTPO has also funded several traffic signal improvement projects in recent years through the CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement) program. These projects are intended to make the signals more demand-responsive by adding vehicle detection cameras, and to improve traffic flow by making nearby signals operate in coordination with one another. SJTPO hopes to continue to fund signal improvement projects in the future as funding permits.*

- 17. COMMENT:** Complete Streets programs are used to ensure that roadways are not just designed for vehicles, but rather for all roadway users including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit buses. I encourage the SJTPO to establish a resolution in support of Complete Streets policies, and to recommend that municipalities adopt Complete Streets policies of their own.

***RESPONSE: SJTPO:*** *SJTPO does not own any roadway facilities and thus a Complete Streets Policy would not have the same benefit that it might at the state, county, or municipal levels. SJTPO is supportive of advancing Complete Streets and is working to help local jurisdictions include and address the needs of all users in transportation projects. SJTPO is currently piloting the Cumberland County Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, which will analyze all bicycle and pedestrian crashes in Cumberland County, identify problem locations, and select countermeasures to advance for federal safety funding (HSIP), while collecting public feedback throughout. The intent is to take that model and apply it to each of the other counties in the region, pending NJDOT and FHWA approval. Additionally, as part of upcoming efforts, SJTPO intends to identify priority corridors for bicyclists and pedestrians, based on factors including but not limited to the need for nearby residents to use those modes. This will assist SJTPO to help local jurisdictions prioritize and incorporate bicycle and pedestrian improvements and accommodations at potential project locations.*

- 18. COMMENT:** In the City of Vineland, street lights are being upgraded to LED lighting. Sometimes, all the street lights are on one side of the road, leaving the other side of the roadway dimly lit. Consideration for installing street lights on alternating sides of the road, so that both sides of the roadway are illuminated.

***RESPONSE: City of Vineland:*** *Street lighting is handled by the City of Vineland Electric Utility. The Utility believes that the LED lighting adequately illuminates both sides of a street. If specific locations are of concern, the Electric Utility will inspect the locations to determine if there is a problem.*

- 19. COMMENT:** There have been 19 pedestrian fatalities in Cumberland County since 2004. Specifically, on NJ State Highway Route 47, from 2010 to 2017, there were nine (9) pedestrian/bicycle fatalities on a four-mile segment from the Vineland City limits (in the south) near Route 55 to Landis Avenue, NJ Route 56 (to the north). Has the City of Vineland asked either SJPTO or NJDOT to conduct a pedestrian study?

***RESPONSE: SJTPO:*** *Within the current Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), SJTPO is seeking consultant services for a Cumberland County Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. This study is to be funded with Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding.*

*The study will be modeled off a City of Newark study and it will analyze all bicycle and pedestrian crashes in the County, identify problem locations, and select countermeasures to advance for federal safety funding (HSIP), while collecting public feedback throughout. The SJTPO study will focus on projects along county and municipal roadways, but we will analyze data along all roadways and bring areas of concern on state highways to NJDOT's attention.*

- 20. COMMENT:** Bus shelters not only protect individuals from the elements when waiting for buses, they also alert drivers that there may be pedestrians in the area. Delsea Drive has very few bus shelters. The City of Vineland should consider the installation of bus shelters along the NJ Transit routes.

**RESPONSE: NJ Transit:** *NJ Transit maintains a bus shelters program whereby municipalities like the City of Vineland can work with NJ Transit to identify potential locations for installation of bus shelters. NJ Transit will work closely with municipalities, and will arrange for, and bear the cost of, installing bus shelters at bus stops established by municipal resolution provided that a local sponsor, public or private, will agree to accept responsibility for maintenance and liability.*

**RESPONSE: City of Vineland:** *Bus shelters are installed by NJ Transit, but maintenance responsibility falls upon the City. Shelters have been installed in the past, but they have been routinely destroyed by vandals. The City is therefore reluctant to request additional bus shelters.*

- 21. COMMENT:** As part of the TIP and long-range planning, the MPO should look holistically to address bicycle and pedestrians; those residents who do not have access to a vehicle. In doing a study, the causation of the crash should be investigated; in some instances, pedestrians are being killed when crossing the street while trying to utilize public transit. The installation of the signage for the bus stop is a contributing factor.

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *SJTPO is now piloting the Cumberland County Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, which will analyze all bicycle and pedestrian crashes in the County, identify problem locations, and select countermeasures to advance for federal safety funding (HSIP), while collecting public feedback throughout. The intent is to take that model and apply it to each of the other counties in the region, pending NJDOT and FHWA approval. Additionally, as part of upcoming efforts, SJTPO intends to identify priority corridors for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit, based on factors including but not limited to the need for nearby residents to use those modes. This will assist SJTPO to help local jurisdictions prioritize and incorporate bicycle and pedestrian improvements and accommodations at potential project locations.*

- 22. COMMENT:** The section of Landis Avenue, between Route 47 and Route 55 lacks appropriate accommodations (such as shoulders, bike lanes, or other traffic calming measures) for bicyclists.

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *The extent of Landis Avenue from Orchard Road to Route 55 is programmed for roadway improvements in federal fiscal year 2018 and 2019.*

**RESPONSE: City of Vineland:** *The lack of accommodation is due to the existing road width and the need for vehicular traffic lanes along the corridor. Upcoming projects will include*

*shoulders, but no designated bike lanes. The shoulders will vary in width, but likely will be below the five-foot width recommended for bike lanes. (Note: The City doesn't prohibit bicycles from utilizing sidewalk in this area.)*

- 23. COMMENT:** Presently, there are no sidewalks near the hotels along Landis Avenue. Improvements along the Landis Avenue corridor should consider the installation of sidewalks.

**RESPONSE: City of Vineland:** *The installation of sidewalks to the hotels near Route 55 is intended as part of the resurfacing project in this area, programmed for federal fiscal year 2019.*

- 24. COMMENT:** A new school has been built at the edge of town in Oldmans Township, with the old school in the downtown area no longer being utilized. The speed limit near the old school is posted at 25 MPH limit, whereas the posted speed limit at the new school is higher. The appropriateness of the speed limits near both schools should be investigated.

**RESPONSE: Salem County:** *Salem County is in the process of investigating the speed limits near the schools in Pedricktown, Oldmans Township.*

- 25. COMMENT:** There seems to be a collaborative effort to create the TIP document, however, the same level of coordination does not seem to exist as it relates to the management of the transportation system in New Jersey compared to other states. For instance, there appears to be a lack of response to the public reporting of pot holes within various roadway jurisdictions. The State lacks a system to allow the various transportation agencies to manage public feedback and ensure the comments are filtered to the appropriate agency.

**RESPONSE: NJDOT:** *The Department maintains a "Pothole/Highway Maintenance Reporting" system on its website [www.state.nj.us/transportation/commuter/potholeform.shtm](http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/commuter/potholeform.shtm). The system can be utilized by both the public and transportation professionals to report a pothole, tall grass, other maintenance problems on a **state highway**. This reporting system ensures that comments are filtered to the appropriate agency. The Department is interested in improving this system and welcomes specific recommendations for consideration.*

- 26. COMMENT:** A bus stop sign is located internal to the Laurel Plaza shopping center at Laurel Plaza Drive and NJ Route 77. However, the NJ Transit 553 bus does not circulate through the shopping center, but instead traverses along NJ Route 77.

**RESPONSE: NJ Transit:** *NJ Transit bus service does operate on NJ Route 77, but does not enter the shopping center. The bus stop located within the shopping center is served by a county-operated local shuttle bus service.*

- 27. COMMENT:** While Cape May County has 16.2% of the population of the four covered counties and 49.8% of the counties' tax ratable bases, spending for Cape May County is projected to be only 7.5% of the four-county total in FY 2018 and FY 2027. Considering the poor and obsolete condition of the county's road and bridges, appropriate and equitable funding should be a major concern for SJTPO.

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *The TIP includes various funding sources available, both from the State of New Jersey and the federal government. There are three federal funding sources over which SJTPO has the most discretion; that being CMAQ, Safety, and STP-SJTPO. Both the CMAQ and Safety funds are awarded through a competitive program administered by the metropolitan planning organizations. Subregions apply to SJTPO through an annual or bi-annual solicitation, with projects selected that best meet the needs of the funding source. With respect to SJTPO's STP-SJ dollars (now referenced as STBGP-SJ) these federal funds are generally used for resurfacing projects, minor intersection improvements, or other projects that do not impact right-of-way. The Counties have access to other funding available through the State of New Jersey; including Local County Aid and Local Bridge, Future Needs.*

- 28. COMMENT:** Summer traffic, to and from the barrier islands, is extremely congestive. This is bad for the economy because it is harmful to the tourism industry and bad for the environment because it causes pollution. Where Route 55 ends, traffic must use either Route 47 or Route 347. Each of these are two lane roads and are very dangerous. Fatalities on these routes are common. Talks concerning the Route 55 expansion have been ongoing since the 1990s, but have been limited to that-just talk. We noted that Section 2 of the TIP (Regional Highway Projects/Programs) does not include a penny for Route 55.

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *SJTPO completed a consultant-led technical study which resulted in the development of a Purpose and Needs Statement for the Route 55/47/347 corridor. The statement was intended to serve as the first step in the project development process to address existing transportation issues. The Purpose and Need Statement sets the stage for the development and analysis of alternatives during Concept Development and is fundamental to selection of a Preliminary Preferred Alternative. SJTPO led the consultant effort, which was forwarded to NJDOT as they are the primary roadway owner. SJTPO will continue to work with NJDOT to advance improvements that will help alleviate congestion and improve safety along the corridors.*

- 29. COMMENT:** The five bridges connecting the county's barrier islands are structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. Please note that Section 2 of the TIP (Regional Highway Projects/Programs) of the TIP does not include a penny for the Ocean Drive Bridges.

**RESPONSE: SJTPO:** *SJTPO recently amended their FY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to include \$1.4 million for a consultant-led technical study effort for Ocean Drive (CR 621) Upgrades and Bridge Improvements Local Concept Development Study. A consultant is under contract to complete the study with an anticipated completion date of June 2018.*

*The Ocean Drive Upgrade and Bridge Replacements effort was the subject of an earlier comprehensive scoping endeavor, initiated by SJTPO on behalf of Cape May County. The effort resulted in development of a Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA) for the Middle Thorofare Bridge, which is no longer viable as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service now owns most of the land where the preferred alignment was proposed. A new study must be undertaken. This task will provide a Local Concept Development (LCD) study, which identifies and compares reasonable alternatives and strategies that address the requirements of the initial stages of the project delivery process, and selects a new PPA. The LCD Phase elements include, but are*

*not limited to coordination, community outreach, data collection, development of a reasonable number of prudent and feasible concept alternatives, and investigation of all aspects of a project including Environmental, Right-of-Way (ROW), Access, Utilities, Design, Community Involvement, Constructability, etc. at a "Planning level of effort".*

***RESPONSE: Cape May County:*** *Each county receives an apportionment from the annual Local Bridge, Future Needs program from New Jersey's Transportation Trust Fund (TTF). In State fiscal year 2018, the State is expected to distribute a total of \$44 million to counties to address structurally deficient and functional obsolete bridges. Cape May County uses their apportionment from this program to address needs of the structurally deficient and functional obsolete bridges in the County, including the Ocean Drive Bridges.*

**30. COMMENT:** The program description for DBNUM X065, Local CMAQ Initiatives references DVRPC projects to be funded. The description should be updated to reflect the SJTPO projects.

***RESPONSE: SJTPO:*** *The SJTPO TIP displays only the sub allocation of funds for the SJTPO region. However, the Statewide program is used to fund local projects that will be used to enhance air quality in all three metropolitan planning organizations (MPO). The description has been modified to reference generic project types and not any specific to one MPO.*