



# Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review

Federal Highway  
Administration

Federal Transit  
Administration

## South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization



**September 2023**  
**Summary Report**

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# South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization Transportation Certification Review

**Certification Report: September 2023**

**On-Site Review: March 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to review, evaluate, and certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in each Transportation Management Area (TMA), an urbanized area of 200,000 population or more, at least every four years.

As a result, FHWA and FTA have jointly undertaken the review of metropolitan transportation planning process of the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization. The intent of the statutory and regulatory requirements is to develop a transportation system that serves the mobility interests of people and freight through a multifaceted metropolitan planning process.

As a result, FHWA New Jersey Division and FTA Region II office (here on referred to as “The Federal Review Team”) conducted the on-site visit portion of the certification review of the transportation planning process for the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPPO) on March 27 and March 28, 2023. A public meeting was held the evening of March 27, 2023.

## 1.1 Previous Findings and Disposition

SJTPO’s previous Certification Review Report was finalized in September 2019. The Federal Review Team then determined that the metropolitan transportation planning process of the SJTPO met the requirements of 23 USC 134, 49 USC 5303, and 23 C.F.R. 450. The federal review team issued one (1) corrective action during this certification review, as well as sixteen (16) recommendations for improvements and three (3) commendation for note-worthy activities to SJTPO’s overall transportation planning process. A list of recommendations from the 2019 certification review and the status can be found in Appendix F.

## 1.2 Summary of Current Findings

The current review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the SJTPO’s Atlantic City-Vineland, NJ urbanized area meets the Federal planning requirements with no Corrective Actions.

As a result of this review, FHWA and FTA are certifying the transportation planning process conducted by the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPPO) meets the federal planning requirements. What follows is the compiled list of *Commendations* and *Recommendations* from the Federal Review Team’s checkup of work products and processes that are the result of the MPO transportation planning process. Each of these comments can also be found at the end of their respective Certification topic section. There are 18 recommendations that require close attention and follow-up, and 5 commendations for the SJTPO because of this review.



## 1.2.1 Commendations (5)

### *Data Collection Commendations (1):*

1. The Federal Review Team commends SJTPO for continuing to test various data sources such as Signal Analytics to inform the transportation planning process. SJTPO has also taken advantage of existing planning efforts to collect critical data that will be used to build upon existing efforts as well as future planned work. Obtaining good data is the first step and requires extensive resources, utilizing the data such as what is being done in the SJTPO Freight Study and the Local Safety Program is commendable.

### *Safety Commendations (2):*

1. The Federal Review Team commends SJTPO on its data-driven transportation safety program and the continued effort to categorize and identify roadway assets with a focused goal of developing a Systemic Approach to Safety. This effort will enable the MPO to develop a proactive approach to addressing safety and reducing fatalities and serious injuries in the region.
2. The Federal Review Team commends the SJTPO for the current offering of Traffic Safety Education Programs. The programs are engaging and diversified and identify risks to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists of all ages that may be encountered on roadways to drive forth the Road to Zero message through a Safe System Approach by developing Safe Road Users.

### *Non-motorized Bicycle Pedestrian Transportation Planning Commendations (2):*

1. The Federal Review Team commends SJTPO for including equity as a criterion for project selection and investing in projects that prioritize non-motorized projects in EJ areas.
2. The Federal Review Team commends SJTPO for continuing to maximize their resources through various planning efforts by collecting data that will further bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. This includes the inventory done as part of a previous pavement conditions study and the Local Road Safety Plan effort currently underway.

## 1.2.2 Recommendations (18)

### *Public Engagement (1):*

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO work with the Policy Board and member counties to improve outreach and engage the municipalities in the region and the public.

### *Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (2):*

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO continue to explore avenues to identify and program Tasks that will be completed within the end of the FY to reduce the number of carryover Tasks.



2. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO explore other non-traditional funding opportunities such as funding from FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants, US EDA Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation grants, US Department of Commerce grants, etc. to diversify their funding sources.

*Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) (3):*

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO strengthens its consultation and collaboration process, especially with the municipalities and resource agencies which include but are not limited to NJ Fish and Wildlife, NJ Forest Service, NJ Watershed and Land Management, NJ Historic Preservation Office, Bureau of Air Quality Planning.
2. The Federal Team recommends that SJTPO develop a better project pipeline, especially for the LRTP – showing a project pool consistent with the RTP timeline and a clear connection to the TIP.
3. The Federal Team recommends SJTPO enhance their website to list specific projects under each PM group (safety, bridge/pavement, system performance) to provide clear examples of projects selected following extensive TPM coordination activities. At the bottom of the PBPP webpage there could be a link to the TIP should the reader wish to view the TIP upon reading the PBPP page.

*Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (1):*

1. The Federal Team recommends that SJTPO develop a documented process showing how the RTP guides the TIP project selection.

*Public Transit (3):*

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO clearly define the roles in the implementation of the recommendations in the Access for All Transit Plan.
2. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO include key demographics who are typically and traditionally impacted by the Human Services Transportation Plan such as seniors, people with disabilities etc. in the development or update of subsequent plans.
3. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO work with NJ TRANSIT to analyze safety at, and around public transit stops.

*Environmental Mitigation, Climate Change and Resiliency Planning (1):*

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO incorporates existing resiliency studies and vulnerability assessments conducted either at the local or state level into its next MTP update.

*Planning Environmental Linkages (1):*

1. The Federal Review Team encourages SJTPO to consider advancing and integrating PEL principles in future RTP updates and in the concept development phase of corridor and feasibility studies. When feasible and appropriate, the MPO should conduct PEL studies



that include NEPA level analysis for larger transportation projects that may be classified as an Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA. A PEL framework should be incorporated early in project scoping to help anticipate and address NEPA requirements that will be required later during implementation. The MPO should work with NJDOT and FHWA to incorporate a system to document planning-level information and carry it into the NEPA phase of a project. SJTPO should also collaborate with NJDOT, resource agencies, and other interested parties to examine project-level range of alternatives, potential impacts, and mitigation strategies of transportation solutions. Expanding and thoroughly documenting public outreach and consultation with other agencies is critical for developing the PEL framework and ensuring pre-NEPA planning work is sufficient.

*Safety Recommendations (3):*

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO initiates a monthly or quarterly Transportation Safety Group with local, county, and other stakeholders for various rotating agenda items and guest speakers. The agendas could include training, grant opportunities, and spotlight best practices/projects of general transportation interest. Other topics might include the SJTPO progress on roadway assets and progress on other transportation safety efforts including the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) requirements.
2. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO track pre- and post-construction fatalities and serious injuries for regional safety projects to understand what impact transportation safety projects have in the region in a concerted effort to reduce fatal and serious injuries. To further this, the SJTPO may want to post this information to call attention the ongoing efforts and progress by the MPO.
3. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO increase the promotion and utilization of HSIP funds and develop a pipeline of projects and efforts that can take advantage of the increase in HSIP funding. This will also put SJTPO in a good position for submitting projects or cost overruns to NJDOT for consideration for Federal August redistribution or various rotating discretionary grant opportunities.

*Freight (1):*

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO utilize their website, the freight webpage, to demonstrate how projects such as those from TIP (page B-9) that contribute towards goods movement be listed directly on the freight page as a way to demonstrate how freight planning efforts result in freight movement enhancement projects being selected in the TIP. Another way to make the connection between freight planning and goods movement projects being selected in the TIP would be to create a link from the freight webpage to page B-9 in the TIP that lists freight/goods movement focused projects.

*Non-Motorized Bicycle-Pedestrian Transportation Planning (1)*

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO work with regional partners to develop more localized circulation plans that emphasize bicycle and pedestrian facilities that can be implemented in a strategic manner. One way to prioritize resources is to better match up facilities with trips and destinations by integrating land use planning into the



transportation planning process. Other strategies to consider for prioritizing investment could be to include partnering with downtowns, communities with transit hubs, or redevelopment sites to maximize resources.

*Support of Economic Vitality and Enhancement of Travel and Tourism (1)*

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO enhance the incorporation of meeting the economic development, travel, and tourism strategies into the various planning work products, including the MTP. This would work to improve the integration of land use planning into the transportation planning process as well as supporting livability initiatives. Work conducted by the South Jersey Economic Development District via their Comprehensive Economic Development plan could be better coordinated with SJTPO to assess areas in the region for future development where it makes the most sense, including redevelopment areas, brownfield sites, downtowns, transit villages, etc. SJTPO could consult with local communities about incorporating this body of work into the planning work products including the upcoming MTP, as well as other studies that could be included in the work program.



## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the FHWA and FTA must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, with a population of over 200,000. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a site visit, a review of planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), and preparation of a Certification Review Report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The reviews focus on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO(s), the State DOT(s), and public transportation operator(s) in the conduct of the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The Certification Review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a regional metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other stewardship and oversight activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) approval, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), metropolitan and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP/TIP) findings, air-quality (AQ) conformity determinations (in nonattainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal and less formal interactions provide both FHWA/FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the Certification Review process.

While the Certification Review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the “findings” of Certification Review are, in fact, based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort.

The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. Federal reviewers prepare Certification Reports to document the results of the review process. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices, and their content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed, whether they relate explicitly to formal “findings” of the review.

### 2.2 Purpose and Objective

Since the enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the FHWA and FTA, are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process in all urbanized areas over 200,000 population to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements in 23 U.S.C. 134, 49 U.S.C. 5303, and 23 CFR 450. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), extended the minimum allowable frequency of certification reviews to at least every four years.



Consistent with Federal regulations, the primary purpose of a Certification Review is to formalize the continuing oversight and day-to-day evaluation of the planning process and document the findings at least every four years. The Certification Review process ensures that the planning requirements of 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303 are being satisfactorily implemented. In a broader sense, the Certification Review process is a valuable opportunity to provide advice and guidance to the planning partners in a TMA, defined as an urban area with a population over 200,000, for enhancing the planning process and improving the quality of transportation investment decisions.

FHWA and FTA undertake a stewardship role to determine what is or is not working and, when appropriate, to *help* make improvements. In addition, by identifying noteworthy practices, which can be shared with other States, MPOs, and public transportation operators, the Certification Review provides an opportunity for continued progress in expanding the state of the practice of transportation planning while maintaining and advancing regulatory compliance.

Certification of the planning process is a prerequisite to the approval of Federal funding for transportation projects in such areas. The Certification Review is also an opportunity to aid on new programs and to enhance the ability of the metropolitan transportation planning process to provide decision-makers with the knowledge they need to make well-informed capital and operating investment decisions.



## 3.0 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Review Process

The 2023 Certification Review of SJTPO officially began in October 2022 with a joint FHWA/FTA letter to Mr. Leonard Desiderio, Chairman of SJTPO, informing the MPO about the upcoming review and identifying the primary topics for the review (*Appendix A*). The dates of the site visit were coordinated with Ms. Jennifer Marandino, Executive Director of SJTPO. NJDOT was informed of the review separately from FHWA/FTA. SJTPO staff notified NJ TRANSIT and other partner agencies and the public about the review.

In preparation of the on-site visit, the FHWA and FTA conducted an internal desk audit of the SJTPO process and materials, including the following items: the current SJTPO 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan, fiscal years 2023 and 2024 Unified Planning Work Programs (*UPWP*), fiscal years 2022-2031 Transportation Improvement Program (*TIP*), 2022 Public Involvement Plan, and the 2021 SJTPO's Human Services Transportation Plan generally referred to as *Access for All Transit Plan*.

The on-site review took place at the Vineland City Hall and SJTPO office on March 27 and 28, 2023. Detailed discussions were primarily with the SJTPO Executive Director and members of the SJTPO staff. The Federal Review Team also met with members of the SJTPO Board and TAC in a round table forum to discuss their thoughts on the overall transportation planning process in the region and major regional opportunities and issues. A full list of participants is included in Appendix B.

The Certification Review covers the transportation planning process conducted cooperatively by the MPO, State, and public transportation operators. Background information, status, key findings are summarized in the body of the report for the following subject areas selected by FHWA and FTA staff for the desk audit and on-site review:

- Overview of Certification and Policy Board Discussion
- Overview of MPO, MPO Highlights, and Regional Issues
- Public Engagement
- Environmental Justice and Equity
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Congestion Management Process
- Data Collection and Usage
- Public Transit
- Environmental Mitigation, Climate Change and Resiliency Planning
- Planning Environmental Linkage
- Safety
- Freight
- Non-Motorized Bicycle-Pedestrian Transportation Planning
- Support of Economic Vitality and Enhancement of Travel and Tourism



## 3.2 Public Input

As a part of the certification review process, the Federal Review Team solicited input from the communities and stakeholders within the region where they were offered the opportunity to submit both verbal and written comments on SJTPO's planning process. The public was offered the opportunity to provide written comments, which were accepted through April 28, 2023. The solicitations for written comments were publicized through SJTPO's website and a host of local newspapers (*Appendix C*). In addition to submitting comments, SJTPO hosted a hybrid in-person at Vineland, NJ City Hall, and virtual public meeting on March 27, 2023, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. No member of the public attended either the in-person or virtual public meeting. There were no written comments submitted to us from the public pertaining to the Certification Review.



## **4.0 PROGRAM REVIEW**

### **4.1 MPO Overview, Boundaries, and Organization**

#### **4.1.1 Regulatory Basis**

23 U.S.C. 134(e) and 23 CFR 450.312(a) state the boundaries of a Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) shall be determined by agreement between the MPO and the Governor. At a minimum, the MPA boundaries shall encompass the entire existing urbanized area (as defined by the Bureau of the Census) plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period for the MTP.

23 U.S.C. 134(d) and 23 CFR 450.314(a) state the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly defined in written agreements among the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operators.

#### **4.1.2 Current Status**

##### **Overview and MPO Boundaries**

SJTPO is the designated MPO for the southern New Jersey Counties of Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem. SJTPO serves as a technical resource, provides access to funding, and provides a regional approach to solving transportation problems. Their vision is to develop a transportation system, based on regional collaboration that moves people and goods in a safe and efficient manner, inclusive of all modes and users. Transportation planning at SJTPO is guided by the following ten goals:

1. Promote accessibility and mobility for the movement of people and goods
2. Mitigate traffic congestion and promote efficient system operation
3. Restore, preserve, and maintain the existing transportation system
4. Support the regional economy.
5. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation infrastructure, particularly along the Atlantic and Delaware Bay shorelines
6. Increase and enhance opportunities for travel and tourism
7. Improve transportation safety
8. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system
9. Protect and enhance the environment and compliment land use planning
10. Improve security

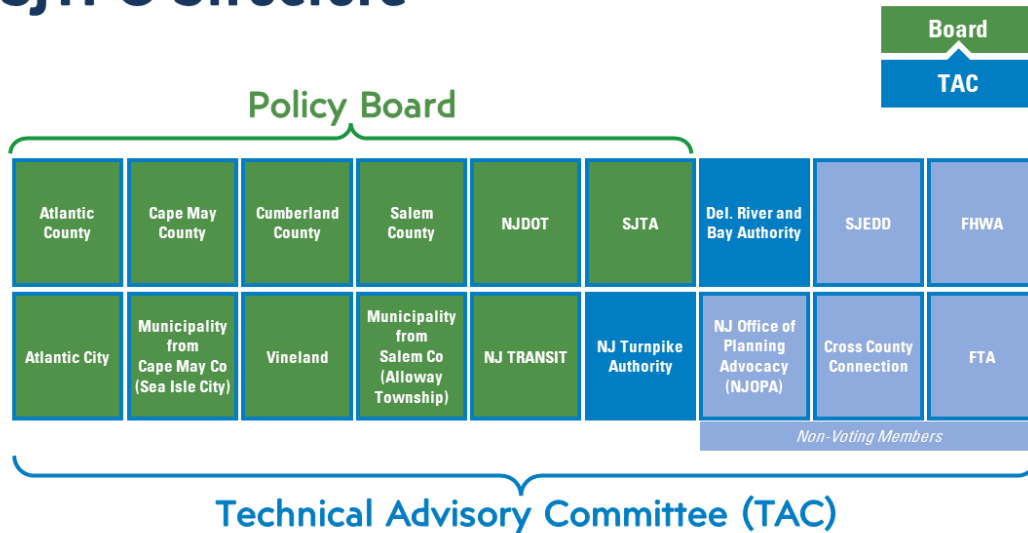
##### **Organizational Structure, Membership, and Voting**

The governing body of the SJTPO is the Policy Board. One of the main responsibilities of the Policy Board is to choose the Executive Director of the MPO, who then has the responsibility of



choosing staff subject to review and approval by the Policy Board. The Executive Director reports directly to the Policy Board Chairman. The Policy Board consists of eleven voting members – one elected official for 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), NJ TRANSIT, and the SJTA. An annual reorganization meeting, at which an election of officers is conducted, is held in January.

## SJTPO Structure



The Policy Board is assisted by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the newly formed Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) which replaces the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The TAC is a thirteen-member committee that provides input to the Policy Board. It consists of staff of each Policy Board member, as well as representatives of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and the Delaware River and Bay Authority. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), South Jersey Economic Development District (SJEDD), the New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy (NJOPA), and the Cross County Connection Transportation Management Association (CCCTMA) each have one non-voting representative on the TAC. Other agencies are also invited to participate in the TAC. The COEC was established to enhance the scope of SJTPO’s public outreach and ensure that SJTPO’s decision-making processes are diverse, inclusive, and equitable. Members are representatives from various sectors, interests, and organizations in the southern New Jersey area. Membership is open to all individuals and organizations who may wish to apply.

### 4.1.3: Findings:

SJTPO satisfies all regulatory requirements.



## 4.2 Public Engagement

### 4.2.1 Regulatory Basis

Sections 134(i)(5), 134(j)(1)(B) of Title 23 and Section 5303(i)(5) and 5303(j)(1)(B) of Title 49, require a MPO to provide adequate opportunity for the public to participate in and comment on the products and planning processes of the MPO. The requirements for public involvement are detailed in 23 CFR 450.316(a) and (b), which require the MPO to develop and use a documented participation plan that includes explicit procedures and strategies to include the public and other interested parties in the transportation planning process.

Specific requirements include giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participate in or comment on transportation issues and processes, employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, making public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web, holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input, and a periodically reviewing of the effectiveness of the participation plan.

### 4.2.2 Current Status

The Federal Review Team found that there are numerous opportunities for the public and stakeholders to engage with their elected officials through the review and comment periods of planning products and during Policy Board meetings. The Policy Board members participated in the review of planning activities and vision sessions and helped provide input on items such as the long-range transportation plan and TIP. Public comments were often documented at these meetings and considered during the planning process.

SJTPO formed a Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) which replaces the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC). The COEC is focused on improving SJTPO's public outreach. According to SJTPO, the CAC was disbanded mainly because membership was not diverse enough. SJTPO anticipates the COEC will ensure SJTPO's decision-making processes are diverse, inclusive, and equity based. The COEC membership is open to the public. Currently, there are four members of the COEC. SJTPO is working to increase the membership of the COEC.

The Policy Board discussions also revealed that the relationship with most of the 68 municipalities in the region is not as strong as with the counties. There are no devoted municipal support staff at SJTPO that can reach out to the municipalities by way of participation in their transportation planning efforts. There are some occasional involvements with the municipalities. SJTPO staff mentioned that they sometimes attend bike-ped master plan meetings or participate in technical studies with the municipalities. SJTPO staff further called on counties and Policy Board representatives to help SJTPO reach out to the municipalities.

There was no attendee at the Public Meeting Session held on March 27, 2023, at 7:00 pm at the Vineland, NJ City Hall even though the meeting was highly publicized. The federal team learned from SJTPO that public participation is not as robust in the region. The federal team also learned that SJTPO has employed various tactics aimed at boosting public participation in planning efforts with little to no success. SJTPO has gone out to the fairs, shopping centers, mailed invitations and



reached out to the public in various ways. The federal team recognizes that SJTPO strives to include the public in their planning process to the highest and reasonable extent. SJTPO utilizes various social media platforms to engage the public regarding upcoming meetings and events, opportunities for public involvement and more.

Further, SJTPO in adherence with the 2022 Public Involvement Plan (PIP), strives to accommodate reasonable requests for translations and interpretation and auxiliary services. The SJTPO website is also equipped with the capability to translate information to various languages.

### **4.2.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO work with the Policy Board and member counties to improve outreach and engage the municipalities in the region and the public.



## 4.3 Environmental Justice and Equity

### 4.3.1 Regulatory Basis

#### **Environmental Justice**

##### Environmental Justice (EJ) Reporting

SJTPO's 2021 EJ Report identified a broad area of concern that included why they consider environmental justice and transportation justice together. The report focuses on residents in poverty, Hispanic populations, and racial minority populations. The poverty level in the SJTPO region is 14.2 percent. This is important because the population in poverty in the region have little to no access to public transportation.

When transportation justice (*which focuses on the populations that tend to be disadvantaged related to transportation access*) is considered, the analyses show that the SJTPO region contains residents that are known to face transportation access issues. SJTPO is working to address these issues through the development of the Access for All Transportation Plan.

Part of the report looked at the impact of projects (how the project impacts the local population or is it a benefit as a pass through). SJTPO also looked at TIP investments and allocation through the lenses of EJ to determine if EJ communities are well-represented in TIP investments. SJTPO is also looking at how projects benefit or adversely impact EJ communities. As part of the analyses, SJTPO is looking at disproportionately adverse effect that is borne by EJ community or will be suffered by EJ community because of a planned project. SJTPO is looking at TIP projects, TAP, Safe Routes to School, HSIP, CMAQ, etc. They are looking into why some communities are left out of the federal process.

##### Ladders of Opportunity

SJTPO developed a Ladders Map Toolkit which the analysis SJTPO used to evaluate the region's accessibility. It assigns an Accessibility Score that helps users visualize the locations where improvements while highly impact the residents. The Ladders Map Toolkit can help answer key transportation questions in the region. For example, the Toolkit can help users determine the job locations and essential services that are accessible by existing public transit network. Employment opportunities within walking distance from public transit stops can be displayed using the Toolkit. SJTPO is also using the Toolkit to highlight transportation network and how they affect vulnerable or EJ communities or where unmet mobility and service gaps exist amongst vulnerable populations.

##### Complete Streets Priority Area Analysis

Complete Streets is another component utilized by SJTPO in determining transportation investment equity. The Complete Street Priority Area Analysis looks at the design side of EJ. SJTPO looked at the following populations that needed additional consideration in system design, such as elderly (75+), disabled, racial minority (non-Hispanic), Hispanic, and low-income



populations. At a minimum, sidewalks and pedestrians' connectivity and ADA access will be considered.

### **Limited-English-Proficiency (LEP)**

SJTPO added automatic translation to the SJTPO website (using Google as the third party). SJTPO also included a translation request form on their website under the Title VI Statement. All reasonable requests for translation, interpretation, and auxiliary services made at least seven days before a public meeting is accommodated. SJTPO has translated all “vital documents” which have been made available on their website. A full listing of “vital documents” is available in the 2022 PIP.

Consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, DOT’s implementing regulations, and Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency” (65 FR 50121, Aug. 11, 2000), SJTPO shall take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are limited-English proficient.

#### **4.3.2 Findings:**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.



## 4.4 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

### 4.4.1 Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.308 sets the requirement that planning activities performed under Titles 23 and 49 U.S.C. be documented in a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) or simplified statement of work in accordance with the provisions of this section and 23 CFR part 420. The budget and program plans should include considerations for performance and program evaluation purposes whenever required in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award. The MPO, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operator, shall develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area and the work proposed for the next one- or two-year period by major activity and task in sufficient detail to indicate the agency that will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding, and sources of funds. Administrative requirements for UPWPs are contained in 23 CFR part 420 and FTA Circular C8100, as amended (Program Guidance for Metropolitan Planning and State Planning and Research Program Grants).

Financial management of federal funds is an important part of managing a UPWP. 2 CFR 200.308 covers the revision of budget and program plans. The Federal awarding agency may, at its option, restrict the transfer of funds among direct cost categories or programs, functions, and activities for Federal awards in which the Federal share of the project exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold and the cumulative amount of such transfers exceeds or is expected to exceed 10 percent of the total budget as last approved by the Federal awarding agency. The Federal awarding agency cannot permit a transfer that would cause any Federal appropriation to be used for purposes other than those consistent with the appropriation.

Annually, the NJDOT requests that FTA Region 2 flex their Metropolitan Planning Program funds to FHWA-NJ, so they become Planning (PL) funds as part of the Consolidated Planning Grant program. The period of eligibility for the use of FHWA's PL funds is the Fiscal Year plus 3 years. PL funds are available for obligation for a period of 3 years after the last day of the fiscal year for which the funds are authorized. For example, fiscal year 2022 funding is available through the end of fiscal year 2025. Recipients may not excessively prolong the life of the award merely for the purpose of expending all award funds. Awards should be closed when the scope of work is completed; if funds remain these should be de-obligated as part of the award closeout. The recipient must initiate award closeout with subrecipients no later than 90 or 120 days after the end of the period of performance or when the award's scope of work is completed.

A one-time no-cost extension for a period of performance up to 12 months request must be made to FHWA along with supporting documentation for their consideration of any extension of time. An extension may be granted if the change reflects a delay in the project which is beyond the control of the recipient and subrecipient or is based on changes that would have an impact on the project end date (e.g., change in project scope). Any modification to the end date must be documented and authorized by FHWA as an internal control matter. If the project end date is



modified after the authorized project end date has passed, any costs incurred between the expiration of the project end date and the modification date are ineligible for reimbursement.

#### **4.4.2 Current Status**

The federal review team reviewed SJTPO's FY 2022 and FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP). SJTPO's FY 2023 UPWP contains over 25 work tasks including the Subregional Planning Work Programs. The FY 2023 UPWP Tasks and Activities outline the planning activities to be performed by SJTPO, state, regional and local participants involved in the South Jersey Transportation Planning process for the period July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. Work tasks in the FY 2023 UPWP are performed mainly by SJTPO staff. In reviewing the Tasks in FY 2022 UPWP, there were four Continuing Tasks Orders with a remaining budget of \$0.655M. In the FY 2023 UPWP, there were more Continuing Task Orders (eight), but the total remaining budget for the task orders reduced to \$0.14M. Tasks outlined in the FY 2023 UPWP are connected and linked to goals set forth in SJTPO's RTP 2050; the current long-range regional transportation plan (LRTP). Funding for Tasks in the FY 2023 UPWP comes from FHWA Statewide Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds, FHWA Flexed FTA Section 5303 (PL) funds, FHWA Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds and Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) funds.

In developing the FY 2023 UPWP, SJTPO considered the "Regionwide FY 2023 Planning Priorities"; activities and products SJTPO will complete in FY 2023 to improve transportation in the region. SJTPO also considered and incorporated FHWA and NJDOT's Priority Emphasis Areas in the FY 2023 UPWP.

SJTPO continued with a comprehensive approach towards transportation planning, incorporating a variety of modes in its everyday work. SJTPO engages well with the sub-region in the development of the UPWP. Coordination with NJ TRANSIT in delivery of UPWP tasks is satisfactory. NJ TRANSIT is duly represented at the Policy Board and the TAC. NJ TRANSIT also participates in various SJTPO's planning tasks.

Since the July 2018 publication of the FTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Final Rule, SJTPO and NJ TRANSIT have worked together to develop and integrate PTASP into the overall planning process to meet Transit Asset Management plan requirements.

#### **4.4.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO continue to explore avenues to identify and program Tasks that will be completed within the end of the FY to reduce the number of carryover Tasks.



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2. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO explore other non-traditional funding opportunities such as funding from FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants, US EDA Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation grants, US Department of Commerce grants, etc. to diversify their funding sources.



## 4.5 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

### 4.5.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (i) and 23 CFR 450.324 set forth requirements for the development and content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Among the requirements are that the MTP address at least a 20-year planning horizon and that it includes both long- and short-range strategies that lead to the development of an integrated and multi-modal system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

The MTP is required to provide a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process. The plan needs to consider all applicable issues related to the transportation systems development, land use, employment, economic development, and natural environment.

23 CFR 450.324(c) requires the MPO to review and update the MTP at least every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years in attainment areas to reflect current and forecasted transportation, population, land use, employment, congestion, and economic conditions and trends.

23 CFR 450.306(d)(4) states that “an MPO shall integrate in the metropolitan transportation planning process, directly or by reference, the goals, objectives, performance measures, and targets described in other State transportation plans and transportation processes, as well as any plans developed under 49 U.S.C Chapter 53 by providers of public transportation, required as part of a performance-based program...” The regulation lists a series of plans that are among those the MPO must integrate into its planning process (23 CFR 450.306(d)(4)(i)-(viii)).

23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) requires that the MTP shall contain at a minimum a description of the performance measures and performance targets used in assessing the performance of the transportation system in accordance with subsection 450.306(d).

Under 23 CFR 450.324(f), the MTP is required, at a minimum, to consider the following:

1. Projected transportation demand
2. Existing and proposed transportation facilities
3. Operational and management strategies
4. Congestion management process
5. Capital investment and strategies to preserve transportation infrastructure and provide for multimodal capacity
6. Design concept and design scope descriptions of proposed transportation facilities
7. Potential environmental mitigation activities
8. Pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities
9. Transportation and transit enhancements
10. A financial plan



#### 4.5.2 Current Status

South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) adopted the Regional Transportation Plan 2050 (RTP) in January 2021. The vision for the RTP is “A transportation system based on regional collaboration that moves people and goods in a safe and efficient manner, inclusive of all modes and users.” The vision is supported by ten goals, further supported by strategies that SJTPO could take to achieve its goals. The ten goals mirror the planning factors outlined in 23 CFR 450.306, whereas the strategies were developed in partnership with the SJTPO’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the public

The RTP has a section that highlights recurring transportation planning process issues, and they are:

1. Funding imbalance – highlights the disproportionate funding that SJTPO receives based on population, seasonally adjusted population, vehicle miles traveled, roadway mileage, and percentage of the population in poverty.
2. Major projects – localities in the SJTPO region bear the full costs of major infrastructure investments.
3. Inequitable access – vulnerable communities in the SJTPO region have limited access to mobility and burdens to improve mobility.
4. Regulatory burden – difficulties in advancing projects due to environmental regulations, especially in the Pinelands.
5. Infrastructure at risk – the region is impacted by sea level rise, increased storm severity, and increased precipitation.

SJTPO has highlighted steps it will take to remedy these issues. During the onsite portion of the review, SJTPO indicated that because of the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Census 2020 results, funding for the region has slightly improved, but challenges remain. The Federal Team recommended that SJTPO seek other funding sources to help alleviate funding shortages, such as those from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that could help in the areas of resiliency.

The RTP includes \$1.9 billion in transportation investments and over \$1.2 billion in unfunded projects. The funded investments are mostly system and roadway preservation. Projects in the plan mainly come from the Fiscal Year FY2020 – FY2030 TIP, including locally-led, state-led, and regionally significant projects. The RTP does not have highway or transit projects listed after FY2023 through the planning horizon. The rationale provided is that FY2020 – FY2023 projects are fiscally constrained, and projects in the final six years of the TIP are for informational purposes and thus not constrained. Per 23 CFR 450.324(b), the RTP should include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that provide for the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand. SJTPO is encouraged to develop a project pool consistent with the RTP timeline and show a clear connection to the TIP. One way of achieving this is by creating a documented process that shows how a project moves through the process from the LRTP to the TIP (short term, near term, long term, illustrative) – and in the TIP from the 4th year to the 3rd year to the 2nd year and then to implementation. SJTPO indicated that the future iteration of the RTP will include scenario planning to help in this regard. Scenario



planning evaluates the effects of alternative policies, plans, and programs on the region's future transportation and land uses.

The RTP contains a system performance report based on the national goal areas of the FAST Act. The report includes performance measures for safety (PM1), pavement and bridge condition (PM2), system performance (freight and CMAQ) (PM3), transit asset management, and transit safety. Like most Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), SJTPO has not developed its own performance measures but has agreed to support state adopted targets for all the measures. SJTPO participates in the Complete Team and other performance measures sub-committees to help develop and set performance targets. The region is either meeting or exceeding the performance measures set. No further discussion was held on this topic during the onsite portion of the review.

During the development of the RTP, SJTPO collaborates with the SJTPO TAC, SJTPO Policy Board, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Interagency Consultation Group (ICG), and Tribal Nations. SJTPO involved the public during the two outreach phases via in-person meetings, virtual public meetings, online surveys, comment forms, and social media. And for the first time, SJTPO hosted a virtual public meeting in Spanish with the help of consultant support from the Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POET) at Rutgers. To ensure that the virtual meeting availability reached the intended audience, SJTPO contacted via telephone and email about twenty-two agencies that work with or provide support to the underrepresented communities in the region, informing them of the opportunity. In addition, SJTPO purchased ads via Facebook for the first time during this effort, expanding SJTPO's reach via social media and allowing SJTPO to tailor the audience to target groups in the SJTPO region. SJTPO is to be commended for its ability to pivot during the health emergency, carry out a successful public involvement process, and expand its reach to non-traditional populations. However, during the onsite review, it was noted that SJTPO does not have adequate consultation and coordination with municipalities and resource agencies responsible for land-use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation.

### **Performance Based Planning and Programming**

SJTPO meets the requirements for Performance Based Planning and Programming (PBPP) in its development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes tracking performance measures, participating in coordination activities for setting data-driven targets and selecting projects to help achieve targets.

The rules for the CMAQ Congestion Measure became effective in May 2017, for the first Performance Period (1st PP 2018 thru 2022). However, it only applied to urbanized areas of more than 1 million people that are in or at least covered a portion of a nonattainment area. As the SJTPO region covered a portion of the Philadelphia Urbanized area, they participated in the setting of the CMAQ Congestion targets for that Urbanized Area.

However, for the second Performance Period (2nd PP 2022 thru 2026), urbanized areas of at least 200k must prepare and submit CMAQ congestion measures and targets. Since Atlantic City is an Urbanized Area > 200k, SJTPO is now subject to the setting of CMAQ Congestion Measures for %Non-SOV, PHED/Capita.



SJTPO is an active participant in the New Jersey Department of Transportation's (NJDOT) Complete Team (collaborative construct between New Jersey's planners and operators to facilitate better linkages between Regional Transportation Planning, Investment Decision-making, Transportation Systems Management and Operations).

SJTPO participated in coordination efforts for PM 3 Congestion Measures led by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), during the first performance period (1st PP) with Philadelphia PA-NJ-DE-MD urbanized area (UZA), with the group setting 2- and 4-year targets and reviewing 2-year performance. The group was comprised of four DOTs (PennDOT, NJDOT, DelDOT and MDOT) and five MPOs (DVRPC, NJTPA, SJTPO, WILMAPCO and LCPC).

SJTPO PBPP coordination activities included forming a working group for the Atlantic City Urbanized Area in which this group met three times since March 2022. The purpose of this group is to conduct formal coordination for TPM activities for the Atlantic City UZA. Meetings focused on a variety of topics including describing the Atlantic City Urbanized area/boundaries and required actions, FHWA performance measures, data needs, initial calculations, target setting, written procedures, and next steps.

SJTPO's external website is an excellent resource to access TPM regulatory requirements. The website includes detailed information regarding rules promulgated by the FHWA covering the interstate system as well as the National Highway System (NHS). The website also includes FTA promulgated rules mandating specific performance measures and targets to assist major transit operators to meet performance goals and targets. The website includes detailed information regarding FHWA PBPP performance measures (PM) 1, 2 and 3 (Safety, Infrastructure, System Reliability) including drop down features where readers can learn more about performance measures, targets and progress made towards each target.

As a suggestion for the external website, it may be helpful if SJTPO could take an additional step to list specific projects under each PM group (safety, bridge/pavement, system performance) to provide examples of projects selected following extensive TPM coordination activities. It should be noted that at the bottom of the PBPP webpage there is a link to the TIP should the reader wish to view the TIP upon reading the PBPP page.

Regarding TPM coordination, it may be appropriate for SJTPO to develop an internal PBPP document sharing resource (Google Drive, SharePoint, other) to facilitate stakeholder coordination, serve as a data repository for meeting minutes, email correspondence, FHWA guidance, written provisions, and data collection.

SJTPO's TIP includes a robust Performance Based Planning & Programming (PBPP) discussion in the PBPP chapter, the projects are listed in subsequent chapters of the TIP. As a suggestion, SJTPO may consider including a short listing of projects (specific projects) that contribute towards target achievement in Performance Management (PM) Areas 1, 2 and 3 to highlight the connection between PBPP and project selection. This could be an additional effort to further connect TPM to



project selection by demonstrating how PBPP leads to selecting projects. Additionally, SJTPO should consider including a discussion regarding how TPM coordination and efforts integrate asset management into the project selection and process. SJTPO works with planning partners at all levels; however, an opportunity exists for better integration of asset management into planning project selection activities.

#### **4.4.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO strengthens its consultation and collaboration process, especially with the municipalities and resource agencies which include but are not limited to NJ Fish and Wildlife, NJ Forest Service, NJ Watershed and Land Management, NJ Historic Preservation Office, Bureau of Air Quality Planning (23 CFR 450.324(g))
2. The Federal Team recommends that SJTPO develop a better project pipeline, especially for the LRTP – showing a project pool consistent with the RTP timeline and a clear connection to the TIP.
3. The Federal Team recommends SJTPO enhance their website to list specific projects under each PM group (safety, bridge/pavement, system performance) to provide clear examples of projects selected following extensive TPM coordination activities. At the bottom of the PBPP webpage there could be a link to the TIP should the reader wish to view the TIP upon reading the PBPP page.



## 4.6 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

### 4.6.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) and (j) set forth requirements for the MPO to cooperatively develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under 23 CFR 450.326, the TIP must meet the following requirements: Must cover at least a four-year horizon and be updated at least every four years.

1. Surface transportation projects funded under Title 23 U.S.C. or Title 49 U.S.C., except as noted in the regulations, are required to be included in the TIP.
2. List project description, cost, funding source, and identification of the agency responsible for carrying out each project.
3. Projects need to be consistent with the adopted MTP.
4. Must be fiscally constrained.

The MPO must provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP.

### 4.6.2 Current Status

The current South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) TIP covers Federal Fiscal Years (FY) 2022 – 2031. It became effective on October 1, 2021, and goes through to September 30, 2031. The TIP includes a list of projects and programs for ten years, with the first four years (FY2026 – 2025) being fiscally constrained and the last six years (FY2026 – 2031) being informational. The TIP includes a variety of projects, including Local Systems Support (39.87%), Mass Transit Assets (31.65%), Bridge Assets (11.86%), Road Assets (10.79%), Congestion Relief (3.08%), Safety Management (1.71%), Multimodal Programs (0.88%), and Transportation Support Facilities (0.17%). The projects in the current TIP are worth over 1.3 billion in federal and state funding dollars.

SJTPO collaborates with subregional county and municipal partners to identify and prioritize projects within the forecasted availability of federal funding which is developed by NJDOT Capital Programming staff. SJTPO's TIP compliments the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the State of New Jersey, which includes the TIPs from all three MPOs in New Jersey: SJTPO, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). SJTPO also coordinates with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the Interagency Consultation Group (ICG), FHWA, FTA, and NJDOT during the Transportation Conformity process.

After adoption, the TIP can be updated through the TIP Modification and Amendment Process. These procedures are outlined in a joint Memorandum of Understanding among SJTPO, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), New Jersey Transit (NJ Transit), and New Jersey Department of Transportation



(NJDOT). Changes to the TIP/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) are either modifications or amendments, and SJTPO maintains and publishes the changes on its website.

Projects included in the TIP undergo a project pre-evaluation screening by SJTPO staff. During the screening, SJTPO staff will assess projects for safety, context-appropriate design, environmental justice, freight, alignment with funding, and air quality benefits. A project that meets the abovementioned requirements will then go through project evaluation criteria and scoring. The projects are evaluated based on meeting federal and state requirements and SJTPO planning priorities and mandates. Additionally, the TIP includes appendices describing the Performance Measures, targets set for the State of New Jersey, and projects and programs that will contribute to meeting the targets.

Even though SJTPO's website mentions that the TIP links the transportation planning process to implementation, with the RTP providing a framework that guides investment decisions over a twenty-year period, it is unclear how the RTP guides the TIP project selection. There is no clear process of how projects from the RTP are implemented via the TIP. For example, there are projects listed in the current TIP that were not part of the RTP either in the fiscally constrained or unfunded portion. Per 23 CFR 450.306(i), each project or project phase included in the TIP shall be consistent with the approved metropolitan transportation plan. It is important to document how the RTP guides the TIP project selection to make the process for TIP programming decisions transparent to stakeholders and the public.

#### **4.5.3 Findings:**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO develop a documented process showing how the RTP guides the TIP project selection.



## **4.7 Intelligent Transportation Systems and Congestion Management Process**

### **4.7.1 Regulatory Basis**

The FHWA Final Rule and FTA Policy on ITS Architecture and Standards are codified in 23 CFR Part 940 ITS Architecture and Standards. The FHWA Final Rule/FTA Policy ensures that ITS projects carried out using funds from the Highway Trust Fund including the Mass Transit Account conform to the National ITS Architecture and applicable ITS standards. This will be accomplished through the development of regional ITS architectures and using a system engineering process for ITS project development

Requirements for a CMP are outlined in Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 450.322 (Congestion management process in transportation management areas). 23 CFR Part 450.322 (a) requires the transportation planning process in a Transportation Management Area (TMA) shall address congestion management through a process that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy, of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under Title 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) and Title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 through the use of travel demand reduction (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs such as a carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), job access projects, and operational management strategies.

### **4.7.2 Current Status**

#### **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)**

The regional architecture is an ITS planning document. It helps to maximize the benefits of all ITS investments in the region by promoting system integration. It provides a regional framework for ensuring institutional agreement and technical integration for the implementation of ITS projects. The regional architecture in high level defines the components of the ITS system, how they are linked to each other, and what information is exchanged between them. Systems engineering analysis provides an organized process for ITS project scoping, managing the technology components of a transportation project, designing, performing integration testing, and implementation.

SJTPO continues to participate in the New Jersey statewide ITS initiatives. SJTPO served on the core team of the NJ ITS Architecture Advancement project to bring the regional architectures into mainstream use by agencies throughout the state. SJTPO also serves as a member agency of the ITS Society of New Jersey. ITS Society of New Jersey is a state ITS chapter focusing on promoting ITS deployment in the state; providing education and outreach to foster the



understanding of ITS applications and technologies; and a forum for collaboration, networking, and information sharing.

### **Congestion Management Process (CMP)**

The CMP provides a strategic planning framework and regional approach for managing congestion using ITS, operational management strategies, mobility services, and programs to optimize the safety and mobility of the transportation system. It is intended to integrate these congestion management strategies into the transportation planning process, project funding, and implementation to support the Long-Range Plan and MTP. It's a requirement of the federal surface transportation legislation. The major activity in the CMP includes:

1. Development of congestion management objectives and identification of strategies.
2. Improve the accessibility and reliability of the transportation system.
3. Establishment of measures to support the multimodal transportation system performance.
4. Collection of data and system performance monitoring to determine the causes of congestion and evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented strategies.

The CMP considers ITS and operational management strategies as one of the ways to improve the safety and mobility of people and goods. To the extent possible, the data collection activities should utilize operations/ITS data to evaluate strategy effectiveness to support the CMP goals and objectives to optimize system performance.

The *RTP 2050* serves as the MTP for the SJTPO region and guides the region's transportation decision making for the next 20 years. It analyzes and identifies the region's long-term transportation needs and activities by creating a framework for project priorities. The MTP transportation planning goals and strategies are in line with the SJTPO Congestion Management Methodology Report 2017 – 2020 goals and strategies. It demonstrated the connection between the MTP and CMP, and the system performance data supporting the CMP.

The Congestion Management Methodology Report 2017 – 2020 is a documentation of the SJTPO congestion management planning process. The CMP report was structured to follow the eight CMP steps outlined by the FHWA in the 2011 Congestion Management Process Guidebook. SJTPO is taking advantage of the availability of vehicle probe travel time data and analytical tools (i.e., Probe Data Analytics (PDA) Suite) for congestion screening and performance management. The NJDOT and operating agencies routinely collect data that can help identify the transportation needs (i.e., bottlenecks) and recommend strategies that can address those transportation needs (i.e., safety service patrols, real-time traveler information, traffic operations centers).

SJTPO has made a concerted effort to identify the different types of data collected, sources, procurement, and use cases. Data collection and tools used to support operations/ITS can also be applied to performance management. Travel data collected from vehicle probes and traffic operation centers can assist in identifying unreliable roadway segments that can be targeted for improvement, understanding travel patterns/characteristics, forecasting, and planning for area-wide transportation services. These efforts in practice will assist the SJTPO to better communicate to the decision-makers and the public about where improvements are most needed with intentions



to move the CMP strategies into the funding stages and implementation to support the Long-Range Plan and MTP.

### **4.7.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.



## **4.8 Data Collection and Usage**

### **4.8.1 Regulatory Basis**

While there is no specific regulatory requirement for data collection and usage, the use of data in the transportation planning process is essential. As such Data in Transportation Planning was one of eight Planning Emphasis Areas developed to enhance the metropolitan and statewide planning programs.

Data sharing principles and data management can be used for a variety of issues, such as freight, bike and pedestrian planning, equity analyses, managing curb space, performance management, travel time reliability, connected and autonomous vehicles, mobility services, and safety. As expressed throughout this certification report, SJTPO has excelled at integrating data into numerous initiatives. Developing and advancing data sharing allows for the efficient use of resources and sound decisions in developing policy.

### **4.8.2 Current Status**

SJTPO has a comprehensive approach towards using and sharing data to inform the transportation planning process. These efforts include collecting data to develop regional plans, inform project selection, and enhance subregional partners access to information.

SJTPO takes advantage of several data warehouse depositories as well as analytical software which is at no additional cost to the MPO. Additionally, SJTPO pays for additional data collection efforts with limited funding with the understanding that good data informs and enhances transportation planning. An example of this is the Atlantic Avenue project in Atlantic City. The initial project was proposed by the city as a pavement preservation project. However, through the SJTPO screening process which utilizes a series of data sources, discovered substantial safety issues along the corridor. By sharing this data and investing additional funds into a more detailed study led to a substantial change in scope and resulted in additional federal and local funding.

Another effort which was initiated prior to the certification review included a massive data collection study that is going to be utilized to develop an Active Transportation Master Plan and bolster existing programs. This type of commitment to collect data such as sidewalk presence, approach configurations, intersection lighting, pedestrian crossings, shoulder types, and more is exactly the type of data that will further the region's goal towards Vision Zero.

SJTPO understands that large data collection efforts and the utilization of data can be a challenge to manage and disseminate to planning partners in a meaningful way. As such, SJTPO is developing a Strategic Data Management Plan that will address concerns about how data will be updated and remain current, how to develop a system that informs projects that incorporate safety and complete streets, barriers to using data from the local level, as well as other obstacles to being a data repository for the region.



### **4.8.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

#### **Commendation:**

1. The Federal Review Team commends SJTPO for continuing to test various data sources such as Signal Analytics to inform the transportation planning process. SJTPO has also taken advantage of existing planning efforts to collect critical data that will be used to build upon existing efforts as well as future planned work. Obtaining good data is the first step and requires extensive resources, utilizing the data such as what is being done in the SJTPO Freight Study and the Local Safety Program is commendable.



## 4.9 Public Transit

### 4.9.1 Regulatory Basis

49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 U.S.C. 134 require the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas to consider all modes of travel in the development of their plans and programs. Federal regulations cited in 23 CFR 450.314 state that the MPO in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process.

Transit agencies are to be key participants with MPOs and State DOTs throughout the entire metropolitan planning process. The statutory requirements below are just a few examples of the planning processes where close coordination and communication is required to meet the three Cs of the planning process. That is, Congress created MPOs to ensure that existing and future expenditures of governmental funds for transportation projects and programs be based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process.

23 CFR 450.306 (h) Preparation of the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, as required by 49 U.S.C. 5310, should be coordinated and consistent with the metropolitan transportation planning process.

23 CFR 450.322(a) the metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon as of the effective date. The transportation plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of a multi-modal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

23 CFR 450.326 requires the MPO to develop a TIP in cooperation with the State and public transit operators.

### 4.9.2 Current Status

SJTPO takes a comprehensive approach towards transportation planning. A variety of modes are deeply entrenched in the SJTPO work program. This includes transit planning, bicycle/pedestrian initiatives, regional trail planning, as well as freight planning.

Sparse public transit service is available in every county of the SJTPO region apart from Atlantic County. Atlantic County, more specifically Atlantic City, has the most concentration of public transit service in the region. This is a result of strong public transit demand from daily commuter and tourists' trips to Atlantic City. Yet, the region still has unmet public transit needs mostly in the sparsely populated transit-dependent rural areas of the region.

To address the unmet public transit needs, SJTPO has embraced numerous Coordinated Human Services Transportation programs and services at the state, county, and local levels. These services are provided and administered by state, county, local, private, and not for profit organizations to provide public transit access to transit dependent population including the elderly, persons with



disabilities, and low-income persons. Access Link, non-profit agencies such as Easter Seals, the Puerto Rican Action Committee, and Pearl Transit of Salem County are examples of the providers.

The recent Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP) known as the Access for All Transit Plan also identified unmet transportation needs with recommendations on how to improve and increase service while reducing costs. To date, many of the recommendations developed from the 2015 HSTP and the Access for All Transit Plan have yet to be carried out.

NJ TRANSIT is the major public transit provider in the SJTPO region. NJ TRANSIT participates in the committee structure of the SJTPO via the Policy Board and TAC. NJ TRANSIT reports on obligated transit projects and provides detailed transit financial planning information for incorporation into the MTP. NJ TRANSIT provides agency representatives to participate in regional transportation planning activities and updates of various SJTPO metropolitan planning products. SJTPO and NJ TRANSIT worked together to coordinate the transit component of performance-based planning to meet Transit Asset Management plan requirements. For the FY 2022 Reporting Period, while NJ TRANSIT met set Transit Asset Management targets for some assets, it did not meet targets for some other assets. However, NJ TRANSIT is constantly updating the performance measures and targets and will likely improve performance in future reporting. The transit asset performance measures and targets addressing State of Good Repair are included in the adopted 2050 Regional Transportation Plan.

Per the requirements of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP), SJTPO, like other MPOs, are required to set performance targets. SJTPO has received and approved reporting from NJ TRANSIT on some of the performance metrics such as Total Number of Fatalities, Total Number of Passenger Injuries, System Reliability: Mean Distance (Miles) between Major Service Failures by Mode (MDBSF); etc.

SJTPO continues to work with Cross County Connection, who is the Transportation Management Association (TMA) in both southern and central New Jersey. They provide public transportation, vanpools, carpools, bicycling, and pedestrian modes, as well as trip reduction strategies such as alternative work schedules and telecommuting, and other similar services for area businesses, employees, developers, individuals, and other groups.

As part of the Congestion Management Process SJTPO's plan notes that they work with NJ TRANSIT and other subregional transit providers to identify strategies that may improve transit accessibility and reliability in the region. Strategies may include real-time information systems for transit users, transit signal priority, bus rapid transit, improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities that serve as intermodal connectors, and more.

As part of the on-site visit, the Certification Review Team asked SJTPO staff if they had taken part in analyzing the safety of transit stop locations or had information readily available on this



topic. They noted that they had not conducted a safety assessment of transit stop locations, but it was something they were willing to conduct moving forward.

During the Certification Review, SJTPO staff stressed the need for cost effectiveness in public transit. They also pointed out some key challenges the region faces including shortage of drivers, change in commuter patterns and how to address public transit needs when travel demand is not strong. SJTPO is also collaborating with Rutgers and NJ TRANSIT in a mobility study.

It was apparent to the federal review team that SJTPO is struggling to engage the local municipalities in the region. When asked if they were aware of any efforts by the municipalities in the region to improve transportation planning, SJTPO did not. However, SJTPO engages well with the counties in the region as well as Atlantic City and the City of Vineland, (as both are city subregions), and works well with NJ TRANSIT. NJ TRANSIT is actively engaged with SJTPO in various planning efforts and products.

### **4.9.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

#### **Recommendation:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO clearly define the roles in the implementation of the recommendations in the Access for All Transit Plan.
2. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO include key demographics who are typically and traditionally impacted by the Human Services Transportation Plan such as seniors, people with disabilities etc. in the development or update of subsequent plans.
3. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO work with NJ TRANSIT to analyze safety at, and around public transit stops.



## **4.10 Environmental Mitigation, Climate Change and Resiliency Planning**

### **4.10.1 Regulatory Basis**

23 CFR 450.206, 23 CFR 450.306, and 23 CFR 450.324 outline the scope of the transportation planning process and the required content of the transportation plan. These include a variety of factors that must be considered in relation to the natural and human environment, along with environmental mitigation actions that should be included in the plan.

23 CFR 450.306(b)(9) requires planning considerations that promote projects, strategies, and services that seek to improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system, and further reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts.

23 CFR 667 mandates periodic evaluations of assets/facilities repeatedly damaged by emergency events (natural disaster, or catastrophic failure of an asset/facility), and identification of reasonable alternatives that address: a) how to reduce the need for federal funds on repairs/reconstruction of said assets/facilities; b) how to improve public safety and health of natural and human environment; and c) how to meet transportation needs identified in applicable plans and programs of federal, state, local, tribal governments.

### **4.10.2 Current Status**

The impacts of a changing climate and extreme weather events are one of the hazards that threaten transportation infrastructure in the SJTPO region. In 2012, the SJTPO region experienced considerable flooding and impacts to its transportation infrastructure due to Super Storm Sandy. The effects of Sandy brought attention to the vulnerability of communities, associated infrastructure and assets, and how critical it is to have resiliency considerations in transportation planning. In the years following Sandy, there were many efforts carried out, within SJTPO and the surrounding region, and more broadly, throughout New Jersey. There is a belief among climate professionals that the average frequency and intensity of storms such as Sandy is likely to increase moving forward.

One of the strategies put forward to address the changing climate is greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction. In 2014, the SJTPO conducted a regional GHG emissions inventory as part of a larger long-range climate change initiative to establish a baseline inventory for GHG emissions, identify climate-vulnerable facilities/assets, as well as tracking the overall GHG emission trends within the region. The study was developed for use by communities in the SJTPO region to help create a framework for incorporating GHG-related impacts into evaluation criteria for programs, and project selection and prioritization. SJTPO has also conducted extensive research on resilience strategies and projects, including hard infrastructure (seawalls, levees), soft infrastructure (dunes, wetlands), and policies (managed retreat).



In the current “RTP 2050”, the SJTPO has identified resiliency and reliability of the transportation infrastructure to be an important target and planning strategy. It is encouraging to see many programs and activities that support this objective, along with the development of planning products for use by partners and stakeholders in the region. Currently, in its FY23 UPWP, the SJTPO continues to prioritize its support for improving the resiliency and reliability of transportation infrastructure in the region, in cooperation with numerous state and local partners and stakeholders. Efforts include improvements to SJTPO’s data repositories (e.g., storm surge, flood insurance, impervious surfaces, and LiDAR elevation maps), identifying new funding opportunities, such as the PROTECT grant program, collaboration with partners to develop risk management strategies, regional emergency preparedness planning, and support for development/improvements to the NJ Statewide Hazard Mitigation Plan. Additionally, there is a large focus on advancing the Regional Vulnerability Assessment study, which includes analysis of existing conditions and determining weaknesses in transportation system, identification of assets and their adaptation potential, assessing the impacts of changing environmental conditions. The SJTPO strives to include and prioritize stakeholder/community involvement in many efforts.

Furthermore, SJTPO has been involved in several discussions aimed at gaining a better understanding of resiliency and transportation planning, including Super Storm Sandy: Five Years Later Meadowlands Conference, TransAction 2017, and Mid-Atlantic Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Conference. Other studies such as the Strategic Recovery Planning Report and Post Hurricane Sandy Transportation Resiliency Study in NY, NJ, and CT, have also been conducted in the state. A few counties in the SJTPO region have also completed some resiliency projects such as the Route 52 Causeway bridge replacement, elevated controller boxes in communities closer to the shore, the elevation of Sea Isle Boulevard and extended revetment wall on Ocean Drive.

#### **4.10.3 Findings:**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO incorporates existing resiliency studies and vulnerability assessments conducted either at the local or state level into its next MTP update.



## **4.11 Planning Environmental Linkages**

### **4.11.1 Regulatory Basis**

Planning Environmental Linkage (PEL) was initiated in 2005 when FHWA and FTA published a joint memorandum outlining the use of PEL in the NEPA process utilizing the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations and case law. A PEL study can incorporate the initial phases of NEPA through the consideration of natural, physical, and social effects, coordination with environmental resource agencies, and public involvement. This allows the analysis in the PEL study to be referenced in the subsequent NEPA document once the project is initiated, saving both time and money with project implementation.

In 2007, FHWA and FTA published regulations governing the development of planning studies within the state and metropolitan transportation planning processes. The regulations explain how results or decisions of transportation planning studies may be used as part of the overall project development process consistent with NEPA (23 CFR 450.212 and 450.318). MAP-21 and the FAST Act refined PEL to strengthen the transportation planning process as the foundation for project decisions, emphasize public involvement and consideration of environmental and other factors, and clarify the Federal role in overseeing the transportation planning process. With MAP-21 and FAST Act changes, additional authorities for PEL provided in the statutory language under 23 USC 168. 23 U.S.C. 168 and Appendix A to 23 CFR Part 450 provide for linking the transportation planning and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes.

### **4.11.2 Current Status**

SJTPO uses readily available published environmental inventories to identify protected landscapes and historical features for their projects. The MPO's project selection process includes a pre-evaluation screening designed to consider the negative impacts that transportation investments can have on both the human and natural environments. This process helps identify mitigation efforts that will be required later during project implementation.

Most projects being developed in the SJTPO region do not rise above the Categorical Exclusion level of review and do not require the full scope of planning work under NEPA. Those projects that may result in significant capital investments, such as the Cumberland County Bike Ped Safety Action Plan or the ongoing bikeway feasibility studies, should incorporate a PEL approach in the planning phase and ensure that adequate analysis and outreach is conducted and documented. Alternative analysis and identification of environmental impacts already occur in varying forms through the project selection and concept development processes but need to be expanded and formalized to mirror that which will likely be required later under NEPA. Consultation with NJDOT and BEPR does currently happen during the project phase but would need to happen earlier in the planning phase, in addition to coordination with other resource agencies.

### **4.11.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.



### **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team encourages SJTPO to consider advancing and integrating PEL principles in future RTP updates and in the concept development phase of corridor and feasibility studies. When feasible and appropriate, the MPO should conduct PEL studies that include NEPA level analysis for larger transportation projects that may be classified as an Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA. A PEL framework should be incorporated early in project scoping to help anticipate and address NEPA requirements that will be required later during implementation. The MPO should work with NJDOT and FHWA to incorporate a system to document planning-level information and carry it into the NEPA phase of a project. SJTPO should also collaborate with NJDOT, resources agencies, and other interested parties to examine project-level range of alternatives, potential impacts, and mitigation strategies of transportation solutions. Expanding and thoroughly documenting public outreach and consultation with other agencies is critical for developing the PEL framework and ensuring pre-NEPA planning work is sufficient.



## 4.12 Safety

### 4.12.1 Regulatory Basis

[23 U.S.C. 134\(h\)\(1\)\(B\)](#) requires MPOs to “increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users” as one of the ten scopes of the planning process. As stated in [23 CFR 450.306\(b\)\(2\)](#), the planning process needs to be continuous, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C process), and provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users. This performance-driven, outcome-based approach to the planning process should be reflected in the MPO’s metropolitan transportation plan and the transportation improvement plan.

In addition, SAFETEA-LU established a core safety program called the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) (23 U.S.C. 148), which introduced a mandate for states to have Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSPs). [23 CFR 450.306\(d\)](#) requires the metropolitan transportation planning process is consistent with the SHSP and coordinated with other transit safety and security planning.

[23 CFR 450.324\(h\)](#) states that the metropolitan transportation planning process should be consistent with the SHSP and other transit safety and security planning and review processes, plans, and programs as appropriate and integrate the priorities, goals, countermeasures, strategies, or projects for the metropolitan planning area in the Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP) including the SHSP.

### 4.12.2 Current Status

Regulations require SJTPO to consider safety as one of its planning factors. The basic requirement is that SJTPO, through the 3-C transportation planning process, considers safety in planning and programming. This Review evaluates whether compliance is demonstrated by:

1. The consistency of safety between the: Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), and the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP),
2. The inclusion of measurable safety goals and objectives in the MTP,
3. The use of safety project prioritization criteria in the TIP development,
4. The inclusion of transportation safety planning work activities in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and
5. Participation in the SHSP development and implementation process.

SJTPO’s RTP 2050 strategies include a Vision Zero goal to end fatal and serious injury crashes by guiding all transportation decision-making with the philosophy that any loss of life on our roadways is unacceptable. In addition, the strategies included Safety in all Projects providing an opportunity to capture safety as an overall evaluation for all projects to capitalize on identifying safety improvements noted as the greatest need based on the Network Screening Lists. The SJTPO has continued to embrace and expand initiatives to reduce barriers to safety with design assistance



support to better serve local projects. The SJTPO RTP 2050 Plan is aligned and consistent with the specific goals contained in the 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan; however, the plan does not identify any goals beyond those identified statewide. The RTP could be expanded to include additional goals more in alignment with the needs of the Southern New Jersey region that may differ from the overall Statewide goals. We recommend the SJTPO explore expanding on the state goals for additional goals that may be of benefit to the southern region of New Jersey.

The New Jersey 2020 Strategic Highway Safety Plan is a statewide plan defining strategies to improve safety under and with equity considerations. SJTPO's stakeholder involvement and subject matter experts assisted on developing the overall statewide plan, and its staff continues to be engaged with numerous implementation efforts. The TIP and UPWP are derived from the same data-driven approach as the SHSP.

The SJTPO's FFY 2022-2031 Transportation Improvement Program implements the Plan to further detail the planned safety programming and investments. The NJ STIP details the Local Roadway Safety Program to advance safety projects consistent with the NJ 2020 SHSP.

The FY 2024 UPWP details SJTPO's planning efforts and, specifically, the transportation safety work performed by SJTPO to provide Local Safety Program Design Assistance; the design assistance includes preparing construction plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E).

SJTPO could prioritize getting HSIP projects in the New Jersey Concept Development Process for programming projects in future years and taking advantage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding increases. This new funding presents new opportunities and, using crash data, SJTPO could target sub-regional partners and municipalities to identify locations and/or systemic safety improvements while also soliciting applications into the Local Safety Program. In addition, SJTPO could provide grant assistance for communities to take advantage of the significant number of grant funding opportunities available under the BIL discretionary grant funding.

SJTPO should also consider the safety analysis of completed safety projects, using before and after data to understand what types of projects are providing the best return on investment for the safety dollars being spent. This approach can provide SJTPO with improved strategies for planning and developing safety projects that have the greatest impact.

SJTPO together with DVRPC and NJTPA are all preparing Countywide Local Road Safety Plans based on a data-driven approach, Safe System Approach (SSA) and Systemic Countermeasures; all which are in alignment with the 2020 SHSP. This coordinated effort for the entire state provides a robust framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local roads in a concerted statewide effort to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on local roads. In addition, this effort will align local agencies participating in the statewide effort to apply for BIL discretionary grant programs related to safety and/or infrastructure improvements through the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Implementation grants along with providing safety projects to create a backlog of HSIP and Safety Local Projects.



SJTPO continues to work with local agencies to develop Data Collection more fully for various roadway attributes on roadways and intersections located in the SJTPO study area. This comprehensive data collection will provide the region with a significant advantage to perform a Systemic Analysis leading to a more proactive approach to circumventing fatal and serious injury crashes *before crashes occur*, as opposed to the current reactive (i.e., hot spot) approach. Once the data is inventoried and tied to GPS coordinates; the crossmatch of similar characteristics to known high crash locations can lead local agencies to construct safety countermeasures before crashes occur. This data collection initiative could be the best effort to reducing fatal and serious injuries in the SJTPO region.

SJTPO has long been recognized for the exemplary effort in Traffic Safety Education which includes a diversified portfolio of various public education programs for all ages. The more recent national effort toward adopting a Safe System Approach encourages a commitment from all road users, designers, automotive manufacturers, and incident management teams; it is imperative the traffic safety education start at an early age and continue throughout all roadway users' lifetime. The Traffic Safety Education program could be expanded to include pedestrian and bicycle safety education along with the current offerings to engage younger roadway users at an earlier age to assist in developing good habits supporting the Safe System Approach.

And finally, the SJTPO website is an easy to navigate website that makes it very simple for users to find what they are looking for. From the home page or any location in the SJTPO website, it is apparent much thought went into the design to provide users a welcoming experience that includes transparency for all SJTPO efforts. The abundant use of hyperlinks within each individual web page provides users a more in-depth experience that not only provides users locations of more information but also a broader explanation of the SJTPO planning process.

#### **4.12.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

#### **Commendation:**

1. The Federal Review Team commends SJTPO on its data-driven transportation safety program and the continued effort to categorize and identify roadway assets with a focused goal of developing a Systemic Approach to Safety. This effort will enable the MPO to develop a proactive approach to addressing safety and reducing fatalities and serious injuries in the region.
2. The Federal Review Team commends the SJTPO for the current offering of Traffic Safety Education Programs. The programs are engaging and diversified and identify risks to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists of all ages that may be encountered on roadways to drive forth the Road to Zero message through a Safe System Approach by developing Safe Road Users.



## **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO initiates a monthly or quarterly Transportation Safety Group with local, county, and other stakeholders for various rotating agenda items and guest speakers. The agendas could include training, grant opportunities, and spotlight best practices/projects of general transportation interest. Other topics might include the SJTPO progress on roadway assets and progress on other transportation safety efforts including the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) requirements.
2. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO track pre- and post-construction fatalities and serious injuries for regional safety projects to understand what impact transportation safety projects have in the region in a concerted effort to reduce fatal and serious injuries. To further this, the SJTPO may want to post this information to call attention the ongoing efforts and progress by the MPO.
3. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO increase the promotion and utilization of HSIP funds and develop a pipeline of projects and efforts that can take advantage of the increase in HSIP funding. This will also put SJTPO in a good position for submitting projects or cost overruns to NJDOT for consideration for Federal August redistribution or various rotating discretionary grant opportunities



## 4.13 Freight

### 4.13.1 Regulatory Basis

The MAP-21 established in 23 U.S.C. 167 a policy to improve the condition and performance of the national freight network and achieve goals related to economic competitiveness and efficiency; congestion; productivity; safety, security, and resilience of freight movement; infrastructure condition; use of advanced technology; performance, innovation, competition, and accountability, while reducing environmental impacts.

In addition, 23 U.S.C. 134 and 23 CFR 450.306 specifically identify the need to address freight movement as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process. The FAST Act (2016) continued federal infrastructure investment as does the 2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

### 4.13.2 Current Status

SJTPO's Freight Planning Program should be considered a strong area of growth with regards to continuing development and implementation of freight initiatives. SJTPO has implemented several activities to better integrate freight into its transportation planning process including participating in major intermodal studies such as the Port of Salem and the start of development (early 2023) of a regional freight plan. In 2022, SJTPO conducted a major data analysis effort in which this information will be used towards the development of their regional freight plan, inform future studies and investments, and enhance SJTPO's representation in future statewide freight planning products. SJTPO actively participates in statewide freight planning efforts including participating in the NJDOT Freight Advisory Committee, contributing towards development of the NJDOT State Freight Plan (2017, 2022) and the New Jersey State Rail Plan (2022).

The formation of SJTPO's Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) in 2021 should be recognized as an effort to bring together business leaders, public and private sector freight professionals, stakeholders from multiple freight modes and the economic development sectors to discuss and identify freight movement challenges, opportunities, and solutions. To date, the New Jersey Division Office has not actively participated in these meetings, however, the division will continue to monitor progress and plan to participate in the future.

As a suggestion, SJTPO could consider including links to freight planning resources and/or tools highlighted by the FHWA via its Office of Freight Management and Operations Index - FHWA Freight Management and Operations ([dot.gov](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/)) as an effort to enhance their webpage. As the SJTPO freight planning efforts continue to develop, the MPO may consider developing resource tools focused on exploring and tracking regional freight network activities.

Regarding the TIP and related to how freight planning efforts contribute towards selecting projects that promote goods movement, the SJTPO TIP (FFY 2022 – 2031), we encourage SJTPO to continue its efforts to incorporate language into the TIP describing the connection between freight planning efforts and projects selected in the TIP that contribute towards goods movement.



As a suggestion for the website, and the freight page, perhaps several projects from the TIP (page B-9) that contribute towards goods movement could be listed directly on the freight page as a way to demonstrate how freight planning efforts directly result in freight movement enhancement projects being selected in the TIP. Another way to make the connection between freight planning and goods movement projects being selected in the TIP would be to create a link from the freight page to page B-9 in the TIP that lists freight/goods movement focused projects.

Lastly, SJTPO is encouraged to consider demonstrating greater emphasis with regards to the relationship between freight planning and project selection.

#### **4.13.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO utilize their website, the freight webpage, to demonstrate how projects such as those from TIP (page B-9) that contribute towards goods movement be listed directly on the freight page as a way to demonstrate how freight planning efforts result in freight movement enhancement projects being selected in the TIP. Another way to make the connection between freight planning and goods movement projects being selected in the TIP would be to create a link from the freight webpage to page B-9 in the TIP that lists freight/goods movement focused projects.



## 4.14 Non-motorized Bicycle Pedestrian Transportation Planning

### 4.14.1 Regulatory Basis

Section 5303 of Title 49 and Section 134 of Title 23 require that the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas consider all modes of travel in the development of their plans and programs. Federal regulations cited in 23 CFR 450.306 state that the MPO in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process.

23 U.S.C. 217(g) states that bicyclists and pedestrians shall be given due consideration in the comprehensive transportation plans developed by each MPO under 23 U.S.C. 134. Bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities.

23 CFR 450.200, 23 CFR 450.300, 23 U.S.C. 134(h), and 135(d)) require that non-motorists must be allowed to participate in the planning process and transportation agencies are required to integrate walking and bicycling facilities and programs in their transportation plans to ensure the operability of an intermodal transportation system.

23 CFR 450.316(a) requires that "[t]he MPOs shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing...representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, and representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan planning process."

23 U.S.C. 134(c)(2) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(c)(2) requires that plans and transportation improvement programs (TIPs) of all metropolitan areas "shall provide for the development and integrated management and operation of transportation systems and facilities (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities)."

### 4.14.2 Current Status

SJTPO is committed to promoting bicycle and pedestrian accessibility as well as making safety for all road users a high priority in their four-county region. Since the prior Federal Certification, SJTPO has made non-motorized bike and pedestrian planning a key priority. SJTPO has successfully integrated various means of non-motorized transportation into their planning processes including the TIP, MTP, and their UPWP. As of 2018 SJTPO has either completed or are actively in the process of data collection and planning efforts including:

1. Inventory of sidewalks along county routes
2. South Jersey Trails Design Guide
3. Identified the Philly to Shore Trail
4. Developed Complete Streets Priority Areas
5. Completed the Atlantic County Bikeway West Feasibility Study



## 6. Initiated the Cape May County Bikeway Feasibility Study

In addition to the efforts mentioned above, SJTPO has successfully utilized HSIP funding to develop a bicycle and pedestrian safety plan for Cumberland County which led to the development of five individual projects that will advance safety goals but also build upon the existing bicycle and pedestrian network. The most recent effort, which is active at the time of this report, is the Countywide Local Road Safety Plans effort. This will not only meet the SS4A planning requirements for the entire SJTPO region but will provide essential data on various bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Another active effort that will look to expand non-motorized transportation is the Maurice River Corridor Study. This effort will evaluate where trails and non-motorized infrastructure can be enhanced. The study will also incorporate ecotourism and sustainable economic development into consideration. Future endeavors that were highlighted in the adopted FY 2024 UPWP include an Active Transportation Master Plan as well as the establishment of a trails advisory committee. As demonstrated above, SJTPO has expended a large proportion of their limited resources to advance bike and pedestrian planning within the SJTPO region.

Other program areas where SJTPO has been diligent in advancing bicycle and pedestrian planning is the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside program (TA) and Safe Routes to School (SRTS). The Transportation Alternative Set-Aside program (TA) provides federal funds for community-based “non-traditional” surface transportation projects designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the nation’s intermodal system. Projects eligible for TA-Set Aside funds are competitively selected. SJTPO administers the application process in its region. The SRTS program strives to empower communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity. SRTS provides funding for a wide variety of projects and activities that support and encourage students to walk and bike to school. Like TA-Set Aside, SRTS funds are awarded competitively. NJDOT administers the solicitation and application process for TA-Set Adie and SRTS program in cooperation with the three MPOs. Furthermore, to improve the quality of applications it was receiving, in partnership with DVRPC and NJTPA, SJTPO worked to enhance the application criteria and process by including equity. These enhancements include updating criteria to allow for more professional judgement and project quality, the addition of an equity component, applicant trainings, and a requirement for mandatory one-on-one pre-application meetings with applicants.

SJTPO has many active partnerships within its region to enhance and receive feedback on various bike and pedestrian planning efforts and is looking to expand this outreach by creating a Trails Advisory Committee. Additionally, SJTPO is looking to include municipalities in the planning process through various technical studies and extensive outreach. As a result of these existing partnerships, SJTPO has created local bicycle/pedestrian plans, identified complete streets priority areas, conducted sidewalk inventories, developed a regional trail system, and committed to include safety for all road users in all projects. In addition to planning efforts, SJTPO has funded several bicycle and pedestrian projects with CMAQ and HSIP funding. SJTPO’s involvement in the creation of these plans is welcomed because it brings a regional perspective. SJTPO also supports regional trails development and has created a trails brand for the region, identified regional



stakeholders, established messaging, identified five critical gaps, updated the trail inventory, generated new conversations about trails, and through the UPWP, has conducted technical studies.

SJTPO has formally adopted a project evaluation process for projects in the TIP, many of the criteria including “Complete Streets/Context Appropriate Design” encourage non-motorized transportation projects. Evaluating projects through this process has led to substantial improvements in projects. Projects like Atlantic Avenue in Atlantic City were transformed after an initial screening process to include a road-diet, bike lanes, and many other pedestrian enhancements. Not all the projects in the SJTPO region are large, but by incorporating facilities such as high visibility crosswalks and count down pedestrian heads into all projects demonstrates how SJTPO is prioritizing non-motorized transportation infrastructure.

#### **4.14.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

##### **Commendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team commends SJTPO for including equity as a criterion for project selection and investing in projects that prioritize non-motorized projects in EJ areas.
2. The Federal Review Team commends SJTPO for continuing to maximize their resources through various planning efforts by collecting data that will further bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. This includes the inventory done as part of a previous pavement conditions study and the Local Road Safety Plan effort currently underway.

##### **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO work with regional partners to develop more localized circulation plans that emphasize bicycle and pedestrian facilities that can be implemented in a strategic manner. One way to prioritize resources is to better match up facilities with trips and destinations by integrating land use planning into the transportation planning process. Other strategies to consider for prioritizing investment could be to include partnering with downtowns, communities with transit hubs, or redevelopment sites to maximize resources.



## **4.15 Support of Economic Vitality and Enhancement of Travel and Tourism**

### **4.15.1 Regulatory Basis**

23 U.S.C. 134 (a) & (h), 49 U.S.C. 5303(h)(1)(a) and 23 CFR 450.306(b)(1) & (10) set forth the requirements that the metropolitan planning process for a metropolitan planning area should provide consideration of projects and strategies that will:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan planning area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency; and enhance travel and tourism.

### **4.15.2 Current Status**

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization's Regional Transportation Plan 2050 contains two goals that consider the planning factors mentioned above – Goal 4: Support the Regional Economic and Goal 6: Increase and Enhance Opportunities for Travel and Tourism.

SJTPO sees freight and tourism as important parts of the regional economy. As such, SJTPO participated in the development of the 2017 New Jersey Statewide Freight Plan and is planning to develop a regional freight plan. SJTPO is also conducting a study to collect and analyze freight data with the intent of using that information to advance capital investments that improve freight movement in the region. A freight advisory committee is also part of SJTPO's efforts to enhance regional freight discussions. Additionally, the RTP has strategies to support the regional economy goal, such as:

1. improve truck routes
2. expand the role of business in the MPO process
3. promote new connections between travel modes
4. infrastructure that supports businesses
5. reduce barriers to job access
6. projects that support the economy
7. projects that enhance tourism
8. advance South Jersey Trails
9. identify congested locations

Tourism is a major economic driver of the shore via employment, investments, tax revenues, and other non-monetary benefits. Due to tourism, the SJTPO population triples in the summer, thus bringing in much-needed revenue and some challenges. For example, Cape May's year-round population is 93,000 compared to 667,000 at summer peak. As a result of such an increase in population, challenges on how to maintain the infrastructure and safely accommodate the increase in vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic also arise. SJTPO is looking for strategies to address these challenges. Currently, there are some local efforts and projects underway that contribute to freight and tourism – Salem Port Study; Truck Route Identification Studies for East/West



Cumberland County, Nabb Avenue Improvements; Maurice River Corridor Feasibility Study; Atlantic County Bikeway West Feasibility Study; Northern Cape May County Bikeway Feasibility Study; South Jersey Trails Design Guide; and Active Transportation Master Plan. SJTPO is also looking to establish a Trails Advisory Committee.

The infrastructure that SJTPO relies on for economic vitality and tourism is also at risk from sea level rise, increased storm intensity, and increases in precipitation because of climate change. SJTPO, through consultants, will conduct a regional vulnerability framework looking at transportation network weaknesses, existing conditions, the extent of disturbance, asset identification, and the impact of change on environmental conditions. This study will benefit the shore areas greatly and, as a result, continue to support the region's economy.

To continue making strides in this area, SJTPO researched work being done in this area, looking at best practices from other MPOs, Counties, and Cities across the country. As a result of this research, SJTPO is looking to expand its role in connecting with tourism and economic development groups, conduct surveys on tourism/recreation access, and conduct technical studies targeting tourism.

During the onsite portion of the review, it was mentioned that the TIP project evaluation process includes project selection criteria that include tourism. It was also noted that the Congestion Management Process consists of a bottleneck analysis that can show population variations (summer vs. year-round). The analysis is shared with regional transportation partners, but there is no knowledge of how that information is used. Recognizing the importance of this subject area in the SJTPO region and the many different parts of SJTPO planning that economic vitality and tourism touches, SJTPO is encouraged to enhance work in this area by better accounting for the summer spike in population and travel as well as increase in freight activity in all areas of SJTPO planning, especially the CMP. Strong collaboration with local governments, tourism agencies, employers, and housing agencies will help SJTPO to enhance planning in this area.

### **4.15.3 Findings**

SJTPO meets all federal requirements.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO enhance the incorporation of meeting the economic development, travel, and tourism strategies into the various planning work products, including the MTP. This would work to improve the integration of land use planning into the transportation planning process as well as supporting livability initiatives. Work conducted by the South Jersey Economic Development District via their Comprehensive Economic Development plan could be better coordinated with SJTPO to assess areas in the region for future development where it makes the most sense, including redevelopment areas, brownfield sites, downtowns, transit villages, etc. SJTPO could consult with local communities about incorporating this



body of work into the planning work products including the up-coming MTP, as well as other studies that could be included in the work program.



# APPENDIX A – FHWA/FTA CERTIFICATION REVIEW LETTER



**US Department  
Of Transportation**

**Federal Transit  
Administration**

**Federal Highway  
Administration**

Federal Transit Administration  
Region II New York  
One Bowling Green  
Room 425  
New York, NY 10004-1415  
212-668-2170  
212-668-2136 (Fax)

Federal Highway Administration  
New Jersey Division  
940 Bear Tavern Road  
Suite 202  
West Trenton, NJ 08628-1015  
(609) 637-4200  
(609) 538 4313 (Fax)

In Reply Refer To:  
HDA-NJ  
TRC-2

October 21, 2022

Mayor Leonard Desiderio,  
Chairman, SJTPO Policy Board  
782 S. Brewster Road, Unit B6  
Vineland, NJ 08361

Dear Mayor, Desiderio:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be conducting a Certification Review of the transportation planning process for your metropolitan area on March 27 and March 28, 2023. These dates were selected in consultation with the senior leadership of the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO).

Titles 23 and 49 of The United States Code require the Secretary of Transportation to identify urbanized areas over 200,000 in population as Transportation Management Areas (TMA). As a result of the 2010 Census, the Atlantic City-Vineland, NJ Urbanized Area continues to be a TMA. TMAs are subject to special planning and programming requirements. In accordance with 23 USC 134 (k)(6), the Secretary must certify compliance of the MPO in each TMA with the metropolitan planning regulations not less than once every four years. This is a joint responsibility of the FHWA and FTA. The four-year cycle runs from the date of the previously jointly signed Certification Report, which was September 2019.

The primary purpose of the Certification Review is to ensure that the planning requirements of 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303 are being satisfactorily implemented. As in past reviews, we intend to highlight good practices, exchange information, and identify opportunities for improvements. FHWA and FTA would like to accomplish the certification review through the following phases: 1) desk review of planning products and processes; 2) an on-site review including public meeting; and 3) a certification report. We will coordinate with SJTPO staff in finalizing the on-site review agenda. At the conclusion of the on-site review, a closeout session will be held with SJTPO staff on March 28, 2023, to discuss preliminary findings.

After the on-site review, a certification review report will be prepared by the FHWA and FTA review team that summarizes the specific findings of the review. This report will be finalized within 90 – 120 days of completion of the on-site review. Within this timeframe, SJTPO staff will be provided 15 calendar days to provide factual verification of the content of the draft report.



To aid with the desk review, FHWA and FTA request that SJTPO provides them with electronic copy or hyperlink of the following topics/documents by **December 30, 2022**:

- Status of corrective actions and recommendations from previous certification
- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP)
- TIP Development and Project Selection
- Transit Activities- Human Services Transportation Plan
- Public Participation Plan (PPP)
- Equal Opportunity Questionnaire (attached)
- Title VI Plan and Related Documents
- Congestion Management Process (CMP)
- Performance Based Planning and Programming
- Transportation Safety and Resiliency Planning and Security in the Planning Process
- Freight and any other Multimodal Plans
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Indirect Cost Estimates, Cost Analysis, and Price Analysis of consultant led efforts undertaken in Fiscal Years 2019 to 2021

Further details on discussion topics, including a draft agenda for the on-site discussion, will be provided in the following months. The Federal contacts for the review are Sutapa Bandyopadhyay of FHWA, (609) 637-4230 and Uzoma Anukwe of FTA, (212) 824-2433. The review is a positive means to advance our mutual goals to maximize the effectiveness of the planning process. We look forward to our on-site visit.

Sincerely,

**ROBERT J  
CLARK**

Digitally signed by ROBERT J  
CLARK  
Date: 2022.10.31 14:20:45  
-0430'

**Robert Clark**  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
New Jersey Division

Digitally signed by  
STEPHEN C GOODMAN  
Date: 2022.10.21  
09:26:23 -0400'

**Stephen Goodman, PE**  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
Region 2

cc: Vice Chairman and Salem County Commissioner Director Benjamin H. Leary, Patricia Ponichese, Assistant to the Chairman, Atlantic County Commissioner John W. Riskey, Kathleen Hicks, Chair SJTPO TAC, Jennifer Macandino (SJTPO), Andrew Swords (NJDOT), Suzilar Joshi (NJDOT), Luis Millan (NJ TRANSIT), Sutapa Bandyopadhyay (FHWA), Donald Burns (FTA), Uzoma Anukwe (FTA)



## APPENDIX B – NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

**Paid Press Announcement to be Released on Wednesday, March 1, 2023**

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### SOUTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

#### **REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR FEDERAL CERTIFICATION REVIEW**

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) covering Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties in southern New Jersey. Formed in 1993, SJTPO serves local jurisdictions as a technical resource, provides access to federal transportation funding, and works to provide a regional approach to address transportation planning and engineering issues.

The SJTPO will participate in a Federal Certification Review in late March 2023. Federal Certification is a process that occurs once every four years. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) assess SJTPO's transportation planning process to ensure full compliance with federal laws and regulations. Determining compliance is essential as it is the basis for providing ongoing allocations of federal funds to SJTPO, which pass through to the four counties served by SJTPO. The Certification Review will also identify the challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the SJTPO, the State Department of Transportation (DOT), and the public transportation operator.

SJTPO staff requests public comments on the current transportation planning process. The comment period will be open from Wednesday, March 1, 2023, through Friday, March 31, 2023. A public meeting for Certification Review is scheduled from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM on Monday, March 27, 2023. This meeting will allow the public to speak with FHWA and FTA representatives regarding SJTPO's current transportation planning process and voice comments, questions, and concerns. Members of the public can attend in person at Vineland City Hall in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Caucus Room. Alternatively, members of the public can participate virtually via GoToMeeting. To join the meeting on your computer, tablet, or smartphone, use this link <https://meet.goto.com/468406461>. Members of the public can also dial into the meeting using a phone. The toll-free number is +1 (866) 899-4679, with the access code being 468-406-461.

Interpretation services and accommodations for individuals with disabilities for the public meeting can be provided to individuals who submit a request to Melissa Melora ([mmelora@sjtpo.org](mailto:mmelora@sjtpo.org) or 856-794-1941) by 4:00 PM on Thursday, March 23, 2023.

Comments may be submitted via online comment form ([www.sjtpo.org/public-comment](http://www.sjtpo.org/public-comment)), email ([certification@sjtpo.org](mailto:certification@sjtpo.org)), mail (782 South Brewster Road, Unit B6, Vineland, NJ 08361), fax (856-794-2549), Facebook ([www.facebook.com/SJTPO](http://www.facebook.com/SJTPO)), or Twitter ([twitter.com/SJTPO](https://twitter.com/SJTPO)).

Comments may also be submitted to the federal agencies. Comments may be mailed, faxed, or emailed. See below for full contact information. Please include "SJTPO Federal Planning Certification" as the email's subject line.



Federal Transit Administration – Region 2  
Office of Planning & Program Development  
c/o Uzoma Anukwe  
One Bowling Green, Room 429  
New York, New York 10004  
Phone: 212-824-2433  
Email: [Uzoma.Anukwe@dot.gov](mailto:Uzoma.Anukwe@dot.gov)  
Fax: 212-668-2136

**OR**

Federal Highway Administration, New Jersey Division  
c/o Sutapa Bandyopadhyay  
840 Bear Tavern Road, Suite 202  
West Trenton NJ 08628  
Phone: 609-637-4230  
Email: [sutapa.bandyopadhyay@dot.gov](mailto:sutapa.bandyopadhyay@dot.gov)  
Fax: 609-538-4919

Title VI: SJTPO's Notice to Beneficiaries: SJTPO operates its programs and services without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, age, ancestry, nationality, gender, disability, religion, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identify or expression, income level, or ability to read, write or speak English, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Any person who believes he/she/they has been subjected to discrimination or wish to obtain additional information regarding SJTPO's Title VI obligations, may obtain a Title VI Complaint Form at [www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI](http://www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI) or contact SJTPO's Title VI Coordinator at [TitleVI@sjtpo.org](mailto:TitleVI@sjtpo.org) or (856) 794-1941. A complaint must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discrimination.



# APPENDIX C – CERTIFICATION REVIEW AGENDA

## SJTPO 2023 Federal Certification Review Schedule

<b>DAY 1</b> <b>Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>Session #1</b>	
		Location: Vineland City Hall 640 E Wood St., City of Vineland, NJ 08360 2nd Floor Caucus Room Virtual Meeting Info: <a href="https://meet.goto.com/478619429">https://meet.goto.com/478619429</a> You can also dial in using your phone: United States: +1 (646) 749-3129 United States (Toll-Free): +1 (877) 309-2073 Access Code: 478-619-429	
		<b>Session Topic</b>	<b>Session Leads</b>
AM:	9:45-11:00	Welcome & Introductions Overview of Certification  Policy Board Discussions	FTA: Uzoma Anukwe  FHWA: Sutapa Bandyopadhyay
	11:00-11:10	Break	
	11:10-11:45	Overview of MPO / MPO Highlights / Regional Issues	FHWA: Sutapa Bandyopadhyay
	11:45-12:15	Public Engagement	FTA: Uzoma Anukwe
	12:15-12:45	Environmental Justice / Equity	FTA: Uzoma Anukwe
PM:	12:45-1:45	Lunch Break	
		<b>Session #2</b>	
		Location: 702 S Brewster Road, Unit B6, City of Vineland, NJ 08361 Virtual Meeting Info: <a href="https://meet.goto.com/382100637">https://meet.goto.com/382100637</a> You can also dial in using your phone: United States: +1 (646) 749-3129 United States (Toll-Free): +1 (877) 309-2073 Access Code: 382-100-637	
	1:45-2:30	UPWP	FTA: Uzoma Anukwe
	2:30-3:30	L RTP / TIP	FHWA: Brian Goodman
	3:30-3:40	Break	
	3:40-4:30	Intelligent Transportation System Congestion Management Process	FHWA: ElaraJ Phomsvuth
	4:30-5:00	Data Collection and Usage	FHWA: Jason Simmons
	5:00-6:00	Dinner and Break	
		<b>Session #3</b>	
		Location: Vineland City Hall 640 E Wood St., City of Vineland, NJ 08360 2nd Floor Caucus Room Virtual Meeting Info: <a href="https://meet.goto.com/468406461">https://meet.goto.com/468406461</a> You can also dial in using your phone: United States: +1 (571) 317-3116 United States (Toll-Free): +1 (866) 899-4679 Access Code: 468-406-461	
	6:00-7:00	Public Meeting	FTA: Uzoma Anukwe



### SJTPO 2023 Federal Certification Review Schedule

<b>DAY 2</b> <b>Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>Session #4</b> Location: 782 S Brewster Road, Unit B6, City of Vineland, NJ 08361 Virtual Meeting Info: <a href="https://meet.goto.com/549550637">https://meet.goto.com/549550637</a> You can also dial in using your phone: United States+1 (571) 317-3116 United States (Toll-Free): +1 (866) 899-4679 Access Code: 549-550-637	
		<b>Session Topic</b>	<b>Session Leads</b>
AM:	9:00-10:00	Public Transit	FTA: Uzoma Anukwe
	10:00-11:00	Environmental Mitigation/ Climate Change and Resiliency Planning	FRWA: Michael Setering
	11:00-11:10	Break	
	11:10-11:45	PEL	FTA: Zack Luckin
	11:45-12:30	Safety	FRWA: Amy Kaminski
PM:	12:30-1:30	Lunch Break	
		<b>Session #5</b> Location: 782 S Brewster Road, Unit B6, City of Vineland, NJ 08361 Virtual Meeting Info: <a href="https://meet.goto.com/309341565">https://meet.goto.com/309341565</a> You can also dial in using your phone: United States: +1 (646) 749-3129 United States (Toll-Free): +1 (877) 309-2073 Access Code: 309-341-565	
	1:30-2:30	Freight	FRWA: Rickie Clark
	2:30-3:15	Non-motorized Bicycle Pedestrian Transportation Planning	FRWA: Jason Simmons
	3:15-3:25	Break	
	3:25-4:00	Support of Economic Vitality and Enhancement of Travel and Tourism	FRWA: Brian Goodson
	4:00-4:30	Close out with MPO	FTA: Uzoma Anukwe
<b>DAY 3</b> <b>Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>Session #6</b> <b>Virtual</b>	
AM:	10:00-11:00	Review Team Caucus (TBD by the Federal Team)	FTA: Uzoma Anukwe
	11:00-11:30	Report back to MPO Virtual Meeting Info: <a href="https://meet.goto.com/943048581">https://meet.goto.com/943048581</a> You can also dial in using your phone: United States: +1 (571) 317-3116 United States (Toll Free): +1 (866) 899-4679 Access Code: 943-048-581	FRWA: Sutapsa Bandyopadhyay



## APPENDIX D - PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals were involved in the SJTPO urbanized area on-site review:

- **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – New Jersey Division**
  - Sutapa Bandyopadhyay - Planning
  - Jason Simmons – Planning
  - Michael Setering – Environmental
  - Amy Kaminski – Safety
  - Rickie Clark - Freight
  - Ekaraj Phomsavath - ITS
- **Federal Highway Administration (HQ)**
  - Brian Goodson – Planning
- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – Region 2**
  - Uzoma Anukwe – Planning
  - Zach Luckin - Planning
- **South Jersey Transportation Organization (SJTPO)**
  - Leonard Desiderio, Mayor & Commissioner Director – Policy Board Chairman (Sea Isle City)
  - Jennifer Marandino – Executive Director
  - David Heller – Program Manager
  - Alan Huff – Program Manager
  - Taylor Waymire – Assistant Planner
  - William Schiavi – Principal Planner
  - Melissa Melora – Public Outreach Planner
- **SJTPO Policy Board Members**
  - Benjamin Laury, Commissioner Director – Vice Chairman (Salem County)
  - John Risley, Commissioner Director, Secretary/Treasurer – Secretary/Treasurer (Atlantic County)
  - Andrew Bulakowski, Commissioner - Cape May County
  - Stephen Mazur, Director of Engineering/Chief Engineer – South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA)
  - Victoria Groetsch-Lods, Commissioner – Cumberland County
  - Marty Small, Sr., Mayor – Atlantic City
  - Anthony Fanucci, Mayor – City of Vineland
  - P. Edward McKelvey, Mayor – Alloway Township
  - Sudhir Joshi, Manager, Bureau of Statewide Strategies – New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)
  - Louis Millan, Senior Program Director, Capital Planning – NJ TRANSIT



## APPENDIX D – PARTICIPANTS (cont.)

- **New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)**
  - Erick Powers – Director Capital Investment and Program Coordination
  - Sudhir Joshi, Manager, Bureau of Statewide Strategies – New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)
  - Andy Clark - NJDOT
- **New Jersey Transit (NJ Transit)**
  - Lou Millan
  - Megan Massey
  - Blanca Quinde
- **Other Representation**
  - Jacques Howard – Assistant Director of Redevelopment (Atlantic City)
  - Leslie Gimeno – Director of Planning (Cape May County Planning)
  - Ranae Fehr – Director/Department Head (Atlantic County Planning)
  - Matt Pisarski – Director of Planning (Cumberland County Planning)
  - Kathleen Hicks – Supervising Planner (Vineland Planning)
  - James McKelvie – County Engineer (Salem County)
  - Tom Holl – Governors Authority Unit, Office of the Governor
  - Megan Wren - Office of Planning Advocacy
  - Doug DiMeo – County Engineer (County of Atlantic)
  - Douglas Whitaker – County Engineer (County of Cumberland)



## APPENDIX E – PUBLIC COMMENTS

The comment period was open from Wednesday, March 1, 2023, through Friday, March 31, 2023. Comments were accepted during the public meeting as well as via online comment form ([www.sjtpo.org/public-comment](http://www.sjtpo.org/public-comment)), email ([certification@sjtpo.org](mailto:certification@sjtpo.org)), mail (782 South Brewster Road, Unit B6, Vineland, NJ 08361), fax (856-794-2549), Facebook ([www.facebook.com/SJTPO](https://www.facebook.com/SJTPO)), or Twitter ([twitter.com/SJTPO](https://twitter.com/SJTPO)) until Friday, March 31, 2023.

At the close of the comment period on March 31, 2023, no comments were received via the online comment form, email, Facebook, and Twitter.



## APPENDIX F – STATUS OF FINDINGS FROM LAST REVIEW

One of the priorities of each certification review is assessing how well the planning partners in the area have addressed corrective actions and recommendations from the previous certification review. This section identifies the one corrective action and 19 recommendations from the 2019 Certification Review and summarizes discussions of how they have been addressed.

### Corrective Actions (1)

#### *Civil Rights (1)*

***Title VI - SJTPO must develop a Title VI Program Implementation Plan in accordance with 49 CFR 21 and FTA Circular 4702.1B.***

SJTPO developed a Title VI Implementation Plan which was adopted by the Policy Board through Resolution 2105-16 at the May 24, 2021, Policy Board meeting. FHWA and FTA issued a joint letter on August 19, 2021, stating that SJTPO's plan successfully addresses the requirement of the 2019 Certification Corrective Action for the SJTPO.

### Recommendations (16)

#### *Federal Planning Process Overview & Policy Board Discussion (2)*

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO continue to conduct discussions with its Policy Board about the various types and amounts of federal and state transportation funding they receive annually. SJTPO should continue to work alongside their Policy Board to carry forward discussions regarding the merits of increasing the share of statewide transportation funding they receive. This will involve working collectively with NJDOT, NJ Transit, and the other two NJ MPOs.***

SJTPO is continuing to explore new opportunities available through various federal discretionary grants MPOs are eligible for. SJTPO also found promise in the collaborative efforts, which resulted in revisions to the distribution of metropolitan planning funds in the state. Along with the additional funds made available through federal legislation, SJTPO will be receiving additional resources for its planning-related work.

SJTPO is continuing discussions on the various types and amounts of transportation funding received with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Policy Board. These discussions are part of the development of SJTPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO and NJ TRANSIT continue to enhance their working relationship and level of communication throughout the development of***



***metropolitan and statewide planning products, including the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/ Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).***

SJTPO has NJ TRANSIT a voting member on their policy board as well as the TAC, allowing for regular communication to occur while developing various planning documents including the TIP. NJ TRANSIT participated in the development of the Microtransit Feasibility Study and has been including STJPO in planning efforts around the Atlantic City Rail Line, operated by NJ TRANSIT. Further collaboration in how NJ TRANSIT funds are programmed in the region via the TIP should be occurring on a regular basis.

***Performance-Based Planning and Programming (2)***

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO capture performance-based planning and programming requirements in the next update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) due in 2020.***

The Regional Transportation Plan 2050: Moving South Jersey Forward (RTP )contains a system performance report based on the national goal areas of MAP-21 and the FAST Act. The report includes performance measures for safety (PM1), pavement and bridge condition (PM2), system performance (freight and CMAQ) (PM3), transit asset management, and transit safety.

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO include the description of the anticipated effect of the TIP toward meeting Performance-Based Planning and Programming requirements in their TIP.***

SJTPO's TIP includes a robust Performance Based Planning & Programming (PBPP) discussion in the PBPP chapter, the projects are listed in subsequent chapters of the TIP

***Transit Activities (2)***

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO develop a list of short, medium, and long-range recommendations in their Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP) that is under development. Additionally, SJTPO should seek to develop a working committee and consider taking a greater leadership role to ensure the service providers meet periodically to address plan findings and advance recommendations.***

The recent 5-year update of the SJTPO 2015 Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP) known as the Access for All Transit Plan also identified unmet transportation needs with recommendations on how to improve and increase service while reducing costs. To date, many of the recommendations developed from the 2015 HSTP and the Access for All Transit Plan have yet to be carried out. The current plan does organize recommendations by time, there still needs strategies identified to achieve the goals and recommendations.



***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO work in concert with NJDOT, NJ Transit, and other stakeholders to analyze to identify if there are any potential opportunities to enhance safe access to bus and rail transit stations in the region.***

As part of the on-site visit, the Certification Review Team asked SJTPO staff if they had taken part in analyzing the safety of transit stop locations or had information readily available on this topic. They noted that they had not conducted a safety assessment of transit stop locations, but it was something they were willing to conduct moving forward. There will be data collected through the County Wide Local Safety Action Plans which could provide the basis for further evaluation on safe access to various transit services.

#### *Consultation and Coordination (1)*

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO develop a documented process identifying the pertinent partner agencies and describing the methods for outreach to those agencies, and a general timeframe for reaching out to them as it develops its MTP and TIP.***

SJTPO has included detailed schedules and an outline of the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the development of the MTP and TIP. SJTPO has also updated their PIP to better communicate the relationship between the MPT and TIP. Their PIP also has developed a procedure to evaluate outreach efforts effectiveness on a biannual basis.

#### *Support of Economic Vitality and Enhancement of Travel and Tourism (1)*

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO enhance the incorporation of meeting the economic development and travel and tourism into their various planning work products, including their MTP and other work activities.***

SJTPO has incorporated Support of Economic Vitality and Enhancement of Travel and Tourism into their MTP, outlining clear goals and strategies for achieving those goals. Additionally, SJTPO has been investing a large portion of their planning resources into studies and plans that will further access to recreational and tourism attractions. SJTPO has also created a project evaluation criterion that considers how a project in the TIP will further access to tourist destinations.

#### *Planning Environmental Linkages (PEL) / Environmental Mitigation (1)*

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO continue to conduct an analysis of environmental constraints in the region and consider developing a GIS layer with geolocated links to planning studies that have been completed for easy access for potential users of these studies beyond the planning phase. When feasible and appropriate, SJTPO should consider conducting PEL studies that include NEPA-level analysis for the larger transportation projects that may be classified as an Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA.***

SJTPO has been developing a database of various GIS layers that can be used to evaluate projects during the TIP development and scoping process. Almost all the projects funded in the SJTPO



region require only a Categorical Exclusion Document and conducting a NEPA-level analysis would not be appropriate unless a major project was identified in the MTP and had funding available. Those projects that may result in significant capital investments, such as the Cumberland County Bike Ped Safety Action Plan or the ongoing bikeway feasibility studies, should incorporate a PEL approach in the planning phase and ensure that adequate analysis and outreach is conducted and documented.

### *Resiliency (2)*

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO collaborates with NJDOT's Office of Emergency Preparedness to facilitate the coordination of emergency preparedness activities in the region. Additionally, SJTPO should incorporate existing resiliency studies and vulnerability assessments conducted either at the local or state level into their next MTP update.***

SJTPO has held an Emergency Management Round Table to help connect the emergency managers with planners and engineers in the region. SJTPO has also kicked off a large two-phase resiliency planning effort that will further build relationships with emergency management personal and planners. The study will also further analyze vulnerabilities in the transportation system that can in turn prioritize projects.

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO develops a Continuity of Operations plan.***

SJTPO has developed a Continuity of Operations Plan.

### *Civil Rights (2)*

***The Federal Review Team recommends that on the SJTPO website the following items be addressed: Maintain Title VI investigations, complaints, and lawsuits in a log; Post a translation request form in an easily accessible location, especially for LEP individuals, such as the homepage; Re-label the Title VI Section of their website to Civil Rights or Nondiscrimination to make it easier for the public to locate information about SJTPO's Civil Rights Program.***

SJTPO has updated their website and labeled the page “Equity” and has adopted actions to meet the corrective action as well as various recommendations outlined in the certification

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO incorporates Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility evaluations and improvements into the transportation process on an ongoing basis through various means identified in this report.***

As part of SJTPO's public engagement process, SJTPO considers transit and ADA accessibility when selecting meeting locations. SJTPO has expanded virtual engagement options, which enhances the accessibility to members of the public, both from a perspective of physical ability and issues related to flexibility of schedules, costs, and time associated with traveling to an event, etc.



SJTPO's website has been enhanced to conform to Section 508 standards, as well as WCAG 2.0 AA and ADA standards, which strengthen the ability of individuals with disabilities to access and use information. The SJTPO website is equipped with the UserWay accessibility tool, which allows visitors to customize the appearance of the SJTPO website and use a screen reader. The website also offers written translations in numerous languages, including all Safe Harbor languages within the SJTPO region.

#### *Congestion Management Process (CMP) (2)*

***The Federal Review Team recommends that the regional architecture should be utilized when scoping new ITS projects to ensure goals, objectives, and performance measures are integrated with the CMP process.***

In coordination with NJDOT and its consultant, SJTPO has been doing extensive outreach to subregional partners to institutionalize the established ITS Architecture to ensure ITS projects are being captured and advancing performance measures. This work has included multiple meetings with planning partners to walk through what an ITS project is, how the ITS Architecture is maintained, and steps to ensure that projects are updated through the project website hosted by ConSysTec.

New Jersey's ITS Architecture has been developed to conform with FHWA 23 CFR 940/FTA Policy. This rule states that ITS projects must conform to the Regional/National ITS Architecture, use a "systems engineering process," and identify all applicable ITS standards. One of the key outputs of New Jersey's ITS Architecture is the documentation of all portions of the architecture that supports the systems engineering analysis required by 23 CFR 940 for the delivery of existing and planned multimodal ITS projects.

SJTPO has been working closely with NJDOT subject matter experts to ensure the architecture is being followed and that ITS projects follow the local project delivery process.

***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO should utilize the TRANSCOM Data Fusion and Analysis tool. Both the PDA Suite and TRANSCOM Data Fusion data analysis tools provide a suite of performance measures to help determine the effectiveness of CMP strategies.***

SJTPO utilizes the Probe Data Analytics Suite as the primary source of archived travel time data within the Congestion Management Process (CMP). SJTPO staff has been discussing various updates and modifications to the CMP with subregional partners to ensure the MPO is meeting the region's needs. As part of any updates to the CMP, staff will investigate how TRANSCOM Data Fusion and Analysis Tool can be integrated.

#### *Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) (1)*



***The Federal Review Team recommends that SJTPO should take steps to ensure that new ITS projects referenced in the regional architecture are consistent with the MTP goals and strategies. This includes ensuring that the regional architecture should be utilized when scoping new ITS projects to ensure that the identification of goals, objectives, and performance measures are integrated with the CMP process.***

Federally funded projects through the TIP are evaluated to ensure they are consistent with regional planning goals and strategies. Evaluation is achieved by using SJTPO's Project Evaluation Process. SJTPO updated its project evaluation process, which is used to evaluate and score projects associated with the TIP and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), during the development of RTP 2050, which was adopted in January 2021. The updated evaluation criteria are closely tied to the Performance-Based Planning Process, RTP Goals (Planning Factors), and SJTPO planning initiatives.

Additionally, projects programmed through SJTPO's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program, a common source of ITS projects, evaluate a project's ability to support regional goals. SJTPO will continue to assess additional means to promote and advance ITS projects that further the regional goals and strategies.



## APPENDIX G - LIST OF ACRONYMS

**ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act  
**AMPO:** Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations  
**CAA:** Clean Air Act  
**CFR:** Code of Federal Regulations  
**CMP:** Congestion Management Process  
**CO:** Carbon Monoxide  
**DOT:** Department of Transportation  
**EJ:** Environmental Justice  
**FAST:** Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act  
**FHWA:** Federal Highway Administration  
**FTA:** Federal Transit Administration  
**FY:** Fiscal Year  
**HSIP:** Highway Safety Improvement Program  
**ITS:** Intelligent Transportation Systems  
**LEP:** Limited-English-Proficiency  
**M&O:** Management and Operations  
**MAP-21:** Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
**MPA:** Metropolitan Planning Area  
**MPO:** Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**MTP:** Metropolitan Transportation Plan  
**NAAQS:** National Ambient Air Quality Standards  
**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide  
**O<sub>3</sub>:** Ozone  
**PBPP:** Performance Base Planning and Programming  
**PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>:** Particulate Matter  
**SHSP:** Strategic Highway Safety Plan  
**STIP:** Statewide Transportation Improvement Program  
**TDM:** Travel Demand Management  
**TIP:** Transportation Improvement Program  
**TMA:** Transportation Management Area  
**U.S.C.:** United States Code  
**UPWP:** Unified Planning Work Program  
**USDOT:** United States Department of Transportation

