



INVOLVEMENT PLAN

ADOPTED May 24, 2021



South Jersey
Transportation
Planning Organization

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SOUTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

RESOLUTION 2105-18: Adopting the SJTPO Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

WHEREAS, the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated under Federal law for the southern region of New Jersey including Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties; and

WHEREAS, SJTPO is responsible for the development and implementation of a plan that describes its public involvement process and how it involves the public in SJTPO's various planning documents and programs; and

WHEREAS, SJTPO's current Public Involvement Plan was adopted on November 23, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Planning Regulations require that the Public Involvement Plan be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the Public Involvement Plan has been re-released to uphold SJTPO's commitment made when the current Public Involvement Plan was adopted in November of 2020 to allow for a more robust comment opportunity by the public; and

WHEREAS, this Public Involvement Plan was updated to reflect changes relating to the Title VI Implementation Plan and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan, as well as the findings from the Multilingual Outreach Services technical study; and

WHEREAS, a 45-day public comment period was held from March 4, 2021 to April 18, 2021, meeting the required 45-day public comment period associated with the PIP; and

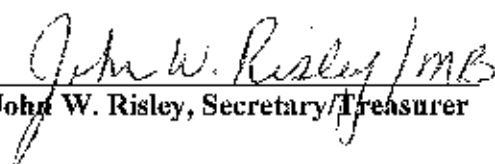
WHEREAS, members of the public, including members of disadvantaged communities, affected public agencies, private transportation providers, and all interested parties have had the opportunity to participate and have their views considered in the development of the revisions to the SJTPO PIP; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Policy Board of the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization hereby adopts the SJTPO Public Involvement Plan (PIP).

BE IT, FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Policy Board authorizes the Executive Director to review and approve subsequent changes to the PIP, as needed, to adhere to federal guidance, and to implement the PIP accordingly.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct and true copy of a resolution adopted by the Policy Board of the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization at its meeting of May 24, 2021.


John W. Risley, Secretary/Treasurer

CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction7
 - SJTPO Structure7
- 2. Purpose of the Public Involvement Plan9
- 3. Serving the Public: SJTPO’s Responsibilities11
 - Federal Laws for Public Involvement.....14
- 4. Opportunities to Engage with SJTPO.....15
 - Where to Find Information.....15
 - Attend Public Meetings18
 - Other Ways to be Involved20
- 5. Addressing Civil Rights in Our Outreach Process21
 - Title VI21
 - Limited English Proficiency (LEP)21
 - Environmental Justice (EJ)21
 - Strategies to Serve Under-Represented Populations.....22
- 6. Having Your Say: Policies and Procedures for Public Comments29
 - Public Comment Periods.....29
 - How Your Comments will be Used32
- 7. Evaluating Our Effectiveness33
 - Questionnaires, Polls, and/or Surveys.....33
 - Assessment of Outreach Tools33
 - Staff Debriefings34

APPENDICES

Appendix A. List of SJTPO Public Document Depository Libraries35

Appendix B. Federal Laws for Public Involvement.....36

Appendix C. SJTPO Social Media Comment Policy.....39

Appendix D. Media Contacts.....41

Appendix E. Documents and Records Request Form42

Appendix F. Transportation Contacts44

Appendix G. Knowing Who to Contact.....46

Appendix H. Summary of Significant Public and Stakeholder Comments and Responses48

1. INTRODUCTION

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the southern New Jersey region, serving Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties. Under federal law, MPOs carry out transportation planning and decision-making for urbanized areas. Formed in 1993, SJTPO replaced three smaller existing MPOs and incorporated areas not previously served. SJTPO serves as a technical resource, provides access to federal funding, and works to provide a regional approach to address transportation planning and engineering issues.

MPOs are responsible for maintaining a Continuing, Cooperative, and Comprehensive transportation planning process, often referred to as the three C's. MPOs provide a forum for collaborative decision-making among responsible state and local officials, public and private transit operators, and the public. They coordinate the planning activities of participating agencies and adopt long-range plans to guide transportation investment decisions. MPOs are also responsible for capital programming through a multi-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), updated every two years, which contains all federal and state funding for surface transportation projects and programs.

SJTPO ensures that planning activities involve consultation and coordination with relevant partners. This includes state, regional, and local partners and requires early engagement, direct outreach, information sharing, plan comparison, and evaluations to meet federal regulations. While these requirements apply directly to the [Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#) and [Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#), these principles are applicable to a variety of planning activities, including outreach, to maximize the effectiveness of SJTPO's efforts.

Other key activities of an MPO include promoting transportation improvements needed in the region and project development, while keeping the public engaged in the planning process. In addition, MPOs ensure the region's compliance with federal regulations affecting transportation decisions, such as the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. In meeting federal requirements, MPOs maintain the eligibility of their member agencies and transit operators to receive federal transportation funds for planning, capital improvements, and operations.

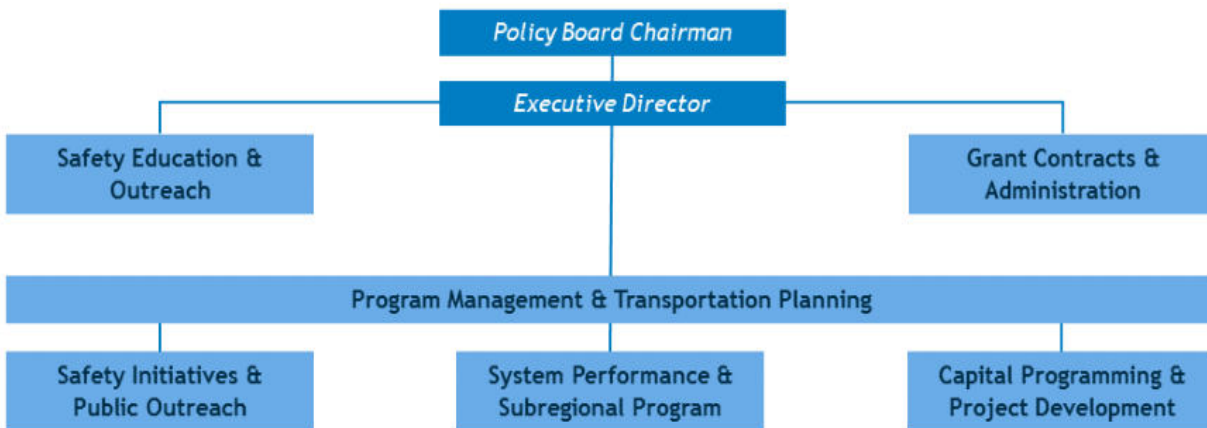
SJTPO Structure

The governing body of SJTPO is the Policy Board. It consists of eleven voting members; one elected official from each county government, one municipal elected official from each county (specifically including the Mayors of Atlantic City and Vineland), and one representative each from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), New Jersey Transit, and the South

Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA). The Policy Board is informed by recommendations of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a committee of planning and engineering experts in the region.

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

The SJTPO Organizational Chart, approved by the SJTPO Policy Board on September 25, 2017, identifies the organization of staff members. SJTPO’s organizational structure has three distinct areas under the Program Management & Transportation Planning umbrella, Safety Initiatives & Public Outreach, System Performance & Subregional Program, and Capital Programming & Project Development. The chart identifies Safety Education & Outreach and Grant Contracts & Administration as additional core functions within the MPO.



2. PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

This update replaces the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) previously adopted in May of 2019. SJTPO received federal guidance related to addressing Civil Rights in its outreach process, namely Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964. The edits to the PIP reflect how SJTPO engages or plans to engage the under-represented populations within the SJTPO region that fall under these Civil Rights umbrellas. SJTPO has an active contract with the Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POET) at Rutgers University. This contract, known as Multilingual Outreach Services, will guide SJTPO in further meeting the needs of the under-represented populations. SJTPO will update the PIP in early 2021 to reflect any findings from the Multilingual Outreach Services contract.

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

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

There are two intended audiences for the PIP. First, the PIP serves as an essential reference for transportation professionals who interact with the public and are responsible for implementing a transparent and inclusive planning process. Transportation professionals in the SJTPO region include Policy Board members, TAC members, and SJTPO staff. Second, the PIP serves as a guidebook for the public to help them determine when and how they can participate in the transportation planning process. In addition to the PIP, another valuable resource for the public is the Public Engagement Guide (www.sjtpo.org/EngagementGuide), which provides an overview of how transportation planning in South Jersey occurs and details ways in which the public can participate in the process.

The PIP is organized into several sections:

- **Serving the Public: SJTPO's Responsibilities**

This section outlines the process and procedures SJTPO follows when conducting public involvement efforts. It includes information, such as the federal regulations that help shape the involvement process, how the public can submit comments, what SJTPO will do with the comments received, and how members of the public can become involved in SJTPO's process, among other topics.

- **Opportunities to Engage with SJTPO**

This section details the tools and techniques SJTPO uses to inform and engage the public in the regional transportation process for the four-county region. More specifically, it includes details on where to find information, types of meetings the Organization hosts, and other actions the public can take to be more involved, such as requesting a safety education program with one of SJTPO's Traffic Safety Specialists.

- **Addressing Civil Rights in Our Outreach Process**

This section details SJTPO's efforts to seek out and consider the needs of groups traditionally not well-served by the existing transportation system. It details efforts related to SJTPO's Title VI, Limited English Proficient (LEP), and Environmental Justice (EJ) Plans.

- **Having Your Say: Policies and Procedures for Public Comments**

This section explains the various ways the public can voice opinions and share ideas with SJTPO. It also highlights the minimum number of days a comment period must be open to the public for each major planning document and how the comments received will be used.

- **Evaluating Our Effectiveness**

This section identifies the tools used to measure both the quantity and quality of interactions with the public.

- **Appendices**

This section provides information and links to more resources related to the planning process and federal guidance.

3. SERVING THE PUBLIC: SJTPO'S RESPONSIBILITIES

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

To ensure opportunities for meaningful and proactive participation that improves the decision-making process and contributes to the overall quality of life in the region, SJTPO's public involvement process complies with federal requirements and goals, as described below.

- **Provide adequate and timely notice of public participation activities, public review, and comment on key decisions**

It is crucial for the public to be informed in a timely manner regarding all public involvement opportunities in the region. This information will be provided in plain language that allows the public to comprehend with ease the information they need or are asked to review. Further, SJTPO will notify the public twelve (12) days prior to any public involvement opportunity through email, social media, and via print media (i.e., newspapers) when necessary.

- **Seek out and consider the needs of the people who are traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system, including low-income and minority households**

Transportation planning is most effective when decision makers consider and seek input from those whose daily lives are largely impacted by how efficiently and safely, they are able to get to work, school, home, stores, and services. To ensure meaningful involvement of persons and groups traditionally underserved in the SJTPO region, such the elderly population, Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations, single or zero vehicle households, and minority and low-income households, SJTPO drafts an Environmental Justice (EJ) Plan. The EJ Plan is then used to target outreach events in areas that are accessible to these underserved groups and tailor messaging and communication methods to try to maximize access for these populations.

- **Hold public meetings at convenient times and locations that are accessible to all people**

Consideration of residents' personal schedules is vital when hosting public meetings. Apart from Policy Board and TAC, meetings take place after typical workday hours to maximize access. Further, SJTPO works to hold meetings in facilities that are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible and in locations that are transit accessible, when meetings are in-person rather than virtual, to the greatest feasible degree.

- **Use visualization techniques to further explain the planning process**

The transportation planning and engineering processes are complex with many steps and requirements. It is essential that information about these processes be presented and discussed in an intuitive manner to allow anyone the opportunity to understand and give feedback. To maximize public involvement and minimize misunderstanding, SJTPO provides information in plain language with as little jargon as possible and often incorporates visuals, such as charts and images. For instance, rather than only use the term Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), SJTPO often supplements with “List of Projects” to help clarify the purpose of the TIP to the public.

- **Provide timely and reasonable access to information about transportation planning**

It is vital that the public is provided reasonable access to information necessary to offer meaningful feedback on matters related to the transportation decision-making process. SJTPO makes the draft RTP, TIP, UPWP, Access for All Transit Plan, Congestion Management Process (CMP), Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan, Title VI Implementation Plan, and Transportation Conformity available for public review for 30 days, and the PIP available for 45 days. These nine documents are often referred to as core documents, as they require public comment periods and public meetings to be held when a new plan is written or a currently adopted plan is revised. Each plan is available on SJTPO’s website (www.sjtpo.org) and at a select list of libraries throughout the four-county region. To view the list of libraries, please see [Appendix A](#).

- **Provide information in electronic formats for accessibility and sustainability purposes**

SJTPO makes all major work products available on its website (www.sjtpo.org) for the convenience of the public, but also for sustainability purposes, as many documents are hundreds of pages in length. SJTPO’s online document library is continuously updated as reports and other items become available.

- **Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input through a two-way communicative process**

To maintain an effective and meaningful public involvement process, SJTPO respects and considers all input that is received. All comments received during a comment period are recorded in the final document with responses from SJTPO and other transportation agencies, if necessary. Further, SJTPO encourages two-way communication between all residents in the region and key decision makers to allow multiple perspectives to be considered. Examples of two-way communication include attendance at Policy Board and Committee meetings, public workshops, as well as active participation on SJTPO’s social media platforms. SJTPO continuously works to clarify for the public the best time to provide comments and the best entity to provide comment to in hopes that the public is

able to maximize the impact of their comments and minimize their frustration in the process.

- **Provide a minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days for the draft PIP**

To ensure the public has ample time to review the draft PIP, SJTPO makes the document available for at least 45 days. Other core documents (RTP, TIP, UPWP, Access for All Transit Plan, CMP, LEP, Title VI Implementation Plan, and Transportation Conformity) are subject to a 30-day comment period, detailed further in [Section 6](#).

- **Provide an additional opportunity for public comment, of at least 10 days, if the final draft PIP differs substantially from the version made available to the public for comment**

When a schedule is developed for the PIP as well as other core document updates, such as the RTP, TIP, UPWP, Access for All Transit Plan, CMP, LEP, Title VI Implementation Plan, and Transportation Conformity, a 10-day public comment period extension is built-in. Thus, if substantive changes are needed and result in a draft that greatly differs from the draft previously made available to the public, SJTPO can solicit the document again for feedback. Substantive changes may include the addition or removal of a section, adjustments to public forms, updates to federal regulations, as well as other changes that SJTPO deems substantive enough to ask for additional public comment.

- **Comply with federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964, and various Executive Orders**

SJTPO operates without regard to race, color, national origin, or disability, and adheres to all applicable federal laws. Accommodations will be provided to the great, feasible degree when requested at least seven (7) days prior to a public meeting. Accommodations may include but are not limited to translation and/or interpretation services and closed captioning, among others. For a list of the federal laws, please see the next sub-section, Federal Laws for Public Involvement. For a description of each federal law, please see [Appendix B](#).

- **Coordinate with the state and local transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes**

SJTPO consults and coordinates with agencies and officials when completing a variety of transportation planning activities, as appropriate to the activity. These regularly include the [Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#) and [Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#). The roles, responsibilities, and key decision points of this consultation and coordination process are detailed in the RTP and TIP. Similarly, when possible, SJTPO coordinates with state and local public involvement processes to increase effectiveness and minimize duplication. SJTPO's public involvement procedures for the TIP also serve as the procedures for the State TIP (STIP).

- **Coordinate with Federal and Non-federal Tribal Nations**

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historical Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (16 U.S.C. 470) (NHPA) and its implementing regulations [found at 36 CFR Part 800], federal agencies, such as SJTPO, must consult with any Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization regarding undertakings occurring on or affecting historic properties on its tribal lands. SJTPO makes Federal and Non-federal Tribal Nations aware of opportunities for feedback and coordination during the planning process, including notice of public comment period and public meetings.

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

The PIP is a living document and is updated on an as-needed basis to ensure effectiveness and consistency with federal guidance. The public is also involved in providing periodic feedback on the SJTPO's procedures and strategies. In addition, SJTPO has identified methods to evaluate the effectiveness of SJTPO's public involvement process, which are described in [Section 7](#).

Federal Laws for Public Involvement

To conduct public involvement outreach, a core function of an MPO, SJTPO complies with federal regulations and programs. These regulations and programs help shape the involvement process and make its implementation more successful. For a description of each regulation and program listed below, please see [Appendix B](#).

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
- Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991
- Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) of 1998
- Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005
- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) of 2012
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) of 2015
- Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §450
- Code of Federal Regulations. Title 23, §771.111
- Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations"
- Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency"

4. OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH SJTPO

There are a variety of strategies SJTPO's utilizes to enhance public involvement for a specific activity or assist in meeting specific public involvement goals. Staff review and modify these strategies on a regular basis to ensure a productive and all-encompassing public involvement process is sustained. The strategies used help disseminate information in both digital and print form with the intent of making information accessible to anyone interested.

Where to Find Information

Public input is essential to SJTPO's planning process, and there are many ways the public can be involved to learn about or influence transportation decisions. SJTPO uses a variety of channels to assure that a broad audience is reached. The recurrent channels used to announce news, updates, and reminders pertaining to meetings and events include:

[SJTPO Website \(www.sjtpo.org\)](http://www.sjtpo.org)

The main tool used by SJTPO to disseminate information is SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org), which can be translated into a multitude of languages. Information available on the website includes an overview of the transportation planning process, information about funding programs, core regional planning documents, an extensive document library, planning studies and other technical information. Opportunities for public involvement are also available online and can be found on the Public Comment (www.sjtpo.org/public-comment) webpage.

[E-list \(Electronic Mailing List\)](#)

Members of the public and interested organizations can sign up for inclusion on SJTPO's e-list to receive information related to upcoming meetings, special events, public comment periods, project news and developments, and to receive issues of the *On the Go* newsletter. To subscribe, individuals can locate the "Join Our Mailing List" at the bottom of every webpage on SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org). Approximately three (3) to four (4) emails are sent each month. Subscribers can unsubscribe at any time.

[Social Media](#)

SJTPO maintains various social media platforms as an additional method to reach the public and highlight key activities and initiatives. Facebook and Twitter are the two primary forms of social media used by SJTPO to disseminate information regarding upcoming meetings and events, newsletter issues, reminders about public comment periods, as well as to share the activities of staff members and other regional transportation planning matters.

At this time, any comment SJTPO receives via social media that adheres to SJTPO’s “Social Media Policy,” found on the [SJTPO website](#) and in [Appendix C](#), will be treated equal to any other comment, added to the public record, and responded to, as appropriate.



Facebook www.facebook.com/sjtpo



Twitter www/twitter.com/sjtpo



YouTube www.youtube.com/channel/UCzdoMUOQ4-umcnlWB5lCxGQ



LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/sjtpo

[On the Go, the Official Newsletter of SJTPO](#)

In July of 2019, the *On the Go* newsletter was established. Prior to its inception, staff produced an online digest of news and activities within the Organization that was updated on an ongoing basis.

On the Go is an electronic publication, released bi-monthly, with six issues produced each year. Distribution of the newsletter is through SJTPO’s e-list. To receive the newsletter, locate the “Join Our Mailing List” at the bottom of each webpage on SJTPO’s website (www.sjtpo.org). Archived and current issues are also made available on the News (On the Go) webpage (www.sjtpo.org/onthego). The website version of the newsletter features a translation tool powered by Google Translation, which allows readers from all backgrounds the ability to stay current on all SJTPO’s matters.

Topics covered in each issue of the newsletter vary depending on what activities are taking place in the Organization. Readers can expect to learn about projects and programs, meetings and events, public outreach programs, and more.

[Newspapers](#)

As appropriate, SJTPO utilizes local newspapers to publicize meetings, events, and other SJTPO projects and programs. Meeting schedules for Policy Board meetings are publicized in local newspapers at the beginning of each calendar year, following the reorganization meeting. Special meetings are publicized twelve (12) days prior to each meeting date, as needed.

SJTPO utilizes newspapers, a form of traditional media outreach, to reach sectors of the region’s population that rely on print media to receive information. SJTPO aims to expand its efforts to involve the local media in its affairs using press releases. The full list of media contacts SJTPO distributes information to can be found in [Appendix D](#).

How to View or Request Documents and Records

To provide reasonable public access to documents and records, SJTPO makes all final draft and final approved plans, programs, and studies produced by the Organization available for examination on its website (www.sjtpo.org), at the SJTPO office, and at select [State Depository Libraries](#) throughout the four-county SJTPO region, listed below. State Depository Libraries make major government agency documents available for viewing by the public at no cost. A list of these libraries, with complete addresses and contact information can be found in [Appendix A](#).

In March 2021, SJTPO staff contacted the State Depository Libraries in the region to inquire about the libraries being able to accommodate SJTPO's transportation planning materials and if they would like to remain on SJTPO's distribution list. SJTPO staff heard from all State Depository Libraries, with the exception of the Michael S. Cettei Memorial Library at the Salem Community College in Carneys Point, New Jersey. The Michael S. Cettei Memorial Library remains on SJTPO's distribution list, as per the decision of SJTPO staff. Of the remaining State Depository Libraries in the region, staff from the Cape May County Library in Cape May Courthouse, New Jersey requested to be taken off the distribution list. The reason being, no members of the public request to review SJTPO's plans and materials, which are retained behind the Circulation Desk due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, as a result of SJTPO staff contacting the State Depository Libraries, and in an effort to be mindful of library staff resources and limited space, language will now be added to the Table of Contents of each final, approved plan sent to the libraries to inform readers that appendices (unless necessary), executive summaries, and amendments, if applicable, will not be printed and transmitted to the libraries. These materials will be assessable on the plan-specific webpages (i.e., if an amendment is made to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the amendment will be available on the UPWP webpage – www.sjtpo.org/UPWP).

If an individual is unable to view documents on SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org), the SJTPO office, or any State Depository Library in the SJTPO region, noncolor copies may be requested, where practical. Fees for copies are \$0.05 per letter page or \$0.07 per legal page. Copies may be picked up at the SJTPO office for no additional charge or mailed at the expense of the receiver. SJTPO may waive totals under \$1.00. Printing and postage costs must be paid by receiver prior to mailing. Checks or money orders must be made out to the South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA). Cash is not accepted. Interested parties can make a request via an [online form](#), also found in [Appendix E](#), or by calling (856) 794-1941.

County	State Depository Library
Atlantic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atlantic County Library – Mays Landing Branch; Reference Area Richard E. Bjork Library at Stockton University; Government Documents
Cumberland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumberland County Library; Reference Department
Salem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salem Free Public Library*; Circulation Desk Salem Community County College Library; Reference Department

* This library is not a State Depository Library. SJTPO has opted to send major documents to this library, as it is in the City of Salem, which serves as the County Seat, much like the other county libraries. This library also provides a location in Salem County for the public to visit that is not located in a college setting.

Attend Public Meetings

Throughout the year, there are numerous opportunities for residents and stakeholders to be engaged in SJTPO's planning process. These meetings are typically meant to provide information and a setting for formal comments to be received. SJTPO works to hold meetings at centralized locations, when held in-person rather than virtual, and at convenient times, including evenings, to maximize participation from a wide range of the region's public, including those traditionally underserved. Other accommodations will be provided to the great, feasible degree when requested at least seven (7) days prior to a public meeting. Accommodations may include but are not limited to translation and/or interpretation services and closed captioning, among others.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SJTPO purchased one license for GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar virtual conferencing platforms. GoToMeeting is useful for small group meetings in which staff and stakeholders need to engage in discussions and decision-making matters, such as Policy Board and TAC meetings. GoToWebinar is most appropriate to use when convening large meetings in which information is shared with attendees, such as public meetings for draft plans. The purchase of these conferencing platforms has allowed SJTPO staff to continue operations with no interruptions to work tasks. Attendance at virtual meetings has been more robust when compared to previously held in-person meetings. Staff anticipates the use of GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar platforms to some degree in all future meetings.

In January of each year, a schedule of Policy Board meetings for the year ahead is placed in local newspapers, including The Press of Atlantic City, The Daily Journal, and South Jersey Times. Meeting dates are also posted to the calendar on SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org) homepage.

As the year progresses and meetings approach, reminders are posted on SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org), sent to e-list subscribers, and posted on social media.

Policy Board Meetings

Policy Board meetings are open to the public. Policy Board meetings are often attended by local elected officials from county government, planners, engineers, federal agency representatives, and concerned individuals, among other stakeholders. Members of the public are given the opportunity to comment at the start of the meeting, with each commenter allotted three minutes to speak. Policy Board meetings are generally held at 10:00 AM at Vineland City Hall or via the GoToMeeting conferencing platform, if being held virtually. Policy Board meetings are generally held on the fourth Monday of every other month beginning in January. Updates and additional information are available on SJTPO's website at www.sjtpo.org/board.

Information for Policy Board meetings is publicized through the e-list, social media, SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org) and paid public notices in local newspapers. To allow for adequate notice, agendas and materials are distributed at least twelve (12) days prior to each meeting through the above channels. Notices are also made available on the bulletin board of Vineland City Hall. Agendas and meeting minutes are obtainable on SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org).

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings are open to the public and are generally held at 10:00 AM at Vineland City Hall or via the GoToMeeting conferencing platform, if being held virtually. TAC meetings are generally held on the second Monday of every other month beginning in January. Technical workshops may be scheduled during the "off" months. The committee consists of staff (typically planners and engineers) of each Policy Board member, as well as representatives of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, the New Jersey Highway Authority, and the Delaware River and Bay Authority. A wide variety of other agencies are also invited to participate in the TAC. Members of the public are given the opportunity to comment on agenda items at the start of the meeting, with each commenter allotted three minutes to speak. Meeting notices, agenda packets and minutes are also available for public viewing purposes on SJTPO's website at www.sjtpo.org/tac.

Public Workshops

SJTPO hosts in-person and virtual workshop-style meetings open to the public on an as-needed basis. These workshops allow attendees to learn about transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian access, freight, or other transportation matters in a greater capacity using presentations, displays, posters, and other informational materials. Workshop-style meetings foster one-on-one interactions between members of the public and transportation professionals. Attendees will

have the opportunity to comment. All comments will be recorded and a written summary, analysis, and report on all significant comments received will be prepared and used accordingly.

Other Ways to be Involved

The following are additional ways in which the public can engage with SJTPO and participate in the transportation planning process.

Request a Safety Program

SJTPO offers a robust series of no-cost, safety education programs. Run by SJTPO Traffic Safety Specialists, these programs are designed with a target audience in mind and in conjunction with other organizations, such as the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (NJ DHTS). Each program is intended to educate roadway users – drivers, passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians – of the many dangers they could encounter on roadways and to impart easy to remember methods to improve safety. To view the entire list of programs offered or to request a program, visit www.sjtpo.org/education/ or the [Safety](#) tab on SJTPO’s website (www.sjtpo.org).

Attend Meetings of County Transportation Boards or Committees

Public involvement at the local, county, and subregional levels is also crucial, as most roadways are owned by these entities, thus much of the transportation planning process occurs at these levels. SJTPO suggests that the public attend meetings and events hosted by county transportation committees or municipal planning boards. A complete list of transportation contacts is located in [Appendix F](#).

5. ADDRESSING CIVIL RIGHTS IN OUR OUTREACH PROCESS

SJTPO is committed to making a special effort to seek out and consider the needs of groups traditionally not well-served by the existing transportation system. These include, but are not limited to the elderly population, minority populations, Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations, zero vehicle households, and low-income households. SJTPO has formal plans pertaining to Title VI, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and Environmental Justice (EJ). The plans outline the appropriate outreach tools and methods necessary to ensure adequate participation of the groups previously mentioned.

Title VI

[Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) and [Executive Order 12898](#) protects individuals from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities.

SJTPO's Title VI Plan is available for viewing purposes on the Title VI webpage (www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI). The webpage also provides background on Title VI, as well as SJTPO's policy statement, complaint procedure and form, and the USDOT Assurances.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

[Executive Order 13166](#), "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," relates to public engagement of LEP individuals. An LEP person is one who does not speak English as his/her/they primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

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

Translation options are available on SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org). To select a language other than English, locate the dropdown menu at the top of each webpage. Translation is provided for linguistic populations of 1,000+ that speak English less than very well in the SJTPO region (2010 Census).

Environmental Justice (EJ)

The federal government defines environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." Fair treatment means that no group of people, including a racial, ethnic, or

socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs, and policies.

An update to the 2015 EJ Plan began in 2019 and will be completed later in 2021. The 2015 Plan evaluated TIP projects for overlap into EJ areas and broadly discussed other planning products, such as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Access for All Transit Plan. The 2020 EJ Plan will be clearer in using an EJ definition that more strictly aligns with the federal definition of EJ and separately include Transportation Justice (TJ) groups, which include elderly, zero vehicle households, and disabled populations. At the core of this effort is the recognition of the right of every person to have a safe, accessible, affordable, and healthy transportation system in his/her/they community. Further, a focus shall be made to research the impact of projects and discuss why some communities have been unable to take advantage of federal transportation funding and examine the associated equity concerns. SJTPO will also begin examining the system design (i.e., sidewalks, bus shelters, etc.) that serve EJ populations.

Strategies to Serve Under-Represented Populations

The Title VI, LEP, and EJ Plans detail in a comprehensive manner the strategies necessary to incorporate under-represented populations in SJTPO's transportation planning process. The strategies to include are as follows:

Identification of Under-Represented Populations using Census Data

To identify Title VI, LEP, and EJ populations, SJTPO uses data gathered at the regional, county, municipal, and Census Block Group level. The information collected helps SJTPO and its subregional partners target outreach needs to under-represented groups. Outreach efforts shall occur throughout all planning efforts, including location-specific projects, plans, and studies.

Engagement of Under-Represented Populations using Targeted Strategies

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

To ensure proper engagement of under-represented individuals, SJTPO has secured a consultant to provide Multilingual Outreach Services, as part of a one-time contract. Regarding the under-represented population in the region, the contract will further assist SJTPO in identifying appropriate stakeholders. Listed below are the current groups and methods SJTPO employs. The Multilingual Outreach Services contract will help to expand these methods, allowing SJTPO to update the PIP in 2021.

Children and Teens

SJTPO is proud to offer a robust series of traffic safety education programs with many of the programs geared towards elementary, middle school, and high school students. Such programs include the Most Dangerous Place on Earth; Share the Keys; Belts, Bones, and Buses; and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety. The programs, presented by SJTPO's Traffic Safety Specialists, are designed to bring awareness to the many risks relative to children and teens on area roadways and to teach them simple ways to improve safety. The programs are fun, accessible, designed for the appropriate age group, and are presented to students in school districts throughout the region.

Since SJTPO's Traffic Safety Specialists have established connections with regional school districts, SJTPO would like to expand upon these traffic safety education programs by incorporating content related to planning efforts.

Young Adults

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

The SJTPO region is home to several universities and colleges. Stockton University, located in Atlantic County, offers a Sustainability Program. SJTPO aims to establish a relationship with professors and students of the program, informing them of efforts related to coursework. Additionally, though outside of SJTPO's region, Rowan University in Gloucester County, offers degrees in Planning and Engineering. SJTPO feels establishing a relationship with professors and students of the Planning and Engineering Programs is beneficial. Rowan University is largely a commuter-based school with individuals traveling from the SJTPO region to work and attend the university.

Older Adults

Older adults are often involved in community efforts. Regardless of their community involvement, older adults may be under-represented in planning efforts for a multitude of reasons, such as mobility challenges, transportation conflicts, among other reasons. Outreach to older adults should include a variety of formats, both in-person and digital. If in-person events are to be held, scheduling the events during daylight hours and in convenient, ADA-accessible venues is most appropriate.

Immigrants and Individuals with Limited-English Proficiency

Approximately 9.3% of the population in the SJTPO region reports speaking English "less than very well." Outreach to these individuals should be approachable, highly visual, and conducted

in their native language, if feasible. The content made available to these individuals should be easy to share to others through word-of-mouth and relative to their needs.

SJTPO is committed to ensuring events and publications are accessible and available to all individuals in the region, regardless of their level of English proficiency or native languages. When notices for public meetings and events are distributed, SJTPO includes information on how to request accommodations, such as translation services. SJTPO requires a seven (7) day advance notice in order to make arrangements to the greatest, feasible degree. Further, SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org) has the ability to be translated in multiple languages.

Racial and Ethnic Groups

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

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

Low-Income Residents

Many low-income people within the SJTPO region balance multiple jobs and face insecurities related to shelter, food, and transportation. Information related to planning efforts is likely to be received through word-of-mouth, community organizations, and social media. Effective outreach to low-income people should be convenient and held during varying hours of the day to take into consideration work and public transit schedules. Additionally, conducting outreach in partnership with Family Success Centers, Community Centers, and other familiar local organizations is advised.

It is also considered a generally accepted best practice to be able to provide modest incentives to attract low-income residents at in-person public meetings. These incentives may include:

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

SJTPO utilizes federal funds for all its activities and currently does not have other supplemental funds. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [§ 200.432 Conferences](#) and [§ 200.438 Entertainment Costs](#) outline the appropriate awarding of funds for incentive-based purchases. 2 CFR 200 also applies restrictions on federal funds to be utilized for food and/or beverages. There is, however, a high burden of proof to be met to allow federal funds to be utilized for food or other incentives. Federal approval is required on a case-by-case basis and is typically only reserved for meetings where food and/or beverage is determined to be both “necessary and reasonable” for the success of that specific meeting or event. With federal funds currently being SJTPO’s only funding source and the restrictions on using these funds, SJTPO must explore other opportunities to offer incentives essential to equitable involvement. This includes identifying and securing additional funding sources. In addition, SJTPO will evaluate how to leverage staff resources, or those in the local community, to provide low-cost activities for children at in-person meetings.

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities may experience any number of cognitive or physical disabilities. Due to the range of possible needs being so broad, SJTPO staff aim to make themselves aware of how individuals with disabilities can be excluded from public engagement activities, and how to rectify such instances of exclusion.

Outreach to individuals with disabilities should be compliant with ADA requirements. SJTPO’s website (www.sjtpo.org) offers an “Accessibility Widget.” The widget is designed to consider the needs of individuals with special needs. Features of the “Accessibility Widget” include keyboard navigation, reading of page content, color contrast, highlighting of links, bigger text, large text spacing, Dyslexia friendly features, among others.

Translation of Vital Documents

SJTPO’s “vital documents” are documents that help residents and stakeholders understand SJTPO’s purpose and importance in the four-county region and will be proactively translated into Spanish and translated in other languages upon request. These documents are as follows:

- **Access for All Transit Plan Executive Summary:** The Access for All Transit Plan Executive Summary is in development and upon completion will be translated and available at www.sjtpo.org/AccessForAll.
- **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Executive Summary:** The RTP 2050 Executive Summary is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/RTP.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Executive Summary:** The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2029 TIP Executive Summary is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/TIP.

- **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Executive Summary:** The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 UPWP Executive Summary is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/UPWP.
- **Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Executive Summary:** The PIP Executive Summary will be updated to reflect changes made to the PIP as a result of the current public comment period (March 4, 2021 to April 18, 2021). The current 2020 PIP Executive Summary is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/PIP.
- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan:** The LEP Plan has been translated into Spanish and is available at www.sjtpo.org/LEP.
- **Environmental Justice (EJ) Plan:** The EJ Plan is in development and upon completion the EJ Plan and the Executive Summary in both English and Spanish will be available at www.sjtpo.org/EJ.
- **The Public Engagement Guide to Transportation Planning in South Jersey:** The Guide is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/EngagementGuide.
- **Title VI Complaint Procedures:** Materials that directly allow the public to understand and exercise their rights under Title VI with regard to SJTPO are available at www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI.
- **Title VI Notice:** The Title VI Notice is SJTPO's commitment to the public to assure full compliance with Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The Title VI Notice is available at www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI.
- **Title VI Complaint Form:** The Title VI Complaint Form is available and must be completed if a person or group of persons believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by SJTPO under Title VI. The form is available in English and Spanish at www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI.

In SJTPO's four-county region, there are five (5) languages or language groups that are spoken by at least 1,000 LEP persons each, and therefore fall under the Safe Harbor provision. One of these is "Other Indic Languages," which SJTPO understands may include Bengali, Hindi, Nepali, Urdu, and Punjabi, bringing the total number of potential languages to nine (9). As the 2005 USDOT guidance contends, "it would be unrealistic" to provide translations in all nine (9) languages. However, SJTPO remains committed to ensuring meaningful access for all LEP persons, regardless of language spoken at home. While SJTPO will continue to focus its proactive translation efforts on the Spanish-speaking community, as the primary LEP population, it will also aim to use ACS data and input from member governments and community organizations to predict contact with LEP persons for area-specific projects, studies, and programs.

Limiting Obstacles of Involvement

The following are efforts SJTPO has established to remove obstacles to involvement, including those of language, mobility, and temporal, among others.

Convenient Meeting Times

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

Transit-Accessible Meetings

SJTPO staff work to select locations that are transit accessible to the greatest feasible degree, if hosting in-person meetings. Policy Board and TAC meetings can take place at Vineland City Hall, if not being held virtually via the GoToMeeting conferencing platform, which is accessible by New Jersey Transit buses and is within an EJ area.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Provisions

All public notices for planning activities include an announcement that states persons with disabilities will be accommodated. Special provisions will be accommodated to the greatest possible extent if notified seven (7) days in advance (i.e., make available large print documents, audio material, someone proficient in sign language, or other provisions requested).

Online Engagement Opportunities

SJTPO will continue to offer online engagement opportunities to accommodate individuals who are unable to offer feedback in-person. All engagement opportunities will be listed on the Public Comment webpage (www.sjtpo.org/public-comment). Staff will also notify social media (i.e., [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)) followers as well as e-list subscribers of opportunities. To subscribe, individuals can locate the "Join Our Mailing List" at the bottom of any webpage on SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org).

Pop-up/Partnering Events

SJTPO will continue to participate in pop-events, such as farmers markets and fairs, as appropriate. Pop-up events are beneficial to members of the public, as they are not asked to travel to a specific location, at a specific date and time. Rather, staff travel to locations and supply all appropriate materials necessary to garner feedback.

SJTPO will also work to better coordinate with community partners in the SJTPO region. Community partners may include churches, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and Community Centers, among others. Much like pop-up events, coordinating with community

partners is beneficial as a relationship, and thus an audience and a level of trust has already been established.

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

As mentioned, SJTPO is required to develop a Title VI Plan. The Plan ensures SJTPO's commitment to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any of its plans and programs. Further, the Title VI Plan provides information on the implementation of a full complaint procedure. The complaint procedure identifies the reporting requirements for the Complainant (i.e., the individual(s) or group(s) that believe a discriminatory action has taken place) and the Organization (i.e., SJTPO). SJTPO's Title VI Plan, along with the complaint procedure, are available on SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI).

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

SJTPO encourages public comments and provides the public with a multitude of ways to voice opinions and share ideas with SJTPO.

Public Comment Periods

A major opportunity for the public to share opinions and ideas is during a public review period. A comment period of **at least 30 days** will be held to review drafts of SJTPO's core documents. As stated in [Section 3](#), SJTPO has nine documents that are often referred to as core documents, as they require public comment periods and public meetings to be held when a new plan is written or a currently adopted plan is revised. The core documents are as follows:

- **[Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#)**: The RTP is a long-term transportation plan that identifies a high-level vision and outlines transportation projects for at least the next 20 years, and is the result of extensive outreach, collaboration, and consensus. The RTP is updated every four (4) years.
- **[Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#)**: The TIP is an agreed upon list of projects, for which state and federal funds are expected to be spent. The TIP is updated every two (2) years.
- **[Unified Planning Work Program \(UPWP\)](#)**: The UPWP details all anticipated transportation planning activities to be performed by SJTPO staff, subregions, and member agencies during the fiscal year. The UPWP is updated every year.
- **[Access for All Transit Plan](#)**: Federally required to be updated every five (5) years, the Access for All Transit Plan identifies the unmet transportation needs and recommends methods to increase service quality and reduce the cost of providing services to the transportation disadvantaged population in the region.
- **[Congestion Management Process \(CMP\)](#)**: The CMP is a federally required process documented in a methodology report that guides how to safely and effectively manage and operate South Jersey's transportation network.
- **[Limited English Proficiency Plan \(LEP\)](#)**: The LEP Plan is a federally required document, updated as needed, that identifies the LEP populations in the region and how SJTPO will work to accommodate their needs in SJTPO's process.
- **[Title VI Implementation Plan](#)**: The Title VI Plan is federally required document, updated as needed, that documents how SJTPO will meet its requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

- **Transportation Conformity**: The Transportation Conformity document demonstrates transportation conformity of the TIP and RTP with the 2015 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
- **Public Involvement Plan (PIP)**: The PIP is a federally required document, updated as needed, that articulates the rules SJTPO will follow and the processes by which the public can engage in the MPO transportation planning process. Unlike the other core documents, a comment period of **at least 45 days** will be held for the PIP.

If public comments cause any of the core documents to greatly differ from the versions previously made available to the public, an additional comment period of **at least 10 days** will be held prior to Policy Board approval. Substantive changes that may justify an additional 10-day comment period include the addition or removal of a section, adjustments to public forms, updates to federal regulations, as well as other changes that SJTPO deems substantive enough to ask for additional public comment.

Policy Board and TAC agendas and materials are made available twelve (12) days prior to each regularly scheduled meeting. Opportunity for public comment is provided at all regularly scheduled meetings.

Information necessary for the public to thoroughly understand and comment on each document will be made available. This can include items such as public-friendly executive summaries, information posted to SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org), PowerPoints, printable flyers and/or project sheets and reports, as well as links to project or sponsor websites for comprehensive information.

Additional Information About the TIP

The TIP may require revisions after it has been approved. As outlined in a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), SJTPO, NJDOT, and New Jersey Transit, found on SJTPO's TIP webpage (www.sjtpo.org/tip), there are three types of revisions: Major Amendments, Minor Amendments, and Modifications.

Any TIP action which affects air quality conformity, or would require a new regional conformity determination, is a Major Amendment and **requires a 30-day comment period**. Following approval by the SJTPO Policy Board, SJTPO will forward the amendment package via [e-STIP](#) to NJDOT or New Jersey Transit, requesting the approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

A Minor Amendment is any TIP amendment which does not affect air quality conformity and does not require a new regional conformity determination. A Minor Amendment, like a Major Amendment, requires approval by the FHWA and the FTA. **Unlike a Major Amendment, a Minor Amendment does not require a 30-day public comment period.**

Modifications refer to any other smaller revisions, which do not require public comment. There are three classifications or modifications, defined in the [MOU](#).

How to Submit Comments

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

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

- **Fax:** (856) 794-2549
- **Email:** pip@sjtpo.org
- **Mail:** The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization
782 South Brewster Road, Unit B6, Vineland, NJ 08361
- **Online form:** General comments are welcomed through the “Contact Us with Your General Comments” form found toward the bottom of the Public Comment webpage (www.sjtpo.org/public-comment) under the Get Involved tab
- **Social media:** Facebook (www.facebook.com/SJTPO) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/SJTPO)*

* See [Appendix C](#) for more information about SJTPO’s social media practices.

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

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

Visit www.sjtpo.org or call (856) 794-1941 to discuss comments with SJTPO staff or for a current schedule of meetings in which to offer comments. All comments must be received by the close of the comment period to be explicitly addressed and included in the final plan. SJTPO welcomes

public comments at any time and will work to properly address any comment or question received.

How Your Comments will be Used

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

7. EVALUATING OUR EFFECTIVENESS

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

Questionnaires, Polls, and/or Surveys

Questionnaires, polls, and/or surveys may be used to provide feedback on a variety of topics, such as the usefulness of public meetings or events and the practicality of techniques utilized. These materials will be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the public involvement goals on pages [10 through 13](#).

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

- **During a comment period to gather input** – Staff may make surveys available through SJTPO’s website (www.sjtpo.org), e-list, etc. to provide the public with an easy and readily accessible way to submit comments on transportation activities. Polling questions may be used during public meetings to gather input, but also to keep attendees engaged in the material.
- **Public Involvement Questionnaire** – Staff may distribute a periodic questionnaire to gauge the public’s expectations of meetings and events, effectiveness of current outreach practices, suggestions for improvement, etc.

Assessment of Outreach Tools

The SJTPO staff have numerous performance measures that can be used when assessing the Organization’s outreach process and its effectiveness. The SJTPO will monitor the following on a quarterly basis:

Tool	Sample Evaluation Measure
Website	Number of users; number of new users; number of sessions; number of pageviews; average session duration
Social media (per account)	Number of followers; change in followers, number of posts; number of impressions; number of mentions; number of clicks

E-list	Number of subscribers; change in subscribers; number of emails sent; number of bounces; percent of emails opened; percent of emails clicked
Public meetings and events	Number of meetings and events; number of individuals notified; number of attendees; location of meetings and events
News “On the Go” articles	Number of articles posted; when posted; topics posted
Questionnaires, polls, and/or surveys	Number of questionnaires, polls, and/or surveys sent; percent completed
Press releases	Number of press releases distributed and published

Staff Debriefings

In addition to quarterly evaluation, SJTPO staff will meet on an ongoing basis to review outreach and engagement efforts. During these meetings, staff will determine if improvements and/or the development of new strategies are needed to enhance the public outreach process.

APPENDIX A. LIST OF SJTPO PUBLIC DOCUMENT DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES

County	State Depository Library
Atlantic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlantic County Library – Mays Landing Branch; Reference Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mays Landing; 40 Farragut Avenue; Mays Landing, NJ 08330 ○ Website: www.atlanticlibrary.org/ • Richard E. Bjork Library at Stockton University; Government Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 101 Vera King Farris Drive; Galloway, NJ 08205-9441 ○ Website: library.stockton.edu/welcome
Cumberland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumberland County Library; Reference Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ County Complex; 800 E. Commerce Street; Bridgeton, NJ 08302 ○ Website: www.cclnj.org
Salem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salem Free Public Library*; Circulation Desk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 112 W. Broadway; Salem, NJ 08079 ○ Website: www.mysalemlibrary.org/ • Michael S. Cettei Memorial Library at Salem Community College; Reference Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 460 Hollywood Avenue; Carneys Point, NJ 08069 ○ Website: www.salemmc.edu/library/home

* This library is not a State Depository library. SJTPO has opted to send major documents to the library, as it is in the City of Salem, which serves as the County Seat, much like the other county libraries. This library also provides a location in Salem County for the public to visit that is not located in a college setting.

In March 2021, SJTPO staff contacted the State Depository Libraries in the region to inquire about the libraries being able to accommodate SJTPO's transportation planning materials and if they would like to remain on SJTPO's distribution list. Staff from the Cape May County Library in Cape May Courthouse, New Jersey requested to be taken off the distribution list. The reason being, no members of the public request to review SJTPO's plans and materials, which are retained behind the Circulation Desk due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

APPENDIX B. FEDERAL LAWS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

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

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

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

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[MAP-21](#), the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, was a law that authorized federal surface and transportation spending and programs. Signed by President Obama, the law expired in September 2014.

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

Signed by President Obama, the 2015 [Fixing American’s Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#) is the current federal legislation which provides long-term funding certainty and outlines the public involvement requirements and provides long-term funding certainty for MPOs through Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020. In terms of public involvement, the FTA summarizes the requirements as follows: “a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is required to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation, and consultation,” including throughout the development of its long-range RTP and its TIP. Further, as mandated, the MPO is to provide “adequate public notice of public participation activities; review and comment at key decision points in the development of the [RTP] and TIP; and multiple, accessible participation formats, including electronic and in-person.”

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

When holding public meetings, the locations must be accessible and convenient, if being held in-person. Further, sufficient notice must be given, with information available online. The notices must also solicit the needs of the traditionally underserved population and the MPO must thoroughly consider the input received.

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §450

The [Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §450](#) provides planning standards for transportation projects. Specifically, §450.316 states that an MPO must develop and abide by a participation plan that thoroughly engages the public, agencies, and other transportation stakeholders. Further, the federal law notes that the plan should address the MPO’s procedures for notice of

public participation activities, including how the MPO plans to reach all segments of the population as well as how the MPO seeks to receive public comments.

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §771.111

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

Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations”

[Executive Order 12898](#), “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” directs federal agencies, including federally funded MPOs, to evaluate the health and environmental impacts of their proposed programs and actions on minority and underserved populations. Further, the order promotes nondiscrimination within programs as well as ensures that communication related to human health and the environment is readily accessible, comprehensible, and translated into other languages “whenever practicable and appropriate.”

Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency”

[Executive Order 13166](#), “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency,” relates to public engagement of limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals. The order states that a “Federal agency shall prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons.” The order enables an agency to have substantial freedom when crafting its LEP plan; however, to assist, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a policy guidance document, “Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - National Origin Discrimination Against Persons with Limited English Proficiency,” also known as the [2002 LEP Guidance](#).

APPENDIX C. SJTPO SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENT POLICY

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) is a government agency that guides the transportation planning process in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties. SJTPO utilizes social media platforms, the primary platforms being Twitter and Facebook to provide an opportunity to inform interested parties on matters regarding SJTPO.

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

- SJTPO Policy Board meetings and agendas
- Information as it relates to major planning documents, such as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Long Range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Release of Request for Proposals (RFPs)
- Outreach event information and images
- Roadway-related information and statistics
- *On the Go* publications
- Other information, as deemed appropriate by SJTPO staff.

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

External User Guidelines

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

As social media is a fast-evolving means of public interface, this policy statement is subject to amendment or modification at any time to ensure its continued use is consistent with its intended purpose as a limited forum. Questions or concerns regarding SJTPO's presence in various social media channels should be directed to Melissa Melora at mmelora@sjtpo.org or (856) 794-1941.

APPENDIX D. MEDIA CONTACTS

As part of SJTPO's efforts to reach and inform residents in the region, SJTPO places paid advertisements in the larger, regional newspapers – The Press of Atlantic City, The Daily Journal, and the South Jersey Times – to announcement public meeting schedules, public comment opportunities, employment opportunities, etc.

Additionally, the SJTPO region is home to many smaller newspapers and television/radio outlets. At this time, SJTPO does not use these outlets for advertising purposes. Rather, when appropriate, SJTPO sends press releases. The outlets will then contact SJTPO if the information in the press releases is of relevance.

The table below details all media outlets in the region known to SJTPO. In **bold** are newspapers SJTPO uses for paid advertisements.

County	Media Outlet
Atlantic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atlantic City Weekly Shore News Today The Hammonton Gazette The Press of Atlantic City
Cape May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cape May Star & Wave Shore News Today The Press of Atlantic City
Cumberland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder Newspaper The Sentinel South Jersey Times The Daily Journal SNJ Today Newspaper The Press of Atlantic City
Salem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elmer Times Company South Jersey Times
Television/Radio Outlets	
62 Telemundo	
Ritmo Broadcasting (105.7 FM Vineland)	

APPENDIX E. DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS REQUEST FORM

The Documents and Records Request form is not a New Jersey Open Public Records Act (OPRA) form, as SJTPO Legal Counsel determined SJTPO is not subject to the Act.

SJTPO makes all final plans, programs, and studies produced by the Organization available for examination on its website (www.sjtpo.org) and at the SJTPO office, upon request. Documents are also viewable at all [State Depository Libraries](#) throughout the four-county SJTPO region. State Depository Libraries make major government agency documents available for viewing by the public at no cost.

If you are unable to view documents on SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org), the SJTPO office, or any State Depository Library in the SJTPO region, you may request noncolor copies, where practical. Fees for copies are \$0.05 per letter page or \$0.07 per legal page. Copies may be picked up at the SJTPO office for no additional charge or mailed at the expense of the receiver. SJTPO may waive totals under \$1.00. Printing and postage costs must be paid by receiver prior to mailing. Checks or money orders must be made out to the South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA). Cash is not accepted. Interested parties can make a request by completing the form below, filling out an [online form](#) or by calling (856) 794-1941.

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



South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization

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

Leonard Desiderio, *Chairman*

Benjamin H. Laury, *Vice Chairman*

782 South Brewster Road, Unit B6,
Vineland, New Jersey 08361

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

Jennifer Marandino, P.E.
Executive Director

John W. Riskey, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Access to Documents and Records Form

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

Date requested: _____

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

Name of Requester (Required): _____

Street Address (Required): _____

City/State/Zip (Required): _____

Telephone (Optional): _____

Email (Optional): _____

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

Do you want to be notified in advance if the cost exceeds \$10.00? Yes No

For SJTPO Use Only

Date Received by: _____

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

Executive Director Signature: _____

APPENDIX F. TRANSPORTATION CONTACTS

The ensuing is an excerpt from SJTPO's Public Engagement Guide, viewable at www.sjtpo.org/EngagementGuide.

SJTPO Subregions

Atlantic County

Department of Regional Planning and Development

Phone: (609) 645-5898

www.atlantic-county.org

Cape May County

Planning Department

Phone: (609) 465-1080

www.capemaycountynj.gov

Cumberland County

Department of Planning

Phone: (856) 453-2175

www.co.cumberland.nj.us

Salem County

Planning Board

Phone: (856) 935-7510 x8414

www.salemcountynj.gov

City of Atlantic City

Department of Planning and Development

Phone: (609) 347-5300

www.development.cityofatlanticcity.org

City of Vineland

Division of Planning

Phone: (856) 794-4000

www.vinelandcity.org

Implementing Agencies

Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA)

P.O. Box 71

New Castle, Delaware 19720

Phone: (302) 571-6300

www.drba.net

New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)

P.O. Box 600

Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0600

Phone: (609) 530-2000

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation>

New Jersey Transit (NJ TRANSIT)

One Penn Plaza East

Newark, New Jersey 07105

24-hour transit information: (973) 275-5555

www.njtransit.com

New Jersey Turnpike Authority (NJTA)

P.O. Box 5042

Woodbridge, New Jersey 07095-5042

Phone: (732) 750-5300

www.njta.com

South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA)

P.O. Box 351

Hammonton, New Jersey 08037

Phone: (609) 965-6060

www.sjta.com

Local Public Transportation Services

Atlantic County Transportation Unit

201 Shore Road – Rear Building, 2nd Floor
Northfield, New Jersey 08225

Phone: (609) 645-7700

www.atlantic-county.org/intergenerational-services

Local Public Transportation Services (Continued)

Cape May County Fare Free Transportation

4 Moore Road

Cape May Court House, New Jersey 08210

Phone: (609) 889-3700

www.capemaycountynj.gov/446/Fare-Free-Transportation

Cumberland Area Transit System

800 East Commerce Street

Bridgeton, New Jersey 08302

Phone: (856) 691-7799

www.co.cumberland.nj.us/aging/CATS

Cumberland County Dept. of Workforce Development

P.O. Box 1500

3322 College Drive

Vineland, New Jersey 08362-1500

Phone: (856) 696-5660

www.co.cumberland.nj.us/workforcedevelopment

Mid-Atlantic States Career and Education Center (Salem County)

111 South Broadway

Pennsville, New Jersey 08070

Phone: (856) 514-2200

wegrowpeople.org

NJ TRANSIT Access Link

One Penn Plaza East, 7th Floor

Phone: +1 (800) 955-ADA1 (2321)

TTY: +1 (800) 955-6765

www.njtransit.com/accessibility/access-link-ada-paratransit

Pearl Transit (Salem County)

105 Spillway Drive

Salem, New Jersey 08079

Phone: (856) 279-2000

www.pearltransit.org

Salem County Office on Aging and Disability Services

110 5th Street, Suite 900

Salem, New Jersey 08079

Phone: (856) 339-8644

health.salemcountynj.gov/human-services/office-on-aging

Federal Partners

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) New Jersey Division

840 Bear Tavern Road, Suite 202

West Trenton, NJ 08628

Phone: (609) 637-4200

www.fhwa.dot.gov/njdiv

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region II

One Bowling Green, Room 428

New York, New York 10004

Phone: (212) 668-2170

www.transit.dot.gov/about/regional-offices

Transportation Management Association (TMA)

Cross County Connection

4A Eves Drive, Suite 114

Marlton, New Jersey 08053

Phone: (856) 596-8228

www.driveless.com

Travel and Traffic

511NJ

Phone: Dial 511

www.511nj.org

APPENDIX G. KNOWING WHO TO CONTACT

The following information is taken from SJTPO's Public Engagement Guide, which is available on SJTPO's website at www.sjtpo.org/EngagementGuide.

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

State-Owned Roadways

The State owns and is responsible for 394 miles of interstate highways (such as Interstate 295), US highways (such as Route 40), and State highways (such as Route 49) in our region. Any roadways



with the signage types shown at right are the jurisdiction of the State of New Jersey. Where a state-owned roadway intersects with a county or municipal roadway, the state generally maintains the intersection. For an issue on one of these roadways, contact the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) at 1-800-Pothole or visit www.state.nj.us/transportation/commuter/potholeform.shtm for the online form.

Authority-Owned Roadways

Authorities own and operate three significant roadways in our region. These roadways are separate from the state-owned roadways managed by NJDOT.



The Garden State Parkway and New Jersey Turnpike are

owned by the New Jersey Turnpike Authority (www.njta.com/), who can be reached at (732) 750-5300. The Atlantic City Expressway is owned by the South Jersey Transportation Authority (www.sjta.com/sjta/), who can be reached at (609) 965-6060.

County-Owned Roadways

Counties own and are responsible for all roadways numbered in the 500s, 600s, and 700s, which total over 1,400 miles in our region. Any roadways marked with signs similar to the one shown here is owned and maintained by a county. Where a county-owned roadway intersects with a state roadway, the state generally



maintains the intersection. However, where a county route intersects with a municipal roadway, the county generally maintains the intersection. On the next page are contacts for the county planning departments in our region.

Municipally-Owned Roadways

Municipalities generally own and are responsible for all of the roadways not addressed above. With over 3,200 miles of roads, if the roadway in question does not have any of the signage previously shown, it is likely owned by a municipality. Where a municipally owned roadway intersects with a county or state roadway, the county or state generally maintains the intersection. With 68 municipalities in the SJTPO region alone, we cannot list contacts for each municipality here, but the State maintains a list of municipal websites at www.state.nj.us/nj/gov/county/localgov.html.

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

Public Comment Period: Thursday, March 4, 2021 – Sunday, April 18, 2021
Virtual Public Meetings: Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 6:00 PM (English)
Saturday, March 20, 2021 at 10:00 AM (Spanish)

Public Comment from Virtual Public Meetings:

1. **COMMENT:** You mentioned being able to provide accommodations, when requested. Can you explain in further detail?

RESPONSE: SJTPO: *Providing accommodations is new to staff. A Spanish Civil Rights in Outreach virtual public meeting took place on Saturday, March 20, 2021. The interpreter was provided through the consultant for the Multilingual Outreach Services Study. When the Study concludes, staff will not have an interpreter or translator readily available. Thus, staff must research and contact professional translation providers to better understand how to establish a contract for such services. In terms of additional accommodations, staff is currently able to provide closed captioning, such as for a hearing impairment, through PowerPoint and GoToWebinar, which is the conferencing platform staff use for virtual public meetings. Researching how staff can provide an array of accommodations is imperative.*

2. **COMMENT:** You also have accommodations on your website, which is a great feature.

RESPONSE: SJTPO: *Thank you for mentioning the accommodations menu available on each page of the SJTPO website (www.sjtpo.org). The menu offers an array of accommodations, such as text spacing, bigger text, color contrast of the screen, and highlighting of links. The accommodations menu is provided by USERWAY, which ensures SJTPO's website is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible.*

3. **COMMENT:** During the polling questions you mentioned in-person and virtual public meeting options. Once we are able to gather in-person safely, do you think you will continue to offer a virtual option?

RESPONSE: SJTPO: *At this time, staff intends to continue to offer a virtual option once it is safe to hold in-person public meetings. Staff understands that people are busy. The times staff schedules public meetings may not work for everyone. Additionally, members of the public may not want or be able to travel a certain distance from their home or workplace. However,*

moving forward from the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be important for staff to not rely solely on virtual outreach. Staff is concerned that not all segments of the public, specifically individuals that may not have access to reliable devices and internet, are able to have their voices heard. Once it is deemed safe to gather, staff will host traditional, in-person public meetings.

4. **COMMENT:** How do I join the Community Outreach and Engagement Committee.

RESPONSE: SJTPO: *Thank you for your interest in the Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC). The Committee is to be comprised of members that work with and are involved in local community organizations and non-profit groups that serve or otherwise represent the voices and needs of our diverse region. The main objective of the COEC is for members to provide feedback on SJTPO's public involvement opportunities as well as spread the word about these involvement opportunities. More information will be forthcoming.*

5. **COMMENT:** Without any translation providers under contract, how would you translate documents in other languages?

RESPONSE: SJTPO: *SJTPO's consultant for the Multilingual Outreach Services Study has assessed automated translations services. The consultant has deemed Google Translate as the most useful automated translation tool for facilitating conversations via the public participation and engagement process. SJTPO staff is cognizant of professional translation services remaining the best choice for accuracy, understanding, and cultural appropriateness. However, until a contract with such a vendor is able to be secured, SJTPO will utilize Google Translate to bridge the gap.*

Public Comment from Facebook:

6. **COMMENT:** Does this mean you stand for equality or equity?

RESPONSE: SJTPO: *Thanks for the question! For anyone else reading who might not know, in this context, equality would be to treat everyone exactly the same in trying to achieve our objective, in this case informing the public and getting feedback on our projects and programs. Equity would be doing what we (reasonably) can to give everyone an equal opportunity to learn about our work and give feedback, including making accommodations to meet the needs of a variety of different people. Some examples of this could include holding meetings at different times so people with different work schedules can attend, providing options for individuals with visual or audible impairments or those who may not be able to fully read and speak English. There are some specific federal guidelines that direct exactly how and when we*

need to do some of these things, which are discussed in the [Title VI Implementation Plan](#), [Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\) Plan](#), and [Public Involvement Plan \(PIP\)](#), but in short to work to not only meet our federal requirements but also serve our region's diverse population, we do our best to serve the region equitably.

7. **COMMENT:** Save tax dollars first. Lighten your director high paying jobs. Place the common man/woman [on] your board and committees. Then talk equality and equity. How many people currently in management are considered minorities[?] Time to step up to the plate. By the way[,] more bicycle lanes don't count as projects.

RESPONSE: SJTPO: *Thank you for your comments. Regarding the spending of tax dollars, transportation improvement projects undergo various stages of scrutiny and work to make them a reality, including evaluations to ensure projects deliver the greatest benefit possible for their expenditure and to scrutinize costs against available funds. Unfortunately, projects, studies to develop projects, and staff with the expertise to implement both of those, are all expensive. That said, SJTPO staff are very focused on how to best utilize our federal funds in an efficient manner and leverage those funds to do the most and most valuable work possible for the region.*

Regarding bicycle lanes, they are rarely, if ever implemented on their own, but are generally one of a series of proven safety improvements on a project, and often incorporated into repaving. As safety is a federal, state, and local priority, and bicycle and pedestrian crashes are greatly over-represented in New Jersey it is important that the safety of all users of our roadway network is addressed.

We agree, we would like to see more diversity among our staff. However, when advertising for open positions we have received limited diversity among applicants. We do have strong female representation on our staff, including our Executive Director, and in a male-dominated field, we are pleased with that. But your point is well-taken and we will look for ways to do better on our upcoming advertisements.

Regarding our committees, membership on our Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Policy Board are largely shaped by federal guidance. Our Policy Board members are generally elected officials of our jurisdictions who are not paid by SJTPO to participate. The TAC is primarily comprised of the planning and engineering staff of those jurisdictions. However, staff is currently in the process of developing a Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) that will be comprised of members that work with and are involved in local community organizations and non-profit groups that serve or otherwise represent the voices and needs of our diverse region.