

**SOUTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION
COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
BYLAWS**

ADOPTED March 28, 2022

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The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the southern New Jersey region covering Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties. The SJTPO's primary objectives include serving as a technical resource, providing access to funding, and addressing transportation planning and engineering issues from a regional perspective. Pursuant to these objectives, the SJTPO has established a Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) to enhance the scope of its public outreach and to ensure its decision-making process is based on diverse, inclusive, and equity-based information and opinions. Through its collective membership, the COEC will provide the SJTPO with a direct channel for public and special interest groups to provide input on important subjects such as the development of a safe, effective, and efficient multi-modal transportation system in the SJTPO four-county region.

I. COEC MISSION STATEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Open Discussions and Providing Input for Important SJTPO Issues.

Through open discussions on important issues, COEC will provide valuable and diverse range of information, feedback, and opinions to the SJTPO. The issues for discussion will include, but may not be limited to:

- **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)** – Updated every four years, the RTP sets out a vision for the development of the region's transportation infrastructure over 20+ years. It includes goals and strategies, as well as an analysis of regional trends.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** – Updated every two years, the TIP is a four-year list of projects drawn from the RTP. To be eligible for federal funding, proposed projects must be approved by the SJTPO Policy Board for inclusion in the TIP.
- **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** – Updated annually and guided by the RTP, the UPWP summarizes transportation planning activities to be conducted by the SJTPO central staff, member agencies, and other transportation agencies in the region, providing details of revenues and expenditures in a given state fiscal year.
- **Air Quality Conformity Determination** – The SJTPO is required to conduct an annual evaluation of the air quality impacts of the RTP and TIP, called a conformity determination, to demonstrate that projects and programs conform to the New Jersey State Implementation Plan (SIP) for meeting and maintaining National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQs).

- **Public Involvement Plan (PIP)** – Updated regularly, the PIP outlines how SJTPO is meeting all federal public involvement mandates. It is updated to reflect SJTPO’s current outreach activities. The PIP reaffirms SJTPO's commitment to an accessible, open, and inclusive planning process.
- **Congestion Management Process (CMP)** – Updated periodically, the CMP documents the process by which congested locations are identified and provides for safe and effective management and operation of the multimodal transportation system.
- **Access for All Transit Plan** – Updated every five years, the Access for All Transit Plan serves as the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the SJTPO region. This plan identifies unmet transportation needs and recommends improvements and opportunities for coordination.
- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan** – Updated as needed, the LEP Plan identifies limited English proficient populations, evaluates SJTPO’s language access efforts, and commits resources and procedures to provide more access to SJTPO’s work, including publications, products, communications, public input, and decision-making processes.
- **Environmental Justice (EJ) Report** – Updated every two years with the TIP, the EJ Report identifies EJ populations (low-income and minority populations) in the SJTPO region, evaluates existing conditions as well as assesses SJTPO’s processes and investments of federal dollars.
- **The Public Engagement Guide to Transportation Planning in South Jersey** – Updated as needed, the Public Engagement Guide is a user-friendly guide designed to give the public a quick and easy understanding of the MPO process and the most effective way for them to get involved.
- **Title VI Materials** – Reviewed annually, there are several Title VI materials which directly allow the public to understand their rights under Title VI and to exercise those rights with regard to SJTPO. These materials include the Title VI Complaint Procedure section of the Title VI Website, the Title VI Complaint Form, and the Title VI Notice. Additionally, the Title VI Implementation Plan, updated at least every three years, details how SJTPO will meet its requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

B. COEC Responsibilities to the SJTPO.

To ensure the COEC is satisfying its various goals and objectives, the COEC shall be guided by the following responsibilities:

- Assist SJTPO to improve its outreach processes to better enable two-way communication to enhance public awareness and involvement in SJTPO’s regional planning activities.

- Compose a membership that, to the greatest reasonable degree, reflects the racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, age, geographic, ability, and economic diversity of the four-county region to allow for the discussion of important issues with individuals that can offer SJTPO a snapshot of the diverse set of viewpoints and interests that exist in the region.
- Consist, to the greatest reasonable degree, of members or representatives of organizations or groups that represent or provide services to the above-mentioned groups and can assist SJTPO staff by sharing information, opportunities for feedback, event notifications, etc. to their group membership to increase awareness and public input related to SJTPO projects, programs, studies, or other general information related to transportation.
- Keep abreast of and contribute to the on-going activities and planning programs of SJTPO, including the development and implementation of SJTPO's major planning products and processes as well as the SJTPO website, reviewing and providing comments related to clarity and effectiveness.
- Determine through its discussions, if any specific issues are of notable importance to committee members, and working with SJTPO staff, determine if a more concentrated focus on an issue would be beneficial to the SJTPO planning process and a good use of members' time.
- From time to time, the COEC may also be asked to offer input related to other plans, studies, and activities.

II. MEMBERSHIP

A. Number of Members.

COEC membership shall consist of no more than 25 members. COEC membership may consist of representatives from a number of sectors, interests, and organizations in the southern New Jersey area; including, but not limited to: (i) regional civic associations; (ii) individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities; (iii) minority groups; (iv) Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations; (v) transportation or transit advisory groups; (vi) low-income individuals; (vii) older adults; (viii) affordable housing organizations; (ix) environmental groups and environmental justice groups; (x) public health organizations; (xi) bicycle or pedestrian advocacy groups; (xii) youth programs; (xiii) community and economic development organizations; (xiv) private sector business organizations; and (xv) ethnic organizations.

Proper outreach should result in an opportunity for members of these groups to participate.

B. Membership Applications.

Prospective members shall submit an application to SJTPO staff for COEC consideration. Applications submitted with inaccurate or omitted information will be evaluated by SJTPO and may be removed from consideration or from membership on the COEC.

C. Membership Consideration, Selection, and Limitations.

The SJTPO Executive Director shall present the selected COEC membership list to the TAC and Policy Board each year for their general information with no formal approval required. Membership selection will be focused on maximizing the diversity of public viewpoints. To this end, SJTPO will seek to limit the involvement of county or municipal personnel, including non-elected decision-making bodies, such as planning boards, and will only seek such members when it is in the best interests of adding needed viewpoints of underrepresented groups. In addition, the following groups will be excluded from consideration as members of the COEC: political party officials, holders of an elective office, persons seeking an elective office, members of a planning board, or spouses and immediate family members of all of the above.

D. Membership Terms.

COEC members shall serve a two-year term. At the onset of committee creation, half of the members will be randomly selected to a three-year term to ensure that terms are staggered such that only half of the COEC membership terms are completed each year. The COEC strives to represent the racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, age, geographic, ability and economic diversity of the region, with members from the southern New Jersey region bringing their own individual experiences. At the expiration of their term, COEC members interested in serving an additional term will be considered by SJTPO through the regular application process based on its interest in maintaining a representative, active, and productive committee.

E. Resignation and Removal.

If the member is serving on behalf of an organization and leaves the organization, such action will constitute a resignation from the COEC. If the member does not serve on behalf of an organization, but no longer lives in or works in the SJTPO region, such action will constitute resignation from the COEC. Three (3) unexcused absences during a year are grounds for removal of that member (but not the organization if they are serving on behalf of an organization).

III. CODE OF CONDUCT

The aim of the COEC is to establish a setting that allows for the respectful sharing of information and views that represent the diversity of the region for the purpose of improving SJTPO's processes, products, and programs. To ensure this, COEC members agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct below. Violation of the Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and will result in the removal of the violating member.

All COEC members shall be required to comply with the following Code of Conduct:

- The participation and contributions of each member will productively advance the mission of the COEC;
- Members shall demonstrate respect for the COEC membership, SJTPO staff, and the public;
- Members shall respects and give fair consideration to diverse and opposing viewpoints;
- Members shall not represent or attempt to represent themselves as a spokesperson, representative, or agent of SJTPO or its member jurisdictions;
- Members shall not conduct events on behalf of SJTPO without the express written permission of SJTPO. This does not extend to members who serve on behalf of an organization and engage in sharing information with organization staff or membership;
- Members shall not engage in political campaigning of any sort (at the municipal, county, state, or federal levels) on behalf of the COEC or SJTPO.

IV. OFFICERS

A. Selection and Vacancies.

The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be selected by simple majority vote of the COEC members present at its annual reorganizational meeting for a one-year term commencing on that date and ending when their successors are selected. Any vacancy in these positions shall be filled through a simple majority vote of COEC members present at the next meeting.

B. Terms.

The COEC officers shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. In the event that a COEC officer serves four (4) consecutive terms in any position, he or she will not be eligible to hold office for a period of at least one year.

V. OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chair shall preside at all COEC meetings and act as a first point of contact for SJTPO staff to discuss meeting topics or other issues of interest to the committee.

The Vice-Chair shall act in the absence of the Chair and shall perform such duties as are assigned to him or her by the Chair.

In the event both the COEC Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a temporary Chair will be selected by the COEC members to preside over that meeting.

VI. MEETINGS

A. Reorganization and Regular Meetings.

Meetings will be scheduled in advance, but there will be no regularly occurring meeting schedule. These meetings include annual reorganization, as well as meetings in support of major planning products and processes whose schedule is known in advance. Public notice for meetings will be made at the beginning of each calendar year. Other meetings

will be called on an as-needed basis, and reasonable notice of such meetings will be provided to the public.

B. Agendas.

The agenda for each meeting will be made available to all COEC members, via email or US mail (upon request) and posted to the SJTPO website prior to the meeting. SJTPO staff will be responsible for sending meeting notices to COEC members and other members of SJTPO's public outreach list.

C. Meeting Discussions and Procedure.

The order of meetings will generally follow the Agenda and shall be guided by the COEC Chair. Meetings shall be conducted in a manner that encourages open and inclusive discussion of issues. With the exception of electing officers as set forth in Article IV, COEC members will not vote on any issues, will not conduct any formal business, and not take action on any specific issues or items.

D. Meeting Attendance.

Members are required to attend and participate in meetings on a consistent basis. Three (3) unexcused absences during a year are grounds for removal of that member.

E. Meetings and Meeting Summaries Open to the Public; Limitations.

All meetings shall be open to the public. In addition, SJTPO staff will prepare a summary of the discussion that takes place at COEC meetings and will make this available to the public by posting to the SJTPO website. The COEC is not authorized to take any formal actions or to spend any public funds. Notice of meetings to the public and the meeting summaries are provided as a courtesy and pursuant to the COEC's overall mission of public inclusion. The COEC shall not be subject to the procedural and notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.

VII. AMENDMENTS

Any proposed changes to the COEC Bylaws will be forwarded for the advice and consent of the TAC and shall be submitted to the Policy Board for support and approval. A positive vote by the Policy Board shall thereby approve and make effective the SJTPO COEC Bylaws.

VIII. RELEVANT LAW

All COEC Members and Officers shall comply with all relevant Federal and State laws, regulations, and directives governing the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) member agencies under U.S. Title 23, USC 134, and Section 8 of the Federal Transit Act, as amended and Section 174 of the Clean Air Act of 1990, as amended.

IX. EFFECTIVE DATE: These Bylaws shall go into effect on March 28, 2022, as approved by Resolution 2203-09 (herein).