



Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023
To: Recipients
Re: FY 2023 Demographics Analysis
Questions and Answers

Q1. The RFP mentions that the tool will allow SJTPO to produce what-if scenarios for the RTP 2050 update in the summer of 2023. Do you expect to use the tool for regular updates and what-if scenario planning?

A1. As part of this effort, SJTPO will need an “official” set of forecasts for the RTP 2050 update. A tool that would allow staff to run “what-if” demographic scenarios is an optional component that could be utilized for an RTP 2050 update scenario planning exercise to be conducted later this calendar year, as well as beyond. Any updates are intended to be conducted internally by SJTPO staff.

Q2. Do you need forecasts for each year, every five years, or every decade?

A2. At a minimum, forecasts for 2030, 2040, 2050, and 2060 should be provided, as stipulated in the RFP. The consultant is welcome to submit forecasts for more than those years prescribed. However, only the forecast years, as noted, are required.

Q3. The quality of a forecast diminishes as the span of the forecast grows. Would you consider probability forecasts or ranges for the 2050 and 2060 forecasts?

A3. While probability ranges for the outer years would be useful and informative and could accompany any “fixed” set of numbers, the consultant should provide a single set of numbers for 2050 and 2060. One of the main applications of these demographic forecasts is input into SJTPO’s Regional Travel Demand Model, which only accepts “fixed” numbers. As such, a range of forecasts is not acceptable.

Q4. Several commercial subscription services include forecasts. Are there reasons why SJTPO is not using one of these tools?

A4. While these externally prepared forecasts may be good and useful on an aggregate scale, such as state and county, they generally do not provide a more granular scale, such as municipality and Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ), which is needed for this analysis. It should be noted that past forecasts developed for the SJTPO have incorporated the use of outside commercially prepared datasets. The consultant is welcome to use commercial subscription forecasts, as cited on page 9 of the RFP under Task 2.

Q5. Do you have an expected budget range for this effort?

A5. SJTPO’s Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) essentially serves as the budget for SJTPO, identifying funding to support planning efforts, including consultant-led technical studies. The budget for this study is included in the FY 2023 UPWP, which can be found on the SJTPO website at www.sjtpo.org/UPWP. The



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effort is identified as a two-year study, as Task 23/403 FY 2023 Demographics Analysis. The budget represents the entire two-year expected duration of the study.

It is important to note that SJTPO expects firms should address the needs and scope of work communicated in the RFP. The costs should reflect the workload and the benefit demonstrated in the proposal. Efficiencies that achieve the objectives are welcomed. Ultimately, the firm will be selected that demonstrates the best technical approach (40%), the best value given the cost (20%), with a strong team (30%), and satisfies the DBE/ESBE requirements (10%). SJTPO will negotiate with the preferred firm, and the budget can be considered further in the evaluation process.

Q6. What has been your experience with, or what is your opinion of, the projections produced by the state as an initial baseline?

www.nj.gov/labor/labormarketinformation/demographics/population-labor-projections/

A6. The demographic projections utilized for the current RTP 2050, adopted by the SJTPO Policy Board in September 2019, used the same growth rates as the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development at that time. Refer to www.sjtpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/RTP-2050-Appendix-C.-Demographics-Forecast.pdf for more details on this process. For this upcoming set of forecasts, SJTPO would defer to the professional judgment of the consultant to assess if the state's projections make sense for use as an initial baseline.

Q7. [Our firm] prepares county and regional population projections using the standard Cohort-Component Methodology. This produces population by 5-year age and sex cohort. The RFP specifies only total population at the region, county, MCD, and TAZ level. Is that a correct reading of the RFP? Does SJTPO see a benefit to the workforce and employment projections incorporating age and sex distribution?

A7. SJTPO did not request county and regional population projections by 5-year age and sex cohort. If the consultant finds value in providing this information, it should be noted in the proposal, indicating how the additional detail could be used by SJTPO in this or future work.

Q8. The RFP (Task 2, page 9) indicates that TAZ geography is based on the 2010 Census block groups. The Census geography for blocks, block groups, and tracts has changed for the 2020 Census. Does SJTPO still expect TAZ boundaries to reflect the old 2010 Census geography? Do you have updated 2020 Census geography and boundary files?

A8. SJTPO intends to make use of the TAZ boundaries based on the 2010 Census geography. Updating those boundaries is not part of the scope of work associated with this effort. SJTPO staff has not investigated the differences between the two boundary areas (2010 vs 2020). The consultant should indicate if a discrepancy between boundaries is necessary to reconcile and propose additional tasks accordingly.

SJTPO has 2020 Census geography and boundary files at the Census Tract level from the Census, which will be provided to the winning consultant team for this effort. This information is publicly available at: <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>.



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- Q9. The TAZ shapefile downloaded from SJTPO.org/model includes Gloucester County. Please confirm that Gloucester County is NOT included in the project scope.**
- A9.** The SJTPO region and the demographic forecast shall include Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties. Demographics for Gloucester County are not necessary to be developed as part of this project scope.
- Q10. Task 3 refers to the optional development of a data dashboard incorporating 2020 Census and ACS data. This raises a number of questions:**
- a. The RFP specifically limits data tools to Excel and Access. Does this limitation apply to such a data dashboard?**
 - b. Does SJTPO have access to visualization applications like Tableau, or are you open to such suggestions?**
 - c. Task 3 notes that the dashboard would be open to various groups and the public. Is there an estimate of average and maximum system user access?**
 - d. Data dashboard design, development, and user interface testing are typically part of the development process. Is SJTPO prepared to involve staff and/or stakeholders in the review and testing process?**
 - e. Is the “optional” development of the data dashboard expected to be included within the total \$70,000 budget allotment identified in Task 23/403 in the Unified Planning Work Program or as an additional expense item?**
- A10.** While the RFP notes that data tools are limited to Excel and Access, that limitation does not apply to the proposed dashboard. SJTPO has access to Tableau Reader, but this is not something that is used regularly. The consultant shall recommend a visualization tool, either within the proposal or during the technical study, in collaboration with SJTPO and other stakeholders. The consultant shall identify the initial or ongoing costs associated with any visualization tools.

SJTPO intends for the data dashboard to be posted on the SJTPO website for public use, with no login credentials required. The website has no user restrictions or maximum users. If the consultant proposes using a tool with user restrictions, they should be specifically identified within the proposal.

If the development of a data dashboard in this task is ultimately included as part of the “final” scope of work, SJTPO will be prepared to involve staff and additional stakeholders in the review and testing process. As part of the response to the RFP, the consultant should recommend the number of testers, examples of who should test the dashboard, and approximate the number of hours estimated for user review and testing. The estimate should separately estimate the number of hours attributed to consultant work and testers.

With respect to the budget, please refer to the response to Question 5. The final scope of work will be the result of negotiations after the selection of a top proposer, whereby the inclusion of the dashboard shall be considered relative to the budget and funding available to advance this consultant-led technical study. The consultant should explicitly identify the proposed cost associated with the optional data dashboard.



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Q11. Release of detailed age-sex distributions from the 2020 Census has been severely delayed and isn't expected until late Summer 2023. It will be necessary to delay work on demographic projections until those results are released. Does that present any problems for SJTPO?

A11. SJTPO did not request county and regional population projections by 5-year age and sex cohort. A delay in the availability of this data is not problematic unless the consultant demonstrates the value of providing this information.

The demographic projections are a critical deliverable that will be utilized in SJTPO's Regional Transportation Plan. To use the projections in late Spring 2024, SJTPO is requesting the initial projections by November 2023.