

Appendix F. SJTPO Project Evaluation Process



SJTPO PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

Through the development of this iteration of the RTP, RFP 2050, staff worked to review and update the Project Evaluation Process, which is used to aid in the selection of projects for inclusion in the TIP and RTP. The process revolved around two central elements, first more closely tying evaluation criteria to the Performance-Based Planning Process, RTP Goals (Planning Factors), and SJTPO Planning Initiatives. Second, a Pre-Evaluation Screening Process, which evaluated projects, not simply to passively assess the quality of the project, but actively encourage improvements to projects to better align with regional, state, and federal guidance and priorities, such as safety, Complete Streets, Environmental Justice, as well as other priorities.

It is important to note that these criteria, being adopted as a part of the this RTP process will begin use during the 2020 solicitation for the 2022 TIP. As such, projects included in RTP 2050 were selected under the old Project Selection Criteria.

Project Evaluation Submissions Process

Sponsors of proposed projects for consideration in the SJTPO TIP and RTP are asked to submit the information below. The submission items include basic project information that focuses on expanded project description narrative, as appropriate to the project, to assist in the planning-level evaluation of potential projects.

1. Project Name
2. County, Municipality
3. SRI, Route, Roadway Name
4. Structure # (if applicable)
5. Milepost of beginning and end points of every segment or intersection
6. Phases of work requested with Project Cost Estimate for each and fiscal year of request
7. AADTs for the project corridor or intersection and year of AADTs
8. Any relevant truck counts, traffic counts, traffic projections, travel time studies, HCS capacity analyses, SYNCHRO studies, if available
9. Number (and width) of lanes and shoulders – (Existing and Proposed), if applicable
10. Year of completion and/or Open to Traffic
11. NJDOT projects should also include scores from Pavement Management System, Safety Management System, Congestion Management System, and other system scores, as relevant to the project
12. General project narrative: describe existing conditions, issues, and project description with as much detail as possible. Things to consider when writing narrative include:
 - Impact on congestion, if any
 - Impact to non-vehicular modes and users without vehicular access
 - Was the impact to disadvantaged users considered and addressed? If so, how?
 - Impact on tourism, if any. Factors may include, but are not limited to promotion of regional trails, byways, and access to shore areas or other tourism amenities in the region
 - Impact on freight movement, if any



- Safety issues present and considerations given to targeted or systemic safety solutions, including rumble strips, Safety Edge, upgrades to ADA ramps or other amenities
- Bridge condition (i.e. Structurally Deficient, Functionally Obsolete, or Scour Critical), if applicable

The Project Pre-Evaluation and Evaluation Processes will be conducted by SJTPO staff and will be coordinated with the project sponsor, TAC, and Policy Board, as described below.

1. SJTPO staff will pre-scan materials received to ensure necessary items have been included, and will follow-up with sponsors, if needed
2. SJTPO staff will conduct a site visit of the project location
3. SJTPO staff will conduct Pre-Evaluation Screening of proposed projects and will reach out to sponsors with any clarifications or to discuss recommendations for improvements
4. SJTPO staff will divide scoring based on areas of expertise and conduct initial Project Evaluation Scoring
5. SJTPO staff will meet to discuss results of initial Project Evaluation Scoring and finalize Draft Scoring
6. SJTPO Executive Director will conduct an overall final internal review of Draft Scoring
7. SJTPO staff will send Draft Scoring of projects to their sponsors for review and comment, offering clarification, and provide additional information, if necessary
8. SJTPO staff will make edits to Scoring, if needed, based on information from sponsors and finalize Draft Scoring Recommendations
9. SJTPO staff will submit Draft Scoring Recommendations to the TAC for review, comment, and final recommendation to the Policy Board. If the final TAC recommendation deviates from the written Evaluation Criteria and Scoring, supporting documentation (explanation) will be included.
10. SJTPO staff will submit TAC Final Scoring Recommendations to the Policy Board for approval

Project Pre-Evaluation Screening

Before a project is advanced for prioritization using the project evaluation process, SJTPO will assess projects for the following items to address opportunities to enhance projects to better meet federal, state, and regional guidance, targets, and priorities. In addition to a desk review, this assessment will include a site visit by SJTPO staff to the project location to better understand the context of the project.

A. Substantive safety considerations are incorporated, as appropriate

All projects will be evaluated for their ability to improve safety for all users. Safety design elements should be incorporated into all projects, as is relevant to their context, including roadway characteristics, crash history, and constraints. SJTPO will aid applicants to ensure appropriate safety countermeasures are considered in all projects.

Projects in locations that appear in the top 100 on a Network Screening List for Intersections, Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridors, or Bicycle and Pedestrian Intersections; appear in the top 200 on the Network Screening List for Corridors; or appear at any ranking on the High Risk Rural Roads (HRRR) List will be evaluated with greater scrutiny to ensure that the safety issues that contribute to their crash performance are addressed in any MPO-funded projects.



B. Context appropriate design is included, as dictated by the project location

All projects will be evaluated to ensure that they adhere to context sensitive Complete Streets design principles. The [New Jersey Complete Streets Design Guide](#) will assist in this effort. The emphasis in this evaluation will be on context appropriate design, which will likely require more accommodation in urban contexts and less in rural contexts. Accommodations shall align with Environmental Justice considerations and will also need to reflect realistic constraints, such as environmental and permitting issues, right-of-way and property conflicts.

Projects located within a Complete Streets Priority Area will be evaluated with greater scrutiny to ensure that the context of the location, land use, and needs of users are addressed in any MPO-funded projects.

C. Environmental Justice

All projects will be evaluated to ensure that they adhere to federal requirements for Environmental Justice, which dictate that projects may not create burdens on any Environmental Justice population greater than burdens on Non-Environmental Justice populations. It similarly requires that any Environmental Justice populations must receive benefits equal to those of Non-Environmental Justice populations. Benefits and burdens may include, but are not limited to safety, inclusion of non-vehicular modes, environmental impacts, and impacts to quality of life. If any project does not adhere to these Environmental Justice principles, then mitigation or accommodation will need to be included to ensure that benefits are at least shared equally with these populations and that project burdens do not fall disproportionately on these populations. SJTPO will also need to evaluate the pool of projects in their totality to ensure that project improvements are not disproportionately concentrated in areas that do not benefit Environmental Justice populations.

D. Freight Considerations

As part of the SJTPO Regional Freight Plan Data Collection and Analysis technical study, SJTPO will soon perform an evaluation of the regional roadway network based on its use for local and regional freight activity. Once available, that data will be used in the pre-screening process to determine the degree to which freight activity will benefit from proposed projects and may be used to suggest alterations to improve regional freight flow.

E. Requested projects align with available funding

All project requests will be evaluated against available funds, by year and by Urbanized Area funding pool (200K+, 5-200K, <5K).

F. Air Quality Assessment

If the project is determined to be “Regionally Significant” and thus not exempt from SJTPO air quality conformity, as defined by the SJTPO Interagency Group, SJTPO shall ensure that all necessary data has been collected and assessment of air quality impact has evaluated.

Project Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

The following tables provide a description of the planning level evaluation criteria to be used by the professional judgement of SJTPO staff to develop a score that reflects the adherence of projects to federal, state, and SJTPO planning priorities and mandates. Sections 1 and 2 reflect the degree to which projects support performance-based planning targets and SJTPO planning initiatives. In addition, Sections 1 and 2 align with the RTP 2050 planning goals, which are noted under each criterion. Section 3 measures the potential impact of the project, while section 4 measures the cost-effectiveness of the project. Criteria where no data are provided and are not available to SJTPO will receive zero points.

With the exception of Pavement Condition and Bridge Condition, all criteria will be scored based on a professional qualitative assessment of the degree to which the proposed projects, as described, will advance the criteria below.



1. Contributions to Performance-Based Planning Targets **45 Points**
 (Categories adapted from performance measures established under MAP-21 and FAST Act.)

<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Scoring Instructions</i>
Traffic Congestion <i>(RTP Goal 2: Mitigate Traffic Congestion and promote efficient system operation)</i>	0-15	To what degree will the project improve traffic congestion?
Pavement Condition <i>(RTP Goal 3: Restore, Preserve, and Maintain the existing transportation system)</i>	0-15	<p>If the project includes repaving in the scope, what is the Surface Distress Index (SDI) from the SJTPO Pavement Management System or International Roughness Index (IRI) based on the NJDOT IRI Guidelines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJTPO SDI 0–1 (Very Poor) or NJ IRI Deficient = 15 points • SJTPO SDI > 1–2 (Poor) or NJ IRI Fair = 12 points • SJTPO SDI > 2–3 (Fair) = 5 points • SJTPO SDI > 3–4 (Good) or NJ IRI Good = 2 points • SJTPO SDI > 4–5 (Very Good) or NJ IRI Excellent or no data = 0 points <p>The NJ IRI Guidelines are scored as Excellent, Good, Fair, and Deficient based on both IRI score as well as three categories of roadways, including: 1.) Interstate Freeways NHS Highways, 2.) Non-NHS Highways, and 3.) Other County Highways. For roadways that have an SJTPO SDI score, those numbers will serve as the primary indicator of condition.</p>
Bridge Condition <i>(RTP Goal 3: Restore, Preserve, and Maintain the existing transportation system)</i>	0,5,10,15	<p>Bridge projects will be scored as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridges deemed “Structurally Deficient” will receive 15 points • Bridges deemed “Functionally Obsolete” or “Scour Critical” will receive 10 points • Projects that preserve or restore all other bridges will receive 5 points • All other projects will receive 0 points
Freight Movement <i>(RTP Goal 4: Support the Regional Economy)</i>	0-15	To what degree will the project improve the movement of freight on the regional network?
Fatalities and Serious Injuries <i>(RTP Goal 7: Improve Transportation Safety)</i>	0-15	<p>To what degree will the project improve safety for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians through the advancement of substantive safety improvements?</p> <p>Projects that only improve driver safety can receive no more than 10 points.</p>
On-Road Mobile Source Emissions <i>(RTP Goal 9: Protect and enhance the Environment and complement land use planning)</i>	0-15	To what degree will the project reduce or mitigate on-road mobile source emissions?
SECTION 1 TOTAL	0-45	Sum of scores for the highest three Evaluation Criteria in this category.



2. Advances Emphasis Areas from SJTPO Planning Initiatives 25 Points

<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Scoring Instructions</i>
<p>Environmental Justice <i>(RTP Goal 1: Promote Accessibility and Mobility for the movement of People and Goods)</i></p> <p><i>Note: “Moderate” and “Significant” population thresholds, based on regional average and 1.5 standard deviations from the regional average, respectively, are as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Households in Poverty: 14.2%; 33.2%</i> • <i>Minority Population (Racial minority and Hispanic): 39.2%; 84.8%</i> • <i>Zero Vehicle Households: 11.2%; 32.6%</i> 	0-5	<p>As described in Section C of the Project Pre-Evaluation Screening, all projects must mitigate or eliminate any disproportionate burdens imposed by a project and must provide equal benefits to Environmental Justice populations in order to advance.</p> <p>What percentage of population within 1 mile of project are minority or live in poverty (as reported by USEPA EJSCREEN tool ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper), and are in zero vehicle households (as calculated by the average of relevant US Census Bureau block group data) AND to what degree does the project benefit these populations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-5 points: Populations above the “Significant” threshold for Poverty OR Minority OR Zero Vehicle Households, while remaining above the “Moderate” threshold for all three. • 0-4 points: Populations above the “Moderate” threshold for Poverty AND Minority AND Zero Vehicle Households. • 0-3 points: Populations above the “Moderate” threshold for any two of the following: Poverty OR Minority OR Zero Vehicle Households. • 0-2 points: Populations above the “Moderate” threshold for Poverty OR Minority OR Zero Vehicle Households. • 0-1 point: Populations above zero (0) for Poverty OR Minority AND Zero Vehicle Households. • 0 points: No populations for Poverty, Minority, OR Zero Vehicle Households.
<p>Flood Zones <i>(RTP Goal 5: Improve the Resiliency and Reliability of the transportation infrastructure, particularly along the Atlantic and Delaware Bay shorelines)</i></p>	0-5	<p>Projects within the most recent FEMA 1 Percent (100-year) floodplain will be evaluated for their ability to improve the performance of that facility in flood conditions and receive a score of 0-5 points.</p> <p>Projects within the most recent FEMA 0.2 Percent (500-year) floodplain will be similarly evaluated and receive a score of 0-2 points.</p> <p>More information about these floodplains is available at www.fema.gov/flood-zones.</p>
<p>Tourism <i>(RTP Goal 6: Increase and enhance opportunities for Travel and Tourism)</i></p>	0-5	<p>Projects will be evaluated for their ability to enhance tourism in the region and will receive a score of 0-5 points. Factors may include, but are not limited to promotion of regional trails, byways, and access to shore areas or other tourism amenities in the region.</p>
<p>Complete Streets / Context Appropriate Design <i>(RTP Goal 8: Enhance the Integration and Connectivity of the transportation system)</i></p>	0-5	<p>Projects located within a Complete Streets Priority Area will be evaluated for their meaningful incorporation of Complete Streets elements and will receive a score of 0-5 points.</p>



		Projects not in these areas will be similarly evaluated and receive a score of 0-3 points.
Evacuation Routes <i>(RTP Goal 10: Improve Security)</i>	0-5	Projects on roadways designated as Evacuation Routes will be evaluated for their ability to improve evacuation and receive a score of 0-5 points. Projects on roadways designated as Secondary Evacuation Routes will be evaluated for their ability to improve evacuation and receive a score of 0-3 points.
SECTION 2 TOTAL	0-25	Sum of scores for all five Evaluation Criteria in this category.

3. Impact of Project 10 Points

<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Scoring Instructions</i>
Weighted Length of Project	1-5	<p>The weighted length of project will be calculated using the following formula:</p> $\left(\frac{\text{Number of lanes}}{2} + \frac{\text{number of shoulders}}{4} \right) \times \frac{\text{centerline}}{\text{miles}} = \frac{\text{weighted length}}{\text{of project}}$ <p>Shoulder for the purposes of assessing project length will only include shoulder of 5 feet in width or greater as such a facility has the potential to serve as a bicycle facility.</p> <p>The weighted length of project will be scored as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weighted project length of greater than 4 miles will receive 5 points • Weighted project length of between 0.5 and 4 miles will receive 3 points • Weighted project length of less than 0.5 miles will receive 1 point • Intersection projects will receive 2 points for one intersection and receive 1 additional point for each intersection, up to 5 points
Volume of Corridor	1-5	<p>Bi-directional Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes of the project corridor will be scored as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corridor AADT of greater than 8,000 vehicles per day will receive 5 points • Corridor AADT between 5,000 and 7,999 vehicles per day will receive 4 points • Corridor AADT between 2,000 and 4,999 vehicles per day will receive 3 points • Corridor AADT between 500 and 1,999 vehicles per day will receive 2 points • Corridor AADT of less than 500 vehicles per day will receive 1 point <p>If a project corridor has multiple traffic volumes associated with different segment, SJTPO will work to create an average volume for the corridor.</p>
SECTION 3 TOTAL	0-10	Sum of scores for both Evaluation Criteria in this category.



SUBTOTAL SCORE (SECTIONS 1-3) 80 Points

<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Scoring Instructions</i>
SUBTOTAL SCORE	0-80	Sum of Scores from Sections 1-3

4. Cost effectiveness 20 Points

<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Scoring Instructions</i>
SECTION 4 TOTAL	0-20	<p><u>A benefit/cost ratio will be calculated, as follows:</u></p> $\frac{\text{Subtotal Score (Sections 1-3)}}{\text{Cost of Project (in \$100Ks)}}$ <p>Benefit/cost ratio will be translated to a score by assigning 20 points to the highest ratio, 0 points to the lowest, and proportionately assigning all other scores on that scale, to the nearest whole number.</p>

TOTAL SCORE 100 Points

<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Scoring Instructions</i>
TOTAL SCORE	0-100	Sum of Scores from Sections 1-4.