



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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IN REPLY REFER TO:
TRO-2
HDA-NJ

December 15, 2025

Mr. Francis O'Connor
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 600
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0600

Re: Fiscal Years 2026-2029 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Approval and Federal Planning Finding

Dear Commissioner O'Connor:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) reviewed the New Jersey Department of Transportation's (NJDOT) Fiscal Years (FY) 2026 – 2029 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), transmitted on October 9, 2025, for federal approval in accordance with 23 CFR 450 Subpart A, B and C, as well as 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, as amended by Public Law 117-58 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), enacted as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

In conjunction with the STIP approval, the FHWA and FTA conduct a Federal Planning Finding (FPF), which is a formal action taken to ensure that the STIP is developed according to statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes consistent with statutory and regulatory planning provisions outlined in Title 23 and Title 49. The FPF serves as an opportunity to highlight areas that need improvement in statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes, and is a prerequisite to FHWA and FTA approval of the STIP.

Over the last several months, we have reviewed the statewide and metropolitan planning processes in detail, and we are enclosing the FPF containing our observations. Based on our review, FHWA and FTA find that the New Jersey FY 2026-2029 STIP, including the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) incorporated into the STIP by reference, meets the transportation planning requirements. Thus, we are approving the STIP effective December 15, 2025, with the understanding that an eligibility determination of individual projects for funding will be met, and all administrative and statutory requirements will be satisfied.

Furthermore, in concurrence with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, we find that conformity has been demonstrated for the FY 2026-2029 New Jersey STIP and LRTPs for all non-attainment and maintenance areas of the state in accordance with the Clean Air Act (CAA). These findings are consistent with New Jersey's CAA-based State Implementation Plan, adequately address requirements in accordance with the Federal Conformity Rule and ensure general compliance with the CAA as well as all subsequent CAA amendments.

We look forward to working with you and your staff in our efforts to carry out the statewide and metropolitan planning processes in an effective manner.

If you have any questions, please contact either Sutapa Bandyopadhyay at (609) 637-4230 or James Goveia at (212) 668-2325.

Sincerely,

Camille Otto
Acting Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
New Jersey Division

Michael Culotta
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
Region 2

cc:

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**FHWA New Jersey Division and FTA Region 2
PLANNING FINDING
and approval of the
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FFY 2026 – 2029 STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Introduction

In order to approve New Jersey Department of Transportation's (NJDOT) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), including the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) contained by reference or directly in the STIP, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must make a finding that the STIP and TIPs are based on a transportation planning process that meets the requirements of 23 U.S.C. § 134 and 135, 49 U.S.C. § 5303 and 5304, and 23 CFR 450 and that TIPs are consistent with the Metropolitan Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) produced by the comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing planning process carried out by the MPOs involving the State, and the public transit operator(s).

The FPF is based on the self-certification statements submitted by NJDOT and the MPOs under 23 CFR 450.220 and 23 CFR 450.336. It is also based upon the review of supporting documentation, routine FHWA and FTA involvement in the statewide and metropolitan planning process, public involvement, and a fiscal constraint determination.

This FPF includes five recommendations. Recommendations are items that generally meet the statutory and regulatory requirements but represent opportunities to improve the transportation planning process. FHWA and FTA will continue to work with NJDOT and other relevant partner planning agencies on a regular basis to monitor progress and provide technical guidance and support to address the recommendations. This assistance may include the delivery of training and/or educational opportunities for the state.

This documentation supports the planning finding for NJDOT's FY 2026 – 2029 STIP and the incorporated TIPs for the following MPOs: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, and South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization.

FINDING	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Recommendation	Local Safety Program (LSP)	NJDOT should work to update its Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Manual to reflect and articulate its Local Safety Program (LSP). Updates should reflect how LSP MPO line items are identified and reevaluated; how NJDOT will handle requests to exceed line items, including how local projects are evaluated when competing against state projects; the role of the Technical Review Committee (TRC) in selecting projects and particularly the role of the Bureau of Safety Improvement Programs (BSIP) given their oversight of HSIP; more clearly define what constitutes a potentially eligible project location; articulate how BSIP will ensure safety focus through project phases; and to ensure compliance with recent executive orders.
Recommendation	Public Participation Plan/Process	NJDOT should consider updating the 2004 Public Involvement Action Plan to account for innovative approaches including Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) as showcased through the Every Day Counts (EDC) initiative. Additionally, it should clearly document the process for seeking out and considering the needs of the disadvantaged communities, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.
Recommendation	Coordination with Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMA)	NJDOT should document how it considers the concerns of FLMAs that have jurisdiction over land within the boundaries of the State (23 CFR 450.208(a)(3)). MPOs must appropriately involve FLMAs in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP (23 CFR 450.316(d)), this could be incorporated into MPO Public Involvement Plans and the NJDOT Public Involvement Action Plan.
Recommendations	CFR 450.218(b) Development and content of the statewide transportation improvement program	Currently, the STIP lists the MPO projects in Section V. However, these projects only show STBGP suballocated funds and are not as shown in the approved MPO TIPs. The projects are mixed into the NJDOT project descriptions. The State shall include each metropolitan TIP without change in the STIP, directly or by reference, after

		<p>approval of the TIP by the MPO. This should be conveyed very clearly in the STIP prior to the next approval.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>Financial Planning and Fiscal Constraint</p>	<p>The STIP and TIPs must be fiscally constrained and should include a financial plan that “demonstrates how the approved STIP can be implemented, indicates resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be available to carry out the STIP, and recommends any additional financing strategies for needed projects and programs” (23 CFR Part 450.218 and 23 CFR Part 450.326). We recommend that the STIP includes additional financing strategies for needed projects and programs given the current fiscal constraints projected to the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund.</p>

Conclusion

Based on our review, the FHWA and FTA find that the STIP meets the requirements of U.S.C. 134, 135; 49 U.S.C. 5303-5305; 23 CFR part 450 and 500, and 49 CFR part 613. FHWA and FTA offer five recommendations for improvement to support the State and MPO planning processes as well as the development of the STIP.