



INVOLVEMENT PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADOPTED May 28, 2024



South Jersey
Transportation
Planning Organization

www.sjtpo.org

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English

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Arabic

للحصول على مساعدة لغوية متعلقة SJTPO تنبيه: إذا كنت ترغب في طلب هذه النشرة بلغة غير الإنجليزية أو ترغب في التواصل مع أو الاتصال على الرقم (856) 794-1941 languageaccess@sjtpo.org بجهودنا، يرجى إرسال بريد إلكتروني إلى

Bengali

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Gujarati

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Haitian Creole

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Hindi

यदि आप अंग्रेज़ी के सिवाए किसी अन्य भाषा में इस प्रकाशन का अनुरोध करना चाहते हैं या हमारे प्रयासों से संबंधित भाषा सहायता के लिए SJTPO से संपर्क करना चाहते हैं, तो कृपया languageaccess@sjtpo.org को मेल करें या (856) 794-1941 पर कॉल करें।

Korean

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Nepali

Itपाई यो प्रकाशन अङ्ग्रेजी बाहेकका भाषामा प्राप्त गर्न चाहनुहुन्छ वा हाम्रो अभियानसँग सम्बन्धित भाषिक सहायता प्राप्त गर्न SJTPO लाई सम्पर्क गर्न चाहनुहुन्छ भने, कृपया languageaccess@sjtpo.org मा इमेल गर्नुहोस् वा (856) 794-1941 मा फोन गर्नुहोस्।

Portuguese

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Punjabi

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Simplified Chinese

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Spanish

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Traditional Chinese

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Urdu

توجہ دیں: اگر آپ اس اشاعت کی درخواست انگریزی کے علاوہ کسی اور زبان میں کرنا چاہتے/چاہتی ہیں یا ہماری کوششوں پر ای میل languageaccess@sjtpo.org سے رابطہ کرنا چاہتے/چاہتی ہیں تو، براہ کرم SJTPO سے متعلق لسانی اعانت کے لیے کریں یا (856) 794-1941 پر کال کریں۔

Vientamese

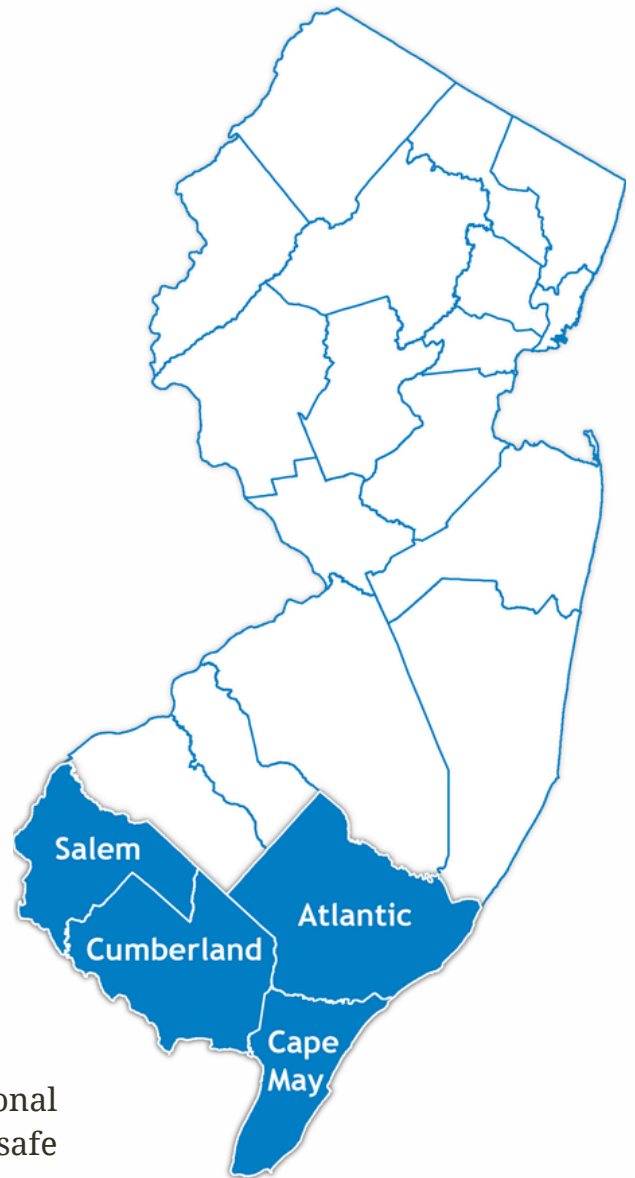
Nếu quý vị muốn yêu cầu ấn phẩm này bằng ngôn ngữ ngoài tiếng Anh hoặc muốn liên hệ với SJTPO để được hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ liên quan đến nỗ lực của chúng tôi, xin vui lòng gửi email đến languageaccess@sjtpo.org hoặc gọi (856) 794-1941.



South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization

WWW.SJTPO.ORG

SJTPO is the federally recognized Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the southern New Jersey region, serving Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem Counties. Under federal law, the formation of an MPO is required for any urbanized area (UZA) with a population greater than 50,000, permitting the MPO to carry out transportation planning and decision-making for the UZA(s). Formed in 1993, SJTPO replaced three smaller existing MPOs and incorporated areas not previously served. The formation provided a stronger regional approach to solving transportation problems and brought new opportunities to southern New Jersey. SJTPO is vital to the region, as the MPO serves as a technical resource, provides access to funding, and works to provide a regional approach to address transportation planning and engineering issues.



Four counties, one mission:

to create a transportation system, based on regional collaboration that moves people and goods in a safe and efficient manner, inclusive of all modes and users.

Title VI Compliance / SJTPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related nondiscrimination mandates in all programs and activities. SJTPO's website, www.sjtpo.org, may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats upon request. SJTPO's public meetings are always held in ADA-accessible facilities and, whenever possible, in transit-accessible locations. SJTPO will work to accommodate all reasonable requests for translation, interpretation, or auxiliary services. Please submit requests at least seven days before public meetings so we can secure the services. Other translation requests, such as those for larger documents, will be provided as quickly as possible and may take up to three weeks. Requests may be made by emailing languageaccess@sjtpo.org or calling (856) 794-1941. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by SJTPO under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with SJTPO's Title VI Compliance Manager and/or the appropriate state or federal agency within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information on the SJTPO Title VI program or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, please visit www.sjtpo.org/Title-VI, call (856) 794-1941, or email TitleVI@sjtpo.org.

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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. 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.

SJTPO Structure

The governing body of SJTPO is the Policy Board. It consists of eleven voting members, including county and municipal officials and representatives from the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), and the South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA). The Policy Board is informed by recommendations of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC is a thirteen-member committee comprised of staff of planning and engineering experts in the region.

The Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) enhances the scope of SJTPO’s public outreach and ensures that decision-making processes are based on diverse, inclusive, and equity-based information and viewpoints. To the greatest extent possible, members reflect the racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, age, geographic, ability, and economic diversity of the four-county region. Members come together at various times throughout the year to discuss critical transportation-related issues and share information through their networks.

The SJTPO Organizational Chart identifies the organization of staff members. Revisions to the Organizational Chart are subject to the review and approval of the TAC and Policy Board. The chart below is displayed for illustrative purposes only.



2. PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

SJTPO actively seeks to provide a transparent process to ensure that plans and programs include the public to the greatest, reasonable degree. 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 major plans and programs. The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) documents the process SJTPO follows in accomplishing its public involvement objectives, which meet and exceed federal guidance.

3. SERVING THE PUBLIC: SJTPO’S RESPONSIBILITIES

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

SJTPO’s public involvement process complies with federal requirements and goals, as highlighted below.

- Provide adequate and timely notice of public participation activities, public review, and comment on key decisions.
- Seek out and consider the needs of the people traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system, including low-income and minority households.
- Hold public meetings at convenient times and locations that are accessible to all people.
- Use visualization techniques to further explain the planning process.
- Provide timely and reasonable access to information about transportation planning.
- Provide information in electronic formats for accessibility and sustainability purposes.
- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input through a two-way communicative process.
- Comply with federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and various Executive Orders.
- Coordinate with the state and local transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes.
- Coordinate with Federal and Non-federal Tribal Nations.

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

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, listed below, help shape the involvement process and make its implementation more successful.

- 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
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) or Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021
- 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”
- Executive Order 13985, “Advancing Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government”

4. OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH SJTPO

There are a variety of strategies SJTPO utilizes to enhance public involvement. The strategies used help disseminate information in digital and print form with the intent of making information accessible.

Where to Find Information

Listed below are the ways the public can be involved and influence transportation decisions.

SJTPO Website (www.sjtpo.org)

SJTPO’s website can be translated into a multitude of languages. Information on the website includes an overview of the transportation planning process, information about funding programs, core regional planning documents, a document library, planning studies, and other

technical information. Opportunities for public involvement can be found on the Public Comment webpage (www.sjtpo.org/Comment).

E-list (Electronic Mailing List)

SJTPO has two e-lists – the Requests for Proposals e-list and the General Information e-list. The RFP e-list is primarily of interest to consultants interested in being informed of when SJTPO releases Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or other project-related work opportunities. The General Information e-list is primarily of interest to members of the public and other interested organizations who want to be informed of public meetings and comment opportunities, special events, the release of SJTPO’s *On-the-Go* bi-monthly newsletter (www.sjtpo.org/News), career opportunities, among other happenings. Approximately three to four emails are sent to the General Information e-list subscribers monthly.

To subscribe to SJTPO’s RFP and/or General Information lists, individuals can locate the “Join Our Mailing List” at the bottom of every SJTPO website webpage (www.sjtpo.org). The e-lists are free to join, and subscribers can unsubscribe anytime.

Social Media

SJTPO maintains social media platforms as an additional method to reach the public and highlight key activities and initiatives. Any comment SJTPO receives via social media that adheres to the SJTPO “[Social Media Policy](#)” will be treated equal to any other comment.



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 (www.sjtpo.org/News)

On the Go is an electronic publication. 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. Archived and current issues are made available on the News (*On the Go*) webpage and can be translated by Google Translation.

Newspapers

SJTPO utilizes local newspapers to publicize meetings, events, and projects and programs. The two local newspapers that send physical newspapers are The Press of Atlantic City and The Daily Journal. Specific days of publication are considered when advertisements are made in the

respective newspapers. Special meetings are publicized at least seven days prior to each meeting date, as needed.

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 SJTPO available for viewing on the SJTPO website (www.sjtpo.org) and at the SJTPO office. SJTPO also makes certain documents available for free in-library reviewing at select libraries. These documents include the PIP, RTP, TIP, UPWP, Access for All Plan, CMP, LEP Plan, Title VI Implementation Plan, and Transportation Conformity. To be mindful of library staff resources and limited space, document appendices (unless necessary), executive summaries, and amendments, if applicable, will not be printed and transmitted to the libraries. Language is included in the Table of Contents, informing readers that these materials can be accessed on the plan-specific webpages.

If necessary, noncolor copies may be requested. Fees may apply. Interested parties can make a request via an [online form](#), or by calling (856) 794-1941.

County	Participating Library
Atlantic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atlantic County Library – Mays Landing Branch; Reference Department Richard E. Bjork Library at Stockton University; Government Documents
Cape May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cape May County Library; Reference Department
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

Attend Public Meetings

Meetings are meant to provide information and a formal setting for comments to be received. SJTPO works to hold meetings at centralized locations when held in-person rather than virtual and at convenient times. Other accommodations, such as language interpreters, will be provided to the greatest feasible degree when requested at least seven days prior to a public meeting.

SJTPO utilizes GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar virtual conferencing platforms.

In January of each year, a schedule of Policy Board meetings for the year ahead is placed in local newspapers. Meeting dates are also posted on the SJTPO’s Calendar (www.sjtpo.org/Calendar). As the year progresses and meetings approach, reminders are posted on SJTPO’s website, sent to e-list subscribers, and posted on social media.

Policy Board Meetings (www.sjtpo.org/Board)

Policy Board meetings are open to the public. Members of the public are given the opportunity to comment at the start of the meeting. Each commenter is allotted three minutes to speak. Agendas are distributed at least twelve days prior to each meeting through the above channels. Agendas and meeting minutes are available on the Policy Board webpage.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings (www.sjtpo.org/TAC)

TAC meetings are open to the public. Members of the public are given the opportunity to comment on agenda items at the start of the meeting. Each commenter is allotted three minutes to speak. Agendas are available on the SJTPO website at least twelve days prior to each meeting. Meeting notices, agenda packets, and minutes are available on the TAC webpage.

Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) Meetings (www.sjtpo.org/COEC)

COEC meetings are open to the public. Meetings will be scheduled in advance, but there will be no regularly occurring meeting schedule. At the beginning of each calendar year, an anticipated schedule of COEC meetings in support of major planning products and processes will be available on the COEC webpage. Other meetings will be called on an as-needed basis, with public notice made at least 12 days prior to a meeting date.

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 and comment on transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian access, freight, or other transportation matters in a greater capacity using presentations, displays, posters, and other informational materials. 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

SJTPO welcomes public input at any time. Members of the public can readily contact SJTPO by calling the office (856-794-1941), filling out the General Comment form on the Public Comment webpage (www.sjtpo.org/Comment), emailing info@sjtpo.org, faxing (856) 794-2549, direct messaging SJTPO via its social media accounts, and by US Mail. Additionally, the following are additional ways in which the public can engage with SJTPO and participate in the transportation planning process.

Request a Safety Program (www.sjtpo.org/Education)

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. Each program is intended to educate roadway users of the many dangers they could encounter on roadways and to impart easy to remember methods to improve safety.

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. SJTPO suggests the public attend meetings and events hosted by county transportation committees or municipal planning boards.

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 the participation of the groups previously mentioned.

Title VI (www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI)

[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 is required to maintain a Title VI Plan, available on the Title VI webpage. The webpage provides background on Title VI, SJTPO's policy statement, complaint procedure and form, and USDOT Assurances.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (www.sjtpo.org/LEP)

[Executive Order 13166](#), "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," relates to public engagement of LEP individuals. An LEP person does not speak English as his/her/their primary language and 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. 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. Further, if translation or interpretation is necessary for a member of the public to participate in a public meeting, public event, or any other public involvement opportunity, SJTPO has a translation and interpretation firm under contract. SJTPO will work to accommodate all reasonable requests for

translation, interpretation, or auxiliary services but encourages requests to be made at least seven days before public meetings to ensure that SJTPO can secure requested services. Other translation requests, such as those associated with larger documents, will be provided as quickly as possible and could take up to three weeks. For more information, see the Accessibility Brochure on the Public Involvement Plan webpage (www.sjtpo.org/PIP).

Environmental Justice (EJ) (www.sjtpo.org/EJ)

Environmental Justice is “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 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.

SJTPO’s EJ Report evaluates TIP projects for overlap into EJ areas and broadly discusses other planning products. At the core of this effort is the recognition of every person's right to have a safe, accessible, affordable, and healthy transportation system in his/her community. Further, a focus was made on researching the impact of projects, discussing why some communities have been unable to take advantage of federal transportation funding, and examining the associated equity concerns.

Strategies to Serve Under-Represented Populations

The Title VI Implementation Plan, LEP Plan, and EJ Report detail the strategies 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

SJTPO uses regional, county, municipal, and Census Block Group data to identify Title VI, LEP, and EJ populations. The information collected helps SJTPO and its subregional partners target outreach needs to under-represented groups.

Engagement of Under-Represented Populations using Targeted Strategies

SJTPO is committed to reducing barriers to public engagement for under-represented groups. Listed below are the under-represented groups and engagement methods SJTPO uses or plans to use.

To ensure greater accessibility to the non-English speaking public, SJTPO has secured a firm that is able to provide translation and interpretation services on an on-call basis. To help make the public aware of these services, an Accessibility Brochure was created.

Children and Teens

SJTPO's Traffic Safety Specialists offer safety education programs to elementary, middle school, and high school students. The programs are fun, accessible, designed for the appropriate age group, and bring awareness to the many risks relative to children and teens on area roadways and to teach them simple ways to improve safety. 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 due to inexperience, school-life balance, and limited opportunities. Engagement opportunities should be social, brief, and held in locations young adults frequent.

The SJTPO region is home to Stockton University, located in Atlantic County, which offers a Sustainability Program. SJTPO aims to establish a relationship with professors and students of the program. Additionally, though outside of SJTPO's region, Rowan University in Gloucester County, offers degrees in Planning and Engineering. 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 but may be under-represented in planning efforts for a multitude of reasons, such as mobility challenges, transportation conflicts, among other reasons. If in-person events are to be held, scheduling the events during daylight hours and in convenient, ADA-accessible venues is most appropriate.

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities may experience any number of cognitive or physical disabilities, making the range of possible needs broad.

Outreach to individuals with disabilities should be compliant with ADA requirements. Public meetings and events hosted by SJTPO are always held in ADA-accessible locations. Furthermore, for website management and support, SJTPO works with a developer that prioritizes accessibility for all people.

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.

SJTPO is committed to ensuring events and publications are accessible and available to all individuals in the region. When public meetings and event notices are distributed, SJTPO includes information on requesting accommodations, such as translation services. SJTPO will work to

accommodate all reasonable requests for translation, interpretation, or auxiliary services but encourages requests to be made at least seven days before public meetings to ensure that SJTPO can secure requested services. Other translation requests, such as those associated with larger documents, will be provided as quickly as possible and could take up to three weeks. SJTPO's website (www.sjtpo.org) can be translated into 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. 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, coordinated with local groups and organizations, and consider family needs.

Low-Income Residents

Many low-income people within the SJTPO region balance multiple jobs and face shelter, food, and transportation insecurities. 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. Conducting outreach in partnership with Family Success Centers, Community Centers, and other familiar local organizations is advised.

The Use of Federal Funds for Public Involvement Activities

Based on [Methods to Improve and Sustain Outreach Equity in the SJTPO Region](#), it is considered a generally accepted best practice to be able to provide modest incentives to attract participation at in-person public meetings. These incentives may include:

- food, in recognition of the limited and precious time of participants and acknowledging the fact that most outreach activities conflict with mealtimes;
- childcare, to allow parents to participate without having to make difficult decisions regarding childcare and to allow parents to participate with reduced stress; and
- small stipends, in recognition of the limited and precious time of participants and to accommodate the costs associated with transportation to attend in-person events.

SJTPO utilizes federal funds for all its activities as a federally designated organization. The [“Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making,”](#) states, “Public involvement and participation activities are eligible expenses for most USDOT programs, including both formula and discretionary grant programs.” The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [§ 200.432 Conferences](#), [§ 200.438 Entertainment Costs](#), and [§ 200.75 Participation Support Cost](#) outline the appropriate awarding of funds for incentive-based purchases. In general, federal funds may be used for public involvement activities. However, the public involvement activities must be “necessary” and “reasonable.”

SJTPO will evaluate the necessity and reasonableness of incentivizing public outreach activities on a case-by-case basis. As appropriate, documentation will be made as part of the internal working files for each project or public outreach effort. Incentives may be offered for public involvement activities whose primary purpose is to disseminate technical information “beyond” the MPO Board/Committee.

Below are illustrative examples of when SJTPO could consider documenting the use of federal funds to incentivize public outreach activities.

Providing Food at Public Meetings

SJTPO aims to hold public meetings outside of typical workday hours to maximize access. In recognition of the limited and precious time of participants and acknowledging that most public involvement activities conflict with typical dinner-time hours, SJTPO staff may determine it appropriate to provide light refreshments at public meetings. To provide light refreshments, SJTPO staff must document that the refreshments are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the purpose of the public meeting.

Providing Childcare Services at Public Meetings

An often-underrepresented group at public meetings is parents/guardians of young children. To allow parents/guardians to participate without making difficult childcare decisions and to enable parents/guardians to participate with reduced stress, SJTPO staff may determine it appropriate to offer childcare services during public meetings. Childcare services may include making SJTPO staff members available to help engage the children in activities (i.e., coloring and drawing) while the parents/guardians participate in the meetings. To provide childcare services, SJTPO staff must document that the childcare is necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the purpose of the public meeting.

Providing Financial Incentives or Reimbursement for Public Involvement Activities

To show recognition of the meaningful value participants provide and to accommodate the costs associated with transportation to attend public meetings, staff may determine it appropriate to offer financial incentives or reimbursement for public involvement. To provide financial incentives or reimbursement, SJTPO staff must document that the financial incentives or reimbursement are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the purpose of the public involvement activities.

Translation of Vital Documents

SJTPO provides Spanish translations (or other languages upon request) of the organization’s “vital documents,” which are documents that help residents and stakeholders understand SJTPO’s purpose and importance in the four-county region, namely:

- **Access for All Transit Plan Executive Summary:** www.sitpo.org/AccessForAll

- Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Executive Summary: www.sjtpo.org/RTP
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Executive Summary: www.sjtpo.org/TIP
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Executive Summary: www.sjtpo.org/UPWP
- Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Executive Summary: www.sjtpo.org/PIP
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan: www.sjtpo.org/LEP
- Environmental Justice (EJ) Report Executive Summary: www.sjtpo.org/EJ
- The Public Engagement Guide to Transportation Planning in South Jersey: www.sjtpo.org/EngagementGuide.
- Title VI Materials: www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI

In SJTPO's region, there are five languages or language groups are spoken by at least 1,000 LEP persons each. 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. 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
- Transit-Accessible Meetings
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Provisions
- Online Engagement Opportunities
- Pop-up/Partnering Events

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

SJTPO is required to develop a Title VI Implementation Plan, which ensures SJTPO's commitment to prevent discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, age, ancestry, nationality, gender, disability, religion, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, income level, and the ability to read, write, or Speak English in any of its plans and programs. The Title VI Implementation Plan also provides information on implementing a full complaint procedure.

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 and Public Meetings

An 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. Most require public meetings when they are substantively revised, except for the UPWP and CMP.

- **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**, www.sjtpo.org/RTP: 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 years.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**, www.sjtpo.org/TIP: 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)**, www.sjtpo.org/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**, www.sjtpo.org/AccessForAll: updated every five 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)**, www.sjtpo.org/CMP: 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)**, www.sjtpo.org/LEP: 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**, www.sjtpo.org/TitleVI: a 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**, www.sjtpo.org/Air-Quality: a document that demonstrates transportation conformity of the TIP and RTP with the 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
- **Public Involvement Plan (PIP)**, www.sjtpo.org/PIP: 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. A comment period of **at least 45 days** is held for the PIP.

If public comments cause any of the core documents to greatly differ (i.e., addition or removal of section or updates to federal regulations) 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.

Additional Information About the RTP and TIP

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 years. Draft documents will be made available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.

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 years. Draft documents will be made available for at least 30 days of public comment, and at least one public meeting will be held.

The RTP is the guiding document for the TIP, and all federally funded projects in the TIP must be included in the RTP. Each project or project phase included in the TIP is required to be consistent with the approved RTP.¹ To maintain consistency between both documents, the RTP must first be revised whenever a revision to the TIP is required.

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.

Major Amendment

A Major Amendment in the TIP, which must be approved by the SJTPO Policy Board, FHWA, and the FTA, occurs when any TIP/ STIP action affects the air quality conformity and requires a new

¹ As specified in 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450.306 (i).

regional conformity determination. The MPO and Interagency Consultation Group (ICG) group determines if the change or addition of the project would affect the following as per the Transportation Conformity Rule.

- Addition of a new project that is non-exempt from conformity analysis unless it is deemed Not Regionally Significant (NRS) or subject to a project-level analysis that would not change the conformity finding;
- Changes the project scope so that it becomes non-exempt from conformity analysis; and
- Changes the project completion date and impacts the conformity analysis year.

Public Outreach Procedures for a Major Amendment:

Public outreach for a Major Amendment will include the following steps:

- Institute a 30-day public comment period on the amendment during which the public can submit written comments.
- Place notification of the public comment period in the legal section of the regional newspapers. Notification will include information on the public comment period, how to access relevant information on the SJTPO website, how to submit comments and any additional information, as necessary.
- Place notification of the public comment period on the SJTPO website with an option for submitting comments via e-mail.
- Provide similar notification to interest groups (i.e., COEC, tribal nations) in the region as appropriate.
- Distribute the document(s) under consideration to the SJTPO's designated libraries.
- A summary of oral and written comments received during the above procedures shall be provided, with responses and staff summaries, in the final Policy Board-approved document(s).
- 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).

Minor Amendment

A Minor Amendment, which also must be approved by the SJTPO Policy Board, FHWA, and the FTA, occurs when a change to the TIP does not affect air quality conformity and does not require a new regional conformity determination. This includes the following circumstances:

- Addition of a new project or program that uses federal funds or available prior year balances;
- Deletion of a project or program that uses federal funds in its entirety;
- Addition of a development phase to a project that results in moving all major phases of work out of the TIP;

- Change of funding source for a project in the TIP from the use of non-federal funds to the use of federal funds;
- Exchange of FHWA or FTA funds for a commensurate amount of non-federal funding between the NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT; or
- Cost increase of more than \$15,000,000 to any phase of work of a project.

Public Outreach Procedures for a Minor Amendment:

- A proposed minor Amendment will be listed on the agenda for meetings of the SJTPO Policy Board, which are open to the public and advertised at the start of the year in the local newspapers. The Policy Board meeting agendas and supporting documentation will be made available for public review twelve days prior to the meeting dates on the SJTPO website, and notification of online availability will be sent to the SJTPO's e-list.
- At meetings of the SJTPO Policy Board, the public will be provided with an opportunity to comment on proposed minor TIP Amendments prior to action being taken by the Board.

Modification

A Modification refers to any other smaller revision that does not affect conformity. There are three classifications or modifications, as defined in the MOU, and they are not listed here because they do not require public comment.

How to Submit Comments

SJTPO prefers comments in written form 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@sitpo.org.

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

- **Fax:** (856) 794-2549
- **Email:** pip@sitpo.org
- **Mail:** The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization
817 East Landis Avenue, 2nd Floor, Vineland, NJ 08360
- **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.sitpo.org/Public-Comment) under the Get Involved tab
- **Social media:** Facebook (www.facebook.com/SJTPO), Twitter (www.twitter.com/SJTPO), and LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/sitpo)*

The public can also comment in person at Policy Board and/or Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings, and any other public meeting.

All comments must be received by the close of the comment period to be explicitly addressed and included in the final plan.

How Your Comments will be Used

SJTPO considers 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 will be provided as part of the final document. All final documents are posted on the SJTPO website.

7. EVALUATING OUR EFFECTIVENESS

A variety of tools will be used to measure the quantity and quality of interactions SJTPO has with the public. The evaluation results will be used to modify the practices, as appropriate. The following are tools will be used by 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.

Assessment of Outreach Tools

SJTPO staff have numerous performance measures that can be used when assessing the Organization’s outreach process and its effectiveness. SJTPO will monitor the following on a six-month (biannual) 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

Consult with Members of the Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC)

The Community Outreach and Engagement Committee (COEC) aims to enhance the scope of SJTPO’s public outreach and ensure that SJTPO’s decision-making processes are based on diverse, inclusive, and equity-based information and viewpoints. Through its collective membership, the COEC provides staff with a direct channel for public and special interest groups to provide input on important subjects such as developing a safe, effective, and efficient multi-modal transportation system in the SJTPO four-county region. When appropriate, members will work with staff to adapt the organization’s public outreach strategies to the specific needs of the SJTPO region's diverse communities and provide feedback on SJTPO plans, activities, and processes.

Staff Debriefings

In addition to biannual evaluations, 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. Similarly, staff may periodically meet with consultants to discuss outreach and engagement efforts. The reason is that consultants are sometimes hired through a competitive process for some planning documents and/or projects and may be tasked with exploring new public outreach strategies and/or conducting outreach efforts. As such, it may be beneficial to meet with consultants to ensure SJTPO’s outreach requirements are being met and/or exceeded.