

# Guidelines for Preparation of NJTPA Reports and Studies

**THESE GUIDELINES ARE INTENDED FOR USE** in preparing reports for the NJTPA under its various study and grant programs. They should be used by consultants, NJTPA staff, staff of subregions and others conducting NJTPA-sponsored studies or projects.

The goal is to create documents that are clearly written, understandable to both technical and non-technical readers and visually appealing. While the following guidelines focus on reports of planning studies (both interim and final), they are applicable to other types of planning activities and projects that include written documents as final products.

All reports released to the public are subject to review and editing by NJTPA communications staff, as well as technical staff. Consultants should allow sufficient time in their project schedules for this review.

## **Executive Summary Content**

All reports must include an executive summary to convey the study's essential findings and recommendations, as well as purpose, significance and a summary of methods used. The Executive Summary should include the following features:

- Language should be understandable to an educated non-technical audience, in particular local elected officials on the NJTPA Board of Trustees.
- Length should be kept to several pages—ideally, able to be read in 10-15 minutes.
- The Executive Summary should be a self-contained document that can be understood without referring to the main report.
- The summary should devote most space to the findings, conclusions and recommendations, starting with the most significant points. Discussion of processes and procedures used during the study should be brief (even though this discussion may take up a considerable portion of the main report.)
- The summary should relate the significance of the study for wider efforts or policies.
- The summary should identify next steps.

## **Main Report Content**

Main reports should cover all aspects of the study in sufficient detail for readers to understand the full range of issues and needs addressed, the methodology employed, the findings/recommendations and next steps. The main report should include the following features:

- Language can be geared to readers with a technical background, familiar with the subject matter. However, efforts should be made to provide enough background and explanations so the report can be followed by non-technical readers.



- Detailed data tables or discussion of technical matters should be put in appendices.
- Data sources should be identified.
- Reports with recommendations that could directly impact NJTPA subregions and partner agencies should include language discussing the level of review and support for these recommendations by the potentially affected parties.

### **Usage Style Guide**

The attached usage style guide should be referred to regarding conventions for names, abbreviations, etc. If an issue is not addressed, reports should follow AP style.

### **Disclaimer**

The following disclaimer should be included on all reports on an initial page, with the appropriate language about the NJTPA's role:

This report has been [SPECIFY ROLE OF THE NJTPA\*] with financing by the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Transportation in the interest of information exchange. The NJTPA is solely responsible for its contents.

\*E.g. prepared by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA); prepared under the direction of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA); prepared as part of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) Subregional Studies Program, etc.

### **NJTPA Description**

Where appropriate, the following description of the NJTPA should be used:

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) is the federally authorized Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the 13-county northern New Jersey region, home to 6.7 million people. It evaluates and approves transportation improvement projects, provides a forum for cooperative transportation planning, sponsors and conducts studies, assists county and city planning agencies and monitors compliance with air quality goals.

[IF SPACE PERMITS:] The NJTPA Board includes 15 local elected officials representing 13 counties—Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren—and the cities of Newark and Jersey City. The Board also includes a Governor's Representative, the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation



(NJDOT), the Executive Director of NJ TRANSIT, the Chairman of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey and a Citizen's Representative appointed by the Governor.

### **Formatting**

- Consultants and study sponsors should be capable of preparing a fully formatted, readable report. The NJTPA graphic designer may be available to offer assistance or consultation, with sufficient notice. The NJTPA also can provide logo files, fonts and colors in keeping with its branding standards.
- Drafts of reports subject to editing by NJTPA staff must be provided in Word format. It is recommended that the text is provided prior to the document being laid out with graphics. If a document is too complicated to fully create in Word (e.g. due to extensive use of maps and graphics), a pdf can be provided. However, a Word document must also be provided with just the text portions to facilitate editing.
- Fonts should not be smaller than 12 points for main narrative sections.
- Report layout should be done in InDesign, when possible, to ensure it is compatible with and editable by the NJTPA's graphic designer.
- The NJTPA requires all native files not just final pdf's. This includes InDesign files, separate photo files, etc.
- The NJTPA logo should normally be included on the cover of the document and on other materials prepared.

### **Photos/Graphics**

- Reports cannot use photos downloaded from the internet, unless they are identified as available for use or rights are obtained.
- The NJTPA has an extensive photo library; needed photos may be available on request.
- Photos obtained from the NJTPA or copied from its website or documents cannot be used on non-NJTPA-related materials, without arrangements made with the NJTPA and/or the photographer.
- It is desirable that photos taken for reports and provided to the NJTPA be high resolution (>1mb).
- Graphics such as maps, charts, tables, etc. also should be provided in high resolution versions to ensure clarity.
- Please ensure you are using the latest version of the NJTPA logo (png file format).

### **Citations**

- Citations should be consistent with the standards of the American Planning Association (APA). Specifically, consult Chapters 14 and 1 of *The Chicago Manual of Style, 16<sup>th</sup> Edition*. APA uses the humanities style.



# NJTPA Usage Guide

**NOTE: Some of the following are unique to the NJTPA and not standard usage. Other usage should follow the AP style.**

**acronyms** Only use after the terms are spelled out on first reference with acronym identified: categorical exclusion (CE)

**the Board** When referring to the NJTPA, always capitalized.

**Chair** Use Chair, rather than Chairman or Chairperson

**Congress, Congressional** Always capitalized.

**Central Staff** Always capitalized when referring to the NJTPA's support staff.

**city, state, county** Lowercase when used as a description: Newark is a city in one of the NJTPA's 13 counties. Can be capitalized when referring to a specific city, state or county: Hudson County has 12 municipalities. The County is the smallest county in New Jersey.

**committee** Lowercase when used as a description: there are five standing committees.

**NJTPA committee names** Always capitalized: Planning & Economic Development Committee, Project Prioritization Committee, Freight Initiatives Committee, Regional Transportation Advisory Committee and Executive Committee

**names of cities, states, and counties** Always capitalized: Bergen County

**executive, legislative and judicial branches of government** Lowercase when used as a description: FHWA is part of the executive branch; Supreme Court is part of the judicial branch.

**federal, state and local government** Lowercase when not part of a proper title: EPA is a federal government agency, but DEP is a state agency.

**formal titles in narrative text (for people)** Always capitalize formal organizational titles when used before a name: Speaker Paul Ryan; Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi; President Donald Trump. Lowercase when describing the individual: Paul Ryan, the speaker; Donald Trump, the president.



**Freeholder** Always capitalized: He is the Freeholder from Bergen County.

**Governor, Gubernatorial** Always capitalized.

**Legislature** When referring to New Jersey, always capitalized.

**surnames in written narrative text** First reference in document is full name and middle initial (if applicable). For second and all subsequent references, use last name by itself without Mr. or Ms.

**New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT)** Is never preceded by “the,” or referred to as “the Institute.” Use either NJIT or “the university.”

**NJ TRANSIT** All caps. Avoid using New Jersey Transit.

**the NJTPA** “The” always precedes NJTPA when the agency is the subject or object of a sentence: The NJTPA is an MPO. The TIP is a product of the NJTPA. “The” is preferred but not required in other uses: The county uses NJTPA funding. Never substitute “the Authority,” or “the TPA.”

**the NJTPA Board of Trustees** Always preceded with “the” and initials always capitalized. Alternate reference is: “the NJTPA Trustees.”

**percentages** Never use “%” in written text. Instead write the numeral and the word “percent,” as in: 100 percent.

**north, south, east, west northbound, southbound, eastbound, westbound**

Lowercase compass directions: The turnpike goes north to south, but Route 80 goes east to west.

**North, South, East, West, North Jersey, South Jersey** Always capitalize when referring to a place: Atlanta is in the South.

**numerals: one, two, three, four, five, six seven, eight, nine** Written as words.

**numerals: 10, 11, 12, 20, 30, 40, 50, 100** Numbers for numerals over nine.

**route** Capitalize names of specific routes: Route 46. Always spell out “route.”

**seasons: summer, fall, autumn, winter, spring** Always lowercase.

