

**SOLICITATION FOR APPLICATIONS TO
2025 PLANNING FOR EMERGING CENTERS
PROGRAM**



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FY 2025 PLANNING FOR EMERGING CENTERS SOLICITATION

INTRODUCTION

The NJTPA Planning for Emerging Centers Program supports the development of municipal plans and regulatory updates that respond to the demographic, land use, housing, accessibility, environmental, and economic changes taking place within the NJTPA region. These planning studies address increased demand for diverse, mixed-use places that are economically sustainable and that provide social, cultural, educational, and economic opportunities for all members of the community while supporting transit, bicycling and walking. These studies advance the goals of the NJTPA Long Range Transportation Plan, [*Plan 2050: Transportation. People. Opportunity.*](#)

Technical assistance is provided to municipalities, or groups of municipalities, on a competitive basis. Municipalities are encouraged to propose studies that complement or advance previously completed local planning efforts as well as advance planning efforts conducted by the NJTPA. When appropriate, studies should capitalize on opportunities to develop and strengthen relationships between adjacent municipalities, counties, and regional and state agencies that lead to coordination of land use planning and implementation of transportation projects. Selected municipalities are expected to participate with a good faith intention to advance the recommendations following study completion.

The Planning for Emerging Centers Program is complimentary with and advances the goals of the [Transit Friendly Planning Program](#) administered by NJ TRANSIT and the [Transit Village Initiative](#) administered by NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT. NJTPA-supported planning activities under this program can support a future Transit Village application, but do not imply or guarantee that Transit Village designation will be awarded following completion of the effort.

Questions about this program should be submitted to Peter Bilton, Manager, Sustainable Transportation Planning, pbilton@njtpa.org. Interested applicants are encouraged to schedule a one-on-one virtual meeting with NJTPA staff any time prior to the application deadline to discuss and receive feedback on your study idea. Applications are due on June 19, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The NJTPA is accepting applications from municipalities, or groups of municipalities, seeking assistance in coordinating their planning efforts related to transportation and land use. Studies in this program focus on transforming communities and improving the lives of residents by creating more sustainable, transit-supportive, and walkable places.

Studies will provide the municipality with recommendations to improve their transportation and land use coordination and offer next steps to implement the findings.

Project Types

Applications should identify a study area and the technical assistance the municipality is requesting. Some examples of eligible activities include:

- Studies that address housing needs, update land use patterns to support public transit, or promote economic vitality and improve the quality of life within the community.
- Studies that enhance pedestrian and bicycle access, or planning efforts that enhance accessibility, to and around a transit facility.
- Planning efforts that lead to the creation and adoption of Complete and Green Streets policies as well as the implementation of Complete Streets and resiliency elements in near-term capital improvement projects.
- Studies that update a municipal master plan or the transportation element of a master plan.
- Studies that develop a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment, a required part of the Land Use Plan Element of all New Jersey municipal Master Plans.
- Studies that provide the framework for an application to the Transit Village Initiative or another funding source.

Past Study Examples

See below for examples of previous studies conducted under the Planning for Emerging Centers Program.

- *Integrated Land Use/Accessibility Plans:* Municipalities have developed integrated land use/accessibility plans that create better connections between the transportation system and housing, employment, community facilities, and open space. Benefits include increased availability and diversity of housing, economic vitality, enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access and land use patterns that support public transit, improved quality of life and creation of an environment that fosters sustainability. These planning efforts have included updating the municipal master plan. See the previous study [Raritan Sustainable Economic Development Plan](#).
- *Transit Area and Transit Supportive Planning:* Municipalities have conducted planning efforts that bring together state and county agencies, regional entities, and transit providers to facilitate or enhance access around transit facilities, such as rail and bus stations, frequent bus corridors, and ferry terminals. This activity is critical in helping the region prepare for the increasing demand for transit-accessible, walkable, mixed-use communities and advances the goals of *Plan*

2050. Activities have included planning, redevelopment, and regulatory documents and ordinances that support revitalization and redevelopment of the area around a transit facility that increases the availability of housing into compact, mixed-use neighborhoods. These plans are intended to be complementary to the Transit Friendly Planning Program administered by NJ TRANSIT. See the previous study [Boonton Transit Village Initiative](#).

- *Complete Streets Policy Implementation Plans:* Municipalities have developed comprehensive Complete Street policy implementation plans that result in new or updated policies and ordinances and identify strategies that advance Complete Streets. Complete Streets policies and ordinances developed from this program provide for the transportation needs of all users with a focus on vulnerable users such as bicyclists, pedestrians, older adults, people with disabilities, and children. Plans have included preparation of policies to institutionalize implementation of Complete Streets at all phases of project development and design guidelines that specify preferred roadway features for a variety of mode specific strategies. See the previous study [Harrison Complete Streets Policy and Implementation Plan](#).

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are municipalities within the 13-county NJTPA region (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties). Municipalities must provide a letter of support from their host county (see Appendix A for a sample letter). As NJTPA subregions, the City of Newark and the City of Jersey City are directly eligible and do not need letters of support from their respective counties. Municipalities selected for this program must adopt a resolution of support prior to the initiation of the project.

Ineligible Applicants

Consultant firms, grant writers, and nonprofit organizations cannot apply directly to this program. Counties cannot apply directly to this program but may apply to the NJTPA's competitive Subregional Studies Program (SSP) for similar planning activities. Counties may also apply for similar activities on behalf of a constituent municipality or municipalities through the SSP. More information on the Subregional Studies Program can be found on the NJTPA website <https://www.njtpa.org/Planning/Subregional-Programs/Studies.aspx>

Municipalities that have already received technical assistance through this program are not eligible to apply.

Project Duration

Technical support is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2026 and have a duration of 12-15 months. Studies will be completed by June 2027.

Local Match

No financial match is required. Municipalities are required to dedicate in-kind staff time to public and stakeholder outreach, project management, data collection, and other tasks as necessary for the successful completion of the project. This staff time commitment should be reflected in the proposal.

Study Elements and Administration

For your information, all studies conducted through this program will include the following elements and administrative procedures:

- *Roles of the municipality and the NJTPA:* Upon acceptance of a study into the Planning for Emerging Centers program, the NJTPA will develop, in collaboration with the selected municipality or group of municipalities, a scope of work and a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant services for the study. The RFP and consultant selection process will follow all applicable guidelines and regulations for the use of federal funds. The NJTPA will contract directly with the selected consultant firm(s) and will serve as project manager, overseeing all consultant activities and deliverables. The municipality will be responsible for coordinating stakeholder and public input, assisting with data collection and analysis, reviewing project deliverables, and participating in other tasks necessary for successful completion of the planning project.
- *Integration with the Metropolitan Planning Process:* Proposed studies will address at least one goal from the NJTPA's current Long Range Transportation Plan ([Plan 2050: Transportation. People. Opportunity.](#))
- *Conformity with State Regulation:* While the scope of planning studies will vary, all planning and regulatory efforts undertaken through this program will serve to advance sustainable transportation and land use policies. All regulatory work conducted through this program must be consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law (NJSA 40:55D-1 et seq.) and/or the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (NJSA 40A:12A-1 et seq.), the Fair Housing Act (NJSA 52:27D-301 et seq.), and all other relevant municipal, county, and state laws and regulations.
- *Engagement of the Public:* The Planning for Emerging Centers Program requires transparency and the active and substantive participation of the public. In keeping with the NJTPA's [Public Engagement Plan](#), public outreach and engagement will be

an integral part of, and occur concurrently with, the study tasks. The extent of public outreach will be determined in collaboration with the selected municipality.

- *Facilitation of Project Partnerships/Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):* A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be created consisting of local stakeholders and representatives from agencies or entities that can provide insights into the study and can reasonably be expected to implement plan recommendations. The role of the TAC is to review and provide comments on all technical memoranda and draft final deliverables. NJTPA staff will coordinate with state agencies and county staff, and the municipality will be responsible for municipal and local stakeholder coordination. The TAC may include representatives from the following entities, where applicable: NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, private transit operators, Transportation Management Associations, county and municipal officials, and others.

HOW TO APPLY

Pre-application Meeting (Optional)

Applicants to encouraged to schedule a one-on-one pre-application meeting with NJTPA staff any time prior to submission of your proposal. Staff can answer questions about the program and provide guidance regarding the suitability of proposed planning activities for this program. Email Peter Bilton, Manager, Sustainable Transportation Planning, pbilton@njtpa.org to request a meeting.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should contain the following sections and information:

1. *Project Description (No more than two pages):*
 - a. Describe the planning study you want to conduct, the key reports, plans, outreach, or analysis the study will produce, and how these work products will help you address your municipality's goals. Describe the need for the study, including highlights of supporting data (population and other demographic changes, traffic counts, asset and facility conditions, etc.) and any information that tells the story of why this study is needed in your municipality.
 - b. Describe any related prior work and funding, if applicable, and how this study will advance this previous work.
 - c. List any anticipated future work or expected funding related to studies or capital improvements in the proposed study area.
 - d. List the municipal staff who will participate in and contribute to the study.

2. *Supporting Documents:*

- a. Map of the study area
- b. Photos of the study area (if applicable to illustrate need)
- c. Relevant prior studies and regulatory documents, provided as hyperlinks to online documents or as attachments

3. *Stakeholder List:*

- a. List stakeholder organizations that may be invited to participate in or provide input to the study. Include municipal departments (planning board, redevelopment agency, engineering, police, department of public works) and other local organizations (business association, major employer, developer, school district, religious or cultural organization). In addition, list state and local agencies such as roadway owners and public and private transit operators.

4. *County Participation Letter/Email:*

- a. Provide a letter of participation from your county. A sample participation request letter is provided as Appendix A.

Submission Requirements

Submit the proposal via email to Peter Bilton, Manager, Sustainable Transportation Planning, pbilton@njtpa.org.

The deadline for submission of proposals is **June 19, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.**

Peter Bilton

Manager, Sustainable Transportation Planning
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
973-639-8450
pbilton@njtpa.org

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee of NJTPA staff. Committee members will score proposals based upon the following criteria:

- *Clarity and Suitability of Proposal*
Are the municipality's needs and goals clearly communicated? Do the proposed planning activities address those goals and needs? Are the proposed planning activities a good fit for the purpose of the program?
- *Demonstration of a Regional Need*

How well and to what extent does the proposal address a regional need as identified through *Plan 2050*, implement a previously completed NJTPA led study or Subregional Study; address State emphasis areas; and address other regional or state planning initiatives?

- *Partnerships and Community Benefit*

How strong is the demonstrated commitment to local partnerships and public engagement? Is the project benefitting or located in an underserved community?

- *Potential for Future Implementation*

What is the proposal's potential and viability for future implementation in the applicant's community, and applicability to similar municipalities in the region?

Selection and Notification

Up to two proposals will be selected for advancement. Staff may contact applicants for further information and may request revisions of high-ranked proposals. Applicants will be notified of selection by email.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE COUNTY PARTICIPATION REQUEST LETTER

Date

Name of County Commissioner/Administrator

Title

Street Address

RE: Participation in Proposed NJTPA/[Insert Name] Planning Study

Dear [Addressee],

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) is the federally authorized Metropolitan Planning Organization for 7 million people in the 13-county northern New Jersey region. Each year, the NJTPA oversees more than \$3 billion in transportation improvement projects and provides a forum for interagency cooperation and public input into funding decisions. It also sponsors and conducts studies, assists county planning agencies and monitors compliance with national air quality goals.

[Municipality name] is applying to participate in the NJTPA FY2025 Planning for Emerging Centers Program. Should their application be accepted, [insert municipality] would partner with the NJTPA to study [insert name/topic of study]. This study is scheduled to kick off in the spring of 2026 and conclude no later than June 30, 2027.

The purpose of the study is to [enter purpose and or importance of the proposed study]. This study will focus on [general topic] in [location] and may result in the identification of needs and the recommendation of operational or capital improvements to your county's streets or other aspects transportation network, or changes to the county's master plan or regulations.

[Insert County]'s participation on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for this proposed project will be critical to its success. Such participation would entail providing vital input and feedback to the project team, reviewing and providing comment on needs and recommendations, and participation in at least two TAC meetings to discuss [County]'s input and feedback with project sponsors and other interested parties.

NJTPA approval of this application is dependent on your willingness to participate in the TAC. Participation in this committee will not, in any way, be construed or portrayed as an endorsement of the study's findings or conclusion.

Please indicate your willingness to participate by sending an e-mail to Peter Bilton (pbilton@njtpa.org) no later than June 19, 2025. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,