

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Public Engagement Plan

November 2018



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Background on Metropolitan Planning Organizations and the NJTPA	2
1.1 History and Purpose of the MPO	2
1.2 The NJTPA	3
Chapter 2: Public Participation Mission and Goals	7
2.1 Mission and Goals	7
2.2 Overview of Federal Requirements for Public Participation	7
2.3 Public Participation for All.....	8
Chapter 3: Opportunities to Engage with the NJTPA.....	11
3.1 Finding Information	11
3.2 Attending Meetings and Events.....	13
3.3 The NJTPA’s Commitment to Accessible Engagement	15
Chapter 4: Public Participation in the NJTPA’s Plans and Programs.....	17
4.1 Formal Public Comment Periods.....	17
4.2 Participation in Together North Jersey	19
4.3 Participation in Regional and Subregional Programs.....	20
4.4 Participation in Capital Programming and Local Projects.....	22
Chapter 5: Public Engagement Best Practices and Resources	23
5.1 Overview of the Public Engagement Toolkit.....	23
5.2 Using the Toolkit to Develop a Public Participation Plan.....	23
Appendices.....	27
Appendix 1 – Current Board of Trustees	27
Appendix 2 – Legislation Regarding Public Participation in Transportation Planning Processes	27
Appendix 3 – Social Media Comment Policy.....	29
Appendix 4 – List of NJTPA Public Documents Depository Libraries	30
Appendix 5 – Amendments to the RTP or TIP.....	31
Appendix 6 – Determining Translation Needs	32

Introduction

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a 13-county region in northern and central New Jersey, the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) actively seeks participation from the public in its regional planning and capital programming activities. This Public Engagement Plan (PEP) sets the NJTPA's standards for this participation and guides the agency in creating opportunities for interaction with the public.

Under federal law, MPOs must issue a PEP that does the following:

- Defines the methods and goals the agency follows in providing public involvement opportunities
- Establishes strategies for reaching all interested parties
- Undergoes periodic reviews and updates, including a 45-day review and comment period before it is adopted.

In keeping with these requirements, specific recommendations are presented to promote participation by all members of the public interested in getting involved in the regional transportation planning process. The PEP lists the various channels through which the public can access information from or communicate with the NJTPA. It also describes what to expect when attending NJTPA-hosted public meetings, including those of the Board of Trustees. Furthermore, the PEP describes how the NJTPA involves stakeholders in the process of developing major plans and programs such as the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.

The PEP also reflects the NJTPA's commitment to serving the needs of the region's broadly diverse population. The PEP documents the steps that the NJTPA takes to include those who have been historically under-represented in civic processes, including individuals with limited English proficiency, minorities, and people with low incomes. It includes specific strategies the NJTPA will use to overcome barriers to public participation that members of these groups may face.

The PEP also provides guidance on public participation to staff of member agencies and consultants working on projects and programs sponsored by the NJTPA. These practitioners should use the PEP and the resources it provides to ensure that the work they do is consistent with the NJTPA's mission and goals regarding public involvement.

The PEP is an update to the NJTPA's public participation plan adopted in 2007 and last revised in 2012. It is the product of research into public participation best practices, as well as experience generated by the NJTPA's extensive outreach efforts, particularly those for *Plan 2045: Connecting North Jersey*, the long-range Regional Transportation Plan adopted in November 2017. Prior to and during the outreach and public comment phases of the development of *Plan 2045*, the NJTPA researched and applied innovative engagement strategies in order to more effectively engage with the public. These strategies are presented throughout the PEP and particularly inform how the NJTPA seeks to engage under-represented populations.

Chapter 1: Background on Metropolitan Planning Organizations and the NJTPA

1.1 History and Purpose of the MPO

Regional planning organizations like the NJTPA were created to address a simple fact about transportation facilities: They span and link numerous communities over wide areas. The region's 6.7 million residents rely on the transportation network — whether travelling by road, rail, foot, bike, ferry or air — to get them to where they need to go. But transportation is also vital to the region's economy. North Jersey is home to the largest container port on the Atlantic seaboard and more than 500 million tons of goods move through the region predominately by truck.

Recognizing this reality, the federal government in the early 1970s required urbanized regions of the country — areas with more than 50,000 people that constitute distinct “commutersheds” — to establish formal transportation planning bodies made up of local elected officials and state agency representatives. Congress tasked these Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or MPOs, with conducting transportation planning and overseeing transportation investments. In this planning process, the MPO sets the vision and goals for the region's transportation system and allocates federal funds for transit, road, bicycle, and pedestrian projects in its region.

Congress has continued to pass laws that support and enhance the authority of MPOs. In 1991, the federal Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act, or ISTEA, expanded the responsibilities of MPOs for allocating federal funding for many highway and transit projects. Subsequent federal laws, including the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015, have continued to strengthen the regional planning conducted by MPOs.

The core activities of all MPOs are:

- Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision making.
- Identify and evaluate transportation-improvement options and other information needed for MPO decision making by conducting planning studies. These are described in the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Prepare and update a long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), with (at least) a 20-year horizon.
- Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the short-range (four-year) program of capital improvements needed to implement the RTP.
- Ensure transportation plans, programs, projects and policies help improve air quality in the region and conform with air quality goals in the State Implementation Plan (SIP).
- Coordinate with transportation operators to establish, monitor and evaluate performance targets for surface transportation and public transportation.
- Involve the general public by offering all interested persons opportunities to participate in the decision-making functions of the MPO.

Nationwide there are more than 400 MPOs, including two others in New Jersey: the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization. Between them, the three MPOs cover all of New Jersey.

1.2 The NJTPA

The NJTPA oversees more than \$2 billion in transportation investments each year. It is responsible for performing the core MPO functions described in [Section 1.1](#), ensuring that transportation funding is invested wisely to improve mobility, promote economic activity and safeguard the environment. Ultimately, all projects that use federal transportation funding must be approved through the NJTPA’s metropolitan transportation planning process.

The NJTPA performs a number of tasks to support this process. It conducts transportation and planning studies, evaluates and approves proposed highway, bridge, transit and other projects, and monitors the region’s compliance with national air quality goals. It also provides a forum for cooperative transportation planning efforts involving counties, municipalities, stakeholders and government agencies. In cooperation with its city and county member agencies — known as “subregions” — the NJTPA sponsors various transportation and planning studies and assists county and city planning agencies.

1.2a Region Overview

Serving about 6.7 million people, the NJTPA is the fifth-largest MPO in the nation. Its 4,200 square-mile region encompasses a diverse geography of urban, suburban and rural areas, as well as an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse population. The region’s transportation network supports people traveling on road, rail, foot, bike and ferry, with each household making 10 trips each day for all purposes. The NJTPA’s *Plan 2045* provides a detailed look at the region’s transportation system and demographics.

Figure 1

Key Planning Areas

Safety Planning

Ensure the reliability of infrastructure and use educational campaigns to promote safety.

Transportation Technologies

Improve transportation safety, efficiency and performance using information and communications technology.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

Promote bicycle and pedestrian planning through investment, workshops, complete streets initiatives, and pedestrian safety programs.

Transit Planning

Conduct studies to improve transit and provide technical assistance to help communities plan for transit-oriented development.

Data Analysis, Models and Maps

Analyze data using simulations and geospatial mapping to assess the performance of the transportation system and predict future needs.

Climate Change Planning

Plan for mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to cope with the consequences of a changing climate, and resiliency so that the transportation system can withstand extreme weather and catastrophic events.

Figure 2

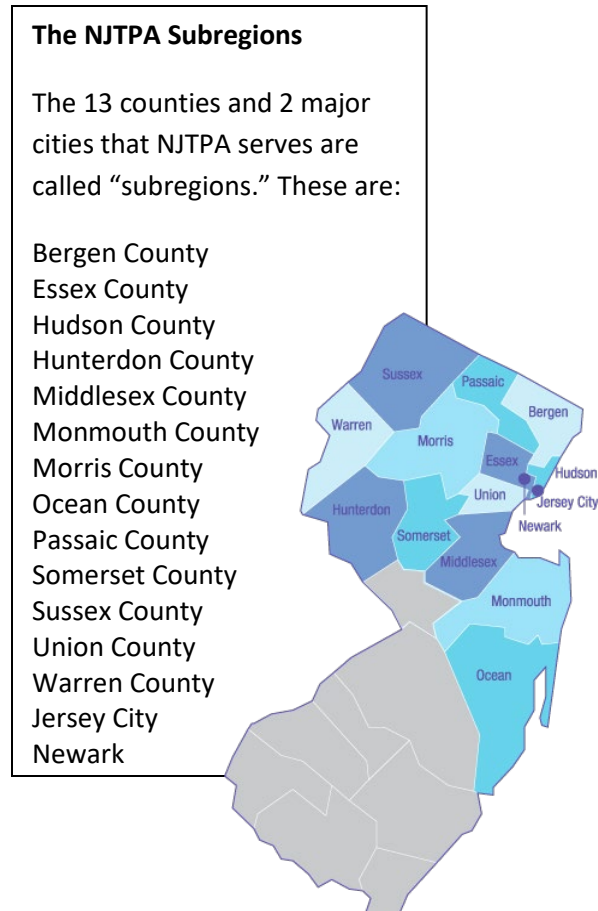
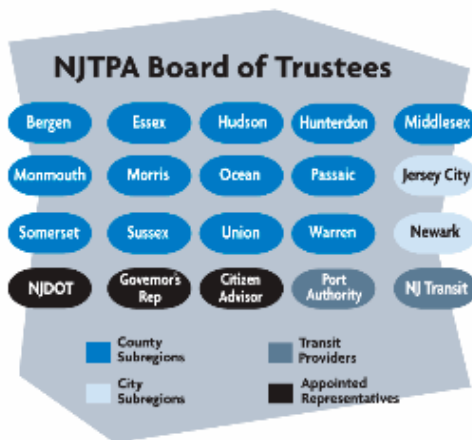


Figure 3



for plans, projects, and studies carried out by central staff and the subregions, including the Unified Planning Work Program.

1.2b Structure of the NJTPA

The NJTPA is governed by a Board of Trustees, which has three standing committees, and is supported by a central staff at the NJTPA offices in Newark.

Board of Trustees

The role of the Board of Trustees of the NJTPA includes formulating policies, guiding investment decisions, and helping to coordinate planning for all aspects of regional transportation. The Board is made up of elected officials representing 13 counties and the cities of Newark and Jersey City. In addition, the Board includes as voting members the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), NJ TRANSIT, the Port Authority of NY & NJ, a Governor’s representative, and a Governor-appointed citizens’ representative. See [Appendix 1](#) for a list of current Board members.

Many other interested agencies and organizations provide input to the Board on a regular basis. The Board and its committees meet regularly, and these meetings are publicized and open to the public.

Committees of the Board

Members of the Board of Trustees are also members of at least one of three standing committees listed below. The standing committees review potential NJTPA actions, discuss agency activities and make recommendations to the full Board of Trustees. Most meetings occur at the NJTPA’s offices in Newark. For a schedule of meetings, check the calendar on the NJTPA website (www.njtpa.org) or call 973-639-8400.

Planning & Economic Development

This committee oversees regional and transportation corridor-based planning activities, including the RTP. It reviews and approves funding

Project Prioritization

This committee oversees all activities related to the annual development and management of the Transportation Improvement Program, including modifications and amendments. It also reviews and approves funding for the NJTPA's Local Safety, High Risk Rural Road and Local Capital Project Delivery programs, among others.

Freight Initiatives

This committee supports the economically vital regional goods movement industry by making recommendations on transportation investments and policies to ensure the region's global competitiveness.

Advisory Committees

The following committees serve an ongoing advisory function for the Board of Trustees. In addition, temporary advisory committees are formed, as needed, for studies and projects, as discussed later in this document.

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

This advisory committee is composed of professional planners and engineers working in the NJTPA's subregions. It reviews and disseminates information to the subregions and makes recommendations to the NJTPA Board and its individual Trustees. It also provides input to central staff on the localized impacts of NJTPA projects and programs.

Public Engagement Advisory Committee

The NJTPA plans to establish, on a pilot basis, an advisory committee to consult with NJTPA staff on public engagement best practices to reach the diverse populations in the region, particularly those who are historically under-represented. This pilot committee would review and evaluate public engagement work plans for various NJTPA and subregional programs and projects. The NJTPA envisions this committee consisting of representatives from community-based organizations, public engagement professionals, and community organizers living or working in the NJTPA region. Meetings would occur both in person and virtually using online tools and social media.

Our Generation Advisory Committee

The NJTPA plans to establish, on a pilot basis, an advisory committee to consider strategies for attracting and retaining young adults and future generations within the NJTPA region and to provide input to NJTPA staff on public engagement strategies, project prioritization, and other programs that affect this group. This pilot committee will be composed of 10-20 young adults who live or work in the region. Meetings would occur both in person and virtually using online tools and social media. This committee was inspired by Set the Table, a young adults outreach effort that was completed as part of *Plan 2045*.

1.2c Central Staff

The NJTPA has a professional central staff of approximately 50 planners, economists, programmers, policy analysts, engineers, communications and other support staff whose job it is to understand the complexities of the region, not just in terms of transportation, but also air quality, economic development, land use and the environment. Working at the NJTPA offices in Newark, they carry out the

activities described in **Figure 1**. The work of central staff helps to inform the decisions made by the Board of Trustees.

1.2d Subregional Staff

Staff of the 13 county and city subregions help implement the goals and policies of the NJTPA at the local level. Support for their planning work is provided by annual formula-based funding as part of the Subregional Transportation Program and through competitive grants from the NJTPA such as the Subregional Studies Program.

Chapter 2: Public Participation Mission and Goals

Because the NJTPA is a publicly funded agency serving the region's residents, public participation is an integral part of its transportation planning work. Public participation enables all residents of the region to be involved in the important decision making processes that shape the region's transportation system.

Through the mission and goals stated here, the NJTPA seeks to create effective and meaningful opportunities for the public to participate. This means fostering trusted, two-way communication between the public and decision makers that includes the perspectives of many kinds of people. Participation by a diverse and engaged public improves decision making by helping to illuminate many of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of transportation decisions.

2.1 Principles & Goals

The NJTPA commits to the following principles with regards to public participation:

- To treat the public as partners in defining and refining a vision for northern and central New Jersey's transportation future that will help create a more competitive, efficient, livable and resilient region.
- To be the leader in engaging the public in a continuing discussion of northern and central New Jersey transportation planning issues.

The following goals will help guide the NJTPA's programs and transportation planning activities:

- Promote greater opportunities for the public to engage with the NJTPA Board members.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful two-way discussions between the NJTPA, its trustees and the public about regional improvements.
- Use a range of tools that promote timely, innovative and informative two-way engagement between the NJTPA and the public, both in person and online.
- Make continuous efforts to engage a diverse and wide-ranging representation of those who live, work and travel within the region with an emphasis on reaching those traditionally under-represented in the planning process.
- Evaluate, upgrade and adjust, on a periodic basis, the public participation efforts of the NJTPA.
- Continue to innovate and experiment with new ideas for engaging the public.

2.2 Overview of Federal Requirements for Public Participation

As described in [Section 1.1](#), public participation is one of the core functions of any MPO. Many federal regulations help to shape the process that MPOs use to involve the public. Please see [Appendix 2](#) for more detail about and web links to relevant legislation, which includes:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
- Transportation Equity Act for 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
- 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”

2.3 Public Participation for All

The NJTPA is committed to seeking input from those who have been historically under-represented in transportation planning decisions. Federal legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 have public participation requirements that MPOs must implement to ensure access to the planning process for protected populations. To meet these requirements, the NJTPA takes steps to include people with disabilities, minority and low-income populations, and those with limited English proficiency (LEP) which are discussed throughout the PEP.

In accordance with the Federal Transit Administration Title VI circular, FTA C 4702.1B, the PEP serves as the NJTPA’s outreach plan for minority and limited English proficient populations. In accordance with Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, the NJTPA has integrated environmental justice concerns across all of its planning activities. This includes efforts to ensure that transportation benefits and burdens are distributed equally among all people in the region, in part by making concerted efforts to involve low-income and minority residents in transportation planning.

2.3a Using Targeted Strategies to Engage Historically Under-represented Populations

The NJTPA is committed to breaking down the barriers to participation that historically under-represented groups face, which include language barriers, wariness of public forums, scheduling constraints, and lack of transportation options, among other challenges.

In partnership with the Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) at Rutgers University, the NJTPA studied the role that innovative and targeted strategies can have in involving harder-to-reach and under-represented populations. The NJTPA will draw on this research to ensure that its outreach is accessible to everyone and will follow the best practices for reaching under-represented populations, as outlined below, in alignment with the goals and objectives of the PEP. For more information about recommended strategies for engaging these populations, visit the NJTPA website or see [Chapter 5](#).

Children and Teens

While underage participants are often overlooked in the participation process, agencies are starting to find ways to engage their youngest constituents. Children are not likely to engage with public issues without strong encouragement from adults, but increasingly as they become teenagers they may begin to identify what is important to them and look for ways to give back. Outreach to children and teens

should be fun, appealing, and easily accessible. They should not feel intimidated by adults. Outreach may be most effective if done in partnership with schools and other child-oriented activities like youth groups or sports leagues where they already congregate.

Immigrants and Individuals with Limited-English Proficiency

In New Jersey, 12.4 percent of the population reports speaking English less than “very well.” Many individuals understand more English than they are comfortable speaking, but still prefer to speak in their native language, especially when discussing complex issues. Outreach to these residents should be approachable, highly visual, and conducted in their language if feasible. The content of activities should be easy to share with others through word-of-mouth and feel relevant to the needs of participants’ families. The NJTPA is committed to ensuring that all of its events and publications are accessible and available to all residents regardless of their level of English proficiency or native language. Residents and/or participants may request translation services for any NJTPA event or publication. For translation services at events, the NJTPA requests seven days’ notice in order to make arrangements. Timing to accommodate translation requests for written documents or reports will depend on the length and complexity of the document.

Low-Income Residents

Many low-income people balance multiple jobs and face insecurity of housing, food, and transportation. They are likely to receive information through word-of-mouth, social media, or community organizations. Keeping these factors in mind, effective outreach to low-income constituents should be convenient and incentivized. It should also be conducted by someone familiar with the community’s character and strengths and involve partnerships with local organizations.

Young Adults

Young adults’ current lifestyle choices are helping drive urban resurgence and land use changes. They are often under-represented in civic affairs due to inexperience, demands of balancing multiple jobs with school and family, and limited opportunities. Outreach to young adults should be social and fun, visually appealing and brief, and incorporate messaging on the appropriate social media platforms. It should also address topics that feel relevant to their needs.

Older Adults

Older adults are often very involved in their communities and feel a strong sense of civic duty, voting at the highest rates of any age group. In spite of this, older adults may be under-represented in planning efforts because of mobility challenges, lack of relevance to their lives, or lack of awareness about issues primarily promoted through the Internet. Outreach to older adults should be conducted in a variety of formats, such as through word-of-mouth, regular mail, television, and social media platforms. To overcome the mobility challenges older adults face, outreach should be scheduled during daylight hours, held in ADA-accessible venues, and located close to home.

Racial and Ethnic Groups

Racial and ethnic minorities include people who do not identify racially as white and others, particularly immigrants, who face limited opportunities to participate in civic affairs due to language barriers,

cultural differences and other factors. This may include Black, Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern, Native American or multiracial populations. Minority communities are extremely diverse with a range of communication styles and engagement levels. Outreach to these populations should be rooted in the community, highlight the community's strengths, be coordinated with local groups, and be relevant to their family's needs.

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities may experience any number of cognitive or physical disabilities. Because the range of possible needs is so broad, agencies should be aware of the myriad of ways in which people with special needs may be excluded from traditional public outreach, and how to correct for it. Outreach to people with disabilities should be in compliance with ADA requirements and otherwise physically welcoming and safe, visually and audibly accessible, and developmentally appropriate. Outreach staff should be trained on how to provide assistance to disabled participants if it is needed.

2.3b Public Outreach and Engagement Liaisons

The NJTPA plans to develop, on a pilot basis for a select study or project, Public Outreach and Engagement Liaisons (POELs) who will work as bridge-builders, facilitating communication between the NJTPA and communities, including those that have been traditionally under-represented in public processes. The NJTPA ultimately envisions engaging and training POELs to work directly with multiple communities to increase awareness of and participation in the region's transportation planning decisions among these populations.

Potential POELs will have diverse backgrounds, skill sets, and abilities enabling them to serve a variety of functions. They will be able to expertly navigate the needs and preferences of a community, ensuring that opportunities to participate with the NJTPA feel more accessible, comfortable and familiar for those who might otherwise be left out. Furthermore, the training and skillset that POELs acquire may help them transition into community leadership roles beyond the program.

Potential activities of POELs may include:

- Planning and facilitating outreach events in a native language
- Coordinating with local organizations to plan and host outreach events and leverage their knowledge of the most effective ways to engage the community
- Providing quality translation services for informational materials, ensuring that they are accurate and clearly convey the source material's meaning
- Supporting constituents at NJTPA-sponsored or local events so that they feel welcome and empowered to participate and ask questions
- Reporting residents' feedback and concerns and connecting them to appropriate NJTPA resources as needed
- Providing expertise on cultural concerns for public outreach work plans for NJTPA projects and programs

Chapter 3: Opportunities to Engage with the NJTPA

There are a variety of opportunities for the public to engage with the NJTPA. The NJTPA disseminates information and communicates through a variety of online and offline platforms in order to reach as many people as possible. The public is also encouraged to attend meetings and events regarding regional transportation planning, such as NJTPA Board of Trustees and committee meetings, meetings of local or county transportation boards, and other events sponsored by the NJTPA and its subregions. The NJTPA is committed to ensuring that people of all backgrounds and abilities feel comfortable participating in these events and have access to the information they need to be involved in the region's transportation planning process.

3.1 Finding Information

The NJTPA seeks to make information about transportation planning in the region available and accessible for anyone interested. It regularly disseminates news, updates, reminders about public meetings and events, and other content through a variety of channels in order to reach a broad audience. This includes:

3.1a NJTPA Website

The NJTPA's website (njtpa.org) is designed to meet all federal and state accessibility criteria in a user-friendly and interactive format. It provides information about all of the NJTPA's work and planning activities, including:

- Plans, studies, reports and other documents related to the regional and sub-regional transportation planning process
- Information about the structure and composition of the NJTPA, including an introductory Citizen's Guide to the NJTPA and regional transportation planning
- Meeting agendas and minutes from meetings of the Board of Trustees and all standing and advisory committees
- Contact information for central staff members, including an email address and telephone number where members of the public can ask general questions and submit comments
- A calendar of upcoming meetings and events
- Public Engagement Toolkit with a database of resources for planning and executing public involvement activities
- The NJTPA Update blog with highlights and updates from NJTPA activities occurring throughout the region
- Transportation news from the NJTPA region and, when relevant, beyond
- Links to the NJTPA's various social media platforms and YouTube channel

3.1b E-list and Mail Lists

Members of the public and interested organizations can sign up through the NJTPA website for inclusion on the NJTPA's e-list to receive notice and agendas for upcoming meetings, special events, public comment periods and other news and information via email. E-list subscribers can choose to only

receive emails about the topics that interest them. The NJTPA also maintains and uses other mailing lists to reach member agencies, stakeholders, media and others.

When appropriate, the NJTPA will also use its mailing list to disseminate information to community centers, libraries, senior centers, and English as a Second Language (ESL) centers.

Link: <http://njtpa.org/get-involved/e-list-subscription>

3.1c Social Media

The NJTPA actively maintains several social media accounts to highlight key agency events and initiatives. The NJTPA uses social media platforms to inform members of the public and the media of upcoming meetings and events, circulate news stories on transportation planning in the NJTPA region, issue reminders about open public comment periods for major planning documents, and share the activities of Board members and other content related to regional transportation planning.

The NJTPA does not consider comments made by members of the public on social media platforms to be official public comment. More detail about the NJTPA's policy is available in [Appendix 3](#).

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NJTPA>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NJTPA>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thenjtpa/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/north-jersey-transportation-planning-authority>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/njtpa/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheNJTPA>

3.1d InTransition

InTransition is a semi-annual magazine, published and distributed in hard copy and online, offering articles on transportation issues, research and trends. It is a collaboration between the NJTPA and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). *InTransition* offers information and analyses relevant to researchers, policymakers, engineers, advocates, administrators, planners and others in the transportation field, written in language accessible to a general reader. The magazine emphasizes under-reported research, innovative approaches to addressing transportation problems and the exchange of ideas between academic disciplines.

Link: <http://www.intransitionmag.org/>

3.1e Newspapers and Radio

The NJTPA, as appropriate, uses local newspapers, hyper-local news websites, and other traditional media to publicize meetings, events, and other NJTPA projects and programs. Commercial radio public service announcements have been used to publicize NJTPA programs such as the Street Smart NJ pedestrian safety education campaign. The NJTPA also participates in television news interviews and

special programs to spread the word about projects and programs, such as the Morris Canal Working Group. Publicizing information through traditional media enables the NJTPA to reach those in the region without access to the internet.

The NJTPA will expand efforts to involve local media in reporting major work programs such as the Transportation Improvement Program, as well as subregional events and meetings, ranging from project ribbon cuttings to local transportation meetings.

3.1f How to Request Data Resources and Public Documents

Public documents produced by the NJTPA are available upon request. Reasonable public access is provided to NJTPA data and policy information. Fees to recover costs may be charged for data requests. Interested parties can contact FOIA@njtpa.org or 973-639-8400 to make a request.

Public documents are also reserved in designated State Documents Depository Libraries and other select libraries throughout the region which keep major NJTPA documents on file. A complete list of these libraries can be found in [Appendix 4](#). The NJTPA also maintains a library of current and past public documents that can be reviewed by the public during regular working hours.

The NJTPA complies with the federal Freedom of Information Act and the New Jersey Open Public Records Act. Records requests should be submitted to the Custodian of Records at FOIA@njtpa.org. A records request form is available on the NJTPA's [website](#).

3.2 Attending Meetings and Events

There are ongoing opportunities for residents and stakeholders to be involved in the NJTPA's planning process. Among these are the meetings of the Board of Trustees, meetings of standing and advisory committees, and various public participation opportunities. One purpose of these meetings and events is to present and discuss information, solicit feedback, or gather input from the public on specific topics or plans. As discussed below, opportunities are provided at all meetings for the public to comment and ask questions.

In January of each year, a schedule of NJTPA Board and committee meetings for the upcoming year is posted on the NJTPA website and sent to e-list subscribers and contacts on other mailing lists. As discussed below, notices are also issued prior to each meeting online and/or through traditional media.

3.2a Board of Trustees and Committee Meetings

Board and committee meetings are open to the public and Board meetings are livestreamed on the NJTPA's website and YouTube channel (the NJTPA also shares the livestream links on social media). These meetings are often attended by planners, engineers, business and labor leaders, environmental advocates, academics, commuter groups, concerned citizens, state and federal agency representatives, neighboring MPOs, and media representatives, among others. The public is given the opportunity to comment before any action at Board meetings and a public comment period on other matters is held at the end of each meeting.

Meetings are publicized through mailings, paid public notices, media advisories, social media posts and the NJTPA website. A calendar of meetings, agendas and minutes from previous meetings are available on the NJTPA website. Most meetings are held during the day at the NJTPA's offices in Newark.

Agendas and materials distributed to the Board of Trustees for each meeting are posted on the NJTPA website calendar prior to the meeting, and additional copies are available at the meeting. Minutes are posted on the NJTPA website.

In accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of NJTPA Board meetings is advertised in regional daily newspapers. The notice is also posted on the bulletin board of the Secretary of State in Trenton and in the county clerk's office of the county hosting the meeting.

Meeting Schedules

Most NJTPA Board and committee meetings occur at the NJTPA's offices in Newark and are generally scheduled on a bi-monthly basis. To learn about upcoming meetings, check the calendar on the NJTPA website or call 973-639-8400.

NJTPA Board Meeting Format

NJTPA Board meetings follow the general process below, which includes opportunities for public comment:

- The Chair of the Board of Trustees leads the meetings, recognizing speakers, and managing the flow of discussion.
- The public is invited to comment on specific action items before they are voted on.
- At the discretion of the chair, members of the public also may be recognized to speak during discussions of other agenda items.
- Agendas include a public-comment time, in which any member of the public will be able to speak, present information or ask questions about any topic.

Normally, a sign-up sheet is provided to those wishing to provide public comment; three-minute time limits are placed on the length of comments.

3.2b NJTPA-Sponsored Meetings

The NJTPA sponsors a variety of public engagement opportunities, convened and managed by NJTPA central staff. The NJTPA central staff often participates in events hosted by subregional agencies. The purpose of these activities is to provide information about the NJTPA's work and gather information and views from members of the public. Therefore, they are designed for as much interaction as possible among all in attendance.

Workshops

NJTPA and subregional staff hold workshop-style meetings open to the public. These workshops allow attendees to learn about plans, projects, or proposals in greater depth through the use of presentations, display tables, posters, and other informational materials. Topics often include planning best practices

and technology used in planning and transportation. Workshops also enable one-on-one interactions between staff, members of the public and subject matter experts.

General Information Sessions

NJTPA staff may conduct informational meetings at the NJTPA's offices in Newark, which is a central location for the region. Session topics include current activities, such as development of major planning documents and updates on other ongoing programs, but also may include detailed presentations and discussions about the results of studies and reports. The format generally consists of presentations by program and project managers, followed by questions and answers. Staff is also available after the presentations for individual follow-up discussion with attendees.

Forums/Symposiums

NJTPA staff collaborates with partner agencies and other organizations to convene regional forums on important topics. Forums are focused on issues of interest to particular constituencies and generally feature a panel of expert speakers with time for questions and answers; sometimes followed by breakout sessions in which small groups of participants may have more intimate discussions. The purpose is to foster communication and cooperation among diverse entities that deal with the issue under discussion, and to look for new solutions to existing problems.

3.2c Subregion-Sponsored Meetings

All NJTPA subregions are required to actively involve the public in ongoing transportation planning and decision making. A number hold regular transportation advisory committee meetings for this purpose. Others conduct a variety of public meetings and events, including as part of NJTPA-supported study and grant programs. Notice of these meetings is distributed locally by each subregion and posted by the NJTPA on its website and social media outlets.

3.2d Other ways to be involved

Request a speaker for a community meeting

NJTPA staff are available to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of a community organization, school, or library where they can make a presentation, answer questions, and gather comments about transportation issues.

Attend meetings of county transportation boards or committees

Much of the transportation planning process occurs at local, county, and subregional levels. The public can get involved by attending local meetings, such as those of county transportation committees or municipal planning boards. The titles and responsibilities of these various committees and boards differ from place to place. The NJTPA or county planning departments can provide contact information.

3.3 The NJTPA's Commitment to Accessible Engagement

In accordance with federal laws, as well as with NJTPA policy and the goals stated in this plan, the NJTPA seeks to ensure all interested members of the public are able to participate in transportation planning decisions. Any person interested in attending an NJTPA hosted or sponsored event, or accessing

information from the NJTPA and any NJTPA-sponsored program or organization, can expect the following accommodations to be made to the extent that resources allow:

- Materials developed to inform the public about NJTPA activities and work products, such as presentations, posters, and pamphlets, include easy to understand language and visualization techniques.
- Events are held in venues that are accessible and comfortable for individuals with disabilities. Attendees can request additional assistance or accommodation by contacting the NJTPA at least 7 business days in advance of the event.
- As location permits, events are held in venues that are reachable via public transportation. Board of Trustees and committee meetings are generally held at the NJTPA's offices in downtown Newark near Penn Station, a major transit hub that provides bus, light rail, and train service.
- Individuals may submit comments via a recording or staff transcription of their spoken remarks either before, during or after an event. The NJTPA also accepts comments by phone and e-mail through the contacts listed in [Figure 4](#).
- Upon request, accommodations may be made for the hearing impaired. Requests should be made at least 7 business days prior to the event.
- Electronic content that is made available to the public through the NJTPA website conforms to Section 508 standards which enhance the ability of individuals with disabilities to access and use information.
- The NJTPA analyzes project areas to determine the need for translated informational materials or language interpreters at events. If a large number of area residents speak a language other than English, certain events may be conducted partially or entirely in that language to the extent that resources allow. Refer to [Appendix 6](#) for more information.

Figure 4

To request assistance in accessing information or attending an event:

Call 973-639-8400 (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays)

Chapter 4: Public Participation in the NJTPA's Plans and Programs

The NJTPA's work in the transportation planning process is ongoing. This includes developing the federally mandated work products that are central to regional transportation planning, as well as other regional and subregional programs and studies conducted as part of that process.

The public can keep up-to-date on opportunities for participating in decisions about these plans and programs by connecting with the NJTPA via the methods described in [Section 3.1](#). The NJTPA makes the public aware of upcoming public comment periods, public meetings, and other outreach events.

Many of the plans, programs, and studies conducted or funded by the NJTPA are subject to specific public participation requirements, some of which flow from federal regulations, while others are particular to the NJTPA's process. NJTPA staff monitor and review public outreach conducted by subregional staff and consultant teams to ensure that outreach occurs consistently throughout the region and upholds the mission and goals stated in this plan.

4.1 Formal Public Comment Periods

The NJTPA conducts formal 30-day public comment periods prior to the adoption of three key planning documents: the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as well as the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the Air Quality Conformity Determination document. These documents are described in the next section, "Key NJTPA Planning Documents." Formal comment periods are also held when these documents are significantly changed or amended (for instance when adding or deleting projects, or in the event of a scope/schedule change that would trigger a new conformity analysis). A financial threshold and other factors, as described in [Appendix 5](#), determine when a formal comment period is required for changing these planning documents and how those comment periods are administered.

Formal public comment periods include the steps listed below to involve the public. However, the NJTPA often goes above and beyond these minimum requirements in striving to use innovative and effective outreach strategies that exceed federal requirements.

- Institute a 30-day comment period on the documents listed above during which written comments can be submitted.
- Place notification in the legal section of regional daily newspapers. The notification will include information on how to obtain copies of documents, any public meetings, workshops or forums scheduled, the schedule for the public comment period, how to submit written comments and a Central Staff contact for additional information.
- Place notification on the NJTPA's website and social media platforms with an option for submitting comments via e-mail.
- Provide notification to a listing of representative interest groups, stakeholders, and agencies in the region.
- Post documents on the agency's website.

- Distribute documents to select State Documents Depository Libraries and other libraries throughout the region. These libraries are listed in [Appendix 4](#).
- A summary of oral and written comments received during the course of the above procedures are furnished, with responses and Central Staff summaries, to the voting members of the NJTPA Board of Trustees prior to their taking action to finalize the work product. The complete comments and staff summaries with responses are made available to the public upon request and posted on the NJTPA website.
- If a final major work product differs significantly from the one made available for public comment by the NJTPA, an additional opportunity for public comment is provided. A summary report including the disposition of significant comments is made part of the final document. This report will include documentation of any direct impact of public comments and other public participation activities on the planning process and the final product.
- All documents are on file and available for public review during regular office hours at the NJTPA offices.

KEY NJTPA PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The NJTPA's role as Metropolitan Planning Organization includes the preparation and updating of the following documents as required by federal law. These documents maintain the region's eligibility to receive federal transportation funding:

Regional Transportation Plan

In order to receive federal funding, a transportation project must be listed in the RTP. In updating the RTP every four years, as required, NJTPA staff assess data, demographics, and trends to forecast the region's transportation needs over the next 25 years and develop a list of transportation projects and strategies to improve regional mobility and meet other goals. The Board of Trustees votes to approve the RTP.

Because it is a foundational planning document for the region, outreach activities for the RTP are opportunities for the public to get involved on the ground floor of the planning process. The NJTPA uses a variety of innovative strategies as described in this PEP to engage the public in preparation of the updated RTP.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a four-year, fiscally constrained agenda of prioritized transportation improvement projects drawn from the RTP. The TIP also contains six years of "unconstrained" project information; the state produces a 10-year capital program). Essentially, the TIP functions as the short-term element of the RTP. It includes a detailed funding schedule and information onfor an information on a wide range of road, bridge, rail, bicycle/pedestrian and other surface transportation projects. To be eligible for federal funds, projects must be included in the TIP. The TIP is updated every two years to reflect funding and project prioritization decisions, and it may be modified or amended as needed.

Air Quality Conformity Determination

Regions such as the NJTPA's, parts of which have been designated as in "non-attainment" of federal air quality standards, are required under federal law to take special steps to reduce pollutants. At a minimum of every two years, the NJTPA demonstrates that the projects it approves through its TIP and RTP collectively do not have an adverse impact on the region's air quality and support the air quality goals in the New Jersey State Implementation Plan (SIP) to meet and maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

To demonstrate TIP/SIP "conformity," the NJTPA uses computer modeling to estimate the emissions impact of approved projects. The Conformity Determination is performed at least every two years in conjunction with development of the TIP. A new Conformity Determination may be required when the RTP or TIP is amended, depending on the exact nature of the change.

Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) describes all transportation and related planning activities to be conducted by the NJTPA's central staff, member agencies and other transportation agencies in the region. The document outlines the transportation planning studies and activities that will support the TIP and the RTP. It covers a two-year period, and is updated annually.

Proposed updates to the UPWP are released to the public each fall and discussed at NJTPA committee meetings, offering many opportunities for public input.

One volume of the UPWP is the Study and Development Program. This program guides work to explore project needs and often involves exploring alternative conceptual designs and routes. Other volumes of the UPWP cover work conducted by NJTPA subregions, Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) and other transportation agencies around the region.

4.2 Participation in Together North Jersey

The NJTPA plays an ongoing role in leading Together North Jersey, a coalition of nearly 100 diverse partners — non-profits, government agencies, educational institutions, businesses, elected officials, community activists and others — who work together to improve opportunities for residents and businesses in the NJTPA region.

After collecting extensive public input, Together North Jersey in 2015 released the region's first-ever comprehensive plan that seeks to make the region more competitive, efficient, livable and resilient. The recommendations and strategies in TNJ plan are a source of guidance and insight for the NJTPA's planning and programming.

Any resident of the NJTPA region can join Together North Jersey. Members work together to discuss, develop, and facilitate the actions that are outlined in the TNJ Plan and participate in the following activities:

4.2a Task Force Meetings

Together North Jersey has established four task forces that shepherd and guide the implementation of the goals and strategies identified in the Together North Jersey Plan. There is one task force for each key vision theme:

- Competitive
- Resilient
- Livable
- Efficient

The four task forces meet approximately four times per year. Meeting locations include the NJTPA offices and Rutgers University campuses in New Brunswick and Newark. When a task force identifies a specific topic that warrants dedicated action or enquiry, several members are appointed to a subcommittee that may work together more frequently.

4.2b Together North Jersey Institute

Together North Jersey members are also involved in the Together North Jersey Institute (TNJ Institute), which sponsors a series of technical assistance and training activities designed to enhance the capacity of counties, municipalities, nonprofits and others within the region. The TNJ Institute's purpose is to advance implementation of the Together North Jersey Plan by disseminating the necessary training and knowledge to those wishing to act on the plan's recommended strategies. The NJTPA distributes information about TNJ Institute opportunities through its social media channels and email lists.

4.3 Participation in Regional and Subregional Programs

The NJTPA oversees a variety of programs that study and address mobility needs identified in the RTP. These transportation planning activities are carried out by the NJTPA's central staff and staff of the 15 subregions and eight statewide Transportation Management Associations (TMAs). Consultants are often retained to assist in these activities. The NJTPA will work with the subregions and TMAs to seek opportunities for greater public participation at the subregional level.

Subregional transportation planning activities — funded in all or in part by the NJTPA, including major projects or studies — must include opportunities for the public to be involved. The adequacy of plans for public engagement will be among the criteria evaluated by the NJTPA in awarding competitive funding. Funds disbursed to the subregions on a formula basis through the NJTPA's annual Subregional Transportation Planning Program should be used to encourage local public involvement and input into transportation planning activities. Stakeholders, other subregional and agency staff and local officials should be included.

To achieve meaningful public participation, each subregion must have in place a mechanism or forum for the open exchange of views and information. In particular, the subregions should facilitate public outreach on a wide range of issues, including transportation needs, projects, safety concerns and coordinated land use and transportation studies. Some examples are:

- transportation committees

- special outreach efforts
- community support through the media
- law enforcement groups
- business groups
- chambers of commerce and other civic organizations
- public relations efforts

When subregional staff or consultants develop outreach procedures or a public participation plan for a project, they should use the guidance and resources provided in **Chapter 5** and on the NJTPA website. Use of this guidance ensures that opportunities for public participation at the subregional level are effective, appropriate, and responsive to the needs of the local population. NJTPA staff will review outreach efforts in the subregions, including project-specific public participation plans, as needed to ensure that they are in keeping with the mission and goals stated in this plan.

To augment these efforts, NJTPA central staff will coordinate with the subregions and municipal governments regarding meetings for NJTPA corridor studies or major work products, and central staff will be available for meetings throughout the region as appropriate. The NJTPA will also promote the role of Trustees at subregional meetings, area-specific corridor studies and other project-specific studies. For corridor-specific projects, as appropriate, the NJTPA will also seek to meet with elected officials, including municipal representatives and members of the State Legislature, to understand their constituent concerns and get their input into the planning process.

The following sections describe the NJTPA’s key regional and subregional programs and studies:

4.3a Regional Studies

The NJTPA conducts a variety of studies focused on transportation issues identified in the RTP. From the adequacy of freight facilities to promising applications of new traffic control technologies to forecasts of future trends and conditions, the studies explore issues that affect the entire NJTPA region.

4.3b Subregional Studies Program

This is a competitive program that provides two-year grants to individual subregions or subregional teams. The program is designed to assist subregions in refining and developing transportation improvement strategies rooted in the RTP.

4.3c Subregional Transportation Planning Program

This program provides formula-based funding to each subregion for essential transportation planning, programming and administrative activities that support programs and projects identified in the RTP and UPWP. These activities include collecting data, analyzing project needs and facilitating public participation.

4.3d Transportation Management Associations

The NJTPA oversees all eight transportation management associations (TMAs) in the State of New Jersey, including those outside the NJTPA region. The TMAs work with employers and the public sector

to help provide effective and efficient commuting and other transportation options. The NJTPA oversees the development of annual TMA work programs and coordinates activities among the TMAs, the subregions, NJ TRANSIT, NJDOT and other partners in regional mobility.

4.3e Street Smart NJ

Street Smart NJ is a statewide pedestrian safety education campaign coordinated by the NJTPA. The campaign uses education and enforcement to change motorist and pedestrian behavior to reduce the incidence of crashes. With support from the NJTPA, TMAs and the NJTPA subregions, dozens of municipalities have initiated local campaigns. The NJTPA and its partners are actively seeking to expand to other communities. During each local effort, campaign organizers seek active public input and participation. There is also extensive social media promotion for each campaign. Further information is available at BeStreetSmartNJ.org. Interested communities should reach out to the NJTPA to discuss possible campaigns.

4.4 Participation in Capital Programming and Local Projects

Much of the NJTPA's transportation planning focuses on identifying location-specific mobility needs and strategies to address them. The NJTPA's local programs support the work of the subregions in developing plans for local projects so that they can be included in the TIP and receive funding.

Subregional staff and consultants should ensure that public involvement is a component of the development and execution of these projects by using the guidance and resources provided in [Chapter 5](#). As needed, NJTPA Communications and Government Affairs staff will review opportunities for public participation in local projects to ensure that they align with the mission and goals stated in this plan. In addition, when awarding projects through competitive funding programs such as those listed below, the NJTPA will review whether a project proposal includes a strong public involvement component aimed at ensuring participation from under-represented populations.

The following programs award funds for local projects:

4.4a Local Capital Project Delivery Program

This competitive program provides funding to NJTPA subregions to prepare proposed transportation projects for eventual construction. The subregions identify problems and needs and develop projects through the various phases of this program.

4.4b Local Safety and High Risk Rural Roads Programs

These competitive programs provide funds to the subregions for high-impact safety improvements on local facilities. They range from pedestrian improvements in New Jersey's largest cities to skid-prevention treatments on winding country roads.

Chapter 5: Public Engagement Best Practices and Resources

Effective public engagement takes careful planning. NJTPA project and program managers should coordinate with NJTPA Communications staff on their public outreach plans to ensure they align with the goals of this Plan. This section of the guide should be used when a program or project is initiated to ensure that the public is involved in a meaningful way. It applies to all NJTPA-funded activities, including those undertaken by subregional staff, TMAs and consultants. This section also provides the public with insight into the NJTPA's considerations when planning for public engagement.

5.1 Overview of the Public Engagement Toolkit

Drawing from a multi-year research effort conducted in partnership with Rutgers University, the NJTPA has developed a Public Engagement Toolkit to easily connect practitioners with the best practices in planning and implementing engagement. Available on the NJTPA's website at www.NJTPA.org/Engage, the Public Engagement Toolkit includes:

- a comprehensive database of hundreds of tools and techniques
- worksheets to guide the user through planning and executing different phases of engagement
- factsheets on innovative engagement strategies with insights into and examples of their use
- reports on feedback received from eight focus groups, each representative of a different population, on effective outreach strategies and messaging
- reports from interviews conducted with the practitioners of innovative outreach projects and programs

The Toolkit can be used by any person looking for guidance in designing and implementing a public engagement plan. Central staff, subregional staff, and consultants should consult the Toolkit when forming NJTPA-funded project- and program-specific public engagement plans. The process of creating a plan is detailed in the following section.

5.2 Using the Toolkit to Develop a Public Participation Plan

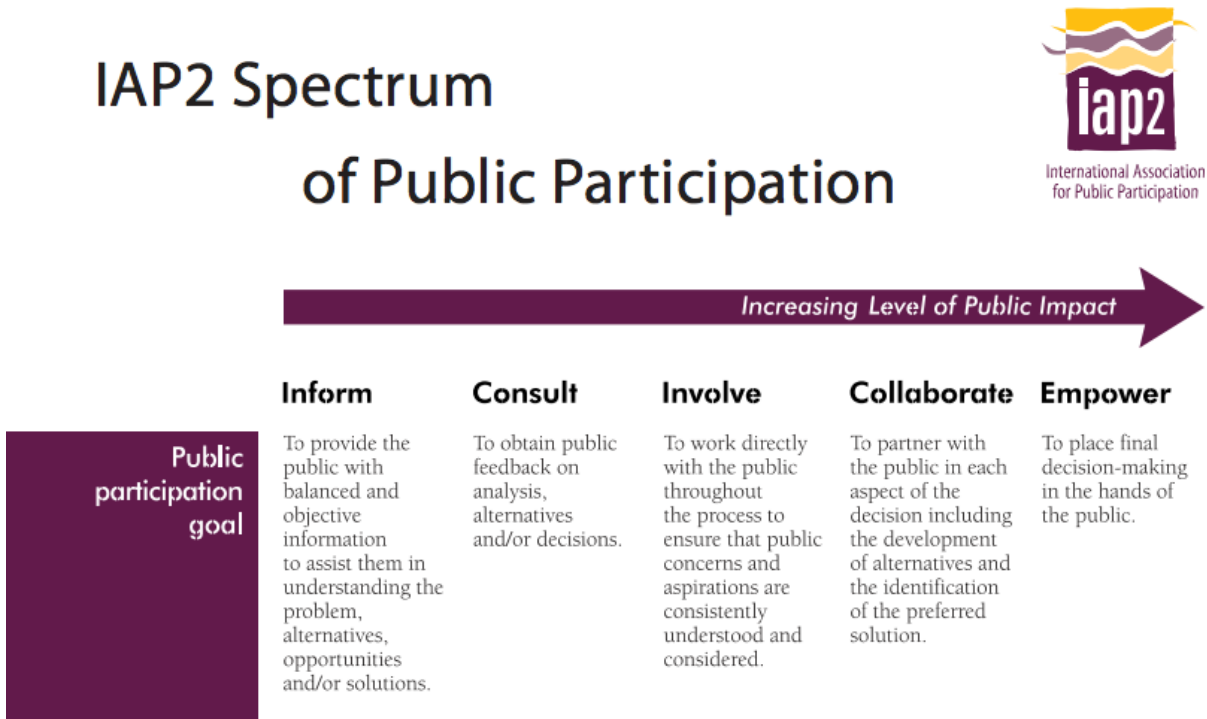
A public participation plan ensures the needs of the affected population are considered in the development and execution of a project or program. The public participation plan identifies the desired objectives for public participation, the key populations and stakeholders in the project area, appropriate strategies to achieve the desired objective, how follow-up with participants will occur, and success measures for each outreach tool.

The following sections describe the steps of developing a public participation plan utilizing the resources available through the Toolkit. While this section provides a general overview of how to develop a plan, practitioners can turn to the Toolkit for more detailed guidance on each stage of writing and implementing a public participation plan.

5.2a Identify the Objective

Successful engagement begins when the project team clearly understands the desired goal of the engagement they will conduct. A well-defined objective is crucial because it will guide the development of other components of the plan, such as identifying appropriate engagement tools and activities. In addition, if engagement objectives are not clearly defined, the public may have difficulty understanding the purpose and expected outcomes of the activities they are participating in.

Figure 5



Source: International Association for Public Participation

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed the widely-used “Spectrum of Public Participation,” shown in Figure 5, that can help to frame the objective of an engagement plan. On the far end of the participation spectrum (collaborate, empower) the public has a more direct role in decision-making. These levels are typically used when the affected population is limited in number. The near end of the participation spectrum (inform, consult) reflects the participation levels most often seen in public processes. A project may incorporate multiple levels of public participation to achieve a community-supported outcome.

5.2b Identify Participants and Understand Demographics

Another important component of a public participation plan is to take a close look at the characteristics of the population within the project area and, as appropriate, those traveling to and/or through the area. Accurately defining the population’s demographic and cultural makeup, as well as special interests, is crucial for identifying what outreach strategies will be most effective. It is often useful to reference U.S. Census data and other resources that provide detailed information about the population in a given

area. If a project area includes people from historically under-represented groups, such as those with limited English proficiency or low incomes, then a more targeted outreach approach may be warranted.

5.2c Identify Tools and Techniques

The NJTPA has compiled, categorized and documented hundreds of engagement methods, from informational pamphlets to mobile outreach booths and online surveys to civic dinner parties. Many of these tools can be adapted to the needs of specific populations. Choose tools that correspond to the desired objectives of the engagement and that are best suited to the participants they are meant to engage. Especially, consider choosing tools that will make participation more accessible, convenient, or comfortable for individuals from historically under-represented groups.

Depending on the level of participation (as determined by using the IAP2 Spectrum) and the key audiences identified within the project area, it may be important to consider multiple engagement techniques or tools. If resources allow, develop special strategies that are specifically targeted to engaging people from under-represented groups, as this can be the most effective way to assure their participation.

5.2d Implement the Plan

Establish a clear timeline of engagement activities and determine who is responsible for carrying them out. This will necessitate coordinating with other parties to ensure outreach activities are well-executed and accessible to all participants. Important aspects to consider include: securing an appropriate and accessible venue, creating a comprehensive supplies list, planning the day's logistics, determining availability of technology resources (if needed), and ensuring that all those who plan to participate can do so. The project team should consult with participating community groups and leaders to ensure that these choices align with the needs and preferences of the activity's audience.

5.2e Demonstrate Results

Participants want to know what happens to the input they give. The feedback gathered during the engagement process can be compiled in an easy-to-read public comment report. The report should summarize the information that was shared with decision makers and describe how public feedback influenced outcomes.

Members of the public who have participated in conversations surrounding issues that remain unchanged may become discouraged and less likely to participate in the future. To minimize this, set clear expectations about how input will affect decision-making and, wherever possible, demonstrate how input was used.

5.2f Evaluate

In order to identify issues, measure success and adjust plans accordingly, it is important to monitor and evaluate a project throughout the entire process. To gauge how participants felt about the way they were engaged, consider adding a question at the end of an online survey or event comment form that asks for suggestions to improve the process. This knowledge can be used to guide how a method or technique will be used in the future.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Board of Trustees (2018)

- Angel Estrada, Chair, Freeholder, Union County
- Matthew Holt, First Vice-Chair, Freeholder, Hunterdon County
- John W. Bartlett, Second Vice-Chair, Freeholder, Passaic County
- Kathryn A. DeFillippo, Third Vice-Chair, Freeholder, Morris County
- Joseph DiVincenzo, Secretary, County Executive, Essex County
- James J. Tedesco III, County Executive, Bergen County
- Thomas DeGise, County Executive, Hudson County
- Steven M. Fulop, Mayor, City of Jersey City
- Charles Kenny, Freeholder, Middlesex County
- Thomas A. Arnone, Freeholder, Monmouth County
- Ras J. Baraka, Mayor, City of Newark
- John P. Kelly, Freeholder, Ocean County
- Mark Caliguire, Freeholder, Somerset County
- Carl Lazzaro, Freeholder, Sussex County
- Jason Sarnoski, Freeholder, Warren County
- Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Transportation
- Kevin Corbett, Executive Director, NJ TRANSIT
- Kevin O'Toole, Chairman, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
- Brian T. Wilton, Deputy Chief Counsel, Governor's Authorities Unit
- Jamie LeFrak, Citizens' Representative

Appendix 2 – Legislation Regarding Public Participation in Transportation Planning Processes

Several important pieces of federal legislation mandate that MPOs, states, or federal agencies seek public involvement in transportation decision-making and seek to engage underserved populations. Forming the foundation of most public participation requirements for public agencies are two principal laws: [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), which addresses rights of people based on race, color, or national origin, and the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) of 1990, which addresses the rights of people with disabilities. Both laws prohibit discrimination against protected groups by any programs and agencies receiving federal funding.

MPOs Must Seek Public Input

The current public participation requirements for MPOs come from the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the most recent surface transportation legislation. FTA summarizes these requirements as follows: "a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is required to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation, and consultation," including throughout the development of its long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under this requirement, "MPOs must allow

for: adequate public notice of public participation activities; review and comment at key decision points in the development of the [RTP] and TIP; and multiple, accessible participation formats, including electronic and in-person.”

To this end, MPOs are required to “develop a collaborative and comprehensive Public Participation Plan, in full collaboration with the public and stakeholder communities, to be used in the development of the [RTP] and TIP, as well as to frame the strategies for public and stakeholder communication and collaboration in all phases of the planning process. The Participation Plan itself must be prepared by the MPO with a 45-day public review and comment period.” Further, in addition to holding public meetings that are accessible and convenient to the public, with adequate public notice and with information available online, MPOs also are required to solicit the needs of traditionally underserved populations and seriously consider the public input it receives.

Carrying forward mandates from previous laws, the FAST Act requires that when developing a program the MPO, in cooperation with the state, should “provide citizens, affected public agencies... representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed program.” States should do the same when developing a long-range transportation plan.

It also requires that public meetings must be accessible and convenient for the public, include adequate notice, and have information available online. The agency must also solicit the needs of traditionally underserved populations and seriously consider the public input it receives.

Regulations implementing federal laws specify further requirements. [The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, §450](#) provides planning standards for transportation projects. §450.316 states that MPOs must have plans for engaging the public, agencies, and other transportation stakeholders. The document should address the MPO’s strategies for providing notice of hearings, making hearings convenient to attend, receiving public feedback, and reaching populations “traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems.”

All states receiving federal highway funding must, under the [Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 §771.111](#), provide “early and continuing opportunities” to give the public an opportunity to identify potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed project. A public hearing must be held when a project receiving federal aid will: result in certain changes to roadway layouts or functions, negatively affect abutting property, and cause significant environmental, social, and economic effects. The hearing must be given with reasonable notice and must explain the project’s purpose, potential alternatives, and anticipated impacts, as well as the proposing agency’s procedures for receiving public comment.

Federal Agencies Must Reach Out to Minority Populations

[Executive Order 12898](#), “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” specifies the obligations of federal agencies (including federally funded MPOs) to examine the health and environmental effects of their proposed programs on minority and underserved populations. Each agency should ensure that communications related to the environment

or public health are “concise, understandable, and readily accessible to the public” and translated into other languages “whenever practicable and appropriate.”

Federal Agencies Must Engage LEP Individuals

[Executive Order 13166](#) addresses engagement of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals: “Each Federal agency shall prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons.” The Order allows agencies significant freedom in crafting their own plans, but provides some more specific guidance in its policy guidance document, “Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons.”

Appendix 3 – Social Media Comment Policy

The NJTPA’s social media channels provide an opportunity for sharing and discussing information about the NJTPA, regional transportation planning, and related programs and activities. Comments and opinions expressed by users of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are theirs alone and do not reflect the opinions of the NJTPA or its employees. All public comments made on social media pages managed by the NJTPA and the staff of NJTPA-sponsored programs, including consultants and grant recipients, must be reviewed and screened in accordance with the NJTPA social media use policy below. The NJTPA encourages members of the public to submit their questions, comments, and concerns, but please note that all NJTPA social media channels are moderated online discussion sites, not a public forum.

External User Guidelines

1. The NJTPA does not allow graphic, obscene, explicit, racial or otherwise discriminatory comments or submissions, nor do we allow comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization.
2. The NJTPA does not allow solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency. Similarly, the NJTPA does not allow attempts to defame or defraud any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency.
3. The NJTPA does not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.
4. NJTPA social media channels are not open to comments promoting or opposing any person campaigning for election to a political office or promoting or opposing any ballot proposition.
5. All NJTPA social media authors and public commentators must be clearly identified. Anonymous postings are not allowed. Personal responsibility for comments is assumed, according to username and any information provided.
6. The NJTPA reviews all comments and reserves the right to discard messages containing inappropriate content.
7. Appearance of external links does not constitute any official endorsement on behalf of the NJTPA.

Comments will not be edited by the NJTPA. However, comments that do not comply with the NJTPA's use policy will be removed. The use of vulgar, offensive, defamatory (personal attacks), threatening or harassing language is prohibited, and comments or user accounts therein are subject to removal.

Public comments on NJTPA-generated content should be limited to comments related to the posted topic. NJTPA social media channels are not the proper place to express opinions or beliefs not related to subjects/areas in which the NJTPA conducts its business (i.e., transportation policies and programs).

The NJTPA encourages comments on content shared via our social media channels, as all viewpoints are welcome, but citizen participation must be constructive. If comments left on our social media postings are constructive, the NJTPA views those posts as an opportunity to engage, discuss, clear up misunderstandings, or otherwise work through whatever issues are presented. The NJTPA reserves the right to make editorial decisions regarding submitted comments, including but not limited to removal of comments.

The NJTPA responds to comments and messages on social media within 24 hours of receipt during a standard business week. The NJTPA also closely monitors our public email account, njtpa@njtpa.org, and quickly responds to emails from members of the public.

Communications made through e-mail and messaging systems within social media channels will in no way constitute a legal or official notice or comment to the NJTPA (or any official or employee of the NJTPA) for any purpose. For example, a post, comment, Tweet, or Facebook message that asks the NJTPA to provide public records will not be considered a public records request until being sent through the proper channels.

Comments on NJTPA plans and work programs to be entered into the public record must be submitted through the formal commenting process. The NJTPA does not consider comments made on social media platforms to be official public comment, though a summary of such comments may be included when the NJTPA reports on the public comments it received on a major work product.

As social media is a fast-evolving means of public interface, this policy statement is subject to amendment or modification at any time to ensure its continued use is consistent with its intended purpose as a limited forum. Questions or concerns regarding the NJTPA's presence in various social media channels should be directed to Melissa Hayes at mhayes@njtpa.org or 973-639-8438.

Appendix 4 – List of NJTPA Public Documents Depository Libraries

- Bloomfield Public Library
- East Brunswick Public Library
- East Orange Public Library
- Elizabeth Free Public Library
- Hunterdon County Library
- Jersey City Public Library
- Johnson Free Public Library

- Linden Free Public Library
- Monmouth County Library
- Morris County Library
- Newark Public Library
- North County Branch Library
- Ocean County Library
- Paterson Free Public Library
- Phillipsburg Public Library
- Plainfield Free Public Library
- Ridgewood Public Library
- Somerset County Library
- Sussex County Library System
- Warren County Library
- Wayne Public Library
- Woodbridge Public Library

Appendix 5 – Amendments to the RTP or TIP

Major TIP Amendments and Amendments to the RTP

An amendment to the RTP is required when a project is added or deleted or there is a major change in policy contained in the document. An amendment to the TIP is required when a project is added or deleted, or there is a major change in the project’s scope. Public participation for an amendment to the RTP or TIP (except in the case of minor TIP Amendments, see below) will include the following steps:

- Institute a 30-day comment period on the amendment during which the public can submit written comments;
- Place notification of the proposed action in the legal section of the regional daily newspapers. Notification will include information on the public comment period, how to access relevant information on the NJTPA website, how to submit comments and an agency contact for additional information.
- Place notification of the comment period on the NJTPA website with an option for submitting comments via e-mail.
- Provide similar notification to interest groups in the region as appropriate. For amendments involving location-specific projects/studies, the mayors of affected municipalities will receive notification as well.
- Distribute the document under consideration to the NJTPA’s designated libraries ([Appendix 4](#)).
- A summary of oral and written comments received during the course of the above procedures shall be furnished, with responses and staff summaries, to the voting members of the NJTPA Board of Trustees prior to their action. The complete comments and staff summaries with responses will be made available to the public upon request.

Minor TIP Amendments

A minor TIP amendment, which also must be approved by the NJTPA Board of Trustees, 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 unobligated 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 participation procedures for minor TIP Amendments include:

- Proposed minor TIP Amendments will be listed on the agenda for meetings of the NJTPA Project Prioritization Committee, which are open to the public and advertised per New Jersey's Open Public Meetings Act. The committee meeting agendas and supporting documentation will be made available for public review on the NJTPA website, and notification of online availability will be sent to the NJTPA's public electronic mailing list ("e-list").
- Following review and if recommended for approval by the Project Prioritization Committee, proposed minor TIP Amendments will be listed on the agenda for meetings of the NJTPA Board of Trustees, which also are open to the public and advertised per New Jersey's Open Public Meetings Act. Agendas and supporting documentation will be made available for public review on the NJTPA website, and notification of online availability will be sent to the NJTPA's e-list.
- At meetings of the NJTPA Board of Trustees, the public will be provided with an opportunity to comment on proposed minor TIP Amendments prior to action being taken by the Board.

Appendix 6 – Determining Translation Needs

As part of compliance with Executive Order 13166, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) outlined steps that DOT funding recipients should take to assess language needs and ensure meaningful access for LEP individuals. The following four-factor analysis can be used to determine translation needs:

- The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee.
- The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
- The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to people's lives.
- The resources available to the recipient and costs.

More information about the U.S. DOT's LEP guidance is available at:

<https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/civil-rights-awareness-enforcement/dots-lep-guidance>