



## Comments received on drafts of *Connecting Communities*, the FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program, FY 2026-2035 State Transportation Improvement Program, and Air Quality Conformity Determination with Responses

**August 27, 2025**

The NJTPA provided many opportunities for public input when developing *Connecting Communities: The NJTPA Long Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP). This included a plan website, online and paper surveys, virtual forums, in-person pop-up events across the region and targeted outreach to engage kids and teens, young adults, people with limited English proficiency and more. Information about the public input gathered through these means is incorporated into the draft *Connecting Communities* and detailed in Appendix C.

The draft LRTP was the subject of a 30-day public comment period (beginning on July 7, 2025 and concluding August 5, 2025) as required by federal law. The comment period also provided an opportunity for public review of the draft FY 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the FY 2026-2035 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the accompanying Air Quality Conformity Determination for both *Connecting Communities* and the TIP.

Before the start of the public comment period, the draft LRTP, TIP, and Air Quality Conformity Determination documents were distributed by mail and electronically (as requested) to the state-designated main libraries in each county in the NJTPA region. Also, the draft documents were distributed electronically to the NJTPA's Board of Trustees, Board alternates, members of the NJTPA's Regional Transportation Advisory Committee, the federally recognized Tribal Nations, and any other parties who so requested. The NJTPA also used its electronic mailing list, the list of people who participated in outreach events, and other stakeholder lists to distribute links to all draft documents, provide information about the comment period and announce opportunities to provide input.

During the comment period, the NJTPA held a virtual open house public meeting on July 17, 2025 in which 42 people participated. This meeting, preceded by a separate virtual public workshop on the draft Air Quality Conformity Determination attended by approximately 30 people, included a welcome "lobby," a general presentation (conducted four times during

the meeting), and a series of virtual breakout rooms in which people could ask specific questions and get more information about *Connecting Communities*, the TIP/STIP and Air Quality Conformity Determination. There also was a separate breakout room for attendees to participate in Spanish.

This document contains summaries of comments received prior to and during the 30-day public comment period as well as responses. The full text of written and voicemail comments is available on the [NJTPA website](#). The NJTPA thanks all commenters for their ongoing interest, engagement and participation in the regional transportation planning process.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

### Commenter: Andy Weiss

**Summary:** There is a need for bus rapid transit, particularly in Bergen and Hudson counties, and an extension of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail to Bergen County.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* highlights the need for strategic transit improvements and for funding to implement and operate them, such as in Chapter 3. Appendix A: Transit Needs discusses the benefits of extending the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail into Bergen County (page 7). In addition, bus service enhancements, including those in Hudson County, are mentioned on page 6. These comments were also shared with NJ TRANSIT who concurred with this response.

### Commenter: Jason Huang

**Summary:** Consider creating a registry of municipal government master plans that have made a commitment to creating active transportation routes.

**Response:** The New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center compiles a list of counties and municipalities that have adopted a Complete Streets policy, which can be used to identify towns that have a commitment to active transportation:  
<https://njbikeped.org/nj-complete-streets-policy-compilation/>

**Summary:** Provide financial incentives for demonstration projects or full design-build construction of small-scale projects to help municipalities improve sidewalks, crosswalks or install roundabouts.

**Response:** The NJTPA provides technical assistance to municipalities, which includes materials to install demonstration projects. In partnership with the state's Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) the NJTPA has supported more than 20 demonstration projects. Municipalities can apply to the state's Transportation Alternative Set-Aside Program, Safe Routes to School, and other federally funded programs to implement improvements.

**Summary:** Use the *Connecting Communities* website to publicize actionable output from the Regional Active Transportation Plan and to provide output of the Barrier Analysis.

**Response:** The *Connecting Communities* website is about the long-range plan. The NJTPA has a webpage and data and mapping tools that aim to advance recommendations of the Regional Active Transportation Plan, including sharing the Barrier Analysis. In addition, in the next year, the NJTPA will undertake a corridor study of select trail segments to advance recommendations of the Regional Active Transportation Plan.

**Summary:** Evaluate the inclusion of an Automated Guideway Transit system running parallel to the multi-use path within the Essex-Hudson Greenway. Add a reference to autonomous shuttles or vehicles to *Connecting Communities*.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* supports continued development of technologies that are transformative, such as automated or connected vehicles, and those that improve travel operations, such as connected traffic signals, real-time transit information, and public transportation automation. The draft is being updated to include a reference to automating public transportation.

**NJ TRANSIT Response:** NJ TRANSIT is working with partners such as the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in the development of the transit component of the Essex-Hudson Greenway. NJ TRANSIT continues to participate in several efforts and forums associated with the testing and analysis of autonomous vehicles (AVs) for use in passenger transportation. NJ TRANSIT recognizes the potential role of AVs as a transit mode and for access to trunk line transit. The agency continues to monitor AV industry developments and consider the readiness and suitability for potential use of AVs, safely, within the rigors of a real-world operating environment.

#### COMMENTS FROM LACKAWANNA COALITION

Sally Jane Gellert, Chair of the Lackawanna Coalition, submitted two pages of comments on behalf of the organization. They are summarized and responded to below by topic area.

##### Rail Projects

**Summary:** Should funding become available, there is a need for several rail improvements including adding passing sidings on the single-track Pascack Valley, Gladstone Branch and Montclair-Boonton lines and recently purchased right-of-way west of Lake Hopatcong; and full electrification of the North Jersey Coast Line. There is also a need to connect the new Andover station to existing rail lines in Pennsylvania. Explore reactivating passenger service to Elizabeth through Aldene, rather than turning this into a busway; and restore West Trenton Service to connect to SEPTA. Address the logistical challenges to advance the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Northern Branch project.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. *Connecting Communities* supports improving rail service where possible and as funding becomes available. The NJTPA will continue

to work with NJ TRANSIT to advance the agency's capital program. Some of these projects are highlighted in Appendix A: Transit Needs, including the Andover Extension, West Trenton Line (both on page 5 of LTRP Appendix A) and the Northern Branch (page 7).

**NJ TRANIST Response:** Proposed rail service west of Andover would be operated by Amtrak. The TIP comprises the transportation capital program for the MPO region and does not include operating funds for regular NJT or Amtrak services.

## **ADA Compliance**

**Summary:** Stations need to be made fully accessible. Start with small steps, such as wayfinding and automatic or push-button doors at all stations.

**Response:** The need to continue to address ADA accessibility at rail stations, as well as the many challenges of modernizing stations close to and over 100 years old, is discussed on page 5 of Appendix A.

**NJ TRANIST Response:** NJ TRANSIT has continued to advance rail station accessibility projects across its system as resources allow. Several projects are currently under way, and NJT continually seeks funding opportunities to advance new accessibility projects at its rail and light rail stations.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE NEW JERSEY BIKE AND WALK COALITION**

Tiffany Robinson, Trails Network Manager of the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition, submitted three pages of comments on behalf of the organization. They are summarized and responded to below by topic area.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety**

**Summary:** Providing safe options for walking and biking reduces the number of vehicles on the road, decreasing congestion and improving safety. These priorities should be reflected in the LRTP and TIP.

**Response:** Safety is one of the seven *Connecting Communities* goals and is a priority for the NJTPA in all its work. It should be noted that projects in the TIP can only be assigned to one funding category. So, for example, a road or bridge rehabilitation project may include safety or pedestrian and bicycle improvements, but these would not be reflected in the investment allocations, as the projects would predominately be considered preservation and categorized as such.

### **Trails and Greenways**

**Summary:** Commends funding for The Greenway and Transitway project in the FY2026 TIP, but trails and shared-use paths remain underrepresented in both the TIP and the LRTP. Support planning efforts to identify and prioritize trail gaps and connections as part of the North Jersey Trail Network, with the goal of incorporating them into future

TIP and STIP updates to build a fully connected active transportation system. Specifically requested funding local and regional connections to The Greenway.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. *Connecting Communities* supports trail projects. Chapter 5 of the draft (pages 77, 79, and 80) includes a priority action to collaborate with the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition on a study to prioritize and advance trail segments. This initiative, to begin in FY 2026, will build on the regional Active Transportation Network (discussed in Chapter 3 on pages 28-30) and will be an initial step toward creating a North Jersey Trails Network.

**NJ TRANSIT Response:** NJ TRANSIT's Secaucus to Meadowlands Transitway project will evaluate alternatives and develop designs for a rapid transit system between NJ TRANSIT's Secaucus Junction Station and the Meadowlands Sports and Entertainment Complex. The project will also assess options to enhance local mobility within the project area, defined as the catchment area between Montclair and Secaucus along the path of The Greenway – the former Boonton Line, with additional consideration of later stages that could extend to Newark and Jersey City.

**Summary:** Elevate the role of shared-use paths and trails beyond isolated projects, reflecting the role they play in improving the environment and safety.

**Response:** In Chapter 3, active transportation is noted as being critical to improving safety (pages 27-28) and as a strategy to reach the state's climate goals (page 41).

**Summary:** Develop a formal trail program or dedicate staff to trail planning to guide cross-county trail and active transportation planning and coordination.

**Response:** The NJTPA has many programs that support existing trails that are included in *Connecting Communities*. In addition to work related to the Regional Active Transportation Plan, the NJTPA coordinates the Morris Canal Greenway Working Group and is working on a pilot trail crossing initiative. These priorities are included in *Connecting Communities*.

#### COMMENTS FROM PHILLIPSBURG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Thomas McGuire, Executive Director of the Phillipsburg Housing Authority, submitted comments on behalf of the agency.

**Summary:** Public transportation in Phillipsburg and Warren County is unreliable and inconvenient. The lack of public transportation makes it challenging for residents without vehicles, particularly low-income individuals, to access and retain jobs. Restoring and expanding transit infrastructure in Phillipsburg is critical.

**Response:** The need for transportation options for all residents, regardless of income or ability, is reflected in the NJTPA goal to "Ensure the transportation system meets the needs of all communities." A discussion of housing and transportation is included in Chapters 3 and 5, with emphasis on the need to coordinate affordable housing with

access to opportunities. In addition, Chapter 3 discusses how the TMAs provide transportation services to low-income individuals and others. The NJTPA oversees the eight TMAs and can help coordinate with Avenues in Motion, the TMA for Warren County.

#### COMMENTS FROM TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN

Corey Hannigan, Active Transportation Program Manager at the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, submitted three pages of comments on behalf of the organization. They are summarized and responded to below by topic area.

##### Project Specific Comments

**Summary:** Supports projects that include bicycle safety elements: DB# 321, 19311, 98540, 99358, N1806, N2305, TN21007, X107, X185; also supports Sinatra Drive Redesign Project.

**NJTPA Response:** Thank you for your comments.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comments. They will be shared with NJDOT staff.

**Summary:** Opposes projects that include roadway widenings: DBNUM N1402, N1405, 14416, 99316, NS9802, 95023, 17419, 12303, 103A1, 99381, 08327C, 08327D, 16344, 97062B, 11415, 780B, 780A.

**Response:** DBNUM 780B is a project from the FY 2024 TIP that is substantially completed and is not included in the draft FY 2026 TIP.

DBNUM 12303 and 99381 are in the Study & Development (S&D) Program. Both mention exploring potential widening to address congestion and safety. #99381 is also exploring pedestrian safety improvements. These projects are still being developed and there will be opportunities for public input.

DBNUM N1402, 99316 and 14416 are bridge replacement projects that include widening of the span to accommodate such features as safe bicycle and pedestrian access and modern shoulders. They are not capacity expansion projects.

DBNUM 95023, 17419, 103A1, 97062B, 11415F and 780A are being widened to address congestion and safety concerns.

All comments related to NJDOT projects (which also include DBNUM NS9802, 08327C, 08327D and 16344) were shared with the agency.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff. The NJDOT project delivery process includes public hearings and local official briefings at which public comments can be provided.

**Summary:** Strongly supports the Hudson Tunnel Project, which is essential for regional mobility and economic resiliency. Requested New Jersey be prepared to increase state funding to cover any gap created by potentially rescinded federal funds.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

**Summary:** Work with Middlesex County on Easton Ave (CR 527) Safety Improvements to ensure bicycle/micromobility safety is included.

**Response:** This project is sponsored by Somerset County. It recently completed Local Concept Development and includes pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Middlesex County has been involved as a key stakeholder and has provided valuable feedback.

**Summary:** Work with NJDOT and Bergen County on Route 67, Route 5 (Central Boulevard) to Route 9W project to update the striping to include proven safety countermeasures to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and connections to George Washington Bridge bike path

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. NJDOT is the project sponsor.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff. NJDOT projects comply with its Complete Street policies and include bicycle and pedestrian facilities where feasible.

**Summary:** Support Route 9W, Palisades Avenue to New York State Line project. Please work with NJDOT to include physical protection (at least vertical delineation) and incorporate the recommendations from the NJTPA/NYMTC Palisades Shared Use Path Study.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. NJDOT is sponsoring this project, which is included in the S&D Program and still under development.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

**Summary:** Work with NJDOT and NJDEP to include a shared-use path on the Delaware & Raritan Canal Bridges project and ADA connections to D&R Canal Trail.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. NJDOT is sponsoring this project, which is included in the S&D Program and still under development.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff. NJDOT projects comply with its Complete Street policies and include bicycle and pedestrian facilities where feasible.

**Summary:** Oppose curb widening in the Route 57/182/46, Hackettstown Mobility Improvements project.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. NJDOT is sponsoring this project, which is included in the S&D Program and still under development..

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff. NJDOT projects comply with its Complete Street policies and include bicycle and pedestrian facilities where feasible.

## **Transit**

**Comment:** Include the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Northern Branch Corridor Project in the TIP. Extend Hudson Bergen Light Rail West Side line to Newark (as an alternative to widening the NJ Turnpike Extension to Bayonne).

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. The TIP includes projects that have been allocated federal funding. These projects are not yet federally funded and therefore cannot be included in the TIP. This comment was also shared with NJ TRANSIT who concurs with this response.

**Summary:** Work with the Governor's Office and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to restart work to extend the PATH train to Newark Airport and South Ward Newark.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. These comments have been shared with the Port Authority.

**Port Authority Response:** The Port Authority Board of Commissioners has fully authorized the EWR Station Access Project, which is now under construction, and has deferred the PATH extension project. As noted in Appendix A, the EWR Station Access Project will improve access, mobility and regional connectivity for the neighboring airport communities and includes provisions for a possible future extension of the PATH system to the station. **Summary:** Work with NJ TRANSIT to include rail electrification in the TIP.

**Response:** Appendix A notes that NJ TRANSIT's budget funds the ongoing replacement of equipment as it reaches its end of life. This approach also permits NJ TRANSIT to procure newer propulsion and fuel systems for vehicles and railroad equipment as they are proven to be feasible, reliable, and cost effective.

**NJ TRANSIT Response:** NJ TRANSIT is cognizant of the state's growth and its impacts on current and forecasted travel demand. NJ TRANSIT's efforts include a wide array of planned investments aimed at accommodating transit travel demand in the state, some of which are advancing through design and construction as resources allow. These projects, particularly those that address transit capacity constraints and service expansion, typically constitute major investments that are able to move forward if and when funding becomes available. Some major projects such as the Portal North Bridge and County Yard, both of which are located in electrified rail territory, have been able to move forward because substantial funding was made available by the federal

government. NJ TRANSIT continues to cooperate and coordinate with partner agencies working to advance major investments associated with the Gateway program, but many such projects are not yet funded. Expansion of electrification, along with other major, proposed transit investments, will require examination to determine feasibility and capital costs.

**Summary:** Increase STGBP funding for the Transit-Friendly Planning Program. It appears that this program is not funded at all under the current TIP.

**Response:** This program is in the S&D Program, which is why there is no funding identified in the TIP.

**NJ TRANSIT Response:** The Transit Friendly Planning (TFP) Program at NJ TRANSIT is dedicated to strengthening the link between public transit and land use through six key goals that are aligned with NJ TRANSIT's 10-Year Strategic Plan. The program strives to promote equitable, economically resilient, and environmentally sustainable development that improves the quality of life for all New Jersey residents. The five pillars of the TFP Program—technical assistance, public education and community engagement, partnership development, data collection, and program management—ensure that NJ TRANSIT supports the development of transit-friendly communities.

**Summary:** Increase STBGP funding for the Transit Village Program.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. This is an NJDOT program.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

**Summary:** Increase funding for Rail Capital Maintenance, Preventative Maintenance-Rail, NEC Improvements.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. These programs have several funding sources, including Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Urbanized Area Formula Program Grants (SECT 5307), FTA State of Good Repair Grants Program (SECT 5337) and state funds. If additional funding becomes available, they can be added to the TIP.

**NJ TRANSIT Response:** NJ TRANSIT's Strategic Plan (*NJT2030: A Ten-Year Strategic Plan*), is grounded in the idea that maintaining a state of good repair is essential to delivering high-quality and reliable service to NJ TRANSIT customers. With proper investment, NJ TRANSIT's infrastructure and equipment can benefit from targeted improvements in business performance, enhance the customer experience, improve safety, and make the system more resilient and sustainable.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

**Other Comments:**

**Summary:** Please work with NJDOT and NJDEP to include a full corridor study for The Greenway to help advance this project beyond the first phase.

**Response:** The NJTPA supports The Greenway, which is a transformative initiative that will greatly increase opportunities for walking in biking. Chapter 5 of *Connecting Communities* includes calls for increased collaboration between state agencies to advance this and other key projects. This comment was also shared with NJDOT and NJDEP.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. It will be shared with NJDOT staff.

**Summary:** Rockfall mitigation projects should be deprioritized in funding priority relative to bike/pedestrian safety projects.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. NJDOT is the sponsor of the referenced rockfall mitigation projects.

**NJDOT Response:** Thank you for your comment. We remain steadfast in our commitment to reducing all fatalities and improving the quality of life for residents and the traveling public. With a vision for a safer New Jersey, the department is deeply committed to eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries in New Jersey by 2040. Rockfall mitigation projects are also a vital part of creating and maintaining safe roadways for pedestrians, bikers, and motorists. Addressing safety requires a wholistic approach.

## COMMENTS ON BERGEN COUNTY PROJECTS

Richard Jones and Jim Jansen both submitted comments on four projects in Bergen County.

**Summary:** The TIP projects sponsored by Bergen County lack bicycle and pedestrian improvements. This includes East Anderson Street Bridge, Kingsland Avenue Bridge, Market Street/Essex Street/Rochelle Avenue and Oradell Avenue Bridge. Bicycle improvements are particularly needed on East Anderson Street.

**NJTPA Response:** Thank you for your comments. As noted, Bergen County is the project sponsor, and your comments were shared with the county. Bergen County sought funding from the NJTPA's Local Concept Development Program for the three bridge projects. This program explores various options for a potential bridge replacement or rehabilitation. All three projects include pedestrian improvements and bicycle compatible shoulders. The county received Congressionally Directed Spending funds for the Market Street/Essex Street/Rochelle Avenue project.

**Bergen County Response:** These projects have completed Local Concept Development and Preliminary Engineering. Each of those phases was about two years and included extensive public, stakeholders, and local official engagement. This input contributed to the selection of the Preferred Alternative during Concept Development, which was further refined based on feedback received during Preliminary Engineering, prior to the current final design stage.

## COMMENTS ON I-80 ROCKFALL/FIX THE S-CURVE STUDY

Several comments received requested that the NJTPA include a “Fix the S-Curve” study in *Connecting Communities* to examine safety, mobility and congestion issues along Interstate 80 (I-80) from Exit 4 to the Delaware Water Gap Bridge. Some of the comments also asked that the funding for the I-80 Retaining Wall Replacement Project (DB# 222360) and I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project (DBNUM 09545) be reprogrammed to concept development and included in the Fix the S-Curve study.

### Commenters:

- Warren County Board of County Commissioners
- Congressman Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
- NJ Senator Douglas Steinhardt
- Assemblyman John DiMaio
- NJ Assemblyman Erik Peterson
- Knowlton Township Committee
- Hardwick Township Committee
- Blairstown Township Committee
- Tara Mezzanotte, Founder I-80/611 DWG Coalition

**NJTPA Response:** Thank you for your comments. NJDOT owns, operates and maintains I-80 and we shared your comments with NJDOT. Given that I-80 is under NJDOT’s jurisdiction, their cooperation and support would be required to include such a study in our plan. A safety-focused study of an interstate would be consistent with the long-range plan’s goals and policies. Should NJDOT choose to pursue such a study, we would be able to incorporate it into *Connecting Communities*.

**NJDOT Response:** There have been previous requests from external stakeholders to realign Rt. 80 to eliminate the existing S-curve. Potential realignment alternatives were initially evaluated during the rockfall project’s development; but these were dismissed from further consideration given their extensive social, economic, and environmental impacts as well as excessive construction costs. The significant topographical constraints on either side of Rt. 80 – the steep slopes of Mount Tammany to the north and the Delaware River to the west – limit the potential for realignment of the footprint of the highway without impacting the Delaware River or adjacent parkland.

Given the critical environmental resources and constraints associated with this segment of Rt. 80, NJDOT prefers options that largely remain within Rt. 80’s existing physical footprint and right-of-way. Projects being completed along this segment of Rt. 80 are focused on improving safety along the corridor without realigning the highway as well as maintaining Rt. 80 in a state of good repair. For example, NJDOT has installed new speed limit and warning signs with flashing lights, completed pavement improvements, and tree trimming. As previously presented in public outreach efforts, options that

involve major realignment of Rt. 80 are not preferred given their associated adverse environmental impacts and excessive costs.

To maintain Rt. 80 in a state of good repair, capital improvements planned for this segment include two independent projects: the Route 80 EB Retaining Wall Replacement Project and the Rt. 80 WB Rockfall Mitigation Project. The Rt. 80 EB Retaining Wall Project will address critical needs associated with the retaining wall's existing condition. The project is needed to ensure the retaining wall meets current serviceability requirements and supports safe travel along Rt. 80.

In summary, existing conditions of the retaining wall that will be addressed by the project include:

- Areas of voids/undermining under the retaining wall
- Wide cracks and large spalling with efflorescence through and on the retaining wall
- Signs of separation and deflection of four to five inches at the northwest end of the retaining wall
- Erosion along the embankment
- Material loss, deterioration, and settlement of inlets and pipes in the vicinity of the retaining wall
- Severe corrosion of the corrugated metal arch culvert that carries water from I-80 WB to the Delaware River

The Rt. 80 WB Rockfall Mitigation Project will address existing rock slopes that exhibit physical and geological safety hazards. This Rt. 80 segment, between mileposts 1.04 and 1.45, has been characterized as having the highest rockfall hazard rating scores (i.e., highest risk) in New Jersey based on the Rockfall Hazard Management System that was developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

FHWA regulations outline three general principles at 23 CFR 771.111(f) that are to be used to frame a highway project. The action evaluated under NEPA as a Category Exclusion (CE), Environmental Assessment (EA), or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must:

1. connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope; and
2. have independent utility or independent significance, i.e., be useable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made; and
3. not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

In conclusion, the Rt. 80 EB Retaining Wall Replacement Project and the Rt. 80 WB Rockfall Mitigation Project each have logical termini. Both projects include rational end points for transportation improvements and for review of the environmental impacts.

Additionally, both projects have independent utility since they can function as stand-alone improvements without forcing other improvements that have impacts. The purpose of the rockfall mitigation project is to increase safety and to maintain the mobility of the traveling public by mitigating rockfall incidents. The purpose of the Rt. 80 EB Retaining Wall Replacement Project is to address the subject wall's poor structural condition and meet current serviceability requirements by addressing the wall's minimal reinforcement. Neither project will restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING – 7/17/2025

**Commenter: Bethany Wall**

**Summary:** Supports trail investments along the East Coast Greenway, specifically The Greenway project.

**Response:** Funding for The Greenway is included in the TIP. Thank you for your comment.

**Commenter: Cheryl Shiber**

**Summary:** Noted challenges in Teaneck due to jurisdictional complications with county roads and called for more connections and improved public transportation as investment priorities.

**Response:** It can be challenging to coordinate different jurisdictions for transportation purposes. Chapter 5 of *Connecting Communities* has actions to assist municipalities with meeting transportation needs and to continue and increase the NJTPA's efforts to coordinate agencies and jurisdictions. We will share your concerns with Bergen County.

**Commenter: Christian Nowell**

**Summary:** Asked how the TIP relates to counties and municipalities.

**Response:** Federal law requires all surface transportation projects financed with federal funds from FHWA and FTA to appear in the TIP. This includes federally funded projects or programs led by municipalities, counties and state agencies. These funds are apportioned annually based on formulas and guidelines in federal legislation to NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT projects and programs. Other authorities, counties and municipalities can also apply for formula and competitive federal funding based on eligibility requirements. As competitive funding is awarded to projects, they are added to the TIP.

**Commenter: Dennis Joshi**

**Summary:** Raised concerns about vehicle lanes being narrowed to construct bicycle lanes or sidewalks in Jersey City.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* supports Complete Streets, which are roads designed to make travel safer for all users, this includes vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Municipalities can use the NJTPA's Demonstration Library to install temporary improvements so that motorists, cyclists, and other roadway users can "try out" potential changes before making permanent changes. We will also share these concerns with Jersey City.

**Summary:** Asked if TIP bicycle infrastructure investments/improvements include e-bikes.

**Response:** The Pedestrian and Bicycle investment category includes sidewalks, bike lanes and paths, pedestrian crossings and greenways.

**Commenter: Lisa Lee**

**Summary:** Asked about the difference between the roadway enhancement and expansion funding categories in the TIP.

**Response:** Road Enhancement focuses on roadway improvements that do not add capacity to the network. These may include intersection redesigns, highway access/egress improvements, geometry changes, or other road redesigns that are meant to improve traffic flow. Road Expansion involves new capacity (including the construction of new roadways, connections, or lanes). Additional information:

<https://rcis.njtpa.org/investments/system-improvement>

**Summary:** Prioritize safety in projects and the TIP and align funding with recommendations from the Target Zero Commission.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. Safety is a priority in *Connecting Communities* and in all the NJTPA's work. It should be noted that projects in the TIP can only be assigned to one funding category. So, the Direct Safety allocations do not reflect all safety improvements being funded in the TIP. For example, a road or bridge rehabilitation project may include safety or pedestrian and bicycle improvements, but these would not be reflected in the investment allocations, as the projects would predominately be considered preservation and categorized as such.

**Commenter: Matthew Ford**

**Summary:** How do current TIP allocations compare to past plans, particularly regarding mode share, and whether they reflect the vision of the LRTP?

**Response:** The RCIS guidelines identify how projects and programs within each category should be planned and designed to help the region achieve desired performance outcomes. The allocation targets largely mirror current spending patterns, with some adjustments, and therefore reinforce past investment decisions by the NJTPA and partner agencies. Transit enhancement, transit expansion, direct safety

improvements, pedestrian and bike investments, and environment and climate investment have been given additional emphasis.

**Commenter: Maureen Crowley**

**Summary:** Advocated for The Greenway and emphasized the importance of trail investments.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. The NJTPA continues to support trail projects in the region, including The Greenway, which is funded in the TIP.

**Commenter: Michael Dannemiller**

**Summary:** Asked whether trail projects could be their own TIP category and asked what category includes active transportation.

**Response:** Trails and active transportation generally fall under the Pedestrian and Bicycle investment category. However, it is important to recognize that an individual project or program may serve multiple functions but only one (primary) category can be assigned to each project/program so active transportation work may also be included in other categories.

**Commenter: Paul Dennison**

**Summary:** Concerned about the impact the New Jersey Turnpike Expansion project in Bayonne and Jersey City will have on air quality and health. Said investing in transit could also have a positive economic impact, while also improving health.

**Response:** The NJTPA does not provide any funding to the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and has no involvement in this project. However, the Air Quality Conformity Determination for *Connecting Communities* and the TIP included this project due to its regional significance. The conformity determination evaluates all investments in the region, as whole, and determined there would be no negative impact on air quality overall. Strategies to increase public transit are included in *Connecting Communities* throughout Chapters 3 and 5.

**Summary:** There is a lack of safe bicycle and pedestrian access to Liberty State Park from the southern end of Jersey City, particularly Greenville.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* supports active transportation accessibility to parks, jobs, shopping and other locations through support for Complete Streets (Chapter 5, page 79). In addition, the City of Jersey City is using the NJTPA Subregional Studies Program to update its circulation element in 2026. These concerns have also been shared with Jersey City.

**Summary:** As chair of a Jersey City theater organization, he would like to partner on making walking and biking safer, which can also boost the local economy.

**Response:** Travel safety is one of the seven *Connecting Communities* goals and is central to the work of the NJTPA. This includes walking and biking access to transit and destinations including cultural centers, employment, health services, shopping and recreation. *Connecting Communities* Section 3.2 (starting on page 25) discusses safety issues and potential solutions.

**Summary:** Will funding and technical assistance continue to be available for planning, demonstration projects, and placemaking efforts?

**Response:** Yes, as detailed in Chapter 5 of *Connecting Communities*, the NJTPA plans to continue its many technical assistance programs.

**Commenter: Tiffany Robinson**

**Summary:** Complimented the NJTPA on its comprehensive public engagement for *Connecting Communities*, highlighting the On Air youth engagement activities. Asked if the NJTPA could share best practices for outreach with other organizations.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. The NJPA has a public engagement toolkit, called Engage, available at <https://njtpa.org/engage>. This includes tips for planning and executing outreach, focus group reports and a searchable database of tools and techniques, which we will be updating including new activities from *Connecting Communities*, like the use of a mascot, Sammy the Squirrel, to engage children. Appendix C: Public Engagement includes additional details about outreach conducted for *Connecting Communities*.

**Summary:** What is included under “system improvements” related to safety in the TIP?

**Response:** Many categories under the Systems Improvement group may include safety elements. For the specifics, please see: <https://rcis.njtpa.org/investments/system-improvement>. It is important to recognize that an individual project or program can only be assigned to one funding category, so safety may be incorporated even if the project isn’t assigned to the Direct Safety category.

**Summary:** How do public outreach priorities align with the TIP’s spending categories?

**Response:** Priorities identified during public outreach have reinforced the proposed *Connecting Communities* goals, which guide the target investment allocations.

**Commenter: Robert DeDomenico, CargoFish**

**Summary:** Has developed CargoFish as a limited goods movement utility prototype that could reduce congestion from deliveries/distribution while also reducing emissions. Encouraged the NJTPA to consider innovative, sustainable solutions such as this.

**Response:** The NJTPA appreciates your interest and innovation with technology. In Chapter 5, technology investments and research are noted as a priority.

**Commenter: Syd Chan**

**Summary:** Encouraged the NJTPA to use consistent terminology to distinguish between bikes and e-bikes.

**Response:** The NJTPA will update *Connecting Communities* to use more consistent language.

**Commenter: Tom Drabic, Sussex County**

**Summary:** There is an increase in luxury housing developments along transportation corridors in Sussex and Morris counties. This raises concerns of housing affordability, and the need to eventually manage congestion on highways with higher residential densities.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* discusses housing and transportation coordination, particularly related to affordable housing and transit in Chapter 1 (page 2) and Chapter 2 (pages 21-33). In addition, a roundtable with housing advocates and providers was held to inform the plan and is described on page 16.

**Summary:** The shift to remote work and flexible schedules is causing traffic congestion during the day.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. The changes in travel from the pandemic, including increased working from home, are noted in *Connecting Communities* (page 4).

**Summary:** Asked how fluctuations in federal funding could impact the TIP.

**Response:** Congress is working on a federal transportation funding reauthorization. The current funding, through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, expires in November 2026. It is too early to say how funding may be impacted. However, the TIP is updated every two years, as required under federal regulations, and can be modified and amended between those updates to reflect any change to funding.

**Commenter: Vito Gallo**

**Summary:** Concerned about safety for cyclists and pedestrians in high-density areas that are prioritized for transit-oriented development, where there is increased vehicular traffic and speeding. Asked if *Connecting Communities* could also consider how to engage municipalities who are allowing high-density development along arterial zones to comply with new affordable housing mandates. This is creating friction between the need for density and pedestrian safety, making it unsafe to walk downtown or to transit.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* discusses housing and transportation coordination, including in Chapter 1 (page 2) and Chapter 3 (pages 21-23). The NJTPA held a roundtable discussion with housing advocates and providers to inform the plan (described on page 16). In addition, Chapter 5 (page 78) includes a description of the

NJTPA's technical assistance programs available to municipalities. Also, one of the plan's priority actions is to increase support for municipalities.

**Summary:** Need safe bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to Liberty State Park. The NJTPA should ensure parks are not isolated or inaccessible.

**Response:** *Connecting Communities* supports active transportation accessibility to parks, jobs, shopping and other locations through support for Complete Streets (Chapter 5, page 79). In addition, the City of Jersey City is using the NJTPA Subregional Studies Program to update its circulation element in 2026. These concerns have also been shared with Jersey City.