





A CALL TO ACTION

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS of *Connecting Communities* identify a wide range of transportation needs in the region and present potential strategies to meet them out to 2050. Many of the strategies involve using NJTPA programs to support and improve transportation and land use planning by member subregions and municipalities. Examples of these programs as discussed elsewhere in this plan are Vibrant Places Planning for Emerging Centers Local Concept Development and the Subregional Studies Program. Recommendations in this plan also highlight the need for continued and enhanced collaboration among NJTPA members agencies, stake-



Point Pleasant, Ocean County

holders and the public to find the best and most efficient use of public resources—relying on performance measures and data analysis—to create a connected, sustainable future that addresses the needs of all travelers in the region.

This chapter details the priority actions that the NJTPA and its partners can take to realize the goals of this plan. It is derived from the needs and recommendations in Chapter 3, and reflects broad themes heard during the public engagement process described in Chapter 2. These actions require continued and strengthened collaboration with agency partners, counties, municipalities and the public.

Beyond capital projects in the TIP (discussed further below), the NJTPA will use annual updates to the Unified Planning Work Program to help implement the priority recommendations focused on planning activities and the early stages of the project pipeline. This work program guides the ongoing transportation planning activities of the NJTPA staff, its member agencies and other transportation agencies in the region. Tasks in the current (FY 2026) work program include new

rounds of subregional studies and local safety projects, assistance to municipalities in implementing Complete Streets, investigating concepts for key local infrastructure improvements and a host of other tasks.

The NJTPA also works with state and local agencies, communities and non-profit organizations to collaborate on initiatives that advance the region's goals. One example is the North Jersey Trails Network, an initiative of the New Jersey Bike Walk Coalition and the Rails to Trails Conservancy to envision and create an on- and off-road trail network in the region. Building on the ATP, the NJTPA and these organizations are identifying corridors for potential further study. This study is included in the FY 2026 NJTPA work program.

Many of *Connecting Communities*' priority recommendations, outlined below, are included in or can be considered for future work programs.

Planning

The NJTPA commits to continue and expand programs that support strong county and municipal planning that advances the goals of *Connecting Communities* and that can result in transportation and community improvements. NJTPA programs for municipalities and counties include:

- Complete Streets Technical Assistance, the Complete Streets Conceptualization Pilot Program and the Complete Streets Demonstration Library
- Planning for Emerging Centers, Vibrant Places and Transit Hubs
- Municipal safety planning that builds on county-level Local Safety Action Plans. This is a pilot program in the FY 2026 UPWP.
- Support for county and municipal resilience and emissions reduction efforts, including planning for EV charging infrastructure.
- Continue and expand construction assistance to counties that may lack personnel or expertise to usher projects through the federal aid process through the Local Capital Project Delivery and Freight Concept Development programs.

In keeping with federal and state guidance, the NJTPA will continue to use performance measures and data to align actions with achieving regional and national goals. Examples of this include:

- Considering housing and transportation costs in NJTPA-sponsored studies and subregional studies, as appropriate.
- Completing and using a regional zoning atlas to support coordinated land use and transportation decision making.
- Using the findings of the latest CMP to further explore local needs and identify potential projects that could be implemented, including evaluating ways to mitigate the impacts of freight traffic on communities.
- Using the RCIS as guidance, consider investments based on performance data and lifecycle cost analysis for infrastructure assets. Encourage proactive maintenance and rehabilitation of roads, bridges, and transit assets to extend their lifespan.
- Continue and expand research and pilot initiatives to advance the use of technology, including exploring new materials and innovative use of smart infrastructure.

Investments

The way forward offered by this plan foresees the investment of some \$123.5 billion through 2050, as discussed in Chapter 4. This averages almost \$5 billion per year (factoring in inflation), a reasonable and fiscally constrained path for future investment. If addi-

tional funding can be secured, the region could fulfill a more aspirational approach to improving transportation, investing \$5.8 billion per year. The RCIS (Appendix E) guides this investment towards priorities agreed upon by the NJTPA Board of Trustees and the public such as public transit, safety and targeted road enhancements.

Based on this funding, the NJTPA can implement the investments in this plan's project index and those that will be identified through the ongoing project development process during the life of this plan. This will involve regular updates to the TIP, through which federal and state transportation funding is allocated and scheduled.

The NJTPA continues to support major infrastructure projects—most notably completing the Hudson River tunnels and larger Gateway Program—to improve accessibility and mobility for everyone—as the most critical long-term investment in the region.

Connecting Communities advocates for other strategic transit enhancements to make more modal choices available in the region. For example:

- Support for first-last mile strategies such as shuttles and micromobility and transit-supportive land use, including bicycle and pedestrian routes to transit and safe bicycle storage at bus and rail stations. This is an especially important consideration when affordable housing is being created.

Rahway, Union County



- Encourage investment in technologies that increase accessibility, such as travel information or fare integration.

This plan recognizes the need to improve travel safety and reduce fatalities. In addition to the safety planning activities outlined earlier, the NJTPA will:

- Continue to work with NJDOT to expand the LSP/HRRR programs, including local safety engineering assistance. These programs assist NJTPA member counties and cities in advancing priority safety improvements on local roads.
- Continue and expand pilot safety programs that address pedestrian lighting to improve safety; evaluate traffic signals and other intersection control devices; and expand an examination of roadway trail crossings to improve visibility and safety.

The NJTPA supports active transportation accommodation and Complete Streets in all projects. This builds on and implements the ATP network and the plans and recommendations arising from municipal planning support programs outlined above and discussed in Chapter 3.

Connecting Communities encourages investments that take advantage of technological advances to make the transportation system work smarter, more effi-

ciently, more equitably, and to make use of clean and renewable energy where possible.

The NJTPA supports investments that help mitigate and adapt to the disruptive and dangerous impacts of extreme weather hazards. This includes using the RIP (Appendix I) and Carbon Reduction Strategy (Appendix J) as guides to reduce emissions and effectively address hazards.

Connecting Communities supports continued robust funding for upgrading infrastructure and maintaining a state of good repair for road and transit infrastructure owned and operated by NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT and local entities.

Collaboration

Coordination and collaboration are central to successful planning and implementation. *Connecting Communities* recommends:

- Coordination between transportation agencies (NJDOT and NJ TRANSIT) and state and federal agencies making non-transportation investments, such as new schools, affordable housing or new parks, to incorporate transportation early in the planning process to realize the greatest benefits. Such coordination may result in enhancing placemaking, better accessibility, sidewalks and transit,

Hackettstown, Warren County



for example. Included in this is coordination with the Department of Community Affairs and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority.

- With a stabilized industrial real estate market, the region and state should strive to better plan for and manage warehouse and related development with local partners.
- Support efforts by state agencies, counties and municipalities to plan for, apply for and obtain competitive grants. The NJTPA will consider the need for additional regional economic development and transportation planning.
- Strengthen stakeholder collaboration to integrate sustainability into maintenance and preservation planning to address climate resiliency and enhance community aesthetics.
- Coordinate and collaborate with non-profit organizations to conduct planning work. One example is the previously mentioned NJTPA work to advance active transportation corridors in the ATP, which involves the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition and the Rails to Trails Conservancy.

This plan and the NJTPA engage in and support coordination to promote economic development. This will involve partners at many levels, such as:

- Cooperation through the MAP Forum across the larger multistate metropolitan area to address issues that concern the regional economy. One issue that requires this broad collaboration is the need to address the truck parking shortage.
- Discussion and cooperation between the public and private sectors on economic progress, including improved dialog and planning activities early in the development process to better mesh business interests with community needs. The Freight Initiatives Committee is an established forum for this dialog.

This plan supports priorities and investments being made by other entities, including:

- Investments and upgrades to facilities by the Port Authority with cooperation from terminal operators and shippers through the Council on Port Performance, in which the NJTPA participates. These discussions and the resulting improvements are vital to the future of the port.



Paterson, Passaic County

- Continued support of NJ TRANSIT's efforts to ensure stable and adequate funding for existing and strategic expanded services and operations, recognizing the vital role bus and rail transit plays in an efficient transportation system serving all communities.

Achieving collaboration on these and other priority recommendations in this plan will require sustained dialog and commitments by numerous parties. As an MPO, the NJTPA is well positioned to help foster and enhance regional cooperation—an especially important role as new challenges arise and needs and interests change. This plan provides a solid foundation for this cooperation and continued progress toward achieving a resilient, multimodal transportation system that meets the needs of all communities in the NJTPA region. ●