

# **NORTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AUTHORITY (NJTPA) AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009**

## **NJTPA PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS**

The NJTPA Board of Trustees consists of one elected official from each of the 15 subregions — the 13 counties and two major cities (Newark and Jersey City). The Board also includes a Governor's representative, the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), the Executive Directors of NJ Transit and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and a Citizens' Representative appointed by the Governor.

This is a summary of the process used by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) to identify projects in the 13-county northern New Jersey region to be allocated stimulus funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The NJTPA, the federally authorized Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 13 county northern New Jersey region, began efforts to identify projects eligible for federal stimulus funding prior to Congress' enactment of the ARRA. The initial efforts involved soliciting potential “ready-to-go” projects from the NJTPA subregions as well as through the New Jersey Association of County Engineers.

The NJTPA screened these projects in consultation with NJDOT (in particular, its Bureau of Environmental Program Resources and Bureau of Local Aid and Economic Development) and FHWA as well as the planning and engineering staffs in the NJTPA subregions. The screening sought to identify projects that met federal eligibility standards and could be implemented quickly. This initial solicitation resulted in an extensive list of candidate projects (with required documentation) involving a wide range of infrastructure improvements. The result was a screened list of eligible projects.

The listing of eligible projects was made available to the public in anticipation that a subset of the list would subsequently be funded. This list was the subject of a 30-day public comment in compliance with federal requirements regarding amendments to the federally required Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

With passage of the ARRA, Congress imposed strict requirements including that sub-allocated funds (provided to NJTPA) must obtain federal authorization within one year. Also, federal regulations specify that projects must meet environmental requirements, federal design and engineering standards, and be located on roads eligible for federal aid. In order to address these requirements and obtain authorization within one year, these projects must already have needed environmental clearances and permits in place or be able to quickly secure such approvals. The NJTPA screened list of eligible projects met these eligibility and deliverability requirements.

While the projects were under public review, the NJTPA provided funding allocations to each of the NJTPA 15 member subregions based on the formula that is used for annually distributing the Subregional Transportation Planning Program funds. This allocation formula included a three

percent minimum for distribution of the ARRA funding. The NJTPA asked each subregion to choose among the previously screened eligible projects to implement with their allocation of funding.

After a final round of consultations, the finalized list was developed and considered by the NJTPA Project Prioritization Committee on March 13 at a public meeting for inclusion in the NJTPA's TIP. New projects also were amended into the NJTPA Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). At a special meeting held the same day, the full NJTPA Board of Trustees acted to approve these changes to the TIP and RTP.