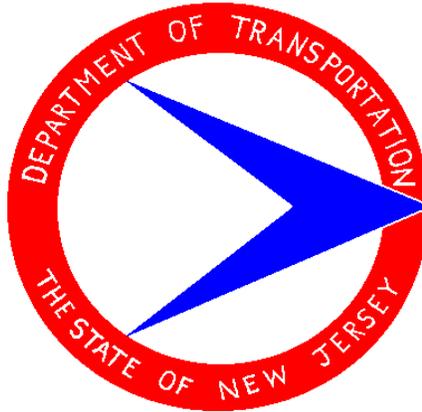


# **New Jersey Department of Transportation**

## **Division of Local Aid and Economic Development**

### **Centers of Place Grant Program Handbook**

### **Application Process and Selection Criteria**



January, 2010

**Chris Christie**  
*Governor*

**James S. Simpson**  
*Commissioner*

## **Introduction**

The New Jersey Department of Transportation Centers of Place Program is designed to provide funding assistance to municipalities who have formally participated in implementation of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). Such participation in the SDRP entails designation as a Center or Plan Endorsed Community by the State Planning Commission, preparation of a Strategic Revitalization Plan and Program that has been approved by the State Planning Commission, or entrance into an Urban Complex or Corridor Region officially recognized by the State Planning Commission. Eligible municipalities can be classified in the SDRP as an Urban Center, Regional Center, Town Center, Village Center, or Hamlet. Also, municipalities are eligible to participate if designated as a Pinelands Town, Village, or Regional Growth Area by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission. The program provides an opportunity to obtain funding for non-traditional transportation improvements that advance municipal smart growth management objectives.

## **Eligible Applicants**

A municipality may submit an application if it falls within one or more of the following categories of formal participation in implementation of the SDRP:

- *Municipalities with center boundaries designated by the State Planning Commission*
- *Municipalities endorsed by the State Planning Commission*
- *Municipalities with Strategic Revitalization Plans and Programs approved by the State Planning Commission*
- *Municipalities within an endorsed urban complex consisting of two or more municipalities and a designated urban center in the Metropolitan Planning Area*
- *Municipalities within a designated Corridor Region*
- *Pinelands Towns, Villages, and Regional Growth Areas*

## **Types of Eligible Projects**

The following five categories of projects are illustrative of the types of non-traditional transportation improvements which this program is designed to bring about in order to advance the planning agenda and vision of the municipality, with special emphasis on improving community livability.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities**

- Strategies which enable mixed use of a “Main Street” as both public space and a transportation link
- Traffic calming improvements
- Bikeways, bicycle lockers at transportation facilities, retail complexes, public buildings and public spaces
- Mid-block connections/paths to ease bicycle and pedestrian circulation

### **Scenic or Historic Transportation Programs**

- Waterfront access improvements
- Restoration and/or historic aesthetic treatments

### **Parking and Circulation Management**

- Parking pattern revisions
- Intercept parking facilities to relieve downtown parking deficit
- Signage for downtown circulation

### **Landscaping/Beautification of Transportation Related Facilities**

- Overlooks of scenic vistas
- Street landscaping and furniture
- Rehabilitation and improvement of circulation related elements of parks
- Improvements to public spaces functionally associated with or in proximity to transportation facilities

### **Rehabilitation of Publicly-Owned Transportation Structures**

- Rail/bus stations, ferry terminals, docks and boat ramps
- Tunnels, bridges, trestles, embankments
- Canals, viaducts, towpaths, locks

### **Ineligible Projects/Activities**

This program will not fund the following:

- Roadway projects eligible under the New Jersey Department of Transportation’s State Aid Programs to Counties and Municipalities such as resurfacing, rehabilitation or reconstruction, and signalization
- Right-of-way purchases associated with any project
- Operating costs associated with any project
- Planning activity costs

- Projects unrelated to transportation

## **Allowable Costs**

The following project related activities are eligible for funding:

- Construction including construction inspection and material testing according to the Transportation Trust Fund Authority Act
- Preliminary and final design for municipalities eligible for Urban Aid or Depressed Rural Centers according to the Transportation Trust Fund Authority Act

## **Application Guidelines**

Application will be made via the SAGE system found on the New Jersey Department of Transportation Local Aid and Economic Development web site. The major components of the application are the Scope of Work and the Data Sheet. The Scope of Work must include a narrative explaining how the project will meet each of the individual selection criteria described below. Applicants must include maps and are encouraged to enclose photographs in order to depict what will be achieved. Municipalities applying for funds that impact a county road shall contact the appropriate county officials in order to receive concurrence in the form of a supplemental agreement by resolution between the county and the municipality. Municipalities seeking funds that impact a state highway shall contact the appropriate Local Aid District Office for instructions on how to proceed. For eligibility, design or engineering questions, applicants are encouraged to discuss proposed projects with staff of the Local Aid District Office and the Office of Smart Growth prior to submission of the application.

## **Project Selection Criteria**

Projects are evaluated and given priority ratings based upon the following criteria:

- SDRP Transportation Goals – whether the project relates or connects to an existing transportation facility, promotes multimodal transportation options, and increases system connectivity
- Compatibility with Strategies and Policies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan – whether the project assists in:
  - creating distinctive, compact walkable communities that offer a sense of place
  - promoting the use of existing infrastructure
  - preserving agricultural land and open space
  - enhancing community economic development and quality of life
- Location within an Urban Coordinating Council (UCC) Target Area and/or New Jersey Department of Transportation designated Transit Village.
- Project Need – whether the project will:

- improve pedestrian and bicycle safety
- improve access to community destinations such as shopping, schools, recreation, etc.
- Commitment –
  - projects that are a continuation of a previously NJDOT-funded project
  - projects that are included in the County or Municipal Master Plan or in another transportation, land use, economic development or other plan
- Community Support – Up to ten letters of support from community organizations, citizens, levels of government and elected officials other than those of the applicant municipality, and any and all interested parties. Letters must be addressed to the applicant and must be dated no earlier than January 1 of the calendar year prior to the current. Letters of support from local elected or appointed officials are not eligible, as the resolution submitted with the application indicates their support.
- Coordination with other Funding Sources or Programs – Will the project draw upon other governmental agencies or organizations for committed or dedicated funding?
- Readiness to Construct -- Construction ready within 18 months from the time the grant is awarded (estimated schedule for right of way acquisition, permits, etc.)
- Applicant Performance -- Timely award and closeout of any previously awarded grant in any Local Aid program will be considered in allocating Centers of Place funds.

## **Design Guidelines**

For bicycle facilities, applicants must use the “New Jersey Department of Transportation Bicycle Compatible Roadways Planning and Design Guidelines” and the “AASHTO 1999 Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities”. All other transportation related facilities must meet minimum AASHTO standards and the “Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices” (MUTCD).

In the planning and design of the projects, the Department of Transportation requires the use of professionals licensed by the State of New Jersey. Qualified historic architects or archaeologists should assess projects involving historic resources. Applicants are also encouraged to apply the relevant principles from the New Jersey Office of Smart Growth’s publication “Designing New Jersey” in the design of the project, which can be found on the Department of Community Affairs Office of Smart Growth website.

## **Project Selection Process**

Applications will be evaluated and given priority ranking by the Centers of Place Review Committee. Among others, the Review Committee shall consist of representatives of the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the New Jersey Office of Smart Growth. Upon

evaluation of all applications by the Selection Committee, a list of recommended projects is forwarded to the Commissioner of Transportation for consideration and approval.

## **Program Administration**

Successful Centers of Place Grant Program sponsors must comply with the rules and procedures for administering contracts as contained in N.J.A.C. 16:20B and the “Handbook for State Aid” found on the NJDOT Local Aid and Economic Development website. The rules provide the requirements for preparing plans and specifications, contract administration, contract completion and payment, and audit requirements.

## **Contact Persons**

All applications for funding must be sent to the appropriate Division of Local Aid and Economic Development District Office. For questions concerning all aspects of the program, please contact the appropriate District Manager listed below:

### **District 1**

Roxbury Corporate Center  
200 Stierli Court  
Mount Arlington, NJ 07856  
Phone: (973) 770-5070/5068  
Fax: (973) 770-5172  
Morris, Passaic,  
Sussex, and Warren

### **District 3**

100 Daniels Way  
Freehold, NJ 07728  
Phone: (732) 625-4290  
Fax (732) 625-4292  
Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth,  
Ocean, and Somerset

### **District 2**

153 Halsey Street - 5th floor  
Newark, NJ 07102  
Phone: (973) 877-1500  
Fax: (973) 877-1556  
Bergen, Essex, Hudson,  
and Union

### **District 4**

1 Executive Campus  
Route 70 West, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002  
Phone: (856) 486-6618  
Fax (856) 486-6771  
Atlantic, Burlington,  
Camden, Cape May, Cumberland,  
Gloucester, Mercer, and Salem