



NEWS YOU CAN USE

Office of Planning Advocacy

Acting Executive Director's Message, Walter C. Lane, PP, AICP

Welcome to the latest issue of the Office of Planning Advocacy's (OPA) "News You Can Use." The Office of Planning Advocacy's dedicated team is pleased to highlight our accomplishments over the last few months to complete the work necessary to be able to adopt a new State Development and Redevelopment Plan by the end of this year. A huge thank you to all of our planning partners for their efforts in helping us reach this point.

We continue to look forward to working with all of our partners in the months and years ahead.

Office of Planning Advocacy Initiatives

Cross Acceptance Completed!

The December 2024 release of the Preliminary Draft of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) began Cross Acceptance, which is an interactive process that allows us to collaborate with local governments to get their input on the plan. During this process, planning policies, documents, and priorities are compared to the goals presented in the State Plan with the purpose of trying to achieve the highest level of consistency possible amongst municipalities, counties, regional entities, and the State. Through this process, stakeholders are able to partner to create a more meaningful and viable State Plan.

The Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) provided a Cross Acceptance Response Template (CART) for every participating municipality and negotiating entity to follow. Each negotiating entity, typically the County Planning Department (or, within the region, the Highlands Council), compiled the municipal responses into a county or regional Cross Acceptance Response which summarized municipal plans and policies. OPA reviewed these Cross Acceptance Responses, as well as public comment submissions, and highlighted essential items to address in the "negotiation phase."

Public negotiating sessions were held with each negotiating entity within a span of 25 days. At each negotiation session, the State Planning Commission's (SPC) negotiating committee met with the authorized representatives of each negotiating entity to discuss the items previously identified in order to improve upon the Preliminary Draft of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. In the negotiating sessions, there was a 97% agreement rate between the SPC's negotiating committee and the negotiating entities.

In accordance with the State Planning Rules, OPA produced two interim reports on the negotiating sessions. In all, there were a total of 555 items discussed. Of those items, 233 pertained to proposed changes to the State Plan Policy Map; however, the SPC has formally decided to pause all map amendments until after the adoption of the new SDRP in order to maintain the highest level of consistency with the updated mapping criteria. The remaining 322 items were summarized in the Draft Statement of Agreements and Disagreements (SAD), which the SPC approved for release on August 6, 2025.

The SPC approved the release of the Final Statement of Agreements and Disagreements on September 10, 2025. This action concluded Cross Acceptance, and ended the negotiating entities' responsibilities.

View the [Final Statement of Agreements and Disagreements](#).

Release of the Impact Assessment

The New Jersey State Planning Act (N.J.S.A. 52:18A-196 et. seq.) requires that an Impact Assessment of the draft State Plan be performed, and the results of the study be made available before adoption of a Final State Plan. The Impact Assessment analyzes projections of land use patterns and related socioeconomic impacts of the State Plan prior to its adoption. The SPC approved the release of the Impact Assessment on August 6, 2025. A "review and respond" period will continue through December 3, 2025.

Release of the Draft Final SDRP and the Draft Infrastructure Needs Assessment

The SPC approved the Draft Final SDRP on September 15, 2025. It was publicly released on September 19, 2025, and is posted to the [OPA website](#) for download and review. The Draft Final SDRP incorporates changes generated during Cross Acceptance, and is the last intermediary version of the Plan before the Final SDRP is adopted.

In addition to the release of the Draft Final SDRP, the Office of Planning Advocacy has provided a "[Companion Document](#)" that shows the changes between the Preliminary SDRP and the Draft Final SDRP. This was created to help stakeholders reviewing the Plan to more easily discern the changes made between the two drafts before providing their input. It is also available for download from the [OPA website](#).

Also on September 15, 2025, the SPC approved the release of the Draft Infrastructure Needs Assessment (INA). The INA covers information on present and prospective conditions, needs, and costs with regard to State, county, and municipal capital facilities--including water, sewerage, transportation, solid waste, drainage, flood protection, and shore protection--and provides estimates of investments needed to manifest the goals and objectives of the new State Plan.

The release of these planning documents brings us closer to finalizing and publishing the first new SDRP in nearly 25 years. The public comment period on the Draft Final SDRP and the Draft Infrastructure Needs Assessment is concurrent with the "review and respond" period for the Impact Assessment, ending on December 3, 2025.

Public Hearings

Last week, the State Planning Commission and the Office of Planning Advocacy held [Six public hearings](#) to actively solicit public feedback on the Draft Final State Plan. Four of the hearings were held virtually and two were held in-person. Interested parties and individuals can still provide comments on the Draft Final

Plan and Draft Infrastructure Needs Assessment by filling out [this survey](#) or by emailing stateplan.comments@sos.nj.gov.

Plan Endorsement

Approved Plan Endorsements of 2025

[Plan Endorsement](#) is a voluntary review process designed to ensure the coordination of State, county, and municipal planning efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of the current State Plan. This process expands upon the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) and incorporates current State policies, regulations, and priorities regarding emerging land use issues, including climate change resilience and environmental justice, to further advance the principles of smart growth, sustainability, and equitable prosperity for all of New Jersey's municipalities and residents.

Plan Endorsement follows a comprehensive [12-step process](#) to ensure appropriate benchmarks are met. During 2025, the SPC has so far approved the Plan Endorsement petitions of three municipalities: The Town of Newton, the Borough of Seaside Heights, and the Town of Dover.

You may visit the OPA website to explore these and other municipalities' [Endorsed Plans](#).