



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
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EILEEN SWAN
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

To: State Planning Commission
From: Eileen Swan, Executive Director
Date: January 11, 2007
Re: Ocean Township Plan Endorsement PIA Monitoring Report

On December 7, 2005, the State Planning Commission (SPC) approved the Plan Endorsement petition submitted by Ocean Township of Ocean County. The State Planning Rules require a municipality with an endorsed plan to provide a report regarding the status of their Planning and Implementation Agreement (PIA) efforts on a biennial basis. In this case, however, the SPC moved ahead the reporting schedule by a year, due to the volume of important planning activities within the first year of the PIA. This special provision was outlined in Item 1.4 of the PIA. Therefore, the Township submitted its first monitoring report and related planning documents on December 7, 2006. The Office of Smart Growth (OSG) distributed this material to other state agencies for review and comment.

OSG has monitored the PIA since its commencement. During the first half year of the PIA, the majority of items were completed on time or within a few days after the deadline, in spite of the aggressive timetable. However, the delay in the recognition of the Waretown Center by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), via amendment to the Coastal Zone Management Rules, has impacted many of the items from the six-month to one-year mark. Even for items not affected directly by the CZM rules (e.g. revision of redevelopment plans), deadlines had to be realigned to some extent to recognize related activities. For future PIAs, OSG, state agencies and petitioners should apply a critical path methodology so that inter-dependent activities are properly timed.

In many ways, Ocean Township has been a test case for the post-endorsement phase of Plan Endorsement, including the matter of coordination between the DEP and the Pinelands Commission on the territory in the Pinelands National Reserve outside the Commission's jurisdiction. Based on discussions with DEP and the Pinelands Commission, we expect that the process of designating coastal centers and proposing changes to planning areas will be smoother for Upper and Stafford Townships. However, as the State Planning Rules and the Plan Endorsement Guidelines are currently being revised, OSG will need to work with these agencies

to clarify what will be required in the period between the SPC's endorsement and DEP's coastal rule amendment for those municipalities in the both the CAFRA zone and Pinelands National Reserve.

For the immediate situation of Ocean Township's PIA, OSG seeks permission from the SPC to work with state agencies and the Township to revise the timelines for items that are currently pending or due within the next year.

The approved PIA was extremely aggressive in its deadlines, and this has been a learning process for all parties involved. To apply lessons learned to future petitioners, OSG recommends the following:

- The new Plan Endorsement Guidelines should outline a detailed post-endorsement procedure for municipalities in both CAFRA and the Pinelands National Reserve so that changes to coastal centers and planning areas can be recognized in a timely manner.
- As part of the Action Plan in the new Plan Endorsement process, there should be the option of a "permit preview" meeting to get a preliminary look at potential permitting issues for proposed centers and major developments in the pipeline. This meeting would bring in relevant permitting staff from DEP, the Department of Transportation, the County and other agencies so that obstacles can be identified and addressed in the plan/concept phase. The outcomes of this meeting should help structure the PIA timeline and help improve coordination between the planning and regulatory sides within various agencies.
- A critical path method should be rigorously applied to the PIA. The optional permit preview discussed above may inform this approach.