



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 820
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0820

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

LT. GOVERNOR TAHESHA L. WAY
SECRETARY OF STATE

THOMAS K. WRIGHT
CHAIRMAN

WALTER C. LANE
Acting Executive Director/Acting Secretary

**New Jersey State Planning Commission
Minutes of the Meeting Held on February 5, 2025
Zoom Video Conference**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wright called the February 5, 2025 video conference of the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) to order at 10:32 a.m.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

It was announced that notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting had been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Danielle Esser, Director of Governance, NJ Economic Development Authority
Joe Grillo, Designee for President Christine Guhl-Sadovy, Board of Public Utilities
Edward J. McKenna, Vice Chair, Public Member
Susan Weber, Designee for Francis K. O'Connor, Commissioner, Department of Transportation
Bruce Harris, Municipal Member
Nick Angarone, Designee for Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, Department of Environmental Protection
Keith Henderson, Designee for Jacquelyn Suarez, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs
Elizabeth Terenik, Public Member (joined at 10:43 a.m.)
Thomas Wright, Chairman
Melanie Willoughby, Designee for Lt. Governor Tahesha Way, Secretary of State, Department of State

Others Present through Video conference

See Attachment A

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Wright asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve the minutes of January 8, 2025, with non-substantive changes. Bruce Harris made the motion, and Edward McKenna seconded it. With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote: Ayes: (9) Danielle Esser, Joe Grillo, Susan Weber, Bruce Harris, Nick Angarone, Edward McKenna, Keith Henderson, Melanie Willoughby, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0). Abstains: (0) The January 8, 2025 minutes were approved.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Wright clarified that Commission members not present for a meeting are able to vote to approve the minutes. He stated that the meeting would be short as there would be no resolutions to approve but that there would be an update on the activities and public responses for the Preliminary Plan.

He then ceded the floor to Deputy Director Lane for his report.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Deputy Director provided an overview of the Office of Planning Advocacy's work since the January 8 SPC meeting. He reported on the following items:

- Staff is working with 14 municipalities toward Plan Endorsement. These municipalities include: Dover, Newton, Seaside Heights, Little Egg Harbor, Ocean Township, Woodstown, Ocean City, Salem City, Barnegat, Sparta, Dennis, Berkeley, Manchester, and Red Bank.
- The Office will hold a PIC meeting on February 19th. Staff plans to present Newton's Plan Endorsement Petition.
- Staff met with NJDEP to discuss Plan Endorsement mapping items for the following municipalities: Lakewood, Berkeley, Woodstown, Barnegat, Seaside Heights, and Ocean Township.
- The draft Salem City Planning & Implementation Agreement was distributed to DEP, DOT, and DCA and staff is currently awaiting comments. Staff prepared a draft Opportunities and Constraints report for Red Bank.
- Lakewood Township submitted their Biennial Review Report (with a map amendment request). Staff is reviewing the report and the requested map amendment.
- Staff is following up with Dennis Township regarding the status of their Municipal Self-Assessment and followed up with Ocean Township regarding the status of their Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee resolution.
- Work continues on refining the Plan Endorsement Tracking process and procedures.
- Dennis Township contacted staff to reengage in their discussion about Plan Endorsement.
- Staff developed a methodology document for developing the Trend Analysis and Build-out Reports. The draft methodology is being reviewed internally.
- Lakewood Township submitted its Biennial Review Report. Staff is reviewing the report and the requested map amendment.

The Deputy Director plans to distribute a draft of the annual report to the Commission for review and comment prior to the March 5th SPC meeting. At the March 5th SPC meeting, Thomas G. Dallessio and his colleagues will make a special presentation on the regional planning efforts of the Musconetcong Watershed Association.

Work continues on the Affordable Housing guidance document, the updated Plan Endorsement Guidelines, the newsletter, brownfields webpage, and the Standard Operating Procedures Manual.

Staff met with representatives from the NJ Center for Resilience for Coastal Hazards to discuss a potential grant opportunity/application.

The Deputy Director served on a panel at the 2025 NJ State Bar Association Redevelopment Law Institute discussing redevelopment and industrial development. He discussed the policies of the draft State Plan as well as provided an overview of the SPC's Warehouse Guidance document. There were questions regarding whether the Office was considering an update to that document. This is being discussed internally and will be brought back to the Commission at a future meeting.

The Office has or will participate in meetings such as but not limited to the following:

- South Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
- NJ Coastal Coalition
- Kickoff Meeting for the New North Jersey Trail Network Initiative
- Transit Village Task Force
- IAC Extreme Heat Coordinated Communications workgroup
- NJ Delaware Bayshore Council Meeting
- NJ County Planners Association

STATE PLAN UPDATE

Status of Activities and Public Responses to Date

Staff continues to work on the master calendar for the required 21, plus the Highlands Council, Cross Acceptance public hearings/information meetings. Twenty (20) of these meetings have been scheduled. The Office is awaiting confirmation from Middlesex County on meeting dates and locations in order to finalize the schedule at which time the March and April Cross Acceptance public meetings will be published in the prescribed newspapers. Due to the time of year these meetings will be held, backup meeting dates are being set for each county. Once the meeting schedule is finalized, the Deputy Director will share it with the Commission. To avoid a quorum, if any Commissioner plans to attend any public meeting, please inform the Deputy Director. The first meeting is on February 12th at 6:00 p.m. in Cumberland County at Rowan College in Vineland.

The Deputy Director thanked Jackie Rivera for doing a tremendous job handling the logistics for these meetings. He also thanked Sara Bennett for helping Jackie with the meetings along with the rest of the team for helping to prepare for all of these meetings.

Staff will work to finalize a detailed timeline for the Cross Acceptance process this week which will be released to the counties. In order to adopt the Plan in December, the schedule calls for the Counties to submit their Cross Acceptance reports by mid to late May. The December 3rd SPC meeting may be pushed back to December 17th to build some flexibility into the schedule. At this time, a PIC meeting is scheduled on the 17th. The Deputy Director asked the Commission members to place a hold on December 17th.

OPA continues to provide technical assistance to numerous counties and municipalities either through interns, our consultant, or internal staff. We are assisting 16 of the 21 counties. So far, 17 counties have accepted the role of Negotiating Entity (Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren). OPA is awaiting outstanding resolutions from Middlesex, Salem, and Union. Bergen County provided a waiver resolution and will not be serving as the Negotiating Entity for their county.

OPA staff continues to attend informational meetings with various stakeholders on the State Plan and provide presentations as requested. On January 13th, the Deputy Director provided an overview of the draft State Plan and the Cross Acceptance Process at the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority. Tomorrow, he will present to the Shore Builders of Central New Jersey and at a meeting organized by the NJ League of Conservation Voters and several other environmental organizations. Staff attended a series of Cross Acceptance kick-off meetings for municipalities hosted by Camden and Burlington Counties. Staff is working on developing a few potential proposals for the NJ Planning and Redevelopment Conference in June.

The Office staff continues to work with the Highlands Council to provide guidance and information to the Highlands Counties regarding Cross Acceptance responsibilities. Staff finalized a mapping protocol document outlining how to review the State Plan Policy Map and the Highland Council's Regional Master Plan Map during the Cross Acceptance process.

Cross Acceptance work programs were received from Essex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, and Warren and are under review. Staff approved Monmouth's Work Program. Per the State Planning Rules, the Work Programs are due February 12th.

Staff continues to make progress on finalizing a draft of a Citizens' Guide for the draft State Plan. Individual public meeting flyers for each of the 21 County meetings have been finalized and will be distributed to the counties to help promote the meetings along with a draft social media post.

Staff met with Rowan to discuss the State Plan Map Viewer and Smart Growth Explorer to ensure the most up-to-date data layers are being utilized. The Office has received feedback that these tools have been useful to the counties.

OPA staff continues to monitor and update the public comment log with comments received through various sources. Myles Elgart developed an automated way to collect and categorize comments from the State Plan Email Address and Microsoft Forms.

Deputy Director Lane plans to hold a Plan Development Committee (PDC) meeting in March to summarize the information and comments received during the February public meetings. Chairman Wright requested that the Commission members take note that a PDC meeting would be held in March, and it will be an important meeting to attend to obtain feedback on those early meetings. He reminded the Commissioners to notify Deputy Director Lane if they planned to attend any public meetings to avoid a quorum. Commissioner Harris asked if any documentation or reports on the public meetings would be provided. Deputy Director Lane responded that OPA staff will prepare a high-level summary of each meeting.

Chairman Wright thanked Deputy Director Lane and OPA staff for their incredible work and underlined how important outreach is to the State Plan Cross Acceptance process. The Plan is not done behind closed doors in secret negotiations, but in public to engage communities and private citizens in these discussions.

Chairman Wright asked the Commissioners if they had any further questions or comments regarding anything previously discussed. As no member commented, he opened the floor to the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Susan Bristol of The Watershed Institute requested that Deputy Director Lane restate or clarify whether the State Plan would potentially influence any changes to current redevelopment law in terms of policies on redevelopment in the State Plan.

Deputy Director Lane stated that he was part of a panel that talked about using redevelopment related to industrial development. While on the panel, he explained that one of the key tenants of the State Plan is using redevelopment as a general strategy instead of having sprawl development and greenfield development as well as reusing properties and revitalizing existing communities. Also discussed were the pros and cons of warehouse development in a redevelopment area, including community and environmental impacts. Deputy Director Lane also discussed how the State Plan tries to balance those competing needs as well as economic and community needs. He highlighted the Warehouse Guidance document and indicated that it may be updated soon.

Susan Bristol emphasized the fact that New Jersey's future depends upon redevelopment improving our environmental systems and the health of our environments and watersheds and hopes that's always a part of the conversation while discussing new capital or new uses coming into abandoned property.

Chairman Wright clarified that the Plan cannot itself rewrite regulations or laws. Deputy Director Lane agreed and stated that the State Plan is the overall policy guide that will influence local rulemaking and regulatory activities of the various state agencies.

Louise Usechak expressed concern that there was more discussion of watershed-based planning and protection in the previous State Plan and she's finding that in Monmouth County, there is development encroaching in key watershed areas. Ms. Usechak noted that over the past 40 years, this was paid more attention to, and there were more resources available. She further explained that they are water supply area number one in New Jersey and are still trying to recharge the deep aquifers that drop precipitously. Simultaneously, there is a spurt of new development of shopping malls, office complexes, etc. and she is not hearing much support at the local level for protecting the water supplies, which are not growing. In the 1980s and early 2000s, there was a great deal more concern and focus on watersheds, and there were watershed groups, communities, as well as environmental commissions. Ms. Usechak stated that she hoped that the State Plan would bring back the concern and feeling of collaboration and coordination between communities.

Deputy Director Lane stated that numerous policies in the State Plan discuss regional planning and collaboration, which is a hallmark of the draft plan. There are various goals in the State Plan, one of which is protecting our natural and environmental resources, including water supply and wellhead protection, and encouraging redevelopment instead of new greenfield development. Deputy Director Lane continued that the Plan is a guide for the municipal and county partners and believes that regional efforts are consistent with the recommendations in the State Plan. He emphasized that especially during the Cross Acceptance period, submission of comments regarding the language in the Plan is welcomed and encouraged.

Roberta from the Citizens for Informed Land Use in Holmdel, New Jersey commented that there is confusion regarding mapping which shows sewer service areas and future sewer service areas or sewer franchise areas in orange, but does not differentiate between the two. She reports that she has done the mapping for Holmdel and has found a significant difference, particularly in planning area five. Roberta requests a differentiation in the mapping between what is franchise or future sewer service area and actual existing sewer service area as accepted by each individual town. Chairman Wright asked Deputy Director Lane if the map differentiates between existing and future sewer service areas. Deputy Director Lane stated that there may be a layer on the map and that he will look into it further.

Commissioner Angarone stated that DEP does not publish an existing sewer service area coverage. It is possible that individual communities have developed this on their own, but that the state does not produce such a map. From the DEP perspective, sewer service area is shown as "projects in this area would be eligible for sewer service" and doesn't extend beyond that.

Roberta responded that areas that are shown as future sewer service sites are not yet approved by the Monmouth County area Wide Water Quality Amendment Review Committee or the Planning Committee and

would need that approval. To delineate all that as sewer service area is misleading to developers and the public in general.

Commissioner Angarone stated that the layer Roberta is looking at is produced by DEP and asked Deputy Director Lane to share his contact information with her. Commissioner Angarone will put Roberta in contact with the program that creates, runs, and implements the water quality management plans and wastewater management plans.

Roberta asked if there had been any changes to the map since December. Deputy Director Lane indicated that there had been no changes to the map and thanked Roberta for bringing the issue to their attention.

Chairman Wright asked Deputy Director Lane to report back regarding the resolution of the conversation.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments from the Commission or the public, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Ed McKenna and seconded by Keith Henderson. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

ATTACHMENT A
NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES
DATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2025 TIME: 10:32 AM

Angela Knowles, APA NJ
Anthony Soriano, Morris County
Bob Hornby, Hunterdon County
Charles Shadle, NJDAG
Dave DuMont
Donna Rendeiro
Fern Ouellette, Delanco
Grant Lucking
Jacqueline Fernandez
Jason L. Kasler, AICP, PP, NJPO
Jelena Lasko
Karen Strickland
Katrina McCarthy, Rowan University
Louise Usechak
Megan Fackler, DOT
Mike Jedziniak
Peter Kortwright, Bergen County
Roberta
Ruth Foster
Susan Bristol, The Watershed Institute