



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*

DONNA A. RENDEIRO  
*Executive Director/Secretary*

**New Jersey State Planning Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting Held on August 7, 2024  
Zoom Video Conference**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Wright called the August 7, 2024 video conference of the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) to order at 10:02 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

Frank Gaffney, Designee for President Christine Guhl-Sadovy, Board of Public Utilities

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

Shanel Robinson, County Commissioner Director, County Member (joined at 10:03 a.m.)

Elizabeth Terenik, Public Member (joined 10:06 a.m.)

Melanie Willoughby, Designee for Lt. Governor Tahesha Way, Secretary of State, Department of State (joined at 10:07 a.m.)

Stephen Santola, Public Member

Julia Somers, Public Member

Jeffrey Oakman, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor

Thomas Wright, Chairman

**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 July 3, 2024, with non-substantive changes. Julia Somers made the motion, and Bruce Harris seconded it. With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote: Ayes: (10) Danielle Esser, Frank Gaffney, Susan Weber, Bruce Harris, Keith Henderson, Shanel Robinson, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Jeffrey Oakman, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0). Abstains: (1) Nick Angarone. The July 3, 2024 minutes were approved.

## **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Wright discussed the recent passing of Ingrid Reed, his dear friend and mentor. She was on RPA's New Jersey Committee, a founding member of the New Jersey Future board, Spotlight NJ, and others. Ingrid served in the public sector for almost 20 years on the Mercer County Planning Board and for over 20 years as the chair of the Capital City Development Corporation. Through academia and teaching, an entire generation of folks were impacted by her work at Princeton University, Rutgers, and Rockefeller University. Those working in state government owe her a great debt and mourn her passing.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Rendeiro reported that OPA received one OPRA request for information from 2004. We provided the information requested.

OPA is in receipt of a letter to the Office of the Governor in support of S1077/A3685 which appropriates \$1 million to the Office to provide technical assistance to municipalities to properly site warehouses. The Bill is currently in Committee. The letter was signed by the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, NJ Future, Regional Plan Association, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, and Clean Water Action. Assemblyman Joe Daniels, Senator Linda Greenstein, Keith Henderson and Alea Couch of DCA, and Donna Rendeiro were copied.

Director Rendeiro reported that the recommendation made for a senior planner is still awaiting approval.

### **Since the June 5 SPC meeting:**

- Staff is working with Dover, Seaside Heights, Little Egg Harbor, Ocean Township, Woodstown, Ocean City, Barnegat, Sparta, Dennis, Berkeley, Manchester, and Red Bank on getting through Plan Endorsement.
- Progress has been made on the mapping issues. Woodstown, Barnegat, and Berkeley were discussed with DEP and those are in process. Dennis' initial map is being created; the federally preserved lands do not align with the parcel layer, creating a challenge. Seaside Heights' map is ready for internal discussion. Staff is working actively on maps for Ocean (Ocean County), Berkeley, Ocean Township, and Red Bank.
- We are awaiting response from the Little Egg Harbor officials regarding the mapping proposal. The plan implementation agreement draft has been completed for Seaside Heights and sent to State agencies for review.
- The Office received comments from DEP and DOT on the draft Plan Implementation Agreement for Seaside Heights. The comments are under review.
- The Office received municipal comments from Barnegat on the Plan Implementation Agreement. We are reviewing those comments now.

- Director Rendeiro approved the visioning waiver for Newton. Newton has demonstrated significant public outreach initiatives, including three focus groups and a survey with nearly 600 responses, which enabled residents to participate in discussions regarding consistency with the State Plan. Further, the public participation effort is largely consistent with Town’s master plan that was reexamined in 2019.
- Dennis Township’s prepetition meeting was held as scheduled on July 9.

Staff continues to work on the updated Municipal Plan Endorsement Guidelines and the guidance on how best to site affordable housing projects and a relaunch of the newsletter, “News You Can Use”.

The NJ PACT Real Rules were issued on August 5 by DEP for a 90-day public comment period. Three public hearings are scheduled. The Legislature held a joint Committee hearing to take testimony from invited speakers regarding the Rules. The pending Rules will very much impact how the State Plan update has to balance the needs of climate changes, economic growth and housing opportunities.

Director Rendeiro invited Nick Angarone to comment on the Pact Rules.

Nick Angarone put the link to the website for the regulations in the chat <https://dep.nj.gov/njreal/> and clarified that the joint legislative hearing was not specifically regarding the Rules, it was on resilience in general but the Rules were a significant topic of discussion.

The Office participated in meetings related to

- MPOs and their subcommittees
- County Planners Association
- Coastal Coalition
- NJIAC
- NJIAC Extreme Heat Communications workgroup
- NJ Climate Change Alliance
- NJ Coastal Resilience Collaborative
- Quarterly Brownfields Roundtable
- GIS Roundtable meeting
- Rutgers Megalopolitan Coastal Transformation Hub (MACH) Government Advisory Board

OPA is monitoring 15 bills, nine of which directly impact either OPA or the SPC. All Bills but one (which has not yet been introduced) are currently in Committee.

**OLD BUSINESS**

State Plan Update

Director Rendeiro indicated that after the State Plan Update, a discussion on population projections would be forthcoming which Tim Evans, the research director from New Jersey Future, will be presenting. OPA has engaged New Jersey Future to do the research function for The Plan. Last week a report was provided on what is being proposed for the methodology, a complicated subject that Tim will present after the update.

Training for municipalities for Survey 1,2,3 has been developed, recorded, and deployed to the counties for distribution. The training consists of a pre-recorded webinar and detailed instructions and has been placed on the Public Input website.

The Development Suitability Map is still on track for release in mid-August. It has been suggested to rename the Map to an "Index" to eliminate some of the confusion related to the two mapping products and to further clarify that this tool is a compilation of other source data.

OPA has received resolutions from 11 counties accepting the role of Negotiating Entity (Burlington, Hudson, Hunterdon, Monmouth, Mercer, Morris, Cape May, Somerset, Atlantic, Cumberland, and Essex). One has waived (Bergen) and we received notice that Sussex will likely waive although we have not received a formal resolution.

The Rules require that if a county waives the Negotiating Entity role, The Office must provide an alternative. The Office procured the services of Heyer, Gruel, and Associates to be the Cross-Acceptance consultant and to work with those counties that have waived that role. So far, only Bergen County has waived its role so their primary responsibility will be in dealing with Bergen County in addition to other identified priority counties that need assistance. Four introductory meetings have been scheduled for the 70 municipalities in Bergen. The first kick-off meeting was held August 6. Lisa Avichal has done a phenomenal job managing the technical assistance between consultants, interns, and internal staff who will provide assistance to the counties in this process.

Progress on the Infrastructure Needs Assessment continues, but much of the work is dependent upon the Preliminary Plan so progress may be delayed based on when the Preliminary Plan is released.

A detailed scope of work has been proposed by Rutgers and Rowan, and accepted by OPA for the Impact Assessment. Preliminary research has begun, but work in earnest will begin in September.

The Executive Director was requested to present to the Atlantic County Board of Commissioners on the State Plan on August 20.

The Executive Director presented to the NJ Chapter of the American Planning Association on the status of the update.

Commissioner Oakman commented that the Development Suitability Map Index will be a tool for stakeholders, municipalities, and counties to use and suggested that it be referred to as a tool rather than an index to indicate how it will be utilized and the possibility of future evolution of the product.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Population and Employment Projections Methodology**

Director Rendeiro introduced Tim Evans, the research director for New Jersey Future who will be presenting on population projections including where the MPOs are, challenges we've come across, and how we believe we can address them. Director Rendeiro referred the presentation to Mr. Evans.

Mr. Evans proceeded to present on the status of population and employment projections.

The presentation can be found at:

<https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/meeting-materials/pop-projections-for-spc-8-7-24.pdf>

Commissioner Somers requested a definition for built-out.

Mr. Evans responded that areas that have been permanently preserved or environmentally constrained are removed, and the remainder is what's developable. The area would be built-out once the remainder has been developed.

Commissioner Somers mentioned redevelopment as a factor.

Mr. Evans agreed that built-out does not mean full, and that not having any developable land left doesn't mean there's no room for growth or further building.

Director Rendeiro mentioned that Mr. Evans is presenting data and believes that it's up to the Commission to determine whether or not we want to make any adjustments to them. This raw data does not account for any changes related to migration related to climate change. This is something that we need to talk about over the next few months.

Director Rendeiro requested that Mr. Evans explain the difference between the annual population estimates and the decennial census that happens every 10 years.

Mr. Evans explained that the decennial census is more reliable because an effort is made to count each individual while the annual population estimate is based on administrative records about births, deaths, and migration.

Chairman Wright indicated that he had been considering the issue of build-out and how in the late 90s to early 2000s, there was an assumption that built-out areas were no longer available for development. As such, his thought at the time was that the State Plan was projecting too much growth in undeveloped parts of the state. It's interesting to see the percentage of growth happening today in communities that are 95% built-out and how trends are moving in that direction. This can be interpreted as success for the policy work we've been doing encouraging redevelopment for a generation.

Chairman Wright raised a second point regarding the complicated relationship between projections and policy. This is something that needs to be considered with the CAFRA zones, climate change, and other factors. Those factors not being considered is problematic as projections are used to justify and shape public policy. The projections made during the 2010s were determined to be about 5% off on the population of the State of New Jersey. It is important that what the Plan is based on does not embed or follow those kinds of mistakes.

Chairman Wright's final point addressed the dynamic of more jobs than people in New Jersey. From 1980 to 2000, 90% of the job growth in the tristate metropolitan region was happening outside New York City in the wealth belt of New Jersey as well as Stamford and Fairfield County, Connecticut, parts of Long Island, and the Hudson Valley. Demographers and projections based on those times assumed that the trend would continue when in fact it changed very dramatically and most of the job growth in the region since 2000 has been in New York City much more so than in Northern Jersey. The statewide employment projections indicated that there would be almost a million added jobs by 2030, a number that doesn't seem credible.

Mr. Evans responded that this is a function of gluing two different data series together. One is from the New Jersey Department of Labor, whereas the MPOs are using other sources for their baseline numbers which generally read higher than the Department of Labor.

Chairman Wright replied that if the 2019 numbers are used, that's still 900,000 jobs, close to a 25% increase in employment over 10 years which does not seem credible.

Tim Evans responded that he could dig into this issue further by going back to what the MPOs had as their projections for 2020 which were higher than NJDOL's numbers. It's a function of utilizing different source material. The computation could be done using their baseline numbers for 2020 and determining what their trend looks like from 2020 to 2030.

Chairman Wright replied that this would be worthwhile as the anticipated growth in population and employment make a big difference in terms of economic development strategy for the State of New Jersey.

Commissioner Oakman thanked Mr. Evans for the presentation and asked what are seen as the risks embodied in taking on a comprehensive set of projections that have not all been done the same. There seems to be risk in terms of people saying that the projections are not consistent across the State.

Mr. Evans responded that ideally, all projections would proceed from the same methodology. Someone could be hired to do a special set of projections for the State Plan.

Commissioner Oakman asked if there are regionally specific reasons why the different decisions made by the MPOs made sense or is it safer to decide which of the approaches makes the most sense and do that at a statewide level.

Mr. Evans replied that this would involve learning about the specific methodologies they're using and trying to evaluate which was the best, which would require a group effort.

Director Rendeiro expressed that on the population side, there are regional differences that can explain the different methodologies, while there is less of a risk on the population side. There is less of a risk on the population side, but the numbers on the employment side create pause.

Mr. Evans agreed and stated that with population, there's a standard that everyone uses; the Census Bureau. The Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of Economic Analysis are not used as the default in the same way to determine employment.

Director Rendeiro responded that another issue is the different types of employment seen regionally. There are very different types of jobs in the NJTPO and SJTPO regions.

Mr. Evans replied that the NJDOL at the municipal level takes extra steps to tally the jobs where they're actually located and not at the corporate headquarters. When possible, using state-specific sources for data items is preferable because the people who prepare the data know more about their turf than is possible to know at a national level. That's the drawback of using the national level data to do county and municipality level job data.

Commissioner Somers asked if it is possible to project types of jobs, income level, and skill types.

Mr. Evans responded that the MPOS use job totals by industry, but is not certain about income. Some guesses could be made by looking at the top industries. Whoever did the projections for the MPOs would probably be able to provide that information.

Commissioner Santola thanked Mr. Evans for his presentation and asked where the job growth would occur. He noted observing suburban offices being knocked down and utilized for other purposes and many headquarter sites relocate. This seems to be a possible shift to remote work or a service industries switch. There will be a lot of jobs added while the office population is decreasing rapidly which gained momentum after COVID. On the population growth side, we're seeing the State legislature compel affordable housing development. Most affordable housing is not generated in 100% affordable housing buildings but is rather an 80/20 split which will drive additional residential development. Climate change regulations and the further restriction of available places to find new development is an issue.

Director Rendeiro responded that the post-COVID employment market has not matured enough to indicate a trend and to have an understanding regarding the future of the employment market.

Mr. Evans replied that various trends were disrupted by COVID and have yet to find a new equilibrium. Some will return to their original state, and COVID will have been an inflection point for others. This is impossible to know in advance.

Commissioner Santola responded that service industry jobs are all show up jobs and assumes that the demographers are beginning to assume a need for hybrid workspaces. There will be an impact on the office footprint whether it be a smaller or shared office, or other.

Tim Evans replied that this is being thought of on the residential side with new units perhaps adding office space.

Commissioner Santola responded that a percentage of our population believes that the reason housing is so expensive is in part a supply issue. Landlords are only charging what they can and people are selling their homes for what the market will bear. Years of restrictive policies are creating less than what is needed in the moment and the prices are being driven up. New Jersey should be kept affordable with less restriction on future housing development.

Chairman Wright agreed with Commissioner Santola and stated that it's a regional housing market, not just for the state, but for hundreds and thousands of New Jerseyans who commute out of state. Some of these jobs require showing up, but many are work from home opportunities so people who used to leave the state five days a week are leaving once or twice instead. That's changing the nature of the communities we live in which could be behind some improvements in local communities and retailers.

Commissioner Santola agreed with Chairman Wright and thinks that in New Jersey, it's even more accentuated because the commute into Manhattan is such an onerous one.

Chairman Wright stated that roughly one in 20 New Jerseyans commutes to New York City for their job.

Director Rendeiro stated that it appears that there is less of a concern on the population side and is wondering what the next step is on employment. She requested that the Commission member let us know their thoughts on doing something different with employment.

Commissioner Harris noted that Tim Evans had raised the question of what it would cost to have a consultant do the employment projections and if there is money to do so.

Director Rendeiro responded that there is some money left in this year's budget, but the scope of services would need to be firmed up.

Mr. Evans replied that he would be unable to take on that project.

Director Rendeiro requested that the Commission members propose some questions they'd like answered in order to develop a scope.

Chairman Wright requested that Tim Evans assist in asking questions.

Mr. Evans agreed to assist.

Chairman Wright stated that he senses that the process of cross-acceptance, accepting a preliminary plan and its policies could move forward while this work was being done because this would be reflected more so in mapping, the impact assessment, and other aspects.

Director Rendeiro read a question in chat from Susan Bristol asking how the numbers of population exiting New Jersey affect the projections.

Mr. Evans responded that the consultants are using recent trends to make projections. That's why you're not seeing any change reflecting climate changes, but also why you're seeing the redevelopment trend continuing and the migration patterns are baked in that. We would see more population growth if we produced enough housing for the people who would like to live here. People leaving is being reflected in the last 10 to 20 years of population change.

Director Rendeiro stated that the other question that hasn't been addressed is when will the State of New Jersey going to be built-out according to current red-zoning and preserved land.

Mr. Evans responded that if the projection is based on what's been happening in the last five years rather than the last 20 years, build-out is farther in the future because of the high percentage of redevelopment. Most of the land that's been taken off the table has been because of preservation and not because it's built on.

Director Rendeiro responded that that will be finer refined as we work with Rowan to do the developable land analysis.

Chairman Wright noted that another caveat is whether the land has been developed up to the zoning envelope, but the zoning envelope can change.

Commissioner Santola asked Mr. Evans for further clarification regarding his comment that more land has been preserved than built on, specifically for a timeframe, statistic, and where the analysis was done.

Mr. Evans responded that the information would be included in a document he is preparing for Director Rendeiro. It has not yet finished as he is waiting for Rowan to finish their analysis of constrained lands. However, he has a PowerPoint regarding land use land data he presented at the 2020 APA Conference which he can forward to Director Rendeiro to disseminate.

Commissioner Santola stated that what we see in the affordable housing world is very instructive. Under the law, municipalities can take vacant land adjustments if they consider themselves to be built-out and can get their number reduced. On the other hand, people with vacant office buildings can deem the land basically vacant and offer affordable housing in those areas. He noted that the concept of "built-out" begins to lose its meaning.

Mr. Evans brought up the efforts to create a national zoning atlas but does not believe that the final product would be worth the effort because zoning is fluid, with towns being able to change their zoning or create overlays.

Director Rendeiro stated that she has been a part of the discussions on the New Jersey zoning atlas which has been a herculean effort and even bigger than having the baseline data is the maintenance of it.

Chairman Wright stated that he has been a part of those discussions as well and when looking at multiple municipalities together with their zoning, it paints a powerful picture that looking at individual towns cannot.

Director Rendeiro added that a big problem is that many towns don't have electronic files of their zoning.

Chairman Wright responded that important work is being done to try to expedite that process so the translation can be done quickly.

Mr. Evans responded that these things can be useful as one-time efforts to indicate what the future would look like if everything happened the way it's zoned, but the maintenance of such data is beyond anyone's capacity.

Director Rendeiro requested that Commission members submit questions about what we want to do on the employment side and a scope will be developed.

Mr. Evans stated that he can dig into the data a bit more regarding the imbalance between job growth and population growth and may be able to quantify some questions.

Director Rendeiro called attention to Commissioner Terenik's comment in the chat which read "For future discussion, in cities like Atlantic City, there is blighted and vacant land and buildings, along with infrastructure capacity and allowable zoning. Development in cities needs to be easier (i.e. environmental) and also a focus on livability like easy parking and improved food access."



Chairman Wright thanked Commissioner Terenik for her comment and asked if any member of the Commission had any questions or comments before the discussion was opened to the public. With no questions or comments made, the discussion was opened to the public.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Grant Lucking from the New Jersey Builders Association commented on the PACT rule proposal. Since the courtesy copy was released, some of the engineers and builders have gone through it and it's beyond the usual site specific regulations normally seen out of DEP. It delves into planning and is like a unilateral planning decision on several coastal areas and even up into the urban areas where we've experienced significant growth and are currently zoned PA1. We're concerned that DEP has made decisions about where the state is going to be growing as opposed to the legislature or the Planning Commission. There's not much room left in the rule proposal for alternative solutions given the restrictions. Maybe the conversation should be about managed retreat and we should be writing off those coastal areas. DEP should take a step back and rethink how they want to encourage growth in the future, maybe through additional resiliency as opposed to changes that also affect the State Plan. Lastly, he hopes that there's been discussion about what will happen to the non-mainland coastal centers which are going to be automatically expired and if they will have time to come to the Commission with an alternative plan before DEP's rule is adopted.

Director Rendeiro responded that it would be up to the municipality to come to the Commission. While the Commission is in discussions with DEP, it is unknown at this point how the rules finally end up being adopted.

Chairman Wright added that once the preliminary plan is released, the cross-acceptance process is an opportunity for communities to comment on both the State Plan as well as additional issues.

Commissioner Somers added that there may be things that will happen that we haven't considered, for example, people may choose not to live where they can't insure their property. It may become difficult to sell property that is going to habitually flood and insurance companies won't cover it anymore.

Director Rendeiro stated that there was recently a law adopted requiring the flood history to be disclosed on a property sale which will impact those actions. There is a distinction to be made between residents on the coast that are the two million dollar vacation home for the hedge fund guy versus the legacy homes which are passed down in families that may not be able to afford traditional insurance, let alone flood insurance.

Commissioner Somers responded that riparian areas for many major rivers are impacted along with the coast.

Director Rendeiro replied that inland flooding is certainly a problem. The question is, who foots the bill? At some point, FEMA will stop paying.

David Smith from the Senate Majority office asked if anyone from DOL was in the meeting and if not, are members of the Governor's office able to speak to the DOL data.

Director Rendeiro responded that we can look into engaging DOL.

Commissioner Oakman replied that the challenge with DOL has been bringing on someone with a very specific skill set.

Mr. Evans indicated that he found the slide that shows the rate of preservation versus the rate of land development shared his screen and briefly explained the data.

Chairman Wright commented that more than half the land in the state is either constrained or preserved.

Mr. Evans confirmed that the land is undevelopable by one measure or another.

Commissioner Santola replied that he assumed that the big jump in green on the slide is mostly attributable to the Highlands Act.

Mr. Evans responded that the issue was elevated in the Whitman administration with the one million acre goal. The goal was not reached, but a lot of land was preserved.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further comments from the Commission or the public, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Danielle Esser and seconded by Jeffrey Oakman. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES**  
**DATE: AUGUST 7, 2024 TIME: 10:02 AM**

Andrew Farquhar, Senate Majority Office  
Angela Knowles, APA NJ  
Anthony Soriano  
Bob Hornby, Hunterdon County  
Carlos Rodriguez, APA NJ  
Celia Smits, Senate Majority Office  
Charles Shadle, DAG  
Christopher Helms  
Dave DuMont  
David Smith, Senate Majority Office  
Eric Schradling  
Grant Lucking, NJBA  
Hannah Riggs, Atlantic County  
James Humphries  
James Jackson  
Jelena Lasko  
Jesskomar Velarde Gargot, NJHMFA  
Joe Barris, Monmouth County  
Jonathan Sternesky, NJHMFA  
Katherine Fullerton, Hunterdon County  
Katrina McCarthy, Rowan  
Kyle Cruz, NJHMFA  
Makenzie Franco, Rowan  
Mirah Becker  
Rachel DeFlumeri, NJ Dept. of Agriculture  
Sarah Taylor-Deak  
Susan Bristol, The Watershed Institute  
Tim Evans, NJ Future  
Walter Lane, Somerset County