



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUSINESS ACTION CENTER
OFFICE OF PLANNING ADVOCACY
PO BOX 820
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0820

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

LT. GOVERNOR TAHESHA L. WAY
Secretary of State

MELANIE WILLOUGHBY
BAC Executive Director

DONNA A. RENDEIRO
Executive Director

Mayor John-Paul E. Couce
Town of Newton
39 Trinity Street
Newton, NJ 07860

July 29, 2024

Dear Mayor Couce:

The Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) is in receipt of Town of Newton's "Town" request to waive Step 5 of the Plan Endorsement Process, conducting Community Visioning sessions *N.J.A.C. 15:30-7.11*.

I approve the Town's request for waiver for Step 5 of the Plan Endorsement Process, conducting Community Visioning Sessions based on the following information and in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 15:30-7.6*.

- The Town places a high value on public information and transparency. Since 2019, the Town has conducted numerous public meetings. The Town has undertaken extensive public outreach initiatives focused on improving environmental conservation, recreational facilities, building infrastructure, renewable energy, and economic growth opportunities. The Town's significant efforts towards public engagement and community development enabled the residents to participate in discussions regarding the Goals described in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan). The extensive public participation effort is largely consistent with the vision created in 2007 and refined in 2013, which is still consistent the vision of the Town's Master Plan adopted in 2008 and reexamined in 2019 and remains unchanged.
- In December of 2021, the Town conducted significant public engagement through the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) grant process awarded by the NJ Department of Community Affairs, which included:
 - public feedback and subsequent implementation focused on Goals 1 and 3 of the State Plan,
 - three focus groups and a survey with nearly 600 responses, which illustrated the Town's seriousness in engaging the community, and
 - the results were presented to the Council on multiple occasions at public meetings along with annual updates.

I look forward to working with the Town to complete the Plan Endorsement process. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself (donna.rendeiro@sos.nj.gov) or Myles Elgart, Assistant Planner for Sussex County (myles.elgart@sos.nj.gov).

Sincerely,

Donna A. Rendeiro
Executive Director