

**Office of Smart Growth**  
**Approach for Considering County Proposed Mapping Changes**

The Cross-acceptance Manual for this round of Cross-acceptance limits proposed changes to the preliminary State Plan Policy Map to two categories: changes based on policy changes or changes based on data discrepancies. The Cross-Acceptance Manual specifically states: ‘The State Planning Commission believes that except for amendments to the State Plan Policy Map that would result from changes to policies in the State Plan or data discrepancies, the discussion of site-specific or individual parcel amendments based on a development interest or the like should occur as part of the Plan Endorsement process and not through Cross-acceptance.’ It goes on to say: ‘Any qualified negotiating entity may submit mapping to help correct a **technical error** found in the 2004 Preliminary State Plan Policy Map... All proposed map changes must be accompanied by **supporting documentation**, which should be cross-referenced to a Map Amendment Document.’

The Office of Smart Growth advised each county of the State Planning Commission’s mapping approach set forth in the Cross-acceptance manual. The approach was highlighted at each of the 21 county informational meetings that took place during the Summer of 2004.

To assist us in forming fair and standardized responses to county mapping changes, OSG recommends that the Plan Development Committee and State Planning Commission endorse the following approach consistent with the Cross-acceptance guidelines:

- 1) The State Plan Policy Map is defined as a geographic application of the goals, strategies, and policies of the State Plan. Proposed mapping changes must be consistent with the intent, policy objectives and delineation criteria for the proposed planning area or proposed critical environmental site in order to be considered for agreement by the State Planning Commission. Proposed mapping changes must also conform to the State Plan mapping conventions.
- 2) County recommendations for map changes that are not driven by newly discovered technical information, mapping errors, or a policy change, should be pursued within the purview of the Plan Endorsement process.
- 3) In cases where counties and/or municipalities have made substantive planning decisions for either development or conservation based on the current State Plan Policy Map planning area designations, and those designations were then revised on the Preliminary State Plan Map, OSG will consider reversing those changes provided that the county/municipality provides appropriate documentation to support the current designation.
- 4) County recommendations that may result in a statewide policy change will be deferred to the Plan Development Committee and State Planning Commission for their consideration.

Examples of how staff will generally respond to county recommendations are listed below. However, in all instances, the proposed change will be evaluated in its overall context and the staff recommendations will be based on a determination of whether the

proposed change is consistent with the Preliminary State Plan. Any agency may bring situations that do not fall under these examples to the Plan Development Committee and the State Planning Commission for discussion. A definition section is added at the end of the document. Except for the definition of “substantive planning decisions,” terms used are consistent with the definitions proposed in the Preliminary State Plan.

#### Map Amendments That May Be Recommended for Agreement

- 1) A request to have a proposed Planning Area change contained in the Preliminary State Plan Policy Map revert back to its current Planning Area designation if the County demonstrates that regulatory decisions, infrastructure investments, or substantive planning decisions have been made in reliance on the current Planning Area designation.
- 2) A request to remove or reduce a Critical Environmental Site (CES) from an area that aerial photography reveals as having been developed and where environmentally sensitive features no longer exist.
- 3) A request to create a new CES 2 acres or larger that is supported by verifiable and documented environmental data.
- 4) A request to change a Planning Area designation from PA1 or PA2 to PA4, PA4B or PA5 because the area:
  - a) has no existing or permitted wastewater or water supply infrastructure system, and
  - b) is not already developed, and either
  - c) has one or more verifiable and documented environmentally sensitive features, or
  - d) has agricultural lands outside of sewer service areas as identified in the State Agriculture Development Committee’s (SADC) Strategic Targeting Project.
- 5) A request to change a Planning Area designation from PA1 or PA2 to PA3 because the area has no existing or permitted wastewater or water supply infrastructure and is not already developed.
- 6) A request to change a Planning Area designation from a PA3 to PA1 or PA2 because the area:
  - a) has existing or permitted wastewater or water supply infrastructure system, or
  - b) is already developed, and neither
  - c) has one or more verifiable and documented environmentally sensitive features, nor
  - d) has agricultural lands outside of sewer service areas as identified in the SADC Strategic Targeting Project.
- 7) A request to change a Planning Area designation from PA4, PA4B or PA5 to PA1 or PA2 because the area:
  - a) has existing or permitted wastewater or water supply infrastructure system, and
  - b) is already developed, and neither
  - c) has one or more verifiable and documented environmentally sensitive features, nor
  - d) has agricultural lands outside of sewer service areas as identified in the SADC Strategic Targeting Project.
- 8) A request to add, remove or correct areas identified by Counties as publicly preserved open space

Map Amendments That Will Be Recommended for Discussion

- 1) A request that does not have supporting documentation as set forth in the Cross-acceptance manual.
- 2) A request that has not been submitted with mapping or GIS files meeting the requirements set forth in the Cross-acceptance manual.
- 3) A request to change a Planning Area designation from PA1 or PA2 to PA4, PA4B or PA5 either where the area:
  - a) has existing or permitted wastewater or water supply infrastructure system, or
  - b) is already developed, and neither
  - c) has one or more verifiable and documented environmentally sensitive features, nor
  - d) has agricultural lands outside of sewer service areas as identified in the SADC Strategic Targeting Project.
- 4) A request to change a Planning Area designation from PA1 or PA2 to PA3 where the area has existing or permitted wastewater or water supply infrastructure.
- 5) A request to change a Planning Area designation from a PA3 to PA1 or PA2 where the area:
  - a) has no existing or permitted wastewater or water supply infrastructure system, and
  - b) is not already developed, and either
  - c) has one or more verifiable and documented environmentally sensitive features, or
  - d) has agricultural lands outside of sewer service areas as identified in the SADC Strategic Targeting Project.
- 6) A request to change a Planning Area designation from PA4, PA4B or PA5 to PA1 or PA2 where the area:
  - a) has no existing or permitted wastewater or water supply infrastructure system, and
  - b) is not already developed, and either
  - c) has one or more verifiable and documented environmentally sensitive features, or
  - d) has agricultural lands outside of sewer service areas as identified in the SADC Strategic Targeting Project.
- 7) A request to create a new CES smaller than 2 acres.
- 8) A request that is not supported by development approvals, adopted master plans or other adopted plans or only supported with vague reasons given such as 'town would like to develop this area' or 'town would like to create a CES' but no other verifiable and documented information has been offered in support of the amendment.
- 9) A request that is more appropriately considered through the comprehensive plan review of Plan Endorsement as stated in the Cross-acceptance manual.
- 10) Designations of new centers, cores or nodes or boundary changes to existing centers, core or nodes
- 11) Mapping CES's on lakes, ponds and other standing water bodies.
- 12) Mapping CES's on publicly preserved open space.
- 13) A request to modify source mapping, including wetlands, the coastline or islands of New Jersey, or individual farms that are preserved. Data should be managed by the originating agency.

### Definitions

“Critical environmental site (CES)” means an area generally less than a square mile, depicted on the State Plan Policy Map, which includes one or more environmentally sensitive features located either outside of a planning area classified as environmentally sensitive by the State Development and Redevelopment Plan or within designated centers located within such planning areas.

“Environmentally Sensitive Features” means natural attributes or characteristics whose function as part of a natural system or landscape is considered integral or important. For example, a coastal dune and beach system is an environmentally sensitive feature as is an area of critical habitat or a stream corridor. Environmentally sensitive features of Statewide or regional significance may also be part of the criteria for identification of a Special Resource Area.

“Infrastructure System” means related and integrated components of Infrastructure for transportation, energy, telecommunications, farmland retention, water supply, wastewater disposal, stormwater management, shore protection, open space and recreation, recreation facilities, solid waste management, public health care, public education, higher education, arts, historic resources, public safety, justice, corrections, public administration, and public housing.

“State Plan Policy Map” means the geographic application of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan goals, strategies, and policies. The State Plan Policy Map serves as the official map of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and includes at a minimum planning areas, including changes made in the plan endorsement process, endorsed plans, designated centers, cores, and nodes as well as other areas including critical environmental sites, historic and cultural sites, parks and natural areas, and military installations.

“Substantive planning decisions” are current master plan amendments, zoning ordinance amendments, designation of areas in need of redevelopment, designation of an area as an affordable housing site in a COAH or court approved plan, and designation of an area for farmland preservation through a planning incentive grant.