



State of New Jersey

Department of State
New Jersey State Planning Commission
P.O. Box 820
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0820

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
*Lt. Governor
Secretary of State*

THOMAS K. WRIGHT
CHAIRMAN

WALTER C. LANE
Executive Director/Secretary

New Jersey State Planning Commission Minutes of the Meeting Held on April 1, 2026 Zoom Video Conference

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wright called the April 1, 2026, video conference of the New Jersey State Planning Commission to order at 9:31 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

Joe Grillo, Designee for President Christine Guhl-Sadovy, Board of Public Utilities (joined at 9:36 a.m.)
Nick Angarone, Designee for Ed Potosnak, Acting Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection
Keith Henderson, Designee for Jacquelyn Suarez, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs
Michael Manzella, Designee for Priya Jain, Commissioner, Department of Transportation
Shanel Robinson, County Commissioner Director, County Member
Bruce Harris, Municipal Member
Jeffrey Oakman, Public Member
Stephen Santola, Public Member
Julia Somers, Public Member
Edward J. McKenna, Vice Chair, Public Member (joined at 9:36 a.m.)
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 February 4, 2026, with no changes. The motion was made by Bruce Harris and seconded by Jeffrey Oakman. Ayes: (11) Joe Grillo, Nick Angarone, Keith Henderson, Michael Manzella, Shanel Robinson, Bruce Harris, Jeffrey Oakman, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Ed McKenna, Tom Wright. Nays: (0) Abstains: (0) The February 4, 2026, minutes were approved.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Wright welcomed Commissioner Michael Manzella, NJDOT designee, as well as his colleagues Thomas Houck and Jelena Lasko. He noted that guest speaker, Mr. Gagandeep Singh, Senior Advisor, Real Estate, NJTransit, would be discussing transit-oriented development and opportunities later in the meeting.

With that, Chairman Wright ended his comments and ceded the floor to Executive Director Walter Lane for his report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Before presenting his report, Executive Director Walter Lane noted that all comments made using the chat feature would be read into the meeting record for the sake of transparency. He proceeded to provide a brief overview of the Office of Planning Advocacy's (OPA) work since the February 4, 2026, State Planning Commission (SPC) meeting.

He reported that staff continued working on wide range of activities to advance implementation of the new State Development and Redevelopment Plan, providing technical planning assistance to extensive array of planning partners while diligently working with Dennis, Manchester, Wildwood City, and Sparta, Ocean City, Little Egg Harbor, North Wildwood, Woodstown, Salem City, Barnegat, and Berkeley on requirements needed to achieve Plan Endorsement. Later in the meeting agenda, staff is scheduled to present Woodstown's Plan Endorsement Petition. Staff anticipates presenting Wildwood City and Little Egg Harbor's petitions to the SPC in the coming months.

Executive Director Lane shared that staff continues to attend various meetings, including the following: New Jersey Highlands Council, State Agricultural Development Committee, NJ Interagency Council on Climate Resilience, NJDEP Meeting with NJDOS – Recycling, NJ Delaware Bayshore Meeting, NJ County Planners Association Statewide Planning and Smart Growth Committee Meeting, Plan4HealthNJ Advisory Council Meeting, DVRPC Board Meeting, NJ County Planners Association Meetings, NJ Coastal Resilience Collaborative Full Partnership Meeting, South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization's Policy Board Meeting, GIS Coordinator Roundtable Meeting, Sustainable Jersey – Certification Standards Committee Meeting, State Plan Interagency Workgroup Meeting, NJ Geospatial Forum, and the NAOIP Public Policy Forum.

He stated that OPA staff will attend the following meetings later in the month: Interagency Council on Extreme Heat Coordinated Communications Workgroup, NJ County Planners Association State Plan Working Group, NJ Highlands Council Meeting, SADC Monthly Meeting, NJ Chamber RenewNJ Business Summit, NJ Transit Village Taskforce Meeting, Rutgers Studio Class Presentation on Climate Change Resiliency and Hazard Vulnerability Assessment, OPA/DEP Staff-Level Mapping Meeting, OPA/DEP Managers level Mapping Meeting, New Jersey Coastal Coalition Meeting, NJ Interagency Council on Climate Resilience Monthly Senior Staff Meeting, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Regional Technical Advisory Committee.

Executive Director Lane reported that Assistant Planner Felix Zamora and GIS Specialist Nikisha Mistry presented to an NJIT Creative Placemaking Class on how GIS can be used to support planning and revitalization efforts. Senior Planner Steve Simone made a presentation on the State Plan at the NJ Coastal and Climate Resilience Conference and Senior Planner Lisa Avichal discussed the Plan Endorsement process and the State Plan at a Rutgers Studio class.

Executive Director Walter Lane shared that the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) was contacted by Egg Harbor Township residents, who requested that the State Planning Commission (SPC) and/or OPA perform a consistency

review of and hold a public meeting on the recently adopted "Route 152 Redevelopment Plan". After reviewing the State Planning Act, the State Planning Rules, and other relevant regulations, neither the State Planning Act nor the Commission's rules and regulations authorize or require the SPC or OPA to conduct a review of a municipal redevelopment plan for this purpose. Furthermore, the consistency review is a part of, not separate from, Plan Endorsement and map amendment processes. As the Township is not currently engaged in the Plan Endorsement process, Executive Director Lane informed the residents that the SPC/OPA would not perform the requested review.

He concluded his report by addressing several housekeeping items. Staff completed the update of OPA's Standard Operating Procedures. The draft 2025 State Planning Commission Annual Report will be presented at the May 6, 2026, SPC meeting. The permanent GIS Specialist Position was posted with hopes to fill the position quickly. All Commission members and designees received the Outside Employment Form to be returned to Administrative Assistant Sara Bennett by May 1, 2026. Lastly, all Commission members and designees should receive an email with information necessary to complete a new Financial Disclosure Statement for 2026.

Chairman Wright commended staff for their thorough evaluation of the request made by Egg Harbor residents and emphasized the importance of partnership with county and municipal government.

With no additional questions or comments from the Commission, Chairman Wright introduced Mr. Gagandeep Singh, Senior Advisor, Real Estate, NJTransit, who would provide an update on NJTransit's LAND Plan: Leveraging Assets for Non-fairbox Dollars.

NEW BUSINESS

NJTransit LAND Plan Presentation – Gagandeep Singh, Senior Advisor, Real Estate, NJTransit

Mr. Gagandeep Singh, Senior Advisor, Real Estate, NJTransit, began his presentation by outlining the background of the project and the challenges faced in creating a credible plan, including the need to identify the entirety of their land holdings, and to increase project throughput from one or two projects per year to 10-15 projects annually.

Mr. Singh presented a plan for developing NJTransit's 8,000 acres over ten years, highlighting potential benefits including revenue impact, housing creation, job generation, and environmental restorations. Other identified areas of activity could include transit oriented development, industrial development, and miscellaneous uses. The implementation target is set for 10 years, with the majority of economic impact expected to occur after year three due to typical project timelines. He announced an upcoming Industry Day event on April 21, 2026, at NJTransit's Newark headquarters, where they will present approximately twelve sites to the development community, provide templates for doing business with NJTransit, and feature local municipal representatives to demonstrate support for the projects.

The Commission discussed how the SPC might assist with facilitating the implementation of the program, with Mr. Singh postulating that the majority of the sites were in alignment with the State Plan, and sharing that proposed legislative action, with the intent of accelerating the timeline, was being worked on in conjunction with Governor Sherrill's office. Executive Director Walter Lane shared that he had been in discussions with Mr. Singh and other NJTransit staff, and that Senior Planner Steve Simone would attend the upcoming Industry Day to further ensure coordination. Commissioner Somers questioned how to maximize affordable housing units beyond the minimum 20% requirement, to which Mr. Singh responded that while 20% is the default minimum, they welcome opportunities to increase affordability. Solar power was determined not to be a significant component due to limited surface area on the available 800 acres.

Further discussion focused on coordinating Transit Village development and Plan Endorsement processes, with Executive Director Walter Lane reporting that he had spoken with NJDOT staff in this regard. Mr. Singh discussed efforts to standardize internal processes and streamline temporary access permitting, while Commissioner Santola mentioned potential challenges in the approval process. Commissioner Harris raised concerns about NJTransit's

equipment installations potentially restricting future development, citing an example from Chatham station. The discussion highlighted the need for better coordination between transit authorities and developers to avoid delays and ensure successful development projects.

The group discussed the importance of having GIS data for Transit Villages, with Commissioner Henderson highlighting the need for detailed mapping to better understand municipal zoning and NJTransit-owned properties. Commissioner Manzella confirmed that this topic would be addressed in the upcoming NJDOT Transit Village Task Force meeting. Mr. Singh also mentioned that NJTransit successfully created a publicly accessible GIS dataset showing their land holdings, which led to new development opportunities.

With no additional comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright thanked Mr. Singh for his presentation and asked Senior Planner Steve Simone to present the Plan Endorsement petition for the Borough of Woodstown.

Resolution 2026-02 Approving the Plan Endorsement Petition for the Borough of Woodstown, Salem County and Designating One Town Center

Senior Planner Steve Simone proceeded to present the Borough of Woodstown Plan Endorsement petition and highlighted the Borough's efforts to revitalize and recenter itself as a vibrant community hub in northern Salem County. Key points included Woodstown's request to establish a new town center, protect natural resources, and address climate change through hazard vulnerability assessments and sustainability initiatives. The Borough formally approved the Plan and Implementation Agreement on September 24th, 2024, committing to various actions including a Municipal Environmental Justice Action Plan and comprehensive planning efforts to advance public safety, accessibility, and sustainability.

The presentation can be found at: <https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/meeting-materials/SPC-Woodstown-Borough-Presentation-4-1-26.pdf>

Mayor Joe Hiles expressed gratitude for the working relationship with the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) and the State Planning Commission (SPC) and emphasized the importance of good planning for community prosperity. The discussion touched on the potential impact of a bypass on neighboring communities, with Mayor Hiles highlighting the need for partnership across Salem County to address infrastructure challenges. Commissioner Santola inquired about shared services between Woodstown and neighboring municipalities.

Quinton Zondervan, Trustee of the Sourland Conservancy, inquired as to the method for strengthening the climate change components of the Borough's petition. Executive Director Walter Lane indicated that OPA will be creating additional guidance documents on how to implement the strategies related to climate change, and will discuss the Borough's progress during biennial reviews.

With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2026-02. The motion was made by Julia Somers and seconded by Stephen Santola. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (11) Joe Grillo, Nick Angarone, Keith Henderson, Michael Manzella, Shanel Robinson, Bruce Harris, Jeffrey Oakman, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Ed McKenna, and Thomas Wright Nays: (0). Abstains: (0) Resolution 2026-02 was approved.

The Resolution can be found at: <https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/resolutions/2026-02-PE-Woodstown-Salem-Certified-Final.pdf>

With no additional comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked Executive Director Walter Lane to discuss Opportunities for Future Hybrid State Planning Commission Meetings.

Opportunities for Future Hybrid State Planning Commission Meetings

Executive Director Walter Lane shared that the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) received clarification that the Executive Order regarding public meeting requirement which expired did not preclude the State Planning Commission (SPC) from holding virtual only meetings. He recommended that the majority of SPC meetings be held virtually, with one or two hybrid meetings per year, and the Plan Implementation Committee meetings to continue as virtual only.

A brief discussion ensued, Executive Director Lane suggesting late spring and early fall as ideal times. Commissioners expressed support for hybrid meetings, particularly for substantive presentations requiring more in-depth discussion, while maintaining the ability for remote access.

With no additional comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked Executive Director Lane to provide the State Plan Implementation Update.

STATE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Executive Director Walter Lane presented a process for addressing deferred map amendments, proposing the use of State Planning Rule Section 15:30-8.3(a) for SPC initiated changes. The SPC will also solicit further information on the proposed map amendments and additional map amendments from municipalities and counties. Additionally, as the Rules preclude the Commission from initiating changes to the State Plan Policy Map for endorsed municipalities and counties, those changes would be resolved through the bi-annual Plan Endorsement review process.

If the outlined process was approved by the Commission, OPA would develop a detailed timeline to address the proposed amendments and present it to the SPC, likely at either the May 6, 2026, or June 3, 2026, meeting. The Commission agreed to this approach, with Commissioner Somers expressing support for the recommendation. Commissioner Grillo suggested organizing a panel discussion at the upcoming NJBPU Business Summit in late June, 2026. Executive Director Lane also outlined ongoing outreach efforts, including State Plan presentations to various groups and conversations with state agencies about how to advance the Plan's goals. With the information that OPA receives from the state agency partners, staff will create a document outlining the ways in which the State Plan can benefit its planning partners. The conversation ended with Commissioner Somers announcing that Executive Director Lane would be recognized by the New Jersey Highlands Coalition at an upcoming golf outing.

With no additional comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked Senior Planner Lisa Avichal to provide the Special Resource Areas Update. He noted that Executive Director Lane, Commissioner Somers, and Commissioner Robinson would need to be moved to the Zoom waiting room when the topic of the Sourlands was addressed due to their previous recusals.

SPECIAL RESOURCE AREAS UPDATE

Senior Planner Lisa Avichal reported that staff are developing a screening application process to help determine which areas may qualify for Special Resource Area (SRA) recognition versus regional facilitation. Further discussion is anticipated at the April 15, 2026, Plan Implementation Committee meeting, and a more formal product presented to the SPC at the May 6, 2026, meeting. After meeting with OPA, several counties have indicated they do not wish to pursue formal recognition at this time, while the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve plans to pursue formal recognition once the process is established.

The Commission discussed the possibility and challenges of designating Special Resource Areas (SRA) against local government wishes as well as exploring alternative approaches like facilitation and coordination.

Chairman Wright then requested that Administrative Assistant Sara Bennett move Executive Director Walter Lane, and Commissioner Robinson to the Zoom waiting room. Commissioner Somers left the meeting and as such, did not need to be moved to the Zoom waiting room.

Administrative Assistant Bennett reported that Executive Director Lane and Commissioner Robinson had been moved to the Zoom waiting room.

Senior Planner Lisa Avichal reported that the Sourlands Conservancy requested, by letter to the Commission, SRA designation for the Sourlands Mountain region. A response letter from the Commission was sent to the Sourland Conservancy as well as all parties Cc'd on the original letter, with the exception of those needing recusal. A follow-up meeting with Hunterdon, Mercer, and Somerset Counties was scheduled for April 15th, 2026. Chairman Wright emphasized the importance of a clear definition of and method to obtain SRA designation.

Quinton Zondervan, Trustee of the Sourland Conservancy highlighted the importance of the designation to recognize the ecological value of the Sourlands region, as well as provide additional tools for protecting and restoring that ecology. Chairman Wright recognized the success of the Highlands in establishing a Council and regional Plan, and identified them as a model for the process.

Chairman Wright requested that Administrative Assistant Bennett return Executive Director Lane and Commissioner Robinson to the meeting from the Zoom waiting room.

With no further questions or comments Chairman Wright opened the floor to the public.

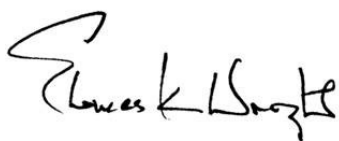
PUBLIC COMMENTS

No member of the public wished to comment.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments from the Commission or the public, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Stephen Santola and seconded by Jeffrey Oakman. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Thomas K. Wright
Chairman
Date: May 6, 2026

ATTACHMENT A
NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES
DATE: APRIL 1, 2026 TIME: 9:30 AM

Anthony Soriano, Morris County
B. Flynn
Becky Hall, Hunterdon County
Bill Millette, Hunterdon County
Carolina Montes
Charles Shadle
Cliff Wilson, Sourland Conservancy
Daniel Brown
Dave DuMont, NJDEP
David Schley
David Zimmer (NJ I-Bank)
Donna Rendeiro
Fern Ouellette, Delanco
Gagandeep Singh, NJTransit
Glen Van Olden, NJ Farm Bureau
Grant Lucking, NJ Builders Association
Jake Mericle, Cape May County
Jason Kasler, AICP, PP (NJPO)
Jeff, NJBA
Jelena Lasko, NJDOT
Jesse Stemberger, Woodstown
Julian Wexer (Topology)
Kamal Saleh, Union County
Katherine Elliot, Pinelands Commission
Katherine Fullerton, Hunterdon County
Lauren Purdom
Max Carlson, Warren County Planning
Mayor Joe Hiles, Woodstown Borough
Melissa Thompson
Mia Petrou
Mirah Becker, Middlesex County
Olivia Hirsch
Oscar Parham, NJRA
Peter Kortright
Quinton Zondervan, Trustee, Sourland Conservancy
Ruth Foster, NJDEP
Sabrina Rodriguez, NJ Future
Samantha De Andrea, Somerset County
Steven Bruder, NJ SADC
Tim Evans, NJ Future