



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 August 5, 2026 Zoom Video Conference

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wright called the August 5, 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 Ben Hertz-Shargel, Board of Public Utilities
Keith Henderson, Designee for Jacquelyn Suarez, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs
Jelena Lasko, Designee for Priya Jain, Commissioner, Department of Transportation
Michael Manzella, Designee for Priya Jain, Commissioner, Department of Transportation (joined at 9:36 a.m.)
Bruce Harris, Municipal Member
Danielle Esser, Director of Governance, NJ Economic Development Authority
Jeffrey Oakman, Public Member
Julia Somers, Public Member
Elizabeth Terenik, Public Member
Thomas Wright, Chairman, Public Member

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

Commissioner Oakman stated that he was incorrectly referred to as “Chairman Oakman” on page four of the July 1, 2026, draft minutes and Executive Director Walter Lane indicated that the correction to “Commissioner Oakman” would be made. Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve the minutes of July 1, 2026 with the change noted by Commissioner Oakman. The motion was made by Julia Somers and seconded by Jeffrey Oakman. Ayes: (9) Joe Grillo, Keith Henderson, Jelena Lasko, Bruce Harris, Danielle Esser, Jeffrey Oakman, Julia Somers, Elizabeth Terenik, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0) Abstains: (0) The July 1, 2026, minutes were approved.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS

Chairman Wright mentioned looking forward to endorsing a resolution for the City of Wildwood and recalled its original approval in 1998.

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 July 1, 2026, State Planning Commission (SPC) meeting.

He reported that staff continued working on a wide range of activities to advance the implementation of the new State Development and Redevelopment Plan, while diligently working with multiple municipalities on requirements needed to achieve Plan Endorsement. Executive Director Lane stated that OPA hosts biweekly meetings with both Manchester and Dennis Townships, and noted additional meetings with Little Egg Harbor and North Wildwood. He reported that OPA has begun sending letters to all endorsed towns to remind them to submit their annual or bi-annual reports. Executive Director Lane mentioned productive engagement with planning partners including meetings with both the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and the staff of the Pinelands Commission. Additionally, the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization is scheduled to present to the SPC at the September 2, 2026, meeting. Executive Director Lane also reported that he co-led several meetings of the Governor’s Housing Council’s Mapping Working Group and participated in the Opportunity Zone 2.0 Working Group.

Executive Director Lane stated that staff continued to attend various meetings, including the following: the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Regional Transportation Committee Meeting, the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization’s TAC Meeting, Staff and Manager Level Mapping Meetings with DEP, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Board Meeting, several meetings of the Governor’s Housing Council’s Mapping Working Group, a walking tour of Princeton to discuss redevelopment opportunities, the State Agricultural Development Committee Meeting, the Interagency Council on Extreme Heat Coordinated Communications Workgroup Meeting, and a seminar at the DVRPC on Emerging Transportation Technologies.

Executive Director Lane introduced new intern Sophie Beemer and announced Assistant Planner Laura Gould’s AICP certification.

With Executive Director Lane’s report complete, Chairman Wright asked Senior Planner Steve Simone to present the Plan Endorsement Petition for the City of Wildwood, Cape May County and Designating One Regional Center and One Core.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2026-06 Approving the Plan Endorsement Petition for the City of Wildwood, Cape May County and Designating One Regional Center and One Core

Senior Planner Steve Simone proceeded to present the recommendation for Plan Endorsement for the City of Wildwood. He summarized the city's regional context, noting its small size, location on Five Mile Beach, and long history as a barrier-island tourism community. Senior Planner Simone also reviewed population trends, recent seasonal population estimates, and key planning milestones, including the expiration of the previous multi-municipal regional center designation in 2023 and Wildwood's subsequent initiation of a new petition.

He outlined proposed updates to the State Plan Policy Map, including the addition of new park and open space acreage, and the establishment of a new regional center boundary encompassing approximately 58% of the City. He described how the municipality's self-assessment demonstrated consistency with the State Plan's ten goals, highlighting efforts in economic development, housing compliance, infrastructure upgrades, redevelopment, climate-related planning, environmental protection, historic preservation, equity, and comprehensive planning aligned with state and county objectives.

Senior Planner Simone reported that Wildwood formally approved its Plan Implementation Agreement on May 13, 2026. Based on the City's continued collaboration with state agencies and Cape May County, and its alignment with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, Office of Planning Advocacy staff recommended approval of the City of Wildwood's petition for Plan Endorsement, including the proposed regional center and core.

The presentation can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/meeting-materials/2026-08-05-SPC-City-Of-Wildwood-Presentation.pdf>

Commissioner Somers emphasized the importance of evacuation planning due to limited access routes off the island, while Commissioner Esser commended Senior Planner Simone for a fantastic presentation and the City of Wildwood for participating in the Plan Endorsement process.

Chairman Wright welcomed comments from Wildwood City representatives and Mayor Ernie Troiano highlighted the City's need for development to compete with neighboring towns and leverage their significant tourism potential.

Chairman Wright invited comments from the public. Kamal Saleh of Union County called attention to the need to preserve Wildwood's historic architecture. Mayor Ernie Troiano indicated that the City shares this priority and has been working with developers to retain those architectural elements in new projects. Tim Evans of New Jersey Future asked whether shore towns are seeing growth in year-round residency due to remote work. Mayor Troiano stated that Wildwood is seeing increases in second-home ownership and retirees, but stressed that the City's economy relies on frequent turnover of tourists and more hotel development, rather than conversion of lodging to condominiums.

Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2026-06. The motion was made by Elizabeth Terenik and seconded by Bruce Harris. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (9) Joe Grillo, Keith Henderson, Michael Manzella, Bruce Harris, Danielle Esser, Jeffrey Oakman, Julia Somers, Elizabeth Terenik, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0). Abstains: (0) Resolution 2026-06 was approved.

The Resolution can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/resolutions/2026-06-PE-Wildwood-Cape-May-Certified-V2.pdf>

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

STATE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Executive Director Walter Lane reported ongoing coordination with Department of State leadership regarding updates to the State Planning Rules to better support the Commission's mandates and implementation of the State Plan. Discussions are ongoing, but staff intends to provide more information at the September 2, 2026, State Planning Commission meeting. Staff continues to work closely with state agency partners, including through the Interagency Workgroup Meeting, to discuss the Rule update and review the Special Resource Area recognition process before presenting it to the Plan Implementation Committee at the August 19, 2026, meeting and State Planning Commission at the September 2, 2026, meeting.

He also highlighted collaborative work with the New Jersey Highlands Council on developing a matrix that aligns the State Plan Policy Map with the Highlands Regional Master Plan's Land Use Capability Zone Map. The Office of Planning Advocacy will present a draft matrix and approval process to the Plan Implementation Committee at the August 19, 2026, meeting, followed by a presentation to the full Commission at the September 2, 2026, meeting and a public comment period. The goal is to adopt the matrix by resolution before the end of 2026.

With no comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked Assistant Planner Laura Gould to provide the Special Resource Areas Recognition Process Update.

SPECIAL RESOURCE AREAS RECOGNITION PROCESS UPDATE

Assistant Planner Laura Gould reported that staff has been working diligently on a process and application for the Special Resource Areas recognition, with a draft having been shared with several state agencies to be discussed at the Interagency Workgroup Meeting on August 6, 2026. The Office of Planning Advocacy hopes to make a presentation to the Plan Implementation Committee at the August 19, 2026, meeting to detail the updates made to the application followed by a presentation to the State Planning Commission at the September 2, 2026 meeting.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Crane of Bernards Township inquired as to when the Map Amendment process would resume. Executive Director Walter Lane indicated that as the Office of Planning Advocacy hopes to provide a more detailed report in the coming months on when the process will begin.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments from the Commission or the public, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Julia Somers and seconded by Danielle Esser. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas K. Wright". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and "W".

Thomas K. Wright
Chairman
Date: September 2, 2026

ATTACHMENT A
NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES
DATE: AUGUST 5, 2026 TIME: 9:31 AM

A. Gibson
Anthony Soriano, Morris County
Barbara Allen Woolley-Dillon, PP, AICP, NJDEP
Becky Hall, Hunterdon County
Bill Millette, Hunterdon County
Brian Ragunan, DAG
Cape May County
Chris
David
Elizabeth Ward, Highlands Council
Glen Van Olden, NJ Farm Bureau
Grant
Grant Lucking
H. Dumont
James Humphries
Jason Kasler, AICP, PP (NJPO)
Jenna Monaghan, SJTPO
John Crane, Bernard's Township
Jonathan Eagle, Warren County
Kamal Saleh, Union County
Katherine Fullerton, Hunterdon County
Katie Elliott, Pinelands Commission
Kyle Cruz, NJHMFA
Larry DiVietro
Laurie Cleveland, Sourland Conservancy
Matt Baumgardner
Max Carlson, Warren County Planning
Mayor Ernie Troiano, Wildwood City
Michael Illiano
Olivia Hirsch
Pamela DeLosSantos
Ruth Foster, NJDEP
Sharon Mascaro, NJSEA
Steve
Steve Booy, Wildwood City
Tim Evans (New Jersey Future)