



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*

WALTER C. LANE  
*Acting Executive Director/Acting Secretary*

**New Jersey State Planning Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting Held on June 4, 2025  
Zoom Video Conference**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Wright called the June 4, 2025 video conference of the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) to order at 10:35 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  
Joe Grillo, Designee for President Christine Guhl-Sadovy, Board of Public Utilities  
Susan Weber, Designee for Francis K. O'Connor, Commissioner, Department of Transportation  
Nick Angarone, Designee for Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, Department of Environmental Protection  
Keith Henderson, Designee for Jacquelyn Suarez, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs (joined at 11:09 a.m.)  
Shanel Robinson, County Commissioner Director, County Member  
Elizabeth Terenik, Public Member (joined 11:13 a.m.)  
Stephen Santola, Public Member  
Julia Somers, Public Member  
Jeffrey Oakman, Public Member  
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 May 7, 2025, with no changes. Julia Somers made the motion, and Danielle Esser seconded it. With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote: Ayes: (9) Danielle Esser, Joe Grillo, Susan Weber, Nick Angarone, Shanel Robinson, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Jeffrey Oakman, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0) Abstains: (0) The May 7, 2025 minutes were approved.

## **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Wright noted that the earlier Plan Development Committee Meeting was beneficial and brought issues to the forefront that will be coming to the Commission. A central point concerned mapping issues, being that there are hundreds of map amendments coming through the Cross Acceptance process, concurrent with potential revisions of planning area definitions. He thanked Acting Executive Director (AED) Lane for his recommendation to attempt to work on those sequentially as well as the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) agreeing to compose a memo for the Commission regarding mapping.

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

## **ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Since the May 7 SPC meeting:**

AED Lane provided an overview of the Office's work since the May State Planning Commission (SPC), with the exception of State Plan updates, which would be covered later in the meeting.

### **Plan Endorsement**

- Staff is working with 15 municipalities to achieve Plan Endorsement status. These towns are: Dover, Seaside Heights, Little Egg Harbor, Ocean Township (Ocean), Woodstown, Ocean City, Salem City, Barnegat, Sparta, Dennis, Berkeley, Manchester, Red Bank, North Wildwood, and Wildwood City.
- Staff reviewed the Seaside Heights map with NJDEP. Staff shared the revised map with the municipality and are awaiting comments.
- Staff met with Dover's municipal officials in mid-May to discuss a potential redevelopment project on land owned by NJ Transit as well as the status of their visioning waiver request. The Office awaits additional information to justify the waiver request.
- The draft Salem City Planning & Implementation Agreement (PIA) was sent to the municipality for their review and comment. Staff followed up with the town's consultant to request additional information on mapping considerations, as well as updates on visioning and PIA review.
- Staff is working with Wildwood City regarding their Plan Endorsement petition. Preparation of the draft O&C report is complete and is undergoing internal review. The DOT component of the O&C packet was received and the DEP component is expected shortly.
- Ocean City's draft PIA was distributed to DEP, DOT, and DCA for comment. The Office is awaiting comments from the municipality regarding potential mapping issues.

- Staff is reviewing NJDEP's latest map proposal for Barnegat and are revising the map to reflect NJDEP's suggestions.
- Staff completed the draft PIA for Red Bank and the PIA was transmitted to DCA, DEP, and DOT. The Office awaits comments.

OPA staff continues to assist the Office of Business Advocacy regarding potential development sites for businesses looking to relocate or expand in NJ.

Staff also attended a large number of meetings, such as but not limited to:

NJDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Stakeholder Interview, DVRPC Centers Working Group, Morris Canal Working Group Spring Meeting, MACH Annual Meeting, DVRPC Board Meeting, SJTPO TAC Meeting, OPA/DEP Managers Mapping Meeting, NJ IAC on Climate Resilience: Monthly Senior Staff Meeting, NJ Coastal Coalition Inc. Meeting, NJ Bayshore Council, NJ County Planners Association, GIS Coordinators' Roundtable, and the IAC Extreme Heat Coordinated Communications Workgroup.

The Office remains very busy, not only with the State Plan, but also with a wide range of initiatives aimed at advancing the goals and objectives outlined in the State Plan.

Next week, staff will attend the New Jersey Planning & Redevelopment Conference. OPA staff will be presenting on two panel sessions. AED Lane and Lisa Avichal will be on a panel to discuss the Smart Growth Explorer with representatives from Rowan University and the Fair Share Housing Center. AED Lane will also be on a panel entitled "Planning to Thrive in Rural Areas: Small Town Sustainable Planning Initiatives in the Garden State."

OPA received an email regarding the potential siting and development of modular nuclear power plants on federal lands that will be shared with the Commission shortly. To avoid sending numerous emails throughout the month, AED Lane will send one email to the SPC members a few days before the monthly meetings, with all correspondence to be shared with the Commission.

The Office is working to fill the vacant Assistant Planner position. With Executive Director Melanie Willoughby's assistance, we have worked with Human Resources to post the position as well as bring OPA's former intern, Langley Oudemans, on in a temporary position until the Assistant Planner is hired. Langley is scheduled to start next week.

Chairman Wright thanked AED Lane for his report and remarked on the incredible range of work being done, as well as noting the partnership with different agencies and the State Plan being a key part of the DNA of policymaking.

With no additional comment from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked AED Lane to move on to the new business, which included the introduction of two resolutions.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Resolution of Approval 2025-04 Authorization of Plan Development Committee and Office of Planning Advocacy Staff to Undertake Activities on Behalf of State Planning Commission During the Negotiation Phase of Cross Acceptance**

AED Lane stated that the first draft resolution included in the Commission's Meeting Packet would appoint the members of the Plan Development Committee and Office of Planning Advocacy Staff to serve as the Negotiation Committee during the Negotiation Phase of Cross Acceptance. The resolution is consistent with the provisions of Subchapter 4 of the State Planning Rules. After the submission of the county Cross Acceptance Reports, the

negotiation phase begins. The Negotiation Committee will need to meet with county partners to review and discuss potential changes based on those reports. AED Lane then read the major provisions of the resolution.

The Resolution can be found at: <https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/resolutions/resolution-2025-04%20-pdc-and-opa-staff-negotiation-committee-certified.pdf>

Chairman Wright noted that any action taken by the Committee and/or OPA staff during the negotiation sessions is subject to review and approval of the full Commission.

With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2025-04. The motion was made by Danielle Esser and seconded by Jeffrey Oakman. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (8) Danielle Esser, Susan Weber, Nick Angarone, Shanel Robinson, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Jeffrey Oakman, and Thomas Wright Nays: (0). Abstains: (0) Resolution 2025-04 was approved.

Commissioner Grillo did not vote, and Commissioner Esser explained that his vote was not necessary for the resolution to be approved, as only a plurality of members was needed.

#### **Resolution of Approval 2025-05 Appointing Heyer, Gruel & Associates to serve as the Negotiating Committee for Bergen County in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan Cross Acceptance Process**

AED Lane stated that the second draft resolution included in the Commission's Meeting Packet would appoint Heyer, Gruel & Associates to serve as the Negotiating Committee for Bergen County in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan Cross Acceptance Process. As previously discussed, Bergen County waived its role in the Cross Acceptance Process, and these responsibilities were assigned to Heyer, Gruel & Associates many months ago. This resolution memorializes this action. AED Lane then read the major provisions of the resolution.

The Resolution can be found at: <https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/resolutions/resolution-2025-05-hga-ne-certified.pdf>

AED Lane mentioned that Heyer, Gruel & Associates was appointed several months ago to serve as Negotiating Committee through the on-call contract, which is memorialized by the resolution. The Cross Acceptance reports must be discussed at a public meeting and sent by resolution, and this gives Heyer, Gruel & Associates the authority to do so.

AED Lane pointed out that it was likely not anticipated that a non-governmental entity would be serving in the role of Negotiating Committee when the Rules were developed. The purpose of the resolution is to memorialize this action and ensure that the intent of the State Planning Act and Rules is being followed.

With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2025-05. The motion was made by Julia Somers and seconded by Shanel Robinson. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (8) Danielle Esser, Susan Weber, Nick Angarone, Shanel Robinson, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Jeffrey Oakman, Joe Grillo, and Thomas Wright Nays: (0). Abstains: (0) Resolution 2025-05 was approved.

#### **STATE PLAN UPDATE**

##### **Status of Activities and Public Responses to Date**

AED Lane reported that OPA staff continues to provide technical assistance to numerous counties and municipalities through consultant or internal staff and are providing some level of technical assistance to every county. Staff continues to update the comment tracking report which contains all the comments received on

the draft SDRP to date. The latest version of the summary was included in the Commission's Meeting Packet. The final public meeting summary notes for all twenty-two public meetings were posted to the website.

Final County Cross Acceptance Reports were due on May 30th. As of today, the Office has received ten final reports from Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Hunterdon, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, and Warren Counties. The Office has received nine draft reports from Atlantic, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Sussex and Union Counties as well as the Highlands Council. These Counties will be submitting their reports over the next week or two, with the last one due to be received on June 19, 2025.

With the adoption of the resolution designating Heyer, Gruel & Associates as the Negotiation Entity/Committee, they will be holding a public meeting shortly, as required by the State Planning Rules, on the draft Bergen Report before transmitting the final report to OPA. Cumberland County will submit their report sometime later today, and Salem will submit their report on June 6, 2025.

In the next day or two, the final Cross Acceptance Reports received will be posted on the OPA website. Examples of some of the comments in the Cross Acceptance Reports are as follows:

- State Agency Coordination
- Economic Development Opportunities in Rural Areas
- Changes to the Map and Mapping Policies (comprising the majority of overall comments received, with over 700 proposed changes for one county)
  - Showing all parks and preserved lands as PA8 or a similar type of designation on the SPPM.
  - Creating new planning areas for developed areas that are facing current or future climate risks.
  - Comments on adjacency and minimum planning area size requirements.
  - Creating a Rural Community Planning Area (PA 4C).

The comments received by the Office thus far are similar to those received at the public meetings, and via the online forms and email throughout the Comparison Phase of Cross Acceptance. With the submission of the Cross Acceptance Reports, the Comparison Phase of Cross Acceptance concludes. Per the State Planning Rules, once the Comparison Phase of the Cross Acceptance ends, the Negotiation Phase begins. During this phase, the Commission and OPA meet with counties and towns to review the comments on the draft Plan's policies and the State Plan Policy Map. Negotiation Session meetings are held with the counties and towns to address comments on the draft Plan's policies and proposed mapping changes. These meetings are open to the public.

Staff has been working diligently to schedule "prep meetings" with the staff of the counties and the Highlands Council to develop a list of issues to be discussed during the Negotiation Session meetings being held in July. The "prep meetings" will be held from mid-June until early July. Staff created a negotiation agenda template to be utilized during initial "prep" meetings with the Negotiating Entities.

Staff has been following up with all the Negotiating Entities to request their Negotiation Committee assignments. To date, the Office has received committee member lists from every County except two, being Salem and Union.

Staff has also been working with the counties to schedule Negotiation Session meetings that will occur during the month of July. Two meetings with each County are being scheduled. The second meeting will only be held in the event that all comments cannot be resolved in one meeting. The meetings will be conducted as webinars with the members of the respective Negotiation Committees as panelists. The public will be able to ask questions and/or provide comments via the chat or question and answer functions of Zoom. Once the meeting dates are

finalized, the meeting information will be posted on the OPA website and public notices will be published in newspapers in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. It is imperative all Negotiation Session meetings are held in July in to have enough time to prepare the revised draft Plan for release in early September.

Staff has created a section on the website where the final Cross Acceptance Reports, dates and agendas for all Negotiation Session meetings, periodic reports on the status of the Negotiation Sessions meetings, and the list of agreements and disagreements will be posted as required by the State Planning Rules. Only one or two periodic reports on the status of the Negotiation Session meetings may be posted due to the compressed timeline of two months, when the Negotiation Phase is meant to take six to seven months.

To ensure the Plan's adoption in December, the Office is constantly reevaluating the schedule. Since the current schedule calls for Negotiation Session meetings to conclude in late July and a revised draft Plan being approved by the SPC for release on August 20th, there is a very short window to pull together the revised draft. The required public hearings are tentatively scheduled to be held during the week of September 15th.

If the public hearings are moved to the week of October 6th and the September SPC Meeting from September 3rd to the 10th, several additional weeks will be gained to pull together the revised draft Plan and still be able to adopt the Plan in December. The August SPC meeting could be held on its original date of August 6th instead of moving it to August 20th as previously discussed. To allow for additional time to work on the draft, work together with the PDC, fully integrate all comments and changes, and provide ample time for review, AED Lane recommended the implementation of the schedule as he proposed.

Chairman Wright asked if the September meeting would be rescheduled from the 3rd to the 10th.

AED Lane responded affirmatively and added that the public hearings would be pushed to the first week of October.

Chairman Wright asked the Commissioners for feedback.

Commissioner Somers stated that her organization holds their annual meeting on October 8th, and will be unavailable in the afternoon.

AED Lane responded that the six public hearings on the revised draft Plan will take place during the first week of October. One in-person meeting will be held in Morris, and the other in Burlington County. The other four will be held virtually.

With no further feedback from the Commission, Chairman Wright stated that AED Lane should move forward with the suggested schedule change.

AED Lane thanked the Commission and continued with his report. OPA staff have been meeting regularly to discuss potential changes to the mapping protocols and criteria based upon the comments received to date regarding the draft SDRP. Once staff have finalized potential recommendations, feedback and direction will be sought from the PDC.

AED Lane stated that per the State Planning Rules, the State Plan Policy Map is meant to represent the policies of the State Plan. Given there have been numerous suggested changes to the mapping policies and criteria, AED Lane recommends that any changes to the SPPM be paused until after the new Plan is adopted. As changes to the mapping criteria could be made based upon results of the Negotiation Session meetings, it would be premature to make decisions on the proposed map change requests that are based the current policies. This could result in potential changes being denied under the current criteria that would might otherwise be approved if updated mapping policies and criteria were adopted. This will prevent duplication of effort on the part of the counties, be the most efficient usage of time, and increase the level of consistency and engagement in the State

Planning process. Proposed changes may still be discussed during the Negotiation Phase, and ways to improve or tweak concepts may result in a higher level of buy-in. He then requested feedback from the Commission regarding their support of pausing mapping changes until after the Plan is adopted.

Chairman Wright stated that he believes that an emphasis on the criteria for and definition of planning areas needs to take place before categorization and redrawing of lines. He then opened the floor for comment from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Angarone noted his strong support due to policy issues and the difficulty of making all proposed changes in a compressed time frame.

Commissioner Somers agreed with the proposal.

Commissioner Oakman voiced his agreeance.

AED Lane asked if a resolution to the effect should be prepared for the next SPC meeting.

Chairman Wright indicated that he did not believe a resolution to be of necessity.

AED Lane stated that he would request feedback from the DAG. He also expressed appreciation to the Commission for supporting his recommendation and believes that it will increase the Plan's level of consistency between the various levels of government.

Chairman Wright emphasized that this should be communicated clearly with the negotiating partners.

AED Lane shared that OPA will be meeting with the county planners later that day.

AED Lane reported that staff continues to attend informational meetings with various stakeholders on the State Plan and provide presentations as requested. AED Lane will be presenting at a NJ Conference of Mayors forum co-hosted with Rutgers Bloustein on the draft SDRP on June 17th. He will also be presenting at the Monmouth County League of Women Voters Meeting on June 19th.

Lastly, staff do not have any updates on their discussions regarding the various Special Resource Area designation requests at this time, but something will be presented within the upcoming months.

Chairman Wright opened the floor to the Commissioners for comment.

Commissioner Santola asked AED Lane if his presentation at the Conference of Mayors includes a pitch to take on Cross Acceptance and become part of the process after the new Plan is adopted.

AED Lane responded that he participated in a round table discussion at their spring conference in Atlantic City two weeks prior. Mayor Salento of Dunnell, President of the Conference of Mayors, focused on ensuring the engagement of the Mayors with the hopes that they will provide additional comments through the process of the public hearings on the Draft Plan. They also discussed how the State Plan can help municipalities achieve their local planning goals. AED Lane believes that the meeting will be productive, is pleased to engage with the group, and hopes to bring them into the conversation moving forward.

Chairman Wright asked the Commissioners if they had any further questions or comments regarding anything previously discussed. As no member commented, he opened the floor to the public.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Grant Lucking with the Builders Association agreed with the decision to delay the mapping change requests, but suggested that the requests be confirmed as actual open space as opposed to areas that a county wants to be open in the future. He also stated that areas with a higher climate risk should not be precluded from development or redevelopment; more specifically, redevelopment should be encouraged in places like Jersey City, where additional investment would increase resiliency.

Mr. Lucking continued that a center designation would increase development in rural areas looking to do so. This should be done in conjunction with any environmental risk factor planning area. If land is being taken off the board, it's critical to ensure the availability of developable land in other areas to meet housing challenges. He stated that the courts have ruled that under the Fair Housing Act, municipalities, specifically sewer districts, should be making reasonable efforts to increase sewer capacity to accommodate additional affordable housing opportunities. Mr. Lucking mentioned that the Fourth Round Housing Elements will be adopted at the end of June and wondered if that will be factored into the ultimate mapping.

Lastly, Mr. Lucking asked if the agency comments would be posted and available to the public.

AED Lane responded in the affirmative regarding the agency comments and stated that Mr. Lucking's concerns would be taken into consideration, as all needs, such as affordable housing and sewer infrastructure, would be balanced. Through the negotiation phase, the public will have the opportunity to comment on the revised Draft Plan.

AED Lane stated that the intent is to rely on open space data sets and the roster for open space inventories as the starting point for mapping. Any mapping change being considered will require a justification, which has been made clear to the counties. This will be made available through the statements of agreements and disagreements as well as the agendas and summaries of the negotiation sessions, which will be posted.

Chairman Wright thanked AED Lane for providing all necessary information, and the members of the public and Commission who were present at the meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further comments from the Commission or the public, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Shanel Robinson and seconded by Danielle Esser. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.



**ATTACHMENT A**  
**NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES**  
**DATE: JUNE 4, 2025 TIME: 10:35 AM**

Andrew Hedin, DAG  
Angela Knowles  
Anthony Soriano, Morris County  
Augusto Dal'Maso  
Barbara Woolley-Dillon  
Bill Millette, Hunterdon County  
Chris Helms  
Cordy  
David Schley  
Dillon McNamara  
Elizabeth  
Glen Van Olden, NJ Farm Bureau  
Grant Lucking, NJ Builders Association  
James Humphries, NJ Highlands  
Jason Kasler, NJPO  
Jeff Kolakowski  
John Crane  
John Sever, Salem County  
Justin Meyer  
Katherine Fullerton, Hunterdon County  
Michael Davis, HGA  
Mirah Becker, Middlesex County  
Nick Cuozzo  
Noel Alexander, Lakewood Township  
Rose Davidson  
Samantha De Andrea, Somerset County  
Steven Bruder, NJ SADC  
Susan Bristol, The Watershed Institute  
Susan Gruel, HGA  
Tim Gleason, Ocean  
Tony Poklasny