

Public Information Meeting
Preliminary SDRP
Atlantic County – Thursday, March 13, 2025 – 5:00 PM

START: 5:05 PM

PREPARED REMARKS:

Bob Lindaw, Planning Director

- Introduction and welcome.

Walter C. Lane, Acting Executive Director, OPA

- The Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) is tasked by the NJ State Planning Act to implement the goals of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP).
- In addition to providing administrative support to the State Planning Commission, OPA is organized within the NJ Department of State's NJ Business Action Center (BAC). The broader purpose of the BAC is to facilitate economic growth in New Jersey through technical assistance and guidance provided to businesses and local governments.
- OPA is currently in the process of updating the SDRP.
- As per the NJ State Planning Act, the SDRP intends to establish an optimal balance of economic development and environmental conservation through sound planning practices.
- The SDRP is not a regulatory document, but a guidance document. It does not overrule, negate, or interfere with local plans or regulations. Instead, its aim is to foster greater coordination and consistency between planning objectives at all levels of government.
- In December of 2024, OPA disseminated the Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan, which is a draft version of the new SDRP. This began a process called Cross Acceptance, in which all New Jersey residents and local and regional entities are free to offer comments, thereby contributing to the final version of the SDRP.
- Because stakeholder engagement is critical to the Cross Acceptance process, OPA commenced its outreach to municipalities, counties, and regional entities well in advance of the release of the Preliminary SDRP.
- At present, OPA is conducting public meetings such as this in all 21 counties and at the Highlands Council. Later this year, OPA will conduct six public hearings on the outcome of the Cross Acceptance process.
- Concurrently, OPA is working with a team from Rutgers and Rowan Universities to prepare an Infrastructure Needs Assessment, which will project the public investments necessary to implement the new SDRP. An Impact Assessment, investigating societal and economic impacts of the new SDRP, is also underway. Furthermore, OPA is soliciting comments on the State Plan Policy Map and its underlying mapping protocols.
- The current SDRP, adopted in 2001, contains eight goals. The Preliminary SDRP contains ten goals. These goals pertain to economic development, housing, infrastructure, urban revitalization, climate change, water and natural resources, environmental protection, historic and scenic resources, equity, and comprehensive planning.
- The State Plan Policy Map, required by the State Planning Rules, serves as the geographic application of the SDRP's goals, strategies, and policies. Although planning area amendments will occur during Cross Acceptance, the addition of new centers and nodes will be addressed outside of Cross Acceptance, through the Plan Endorsement process.

- The Smart Growth Explorer is an online mapping tool developed by OPA's partners at Rowan University. It can be used to identify areas suitable for development and areas suitable for conservation. It can serve as a resource to stakeholders when considering requests to amend the State Plan Policy Map.
- OPA will complete its public meetings by mid-April. The Cross Acceptance process will then proceed to the Comparison Phase, in which County Cross Acceptance Reports are developed and submitted to OPA. Next is the Negotiation Phase, in which OPA and the counties will discuss points of agreement and disagreement in the Preliminary SDRP. Ultimately, we hope to adopt the Final SDRP, along with the Infrastructure Needs Assessment and the Impact Assessment, before the end of the year.
- QR codes are available to access the Preliminary SDRP, the Citizen's Guide to the Preliminary SDRP, and an online portal to submit comments on the Preliminary SDRP.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD:

Summary of **Questions** and *OPA Responses*

Is this the first meeting?

This is our 15th meeting.

How do you get started with the draft process?

OPA started with the current state plan, met with many committees and stakeholders, and conducted public outreach.

How can the public know when meetings occur and be better dispersed prior to the release of the draft?

Meetings were noticed and are posted on our website. We welcome any suggestions on how to improve spreading awareness and getting the word out.

How often do we do a plan and when is the current one from?

Every 3 years, and 2001. There have been previous unsuccessful attempts to adopt a new State Plan.

Is any additional time allotted for the adoption of the State Plan?

We have until the end of the year.

Is the State looking to municipalities for comments on the plan?

Yes, and the Cross Acceptance Response Template (CART). Counties will work with the municipalities regarding the CART.

The map that was shown during the presentation—when is that from?

It is the current map, which takes the 2001 map and has been updated to include all amendments since then.

If a municipality falls within Pinelands and CAFRA, how do they align themselves with the State Plan?

We do not have jurisdiction over the full map and the Pinelands is one of those areas. While we do not have jurisdiction in the Pinelands, we do have planning areas in the CAFRA region that can be commented on.

[Bob Lindaw, Planning Director]: I'd like to give a shout-out to Langley Oudemans, OPA Intern, and Ben Woodward, who have been working diligently to help the municipalities prepare their CARTs.

How does the Plan benefit Corbin City, which has no vacant land or sewers?

[Bob Lindaw, Planning Director]: By participating, you have a seat at the table and a way to voice your concerns.

How does the general public know when and how they can participate?

We have an interested parties list.

[Bob Lindaw, Planning Director]: The County will continue to let the public know through their outlets and get those who would like municipal contacts in touch with the right folks.

How do I tell my local residents how to reach out to the agencies they have concerns about?

[Bob Lindaw, Planning Director]: The County will get in touch with the municipal reps to help.

Is the County scheduled to have any public meetings/hearings that the public can attend?

[Bob Lindaw, Planning Director]: There will be a meeting when they approve the final CART for transmittal to OPA.

We don't have a local newspaper and advertising is a struggle. Does the County have a budget for advertisement?

[Bob Lindaw, Planning Director]: Yes, but not much.

END: 6:00 PM