

Public Information Meeting
Preliminary SDRP
Union County – Tuesday, February 25, 2025 – 6:00 PM

START: 6:09 PM

PREPARED REMARKS:

Lourdes M. Leon, Chair, Board of County Commissioners

- Recognizes the County Commissioners
- Reminds audience that Union has a voice on ideas and concern adding value and a strong foundation to the State Plan.

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*

Does the Mapping Tool help determine Planning Areas?

Yes, you can use it to identify possible changes to Planning Areas.

When will the mapping changes take place?

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.

How did the State Agencies contribute?

We have received comments from all relevant state agencies.

How does the development of housing apply to medium- and high-density municipalities in the State Plan?

Housing density differs for every county. The State Plan mentions the importance of having housing be accessible to amenities and promoting walkability.

Regarding affordable housing, how does the State Plan relate to the rules?

The State Plan highlights affordable housing. It does not have a formula for affordable housing but discusses the importance of housing affordability. .

Does the State Plan address stormwater management capacity?

Yes, it covers green infrastructure and flooding mitigation. These strategies are contained within the climate resilience strategies.

When will the new State Plan be adopted?

If things go to plan, December of 2025. The next governor's administration will implement the Plan.

How long should it be updated after State Plan has been adopted?

By law, every three years.

Can you elaborate on the contents and purpose of the IA/INA?

Both documents will consider the impacts and benefits of the new State Plan's policies. The Impact Assessment will analyze the economic and societal implications, while the Infrastructure Needs Assessment will project future infrastructure needs and the associated costs.

How does the State Plan determine where the infrastructure should go?

The State Plan helps inform decisions about where infrastructure should be built, and where it should not be built. When the 2001 Plan was implemented, it prescribed less additional growth-inducing infrastructure investment in the rural areas. The focus then, as now, is to preserve land in Planning Areas 4 and 5.

Are there economic incentives related to planning area and center designations?

Yes, areas in PA1, PA2, & Centers are eligible for Aspire Tax Credits from EDA and are eligible for funding from a variety of grant programs offered by HMFA, DOT, DEP, EDA, and many other state agencies.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Joseph J. Maraziti, Jr., Maraziti Falcon, Former SPC Chair

- I thank Governor Murphy for allowing an update to the State Plan.
- The map is an essential tool and effectuates the Planning Areas.
- I strongly support the updated State Plan, particularly its focuses on Climate Change and Equity.
- I have a suggestion concerning sea level rises: The plan mentions all sorts of climate hazards, but this should also incorporate DEP regulations.
- Inundation risks zones should have short-term plans.
- By 2050, most of the shore will be flooded.
- The State Plan refers to areas such as the shore as "vulnerable." It should instead refer to these areas as "accessible."

END: 6:57 PM