



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 September 10, 2025
Zoom Video Conference**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wright called the September 10, 2025, video conference of the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) to order at 10:32 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 11:12 a.m.)
Amanda Gendek, Designee for Francis K. O'Connor, Commissioner, Department of Transportation
Bruce Harris, Municipal Member
Nick Angarone, Designee for Shawn LaTourette, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection
Edward J. McKenna, Vice Chair, Public Member
Keith Henderson, Designee for Jacquelyn Suarez, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs
Shanel Robinson, County Commissioner Director, County Member
Elizabeth Terenik, Public Member
Melanie Willoughby, Designee for Lt. Governor Tahesha Way, Secretary of State, Department of State
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 August 6, 2025, with no changes. Ed McKenna made the motion, and Keith Henderson seconded it. With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote: Ayes: (11) Amanda Gendek, Bruce Harris, Nick Angarone, Ed McKenna, Keith Henderson, Elizabeth Terenik, Melanie Willoughby, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Jeffrey Oakman, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0) Abstains: (1) Shanel Robinson. The August 6, 2025, minutes were approved.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Wright indicated that his comments would be brief, but asked for a moment of silence for the 24th anniversary of the attacks on 9/11/2001, which was observed by the group. He also reflected on the Abundance Conference, in which he recently participated in Washington, D.C., concerning abundance and scarcity in public services.

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 August 6 SPC meeting:

AED Lane provided a brief overview of the Office's work since the August 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 numerous towns to achieve Plan Endorsement (PE) status.
- Staff hopes to bring the PE petitions for several towns' petitions to the upcoming Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) and SPC meetings.

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

The Interagency Council on Extreme Heat, DVRPC Regional Technical Committee Meeting, NJCPA Statewide Planning/Smart Growth Committee, numerous meetings with DEP partners on mapping for PE applications, New Jersey Coastal Coalition Meeting, SJTPO TAC Meeting, NJTPA Land Use Coordination, Vibrant Communities, & Accessibility Expert Session, and the Plan4HealthNJ Advisory Council Meeting.

With no questions or comments from the Commission, Chairman Wright requested that Jacqueline Rivera move AED Lane, Mr. Simone, Commissioner Somers, and Commissioner Robinson to the Zoom waiting room before moving on to the next agenda item due to previous recusals. All parties were moved to the Zoom waiting room. Chairman Wright then asked Assistant Planner Felix Zamora to provide an update on the Statement of Agreements and Disagreements (SAD).

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2025-10 Approval of the Final Statements of Agreements and Disagreements (SAD)

Mr. Zamora proceeded to present an overview of the negotiation process and outcomes. Negotiation Sessions (NS) were held for all 21 counties and the Highlands after which OPA produced two interim reports. Upon completion of the NS, the SPC's negotiation committee determined that the negotiations produced the highest degree of agreement feasible, and the negotiation phase of Cross Acceptance was complete. Of the 555 items in Appendix A discussed during the NS, the agreement rate was approximately 97%.

The adoption of the SAD marks the conclusion of cross-acceptance and signifies the end of the negotiating entity's participation and responsibilities in the process. No additional comments or changes to the draft State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP or the Plan) are required by the counties or municipalities. However, feedback will still be accepted as public comments through ospmail@sos.nj.gov and the online survey.

The Final SAD can be found here:

https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/update-to-state-plan/final_sad_2025.pdf

With no discussion or questions from the Commission, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2025-10. The motion was made by Melanie Willoughby and seconded by Ed McKenna. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (10) Amanda Gendek, Bruce Harris, Nick Angarone, Ed McKenna, Keith Henderson, Elizabeth Terenik, Melanie Willoughby, Stephen Santola, Jeffrey Oakman, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0) Abstains: (2) Shanel Robinson and Julia Somers. Resolution 2025-10 was approved.

The Resolution can be found here:

https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/res_final_sad_2025_10.pdf

Before the next agenda item, Chairman Wright requested that Ms. Rivera move AED Lane, Mr. Simone, Commissioner Somers, and Commissioner Robinson from the Zoom waiting room back to the meeting. All parties had rejoined the meeting. Chairman Wright then requested that AED Lane discuss the Infrastructure Needs Assessment (INA) and introduce the consultant team, who would provide a briefing.

Resolution 2025-11 Approval to Release the Draft Final State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the Draft Infrastructure Needs Assessment – to be deferred to the September 15, 2025 SPC meeting

Infrastructure Needs Assessment Update

AED Lane stated that The New Jersey State Planning Act requires that the State Planning Commission prepare and adopt as part of the State Plan a long-term Infrastructure Needs Assessment. The draft INA must be released with the draft Final SDRP prior to the initiation of the public comment period and public hearings.

He continued that Rutgers University was hired to develop an INA and has done so over the past year. AED Lane introduced Leigh Ann Von Hagen, who led the development of the INA.

Ms. Von Hagen proceeded to present on the INA. The presentation can be found at:

<https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/meeting-materials/sdrp-ina-2024-2030-corrected-presentation-9-10-2025-spc.pdf>

Commissioner Harris raised the question of whether some sectors are close to being funded. A short discussion followed with the consultants responding that it appears that some are close to being funded. Commissioner Somers inquired as to whether the consultant team worked with the Highlands Council, to which they reported

that they would follow-up. Commissioner Oakman raised questions about the inclusion of emerging technologies like AI and the energy sector's growing importance. Commissioner Angarone noted that the INA does not include new assessments, but summarizes existing assessments – it does not include an assessment of the state's climate resilience needs, for example. A discussion with the consultants followed. The group discussed the ongoing relevance of the document, with AED Lane suggesting that while the current assessment is a snapshot, ongoing analysis will be needed to address evolving needs.

Chairman Wright then requested that AED Lane discuss the Final Draft SDRP.

Final Draft State Development and Redevelopment Plan

AED Lane stated that, as changes had been made to the SDRP based on comments from state agencies and the governor's office up until the day before the meeting, the Commission had just received the document. As such, the recommendation is to defer voting on the release of the draft INA and the draft final SDRP until a special SPC meeting on September 15, 2025. If the Plan and the INA are approved for release at the special SPC meeting on September 15, 2025, there would still be an opportunity to submit comments, as the documents will not be final.

He continued that the approach when considering changes to the Plan was to ensure that there was enough information to explain the intent of the strategies/policies, but in a manner that would keep the plan evergreen if the Plan was not updated for a significant amount of time.

AED Lane reported that there were many requests for clarifications of proposed strategies, the provision of more detail on how the Plan was to be used, and additional guidance on how to implement its goals. This had to be balanced with the numerous comments about not having the Plan be a "one size fits all" document. OPA provided concise new language to address these comments at a high level. Examples include adding text stating that OPA and state agency partners will provide technical assistance and create guidance documents, as well as case studies of best practices on implementation of the Plan's strategies or recommendations.

OPA also added new text clarifying that all the goals are equally important, but communities can prioritize the goals based on local needs.

Due to AED Lane's previous recusal, he has not participated in and cannot participate in any discussions related to the following items:

- Equity Goal section of the Draft Final SDRP
- Critical Environmental Site (CES) and Historical and Cultural Site (HCS) criteria in the Draft Final SDRP
- The Sourlands Mountain Region
- Mapping amendment requests from any Somerset County jurisdiction
- Any other planning issue specific to Somerset County

If necessary, Senior Planner Steve Simone will be able to discuss those items, and AED Lane will be removed from the meeting at that time.

Substantive Changes were made to the following sections:

- Special Resource Areas (new definition, policy, and process to designate these areas outside of the plan)
- Planning Area Policies and Mapping Criteria (New planning areas proposed to address flooding in developed areas, as well as adding flooding considerations to PA3, 4, and 5)
- Infrastructure Section (added text to discuss other types of infrastructure beyond transportation and clean energy, and to be consistent with the INA analysis)
- New and updated definitions in the glossary

Chairman Wright requested a list of all the requests for special resource areas, which AED Lane agreed to produce and suggested that OPA and the SPC would facilitate meetings with the stakeholders of each special resource area.

AED Lane stated that when the Commission approves the Plan for release and public comment, it will be a clean document with a companion document that details all changes.

There were only a handful of requested changes not addressed:

- Prioritization of the 10 goals
- Adding text regarding the need to make changes to the school funding formula
- Adding a recommendation to provide “rebate” payments to towns with large amounts of state owned land or preserved farmland
- Adding specific projects by name (transportation, stormwater, etc.)

With no discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve the deferment of Resolution 2025-11 to the September 15, 2025 SPC meeting. The motion was made by Jeffrey Oakman and seconded by Ed McKenna. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (12) Joe Grillo, Amanda Gendek, Bruce Harris, Nick Angarone, Ed McKenna, Keith Henderson, Shanel Robinson, Melanie Willoughby, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Jeffrey Oakman, and Thomas Wright Nays: (0). Abstains: (0) The motion to approve deferring action on Resolution 2025-11 until the September 15, 2025 meeting was approved. Elizabeth Terenik had left the meeting and did not vote.

Chairman Wright then requested that AED Lane discuss setting a date and time for a special SPC meeting.

Approval of a Special State Planning Commission Meeting Date on September 15, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

AED Lane stated that after pooling the Commissioners, September 15, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. would be the best option to achieve a quorum to take action on releasing the draft documents, and to maintain the current timeline.

With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Wright asked for a motion to approve holding a special State Planning Commission Meeting on September 15, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. The motion was made by Ed McKenna and seconded by Julia Somers. Chairman Wright asked for a roll call vote. Ayes: (12) Joe Grillo, Amanda Gendek, Bruce Harris, Nick Angarone, Ed McKenna, Keith Henderson, Shanel Robinson, Melanie Willoughby, Stephen Santola, Julia Somers, Jeffrey Oakman, and Thomas Wright. Nays: (0) Abstains: (0) Holding a special State Planning Commission Meeting on September 15, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. was approved. Elizabeth Terenik had left the meeting and did not vote.

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

STATE PLAN UPDATE

AED Lane reported that he will be making presentations on the SDRP Update at the Southern Jersey Association of Counties meeting on September 29th and at the New Jersey Association of Planning and Zoning Administrators on September 30th.

Additionally, after today’s meeting, Ms. Rivera will contact the Commission members regarding their intent to attend any of the six public hearings in October (14th to the 17th). While the Commissioners are encouraged to attend, they must inform Ms. Rivera to avoid reaching a quorum of the SPC.

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

As Laurie Cleveland of The Sourland Conservancy wished to discuss the process of special area designation, Chairman Wright requested that Ms. Rivera move AED Lane, Mr. Simone, Commissioner Somers, and Commissioner Robinson to the Zoom waiting room due to previous recusals. All parties were moved to the Zoom waiting room.

Ms. Cleveland expressed concern about the delay in receiving this designation despite significant tree loss. Mr. Simone explained that the concept of special resource areas needed to be clearly defined, and the Commission would work on establishing a new process after adopting the final SDRP. Chairman Wright emphasized the importance of creating a meaningful designation that leads to tangible outcomes.

Chairman Wright requested that Ms. Rivera move AED Lane, Commissioner Somers, and Commissioner Robinson from the Zoom waiting room back to the meeting. All parties rejoined 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 Ed McKenna and seconded by Bruce Harris. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 12:19 p.m.

ATTACHMENT A
NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION ATTENDEES
DATE: SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 TIME: 10:32 AM

Alan Hunt, Hunterdon
Andrew Olsen
Anthony Soriano
Barbara Woolley-Dillon, NJDEP
Bill Millette, Hunterdon
Charles Shadle
C. Helms
David Schley
Dillon McNamara
Donna Rendeiro
Gabriela Duncan
Glen Van Olden, NJ Farm Bureau
Grant Lucking
Greg Polyniak
H. Dumont
H. Knight
Helen Kioukis, NJ Future
J. Biegen
James Humphries
John Crane
Katherine Fullerton, Hunterdon
Laurie Cleveland, Sourland Conservancy
Leigh Ann Von Hagen, Rutgers
Matt Baumgardner
Max Carlson, Warren County
Melissa Thompson
Michael Davis, HGA
Mirah Becker, Middlesex
Noel Alexander, Lakewood Twp.
Ruth Foster, NJDEP
Samantha De Andrea, Somerset
Susan Weber
Tim Evans, NJ Future
Tom Stanuikynas, Burlington
Tony Poklasny