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State Planning Commission/Middlesex County Negotiation Session
July 15, 2025 – 11:30 a.m./July 24, 2025 – 11:30 a.m.

Zoom Video Conference

Meeting ID: 829 6980 1651

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82969801651>

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Purpose of Negotiation Session
Walter Lane, Acting Executive Director
3. Public Participation during Negotiation Session
Walter Lane, Acting Executive Director
4. Negotiation of County Cross Acceptance Response Items
Appendix A
5. Negotiation of Statewide Policy Items
Appendix B
6. Public Comment

Appendix A: Middlesex County Cross Acceptance Response Items

PSDRP GOAL/SECTION	PSDRP PAGE	CAR PAGE	DESCRIPTION	JURISDICTION	AGREE/DISAGREE
State Plan Policy Map			While we understand that the OPA intends to address mapping issues after policy changes have been adopted, it is important to us that an acknowledgment of these requests, at least generally if not on an individual basis, be made in the State Plan and that OPA affirms its commitment to address those in a timely manner. As a County, and on behalf of our municipalities, we do have some concern that future development could be burdened by appearing to be inconsistent with the future State Plan Map when in fact, edits have been requested and may be pending.	Middlesex County	
State Agency Coordination		16	"To ensure participation and long-term compliance with the State Plan, state agency financial incentives and technical assistance must be built into the Cross-Acceptance process. This will ensure that counties and municipalities embrace not only the State Plan but also what the planning area designations are on the State Plan Policy Map when confronted by development."	Middlesex County	
State Plan Policy Map		17, 18	<p>"The Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve is comprised of approximately 660 acres of freshwater wetlands, forested uplands, and meadows in a densely populated, highly developed central part of the State, offering unique natural habitat including federal priority wetlands. Over 15 different bird species have been spotted in the preserve, including the threatened and endangered grasshopper sparrow and yellow crowned night heron. In addition, 25 mammals and over a dozen reptile and amphibian species have been sighted, and archeological digs have uncovered at least 5 significant archeological sites, including one that is at least 10,000 years old.</p> <p>This significant State environmental resource, which is located in a dense urban environment, has been preserved by State Statute, yet is not mentioned in the Preliminary State Plan, nor is it represented on the State Plan Policy Map. Middlesex County is requesting that this situation be addressed and rectified during the negotiation phase such that both the text of the State Plan and the GIS behind the State Plan Policy Map be updated to include this special geographic area ."</p>	Middlesex County	

Special Resource Area		77, 78, 79	<p>"A policy change request is hereby made to create an "Area of Critical State Concern" for the 660-acre Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve. Similar to the Pinelands, Highlands, NJSEA, Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority, and Casino Reinvestment Developemnt Authority, the Barnes Wildlife Preserve deserves special statutory treatment under the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preservation Act, and the Plan should treat the Preserve with the same deference as the Special Resources that are named in the State Planning Act. Map policy change requests have been prepared as submitted as a supplemental appendix in this Cross-Acceptance Report. Each map change is presented graphically on a quadrangle map, and an explanation provided for each request on the corresponding table."</p> <p>"Page 61 of the Preliminary Draft State Plan addresses Regional Planning and Areas of Critical State Concern. This section should be updated to include Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve."</p> <p>"The requested policy change to create an "Area of Critical State Concern" for the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve does not have a viable alternative beyond a PA5 designation."</p>	Middlesex County	
Climate Change		167	<p>"Sprawl is not an issue in the municipality. However, the municipality does have flooding issues along the Raritan River. There are both existing single-family homes and apartment complexes located along the river. Homeowners may choose to raise their dwellings or the State could possibly offer a buy-out to raze them, neither of which has been done to date."</p>	Township of Piscataway	
Climate Change		171	<p>"The City has no space for sprawl development. Areas near the Raritan River are highly developed but also at risk during major events. The State should explore improvements to Rt. 18 to install major detention infrastructure under the roadway to absorb impact of major flooding events. They can replicate this elsewhere that roadways are buffers from flooding."</p>	City of New Brunswick	
State Agency Coordination		184	<p>"• NJDEP regulations should have special considerations and/or ways to facilitate redevelopment of prime downtown areas and designated Centers</p> <p>• this is especially true for stormwater regulations in places with existing poor soil (type D) conditions. Similarly, NJDOT permitting processes should give special consideration to municipalities with walkable downtowns that include state highways."</p>	Borough of Highland Park	
State Agency Coordination		184	<p>"1. State Planning Areas and Center Designation, specifically how to make it easier/more meaningful to be identified as a center</p> <p>2. State/County Support for Local Efforts to Implement the SDRP - Technical assistance - Financial assistance - Permitting exceptions"</p>	Borough of Highland Park	

State Plan Policy Map		184	"Very well - the entire municipality is designated PA-1. However, it may be worth considering placing the Rutgers Ecological Preserve, including parts of Piscataway and Edison, as well as the existing municipal and county parks along the Raritan River, into PA-5. Also, we would suggest enhanced PA-1 core areas, perhaps as PA-1A, and remaining transitional metro areas as PA-1B."	Borough of Highland Park	
State Plan Policy Map		185	"In addition, in looking at the State Plan Map, we were struck by the fact that most of our region is Planning Area 1 and there is no distinction between walkable Highland Park and more suburban places like East Brunswick. A re-thought Center Designation process, one that is streamlined, would go a long way. We would suggest enhanced PA-1 core areas, perhaps as PA-1A, and remaining transitional metro areas as PA-1B."	Borough of Highland Park	
State Plan Policy Map		190	"We agree that we are predominantly PA 1 and have made minor revisions to the map to reduce environmentally sensitive lands that have been developed as subdivisions. I have also amended the map to show that the township believes that the 212-acre transit village should be designated a regional center."	North Brunswick	
Infrastructure		191	"We recommend that it be made clear that state infrastructure resources should be targeted specifically to facilitate the construction of rail stations given their enormous cost." "Again, our concern is that state funding continue to be made available to complete the design and construction of North Brunswick Station on the Northeast Corridor."	North Brunswick	
State Plan Policy Map		195	"Extremely well - nearly the entire municipality is designated PA1. However, it may be worth considering placing the future County park associated with the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve (as part of the Gulton redevelopment project) into PA-5. Also, we would suggest enhanced PA-1 core areas, perhaps as PA-1A, and remaining transitional metro areas as PA-1B."	Borough of Metuchen	
State Agency Coordination		195, 196	"NJDEP regulations (i.e., stormwater regulations) should have special considerations and/or methods to permit redevelopment of designated centers. Streamline permitting process involving federal grants, including enabling scope changes, as well as with projects involving AMTRAK coordination and/or review."	Borough of Metuchen	
State Plan Policy Map		196	"1) State Planning Areas and Centers designation, specifically to make it easier to renew/extend (or make permanent) the extension, and make it more meaningful to be identified as a center (i.e., financial benefits, permit prioritization)	Borough of Metuchen	

State Plan Policy Map		196, 197	"The Borough allowed the Centers designation to expire because the cost-benefit of the application to extend made the effort infeasible. The benefits should be more easily understood. Perhaps the Centers designation should not expire, or should be subject to a Statement of Strategy analysis as municipalities re-examine their master plans. As to the State Plan Policy Map, Metuchen is clearly a town center, and there should be a designation that clearly differentiates a walkable downtown area, particularly one with a train station, from suburban areas. This would further emphasize and implement the State's goal to revitalize and recenter.	Borough of Metuchen	
State Plan Policy Map		78, 79,	"Other requested policy changes related to the State Plan Map. These are generally corrections to Plan Area boundaries based on existing development, planned development, or the desire to protect existing open space. One municipal suggestion is to create an additional PA1 classification for existing, established downtown areas." "One municipal suggestion is to create an additional PA1 classification for existing, established downtown areas. A viable way to accomplish this would be to survey downtowns in existing PA1 areas based on density or other criteria. In the alternative, additional Center designation may be effective."	Middlesex County	
State Plan Policy Map		195	"We think you did a great job. Perhaps there should be greater emphasis on transit-oriented developments and emphasizing actual centers within PA-1, not necessarily suburban / rural areas that happen to be within PA-1. Such should be commiserate (sic) with enhanced technical assistance and funding opportunities, similar to the Transit Village program."	Middlesex County , Borough of Metuchen	

Appendix B: Statewide Policy Issues

PSDRP GOAL/SECTION	PSDRP PAGE	DESCRIPTION	JURISDICTION	NOTES	AGREE/DISAGREE
General		Add definitions requested from public comment to glossary	State		
General		Formatting of document will be done for revised draft final	State		
General		Clarifying language requested from public comment will be added to revised draft final	State		
Pollution and Environmental Cleanup	48	Waste Management and Recycling: add language on illegal dumping	State		
Comprehensive Planning	61	Remove the term "Areas of Critical State Concern" and incorporate concepts into a revised Special Resource Area definition and policy.	State		
Comprehensive Planning	62	Recognize the following as Special Resource Areas: The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, The Skylands Region, The Sourland Mountain Region, The Great Swamp, Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve, and Rancocas Creek.	State		
Comprehensive Planning	62	Special Resource areas be mapped on the State Plan Policy Map.	State	Currently, Special Resource Areas are not mapped.	
Comprehensive Planning		Plan Endorsement: The process of pursuing Plan Endorsement/Center Designation by a municipality and the benefits for receiving endorsement are not balanced.	State	While Plan Endorsement is in the Plan generally, the specifics of endorsement are in the Guidelines and Benefits documents, respectively.	
State Plan Policy Map		Planning Areas: remove adjacency criteria.	State	Example: a PA2 will not need to be next to a PA1.	
State Plan Policy Map		Planning Areas: remove land greater than 1 sq. mile criteria.	State		
State Plan Policy Map	77	Designate Parks, Open Space, and Natural Areas as an official Planning Area	State	The 2001 Plan does not consider Parks, Open Space, and Natural Areas a Planning Area.	
State Plan Policy Map		Create a new Planning Area that reflects developed areas that are subject to current and future climate risk.	State	Example: PA1B and PA2B	
State Plan Policy Map		Create a new Planning Area that recognizes a Rural Planning Area (PA4) that has development.	State	Example: PA4C	
State Plan Policy Map	78	Centers: Addition/reintroduction of Cores within Centers	State	This concept was introduced in the 2001 Plan and removed in the Preliminary Plan.	
State Plan Policy Map	78	Centers: Revise the definition of Center.	State		
State Plan Policy Map/Comprehensive Planning	78	Centers/Plan Endorsement: Remove Center Designation expirations	State	Centers/cores/nodes expire after 10 years unless you are one of the few permanent centers.	
State Plan Policy Map	78	The State Plan should include a list of identified Centers	State		
State Plan Policy Map	76	Critical Environmental Site: if the land greater than 1 sq. mile criteria is removed that CESs should become critical environmental areas.	State	CESs in the 2001 Plan were meant for areas less than 1 sq. mile.	
State Plan Policy Map	76	Separate Critical Environmental Site and Historical Cultural Site (HCS)	State		
Implementation		Implement the State Plan as a guide.	State	SPC received many comments on having the State Plan not impose on local zoning and regulation changes.	
Implementation		Strengthen language regarding coordination between the State Plan, State Agencies, and municipalities/Counties.	State		