Citizen's Guide to the Preliminary Draft of the NJ State Plan

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The Goals

Economic Development

Overview

- **Promote Inclusive Economic Development:** Support policies that benefit our residents equitably, especially historically under-represented groups, while fostering sustainable growth.
- **Leverage State Strengths:** Market New Jersey's skilled labor, cultural diversity, education, strategic location, and diverse industries to attract businesses.
- **Foster a Sustainable Economy:** Prioritize efficient corporate practices, and support renewable industries and green technologies to ensure long-term economic stability. Guide existing businesses while attracting new ones to become a modernized economic base that integrates cutting-edge technology and environmentally responsible practices.
- **Align Workforce Development with Industry Needs:** Offer educational opportunities including job training, apprenticeships, and skill development to develop a skilled and knowledgeable workforce that support diverse populations, including women and minority groups.
- **Invest in regional planning:** Focus investments in transportation and infrastructure that promote connectivity, balanced growth, and urban redevelopment.

Priorities

Government Coordination

What does the State Plan do?

- Improves coordination efforts across state, county, and municipal governments to streamline economic development efforts.
- Advocates for the simplification of regulatory processes to reduce delays and costs to support businesses and urban revitalization.
- Fosters interstate cooperation to engage in much-needed infrastructure and regional economic growth, while preventing bidding wars.

Why it matters:

- Efficient government processes facilitate economic development and urban revitalization.
- Coordination increases the effectiveness of public resources and services.

- Streamlined regulations help lower costs for businesses and promote further investments into our communities.
- Strong partnerships support sustainable growth, while maintaining healthy regional competitiveness.

Business Retention and Expansion

What does the State Plan do?

- Promotes the retention and expansion of existing businesses while attracting new businesses by proposing financial incentives, regulatory reforms, and technical assistance in downtown areas.
- Focuses on expanding high-growth sectors, such as technology and clean energy, that align with New Jersey's strengths and keeps New Jersey economically competitive.
- Promotes the modernization of industries through technological advancements and worker retraining programs.
- Promotes support to small businesses and mixed-use business districts located in New Jersey's cities, towns, and downtown areas.
- Promotes the development of trade policies and programs that encourage the use of goods and services produced within New Jersey.

Why it matters:

- Retaining and expanding businesses helps to strengthen the local economy and creates job opportunities.
- Modernizing businesses keeps them competitive and prepared for future challenges, while attracting out of state companies and employers.
- Supporting small businesses fosters innovation and a sense of community.

Workforce Development

What does the State Plan do?

- Calls for alignment of educational programs with industry needs to help develop a skilled workforce to meet future labor demands.
- Promotes targeted training, apprenticeships, and job placement services to equip workers with the necessary skills to succeed in the workforce.
- Calls for coordination of public and private sector development with secondary schools and higher education programs to best meet labor market demands.
- Promotes support to small businesses and mixed-use business districts located in New Jersey's cities, towns, and downtown areas.
- Promotes the development of trade policies and programs that encourage the use of goods and services produced within New Jersey.

Why it matters:

- A skilled workforce drives economic competitiveness and innovation.

- Training and job placement programs provide individuals with necessary tools for success.
- Inclusive workforce development helps ensure equitable opportunities for all residents.
- Collaboration between economic sectors helps address and improve labor market efficiency.

Regional Planning

What does the State Plan do?

- Promotes regional planning that balances housing, employment, and transportation to create vibrant and sustainable communities.
- Outlines infrastructure investments that would support efficient movement of goods through New Jersey's ports, airports, and road/rail systems.
- Encourages the redevelopment of underutilized urban areas to create vibrant downtown areas.
- Calls for housing, commerce, and employment opportunities to be well-connected to reduce travel times and improve living standards.

Why it matters:

- Effective regional planning creates well-connected and sustainable communities.
- Investment in infrastructure boosts economic activity and enhances logistical efficiency.
- Revitalization of urban areas leads to increased economic opportunities and improved quality of life.
- Balancing the location of housing and job centers makes communities better connected and reduces congestion.

Sustainable and Inclusive Development

What does the State Plan do?

- Promotes sustainable economic practices by encouraging businesses to utilize safe, healthy, and resource-efficient operations.
- Recognizes the agricultural sector and urban farming as essential contributors to New Jersey's economy.
- Recommends implementation of policies that reflect true social, economic, and environmental costs to ensure sustainable growth.
- Incentivizes industries that focus on renewable resources, reducing emissions, and minimizing waste.

Why it matters:

- Sustainable development practices are beneficial to the economy and the environment.

- Supporting green industries leads to a cleaner economy and further job creation in emerging sectors.
- Integrating sustainability into business models reduces environmental impacts and improves the efficient use of resources.
- Sustainable growth helps protect New Jersey's natural resources and provides sufficient public infrastructure for future generations.

Housing

Overview

- **Increase the Construction of Diverse Housing Types and the Amount of Affordable Housing:** Promote varied housing options for all income levels, including rentals, starter homes, senior housing, and market-rate units in transit-rich and mixed-income communities.
- **Focus on Retaining Residents and Increasing Sustainability:** Support inclusionary zoning, green building standards, and Transit-Oriented Development, while reinforcing fair housing practices and preventing the displacement of residents.
- **Address housing needs of diverse demographics:** Facilitate multi-generational households, senior housing, and adaptable options to ensure all residents can age in place and access affordable housing.
- **Promote Regional Housing Balance:** Encourage diverse housing development in areas with strong job markets, educational opportunities, and other amenities which support socio-economic mobility and integrate communities.

Priorities

Housing as a Catalyst for Economic Development

What does the State Plan do?

- Promotes avenues to make housing more affordable such as inclusionary zoning, zoning changes, and increased density in targeted areas.
- Encourages municipalities to use their existing infrastructure to support higher-density housing.
- Identifies techniques to increase property values, thereby increasing property tax revenue to fund public infrastructure and services.
- Encourages the establishment of public-private partnerships to create more affordable housing options.

- Facilitates the fulfillment of municipal affordable housing obligations by identifying creative ways to incorporate affordable housing in new developments.

Why it matters:

- Enhances workforce diversity and supports local private and public service needs.
- Ensures safe housing for people from all income levels.
- Increases infrastructure efficiency and reduces infrastructure costs.
- Increases property tax revenues to improve public services such as better schools and public spaces.
- Increases the availability of affordable housing near residents' work or schools.

Housing Stock Diversity

What does the State Plan do?

- Promotes diverse housing types like starter homes, condos, townhomes, and ADUs (accessory dwelling units) to make homeownership more affordable.
- Prioritizes housing for special needs populations, ensuring they are included in all planning and development processes.
- Advocates for age-friendly housing options that are accessible, integrated with community services, and promote social connection to enable seniors to age in place.
- Encourages building more multi-bedroom rentals and multi-generational households to support families and those working from home.

Why it matters:

- Keeps communities vibrant and growing by assisting young families, workers, and retirees to enter or maintain homeownership.
- Ensures people with special needs are part of the community and have sufficient housing.
- Enables older residents to live independently, remain active, and stay engaged in their communities.
- Gives families and renters sufficient space to live comfortably and thrive.

Reducing Barriers to Development

What does the State Plan do?

- Promotes affordable, quality housing for all—regardless of income or location—to break historic segregation patterns.
- Promotes zoning reforms to allow multifamily developments and ADUs, increasing housing affordability.
- Advocates for fair lending practices to protect housing access for all people, regardless of background or circumstances.
- Encourages redevelopment that upgrades housing without reducing the overall supply of affordable options.

- Supports housing development away from harmful land uses such as landfills or chemical refineries to protect residents' health and safety.

Why it matters:

- Creates equal opportunities for families to live in safe, quality neighborhoods.
- Tackles zoning restrictions that block affordable housing, ensuring more options for everyone.
- Protects residents from being displaced during redevelopment, keeping communities stable.
- Builds healthier environments by avoiding developing housing near polluting or dangerous industrial sites.
- Spreads economic growth beyond city centers, making more areas livable and accessible.

Health and the Environment

What does the State Plan do?

- Encourages new construction and redevelopment to meet green building standards, such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or Passive House, to reduce environmental impacts and improve energy efficiency.
- Encourages rehabilitating older homes to meet modern health, safety, and environmental standards, including zero-emission heating.
- Advocates for mixed-income housing with equal amenities for affordable and market-rate units, ensuring access to amenities such as sunlight, broadband, and green spaces.
- Promotes environmentally sustainable design in communities, including solar power, water retention systems, and flood mitigation features.
- Prepares for an aging population by ensuring adequate housing options and services to meet the needs of older residents.

Why it matters:

- Promotes healthier, climate-friendly housing to reduce carbon footprints.
- Ensures older homes are safer, more energy-efficient, and aligned with modern building standards.
- Provides a dignified living space for everyone, ensuring that no one is denied quality housing.
- Protects communities from climate risks such as flooding and extreme heat while making them more sustainable.
- Prepares for a future where nearly one in four residents will be over 65, ensuring housing keeps pace with demographic changes.

Housing and Transportation

What does the State Plan do?

- Encourages housing developments to include green infrastructure, such as EV chargers, bike racks, and pedestrian-friendly designs.
- Promotes Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) to increase transit ridership, reduce vehicular congestion, and improve air quality.
- Advocates for reducing parking mandates near transit, allowing flexibility based on local needs.
- Focuses on integrating safe and efficient multimodal transportation options with housing developments.

Why it matters:

- Makes communities more walkable, bike-friendly, and environmentally sustainable.
- Reduces car dependency, cutting air pollution and improving public transportation.
- Increases the available land by avoiding unnecessary parking requirements.
- Connects residents to jobs, schools, and amenities while supporting a greener future.

Infrastructure

Overview

New Jersey is maintaining and expanding its infrastructure with a focus on sustainability, safety, and affordability.

- **Encourage Public Transportation Use:** Prioritize transit-oriented development, pedestrian and cyclist friendly spaces, and public-private partnerships to address climate change goals and improve connectivity across neighborhoods.
- **Enhance Livability and Connectivity:** Invest in creating green spaces, walkable neighborhoods, and Transit Oriented Development, especially in communities with limited access to jobs, housing, and services.
- **Develop Effective Infrastructure through Strategic Partnerships:** Invest in transit-oriented development in partnership with the private sector to expand and maintain New Jersey's transit systems to create and support a healthy economy, vibrant downtowns, and economic development.
- **Improve Infrastructure for Everyone:** Maintain and enhance infrastructure that promotes environmentally sustainable, safe, and affordable living, with a focus on supporting programs in Overburdened Communities.

Priorities

Transportation

What does the State Plan do?

- Supports public/private sector partnerships that improve and expand public transit and increase ridership.
- Promotes the connection of neighborhoods with jobs, tourism spots, and regional commerce.
- Encourages the implementation of land use policies that support biking, walking, and public transportation and reduce car dependency.
- Encourages integration of climate resiliency practices into transportation projects to mitigate the effects of environmental hazards.
- Recommends transforming unused spaces into greenways to improve safety and neighborhood connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Why it matters:

- Boasts a greener and more efficient transportation system that decreases traffic and pollution.
- Makes it easier for people to access job opportunities and other key areas, especially in underserved communities.
- Prepares transportation systems for future climate change and other environmental hazards.
- Promotes healthier lifestyles by making walking and biking easier, while also reducing carbon footprints.
- Drives economic growth by improving connections between the places where people live, work, and visit.

Clean Energy

What does the State Plan do?

- Prioritizes transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable and low-emission energy sources such as wind, solar, and nuclear.
- Encourages energy-efficient buildings, from new construction to retrofitting older buildings.
- Recommends coordination across state agencies, private utilities, and local governments to plan energy facilities and infrastructure.
- Promotes development in areas that support public transportation modes and energy-efficient infrastructure.
- Endorses the implementation of electric vehicles, as well as clean and efficient energy systems for buildings and industries.

Why it matters:

- Helps combat climate change by reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and decreasing carbon emissions.
- Makes buildings and transportation more energy-efficient, saving money and resources.
- Boosts the use of clean energy, thereby improving air quality and reducing environmental harm.
- Strengthens the energy grid to support a more sustainable and resilient future.
- Prioritizes public health and safety by ensuring that energy infrastructure is built to handle emergencies.

Revitalization & Recentering

Overview

New Jersey is leading the way in effective revitalization, recentering efforts, and reconnecting fractured communities:

- **Revitalize Underutilized Areas:** Focus on improving underutilized urban, suburban, and rural spaces by addressing legacy issues, such as environmental contamination and communities divided by highways.
- **Enhance Livability and Connectivity:** Invest in creating green spaces, walkable neighborhoods, and transit-friendly areas, especially in communities with limited access to jobs, housing, and services.
- **Attract Young Adults to Walkable Communities:** Young adults seek to live in walkable communities. New Jersey should focus on affordable and walkable communities to retain and attract this demographic.
- **Support Revitalization with Smart Policies:** Streamline land-use policies to remove barriers, promote redevelopment, and transform auto-dependent areas into vibrant, walkable communities.

Priorities

Revitalizing Older Centers

What does the State Plan do?

- Focuses on developing existing Centers and optimizing land use to reduce strain on overburdened communities and improve access to amenities.
- Prioritizes redevelopment in transit-connected and underutilized areas to support new housing, businesses, and parks.

- Advocates for reevaluating parking requirements to reduce land use dedicated to parking and support pedestrian-friendly growth.
- Encourages the repurposing of vacant parking lots into residential and commercial uses.
- Calls for a reassessment of outdated zoning codes and streamlining local land use policies to facilitate development approvals.

Why it matters:

- Relieves pressure on overburdened areas by creating new Centers that offer housing and business opportunities.
- Supports sustainable growth by reducing land used for parking and promoting walkable, transit-friendly communities.
- Helps revitalize underused spaces, such as vacant parking lots, making them more useful for the community.
- Increases access and connectivity to amenities such as parks and shops for residents.
- Streamlines the development process, enabling new projects to be approved and meet the needs of growing communities.

Recentering Underutilized Developed Areas

What does the State Plan do?

- Promotes the use of redevelopment plans to introduce pedestrian-friendly features such as walkable spaces, housing, and public areas.
- Encourages connections between developments to reduce auto-dependency and improve walkability.
- Suggests modifying zoning to incorporate walking paths with landscaped buffers to improve pedestrian circulation.
- Recommends integrating natural features into the design of redevelopment sites to enhance their aesthetic and environmental value.
- Proposes the option of adding housing to auto-oriented commercial strips, particularly in areas where residential use makes sense, to boost nighttime activity and community vibrancy.

Why it matters:

- Helps create more connected and walkable communities, reducing reliance on cars and enhancing quality of life.
- Improves the functionality of redevelopment areas by making them more accessible and inviting for pedestrians.
- Ensures that redevelopment projects respect and enhance the natural environment, making areas more sustainable.
- Adds housing where it makes sense, promoting vibrant neighborhoods with activity at all hours of the day, not just during business hours.

- Encourages mixed-use developments that blend residential and commercial uses with public spaces to foster stronger and more resilient communities.

Climate Change

Overview

New Jersey is stepping up to fight climate change and build a greener future. Here's how:

- **Promoting** the switch to clean energy such as wind and solar while cutting pollution from cars, buildings, and power plants.
- **Planning** for green neighborhoods that make it easier and safer to walk, bike, and use public transit.
- **Protecting** communities and nature by avoiding building in areas that threaten humans and endangered species while creating stronger, safer infrastructure.
- **Using science** to map out where we will face challenges such as rising sea levels and increased flooding.

Priorities

Decarbonization

What does the State Plan do?

- Advocates for reducing emissions from cars, trucks, and buses, and implementing more alternative fuel and electric vehicles.
- Promotes buildings that are more energy-efficient with better heating, cooling, and construction practices.
- Encourages a shift of energy production to renewable sources such as wind and solar.
- Provides guidance to modernize the power grid to distribute renewable energy efficiently.
- Encourages smart land use policies for walkable, bike-friendly, and transit-oriented communities.
- Recommends identification of forests, wetlands, and farmland that can be preserved and restored to absorb carbon dioxide, improve air quality, and protect the environment.

Why it matters:

- Cleaner transportation leads to less air pollution and healthier communities.
- Energy-efficient buildings reduce heating and cooling costs while also reducing energy consumption.

- Renewable energy reduces our dependence on fossil fuels and combats climate change.
- Walkable and bikeable neighborhoods make it easier to get around and decrease car use.
- Healthy ecosystems capture carbon, reduce flooding, and provide habitats for wildlife.
- A green economy creates well-paying jobs that drive innovation in clean energy and sustainable practices.

Hazard Mitigation

What does the State Plan do?

- Calls for the State to assist towns and cities assess climate risks like flooding, wildfires, and extreme heat and plan for them.
- Supports green cooling strategies like planting more trees and adding green roofs in urban areas.
- Promotes smart forest management, such as selective burning and clearing excess vegetation.
- Promotes stormwater planning to prevent floods, improve water quality, and protect ecosystems.

Why it matters:

- Protects communities and property from climate risks like floods, fires, and heat waves.
- Keeps urban areas cooler and healthier with more shade and less pavement.
- Restores forests and watersheds to absorb rainwater and reduce flood damage.
- Supports long-term planning to make New Jersey safer and more resilient for future generations.

Coastal Areas and Riverine Corridors

What does the State Plan do?

- Calls for coordination of efforts to create a more detailed coastal and river management program that adapts to changing conditions.
- Calls for protection and restoration of natural habitats to reduce flooding and strengthen ecosystems.
- Promotes well-managed coastal communities that balance economic growth and environmental protection.
- Encourages greater public access to coastal and riverfront areas for recreation and tourism.
- Encourages responsible water use and protects water quality through better wastewater management and pollution controls.

Why it matters:

- Keeps New Jersey's beaches, estuaries, and rivers healthy for recreation, tourism, and local economies.
- Reduces flood risks and strengthens ecosystems by restoring natural habitats.

- Supports smart growth while protecting the environment and ensuring public access.
- Protects the natural beauty of the coast while providing safe, enjoyable spaces for residents and visitors.
- Helps manage and protect water resources to ensure clean and accessible water.

Comprehensive Planning

Overview

- **Achieve Comprehensive and Coordinated Planning Actions:** Encourage citizen participation and capacity analysis to integrate private and public investment, programs, and regulatory land use decisions.
- **Consider Boundaries and Long Term Decisions:** Make land use decisions that are sustainable, considering future impacts and respecting neighboring communities.
- **Redress Past Planning Mistakes:** Make a concerted effort to redress past planning mistakes and mitigate the adverse consequences of those mistakes.
- **Address Climate Change:** Utilize planning strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.
- **Establish Flexible Design Policies and Coordinate with Statewide Policies:** Promote the creation of flexible design policies that consider local conditions and effectively integrate with other statewide policies for housing, transportation, and environment.
- **Promote the Creation of Vibrant Communities:** Encourage the development of mixed-use buildings, walking and biking paths, and safe and accessible public spaces.
- **Reduce Auto-Dependence and Sprawl:** Prioritize minimizing automobiles' visual impact and promote pedestrian- and transit-oriented development. Concurrently, revitalize sprawling areas by increasing density, improving walkability and connectivity, and fostering mixed-use development.

Priorities

Comprehensive Planning and Design

What does the State Plan do?

- Advocates for planning and building design policies in urban, suburban, and rural areas that promote compact, close-knit development with multiple uses.
- Encourages flexible design principles that integrate housing, transportation, and environmental policies.
- Advocates for multimodal transportation systems that prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation options to enhance accessibility and safety for all users.

- Focuses on implementing pedestrian-friendly routes and sustainable design to reduce car dependency.
- Suggests transforming low-density areas of sprawl into functional higher density areas through Transit-Oriented Development and pedestrian-friendly design.

Why it matters:

- Promotes efficient, environmentally responsible, and adaptable development.
- Creates vibrant, walkable spaces that foster community identity and interaction.
- Encourages sustainable practices to minimize pollution and resource use.
- Attracts businesses and residents through adaptive reuse and mixed-use spaces.
- Provides strategies for future growth while preserving resources and reducing sprawl.

Equity

Overview

- **Tackle Environmental Health Risks:** Use data to understand pollution's impact on public health, focusing on childhood cognitive development, asthma, and obesity, and develop targeted mitigation strategies.
- **Improve Infrastructure:** Reduce pollution by phasing out harmful facilities, expanding green spaces, and upgrading infrastructure, such as wastewater and stormwater systems.
- **Promote Sustainable Transportation:** Encourage electric vehicle use, improve pedestrian and bike infrastructure, and redesign urban highways to reconnect neighborhoods.
- **Support Fair Housing:** Implement housing policies that prevent displacement and ensure equitable access to healthy, thriving communities for residents, with an emphasis on Overburdened Communities.
- **Combat Historical Inequities:** Address past inequities, such as redlining and pollution, in historically Overburdened Communities, and promote restorative land use, housing, and transportation policies.

Priorities

Equity

What does the State Plan do?

- Calls for the correction of past inequities in planning by distributing the benefits of the State Plan fairly across all communities.
- Aims to repair the damage in communities caused by years of underinvestment and neglect.

- Encourages public involvement to ensure everyone's voice is heard and needs are considered.
- Focuses on improving living conditions, farming practices, and economic opportunities in rural areas facing challenges such as limited access to infrastructure, fresh food, and employment.
- Provides clear principles and cohesive guidance to direct public and private actions toward equitable, sustainable, and inclusive developments.

Why it matters:

- Helps address the lingering effects of land loss and other historical wrongdoings, towards both indigenous populations and Overburdened Communities.
- Ensures all residents benefit from better development practices by addressing lingering issues, such as inadequate infrastructure, pollution, and unsafe housing.
- Prioritizes equitable outcomes in land use, transportation, and development decisions, which ensures that the well-being of all community members, particularly vulnerable populations, are considered.
- Encourages investment in rural areas to support farming, employment, and community well-being to strengthen the local and regional economies.
- Establishes a framework for policymaking decisions that prioritizes equity and environmental.

Historic and Scenic Resources

Overview

- **Preserve History and Culture:** Protect New Jersey's historic, cultural, and natural landmarks to support thriving communities and economic growth, while ensuring public accessibility.
- **Support Arts and Creative Spaces:** Promote arts, cultural projects, and open spaces, especially ecologically and historically significant areas significant areas.
- **Connect Public Spaces:** Connect trails, greenways, and waterways outdoor areas, and preserve the scenic and historic qualities of the state's landscapes.
- **Honor Diverse Histories:** Protect the stories and artifacts of New Jersey's indigenous peoples, settlers, enslaved people, and immigrant communities, ensuring these are part of the state's history.
- **Adapt to Climate Change:** Work collaboratively with underrepresented groups and all levels of government to protect cultural resources from climate change impacts and ensure continued public access to high-quality spaces and recreation opportunities.

Priorities

Historic Resources, Cultural Resources, and the Arts.

What does the State Plan do?

- Promotes tourism and the official designation or local recognition of historic resources to preserve the state's history.
- Promotes coordinated planning, flexible construction codes, and development regulations, without causing disinvestment or an economic burden.
- Advocates for appropriately sized development so that new buildings or projects do not harm or overshadow historic resources.
- Advocates for consistent historic landmark preservation rules and guidelines to protect New Jersey's history and heritage.
- Promotes historic district management programs that encourage vibrant neighborhoods while also ensuring that redevelopment, rehabilitation, and new construction does not damage or disrupt historical landmarks.
- Endorses adaptive reuse of historic buildings, while maintaining integrity and community character, to create new spaces such as affordable housing, commercial areas, or mixed-use developments.

Why it matters:

- Ensures future generations can enjoy and learn New Jersey's history and heritage.
- Attracts visitors to historic sites, which supports local economies and spreads awareness of the past.
- Balances development with the preservation of a city's historical charm and character to ensure residents and visitors can enjoy its unique heritage.
- Prioritizes the reuse of existing structures to preserve valuable architectural features and community assets.
- Fosters appreciation for history and culture by connecting residents to art, history, and culture in public spaces.

Open Space and Recreational Resources

What does the State Plan do?

- Advocates for the acquisition of land with ecological, cultural, or scenic value for public enjoyment and protection.
- Advocates for open spaces and recreational areas that are accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities and non-English speakers.
- Calls for the alignment of regional, county, and municipal land use plans to balance the need for economic development, housing, open space, and recreational areas.

- Prescribes development of a statewide network of continuous Greenways, Trails, and natural corridors connecting the public to forests, grasslands, and rivers through public-private partnerships
- Supports private landowners' rights to expand and sustain the preservation of forests, open spaces, and agricultural lands through financial incentives and strategic partnerships.

Why it matters:

- Protects sacred lands, nature reserves, and scenic areas for future generations.
- Provides spaces for outdoor activities that improve mental and physical health for all residents.
- Helps conserve natural habitats and enhances the biological health of ecosystems.
- Links people to nature through accessible greenways, trails, and open spaces, fostering a sense of community.
- Balances development that respects housing needs and the need for open space and recreational areas.

Natural and Water Resources

Overview

New Jersey is working to protect forests, farmland, wetlands, and water systems while reducing pollution and addressing climate change. Efforts include:

- **Restoring:** forests and wetlands for better air and water quality
- **Converting:** public and private lands into carbon-absorbing spaces to slow climate change
- **Reconnecting:** wildlife habitats to protect endangered species

Priorities

Habitat Preservation and Restoration

What does the State Plan do?

- Recommends identification and protection of the habitats of threatened and endangered species.
- Calls for municipalities to adopt construction standards and performance standards for new development that reduce soil disturbance.
- Calls for expansion and maintenance of the existing urban tree canopy.

- Calls for acquisition of forest resources that serve an overriding public purpose for public use and preservation.
- Calls for the design of forest management practices to protect watersheds, wetlands, and stream corridors from pollution that threatens water quality and aquatic habitat.
- Calls for the identification and restoration of streams that have been buried in culverts.

Why it matters:

- Centuries of farming, the use of wood for construction, industrial activities such as mining and quarrying, and urbanization have reduced the tree cover and forested landscape and destroyed natural habitats and ecosystems.
- To protect and conserve remaining ecosystems, the State Plan encourages biodiversity to protect wildlife and waterways.

Agriculture and Local Food Production

What does the State Plan do?

The State Plan endeavors to ensure that agriculture continues to be a viable industry in the face of a changing climate and an onslaught of invasive species. Some of the objectives include:

- Continuing to allocate and leverage funds for farmland preservation.
- Promoting local regulations, state building codes, and fee criteria which are fair and understanding of agricultural construction and seasonal uses.
- Using creative land planning and design to accommodate future growth and development that aids the agriculture industry.

Why it matters:

- Access to fresh, local food improves health and addresses food shortages.
- Preserving farmland enhances the environment and creates jobs.
- Aids in the conservation of biodiversity.
- Protects natural water resources.
- Promotes tourism opportunities.
- Enhances the overall quality of life for residents.

Air Quality

What does the State Plan do?

- Recommends that the State coordinate with agencies and planning partners to engage in research, regulatory initiatives, land use planning, and transportation planning initiatives to meet air quality standards.
- Recommends that the State identify “hotspots” where air quality is particularly poor, and determine actions to address them (prioritizing natural and nature-based solutions).

Why it matters:

- Reduces the state's overall carbon footprint by transitioning to cleaner, zero-emission transportation.
- Benefits both public health and the environment by addressing harmful pollutants such as ground-level ozone, particulate matter, and carbon dioxide.
- Improves mobility options and encourages sustainable travel methods, decreasing traffic congestion and enhancing quality of life.
- Aligns New Jersey with federal standards for air quality, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and contributing to global climate goals.
- Prioritizes environmentally friendly solutions to combat air pollution, especially in areas with the highest pollution levels, promoting the restoration of natural ecosystems.

Water Quality

What does the State Plan do?

- Calls for the coordination of planning efforts of agencies managing land, water, and environmental resources to protect water quality and supply from the cumulative impacts of development.
- Proposes a watershed-based resource planning and permitting program to ensure the sustainability of water resources, addressing water quality, supply, and wastewater management.
- Prescribes integration of county and municipal planning with natural systems' carrying capacity, focusing on hydrological systems and climate change resilience.
- Promotes protection of water quality through the proper design and installation of stormwater and wastewater management systems, considering local geology and water systems.
- Encourages regional flood and stormwater management, with an emphasis on natural solutions such as increased infiltration and the creation of regional control facilities.

Why it matters:

- Protects New Jersey's vital water resources, ensuring that development does not compromise water quality or supply.
- Prepares the state for climate change impacts, such as seasonal droughts, by enhancing water supply management and improving water infrastructure.
- Reduces the risk of flooding and stormwater damage by integrating natural systems and best management practices into stormwater designs.
- Safeguards sensitive water resources, such as aquifers and headwaters, from the effects of development, ensuring long-term sustainability.
- Supports water conservation through innovative practices, reducing consumption and enhancing resource efficiency for future generations.

Pollution and Environmental Clean-Up

Overview

New Jersey is working to protect forests, farmland, wetlands, and water systems while reducing pollution and addressing climate change. Efforts include:

- **Restore Nature and Communities:** Focus on cleaning up polluted land and water in both public and private areas, especially in communities facing more environmental challenges.
- **Circular Economy:** Encourage recycling and reusing resources to reduce waste and carbon emissions, and help the environment.
- **100% Clean Energy:** Keep working towards a fully clean energy system to reduce pollution and protect the planet.
- **Cleanup and Redevelopment:** Clean up polluted sites such as Brownfields and work on rebuilding them for healthier, sustainable communities, with a focus on equity and environmental restoration.
- **Lead Abatement:** Continue efforts to remove lead paint and pipes from homes and buildings, especially in higher-risk communities.
- **Waste Management and Recycling:** Waste management and recycling should be sustainable, and siting of facilities should be multi-jurisdictional.
- **Reduce, Recycle, and Reuse:** Minimize environmental impacts, reduce toxic emissions, and promote resource conservation.

Priorities

Brownfields and Lead

What does the State Plan do?

- Recommends commitment of public resources and assistance to communities with planned Brownfield redevelopment strategies, that are consistent with government plans and focuses on long-term economic sustainability, particularly in underserved communities.
- Encourages the development of Brownfield sites by leveraging existing infrastructure, established communities, and available workforce, while utilizing regulatory, statutory, and financial incentives.
- Calls for identification of areas for redevelopment based on community vision and consensus, integrating environmental cleanup with future land use, habitat restoration, and public health protection.

- Focuses on the removal and mitigation of lead paint and pipes in older housing stock, particularly in Overburdened Communities, to protect the public, and especially children, from toxic exposure.
- Highlights the importance of the New Jersey Lead Service Line Replacement Law, which addresses health threats posed by lead in drinking water and requires public community water systems to identify and replace all lead service lines within 10 years of its adoption.

Why it matters:

- Transforms unusable industrial sites into opportunities for economic growth, while addressing inequities in communities and revitalizing local economies.
- Reduces the long-term health risks associated with toxic contamination in Brownfield sites, making these areas safe for redevelopment and public use.
- Directly improves the quality of life, especially in Overburdened Communities, by reducing lead exposure in the housing stock and drinking water supply.
- Assists New Jersey in meeting its health and safety goals by reducing environmental hazards and the health impacts of hazardous materials, while promoting sustainable development.
- Supports New Jersey's commitment to clean and safe infrastructure to protect residents and the environment from lead in paint and drinking water.

Waste Management and Recycling

What does the State Plan do?

The State Plan endeavors to ensure that agriculture continues to be a viable industry in the face of a changing climate and an onslaught of invasive species. Some of the objectives include:

- Calls for coordination of all levels of government and existing regulatory mechanisms for planning, siting, designing, and operating waste management facilities.
- Promotes multi-jurisdictional planning and collaboration to efficiently collect, dispose, and manage trash, hazardous waste, and recyclable materials.
- Encourages self-sufficiency in waste management by implementing Solid Waste Management Plans that prioritize source reduction, reuse, and recycling, composting, and sustainable disposal techniques.
- Advocates for the development of educational programs encouraging residents to actively participate in waste reduction and recycling efforts.
- Supports the expansion of remanufacturing and recycling facilities to conserve resources and reduce waste, while promoting the economic reuse of materials.
- Promotes the development of community and regional composting facilities that divert organic waste from the trash stream and repurpose waste for household use.

Why it matters:

- Ensures effective and environmentally sound waste management and recycling practices to reduce the state's environmental impact. Promotes a sustainable approach to waste by prioritizing the reduction, reuse, and recycling of waste, and minimizing landfill reliance and environmental hazards.
- Supports New Jersey’s transition towards a sustainable economy, one which seeks to conserve resources and support economic growth through recycling, composting, and remanufacturing.
- Protects public health by minimizing hazardous waste exposure through enhanced disposal practices and effective household hazardous waste management.
- Supports the development of composting facilities to divert organic waste from landfills to create valuable natural resources for local communities, such as enriched soil.

Implementation

The State Plan establishes a framework for development and conservation in both natural and developed areas across New Jersey. This framework is dynamic and continually evolves to meet the needs of the public.

Successful implementation of the State Plan will pave the way for sustainable prosperity in New Jersey through coordinated land use policies, the implementation of smart growth initiatives, enhanced climate change resilience, and the effective protection and preservation of our valuable natural resources and sensitive landscapes.

Successful implementation of the State Plan necessitates a critical reevaluation of past policy and planning decisions that have shaped the natural and built environments and identify areas where more modern interventions, guidance, and investment can yield significant benefits.

Diversity and Density

New Jersey is renowned for its remarkable diversity and high population density. Rather than viewing these characteristics as challenges, we should embrace them as strengths. Our policies and programs must celebrate and leverage this diversity and density to create vibrant, equitable, and sustainable communities for all.

Decision Making

All levels of government have responsibility for implementing effective land use policies that yield both immediate and long-term benefits for residents. Nearly every decision made by elected officials has significant land use implications that directly impact the quality of life in our communities.

Finding Balance

The State Plan provides a clear framework for effective land use planning by outlining balanced goals, strategies, and priorities among government agencies and fostering effective collaboration and cohesion. While achieving these goals necessitates difficult choices, the State Plan prioritizes a comprehensive approach that promotes prosperity, equality, and resilience for all New Jersey residents.

This clear framework allows county and municipal governments to more effectively implement policies that align with goals, strategies, and policies in the State Plan.

A Roadmap for State, County, and Municipal Governments

The State Plan empowers counties by providing comprehensive guidance for effective land use planning and decision-making. This streamlined approach, developed with input from various state agencies, offers counties a valuable blueprint that they can confidently utilize.

- The State Plan enables counties to more effectively focus on long-term planning and implementation and managing their daily operations, by outlining balanced goals, strategies, and priorities. Moreover, successful implementation of the State Plan equips counties with the tools to assist municipalities in practicing sound planning principles, enhance public understanding of community planning processes, conduct effective public outreach programs, protect the environment, and make informed and responsible land use decisions.
- Local planning and zoning board members must receive comprehensive education and technical assistance to effectively achieve the goals of the State Plan and adequately protect and develop New Jersey's lands responsibly for future generations.
- A successful State Plan implementation hinges on the modernization of New Jersey's land use laws, including the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL), and the County Planning Act, which requires effective convening and collaboration efforts between all relevant state agencies. A focus on quality and consistent municipal, county, and regional planning is critical to the success of the State Plan.

  Effective land use planning with strong State leadership and continued work with the Special Resource Areas, Watershed Planning, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and other regional entities will have positive impacts on the prosperity and quality of life in New Jersey.

State, county, and municipal governments can evaluate local planning decisions by utilizing the goals, strategies, and policies in the State Plan. A successful implementation of the State Plan will serve as the standard by which other states are measured.

State Plan Policy Map

The State Plan Policy Map integrates three key spatial concepts—Planning Areas, Centers/Nodes, and Environs—to provide a framework for implementing the State Plan's goals. Planning Areas are regions with shared characteristics that guide strategic planning and development, identifying unique natural and built infrastructures across New Jersey. Centers/Nodes serve as focal points for activity within Planning Areas, directing growth while considering the area's unique characteristics and opportunities. Environs are the surrounding areas outside Center boundaries, providing a balance between development and conservation.

The objectives for Planning Areas, Centers, and Environs are interconnected, guiding development patterns and conservation efforts. Planning Areas define where growth or conservation should occur, with development concentrated first in Metropolitan and Suburban Areas, followed by Fringe, Rural, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas, where development should be limited and environmentally conscious. The map applies to all lands except specific exclusions such as military installations and open water, aligning with agreements between the State Planning Commission and regional planning entities.

https://nj-map.com/sdrp/stateplan/

The Update Process

Preliminary State Plan

Per NJSA 52:18A-199(4a) the Commission "….shall provide a coordinated integrated and comprehensive plan for growth, development, renewal, and conservation of the State and its regions and which shall identify areas for growth, agriculture, open space conservation, and other appropriate designations."

*Cross-Acceptance begins with the release of the Preliminary State Plan

Cross Acceptance

A negotiating process, designed to encourage consistency between municipal, county, regional, and State Plans to create a meaningful, up-to-date, and viable State Plan and State Plan Policy Map that incorporates input at all levels of government and public input.

The State Planning Commission urges those participating in Cross-Acceptance to recommend policies as appropriate to address development, redevelopment, and conservation issues in these and other regions of New Jersey, as their plans, comments and advice will be considered.

Draft Final Plan

Incorporates the negotiated agreements from the Cross-Acceptance process.

Once the State Planning Commission approves the Draft Final Plan, that document, together with the State Plan Policy Map, becomes the new State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Fun Facts

- New Jersey is one of only 12 states that have planning boards.
- The state of New Jersey has over 500 miles of coastline.
- The state is home to several historic districts, including Princeton, Lambertville, and Cape May.
- Redevelopment projects in New Jersey have contributed to significant economic growth. For example, the revitalization of the Camden Waterfront has attracted over $1 billion in private investment.
- The EPA has identified more that 600 superfund sites nationally, which can support more than 200,000 new jobs. New Jersey has the highest number of superfund sites in the nation.

FAQs

What is the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP)?

The SDRP is a comprehensive plan that provides a vision for the future development and redevelopment of New Jersey. It aims to equitably balance the needs of all stakeholders and municipalities, fostering growth while simultaneously prioritizing conservation and enhancing the quality of life.

How often is the SDRP updated?

By law, SDRP is to be updated every three years. The last SDRP was published in 2001, highlighting the importance of the current update and this guide.

What are the main goals of the SDRP?

The SDRP has 10 equal goals.

- Economic Development: Promote Economic Growth that Benefits all Residents of New Jersey
- Housing: Provide an Adequate Supply of Housing for Residents of All Ages and Incomes in Communities of Their Choosing That Meet Their Needs and Offer Ready Access to the Full Range of Supportive Goods and Services
- Infrastructure: Economic Opportunity Through Nation Leading Infrastructure
- Revitalization and Recentering: Revitalize and Recenter the State's Underutilized Developed Areas
- Climate Change: Effectively Address the Adverse Impacts of Global Climate Change
- Natural and Water Resources: Protect, Maintain, and Restore the State's Natural and Water Resources and Ecosystems
- Pollution and Environmental Clean-Up: Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution
- Historic and Scenic Resources: Protect, Enhance, and Improve Access to Areas with Exceptional Archeological, Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space, and Recreational Value
- Equity: Implement Equitable Planning Practices to Promote Thriving Communities for all New Jerseyans
- 2024 Comprehensive Planning Goal: Foster Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation at all Levels Statewide

How does the SDRP impact local planning efforts?

The SDRP provides a framework for local planning efforts by establishing statewide planning objectives and policies. Local governments are encouraged to align their master plans, climate

change resiliency and economic growth initiatives with the SDRP to ensure consistency and coordination between the state and local governments.

What is the Cross-Acceptance process in the SDRP?

The Cross-Acceptance process involves comparing statewide planning policies at different government levels to achieve consistency among municipal, county, regional, and State Plans. Through public meetings and surveys, the public has the opportunity to influence the SDRP and the State Plan Policy Map, ensuring that local plans and policies and public input are considered.

How can the public participate in the SDRP update process?

The public is encouraged to participate in the SDRP update process through public meetings, forums, and the submission of comments and feedback. The SPC conducts public meetings in each county to gather input from residents.

What role do state agencies play in implementing the SDRP?

State agencies play a crucial role in implementing the SDRP by incorporating its objectives and policies into their functional plans, investment priorities, and administrative rules.

How does the SDRP promote equitable development, conservation, restoration, and opportunity for all New Jerseyans?

The SDRP promotes equitable development by focusing on creating opportunities for all residents, regardless of their background, and ensuring that the benefits of development, conservation, and restoration are distributed fairly across the state.