



State of New Jersey

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Cross Acceptance Negotiation Phase – Second & Final Interim Report July 29, 2025

The Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) is pleased to provide this report, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 15:30-4.5(b), on the Cross Acceptance Negotiation Phase.

The first Interim Report was delivered to the State Planning Commission on July 17, 2025 and summarized all Cross Acceptance activity from the official release of the Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan on December 6, 2024 through July 14, 2025. The first Interim Report was occasioned by the approximate halfway point of the Negotiation Phase of Cross Acceptance. As of this writing, the Negotiation Phase is complete.

Since July 15, 2025, the State Planning Commission's negotiating committee has met with the authorized representatives of Negotiating Entities in an additional ten (10) public Negotiation Sessions, for a total of twenty-two (22) public Negotiation Sessions. As with the sessions held through July 14, 2025, these subsequent Negotiation Sessions have been productive and efficient. In each of the ten (10) sessions, all agenda items have been addressed, and each Negotiating Entity elected to forego their second scheduled session.

As in the first half of the Negotiation Phase, the substantive portions of the agenda for each Negotiation Session were presented in two parts. An "Appendix A" was presented first; this contained items for negotiation that have been taken directly from the Negotiating Entity's Cross Acceptance Response and any supplemental municipal submissions. An "Appendix B" was then presented; this was comprised of a standardized list of items that have been gleaned from multiple Cross Acceptance Responses and/or comments received through other means, all of which the Office of Planning Advocacy staff had deemed to be of statewide relevance. During discussion of both appendices, members of both negotiating committees and any municipal representatives in attendance were welcome to offer input for the purposes of coming to an agreement, if possible. Following the completion of all agenda items, members of the public were given the opportunity to comment.

Also, as in the first half of the Negotiation Phase, the State Planning Commission's negotiating committee committed to consider revising the pertinent content of the Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan for the vast majority of items discussed. When a Negotiation Session participant requested a definition of a term contained in the Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan, those requests were noted. In most cases, Negotiation Session participants consented to the State Planning Commission's decision to pause consideration of all proposed amendments to the State Plan Policy Map until after the adoption of the new State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Instances in which the State Planning Commission's negotiating committee objected to a request from a Negotiating Entity or member of the public have been minimal, and no disagreements of significance were noted since the first Interim Report. In some cases, different Negotiating Entities took opposing positions on items presented in Appendix B. One example is whether or not "Parks, Open Space, and Natural Areas" should be mapped as a new Planning Area on the State Plan Policy Map. This and all other differing positions will be summarized for the State Planning Commission in the Draft Statement of Agreements and Disagreements (see below).

It should be noted, as per the parameters of his recusal, that the Acting Executive Director has refrained and will continue to refrain from any and all discussions pertaining to his prior position as the Director of Planning for the County of Somerset. These matters include: 1) all matters broadly pertaining to Somerset County, 2) all discussion of the Sourlands Mountain Region as a potential Special Resource Area, 3) all discussion of the removal of expirations for designated centers, and 4) all discussions of the West Trenton Passenger Service Reactivation and Raritan Valley Line One Seat Ride Improvements. In so keeping, the Acting Executive Director has not reviewed Somerset County's Cross Acceptance Response, and has not participated in Somerset County's "Prep Meeting" or Negotiation Session. When any topic included in his recusal came up during any Prep Meeting or Negotiation Session with another Negotiating Entity, the Acting Executive Director has excused himself from the conversation.

Tables summarizing the product of all Negotiation Sessions held since July 15, 2025 are attached hereto. These will form the basis of the Draft Statement of Agreements and Disagreements, which, in compliance with N.J.A.C. 15:30-4.6, will be submitted for the State Planning Commission's review and approval. Cross Acceptance will conclude with the State Planning Commission's approval of the final Statement of Agreements and Disagreements.

The Office of Planning Advocacy remains confident that the final State Development and Redevelopment Plan can be adopted by the end of 2025. Amidst the tightly compressed timeline of the Cross Acceptance process, members of the public and representatives of local governments have still been provided ample opportunities to contribute substantively to the shaping of New Jersey's new State Plan. Important considerations are being raised and addressed, and the entire process is proceeding in conformance with the State Planning Rules and all other relevant regulations.

Respectfully submitted,



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