

REPORT OF THE CAPITAL FACILITIES

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBMITTED TO THE OFFICE OF STATE PLANNING

JULY 1988

Committee Members

Robert Cielik
Board of Public Utilities

Robert Kraml
NJ Department of Transportation

Michael Merkle
LinPro Corporation

Joseph Miri
NJ Department of Environmental
Protection

Gene Schneider
Office of Management and
Budget

Staff Facilitator

James Reilly

The Capital Facilities Technical Advisory committee met three times to the Plan and their recommendations. The first meeting was held on May 9, 1988; the second meeting on May 25, 1988; and the last meeting was held on June 9th. Prior to the meetings, the committee members were supplied with a copy of the Draft Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan, dated January 1988.

This report summarizes the committee's discussions and reports the committee's recommendations to the Office of State Planning and to the State Planning Commission. The report is organized into three sections, which correspond to the types of suggestions the committee is presenting, for consideration, to the Office and the Commission. The three sections are:

1. Suggested Plan Revisions
2. Implementation Recommendations, and,
3. Plan Evaluation Recommendations.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Suggested Plan Revisions

The Committee felt that the Plan's capital facility recommendations were too abstract. For example, the Plan talked about the need to improve the quality of life, through the improvement of infrastructure systems, but the Plan was ambiguous about exactly what systems needed what improvement. The Committee felt that the recommendations should be made more concrete and should be more clearly stated. It was felt that such clarity could be useful in securing the cooperation of municipalities and in advancing the Cross-Acceptance process.

Somewhat along the same lines, the Committee felt that the Plan's vision for the Older Urban areas and for the suburban areas of the state need to be more fully defined. Such clarification, it was felt, would assist in defining the appropriate capital facility improvements that need to be made.

Finally, the Committee felt that the plan needs to clearly state the need for new Capital funds. It was the Committee's opinion that current capital facility funding was being utilized to pay for "catch-up" facilities, and that there was little, if any, money to pay for the improvements that the plan seemed to be suggesting were desirable.

2. Implementation Recommendations

The committee recommended that the capital facility funding to benefit the cities be focused through the development of, and identification of, strategic investment targets. The committee felt that the capital facility needs of most of the State's older urban areas was sizable. It was felt that if capital improvements were funded without regard to economic impact, then unrealistic sums of money might easily be spent, without improving the quality of life in these cities. For example. The committee thought it likely that many of the urban areas needed new water distribution systems. However, it was noted that even if the large sums to provide these systems were spent, that this expenditure may not result in any new jobs locating into the cities, or in the cities becoming more desirable places to live. On the other hand, strategic investment into capital facilities, as part of a focused development strategy (such as the strategy now being developed along the Gold Coast or now being implemented in Caroden) might produce results.

In addition to the need for strategic funding, the Committee recommends that the planning arms of the-various state agencies, responsible for providing and/or maintaining capital facilities, increase their coordination with the Office of State Planning and the State Planning Commission to insure conformance with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. One committee felt that these planning agencies should begin to identify the capital improvements necessary to achieve the Plan. To insure further coordination, these agencies, after reviewing the Cross-Accepted. Plan, and after identifying needed capital improvements to carry out the plan, should also inform the Commission of additional legislation that would be needed to carry out the capital facility portions of the Plan. To insure that this agency coordination and cooperation is accomplished, it was recommended that the Plan contain administrative recommendations designed to correct any current weaknesses or gaps in the Capital Facility planning process within state government.

In addition to improvements to the public sector's capacity to plan and implement the plan, the committee stressed the importance to clearly state that the Plan must be seen as a public/private partnership. The committee recognized that the capital facilities needed to achieve the plan's objectives would require funding levels beyond the public's capacity to afford. In addition, many of the capital facilities, which might have to be improved or newly built, likely would belong to private companies or utilities.

Further, the committee stressed the importance of identifying fiscal alternatives to achieve the plan's goal. It was realized that the magnitude and diversity of capital facility improvements might seem unmanageable, even with strategic fiscal planning, and the participation of the private sector. New fiscal methods and concepts might need to be tried to achieve the capital facility levels called or in the plan.

3. Plan Evaluation recommendations

The magnitude of the plan's intent, to improve the quality of life for all New Jersey citizens, might seem overpowering and too abstract to be fully appreciated by many people. Therefore the Committee recommended that the goals of the Plan should be more carefully quantified. It also was recommended that the Plan identify short term remedial targets. These short term targets would both provide a test of plan implementation and provide a more understandable vision, to the average citizen, of how the plan would benefit their lives.