



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Peter Kasabach - office: (609) 393-0008 ext. 104; cell: (609) 954-7422
Chris Sturm - office: (609) 393-0008 ext. 114; cell: (609) 213-4673
Elaine Clisham - office: (609) 393-0008 ext. 102; cell: (732) 742-6713

New Jersey Future Responds to State of the State Address

TRENTON—Governor Christie focused his State of the State address today on bringing New Jersey back as an economic leader through disciplined spending and bipartisan, pragmatic reform efforts. He touted successes from the past two years and laid out his administration’s top three priorities for the year—a state income tax cut, education reform and criminal offender interventions.

This message frame left little room for highlighting other significant accomplishments, such as his administration’s State Strategic Plan—the document that offers the governor’s vision of what the state is going to do to promote growth and development in the right places, and protect the landscape from continued suburban sprawl.

“We would characterize the introduction of the draft State Strategic Plan in October as one of the major accomplishments of the Christie administration in the past year,” said New Jersey Future Executive Director Peter Kasabach. “We were disappointed that the governor chose not to make even passing mention of this accomplishment, especially since the plan will be going through its public acceptance and implementation stages this year.

“The governor’s staff put a tremendous amount of time, energy and effort into preparing the draft State Strategic Plan, with one overarching objective: to make New Jersey, in the words of the plan: ‘...the national leader in private and public investment which supports sustainable communities that attract and provide strong economic opportunities, preserve our State’s natural resources, and create healthier communities to work, reside and recreate.’

“Additionally, the State of the State address seemed poised to tackle urban issues, and we hoped that redevelopment would top the agenda,” Kasabach concluded. “Instead, the governor presented education reform and tweaks to the criminal justice system as the only articulated efforts. These are important efforts, to be sure, but they fall far short of a comprehensive urban or redevelopment agenda.”

New Jersey Future Senior Director of State Policy Chris Sturm added, “As the governor pursues his economic growth agenda, we expect to see him rely upon the draft State Strategic Plan to ensure that state and private investments are targeted to areas with infrastructure. Otherwise, we’re likely to see continued subsidies for suburban sprawl, which will make New Jersey less attractive as a place to live and work.”

Sturm continued, “Now is the time for New Jersey to do what the State Strategic Plan calls for: ‘Promote development in Priority Growth Investment Areas that are compact, conserves land and offers shopping and services within convenient walking distance of home and jobs.’ These are the very kinds of places young professionals and empty nesters are looking for.”

New Jersey Future is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that brings together concerned citizens and leaders to promote responsible land-use policies. The organization employs original research, analysis and advocacy to build coalitions and drive land-use policies that help revitalize cities and towns, protect natural lands and farms, provide more transportation choices beyond cars, expand access to safe and affordable neighborhoods and fuel a prosperous economy.

#