New Jersey’s State Plan: Where We Are and What’s Next

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Where and How We Grow
State Plan Governed by the State Planning Act

Changes Needed

1) Create measurable state planning outcomes, not just goals

2) Simplify the state plan map to better concentrate growth and coordinate with other land use plans

3) Reposition the State Planning Commission to provide better state-level coordination

4) Streamline the local state plan conformance process
What We Have Now

Goals

1. Revitalize the State’s Cities and Towns
2. Conserve the State’s Natural Resources and Systems
3. Promote Beneficial Economic Growth
4. Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean up Pollution
5. Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost
6. Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost
7. Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic Open Space and Recreational Value
8. Ensure Sound, Coordinated and Integrated Statewide Planning

2008 Final Draft State Plan
What’s Needed: Measurable Outcomes

SPC Decisions (Mapping, etc.)

Broad State Plan Goals

Measurable Outcomes
Sample Outcome: reduce auto-dependency

- Supports several State Plan goals:
  1. Revitalize the State’s Cities and Towns
  2. Conserve the State’s Natural Resources & Systems
  5. Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost
  7. Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Open Space, etc.
  9. Increase Energy Efficiencies and Reduce GHG Emissions

- Quantifiable and Measurable

- Can be addressed through mapping
Simplify the Map

5 Planning Areas
(7 including 4B and 5B)

State policies that group these into two general categories: growth and conservation

Lack of buy-in and clarity
What we need: Simple Map

- Growth Areas and Conservation Areas
- Centers and Critical Environmental Sites
- Standards for development for each area
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Collapse existing planning areas
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• Growth Areas and Conservation Areas
• Centers and Critical Environmental Sites
• Standards for development for each area

To achieve growth-related Outcomes

Adding standards for types, intensities of development

To achieve conservation outcomes
Comprehensive Planning and Conflict Resolution

1. Start with newest State Plan map

2. Overlay new information

3. Use rules based on outcomes to resolve conflicts and draft the map

4. Discuss and verify with others
State Coordination vs. State Silos

- Transportation
- Environment
- Human Service
- Agriculture
- Housing
- Energy
- Health
- Economy
- Land Use
Considerations for State Level Coordination

Guiding Regulations and Capital Spending?

Balancing core missions and state plan outcomes?

Role of SPC?
Role of Governor?

Structure of SPC?

Positive Land Use Outcomes

Transportation

Human Service

Agriculture

Health

Economy

Energy

Housing

Environment
What We Have Now

Governor

DCA Commissioner

State Planning Commission Chairperson

Commission Members

Office of Smart Growth Executive Director

Staff
Shortcomings of What We Have Now

- The separation of the Commission from the staff leads to confusion and mission creep
- Commission lacks independence to act as a neutral advocate for the State Plan
- Commission lacks the stature to coordinate on a peer-to-peer level with other departments
- Commission lacks the authority to effectively challenge departments to conform to the State Plan
- The statutory mandate to update the State Plan through cross-acceptance every three years is too time and resource intensive
Addressing Shortcomings

• The separation of the Commission from the staff leads to confusion and mission creep.
  1) **Consolidate the Office of Smart Growth back into the State Planning Commission, like most state commissions.**

• Commission lacks independence to act as a neutral advocate for the State Plan.
  2) **Move the State Planning Commission in, but not of, Treasury and re-focus the staff on state level planning and regional coordination.**

• Commission lacks the stature to coordinate on a peer-to-peer level with other departments.
  3) **Create the Chief Executive Officer as a cabinet-level position that oversees the staff, and is the non-voting chair of the Commission.**

• Commission lacks the authority to effectively challenge departments to conform to the State Plan.
  4) **Give the Commission the authority to broker state department actions for consistency with the State Plan outcomes.**

• The statutory mandate to update the State Plan through cross-acceptance every three years is too time and resource intensive.
  5) **Change the State Plan update cycle to every ten years.**
Proposed Structure

Governor

Chief Executive Officer
    Non-voting Chair

Commission Members

Staff

Treasury

Cabinet Level
Beyond State Coordination

State
County
Municipality

?
Criteria for Reviewing Options

- Account for regional systems and dynamics
- Effectively achieve the State Plan outcomes
- Simplify participation
- Preserve local authority to shape character and quality
Addressing Criteria

Account for regional systems and dynamics
1) Counties funded to play a larger coordinating role with municipalities.

Effectively achieve the State Plan outcomes
2) Counties given state growth projections and outcome-based targets to integrate into planning.

Simplify participation
3) Streamline the municipal plan conformance process focused on locations and intensity of growth. Counties delegated state authority to certify municipal plans.

Preserve local authority to shape character and quality
4) If local plans conform to State Plan, then the state will assist in the defense of local land use decisions.
Summary

1) Create measurable state planning outcomes, not just goals

2) Simplify the state plan map to better concentrate growth and coordinate with other land use plans

3) Reposition the State Planning Commission to provide better state-level coordination

4) Streamline the local state plan conformance process