



## Just-Released Final State Strategic Plan Provides Improved Framework for Investment But Key Elements Are Still Missing

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**TRENTON** – After almost a year and eight public hearings, the New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy has released the final draft version of its proposed State Strategic Plan. The State Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, Nov. 13, to vote on adoption of the plan.

New Jersey Future commends the administration for releasing an improved plan to guide the state's economic and physical development in a way that balances the objective of promoting growth with that of protecting the environment.

Consistent with the mandate of the State Planning Act, the plan's mission, vision, and goals have been revised to reflect the need not only to preserve land but to protect natural resources. The plan also clarifies its deference to the regional planning entities for land-use decisions in the Pinelands, Meadowlands and most of the Highlands region.

One opportunity for improvement lies in integrating updated information on flooding and rising sea levels into the mapping criteria. "The State Strategic Plan can offer a framework for making sure that state investment decisions consider risks from extreme weather events," said New Jersey Future Senior Director of State Policy Chris Sturm. "We've learned from Hurricane Sandy that we place people and property at risk when we build without regard to flood- and storm-related hazards."

"The revised plan creates a roadmap for building on New Jersey's existing assets to spur economic development strategically in priority growth areas of the state. Where this plan comes up short, though, is in promoting social and economic opportunity for all of the state's residents, especially in terms of housing and proximity to jobs," said Peter Kasabach, New Jersey Future's executive director. This social equity component had been evident in previous State Development and Redevelopment Plans and is emphasized in the State Planning Act.

The plan calls out priority growth areas, alternative growth areas, limited growth areas and priority preservation areas for different treatment. However, the provisions for designating these areas are of concern. The plan lays out a general framework of investment area criteria, but it requires further elaboration through rule-making and a commitment to providing an illustrative map before it becomes clear where we want to grow and preserve.

"New Jersey will benefit greatly from this strategic land use planning framework," said Mr. Kasabach. "We hope that the State Planning Commission will adopt this plan with the identified

concerns addressed. Then the real work begins, for state agencies and local governments to work together to encourage growth and preservation decisions that ensure strong, healthy and fair communities for all New Jerseyans.”

You may read the original draft plan [here](#) and New Jersey Future's formal comments on it [here](#).