



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NEW JERSEY STATE PLANNING COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 820
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0820

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Governor

LT. GOVERNOR TAHESHA L. WAY
SECRETARY OF STATE

THOMAS K. WRIGHT
CHAIRMAN

DONNA A. RENDEIRO
Executive Director/Secretary

April 3, 2024

Dear Mayor,

As you are aware, the State Planning Commission has embarked on an update to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. You should have received some initial materials so that you can begin planning for this effort and our office is available to answer any questions you may have. Additionally, your county planning staff has further information.

The State Planning Rules anticipate that the counties (or another appropriate entity) be the negotiating entity for their municipalities through the cross-acceptance process. This process involves comparing your land use policies with those of the county, regional State entities, and the State, then identifying agreements and disagreements and participating in negotiations to achieve the highest level of consistency possible.

The Office of Planning Advocacy is now in discussions with the Highlands Council, in conjunction with the affected counties, to consider the Highlands as the negotiating entity for municipalities within the Highlands. We believe that this structure will facilitate the regional planning goals of the State Plan and make this process more cost-effective and efficient for every level of government. Toward that end, the Office of Planning Advocacy and the Highlands Council are recommending the following structure, which is dependent on your status with the Highlands Council. Please note that municipalities that are represented by the Highlands Council may request grant funding to assist in the process.

- Municipalities that are in 100% conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan will be represented by the Council. To be considered in conformance, the municipality must, by March 1, 2024, meet the definition for conformance as adopted by the Highlands Council. This requires that a municipality is conforming for the entire municipality, has had their conformance petition approved by the Highlands Council, and has adopted any ordinance(s) that implement the Regional Master Plan.
- If a municipality is in disagreement with the Highlands submission of the Cross-Acceptance Response Template, they can provide their own submission to the Office of Planning Advocacy after the adoption of a resolution by their governing body.

- It is strongly recommended that municipalities that are partially or not in conformance with the Highlands Master Plan also be represented by the Highlands Council. If you choose to be represented by your county instead, a letter requesting such representation must be forwarded to the Office of Planning Advocacy by May 15, 2024, via an email to Jackie Rivera at jackeline.rivera@sos.nj.gov. Please include your reason(s) for your request.

We are looking forward to working with you on this important effort. You will be receiving further information as we move along in the process, but in the meantime, if you have questions regarding the process, please email the Office of Planning Advocacy at stateplan.comments@sos.nj.gov.

Thanks for your attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna A. Rendeiro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Donna A Rendeiro
Executive Director
Office of Planning Advocacy

c: Planning Board Secretary
Municipal Clerk