



THE DRAFT STATE STRATEGIC PLAN: A Somerset County Perspective

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ACTIVE COUNTY INVOLVEMENT IN STATE PLANNING



- Lead three rounds of Cross-Acceptance at the County-level, serving as “Designated Negotiation Entity”
- Facilitated 12+ Center Designations
- Provided support to Municipalities seeking Plan Endorsement (Somerset Regional Center, Millstone Borough, etc...)
- Ongoing role as WMP Agent and MPO Member
- Engaged in current State Strategic Planning Project via participation in Stakeholder Meetings

STRENGTHS OF THE STATE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



- Strong governor-level commitment and support
- Repositions OPA and SPC under the Secretary of State
- Puts state planning back in the spotlight
- Accurately reflects the current administration's (and the public's) priorities
- Reflects current conditions
- Brings back the balance lost in CA III and integrates Sustainability

STRENGTHS OF THE STATE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS (Cont.)



- Implementation focuses on alignment of state agency policies and resources with the new State Plan
- Is straight-forward – does not get mired in details
- Promotes effective regional planning
- Links priority industry sectors with higher education
- Gets rid of Plan Endorsement & Unfunded Mandates

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STATE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



- Represents a “Plan for a Plan”, (not “ready-to-go” in terms of implementation)
- Limited opportunities for public involvement in refining the Draft Plan prior to adoption
- Meets State Planning Act mandate, but provides little meaningful local guidance
- Ignores planning partnerships built during the past two decades
- Are other Guiding Principles for decision-making overlooked?

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STATE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS (Cont.)



- County and Local involvement in development of scorecard criteria and guidelines for State Agency Strategic Plans uncertain – (how will working groups be structured?)
- Too silent on property tax reform issue
- Relationship between “Priority Industry Clusters” and “Priority Growth Investment Areas” unclear
- Process for identifying “Priority Preservation Investment Areas” unclear
- What about the “in-between” (non-investment priority) areas?
- Will Garden State Values “work” Statewide?



ASSURE MUNICIPAL AND STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN

- #1 - Define what the Plan means to municipalities and counties via FAQs
- Expand minimum of 6 Hearings to a maximum of 21 (one per county)
- Engage diverse stakeholder groups in a deliberative plan-building process
- Make Investment Criteria, Scorecard, Guidelines for State Agency Strategic Plans, etc. subject to public review and comment
- Set-up the Steering Committee and Workgroup Processes to allow maximum transparency
- Empower Counties to deliver the message

TRANSFORM SUPPORT INTO ACTION



- Keep the momentum going by building partnerships right away
- Complete the analysis of industry sectors and identification of core areas and Priority Industry Clusters
- Expedite the identification of “Priority Growth Investment Areas” and Priority Preservation Investment Areas” at the county and local levels
- Define coordination process with Highlands, Pinelands and Meadowlands Commissions
- Help counties and municipalities begin the process of aligning regional and local master plans with the State Strategic Plan
- Define additional areas where planning and technical support will be provided by the OPA



IN SUMMARY.....

- The Plan is heading in the right direction
- Critical Plan details are missing
- Uncertainty regarding what the outcomes will be
- What do we need to do to minimize the uncertainty?
 - **Include a detailed public involvement process to assure citizen, municipal and stakeholder involvement in all aspects of the plan-building process.**

*FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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