

State Plan - Cross Acceptance Process Update for Somerset County, May 2008

The Somerset County Planning Board participated fully in the State Plan Cross Acceptance Process. The Comparison Phase commenced in April, 2004 with the release of the Preliminary State Plan Policy Map. After numerous public meetings and individual meetings with Municipal Cross Acceptance Committees; the completion of municipal "Plan Consistency" questionnaires; and the compilation of proposed changes to the State Plan Policy Map in GIS format, the Final Somerset County Cross Acceptance Report was prepared submitted to the State Planning Commission in March 2005. It contained numerous recommended changes to the 2001 State Plan Policy Map, the bulk of which comprised updated information about county and local preserved open space and farms. In addition, a number of Planning Area changes were made to more accurately reflect existing development patterns, infrastructure and environmentally sensitive features.

The Office of Smart Growth (OSG) conducted a detailed review of the changes to the State Plan identified in the County's Cross Acceptance Report and released a comprehensive list of "Agreements and Disagreements" which was used as the basis of the Negotiation Phase of Cross Acceptance. Further refinements of the proposed updated State Plan Policy Map for Somerset County took place during the Negotiation Process. Additional information and mapping was submitted to the State Office of Smart Growth for sixty (60) of the County's proposed mapping changes that OSG was either in disagreement with or required additional clarification. The County Planning Board compiled additional information concerning 18 proposed State Plan policy changes; including a recommendation to clarify and the State Plan's Agricultural Policies for Planning Areas 4, 4B & 5. The outcome of the Negotiation Process, which concluded in a public hearing held on May 30, 2007, resulted in a number of additional agreements on refined mapping and policy changes that are anticipated to be reflected in the Updated State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

The County Planning Board is currently working with its municipalities to update the population, household and employment projections included in the Final County Cross Acceptance Report. The updated projections will be submitted to the State Planning Commission for use in the Updated State Plan in lieu of the projections submitted in March 2005.

The County Planning Board was informed by the Office of Smart Growth that the preparation of the updated State Plan Policy Map was completed by the Office of Smart Growth in early 2008, but has not been released. The written portion of the updated State Development and Redevelopment Plan has not been completed to date, but work commenced in February, 2008 by the Office of Smart Growth with assistance from a consultant. It is anticipated the draft updated plan will be released in July 2008.

The Final Somerset County Cross Acceptance Report and Map showing the County's initial proposed changes, are available on line through the Somerset County Planning

Board Webpage: www.co.somerset.nj.us. For more information, contact
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