

## **WHAT IS STATE PLAN ENDORSEMENT?**

### **What is Plan Endorsement and how does it relate to the State Plan?**

The State Plan serves as a tool for both public and private sector investment in New Jersey's future by encouraging that growth and preservation be consistent with its goals and policies. Plan Endorsement is official recognition by the NJ State Planning Commission that a local, county, or regional plan is consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan). Government agencies can voluntarily submit their plans for endorsement by the State Planning Commission. Those whose plans receive endorsement make the commitment to implement the endorsed plan that lasts for 10 years.

### **Who is eligible to petition for Plan Endorsement?**

Municipalities, counties, groups of municipalities and/or counties, and regional agencies are eligible.

### **What are the benefits of Plan Endorsement?**

State agencies will provide benefits in the form of technical assistance, capital investments, priority for state grants and loans, and regulatory changes to implement the endorsed plan. The State Planning Commission will give priority to petitions received from counties, regional entities or from municipalities that submit their master plans as part of a petition from a county or regional entity. In addition, the State Planning Commission will give priority consideration to municipal petitions that are supported by counties with endorsed plans and joint petitions from more than one municipality in a given region.

### **How do you petition for Plan Endorsement?**

Plan Endorsement is a two-phase process. Municipalities or Counties can apply for Initial Plan Endorsement and be eligible for a limited set of benefits. They can then apply for Advanced Plan Endorsement to receive a more comprehensive set of benefits.

A municipality, county, or regional entity that wishes to petition for Plan Endorsement can request a pre-petition meeting with the Office of Smart Growth and representatives from other state agencies, including the Departments of Environmental Protection, Transportation, and Agriculture, and the Council on Affordable Housing. The purpose of this meeting is to advise petitioners on the requisite planning documents they need to submit in order to have their petition for the plan endorsement considered by the State Planning Commission. Initial Plan Endorsement petitions require the petitioner to submit their fundamental planning documents which most municipalities and counties have already prepared. These documents will be reviewed by the Office of Smart Growth and State agency staff. Counties will be invited to participate in these meetings to provide a regional perspective on local petitions. After a substantive review period, the State agencies will make a recommendation to the State Planning Commission as to the consistency of the petitioner's plan with the State Plan. Once a plan is endorsed, the Planning and Implementation Agreement will become a binding document on both the petitioner and the State agencies of tasks to be completed within a specified period of time. The petitioner can choose to stop at this stage or move on to Advanced Plan Endorsement.

### **Is Plan Endorsement mandatory?**

The State Planning Rules establish plan endorsement as a voluntary process. However, there are currently two State programs which require initial plan endorsement. They are as follows:

1. The Statewide Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) legislation requires that a municipality have had a petition for initial plan endorsement approved by the State Planning Commission in order for a TDR ordinance to take effect. The TDR ordinance and other materials required to be prepared by the Statewide TDR legislation can be submitted to the State Planning Commission along with the petition for initial plan endorsement.
2. The Third Round COAH Rules, which took effect in December 2004, require that municipalities obtain Initial Plan Endorsement within 3 years of receiving Third Round Substantive Certification.

### **Where can I find out more about Plan Endorsement?**

Please visit the Office of Smart Growth webpage at: [www.nj.smartgrowth.com](http://www.nj.smartgrowth.com).

From the Office of Smart Growth's website, you can visit the Plan Endorsement page which provides links to the Plan Endorsement Guidelines, State agency guidance, as well as links to real petition documents. Further questions about the Plan Endorsement process can be directed to the Office of Smart Growth staff at 609-292-7156 or via email at [osgmail@dca.state.nj.us](mailto:osgmail@dca.state.nj.us)