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PLANSMART NJ TESTIFIES ON STATE STRATEGIC JOB GROWTH PLAN

TRENTON, November 14, 2011 – PlanSmart NJ offered testimony in support of the draft State Plan at today’s State Planning Commission meeting. The State Planning Commission met today to approve the State of New Jersey’s draft Final State Strategic Job Growth Plan.

Lucy Vandenberg, PlanSmart NJ Executive Director, stated, “The draft final State Strategic Job Growth Plan is a tremendous leap forward. We are pleased that the State Planning Commission took decisive action today to foster sustainable economic growth and preserve New Jersey’s open spaces.”

Executive Director Lucy Vandenberg lauded the Plan’s inclusion of proposed geographic industry growth clusters based on employment sectors with high growth potential. This concept was first proposed by PlanSmart NJ in its spring planning and economic growth conference of industry leaders and then put forth in comments made to the OPA during its spring public comment period.

The Plan also recognizes the need to locate housing near geographic employment clusters to improve employee attraction and retention and create livable communities, a principle PlanSmart NJ has long endorsed.

PlanSmart NJ today strongly supported the Plan’s steps to foster alignment of state agency regulations, policies, and funding with the State Strategic Plan. “We’ve all experienced first-hand how communities suffer when state agencies send conflicting messages,” said PlanSmart NJ Vice Chair Richard Goldman. “If this Plan does nothing else, it must end state government’s practice of operating in silos when it comes to land-use decision-making.”

PlanSmart NJ called upon the State Planning Commission to make some revisions to the Plan before adoption:

- Provide a broader role for counties and regional planning entities in implementation of the State Plan. Create a system of regional project level review to replace municipal review for sustainable economic development projects of regional significance.
- Revise the State Planning Act, Municipal Land Use Law, and County Planning Act to reflect the vision and strategies laid out in the draft State Plan.
- In the absence of a map, spell out “locational criteria” to provide clarity as to where growth is encouraged and where preservation is sought.
- Ensure that the State Steering Committee actions are transparent and that proposed “State Agency Functional Plans” resolve conflicting State agency regulations and policies.
- Offer real state incentives to foster municipal, county, and regional participation in the State Plan.

A full copy of PlanSmart NJ’s testimony is available at www.plansmartnj.org

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Founded in 1968, PlanSmart NJ is an independent non-profit planning and research organization based in Trenton. PlanSmart NJ’s mission is to improve the quality of community life in New Jersey through the advancement of sound land use planning and regional cooperation.

More information about PlanSmart NJ, please visit www.plansmartnj.org; follow us on facebook <http://www.facebook.com/plansmartnj> and twitter <http://twitter.com/#!/@PlanSmartNJ>

EDITOR’S NOTE: PlanSmart NJ Executive Director Lucy Vandenberg is available to answer questions, 609-393-9434.