

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
609-777-2600
Kathy Bird-Maurice (SPC), (609) 292-3502
Tom Damm (DCA), (609) 292-6055
RELEASE: December 13, 1999

New Jersey Recognized Nationally for its Smart Growth Leadership by American Planning Association

Governor Christie Whitman today said she was honored that the American Planning Association (APA) has recognized New Jersey as one of six states in the country serving as exemplary models for smart growth planning practices.

New Jersey, along with five other states, is featured in a report released today by the APA at a news conference in Washington, D.C. The 108-page report, "Planning Communities for the 21st Century," contains detailed information about the state's comprehensive smart growth efforts.

"New Jersey's historic initiative to preserve one million acres of open space over the next 10 years will allow our children and grandchildren to enjoy our state's fields, forests and farms for all time. Keeping the `garden' in the Garden State is only part of the solution - smart growth is the other part," said Gov. Whitman.

"Saving farmland and open space well into the new millennium will require better designing and smarter planning for our cities, towns, and suburban areas than we've ever had - or needed - before," said the Governor. "We need to encourage smart growth of any future land that is to be developed as well as the redevelopment of our existing cities, towns and brownfield sites."

And it's the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, according to Gov. Whitman, that provides such a blueprint for smart growth and a strong framework for the future that will contribute to making New Jersey a better place to live, work and raise a family.

The APA's report included many references to New Jersey, citing among other accomplishments, the creation of a new, \$3 million Smart Growth Planning Grants program.

The grants will be allocated to counties and municipalities by the Department of Community Affairs, in consultation with the Office of State Planning and other agencies.

The APA's report noted that the State Plan is under review and revision, with a new plan expected to be adopted by the New Jersey State Planning Commission in May.

"This is a vision for New Jersey that grows smart," said Joseph J. Maraziti, Jr., Chairman of the State Planning Commission. "We will soon have a new State Plan that is more comprehensive, more up-to-date and more usable for shaping where want to live, work, play and raise a family."

Chairman Maraziti urged citizens, interest groups, and local, county and state officials to get involved in the state planning process. A series of public 21 public hearings - one in each county - will be held in the spring before adoption of the new State Plan.

Commissioner Jane Kenny of the Department of Community Affairs joined in the Governor's acknowledgement to the APA for singling out New Jersey's efforts. The APA report details a host of state programs and efforts in a range of areas that further principles of smart growth. The areas include comprehensive planning laws, farmland and open space preservation, heritage and cultural assets, affordable housing, economic development, transportation, and environmental protection.

"The Whitman administration is working in a coordinated manner to support the goals of smart growth, " said Commissioner Kenny. "It is encouraging to see that our efforts are being recognized nationally."

Commissioner Kenny noted that New Jersey was the only state to win a national award for sustainability in 1999 from Renew America and the President's Council on Sustainable Development. The term sustainability means being able to live today without using up the resources, such as air and water, needed for future generations.

Herbert Simmens, Executive Director of the Office of State Planning, was in Washington this morning to thank the APA on behalf of the Whitman administration and the State Planning Commission.

The other states singled out by the APA in its report are Maryland, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee and Washington.