



The Official Publication of the Urban Mayors Association

# URBAN MAYORS PRESS

WINTER 2024 | VOL. 10



Investment in  
Clean Water Is  
an Investment  
in Our Future

07

2023 New Jersey  
League Of  
Municipalities  
Highlights

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## ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY URBAN MAYORS ASSOCIATION

The New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) is housed in the New Jersey Urban Mayors Policy Center at the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University. The New Jersey Urban Mayors Policy Center coordinates all activities of the NJUMA and provides policy and legislative analysis. Established in 1991, the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association is dedicated to working with state and federal lawmakers and officials to develop appropriate and effective public policy measures that benefit the state's urban centers and to help lawmakers understand how public policy affects New Jersey's municipalities.

As an organization, NJUMA is comprised of 32 New Jersey urban and rural municipalities. NJUMA serves its members through meetings, policy retreats, and annual conferences which keep them informed on issues affecting their ability to provide adequate services to their residents. NJUMA also assists its members in interpreting legislation and state policy and works with the Governor's Office to assist in defining an urban policy agenda.

It uses a 7-Point Plan for Strengthening Cities, Families, and Communities as a guide for addressing the critical issues of its member cities. This plan is designed to aggressively address the areas of crime and public safety; education and positive youth development; environment and public health; family and community welfare; housing and economic development; tax reform and intergovernmental relations, and unfunded mandates.

NJUMA is a proactive organization that pursues opportunities from the government and the private sector to advance the interests of members. We are consistently exploring opportunities that will strengthen our communities and ultimately the state of New Jersey.

### Editors' Note

We hope you enjoy reading our Winter 2024 edition of the Urban Mayors Press! This digital newsletter is created to highlight the impactful work of the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) members and to provide resourceful information to municipalities throughout New Jersey from federal, state, and local agencies.

Submissions to the Urban Mayors Press are edited and distributed by the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University.

A Big Thank You to all Our Contributors!



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John S. Watson Institute for  
URBAN POLICY & RESEARCH

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- Hon. Hector C. Lora, Mayor City of Passaic, Vice President
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- Hon. W. Reed Gusciora, Mayor, City of Trenton, Vice President (Central)
- Hon. Dwayne Warren, Mayor, City of Orange, Vice President (Northern)
- Hon. Ras. J. Baraka, Mayor, City of Newark, President Emeritus
- Hon. Albert R. Kelly, Mayor, City of Bridgeton, President Emeritus

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# President's Corner



Dear Honorable Members of the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association and Valued Community Partners,

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I am humbled by the privilege of assuming the role of President for NJUMA, following in the footsteps of Mayor Ras J. Baraka of the City of Newark and other remarkable leaders who have selflessly dedicated themselves to this position. As I step into this role, I carry with me a deep commitment to uphold the core principles and mission that define our Association.

NJUMA boasts a storied history filled with remarkable achievements, all built upon our shared dedication to common goals. What sets us apart is the rich tapestry of experiences, perspectives, and innovative ideas that each Mayor brings to our collective table.

Together, we form a vibrant and dynamic network capable of driving positive change and progress in our respective communities.

In my capacity as President, I am excited about the prospect of collaborating closely with our newly elected Vice President, the Honorable Hector C. Lora, Mayor of the City of Passaic, and all of our esteemed NJUMA members. My foremost commitment is to nurture a culture of collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and mutual support. Your insights and active participation will be invaluable as we navigate the intricacies of governance and work tirelessly toward the betterment of our cities.

The future holds thrilling opportunities for growth, collaboration, and the realization of positive change. As we embark on this collective journey, I am filled with optimism about the profound impact we can achieve together. Your unwavering dedication to public service is truly commendable, and I eagerly anticipate the upcoming years, brimming with shared achievements and progress. I want to assure you that the Urban Mayors Press will remain a steadfast platform, ensuring that you stay well-informed about crucial updates, innovative initiatives, and inspiring success stories within our association. Be on the lookout for captivating profiles, valuable resources, and exciting opportunities for collaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian O. Mapp".

Mayor Adrian O. Mapp  
City of Plainfield  
President, New Jersey Urban Mayors Association

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# Tackling the Housing Crisis in Plainfield: A Model for Success



By Honorable Mayor Adrian Mapp, Mayor of Plainfield

In recent years, the City of Plainfield has worked tirelessly to address the pervasive housing crisis, skillfully balancing economic development and community wellbeing. This transformation has been marked by a series of successful initiatives and policy decisions, leading to an increase in housing availability and quality while also attracting new tenants from both inside and outside the city.

One of the most significant strides has been in the realm of economic development. Plainfield has successfully attracted substantial investment, focusing on expanding the number of available housing units. This year alone, the city celebrated numerous ribbon cuttings, each symbolizing not just the addition of new homes but the promise of community growth and revitalization. These events are more than mere formalities; they are tangible evidence of Plainfield's commitment to solving the housing shortage.

The new apartments in Plainfield aren't just numerous; they are replete with luxurious amenities that cater to modern lifestyles. Such amenities are not just perks; they represent a broader shift in urban living, where the quality of life is paramount. This focus on luxury and comfort has been a key driver in attracting people to Plainfield. The allure of these new developments is significant for those within the city seeking to upgrade their living situation, as well as for outsiders looking for a community that promises a higher standard of living.

The city is also taking bold and innovative steps to transform the affordable housing landscape. At the forefront of this transformation is the Station at Grant, a shining example of luxury living made accessible. Here, high-end amenities typically reserved for market-rate housing are offered to eligible applicants at significantly reduced rates, blending luxury with affordability in a groundbreaking way.

Elmwood Square Gardens has undergone a remarkable metamorphosis. Once outdated housing units, they have been meticulously rebuilt into spacious, modern townhomes. This revamp is not just about aesthetics; it's a commitment to improving the quality of life for its residents, offering them a space that is not just affordable but also inviting and comfortable.

The city's proactive approach doesn't stop there. Ongoing discussions with potential investors highlight a dedicated effort to expand the affordable housing portfolio. This engagement with investors is a testament to the city's commitment to addressing the growing need for affordable housing.

Looking to the future, the city is setting a new standard for urban development. Upcoming projects promise a blend of market-rate and affordable housing, an initiative that not only addresses the immediate need for affordable living spaces but also fosters a diverse and inclusive community. This approach acknowledges that a healthy, vibrant city is one where all residents, regardless of income, have access to quality housing.

These efforts paint a picture of a city not just reacting to the housing crisis but proactively shaping a future where affordable housing is not an afterthought but a key component of its urban fabric. It's a vision of a city that values inclusivity and quality of life for all its residents.

But Plainfield's approach goes beyond just building new apartments. The city has also implemented robust policies to ensure the maintenance of existing properties, particularly larger ones. The decision to perform ongoing yearly inspections for properties over four units is a groundbreaking step in holding all property owners accountable. This policy ensures that every building, not just the new and shiny ones, is up to code, safeguarding the residents' right to a decent quality of life. Such a proactive stance on property maintenance is crucial in a city's efforts to not only expand its housing options but also to maintain the quality of its existing housing stock.

This balanced approach to growth and maintenance has positioned Plainfield as a beacon of hope in the often grim landscape of urban housing crises. By focusing on both the expansion and upkeep of housing, the city ensures that its growth is sustainable and inclusive, committing itself to both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of housing development.

The transformation of Plainfield's housing landscape is a multifaceted success story. It's a narrative about how a city can tackle the daunting challenge of housing shortages by fostering economic development, ensuring the availability of high-quality living spaces, and maintaining high standards for existing properties. Plainfield's journey offers valuable lessons and a template for other cities grappling with similar challenges, showcasing that with the right mix of policies, investment, and community focus, the housing crisis can be effectively addressed.

# The Newark Summit 2023

Written and Submitted by Leslie Cook  
Business Development Manager

On December 4th, 2023, Newark witnessed a groundbreaking event as industry leaders convened for The Newark Summit. With a thousand participants gathered at the Newark Convention Center, the summit served as a crucible of ideas, innovations, and a shared commitment to transforming the city's real estate landscape responsibly and inclusively.

A poignant addition to the narrative came from Adenah Bayoh, a Newark native, and a luminary in the realms of restaurant ownership, real estate development, and community advocacy. As the owner/operator of 7 restaurants and the mastermind behind successful mixed-use development 915 Broad Street, Bayoh provided a unique perspective on the imperative of community inclusion in urban planning.

During her insightful discourse, Adenah Bayoh emphasized the paramount importance of engaging with all five wards, transcending the conventional focus on downtown areas when envisioning a development project. Her experience with 915 Broad Street underscored the transformative power of intention and a genuine connection to the local community.

"Newark is diverse, passionate, and full of talent, so lean into that," Bayoh urged. Her message resonated throughout the summit, echoing the sentiment that a community-driven approach not only leads to successful developments but also nurtures a sense of belonging and shared ownership.

The success story of 915 Broad Street, attributed to Bayoh's intentional connection with the community, became a beacon for others in the industry seeking a blueprint for responsible and sustainable development. The emphasis on active community engagement, Bayoh noted, results in tangible differences in support and love from the residents. This acknowledgment underscores the reciprocal relationship between developers and the communities they serve.

Beyond individual successes, The Newark Summit facilitated a holistic exploration of Newark's potential. The city's diversity and passion, as highlighted by Bayoh, became integral themes throughout the event. Discussions delved into how embracing this diversity could fuel innovation, creativity, and a vibrant cultural scene, making Newark an even more attractive place to live, work, and invest.

Gabriel Lopez, representing J&L Real Estate, a family-owned and operated company deeply rooted in the Newark community for over 40 years, stood as a testament to the enduring commitment of local entities to the city's growth. J&L Real Estate, with a rich history of multiple developments and properties, proudly unveiled its latest achievement, 55 Union Street, during The Newark Summit. J&L has strong ties to the community and is invested in showing what a great place it is to live, with culture, great restaurants and transportation.

The Newark Summit was a testament to exciting future of Newark. The room was full of passionate innovative leaders that can not wait to work together to keep Newark a great community and build on the foundation Mayor J. Ras Baraka and his team have worked so hard to implement.

Mayor Ras J. Baraka, addressing the summit, aligned with this community-centric narrative. His plans for Newark included affordable housing initiatives, streamlined tenant applications, and the establishment of a second planning board, all geared towards ensuring that development aligns seamlessly with the aspirations of local residents.

"Newark is beautiful," he said, noting the increasing wealth for some but not all.

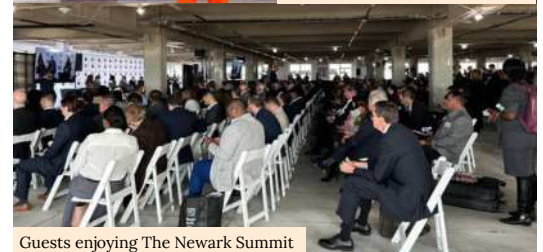
"We have to remember everybody else and that dream in their head — and the dream in the children's heads — that they, one day, will have a part of what we're creating here in the city of Newark.

"You can't ever forget that."

As The Newark Summit concluded, the city stood at the crossroads of a promising future. The narratives woven by industry leaders, including Adenah Bayoh, painted a picture of a Newark that not only builds structures but fosters communities, where the unique pulse of each ward contributes to a vibrant and interconnected whole. The summit left an indelible mark, setting the stage for a new era of real estate development—one where the community's heartbeat reverberates through every structure and initiative.



Adenah Bayoh  
Entrepreneur & Four Time Franchise Owner [IHOP]



Guests enjoying The Newark Summit



Honorable Ras J. Baraka, Mayor of Newark [Left] with Angelo Genova Esq.,  
Co-Founder & Chairman, Genova Burns LLC [Right]



Bradley Smith, Sr. Vice President at Sordoni Construction Co. [Left]  
Gabriel Lopez, Principal, J&L Companies [Right]



Honorable Ras J. Baraka, Mayor of Newark

Photo by: Office of Mayor Baraka

# Investment in Clean Water Is an Investment in Our Future

By Honorable Ras J. Baraka, Mayor of Newark

It has been nearly two years since Newark completed its total replacement of 23,190 lead service lines. It drew high praise from Vice President Kamala Harris as the “model city” for eliminating a drinking water hazard that impacts cities, towns, and rural areas across the United States.

In replacing these dangerous lead lines in less than three years and at no cost to residents, Newark gave communities a blueprint to tackle this daunting infrastructure project when subsequent federal funds were made available by the Biden-Harris Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan and the \$1 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill.

While the successful \$190 million project grabbed the headlines, there is an untold story in Newark’s aggressive upgrading of its entire water and sewer infrastructure.

We have made this one of my administration’s goals and our Department of Water and Sewer Utilities under the leadership of Director Kareem Adeem provides the cleanest, safest, and best drinking water possible, an important part of the “Equitable City” and “Newark Forward” promises made by this administration. We know that water and sewer infrastructure is essential to new development and economic growth.

Since taking office, my administration has authorized nearly \$240 million in upgrades to the city’s water and sewer systems. These are invisible projects, either done underground or hidden away in the City’s water plants, reservoirs, conveyance, and delivery systems.

Under the streets of Newark are 650 miles of water and sewer pipes – enough to go from Newark to Pittsburgh under constant maintenance and repair or replacement.



Representatives collaborating to enact infrastructure changes

Currently, in Newark, we are undergoing a three-part water- and sewer-line cleaning repair and restoration project costing \$45 million, including repairing leaks and disconnecting water lines no longer used, both of which waste our most valuable resource.

We are conducting valve testing for our larger mains as preventive measures to keep cracks in our older larger mains from flooding streets, creating sinkholes, and causing private property and street damage.

Flood mitigation is the reason for a \$3.4 million Brick grant award for a project at one of our low-lying areas in the vicinity of South Street by Newark Bay, which includes creating new drainage inlets, replacing broken storm sewer lines, and raising some lines to let gravity do its work. Of course, this work leads to road and sidewalk repair once the digging is done.

At our Pequannock Water treatment plant, we are in the middle of the largest upgrading project since the last plant was built 30 years ago, replacing dozens of large valves and building nine massive new pumps, new filters an air scouring system that further purify our water and a state-of-the-art computer control system with artificial intelligence that assists with adjustments to water chemistry on the fly. This \$25 million project will nearly double our water delivery capacity from 40 million to 80 million gallons daily.

There is much more, including system-wide environmental and infrastructure upgrades like combined sewer overflow netting facilities, dam improvements, fire hydrants, road restoration, green infrastructure, stormwater pump stations, water meter replacement, watershed security improvements of 37,000 acres, water and sanitary sewer main upgrades.

By applying for grant funding, taking advantage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill and the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank loans. That offers principal loan forgiveness and low-cost financing rates to complete the projects. All while improving efficiency in our operations and preventing wasteful spending.

Photo by: Office of Mayor Baraka

It is easy to neglect infrastructure and continue to put band-aids on problems. People take water and sewer services for granted until something goes wrong, and leaders know investment in over-the-ground services, like public safety and education, is also a pressing need. The lead pipe crisis is just one example of governments kicking infrastructure investment down the road.

The key word is investment. It will always be cheaper to make improvements now than in the future, and these improvements are essential to the health of the residents and the growth of the community. As we see time and again, ignoring infrastructure is done at the peril of both.

Our biggest challenge right now is support for cities with Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO). Newark is one 21 New Jersey cities that has a combined sewer system, which is responsible for combined sewer overflows (CSOs). These overflows, which occur during rain events, result in raw sewage entering nearby waterways and localized flooding that contains both sewage and stormwater. New Jersey’s cities face a multi-billion-dollar price tag to fix combined sewer systems that dump over 23 billion gallons of raw sewage into our waterways every year. The cost of not fixing this will be even higher if we do not act fast. New Jersey needs to upgrade its wastewater treatment infrastructure and we need our state and federal government’s support in getting this done.



LSL Replacement

Photo by: Office of Mayor Baraka

# Addressing Health Disparities in the United States: Air Pollution's Impact on Housing in Low-Income Communities

By Olubori Agboola

Master of City and Regional Planning (MCRP)' 24 at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers, New Brunswick  
Student representative of the American Association of Planners (APA) for Rutgers University

Housing has been one of the most important determinants of healthy living since immemorial; therefore, poor housing, susceptible to pollutants, automatically becomes a significant health risk to its inhabitants. About 6.7 million deaths were recorded in 2019 due to health conditions from air pollution exposure in their homes. This case is even worse in the United States and New Jersey, as over 197,000 people, majorly low and middle-income earners, die annually due to air pollution, with about 1.9 million New Jersey residents living in extreme proximity to industrial warehouses. Therefore, addressing the life-threatening health disparities rooted in air pollution, particularly in low-income communities, is imperative.

Diverse public health research consistently underscores the connection between air pollution and industrial warehouses in low-income communities. For instance, the Ironbound community is the most polluted northeast, with over 100 known contaminated sites and industrial warehouses alone. This correlation isn't just academic but a daily testament to their reality, including the air they breathe, tainted with particulate matter and other pollutants, which later becomes a silent assailant on their respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Amidst the iconic New Jersey skyline, we see air pollution as an adversary that unfairly affects low-income communities the most.

Air pollution isn't just an environmental concern; it is a public health crisis with overarching consequences, especially with the State's current surge of Asthma being higher than the national average. Even aside from Asthma, the inhalation of pollutants, including particulate matter (PM), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and other volatile organic compounds/pollutants, seen from gas emissions in warehouse and transport trucks, garbage incineration burns, carcinogenic vapors from brownfield sites, among others directly link with adverse health complication, even in pregnancy outcomes. It is, therefore, imperative to review possible mitigation strategies (including a multifaceted approach) to help ensure better access to safe and healthy communities, especially among marginalized communities. Some of these mitigation strategies include:

- Greening Housing Spaces:** Implementing green infrastructures and streetscapes within impact communities like Camden is essential as they help foster a healthier environment. For example, improvements like tree buildings, rooftop gardens, green spaces, parks, and open spaces help purify the natural environment and atmosphere while also creating recreational mediums for exercise and active body movements these improvements improve air quality and give these communities an honest, green facelift. To be clear, I am not arguing that providing recreational activities automatically reduces obesity or enhances air quality. They don't because this way, residents become more exposed to pollution; however, a maintained provision of greenery can go a long way.

- Better Emission Policies:** Zero emission standards and the electrification of truck fleets are essential in addressing health concerns in target communities. The Department of Environmental Protection's implementation of the Advanced Clean Trucks must be strictly adhered to while also mandating that buses and trucks can only be acquired if they strictly follow environmentally friendly standards. Also, it is important that municipalities prohibit/dramatically limit the construction of new distribution or industrial warehouses in these communities.

- Equity and Inclusive Zoning:** Historically, it has been established that public and affordable housing is usually located in environmentally degraded areas of industrial waste and highway lands in New Jersey. Therefore, zoning ordinances must be carefully reviewed to create room for equitable housing distribution and sustainability.

As we confront these disparities in our areas, it is important to explore different collaborative solutions. These mitigation efforts must prioritize environmental improvements and engage residents and community stakeholders in decision-making. By implementing these strategies, we forge a huge path toward ensuring a healthier future where every citizen, regardless of economics, can breathe clean air and thrive.



CONTAMINATION SITES CONTRIBUTING TO POLLUTION IN IRONBOUND, NEW JERSEY

- Active
- Active - Post Rem
- Active - RAP
- Ironbound Community





## Code Blue/Code Red Protecting NJ's Most Vulnerable

By Matthew Hersh  
Director of Policy and Advocacy,  
Housing and Community Development Network of NJ

**Heat waves and arctic blasts are becoming more frequent, more extreme, and more of a health risk for New Jersey residents, particularly those who have no way to seek relief from the danger.**



Matthew Hersh  
Director of Policy and Advocacy,  
Housing and Community Development Network of NJ

Photo By: HCDNNJ

New Jersey's Code Blue law mandates emergency shelter for homeless residents in all 21 counties during a Code Blue Alert. The law states that a Code Blue Alert must be issued by county offices 24 to 48 hours before temperatures are predicted to drop below 32 degrees or wind chill temperatures will be zero degrees or less for two hours or more. Each county must develop a plan to issue Code Blue Alerts to municipalities with a homeless population of at least 10 people, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations that provide services to at-risk individuals. Counties must also provide emergency warming centers, which are often located in public buildings such as libraries, shopping centers, and senior activity centers.

One of the main obstacles to New Jersey's Code Blue response is funding, a problem that the state has taken steps to address.

In March 2019, Governor Phil Murphy signed a bill to allow county homelessness trust funds to be used for Code Blue emergency shelter services. With protections in place from freezing temperatures, advocates have turned their attention to the opposite extreme. NJ bill A3540/S2429, sponsored by Assembly Housing Committee Chair Yvonne Lopez and Sen. Richard Codey, has been introduced that would create statewide Code Red requirements for counties based on the state's existing Code Blue requirements. This bill to provide shelter for at-risk individuals during hot weather awaits consideration in the Senate Health, Human Services, and Senior Citizens Committee and the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Housing advocates are urging legislators to pass Code Red before the current lame-duck legislative session ends in January.

As our communities face the effects of climate change, the least NJ can do for all residents is make sure everyone has shelter during increasingly unpredictable and extreme weather conditions.

Utility assistance may be available for households struggling with utility payments through the NJ Department of Community Affairs. The Network also offers a weatherization and energy assistance toolkit to connect NJ residents with appropriate resources at [www.hcdnnj.org/weatherization-toolkit](http://www.hcdnnj.org/weatherization-toolkit).

**HOUSING HELP NJ:**  
Additional resources can be found at  
[www.housinghelpnj.org](http://www.housinghelpnj.org)



# 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CIRCLE OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS GALA

The Premiere Black History Month Event in NJ

FEBRUARY 22  
2024  
6:00 P.M. - 11:00 P.M.  
THE VENETIAN  
546 RIVER DRIVE  
GARFIELD, NJ

## “LEADING THE WAY”

In recognition of our ancestral DNA, and those who courageously paved the way for past, present, and future generations of Blacks in America.

Cocktail Reception  
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Awards Dinner  
7:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Dancing  
10:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

BUSINESS AWARD

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD



**The Honorable Benjamin Crump**  
Founder & Principal  
Ben Crump Law, PLLC



**Keith D. Wright, PhD.**  
Director, Business Diversity Operations  
Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion  
Port Authority of NY&NJ



**Brett J. Hart**  
President  
United Airlines Holdings, Inc.



**Dr. Darcella Patterson Sessomes, LCSW**  
Chief of Programming and Reintegration Services  
New Jersey Department of Corrections



**Master of Ceremonies**  
**Lamman Rucker**  
Actor, Educator,  
Activist and Entrepreneur

Early Bird discounted registration (October 3rd through November 3rd)



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# New Jersey Urban Mayors Association Members Delve into Key Issues at the NJ League of Municipalities

By Tenisha Malcolm - Director, Urban Mayors Policy Center &  
Dayana E. Velasco Manzano - John S. Watson Institute Graduate Assistant & Kean Student

The 108th Annual League of Municipalities served as a pivotal platform for collaboration, the exchange of ideas, and the cultivation of meaningful connections, particularly for members of the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA). Within NJUMA's agenda, a noteworthy policy breakfast brought together federal agency representatives including Olivia Glenn, Chief of Staff & Sr. Advisor, Environmental Protection Agency, Dr. Kimberly McClain, Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and David Cohen, Program Analyst, Economic Development Administration.



The mayors and agency representatives identified common goals, shared insights, and explored potential policy solutions to enhance the overall well-being and resilience of urban communities. Following the NJUMA Policy Breakfast, was the League session titled "Building Bridges: Connecting Interfaith Communities and Local Government." NJUMA members came together for a dynamic panel discussion that delved into the role of interfaith-local government partnerships in urban centers, essential for crafting sustainable solutions for communities. The session, presided over by the Honorable Ras J. Baraka Mayor of Newark, featured esteemed participants including Rev. Dr. Charles Boyer, Rev. Louise Rountree, Rev. Dr. Regena Thomas, Imam Deen Shareef, and Assemblyman Reginald W. Atkins.

The discussion explored themes centered around community upliftment through collaborative policy creation, with a focus on fostering responsiveness, inclusivity, and alignment with the diverse needs of the community. This session not only provided valuable insights but also highlighted the shared commitment of leaders from different faith traditions to building bridges and creating policies that positively impact urban communities.

The NJUMA reception was a momentous occasion as Mayor Ras J. Baraka graciously acknowledged the conclusion of his term as President. In a symbolic gesture, Mayor Baraka passed the leadership baton to the incoming president, Honorable Adrian O. Mapp Mayor of Plainfield, marking a significant transition for the organization. Additionally, the new Vice President, Honorable Hector C. Lora Mayor of Passaic, was introduced, adding to the anticipation of fresh perspectives and continued dedication to the goals of the NJUMA. The reception celebrated the achievements under Mayor Baraka's leadership and welcomed a new era of collaboration and initiatives under the guidance of Mayor Mapp and Mayor Lora.



# NJUMA Policy Breakfast





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NJUMA League Session  
 Building Bridges: Connecting  
 Interfaith Communities and Local  
 Government

”











NJUMA Annual Reception

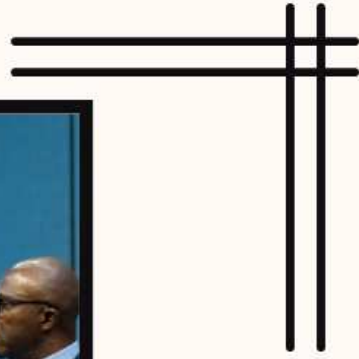




**Collaborative Empowerment: National Forum for Black Public Administrators – New Jersey Chapter and Kean University Forge a Strategic Partnership for Empowering Connections**

The New Jersey chapter of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) marked a significant milestone with its inaugural NFBPA breakfast, held in collaboration with Kean University at the NJLM conference. At this event, the NFBPA showcased its commitment to establishing an enduring network of Black public administrators in New Jersey, dedicated to advancing education and fostering community progress. Featured speakers from both the NFBPA and Kean University articulated their shared goals and aspirations for this impactful partnership, emphasizing a collective vision for positive change in education and community development.

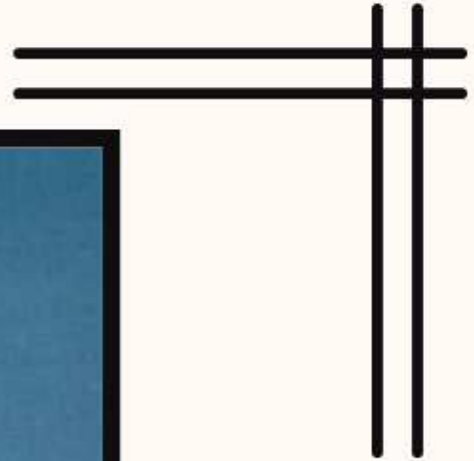




The New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus “Spotlight on Cannabis Social Equity Revenue,” emphasizing the crucial need to prioritize social equity as a fundamental aspect of cannabis legislation. Members engaged in discussions highlighting the potential of the Cannabis Regulatory Enforcement and Marketplace Modernization Act (CREAMMA) to generate social-equity tax revenue. This revenue is seen to address the historical injustices stemming from the failed war on drugs.

The focus extended to the significant role that the legislation could play in supporting Black and Brown families, with funds derived from cannabis taxes earmarked for addressing financial, mental health, and educational needs. The NJLBC underscored the importance of leveraging cannabis revenue to rectify past wrongs and contribute positively to the well-being and empowerment of communities disproportionately affected by the war on drugs.

**Cultivating Equity: The New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus Shines a Spotlight on Cannabis Social Equity Revenue**



# The State Plan is Being Revised: What It Means & How to Get Involved

Written and Submitted by Jef R. Buehler, Assistant Director, NJ Business Action Center

## What is the State Plan?

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) is a document prepared by the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) that contains a comprehensive framework intended to guide future development, redevelopment, conservation, preservation, and restoration efforts in the state of New Jersey. The SDRP will guide NJ's municipalities and counties to foster their prosperity through enhancing economic, place, social, and civic value.

The SDRP is prepared by SPC staff in the Office of State Planning at the NJ Business Action Center in the NJ Department of State, in consultation with a variety of state agencies, and is subject to a process called cross-acceptance, which is a consultative process with county and local governments intended to align, to the extent possible, the state's priorities and planning objectives with the priorities and planning objectives of local governments. SDRP policies and strategies reflect current principles and best practices that are widely accepted within the city and regional planning discipline with respect to land use, transportation, housing, environmental protection and enhancement, economic development, provision of public infrastructure, historic preservation, social justice and adaptation to global climate change. All of those topics touch our state's downtowns and managed districts, to a greater and lesser extent for each community.

## What the State Plan Does & Does Not Do

The SDRP is intended to be implemented by the state agencies, through their functional plans, investment priorities, and administrative rules. It is also implemented by local governments, to the extent that they have synchronized their planning objectives with those of the SDRP.

The SDRP does not overrule, negate, or interfere with local master plans and development regulations. Local governments in New Jersey exercise total control over local land use matters, limited only by enforcement of state statutes and state agency administrative rules. Similarly, the SDRP does not overrule, negate, or interfere with the plans independently prepared and adopted by the state's three regional planning entities with jurisdiction over the Meadowlands, Pinelands, and Highlands regions, although a high level of consistency is sought between the SDRP and these plans.

What the SDRP does do is point local and county governments in the direction of a more prosperous future, one in which growth and change fit with the local vision, needs, and character while meeting the following goals.

The Goals of the SDRP are:

- Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns
- Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems
- Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development, and Renewal for all Residents of New Jersey
- Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution
- Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost
- Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost
- Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space, and Recreational Value
- Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide

Additionally, two more goals will be added to the 2024 update of the SDRP

- Address the Negative Impacts of Global Climate Change
- Prevent the Concentration of Adverse Environmental Impacts in Overburdened Communities

## Opportunities to Participate

This current State Plan revision process is built to both move quickly and offer significant engagement opportunities to all NJ stakeholders, including district management entities, developers, businesses, property owners, County governments, municipal governments, and residents. So far, all 21 County planners are already involved in the SDRP revision process having met with the Office of State Planning. There will be several online surveys that will be both broadly accessible and targeted to particular subject matter interest groups. The public will hear more about the State Plan revision through a variety of online and on-site conferences and educational sessions. Throughout October 2023, there were several online topic-focused listening sessions; the recordings are available at [www.publicinput.com/njstateplan](http://www.publicinput.com/njstateplan).

In early 2024, after feedback and guidance are received and analyzed, the Preliminary Plan will be published and shared online for public review. Throughout the entire process, the public may share comments online or through a dedicated email address: [stateplan.comments@sos.nj.gov](mailto:stateplan.comments@sos.nj.gov). After the publication of the Preliminary Plan, there will be 21 County hearings beginning in the spring of 2024 with an additional 6 public hearings after the Final Plan is published.

Unlike past State Plan revisions, our approach and process has been streamlined to minimize work and cost for municipalities. They will not have to submit Master Plans, and any filing that is needed will be able to be done exclusively online.

By creating these efficiencies and maintaining a variety of stakeholder engagement opportunities, we intend for the State Plan revision to be functional, impactful, and fair – and one that will elevate NJ's prosperity on the state, local, and county levels for the decades to come.

## About the New Jersey Business Action Center

The New Jersey Business Action Center serves as the State's liaison to the business community, offering free information, services, and resources across various areas such as business registration, financial programs, regulatory compliance, property selection, workforce training, and more. NJBAC, a division of the Department of State, comprises multiple offices, including Business Advocacy, Export Promotion, Small Business Advocacy, State Planning, and the Cannabis Training Academy. Access to NJBAC services is available through NJ DOS - NJ Business Action Center or [Business.NJ.gov](http://Business.NJ.gov): Your first stop for doing business in NJ or by calling 1-800-JERSEY-7.

### Comments can be provided through:

[stateplan.comments@sos.nj.gov](mailto:stateplan.comments@sos.nj.gov)

Public input email: [stateplan.comments@publicinput.com](mailto:stateplan.comments@publicinput.com)

The "Community Input" or the "Surveys" tab at

[www.publicinput.com/njstateplan](http://www.publicinput.com/njstateplan)

Comments can be provided through a voice mail message

left at 1-855-925-2801, passcode 2813

# Applying Private Sector Strategies to Optimize How We Govern

By Honorable Mayor Donald Shaw  
Borough of Roselle

The Borough of Roselle is a small beautiful urban municipality with 22 thousand people that is nestled in the heart of Union County, New Jersey. With its small town characteristics and being close to major highways and transportation hubs Roselle has a great potential to be a thriving community. To realize that potential, we had to reimagine the way we run the Borough. As I move into the second term of my administration with like-minded Council Members, we are ready to execute against a new strategic approach to optimize our operations.

During my first term in office, my colleagues and I were able to bring over \$9.7 million in grant dollars to the Borough, lay a foundation down for redevelopment opportunities, start actual development projects, all while keeping taxes flat, but there is so much more that needs to be done to realize the full potential.

Like many corporations in the private sector, the Borough recognizes that our progress is intrinsically tied to our ability to acquire talent, optimize processes, and move towards a result-drive approach to how we serve our community and deliver against Borough projects. We believe this approach will allow us to deliver more community improvement projects, decrease the turnaround time on economic development initiatives, improve services to residents and build out Roselle reputation throughout the state. This would make us the ideal municipality to invest in.

## Reshaping Operations for Progress:

The ongoing restructuring efforts within the Borough signify our commitment to efficient and effective governance. We also understand that talent acquisition forms the cornerstone of any successful organization. In the second half of 2023, we hired Missy Balmir as the Borough's Business Administrator. My administration, along with Council has created a strategy to restructure our operations and acquired new talent. The strategy for our restructuring efforts includes, merging multiple departments under one area of focus, creating a new Director level for those key areas, creating new positions, and actively filling open ones.

## Optimizing Processes for Better Service:

Optimization is not merely a buzzword; it is a commitment to streamlined operations that benefit our residents. We are reimagining our administrative procedures to ensure that decision-making is prompt, policies are implemented effectively, and governance is responsive to the needs of our citizens. We have reviewed the current processes, identified shortcomings, and identified both manual and technological ways to improve the way we deliver better services to residents, including more online options to submit forms, pay fees, report and track issues, attain information and more. We are also working to improve the processes that impact economic development, so it easy for partners to help work with and ultimately develop in Roselle.

## Progress Towards Our Common Goals:

Every effort towards restructuring our operations aligns with our ultimate goal – to create a Roselle that thrives, where residents experience a high quality of life, economic opportunities abound, and where community engagement is the norm rather than the exception. Roselle will stand as a beacon of progress in Union County and across the state.



Mayor Donald Shaw  
Borough of Roselle



# Data-Informed Community Engagement (DICE) for Public Safety

By Andy Horn and Joel Caplan

Many local governments grapple with the shift from reactive to proactive crime prevention programming in their communities. Challenges include resource constraints, which can make the prospect of preemptive problem-solving seem out of reach. However, there's a way to navigate these challenges and create safer spaces: by using data analytics to engage with multiple community stakeholders and coordinate their resources. It's called data-informed community engagement (DICE).

Historically, efforts to reduce crime and related harms focused on individual people, such as potential offenders. The city police department would have been tasked with figuring out who or what poses risks, and then trying to address them one at a time. Instead, DICE focuses on places to identify vulnerabilities in a city landscape. Then multiple local resources are tasked with addressing elements of key places simultaneously. City staff are empowered to operate where their presence is most needed while giving them more time to address other critical duties too. This is key to co-producing public safety and community wellness while maximizing existing local resources without added costs.

Consider the DICE success story of the Newark Public Safety Collaborative (NPSC) in New Jersey. NPSC diagnosed crime location patterns and engaged multiple stakeholders to craft data-informed risk narratives around crime problems that drove prevention actions in the city. Similarly in Atlantic City, particular places near convenience stores, laundromats, and vacant buildings were identified as the most opportunistic settings for violent turf conflicts over drug-related activities. Driven by this risk narrative, local officials coordinated their efforts to mitigate spatial risks: law enforcement focused patrols while other city departments prioritized actions like boarding up vacant properties and enhancing street lighting near these businesses.

Visit  
**DICEforPublicSafety.org**  
for more information here

What DICE apart from the status quo is its capacity to involve the entire community in problem-solving. Crime is no longer solely a policing issue. Local leaders use it to make more informed and place-based economic development decisions too. DICE empowers a diverse group of local stakeholders to do what they do best at the places needing them most. Business owners, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and city departments all have a role to play in line with their unique missions, expertise, and resources.

DICE programs around the country have achieved remarkable reductions in violent and property crimes, while also meeting local community needs and expectations.

**CITY OFFICIALS HOLD THE KEY TO HARNESSING LOCAL RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY. WITH DICE, THEY EMBRACE AND PROPEL A MINDSET SHIFT FROM SOLELY REACTING TO CRIME PROBLEMS, TO PROACTIVELY MANAGING SPATIAL RISKS AND FIXING PERSISTENTLY VULNERABLE SETTINGS.**

As an evidence-based practice, DICE helps you yield the highest returns on investment while crediting the use of your existing local data and resources to do it.

DICE leverages locally available resources to democratize the application of government-led programming. It lightens the burden on first responders, enhances public safety, and improves public relations. To learn more, visit [DICEforPublicSafety.org](https://DICEforPublicSafety.org)

**PUBLIC SAFETY**  
COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL

# Essential Safety Tips for the Winter Season

Submitted by Lisett Lebron on behalf of the City of Perth Amboy

In December 2023, the city announced a playful twist to their ongoing campaign: the Grinch has "escaped" and is now roaming the streets of Perth Amboy. This new development adds an exciting dimension to the campaign. Teasing whether he will spread holiday cheer or continue his notorious ways, the campaign uses engaging video content to encourage residents to follow the Grinch's holiday adventures. This approach captures the community's attention and reinforces important safety messages memorably and engagingly. Even after the holiday season is over.

## Essential Safety Tips During the Winter Season

- **Avoid Overloading Electrical Outlets:** The campaign reminds people not to overload electrical outlets to prevent fire hazards.
- **Awareness in Public Spaces:** The campaign encourages vigilance in crowded shopping areas and events.
- **Focused Driving:** Emphasizing road safety, it discourages texting or using phones while driving.
- **Secure Delivery Locations:** With increased online shopping, we remind residents to secure delivery areas.
- **Vehicle Security:** The campaign advises securing gifts in vehicles to prevent theft.
- **Home Security:** Securing windows, sheds, and garages is crucial for home safety.
- **Vigilance Against Internet Scams:** The campaign highlights the importance of being cautious of Internet scams.

What sets Perth Amboy's approach apart is its ability to foster community engagement. Residents are encouraged to stay tuned to important safety messages for this winter season that are provided in both English and Spanish.

Residents and those interested can follow the campaign with the latest Grinch activities updates by following Perth Amboy's official social media handle: @cityofperthamboy (<https://www.instagram.com/cityofperthamboy/>). This platform provides regular updates and engaging content to keep the city informed and involved.

Perth Amboy's use of the Grinch character in public safety messaging is an innovative model for other cities. It shows how creativity and popular culture can effectively engagingly communicate vital information. This approach enhances the effectiveness of safety messages and fosters a stronger, more engaged community. With its blend of fun and information, the Grinch campaign is a prime example of imaginative and impactful public communication.

# City Leadership, Employers, & Schools Must Work Together to Create More Opportunities For Youth

By Ashaki E. Goodall,  
Executive Director,  
Schools That Can Newark

As Executive Director of Schools That Can Newark, I have the opportunity to see firsthand the power of providing young people with opportunities and access, and the importance of partnerships between city leadership, employers, and schools in creating those opportunities. When we connect high school students to their local government and employers, we're not only giving them critical hands-on work experience. We're also building a pipeline that helps expand the economic base, grow our communities, and ensure young people know opportunities are awaiting them in their homes after they graduate high school.

Through in-person work opportunities, students practice important skills they are learning in school, from professional communication to time management. We need to strengthen partnerships between local government, businesses, nonprofits, and schools to create more internship opportunities that make this possible.

One example is Alyssa Nazario, a 16-year-old junior at Gateway Academy who is participating in her second internship. This internship, at the City of Newark Law Department, involves Alyssa working in person, building relationships with attorneys, and handling tasks ranging from scanning mail to proofreading briefs. Working with Schools That Can's programming in her school, she developed a professional resume to apply, a process she said made her more confident in showcasing her skills to employers.



“I think in high school, we are prepared for the strategic challenges, on paper, what we're supposed to do,” Alyssa said of preparing for the workforce. But she said having this “immersive program, where I'm in an office and I'm in a professional setting” has been a game-changer. She's built solid relationships with coworkers, which has also benefited her college application process. She was excited to discover that the attorneys she works with in city hall are genuinely interested in what she has to say. “They're always putting me in meetings, telling me, well, what does our intern think?” she said. “To have my voice be valued and to be heard, I get to see the changes being made throughout the time that I've been there. It's a great feeling.”

There is a unique role for local government in student career readiness. At 16 or 17, someone isn't old enough to vote, but they are creating an understanding of the importance of participating in local government. Creating work-based opportunities is also an important civics lesson, one that shows adults are committed to investing in them and seeing them as future government and business leaders.

We know how profoundly this impacts urban centers, because youth aren't just our future. They are part of our communities now. Working together, we can create opportunities to help them build the skills necessary to get a job, and beyond that, build a pipeline our city leadership is proud of.

**SCHOOLS<sup>®</sup>  
THAT CAN**

*Where Real World Success Begins*



Honorable Marty Small, Sr. Atlantic City Mayor

Photo by: Office of Mayor Marty Small, Sr.

## Mayor Marty Small, Sr. Scholarship

The scholarship money comes from the Addressing Educational Disparity category of American Rescue Plan funds Atlantic City has received. The check presentation was part of a fun celebration, but the money was actually sent directly to the college. To apply, all eligible students had to submit an application, a one-page resume, a one-page essay explaining how they will contribute to bettering Atlantic City and obtain two letters of recommendation. I formed a 17-person committee that was responsible for reviewing applications and essays, and interviewing the candidates. I had no role in the actual selection process.



Mayor Small with Scholarship Recipient Iffathara Chowdhury

Photos by: Office of Mayor Marty Small, Sr.

**There were no GPA requirements for this scholarship either. As long as our youth have a will, the Small administration will always find a way.**



Mayor Small with Scholarship Recipient Shariar Hossain

# A Life-Changing Investment in Atlantic City Youth

By Honorable Mayor Marty Small, Sr. of Atlantic City

**YOU ALWAYS HEAR PEOPLE SAY THEY CARE FOR OUR KIDS.**

You always hear people say they want to give our children opportunities to achieve greatness. Well, in the Great City of Atlantic City, the Small administration puts our money where our mouth is, and we govern to our priorities.

Prior to the current academic school year, I announced a commitment of \$3-million dollars over the next three years to the youth of Atlantic City in the form of the 'Mayor Marty Small, Sr. Scholarship.' The first \$1-million dollars was presented to 100 students over the summer, with each student receiving a check for \$10,000. The first 50 scholarships went to students who graduated from Atlantic City High School this past Spring, who are also Atlantic City residents. The other 50 scholarships were awarded to students entering (and now currently in) their sophomore, junior and senior years of college, who reside in Atlantic City. The high school seniors that applied had to have an acceptance letter from an accredited higher educational institution.

As a mayor who has made taking care of our youth a priority, I feel it is important to provide them with the necessary tools and resources to succeed. That's why I created the Small Business Academy, to teach our youth what it takes to become entrepreneurs. That's why the city helped jumpstart the Atlantic City Infrastructure Program, to train our youth and guide them in the right direction to a career path in the energy field. And that's why this scholarship was formed, to allow us to invest in our children, and have those same children get educated and return to the City of Atlantic City to better themselves, and their community.

It's no secret, college is expensive. I called every single scholarship winner directly to inform them they will be receiving this money. Some students screamed, some cried, and some even thought I was playing a prank on them. Overall, their reactions were both touching and priceless, I will never forget them. Some students openly told me they did not think they would be able to attend college because of the cost, until this scholarship came their way. I reminded all the students there is no obstacle they will come across in their educational journey that they can't overcome.



# SUPERA

Spanish Speaking Program

Written and Submitted by Kean University's SUPERA Program Team

Supera, the Spanish-speaking program at Kean University, was established in 1972 to provide services to students who are English Language Learners (ELLs). The only program of its kind in New Jersey, Supera is committed to opportunity and excellence through access to higher education for ELLs.

"I feel very proud because I am an English Language Learner, myself," said Rosa Paulino, Supera director. "I came to the U.S. when I was 15 years old, and I had to learn English in college. Because of the services and programs Kean offered and their mission of academic access and excellence, I was able to obtain a degree."

Students take English as a Second Language (ESL) courses during their first few semesters, while also taking general education courses taught in Spanish. The Spanish-taught courses help students progress in their studies while acquiring English proficiency, as well as save money and time. Supera students, who can access any Kean academic program and service, graduate at a similar rate as their peers.

"Without Supera, I would not have been able to make such great progress in my academic career," said criminal justice graduate Luis Parra '23. "I took advantage of all of the support the program offers, including workshops, counseling, networking, financial aid and supplemental instruction. Every student feels like they have a family in the academic environment."

Supera was chosen as a finalist in 2022 by Excelencia in Education, a national organization focused on advancing Latino student success in higher education.

More than 500 students are currently enrolled in Kean's program.

"I acknowledge the program for helping first-generation and immigrant students develop professional skills for college while giving them the extra support they need," said Cecilia Calvo, a management science student slated to graduate in 2025. "Furthermore, the program helped me meet new people and make new friends, building a community that makes me feel like I belong."

**Graduates of Supera have gone on to serve in major roles in their fields, including as dentists, journalists, attorneys, scientists, and teachers, who are proud to share their stories:**

**"Bend but don't break' is a concept central to orthodontics and is a theme that has defined my life," said Willan Jumbo, DMD, Class of 2015. "I am an immigrant dreamer from Ecuador who arrived in the U.S. shortly after graduating high school. Supera served as the catalyst for my success."**

**"The benefits that I got from Supera were guidance, wisdom and awareness – all of which helped me become a positive and professional contributor," said Javier Olaya, Class of 2012**

**"I cannot be more grateful to Kean's Supera program for being the pioneers in offering this program for students like me who have the intellect and desire to become a professional but are still trying to make English our second language," said Karoline Puma, Class of 2001. "I am now CEO of my own company and can offer jobs to other bilingual individuals."**

**"Supera counselors positively influenced the lives of many Latinos in New Jersey, including mine. They encouraged me to work hard for my dreams," said Diana Calle, Class of 2012**

# Uplifting Environmental Justice in New Jersey and Beyond

By The Center for the Urban Environment

**The Center for the Urban Environment (CUE) works with the environmental justice (EJ) community to develop public policy that centers an EJ perspective in New Jersey and the country at large.**

We strive to protect communities Of Color and low-income communities from disproportionately high amounts of pollution by addressing EJ issues on the local, state and national levels. As part of our work, we work closely with the EJ advocacy community and are involved with their important issues such as reducing particulate matter (PM) air pollution, climate change, energy policy, cumulative impacts, access to the natural environment and increasing the capacity of the EJ community to address these and other issues. The center also provides technical assistance and support on policies, legislation, rules and regulations, and attempts to ensure the meaningful participation of community residents in decisions that affect their environment. The Center's director, Nicky Sheats, Ph.D, MPP, Esq., spends a significant amount of time talking to various groups and institutions representing the EJ movement and advocating for its issues. Dr. Sheats is a member of:

- White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC)
- Equitable and Justice National Climate Platform (EJNCF)
- New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA)

Exposure to PM, and particularly PM 2.5, has been linked to mortality and detrimental cardiovascular impacts and is likely connected to detrimental respiratory impacts, detrimental nervous system impacts, and cancer. Concerningly, there is a significant disparity in the levels of exposure to these pollutants and their subsequent health impacts between non-Hispanic White populations and Of Color populations, particularly Black and Hispanic populations. As the EPA released a new rule that considered changing the National Ambient Air Quality standards that provided governmental oversight on polluters emitting PM 2.5, CUE developed recommendations for the strengthening of these standards to the greatest degree possible. This type of pollution is the source of many major health and environmental justice issues in New Jersey and around the country and is emitted by fossil fuel-fired power plants, incinerators, other heavy industrial sites, and motor vehicles. This position was adopted by WHEJAC in their official recommendations on the proposed rule.

- ◆ Letter to EPA on the Environmental Justice Strategic Enforcement Assessment Tool
- ◆ Criteria Air Pollutants

Over this past year, CUE has been very busy. Some of our completed and ongoing projects include working with allies in Albuquerque on a cumulative impacts law, several different WHEJAC projects; a primer document on climate change mitigation policy for the Equitable and Just National Climate Forum; a paper on cumulative impacts; comments on proposed federal rules covering power plants, the National Environmental Policy Act, and fine particulate matter air pollution, and a research paper on carbon capture and storage with the Tishman Environment and Design Center. One of the highlights of this summer was our work on a new rule the EPA released on air quality standards. This rule proposed new, more stringent standards for the national ambient air quality standards for PM 2.5. PM 2.5, or fine particulate matter, is a category of criteria air pollutants that are microscopic, inhalable particles, with diameters that are 2.5 micrometers and smaller. It is also the main component of the red haze caused by Canadian wildfires that covered much of the Northeast this past summer.

**Learn more about CUE on our webpage here.**



# Two Actions: Download the New Climate Change Planning Guide, and Complete a Quick Housing Survey.

Submitted by Michael Atkins  
New Jersey Future

## Adapting to Climate Change

Municipalities are on the frontline of climate change, and it is critical for the well-being of their communities that they proactively plan to adapt. New Jersey Future, in partnership with Sustainable Jersey, have released a brand new, first of its kind climate vulnerability assessment practitioner's guide. The guide helps elected and appointed officials and community leaders address the impacts of climate change. The Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (CCRHVA) Guide is now available online for municipal leaders and planners to bring their municipalities in compliance with the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) and prepare their communities for climate change.

New Jersey's Chief Resilience Officer, Nick Angarone, said, "This guidance document will help communities develop a local climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment that both meets the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law and provides a strong foundation for municipalities to make the difficult decisions that will ultimately result in a more resilient New Jersey."

This guide launches at a critical moment—while the NJ Municipal Land Use Law mandates that all municipalities include a CCRHVA in the Land Use Plan Element of their municipal master plans, they have hitherto lacked a comprehensive guide through which to conduct an evaluation of their community's climate change risks and needs. CCRHVA provides a step-by-step process for municipalities to address all provisions of the law, using an approach that centers community engagement and the reduction of risks for vulnerable populations, provides a means of conducting a comprehensive assessment, assists communities in identifying climate-ready strategies, and builds local adaptive capacity. CCRHVA guidelines now seek real-world application; we want to engage with pilot municipalities who utilize the guide, and receive feedback for its refinement and deployment.



**DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE TO LOCAL CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLANNING TO PREPARE YOUR MUNICIPALITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE.**

## Addressing Housing Issues

New Jersey Future framed and highlighted critical housing issues in the state through a feature in NJ Municipalities Magazine, emphasizing the role of good planning, reinforcing the prioritization of redevelopment and adapting to climate change, and ensuring affordable and accessible housing options.

To gather insights from municipal leaders across the state, New Jersey Future has launched an anonymous online survey at [njfuture.org/housingsurvey](http://njfuture.org/housingsurvey). This survey is crucial for collecting diverse perspectives on housing issues further informing future policy recommendations and strategies tailored to New Jersey's unique landscape.

New Jersey Future recognizes the key to adapting to climate change is providing technical assistance, supporting redevelopment, and keeping people's homes safe. We emphasize resilient redevelopment as a component of climate change adaptation, as we repurpose existing resources and spaces to foster sustainability, affordability, and resilience. By actively participating in the deployment of the CCRHVA guidelines and contributing insights through the housing survey, municipal leaders can play a vital role in reshaping and revitalizing urban spaces for a resilient and vibrant future.



**HELP US COLLECT DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON HOUSING ISSUES THROUGH OUR ANONYMOUS HOUSING SURVEY.**

# All Municipalities Must Develop Watershed Improvement Plans

By Mike Pisauro, Policy Director at The Watershed Institute

New Jersey's recent Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit mandates municipalities to create a Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP) over a five-year period. This plan, developed in three phases, aims to enhance water quality and mitigate flooding.

## **Phase 1: Mapping and Inventory**

Over three years, municipalities must map and inventory aspects of their stormwater system and other assets. Some data, like water classifications and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) areas, is accessible through tools like New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP's) Geoweb. Other information, such as privately owned Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), may require additional effort, possibly facilitated by a permitting and inspection reporting program.

## **Phase 2: Watershed Assessment Report**

By the end of Year 4 (December 2026, municipalities must develop a plan to improve water quality. This plan should identify projects, describe the reductions required by any TMDLs, propose funding sources, and undergo public review.

## **Phase 3: Final Watersheds Improvement Plan Report**

The WIP is primarily a planning and inventory exercise during this permit term. Implementation is expected to occur in future permits. By December 2027 the finalized plan must be submitted to NJDEP. It must include a summary of public comments, a list of permits needed, identification of external issues, anticipated costs and schedules, and an explanation of how overburdened communities will be prioritized.

## **Why WIPs are Necessary:**

WIPs are crucial for improving water quality and reducing flooding. The Clean Water Act requires us to restore water quality. NJ's Water Pollution Control Act reinforces this directive: "to restore, enhance and maintain" our streams. To implement these goals, pollution discharge from point sources, including stormwater runoff, requires permits. The MS4 permit authorizes municipalities to collect, treat, and discharge stormwater. Federal and state regulations require reducing discharges and addressing impaired waterways.

## **NJ's Waters and TMDLs:**

According to NJ's Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report, most of NJ's waters are impaired. TMDLs set limits on pollutant discharge, allocating amounts to sources with target reductions. The 2023 MS4 permit requires municipalities to implement not only TMDL-related reductions but to address water impairments. This is a change from previous permits.

WIPs are NJ's approach to meeting water quality standards, addressing the need to reduce water pollution, improve water quality, and mitigate flooding.

Click here to learn more about this at The Watershed  
Institute's webpage





# Register now for the 7th Annual NJ Watershed Conference

*Regional Collaboration  
for our Watersheds*

**February 23, 2024**  
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[thewatershed.org/7th-annual-watershed-conference](https://thewatershed.org/7th-annual-watershed-conference)



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