



State Conservation and Development Policies Plan Working Group Recommendations

Commission on CT's Development and Future

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Introduction

- Reporting Requirements
- Working Group Membership
- Process
- Main Recommendations
- Related Recommendations
- 2023 Legislative Session Recommendations

Reporting Requirement

- “Any recommendations for statutory changes concerning the process for developing, adopting and implementing the state plan of conservation and development” – PA 21-29
- Focus on state plan, however regional and municipal Plans of Conservation and Development (POCDs) integral to effective planning

Working Group Membership

- Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey
- Erin Kemple
- Charles Gardner
- James Basch
- John Board
- John Guskowski, AICP
- Kathryn L. Braun
- Kevin Alvarez
- Kevin Kurian
- Kyle Shiel, AICP
- Lynn Haig, AICP
- Maureen Goulet
- Rachel DeScenza
- Robert B Hendrick Jr
- Savannah-Nicole Villalba, AICP
- Stephen Saloom
- Stewart "Chip" Beckett III
- Eric Lindquist
- Rebecca Augur, AICP

Process

Listened To:

- OPM on history and process of developing Conservation and Development Policies Plan (C&D Plan)
- Municipal and regional planners on processes, content and implementation of local and regional Plans of Conservation and Development (POCDs)

Reviewed:

- Other states' comprehensive planning frameworks

Considered:

- Need for statewide planning
- Whom and what activities the C&D Plan should guide
- How to best coordinate planning across levels of government
- Means to ensuring the C&D Plan gets implemented

Main Recommendations

1. Transform the C&D Plan into a visionary and objective-setting plan based on current data and analysis
2. Maintain the C&D Plan as an Executive Branch plan with its development overseen by the Continuing Legislative Committee and OPM, and ultimate adoption by the CT General Assembly
3. Meaningfully engage stakeholders in development of the Plan
4. Ensure implementation of the C&D Plan

1. Visionary Plan with Objectives

- Establish a long-term vision for policy and investment beyond the five-year span of the Plan
- Use data analysis to identify and prioritize objectives that incrementally advance toward the long-term vision
- Develop specific, measurable objectives/ targets for particular elements and/or geographies for the five-year term of the Plan
- Direct state spending and other actions to support objectives, while encouraging creativity and flexibility in the methods used and enabling responsiveness to unforeseen circumstances
- Make policy recommendations to guide decisions at the regional and local level and seek to obtain consistency through policy and funding decisions

2. Executive & Legislative Branch Plan

- OPM should continue to draft Plan through transparent, iterative process with the Continuing Committee and by actively engaging state agencies and stakeholders
- The General Assembly should maintain authority to adopt the Plan to help foster commitment to its objectives and spending priorities. Consider statutory change to establish an automatic approval after a specified time if the General Assembly has not acted to approve or disapprove.
- Hold state agencies accountable for implementation through regular monitoring of progress by OPM and the Continuing Committee
- The Plan should guide COGs and municipalities in their own planning and land use decisions.

3. Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

- OPM should engage Continuing Committee, Legislative and Gubernatorial Leadership early in the process to establish long-term vision which can help guide development of the Plan
- Collaborate with all state agencies to develop coordinated, prioritized strategies for state action
- Use technology to better engages COGs, municipal leaders, advocacy groups and other stakeholders throughout the planning process

4. Ensure Implementation

- State agencies' operations, programs and initiatives; administration of discretionary funding; and State Bond Commission actions should be consistent with C&D Plan
- Regional POCDs should be formally required to be consistent with the C&D Plan, and help position regions and member municipalities to achieve statewide objectives
- COGs should review local plans for consistency with C&D Plan and regional POCDs, and both local and regional POCDs should include progress reporting on identified goals and objectives
- Municipalities and COGs should be able to access state funding only for projects that are consistent with the C&D Plan
- Create a regular feedback loop between state agencies and the Continuing Committee on implementation progress

Related Recommendations

Acknowledging impacts of main recommendations to slightly shift responsibilities for planning across levels of government, also recommend:

- Fiscally supporting an enhanced role for COGs in monitoring and implementing statewide planning objectives through non-transportation planning funding
- Considering enacting a local option for municipalities to adopt their regional POCD as their local POCD

Legislative Recommendations

More changes may be needed to fully adopt the main recommendations, however for 2023 session, recommend the following:

- Amend Section 16a-27 to streamline and clarify intent of C&D Plan, per previous recommendations
- Amend Section 16a-28 to adjust planning process milestones while maintaining Dec. 1, 2024 deadline for 2025-30 C&D Plan