



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council
(CEEJAC)**

Thursday, February 22, 2024, 1:00-3:00 PM

Land Subcommittee Meeting Agenda

[Link to Meeting Recording](#)

Disclaimer: Please note this is not a word for word translation

CEEJAC Subcommittee Members:

Name	Position	Attendance
Yaw Darko	CEEJAC Member & Subcommittee Chair	Present
Terry Adams	CEEJAC Member	Absent
Alex Rodriguez	CEEJAC Member	Absent
Sharon Lewis	CEEJAC Member	Present
Leticia Colon De Mejias	CEEJAC Member	Absent
Gustavo Requeno Santos	Subcommittee Member	Present
Kathy Czepiel	Subcommittee Member	Present
Reginald Saint Fortcolin	Subcommittee Member	Present
Anna Pickett	Subcommittee Member	Absent

1. Welcome

2. Presentation on State Conservation & Development Plan by Rebecca Augur, Becca Dahl, Justine Phillips-Gallucci (CT Office of Policy Management, Office of Responsible Growth)

- Why they are presenting at today's meeting:
 - Are meeting with the CEEJAC Land Subcommittee to review the C&D Plan, garner insight/check out their blind-spots, and ensure environmental justice issues are considered by all state agencies via the C&D Plan.
 - The Office of Responsible Growth (ORG) is a small unit within OPM that has been working on the draft C&D plan for 2025-30.
- Overview of draft C&D Plan:
 - The C&D Plan has been around for 20 years although recently codified in an act last year. Small program where they serve as conveners/coordinators.
 - The plan, which is required by state statute, is to be an overarching plan across state agencies. Requirements in the plan include housing, economic development, etc. Different from local conservation plans since its catered to state agencies.

- The C&D plan has been around for decades and has evolved over time. Structured around multiple growth principles (e.g. expanding housing opportunity, conserving natural environment, etc.). These principles fall short in recognizing social impacts of past and current land use decisions and encourage a siloed approach to implementation. As such, OPM's team is working on restructuring the draft plan differently to shift thinking into a more holistic way to consider multiple priorities at once.
- Background:
 - In 2023 they reviewed state agency plans and programs. They also had conversation with staff.
 - They held 4 virtual public outreach sessions and gathered feedback in Fall 2023. Trying throughout this process to be as inclusionary as possible as they continue to draft the plan. Held other panels for non-profit agencies.
 - Developed first and second drafts with Continuing Committee and agencies. This is the legislative committee that sponsors the C&D plan.
 - Posting Draft C&D Plan for public comment on March 1st.
 - Have four components to the plan: Guiding principles, visions, measures, and policies.
 - Guiding principles: Values at the foundation of all agency plans, programs, and activities used to strike balance between competing priorities.
 - Visions: Made up of vision statements and guiding principles which are there to aid in the holistic implementation of the plan.
 - Measures: Implementation measures used to guide agency actions.
 - Policies: Policies to guide agency plans and programs.
 - Draft guiding principles
 - Sustainable – Balancing ecological social, and economic dimensions of conservation and development to meet current needs without compromising the future.
 - Equitable – Ensuring a high quality of life and opportunity for people of any income, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, or age.
 - Vibrant – Create and maintain culturally economically and physically diverse communities and an innovative thriving statewide economy.
 - Resilient – Develop and maintain capacity to prepare for, recover from, adopt to, and thrive in changing and disruptive conditions.
- Draft vision statements (which are equally prioritized) cover the following:
 - Thriving economy
 - Housing for current and future residents
 - Stewardship of resources
 - Healthy people and places

- Connected and inclusive communities
 - They have a series of targets and have also identified strengths and challenges.
 - Policy statements:
 - Seek multiple benefits and creating efficiencies across agencies. About how do we overlap the five priorities and how do we complement each other and get further agency collaboration. Trying to achieve multiple benefits.
 - Leveraging federal and private resources to support programs and projects that balance priorities.
 - Encourage planning and preliminary phasing among partners in conversation and development to advance well balanced projects for potential state investment. Hope agencies continue to encourage planning for projects, so we are achieving well designed and balanced projects.
 - Developing greater capacity to govern, develop, leverage, and use existing data.
 - Clearly communicate priorities horizontally and vertically within and across agencies.
 - Seek out and facilitate meaningful engagement with diverse stakeholders.
 - Implementation measures – They would like to change implementation of this plan. Specifically, in creating more of a program from the plan instead of the current process of updating the plan every five years and then putting it on the shelf. Want to create a committee that pulls in folks from other agencies to:
 - Review and evaluate opportunities for interagency efforts and integration of resources.
 - Consult with OMP on the development of plan consistency reporting documentation.
 - Regularly update the ongoing initiatives and resources in Appendix A of the draft plan
 - Provide a forum for developing approaches to balance conducting conservation and development priorities.
 - They are suggesting legislature to amend to increase activities to go from \$200,00 to \$1,000,000 in terms of value of agency actions affecting priorities that need to be consistent with C&D Plan.
 - Mapping associated with the plan is something they are actively working on right now. Mapping is mentioned in statutes and referred to as locational guide map. Trying to shift the approach to this map by for example acknowledging different approaches for rural vs. urbanized areas. Once the mapping is completed, they want to add an overlay for mapping on environmental justice communities. Some mapping will be available by March 1st.
- Discussion & Feedback:
 - Maisa: Feels like EJ should be a guiding principle because all the other categories mentioned have allowed inequities in EJ communities. What happens when agencies and principles conflict? How are these going to be resolved? Is there a

meaningful appeals process that allows for public participation and recourse and request for investigation? How do they define resources when they say state and federal resources. Does it include money from bond issues which have allowed for loopholes?

- Rebecca Augur's response: Explained how her team will think about adding EJ as a principle. Mentioned how there will be ample opportunity for further revisions and public comment. For the school construction it is a guidance document and should apply to DAS but recognize how there are other mandates other agencies work under (e.g. state statutes or federal mandates) so there's a balancing act between meeting these. Limited on what they can address through this plan but are cognizant of the issues Maisa brought up. When agencies conflict with the plan right now there is no process for any type of appeals or open transparent process for how to handle an agency that is conflicting with the plan. Considering this plan as a transitional one to help improve transparency. Trying to work towards a more transparent process. They acknowledge how this is a five-year plan but want to take steps towards that direction.
- Gustavo: Suggests to actively pursue conversation with indigenous communities. As an educator interested in the stewardship concept. Want them to be more specific. Turning towards sustainable long-term relationship with nature. In 2022 one of the departments of DEEP updated the literacy plan and there are guidelines on how to make high quality educational programs and work with state programs. This could be an important document they can consider in order to create guidelines in the future.
 - Rebecca: Would appreciate receiving the link for that.
 - Connecticut's Environmental Literacy Plan:
https://www.coeea.org/files/ugd/3b1515_a503742496254b7c9b18eacfbcd9de9a.pdf
 - Becca: Trying to hit different venues and therefore appreciate Gustavo's comment.
- Mary Pelletier: Important that the strategy recognizes nature operates differently than economic and social challenges. State needs to recognize water issues. As the planet heats up how quickly the soil will evaporate is going to be a challenge and will see increased drought/flooding and therefore supports the idea of resiliency. This is all hard to stop because of the way developers have altered municipal zoning and planning so these zoning meetings have to approve it. Mary hopes this plan begins to provide clear messages about our repairing zones even in high density areas.
 - Rebecca: Through this process they hope to bring agencies together earlier in actives and setting up programs/grants to think through some of these issues.

- Diane Lauricella: Should place EJ as a principle in the current draft so it won't appear to be an afterthought. Feels like we have to get beyond the politics. IOPM should put some basics to prevent this. Building in a flood plain cost more money. Please include in your plan where the current and affecting facilities are.
 - Rebecca: They are working with legislators and are naming that tension. But they will think about that and have further conversations.
- Denise Savageau: Want to reinforce comments made by Maisa, Diane, Mary. Particularly looking at issues that we will have to push policies that might not be as political as folks would like. If you're going to do a plan, you have to put the tough things in there and work with legislature and if they clean it up then they take it out. We have two projects – Bridgeport High School, why are we putting a high school in a coastal flood plain where we will have inundation on a constant basis not just in storms. Airport in East Haven, that is in a flood zone – what are we doing there? If we are going to accept federal funds, why would we put things in a floodplain. Some people think that if we just elevate homes, that we will be fine, that is not okay. A high school should be a community center and retreat center during storms. Protecting public drinking water is paramount – rural areas are serviced by private wells. Need to pay attention to public drinking water and have language in there.
- Susan Halpern, South End Stamford: This is a coastal floodplain. Biggest concern is storm drain. We have so many plants like cement processing, but none of the storm drains are protected by the debris.
- Katherine Bennett: Been involved with a group trying to stop expansion of airport in an EJ community that is surrounded by communities. They are trying to build the terminal on stilts on a wetland.
- Laura Cahn: We would be better able to do things if we work together. Anything that you can do to get that coordinated is very appreciated.
- Reggy: In the housing section, it doesn't touch on that some people don't want it. If you talk to neighboring towns there are records that say that they don't want this. In stewardship section, there should be something about equity – land ownership, jobs. Work at a land trust, there isn't that much diversity.
- Kathy Czepiel: When I look at the one-pager with the complex venn diagram, the intersections are positives, but want to see where there is an acknowledgement of the tensions. There is no statement about protection of natural resources in the thriving economy section, but the intersection of those two things is a tension point. Want to see that development is in direct conflict to protecting wetlands – high level comment about the way that information is presented and also how are those going to be addressed.
 - Rebecca: think that we need to relook at the narrative that we have among the priorities. There are tensions in the priorities, but really the tensions come out of the implementation measures for agencies to go through all of these things all at once.

- Reggy: education should be an opportunity for everything. People don't know what stewardship is. There should be a level of education so that it's not just nonprofits dumping stuff on communities. Would like to see it as an opportunity for growth in a lot of sections.
- Yaw Darko: Have EJ incorporated throughout and as a standalone priority. What specific EJ considerations or policies do you want to lay out? Or is that something that this group should provide? Ad-hoc advisory committee for state agencies, but will that create an echo chamber? You should have stakeholders in this committee.
- Maggie Favretti: Recommend that someone from the state tribes be on the advisory committee. They are having a hard time finding themselves on the EJ Screening Map. If they are a presence in these committee meetings, then that helps, even if the maps aren't accurate. I'm one of the Directors for the Alliance of the Mystic Watershed. We are focusing on regenerative design and development so that built environment and relationship with natural world is aligned. Not sure whether C&D drafts have this in there. Might want to have Build Green Group, which is now a merged group.
- Lori Mathieu, DPH: Like the idea of breaking down silos. This is a core piece because sometimes the federal requirements set us up to not be in concert with each other. In the way of protecting lands and riparian corridors and drinking water, we miss opportunities to work together. Need to complement each other in the work that we are doing, especially with that federal funding that's coming down.
- Yaw: Could OPM set aside funding for state agencies that follow through with these policies?
 - Rebecca: the statutes are geared around when the state is making investments around certain levels.
 - Mary Pelletier: Are there scientists on your team working with you, like ecologists, hydrologists?
 - Rebecca: we are planners, planning analysts, but we don't have specific scientists. We are a small office of 5 people.
 - Mary: Nature-based solutions are a valuable response to the biodiversity crises; we could ask those folks specifically for their input.

3. Announcements, Updates, & Events

- a. Laura Cahn – next Wednesday, EPA EJ Specialist coming to New Haven, opportunity to meet with her 4-6pm at atrium at City Hall
- b. Sarah – reminder of events
- c. Lindsay – OSWA statute changes in governor's climate bill

4. Next Steps and how to stay involved.

- a. We are open to receiving comments at any time, revising plan in the summer, and final adoption in 2025 legislative session. We have a website that is linked in the 1-pager – Sarah can put folks in direct contact with OPM team.

5. Upcoming Meetings

- Mon Mar 18, 2024, 6-8pm
CEEJAC Quarterly Meeting
- Thurs April 4, 2024, 1-3pm
Public CEEJAC Land Subcommittee Meeting about Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Grant Program
- Thurs April 18, 2024, 1-3pm
CEEJAC Land Subcommittee Meeting (members only) about Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Grant Program

Registration List:

Terry Adams	jay stange
doris johnson	Sarah Huang
Michael Davis	Sharon Lewis
Tyler Carey	Alex Rodriguez
Lidia Ruppert	Teresa Eickel
Tracy Babbidge	Mark Mitchell MD
Jaimeson Sinclair	Alycia Jenkins
Allison Pilcher	Yaw Darko
Ashley Benitez	JACOB FELTON
Emma Cimino	Karen Kitsis
Paul Farrell	Daphne Dixon
Sharmin Akter	Hailey Greene
Ryan Boggio	Maritza Bond
aaron goode	Pete Babich
Halle Lisette Pierce	Anstress Farwell
Chris Schweitzer	Robbie Goodrich, He/Him/His,
Gabriela Campos	RACCE
Eric Hammerling	lynne bonnett
Andrew Hoskins	Lori Mathieu
Annie Decker	