



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
Intergovernmental Policy and Planning Division

February 14, 2023

The Honorable MD Rahman
The Honorable Eleni Kavros DeGraw
Members of the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development

Re: 2023 Report on State Conservation and Development Policies Plan Implementation

Dear Senators and Representatives:

Pursuant to Section 16a-32(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Office of Policy and Management hereby submits its report on the implementation of the *Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut* (State C&D Plan).

Please contact Rebecca Augur at (860) 418-6343 or Rebecca.Augur@ct.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Martin L. Heft".

Martin L. Heft
Undersecretary

2023 Report on the Implementation of the Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut (2018-2023)

Prepared for the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development by the Office of Policy and Management, in accordance with CGS Section 16a-32(c)

[Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut](#) (State C&D Plan) is intended to establish overarching state policy in matters pertaining to the conservation and development of land and water resources to guide relevant actions of state agencies. Further background on laws pertaining to the development, adoption and implementation of the State C&D Plan is available in the last section of this report.

The 2018-2023 State C&D Plan was adopted by House Joint Resolution No. 107 on May 4, 2022, despite first being introduced to the full General Assembly in February 2018 and annually thereafter. Prior to May 2022, the 2013-18 State C&D Plan remained in effect.

Implementation

Since 2018, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) has reported annually on the challenges of monitoring implementation of the State C&D Plan. Over the last five years, OPM has requested and/or supported legislative revisions to improve how the plan gets implemented. The recently adopted 2018-23 State C&D Plan retained the format and a significant amount of content from the prior plan. OPM remains unable to report in any meaningful way on implementation and conformity of the State C&D Plan. As it stands, state agencies independently determine the consistency of their actions with the State C&D Plan. There is no systematic framework for determining the consistency of plan implementation, nor is there a mechanism for secondary review. The State C&D Plan states:

Whenever a state agency is required to determine the consistency of a proposed action with the State C&D Plan, it may cite any relevant policies contained in the Plan – regardless of the particular Growth Management Principle under which it appears.

The unprioritized and broad policy statements contained in the State C&D Plan, in combination with that simple requirement for determining consistency, results in minimal direction and/or guidance to agencies in upholding the state’s overarching objectives. This presents further complications for actions which may be supported by one policy statement but in conflict with others.

Future of the State C&D Plan

[Public Act 21-29](#) established the Commission on Connecticut’s Development and Future (CCDF), in part to study and make recommendations regarding the process for developing, adopting and implementing the State C&D Plan under Sec. 13(A). The CCDF formed a working group devoted to this task and recently received its recommendations for further consideration. Those recommendations include:

- Transform the State C&D Plan into a visionary and objective-setting plan based on current data and analysis
- Maintain the State C&D Plan as an Executive Branch plan with its development overseen by the Continuing Legislative Committee and OPM, and ultimate adoption by the General

Assembly

- Meaningfully engage stakeholders in the development of the State C&D Plan
- Ensure implementation of the State C&D Plan

The CCDF made 2023 legislative recommendations to the Planning and Development Committee to establish a long-term vision for policy and investment beyond the five-year span of the State C&D Plan and adjust the planning process milestones while maintaining the deadline for the 2025-2030 Plan.

OPM looks forward to considering these and other recommendations from the CCDF and its workgroups, alongside the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development (Continuing Committee) as work begins on the 2025-30 State C&D Plan.

Legislative Process and Background

As the support agency to the Continuing Committee, OPM prepares revisions to the State C&D Plan on a recurring five-year cycle, in accordance with Sections 16a-27 through 16a-29 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS). OPM submits a draft of each five-year revision to the Continuing Committee to facilitate the General Assembly's consideration of adoption, in accordance with CGS Section 16a-30.

Once adopted by the General Assembly, the State C&D Plan is then implemented by state agencies whenever they undertake certain actions. CGS Section 16a-31 outlines the types of actions for which state agencies must be in conformity with the policies of the State C&D Plan, and CGS Section 16a-35d outlines the Priority Funding Area implementation requirements associated with Plan's Locational Guide Map. The state's quasi-public agencies are not subject to these requirements.

CGS Section 16a-32(c) states that "The secretary shall report annually on or before February fifteenth to the committee progress on the implementation of the plan and the extent to which state actions are in conformity with the plan."

State statutes provide the following requirements for State C&D Plan implementation:

- CGS Section 16a-31(a) – Requires that state agency-sponsored activities and grants for the acquisition of real property, the development or improvement of real property, or the acquisition of public transportation equipment or facilities be consistent with the State C&D Plan whenever they involve the use of state or federal funds in excess of \$200,000.
- CGS Section 16a-31(b) – Requires that state agencies request and OPM provide an advisory statement commenting on the extent to which any of the actions specified in CGS Section 16a-31(a) conform to the plan.
- CGS Section 16a-31(c) – Requires that OPM submit an advisory statement to the State Bond Commission commenting on the extent to which certain bond agenda items are in conformity with the plan.
- CGS Section 16a-31(d) – Requires that the University of Connecticut request and OPM provide an advisory statement commenting on the extent to which the projects included in the third phase of UConn 2000 conform to the plan, and that the OPM secretary submit such advisory statement to the State Bond Commission prior to the approval of the master resolution or indenture for securities for the third phase of UConn 2000.
- CGS Section 16a-31(e) – Requires that state agencies submit a draft of any plan they prepare under state or federal law to OPM for review, and that OPM provide the preparer an advisory

report commenting on the extent to which the proposed plan conforms to the State C&D Plan.

- CGS Section 16a-35d – Requires that no state agency provide funding for a “growth-related project” unless such project is located within the boundaries of a Priority Funding Area. However, a sponsoring agency may seek OPM’s approval for an exception through the process authorized under this section. Agencies must report annually on any grants that were provided through the exception process and the reasons therefor.