

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Senator MD Rahman

The Honorable Representative Eleni Kavros DeGraw

Members of the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development

**Re: 2025 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 2018-2023* (State C&D Plan).

Please contact Rebecca Augur at 860.418.6343 or [Rebecca.Augur@ct.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Augur@ct.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Martin L. Heft

Undersecretary

## 2025 Report on the Implementation of the Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut (2018–2023)

Prepared by the Office of Policy and Management, Intergovernmental Policy and Planning Division, Office of Responsible Growth, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 16a-32(c)

[Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut 2018-23](#) (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. When the 2018–2023 C&D Plan was adopted, it was also extended through 2024.

### **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. The current 2018–2023 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 state actions to 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 2018–23 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**

OPM submitted a draft [2025-2030 Conservation and Development Policies Plan](#) to the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development in the fall of 2024. The Continuing Committee recently conducted a public hearing on that draft and formally recommended approval to the General Assembly. Included in the 2025-30 C&D Plan draft are several recommendations to clarify what consistency with the C&D Plan means, and to compel and encourage state agencies to be more transparent in their deliberations on consistency for relevant plans, programs and actions. OPM looks forward to working with the General Assembly on the legislative changes proposed within the draft 2025-2030 C&D Plan to facilitate its implementation, which will in turn enable OPM to prepare more meaningful annual reports.

## **Legislative Process and Background**

As the support agency to the Continuing Committee on State Planning and Development, 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.

