

The New North Jersey: Why We Need Urban Planning

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Abstract

The North Jersey region will become more resilient to climate change through *regional planning*. But the federal government's new direction is no longer going to sustain the aid that made previous planning efforts possible. Its budget will no longer fund the planning grants which New Jersey had relied on to prepare new plans. This research outlines the kinds of opportunities which will be lost, and what to do with the plans we already have.

Regional Plans to Consider

Together North Jersey

Using a competitive grant from the US DOT, *Together North Jersey* is a regional plan for the region developed by a coalition of state agencies, municipalities, faculty at Rutgers University, and private partners. It addresses economic, infrastructural, and environmental planning. *Together North Jersey* prescribes important directions for making the region more resilient to storms.

The Fourth Regional Plan

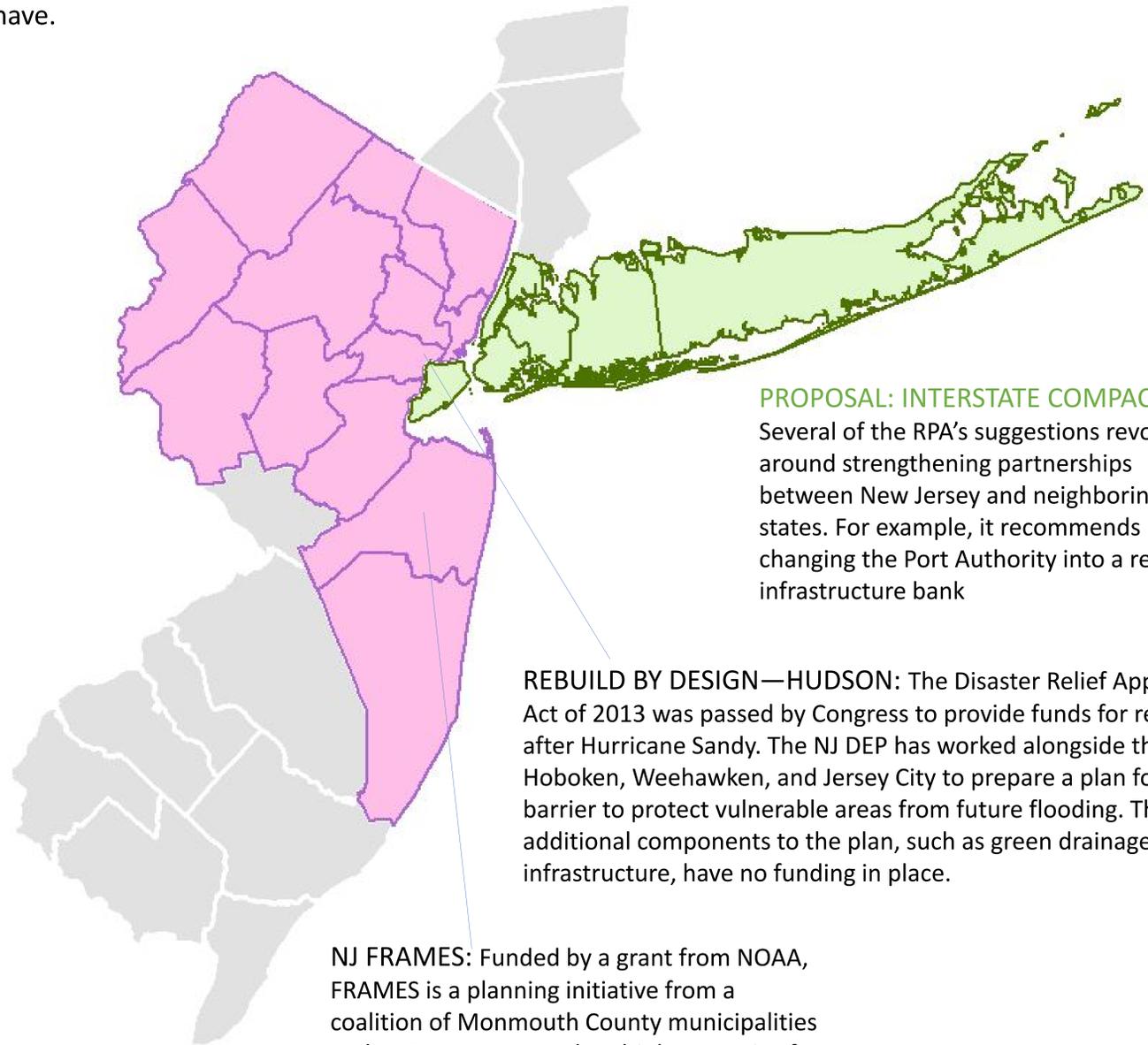
The Regional Plan Association (est. 1929) released its fourth development plan for the Tristate Area last year, 2017. While the RPA collaborated with the *Together North Jersey* project, its own plan calls for more governmental reform, such as a restructuring of the Port Authority and the creation of a Tristate Regional Coastal Commission to oversee planning matters for floods and storm surges.

PROBLEM: DEVOLUTION

New Jersey has previously relied on federal aid for major climate and resilience infrastructure, but recent federal budgets have eliminated the programs which previously provided the grants that made those projects possible

PROBLEM: LACK OF REGIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

New Jersey has not updated its statewide development plan since 2001. Because of the state constitution, municipalities have extensive authority over planning and development, which makes regional or multijurisdictional coordination difficult. Municipalities lack the money and resources needed to prepare comprehensive sustainability plans.



PROPOSAL: INTERSTATE COMPACTS

Several of the RPA's suggestions revolve around strengthening partnerships between New Jersey and neighboring states. For example, it recommends changing the Port Authority into a regional infrastructure bank

REBUILD BY DESIGN—HUDSON: The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 was passed by Congress to provide funds for recovery after Hurricane Sandy. The NJ DEP has worked alongside the cities of Hoboken, Weehawken, and Jersey City to prepare a plan for a sea barrier to protect vulnerable areas from future flooding. The additional components to the plan, such as green drainage infrastructure, have no funding in place.

NJ FRAMES: Funded by a grant from NOAA, FRAMES is a planning initiative from a coalition of Monmouth County municipalities and NJ DEP. It prepared multiple scenarios for potential sea level rise in the Two Rivers area, and asked residents to identify places of significance that could be affected.

PICTURED: The 13-county North Jersey region, and the New York counties making up the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council

Conclusions

The federal government currently plays a central role in resilience planning and development in New Jersey. A loss of federal funding may not be replaceable without major expenditures from the state government or an interstate coalition. While promising, interstate compacts are politically risky—they have often stirred conflict between the states over how they raise and invest funds for development. Without major financial support, many sound recommendations from *Together North Jersey* will not be feasible.