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.

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.