

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**REGIONAL DESIGN**

*A Report of the  
Regional Design System  
State Planning Advisory Committee*

November 1990

**State  
Development**  
AND  
Redevelopment  
**Plan**

## ***Preface***

The mission of this Regional Design System State Planning Advisory Committee (RDS-SPAC) is to advise the State Planning Commission and the Office of State Planning on the conception and potential effectiveness of the Regional Design System of the proposed State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

## **Committee Membership/Acknowledgements**

The following are the members of the Regional Design System State Planning Advisory Committee who have generously contributed their time and efforts in order to produce this first report:

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*Public Service Electric & Gas*

In addition, the Committee benefited from the input of Lou Donaldson, State Association of Soil Conservation Districts; Jim Leva, New Jersey Utilities Association; and Harry Mahler, The Grad Partnership.

Members of the public that have added to the dialogue should also be acknowledged, especially John Carlton, Carlton Design; William Kruse, Middlesex County Planning Board; Dawn Malone, K. Hovnanian Company; David Mullaney, Mercer County Planning Division; and Christy Van Horn, New Jersey Future.

The Committee and staff thank Jim McQuire of the Center for Dispute Resolution for his professional facilitation throughout this process. Diane Brake assisted in this effort and should be recognized.

## Meetings

The Regional Design System SPAC convened on January 30, February 28, April 4, May 2, June 13, July 9, September 17 and October 22, 1990 in Voorhees, New Brunswick, Trenton and Pennsauken to organize, engage in discussions on the Regional Design System in the Preliminary Plan, and identify the boundaries of debate and the areas of consensus. Recommendations were identified during each of these meetings and were noted in summaries produced after each meeting. Additional reports will be forthcoming, following the second and third phases of the SPAC process.

## Discussion

During the course of its deliberations, the Committee considered a number of items pertinent to the Regional Design System. They included regional considerations such as the importance of thinking regionally, what are regions, what is regional design, and the factors that comprise the regional perspective. The group also focussed on communities of place, their regional role, and their characteristics. Central to the debate throughout were implementation concerns - how to do regional design. The Committee received support from the Office of State Planning (OSP). John Canuso, a Committee member, presented his firm's recent project, "Main Street" in Voorhees Township, at the group's initial meeting, held at "Main Street's" community building.

The Committee meetings were facilitated by Jim McGuire, staff mediator for the Center for the Public Dispute Resolution. A consensus process was used to reach agreements, major findings, and recommendations. Two subcommittee meetings were held at the latter stages to review OSP staff work on the document presenting the Regional Design System.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Purpose and Intent

The Regional Design System report was prepared by the Office of State Planning with the advice and support of the Regional Design System State Planning Advisory Committee (RDS-SPAC). The report and this Executive Summary constitute the first report of the RDS-SPAC to the Office of State Planning and the State Planning Commission. The Committee met monthly over the past year since January to debate the Regional Design System and provide editorial and conceptual direction to OSP in the formulation of the report. The report embodies the direction of the Committee's discussions without necessarily reflecting full consensus on all of its points. In its Preface, the report details the evolutionary nature of the RDS-SPAC actions, and provides findings and recommendations that are included at the end of this Summary.

The one finding which the Committee unanimously agreed to was that the Regional Design System is a central and critically important component of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Development of the system should continue, with an emphasis on implementation.

New Jersey has a unique opportunity to demonstrate the conjunction of private concern and action through a well planned civic, non-profit and intergovernmental process. The Regional Design System proposes to organize future growth in and around existing and planned "central places" from which basic public and commercial services can be provided efficiently. Realizing the vision of the Regional Design System requires both regional and community planning. Regional planning provides a framework for regional implementation including transportation systems, revenue districts and interjurisdictional agreements. Community planning focuses on physical design. It endeavors to build settlements that are cohesive communities with distinctive character.

State government alone cannot realize this vision. It will require cooperative action among the various levels of government and the private and non profit sectors. The State should act as a catalyst, coordinator and facilitator; it should provide leadership, technical assistance, and funding resources in response to local commitment to obtain this vision. Counties and municipalities should cooperate during cross-acceptance to identify central places, and after the Final Plan is adopted to implement the concept.

## The Historical Context

New Jersey has a wealth of historical precedents in the planning and development of new communities. This report highlights the past major contributions in settlement forms that have made the State a desirable place to live and work. Because of New Jersey's central location between New York and Philadelphia and its rich abundance of prime rural farm land the State offered an excellent opportunity for testing new settlement patterns in both the city and country.

America's first planned industrial city was created through the formation of a public and private partnership in Paterson in 1792. The company towns of Roebling and Yorkship Village are examples of private industrial companies which were designed as residential villages to house its workers and families. Both contained a village square surrounded by planned recreational spaces, public walkways and a wide range of housing types and community services.

The mid 19th century plan for Llewellyn Park in West Orange was an attempt to strike a rural-urban balance. Community walkways and roadways followed the natural course of brooks and ravines. This concept of balancing new communities with existing natural landscape features influenced a generation of landscape architects in the later half of the 19th century.

Radburn was New Jersey's contribution to the "garden cities" movement in the early 20th century. Distinct neighborhoods were created and interior parks and walkways separated pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Schools and shopping were accessible to pedestrians as well.

By the late 19th century, peripheral towns and suburbs began to grow, in part by the construction of electrified commuter railway systems. This led to the emergence of the bedroom suburb at the expense of neighborhoods in the older urban areas. This national trend first took shape in New Jersey in the suburbs of Irvington, Orange and Bloomfield in the Newark area, and Highland Park near New Brunswick.

In the post World War II economic boom, the automobile, as well as new residences in suburbia, became affordable to middle-class Americans. Infrastructure systems were built to support and encourage this more mobile and affluent population. The expanded infrastructure systems allowed the growing population to live, work and shop further out in the rural areas. This trend has continued up to today. The remainder of this report outlines the vision to reverse this post World War II trend.

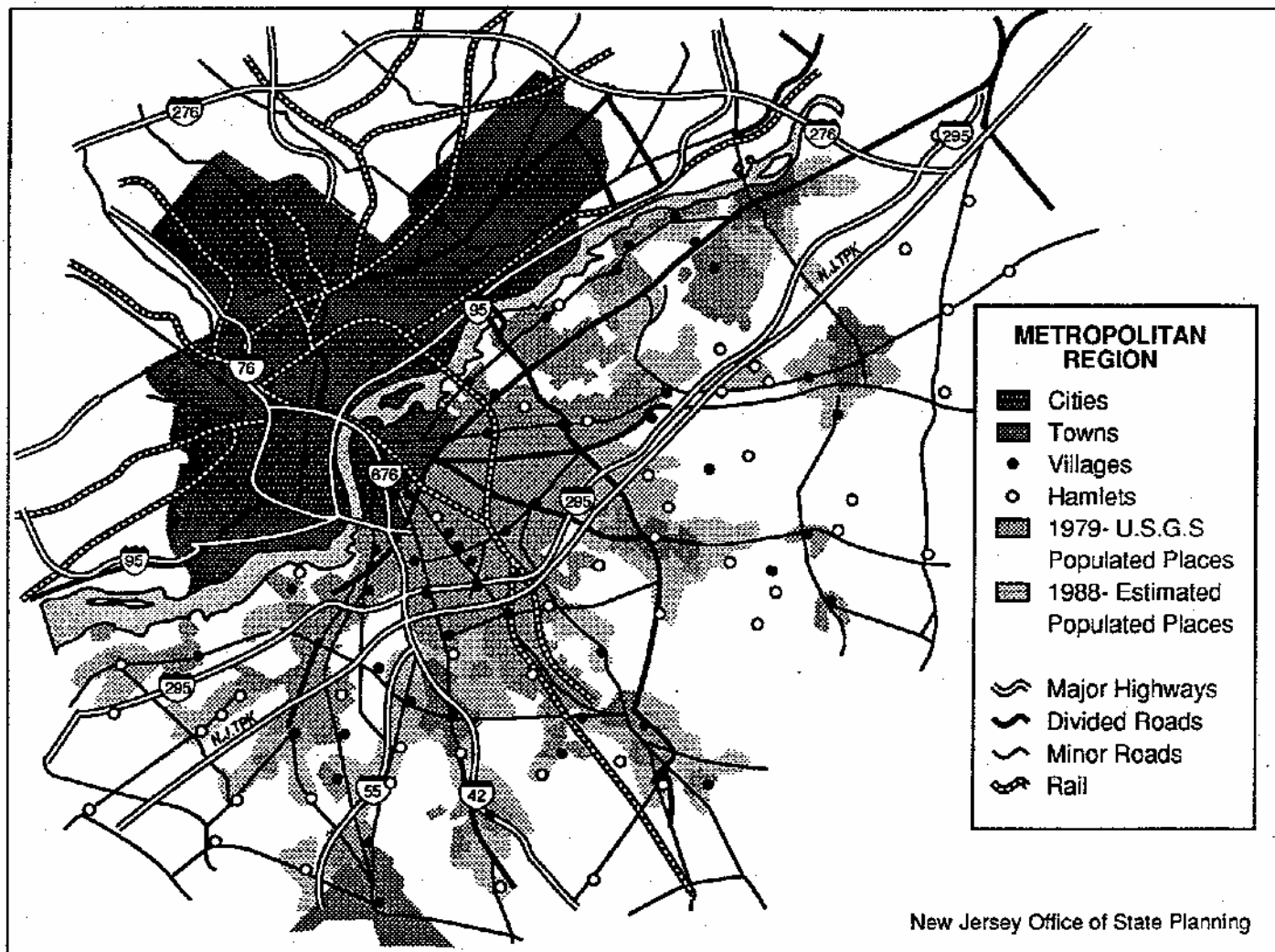
## The Regional Design System

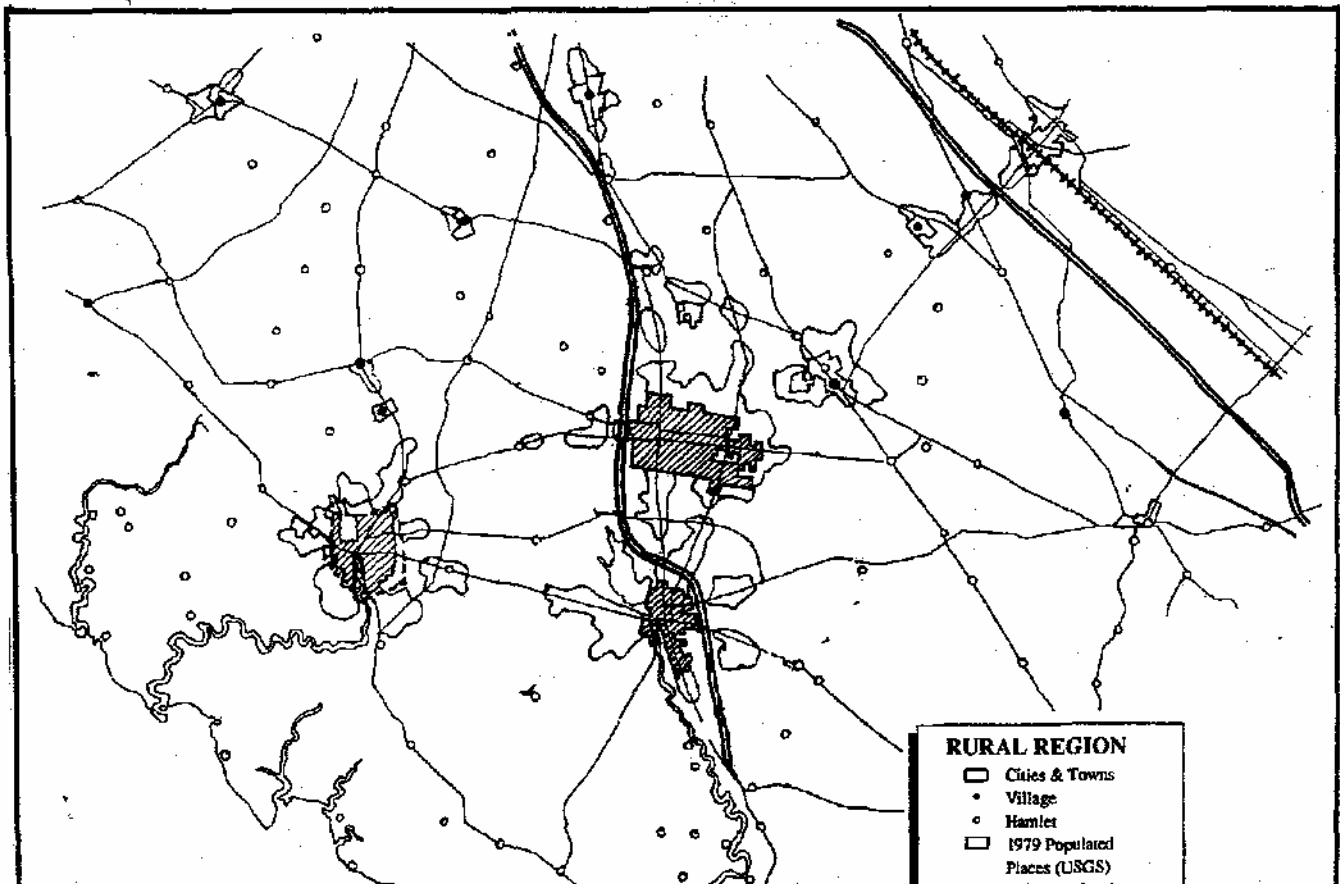
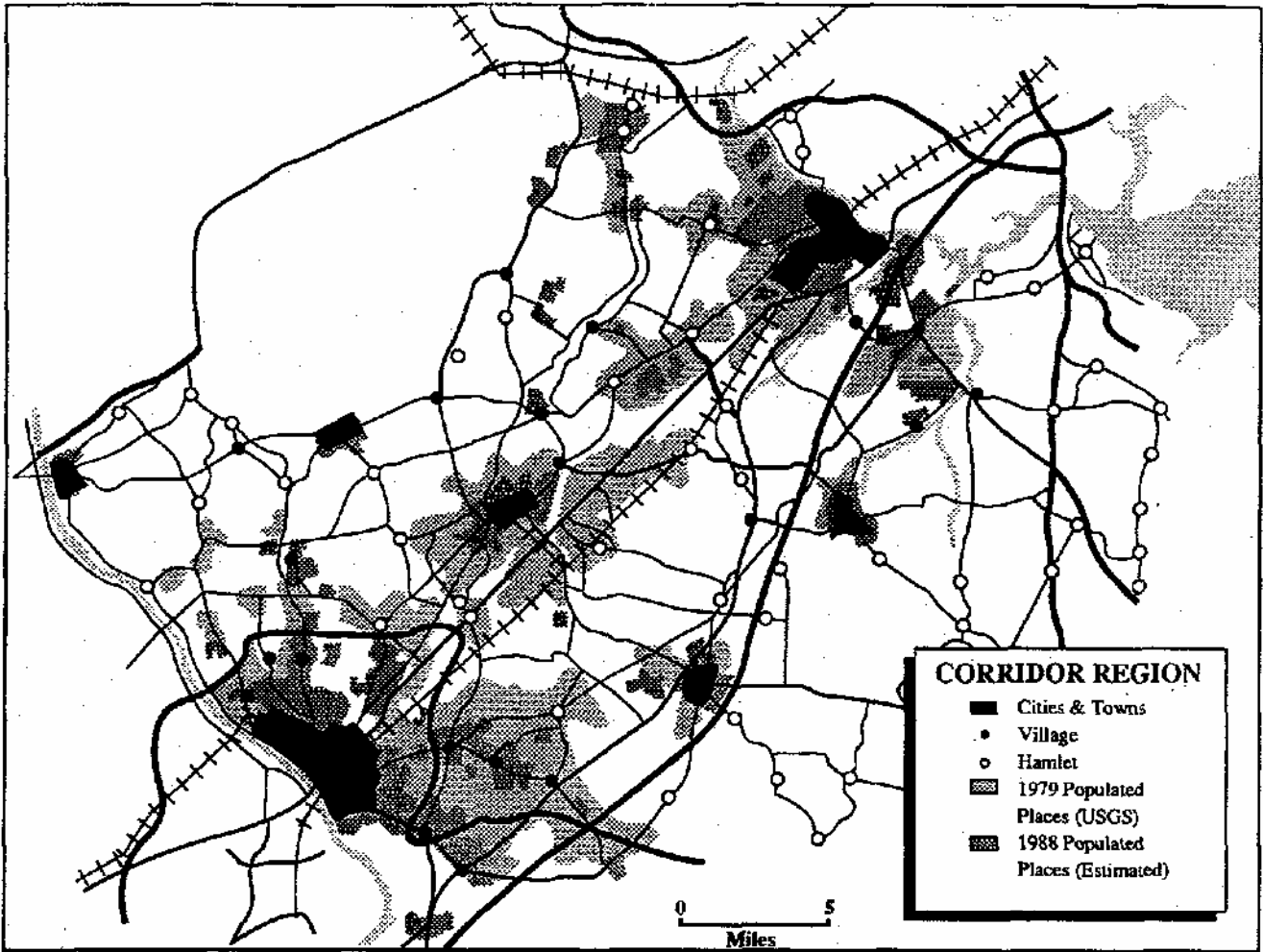
Regional design is the intentional act of shaping the physical form of human settlement patterns in large geographic regions. This is a growth management system that accommodates regional growth by providing criteria to determine the most beneficial location, function, scale, and inter-relationships of communities within a region.

The report generally describes the three types of regions, in which settlement patterns occur in New Jersey. These settlement patterns or communities of place are local, not regional in nature. However, all communities exist within a region. The form and character of a community are influenced by its region. Therefore, it is important to look at the region as well as the community while planning and designing.

In New Jersey, the three types of regional settlement patterns are metropolitan, suburban/corridor, and rural. (See the following three diagrams). It is critical to understand that these three region-types are general in nature. No distinct boundaries are described as they often overlap. Whether metropolitan, corridor or rural, a region is a network of central place communities which are connected by transport and communication linkages and surrounded by less intensely settled land.

The size of a central place depends on the size of the region it serves. Small communities of place, such as neighborhoods, hamlets, and villages, serve a small area. Towns and corridor centers serve larger areas. Urban centers service a metropolitan region, along with parts of outlying corridor and rural regions. The table following the three diagrams presents the predominant types of central places found in each region. While these central places are the primary examples in a region, all may in fact be found in any one region.





## Regions and Their Central Places

<u>Metropolitan Region</u>	<u>Corridor Region</u>	<u>Rural Region</u>
urban centers, towns, boroughs	corridor center, towns, boroughs, villages	towns, villages, hamlet

The three key physical settlement components of New Jersey regions are: 1) central places; 2) linkages; and 3) environs (the lands surrounding the central places). Central places are communities of place that centrally serve a surrounding area. In New Jersey there is a hierarchy of central places which includes five types of communities - cities, corridor centers, towns, villages, and hamlets. Linkages which connect communities may be transport links, communication channels, and utilities and infrastructure linkages. Environs are the lands outside of central places. The intentional arrangement of these three physical components forms the foundation for regional design.

The report describes the physical features, functions and characteristics of the three components of regions in further detail. The table of Planning and Design Characteristics illustrates the image of what these central places could be in the future. (See the next page)

### Implementation

The approach presented is two-fold: process and substance. The two are related. The procedural approach lists sequential actions to be taken by parties interested in communities of place. The substantive section points out those technical methods that are needed to actually develop a community of place and its supporting linkages and environs. Not all of the tools presented are needed in each case. Circumstances and availability will determine which are appropriate. Nonetheless, all are listed in order to enhance the range of public policy choice and to provide flexibility and encourage creativity in meeting this challenging, yet vital endeavor.

This section of the Regional Design System report will be expanded upon and enriched as the Plan Implementation Committee of the State Planning Commission releases its work. One of the major areas that the Committee is evaluating is the implementation of the Regional Design System. The Implementation Report is scheduled to be released at the same time as the Interim State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

During the course of its deliberations, the Regional Design System SPAC considered a number of items pertinent to the system. They included regional considerations such as the importance of thinking regionally, what are regions, what is regional design, and factors that comprise the regional perspective. The group also focused on communities of place, their regional role, and their characteristics. Central to the discussions throughout were implementation concerns. The following list of conclusions of the committee are presented next in the section titled "Findings and Recommendations."



## EXHIBIT

### Communities of Place Planning and Design Characteristics

The sole purpose of providing examples of planning and design characteristics is to assist in creating an image of what these central places could be in the future. There may be considerable variety within each type of central place in the Regional Design System. When combined with associated narrative and graphic sketches and enriched by the dialogue of cross-acceptance, these characteristics can help paint a more complete picture that represents these existing and future communities.

	HAMLET	VILLAGE	TOWN	CORRIDOR CENTER	URBAN CENTER
<b>POPULATION:</b>	25 - 250	200 - 1,250	1,000 - 30,000	5,000 - 40,000	>40,000
<b>JOBS:</b>	0 - 25	25 - 500	400 - 10,000	4,000 - 30,000	>40,000
<b>DWELLING UNITS:</b>	10 - 100	75 - 500	400 - 10,000	2,000 - 15,000	>16,000
<b>JOBS/HOUSING:</b>	0:1 - .25:1	.25:1 - 2:1	1:1 - 4:1	2:1 - 5:1	>2.5:1
<b>NET DU'S/ACRE:</b>	1 - 4	1.5 - 6	2 - 18	4 - 24	>15*
<b>NET F.A.R.:</b>	N/A	N/A	.2 - 2.5	1.0 - 5.0	>4.0*
<b>OPEN SPACE RATIO:</b>	.65 - .90	.60 - .80	.40 - .75	.20 - .35	<.25
<b>MODAL SPLIT:</b>	100:0 - 95:5	100:0 - 90:10	95.5 - 75:25	85.15 - 60:40	<75:25
<b>ACREAGE:</b>	10 - 100	50 - 300	200 - 6,400	640 - 6,400	

in central business district

The overlap of characteristics among central places reflects the existence of communities that function as one type of community in the hierarchy of five types, while having characteristics of another.

## Findings and Recommendations

1. The Regional Design System is central to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Development of the system should continue, with an emphasis on its implementation.
2. The regional perspective in land use decision-making is central to the Regional Design System. Among the regional factors to consider include:
  - \* natural environment
  - \* neighboring communities
  - \* overlapping and neighboring regions
  - \* agriculture and other natural resource based activities
  - \* housing availability and affordability
  - \* social and cultural milieu
  - \* State, national, and global economies
  - \* infrastructure
3. New villages and hamlets should be permitted in agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas (designated as Tiers six and seven in the Preliminary State Plan). These new communities should meet performance criteria established in the State Plan.
4. Small and intermediate scale sewage disposal facilities are vital for the protection of public and environmental health in the maintenance or expansion of existing hamlets, villages, and smaller towns, as well as the creation of new ones.
5. Model ordinances, community design handbooks, and legislative recommendations, such as changes to municipal and county planning enabling legislation should be prepared under the leadership of the Office of State Planning to further the implementation of the Regional Design System.
6. Legislation enabling the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) would significantly enhance the implementation of the Regional Design System.
7. A multi-dimensional public education campaign to educate public officials, citizens, interest groups, and development professionals on regional design should be undertaken as soon as possible, under the direction of the OSP. The existing network of organizations involved in the State planning process can assist in this regard.
8. The Regional Design System State Planning Advisory Committee desires that it continue to participate actively in the development of regional design, furthering its role in the State Plan and its dissemination.

This advisory committee also considered the following issue: whether to retain the "Tier System" or adopt a new name, "Policy Areas". The resolution was as follows: a majority of the committee supporting the retention of the "Tiers" as indicated on the resolution appended to the report.

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