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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Office of Planning

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Memorandum

To: Site Plan and Subdivision Applicants
From: Middlesex County Office of Planning
RE: Public Guidance Document for Submitting Digitally Signed and Sealed Plans for Development Applications
Date: July 23, 2024

Beginning in August 2024, all electronic plans and supporting documents submitted to the Middlesex County Office of Planning through the ePlan electronic development review system that would typically be signed and sealed by a professional engineer and/or professional land surveyor must be digitally signed and sealed; this includes plan sets, surveys and reports (e.g., stormwater management, traffic impact analysis, etc.). This policy is being implemented to reduce and ultimately eliminate the processing and storage of hard-copy paper submissions of development application materials.

If a professional engineer and/or professional land surveyor does not have digital sign/seal certification capability, the professional may continue to submit one physical copy of a signed and sealed plan and supporting documents to the Office of Planning, and upload one set of digital plans and documents without digital sign/seal certification to the ePlan system.

The New Jersey Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors adopted rules for digital signatures and seals in November 2015 (N.J.A.C. 13:40-8.1A Digital Signatures and Seals).

Pursuant to the rules adopted by the Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors for digital sealing at N.J.A.C. 13:40-8.1A(a)1-2, the digital signature and seal must be:

- Unique to the licensee;
- Verifiable by a trusted third party or some other approved process as belonging to the licensee; and
- Under the licensee’s direct and exclusive control; or
- Linked to a document in such a manner that the digital signature and seal is invalidated if any data in the document is changed. Once the digital signature and seal are applied to the document, the document shall be available in read-only format if the document is to be digitally transmitted.

The Office of Planning offers the following guidance in furtherance of the above rules:

- Digitally signed and sealed plans consist of two components: the digital signature and the digital seal, as pictured below:

75 Bayard Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Phone: 732-745-3812 | Fax: 732-745-8443
www.middlesexcounty.nj.gov





Digitally signed by your
common name here
Date: 2020.02.05
15:22:32 -05'00'

- Both the digital signature and the digital seal must be included in the digital certification; a digitally signed plan does not necessarily mean that the plan has also been digitally sealed.
- The Board of Professional Engineers and Surveyors does not require a particular pictograph to be used for the digital seal. However, the digital seal must include the license name and number of the professional (N.J.A.C. 13:40-8.1).
- The following will not be accepted:
 - Digital signature with no seal. Adobe and Blue Beam background watermarks will not be accepted as a professional seal, as they do not include the license name and number of the professional.
 - A scanned plan set with a physical signature and/or seal.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Division of Land Resource Protection developed a guidance document *Digital Stamp and Signature Guide: Instructions for E-Submission Digital Guidelines*, last revised October 15, 2021, which may be useful to answer any technical questions regarding how to digitally sign and seal plans in New Jersey: https://nj.gov/dep/landuse/download/lur_052.pdf

Please contact the Office of Planning at (732) 745-3812 or ePlan@co.middlesex.nj.us with any questions regarding this policy.

