

New Jersey Professional Planner Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	5
Answers	8
Explanations	10
Next Steps	16

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. What is the term for the area of a watercourse that is periodically inundated?**
 - A. The seasonal stream bed**
 - B. The floodplain**
 - C. Wetlands**
 - D. The transitional or buffer area**

- 2. The County Planning Act is codified at which reference?**
 - A. NJAC 19:3-1 et seq.**
 - B. NJAC 45:14A et seq.**
 - C. NJAC 40:27-1 et seq.**
 - D. NJAC 40:55-1 et seq.**

- 3. Which of the following best describes Class II membership in planning boards?**
 - A. Reserved for officials of the municipality**
 - B. Consists solely of ordinary citizens**
 - C. Selected by the mayor only**
 - D. Must include at least one member of the zoning board**

- 4. How many days of advance public notice is required for hearings on changes to zoning ordinances?**
 - A. 5 Days**
 - B. 10 Days**
 - C. 15 Days**
 - D. 20 Days**

- 5. Which of the following is a regulated activity under the Freshwater Wetlands Act?**
 - A. Excavation or disturbance of any soil**
 - B. Discharge of any fill**
 - C. Destruction of plant life altering existing vegetation**
 - D. All of the above**

- 6. The state planning commission consists of how many members?**
- A. 17 members**
 - B. 20 members**
 - C. 15 members**
 - D. 10 members**
- 7. What is the minimum required time a planning board has after receiving a complete application to act on a preliminary subdivision application for fewer than 10 lots?**
- A. 30 Days**
 - B. 45 Days**
 - C. 60 Days**
 - D. 90 Days**
- 8. What percent of property owners within a proposed zoning ordinance change area must sign objections to trigger a two-thirds vote requirement?**
- A. 10%**
 - B. 15%**
 - C. 20%**
 - D. 25%**
- 9. What does the historic preservation commission typically review?**
- A. Land use regulations**
 - B. Infrastructure projects**
 - C. Applications for construction affecting historic sites**
 - D. Municipal budget proposals**
- 10. What is the time period following the adoption of an ordinance for a structure or use to apply for a certificate of non-conformance?**
- A. 6 Months**
 - B. 1 Year**
 - C. 2 Years**
 - D. 3 Years**

Answers

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1. B
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. D
6. A
7. B
8. C
9. C
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What is the term for the area of a watercourse that is periodically inundated?

- A. The seasonal stream bed**
- B. The floodplain**
- C. Wetlands**
- D. The transitional or buffer area**

The term that accurately describes the area of a watercourse that is periodically inundated is the floodplain. A floodplain is defined as the flat or low-lying area adjacent to a river or stream that is subject to flooding during periods of high water. This area plays a critical role in the hydrology of the region, as it helps to absorb excess rainfall, reducing the risk of downstream flooding and allowing for the natural deposition of sediments. The floodplain supports a variety of ecosystems and wildlife, making it ecologically significant. It helps to filter pollutants and provides habitat for diverse flora and fauna. Floodplains are also essential for the recharge of groundwater supplies. Other choices, such as seasonal streambeds or wetlands, while related to water management and ecosystems, do not specifically refer to the area that is periodically inundated by floodwaters in the same way that floodplains do. The transitional or buffer area is typically regarded as the land that provides a buffer between developed areas and water bodies, serving more to protect water quality and habitats rather than being defined by periodic flooding.

2. The County Planning Act is codified at which reference?

- A. NJAC 19:3-1 et seq.**
- B. NJAC 45:14A et seq.**
- C. NJAC 40:27-1 et seq.**
- D. NJAC 40:55-1 et seq.**

The County Planning Act is indeed codified at NJAC 40:27-1 et seq. This section pertains specifically to the powers and duties of county planning boards, as well as the processes for county-level planning within New Jersey. The act establishes the framework for how counties develop, implement, and manage land use and planning in their respective jurisdictions, emphasizing the importance of organized and collaborative planning efforts to integrate county and municipal interests effectively. Understanding this reference can be pivotal for those involved in professional planning in New Jersey, as it provides the legal foundation upon which county planning activities are based. It covers aspects such as the authority granted to counties in their planning roles, the requirements for planning documents, and the interaction between different levels of government in the planning process. This knowledge is essential for planners to navigate the regulatory environment and ensure compliance with state laws governing land use and development.

3. Which of the following best describes Class II membership in planning boards?

A. Reserved for officials of the municipality

B. Consists solely of ordinary citizens

C. Selected by the mayor only

D. Must include at least one member of the zoning board

Class II membership in planning boards is specifically designated for officials of the municipality. This classification is intended to ensure that the planning board includes individuals who have a deep understanding of the local government's structure, policies, and objectives. Members typically include positions such as the mayor or other municipal officials, which allows for an integration of the planning process with the administration's goals and regulations. Including officials in this capacity helps to facilitate better communication between the planning board and the city or town government. These officials can offer valuable insights regarding municipal resources, limitations, and strategic goals, which can enhance the planning process by aligning it more closely with the community's needs and objectives. Class II members serve a critical role in balancing the perspectives of local governance with those of the citizens and experts on the board, ensuring comprehensive decision-making that benefits the entire municipality.

4. How many days of advance public notice is required for hearings on changes to zoning ordinances?

A. 5 Days

B. 10 Days

C. 15 Days

D. 20 Days

In New Jersey, the law mandates that a minimum of 10 days of advance public notice must be provided for hearings on changes to zoning ordinances. This requirement is in place to ensure that the public has adequate time to become aware of proposed changes and to participate in the hearing process. This notice must be published in a newspaper that serves the area where the municipality is located, enabling citizens to engage in local governance. The emphasis on a 10-day notice reflects a balance between efficiency in legislative procedures and the necessity for public engagement and transparency in local planning decisions. This time frame allows stakeholders, including residents and businesses, to prepare for the discussion or express their opinions regarding proposed zoning changes effectively.

5. Which of the following is a regulated activity under the Freshwater Wetlands Act?

- A. Excavation or disturbance of any soil**
- B. Discharge of any fill**
- C. Destruction of plant life altering existing vegetation**
- D. All of the above**

The Freshwater Wetlands Act is designed to protect New Jersey's wetlands and the ecological functions they provide. It regulates several activities that can significantly impact these environments. Excavation or disturbance of soil in wetland areas can lead to the loss of habitat and disrupt the natural filtration and water retention that wetlands provide. The regulations are in place to ensure that any activities that could harm these functions are closely monitored and controlled. Discharge of fill is another regulated activity because introducing materials into a wetland can obstruct water flow, alter water levels, and affect the organisms that rely on those ecosystems. The Act ensures that any such discharges are carefully assessed for their potential environmental impact. Destruction of plant life and altering existing vegetation also falls under regulation, as plant life in wetlands plays a crucial role in maintaining the ecosystem's health, including stabilizing soil, providing habitat for wildlife, and assisting in water filtration. Since all these activities can have detrimental effects on wetlands, they are all considered regulated under the Freshwater Wetlands Act, making the choice that encompasses all of these activities the correct one.

6. The state planning commission consists of how many members?

- A. 17 members**
- B. 20 members**
- C. 15 members**
- D. 10 members**

The correct answer indicates that the state planning commission consists of 17 members. This composition is established to ensure a diverse representation of interests and expertise in the areas of land use and community planning throughout the state. In New Jersey, the structure of the state planning commission is designed to effectively address statewide issues related to growth, development, and spatial planning. It is composed of individuals appointed to bring various perspectives, including those from local government, various sectors of the community, and policy experts, which enriches the planning process. By having 17 members, the commission can integrate a broad range of viewpoints and experiences, which is important for the development of comprehensive and effective planning policies that meet the needs of different regions and communities across the state.

7. What is the minimum required time a planning board has after receiving a complete application to act on a preliminary subdivision application for fewer than 10 lots?

- A. 30 Days
- B. 45 Days**
- C. 60 Days
- D. 90 Days

The minimum required time for a planning board to act on a preliminary subdivision application for fewer than 10 lots is 45 days. This timeframe is established under New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law, which aims to ensure that applications are processed in a timely manner, thus providing a clear expectation for both applicants and the planning boards. The 45-day period allows the planning board to review the application fully, consider any necessary modifications, and respond adequately to any concerns raised during the review process. This period is particularly important for smaller subdivisions, as it promotes efficiency while still allowing for adequate public input and consideration of regulatory requirements. In contrast to the other timeframes mentioned, such as 30, 60, or 90 days, the 45-day requirement strikes a balance between promptness and thoroughness in the review process, making it an essential guideline for managing local development responsibly. This timeframe reflects an understanding of the need for local government to be responsive while still fulfilling its role in land use planning.

8. What percent of property owners within a proposed zoning ordinance change area must sign objections to trigger a two-thirds vote requirement?

- A. 10%
- B. 15%
- C. 20%**
- D. 25%

To understand why the answer is 20%, it's important to recognize how zoning ordinance changes can be influenced by community input. In New Jersey, if property owners within a specific area feel strongly against a proposed zoning change, they have the ability to voice their objections, which can impact the decision-making process. When at least 20% of property owners within the affected area sign objections to the proposed zoning ordinance change, this triggers a requirement for a two-thirds majority vote by the governing body to approve the ordinance. This threshold serves as a protective measure for property owners, ensuring that a significant level of community opposition can lead to a more rigorous review of the proposed changes. Understanding this process emphasizes the importance of community involvement in zoning matters. The 20% threshold illustrates the balance between facilitating development and protecting the interests of property owners who may be affected by such changes in land use regulations. This framework enhances governance by ensuring that significant concerns from property owners are taken into account during decision-making processes.

9. What does the historic preservation commission typically review?

- A. Land use regulations**
- B. Infrastructure projects**
- C. Applications for construction affecting historic sites**
- D. Municipal budget proposals**

The correct answer focuses on the primary function of a historic preservation commission, which is to review applications for construction that may affect historic sites. These commissions are established to protect the character and integrity of historically significant buildings, structures, and districts. When a property is designated as historic, any proposed changes, renovations, or new constructions must be carefully evaluated to ensure that they align with preservation standards and guidelines. This review process helps maintain the historical and cultural value of the area, preventing alterations that could detract from the historical significance of the site. Other options relate to different responsibilities and functions outside the specific focus of historic preservation. For instance, while land use regulations and infrastructure projects are important topics in urban planning, they do not inherently fall under the purview of a historic preservation commission unless they directly intersect with historic properties. Similarly, municipal budget proposals pertain to financial planning and allocation, which is a distinct area separate from the responsibilities of reviewing the impact of construction on historic sites.

10. What is the time period following the adoption of an ordinance for a structure or use to apply for a certificate of non-conformance?

- A. 6 Months**
- B. 1 Year**
- C. 2 Years**
- D. 3 Years**

The correct answer is one year. In New Jersey, following the adoption of an ordinance that changes land use regulations, there is a specific timeframe during which property owners may apply for a certificate of non-conformance. This certificate is essential for those who had existing structures or uses that may no longer comply with new restrictions or zoning standards. The one-year period allows property owners adequate time to gather necessary documentation and submit an application for this certificate, ensuring they are not immediately penalized for past investments in their property. This timeframe balances the need for compliance with new regulations while providing a reasonable opportunity for property owners to address potential non-conformities that could affect their rights to use or develop their property. Other time periods do not apply for this specific process under New Jersey law—less than a year may seem insufficient for property owners to react effectively, while longer periods could lead to ambiguity and complications in zoning enforcement and community compliance.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://njprofessionalplanner.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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