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Matthew J. Curtis

From: Khassan@njba.org
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2007 10:50 AM
To: DraftPlanComments
Subject: II-D-2-Housing

Kristin Hassan
Khassan@njba.org
Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council 100 North Rd.
Chester, NJ 07930

Regarding: Planning

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You appear to have missed the fact that you are a planning council and are required to include a real smart growth component in the master plan for the Highlands region. The planning council needs to determine what housing is needed and where it should be located—not leave it to some future determination that maybe some site will be found to be appropriate.

There is a serious need for workforce housing in the Highlands region. Most of the job growth is in service sector jobs, most of which do not have high salaries. This workforce needs housing that it can afford. This includes rental housing. Most housing in the Highlands is owner-occupied at 79%, compared to the state average of 65.6%, and 66% have three bedrooms or more.

There is a significant need for greater diversity in housing in the Highlands region. Most young adults, who have grown up in the Highlands, either have to leave the region to find housing or live with their parents. They need alternatives to expensive single-family detached housing.

While policies in the draft plan speak to these housing needs, the controlling policies leave it totally up to the municipalities to determine if they will choose to address them. Municipalities would even be able to be found in conformance with the regional master plan if they decide not to provide for higher density housing in the planned community zone.

The Highlands Planning Council has an obligation to plan for housing in the planning area. While municipalities have the right to opt out, they certainly shouldn't have the right to opt in without providing for the housing needed to sustain the Highlands region.

Sincerely,

Kristin Hassan

Cc: NJ Gov. Corzine

