



JON S. CORZINE
Governor

State of New Jersey
Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
100 North Road (Route 513)
Chester, New Jersey 07930-2322
(908) 879-6737
(908) 879-4205 (fax)
www.highlands.state.nj.us



JOHN R. WEINGART
Chairman

EILEEN SWAN
Executive Director

**DRAFT – FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE NOVEMBER 8, 2007
MEETING OF THE HIGHLANDS COUNCIL**

RMP Program: Transportation Safety and Mobility
Version: November 7, 2007

<p>Issue Overview</p>	<p>The Highlands regional transportation system uses roads, highways, railways and bridges to move people and goods through various modes of travel, including private automobile, bus, plane, truck, rail, bicycle and walking. In the Highlands, numerous factors including inefficient land use patterns have led to an increased dependence on automobile travel, which has had adverse impacts on natural resources and overall quality of life. By promoting efficient mixed land uses and increasing access to a multimodal transportation system, better protection can be offered to environmentally sensitive areas of the Region.</p> <p>The Highlands Act emphasizes the preservation and enhancement of the transportation system which integrates transportation and comprehensive land use planning. It emphasizes the promotion of a balanced, efficient and safe transportation system that is consistent with smart growth strategies and principles and which preserves mobility and maintains transportation infrastructure in the Highlands Region. Section 11 of the Act states:</p> <p><i>11. a. The regional master plan shall include, but need not necessarily be limited to...</i> <i>(5) A transportation component that provides a plan for transportation system preservation, includes all federally mandated projects or programs, and recognizes smart growth strategies and principles. The transportation component shall include projects to promote a sound, balanced transportation system that is consistent with smart growth strategies and principles and which preserves mobility and maintains the transportation infrastructure of the Highlands Region. Transportation projects and programs shall be reviewed and approved by the council in consultation with the Department of Transportation prior to inclusion in the transportation component;</i></p> <p>An assessment of roadway conditions across the Highlands indicates that many of the Region's roads are at or approaching traffic capacity. Some of the major U.S. and State highways have recurring capacity constraints during the AM and PM peak travel periods. In addition, because mobile source pollution is generated by vehicle emissions, this traffic congestion increases emissions of harmful pollutants and adversely affects air quality.</p>
------------------------------	---

<p>RMP Policies and Objectives Addressed</p>	<p>Policy 5.1.1. To ensure that the Highlands transportation system provides safe and reasonable intra-regional and inter-regional mobility.</p> <p>Policy 5.1.2. To ensure that the Highlands transportation system affords Highlands industries, including agriculture, cost-effective transportation for raw materials, products and employees.</p> <p>Policy 5.1.4. To provide for safe pedestrian connections including features such as sidewalks, proper lighting, shade trees, and shelters consistent with NJDOT’s Pedestrian Safety Initiative.</p> <p>Policy 5.2.2. Require an evaluation of potential growth inducing effects such as substantial new land use, new residents, or new employment that could occur as a result of increased capacity road improvements.</p> <p>Policy 5.2.3. To prohibit road improvements in the Highlands Region which a Growth Inducing Study demonstrates that proposed improvements are likely to be growth-inducing for lands with limited or no capacity to support human development without an adverse impact on the Highlands ecosystem.</p> <p>Policy 5.2.5. To encourage and promote tourism through appropriate transportation measures, accessible transit schedules, and enhanced street furnishings and information and directional signage.</p> <p>Policy 5.3.1. To ensure, to the extent practicable, that proposed transportation improvements which are not consistent with the Regional Master Plan be modified to be consistent or be re-evaluated in the context of state and regional planning goals.</p> <p>Policy 5.3.2. To coordinate with NJ DOT, NJ Transit, NJTPA (North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority) and counties with regard to transportation planning within the Highlands Region.</p> <p><i>Objective 5.3.2.1. Highlands Region transportation site development activities will reflect Regional Master Plan resource protection, development, and redevelopment goals.</i></p> <p>Policy 5.3.3. To limit road improvements where roads are constrained by topography, forested lands or the community character of land uses fronting on the road.</p> <p>Policy 5.3.4. To support economic development by ensuring that transportation planning and improvements support regional development, redevelopment, and tourism opportunities. .</p> <p>Policy 5.3.5. To recognize and support the unique needs of the agricultural industry to move farm vehicles and goods along transportation corridors, and establish safe travel routes for farmers in order to ensure the safety and viability of farming as an occupation in the Highlands Region.</p> <p>Policy 5.3.8. To evaluate the existing and proposed Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) in the context of the Regional Master Plan and develop an action plan for recommendations to minimize environmental impacts and maximize utility efficiency from new residential developments in a context-specific manner.</p> <p>Policy 5.4.1. To promote the use of alternative modes of transportation within the Highlands Region.</p> <p><i>Objective 5.4.1.2. Increase overall transit rider-ship and the use of multi-modal transportation systems for peak hour travel.</i></p> <p>Policy 5.4.2 To promote transit improvements within the Highlands Region which primarily support intra-regional mobility.</p> <p>Policy 5.4.3. To promote priority for transportation improvements which primarily improve intra-regional mobility.</p> <p>Policy 5.4.4. To promote transit improvements which will increase capacity for inter-regional mobility.</p>
---	---

	<p>Policy 5.5.1. To promote land use patterns that support a balance of jobs to housing as a means of reducing average trip lengths.</p> <p>Policy 5.5.3. To promote land use patterns which facilitate use of alternative modes of transportation including walking and the use of bicycles.</p> <p>Policy 5.5.4. To promote shared parking programs in support of mixed use development and redevelopment.</p>
<p>Program Summary</p>	<p>The Highlands Act states that a primary goal is to promote a sound and balanced transportation system that is consistent with smart growth strategies and principles and which preserves mobility. The transportation program serves multiple purposes such as identifying roadway capacity constraints, addressing safety concerns, assessing agricultural and freight needs, and promoting efficient land use patterns which look comprehensively at land use and transportation planning. The program also looks to enhance a multi-modal transportation system which facilitates the movement of people and goods without adversely affecting ecosystem integrity and community character. Each program component addresses a specific need area while providing a set of strategies through which the Highlands Council, in coordination with state agencies, local government units and stakeholders, can ensure that RMP goals are achievable.</p>
<p>Linking Transportation and Land Use</p>	<p>Program Description</p> <p>This program component discusses the critical relationship between transportation and land use in the Highlands Region, and the necessity to incorporate smart growth principles in transportation improvements in order to protect the environment while encouraging economic viability.</p> <p>Many of the transportation improvements made in recent decades have been in the form of adding roadway capacity, with the intent of relieving or mitigating traffic congestion. It is widely acknowledged, however, that the strategy of adding roadway capacity is not a sustainable solution to the many problems facing the transportation system. By looking at transportation and land use planning comprehensively, a long-term strategy can be developed to better solve the Region's transportation issues. There are several integrated land use/transportation corridor studies currently underway or planned in the Highlands Region including Interstate 78, Route 57 and Route 23.</p> <p>The idea of mixing land uses, combining jobs, housing, retail and other uses in a compact, efficient manner, is one approach which can lead to shorter and less frequent trips taken and fewer vehicle miles traveled. These mixed uses, when integrated as a compact, walkable community, can also create and enhance a sense of place and vitality, which may in turn lead to higher property values and lower infrastructure costs. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is another method that integrates transportation planning specifically by promoting more compact development around existing transportation infrastructure as an alternative to sprawl. Innovative approaches to roadway design can also put greater focus on ecological systems. The NJTransit <i>Transit Score Program</i> is an approach for evaluating land use and transit supported links by defining a transit score index. The program evaluates the relationship between people, employment and vehicle use as related to land use to improve transit options in local and regional planning.</p> <p>Green Street approaches seek to design a street system that protects water resources in order to prevent the adverse affects of surface runoff. A concept called "Shared Parking" is used extensively in traditional neighborhood</p>

	<p>commercial settings and downtowns. In these locations, higher densities and mixed uses often allow people to park in a single spot and then walk from one destination to another, allowing the same parking spaces to be used by various uses.</p> <p>This program component includes the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Municipal Plan Conformance includes the development of a circulation plan element in coordination with the land use plan element; it will evaluate local Transit Scores in support of connecting land use to transit services and address smart growth principles consistent with the goals of the RMP. 2. A circulation plan element must show the location and types of facilities for modes of transportation required for the efficient movement of people and goods, as well as a municipal evaluation of transit and shared parking opportunities through a comprehensive parking study. 3. Conforming counties shall develop a transportation plan that supports local and regional land use planning, evaluates regional Transit Scores as a means to screen for improved and innovative transit options, promote connectivity, shared service opportunities and long-term transportation network needs. 4. Council shall evaluate the existing and proposed Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) in the context of the RMP and develop recommendations for amendments to minimize environmental impacts and maximize utility efficiency from new residential developments in a context-specific manner. 5. Coordinate with NJ Transit, counties and municipalities to increase the performance of the public and private bus carrier systems, increasing transit rider-ship and the use of multi-modal transportation systems for peak hour travel. 6. Encourage development and redevelopment which provides a balance of jobs to housing in close proximity to rail and bus.
<p>Regional Transportation Safety and Pedestrian Security</p>	<p>Program Description</p> <p>The widespread usage of the Highlands roadway system does not come without certain risks for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus passengers. Many years of vehicle safety and traffic engineering improvements have resulted in generally safer conditions for automobiles, with fewer fatalities and fewer crashes per vehicle miles traveled. Beyond automobile safety, there has been a growing awareness of the need to protect the most vulnerable road users - pedestrians and bicyclists.</p> <p>The Act emphasizes the importance of transportation safety and creates certain exemptions which allow for such things as the routine maintenance and reconstruction of transportation infrastructure provided that the activity is consistent with the goals of the Act, and does not result in new through-capacity travel lanes. The challenge of improving safety for all travelers in Highlands Region can best be addressed through strategic and coordinated efforts to integrate safety concerns into transportation planning with State agencies, local governments and stakeholders.</p> <p>This program component emphasizes the following strategies in order to promote transportation safety:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require municipalities to assess local transportation improvement needs and safety concerns as part of their circulation plan element for Plan

	<p>Conformance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Coordinate with municipalities, counties, NJDOT, NJTPA and NJ Transit in order to increase safety and security of inter-modal transportation for motorized and non-motorized users, and by implementing traffic calming measures in areas with high pedestrian activity. 3. Promote safe routes for children to travel to and from school in a coordinated effort with NJDOT's Safe Routes to School Program. In addition, encourage safe routes to public transportation through NJDOT's Safe Streets to Transit Program. 4. Provide for safe pedestrian connections including features such as sidewalks, proper lighting, shade trees, and shelters consistent with NJDOT's Pedestrian Initiative.
<p>Mobility of Agriculture and Freight Access</p>	<p>Program Description</p> <p>Transportation mobility is a vital component to the agricultural industry in the Highlands Region, as farmers rely on a functional transportation system in order to operate farms and ultimately bring a variety of goods to market. In order to ensure the safety and viability of farming as an occupation in the Highlands Region, safe travel routes for farmers need to be coordinated with local governments and state agencies.</p> <p>Mobility is also critical to the needs of a growing freight industry which continues to use the Region's infrastructure to haul goods to and from the State's major ports. However, a growing number of freight trucks are having a negative impact on the Region's roads. By improving upon existing rail infrastructure and shifting from truck to rail for long-distance transport, more freight can be moved safely and efficiently.</p> <p>The program components include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate with municipalities, counties, New Jersey Department of Agriculture and NJDOT to identify and support the unique needs of the agricultural industry to move farm vehicles and goods along transportation corridors, and establish safe travel routes for farmers in order to ensure the safety and viability of farming as an occupation in the Highlands Region. 2. Require that all circulation plan elements and county plans, as part of Plan Conformance, evaluate "farm-to-market" opportunities to improve upon the movement of goods from farms and areas of supply to areas where goods are in demand 3. Require that all circulation plan elements and county plan, as part of Plan Conformance, evaluate opportunities to increase freight service through the reactivation of abandoned freight lines. 4. Coordinate with NJDOT on new Comprehensive Statewide Freight Plan <p>(For more information on agricultural needs see <i>Agricultural Management and Sustainability Program</i>)</p>
<p>Transportation and Tourism Economy</p>	<p>Program Description</p> <p>As a Region that reflects history, exhibits scenic beauty, and provides outdoor recreational activities, the Highlands offers residents and visitors a variety of recreational and tourism opportunities. A strong tourism industry in the Highlands depends upon a safe and efficient transportation system.</p> <p>This component seeks to focus on the relationship between the Highlands transportation system and tourism resources. Are transportation services available so that tourists can travel safely and by a variety of modes? Is</p>

	<p>information about transportation to tourist attractions and activities available? What are opportunities to expand tourism through transportation-related activities such as rail, bus, hiking trails and signage? By answering these questions, Highlands communities can support enhanced regional economic vitality and contribute to overall quality of life.</p> <p>This program component includes the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate with NJDOT, NJTransit and NJ Division of Travel and Tourism to increase tourism opportunities through innovative multi-modal transportation measures and accessible transit schedules. 2. Support the regional tourism economy in cooperation with NJDOT through a road signage program which identifies significant natural and historic resources and landmarks. 3. Require that circulation plan elements evaluate opportunities to expand tourism through multi-modal transit connectivity, thus promoting the use of transit as a means to access Highlands' tourism resources. 4. Coordinate with NJDOT and NJ Department of Agriculture to promote agri-tourism through enhanced information sharing, education and outreach.
<p>Overview of Transportation Project Review</p>	<p>Program Description</p> <p>The review of transportation projects by Council is a critical step to ensuring that transportation improvements are consistent with the goals and policies of the RMP. The Act states that the Council may provide comments and recommendations on any transportation project undertaken by any State entity or local government unit in the Highlands Region. In the Preservation Area, the Council must establish procedures for conducting reviews of projects that, except in certain cases, involve the disturbance of two acres or more of land, or a cumulative increase in impervious surface by one acre or more. The Act also states that the Council has the power to approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove a project, and that except in certain cases no such project can move forward without approval of the Council.</p> <p>Transportation project review will generally evaluate the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consistency with the goals policies and objectives of the RMP and smart growth and sound planning principles. 2. Determination of net effect on through lane capacity, as additional through lane capacity is prohibited in the Preservation Area. 3. Impact on water quantity and quality, and other critical natural resources such as forests, habitat and open waters. 4. Growth-inducing impacts regarding new land use, new residents, and new permanent employment which could have secondary growth implications, or greatly expand transportation infrastructure capacity, especially in areas with high natural resource values and limited capacity to support human development. 5. Use of alternative modes of transportation including transit, bus, pedestrian and bicycle. 6. Safety measures such as traffic calming strategies and pedestrian and bicycle safety features. 7. Impact on agricultural and freight mobility. 8. Effect on eco-tourism, agri-tourism and heritage tourism in the Region. <p>(Prior to Plan Conformance, guidelines and procedures will be developed in</p>

	support of transportation project review detailing the specific requirements)
Roadway Capacity Monitoring	<p>Program Description</p> <p>The roadway capacity assessment included in the <i>Transportation Technical Report</i> provides a detailed assessment of roadway conditions, identifying major origin and destination trips generated in the Highlands for the base year 2002. The Council worked with NJDOT, NJTPA and counties to develop a Highlands Sub-Area model based on information developed from a larger model known as the North Jersey Regional Transportation Model (NJRTM). It is currently the primary analysis tool for transportation planning in the Region.</p> <p>There is a need to re-examine, refine and monitor these roadway conditions and travel patterns, and the impact of future development and land use patterns on traffic conditions. The refined assessment will need to be conducted to a finer Traffic Analysis Zone standard in order to determine more accurately local roadway conditions by municipality in the Highlands Region. This more refined analysis can better reflect the impact of past land use changes in order to inform future land use decisions, and thereby shape transportation infrastructure improvements. The Council will continue to partner with NJDOT, NJTPA and counties to refine the model for future needs.</p> <p>(More information on the Roadway Capacity Assessment can be found in the <i>Transportation Technical Report</i> pg.11)</p>