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MEETING OF THE HIGHLANDS COUNCIL**

RMP Program: Federal, State, and Regional Agency Coordination
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Issue Overview	<p>The Highlands Act requires a coordination and consistency component which details the ways in which local, State, and Federal programs and policies may best be coordinated to promote the goals, purposes, policies, and provisions of the RMP, and which details how land, water, and structures managed by governmental or nongovernmental entities in the public interest within the Highlands Region may be integrated into the RMP.</p> <p>For a regional planning initiative to thrive, a substantial amount of participation and coordination is required from all levels of government. In addition to the 88 constituent municipalities and seven Highlands counties that will play a large role in implementing the RMP, it is necessary for the Council to incorporate thorough and effective interaction and coordination with federal and State agencies. Coordination with the seven county planning departments in support of both county and municipal Plan Conformance as well as RMP data management and data sharing is also a critical component.</p> <p>This extraordinary degree of cooperation is vital in order to achieve the most positive, sustainable outcome for the environment and economy of the Highlands Region, and thus the quality of life for all who live and work here or benefit from its resources. Establishing a process based on the consistent treatment of factors at all levels of government is key to the success of regional policies and initiatives.</p> <p>State level coordination between the Council and the Department of Environmental Protection will be particularly important due to the requirements of the Act that establish stringent regulatory standards for development in the Preservation Area administered by the Department and the provisions in NJDEP regulations at N.J.A.C. 7:38-1.1(g) through (l), which require that consideration and weight be given to this Plan.</p> <p>The Highlands Act provides that any municipality or county located entirely or in part in the Preservation Area shall be exempt from the State Planning Commission’s Plan Endorsement process and provides that the Council must consult with the State Planning Commission before approving, rejecting, or approving with conditions the revised plans and associated regulations of Planning Area municipalities and counties for lands in the Planning Area. Further, the Act provides that upon the State</p>
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	<p>Planning Commission’s endorsement of the RMP, any municipal master plan and development regulations or county master plan and associated regulations that are found by the Council to be in conformance with the RMP shall be considered the equivalent of having those plans endorsed by the State Planning Commission.</p> <p>Finally, regional coordination between the Highlands states (Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania) is necessary in order to address and implement comprehensive conservation measures, since regionally significant resources do not neatly follow political boundaries.</p>
<p>RMP Policies and Objectives Addressed</p>	<p>Objective 1.5.1.5.1. <i>Establishment of a dedicated source of state revenue to be used for open space preservation in the Highlands Region, such as coordination with NJDEP Green Acres Program for re-authorization of the Garden State Preservation Trust Fund, including a dedicated fund for the anticipated land acquisition needs of the Highlands Region. Also the imposition of a water user fee.</i></p> <p>Objective 1.5.1.6.1. <i>Coordination of Highlands Region priority open space preservation and land stewardship activities with the NJDEP Green Acres Program and the State Agriculture Development Committee with regard to land acquisition and preservation priorities in the Highlands Region.</i></p> <p>Objective 1.5.1.6.2. <i>Coordination with NJDEP regarding the review of applications for Green Acres diversions for consistency with the Highlands Regional Master Plan.</i></p> <p>Policy 1.5.1.10. To promote and facilitate the formation of an interagency working group comprised of representatives of appropriate federal, state and county agencies for the purpose of coordinating open space acquisition activities, including identification of high priority lands for preservation, land stewardship initiatives, and funding needs.</p> <p>Policy 2.1.2.1. To track and consider water availability in the review of site-specific and regional planning activity, including any major Highlands development, issuance of a Highlands Preservation Area Approval or waiver, State or local capital projects that involve disturbing two or more acres of land or a cumulative increase in impervious surface by one acre or more, development applications that disturb two or more acres of land or increase impervious surface by one acre or more, wastewater management plan amendments, and other applications under the purview of the Highlands Council.</p> <p>Policy 2.3.1.5. To coordinate with NJDEP and other agencies to identify impairments and implement improved regulatory actions and management practices that will also support the water quality goals of the Highlands Act.</p> <p>Objective 2.3.3.1.1. <i>Coordinate with NJDEP to establish and maintain an inventory of Wellhead Protection Areas in or affecting the Highlands Region.</i></p> <p>Objective 2.4.2.9.2. <i>A program of coordination with NJDEP, water purveyors and water utilities to ensure that service areas and franchise areas are supplied by and consistent with sustainable yields from their designated sources.</i></p> <p>Objective 3.1.9.1. <i>Coordinate with the State Forester to provide guidance for the development of Forest Management Plans that improve maintenance of ecosystem and water resource values of the Highlands Region.</i></p> <p>Policy 3.2.4. To coordinate with other municipal, County, state, and federal agencies to ensure to the maximum extent practicable that other agency programs are coordinated with the resource protection requirements of the Highlands Regional Master Plan.</p> <p>Policy 4.1.6. To coordinate the Highlands Council’s activities with regard to the historic and cultural resources with the New Jersey Historic Trust and State Historic Preservation Office.</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</p>

	<p>planning within the Highlands Region.</p> <p>Objective 6.5.2.1.1. Establish a Highlands Interagency Team to support and expedite redevelopment and development activities that conform to the Plan.</p> <p>Objective 6.5.4.1.1. Any restoration of contaminated sites will be conducted in accordance with the criteria required by the NJDEP’s technical requirements for site remediation (NJAC 7:26E)</p> <p>Objective 6.5.4.1.2. Coordinate with NJDEP on Highlands Brownfield designations and in support of a mechanism that facilitates remedial activities within the Highlands Region.</p> <p>Policy 6.7.1.1. To establish a region-wide, comprehensive approach to addressing residential needs in the Highlands Region, serving all age groups, income levels, and mobility options. Conforming municipalities must prepare and submit a petition for substantive certification to COAH.</p> <p>Objective 8.1.4.2. State agency coordination of economic development funding and programs that support Highlands Region development and redevelopment areas.</p> <p>Objective 8.2.2.1. Coordinated activities with the NJ Department of Agriculture and other entities to improve opportunities for sustainable agricultural operations that improve farm incomes and the long-term viability of farming.</p>
<p>Program Summary</p>	<p>The purpose of this program is to establish a process based on the consistent treatment of factors at all levels of government to ensure the success of RMP policies and initiatives. Towards this end, a fundamental goal of this program is to establish or enhance interagency coordination to address critical issues such as environmental review procedures, land use regulation, affordable housing, land acquisition, agriculture, TDR, and Smart Design practices. Additionally, through this program, the Highlands Council will establish regular lines of communication and exchange technical information with representatives of the Federal Highlands Region in Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania.</p> <p>Through proactive coordination with federal, State and county agencies the Council will promote the use of the RMP policies and standards to ensure the consistent protection of resources in the Highlands Region. Consistency is particularly important with those federal or State programs related to water supply availability, water quality, biodiversity conservation, and infrastructure capacity needed to handle growth.</p>
<p>Creation of Interagency Committees</p>	<p>Program Description</p> <p>The Highlands Council has established a State and Federal Agency Coordination Committee that will work with staff to develop the creation of Interagency Teams as needed to implement the RMP. The Interagency Teams will reflect the multiple modes of coordination that are required and will be dynamic and subject to change based on the nature of the issues at hand. The Interagency Teams may address critical coordination measures such as environmental review procedures, land use regulation, affordable housing, land acquisition, agriculture, Brownfields, TDR, historic and scenic resources, transportation and Smart Design practices. The Teams will serve in support of RMP policies, Plan Conformance reviews, and Project reviews as well as technical and planning partners in the implementation of RMP policies. The role of the Interagency Teams for all stakeholders is that it serves as a local and regional entity in support of Highlands’s issues and concerns.</p>

<p><i>Coordination with Regional Agencies</i></p>	<p>Program Description The Highlands Council will establish or enhance regular lines of communication and exchange technical information with representatives of the Federal Highlands Region in Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania. The Council will also ensure consistent coordination with relevant federal departments and agencies including the United States Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Commerce, Transportation, and Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as any federal departments and agencies that engage in activities that affect the Highlands Region. The Council will maintain liaison with each federal department or agency that administers or funds programs that affect the use of lands or protection of resources in the Highlands. These coordination efforts will encourage each federal entity to rely upon the RMP when their actions or decisions about programs, projects, or funding have the potential to affect the Highlands Region.</p>
<p><i>Coordination with State Agencies</i></p>	<p>Program Description The Highlands Council will ensure consistent on-going coordination with State agencies and between the Council and NJDEP. The Council will work with NJDEP to actively encourage NJDEP to utilize the RMP as the basis for establishing regulatory thresholds and standards. The Council will also work with NJDEP to develop a coordinated land use permitting strategy for lands subject to the NJDEP's Highlands Rules and the RMP'ss Preservation Area requirements. The Council will also develop a process to ensure consistent coordination with the New Jersey Departments of Agriculture, Law & Public Safety, Community Affairs, Education, Health and Senior Services, Treasury, and Transportation, and the NJ Commerce, Economic Growth and Tourism Commission on issues appropriate to their jurisdictions.</p> <p>In order to aide municipalities where they seek the appropriate development, redevelopment, and preservation of appropriate lands within the Highlands Region, the Council will coordinate with the Economic Development Authority, New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust, the New Jersey Historic Trust, and the Garden State Preservation Trust to facilitate funding and the institution of policies that help to implement the RMP.</p> <p>To help ensure that new infrastructure and State funded public development is guided to appropriate locations in the Highlands Region, the Council will work with the Board of Public Utilities, New Jersey Transit, the New Jersey School Construction Corporation, Department of the Treasury, and New Jersey Building Authority.</p>
<p><i>Specific Coordination with State Planning Commission</i></p>	<p>Program Description The Highlands Council will take the following steps related to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within sixty days of adoption of the RMP, the Council will, as required by the Highlands Act, submit the RMP to the State Planning Commission for Plan Endorsement for the Planning Area of the Highlands Region; • Coordinate with the State Planning Commission to resolve inconsistencies between the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and Map and the Highlands RMP and Land Use Capability Map through modifications that respond to requirements of the Highlands Act; • Maintain a cooperative planning process with the State Planning Commission to reconcile conflicting land use policies that municipalities may encounter when seeking to gain Plan Endorsement by the State Planning Commission or Plan

	<p>Conformance by the Highlands Council;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the State Planning Commission to ensure the sharing of all reports, petitions, recommendations and/or reviews generated for the State Plan Cross Acceptance and Plan Endorsement processes by Highlands municipalities and counties as well as those prepared as part of the Highlands RMP and Plan Conformance process with local Highlands governments; • Streamline the State Plan and Highlands processes for municipalities and counties by providing for simultaneous agency reviews as well as joint meetings, whenever possible; • Coordinate with the State Planning Commission to ensure consideration of any written comments provided by the Council concerning petitions before the Commission prior to any action approving, rejecting, or approving with conditions the petition for Plan Endorsement; and • Coordinate with the Department of Community Affairs' Office of Smart Growth to ensure the sharing of all relevant documents and data concerning the review and coordination of State infrastructure capital investment, community development, and financial assistance for local governments with lands in the Planning Area.
<p><i>Specific Coordination with Regional, County, and Municipal Planning Agencies</i></p>	<p>The Highlands Council will ensure consistent, on-going coordination with the Regional, County, and Municipal Planning Agencies in support of Plan Conformance and State agency coordination. The Council will work with these agencies to allow for coordination and consistency in support of County and municipal planning, project reviews and long term planning and funding programs. The Regional and County Planning Agencies serve as a critical interface between state, regional and local knowledge to ensure that RMP policies and initiatives are coordinated throughout the Region. The data sharing and management practices with Regional, County, and Municipal Planning Agencies will continue to be refined and enhanced to ensure that timely updates are achievable, quality assurance measures are in place and innovative approaches may be realized.</p>