

Guidance for Municipal Plan Conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan
Sustainable Economic Development Conformance Standards
New Jersey Highlands Council

COMPONENT	STATUS ¹	STANDARDS	COMMENTARY
Municipal Master Plan and Economic Plan Element		BASIC PLAN CONFORMANCE STANDARDS: 1. General (Background Statement): NA 2. Policy Statement: Adopt by reference RMP Policies and Objectives 8A6, 8D1, and 8D1a into the policies, goals, objectives section of the Master Plan. Relate the policies to MLUL purposes as appropriate. 3. LUC Zones: NA 4. Preservation Area Special Provisions: NA	<i>See Policy 8A6 requiring conforming municipalities to complete an Economic Plan Element for their master plan. See Policy 8D1 and objective 8D1a relating to development regulations that allow for home office, entrepreneurial and other small business activities in the Highlands Region</i>
		PLAN CONFORMANCE STANDARDS: 1. Master Plan Requirements: Establish sustainable economic planning that integrates economic, social, and environmental factors as a policy of the municipality, enumerating the purposes and benefits as cited in the Economic Plan Element. 2. Economic Plan Element Requirements: Establish the importance of economic planning to ensure sustained municipal economic vitality and economic growth, where appropriate. Municipalities must adopt or amend an Economic Plan Element that considers and provides strategies for achieving economic development and sustained economic vitality consistent with RMP and NJDEP resource requirements and appropriate for the municipality. The Economic Plan Element shall at a minimum include (consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28), (1) a comparison of the types of employment expected to be provided by the economic development to be promoted with the characteristics of the residing labor pool in the municipality and nearby areas and (2) an analysis of the stability and diversity of the economic development to be promoted. Municipalities shall review and utilize the Highlands Economic Indicators, which include data relating to population (distribution and age demographics), employment (industries and levels), housing units, income (median household and per capita income, and income ranges), property tax (average property tax), equalized property values and per acre calculations (vacant land, residential, commercial, industrial and farmland), property transactions (number of transactions and sales data), and building permits. Additional local economic	<i>In the Highlands Region, economic development plans can be developed for municipalities that chose to grow and those that chose not to; individual economic development activities will vary based on local conditions but all will contribute to achieving regional economic vitality. In some areas, the sustainable use of the natural resources of the Region, such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism will remain a critical local economic initiative, while other areas may be well suited for technology-dependent enterprises ranging from home occupations to corporate headquarters. Main street or downtown revitalization and business retention efforts may be the primary economic initiative for some municipalities. It is important for <u>all</u> municipalities to consider economic strategies that integrate economic, social, and environmental factors and are locally appropriate.</i>

¹ This column is for the municipal self-assessment. C = fully complete. P = partially complete, with a need for improvement. IP = in progress. NS = not started. NA = not applicable (e.g., for a municipality for which this component is not relevant).

		<p>indicators shall also be incorporated.</p> <p>In addition, the Economic Plan element shall address and/or contain the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A block and lot listing of current and future local economic development initiatives, including development, redevelopment and brownfield sites. The listing shall include a brief narrative of the identified initiatives and their objectives. The listing shall include any existing redevelopment plans, consistent with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (“LRHL”), N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. b. A statement that addresses current and future municipal fiscal sustainability. The statement shall address how economic development initiatives and plans will have a positive impact on municipal fiscal health. <p>In order to complete the aforementioned items, municipalities shall first complete the following Plan Conformance activities, pursuant to the Plan Conformance Guidelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Review Highlands LUCM maps, charts and technical data to identify any need for RMP Updates. The RMP Updates Program is designed to facilitate and coordinate the exchange and verification of updated, relevant factual information. As a result, the RMP and LUCM will reflect the most current data for use during Plan Conformance. (2) Determine local land use capability, through a Land Use Capability Analysis and “Limiting Factor” Analysis, combining land, resource, and utility based capacity considerations consistent with the provisions of the RMP (pursuant to the Land Use Capability Analysis Approach Program). (3) Utilize the Highlands Build Out Model to develop a local build out analysis that incorporates RMP policies and objectives to evaluate land use capability and capacity planning. The local build out analysis will assist municipalities in determining household and employment projections that are consistent with RMP conformance. (4) Based on the findings from the Land Use Capability Analysis, “Limiting Factor” Analysis, and Highlands Build out Model, municipality shall consider modifications to zoning to more fully utilize available resource or utility capacities, protect natural resources, and permit development and redevelopment to meet the current and future needs of the municipality consistent with RMP policies. <p>3. <u>Development Regulations Requirements:</u> Ensure that municipal and county development regulations permit opportunities for home office,</p>	<p><i>Ensuring opportunities for home office, entrepreneurial</i></p>
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		entrepreneurial and other small business activities in the Highlands Region. Development regulations shall permit these uses provided that it is consistent with RMP and NJDEP resource protection requirements.	<i>and other small business activities in the Highlands Region will allow for economic activity that is less land development intensive and reduce vehicle miles traveled for commuting. Municipalities with environmental constraints may fiscally benefit from these approaches, as well as non-development economic approaches.</i>
Institutional Capability		1. Planning: The Council will provide assistance should planning board and zoning board of adjustment members and staff require assistance with this issue to ensure that the Economic Plan Element is properly implemented and that conformance with the RMP is maintained.	<i>To assist board members and staff regarding this topic and the implementing ordinance the Council will provide educational and training opportunities as requested. Council will work with the municipality's professionals if requested.</i>
		2. Project Review: Municipality must have capacity to interpret the amended development regulations permitting opportunities for home office, entrepreneurial and other small business activities and that conformance with the RMP is maintained during local project review. Further, municipalities must have the capacity to interpret and implement the strategies included in the Economic Plan Element through project review, as appropriate.	
		3. Independent Projects: The municipality must periodically and in a timely manner inform the Highlands Council of special or independent projects (e.g., preliminary investigation to determine if an area is in need of redevelopment) developed and implemented regarding economic planning, as related to Plan Conformance or RMP implementation.	
Recommended Model or Example Ordinances (up to five, with model ordinances listed first)		1. NA	Model and draft ordinances are listed for informational purposes only. Specific language from each ordinance must be reviewed by competent legal and planning experts to determine what is most appropriate for use in complying with the Highlands Council standards for Plan Conformance.