

DRAFT FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE HIGHLANDS COUNCIL
AT THE JUNE 12, 2008 COUNCIL MEETING

CHAPTER VI. IMPLEMENTATION

Part 3. Improvement of the Regional Master Plan

Subpart b. Regional Master Plan Monitoring

Issue Overview

Monitoring and research are vital to understanding the impact and effectiveness of the RMP over time. Monitoring will ensure that the RMP continues to provide effective polices and programmatic approaches in an ever changing landscape. In order to evaluate regional conditions, identify new or emerging issues, and develop future RMP priorities, indicators will be identified and tracked by the Highlands Council. Indicators may relate to natural resources, water resources, agricultural resources, historic, cultural, archaeological and scenic resources, transportation, community character and smart growth, land owner fairness, air quality, government finances and economic development. Conclusions drawn from the findings of the monitoring program may result in updates or amendments to policies and programs of the RMP. The monitoring program is necessary to ensure the RMP's goal of long-term sustainability in the Highlands Region.

Program Summary

The RMP Monitoring Program and associated Monitoring Review Report will evaluate the progress in achieving the goals of the RMP through implementation of policies and programs. The approach is similar to that of a municipal master plan re-examination report. The implementation of a monitoring program will ensure that the RMP remain effective and current.

RMP Policies and Objectives Addressed

Policy 10A1. To ensure that programs and policies are effectively coordinated to promote the purpose and provisions of the RMP, through efforts involving all levels of government, including local, county, regional, state and federal agencies.

Policy 10A5. To ensure the long term success of the RMP, evaluate regional conditions, identify new or emerging issues, and develop future RMP priorities through the tracking and monitoring of regional indicators.

Objective 10A5a. Prepare a Highlands RMP Monitoring Review Report at least every six years to ensure that the RMP is meeting its goals.

Objective 10A5b. Prepare a fiscal impact assessment that measures the overall economic health of the Region as compared to the rest of the State, to be included in the Highlands RMP Monitoring Review Report.

RMP Monitoring

The RMP Monitoring Program will consist of on-going monitoring of indicators and a periodic monitoring report which documents the regional indicators and milestones. It will evaluate the progress in achieving the goals of the RMP as it is implemented locally. Data will be gathered for conforming municipalities and counties, as well as for non-conforming municipalities and counties (to the degree that information is available).

Environmental, social, and economic health indicators will be used to document changes in the Highlands Region. Indicators will be chosen based upon the usefulness of information they communicate and data availability and may be either quantitative or qualitative depending on the parameter to be measured.

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**RMP Monitoring
Review Report**

Should an indicator be found to be ineffective or another is found to better measure a parameter of the RMP, the indicator may be revised. The values may reflect a Highlands baseline data standard or a governmental standard. Monitoring will also identify gaps in available data and develop data-gathering mechanisms to fill such gaps or include recommendations for additional or alternative data.

Monitoring activities by the Highlands Council will guide potential amendments to the current or to future iterations of the RMP. Indicators will help to identify where RMP policy is most effective, and where amendments to policy or programs may be useful. The monitoring of indicators will be an on-going process, although the Monitoring Review Report will be prepared periodically, as described below.

The RMP Monitoring Review Report will be used to communicate with state, federal, county, and local planning partners and the general public the successes of the RMP, as well as the remaining challenges to the Region. Initially, the RMP Monitoring Review Report will be a baseline assessment of the Highlands Region, based upon the RMP monitoring indicators.

The initial assessment will inform the development of “Highlands Milestones.” Milestones will be chosen for each indicator and are intended to reflect progress toward long-term RMP goals. For example, an RMP indicator that would be measured yearly may be “acres of Conservation Priority Areas that are preserved as open space”. The milestone would be an “increase in preserved Conservation Priority Areas from the previous year.” Another associated milestone would be an “increase in conservation easements from the previous year.” The Monitoring Review Report will track changes to the indicators and report on Highlands Milestones achieved and not achieved. The Monitoring Review Report will also present a fiscal impact assessment, in which economic and fiscal indicators are used to assess the overall economic health of the Region, as compared to the rest of the State.

Examples of Highlands Milestones that may be used include:

- Increase in the acreage of new parks and preserved open space and farmland that preserve high priority lands;
- Increase in the number of redevelopment and brownfields properties that are redeveloped in conformance with RMP policies;
- Reduction or elimination of Water Deficits in HUC14 subwatersheds;
- Increase in the percentage of new development within areas served by public water and sewerage;
- Compliance of new development with RMP septic system densities, where public sewerage is not used;
- Increase in the number of zoning amendments and/or new/updated ordinances reflecting RMP policy;
- Increase in the percentage of new construction projects that include mixed use or green building approaches;
- Increase in the number of new/updated resource management plans or protection measures reflecting RMP policy;
- Increase in the number of opportunities for public participation in the

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Highlands planning process, including education and outreach programs;
and

- Increase in the number of municipalities or portions of municipalities participating in Plan Conformance.

The monitoring of indicators is an on-going process, and the RMP Monitoring Review Report will be produced at least every six years, or additionally, if necessary. RMP Monitoring Review Reports will be used to inform the development of future iterations of the RMP.

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Part 10. Local Participation

The Highlands Act calls for local participation in the development and implementation of the Regional Master Plan (RMP). Plan Conformance is voluntary in the Planning Area and mandatory in the Preservation Area. In both cases, municipal and county participation will be critical to achieving the aims of the RMP. In addition, the programs and policies of the RMP must be effectively coordinated and sustained over time. Cooperation between governmental and non-governmental interests will be vital to Plan success.

GOAL 10A	MAXIMIZE MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY PARTICIPATION TO ENSURE THAT THE REGIONAL MASTER PLAN ACHIEVES ITS LONG TERM GOALS OF PROTECTING, ENHANCING AND RESTORING HIGHLANDS RESOURCES WHILE MAINTAINING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY IN THE HIGHLANDS REGION.
Policy 10A1	To ensure that programs and policies are effectively coordinated to promote the purpose and provisions of the RMP, through efforts involving all levels of government, including local, county, regional, State and federal agencies.
Policy 10A2	To ensure sufficient local participation in the development of the RMP and on-going work of the Highlands Council.
Objective 10A2a	Engage stakeholder groups and individuals in public participation opportunities that provide meaningful input in the Highland Council planning process.
Policy 10A3	To ensure maximum RMP Conformance by municipalities and counties to achieve the highest level of protection for all important natural systems and resources of the Highlands.
Objective 10A3a	Provide benefits and incentives to municipalities and counties that conform to the RMP.
Policy 10A4	To ensure that municipal- and county-level efforts to conform to the RMP incorporate opportunities for public participation at the local level.
Objective 10A4a	Require that jurisdictions petitioning for Plan Conformance provide a public participation component demonstrating compliance with all statutory requirements regarding public meetings and provision of adequate public notice.
Objective 10A4b	Encourage all jurisdictions seeking Plan Conformance to provide opportunities for local participation that go above and beyond statutory requirements, regardless of the extent of changes proposed or necessary to conform to the RMP.
Policy 10A5	To ensure the long term success of the RMP, evaluate regional conditions, identify new or emerging issues, and develop future RMP priorities through the tracking and monitoring of regional indicators.
Objective 10A5a	Prepare a Highlands RMP Monitoring Review Report at least every six years to ensure that the RMP is meeting its goals.
Objective 10A5b	Prepare a fiscal impact assessment that measures the overall economic health of the Region as compared to the rest of the State, to be included in the Highlands RMP Monitoring Review Report.

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