

**DRAFT- FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE MAY 15, 2008
MEETING OF THE HIGHLANDS COUNCIL**

Part 8. Sustainable Economic Development

The Highlands Act establishes natural resource protection as the fundamental goal for the Highlands Region but recognizes that development, redevelopment, and economic growth in certain appropriate areas of the Region are in the best interests of all citizens of the State, providing innumerable social, cultural, and economic benefits and opportunities. The long term integrity of the Highlands Region requires economic and fiscal vitality as well as the preservation of natural resources. Economic development can be broadly described as any effort or activity that improves general economic health. It may involve a range of activities aimed at increasing the local tax base and providing employment opportunities, and efforts can range in scale from local to regional.

In the Highlands Region, individual economic development activities will vary based on local conditions but will contribute to achieving regional economic vitality. In some areas, the sustainable use of the natural resources of the Region, such as agriculture and forestry will remain a critical local economic initiative. Sustainable economic initiatives may also include the continued development of the Highlands Region eco-, agri-, and heritage tourism infrastructure. Portions of the Region may be well suited for technology-dependent enterprises of all sizes ranging from home occupations to corporate headquarters, while other areas may benefit from main street and downtown revitalization efforts. Economic development in the Highlands Region must be sustainable over time, to avoid damage to natural resources and community character. It must depend heavily on renewal and improvement of economic output without continual development of undeveloped lands. As such, strategies must consider land development and non-development approaches to achieving economic development goals.

GOAL 8A	SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE HIGHLANDS REGION.
Policy 8A1	To maintain and expand the existing job and economic base by promoting appropriate, sustainable, and environmentally compatible economic development throughout the Highlands Region.
Objective 8A1a	Highlands Economic Development Program to identify and promote sustainable economic development opportunities and strategies for recruiting and promoting such development in the Highlands Region, in a manner that integrates economic, social and environmental factors.
Objective 8A1b	Serve as an advocate and technical resource for Highlands economic development initiatives in work with municipalities, counties, regional agencies, and the private sector to promote sustainable economic development in the Highlands Region.
Objective 8A1c	Public private partnerships to support economic development initiatives.
Objective 8A1d	Positive fiscal impact to local governments and the Region through appropriate economic development initiatives.
Policy 8A2	To preserve the high quality of life in the Highlands Region in order to retain and attract workers to live and work through implementation of the RMP.
Policy 8A3	To coordinate and pursue state and federal programs and financial assistance for sustainable economic development in the Highlands Region.
Policy 8A4	To serve as a clearinghouse for economic development opportunities in the

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	Highlands Region.
Objective 8A4a	Identification, marketing, and support of Highlands Region areas including brownfield sites that may be appropriate for local and regional economic development initiatives.
Objective 8A4b	A long-term Economic Tracking Program as a means to continually assess the long-term economic progress of the Region through specified economic indicators in order to establish Highlands trends and to support municipal economic plan elements.
Policy 8A5	To advocate for appropriate public investment in the Highlands Region through the strategic location of public facilities and institutions that will spur sustainable and appropriate economic activity.
Policy 8A6	To require that conforming municipalities develop an economic plan element that provides strategies for achieving sustainable and appropriate economic development and identifies development, redevelopment and brownfield opportunities.
Objective 8A6a	Coordinate with municipalities and counties as local and regional strategies are developed to improve the tax base and to create jobs and economic opportunities consistent with the policies and objectives of the RMP.
GOAL 8B	PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY IN THE HIGHLANDS REGION.
Policy 8B1	To enhance the sustainable economic benefits of agricultural practices in the Highlands Region.
Objective 8B1a	Coordinate activities with the NJ Department of Agriculture and other entities to maximize the potential benefits of existing programs that sustain agriculture.
Policy 8B2	To protect and enhance the agricultural economy in the Highlands Region.
Objective 8B2a	Coordinate activities with the NJ Department of Agriculture and other entities to ensure a sustainable agricultural industry and agricultural operations that improve farm incomes and the long-term viability of farming.
GOAL 8C	EXPANSION OF COMPATIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND RECREATION WITHIN THE HIGHLANDS REGION.
Policy 8C1	To promote recreation and tourism based economic initiatives, which derive economic benefit from sustainable use of the natural resources of the Highlands Region.
Objective 8C1a	Identification of specific economic development initiatives which would encourage and promote eco-, agri- and heritage tourism in the Highlands Region.
Policy 8C2	To enhance the Region's tourism infrastructure in order to encourage visitors to visit and stay longer in the Highlands Region.
Objective 8C2a	Encourage the development of overnight accommodations and other services to support recreation and tourism attractions in the Highlands Region, where

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Objective 8C2b	appropriate and permitted by LUCM Zone. Encourage transit-oriented recreation and tourism connections.
Policy 8C3	To promote public and private tourism attractions in the Highlands Region through the marketing of natural resources, arts, cultural, historic, scenic, agricultural, recreational, and urban amenities and accommodations.
Policy 8C4	To support local, state, and federal eco-, agri- and heritage tourism programs.
Policy 8C5	To advocate for state and federal funding of recreation and tourism initiatives in the Highlands Region.
GOAL 8D	EXPANSION OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENURIAL BUSINESSES INCLUDING HOME OFFICE, ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION ENTERPRISES IN THE HIGHLANDS REGION.
Policy 8D1	To ensure opportunities for home office, entrepreneurial, and other small business activities in the Highlands Region.
Objective 8D1a	Municipal and county development regulations which permit the establishment of home occupations, participation in small business incubator programs and use of innovative technologies that promote compact design, native species landscaping, low impact development, energy efficiency and resource conservation in support of comprehensive RMP goals.
GOAL 8E	ESTIMATE AND TRACK OVER TIME THE COSTS AND BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND THE PROTECTION OF CRITICAL RESOURCES OF THE HIGHLANDS REGION.
Policy 8E1	The Cash Flow Timetable shall track the revenues and costs associated with the Highlands Protection Fund, with the exception of the Pinelands Property Tax Stabilization Aid category. Four components that shall be tracked in the Cash Flow Timetable include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning Grants Program (including Incentive Planning Aid and Regional Master Plan Compliance Aid);• Highlands Property Tax Stabilization Aid;• State Aid for Local Government Units (Watershed Moratorium Offset Aid and other State Aid funding); and• Land Acquisition Tracking.