

Policy Consideration: **Site Design Standards**
Status: **Draft for Consideration by the Highlands Council at
the September 28, 2006 Work Session**
Date: **September 26, 2006**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the goals of the Regional Master Plan is to ensure that growth, where it is permitted, is done in a manner that protects the Highlands environment from the individual and cumulative adverse impacts of that growth. Section 10.c.(9). One way to achieve this goal is to require that growth (in any of the Regional Master Plan's three district overlay zones), must follow certain site design requirements in order to protect natural resources and promote smart growth. Staff recommends that an applicant be required to satisfy site design standards during site plan review and that these standards include: conservation development (an approach that maximizes the use of open space, resource conservation and community character); green building (an approach that promotes that conservation and efficient use of energy and natural resources); low impact development (an approach designed to maintain, restore and enhance preexisting natural drainage patterns) and community and neighborhood design (an approach that promotes mixed uses, redevelopment, adaptive re-use, infill development and a choice of housing options). Staff is advancing categories and certain specific standards through this policy paper. Details will be developed during Pre-Conformance as set forth below.

I. STAFF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

(*) SITE SPECIFIC STANDARDS

[These standards are to be applied during site plan review. Following each bullet is language that is proposed for inclusion in the Policy Guidance Element of the Plan. Though Members will have the opportunity to review that language when you review the Policy Guidance Element, your input at this juncture would be very beneficial.]

1) Staff recommends the establishment of **Conservation Development** standards to maximize the use of open space, resource conservation and community character.

Approach – Efficient use of land

- Require compact development alternatives to utilize land more efficiently and maximize the opportunities for contiguous open space.

Implementation Strategies

Require municipal and county ordinances to include, at a minimum, the following development standards in support of efficient use of land and allow for relief of minimum percentages in redevelopment and infill projects also encourage additional strategies and best management practices:

- Require the clustering of development and a minimum percentage of the site devoted to preserve open spaces comprised of active recreation, passive recreation, trail systems,

and critical environmental areas, such as, steep slopes, habitat lands, wetlands, riparian corridors, streams, ponds, and forest.

- Require a landscape plan which specifies indigenous plant species wherever feasible.
- Require, where feasible, an open space component as an integral part of a site plan.
- Require that open space elements of a site plan be interwoven throughout to provide connections between the neighborhoods and the natural environment.

Rationale: The Highlands Act requires the development of Land Use Capability Map and minimum standards based upon the Resource Assessment and Smart Growth Component, Sections 11.a.(1), 11.a.(6) and 12. The RMP will apply a Conservation Development approach which is a creative land use technique that allows a community to guide growth to the most appropriate areas within a parcel of land to avoid impacts to the environment and to protect the character defining features of the property. For example Conservation Development reduces impacts through a site analysis that requires the maximum protection of environmentally sensitive areas first and then a flexible development pattern to address lot size or density.

2) Staff recommends the establishment of **Green Building** standards to promote the conservation and efficient use of energy and Highlands resources.

Approach - Green Building approaches for energy and resource efficiency

- Require the design and construction of energy efficient buildings to reduce air, water, and land pollution and environmental impacts from energy production and consumption.

Implementation Strategies

Require municipal and county ordinances to include the following development and redevelopment standards at a minimum in support of energy and resource efficiency and encourage additional strategies and best management practices:

- Require the design and construction of energy efficient structures for development and redevelopment.
- Require water conservation measures and techniques (water efficient landscaping, rain collection systems, use of greywater reuse systems to irrigate landscaping, eliminate the use of potable water for non-potable use, such as, landscape irrigation and toilet flushing).
- Require efficient landscape maintenance practices (use of greywater to irrigate landscaping, limit daytime lawn watering, require evapo-transpiration irrigation controllers to limit unnecessary watering, encourage native and drought-tolerant plant species).

- Require limitations on vegetative disturbance and clearing and grading to the necessary construction envelope.
- Require design that maximizes solar gain for winter warmth and minimizes sun exposure during high temperature summer conditions.
- Promote the re-use and recycling of building materials in demolition and adaptive re-use projects.

Rationale: The Highlands Act requires the development of Land Use Capability Map and minimum standards based upon the Resource Assessment and Smart Growth Component, Sections 11.a.(1), 11.a.(6) and 12. The RMP will consider the use of the LEED Green Building Rating System™ which encompasses the standards that many builders, architects, landscape architects, engineers and planners are incorporating into their professional disciplines. LEED is a rating system which gives points for meeting specific green building, sustainable design and smart growth goals. LEED standards have been developed and adopted for sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. The RMP will also consider existing local, state and federal programs that support green building policies.

3) Staff recommends **Low Impact Development** standards to protect the natural hydrologic features of the land.

Approach - Minimize Stormwater Impacts

- Require on-site stormwater management design that maintains, restores, and enhances, the pre-existing natural drainage patterns of the site. Site design shall minimize impervious cover as a means to increase stormwater infiltration and reduce stormwater runoff.

Implementation Strategies

Require municipal and county ordinances to include the following at a minimum in support of energy and resource efficiency and encourage additional strategies and best management practices:

- Require a site-specific hydrologic study for all development proposals that result in an increase in or alteration to pre-existing impervious cover or clearing of existing forest to predict and understand the velocity, volume and pattern of water flow into, through, and off the site.
- Require stormwater management systems to be based upon a “design with nature” approach.
- Require the use of vegetated channels, where feasible, rather than the standard concrete curb and gutter configuration, to decrease flow velocity and allow for stormwater filtration and infiltration.

- Require that the dimensional requirements for impervious surfaces be minimized, such as, streets, driveways, parking areas, and sidewalks and that they be supported with on-site stormwater management techniques.
- Require stormwater to be retained on site to the maximum extent possible and provide the maximum quality and quantity controls available.
- Require submission of a nonstructural stormwater management plan which provides for on-site infiltration and recharge of stormwater for development and redevelopment proposals to the maximum extent possible.
- Require stormwater management plans to make use of grass channels, dry swales, wet swales, infiltration basins, bioswales and water gardens, green roofs, and other low impact mechanisms, where feasible for stormwater attenuation.

Rationale: The Highlands Act requires the development of Land Use Capability Map and minimum standards based upon the Resource Assessment and Smart Growth Component, Sections 11.a.(1), 11.a.(6) and 12. Low Impact Development is an environmentally sensitive approach to storm water management that emphasizes conservation and the use of existing natural site features integrated with distributed, small scale storm water controls to more closely mimic natural hydrologic patterns in residential, commercial and industrial settings. LID best management practices involve comprehensive land planning and engineering design to maintain and enhance the hydrologic regime of urban lands and development within watersheds. LID standards and best management practices are supported by the New Jersey Stormwater Management Rules, N.J.A.C. 7:8 and the “New Jersey Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual” developed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in coordination with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, municipal engineers, county engineers, consulting firms, contractors, and environmental organizations.

4) Staff recommends **Community and Neighborhood Design** standards to promote development opportunities that support a variety and choice of housing options, mixed uses and redevelopment, adaptive re-use and infill development. The focus of the suggested policies in this section is on fostering growth and economic development according to efficient land use and sustainable policies.

Approach - foster growth and economic development according to efficient land use and sustainable policies.

- Require community and neighborhood design that supports a variety and choice of housing options, mixed uses and redevelopment, adaptive re-use and infill development.

Implementation Strategies

Require municipal and county ordinances to include the following at a minimum in support of community and neighborhood design and encourage additional strategies and best management practices:

- Require center-based, compact development alternatives and advocate for development and/or redevelopment in existing communities that can be served by existing infrastructure systems.
- Require and facilitate, where appropriate, the redevelopment of brownfields and greyfields, while limiting development on greenfields.
- Require accessibility to a wide range of housing types across a wide scale of market and rental prices to enable citizens from diverse economic and age groups to live within a community.
- Require site plan and subdivision regulations which foster mixed use developments. Where appropriate, require mixed use development.
- Require municipal master plan circulation elements to integrate with the land use elements and shall address local and regional transportation and transit interconnections.
- Require the development of comprehensive transportation plans at every level of government that advocate for pedestrian and bicycle access, green street policies, and context sensitive design.

Rationale:

The RMP will promote smart growth design principles that foster a strategic approach to development decisions which uses planning to guide, design, develop, revitalize and build communities for all stakeholders. The RMP Site Design Standards will promote a unique sense of community and place; preserve and enhance valuable natural and cultural resources; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; expand the range of transportation, employment and housing choices in a fiscally responsible manner; value long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over short term incremental geographically isolated actions; and promotes public health and healthy communities. These standards serve to support furtherance of the goals and requirements of the Highlands Act to encourage appropriate economic development opportunity throughout the Highlands Region. The Highlands Act requires the development of Land Use Capability Map and minimum standards based upon the Resource Assessment and Smart Growth Component, Sections 11.a.(1), 11.a.(6) and 12.

(*) POST ADOPTION, COORDINATION AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES

[Following each bullet is language that is proposed for inclusion in the Policy Guidance Element of the Plan. Though Members will have the opportunity to review that language when you review the Policy Guidance Element, your input at this juncture would be very beneficial.]

5) Staff recommends the following **Pre-Conformance Strategies:**

- Add detail to the Site Design Standards so that they are comprehensive and provide needed standards for county and municipal officials.

Rationale: RMP Implementation Strategies support the necessity to determine what activities, data and programs will be required of both the Highlands Council and municipal and county stakeholders during the Plan Conformance process as well as what initiatives will require longer term planning goals. Sections 11.a.(3), 14 and 15. The RMP is a “living document” and will continue to be refined and developed in support of regional planning goals. In order to facilitate regional planning goals it is imperative that the RMP have State, county and local support from all levels of government and the support of the stakeholders of the Highlands Region.

6) Staff recommends the following **Conformance** strategies:

- Require the inclusion of the Site Design Standards in municipal/county conformance documents, master plans, zoning and land use ordinances as appropriate.
- Facilitate a Site Design Standards visioning process with select municipalities in support of Conformance Guidelines.

Rationale: RMP Implementation Strategies support the necessity to determine what activities, data and programs will be required of both the Council and municipal and county stakeholders during the Plan Conformance process as well as what initiatives will require longer term planning goals. Sections 11.a.(3), 14 and 15. The RMP is a “living document” and will continue to be refined and developed in support of regional planning goals. In order to facilitate regional planning goals it is imperative that the RMP have State, County, and local support from all levels of government and the support of the stakeholders of the Highlands Region.

7) Staff recommends the following **5-year Resource Protection and Planning Goals:**

- Augment the Site Design Standards in support of regional planning initiatives.
- Develop an assessment protocol for evaluating implementation of the Site Design Standards.

Rationale: The Highlands Act requires the Highlands Council to periodically revise and update the RMP at least once every six years. Section 8.a. RMP Implementation Strategies support the necessity to determine what activities, data and programs will be required of both the Council and municipal and county stakeholders during the Plan Conformance process as well as what initiatives will require longer term planning goals. The RMP is a “living document” and will continue to be refined and developed in support of regional planning goals. In order to facilitate regional planning goals it is imperative that the RMP have State, County and local support from all levels of government and the support of the stakeholders of the Highlands Region. Sections 11.a.(3), 14 and 15.

8) Staff recommends the following **Coordination and Consistency Considerations:**

- Ensure state and federal funding is leveraged in support of RMP initiatives.

- Establish a Highlands Interagency Team that meets regularly at the Council offices to coordinate consistency amongst agencies.
- Coordinate with the Department of Community Affairs to evaluate Site Planning and Design Standards in support of a Residential Site Improvement Standards amendment and local ordinances specific to the Highlands Region.

Rationale: RMP Implementation Strategies support the necessity to determine what local, State and federal programs and policies may best be coordinated to promote the goals, purposes, policies, and provisions of the RMP. Sections 11.a.(4). The RMP is a “living document” and will continue to be refined and developed in support of regional planning goals. In order to facilitate regional planning goals it is imperative that the RMP have State, county and local support from all levels of government and the support of the stakeholders of the Highlands Region.

9) Staff recommends the following **Local Participation Considerations:**

- Provide education and technical support for Highlands Region Site Planning and Design Standards at the county and municipal level.
- Provide Highlands Region stakeholder education about RMP natural resource protection, energy conservation and subdivision and site planning protocols.

Rationale: RMP Implementation Strategies support the necessity to provide for the maximum feasible local government and public input into the Highlands Council's operations. Section 11.a.(3). The RMP is a “living document” and will continue to be refined and developed in support of regional planning goals. In order to facilitate regional planning goals it is imperative that the RMP have State, county and local support from all levels of government and the support of the stakeholders of the Highlands Region.

II. REQUIREMENTS OF THE HIGHLANDS ACT AND RMP GOALS RELATED TO REGIONAL MASTER PLAN STANDARDS:

Findings of the Highlands Act:

The Highlands Act includes specific legislative findings relating to the protection of water supplies:

“The Legislature further finds and declares that the protection of the New Jersey Highlands, because of its vital link to the future of the State's drinking water supplies and other key natural resources, is an issue of State level importance that **cannot be left to the uncoordinated land use decisions of 88 municipalities, seven counties, and a myriad of private landowners**; that the State should take action to delineate within the New Jersey Highlands a preservation area of exceptional natural resource value that includes watershed protection and other environmentally sensitive lands where stringent protection policies should be implemented; that **a regional approach to land use planning in the preservation area should be established to replace the existing uncoordinated system.**” Section 2. (emphasis added).

“The Legislature therefore determines, in the light of these findings set forth hereinabove, and with the intention of transforming them into action, that it is in the public interest of all the citizens of

the State of New Jersey to enact legislation setting forth **a comprehensive approach to the protection of the water and other natural resources of the New Jersey Highlands**; that this comprehensive approach should consist of the identification of a preservation area of the New Jersey Highlands that would be subjected to stringent water and natural resource protection standards, policies, planning, and regulation; that this comprehensive approach should also consist of the establishment of a Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council charged with the preparation of a regional master plan for the preservation area in the New Jersey Highlands as well as for the region in general; that this comprehensive approach should also include the adoption by the Department of Environmental Protection of stringent standards governing major development in the Highlands preservation area; that, because of the imminent peril that the ongoing rush of development poses for the New Jersey Highlands, immediate, interim standards should be imposed on the date of enactment of this act on major development in the preservation area of the New Jersey Highlands, followed subsequently by adoption by the department of appropriate rules and regulations; that it is appropriate to **encourage in certain areas of the New Jersey Highlands, consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and smart growth strategies and principles, appropriate patterns of compatible residential, commercial, and industrial development, redevelopment, and economic growth, in or adjacent to areas already utilized for such purposes, and to discourage piecemeal, scattered, and inappropriate development, in order to accommodate local and regional growth and economic development in an orderly way while protecting the Highlands environment from the individual and cumulative adverse impacts thereof**; that the maintenance of agricultural production and a positive agricultural business climate should be encouraged to the maximum extent possible wherever appropriate in the New Jersey Highlands; and that all such aforementioned measures should be guided, in heart, mind, and spirit, by an abiding and generously given commitment to protecting the incomparable water resources and natural beauty of the New Jersey Highlands so as to preserve them intact, in trust, forever for the pleasure, enjoyment, and use of future generations while also providing every conceivable opportunity for appropriate economic growth and development to advance the quality of life of the residents of the region and the entire State. Section 2. (emphasis added).

Goals of the Highlands Act:

In accordance with Section 10 of the Highlands Act, the overarching goal of the Regional Master Plan “with respect to the entire Highlands Region shall be to protect and enhance the significant values of the resources thereof in a manner which is consistent with the purposes and provisions of this act.” Section 10.a.

For examination of Site Design standards, all of the goals are included with respect to the Preservation Area:

- protect, restore, and enhance the quality and quantity of surface and ground waters. Section 10.b.(1).
- preserve extensive and, to the maximum extent possible, contiguous areas of land in its natural state, thereby ensuring the continuation of a Highlands environment which contains the unique and significant natural, scenic, and other resources representative of the Highlands Region. Section 10.b.(2).
- protect the natural, scenic, and other resources of the Highlands Region, including but not limited to contiguous forests, wetlands, vegetated stream corridors, steep slopes, and critical habitat for fauna and flora. Section 10.b.(3).

- preserve farmland and historic sites and other historic resources. Section 10.b.(4).
- preserve outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, on publicly owned land. Section 10.b.(5).
- promote conservation of water resources. Section 10.b.(6).
- promote brownfield remediation and redevelopment. Section 10.b.(7).
- promote compatible agricultural, horticultural, recreational, and cultural uses and opportunities within the framework of protecting the Highlands environment. Section 10.b.(8).
- prohibit or limit to the maximum extent possible construction or development which is incompatible with preservation of this unique area. Section 10.b.(9).

In addition, the goals with respect to the Planning Area shall be to:

- protect, restore, and enhance the quality and quantity of surface and ground waters. Section 10.c.(1).
- preserve to the maximum extent possible any environmentally sensitive lands and other lands needed for recreation and conservation purposes. Section 10.c.(2).
- protect and maintain the essential character of the Highlands environment. Section 10.c.(3).
- preserve farmland and historic sites and other historic resources. Section 10.c.(4).
- promote the continuation and expansion of agricultural, horticultural, recreational, and cultural uses and opportunities. Section 10.c.(5).
- preserve outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, on publicly owned land. Section 10.c.(6).
- promote conservation of water resources. Section 10.c.(7).
- promote brownfield remediation and redevelopment. Section 10.c.(8).
- encourage, consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and smart growth strategies and principles, appropriate patterns of compatible residential, commercial, and industrial development, redevelopment, and economic growth, in or adjacent to areas already utilized for such purposes, and discourage piecemeal, scattered, and inappropriate development, in order to accommodate local and regional growth and economic development in an orderly way while protecting the Highlands environment from the individual and cumulative adverse impacts thereof. Section 10.c.(9).
- promote a sound, balanced transportation system that is consistent with smart growth strategies and principles and which preserves mobility in the Highlands Region. Section 10.c.(10).

Requirements of the Highlands Act:

Resource Assessment

The Highlands Act includes specific requirements relating to protection of ground water recharge areas requiring the development of a Resource Assessment for the Highlands Region which “(a) determines the amount and type of human development and activity which the ecosystem of the Highlands Region can sustain while still maintaining the overall ecological values thereof, with special reference to surface and ground water quality and supply; contiguous forests and woodlands; endangered and threatened animals, plants, and biotic communities; ecological factors relating to the protection and enhancement of agricultural or horticultural production or activity; air quality; and other appropriate considerations affecting the ecological integrity of the Highlands Region; and

(b) includes an assessment of scenic, aesthetic, cultural, historic, open space, farmland, and outdoor recreation resources of the region, together with a determination of overall policies required to maintain and enhance such resources.” Section 11.a.(1)(a) and (b).

Smart Growth Component

The Highlands Act require the development of a Smart Growth component that includes “an assessment, based upon the resource assessment prepared pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection a. of this section, of opportunities for appropriate development, redevelopment, and economic growth, and a transfer of development rights program which shall include **consideration of public investment priorities, infrastructure investments, economic development, revitalization, housing, transportation, energy resources, waste management, recycling, brownfields, and design such as mixed-use, compact design, and transit villages.** In preparing this component, the council shall:

- (a) prepare a land use capability map;
- (b) identify existing developed areas capable of sustaining redevelopment activities and investment;
- (c) identify undeveloped areas in the planning area, which are not significantly constrained by environmental limitations such as steep slopes, wetlands, or dense forests, are not prime agricultural areas, and are located near or adjacent to existing development and infrastructure, that could be developed;
- (d) identify transportation, water, wastewater, and power infrastructure that would support or limit development and redevelopment in the planning area. This analysis shall also provide proposed densities for development, redevelopment, or voluntary receiving zones for the transfer of development rights;
- (e) identify potential voluntary receiving zones in the planning area for the transfer of development rights through the appropriate expansion of infrastructure or the modified uses of existing infrastructure;
- (f) **issue model minimum standards for municipal and county master planning and development regulations outside of the preservation area, including density standards for center-based development to encourage, where appropriate, the adoption of such standards;**
- (g) identify special critical environmental areas and other critical natural resource lands where development should be limited; and
- (h) identify areas appropriate for redevelopment and set appropriate density standards for redevelopment. Any area identified for possible redevelopment pursuant to this subparagraph shall be either a brownfield site designated by the Department of Environmental Protection or a site at which at least 70% of the area thereof is covered with impervious surface. (emphasis added).

Preservation Area Assessment

For the Preservation Area, Section 12 of the Highlands Act requires “a land use capability map and a **comprehensive statement of policies for planning and managing the development and use of land in the preservation area,** which shall be based upon, comply with, and implement the environmental standards” adopted by NJDEP and the Resource Assessment prepared the Highlands Council under Section 11. Section 12.(emphasis added).

Section 12 specifically requires implementation “that will ensure the continued, uniform, and consistent protection of the Highlands Region in accordance with the goals, purposes, policies, and provisions of this act, and shall include:

- a. a preservation zone element that identifies zones within the preservation area where development shall not occur in order to protect water resources and environmentally sensitive lands and which

shall be permanently preserved through use of a variety of tools, including but not limited to land acquisition and the transfer of development rights; and

b. minimum standards governing municipal and county master planning, development regulations, and other regulations concerning the development and use of land in the preservation area, including, but not limited to, standards for minimum lot sizes and stream setbacks, construction on steep slopes, maximum appropriate population densities, and regulated or prohibited uses for specific portions of the preservation area. Section 12. (emphasis added).

Local Participation Component

A component to provide for the maximum feasible local government and public input into the council's operations, which shall include a framework for developing policies for the planning area in conjunction with those local government units in the planning area who choose to conform to the regional master plan. Section 11.a.(3).

Coordination and Consistency Component

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 regional master plan, 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 regional master plan. Section 11.a.(4).

III. TECHNICAL BASIS AND JUSTIFICATION FOR STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highlands Act calls a new approach to land use decision-making based on a comprehensive, regional protection of the Highlands Region and its critical resources. Its passage signaled a critical change in thinking about how land use decisions should be made. The legislation declared that it is time for a change in how our resources are thought about, how our decisions are made, and how lands are ultimately managed. The Legislature called for a departure from “the uncoordinated land use decisions” of the past and the “piecemeal scattered and inappropriate development” that resulted from those decisions. (Section 2). The Highlands Act called for region-wide resource protection, conservation and management of our natural and built resources, and site design principles to foster efficient patterns of compatible development and economic growth.

The Regional Master Plan will be organized to meet each of these objectives and will propose policies and strategies to support their implementation. A planning framework has been established to integrate the full range of issues associated with Highlands protection from the macro to the micro scale; from regional protection decisions to site specific sustainable design decisions. Smart growth and green strategies are therefore woven throughout the RMP, and will be incorporated in the strategies and policies that lead to the development of the Land Use Capability Map (LUCM).

Smart growth and sustainable design are complementary planning approaches. Smart growth guides development toward appropriate locations where efficient infrastructure supports neighborhoods of people, houses, jobs, schools, and open spaces. Sustainable design balances the various elements of the built and natural landscape to deliver long term beneficial results for the environment, the

economy and our society. Together sustainable and smart growth policies serve as integral components of every land use management decision at every scale in the Highlands.

The concept of sustainability and its application to land use management guides regional preservation decisions (smart conservation) and helps to identify potential areas that may be appropriate for growth. At the more micro scale of site design, sustainable smart growth practices allow for the implementation of sustainable or “green” building practices. A green building process incorporates environmental considerations into every phase of development and embraces a holistic approach throughout each decision step.

While smart growth is a laudable concept, the true success is in the implementation. Smart growth establishes the principles and framework; and from these we can draw a series of implementation strategies designed to achieve each of the smart growth principles. These strategies can be organized and advanced in the RMP through the use of site design and sustainable green policies and standards.

The overall goal of protecting and enhancing the significant values of the resources of the Highlands is clearly a major facet of design and sustainable green standards. Locating, designing and constructing structures to be energy and resource efficient with minimal impact on the environment are a major premise of green, sustainable thinking. Likewise, design and sustainable green standards call for preservation of critical environmental areas, farmland, natural beauty and open spaces. Smart growth advocates and practitioners recognize the value of these natural open spaces to provide environmental quality and health benefits for both people and plant and animal wildlife. Design and sustainable land use management, which includes smart conservation, preserves land areas that help protect surface and ground water resources.

Site Design and green policy standards will be developed for individual RMP elements, such as Highlands open waters, significant natural areas, or growth areas. These standards were developed by building upon the research and models of local, state, and national programs. The standards and guidelines devised for the Highlands have been organized according to three major encompassing categories: Regional Resource Protection that focus on Highlands resource protection, restoration and enhancement; Smart Design Standards that promote regional conservation and resource efficiency; and Regional Growth Standards that support community development and redevelopment.

The policies and standards which are reported here are a partial list of the policies and standards which are proposed to be included in the RMP. They have been drawn from those already presented to the Council for their consideration; as well those related to green policies, efficient land development, and conservation measures. They will continue to be developed as the RMP is drafted and will be refined and added to during the pre-conformance and conformance time periods to follow.

The Pre-Conformance timeframe will allow for the Highlands Region Site Planning and Design Standards to be finalized. During Conformance counties and municipalities will work with the Highlands Council in order to align local planning documents, standards and ordinances with the RMP.

The five year planning goals will continue to recognize and support smart growth principles, green practices and innovative approaches for the Highlands Region. The Coordination and Consistency program will serve as a mechanism to leverage innovative/alternative approaches and RMP Standards with federal and state agency support. The Local Participation program is critical to RMP implementation and success. Local stakeholders and all levels of government will require education, technical support and a clear and concise understanding of the Conformance process.

IV. GLOSSARY

Conservation Development – a creative land use technique that allows a community to guide growth to the most appropriate areas within a parcel of land to avoid impacts to the environment and to protect the character defining features of the property. *The Rhode Island Conservation Development Manual*

Green Homes Office - The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' is charged with advocating, educating and providing technical assistance relative to green design for homes in the State. Its mission is to fundamentally improve the environmental performance, energy efficiency, quality, and affordability of housing in New Jersey. The Office oversees several green programs: NJ Affordable Green (NJAG), NJ High Performance Homes, and NJ Home Energy Raters Alliance.

Green Infrastructure – the process of integrating ecological systems and natural open space into the fabric of development.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) - The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is a coalition of leaders from all segments of the building industry who are working to facilitate the development of environmentally-responsible, sustainable and healthy places to live and work. It was formed in 1993 with a mission to accelerate the adoption of green building practices, technologies, policies and standards.

LEED Green Building Rating System™ – The LEED rating system encompasses the standards that many builders, architects, landscape architects, engineers and planners are incorporating into their professional disciplines. LEED is a rating system which gives points for meeting specific green building, sustainable design and smart growth goals. LEED standards have been developed and adopted for sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality.

Location Efficiency - includes a prerequisite for transportation efficiency and another for water and stormwater infrastructure efficiency. Additional credits are proposed to be earned through such locational choices as brownfields redevelopment, infill, access to public spaces and schools and the reduction of automobile dependence.

Low Impact Development (LID) Best Management Practices – Low Impact Development is an environmentally sensitive approach to storm water management that emphasizes conservation and the use of existing natural site features integrated with distributed, small scale storm water controls to more closely mimic natural hydrologic patterns in residential, commercial and industrial settings. LID best management practices involve comprehensive land planning and engineering design to maintain and enhance the hydrologic regime of urban lands and development within

watersheds. LID standards and best management practices are supported by the New Jersey Stormwater Management Rules, N.J.A.C. 7:8 and the “New Jersey Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual” developed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in coordination with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, municipal engineers, county engineers, consulting firms, contractors, and environmental organizations.

National Association of Home Builders developed the Model Green Home Building Guidelines (NAHB Guidelines) - highlight ways that mainstream home builders can incorporate environmental concerns into a holistic approach to home construction. The NAHB Guidelines are organized according to a series of guiding principles related to facets of their industry: Lot design, preparation, and development; resource efficiency; energy efficiency; water efficiency; indoor environmental quality; operation, maintenance and homeowner education; and global impact.

New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Financing Agency (NJHMFA) - provides low cost financing for developers of affordable housing and is dedicated to implementing policies and practices to help transform the market and aid the development of more sustainable and energy efficient affordable housing. They are coordinating with the Green Homes Office to develop green building policies, initiatives and incentives within the Agency. NJHMFA also has two proposed energy efficiency programs:

- ☀ SEERMAH: designed to assist property managers assess, plan for, and finance improvements to their multi-family affordable housing properties that will benefit the long-term health of the residents, the property and the environment. The main focus of the program is energy.
- ☀ SUNLIT (Solar Underwriting with Low Income Tax Credits): will utilize and combine existing financing programs to help incorporate photovoltaic (PV) technology into new affordable rental housing projects.

Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) – the Site Improvement Advisory Board established by (C.40:55D-40.3) and the Department of Community Affairs in accordance with (C.40:55D-40.1 et seq.) develops and oversees the site improvement standards for residential development known as the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS).

Smart Code – a form-based approach model that integrates development code in a streamlined format incorporating Smart Growth principles, New Urbanism principles, Transect-based planning, environmental and zoning regulations, and regional, community and building-scaled design provisions. *Duany Plater-Zybeck and Company and Placemakers.com – Smart Code Manual Version 8*

Smart Growth – A strategic approach to development decisions which uses “planning to guide, design, develop, revitalize and build communities for all that: have a unique sense of community and place; preserve and enhance valuable natural and cultural resources; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; expand the range of transportation, employment and housing choices in a fiscally responsible manner; value long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over short term incremental geographically isolated actions; and promotes public health and healthy communities.” *American Planning Association, Policy Guide on Smart Growth*

Specially Planned Area - Previously developed lands that provide opportunities for redevelopment, including infill and adaptive reuse, based on limited resource constraints due to past

development patterns. Within the Preservation Area a Specially Planned Area is limited to an area or site that contains at least 70% impervious area or is a Brownfield site determined to be Specially Planned Area by the Highlands Council and NJDEP.

Sustainable – Capable of equitably meeting the vital human needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by preserving and protecting the area’s ecosystems and natural resources. “The concept of sustainability describes a condition in which humans use of natural resources, required for the continuation of life, is in balance with Nature’s ability to replenish them.” *American Planning Association, Policy Guide on Planning for Sustainability*