



# State of New Jersey

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*Lt. Governor*

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*Executive Director*

## HIGHLANDS REGIONAL MASTER PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM MUNICIPAL CENTRAL PUBLIC WORKSHOP

**DATE:** December 15, 2014

**TIME:** 7:00PM – 9:00PM

**LOCATION:** County College of Morris  
214 Center Grove Road  
Randolph, NJ

### PARTICIPANTS:

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Peter	Dolan	Resident
CA	Donati	Resident
Warren	Favano	Resident
Giulia	Groteneis	Resident
Helen	Heinrich	NJ Farm Bureau
Hank	Klumpp	Resident
Steven	Lydon	Resident
David	Peifer	ANJEC
Steph	Shaw	Resident
Greg	Soche	Resident
Julia	Somers	NJ Highlands Coalition
Maribeth	Thomas	Resident
Erica	Van Auken	NJ Highlands Coalition
Margaret	Nordstrom	NJ Highlands Council - Staff
Chris	Danis	NJ Highlands Council - Staff
Keri	Benscoter	NJ Highlands Council - Staff
Maryjude	Haddock-Weiler	NJ Highlands Council - Staff
James	Humphries	NJ Highlands Council - Staff
Corey	Piasecki	NJ Highlands Council - Staff
Chris	Ross	NJ Highlands Council - Staff
Rob	Freudenberg	Regional Plan Association
Courtenay	Mercer	Regional Plan Association
Janani	Shankaran	Regional Plan Association

# HIGHLANDS REGIONAL MASTER PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM



## **PURPOSE:**

To provide an overview of the Highlands Regional Master Plan Monitoring Program and process, receive feedback on draft indicator topics, and collect other general feedback as it relates to the Highlands program areas.

## **ACTIVITIES:**

Participants were invited to visit topic-area stations, facilitated by Highlands Council staff, to vote on indicator topics and respond to targeted questions. For indicators, participants were asked to use up to three dots per topic area to vote on the indicator topic(s) most important for monitoring. Participants were asked to respond to questions using post-it notes. Those with any general comments or questions were invited to speak with any member of the Highlands Council staff. Topic areas/stations included:

- Introduction: Learn about the Highlands Act, the Highlands Regional Master Plan and the monitoring program.
- Land Owner Equity
- Resident and Business Owner Concerns
- Agriculture & Forest Sustainability
- Land Use
- Water Resources & Lake Management
- Water & Sewer Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Transportation, Transit & Air Quality
- Conformance
- General Questions & Comment

Participants were encouraged to submit additional comments on the online web comment portal.

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## RESULTS:

### Station: Economic Development

Indicator Topic	Number of Votes
Income	
Employment	2
Wages	
Labor Force Qualifications	1
Business	3
Population w/characteristics	1
Households w/characteristics	
Housing units w/characteristics	
Building Permits	2
Property Value	6
Non-residential Lease Rates	
Equalized Property Values	1
Property Tax Revenue	1
Household Expenditures/Revenues	
Foreclosures	1
School Enrollment	
Tourism	1
Farm Labor	
National Agriculture Statistics	
Scenic Corridors	2
Viewsheds	1
Cultural Resources	2
Historic Resources	
Archeological Resources	1
Recreational Areas & Trails	1
Preserved Open Space	1

### **General Comments on Indicators:**

- The RMP is focused on conservation, rather than planning. Should plan for economic growth, housing and jobs in the region
- Scenic resources need to be recognized and protected

## HIGHLANDS REGIONAL MASTER PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM



- Cultural resources are historic resources are cultural resources

**How can the Highlands Council improve outreach, planning and education to help attract and retain business in the region?**

*No comments*

**How can the Highlands Council assist in the expansion and promotion of tourism in the region?**

- Support public access to state parks/forests via hiking trails. Promote involvement in trail volunteer events and opportunities
- Tourism is the future of the Highlands

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## Station: Water Resources & Lake Management

Indicator Topic	Number of Votes
Open Waters	2
Wetlands	1
Reservoirs	3
Water Quality	1
Water Quantity (flow & levels)	1
Aquifers	5
Flood Areas	2
Conservation lands	1
Contaminants	2
Septic Density	3
Stormwater Management	2
Prime GW Recharge Areas	4

### **What steps can the Highlands Council take to support water quality improvements in the Highlands region?**

- Encourage, where appropriate, inter-basin transfers in order to reduce dependence of septic system
- Should be interaction and cooperation on water quantity and quality between the adjacent states, especially NYS

### **What steps can the Highlands Council take to support lake management in the Highlands region?**

- Attack non-point pollution sources, especially runoff from streets and roads
- Encourage septic upgrades and inter-basin sewage flows

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## Station: Water & Sewer Infrastructure

Indicator Topic	Number of Votes
Wastewater Treatment (existing areas served & sewer service areas)	8
Septic Management	9
Water Supply (existing areas served)	3
Wellhead Protection Areas	2

### **General Comments on Indicators:**

- Drop the nitrate dilution model or use numbers based on site specific reality water and wastewater infrastructure in the preservation area that services the planning area should be able to be expanded and improved
- Important to correct water supply deficits - supply is needed outside Highlands to improve state economy
- Septic density standards are too restrictive and not based on science and engineering
- Highlands RMP standards and definitions should be the same as DEP
- Important to maintain deep ground water recharge

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## Station: Land Use

Indicator Topic	Number of Votes
Land use capacity	5
Housing	4
Community Facilities	1
Redevelopment	4
Centers	5

### **How can the Highlands Council better assist communities that wish to promote infill development and redevelopment?**

- Liberalize sewer permit, numbers – OU site, gray water, etc.
- Redevelopment and center development should be encouraged by discounting sanitary flows that might be transferred out of the basin

# HIGHLANDS REGIONAL MASTER PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM



## Station: Agriculture & Forestry

Indicator Topic	Number of Votes
Important Farmland Soils	3
Crop production	1
Livestock production	2
Value added products	2
Agricultural labor	
Agricultural business	4
Preserved Farmland	1
Right to Farm	1
Forests	7
Riparian Areas	2
Critical Habitat	5
Conservation Lands	4

### **What steps can the Highlands Council take to better support and promote the agriculture industry in the Highlands?**

- How many new ag enterprises, crops, value added products development since 2004?
- Push conformance towns to look at farms as economic engines

### **What steps can the Highlands Council take to better protect large contiguous forests in the Highlands?**

- Encourage public access via contiguous hiking trail systems
- Provide some mechanism for landowners to get paid for value comparable to non-Highlands property for fee and easements
- Implement TDR program that works, encourage high density development
- Emphasize importance of protecting/preserving forested lands of all size parcels
- Require TDR participation to maintain ag lands, forest and aquifers
- Need program to buy easements on forest land
- Assess forest condition, health and not just size



# HIGHLANDS REGIONAL MASTER PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM



## Station: Transportation, Transit & Air Quality

Indicator Topic	Number of Votes
Commuting Patterns	6
Transit Options	5
Freight Rail Connections	1
Air Quality	2
Health Impacts	4

### **General Comments on Indicators:**

- Index major stationary sources - power plants, etc.
- Measure toxic air emitters

### **What public transportation improvements would you like to see in the Highlands in the near and long term?**

- Congestion pricing on all state highways
- More transit villages
- Use more transit to encourage economic development in the right places, bus, shuttle lines and connections
- Increase jobs in Sussex County to improve air quality up there

**Station: Resident & Business Owner Concerns**

**How could communication between the Highlands Council, and residents and business owners be improved?**

- Link business groups, chambers of commerce, business owners, producers
- Towns must not make exemptions like these expensive and over-regulated

**What would you change about the Highlands landowner equity policies?**

- Science
- Land equity?? 11 years
- Funding for land owners at next to full value if they sell to conserve or restrict via easements
- Dissolve it
- TDR 2004 not working, 18 months, 4 years, 6 years, 11 years still not working
- The TDR program was supposed to be in place prior to the adoption of the RMP. There may be a policy on land owner equity but there is no actual program

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### Station: Conformance

**Has plan conformance been a positive or negative experience in your municipality? Please explain.**

- Neutral, personally. Professionally I would like to see it happening faster
- Plan conformance has been positive. Placed focus on natural resources.
- Negative – long, difficult process, seems to focus on process rather than progress

**Do you have any suggestions to improve the plan conformance process?**

- RMP is, in one volume, overwhelming.
- Stop the use of the checklist ordinance for plan conformance. Process needs to be more transparent
- Plan conformance process has a start, but then the process gets fuzzy.
- We need the protective land use ordinances asap
- See a final Highlands land use ordinance with all environmental protections included

# HIGHLANDS REGIONAL MASTER PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM



## Station: General Comments & Questions

### **General Comments & Questions:**

- Public comments to be 10 minutes or more at Highlands meetings
- Comments made through the web portal should be able to be viewed by the public as they were submitted, instead of waiting for them to be reviewed and responses issued