



# State of New Jersey

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## HIGHLANDS REGIONAL MASTER PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM HISTORIC, CULTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, AND SCENIC RESOURCES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**DATE:** December 15, 2015  
**TIME:** 3:30PM - 5:30PM  
**LOCATION:** Highlands Council Office  
100 North Road  
Chester, NJ

**ATTENDEES:**

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Dennis	Bertrand	Dennis Bertrand Associates
Peter	Dolan	NY-NJ Trail Conference
Janet	Foster	NJ Historic Review Board
Wilma	Frey	NJ Conservation Foundation
Elliott	Ruga	NJ Highlands Coalition
Dan	Saunders	NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection
Marianne	Walsh	E2PM
Margaret	Nordstrom	NJ Highlands Council – Executive Director
Chris	Danis	NJ Highlands Council – Staff
Maryjude	Haddock-Weiler	NJ Highlands Council – Staff
Corey	Piasecki	NJ Highlands Council – Staff
Ellis	Calvin	Regional Plan Association
Courtenay	Mercer	Regional Plan Association

## **MEETING PURPOSE:**

Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) serve to engage those with specific technical content knowledge across the ten topic areas included in the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP). TAC membership represents academic institutions, business and industry, regulatory agencies, and non-government organizations each providing a unique perspective on their area of expertise. Each TAC will meet two times over the course of the RMP Monitoring Program project.

The purpose of TAC Meeting 1 was to review of the draft proposed indicators under consideration for analysis, as well as sample indicator reports demonstrating the type of output that is anticipated to be included in the Monitoring Program Recommendation Report (MPRR). As time allowed, the TAC could discuss potential milestones.

## **MEETING SUMMARY:**

The meeting opened with welcome remarks by the MPRR project consultant, Courtenay Mercer, New Jersey Director at Regional Plan Association (RPA). After attendees introduced themselves, Ms. Mercer provided an overview of the meeting purpose and an explanation of the meeting materials, which included the Agenda, RMP Goals information sheet, Briefing Memo, and Draft Indicator Spreadsheets.

Participants were presented with several general questions regarding implementation indicators in the MPRR, including:

- Do the indicators adequately analyze the Historic, Cultural, Archaeological and Scenic Resources goals and policies of the RMP? Are there any missing indicators, or are any indicators listed in an inappropriate tier?
- For the sample indicators, does the proposed MPRR format present the indicator clearly (in its narrative, tables, charts, and maps)?
- For each indicator, what may serve as the appropriate corresponding milestone?

The TAC first discussed the draft proposed Tier 1 indicators (those with the strongest nexus to the goal and policies of the RMP), which would be analyzed as part of the MPRR.

Stewardship was raised as a critical issue in Historic, Cultural, Archaeological, and Scenic Resources. Only a small number of historic properties may have been demolished, but more may already or soon be lost due to neglect and poor stewardship. Even historic properties acquired by public entities like the Green Acres program are in a variety of conditions—some are repurposed, while others may be neglected or demolished. Research such as surveys or site visits may be necessary. With regards to the stewardship of historic structures on State-owned land, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) representative explained that they are involved in the determination as to whether a structure is saved, primarily based on whether it is habitable. Further, SHPO works to identify local stewardship partner organizations to maintain these structures.

It was suggested that occupied buildings are generally well maintained, while vacant buildings are at greatest risk of neglect. Moreover, structures owned by private entities are generally better maintained. Participants suggested identifying public and non-profit owned historic properties, and then evaluate the rate of deterioration through site visits to a representative sample. This task will be referred to the Science and Research Agenda.

Participants wondered how the true loss of a historic property could be measured. The recent example of the Greystone property appears as a single property out of hundreds, yet the impact was greater than the impression given by the numbers alone. Moreover, demolitions of contributing structures within a Historic District are not captured in the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) inventory. Participants suggested gathering information from county and municipal historic organizations. As a Science and Research Agenda item, the Highlands Council and SHPO could create a strategy to collect information from locals.

Participants discussed the possibility of adding an indicator to track public funds spent on historic preservation and rehabilitation; as it is different from public funds spend on open space preservation. The ability to get the necessary data is unknown, but the likely sources of data are the NJ Historic Trust and the counties.

Participants asked whether the Highlands Council requires historic preservation plans as part of Plan Conformance, to which Highlands staff answered that while the Act uses the word “shall” relative to historic resources, currently historic resource protection is considered a voluntary component of Plan Conformance. It was also clarified that SHPO is included in the Highlands project review process. This is why SHPO places a priority on compiling a comprehensive list of the historic properties and up-to-date data on demolitions is less of a priority at the moment.

Participants asked for clarification regarding the recreation-related indicators, and questioned the need to measure it in terms of unit of population. Instead, looking at facilities per municipality may be more useful for the Highlands Region. It should also be tied to the goals of the RMP. Participants felt trails were the most important recreation facility to be included in the indicator analysis. The NY-NJ Trail Conference can provide up-to-date data, even for trails the organization does not maintain. Participants also felt the Appalachian Trail should be included in any report on the scenic or recreational resources of the Highlands Region.

In terms of scenic resources, the Highlands Council identified a baseline inventory of scenic resources for the RMP. Subsequent to the adoption of the RMP, procedures were adopted for municipalities and counties (and organizations in partnership with municipalities and counties) to nominate additional scenic resources. To date, no additional scenic resources have been nominated. Participants recommended stronger outreach for this program. There are categories of scenic resources recognized in the procedures, such as cultural landscapes or scenic byways that were not included in the initial Highlands scenic resource inventory, but could be nominated. It was noted that the Highlands Scenic Inventory currently includes a robust variety of preserved lands, but does not identify critical vistas. It was suggested that the Scenic Resource Inventory be refined to identify critical vistas. The NY-NJ Trail Conference has a viewshed inventory that could inform the Highlands scenic resource inventory in this regard. The Scenic Resource Inventory indicator should track: 1) change in the Scenic Resource Inventory extent, and 2) new development and preservation

in the critical vista areas. The critical vista identification should be completed as part of the Science and Research Agenda, so as to allow future tracking of development and preservation.

Ultimately, with regard to the various scenic, cultural and historic resource indicators, the TAC recommended the creation of a Cultural Resource Inventory that would serve as a baseline for this MPRR, and could be tracked going forward. The Inventory should include scenic resources and identified critical vistas, open space, trails, and historic resources.

Participants then provided feedback on Historic, Cultural, Archaeological, and Scenic Resources-related indicators that fall under other topic areas. Participants suggested that the Tourism Plans indicator in the Implementation topic area be linked with Historic, Cultural, Archaeological, and Scenic Resources topic area. There is a strong link between the cultural, scenic, and historic resources, tourism, and economic development. West Milford's investment in trail kiosks was cited as an example of this link. Participants felt the Community Character Index (in the Economic Development topic area), was not practical and is at least partially accounted for in the Scenic Resources Inventory.

Ms. Mercer then reviewed the final proposed changes to the Historic, Cultural, Archaeological, and Scenic Resources indicators:

**Cultural Resource Inventory (new indicator):**

- Add new indicator that measures change in development or preservation of scenic resources and critical vistas, open space, trails, and historic resources.
- Baseline inventory for this MPRR, then measure change going forward

**Distribution of Recreation Capacity:**

- Move to Tier 2 in favor of new Cultural Index

**Educational Institutions:**

- Move to Tier 2 in favor of new Cultural Index

**Historic and Cultural Facilities:**

- Refine only to address historic properties – revise title to Historic Resource Inventory
- Add stewardship tracking of public and non-profit owned historic properties (note that this is a Science and Research Agenda item)
- Highlands Council and SHPO create a process to gather local historic property information from local organizations

**Historic Resource Public Investment (new indicator):**

- Add new indicator to track public investment in the preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources

**Recreational Amenities:**

- Move to Tier 2 in favor of new Cultural Index

**Scenic Resource Inventory:**

- Refine to include critical scenic vistas (Science and Research Agenda)
- Add tracking development and preservation in critical vista areas

## **REVISED DRAFT HISTORIC, CULTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, AND SCENIC INDICATORS:**

### **TIER 1 INDICATORS:**

- **Cultural Resource Inventory:** Measures change in development or preservation of scenic resources and critical vistas, open space, trails, and historic resources.
- **Historic Resources Inventory:** Identifies the number, location, and change in status of historic resources, as well as stewardship of public and non-profit owned historic resources.
- **Historic Resource Public Investment:** Tracks public investment in the preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources.
- **Scenic Resources Inventory:** Measures change in the extent of the Scenic Resource Inventory and change in development or preservation of critical vista areas.

### **TIER 2 AND 3 INDICATORS:**

- **Distribution of Recreational Capacity:** Measures recreational facilities per unit of population.
- **Educational Institutions:** Identifies the number and location of educational institutions.
- **Passive and Active Recreation:** Measures the proportion of recreational amenities that are passive versus active.
- **Recreational Amenities:** Inventory of the number and location of recreational amenities.