

Process Summary

In developing this baseline *Monitoring Program Recommendation Report (MPRR)*, the Highlands Council constructed a process that ensured public participation and technical review, and which could serve as a foundation for ongoing monitoring.

Pinwheel Vista / Vernon Township

Initial Public Comment

An initial public comment period was held from September 15, 2014 through April 30, 2015 to gather public input in support of the development of indicators and milestones that would help provide metrics for measuring progress on achieving the goals of the Highlands Act and RMP. The comment period was announced via public notice and promoted via direct communication with municipalities, counties, and other constituent groups and through media channels.

More than 110 comments were received via a web comment portal and through traditional means. All comments were categorized based on topic areas identified in the RMP. A Comment Response document and Comment Log, including searchable comment database, were posted to the website in May 2016.

Targeted Stakeholder Meetings

Facilitated, small-group, invitation-based meetings were held in late 2014 and early 2015 with representatives from state agencies, county and local government, and non-governmental organizations. These sessions were technical in nature and designed to garner input on potential indicators that emerged from the public comment period and data availability related to the proposed indicators. A briefing book was posted to the Highlands Council website in advance of the sessions and meeting summaries were made public following the sessions.

Stakeholder Outreach Workshops

Workshop-style sessions designed to provide a stakeholder forum for groups that were too large or diverse to accommodate in smaller sessions were held in late 2014 and early 2015. These meetings were open to the public, announced via public notice, and promoted through municipalities, counties and media channels.

In an effort to provide a reasonably convenient location for attendees throughout the Highlands Region, sessions were held at County College of Morris in Randolph (Morris County), Sussex County Technical School in Sparta (Sussex County), and the Oldwick Fire Company Social Hall in Oldwick (Hunterdon County).

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings

In early 2015, the Highlands Council worked to identify membership for and establish Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) to help inform development of indicators and milestones. Candidates from government, academia, the nonprofit and for-profit business community, and the general public were considered based on expertise spanning content areas of the Regional Master Plan (RMP). TACs were established for each of the topic areas identified in this report.

Facilitated work sessions designed to review indicator and milestone findings, and provide input toward monitoring activities for the 2015-2025 period, were held at the Highlands Council office in December 2015. Sessions were organized by topic areas reflective of the RMP. A briefing book was posted to the Highlands Council website in advance of the sessions and meeting summaries were subsequently made public.

Indicator Analysis and Methodology

As a result of meetings and work sessions with key stakeholder groups, sister agencies, and technical advisory committees, the list of possible indicators for measuring progress related to the RMP was refined to include only those indicators that were directly related to the RMP and for which valid datasets for measurement were available.

Indicator analysis methodologies were then developed by the project consultant in collaboration with Highlands Council technical staff. Datasets were identified and detailed instructions written for how analysis of the identified indicator is to be performed. The scope and scale of the analysis and projected output were also identified. These documented methodologies ensure a platform for consistent monitoring and measurement over time. Methodologies were then used by the project consultant to independently conduct the analysis with input from and final review by Highlands Council technical staff. Recommendations were then drafted based on indicator analysis results and an examination of RMP implementation activities to date.

Public Outreach Sessions

Facilitated meetings were held in early 2016 to provide the public with an update on the Monitoring Program and a forum to ask questions. Sessions began with a brief overview presentation, with the remaining time available for attendees to review materials related to proposed draft indicators and ask follow-up questions. Materials from these sessions were then posted to the Highlands Council website. These events were open to the public and announced via public notice.

In an effort to provide a reasonably convenient location for attendees throughout the Highlands Region, sessions were held at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morris Township (Morris County), Warren County Technical School in Washington (Warren County), and Passaic County Community College, Haskell (Passaic County).

Public Comment on Draft MPRR

A public comment period for the draft MPRR was open from July 11 through September 10, 2017. A comment response document has been added to this report as Appendix B.