



# State of New Jersey

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*Executive Director*

## HIGHLANDS REGIONAL MASTER PLAN MONITORING PROGRAM TRANSPORTATION AND AIR QUALITY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**DATE:** December 15, 2015

**TIME:** 9:30AM – 11:30AM

**LOCATION:** Highlands Council Office  
100 North Road  
Chester, NJ

**ATTENDEES:**

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Brian	Appezato	Warren County
John	Ciaffone	TransOptions TMA
John	Del Colle	NJ TRANSIT
John	Hayes	Morris County
Mathew	Safer	NJ TRANSIT
Maria	Sheridan	Morristown Municipal Airport
Leigh Ann	Von Hagen	Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, NJ Health Impact Collaborative
Tim	Wagner	Wagner Airport Maintenance & Services
Margaret	Nordstrom	NJ Highlands Council –Executive Director
Herbert	August	NJ Highlands Council – Staff
Chris	Danis	NJ Highlands Council – Staff
John	Maher	NJ Highlands Council – Staff
Corey	Piasecki	NJ Highlands Council – Staff
Alex	Belenz	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 being considered 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 Transportation and Air Quality 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.

TAC members suggested that the Air Quality Conditions Index indicator data sources relied too heavily on analyses conducted by external agencies to be performed on a consistent basis for inclusion in the MPRR.

TAC members recommended that the Air Quality Index include adult and childhood asthma rates be included as part of the Tier 1 analysis in order to supplement the analysis of air quality in the Region and demonstrate the impact of air quality conditions. Data is available at the county level from the New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey. Some participants expressed concern about the use of county-level data, as this will include significant areas outside of the Highlands Region. However, data is not available below the county level for Air Quality Index without the use of a complicated EPA modeling processes. Moreover, regional air quality is influenced by many factors outside the geography and goals of the Regional Master Plan (RMP), so a county approach was deemed sufficient.

TAC members recommended that vehicle miles traveled (VMT), annual average daily traffic (AADT), total transit ridership, and park and ride counts be included in the Commutation Patterns Index analysis. They also confirmed that the Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP) is the best source for origin/destination data. The TAC commented that demographic trends influence commutation, particularly VMT, AADT and total transit ridership. Accordingly, participants suggested that the Demographic Profile indicator of the Economic Development topic area be cross-referenced in the Commutation Patterns Index narrative.

With regard to the Freight Index, the TAC noted that the analysis of land use and jobs along freight corridors and in freight hubs reveals very little about the productive use of the corresponding freight lines and spurs. Data regarding the movement of goods along freight lines in the Highlands would provide a more useful analysis; however, this data is not publicly available; however, it may be available for a fee. Participants suggested that the NJTPA may have data related to freight activity. They further suggested that an analysis of County freight data could serve as a good Tier 2 indicator. In the absence of freight activity data, participants recommended that existing land use and jobs analysis be kept as is.

The TAC was satisfied with the analyses completed for the Transit Lands Areas Index.

The TAC suggested that the crash indicator be elevated from Tier 2, as transportation safety is an explicit goal of the RMP. Highlands Council staff cautioned that the Council has limited ability to influence roadway geometry and design. The Council can attempt to address transportation safety through land use controls and partnering with state and federal transportation agencies, but it is unlikely that any development in conforming areas would be large enough to influence crash patterns. It was suggested that the MPRR include a recommendation that the Highlands Council work with municipalities, Counties and the NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to address high crash rate areas through land use and capital planning.

Ms. Mercer then reviewed the final proposed changes to the Transportation and Air Quality indicators:

Air Quality Conditions Index:

- Eliminate due to the degree of reliance on external partners

Air Quality Index:

- Add analysis of county-level adult and childhood asthma data

Commutation Patterns Index:

- Add vehicle miles traveled (VMT), annual average daily traffic (AADT), total transit ridership, and park and ride counts
- Relate trends to the Demographic Profile indicator of the Economic Development topic area

Freight Index:

- Contact NJTPA regarding freight activity data
- Add a Tier 2 indicator looking at freight activity data from counties

Transit Lands Areas Index:

- No changes suggested for this indicator

Accidents (Tier 2):

- Rename indicator to “Crashes”

Volume/Annual Average Daily Traffic (Tier 2):

- Consolidate into the Commutation Patterns Index

## **UPDATED DRAFT TRANSPORTATION AND AIR QUALITY INDICATORS:**

### **TIER 1 INDICATORS:**

- **Air Quality Index:** Measures change in the number of days annually that the Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeds the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for sensitive groups, and change in adult and childhood asthma rates.
- **Commutation Patterns Index:** Measures change in commuting behavior, including travel mode, commute time, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), annual average daily traffic (AADT), origin and destination of commuting trips, total transit ridership, and park and ride usage.
- **Freight Index:** Measures change in active freight rail miles, commercial and industrial land uses near freight rail lines and freight rail hubs, and jobs within freight rail hubs (and freight activity, if data available).
- **Transit Lands Areas Index:** Measures change in land use, population density, jobs, and construction activity in transit lands areas.

### **TIER 2 INDICATORS**

- **Crashes:** Measures change in number and location of vehicular crashes.
- **Alternative Transportation Program Participation:** Measures change in the number of Highlands Region employers participating in or offering programs such as carpools, vanpools and employer shuttles.
- **Freight Activity:** Measures change in freight rail activity within Highlands Region counties.