



State of New Jersey

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Highlands Council Helps Towns Meet New Climate Requirements

Guidance Materials, Workshops, and New Grant Program to Come

CHESTER, N.J. — At its most recent meeting, the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council approved a contract for a project that will provide Highlands municipalities with critical guidance about how best to incorporate a wide range of climate resiliency components into local planning documents, which they are now required to do by law.

“Recent amendments to Municipal Land Use Law now require towns to incorporate smart growth, storm resiliency, environmental sustainability, electric vehicle infrastructure planning, and climate change hazard vulnerability assessments in their master plans,” explains Lisa J. Plevin, Highlands Council Executive Director. “This guidance document will provide a much-needed template for Highlands municipalities to use in meeting these new requirements.”

The contract, not to exceed \$89,000, was awarded to New Jersey Future, a nonprofit organization focused on smart growth. The full project team will also include professionals from Sustainable Jersey, Brownfield Redevelopment Solutions (BRS) Inc., and The Land Conservancy of New Jersey (TLCNJ). Deliverables listed in the contract include not only guidance materials, but also a stakeholder outreach

program and municipal workshops. The guidance developed will also lay the foundation for the development of a Highlands Plan Conformance grant program to help municipalities fund this work. The contracted work is expected to be concluded before the end of 2022.

“The challenges of addressing climate change are no longer something we can push off and think about in the future,” says Carl Richko, Highlands Council Chairman. “New Jersey has taken a leadership role in its Climate Change Resilience Strategy and some of our Highlands municipalities have already reached out to us, eager to begin this work. We know this project will result in assistance that is immediately relevant and valuable to our stakeholders, and beyond.”

Actions taken by the Council at this meeting will take effect following the Governor’s review and consideration of the meeting minutes, up to 10 business days from receipt of the minutes. Materials related to this meeting including resolutions, presentations, audio, and minutes will be posted at: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/about/calend (click on February 17, 2022 meeting).

The Highlands Council is a regional planning agency established in 2004 with the passage of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act and charged with implementation of the Act. More information is available at www.nj.gov/njhighlands.

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