

**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COUNCIL**  
**PLAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**CHAIR REPORT**  
**FOR THE MEETING APRIL 6, 2006**

On April 6, 2006, the Plan Development Committee held a meeting at the Highlands Office in Chester. Notice of the meeting was provided to the public on the Council's web site. Council members present at the meeting included Committee Chair John Weingart, Jack Schrier, Mimi Letts, Debbie Pasquarelli, and Tim Dillingham. Council staff members present included Dante Di Pirro, Tom Borden, Steve Balzano and Chris Danis.

Committee Chair Weingart and the Committee members discussed and reviewed the status of the Regional Master Plan ("RMP") development, the timetable for the adoption of a Regional Master Plan, the progress made on the development of the RMP, as well as the input and assistance received from agencies, consultants, the Technical Advisory Committees, municipal and county officials, and the public. Mr. Weingart discussed the major challenge to meet the deadlines in the Highlands Act and expressed his preference to take the time necessary to adopt the RMP based on good science and planning and an adequate opportunity for public input.

Mr. Di Pirro provided a summary of the staff memorandum to the Plan Development Committee recommending a revised schedule for the adoption of the RMP. He stated that his staff prepared a detailed inventory of the status of the RMP and the schedule for completion of the RMP. The proposed schedule includes the release of extensive resource and infrastructure data sets and reports in June, the release of a draft RMP in the Fall, and adoption by the end of the year. Mr. Di Pirro also stated that staff also recommends that the Council specifically address sources and expedited methods to deliver preservation funding.

Mr. Balzano provided an analysis of the status and schedule for the RMP. He stated that the intention of the Council staff is to create a RMP based upon the best available information, science and planning. He summarized the feedback received from the *New Jersey Highlands Council Regional Master Plan Scoping Document* in January 2006 and the comments received during the most recent TAC Charrette and stated that he would provide a detailed PowerPoint presentation before the full Council meeting. A handout of the presentation was given to the Committee.

Mr. Balzano then provided an overview of the detailed draft schedule for the ongoing development of the RMP and the proposed adoption of the RMP by the end of 2006. He described the various elements of the RMP, such as water quality and quantity elements, ecosystem that will be advanced through the various committees up to the Highlands Council. He then described the need to integrate these individual elements into the Land Use Capacity Map with its accompanying land use standards and statement of policies. He specified that the proposed schedule was aggressive and that delays in certain elements of the RMP may impact the entire schedule.

The Committee discussed the relative risks and benefits associated with the proposed schedule. Committee members acknowledged the Highlands Act's requirements to adopt a plan for the entire Highlands Region in a timely fashion in order to protect its critical resources. The members also discussed the competing mandate in the Highlands Act to ensure that the RMP has a sound basis in science and planning and specifically identifies the infrastructure capacity to accommodate growth while ensuring the sustainability of the resources of the Highlands. The Committee members discussed the numerous tasks identified in the detailed schedule and concluded that the RMP should be a robust plan that fully addresses the numerous elements detailed in the schedule. After additional discussion, the Committee reached a consensus that the proposed schedule for adoption of the RMP by the end of 2006 should be advanced the full Council. Regarding the importance of addressing landowner equity issues, there was agreement among the Committee that these issues had to be a major focus before the RMP is adopted.

After opening the meeting to the public for additional comment, the Committee adjourned.