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The State Development and Redevelopment Plan and Highlands Region Land Use Capability Zones

The statewide policies in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan) are applied to the natural and built environments through the designation of seven general Planning Areas on the State Plan Policy Map (SPPM). The seven general Planning Areas in the State Plan are: Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1), Suburban Planning Area (PA2), Fringe Planning Area (PA3), Rural Planning Area (PA4), Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA4B), Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5), and Environmentally Sensitive/Barrier Islands Planning Area (PA5B). These Planning Areas reflect distinct geographic and economic areas and serve as an organizing framework for the application of Statewide Policies. There are two subareas, PA1B, Metropolitan/Floodprone Planning Area, and PA2B, Suburban/Floodprone Planning Area. These are under PA1 and PA2, but take into account the potential for flooding or flood hazard areas. Many state rules, regulations and statutes refer to these state planning areas. This document provides an equivalency between state planning areas and the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) Land Use Capability Zones for use in applying the Land Use Capability Zones (LUCZ) Map against these rules, regulations and statutes.

In the Highlands Region, the State Plan utilizes the RMP LUCZ Map as the State Plan Policy Map. The LUCZ map is the primary indicator for development of land in the Highlands. LUCZ designations identify areas within the Highlands Region that can best support appropriate and varying levels of economic and development activity by identifying environmental constraints and capacity limitations. The LUCZ map subdivides the region into three Primary Zones within which are four Sub-Zones. The three Primary Zones are Existing Community Zone (ECZ), Conservation Zone (CZ), and Protection Zone (PZ). The ECZ has two Sub-Zones: Existing Community Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone (ECZ-EC) and Lake Community Sub-Zone (LCZ) and the CZ and PZ each have one, the Conservation Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone (CZ-EC) and the Wildlife Management Sub-Zone (WM).

The State Planning Commission relies on the adopted plans and regulations of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council in developing the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The Highlands Act required that the RMP include a resource assessment (N.J.S.A 13:20-11.a(1)(a)) that would determine the amount and type of human development and activity the ecosystem of the Highlands Region can sustain while still maintaining its overall ecological values. The resource assessment is used to establish land use policies. The Highlands Act also required that the Council prepare a Land Use Capability Map (N.J.S.A 13:20-11 and 12). To address this requirement, the Council developed a Land Use Capability Map Series.

The Highlands LUCZ designations are interspersed throughout the entire Highlands Region. There is no direct correlation between the LUCZ and the State Planning Areas. However, the intent of the seven LUCZ designations is similar to the intent of the seven SPPM Planning Areas. The following table displays the SPPM Planning Areas and the equivalent LUCZ designations. In addition, Highlands Center designations are considered the equivalent to State Plan Center designation. An equivalent LUCZ designation will replace the SPPM Planning Area designations for Highlands Region communities when referenced in various statewide rules such as the wastewater management planning rules. The intent and guiding criteria of the Land Use Capability Zones are described after the summary table. The intent and guiding criteria of the Planning Areas on the State Plan Policy Map are described in the [State Development and Redevelopment Plan](#).

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan also shows Critical Environmental Sites, Historical & Cultural Sites, and lands preserved for recreation, conservation/open space, and farmland. Critical Environmental Sites and Historical & Cultural Sites are shown on the SPPM as an overlay and do not have a LUCZ equivalent. The State Plan depicts parks, open space, natural areas, and preserved farmland to protect critical natural resources and the retention of agricultural resources, provide for recreational and educational opportunities, and incentivize the connection of these areas to systems of open lands and preserved agricultural lands. The information is derived from several publicly available data sets. The Highlands Council will have supportive mapping through its Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). This regional planning document focuses on goals specific to the Highlands Region and identifies properties that have values for conservation due to their natural resources, scenic values, recreation opportunities, or cultural or historical significance. While this document will not be integrated with the State Plan, the Highlands Region OSRP is a supportive planning document and resource that can help achieve the goals of protecting, preserving, and enhancing natural resources and areas with historic, cultural, scenic, open space and recreational value.

Table 1. Summary of Equivalent Designations State Plan Planning Areas/Map Elements to Highlands RMP Land Use Capability Zones

	Metropolitan Planning Area	Suburban Planning Area	Metropolitan and Suburban Flood prone Planning Areas	Fringe Planning Area	Rural Planning Area Rural/ Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area	Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area / Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area	Center Designation
	PA1	PA2	PA1B/ PA2B	PA3	PA4 / PA4B	PA5 / PA5B	Centers, Cores & Nodes
Existing Community Zone (ECZ)	X	X	X	X			
Lake Community Sub-Zone (LCZ)		X		X			
Existing Community Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone (EC-ECZ)			X	X			
Conservation Zone (CZ)					X		
Conservation Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone (CZ-ECZ)					X		
Protection Zone (PZ)						X	
Wildlife Management Sub-Zone						X	
Highlands Centers							X

Intent and Guiding Criteria of the Highlands Regional Master Plan Land Use Capability Zones

Existing Community Zone (ECZ)	
Intent	Guiding Criteria
Support development and redevelopment provided that such development is compatible with the protection and character of the Highlands environment, at levels that are appropriate to maintain the character of established communities.	- Contiguous areas of existing development. - Area served by existing sewerage facilities and public water supply. - Multi modal transportation opportunities - Limited environmental constraints. - Minimum land area of 75 acres.
Existing Community- Environmentally Constrained Subzone (EC-ECZ)	
Intent	Guiding Criteria
- Protect significant environmental features from further fragmentation by land preservation and protection and by constraining development. - Serve as regional habitat “stepping stones” to larger contiguous critical habitat and forested areas.	- Significant environmental features present. - Restrictions on the extension of existing or the creation of new water supply and wastewater services. - Minimum land area of 2 acres.
Lake Community Subzone	
Prevent degradation of water quality and watershed pollution, harm to lake ecosystems, and promote natural aesthetic values within the Existing Community zone.	- Development around lakes that are within the Existing Community Zone and within 1,000 feet of lakes that are 10 acres or greater. - Protect the Existing Lake Community as well as resources that extend within 1,000 feet of the shore line.
Conservation Zone	
Intent	Guiding Criteria
Protect significant agricultural lands that are interspersed with associated woodlands and environmental features while promoting agricultural based development and similar activities.	High concentration of agricultural lands and associated woodlands, and environmental features.

• Protect agricultural resources. • Traditional development should be constrained.	• Development potential may exist to extent it is not limited by available infrastructure to support development. • Limitations of non-agricultural development in overall area and intensity. • 75 acre minimum mapping threshold.
Conservation Zone- Environmentally Constrained Subzone	
Intent	Guiding Criteria
• Promotes the preservation and protection of lands with significant environmental features from non-agricultural development.	• Constrained environmental lands, limit traditional based development. • Restrictions on extension or creation of water supply and wastewater services. • 10 acre minimum mapping threshold.

Protection Zone	
Intent	Guiding Criteria
• Supports limitation of development and promotes the protection/preservation of properties due to the presence of special and important environmental and ecological features. The protection zone emphasizes the need for protecting and preserving existing water quality, quantity, and ecological resources.	• Constrained lands, development is extremely limited. Development subject to stringent limitations on consumptive and depletive water use, degradation to water quality, and impact on environmental resources. • Prioritize land acquisition of property. • Presence of high resource value lands. • Model utilizes a 75-acre mapping threshold for delineation.
Wildlife Management Subzone	
Intent	Guiding Criteria
• Protect specially managed lands that are part of a network of lands and waters for conservation and management, yet also permit various ecological	• All lands designated as a National Wildlife Refuges that are managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Wildlife Management Areas

restoration activities, and permit compatible recreational uses.	administered by the NJDEP Division of Fish & Wildlife's Bureau of Land Management. • No minimum mapping threshold.
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Highlands Centers	
Intent	Guiding Criteria
• Encourage and foster development and redevelopment within a specific geographic area. • Support economic balance in the Highlands Region, provide for sustainable economic growth. • Protect critical natural and cultural resources.	• Located within an area with sufficient water availability, water supply, wastewater, and transportation capacity and is appropriate for increased land use intensity. • Consistent with the resource protection standards of the Regional Master Plan. • Consistent with the Smart Growth and Low Impact Development Standards of the Regional Master Plan. • Provide a need for land uses within the community such as affordable housing or increased transit opportunities.