



CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

State of New Jersey  
Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council  
100 North Road (Route 513)  
Chester, New Jersey 07930-2322  
(908) 879-6737  
(908) 879-4205 (fax)  
www.highlands.state.nj.us



JIM RILEE  
Chairman

MARGARET NORDSTROM  
Executive Director

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** RMP Update Committee  
**From:** Margaret Nordstrom, Executive Director  
**Subject:** Record of RMP Update Committee Meeting of February 11, 2015  
**Date:** February 27, 2015

The RMP Update Committee met on Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at the Highlands Council office in Chester. Committee Members present: Council Chairman Rilee (on phone), Committee Chair Alstede, Member Vohden, and Member Sebetich.

Highlands Council Staff Members present: Margaret Nordstrom, Andy Davis, Chris Danis, Judy Thornton, Corey Piasecki, Jim Hutzelmann, Carole Ann Dicton, and Annette Tagliareni.

Also present via phone: Tyler Yingling, Assistant Counsel, Governor's Authorities Unit; Steve Gunnells, PlaceWorks; and Courtenay Mercer, Regional Plan Association (RPA), Janani Shankaran, RPA.

*Committee Chair Alstede called the meeting to order at 1:05pm.*

The following topics were discussed:

### Fiscal Impact Assessment (PlaceWorks)

Corey Piasecki reported that Steve Gunnells from PlaceWorks will present to the committee a draft Power Point of the first phase of the Fiscal Impact Assessment, titled "Regional Economic Evaluation." This component was based on employment and social/demographic data collected from:

- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) – data lag about 9 months
- Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program (LEHD) – most recent data is 2011

Mr. Gunnells compared job growth across three areas:

- Highlands Region (7 counties)
- Highlands County Municipalities not in the Highlands Region
- Northern New Jersey (consisting of 11 counties) – excluding outliers (i.e., areas having a significantly higher density population and/or employment than the Highlands Region)

During the presentation, Chairman Rilee asked if companies that had the highest job growth can be identified or if a number can be supplied without giving the company name. Mr. Gunnells responded that the information is confidential, but he will see what public information he can provide to address Chairman Rilee's question.

Mr. Gunnells completed his presentation at 2:00pm. He asked the members if they had any questions.

Committee Chair Alstede asked what the comparison basis is for job losses indicated. Mr. Gunnells responded that it is measured against total employment for the region. All study areas lost jobs from 2009 to 2010. All had a positive job growth from 2004-2008, but only the adjacent region in Pennsylvania had a net job gain from 2008 to 2011. Using QCEW data shows that the Highlands Counties (including municipalities within the Highlands Region and outside) outperformed Northern New Jersey from 2008 to 2013, while the LEHD shows the opposite from 2008-2011. This suggests that employment recovery came more slowly to these seven counties.

Committee Chair Alstede asked if we can evaluate lost opportunity. Mr. Gunnells responded that because the recession was actually about debt – it was the biggest factor causing individual businesses to file for bankruptcy, while those with manageable debt survived – he doesn't believe it would be worth the resources to investigate.

Member Vohden commented that the data shown today do not reflect what he saw happen, in particular in Sussex County.

Mr. Piasecki responded that the next phase of the analysis will look at building permits, demographics, and property values. Ms. Thornton added that building permits will give us more information in this regard.

Mr. Gunnells added that the report will go into more detail on specific issues raised by the members. Mr. Gunnells noted that the perception that construction and development equals economy is not correct, indicating that new construction constitutes only about 4% of the economy as a whole.

Member Sebetich added to Mr. Vohden's remarks about recent demographic trends in rural areas of New Jersey. Member Sebetich asked if national surveys will be considered in the analysis. Mr. Gunnells responded that the next phases of the analysis will go further into these areas.

Ms. Mercer (RPA) added that part of the upcoming analysis will be on regulatory and policy changes that have occurred and on the differences in these, between NJ, NY and PA. She stated that we have to keep these differences in mind as well, in considering the question "Is PA doing better than NJ?"

*Mr. Gunnells and Ms. Mercer left the meeting at 2:30pm.*

### Council Meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup>

Ms. Nordstrom noted that Mr. Gunnells' presentation is the only agenda item on Council's March 19<sup>th</sup> agenda. The presentation will be posted to the website after that meeting.

### Report out to Council:

### Public Comment Web Portal

Ms. Nordstrom reported that the web portal will be extended for two months at no cost to Council.

### Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Member List

The committee reviewed the draft list of TAC members. These nominations were submitted by various entities, by Council members, and supplemented by Council Staff. The Committee agreed that staff should begin reaching out to nominated individuals. If a nominated individual is interested in participating, they will be asked to submit resumes. Staff will review resumes based on the resume criteria committee members received today; and the TAC list will be finalized. The final TAC list will be given to the Council prior to March meeting for comment. . The subcommittee agreed that TAC formation will be based on the following:

- All prospective members must provide a resume;
- TACs will consist of 15-20 individuals;
- Each participant will be limited to membership in not more than two TACs; and
- Two Council members will be designated for each TAC, with the exception of the Implementation TAC, where the full RMP Update Committee will be in attendance.

### TAC Briefing Book

Mr. Piasecki asked the members to review the briefing book prior to staff providing it to the full Council. Once the briefing book is reviewed by Council, it will be posted to the website.

### Stakeholder Meeting Summaries

The committee received the remainder of the stakeholder meeting summaries (10). The summaries will be provided to the full Council for its review, after which time they will be posted to Council's website.

The next committee meeting is scheduled on March 11, 2015 at 1:00pm.

*The meeting was adjourned at 3:03pm.*