



## New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Pinelands Commission approves ordinance that significantly reduces residential zoning capacity in Jackson Township**

NEW LISBON, N.J. – The Pinelands Commission has certified an ordinance that establishes two new zoning districts and significantly reduces residential zoning capacity in Jackson Township, Ocean County.

Approved by the Commission on Nov. 9, the ordinance creates the PED-1 and PED-9 Planned Environmental Development Districts, and adopts a revised zoning map to reflect the location of these new zones within the Pinelands Area. Based on this zoning map, approximately 223 acres of land along Jackson Township's boundary with Manchester Township are now rezoned from the RG-4 District in the Regional Growth Area to the new PED-9 District in the Rural Development Area. Additionally, approximately 10 acres of land are now rezoned from the RG-4 District to the PED-1 District within the Regional Growth Area.

Permitted uses in the new PED-9 District include agriculture, churches, municipal parks, playgrounds and buildings and single-family detached housing at a maximum density of one unit per 9 acres. All residential development in the PED-9 District is required to be clustered on one acre lots. Lands not assigned to individual residential lots must be permanently deed restricted as open space with no further development permitted through imposition of a conservation easement.

Permitted uses in the new PED-1 District are identical to those of the PED-9 District with the exception of the maximum permitted density for residential development. In the PED-1 District, a density of one unit per 3.2 acres is permitted. All residential development in the PED-1 District must be clustered on one-acre lots.

The ordinance also provides for the clustering of units from the two new PED Districts onto contiguous (commonly owned) lands in Manchester Township as part of a planned retirement community development, provided such development is in conformance with the provisions of Manchester's land use ordinance, the lands in Jackson Township are then permanently deed restricted to preclude future development and an intergovernmental agreement between the two municipalities has been executed. The ordinance specifies that a maximum of 250 units may be generated from the PED Districts in Jackson Township for this purpose.

As a result of the zoning changes, Jackson Township's RG-4 District has been eliminated in its entirety. Permitted residential density in the RG-4 Zone was six units per acre (with the use of Pinelands Development Credits), equating to a zoning capacity of over 1,400 units. Under the new PED zoning, a maximum of 28 units would be permitted if development occurred on-site in

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Jackson. If the clustering of units onto contiguous lands in Manchester Township occurs, 250 units are feasible. In either case, a significant reduction in residential zoning capacity results from the zoning and management area changes incorporated in the ordinance.

The PED Districts were established as the final part of Jackson Township's implementation of the Regional Natural Resource Protection Plan for the Toms River Corridor, which was issued by the Toms River Corridor Task Force in February 2004. Coordinated by the Pinelands Commission, the Toms River Task Force consisted of 20 individuals who were asked to assess the natural resources of the corridor, prioritize protection areas, suggest and implement land protection strategies, and craft a regional land use and natural resource protection plan for the area. Through a series of meetings in 2003 and 2004, the Task Force developed a comprehensive plan and implementation strategy for directing development within the corridor into clustered areas while preserving important natural resources, wildlife habitat and open space.

The objective of the PED zoning is to direct development away from environmentally sensitive land by encouraging and facilitating cluster development in sewerred, upland areas that are appropriate for higher density residential development. Lands rezoned by the ordinance from the Regional Growth Area to the Rural Development Area (the PED-9 District) are a recognized, important population center for the threatened northern pine snake and are also known to harbor at least one endangered plant species. By requiring any on-site development that occurs to be clustered and further providing the opportunity for the clustering of units from the PED-9 District to adjacent lands in Manchester Township, the protection of critical habitat will be maximized. At the same time, an appropriate amount of residential development will be allowed on less critical or environmentally sensitive lands.

The ordinance was approved by Jackson Township in 2006 and was submitted to the Commission for certification in September 2007. The Commission anticipates receiving a similar ordinance for its certification from Manchester Township within the next two months.

By certifying the ordinance, the Commission determined that it is in conformance with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the rules that govern land use, development and natural resource protection in the Pinelands Area.

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