

HUNTERDON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Hunterdon County Highlands Plan Conformance

- **What is the Highlands Plan and the Conformance Process?**
 - The process includes a review of the County's existing planning documents for the purpose of aligning them with the Highlands Regional Master Plan. The Highlands is not dictating this effort, they are a willing partner in developing a meaningful relationship with the County. The hope is that increased collaboration with the Highlands Council will drive economic development, balance environmental impacts, and preserve and protect the character of Hunterdon County.

- **How is this different?**
 - Hunterdon County has an opportunity to be a leader and define a new plan conformance process with the Highlands Council. The old "plan conformance" for counties is set aside in order to create a collaborative and more meaningful process.
 - Benefits include grant funding for projects to promote the County and its goals, support from the Highlands Council, and an opportunity to position the County as a leader in the region. The relationship is designed to be mutually beneficial.

- **Benefits of Plan Conformance**
 - Planning grants and technical assistance.
 - State aid and assistance for smart growth. The County can include a list of priority projects for infrastructure and public facility improvements. The Highlands Council can help coordinate with other State agencies.
 - Strong presumption of validity, extraordinary deference, and burden of proof.
 - Legal representation.
 - Plan conformance is the equivalent of State Plan Endorsement and shall be entitled to the same benefits.

- We are soliciting public input – there will be two public meetings as part of the process and an opportunity to review draft documents. However, we also wish to provide an avenue through which interested parties can ask questions or make comments. Please send any input to: planning@co.hunterdon.nj.us