



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF SMART GROWTH

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Executive Director

March 20, 2007

The Honorable Bernard O'Brien
Mayor of Holland Township
61 Church Road
Milford, NJ 08848

**Re: Holland Township Petition for Initial Plan Endorsement
Completeness Determination**

Dear Mayor O'Brien:

I have reviewed the Holland Township petition for Initial Plan Endorsement and would like to commend the Township for its substantial planning efforts over the last several years. However, upon review of the petition, pursuant to the State Planning Rules, N.J.A.C. 5:85-7.5, and the Plan Endorsement Guidelines, I find that the petition is not complete as submitted. I have outlined below the additional information that must be provided in order for the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) to deem the petition complete. Although not part of the completeness determination, I have also identified preliminary areas of concern related to the consistency of the Township's plan with the goals, policies and strategies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan), and have proposed amendments to the draft Planning and Implementation Agreement (PIA).

Additional Information Required for Completeness:

Natural Resource Inventory (NRI):

While the Township's petition and various planning documents include information and mapping of natural resources and state that a draft NRI was submitted to the Planning Board, the petition does not include a stand-alone Natural Resource Inventory. The information included in the Physical Characteristics and Scenic Resources section of the 2001 Master Plan, Open Space Element and Plan Endorsement petition would serve as a sufficient foundation for a comprehensive, township-wide Natural Resource Inventory. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council) can provide technical assistance and data to work with the Township in developing such a document. Sample NRIs are available for review on the plan endorsement page of the OSG website at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/osg/plan/endorsement.shtml>. In addition, the Township may wish to consult the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions' (ANJEC) website which provides some helpful guidance at www.anjec.org/index.htm.

Map Amendments:

In the Township's petition, the Township proposes two Hamlet Centers and reconfiguration of the Planning Area 4 and Planning Area 4B. After review of the petition, we note that there are inconsistencies between the GIS data and hard-copy maps submitted. The Township must reconcile this information so that we can conduct a thorough review of the proposed map amendments. In addition, the SHP GIS file for the proposed PA 4/4B Planning Area change has not been submitted.

Transportation Overview:

The transportation overview should be revised to contain information regarding local truck deliveries to businesses, and transit services in the form of private bus routes, county rural bus routes, or para-transit/shuttles as applicable. The transportation overview should also address whether any of the proposed land uses would strain the capacity of local or county roadways and whether there would be a need to redesign such land uses.

Preliminary consistency concerns:

Once the Township's petition is deemed complete, the State Planning Rules at N.J.A.C. 5:85-7.5(d) provide that the relevant state and federal agencies have 45 days to review the petition and provide comments to OSG. As part of our consistency review of the Township's petition, OSG and our state agency partners will draft an Action Plan that will outline the necessary steps for the Township to take to achieve Plan Endorsement. Although the state agencies have not yet conducted a substantive review of the Township's petition, we wanted to provide the Township with an indication of some preliminary consistency concerns as described below.

Justification for Centers

Based on a cursory review of the petition, a concern that will require further review is how the boundaries of the proposed Hamlets are defined. Further explanation and justification may be needed to support the Township's request for the proposed centers.

Statement of Planning Coordination with the Highlands

The Plan Endorsement Guidelines require a statement of consistency of current land use regulations with applicable regional plans. The 2001 State Plan recognized the Highlands region as a Special Resource Area. Although the petition briefly describes the relationship of land use to the Highlands, it needs to be revised to address the consistency of current land use regulations with the goals, requirements, and policies of the Highlands draft Regional Master Plan. The Township will have to amend its plan to address the aforementioned requirement.

Additionally, we remind you that the amended Municipal Land Use Law requires municipalities situated in the Highlands to amend the municipal master plan to include a policy statement regarding the relationship of the proposed development in the municipality to the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

Clarification regarding relationship to the Highlands Regional Master Plan

I would like to clarify that the Highlands Council has exclusive jurisdiction over the portion of Holland Township that lies within the Highlands Preservation Area.

Upon adoption of the Highlands Regional Master Plan, Holland Township will have the option for the Planning Area to opt-in and conform to the Highlands Regional Master Plan or seek Plan Endorsement from the State Planning Commission.

Suggested items for the Planning and Implementation Agreement:

As you consider updates to your petition in accordance with the items identified above, I would also like to suggest a few additional items to be included in your draft PIA. Please be advised that these recommendations are not required for your petition to be deemed complete. Please provide a proposed timetable to complete each task.

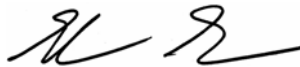
- Wellhead protection: Identify public water supply wells, amend and adopt local ordinances.
- Habitat protection: Amend and adopt local ordinances or a habitat conservation plan to ensure no net loss of habitat value.
- When the Township prepares a new circulation element, it should address any infrastructure capacity issues related to land use.

Next Steps

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:85-7.5(b), the Township must submit an amended petition within 90 days of receipt of this notice. Otherwise, the initial petition will be considered to have been withdrawn. OSG and our state agency partners are committed to working closely with the Township in order for the petition to meet the requirements of the State Planning Rules and obtain Plan Endorsement. If you believe that some of the items identified above are already adequately addressed within the petition, please bring that to our attention as soon as possible.

Thank you again for your commitment to the Plan Endorsement process. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Township to discuss the items identified in this letter in greater detail. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact myself or Barry Ableman, Principal Planner for Hunterdon County, in the Office of Smart Growth at (609)-292-3228 or via email at bableman@dca.state.nj.us.

Sincerely,



Eileen Swan
Executive Director

ES:ba:dds

c: Elizabeth McKenzie, Planner
Catherine M. Miller, Municipal Clerk
Betty Anne Bechtold, Planning Board Secretary
Benjamin Spinelli, Policy Director, OSG
Joseph I. Donald, Deputy Executive Director, OSG
Barry Ableman, Principal Planner, OSG
State agency representatives *via email*