

New Jersey Highlands

Economic Sustainability Plan

The goal of the Economic Sustainability Plan is to secure the economic future of the Highlands Region, and to do so in a way that is compatible with the work of the Highlands Council and its partners in protecting and enhancing the Regions' natural resources.



Why did we create an Economic Sustainability Plan?

Creating a sustainable, resilient, and prosperous economy for the people and businesses in the New Jersey Highlands Region has never been more important. Sustainable business practices are no longer a "nice to have" quality—they are an imperative to prolong and expand economic opportunity.

As values shift in the field of economic development to be more inclusive of environmental considerations, the Council is in a unique position as a regional planning agency to show that natural resource protection and a vibrant economy are not mutually exclusive goals.

How to Use this Plan

This plan is a tool for every economic development partner in the region to use to steer their decision-making process. It is a complement to the work of local economic development committees and community leaders who work with businesses day in and day out.

Not every strategy will apply to the entire region. However, the plan will help guide local communities to identify where and how development is best suited and amplify where the Highlands Council can advocate or support their work through technical assistance or other means.

How do we define success?

At the outset of the planning process, both the Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee participated in a survey that helped to direct the goals of the Plan. The group identified three core elements to define success:

1. **A diversified economy**
2. **An increase in total number of jobs**
3. **Maintained and enhanced water quality**

Great! What's Next?

Action. Together we will...

- Collaborate to accomplish our collective goals.
- Highlands Council will support implementation, in partnership with other regional and local organizations.
- Coordinating implementation of the Plan will require regular meetings and status updates.
- Progress reports will be completed to the Highlands Council and public constituents through a greater online presence and annual report.
- Strategies will be continually reassessed and revised in order to adapt to changing conditions and emerging opportunities.



What This Plan Will Achieve

The New Jersey Highlands Council undertook a year-plus long strategic planning effort to understand the current economic conditions and define tactics for creating increased economic sustainability in the Highlands Region.

The Plan is organized around 5 Goal Statements that showcase the themes brought forth in the planning process. Within each of these 5 Goal Statements there are strategies to advance the established goals.

Our Collective Goals

1. Reinforce the Highlands Region as a center of natural resource protection innovation and technology.
2. Communicate the value of quality of life in the Highlands Region and evaluate how current assets meet, miss, or exceed market demand.
3. Expand awareness and understanding of the New Jersey Highlands Council's purpose and impact on the business community.
4. Strengthen the role of the New Jersey Highlands Council as leader in regional planning assistance.
5. Support the Highlands Region's existing target industries and small businesses in their efforts to thrive and adapt in response to the new economy.

Sustainability Means Business Longevity

This plan connects sustainability to the concept of business longevity and seeks to build economic sustainability so that a business will be able to:

- Expand employment for high quality, good paying jobs
- Innovate to the latest in technology uptake
- Adapt to climate change as needed for their sector
- Attract appropriate workforce for its operations
- Remain competitive in their sector
- Localize or regionalize their supply chains

Download the Plan at: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/master/economic-sustainability

Contact us to get involved!

Maryjude Haddock-Weiler
908-879-6737 | Maryjude.haddock-weiler@highlands.nj.gov

