



Contact: Brian Aberback, Public Information Officer
(201) 460-4619; (201) 615-8570 (cell)
brian.aberback@njmeadowlands.gov

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NJMC Creates Sustainable Communities Planning Service

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The Board of Commissioners of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission today authorized the creation of a Sustainable Communities Planning Service to offer professional planning assistance to District municipalities.

“Responsible planning and development is a critical element to the future growth and success of the Meadowlands region,” said NJMC Acting Chairman Charles Richman, who also serves as Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. “The Sustainable Communities Planning Service will go a long way toward achieving our goals for smart growth. At the same time, the program will help relieve our municipalities’ financial burden by providing first-rate planning services at no cost.”

The service will consist of a special unit of NJMC planners who will aid towns in attaining a valuable New Jersey Plan Endorsement and work closely with them in other facets of sustainable planning and development.

To achieve a New Jersey Plan Endorsement, towns align their Master Plans and procedures with the goals and policies of the New Jersey State Plan as they relate to smart growth principles and other planning initiatives. Municipalities who receive an endorsement can qualify for financial and technical incentives to help implement their plans. Incentives include enhanced scoring for grant funding, low-interest loans, tax credits, and streamlined regulatory review.

NJMC planners will also help District municipalities in other areas, including the employment of green building practices, downtown revitalization and the preparation of affordable housing plans for certification by the state Council on Affordable Housing. This coincides with the NJMC’s effort to expand its participation in the development of affordable housing in the District.

“Today we are taking another step in supporting the municipalities of the Meadowlands and providing them with the unique tools that help this region thrive and stand out,” said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. “The critical gains made through this agency’s support of strong municipal policymaking can now be better sustained.”

