



GREEN ACRES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT AND NONPROFIT GUIDE

Coordination with the Council on Affordable Housing

Green Acres funding should not be used to thwart another State agency's mission. For example, the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) works to ensure that municipalities meet their constitutional obligation to provide a fair share of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households pursuant to the Fair Housing Act of 1985 (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 et seq.).

Municipalities are required to prepare affordable housing plans as part of the housing elements of the municipal master plan. These plans are approved by COAH, which assigns each municipality the number of affordable housing units it must provide to meet its "fair share" requirement. Municipalities meet their requirement by filing a plan voluntarily with COAH or by a court ordered "builders' remedy."

The identification of parcels to be preserved by a county or municipality has the potential to conflict with designated "COAH sites." Green Acres funding cannot be used to acquire a site that is formally identified for affordable housing unless the local government unit has a suitable alternative for such required housing. **Proper planning by a local government unit will enable it to meet both its recreation/conservation needs and its COAH obligations.**

A local government unit or nonprofit must inform Green Acres if the site intended for acquisition has been identified by a municipality, or otherwise designated for use in meeting municipal fair share housing obligations. If the site has not been designated, the local government unit or nonprofit must submit a certification to that effect to Green Acres. If the site *has* been so designated, the local government unit or nonprofit must describe the coordination with COAH regarding an acceptable alternative to meeting the existing fair share housing obligations. Green Acres will not proceed with the acquisition project until it determines that such acquisition will not create a conflict with COAH.

Counties and nonprofits will have to coordinate their preservation efforts with municipalities to avoid conflict with COAH sites.