



JON S. CORZINE
Governor

State of New Jersey
Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
100 North Road (Route 513)
Chester, New Jersey 07930-2322
(908) 879-6737
(908) 879-4205 (fax)
www.highlands.state.nj.us



JOHN R. WEINGART
Chairman

EILEEN SWAN
Executive Director

Contact: Craig Garretson, Manager of Communications
(908) 879-6737 ext. 105 or craig.garretson@highlands.state.nj.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, June 27, 2008

A Better View of the Highlands

*New Web tool allows public to access Highlands data
and to create custom maps*

CHESTER, N.J. – The New Jersey Highlands Council at yesterday’s meeting unveiled a new mapping tool that will soon be available on its Web site, and also provided an overview of the next phases of development of the web site.

The Council’s existing Property Search Application (on the Council’s Web site at <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us>) provides information on properties within the Highlands and has been updated to allow users to view topographical details. Users also can identify properties within 200 feet or 300 feet from the outer edge of the selected parcel. This feature also can be useful to municipalities to identify property owners who must be notified of proposed developments or other announcements. Over the past year, the Property Search Application has been used by over 10,000 individuals.

The new mapping tool, called the Consistency Application, builds upon the Property Search Tool. This customized mapping application gives anyone with the Internet access to much of the same information the Council uses in its planning and analysis of the Highlands Region. In addition, it provides the most recent aerial views of the Highlands that are publicly available. This Consistency Application, as well as those in development, makes use of freely distributed open source software with Google Maps and Windows Live to minimize cost to the taxpayers and present a familiar interface to users quickly and reliably.

“The Council’s Web site is designed to share information with the public to promote transparency in planning for the Highlands Region. It brings together information developed by the Highlands Council and from many different sources onto one site for easy access for all Highlands stakeholders,” Highlands Council Executive Director Eileen Swan said.

The map has more than 50 available features that can be turned on or off to create a map that, for example, shows stream corridors and steep slopes. Users can create a custom map for their area of

interest comparing various features, such as wetlands areas, agricultural lands and other resources that are identified in the Regional Master Plan. The new applications allow users to see multiple aerial views of properties, using images from Google Maps and Windows Live, including the “bird’s eye view” function that allows views from four different angles. These views will be automatically updated to show the latest images available from Google Maps and Windows Live.

The next phase of this application, currently under development, was also unveiled at yesterday’s Highlands Council meeting. The Regional Master Plan Update Application will allow representatives designated by counties and municipalities to seamlessly inform the Highlands Council about updates, such as parcels served with either water or wastewater or newly acquired preserved open space. Updates are submitted through the Web site, with supporting documentation, to update parcel based information.

“This technology will provide direct and immediate communication between the Highlands Council and municipal and county officials,” said Chairman John Weingart, “and will help ensure that the Regional Master Plan continues to be based upon the most accurate and relevant information.”