

Community Investment, Brownfields Redevelopment and Regional Development:

Numbers in () indicate the number of votes or dots that each strategy received from the morning vote.

Problem Statement 1: How can we utilize brownfield and redevelopment opportunities to support our regional goals? How can we quantify the opportunity for brownfield and greyfield redevelopment in the Highlands region? How do we determine priority sites for redevelopment in the Highlands?

1. Balanced approach to redevelopment; consider economic development and natural resources (8)
2. Expedite permitting in the Preservation Area (7)
3. Prioritize sites located in areas with infrastructure (6)
4. Clean up and redevelop brownfields (4)
5. Identify priority sites – located at transportation nexus (4)
6. Clarify rules to speed timeframe (4)
7. Priority sites can include criteria, such as: (4)
 - a. Contamination level – in Preservation Area
 - b. Ground water contamination? If so, then sites becomes priority due to natural resource protection issues....
8. TDR programs are an effective strategy because they allow development to be consolidated (3)
9. Efficient review process and time deadlines (3)
10. Increase incentives for COAH sites located on Brownfield sites (3)
11. Develop a brownfields inventory (3)
12. Recognize free choice and individual tastes when considering regional level redevelopment strategies (2)
13. Prioritize Preservation Area clean-up and permitting (1)
14. Allow the market to determine priority sites (1)
15. Balance efficient and fast remediation work with high quality work (1)
16. Open space preservation
17. Cross reference existing brownfield data sets in order to gather more complete information
18. Use block and lot information
19. Meet COAH obligation through brownfield redevelopment
20. State incentives for cleanup
21. Clarify authority
22. Where there is infrastructure, a site can be redeveloped. Where there is no infrastructure, sites should be cleaned and left green
23. Consolidate commercial areas using brownfields redevelopment
24. Create contiguous areas of development and of undeveloped areas

Problem Statement 2: How do we ensure that regional development decisions are based on an accurate understanding of all existing and planned infrastructure (wastewater, water, transportation, education, community services)?

1. Infrastructure capacity is the foundation of planning (5)
2. Regional approach (1)
3. Consider the Meadowlands and other models: feed back loop (1)
4. Look for infrastructure capacity (1)
5. Use GIS (1)
6. Municipal identification of key areas
7. Look to identify regional needs
8. Rely upon existing information sources when making regional infrastructure decisions – County, DOT, etc.

Problem Statement 3: With respect to land acquisition: What is the average preservation price in relation to assessed value? How do we derive the acquisition rate (5 and 10 years)? How do we project potential revenues considering GSPT fund status and fragmented sources of info (per parcel)? How do we identify the difference between funds available for farmland preservation and funds needed to achieve preservation goals?

1. Recognize the economic value of water resources (6)
2. Link land acquisition to natural resource protection and water quality (4)
3. Dedicated source of funding for land acquisition (3)
4. Determine the fiscal implication for municipalities (3)
5. Why spend money for land acquisition in preservation area? (2)
6. Build out analysis should consider the cumulative effects (1)
7. Definition/determination of a farm needs to be clarified - working farms should be prioritized for acquisition (1)
8. Economics of agriculture (1)
9. Recapture farmland taxes for preservation (1)
10. How do you ensure that the right parcels are preserved?
11. Take a regional approach to land acquisition
12. How do you balance land acquisition versus park development
13. DEP regulations and their effect on the Highlands needs to be better studied and understood
14. How will land acquisition be paid for? By both those living in and those living outside of the Highlands. What will be the impact?
15. How do local officials work with the various land acquisition programs – including county, state, and Highlands programs
16. Look to build out model to determine water quality standards – moving forward
17. Land acquisition should consider tipping point
18. Environmental impacts should be considered

Problem Statement 4: With respect to property tax stabilization: Are there better ways to develop potential loss in value? What are the variables that make up the added value factor (AVF) – the conditions that allow certain properties to develop or obtain compensation?

1. Funding mechanisms should be guaranteed (10)
2. Watershed offset aid should be expanded (7)
3. What are the economic benefits of development? (4)
4. Tax sharing and sharing of services should be regionalized (4)
5. Make the tax stabilization program permanent (2)
6. Tax stabilization
7. Regional perspective
8. At what price do you get low property taxes? 40% of all taxes and moneys collected come from property taxes in New Jersey. This is the highest percentage for all states.
9. Allow free market to determine school districts
10. Establish thresholds for property taxes
11. Real estate transfer tax should be guaranteed

Problem Statement 5: With respect to state and federal grant programs: How do we deal with potential grant funds that cannot be counted as revenue? How do we assess 88 municipalities and 7 counties, as each will require independent considerations (different grants for different projects)?

1. The impact of the Regional Master Plan will vary depending on the municipality. The levels of assistance should also vary (depending on the impact). Assess impacts for each town (2)
2. Offer assistance and services to towns to support the Highlands process (2)
3. Grant programs are unpredictable (1)
4. Outline and define thresholds
5. Incentives to counties to provide data for all towns – access to grants will affect the perception of available funds
6. Distinguish between voluntary and mandatory requirements
7. Economic impact analysis should be performed at the municipal level– both pre and post Highlands Act
8. What are the repercussions of non-conformance with the Regional Master Plan?
9. Create priorities for funding. Those municipalities that cooperate should receive more
10. Boiler plate approach limits individual concerns
11. Provide different levels of funds reflecting various options
12. One grant to do all of the Highlands work – to do the regional master plan and cross-accept it. One plan for all 88 municipalities

Problem Statement 6: Are the economic indicators presented sufficient?

1. 1990-2000 is skewed due to the boom (3)
2. School district analysis – the cycle of family/housing – paying into the system and using the system (2)
3. Employment within each municipality versus numbers of those who are commuting out (1)
4. Consider expanding regional comparison (1)
5. Commercial and other vacancy rates (1)
6. Traffic flow
7. Need retail sales per capita
8. Traffic flow through town

Problem Statement 7: What qualitative factors should be considered in developing a fiscal impact assessment for the region and municipalities?

1. Community character (3)
2. Bond ratings (2)
3. New building stats (2)
4. Cultural Activities – such as the performing arts (2)
5. Prime rate – good indicator (1)
6. Crime rates (1)
7. Vacancy rates – commercial and overall
8. Census data
9. Hours worked (including commuting time)
10. Recreational opportunities
11. Proximity to wildlife
12. Common vision and interest
13. Health care access
14. Education
15. Open space

Problem Statement 8: How can we make implementation of the Highlands Regional Master Plan more predictable and streamlined at all levels of government?

1. Abolish the builders remedy (8)
2. Provide clear and concise information – checklists and handbooks (7)
3. Clear and consistent information (6)
4. Waiver process needs to be improved and associated costs decreased (3)
5. Accountability (1)
6. Ensure that all municipalities are involved and aware of program, process and procedures (1)
7. Acceptance process (1)
8. Highlands Board of Adjustment – flexibility and waiver process (1)
9. Municipal training sessions (1)
10. Clarify process – there should be clear and consistent requirements
11. Greater assistance from Council to towns
12. Get rid of government

Community Investment, Brownfields Redevelopment and Regional Development Final Strategies:

1. The Highlands Council should identify all brownfields using all available information, outreach, field proofing, and an inventory. This information should also be used to prioritize sites. Priority sites criteria should include proximity to infrastructure and other factors.
2. The Highlands Council, in partnership with municipalities should clean-up and redevelop brownfield sites, with the most appropriate end use. These end uses should range from natural resource protection through greenfield development to commercial and industrial uses.
3. Expedite approvals based on clear and concise information, so that everyone understands the permitting process.
4. Identify regional and community infrastructure capacity needs.
5. Recognize the economic value of water resources to establish a dedicated funding source. This can be accomplished through a water tax.
6. Watershed offset aid and other financial mechanisms should be guaranteed and predictable, in order to stabilize taxes.
7. Analyses must be performed using up-to-date qualitative and quantitative information.
8. No more builders remedy.
9. Department of Environmental Protection brownfields managers for the Highlands region. This can be modeled on the BDA program.
10. There should be a transparent waiver process.