



New Jersey Pinelands Commission **NEWS RELEASE**

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Florio Announces Dodge Grant to Support Smart-Growth Planning Project in Egg Harbor Township *Commission also approves Egg Harbor Township open space ordinance*

SOUTHAMPTON, NJ - Pinelands Commission Chairman James J. Florio today announced that the Commission has been selected to receive \$167,000, over two years from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, to continue the work of the Pinelands Excellence Program. The Pinelands Excellence Program was established in 2002 through a previous Dodge Foundation grant of \$187,000. To date, the program has helped two Pinelands Regional Growth Area communities to develop smart-growth action plans that address difficult challenges associated with the quantity and quality of development. The new grant will be used to support a similar smart-growth planning effort in Egg Harbor Township in Atlantic County.

“Egg Harbor Township has borne the brunt of suburban development fueled by the explosive growth of the Atlantic City gaming industry,” Florio said. “Over the past ten years, the rate of growth has increased significantly, affecting the Township’s ability to keep up with and finance schools, infrastructure and services. The Commission is committed to helping all Pinelands growth communities to better plan for and manage growth. Thanks to the generosity of the Dodge Foundation, this grant will help us to achieve some very positive results in Egg Harbor Township.”

Under this project, Egg Harbor Township will form a community visioning team, that will be supported by a professional planning firm with expertise in smart-growth planning. The team will develop a community action plan that sets strategies for zoning, subdivision, site planning and infrastructure improvements. The action plan may address a wide range of issues, including open space and recreation, community character, historic preservation, traffic and circulation, community and site design standards, tree clearing, storm water management and siting of public facilities.

In a related development, the Pinelands Commission today also approved an amendment to the Egg Harbor Township land development ordinance that significantly increases the amount of land that must be set aside as common open space for active recreational use in major residential subdivisions from 2.5 acres per 1,000 people to 8 acres per 1,000 people. The ordinance also makes a number of changes aimed at strengthening the Township’s open space requirements to improve recreational opportunities.

“Parks are critical to the social and physical development of children and to the overall sustainability of communities,” Florio added. “Today’s action by the Commission will help Egg Harbor Township to better meet the open space and recreational needs of its growing population and make the town a better place to live.”

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