



For Immediate Release

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**New Survey: New Jerseyans Support Statewide Planning
and Water Quality Protection**

TRENTON, NJ – New Jerseyans’ decades-long support for coordinated statewide planning to guide growth and development and protect farmland and open space remains undiminished, according to a poll released today by smart growth, environmental and transportation advocates.

The poll, conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute, found that residents are as concerned about protecting drinking water as they are about the economy. Ninety one percent identify protecting the state’s drinking water supply as very important, compared to 88 percent who say that attracting new business is a top concern.

New Jerseyans are enthusiastic about sustainable communities – places where a variety of transportation options already exist and neighborhoods are within walking distance of shopping and other services. Two-thirds of residents believe the state needs more sustainable communities and nearly three in four say they would definitely (46 percent) or probably (27 percent) like to live in such a place.

The survey of 804 residents was conducted between Aug. 18 and Aug. 24 and has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percent. The poll was commissioned by nonprofit organizations New Jersey Future, the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, the Tri-State Transportation Campaign and Smart Growth America. The poll was funded by the William Penn Foundation.

Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute, said, “Compared to a decade ago, New Jerseyans’ priorities on growth issues have not changed much, despite the impact of a declining economy. One of the most interesting aspects of these results is the widespread bipartisan agreement on most issues, including protecting our water, reducing property taxes, maintaining our transportation system and roads and protecting open space, such as the Pinelands and Highlands.”

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Peter Kasabach, executive director of New Jersey Future, said New Jerseyans' preference for smart growth should be heeded by public officials. "We want to be sure that policymakers understand that citizens won't support shortsighted economic decisions that betray the principles of smart growth in the most developed state in the nation," Kasabach said. "On the contrary, the poll found strong support for more sustainable communities that are walkable and offer transportation choices."

Kate Slevin, executive director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, noted that New Jersey residents understand and appreciate both the land-use and economic benefits of transit. "This new data further supports our stand that investing in public transportation and road and bridge repairs will prevent suburban sprawl and enhance our sustainability," Slevin said. "It also has an added benefit of offering some economic relief throughout the state."

Carleton Montgomery, executive director of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, said he was heartened by the survey's finding that regional planning enjoys widespread support. "We are pleased to find that despite the economic climate, New Jerseyans maintain a commitment to protecting the Pinelands and Highlands," Montgomery said. "We encourage them to express those feelings and impress upon state and local officials the need to save the forests of these regions, which cleanse and store the water supplies on which we all rely."

Geoff Anderson, president and CEO of Smart Growth America, said New Jersey's support for coordinated, statewide planning is part of growing national support for smart growth strategies. "People across the country are speaking out for smarter growth at local planning meetings, in state ballot measures and to their members of Congress," Anderson said. "These strategies help cut costs for state and federal governments and help build stable economies in regions across the country."

Key findings from the new poll include:

- 69 percent of New Jerseyans are in support of a coordinated, statewide plan for existing population centers in order to preserve farming communities and open spaces. These findings are nearly identical to a poll conducted in 2002.
- 52 percent of residents agree with the statement that now is the time for state government to invest in transportation to create jobs and attract new business.
- Residents believe road and bridge repair and expansion of public transportation are high priorities. Seventy-five percent rate the maintenance and repair of existing roads and highways as a high priority, and 54 percent give the same rating to expanding and improving train and bus services. Only 36 percent see building new roads as a high priority.
- Of those who knew about the Pinelands and Highlands programs, two-thirds support these regional planning initiatives. Fifty-nine percent of residents believe it is very important to protect areas like the Pinelands and Highlands.

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To view a copy of the survey report, click here [New Jersey Opinions on Growth and Development](#).

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About New Jersey Future

New Jersey Future is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that brings together concerned citizens and leaders to promote responsible land-use policies. The organization employs original research, analysis and advocacy to build coalitions and drive land-use policies that help revitalize cities and towns, protect natural lands and farms, provide more transportation choices beyond cars, expand access to safe and affordable neighborhoods and fuel a prosperous economy. For more information, go to www.njfuture.org.

About Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a nonprofit transportation policy group dedicated to creating a more balanced, environmentally friendly and equitable transportation system in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. For more information, go to www.tstc.org.

About Pinelands Preservation Alliance

The Pinelands Preservation Alliance is a nonprofit advocacy and education group founded in 1989 to promote the protection of the Pinelands' natural and historic resources. PPA is headquartered in Southampton, New Jersey, and can be reached at (609) 859-8860 or ppa@pinelandsalliance.org. Its web site is www.pinelandsalliance.org.

About Smart Growth America

Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks so people can walk to their town center to ensuring that more homes are built near public transit or productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure that people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For more information, go to www.smartgrowthamerica.org.