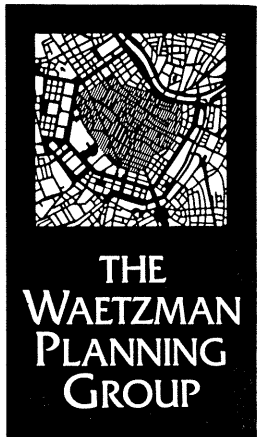


Master Plan Reexamination Report

Prepared for the City Planning Board

City of Cape May, Cape May County, NJ

Adopted December 20, 2000



Technical Support Provided By:

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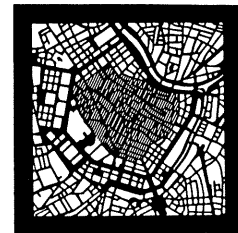
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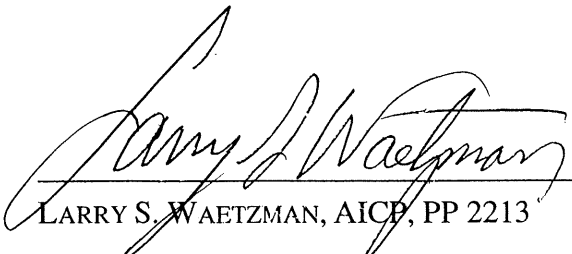
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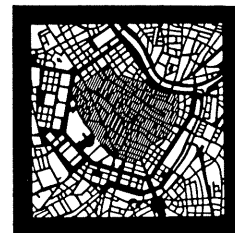


This master plan reexamination report has been prepared under the direct supervision of Larry S. Waetzman, AICP, who is the holder of New Jersey Professional Planner License 2213. The author wishes to express his thanks to the City Planning Board and to the many citizens of Cape May who have selfishly volunteered their time and wisdom to insure the success of this effort.


LARRY S. WAETZMAN, AICP, PP 2213

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I. INTRODUCTION

All New Jersey municipalities that have enacted a zoning ordinance and other land development regulations are required by the Municipal Land Use Law to have a master plan and to reexamine it at least once every six years. The periodic review of the Master Plan is such a fundamental element of New Jersey Law that failure to reexamine the plan creates a refutable presumption that land development regulations in the municipality are no longer reasonable.¹ Moreover, the New Jersey Supreme Court has held, in its landmark *Medic* decision, that all zoning decisions made by the governing body (City Council), the planning board, and the zoning board of adjustment must be based upon the master plan.²

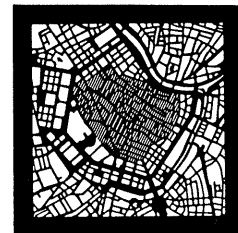
The City of Cape May's last full master plan update was prepared in 1988 and reexamined on November 1, 1994. The Reexamination Report was adopted by the Planning Board on February 1, 1995.³ It is thus timely to prepare this reexamination report, which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of N.J.S.A 40:55D-89. As such, this report should not be considered a complete master plan, but rather a review of problems and objectives that existed at the time of the adoption of the last master plan report, and the extent to which conditions have changed since then. Based upon this review, recommendations will be made for further work or updates that may be appropriate. However, the adoption of this report will satisfy the statutory reexamination obligation and allow the completion of follow-up work in a timely fashion.

This reexamination report will review all aspects of the master plan, but will place special emphasis on land use and the City's development regulations, transportation and parking, historic preservation, and environmental issues.

¹ N.J.S.A. C.40:55D-89.1

² *Medici v. BPR Co.*, 107 N.J. 1,(1987).

³ It should be noted that a Master Plan Housing Element and Fair Share Plan was adopted on December 15, 1995 and has been certified until 2002 by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). Because COAH regulations may be substantially revised before the City's certification expires in two years, a reexamination of the housing element is neither required nor recommended at this time.



1. PREVIOUS GOALS, CURRENT CONDITIONS AND SIGNIFICANT EVENTS SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE LAST REEXAMINATION REPORT

In 1978 Cape May adopted a master plan which identified the need to support the growth of the City's resort industry as the top priority. The master plan was updated and/or reexamined again in 1984, 1989, and 1994, with historic preservation and harbor-front enhancement supplements having been prepared in 1991. The housing element and fair share plan was adopted in 1988 and again on December 15, 1995. The housing plan has been certified until 2002 by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing.

To help it prepare for this master plan reexamination report, the City Planning Board has distributed a planning issues survey to property owners throughout the community. Approximately 4,000 survey forms were distributed and 856 responses were received. This is a response rate in excess of more than 20%, which is extraordinary for a mail survey such as this. The results of that survey were helpful in formulating the recommendations of this report.

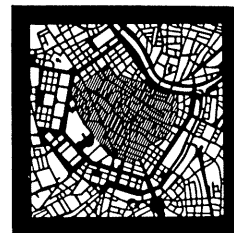
In each of the subsequent updates, a recurrent theme has been that the goal of enhancing Cape May's role as a leading resort along the New Jersey shore has been achieved, but that it has brought with it a significant price in terms of traffic congestion, the proliferation of commercial uses, and increased residential densities.

Traffic Circulation Issues and Parking

The concerns of the more recent reexamination reports, in raising the issue of increasing congestion in Cape May, remain as valid today as in 1984, 1989, and 1994. Cape May is a victim of its own success, attracting an ever-increasing stream of visitors to the community. While this is generally a good thing, it can eventually discourage visitation if it is not managed properly. Some local tourist officials have already noted a plateau in visitation numbers in recent years.⁴

Cape May generally competes successfully with other nearby shore communities as an oceanfront resort, and its reputation as a national historic landmark with a large concentration of Victorian-era structures gives it a unique advantage. Cape

⁴ Interview, Michael Zuckerman, Director, Mid Atlantic Center, October 19, 2000.



May has become a year-round destination through the efforts of the Mid Atlantic Center and various other tourist promotion agencies. A calendar of special events has been developed that attracts visitors twelve months a year. Summer, nonetheless, remains Cape May's busiest season. Moreover, Cape May offers a concentration of restaurants and shopping opportunities in a turn-of-the century atmosphere not found in nearby beach communities. As a result, visitation often increases dramatically on cloudy and rainy summer days when vacationers from other South Jersey and Delaware shore resorts drive to Cape May as an alternative to a day on the beach.

The 1988 Master Plan established, as its #1 goal, the need to develop a coordinated circulation system. The 1994 reexamination repeated the goal and offered suggestions to achieve the goal. These concentrated on (1) the need to improve movement into and out of the city; (2) the need to address the lack of centralized and satellite parking; (3) the creation of a pedestrian and bicycle network; and (4) improved rail access.

Some progress has occurred. Cape May has been designated a "center" under New Jersey's state planning process, which will enhance the city's eligibility for various grant programs. The City has used grant funds to undertake construction of a transportation center that is designed to encourage visitors to use other modes of transportation to reach Cape May. It has begun operations, although construction has not yet been completed. And, the City has initiated plans to widen sidewalks along Ocean Street between the Transportation Center and the Washington Street Mall.

These actions are indicative of a sincere desire by City Officials to improve conditions in Cape May. Unfortunately, the Planning Board has not been directly involved in all of these planning efforts, despite a specific requirement of the Municipal Land Use Law that it comment on all such proposed capital improvements.⁵ No one doubts the positive motives of the Mayor and Council to make these improvements. However it is unclear, for example, if consideration was given to the affect that the narrowing of the Ocean Street cartway (to accommodate the wider sidewalks) will have on traffic flow in this area. Because the Planning Board has not seen these plans, and has had to rely on newspaper accounts, no definitive comments can be made. Nonetheless, it is clear that an

⁵ N.J.S.A. 40:55D-31.



open dialog, better communication and common planning efforts between Council and the Planning Board would greatly improve the process.

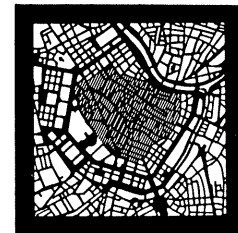
Despite the suggestions of the earlier master plans and reexamination reports, the problems persist. Long lines of traffic still clog Lafayette Street from the bridge to Ocean Street (a distance of 7,000 feet), as motorists attempt to enter and exit the city. More than 400 respondents to the taxpayer's survey cited problems entering the City at the Schellengers Landing Bridge as a major concern.

Conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, horse-drawn carriages, and bicycle "surreys" abound near the city center, creating a potentially dangerous situation. Meanwhile parking remains in critically short supply. Off-street parking lots are limited in terms of both location and number of spaces. Many residents and visitors alike are forced to rely on on-street parking meters, which require a large number of quarters and have a fixed time duration. This discourages prolonged stays. The use of satellite parking lots, both off-island and in town, elicited the largest number of responses to the taxpayer's survey, with 646 and 605 responses respectively.

A number of frustrated tourists have written letters complaining that their vacation memories have been overwhelmed by recollections of sitting in traffic or cruising the downtown area in a desperate search for a parking space. Local residents have also continued to complain about the same issues. The solution of traffic circulation and parking issues remains of paramount importance to the city.

Community Services and Facilities

Goal #2 was to ensure the provision of an adequate range and availability of community services. The City has been more successful in addressing this goal. The 1994 reexamination report focused on the need to provide adequate potable water and sewer service. Since then, the first a desalinization plant in the Northeastern United States has gone online to solve short-term water supply supplies for both the City and surrounding communities. However, operation of the plant is expensive and conservation efforts must remain vigilant. Despite this, an overwhelming majority of survey respondents (577) supported the desalinization project.



Local officials interviewed for this report have reported no difficulties in providing other public services. Police bicycle patrols have increased while fire and emergency services appear adequate.

The City is currently evaluating renovations and the future use of the Franklin School. Its lease to the Community Center for the Arts was supported by many survey respondents, as was maintenance of city-owned historic properties. Renovations to Convention Hall are planned and some consideration is being given to removal of City Hall to the former Shelton College site in East Cape May.⁶ It should be noted that moving City Hall received one of the lowest rankings in the citizen survey, although the question is too important to be resolved solely on the basis of an opinion poll. It, like all of these issues, requires further study.

Residential Land Use

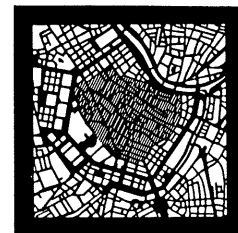
The previous plan established a goal of preserving the established residential districts and providing a range of housing types to meet the varied income and age level needs of residents and vacationers. The reexamination report urged a review of residential district boundaries, a limitation on the number of uses permitted, and a further restriction on commercial encroachments.

The identified concerns remain valid today but little has been done to address these issues. It is becoming increasingly important to take action now.

The zoning ordinance does provide for a significant range of dwelling types and the City has an adopted housing element that addresses its affordable housing obligation. However, the goal of addressing the age-level needs of residents does not appear to be met. There are no provisions for age-restricted development (although single family and multiple family units could be provided under existing regulations) and no regulations for the increasingly popular assisted living facilities, nursing homes and congregate care facilities.

The desirability of Cape May, combined with the almost total lack of vacant building lots, has created considerable development pressure that has raised the value of real estate in the community. In the extreme, vacant 75' x 150' beachfront lots, created by the demolition of the Admiral Hotel in 1996, have

⁶ Interview, City Administrator Lou Corea, October 17, 2000.



increased in value from \$425,000 to \$1,400,000 in just four years. More modest twin homes in the Village Green section are now selling for as much as \$170,000 to \$200,000.⁷ This pressure will likely encourage a future trend that favors the demolition of smaller structures and their redevelopment with larger buildings. This process can be seen along Yacht Avenue, which is located in the commercial Mixed-Use District although existing uses are predominately residential. The process can also be seen at selected locations throughout the community, such as the so-called “Christmas Island,” where a former Christmas shop was more intensively redeveloped as a multi-family residential complex. Although controls are in place to protect historic structures, care must be taken to assure that private redevelopment projects do not overwhelm and adversely affect the existing character of the community.

The increasing real estate values have raised summer rental prices to well above \$1,000 a week. This, in turn, has encouraged renters to share their quarters among several families, with each household bringing at least one vehicle. The result has exacerbated the parking problem in residential neighborhoods. Two to three vehicles per unit are common, with some rentals (particularly among unrelated individuals) and Bed and Breakfast properties resulting in a substantial higher numbers of vehicles. Meanwhile, the zoning ordinance requires just one off-street parking space per one and two family dwelling unit and 1.5 spaces per multifamily unit. It would be difficult to provide additional off-street parking for most existing dwellings and options to require more parking for new construction would be hampered by the New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards Act. This law, adopted in 1997 after the last reexamination report, restricts the number of parking spaces that can be required of any residential development.⁸

There is great concern regarding the potential development of wetlands, east of Pittsburgh Avenue. This is the last concentration of undeveloped land in Cape May. Much of this land is zoned residential and only the state’s wetland protection policies have so far prevented development. Much of this land has been rezoned to the RC Residential Cluster District, which permits single family homes on 10,000 square foot lots, but which also requires that at least 40% of the tract be preserved as open space. A large residential subdivision plan has been

⁷ Interview, Planning Board Chairman and Realtor William Bezaire, September 19, 2000.

⁸ N.J.A.C. 5:21-4.14. Single family homes are limited to 2 spaces per 2 bedroom unit up to a maximum of 3 spaces for a 5 bedroom dwelling. Garden apartments are limited to a maximum of 2.1 spaces for a 3 bedroom unit.



filed but it is embroiled in litigation with the State over the extent of the wetlands. The issue continues to demand attention, particularly in light of a recent decision allowing development of the former Shelton College site.

Similarly, there seem to be some inconsistencies in the relationship between existing land use patterns and zoning boundaries. This issue has been raised in particular with respect to the R-4 District and to long-term commercial encroachments on residential districts, such as along Jefferson Street.

Commercial Land Use

The commercial land use goal of the current master plan is to “maintain Cape May’s unique appeal by offering varied activities and services in appropriate areas while maintaining the City’s character and quality of life.” The reexamination report urged a consolidation of the commercial districts and the introduction of design and performance standards.

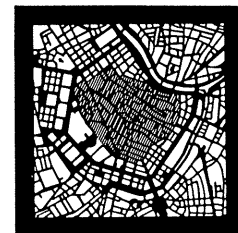
It appears that the commercial districts now generally conform to the recommendations of the last reexamination report, although there is a need to again review their operation. In particular, design standards should be considered in areas not now part of the historic district.

Oceanfront and Harborfront Land Use

A separate goal of the previous plan was to promote quality oceanfront and harbor front land uses and to encourage public access. Among the recommendations were the implementation of design guidelines and improved access opportunities for the physically challenged.

The goals generally remain viable today but attention should be paid to two waterfront districts: the Harbor District and the Mixed Use District. There are virtually no nonresidential uses in these districts. The Harbor District is now almost completely devoted to Green Acres parkland but, other than the Fishermen’s Memorial, it appears underutilized. This addresses the public access goal but there does not appear to be a need for a separate HD District.

The Mixed Use District on Yacht Avenue has been discussed above, under residential uses. Some nonresidential activities exist, including boat docks and



the Coast Guard Auxiliary clubhouse, but more intensive uses like large-scale office and marine-oriented retail have yet to appear. These uses are currently permitted by the zoning ordinance but appear unwise in light of the narrow street cartway, flooding concerns, and the character of the street. This district should be reviewed with an eye towards reducing the extent of the multi-family and commercial uses now permitted.

Additionally, it continues to be true that some oceanfront development has been unsympathetic to the overall character of the community. The need for design standards for hotels, motels, and other uses in this area remains unresolved.

Recreation and Open Space

The preservation and enhancement of the City's open space system was another goal. The plan urged that recreational and open space lands be used both to protect environmental resources and to serve the needs of permanent and seasonal residents.

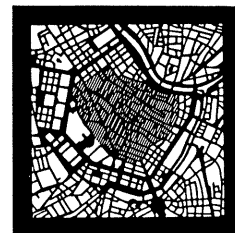
The need for a comprehensive recreation and open space plan is documented in the plan. Access to and maintenance of beach areas ranked high in the citizen survey, as did the purchase of the remaining open space in the community.

Environmental Protection

The master plan establishes the protection of the quality of the natural and manmade environment as a goal.

As noted in the preceding section, protection of wetlands and beach areas remains an area of high concern, with both ranking high in the taxpayer's survey. The City has embarked on a voluntary dunes grass stabilization project and has entered into a 50-year agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers for beach replenishment.

The Cape May Environmental Commission has advocated a proactive policy regarding wetlands. They have suggested acquisition of all environmentally sensitive wetlands within the City Limits, enactment of a moratorium on building on all City-owned wetlands, and adoption of a 300-foot wetland buffer.



The acquisition of wetlands should be encouraged, but would require grant funding to accomplish. If that is not possible, a thorough review of densities permitted by the zoning ordinance on sensitive lands is recommended elsewhere in this reexamination report. Further investigation of the potential to impose a 300-foot wetland buffer is also recommended.

Several groups in the community, including the Shade Tree Commission and Save Our Sycamores, have urged an enhanced role for trees and tree protection in the master plan. The City participates in Tree City USA and an important change since the last master plan has been the adoption of a "Community Forestry Management Plan," which requires inclusion of forestry, conservation and environmental management as part of the master plan. A new landscape ordinance has been adopted.

Cape May County has adopted a recycling plan and has as a goal that 65% of the total waste stream be recycled. The County's Recycling Coordinator has noted that the City does not now meet this goal and has suggested that the master plan provide encouragement to reach it.

Historic Preservation

Much of the City of Cape May is a National Historic Landmark, one of the few municipalities in the entire United States to have that distinction. The eighth and final goal of the master plan is to maintain the City's uniquely attractive and livable character through the preservation of historic and architecturally important structures.

The impact of this effort has been generally positive, although not uniformly successful. The Historic Preservation Commission has a strong regulatory presence, with the status of a certified local government. Yet there appears to be some confusion regarding the sequence of the preservation process and a need for better coordination between the HPC, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board, and Council.

Historic preservation efforts failed to save the Admiral Hotel, which was demolished in 1996. This was an example of "demolition by neglect," and this process continues to be a concern. The City remains on the National Park Service's list of 25 most endangered national historic landmarks and much of the Park Service's concerns seem to center on the overall loss of the City's character. They point out that unsympathetic new construction, even if not near a historic



property, may effect this issue. However, on the positive side, renovations to the historic Congress Hall are underway after a long delay.

A number of specific goals were advanced in the 1991 historic preservation plan, but the record of implementation has not been uniform. Some important recommendations have been adopted, including the referral of development applications to HPC; the establishment of explicit design standards; the development of explicit appeals process; the establishment of a minor application process; and the achievement of Certified Local Government (CLG) for the HPC.

Some of the 1991 goals are still being implemented. A complete inventory of historic resources will be completed in 2001, using recently received CLG Grant. The HPC has recommended the elimination of the distinctions between the Primary and Secondary Historic Districts, a goal of the 1991 plan, but it has not yet been adopted by Council; A better flow of applications between boards has been worked on, but there is a need to either codify the process or create a flow chart. Council is in the process of working on a property maintenance code which would address the "demolition by neglect" issue.

Lastly, several goals are still unimplemented. These include investigating the possibility of revising area and bulk regulations for historic resources; developing the HPC's role in choosing "street furniture;" encouraging businesses to obtain "Victorian" lights, benches and similar items; and developing an historic plaque purchase program.

Other Significant Events Since Adoption of the Last Reexamination Report

Several other significant changes in the state regulatory framework have been adopted since 1994 and they will affect the City as well. The Residential Site Improvement Standards Act mandates uniform utility and street design standards for residential development throughout New Jersey. Much of its regulations will not affect Cape May, because of the lack of vacant land for new streets, but the regulations will impact parking standards for dwellings, as noted above.

New regulations have been promulgated under the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA 2) which includes specific mapping affecting applicability within Cape May City. A conversation with the Planning Board's Engineer indicated that he did not anticipate these regulations to require major changes in the City's

ordinances, although they could have an impact on any development in the area of west of Pittsburgh Avenue.⁹



Although not directly regulated by the City's ordinances, the U.S. Coast Guard facility is a valued and important part of the community. The installation maintains a large search and rescue operation and its Training Center is the only Coast Guard basic training center in the nation. Since the last master plan, the base has lost its air station but a second cutter has been assigned to the base with a crew of 65. A new Veterans Administration clinic has also been built. Future expansion of the base's training function is anticipated in the future, which will have implications for the City's utility service plan.

We have also reviewed the master plans of the adjacent municipalities of the Borough of West Cape May and Lower Township. We found adjacent land use policies to be consistent. West Cape May is now working on a new reexamination report while Lower Township completed its reexamination earlier this year. The importance of cooperation with adjoining municipalities, including Cape May Point, cannot be underestimated. Consideration of formal or informal efforts at regional planning should be encouraged.

⁹ Interview, James Mott, P.E., August 17, 2000.



III. Circulation and Parking Recommendations

Special emphasis was placed upon the need to address traffic circulation and parking issues. These recommendations were prepared by Orth-Rodgers and Associates, a transportation planning firm, in cooperation with lead consultant.

Parking, Shuttles and Other Alternative Transportation Modes

Several objectives from the 1994 Master Plan Reexamination Report encouraged the use of alternative transportation modes.

The feasibility of providing satellite parking and a shuttle service has been most thoroughly explored to date in the *Cape May Intermodal Ground Transportation Feeder Study* (South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization, May 1995). This study suggested that tourists were willing to use a shuttle service if provided at 15-30 minute intervals, and said that candidates for shuttles and trains included weekend day trippers, local residents, employees who work in Cape May City, and seasonal vacationers.

The study also recommended consideration of Historic Cold Spring Village, Rio Grande Mall, and Elementary School #2 as potential park and ride locations. Although interest had been expressed by public officials and businesspeople in a park-and-ride site at the base of the Garden State Parkway, this was not evaluated in the study due to capital costs, environmental problems, site approval and other issues.

Satellite parking should continue to be explored both because of the difficulty of developing parking sufficient to meet the demands of the major attractions in downtown Cape May, and also to reduce traffic volumes on the roadways leading into Cape May. Significantly expanding the parking supply in Cape May would likely lead to an increase in traffic volumes on already congested roadways. Employees, in particular, should be targeted for satellite parking facilities. Several sites have been identified, both off-island and in-town. Further analysis is necessary, including projects of need and available capacities.

The 1995 *Cape May Intermodal Ground Transportation Feeder Study* (South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization) recommended implementing the



Cape May Seashore Lines; this recommendation was followed through. This line accounts for a relatively small percentage of visitors to Cape May City, however.

While it will be difficult for passenger rail and other high-volume transportation modes (such as shuttles) to become the primary mode of accessing the city, these alternative transportation modes should continue to be strongly encouraged.

Other Parking Issues

The issue of providing more parking in Cape May City remains of critical importance. It was most recently examined in the 1987 *Traffic and Parking Study* (RPPW Consultants, Inc). Many of the recommendations in that report have not been implemented, and the limited availability of parking remains an important issue for downtown businesses in particular. Sites previously suggested for off-street parking include a city-owned lot on Elmira Street and the seasonal use of the elementary school parking lot. More investigation is required.

It is important to find funding for parking improvements. The provisions of the existing code that relate to the parking trust account should be reviewed with an eye towards expanding its use. In addition, consideration should be given to targeting all or a portion of parking meter revenues for the provision of public off-street parking facilities.

While the need for more parking facilities remains, their construction should not be at cross-purposes with other transportation strategies eventually approved by the City. Greatly expanding the parking supply in downtown Cape May would likely discourage potential use of satellite parking and/or shuttle services. An increase in traffic volumes downtown should not be encouraged if the effect is to impair Cape May City's pedestrian-friendly ambience. As always, one of the most important questions remains how to bring in the large numbers of visitors important to Cape May City's economy while maintaining its attractive character.

Improving Circulation In To, Out Of and Through Cape May

The previous master plan also sought to evaluate county, state and federal transportation planning in order to coordinate them with local planning, giving particular emphasis to City entrances and exits.



A major "choke points" for visitors to Cape May City is Route 109 just north of the Schellenger's Landing Bridge in Lower Township. (A traffic count conducted from July 1st through July 6th, 2000 just south of Schellenger's Landing Bridge indicated average daily traffic volumes of 14,470.)

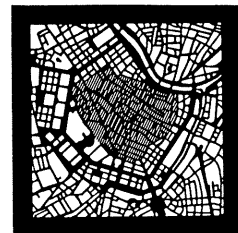
The 1987 RPPW study said many of the problems on Route 109 could be solved with low-cost traffic management measures. This study also suggested widening the roadway to 36 feet. This width would permit a cross-section of two through/right-turn lanes and a center-left turn lane. The addition of a left-turn lane would be a very desirable measure given the intensity of land uses along this corridor. However, a roadway widening would be expensive due to the need to move curbs and utilities. Improving traffic flow in this area will obviously require close coordination with Lower Township.

In the past, construction of a new bridge linking Cape May City to Lower Township has been considered. This bridge was proposed to link Schellenger's Landing to Texas or Pittsburgh Avenue. Such a plan would face significant obstacles and should not be a transportation priority at this time.

It has been suggested that traffic should be encouraged to enter the city via Broadway (CR 626). CR 626 is already extensively used as an entrance into Cape May by persons familiar with the area. However, significantly increasing traffic on CR 626 would face possible constraints, as it passes through West Cape May Borough. Coordination with West Cape May is therefore required. This approach received little support, however, in the citizen survey.

In addition, it has been suggested that more traffic be encouraged to use Pittsburgh Avenue (CR 622). However, increased volumes on this route might be problematic given the required weaving movements on Washington Street between Sidney Street and Texas Avenue (in order to reach Pittsburgh Avenue).

The feasibility of converting Lafayette and Washington Streets into a one-way couplet should be considered. Converting Lafayette and Washington Streets into a one-way couplet would have significant potential for improving traffic flow into downtown Cape May, particularly at the intersection of Lafayette and Ocean Streets, which is a major congestion point. As far back as 1967, a traffic study prepared by Wilbur Smith & Associates for Cape May County recommended that Cape May City consider converting Lafayette and Washington Streets into a one-

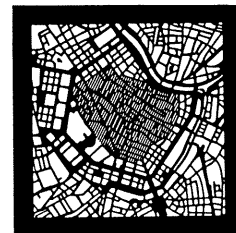


way couplet. There is a heavy volume of left turns at the southern end of Lafayette Street since the major attractions in Cape May City lay to the east. A one-way couplet would greatly expedite the left-turn movement in this area, as southbound motorists would not have to turn left across northbound traffic. A feasibility study should, of course, consider the effect upon residents and businesses in this area and upon emergency responses. However, the impact of this proposed change on the historic district needs to be carefully examined.

The timing of the traffic signals on Lafayette Street at the Transportation Center and Ocean Street should be reviewed. The Mayor's Task Force has also suggested consideration of reversing the one-way traffic patterns surrounding the Washington Street Mall on Carpenters and Lyle Lanes.

In the past, the master plan has suggested that consideration should be given to the creation of a task force to study circulation problems and make recommendations for improvements. The plan noted that the creation of the task force is the responsibility of the Planning Board and should include representatives from citizen and business groups. This recommendation continues to be valid.

If adequate solutions for parking and circulation can not be found, consideration should be given to creating a "pedestrian-friendly" zone in the downtown area during fixed hours of the summer months. Such a step would encourage use of satellite parking lots. During this period private motor vehicles would be prohibited, except for emergency vehicles and mass transit vehicles. The streets would be primarily devoted to pedestrians, bicycles, and horse-drawn carriages. Through traffic could be facilitated by allowing Lafayette and Beach to remain open to all vehicles, but congestion would be virtually eliminated in the heart of the community. Resident parking sticker could be used to discourage visitor parking at the edges of the "pedestrian-friendly" district. Boundaries need be carefully considered. These boundaries could be drawn narrowly, so as to include only the portion of Jackson and Decatur Streets that intersects the Washington Street Mall, or they could be drawn more expansively to include much of the historic district.

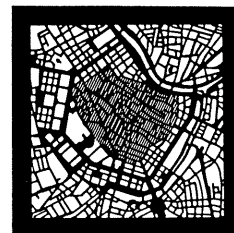


Pedestrian and Bicycle Considerations

Pedestrian and bicycle facility needs have not been recently evaluated in traffic studies for Cape May City. Much of Cape May City's demand as a tourist destination can be attributed to its appeal for people who enjoy leisure walking and biking. Pedestrians and bicyclists enjoy the attractive streetscapes both downtown and along the beach, and they also benefit from the "traffic calming" that the downtown street system imposes upon motor vehicles, as vehicles cannot travel very fast.

One means of encouraging bicycle traffic would be to stripe bike lanes where roadway widths permit; on many downtown streets, however, the striping of bike lanes could be accomplished only by removing parking from at least one side of the street and so should be considered only after thorough study. Another means of encouraging pedestrian and bicycle traffic would be to close certain streets downtown to motor traffic for regular time periods every day, and thus to effectively create pedestrian and bicycle malls. Motorized vehicles would be permitted to make deliveries every morning. Enforcement concerns could be addressed by the use of movable bollards, which could be installed and removed at the entrance to a street at the same time every day. Of course, closing streets could only take place after extensive study. Consultation with downtown merchants and other local stakeholders would be critical. At a minimum, parking would be lost, and issues of access to downtown businesses must be addressed. Emergency service issues would also need to be addressed.

Finally, the adequacy of existing wayfinding signs should be re-evaluated, along with appropriate usage of traffic control signs and pavement markings in providing for pedestrian and bicycle safety. The supply and placement of bike parking facilities should also be evaluated.



IV. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Special attention was also paid to the status of the City's historic preservation efforts because of its importance to the city's vitality. Robert Wise Consulting reviewed the existing regulations, met with officials of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and discussed the city's efforts with the National Park Service.

Both Mr. Wise and the HPC found that the preservation ordinances were generally working as intended. However a number of general concerns were identified, as noted below:

1. There still seems to be confusion regarding the "flow" of an application, although much of this was cleared up and amended. The ordinance should have stronger language pertaining to the flow of an application so that all parties are aware of the process up front.

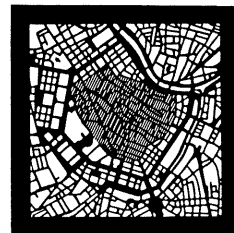
Though not codified, the current process seems to be working. Applications are first reviewed as concept plans by the HPC then forwarded on to the ZHB or PB. The application then comes back to the HPC for final approval. It is recommended that this "flow" process be codified so no parties are missed in the process and there is a complete understanding, in advance, by the applicant. Also, a flow chart of the process should be created for applicants, so they know what to expect.

2. There needs to be stronger – and codified – liaison between the boards and council. Informal reviews should be encouraged to prevent problems later on.
3. Demolition by neglect is a concern. A property maintenance code that addresses the issue of demolition by neglect is currently being considered by Council. It would reference the BOCA code and authorize the use of liens to mandate improvements if owners are unable to cooperate. These efforts should be encouraged. Had such an ordinance been in effect years ago, key historic structures such as the



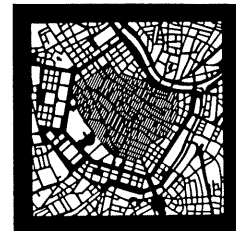
Admiral Hotel might have been prevented from becoming so deteriorated that renovations were no longer feasible.

4. The HPC has recommended that the historic district be expanded to the whole city. As a CLG, the city just received a \$31,000 grant to conduct a citywide survey. However, in lieu of this, the HPC could serve as an advisory board for activity impacting historic resources outside of the current district. The critical concern is to explain how the review process would not include noncontributing properties.
5. The differences between "key" historic resources, contributing resources, and noncontributing resources are not now spelled out. The same regulations are enforced in both districts and we would support the HPC's recommendation that they be consolidated. Also, the ordinance refers to historic resources by a variety of names. As such, these properties and terms need to be defined and used consistently throughout the ordinance.
6. It is important to ensure that the addresses are properly flagged for review by HPC. A more effective follow-up system should also be developed. For example, a letter could be forwarded to the HPC after construction ends stating that the building has been inspected and that the resolutions of the HPC regarding on the certificate of appropriateness have been properly carried. (This would force the construction official to carefully inspect the building, of course, submit the assurances in writing.)
7. It is recommended that the HPC look into the cost of hiring an architectural/historic administrator. This is done in other municipalities that review a similar number of applications. An additional inspector would be helpful. Funding may be available from CLG grants. Lastly, it is recommended that a professional education rotation be created for HPC members to maintain the status of the CLG.
8. The consistent of zoning and historic district regulations should be reviewed. There may be some incompatibility between the zoning and historic preservation ordinances. Most historic resources are probably



nonconforming with respect to the zoning ordinance, creating a need for variances.

9. Design guidelines are extremely helpful for everyone. They serve as a helpful design direction for the applicant and help the HPC not to be arbitrary or capricious. Guidelines are now adopted into ordinance. Comments were made, however, regarding the lack of use and understanding of the guide. Also, the guidelines, it was pointed out, are not really guidelines but architectural regulations, and should be described as such. It is recommended that the guidelines be updated in a more presentable format, and one easily reproduced. They should be incorporated directly into ordinance under the name, "Architectural Regulations."
10. The public is often unaware that they are in the Historic District or that they own a historic resource. There is a need to produce handbook of the historic resources and to advise new owners that they own a historic structure. Key structures should have plaques.
11. The City should promote a better understanding with regard to the public and other governmental entities regarding the importance of the HPC in the planning and regulatory process and the economic well-being of the City.



V. Recommendations for Future Action

As noted in the introduction, the reexamination report is not intended to answer all questions, but rather to review the existing master plan in light of current conditions and to suggest future steps, if necessary,

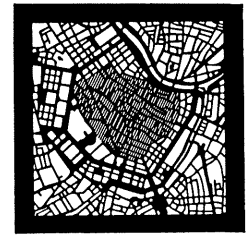
This review indicates that further action is appropriate and a complete update of the master plan is warranted. The current plan is twelve years old and it should be thoroughly revised, as follows:

1. The statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, assumptions, and standards should be updated and placed in the format required by the Municipal Land Use Law.
2. The Land Use Element should be reviewed in light of the recommendations of this report. Particular attention needs to be directed towards the viability of the MD and HD Districts and the boundaries between various districts, especially in the R-4 District. The adequacy of current zoning regulations as they affect the undeveloped lands in East Cape May should be investigated. An analysis of the impact of the zoning provisions on "over-building" and historic properties should also be considered. The list of permitted uses in the RS and all nonresidential districts should be reviewed with an eye towards limiting commercial over-development in inappropriate areas. Importantly, consideration should be given to developing design guidelines for the Oceanfront area.
3. Housing Element

The housing element has been certified by COAH until 2002 and should not be updated until new COAH regulations are promulgated.
4. Historic Preservation Plan Element.

The 1991 element should be updated to incorporate the recommendations of this report.
5. Storm Water Management

This is not specifically enumerated as a required element, but N.J.S.A. 40:55D-94 requires a storm water management plan to be integral to the master plan. This linkage should be provided, in cooperation with the City or Planning Board Engineer.



6. Consistency Review

N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28d requires a policy statement indicating the relationship of the master plan to those of adjacent municipalities, the county master plan, the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and the County Solid Waste Management Plan. This needs to be updated.

7. Circulation Element

There is currently no circulation element as part of the master plan, although a number of prior traffic and parking studies have been undertaken. Many of the recommendations noted above require further study and refinement, but are highly recommended.

8. Utility Service Plan

This is not now part of the master plan. It is optional, but current city planning efforts in that regard should be integrated into the document.

9. Community Facilities and Recreation Plans

These are two other optional elements of the master plan that should be addressed.

10. Natural Resources Conservation Plan

The existing research of the Environmental Commission and related agencies should be included in the master plan. Much work regarding topics as diverse as tree protection and migratory bird patterns has been documented but none is now referenced in the master plan.

11. Economic Plan Element.

This is an optional element but it can be effective. Many recommendations will be included as part of other elements of the master plan but consideration might be given, dependent upon available funding, for a specific economic development element.

12. Recycling Plan

A statement of the relationship of the City Master Plan to the County Solid Waste Management Plan is required and a recycling element should be included with the master plan.

Once the master plan is updated, the land development regulations should be thorough revised to implement its recommendations.