

MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

City of Ocean City
Cape May County, New Jersey

Prepared by

Heyer, Gruel & Associates, PA
Community Planning Consultants
732-828-2200

November 2000

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REEXAMINATION REPORT**

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732-828-2200

The original of this report was signed and
sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12.


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Susan S. Gruel, P.P. #1955

Planning Board

William Lindsay, Chairperson
Charles Lynch, Vice Chairperson
Honorable Henry Knight, Mayor

Edward Taylor

Robert Coste

Gus Bruno

Michael Hoffman

George Savastano, Public Works Director

Lawrence Carnuccio, Council Member

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RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on February 3, 1988 the Ocean City Planning Board adopted the City of Ocean City Master Plan ["Master Plan"] consistent with N.J.S. 40:55D-28; and

WHEREAS, among other things, N.J.S. 40:55D-89 requires periodic review of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, consistent with N.J.S. 40:55D-89, the governing body for the City of Ocean City did engage and retain Heyer, Gruel & Associates, PA, Community Planning Consultants to assist the Ocean City Planning Board in fulfilling the legal requirements of N.J.S. 40:55D-89; and

WHEREAS, Heyer, Gruel & Associates, PA, Community Planning Consultants did prepare a Master Plan Reexamination Report dated October 10, 2000 ["Reexamination Report"] for the purposes of reviewing and evaluating the Master Plan and development regulations in order to determine the need for update and revisions; and

WHEREAS, on October 17, 2000 the Ocean City Planning Board upon proper and due notice having been legally given did conduct a public hearing ["Public Hearing"] in respect of the Reexamination Report; and

WHEREAS, at the Public Hearing, the Ocean City Planning Board received an oral summary of the Reexamination Report from Susan Gruel, P.P.; and

WHEREAS, the Public Hearing was opened to members of the general public for public comment about the Reexamination Report and the following named individuals did provide public comment: (1) Hank Glaser, 852 Boardwalk, Ocean City, New Jersey 08226; (2) Georgina Fenichel, 2117 Bay Avenue, Ocean City, New Jersey 08226; (3) Charles London, 815 4th Street, Ocean City, New Jersey 08226; (4) Roberta Jones, 2747 Wesley Avenue, Ocean City, New Jersey 08226; (5) Fred Hoffman, 807 2nd Street, Ocean City, New Jersey 08226; (6) Nancy Robinson, 2221 West Avenue, Ocean City, New Jersey 08226; (7) Sam Capizzi, 801 Atlantic Avenue, Ocean City, New Jersey 08226; (8) Kim Baker, 1410 West Avenue, Ocean City, New Jersey 08226; and (9) Flo McNally, 929 Central Avenue, Ocean City, New Jersey 08226; and


WHEREAS, upon completion of the Public Hearing, the Ocean City Planning Board in a unanimous decision voted to accept and adopt the Reexamination Report, subject to the minor changes to the Reexamination Report set forth in the Memorandum of Tammy D. Barner, Board Secretary dated October 17, 2000, which is hereby incorporated by this reference.

NOW, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Ocean City Planning Board to accept and adopt the Reexamination Report, subject to the minor changes to the Reexamination Report set forth in the Memorandum of Tammy D. Barner, Board Secretary dated October 17, 2000, which is hereby incorporated by this reference.

A motion to adopt this Resolution was made by Ocean City Planning Board Member Knight and seconded by Ocean City Planning Board Member Hoffman. The Resolution was unanimously adopted with Ocean City Planning Board Members Knight,

Savastano, Carnuccio, Lindsay, Hoffman, Bruno, Taylor, Coste, and Psaltis all voting in the affirmative.

OCEAN CITY PLANNING BOARD


WILLIAM LINDSAY, CHAIRMAN

Dated: 11/1/ 2000

CERTIFICATION

I, Tammy D. Barner, Secretary to the Ocean City Planning Board, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted at the meeting of the Ocean City Planning Board held on the 1 day of November 2000, said Resolution memorializing the action taken as more fully described therein at the meeting of the Ocean City Planning Board held on October 17, 2000.



TAMMY D. BARNER,
Secretary, Ocean City Planning Board

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INTRODUCTION

This report constitutes the Master Plan Reexamination Report for the City of Ocean City as defined by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89). The purpose of the reexamination report is to review and evaluate the local master plan and development regulations on a periodic basis in order to determine the need for update and revisions. The City of Ocean adopted its last Reexamination Report on June 28, 1995 and its last Master Plan in 1988.

Section A of this report identifies the goals and objectives which were established in the 1988 Master Plan. Sections B and C describe what changes have occurred in the City and the State since the adoption of the 1995 Reexamination Report. Finally, Sections D and E discuss recommended actions to be addressed by the City in the future.

PERIODIC REEXAMINATION

The Statute requires that the Reexamination Report contain the following:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- d. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- e. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et seq.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

A. THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES RELATED TO LAND DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY OF OCEAN CITY AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE LAST MASTER PLAN.

The 1995 Reexamination Report of the City of Ocean City identified the following goals and issues which formed the basis for the plans, policies, statements and proposals of the 1988 Master Plan:

LOCAL OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the 1988 Master Plan are essentially a recitation of the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law (C.40:55D-2):

1. To encourage municipal actions which will guide the long range appropriate use and development of lands within the City of Ocean City in a manner which will promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of present and future residents.
2. To secure safety from fire, flood, panic and other natural and man-made disasters.
3. To provide adequate light, air and open space.
4. To ensure that development within the City does not conflict with the development and general welfare of neighboring municipalities, the County, the region, and the State as a whole.
5. To promote the establishment of appropriate population densities in locations that will contribute to the well being of persons, neighborhoods and preservation of the environment.
6. To encourage the appropriate and efficient expenditure of public funds by coordinating public and private development within the framework of land use and development principles and policies.
7. To provide sufficient space in appropriate locations within the City for residential, business, office and public and quasi-public uses in a manner which will provide for balanced City growth and development.
8. To provide for the maintenance of Ocean City's resort character and posture as a recreation resource of the State and eastern United States including protection of beach and bay resources.

9. To support the upgrading of substandard housing in the City through code enforcement, housing improvement loans, technical assistance, education, grants, and the provision of public improvements such as new streets, sidewalks, street lighting, street trees, drainage and sanitary sewage collection facilities.
10. To encourage the location and design of transportation and circulation routes which will improve the free flow of traffic in appropriate locations while discouraging roadways in areas which would result in congestion, blight, or depreciated property values.
11. To promote the use and development of rail and air transportation links which are supportive of Ocean City's resort industry.
12. To promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques with respect to environmental assets and constraints of the overall City and of individual development sites.
13. To promote the conservation of open space through protection of wetlands, stream corridors and valuable natural resources and prevent degradation of the environment.
14. To acquire, develop and maintain park and recreation facilities within the City to meet reasonable and affordable needs and demands for recreation by present and future residents.
15. To encourage the preservation and restoration of historically significant buildings and sites within the City in order to maintain the heritage of Ocean City for enjoyment of future generations.
16. To encourage coordination of the numerous regulations and activities which influence land development with a goal of producing efficient uses of land with appropriate development types and scale.
17. To encourage economic development through new investment and maintenance and reinvestment in existing commercial retail, amusement, hotel, motel and related resort activities within the City in areas suitable for such development.
18. To encourage energy efficient subdivision and site designs and provisions for renewable energy resources including passive solar, wind and/or recycled heat.

19. To encourage the efficient management of stormwater runoff through the development of appropriate guidelines which will prevent future drainage problems and provide environmentally sound land use planning.

PRINCIPLES

The 1988 Ocean City Master Plan was based upon several land use and land development principles. These included:

1. Encouraging residential development in locations and at densities which are compatible with existing development patterns and which can be properly serviced by public roadways, utilities and services.
2. Locating public, commercial, service and professional office uses in locations which are suitable for their use environmentally, economically and geographically, and are compatible with existing uses, public facilities, roadways, and natural features.
3. Protection of natural and environmental resources including floodplains, wetlands, marsh and aquifer recharge areas, and areas suitable for public and quasi-public recreational activities.
4. Encouraging a development pattern which will protect and enhance the long term economic, social and cultural interests and quality of life of present and future residents of the City.

ASSUMPTIONS

The 1988 Ocean City Master Plan was based upon several assumptions:

1. That there will be no catastrophic man-made or natural disasters which will greatly affect the existing natural and/or cultural development of the City.
2. The Ocean City will be able to guide its growth in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law and will have major input into any proposed County, regional, State and/or Federal development plans which may affect the City or its immediate environs.
3. That future growth during the next ten (10) year period will not exceed the capacity of the City to provide essential community facilities, utilities and/or services.

POLICIES

The 1988 Ocean City Master Plan was based upon the following policies which had been developed by the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the City:

1. Land use planning will provide for a variety of residential and non-residential uses and will encourage the continuation and enhancement of Ocean City as a quality family resort community.
2. Land development should be designed to protect and enhance the environmental quality of the City.
3. The City will consider and evaluate innovative development proposals which would enhance and protect environmental features, minimize energy usage and encourage development densities consistent with existing patterns and types of development.
4. The City will encourage commercial and office development within the City which will provide employment for present and future residents and contribute to a balanced economic base for the City and which will serve the needs of the City's residents.
5. The City will encourage the continuation and development of social, health, welfare, cultural, recreational, service and religious activities within the City to serve present and future residents of Ocean City.
6. The City will continue its program of updating and supplementing the Master Plan and Zoning and Land Development Regulations as new data become available, as land development patterns and trends change, and as community goals and objectives are modified.

STANDARDS

The 1988 Master Plan provided general standards for development, including type, density and location of development and delineation of environmentally sensitive areas which generally are not developable. The Master Plan also provides recommended standards for roadways and other facilities. The Land Development Ordinance, including zoning, site plan, land subdivision and design regulations, provides specific standards for design, construction and development of individual land uses and development sites within the City.

In addition, City regulations pertaining to utilities, fire prevention, flood plains, wetlands, soil erosion, street trees and other development factors have been adopted and are applied by the Planning Board, Board of

Adjustment, Coastal Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Construction Official and others. Cape May County, the State of New Jersey and Federal planning and regulatory agencies also have detailed standards pertaining to environmental features, roadways, utilities, etc. which are utilized in the overall development process in Ocean City.

ADDITIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, 1995

In addition to the goals and objectives in the 1988 Master Plan, the 1995 Reexamination Report recommended the following additional goals:

- Protect and preserve the environmental resources of the City, including the ocean, beaches, bay and wetlands.
- Reduce water pollution and tidewater infiltration through capital improvements.
- Maintain the beaches and replenish as needed.
- Maintain and upgrade the City's housing stock.
- Foster economic development by creating an atmosphere to attract private investment for residential and commercial purposes.
- Create a physical environment where people will want to visit, live and raises families.
- Upgrade the City's ordinances and regulations to improve Ocean City's physical and visual quality.
- Promote alternative means of transportation.
- Investigate and develop plans to provide adequate parking at all times of the year.
- Develop a comprehensive recreational, cultural and leisure activity and facility plan for the community.
- Maintain a sense of history and tradition by encouraging historic preservation.

B. THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED SUBSEQUENT TO THE 1995 REEXAMINATION REPORT

Ocean City continues to be proactive in meeting the objectives and policies of the 1988 Master Plan and the 1995 Reexamination Report goals. The following section details the manner in which the City has addressed the 1988 and 1995 objectives with particular emphasis on the new goals and objectives detailed in the 1995 Reexamination Report.

Environmental Resources Protection and Preservation

The City continues to recognize the need to protect and preserve its environmental resources. The City is intimately aware of the interrelationship between protection of these resources and maintaining and enhancing Ocean City's status as "America's Greatest Family Resort."

Historically, flooding and drainage problems have been a chronic issue in the City. The extent of the problem ranges from being an inconvenience to a significant public safety problem. Most of the flooding is tide-related and occurs in roads and public rights-of-way and structural damage is not that frequent. Emergency access to some areas of the City is a real concern. A Flood Plain Management Plan was adopted in 1997 and amended each year since. The Plan details specific activities, time frames and budget allocations which are proposed for flood mitigation measures.

Given the nature of the City as a barrier island, the complete elimination of the flooding and drainage problems is not a feasible option. Several streets, however, are proposed for reconstruction to bring them above the flood elevation.

One of the major assets of Ocean City is its boating opportunities and access to the Intercoastal Waterway. Some of Ocean City's lagoons are privately owned while others are owned by the City or State. Dredging has occurred by private property owners during the past five years; however, there has been no coordinated and comprehensive dredging program.

Beach Maintenance and Replenishment

The City has worked in partnership with the US Army Corp of Engineers and the NJDEP in a number of beach replenishment projects. The federal project began in 1992 and includes the areas from the Seaspray Road terminal groin to 36th Street. There is a 50 year planned commitment for this area. Additionally, the City has worked in partnership with the state to construct and maintain an engineered beach on the rest of the island.

A feasibility study for the areas between 36th and 60th Streets, as well as the inlet beach at the north end, has been completed with the hopes that these areas can be incorporated into the federally supported replenishment program. As of the writing of this document, a replenishment project is about to begin that will replenish the federal area to the original profile, as well as add needed sand to the south end beaches.

The beach preservation effort has also included the development and maintenance of a viable dune system in the entire federal area. Efforts at establishing dunes in some of the areas outside of the federal area, in particular from 49th to 57th Streets, have not been as successful.

The results of the beach replenishment and preservation projects have been dramatic in terms of both property protection and recreational use of the beaches. There has not been any storm-related damage to public or private beachfront infrastructure in the federal replenishment area since the first project in 1992. Areas not included in the federal project, again, have not fared as well, despite a replenishment project there in 1995.

Some phases of the beach replenishment projects have included improvements to the City's storm drainage outfall pipes that extend onto the public beaches. There is a desire to reduce the number of storm water outfalls in the downtown beach area and the upcoming project will begin this process.

Maintenance and Upgrade of the City's Housing Stock

The City originally adopted a Housing Element/Fair Share Plan in 1995, which was subsequently submitted to COAH for substantive certification. As a result of objections to the Plan, the City entered into the mediation process with COAH. At the end of mediation, the City agreed to amend its Plan. In September of 1999, the Planning Board adopted an amended Housing Plan which was sent to COAH for certification. In June of 2000, the City received conditional substantive certification. The Plan proposes the construction of eight single-family affordable units along Simpson Avenue in the Neighborhood Preservation Area, the establishment of an accessory apartment program and a development fee ordinance.

In addition to the proposed construction of single-family affordable units, the City has targeted the area from 3rd Street to 15th Street along portions of Central Avenue to Bay Avenue as a neighborhood preservation area. In the Fall of 1997 the City received endorsement of its Neighborhood Preservation Program from the State. By the end of 1997 a Neighborhood Preservation Manager was hired. A Neighborhood Preservation Program Action Plan was prepared for this neighborhood in November of 1999. The Plan identified long-range program goals and objectives which include future grants and low-

interest loans for housing rehabilitation and flood mitigation of owner-occupied single-family structures. An element of the Neighborhood Preservation Program Action Plan is to upgrade streets within the neighborhood preservation area to address drainage, sewer and sidewalk issues that are related to flooding.

Since flooding is a serious issue in the identified neighborhood, the Neighborhood Preservation Manager worked with the City's Environmental Officer to present plans to FEMA in 1998 which would address flood damage to residential properties. In April of 1999 the City was awarded \$336,000 of FEMA money for the rehabilitation and mitigation programs within the target area. The remaining funds will come from low-interest loans in partnership with neighborhood banks.

The City is currently requesting proposals from professional planners to develop a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for the area adjoining the Central Business District bounded by 6th Street, 8th Street, Bay Avenue and West Avenue. It is expected that the Revitalization Plan will provide the City with specific, detailed recommendations which will result in the revitalization of this area.

Promotion of Economic Development

The City has recognized the importance of promoting economic development, particularly through its status as a family-oriented resort community. A full-time Economic Development Director has been hired and an Economic Development Plan has been submitted and endorsed by the City. There have been extensive surveys which have been undertaken to reinforce and enhance the City's economy, with emphasis on the tourist sector.

In addition, the City has been designated a Main Street Community by DCA, and revitalization efforts have been undertaken in the CBD and along the boardwalk. The establishment of a SID in October of 1995 for both of these areas has provided an implementation mechanism and funding source for these revitalization efforts. The SID ordinance also established the Business and Neighborhood Development Association, Inc. (B.A.N.D.) as the district management corporation. Streetscape improvements have been undertaken with additional improvements expected in the future. As part of the Downtown revitalization, Staintons, a former department store, has been converted to ground level retail stores. Uses of the upper stories are under consideration.

Transportation Improvements

Improvements to the Longport Bridge are underway. Further, the State is finalizing its plans to improve State Route 52 (9th Street) which is one of the principal gateways into the City. The proposed design of Route 52 will require the relocation of the City's Information Center. It has been proposed that the Center

be relocated along 9th Street. These projects will provide improved evacuation routes from the island during storm events. Added bike and pedestrian lanes will also provide a safe route to the mainland. The bridge improvement projects provide opportunities to improve Ocean City's gateways, 9th Street in particular.

Bicycling is not only a leisure time activity in the City but also an important alternative mode of transportation. A Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs Assessment Study was prepared in 1999 to promote the use of bicycles as an alternative mode of transportation in the City, especially in the downtown area between 5th and 14th Streets. The Study was prepared under the auspices of the NJDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Local Planning Assistance Program. In addition, there was a specific Bikeway Options Assessment prepared for Haven Avenue in 1998. The City has submitted a grant application for a bike path/lane along Haven Avenue.

Community Facilities

The City currently has an extensive and heavily used community facility network. In order to enhance the network, several improvements are being undertaken. The Public Works Department is completing a concept plan to consolidate its facilities on a site between 10th and 12th Streets on Haven Avenue.

Although there is limited land to develop additional recreation facilities, the City is currently preparing a Recreation Plan to address the recreation needs of City residents.

The largest facility issue in this community is the future of Ocean City High School. Various proposals have been explored and pursued over the past seven years, with no resolution of the current over crowding and deteriorating facility conditions. Voters have defeated three separate bond referendums for repair, replacement and expansion of the facility.

Recently, a citizens advisory committee composed of representatives from the four communities that send children to the high school has recommended that rather than upgrade the existing high school facility, a new school be constructed in Upper Township, off the island. The effects of this proposal on both the local education system and the community are currently being discussed. New state funding of school construction aid has become available since the drafting of the advisory committee's report. This factor is now being analyzed as well.

The City has plans to widen the boardwalk to 48 feet between 12th and 14th streets as a transition zone between the 60 foot wide boardwalk from 5th to 12th streets and the 24 foot wide boardwalk south of 14th street. A new lifeguard and public restroom facility is also planned for 12th Street.

Parking

The City has acquired five additional parking lots between 8th and 9th Streets. The long range plan includes evaluation of the feasibility of providing structured parking on a portion of these parcels in order to increase the supply of parking and enhancing the economic and aesthetic values of the properties and the neighborhoods.

Historic Preservation

The City presently has a historic district. The district is being evaluated to determine whether to keep the district intact or to reduce, expand or eliminate the district. It has been recommended that any historic district include incentives to property owners to maintain the historic integrity of their properties.

Upgrade of Ordinances and Regulations

The City amended its Zoning Ordinance three years ago to include an Old City Overlay District which extends from the bay to the ocean from 18th Street to Battersea Road to the north. The objectives of the Old City Overlay District are:

- To encourage the replacement of obsolete structures with new high quality safe construction.
- To encourage new construction consistent with the historic character of the traditional center City (Old City) including: taller buildings, buildings with strong connection to the street (front steps), buildings that complement their neighborhoods, buildings with more interesting architectural features including covered porches, improved landscaping.
- To provide on site parking.

The overlay zone has been a factor in increased redevelopment activity in some of the targeted area.

The City is currently undertaking a land use analysis for the majority of the City. This information will be used to evaluate the manner in which the zone districts are identified and regulated.

The City expects to hire a consultant by the end of the year to create a Geographic Information System. Once established, this system will give the City the technology to access information and resources which will improve the City's use of information efficiency. The GIS will be particularly useful in planning efforts upon the ability to access and manipulate land sensitive information.

The City has recently undertaken a separate planning study regarding the redevelopment of the two-block area adjacent to Flanders and some of the adjoining property. In August, the Planning Board adopted a

Master Plan Amendment creating a Conference Center Resort Overlay Zone and is considering ordinance amendments to recommend to the Mayor and Council consistent with this new overlay zone.

Planning Documents

Ocean City acknowledges that planning is a continuous and ongoing process and routinely prepares issue specific planning documents. The following is a list of planning documents which have been prepared since the 1995 Reexamination Report:

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs Assessment – February 1999
- Resource Team Report of Main Street Program – January 11-14, 2000
- Neighborhood Preservation Program Action Plan – November 1999
- 1998 Overlay Zone Report – December 1998, 1999 Overlay Zone Report – January 6, 2000
- Green Acres Inventory
- Survey Analysis – Recreational and Leisure Facilities
- Community Forestry Management Plan – December 1999
- Flood Plain Management Action Plan, Amended 1998, 1999 and 2000
- Demolition and Construction Statistics - June 30, 2000
- 1999 Annual Zoning Board of Adjustment Report
- Haven Avenue Bikeway Options Report – December 1998
- Cape May Cross Acceptance Report - 1998
- Housing Element dated October 15, 1995, amended to August 1999
- Land Development Ordinance - 2000

C. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES FORMING THE BASIS FOR THE MASTER PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AS LAST REVISED

Housing

The level of housing activity in the City has been extremely high over the past five years due to the strength of the resort housing market and the desirability of the City as a resort community. The extent of demolitions has been particularly telling. During the past ten years the City has created 2140 new units while losing 1563 units for a net increase of 577 units or an average of 58 units/year. This activity has resulted often times in the demolition of obsolete and substandard buildings and the construction of new housing units. In some instances, however, there has been a loss of historically/architecturally significant buildings.

Adoption of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan

Since the last Reexamination Report, the City has participated in the Cross Acceptance II process and the proposed amendments to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan which was adopted in 1992. As noted in the 1998 Cross Acceptance Report, the City is basically developed and has a complete infrastructure system with few vacant areas remaining for future development. The Cross Acceptance Report does state, however, that the entire City has been identified as Planning Area 5 (Environmentally Sensitive) on the Resource Planning and Management Map. The Cross Acceptance Report recommends that the City seek Center designation under the State Plan due to its developed nature which would reconcile the Planning Area 5 designation with the existing conditions. An amendment to the State Plan in 1999 established a subcategory for Planning Area 5. Planning Area 5B "Environmentally Sensitive/Barrier Islands" specifically recognizes the unique characteristics of island communities like Ocean City. The City should seek plan endorsement or designation as a PA 5B community when its new Master Plan is completed.

Council on Affordable Housing (COAH)

Under the Fair Housing Act and COAH regulations, each municipality has a fair share obligation. COAH is currently in its second 6-year obligation period which is a cumulative obligation running from 1987 through 1999.

The City received final substantive certification from COAH on October 4, 2000. Certification provides the City with a 6-year period of repose until 2007.

Group Homes

In January 1998, the Municipal Land Use Law was amended to address group homes in residential districts. N.J.S.A. 40:55D-66.1 states that:

"Community residences for the developmentally disabled, community shelters for victims of domestic violence, community residences for the terminally ill and community residences for persons with head injuries shall be a permitted use in all residential districts of a municipality, and the requirements therefore shall be the same as for single-family dwelling units located within such districts."

This change should be incorporated into the revised Land Development Ordinance.

Sexually Oriented Businesses

It is recognized and documented by numerous expert studies and reports throughout the country that adult entertainment uses, because of their very nature, have serious objectionable operational characteristics that result in a deleterious effect upon adjacent areas.

Title 2C of the New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice, effective September 15, 1995, regulates the location and building requirements of sexually oriented businesses as defined by Statute. Further, in January 1998 the Appellate Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey (Township of Saddle Brook vs. A.B. Family center, Inc., et al.) remanded the case for further proceedings "in light of our conclusion that N.J.S.A. 2C:34-7 renders municipal boundaries irrelevant where the buffer can not be satisfied within a particular municipality and that the statute avoids the constitutional infirmity of not providing alternative means of communication within a single municipality."

It is recommended that the City evaluate its regulations in light of the 1995 New Jersey Criminal Code and the 1999 Supreme Court case.

Home Occupations

In recent years there has been a growing trend towards telecommuting which has potential land use impacts. In order to address this issue, the State legislature has considered amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law governing home occupations. The City agrees that home occupations should be regulated; however, is of the opinion they should be determined at the local level.

Child Care

Amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law govern the regulation of childcare and daycare facilities. The City development ordinance should be reviewed for consistency with the statute.

Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS)

The Residential Site Improvement Standards were adopted in January 1997 and govern any site improvements carried out in connection with a residential development application. According to the Statute, the standards are intended to create uniform standards and ensure predictability. The rules supersede municipal standards for residential development. The rules took effect June 3, 1997.

It is recommended that the Land Development Ordinance be revised to include provisions which are consistent with RSIS or that the City seek special area designation for approval of its own standards.

D. SPECIFIC CHANGES RECOMMENDED FOR THE MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The City established a broad based and aggressive outreach and public participation process with respect to the preparation of this Reexamination Report. A wide array of Ocean City officials, interest groups, and members of the public were asked to discuss the assets and constraints of the City and to offer possible solutions.

The list of participants included the following:

- The subcommittee of the Planning Board
- Current and previous municipal elected officials
- Representatives of the Department of Community Services
- Members of the Zoning Board
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Members of the Coastal Conservation Commission
- Members of the Recreation Board
- Members of the Tourist Development Commission
- Representatives of the Department of Public Works
- The City solicitor
- Representatives of the City's zoning office
- Representatives of the City's engineer's office
- Representatives of the Economic Development Division
- The City's environmental officer
- The Manager of the City's capital improvement program

Meetings were also held with neighborhood and business groups including the Board of Realtors, the Chamber of Commerce, BAND, ChiP, the North End Civic Association, the South Ocean City Improvement Association, the Garden Civic Association, 16-34 Community Association, Fairness in Taxes, the Ocean City Trades Association, the Overlay Zone Committee.

In addition, meetings were held with four focus groups consisting of citizens of Ocean City not represented by any particular organized group. Finally, the Ocean City Planning Board subcommittee held a public hearing to solicit input from the general public.

One of the strongest messages conveyed through the series of meetings is that Ocean City has a very clear and well-established sense of community. There is a strong sense of commitment on the part of residents, the business community and local government. Given the tourism nature of the City, this image

is vitally important from both a community and an economic development perspective. The City has a reputation for being a safe, attractive and clean family-oriented resort. This image makes the City a very desirable place in which to live and invest. However, this also means that the image is vulnerable to negative publicity. As a result, the City probably invests more heavily in public safety and other community services than many of New Jersey's municipalities. Public safety, water quality, the aesthetic quality of the beaches and the general quality of life issues are vital to preserving the City's position as "America's Greatest Family Resort".

Ocean City affords its residents a broad spectrum of community services rarely provided in other communities. It is able to do so because of its fiscal health and commitment of staff and elected officials. The link between quality of life and economic health must be recognized.

It is recommended that a comprehensive and updated Master Plan element be prepared which incorporates the recommendations contained in this Reexamination Report. The City has prepared a number of studies on a wide variety of issues which could be readily incorporated into a variety of plan elements.

The following is a suggested outline of the specific changes recommended to the Master Plan elements:

- Land Use Plan Element: A new Land Use Element should be prepared which includes the results of the existing land use survey which is currently being undertaken. The survey results should be compiled and mapped. A more detailed analysis of the land use issues identified in this Reexamination Report should be undertaken and specific recommendations identified.
- Economic Plan Element: The endorsed Economic Element should be reviewed and updated where appropriate.
- Circulation Plan Element: A new circulation plan element should be prepared which includes a review of traffic volumes, accident statistics, and proposed roadway, bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- Conservation Plan Element: The City's Natural Resource Inventory should be done, reviewed and updated and incorporated into the Conservation Plan Element. This element should coordinate with the City's Recreation/Open Space Plan and Land Use Element.

- Open Space/Recreation Plan Element: Complete the City's Open Space/Recreation Plan currently being prepared by City Staff. Format the document in a manner consistent with DEP guidelines to assure streamlined processing of Green Acres applications.
- Historic Plan Element: Assess feasibility of district as presently configured. Consider the extent of boundaries by updating the City's historic assessment. Consider mechanisms for incentives to historic district property owners.

The following summarizes the recommended major changes to the Master Plan and development regulations.

Land Use and Zoning

The Half-Block Approach to Residential Development

Ocean City has a fairly unique approach to zoning. Currently, the City's residential zones are regulated on a half-block basis. The City's one- and two-family zones are organized based upon percentages of one- and two-family development and by lot width. While the original intent of the ordinance is clear, the approach is cumbersome in its implementation and administration. The zones incorporate a single set of bulk standards which has proven to be problematic in certain neighborhoods.

A recurring theme throughout the public participation process was a concern over incompatible in-fill development particularly regarding the character and scale of new development in the City. There was general consensus among the stakeholders that Ocean City should consider the adoption of a more neighborhood based zoning approach. Since the physical character of development in the City varies widely from neighborhood to neighborhood, a single boilerplate set of standards is not sensitive to the character of the individual neighborhoods.

The City has a complex land use pattern, which includes a variety of housing that consists of two units on a single lot. This includes traditional two-families, side-by-side duplexes or row homes, two-unit condominium development and single-family homes with "accessory" units in either the principal or accessory building. Some neighborhoods include a preponderance of structures which appear to be single-family homes, but which have accessory apartments. These structures do not include separate entrances. The existing half-block approach should be replaced by a more neighborhood sensitive approach. Discrete standards for the variety of housing types in the City should be included.

It is also recommended that, where possible, existing single-family neighborhoods should be preserved through rezoning. The ongoing land use survey should assist in these rezoning efforts.

The Drive-in Business Zone

The City's Drive-in Business (DB) Zone is principally located along West Avenue and Haven Avenue near the center of Ocean City. Given the relative shallow depth of the DB zone and its close proximity to residential properties, appropriate buffering is difficult or impossible to achieve. Alternatives to the present zoning should be investigated. Possible solutions to these issues include a focus on service businesses such as law offices, medical offices, real estate and travel services and reducing the size of the zone.

The Marine Village Harbor Zone

Ocean City's Marine Village Harbor Zone includes most of the bayfront area from 10th Street to 1st Street. The principal focus of this zone is to provide for the proper use of this scarce land resource for viable commercial water dependant activity. This is a relatively small land area with access to the Intracoastal Waterway. Because of the size and disparate ownership of the parcels, very little conforming activity has occurred in the zone district. One critical constraint is parking. Boat liveryes and other conforming uses have fairly significant parking requirements. When land is redeveloped for residential use, some of the parking opportunities disappear and parking is forced onto the streets in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

It is recommended that a waterfront walkway and public access should be provided in the context of a mixed use development which could include restaurants, water dependent activities and accessory residential development. Further, use of the redevelopment statute may be an appropriate mechanism in assembling and redeveloping this area. The City is investigating the public purchase of parking facilities in the area of the MVH zone.

The Hotel/Motel Zones

In prior planning documents, the City established a need for short-term lodging. The City's Hotel/Motel zones were established to address the transient lodging need. The City also felt that the zone could serve as a transitional land use between the intensity of the boardwalk commercial uses and the adjacent multi-family zoned properties.

Very little conforming activity has occurred in this zone in the time period since the last Master Plan Reexamination. One principal reason for this is the difficulty in assembling a parcel of critical mass to obtain a reasonably scaled hotel/motel site given present industry standards. The trend towards larger, more luxurious accommodations has limited demand for the small-scale hotels which were part of Ocean

City's history. The hotel industry is demanding not only larger facilities in terms of room count but would require significantly taller structures, given the parking requirements of Ocean City's zoning.

If the City remains committed to providing transient lodging, then the use and bulk standards and boundaries should be examined and the possibility of using redevelopment to assemble parcels should be considered. Market research should be consulted to evaluate the feasibility of various hotel/motel options.

Neighborhood Business

Ocean City has historically had a number of neighborhood business zones. These zones are scattered throughout the City but include neighborhood business zones along 55th Street, 34th Street, Asbury Avenue, West Avenue and Bay Avenue. There has been debate over the appropriateness of the neighborhood business zoning. One faction questioned the ability to market neighborhood business properties because of the constraints imposed by flood regulations, the lot sizes and the City's parking ordinance. It was felt that limited activity would occur because of the difficulties involved in producing viable commercial users in the context of these regulations. Others felt that the neighborhood business zones continue to provide a valuable service to the adjacent residential neighborhoods, reducing the need to travel long distances on congested roadways, particularly on the weekends. Another concern raised was that businesses in the neighborhood business zones would compete directly with businesses in the central business district.

It is recommended that the NB zone be retained; however, the boundaries and zone standards should be reevaluated. In particular, the following alternatives should be explored: reduction or elimination of onsite parking, and reduction in the size and/or elimination of some of the neighborhood business zones.

Central Business District

Ocean City's CBD or Central Business District is the City's "Downtown." It is principally located along Asbury Avenue between 14th Street and 6th Street. The general consensus was that Ocean City's residents are happy with the progress made in the business district in terms of its viability and attractiveness. Concerns continue regarding the number and location of available parking spaces, the availability of public restrooms, the size of the zone and permitted uses.

It is recommended that the ground floor in the core of the CBD be retained as retail sales. Encroachment by service uses should be prevented. In this way, a continuous retail frontage is maintained and "window shopping" is facilitated. Viable uses for upper level spaces continue to be an issue and should be reviewed. To the extent retail service uses are located in the CBD, they should be sited on the fringe

areas rather than in the core. Finally, the periphery of the downtown area should be examined. The desirability and viability of some of the City's zoning standards for these transitional areas should be assessed.

Building Height

Height is measured in varying ways in Ocean City's regulations. A consistent point of measurement for height should be adopted throughout the City. This could include street elevation, base flood elevation, or average grade.

Undersized Lots

Often the Zoning Board is constrained by case law when dealing with undersized lots which generally conform to the established pattern in the neighborhood. The pattern of lotting in the City has created a situation where there are wholesale non-conformities in many areas of the City. The City should undertake a survey of existing lot sizes to assess alternative zoning standards which are sensitive to established neighborhood patterns.

Pools

The Ocean City Zoning Ordinance presently permits pools as an accessory use but does not include any setback or dimensional requirements. These standards should be incorporated into the Code.

Accessory Structures on Bayfront and Lagoonfront Lots

Ordinance standards affecting accessory structures in the bayfront and lagoonfront yards of residential lots should be reassessed. Three accessory structures of prime concern were fences, patios and decks. The ordinance requires clarification as to whether or not these structures should be permitted in rear and side yard setbacks. This is of concern given the fact that changing bulkhead heights and fill in rear yard areas have increased the height of these accessory structures relative to adjacent properties.

Corner Lots

At present the Ordinance incorporates a sliding scale for combined side yard width based upon lot width. Clarification regarding the yard dimensions on corner lots is recommended. The recommendation was that if there's a combined side yard width of 13 feet, and a minimum of 5 feet, then the 8-foot dimension should be provided for the side yard adjacent to the public right-of-way. This is recommended in order to "open up" the corner.

Building and Impervious Coverage

The definitions of impervious and building coverage should be examined to determine whether or not structures such as decks, patios and stairs covered by a roof should be included in the overall calculation. An assessment of the maximum coverage by zone should also be made. Consideration should be given to creating consistent definitions and methods of calculation.

Curb Cuts/Driveways

The design of off-street parking should be reviewed to assess the impact upon on street parking and streetscape.

Parking

The issue of how to calculate the number of parking spaces provided and the dimensional and setback requirements of parking should be addressed. A concern was expressed regarding the utility of tandem parking arrangements which require movement of several vehicles to gain access to a car. Given the perception of increasing overall size of the units being produced in the City, it may be appropriate to link parking requirements to bedroom count as well as unit count and/or square footage of units

The Americans With Disabilities Act

It is recommended that an exception be instituted in order to allow certain barrier-free improvements to be installed without Planning or Zoning Board review.

Amusement Rides

The ability of the City to limit certain aspects of amusement rides should be investigated. It should be determined whether or not there is a State preemption of the regulation of amusement rides. One particular aspect of concern is the height of these rides.

Accessory Structures in Side Yards

The location, height and screening of accessory structures in residential side yards, particularly structures like heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment, outdoor showers, trash enclosures and accessory buildings such as sheds needs to be regulated.

Preemption by Other Agencies

It is recommended that the Land Development Ordinance be reviewed to provide for consistency with regulations of higher orders of government such as the Residential Site Improvement Standards, Airport Hazard requirements and DEP rules on Coastal Development.

Continuing Certificate of Occupancy (CCO)

The City should consider the advisability of establishing a CCO procedure. The City acknowledges the need to balance its legitimate concerns with property owners' convenience. As part of any regulation, the City should be prepared to commit sufficient resources in a manner that will not inconvenience people.

Urban Design

Compatibility of Development

The issue of overdevelopment and how it is defined was another recurring theme. Simply relying on dwelling units per acre does not appear to be a sensitive enough standard in the context of in-fill development. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) regulates the actual square footage of a building as a function of lot size. The appropriateness of certain floor area ratios was raised. It was felt that the FARs are too high in certain circumstances and too low in others. The number of bedrooms as a determinant of intensity was suggested. In addition, building coverage, heights and dimensional requirements have a relationship to what the general public perceives as "density." Other standards including side yards and lot coverage should be examined to address these "mass and bulk" issues.

Gateways

The reconstruction of the bridges into Ocean City present unique opportunities for gateway treatment. This is particularly true of the 9th Street Gateway. Gateway treatments should be coordinated with the bridge project to address the overall appearance of the commercial corridor into downtown. Careful consideration should be given to the relocation of the Visitor Center. Suggestions for reuse of the old Center include a park for bird watching or as a natural wildlife area.

Linkages

Several potential alignments have been discussed including 8th Street and 9th Street. These corridors should be visually connected through the use of consistent streetscape and signage and the possible expansion of the SID to incorporate these connections.

Old City Overlay

This is an overlay district which encompasses a significant area of Ocean City. It extends from the bay to the ocean from 18th Street to Battersea Road to the north. The intention of the Old City Overlay is to encourage the replacement of obsolete structures, improve architecture and to provide on-site parking. The Old City Overlay includes design standards which encourage architectural interest through the use of incentives.

The zoning option has helped prompt a great deal of reinvestment into some of the target areas. Many feel that the overlay standards have significantly improved the aesthetic quality of housing. The scale and compatibility of the development has been subject to debate. The new structures frequently replace obsolete structures which may have contained a greater number of dwelling units.

Critics of the Overlay District cite the incompatible mass and height of the structures as adversely impacting the neighborhood. In many cases, the new structures are duplex-condominiums, including three to five bedrooms per unit. Perceived problems include excessive occupancy by multiple families, parking problems created when four or more vehicles per unit arrive, and insensitive streetscape treatment with very little attention paid to green amenities.

In an effort to specifically focus on the problematic aspects of the Old City Overlay, several concerns have been identified. These include the development of overlay structures on lots which are wide and shallow without alley access, the overall height of some of the overlay duplexes in certain neighborhood context and the creation of master suites which approach a full third story in some instances. In some cases, structures appear larger than their usable floor plan would indicate.

Although the overlay district has been a factor in spurring development in areas where investment was desired, ~~the coverage, height, and floor area ratio standards need refinement to address the incompatibility issue.~~ Certain areas within the extensive overlay district may not be appropriate for development with overlay structures as presently permitted. ~~Therefore, the boundaries of the district should also be reexamined.~~

The possibility of using an overlay type mechanism for commercial uses should be assessed. This could include incentives to provide for improved design.

Signage/Streetscape

The City should develop an overall signage and streetscape plan. Signage and streetscape standards which create a uniform theme will help improve the "greetability" of the City. Residential neighborhoods, including the historic district, may warrant specific and standard treatment for street trees, lighting, curbs and sidewalks, routing and signage.

Provision of Public Restrooms

Deficiencies in the availability of public restrooms in the Downtown and on the boardwalk should be studied. Facilities should be located in proximity to the greatest number of users.

Freeboard Bulkhead Heights

The issue of waterfront development on bay front lots was raised, specifically, the bulkhead heights and their impact on views. As bulkhead heights rise and rear yards are filled, structures such as decks are built in a fashion so that views of adjacent, lower neighbors are impacted. One uniform set of design standards needs to be developed.

Environmental

Water Pollution

As noted by some of the stakeholders the ocean and bay water quality is impacted by the City's land use and development policies and regulations. In order to improve water quality, it was felt that stormwater runoff needs to be reduced through a variety of techniques. Sources of pollution include vehicle discharge, fertilizers and pesticides, and pet waste.

Lagoon Dredging

One of the assets of Ocean City is its boating opportunities and access to the Intercoastal Waterway. Some of the lagoons are privately owned while others are owned by the City or State. In order to maintain this asset, a master dredging program for lagoons is suggested.

Beach Replenishment

The City has had an active beach replenishment program for years. This is a viable environmental and economic development tool for Ocean City. The program also provides an added benefit of protection of property values. Beach replenishment programs have reestablished a desirable beach which previously had limited beach area. Public investment, such as parking, should be geared to these newly created beach areas.

Beach Access

The dunes on the beachfront provide a valuable and natural system of protection from coastal storm events. In order to help preserve these areas, sensitively planned public access is required to cross these areas. The City's street ends present logical access points for the public to access the beach. Barrier-free design and convenience need to be addressed. New cuts through the dune system for access should be carefully evaluated.

Historic

Historic District

Ocean City presently has a fairly modest historic district in place. Originally, a much larger historic district was proposed. Debates surround the Historic District and opinions range from abolishment of the present district to an expanded Historic District which more "closely patterned" the original district boundary. The feasibility of the district expansion is somewhat limited by the lack of historic integrity which has occurred on the periphery in the time period since the original boundaries were suggested. If a change in the district boundary is to be considered, it should be subject to a detailed survey to assess the viability of an expanded district.

One recurring concern regarding the Historic District is that the development boom that is occurring in Ocean City as a whole is not happening to the same extent in the Historic District. Property owners have raised the issue of their land value relative to other sites throughout the City. The continued viability of the Historic District would be enhanced by economic incentives for historic preservation and a more aggressive education program regarding the benefits of historic preservation. The City should investigate pursuing State and/or Federal historic designation.

In some instances, the current zoning regulations represent a mismatch with the existing conditions in the district and should be reviewed. The Historic District is not readily identifiable and defined and there is no sense of entry and leaving the District. Signage and uniform streetscape standards could provide a more pronounced identity for Ocean City's historic area. Opportunities to capitalize on Ocean City's Historic District include the use of the District as an economic development tool through walking tours and potential bed and breakfast development.

The razing of existing architecturally significant structures was a recurring topic. Given the intense level of development pressure and the duplex condominium phenomenon in Ocean City, structures which would normally not be vulnerable to demolition are being lost throughout the City. It is recommended that an inventory of potential historic sites be undertaken. These sites may be in or out of the historic district. Some may be eligible for local historic status and this process may delay or eliminate some of these losses.

Community Facilities

Community Facilities

Ocean City provides a wide variety of community facilities and services. The City has a comprehensive 10 year Capital Improvements Plan. Broad categories include beach restoration, boardwalk rehabilitation, drainage and road construction, equipment necessary for operations, public building rehabilitation and downtown development, parking and cultural and historical preservation.

The most debated community facilities issue which was raised was the contested high school plan. The issue of whether to retain the high school in Ocean City or locate a regional facility on the mainland was a topic discussed by a number of participants. The economic and educational benefits versus the liabilities was debated and the community value associated with having a high school needs to be reconciled.

With the Haven Avenue property acquisition, the City will be relocating some of its public works storage and services from various smaller satellite sites throughout the City. This will free up municipally owned properties for other uses. Many of these sites are small, but they do have potential value as neighborhood vest pocket parks. A detailed inventory of "surplus" municipally owned properties should be prepared and the optimum use of each parcel should be evaluated. There was also a strong community sentiment to preserve the emergency services located in the southern portion of the City to reduce response times.

Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation

Given the very limited amount of vacant land, developable property for recreation activity is a scarce resource which merits careful attention. Reuse of "surplus" sites and possible adaptive reuse of some of the municipal airport property should be evaluated and considered in the context of the City's changing demographics. The City should continue to provide for the recreation needs of the full spectrum of City residents. In particular, a severe shortage of active recreation facilities and indoor gym space was identified.

Ocean City is presently preparing a recreation plan. The City should also prepare a comprehensive open space/recreation element in accordance with DEP guidelines as an element of the Master Plan. This would enable the City to utilize the document in its pursuit of Green Acres/Blue Acres funding.

Utilities

Natural Gas

Concerns regarding the natural gas delivery system was raised during the meetings. Specifically, the delivery system in the northern end of the City has proven problematic given the design and age of the infrastructure. Constant repairs and connections have led to roadway problems. This issue should be addressed.

Sanitary Sewer

Given the surface drainage issues and the high groundwater table, inflow and infiltration are a concern in the City. Measures should be undertaken to reduce this problem. The City has encouraged NJ American Water to address this issue through its Utility Commission.

Circulation

Traffic

Traffic problems during peak summer hours was a common concern. The perception is that the traffic delays are increasing. The most severe part of the problem appears to be limited to those times during the weekend when visitors arrive and depart.

As the mainland municipalities develop and as transient lodging in the City is somewhat lacking, the phenomenon of daily use of the beach and boardwalk is increasing. Beach replenishment projects have made certain beaches desirable where previously there were limited opportunities for access to these areas. This creates the potential for parking problems in the vicinity of the beach and boardwalk which overflow into residential neighborhoods.

The City has acquired five parking areas that were formerly privately owned. However, the concern is that although the City acquired these parcels, no increase in available parking has occurred. Options should be considered to increase the utility of these properties, particularly the parking lots on 8th and 9th Streets near the boardwalk. The potential of providing structured parking was discussed. The concern related to structured parking is its often unattractive facade which would be compounded by the fairly sensitive gateway location of the parcels. Solutions such as limited first floor retail as a veneer for the street level deck should be evaluated. Additionally, off-season use of the parking deck for potential recreation use such as a skateboard facility or court sports should be assessed.

Bikeways

Ocean City has a very high level of interest in using the bike as a form of transportation and recreation. The City has prepared a Bikeway Plan which identifies certain deficiencies in the City's bike network. These include relatively narrow bike lanes alongside of parking lanes which interfere with the opening and closing of vehicle doors, the lack of east-west connections in the bike network, and bicycle congestion on the boardwalk. The use of the rail bed in the southern portion of the City as a bike/nature trail should be studied. Formal bike storage in a dedicated area would be desirable on the boardwalk and in the central business district.

Pedestrian Circulation

Strong pedestrian links between the downtown and the boardwalk were recommended. Additionally, boardwalk widening was recommended between 12th and 14th Streets. A concern was expressed regarding pedestrian crossing of the City's major streets. Development of intersection improvements and traffic calming measures were recommended.

Economic Development

Special Improvement District (SID)

The City has established Special Improvement Districts. Dividends from this investment are only beginning to pay off. The business community expressed some concern regarding concrete evidence of their investment in terms of visible improvement. Additional improvements which should be considered include central business district restroom areas and parking improvements. Links between the business district SID and the boardwalk SID are recommended. The potential use of 8th Street as a major pedestrian connector should be evaluated.

Bed and Breakfast

The use of bed and breakfast's to supplement the City's supply of transient lodging should be reviewed. The concept appears to have merit throughout the City, including the Historic District and multi-family zones. Larger homes can be converted to bed and breakfast's and provide an alternative to the condominium-duplex as a form of lodging.

Tourism

The City's economic health is inextricably linked to tourism as an industry. The City should continue to investigate potential tourism markets and expand the geographic base in targeting Ocean City as a destination. The City should also evaluate methods of extending the tourist season into the spring, fall and winter.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PLANNING BOARD CONCERNING THE INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS INTO THE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE MASTER PLAN

There are several areas in the City where the use of the redevelopment statute may be appropriate. The Marine Village Harbor zone includes most of the bayfront area from 10th Street to 1st Street. The district currently contains a number of small parcels with a diverse ownership pattern. The use of the redevelopment statute may be an appropriate mechanism to use in assembling and redeveloping this area in the context of a mixed use development. Additionally, the City's Hotel/Motel zone, which also contains small parcels with a diverse ownership pattern, should be considered for study as an area in need of redevelopment.