Master Planning Team

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“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.”
Municipal Land Use Law require that all municipalities reexamine their master plan every ten years. The last Ventnor Master Plan Reexamination was in 2006.

Process started April 2016.

Planning Board adoption planned for November / December 2016.

Implementation can start immediately with actions by the City Commissioners.
Public Involvement

There has been significant public input into this Plan:

- **Monthly Steering Committee Meetings**
  - Four members of the Planning Board including Chairman Jay Cooke & Commissioner Lance Landgraf, Planning Board Engineer & Solicitor, business leaders, a realtor, Ventnor Tourism Association and City building official.

- **Public Meetings**
- **City Commissioner Meeting**
- **Planning Board Meeting**
- **Business Leaders Focus Group**
Master Plan Elements

- Master Plan Reexamination
- Land Use Element
- Resiliency Element (new)
- Economic Development Element (new)
- Recreation & Open Space Element
- Circulation Element
- Community Facilities Element
- Utility Element
MLUL requires that a Master Plan Reexamination include:

a. The major problems and objectives related to land development in 2006.

b. The extent to which these problems have been addressed.

c. The extent to which there has been significant changes in the City.

d. The specific changes recommended.
Changes Since 2004
Master Plan Reexamination

- Impacts of Superstorm Sandy
  - Preliminary flood maps have been adopted that effect new development.
  - $43 M is Superstorm Sandy funds obligated for Ventnor including $36.3 M to elevate homes.

- Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014
  - 4,846 policies in Ventnor in 2016 (60 percent of the housing stock).
  - $4,460,879 in insurance premiums paid in 2016.
  - New flood maps may become effective in 2017 and result in higher flood insurance costs.
Changes Since 2004
Master Plan

- Our economy and demography has changed
  - Atlantic County civilian labor force has dropped from a high of 155,000 in 2006 to 125,000; down 19 percent since 2006
  - Unemployment
    - United States 4.9%; New Jersey 6.5%
    - Atlantic County 7.5%
  - Abandoned/Foreclosed Properties total 274 homes in 2016
  - Barrier island homeowners are relocating for employment
    - Ventnor 2014 population 10,597; down 18 percent since 2010
  - School enrollment is dropping
    - Ventnor 2016 Enrollment 706; down 28 percent since 2010
  - Population density has dropped almost 10 percent from 2000 to 2010
  - Wealth is migrating to the barrier island communities in the form of second home owners
Atlantic County Employment Trends

Shaded areas indicate US recessions

Source: US. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Recommendations

RESILIENCY ELEMENT
Resiliency Element

- Host Community Awareness Workshops to assist property owners to make improvements to reduce flood insurance costs – 11/22/2016
- Encourage and pursue funding to elevate repetitive loss (192) and substantially damaged (199) homes.
- Continue to aggressively address nuisance flooding and infrastructure needs.
- Adopt a minimum bulkhead heights and adjust land use standards to compliment these requirements.
Resiliency Element

- Strive for a Class 4 CRS rating which will result in $446,000 additional savings for Ventnor property owners.
  - Develop an active Program for Public Information to advise residents of flood hazards, flood insurance and flood loss reduction measures.
  - Upgrade information on the City web site.
  - Develop a Repetitive Loss Mitigation Plan
  - Install an early warning system on the Boardwalk.
  - Adopt a Watershed Management Plan.
  - Update the Floodplain Management Plan.
Resiliency Element

- Actively participate in the Army Corps Back Bay Study.
- Work with the NJDEP and Army Corps to elevate Wellington and West End Avenues to reduce nuisance flooding and provide emergency access.
- Make dredging of the City’s waterways a priority.
- Work with the Army Corps to restore Shelter Island with dredge materials.
- Develop living shorelines along the back bay to reduce storm surge, wetlands loss and flooding.
Recommendations

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT
Economic Development

- Demographic Trends:
  - Ecotourism and agritourism are growth industries.
  - Culinary tourism, the birth of the foodie, is on the rise.
  - Millennials is the largest living generation surpassing the baby boomers
    - Locally experiences are demanded - farm to table restaurants and local breweries and distilleries.
    - Health, wellness and fitness are their top interest.
    - Look for a value and “special” treatment as a reward for their business.
    - Cultural Immersion – Millennials are looking for experiences that bring a destination to life, they want to “own” it and learn something new.
Catalyst for Economic Growth

1. The Gateway Project
Catalyst for Economic Growth

2. Ventnor is ideal for Millennials

MILLENNIALS’ MOST-DESIRED CITY FEATURES

THE TOP 20 QUALITIES
MILLENIALS WANT
IN A CITY

- A thriving job market: 8.19
- Affordable rent: 7.94
- Affordable home prices: 8.52
- Parks or hiking trails: 6.52
- Local restaurants (non-chain): 6.49
- Quality pizza: 6.11
- Top-rated public schools: 6.07
- Movie theaters: 5.96
- Walkability: 5.75
- Revitalized downtown: 5.64
- LGBTQ-friendly: 5.64
- Ethnic food: 5.47
- Green or farmers market: 5.43
- Concert or music venues: 5.40
- Quality public transportation: 5.38
- Mall or town center: 5.34
- Local coffee shops: 5.34
- Affordable clothing stores: 5.21
- A nearby beach, lake, or river: 5.18
- Local college or university: 5.07

Rated on a scale of 1–10:
10 being most important and 1 being not important
Catalyst for Economic Growth

3. Celebrate Ventnor as a Green Community
   - 493 Acres of Parks & Open Space
     (not includes Shelter Island and Ventnor East)
     - Ventnor West
     - Ski Beach Park
     - Fishing Pier
     - Boardwalk
     - Beaches
     - And many other green amenities
Economic Development Recommendations

- Establish a mercantile fee on seasonal rental properties to develop a fund to promote and expand tourism efforts.
- Build a City brand, tag line, web site, mobile app and marketing campaign that is consistently used throughout the City.
- Develop and optimize a digital marketing platform that ties into all social media components.
- Provide wayfinding signage particularly at the gateways to the City.
- Develop a Tourism Information Center at the Ventnor Shopping Center.
- Provide Welcome Bags to new homeowners and summer renters.
### Economic Development Recommendations

- Support a regional effort to promote tourism.

Atlantic County is losing tourism market share to nearby coastal counties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Atlantic Co.</th>
<th>Cape May Co.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Sales</td>
<td>$6.7 billion</td>
<td>$6.0 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Employment</td>
<td>47,620</td>
<td>25,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Net Taxable Value</td>
<td>$35.2 billion</td>
<td>$47.5 billion</td>
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Economic Development Recommendations

- Continue to market distinctive neighborhoods and commercial districts i.e. North Beach.
- Position the public school district as an marketing advantage.
- Maintain and promote a flood insurance discount program.
- Continue to aggressively pursue outside funding for economic development projects.
- Add additional promotional events to attract visitors and second home buyers.
Economic Development Recommendations

- Adopt and implement an Abandoned Properties Ordinance to:
  - Motivate owners to return their properties to productive use
  - Hold a special tax sale
  - Determine the fair market value of the properties and facilitate accelerated foreclosures
  - Permit private developers to acquire, renovate and market properties
Commercial Districts Recommendations

- Consider the creation of a Special Improvement District (SID) to develop and cooperatively market the business districts in Ventnor.
- Provide value added options for restaurants by promoting sidewalk dining, permitting wine sales rooms and providing for liquor licenses.
- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle access in and around the commercial districts on Ventnor Avenue and Dorset Avenue by adding lanes and bike racks.
- Implement well designed streetscape improvements in each of the business districts.
Commercial Districts
Recommendations

- Competed a market study to determine what types of businesses would be supported in the Downtown area.
- Upgrade the parking meter system to provide for credit cards and cell phone payment.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive parking strategy to include the review of parking standards and the potential of shared parking.
- Prohibit parking in the front of any commercial establishment.
Commercial Districts
Recommendations

- Develop detailed design standards mixed use development in the Central Business District and North Beach Districts.
Economic Development Incentives

- The following incentives can be used to leverage these recommendations:
  - US Economic Development Agency Incentives
  - New Jersey Economic Development Authority Incentives
  - Short Term Tax Abatement for Commercial Improvements and Home Elevations
  - Zoning Code Revisions
  - Value Added Restaurant Options
  - Implement a Shop at Home Campaign and provide incentives.
  - Private/Public Partnerships
Recommendations

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT
Recreation and Open Space Recommendations

- Ventnor West EcoPark
Recreation and Open Space Recommendations

- Ventnor West EcoPark
  - Develop recreational facilities and a dog park on the former driving range site.
  - Provide boat access facilities at the end of Swarthmore Avenue.
  - Establish a Fishing Pier on the eastern end of Wellington Avenue.
  - Construct a parking lot along Wellington Avenue and at the proposed boat ramp.
  - Walking trails and observation decks.
  - Basketball/pocket park opportunity.
  - Restore wetlands.
  - Develop a living shore line to reduce erosion.
Waterfront Enhancements

- Enhance the waterfront areas to become a more vibrant, attractive, year-round destination with improved public access:
  - Enhance access to the Ventnor Pier to provide for seasonal kiosks and public access.
  - Promote additional activities at Ski Beach - improve the boat ramp and beach area and provide for water taxis, paddle boards and kayaks.
  - Encourage the Army Corps to dredge the ICWW.
  - Provide for a boat ramp and Improvement access at the planned EcoPark at Ventnor West
  - Consider mini-golf operation at New Haven Avenue Park
A variety of funding options has been identified:

- NJDOT Grants for Streetscape Improvement & Bikeway Improvements
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Grants for Living Shorelines
- NJ Environmental Trust for Stormwater Infrastructure
- FEMA Grant to Elevate Homes
- Army Corps and NFWF Assistance for Dredging
- NJ Department of Environmental Protection for Regional Resiliency Projects
- NJDOT Transient Marina grants
- South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization CMAQ Grants
Master Plan Schedule

- July 27, 2016: Public Meeting
- October 16, 2016: Public Meeting
- Nov/December 2016: Planning Board Plan Adoption
- Jan/Feb 2016: Implementation
  - Ordinance Adoption
  - Design Standards
  - Capital Improvements Plan
  - Regionalization/Shared Services Plan
Questions & Comments