



Ventnor Master Plan Reexamination

PROGRESS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Master Planning Team



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“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.”

Master Plan Reexamination

- ▶ 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

Master Plan Reexamination

- ▶ 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

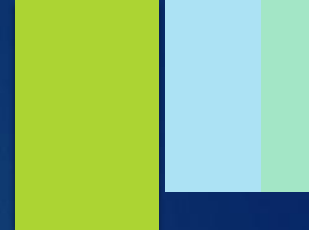
- ▶ Impacts of Superstorm Sandy
 - ▶ Preliminary flood maps have been adopted that effect new development.
 - ▶ \$43 M is Superstorm Sandy funds obligated for Ventnor including \$36.3 M to elevate homes.
- ▶ Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014
 - ▶ 4,846 policies in Ventnor in 2016 (60 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



FRED

— All Employees: Total Nonfarm in Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ (MSA)



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



AERIAL VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT

STOCKTON UNIVERSITY AC ISLAND CAMPUS - SOUTH JERSEY GAS HEADQUARTERS

2015-11-24



SOUTH JERSEY GAS

Catalyst for Economic Growth

2. Ventnor is ideal for Millennials

MILLENNIALS' MOST-DESIRED CITY FEATURES



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:

	Atlantic Co.	Cape May Co.
Tourism Sales	\$6.7 billion	\$6.0 billion
Tourism Employment	47,620	25,884
Property		
Net Taxable Value	\$35.2 billion	\$47.5 billion

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

- ▶ Conducted 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

Funding

- ▶ 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

