3.0 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

3.1 The Rise of Pleasantville

Located in Atlantic County in southeastern New Jersey, the City of Pleasantville was originally settled in the 1700s by European fishermen as a series of small villages located around the Great Egg Harbor River and Lakes Bay. Whalers and shell-fishers, moving to the region from Cape May congregated in hamlets such as Adamstown, Risleytown, Lakestown and Smith's Landing.

Spurred by their location as the gateway to Atlantic City, these separate villages grew until they became a unified community in the latter-half of the 19th century. During this period, railroads ~ and to a lesser extent (stagecoach) roadways ~ brought passengers and freight through Pleasantville on the way from Philadelphia to Atlantic City. On December 18th, 1888, Risleyville, Pleasantville, Mt. Pleasant and Smith's Landing consolidated into the Borough of Pleasantville[10].

Pleasantville's economy continued to prosper with the advent of regional trolley service in 1903. As passenger transit lines linked Absecon to Somers Point and the 'Mainland' to Atlantic City, Pleasantville's Main Street began to grow. Soon schools, banks and stores lined the streets and public institutions (firehouse, post office, etc.) were built. Shoppers came from throughout the region to buy vegetables and fruits from farmers who sold their goods in the City.

This growth continued through the early 1920s, when the City's population doubled from 5,887 to over 12,000. What was once a former pass-through on the way to Atlantic City became the hub of commerce for the Mainland. Unfortunately, this prosperity was not to last.

3.2 The City's Decline

Pleasantville's economic decline mirrors that of many urban communities in the post-World War II era. Highway construction (principally the Garden State Parkway and the Atlantic City Expressway) allowed residents to move away from the City to new suburban areas. These new roadways decimated the passenger rail and freight rail industries on which the City's economy was based. Pleasantville soon lost its importance as a regional transportation hub.

Following the trend nationally, shoppers fled Pleasantville's commercial downtown, opting instead for the large shopping malls and strip-type developments located outside of the City[11]. Businesses followed their customers, and the resultant loss in ratables devastated the municipality.

[10] Pleasantville adopted a 'City' form of government in April of 1914.

[11] Except for the Pleasantville Shopping Center, which continued to survive, if not thrive, through the 1980s.

As businesses closed on Main Street, empty and deteriorated storefronts brought an image of the City as unsafe and crime ridden. Real estate values dropped, more affluent homeowners fled, and poorer residents, many of them renters, moved in.

As the City's business district became less-and-less attractive as a shopping destination, downtown property-owners were forced to lease space at less expensive rates and to whatever businesses were willing to locate in Pleasantville. As a result, the City's downtown became home to light-industrial and other non-retail uses, and the critical mass of retail and service establishments required for Main Street commerce to thrive began to vanish.

This cycle quickly began to feed on itself, and image soon became reality. Over time, the City simply could not rebound.

3.3 The Atlantic City Factor

In addition to what may be described as indigenous factors contributing to Pleasantville's economic and social decline, forces from outside the City added negative pressures on Pleasantville's population and economic base. In an ironic twist of fate, the byproducts of the urban renaissance in Atlantic City fueled the decline of neighboring Pleasantville.

What has come to be known locally as the 'Casino-era' began in 1976, with the passage of the statewide referendum approving casino gaming for Atlantic City. The first Casino-Hotel opening in 1978. Between 1976 and the mid-1980s, land speculation caused an increase in housing prices and rental rates, while voluntary and arson-related demolitions resulted in a reduction in housing inventory. With excellent access to public transportation and an existing inventory of relatively inexpensive housing units, Pleasantville became the residential location of choice for many casino, hotel and service employees.

Atlantic City's redevelopment began in earnest in 1988 with the adoption of the Northeast Inlet Redevelopment Plan. Funded by the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority,[12] this Redevelopment Plan required the near-total demolition of the hundreds of deteriorated residential units in the 101-acre Redevelopment Area. Residents of the demolished units were required to relocate into replacement housing.

With an insufficient housing inventory inside of Atlantic City to accommodate the dislocated residents, many of whom were on the lower end of the income scale, a considerable number of households followed earlier trends and relocated to Pleasantville.

[12] The state agency charged with administering the casino's urban reinvestment obligation ("CRDA")

While it would be wrong to hold these relocatees fully responsible for all of Pleasantville's Casino-era economic and social ills, their impact on the socioeconomic profile of the City can not be denied.

CENSUS	TOTAL POPULATION	POVERTY	LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	IN LABOR FORCE
1970	13,790	16.1%	18.4%	6.0%	59.3%
1980	13,435	14.6%	25.3%	10.4%	60.2%
1990	16,027	12.0%	18.5%	8.6%	68.8%
2000	19,012[13]	15.8%	23.0%	10.2%	61.2%

3.4 Pleasantville Today

The statistical impact of Pleasantville's decline is significant:[14]

- The City's median household income is $37,355, which is 79.5% of that for Atlantic County.[15] More than 17% of households have incomes less than $15,000. Approximately 30% of households have incomes less than $24,999, 47% less than $34,999 and 65% under $49,999.[16]
- 22.9% of Pleasantville's households are considered low-income or lower as defined by the State of New Jersey, with 17.38% in poverty. This compares to 7.4% for Atlantic County.[17]
- Unemployment rate is 8%, compared to 5.7% for Atlantic County.[18]
- The City was ranked 39th on the state's (last) municipal distress index[19].
- 9.1% Of the City's 6,559 housing units are vacant. Of the 5,960 occupied housing units, 2,235 are rental and 3,725 are owner-occupied. This results in a rental :: owner-occupancy ration of 37.5 :: 62.5.
- Pleasantville consistently ranks 1st or 2nd in the County[20] in terms of percentage of population receiving public assistance.

[13] Updated to 18,982 as of July 1, 2006 (http://www.wnjpin.net/OneStopCareerCenter/ LaborMarketInformation/lmi02/mcd/atlest06.htm)

[14] Unless otherwise indicated, data as reported in the 2000 Federal Census (Exhibit 5)

[15] Claritus (2004) (Obtained from the Pleasantville Housing Authority)

[16] Pleasantville Housing Authority.

[17] Council on Affordable Housing, Third Round Substantive Rules (N.J.A.C. 5:94-1.4)

[18] Current through 2006 (http://www.wnjpin.net/OneStopCareerCenter/LaborMarketInformation/lmi11/mun06.xls)

[19] Pursuant to NJDCA rankings (last updated in 1996)

[20] Alternating with Egg Harbor City.

These conditions have resulted in Pleasantville's designations as detailed in section 1.01 herein.

3.5 Prior Master Planning Efforts

3.5.1 Pleasantville's original Master Plan was adopted in December 1979. Known Reexaminations were adopted in 1993[21] and 1999. The City's current Zone Plan and related development regulations were adopted in November of 1987 and have been modified periodically since, with the last change occurring in April 2008.

3.5.2 Numerous attempts to locate the 1979 Master Plan proved unsuccessful.[22] However, the 1993 Update did include references to issues identified in 1979.

Based on a review of the 1993 Update as well as conversations with City officials, business leaders and members of the Community, it is the professional opinion of Remington, Vernick & Walberg Engineers that the problems, policies and objectives identified in the 1979 Master Plan have either been addressed by the City in the intervening years or have evolved into the problems, policies and objectives identified in this 2008 Comprehensive Master Plan Reexamination.

3.5.3 This 2008 Comprehensive Master Plan Update relies heavily on the information, analyses and conclusions contained in both the 1993 Update & the 1999 Reexamination, as same may have been updated to the present time.

3.5.4 Recreation Master Plan

In July 2001, the City commissioned a Recreation Master Plan designed to address existing conditions and recommendations regarding Recreation Programs, Lands and Facilities.

3.6 Community Planning Activities

The City of Pleasantville has taken a very active approach to planning over the past several years. Recognizing its declining economic position, its deteriorating physical stock and the toll these conditions have taken on the City's social fabric, local Policymakers, alone and in conjunction with state and federal agencies, have developed various strategies aimed at reversing these trends. Taking advantage of the state and federal designations detailed in section 1.01 herein, such efforts include, but are not limited to, strategies embodied in the:

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[21] While titled "1993 Master Plan *Update*", this effort was actually a Master Plan Reexamination under N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89.

[22] Attempts to locate a copy of the document from 1) the Pleasantville City Clerk, 2) the Pleasantville Planning Board Secretary, 3) the offices of the Municipal Planner and Municipal Engineer, 4) the Atlantic County Clerk, 5) the Atlantic County Department of Planning and Economic Development and other sources were unsuccessful.

The above notwithstanding, the *Municipal Land Use Law* requires that a Master Plan Reexamination be based on issues faced by a municipality *from the time of the last reexamination report* [*emphasis added*] (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89). This effort fully addresses the issues raised in the 1999 Reexamination and thus satisfies the statutory requirements for a Master Plan Reexamination.

- Zone Development Plan for the Pleasantville Urban Enterprise Zone
- Transit Village Development Plan
- Revitalization Plan for the Urban Coordinating Council Area
- Neighborhood Preservation Program Plan (Waterfront district)
- Neighborhood Preservation Program Plan (Midtown district)
- Weed and Seed Program Plan
- Rehabilitation Plan for the City-Owned Land Disposition Program
- Amended & Restated Redevelopment Plan for the Lakes Bay Waterfront Redevelopment Area
- Amended & Restated Redevelopment Plan for the Cambria Avenue Redevelopment Area
- Redevelopment Plan for the Expanded City Center Area
- Redevelopment Plan for the Narcissus Avenue Rehabilitation Area
- Redevelopment Plan for the California Avenue Tract
- Rehabilitation Plan for the Woodland Terrace ~ New Hope Community

3.7 2008 Comprehensive Master Plan Update

The *MLUL*[23] provides that a municipal Master Plan shall generally comprise land use and development proposals, with maps, diagrams and text, addressing:

Mandatory Elements

(1) Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies & Standards

Municipal Vision Statement / philosophical underpinnings upon which physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based.

This Element will satisfy N.J.S.A. 40:44D-a, b. & c. as relates to the requirements for a Master Plan Reexamination under the *MLUL*.

(2) Land Use Plan Element

Analyses of the relationship between land uses and development patterns in the City both as an independent function and against the Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards and other Master Plan Elements developed as part of this Master Planning process, with specific attention paid to:

[23] N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 & 62

(a) natural conditions, including, but not necessarily limited to, topography, soil conditions, water supply, drainage, flood plain areas, marshes, and woodlands;

(b) existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, educational and other public and private purposes; and stating the relationship to the existing and any proposed zone plan and zoning ordinance;

(c) showing the location of any airports and the boundaries of any airport safety zones pursuant to the "Air Safety and Zoning Act of 1983," PL 1983, c. 260 (6:1-80 et seq.);

(d) including a statement of the standards of population density and development intensity recommended for the municipality;

This Element will satisfy *MLUL* section 40:44D-89 d & e as relates to these requirements for a Master Plan Reexamination.

Optional Elements

(3) Housing Plan Element[24]

Residential standards and proposals for the construction and improvement of housing, including:

(a) *An inventory of city's housing stock by age, condition, purchase or rental value, occupancy characteristics and type;*

(b) *A projection of the city's housing stock, including the probable future construction of low and moderate income housing, for the next six years;*

(c) *An analysis of the city's demographic characteristics, including household size, income level and age;*

(d) *An analysis of the existing and probable future employment characteristics of the city; and*

(e) *A determination of the city's present and prospective fair share for low and moderate income housing and its capacity to accommodate its present and prospective housing needs, including its fair share for low and moderate income housing.*

[24] While N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 lists a Housing Plan Element among the Optional Elements of a Municipal Master Plan, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-62 requires a Housing Plan Element prior to the adoption of a Zoning Ordinance.

As part of this Comprehensive Master Plan Update, a Housing Plan Element was prepared in anticipation of a policy discussion related to the City's position regarding the filing of a Fair Share Plan with the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing.[25]

The document was nearing completion when the New Jersey Appellate Division, responding to an appeal brought by affordable housing advocacy groups, invalidated COAH's Third Round Rules, finding that the regulations were based on invalid calculations, arbitrary rules and unconstitutional provisions. Under the Court's ruling, all actions related to COAH's Third Round were stayed, including the preparation of new municipal Fair Share Housing Plans, until COAH adopts revised regulations. While the Court ordered that such regulations were to be completed within six (6) months from the ruling (approximately July 2007), COAH has missed this deadline.

COAH published its amended Third Round Methodology and Rules in the N.J. Register in January 2008, with comments due by mid-March 2008. The rules were adopted in June 2008, with an effective date of December 2008.

Such Rules provide for, inter alia, a Growth Share Obligation of one affordable housing unit for every four (4) market rate units constructed and one affordable housing unit for every 16 jobs created. These regulations are viewed as overly onerous on a City like Pleasantville, with its overabundance of low and moderate income households and its need for economic revitalization. Pleasantville's comments submitted to COAH expand on the City's situation and seek relief from any Growth Share Obligation. At Publication, no COAH response to the City's comments were received.

The City is receptive and sensitive to the need for affordable housing (including workforce housing to support the growth expected in neighboring Atlantic City) in the region, has a history of supporting such efforts in Pleasantville and anticipates continuing this policy, just not at the level mandated by COAH. The Housing Plan Element of this Comprehensive Master Plan Update (section 7.0 herein) outlines the City's efforts in this regard. The companion Fair Share Plan has been prepared to meeting the City's obligations in a manner deemed appropriate to Pleasantville.

(4) Circulation Plan Element

Analyses of the location and types of facilities required for the efficient movement of people and goods into, about, and through the municipality, taking into account the functional highway classification system of the Federal Highway Administration and the types, locations, conditions and availability of existing and proposed transportation facilities, including air, water, road and rail.

[25] "COAH"

A Circulation Plan Element is required if the City wishes to create a Parking Authority or Parking Utility and adopt of "in-lieu-of" parking fees as part of its efforts to permit increased building height for development, or to adopt regulations requiring developers to pay for off-tract street improvements as a component of Subdivision and Site Plan approval process.

Additionally, a Circulation Plan Element typically forms the basis for a municipality's future capital programs.

(5) Utility Service Plan Element

Addresses the general location of current infrastructure and analyzes the need for future systems, including water supply and distribution facilities, drainage and flood control, sewerage and waste water treatment, solid waste disposal and other related utilities.

Upon completion, this Element may be used by the City for development of a Storm Water Management Plan pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-93 et. seq.

(6) Community Facilities Plan Element[26]

Addresses existing and proposed educational and cultural facilities, historic sites, libraries, hospitals, firehouses, police stations and other public and quasi-public institutions as well as significant private community amenities.

(7) Open Space & Recreation Plan Element[26]

Addresses the City's public (municipal and Board of Education) and, as appropriate, private sites for active and passive recreation, describing existing facilities and identifying needed upgrades.

(8) Conservation Plan Element

Analyses the opportunities for the preservation, conservation and utilization of the municipality's natural resources, including, to the extent appropriate, energy, open space, water supply, forests, soil, marshes, wetlands, harbors, rivers and other waters, fisheries, endangered or threatened species, wildlife and other resources as well as the impact of each Master Plan Element on resources.

(9) Economic Plan Element

Analyses the economic development goals of the City and addresses, among other issues, employment requirements, availability of labor pool and the stability and diversity of the economic development program to be promoted.

[26] Community Facilities Plan Elements, Open Space & Recreation Plan Elements and Conservation Plan Elements work best when crafted together to provide for a coordinated system of public facilities while directing the efficient use of public funds.

(10) Historic Preservation Plan Element

Identifies the location and significance of historic sites and historic districts within a municipality, identifies the standards used to assess worthiness for historic site or historic districts and analyzes the impact of each Master Plan Element on the preservation of historic sites and districts.

This Element may be expected to serve as the basis for architectural or other policy guidelines the City may wish to consider in order to preserve the character of the City (or specific sections therein).

(11) Recycling Plan Element

Incorporating the State Recycling Plan goals, including provisions for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials designated in the municipal recycling ordinance, and for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials within any development proposal for the construction of 50 or more units of single-family residential housing or 25 or more units of multi-family residential housing and any commercial or industrial development proposal for 1,000 square foot or more of land.

(12) Farmland Preservation Plan Element

Including an inventory of farm properties and a map illustrating significant areas of agricultural land; a statement showing that municipal ordinances support and promote agriculture as a business; and a plan for preserving as much farmland as possible in the short term by leveraging monies made available by 13:8C-1 et al. through a variety of mechanisms including, but not limited to, utilizing option agreements, installment purchases, and encouraging donations of permanent development easements.

(13) Development Transfer Plan Element

Addressing the public purposes, location of sending and receiving zones and the technical details of a development transfer program based on the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-141.

(14) Educational Facilities Plan Element[27]

Incorporating the purposes and goals of the "long-range facilities plan" required to be submitted to the Commissioner of Education by a school district pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 7G-4.

[27] Element added to Municipal Land Use Law in 2008.

(15) Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan Element[27]

Providing for, encouraging and promoting the efficient use of natural resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems by considering the impact of buildings on the local, regional and global environment; allowing ecosystems of function naturally; conserving and reusing water; on-site treatment of storm water; and optimizing climatic conditions through site orientation and design.

3.8 With this section 3.0 as context, this Comprehensive Master Plan Update satisfies all statutory requirements for a Master Plan and Master Plan Reexamination pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 and 89, respectfully, and shall serve as the operative Master Plan for the City of Pleasantville.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 This Comprehensive Master Plan Update bases its findings and recommendations on, among other sources:

- The Atlantic County Master Plan prepared by the Atlantic County Department of Planning Board (July 2002).
- The State Development and Redevelopment Plan ("State Plan") prepared by the New Jersey State Planning Commission (March 2001).
- Rules on Coastal Zone Management as promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (as amended).
- Census Data compiled and released by the US Census Bureau.[28]
- South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization ("SJTPO") 2030 Population & Employment Projections by Municipality, June, 2006.
- Elements of the 1979 Master Plan as cited in the 1993 Update.
- The 1993 Update and 1999 Reexamination prepared by Remington & Vernick Engineers.
- Amendments to Chapter 290 enacted as a result of the 1999 Reexamination.
- City of Pleasantville, Urban Enterprise Zone 5-Year Strategic Plan prepared by Remington & Vernick Engineers (1996) as updated through the Amended & Restated Zone Development Plan, Urban Enterprise Zone, City of Pleasantville prepared by Remington, Vernick & Walberg Engineers (2002).
- Electronic Tax mapping prepared by Remington, Vernick & Walberg Engineers and MOD IV parcel data retained by the City's Tax Assessor; [29]
- Visual inspections of the City conducted for this Master Planning process;
- Comparison of the City's existing land use and development patterns[30] with the City's current Zone Plan[31].
- Conversations with City officials, business leaders and Community members.
- Other pertinent data and planning documents (footnoted as appropriate).

4.2 Unless otherwise noted, Ordinances, Resolutions, Reports and other documents of the City of Pleasantville or its municipal agencies are on file with the Pleasantville City Clerk.

[28] http://factfinder.census.gov

[29] Both current through the 2nd Quarter 2007

[30] Exhibit 7 & Exhibit 8

[31] Exhibit 6