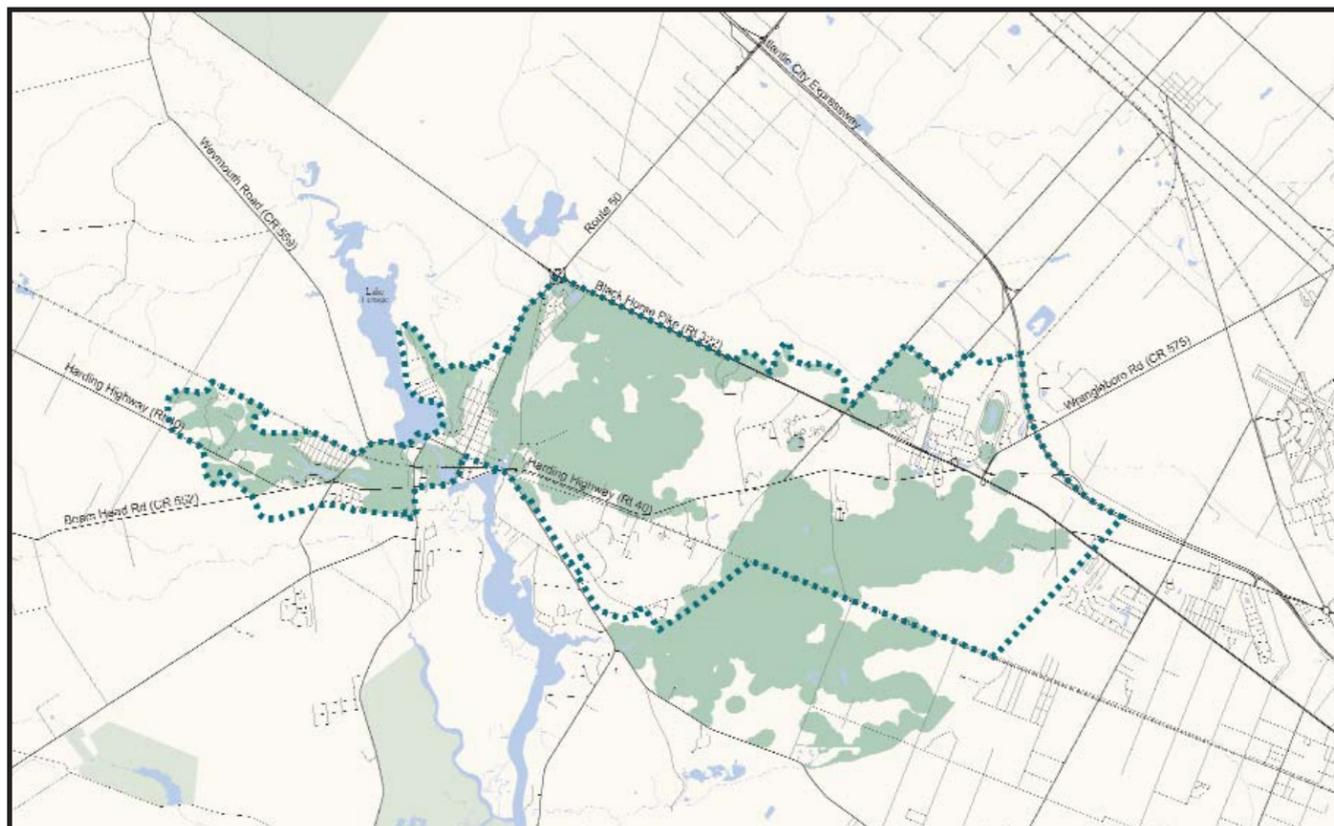


LIVABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Pinelands Regional Growth Area in Hamilton Township



Prepared for:
Hamilton Township, New Jersey



Sponsored by:
New Jersey Pinelands Commission
Pinelands Excellence Program
with funding from:
The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation

Prepared By:
Glattig Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart, Inc.
Kise Straw & Kolodner
Cahill Associates

MARCH, 2004

LIVABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Pinelands Regional Growth Area in Hamilton Township

Hamilton Township Visioning Team

- **John Sacchinelli**, Mayor, Hamilton Township
- **Michael Dupras**, Environmental Commission
- **Michael Kolchins**, Architect
- **James Link**, Chairman of the Planning Board
- **Linda Maslanko**, VP, Mays Landing Merchants' Association
- **Thomas Palmentieri**, Township Committee
- **Ed Perugini**, Administrator, Hamilton Township
- **Robert Ravell**, Industrial Commission
- **Sharon Riordan**, School District Superintendent, Hamilton Township
- **Elmer Ripley**, Township Historic Commission
- **Stuart Wainberg**, Developer, Benderson Development Company

New Jersey Pinelands Commission:

- **John Stokes**, Executive Director
- **Larry Liggett**, Director of Land Use and Technology Programs
- **Kim Beidler**, Principal Resource Planner
- **David Kutner**, Director of Special Programs

Consultant Team:

Glattig Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart, Inc.
Walter Kulash, Principal-in-charge
Ian Lockwood, Transportation Engineer

Kise, Straw & Kolodner
Shawn McCaney, Project Manager
Joe Clemens, Assistant Project Management
Pierrette Kalogeropoulos Yeo, Public Involvement/Project Planner

Cahill Associates
Wesley Horner, Principal Planner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Opportunities and Challenges

- Background
- Existing Conditions

Community Vision

- CBOT Results and Conclusions
- Draft Long Range Vision Statement

Actions

1	• Issues/Strategies Analysis	8
	• Develop Strategic Plan for Mays Landing	9
	• Bypass Plan	12
	• Develop Strategic Area Plan for Racetrack District	13
2	• Adopt Build-To Commercial Building Siting	16
3	• Revise Site Plan Parking Requirements	18
	• Obtain Street Connectivity through Subdivision Regulation	19
	• Create Greenway Plan	20
	• Map Additional Street Network	23
	• Revise Street Design Guidelines	25
6	• Revise Stormwater Regulations	26
7	• Implementation Recommendations	30

Appendix

A.	Tree Removal Ordinance	32
B.	Community Based Observation Technique (CBOT) Summary Results	35
C.	Pinelands Excellence Program - Creating Livable Communities	45

Introduction

Under a grant funded by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Pinelands Commission initiated the Pinelands Excellence Program to take an in-depth look at some of the critical problems facing fast-growing communities and develop targeted strategies to address them. For more than 20 years, development in the Pinelands has been guided by the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The CMP protects the region's most sensitive natural resources by strictly limiting development in certain areas while allowing for varying amounts and types of development in other more appropriate locations. The most substantial amount of development is permitted in Pinelands Regional Growth Areas (RGAs), which are located predominantly along the Pinelands eastern and western borders. While the RGAs comprise less than 10% of the overall Pinelands Area, they were zoned in 1980 to accommodate more than 100,000 new homes over the coming decades. Without the RGAs, the rest of the Pinelands cannot be protected. Yet unless the RGAs are desirable places to live, they will not function well.

The long-term success of the CMP depends upon the creation of "livable" growth area communities - communities that are vibrant and attractive, and where important natural values and recreation areas are preserved for the residents' benefit. Yet, the pace of development in some RGAs and the lack of financial resources to comprehensively plan at the local level have made it extremely difficult for towns to stay ahead of the curve in effectively accommodating these housing demands. The result, in some cases, is ordinary suburban sprawl, poor neighborhood design, overburdened transportation systems, little or no open space and other amenities, and conflicts with natural resource protection. Simply reducing the amount of development permitted in these areas will not solve all the problems, since less development does not inherently lead to good community design. Moreover, the accommodation of less development in these growth areas may exert pressure to open up other areas of the Pinelands to satisfy unmet housing demands.

The Pinelands Excellence Program provides an opportunity to examine some of these issues that fall outside of the CMP's scope but nonetheless can have substantial impacts on a community's character and functioning. To implement the Program, the Commission invited the Pinelands communities with the largest RGAs to participate and then selected two based on an evaluation of written requests that they submitted: Hamilton Township in Atlantic County and Winslow Township in Camden County. Next, the Commission, with input from Hamilton and Winslow, hired a team of consultants to lead each municipality in a comprehensive community visioning effort, culminating in the development of innovative zoning and design recommendations. These recommendations are presented in this community action plan.

The information presented in this community action plan is structured similarly to the process followed by the Pinelands Excellence Program, beginning with an analysis of existing conditions (e.g., land uses, street network, environmental constraints, and zoning) in Hamilton Township's RGA. Much of the data used for this analysis was supplied by the Pinelands Commission. The results were used to determine the amount and location of land available for development in Hamilton's RGA.

While the analyses were underway, the consultants began work in the township. First, they conducted a series of interviews with key stakeholders selected by Hamilton to supplement the information provided by the data analyses and to gain additional insight into local concerns and issues. The Township was then asked to form a "visioning team" representative of the community to work with the consultants on the development of a vision statement to guide preparation of the community action plan for the RGA. Members of the visioning team were instructed in a community-based observation technique (CBOT), in which they were provided with cameras and asked to document, in pictures and words, what they liked and did not like in Hamilton Township and surrounding areas. Input received during the CBOT process helped ensure that the resulting visioning statements are grounded in reality and not just abstractions from a more theoretical exercise. Results from the CBOT process are summarized on page 6 and more fully detailed in the Appendix B.

The translation of the issues identified during the stakeholder interviews and CBOT exercise into elements of a vision statement and ultimately, individual strategies, is represented by the diagram shown on page 8. This "big picture" sets the stage for the detailed strategies that follow, beginning on page 9. To the extent possible, these strategies were designed to facilitate implementation. For example, model ordinance language is provided to address community design issues, and land clearing. Other discussions provide the foundation for complementary actions including the mapping of street corridors, and revising of street design guidelines.

The community action plan concludes with implementation recommendations that addresses priorities, responsibilities, pre-requisites, and resources. The intent of this section is to help ensure that the strategies presented in this plan move from the page to reality, thereby improving the lives of current and future residents in Hamilton Township. Actual implementation of the strategies, however, will demand support and effort from the Township's residents and businesses. Only with this broad-based commitment will the key components of the plan advance.

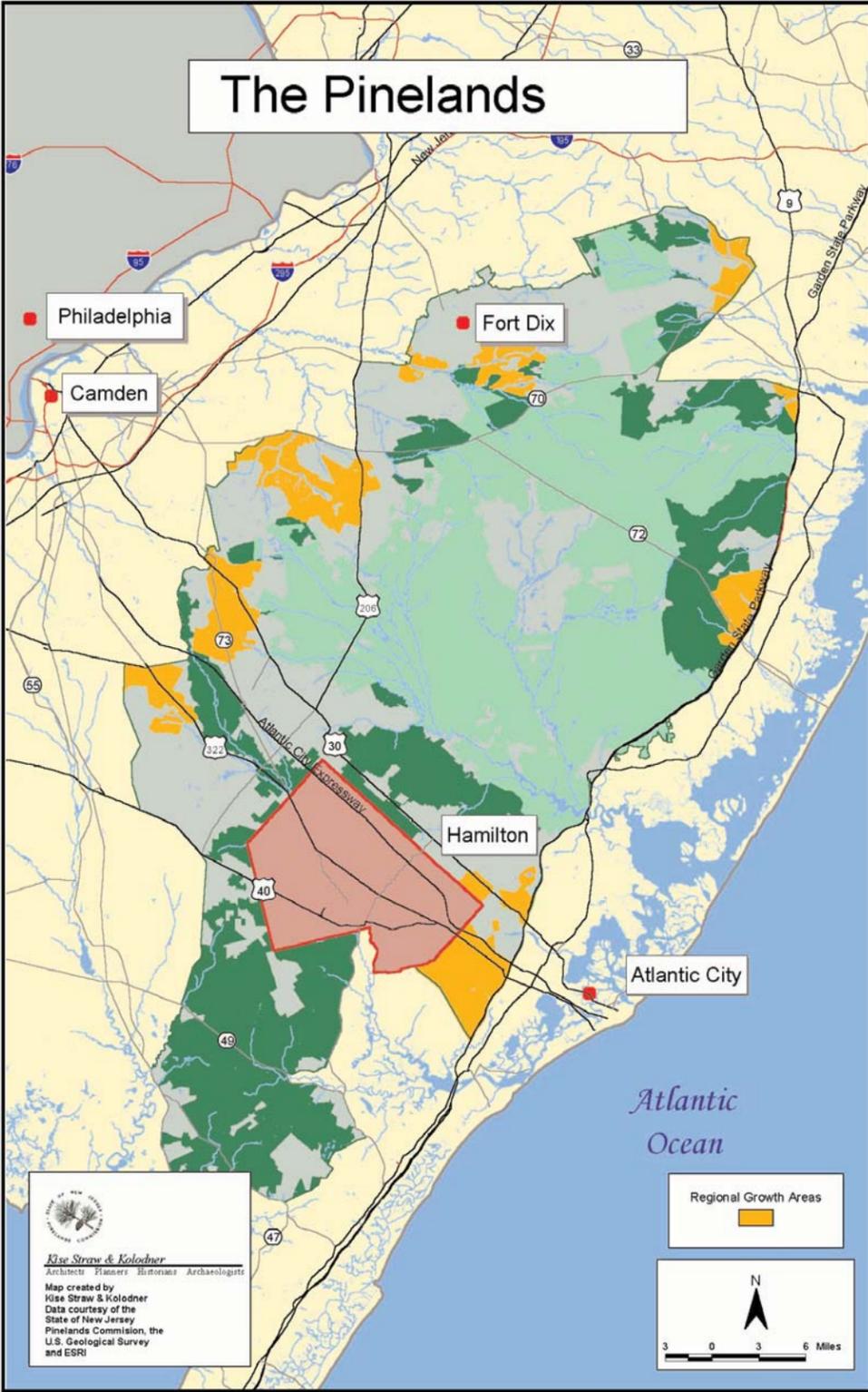
Given the geographic focus of this project (i.e., Hamilton's Regional Growth Area) and available resources, not all issues related to growth and development could be addressed within the scope of this plan. Because the visioning team focused on two specific and complex locations from the outset - Mays Landing and the Atlantic City Race Track - the plan does not contemplate major rezonings in other areas of the Township nor does it address in any great detail options to "retrofit" existing development to make it look and function better. These topics, along with the relationship of existing development to Mays Landing and the Race Track (including the identity of the Township as a whole), are prime candidates for further study. Consequently, an overall recommendation for the Township is to use the results of this project as a catalyst to seek funding for additional planning efforts on a community-wide scale.

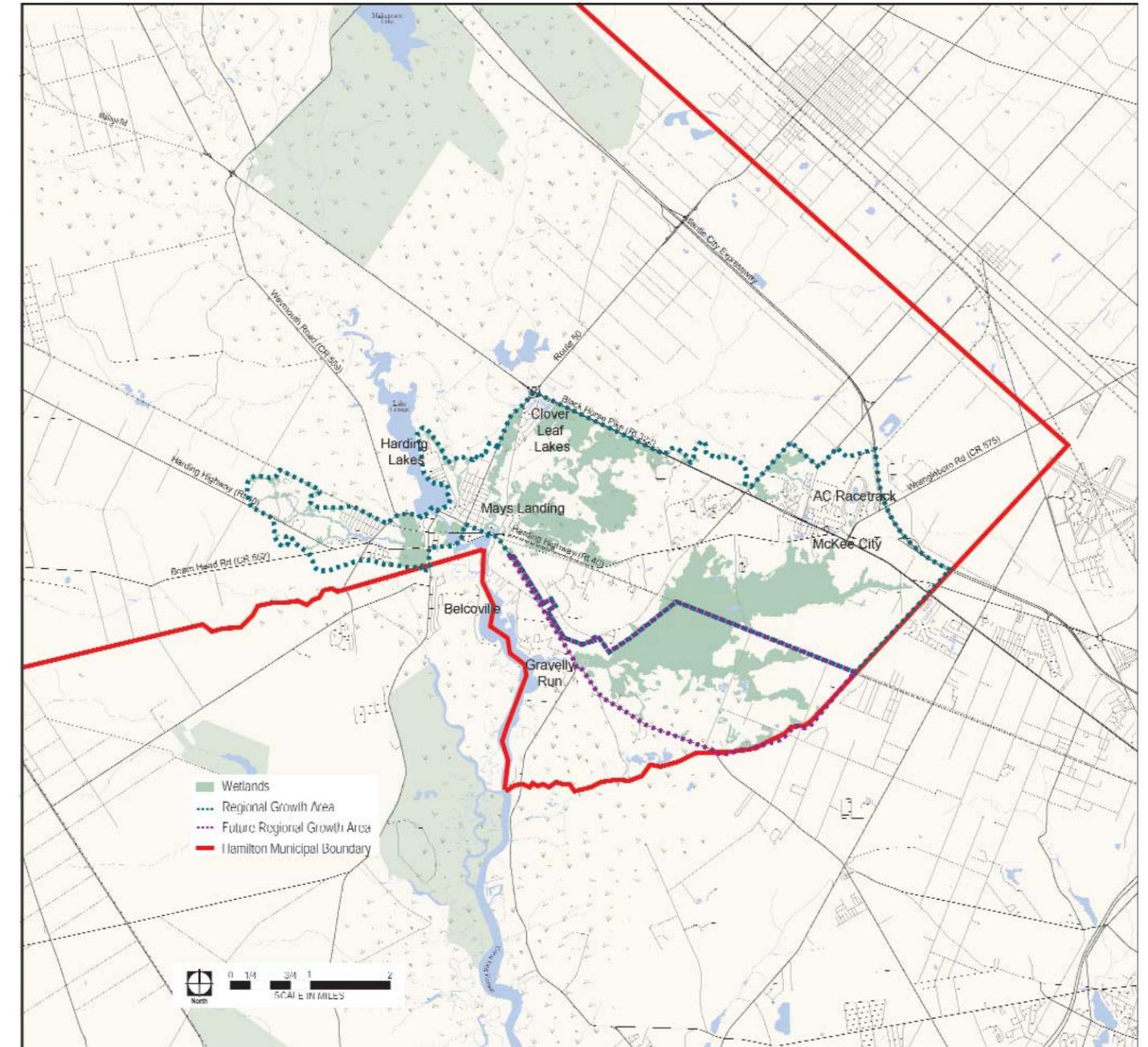
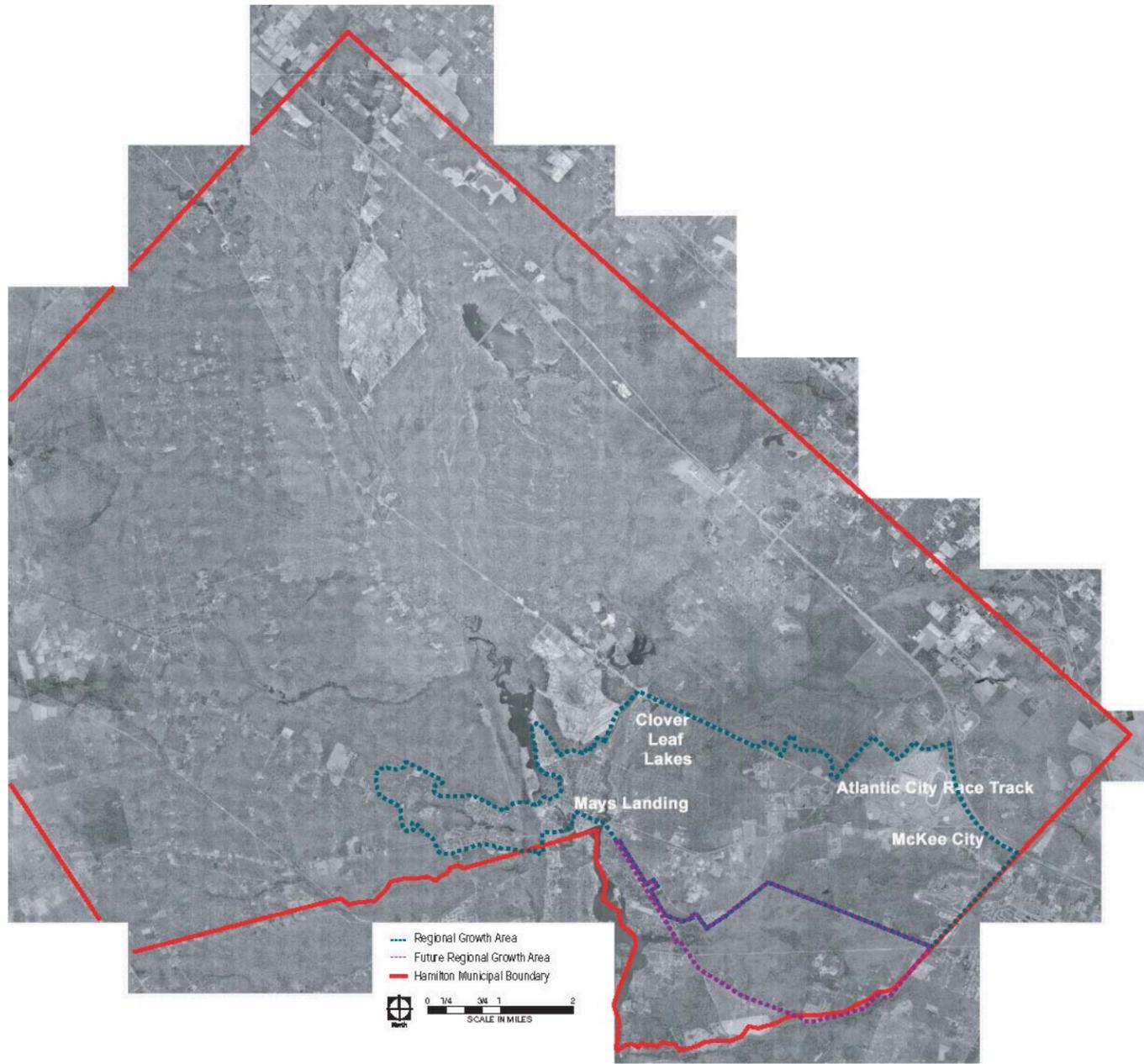
Opportunities and Challenges

Background

The character of new development in the New Jersey Pinelands designated growth areas disappointing at times. The disappointment is felt from a number of viewpoints. Existing residents of the Pinelands are not seeing much new growth that complements the "town and country" qualities that have kept them in or drawn them to the Pinelands. To the contrary, they see an erosion of these qualities. Instead of development of unusual quality, utterly conventional suburban sprawl has occurred in many locations. Environmentalists, rightfully pleased with the boldness of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan and hoping for a development ethic correspondingly advanced, are disturbed with the consumptiveness of development in the growth areas. The vigorous level of investment in the growth areas is, to some viewpoints, the main strength. However, even in this case, the rare advantage of a "captive" market is yielding nothing special or interesting.

There is every reason for Hamilton to intervene in this pattern. The boldness of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan and the monumental achievement in designating growth areas deserves better than just a new eruption of conventional suburban sprawl. The residents of the Pinelands, and particularly in the growth areas such as Hamilton, parties to one of the boldest "town and country" visions in the United States, have every right to expect that the growth areas be as remarkable as the preservation areas. Investors in Hamilton should be able to benefit, far more than at present, from the concentration of investment opportunity into growth areas embedded within a remarkable nature preserve.



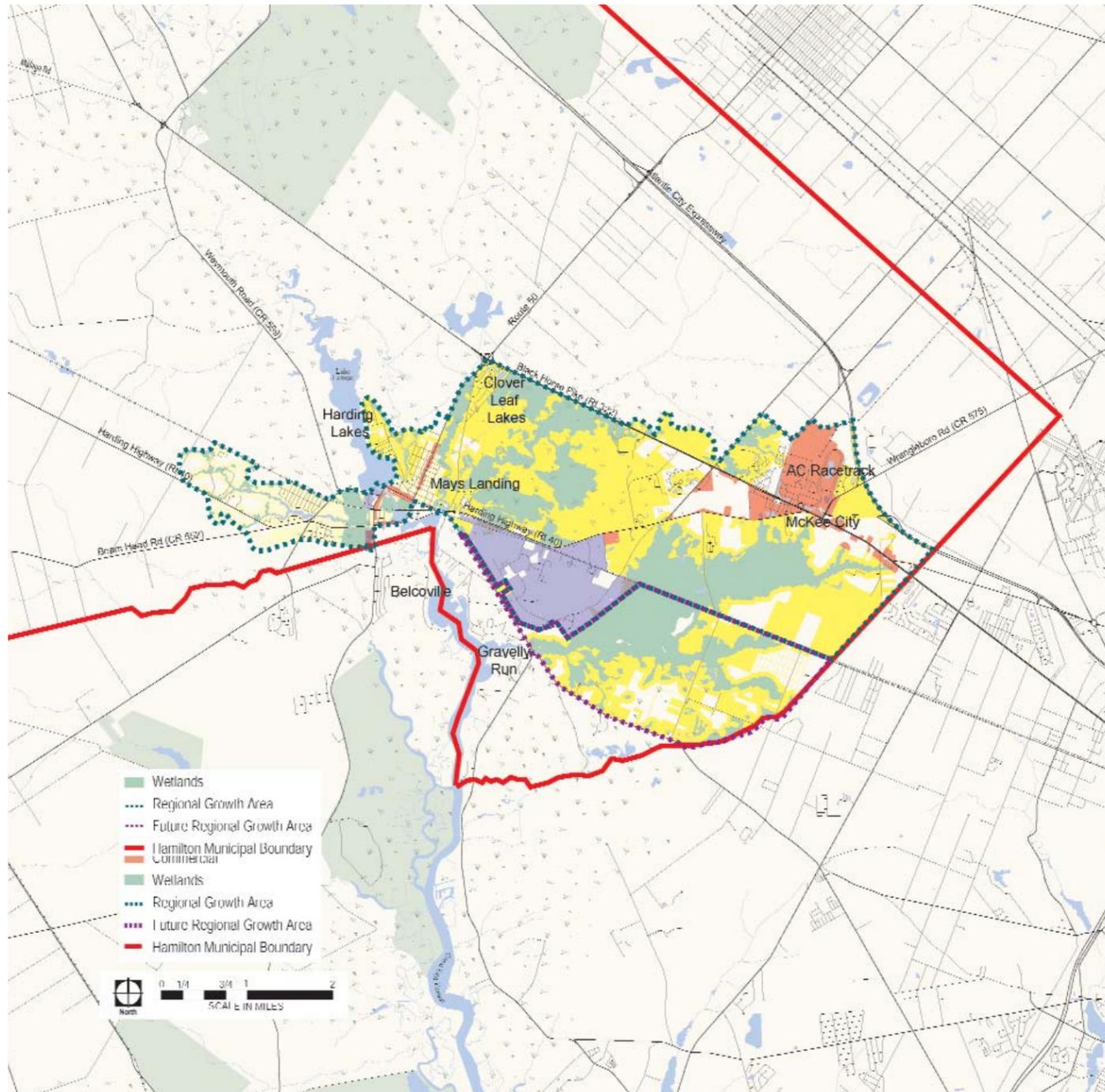


Aerial

The large amount of wetlands and open water greatly influence the shape of development in the Hamilton growth area. The traditional town pattern of Mays Landing, and the contrasting pattern of the suburban sprawl around the Atlantic City Racetrack are clearly evident.

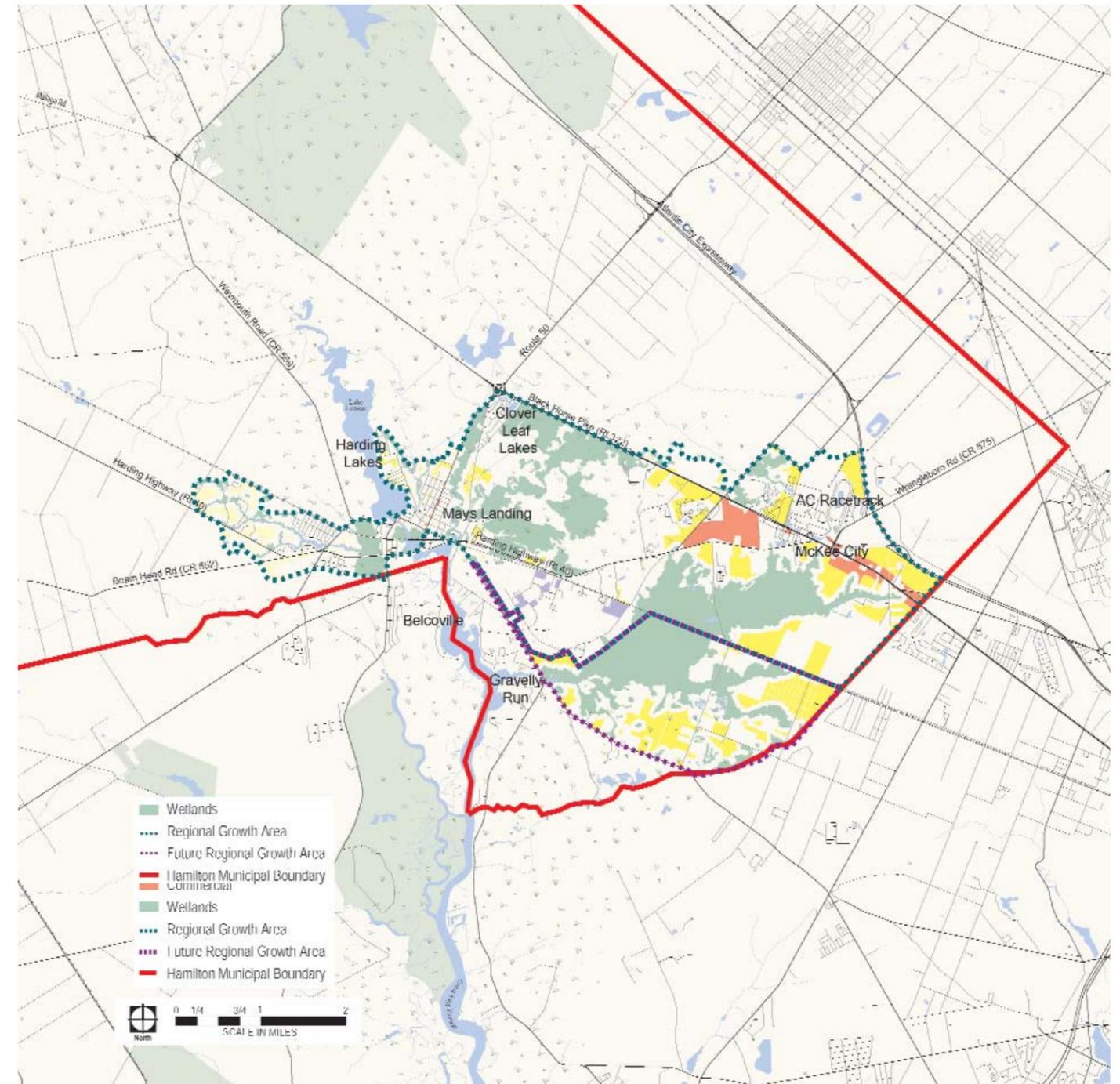
Existing Street Network

Historically, a number of highways converged in Mays Landing. As longer distance travel increased, this convergence of traffic in Mays Landing has become a constant problem, even with the later addition of express routes such as the Atlantic City Expressway. In the racetrack area, Route 322, Route 40 and the Atlantic City Expressway converge in an area which has much potential for a town center, but which is currently characterized by a suburban sprawl pattern of roads and access.



Developed Lands

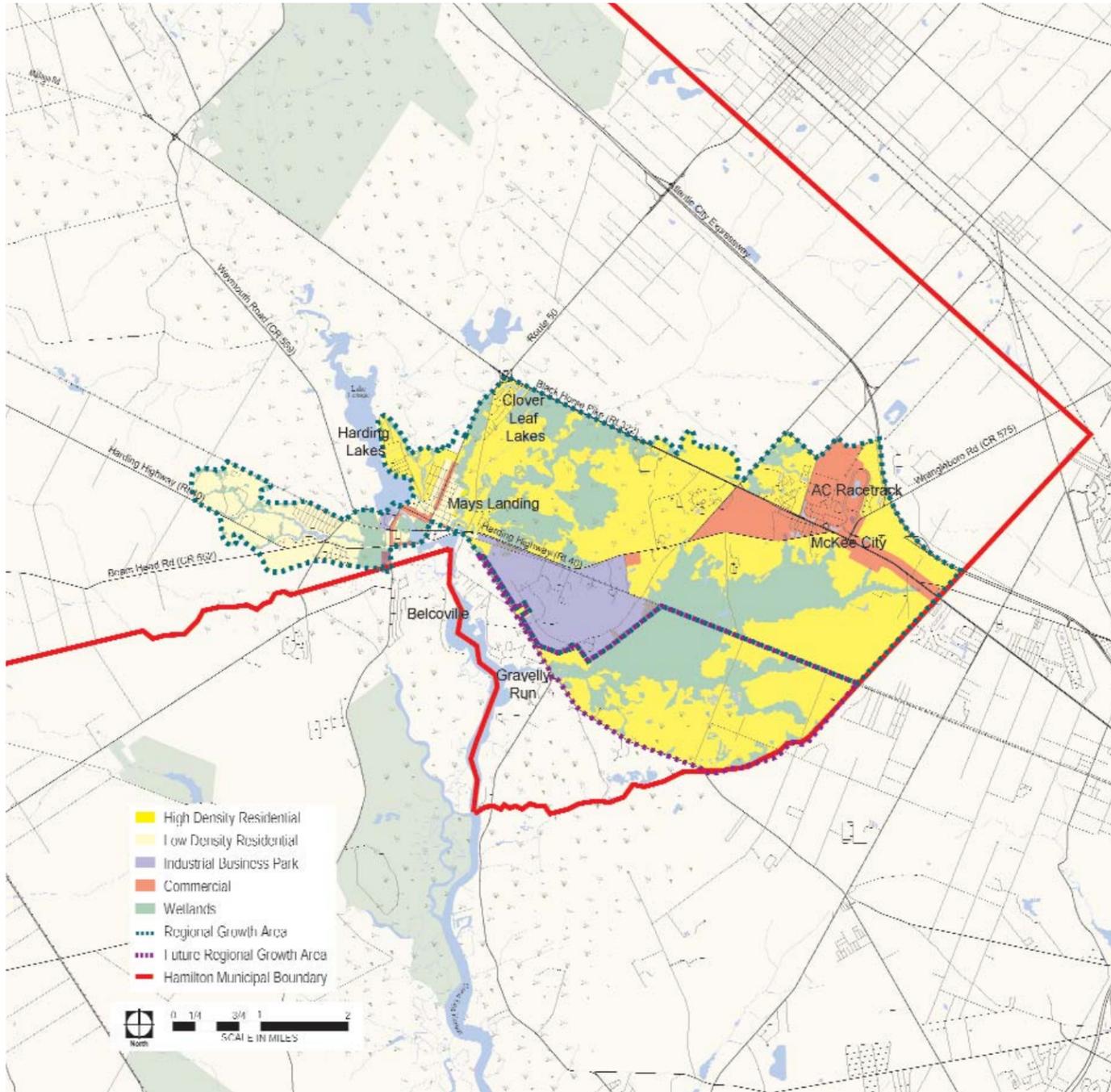
The traditional main street retail pattern in Mays Landing is evident. Also evident is the far larger concentration of retail activity around the racetrack, and the "suburban sprawl" pattern of parcels along Route 322. The large triangular block of the industrial park is noteworthy for its size. Although designated an industrial park most of the current tenants are public agency and private office occupants.



Developable Lands

The largely built-out nature of the western part of the Hamilton growth area is evident in this diagram. There is little opportunity for residential, and almost no opportunity for new commercial activity in Mays Landing. Developable land is, however, available in the industrial park where the courthouse has recently relocated from Mays Landing.

The majority of developable land, both residential and commercial, is centered along Route 322, in the areas immediately adjacent to the existing development in the racetrack area.



Land Use Summary (in Acres) Pinelands Growth Area, Hamilton Township

	Total in RGA	Committed or Developed	Public	Wetlands	Available for Development
Residential Land Area	7100	4560	370	640	1530
Nonresidential Land Area	1970	970	630	10	360
Total Development Potential					1890

Existing Zoning Regions

In principal, the simple zoning structure within the township is intended to focus commercial activity into two places (Mays Landing small scale “main street” and a town center around the racetrack) with all of the industrial uses concentrated in the triangular area south of Route 40. The rest of the growth area is zoned residential.

Despite the simplicity of the zoning scheme and the concentration of activity into clearly defined areas, the net result is gravitating toward a roadside sprawl pattern, as the commercial uses arrange themselves linearly along Route 322 and Route 40.

Community Vision

CBOT Results and Conclusions

The community-based observation technique (CBOT) is a key element in eliciting opinion from stakeholders, and translating it into actions to be undertaken by the township. In the CBOT process, the visioning team members (selected by the township) were provided with cameras, and instructed, by the consultant team, to take a series of photographs (20-50 in number) illustrating both desirable and undesirable features of development. Participants were encouraged to focus primarily on scenes from within Hamilton, but could also include scenes from outside the township that were particularly illustrative. Participants were asked to provide a brief commentary describing the photographs taken.

The CBOT results are used to identify common themes from which to develop a vision statement, and ultimately, recommendations for moving toward the vision. The CBOT process is particularly useful in illustrating what the community "wants," and disparities between these wants and what they are now getting with new growth. The CBOT process does not necessarily, in itself, define a consensus of opinion. However, the large areas of agreement about both positive and negative aspects of the township, as expressed in the CBOT process, are extremely valuable at arriving at a consensus at later stages of the project.

The CBOT summary results and the accompanying comments provided by vision team members are incorporated in Appendix B.

Single-Family Residential Growth



Want: homes "tucked into the landscape;" narrow streets with natural (swale) drainage; mature trees, in many cases bordering the street.



Getting instead: overly large street; development that "all looks the same;" devoid of street trees; no replacement of cleared trees; no opportunity in street design, to create a characteristic street tree canopy.

Remedies: smaller streets; more "natural" drainage, extraordinary care for existing trees; extraordinary attention to planting of new trees.

Multi-Family Housing

Stakeholder comments while not always in favor of multi-family housing (townhouses, apartments) focus on making high density development as attractive as possible.



Want: nice townhouse development with well-landscaped entrance and (concealed) parking.



Now getting: apartments on clear-cut and clear-graded sites; large streets, unrelieved monotony in building design; view from street dominated by driveways and garages.

Remedy: architectural guidelines to remove auto servicing (driveway and garage door) as prime architectural features; site clustering to leave large areas of ungraded and uncleared land; design guidelines for smaller streets; extraordinary attention to retaining and replanting trees.

Townhouses

Another theme regarding multi-family housing, is the desire to soften or largely conceal it from the view from the road, or otherwise manage it to appear as single-family homes.



Want: "Condos with nice backgrounds, green buffer, and mature trees."



Getting: "Condos with backyards too close to street; backs of houses facing the street."

Remedy: Subdivision regulations that encourage the clustering of multi-family units, leaving large parts of the site in a natural or park-like state; subdivision regulations that call for real streets with homes and town homes fronting on these streets; site plan regulation that prevents "single loaded" lots that "back up" to a street.

Commercial Uses In Historic Area



Want: "A new use that maintained the original architecture, or



Nice new construction in a historical district.



Don't like inappropriate architecture for historic district."

Remedy: architectural guidelines, with a historical district category, that will produce architectural details in keeping with the district's character; site placement guidelines to site buildings in a historically correct manner.

Major Commercial Concentration

The Hamilton Mall, the Township's largest concentration of retail space, and its surrounding retail satellites are generally considered a benefit to the town. On the other hand, the associated impact on character is considered a drawback.



Want: "commercial ratables."



Getting: Traffic congestion and road-side blight.

Remedy: site development regulations to channel new commercial growth into towns and villages, not continuing sprawl.

Draft Long-Range Strategic Vision Statement:

Achieve enhanced community livability that promotes and reinforces local identity through:

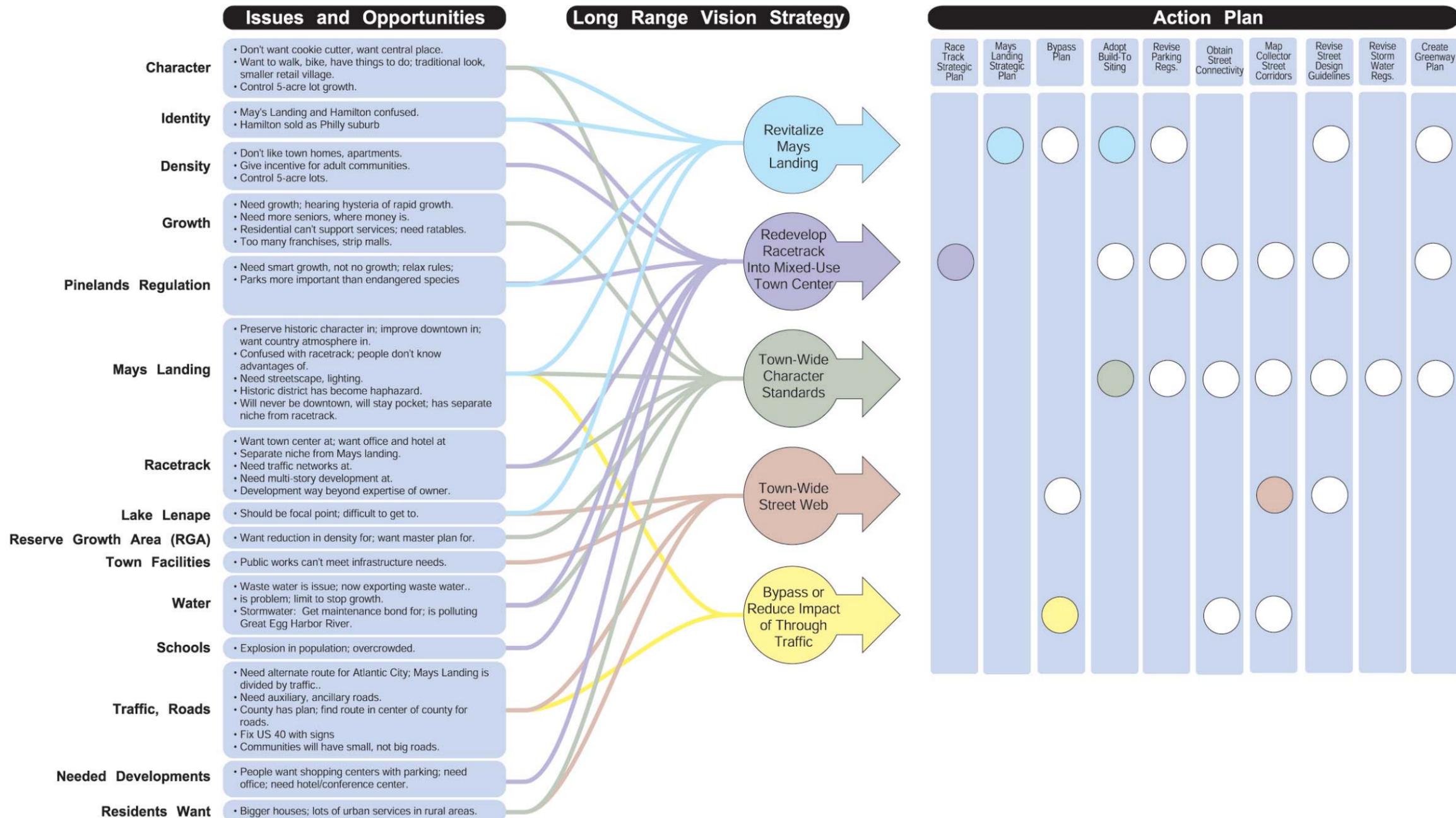
- The redevelopment of the Atlantic City Race Track property as a world-class, mixed-use, new town center;*
- The revitalization of historic Mays Landing, emphasizing reconnecting the village to its waterfront and conversion of historic buildings to contemporary uses;*
- Improved circulation throughout the Township and especially along the Route 40 and Rt. 322 corridors by complementing the existing street network with new roadways and connectivity of new developments; and,*
- The development and implementation of township-wide livable street and block design guidelines for intense growth districts in the Regional Growth Area (RGA).*

Issues/Strategies Analysis

Key issues and challenges identified by stakeholders are grouped and summarized on the left-hand side of this diagram. Next, the long range vision statement elements are listed and associated with the issues and opportunities.

The strategies that translate the "vision elements" into town actions are identified in the matrix in the right-hand side of the diagram. These strategies are then discussed in further detail, throughout the remainder of this report. Shaded circles denote higher priority strategies, while the open circles indicate complementary actions that will help realize each element of the vision statement.

Note the high degree of interrelationship between issues and the strategies that address them. Most issues are addressed by several vision elements, which in turn translate to multiple strategies. Thus, most issues are ultimately addressed by several of the recommended strategies. Conversely, each recommended strategy accomplishes a number of vision elements, and therefore addresses a number of different issues. The chart gives a graphical idea of the most effective measures; they are the ones that advance multiple vision elements and therefore address the greatest number of issues.



Develop Strategic Plan for Mays Landing

The Village of Mays Landing is the historic center of Hamilton Township, and developed due to its proximity to the Great Egg Harbor River and harnessing its waterpower for industrial uses. Since industrial uses are no longer prominent, Mays Landing and its Main Street have struggled to remain competitive in a suburban-style development market. However, during the visioning phase of this project, there was general agreement that Mays Landing could be revitalized and that those efforts should be complementary to, and not competitive, with Hamilton Mall and the potential redevelopment of the Atlantic City Racetrack. Therefore, Hamilton Township should create a strategic revitalization plan for Mays Landing that focuses on its potential to reconnect with the Great Egg Harbor River and to tap into the eco-tourism niche market in Southern New Jersey. As part of strategic planning process, the Township should evaluate its current zoning regulations to determine whether the township's vision can be properly achieved. For instance, Adopt Build-To Commercial Siting, as described later in this plan is essential for maintaining the historic character of Mays Landing and avoiding the potential for incompatible development. By creating a detailed strategic plan, Hamilton Township could apply for plan endorsement from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA), which may provide planning and funding assistance to aid development efforts.

In addition to the concerns expressed by the visioning team, the Mays Landing Riverfront Area was identified by the Township as one of three critical areas needing attention in the Local River Management Plan that was prepared by the Township as part of the effort to implement the Recreational river designation conferred by the National Park Service under the national Wild and Scenic Rivers program. This area was identified because of its traffic congestion and the impact that traffic congestion has on water quality in the form of stormwater runoff, air quality and full use of the public waterfront area. Furthermore, the Great Egg Harbor River Comprehensive Management Plan prepared by the National Park Service provides detailed information on visitor management and interpretation services for the River, including establishment of a Welcome Center for which Mays Landing is well suited (assuming controls are put in place to protect the River's resources).

Potential Revitalization Strategies

• Reconnect Mays Landing with Waterfront

Since Mays Landing's greatest asset is its waterfront, the township should create a safe pedestrian-friendly atmosphere for residents and tourists in downtown, particularly along Main Street and between Main Street, Lake Lenape, and the Great Egg Harbor River. Since Gaskill Park is a beautiful, well-maintained county park, the township should initially focus on new streetscape improvements along River Drive to connect Main Street to the waterfront through Gaskill Park (see "before/after image on next page").

• Improve Access

Efficient access by vehicles, pedestrians, and others (e.g., cyclists), is essential for ensuring the vitality of any town. By virtue of its location at the convergence of several major highways, the heavy flow of thru traffic that currently cuts through

the downtown area impedes access by all modes of internal transportation. Since new roads are unlikely given significant costs and environmental and land use constraints in the area, options to reduce vehicular traffic include designating a bypass around Mays Landing using existing roads and limiting routes for certain types of vehicles (i.e., trucks). Two potential bypass alternatives are described on page 12. While prohibiting all traffic by all trucks is not realistic, establishing a preferred route for thru truck traffic may be a viable option. Specifically, routing truck traffic from the south along Route 50 north to Route 322 East can alleviate the anti-pedestrian environment created along Route 40/River Road by Gaskill Park and the congestion caused when large trucks are forced to back up in order to negotiate the right turn onto Main Street in order to reach Route 40. The Township should explore these options more fully with residents and business owners in Mays Landing, and if sufficient interest is expressed, work with the County and the New Jersey Department of Transportation to evaluate these options and implement feasible solutions.

In addition to reducing vehicular thru traffic through Mays Landing, access by pedestrians and cyclists needs to be enhanced through other means. Mays Landing, the nearby industrial park, and surrounding residential areas provide a concentration of employers and businesses in close proximity to potential commuters and customers. The historic character of Mays Landing coupled with its scenic setting also make it a natural for attracting visitors. Several trail projects either underway or recently completed converge on Mays Landing, including the cross-County bike path ("Bikeway East", a paved portion, currently runs from the Shore Mall to the Industrial Park, while "Bikeway West", an unpaved portion, is envisioned from west of town to Buena Vista), the Highlands to Cape May statewide bike route, and a Pinelands Scenic Byway that stretches from Tuckerton in Ocean County to Port Elizabeth in Cumberland County. Additionally, the Great Egg Harbor River, which has been designated a National Scenic and Recreational River by the National Park Service, attracts boaters and other visitors, as does Lake Lenape, part of the Atlantic County Park system. Mays Landing is well-positioned to provide services and points of interest for these visitors, and the Township should work in close cooperation with the County and others to define logical routes and promote area attractions/businesses. The blend of transportation, historical, ecological, and economic development issues represented by such projects should be a real asset in attracting the interest of potential funding sources.

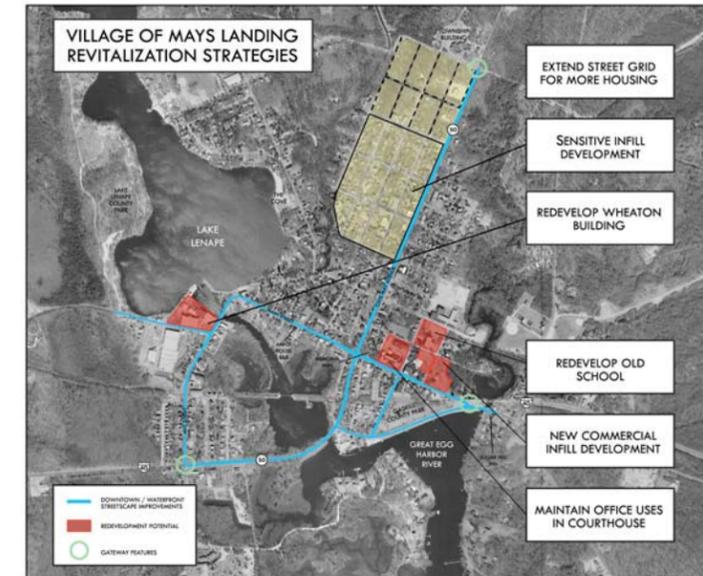
• Maintain Office Uses in County Courthouse Building

Since the County Courthouse and corrections facility relocated to the township's industrial park on Route 40, the township should work with the County to maintain this office employment anchor and take advantage of newly available parking in order to support and increase pedestrian activity and retail business on Main Street. Although it may be easier to build new facilities in the industrial park, Mays Landing will continue to deteriorate unless the township and the County find ways to attract new businesses and residents into this town.

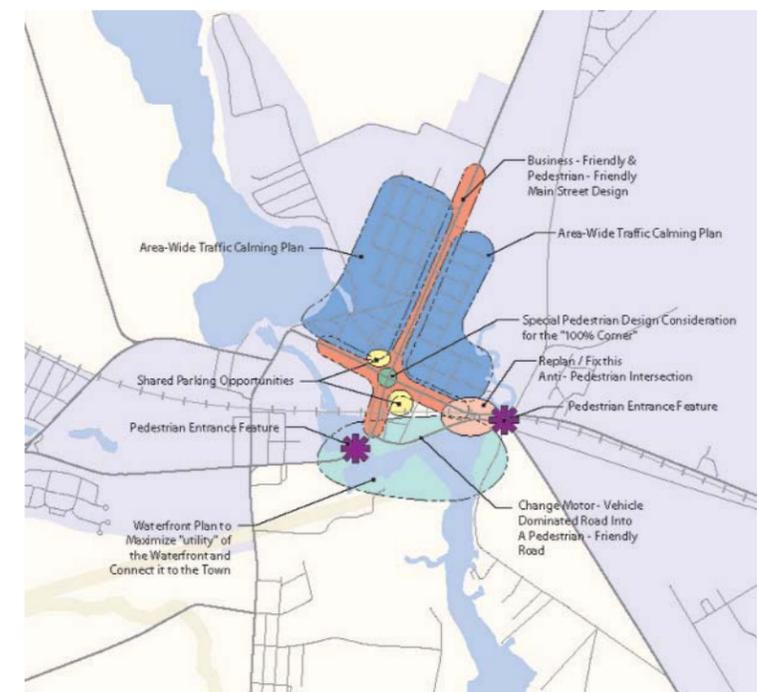
• Redevelop Wheaton Building

The Hamilton Township Master Plan Reexamination Report (1999) already details the redevelopment potential of this historic waterfront resource for the following uses: environmental/historic museum, arts and craft vendors, antique market, artist studio/lofts, restaurant, and offices. Since the historic cotton mill's water dam once provided electric power for Mays Landing, there may be the potential to re-harness

this power as a redevelopment funding source. Given its enormous potential to become an anchor for Main Street and to create a ripple effect of complementary businesses, a concerted effort is needed to promote the complex's redevelopment. The size of the property, the age of the structures and market forces make it unlikely that redevelopment will simply occur on its own. The Township should consider forming a task force of local representatives (e.g., the Historic Commission), the County, the State (e.g., the Department of Community Affairs), and non-profits (e.g., Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association) to actively explore appropriate, realistic uses.



Village of Mays Landing revitalization strategies



Circulation Elements, Mays Landing Strategic Plan

- **Redevelop Underutilized Properties**

The eventual redevelopment of the Wheaton Building will likely cause greater market demand for developable land in Mays Landing. Certain underutilized properties could be redeveloped in the future, such as the old elementary school. In addition, low-density auto-oriented uses and single-story buildings that do not contribute to the vitality of a pedestrian-oriented village could be redeveloped in time as property values increase (although the Township should work to relocate affected businesses as needed). As part of the strategic revitalization plan, Hamilton Township should determine which additional properties besides the Wheaton Building could be redeveloped.

- **Extend Street Grid for More Housing**

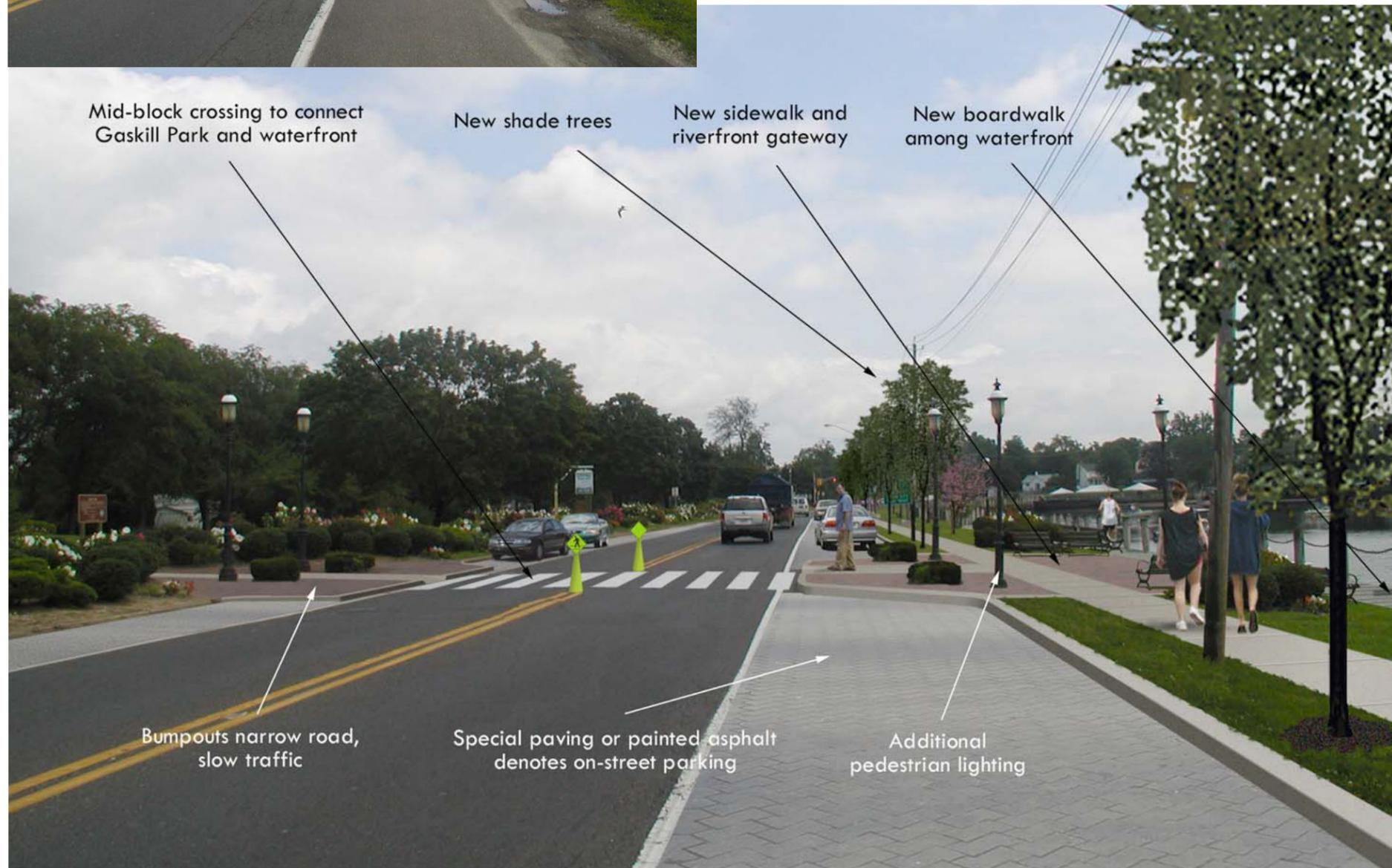
The new township building at Cape May Avenue and Tanglewood Drive essentially extends the size of downtown Mays Landing. The township should map out and extend the street grid between 11th and 14th Streets, west of Cape May Avenue, to provide more housing opportunities. Ultimately, more housing in Mays Landing will create a larger market demand for basic goods and services and help revitalize Main Street.

- **Sensitive Infill Development**

Although the neighborhood bordered by 5th and 11th Streets may seem fully developed, there are many opportunities for new infill housing on corner lots and mid-block parcels as well as restoration of older homes. Simply stated, more housing in Mays Landing means more business demand on Main Street.

- **New Commercial Infill**

New commercial uses are desperately needed on Main Street to create a full service business district. In particular, the southern stretch of Main Street between Farragut Street and River Drive is a "missing link" between downtown and the waterfront area. The available commercial land could become a bookend anchor (with the Wheaton Building) that would link one end of Main Street to Mill Street, and create the critical mass necessary for a lively downtown and waterfront pedestrian environment. Any new development should adhere to the build-to requirements described later in this plan. The recommendation to Revise Site Plan Parking Requirements should also be considered to promote efficient and adequate parking.



Streetscape improvements along River Drive

Bypass Plan

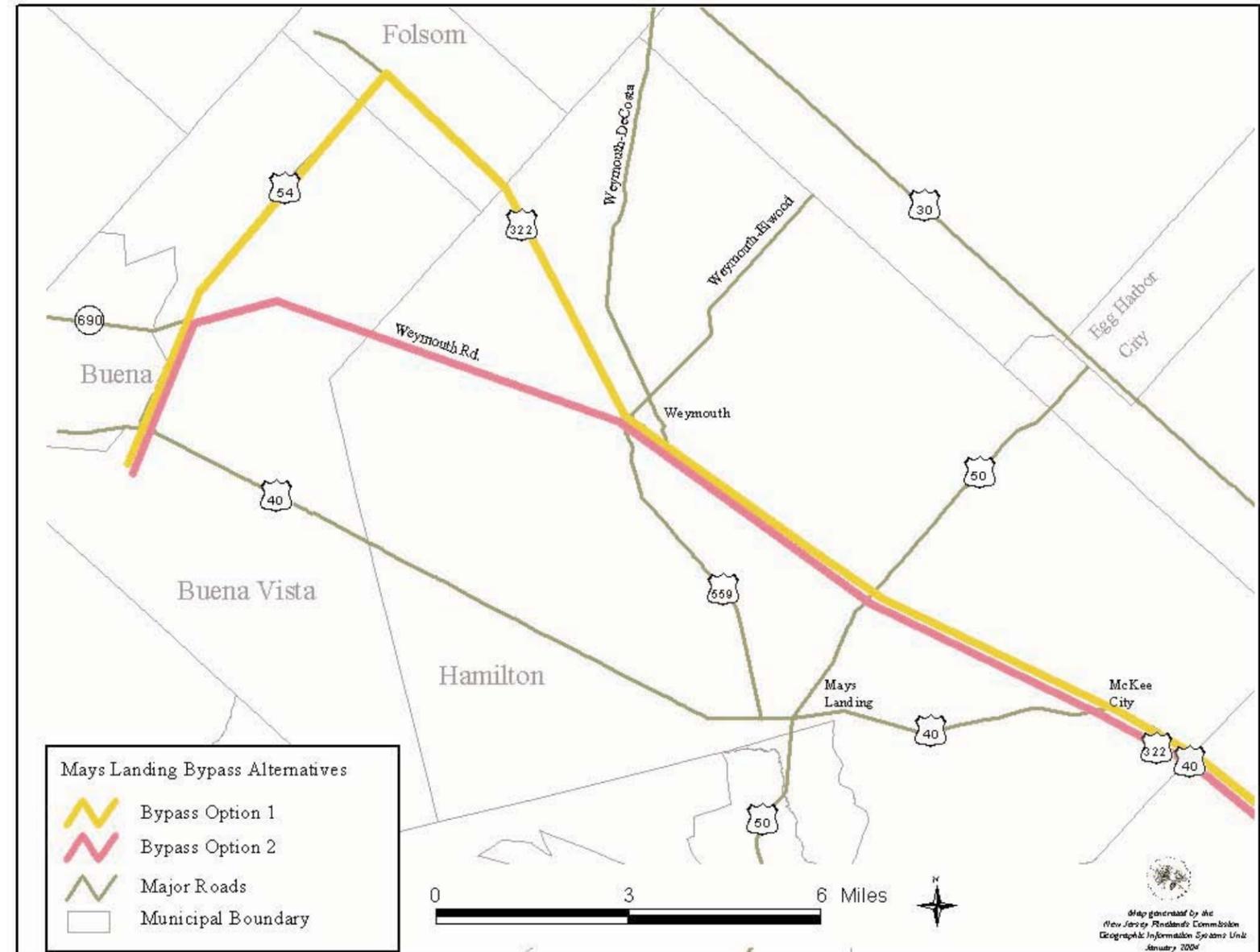
The convergence of four principal highways (US 40, New Jersey Route 50, New Jersey Route 559 and New Jersey Route 552) in the center of Mays Landing was repeatedly noted as a major problem. These routes carry a large volume of through traffic (i.e., traffic with neither origin nor destination in Mays Landing or even within Hamilton Township). While a moderate level of through traffic is accepted by Mays Landing residents and vital for local businesses, the frequent peaks in traffic, particularly during holiday seasons, is a serious challenge to the village's and township's quality of life. Further, at all times of the year, truck traffic on these routes generates unwelcome impacts.

New bypasses in the immediate vicinity of Mays Landing are not feasible, due to the presence of the Great Egg Harbor River and Lake Lenape, which funnel the four principal routes through the narrow neck of land between the river and Lake Lenape. However, more bypasses more distant from Mays Landing are possible.

The alternate routing for traffic on US 40, which would direct eastbound traffic away from Route 40 at Buena, redirecting it to Route 54 northbound (6.8 miles) to US 322 eastbound, US 322 (15 miles), rejoining US 40 at McKee City (and vice versa westbound), is a viable alternative to the use of Route 40 through Mays Landing. A further variation would begin with redirection from US 40 to New Jersey Route 54 at Buena, following New Jersey Route 54 for 1.9 miles, then following Weymouth Road for 7.0 miles, connecting with US 322 just to the west of Weymouth. From this point eastward, the routing is the same as noted above, i.e., on Route 322 eastward to its connection with US 40 at McKee City.

Both of these bypass alternatives are reasonable, both in terms of the ability of the routes to accommodate traffic and also with respect to the additional travel time and distance involved. During peak hour travel periods, when congestion is likely in Mays Landing, the bypass routes become "competitive" in terms of travel time, compared to the alternative of remaining on US 40 through Mays Landing.

Further consideration of these alternatives must involve ongoing consultation with the County, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, and the other affected municipalities. Detailed analyses of traffic and travel time impacts will be required before any alternative can be implemented.



Develop Strategic Area Plan for Racetrack District

The Atlantic City Racetrack represents perhaps the most significant redevelopment opportunity in Hamilton Township and possibly even Atlantic County as a whole. Located between the Atlantic City Expressway and Route 322, and just a short distance from the expanding Atlantic City entertainment and tourist economy, the racetrack not only presents a unique economic development opportunity for Hamilton Township but also a chance to create a new civic identity for the state's largest municipality.

During the visioning phase of this project, a significant amount of attention was paid to the potential of the racetrack site and a number of reuses were envisioned. However, there was general agreement that the redevelopment of the track should take the form of a "world class" mixed-use town center. There was also, importantly, general agreement that the redevelopment of the racetrack and the revitalization of Mays Landing should be complementary, not competitive, initiatives.

Perhaps most importantly, the development of a new town center represents an opportunity to create a genuine "smart growth" response to concerns that the remaining open spaces in the Regional Growth Area of the Township are being overbuilt and clear-cut for new residential developments. By concentrating development in the form of a higher density town center, the demand for development density can be lessened elsewhere in the Township, including residential land uses (depending on the final amount of housing to be accommodated in the new town center). As a previously developed site, the redevelopment of the racetrack site will not represent the further loss of green space. Moreover the development that does occur within the town center will also be of a much higher quality due to the strict zoning and urban design standards recommended at the end of this chapter.

To achieve the goal of redeveloping the Atlantic City Racetrack as a world-class, mixed-use town center, a master site plan and implementing zoning and land use ordinance must be created. The development of such a master plan will require the input and participation of many community stakeholders and residents and will require the on-going guidance of a highly skilled town planner and designer. This section of the Hamilton Township Action Plan is designed to initiate the process of developing a master plan by offering some preliminary recommendations regarding possible goals, objectives, and content of the plan, as well as indicating the initial steps in the planning process.

In conjunction with the Master Planning process or as an alternative, the Township could use the authority provided by New Jersey's redevelopment statutes to control the design of future development at the racetrack site. The authority conveyed by these statutes are the most powerful tool available for shaping redevelopment at the racetrack, and allow local redevelopment agencies to exert a level of design control unprecedented under New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law.

Community Vision: Creating an Identity for a new Hamilton Town Center

An extremely important and initial first step in the planning process will be to conduct a community wide public involvement effort to create an overall vision for the Racetrack. Involving key community leaders, stakeholders, and residents, the

process could take the form of a series of public workshops, focus group meetings, or design charrette focused on answering the following questions:

- What kind of identity should be established for the racetrack
- What kind of land uses should be allowed?
- How should the racetrack be redeveloped?
- What should be built there?
- What kind of community or public amenities need to be included?
- What should the redeveloped racetrack look like?
- What market forces need to be considered and how do they affect what might be built?
- What should be the level of development intensity?
- How can the racetrack be integrated with the existing community?
- How can potential impacts to adjoining areas be managed?

Development Framework: Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

Once a vision has been established for the racetrack, a development framework must be established. The development framework organizes the actual physical form of the racetrack and will ensure that the site is developed at a desirable scale. It is the recommendation of the Action Plan that the racetrack be developed as pedestrian-scaled, highly walkable town center. To achieve this, a finely grained network of blocks and streets, with pedestrian-oriented cross sections and amenities, is necessary. A separate section of the Action Plan ("Map Additional Street Network") has suggested a conceptual layout and hierarchy of street and blocks. Additionally, to ensure that the racetrack development is well integrated with the rest of the Township, key street network connections and enhancements are recommended.

Development Framework: Open Space Plan

Another design feature that helps to organize the physical form of a community is public open space. Like the street hierarchy, a variety of public spaces, ranging from landscaped streetscapes and plazas to new parks and open spaces, set the stage for a vital and healthy community life and provide opportunities for community interaction, socialization, and recreation. The open space plan will designate where and what type of open spaces will be provided throughout the racetrack site. The Action Plan recommends that a major new community park be developed at the east side of the race track oriented on the existing infield lake. An important aspect of the Open Space Plan is to ensure that new public spaces provide public recreation opportunities for all residents of the Township and that these spaces and amenities do not function as a private preserve for only the tenants and residents of the racetrack development. This can be assured through proper design, the provision of public rights-of-way and even transferring ownership of parks and open spaces to the Township.

Land Use Plan

The land use plan will designate what types and intensity of land uses are desirable and will be permitted in the Town Center. Since a mixed-use pattern of development is proposed, a variety of land uses will be permitted. Conceptually, the following types of land uses may be appropriate for a new "Hamilton Town Center":

- Office,
- Retail,
- Hotel and conference center,
- Entertainment/recreation,
- Apartments, condominiums and town homes.

Lower density housing, may also be appropriate as a transition to the adjoining existing residential neighborhoods.

Commercial Districts: Creating a Center

Based on the recommendations of the Land Use Plan, the Master Plan will designate the location and character of nonresidential areas within the racetrack. The Action Plan recommends that the area between the Hamilton Mall and the racetrack be redeveloped as a "Main Boulevard", containing primarily office, hotel and condominium developments, that integrates these two separate areas into a single commercial district. Additionally, the Action Plan recommends that a "Main Street - Downtown Commercial District" be developed perpendicular to the "Main Boulevard." The "Downtown" will take the form of a mixed use district with first floor retail space and upper floor office and residential uses. The intersection of these two areas - the "Main Boulevard" and "Main Street" - will produce a very intense, exciting, and dynamic town center. The town center would be the location of the most intense zone of development on the racetrack and will include a mix of land uses, building types, and most likely the tallest structures on the site.



Residential Districts: Making Neighborhoods

Based on the overall recommendations of the land use plan, the master plan will designate a series of residential districts, providing a range of housing types and options. The Action Plan recommends that these districts take the shape of distinct neighborhoods of traditional design and layout organized on a grid of streets. The density of this neighborhood would range from very dense multi-family buildings, such as loft apartments and condominiums, in the town center to single-family detached homes on the edge of the site to match the character of development in adjoining areas. Between these two ranges would be other housing types including, possibly courtyard apartments, twins and town homes. And although each neighborhood is intended to have a distinct identity, they will all be integrated and linked through a pedestrian network. These linkages would also provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Town Center and "Finish Line Park".



Institutional/Civic Uses

In addition to private commercial and residential land uses, the Action Plan recommends reserving area both within the town center area and elsewhere on the site for institutional and public buildings and spaces. These uses, which may include churches, school, community centers, and government buildings, provide essential services and activities and when properly designed and oriented can be very important "place making" community features. These institutional uses are not redundant or competitive with those now in (or planned for) Mays Landing. Rather, they are essential to communities of all types, old or new, but are seldom incorporated in new growth.

Hamilton Town Center Zoning and Urban Design Regulations

It is more than likely that multiple parties will be involved in the redevelopment of the racetrack and that the project will take many years to complete. To maintain consistency between many participants over the course of many years and to ensure that the vision established by the Township actually emerges "on the ground" it is essential that very specific town center zoning language and an urban design regulating plan be developed and adopted. The zoning/urban design regulations will specify the location, types, scale, character, and appropriate design of proposed buildings, streets, and public spaces. Following is an outline of the essential components of town center zoning and urban design regulations for the Hamilton Town Center. Complete and detailed ordinance should be created subsequent to the development and adoption of a master plan for the racetrack area.

Hamilton Town Center Prototype Zoning Ordinance and Urban Design Guideline

Section 1.0 Purpose

The legislative purpose of the ordinance should reflect the goals and objectives that are result as an outcome of the development of the master plan for racetrack area. Conceptually, the legislative intent of the Hamilton Town Center zoning ordinance and urban design guidelines should emphasize the following purposes:

- The redevelopment of the racetrack as a "world class" mixed use town center
- The provision of a higher densities and mix of land uses and building types, including public and civic institutions
- The development of housing accommodating a mix of income levels
- The creation of an overall environment that is walkable and pedestrian in scale
- The provision of public open space and recreation facilities that benefit all residents of the Township
- The development of an identifiable "center" that functions as place of community orientation and interaction

Section 2.0 Permitted Uses

To generate a dynamic and vital town center a variety of land uses should be permitted. Additionally, mixing of land uses, including vertical mixing within buildings, is essential. The types of land uses that are appropriate could be wide ranging

and may include public and institutional facilities to meet local needs and desires (e.g, libraries, schools, municipal facilities, hospitals, etc.). In general, the land use that would most likely be appropriate for a town center would include:

2.1 Housing

Conceivably, all types of housing would be desirable in the town center, although higher density in the form of multi-family and attached housing should be the primary building type. Emphasis should also be placed on mixing of income levels.

- Multifamily housing in the form of apartments and condominiums (where designated by the master plan, retail, office, and other nonresidential land uses should occupy the ground floor)
- Attached housing such as townhouses and duplexes
- Single-family detached housing (by definition, a town center is a higher density, compact urban place, therefore detached single family homes should be permitted only very small "town lots" of no more than 5,000 square feet)

2.2 Commercial

A variety of nonresidential and commercial uses would be appropriate in the town center. However, considering the significant amount of retail already existing in the Township along the Route 322 corridor, it would seem that emphasis should be placed on employment-generating land uses such as office and hospitality-related uses. While research and development, laboratory and healthcare activities would also seem to be acceptable; distribution and manufacturing activities would not be appropriate and should be directed toward the Township's industrial park.

- Retail, with upper-story residential or office space
- Office (with ground floor retail where designated by the master plan)
- Hotel, hospitality, and associated uses (i.e., restaurants, retail, etc)
- Entertainment venues (where designated by the master plan)
- Healthcare, daycare

2.3 Public/Institutional Uses

In addition to residential and commercial uses, public or semi-public uses such as governmental and health care uses would be acceptable. These types of "town center" uses would include:

- Future Governmental offices
- Community facilities
- Future Schools and colleges
- Future Libraries - now in Mays Landing
- Churches and places of worship
- Healthcare and daycare facilities
- Parks and public and private recreation facilities

Section 3.0 Accessory Uses

Certain types of support uses will be necessary in a town center, including for example parking garages and other uses, such as swimming pools related to hotel and hospitality uses.

Section 4.0 Urban Design/Density Regulations (Density Bonus)

Section 4.1 Urban Design Regulations

Urban design regulations will establish the actual overall built form of the town center and serve as a framework for individual development projects. As indicated previously, urban design regulations will ensure that whether the town center is developed by one developer or multiple developers (which is more likely), the vision established in the master plan will be executed. The urban design guidelines function as a codification of the master plan and will specify the following:

- The location, size and design of all streets and pedestrian circulation
- The dimensions of blocks and lots
- The location, dimension, and design of all public spaces
- The location and density of all land uses
- Building and structure siting

In addition to their content of the most important component of the urban design regulations is their presentation. To ensure that they are easily comprehensible and that they clearly illustrate the vision of the town center master plan, the urban design regulations must be presented in graphic form, with each element, illustrated with images. The urban design guidelines should function as a blueprint or map for the town center and indicate with great specificity the desired location of streets, structures, and other improvements.

Section 4.2 Density Regulations and Bonuses

As indicated earlier, it is anticipated that that the town center would accommodate and support higher densities than currently permitted. This is intended both to concentrate development in a "smart growth" compact form and to provide incentives for the provision of amenities and public improvements. To ensure that the redevelopment of the racetrack conforms to the Township's vision as developed through the master planning process and that desired amenities and public improvements are achieved, it may be necessary to award incremental density bonuses linked to public improvements. For example an incremental increase in allowable commercial development density could be permitted for the following improvements:

- Parks, plazas, and open spaces
- Streetscape/public landscape improvements

- Public art
- Public convenience (e.g., rest rooms)
- Community facilities

In addition to these very general improvements, a density bonus could be awarded for a specific improvement or project that may be identified during the development of the town center master plan.

Section 5.0 Building Design Regulations

Whereas the urban design regulations provide the overall development framework for the town center, building design regulations would provide design guidance for individual buildings. These regulations would include:

- Building mass and scale
- Roof form
- Ground floor (pedestrian-level) design
- Facade design
- Materials
- Site landscaping and design
- Signage
- Lighting
- Parking location and design (structured - i.e., multi-level parking - should be required to reduce the need for stormwater management and provide more land for development while allowing for future expansion.)

Managing and Expediting the Implementation of the Town Center.

The redevelopment of the racetrack will undoubtedly be a lengthy and complex process. The Township will be required to develop a detailed master plan and implementing ordinances and/or use the redevelopment authority conferred by State statutes as well as devote significant staff resources, time and energy to the review and approval of development site plan applications. Considering the scale of the project, the Township may wish to supplement the local review staff with a redevelopment coordinator to provide ongoing guidance and project management. In addition to coordinating and reviewing development applications, the role of this staff person could also be expanded to include the responsibilities of Pinelands Local Review Officer (LRO). Combining the duties of local and Pinelands review could help to expedite the development review process and achieve greater coordination between the Township and the Pinelands Commission. Presently the LRO program delegates review responsibility for generally straightforward residential applications to municipal staff trained by the Pinelands Commission. In the case of the redevelopment of the racetrack, the LRO program would have to be expanded by the Pinelands Commission to include nonresidential and commercial land uses. The costs for a combined redevelopment coordinator/LRO staff position could be recovered through application fees and review escrows provided by developers.

While the master planning process is underway, the Township should initiate some "quick fixes" to their existing zoning ordinance to ensure that any new development that might be proposed prior to completion of the new master plan will not diminish the future potential for the site. Generally, the Township's existing zon-

ing for the Recreation Commercial District is in keeping with the general concepts described earlier for a town center. The list of permitted uses, however, should be revised to add the following two uses: residential and office. Also, the prerequisite conditions should be revised to specify a balance of mixed uses for the entire tract, such as: 40% of the total acreage is for residential uses, 20% for office uses, 15% for hospitality and entertainment uses, 15% for open space, and 10% for retail uses. The Township should also take this opportunity to incorporate provisions that would require existing stormwater basins to be assessed and improved as needed (existing basins are reportedly failing). The Pinelands Commission is available to work with the Township in making these revisions.

Adopt Build-To Commercial Building Siting

This simple site plan regulation action, which requires that commercial buildings be located on or near the street right-of-way line, is absolutely essential to the character of all levels of center - town center, village center and rural hamlet. Without the build-to requirement, no amount of other amenities - buffering, architectural design reviews, landscaping, etc. - will provide the desired "smart growth" environment. Conversely, the build-to requirement alone, even in the absence of many of the supporting amenities, will in itself provide most of the desired village qualities.

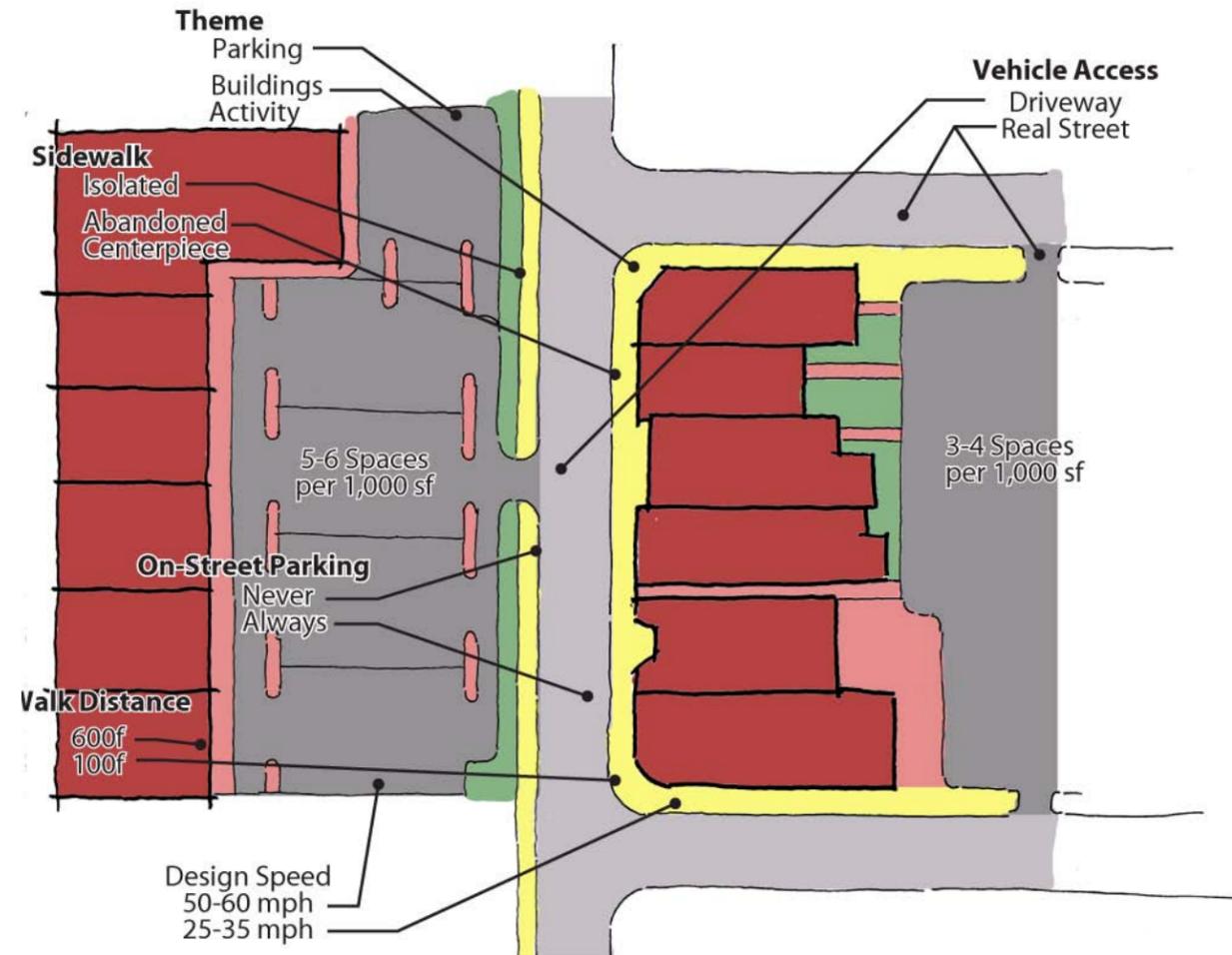
The build-to ordinance assures the presence of the single most important characteristic of towns and villages; namely the arrangement of destinations in a valuable civic pattern, rather than a pattern dictated by the speed and convenience of automobile access.

With buildings placed forward, walking distances between building entrances decreases below the 500-foot threshold for convenient walking. Further, the environment for this walking is along attractive streets fronted by buildings. Under conventional building layout, building entrances are almost always separated by distances greater than the 500-foot threshold. Further, these longer distances are comprised of parking lots and multi-lane arterial streets, two of the most hostile environments imaginable for walking.

Buildings placed forward on the site bring a sense of enclosure to the street, a prime characteristic of towns and villages. Conventional development, with the buildings deeply set back, on the other hand, provides no sense of enclosure. The pattern of driving and parking activity is fundamentally different in the building-forward arrangement, compared to the conventional sprawl arrangement. With buildings forward and parking consolidated toward the rear of buildings, visitors no longer attempt to park on the premises of their final destination and make repeated driving trips between destinations within the same town center. Rather, drivers accept a parking space at any of a number of comparable locations, and make an extended "walking" tour, visiting multiple destinations from a single parking space. The result is a greatly reduced need for parking spaces, fewer vehicle trips and less vehicle miles of travel within the town center.

The building-forward design is inherently favorable to business, particularly small retailers. Typically, the most burdensome requirement, for businesses (new, expanding, relocating, etc.) in a town center is providing parking. In conventional suburban layouts, with no possibility of walking between destinations, local codes typically require that all of the parking for a given destination be contained on the premises of that destination. Further, the parking requirements are generally sized to not only accommodate the daily peak or parking demand for that individual destination, but also the annual peak. The result, therefore, is typically a demand, by developments of mixed-use commercial areas, for 5-6 spaces per 1,000 square feet. Not only is this quantity of parking burdensome for the businesses involved, but it becomes almost impossible to provide in an arrangement that preserves the qualities of the town. Inevitably, providing 5-6 spaces per 1,000 square feet results in parking lots becoming the dominant feature of the site, as seen from the road or any other viewpoint.

The retail exposure to passing traffic (a primary measure of effectiveness of retail areas) is vastly better if buildings are arranged forward, rather than rearward. With buildings forward, the entire building frontage is within the 20 degree vision cone of



Comparison, Conventional Vs. Build-To Development



Conventional



Same Use, Build-To Siting

the passing driver; with buildings rearward, the building is not visible within this vision cone. With buildings arranged forward in a solid street front or road front, the "impression" on the passing motorist is continuous and first-hand; motorists see and even look into the final destination. With buildings rearward, buildings are not only removed from the 20 degree vision cone, but also become sporadic, rather than a continuous building front. Further, since the interior of the building (and usually the building itself) is no longer visible from the street, the site must rely on "secondary" ways of communicating, such as signs, logos, streamers, bizarre building shape, and so forth.

Examples of Build-To Siting



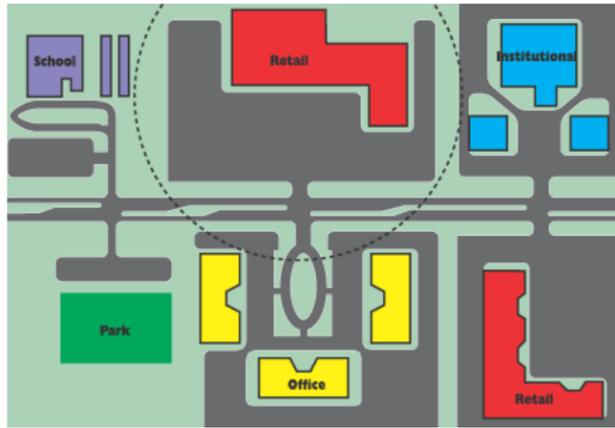
Crossroads Hamlet Retail



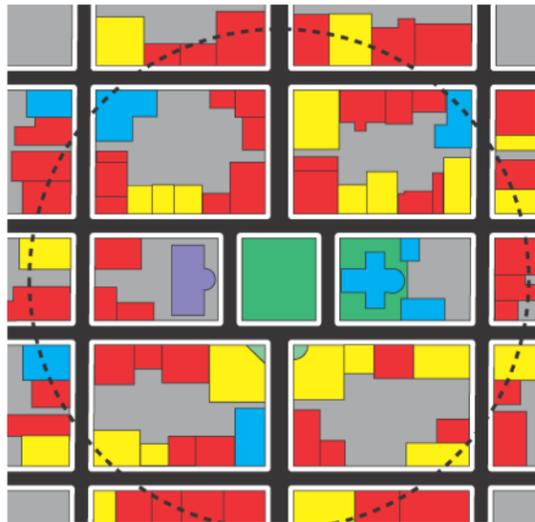
Grocery Store



Gas Station/Mini Mart



Conventional siting: mixed use, but nothing within 500 feet



Build-to siting: same uses, but everything within 500 feet

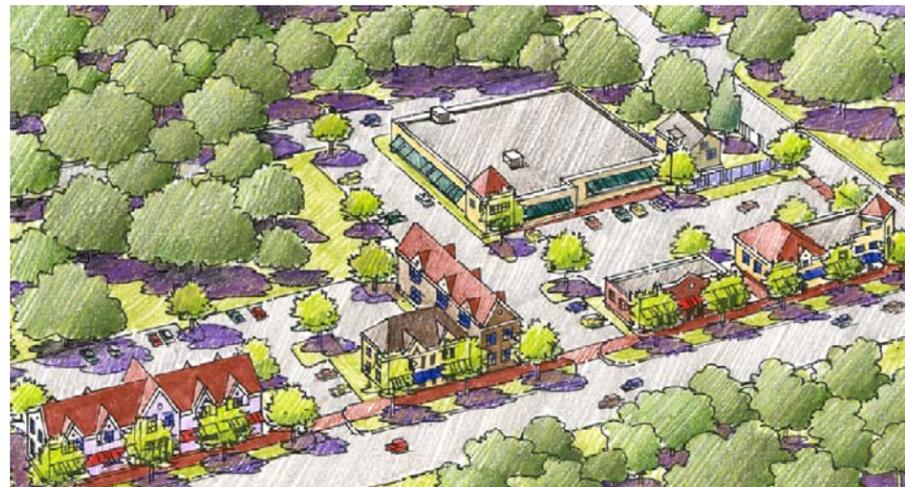
Concerns and Solutions

Site developers frequently argue (sometimes strenuously) that "modern retailing" such as chain drugstores and banks, does not lend itself to a build-to building siting because of the need for parking, drive-thru service windows and so forth. However, the build-to site configuration does not diminish, in the least, any of these "modern" requirements of site design. To the contrary, meeting two of the most pressing auto related needs - parking and access from the street - is generally enhanced, not diminished by the build-to requirement.

Legal action, on the part of developers or their would-be tenants, is occasionally threatened, typically on the argument that the build-to requirement is "depriving" the owner of the ability to use the land to its maximum value. This threat is rarely pursued, due to the likelihood of it being dismissed since the build-to requirement cannot be shown to produce any detriment to business advantage. To the contrary, consistent application of the build-to requirement will produce a superior, and therefore more valuable, business environment for all owners involved. Further, the large number of build-to requirements now successfully in effect throughout and the U.S. is daunting to a protesting site owner considering legal action.



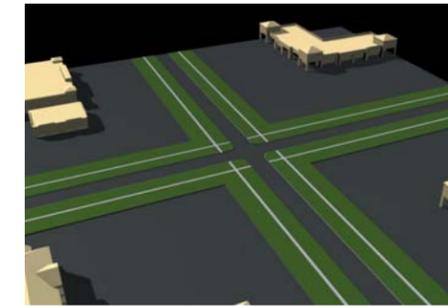
Before: Roadside Strip; parking dominates view; no shared parking; no walking environment



After: New buildings sited on street; old businesses remain; village buildings dominate view; sharing parking; superior walking environment

Another threat often made in response to build-to requirements - that the business will abandon the proposed site and locate outside the town - is seldom credible. More often than not, protesting businesses are committed to developing on the originally intended site, and will comply, perhaps grudgingly, with the build-to requirement. Township wide build-to requirements (rather than "special" district ones) will further answer the threat to simply relocate an uncooperative business.

Proximity to the street, and therefore to noise, vibration, fumes, salt spray and so forth, is sometimes cited as an argument against the build-to requirement. However, this concern is addressed by a proper street design with on-street parking, thereby buffering the building and its sidewalk by parked vehicles. Also, current building code requirements for soundproofing, insulation and so forth greatly mitigate the noise, fume and vibration impacts of passing traffic. Finally, some variation in setback is possible (up to twenty feet), giving businesses some option in removing themselves from the street. This ability to have a larger setback is particularly helpful on some state highways where on-street parking may not be possible. Even where large setbacks are granted, however, it is essential that parking not be located between the street and the building front.



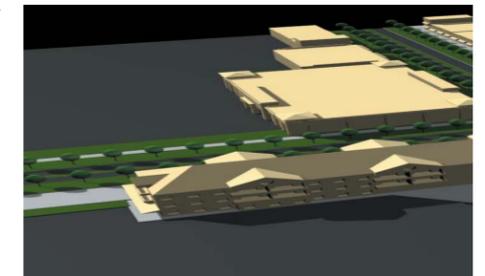
Typical crossroads commercial; view dominated by parking lots



Streetscape, by itself does little to change character



Character starts to change when next generation of building fronts the street



Opportunities for important public space become self-evident

Recommended Actions

Adopt the simple requirement that the maximum setback for commercial buildings be no greater than five to fifteen (5-15) feet from the front property line. Specifically exclude any vehicular accommodation (driveway, drive-in window, parking, etc.) from the space between building and sidewalk. Require doorways onto the street or, if on the side of building, within a short distance (less than 30 feet, for example) of sidewalk. Make the build-to requirement applicable to commercial and retail sites, whether in designated town/village centers or outside of them. Apply the regulation to all types of commercial and retail activity, including "big box" sites.

Revise Site Plan Parking Requirements

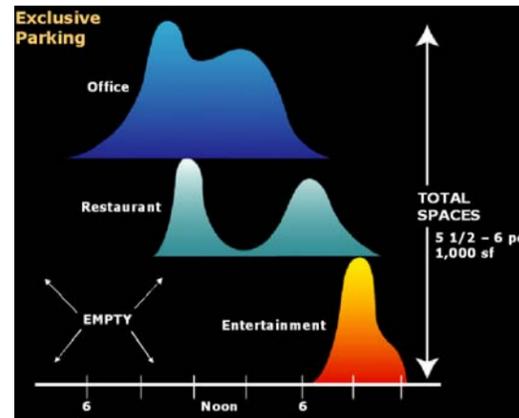
Current site plan regulations for Hamilton Township require that new commercial development provide a designated number of parking spaces (the parking "ratio") for each thousand feet of building floor area. While intended to assure an adequate supply of off-street parking in support of new growth, these regulations, in actual practice, are producing unintended consequences. Foremost among these are the large number of spaces required, since the parking ratios reflect the maximum number of spaces needed during peak period for that particular user, leaving the user with many unused spaces throughout most of the year. Another unintended consequence of the current regulations is the inability for neighboring destinations to share their parking. Rather than promoting shared parking, and consequently a reduction in total number of spaces, the regulations tend to foster parking that is dedicated exclusively to the retail destination. Any sharing of this parking is out of the question, because of the excessive walking distances between destinations (partly as a result of the parking itself) and further by the design of the parking that signals, to the driver, that sharing is not welcome and in some instances prohibited outright.

With all parking self-contained on the premise of the final destination, the parking need is typically 5-6 spaces per thousand square feet of building area, as each individual site attempts to provide not only for its daily peak need, but even its annual peak need. At this level of parking supply (i.e., 5-6 spaces per thousand square feet), the parking areas become the dominant feature of the view from the road, and it is practically impossible to design sites otherwise.

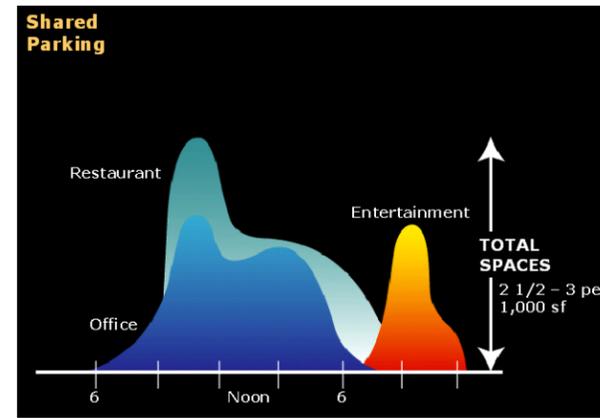
With shared parking, in a town center or village center, the combined need for parking reduces to 3-4 spaces per thousand square feet of commercial building floor area. At this level of parking demand, parking can be easily concealed behind buildings fronting the street, or contained in small "vest pocket" parking lots, occupying only small amounts of street frontage and therefore largely concealed from the view from the street.

For all town and village districts, it is recommended that the township reduce the minimum parking requirements. Further, it is recommended that the township, at the subdivision site plan approval process, require full cross-access easements across all commercial parking. It is recommended that, as part of the site plan approval process for commercial land uses, the applicant prepare an analysis of the potential for shared parking with other existing or committed projects within reasonable walking distance. Finally, the use of structured (i.e., multi-level) parking for any redevelopment that takes place at the Race Track site.

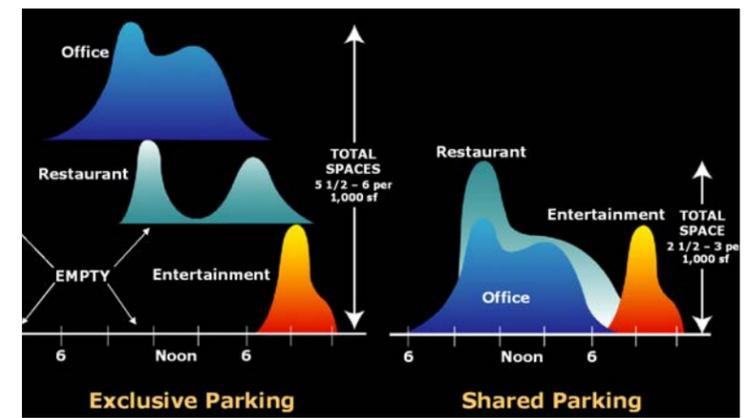
Two other proposed actions are highly interrelated with the revision to the parking requirement. The "build-to" building siting requirement is a key factor in properly locating parking for smart growth, and is a key prerequisite for successful joint use of parking. Forming new blocks, bounded by real streets, as part of the subdivision approval process is also a key factor in creating the street network essential to shared parking.



No Shared Parking: Each destination must meet its peak daily and annual need



Shared Parking: Daily/Annual peaks "dovetail"



With shared parking total demand is 60% of typical suburban site.



Shared parking can be completely hidden from view in typical town center. Retail buildings fronting on street and bordering higher-density housing surround the parking area.

Obtain Street Connectivity Through Subdivision Regulation

Connectivity, both external and internal, makes it possible for most travel for daily needs to be made on the local street system, without being channeled onto major roads. The resulting smaller street size, lower driving speed, decreased impact on fronting properties, improved driving experience, multiplicity of driving routes, reduction of travel on arterial highways, and variety of pedestrian and bicycle routes directly advance the vision goals of “redevelop racetrack into mixed-use town center” and “town-wide character standards.”

Challenges and Solutions

Better connectivity requires more route-miles of street. On the other hand, well-connected streets should be smaller and simpler in design than those called for by current guidelines (see "Revise Street Guidelines" Action).

Isolated subdivisions may not have adjacent streets to join, thereby creating "stubs" that prove to be politically impossible to connect in the distant future. The answer is the mapped system of framework streets (see "Map Additional Street Network" Action).

Subdivision applicants may claim that connectivity requirements are "depriving" them of the ability to use the property to the best advantage. However, connectivity produces public benefits that overwhelm whatever private advantages are claimed. Further, connectivity is, in many respects, a device for minimizing the "exporting" of costs of development from a particular subdivision to the public at large. This "exporting" of development costs is a major cause of residents' dissatisfaction with new growth.

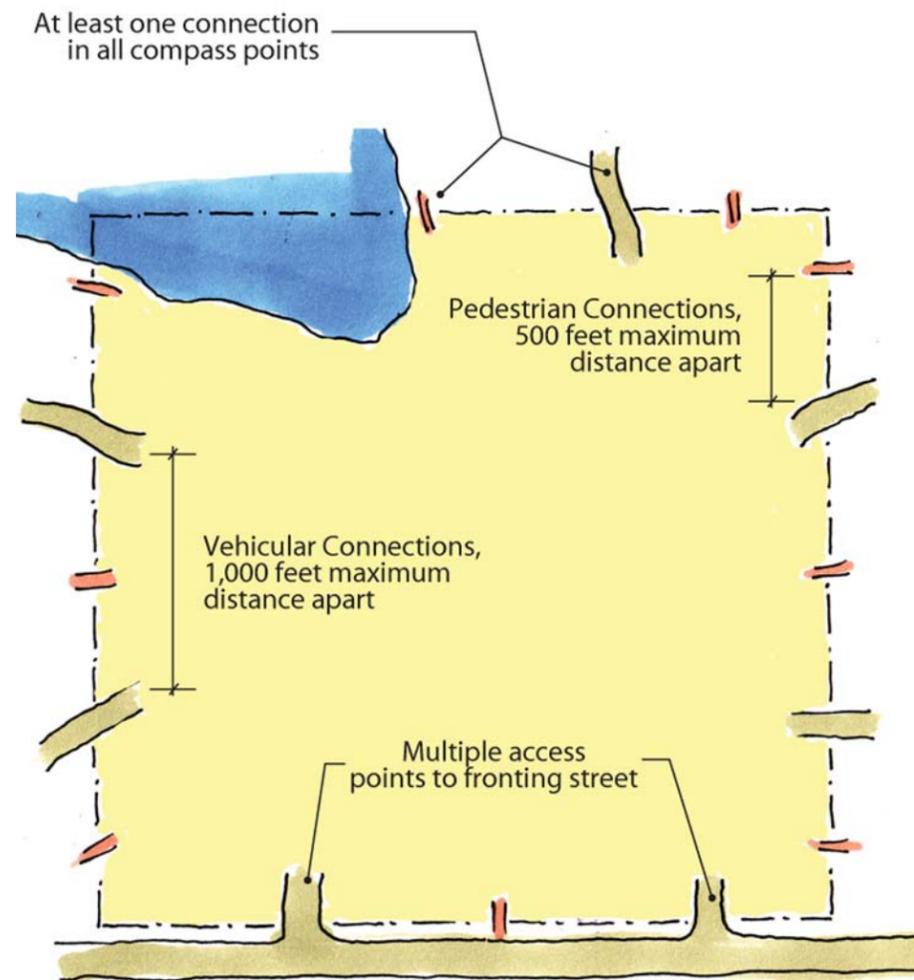
A simple, fair and very effective device for assuring a desired level of street connectivity is the connectivity index. This is the simple ratio of the number of street links (road sections between intersections and cul-de-sacs) divided by the number of street nodes (intersections and cul-de-sac heads). The illustration provides an example of how to calculate the index. Street links on existing adjacent streets that are not part of the proposed subdivision are not included in the connectivity index calculation.



• Links: 11
 *Nodes: 9
 Connectivity Index = $11 \div 9 = 1.22$

Any residential development shall be required to achieve a connectivity index of 1.2 or greater unless the town determines that this requirement is impractical due to topography and/or natural features. In the event that this requirement is waived, a six (6) foot pedestrian trail shall be provided to link any dead-end streets within a residential development in which the required connectivity index has been waived.

All non-residential development shall be designed to allow for cross access (both vehicular and pedestrian) to compatible adjacent properties to encourage shared access points on public or private streets. This requirement may be waived if the town determines that cross access is impractical.



The proposed public or private street system shall be designed to provide vehicular interconnections to all similar or compatible adjacent uses (existing and future). Such connections shall be provided approximately every 1,000 linear feet for each direction (north, south, east, west) in which the subject property abuts similar or compatible uses. If the common property boundary in any direction is less than 1,000 linear feet, the subject property will be required to provide an interconnection if it is determined by the town that the interconnection in that direction can best be accomplished through the subject property. When the town deems a vehicular connection impractical, it can increase the length requirement and/or, require pedestrian connections.

Require External Street Connectivity

Require that subdivisions connect with the external "framework" street system at intervals not to exceed 1,000 feet along the perimeter of the site. Further, require that subdivisions connect to the designated framework street system in all four major directions. Require connection for non-vehicular travel at intervals not to exceed 500 feet along the perimeter of the property. Although often called a "grid," the arrangement of the highly connected network can take many forms, only one of which is the rectangular block pattern. Regardless of pattern, the important feature - connectivity of streets - is accomplished. At dead-end streets, serving properties at the subdivision border, require that pedestrian connection (or right-of-way for pedestrian connection) be provided from the cul-de-sac to the subdivision boundary. Exceptions: topographical constraints (wetlands, streams, etc.) and limited-access highway right-of-way.

Internal Connectivity

Adopt a connectivity index, defined as the ratio of street links to nodes (intersections and dead-ends). The connectivity index assures the desired level of connection for walking trips, and also assures that traffic is well dispersed over the street network, rather than being focused onto a few links. At the same time, a connectivity index gives the site developer a wide degree of latitude in laying out the street system. The connectivity index allows for a reasonable number of dead-end streets ("cul-de-sacs"), leaving their placement and design to the discretion of the site developer.

In computing the connectivity index, include all internal intersections and dead-end street endings. (cul-de-sacs) as a node. Also, count, as a node, intersections with existing streets. Count as links, all segments of streets between nodes as defined above. Street lengths extending to the subdivision boundary, and intended to connect with future streets in adjacent subdivisions, are counted as one-half of a link.

Guidelines for connectivity index are:

- For subdivisions of less than 100 dwelling units: minimum connectivity index of 1.1.
- For subdivisions of 100 through 500 dwelling units: connectivity index of 1.25.
- For subdivisions of more than 500 dwelling units: connectivity index of 1.3.

Detailed ordinance language for connectivity is presented in Appendix A.

Create Greenway Plan

During the public involvement and visioning component of this project, community stakeholders and residents expressed a desire to preserve remaining open space in Hamilton Township. The plan described below was previously developed by Commission staff to guide the Township's efforts to preserve open space in the Regional Growth area. This Community Action Plan is an opportune time to re-visit this topic.

Greenbelts, unbroken rings of open space surrounding areas of development, have been shown to be an effective way to focus future growth pressures without adding unwanted sprawl to the fringes of our growth communities. The greenbelt can span a mix of management areas and provide a range of recreational opportunities, as well as crucial habitat for native wildlife including threatened and endangered species.

Hamilton Township's Regional Growth Area, located just north of the Great Egg Harbor River along Routes 40, 50 and 322 in southern Hamilton Township, offers an excellent opportunity to link existing and proposed protected environmentally restricted sites into an effective open space network consisting of multiple greenways, greenbelts, or wildlife corridors in this area by coupling land protection efforts with existing State and municipally owned land. Despite the considerable level of development in the RGA, a good deal of the land in and around this area remains largely undisturbed wetlands and forested upland. In addition, numerous threatened and endangered species, from pine snakes to tree frogs to plant life, utilize this area as habitat. Establishing a greenway system would not only serve to enhance the quality of life for residents of Hamilton Township, but would protect crucial environmental resources as well.

Potentially more than 3,800 acres in Hamilton Township's Regional Growth (670 ac. uplands, 849 ac. wetlands), Rural Development (890 uplands, 934 wetlands), and Forest Areas (219 uplands, 305 wetlands) could be incorporated into a greenbelt/greenway system. The map and accompanying charts document how preservation of most or all of this land would, together with existing public land, create at least two significant "loops" of open space or greenways. These loops, beginning and ending along the scenic Great Egg Harbor River, would provide excellent opportunities for recreation, ranging from hiking/biking trails to more intensive uses, and would augment other planned recreational projects such as the Atlantic County "rails to trails" bike path. Certain, more sensitive areas, such as those housing threatened or endangered species, might be best preserved by limiting intense public usage.

In some cases the greenway loops are not shown to traverse particular properties, yet these lots are still included in the plan. There are a number of reasons for this. These lots may serve as a "fall back" for the route in case adjacent properties prove to be unavailable for permanent protection. Also, they help to widen and buffer the route, an important function, and may have desirable qualities in their own right such as wetlands or threatened/endangered species.

Due to the singular nature of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan and the fact that most of the properties discussed here are within the Regional Growth and Rural Development Areas, certain principals should be adhered to when

devising a system of greenways for Hamilton Township. Although land acquisition by the State or some other agency/organization can ensure permanent protection, limited funds necessitate consideration of other alternatives. In addition, while uplands provide opportunities for growth, wetlands are already largely off limits to developers and therefore should be prioritized as protection targets. When choices are available between open space preservation in Regional Growth Area or Rural Development Area, the more sparsely zoned RDA should be chosen. And finally, linkages are key to the greenbelt concept, so existing preserved lands should be used to guide the targeting of parcels for inclusion in the plan.

In addition to the potential greenbelt mapped by the Pinelands Commission, other factors to be considered in determining priorities for creating greenways have been identified as part of the effort to implement the Recreational river designation conferred by the National Park Service under the national Wild and Scenic Rivers program. The Township's Local River Management Plan notes that "the entire length of the Gravelly Run tributary flows through" the RGA and that concentrated development "increases the possibility of unsupervised casual use of the wetlands areas in a manner that may result in damage to known habitats of rare and endangered species." Consequently the Plan suggests targeting the Gravelly Run wetlands as a priority area for establishment of a greenway system. The Township may also want to consider building off of existing municipal easements along the tidal portion of the Great Egg Harbor River. Finally, this concept can be broadened to include the Great Egg Harbor River corridor to best capitalize on the River's eco-tourism potential while protecting resources. Such a corridor could connect exiting county- and state-owned public lands to assure the protection of wildlife corridors.

Possible Implementation Strategies

Land Acquisition

The sale of land to the State's Green Acres Program or to the Township is obviously an effective way to ensure permanent protection. However, maintenance of growth opportunities is also an important consideration. In some cases, a small portion of a large lot can be subdivided for development with the remainder acquired by the State. This seems to be occurring in more than one place along the greenway route. Should acquisition efforts fail to be fruitful, however, there are a number of other protection tools that can be employed.

Downzoning

In areas where lot sizes are protective and comparable to or smaller than current densities, downzoning or existing zoning can be utilized as a means of reducing the threat of future development. The majority of the proposed greenway properties, however, are large lots in the growth area where densities are less than 1 du/ac; downzoning is not proposed here.

Wetlands

The presence of significant wetlands throughout the study area helps to ensure that some areas remain free of development. Because of the restrictions associated with them, wetlands and wetlands buffers make post-development sale, donation, or easement of land an attractive alternative to some landowners.

On-site Clustering

Mandatory clustering used in tandem with deed restriction can be an effective way to protect a high percentage of a large lot when the owner wishes to proceed with development. The conservation easement can specify certain recreational uses permitted on the property, such as nature trails or recreational fields should public ownership become desirable.

Off-site Clustering and Density Transfer

The Township's current Density Transfer Program is designed to protect land within the Forest and Rural Development Areas by designating environmentally sensitive sending areas from which density is transferred to other properties in

receiving areas owned by that same landowner. This tool has already been widely used in Hamilton Township and can possibly be extended to place easements of some of the properties within the proposed greenways. Off-site clustering or density transfer may also be applicable to a large group of smaller lots with development potential, as can be found in Hamilton's Rural Development Area.

The Laureldale section of Hamilton's RDA presents a special challenge and opportunity for open space planning. This area, dominated by 5-acre lots with single-family home potential, is thought to be home to a wide range of threatened and endangered species, based on preliminary surveys conducted by Commission staff. Development in this area is somewhat curtailed by the presence of wetlands, and by hydric soils that limit the use of septic systems. Many homes already dot the area, however, and additional development applications are coming in at a steady rate.

Documentation of threatened or endangered species on a site is sufficient to circumscribe development, but resources for a comprehensive survey of the area are unavailable and the site surveys accompanying applications are often non-comprehensive. Clustering or density transfer may be viable options; conversely direct acquisition of many of these small parcels would be the surest way to protect this critical habitat, but would probably need to be pursued by non-profit organizations.

Official Map

Another way to facilitate the preservation of open space is for the Township to designate certain properties on an "official map," making it impossible for the land to be acquired and built upon by developers before the Township has time to act. Commission staff can provide more details on this and other land protection tools if the Township so desires. It is suggested that the key parcels that comprise the greenway be placed on such a map, should the Township decide to pursue this greenway plan.

Proposed Greenway/Greenbelt Parcels

Following is a listing of parcels that could comprise the proposed greenway/greenbelt system. Unless otherwise noted, all parcels are located in the Regional Growth Area.

Residential Open Space

To avoid clear cutting of individual house sites, the Township can adopt a tree preservation ordinance as part of its subdivision and land development ordinance. Tree preservation ordinances typically establish "tree preservation zones" that are essentially the territory contained in the required setback areas of residential lots. However, considering the larger lot sizes required by lower allowable densities in the Pinelands areas of the Township and being mindful that the Pinelands are a fire prone environment, it may be more effective to create a tree preservation zone that is related to the actual house site. For example, limit clearing to within 30' of all sides of the dwelling. Limiting the clearing along lot street frontages is critical to preserving the rural appearance of the community, and therefore, only an approximately 10 foot wide clearing should be allowed for driveway access. In addition to community aesthetics, tree preservation is critical to limiting storm water runoff (and thus reducing the need to rely on "engineered" storm water management facilities) and soil erosion and, therefore, plays an important role in conserving the local environment. (Note that the ordinance could be expanded to address tree cutting on private waterfront property and include the establishment of 25-50 foot vegetative buffers at water's edge.)

Parcel	Description of the Greenway Properties
1	Relatively small (35 ac) property; threatened/endangered species (T/E) site; vacant land mostly wetlands. Possible acquisition target; not conducive to downzoning.
2	Vacant 100-acre lot (5 acres subdivided for commercial use); almost all wetlands. Plans to donate/sell subdivided 95-acre portion to the State.
3	About 500 acres not planned for development; significant wetlands; T/E sites; adjacent to State owned land.
4	Subdivided vacant lots also owned by Woods Landing (#3); wetlands. Would be included in land donated/sold to State.
5	The RGA portion of this lot is planned for residential development. RDA portion (850+ acres) is assessed as farmland but is currently undeveloped; has had forestry applications; mixture of wetlands and forest. Adjacent to State owned land; excellent T/E habitat.
6	Large subdivided area in RDA adjoins #5 and shares some common ownership; lots are undeveloped wetlands & forest; T/E sites.
7	Block of seven 5 acre lots in RDA sharing common ownership; all vacant with forest & wetlands; infill for #5.
8	Small (9 acre) lot; vacant land; mostly wetlands; adjacent to municipal land. Possible municipal acquisition target; wetlands easement.
9-12	Total of 95 undeveloped acres, most of which forms open space for nearby apartment complex. If necessary could be eased to keep it vacant.
13	Located adjacent to residential and commercial uses as well as a Superfund cleanup site; 100+ acre forested site; could serve as a link across Rt. 322 extending greenway toward
14-16	Three vacant lots (total 95 acres); mixture of wetlands and forest; T/E sightings; adjacent to State owned land.
17	460-acre property is almost entirely wetlands; State is close to acquiring. Not part of a loop; appealing due to its size and predominant wetlands; possible spur loop.
18-19	Mostly wetlands; located in RDA; vacant land; adjacent to State owned land. Draft ordinance preventing "RGA flip"; acquisition possible; density transfer; partial ease-
20-22	Small, vacant RDA lots; wetlands; tidal influences & possibly species. Draft ordinance preventing "RGA flip"; acquisition possible; density transfer; partial ease-
23	Laureldale section of Hamilton is subdivided Rural Development Area; considerable development; dense concentration of T/E species especially in wetlands areas. Acquisition of small parcels; wetlands buffers; partial easements; density transfer; T/E
24	Atlantic Blueberry is in the process of transferring much of this 328-acre property to the State. They are keeping only the central water body and a small amount of land around it.
25	500+ acre property in the Forest Area has considerable wetlands; T/E species activity; site of forestry application but currently vacant. Adjacent to Lake Lenape open space and recreational area.

Summary

The foregoing represents a coordinated approach to open space planning in Hamilton Township. Individually, the permanent protection of any one of the proposed properties is an important step toward preserving open space in our community. Taken together, however, they form an integrated greenway system that would greatly enhance the aesthetic, ecological, and recreational characteristics of the community while helping to ensure a balanced, environmentally sound approach to development.

Implementing the Hamilton Greenway/Greenbelt Plan would require several steps, including the following:

1. Township consideration/agreement:
The township will have to develop and adopt a greenway/greenbelt master plan that illustrates the location of all components of the network
2. Work/meet with landowners: The township will have to meet with local landowners to explore the extent to which voluntary participation may be possible. Any parcels along state highways should be reviewed with the New Jersey Department of Transportation.
3. Secure funding for acquisition, capital improvement:
In the event that property owners are unwilling to donate lands or provide conservation easements, the township will have to explore potential funding sources to purchase land, such as the County (which levies an open space tax for such purposes) and the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association.

