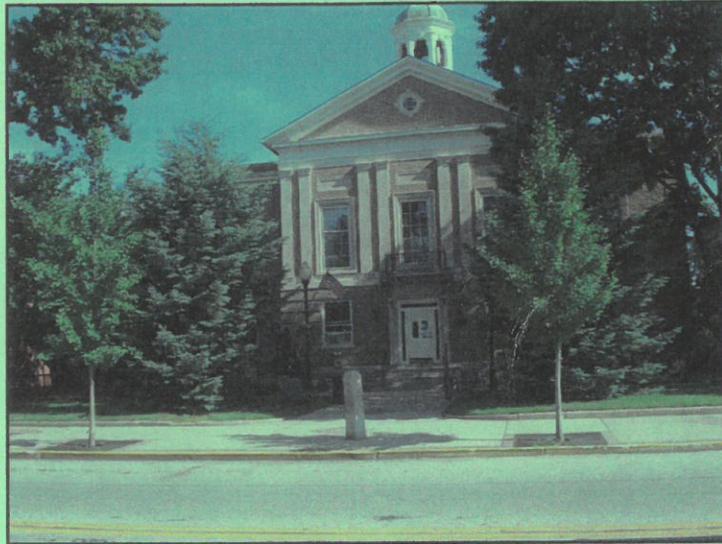


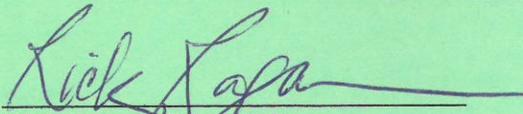
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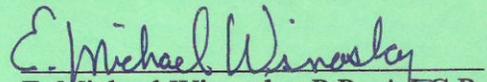
Camden County, New Jersey

MASTER PLAN



Prepared by **RAGAN DESIGN GROUP**
for the **Merchantville Planning Board** *
Adopted October 23, 2007


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* one addendum

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan is a broad policy document that guides the future physical, economic, and social development of a community. It contains an inventory of the municipality's existing conditions, articulates the community's vision and goals, identifies its needs, and provides long-range policy recommendations for achieving the community's vision and goals in the future. It is the principle document used to formulate the contents of a community's zoning and subdivision regulations. A thorough Master Plan also provides the foundation for future planning decisions for proposed capital improvements, program funding, regulation changes, and future planning priorities, thereby providing the logic, foresight, and defensibility to the community's decisions. The Master Plan is intended to serve as a road map and reference guide so that future community decisions are made in a consistent and reasoned manner.

Although the Borough of Merchantville is a relatively small, established community, there are a variety of issues that necessitate planning attention in order to ensure that the Borough continues as a healthy and vibrant community, and to ensure that it retains its identity and sense of place. While it is acknowledged that this Master Plan may be lengthier than originally envisioned, it is believed that it reflects the appropriate depth and breadth of Merchantville's core issues and includes recommendations that will allow the community to plan, guide, and shape its future. Therefore, Merchantville's Master Plan is truly a comprehensive community plan addressing a wide variety of issues facing the community, including land use, historic preservation, community facilities, recreation, circulation, housing, economic development, utilities, and recycling.

2.0 PLANNING PROCESS AND CONTEXT

The Borough is the recipient of a Smart Future 2006 Grant administered by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Office of Smart Growth. The Ragan Design Group was hired to review the Borough's existing informal and written planning policies, to facilitate the planning process, and to amend the Master Plan to reflect the principles of Smart Growth and design guidelines that are appropriate for this small historic older suburban community.

Smart Growth policies are incorporated into all of the Master Plan Elements, including policies such as: reinvesting in the community, by maintaining and upgrading the Borough's infrastructure and community facilities (*See Community Facilities Plan Element*), providing a range of housing choices and opportunities and preserving the Borough's housing stock (*See Housing and Population Element*), exploring shared services with other communities (*See Community Facilities Plan Element*), augmenting historic preservation efforts to maintain the Borough's character and sense of place (*See*

Historic Preservation Plan Element and Land Use Plan Element), embarking on economic development efforts to maintain the vitality of the Borough (*See Economic Plan Element and Land Use Plan Element*), traffic calming to create a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere (*See Circulation Plan Element and Land Use Plan Element*), maximizing the Borough's recreational facilities (*See Recreation Plan Element*), and supporting the long-term viability of the State's ecological systems (*See Recycling Plan Element and Land Use Plan Element*). Additionally, specific Smart Growth principles and design guidelines concerning downtown revitalization, maintaining the Borough's unique character and sense of place, and neighborhood stabilization/enhancement are focused in the Land Use Plan Element. In sum, this Master Plan is a coordinated and comprehensive Smart Growth Strategy for capitalizing on the Borough's many unique assets so that the fabric of Merchantville's physical, social, economic, and cultural life remains strong.

This Master Plan is the culmination of extensive research and public participation. The Master Plan process involved citizens, community leaders, elected and appointed officials, business owners, and interest group advocates. Extensive data collection and outreach was utilized to craft the Plan, including but not limited to: a detailed, lot-by-lot inventory of uses for every tax parcel in the Borough, examination of census and regional data on the Borough's population and employment trends, interviews and meetings with a full range of local department heads and stakeholders, an inventory of the Borough's existing community and recreation facilities, outreach to County planning and utility officials, research of the Borough's historic resources, and summoning of business community participation via a business community survey and workshop. Monthly public meetings were held to solicit input on the Master Plan. Notification of the meetings was posted on the Borough's website, advertised in the local newspaper, appeared on a local Merchantville blog, featured in the Borough newsletter, and flyers printed by Ragan Design Group were distributed door-to-door prior to meetings by a local group of residents.

3.0 GUIDING PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

The Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55 D-28b(1), requires the Master Plan to provide a statement of goals, objectives, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic, and social development of the municipality are based. The following Vision Statement and Goals and Objectives identify these basic principles, which are explained in more detail in the associated Elements of the Plan.

3.1 Vision Statement

A Vision Statement is a mental picture of how a municipality envisions itself as it moves forward into the future; it embodies the community's ideals and captures its unique qualities. The Vision Statement below describes the Borough's future as it achieves the goals and objectives described in Section 3.2 below.

Merchantville continues to have a special sense of place. It has a charming and lively downtown, with attractive shops and restaurants on first floors, with residences and small businesses above. Surrounding the downtown are well-maintained residential neighborhoods with tree-lined streets and neighborhood parks. The historic areas and sites of the Borough have maintained their architectural and historical integrity. The west end of the Borough has been revitalized, containing a healthy mix of business and residential uses and a vibrant streetscape. Residents vary in age, socio-economic status, and ethnic backgrounds while maintaining a strong sense of community. The school system is one of the best in the County. The Borough's parks and recreational facilities contain modern amenities, providing a range of recreation opportunities. In essence, Merchantville is a desirable place to live, work, and play.

3.2 Goals and Objectives¹

3.2.1 Land Use

- a. To maintain a balanced community that offers a mix of land uses that are appropriate for this small historic suburban community;
- b. To preserve and enhance the Borough's distinctive community character and sense of place by providing guidance for renovated and/or new residential and commercial development;
- c. To encourage an economically and socially vibrant downtown, by promoting a healthy mix of housing, shopping, offices, restaurants, and civic uses and enhancing its pedestrian-friendly nature;
- d. To stabilize and revitalize the West End business and residential districts, by enhancing its economic vitality, improving the quality of life, and strengthening its ties to the rest of Merchantville and the surrounding communities;
- e. To preserve Merchantville's diversity of housing stock and protect the character of its residential neighborhoods;
- f. To enhance the architectural attributes of the properties in the Neighborhood Business Districts;
- g. To improve the scenic quality of Merchantville's principle gateways;

¹The goals and objectives articulated herein are duplicated in the individual Elements of the Master Plan so the reader does not have to refer back to the Introduction section of the Plan to identify the underlying policies that guide the analysis and recommendations in those Elements.

- h. To include community leaders and stakeholders in the process of development decision-making.

3.2.2 Historic Preservation

- a. To promote awareness, education, and appreciation of the Borough's historic resources;
- b. To preserve the integrity of Merchantville's significant historic buildings, structures, districts, sites, and streetscapes which possess exceptional qualities and exemplify the Borough's cultural, social, economic, and/or architectural history;
- c. To encourage private reinvestment and preservation of historic resources in order to safeguard the heritage of the Borough, to maintain and improve property values, and to strengthen the local economy;
- d. To recognize that Merchantville's historic resources are integral elements of the Borough's character and identity, important factors in the Borough's economy, and contribute to the quality of life in Merchantville;
- e. To make preservation of significant historic resources an integral part of planning and decision-making processes at the local level;
- f. To foster civic beauty and to engage in stewardship of publicly-owned historic resources by stabilizing and restoring these important resources;
- g. To ensure that new construction, alterations to existing structures, and other exterior features are compatible with the Borough's historic, cultural, aesthetic and architectural heritage and are harmonious with adjacent historic buildings.

3.2.3 Community Facilities

- a. Provide quality and cost-effective community services and facilities to meet the needs of the Borough's residential and business population;
- b. Preserve, maintain, and improve the community's stock of buildings, facilities, and equipment.

3.2.4 Recreation

- a. Provide a full-range of passive and active recreational opportunities for all of Merchantville's residents, including persons of varying ages and abilities.
- b. Maintain and update existing recreational facilities to provide safe, accessible, and modern amenities.

- c. Increase the functionality and availability of the limited open space and recreational areas.

3.2.5 Circulation

- a. To provide a safe, effective, and attractive circulation system for pedestrians, automobiles, bicyclists, and public transportation.
- b. To enhance the Borough's walkability, by improving pedestrian street crossings, and enhancing the pedestrian environment throughout the Borough.
- c. To improve accessibility to sidewalks and commercial uses in the Borough for persons with physical disabilities, elderly, as well as parents with young children in strollers.
- d. To encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, including bus service, car pooling, and bicycle use.
- e. To improve specialized transit services to meet the needs of the Borough's elderly, sick, and disabled populations.
- f. To develop a capital budgeting plan to finance roadway reconstruction, traffic calming device installation and maintenance.
- g. To promote a safe walking environment through adequate maintenance, snow removal, vegetation trimming and lighting.

3.2.6 Housing and Population

- a. To ensure safe, decent, and affordable housing in Merchantville.
- b. To preserve and promote a variety of housing types offering a range of affordability to meet the diverse needs and preferences of the Borough's different age groups, income levels, and life styles.
- c. To satisfy the Borough's affordable housing obligations and obtain substantive certification for the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan from the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH).
- d. To preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods through rehabilitation of any substandard housing units and the encouragement of appropriate infill development where permitted by zoning. Rehabilitation includes both major and minor housing repairs.
- e. To ensure that new housing development is in character with existing land use patterns and with land use patterns recommended in the Land Use Plan Element.

- f. To ensure residential stability, with a special focus on the West End of the Borough and the Chapel Avenue/Centre Street circle area.
- g. Revitalizing downtown by adding residential units in the commercial center without losing the small-town feel of the Borough.
- h. Provide affordable housing without negatively affecting property values or impacting the desirability of the Borough as a place to live, work and play.
- i. Continue to support home ownership.
- j. Continue strict enforcement of code standards for residential construction and property maintenance throughout the Borough.
- k. Encourage new urbanism and neo-traditional developments that provide a variety of housing opportunities.
- l. Adhere to residential design guidelines set forth in Land Use Plan Element and establish further design criteria for new construction and residential renovations within existing neighborhoods.

3.2.7 Economic Development

- a. To expand and diversify the economic profile of the Borough;
- b. To increase tax rates so the Borough can maintain and improve the quality of services it provides to its residences and businesses;
- c. To stabilize and rejuvenate the West End mixed-use neighborhood;
- d. To have a vibrant downtown with a healthy mix of businesses and attractive storefronts;
- e. To provide a business friendly environment for existing businesses, which have invested in the Borough and provide a supportive environment for those wishing to upgrade or renovate.
- f. To attract new businesses to the Borough.

3.2.8. Utilities

- a. Ensure the provision of safe, adequate, and proper utilities to Borough residents and businesses at reasonable rates.
- b. Preserve, maintain, and improve the community's existing water, sewer, stormwater, and solid waste infrastructure.

3.2.9 Recycling

- a. To reduce solid waste in the most efficient way and to reduce costs of collection and disposition.
- b. To encourage the reuse of reusable items by residents, businesses, schools and government departments located in the Borough.
- c. To recycle all possible materials that enter into the Borough's solid waste stream.

II. LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statutory Requirements

This Land Use Plan Element is prepared pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(2), which sets forth the following four requirements: (a) a statement relating the Land Use Plan Element to the Master Plan's overall goals and policies, to its other elements, as well as natural conditions of the land; (b) the 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 or combination of purposes; and stating the relationship thereof to the existing and any proposed zone plan and zoning ordinance; (c) the existing and proposed location of any airports and the boundaries of any airport safety zones; and (d) an explanation of the population density and development intensity recommended for the municipality.

1.2 Purpose

The Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan is the central element of the Borough's Master Plan. It sets the framework for and incorporates the land use implications for all of the other elements of the Master Plan. It establishes policies for the long-term physical development of the municipality. It translates the community's vision into a physical pattern that guides the general location of various types of land uses. The Land Use Plan Element also includes goals, policies, and action items that are necessary to achieve the long-term future desired by the community. It will be utilized to guide the Borough's local decision making and will be implemented through the Borough's Zoning Ordinance and Map, as well as other land development regulations.

While the Land Use Element is often considered to be the heart of the Master Plan, there are a variety of issues facing Merchantville, ranging from historic preservation, declining population, the need for affordable and decent housing, updating and increasing the functionality of Borough's recreation areas, to maintaining and upgrading aging infrastructure. This Plan has been specifically crafted so that the Borough has the framework and the flexibility necessary to address these and other issues.

2.0 GOALS FOR LAND USE

- 2.1 To maintain a balanced community that offers a mix of land uses that are appropriate for this small historic suburban community;

- 2.2 To preserve and enhance the Borough’s distinctive community character and sense of place by providing guidance for renovated and/or new residential and commercial development;
- 2.3 To encourage an economically and socially vibrant downtown, by promoting a healthy mix of housing, shopping, offices, restaurants, and civic uses and enhancing its pedestrian-friendly nature;
- 2.4 To stabilize and revitalize the West End business and residential districts, by enhancing its economic vitality, improving the quality of life, and strengthening its ties to the rest of Merchantville and the surrounding communities;
- 2.5 To preserve Merchantville’s diversity of housing stock and protect the character of its residential neighborhoods;
- 2.6 To enhance the architectural attributes of the properties in the Neighborhood Business Districts;
- 2.7 To improve the scenic quality of Merchantville’s principle gateways;
- 2.8 To include community leaders and stakeholders in the process of development decision-making.

3.0 STATE AND REGIONAL APPROACHES TO LAND USE PLANNING

The following sets forth the State and Regional Smart Growth Policies. It is important to have an understanding of the State’s and Region’s approaches to land use planning, which set the context for land use planning in Merchantville.

3.1 State Planning Policy

The State Planning Act of 1985 mandated the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), which establishes State-level planning policy. It advocates Smart Growth planning, by targeting the State’s resources and funding in ways that are consistent with well-planned, well-managed growth. Smart Growth is a comprehensive strategy for sustainable development, i.e., development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Smart Growth emphasizes the following objectives:

1. Mixed land uses
2. Compact, clustered community design
3. Range of housing choice & opportunity
4. Walkable neighborhoods
5. Distinctive, attractive communities offering a sense of place

6. Open space, farmland and scenic resource preservation
7. Direct future development to existing communities with infrastructure
8. Variety of transportation options
9. Predictable, fair and cost-effective development decisions
10. Community and stakeholder collaboration in development decision-making

The SDRP is a reaction to the inefficient use of land and infrastructure and lack of a sense of community associated with suburban sprawl. It is intended to provide a balance between growth and conservation by designating planning areas that share common conditions with regard to development and environmental features. Basically, it seeks to maintain and revitalize existing cities and towns, focus growth into compact mixed-use communities that offer array of choices and options, and protect farmland and natural resources.

The SDRP designates Merchantville as a Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1), which encompasses large urban centers and postwar suburbs that are fully or almost fully developed.

These communities have many things in common: mature settlement patterns resulting in a diminished supply of vacant land; infrastructure systems that generally are beyond or approaching their reasonable life expectancy; the need to rehabilitate housing to meet ever changing market conditions; the recognition that redevelopment is, or will be in the not-too-distant future, the predominant form of growth; and a growing realization of the need to regionalize an increasing number of services and systems in light of growing fiscal constraints. In addition, the wide and often affordable choice of housing in proximity to New York and Philadelphia has attracted significant immigration, resulting in noticeable changes in demographic characteristics over time.¹

The intent of the Metropolitan Planning Areas (PA1) is to provide for much of the State's future redevelopment; to revitalize existing cities and towns; to promote growth in compact forms, to stabilize older suburbs, to redesign areas of sprawl, and to protect the character of existing stable communities.²

In many ways, Merchantville represents the quintessential Smart Growth model. It is an attractive, compact, walkable community, with distinctive community character. It contains several mixed-use activity centers and offers an array of housing choices. It has active grassroots community groups, who are concerned about the Borough's future and participate in the public discourse. This Land Use Plan seeks to capitalize on those attributes so that the Borough will continue to be a vibrant and healthy community and will maintain its sense of place.

¹ SDRP, p. 188.

² *Id.*, p.190.

3.2 Regional Planning Policy

On the regional level, the Camden County Improvement Authority (CCIA) has developed the Camden Hub Plan, which is a regional Smart Growth strategy for the City of Camden and its first-generation, inner ring suburbs, including the Borough Merchantville. The Camden County Planning Board and Board of Chosen Freeholders intend to adopt this regional plan as an update to the existing County Master Plan. The Plan echoes many of the concepts of the State level planning policy, articulating sustainable development strategies. It supports Smart Growth redevelopment and revitalization efforts in the former industrial waterfronts of Camden, Gloucester and Pennsauken, as well as strategic smaller revitalization projects in the local cores, corridors and redevelopment areas of Camden's inner-ring suburbs. It is intended to be a reference for the County and provides municipal development, redevelopment and conservation strategies to enhance the quality of life within their communities.

The Borough of Merchantville has implemented many Smart Growth principles that are being articulated by the New Jersey State Planning Commission in the SDRP, as well as Camden County via the Camden Hub Plan. However, these principles are not currently reflected in the Borough's recent Master Plans. The primary intentions of this Land Use Plan Element, as well as the other elements, is to articulate the Borough's Smart Growth policies and to ensure its continued sense of place by providing guidance for new development and redevelopment in the future.

4.0 INVENTORY OF EXISTING BOROUGH CONDITIONS

4.1 Location and Natural Conditions of the Borough

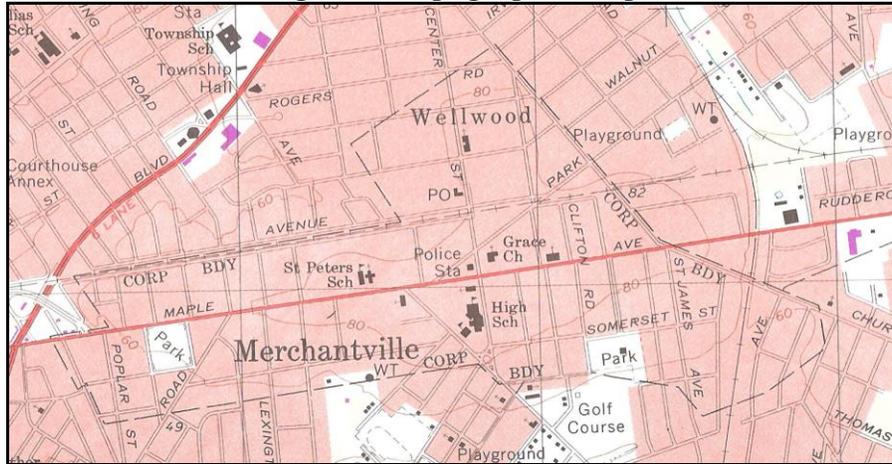
4.1.1 Location

As Merchantville is located five miles east of Philadelphia and less than one-tenth of a mile east of Camden, it is part of the vast Philadelphia-Camden Metropolitan Region. The Borough borders the Township of Pennsauken to the north, northeast, west, and southwest, while the Township of Cherry Hill shares its southeast boundary. See 7.0 Appendix, **Map LU-1**, Location Map.

4.1.2 Physical Features

There are no serious physical, topographical, subsoil conditions or other natural features that limit or strongly influence land use and development in the Borough. The topography of Merchantville is relatively flat. The highest point in the Borough is near Borough Hall on Maple Avenue and the land gently slopes away in all directions. The topography ranges from 80 feet above mean sea level to 60 feet above mean sea level in the southeast and western portions of the Borough. *See Topographic Map below.*

Figure 1, Topographic Map



Source: United States Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, Camden Quadrangle, New Jersey-Pennsylvania, 7.5 minute series (Topographic), Scale 1:24,000, Contour Interval 20 feet (1995).

For the most part, the soils in Merchantville are comprised of Freehold-and Downer-Urban Land Complex (FrpB) and Freehold-and Downer-Clayey Substratum-Urban Land Complex (FrpkB), which consists of dark grayish-brown, well-drained, sandy soils that are low in glauconite. A small portion of the southeast and southwest section of Merchantville is composed of Howell-Urban Land Complex (HowB), which consists of thick, yellowish-brown, silty clay soils that are well-drained to moderately well-drained, and contain a small amount of glauconite.³ While some degree of stormwater seeps into the ground, as a densely-built suburban community, most stormwater is transported through underground storm sewer pipe that carries the surface runoff to the drainage channel along the railroad in the southeastern portion of the Borough.

4.2 Population in the Borough

Figure 2, Population Figures

Population Censuses			Population Forecasts		
1980	1990	2000	2005	2015	2030
3972	4095	3801	3730	3560	3400

Source: DVRPC, Regional Data Bulletin, No. 82, Population Change in the Delaware Valley, 1930-2000, Appendix A (April 2006). DVRPC, Regional Data Bulletin, Revised No. 73, Population and Employment Forecasts, 2000-2030, Table 5 (March 2005).

Census 2000 revealed that there were 3,801 persons living in the Borough. According to the DVRPC's 2005 population forecast, the Borough has experienced a decline of 242 persons since the 1980 census, representing a loss in population of 6.5%. This decline in population is likely the result of the growing suburban/rural housing market, as new housing and employment growth has moved outward into former rural areas.

³ Markley, Marco, Soil Survey of Camden County, New Jersey, Series 1961, No.42; pp. 11-15.

Additionally, there has been a trend in the Borough of duplexes and multi-family homes returning to single family dwellings, which presumably has caused a decrease in population.

4.3 Existing Land Use in the Borough

Merchantville is a small historic suburban community with an established land development pattern. Its 0.6 square miles is virtually built-out. It has a historic walkable downtown containing a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses. A number of the buildings contain businesses on the first floor, with residential units on the upper floors. The downtown is surrounded by charming residential neighborhoods, boasting an array of impressive architecture, sidewalks, grid-pattern tree-lined streets, as well as several community parks. The most dense residential uses are located in the downtown and along Maple Avenue, the Borough’s major thoroughfare. In the west end, there is a secondary mixed-use historic area that serves as one of the major gateways into the community, providing direct access from Route 130. Other minor commercial nodes exist in the northern, eastern, and southern points of Merchantville.

The Existing Land Use Map of Merchantville, **Map LU-2** in the Appendix, illustrates the location of existing land use on a parcel by parcel basis. Figure 3 below summarizes the amount of land occupied by each land use category. 63% of the Borough’s land is used for residential purposes, the majority of which consists of single-family detached dwellings. Less than 6% of the land is occupied by commercial or office type of uses, which are concentrated in the downtown area, as well as the West End of the Borough. Only nine vacant parcels have been identified. Almost 5% of the land is used for public facilities (community facilities, parks and recreation, utilities, public parking), while private institutions use 3% of the land. The balance of the land, 23.51%, is used for circulation (roads, railroad, alleys). Therefore, 31% of the land in the Borough is considered non-taxable. There is no industry in the Borough (nor is any land presently zoned for this type of use). The land use pattern indicates that Merchantville is primarily a residential community, with the majority of its land use in that category.

Figure 3, Existing Land Use Tabulation

Land Use	Sum of Acres	Percentage of Land
3 - 6 Residential Units	8.01	2.06%
Apartments	11.56	2.97%
Commercial	9.18	2.35%
Commercial/Office	0.91	0.23%
Commercial/Residential	3.81	0.98%
Community Facility	4.33	1.11%
Duplex	20.41	5.24%
Office	3.59	0.92%
Office/Residential	2.83	0.73%

Parks and Recreation	9.29	2.38%
Private Institution	12.03	3.09%
Public Parking	0.31	0.08%
Single Family	191.07	49.03%
Townhouses	4.24	1.09%
Twins	9.33	2.39%
Utilities	5.10	1.31%
Vacant	2.13	0.55%
Other*	91.62	23.51%
Totals	389.74±	100.00%
Includes Railroad, Streets, and Alleys		
Source: Camden County Improvement Authority Parcel data dated December 16, 2006, which has been modified as a result of information compiled through site visits and Borough staff verification of land uses.		

4.4 Existing Merchantville Zoning Map

Map LU-3 in the Appendix is a reproduction of Merchantville’s current Zoning Map. It is provided here for illustrative purposes only. There are currently 6 zoning districts in Merchantville, consisting of the following:

- B-1 Central Business District
- B-2 Neighborhood Business District
- R-1 Residential Single-Family District
- R-2 Residential Single-Family District
- R-3 Residential Single-Family District
- R-4 Residential Multifamily District

Both the B-1 Central Business District and the B-2 Neighborhood Business District are mixed-use zoning districts, permitting various types of commercial, office, and residential uses. The R-1 District permits single-family residences and also allows for professional offices as conditional uses. The R-2 and R-3 Districts permit single-family residences. The R-4 District permits single-family residences, as well as two-family dwellings, multifamily dwellings, attached dwellings, and senior citizen multi-family buildings as conditional uses.

4.5 Major Land Use Issues in Merchantville

Although Merchantville is a small built-out community, there are a variety of land use issues that necessitate planning attention in order to ensure that the Borough continues as a healthy and vibrant community, and to ensure that it retains its identity and sense of place. These issues are identified below and are addressed in detail in Section 5.0, the Land Use Plan of this Element.

- Downtown Revitalization
- Harmonizing New Construction with Merchantville’s Small Town Charm and Historic Character
- Provision of Adequate Parking in the Downtown
- Neighborhood Stability and Revitalization of the West End
- Stabilization and Enhancement of Chapel Avenue/Centre Street Circle Gateway Area

5.0 LAND USE PLAN

This Land Use Plan evaluates the major land use issues facing the Borough, articulates design guidelines for new and infill development in the community, and makes recommendations for future changes to the Borough’s development regulations and maps relating to land use. The Land Use Plan Map, **Map LU-4** in the Appendix, and its associated text in Section 5.6 of this Element, should be referenced in conjunction with the following.

5.1 Land Use Issue 1: Downtown Revitalization

5.1.1 Overview

At one time, Merchantville’s downtown business district was the center of community life and the commercial hub for surrounding communities, including the Townships of Pennsauken and Cherry Hill. It served as the social, economic, transportation, and civic center for the area’s populace. However, like other traditional downtowns, Merchantville’s commercial center started to decline with the post-industrial economy and the onset of suburban sprawl and automobile-oriented land use patterns. When the Cherry Hill Mall, Moorestown Mall, and other nearby retail stores opened in the 1960s, Merchantville’s commercial center began to deteriorate. People began to travel to retail centers in the environs for goods and services, rather than to Merchantville. As Merchantville’s downtown waned as a center of activity, vacant storefronts and lack of private investment followed.

In recent years, the Borough has made considerable efforts to enhance the vitality of its downtown. In the early 1990s, a community group, the Merchantville Task Force, was formed to help improve the Borough’s image. Downtown clean-ups and a community art fair were initiated. In 1994, the Merchantville Main Street Program was established, as one of eight Main Street New Jersey communities. Under the Main Street Program, various downtown revitalization activities were initiated. A Main Street manager was hired and various committees were formed. An active management approach was implemented, which sought to keep fresh new businesses coming into town. A business recruitment package was developed for local officials and realtors to use. New fairs and festivals were launched and a historic plaque program was initiated to help educate passersby of the history and significance of the downtown buildings.⁴

⁴ E-mail correspondence from Shawn Waldron, dated August 1, 2007.

Most notably, various façade improvements were made to businesses in the downtown through a matching grant program, in coordination with a five-year Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP), which began in 1997. The most significant façade improvements were made to Vincent’s Pizza at 17 West Park Avenue, and the group of stores on the corner of Centre and Park Avenue, known as 31-39 South Centre Street, which include the cleaners and Grand China Restaurant. Improvements were also made to the former Singer building. However, as Main Street and NPP funds dissipated and volunteer burn-out set in, the program weakened and eventually became non-operational.⁵

Around this time, other improvements were made to the downtown through other avenues. Streetscape and sidewalk improvements were installed along Centre Street and West Park Avenue, which were principally funded through an Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) grant. Just north of the downtown, the former railroad corridor was transformed into an urban greenway, with the assistance of funds from the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund Authority.

Additionally, over the years, the Borough has spearheaded several redevelopment projects in the downtown, including a four-story, 74 unit senior apartment building, known as Chestnut Station Apartments, that was constructed in 2004 at the former site of places, such as a lumberyard, drycleaning plant, and a home heating oil depot.⁶ An additional ten townhouses facing the apartment complex have recently been constructed. The project was funded via multiple sources, including Neighborhood Preservation Balanced Housing Funds, federal low-income housing tax credits, Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund (HDSRF), and funding from Camden County.⁷



Chestnut Station Apartments

⁵ Id.

⁶ Department of Community Affairs Press Release, dated August 4, 2004, accessed at <http://nj.gov/dca/news/2004/pr080404.shtml> on October 18, 2006.

⁷ Id. Also, New Jersey Economic Development Authority Press Release, dated June 28, 2004, accessed at http://www.njeda.com/pr_062804.asp on October 18, 2006.

On April 12, 2004, the Borough declared 19-21 Centre Street and 7 East Park Avenue as an Area in Need of Redevelopment pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. This designation has resulted in renovations and has attracted new commercial and residential tenants.



19-21 Centre Street



7 East Park Avenue

More recently, on November 14, 2006, the Planning Board approved a mixed-use redevelopment project, known as the “Town Centre East Project,” for 86 residential units, over 16,000 square feet of commercial space, and a mixed-use parking structure intended to accommodate 257 parking spaces. While seen as an opportunity to add to the downtown’s residential and commercial tax bases, the scale of the project and the proposed demolition of several structures has been controversial. It is uncertain whether the project will move forward as approved, as the project is currently in litigation.



Proposed Chestnut Avenue Elevation for the Town Centre East Project, prepared by AST Development Company. ⁸

Lastly, the Borough has also declared several vacant and blighted properties in the Central Business District, adjacent to the Maple Avenue and Chapel Street intersection, to be an Area in Need of Redevelopment, pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. A Redevelopment Plan has recently been presented to the Planning Board and Historic Preservation Commission and will likely be adopted.

⁸ Rendering accessed from AST Development Corporation’s website at <http://www.astdevelopment.com/merchantville.html> on July 18, 2007.



Former Nursing Home on Maple Avenue, which is vacant and has blighting conditions.

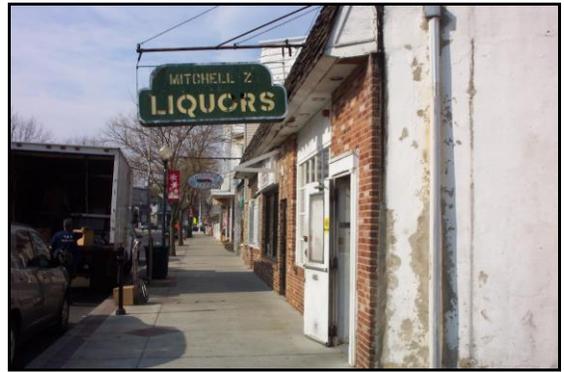


Former Gas Station on corner of Maple and Chapel Avenues, which is vacant and has blighted conditions.

Despite the Borough's efforts to enhance the visual appearance and the activity level in the downtown, the Central Business District and nearby Neighborhood Business District continue to experience occasional vacant storefronts and business owners complain that there are not enough patrons to support their establishments. Consequently, some businesses and property owners have not been willing, or may not have had the means, to make aesthetic improvements.



Faded paint and torn and discolored awnings detract from this storefront on Centre Street.



Dilapidated sign and chipped exterior paint are not inviting to customers at this Park Avenue site.

While Merchantville's downtown has experienced significant improvement over the past two decades, the downtown has not reached its full potential. The Borough still strives to reinvigorate its commercial center, by enhancing street-level activity and maintaining businesses that attract customers and workers, in order to return the downtown to a central meeting place for the community and beyond.

5.1.2 Analysis

Like many other Main Streets, Merchantville has lost its market share to malls and suburban strip developments. Yet it is critical to the image and identity of Merchantville that it maintain a healthy downtown. A coordinated multi-disciplinary approach is needed to continue the downtown revitalization momentum that has been garnered by the

Borough over the last two decades and to kick off renewed revitalization efforts to ensure the downtown's future success.

While the lack of adequate and convenient parking has been singled out as one of the primary factors in the struggles of the downtown, it is also true that the small older buildings do not lend themselves to 'warehouse style' trends in retailing that emphasize a large amount of square footage on a single level. Grocery stores, for example, have grown from a neighborhood establishment of as little as 5,000 square feet to modern day standards of upwards of 65,000 square feet. Pharmacies are seeking 15,000 square feet of retail space. Such stores cannot easily be accommodated in a small downtown like Merchantville without significantly changing the landscape. Consequently, public and private re-investment and a search for a new role or market niche are essential.

Historic downtowns that have been successful in revitalization have turned to restaurants and entertainment, specialty shops, professional offices, convenience services, and sizeable infusions of downtown residents and employees to create viable local markets that adapt well to historic buildings. Revitalization cannot happen without activities in the downtown that attract large numbers of people throughout the day. A broad range of activities will bring in workers, customers, sales, property values, and tax receipts, which will, over time, initiate more private investment in the downtown and its appearance.

For that reason, this Land Use Plan seeks to enhance the mix of land uses and encourage activity in the downtown. Maintaining and enhancing the mix of land uses in the downtown is essential for sustaining the conditions that are necessary for a symbiotic relationship to develop between various uses. Retailers and service providers want to be located within close proximity to a density of target consumers. Residential density in the downtown provides a built-in market for convenience goods and services. Retailers also want to be located within close proximity to other retailers, to take advantage of the retail synergy that is created.⁹ To the extent that a retail use is located near other retailers and service providers, especially those that appeal to the same target market, the result is that they all benefit more than they would if they were each alone at that location. Maintaining a mix of uses is essential to the downtown's success.

In sum, the more potential for interaction and exchange in the community center, the more activity will be generated. As Main Streets require a tremendous amount of activity in order to be healthy and vibrant, this Land Use Plan seeks to reinvigorate the downtown, by maintaining and enhancing the diversity of land uses, capitalizing on the Borough's community character, and enhancing the Borough's sense of place.

⁹ Synergy is the concept that the interaction of two or more forces is greater than the sum of their individual effects.

5.1.3 Recommendations

5.1.3.1 Enhance the Mix of Land Uses and Activities in the Downtown, by Maintaining and Encouraging Retail and Service Uses on the First Floor of Buildings.

When Merchantville's downtown experiences occasional vacancies, applicants have approached the Planning Board for approval to utilize ground level storefronts for office space. While Merchantville is tempted to allow office uses on the first floor of buildings in the downtown to fill vacant storefronts, this will not serve the long-term goal of making Merchantville a destination that draws customers and visitors into the downtown. It is recommended that the Borough increase street level activity, by encouraging retail and service uses on the first floor of buildings, rather than office or residential uses.

If office space continues to supplant the retail space in the downtown, this will cause existing retail to suffer. It will also prevent other retailers from wanting to locate in Merchantville, as the opportunity for retail synergy has been lost. The more retail and service facilities that are situated in close proximity to one another, the stronger the overall customer draw to the area will be, the more successful the downtown will be, and the easier it will be to draw additional businesses to the downtown in the future.

Retail and service-oriented businesses are critical to drawing customers and creating street level activity. While downtown office employees are good customers for lunch-hour restaurants and services such as banks, office use does not generate the same amount and type of traffic as retail or service stores. Retail and service stores generate traffic on an on-going basis. The traffic that is generated by offices is only limited to the traditional workday, with a peak during the lunch hour. If the preponderance of the downtown consists of office use, life in the downtown will shut down at 5pm. It is the human activity in the downtown that is essential to a successful downtown. The level of pedestrian activity defines the image and vitality that is projected by the downtown. People will not want to shop, go for coffee, or go to the hairdresser in the downtown if the downtown is empty. Human activity is essential to the downtown's success.

While office uses can be successful on both the ground level and upper floors, retail use is generally only successful on the first floor, as it relies on its storefront to generate foot traffic. Therefore, street level storefronts should be reserved for retail and service-oriented businesses. While allowing office use on the first floor in the downtown may solve Merchantville's short term objective of filling a storefront vacancy, the cumulative impact of this course of action will have lasting consequences. Without maintaining retail uses on the first floor, it loses its opportunity for a symbiotic mix of land uses, which will have lasting impacts on the downtown, as well as the entire community.

5.1.3.2 Enhance the Mix of Land Uses and Activities in the Downtown, by providing Additional Opportunities for Uses on Upper Floors of Buildings.

One means of enhancing the diversity of land uses is by providing additional opportunities for uses on upper floors of buildings. Merchantville’s downtown consists of a variety of building heights, ranging from one to four stories. One-story structures are an inefficient use of land in Merchantville’s downtown, particularly given the desired activity for the downtown, coupled with the Borough’s limited supply of land. Upper floors would provide additional opportunities for residential, office, or other compatible uses, thereby helping to make the downtown a more active place and helping to broaden the local tax base. For owners, the additional floors would offer an opportunity to generate additional revenue and increase the value of their property. Additional residential housing in the downtown would also allow the Borough to absorb a growing population without changing the character of its existing residential districts and would also provide a built-in market for local businesses offering convenience goods and services.

The following are illustrative examples of opportunities for residential and office uses on upper floors of buildings in the downtown and are shown here for demonstrative purposes only. They provide examples of opportunities for the addition of upper stories to existing one-story structures as well as opportunities for selective demolition of buildings and replacement with new infill development.

Figure 4, Centre Street Elevation and Illustration



An illustrative example of how an additional story could harmoniously be incorporated into this South Centre Street streetscape by the addition of an upper story to the existing one-story structures.

Figure 5, West Park Avenue Elevation



Existing building elevations on West Park Avenue. Currently, there are several 3-story buildings to the east of these structures.

Figure 6, West Park Avenue Illustration



An illustrative example of how selective demolition in conjunction with new infill development could be appropriately incorporated into this West Park Avenue streetscape to provide additional opportunities for office and residential uses on upper floors, as well as an outside promenade and café seating area.

Figure 7, West Park Avenue Illustration



An illustrative example of how upper stories could be added to the existing structure on this West Park Avenue streetscape to provide additional upper floor opportunities. Maintenance of traditional storefront widths, in conjunction with recessed upper floors, recessed façade modules, and changes in materials help to lessen the perceived scale of the building.



Examples of the underutilization of the commercial district, as well as unharmonious building forms and styles. The photos demonstrate opportunities on West Park Avenue for upper stories or infill development that could provide supplementary uses on upper floors, as well as provide more sensitivity to the building form and historic character of adjacent buildings. The picture on the right demonstrates the disharmony between the vertical building form on the left and the horizontal building form on the right.

It is recognized that new construction can have either a positive or negative impact on the character of the downtown. Positive contributors will consist of quality buildings that reflect the context surrounding them. While the Land Use Plan recommends adding more activity and density in the downtown, it is important that the Borough's small town charm and historic character be maintained. *For a further discussion on harmonizing new and infill development with community character, see Section 5.2 below.*

5.1.3.3 Enhance the Mix of Land Uses and Activities in the Downtown, by Allowing Additional Activities on the Sidewalk.

During the Master Plan process, the business owners were surveyed and a number of respondents felt that the Borough was not supportive of local businesses and felt that the restrictions on signage and activities were too stringent. Allowing more flexibility in marketing and activities would serve the dual purpose of supporting the local business community, while boosting the activity level in the downtown.

The Borough should continue their outdoor activities in the downtown that encourage people to shop, eat, and linger. For instance, outdoor café seating adjacent to restaurants would encourage the viability of restaurants and enhance the human activity in the downtown. Allowing businesses to utilize A-frame signs and the display of goods on the sidewalk in front of retail stores would provide businesses with additional means of marketing their goods and would provide additional activity and attractions to help draw customers to the downtown. While the proliferation of non-regulated non-permanent signs and displays of goods has the potential to create unattractive streetscape conditions, well-defined parameters could be developed to ensure appropriate material, placement, appearance, duration, and safety of pedestrians.

If the Borough is hesitant to commit to a permanent outdoor seating, sign, or display program, the Borough may want to experiment with these concepts by developing a trial program, similar to other South Jersey communities like Haddonfield. If successful, a more permanent program could be implemented.

It is also recommended that the Borough residents continue to be supportive of the variety of street fairs and festivals that take place in Merchantville that attract residents and visitors into the downtown. The Borough may also want to consider allowing flea markets and other fairs and festivals along the Merchantville greenway. *See the Economic Development Plan Element for additional economic development measures.*

5.1.3.4 Enhance Downtown’s Sense of Place, by Preserving Merchantville’s Historic Character

A sense of place is what draws people to a downtown. It is a perception that a particular environment is unique and special. As Merchantville is an attractive, compact, historic, walkable community, with distinctive community character, it has a sense of place and small town charm. Unlike a cookie-cutter shopping mall or strip center, Merchantville’s downtown has its own distinctive sense of place, which has evolved over time. This unique historic character should be preserved.

5.1.3.4.1 Preservation of Significant Historic Resources

As outlined in the Historic Preservation Plan Element, significant historic properties and contributing buildings in the Borough should be preserved and their historic integrity should be maintained. Reasonable effort should be made to use the property for its originally intended purpose or to provide a compatible use for the property.

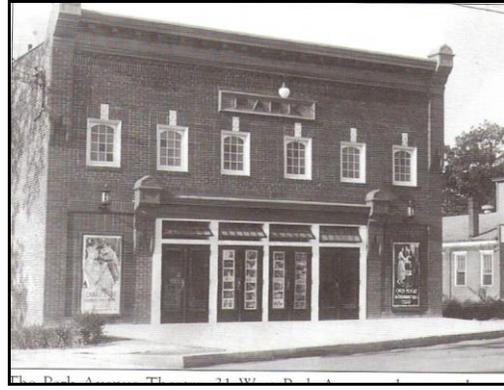
5.1.3.4.2 Rehabilitation of Historic Structures

Contributing restorable historic buildings should be rehabilitated, rather than redesigned or demolished. These are buildings that have original material that is now covered or buildings that have experienced some alteration, but still convey a sense of history. In the vast majority of the cases, the best design is the building’s original design.

There are a number of instances in Merchantville where the original façade has been inappropriately altered. Whenever possible, property owners should retain or repair original architectural features such as cornices, lintels, and the original façade of the building (stone or brick). Architectural features should not be altered or covered up. The original stone or brick façade should be maintained.



Opportunity to restore doors and windows to original character and to remove the façade covering on the first floor to harmonize the first floor with the character of the upper floor.



Original elevation. Source: Images of America, Merchantville, Maureen A. McLoone (2001), p. 93.



Opportunity to restore façade to original character by removing the unattractive first-floor addition and harmonizing the first floor character with the upper floors.



Original elevation. Source: Images of America, Merchantville, Maureen A. McLoone (2001), p. 92.

5.1.3.4.3 Demolition of Historic Structures

While there is a general preference for preserving the integrity of historic buildings and historic districts and promoting the rehabilitation of historic structures for contemporary uses, there are instances where demolition of dilapidated, insignificant, or non-contributing buildings may be appropriate. Either the property is not considered historic or has undergone such significant alterations that have damaged its physical connections with the past.

The appropriateness of demolition must be evaluated on an individual basis. The Historic Preservation Commission will need to engage in a thoughtful analysis of the impact a demolition would have to the Borough's historic character, by reviewing a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition according to the standards set forth in the Zoning

Ordinance.¹⁰ As noted in the Historic Preservation Plan Element, the Historic Preservation Commission should be consulted as early as possible in the planning process for a land development project before much time, money, and effort has been committed to a project. *See Historic Preservation Plan Element for more details.* In instances where buildings are demolished, new construction shall adhere to the design principles and guidelines set forth in Section 5.2.2.1 below that are intended to harmonize new construction with Merchantville's small town charm and historic community character.

5.1.3.5 Enhance Downtown's Sense of Place, by Creating More Pedestrian Friendly Spaces.

While the historic character of the downtown is important, the built environment cannot by itself provide a sense of place. As noted above, pedestrians are an indispensable part of downtown life and are a critical ingredient to creating a sense of place. Therefore, physical design features that enhance public safety, encourage pedestrian activity, and reduce dependency on the automobile should be incorporated into the downtown.

Basically, people will walk if they feel safe, if they feel comfortable, and if there is a network of sidewalks and pathways to guide them to their destination. While Merchantville has an extensive network of sidewalks in the downtown, and the Borough has made efforts to make the pedestrian experience more enjoyable through the use of brick paver accents in the sidewalk, street furniture, and outdoor planters, there are a number of pedestrian corridors that remain uninteresting, uninviting, and feel unsafe. As described above, the dwindling amount of street level shops, services, and restaurants makes the downtown uninteresting to pedestrians. People will not be drawn to the downtown without these important components. Long windowless and monotonous walls are uninviting to passersby. Unattractive and poorly lit alleys make people feel insecure. Poorly marked crosswalks and speeding vehicles are unsafe for pedestrians.

It is recommended that Merchantville enhance the downtown's sense of place by creating more pedestrian friendly spaces. The downtown should continue to develop as a pedestrian-oriented environment. As noted above, maintaining retail storefronts in the downtown to encourage street level activity is essential. Buildings should be visually interesting to invite exploration of the area by pedestrians. *See design guidelines for new construction in Section 5.2 below for more details.* Streets, sidewalks, and pathways should encourage walking, sitting, and other pedestrian activities. Additional street furniture, like benches, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, and café seating, should be incorporated, particularly outside of restaurants or prepared food vendors and heavily trafficked pedestrian locations. However, as some sidewalks along Centre Street and Park Avenue are narrow, careful consideration should be given to ensuring that the furniture does not impede pedestrian traffic flow. Existing pedestrian routes, such as the one pictured below should be enhanced.

¹⁰ See Section 94-51.7(C) of the Merchantville Zoning Ordinance for factors to be considered for a Certificate of Appropriateness.



This unattractive alley between 19 and 23 West Park Avenue provides access to apartments and a parking lot in the rear of 23 West Park Avenue.



Illustration of opportunity to enhance pedestrian walkway.

There are various opportunities to improve this secondary pedestrian system to make it more visually interesting, safe, and accessible to pedestrians. Opportunities include retrofitting the alley with decorative paving or brickwork, incorporating pedestrian scale street lighting and accent lighting to highlight the building and alleyway entrances, decorative archways to emphasize the pedestrian walkway, as well as the integration of landscaping or planters. This alleyway could also serve as an area for café seating in the event the clothing retail store or adjacent office building is converted to a restaurant in the future.

Additionally, traffic calming measures should be implemented in the downtown to make intersections easier to cross and to slow down traffic in the downtown. As noted in the Circulation Plan Element, pavement markings, such as crosswalks and stop position lines for vehicles, need updated painting. Signage that emphasizes that pedestrians have the right of way should be installed and violations should be enforced. Additional stop signs should be installed at intersections along Centre Street to slow down traffic. The feasibility of other traffic calming measures, like bulb-outs, raised pavement intersections, and attractive flashing lights that accompany crosswalks, should be considered. *See Circulation Plan Element for further details.*

5.2 Land Use Issue 2: Harmonizing New Construction with Merchantville’s Small Town Charm and Historic Character

5.2.1 Overview

Merchantville is an established community with few vacant lots for new construction. It is anticipated that future land use changes will be the result of renovation to existing structures or selective demolition of underutilized, obsolete, or dilapidated sites in conjunction with new infill development. Recently, the demolition of existing structures, along with the character and scale of new construction, has been a community concern. One of the primary issues facing Merchantville, then, is delineating how the Borough can

take steps to maintain and revitalize its commercial and residential districts, without losing its sense of identity, sense of history, and its small town charm.

5.2.2 Analysis and Recommendations

5.2.2.1 Design Guidelines

As it is anticipated that changes to Merchantville’s built environment will occur over time, and this Land Use Plan recommends adding more activity and density to the downtown, the following are design guidelines to ensure that the historic character and small town charm of the Borough is preserved. These design guidelines encourage the sort of street level activity and character that Merchantville was founded on. They are intended to provide guidance and more predictability in the form and character of future renovations and new construction, as well as predictability in local decision-making.

Design Guideline 1: Placement of Buildings

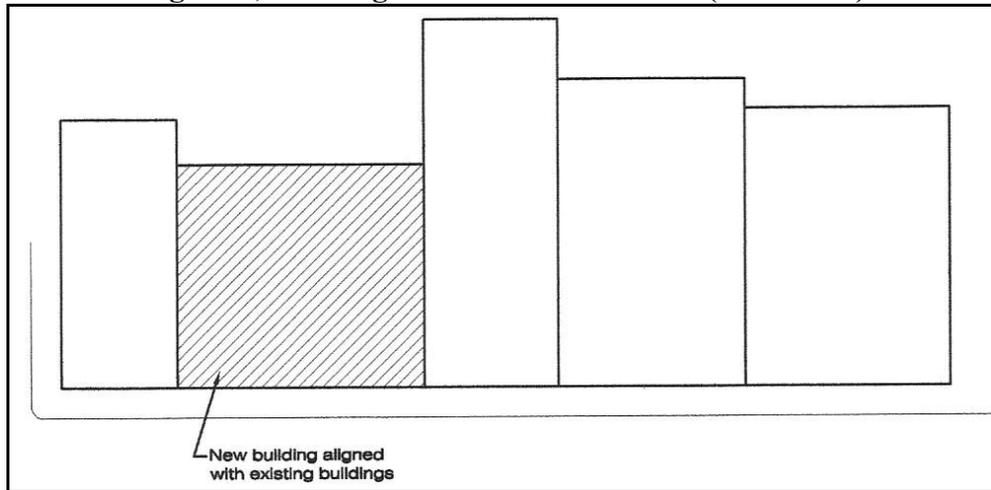
Downtown (B-1 Central Business District)



Photo of existing building placement conditions along Centre Street in the downtown. Buildings predominantly maintain a zero front yard setback.

One of the most important aspects of urban design is the relationship of the building to the street. In Merchantville’s downtown, the placement of the building should reinforce its pedestrian character. Generally, new commercial buildings fronting on Centre Street and Park Avenue should have a zero front yard setback in order to maintain connectivity to street level activity. A zero front yard setback means that buildings abut the public right of way, rather than being sited further back on the lot. *See illustrative diagram in Figure 8 below.* This design concept is consistent with the existing building placement character in the downtown.

Figure 8, Building Placement Illustration (Plan View)



Currently, Article 94-34(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, which governs front yard setbacks in the B-1 district, states:

There shall be no front yard required. However, in no case shall a building be erected or constructed within twelve (12) feet of the curblines of any street as now established and existing at the date of the passage of this chapter, and eighteen (18) feet of the curblines on either the north or south side of Maple Avenue as now established and existing as of the effective date of this chapter, and including the east and west sides of South Centre Street from Maple Avenue South to the borough line.

This language is unclear and may have the unintentional consequence of requiring applicants for new construction to obtain a bulk variance to maintain the same front yard setback that currently exists in, and is desired for, the downtown.¹¹ Currently, sidewalk widths in the downtown vary. For example, sidewalk widths in the vicinity of the Centre Street and Park Avenue intersection currently range between approximately 7'4" and 13'7".¹² It appears that this language would require new infill development to be set back further from the sidewalk, which would not only break the visual continuity of the downtown, but is contrary to the desire to enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment. On the other hand, a strict zero front yard setback could also result in the unintended effect of buildings being constructed closer to the street than typically exists in the district. In order to provide clarity in the regulations, to support a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, and to ensure visual continuity in the downtown, it is recommended that this language be revised. Specifically, the Zoning Ordinance should allow a zero front yard setback measured from the street line¹³ (i.e., the dividing line between the public right of

¹¹ This language also seems to include areas not located in the B-1 district.

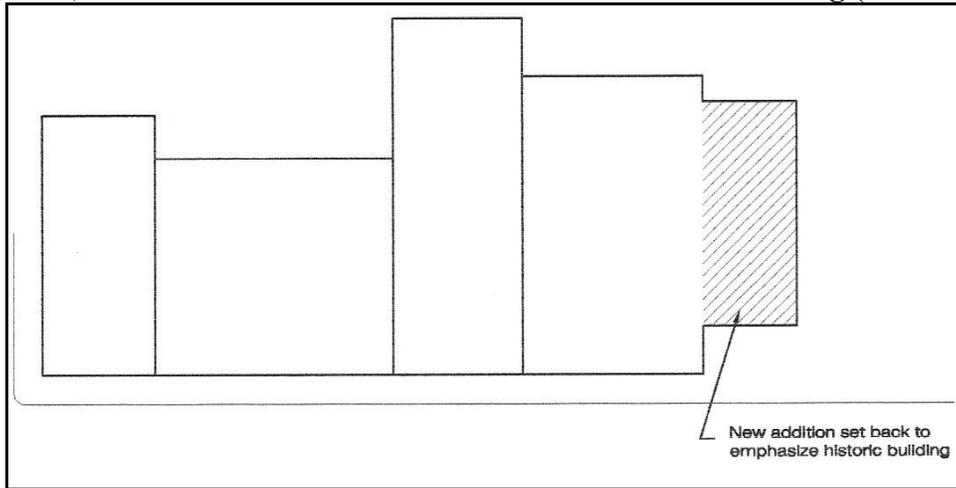
¹² These measurements are based on a diagram of the sidewalks at the Centre Street and Park Avenue intersection, prepared by Sergeant Fred Koehler, Merchantville Community Affairs Officer, dated August 7, 2007.

¹³ Article 94-5 of the Merchantville Zoning Ordinance defines "street line" as: "the edge of the existing or future street right of way, whichever would result in the widest right of way... forming the dividing line

way and the property line), with the condition that the front line of the building cannot be located closer than the average of the front yard setbacks within two hundred (200) feet on either side of the side lot lines of the applicant's premises.

While the general rule is that a zero front yard setback should be maintained in the downtown, it is recognized that it may be appropriate for additions to historic buildings to be placed behind the original front building line to preserve existing building front elevations. In these instances, new additions should be placed behind the original setback of the building to distinguish it from the original historic structure.¹⁴ See illustrative diagram in Figure 9 below.

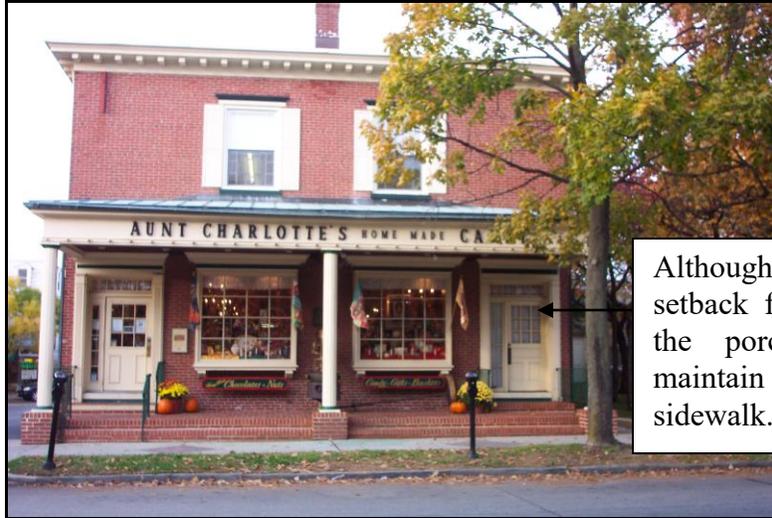
Figure 9, Illustration of Addition Placement for Historic Building (Plan View)



There also may be instances when it is appropriate for buildings to be setback from the sidewalk edge, such as along Maple Avenue, a primary artery in the Borough. However, in these occurrences, careful consideration should be given to maintaining the front line of the building at the sidewalk edge through the use of porches, columns, railings, planters, or similar features to maintain connectivity to the downtown pedestrian.

between the street and the property line. For the purposes of relating the "street line" to the setback requirements of this chapter, this definition shall control."

¹⁴Also, additions to historic buildings should be subtly distinguishable from the original while maintaining visual continuity through the use of design elements, such as proportion and scale, façade set-back, and subtle changes in materials, color, and texture. When design elements contrast too strongly with the original structure, the addition will appear visually incompatible. Conversely, when the original design is replicated, the addition is indistinguishable and the historical evolution of the building becomes unrecognizable.



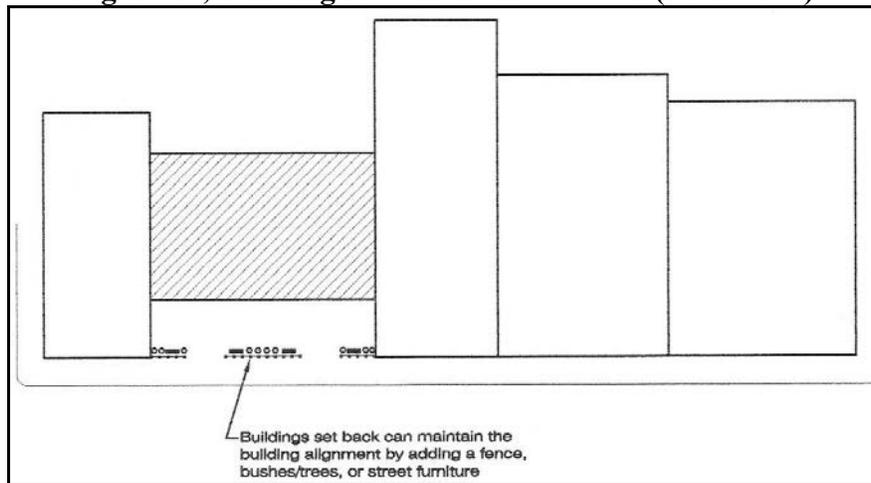
Although the building is setback from the sidewalk, the porch and columns maintain the front line at the sidewalk.

Example of maintaining the front line of the building at the sidewalk edge through the use of a porch and columns.

Adjoining Neighborhood Business District (portion of B-2)

Likewise, in the adjoining Neighborhood Business District, which lies immediately north of the Central Business District, the placement of buildings should reinforce the district's pedestrian character and enhance street level activity. New buildings should adhere to a zero front yard setback. However, as some of the commercial buildings consist of former residences that have been converted to business uses, it may be appropriate in some instances for the front line of the building to be setback from the sidewalk. In these instances, careful consideration should be given to maintaining the front line of the building at the sidewalk edge through the use of planters, railings, columns, or similar features that are inviting to pedestrians. *See illustrative diagram in Figure 10 below.* No off-street parking should be permitted in the area between the sidewalk and the front of the building. *See Design Guideline 8 below for further parking details.*

Figure 10, Building Placement Illustration (Plan View)





While Earth Tones, located at 19 North Centre Street, is set back from the sidewalk, the impact is lessened through the use of a fence line, planters, street furniture, and a brick walkway to connect the pedestrian visually to the storefront.



Similarly, while the Country Bloom, located at 13 North Centre Street, is set back slightly from the sidewalk, the impact is lessened through the use of a brick wall, a porch, and planters to align the structure with the front building line of nearby buildings.

Northern Neighborhood Business District (portion of B-2)

This commercial portion of Centre Street primarily consists of buildings with front building lines that are set back from the public right of way, with an intervening parking lot. This follows the traditional building pattern of the street, as most structures are former residences that have been converted to businesses. Measures to soften the impact of the on-site parking should be employed, such as the installation of a landscape buffer strip, additional landscaping, and street trees. The business establishments in the Neighborhood Business District should be more visually compatible with the surrounding residential uses in the neighborhood.



Typical commercial building placement in northern Neighborhood Business District.

Any new buildings along this portion of Centre Street should have the same relative placement on the lot as adjacent structures in order to connect visually to adjacent properties. However, careful consideration should be given to creating a more pedestrian friendly atmosphere, through the use of landscaping, planters, porches, railings, columns, or similar features that are inviting to pedestrians. In the future, no off-street parking

should be permitted in the area between the sidewalk and the front of the building, as has occurred in the past. *See Design Guideline 8 below for further details on parking.*

West End Neighborhood Business District (portion of B-2)

In the West End of the Borough, some of the buildings maintain a zero front yard setback, while others are sited further from the public right of way.



Example of buildings in the West End that have zero front yard setback lines.



Example of buildings that are set back further on the lot.

While in some instances it may be appropriate for the building facade to be setback from the sidewalk in order to have the same relative placement on the lot as adjacent structures (in order to connect visually to adjacent properties), the general rule is that the placement of a new building should seek to improve the pedestrian activity in the West End and therefore, should be located with a zero front yard setback. See the discussion above in the downtown section relating to the front yard setback requirements in the B-1 district. The same language is utilized in Article 94-38(B) of the Zoning Ordinance for the B-2 district and should be amended accordingly.

In instances where the building is setback from the sidewalk, careful consideration should be given to creating a pedestrian friendly atmosphere, through the use of landscaping, planters, porches, railings, columns, or similar features that are inviting to pedestrians. No off-street parking should be permitted in the area between the sidewalk and the front of the building. *See Design Guideline 8 below for more parking details.*

For additions to significant historic buildings, it is recommended that additions be placed behind the original setback of the building, when possible, to distinguish the addition from the original historic structure. *See Figure 9 above and associated text.*

Other Neighborhood Business Districts (portion of B-2)

134 East Park Avenue (Buzzys Plaza) and 177 South Centre Street (Nando's Pizza and De Marco Dance Studio Strip Center) clearly do not conform to the traditional commercial building placement in Merchantville. They have been constructed as suburban retail stores, with buildings set back from the street and parking located in front

of the buildings. Without demolition and reconstruction on these sites, measures to soften the impact should be employed, such as the installation of a landscape buffer strip, street trees, uniform signage, pedestrian scale street lighting and accent lighting to highlight the building.



These photos demonstrate the visual incongruity between the front building line of adjacent residences in relation to 134 East Park Avenue (Buzzy’s Plaza) and shows the primary focus of the site is the parking lot.



Photo of 177 South Centre Street. The parking lot dominates the streetscape. The front building (Nando’s Pizza) lacks unity of design with the building located to the rear of the site.

In the event demolition and reconstruction is considered at either of these sites in the future, new construction should respond to the guidelines herein. Special attention should be paid to fitting in more harmoniously with the surrounding residential neighborhoods, with buildings located closer to the street and parking located in the rear. While Nando’s Pizza of 177 South Centre Street is currently oriented toward the street, the building is sited too close to the street, obstructing the sight distance for drivers exiting the strip center parking lot on to Chapel Avenue. On the other hand, the remainder of the buildings at the site are set back too far from the street and are completely disconnected from pedestrian and street level activity. The primary focus of any reconstruction should be on the building’s architecture, associated landscaping and connection to the pedestrian, rather than on the parking lot.

Maple Avenue (portion of R-1 district)

When the railroad brought several affluent Philadelphia families to Merchantville in the late 1860s and early 1870s, they typically built mansions along Maple Avenue to be used for summer homes. Today, a number of these distinctive residences with gracious front yards continue to line Maple Avenue. As one of the primary gateway corridors into the Borough, this Land Use Plan seeks to retain the stately elegance of Maple Avenue. Therefore, any new construction along this corridor should have the same relative placement on the lot as other structures along this corridor to preserve this unique historic character.



Residence on Maple Avenue

While the Zoning Ordinance recognizes the importance of maintaining the visual continuity along this corridor, by requiring newly sited buildings in the R-1 zone to connect visually with the average front yards located within 200 feet of the subject property, it qualifies that requirement by further stating that the minimum front yard setback shall be no less than 30 feet from the front property line, and no front yard shall be required to be greater than 45 feet.¹⁵ Based upon an aerial analysis of this corridor, it appears that this minimum front yard setback requirement is inadequate to protect the character of Maple Avenue. It is recommended that Article 94-21(B) of the Zoning Ordinance be amended to reflect a greater setback requirement for the R-1 zone. For instance, while the visual continuity requirement should be maintained, the minimum front yard setback should be increased to be between 40 and 65 feet, which is more consistent with the prevalent setbacks along this corridor.

Surrounding Residential Neighborhoods (R-2, R-3, R-4)

In the surrounding residential neighborhoods, new residential buildings should have the same relative placement on the lot as structures on adjacent lots in order to connect visually to adjacent properties.

¹⁵See Article 94-21(B) of the Zoning Ordinance.

Design Guideline 2: Building Height

Downtown (B-1 Central Business District)

Merchantville’s downtown consists of a variety of building heights, ranging from one to four stories. Generally, new buildings should relate to the height context established by neighboring structures to reinforce the perceived scale of the area and to provide visual harmony. However, as stated above, this Land Use Plan recommends adding upper floors to one-story buildings to achieve an appropriate level of intensity for Merchantville’s downtown and to encourage a greater mix of uses and activities. Therefore, while new buildings should generally correspond with the height of adjacent buildings, there are exceptions when the existing built environment does not reflect the overall goals and character of the district. As such, single-story structures should not be replicated in the downtown.

Nevertheless, in order to relate to existing single-story structures, taller buildings can acknowledge the height of neighboring buildings by affirming important horizontal lines, and by using setbacks, recesses, and changes in color or building materials to differentiate the taller parts of the building. In these instances, architectural details that distinguish the ground floor retail areas from the upper floor living and office areas should be utilized. Additionally, the height of the neighboring cornice lines, window heads and sills, and first floor elevation above the ground should generally be continued. Additional horizontal elements that would be appropriate to align with adjoining buildings include: building kickplates, transoms over the entranceway, upper story window openings and styles, and sign bands above the street level.

Figure 11, Illustration of Horizontal Alignment



Illustration of horizontal architectural feature alignment on the façade of the building.

In order to maintain the historic small town character of Merchantville, no more than three stories should be permitted in the downtown, except along Chestnut and Maple Avenues, which have wider rights of way. Generally, the height of the building façade should relate to the width of the right of way. The wider the public right of way, the

taller the street front facade can be. Therefore, it may be appropriate for buildings in the downtown along Chestnut and Maple Avenues to contain four stories if the applicant can demonstrate that the perceived height of a higher structure will be compatible with surrounding buildings and will utilize architectural features to lessen the perceived height of the building.

In order to lessen the perceived height of a building, it may be desirable to include a setback of the upper stories, provide recessed facades, changes in color or building materials to differentiate the taller part of the building. The photos below, taken on Hulfish Street in Princeton and Main Street in Riverton, New Jersey, depict examples of buildings that fit into a small-town’s pedestrian-oriented streetscape. The use of recessed and dormered upper floors, the inclusion of first floor pedestrian-oriented window and door openings, and distinctive façade modules lessen the perceived height of the buildings.



15 Hulfish Street, Princeton, New Jersey. Example of three and four story building with dormered and recessed upper floors and changes in building materials to differentiate the taller part of the building.



605 Main Street, Riverton, New Jersey. Example of three-story building with recessed upper floor, recessed façade module, traditional store widths to lessen perceived scale of the building. Good example of building that would complement architecture of historic Merchantville.

Currently, the Schedule of District Regulations in the Zoning Ordinance states that the maximum principal building height for uses in the B-1 district is 40 feet or 3 stories. However, for senior citizen multifamily buildings, the maximum principal building height is 60 feet. It does not identify the corresponding maximum number of stories for this type of use. In order to maintain the small town character of Merchantville, it is recommended that the Schedule of District Regulations be amended to reflect that four

stories is the maximum number of stories appropriate for senior citizen multifamily buildings in the downtown.

Neighborhood Business Districts (B-2)

The Neighborhood Business Districts consist of a variety of building heights, ranging from one to three stories. Generally, new buildings should relate to the height context established by neighboring structures to reinforce the perceived scale of the area and to provide visual harmony. In order to maintain the small town character of Merchantville, no more than 2.5 stories, or 35 feet, should be permitted in these districts.

Single Family Residential Districts (R-1, R-2, R-3)

The R-1, R-2, and R-3 residential districts consist primarily of one and two story structures. Generally, new buildings should relate to the height context established by neighboring structures to reinforce the perceived scale of the area and to provide visual harmony. In order to maintain the small town character of Merchantville, no more than 2.5 stories, or 35 feet, should be permitted in these districts.

Multi-Family District (R-4 District)

The R-4 residential district contemplates allowing two-family dwellings, multi-family buildings, and attached dwellings as conditional uses in the district. The current Zoning Ordinance states that the maximum building height for these types of conditional uses is two stories, or 30 feet,¹⁶ which is less than the building height permitted for single-family dwellings in the district and is less than the building height permitted for single-family dwellings in the R-1, R-2, and R-3 districts. Therefore, it is recommended that the Borough increase the maximum building height for two-family and attached dwellings to at least 2.5 stories or 35 feet, in order to be in harmony with the allowable building height for single-family dwellings. It is further recommended that the Borough increase the maximum building height for multi-family buildings to 3 stories or 40 feet, in order to be consistent with the height of existing multi-family buildings in the Borough's residential districts and to provide realistic opportunities for this dwelling type.

Design Guideline 3: Building Mass and Human Scale

Downtown (Central Business District) and Neighborhood Business Districts

As existing buildings are renovated and new projects infill the downtown and neighborhood business districts, careful consideration should be given to maintaining the human scale. Historically, buildings in Merchantville provided interesting, articulated storefronts scaled to the person on the sidewalk. Merchants employed large storefront windows to display the range of goods available to the pedestrian consumer. These guidelines seek to strengthen the pedestrian orientation of Merchantville's commercial

¹⁶ See § 94-32 of the Merchantville Zoning Ordinance.

areas by maintaining those same philosophies to encourage the sort of street level activity and help restore the importance of the pedestrian.

The first floor of commercial buildings in the downtown and Neighborhood Business Districts should mostly be transparent, with a pedestrian orientation and storefront appearance. Building facades that present large, over-scaled architectural elements to the sidewalk without breaking down the size to relate to a more human scale are inappropriate in Merchantville's small town atmosphere.



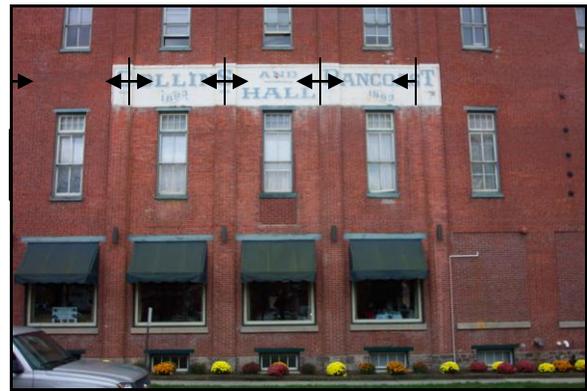
While this medical and professional building may be an appropriate building in an office park, it does not fit in with the architectural style and massing of other downtown buildings in Merchantville. This building has an oversized entry, lack of first floor windows at eye-level, and upper story windows that are dissimilar to the established proportions and patterns of neighboring upper story windows on the block.

When large buildings are planned, it is essential that particular attention be made to maintaining the existing rhythm established by the repetition of the traditional storefronts. To accomplish this, the building façade facing the street should be divided into distinct modules, such as 20 to 25 feet, which is the typical width of a single store in Merchantville. Other opportunities include changing materials, patterns, building setbacks, façade portions, or by using design elements such as columns or pilasters. This will maintain the existing pattern and rhythm of traditional façade widths in the commercial areas of the Borough and will give the appearance of a collection of smaller buildings and additions. Additionally, complementary elements, such as awnings, canopies, overhangs, and flags should be utilized to break down the scale of a building and to add color and architectural interest, provided they are designed to the scale of the building and are sensitively mounted.

Figure 12, Illustration of Traditional Storefront Widths



Illustration of the rhythm established by the repetition of traditional storefront façade widths.



While the Collins House is one of the larger buildings in Merchantville’s downtown, it still maintains a human scale, as the front façade of the building is broken down into smaller traditional storefront modules, the side façade of the building is broken down into smaller vertical sections, there are first-floor eye-level windows and awnings, there is an inviting front porch designed to welcome passersby, as well as attractive landscaping.

Residential Districts

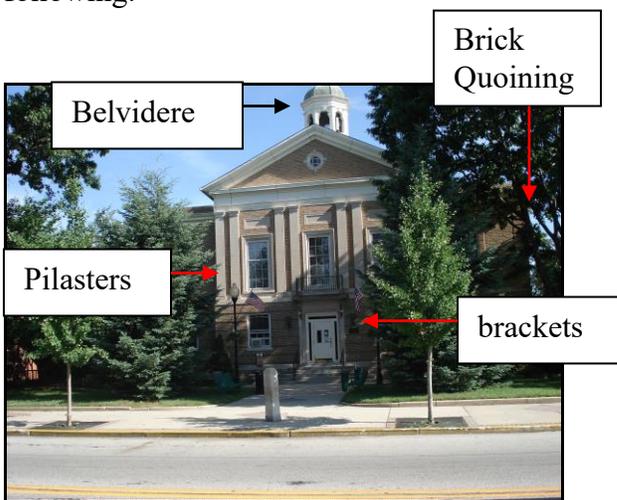
In order to be compatible with Merchantville’s historic building fabric, renovated buildings and new residential infill should incorporate building elements that convey a human scale, such as the inclusion of a front porch or entry element. The structure should be oriented to the street and sidewalk. “Snout houses,” i.e., houses where one of the primary features of the front façade is the garage, are strongly discouraged.

Building facades that are designed to have a rhythm and pattern consistent with the character and predominant scale of structures found in the neighborhood are encouraged. Buildings should be similar in height and width, as well as use similar setbacks, to those typically seen on the block.

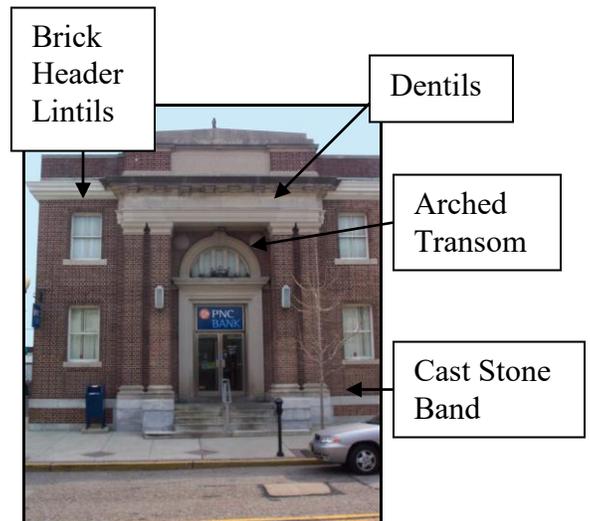
Design Guideline 4: Architectural Character and Building Form

Downtown (B-1 Central Business District) and Neighborhood Business Districts (B-2)

Although there are various architectural styles in Merchantville’s downtown and Neighborhood Business Districts, new development should be designed to contribute to the districts’ historic character. Quality craftsmanship and the use of ornamentation and architectural details are strongly encouraged. Architectural details include design elements such as doors, windows, dormers, porches, balconies, cornices, columns, pilasters, pediments, railings, brackets, parapets, and similar features. These details play a key role in defining the style and character of a building and deserve significant attention. These design details should relate to, and reflect the character of contributing historic structures in the downtown and Neighborhood Business Districts, such as the following:



Borough Hall’s striking design elements, include cast stone pilasters, brick quoining (hidden), a bracketed entablature supporting an iron balconnette, cast stone features above the windows, a pedimented gabled roof, and a belvidere on the top of the building.



The PNC Bank building’s architectural details include: an arched transom above the entrance with keystone detail, brick pilasters, an entablature embellished with dentils, cast stone band at the foundation, brick header lintels and cast stone sills.



The Masonry Preservation Group building at 706 West Maple Avenue is accented with soldier course brick lintel, a decorative roof parapet, and transoms above the storefront windows.

New buildings should also complement the building orientation of adjacent buildings. Most buildings in Merchantville’s downtown and commercial areas have a vertical building form. They are generally taller than they are wide. When wide buildings are constructed, design elements can be utilized to enhance the vertical appearance of the facade, such as using windows and doors that are taller than they are wide, or breaking the building up into distinct vertical modules. See Design Guideline 3, Building Mass and Human Scale, above for more details.



These buildings on West Park Avenue demonstrate the unharmonious building forms of these adjacent structures. The one-story horizontally oriented structure (right) is inconsistent with the size, shape, and proportion of the adjacent historic building (left), which is tall and narrow .



This one-story, horizontally oriented structure is inconsistent with the size, shape, and proportion of storefront faces and openings along Centre Street.



This wide building on the corner of Park Avenue and Centre Street appears to have a vertical form, due to the façade being broken down into separate sections and the utilization of windows and doors that are taller than they are wide. Also see photo of Collins and Pancoast Hall above.

Residential Districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4)

Merchantville’s residential neighborhoods embrace a plethora of historic and modern architectural styles, including Colonial Revival, Prairie Bungalow, Craftsman Bungalow, Folk Victorian, Queen Ann, Tudor Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, and Italianate, as well as ranch, split level, and minimal traditional house types. New and remodeled residences should reflect the architectural character and building forms of surrounding

buildings in neighborhoods where the existing context is well defined. By borrowing from the diversity of existing architectural styles, the character of the neighborhood will be maintained.



These homes (above) on Clifton Avenue are representative of the architectural character and building form on the block.



This ranch-style home is located on Clifton Avenue, the same block as the houses pictured above. It is inconsistent with the typical architectural character and building form on the street. This style home is more appropriate in one of Merchantville's newer neighborhoods.

New or renovated residences should be designed to have a rhythm and pattern consistent with the character and predominant scale of structures found in the neighborhood. Buildings should be similar in height and width and should use similar materials, roof forms, and setbacks typically seen on the block. They should mimic the predominant building form on the block to determine whether they will have a vertical or horizontal orientation. Most houses in Merchantville's historic residential neighborhoods, have vertical building forms. In some of Merchantville's newer residential neighborhoods, ranch style and minimal traditional style homes were constructed after World War II, which have horizontal building forms; as they are wider than they are tall. New infill buildings should complement the orientation of the prevalent building form.



Typical ranch-style home on Glenwood Avenue.



Typical minimal traditional style home on Ivins Avenue.

For the Borough's historic residential neighborhoods, like the Cattell Tract and the Oaks, it is anticipated that the Historic Preservation Commission will be spearheading the development of illustrative residential design standards to provide homeowners with guidance on the appropriate means of making improvements to their residences or embarking on new construction in a manner that would not diminish the integrity of the structure or surrounding historic properties. *See Section 5.4.1 of the Historic Preservation Plan Element.* It is recommended that the standards contain a listing of architectural elements and ornamental features (with corresponding illustrations) that should be integrated into renovations and new construction, based upon the relevant architectural style. For instance, in the Cattell Tract, the predominant architectural style is Victorian. Therefore, the guidelines should require new construction in the Cattell Tract to incorporate a minimum number of architectural elements and ornamental features into the exterior of the structure, such as gabled end roofs facing the street or windows with small panes (9/9, 9/, 6/9, or 8/12), in order to ensure compatibility of the exterior design with the character of the historic neighborhood.



These photos were taken on Walnut Avenue in the Cattell Tract, a predominantly Victorian style neighborhood.

Design Guideline 5: Proportion of Building Walls to Openings

Downtown (Central Business District) and Neighborhood Business Districts

The proportion of building walls to openings plays an important factor in the character and vitality of a downtown. Building aspects that isolate people and discourage pedestrian activity, such as faceless buildings without windows or doors at eye level are prohibited in the commercial areas. Doorways, windows, and other openings in the façade should be proportioned to reflect pedestrian scale and movement and to encourage interest at the street level. Windows on the street level should be transparent or lightly tinted to provide views into the interior.



Aunt Charlotte's Candies is an excellent example of an inviting storefront. Its inviting porch and display windows reflect the pedestrian scale and movement and encourages interest at the street level.

While the front of the building facing the street is generally the most important part of any building, the three-dimensional form of the building should not be neglected. All exposed sides of a building should be designed with the same level of care and integrity. Buildings should be attractive and visually engaging from all sides, except in a zero lot line condition when it is not visible. Long uninterrupted walls should be avoided.



This building at 214 North Centre Street is oriented towards an alley, rather than the street. It is a faceless building with no windows or doors at eye level, discouraging sidewalk activity.



Although this long uninterrupted wall at 11 West Park Avenue is not the front of the building, it is highly visible to persons on the sidewalk and street. It could be greatly improved with windows, landscaping, or a tasteful mural.

While first floor openings are important, buildings that have too high a percentage of glass lack the structure that helps define a building. The number and size of windows and doors in a building strongly affect its appearance. Window and door patterns are important features of façade composition and critical in establishing rhythms of solids to voids. Ill-fitting buildings will have facades that are mostly glass or facades that are mostly wall. Display windows should complement the overall building design and offer attractive views of the interiors in order to capture and maintain pedestrian interest.



Existing Elevation: 27 South Centre Street. Large percentage of glass detracts from building's original design.



Original Elevation of 27 South Centre Street; the original building design had more structure and was more visually appealing. Source: Images of America, Merchantville, Maureen A. McLoone (2001), p. 104.

On the other hand, facades that are mostly walls are uninviting to pedestrians and disregard their relationship to the streetscape. Covered windows or solid roll-down security grates are a significant visual intrusion that contributes to an impression of an undesirable neighborhood. While security devices are generally discouraged, when they are absolutely needed, they should be retractable open mesh grates instead of solid. If they are deemed necessary, they should be installed inside the storefront windows to reduce their visual intrusion.



Existing elevation of 622 West Maple Avenue that shows how covered windows contribute to an impression of an undesirable neighborhood.

Residential Districts

Older Residential Neighborhoods

As Merchantville is a community with a number of historic structures, it is important that new residential construction does not diminish the integrity of the fabric of its historic neighborhoods. Window and door patterns are important features of façade composition and critical in establishing rhythms of solids to voids. The number and size of windows and doors in the structure strongly affect its appearance. Windows are an important design element as they are able to establish the scale and character of the building.

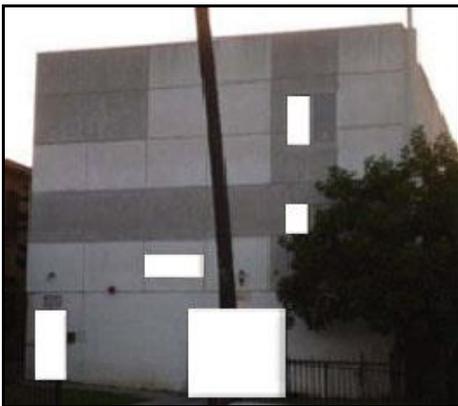
The amount of open space in a wall can be expressed as a ratio. A building with twice as much wall space as windows and doors would have a 2 to 1 ratio. Most historic residential buildings in Merchantville have a wall to opening ratio between 2 to 1 and 3 to 1. To be compatible with Merchantville's historic buildings, new residential buildings should be consistent with that ratio.



House on Maple Avenue with a wall to opening ratio of approximately 2 to 1.



House on Chestnut Avenue, with a wall to window ratio of approximately 3 to 1.



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Picture to the left (not in Merchantville) is an example of house with a wall to opening ratio of approximately 6 to 1. Not only would the architectural style of this house be incompatible with Merchantville's residential neighborhoods, but the number, proportion, and pattern of windows placement would also be an ill-fit in this historic community.

¹⁷ Source: http://la.curbed.com/archives/2007/04/ugly_buiding_co_1.php, downloaded on August 6, 2007.

Newer Residential Neighborhoods

Although the front facades of buildings within the newer residential neighborhoods may vary in style and detail, new infill development should still utilize similar solid-to-void ratios as those found predominantly in the neighborhood. The number and proportion of walls to windows/doors are important to the rhythm of the street and character of the neighborhood and should be reflected in the façade of new buildings.

Design Guideline 6: Building Materials

Downtown (Central Business District) and Neighborhood Business Districts

The appeal of older buildings is often due to their use of quality materials and use of detail. Materials that complement the facades of contributing historic structures on the block should likewise be utilized in renovations to existing structures and new construction. Selection of materials should be based on durability of the materials, ability to weather and age, and harmony with surrounding character.

Appropriate primary façade materials include brick, natural stone masonry, and horizontal wood clapboard. Appropriate secondary or “accent” facade materials include: brick, natural stone masonry, vinyl siding on upper floors, and smooth or subtle textured stucco. Inappropriate materials include, but are not limited to: concrete block, metal siding, machine cut stone masonry that mimics the rectangular pattern of brick masonry, stucco surfaces that are highly textured such as those associated with a Mediterranean style, glass block, mirror or metalized reflective glass, imitation brick or stone, plastic molded imitations of conventional building materials, and coarsely finished rustic materials such as wood shingles, stained fir plywood, or unpainted wood. All wood surfaces should be painted. Additionally, materials that are inconsistent with the chosen architectural style are inappropriate. For instance, it would be inappropriate for a Victorian style building to utilize textured stucco façade materials.

Residential Districts

Where adjacent buildings exhibit a consistent use of similar materials to the extent that a cohesive pattern is created, renovated structures and new infill projects should be composed of similar building materials. Materials that are inconsistent with the chosen architectural style are inappropriate.

Design Guideline 7: Roof Lines

Downtown (B-1- Central Business District) and Neighborhood Business Districts (B-2)

Roofs are major features of buildings and, when repeated along a street, they contribute to the visual continuity. There are a variety of roof types in the downtown and neighborhood business districts, with gabled and flat roofs being the predominant type. It

is generally not appropriate to use a roof size, shape, or slope that is not typically seen in the downtown or other commercial areas.

While flat roofs are one of the most common in Merchantville's commercial areas, new buildings with flat roofs should contain ornamental details, such as parapets or cornices, to provide architectural interest. Flat roofs with a false mansard style, like the one pictured below, are aesthetically inconsistent with Merchantville's historic character and are discouraged. Only mansard-type roofs that are designed in the historic nineteenth-century way, i.e., with dormered windows and a roof that surrounds all of the visible building facades, are appropriate.



An example of a flat roof with a “false mansard” style.

Where gabled roofs occur, a minimum slope of 8:12 is recommended. A sloped roof with a flattened pitch is not appropriate for Merchantville's commercial historic districts.

Energy and water system improvements serving a greater efficiency are encouraged. However, effort should be made to ensure that they do not adversely impact the historic integrity of a building or the district. The visual impacts of skylights, solar panels, and other rooftop devices visible to the public should be minimized, when possible. Solar panels are best placed on the south side of the property. With clear access to the sun, solar panels can have a significant reduction to fossil fuel use. They should be located toward the rear of the building, when possible, so that it is not visible from the street.

Residential Districts

There are a variety of residential roof styles in Merchantville, including gabled, shed, and hip roof types. The roof shape is among the most dominant features of a house. It is not appropriate to use a roof size, shape, or slope that is not typically seen on the block. Accordingly, roof lines of new construction or renovated structures should be responsive to the typical house styles within the neighborhood and, for historic areas, should comply with the residential design standards that are anticipated to be developed in the future for the Borough's historic residential neighborhoods (as set forth above in Design Guideline 4, Architectural Styles and Building Form). While flat roofs on multi-story buildings are generally acceptable in the commercial areas, they are not appropriate for the Borough's residential districts, with the exception of existing row-house style houses.



This photo was taken on Cedar Avenue (in nearby Pennsauken neighborhood). The house on the left has a shed-style roof, which is inconsistent with the roof styles in this predominantly Victorian neighborhood.

Like the business districts, energy system improvements serving a greater efficiency are encouraged in the residential neighborhoods provided that they do not adversely impact the historic integrity of a building or older historic residential neighborhood. In these instances, the visual impacts of skylights, solar panels, and other rooftop devices visible to the public should be minimized, when possible. Solar panels are best placed on the south side of the property. With clear access to the sun, solar panels can have a significant reduction to fossil fuel use. They should be located toward the rear of a house and maintain the angle of the roof. No angled platforms should be located on the roof. If the south face is in the front of the house, then solar shingles are recommended to maintain the character of the home.

Design Guideline 8: Parking and Utilitarian Needs

Downtown (B-1- Central Business District)

During the Master Plan process, the adequacy of parking continued to be one of the primary concerns for residents and businesses for the downtown. Given the high value that most Americans place on mobility and convenience, it is not surprising that the availability of parking is important to the downtown. The challenge is how to retrofit a compact downtown with the needed parking facilities to accommodate modern retail and business needs without harming the downtown's pedestrian friendly atmosphere and historic fabric. The two key considerations are location and design of parking facilities.

The location and design of surface parking lots and garages have the potential to diminish the sense of place that makes a downtown a desirable destination. They can diminish the aesthetics of a downtown, as well as break the continuity of street-level activity. Parking should be strategically located and designed to maintain the mix of uses and desired densities, as well as promote a pedestrian-friendly environment. Parking should strive to provide an adequate supply of parking, but at the same time strive to support a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Given the perception that there is inadequate parking in the downtown, on-street parking should be maintained as much as possible. Drivers like on-street parking because of its perceived advantages in visibility, accessibility, and heightened sense of personal safety. It also provides a buffer between moving traffic and the sidewalk.

Existing surface parking should be upgraded to be neat, orderly, and enhanced with landscaping. Parking lots should be generously landscaped along their edges to act as a visual buffer between the sidewalk and the parking lot. Planting should be attractive, low maintenance, and hardy- able to survive soot and gas fumes.

When buildings front directly on the street, they create a lively and inviting environment where people can feel comfortable walking from store to store. Therefore, future on-site parking lots should be placed behind or beneath buildings. They should not be provided between the street and the building, or between adjacent buildings, if feasible.

When parking garages are utilized, sensitive design standards for exteriors should be incorporated to ensure that parking facilities integrate smoothly with the surrounding downtown fabric. Parking garages should be wrapped with usable retail/commercial space on the first floor to the extent possible. Street level shops in parking structures help to mitigate the faceless buildings described above. They will reduce the visual impact of structured parking, by being more compatible with surrounding buildings and the desired pedestrian friendly environment. Façade design should be considerate of architectural elements (such as window patterns) of buildings in the area.



The photo above, taken on Hulfish Street in Princeton, New Jersey, depicts a good example of a parking garage that fits into the pedestrian-oriented character of a small-town downtown. It is wrapped with retail on the first floor and residential or office uses are located on the upper floors.

Utilitarian necessities, like service entrances, loading facilities, and garbage dumpsters, should be located at the rear or side of structures and screened from public view. They should be designed as an integral part of the overall building design and present an attractive feature when viewed. Where no off-street options are available, loading and service entrances should occupy the minimum space necessary and should be compatible with other uses of the street, particularly pedestrian activities.



Attractively screened alley on West Park Avenue.

As stated in Section 5.1.3.5 above, opportunities exist to make alleyways more attractive and safe. They can either be screened attractively from view, or upgraded to be more interesting places, not merely hallways to rear parking lots or alley service areas. Lighting, landscaping, paving materials, and other visual innovations are encouraged.

Neighborhood Business Districts (B-2)

All of the design guidelines for parking and utilitarian uses stated above for the downtown are applicable to the Neighborhood Business Districts. Generally, parking lots should be located behind buildings to maintain a more inviting and pedestrian friendly environment. When buildings front directly on the street, they create a lively and inviting environment where people can feel comfortable walking from store to store, rather than getting in their car to drive to their next destination. On-street parking should be maintained and existing surface parking lots should be upgraded to be neat and orderly and enhanced with landscaping. Service entrances, loading facilities, and garbage dumpsters should be located to the rear of structures and screened from public view.



While this parking lot on the corner of North Centre Street and West Chestnut Avenue is placed adjacent to a building, rather than behind it (the more ideal location), the parking lot is neat and orderly and contains a landscape buffer accented by an ornamental fence.

While businesses, like the one below, want parking to be as readily visible and easily accessible so that potential patrons arriving by car will know that they will be able to park quickly and easily, locating parking in front of buildings where it is most visible from the

street, however, seriously detracts from the aesthetics of the site and inhibits the pedestrian environment. Efforts to soften the impact should be implemented, such as landscaping, street trees, complementary signage, pedestrian scale street lighting and accent lighting to highlight the building. The Borough should consider reducing the allowable amount of impervious lot coverage for the Neighborhood Business District in the Zoning Ordinance to prevent this from happening in the future.



This photo of a retail store on North Centre Street shows on-site parking between the sidewalk and the building and demonstrates the uninviting conditions of the site and loss of pedestrian connectivity.

Residential Districts

Given the nature of many of the small lots in Merchantville, on-street parking should be maintained as much as possible in order to provide adequate parking for residents.

Additionally, during the Master Plan process, residents indicated their displeasure over the presence of recreational vehicles in the Borough's residential neighborhoods. The presence of excessively large motor vehicles and of certain motor vehicles that, by virtue of their design, type, or characteristics, are not customary and incidental to the use or occupancy of residential property, has a detrimental impact upon the visual quality and character of the Borough's residential neighborhoods, particularly given the relatively small size of lots in the Borough. Recreational vehicles contribute to the visual deterioration of residential neighborhoods and have the potential to negatively impact property values. It is recommended that the Borough review the existing policy for recreational vehicles and consider limiting their presence in the Borough, given their incompatibility with existing surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Design Guideline 9: Complementary Elements (Awnings, Signage)

Downtown (Central Business District) and Neighborhood Business Districts

Complementary elements, such as awnings, canopies, overhangs, and flags should be utilized to break down the scale of a building and to add color and architectural interest, provided they are designed to the scale of the building and are sensitively mounted.

Plastic or vinyl awning materials should not be permitted. Canvas material is encouraged.



Example of building on West Park Avenue where complementary awnings have been utilized to add color and break down the scale of the building.

Sign material, style, and color should compliment the building façade. Wall signs on building facades should be placed just above the storefront and appropriately proportioned to the front façade. Internally illuminated signs, flashing elements, or elements that move or change in brightness are not appropriate for these historic commercial districts. Wooden signs, or a sign material that has the look of traditional wood signage (such as trex) are appropriate. All of these complementary elements should be properly maintained and replaced when necessary.

5.3 Land Use Issue 3: Provision of Adequate Supply of Parking in the Downtown

5.3.1 Overview

The provision of adequate parking in the downtown is linked to downtown revitalization. It is believed that one of the deterrents to downtown revitalization is a lack of adequate parking. The need for adequate parking has been a recurring theme in Merchantville’s Master Plans over the years. The 1966 plan found a severe lack of adequate off-street parking within and serving the commercial district.¹⁸ One of the goals in the 1980 Master Plan sought to “maintain adequate and accessible parking areas in the downtown.”¹⁹ Thereafter, the 1990 Master Plan included a parking study of the Central Business District, which identified an overall parking deficit. It calculated an existing shortfall of 161 parking spaces, based upon the then existing land use. It also identified a potential shortfall of 292 spaces, based upon large-scale conversions of space to higher intensity activities that would require higher parking ratios, such as retail or office use.

¹⁸ Merchantville Master Plan Study, Volume One, Stonorov and Haws (October 1965), p.5.

¹⁹ Borough of Merchantville, Master Plan Update, dated December 1980, Section C. Goals and Objectives, III. Traffic, A.2.

Since 1990, 38 parking spaces and 2 accessible parking spaces have been added along Chestnut Avenue. Additionally, over the past seventeen years, there have been significant changes to the uses in the Central Business District, including but not limited to: the conversion of warehouse space to a senior housing complex, the conversion of warehouse space to a head trauma center, the conversion of an office to a restaurant, and the conversion of a light manufacturing use to a mixed retail/apartment use. Also, a large mixed-use redevelopment project has been approved in the district, which includes a parking structure proposed to house 257 parking spaces. Therefore, a number of changes have taken place during this time and additional changes are on the horizon.

5.3.2 Analysis and Recommendations

An updated parking study is needed in order to identify parking shortfalls based on modern parking requirements, and to explore opportunities for parking improvements in more detail. The Borough recently was awarded a Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to conduct a downtown parking study. Pursuant to the study, both qualitative and quantitative data will be researched and recommendations will be made related to effectively meeting the parking needs for Merchantville's guests, residents and employees. Public and private stakeholder meetings will be conducted as part of the planning process. Upon completion, this study may be adopted as an addendum to this Master Plan.

5.4 Land Use Issue 4: Neighborhood Stability and Revitalization of the West End

5.4.1 Overview

Merchantville's secondary mixed-use center is located in the West End of the Borough. It has direct access to US Route 130, is bounded by the Township of Pennsauken on three sides, and is within walking distance to the City of Camden. These factors strongly influence land use and circulation patterns in this part of the Borough.

Specifically, US Route 130 provides a significant impact on land use and circulation, as Maple Avenue terminates at an unsightly and seldom-used footbridge that straddles the highway. The US Route 130 and Federal Street entrance and exit ramps empty onto Maple Avenue, bringing high volumes of vehicular movement and speed through this once pedestrian-oriented neighborhood. Consequently, the auto-oriented land use patterns and visual clutter associated with this section of US Route 130 has trickled into the West End.



Aerial view of Route 130 and impact on circulation patterns in West End.



Photo of footbridge that crosses over US Route 130 and associated highway visual clutter.



Photo of entrance and exit ramps for US Route 130 and Federal Street.

Furthermore, the land use patterns and building conditions of neighboring municipalities have negatively affected Merchantville's West End. While vacant buildings, like this one in Pennsauken pictured below, may technically be located outside of Merchantville's borders, they have a significant impact on the quality of life and vitality of this neighborhood. In this instance, the vacant property is perceived as an integral part of the Merchantville West End neighborhood, even though it is technically located across the street in Pennsauken.



Vacant building located in Pennsauken, across the street from Merchantville.

Although the City of Camden does not directly abut Merchantville, portions of the City are located within walking distance. Over the years, an interrelationship has developed between the City of Camden, Pennsauken Township, and the Borough of Merchantville with respect to social and economic conditions, commerce and employment, education, public safety, and transportation. Once the economic and social hub of the region, the City of Camden now has some of the highest concentrations of unemployment, poverty, violent crime, high school dropout rates, and other indicators of urban distress in the nation. Former Camden residents seeking a better quality of life have sought housing, employment, education, social opportunities, and safety in Camden's inner ring suburbs, including Merchantville and Pennsauken. This has resulted in a noticeable change in demographic characteristics, property values, public safety, and private reinvestment in the residential and commercial sectors of Merchantville and Pennsauken.

Community planning in the West End neighborhood is aggravated by the patchwork of municipal boundaries in the area. For example, for a segment along Maple Avenue, the street right of way bisects the communities of Merchantville and Pennsauken; Pennsauken is located on the north side of the street, while Merchantville is located on the south side of the street. In another instance, the public right of way bisects the communities of Pennsauken and Camden; one side of the street is 42nd Street in Camden, while the other side of the street is Roosevelt Avenue in Pennsauken. To compound this issue, there is only a small neck of land that connects Pennsauken's Cooper Planning District (which is north of the West End neighborhood) to Pennsauken's Browning Planning District (which is south of the West End neighborhood). This "neck" is sandwiched between US Route 130 to the west, the City of Camden to the southwest, and the Borough Merchantville to the east. In sum, this patchwork effect causes community planning by the various municipalities to be disjointed.

As a result of the above-described circumstances, the West End has experienced significant challenges over the past several decades, including under-utilization of storefronts, uninviting streetscape conditions, and neighborhood stabilization. It has become more auto-oriented, rather than pedestrian-oriented. The visual character of this area tells a story about this section of the Borough's declining economic vitality and quality of life. Front yards have been paved over to accommodate parking spaces. Businesses have located in the neighborhood without being required to conduct suitable

renovations. *See photo below of nail salon in former bank building.* The neighborhood's aging housing stock has begun to deteriorate without proper reinvestment by owners and landlords. Historic buildings have been altered to cover up the original façade design, and street level windows have been concealed for added security.



Photo of nail salon in former bank building. Drive-thru canopy remains even though current building use has changed



The original façade of the first floor of this historic building has been altered to be inconsistent with the character of the upper floors. The first floor windows have been concealed, presumably for added security, resulting in uninviting streetscape conditions.



The front yard has been paved over to provide parking in front of the building. This provides unattractive streetscape conditions and creates potential for auto-pedestrian conflicts.



Vacant retail store. The front yard was paved over to provide parking in front of the building for the retail business. Residents complain that the site is currently being used illegally for off-street parking.

To combat these problems, the Borough of Merchantville and Pennsauken Township have been making efforts to stabilize and revitalize this neighborhood. Over the past five years, Merchantville acted as the lead municipality of a Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP), which was intended to improve sections of Pennsauken, Camden, and Merchantville in this vicinity. The program was funded by the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, as well as other funding sources. It provided financial assistance to homeowners for housing rehabilitation and to businesses for façade improvements in order to create healthier, more attractive surroundings for

residents and business owners. New period street lighting was installed along Maple Avenue, and summer art and music concerts have been hosted in nearby Wellwood Park, as well as other festivities. Over the past five years, \$400,000 has been expended in this area under the program.



These are some of the businesses that received financial assistance for façade improvements through NPP.

Additionally, Pennsauken sought to acquire the 42nd street portion of the City of Camden that is located on the east side of US Route 130, as garbage pickup and streetscape improvements were lacking continuity along this street. However, the City of Camden declined.

Merchantville is currently considering declaring a 54-unit multi-family housing development in the West End, known as 606 West Maple Avenue, as an Area in Need of Redevelopment, based upon its blighting, unsanitary, and unhealthy living conditions. A Redevelopment Study and Plan is currently being prepared for the site to include rehabilitation as the preferred option. The Borough seeks to increase the quality of life for the residents of this apartment complex and to eradicate any blighting conditions.

5.4.2 Analysis

While the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) has helped to ameliorate conditions in the West End of the Borough and Merchantville has begun to target dilapidated properties, stability and revitalization of this part of the community is still a major objective of the Borough. The Borough should continue on this path, by developing a municipal strategic revitalization plan for this area.

Given the interrelationships that exist between Merchantville and its neighbors, effective stabilization and revitalization efforts cannot be achieved in the West End of the Borough without the cooperation and assistance of these communities. All three communities have an interest in encouraging the social and economic development of the area and need each other to address the fundamental problems in this area. Inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation is needed to achieve the greatest impact on these conditions. Accordingly, the West End is identified as a joint municipality targeted planning area on the Land Use Plan map.

5.4.3 Recommendations

5.4.3.1 Develop a Joint Municipality Strategic Revitalization Plan for the West End

It is recommended that the Borough form a coalition with the adjacent communities to develop a strategic revitalization plan for this area. The Mayors of Merchantville and Pennsauken have already agreed to meet on a bi-monthly basis to work on ways to improve the West End neighborhood. It is recommended that the Borough consider formalizing this process, by appointing a task force comprised of various neighborhood stakeholders, including inter-municipal government officials, local residents, civic groups, non-profit organizations, and local business owners to develop an inter-municipality strategic revitalization plan for the West End. This will serve several purposes; including opening the lines of communication between the various municipalities, coordinating revitalization efforts, as well as pooling resources to target public investments that will achieve the greatest impact on neighborhood conditions. It is recommended that the municipalities seek financial and consultative assistance from State, regional, and county agencies to craft strategies and implement revitalization activities.

To this end, the following are recommendations that should be pursued by the Borough of Merchantville, both individually and in conjunction with neighboring municipalities pursuant to an inter-municipality strategic revitalization plan.

5.4.3.2 Improve the Scenic Quality of the West End Gateway

During the Master Planning process, residents raised specific concerns about the gateways into the community. Gateways into the community are significant contributing factors to the public's perception of Merchantville. As a primary vehicular thoroughfare, the US Route 130 and Federal Street gateway into the West End provides humble images of the West End and Merchantville. The vacant buildings, uninviting streetscapes, and minimal landscaping are unattractive and uninviting.

It is recommended that a landscape beautification program be implemented at several locations of the gateway, including at the bottom of the Route 130 exit ramp, in the vicinity of the footbridge, and along Maple Avenue. Street trees, planting materials, street furniture, and even fountains or other features should be considered for incorporation into the streetscape. Funding for streetscape improvements should be pursued through the Department of Transportation as a Transportation Enhancement Project, as well as county and local capital improvement programs.

5.4.3.3 Retain Existing Businesses and Fill Vacant Storefronts

Efforts should be made to retain existing businesses, as well as to attract a broad range of new businesses and activities to the area. Reaching out to existing businesses, by initiating a dialogue for their concerns and complaints will help in this effort. While a business survey was distributed as part of the Master Plan process, additional in-person

efforts should be pursued. Additionally, concerted efforts should be made to fill existing vacant retail space along Maple Avenue. The Borough should maintain a list of available properties that is available to the public at Borough Hall and via the Borough website. Like Merchantville's downtown, enhancing street-level activity and maintaining businesses that attract customers and workers is essential to ensuring the vitality of the West End. While US Route 130 has had detrimental impacts to the neighborhood, its strategic location and easy access to the highway is an asset to this end of the Borough that should be exploited.

5.4.3.4 Eliminate Blighting Conditions in the West End

Concerted efforts should be made to eliminate existing blighting conditions. The proposed task force should work with existing property owners to mitigate blighting conditions. For instance, while it is believed that the owner of the vacant building located at 4203 Maple Avenue pictured in Section 5.4.1 above, intended to demolish the building and to incorporate the site into its adjacent wireless communication facility, to date, the demolition has not occurred. The task force should work with the property owner to either demolish the building or to make adaptive reuse of the site. In the event the building is ultimately demolished, gateway enhancements, like landscaping, should be encouraged. Its current condition has a blighting effect, as vacant buildings create a negative visual image for the neighborhood, harming surrounding property values.

The Borough and task force should further analyze the neighborhood to determine whether additional sites of blighting influences should be pursued in accordance with the New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. While the power of eminent domain is not intended to be used lightly and will often only be exercised as a means of last resort, the declaration of an area in need of redevelopment may be an effective tool in steering the property owner in a positive direction to improve the conditions of the property. One noticeably blighted property can affect attitudes and property values in a neighborhood. Removal of blighting influences will help to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

5.4.3.5 Continue Housing Rehabilitation Assistance and Home Ownership Assistance Programs in the West End

In order to help stabilize the neighborhood, the Borough and adjacent municipalities should pursue programs to replace the outgoing Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) to provide financial assistance to owners of both tenant and owner-occupied structures to help them make necessary structural and mechanical repairs. Often, older neighborhoods like the West End have filtered to lower income residents who are less able to support the capital expenditures needed to keep housing from falling into disrepair and abandonment. These assistance programs are critical to ensuring safe and decent housing for residents, as well as to helping stabilize the surrounding neighborhood. Proper housing maintenance will help to prevent a downward spiral to the surrounding neighborhood. Therefore, it is recommended that the Borough and adjacent communities continue to pursue programs for housing rehabilitation assistance, such as through the

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the County Home Improvement Program (HIP) for the West End.

It is also recommended that the Borough and surrounding municipalities continue to pursue homeownership assistance programs for neighborhood residents. Home ownership provides benefits for families, which can include wealth accumulation, greater stability, and a sense of belonging to the community. Homeownership also has important benefits for the community, as homeowners are more likely to reinvest capital in their properties in comparison to rental properties. Since owners tend to take better care of their properties than absentee landlords, communities with high homeownership rates often look more attractive than neighborhoods with few homeowners. There is a greater commitment through homeownership in improving properties and the neighborhood, given the financial investment that is at stake. The market value of nearby properties will also tend to increase as homes in a neighborhood convert from rental units to owner-occupied housing. Therefore, it is recommended that the Borough and adjacent communities continue to pursue programs for home ownership assistance, such as through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME).

5.4.3.6 Maintain a Visible Police Presence in the West End

The lack of pedestrian activity on the streets, coupled with covered windows of first floor storefronts, is telling about the safety, or perceived safety, of the West End. Current and potential residents and businesses will be attracted to the West End if they have a sense of security about their lives, families, and properties. Consequently, the success of West End revitalization is dependent upon providing a safe and inviting atmosphere for residences, businesses, and visitors. Public safety efforts should seek to reduce the amount of harm to individuals and damage to property, as well as to promote an atmosphere of comfort in personal security. As such, a strong police presence is desired to make pedestrians and merchants safe and to thwart criminal activities in this area of the Borough.

It is recommended that a multi-faceted approach be utilized. As suggested during the Master Plan process, a community policing approach that focuses on partnerships with area stakeholders should be an integral component to the Borough's approach to public safety in the West End. Specifically, an increased foot and bike patrol presence would allow police to interact with residents and merchants on a more intimate basis. This would also set a tone of the police working together with residents and merchants to solve community problems. Additionally, the use of parked marked police cars in strategic locations would create a visible police presence, helping to deter criminal activity.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the Borough consider either relocating the Merchantville Police Station to the West End, creating a Police sub-station in the West End, or creating a municipal complex in the West End (either as a joint facility for various Borough departments or as a joint facility for shared services with other

municipalities). As discussed in more detail in the Community Facilities Plan Element, this may solve some of the existing limitations with the Borough's Police, Fire, EMS, and/or Public Works Departments. It would also serve the dual purpose of creating a permanent and visible police presence in the West End, while creating more street level activity of persons in this section of the Borough. Revitalization cannot happen without activities in the neighborhood that attract people throughout the day and night. Adding a government facility component to this end of the Borough will bring more visitors and employees to the West End and will help to create more connectivity between the West End and the rest of the Merchantville community. By locating a police facility in this end of the Borough, it may also initiate more private reinvestment in the neighborhood, as business owners, residents, and pedestrians feel more secure about their persons and property.

5.4.3.7 Facilitate Pedestrian Accessibility in the West End

Due to the impact of US Route 130 and Maple Avenue's function as a transportation link to adjacent communities, traffic volume and speeding vehicles are a significant issue along Maple Avenue. Traffic calming devices at strategic locations should be considered to create a comfortable pedestrian environment. Police enforcement of the speed limit and crosswalks is also needed. Improving the safety of pedestrians by addressing conflicts between cars, transit, and pedestrians and enhancing the convenience and comfort of pedestrians is desirous for ensuring a livable West End neighborhood.

5.4.3.8 Strengthen Code Enforcement in the West End

In order to protect and preserve the stability, quality, and character of the West End and to prevent further deterioration and blight, it is recommended that the Borough and neighboring municipalities strengthen enforcement of building and property maintenance codes, as well as Zoning Ordinance regulations. The Borough should prevent and correct conditions that adversely affect the health safety and welfare of residents and that have a contagious blighting effect that accelerates neighborhood decline. Zoning concerns, like maximum impervious lot coverage, building placement, signage, and building reuse, can have significant impacts on the quality and character of the West End, as well, and should be closely monitored.

5.5 Land Use Issue 5: Stabilization and Enhancement of the Chapel Avenue and Centre Street Circle Gateway Area

5.5.1 Overview

As mentioned above, during the Master Planning process, residents raised concerns about the gateways into the community. Gateways into the community are significant contributing factors to the public's perception of Merchantville. The Chapel Avenue and Centre Street gateway circle area is experiencing challenges, including aging housing stock, occasional vacant buildings, and neglected property maintenance. Neighborhood stabilization efforts are needed to prevent further deterioration of this area.

Additionally, character enhancement of the gateway's commercial center is needed. The focal point of the gateway, 177 South Centre Street (pictured below), is not representative of the charm and historic character of Merchantville. It encompasses a non-descript building (Nando's Pizza) that serves as the central architectural feature for persons traveling into Merchantville from Magnolia Street. The strip center's expansive parking lot also dominates the streetscape. This front building lacks unity of design with the buildings located to the rear of the site. It has unscreened dumpsters and often contains litter in the side yard and parking areas. The building is located within close proximity to Chapel Avenue, a busy thoroughfare, thereby obstructing the sight distance for drivers who are exiting the strip center's parking lot on to Chapel Avenue. On the other hand, the buildings located to the rear of the site are located too far from the street and are completely disconnected from pedestrian and street level activity. The building experiences occasional vacancies in the storefronts and offices.



Photos of 177 South Centre Street.

Furthermore, the Chapel Avenue and Centre Street Circle gateway experiences high volumes of vehicular movement and speeding motor vehicles along Chapel Avenue. This is partially due to the generous cartway width of Chapel Avenue, which promotes fast vehicular movement. Vehicles traveling along Chapel Avenue do not get the sense that they should be slowing down as they travel through the circle. Another flaw is the proximity of buildings to the roadway in this area. As mentioned above, Nando's Pizza in the 177 South Centre Street Shopping Center blocks the sight distance of vehicles leaving the parking lot to enter into the circle. Additionally, the building on the corner of Magnolia Street and Chapel Avenue blocks the site distance of vehicles turning onto Chapel Avenue from Magnolia Street. The high speed of traffic, coupled with sight distance impediments, makes this a dangerous area for travelers.



Aerial of Chapel Avenue/Centre Street Circle and environs.



Vacant building (left) on the corner of Magnolia Street and Chapel Avenue in Pennsauken obstructs the sight distance for drivers making a left turn from Pennsauken into Merchantville. Adjacent building (right) shows evidence of neglected building maintenance, including porch roofing that is in poor condition.

Finally, a community landmark in this neighborhood, the Merchantville Community Center, is in need of structural repairs. The building, together with its grounds, serves the recreational, nutritional, and social needs of local residents. The bottom floor of the building serves as the senior center/nutrition facility, where the Salvation Army provides lunch services. The second floor contains a grand ballroom that is used for community meetings and is available for rent for public and private functions. The Merchantville Historical Society also stores their archives at this location and a portion of the building is being considered for a resource center for the Society to display its collection of historic artifacts, documents, and photos. The building is in need of major repairs, including roofing, plumbing, heating, and windows. The Borough would like to rehabilitate the building in such a manner that would preserve its historic character and integrity. *See Recreation Plan Element and Historic Preservation Plan Element for more details.*



Merchantville Community Center, 212 Somerset Avenue

To mitigate some of the afore-mentioned issues, the Borough of Merchantville, Township of Cherry Hill and Township of Pennsauken are currently applying for a multi-jurisdiction Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) grant through the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Community Resources for a period of five years. The total grant amount sought is \$525,000 for various programs, including housing rehabilitation, business grants, public area beautification, and infrastructure improvements. If awarded, it is anticipated that these funds will be utilized to partner with other programs to leverage funding, including the County Home Improvement Program (HIP), which provides funds for income eligible homeowners for heating, plumbing, electrical, and structural repairs to eliminate safety and health hazards for income-eligible persons, the Lend A Hand Program and Neighborhood Preservation Balanced Housing Program, which assists in the development of new and rehabilitated affordable housing.

The Borough has also hired an architectural and preservation consultant to conduct a condition assessment of the Merchantville Community Center and to prepare a Preservation Plan to guide the rehabilitation and preservation of the building.

5.5.2 Analysis

As this section of Merchantville borders on the Townships of Cherry Hill and Pennsauken, all three communities have a shared interest in stabilizing and enhancing the Chapel Avenue and Centre Street Circle neighborhood. Inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation is needed to achieve the greatest impact on these conditions. This will serve several purposes, including opening the lines of communication between the various municipalities, coordinating stabilization and enhancement efforts, as well as pooling resources to target public investments that will achieve the greatest impact on neighborhood conditions. Accordingly, the Chapel Avenue and Centre Street Circle Gateway is identified as a joint municipality targeted planning area on the Land Use Plan map.



Vacant property on the corner of Clayton and Chapel Avenues. Though technically located in Pennsauken, it is adjacent to, and across the street from, the Borough of Merchantville.

5.5.3 Recommendations

5.5.3.1 Improve the Scenic Quality of the Chapel Avenue and Centre Street Circle Gateway

During the Master Plan process, one of the owners of 177 South Centre Street participated in the workshops and reached out to the Ragan Design Group, expressing a desire to improve the site. It is recommended that the Borough initiate a dialogue with the owners of the property to explore opportunities for site improvements. As the property impacts visibility along Chapel Avenue, a County road, it is recommended that the County Department of Public Works- Division of Planning also participate in future discussions. As a major focal point of the Chapel Avenue and Centre Street Circle gateway, improvements to this site would significantly impact the scenic quality of the gateway.

5.5.3.2 Pursue Housing Rehabilitation Assistance and Home Ownership Assistance Programs in Chapel Avenue and Centre Street Circle Neighborhood

In the event the NPP application is ultimately not funded, the three municipalities should continue to pursue other assistance programs to provide financial assistance to owners of both tenant and owner-occupied structures to help them make necessary structural and mechanical repairs. As noted above in Section 5.4.3.5 with respect to the West End, these programs will help ensure safe and decent housing for area residents, as well as help to stabilize the surrounding neighborhood.

5.5.3.3 Implement Traffic Calming and Traffic Management Measures and Facilitate Pedestrian Accessibility

As described further in the Circulation Plan Element, it is recommended that the County consider retrofitting the Chapel Avenue/Centre Street circle to operate as a modern day roundabout, which would force vehicles to yield at the entry into the roundabout. It is recommended that traffic calming measures be considered, such as the installation of splitter islands, deflection of the roadway, raised pavement in the roundabout, better signage, and the installation of signalized

pedestrian crosswalks and yield lines prior to pedestrian crosswalks. It is also recommended that the Borough and the County work with the owner of 177 South Centre Street to discuss demolishing or moving the building that serves as a traffic and safety impediment. . The owner has exhibited a willingness to cooperate in this regard during the Master Plan process. Special attention should be paid to the placement of buildings on the site to create a more pedestrian-oriented atmosphere.

Additionally, the Township of Pennsauken, the Borough of Merchantville, and the County should consider means of improving the sight distance at the Magnolia Street and Chapel Avenue intersection, such as demolishing the vacant obstructive building or installing traffic signals in the vicinity. However, it is understood that the installation of a traffic signal would likely be complex, given the close proximity of the traffic circle.

5.5.3.4 Strengthen Code Enforcement

In order to protect and preserve the stability, quality, and character of this neighborhood and to prevent further deterioration and blight, it is recommended that the Borough and neighboring municipalities strengthen enforcement of building and property maintenance codes, as well as Zoning Ordinance regulations. The Borough should prevent and correct conditions that adversely affect the health safety and welfare of residents and that have a contagious blighting effect that accelerates neighborhood decline.

5.5.3.5 Preserve Unique Neighborhood Asset

The Merchantville Community Center and associated recreation lands is a significant neighborhood asset. The Borough should continue its efforts to stabilize the deteriorating condition of the building and to augment the recreational opportunities at the center. It is recommended that the Borough pursue grant funding for the preservation of the building in a historically sensitive manner, through the New Jersey Historic Trust, and other Federal, State, and County Programs and plan for needed capital improvements in the proposed local capital improvement program.

5.6 Land Use Plan Map

5.6.1 Overview

The Borough's Land Use Plan Map is located in the Appendix as **Map LU-4**. As Merchantville is an older community with an established land development pattern, the Land Use Plan map does not propose any significant changes to the land use. For the most part, it reflects the existing conditions of the community. The Land Use Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the existing mixed-use commercial areas, preserve the established residential neighborhoods and locations of educational, community facility, institutional and utility uses. It does, however, recognize the potential location of a community facility in the West End, as discussed in detail in the Community Facilities Plan Element. It further identifies two targeted gateway areas for joint municipality neighborhood preservation efforts (i.e., the West End and Chapel Avenue/Centre Street Circle Gateways), and recognizes several areas previously declared to be in need of

redevelopment by the Borough of Merchantville, as well as one current redevelopment study area (see Section 5.1.1 of this Land Use Plan Element above for further details).

5.6.2 Analysis

The Land Use Plan Map is broken into residential and mixed-use planning districts, based upon the district boundaries of the existing Merchantville Zoning Map.

Mixed Use Planning District (MUD)

The Central Business District and the Neighborhood Business District comprise the Mixed-Use Planning District (MUD) on the Land Use Plan Map, which contemplates an array of commercial, office, and residential uses. The intent of this planning area is to maintain and enhance the mix of land uses to provide lively centers of community activity. This planning district contemplates the extent and intensity of future land development to be governed by the principles and design guidelines set forth in the foregoing sections of this Element. It is in these planning areas where it is anticipated that gains in population will be accommodated, as upper floors are added to single-story commercial buildings and infill development will occur.²⁰

There are five residential planning districts on the Land Use Plan map that generally follow the boundaries of the R1, R2, R3, and R4 zoning districts on the Merchantville Zoning Map, with the exception of the R-3 zoning district, which is broken into two sub-planning districts, based upon their existing characteristics.

R-1 Planning District (R-1)

The R-1 Planning District is characterized by large single-family detached dwelling units with a scattering of other residential housing types (duplexes, townhouses, and multi-family buildings), as well as a few office and commercial uses. The intent of the R-1 Planning District is to maintain the single-family residential estate character along Maple Avenue. This planning area contemplates the extent and intensity of future land development to be low density residential uses, typified by minimum lot sizes of 18,000 square feet (which equates to less than 3 dwelling units per acre). Based upon an analysis of the typical lot sizes of detached single family dwellings along this corridor, it appears that the current minimum lot size requirement of 12,000 for inside lots to 13,800 square feet for corner lots in the Zoning Ordinance for the R-1 zone is inadequate to protect the estate character along Maple Avenue. It is recommended that the minimum lot sizes for the R-1 zone in the Zoning Ordinance be increased to 18,000 square feet to protect the prevailing character of this corridor.²¹

The R-1 planning district also anticipates that professional offices may be considered as a secondary use along this corridor, provided that the building is predominantly used for single-

²⁰ The Camden HUB Plan population plan calls for an increase in the Borough population of 1% by the year 2025, which equates to 3,830 persons. See Preliminary Draft Camden HUB Plan, dated 7/14/06, produced by the Camden County Improvement Authority, p.19.

²¹ Based upon an analysis of the GIS parcel data and existing land uses, the average lot size for single family uses in the R-1 zone is 18,593 square feet.

family purposes and the exterior aesthetics blend almost seamlessly into the neighborhood. The principles and design guidelines outlined in Section 5.2 of this Element are intended to provide context and guidance for future residential development in this planning area.

R-2 Planning District (R-2)

The R-2 Planning District primarily consists of single-family detached dwelling units intermingled with duplexes, twins, and small-scale multi-family housing that are generally aesthetically and size compatible with the surrounding single-family neighborhood. The intent of this planning district is to maintain the predominant detached single-family residential character of these older neighborhoods. This planning area contemplates the extent and intensity of future land development to be low density single-family use, typified by minimum lot sizes of 12,000-13,800 square feet (which equates to less than 4 dwelling units per acre), as currently reflected in the Zoning Ordinance. The principles and design guidelines outlined in Section 5.2 of this Element are intended to provide context and guidance for future residential development in this planning area.

The R-3(a) and R-3(b) Planning Districts (R-3(a) and R-3(b))

The R-3 Planning District is broken down into two sub-districts: R-3(a) and R-3(b). The R-3(a) Planning District is characterized by older single-family detached dwelling units interspersed with duplexes, twins, and small-scale multi family housing. The intent of this planning area is to enhance the detached single-family residential character of the district and to restore the sense of neighborhood and to inspire greater care of properties. On the other hand, the R-3(b) Planning District is almost entirely comprised of newer detached single-family dwellings. The intent of this planning area is to maintain the detached single-family residential character of the district. Both the R-3(a) and the R-3(b) Planning Districts contemplate the extent and intensity of future land development to be low density single-family use, typified by minimum lots sizes of 7,500-8,750 square feet (which equates to less than 6 dwelling units per acre), as currently reflected in the Zoning Ordinance. The principles and design guidelines outlined in Section 5.2, 5.4, and 5.5 of this Element are intended to provide context and guidance for future residential development in this Planning area.

The R-4 Planning District (R-4)

The R-4 Planning District consists of a mix of residential and institutional uses, including single-family detached dwellings, townhouses, twins, small and large-scale multifamily buildings, churches, and the elementary school. The intent of this Planning District is to maintain the mix of uses of this Planning District and to inspire greater care of properties and restore the sense of neighborhood, particularly in the southern portion of the district. The R-4 Planning District contemplates the extent and intensity of future land development to be a mix of low density single-family uses, typified by minimum lot sizes of 7,500-8,750 square feet (which equates to less than 6 dwelling units per acre), as well as medium density residential uses. The medium density uses include: two-family dwellings, typified by minimum lot sizes of 3,750-4,375 square

feet (which equates to less than 12 dwelling units per acre), townhouses typified by a maximum density of 8 dwelling units per acre and multi-family buildings, typified by a maximum density of 14 dwelling units per acre, as currently reflected in the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, the principles and design guidelines outlined in Section 5.2 and 5.5 of this Element are intended to provide context and guidance for future residential development in this planning area.

5.6.3 Comparison to Current Zoning Map and Recommended Zoning Map/ Zoning Ordinance Changes

The Land Use Plan Map is consistent with the existing Merchantville Zoning Map. However, it is recommended that the Borough amend the Merchantville Zoning Map to reflect areas designated to be in need of redevelopment by the Borough, particularly in instances where it is the intent for a redevelopment plan to supersede the development standards of the Zoning Ordinance, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7(c). The Zoning Map should also be amended to reflect any locally designated historic districts and sites pursuant to Article VIII B, Section 94-51.2 and 51.4 of the Zoning Ordinance in order to put potential property owners and business operators on notice of the Historic Preservation Commission's review of regulated activities in these areas. Finally, it is recommended that the Borough amend its land use regulations, where necessary, to reflect the principles, design guidelines, and recommendations formulated in this document.

5.7 Sustainability

As discussed in Section 3.1 of this Element above, Smart Growth is a common sense approach that involves planning for the long-term viability of the State's natural resources as well as social and economic systems. This Land Use Plan Element furthers the principles of Smart Growth and sustainability, as it encourages mixed use land use design, promotes a compact and walkable community, and focuses economic and land development activity toward an already-established area and, thus, away from the State's rural areas. By providing a desirable alternative to suburban sprawl, this will help to maintain the State's green spaces, which absorb climate changing carbon dioxide. As compact development allows residents to walk, bike, or take mass transit to work, school, and leisure activities, they are climate friendly, significantly reducing transportation-related carbon emissions. This type of sustainability helps develop healthier, safer, and more livable communities, with a greater sense of community identity and engagement, and a greater awareness of environmental issues and options for sustainable living.

The Planning Board supports and encourages actions that will protect the global climate and achieve environmental sustainability. Specifically, it supports means of reducing global warming pollutants (i.e., carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, fluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and black carbon), strengthening of New Jersey's residential and commercial building energy codes, and adopting measures to reduce government energy use. On the local level, it is recommended that the Borough retrofit Borough facilities with energy efficient lighting, urge employees to conserve energy, purchase Energy Star equipment and appliances for Borough use, increase the average fuel efficiency of municipal fleet vehicles, increase recycling rates in Borough operations and in the community, promote tree planting to increase shading and

to absorb CO₂, and educate the public, schools, businesses about ways of being more environmentally conscious.

The Planning Board also encourages homeowners and businesses to utilize energy efficient appliances and equipment to reduce the amount of energy wasted in heating, cooling, lighting and the use of electrical equipment. The energy used in the average home can be responsible for more than twice the greenhouse gas emissions of the average car.²² When you use less energy at home, you reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and help protect our environment from the risks of global climate change.²³ The Planning Board also encourages the use of energy efficiency in all new construction, including renovations to existing structures, particularly as Merchantville contains a significant amount of older building stock which usually does not have a great measure of energy conservation. All new construction, of course, has to meet the new State Standards for residential and commercial construction. It is further recommended that the Borough support appropriate policy resolutions calling for cities, communities, States, and the Federal Government to take actions to reduce global warming pollution.

6.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Downtown Revitalization

- Enhance the mix of land uses and activities in the downtown, by maintaining and encouraging retail and service uses on the first floor of buildings.
- Enhance the mix of land uses and activities in the downtown, by providing additional opportunities for uses on upper floors of buildings.
- Enhance the mix of land uses and activities in the downtown, by allowing additional activities on the sidewalk.
- Enhance the downtown's sense of place, by preserving Merchantville's historic character through preservation of historic resources, rehabilitation of historic structures, and the Historic Preservation Commission's early evaluation of the appropriateness of building demolitions in accordance with the standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.
- Enhance downtown's sense of place, by creating more pedestrian friendly spaces.

6.2 Harmonizing New Construction with Merchantville's Small Town Charm and Historic Character.

- Adhere to the design guidelines set forth herein for building placement, building height, building mass and human scale, architectural character and building form, proportion of

²² See http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=lighting.pr_lighting

²³ Id.

building walls to openings, building materials, roof lines, parking and utilitarian needs, and complementary elements.

6.3 Provision of Adequate Supply of Parking in Downtown

- Conduct an updated parking study to analyze parking shortfalls and to explore opportunities for parking improvements in the downtown, which may be adopted as an addendum to this Master Plan.

6.4 Neighborhood Stability and Revitalization of the West End

- Develop a Joint Municipality Strategic Revitalization Plan for the West End, which should take into account:
 - Improving the scenic quality of the West End Gateway, by embarking on a landscape beautification program.
 - Enhancing the vitality of the West End, by making efforts to retain existing businesses, to attract a broad range of new businesses, and to encourage street-level activity in the West End.
 - Eliminating blighting conditions in the West End, by working with existing property owners to mitigate blighting conditions and analyzing whether additional Preliminary Investigations should be conducted in accordance with New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.
 - Continuing housing rehabilitation assistance and home ownership assistance programs in the West End.
 - Maintaining a visible police presence in the West End, by using a multi-disciplinary approach, including stepped up police foot, bike, and vehicle presence in the West End, as well as consideration of locating a police community facility in the West End.
 - Facilitating pedestrian accessibility in the West End, by implementing traffic calming devices at strategic locations and police enforcement of the speed limit and crosswalks.
 - Strengthening code enforcement in the West End, including building and property maintenance codes and enforcement of Zoning Ordinance regulations.

6.5 Stabilization and Enhancement of Chapel Avenue/Centre Street Circle Gateway Area

- Improve the scenic quality of the Chapel Avenue and Centre Street Circle Gateway, by working with owner of 177 South Centre Street to explore opportunities for site improvements.
- Pursue housing rehabilitation assistance and home ownership assistance programs in neighborhood.
- Consider implementing traffic calming and traffic management measures and facilitate pedestrian accessibility at and near the Chapel Avenue/ Centre Street Circle, as well as at the Magnolia Street and Chapel Avenue intersection.
- Strengthen code enforcement, including building and property maintenance codes and Zoning Ordinance regulations.
- Stabilize deteriorating condition of unique neighborhood asset, i.e., the Merchantville Community Center, and preserve its historic integrity, as well as augment recreational opportunities at the site.

6.6 Land Use Plan Map

- The Merchantville Zoning Map should be amended to reflect areas designated “to be in need of redevelopment” by the Borough.
- The Merchantville Zoning Map should be amended to reflect locally designated historic districts and sites.
- The Borough’s land use regulations should be amended, where necessary, to reflect the principles, design guidelines, and recommendations formulated in this document.

6.7 Sustainability

- It is recommended that the Borough engage in efforts to be more environmentally conscious and to take actions to reduce global warming pollution, as described herein. It is further recommended that residents and local businesses be encouraged to do the same.
- It is recommended that the Borough support appropriate policy resolutions calling for cities, communities, states, and the federal government to take actions to reduce global warming pollution.

7.0 APPENDIX TO LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

The following maps can be found in the attached Appendix.

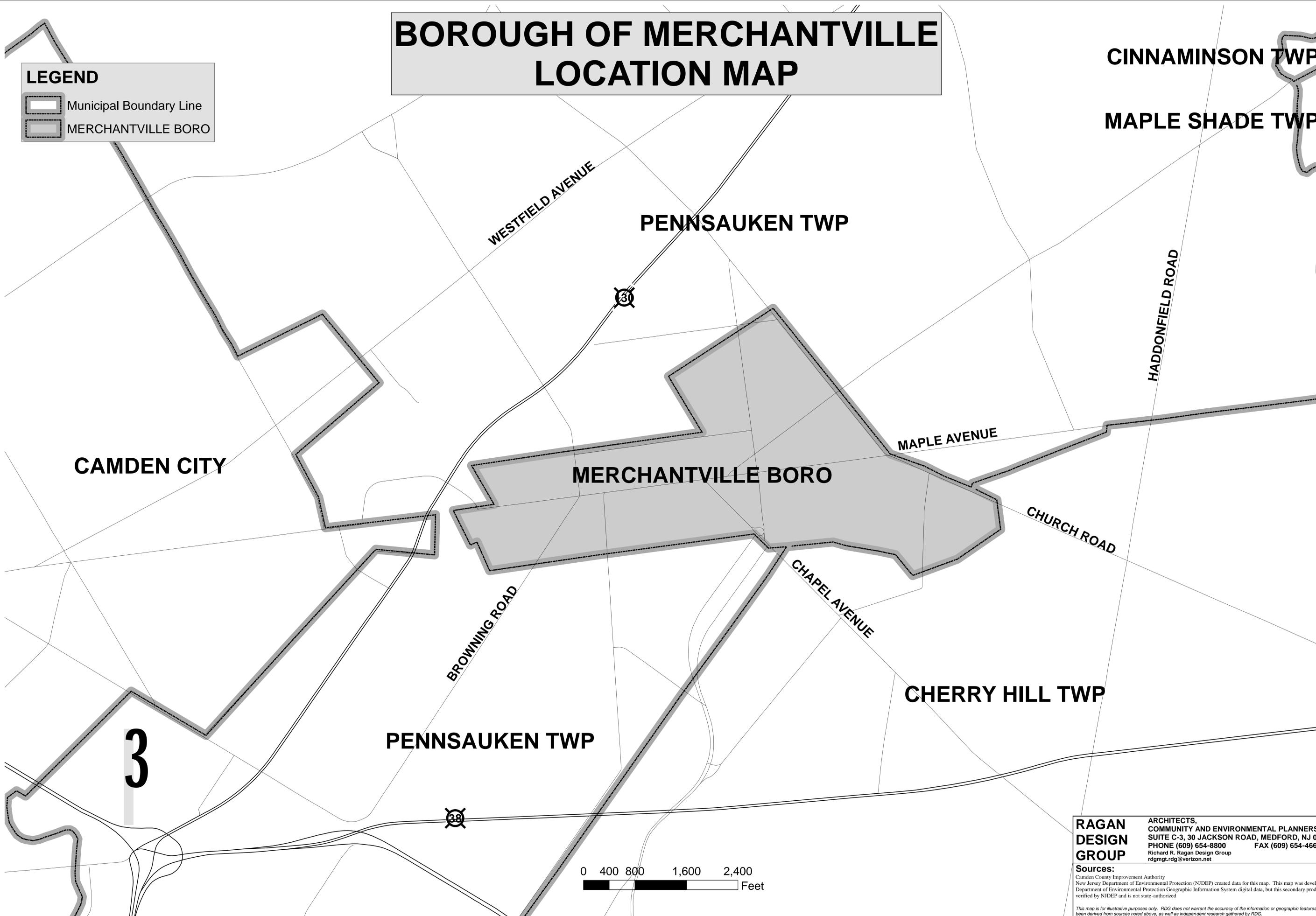
Location MapLU-1
 Existing Land Use Map of Merchantville.....LU-2
 Reproduction of Existing Merchantville Zoning Map.....LU-3

Land Use Plan Map.....LU-4

BOROUGH OF MERCHANTVILLE LOCATION MAP

LEGEND

-  Municipal Boundary Line
-  MERCHANTVILLE BORO



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Sources:
Camden County Improvement Authority
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) created data for this map. This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

This map is for illustrative purposes only. RDG does not warrant the accuracy of the information or geographic features identified. The map has been derived from sources noted above, as well as independent research gathered by RDG.
October 2007

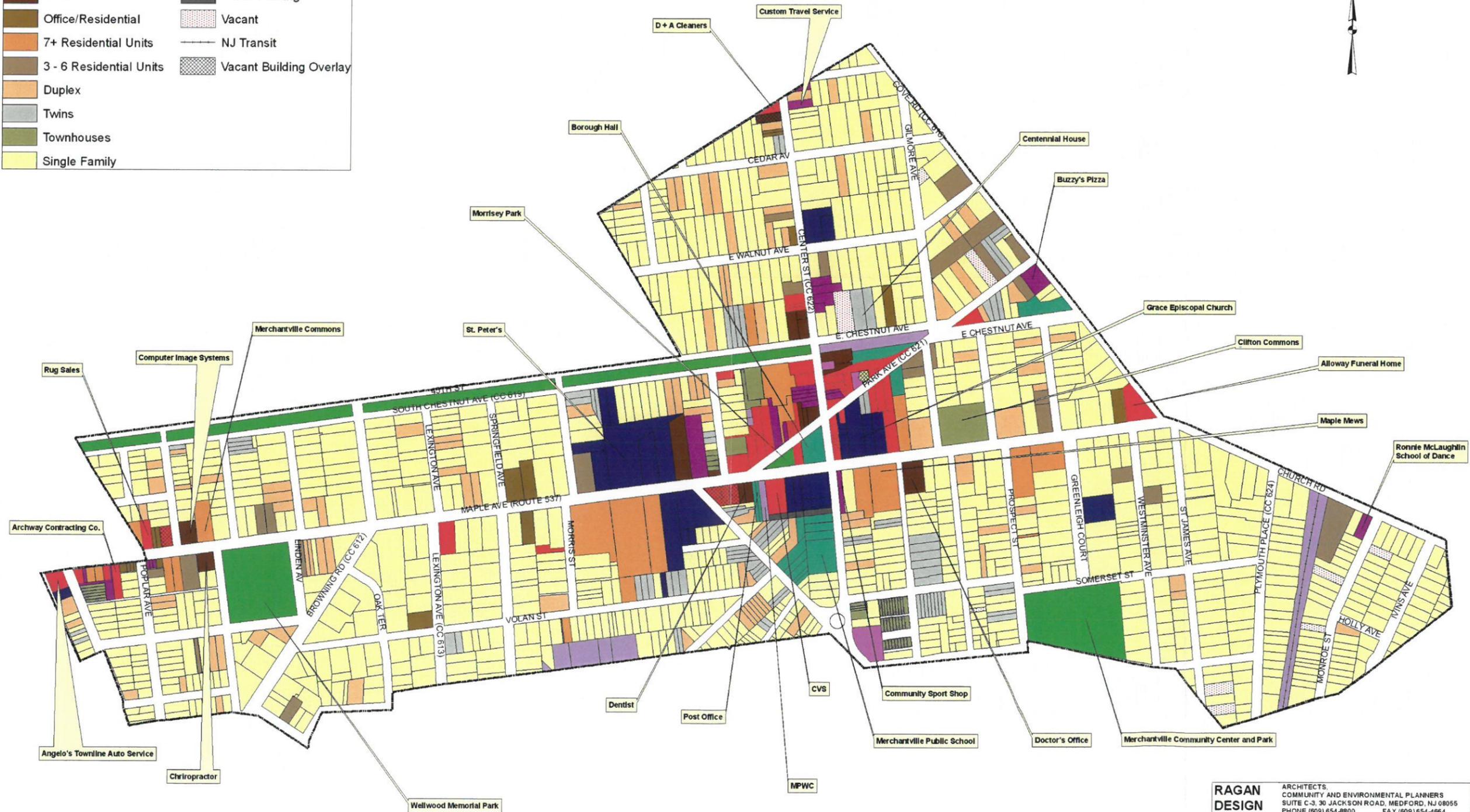
MAP LU-1, LOCATION MAP: Adopted 10/23/2007

BOROUGH OF MERCHANTVILLE EXISTING LAND USE MAP

LEGEND

LAND USE

	Commercial		Parks and Recreation
	Commercial/Office		Utilities
	Commercial/Residential		Private Institution
	Office		Community Facility
	Office/Residential		Public Parking
	7+ Residential Units		Vacant
	3 - 6 Residential Units		NJ Transit
	Duplex		Vacant Building Overlay
	Twins		
	Townhouses		
	Single Family		



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SOURCES:
Clarke County Government Authority
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) created data for this map. This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been modified by NJDEP and is not state-endorsed.
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August 2007

MAP LU-2, EXISTING LAND USE MAP

BOROUGH OF MERCHANTVILLE ZONING MAP

LEGEND

ZONING

	B1 - CENTRAL BUSINESS
	B2 - NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS
	R1 - RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY
	R2 - RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY
	R3 - RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY
	R4 - RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY



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Sources:
 Camden County Improvement Authority
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August 2007

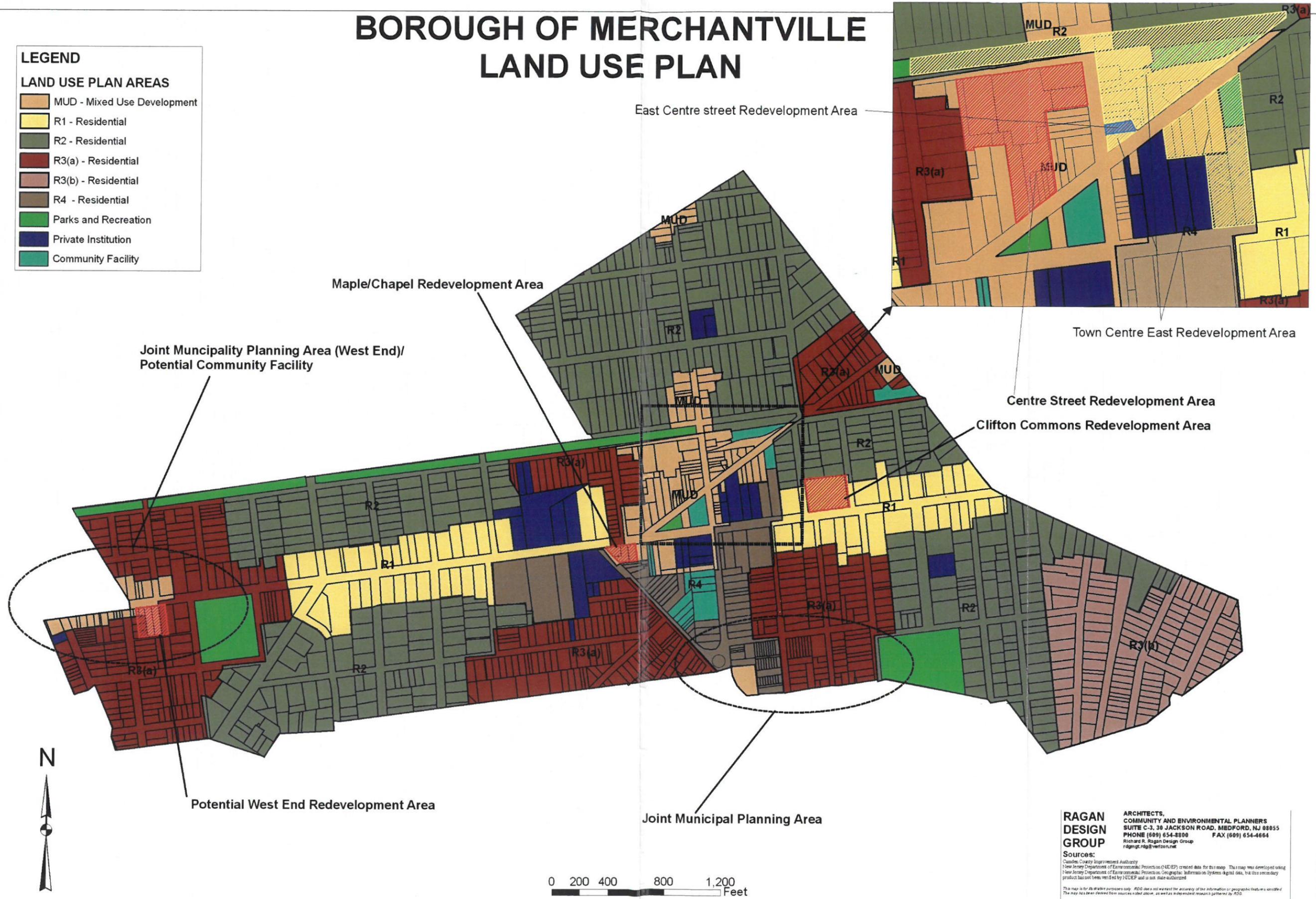
MAP LU-3, ZONING MAP

BOROUGH OF MERCHANTVILLE LAND USE PLAN

LEGEND

LAND USE PLAN AREAS

-  MUD - Mixed Use Development
-  R1 - Residential
-  R2 - Residential
-  R3(a) - Residential
-  R3(b) - Residential
-  R4 - Residential
-  Parks and Recreation
-  Private Institution
-  Community Facility



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Sources:
Caldwell County Improvement Authority
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April 2007

MAP LU-4, LAND USE PLAN MAP

III. HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statutory Requirements

This Historic Preservation Plan Element is prepared pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(10) for the purposes of: “(a) indicating the location and significance of historic sites and historic districts; (b) identifying the standards used to assess worthiness for historic site or district identification; and (c) analyzing the impact of each component and element of the Master Plan on the preservation of historic sites and districts.”

The Historic Preservation Plan Element begins with a brief history of Merchantville, explains why historic preservation is important, articulates goals for historic preservation, identifies Historic Sites and Districts in the Borough and standards used to assess their worthiness for identification, and provides the status of local preservation efforts. Although this Element establishes a strong framework for preservation, it is only one step toward an effective preservation program. Implementation activities are identified to improve the Borough’s preservation efforts. This Element concludes with an analysis of the impact of each element of the Master Plan on historic preservation, as required by law.

1.2 History of Merchantville

The Borough of Merchantville has a rich cultural and historic heritage. Merchantville was originally part of Stockton Township and was, at that time, a sparsely settled agricultural community.¹ On April 1, 1851, Moorestown Pike, later known as Maple Avenue, opened along a former Indian Trail.² The Pike was a gravel road that provided farmers with access to Camden and to Philadelphia (via ferry from Camden).³

Shortly thereafter, a first generation of land speculators purchased property in anticipation of the construction of the Camden and Pemberton Agricultural Railroad.⁴ These early investors were merchants in Philadelphia. Patrick Cunningham was the first of the Philadelphia merchants to settle in Merchantville in 1852.^{5 6} He was joined by

¹ Maureen McLoone, *Images of America, Merchantville*, Introduction (2001). Stockton Township was formerly a part of Waterford Township.

² National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District, dated August 1, 1994, Section 8, p. 2B.

³ Id.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Intensive-Level Survey of Historic Resources, Camden County, Volume I of II, Narrative Report, prepared by Kise Straw & Kolodner (January 2002), p.27 (*citation omitted*).

⁶ Cunningham named his estate Wellwood because of a natural spring, which he converted into a well on his property. Cunningham’s estate later became Merchantville’s first public park in 1936. Id.

Samuel McF McFadden, John Loutey, and Frederick Gerker.⁷ These four “Founding Fathers” established the town of Merchantville in 1852.⁸ Mrs. Loutey is credited for nominating the town’s namesake during a social gathering of the Founding Fathers in 1857.⁹

Despite the foresight of these initial real estate speculators, no railroad construction ensued in the 1850s.¹⁰ By 1865, they sold most of their land to a second generation of land speculators, including Alexander Cattell, who later became the United States Senator from New Jersey.¹¹ It is not coincident that Cattell served on the Board of Directors of the West Jersey Railroad and foresaw the development of the Camden and Burlington Railroad through Merchantville.¹² He along with various other families, including the Stetson, Homer, Cunningham, Morris, and Curtis families, donated a large amount of the land needed for construction of the Camden and Burlington Railroad, which traversed along Chestnut Avenue.¹³ Thereafter, the Camden & Amboy Railroad leased the line in 1868 and the Pennsylvania Railroad took over the lease four years later.¹⁴

The opening of the railroad in 1867 propelled the first wave of development in Merchantville.¹⁵ The railroad brought several affluent Philadelphia families to Merchantville in the late 1860s and early 1870s.¹⁶ While this wealthy class typically built mansions along Maple Avenue to be used for summer homes, other residences were built in the Cattell Tract north of the railroad, including the homes of lace importer Edward M. Furber (1869), wholesale dry goods merchant Christian E. Spangler (1872), and cloth manufacturer Joseph Bayliss (1873).¹⁷ Around this time, David S. Stetson started the first of several building and loan associations in Merchantville.¹⁸ By the time Merchantville was incorporated on May 18, 1874, it was a growing residential suburb of stately Victorian homes and contained a business district that served as the commercial hub for surrounding towns.¹⁹

⁷ Intensive-Level Survey of Historic Resources, Camden County, Volume I of II, Narrative Report, prepared by Kise Straw & Kolodner (January 2002), p.27 (*citation omitted*).

⁸ Id.

⁹ Id. (*citation omitted*).

¹⁰ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District, dated August 1, 1994, Section 8, p. 2B.

¹¹ Id. at pp. 2 & 3.

¹² Id. at p.3.

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ Intensive-Level Survey of Historic Resources, Camden County, Volume I of II, Narrative Report, prepared by Kise Straw & Kolodner (January 2002), p.28 (*citation omitted*).

¹⁵ Excerpt from Regional Plan Association’s 2005 Mayor’s Institute annual report, Background, p.8, released October 2005, accessed January 31, 2007.

¹⁶ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District, dated August 1, 1994, Section 8, p. 3.

¹⁷ Id.

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ Excerpt from Regional Plan Association’s 2005 Mayor’s Institute annual report, Background, p.8, released October 2005, accessed January 31, 2007.

Between 1880 and 1910, Merchantville's population increased from 440 residents living in 73 households to 1,996 residents living in 446 dwellings.²⁰ In contrast to the early affluent vacationers, most of the new residents that came to Merchantville from Philadelphia and Camden were middle class merchants and manufacturers.²¹ The railroad, land speculators, and financial institutions made year-round suburban homes accessible to the middle class.²² In the late 1880s and early 1890s, Merchantville experienced intense institutional development to meet the needs of its growing population, including the construction of the railroad station (1883), Collins & Pancoast Hall (1887), an Episcopal Church (1892), a new clubhouse for the Niagara Hose Company (1892), and the Merchantville Club (1892).²³

Transportation through Merchantville was further enhanced by the completion of the Camden Horse Railroad Company's trolley lines in 1892, which ran cars between Camden and Moorestown.²⁴ Thereafter, in 1916, Maple Avenue was paved.²⁵ Coincident with the automobile age, a number of Merchantville's founding fathers and wealthy residents died and their estates succumbed to development pressures.²⁶ Consequently, a new form of development occurred in Merchantville - the apartment complex, including Wellwood Manor Apartments, Greenleigh Court Apartments, and Wedgewood Walk, which replaced earlier generations of large estates.²⁷

When the Ben Franklin Bridge, spanning Camden to Philadelphia, opened in 1926 and Route 130 opened in 1927, new streets on the southern side of Maple Avenue were constructed to fill out Merchantville's borders.^{28 29} This effectively opened the door for auto-driven suburban development in the remainder of the Borough.

By World War II, the Borough was nearly built to capacity.³⁰ Merchantville's commercial center started to decline with the post-industrial economy and the onset of suburban sprawl and automobile-oriented land use patterns. When the nearby Cherry Hill Mall, Moorestown Mall, and other retail stores opened in the area in the 1960s,

²⁰ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District, dated August 1, 1994, Section 8, p. 4 (citing Census Reports, 1880, 1900, 1910, Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey).

²¹ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District, dated August 1, 1994, Section 8, p. 4.

²² Id.

²³ National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form for the Collins House, dated September 27, 1983.

²⁴ Merchantville, New Jersey Historic/Architectural Resource Survey, prepared by Carol A. Benenson & Associates for the Borough of Merchantville and the Merchantville Historical Society (October 1992), p.12.

²⁵ Id.

²⁶ Id. at 18.

²⁷ Id. at 19.

²⁸ Excerpt from Regional Plan Association's 2005 Mayor's Institute annual report, Background, p.8, released October 2005, accessed January 31, 2007.

²⁹ History, www.merchantville.com, dated October 2, 2005, accessed January 31, 2007.

³⁰ Benenson Survey, p.21.

Merchantville's commercial center started its decline. Residents of Merchantville and the surrounding communities traveled to those retail centers, rather than to Merchantville for goods and services. Recent revitalization efforts have helped to reverse this trend.

Today, Merchantville is a mature built-out suburban community. As of the 2000 Census, the Borough had a population total of 3,801 persons living in 1,607 housing units. A significant amount of the Borough's historic resources have been retained, which is an integral part of Merchantville's charm and sense of place.

1.3 Importance of Historic Preservation

Historic preservation is the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic and archaeological resources so that they continue to play an integral, vibrant role in the[] communit[y]. [Merchantville's] historic properties and the environment in which they exist are irreplaceable assets that contribute to the quality of life that residents enjoy and expect.

Historic properties are the physical links to our past, providing meaning to the present and continuity with the future. They are the physical records of the events and people that shaped [Merchantville's] history. Historic properties add visual and intellectual spirit to the physical environment that [Merchantville] residents experience daily.

Historic properties have both economic and cultural value. They provide a sense of continuity with the past, attract visitors, create a sense of civic pride, and provide opportunities to enrich the education of our children.

Historic preservation is more than saving old structures; it also includes conserving scenic views and natural landscapes that are a part of our daily lives. These are treasures we will surely miss if they are significantly altered or destroyed.³¹

2.0 GOALS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- 2.1 To promote awareness, education, and appreciation of the Borough's historic resources;
- 2.2 To preserve the integrity of Merchantville's significant historic buildings, structures, districts, sites, and streetscapes which possess exceptional qualities and exemplify the Borough's cultural, social, economic, and/or architectural history;

³¹This is an excerpt from an article that was prepared by Charles Scott of the State of New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (HPO), which originally appeared in the Office of State Planning (OSP) memo in April 1996. See *Historic Preservation*, Article Reprint, OSP Memo, April 1996 on www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo. References to "New Jersey" have been replaced with "Merchantville" for the purpose of this document.

- 2.3 To encourage private reinvestment and preservation of historic resources in order to safeguard the heritage of the Borough, to maintain and improve property values, and to strengthen the local economy;
- 2.4 To recognize that Merchantville’s historic resources are integral elements of the Borough’s character and identity, important factors in the Borough’s economy, and contribute to the quality of life in Merchantville;
- 2.5 To make preservation of significant historic resources an integral part of planning and decision-making processes at the local level;
- 2.6 To foster civic beauty and to engage in stewardship of publicly-owned historic resources by stabilizing and restoring these important resources;
- 2.7 To ensure that new construction, alterations to existing structures, and other exterior features are compatible with the Borough’s historic, cultural, aesthetic and architectural heritage and are harmonious with adjacent historic buildings.

3.0 NATIONAL AND STATE RECOGNIZED HISTORIC RESOURCES

3.1 Overview

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established the National Register of Historic Places as the official list of the nation’s historic resources worthy of preservation, which is administered by the National Park Services (NPS) under the Secretary of the Interior. The benefits of listing on the National Register include: (1) recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state or the community; (2) eligibility for federal investment tax credits for the rehabilitation of income-producing properties; and (3) a degree of review and protection from public encroachment from federal or federally-assisted projects, via “section 106” review. Under this review, projects that are federally funded, licensed, or authorized are required to take into account how an undertaking will affect historic properties. Under the law, a historic property is not only one that is already listed on the Register, but also extends to properties that are eligible for the National Register of Historic places.

On the state level, the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act of 1970 established the New Jersey Register of Historic Places as the State’s official list of historic resources. The New Jersey Register is modeled after the National Register and uses the same criteria for evaluating the eligibility of resources and the same forms for nominating properties. The benefits of listing on the New Jersey Register include: (1) recognition of a property’s historic importance; (2) eligibility of state, county, and municipal agencies and non-profit organizations for matching grants and low interest loans for rehabilitation and restoration activities through the New Jersey Historic Trust; and (3) protective review of state, county or municipal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic

property. Signature of the State Historic Preservation Officer on a nomination application simultaneously lists the property on the New Jersey Register and recommends National Register status to the NPS.

3.2 Standards to Assess Worthiness for Historic Site or District Identification on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places

The following criteria are designed to guide State and local governments, Federal agencies, and others in evaluating eligibility for both the National and the New Jersey Registers of Historic Places:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling an association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.^{32 33}

³²Criteria Considerations: Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- A. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- B. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is primarily significant for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- C. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life; or
- D. A cemetery which derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- E. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- F. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or
- G. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

³³See <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/faq.html> (accessed February 20, 2007).

3.3 National and State Recognized Historic Districts

There are two historic districts that are listed on both the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places: the Cattell Tract Historic District and the Oaks Historic District, which are both described below. See **Map HP-1**, Map of Existing Historic Districts and Sites. Additionally, the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office found the “Merchantville Town Center Commercial District” eligible for listing in the National Register.³⁴ However, no formal nomination has occurred.

3.3.1 Cattell Tract Historic District

The Cattell Tract Historic District was listed on the New Jersey Register on August 1, 1994 and on the National Register on September 8, 1994.³⁵ The Cattell Tract stands as a “well-preserved representative of the Victorian commuter suburbs that sprouted in the second half of the nineteenth century.”³⁶ Its development was primarily the result of the arrival of the Camden and Burlington County Railroad.

The District is located in the northern portion of Merchantville, generally extending from Chestnut Avenue and Park Avenue northward to the Borough limits. The district boundary also includes the Victorian train station on the south side of Chestnut Avenue.³⁷ It encompasses approximately 79 acres and consists of 192 properties.³⁸ The overriding character of the district is residential, with the exception of North Centre Street. The predominant architectural style of the District is Victorian. There is a full spectrum of Victorian architecture represented, including Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Second Empire, Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival.

The District’s namesake is Alexander G. Cattell (1816-1894), who was elected to the New Jersey Legislature at the age of twenty-four and was clerk of the House in 1842-43.³⁹ He moved to Merchantville in 1863 and three years later was elected United States Senator for New Jersey, succeeding J.P. Stockton.⁴⁰ Cattell purchased the 79 acres in 1865 from initial land speculators, and plotted the tract in 1869.⁴¹ Not coincidentally, Cattell served on the Board of Directors of the West Jersey Railroad and was aware of the impending rail service that would traverse Chestnut Avenue.⁴²

³⁴ See HPO-E99-138, Letter from Dorothy Guzzo, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, dated May 25, 1999.

³⁵ NJDEP- Historic Preservation Office, New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, Camden County, last update: 7/20/2006, p.8.

³⁶ Id. at Section 8, p.5.

³⁷ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District, dated August 1, 1994, section 7, p. 2.

³⁸ Id.

³⁹ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District, dated August 1, 1994, section 8, p 3.

⁴⁰ Id.

⁴¹ Id.

⁴² Id.

Early construction in the Cattell Tract includes the homes of lace importer Edward M. Furber (1869), wholesale dry goods merchant Christian E. Spangler (1872), and cloth manufacturer Joseph Bayliss (1873). The district also includes one Historic Site listed on the National and State Registers, the Centennial House, located at 17-19 East Chestnut Avenue, which is a stick-style double partially rebuilt by John Crump from building remnants from the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.⁴³

3.3.2 The Oaks Historic District

The Oaks Historic District was listed on the New Jersey Register on May 21, 1997 and on the National Register on July 9, 1997.⁴⁴ “The Oaks” is a residential subdivision that was designed during the early years of the automobile age and served as a “showcase and gateway” for vehicular traffic entering the Borough from Browning Road (formerly Wellwood Avenue).⁴⁵

It is located in the western end of Merchantville, in the vicinity of Browning Road and Maple Avenue. It is roughly 8.1 acres and is defined by Maple Avenue, Browning Road, Volan Street, and Oak Terrace. The boundaries are based upon the subdivision plan called “The Oaks” which was first filed in 1909 by landscape architect George E. Rhedemeyer, and then updated in 1916 to include the south side of Volan Street.⁴⁶

Rhedemeyer acquired the land from Arthur Dorrance, a partner in the Campbell Soup company. There are fourteen single-family houses in the district. Twelve of the houses are considered well-preserved from the early twentieth century and consist of a variety of revival styles, including Italian Renaissance, Neoclassical, Tudor, and Colonial.⁴⁷ The size, scale, and level of architectural sophistication of these structures distinguish them from the other period housing in Merchantville.⁴⁸

Several of the homes are linked with Arnold H. Moses (1862-1934), an influential architect in Merchantville, who was responsible for most of the Borough’s major civic and commercial architecture, including an electric light plant (1889), a clubhouse for the Merchantville Country Club (1917), the First National Bank (1921), the Merchantville School (1926), and Borough Hall (1928).⁴⁹

⁴³ Id. at Section 8, p.4.

⁴⁴ NJDEP- Historic Preservation Office, New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, Camden County, last update: 7/20/2006, p.8.

⁴⁵ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Oaks Historic District, dated May 21, 1997, Section 8, p.1.

⁴⁶ Id., Section 7, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Id.

⁴⁸ Id., Section 8, p.2.

⁴⁹ Id., Section 8, p.3.

3.4 National and State Recognized Historic Sites

There are three historic sites that are listed on the National and New Jersey Registers: the Centennial House, Collins & Pancoast Hall, and the Arthur Dorrance House. See **Map HP-1**, Map of Existing Historic Districts and Sites, in the Appendix. These sites are described below. It is recommended that additional nominations be made to the Registers in the future, as Merchantville has numerous historic resources worthy of recognition.

3.4.1 The Centennial House

The Centennial House was listed on the New Jersey Register on April 12, 1991 and on the National Register on May 30, 1991. It is located at 17-19 East Chestnut Avenue and consists of a twin house and carriage house/garage. It is located within the Cattell Historic District. This Stick Style twin house was erected in 1877 by architect and builder John Crump, a Philadelphia architect and builder. Crump was the builder of the Third Chestnut Street Theatre (1863), the Union League Club (1865), the Colonnade Hotel (1868), University of Pennsylvania Hospital (1873), the Commercial Exchange (1867), and the Bingham Hotel (1876) in Philadelphia, as well as others.

The structure's namesake is derived from the theory that the twin house is a partial reconstruction of architecture from the Centennial Exhibition in 1876, the first major World's Fair held in the United States.⁵⁰ Both John Crump and his brother, George, a vice-consul to Great Britain, were involved in the Centennial Exhibition. The architecture of the structure is significant. The Centennial House has "diagonally laid clapboarding, steeply gabled wall and attic dormers, and slender mansard towers crowned with cresting."⁵¹



Centennial House

⁵⁰ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Centennial House, dated April 12, 1991, Section 8, p.3.

⁵¹ *Id.* at p.4.

3.4.2 Collins and Pancoast Hall

Collins and Pancoast Hall, located at 4-8 South Centre Street, was listed on the New Jersey Register on January 6, 1984 and on the National Register on February 16, 1984.⁵² It is a well-preserved three-story red brick late Victorian commercial building, circa 1887.⁵³ It has a Queen Anne façade and overtones of Germanic Victorian brickwork.⁵⁴

It occupies an important site in Merchantville, where the main street, Centre Street, meets the former railroad tracks. The building was designed and built by John Collins and his son-in-law, Thomas Pancoast, to operate their Lumber and Coal Company. Collins acquired the land from Senator Alexander Cattell in 1886 and built the Hall shortly thereafter.⁵⁵ They designed the building to provide space for the growing cultural and social needs of Merchantville's populace, containing a second story auditorium and third floor Masonic meeting room. The Masons assembled at that location for three-quarters of a century.⁵⁶ To the rear of the building were the lumber and coal yards, which remained active until 1975, when the last family member sold the property.⁵⁷ Not only is John Collins an important historical figure locally, but he has national recognition. He was one of the founders and developers of Miami Beach and for whom its famous "Collins Avenue" was named.⁵⁸



Collins and Pancoast Hall

⁵² NJDEP- Historic Preservation Office, New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, Camden County, last update: 7/20/2006, p.8.

⁵³ National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form for Collins and Pancoast Hall, prepared September 27, 1983 and endorsed on January 6, 1984, Section 8.

⁵⁴ Id.

⁵⁵ Id.

⁵⁶ Id.

⁵⁷ Id. at Section 7.

⁵⁸ National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for Collins and Pancoast Hall, prepared September 27, 1983 and endorsed on January 6, 1984, Section 8, p.1

Over the years, the building has also been home to the Merchantville Post Office, the Merchantville Playcrafters for forty years, the O'Brien –Kreitzberg & Associates construction management and consulting firm, and is now occupied by a restaurant/catering hall called the Collins House.⁵⁹ In addition to being distinctive based on its own architectural merit, Collins and Pancoast Hall is an important landmark of Merchantville as a major focus of Merchantville’s social and cultural history.

3.4.3 Arthur Dorrance House

The Arthur Dorrance House, located at 28 Franklin Avenue, was listed on the New Jersey Register on January 5, 1994 and on the National Register on May 13, 1994.⁶⁰ The house was built in 1896 for Arthur Dorrance, the originator of Campbell Soup Company and president of the Joseph Campbell Company from 1894 to 1914.⁶¹ Dorrance acquired a parcel of land known as 28 Franklin Street (Avenue) in October of 1895.⁶² The following year, a 2 ½ story, gambrel roof subtype of the Shingle Style was built thereon. In 1897, Dorrance hired his nephew and chemist, Dr. John T. Dorrance, who originated the concept of canned condensed soup for which the company is well known today.⁶³ The Arthur Dorrance House is a landmark for its association with an important industrialist during the years in which he made contributions to the Campbell Soup Company.



Arthur Dorrance House

⁵⁹ Id. at Section 8. See also O’Brien-Kreitzberg & Assoc., Inc. press release obtained from HPO records (undated).

⁶⁰ NJDEP- Historic Preservation Office, New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, Camden County, last update: 7/20/2006, p.8.

⁶¹ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Arthur Dorrance House, prepared on June 4, 1993 and endorsed on January 5, 1994, Section 8, p.2

⁶² Id.

⁶³ Id. at Section 8, p.3.

4.0 MUNICIPAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

4.1 Merchantville Historical Society

The Merchantville Historical Society initially began as the historical research group in charge of lending historical authenticity to the various planned activities of the 1974 Merchantville Centennial Celebration. Through the years, the group has remained active and on October 20, 1989, the Merchantville Historical Society was formally incorporated.

Today, there are approximately 150 members. Numerous resident and non-resident enthusiasts participate in various ways, including volunteering and financial support through the annual membership dues. The Society meets monthly in the Merchantville Community Center and an annual membership meeting is held each fall.

Primarily, the Merchantville Historical Society: (a) identifies and helps preserve historic buildings, (b) searches for, accumulates, classifies, and displays historical materials, (c) encourages restoration and beautification of property, (d) assists researchers, including the Historic Preservation Commission, in their quests, (e) helps initiate deed searches, and (f) develops educational opportunities, including walking tours.⁶⁴

The Merchantville Historical Society has various goals for the future, including computerizing the collection catalog, expanding the historical inventory, educating the public through walking tours, school programs, and workshops, and establishing a formal Merchantville Historical Society resource center that will be open to the public. The Borough is currently considering utilizing a portion of the Merchantville Community Center as a museum to house the Society's collection of Merchantville history artifacts, documents, and photographs to be on display to the public.

4.2 Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission was created on January 26, 1998. It replaced the former Design District Review Committee. On October 13, 2004, the Borough created two historic districts, as well as new rules and regulations governing the Historic Preservation Commission.⁶⁵ The powers and duties of the Historic Preservation Commission are to:

- (1) Prepare a survey of Historic Sites of the Borough, pursuant to criteria identified in the survey report.
- (2) Make recommendations to the Planning Board and the governing body on the preparation and periodic updating of the historic preservation plan element of the

⁶⁴ The Society has developed and prepared brochure materials for two walking tours: the Oaks Historic District and the Cattell Tract Historic District. These districts are discussed further herein. The brochures are currently available in Borough Hall.

⁶⁵ See Merchantville Ordinance #04-19.

Borough's Master Plan, including but not limited to the addition or deletion of Historic Sites and Historic Districts identified in the Borough's Master Plan.

- (3) Make recommendations to the Planning Board and governing body on the historic preservation implications of any plan element of the Borough's Master Plan which has been or may be adopted.
- (4) Advise the Planning Board on the inclusion of Historic Sites in the recommended capital improvement program.
- (5) Recommend to the governing body sites and districts to be designated through amendment of [] Article VIII B. The criteria and procedures for designation are set forth in Section 94-51.4 of [] Article VIII B.
- (6) Advise the Planning Board on development and zoning applications affecting Historic Districts and Historic Sites, in accordance with the procedures established in Section 94-51.6 of [] Article VIII B.
- (7) Review all applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness in accordance with the procedures established in Section 94-51.5 of [] Article VIII B.
- (8) Provide advisory, educational and informational services to promote historic preservation in the Borough.⁶⁶

5.0 MUNICIPAL RECOGNIZED HISTORIC RESOURCES

5.1 Municipal Standards to Assess Worthiness for Historic Site or District Identification

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) gives municipalities the authority to identify, designate and regulate their own historic resources, through the creation of historic districts and individual sites, which are considered an extension of local zoning laws. N.J.S.A. 40:55D-65.1. As set forth in Article VIII B, Section 94-51.4 (A) of the Zoning Ordinance, the following standards are utilized on the local level to assess worthiness for historic site or district identification:

The Historic Preservation Commission shall consider for nomination districts and sites that have integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and association and that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the Borough, State, or nation.

⁶⁶ See Article VIII B, Section 94-51.3(G) of the Merchantville Zoning Ordinance.

- (2) Identification with a person or persons who significantly enriched the Borough, State, or nation.
- (3) Site of an historic event which had a significant effect on the development of the Borough, State, or nation.
- (4) Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, architecture or engineering.
- (5) Identification with the work of a builder, designer, artist, architect or landscape architect whose work has influenced the development of the Borough, State or nation.
- (6) Embodiment of elements of design, detail, material or craftsmanship that render a site architecturally significant or structurally innovative.
- (7) Unique location or singular physical characteristics that make a district or site an established or familiar visual feature.
- (8) [The district or site is] likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

The procedures for designation are outlined in Article VIII B, Section 94-51.4 (B) of the Zoning Ordinance.

5.2 Municipal Recognized Historic Districts

As mentioned above, on October 13, 2004, the Borough created two local historic districts via Ordinance #04-19, which overlay the B-1 Central Business District and the B-2 Neighborhood Business District. These districts are described below. A Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission is required before any regulated activity is conducted within a Historic District, including the demolition, relocation, change in exterior appearance, new construction of a principal or accessory structure, any replacement, alteration or addition of signs, shutters, outdoor displays, fences, hedges, awnings, off-street driveway, parking materials, or exterior lighting. The Zoning Ordinance sets forth standards for review by the Historic Preservation Commission for these types of applications.

5.2.1 B-1 Central Business District

The B-1 Central Business District is considered the Borough's "Town Center," predominantly consisting of first-floor commercial businesses with second and third floor residential uses above. The District consists of architecturally diverse building types, styles, and materials. A significant number of the buildings are attributable to the

Borough's development between 1850 to approximately 1930.⁶⁷ Significant properties within the District include: Merchantville Borough Hall, Aunt Charlotte's Candy Store, the Collins House Restaurant, and the former train station that now serves as professional offices. According to a State Historic Preservation Office opinion, dated May 25, 1999, a portion of the Central Business District is also considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.⁶⁸

5.2.2 B-2 Neighborhood Business District

The B-2 Neighborhood Business District consists of five neighborhood commercial nodes, including the commercial segment along Centre Street in the Cattell Tract Historic District, which includes the former sites of the post office and Aunt Charlotte's Candy Store, as well as the early-twentieth century business district along Maple Avenue in the west end of the Borough. This second, latter commercial center emerged near Poplar Street as Merchantville's west end developed into a residential neighborhood at the onset of the automobile age and the opening of the Ben Franklin Bridge. The other commercial pockets in the district include 134 East Park Avenue, 177 South Centre Street, and the small commercial node along Centre Street at the northern border of the Borough. The Neighborhood Business District consists of architecturally diverse building types, styles, and materials.

It should be noted that the two national and state recognized historic districts, the Oaks Historic District and the Cattell Tract Historic District, are not identified as local historic districts at this time. (See Sections 5.3 and 5.4 below for a more detailed discussion of this issue).

5.3 Municipal Historic Sites

There are numerous significant historic sites within Merchantville that reflect elements of the Borough's cultural, social, economic, and architectural history. However, to date, the Borough has not identified any Historic Sites for inclusion in the regulatory scope of the Zoning Ordinance. The primary reason for this hesitation has been a general apprehension of excessive infringement upon individual property rights. While it is recognized that municipal regulation of historic resources is the most effective means of protecting historic resources, the Borough is also cognizant that property owners at the local level need to accept this type of oversight. The Borough is mindful of the delicate balance that must be struck between the desire of the Borough to preserve its historical resources and the individual rights of property owners. Thus far, the Borough's policy has been to allow residential autonomy in this regard.

Even so, there are many significant commercial, public, and non-profit historic sites that are sources of identity for Merchantville that should be identified as priority properties

⁶⁷See HPO-E99-138, Letter from Dorothy Guzzo, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, dated May 25, 1999 (regarding impact of Town Center Transportation & Pedestrian Enhancement Project on historic resources).

⁶⁸ Id.

and earmarked for preservation as the Borough moves forward into the future. As such, it is recommended that the Borough include the following sites in its local inventory of Historic Sites in the Zoning Ordinance. While some of these structures are located within the local historic districts (*See Section 5.2*) and are already subject to local regulatory control, it is important for the Borough to specifically identify them as celebrated and significant historic resources of particular importance to the Borough. They will be recognized as the highest priority sites and the integrity of these historic resources should be preserved. Their identification will serve to guide the Borough's decision-making processes and activities in the future. Therefore, it is recommended that the following significant historic sites be included in the Zoning Ordinance as a Historic Site at this time. They are identified on **Map HP-2**, Proposed Municipal Recognized Historic Sites in the Appendix to this Element.

- Collins and Pancoast Hall, located at 4-8 South Centre Street (Block 22, Lot 21), is a significant landmark in Merchantville. It was listed on the New Jersey Register on January 6, 1984 and on the National Register on February 16, 1984 and is located within the B-1 Central Business Historic District.⁶⁹ It is a well-preserved three-story red brick late Victorian commercial building, circa 1887.⁷⁰ The namesake of the building is an important historical figure locally, as well as nationally. See Section 3.4.2. herein for additional details. At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards of worthiness for identification:⁷¹ 1, 2, 5, and 7.



Collins House and Pancoast Hall

- Aunt Charlotte's Candy Store, located at 5 West Maple Avenue (Block 23, Lot 2), is a significant landmark in Merchantville. It is located within the B-1 Central

⁶⁹ NJDEP- Historic Preservation Office, New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, Camden County, last update: 7/20/2006, p.8.

⁷⁰ National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form for Collins and Pancoast Hall, prepared September 27, 1983 and endorsed on January 6, 1984, Section 8.

⁷¹ See section 5.1 above, which outlines Merchantville's standards of worthiness for identification.

Business Historic District. This 2-story, 2-bay by 5-bay, rectangular Colonial Revival brick building was erected in 1901 to house the Beideman's Feed Store. The feed store played an important role in commerce for Merchantville residents and local farmers. After various other interim uses, Aunt Charlotte's moved into the building from its previous location at 16 North Centre Street in 1971 and has been attracting customers from all over South Jersey ever since.⁷² The Camden County Inter-Municipal Historic Preservation Zoning Study prepared by Elizabeth Malesich in 1992 (hereafter "Malesich Study") identifies this site as a significant structure.⁷³ At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards for worthiness of identification: 1, 7.



Aunt Charlotte's Candy Store

- The Merchantville Train Station Building, located at 10 East Chestnut Avenue (Block 29, Lot 17), is a significant landmark in Merchantville. It is located within the Cattell Tract Historic District, which was listed on the New Jersey Register on August 1, 1994 and on the National Register on September 8, 1994.⁷⁴ The District intentionally extends to the south side of Chestnut Avenue to include this Victorian train station, which now serves as professional offices for the Global Exchange Group. Train service, which began in 1867, was run by the Camden and Burlington County railroad, the Camden and Amboy Railroad, and then as of 1872, by the Pennsylvania Railroad. The train station was pivotal in the development of Merchantville, as it spurred Alexander Cattell's speculative development, which attracted people from Philadelphia to this new suburban community. Although rail service was discontinued in the 1970s, the train station

⁷² Historic/Architectural Resource Survey prepared by Carol A. Benenson & Associates for the Borough of Merchantville and the Merchantville Historical Society in October 1992, Survey 0424-036.

⁷³ See Malesich Study, p.13.

⁷⁴ NJDEP- Historic Preservation Office, New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, Camden County, last update: 7/20/2006, p.8.

remains an important historical marker in Merchantville.⁷⁵ At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards for worthiness of identification: 1, 3, 5, and 7.



Merchantville Train Station Building

- The PNC Bank building, located at 9 South Centre Street (Block 29, Lot 2), is an important building in Merchantville’s history. It is a Neoclassical-style⁷⁶ brick commercial building built in 1921 with a 1-bay stuccoed modern addition.⁷⁷ It was built for the First National Bank of Merchantville, the first banking facility in the Borough, which marked the substantial development of the Borough at that time.⁷⁸ The building style “marks a transition from the residential-scaled frame structures that dominated the Borough’s twentieth-century “downtown” to a more distinctively commercial streetscape.”⁷⁹ Merchantville resident, Arnold H. Moses, was the architect. Moses designed numerous houses in the Borough, as well as the public school on South Centre Street. According to the Intensive-Level Survey of Historic Resources, Camden County, prepared by Kise, Straw & Kolodner for the Camden County Office of Community Development in January 2002 (hereafter “Kise Survey”), this building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a significant example of its architectural type.⁸⁰ At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards for worthiness of identification: 1, 4, 5, and 7.

⁷⁵ Historic/Architectural Resource Survey prepared by Carol A. Benenson & Associates for the Borough of Merchantville and the Merchantville Historical Society in October 1992, Survey 0424-007.

⁷⁶ The Kise Survey describes the building as an Italian Renaissance Revival commercial building.

⁷⁷ Benenson Survey, Survey 0424-031.

⁷⁸ Id.

⁷⁹ Id.

⁸⁰ The Benenson Survey did not identify this property as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



PNC Bank Building

- The Community Sports Building (formerly Gilpin Apartments and Drug Store), located at 2 East Maple Avenue (Block 34, Lot 1.01), is located in a prominent intersection of the Borough. It is a Spanish Colonial Revival commercial/residential building built circa 1930.⁸¹ According to the Kise Survey, this building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as an intact, Spanish Colonial Revival-style commercial building rarely found in Camden County.⁸² At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards for worthiness of identification: 4, 6, and 7.



Community Sports Building

⁸¹ The Benenson Survey identifies it as being erected in the mid-1920s.

⁸² The Benenson Survey did not identify this property as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Merchantville Community Center, located at 212 Somerset Avenue (Block 37.02, Lot 1), is a significant landmark in Merchantville. This 1870 building was originally a Gothic Revival carriage house and stable designed by influential architect Isaac Hobbs for Harrison Robbins, one of the wealthy early merchants in Merchantville. Robbins was a member of the first Borough Council established in 1874. The building was originally located on the same property as Robbin’s mansion on Maple Avenue. Designs for both the residence and carriage house/stable were published in Hobb’s pattern book and Godey’s Ladies Magazine, a style-setting magazine of its time.

Robbins’ property was subsequently owned by John J. Burleigh, a well-known Camden entrepreneur who served on the executive board of various electric, water, trolley and railroad companies in which he had extensive investments. When the mansion was demolished circa 1920 and replaced by Greenleigh Court Apartments, the carriage house and stable was moved to its present location for use as a club house for the Merchantville Country Club. It is believed that it was renovated into the Tudor Revival Style at that time. After renovations, it formally opened on September 10, 1921. The country club building later became the Merchantville Community Center in 1954.⁸³



Merchantville Community Center

The Borough has hired an architectural and preservation consultant to develop a Preservation Plan to guide the rehabilitation and preservation of the building, as well as to prepare an application to the New Jersey Historic Trust seeking associated grant monies. It is anticipated that the Borough will apply for a capital grant in the future to provide matching funds for needed repairs. As noted previously, a portion of the building is being considered for a resource center for the Merchantville Historic Society that would house the Society’s collection of Merchantville history artifacts, documents, and photographs to be on display to

⁸³ Benenson Survey, 0424-052.

the public. At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards for worthiness of identification: 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6.

- Merchantville Borough Hall, located at One West Maple Avenue (Block 23, Lot 3), is a significant landmark in Merchantville. The building was built in 1928 on the site of Merchantville's first municipal building called the Stockton House. It is a 2-story, 5-bay Georgian Revival building clad with a Flemish bond brick veneer. It is a prominent building located within the B-1 Central Business Historic District. Merchantville's resident Arnold G. Moses and Joshua C. Jeffries were the architects.⁸⁴ At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards of worthiness for identification: 1, 5, and 7.



Merchantville Borough Hall

- Merchantville School, located at 130 South Centre Street (Block 26, Lots 19, 20, 21), is a significant landmark in Merchantville for the role it has played in education for almost a century. The original brick building was completed in 1915. In the 1920s, Pennsauken and Merchantville agreed to share facilities, which resulted in a substantial addition that was built in 1926. Both sections were designed in the Tudor Revival style, which was the signature style for academic buildings at that time. As mentioned above, Arnold Moses was the architect of the 1926 addition. Another addition for the library and classroom was constructed in 1941.⁸⁵ At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards of worthiness for identification: 1, 4, and 5.

⁸⁴ Benenson Survey, 0424-034.

⁸⁵ Benenson Survey, Survey 0424-037.



Merchantville School

- Grace Episcopal Church, located on East Maple Avenue, near Centre Street (Block 33, Lot 3), is an Old English, country parish Gothic church that was built in 1894. According to the Benenson Survey, it appears eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion C for its significant role in the cultural history of Merchantville and for its outstanding architectural merit. At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards of worthiness for identification: 1, 4, 6, and 7.



Grace Episcopal Church

- Trinity United Methodist Church, located at 38 West Maple Avenue (Block 25, Lot 5), consists of three building increments: an 1866 chapel, an 1894 large Victorian Romanesque Revival-style sanctuary and a 1953 Sunday School. According to the Benenson Survey, it appears eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A and B as Merchantville's first congregation and its pastor, Rev. Robert S. Harris, in the history of Methodism. According to the Kise

Survey, “this building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as an intact example of a Romanesque Revival church design seldom seen in Camden County.” At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards of worthiness for identification: 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7.



Trinity United Methodist Church

- Milepost, located on West Maple Avenue near Centre Street, is a four-foot tall granite marker. It has the carvings “5MTM” and “4MTC,” which are abbreviations for “five miles to Moorestown” and “four miles to Camden.” The milepost is significant in documenting the historic importance of Maple Avenue as the principal transportation artery between two areas of early settlement: Moorestown and Camden.⁸⁶ On April 1, 1851, Moorestown Pike, later known as Maple Avenue, opened along a former Indian Trail.⁸⁷ The Pike was a gravel road that provided farmers with access to Camden and to Philadelphia (via ferry from Camden).⁸⁸ At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards of worthiness for identification: 1, 7.

⁸⁶ Benenson Survey, 0424-035.

⁸⁷ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District, dated August 1, 1994, Section 8, p. 2B.

⁸⁸ Id.



Milepost

- Traffic Control Booth, located on West Maple Avenue in from of Borough Hall near the Centre Street intersection, has been a familiar site in Merchantville for almost a century. The original wooden traffic booth appeared outside of the Borough's first municipal building, the Stockton House. Photos dating to 1950 reflect an elevated traffic booth, as it is today. At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards of worthiness for identification: 1, 7.



Traffic Control Booth

- The Straub Building, located at 5 West Park Avenue (Block 22, Lot 28), is a two-story, four-bay brick commercial style building. The main façade features a

parapet with a central curved section and squared-off ends and contains a cast stone signboard reading “Straub Building.” The building was constructed in 1926 for the Howard S. Straub, Inc. realty company, a business established in 1915. The building reflects the prosperity during the Borough’s suburban residential development boom at a time when many new commercial structures were added to Merchantville’s commercial district. The building was constructed by Morris C. Pennell, a local building contractor at 12 South Centre Street.⁸⁹ At a minimum, this site meets the following Merchantville standards of worthiness for identification: 1, 4, 7.



The Straub Building

5.4 Consideration of Municipally Recognized Residential Historic Sites and Districts in the Future

While it has been the Borough’s policy to focus historic preservation efforts on the commercial areas of the Borough, it is recommended that a dialogue continue among Borough officials and residents to determine whether including significant residential historic sites and districts would be appropriate for Merchantville in the future, particularly for those that are on the National and State Registers of Historic Places and those considered potentially eligible for listing on the Registers.

There are two residential properties and two primarily residential districts currently located on the National and State Registers of Historic Places that should be considered in accordance with the Municipal Assessment Standards for Worthiness for Historic Site or District Identification for ultimate inclusion as a Historic Site or District in the Zoning Ordinance:

- The Centennial House

⁸⁹ Benenson Survey, 0424-032.

- The Arthur Dorrance House⁹⁰
- The Cattell Tract Historic District
- The Oaks Historic District

Additionally, the following properties have been identified either in the Benenson, Kise, or Malesich Surveys as being potentially eligible for the New Jersey or National Register of Historic Resources.⁹¹ These resources offer specific documentation of Merchantville’s historic resources. In the event the Borough decides to include residential Historic Sites in the Zoning Ordinance in the future, the following properties, as well as any other pertinent properties, should be reviewed for consideration in accordance with the Municipal Assessment Standards for Worthiness for Historic Site or District Identification for inclusion as a Historic Site or District in the Zoning Ordinance.

- 201 East Maple Avenue is a Colonial Revival residence built in 1906. According to the Kise Survey, “This building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a unique example of an intact, Colonial Revival-style dwelling rarely found in Camden County.”⁹²
- 210 East Maple Avenue, Greenleigh Court Apartments, is a three-story U-shaped building designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style built in 1926-27. According to Benenson Survey, it appears eligible for the National Register under Criteria A & C as “it is a well-preserved and good example of the work of one of South Jersey’s most prolific architectural firms, Edwards & Green, and is a building type not yet recognized among Camden County’s historic resources.”⁹³
- 32 Fithian Avenue, the Loutey House, is a three-story, five-bay, Italianate frame structure sheathed with asphalt shingles built in 1857. According to the Benenson Survey, it appears eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion B and C for its association with John Loutey, one of the founding fathers of Merchantville and for its architecture.⁹⁴
- 33 Fithian Avenue is a Colonial Revival residence built circa 1920. According to the Kise survey, “This building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a significant example of its architectural type.”⁹⁵

⁹⁰ For a more detailed discussion, see Section 3.3 above.

⁹¹ The Appendix in the Benenson Survey includes a 1984 Survey that identifies various properties as potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. However, it appears that these may be initial evaluations and are not necessarily concrete evidence of eligibility for the National Register. As such, they are not listed here. However, they should be used as a starting point for further research.

⁹² Kise Survey, p.46.

⁹³It was also identified as eligible in the Intensive-Level Survey of Historic Resources, Camden County, prepared by Kise, Straw & Kolodner for the Camden County Office of Community Development in January 2002 (hereafter “Kise Survey”)

⁹⁴Benenson Survey 0424-047. The Inter-Municipal Preservation Zoning Study prepared by Elizabeth Malesich for the Camden County Planning Board in 1992 (hereafter “Malesich Study”) also identifies this property.

⁹⁵ Kise Survey, p. 45.

- 11 Linden Avenue, a Queen Anne style residence built circa 1891. According to the Kise survey, “This building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a significant example of its architectural type.”⁹⁶
- 23 Linden Avenue is a Dutch Colonial Revival residence built circa 1894 and is the Thomas Stephen residence. According to the Kise Survey, “This building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a representative of late nineteenth century Dutch Colonial Revival-style residential architecture in Merchantville.”⁹⁷
- 15 Morris Street is a Queen Anne style residence built circa 1880. According to the Kise Survey, “This building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a significant example of its architectural type.”⁹⁸
- 127 Saint James Avenue is a Prairie style residence built circa 1920. According to the Kise Survey, “This building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a unique example of an intact, Prairie-style residence in Merchantville. The home’s design is typical [of] the period.”⁹⁹
- 19 Springfield Avenue is a Richardsonian Shingle residence built circa 1880. According to the Kise Survey, “This building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as an example of late nineteenth century Richardsonian Shingle style residence designed by Arthur Truscott.”¹⁰⁰
- 401 West Maple Avenue is a Colonial Revival residence built circa 1901. According to the Kise Survey, “This building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria B and C as representative of an early-twentieth century Colonial Revival Style residence designed and inhabited by Henry Alexander Macomb.”¹⁰¹
- 214 Westminster Avenue is a French Eclectic residence built circa 1920. According to the Kise Survey, “This building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a unique example of an intact, French Eclectic-style dwelling rarely found in Camden County.”¹⁰²

Therefore, it is recommended that the Borough continue this debate in the future to determine whether it would be prudent to adopt these residential Historic Sites and/or the

⁹⁶ Kise Survey, p. 46.

⁹⁷ Kise Survey, p. 46.

⁹⁸ Kise Survey, p. 46.

⁹⁹ Kise Survey, p. 45.

¹⁰⁰ Kise Survey, p. 46.

¹⁰¹ Kise Survey, p. 46.

¹⁰² Kise Survey, p. 45.

Oaks and the Cattell Historic districts locally as a means of safeguarding the Borough's historic neighborhoods and heritage for future generations.¹⁰³

6.0 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Residential Design Standards

During the Master Plan process, members of the public suggested that illustrative residential design guidelines be adopted that would guide owners of residential structures when making improvements to their residences or embarking on new construction in a manner that would not diminish the integrity of the structure or surrounding historic properties. It was further suggested that in instances where the design guidelines would not be met, the homeowners would be required to appear before the Historic Preservation Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Although it is unclear whether this type of regulation could be legally applied on a Borough-wide basis, this is a concept that can certainly be instituted for locally identified residential Historic Districts or Sites. Rather than requiring every regulated activity conducted in a residential Historic District or at a residential Historic Site to appear before the Historic Preservation Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness, the regulations could require only certain construction activities that are inconsistent with the residential design guidelines to be reviewed by the Commission. Therefore, in the event the Borough decides to incorporate residential Historic Sites and Districts locally, the Borough should consider adopting residential design standards.

Such residential design standards should incorporate illustrations or some other pictorial display, based upon the guiding principles of the existing "Standards for review by the Historic Preservation Commission" set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, the general design guidelines for "Harmonizing New Construction with Merchantville's Small Town Charm and Historic Character set forth in Section 5.2 of the Land Use Plan Element, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, as well as other appropriate design principles. Further, any design standards should require additions to historic buildings to be differentiated from the older structure, yet be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment. Likewise, such standards should require new construction to be in architectural harmony with the context of its surroundings. In the event the homeowner wants to stray from these guidelines, at that point, he or she would be required to appear before the Historic Preservation Commission.

Residential design standards could also be incorporated into a historic preservation booklet as guidelines to be distributed by the construction office or in an outreach effort to owners of historic structures throughout the Borough to encourage maintenance of

¹⁰³ In the event the Borough decides to incorporate residential Historic Sites and Districts locally, the Borough will need to notify property owners of potential sites or of properties within a proposed Historic District that his or her property is being considered for historic designation at that time, in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance requirements.

historic buildings and to provide illustrative examples of appropriate modification of historic residential structures and for use in designing new construction. While the guidelines may not be enforceable Borough-wide, this would serve as guidance to homeowners and would make them aware of the Borough's desire to protect the historic fabric of the Borough's neighborhoods.

Along those lines, the Borough should encourage maintenance of existing historic buildings. While repair and/or replacement of historic building fabric is inevitable over the lifecycle of a building, regular maintenance generally reduces the need for such modifications through early detection of potential problems. In addition, repairs made as a result of regular maintenance inspections tend to be smaller in scope, therefore retaining greater amounts of original fabric in an historic building. Unfortunately, the vast majority of historic preservation efforts focus on saving buildings once they begin to fail, rather than preventing the failure from occurring in the first place. Therefore, the Borough could also distribute guidelines on preventative maintenance.

6.2 Survey of Borough's Historic Properties

As Merchantville is an older community with few vacant lots for new construction, demolition of existing structures has been utilized in efforts to revitalize the Town Center, redevelop underutilized areas, and eradicate blighted commercial and residential areas. Demolition of structures can become highly controversial and can result in community divisiveness and discord. Therefore, one of the primary issues facing Merchantville is delineating how the Borough can take steps to revitalize and maintain its commercial and residential districts to help ensure Merchantville's future as a healthy and vibrant community, without losing its historic character and sense of self in the process. This is a complex question, and reasonable minds may disagree as to the correct answer.

The reality is that achieving this goal may require a combination of preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, as well as selective demolition and new construction. While there is a general preference for preserving the integrity of historic buildings and historic districts and promoting the rehabilitation of historic structures for contemporary uses, there are instances where demolition of dilapidated, insignificant, or non-contributing buildings may be appropriate. The Zoning Ordinance identifies a number of factors to be considered when a certificate of appropriateness for a demolition is being considered, including: (1) the historic, architectural or scenic significance of the structure, (2) its significance to the Historic District and the probable impact of its demolition on the character and ambience of the Historic District, (3) its potential for reuse under the existing zoning regulations, (4) the building's structural condition and economic feasibility of alternatives to the proposal, (5) the structure's importance to the Borough and the extent to which its historical or architectural value is such that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest, (6) the extent to which it is of such old, unusual or uncommon design, craftsmanship, texture or material that it would not be reproduced or could be reproduced only with great difficulty and expense, (7) the extent to which its retention would promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing the real estate values, generating business, attracting tourists, attracting new residents,

stimulating interest and study in architecture and design or making the Borough an attractive and desirable place in which to live, and (8) whether the property can be put to reasonable beneficial use without the demolition.¹⁰⁴

In order to assist the Historic Preservation Commission in this analysis, it is recommended that a comprehensive survey of the Borough's historic resources be developed that prioritizes sites in accordance with a ranking system. An effective preservation program requires a good inventory of historic properties. While various studies have been conducted by Benenson, Kise, and Malesich over the years, there is no centralized database that inventories the historic resources and prioritizes them according to their historic significance. Therefore, it is recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission, with the assistance of the Merchantville Historical Society, as well as others, develop a survey of Historic Sites of the Borough, which ranks the properties based upon the standards to assess worthiness for historic site or district identification, which is set forth in Article VIII B, Section 94-51.4 (A) of the Zoning Ordinance, as well as other applicable standards. It is anticipated that the Benenson, Kise, and Malesich Surveys will be used as a starting point in developing a centralized database and will be considered when ranking the individual properties. The Borough should pursue operating support funding, such as through the New Jersey Historical Commission, to assist in the research and survey efforts. The survey should ultimately appear as an appendix to the Historic Preservation Plan Element.

This type of priority ranking will guide the Historic Preservation Commission when reviewing Certificates of Appropriateness, as well as help guide the Borough's decision-making processes and activities in the future. This survey can also serve the dual purpose of determining whether particular properties should be identified as locally recognized Historic Sites in the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance as the highest priority historic resources.

Generally speaking, the highest priority properties should be preserved and their historic integrity should be maintained. In these instances, every reasonable effort should be made to use a property for its originally intended purpose or to provide a compatible use for the property. These high priority sites should not be demolished or altered in a way that would negatively affect their integrity and they should be identified as Historic Sites in the Merchantville Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. For contributing properties within a historic district that are not considered "high priority" properties, preservation is highly desired, but not critical. These types of contributing properties help make a historic area historic, but in and of themselves may not be historically significant or may not have maintained their historic integrity. For non-contributing properties, preservation is not necessary. Either the property is not considered historic or has undergone such significant alterations that have damaged its physical connections with the past. In all instances, new infill projects, especially on sites within a Historic District, should be sensitive to the character of adjacent development and should incorporate architectural

¹⁰⁴ See Section 94-51.7C.

elements, scale, texture, materials, and designs that complement nearby historic buildings.

6.3 Early Guidance from Historic Preservation Commission

While the Historic Preservation Commission is required to engage in an important analysis of the benefits and harms of demolition, this analysis most often will not take place until a later stage in the planning process when much time, money, and effort has been committed to a project. It is recommended that the applicant, and in appropriate instances the Borough, consult with the Historic Preservation Commission as early as possible in the planning process for a land development project. It is further recommended that the Borough's historic preservation regulatory review processes be as efficient as possible to allow projects to move forward in a timely and cost-effective manner without sacrificing the integrity of the preservation review process.

6.4 Nomination of Historic Resources to National and State Registers

In order to augment the Borough's preservation efforts, it is recommended that the Merchantville Historical Society nominate, or cause the nomination of, additional significant historic resources to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Merchantville Historical Society should utilize the Benenson, Kise, and Malesich surveys, as well as the May 25, 1999 State Historic Preservation Office opinion as a starting point.¹⁰⁵ In addition to enhancing the way in which residents and outsiders perceive the community, listing on the Registers also affords protection from federal and State undertakings that may affect the property, and may encourage the rehabilitation of certain income-producing properties through an investment tax credit incentive program. See benefits of listing on the Registers in Section 3.1 above.

To assist the Merchantville Historical Society in this effort, the Borough may want to reach out to universities and colleges in the area that have architecture programs in order to enlist the assistance of graduate professors and students in the preparation of application submissions. Additionally, the Borough should pursue operating support funding, such as through the New Jersey Historical Commission, to assist in the research and application efforts.

And finally, the Borough, in association with the Merchantville Historical Society, should engage in outreach to owners of potentially eligible properties to encourage them to place their properties on the National and State Registers.

¹⁰⁵ See HPO-E99-138, dated May 25, 1999, recognizing that the "Town Center Commercial Historic District" eligibility for listing on the National Register.

6.5 Historic Marker Program

It is recommended that the Borough, with the assistance of the Merchantville Historical Society, develop a comprehensive historic marker program, honoring all federal, state, and local listed properties and districts, to inform the public of historically significant sites throughout the community. They are easily accessible to the public and reflect the importance a community places on its heritage. Historical markers benefit communities by sparking further interest in local history and publicizing historic resources. Dedication ceremonies, which celebrate the installation of the markers, call attention to historic preservation efforts. As such, they can play an important part in an awareness and publicity campaign. By instituting a historic marker program, the Borough would be capitalizing on the important historic attributes of the community.

6.6 Historic Amenities to the Greenway

It is recommended that the Borough emphasize the former railroad's importance to the Borough's historical development by installing a railroad interpretive center along the greenway. The Interpretive Center could provide pedestrians, bicyclists, and wheelchair users with a self-guided interpretive tour, outlining the history of Merchantville and offering insight into the region's rich railroad history and how it contributed to the economic success of the Borough. It could serve as a welcome center for visitors to the downtown, provide walking tour brochures of the Cattell Tract Historic District, as well as provide visitors with a local business directory. These amenities would augment the historic and educational experience of all intermodal transportation users, by offering a variety of historical, recreational, and educational opportunities that few other multi-use trails can provide.

7.0 EVALUATION OF IMPACT OF OTHER ELEMENTS

The provisions of other Master Plan elements can have direct bearing on the preservation of historic sites and districts. Proposals for future land use, circulation or community facilities can directly affect these resources. As required by statute, the impact of other components and elements of the Master Plan on the preservation of historic sites and districts are addressed below.

7.1 Land Use Plan Element

The Land Use Plan Element is consistent with this Historic Preservation Element. The Land Use Plan Element is guided by the principles of Smart Growth, which include, but are not limited to the encouragement of: mixed land uses, compact community design, walkable neighborhoods, investment in existing communities with infrastructure, distinctive, attractive communities offering a sense of place, and community collaboration in development decision-making. In essence, these Smart Growth Principles are derived from traditional city planning principles that are embodied in historical towns and communities, like Merchantville. The Land Use Plan Element does

not alter the historic pattern of development. The Land Use Plan Element also recognizes that Merchantville’s historic resources are integral elements of the Borough’s character and contribute to the quality of life, by making it a desirable place to live, work, and play.

While development in areas within historic districts or in proximity to historic sites or districts does have the potential to detrimentally impact the historic character and integrity of the sites and districts, the Land Use Plan Element specifically seeks to harmonize new construction with the existing small town and historic character of the Borough. *See Section 5.2 of the Land Use Plan Element.* In particular, the design guidelines for placement of buildings, architectural character, building form, proportion of building walls to openings, and roof lines all seek to ensure that new construction protects the historic character of the business districts and older residential neighborhoods. The Land Use Plan Element also encourages the enhancement of the Downtown’s sense of place, by preserving Merchantville’s historic character and provides examples of opportunities for rehabilitation of contributing restorable historic buildings. *See Section 5.1.3.4 of the Land Use Plan Element.*

Additionally, it is assumed that this Historic Preservation Element will serve as guidance in determining whether a certificate of appropriateness should be granted for the demolition of particular historic structures and that historical preservation efforts and the standards of review for the Historic Preservation Commission will be an integral part of local planning and decision-making. Therefore, the Land Use Element is consistent with this Element and will not negatively impact the preservation of historic sites and districts.

7.2 Community Facilities Plan Element

The Community Facilities Plan Element is consistent with this Historic Preservation Element. The Borough owns several historic buildings, including Merchantville Borough Hall and the Merchantville Community Center. The Borough should strive to be a leader in stewardship of its publicly owned historic and cultural resources. As mentioned in the Community Facilities Plan Element, it is essential that a strategy be developed for stabilizing and preserving these properties. The Borough has hired Westfield Architects and Preservation Consultants to prepare a plan for the rehabilitation of the Merchantville Community Center and intends to seek funding for its rehabilitation in the near future. Stewardship of publicly-owned historic resources by stabilizing and restoring these resources is one of the goals of this Element.

Additionally, while the Community Facilities Plan Element recommends either that Borough Hall be retrofitted to better accommodate the Police Department or that the Borough explore the possibility of relocating the Police, Fire, and/or EMS Departments to the West End of the Borough, this Element recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission be consulted early in the process so that the potential negative historic impacts on Borough Hall and the B-1 and B-2 Historic Districts will be considered in local planning and decision making. Therefore, the Community Facilities Plan Element is consistent with this Historic Preservation Element.

7.3 Economic Development Plan Element

The Economic Development Plan Element is consistent with this Historic Preservation Element. The Economic Development Plan Element recommends that the Borough capitalize on the historic roots of the Borough, as it is the Borough's historic character and walkability that makes Merchantville unique and a destination. The Economic Development Plan Element recommends incorporating historic properties and districts into economic development promotional materials for the Borough. It seeks to encourage private reinvestment in the historic business districts in order to maintain and improve property values, create vitality, and to strengthen the local economy. Consequently, the Economic Development Plan is consistent with the Historic Preservation Plan Element.

7.4 Recreation Plan Element

The Recreation Plan Element is consistent with this Historic Preservation Element. It recommends historic preservation and rehabilitation of the Merchantville Community Center and also recommends the installation of interpretive signage at the greenway, highlighting its linkage to the former railroad and railroad station that was critical to the Merchantville's beginnings in the late nineteenth century. Both of these recommendations in the Recreation Plan Element advance the goals of this Historic Preservation Plan Element, which seek to promote awareness and education of the Borough's history and historic resources and promote the stewardship of publicly-owned historic resources. Therefore, the Recreation Plan Element is consistent with this Element and will positively impact the preservation of historic sites and districts.

7.5 Circulation Plan Element

The Circulation Element is consistent with this Historic Preservation Plan Element. The Circulation Element recommends slowing down traffic along Centre Street and Maple Avenue, including the segments within the historic districts and to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment. It is implicit that the present scale of historic district streets should be maintained or minimized, as road widths designed to typical modern engineering standards can unalterably damage the historic scenic character. This will help preserve Merchantville's historic districts and streetscapes and help safeguard the vitality of these districts by making them more pedestrian-friendly. As such, the Circulation Element is consistent with the Historic Preservation Plan Element.

7.6 Utilities Services Plan Element

The Utilities Services Plan Element is consistent with this Historic Preservation Plan Element. The Utilities Services Plan Elements acknowledges the Borough's aging sewer infrastructure and recommends a program to monitor the age, condition, and capacity of the system and to plan for periodic improvements. Like historic buildings, this aging system needs maintenance. It is anticipated that when improvements or replacements are made, the Borough will be sensitive to any adjacent historic sites or districts and will make efforts to limit any negative impacts to the historic districts or historic sites, such as

rehabilitating sewer lines without excavation, if feasible and economically practical. Any future cell tower locations should be sensitive to the Borough's historic setting.

7.7 Housing Plan Element

The Housing Plan Element is consistent with this Historic Preservation Plan Element. Historic housing stock is an important consideration in a housing plan. While the rehabilitation of deficient housing stock does have the potential to detrimentally impact the integrity of historic sites, this Element recommends the development of design standards that informs owners of historic structures and properties how to maintain exterior appearance, scale, texture, and architectural treatments and a listing of potential funding sources for improvements or alterations. Additionally, if any federal or state monies are used to subsidize the rehabilitation of housing stock, a Section 106 review will be required. Furthermore, any demolition, alteration, or new construction in the historic districts for the development of affordable housing is required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission. As such, the integrity of significant historic sites or districts will be safeguarded. The Housing Element is consistent with the Historic Preservation Plan Element.

7.8 Recycling Plan Element

The Recycling Plan Element is consistent with this Historic Preservation Plan Element. Recycling will not negatively impact historic preservation efforts.

8.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that Borough Council incorporate the non-residential historic sites identified in Section 5.3 above in the Borough's local inventory of Historic Sites in the Zoning Ordinance.
- 8.2 It is recommended that a dialogue continue to determine whether the inclusion of residential historic districts and/or sites in the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance would be appropriate for Merchantville. This is especially true for those that are listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places and those considered potentially eligible for listing on the Registers. In the event that residential historic sites or districts are identified locally, it is recommended that the Borough consider the adoption of illustrative residential design standards, as well as accompanying regulations that would require only those activities that stray from the identified standards will need to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission.
- 8.3 It is recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission, with the assistance of the Merchantville Historical Society, develop a centralized database of prioritized Borough Historic Resources that ranks properties based upon the

Standards to Assess Worthiness for Historic Site or District Identification as set forth in Article VIII B, Section 94-51.4 (A) of the Zoning Ordinance.

- 8.4 It is recommended that the historic preservation regulatory review process be as efficient as possible and be conducted during the early planning stages of a land development project.
- 8.5 It is recommended that the Merchantville Historical Society nominate, or cause the nomination of, additional significant historic resources to the State and National Registers, using the Benenson, Kise, and Malesich surveys, as well as the May 25, 1999 State Historic Preservation Office opinion, as a starting point. It is recommended that the Borough seek outside assistance and grant funding for these purposes. The Borough should also engage in outreach to owners of potentially eligible properties to encourage them to nominate their properties to the State and National Registers.
- 8.6 It is recommended that the Borough develop a comprehensive historic marker program.
- 8.7 It is recommended that the Borough emphasize the former railroad's importance to the Borough's historical development by installing a railroad interpretive center along the greenway.

9.0 APPENDIX TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

The following maps can be found in the Appendix to this Element.

Existing Historic Districts and Sites.....HP-1
Proposed Municipal Recognized Historic Sites.....HP-2

BOROUGH OF MERCHANTVILLE PROPOSED MUNICIPAL RECOGNIZED HISTORIC SITES

LEGEND
 Proposed Historic Sites



PROPOSED MUNICIPAL RECOGNIZED SITES Borough of Merchantville	
Id Number	Proposed Municipal Site
1	Collins & Pancoast Hall
2	Aunt Charlotte's Candy
3	Train Station Building
4	PNC Bank Building
5	Community Sports Building
6	Merchantville Community Center
7	Borough Hall
8	Public School
9	Grace Episcopal Church
10	Trinity United Methodist Church
11	Mile Post Marker
12	Traffic Control Booth
13	Straub Building



RAGAN DESIGN GROUP
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Sources:
 Camden County Improvement Authority
 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) created data for this map. This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System (GIS) data, but the necessary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not a substitute.

This map is for illustrative purposes only. RAGAN does not warrant the accuracy of the information or geographic features identified. The map has been derived from sources listed above, as well as independent research gathered by RAGAN.
 August 2007

MAP HP-2, PROPOSED MUNICIPAL RECOGNIZED HISTORIC SITES

IV. COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As set forth in the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(6), a community facilities plan element shows the existing and proposed location and type of educational or cultural facilities, historic sites,¹ libraries, hospitals, firehouses, police stations and other related facilities, including their relation to the surrounding areas. This Element also sets forth goals for the Borough's community services and facilities, inventories and analyzes existing conditions, and provides specific objectives or actions to be taken.

2.0 GOALS FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 2.1 Provide quality and cost-effective community services and facilities to meet the needs of the Borough's residential and business population;
- 2.2 Preserve, maintain, and improve the community's stock of buildings, facilities, and equipment.

3.0 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The inventory of existing conditions examines staffing levels, equipment, and facilities for the various community facilities and identifies deficiencies, including space allocation, condition, and safety. This analysis was developed from interviews with department officials. The Borough's community facilities are identified on **Map CF-1**, the Community Facilities Map located in the Appendix.

3.1 Borough Hall

3.1.1 Facility

The primary administrative offices for the Borough are located in Merchantville Borough Hall, which is located at One West Maple Avenue. The building provides administrative space for the following departments:

- Borough Administrator
- Borough Clerk/Registrar of Bureau Statistics
- Finance Department
- Mayor's Office
- Municipal Court
- Police Department
- Tax Assessor

¹ Historic sites are covered in the Historic Preservation Plan Element.

- Tax Collector

Additionally, the Borough Hall Annex, which was formerly the police garage and converted to office space in June 2005, provides administrative space for the following departments:

- Building Inspector
- Community Affairs
- Neighborhood Preservation Program
- Zoning and Code Enforcement

In addition to administrative offices, Borough Hall contains a public meeting room on the second floor that the various boards and commissions utilize, as well as council/court chambers, which doubles as a conference room during normal business hours. Office and storage space is generally considered sufficient in both the Borough Hall and the Annex, with the exception of the Police Department (discussed further herein) and the Municipal Court offices, which lacks both office and storage space.

A principal concern for Borough Hall facilities is building maintenance. The building needs weatherproofing, including window refurbishment or replacement, and the exterior brickwork and steps need to be repointed. One section of the exterior wall is beginning to bow, as a result of the current condition of the mortar. As it is important for the Borough to preserve, maintain, and improve the community's stock of buildings and facilities, it is recommended that the Borough initiate a mechanical and structural assessment of Borough Hall, as well as all of the Borough's buildings and facilities, and develop a maintenance schedule for needed improvements. It is suggested that large capital expenditures be planned for via a recommended capital improvement plan (discussed further herein) and grant and loan opportunities be explored through the New Jersey Historic Trust. As Borough Hall is located in a Historic District and is also an identified Historic Site in the Historic Preservation Plan Element, exterior improvements to the building should first receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission.

3.1.2 Staff

There are 12 Borough employees who work within the Administration Offices, exclusive of the Police Department.² Many of these employees work part-time. The following table sets forth the number of employees in each department and their part-time or full-time status.

² This figure does not reflect off-site Borough employees, such as fire prevention, sewer engineer, council persons, municipal court professionals, recreation, or public works. Only those employees that have offices in the Borough Hall are included here. The Building Inspector is not listed because he is not considered a Borough employee. There is an interlocal agreement with the Borough of Collingswood for his services. He maintains 4 office hours and also conducts inspections. The police department staff is described in the following section.

Figure 1, Breakdown of Employee Status

Department	Full-Time	Part-Time	Notes
Tax Assessment		1	1.5 hrs/wk
Finance Department		1	14 hrs/wk
Municipal Court	1	3	21 hrs/wk, 14 hrs/wk, 3 hrs/wk
Borough Clerk's Office	1		Deputy Clerk/NPP Coordinator
Borough Administrator	1		Administrator/Tax Collector/Borough Clerk
Tax/Sewer Collection	1		Deputy Tax Collector
Zoning and Code Enforcement		1	21 hrs/wk
Building Inspection		1	4 hrs/wk
Other clerical		1	17 hrs/wk
Total:	4	8	

The Borough Administrator considers the current staffing levels to be sufficient to meet the functions and responsibilities of each department. It is believed that additional staffing levels are not necessary at this time. Members of the public generally understand and accept the part-time availability of Borough staff.

3.1.3 Equipment

Currently, each Borough department utilizes its own software programs to manage data. There is no centralized database that allows information to be shared by various departments. Merchantville would benefit from a centralized municipal management system that would allow an administrative user to view information, while restricting editing capabilities to individual departments. Given the part-time availability of Borough employees, this access would provide better customer service to Borough residents and businesses. It is recommended that the Borough explore this type of municipal data management system in the future. It is recommended that a needs assessment, cost assessment, and grant funding be explored. However, it is recognized that given current financial restraints, this is not a priority.

Additionally, there is a general need for functional office furniture throughout Borough Hall that will maximize the amount of existing office space and will accommodate modern technology.

3.2 Police Department

3.2.1 Staff

The Police Department is comprised of 17 persons, including the Chief of Police, 12 patrol officers, one detective, one part-time parking enforcement officer, one community affairs/crime prevention officer, and one secretary. The Chief of Police considers the current police department staffing levels to be sufficient to meet the needs of the community. However, he has indicated that it would be beneficial for the Department to have an administrative officer who would be responsible for grant writing and

administration of day-to-day operations of the department. This would allow the Borough to seek more grant funding for department operations and would also allow the Chief of Police to focus on the most important matters of the Department. However, the Chief of Police recognizes that given current financial restraints, this is not a priority.

3.2.2 Equipment

The Department has seven police vehicles, consisting of six marked cars and one unmarked car utilized by the detective, as well as three bicycles utilized for bike patrols. Five officers are trained for bike patrol. The police vehicles are equipped with mobile data terminals and are GPS³ capable; however, they do not have the GPS software yet. It is anticipated that they will be GPS linked to the County within a year. It is estimated that it will cost less than \$1,000 total, which is based upon the estimated fractional share of the software costs. As a large capital expenditure was funded in 2006 for handguns, new police radios, and office furniture, the department does not anticipate large capital expenditures in the near future.

One identified equipment need is a County-wide radio system. From time to time, emergencies arise involving multiple towns. It is imperative for local police departments to be able to effortlessly communicate with each other. Currently, the process is very cumbersome. A Camden County Central Communications Center radio committee has been formed to try to improve its emergency communications system. It is recommended that the Chief of Police and Borough Officials continue to participate in the committee discussions and keep apprised of the committee's progress in developing a county-wide radio system that will facilitate communication by multiple departments.

3.2.3 Facility

As mentioned above, the Police Department is located within historic Borough Hall. There are only three offices within the Department: one for the Chief of Police, the Detective, and the Department Secretary. The Detective's office also doubles as a filing room. The Secretary is enclosed in a confined room that contains a computer terminal for motor vehicle records. Due to the limited space, the secretary must vacate her desk in order for officers to obtain access to the computer terminal. There is one holding cell for single occupancy with outdated bedding provisions. The Police Department lacks an interview room and a vehicle sally port area.

Additionally, employee and visitor parking is very limited. There is a small, ill-defined parking area located behind Borough Hall. Other police parking is not secure, nor in close proximity, which garners complaints from officers and municipal court personnel who are concerned about safety and vandalism to their vehicles. Better signage is also needed on the building to identify the outside entrance to the Police Department.

³ Global Positioning System.

In addition to the lack of adequate space and parking, the existing facilities do not have adequate security measures in place. There are no defined public versus private spaces in the Police Department, which poses a security issue for the officers, prisoners, as well as members of the public. The Police Department should have separate access for officers and the public. There should also be secure corridors and circulation space. However, the Chief and the Detective are located in unsecured offices. There is no barrier between the door to the police station wing of the building and the Chief and detective's offices. Members of the public use the same entrance that prisoners are brought through and utilize the same hallway. It is feasible for members of the public to enter the hallway while a prisoner is being transported into the building for processing, which could cause a potential conflict. As mentioned previously, there is no vehicle sally port to transport prisoners to and from the municipal detention facility. Prisoners are brought into the rear public entrance of the police station via a concrete staircase, which poses a hazard, particularly for combative prisoners or persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Also, the size of the prisoner processing area is very small, with officers located within close proximity to the prisoners. These deficiencies pose risks to officer, prisoner, and public safety.

In sum, while the Borough is not considered to be in default of current municipal detention facility standards due to its "grandfathered" status as a pre-existing facility, the Police Department office, parking, prisoner, and security measures are deficient for modern day standards and would not meet the minimum standards for new or renovated facilities.⁴

Over the years, there have been alternative locations considered for the Police Department. There have been cursory discussions about either entering into a shared services agreement with other communities or moving the Police Department out of Borough Hall and combining it with other Borough departments, such as Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Public Works, or the Niagara Fire Company at another location.

There were public concerns raised during the Master Plan meetings that the quality of police services would suffer if the Merchantville Police Department were merged with another town like Pennsauken, Camden, or Cherry Hill, given the very different scale of the communities and approach to policing, as Merchantville has had the benefit of tailored services inherent to a small town. Most participants in the Master Plan meetings favored maintaining the Merchantville Police Department.

Given the restraints of the current Police Department facility and the need for a greater police presence in the West End of the Borough, some consideration has been given during the Master Plan process to moving the Police Department to, or creating a police sub-station in, the West End of the Borough. While a joint facility for various Borough departments would be ideal (see discussions below), it is recognized that the Borough has

⁴ Conversation with Police Chief Wayne Bauer on July 16, 2007.

limited funding to build a new facility at this time.⁵ Nevertheless, the Borough should continue to explore these options in the future.

In the event the Borough ultimately decides to maintain the Police Department in its existing location, there are various improvements or modifications that are needed in order to make the Police Department more functional, more secure, and more able to meet the needs of a modern day Police Department. The Borough should consider retrofitting the interior of Borough Hall to make these improvements, with safety concerns having the highest priority.

3.3 Fire Department and Niagara Fire Company

3.3.1 Staff

The Niagara Fire Company, which provides fire prevention and protection services to the Borough, consists of 1 full-time paid employee and approximately 33 volunteer members, including five junior members. The company is funded from private donations and fundraising activities, with the exception of the one paid full-time fire fighter position, which is funded by the Borough. Recruitment and retention of members is an on-going issue, as all but one of the positions are volunteer and training requirements for firefighters are demanding. While the Fire Company provides fire protection services primarily to the Borough of Merchantville, it offers mutual aid to surrounding communities.

The Fire Department, which conducts fire safety inspections for the Borough, consists of one part-time Fire Prevention officer and several fire inspectors, who are funded through the Borough.

3.3.2 Equipment

The Borough owns three fire trucks, consisting of a 1987 Hahn custom engine 1000 gallon pumper, a 2002 E-One custom engine 1000 gallon pumper, and a 2002 Metz 100' aerial ladder truck on a Spartan cab. The Fire Company currently needs an air compressor to fill Self Contained Breathing Apparatus' (SCBA).

It is recommended that the Borough start planning for a new truck to replace the twenty-year old 1000 gallon pumper truck, unless there are serious plans for merging the Fire Department with an adjacent community (see discussion below). Additionally, a new air compressor to fill Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus' (SCBAs) is needed.

Technology upgrades are also desired. GIS and GPS capability would assist in accountability and pre-planning, such as hydrant location, diameter of connected pipelines, parcel data such as building footprints, access, fence lines, number of children

⁵ Ragan Design Group estimates it would cost approximately \$250 per square foot to construct a new joint facility. The costs of constructing a 6,000 square foot facility would equate to approximately \$1.5 million dollars, not including site acquisition costs.

or disabled persons in household, images of building from various points of view, etc. Currently, the Fire Department uses maps to identify hydrants and pipeline data. It is recommended that a needs assessment, cost assessment, and potential grant funding be explored in the future for use by various departments that could utilize GIS/GPS capability, such as the Fire Department, the Tax Assessor's Office, Code Enforcement, the Police Department, and the Department of Public Works.⁶

3.3.3 Facility

The Fire House is located at 22 East Park Avenue and is owned and maintained by the Borough. The structure was built in 1955⁷ and is limited in size and height. Office expansion is desired as the Fire Bureau and the Fire Department, two separate entities, share the same desk. Additionally, according to fire officials, the building lacks sufficient height to house new equipment. Major structural improvements would be required to increase the height of the existing structure. The Fire House also needs maintenance, including roof repair and a new coat of paint.

It is recommended that the Borough explore the feasibility of an alternate location for the Fire Department. As mentioned previously, a shared location for the Police Department, EMS, and Public Works has been discussed over the years. The Fire Department should be considered in any future discussions regarding a joint facility in the future. Alternatively, the Borough should explore the feasibility of merging the Niagara Fire Company with a fire department in an adjacent community. Shared services for the Fire Department was discussed during the Master Plan process. On the whole, this option was better received than the sharing of Police Department services. While it is not a popular decision, particularly given the long and proud tradition of the Niagara Fire Company in Merchantville, it is a practical consideration, given the limitation of the Borough's financial and volunteer resources. Shared services may achieve cost savings, maximize efficiency, and optimize facility resources.

It is recommended that Borough Officials, in conjunction with Fire Department and Fire Company officials, meet with the Camden County Office of Shared Services as well as adjacent communities to explore this opportunity further. There is grant assistance available for feasibility studies, implementation and transitional costs and county-wide coordination efforts of new shared services through the Sharing Available Resources Efficiently (SHARE) Grant Program, funded through the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services.

⁶ As GIS and GPS are costly undertakings, this is a recommended course of action only if the Borough decides to continue its independent Fire Department.

⁷ Source: Niagara Fire Company 100th Anniversary Program.

3.4 Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

3.4.1 Staff

The staff of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is entirely volunteer. Recruitment and retention of younger trained volunteers is the primary staffing issue. The Merchantville EMS is funded by the Borough, as well as through private donations. Although the EMS provides services primarily to Merchantville, it provides mutual aid to surrounding communities, including Maple Shade, Pennsauken, Cherry Hill, Haddon Township, and Camden, if needed. It is anticipated that additional volunteers will be necessary in the future as a result of future redevelopment in the Borough in order to provide the same level of service as it currently provides, as it is expected that the call line will increase.⁸

3.4.2. Equipment

The EMS has a ten-year old ambulance.⁹ These vehicles are sufficient to meet the needs of the Borough at this time. The Borough may need additional vehicles, however, in the future as a result of future redevelopment in the Borough, as the call line will increase.¹⁰ Technology upgrades are also desired, including GPS technology and a laptop for the ambulance.

3.4.3. Facility

The EMS facility is located at 25 East Park Avenue. The existing facilities do not meet the needs of the Borough at this time, as the vehicle bay is inadequate for the size of the ambulance. The EMS building will likely be displaced by the approved Town Centre East development. There has been some discussion about the EMS department sharing space with the Niagara Fire Department across the street. However, as noted above, that facility is generally believed to be deficient. An alternate location for the EMS Facility needs to be identified.

As mentioned previously, a new shared location for the Police Department, EMS, and Public Works has been discussed over the years. Any future discussions regarding such a joint facility should consider the inclusion of EMS. Alternatively, the Borough should explore the feasibility of merging the Merchantville EMS department with a similar department in an adjacent community. Shared services for EMS was discussed during the Master Plan process. On the whole, this option was better received than the sharing of Police Department services. While it is recognized that it is not a popular decision, it is a practical consideration, given the limitation of the Borough's financial and volunteer resources. It is recommended that Borough Officials, in conjunction with EMS officials, meet with the Camden County Office of Shared Services to explore this opportunity further.

⁸ E-mail correspondence from Denise Brouse, dated January 9, 2007 (summarizing her research).

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ Id.

3.5 Department of Public Works

3.5.1 Staff

The Department of Public Works has eight employees, including the Superintendent, Foreman, three drivers, and three laborers. The Superintendent considers the existing staffing levels minimal, given the vast amount of services the department provides, including snow removal, landscape maintenance, storm drain maintenance, tree removal, trash removal, leaf pick-up, street sweeping of commercial areas, building maintenance, as well as various miscellaneous tasks. Additional workforce assistance is desired.

3.5.2 Equipment

The Department has various types of public works and maintenance equipment, including three garbage trucks (two are 2002 and one is 1984), one street sweeper (1991), two large dump trucks (1989 and 1991), one small dump truck (1999), three pick-up trucks (2007, 2002 and 1995), one leaf machine (2005), and one front end loader (1995). The 1984 garbage truck, 1995 pick up truck, and 1995 front end loader are in fair condition and will need to be replaced in the next couple of years. Multi-purpose equipment, such as a large front-end loader with tractor functions, should be considered in the future. Although the Department recently acquired a new two-person leaf machine, it is believed that an additional one-person version would be more efficient for smaller jobs.

During the Master Plan process, it was suggested that the Borough explore the opportunity for augmenting the Department's purchasing power by entering into a cooperative purchasing agreement for equipment and tool purchases with other Camden County communities.

3.5.3 Facility

The Department of Public Works is located on the corner of Cove Road and East Chestnut Street. According to tax records, the structure appears to have been constructed in 1978. Up until last year, there was limited heat in the office only. Heat was added to the garage last year. There are concerns about the structural integrity of the building, as there are stress cracks near the front and rear of the building, and the wall is bowing. The size of the building would be adequate for the needs of the Department, if it was solely being used for public works purposes. However, a portion of the building is being utilized for storage of Borough-owned property, such as obsolete equipment and furniture.

As mentioned earlier, it is recommended that a mechanical and structural assessment be conducted of the various Borough-owned properties, including the Department of Public Works building, and a strategic maintenance plan be developed. It is recommended that any structural problems of the Public Works facility that could result in structural failure be addressed immediately and should be considered a priority in any capital improvement planning. If the structural integrity of the building cannot cost effectively be maintained,

additional consideration should be given to providing a new shared location for the Public Works Department with other Borough Departments, as mentioned herein.

Additionally, in order to free up space in the building, it is recommended that the Borough initiate the process of selling or otherwise disposing of unused and outdated Borough property in accordance with applicable municipal property disposition laws.

3.6 Merchantville Public School

3.6.1 Enrollment Trends – Past, Present, Future

The Merchantville Elementary School is located at 130 South Centre Street, serving students in grades pre-school through 8th grade. For high school, Merchantville resident students attend Pennsauken High School for grades 9-12 through a long-term send-receive agreement that costs approximately \$8,300 per pupil.¹¹ Currently, there are 367 students enrolled in the preschool through 8th grade program and there are 68 resident students attending Pennsauken High School.¹²

**Figure 2, MERCHANTVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT
2006 - 2007 ENROLLMENT as of 1/17/07¹³**

<u>Regular Education:</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pre-Kindergarten	30
Kindergarten	45
Grade One	33
Grade Two	32
Grade Three	32
Grade Four	37
Grade Five	42
Grade Six	33
Grade Seven	35
Grade Eight	<u>34</u>
Regular Ed	353
<u>Special Education:</u>	<u>Total</u>
SLD	7
Junior High PI	<u>7</u>
Special Ed	14
Grand Total	367

Merchantville resident students also attend a number of private schools, including:

¹¹ Memorandum from Christian Swanson, Merchantville Public School Superintendent, dated January 5, 2007.

¹²Id.

¹³ E-mail correspondence from Sandra Martinelli, Superintendent's office, dated January 17, 2007.

- Westfield Friends School, Cinnaminson (6 students, grades 1-7)
- Montessori Academy of New Jersey, Delran (3 students, grades K-6)
- Moorestown Friends School, Moorestown (6 students, grades 5-12)
- Mount Olivet Seventh Day Advent School, Camden (1 student, grade 9)
- The Kings Christian High School, Cherry Hill (2 students, 11-12)
- Living Faith Christian Academy, Cherry Hill (1 student, grade 11)
- Queen of Heaven School, Cherry Hill (3 students, grades 4-7)
- St. Peters Celestin School, Cherry Hill (2 students, grades 2, 5)
- Baptist Regional School, Haddon Heights (2 students, grades 11-12)
- Kings Christian School, Haddon Heights (1 student, grade 5)
- Paul Sixth High School, Haddon Township (5 students, grades 9-11)
- Haddonfield Friends School, Haddonfield (1 student, grade 2)
- Bishop Eustace Prep School, Pennsauken (10 students, grades 9-12)
- St. Stevens School, Pennsauken (1 student, grade K)
- St. Peter’s School, Merchantville (51 students, grades pre-K – 8)
- Camden Catholic High School, Cherry Hill (67 students, grades 9-12)¹⁴

Over the last ten years, enrollment has ranged from 339 to 394 students in the elementary school.

<u>Date</u>	<u>School Year</u>	<u>Students on Roll</u>
3/2/98	1997-1998	392
11/23/98	1998-1999	394
11/24/99	1999-2000	360
11/30/00	2000-2001	339
11/30/01	2001-2002	351
10/31/02	2002-2003	351
12/03/03	2003-2004	359
11/30/04	2004-2005	372
10/31/05	2005-2006	356
10/13/06	2006-2007	363

Source: ASSA Student Count Profile obtained from the Superintendent of Merchantville Public School

As shown above, enrollment trends over the last six years have stabilized, within a 5% plus or minus range. The School Department does not anticipate a substantial increase in student enrollment in the future.¹⁵

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ Id.

3.6.2. Staff

The School District employs 37 employees, including 30 teachers, 7 support staff.¹⁶ The Merchantville School has experienced reduced staffing levels for a number of budget cycles.¹⁷ According to the School Superintendent, Office staff, business services, cafeteria, custodial/maintenance, administrative, and support services have been repeatedly reduced or outsourced in an effort to cut costs.¹⁸

3.6.3 Facility

From a capacity standpoint, the current facilities at the Merchantville Public School are sufficient to meet the needs of the student enrollment. As mentioned earlier, there are currently 367 students. The maximum student capacity of the facility is estimated to be 540 students.¹⁹ Therefore, there is a current excess capacity of 173 students. It is believed there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the anticipated student population from the approved Town Centre East project.

However, maintenance issues and facilities upgrades are needed. Upgrades to the auditorium, cafeteria, and locker room areas have been repeatedly delayed due to budget constraints. Specifically, new auditorium seats, upgrade to the cafeteria serving equipment and student seating, and renovation of the boys and girls locker rooms are needed.²⁰ The school has also experienced an increase in the breakdown of its heating controls, in the boiler room, as well as the individual units throughout the building and will need to be addressed systematically throughout the plant.²¹ Furthermore, basic repairs are needed to the exterior of the facility, including brick re-pointing, parking lot upgrades, and fence repairs, as well as electronic gates.²² Additional technology upgrades are desired, including Smart Boards and projection systems.²³

There are various key elements that make a city or town a desirable place to live, including: quality public schools, distance to work, affordability, strong local economy, safety, green space, etc. For many families, quality of education is a major factor in deciding whether to move to, or stay in, the community. It is important to the Borough's continued vitality and civic pride that the Borough be committed to providing a high quality educational program and facility. As well-maintained facilities and modern equipment have a significant impact on the teaching and the learning process, it is important that these areas not be neglected.

¹⁶ E-mail correspondence from Sandra Martinelli, Superintendent's Office, dated January 17, 2007.

¹⁷ Memorandum from Christian Swanson, Merchantville Public School Superintendent, dated January 5, 2007.

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ Id.

²⁰ Id.

²¹ Id.

²² Id.

²³ Id.

It is recommended that the Board of Education institute a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to assist in long-range capital facilities planning. In this way, the Board of Education can plan for major renovations, replacement of building systems and/or components, by establishing priorities for facilities and educational programs, based upon need and funding sources available. It should set priorities, establish timelines and the sequence of the projects. *See Section 4.1 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) below.*

Additionally, the Merchantville Board of Education has historically expressed a desire to consider all high school options, based on State rules and regulations governing sending/receiving relationships. It is recommended that the Borough continue dialogue with surrounding communities to ensure that Borough residents are afforded a quality education.

3.7 Library

3.7.1 Staff

The Merchantville Public Library is part of the Camden County Library System. It is part of a joint facility, located in the Merchantville Public School. It is utilized by the school during school hours and is open to the public after hours and on Saturdays. Consequently, there are two sets of staff at the library, depending upon the hours of operation. During school hours, there are two library clerks who are employed by the Merchantville Board of Education. After school, there are three library staff members, consisting of one full-time principal librarian and two part-time support staff, who are employed by the County. According to Library Staff, this arrangement runs smoothly. Cross-training is conducted to assist in this effort.

3.7.2 Equipment

The Merchantville Public Library is funded by a dedicated county library tax. The County provides all materials for the library, including all collections, computers, electronics, and office supplies. The facility houses an adult, juvenile, magazine and audio-visual collection size of 14,125 materials.²⁴ There are ten computers that are available to the public for Internet access, as well as three staff computers that are used to check out books. The Merchantville Board of Education supplies the facility and provides all furnishings, including shelving, tables, and chairs. From time to time, the County supplies furniture, as a result of overstock from other libraries within the system. However, the County will not fund the acquisition of new furniture. The condition of the existing furnishings is considered sufficient.

²⁴ Camden County Library System, Facilities Master Plan 2004-2014, dated November 9, 2004, produced by Dubberly Garcia Associates, Inc., p.15

3.7.3 Facility

The Merchantville Public Library is located at 130 South Centre Street, located within the Merchantville Public School. It is approximately 2,000 square feet.²⁵ Although the Merchantville Public Library is the smallest of the Camden County library branches, it meets current square footage standards for public libraries. According to the American Library Association, the median square footage of reporting public libraries is .53 SF per person. For the Borough of Merchantville with a population of 3,801, this equates to 2,014 SF in the case of the Borough of Merchantville.²⁶ Therefore, the library meets current branch size standards.

As mentioned above, the Merchantville Board of Education supplies the facility and furnishings. As a result, it is responsible for all maintenance and utilities. The existing carpet was fraying and was recently repaired. However, a new carpet is anticipated in the future if funds are available. There is only one bathroom (for both men and women) in the library. It is not accessible for persons with disabilities. Library patrons do not have access to restrooms located within the school facility. It is recommended that the Borough seek grant funding, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), for renovations to the library restroom to make it compliant with ADA standards in order to be accessible to all members of the public.

Additionally, during the Master Plan process, it was suggested that additional signage be incorporated, perhaps along Maple Avenue, to better notify residents and visitors of the location of the library.

4.0 GENERAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES MATTERS

4.1 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Throughout this Master Plan, there are various references to a recommended capital improvement Plan (CIP). The Borough currently does not have a formal capital improvement planning process. A CIP is a long-range financial planning tool used to address the community needs by planning for capital improvements to public facilities, utilities, and other Borough needs in the long-term. It is recommended that the Borough develop a CIP.

A CIP is composed of two parts, a capital budget and a capital program. The capital budget is the upcoming year's spending plan for capital items. The capital program is a plan for capital expenditures that extends five years beyond the capital budget. The CIP provides a mechanism for estimating capital requirements, planning, prioritizing, scheduling and implementing projects during the next six years, developing revenue

²⁵ Camden County Library System, Facilities Master Plan 2004-2014, dated November 9, 2004, produced by Dubberly Garcia Associates, Inc., p.15.

²⁶ Camden County Library System, Facilities Master Plan 2004-2014, dated November 9, 2004, produced by Dubberly Garcia Associates, Inc., p. 67 (citing "Statistical Report 2002, Public Data Service" produced by the American Library Association, Chicago, 2002).

policy for proposed improvements, budgeting high priority projects, providing inter-department coordination of projects within the Borough, and informing the public of planned capital improvements. It is intended to be an evolving plan that will facilitate meeting the future capital needs of the Borough. It requires effective leadership and the involvement and cooperation of all municipal departments.

It is suggested that the needs identified in this Master Plan be used as a starting point for developing a CIP in the future.

4.2 Maintenance of Community Facilities

As mentioned previously, the Borough currently does not have a maintenance plan in place for the Borough's various public buildings. As one of the most important responsibilities of local government is to preserve, maintain, and improve a community's stock of buildings, roads, parks, and other community facilities, it is recommended that the Borough develop a strategic plan for needed and anticipated capital improvements. A mechanical and structural assessment should be conducted of the various Borough-owned properties and a thorough maintenance plan should be developed. It is suggested that large capital expenditures be planned for via a recommended capital improvement plan (discussed further herein).

Currently, there is no administrative staff person designated to oversee maintenance of the Borough's buildings. The oversight of buildings and grounds has traditionally been the responsibility of a councilperson. The Borough should consider assigning an administrative staff person to assist in this regard. A qualified contractor should be hired to conduct the assessments and to develop a maintenance plan. A historic preservation expert should be consulted, particularly for Borough-owned Historic Sites identified in the Historic Preservation Plan Element. For properties located within a Historic District or identified as a Historic Site, a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission is required for exterior improvements.

5.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Borough Hall

- It is recommended that the Borough initiate a mechanical and structural assessment of Borough Hall and develop a maintenance schedule for needed improvements.
- It is recommended that large capital expenditures be planned for via a recommended capital improvement plan (discussed further herein) and grant and loan opportunities be explored through the New Jersey Historic Trust.
- It is recommended that the Borough explore the feasibility of a municipal data management system that will allow access to information by various Borough

departments in the future. It is recommended that a needs assessment, cost assessment, and grant funding be explored.

5.2 Police Department

- It is recommended that the Borough hire an administrative officer who would be responsible for grant writing and administration of day-to-day operations of the Police Department, if funding becomes available.
- It is recommended that the Chief of Police and Borough Officials participate in the Camden County Central Communications Center radio committee discussions and keep apprised of the committee's progress in developing a county-wide radio system that will facilitate communication by multiple departments.
- It is recommended that the Borough continue to explore the opportunity of moving the Police Department to, or creating a police sub-station in, a location in the West End of the Borough. It is also recommended that a joint facility for various Borough Departments be considered.
- In the event the Borough ultimately decides to maintain the Police Department in its existing location, it is recommended that it conduct various improvements or modifications to make the Police Department more functional and more secure.

5.3 Fire Department

- In the event shared services is not a viable option for the Fire Department in the near future, it is recommended that the Borough plan for the following purchases: a new truck to replace the twenty-year old 1291 1000 gallon pumper truck and a new air compressor to fill Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus' (SCBAs);
- In the event shared services is not going to be implemented by the Borough, it is recommended that the Borough conduct a needs assessment, cost assessment, and explore potential grant funding for use of GIS/GPS by various departments, including the Fire Department,
- It is recommended that the Borough explore the feasibility of an alternate location for the Fire Department, with the possibility of a shared location for various Borough departments.
- Alternatively, the Borough should explore the feasibility of merging the Niagara Fire Company and Merchantville Fire Department with a Fire Department in an adjacent community. It is recommended that Borough Officials, in conjunction with Fire Company and Department officials, meet with the Camden County Office of Shared Services and adjacent communities to explore this opportunity. It is recommended that the Borough explore grant assistance for conducting a feasibility study for this purpose, as discussed herein

5.4 Emergency Medical Services

- It is recommended that the Borough explore an alternate location for the EMS, with the possibility of a shared location for various Borough departments.
- Alternatively, the Borough should explore the feasibility of merging the Merchantville EMS department with a similar department in an adjacent community. It is recommended that Borough Officials, in conjunction with EMS officials, meet with the Camden County Office of Shared Services to explore this opportunity and explore grant assistance for conducting a feasibility study for this purpose, as discussed herein.

5.5 Department of Public Works

- It is recommended that a mechanical and structural assessment be conducted of the Department of Public Works building, and a strategic maintenance plan be developed. It is recommended that structural problems that could result in structural failure be addressed immediately. If the structural integrity of the building cannot cost effectively be maintained, additional consideration should be given to providing a new shared location for the Public Works Department with other Borough Departments.
- It is recommended that the Borough initiate the process of selling or otherwise disposing of unused and outdated Borough property in accordance with applicable municipal property disposition laws.
- It is recommended that the Borough explore opportunities for augmenting its purchasing power of tools and equipment by entering into a cooperative purchasing agreement with other Camden County communities.

5.6 Merchantville Public School

- It is recommended that the Borough continue to maintain the elementary school facility and upgrade with modern equipment.
- It is recommended that the Board of Education institute a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to assist in long-range capital facilities planning.
- It is recommended that the Borough continue to explore all high school options for educating Merchantville resident students.

5.7 Library

- It is recommended that the Borough seek grant funding, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, for renovations to the library restroom to make it compliant with ADA.
- It is recommended that additional signage be incorporated to better notify residents and visitors of the location of the library.

5.8 General Community Facility Matters

5.8.1 Capital Improvement Plan

- It is recommended that the Borough initiate a formal Capital Improvement Plan process to plan for capital improvements to public facilities, utilities, and other Borough needs in the long-term.

5.8.2 Maintenance of Community Facilities

- It is recommended that the Borough hire a qualified contractor to conduct a mechanical and structural assessment of the various Borough-owned properties and to develop a thorough maintenance plan. A Historic Preservation expert should be consulted. Large capital expenditures should be incorporated into the recommended a Capital Improvement Plan.

6.0 APPENDIX TO COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN ELEMENT

The following map can be found in the Appendix to this Element.

Existing and Proposed Community Facilities Map.....CF-1

BOROUGH OF MERCHANTVILLE EXISTING AND PROPOSED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

LEGEND

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Parks and Recreation
- Utilities
- Community Facility
- NJ Transit



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Sources:
 Camden County Improvement Authority
 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) provided data for this map. This map was developed using
 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System (GIS) data, but the secondary
 product has not been reviewed by NJDEP and is not state-certified.
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 April 2007

**MAP CF-1, EXISTING AND PROPOSED
 COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

V. RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As set forth in the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(7), a recreation plan element shows a comprehensive system of areas and public sites for recreation. This element analyzes existing recreation facilities, identifies needs and deficiencies, and proposes recommendations for improvements.

2.0 GOALS FOR RECREATION

- 2.1 Provide a full-range of passive and active recreational opportunities for all of Merchantville's residents, including persons of varying ages and abilities.
- 2.2 Maintain and update existing recreational facilities to provide safe, accessible, and modern amenities.
- 2.3 Increase the functionality and availability of the limited open space and recreational areas.

3.0 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The inventory of existing conditions examines the Borough's recreational facilities and identifies existing needs and deficiencies. Both a quantitative and qualitative analysis has been conducted. These analyses will enable the Borough to plan for the community's current and future recreational needs. A summary of recreation recommendations is outlined at the end of this Element and the locations of park and recreation areas are identified in the Park and Recreation Areas Map, **Map REC-1**, in the Appendix to this Element.

3.1 Quantitative Recreational Analysis and Needs

The first part of the analysis, the quantitative analysis, is shown in the Table below. The Table summarizes whether there are a sufficient number of recreational facilities to meet the needs of Merchantville's existing population, based upon the 1983 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards. These standards have been modified by the Ragan Design Group to reflect community characteristics. It serves as general guidance for assessing the needs of the community.

The Quantitative Recreation Analysis and Needs Table demonstrates that the number of recreational facilities in Merchantville is generally sufficient to meet the recreational needs of Merchantville's population. However, a deficiency in the number of developed

facilities for certain types of recreation, including: volley ball, soccer, and jogging/fitness trails, was identified. The shortage in jogging/fitness trails is generally overstated, given the extensive sidewalk system throughout the Borough. When these shortages were identified during the Master Plan workshops, residents did not express that it would be critical for the Borough to develop a volleyball court or a soccer field in order to maintain the Borough's responsiveness to the needs of its residents. On the other hand, residents specifically articulated the desire to extend the Merchantville urban greenway, which would serve to augment the existing jogging/fitness trails.

Additionally, some residents expressed that the Borough's focus should be on upgrading amenities and maintaining the existing recreational facilities, rather than actively engaging in a parkland facility acquisition program. However, it was recognized that there are very little recreational opportunities for young children, north of Maple Avenue, a major thoroughfare. Residents requested that the Borough consider acquiring land in the northern part of the Borough for a mini neighborhood park and playground facility in order to meet the needs of families in the northern part of the Borough.



Borough of Merchantville, Quantitative Recreation Analysis and Need

Population = 3,801¹

Facility	Total Standard ²	Current Facilities			Deficit (-) Surplus (+)
		Twp./Co.	Schools ³	Total	
Community Park 5 Acres/1,000	19 Acres	9.6 ⁴	10.2	19.8	+8 acres
Neighborhood Park/ Playground Equipment 2 Acres/1,000 Equipment is need based	7.6 Acres	9.2 ⁵	-	9.2	+1.6 acres
Baseball/Softball Fields 1 Field/3,000	1 Field	2 ⁶	4 ⁷	6	+4 fields
Tennis Courts 1 Court/1,500	2 Courts	3 ⁸	-	3	+ 1 field
Basketball Courts 1 Court/2,000	2 Courts ⁹	2 ¹⁰	2 ¹¹	4	+2 courts
Volleyball Courts 1 Court/4,000	1 Court ¹²	-	-	-	-1court
Soccer Fields 1 Field/1,500	2 Fields	-	1 ¹³	1	-1field
Football Fields 1 Field/10,000	0 Fields	-	1 ¹⁴	1	+1field
Lacrosse/Field Hockey 1 Field/4,000	1 Field ¹⁵	-	1	1	Even
General Use Fields 1 Field/6,000	0 Field	1 ¹⁶	1	2	+2 fields
Jogging / Fitness Trails .5 Mile/1,000 ¹⁷	1.9 Miles	.5 ¹⁸	-	.5	-1.4 miles
¼ Mile Running Track 1 Track/10,000	0 Tracks	-	1 ¹⁹	1	+1track
Ice Skating 1Rink/25,000	0 Ice Rinks	1 ²⁰	-	1	+1 rink
Street Hockey 1 Rink/8,000	0 Street Rinks.	-	-	-	Even
Community /School Pools 1 Public Pool/25,000	0 Public Pools	1 ²¹	-	1	+1pool
Golf Course 0 courses	0 courses	1 ²²	-	1	+1course
Skating Park	0	-	-	-	Even

¹ U.S. Census: 2000 data

² Source: 1983 NRPA standards, modified by Ragan Design Group based on community characteristics.

³ The Borough has an agreement with the Board of Education to share the school athletic fields, which are located in Pennsauken.

⁴ Wellwood Park is 4.047 acres, Morrissey Park is .41 acres, and Merchantville Community Center Park is 5.148 acres.

⁵ This figure reflects the entire acreage at Wellwood Park and Merchantville Community Center, not just the portion dedicated to playground equipment.

⁶ This figure reflects one ball field at Wellwood Park and one ball field at the Merchantville Community Center.

⁷ This figure reflects four ball fields at the school athletic fields in Pennsauken.

⁸ This figure reflects one tennis court at Merchantville Community Center and two tennis courts at Wellwood Park.

3.2 Qualitative Recreation Analysis and Need

To complement the quantitative analysis, a qualitative analysis of each of the Borough's recreational facilities has been developed based upon site visits to the various facilities, from community input gathered during the master planning workshops, as well as from interviews with the council liaison to the recreation committee.

3.2.1 Wellwood Park

Wellwood Park is situated in the western end of the Borough and is bounded by Hamilton, Maple, Irving and Myrtle Avenues. The park is the site of the former estate of Patrick Cunningham, who was the first of the Philadelphia merchants to settle in Merchantville in 1852.²³ Cunningham's estate became Merchantville's first public park in 1936.²⁴ The park is a participant in the NJDEP Green Acres program.

There are various amenities at the park, including a baseball/softball field, one large playground system, one small playground structure, a gazebo, a storage shed/refreshment stand, two tennis courts, six park benches, six picnic tables, two bicycle racks, hardscape trails, and monuments honoring WWII veterans. Private groups, such as the Merchantville Little League, use the baseball field. However, the field is mostly underutilized, which is partially a consequence of it being a non-regulation field, as well as lack of amenities (i.e., restroom facilities, lighting, etc.). Over the years, the park has hosted a summer art and concert series, as well as other festivities. While the overall condition of the park is adequate, there is a damaged backstop, due to a fallen tree branch, and the split rail fencing surrounding the playground area is broken in several sections. Additional bicycle racks are needed throughout the facility. The Community

⁹ Although the population requirements are not met here, the population is close to 4,000 to warrant an additional basketball court.

¹⁰ This figure reflects 1 full basketball court and 2 half-basketball courts at Merchantville Community Center.

¹¹ There are two outdoor basketball courts located at St. Peter's Catholic School.

¹² Although the population requirements are not met here, the population is close to 4,000 to warrant a volleyball court.

¹³ This figure reflects the 1 soccer/football field at the school athletic fields in Pennsauken.

¹⁴ This figure reflects the 1 soccer/football field at the school athletic fields in Pennsauken.

¹⁵ Although the population requirements are not met here, the population is close to 4,000 to warrant a field hockey court.

¹⁶ There is a general use field at the Merchantville Community Center.

¹⁷ This standard was reduced in half to reflect the pedestrian-friendly nature of Merchantville.

¹⁸ This figure reflects the paved portion of the greenway,

¹⁹ This figure reflects the track at athletic fields in Pennsauken.

²⁰ This figure reflects the private ice skating rink, the Flyers Skate Zone, located nearby on River Road in Pennsauken.

²¹ This figure reflects the private swim club, the Woodbine Swim Club, located nearby on Maple Avenue in Pennsauken.

²² This figure reflects the private golf course, the Merchantville Country Club, which adjoins the Borough's Merchantville Community Center property and is located in Cherry Hill Township.

²³ Intensive-Level Survey of Historic Resources, Camden County, Volume I of II, Narrative Report, prepared by Kise Straw & Kolodner (January 2002), p.27 (*citation omitted*).

²⁴ *Id.*

Affairs Officer conducts a monthly safety walk through all of the recreation facilities. He has identified the damaged facilities and measures are currently in place to fix them.

The recreation amenities at Wellwood Park do not appear to meet ADA standards. The Borough should review the ADA requirements for ground level accessible routes, accessible playground surfaces, ground level play components, as well as slopes and turnarounds for wheelchair activities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that newly constructed and altered State and local government facilities, places of public accommodation, and commercial facilities be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities. Recreational facilities, including play areas, are among the facilities required to comply with the ADA.²⁵ The ADA does not apply to existing facilities unless they are altered.²⁶ While existing public recreational facilities at Wellwood Park are not required to meet ADA standards, any improvements, such as removing a play component to replace it with a different piece or changing the ground surfacing will require adherence to ADA standards.²⁷ Normal maintenance activities such as replacing worn equipment or topping off ground surfaces are not considered alterations.²⁸



The Borough will need to keep this in mind when it upgrades the playground surfaces or makes other improvements to the park in the future. The playground surfaces are currently standard mulch. The mulch requires periodic renewal or replacement and continuous maintenance (i.e., leveling, grading, sifting, raking) to maintain appropriate depth and remove foreign matter. Over time, it decomposes and compacts, and is

²⁵ Introduction, A Guide to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Play Areas (October 2005), the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board website: <http://www.access-board.gov/play/guide/intro.htm> (accessed December 14, 2006).

²⁶ Where do the Play Area Guidelines Apply?, A Guide to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Play Areas (October 2005), the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board website: <http://www.access-board.gov/play/guide/intro.htm> (accessed December 14, 2006).

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.*

displaced due to children's activities. When it is wet, it is subject to microbial growth and can soil skin and clothing. Therefore, Borough Officials are considering rubberized mulch or mats as a replacement playground surface in the future.

As it is a goal of this Recreational Element to provide recreational opportunities for persons of varying ages and abilities, consideration should be given to making the park amenities more accessible to persons with disabilities. Any future alterations should be designed to meet the requirements of the ADA.



Finally, during the Master Plan process, residents noted that safety at Wellwood Park was a concern, including the consumption of alcohol within the park. The Borough wants to encourage a family-friendly atmosphere at the park.

3.2.2 Merchantville Community Center and Park

The Merchantville Community Center and Park is located at 212 Somerset Street in the southeastern portion of the Borough. It is bound by Prospect Street, Somerset Avenue, Westminster Avenue, and the Merchantville Country Club. This recreation facility has both indoor and outdoor amenities. The outdoor amenities at the site include the Ed Roecker Memorial baseball field with three sets of bleachers, a tennis court, one large playground system, one small playground structure, a swing set with four swings, a toddler swing set with two swings, one full basketball court, two half basketball courts, three benches, five picnic tables, one tire swing, and two rocking horses. The tennis court was recently installed, replacing two dilapidated courts. The Merchantville Little League uses the baseball field at this location. The Borough holds a summer "parks and playgrounds" recreational program at this site, which is a summer camp for children ages 4-10.

The indoor amenities are located inside the Merchantville Community Center, which is a three-floor historic structure. It is believed that the 1870 building was originally a Gothic Revival carriage house and stable designed by architect Isaac Hobbs for Harrison

Robbins, one of the early wealthy merchants in Merchantville who owned a mansion on Maple Avenue. The carriage house and barn was moved to its present location in 1921 for use as a clubhouse for the Merchantville Country Club. It is believed that it was renovated into the Tudor Revival Style at that time. After renovations, it formally opened on September 10, 1921. The country club building later became the Merchantville Community Center in 1954.²⁹

The bottom floor of the building serves as the senior center/nutrition facility, where the Salvation Army provides lunch services. The second floor contains a grand ballroom that is used for community meetings and is available for rent for public and private functions. The third floor contains a caretaker apartment, two large rooms and a storage room. The building has resident caretakers, who live on the premises in exchange for overseeing the building. The Merchantville Historical Society stores their archives at this location.



Improvements are slated for both the indoor and the outdoor facilities. The building is in need of major structural repairs, including roofing, plumbing, heating, and windows. The Borough would like to rehabilitate the building in such a manner that would preserve its historic character and integrity. However, funding is a concern for this small community. The Borough has hired an architectural and preservation consultant to conduct a condition assessment and to prepare a Preservation Plan for the Community Center to guide the rehabilitation and preservation of the building, as well as to prepare an application to the New Jersey Historic Trust for associated grant monies. It is anticipated that the Borough will apply for a capital grant in the future to provide matching funds for needed repairs. As noted in other Elements, a portion of the building is being considered for a resource center for the Merchantville Historic Society that would house the Society's collection of Merchantville history artifacts, documents, and photographs to be on display to the public.

²⁹ Historic/Architectural Resource Survey prepared by Carol A. Benenson & Associates for the Borough of Merchantville and the Merchantville Historical Society in October 1992, Survey 0424-052.

Upgrades are being contemplated for the outdoor facilities, including resurfacing the playground and swing facilities with more modern surfaces. Like the playground surfaces at Wellwood Park, the Community Center play surfaces consist of standard mulch and updating is desired. The Borough received grant funds from Camden County Open Space Trust Fund Advisory Committee to upgrade the baseball field and playground equipment at the community center. The Borough is intending on using a portion of the funds to install rubberized mulch or mats for the playground surfaces. ADA compliance will need to be implemented, as noted in Section 3.2.1 above.



The balance of the Camden County Open Space Trust Funds will be used to replace the existing backstop at the baseball field, which is in poor condition.



Other outside improvements being considered in the future for this recreational facility include: regrading portions of the park to prevent children from tripping over surface tree roots, enhancing the park by installing additional components (such as a soccer field, more accessible playground components, and bicycle racks), updating the ballfield

bleachers with more supportive seating, adding lights to the field, increasing the parking area. Any plans to regrade the park should take into consideration the negative impacts to live trees, as they will need to be protected from construction and earth moving equipment.

3.2.3 Merchantville Mile Greenway

The Merchantville Mile is a former railroad right of way along North Chestnut Avenue that has been transformed into an urban greenway. The majority of the funding to develop the Greenway was provided through the 2000 Local Bikeway Program portion of the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund Authority. The greenway consists of a two-lane paved trail that extends a mile. It has associated landscape features, including a gazebo, as well as one pull-up bar exercise station.



The Borough is considering means of enhancing the greenway, such as adding additional fitness stations, in order to provide a well-balanced outdoor fitness trail suitable for both novices and veteran athletes. Bicycle racks should also be considered for installation at strategic locations along the Greenway, such as near the Collins House Restaurant. During the Master Plan process, residents suggested that outdoor sculptures be incorporated into the greenway, which could also serve as a visual linkage between the Central Business District and the adjacent Neighborhood Business District north of Chestnut Avenue. It is recommended that the Borough emphasize the former railroad's importance to the Borough's historical development by installing a railroad interpretive center along the greenway. The interpretive center could provide pedestrians, bicyclists, and wheelchair users with a self-guided interpretive tour, outlining the history of Merchantville and offering insight into the region's rich railroad history and how it contributed to the economic success of the Borough. It could serve as a welcome center for visitors to the downtown, provide walking tour brochures of the Cattell Tract Historic District, as well as provide visitors with a local business directory. These amenities would augment the historic and educational experience of all intermodal transportation users, by offering a variety of historical, recreational, and educational opportunities.

The quantitative analysis suggests that the Borough is deficient in jogging and fitness trails. During the planning workshops, it was suggested that the Borough extend the greenway along East Chestnut Avenue, with the possibility of linking the greenway to former railways in adjacent Pennsauken.³⁰ This is an excellent opportunity to augment the existing multi-purpose greenway, for Merchantville to strengthen ties with its neighbor, and to help stimulate the local economy by increasing tourism and promoting local businesses in the vicinity of the former railroad corridor. It is recommended that Borough officials initiate discussions with Pennsauken officials to work together in a multi-jurisdictional effort (i.e., apply for grants together, seek abandonment of easements held by NJ TRANSIT rail operations, etc.).



3.2.4 Morrissey Park

Morrissey Park is a mini-pocket park located in the center of the Borough at the intersection of Park and Maple Avenues. The park is adjacent to Aunt Charlotte's Candies and near Borough Hall. It contains several park benches with a water fountain serving as its focal point. It was constructed in 1974-1975, replacing the site of a 100-foot water tower.³¹ It was dedicated as Morrissey Park in 1995. The condition of the park is generally adequate. However, the brick pathways will need to be reset in the future, as some bricks are beginning to raise and are no longer flush with the ground surface.

³⁰ While the Town Centre East development proposes to construct a combination bicycle/pedestrian pathway, given the litigious nature of this land development project, it is uncertain whether it will proceed.

³¹ Merchantville Master Plan prepared by Queale & Lynch, Inc., adopted June 26, 1990 (p.7).



3.2.5 School Athletic Fields

The school athletic fields are located outside of the Borough between Clayton Avenue and Cuthbert Boulevard in Pennsauken, but are owned by the Merchantville Board of Education. The school athletic fields consist of lower and upper fields. The lower field is utilized for football and soccer, while upper field contains a baseball field, field hockey field, and a snack bar/bathroom/storage facility. The school athletic fields are primarily used for school purposes and by school sports teams. The Borough has an agreement with the Board of Education to allow other groups to use the facilities. Various private groups utilize the grounds, including the Merchantville Little League and various church sports teams. There is a new agreement with the Borough, whereby the Department of Public Works now maintains the school athletic fields. It is recommended that the Borough and Board of Education explore the feasibility of allowing greater access by Merchantville residents to the school indoor recreational facilities, including the indoor basketball courts, during off school hours.

3.3 Private Facilities

3.3.1 Woodbine Swim Club

The Woodbine swim club is located outside of the Borough on Maple Avenue in Pennsauken. Although the swim club is located outside of Merchantville, it has been an important asset for Merchantville residents over the years. It contains three pools, a picnic area with barbeque pits and propane grills, a playground area, snack bar, basketball, volleyball, and shuffleboard courts, as well as boasts a Tri-County swim team.

3.3.2 Flyers Skate Zone

The Flyers Skate Zone is located outside of the Borough on River Road in Pennsauken. It hosts both public skating, as well as private skating and ice hockey opportunities.

3.3.3 Merchantville Country Club

Despite its namesake, this private golf course is located outside of Merchantville in Cherry Hill Township. The 9-hole golf course is the 10th oldest golf course in the United States. Part of the course abuts the Merchantville Community Center park.

4.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

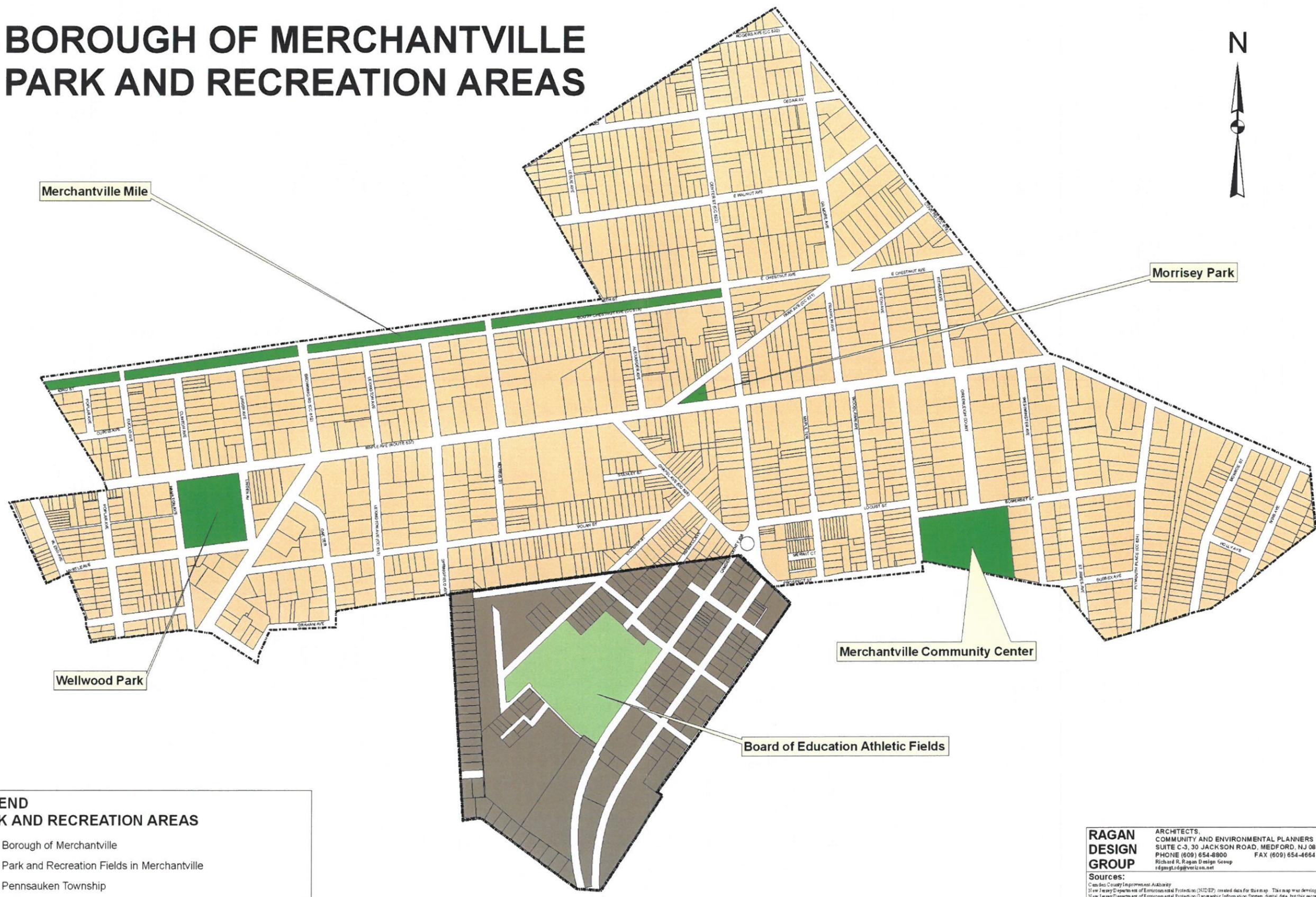
- 4.1 It is recommended that the Borough continue its program of upgrading and maintaining its existing recreational facilities. The Borough should seek grant funding, when applicable, such as through the Camden County Open Space Trust Fund Advisory Committee.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the Borough consider acquiring land, when available, in the northern part of the Borough for a mini neighborhood park and playground facility in order to meet the needs of families in the northern part of the Borough.
- 4.3 It is recommended that the Borough consider making its recreational facilities more accessible and that any future alterations should be designed to meet the requirements of the ADA.
- 4.4 It is recommended that the Borough seek funding from the New Jersey Historic Trust, as well as any other pertinent resources, to assist in the preservation of the Merchantville Community Center.
- 4.5 It is recommended that the Borough enhance the Merchantville Mile Greenway, by adding additional amenities, such as fitness stations, outdoor sculptures, and a historic railroad interpretive center/visitors center. It is also recommended that the Borough pursue the extension of the greenway, with the possibility of linking it to a similar multi-use path in Pennsauken. It is recommended that the Borough pursue non-traditional transportation improvement grant funds for these purposes.

5.0 APPENDIX TO RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

The following map can be found in the Appendix to this Element.

Park and Recreation Areas Map.....REC-1

BOROUGH OF MERCHANTVILLE PARK AND RECREATION AREAS



**LEGEND
PARK AND RECREATION AREAS**

- Borough of Merchantville
- Park and Recreation Fields in Merchantville
- Pennsauken Township
- Recreation Fields Owned by the Merchantville Board of Education
- NJ Transit



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Sources:
City and County Improvement Authority
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) created data for this map. This map was developed using
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System, digital data, but this secondary
product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

This map is for illustrative purposes only. RDG does not warrant the accuracy of the information or geographic features identified.
The map has been derived from sources noted above, as well as independent research gathered by RDG.
August 2007

MAP REC-1, PARK AND RECREATION AREAS

VI. CIRCULATION PLAN ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is a close nexus between transportation and land use patterns. Transportation provides a means of moving goods, people, and information from one place to another and significantly impacts how communities develop. In the 17th and 18th centuries, cities like the City of Camden, initially developed along waterways, which were served by the ferry industry. In the 19th century, towns like Merchantville, sprung up along rail lines. In the 20th century, towns and cities expanded along highways and roads as a result of the automobile age. In each instance, transportation played a significant role in the development and well being of the community.

This Circulation Plan Element sets forth goals for the Borough's circulation, inventories and analyzes existing conditions, and provides specific objectives or actions to be taken in the future. It is guided by the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(4), which states: "a circulation plan element shows the location and types of facilities for all modes of transportation 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."

2.0 GOALS FOR CIRCULATION

- 2.1 To provide a safe, effective, and attractive circulation system for pedestrians, automobiles, bicyclists, and public transportation.
- 2.2 To enhance the Borough's walkability, by improving pedestrian street crossings, and enhancing the pedestrian environment throughout the Borough.
- 2.3 To improve accessibility to sidewalks and commercial uses in the Borough for persons with physical disabilities, elderly, as well as parents with young children in strollers.
- 2.4 To encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, including bus service, car pooling, and bicycle use.
- 2.5 To improve specialized transit services to meet the needs of the Borough's elderly, sick, and disabled populations.
- 2.6 To develop a capital budgeting plan to finance roadway reconstruction, traffic calming device installation and maintenance.

- 2.7 To promote a safe walking environment through adequate maintenance, snow removal, vegetation trimming and lighting.

3.0 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.1 Road Circulation Network

3.1.1 Roadway Functional Classifications

The road network provides two functions: travel mobility (i.e., getting from one point to the other) and access to abutting property. The road network is grouped into functional classifications, according to the character of traffic service they are intended to provide. It helps define the role each street will play in serving the flow of traffic within the community.

For urbanized areas, there are four functional classifications: (1) principal arterial, (2) minor arterial, (3) collector, and (4) local. Generally, the principal arterial system serves the major centers of activity, carries a high proportion of the total urban area travel, carries the highest traffic volume, and provides the longest trip needs. Whereas, the minor arterial street system interconnects with and augments the urban principal arterial system and includes all arterials not classified as principal. It accommodates trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than principal arterials do. This system places more emphasis on land access than the higher system does and offers lower traffic mobility. Meanwhile, the collector street system provides both land access and traffic circulation. It collects traffic from local streets in neighborhoods and channels it into the arterial system. Finally, the local street system comprises all roadways not included in one of the higher systems. It primarily provides direct access to abutting lands with little or no through-traffic movement.

The primary roadways in Merchantville are identified below in **Figure 1** along with their functional classifications. Also see **Map-C1**, the Circulation Map in the Appendix, which depicts the existing road network and other circulation facilities.

Figure 1, Road Classifications

ROAD NAME	CLASSIFICATION
Maple Avenue (County Route 537)	Principal Arterial
Centre Street (County Route 622)	Minor Arterial
Cove and Church Roads (County Route 616)	Minor Arterial
Park Avenue (County Route 621)	Minor Arterial
Browning Road (County Route 612)	Minor Arterial
Chapel Road (County Route 626)	Minor Arterial
Lexington Avenue (County Route 613)	Collector
Plymouth Place (County Route 624)	Collector

Rogers Avenue (Route 620)	Collector
Segment of Chestnut Avenue between Browning Road and Centre Street (County Route 619)	Collector ¹
All other roads	Local
<u>Source:</u> The Official Map prepared for the Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders and Camden County Planning Board by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, modified by Ragan Design Group.	

3.1.2 Roadway Ownership and Maintenance

Merchantville’s road network is comprised of both County-owned and locally-owned roadways. Camden County owns and maintains all ten (10) county routes² in Merchantville, while the balance of the local roads in the Borough are owned and maintained by the Borough. However, the Borough has an agreement with the County, whereby the County provides salt for the snow removal, and the Borough assists in snow removal services on County roads.

3.1.3. Major Issues for Road Circulation

During the Master Plan process, various needed improvements to the road circulation system were discussed. The following summarizes the major issues raised:

3.1.3.1 Problem Intersections

3.1.3.1.1 Six-Legged Intersection

As noted in the 1990 Master Plan, there is a significant design problem with the six-legged intersection formed by Park Avenue, Franklin Avenue, North Chestnut Avenue, South Chestnut Avenue, and Gilmore Avenue. There have not been any improvements to the intersection since that time; however, over the past several years, the Camden County Department of Public Works has been spearheading efforts to make improvements to this intersection.³

In 2005, the County awarded Kupper Associates a contract to conduct a traffic feasibility analysis to determine possible design solutions to improve the 6-legged intersection. AmerCom Corp was hired as a subcontractor to examine various options to improve traffic circulation at the intersection, including a signalized intersection, a two-way and

¹ The Official map of Camden County prepared for the Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Camden County Planning Board designates this road segment as “Local.” However, the function of this roadway is more akin to a collector, as it collects traffic from local streets and channels it into the arterial system. It also provides east/west traffic circulation in the Borough.

² Maple Avenue (CR 537), Centre Street (CR 622), Cove and Church Road (CR 616), Park Avenue (CR 621), Browning Road (CR 612), Chapel Road (CR 626), Lexington Road (CR 613), Plymouth Place (CR 624), Rogers Avenue (CR 620) and Chestnut Avenue (CR 620)

³ Conversation with Bob Kelly, Director of the Camden County Department of Public Works, on February 13, 2007.

four-way stop controlled intersection, as well as a roundabout.⁴ AmerCom Corporation took into consideration traffic volumes expected to be generated by the Town Centre East project that was approved by the Planning Board in November 2006.⁵ The AmerCom Corp Report recommends the installation of a roundabout for the intersection, concluding that “a roundabout will function at acceptable levels of service while promoting a safer operational scenario than the stop sign controlled design since the roundabout allows for multi-legs to enter and exit in a controlled manner.”⁶

During the Master Plan process, there was a considerable amount of resident opposition to the transformation of this intersection into a roundabout. Residents voiced their concern that a roundabout would facilitate motor vehicle speed, would inhibit pedestrian accessibility to the downtown, would necessitate the taking of private property, and would negatively impact nearby historic properties and two oak trees. Residents pointed to the problems associated with another circle in the Borough, that is located at the intersection of Chapel Avenue and Centre Street, which experiences fast-moving traffic and contains inadequate pedestrian crossing facilities.

In May 2007, representatives from Kupper Associates and the County presented five potential roundabout designs to the community and Borough Council. Kupper Associates’ preliminary roundabout design sketches address some of the residents concerns such as motor vehicle speeds, pedestrian crossings, and the taking of property. Kupper Associates and the County have assured the Borough and its residents that the roundabout will have safe access points for pedestrian crossings and it will be landscaped. The County indicated that it would solicit possible landscape designs from the community. After the presentation, Kupper and the County entertained questions from the public and provided literature on modern-day roundabouts. It is anticipated that Kupper Associates will be presenting a final design before the Borough Council in the Fall 2007.

It is recommended that Borough Officials continue to encourage the Camden County Department of Public Works and their consultants to obtain public input into the design improvements to the intersection throughout the preliminary design process. It is important for the County to consider a full range of design alternatives and to understand the community impacts and user needs. Public education about modern roundabouts is also necessary. This due diligence will help to garner public acceptability of design improvements to the site. It is also recommended that specific design treatments be incorporated for pedestrians, such as sidewalks and accessible pedestrian crossings, to facilitate safe pedestrian mobility. Finally, in the event the roundabout is constructed, the operation and public response should be evaluated to determine whether any further alterations need to be made in the future.

⁴ Traffic Impact Report for Intersection Improvements Park Avenue, N. Chestnut Street, & Gilmore Avenue, Borough of Merchantville, Camden County, New Jersey prepared for Kupper Associates by AmerCom Corp (November 2006), p.2.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Id.

3.1.3.1.2 Chapel Avenue and Centre Street Circle

As noted above, the Chapel Avenue and Centre Street circle is problematic. Vehicles traveling south on Chapel Avenue often speed through the intersection and ignore vehicles merging from Centre Street. One of the primary design flaws is the cartway width of Chapel Avenue, which promotes fast vehicular movement. Vehicles traveling along Chapel Avenue do not get the sense that they should be slowing down as they travel through the circle. Another flaw is the proximity of one of the buildings in the 177 South Centre Street Shopping Center (Block 38, Lot 3) to the roadway, which blocks the sight distance of vehicles leaving the parking lot to enter into the circle.

It is recommended that the County consider retrofitting this circle to operate as a modern day roundabout, which would force vehicles to yield at the entry into the roundabout. It is recommended that traffic calming measures be considered, such as the installation of splitter islands, deflection of the roadway, raised pavement in the roundabout, better signage, and the installation of signalized pedestrian crosswalks and yield lines prior to pedestrian crosswalks. It is also recommended that the Borough and the County work with the owner of 177 South Centre Street to demolish or move the obstructive building so it can be sited elsewhere on the property. The owner has exhibited a willingness to cooperate in this regard during the Master Plan process.

3.1.3.1.3 Merchantville Public School and Centre Street Access

Merchantville does not provide school bus services for students. For the most part, parents drop-off and pick-up their children for school. The Borough does provide bike facilities and storage areas for students who ride their bikes to school. It was noted at the Master Plan meetings that very few students carpool, ride their bikes or walk to school. Since most families drive their students to school, there is an excessive amount of vehicular traffic delays on Centre Street and Chapel Avenue during peak morning and afternoon school hours.

In the morning, parents enter the parking lot between the school and the First Presbyterian Church from Centre Street. Students are dropped-off in a designated area where they line up before they enter the school. After dropping off the students, cars make a U-turn in the parking lot and proceed back towards Centre Street. There are no additional parking spaces for parents to use because there is limited amount of parking that is shared between teachers, administrators and church goers. Since cars cannot make a left out of the parking lot onto Centre Street, all vehicles must make a right onto South Centre Street towards the Centre Street/Chapel Avenue circle. This creates more traffic delays at the already problematic Chapel Avenue/Centre Street circle.

After school, parents pick-up their children on the Chapel Avenue side of the school. Vehicular traffic must navigate through a series of traffic cones on the school's property and Chapel Avenue to pick-up their children. One problem with this location is that there are only two car spaces for vehicles to pull into to pick students. Another problem with this pick-up location is Chapel Avenue is not wide enough to handle on street

parking on both sides and two lanes for vehicle traffic. Parents, who are unable to find a parking spot, park on Chapel Avenue and block the flow of traffic.

To improve the circulation pattern around the school, the Borough has placed no parking signs on Centre Street during school hours. The Police Department regularly enforces the time-restricted parking with warnings and traffic tickets, but vehicles continue to park on Centre Street. The additional parked vehicles on Centre Street impede traffic flow on an already busy main road in the Borough.

It is recommended that the Borough develop a comprehensive Safe Route to School program that addresses school walking routes, bike safety and route plans and parental vehicle pick-up/ drop-off circulation plan. Merchantville Public School does not own enough land to create additional parking for parents and travel lanes for vehicles. The school and the Borough should work together and create an incentive program, such as discount coupons at local grocery stores, to reward students and parents who use alternative modes (i.e. carpools, biking, walking) to get to school. The Borough should strive to become less dependent on single-auto occupied trips, and embrace alternative modes for transportation. Alternative modes would significantly decrease the traffic congestion around the school and it would also be fostering the New Jersey Smart Growth principles. The New Jersey Department of Transportation provides funding for municipalities to conduct Safe Route to School studies. The Borough should continue to apply for grant funding to conduct a Safe Route to School study.

It is also recommended that Board of Education and Borough Council create designated time-restricted parking zones on Victoria Street, Volan Street, and Stanley Street for parents to park, walk across Chapel Avenue and pick up their children. By forcing cars to park on side streets, traffic flow on Chapel Avenue will be significantly improved. Moreover, if the Borough implements designated time-restricted parking zones, it is recommended that the Borough paint pedestrian crosswalks bars on Chapel Avenue and install pedestrian crossing and children at play signs at the intersections of Centre/Maple, Victoria/Chapel and Stanley/Chapel.

3.1.3.1.4 Route 130 and Maple Avenue

The intersection of Route 130 and Maple Avenue is a major access point into the Borough. Unfortunately, the Route 130 ramp has divided an established neighborhood and has contributed to the degradation of quality of life for its residents. As noted previously in the Land Use element, there are several underutilized land uses in the West End especially at the intersection of Route 130 and Maple Avenue. The ramp has a negative impact on the neighborhood and makes it a less desirable place to live.

A traffic analysis of this area should be conducted to consider either relocating the Route 130 exit ramp and/or investigating means of mitigating its impact. Relocating the ramp could foster redevelopment in the area and would help to restore the West End into a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use neighborhood. It is recommended that Merchantville

reach out to the State, the County, and the Township of Pennsauken to evaluate possible options to mitigate the impacts of the Route 130 ramp.

During the Master Plan meetings, the residents suggested creating a gateway entrance to welcome people to Merchantville as they exit off of the Route 130 onto Maple Avenue. It is recommended that the Borough install a gateway sign on Maple Avenue to welcome travelers as they exit Route 130. Furthermore, gateway signs should be installed at all major entrances into Merchantville (Cove/Church Road, Centre Street, Maple Avenue, Chapel Avenue and Browning Road). A gateway sign will increase a motorist's awareness of the historic character of Merchantville as well as serve as an inexpensive traffic calming devices that will impede speeds on Maple Avenue.

3.1.3.1.5 Centre Street and Chestnut Avenue

The above intersection creates many problems for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. At the first Master Plan meeting, the residents stated that there are three major problems with the intersection of Centre Street and Chestnut Avenue: traffic volumes from cars and heavy-weighted trucks, cut-through traffic, and motor vehicle speeds. Motorists who are avoiding traffic in Cherry Hill Township use Centre Street as a cut-through road. The cut-through traffic often exceeds the posted speed limit of 25 mph which creates an unsafe pedestrian environment in downtown Merchantville. Centre Street is attractive to commuters because there is a lack of traffic calming devices to slow motorists down especially in the downtown.

The second problem with Centre Street/Chestnut Avenue intersection is that it forces drivers traveling on South Chestnut to make an "S" turn when they cross Centre Street. The residents noted that it is difficult to make a left onto the Centre Street because it is difficult to see the speeding traffic on Centre Street. Moreover, field visits and interviews with stakeholders have revealed that cars from St. Peters and Chestnut Station Apartments are queuing on South Chestnut Street during peak morning and evening hours waiting for motorists to make a left hand turn on Centre Street.

Thirdly, the residents raised concern over lack of pedestrian safety when trying to cross Centre Street at the Centre Street/Chestnut Avenue intersection specifically at the end of Merchantville Mile trail. During the community meetings, the residents of Merchantville overwhelmingly agreed the intersection of Chestnut Street (Camden County 619) and Centre Street (Camden County 622)⁷ was not safe for pedestrian/bike crossings. Residents are also unsure where to cross because there is a lack of pedestrian crossing stripes at the intersection.

It is recommended that the Borough install traffic calming devices such as chokers and bulb-outs on the Conrail parcels (greenway between North and South Chestnut Avenues) to narrow the lanes of travel on Centre Street so that the street feels "tight" to motorist;

thus, slowing vehicle speeds and reducing cut-through traffic in downtown Merchantville. The narrowing of Centre Street can be accomplished by extending the curb line of the Conrail Parcels into Centre Street. In addition, the chokers used on Centre Street will decrease the crossing length for pedestrians and bicyclists who are using the Merchantville Mile. The chokers (or bulb-outs) should be landscaped and painted a different color to be more effective in slowing traffic on Centre Street. It also is recommended that the Borough install four-way stop signs at the intersections of East Walnut Avenue/Centre Street and North Chestnut Avenue/Centre Street to assign the right of way at intersections. In addition to assigning the right of way, spacing out the stops signs on Centre Street will prevent motorists from reaching a high rate of speed and make Centre Street less convenient as a cut-through street.

To remedy the “S” intersection, it is recommended that the Borough create a one way entrance onto Centre Street from South Chestnut Avenue. The purpose of creating a one way entrance onto South Chestnut Avenue is to prevent motorists from making left hand turn onto Centre Street. The newly built Chestnut Station Apartments in the downtown area and St. Peter’s church attendees have added to the traffic congestion on South Chestnut Avenue. It is recommended that the Borough install a forced-turn channelization device on South Chestnut Street that will prevent motorists from turning left onto Centre Street. The forced-turn channelization device will limit traffic volumes on Chestnut Street and improve pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Chestnut Avenue and Centre Street. A forced-turn channelization device, such as a diagonal diverter, is an island that prevents traffic from making certain movements at an intersection. A diagonal diverter will force all traffic right onto the Centre Street; thus, breaking up through routes and making travel through a neighborhood more difficult. The purpose of the diagonal diverter is to reduce cut-through traffic and speed, especially near the intersection of South Chestnut Avenue and Centre Street.

There has been an increase in pedestrian and bicyclist conflicts and automobile accidents at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Centre Street over the past ten years. It is recommended that new color pedestrian crossing bars be painted on Centre Street and South Chestnut Street to inform motorists as the presence of a crosswalk. The Borough should install flashing pedestrian crossing signs on Centre Street to notify motorists that they are entering a high pedestrian activity zone.

3.1.3.2 Traffic Signalization

There are outdated traffic lights and controllers at the intersection of Browning Road/Maple Avenue and Cove Road/Park Avenue. The timers and the mechanisms need to be updated especially at the intersection of Cove Road and Maple Avenue. It is recommended that Borough officials work with the Camden County Department of Public Works and the State Department of Transportation to update the traffic signals at these intersections. While the County would be responsible for funding the installation of the signals, the Borough would be responsible for designing the traffic lights and controllers and obtaining approval from the State Department of Transportation.

3.1.3.3 Pavement Markings

Pavement markings are deficient throughout the Borough. Pavement markings are an important part of the communications system for road users. They help drivers correctly position their vehicle and guide drivers through different situations they encounter. They also serve to supplement and enhance the messages of other traffic control devices such as traffic signs and signals. Of particular note, is the lack of pavement markings along Chestnut Avenue, which provides two-way traffic along both sides of the grassy median (also known as the Merchantville Mile). This is confusing, particularly to out-of-town motorists, who believe the median separates one-way lanes of traffic. Additionally, many intersections are missing the solid white line to indicate the required stop position for motor vehicles in association with a stop sign or a traffic signal. The Police Department has compiled a comprehensive list of all the intersections in the Borough that require crossbar striping. It is recommended that the Department of Public Works procure this list from the Police Department and coordinate with Camden County to pursue funding to stripe these intersections.

For Borough-owned streets, it is recommended that the Police Department develop a pavement marking program to install and maintain pavement markings on all public rights of way under the Borough's jurisdiction. As pavement markings require continual maintenance to assure their on-going effectiveness, it is recommended that it be included in the annual budget. Priority should be given to high traffic areas, such as the Central Business District, near schools, the Merchantville Community Center and Wellwood Park. For County-owned streets, it is recommended that Borough Officials request the Camden County Department of Public Works to install pavement markings and maintain any deficient pavement markings, particularly along Chestnut Avenue and in high traffic areas, including the downtown, near the schools, and along Maple Avenue. This is a cost effective measure to ensure safety for pedestrians and vehicles.

3.1.3.4 Pavement Conditions

The Borough received a grant from the 2007 NJDOT Trust Fund State Aid Program to resurface a portion of South Chestnut Avenue, from Poplar Avenue to the municipal border west of Poplar Avenue. It is anticipated that improvements will take place in 2007. No other specific pavement condition deficiencies were identified during the Master Plan process. It is recommended that the Borough implement a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in order to prepare for future infrastructure improvements.

3.1.3.5 Signage

During the Master Plan process, residents identified problem areas needing upgrades to existing signage or installation of new signage at the following locations:

- A four way stop sign at Chestnut Avenue and Morris Street;
- A four way stop sign at Lexington Ave and Maple Ave;

- A four way stop sign at East Chestnut Avenue and Gilmore Avenue (as an alternative to the proposed roundabout);
- A three way stop sign at Maple Terrace and Locust Street;
- Additional speed limit signage along East Chestnut;
- Additional speed limit signage along Park Avenue;
- Add weight restriction signs on Centre Street;
- Add weight restriction signs on Cove Road;
- Add weight restriction signs on Church Road; and
- Add weight restriction signs or speed restriction sign at West Maple Avenue and Route 130 exit ramp.
- Allow left hand turns out of the CVS/School parking lot onto Centre Street during non-peak travel hours.

One of the most inexpensive ways to reduce the convenience of cut-through streets, speeding and heavy truck traffic is to install speed limit, pedestrian crossings and stop signs on streets to inform motorists of the speed limit and gain compliance with the speed limit. The above-listed intersections should be forwarded to the Borough's engineer and County's engineer for evaluation as to whether a sign is warranted. The engineers should evaluate the number of vehicles entering the intersection from all approaches, the number of pedestrians using the intersection, vehicle speeds, and types of accidents (if available). If the conditions meet the requirements established by the state, County and Borough, a sign should be installed along with the proper pavement markings and advance warning devices.

3.1.3.6 Speeding and Cut-through Streets

During the Master Plan meetings, several streets were identified as streets with excessive speeding or used as cut-through. However, speeding vehicles and the use of cut-throughs is not an issue unique to Merchantville. The best solution to reduce speeding and cut-through traffic is to install traffic calming devices. Volume control and speed control measures are used to address cut-through traffic problems by blocking certain movements, slowing speeds and by narrowing the roadway.⁸ The following are initiatives that will encourage traffic calming:

1. Education - Awareness campaigns alerts people to ways they can ease traffic problems. It is recommended that the Police Department embark on a Speed Awareness campaign from time to time. Signs and banners reminding motorists to check their speed and slow down could be utilized. Also, the Police Department should continue their existing speed watch program, which uses a mobile speed trailer. The radar trailer is placed at temporary locations where they have been complaints of excessive speed. The intention is to alert motorists of their speed and give them a chance to correct their driving behavior. The trailer helps to produce lower average speeds without using valuable law enforcement personnel.

⁸ www.trafficcalming.org; September 1, 2007.

2. Engineering - There are a variety of traffic calming devices that can reduce speed and improve safety. Traffic calming devices such as speed bumps, chokers, neck downs and bulb-outs have been used in surrounding communities to slow vehicular travel in residential neighborhoods. The Borough should work with neighborhood groups to create a prioritization list where traffic calming devices should be implemented to help reduce speed and improve safety.

3. Enforcement – Enforcement is the primary tool that is employed by the Borough to reduce speeding violations. After the radar trailer is utilized at a site for a few days, the Police Department deploys a patrol unit that monitors traffic by radar. Violators are ticketed or given a warning. However, the Police Department’s resources are limited and they cannot constantly maintain the speed traps.

Figure 2 presents street segments that were raised during the Master Plan meetings that require attention for traffic calming measures.

Figure 2, Resident Identification of Locations for Traffic Calming Measures

ROAD SEGMENT	DESCRIPTION
Cove Road	Speeding and Truck Traffic
Chapel Avenue (southbound)	Speeding
Franklin Avenue	Cut-through and Speeding
Fithian Avenue	Cut-through and Speeding
Morris Street	Cut-through and Speeding
Centre Street (between Maple and Walnut)	Cut-through and Speeding
Chestnut Avenue	Speeding
Clifton Avenue	Speeding
Lexington Avenue	Speeding
Church Road	Cut-through
Somerset Avenue	Cut-through
West Walnut Avenue	Cut-through

The Borough should forward the above list to the Chief of Police, Borough engineer and County engineer to evaluate each street/intersection and create a prioritization schedule. Afterwards, the Borough should partner with the County and sponsor any traffic calming efforts, including design, installation and on-going maintenance. The Borough and County should seek public support prior to installing any traffic calming device in Merchantville. The New Jersey Department of Transportation provides grant funding to help municipalities with installing traffic calming devices. The Borough should continue to pursue municipal aid money to install traffic calming devices. In addition, it is recommended the Borough implement a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in order to prepare for future traffic calming improvements.

3.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

The basic framework of sidewalks establishes the primary component of the pedestrian circulation system. Walking is the primary source of travel between two points. An

inventory of the Central Business District and residential side streets in the Borough reveals sidewalks that are in relatively good condition with curbing, green space and concrete walks separating pedestrians from vehicular traffic. The Borough previously received funding to install curb cuts at several intersections in the Central Business District. It is recommended that the Borough continue to pursue state and local monies to construct ADA compliant curb cuts. It is also recommended that the Borough request the County to construct ADA compliant curbs along Maple and Chestnut Avenues, particularly at the head trauma center and other rehabilitation/health care centers.

The bicycle, as a means of transportation and a form of recreation, offers many benefits for individuals, families and the community. New roads and highways that are designed to accommodate bicycles and provide greater mobility for an increasing number of road users at low capital and environmental cost. Yet Merchantville's narrow streets and current traffic are often stressful for the average bicyclist. Bicyclists often ride on the sidewalks in Merchantville. Unfortunately, it would difficult to add bike lanes on Borough and County roads in Merchantville because of the small cartway widths.

In the mid 1990s, the Borough successfully procured grant funds from the state to convert a portion of Conrail's railroad right-of-way in Merchantville into a bituminous multiuse trail. The trail, more commonly known as the Merchantville Mile, is a well-utilized recreation amenity in the Borough. The Merchantville Mile is a 9.5' wide bituminous trail that runs from Popular Avenue to approximately Alexander Avenue using the existing Conrail Railroad bed as a base. Right now the trail lacks connections to the other side of Chestnut Avenue, Wellwood Park and the Community Center. Centre Street and Chestnut Avenue create significant barriers to pedestrians and bicycles attempting to cross from the multiuse path to the other side of the vacated railroad unimproved greenway. In order to extend the Merchantville Mile to the other side of Centre Street, it is essential that the Borough work with the County and install traffic calming devices, such as chokers or bulb-outs, to bridge the gap across Centre Street. The New Jersey Department of Transportation provides funding to municipalities to implement traffic calming devices to improve pedestrian/bicycle trails. Additionally, there are national programs such as, The Rails to Trail Program, that assist municipalities with converting vacated railroad right-of-ways into multiuse path.

It is recommended that the Borough extend the bituminous trail from Alexander Avenue, across Centre Street, into the vacated existing railroad bed to Park Avenue, If the trail is extended across Centre Street, it will provide better access to the Community Center, residential neighborhoods, downtown retailers, and bus stops. The path will help decrease pedestrian conflicts with motorists and improve the Borough's overall transportation plan.

It is recommended that all new developments along the Merchantville trail, within the business district or near a public institution (i.e. school, community facility, Borough-owned facility) be required to dedicate land and construct pedestrian-oriented sidewalks. Developers should be responsible for implementing planned bike paths/lanes, improving sidewalks or installing bikeway corridor signs along the frontage of their parcels.

3.3 Public Transit Circulation

3.3.1 Bus Service

NJ Transit operates 31 fixed-route bus lines that terminate or travel through Camden County. Commuter bus routes travel into the City of Camden and then into downtown Philadelphia. Local bus routes do not cross the Delaware River and are contained within Camden, Burlington and Gloucester Counties.⁹ There are three commuter bus routes that provide service to Merchantville, including two routes that service Philadelphia/Cherry Hill Mall (404 and 405) and one route that services Philadelphia/Moorestown Mall (407). NJ Transit provides partial service along Maple Avenue, Park Avenue, Chestnut, Centre Street, Chapel Avenue, and Church Road.

3.3.2 Rail Passenger Service

Due to its close proximity to the City of Philadelphia, 15 percent¹⁰ of Merchantville residents commute to Philadelphia regularly. Some of the residents take the Port Authority Transportation Commission Organization (PATCO) elevated-train. PATCO operates from downtown Philadelphia and serves points in Camden County from the City of Camden to Lindenwold. Although there is no PATCO station in Merchantville, there are two train stations located nearby in Collingswood (Haddon Avenue) and Camden (Ferry Avenue).

NJ Transit also operates the Atlantic City Rail Line (ACRL), which traverses through Merchantville. The rail passenger service operates between Atlantic City and Philadelphia and serves points in between; however, there is no train station located in or near Merchantville along that line. The closest station is located at the Garden State Park Race Track in Cherry Hill.

It should be noted that the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority is seeking ways to upgrade the Southern New Jersey regional transportation network in anticipation of the vast economic expansion expected to take place over the next 10 years in that resort area. According to a Request for Proposals for Transportation Consulting Services by the Casino Reinvestment Development authority, dated March 2007, it is anticipated that upcoming planned and proposed projects will bring “upwards \$10 billion of construction, 45,000 new direct casino industry jobs, additional indirect jobs and significant increases to the number of visitor trips to the City” over the next ten years.¹¹ As it is anticipated that the needed employment pool will draw from areas outside of the immediate Atlantic City region, expansion of the commuter rail routes will likely be considered. Merchantville (and its neighbors along the rail line) should participate in any regional transit planning discussions, including the consideration of an additional train station location close to Merchantville.

⁹ Camden County Public Transportation Plan prepared for the Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (December 1997), p. 15.

¹⁰ Journey to Work Survey, US Census 2000.

¹¹ *Id.* at p.2.

3.3.3 Special Need Services - Para Transit

NJ Transit and Camden County Transit System (Camden Sen-Han Transit) jointly provide free door to door shuttle service (with a suggested donation of \$1.00) for senior citizens (60 or older) and persons with disabilities (no age restriction) residing in Camden County. Service is offered Monday to Friday, with Saturday for dialysis and limited personal business. The service provides transportation to the following locations:

- Seniors and persons with disabilities (under 60) attending certain college campuses within Camden County;
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) provides transportation for senior citizen volunteers who are registered with the RSVP program and need transportation;
- Persons with disabilities (under 60) going to job training sites/sheltered workshops;
- Participants of certain nutrition sites and social day programs;
- Special events for groups (this is a fee service);
- Non-emergency medical appointments to doctors' offices, hospitals, and other medical facilities for veterans, seniors and persons with disabilities;
- Grocery shopping (weekly fixed route) and malls (bi-monthly);
- Private employment (limited service);
- A shuttle to major Philadelphia health centers (in conjunction with Gloucester and Cumberland County Para-transits) for non-emergency medical appointments; and
- Conduct personal business on a pre-reserved, space available basis (banking, hairdresser, social event, home visit, etc.)

3.4 Parking

As noted in the Land Use Plan Element, the adequacy of the parking supply in the downtown has been a reoccurring issue in Merchantville's planning documents over the years. Most recently, it was identified in the August 2004 *Town Center East Redevelopment Plan*, authored by the Camden County Improvement Authority (CCIA), which was adopted by the Merchantville Borough Council. The mixed-use redevelopment plan recommended that Merchantville conduct a parking study to determine if parking demands within the downtown area were being met due to the recent redevelopment occurring in the core business area. This issue was also highlighted during the Planning Board hearings for said redevelopment project, which proposed a mixed-use parking structure.¹² While the parking structure is intended to meet the projected parking demands of the redevelopment project, it will only accommodate a limited amount of overflow parking. It is also uncertain whether the development will move forward as approved, or at all. Hence, parking in the Central Business District is still considered to be a concern and the provision of sufficient parking to meet the needs of the downtown continues to be a major objective of the Borough.

¹² The Planning Board approved the project, with conditions, on November 14, 2006.

In May 2007, the Borough successfully procured a grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to conduct a comprehensive parking study that will address current and future parking needs for Merchantville as it redevelops into a thriving community. A critical part of the parking study will involve receiving input from various public and private stakeholders who deal with parking issues. Community meetings will be held to discuss parking problems, such as an insufficient parking supply on Centre Street and the underutilization of certain off-street parking areas. These meetings will also explore potential problems such as inadequate protection and enforcement of residential parking areas near the commercial core and parking-related problems such as traffic congestion. The evaluations and recommendations of the parking study may be appended to this Master Plan.

4.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Six-Legged Intersection

- It is recommended that the Borough continue an open dialogue between the Camden County Department of Public Works and their representatives into the redesign of the six-legged intersection. In the event the County and the Borough decide to move forward with the proposed roundabout, it is important that the public has input into the design and landscaping of the intersection.

4.2 Chapel Avenue/Centre Street Circle

- It is recommended that traffic calming measures be considered, such as the installation of splitter islands, deflection of the roadway, raised pavement in the roundabout, better signage, and the installation of signalized pedestrian crosswalks and yield lines prior to pedestrian crosswalks.
- It is recommended that the Borough and the County work with the owner of 177 South Centre Street to demolish or move the obstructive building to improve driver's site view.

4.3 Merchantville Public School Vehicular Traffic Circulation

- It is recommended that the Merchantville Board of Education and the Borough Council work together to create a comprehensive circulation plan for the school.
- It is recommended that the Merchantville Board of Education and Borough Council establish time-restricted parking zones on nearby residential streets and install pedestrian crossing signs and crosswalk stripes.

- It is recommended that the Borough create an incentive program for families who use alternative modes to commute to and from school.

4.4 Route 130 and Maple Avenue

- It is recommended that Merchantville reach out to the State, County, Pennsauken and the City of Camden to analyze the possibilities of either relocating the Route 130 exit ramp and/or implementing means of mitigating its impact.
- It is recommended that the Borough install a gateway sign on Maple Avenue to welcome travelers as they exit Route 130. Gateway signs should be installed at all major access points into Merchantville.

4.5 Intersection of Chestnut Avenue and Centre Street

- It is recommended that the Borough install traffic calming devices such as chokers and bulb-outs on the Conrail parcels (greenway between North and South Chestnut Avenues) and extend the curb line to narrow the lanes of travel on Centre Street so that the street feels “tight” to motorist; thus, slowing vehicle speeds and reducing cut-through traffic in downtown Merchantville.
- It is recommended that the Borough create a one way entrance onto Centre Street from South Chestnut Street. Borough should install a forced-turn channelization device, such as a diagonal diverter, on South Chestnut Street that will prevent motorists from turning left onto Centre Street. The forced-turn channelization device will limit traffic volumes on Chestnut Street and improve pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Centre Street
- It is recommended that the Borough install four-way stop signs at the intersections of East Walnut Avenue/Centre Street and North Chestnut Avenue/Centre Street.
- It is recommended that the Borough add painted pedestrian crosswalk stripes to the intersections Chestnut Avenue and Centre Street.

4.6 Traffic Signalization

- It is recommended that Borough officials work with the Camden County Department of Public Works and the State Department of Transportation to update the traffic signals at Browning Road and Maple Avenue; Cove Road and Park Avenue; and Cove Road and Maple Avenue.

4.7 Pavement Conditions

- It is recommended that the Borough implement a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in order to prepare for future infrastructure improvements to the Borough roadways.

4.8 Signage

- It is recommended that the Borough forward the above-mentioned list of signage locations to the Borough’s engineer and County’s engineer for evaluation and prioritization.

4.9 Speeding and Cut-throughs

- It is recommended that the Borough forward the above-mentioned list of speeding and cut-through streets to the Chief of Police, Borough engineer and County engineer for evaluation and prioritization. The Borough should also have public meetings and get the community involved in the design of traffic calming devices.
- It is recommended the Police Department continue their existing speed watch program, which uses a mobile speed trailer.

4.10 Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

- It is recommended the Borough extend the Merchantville Mile bituminous path from Alexander Avenue across Centre Street to Park Avenue utilizing the existing vacated Conrail railroad right-of-way.
- It is recommended that all new development along the Merchantville Mile, within the business district or near a public institution (i.e. school, community facility, Borough-owned facility) be required to dedicate land and construct pedestrian-oriented sidewalks.

4.11 Parking

- It is recommended that the community participate in the parking study process and provide valuable information such as locations for off-street parking, time limits of meters and time restricted parking zones.

5.0 APPENDIX TO THE CIRCULATION PLAN ELEMENT

The following map can be found in the Appendix to this Element.

Circulation Map.....C-1

BOROUGH OF MERCHANTVILLE CIRCULATION



LEGEND

ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local
- NJ Transit



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Census, County Improvement Authority
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) created data for this map. This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP as is not state-sanctioned.

This map is for illustrative purposes only. RDG does not warrant the accuracy of the information or geographic features identified. The map has been derived from sources noted above, as well as independent research gathered by RDG.

August 2007

MAP C-1, CIRCULATION

VIII. ECONOMIC PLAN ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of the Master Plan is to improve the prospects for expanding the Borough of Merchantville's ratable base. This element will provide some direction and options for pursuing economic growth. In accordance with Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.) the economic plan element is intended to consider all aspects of economic development and sustained economic vitality, including: a) a comparison of the types of employment expected to be provided by the economic development to be promoted with the characteristics of the labor pool resident in the municipality and nearby areas and b) an analysis of the stability and diversity of the economic development to be promoted.

2.0 GOALS

- 2.1 To expand and diversify the economic profile of the Borough;
- 2.2 To increase tax ratables so the Borough can maintain and improve the quality of services it provides to its residences and businesses;
- 2.3 To stabilize and rejuvenate the West End mixed-use neighborhood;
- 2.4 To have a vibrant downtown with a healthy mix of businesses and attractive storefronts;
- 2.5 To provide a business friendly environment for existing businesses, which have invested in the Borough and provide a supportive environment for those wishing to upgrade or renovate.
- 2.6 To attract new businesses to the Borough.

3.0 HISTORICAL ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Merchantville's small status as a one square mile community belies its history as the residence to many of the foremost business leaders in the Philadelphia metropolitan region. The opening of the railroad in 1867 propelled the first wave of economic development in Merchantville.¹ The railroad brought several affluent Philadelphia families to Merchantville in the late 1860s and early 1870s.² While this wealthy class typically built mansions along Maple Avenue to be used for summer homes, other residences were built in the Cattell Tract north of the railroad, including the homes of

¹ Excerpt from Regional Plan Association's 2005 Mayor's Institute annual report, Background, p.8, released October 2005, accessed January 31, 2007.

² National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District dated August 1, 1994, Section 8, p. 3.

lace importer Edward M. Furber (1869), wholesale dry goods merchant Christian E. Spangler (1872), and cloth manufacturer Joseph Bayliss (1873).³ Around this time, David S. Stetson started the first of several building and loan associations in Merchantville.⁴ By the time Merchantville was incorporated on May 18, 1874, it was a growing residential suburb of stately Victorian homes and contained a business district that served as the commercial hub for surrounding towns.⁵ Between 1880 and 1910, Merchantville's population increased from 440 residents living in 73 households to 1,996 residents living in 446 dwellings.⁶ In contrast to the early affluent vacationers, most of the new residents that came to Merchantville from Philadelphia and Camden were middle class merchants and manufacturers.⁷

Today the world is more diverse. Merchantville's rich architectural history is one of the remaining legacies of wealth of the individuals who live here. This Master Plan must focus on the economic climate of today and make recommendations based on a more diverse economic environment. With the internet age, many of our businesses sell their unique items world wide over the internet. Many traditional downtowns, like Merchantville's have lost their market share to malls and suburban strip developments. The small older buildings do not lend themselves to 'warehouse style' trends in retailing that emphasize a large amount of square footage on a single level. Even though most of our businesses are local service shops, many owners indicate that 65% or more of their business comes from out of town. Consequently, public and private re-investment and a search for a new role or market niche are essential.

4.0 PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH 2004-2014⁸

Camden County has a projected annual growth rate of .84 percent. The fastest growing sector within the ten year period is anticipated to be the Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations sector with an estimated growth of 21.5% followed closely by the Community and Social Service Occupations sector at 19.5% and the Computer and Mathematical Occupations sector at 17.7%. Of the twenty-one sectors of occupations, only one, the Production Occupations sector is anticipated to decrease within the period. The County is expected to add 8,000 new jobs between 2004 and 2014, most of which will be business, health and social services. The county also has a large and fast growing Office and Administrative Support Occupations sector which is expected to increase by 1.9 percent annually and create 1,260 new jobs. As with most counties, professional and

³ Id.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Excerpt from Regional Plan Association's 2005 Mayor's Institute annual report, Background, p.8, released October 2005, accessed January 31, 2007.

⁶ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District dated August 1, 1994, Section 8, p. 4 (citing Census Reports, 1880, 1900, 1910, Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey).

⁷ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Cattell Tract Historic District, dated August 1, 1994, Section 8, p. 4.

⁸ New Jersey's Projected Industry Employment Projections by County:2000-2014", New Jersey Division of Labor Market and Work Force Development, October, 2006.

related occupations and service occupations will add the most new jobs, even though professional and related occupations will grow slower than the state overall.

5.0 TRADE AREA

The downtown business district has served this region as the center of commerce since the late 1800's. With the advent (1960's) of the Cherry Hill Mall and the subsequent suburbanization of surrounding communities, the downtown commerce area has seceded to these more suburban automobile oriented shopping areas. Consequently, the Borough finds itself as a traditional downtown (something planners are recreating all over America) without the attractions to maintain economic growth. This is due, in part, to a greatly expanded trade area.

6.0 REGIONAL ECONOMIC CLIMATE

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission measures regional economic indicators in order to plan for a diverse and competitive regional economy. In the nine county region as a whole, employment increased by 9 percent between 1990 and 2000. Camden County had a 2 percent increase in employment over the time period, which was second lowest only to the City of Philadelphia which had a decline of 6 percent in employment.⁹ While the increase in jobs is an important economic indicator, income growth is also important since skilled jobs with higher wages will increase the money spent in the region and expand the regional economy. In 1999, per capita income in Camden County was \$22,354 and ranked 16 of 21 New Jersey counties. In 1999 per capita income in the Borough of Merchantville was \$25,589 and ranked 447 of 566 municipalities in New Jersey. The per capita income in Camden County and Merchantville is below the state average of \$27,006 but above the national average, \$21,587 for 1999.¹⁰

7.0 ECONOMIC BASE

As of 2003, the Borough had over 200 businesses and slightly more than 800 jobs within its borders.¹¹ The greatest number of employees is found in health care and social assistance. The Retail Trade sector had the second most employees and comprises establishments engaged in retailing merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise.

⁹ Regional Economic Information System, Employment, 1970-2000,DVRPC, October 2002

¹⁰ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

¹¹ Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment, New Jersey Division of Labor Market and Work Force Development, 2003

**NEW JERSEY EMPLOYMENT : 2003 ANNUAL REPORT
MUNICIPALITIES BY INDUSTRY
CAMDEN COUNTY**

<u>MUNICIPALITY/INDUSTRY</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
MERCHANTVILLE	
Construction	73
Manufacturing	
Wholesale trade	18
Retail trade	85
Information	
Finance and insurance	33
Real estate and rental and leasing	
Professional and technical services	45
Administrative and waste services	
Health care and social assistance	143
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	
Accommodation and food services	24
Other services, except public administration	37
PRIVATE SECTOR MUNICIPALITY TOTAL	690
LOCAL GOVT MUNICIPALITY TOTAL	134

8.0 LABOR FORCE

Merchantville's resident labor force, or the group of residents currently employed or seeking employment, contains 2,026 workers, which represents a labor force participation rate of 68.9 percent.¹² Merchantville's low unemployment rate of 3.9 percent indicates that the Borough's employment is stable. Private sector employment may increase slightly as a result of new redevelopment opportunities in the next few years. Anticipated employment will come from redevelopment in the downtown of 100 new residential units and retail commercial infill. It is anticipated that an additional 200 jobs will be created during the period of construction and approximately 75 jobs on a continuing basis thereafter.

Only 14 percent of workers in Merchantville work in their place of residence and 20.2 percent work outside the State. The majority of Merchantville's resident work force is employed within Camden County. The majority of Merchantville's labor force (64.3 percent) commutes to work by car, however, 13.7 percent car pool. More people walk to work than use public transportation, which is indicative of a small urban community having a town center in close proximity to residential homes.

¹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Merchantville's Resident Labor Force Characteristics, 2000		
	Number	Percent
<i>Labor Force Participation</i>		
Persons 16 and over	2,941	
Persons in Labor Force	2,026	68.9
Employed	1,960	66.6
Unemployed	66	2.2
Males	1,044	51.5
Females	982	48.5
<i>Community Characteristics</i>		
Workers 16 and over	1,895	
Drove alone	1,218	64.3
Carpools	260	13.7
Using public transportation	137	7.2
Using other means	128	6.8
Walked or worked at home	152	8.0
Mean travel time to work	24.2	
<i>Place Of Work</i>		
Worked in place of residence	271	14.3
Worked outside of place of residence	1,624	85.7
Worked in county of residence	1,030	68.1
Worked outside county of residence	482	31.9
Worked in State of residence	1,512	79.8
Worked outside of state of residence	383	20.2

9.0 RESIDENT LABOR SKILLS

Merchantville's resident labor force is relatively equally well-educated when compared with Camden County. Approximately 58.8 percent of all Borough residents age 25 and over have a high school, bachelor's or graduate degree. In comparison, 61.6 percent of all county residents have a high school, bachelors or graduate degree. The gap between the Borough and the County is most pronounced for bachelors or graduate degrees. Approximately 27.7 percent of all Merchantville residents age 25 and over have a post-secondary education degree compared with 24.0 percent for all Camden County residents.

A well educated labor force is needed to support the emergences of sophisticated service industries that existed within the metropolitan Philadelphia area. A recent trend that warrants further attention is the development of a bimodal work force, with one group of highly skilled, highly educated workers and another group of relatively unskilled workers. Economic opportunities for this second group are limited because the educational and social system cannot overcome the cultural, monetary and social difficulties that separate the two groups. Preventing this bimodal split, which discounts one segment of the Borough from meaningful participation in the work force, is necessary for the long-term economic well-being of the Borough and its residents.

RESIDENT EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 2000 ¹				
Borough of Merchantville and Camden County ¹³				
Educational Attainment	Borough of Merchantville		Camden County	
Less than 9 th grade	79	3.1	19,501	5.9
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	382	15.1	45,956	13.9
High school graduate	659	26.0	106,572	32.1
Some college, no degree	581	23.0	61,683	18.6
Associate degree	129	5.1	18,351	5.5
Bachelor's degree	496	19.6	51,782	15.6
Graduate or professional degree	205	8.1	27,920	8.4
Total	2,531	100	331,765	100
Percent high school graduate or higher		77.8		78.3
Percent bachelor's degree or higher		22.2		21.7

¹ Persons 25 years and over

10.0 INCOME

The following table provides 1999 income data for the Borough, County and State which is the last full year of income before the 2000 Census questionnaires were distributed. The Borough's per capita income is higher than the County and lower than the State. The Borough's median incomes are also higher than those of the County and lower than those of the State.

1999 Income for Merchantville, County and State

Jurisdiction	Per Capita Income	Median Income	
		Households	Families
Borough of Merchantville	\$25,589	\$49,392	\$60,652
Camden County	\$22,354	\$48,097	\$57,429
New Jersey	\$27,006	\$55,146	\$65,370

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, SF-3 DP-3 for Merchantville, County and State.

The following table addresses the lower end of the income spectrum by providing data on poverty levels for persons and families. The determination of poverty status and the associated income levels is based on the cost of an economy food plan and ranges from an annual income of \$8,501 for a one-person household to \$28,967 for an eight-person family for the year 1999. According to the data in the following table, the Borough proportionally has fewer persons qualifying for poverty status than do the County or

¹³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

State. However, the 2000 census states that 259 persons and 55 families are classified in poverty status. Thus, the family households have a much larger share of the population in poverty status.

**Poverty Status for Persons and Families for Merchantville, County and State
(% with 1999 income below poverty)**

Jurisdiction	Persons (%)	Families (%)
Borough of Merchantville	6.8	5.8
Camden County	10.4	8.1
New Jersey	8.5	19.4

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, SF-3 DP-3 for Merchantville, County and State.

11.0 TAXES AND THE RATABLE BASE

Currently the equalized assessed value for tax purposes in the Borough of Merchantville is established at 57.91 percent. The Borough's 2005 property assessments are as follows:

Classification	Number of Parcels	Land	Improvements	Assessed Value
Residential (3-6 units)	27 parcels	\$1,110,000	\$3,034,800	\$4,144,800
Apartments	22 parcels	\$1,307,900	\$6,064,300	\$7,372,200
Commercial	52 parcels	\$2,025,300	\$9,093,800	\$11,119,100
Commercial/Office	3 parcels	\$127,100	\$872,200	\$999,300
Commercial/Residential	26 parcels	\$785,100	\$2,934,900	\$3,718,900
Community Facility	17 parcels	\$2,041,500	\$18,557,300	\$20,598,800
Duplex	100 parcels	\$3,337,400	\$8,702,200	\$12,039,600
Office	17 parcels	\$820,500	\$2,825,100	\$3,645,600
Office/Residential	11 parcels	\$191,200	\$721,000	\$912,200
Parks and Recreation	7 parcels	\$978,600	\$280,600	\$1,259,200
Private Institution	24 parcels	\$2,213,900	\$10,042,100	\$12,256,000
Public Parking	4 parcels	\$69,400	\$9,500	\$78,900
Single Family	882 parcels	\$30,857,200	\$79,614,500	\$110,295,800
Townhouses	47 parcels	\$952,700	\$2,565,400	\$3,518,100
Twins	80 parcels	\$1,949,400	\$4,916,200	\$6,865,600
Utilities	10 parcels	\$516,500	\$1,298,700	\$1,815,200
Vacant	9 parcels	\$165,100	\$ 0	\$165,100
TOTAL	1,338 parcels	\$49,448,800	\$151,532,600	\$200,804,400

The Borough’s 2007 tax rate is 4.650%. The tax rate is broken down as follows:

Receiving Entity	Rate
Camden County (includes library & open space)	1.153
School	2.484
Borough	1.013
Total	4.650

12.0 ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A few obstacles either exist, or are perceived as obstacles, in planning for the future economic viability of the Merchantville downtown business district. There remains a heavy reliance on the residential tax base due to the lack of a major commercial user or industry in the Borough. According to the Borough’s property assessments, nearly 72 percent of all taxes collected are a result of residential housing. In addition, the West End business district is in need of redevelopment. There is also a perception that the downtown area lacks adequate parking. In order to create a more vibrant downtown, this plan advances the following recommendations.

12.1 Smart Growth Principles

The downtown area has phenomenal attributes. There is a strong tradition of history, which needs to be told as part of the Merchantville experience. The downtown area has wonderful architecture. From Colonial to Victorian to Second Empire, these buildings create a fantastic opportunity to create a significant statement about the wonderful periods of architecture in America and how Merchantville was a working part of that history.

It is recommended that the Borough adhere to the Smart Growth principles and design standards outlined in Land Use Plan Element to implement the vision for the community, including capitalizing on the historic roots of the Borough by preserving the historic character of buildings and encouraging renovation and rehabilitation of existing structures, as well as enhancing activity in the downtown and the Borough’s other mixed–use neighborhoods.

12.2 Economic Growth – Must be balanced with proper taxes.

Redevelopment – The downtown area of the Borough continues to meet the need for a redevelopment area. The Borough, in conjunction with a joint municipality task force, should analyze whether there are additional areas in need of redevelopment in the West End neighborhood, pursuant to the New Jersey’s Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. The Borough should also pursue other programs to replace the ending Neighborhood Preservation Program for the West End business area and coordinate efforts with Pennsauken and Camden in an

effort to stabilize the West End. The Borough is encouraged to establish an opportunity for incentives for prospective users. These incentives include business assistance, façade grants, and payment in lieu of taxes.

12.3 Government Sponsorship

Attracting new businesses and maintaining existing businesses is a hallmark goal of this plan. The establishment of a Business Ombudsman at Borough Hall is recommended to develop strategies to help coordinate and attract developers and businesses interested in becoming active in the Borough renaissance and to ensure a smooth transition for businesses wanting to locate in Merchantville. The person should be knowledgeable about the planning, zoning, and building inspection process. He or she will provide detailed information on permits required, forms, procedures, and timetables for obtaining such permits or approvals. In addition, a Downtown Economic Steering Committee should be considered with a goal of restoring and revitalizing the downtown shopping environment. This Steering Committee would represent the organizational and governing commitment to revitalize the Borough's downtown. The Steering Committee could also assist property owners with researching and securing façade grants and meet regularly to help promote their businesses.

Landowners are one key to understanding the pulse of the retail district. Meetings with landowners and businesses should be arranged in an attempt to learn of each others issues and seeing how the Steering Committee may be of assistance. These meetings would send a message that the Borough is willing to listen and support economically sound ideas to re-generate new life within the downtown area.

12.4 Marketing of Borough Businesses

Embark on a "Shop Locally" campaign by sending out flyers to residents making them aware of new and existing business and displaying overhead banners at strategic locations in the downtown. Market to other areas within the region including Philadelphia and the rest of South Jersey by advertising in regional newspapers and newsletters. Encourage the development of niche retail markets and mid-level to upscale restaurants. Advantages such as proximity to a large regional employment base and nearness to a major city are attributes that companies look for when choosing a location. In order for any redevelopment plan to be successful and to have a vibrant downtown business area, the Borough must understand both the potential and the constraints of the business area and develop a marketing strategy that embraces opportunities without wasting resources on industries or markets that may never materialize.

12.5 Provision of Adequate Supply of Parking in Downtown

As noted in the Land Use Plan Element, many Borough residents and businesses believe that one of the major obstacles to the success of the downtown is the

inadequate supply of parking. The Borough was recently awarded a Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to conduct a downtown parking study. Pursuant to the study, both qualitative and quantitative data will be researched and recommendations will be made related to meeting the parking needs of Merchantville’s visitors, residents, and employees. It is anticipated that the study will be adopted as an addendum to this Master Plan.

13.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 Implement the Smart Growth principles and design standards outlined in Land Use Plan Element to achieve the vision for the community, by capitalizing on the Borough’s historic roots, as well as enhancing the mix of land uses and activity in the downtown and the Borough’s other mixed-use neighborhoods.
- 13.2 Continue to cultivate redevelopment/infill opportunities in the downtown and investigate new redevelopment opportunities in the West End.
- 13.3 Encourage full occupancy in commercial locations by opening lines of communication with existing businesses and offering business incentives for site improvements and business development.
- 13.3 Employ a Business Ombudsman to attract new businesses by developing strategies to coordinate and attract developers and businesses interested in becoming active in the Borough renaissance and to ensure a smooth transition for businesses wanting to locate in Merchantville.
- 13.4 Establish a Downtown Economic Steering Committee to restore and revitalize the downtown shopping environment.
- 13.5 Embark on a “Shop Locally” campaign, as well as implement marketing strategies to attract shoppers from other areas in the region.
- 13.6 Once complete, adopt the TCDI downtown parking study as an addendum to the Master Plan.

IX. UTILITY SERVICE PLAN ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As set forth in the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(5), a utility service plan element analyzes the need for, and illustrates the future location of water supply and distribution facilities, drainage and flood control facilities, sewerage and waste treatment, solid waste disposal and provision for other related utilities, including storm water management.

2.0 GOALS FOR UTILITY SERVICES

- 2.1 Ensure the provision of safe, adequate, and proper utilities to Borough residents and businesses at reasonable rates.
- 2.2 Preserve, maintain, and improve the community's existing water, sewer, stormwater, and solid waste infrastructure.

3.0 WATER SUPPLY

3.1 Introduction

The Merchantville-Pennsauken Water Commission (hereafter "MPWC") services all of Merchantville, Pennsauken, and portions of the city of Camden and Cherry Hill Township. The MPWC is co-owned by the Borough of Merchantville and Pennsauken Township and was first established in 1926. It currently services a population of 52,200 people with 16,400 service connections.

The MPWC 2006 rate schedule consists of a base rate and excess consumption rate. The minimum base rate covers the first 900 cubic feet of water consumed and is dependent upon the meter size. The base rate ranges from \$15.47 per quarter for a 5/8" meter to \$840.19 per quarter for an 8" meter. Thereafter, anything above and beyond the first 900 cubic feet of water, i.e., the excess usage, is assessed at a rate ranging from \$1.16-\$1.45 per 100 cubic feet of water, depending on amount of usage.

3.2 Capacity

The MPWC owns 14 underground wells,¹ four elevated storage tanks,² and approximately 175 miles of water main. There are plans to erect an additional tank at

¹ The wells vary in depth from 139 to 290 feet deep.

² The elevated storage tanks are located at Park Avenue and Haddonfield Road (3 MG), National Highway and John Tipton Boulevard (1 MG), Marion and Park Avenues (1 MG), Woodbine and Victoria Avenues (1 MG), and Clements and Camden Avenues (1 MG). There are plans to erect a tank at Garden State Park (1 MG) in 2007-2008.

Garden State Park (1 MG) in Cherry Hill in 2007-2008. The MPWC wells are located within an area designated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (hereafter "NJDEP") as critical. Specifically, half of the wells are located in a Threatened Zone, while the other half are located in a Depleted Zone. This has limited the amount of water the MPWC may withdraw from the Potomac Raritan Magothy (PRM) aquifer. Consequently, the DEP has assigned a limited water source allocation of 2.769 billion gallons per year to the MPWC, which has not been exceeded. On average, the MPWC pumps 2.237 billion gallons per year, leaving an excess of 532 MGY on average. Seasonal demands vary greatly from 6 M.G.D. to 10.5 M.G.D. The daily average is about 7.6 M.G. during the summer months. While the MPWC has historically never exceeded its source allocation of 2.769 billion gallons per year, it is anticipated that additional capacity will be needed in the future, given redevelopment activity in the franchise area.

There has been significant redevelopment activity in the franchise area, including the Garden State Park and the Borough Mills projects in Cherry Hill, the Maple Commons and St. Stevens Stone Gate projects in Pennsauken, and the Chestnut Station Apartments in Merchantville. Given the aforementioned environmental restrictions, the anticipated increase in demand will be met with outside sources. The MPWC is interconnected with the New Jersey American Water Company, a regional water supplier, and it has the ability to purchase additional water from the City of Camden, if needed. Therefore, the MPWC has no concern at this time about being able to provide service to its franchise area in the future, assuming the stability of its natural resource. It anticipates that the existing MPWC facilities will be sufficient to serve Merchantville, Pennsauken, and its franchise area in the future.

3.3 Condition

The water supply system is functioning properly, with no noteworthy deficiencies being reported. The distribution system ranges from 4" water mains to 20" water mains. All pipes are cement-lined cast iron and ductile iron. All service connections consist of primarily 1" K-type copper with flared joint fittings, with a small amount of galvanized iron.³ All treatment plants and pumping stations are inspected, maintained and supervised daily. An elevated storage tank was recently painted (inside and out) in 2006. There are plans to paint another storage facility at the National Highway and John Tipton Boulevard site in 2007 as part of the MPWC's preventative maintenance and care program.⁴

³ Memorandum from Jeffrey C. Whalen, Superintendent of Merchantville-Pennsauken Water Commission, dated October 26, 2006, p.2.

⁴ Id.

4.0 SANITARY SEWER

4.1 Introduction

Merchantville's sewage collection system conveys flow to the Pennsauken Sewerage Authority, which serves as the regional interceptor for the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (hereafter "CCMUA"). The CCMUA collects and treats all sewerage that is discharged from properties located in Camden County. The Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders created the CCMUA in 1972 to meet the requirements of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1967, which required each State to develop water quality standards to protect surface water and ground water. The CCMUA has the responsibility and sole authority to plan for and treat wastewater within Camden County.⁵

The Merchantville Sewer Utility 2006 residential sewer rate schedule is \$86 semi-annually. The non-residential rate schedule is based upon usage, with a minimum \$72 semi-annual charge, assessed \$1.33 per 100 cubic feet. The CCMUA 2006 rate schedule is \$78.75 per quarter for most customers.

4.2 Capacity

4.2.1. County Plant Capacity

The CCMUA treats approximately 60 million gallons of sewerage per day at two facilities, the Delaware No. 1 Water Pollution Control Facility in Camden, which treats about 58 million gallons of sewerage per day, and the Winslow Water Pollution Control Facility in Winslow, which treats approximately 2.25 million gallons per day.⁶ This flow travels through 110 miles of pipe assisted by 25 pump stations located throughout the County.⁷ The Camden plant is designed to treat 80 million gallons per day, while the Winslow plant is designed to treat 2.25 million gallons per day.⁸ Therefore, there is an excess capacity of 22 million gallons per day at the Camden plant.⁹ It is believed that there is sufficient plant capacity to handle the projected build-out needs for Camden County in the foreseeable future.¹⁰

The Borough of Merchantville currently utilizes about 443,000 GPD and has a County capacity allocation of 480,000 GPD.¹¹ Thus, Merchantville is close to its sewer allocation. Historically, there have not been any concerns regarding Merchantville's

⁵ Camden County Municipal Utility Authority website, Frequently Asked Questions about the Regional Sewer Utility, p. 2, downloaded October 22, 2006.

⁶ Id.

⁷ Id.

⁸ Camden County Municipal Utility Authority website, Frequently Asked Questions about the Regional Sewer Utility Billing, p. 2, downloaded October 24, 2006.

⁹ E-mail correspondence from Andy Kricun, P.E., Deputy Executive Director/Chief Engineer of the CCMUA, dated November 3, 2006 (verifying excess capacity).

¹⁰ Id. (discussing plant capacity). Also, e-mail correspondence from Andy Kricun, dated July 23, 2007.

¹¹ E-mail correspondence from Andy Kricun, P.E., Deputy Executive Director/Chief Engineer of the CCMUA, dated November 28, 2006.

allocation. However, given recent redevelopment efforts in the downtown area and anticipated future redevelopment activity, this matter should be looked at more closely. Particularly since the 2001 New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) designates Merchantville as a Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1), a growth area, whereby further development is dominated by an intensification of land uses through redevelopment and reuse. The major thrust of the PA1 designation is to make private investment and reinvestment a high priority to sustain and leverage the existing investment in public and private infrastructure, facilities, and services that exist there. Therefore, it is recommended that the Borough Sewer Engineer review the amount of excess sewer capacity with Borough Officials and the CCMUA and the Borough should consider entering into negotiations with the CCMUA to increase the Borough's allocation, in consultation with the Township of Pennsauken Sewerage Authority.

Additionally, the CCMUA generally recommends that municipalities check for excessive infiltration/inflow, which can inadvertently utilize some of the Borough's allocation capacity.¹² Installing watertight manholes and checking for leaky lines would be a cost effective way to reduce infiltration/inflow.¹³ An inflow and infiltration study (hereafter "I&I study") was conducted approximately 15 years ago.¹⁴ As sewer infrastructure can experience structural changes due to collapsed lines, uncontrolled wet-weather overflows, and chronic back-ups, it is recommended that the Borough consider updating the I & I study to identify any changed conditions and ameliorate any excessive infiltration/inflow. However, it is recognized that these types of studies are very expensive to conduct and should be made a part of the recommended capital improvement plan (CIP) described in the Community Facilities Plan Element.

4.2.2. Local Sewer Line Capacity

The Merchantville sewer lines are gravity fed to the Pennsauken sewer system, which in turn is pumped to the CCMUA. The Pennsauken Sewerage Authority recently conducted a capacity study, which demonstrated that there is adequate capacity to handle anticipated growth in Pennsauken and Merchantville.¹⁵ However, the demands of specific projects need to be reviewed on a case by case basis, particularly as both towns are actively engaging in redevelopment activities.¹⁶ It is recommended that all future applications for development obtain verification from the Pennsauken Sewerage Authority that there is sufficient capacity in Pennsauken's infrastructure to accommodate the projected needs of the development.

Within Merchantville, various sewer lines have been upgraded to larger mains, including the sewer main along Chestnut Street, which was replaced in order to accommodate the Chestnut Station Apartments. Additionally an 8" sanitary sewer extension was

¹² Id.

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ Conversation with Patrick Brennan on December 28, 2006.

¹⁵ Conversation with Tom Tillinghast, Superintendent of the Pennsauken Sewage Authority on January 10, 2007.

¹⁶ Id.

constructed in the location of Maple and Clifton Avenues to accommodate the townhouses at Clifton Court. Although there have been no concerns raised about the capacity of the Borough's collection system that conveys flow to the Pennsauken sewage system, the capacity of the existing pipelines is an important factor that should be considered, particularly with respect to future redevelopment efforts. Therefore, it is recommended that the Borough evaluate the capacity of the local pipelines that convey flow to Pennsauken.

4.3 Condition

4.3.1. County Condition

The condition of the CCMUA's sewer plant, pipeline, and pumping stations is generally good, as the system is about 20 years old or less.¹⁷ Every year, a consulting engineer performs a physical assessment of the system. Any repairs that are indicated are made on a regular basis. The plant has been in full compliance with the water quality and air quality standards of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The CCMUA has implemented an environmental management system, in order to further ensure optimal environmental performance. It is the only municipal utility in New Jersey to implement such a system to date.¹⁸

4.3.2. Local Condition

The Borough of Merchantville is responsible for the collection system within the Borough that delivers the sanitary sewerage to Pennsauken, who in turn delivers the sewerage to the CCMUA. Most sewer mains and laterals are made of terra cotta pipe installed in the early 1900s through the 1940s, which is typical of older towns.¹⁹ From time to time, there are minor isolated problems, primarily due to root infiltration into the joints of the sewer pipes.²⁰ There is an on-going maintenance agreement with the Pennsauken Sewerage Authority. They provide routine maintenance to the Borough by flushing all of the lines with high velocity volumes of water at least once a year. At that time, they investigate any blockages revealed.²¹ They also investigate customer complaints and provide minor repairs. From time to time, they utilize their camera equipment to examine areas of special concern. Major repairs, however, are the responsibility of the Borough of Merchantville.

The sewer system is one of the most significant public infrastructure systems that the Borough operates. However, since it is underground, and therefore out of sight, it may not receive the attention that it should. While there is a routine maintenance program in

¹⁷ E-mail correspondence from Andy Kricun, P.E., Deputy Executive Director/Chief Engineer of the CCMUA, dated November 3, 2006.

¹⁸ E-mail correspondence from Andy Kricun, P.E., dated July 23, 2007.

¹⁹ E-mail correspondence from Brad Stokes, P.E., Borough of Merchantville Sewer Engineer, dated October 20, 2006.

²⁰ Id.

²¹ Conversation with Pennsauken Sewerage Authority staff on January 10, 2007.

place, there is no program that monitors the age, condition, and capacity of the system, nor is there a systematic plan for periodic improvements. Instead, sewer problems are generally handled as they arise.

About ten years ago, a portion of the sewer infrastructure was replaced along Volan Street that was financed with the assistance of the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust. There was also an emergency repair to a sewer line on Maple Avenue, near Wellwood Park. Also, there have been several sewer relining projects along Prospect Street, Browning Road, and Walnut Avenue. Given the aging sewer infrastructure, it is recommended that the Borough develop a program to monitor the age, condition, and capacity of the system and to plan for periodic improvements by allocating funding (i.e., CIP) to ensure the structural integrity of the sewer network. In this way, the Borough will develop a systematic methodology for allocating budget resources to maintain sewer infrastructure over time. Federal and State grant opportunities and low interest loans should also be explored, such as through the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program.

As part of the program, it is recommended that a single database be created that compiles existing information about the collection system, including current maps, maintenance records, maintenance and emergency logs, recorded flow data, any as built drawings/survey information, preferably in an electronic format, such as GIS. A starting point may be a map generated by Remington & Vernick, dated 1990, that contains information on the locations and diameter of the sewer infrastructure. However, the map is not in an electronic format and does not contain updated information. It is recommended that the Borough seek the assistance of the Camden County Office of Shared Services, as well as the Township of Pennsauken, to develop a joint program for establishing an electronic sewer database, in order minimize costs and to reduce duplicative efforts. This would be an advantageous strategy, given the established sewer relationship with the Pennsauken Sewerage Authority for routine sewer maintenance and transmission of sewage to the CCMUA. The Borough should explore grant assistance for feasibility studies, implementation and transitional costs and county-wide coordination efforts of new shared services through the Sharing Available Resources Efficiently (SHARE) Grant Program, funded through the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services.

As part of the program, the Borough will need to establish priorities for long-term sewer system maintenance in consultation with Pennsauken Sewerage Authority. For example, the Borough may group sewer pipes into categories based on age, diameter, and material type in order to determine the most appropriate allocation of funding, given budgetary constraints. Common problems should be evaluated, such as overflow from wet-weather inflow and infiltration, odors from solids build-up or poor system hydraulics, sink holes from structural deterioration, and backups from maintenance related blockages, such as grease and roots. A color-coded map of the collection system that is keyed according to associated problems would be helpful by revealing interrelationships that may otherwise be overlooked. The configuration of the sewer system should be analyzed to see if there are any spots that would be susceptible to hydrogen sulfide corrosion, such as the end of

long force mains or long and flat gravity sections of pipe. Many towns add chemicals to the sewage on a regular basis to neutralize the acids and preserve the pipes.²²

5.0 STORM WATER MANAGEMENT AND DRAINAGE

5.1 Introduction

On February 2, 2004, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection established two sets of stormwater rules that establish a comprehensive framework for addressing water quality impacts associated with existing and future stormwater discharges to local waterways. Phase II New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Regulation Program Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:14A) are intended to address and reduce pollutants associated with existing stormwater runoff. Stormwater Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8) set forth required components of regional and municipal stormwater management plans and established stormwater management design and performance standards for new development.

For residential development, the design and performance standards became immediately effective through the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). For non-residential development, each municipal planning board is required to adopt a stormwater management plan consistent with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:8-2 and N.J.A.C. 7:8-4. Each municipality is required to adopt a stormwater control ordinance and submit both the plan and the ordinance to the county for review.

5.2 Plan

On June 14, 2005, the Merchantville Planning Board approved a Municipal Stormwater Management Plan (MSWMP) prepared by Joseph T. Brickley, P.E., CME of Consulting Engineer Services, dated March 22, 2005. Merchantville Borough Council also adopted said plan on July 11, 2005 and subsequently adopted an implementing ordinance on November 28, 2005. Copies of the MSWMP and associated ordinance are on file in the Borough Clerk's office. The Municipal Stormwater Management Plan is incorporated herein by reference. Additionally, Terry Vogt, P.E., of Remington & Vernick Engineers has prepared a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPPP) for the Borough, dated November 2006 and revised December 2006.

6.0 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Merchantville Department of Public Works provides trash and recycling pick-up and disposal services on a weekly basis. Waste from Merchantville is disposed of at the steam incineration plant located in Camden, New Jersey. The Borough participates in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) municipal recycling

²² E-mail correspondence from Andy Kricun, P.E., Deputy Executive Director/Chief Engineer of the CCMUA, dated November 28, 2006.

tonnage grant program. Merchantville reports approximately 1,700+ tons of recycled material annually.²³

As discussed in the Recycling Plan Element, pursuant to Merchantville’s trash and recycling pick-up and disposal ordinance, the Borough will collect and remove, on specified dates, matter that is placed in proper receptacles or bundles and placed for collection in the prescribed manner.²⁴ However, for large scale commercial and residential development, it states that the Borough is not responsible for collection or removal of “garbage, trash, refuse, used newspapers and glass from industrial facilities, commercial facilities and apartments having four or more living units except where such establishments utilize not more than 12 containers...”²⁵ In practice, however, some large scale developments have historically utilized Borough services, while others have utilized private services.

As N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(12) requires the incorporation of provisions 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 the utilization of 1,000 square feet or more of land, it is recommended that the Borough amend its land development ordinances to require proposed future development of such scale to submit a waste management plan for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials. Even if a private contractor ultimately provides these services, all commercial, residential, and industrial users should be engaging in recycling efforts. It is further recommended that the Borough follow a consistent policy for the provision of large-scale trash and recycling services in the future. *See Recycling Plan Element for further discussion.*

7.0. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Water Supply

- Continue to maintain open communication with the MPWC to keep apprised of the Commission’s activities.

7.2 Sanitary Sewer

- It is recommended that the Borough Sewer Engineer review the amount of excess sewer capacity available with Borough Officials and the CCMUA. The Borough should consider entering into negotiations with the CCMUA to increase the Borough’s allocation, in consultation with the Township of Pennsauken Sewerage Authority.

²³ Correspondence from Joseph Davis, NJDEP Department of Recycling and Planning, dated January 8, 2007.

²⁴ See Chapter 34, Garbage, Rubbish, and Refuse Ordinance.

²⁵ Id. at Section 34-7.

- It is recommended that all future applications for development obtain verification from the Pennsauken Sewerage Authority that there is sufficient capacity in Pennsauken's infrastructure to accommodate the projected needs of the development.
- It is recommended that the Borough develop a program to monitor the age, condition, and capacity of the local sewer system and plan for regular periodic improvements. As part of this, it is recommended that the Borough update the I&I study or conduct a new study to identify any changed conditions and implement ways to limit inadvertent inflow. It is also recommended that a single electronic database be created to compile information about the collection system.
- It is recommended that the aforementioned program be included in a funding and planning program, such as a capital improvement plan (CIP).
- It is recommended that the Borough explore Federal and State grant opportunities and low interest loans for these purposes.
- It is recommended that the Borough seek the assistance of the Camden County Office of Shared Services, as well as the Township of Pennsauken, to develop a joint program for establishing an electronic sewer database in order minimize costs and to reduce duplicative efforts.

7.2 Stormwater Management and Drainage

- For recommendations, see Municipal Stormwater Management Plan (MSWMP) prepared by Joseph T. Brickley, P.E., CME of Consulting Engineer Services, dated March 22, 2005. Also, see Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPPP), prepared by Terry Vogt, P.E., of Remington & Vernick Engineers, dated November 2006 and revised December 2006.

7.3 Solid Waste Management

- It is recommended that the Borough adopt a provision within its land development ordinances to require each development application for the construction of 50 or more units of single family residential housing or 25 or more units of multi-family residential housing submit a waste management plan for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials. Further, the provision should require each application for a nonresidential development utilizing more than 1,000 square feet to include a plan for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials.
- It is recommended that the Borough follow a consistent policy for the provision of large-scale trash and recycling services in the future.

X. RECYCLING PLAN ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As set forth in the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(12) a recycling plan incorporates 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 the utilization of 1,000 square feet or more of land.

2.0 GOALS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

- 2.1** To *reduce* solid waste in the most efficient way and to reduce costs of collection and disposition.
- 2.2** To encourage the *reuse* of reusable items by residents, businesses, schools and government departments located in the Borough.
- 2.3** To *recycle* all possible materials that enter into the Borough's solid waste stream.

3.0 STATE SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING PLAN

In April 1987, the New Jersey Legislature adopted the New Jersey Statewide Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act, N.J.S.A. 13:1E-1 et seq. (the "Act"). The Act established the framework for the collection, transportation and disposal of solid waste in New Jersey. Since 1987, the Act and subsequent amended waste management plans have guided the waste management process in New Jersey. However, the 1993 Waste Management Plan and many statewide waste flows have been invalidated by Federal court. In January 2006, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) adopted a new Statewide Waste Management Plan titled, *Solid Waste Management & Sludge Management State Plan Update, January 2006* (the "State Plan"). The State Plan requires districts¹ to revise, update and readopt the Statewide Solid Waste Management Plan. The State Plan recommends that districts implement stronger recycling and waste disposal guidelines.

¹ In accordance with the requirements of the New Jersey Solid Waste Management Act (N.J.S.A. 13:E-1 et seq.), Camden County has been designated as a solid waste management district. The County has been charged with the responsibility of developing a solid waste management plan consistent with the State's goals and objectives.

The 1987 Act also required a mandatory separation of solid and waste material and established a goal of recycling a minimum of 25% of the total municipal solid waste stream. Subsequently in 1992, the New Jersey State Legislature increased the State recycling goal to 50%. In 2000, NJDEP and the Bureau of Recycling and Planning (the “Bureau”) increased its statewide goal of recycling to 65% of New Jersey’s total solid waste stream, but specifically, to recycle 50% of NJ’s municipal solid waste (MSW) stream. NJDEP reports that the overall recycling rate for New Jersey was 52% in 2003 and the MSW was only 33%.² To increase recycling participation, the Bureau of Recycling and Planning have adopted the following goals to foster recycling in New Jersey:

1. Increase demand for recyclable materials and recycled products;
2. Increase the supply of high quality secondary materials;
3. Maximize the overall efficiency of the recycling infrastructure and;
4. Further recycling-related job development in the collection, processing and manufacturing sectors

These goals have enabled the Bureau to enact recycling policies that include standards on collecting and removing materials from the waste stream, expanding recycling centers and promoting the utilization of recyclable materials and reusable energy sources. Additionally, the Bureau works with districts and municipalities to meet the established goals through grants and business incentives, technical and regulatory assistance, and education and marketing techniques to recycling professionals throughout the state.

4.0 CAMDEN COUNTY SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING PLAN

In accordance with the New Jersey Statewide Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act, Camden County has adopted a Waste Management Plan that establishes parameters for separating waste and recyclable materials. The Camden County Waste Management Plan includes strategies to complete a nondiscriminatory procurement process for securing waste disposal services and to regulate the flow of waste. In April 2002, the Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders adopted a plan amendment that included in the County Plan a new service agreement between the Pollution Control Finance Authority of Camden County (PCFACC) and Camden County Energy Recovery Associates (CCERA) and the reestablishment of waste flow regulation within Camden County. All solid waste and non-recyclable materials are incinerated and disposed by PCFACC in Camden County. The facility is permitted by the NJDEP and uses mass burn technology to convert over 300,000 tons per year of solid waste into enough electricity to supply the needs of approximately 25,000 homes.³

² State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection, Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Program: *Solid Waste Management & Sludge Management State Plan Update, January 2006; Section A; Table A-1.*

³ <http://www.pcfacc.com/crrf.htm>

The Camden County Division of Environmental Affairs, a division of the Department of Parks, is responsible for promoting and handling community recycling activities including household special waste collections, electronics recycling events and litter clean-up. The Division of Environmental Affairs provides information on their website⁴ about dates and locations on where residents can dispose of automotive waste, paint-related products, household cleaners, fuels and pesticides. The County will either recycle or refurbish the waste items. They are also providing a shredding service for sensitive documents which will then be recycled.

The County last amended their Waste Management Plan in 2003. In 2003, Camden County generated approximately 1,068,011 tons of solid waste. The County recycled approximately 542,518 tons and disposed of about 525,493 tons, which equates to a 50.8% recycling rate for the total waste stream. The County's documented municipal waste stream recycling rate was 30.7%.⁵ The County has not amended its Plan to meet the requirements of the new State Plan.

5.0 MERCHANTVILLE SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING PLAN

The Borough of Merchantville adopted its first Waste Management Ordinance in 1985 and has amended its Garbage, Rubbish, and Refuse ordinance in 1986 with subsequent ordinances to further foster the State's goals of solid waste reduction and recycling. Pursuant to the New Jersey Statewide Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act, Merchantville coordinates its trash and recycling collection through the Borough's Department of Public Works and PCFACC.⁶ It is recommended that the Borough update its recycling ordinance to be consistent with the Statewide and County Plan.

Merchantville's Department of Public Works provides trash collection, recyclable pick-up and curbside procurement of large items such as washers/dryers, refrigerators, lamps, non-burnable chemicals etc. The Borough also handles brush collection, leaf composition and Christmas tree recycling. In addition, the Borough participates in the County's Special Waste Collection Program. Household hazardous materials including paints, thinners, household chemicals, etc. can be brought to the Pennsauken Sanitary Landfill. The County's website (<http://www.camdencounty.com/community/household.html>) provides dates, times and locations where special waste products can be dropped-off.

The Borough of Merchantville strives to meet the statewide recycling goal of 65% or better. Working with PCFACC, the Borough recycles various materials including corrugated cardboard, newspaper, glass containers, aluminum containers, plastics, leaves/brush, concrete/asphalt etc. Waste from Merchantville is disposed of at the South

⁴ <http://www.camdencounty.com/community/household.html>

⁵ State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection, Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Program: *Solid Waste Management & Sludge Management State Plan Update, January 2006; Section A*; page 10.

⁶ Telephone conversation with Public Works Director on May 22, 2007.

Camden Resource Recovery Facility. At the incinerator facility, ash from the resource recovery process is disposed of out-of-state. The bypass and non-processible waste is taken to the Pennsauken A-11 Landfill. The Borough participates in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) municipal recycling tonnage grant program. Merchantville reports approximately 1,700+ tons of recycled material annually.⁷ It is recommended that the Borough place additional recycling and trash bins at community parks, schools and government buildings.

Pursuant to Merchantville’s trash and recycling pick-up and disposal ordinance, the Borough will collect and remove, on specified dates, matter that is placed in proper receptacles or bundles and placed for collection in the prescribed manner.⁸ However, for large scale commercial and residential development, it states that the Borough is not responsible for collection or removal of “garbage, trash, refuse, used newspapers and glass from industrial facilities, commercial facilities and apartments having four or more living units except where such establishments utilize not more than 12 containers...”⁹ In practice, however, some large scale developments have historically utilized Borough services, while others have utilized private services.

As N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)(12) requires the incorporation of provisions 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 the utilization of 1,000 square feet or more of land, it is recommended that the Borough amend its land development ordinances to require proposed future development of such scale to submit a waste management plan for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials. Even if a private contractor ultimately provides these services, all commercial, residential, and industrial users should be engaging in recycling efforts. It is further recommended that the Borough follow a consistent policy for the provision of these types of services in the future.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** It is recommended that the Borough update its recycling Ordinance to be consistent with the Statewide and County Solid Waste Management Plan within one (1) year of adoption.
- 6.2** It is recommended that the Borough place additional recycling bins for paper, plastic bottles, glass and aluminum cans at the Borough’s parks, community centers, schools and government buildings. The Borough should use Clean Communities grants to satisfy this recommendation.

⁷ Correspondence from Joseph Davis, NJDEP Department of Recycling and Planning, dated January 8, 2007.

⁸ See Chapter 34, Garbage, Rubbish, and Refuse Ordinance.

⁹ Id. at Section 34-7.

- 6.3** It is recommended that the Borough place pamphlets in the residents and business owners' mail boxes annually regarding materials that can be recycled and the location of household chemical disposal facilities. It is also recommended that Borough post locations and dates on the Borough's website (<http://www.merchantville.com/>).
- 6.4** It is recommended that the Borough adopt a provision as per the State Plan within its land development ordinances to require each development application for the construction of 50 or more units of single family residential housing or 25 or more units of multi-family residential housing submit a waste management plan for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials. Further, Borough Council should add a provision that requires each application for a nonresidential development utilizing more than 1,000 square feet to include a plan for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials.
- 6.5** It is recommended that the Borough follow a consistent policy for the provision of large-scale trash and recycling services in the future, as discussed in Section 5.0 of this Element.

XI. POLICY STATEMENT OF PLAN RELATIONSHIPS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55 D-28d, requires municipal Master Plans to include a specific policy statement indicating the relationship of the proposed development of the municipality, as developed in the Master Plan to (1) the Master Plans of contiguous municipalities, (2) the Master Plan of the county in which the municipality is located, (3) the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and the district solid waste management plan. The intent of this reflection is to require communities to look beyond their borders to consider the impacts of local decisions on adjacent municipalities and to acknowledge the importance of regional planning, which is essential to addressing region and State-wide environmental, social, and economic issues.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

2.1 Relationship to Master Plans of Contiguous Municipalities

Merchantville's policies affect, and are in turn affected by, the plans and policies of adjacent municipalities. Merchantville shares its southeast border with Cherry Hill between Chapel Avenue and Church Road. According to the Cherry Hill Township Master Plan, adopted in 2003, the existing and proposed land use along this border is primarily residential, which is consistent with Merchantville's existing and proposed land use for this area. The Merchantville Land Use Plan Element of this Master Plan designates this neighborhood as a Joint Municipality Targeted Planning Area, as this neighborhood is experiencing challenges, including aging housing stock, occasional vacant buildings, and neglected property maintenance. The municipalities of Cherry Hill, Pennsauken, and Merchantville recognize that inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation is needed to achieve the greatest impact on these conditions. All three communities are currently applying for a multi-jurisdiction Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) grant through the Department of Community Affairs for various programs, including housing rehabilitation, business grants, public area beautification and infrastructure improvements for the Chapel Avenue and Centre Street gateway area. Therefore, Merchantville's Master Plan is consistent with the policies and plans of Cherry Hill for this area.

On all other sides of the Borough, Merchantville shares its border with the Township of Pennsauken. Pennsauken's Cooper Planning district lies to the south and west of Merchantville, while its Browning Planning District is located to the north and east of the Borough. A portion of Pennsauken's Cooper Planning District encompasses the haphazard stripmall commercial development pattern along Pennsauken's major highways with large parking lots, an unfriendly environment to pedestrians, and limited landscaping.¹ One of Pennsauken's objectives for the Cooper Planning District is to

¹ Master Plan Reexamination for Pennsauken Township, prepared by the Martin/DePallo Group (1998), p.14.

enhance the strip commercial development along Pennsauken's major arteries, including Route 130, with signage and site improvement standards, such as landscape elements and underground utilities.² This is consistent with Merchantville's policy, set forth in the Land Use Plan Element, to stabilize and revitalize the West End of the Borough, which abuts the Cooper Planning District, by improving the scenic quality of the West End Gateway, eliminating blighting conditions, facilitating pedestrian accessibility, and strengthening code enforcement. Additionally, the Land Use Plan Element of the Merchantville Master Plan specifically identifies this area as a Joint Municipality Targeted Planning Area and recommends developing a joint municipality strategic revitalization plan with Pennsauken, as well as the City of Camden, to improve conditions in this neighborhood. (See Section 5.4 of the Land Use Plan Element in this Master Plan). With respect to the residential aspects of the Cooper Planning District, Pennsauken's Land Use Plan goals seek to preserve and protect the character of established neighborhoods.³ It also states that new and infill developments should be designed to create a sense of community and to blend into the surrounding neighborhood fabric. As set forth at length in Merchantville's Land Use Plan Element, this is also a goal of the Borough of Merchantville with respect to its residential neighborhoods.

This Master Plan is also consistent with the policies and plans for Pennsauken's Browning Planning District, which lies north and east of the Borough. The predominant land use within the Browning District along Merchantville's border is low-density residential neighborhoods, primarily consisting of single-family houses with a scattering of twin and rowhouse buildings.⁴ This is consistent with the existing and proposed land uses in Merchantville's R-2 and R-3(a) Planning Districts on the Land Use Plan map which abut the Browning District. Pennsauken's Land Use Plan goals seek to preserve and protect the character of established neighborhoods.⁵ It also states that new and infill developments should be designed to create a sense of community and to blend into the surrounding neighborhood fabric. As set forth at length in Merchantville's Land Use Plan Element, this is also a goal of the Borough of Merchantville with respect to its residential neighborhoods. Therefore, Merchantville's Master Plan is consistent with Pennsauken's planning policies.

2.2 Relationship to Master Plan of the County

As discussed in the Land Use Plan Element, the Camden County Improvement Authority (CCIA) has developed the Camden Hub Plan, which is a regional Smart Growth strategy for the City of Camden and its first-generation, inner ring suburbs, including the Borough Merchantville. The Camden County Planning Board and Board of Chosen Freeholders intend to adopt this regional plan as an update to the existing County Master Plan. The Plan supports Smart Growth redevelopment and revitalization efforts in the former industrial waterfronts of Camden, Gloucester and Pennsauken, as well as strategic smaller revitalization projects in the local cores, corridors and redevelopment areas of

²Id., p.9 and p.17.

³ Id., p. 9. and p.16.

⁴ Id., p.14.

⁵ Id., p. 9. and p.16.

Camden's inner-ring suburbs. It is intended to be a reference for the County and provides municipal development, redevelopment and conservation strategies to enhance the quality of life within their communities.

The Borough of Merchantville Master Plan articulates many of the Smart Growth principles that are being articulated in the Camden Hub Plan. It specifically encourages reinvestment in the community, by recommending that the Borough's infrastructure and community facilities be maintained and upgraded (*See Community Facilities Plan Element*), provides for a range of housing choices and opportunities and preservation of the Borough's housing stock (*See Housing and Population Element*), recommends the exploration of shared services with other communities to achieve cost savings and greater efficiency of resources (*See Community Facilities Plan Element*), seeks to augment historic preservation efforts to maintain the Borough's character and sense of place (*See Historic Preservation Plan Element and Land Use Plan Element*), recommends embarking on economic development efforts to maintain the vitality of the Borough (*See Economic Plan Element and Land Use Plan Element*), recommends engaging in traffic calming techniques and create more pedestrian friendly spaces to create a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere in this already walkable community (*See Circulation Plan Element and Land Use Plan Element*), recommends the maximization of the Borough's recreational facilities (*See Recreation Plan Element*), and supports the long-term viability of the State's ecological systems (*See Recycling Plan Element and Land Use Plan Element*). It also articulates Smart Growth principles and design guidelines concerning downtown revitalization, maintaining the Borough's unique character and sense of place, and neighborhood stabilization/enhancement in the Land Use Plan Element. In sum, this Master Plan is a coordinated and comprehensive Smart Growth Strategy for capitalizing on the Borough's many unique assets so that the fabric of Merchantville's physical, social, economic, and cultural life remains strong, which is consistent with the Regional Smart Growth strategies being articulated in the Camden Hub Plan.

2.3 Relationship to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP)

As discussed in more detail in the Land Use Plan Element, the State Planning Act of 1985 mandated the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), which establishes State-level planning policy. It advocates Smart Growth planning, by targeting the State's resources and funding in ways that are consistent with well-planned, well-managed growth.

The SDRP designates Merchantville as a Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1), which encompasses large urban centers and postwar suburbs that are fully or almost fully developed. The overall intent of the Metropolitan Planning Areas (PA1) is to provide for much of the State's future redevelopment; to revitalize existing cities and towns; to promote growth in compact forms, to stabilize older suburbs, to redesign areas of sprawl, and to protect the character of existing stable communities.⁶

⁶ *Id.*, p.190.

This Master Plan affirms the State’s planning policies articulated in the SDRP. For example, it seeks to stabilize this older suburb by revitalizing Merchantville’s downtown, stabilizing and revitalizing the Borough’s West End neighborhood, and stabilizing and enhancing the Centre Street/Chapel Avenue Circle neighborhood. It promotes growth in compact forms in the downtown, by recommending that upper stories be added to existing single-story structures, recommending means of adding additional activity to the downtown, as well as recommending means of enhancing the pedestrian friendly character of this already walkable community. It seeks to protect the character of the community by preserving Merchantville’s historic character and small town charm, by preserving significant historic resources and encouraging the rehabilitation of historic structures, and articulates design guidelines for harmonizing new construction with the Borough’s community character. It seeks to provide a range of housing choice and opportunity, by maintaining the existing diversity of housing stock and encouraging additional residential opportunities in the downtown. It also seeks to establish multi-jurisdictional policy and planning entities to ensure compatible and coordinated community planning, by identifying joint municipality strategic planning areas and encouraging the exploration of shared services with other communities in the region. *See the discussion above with respect to the County Master Plan for more examples.*

2.4 Relationship to the District Solid Waste Management Plan

As discussed in more detail in the Recycling Plan Element, pursuant to the New Jersey Solid Waste Management Act, N.J.S.A. 13:1E-1 et seq., Camden County has been designated as a solid waste management district and has been charged with the responsibility of developing a solid waste management plan consistent with the State’s goals and objectives. Camden County has adopted a Waste Management Plan that establishes parameters for separating waste and recyclable materials. The Camden County Waste Management Plan includes strategies to complete a nondiscriminatory procurement process for securing waste disposal services and to regulate the flow of waste.

The Camden County Division of Environmental Affairs, a division of the Department of Parks, is responsible for promoting and handling community recycling activities including household special waste collections, electronics recycling events and litter clean-up. The County last amended their Waste Management Plan in 2003. The County’s documented municipal waste stream recycling rate was 30.7%.⁷ The County has not amended its Plan to meet the requirements of the new State Plan.

Pursuant to the New Jersey Statewide Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act, Merchantville coordinates its trash and recycling collection through the Borough’s Department of Public Works and Pollution Control Finance Authority of Camden County

⁷State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection, Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Program: *Solid Waste Management & Sludge Management State Plan Update, January 2006; Section A;* page 10.

(PCFACC).⁸ This Master Plan recommends that the Borough update its recycling ordinance to be consistent with the Statewide and County Plan. The Borough participates in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) municipal recycling tonnage grant program. Merchantville reports approximately 1,700+ tons of recycled material annually.⁹ As noted in the Recycling Plan Element, the Borough of Merchantville strives to meet the statewide recycling goal of 65% or better.

⁸ RDG Staff telephone conversation with Public Works Director on May 22, 2007.

⁹Correspondence from Joseph Davis, NJDEP Department of Recycling and Planning, dated January 8, 2007.