

Business District Urban Design Plan

for the
Borough of West Cape May, New Jersey



Prepared by Rhodeside & Harwell
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Table of Contents

Introduction.....1

Public Process.....1

Planning Context.....2

Existing Attributes.....5

Existing Retail/Pedestrian Connections.....6

Existing Open Spaces and Linkages.....7

Existing Circulation Issues.....8

Commercial Land Use Concept Plan.....9

Concept Plan Elements.....10

Concept Plan Enlargement.....11

Short-Term Improvements.....12

Short-Term Visualization.....13

Long-Term Improvements.....14

Long-Term Visualization.....15

Design Guidelines.....16

Implementation.....18

Conclusions.....20



INTRODUCTION

In many ways, the Borough of West Cape May is an icon of small town America, characterized by a dense, walk-able “downtown” area surrounded by farmland and undeveloped natural areas. Varied architectural styles and the close proximity of residential properties to locally-owned businesses contribute to the Borough’s livability.

However, the Borough--particularly the Borough’s business district--experiences some problems. Broadway has traditionally served as West Cape May’s principal commercial corridor, but in recent years businesses have struggled along that street, and subsequently many businesses have relocated elsewhere. In recent years, some new development has detracted from the Borough’s appeal. The center of the Borough’s business district, the intersection of Broadway, West Perry Street, and Sunset Boulevard, is flanked with retail uses whose suburban building form and site design do not support pedestrian activity. Development of foot traffic--vital to a bustling commercial district--is hindered by a discontinuous retail street edge and a fragmented network of sidewalks and crosswalks. Further, as the tourism industry is a significant economic generator for West Cape May, the Borough must preserve and enhance its character in order to compete with other tourist destinations. This urban design study presents solutions to re-energize the Borough’s business district while maintaining a small-town atmosphere.

PUBLIC PROCESS

The Borough of West Cape May retained urban designers and planners Rhodeside & Harwell and economic planners Basile Baumann and Prost Associates to lead a two-day planning session with the Borough in June 2007. The goal of this process was to produce a plan for key improvements to the Borough’s business district, roughly defined as the corridors of Broadway and Park Boulevard south of Leaming Avenue, West Perry Street, and Sunset Boulevard from Broadway to Pacific Avenue.

The two-day session included collection of data prepared as part of previous planning studies; interviews with stakeholders, including elected officials, residents and business owners; field investigation; and two town hall-style public meetings. At the first meeting, the public commented on the planning and design team’s understanding of the project, including the area’s assets and opportunities for improvement. The public also suggested improvements to be included in a plan. Following the first public meeting, the planning and design team prepared concept plans, incorporating public comments. At the second public meeting, proposed plans for improvements, including potential funding and implementation options, were presented for public review and comment. Finally, public comments were incorporated into the plans and compiled into this document for presentation to the Borough Commissioners for adoption in October 2007.

During the two-day session, the public noted three specific goals:

- Maintain the quality of life that has attracted residents to move to West Cape May and is the reason they remain in the Borough.
- Retain or slightly increase the year-round population.
- Retain and encourage more year-round stores that serve the community (i.e. grocery store, book store, coffee shop), rather than allow West Cape May’s commercial economy to be dominated by businesses that cater almost exclusively to tourists.

In addition to the assets and liabilities noted in the Introduction to this document, the public provided the following comments:

Strengths:

- Existing retail establishments are generally high-quality and diverse in nature; the Borough is home to several year-round “anchor” retail businesses.
- The accommodations industry and residential community are generally supportive of locally based businesses and located in close proximity to retail businesses, as the Borough contains a traditional neighborhood mix of uses.
- The local business association boasts sixty-three members and is active in the community by hosting trolley tours and maintaining a map-based directory and website.
- Unique festivals and events draw people to West Cape May.
- The Borough has a strong bond rating and a healthy debt ratio
- The Borough has access to and awareness of federal, state, county, and private resources as tools to fund and implement local improvements.

Weaknesses / Liabilities:

- The local economy is dependent on the tourism industry, facing the following hurdles:
 - o Competition from other areas;
 - o Scattered/dispersed retail;
 - o Fast-moving vehicular traffic;
 - o Limited year-round population to support retail; and
 - o A pedestrian environment not conducive to high levels of foot traffic.
- Development challenges were also noted, including:
 - o National retailers are located on key sites, and these retailers are considered unlikely to relocate or make desired site improvements;
 - o Preservation of affordable retail rents in new development has proven challenging in recent years; and
 - o Undeveloped parcels within the Borough are relatively small, limiting space available for development and parking.

The outcome of the planning processes is an urban design plan for the business district of West Cape May that has been guided by the concerns and ideas raised by the Borough’s citizens. The plan should be used to complement the Borough’s historic preservation, transportation and economic development initiatives, and as a tool to guide land use decisions, policy decisions, and design decisions within the study area

PLANNING CONTEXT

This urban design and planning process began with a thorough understanding of the existing adopted Master Plan for the Borough. Many of the concerns addressed by citizens and apparent to the design and planning team were identified in the 2005 Comprehensive Master Plan Update for the Borough of West Cape May, prepared by Remington Vernick and Walberg Engineers (the Master Plan).

This section of the report includes excerpts from the Executive Summary of the Master Plan (italicized below) and responses to those statements, specifying how this urban design study includes solutions to issues identified and builds upon work previously completed. Further, subsequent Master Plan Updates should incorporate changes as recommended in this document, including re-examination of parking requirements, density, land use requirements, and architectural requirements.

While Borough Planners continue to prioritize the upgrade of the infrastructure network to service existing residential development and to strengthen service to the commercial zoning districts, expanding this infrastructure to support future development is no longer a desired objective.

This document addresses modest increases in density within the Borough’s business district in order to provide economic development without encouraging sprawl.

West Cape May is largely dependent on its natural resources as the basis of its economy. Borough Planners recognize that these resources provide the quality of life so cherished by the community.

Concept plans included in this document include establishing bicycle and pedestrian connections between the Borough’s business district and natural areas in order to enhance quality of life.

The lack of a significant commercial base in the Borough results in an over-reliance on residential property taxes to fund municipal services and education. While Borough Planners do not seek to attract the type of commercial development which would negatively affect the identity and charm of West Cape May, a thriving commercial district with uses designed to support the existing tourist economy and provide business and employment opportunities to Borough residents remains a goal.

A key recommendation within this urban design study is revitalization of a commercial district within West Cape May, centered along the West Perry Street / Sunset Avenue corridor.

Borough Planners encourage and endorse development in West Cape May that conforms with Smart Growth Development Principles.

This urban design study adheres to Smart Growth Development Principles by calling for re-investment within the existing developed area of West Cape May, especially infill development and re-development of underutilized properties. Mixed-use development is a hallmark of this plan, strengthening the Borough’s existing mix of residential, commercial, and other uses within walking proximity of each other.

Cluster housing is a Smart Growth technique which can provide for a variety of density and housing choice opportunities while preserving open space. While long an objective of Borough Planners, the Land Development Ordinance does not currently permit clustering.

The concept plan calls for residential infill development within the business district and creation of residential uses upstairs to commercial uses, both of which adhere to the principles of cluster housing by accommodating a relatively high concentration of residential units on a minimal amount of land, thus allowing undeveloped farmland and open space to remain undeveloped. This strategy of residential infill is complementary to other plans for cluster residential development within the Borough.

Problems related to traffic circulation and parking have intensified since the last Master Plan Re-examination and are likely to continue to increase as southern Cape May County in general ~ and the Borough in particular ~ grow in popularity as both tourist destinations and residential communities.

Improving Borough sidewalks for pedestrian circulation ~ especially in the commercial districts ~ remains a priority for Borough Policymakers.

The shortage of on-street and off-street parking are longstanding concerns for the Borough. Such shortage is likely to increase as Borough Planners seek to expand commercial opportunities in the commercial district(s). The parking regulations contained in the Land Development Ordinance and the Borough’s attitude toward parking variances will impact this issue into the future.

A newly-formed Task Force on Alternative Transportation Modes has been formed to address, in part, bicycle paths, pedestrian circulation and congestion-related issues.

The four aforementioned statements from the Master Plan are addressed by key recommendations within this document. Essential to the success of West Cape May’s business district is enhancement of pedestrian circulation to create a downtown that is more easily navigable by foot. Likewise, safe and clearly marked bicycle routes should be established, as delineated on the concept plan, to encourage biking as an alternative to driving. Where possible, parking should be removed from areas immediately back of curb to alley locations; on-street parking should remain. Collectively, these improvements support a “park once” approach, in which a visitor to the business district could park in one location, then walk or bicycle to any other destination within the business district or nearby open spaces. This approach will partially alleviate traffic congestion, and will go a long way toward minimizing parking shortages by allowing for better management of existing parking resources. Further, pedestrian and bicycle route enhancements will improve the quality of life of the Borough, making it a more desirable place to live, work, and shop.

An Ocean-to-Bay network of paths connecting the Delaware Bay to the Atlantic Ocean via the Central Wetlands Corridor as presently envisioned, would entail acquisition and dedication of privately-owned but undeveloped lands within the Borough. Financing is anticipated via Farmland Preservation funding, Green Acres funding, private endowment grants and other means.

Eco-Park: Recreation area proposed for lands on the extreme eastern portion of the municipality. Envisioned to contain active and/or passive recreation facilities, interpretive stations, eco-tourism opportunities, and related uses. While funding mechanisms have yet to be identified, it is noted that one of the State's primary policies is the remediation of landfills and other impacted properties (brownfields), especially in environmentally-sensitive areas.

Similar to the previous item, these two statements from the Master Plan are addressed via recommendations for enhancement of pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the business district of the Borough. Note on the Concept Plan the open space linkages connecting the business district with the adjacent natural areas that frame the Borough as “bookends.”

Establish a “strong” Historic Preservation Commission empowered to: . . . Work with owners of historic and non-historic properties within the Historic District to reach mutually-acceptable solutions to issues as they may arise.

This urban design study does not build upon this Master Plan statement, but rather reinforces its importance. The recommendations contained within this document include a mixture of public sector and private sector improvements. The Borough will need to work hand-in-hand with private landowners to realize many of the private sector improvements. As many of the recommendations are within the Historic District and call for preservation or rehabilitation of historic resources (such as the streetscape along Broadway, especially in compromised locations such as the frontage of the existing 7-11 site), the Borough and its Historic Preservation Commission should work diligently with private landowners to reach specific solutions that are mutually beneficial to private and public sector interests.

The Master Plan also includes several references to protecting existing farmland and halting suburban sprawl within the Borough. This urban design study does not directly address those issues, as they are outside the scope of work of this project; however, recommendations within this document can be viewed as providing an alternative to sprawl by re-energizing a compact, attractive, livable core within West Cape May.

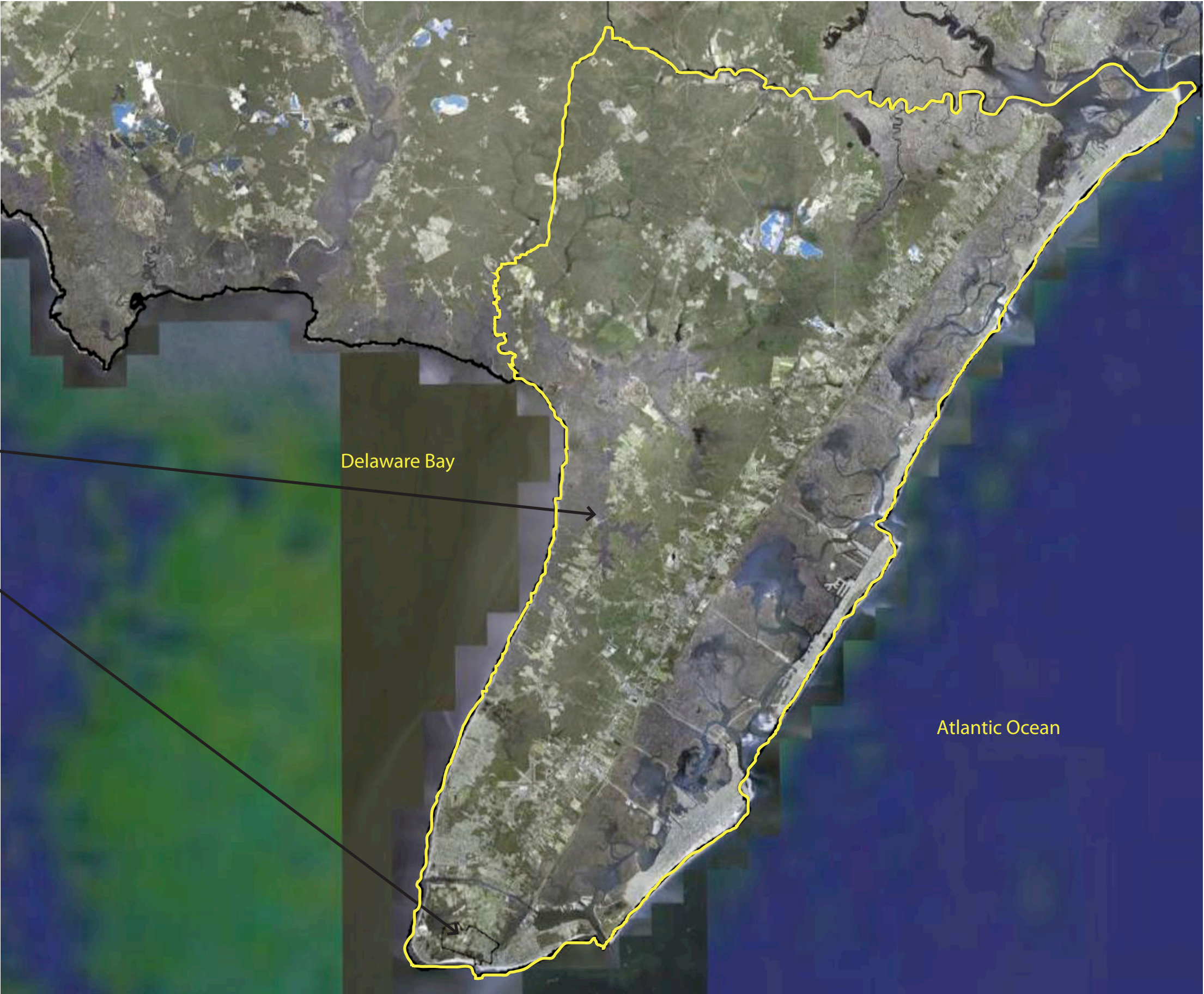
Context Map

Cape May County

Borough of West Cape May

Delaware Bay

Atlantic Ocean



Existing Attributes

West Cape May’s small town character is generally noted by residents as one of its key attributes. Factors contributing to this character are an interconnected grid of streets with supporting alleys, the Borough’s historic Wilbraham Park, the mixed-use Historic District, and close proximity to natural resource areas and beaches.

The geometry of the existing street and alley grid is casual, rather than rigid and highly regular, which contributes to the relaxed atmosphere of West Cape May while allowing for maximum connectivity.

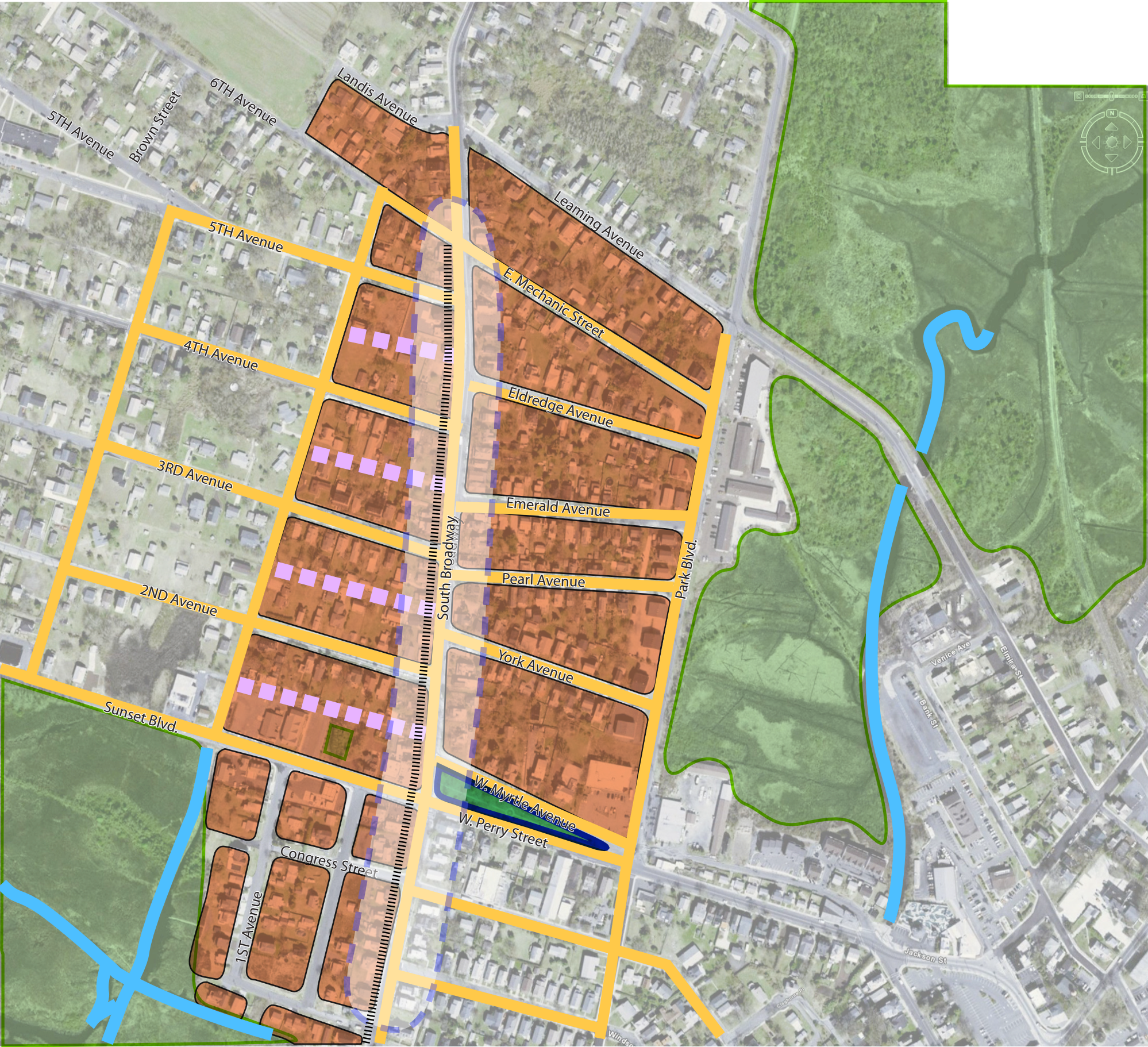
The heart of the business district of West Cape May, Wilbraham Park has an unusual wedge shape that makes it a memorable space. This civic green is host to several events throughout the year, and is beloved by residents of the Borough as a place to relax under mature shade trees.

The first block on either side of Broadway south of Landis and Leaming Avenues constitutes the West Cape May Historic District. Hallmarks of the District are its mix of residential and commercial uses, and of architectural styles from various periods of development. The eclectic mix of uses and building types along Broadway includes 19th century estates with large front lawns and gardens, 19th and early 20th century store fronts built to the back of sidewalk, and early 20th century bungalows with fenced front gardens. Collectively these attributes tell a story about the flavor of West Cape May and its past, and set a casual tone for other development within the Borough’s core business district.

Salt marshes form “bookends” of West Cape May; all areas of the Historic District are within two blocks of a natural resource area, which further contributes to the Borough’s charm and livability. Though not within the Borough, beaches along the Atlantic Ocean are within walking or biking distance of its business district.

Legend:

- Street Grid
- Alleys
- Historic Greens
- Historic District
- Mixed Use “Main Street”
- Pedestrian Beach Link
- Natural Resources
- Tidal Stream



Existing Retail / Pedestrian Connections

West Cape May has many of the hallmarks of an ideal walkable town: narrow, tree-lined streets; moderate to slow vehicular traffic flow; generally dense development pattern; and close proximity of residential, recreational, and commercial/retail uses. However, one of the key ingredients for a successful pedestrian environment is a continuous network of sidewalks. In West Cape May, two major pedestrian access issues are identified:

- 1) Many sidewalks along Broadway are in poor condition and do not meet current accessibility standards.
- 2) Many existing retail uses are not well served with sidewalk connections. Sidewalks are present along most of the historically developed portions of Broadway and West Perry Street, but more recently-developed retail areas along Sunset Boulevard and Park Boulevard do not have a continuous network.

Note on the map at right the discrepancies between retail locations and sidewalk presence. The map does not distinguish between general sidewalk conditions (good, fair, or poor), as conditions are localized.

Legend:

- Existing Retail
- Existing Sidewalks



Existing Open Spaces & Linkages

Similar to the previous map, the map at right illustrates the lack of pedestrian connections between West Cape May's business district and its adjacent natural resource / open space areas.


Legend:


- Open Space
- Existing Sidewalks
- Water Bodies / Creeks





Existing Circulation Issues


As part of understand the existing street and sidewalk network within the Borough's business district, the map at right illustrates three key problem intersections, and classifies five street types.


-  Problem Intersection:
 - 1) Broadway and West Perry / Sunset: Lack of clear pedestrian crosswalks, obstructed sightlines, obstructed left-hand turning movements.
 - 2) Park Boulevard, Myrtle Street, West Myrtle Street and West Perry: Lack of pedestrian crosswalks, overly-wide intersection, lack of distance between major and minor intersections / too many streets converging at one point.
 - 3) Park Boulevard and Leaming Avenue / Elmira Street: Lack of clear pedestrian crosswalks, speeding problems.

 Appropriately-scaled residential street: Most side streets within the study area meet this definition, with two travel lanes (approximately 10-12' each), parallel parking allowed on either side of the street, and street trees and sidewalks along most street blocks.

 Appropriately-scaled mixed-use street: Broadway and West Perry fall into this category, characterized by two travel lanes (12 - 14' width each), parallel parking on one side of the street, and sidewalks and street trees along most street blocks.

 Overly-wide mixed-use street: West Myrtle Avenue is the only street that falls into this category, as the street has more than adequate width for its one travel lane, with parallel parking on one side, and angled parking on the other.

 Overly-wide street: Sunset Boulevard, Park Boulevard and Leaming Avenue are streets whose existing designs encourage speeding traffic as a result of their wide travel lanes, but discourage pedestrian circulation due to missing sidewalks, croswalks and street trees.

 Rural Road: Sunset Boulevard and Broadway outside of the business district are designed as rural roads without curbs or sidewalks. This character is appropriate for less dense areas with minimal pedestrian traffic.



Commercial Land Use Concept Plan

The diagram at right illustrates in red areas where commercial activity should be concentrated.

Due to available space for sidewalks, existing lot size, existing building types present, and potential for appropriate commercial redevelopment, the Borough should concentrate destination retail along the West Perry and Sunset corridor.

Existing businesses are located within a complex on Park Avenue. Neighborhood retail is most appropriate for this area, which is not contiguous with other commercial areas of the Borough.

Broadway is flanked with a mix of historic buildings of various types. Some buildings support retail use, such as those whose floor elevation is close to street grade and whose facade is situated close to the sidewalk edge. Other historic buildings are best suited as residential or Bed and Breakfast use, such as historic homes with generous front yards and porches several steps above street level. Other potential uses of these historic homes might include office or restaurant use. Based on existing sidewalk widths, existing building types, and historic mix of uses, the most appropriate use of this area is mixed use.



Concept Plan Elements

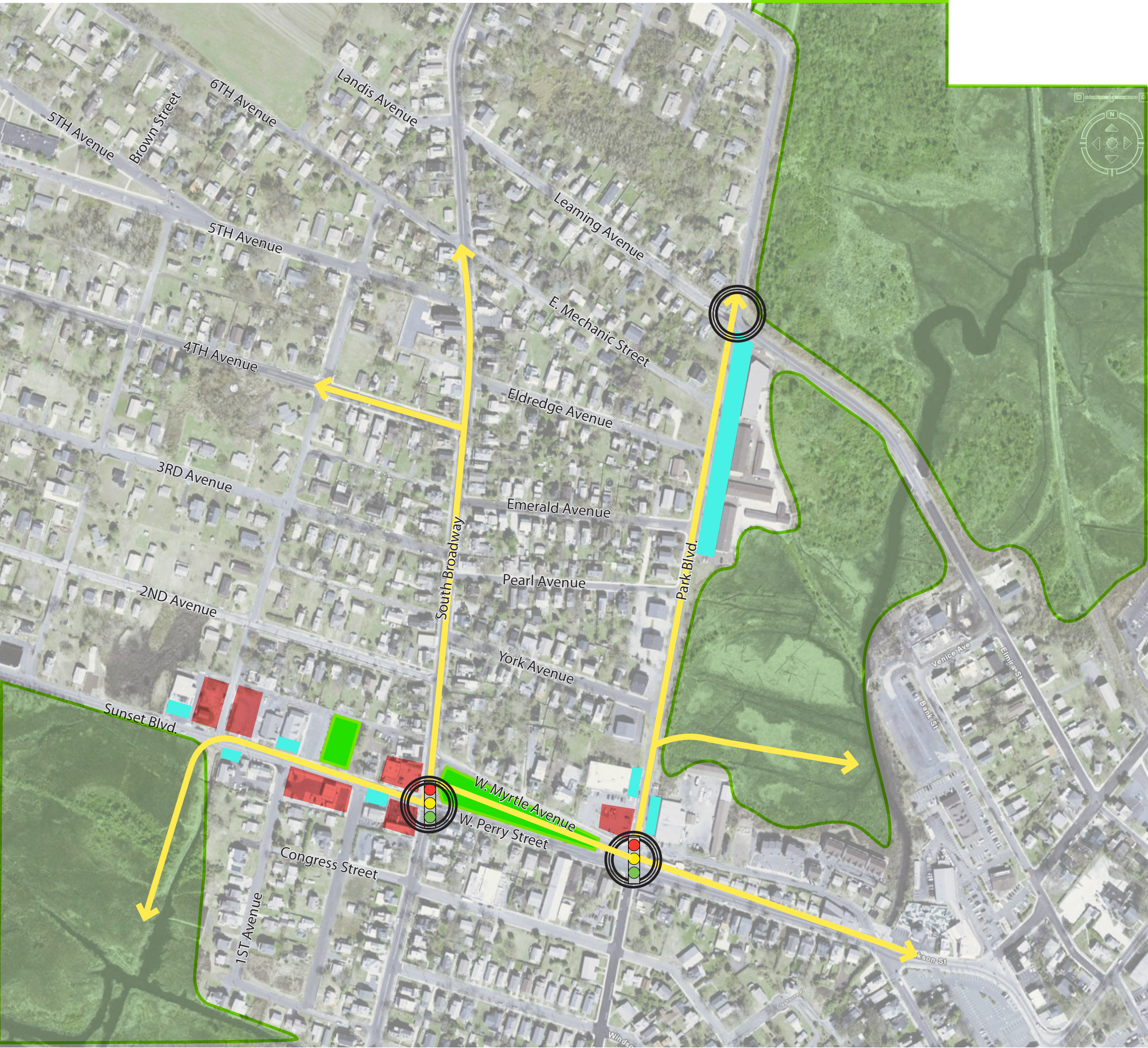
The Concept Plan focuses on the following improvements:

Creating a safe and pleasant environment for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the Borough's business district and connecting to adjacent natural areas; preserving the existing historic mixed-use character of Broadway north of West Perry Street; focusing redevelopment efforts in the West Perry Street / Sunset Boulevard corridor in order to create an environment that will support restaurant and retail foot traffic.

Components of the plan include:



-  Continuous pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle linkages: Repair sidewalks in poor condition and construct sidewalks where none exist. Create linkages to adjacent open spaces and nearby Cape May. Delineate on-street bike lanes where space exists; where space does not exist, designate "sharrows" in which bicyclists and motorists "share the road."
-  Recommended street frontage improvements at existing developed sites: Locations indicated have nonexistent sidewalks, lack of street trees and / or lack of plantings or other vegetative treatments that contribute to a parklike environment. Most locations indicated have front-door parking, immediately in back of the curb. Study specific improvements on a case-by-case basis and determine site-specific strategies for relocating or reducing front-door parking, improving pedestrian conditions, and adding vegetation to treat each street as a parkway.
-  Potential redevelopment sites: Each of the sites indicated is in private ownership; the Borough is encouraged to work with owners and developers to spur appropriate redevelopment on these parcels as part of creating a continuously developed street edge to support retail and restaurant establishments.


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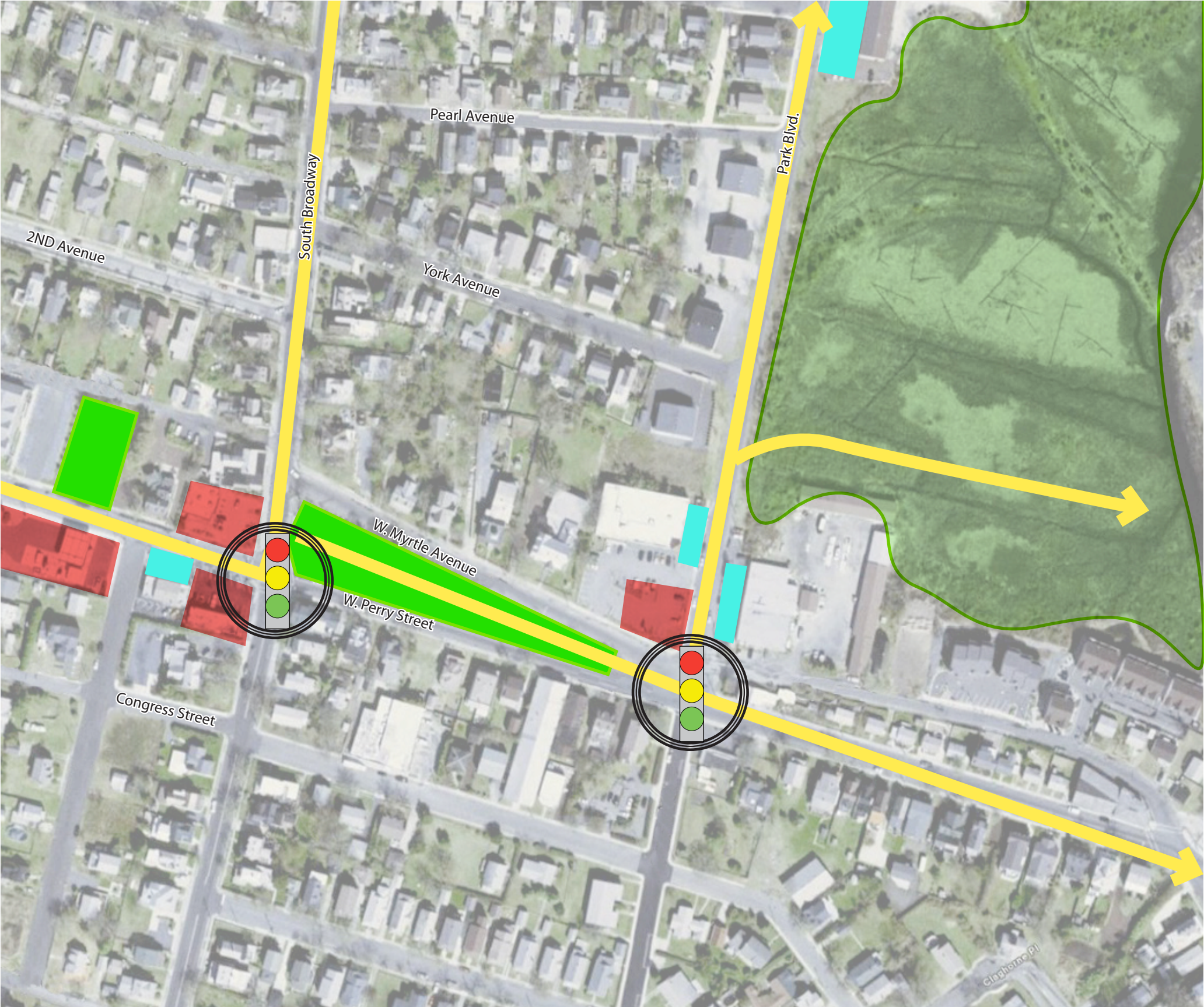


Concept Plan Enlargement

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-  Intersection improvements:
 - Major: Broadway and West Perry / Sunset: Add clear pedestrian crosswalks, selectively remove shrubbery that obstructs sightlines, adjust stop line locations and parking lane locations to allow for easier left-hand turning movements. Consider resurfacing in cobble or other durable, decorative material to distinguish this “100-percent corner” of West Cape May. Improvements will not require geometric changes to the existing intersection.
 - Major: Park Boulevard, Myrtle Street, West Myrtle Street and West Perry: Redesign this intersection as a roundabout to accommodate the six-point intersection. Treat the center of the roundabout as a focal point gateway to the Borough.
 - Minor: Park Boulevard and Leaming Avenue / Elmira Street: Narrow intersection and install crosswalks to calm traffic.
-  Public Green / Urban Park:

At the heart of the business district, and at the convergence of the three focal point streets, focus public realm improvements on Wilbraham Park. Upgrade plantings, lighting and furnishings in the park.
-  Protected Natural Resources Areas



Short-Term Improvements

1. New boardwalk extending to intersection of 2nd Avenue and Mount Vernon Avenue and beach access
2. Reoriented building entrance to front on streetscape
3. Proposed retail infill on corner
4. Streetscape and low wall at gas station
5. Outdoor dining with arbor at restaurant
6. Continue streetscape
7. Make Wilbraham park more "open"
8. Small-lot single family infill
9. New infill- retail ground floor with residential above
10. Existing retail to remain
11. Public green with lawn, shade trellis, and public restrooms
12. Storm water rain garden
13. Connected and expanded parking facility across public property
14. Mixed-use urban infill (existing vacant building in the City of Cape May)
15. Traffic circle
16. Existing CVS to remain



This plan illustrates short-term improvements that can be made pursuant to fulfilling the goals outlined in the Concept Plan. Short-term improvements have been distinguished from long-term improvements as having met at least one of the following criteria:

- The project is located entirely within the public realm and funding required to implement the project is generally considered obtainable (e.g. Item #15 "Traffic Circle" could potentially be constructed utilizing state and local transportation funds).
- The project is located entirely within the public realm and the overall cost of the project is less than \$1 million.
- The project is located on undeveloped or significantly underdeveloped private property on which the Borough could encourage development and increase the property's value (e.g. Item #8 "Small-lot, single-family" would encourage development of a vacant privately-held lot).
- The project is located on developed private property, the cost of the project is less than \$500,000, and the project would enhance the property's existing use (e.g. Item #5 "Outdoor dining with arbor at restaurant" would allow the existing restaurateur to develop the frontage of that property as outdoor dining space rather than as parking).

Collectively, these and other short-term improvements would immediately improve the character of West Cape May and could hasten longer term goals.

Note that the proposed improvements maintain what has been identified as the best of West Cape May's character: its existing historic buildings, walkable streets, and mix of uses. Proposed improvements enhance the existing character by providing new buildings whose form and uses are consistent with the form and uses of historic buildings, making more streets walkable, and by increasing the density of restaurant, retail, and residential uses along West Perry and Sunset to support foot traffic and a vibrant small-town atmosphere.

Short-Term Visualization

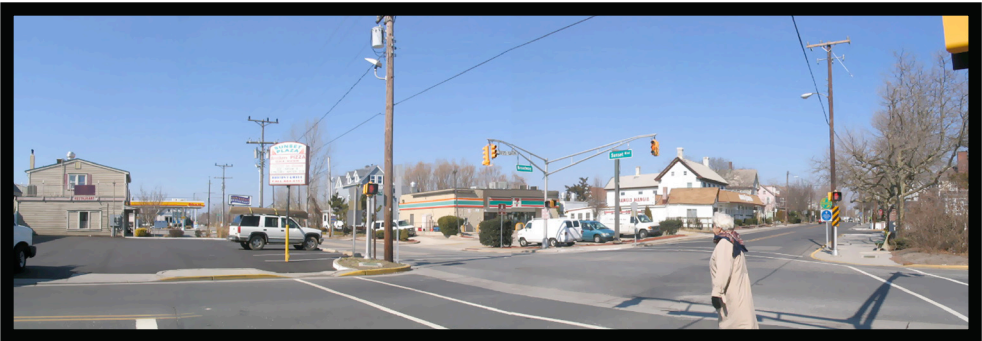


Shown are an existing and proposed view of the intersection of Broadway, Sunset and West Perry. The photograph is taken standing on the southeast corner of the intersection, facing northeast toward the existing 7-11 site. Note that the improvements made include:

- Clearly delineated crosswalks;
- Street edge improvements within the public right-of-way, including plantings and fencing;
- Addition of banners on existing power line poles;*
- Upgrading traffic signals with historically appropriate signal poles and arms;
- Utilizing street lights consistent with those in the Historic District; and
- Street tree plantings.

The improvements shown achieve maximum visual and spatial effect for a moderate cost. Street trees are shown as they would appear several years after planting; a first step could be a street tree planting program, utilizing best practices for urban tree soil preparation so that street trees can mature while other improvements are made.

* Due to the anticipated high costs of burying existing overhead power lines, the design team recommends that the Borough utilize funds to accomplish other more pressing improvements, and that existing overhead power lines remain in-place.



Existing

Long-Term Improvements



This plan illustrates long-term improvements that can be made pursuant to fulfilling the goals outlined in the Concept Plan. The three long-term improvements identified involve redevelopment of three privately held lots.

- 1. Mixed-use infill development at retail site. This site is currently occupied by small-scale strip commercial with front-door parking. Proposed redevelopment would construct the face of building at the back of sidewalk, at a build-to line consistent with the historic character of Broadway and Perry. The new building should be two- or three-stories in height to be consistent with the form of adjacent development. Ground-level uses should be retail or restaurant, with residential or office above. Parking should be located at the rear of the site, accessed by an alley.
- 2. Mixed-use infill development at existing 7-11 site. Similar to item #1, this site has been developed in a suburban character that is inappropriate to the intersection of Broadway and Sunset at the heart of West Cape May. Recommended treatment is similar to #1 above.
- 3. Commercial infill development at existing CVS site. Unlike items #1 and #2, this item proposes that the existing building and use remain; however, a portion of the existing parking lot could be developed for retail or restaurant ground-floor use and office or other use on the upper level.

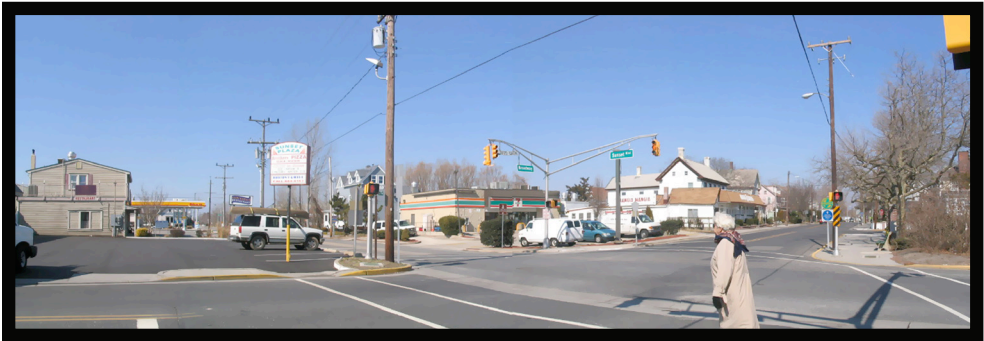
Note that in each one of these proposals, existing minimum parking requirements might need to be re-examined and reduced. With ample street parking available and a pedestrian-friendly environment within the business district of West Cape May, the Borough's parking policy should reflect the reality that it is not necessary for one to drive from one establishment to the next. Conversely, the Borough should promote a "park once" mentality that encourages people to park one time and walk to other destinations within a few blocks of parking. Lowering parking requirements, increasing allowable density, and providing attractive and walkable streets are a few of the tools at the Borough's disposal for encouraging these long-term improvements.

Long-Term Visualization



This visualization shows how the intersection of Broadway, Sunset and West Perry could appear following redevelopment of the two existing commercial sites west of the intersection (the existing 7-11 site and the strip commercial site). Additionally, the intersection is shown paved in granite cobbles to give it a distinctive appearance.

With the exception of back-of-sidewalk improvements shown in the short-term visualization, all other short-term improvements remain in this long-term scheme. New two- and three-story buildings would be constructed at the build-to line. The character of new buildings should be consistent with the architectural character of West Cape May, especially existing historic commercial buildings along Broadway and West Perry.



Existing

Design Guidelines



Design Guidelines

Site and street furnishings should be coordinated throughout West Cape May to provide a coherent experience. Within the business district’s streetscape and parks, lighting, benches, trash receptacles, traffic signals and wayfinding signage should be uniform. Sidewalk paving materials should be treated uniformly within two areas of the business district: Broadway, West Perry and Sunset sidewalks should be surfaced with clay brick pavers; sidewalks along Park Avenue and other streets should be paved in concrete.

Fences, walls, and planters provide an opportunity to introduce some diversity in visual interest within a specified range of materials, styles, colors and configurations. Recommended materials are natural wood, clay brick, natural stone, cast stone, and painted metals consistent with materials used throughout the period of significance of West Cape May’s historic district.

Key components of site and street furnishings are shown on this page. The previous page illustrates how a collection of site and street furnishings, coordinated with appropriate architectural design and appropriate plantings, collectively establish a visual and tactile theme for West Cape May, consistent with the Borough’s small-town character.



Wooden Fencing And Brick Sidewalk



Steel or Iron Fencing And Brick Sidewalk



Bench



Bicycle Rack



Light Pole



Trash Receptacle



Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage



Picnic Table

Implementation

Opportunities: Short-term Marketing and Organization

Establish Retail Niches that Draw from a Large Market Area, such as Antique Shops, Spas, Art Galleries, and Restaurants

Recruit Independent Retailers who Serve Community Needs, such as Grocery Stores and Book Stores

ACTIONS

- Engage community and businesses in visioning for the future
- Cooperate with brokers and property owners
- Reach out to independent merchants and artisans
- Provide financial incentives such as sales and property tax abatements, rent concessions, and decreased standard permitting times/fees

POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Business association dues and special collections
- Property tax abatement for property owners who offer rental concessions
- USDA Guaranteed Loan Program

STAKEHOLDERS

- Business associations, businesses
- Borough

Enhance Marketing

ACTIONS

- Promote niches
- Recruit new retailers
- Clarify for transmitting the West Cape May “message” or “brand”
- Organize events such as First Fridays

POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Business association dues and special collections

STAKEHOLDERS

- Business associations, businesses

Mid- to Short-term Opportunities: Public Realm Improvements

Work with the County to Improve the Pedestrian Environment and Coordinate Vehicular Circulation Using Thoughtful Urban Design

ACTIONS

- Use business associations to coordinate small-scale improvements
- Design & install banners
- Install flower boxes
- Create way-finding signage
- Improve maintenance
- Improve and add sidewalks and crosswalks
- Install rotary and traffic-calming devices

POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Business associations and special collections
- County grants
- General Obligation Bonds
- Tax Increment Financing
- NJDOT Centers of Place Program

STAKEHOLDERS

- Business associations
- A business improvement district (BID), if incorporated
- Borough

Plan for Increases in Parking Needs

ACTIONS

- Provide additional on-street parking and/or enhance existing on-street parking
- Require parking management plans as part of development plans
- Allow shared parking between businesses/developments
- Construct a new public parking facility
- Expand trolley service
- Improve management of existing parking resources

POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Adopt a payment-in-lieu-of-parking program

STAKEHOLDERS

- Borough
- Property owners
- Business associations or BID

Improve Public Open Spaces

ACTIONS

- Create small urban parks on Borough-owned property on Sunset Boulevard
- Build a comfort station
- Complete bicycle lanes, sharrows, and trails through the Borough as part of a County-wide bicycle plan
- Construct boardwalks to provide appropriate public access to adjacent salt marshes
- Plant street trees on all streets within the study area
- Enhance Wilbraham Park (minor enhancements to the existing design)

POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- General obligation bonds
- County Joint Venture grants
- NJ Green Acres Program
- NJDOT Centers of Place Program
- USDA

STAKEHOLDERS

- Borough

**Mid- to Long-term Opportunities:
Property Development and
Enhancement**

Attract Anchor Tenants to Key Corner Locations

- ACTIONS
- Take the same actions as those recommended to recruit independent retailers
 - Provide development incentives, such as increasing allowable density and reducing minimum parking requirements
 - Approach individual property owners

- STAKEHOLDERS
- Borough
 - Property Owners
 - Business Owners / Business Associations

Develop a Trade Center Similar to the Charleston Market in Charleston, South Carolina, or the Alexandria Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, Virginia

- ACTIONS
- Pursue public-private partnerships (private development that sells/leases space to the Borough in exchange for economic incentives/ infrastructure)
 - Facilitate private development of a trade center with economic incentives (increased density/ infrastructure, tax abatement)

- POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
- Revenue bonds
 - Tax increment financing

- STAKEHOLDERS
- Borough
 - Property Owners

Consolidate Retail in Ley Locations to Develop ‘Destination’ Areas

- ACTIONS
- Amend existing zoning to restrict retail uses to areas identified as desirable for retail focus
 - Design public realm improvements appropriately based on existing and desired uses.
 - Site and design public parking to best serve areas where retail concentration is desired.
 - Reduce minimum parking requirements and allow payment-in-lieu-of-parking.

- STAKEHOLDERS
- Borough
 - Property Owners / Taxpayers
 - Business Owners / Business Associations

Introduce Modest Levels of Multistory, Multifamily Housing in Appropriate Locations

- ACTIONS
- Designate Sunset Boulevard as a main corridor using a master plan amendment
 - Provide economic incentives such as sales and property tax abatements, rent concessions, and decrease standard permitting times/fees
 - Amend zoning categories and/or ordinances to increase allowable heights and floor-to-area ratios
 - Use tax increment financing to pay for infrastructure
 - Provide development flexibility/facilitation
 - Reduce parking requirements
 - Increase available street/public parking
 - Decrease standard permitting times/fees

- STAKEHOLDERS
- Borough
 - Property owners

Encourage Façade Improvements

- ACTIONS
- Complete design guidelines for façade improvements; guidelines should address historic buildings, non-historic existing buildings, and new buildings
 - Host seminars or training sessions regarding effective or appropriate façade characters and strategies for implementing façade improvements
 - Offer low-interest loans to businesses; restrict use of funds to façade improvements

- STAKEHOLDERS
- Borough
 - Business Owners / Business Associations

Conclusions

West Cape May is a special place within the state of New Jersey. The Borough has a distinctly close-knit small-town character, a collection of beautiful historic properties, a highly desirable seaside resort location, a lush natural setting within a world-re-nowned migratory bird flyway and salt marshes, and an engaged and educated community of business owners and residents.

The urban fabric of West Cape May’s business district has some wonderful characteristics, such as historic architecture, walkable streets, a comfortable park, and streetfront businesses; however, major portions of the business district do not represent the best of West Cape May’s character. Development patterns along Sunset Boulevard and Park Boulevard, and at two key intersections within the business district, are suburban in character. The design of these suburban, vehicular-oriented areas is antithetical to key goals identified by the Borough: historic small-town character, walkable tree-lined streets, and pedestrian foot traffic to support local businesses. This document identifies specific, implementable solutions that the Borough, businesses, and residents can take to re-establish a functional, attractive and sustainable business district.

Short-term and long-term plans are identified, as any plan for revitalization of public and private areas within the business district will certainly be phased. Potential funding sources and organization structures are identified to assist the Borough in jump-starting revitalization efforts.

By following the recommendations presented in this document, and by maintaining an active and involved public, West Cape May can achieve and even surpass the goals identified by the community through this planning process.

