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Chapter 1.0 : Introduction

Since 1999, my design career has centered on resort architecture and planning. Two projects; a ski resort in Breckenridge, Colorado and a golf club in Southampton, New York, were planned to have employee housing. Finding affordable housing for seasonal employees is difficult, often because of limited land and increasing demands for second homes in resort towns.

My family has vacationed in Wildwood, New Jersey, for thirty-five years, and has owned property for the past thirty. I became a passionate volunteer to a local community organization because of my interest in historic preservation. In 2003, I was nominated to the advisory board of the Doo Wop Preservation League.

In this role, I feel compelled to advise my adopted community about planning needs because of the resort knowledge I have gained over the years. I find it interesting how different, and sometimes how similar the resort planning for Vail, Colorado, a winter-only destination is to Wildwood, New Jersey, a summer-only destination and the desire in both communities to extend their tourist season. Vail has done this by introducing golf.

My client, Jack Morey, is the Vice President of The Morey Organization (TMO) which is affiliated with six hotels and motels, a luxury condominium complex, and Morey's Piers which is identified as the largest seaside amusement center in the Western Hemisphere. There are four amusement piers, including several restaurants, two water parks and approximately 130 rides and attractions (<http://www.moreyspiers.com/history.htm>).

The Housing Dilemma in Wildwood

The Morey Organization is recognized as the largest employer in town with 1500 summer employees; they import approximately 800 from overseas. The Morey Organization has taken on housing some of their own employees based on need, they house or place approximately 200. Wildwood, New Jersey, is an island community, and increasingly the only new residential development that occurs is luxury condominiums. (Median value for a single-family owner-occupied home in 2000 was \$128,600. (U.S. Census 08260 Fact Sheet 2000) Median value for a single-family home in Wildwood in November 2005 was \$336,356 (Cape May County Herald 11/4/05), a 161% increase.)

It has become harder for The Morey Organization to house the seasonal workers and they have proposed building a dormitory for 480 on an existing, underutilized amusement pier that they own.

I met with Denise Beckson, Director of Operations / Human Resources in October 2005. She said that the employee recruitment competes with Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio and Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, New Jersey

for foreign workers. The other amusement parks have considerably lower housing costs.

What I propose is to identify the need for affordable housing for seasonal workers in Wildwood for a healthy tourist economy, how the existing rooming houses are being priced out by the second-home condominium market, and why housing workers off-island is not appropriate for an environmentally responsible community. I will investigate what zoning changes would be needed to build temporary housing on the amusement pier, and research precedents for pier housing and recommend two other locations in the city.

The City of Wildwood Master Plan Reexamination (2002) identified an increase of 32.6% in the number of seasonal housing units and states, “Wildwood is increasingly becoming renter-occupied...” it also recommends addressing land development patterns which often juxtapose incompatible land uses. The owner-occupied housing increased 4%, while renter-occupied housing increased 44%. This reexamination states that one measure of community stability is the ratio of home-owners to renters. A 70%:30% owner:renter ratio is considered healthy, and therefore Wildwood’s 60:40 is trending toward instability (Remington 2002, 9). Perhaps the growth in seasonal housing is a necessary aspect of a tourist-based seasonal economy? There is a contradiction between the needs that the current Master Plan identifies, and what my client needs.

Literature Review

Tourism is among the largest industries in the U.S., generating \$545 billion in revenues and employing 7.2 million workers in 2002. In the Rockies, tourism

jobs frequently pay less than jobs that were plentiful in the past, such as mining or lumber mills. Housing costs in resorts rise as second-home buyers invest after discovering the beauty of a place (Goodno 16-24).

There is a real need for affordable rental housing for seasonal workers in resort communities. The ability to house seasonal workers is essential to the economics of places that depend on tourism. I tried to focus on articles that pertained to mountain resorts such as Vail and Aspen, Colorado and coastal communities in Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The Impact of Second Homes on Resort Communities

Trends in second homes are accelerating as baby boomers enter prime age for buying them. In Eagle County, Colorado, for example, they currently have a labor shortage and the demand is expected to increase as current second-home trends continue (Goodno 16-24). The increase in second homes decreases the supply of affordable housing in resort communities.

In Aspen, the lack of affordable housing threatens not only the operation of the resort economy – hotels, restaurants, stores, and recreational facilities, but also the operation of hospitals and schools. Employers that offer low- and moderate-income jobs, face labor shortages as well. The housing situation will ultimately determine Aspen's ability to maintain the social balance of the community (Culbertson 12-15).

Housing in Self-Contained Resorts

Historically, international resorts provided seasonal housing for workers in out of the way places, such as southern Florida. Beginning with the Florida

resorts of 1885-1888, housing was often provided in the hotel or on the grounds, for the necessarily large and disparate needs of its affluent guests. The housing was often necessary where hotels were in remote and undeveloped areas for guests of the gilded-age with high expectations. Seasonal employees at Florida resorts had room and board included in their salaries, and their lives were carefully monitored by the management (Braden 127).

Providing worker housing also benefited employers by allowing them greater control over their employees. Disobedient or troublesome employees could be dismissed and would face the hardship of finding not only another job but also a place to live. Truly undesirables might even be placed on a train and abruptly shipped back north (Braden 127).

In order to house their large and largely transient labor forces, resort hotels provided special staff quarters, including dining rooms and dormitories. Sometimes hotels placed these facilities in auxiliary buildings, and sometimes the workers lived within the precincts of the hotel itself. Typically, hotels assigned workers bedrooms in undesirable locations such as the basement or attic, places unsuitable for most guests (Braden 128).

For example, in 1893 the Alcazar casino had a fire and when Henry Flagler rebuilt the structure, they added bachelors' quarters; these were a series of small rooms above the ballroom for hotel employees or single male guests, if there was no other place for them (Braden 188).

The Royal Palm Hotel had guest rooms on the eastern side for guests that had magnificent views of Biscayne Bay. Rooms on the western or less-desirable

side housed members of the staff. “Approximately 350 of the 450 rooms served as guest rooms, with about 100 rooms assigned to the hotel staff.” (Braden 234)

Today, Dorney Park and Wildwater Kingdom (located in southeastern Pennsylvania) offers employee housing at a neighboring college campus and free transportation, to and from the park. Additionally they have a housing subsidy for workers who obtain their own housing in the area (www.dorneypark.com).

Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio has dormitories that range from \$16.80 to \$31.20 a week. The dorms are within walking distance to the park. The seasonal jobs include; bartenders, ride hosts, office clerks, and lifeguards (www.cedarpoint.com).

Labor Force Recruitment

Labor force recruitment and traffic problems arise when workers have to commute from far away. Increased second-home growth and the automobile congestion that comes with it is a threat to what made these locations desirable in the first place. It's not typical to house workers within the hotels where they are employed anymore, so they have to commute.

The lack of affordable housing threatens the viability of resort communities, since employees of local businesses cannot afford to live where they work. Employers are forced to offer higher wages in order to attract workers from distant towns. “As the working population is forced to find housing in outlying towns, their daily commutes exacerbate the existing traffic problems caused by visitors driving cars.” (Kozloff 96)

Workers who are unable to live in Jackson Hole due to lack of affordable housing, commute from nearby towns in Idaho. They have to travel through a treacherous pass in the Teton Mountains. A local standing joke is that if your house is on fire, be patient, help will be there as soon as they make their way from Idaho. There is a sense of resentment that people who grew up in Jackson Hole can't afford to live there "...because of the phenomenal influx of wealth" (Salvesen 36-40).

Community Concerns in Popular Resort Areas

In the Rocky Mountain ski areas, prices for land are high and land that is zoned for multi-family use is rare. There is a bias in these communities that affordable housing will attract ski-bum types. Alternatively, residents are concerned about the environment and preservation of the quality of life. "Affordable housing developers must attract contractors from out of town whose bid prices, though they include lodging and subsistence costs, still are cheaper than those of local subcontractors whose high prices reflect their involvement in the building of "trophy homes" for wealthy landbuyers" (Szatan 96).

Another issue in Aspen is that land supply is constrained by federal lands that limit the supply of public ownership, and steep mountain terrain limits the buildability of many parcels. Not only is land scarce but higher construction and material costs, as well as a shortened construction season, increase the cost of housing (Szatan 96-97).

Barriers to Affordable Housing

In Colorado resorts, long-range plans need to take place on a regional level, in order to take big steps such as; building public-private partnerships, getting the FHA to raise mortgage limits for the region, and working with local businesses to develop housing for employees (Goodno 19).

The barriers in this process can be codes that need reformation, and there are debates on whether to make use of incentives versus regulation. There is much resistance to development in areas where nature is the main attraction. There is a lack of political will to zone for workforce housing. There is limited land in Eagle County, Colorado, because 85% is owned by the federal government, which is eager to add to the reserves. This drives up real estate prices even further (Goodno 19).

There are given constraints associated with environmental protection that cause available land in resort areas to be even more costly. Banff, Alberta is set in the majestic Canadian Rocky Mountains. The town was created to serve as a “public park and pleasure ground” for the people of Canada. Tourism is its primary form of economic activity. In Banff, 50% of all persons who are employed, rent their housing. The majority of seasonal and service industry staff workers earn the minimum wage. They are often forced to live in over-crowded and substandard conditions (McKay 15-16).

Housing policy

“By definition, expanding homeownership by increasing public subsidies focuses on a crucial segment of the population—those potentially able to afford

to purchase a home, but who have not been able to do so for a variety of reasons...” The goal of revitalizing neighborhoods via increased homeownership requires that there is an adequate supply of affordable for-purchase housing. “Shortages of affordable units create problems in urban areas that are attracting significant mortgage investment.” (Wyly 92)

The rapid price escalation of homes may reduce the supply of affordable housing in gentrifying neighborhoods. Although the rapid appreciation of existing property benefits owners, they are often absentee landlords with decaying rental properties and early speculative buyers. Renters do not benefit (Wyly 93).

Secondly, gentrification can also lead to displacement or significant social and political tensions between old and new residents, especially during transitional periods. Displacement also increases demand for affordable housing in surrounding neighborhoods, which may then increase the cost of that housing (Wyly 93).

Controlling Growth

I spoke with Michael Cunningham, a former employer and Principal at Hart/Howerton Architecture in June 2006. I worked with him on the Bayberry Property master plan, as it was known in 2002. Now identified as the Sebonak Golf Club, the plan is for a 300 acre property in Southampton, New York. The design work included a clubhouse, golf cottages, a private residence, maintenance facilities, and staff quarters. I was interested to know if the municipal government supported building affordable housing for the Club staff.

They, “changed zoning because the town wants to see the club prosper.” Michael said. He explained that part of the property was zoned for single family homes as-of-right. They could have had 90 single-family houses and the town was happy to have a golf club rather than have adverse environmental impacts. They would prefer to have an amenity for the community, and not have to build the infrastructure that would be required for the new residents. Providing affordable housing, Michael continued, “attracts good wait staff in a place where you can’t buy or rent.”

“Not only the club employees, but the assistant Pro and the Pro. You don’t want high turnover. The staff quarters is planned to have 20 single rooms and 4 apartments. The apartment could be for a couple with one or two children. The town benefits by subsidizing housing.” (Interview with Michael Cunningham, Hart/Howerton, June 8, 2006).

The Town of Southampton has a Wildlands and Groundwater Protection Plan states, “recommendations contained within this plan will guide decisions relative to future management of environmental resources in the study area, particularly vegetation and wildlife, groundwater, surface water conditions, the watersheds of the Peconic Bay, the provision of affordable housing in appropriate areas, and the protection of the public’s health, safety, and welfare, local community character, and the quality of life (<http://www.town.southampton.ny.us> : S-1).”

Southampton, New York, is recognized for having some of the most expensive real estate in the United States. The municipal government

recognizes the need for seasonal housing for the workforce. Providing affordable housing for seasonal workers is a quality of life issue for this community.

Controlled Growth in Environmentally Sensitive Areas

There are compelling environmental reasons to control growth and density in coastal areas. The Cape Cod Commission (CCC) grew into a powerful agency in the 1990's. It was too powerful according to some developers, although it endeavored to control growth and to articulate the public interest in development and environmental issues. The former executive director of the CCC, Armando Carbonell introduced a "land as common property" project. He felt it was a way of understanding property rights. He asks the question that most communities don't know the answer to, "Do we have the ability to support the growth that is taking place? (Denison 1)"

Perhaps the physical nature of Cape Cod allows it to be well-defined as a region, and the sensitivity to the environment is well established. Although there are 15 towns on Cape Cod there is much dedication to the principle of home rule, and perhaps residents on the Cape have a better understanding of environmental limits than other places (Denison 1).

Armando Carbonell feels that density for housing is what has been avoided in Cape Cod for many years. They have been reducing density by increasing lot sizes to achieve environmental goals and in many cases that is counter-productive. By encouraging appropriate density, in appropriate locations and with proper infrastructure this will have the effect of reducing land costs, so it will contribute to the reduction of housing prices.

There is often more room for development in cities in Massachusetts due to the fact that many have lost population over time. Historically, Massachusetts developed from small, densely developed villages. Planners are aware of the desirability of this form but zoning has very often countermanded it.

In 1999, Cape Cod had approximately 5 million visitors a year to the National Seashore (Denison 4). Environmentally Cape Cod has been very forgiving. In spite of the extensive growth and the fact that its choking with traffic shows that it hasn't been ruined yet. Development that takes place from now on should be redevelopment and reuse of existing structures, which will go a long way to accommodating growth on Cape Cod. This will have a better environmental effect and be more enjoyable to people. The Cape Cod commission needs to make it easier to redevelop than cut down trees to build on existing greenfield sites, according to Carbonell (Denison 4).

Mountain resort communities have long provided refuge from the urbanized world, and the fight to prevent change that threatens their way of life is fierce. Instead of fighting, residents need to realize the greatest threat to mountain resort communities is not affordable housing or public buses, but "urban denial" – the refusal of "small towns" to accept the fact that they have problems typically associated with urban settings, i.e. traffic congestion, need for public transit, poor housing options, and so forth (Kozloff 22-23).

Banff is a year-round destination in Alberta, Canada. Tourism has been and will continue to be Banff's primary form of economic activity, and the main reason for the town's existence. The population in 2000 was 6,098 and that

number grows by an estimated 25% when the seasonal service industry is taken into account (McKay 15).

Banff's residents said they were "passionately concerned" about growth and development in the townsite, and about maintaining a sense of community. Of those surveyed, 26% wanted to see a lower rate of residential growth. The town of Banff faces tremendous challenges to its community and social services as they must be geared, not only to local residents, but also to residents of the four mountain parks, and the almost 4.2 million annual visitors to the Banff townsite. (McKay 15).

The cost and affordability of housing is the biggest threat to social health of Banff as a community. Seasonal industry staff (the majority of whom earn minimum wage) are often forced to live in overcrowded and less than desirable conditions. This in turn leads to a wide range of social problems and affects how the town is perceived by the very people who support and sustain tourism (McKay 15).

The town of Banff's planning and development department has worked closely with the community services department to develop a series of strategic planning objectives which include: Increasing the supply of affordable housing, in order to insure a balance between residential and commercial land uses, and to support a healthy community (McKay 16).

I have tried to collect articles on resorts in remote locations like Banff, Vail, and Cape Cod because they seem to have similarities to Wildwood in terms of remoteness, reliance on tourism for their economy, and limited available land for

new development. I find it notable that all the resorts report visitors in the millions, in spite of local populations being in the five digits.

There is little written on seasonal housing in research journals and less on remote location issues. Most of the published information on resort housing issues pertains to Vail, Colorado.

I hope my research and recommendations will make a difference in making Wildwood convenient and attractive for seasonal employees and for it to maintain its competitive edge with other first-class resort destinations.

Chapter 2.0 : Wildwood History

Wildwood is situated on a barrier island known as Five Mile Beach. The local Native American tribe, Lenni Lenape were first to enjoy the bounty of the Wildwoods for hunting and fishing (Ristine 7). The Wildwoods were named for the thick growth of scrub trees, vines, and bushes that covered the barrier island [Figures 9 + 10].

During the 1870's fishermen established the Anglesea community at the northern tip of the island. The earliest exploitation of the area's potential as a summer resort took place in 1884 when Anglesea was sold to the Five Mile Beach Improvement Company (Zerbe 3).

To the south, Holly Beach was established by the Holly Beach Improvement Company in 1882 (Zerbe 3). In 1885 Holly Beach, which is the commercial center of Wildwood today, was officially incorporated (Ristine 7).

The Wildwoods followed the general pattern of resort development along the New Jersey shore with land development companies and speculators

enticing the visitors to the area. As a result of improvements to the railroad, thousands of “excursionists” came by the summer of 1890. The railroad brought passengers from cities such as Philadelphia and New York. The popularity of train travel with working- and middle- class visitors established the socioeconomic character of the Wildwoods, which persisted through the twentieth century (Zerbe 5).

The City of Wildwood was incorporated in 1895, and in 1912 the communities of Holly Beach and Wildwood had grown to such an extent that they were combined (Ristine 7). The railroad connection to Five Mile Beach began in 1888 with one dollar excursions, when the West Jersey Railroad acquired the then-defunct Anglesea Railroad. The track reached Wildwood in June of that year, and it proved to be the “catalyst needed to fully ignite resort development.” (Francis 19)

The earliest accommodations for summer visitors were modest in scale and varied in their architectural ambitions, but they were constructed of wood and susceptible to fires. The rooming houses, cottages, and hotels were elaborate houses with large fireplaces, towers, porches, and gingerbread trim. Typically small hotels including the Dayton and Marine Hall, were only about three stories tall, with typical Queen-Anne details such as wrap-around porches, corner towers, and wooden shingle exterior siding (Zerbe 7).



Figure 1. The Hotel Dayton, this hotel was dedicated in August 1890 and was located at Wildwood and Atlantic Avenues. (Ristine)

With the arrival of the railroad in 1888, there was an increase in tourism. Hotels found increased competition among them, which prompted the introduction of recreational facilities, such as shuffleboard courts, and room amenities like electricity. Following the end of the depression in 1893, hotel construction increased more rapidly. Between 1903 and 1904, the number of hotel rooms in Wildwood increased by thirty percent.

The early hotels, like many in other East Coast resorts were made of wood and by the 1920's there was a need to construct a large, fireproof hotel. The Hotel Seville on Maple Avenue was more similar in scale to the contemporary Atlantic City hotels. The name gave clue to the theme, which related to the southern Spanish city. During the 1920's it was common for

Mid-Atlantic summer resort builders to adopt architectural idioms for well-known, and often warm places.

If the railroad was the catalyst for the initial real estate boom, the automobile led to the second one. Increased development of automobile transportation played a crucial role in the continued development of the Wildwoods as a resort. In 1917, only a few roads existed for motorists from the mainland to New Jersey's barrier islands. In the 1920's the New Jersey Highway department planned a \$175 million highway system with many new routes connecting New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia to the Jersey shore. By the 1940's, the County representatives endorsed the construction of a new highway to the region which later came to be known as the Garden State Parkway. During this time a canal was built connecting Cape May harbor to the Delaware Bay; a representative also advocated for the development of a county airport (Zerbe 5).

The completion of the New Jersey Turnpike between 1951 and 1952 facilitated north-south travel automobile transportation, but the greatest impact on the Shore was made by the Garden State Parkway. In 1954, the Parkway made it to the southern tip, where the ferry made travel to Delaware across the bay possible, thereby making it a "gateway to the South." (Zerbe 5)

Toll operations began on the Parkway on January 15, 1954. A New York Times article celebrating the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Parkway claimed that after World War II, "everybody knew New Jersey needed a new

super highway—a north-south artery through which the State’s economic pulse could surge.” The engineers not only attempted to alleviate congestion, but the designers attempted to relieve, “long stretches of roadway, seemingly reaching to the horizon,” by planning for graceful curves in the road. The fact that the Parkway terminated at the ferry to Delaware, led officials to note that, “in the three years following the opening of the highway, retail sales in the counties through which it ran increased at a rate more than twice that of New Jersey’s other counties.” (Zerbe 6).

Fuel shortages and a recession in the late 1970’s deeply affected The Wildwoods (Francis 61). Throughout the United States, smaller amusement parks that had prospered for decades were forced to close when they began losing income after several seasons. Enormous investments occurred at such parks as Cedar Point, Magic Mountain, Disney, and the Six Flags Parks. Millions of dollars were spent on advertising and bigger faster coasters; the smaller parks could not compete with the emerging giants of the amusement industry (Francis 190).

Along the Jersey shore the amusement piers began to look shabby, often due to a lack of maintenance. Wildwood businesses suffered due to a nationwide decline in summer resorts. A new generation of vacationers chose bigger better thrills for their money in the late 1970’s (Francis 190).

When the legal drinking age was raised it caused further damage to the Wildwoods entertainment industry as the big shows went to the new casinos in Atlantic City, the first one opened in 1978 (Francis 191).

A 1969 survey of one million visitors to the Jersey shore revealed that 100% of them named the ocean and the beach as Wildwood's main attraction. These natural assets suffered from negative publicity about pollution. "Oil and other refuse had been dumped into the ocean for decades." The cities of New York, Philadelphia, and Camden, New Jersey were dumping sludge into the ocean. Medical waste, chemicals, industrial by-products, land run-off, and the constant oil discharge and spillage from ships were also turning up in the ocean. News of pollution on the beach often made the local papers. Many of the founding fathers of Wildwood resorts died or sold their businesses at this time. The recession of 1973-1975 left Wildwood with an unemployment rate of 9%. By 1990, the unemployment rate was nearly 19% - the highest along the Jersey shore. Wildwood population dropped from 4,913 in 1980 to 4,484 in 1990 (Francis 191).

By the early 1980's steps were taken to begin revitalization on a statewide level. The New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Program was created to stimulate economic development and job creation in the State's designated zones. The UEZ program was started by the New Jersey Commerce & Economic Growth Commission in 1983 to revitalize the most distressed urban communities through the creation of private-sector jobs and public/private investment in targeted areas within these communities. Participating businesses located in these zones are eligible to receive incentives, including sales tax exemptions for building materials, equipment, and supplies invested or used at the certified site, corporation tax benefits, and unemployment insurance rebates. Retailers charge

only half the current sales tax on most "in person" purchases. Receipts from retail sales are deposited into a Zone Assistance Fund to which zone municipalities may apply for funding for projects within the urban enterprise zones.

On August 29, 2002 the four Wildwood Municipalities became part of the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone system. In February 2002, a new state-of-the-art Convention Center was built with a seating capacity of 7,000 in the main hall. The center has over 11,000 square feet of ballroom space, and 75,000 square feet of space for exhibitions. The center was intended to be the keystone of Wildwood's redevelopment plan (www.jerseyboardwalk.com).

By 2004, The Wildwoods UEZ projects included the completion of the Convention Center Park and Grande Gateway (park and band shell), 200 luxury homes and Boardwalk reconstruction (New Jersey Commerce & Economic Growth Commission brochure, 2004.)

Currently there are many new businesses opening on Pacific Avenue, the Main Street and shopping district in Wildwood.

Community planning

New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law requires a municipality to conduct a reexamination of its master plan at least every six years. Wildwood's Master Plan was adopted in 1971. Reexaminations were adopted in 1987, 1997, and 2003. The City's current Zone Plan was adopted in 1978 [See maps in Appendix]. It was modified periodically since its adoption until 1990 (Remington, 2004, 3).

The 2002 Master Plan Reexamination attempted to address the problems, policies, and objectives identified in the 1971 Master Plan¹ that had either been addressed by the City in the intervening years or had evolved into the problems, policies, and objectives identified in the 2002 reexamination (Remington, 3).

The 2002 Reexamination recognized the City's declining economic position, its deteriorating physical stock and the toll these have taken on its social fabric and states that with the assistance of the other island municipalities it has developed strategies and public/private partnerships aimed at reversing recent trends (Remington, 4).

Less than a year after the 2002 Reexamination, City Policymakers decided to undertake a new Master Plan reexamination based on the pace of the City's physical change, which has been more rapid than the planning process. Portions of the Generalized Land Use Map were rendered obsolete even before the 2002 Reexamination was completed (Remington, 5). A footnote states, "The (near) buildout of the neighboring communities on the island, combined with the relatively low real estate prices in Wildwood, has resulted in the demolition of dozens of motels and residential cottages and replacing them with duplexes, townhouses, and other multi-unit structures...(Remington, 5)"

The 2002 Reexamination was adopted just after a municipal election in which the sitting Mayor did not seek reelection. The new administration had different priorities than the previous one. Further impetus was the realization that

¹ 2002 Periodic Master Plan Reexamination. (The recommendations from the 1971 Master Plan were; Improve circulation and transportation patterns, Develop land uses which will strengthen the City's resort economy and tax base, Provide more suitable relationships among the various land uses, Provide for a small year-round population and a large summer influx of visitors, Discourage mixed land uses.)

few recommendations of the previous Master Plan were ever enacted, and that issues identified in the 1971 Master Plan, the 1987 Reexamination and the 1997 Reexamination remain issues today (Remington 2004, 5).

One of the issues addressed in the 2002 Reexamination was the increase in renter-occupied housing, and the increase in rental housing. This trend was noted as “significant”. Concerns about increasing congestion in low and moderate density residential zones placed negative pressures on the City’s neighborhoods and its school system, while providing increased demand for municipal services (Remington, 2004, 8).

Wildwood’s previous zoning permitted duplexes and apartments on 30’ x 40’ lots and apartments and townhouses on 40’ and 80’s lots. “In addition to ‘by-right’ applications under said zoning, developers have purchased multiple lots to create large, continuous tracts for multiple duplex development (thus creating townhouse-type densities where townhouses are not permitted). Individual sites become developed with more units than they are ‘programmed’ to carry. Extreme overcrowding results.” It goes on to say that...” residential and commercial uses intermingle in such a manner as to undermine the integrity of the City’s residential neighborhoods and commercial districts (Remington, 2004, 8).”

The proposal led to create specific Residential, Commercial, and Specialty Zones along with Overlay Districts [See Appendix].

Chapter 3.0 : Recommendations

There are constraints to Wildwood's buildable land, primarily because it is in an island community. There is concern of over-development and the negative impacts that go with it. The natural resources are protected by state and county regulations.

The provision of affordable housing conflicts with municipal priority to maximize ratables. The Master plan recommendations of 2002 include; developing a Land Use Plan to generate ratables and maximize long-term tax stability, balance economic development with the need to preserve environmental resources, and to ensure decent, safe and sanitary housing for all residents (Remington 5).

On March 23, 2005 a zoning ordinance was passed allowing for 25-story buildings in the hotel/motel zone. The city hopes to lure a big hotel chain like Marriot or Hilton. Ratables are the reason. The Mayor said high-rises could be the "ticket to tax relief and to (Wildwood) being a first-class tourist destination." (Wildwood Leader 8/17/2005)

The Mayor continued, "These high-rises are going to be our ticket to a tax-free community." The proposed projects will be "condotels", where a portion of the units will be sold to individual owners, but they will be rented as typical hotel rooms when not in use by the owner. A local resident believes the high rises and the commerce they bring will create year-round jobs for local residents (Wildwood Leader 8/17/05).

In December, 2005, the commissioners in Wildwood passed an ordinance limiting motel stays to 30 days. Low-income residents live in motels year-round, many of which don't have full kitchens or adequate heat. The Mayor says that much of the affordable housing in the City is substandard. In a recent article he says, "The county needs to do something (Wildwood Leader 12/21/05)."

The Mayor goes on to say that they have hired an expert to investigate requiring developers to construct some low-income housing in addition to high-end residential. This is a wise decision.

Town master plans and housing policy generally emphasize owner-occupied over rental housing. Recently, neighboring Wildwood Crest revised its Land Use Plan. Affordable housing for seasonal workers is identified on a list created by the public outreach process. This housing would have to be created in the Multi-Family zone which is primarily in the Hotel/Motel zone. I think there has to be incentives for this; in the fierce luxury condominium market I haven't seen any advertisements for new seasonal workforce housing (Heyer 3).

There is theory that homeownership should be subsidized according to some researchers. But, even those who generally support homeownership propose that it is not suitable for everyone and that by emphasizing homeownership we are not paying attention to other housing needs, such as new rental housing and maintenance of the existing rental housing stock. Additionally, shouldn't the government's job in the market be limited to guarding against discrimination, as opposed to equalizing homeownership.

(Listoken 493)

"Racial and ethnic minorities are much less likely than the rest of the population to be homeowners. As of the fourth quarter of 2000, the white

(non-hispanic) homeownership rate in the United States was 73.9 percent—much higher than the 47.8 percent rate for black households and the 47.5 percent rate for Hispanic households (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2001) (Listoken 465).”

According to the 2000 census, 15.1% of Wildwood residents are living below poverty level, compared to 12.4%, which is the U.S. average. Approximately 15% of the residents of Wildwood are black or Hispanic (US Census 2000). By driving affordable housing off Wildwood’s barrier island community, it forces the workforce to commute approximately three miles to the mainland.

The concept of balance in community by requiring a majority of residents be homeowners may not be pertinent to a community with a seasonal economy. In Banff 50% of the housing is rental. According to the 2000 Census, 43% of the housing units in Wildwood are renter-occupied (US Census 08260 Fact Sheet). Until Wildwood has a year-round economy, it cannot be expected to achieve the 70:30 ratio proposed by Remington.

One definition of affordable housing is housing in which a person is spending no more than a third of his income on rent. Based on the survey I conducted over the summer of 2005, the average seasonal worker in Wildwood, New Jersey, spends more than \$80/week on housing and earns approximately \$240 a week, a maximum based on minimum wage. (\$6.15 is the minimum wage in 2006). Talking about affordable housing, low-income housing, and seasonal housing are not exactly the same thing. I am surprised that most planning data

that is collected is based on the Census. The Census does not explain why there are 14,161 vacant housing units in Wildwood with a household population of 15,252 (08260 Fact Sheet 2000).

Earlier I mentioned that in 1999, Cape Cod had approximately 5 million visitors a year to the National Seashore (Denison 4). Banff, Alberta has approximately 4.2 million annual visitors to the Banff townsite. (McKay 15).

These are interesting numbers for comparison to the 3.5 million visitors to The Wildwoods, NJ in 2002 (Remington 15). Perhaps Cape Cod and Banff are places we should look to for reference as a community rather than Atlantic City, NJ or Ocean City, MD.

I interviewed Jack Morey, Vice President of The Morey Organization (TMO), Denise Beckson, Director of Operations / Human Resources (TMO), Lou Ferrara, Director of Redevelopment, and Steve Lerario, Zoning Board Member both for City of Wildwood. I have a letter from Rich Hluchan who is an attorney that specializes in environmental/DEP.

My client is interested in building housing for his seasonal employees on properties that he currently owns. He is not asking for government subsidies. He may not even be asking for special allowances. Perhaps he will qualify for smart growth incentives if he builds housing downtown for the following reasons; it's near existing development and infrastructure, creates a mix of residential and retail, and is walkable to employment.

He may be asking for flexibility with the current zoning policy in Wildwood. By allowing The Morey's Piers Organization to build housing for approximately

500 seasonal employees is a benefit to the community, which relies on tourism for its economy. There will be no increased transportation demands since seasonal workers walk and bike to work. Having residents in under-populated areas like downtown; land where my client proposes to build housing, will give a sense of community and quality-of-life benefits that made these areas attractive in the first place. High-density construction in the town center will provide vitality to Pacific Avenue and the shops, restaurants and internet cafes will be filled with paying customers. With more people living downtown it will become a more vital, active place than it currently is.

There are three properties where I propose The Morey Organization build housing for seasonal employees; Pier 27 and the The Shore Resort properties are in the Boardwalk SID Overlay District. The Murphy building is zoned T/E (Tourist/Entertainment), The Shore Resort Development is zoned BA (Boardwalk Amusement), and Pier 27 is zoned P (Pier). TMO provided me with existing schemes proposed by Richard Stokes, AIA and Leonard J. Ciccotello, AIA architects. I reviewed them and have recommendations to the plans. The original schemes are in the Appendix [See Figure 11 for the location of three sites].

Pier 27

With a chance to take over a competitor, Morey's Piers purchased Pier 27 in 1999. Dating back to 1957 the pier (known then as Hunt's Pier) established a reputation in the 1960's and 1970's as the place to go for creative high quality

rides including the Jungleland ride, the Golden Nugget Mine ride, a one of a kind dark ride through a man made mountain; and the Skua, a large pirate ship-themed fun house. The pier began to decline under new owners during the late 1980's, and by 1991 had closed. In 1996, Hunt's Pier reopened as Dinosaur Beach, a \$10 million theme park. It seemed like it was influenced by the movie Jurassic Park, Steven Spielberg's phenomenally successful sci-fi adventure which came out in 1993. Eventually, the competition was stiff and Dinosaur Beach closed in 1998. Maintenance facilities for TMO are currently located on the pier (www.moreyspiers.com).

A May 17, 2006, article in the local newspaper reports that the Seapointe Village redevelopment plan was approved (Wildwood Leader). Seapointe Village is the northern-most pier in North Wildwood, New Jersey. Moving south the next pier is Sportland, then Surfside Pier which is owned by my client. The next pier is Pier 27 which is also owned by Morey's Piers. This change supports the need for creative uses for the piers and the addition of diverse activities to them.

Establishing housing on Pier 27 would be difficult since P (Pier) zoning does not allow for residential use. There is no local-historical precedent for this kind of change to the zoning in The Wildwoods. The city official I spoke to said in light of the recent Hurricane (Katrina) damage, the concept of housing "out there" is even more unorthodox. The City official also said it would be difficult to evacuate, but I don't think it would be any more difficult in getting rescue equipment to the amusements, whether it was an emergency situation or not.

Are there total capacities for the piers?

The Morey Organization consulted with Richard Hluchan a lawyer who specializes in environmental issues and asked him to for some analysis on building housing on Pier 27. He explains in a letter that the Pier is regulated by the Coastal Area Facilities Review Act (CAFRA). Because one of the purposes of this organization is to “balance environmental protection with the tourist economy, and since CAFRA permits housing to be located on piers elsewhere within the coastal zone,...” he believes there is a strong argument, at least temporarily.” (Hluchan)

I am not willing to support the scheme to build housing for 480 persons, but I have proposed 96 beds on top of commercial uses. The smaller number is more appropriate for being an accessory use, to the entertainment venue, coaster shop, or carpenter shop that currently exist on the pier. TMO would have a better case if the housing was specifically for the employees that work on Pier 27.

I suggested to Jack Morey that many other amusement parks have entertainment venues and asked him about his interest in it. There were two concert events held over the summer of 2006 that we discussed. One was *School's Out Radio Disney Music Festival with Raven Symone* and *A Closer Walk*, a Christian Youth Event. The Raven concert sold-out at approximately 3,000 tickets. I asked Jack Morey if he ever thought of building a venue to hold concerts indoors. He said he is concerned that it would be perceived as competition with the Wildwood Convention Center. The Raven concert and

family-oriented Christian events are different than the concerts typically held at the Convention Center.

I proposed an entertainment venue on Pier 27 [Figures 19-20.4]. Housing could be built on top of boardwalk level entertainment and retail uses. I would be willing to accept a small amount of housing, but less than 480 for this location, or would it become a teen ghetto. Would the students have supervision?



Figure 2. Currently the main activity on Pier 27 is Go-Carts. The Coaster shop can be seen and the Carpenter shop beyond. MLH.

The Shore Resort Development

This property has been vacant for years. It is sad that the theaters were demolished because there was so much history there. The theater on the north side is where I saw “Jaws” in 1975. I liked exiting the theater on the boardwalk. It was amazing that so much was going on outside the dark, quiet theater.

I asked Bob Bright (7/26/06) why Cedar Avenue was closed to traffic in the first place. He explained that Schellenger Avenue was the border between the towns of Wildwood and Holly Beach, the towns merged in 1912. Wildwood to the north was a dry town. Perhaps because of this, the first block in town attracted an undesirable crowd. The Blackstone Hotel was located on Cedar Avenue and was known to have “hookers”, he said (Bob Bright). He said it was a “non-descript” street and nothing but rooming houses. A 1924 business directory lists mostly, “furnished rooms”. An urban renewal scheme in the 1970’s led to the street being closed to traffic, “the City turned everything into a parking lot.” A city parking lot exists on the properties created by the street closure.



Figure 3. Cedar and Atlantic Avenues 1961. (Wildwood Historical Society, Inc.)



Figure 4. Cedar and Atlantic Avenues 1977. The City parking lot can be seen beyond.

This site is excellent for giving the Morey Organization a “face” on Atlantic Avenue. Rich Stokes’ scheme has an excellent sign that prominently brings Morey’s Piers off the boardwalk. It takes the piers to the street. The concept that this would become a drop-off for the many tour buses is also important to the functioning of the picnic area (Rendezvous Beach) [Figure 12]. This pier is immediately east of the Cedar Avenue branch of the boardwalk. This is the only location where this occurs.

I support the idea of “wrapped parking”. “Parking should be wrapped on commercial streets, with no blank walls.”(Kelly, 7) This can enhance the pedestrian experience. There is no reason to see windowless parking decks. Housing a certain amount of seasonal employees in this location spreads out the workers. No need to have them all in one location. The rooms could be used for an Elderhostel in the off-season. Shoulder-season or year-round activities in the future will help Wildwood reach its economic goals, and this central location would be ideal for this.

Does TMO have the ability to open any part of the amusement parks year-round? There are billion dollar investments developing near New York City, that both have indoor recreational uses. Will the millions of visitors continue to drive more than three hours to Wildwood, New Jersey when these developments take place?

In March 2005, the Mills Corporation started construction on Meadowlands Xanadu. The 4.8 million-square-foot family entertainment, sports, retail, office and hotel complex is located within five miles of Manhattan. It is proposed to have America's "... first indoor ski resort, an indoor Formula One-inspired go-kart track and simulated skydiving." (Meadowlands Xanadu 3/21/05).

The intention of this project is revitalization of the Meadowlands Sports Complex, and intends to create more than 20,000 full- and part-time jobs. There is also a land transfer agreement to preserve 587-acres of open space for a conservation trust (Meadowlands Xanadu, 2).

Thor Equities, a real estate development company based in New York City has plans to build a 100,000 square foot indoor waterpark at Coney Island (Ehrenkrantz Eckstut and Kuhn Architects). Coney Island (New York Department of City Planning) endeavors to extend their tourist season from summer-only to year-round. They also plan to build one million square feet of hotel space (www.thorequities.com).

An anchor hotel would be a good catalyst for Wildwood's Cedar Avenue redevelopment plan, but also for TMO. The location in the Cedar Avenue

redevelopment area ensures that incentives will be available to it. It is also in the UEZ zone, and the Boardwalk SID.

I initially proposed to Jack Morey that seasonal housing could be located in The Shore Resort Development project (January 28, 2006 e-mail). He expressed concern that second home buyers would have to share the building with seasonal employees, and would prevent TMO from successfully marketing the condominiums. (January 29, 2006 e-mail). I met with Jack Morey and proposed that the condominiums would pay for the seasonal housing. He was intrigued by that idea, and I said having the seasonal employees living in the same building as guests is similar to a cruise ship. He called the The Shore Resort Development scheme the silver bullet concept. (Interview on July 27, 2006).

There could be more residential units because there is extra parking [Figures 15, 16.1-18.1]. There could be 117 residential units, and 234 parking spaces to fill the requirement and 159 public parking spaces, and 14 more for winter use. The 14 spaces on the ground floor could be used for vendor stalls in the summer [Figure 18.2].

The condominium residents would enter on Atlantic Avenue, and seasonal employees could enter on Schellenger Avenue, or even on the second level from Cedar Avenue. The residents could be separated from the condominium owners by the lobby / common areas floor.

Murphy Building

The C.G. Murphy Company building has been vacant for years. The most recent date found documenting an active business was 1987, as the Whale of Sale 99 cent shop (Wildwood Historical Society, Inc. 7/26/06). Pacific Avenue in Wildwood in the summer looks like the seasonal employee zone. It has the look of a college town commercial strip. Some may see this as negative, but it is enlivened and vital. The seasonal workers use the internet cafes, laundromats, and one-of-the-few bookstores in town.

The Murphy building opened on April 4, 1929 as part of a chain of 5 & 10 cent stores operating in twelve states. There were many stores of this kind in Wildwood; an F.W. Woolworth was located directly across the street. In Wildwood's heyday the population was larger because of military people from the Coast Guard base at the southern end of Five Mile Beach, and the Cape May County airport on the main land (Wildwood Historical Society, Inc. 7/26/06).

This airport was designated as a Naval Air Station in 1943. During World War II this facility was called upon to support as many as 154 planes, 443 offices and 2497 men. The Hotel Davis in Wildwood was occupied by 150 men when the facility was filled to capacity in 1943 (www.usnasw.org). Wildwood often served to house men that were stationed at the Naval Air Station over the years.

The Murphy building is across Wildwood Avenue from the Crest Savings Bank which is a National landmark. From an urban design point of view, these two prominent and historic buildings provide an attractive portal. An excellent

way to view this intersection and both buildings have a story to tell. Whatever the tenant, it should be something active.

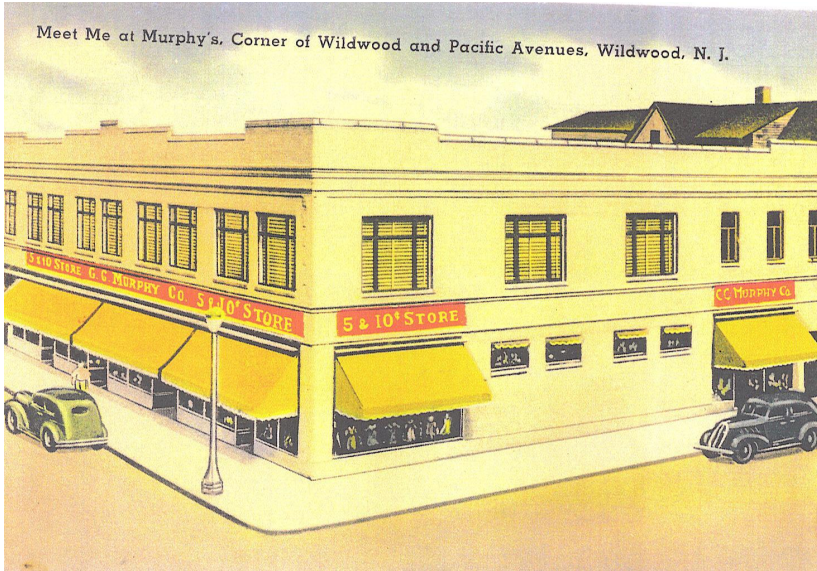


Figure 5. Antique postcard of C.G. Murphy Co. from Wildwood Historical Society, Inc.

A family sports-related or branded restaurant would be excellent and yet another opportunity for spreading the Morey's Piers Organization identity. A destination-dining experience like a beach location for Chickie + Pete's sports themed restaurants from Philadelphia is my recommendation.

There is approximately 7,500 square feet available for a restaurant [Figures 13,14.1-14.3]. According to Wildwood zoning one parking space is required for every four seats or 150 sq. ft. of floor area, whichever is greater. Without having a layout of the restaurant, a rough total would require 50 parking spaces. (using the 150 sq. ft. total). By demolishing the rear portion of the building, the Stokes Architecture proposal has 22 spaces. Perhaps this is why this property remains vacant?

I asked Jack Morey if parking was his hesitation for developing the site he said,

“The Murphy building is not yet feasible for commercial as the cost for rehabilitaton will not support what a tenant will pay (Jack Morey e-mail 8/10/06).” Does there have to be condominiums built as part of this development to make it feasible?

There is no parking requirement for housing over commercial space in Wildwood. In this space it is beneficial, since most of the seasonal employees walk/bike to work. The City should encourage development of this site. It has been vacant for years. The increase in residents in the downtown area will cause greater demand for commercial activities. More restaurants and shops that are entertainment oriented. By spreading out the



Figure 6. The G.C. Murphy Building (The Great Whale 99 cent store) MLH
Figure 7. Crest Savings Bank (Wildwood Historical Society, Inc.)

seasonal housing, it will encourage pedestrian traffic flow from Pier 27, The Shore Resort Development, and Murphy building. This traffic will enliven the Cedar Avenue connector. Friends will walk to meet friends this way. Wildwood needs an east-west thoroughfare to entice pedestrian traffic further into town. Ideally the central parking will be located here.

Crest Saving has 14 spaces south of the bank, and 3 spaces on the north side. The 17 spaces could be used at night by the restaurant next door. There are 22 spaces immediately east of the bank, which may be on the Bolero property. There are about 32 more on the Royal Canadian property. During the day it appears that there are many open parking spaces in the city lots, but they are not adjacent to the Murphy Building. Encouraging buildings that are in use should be priority; rather than requiring fulfillment of parking regulations by the City of Wildwood.

A central parking deck will entice commercial development in Wildwood. The 2004 Periodic Master Plan Reexamination recommends the creation of municipally-owned surface parking, as well as a multi-story public parking structure and the creation of a Parking Authority (Remington, 26).

The Murphy Building's location on Pacific Avenue (a successful Main Street program) but also the Urban Enterprise Zone would allow it to qualify for incentives to rehabilitation. Also the G.C. Murphy Company Foundation currently is an independent, non-profit corporation that makes annual grants to civic, educational and charitable organizations. Perhaps they would be interested in supporting the preservation of this building?

Conclusion

I set out to identify the need for seasonal housing in Wildwood, New Jersey. In August 2005 I surveyed twenty-five summer employees. Research for my DPC revealed that local planning data is derived from the U.S. Census, which does not include information on the seasonal population.

Many of the workers I spoke with in Five Mile Beach pay \$100 a week for housing. Paying more than 1/3 of their income in rent makes the definition of their housing, less than “affordable.” 84% of the workers I spoke to lived in Wildwood, and 36% had two jobs. Of the workers I spoke to the largest foreign group was 20%, which were from Russia (includes Bellarus and Ukraine). The next highest group was 12%, and they were Irish. 80% of the Russians had two jobs. Fifteen of the foreign workers I spoke with lived with more than four others.

Many of the seasonal workers live with multiple roommates and often had trouble giving me an exact number for their rent because it changed over the summer, or the weekly total wasn’t consistent. Of the workers who gave me numbers, 40% spent more than \$80 weekly.

Recently a newspaper article was titled, “Second person injured in fall from building.” A foreign worker was injured after falling from a third-story balcony. Another worker had recently fallen in a similar accident from a seasonal apartment building (Press of Atlantic City, 8/5/06). There are concerns about the quality of housing in Wildwood.



8. A foreign worker fell from the third-story balcony as reported in the Press of Atlantic City article on August 7, 2006.

Dorney Park and Wildwater Kingdom and Cedar Point offer affordable housing to seasonal employees at discounted rates, and provide transportation to workers who can't walk to their jobs. The service industry hasn't replaced the industrial jobs that were plentiful in the past, and does not pay as well.

In "Communing with Nature" an article on Banff stressed that "cost and availability of affordable housing is...the biggest threat to the social health...for the community. (McKay, 15)" If the seasonal staff, who often earn minimum wage are forced to live in overcrowded and less than desirable living conditions, how will Wildwood be perceived by the visitors who support and sustain our economy?

It is my recommendation that by building seasonal housing, TMO will make Wildwood convenient and attractive for seasonal employees. Housing TMO employees at the other proposed locations; The Shore Resort Development on Atlantic Avenue, and the Murphy Building location will do more for revitalization and activating downtown Wildwood, than Pier 27.

Building housing in downtown locations will benefit Wildwood by enlivening the area. There will be no increase in traffic because most of the workers can walk or bike to work. Affordable housing for the seasonal workforce is needed for the City of Wildwood to maintain its competitive edge with other first-class resort destinations. Ideally, The City and my client will work together to ensure that it can happen.