

**Borough of Stone Harbor**  
**Cape May County, New Jersey**

**Master Plan**  
**Reexamination Report**



*Prepared for:*  
**Borough of Stone Harbor Planning Board**  
**9508 Second Avenue**  
**Stone Harbor, New Jersey 08247**

**June 2019**

*Prepared by:*

**MOTT**  
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CONSULTING ENGINEERS & PLANNERS

# Master Plan Reexamination Report

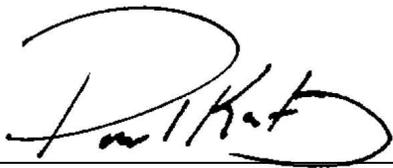
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Kates", written over a horizontal line.

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### **Members of the Master Plan Sub-Committee - 2019**

Mr. Charles Krafczek, Councilman  
Mrs. Joselyn Rich, Councilwoman  
Mr. William Cathcart, Zoning Board Chairman  
Mr. Wayne Conrad, Planning Board Vice-Chairman  
Mr. Angelo Caracciolo, Zoning Board Member

### **Members of the Planning Board – 2019**

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Mr. Wayne Conrad, Vice-Chairman  
Mrs. Judy Davies-Dunhour, Mayor  
Mr. Charles Krafczek, Councilman  
Mrs. Jill Gougher, Borough Administrator  
Ms. Lynne Dubler  
Mr. Robert D. Bickford, Jr.  
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### **Planning Board Staff – 2019**

Ms. Diane Frangiose, Board Secretary  
Mr. Ray Poudrier, Zoning Officer

### **Planning Board Professionals – 2019**

Mr. Andrew D. Catanese Esquire, Board Solicitor  
Mr. Paul D Kates PE, PP, Board Engineer and Planner

**Planning Documents utilized in the preparation of this Master Plan Reexamination:**

Stone Harbor Master Plan, June 22 2009

2018 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

Borough of Stone Harbor Zoning Code

Historic Preservation Plan, October 2010

Municipal Public Access Plan, December 2011

Conservation Plan, March 2008

Forestry Management Plan, September 2016

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## 2. Introduction

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that a municipality undertake a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations at a minimum every ten years (NJSA 40:55D-89). This report is the culmination of the reexamination for the Borough of Stone Harbor and fulfills the required objectives set forth in NJSA 40:55D-89.

The reexamination report shall state:

- a. *The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of adoption of the last master plan.*
- b. *The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.*
- c. *The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, County, and municipal policies and objectives.*
- d. *The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.*
- e. *The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.*

This report will address the above requirements as outlined in the MLUL.

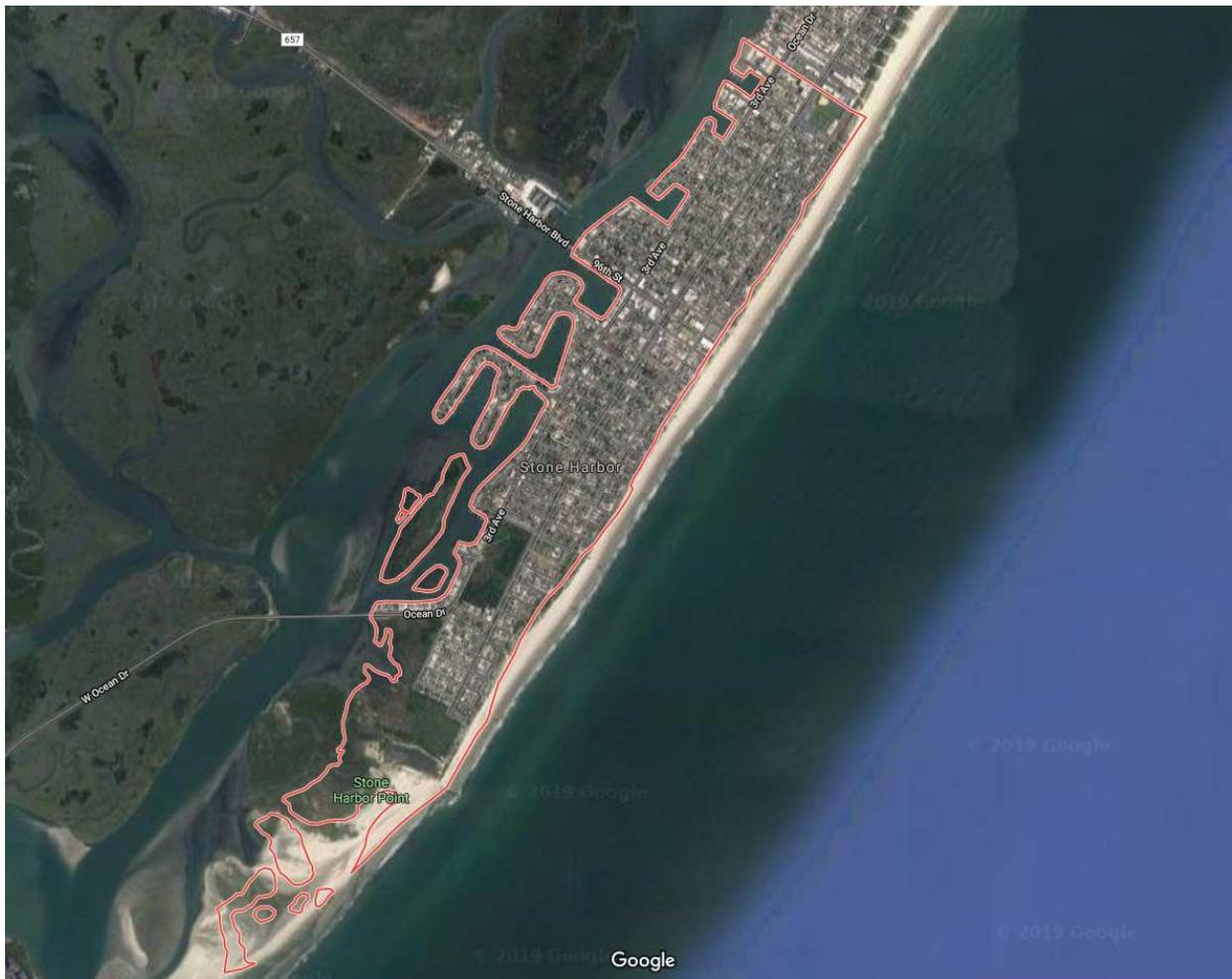
## 3. Background

Stone Harbor is a coastal resort community with an abundance of natural resources, attractive residential neighborhoods and a thriving downtown district. As a seasonal resort, the extreme fluctuations in local population from seasonal to non-seasonal months have social, economic and physical (land use) ramifications. Balancing the needs and services of permanent residents,

guests and merchants is a challenging and sometimes daunting task. The goal of the master plan and this reexamination report is to address those challenges by providing a comprehensive analysis of existing land use conditions and recommendations for future planning policies.

Stone Harbor is located in Cape May County, the southernmost county in New Jersey, and is approximately 150 miles south of New York City, 80 miles southeast of Philadelphia, and 130 miles due east of Washington D.C. The Borough occupies approximately 1.6 square miles of the Seven Mile Island, a barrier island along the Atlantic Ocean coastline with the Borough of Avalon located north of Stone Harbor.

The primary access to Stone Harbor is through Middle Township and a four mile causeway. Other access points are through Avalon to the north and from North Wildwood Boulevard to the south across the Hereford Inlet on County Route 619, Also known as Ocean Drive.



**Figure 1.1 Aerial Photograph of Stone Harbor via Google Maps**

## **4. Major Problems and Objectives addressed in the 2009 Master Plan and the extent to which they were reduced or increased**

The 2009 Master Plan at the outset identified six issues and set out ways to address them. The issues it identified were as follows:

- a. Clean and healthy beaches
- b. Navigable bay waters
- c. An economically vibrant downtown district
- d. A unique destination spot on the Shelter Haven Basin
- e. Pristine wildlife habitats
- f. A public marina with enhanced activities and uses.

The Master Plan went further into the identified issues with the Analysis of Existing Conditions.

### **Major Trends and Issues**

The popularity and intrinsic charm of Stone Harbor is firmly rooted in its natural resources and pristine coastline. The attractive setting has set Stone Harbor apart as an increasingly popular place to own a home and has resulted in property values soaring. This has resulted in the development and reconstruction of many homes throughout the Borough that is altering the character of the neighborhoods. The increase in value has also had an effect on the number of permanent resident. Many of the homes are being bought as second homes and as a result the Borough is experiencing fewer people in town as many homes are utilized less frequently. The effect has been felt on business owners as they adapt to the changing demographics.

The Master Plan identified three competing demographics with different needs that must be addressed. The first of those groups being the permanent residents which consists of both families and retirees. The men and women of this group are looking for social programs and activities along with the need for essential goods and services. They are also concerned about taxes. The second group is the Borough's second homeowners. They have high expectations with regard to the quality of life in the town. They are concerned with the character of the town as well as seeking numerous activities throughout the summer months. The final group is the Borough's merchants and business owners. They rely on patrons spending time in town and wish to cultivate a longer season.

This section of the Master Plan went further in identifying other land issues in the Borough which are more narrowly focused. One issue being the changing patterns and intensity of development as it relates to the growing size and footprint of homes being reconstructed. The

other issue being the complicated and costly task of protecting and conserving the Borough’s natural resources, which includes beach replenishment, bay dredging, and habitat restoration.

## Demographics

The Master Plan elaborates on the changing demographics. As a coastal resort town, Stone Harbor’s small year round population increases dramatically in the summer months. Demographic changes in the community have resulted in a decrease in year round residents and rental lodging. This has led to an increase in second homeowners. The issue is that second homeowners spend less time in the Borough which reduces the number of patrons for the downtown businesses and merchants.

Table A from the Master Plan mapped the population trend for the Borough:

<b>Table A. Stone Harbor Population Trends</b>									
<b>1920</b>	<b>1930</b>	<b>1940</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2007*</b>
159	363	383	670	834	1089	1187	1025	1129	1021
Source: US Census Bureau, *Cape May County Planning Department estimates									

This trend has continued through to today with the population decreasing more than predicted in Table A. The 2010 Census lists Stone Harbor’s year round population at 866. The Cape May County Planning Department has projected the 2020 population to further decline to 816. The 2010 Census also concluded that the median age had increased from 57.5 to 60.6.

<b>Table B. Select Economic Statistics</b>			
	<b>Stone Harbor 2000</b>	<b>Stone Harbor 2017</b>	<b>New Jersey</b>
Median Value of SF/owner-occupied home	\$445,300	\$1,209,100	\$321,100
Labor Force (percent of population)	48.50%	45.5%	65.6%
Median household income in 2009 (permanent residents)	\$51,471	\$101,406	\$76,475
Source: US Census 2010, American Community Survey 2013-2017			

Table B has been updated to reflect the most current statistics. The Master plan indicated that Stone Harbor residents were below the median income when compared to New Jersey residents. This is no longer the case. Income growth amongst Stone Harbor residents has outpaced growth among New Jersey Residents. With property values still on the rise Stone

Harbor is attracting wealthier homeowners. The Cape May County Planning Department Estimates that Stone Harbor’s population swells to just over 21,000 people in the summer. The second homeowners who occupy their summer dwellings are typically more affluent than the year round population.

<b>Table D. 2010 Housing Occupancy</b>			
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
Housing Units	3173	3428	3247
Occupied	535	596	441
Vacant	2638	2832	2806
Seasonal	n/a	2549	2678
Source: US Census 1990, 2000, 2010			

Table D has been updated to reflect the most recent housing statistics, which further indicate the growing trend toward fewer year round residents and more second homeowners. The available rentals also decreased from 283 in 2000 to 112 in 2010. The labor force in Stone Harbor has remained unchanged. The low percentage of the labor force is attributed to a large portion of the year round population consisting of retirees.

### **Cultural and Heritage Preservation**

The third issue the Master Plan identified was the Borough’s dwindling supply of historic structures. Historic structures contribute to the pride of the community and a “sense of place.” Stone Harbor has only one structure, the Lifesaving Station, on the National Historic Registry with many of the town’s historic homes already having been torn down to make way for larger, modern homes. The Master Plan recommended a comprehensive inventory and analysis of the condition and historical significance of the older structures throughout the Borough to determine the extent to which they can be protected.

The Master Plan made recommendations to preserve the heritage in Stone Harbor. Those recommendations were as follows:

1. Safeguard the heritage of Stone Harbor by preserving buildings and other features within the Borough that reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, and architectural history.
2. Increase public awareness of the Borough’s heritage. Encourage the creation of historic plaques and markers for buildings and landmarks and preserve relics of the past.
3. Where historic structures must be expanded, encourage the sensitive design of additions that retains the integrity of the structure. The preparation of a brochure is

recommended to offer residents and real estate professionals examples of how historic homes can be renovated in a manner that is sensitive to the historic context of the building, neighborhood and Borough.

In addition to those recommendations the Stone Harbor Action Plan called for the preparation and adoption of a Historic Preservation Plan followed by a Historic Preservation Campaign.

*Following the adoption of the Master Plan in 2009 the Borough adopted the Historic Preservation in 2010. As property values continue to climb, the value is increasingly tied to the land and not the structure that sits on it. Many homes, regardless of age are torn down and replaced with the new homeowner's vision and home that fits their needs, lifestyle, and family. Historic Preservation is often viewed as a negative and feared that it could diminish the value of the property along with limiting what the market is currently dictating.*

*The Master Plan also called for the relocation of the museum to a permanent location. The museum was previously housed in a small building owned by the Stone Harbor Elementary School. The museum outgrew that facility and was moved to its new location at 9410 Second Avenue in May of 2017. The Stone Harbor Museum serves as the cultural link to the past.*

## **Environmental and Natural Resources**

The Master Plan puts a strong emphasis on the environmental and natural resources of Stone Harbor. The character and economic success of Stone Harbor is defined by its geography – a barrier island surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, bays and tidal wetlands. The Master plan breaks those resources into three categories: Beaches and Coastal Location, Wildlife Habitats, and Tidal Basins and Bay Waters.

Stone Harbor's beaches are the essence of its charm and the driving force of the local economy. The beaches are one of the main characteristics that make Stone Harbor what it is, but it also brings problems and challenges. The majority of the land in the Borough is less than five feet above sea level, leaving much of the island susceptible to flooding. Hurricanes and large storms batter the island causing damage from flooding as well as eroding the beaches and dunes which protect the island. Beach replenishment is a costly exercise that is necessary in maintaining one of the island's greatest resources but also for protection from damaging storms.

Stone Harbor's wildlife habitats are a link to the island's past as well as a well preserved tie to the environment we all enjoy. The point is a tidal wetland area at the southernmost tip of the Borough, with the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Hereford Inlet and great channel to the south and west. The Master Plan goes into detail on the importance of the point to permanent

and temporary coastal birds as well as butterflies, terrapins, sea turtles, and dolphins. It is also a critical pathway for finfish and shellfish to move between spawning grounds and nursery areas. It is an area critical to the ecology of the area and an asset to protect.

The other important wildlife habitat in Stone Harbor is the bird sanctuary. The bird sanctuary was founded in 1947 and registered as a National Landmark by the National Park Service in 1965. There has been increased attention to maintaining the sanctuary as it had always been by removing invasive species of plants and animals. The sanctuary draws an abundance of coastal birds and is a popular spot for naturalists and bird watchers alike.

Stone Harbor's tidal basins and bay waters are another important link to the ecology surrounding the Borough. They provide ample opportunity for boaters and fishermen to enjoy recreational activities in the summer. Publicly these waters can be accessed by the Borough's marina, fishing piers and public boat ramp near 80<sup>th</sup> Street. Like many of the natural resources in Stone Harbor the basins and waterways also require a great deal of maintenance to keep them flowing and free of silt which can limit their usability.

*The Master Plan recommended moving the remainder of the point and the bird sanctuary out of the Public Use District and into the Conservation Management District. The Conservation Management District offers more protection for the sensitive environmental areas and these areas could benefit from that protection. No action has been taken on this recommendation and it remains an issue.*

*The Master Plan also recommended the development of a natural resource monitoring program. The Borough has taken steps to recognize, monitor, preserve, and protect the natural resource surrounding Stone Harbor. The natural resource committee is committed to protecting the Borough's assets. While the steps taken have been beneficial these issues are ongoing and the monitoring and protection should continue.*

## **Residential Land Uses**

The Master Plan outlines the three residential zoning districts in the current zoning ordinance, Residential A, B, and C. The three zoning districts account for 318 acres of property in the Borough. The Borough has maintained the two story maximum and a stringent height restriction which has helped to maintain the character and charm of the neighborhoods within Stone Harbor. With very few lots available for new residential construction the majority of all growth has been in the form of renovations, additions, and redevelopment of lots. Growth of this nature can lead to issues with compatibility, context, and resource conservation. The

central issue has been the growth in size of newer homes which often stand out from the much smaller homes of the past. This has led to the significant decrease in older structures as well as working toward eliminating the one story structures found throughout the Borough. The new and larger homes are being built to deal with flooding. The raised elevations also can leave a new structure unsightly at street level and break up the cohesiveness of the streetscape.

*The Master Plan recommended monitoring impervious coverage limits to ensure that they can maintain the balance of light and air along with historically desirable densities. This problem persists but has not been exacerbated.*

Trees and vegetation have also suffered due to the increase and size of the new homes. Often as lots are cleared they are removed for ease of construction or to accommodate the larger footprint of homes, pools, and patios. This loss of mature trees is akin to the loss of historic structures. They can give a neighborhood a sense of place and time in the environment. The trees should be protected whenever possible. *The Master Plan recommended adopting a landscape ordinance to protect mature trees or consider replacements for them wherever possible. The plan recommended the establishment of a shade tree committee to serve as an advisory board to the Borough. The Borough currently has a shade tree committee which along with the garden club works hard to promote the care and maintenance of vegetation throughout the Borough. In 2016 the Borough commissioned and adopted a Community Forestry Management Plan that now serves as a guide for the care, maintenance and selection of trees throughout the Borough.*

## **Commercial and Industrial Land Uses**

The Master Plan identified several issues with the downtown business district. The first issue being the lack of cohesiveness between the 200 block of 96<sup>th</sup> Street and the surrounding areas that are part of the business district. The plan identifies the lack of street trees and landscaping that the 200 block has as the main culprit. This in turn adds to less foot traffic in these areas. 97<sup>th</sup> Street suffers even more due to the numerous blank walls and parking lots. The Master Plan sites the lack of protruding signs as adding to this issue. The Plan also recommends strengthening the shoulder seasons to aid the Business District.

*The sign ordinance has been amended to allow protruding signs in the Business and Waterfront Business District thus eliminating the problem of lack of visibility for storefronts. This change has been beneficial. The Master Plan also recommended that the Borough create a temporary parking lot in the lot on Second Avenue between 93<sup>rd</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> Street. That parking lot has since*

*been improved and has become an asset to the Borough. However parking problems continue to exist and are addressed further in this report.*

*Streetscape improvements continue to be a problem today. With the frequent flooding along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue salt water prohibits most vegetation from growing. Efforts to update the streetscape have been met with issues. With the approval and grant money to mitigate flooding along Third Avenue planting trees and vegetation may finally be possible. This issue has not been solved to date and the recommendations within the Master Plan still hold merit.*

*The Chamber of Commerce along with the Borough have taken steps to strengthen the shoulder seasons. The addition of programs and events provide incentives for second homeowners to come back to town and enjoy what the Borough has to offer. The redevelopment of the movie theater along with the Reeds and Fred's have become offseason staples that draw patrons into town as well. While this issue has not been resolved the current direction has strengthened the Business Districts.*

The Master Plan then discusses issues with the Waterfront Business District. The issues faced in this district vary from unsightly undeveloped lots to residential properties mixed in with commercial. The latter creates a unique streetscape by breaking up commercial properties with private front yards. Driveways further add to disruption as they can be dangerous to foot traffic. Another issue they felt was the lack of public view of Shelter Haven Basin along with public access. At the time of adoption of the Master Plan the Waterfront business district was relatively new.

*Since the adoption of the Master Plan the Waterfront Business District has developed into a thriving cornerstone within Stone Harbor's downtown. The zoning ordinance has been adapted as the District developed to continue to serve the Borough and return the maximum value. The Master Plan had recommended the addition of a pocket park to open up views of the Shelter Haven Basin and spur development in the District. The Community Design Standards also recommended the addition of a bay walk around the Shelter Haven Basin. Both of these ideas are no longer seen as viable as the area continues to thrive.*

The Light Industrial Zone has outlived its purpose. The Master Plan felt that this zone was no longer needed and should be eliminated. This sentiment mirrored the recommendations of the previous Master Plan. *There has been no action taken to eliminate the Light Industrial Zone. It has not hindered development in the area. This issue still exists.*

*The Master Plan recommended three additional zones in the North West side of the Borough in the marina area. The marina area of the Public Use District should be moved to a newly created Marina District. Uses would include water sports and hobbies, restaurants, outdoor dining, arts*

*and cultural facilities, goods and services related to water sports/ hobbies, residences, public uses, outdoor park, recreational facilities, and possibly a community center. A multi-family Residential District should replace the existing Light industrial Zone at the corner of 80<sup>th</sup> Street and Second Avenue where there already exists a large multifamily structure. The third zone in this area would be the creation of the Neighborhood Commercial District which would replace the existing Business District in the north end of the Borough. Recognizing that businesses in this area of town may have specific needs for which the zoning could be tailored to address. These recommendations have not been acted on. Development in this area has not been hindered due to the lack of unique zoning.*

## **Public Use District**

The Master Plan identified two issues within the Public Use District. The first being the Borough's public works buildings. These buildings are large Morton-style buildings on 80<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> Street near the marina. The buildings are out of scale with the neighborhood they reside and do not fit the character of the island. *It was recommended that the Borough Consider ways to minimize the visual impact of the existing structures while also exploring alternative sites for possible relocation of public works. This issue continues to exist in the same manner it has.*

The second issue they raise is with the marina. The site does not provide a sense of place, both form and function, are not commensurate with the scenic qualities of its prime waterfront location. *The Master Plan recommended the preparation of a Marina District Master Plan. To date nothing has been done and the marina continues to be an underutilized asset within the Borough.*

## **Circulation**

The circulation section of the Master Plan outlines the flow paths in and around the Borough. The primary issue is traffic congestion. The majority of roadways through the Borough are small two lane roads with room for parking along each side. The issue spreads beyond the volume of cars throughout the summer as roads are shared among cyclists, joggers, moped riders, and rollerbladers. In addition to the amount of traffic the water ways were being silted reducing the navigability of the back bay waters. *This section also commented on the Chamber of Commerce sponsored trolley which is no longer in operation. The issues outlined in this section have not been reduced.*

## Community Facilities

The Borough’s facilities have undergone several changes since the adoption of the 2009 Master Plan. The following is a list of the relevant changes:

- The branch of the Cape May County Library which was formerly housed in Stone Harbor Borough Hall has been moved. The newly constructed library at the corner of 96<sup>th</sup> and Second Avenue was completed in early 2017. The Master Plan had recommended the construction of a new library.
- The Police building was expanded in 2018 and a portion of the old building was renovated to be used jointly with Borough Hall.
- Stone Harbor School was consolidated with Avalon beginning with the 2011-12 school year. Students in kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade attend Stone Harbor School while students in 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> attend Avalon School. *The school is an important piece of the community and the Borough should continue to support it.*
- The parking lot on Second Avenue between 93<sup>rd</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> has been paved. Table F has been updated below.

<b>Table F. Public Parking Lots and Spaces</b>	
Beach Lots	Two lots for a total of 145 regular spaces, 7 RV spaces, and 8 handicap spaces
200 Block of 95 <sup>th</sup> Street	Ace lot has 14 spaces and 1 handicap space, water tower lot has 40 spaces and 1 handicap space
200 Block of 97 <sup>th</sup> Street	44 spaces
300 Block of 96 <sup>th</sup> Street	Two lots for a total of 52 spaces
80 <sup>th</sup> Street and the Bay	126 parking spaces and 28 trailer spaces (Free)
Second Avenue at 122 <sup>nd</sup> Street	84 spaces, 5 RV spaces, 5 handicap spaces
83 <sup>rd</sup> Street and Bay	4 spaces
Bulkhead 111 <sup>th</sup> Street	12 spaces and 1 handicap
80 <sup>th</sup> Street and First Avenue	36 spaces and 2 handicap (Free)
80 <sup>th</sup> Street and Second Avenue	23 spaces and 2 handicap (Free)
Borough Hall at 96 <sup>th</sup> Street	33 spaces and 2 handicap
Firehouse at 96 <sup>th</sup> Street	1 spaces and 1 handicap
Second Avenue between 93 <sup>rd</sup> and 94 <sup>th</sup>	60 spaces and 2 handicap (Free)

- The Stone Harbor Museum has been relocated to 9410 Second Avenue. The Master Plan had recommended finding a permanent location for the museum.

- The park at 82<sup>nd</sup> Street between First and Second Avenue has been updated. The 11 tennis courts have been completely overhauled. The number of courts has been reduced to 9 with the remaining area being utilized for 6 pickle ball courts. A tennis support building is being constructed. The skateboard park is no longer there and will be replaced by a bicycle rest area. The small arts and crafts building was rebuilt as the recreation center with a covered basketball pavilion. *The Master Plan had recommended an indoor recreation facility however it was determined that the current recreation building was suited to the Borough's needs.*
- The public restroom on the corner of 95<sup>th</sup> and Second Avenue was updated to better accommodate handicap access and a more modern feel commensurate with the Stone Harbor Experience.

## Utilities and Public Infrastructure

Stone Harbor draws water from the Kirkwood Aquifer. The Cape May County Comprehensive Plan notes studies by the US Geological Survey which concluded that there is an ample supply of potable water. The long term concern is that saltwater intrusion will contaminate the water supply. This concern should be watched along with County and State authorities. *This issue has not been reduced nor has it gotten worse and should continue to be monitored.*

## Tourism

The Master Plan cites the changing trends and demographic of tourism in Cape May County as requiring a more in depth look into marketing trends and effective advertising. The Cape May County Board of Tourism reported that in 2017 tourism expenditures reached nearly 6.4 billion in the County. This is an increase over the numbers in the 2009 Master Plan which had been in decline at the time. The tourism board attributes much of this increase to the ever developing shoulder seasons. Tourists are largely coming from the surrounding states; however there has been an uptick in tourists from Canada. The Cape May County board of Tourism for 2018 lists the following statistics for where the County draws tourists:

- Pennsylvania      28%
- New Jersey        27%
- New York            19%
- Canada              9%
- Maryland/DC      7%

The Master Plan discussed Stone Harbor's unique assets that set it apart and should be marketed. Stone Harbor has a clean, quiet beachfront within a short walking distance to a traditional downtown shopping area. It also has the unique opportunity for eco-tourism with the point and bird sanctuaries as attractions. Shops and restaurants should cater to second homeowners as well as tourists to maximize their potential. The plan recommends pooling resources and coming up with new and innovative approaches to advertising. *The work to attract and draw tourists into the Borough is ongoing and will continue to be so.*

## **Sustainability**

The Master Plan outlines the increased interest on sustainability. Sustainability strategies include green building design, green engineering, low-impact development, and smart growth policies. Stone Harbor should include these strategies in future projects. *The Master Plan recommended the preparation and adoption of a Green Buildings and Sustainability Plan Element. That work was never completed; however Stone Harbor has taken a strong position on sustainability. That work is ongoing.*

## **5. Significant Changes in Assumptions, Policies, and Objectives**

The largest and most significant change that has come about since the adoption of the 2009 Master Plan came in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. Hurricane Sandy made landfall in October of 2012 just north of Atlantic City. It became the second costliest hurricane on record up to that time. FEMA quickly revised flood maps with the information gleaned from Sandy along with data relative to sea level rise and the long term future of communities. FEMA's goal along with the National Flood Insurance Program has been the reduction of at risk and repetitive loss structures. Along with new policies and guidelines the NFIP revised the Community Rating System to further encourage municipalities to take on new regulations and zoning to increase resilience to flood damage. Congress has also passed the Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 which among many changes will increase rates on at risk structures gradually until homeowners are paying actuarial rates. These changes all serve to incentivize municipalities to become more flood resilient.

Stone Harbor quickly began making policy changes to adapt to new regulations. The Borough entered into the CRS Program and is currently a level 5 which brings with it a 25% reduction in

Flood Insurance rates. In addition changes have been ongoing and nearly all policy changes have been looked at with an eye toward resilience. Several ordinances have already been adopted including Flood Damage Prevention and a new bulkhead ordinance. Stone Harbor has lowered triggers that require a non conforming structure or bulkhead to come into compliance with new regulations. Storm water projects to mitigate flooding continue to be a high priority. The work toward building a strong more resilient community will aid Stone Harbor far into the future.

The other major shift in policy has come from Stone Harbor's increased interest in sustainability. The Borough is closely tied to the beauty and nature that surrounds it, so it has become only natural to shift toward protecting that asset. Green initiatives have been at the forefront of many major decisions. The Borough is developing greener solutions for dealing with storm water. They are looking at reducing consumption of natural resources, water and electricity, as well as creating less waste while promoting the use of recyclable materials. Stone Harbor is also considering policies and incentives that will reduce the impact that new construction and larger homes have on the Borough. While sustainability is not something new to the Borough it is increasingly becoming the focus.

The business district was in a decline in 2009 when the Master Plan was adopted. Since that time there has been a resurgence as Borough businesses adapt to the changing needs of their patrons. Development in the Waterfront Business District along with the redevelopment of the movie theatre has anchored this change. With several upscale bars and restaurants coupled a variety of high end boutiques and shops, new life has been breathed into the downtown. Festivals and events have begun to strengthen the shoulder seasons along with stores and restaurants staying open further into the fall and opening earlier in the spring. The Borough must continue to support this growth to continue to maintain the vibrancy of the town.

## **6. Specific Changes Recommended for the Master Plan**

### **Land Use Plan**

The Master Plan recommended the elimination of the Light Industrial Zone. The Light Industrial Zone has not hampered development in the area. The lots contained within the zone are currently developed or Borough owned. There has not been interest or need to redevelop the existing structures. Having the zone in place also allows for a place within the Borough where certain business are permitted and could be developed. If the Zone was eliminated that would

leave certain types of businesses with nowhere to go, which could give them legal standing to seek a variance where it would be unwelcome. Gas stations are a permitted use in the Light Industrial Zone. If it were eliminated an applicant could make a case for developing that type of business elsewhere in the borough. Our recommendation would be to leave it in place at this time. Any change in zoning at this location should only be considered along with a redevelopment plan for the area.

The Borough has received many requests for relief to some the constraints affecting the Courts. The Courts are a subset of the Residential C district and are the smallest buildable lots in Stone Harbor. The lot sizes along with floor and height restrictions have kept the homes small and represent the bungalows that were a staple of shore experience. The town has been developing into more than just a summer destination and many of these homes have expanded their use as well. Residents of the Courts have requested relief to some of the size constraints to allow more room for storage and utilities, such as heating and air conditioning systems, as well as second floors for additional living space. Residents of the courts have expressed their frustration with the size of the homes being built in their backyards towering over them. In addition they feel that the values of their homes are beginning to diminish. As the value of the land in Stone Harbor continues to increase it has significantly outpaced the values in their homes. Many feel that adding value to their structures would not yield any equity in the long term. This has led to many of the homes falling into disrepair.

The Courts have outlived their place in the Residential C. We would recommend creating a fourth residential zone and developing a set of standards appropriate to address the size and unique elements of the courts. To address the storage and utility concerns our recommendation would be to allow additional height beneath the first floor. The ground elevation of the Courts is among the higher elevations on the island. Therefore, many of the homes sit close to existing grade and above the design flood elevation. By allowing them to raise their homes or elevate new structures to include a four foot crawlspace they would gain necessary storage as well as a place to put utility systems. In order to gain more living space we would recommend allowing limited second floors. The inclusion of a second floor setback would keep the structures from towering over the street and creating a tunneling or canyon like affect, thus protecting the character while meeting resident's needs. Figure 6.1 shows how a second floor setback would affect the building envelope. One concern the addition of living space always brings up is the need for additional parking. Should parking become an issue the Borough could issue or make available to purchase a limited number of parking permits to each resident that would limit congestion on the street.

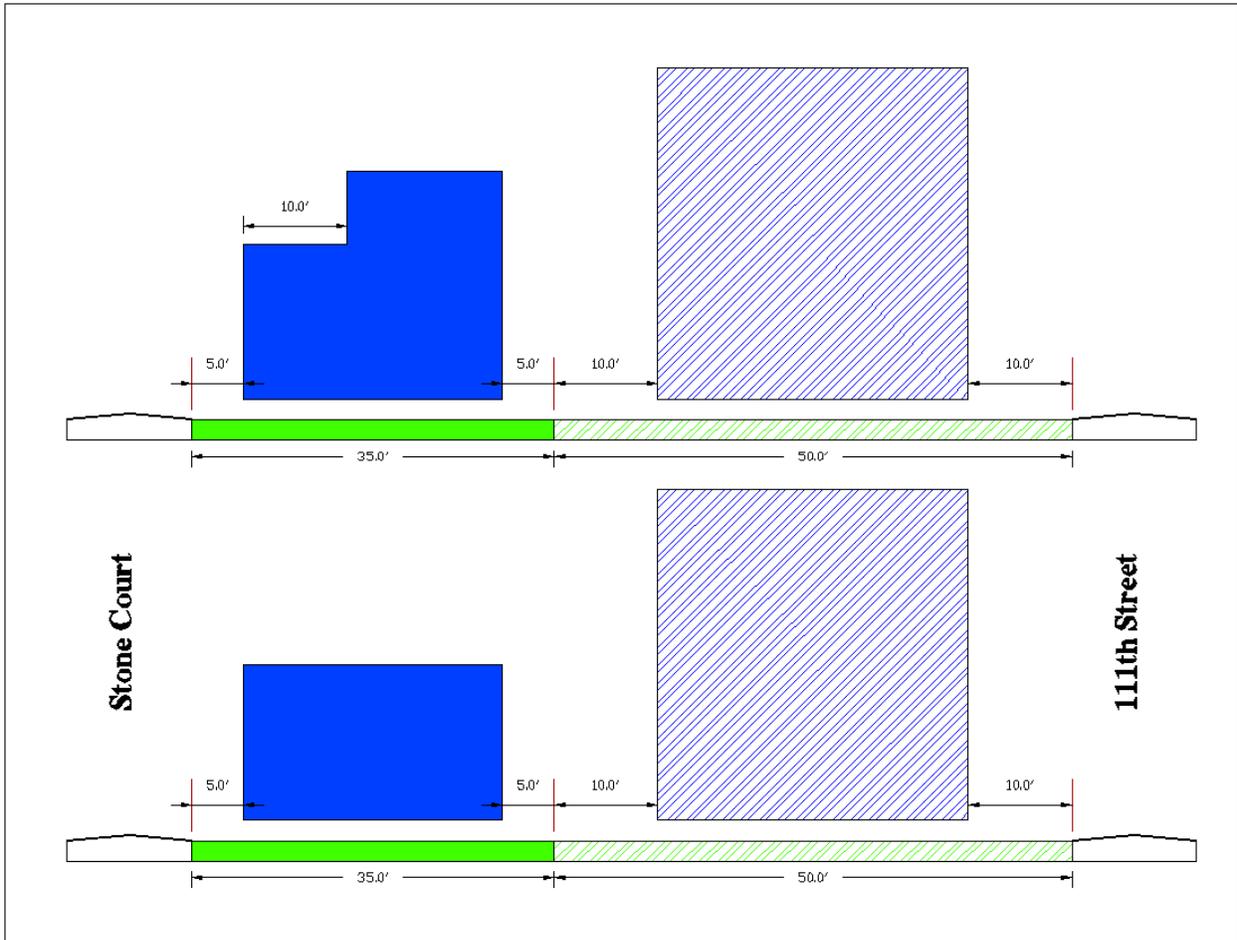


Figure 6.1

## Housing Plan

The Borough's zoning with regard to housing has created a framework for architectural diversity and maintained a high standard for the housing construction in Stone Harbor. To maintain that architectural diversity the Borough should consider the effects of instituting a well thought out floor area ratio. The floor area ratio could promote unique rooflines and would aid in the creating more unique architecture. It would prevent builders from filling the building envelope with large boxes to maximize interior space and incentivize diversity. By allowing an increase in building coverage to offset the loss of second floor space a reasonable floor area ratio could be achieved. Front porches could also be incentivized by their inclusion in the floor area calculation but exclusion in building coverage. One of Stone Harbor's largest assets is the quality and diversity of its residential construction and should be preserved.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b), the Housing Element is a required section of the Municipal Master Plan. The Housing Element must be designed to achieve the goal of access to affordable housing to meet existing and future housing needs, with special attention given to low-and moderate-income households. The housing needs analysis must include demographic information on existing and projected housing stock and employment characteristics, a quantification of low-and moderate-income housing need, and a consideration of the lands within the municipality that are most appropriate to accommodate such housing. Stone Harbor's Housing Element includes sufficient information regarding housing stock, demographic and employment characteristics and population trends pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-310.

Under N.J.A.C. 5:97-2.1(b), the Housing Element must also set forth the municipality's affordable housing fair share obligation, which is the sum of the rehabilitation share, the prior round obligation and the growth share.

**A. Rehabilitation Share**

The rehabilitation share is the number of existing housing units within a municipality as of April 1, 2000, that are both deficient and occupied by households of low or moderate income. As indicated in Appendix B of N.J.A.C. 5:97, Stone Harbor has a rehabilitation share of three units.

**B. Prior Round Obligation**

The prior round "new construction" obligation is the cumulative 1987-1999 new construction obligation provided in Appendix C of N.J.A.C. 5:97. Stone Harbor has a prior round obligation of 141. That prior round along with the Borough's round 3 new construction obligation of 102 leaves Stone Harbor with a new construction obligation of 243. However, Stone Harbor received a vacant land adjustment of 243, due to the lack of any vacant or suitable land in the Borough, that resulted in a reduced new construction obligation or realistic development potential (RDP) of zero and an unmet need of 243.

**C. Projected Growth Share**

The projected growth share is initially calculated based on household (residential) and employment (non-residential) 2004-2018 projections. Pursuant to Appendix F of N.J.A.C. 5:97, Stone Harbor has a residential projection of zero units and a nonresidential projection of zero jobs, which results in an initial projected growth share obligation of zero affordable units.

## Circulation Plan

Our goal is to move cars, bikes, and people through the Borough safely. Striking a balance among the three can often be difficult. Bikes and cars need to be able to share the road safely. Currently the primary bike path through the town is Second Avenue with no secondary routes. The addition of cross town bike paths could add to the safety of biking in town as well as promote biking even further as an alternative to driving while in town. Focus should be on the area around the 96<sup>th</sup> Street business district as well as the area around the marina. Additional bike racks in key areas of the Borough would also make using a bike as a primary mode of transportation more appealing. The more residents and visitors using bikes during the summer will take some of the strain off of traffic and parking.

Protecting pedestrians is also a priority that needs to be considered. The area along First Avenue sees a lot of congestion with people headed to the beach. They circle around looking for parking, load and unload beach gear, and walk to the beach. Cars using First Avenue as a means to cross town can create a hazard. The Police cite increasing sightlines as a way to improve safety. Slowing cars down on First Avenue will also make it safer for beachgoers to load and unload cars as well as cross the street on the way to the beach. The first step to be considered would be the addition of crosswalks at key locations. The crosswalks will create a visual stop for driver and remind them to watch for pedestrians. The second step that could be utilized would be to add four way stops. The addition of four ways would make it a nuisance to use First Avenue to drive across town and would push traffic to Second or Third Avenues which are better suited to handle the traffic. Cars stopping will also allow pedestrians to cross the street. The third step that could be taken would be the addition of sidewalk nodes extending into the roadway. Sidewalk nodes give the appearance of narrowing the roadway which in turn slows cars down. They could also provide the opportunity to reduce impervious coverage with the use of pervious concrete or pervious pavers. They could also be used to soften the area with the addition of grass or landscaping. They can, however, pose a problem with drainage that would need to be accounted for and can drive the cost of implementing them up. Slowing down cars along First Avenue would increase the safety of pedestrians.

The busiest intersection in town also presents the largest opportunity for interaction between cars and pedestrians. The intersection of Third Avenue with 96<sup>th</sup> Street is a challenging intersection due to the volume of traffic entering and leaving the island coupled with the vitality of the business district and pedestrians accessing popular businesses on both sides of Third Avenue. Several traffic studies have been done with no definitive conclusion. Adding a dedicated light cycle for pedestrians will only slow vehicular traffic and back it up into town or off the island. Posting a police officer at peak times has been utilized but is not a long term or

cost effective solution. Educating pedestrians to utilize the walk/don't walk effectively is the safest way to proceed but has not been met with much success. The intersection should be monitored and a solution found that effectively moves traffic and protects pedestrians crossing the street.

Parking is a problem that many shore towns face and Stone Harbor is no exception. Residents and visitors alike want to park near their home, near the beach, or near the restaurant they plan to dine at. This poses a problem when faced with a limited amount of parking and a large influx of visitors. Time limits on parking as well as parking meters have done their fair share to promote parking turnover which in turn promotes visitor turnover in business and restaurants. However with the limited amount of parking and increased length of visits required with coursed dining along with the popularity of the revamped movie theater something should be done to allow for longer term visits and increased capacity.

Stone Harbor has several existing parking lots that serve specific needs. Outside of that specific need these lots are often underutilized. The municipal parking lots along the beach between 94<sup>th</sup> Street and 96<sup>th</sup> Street serve as beach parking during the day. After 5 pm they become free parking and are underutilized. A very short walk from the downtown business district, they could serve diners and visitors alike. Increased visibility through signage or way finding maps could increase their use in their off peak times and aid in reducing parking congestion in the heart of the business district.

Long term parking in areas designated as short term parking has also become a hindrance to business owners and visitors. During the summer the parking lot at the corner of 80<sup>th</sup> Street and Second Avenue, the parking around the municipal playground and bulkhead adjacent to that lot, and the parking lot at the point often experience parking there for extended hours. This prohibits visitors to those areas from finding convenient parking which those spots were meant to serve. Increased enforcement of the existing timeframes or the addition of parking meters could go a long way to creating turnover and allowing more visitors convenient access to those areas. Business owners in the downtown business district are experiencing a similar problem in the off season where several businesses have begun to thrive. Those businesses could benefit from patrons being able to park close to where they are going due to colder temps and often inclement weather. However, much of the parking is being capitalized by people staying nearby or employees of local business. The creation of a parking authority could aid in the enforcement of existing timeframes as well as all other parking related issues and allow the Borough police force to focus on bigger issues.

Stone Harbor has cultivated a unique resort town that stands apart from all the others. Continuing on with that tradition the downtown business district could benefit from a valet parking service. Stationed at either end of the business district and contracting with a third party to operate it, residents and visitors could pull up to the kiosk right near where they want to be. A valet would then move their car to one of the underutilized municipal lots to be parked until they return. A kiosk on 96<sup>th</sup> Street west of Third Avenue could serve visitors entering the Borough while another kiosk located near City Hall on Second Avenue would cater to residents and visitors presently in the borough. Diners and shoppers alike could take advantage of the amenity reminiscent of high end restaurants, hotels, and resorts befitting of the Borough.

The Borough should also consider a shuttle or jitney route through downtown that circles the parking lots that see little to no use in the evenings. Patrons could then park their cars and be shuttled the short distance to the downtown business district. This could increase the use of those parking lots without the need for people to walk greater distances once parked. Increased accessibility to parking and the downtown could increase the vitality to that area and the overall well being of the Borough.

## Utility Plan

The utility plan was first looked at with an eye toward sustainability. Stone Harbor is in the unique position to effectively utilize a water reclamation plant. Utilizing space in the Marina adjacent to the Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority's sewer pump station a reclamation plant could be built and made scalable as demand comes on line. Any excess flow or untreatable effluent would flow back into the County's system. Initially the grey water could be used to irrigate the landscape median in Second Avenue which would also serve as the main trunk line through the island. From that line additional Borough landscaping could be irrigated, ultimately the grey water could be used in Borough bathroom facilities cutting the borough's water demand. With the State and Federal Government's focus on sustainability it may present a unique opportunity for the Borough to fund the project through grants that are available for green infrastructure.

Stone Harbor prides itself on being a unique seashore community, "The Seashore at its Best." The Borough has maintained its unique charm over the years by upholding several building standards including a two story minimum along with a height restriction. The quality and overall cohesiveness of the neighborhoods has been maintained. One area where the Borough has taken steps to add to the uniqueness and charm of the neighborhoods is through the

ordinance requiring new construction to connect to all utilities underground. This ordinance has gone a long way in reducing overhead clutter as new construction continues at a rapid pace. In addition to that ordinance recent road projects have begun including conduit as a means to connect homes in the future. The conduit provides a way to connect to utilities underground without the need to reopen the street. This will add to the longevity of the streets while also reducing the cost to connect underground which will ultimately make it easier for existing homes to move their utilities underground.

The goal of undergrounding utilities should continue, it adds to the charm of the Borough along with maintaining and often increasing property values. It is recommended that the current ordinance be strengthened to include not just new construction buildings but any construction involving overhead utilities. It should include all new utility line construction as well as replacement due to the lifecycle of existing lines. In addition the Borough should begin to include the undergrounding of lines as part of future road projects wherever feasible. This could be accomplished through phases, by placing lines underground ahead of road projects which could reduce cost. It is also recommended that stand alone projects be considered. Priority should be given to the business district followed by streets where the largest percentages of homes have been previously connected underground.

Maintaining the long term goal of moving all utility lines underground will ultimately work to add to the distinction Stone Harbor already enjoys. The added resiliency, increase in charm, and desirability will continue to set Stone Harbor apart from the rest.

Storm water development in the Borough is looking to the future to control nuisance flooding as well as catastrophic failures during major storm and tidal flooding events. The current plan breaks down the island into thirteen drainage areas where storm water runoff would be moved to the lowest point and dispersed through underground recharge systems or conveyed by pumps either downstream or into the bay. While the ultimate goal is to reduce impermeable surface runoff through recharge, rain gardens, pervious surfaces, and underground storage; in some areas the runoff and elevation exceeds the limitations of those methods. In areas where greener solutions are impractical the Borough will need to utilize pump stations. The first pump station is already under development on 93<sup>rd</sup> and Third Avenue and will work to minimize frequent flooding in that area of the borough. The plan also recommends the current storm water conveyance system be upgraded to handle the increase in capacity necessary to support the larger homes being constructed on the island. Part of the storm water planning process also brought about changes to the bulkhead requirements that have already been

implemented. A storm water master plan will lay the groundwork for sustaining the island into the future and should be completed.

### Community facilities plan

Stone Harbor continues to develop its facilities to a level befitting of the borough. The recently completed public safety building along with the library reflects that goal. The next building being developed will be the lifeguard building which is already in the planning stages. The Borough residents, visitors, and employees as a whole are well served by all of Stone Harbor's existing facilities. One area where there is always need is additional bathrooms to serve beachgoers. The greatest need was determined to be at the two ends of the island. Beachgoers and bird watchers at the point are currently being served by portable toilets which require frequent pumping to maintain along with less durability and difficulty to keep clean. Similarly the playground and the beach at the north end of the Borough are also being served by portable toilets facing the same issues as the point. The nearby community center and the newly constructed tennis support building do contain bathrooms but are often overlooked for not being close enough to the beach and playground. These areas would be well served by having their own facilities.

The Borough owned marina at the end of 81<sup>st</sup> Street is primarily used as a parking lot for fisherman and boaters. In addition to its ample parking there is also a municipally owned and operated boat ramp and approximately 80 boat slips that can be rented for the season along with 60 trailer parking spots that can be rented as well. The parking area sits behind a steel bulkhead and is largely paved. Aside from a small gazebo there is little to no shade and no green space. While the marina serves boaters and fisherman well it goes largely unused by the remainder of Stone Harbor's tourist and resident population. This creates an opportunity to redevelop the marina to serve a larger audience and create yet another place to enjoy the *Seashore at Its Best*.

The marina would benefit from a best use study and conceptual drawings to determine how to best utilize the space. The bulkhead will need to be reconstructed and brought up to the current bulkhead standard and the lot filled in order to mitigate the flooding and preserve any grass, trees, or greenery that may be planted to soften the landscape. The current redesign of the boat ramp should take into account the future uses of the marina and be constructed accordingly.

The redevelopment work should not alienate boaters and fisherman as they will remain vital to the use of the marina. The possibility of reconfiguring the current docks along with adding more along the channel side could increase boater use along with access and should be studied. A boardwalk surrounding the perimeter could serve tourists and fisherman alike as well as easily accessed bathrooms. The addition of trees and landscaping could add to the beauty of the marina while providing a place to escape the summer sun. A small restaurant or several food trucks, and a picnic area could also attract visitors who wish to enjoy a meal right on the water. The restaurant would serve boaters, fisherman, and others looking to grab a quick meal and continue their activity without leaving the area. Planning a location for a gas dock should also be considered. As the value of Stone Harbor property continues to rise the current privately owned gas dock may one day end up being sold and no longer operated. Having a gas dock is a convenience to local boaters and draw to others passing through the area. Without it, the increased difficulty in getting fuel could push boaters to other marinas where that amenity is easily accessed. The marina could also continue to provide a place to store and launch kayaks and standup paddleboards. The ability to rent kayaks and standup paddleboards could also be added to attract residents and tourists to the marina who might not otherwise visit there.

The marina in its current configuration only engages a small portion of the summer population. With careful planning the area could become a draw for many and give tourists and residents alike one more reason to enjoy all that Stone Harbor has to offer.

Third Avenue within the business district has been plagued by persistent nuisance flooding which has had a detrimental impact on the viability of trees and landscaping in the area. With the proposed storm water pump station coming on line in the near future to mitigate flooding in this area, it will provide the opportunity to soften the area with additional landscaping and bring it into conformance with the rest of the business district. The 96<sup>th</sup> Street corridor could also benefit from updating to bring it into conformance with the current direction of the Borough. Revamping the sidewalks and pavers to reduce runoff with the use of pervious surfaces will showcase the material's capabilities and set the example for the rest of the Borough. Updating the lighting and landscaping will also bring them in line with all of the green initiatives around town. To add to the allure of the business district, should some of the parking issues be solved, the size of the nodes could be increased creating areas for outdoor dining or additional space for pedestrians. Increasing the charm of the already vibrant business district will continue to draw visitors to the area.

The Borough could also benefit from a new welcome sign on Stone Harbor Boulevard. Previous talks about a lighted, changeable welcome sign settled on the CMCMUA's pump station as a

suitable location. The MUA had agreed to allow the Borough to install a sign there but they never received the approval of Middle Township. Given the broader acceptance of this type of sign it may be worth revisiting. It would be helpful in not only informing visitors of events happening around the Borough but could also be used in the case of an emergency to keep residents informed. A welcome sign would be a valuable asset to the borough.

## Recreation Plan

Stone Harbor is a wonderful place to live and vacation in the summer. The recreation options are endless and have something for everyone. You can be relaxing on the beach or bay, working out at boot camp, playing in a pickup league, or enjoying one of the many sports fields and courts. Any changes to the recreation options should reflect the quality and high standards of the current recreation experiences. One area where there could be improvement is the entry way into Stone Harbor traveling south from Avalon on Third Avenue. Residents and visitors entering town in this direction are greeted by an empty, mostly dirt lot. The lot is Borough owned and currently being underutilized. The addition of a park in this location would be an asset to the neighborhood as well as a great way to welcome residents back to the Borough along with welcoming visitors.

The park at 96<sup>th</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue has served the community for many years. The park is showing signs of aging as many of the surfaces approach their usable life cycle. This park should be considered for updating in the future. The Borough's recreation needs should be considered when planning how to best utilize the park.

The Borough has no shortage of outstanding facilities. One recreation facility that could add to the Stone Harbor experience and be unique to the Borough would be the addition of an outdoor pool. The pool could be used to swim laps, teach low impact classes, or open swims for children and families to enjoy. Despite being sandwiched between a world class beach and a pristine bay, pools have become an integral part of the Stone Harbor experience. The addition of a community pool would be a great meeting place as well as provide a unique recreation opportunity for Stone Harbor.

## Conservation Plan

Stone Harbor is surrounded by natural beauty and committed to protecting those assets. One of the biggest assets is also the hardest to protect. The beach and the bay are constantly being assaulted by storms. Beach replenishment will always be an ongoing need. Stone Harbor is currently working to reopen the Hereford Inlet as an acceptable borrow site. Stone Harbor's

sand naturally moves south and collects in the inlet. It is the ideal location to reclaim the sand; however the site has been recently shut down to federal funding in an attempt to protect the adjacent back bay. Beach replenishment will be an ongoing hurdle and reopening the inlet will continue to be a priority. The other side of the island requires equally as much work. The Borough is currently budgeting money for maintenance dredging of the basins and waterways on the west side of the island. Maintenance dredging will keep the costs of dredging down and should continue to be a priority. A sustainable maintenance dredging plan should be created and adhered to in order to keep the cost of dredging from escalating.

The point is a designated conservation area at the southern tip of the island. It is an excellent place for nature walks, bird watching, beach fishing, and simply enjoying the pristine untouched beauty of Stone Harbor. Programs already exist to protect the natural beauty of the point as well as restore habitat for migrating and beach nesting birds. The borough's partnership with the Wetlands Institute has been vital for developing programs to protect and restore the point as a destination for shore birds and visitors alike. The point should continue to be a focus of conservation efforts and maintained accordingly.

The bird sanctuary is another pristine gem located within the borough and represents another area where the focus is on conservation and preservation. The bird sanctuary has been recognized as National Natural Landmark in 1965. Stone Harbor's commitment to the preservation of the sanctuary has been ongoing for over seventy years and continues today. That commitment will continue long into the future.

Along with preserving the natural beauty of Stone Harbor the Borough Council has begun taking steps to preserve the environment in other ways. The recently enacted ban on plastic bags within the Borough is one strong step to reducing waste and single use plastics that can be extremely detrimental to the environment. In addition the recently enacted lot grading ordinance requires all new construction to install underground storage to reduce the amount of storm water runoff being put into the borough's storm water collection system. Storm water can be a pollutant to waters downstream as it can pick up oils dropped from cars, pesticides used in landscape maintenance, and other contaminants that end up in streets and yards. By reducing runoff we can minimize contaminants carried downstream which will ultimately end up in the bay and ocean.

The Borough should consider additional programs to incentivize green solutions. Incentivizing the use of pervious concrete and pavers could increase adoption of those surfaces as outdoor spaces for entertaining and relaxing continue to grow relative to lot size. Creating an award for

new construction or renovated homes for the individual incorporating the most environmentally friendly solutions could also increase adoption of those solutions. As homes in Stone Harbor continually try to distinguish themselves among a growing population of outstanding homes it could give homeowners a chance to stand out. Run in conjunction with the Garden Club or Chamber it could increase visibility for all those involved. The Borough's commitment to preserving the natural beauty of Stone Harbor should continue to be a priority into the future.

## **Economic plan**

Stone Harbor's year round population has continued to dwindle as more homes are purchased as second homes or vacation destinations. This has led to a change in the business dynamic within the borough. The trend had seen year round businesses shift toward summer only establishments with real estate and construction as the main year round entities. Recently there has been a shift back in the other direction as several new and existing businesses have managed to create year round vitality. The Borough should do everything they can to promote this shift.

The Borough is an increasingly popular dining destination. Quality restaurants abound throughout the Borough and should be continually supported however possible. The Downtown Business District continues to be a vibrant part of the Stone Harbor experience. The quality of the restaurants is a strong contributor to that vibrancy and draws people to the area, not just those living and vacationing in town but also residents and vacationers from other towns as well. Summer residents and vacationers alike prefer to spend much of the summer outdoors. Outdoor dining would add to the vitality of the downtown district by bringing people out of the restaurants and into the streetscape where many of them prefer to be. When done properly it would add to the existing charm of the shopping and dining experience in Stone Harbor.

The current process for getting the approval for outdoor seating is arduous and can be costly, thus limiting those who seek to utilize it. The creation of a set of standards along with an easily obtained permit could serve to promote outdoor seating and lift some of the hurdles those who wish to take advantage currently face. A set of standards should be enacted with regards to the tables and chairs, type and material allowed; space required; type of service permitted or recommended; and the ability to utilize the public right-of-way, provided pedestrian access is not hindered. Stone Harbor's continued development as a premier destination will be further enhanced by outdoor dining.

Boating is another staple of the summer experience. Continued support for boaters should also be a priority within the borough. The recommendation to develop the marina and include provisions for a gas dock is important to keeping Stone Harbor accessible to boaters.

### **Historic Preservation Plan**

Stone Harbor's demographic has changed through the years and the way residents and visitors enjoy the island has changed with them. Many of the homes on the island have grown with the families that enjoy them. With property values rising the size, complexity, and quality of homes have risen. Due to this growth many of the older homes have been demolished and rebuilt to keep up with the growing island. The Borough would not benefit from limiting the development potential of properties on the island. We see education with an eye toward renovation as a means to preserve the ever dwindling historic structures. The museum is the focal point for education while it will fall on individual homeowners to decide the best course to fit their family's needs. Special consideration should be given to homeowners who attempt to preserve historic structures. Relief should be considered whenever sought to allow for the older homes to become more usable in the modern context. Stone Harbor's history is a vital part of its future.

### **Recycling Plan**

The Borough has always taken a strong stance on recycling and green initiatives. Continued support for recycling through education should be the primary focus. Educating residents and visitors on what can be recycled and how to reduce waste are important for the community. There is also room for improvement with the receptacles around town. Many of the older trash and recycling bins throughout the Borough are unclear and can result in contaminated recyclables or recyclable material ending up in the trash cans. Making the cans more distinctive could add to reducing waste within the borough.

### **Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan**

Stone Harbor's commitment to green solutions and preserving the environment has been central to all areas of the Borough whenever applicable. Stone Harbor's facilities are no exception and their environmental sustainability is more of an evolution of current practices. Solar power is already incorporated on the public works building and those building are being switched to LED lighting which can greatly reduce energy consumption. Solar power should

continue to be incorporated wherever feasible. Converting light fixtures and bulbs throughout the borough's properties should also be a priority. Atlantic City Electric is also offering options for LED Street lights and could be considered as lights are replaced or upgraded. Reducing energy consumption will promote sustainability. Incorporating green storm water solutions into Borough construction plans will also improve the sustainability of these projects. The general theme of reducing runoff should be incorporated here as well. Through the use of pervious concrete and pavers the Borough can reduce storm water runoff. In addition to reducing runoff, adding underground storm water storage to all future building construction projects to collect storm water from the building footprint will also reduce runoff and improve sustainability.

## **7. Recommended Redevelopment Plans**

The Planning Board's recommendations concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans into the Land Use Plan Element of the municipal Master Plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

The Planning Board should conduct a study of the area around the Marina to determine if a Redevelopment Plan would benefit the community. The study should consider the costs vs. the benefits of relocating a portion of the public works complex as well as how to better utilize the marina and surrounding vacant lots. The study could be incorporated with a best use plan for the marina as part of conceptualizing how to better utilize the site to serve the community.

## 8. Reexamination Report Adoption

This report shall serve as a Periodic Reexamination Report. The absence of the adoption of a reexamination report by the planning board shall constitute a rebuttable presumption that the municipal development regulations are no longer reasonable.

This report was adopted after a public hearing by Resolution # 2019-004 By the Stone Harbor Planning Board on July 8th, 2019

The original of this document has been signed and sealed in accordance with NJAC 13:41-13.b