



This is SICTA's annual free mailing of its newsletter to all property owners of Sea Isle City

Master Plan Update

SICTA met with Councilman John Divney, the City Council's representative on the Planning Board, to discuss progress on the City's Master Plan Re-examination. The Master Plan Re-exam is the product of an extensive process which included a community survey with 3600 responses, a public workshop in which over 200 residents participated, another workshop involving key civic groups (including SICTA), and individual workshops for each of the five issue areas that were addressed.

These issue areas included:

- 1) land use
- 2) economic development
- 3) parks and recreation
- 4) storm water, infrastructure, and environmental concerns
- 5) parking, bicycle traffic, and traffic circulation.



By early summer the Planning Board will receive the Master Plan Re-exam draft prepared by the City's consultants, hold a public hearing, request any modifications, and then by fall, 2016 send it to City Council for their consideration and action. Some of the recommendations will address specific changes to be made, while others will request further study by City management or consultants.

The Plan is charting a path forward to improve the quality of life in Sea Isle by managing density and congestion, enhancing amenities such as improved parks and recreational facilities, and dealing with the City's ongoing battles with Mother Nature (e.g., flooding). Also, it attempts to provide a framework within which the City can continue to grow and prosper.

- **Zoning changes to manage density--**

- ◆ No changes were recommended to zoning in the downtown area, along the promenade, or in the motel areas.
- ◆ However, in the neighborhood business zones away from downtown (e.g. Fish Alley), changes were proposed to reduce congestion and density:
 - ⇒ Mixed use commercial establishments will now be required to have a specified number of parking spaces in these zones for the commercial units. Historically, no such requirements had existed.
 - ⇒ The parking requirements for mixed use residential units will also be increased.
 - ⇒ There will be a recommendation to reduce the number of residential units allowed per lot.
- ◆ A shopping center district (around the new ACME) will be established, and no residential units will be allowed above the stores.
- ◆ In residential zones, it will be recommended that all new construction require 4 parking spaces per unit versus the current 3.

- **Economic development**—It will be recommended that the City and the Chamber of Commerce continue to commit to maintaining a strong public/private partnership to innovate and promote economic development.

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- **Parks and recreation**
 - ◆ It will be recommended that the Council consider the suggestions proposed by the City’s Recreation Commission for changes/additions to our current programs.
 - ◆ It will be recommended that the school facility on Park Road be used for recreation, a park, and parking to support these activities. The City will be asked to perform a study that would address the requirements for the various activities and the cost and feasibility of using the existing building versus a new facility.
 - ◆ The old firehouse site will be proposed for recreational activities such as bocce and pickle ball.
 - ◆ Further development of the Marina site will continue be handled through an RFP process to solicit developers/operators to propose potential uses and financial arrangements.
- **Bicycle traffic and congestion** –the review process highlighted the constraints imposed by a fully developed, long and narrow barrier island with major seasonal impacts. The changes discussed included: reduced speed limits, elimination of some on-street parking, establishment of bike lanes, expanded education programs, and establishment of bike paths. All the items reviewed had serious challenges to implementation, (e.g. streets not being wide enough for bike lanes).
- **Parking**—The Board did a parking survey in the downtown business district and found the issue was more one of convenience (requiring a longer walk), than number of parking spaces. The jitney service, launched a few years ago and now servicing the length of Sea Isle and Strathmere, seems to have helped ease the parking problem downtown. In a quest to further relieve parking issues throughout Sea Isle, the Planning board also explored remote parking in the north end which would be serviced by jitneys. The feasibility of this solution is still to be determined. The congestion on Venetian Road, near the Yacht club, may be addressed by eliminating parking on one side of the road.
- **Storm water**—The Planning Board viewed this as a complex problem that needed a well thought out, integrated plan. The Board will likely recommend that the City engage a qualified consultant to craft a comprehensive solution.
- **Greenery**—The Planning Board, will ask the City, specifically the Environmental Commission, to develop guidelines to ensure greenery survives after planting. Guidelines might cover types of greenery that best survive in the Sea Isle environment, suggestions on planting procedures, etc. Financial incentives/penalties may also be recommended to help support ordinances pertaining to greenery.

What is SICTA's reaction to the Master Plan? First, we applaud the inclusiveness of the process, the goals set out to improve the quality of life, and the City’s planning for the future. However, going forward as recommendations are considered, we want to also ensure that: costs and benefits are carefully evaluated, especially for major projects (e.g. the recreation center, the marina district); that the City Council take into account the interests of the whole community, both in deciding what to pass and how it is to be implemented; and to guard against the zoning board giving into special interests when individual projects are considered. We fear that bad decisions could undo the great work that has been done in trying to respond to the public will.



Generally the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at City Hall, 450233 John F. Kennedy Blvd. 1 Park Road from 10am to 11:30 am to confirm check city website: <http://sea-isle-city.nj.us/city-departments/city-meetings.aspx>

Sea Isle City Council Meeting Schedule

JUN	June 14, 2016	10:00 AM	June 28, 2016	10:00 AM
JUL	July 12, 2016	10:00 AM	July 26, 2016	10:00 AM
AUG	August 9, 2016	10:00 AM	August 23, 2016	10:00 AM
SEP	September 13, 2016	10:00 AM	September 27, 2105	10:00 AM
OCT	October 11, 2016	10:00 AM	October 25, 2016	10:00 AM
NOV	November 15, 2016	10:00 AM	November 29, 2016	10:00 AM
DEC	December 13,2016	10:00 AM	December 27, 2016	10:00 AM

Complaints: See Something and Call, Call, Call



Sea Isle City, our home, our happy place. We all have our personal stories about how we arrived on this beautiful, small island.

Flash forward, you're an adult and where do you own a home? Sea Isle City, your favorite shore town!! Feeling blessed and delighted because you own your very own vacation home. Better yet, you're retired and living full time in Sea Isle, by choice. Ownership brings awareness and a sense of protectiveness.

We all appreciate that vacationers love Sea Isle and continue to return. At the same time, we also acknowledge that we have ordinances to protect our town and our citizens. Often we've heard complaints from home owners wondering why many of our quality of life ordinances are being ignored by our police.

Recently we have noticed an acceleration of "quality of life" complaints to City Council--uncovered dumpsters, unkempt yards, bicycles on the promenade after posted hours, alcohol on the beach, bright lights shining into houses, dogs on the beach (in season), and sometimes the very unwelcome disorderly neighbor.

Typically, these complaints are voiced at Council meetings when it is always after the fact. The frequent reply is: we can look into this; followed by "call and report". The projected message is "it's up to you, the citizen, to be alert and report". This is clearly what we should do.

Often, the problem is repeated, a feeling of dissatisfaction settles in and the cycle begins again.

Recently, we spoke with Sgt. McQuillen, Sea Isle's liaison to the public on how to proceed with any complaints and the procedure to follow if not satisfied with the results. Sgt. McQuillen told me there are three steps to follow when reporting any incident or disturbance that affects you personally.

1. It is very important that you speak with an officer at the time of incident. If a police officer is not present, then call: 609.263.3411, ext. "0". Ask to speak with the shift supervisor or Sergeant Patrolman on duty and report your concern.
2. If you are not satisfied with the results, the next step is to call the Patrol Lieutenant, Bill Mammele, 609.263.3411, ext. 2245. This second step could be for various reasons, particularly, if the disturbance is being repeated.
3. If after following steps one and two, the situation has not been resolved, please call Sgt. McQuillen, 609.263.3422, ext. 2310. Explain the steps you have taken and your dissatisfaction. This is when he becomes the 'liaison'. At this point the sergeant will speak with all parties involved. He also expressed his commitment to solving these quality of life situations.

So, please take the Sergeant's advice and please call, call, call, the next time you are almost run over by an after-hours biker on the promenade. **Call in immediately.**



Sea Isle City Council E- mail Addresses

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Review of Sea Isle City Operating Budget for 2016

Reassessment of Properties Values Confuses the Issue



The total taxable value of properties in Sea Isle City decreased from approximately \$4.9 billion used in the 2015 Operating Budget to \$4.5 billion used for 2016. Naturally, to maintain the same level of revenues, the tax rate had to be increased. Assuming that expenses had remained the same between 2015 and 2016 (they did not), then the tax rate would have needed to increase by 8.13%.

	Actual	Required for No	
	2015	Tax Increase	2016
			Change
Total Taxable Valuation	4,882,713,875	4,515,427,300	-7.52%
Sea Isle City Municipal Tax Levy Rate	0.32374%	0.35007%	8.13%
Sea Isle City Municipal Tax Levy Amount	\$15,807,189.36	\$15,807,189.36	\$0.00

The table below shows that the tax rate actually increased by 15.86%, resulting in a tax increase of 7.15% or approximately \$1.1 million.

	Actual	Tax Increase	
	2015	2016	Change
Total Taxable Valuation	4,882,713,875	4,515,427,300	-7.52%
Sea Isle City Municipal Tax Levy Rate	0.32374%	0.37508%	15.86%
Sea Isle City Municipal Tax Levy Amount	\$15,807,189	\$16,936,676	\$1,129,487
Percentage Increase in Tax Levy Amount			7.15%

Drilling down to the average property values in Sea Isle City, the table below shows that the average assessed value per property decreased by 7.84% while the average municipal tax levy per property increased \$155, or 6.67%.

	2015	2016	Change
Average assessment	716,000.00	659,863.00	-7.84%
Rate	0.00324	0.00375	15.74%
Municipal Tax	\$2,320	\$2,474	\$155
Percentage Increase in Tax Levy Amount			6.67%



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So, what caused the overall tax increase of \$1.1 million, or \$155 on average?

Let's review the entire budget below:

SEA ISLE CITY, NJ	2016	2015	Increase (Decrease)	
	Budget	Budget	Amount	Percent
REVENUES:				
Tax Levy	\$ 16,936,676	\$ 15,807,189	\$ 1,129,486	7.1%
Miscellaneous Revenues:				
Licenses	215,000	215,000	-	0.0%
Fees and Permits	50,000	50,000	-	0.0%
Fines	185,000	185,000	-	0.0%
Interest Income	85,000	100,000	(15,000)	-15.0%
Parking Meters	255,000	250,000	5,000	2.0%
Beach Fees	1,280,000	1,280,000	-	0.0%
Marina Slip Rentals	150,000	150,000	-	0.0%
Cable and Beach Vendors	250,000	180,000	70,000	38.9%
Telephone Cell Tower Rental	393,000	393,000	-	0.0%
State Aid	293,009	293,009	-	0.0%
Uniform Construction Code Fees	300,000	300,000	-	0.0%
Grants	45,487	39,521	5,967	15.1%
Collection of Delinquent Taxes	300,000	300,000	-	0.0%
Other	555,000	507,820	47,180	9.3%
Total Miscellaneous Revenue	4,356,496	4,243,349	113,147	2.7%
Total Revenue	21,293,172	20,050,539	1,242,633	6.2%
EXPENSES:			-	
Salaries and Wages	8,609,922	8,397,605	212,317	2.5%
Health Insurance	2,941,901	2,810,000	131,901	4.7%
Pension and Social Security	1,789,625	1,681,770	107,855	6.4%
Other Insurance	641,860	679,449	(37,589)	-5.5%
Utilities	673,000	670,000	3,000	0.4%
Other Expenses	2,488,394	2,249,890	238,504	10.6%
Total Subject to Spending Caps	17,144,702	16,488,714	655,988	4.0%
Debt and Interest Payments	4,982,400	4,515,750	466,650	10.3%
Miscellaneous Cost Not Subject to Caps	517,653	420,896	96,758	23.0%
Total Not Subject to Spending Caps	5,500,053	4,936,646	563,408	11.4%
Reserve for Unpaid Local Tax Levy	748,417	725,180	23,237	3.2%
Total Expenses	23,393,172	22,150,539	1,242,633	5.6%
Gain (Planned Use of Prior Years' Surplus)	\$ (2,100,000)	\$ (2,100,000)	\$ -	0.0%

Total expenses subject to New Jersey's spending caps increased \$656,000 or 4.0%. Within this category, Other expenses increased \$238,500 or 10.6%. The largest part of this increase was \$50,000 related to the new Master Plan; the remaining increase was spread out among various expense categories.

The most significant increase in expense is a \$467,000 increase in debt and Interest Payments, which were associated with the various capital improvements made by the City. Another article in this newsletter addresses the **new** Capital Plan in more detail. .

It is always disappointing to incur a tax increase, but considering the many capital improvements that have been made and the quality of our municipal services, most of us would likely feel the 7.1% increase is justified and reasonable.

Capital Plan 2016-2020 – City of Sea Isle City

It has been a while since SICTA has provided our thoughts on the Capital Planning process utilized in Sea Isle City. We recently had conversations with the City regarding how the Capital Plan is developed.

What is the Capital Plan?

The Capital Plan is a disciplined approach to understanding future capital needs for Sea Isle City and ensures that funding for projects are addressed when the City develops the operating budget each year. The Capital Plan is a projection of future needs that are reviewed, discussed, and approved for actual spending throughout the year. Each capital expenditure must be approved by City Council and is discussed during City Council meetings.

Who develops the Capital Plan?

As a result of our discussions with the City, an explanation of the Capital Process has been posted on the City web site. <http://www.seaislecitynj.us/city-projects/capital-projects-process.aspx>

When is the Capital Plan developed?

The Capital plan is developed each year and looks at a 5-year time horizon. The overall plan is reviewed in late summer and fall of each year. Priorities are reviewed, progress is assessed, and priorities for the following year(s) are determined. The Capital Plan each year is typically approved by City Council in December of each year.

Are all projects identified in the Capital Plan completed?

No. The Capital Plan identifies projects that may require further analysis. If the due diligence indicates that the project is not warranted, then City Council can stop the project or amend it in a way that addresses the original intended need.

Can I review the Capital Plan for Sea Isle City?

Yes. A summary of the Sea Isle City Capital Plan 2016-2020 is included in this article.

We have provided the adopted Sea Isle City Capital Plan 2016-2020 by project on the SICTA web site, www.sicta.org.

Here is a brief summary and observations:

- General Capital Improvements represent \$19,553,000 or 68.5% of plan spending over 5 years.
- Water & Sewer improvements represent \$8,995,000 or 31.5% of plan spending.
- The 5 year plan reflects a significant decrease in spending over the next 5 years.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Planned Spending</u>	<u>% Change vs Prior Year</u>
2016	\$7,910,000	
2017	\$6,189,000	-21.8%
2018	\$5,955,000	- 3.8%
2019	\$4,847,000	-18.6%
2020	\$3,647,000	-24.8%

The decrease in future year plan spending is primarily due to the previous years' emphasis on systemic improvements to the infrastructure in Sea Isle City.

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Observations:

The capital plan reflects future projects that most likely will materialize once more in-depth due diligence is completed. The Capital Plan also reflects work that is a shared expense with the county.

Here are some of the key projects identified in the Capital Plan:

1. **Promenade Extension** **\$1,070,000** identified in the plan spread over 4 years.

As the due diligence is completed in 2016 & 2017, the scope of the project will become clearer and a determination can be made on how best to proceed.

2. **Beach Fill Project** **\$1,000,000** in 2019.

Beach replenishment in the future will be a shared cost with funding from federal, state, and local sources. The potential local cost is unknown, but inclusion in the plan helps ensure that city administration is factoring the potential expense in the future operating budget. If the recent trend of storms continues, SIC will be required to pay our fair share of any new beach replenishment/repairs. If we are extremely fortunate the plan funding may not be necessary.

School Property – This project is not identified in the current plan, but the city is following the process of determining how to best utilize the property. City Council has the opportunity to advance the funding for due diligence to look at options on how best to utilize the property in the future. The public will have an opportunity to provide input as this project becomes more formalized.

The Capital Planning process ensures that the city is looking at future capital needs over a 5 year time horizon. As you can see, the future Capital Plan requirements for Sea Isle City are decreasing. It is important to note that the projects identified in the Capital Plan are included for consideration. The City provides regular updates on the progress of the capital projects in their newsletters and sometimes on the City website.

SICTA's point-of-view:

The capital projects that have been completed have been very beneficial to the City. They have also materially increased the size of the City's debt. Repayment of the debt is a big chunk of the City's budget and will continue to be for many years to come (see budget article in this newsletter). Fortunately, we are coming to the end of this capital spending cycle.

Turning to the capital planning process, we think it appears to provide the opportunity for ample consideration and input by the public. But, opportunity for public input is far more limited than it appears because non-resident taxpayers have a hard time participating. Most meetings occur in the offseason and during the workweek, making it extremely difficult to attend. Minutes are brief and sometimes uninformative. Even though a state of the art City Hall was built for almost \$15 million, none of the meetings are captured for live viewing or archived. Therefore, we have no record of what transpired.

In our view, we are not as informed, and accountability is lost. We suggest two actions to address this. First, take advantage of technology and capture meetings on video. Second, strive to hold major meetings where public input is needed on weekends. That proved to be quite successful in the Master plan process and should serve as a model going forward.

SICTA's goal is to continue to stay abreast of how the capital plan is developed and have a voice as projects work their way from concept to funding.

Let us know your thoughts related to the Capital Plan.



Your SICTA Officers

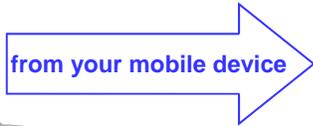
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www.sicta.org/aboutsicta.htm - OR -



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