

Report of the Downtown Subcommittee of the Master Plan Advisory Committee

Lakewood Township Master Plan

April 2017

A. Introduction

The Downtown Subcommittee was appointed by the Master Plan Advisory Committee to advise the Advisory Committee of pertinent issues relating to the downtown business district of Lakewood. The subcommittee consists of the following individuals:

Ben Heinemann, chair; Steve Reinman; Justin Flancbaum; Abraham Bernstein, Moshe Lankry, and Mike McNeil. (Martin Truscott of T&M Associates, Township Planner, was an ex-officio member and attended the September meeting.).

The subcommittee met on September 19, 2016, and February 27, 2017. Members of the public attended both meetings. At the September 2016 meeting the following subcommittee were in attendance: Ben Heinemann, chair; Steve Reinman; Justin Flancbaum; Abraham Bernstein, and Marty Truscott. The public consisted of Herschel Hershkowitz and Shlomo Klein.

Subcommittee members attending the February 27th public meeting were: Ben Heinemann, Justin Flancbaum, Steve Reinman, Moshe Lankry and Abraham Bernstein with Mike McNeil absent. The names of the public attending the February 2017 meeting were not recorded, however Mr. Heinemann reported approximately 30 citizens in attendance in addition to the subcommittee members.

B. Recommendations

Based on the discussions of the subcommittee, the following recommendations are offered to the Master Plan Advisory Committee:

1. “Old School” Look

Many of the buildings in the downtown are older style structures and require some modernization, contemporary features and updates. The subcommittee recommends-

- Freshening up the facades with incentives from the town.
- Full or partial grants to businesses to encourage remodeling.
- Tax abatement for new construction.

2. Latest Technology

It is important for a business area to have access to the latest in communication technology to conduct its business and for customers shopping in the downtown.

- Verizon FIOS is currently not available.
- The Township should advocate the installation of current technology in the downtown.

3. No Parking Downtown Ordinance

To encourage economic development and reduce the economic burden on- or off-site parking, the B-2 zone district does not require off-street parking for new businesses. However, some areas of the downtown have a severe deficiency in available parking spaces. Recommendation: limit the

“No Parking Required” ordinance to the first two stories/floors. Additional stories/floors should be subject to regular parking requirements.

4. Traffic and Bottlenecks

Traffic congestion and bottlenecks are limitations to growth and need to be addressed to spur economic activity. The major downtown circulation problems are:

- Clifton Avenue and Main Street is a big bottleneck
- Clifton Ave Southbound often backed up to 5th St
- South Clifton northbound is always backed up
- Parts of 4th and 2nd often jammed

Possible solution: a one-way street grid and correcting lane patterns. Successful business hubs and downtown districts use a one-way driving grid. Examples are Manhattan and Brooklyn as well as parts of Philadelphia.

Figure One. Possible One-Way Street Grid

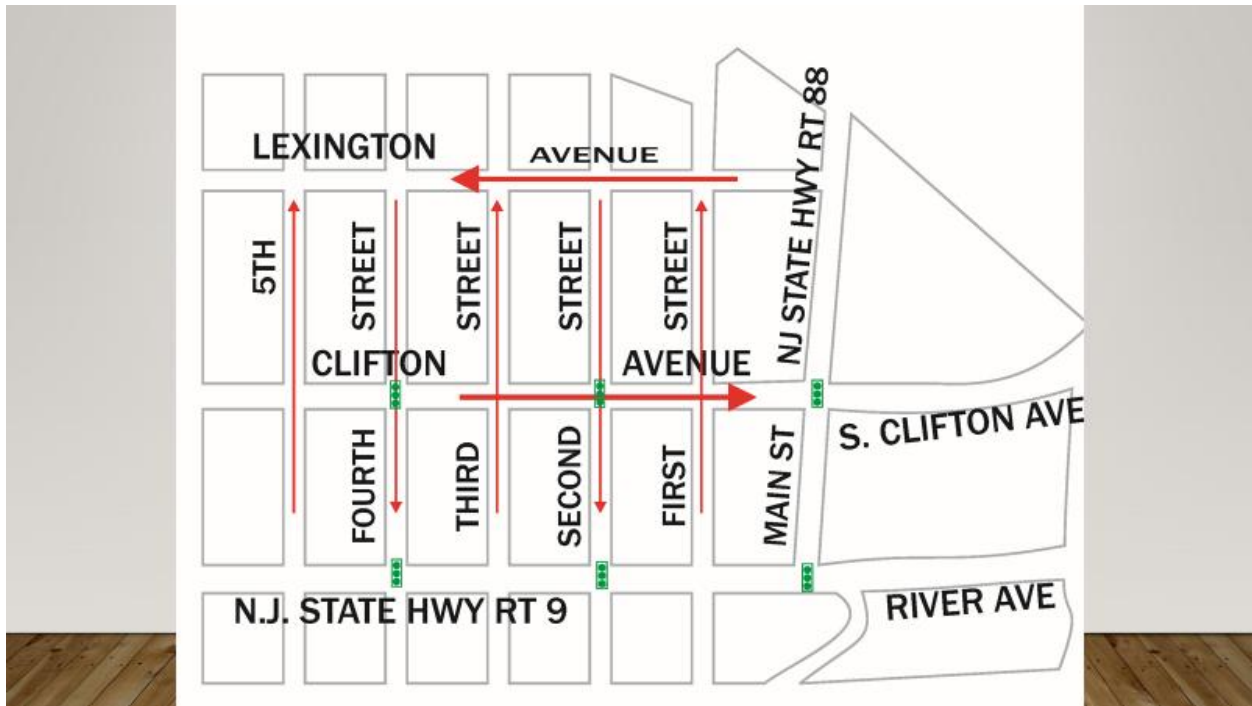


Figure Two. Simulation of angled parking on Clifton Avenue above 4th Street.

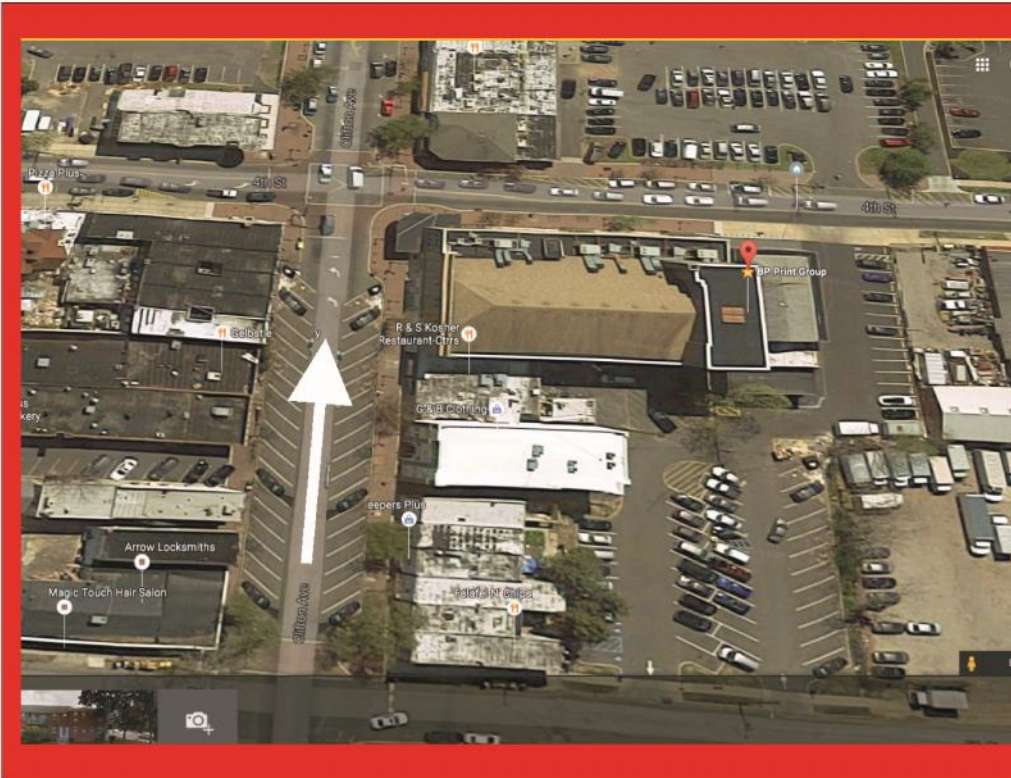


Figure Three. Potential Improvements to the Clifton Avenue and Route 88/Main St. Intersection

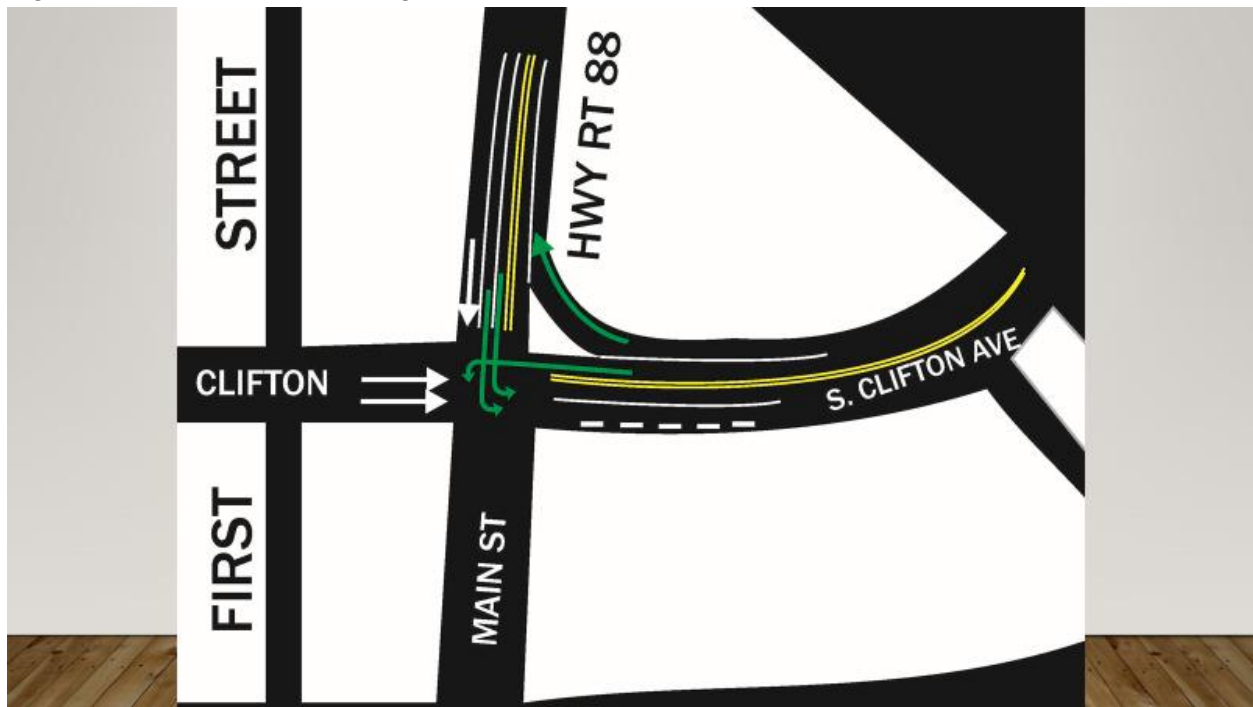
IMPROVEMENTS TO INTERSECTION

CLIFTON AVE AND ROUTE 88

- Clifton Avenue will have 2 lanes going southbound
- South Clifton to have 2 lanes going southbound
- South Clifton northbound will have single lane to go east on Rt 88 without stopping (new lane)
- Route 88 westbound will have 2 lanes to turn into South Clifton

The above should alleviate traffic from all directions – see next slide for illustration.

Figure Four. Possible Lane Configuration at the Clifton Avenue and Route 88/Main St. intersection



5. Additional Parking

Parking for customers is always an issue in a business district. One parking solution in conjunction with the one-way street grid is to provide angled parking on Clifton Avenue. Also, two-sided parking on all streets (including, 1st, 4th and 5th). Designated delivery spots at the end of blocks would address temporary parking for delivery vehicles. Please refer to Attachment #1 which provides an excerpt of a news article regarding a conversion of perpendicular street parking to angled parking spaces.

6. Parking Enforcement

This has been a long debate, with pros and cons on both side. Everyone agrees that proper/friendly enforcement would be optimum. Particularly targeting store owners and their employees who seem to be the unwanted violators should be minimized.

Summary of Solutions

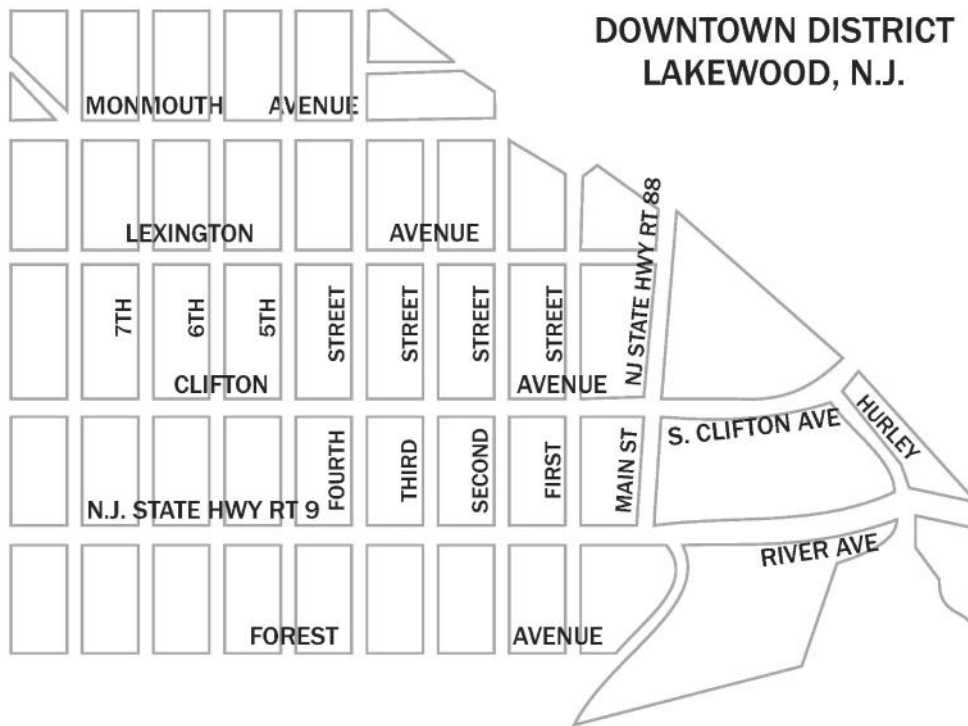
- Create plan to encourage downtown beautification
- Bring additional technology to downtown
- Create ordinance that limits “no parking” to 2 story buildings
- Change to one way traffic grid
- Fix traffic pattern at Clifton Ave and Main St
- Add angled parking, (both sides of the street) and delivery zones

C. Additional Recommendations

The Downtown Subcommittee also offers the following recommendations and solutions based on input received from the public after the February meeting.

1. Town Square. There has been discussion of using the town square at the corner of Clifton Avenue and 3rd Street for parking with the resulting loss of a public gathering location. The subcommittee recommendation for the town square is that the Township retain the ability to maintain a town square for public gatherings, shows, festivals, events, etc. even if the surface of the square is modified to allow for parking on selected occasions.
2. Alleys can serve a delivery areas for commercial properties and alleviate the congestion of deliveries on the business street. Alley ways should be encouraged and provided, where possible.
3. Relocation of municipal building to Cedar Bridge Avenue. The benefit of relocating town hall to the Cedar Bridge area is to shift the parking demand (for example, court days) away from the downtown. At same time, it removes one of the downtown anchors. This recommendation was not a consensus choice of all members.
4. Parking structure for the downtown. A vertical parking structure can increase the number of available parking spaces Increasing the
5. Review existing parking areas. Investigate existing parking areas for opportunities to increase the number of parking spaces.
6. Business Improvement District. (BID). A business improvement district is a method for downtown merchants to focus some of the property tax revenues into the downtown for improvements and increased maintenance. A BID should be evaluated as a tool for commercial revitalization
7. Review parking requirements. The municipal requirements for off-street parking spaces should be evaluated to ensure that they are up-to-date and properly address parking generation of applicable land uses.

Figure Five. Overall Map of Downtown Lakewood



Attachment #1: Example of converting parallel parking spaces to angled spaces.

Councilman Chaim Deutsch Continues to Expand Parking Options in Southern Brooklyn (Thursday, March 23rd, 2017 06:15 AM) Looking for parking in New York City can be an aggravating experience, frequently contributing to congestion on our roads. Drivers are often forced to choose between circling endlessly in search of an available spot and parking blocks away from their destination. Last year, Councilman Chaim Deutsch (D – BROOKLYN) launched an initiative to alleviate this issue within his district. To date, Councilman Deutsch has successfully advocated for more than one hundred new parking spots within the 48th council district. At a recent NYC Council Education hearing, Councilman Deutsch called on the city to conduct an in-depth study to determine the feasibility of providing faculty parking in the areas around New York City schools. Deutsch accomplished this at Madison High School, by petitioning the NYC Department of Transportation to convert nineteen parallel parking spaces into forty angled spots on Avenue P between Bedford Avenue and East 27th Street. The added parking will be an asset for residents and school staff. Deutsch is maximizing the space available for motorists to park in other locations as well, changing thirty-three parallel spaces on Batchelder Street to seventy angled spots, as well as two separate locations on Avenue P, where a total of sixty angled spots were added. Deutsch said, “Our lives are already busy and sometimes stressful. My job is to make things easier for my constituents, and that’s why I’m proud to have spearheaded this successful effort to provide additional parking options for my constituents. Thank you to NYC Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, Brooklyn Commissioner Keith Bray, and Acting Deputy Commissioner Rebecca Zack for their collaboration.” Councilman Deutsch is continuing to collaborate with the NYC Department of Transportation to identify locations that could sustain angled parking spots. To reach his office, call 718-368-9176 or email him directly at CDeutsch@council.nyc.gov.

Source: <http://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/1241878/councilman-chaim-deutsch-continues-to-expand-parking-options-in-southern-brooklyn.html>