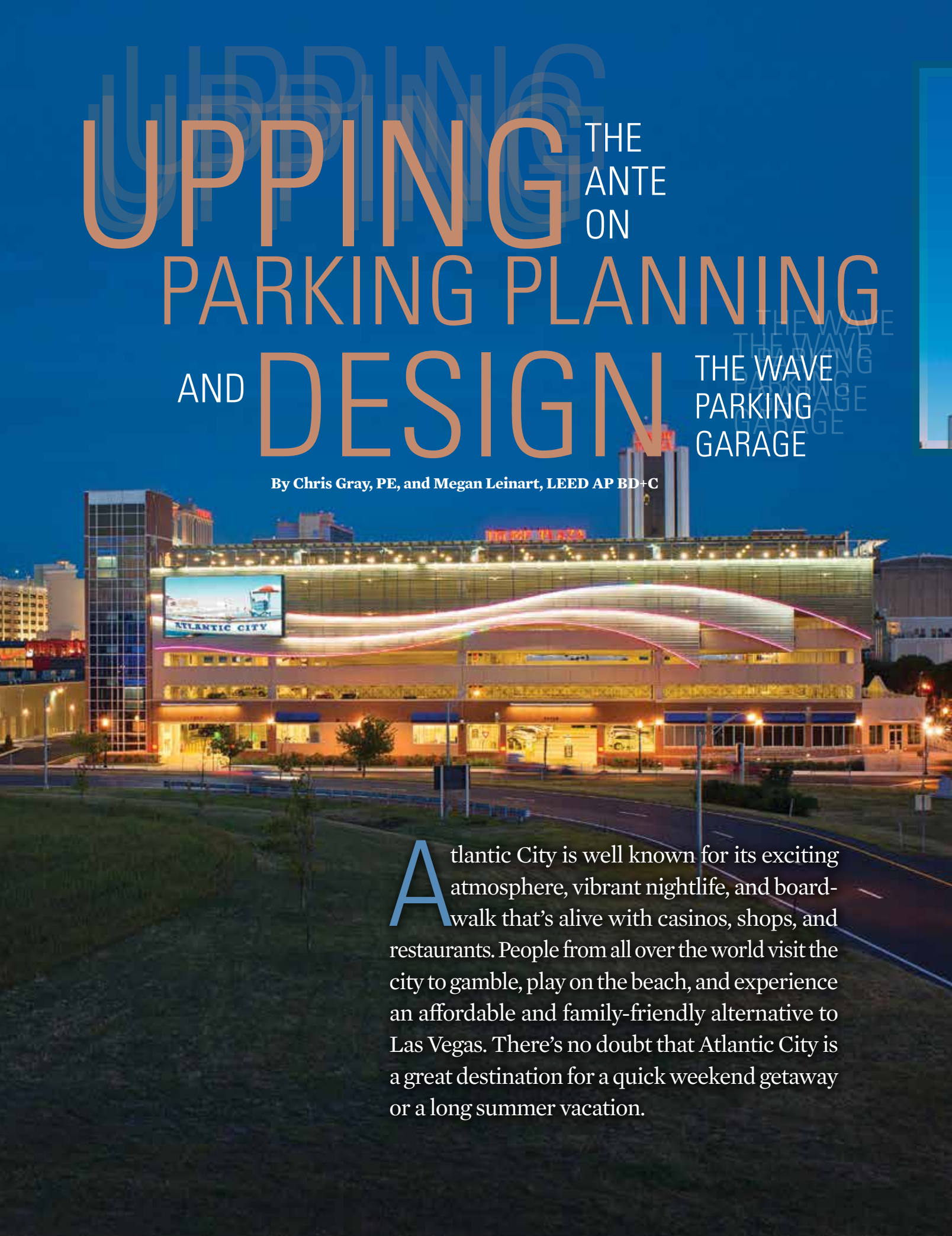


UPPING THE ANTE ON PARKING PLANNING AND DESIGN THE WAVE PARKING GARAGE

By Chris Gray, PE, and Megan Leinart, LEED AP BD+C



Atlantic City is well known for its exciting atmosphere, vibrant nightlife, and boardwalk that's alive with casinos, shops, and restaurants. People from all over the world visit the city to gamble, play on the beach, and experience an affordable and family-friendly alternative to Las Vegas. There's no doubt that Atlantic City is a great destination for a quick weekend getaway or a long summer vacation.



Atlantic City has sought to capitalize on its notoriety as a tourist destination, and as part of that, embarked on a major downtown redevelopment effort. In February 2012, the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) released the Tourism District Master Plan, which outlines a plan for short- and long-term projects and policy initiatives meant to enhance the visitor experience, promote private investment, and improve the economic stability of the city. Development of the plan included significant input from all stakeholders, including Atlantic City residents, business owners, property owners, government officials, investors, casino representatives, and even visitors.

The Tourism District Master Plan provides a framework for future improvement and growth in the city, capitalizing on its existing prominence as a major tourism destination and expanding outward from current limits. The plan includes strategies such as improvements to the casino and boardwalk areas, significant improvements to the streets and sidewalks, and implementing improvements in cleanliness and safety to enhance visitor and resident experiences. The city and the CRDA understand that investment and development in the Atlantic City core are critically important to future economic success.

A notable example of the city's commitment to redevelopment is the prominence of "The Walk," a 109-store, open-air mall that opened in 2003. The Walk, which spans three city blocks, is the only outlet mall in Atlantic County and South Jersey. It wraps around the Atlantic City Bus Terminal, allowing people to easily come and go without driving. The world-class retail development has significantly increased pedestrian activity in the area, drawing millions of people each year. Although it opened years before the master plan was developed, The Walk will play a significant role in supporting the future growth and development of the area. It's also

part of the plan, which encourages the expansion of the shopping center to help connect Pacific Avenue—one of the most highly trafficked streets in the area—to the boardwalk in and around the midtown core.

What About Parking

As is the case with many major redevelopment plans, the need to right-size parking is an issue that's proven to be a struggle for many government entities. Unlike other cities, Atlantic City experienced no shortage of parking for patrons of its casinos, most of which had their own parking facilities. However, the CRDA recognized that to support ambitious plans for growth within the community, they would need to increase parking capacity to accommodate additional demand.

The result of that is The Wave Parking Garage & Mixed Use Center: a state-of-the-art mixed-use parking facility featuring impressive elements that make it a unique destination while providing for both current and future parking demands generated by the city's master plan efforts.

Unique Challenges

The CRDA recognized that the prominent location of this garage project site ensures that The Wave will be the very first thing people see when coming off the Atlantic City Expressway into the city. Therefore, the facility's design was paramount to ensuring that visitors were given a memorable first impression.

The Wave, which cost \$30 million to build and offers six levels of parking in its five stories, is centrally located to support growing parking demands in the surrounding area. Its 1,180 parking spaces accommodate the parking demand generated by the adjacent outlet mall, a Sheraton hotel, the Convention Center, the Boardwalk Hall entertainment center, and many more current and future destinations.



The addition of the mixed-use facility has helped create a more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere in the city core. The Wave includes approximately 16,000 square feet of ground floor retail space, enhancing activity along the streetscape and providing additional connectivity between the facility and the other nearby destinations. The project also incorporated improvements to the streets to provide a more walkable environment.

City destinations promote a more pedestrian-friendly and walkable atmosphere. This helps reduce the number of automobile trips in the area, resulting in less traffic congestion and fewer carbon emissions.



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Sustainability at its Finest

The CRDA elected to use an already-disturbed property as the site for The Wave, rather than taking away any of the city's green space. Originally, the site included a parking lot, community center, and fish market. The location was very important not only for the success of the project, but as it related to sustainability as well, marrying transit-accessibility with urban infill and a location near other mixed-use destinations. The Wave builds on these foundations to increase density and provide efficient parking resources.

A Gateway to Atlantic City

CRDA understood that, given the site location, The Wave would provide visitors with their first impression of Atlantic City as they drove into town. Therefore, the garage needed to incorporate design elements that would match the look and feel of the surrounding neighborhood while enhancing the visual experience both during the day and at night.

The design team incorporated a number of architectural enhancements to achieve this goal. The garage features a curved metal screen running along the top of the façade. This screen reflects a vibrant array of colors and enhances the visual appeal of the garage. In addition, an LED billboard highlights local events. Each of these elements creates a more exciting and memorable appearance and complements the nearby casinos and retail center.



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The CRDA's forward-thinking approach to sustainability is evident throughout the design of The Wave. The 54,000 square-foot roof of the garage features a large 400kW solar panel array with 1,677 solar panels. The energy generated by the solar array helps significantly offset the energy use inside the garage.

The facility also features six electric vehicle charging stations, and there are provisions for the installation of 14 additional stations in the future. The inclusion of these stations brings the concept of sustainability to the forefront and is intended to promote and support the use of electric vehicles.

The significant retail space at the ground level of the garage helps generate additional activity while creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment for those walking around the garage. Current plans for retail include an art/retail space to serve as an anchor location for the Atlantic City Arts District. In addition, the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey plans to lease space in the garage for its Noyes Museum of Art, including studio and retail space. Each of these destinations will enhance the atmosphere around the ground floor of the garage and generate additional activity within and around the facility.

The Wave is a great example of using parking to promote and enhance large-scale community redevelopment efforts. No one involved has any doubt that it will be an essential piece of infrastructure that greatly supports the impressive Tourism District Master Plan effort both now and into the future. **P**

While providing significant parking demand for visitors, employees, and residents of Atlantic City, the location of The Wave actually helps encourage walkability. The significant amount of retail space within the garage and the facility's central location near many important Atlantic