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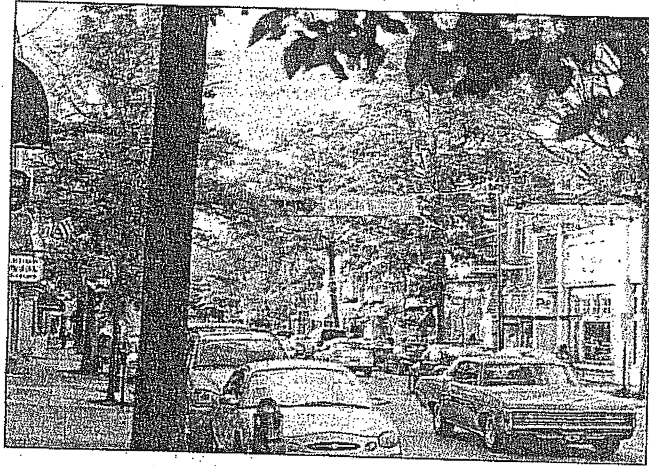
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Haddon Avenue in Collingswood has been selected as one of the 10 best streets in the nation by the American Planning Association. DOUGLAS M. BOVITT/Courier-Post

Haddon Avenue earns national recognition

Collingswood section receives honor

By **LAVINIA DeCASTRO**
Courier-Post Staff

COLLINGSWOOD

A national planning organization has picked Haddon Avenue in Collingswood as one of the 10 best streets in the United States.

This is the first time the American Planning Association picked a New Jersey location to feature as part of its Great Places in America program.

"We hope to call attention to the fact that there are some really neat places in America and they don't just happen on their own, these communities had a plan to make it happen," APA spokesman Denny Johnson said. "Hopefully this will inspire other communities to say 'What can we do here to make our community better?'"

APA considered more than 200 locations before picking 10 winners in each of three categories — best street, best neighborhoods and best public spaces.

"It's extremely flattering to get national recognition for our downtown," Collingswood Mayor Jim Maley said.

Maley said borough of-



Collingswood has revitalized its downtown area along Haddon Avenue with a variety of businesses. DOUGLAS M. BOVITT/Courier-Post

Officials had no idea Collingswood was in the running until last month, when he received a letter from APA saying Haddon Avenue was being considered for the designation.

"That's a really big deal and one we didn't even know about," Maley said. "It was completely out of the blue."

Economic development efforts in Collingswood have earned the borough some recognition from regional and state organizations, but this is the first national designation for the cozy Camden County municipality. The designation covers a 10-block portion of Haddon Avenue between Homestead and Madison streets.

David Morley, a research associate with APA, said the organization picked Collingswood because of the borough's efforts to use economic development to completely revitalize its downtown shopping district, which was filled with empty storefronts in the 1970s and 1980s.

"It's a functional commercial corridor with restaurants and shops," Morley said. "We were particularly interested in the drama of their story — how it was completely transformed in the past couple of decades."

Collingswood's walkability was also a factor, Morley said.

Street/Collingswood pleased with honor

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"We are looking for streets that are both friendly to motorists and to pedestrians and public transit," Morley said.

Also a factor were transit-oriented development projects like the Lumber-Yard and the planned transformation of the area surrounding the PATCO Hi-Speedline station in town into a mixed-use development.

"It is exciting to see this type of sustainable development occurring not only in large urban areas, but also smaller communities like Collingswood," APA Chief

Executive Officer Paul Farmer said.

The other nine streets to get the designation were Broadway in Skagway, Alaska; President Clinton Avenue in Little Rock, Ark.; Front Street in Bath, Maine; South Main Street in Ann Arbor, Mich.; Front Street in Traverse City, Mich.; Main Street in Greenville, S.C.; Duke of Gloucester Street in Williamsburg, Va.; North Main Street in Wheeling, W.Va.; and East Newberry Boulevard in Milwaukee, Wis.

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DOUGLAS M. BOVITT/Courier-Post

Haddon Avenue in Collingswood is one of 10 streets honored by the American Planning Association. It is the only street in New Jersey to receive the honor in 2009. The association praised Collingswood for its work in the downtown area.