

# CHELSEA NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) in Atlantic City will respond to the need for protection of the historic built environment while avoiding being overly restrictive. The NCD will cover the Chelsea neighborhood from Texas Avenue to Albany Avenue in order to preserve the existing historic housing stock that would not necessarily qualify for historic designation under a local ordinance or National Register district. The district will function as a zoning overlay containing a set of optional incentivized guidelines for rehabilitation work and new construction, which attempt to preserve neighborhood scale and character.

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

The Chelsea neighborhood is one of the areas of the highest historic integrity in Atlantic City. It stands as a testament to the fact that there is more to Atlantic City than its night-life and casinos and represents the dichotomy of experience between residents and tourists. Bounded by Texas Avenue to the North and Albany Avenue to the South, the neighborhood spans the area from the Atlantic Ocean to the east to the Intercoastal Waterway to the west (see FIGURE 1). Landmarks like the Knife and Fork Restaurant and the Chelsea Hotel as well as several casinos below Atlantic Avenue define the neighborhood to tourists, but beyond Atlantic Avenue to the West, there is a breadth of historic residential fabric that serves as a concentration of affordable housing for residents (see FIGURE 2). However, the main artery and divider of the city between residential neighborhoods and the tourism district is not a static line, as revealed in Chelsea. There is a scattering of historic fabric below Atlantic Avenue, and in some cases below Pacific Avenue within the Casino-dominated district. Atlantic Avenue is also defined by blocks of neighborhood commercial, much of which is historic fabric (see Figure 3).



Figure 1: Atlantic City Neighborhoods

## HISTORIC VS. CONTEMPORARY FABRIC

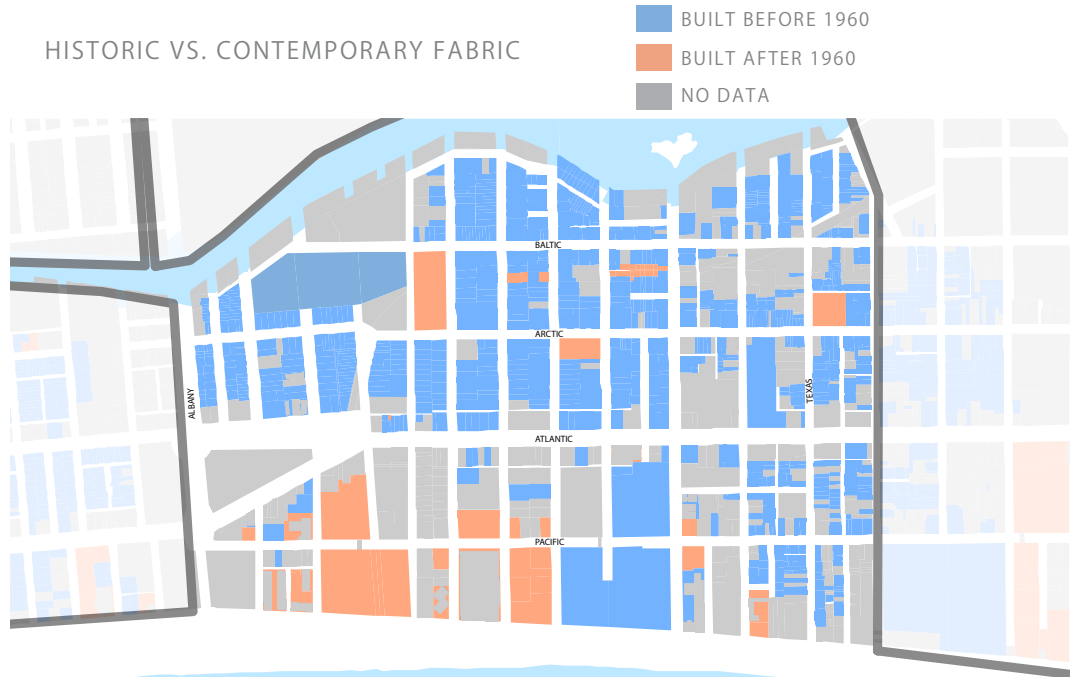


Figure 2: Historic vs. Contemporary Fabric

## LAND USE MAP

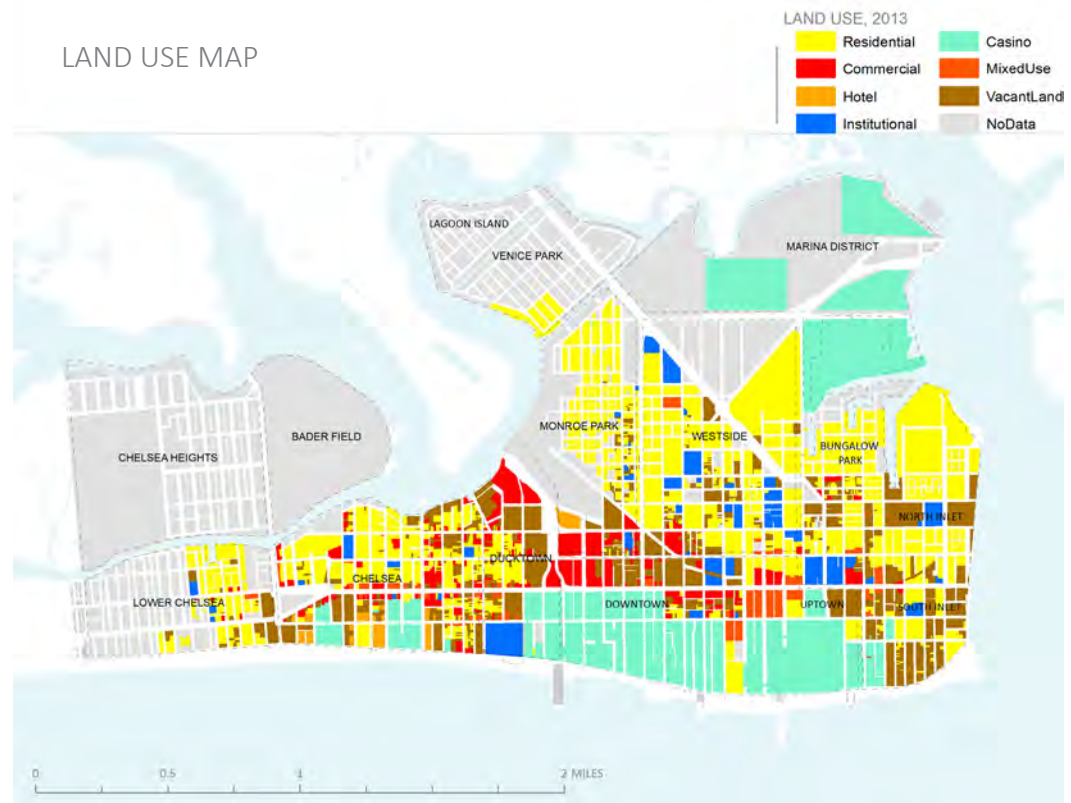


Figure 3: Land Use Map-Condensed from the Character Study



The neighborhood expanded over the course of the late 19th and early 20th century during Atlantic City's largest period of growth as a "suburban" neighborhood separate from the spectacle and tourism-oriented development towards the boardwalk. As the neighborhood expanded, the marshes that border the Intercoastal Waterway were built out with an impervious bulkhead in order to extend the buildable land surface area to accommodate for growth. The character study revealed that much of built environment from this period remains and are in good condition, despite their situation on former marsh land (see FIGURE 2). There are a diversity types in the Chelsea neighborhood, including a concentration of Late 19th Century Rowhouses and Twins, Small Lot detached housing, Multifamily basement apartment, and multifamily flats (see FIGURE 4). The residential fabric may not retain the same level of architectural integrity as Lower Chelsea, a wealthier neighborhood to the south, and the obvious choice for an historic district, but buildings have retained the same form, use, density, and site situation as in the early 20th century.

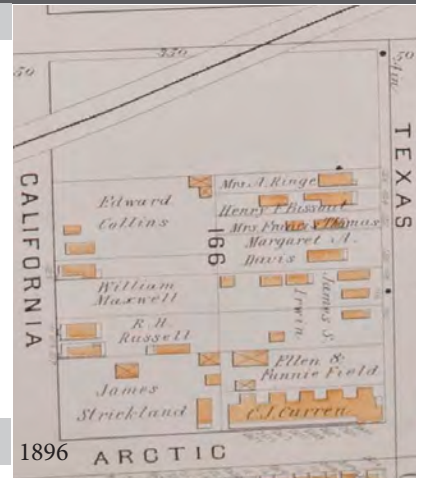


## EXISTING BLOCK CONDITIONS

## ZONE 13.1-BLOCK 342

### GOOD

- o The original detailing remains on most of the houses
- o Original fenestration remains intact on most houses
- o Original materials remain intact on most houses
- o The street retains most of its original character
- o The original form of the house remains intact.



### FAIR

- o The original detailing remains on some of the houses
- o Original fenestration remains intact on some of the houses
- o Some of the original materials have been removed and changed on some houses
- o The street has some of its original character and still retains a sense of cohesiveness
- o There have been small additions (including enclosed porches) have been added to some of the houses



### POOR

- o The original detailing remains only on a few houses
- o Original fenestration remains on only a few houses
- o Nearly all the houses have new materials that are not in keeping with the original fabric
- o New buildings have been erected that break up the block
- o The street no longer has cohesiveness and has little housing stock to conserve

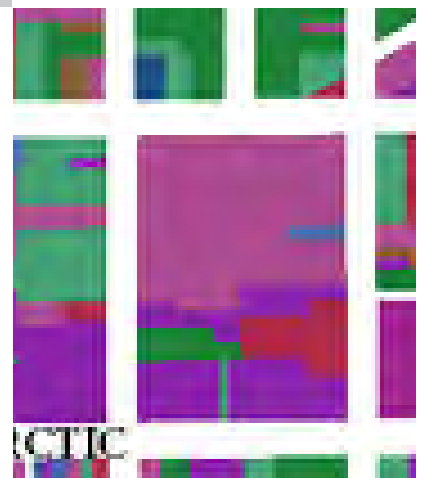
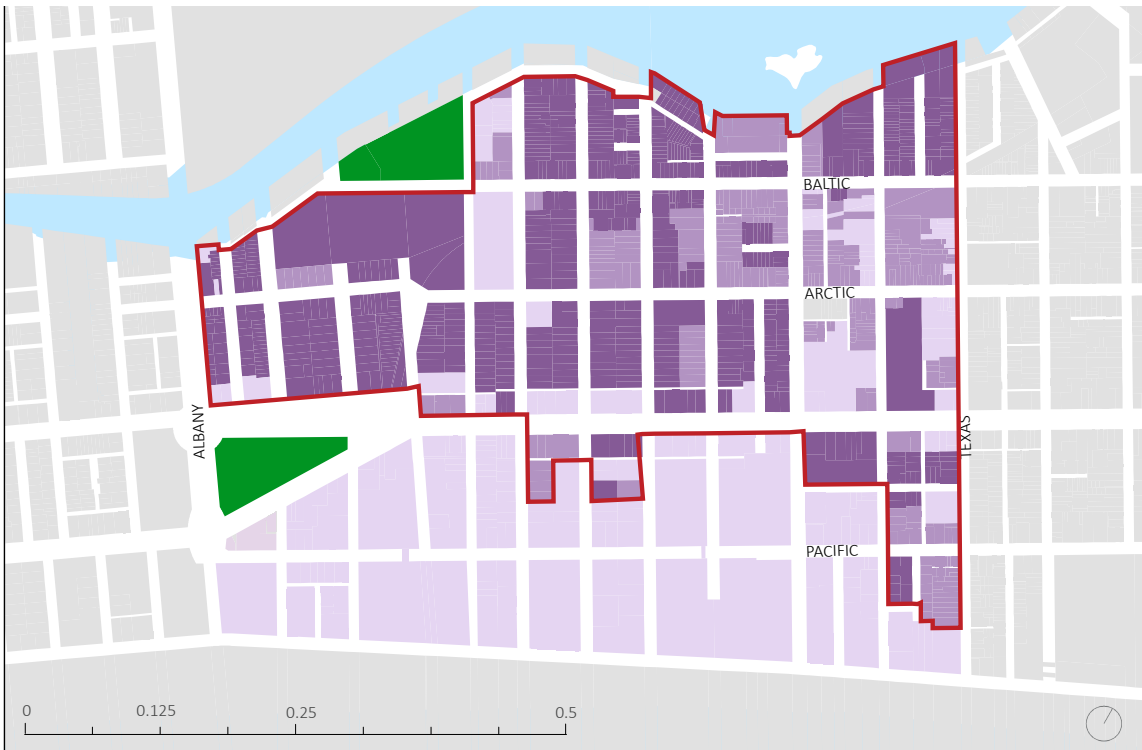


Figure 5: Sample Conditions Survey Form

## NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT: OVERLAY BOUNDARIES



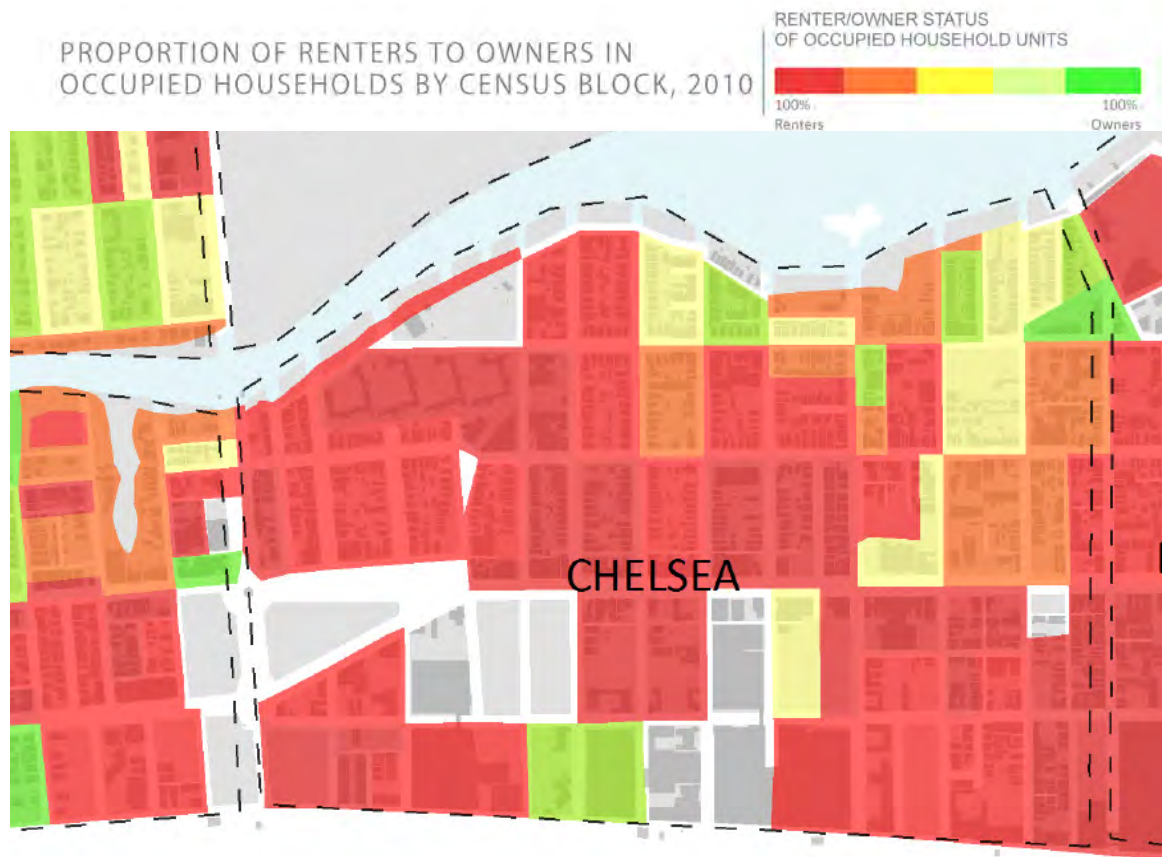
**Figure 6: Chelsea Neighborhood Conditions Map**// This map reflects the results of a survey which referenced the results of the character study as well as historic maps in order to gauge block level integrity.

### CONDITIONS AND BOUNDARIES

A conditions survey of Chelsea proves that the residential fabric is mostly in good or fair condition and hence worthy of preservation. The neighborhood was evaluated on the basis of block integrity on top of the character study (see FIGURE 5). “Good blocks” maintained their historic character with no vacant lots, housing which maintained its original massing, fenestration and material, and no new construction disrupting the block. “Fair blocks” may have had one or two vacant lots or new buildings which broke up the cohesiveness of the block, but contained a remaining built environment with a high level of integrity. “Poor blocks” were block that were dominated by new construction, Casinos, parking lots, vacant lots, and had no remaining neighborhood character.

Blocks in good and fair condition are concentrated above Atlantic Avenue, especially in the area above Baltic Avenue, but there are some intact blocks in the area below Atlantic Avenue, and two below Pacific Avenue, inside the Casino district. The majority of the blocks in poor condition are located below Atlantic Avenue in the Tourism and Casino District. Most of the blocks in poor condition above Atlantic Avenue are concentrated in the North, bordering the Ducktown neighborhood. At the same time, there is a heavy concentration of blocks in good condition toward the South, bordering the Lower Chelsea neighborhood (see FIGURE 6).

The results of the Conditions survey formed the boundaries of the proposed conservation district in an attempt to preserve the fabric with the highest integrity.



**Figure 7: Chelsea Rent-Own Population** // Shows the ratio of renters to owners in the housing stock in Chelsea.

#### THREATS TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

While Chelsea maintains a high level of integrity, there are social, economic, and environmental threats to the preservation of the built environment.

##### Social Threats

Social threats to the historic built environment include a high renter population and current zoning provisions. A high renter to owner ratio implies that the population is more transient than owner-occupied housing, and hence, less likely to invest in improvements to their properties. For the same reason, property owners are less motivated to invest in their properties and make necessary repairs to systems which help maintain the structures (see FIGURE 7).

Current zoning is Euclidian in style and single-use. It includes R-3: single family attached, R-2 single family detached, NC-2 (Neighborhood Commercial), and R-S (Resort Service) zoning districts which are defined in horizontal bands spanning the neighborhood. While R-3 and R-2 zoning have a lot size of 3,000 square feet, which encourages dense residential development matching the existing historic residential fabric, R-S zoning has a lot size of 20,000 square feet. This large lot size encourages large scale development which conflicts with the density of the neighborhood's residential fabric (see FIGURE 8)

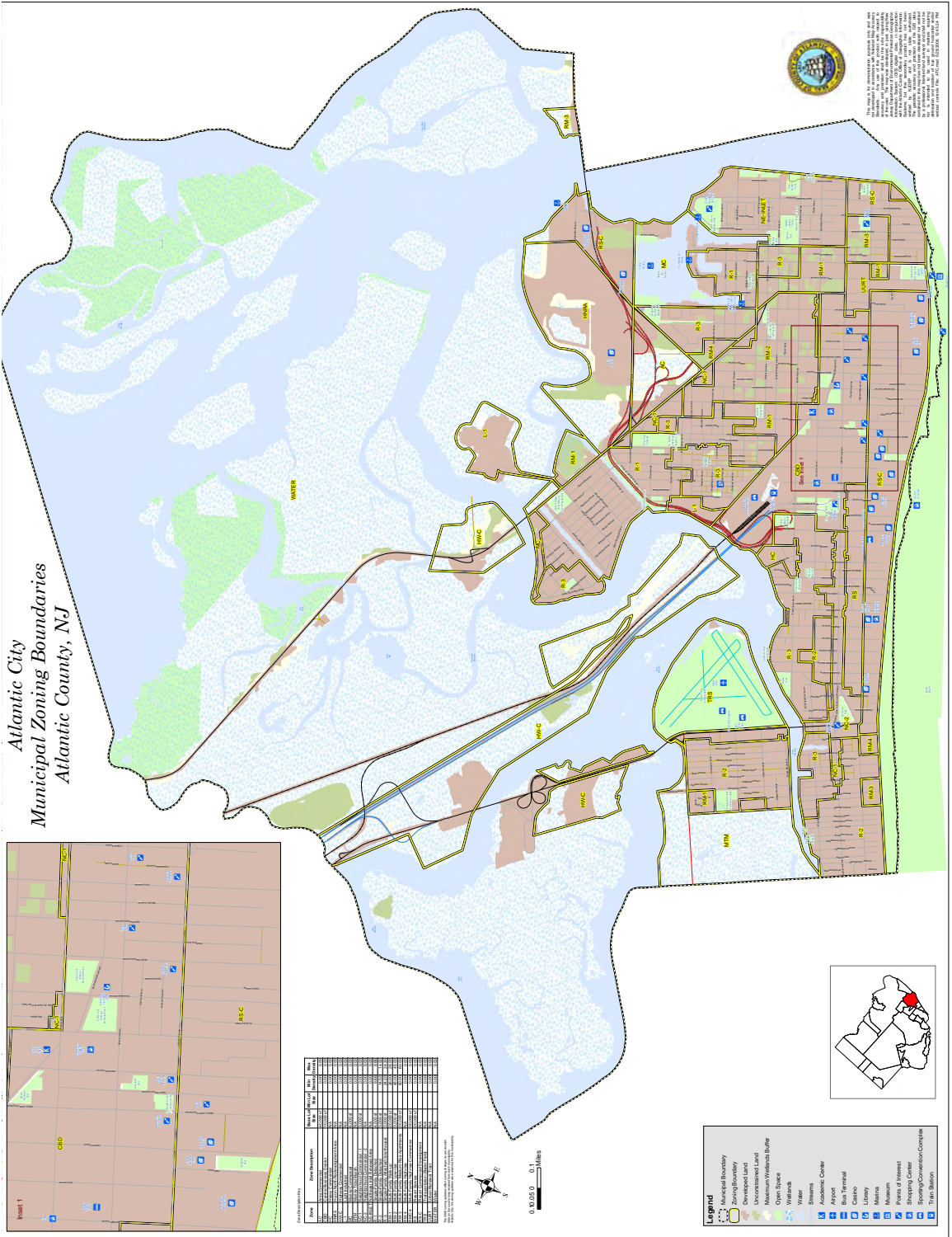


Figure 8: Current Zoning Map // Outlines Official zoning districts in Atlantic City.

## PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LINE MAP, 2013

POV\_TOTAL\_ / none  
9.2 - 15.4  
15.4 - 24.4  
24.4 - 39.0  
39.0 - 66.7



**Figure 9: Percent of Population Living Below the Poverty Line**

### Economic Threats

In addition to broader economic trends in Atlantic City, including a lack of middle-class year-round jobs and changes to gambling law in New Jersey which threaten the casinos' profitability, there is a high overall percentage of the population living in poverty. Chelsea has a higher percentage of its population living in poverty than middle-class neighborhoods, like Venice Park, Monroe Park, and Lower Chelsea. In the area above Atlantic Avenue to the south, 15.4-24.4% of the population was living below the poverty line in 2013; in the area below Atlantic Avenue to the north 24.4-39% were living below the poverty line in 2013 (see FIGURE 9). Lower income populations have less expendable income to make home repairs and upgrades, a problem that is only compounded over time.

This threatens the overall sustainability of the built environment. While a high impoverished population threatens the quality of the historic built environment, the relationship between low income populations and the historic built environment should not be forgotten. In Chelsea the historic twins, multifamily housing types, and apartment buildings provide affordable housing for low income populations.



# FEMA FLOOD INSURANCE, HURRICANE SANDY IMPACT

- KEY**
- Hurricane Sandy Storm Surge Elevation Points
  - V - 1% or more annual chance of flooding and hazards associated with storm waves. 26% chance flooding over life of a 30-year mortgage.
  - A - Base floodplain. Areas that will be affected by waves 1.5 foot high or greater.
  - Areas where wave characteristics deemed sufficient to damage National Flood Insurance Program participant structures.

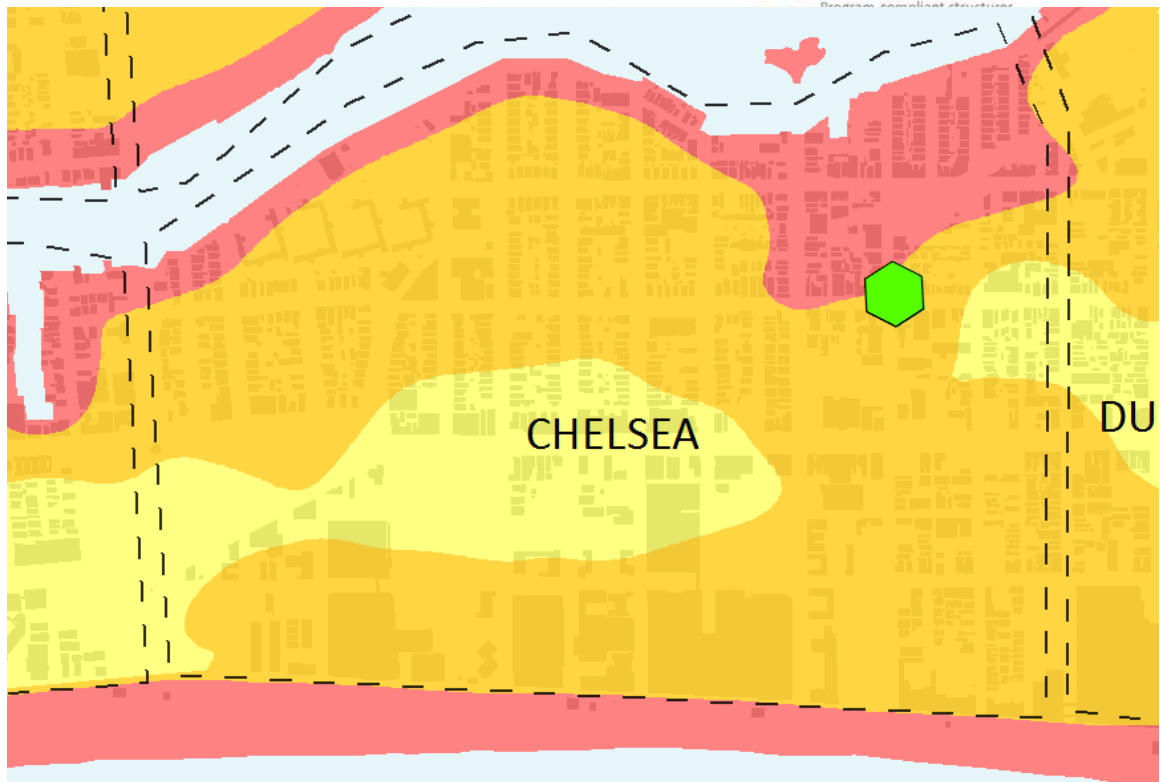


Figure 10: Percent of Population Living Below the Poverty Line

## Environment Threats

Perhaps the most pressing threat and most difficult to deal with are the environmental threats facing Atlantic City’s historic built environmental. The entire neighborhood of Chelsea is in a high flood risk zone according to FEMA data (see FIGURE 10).. The conditions survey revealed that the areas with the highest level of integrity are located above Baltic Avenue, the same area that FEMA’s Flood Hazard map defines are the highest risk areas for flooding



Sunset Avenue//block with a high level of integrity located in the highest risk zone according to FEMA.

## NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT OVERLAY BACKGROUND

There are two types of neighborhood conservation districts common in the United States: the historic preservation model and the zoning and land use model. The former functions much like a traditional historic district in its criteria for designation and review standards. These districts are often described as “historic-district-lite” conservation districts as they are reviewed against less strict standards than typical historic districts, meaning they may have a cohesive neighborhood character, but would not necessarily qualify for National Register of local historic district designation. Standards and guidelines for review are developed on a neighborhood basis and review by the zoning or planning department in order to obtain a building permit. Usually, review is only performed by Planning or Zoning departments when there is no Historic Review Commission. Zoning/land use based districts are less concerned about the individual features and design of buildings and more concerning with protecting the overall character of a neighborhood through preventing large-scale demolitions, preserving the use character, and controlling scale and set-backs. Occasionally there are design guidelines included in these districts (see FIGURE 11).

## CHELSEA NCD OVERLAY

A hybrid of the zoning/land use model and the historic preservation model will be the best solution in Atlantic City’s Chelsea neighborhood as there is an existing character in the late 19th and early twentieth century housing stock with its rowhouses, twins, and multifamily housing, as well as neighborhood land use patterns defined by scale, residential use, set-backs and the street grid, but less of a distinct “museum quality” architectural style which defines the area. This hybrid model of a neighborhood-based conservation district would avoid imposing financially restrictive requirements on the housing stock in a high-renter, low income environment.

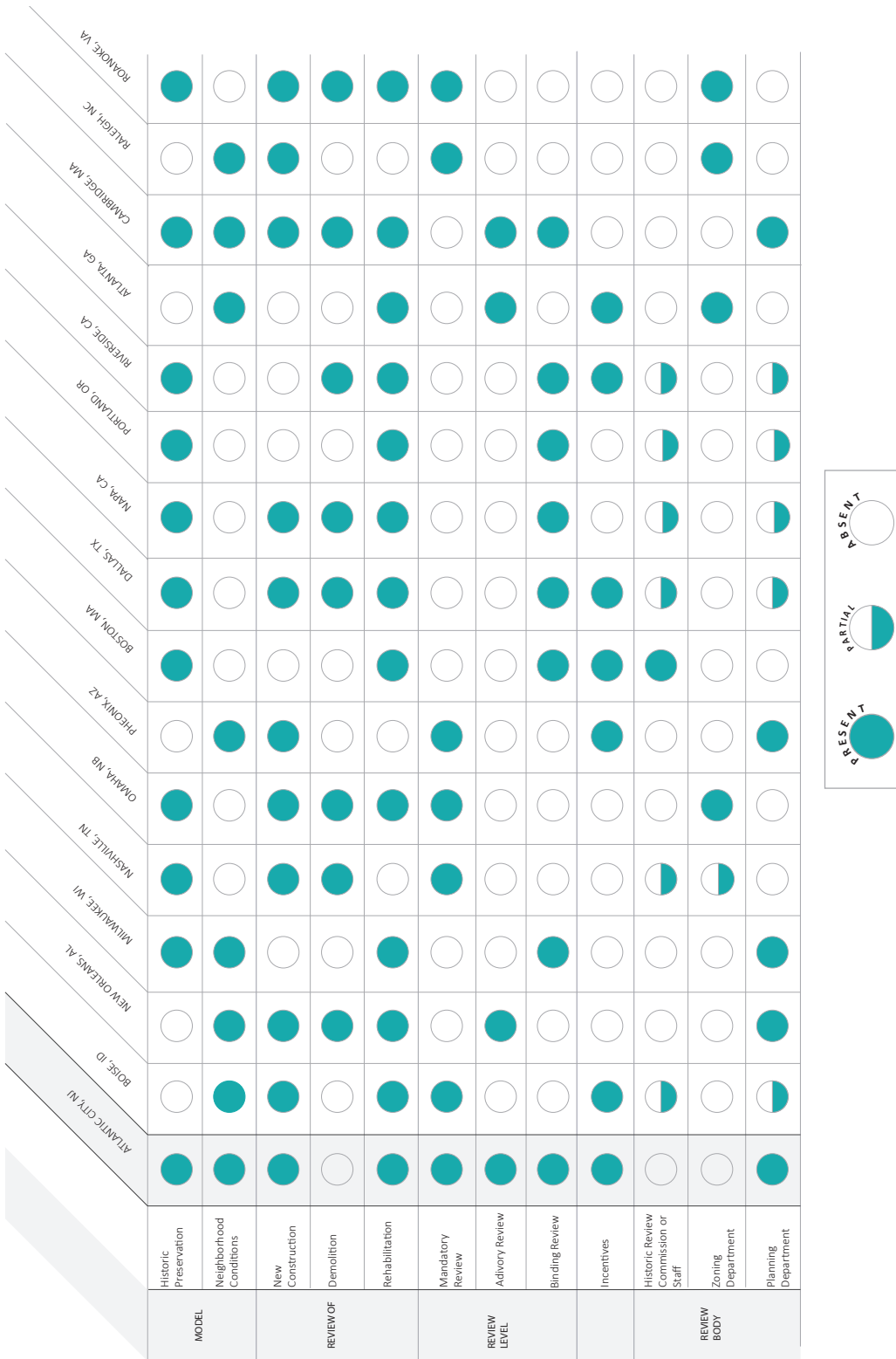
In order to conserve the existing development pattern of dense residential fabric with an intermingling of small scale commercial and mixed use types, zoning controls

for new construction which favor similar scale, density and site situation, and proposals for rehabilitation work will become part of an advisory mandatory review process by the department of Planning and Development in order to obtain a building permit. To encourage reinvestment in the existing housing stock, guidelines for rehabilitation will be included in the district which will follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation with adjustments to accommodate for coastal conditions.

Because the district has a high renter population, it will be important to incentivize rehabilitation to property owners. So, a financial incentive program in the form of property tax breaks and matching grants for completing rehabilitation work will be included. Use of one or both of the incentives will require mandatory review of proposed work in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, where a building permit will be received if the plan is in accordance with the standards. To receive the financial incentive, there will be a final review process to receive a certificate of occupancy. The matching grant portion of the incentive could be funded through a revolving fund or could take advantage of state and federal funding for Hurricane Sandy relief.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Refine the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards to accommodate for high flood risk zone areas
2. Community Feedback: will require public meetings, surveys, and outreach.
3. Refine the incentive program: solidify funding sources, amounts for matching grants, and property tax breaks.



**Figure 11: Neighborhood Conservation District Comparables Chart** // Compares the proposed Atlantic City Chelsea Neighborhood NCD framework to other conservation districts in the US.

# VACANT PARCEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

AMANDA MAZIE

Vacant land and desolation have plagued the South Inlet since the beginning of the 20th Century. Due to misguided urban renewal projects and widespread, unchecked speculation, an abandoned and ruined wasteland is all that is left behind. Once a place of residential density and strong community, the South Inlet is now reduced to unused vacant space. It remains the place in Atlantic City in the most need for smart redevelopment and intervention. A future master plan design that prioritizes density, commercial activity and small scale residential development can breathe life back into a place left behind by the rest of the city.



2008 South Inlet Aerial // Widespread vacancy and derelict housing conditions currently characterize the South Inlet. The only major addition missing in this map is the Revel Hotel now located along the coast.



South Inlet Aerial // 1965



South Inlet Aerial // 1945

## SITE HISTORY

Over the past 100 years, the area of the South Inlet in Atlantic City has transformed from a site of thriving density and activity to a derelict desert of vacant land. Up until the mid-1960s, the area was characterized by densely clustered rowhomes, narrow streets, front porches and small corner stores. The open space surrounding Absecon Lighthouse was one of the only open parcels of land in the South Inlet.

This changed in 1964 when the area was declared blighted by Atlantic City Housing Authority and the Urban Reinvestment Authority. Previously, the area was populated by mostly all white residents. The director of the Housing Authority, Pauline Hill, determined the South Inlet to be the city's most valuable and least commercially developed sections. She wanted to create a new, more valuable South Inlet.

In the three subsequent years after 1964, the Housing Authority rapidly bought out residents and relocated them to other areas of the city. Following Urban Renewal style principals, the area was completely bulldozed. Hill planned to replace the previous mix of brick and wood-framed houses with garden apartments and high-rise hotels. These plans never came to fruition and the over 80 acres cleared have remained vacant ever since. Feeling isolated in the South Inlet after the demolition spree. The remaining residents. began to move out of the area.

In 1976, another policy changed radically shifted the future of the South Inlet when the city passed the Gambling Referendum. The Casino Era ushered in a new age of development and subsequent speculation. The new referendum went into detail requiring all new casinos to have a minimum of 500 rooms, as well as restaurants, shops, conference room and other amenities within their walls. The casinos also had to be physically segregated from the non-gambling areas. These plans handicapped any broader development plans beyond the casinos.

A surge in land values occurred as a result of the new investment in casino development. The land in the South Inlet, being located along the coast to the South

and East, became extremely valuable almost overnight. However, this surge in land values made it extremely costly to acquire land and develop it. The South Inlet was rezoned for casino development in 1979. By 1980, the per square foot land values sky rocketed from \$4.45 in 1976 to \$39.15. The land was worth more vacant than with a built structure and residents began setting fire to their homes in order to cash-out.

By the 1990's, the casino business began to decline. Foxwoods opened in Connecticut in 1996 and would grow to be the world's largest casino complex by 1998. This rapid growth in competition drastically hurt the industry in Atlantic City. In response, in 2004, the City invested \$100 million into a Boardwalk Revitalization Fund to update commercial storefronts and encourage casinos to build more inviting fronts. This fund also established "The Walk," a 100-store outlet mall. These new developments further drew visitors away from the city's neighborhoods and land in the South Inlet remained vacant. The land was mostly held by capital investment funds, still waiting to capitalize on the previous surge in land values.

However, by 2006 became the weakest peak of the Atlantic City market. The city government was plagued with excessive debt from over-expansion and sharp declines in visitors and casino revenues. Gambling revenues fell from \$5.1 billion in 2006 to \$3.1 billion in 2009. To revitalize the city, current Governor Chris Christie pushed to develop a new casino project to save the city in the South Inlet. Morgan Stanley invested over \$1.25 billion into the construction of the Revel Casino, but pulled out of the deal with only 60% constructed. Therefore, Chris Christie dumped over \$1.2 billion of state funds to finish the project in 2012. Problems quickly emerged and the shrinking casino market in Atlantic City was unable to sustain the new 1,399-room resort.

Currently, the Revel overshadows the small, remaining pieces of housing and commercial structures in the South Inlet and has failed in bringing development back to the area. The South Inlet is still characterized by vacant land since its desolation in the 1960's and all efforts since to redevelop the area has failed.



South Inlet Map // 1900



South Inlet Map // 1924



South Inlet Map // 1952



South Inlet Map // 1977

#### HISTORIC AERIALS AND MAPS

The above map timeline illustrates the desolation that occurred in the South Inlet in only a few short years. Between the years of 1900 to 1952, the area developed in small, rowhouse residential patterns with back alleyways and small streets. The area was characterized by a close-knit community with corner stores and large front porches.

This small community was devastated in the 1960's and 1970's when urban renewal principals dominated the politics. The map of the South Inlet from 1977 depicts the block clearance as the city literally wiped the density off the face of the land. By 1983, the desolation remained as the grand redevelopment plans had still not been implemented.



South Inlet Map // 1983



1901 View West from Absecon Lighthouse // This map shows the residential density that once existed in the South Inlet.



2013 View West from Absecon Lighthouse // Notice the blue square that highlights the same house from 1901 to 2013. It is now one of the last standing on its block.



**South Inlet Focus Area Map** // This map depicts the boundaries for the area I will focus on for redevelopment.

**CURRENT CONDITIONS**

The above map illustrates the area that will be the focus of my management plan for the South Inlet. It is bounded by the Boardwalk to the South and East, Grammercy Ave to the North and zig-zags from Metropolitan to Connecticut Ave on the West.

Only a few derelict structures remain in the area and they are falling fast into further disrepair. The images to the right depict a few of the structures left on the landscape. A few high-rise housing developments built in the last 20 years are the only tall structures in the area and represent failed housing goals. A future focus on small-scale residential, block by block construction is a more effective tool to lure residents back to the South Inlet.



Image of "Missing Teeth" Rowhouse

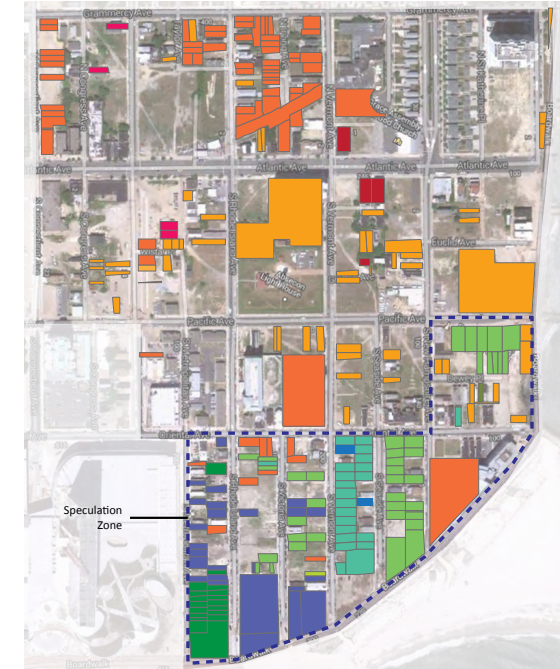


Image of High-Rise Residential



**Current Vacant Properties Typology Map**//

- Vacant Lots
- Parking Lots
- Parks



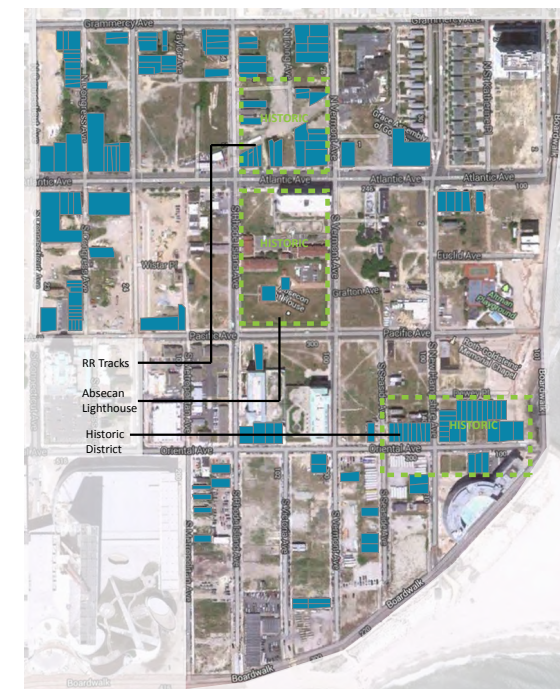
**Current Ownership Map**//

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #32cd32; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> GMAB Realty, LLC | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4169e1; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> NB Acquisition, LLC |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #90ee90; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Windmill, LLC    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #dc143c; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> AC Board of EDU     |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4169e1; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Inlet 78, LLC    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffa500; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> City of AC          |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #32cd32; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> SPE Realty, LLC  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffa500; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> CRDA                |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #008000; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Lazocean, LLC    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ff00ff; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Housing Authority   |

**VACANCY // HISTORIC RESOURCES // OWNERSHIP**

These three maps show the current physical, political and historic landscape of the site. The first map more clearly illustrates the widespread vacancy in the area. The next, to the right, shows the current ownership in the area. The orange tones depict the city owned properties and the blue/green tones show the properties owned by private investment funds. Investment and high land prices still exist in the blocks closest to the water. The five LLC's represent the main land owners still holding land in the area that stand in the way of development.

The last map to the right, portrays the properties built before 1960. Many of these properties still retain historic integrity and can be saved with reinvestment efforts. The three zones highlighted are areas of strength with which a new master plan can build upon.



**Historic Resources Map**//

- Built before 1960
- Focus Areas



**Site Values Map** // This map illustrates the current conditions and values remaining in the landscape. Many are opportunities that can be used to build new development from existing strengths.

**SITE VALUES**

This area is currently characterized by values that contribute to its condition in both negative and positive aspects. Many of the blocks no longer have small alleys and streets running through them. This super block configuration and the many vacant parcels contribute to the large, desolate and desolation feel of the area. Smaller blocks will promote more infill development.

The commercial and possible historic zones are currently desperate and spread out along Atlantic Ave. The same is true of individual 'missing teeth' rowhouses that remain scattered along the landscape. Almost all of the structures are in dire, derelict conditions and deteriorating rapidly. Large residential high-rise buildings dot the area. They are examples of failed housing projects that we do not want to replicate.

The lack of Boardwalk extension is another area that needs attention. The current state of the Boardwalk past the Revel Casino is in a very dilapidated state and needs immediate repairs. This future improvement is the most integral aspect of bringing positive activity back to the South Inlet area.



Image of Absecan Lighthouse// 2013

**DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

Building on the last section, the following principles need to be implemented to guide responsible and smart development of the South Inlet:

1. Create Blocks That Are More Consistent With The Rest Of City - Chelsea, South Side
2. Promote Infill And Mixed Use Development
3. New Streets To Encourage Dense Development
4. Extend Commercial Corridors - Atlantic Ave And Oriental Ave
5. Designate Historic Zone on Oriental Ave
6. Establish New Parks - Railway Park And Absecan Lighthouse Extension Park
7. Extend and Rebuild The Boardwalk To Wrap Around City And Bring New Activity
8. Retreat From The Edge On East Coast

**DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**

To encourage growth, development initiatives can be implemented to attract future investment. These initiatives will guide future growth and allow for a more attractive development process.

1. Land Bank  
The previous map of current ownership illustrates four city agencies that own land in the South Inlet. The creation of a Land Bank to consolidate these properties to be held by one city agency will allow for an easier development process. These properties will be held by the land bank until appropriate uses can be identified in the future. It is a way for the city to gain control over future growth.

2. FAR Bonus

The addition of an FAR density bonus for new mixed community development will provide for a wider range of residents. New developments need to leave room for affordable housing needs and the city should reward them for doing so. In order to be rewarded an FAR bonus, the new development must include 30% of the total number of units for affordable residents. These units will be put aside for income qualified families that fall within 80% area median income (AMI) qualification.

3. New Zoning

The existing official master plan zoning map categorizes most of the South Inlet as resort commercial development or northeast inlet redevelopment area. This over simplifies the area as there are more land uses present than the official master plan currently identifies. Therefore, the current overlays needs to be changed from resort commercial development zone to single family residential and mixed use. New zoning overlays will help promote residential and commercial density.

4. Retreat from Edge

Another approach to future growth is to pull back development from the east coast to protect the city from future storms. Interventions that protect the edge and mitigate future storm surges need to be designed and implemented in the remaining areas.

5. Historic District Designation

The designation of historic buildings in the area, such as the Firehouse on Grammercy Ave and a new Historic District on Oriental Ave will serve to preserve the character of the area. This area will serve as a base for a new commercial hub in this area that connects to the repaired Boardwalk.



Image of vacant land in South Inlet// 2013



**Urban Moves Map** // This map shows the urban moves needed to implement the new development principals to bring back density and activity to the South Inlet. The new land uses are highlighted in the various colors.

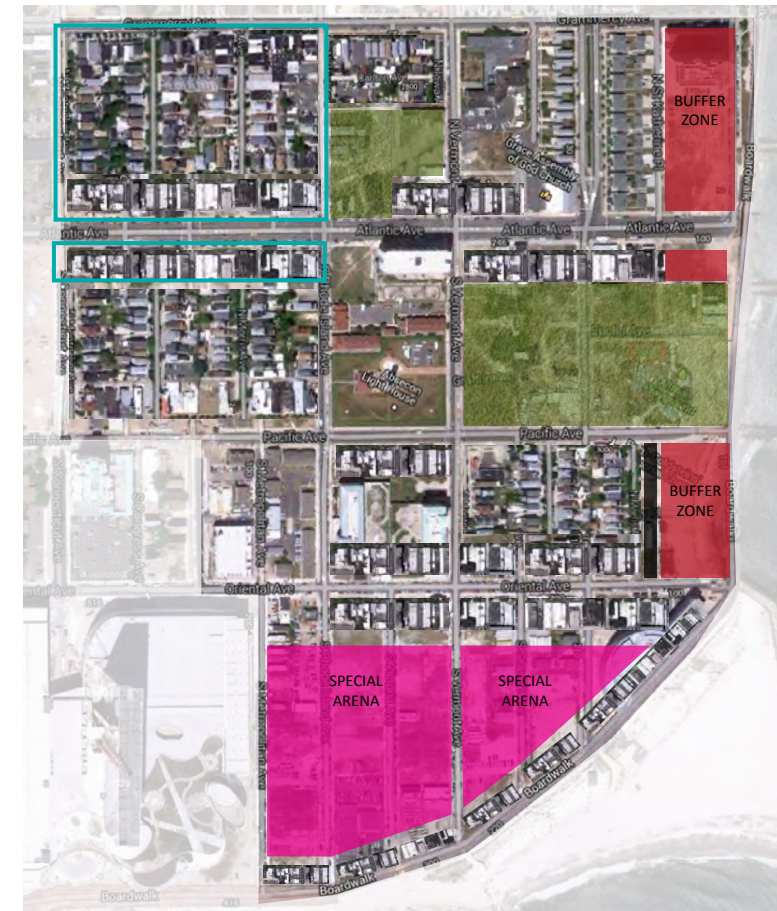
**URBAN MOVES**

Based on the new development principals, I came up with a set of urban moves resulting in a new site plan for the South Inlet:

1. **Designate Historic Zone along Oriental**  
This will create a sense of place and connection to the past. It will also serve as a destination to travel to from the Boardwalk.
2. **Create pedestrian street on Oriental**  
Adapting the last few blocks into a pedestrian pathway will pull visitors off the Boardwalk into the city.
3. **Extend commercial zones on Atlantic & Pacific Ave**  
Atlantic and Pacific already are already commercial hubs. This activity needs to be rebuilt and extended.
4. **Add new streets to create smaller blocks**

The creation and addition of paved streets will allow for more density and plots for new development.

5. **Build on existing grid**  
The grid of Atlantic City is a underused historic resource.
6. **Add small scale rowhouses to infill blocks**  
The land in the South Inlet is valuable and can support high density development.
7. **Extend existing historic park to include railway tracts**  
This move will build on a existing historic footprint in the landscape and create a new public attraction.
8. **Create new park to extend to water - Lighthouse Park**  
Not only will an extension of this historic resource beautify the South Inlet, but can be used to mitigate future storm surges.



**New Site Plan Map** // This map illustrates what the are could look like if new development principals were realized. The highlighted neighborhood areas are sampled from Chelsea and the highlighted commercial areas are from Atlantic Ave.

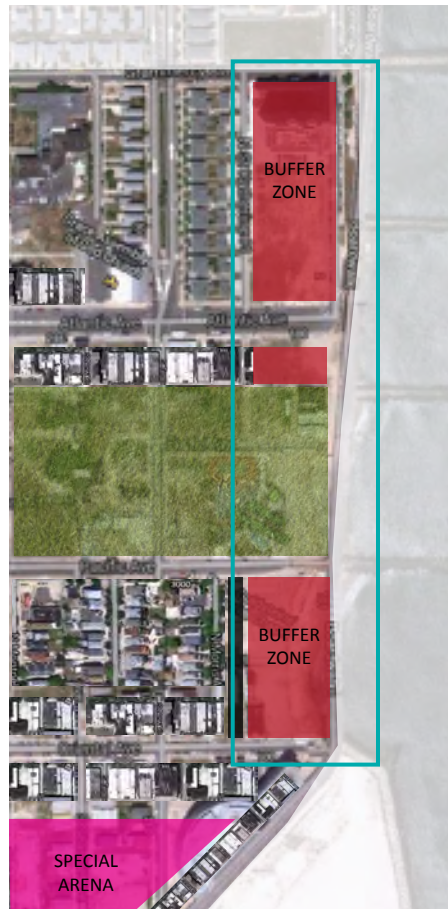
**NEW SITE PLAN**

The new site plan map above depicts realistically what the area could look like in the future. Dense development can bring the area back to life and begin to fill in the gaps left by previous desolation.

The images used to fill in the residential areas are from the adjacent Chelsea neighborhood in Atlantic City. We want to strive towards similar density in redeveloping the area. Chelsea is a thriving, highly occupied area with a strong sense of community, just as the South Inlet once was before demolition. The images used to show future commercial are taken from Atlantic Ave which is already a thriving commercial corridor. This activity just needs to be continued down the street. The special arena, buffer and park spaces are left intentionally vague as future design proposals are needed to reconcile the spaces.

9. **Leave space for special arena space along water for future investments**  
These special arena spaces are set aside because there is no current market for investment in the long term. Short term goals can be to use the areas as temporary event spaces or pop-up markets.
10. **Add commercial along Boardwalk to extend pedestrian paths**  
New commercial activity along the Boardwalk will serve to draw pedestrians further down into the South Inlet to the new Historic District.
11. **Buffer zone to protect edge**  
A new buffer zone will protect the edge of the city from future storms. It can temporarily be used for pop-up events but ultimately can be used for water management.





**Focus on Edge Map** // This map zooms in on the eastern edge of the city facing the Atlantic Ocean.

#### RETREAT FROM THE EDGE

As a strategy to mitigate future damage by storms, the eastern edge of Atlantic City demands special treatment for protection.

The creation of a buffer zone between waterfront and development is an tool to protect the South Inlet from storm surges and damage. Protective boardwalks, seawalls, and sand carpets are interventions geared towards further insulating the city. Any residential development will be pulled back from the edge to avoid any possible future damage.

The Boardwalk was previously badly damaged by Superstorm Sandy and still is in unusable pieces and disrepair. Replacement and extension of the Boardwalk is integral to the new plan and revitalization of the South End. This move will bring new life to the area.

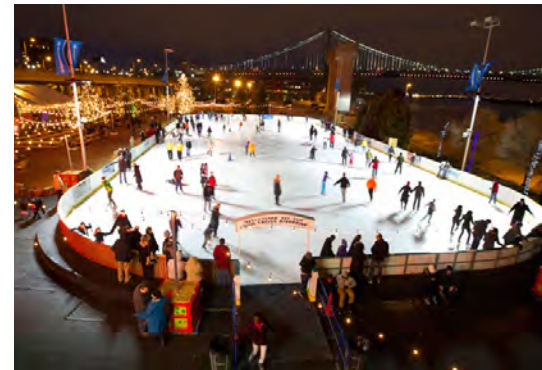


Image of Skating Rink at Delaware River Waterfront, PA/ 2013



Image of PHS Pop-Up Beer Garden in Philadelphia, PA// 2013

Temporary attractions along edge such as pop-up parks and fair grounds are short term investment strategies that can take advantage of the spaces without any large investments. The images of the pop-up beer garden and skating rink in Philadelphia, PA are examples are successful temporary installations.

The large Lighthouse Park that extends from Absecon Lighthouse to the ocean is another tool to mitigate a future storm surge. It can be used as a basin to funnel water away from the surrounding residential districts.

The exact design and specification for these areas will need more investigation and research. My work is intended to establish development principals as a starting point and provide a framework for future large scale interventions.

## END NOTES

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2. Simon, Bryant. "Boardwalk of Dreams - Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban American." New York: Oxford University Press. 2004.

# Historic Preservation Ordinance // Maggie Smith

ESTABLISHING A LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The lack of historic preservation policy in Atlantic City has been detrimental to maintaining its historic fabric. To address this, the adoption of an Atlantic City Historic Preservation Ordinance (HPO) and subsequent regulatory Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will help prevent the loss of locally designated Historic Landmarks to the city's character. It will ensure the security of the city's heritage such that it can be shared from generation to generation. The HPO and HPC will directly attend to the Atlantic City Studio Project goal by creating a plan for preservation policy that recognizes the cultural values of the city's historic environment and architecture. More specifically, they "will establish a framework for managing change and advocate for the role of preservation in managing urban change and adapting to 21st century demands."

## JUSTIFICATION

Despite the effects of casino development and urban renewal on the built environment, Atlantic City still has a wealth of historic character remaining from earlier times of prosperity. Yet the City, its residents, and its visitors have been known to overlook this wealth, not seeing its inherent value for creating a sense of place. Although a total of 14 historic sites in Atlantic City have been nationally listed – 13 on the National Register of Historic Places and one as a National Historic Landmark, only half of these are standing today. Five of those seven demolished sites were also on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. These nationally designated sights were not the only historic resources to be swept away for new development. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) issued an opinion of eligibility for several additional buildings that were demolished. Whole blocks of the city, like those seen in the South Inlet, are scarred from the leveling of buildings. Areas that were

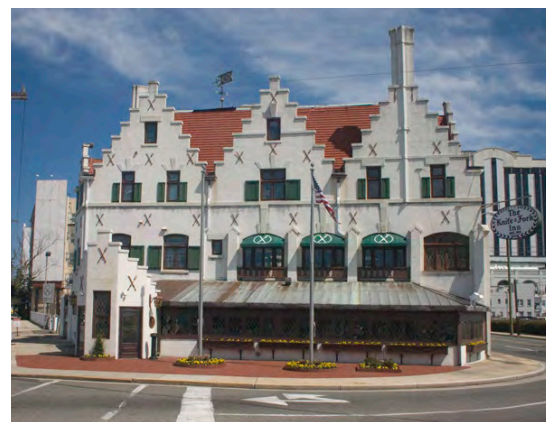


Knife & Fork Inn 1912 // Route40.net

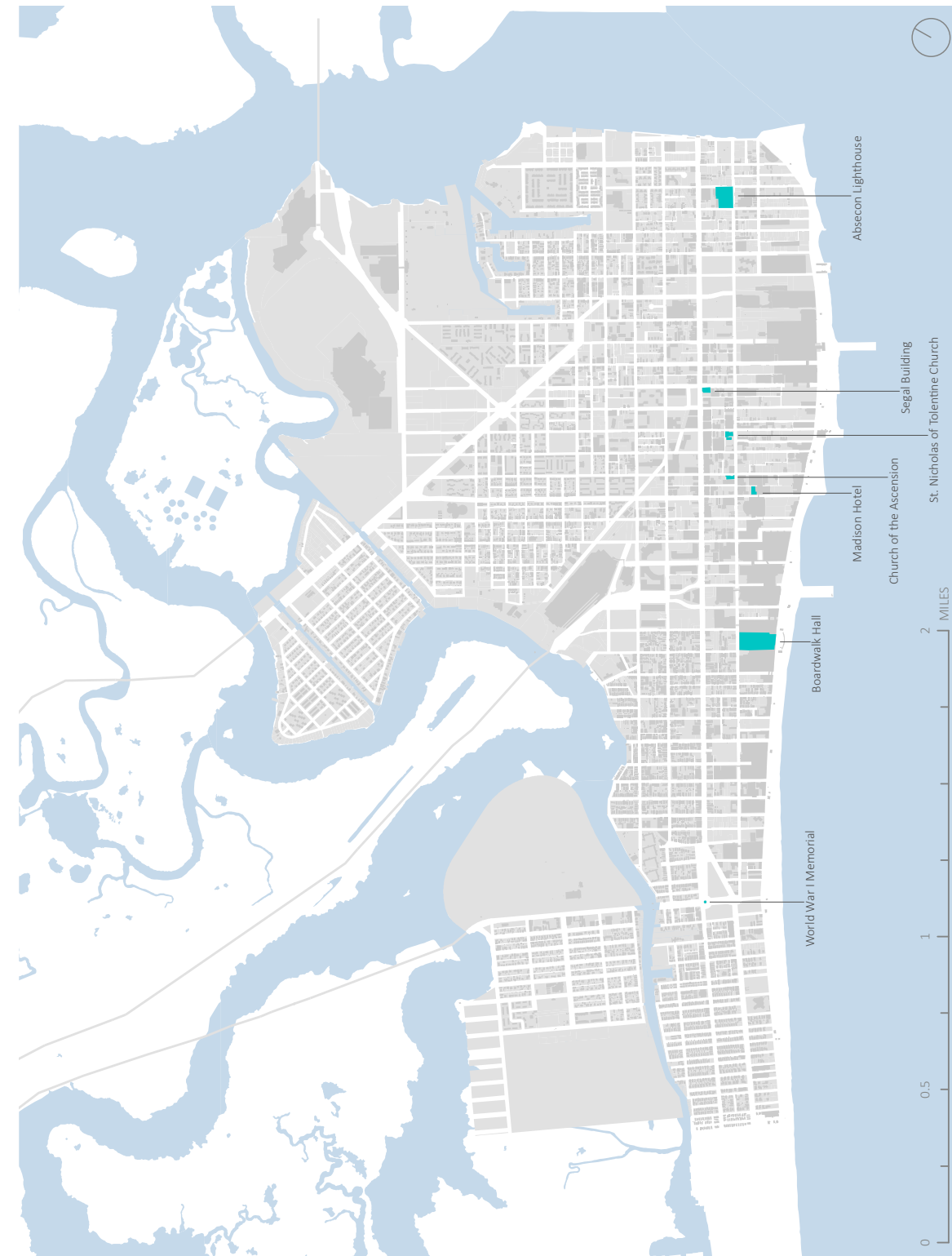
once filled with density, energy, and character, are now razed with vacant lots, gloom, and placelessness.

Nevertheless, there are still buildings and areas of Atlantic City that remain true to their historic photographs. Only a handful of these are listed on the National and State Registers (see Listed Historic Sites map to the right). According to more SHPO Opinions, a 1979 survey, a survey from the 2008 Atlantic City Master Plan, and several community opinions there are at least 85 more significant historic resources that have not been officially acknowledged through designation (see Potential Historic Sites for Local Designation map on the following page and the list in the Appendix).

Enacting a HPO would protect the existing historic sites from adverse effects. As seen with the demolition of buildings that are on the National and State Registers,



Knife & Fork Inn 2013 // HuffingtonPost.com



**Listed Historic Sites** // This map illustrates the six sites on both the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places as well as the one site listed as a National Historic Landmark.

these two forms of protection are not forces strong enough to prevent demolition. Local designation of historic assets is stronger than national or state designation. Charles Scott argues, “The most effective protection of historic resources is designation and regulation at the municipal level.” The Municipal Land Use Law is the enabling legislation for HPOs in New Jersey (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 through 136). Its central benefit to historic preservation is its capacity to bar a private property owner from altering or even demolishing a listed property. The HPO is an extension of the municipality’s zoning laws as an “overlay” because historic designation is “in addition to such designation and regulation as the zoning ordinance may otherwise require.”

The HPO defines and creates the HPC. They initially complete an extensive survey of the municipality for historic sites that with the approval of the governing body can be locally designated as Historic Landmarks or Historic Districts. Not only could the sites on the National and State Registers be locally designated through the HPO, but also the 85 other sites that demonstrate historic significance to Atlantic City. The HPO states the HPC as either advisory or regulatory. This is determined by the amount of authority they have over regulating a Certificate of Appropriateness – any work done to a designated Historic Landmark or site in a Historic District. A weak, advisory commission “makes a recommendation to the Planning Board who makes the final decision on whether a Certificate of Appropriateness should be issued.” However, a strong, regulatory commission “makes final decisions on whether to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for a project.”

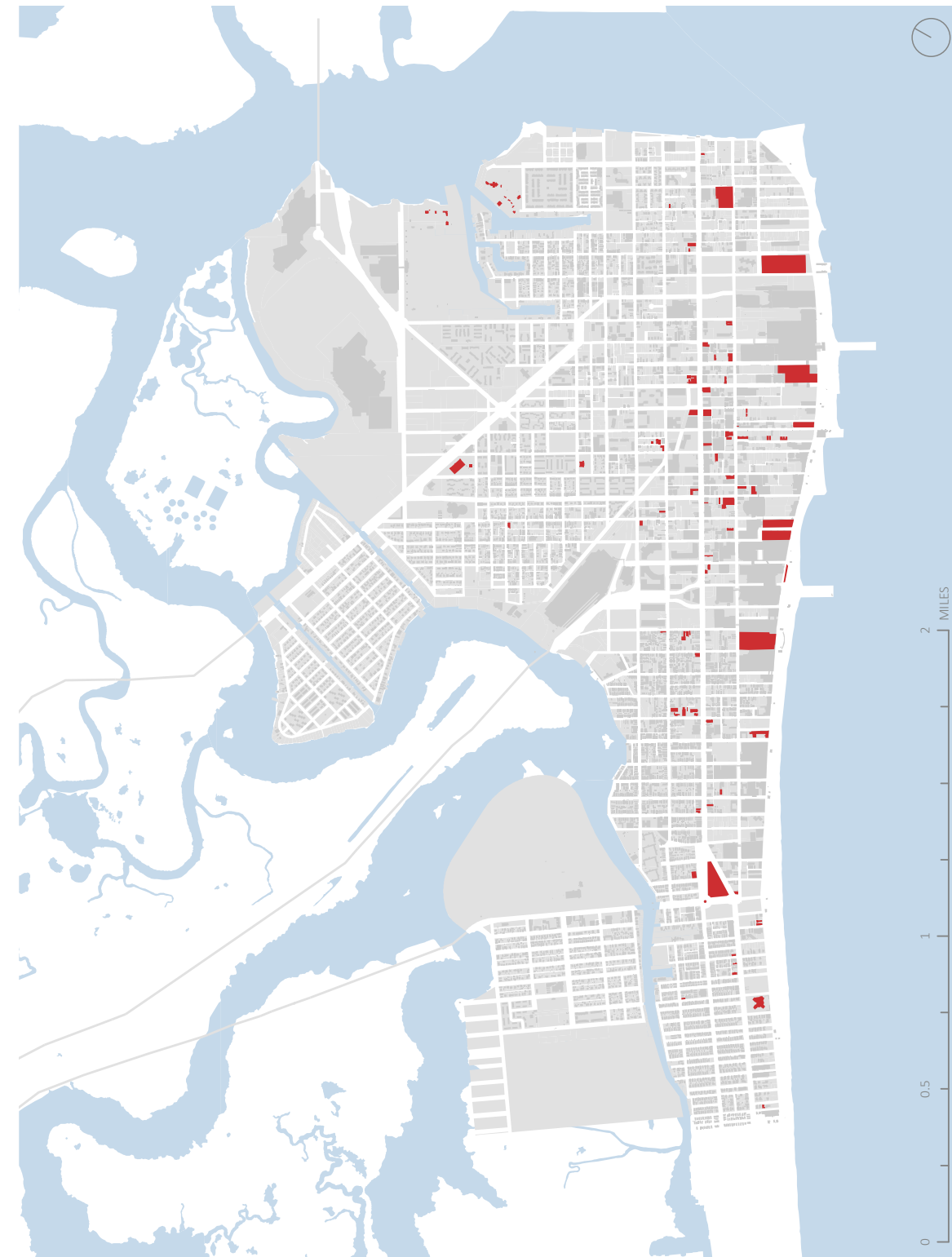
The 2008 Atlantic City Master Plan explicitly explains under “Policy Recommendations” in the Historic Preservation section, “The New Jersey SHPO recommends that historic preservation efforts undertaken at a local level are the most effective way to protect the historic resources in a place. Given the rich history of Atlantic City and the vast expanse of historic resources, which are fast depleting in the face of development, the City needs to take active preservation measures.” The enactment of a HPO and consequential HPC would aid the city in fulfilling this policy recommendation.



Absecon Lighthouse 1900s // AtlanticCityNJ.com



Absecon Lighthouse 2013 // Lee Riccetti



**Potential Historic Sites for Local Designation** // Here is a visual representation of the compiled list of existing historic resources (including already designated ones) seen in the Appendix that could be locally designated using the HPO.

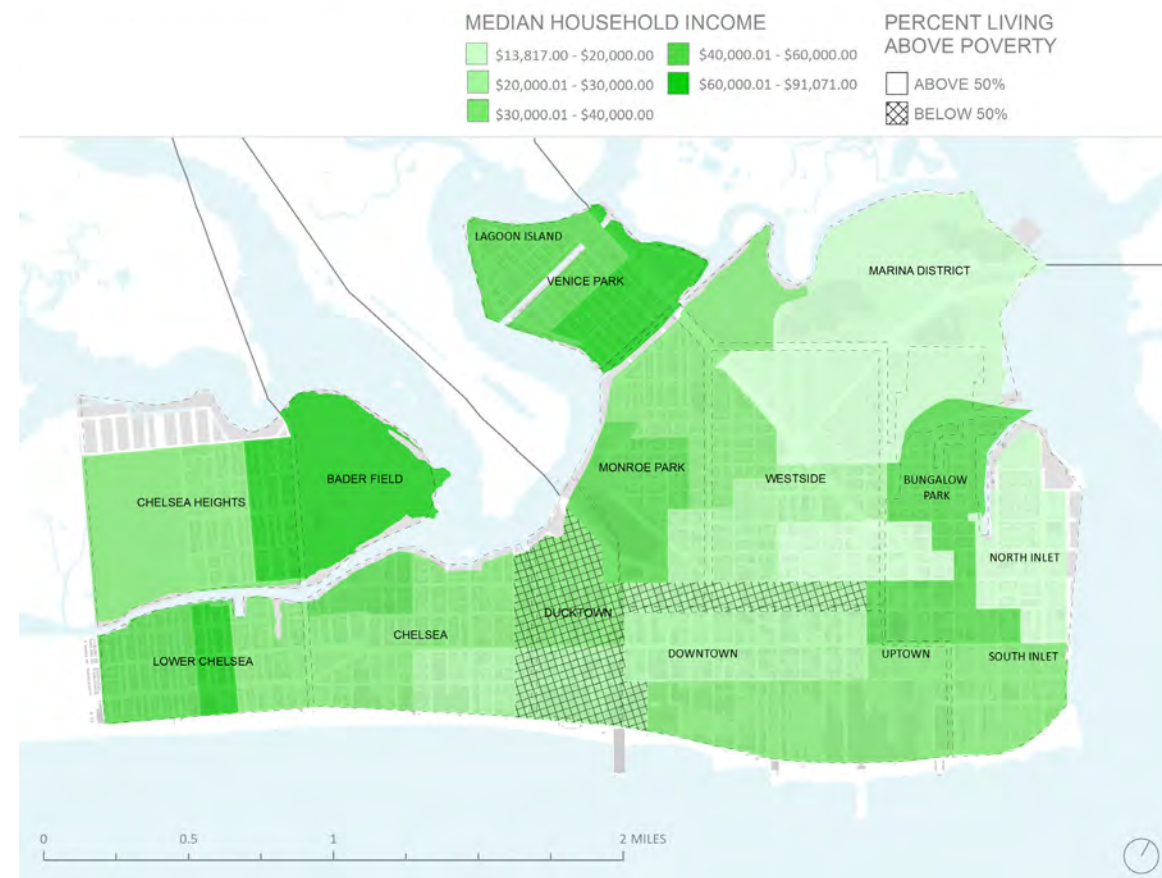
**METHODOLOGY**

Atlantic City calls for a unique version of an HPO. It would most benefit from a strong, regulatory commission. This gives the HPC the legal right to prevent the threat of further demolition to local Historic Landmarks. The city has already lost so much of its historic fabric that continuing down this path of negligence would result in placelessness. An advisory commission would not have enough of an impact on the culture of decision-making that occurs in the city. To mitigate the need for a regulatory commission with the potential burden it could place on Atlantic City, the HPO would only permit the designation of Historic Landmarks, and not Historic Districts. The low-income demographic of residents and low homeownership rate both indicate the city's current lack of capacity for a Historic District (see maps below and adjacent). The proper implementation of Historic

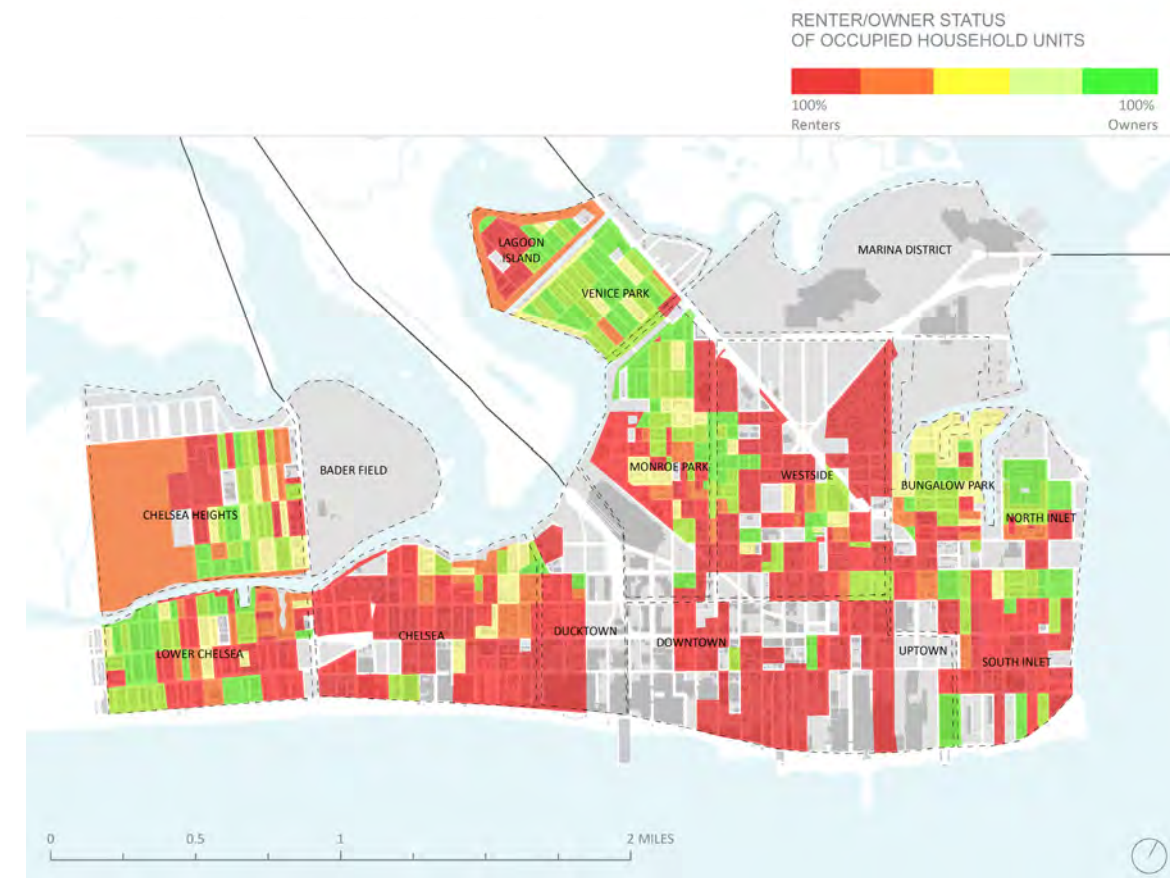
Districts is often costly and demanding of those living within the designated area. Thus, not including Historic Districts in the legislation would offset the employment of a regulatory commission.

Upon writing the policy, five HPOs were consulted as precedents. They were all from New Jersey because the enabling legislation is specific to the state. They were also written within the last 13 years, exemplifying contemporary terminology. The HPO for the Township of Hopewell serves a rural area with multiple farms and some suburbanization, dissimilar to Atlantic City's physical layout. The Town of Newton HPO is advisory and consequently lacks the power to control final decisions. Atlantic City has already lost much of its historic assets and thus cannot risk a weaker form of

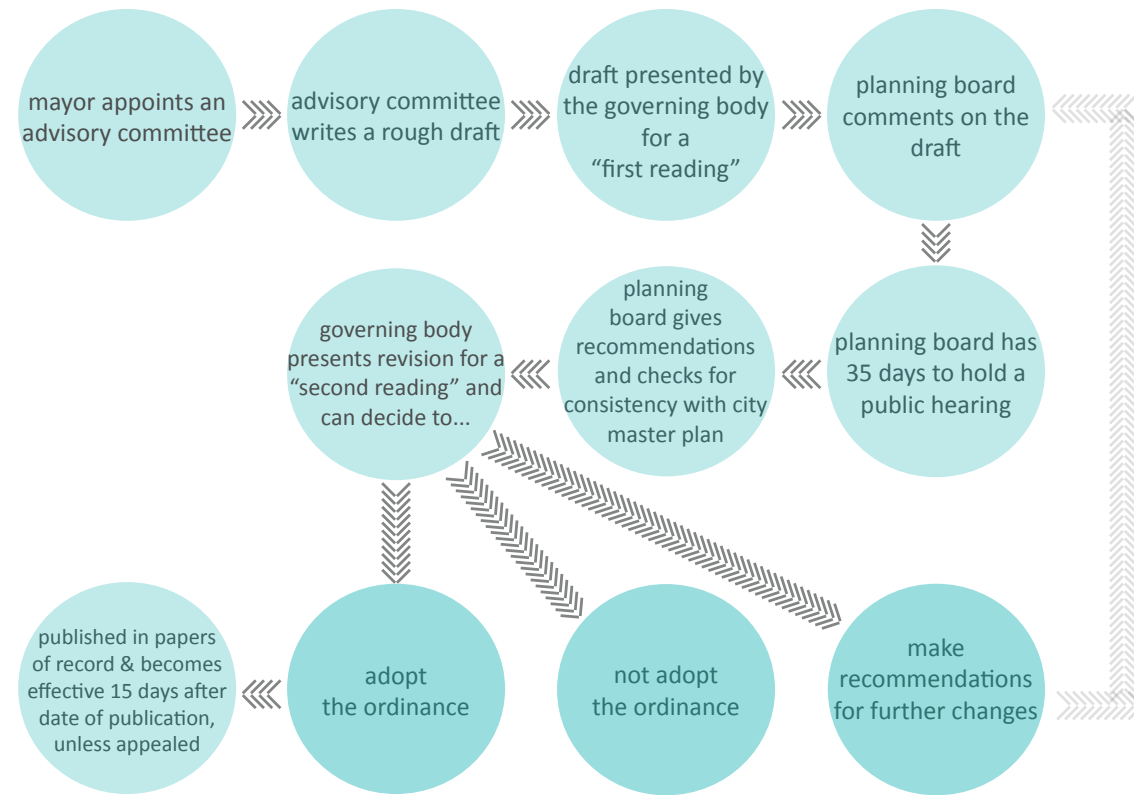
regulation. Primarily designed for the creation of a neighborhood historic district, the Ocean City HPO is a step Atlantic City is perhaps 20 years away from due to the city's current demographics. The Borough of Beach Haven HPO aimed at maintaining the integrity of a small, mostly residential beach town. Unlike Atlantic City, there is little commercial development, and a population of only 1,278. The HPO for the City of Bordentown is the most comprehensive and recently created legislation out of the five. It encourages the revitalization of a small city and main street through a regulatory commission. Though it is not as large as Atlantic City, the two have similar needs for historic preservation. For these reasons, the Atlantic City HPO is adopted after the Bordentown HPO (see Appendix).



**Median Household Income by Percent Living Above Poverty** // The average median household income is low for most of Atlantic City, residents would not be able to afford the costs inherent in Historic Districts.



**Proportion of Renters to Owners in Occupied Households by Census Block, 2010** // The high percentage of renters to homeowners indicates a lack of investment, not conducive to successful Historic Districts.



**Process for Creating a HPO** // Adapted from Preservation New Jersey, Inc.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

The first step essential to the success of the Atlantic City HPO is to obtain a supportive base. The Mayor, City Council, Planning and Development Department, and the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority must all understand the benefits of the HPO and the resulting HPC. Backing by these four entities will ensure the next step, adopting the HPO and determining the members of the HPC. Once the HPO is in effect, the HPC will complete a survey of Atlantic City with recommendations for the local designation of Historic Landmarks. The compilation provided in FIGURE ?? is only suggestive, not exhaustive, so a thorough examination of existing historic resources is necessary. The final step is to become a Certified Local Government (CLG), the certification of a local government by the SHPO to become eligible for Historic Preservation Fund grants. As a CLG, Atlantic City will

have access to “matching and no-match grants reserved exclusively for historic resources survey, preservation planning and pre-development projects undertaken by Certified Local Governments.” Ultimately, the Atlantic City HPO will generate community awareness, pride, and revitalization while encouraging the protection of the city’s cultural heritage.

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# APPENDIX

## Contrast Potential Historic Sites for Local Designation // Compilation

BUILDING NAME	ADDRESS	DESIGNATION ORIGIN
Boardwalk Hall	2301 Boardwalk	National Historic Landmark
Absecon Lighthouse	31 South Rhode Island Avenue	National & State Register
Madison Hotel	123 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd	National & State Register
St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church	1409-1421 Pacific Avenue	National & State Register
Segal Building	1200 Atlantic Avenue	National & State Register
Church of the Ascension	1601 Pacific Avenue	National & State Register
World War I Memorial	South Albany Avenue	National & State Register
Fire Station #8	140 North Indiana Avenue	Determination of Eligability
Fire Station #9	734 North Indiana Avenue	Determination of Eligability
Ritz Carlton Hotel	2715 Boardwalk at Iowa Avenue	Certificate of Eligability
Warner Theatre (facade)	2015 Boardwalk	SHPO Opinion
Atlantic City Post Office	1701 Pacific Avenue	SHPO Opinion
Raphael-Gordon House	118 South Newton Avenue	SHPO Opinion
Atlantic City High School	1809 Pacific Avenue	SHPO Opinion
Equitable Trust Bank Building	2030 Atlantic Avenue	SHPO Opinion
2-6 South Virginia Avenue	2-6 South Virginia Avenue	SHPO Opinion
U.S. Coast Guard Station	900 Beach Thorofare	SHPO Opinion
The Knife and Fork Inn	3600 Atlantic Ave	SHPO Opinion
The Strand and Marine Apartments	3821-3825 Boardwalk Avenue	SHPO Opinion
Morris Guard (Aminata)	10 South New York Avenue	SHPO Opinion
Beth Kehillah Synagogue Building	901 Pacific Avenue	SHPO Opinion
Westside All Wars Memorial Building	1510 Adriatic Avenue	SHPO Opinion
Apartments	33 South North Carolina Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Asbury ME Church	1713 Arctic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Atlantic City Fire Station 2	138 North Indiana Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Atlantic City Fire Station 3	732 North Indiana Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Atlantic City Fire Station 6	4025 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Boardwalk National Bank	1325 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Carnegie Library Center	35 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd	2008 Master Plan
Carpernters Hall Local 623	26 South New York Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Central Methodist Episcopal Church	1213 Pacific Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Central Pier	1400 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Chelsea Baptist Church	2908 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Chelsea Presbyterian Church	9 South Chelsea Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Chelsea Hebrew Congregation	3923 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Civil Rights Memorial	35 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd	2008 Master Plan
Claridge Hotel	1811 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Commercial Store	3112 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Delicatessens Building	1326 Pacific Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Eldredge Chelsea Fireproof Warehouse	3528 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
First United Presbyterian Church	1015 Pacific Ave	2008 Master Plan
Fountain on Garden Pier	600 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Garden Pier	601 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Gardner's Basin	800 North New Hampshire Ave	2008 Master Plan
Guaranteed Trust Bank Building	1125 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Health Office	3121 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Kennedy Sculpture	2301 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Kline Memorial	905 Pacific Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Knife and Fork Inn	2405 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Korean War Memorial	1801 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Law Office	3123 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Marburg Building	22 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd	2008 Master Plan
Masonic Temple	3515 Ventnor Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Morris Guard (Aminata)	20 South New York Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Newberry Building	1424 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Old Fire House	15 South Pennsylvania Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Old Fire House	519 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Providence Motor Car	3500 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Public School (Board of Education)	28 North Brighton Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Resorts Casino Hotel	1121 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Richmond Ave Pubic School	4115 Ventnor Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Ridgeway Apartments	4011 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Riviera Building	101 South Raleigh Ave	2008 Master Plan

BUILDING NAME	ADDRESS	DESIGNATION ORIGIN
Second Baptist Church	110 Rev. Dr. Isaac Cole Plaza	2008 Master Plan
Soldiers & Sailors of Civil War Memorial	3501 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
St. James AME Church	101 North New York Ave	2008 Master Plan
Steel Pier	1100 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Sun National Bank	2028 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
Tabers Building	1635 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
The Shoe Stop/ Sundaes Ice Cream	1317 Boardwalk	2008 Master Plan
Wachovia Bank	1301 Atlantic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
White House	2301 Arctic Avenue	2008 Master Plan
106 South Carolina Avenue	106 South Carolina Avenue	1979 Survey
Commercial Building	1114-16 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
120 Atlantic Avenue	120 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
Department Store	1300 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
135 St. James Place	135 St. James Place	1979 Survey
143-9 St. James Place	143-9 St. James Place	1979 Survey
Commercial Building	1633 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
Commercial Building	1708 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
1926 Atlantic Avenue	1926 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
2401 Atlantic Avenue	2401 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
2512 Pacific Avenue	2512 Pacific Avenue	1979 Survey
Apartment House	7-9 Connecticut Avenue	1979 Survey
Knights of Columbus Hotel	1408 Pacific Avenue	1979 Survey
St. Michael's Church	10 North Mississippi Avenue	1979 Survey
German Presbyterian Church	1315 Pacific Avenue	1979 Survey
Engine Company 4	2700 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
Our Lady Star of the Sea	2651 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
Price Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church	525 Atlantic Avenue	1979 Survey
Dante Hall Theater	14 North Mississippi Avenue	Community Opinion
Professional Arts Buildings	1616 Pacific Avenue	Community Opinion
The Boardwalk	Along the Beach	Community Opinion

# APPENDIX

**Atlantic City Historic Preservation Ordinance** // Coming Soon...

# UNCOVERING DUCKTOWN

DOCUMENTATION AND INTERPRETATION PROJECT

Known in its heyday as Atlantic City's Italian American neighborhood, the Ducktown neighborhood today has been witness to significant changes to its social makeup, all the while retaining a rich array of historic residential fabric. This makes Ducktown one of the more striking examples of both change and continuity in Atlantic City today. Focusing specifically on Ducktown's residential landscape, this project documents its surviving historic fabric and examines how preservation goals can be tied to existing social needs.

## PROJECT GOAL

This project sought to answer the following questions: What has changed? What historic fabric remains? How can preservation be joined to local community needs?

The goal of this project was to document Ducktown's change over time through interviews with current and former residents, documentation of its physical landscape and a mapping analysis. By understanding exactly what physical fabric remains, as well as what has changed in the neighborhood, this project then aimed to present ideas for how Ducktown's history and historic fabric can be preserved and utilized to assist in meeting community needs in the area.

## DUCKTOWN LOCATION

The neighborhood border of Ducktown, like many neighborhood borders, is loosely defined. In the early 1900s, the original boundary spanned from Arkansas Avenue to California Avenue, and from the beach to the bay. Today, depending on who one asks and what map is consulted, the Ducktown neighborhood is considered to be from Missouri to California Avenue and from either the beach to the bay or from Pacific Avenue to the bay. Most residents appear to identify the latter as the boundary of Ducktown, and indeed the area south of Pacific is more of a commercial area, whereas north is where one finds the majority of Ducktown's residential fabric. As this project focuses on the residential neighborhood of Ducktown, the border from Missouri to California and from Pacific Avenue to the Bay is used.



Map of Ducktown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ducktown's location, adjacent to the main vehicular and train entries into the city as well as to the Tanger Shopping Outlet and several casinos, allows the neighborhood to serve as both a residential and local commercial area, and the neighborhood likewise reflects the same duality between resident and tourist landscapes that makes Atlantic City unique. The area is also home to several key civic institutions and historic buildings, which continue to not only serve the community but have also benefitted from extensive restoration and conservation work, demonstrating the value placed by residents on local history. Finally, the Ducktown neighborhood is home to one of Atlantic City's most distinct residential landscapes.



1909 Aerial // Courtesy of US Library of Congress

Originally home to Atlantic City's Italian American community, the neighborhood has overseen significant changes to its social makeup while retaining a rich array of both its physical fabric and local institutions. This has made it one of the more striking examples of both change and continuity in Atlantic City today.

## HISTORY

### Early Years

In the early 1800s, the area known now as Ducktown was a mostly rural area and housed duck farms along the bay. Locals agree that this is how the name 'Ducktown' came to be. One local fisherman and Ducktown resident, George Gundaker, notes that rather than housing duck farms, the area was home to 'Baymen' who hunted ducks for a hobby or for food and generally made their livelihood through the bay.

In the 1880's, Italian immigrants, including two prominent Sicilian families, the Siracuas and Ruffas families, settled in the area, responding to employment opportunities as developers began to build hotels in the area. By 1897, Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, a Roman Catholic Church, was erected at the intersection of California and Atlantic Avenues to serve a growing population. Our Lady Star of the Sea Church was soon followed by St. Michael's Church in 1903, which is situated on Mississippi Avenue between Arctic and Atlantic Avenues.

## The Establishment of Ducktown

In 1906, after African American workers went on strike to protest low pay and poor work conditions, hotel owners responded by turning to Italian laborers for employment. According to historian Bryant Simon, "almost overnight, Ducktown became an Italian American neighborhood." Ducktown quickly transformed from a series of duck farms to a working class neighborhood, characterized by two- and three-story detached and semi-detached row houses, as well as alleys containing small row houses like Italy Terrace. Former residents speak fondly of a close-knit community, where everyone knew each other and life was lived out on porches and at local favorites like Fedelli's or White House Sub Shop.

Ideally located next to the main railroad and later, automobile entrance to the city, Ducktown and its residents thrived. The neighborhood also actively participated with Atlantic City's tourists. Row houses often had small apartments in the back or finished basements that owners rented out to tourists in the summer; across Atlantic Avenue towards Pacific, guesthouses stood next to single-family homes. Coming mainly from South Philadelphia, Italian-American families came every summer, like the rest of the city's visitors, to experience the pleasure Atlantic City had to offer. By 1920, Ducktown had become a tourist destination as the city's Little Italy. This was commemorated by local Italian-American organizations and businesses with the formation of the Columbus Day Committee, which organized events to celebrate Columbus Day each year, in partnership with St. Michael's Church. This eventually led to the creation of a Columbus Plaza, where a statue of Christopher Columbus was placed in the 1950s. Made



Fairmount and Georgia Avenues, 1910s. // Courtesy of Bob Ruffolo, Princeton Antiques.





Photos courtesy of Sapienza/White family collection.

in Italy by the artist Gaetano Chiaromonte, the statue was gifted by the Italian American community to Atlantic City in 1958.

However, Ducktown's close-knit community meant that like the rest of the city, Ducktown experienced and perpetuated a de-facto segregation. According to Bryant Simons, "when people spoke of Ducktown, they marked the area, as they did the Northside, as a racially, religiously, and ethnically distinct space. Again in Atlantic City, identity created a geography and geography created identity" (75). In 1941, the first families moved into Jonathan Pitney Village, a white-only public housing project in Ducktown, and Atlantic City's second public housing project after Stanley Homes Village in the Northside. Bounded by Missouri, Fairmount, Mississippi, Mediterranean and Georgia Avenues, the housing project was eventually desegregated and was demolished in 1998.

#### Changes

By the 1960s, changes began to come to Ducktown. The second and third-generation family members of the neighborhood's long-time residents, benefiting from their families' success, began to move out to the suburbs of Ventnor and Margate. One resident notes that when the children and grandchildren of Ducktown's original residents went to college, after "these goals were achieved, the old neighborhood didn't figure in new lives." For some, the lack of parking and small housing was a primary issue. For others, superior school

systems in nearby Ventnor played a key role. In their place, especially with the advent of the casinos and the need for new labor, Hispanics, Greeks, Asians and African Americans began to move into the neighborhood.

In the 1990s, the Ducktown Revitalization Association (DRA) was formed by third-generation local business owner Frank Formica. The 1990s saw a renewed interest by Ducktown residents in its preservation, with St. Michael's Church raising funds for a massive \$1.5 million renovation in 1998 and the Press of the Atlantic describing the start of a "Ducktown renaissance." In 1992, the DRA, with support from Trump Plaza, a nearby casino, developed a proposal calling for reinvestment in the area. In particular, it called for renaming the area around St. Michael's Church to "The Shops of St. Michael's" and called for the promotion and inclusion of Ducktown's commercial area as a key tourist destination. The Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) ultimately funded a \$700,000 feasibility study on this proposal; unfortunately, details on this particular proposal could not be obtained, with those working closely on it feeling that the proposal was ignored and eventually discarded.

In the 2000s, CRDA provided \$2 million to refurbish sidewalks and put electrical lines beneath ground as part of a street beautification scheme. In 2003 CRDA also renovated Dante Hall, originally built in 1926 by St. Michael's Church as a theater space for its parish school, over an 18-month period. Completed in October 2003 and totaling \$3.5 million, the newly named Dante Hall

Theater of the Arts launched the beginning of CRDA's consideration of Ducktown as a potential arts district. This was realized in 2013 with the development of the Wave Garage arts retail center.

#### WHAT HAS CHANGED

Ducktown today houses approximately 3034 residents. Broken down, 3% identify as white, 2% as black, 1% as Native American, 30% as Asian, 29% as other and 5% as two or more races. Within the total population, 51% identify as Hispanic. The demographic makeup of Ducktown residents have changed significantly even within the last two decennial censuses. Now predominately a Hispanic and Asian neighborhood, the overall population saw a 5% increase but a significant decrease in almost all racial groups, with the exception of Asians and Hispanics. Most notably, the population percentage of Asians grew an astronomical 96.7% in the past ten years, while the white population shrunk by 72.4%.

The changes to Ducktown's social makeup are evident when one walks through the neighborhood, with one finding evidence of the mixing of races and ethnicities in places like Our Lady Star of the Sea church, where mass is held in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, and in the food-based retail dotting the landscape. Alongside long-time favorites such as White House Sub Shop, Formica's Bakery or Barbera's Fish Market, one now also finds offerings like Cage VYVY Banmi Mi Thit Ngoui or Panchos. The local 7-Eleven sells ready-to-eat enchiladas and stores like Bongiovani's Grocery is now replaced by Solanos, a Spanish-American grocery store. There is thus strong evidence that newer residents have adopted and made Ducktown their home.

#### WHAT HAS REMAINED

Despite significant changes to its racial and ethnic makeup, Ducktown still evokes and is still widely perceived as an Italian American space. The continued success of long-standing businesses such as Angelo's Fairmount Tavern, started in 1935, contribute to this, but perhaps more than anything, long-time residents who no longer live in Ducktown continue to actively use and



**2000 & 2010 Population/Race Maps**  
 // Depicts total population and reported race/ethnicity for each census block in Ducktown for the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census. Table demonstrates percent change in reported race and ethnicity.



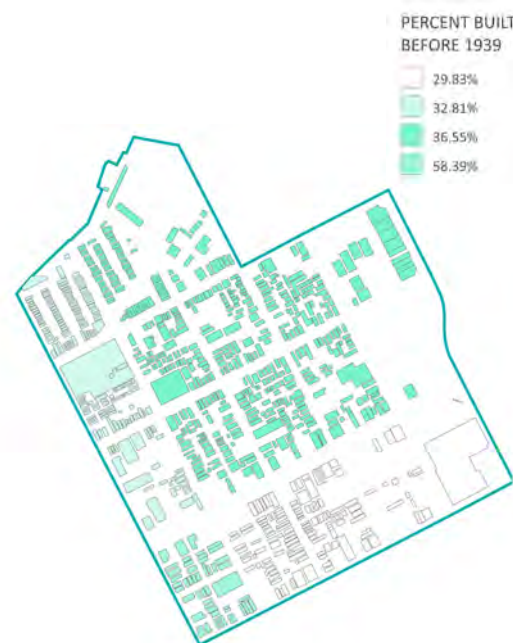


**2010 Maps: Percent of Housing Built Before 1969 and After 2000** // Depicts percentage of total housing in census block group built before 1969 and after 2000.

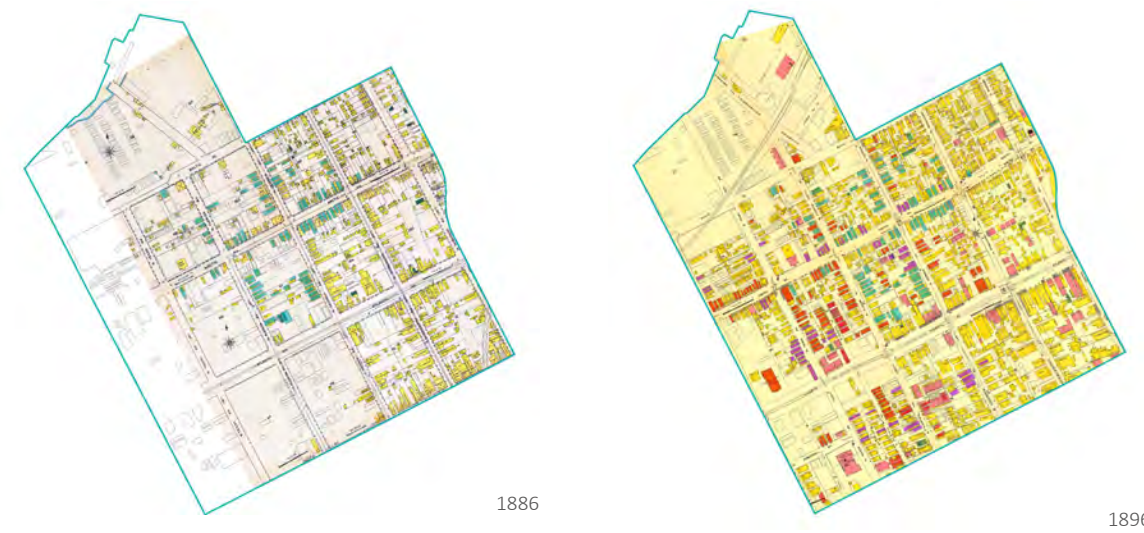
feel ownership of Ducktown. One business owner who no longer lives in the area says, without a trace of irony, that “ anybody who doesn’t live in this neighborhood is crazy. This is the best neighborhood in the world.” Another defines himself as one of the many “who’ve left Ducktown as a place to live,” but continues to come in every day to work.

What remains however, is not restricted to memory landscapes. Ducktown still largely retains its physical historical fabric. A common criteria for preservation requires sites to be older than 50 years old in order to be considered as historic. The 2010 decennial census data suggests that a high percentage of the area’s buildings meet this criteria, particularly between California and Texas Avenues. In fact, new construction (post-2000) make up under 10% for Ducktown areas.

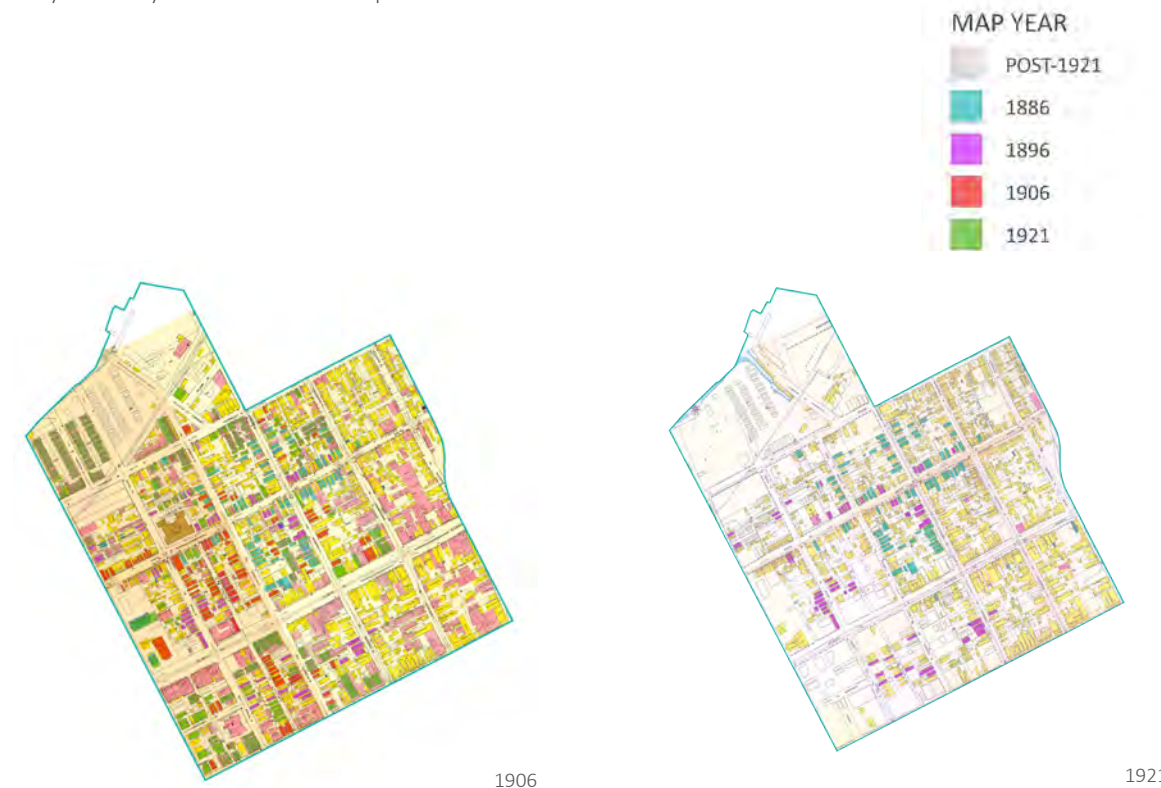
Additionally, a sizeable chunk appears to have been built before 1939. An analysis of historical maps from the late



**2010 Map: Percent of Housing Built Before 1939** // Depicts percentage of total housing in census block group built before 1939.

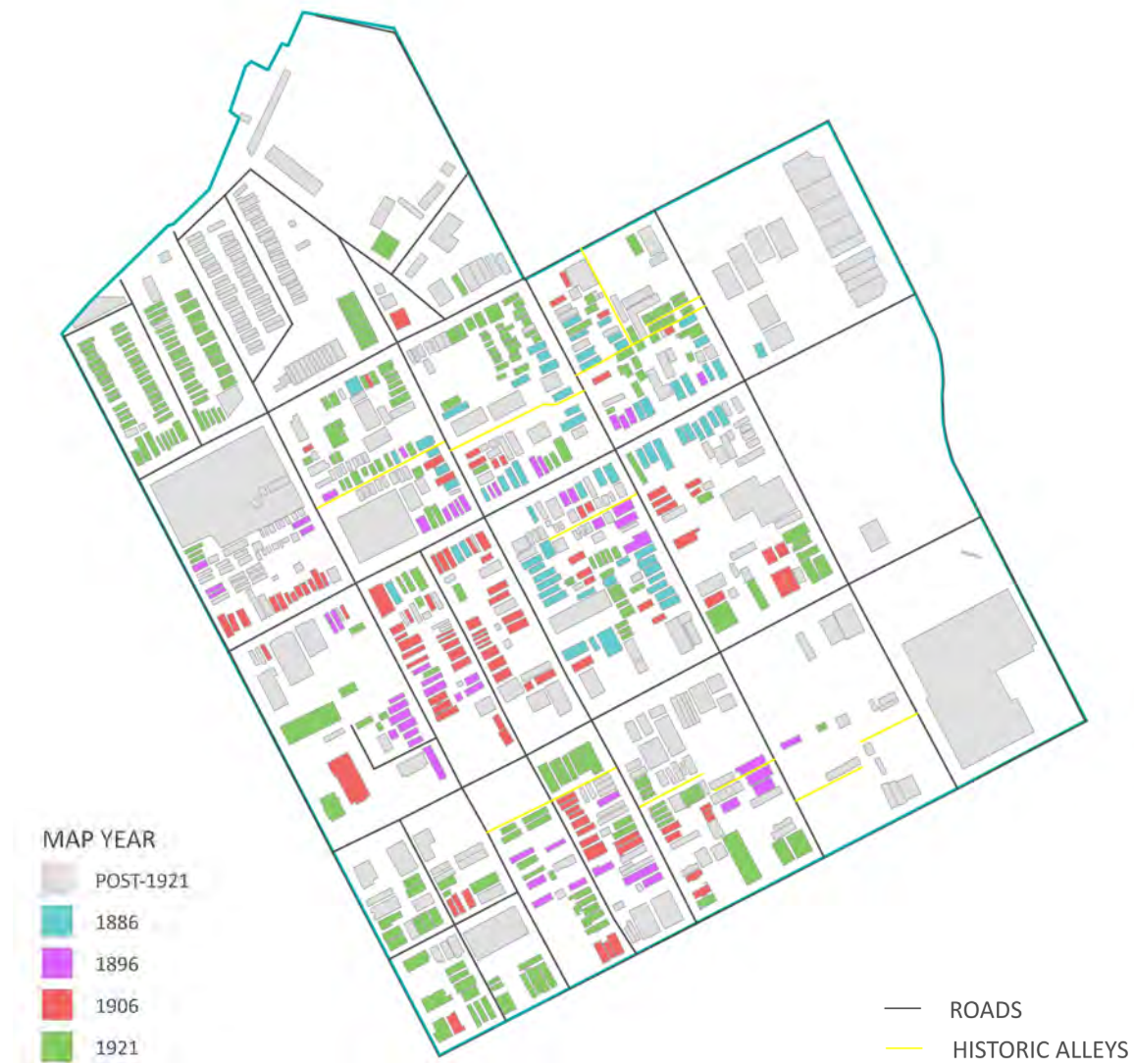


19th and early 20th century both verify and suggest an even richer repository of historic fabric than the census data suggests. While one cannot ascertain with 100% certainty as to whether the current building is indeed the same structure as what is present in these maps, one can at least determine where development patterns remain unchanged, and when such patterns emerged. There are strong block patterns that still remain, particularly along Arctic Avenue, and historic alleys and alleyhomes that hide from plain view.



**1886, 1896, 1906 and 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Ducktown**

// Geolocated via GIS and color-coded to identify buildings still existing in current map of Atlantic City

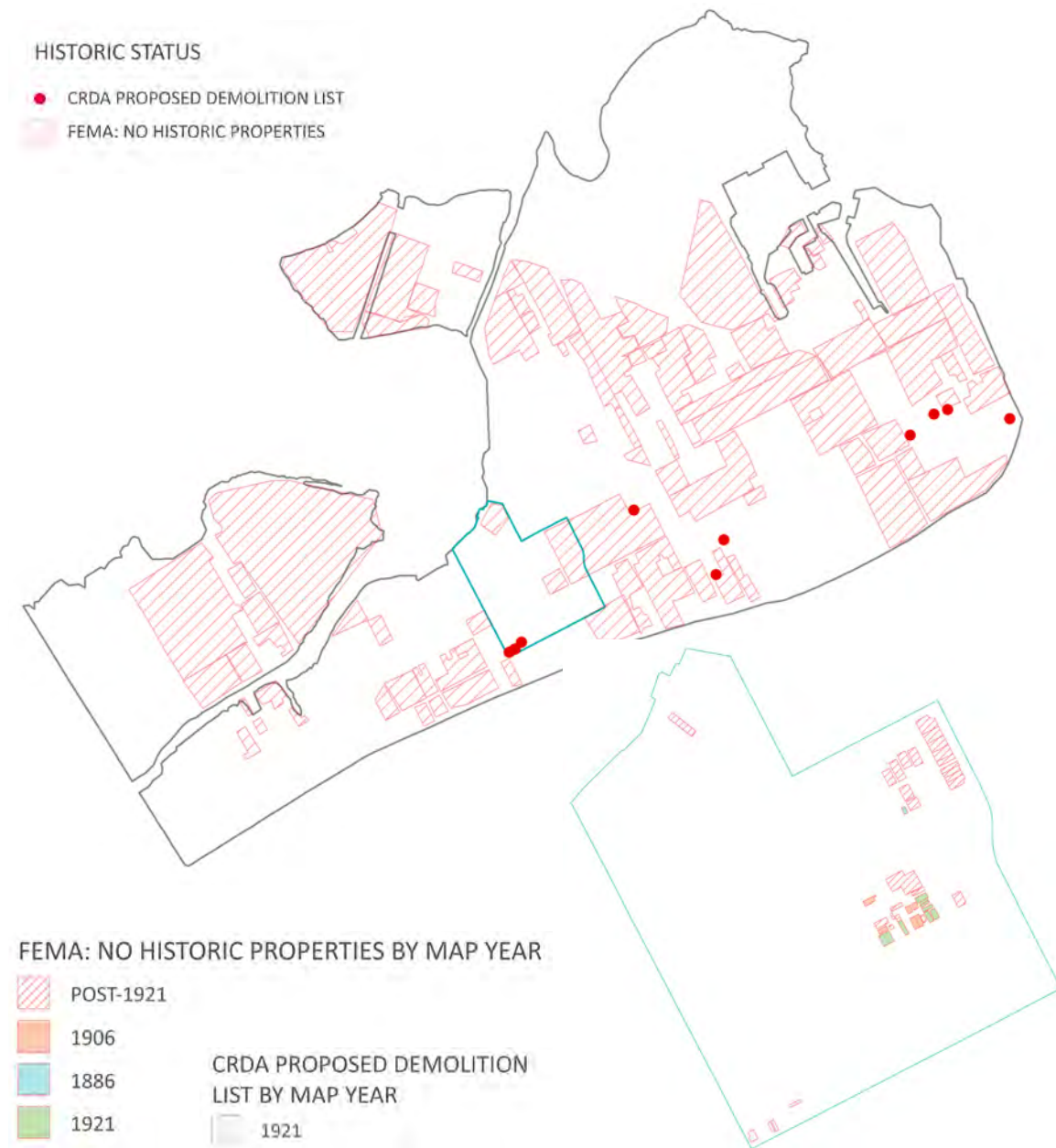


**Surviving Historic Fabric in Ducktown Pre-1921** // Map identifying buildings from pre-1921 still existing in current map of Atlantic City

**IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

On a positive note, only 4.74% of Ducktown’s buildings fall into either FEMA’s “no historic properties” zones or CRDA’s top ten demolition list, demonstrating that Ducktown’s high percentage of existing historic fabric is recognized. However, a pressing concern is that, as a result of Hurricane Sandy and FEMA’s updated flood insurance policies, Ducktown’s many historic buildings may not comply with updated building codes. This could potentially threaten Ducktown’s rich repository of historic buildings, as they will be less likely to meet new codes and will be costly to rehabilitate.

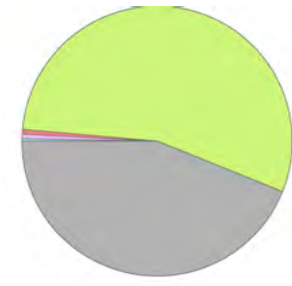
The factor of cost becomes especially pressing, given the socioeconomic trends in this neighborhood. As discussed previously, this is a place with a lot of new residents. Many of these residents are young, and while Ducktown residents overall have a higher percentage of residents with a bachelor’s degree than other areas, suggesting a relatively educated population, over 50% of Ducktown’s residents live below the poverty line. This, along with the fact that its median household income is not, as one might expect, in the lowest percentile, suggests a wide range in socioeconomic status. This is therefore a place where the gap between those living



**Map of FEMA Historic Properties Status and CRDA Demolition List** // Maps identifying and then coding properties in Ducktown that are overlaid by the FEMA No Historic Properties map or by CRDA’s Proposed Demolition List

in poverty and those above it is rather high. Most importantly, Ducktown is also overwhelmingly a renter occupied neighborhood, and the only two areas where high rates of owner-occupied housing are reported also report high rates of vacancy. Ducktown is thus an

area with not only rich historic fabric, but a resident population that no longer is directly linked to the area’s period of historical significance, with troubling rates of poverty and low income.

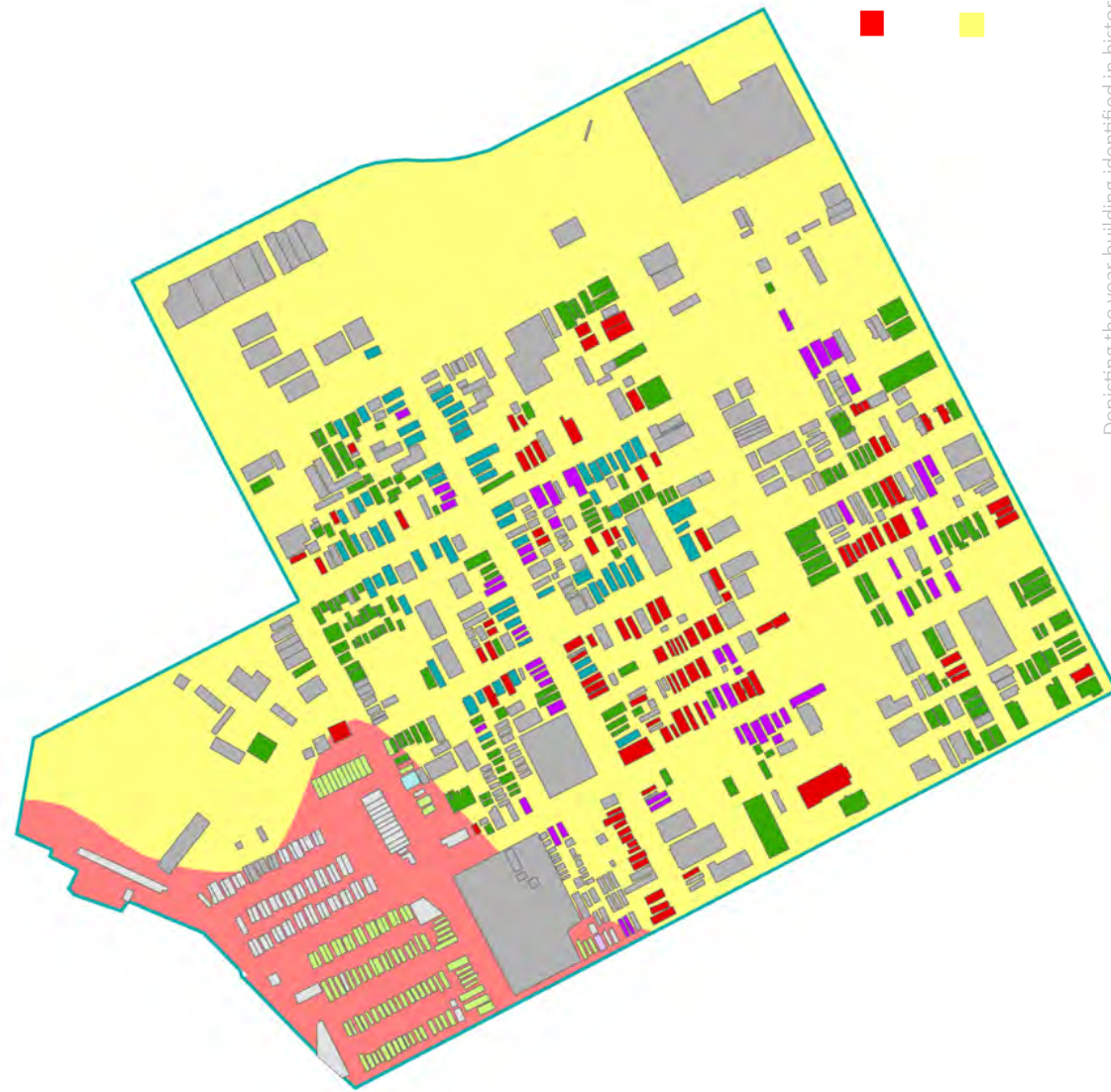
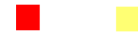


**ZONE V:**  
 0.5% - 1886  
 0.5% - 1896  
 0.5% - 1906  
 53.5% - 1921  
 45% - POST-1921



**ZONE A:**  
 09% - 1886  
 07% - 1896  
 15% - 1906  
 26% - 1921  
 43% - POST-1921

V - 1% or more annual chance of flooding and hazards associated with storm waves. 26% chance flooding over life of a 30-year mortgage.  
 A - Base floodplain. Areas that will be affected by waves 1.5 foot high or greater.



Map of Buildings and FEMA Flood Insurance Map //

Depicting the year building identified in historical map, and location within FEMA Flood Insurance zones.



Photo #9 in Project NJ-14-1, December 15, 1939. // Courtesy of Bob Ruffolo, Princeton Antiques.



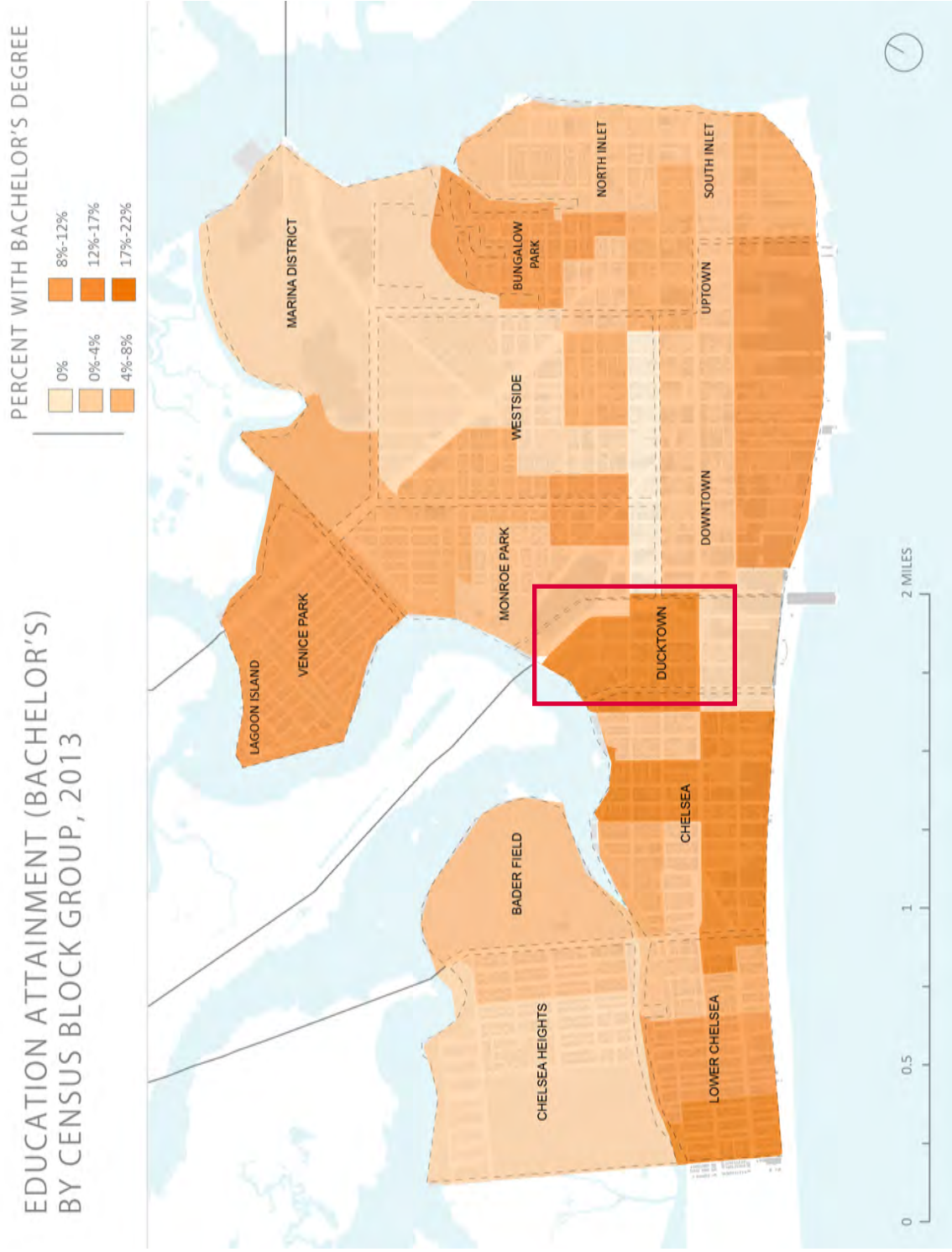
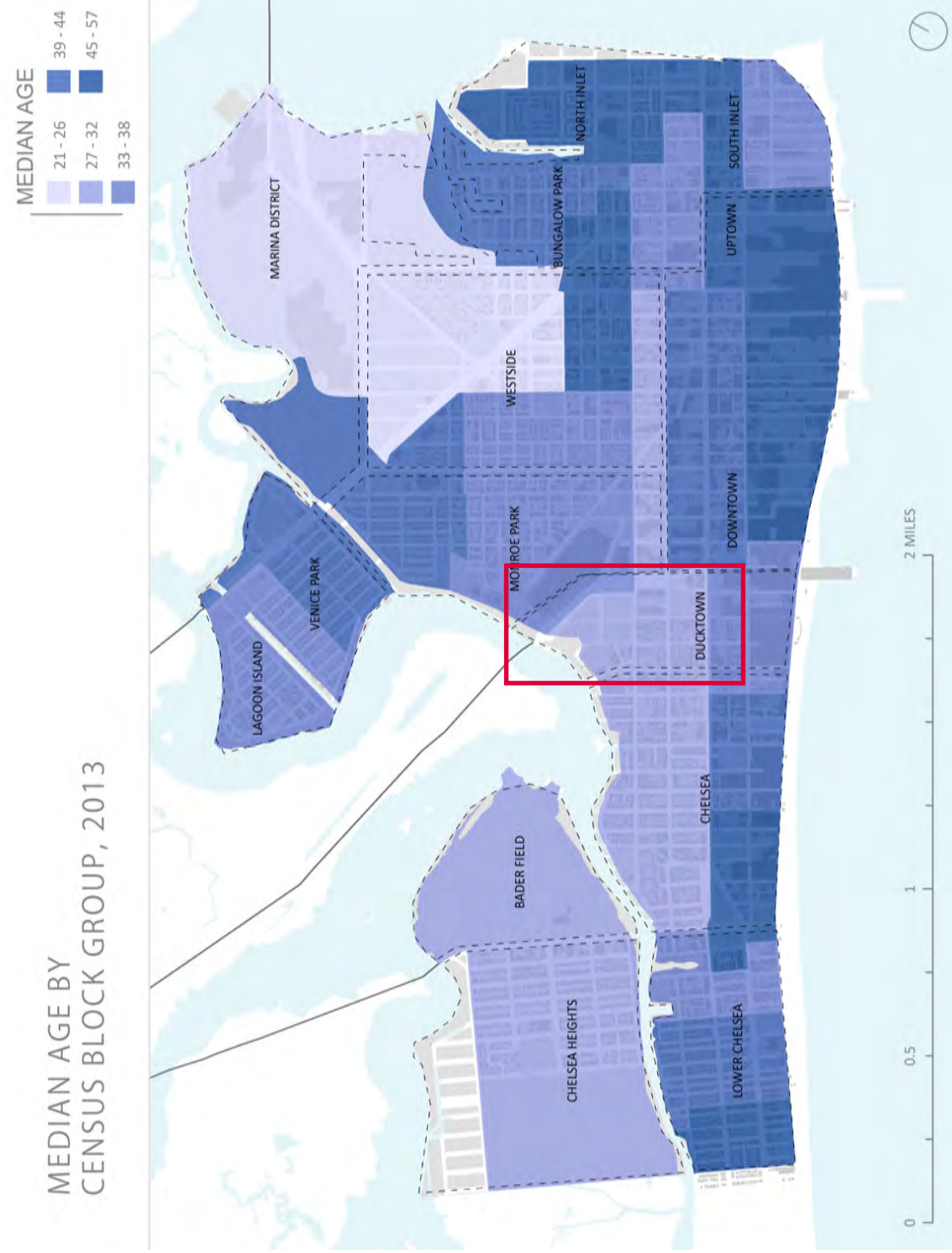
Photo #21 in Project NJ-14-1, December 15, 1939. // Courtesy of Bob Ruffolo, Princeton Antiques.

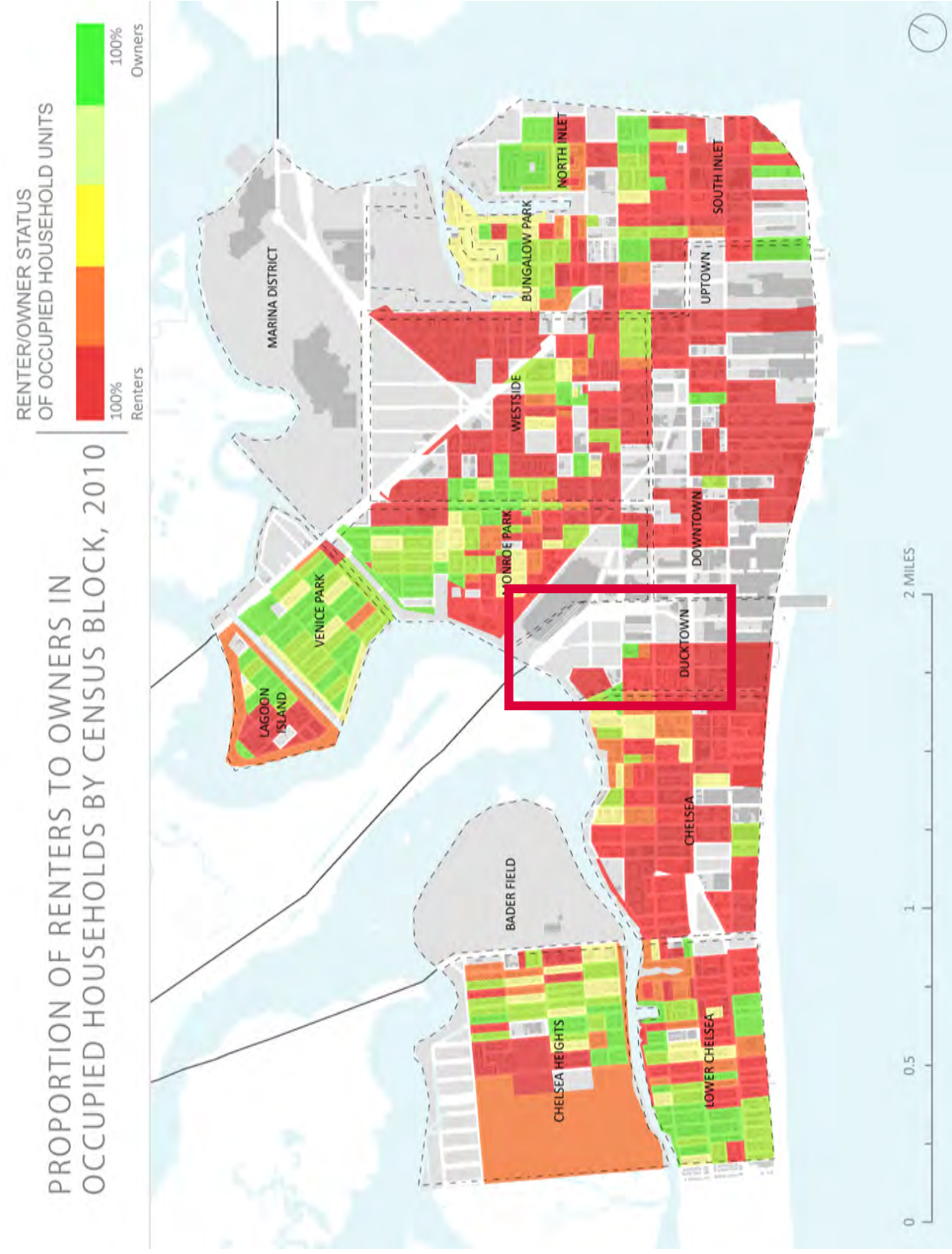
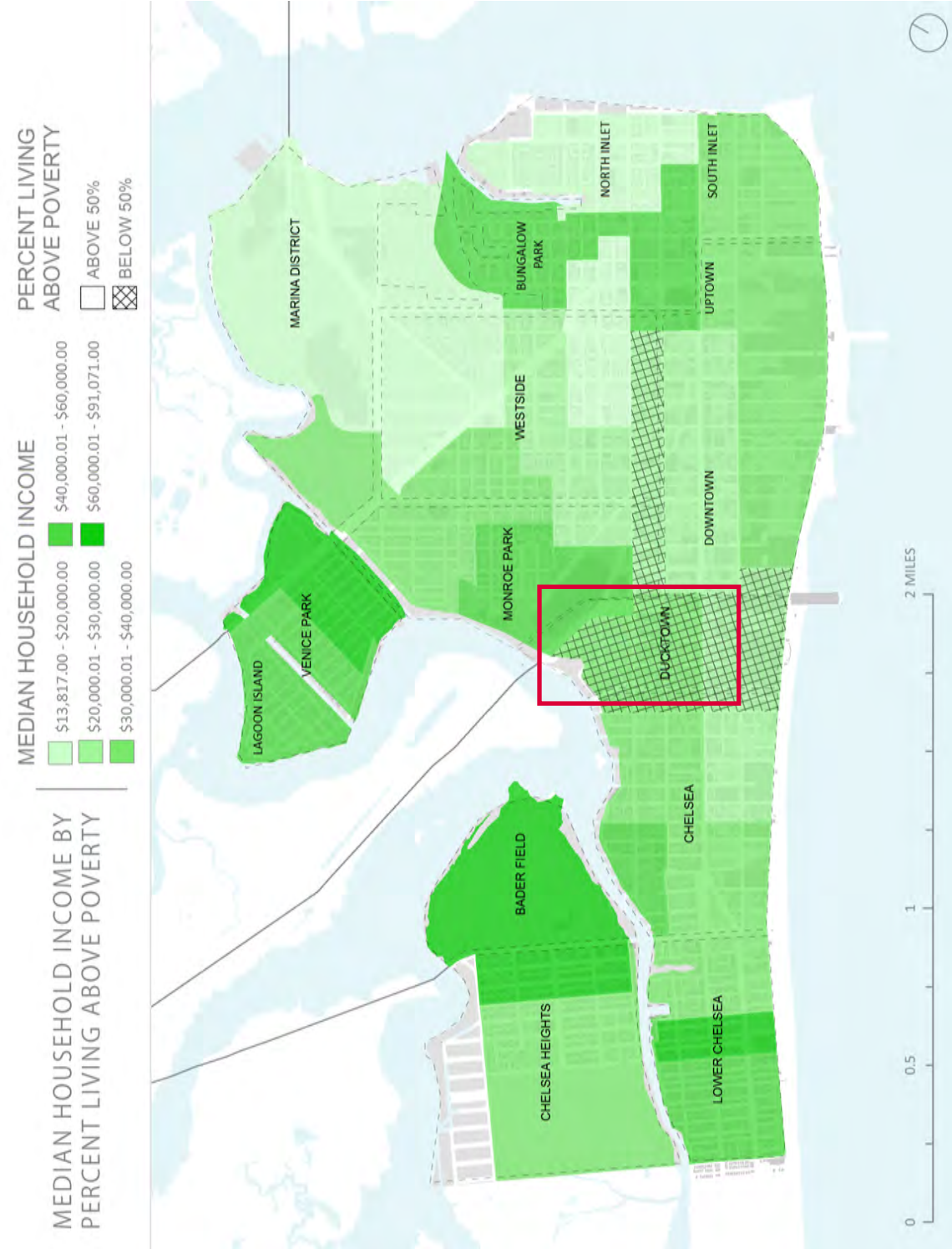


**JOINING PRESERVATION TO LOCAL NEEDS**

A potential intervention that warrants future study lies in the investment of affordable housing. The newly elected mayor of Atlantic City, Mayor Guardian, has announced as a priority increasing the building stock of affordable housing in Atlantic City. Ducktown is home to a high percentage of durable, old building stock. More importantly, it evokes a strong sense of place and is ideally situated towards the heart of Atlantic City. Furthermore, a majority renter population, the majority of whom live below the poverty line, already inhabits Ducktown. This is a place where rich historic fabric exists, where local institutions have successfully intermingled, where strong place attachment and nostalgia remain, and where there is much social need.

As Mayor Guardian begins to work to realize his campaign goals, Ducktown should be looked to as a viable investment and example for how historic assets can be preserved, celebrated and utilized to help solve some of Atlantic City's social problems.





# END NOTES

## KEY RESOURCE

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Rose, Elaine, "Ducktown merchants see money in expansion of nearby outlets at The Walk in Atlantic City", Press of the Atlantic, 4.18.10.

Simons, Bryant, Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004).

## DATA SETS

2000, 2010 U.S. Decennial Census

FEMA Atlantic City Windshield Survey

CRDA Demolition List

## IMAGE REPOSITORIES

U.S. Library of Congress

Sapienza/White Family Collection

Bob Ruffolo, Princeton Antiques



# ATLANTIC CITY'S BLACK HERITAGE SITES

The Northside's Remnants

**B**eyond the Boardwalk, Atlantic City had another resort enterprise. Focused on the African American experience, the area known as the Northside became a distinct place of Black culture within the segregated city. From its prime to its decline, the Northside has been continually inhabited by Atlantic City's Black population. Today, its heritage remains of central importance to the revitalization of the city.

## BACKGROUND

Following the end of the Civil War, African Americans began migrating up north looking for jobs. In Atlantic City, the rapid development of the town brought many ex-slaves looking for work. As the city grew into the "Playground of the World," the Black population continued to build and filled the resort industry's service positions. By 1900, African Americans represented twenty-three percent of the entire city.

In the beginning, the neighborhoods of Atlantic City were not racially divided. As seasonal employees became permanent the town began to separate according to wealth and race. African Americans were condensed in an area above Atlantic Avenue, with general boundaries at Arkansas Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, and Absecon Boulevard. Eventually, this part of Atlantic City became known as the "Northside."

In order to deal with the discriminatory practices, African Americans began to create their own city within Atlantic City. Blacks had their own schools, churches, community centers, and businesses in order to circumvent segregation. During its Heyday years from 1910 to 1960, the Northside evolved into a strong and culturally identifiable neighborhood.

In the mid-twentieth century, the decline of Atlantic City's economy and tourist industry caused many of the Northside businesses to close. Moreover, urban renewal wiped out many of the buildings that once existed. Today, the Northside has become largely fragmented due to demolition, environmental catastrophes, population loss, and increased poverty.

## JUSTIFICATION

In order to benefit the community, while raising awareness of preservation issues in the Northside, it is apparent that a new resource for understanding the historic built environment of Atlantic City's Northside must become readily available.

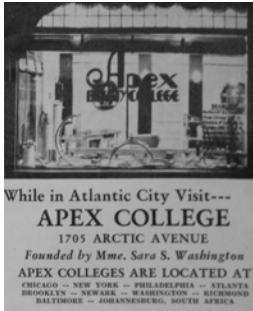
HistoryPin is an online resource that partners with Google Maps to allow users to pin historic photographs to the Google Maps interface. It uses a combination of textual descriptions, photographs, videos, and audio to share the stories of places across the world and provides access to material that would most likely remain hard to find. This resource has become increasingly popular among institutions like the US National Archives, the Smithsonian, and New York Public Library. It has developed an application for your phone and now allows you to develop up tours and collections of the uploaded data.

By using this interface, this intervention will allow the Atlantic City community, as well as tourists, history enthusiasts, the Atlantic City Free Public Library, and the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey, public access to the history of Atlantic City's Northside as told through its heritage sites. By uploading historic photographs, descriptions, and information and by sharing this through the HistoryPin interface, a new interpretive method will allow for further understanding of Atlantic City's Northside and benefit public awareness of the historic architecture that remains, as well as what has been lost.

To Access the Completed HistoryPin Tours Visit:  
<http://www.historypin.com/channels/view/51423/#ltours/all/>

# BUSINESSES

## APEX ENTERPRISES



Apex College | 1705 Arctic Avenue | Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1936 | Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



Apex Community Drug Store | 1800 Arctic Avenue | Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1936 | Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



Apex Rest | Indiana & Ontario Avenues | Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1936 | Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



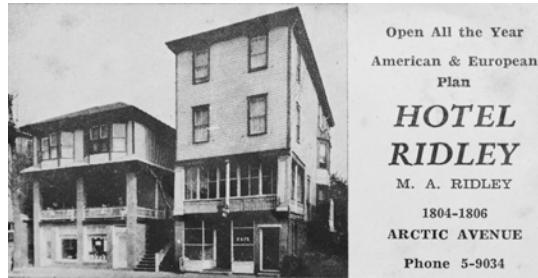
Apex Inn & Home of Sara Spencer Washington | 1800 Arctic Avenue | Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library, Undated



Apex Warehouse | 1810 Ontario Avenue | 2013

Madame Sara Spencer Washington's Apex Enterprises included Apex Beauty Colleges, Apex Publishing Company, Apex News and Hair Company, Apex Laboratories, and Apex Drug Company. With offices in 10 domestic cities and abroad, Washington was a savvy and wealthy business woman. An Northside resident, Washington founded her business in Atlantic City after moving there at the age of 22 and continued to operate her empire in the city until her death in 1953. Washington would establish several Black institutions after dealing with the segregation of the city, Included Apex Rest and Apex Country Club. Additionally, Madame Washington would organize an Easter's Day Parade on Arctic Avenue after Black women were banned from the one along the boardwalk. She was inducted into the Atlantic County Women's Hall of Fame in 1997.

**HOTEL RIDLEY** // 1804 - 1805 Arctic Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

Opened in 1900 by Alonzo and Maggie Ridley, Hotel Ridley would operate until 1941. The Board of Trade's annual officers' installation was held at the hotel every year. It no longer stands.

**BILL MARKS TAVERN** // 1923 Arctic Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

Undated Postcard  
Courtesy of Boston Public Library

Beginning just as a liquor store, Ulric Weekes would develop Weekes into a cocktail lounge with a house band. Both Grover Washington and Arthur Prysock would play here.

**IKE'S CORNER** // Tennessee & Arctic Avenues



Undated Postcard  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey

Owned by Nick Nicholson, the now demolished building included the bar, a liquor store and 10 apartments. Nicholson also owned Ike' Records on Kentucky Avenue.

KENTUCKY AVENUE // Kentucky Avenue between Atlantic & Arctic Avenues



Hotel Randall  
Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



Fitzgerald's, Undated Photograph  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



Club Harlem, Undated Photograph  
Courtesy of Press of Atlantic City



Grace's Tavern, Undated Postcard  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



Barber Shop  
2013



London's Drugs  
2013

Known as "KY and the Curb," Kentucky Avenue was the spot for Blacks, and even Whites, to have a good time. Club Harlem would be the center of the entertainment on the Avenue, its precursor Fitzgerald's, and introduced to the world many notable Black musicians. These include Billy Daniels, Cab Calloway, Count Basie, Pearl Bailey, "Moms" Mabley, Sam Cooke, Sammy Davis Jr., Sarah Vaughan, and Tina Turner. Another happening spot, Grace's Little Belmont was located across the street from Club Harlem and hosted several musical acts. Hotel Randall stood across the street from the London's Drugs, still visible, and its first floor included the Wonder Bar. Sonny's Hair Salon was once located at Grace's Barbershop on 43 North Kentucky Avenue but after buying out Grace, owner of Grace's Little Belmont, Sonny eventually moved his business here in 1989. Today, Kentucky Avenue only features these two original structures from its golden years of "KY and the Curb."

WEEKES TAVERN // 1700 - 1702 Baltic Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1936  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



Undated Postcard  
Courtesy of Boston Public Library

Beginning just as a liquor store, Ulric Weekes would develop Weekes into a cocktail lounge with a house band. Both Grover Washington and Arthur Prysock would play here.

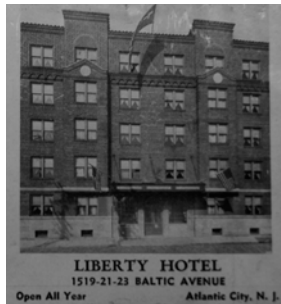
LEW'S BAR // BALTIC AVENUE & BAY STREET



Undated Photograph  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of  
Southern New Jersey

According to historian Ralph Hunter, Lew's Bar was the place to hang out before heading over to begin your night on Kentucky Avenue.

LIBERTY HOTEL // 1519-1523 Baltic Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



2013

Not welcome at the White hotels along the boardwalk, the Liberty Hotel was once one of the nicest places for Black tourists to stay in Atlantic City with 141 suites and room service from the Green Parrot restaurant. The building now houses senior citizens.

NEWSOME'S COTTAGE // 225 North Indiana Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

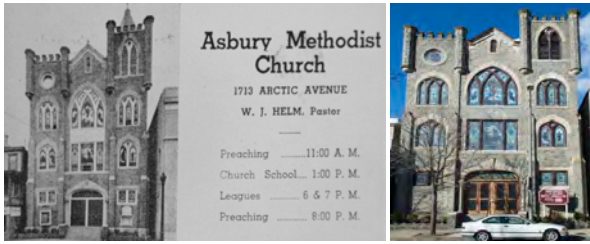


2013

Clifford Newsome, one of the founders of Atlantic City's Board of Trade, and his wife Carrie ran Newsome's Cottage as a boarding house. Carrie's Beauty Salon was also located inside. Today, Newsome's Cottage is further up Indiana Avenue, directly across from the Indiana Avenue School. Still living, Carrie hosts 3 to 5 boarders each year, according to historian Ralph Hunter.

# CHURCHES

## ABSURY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH // 1713 Arctic Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

2013

On July 15, 1886, following almost a year of Bible study sessions, Asbury Methodist Church formally organized in Atlantic City. The structure at this location has been rebuilt three times - 1886, 1898, and 1912. In 1998, the congregation moved to the former Central Methodist Episcopal Church's sanctuary at 1213 Pacific Avenue. The building is currently occupied by the New Jerusalem Church.

## BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH // 116 North New Jersey Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

2013

Since it's 1941 listing in the Atlantic City's Board of Trade, Bethel Baptist Church's steeple has been removed and it no longer appears active.

## COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH // 234 North New Jersey Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

2013

Founded in 1941, this church was rebuilt in 1949.

HAMILTON MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH // 611 Arctic Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
 Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



2013

Founded in 1920, Hamilton Memorial United Methodist Church was an affiliate of Asbury Church. It formed to be closer to some of its churchgoers as the distance to Asbury was too far for accessible worship. After a visit with the congregation the church was named for Bishop John Hamilton. Originally, the church was located at 817 Baltic Avenue but they moved here in 1940.

JETHRO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH // Ohio & Hummock Avenues



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
 Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1941



Vacation Bible School, 1960  
 Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



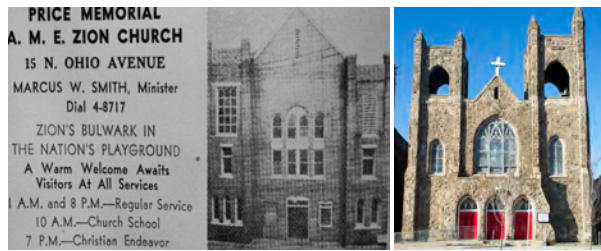
Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1936  
 Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



2013

Founded in 1909, Jethro Presbyterian Church started in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Ridley, owners of Hotel Ridley.

PRICE MEMORIAL A.M.E ZION CHURCH // 15 North Ohio Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

Founded in 1876, Price Memorial AME Zion Church would be the second traditional Black Church in Atlantic City. The congregation relocated to 525 Atlantic Avenue.

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH // 110 Center Street



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City

Reverend J.J. Hebron formed Second Baptist in the spring of 1896 after being sent by the Baptist Council. Two other Baptist churches formed from its initial congregation – Shiloh Baptist Church and Union Temple Church. The congregation has a new building at 110 Reverend Dr. I.S. Cole Plaza, while the original building still stands.

SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH // Arctic & Ohio Avenues



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

Fifty-Fourth Anniversary, 1952  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey

In 1898, varying opinions among the members of Second Baptist led to the formation of Shiloh Baptist under Reverend John W. Henderson. Today, the congregation has a new building at 701 Atlantic Avenue. In 1958, the church hosted Martin Luther King Jr. while he visited to speak to the Atlantic City High School.



ST. AUGUSTINE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH // 1709 Arctic Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



2013

Established in 1909, St. Augustine's still has an active congregation.

ST. JAMES A.M.E. // 101 North New York Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1939  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



2013

Founded in 1875 and Atlantic City's first traditional black church, St. James AME was originally called Bethel AME. Reverend Jeremiah H. Pierce came from Philadelphia to form the congregation, which functioned out of the Ocean House Hotel's dining room until 1878. The congregation relocated to a structure at Maryland and Arctic Avenues until it was renamed and moved here in 1884.

ST. MONICA'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH // 108 North Pennsylvania Avenue



Undated Photograph  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



2013

In 1917, Emma Lewis and the St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church organized a mission for the small amount of Black Catholics living in Atlantic City. Afterwards, the group functioned out of a home on North Delaware Avenue, seen in the picture above, until the church was built in 1949.

UNION BAPTIST TEMPLE CHURCH // 226 North South Carolina Avenue

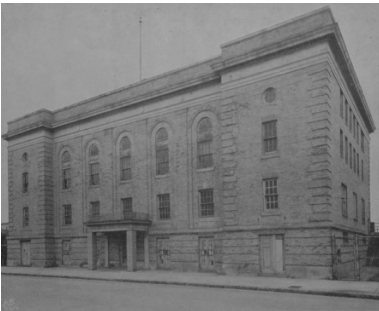


Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

Founded in 1907, Union Baptist Temple was the second Baptist church to form out of the original Second Baptist congregation. Completed in 1910, the building above burned down in 1955. The church continues at the same location in a building constructed 1959.

## PUBLIC BUILDINGS & SPACES

ALL WARS MEMORIAL // Adriatic & Kentucky Avenues



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



Undated Photograph  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



2013

Built in 1924, the All Wars Memorial Building, known as the “Old Soldier’s Home” to locals, is a memorial to Black Veterans. Covering an entire block, the center has provided recreational and athletic facilities to the surrounding community since its construction.

### CHICKEN BONE BEACH // Beach between Mississippi & Missouri Avenues



Martin Luther King Jr. posing for the camera  
Courtesy of Temple University



Sammy Davis Jr. and friends enjoying the beach  
Courtesy of Temple University

Along Atlantic City's shore, the stretch of beach from Mississippi to Missouri Avenues would become the segregated area primarily used by Black residents and tourists. Likely named for racist stereotypes of African Americans, Chicken Bone Beach was frequented by Blacks from all over the northeast. Notable visitors include Martin Luther King Jr. and Sammy Davis Jr., as seen in the images above. In 1997, the city council approved an ordinance recognizing Chicken Bone Beach as a locally historic place.

### FIRE HOUSE NO. 9 // Indiana & Grant Avenues



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1941  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



2013

The Northside's own segregated fire station, Engine Company No. 9 had two platoons and fought fires through the city. Today, the Fire Station is still in operation and renamed "Deputy Chief Pierre Hollingsworth Fire Station No. 3." Hollingsworth was one of "The Big Three" fire chiefs at the firehouse, along with Marvin Beatty and John Jasper. He was well known throughout the city for his dedication to firefighting and his work with the NAACP.

### ILLINOIS AVENUE BOYS VOCATIONAL SCHOOL // Illinois & Arctic Avenues



1941  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



2013

Unlike the girl's vocational school on Indiana Avenue, the Illinois Avenue Boys Vocational School was integrated. It has now been converted into apartments.

INDIANA AVENUE GIRLS VOCATIONAL SCHOOL // Baltic & Indiana Avenues



Undated Photograph  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



1941  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



2013

An annex of the Indiana Avenue School, the girls vocational school was segregated. The white counterpart was located on Monterey Avenue.

INDIANA AVENUE SCHOOL // 117 North Indiana Avenue



Undated Photograph  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



Undated Photograph  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



Graduation, 1934  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



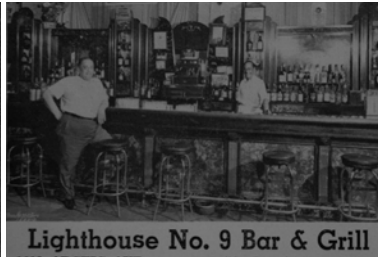
2013

Until the end of the twentieth century, Atlantic City's black population was integrated in the educational system. Following the growth in population and the urging of George Walls for Black teachers for Black students, Hatte E. Merritt became the first Black teacher in Atlantic City. In 1900, following controversy from both Blacks and Whites about the race of the school's teachers and integration of students, Atlantic City adopted a position of segregation. Thus, Indiana Avenue School became a Black school. In 1906, for around \$53,000 the current structure replaced its predecessor.

LIGHTHOUSE LODGE NO. 9// 1607 - 1613 Arctic Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1947  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1936  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

Established on February 12, 1900, Lighthouse Lodge No. 9 was occupied by Elks of the World after its construction in 1912. The building has been demolished.

MASON'S HALL// 323 NORTH NEW YORK AVENUE



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1936  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



2013

In 1897, Mason's Hall originally stood near Atlantic Avenue on North Michigan Avenue but the building moved to 323 North New York Avenue in 1925. Documentation hints that the Mason's Lodge occupied the bottom floors while the Odd Fellows Lodge occupied the top floor. At one point, over a dozen of Atlantic City's Black organizations used this building. Today, it houses the Prince Hall Lodge No. 27.

NEW JERSEY AVENUE SCHOOL // Baltic & Indiana Avenues



Undated Photograph  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



1941  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



2013

Following the adoption of a segregation policy, Indiana Avenue School quickly became too small. The New Jersey Avenue school was physically divided to be half white and half black. Different races did not interact and signs labeled what was Black and White, as in the Jim Crow South. In 1925, a larger New Jersey Avenue School was built at a cost of about \$680,000.

OLD FOLKS HOMES // 416 North Indiana Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 2013  
1936  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City  
Free Public Library

From 1919 to 1957, the Colored Old Folks Home was located here after its founding in 1898. Recognizing the need for a low-cost home for the Black elderly, Maggie Wayman worked with several community leaders to establish the institution. The home was supported by several churches and fundraisers, allowing an elderly person to live comfortably and receive medical care until the end of his or her life.

POP LLOYD STADIUM // Indiana & Huron Avenues



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1941  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library

2013

As a talented baseball player from Florida, John Henry “Pop” Lloyd first joined the Bacharach Giants in 1921. Shortly afterwards he left for New York, where he would be influential in the desegregation of the Yankee Stadium. Pop Lloyd returned to Atlantic City permanently in 1931 and joined the Bacharach Giants until they split in 1934. Afterwards, he coached the Johnson Stars, later the Farley Stars, until 1942 when he took on a job as a custodian. On October 2, 1949, Atlantic City recognized Pop Lloyd’s baseball achievements when they dedicated this stadium to him. Pop Lloyd was posthumously inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York in 1977.

STANLEY S. HOLMES VILLAGE // 323 NORTH NEW YORK AVENUE



Undated Photograph  
Atlantic City House Authority



2013

Constructed in 1936, Stanley S. Holmes Village became New Jersey's first public housing project. Following the onset of the Great Depression, Black workers were the first to lose their jobs and continued to struggle in poor housing conditions. Morris Cain, a prominent African-American and member of the Civic Committee for Better Housing, advocated for the people of the Northside. Stanley Holmes was quickly financed after a city-wide study confirmed the substantial need for housing in the Black neighborhood. Still used by residents of Atlantic City, many would say "We've All Spent Some Time in the Village."

WEST SIDE SCHOOL // 615 North Ohio Ave



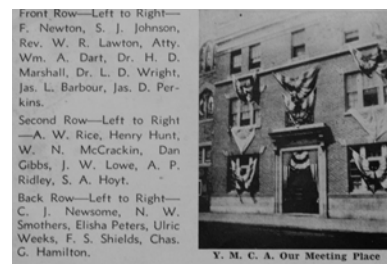
1941  
Courtesy of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey



2013

According to historian Ralph Hunter, the once two-story West Side Elementary School has been converted into the one-story Christ Gospel Church.

YMCA // 1711 Arctic Avenue



Atlantic City Board of Trade, 1936  
Courtesy of the Atlantic City Free Public Library



2013

After Atlantic City's first YMCA opened in 1893 and excluded access to Blacks, George Walls aimed to open a branch in the Northside. One year later, Walls successfully organized a Black YMCA, which functioned in a small cottage on North New York Avenue until moving here. Built in 1927 for \$250,000, the building included a recreational room, gymnasium, showers and dormitories. The YMCA was used by many Black community organizations, including the Board of Trade, until it became Disston Apartments.

# END NOTES

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# HERITAGE PIER PROJECT

A HISTORICALLY DEFINED PUBLIC REALM

From the time of the world’s first amusement pier in 1882 through the twenty-first century, Atlantic City’s Boardwalk supported seven distinct pier sites: Howard’s Pier on Kentucky Avenue; Young’s Pier on Tennessee Avenue; Million Dollar Pier on Arkansas Avenue; Iron Pier on Massachusetts Avenue; New Garden Pier on New Jersey Avenue; Steel Pier on Virginia Avenue; and Steeplechase Pier between Pennsylvania and North Carolina Avenues. The unique infrastructure and its programming worked in tandem with the diversion-style development that gave rise to Atlantic City’s popularity at the turn of the twentieth century. Touting valuable public space in an epicenter of brazen commercialism, the seven original piers have endured erratic cycles of construction, demolition, and reinvention; and today, understanding of their heritage has slipped through the wooden planks.

## PIER SIGNIFICANCE

In Atlantic City’s prime, the piers were lauded as feats of construction. They expanded the energy of the Boardwalk over the ocean, creating more space for the booming tourism industry. Unfortunately, the piers proved a transient triumph of human engineering over the constraints of the built environment time and again. Yet they were revived by a legacy of rebuilding after each storm, each fire, and each financial misstep.

Sites of overt fantasy and unabashed commercialism, the amusement piers expressed an omnipresent yearning for expansion. This sentiment defined Atlantic City its in golden era as the Playground of the World, when the population swelled to 660 thousand permanent residents and visitors flooded the seaside town en masse. The Boardwalk, a bedrock of the city’s resort appeal, was energized by these piers that connected to the promenade while remaining distinct entities. However, the piers’ prominence dissipated at the same pace as the city’s decline after World War II, serving as striking reminders of loss akin to the diminishing social and economic values of the time. After less than a century of constant rebuilding on the heels of each setback, Atlantic City seemingly gave up on reinventing the limbs of its Boardwalk. Piers became shorter, more manageable and less imaginative.

This development history closely imitates the life cycle of the city. When hopes were high, the piers broke

records extending out over the Atlantic Ocean. When hopes sank, the piers retreated to the Boardwalk, physically recoiling as the city collapsed metaphorically into itself. Since the end of the twentieth-century, when construction in Atlantic City became a means of survival more than an expression of imagination and experimentation, development has contracted. Growth today has lost the expression of outward expansion demonstrated by pier development, becoming instead constrained, inward, and exclusive. Amusement, however, remains an essential element of the Atlantic City experience. The impulse to amaze and entertain has not disappeared with the built heritage; it has by and large been relocated to the windowless interiors of the casino floors.

Yet every so often, new development proposals directed inward, not outward, arise and remind us of the piers’ vast contribution to place memory in Atlantic City. Consider Tropicana Casino’s indoor amusement park from the early eighties that sought to evoke the nostalgic whimsy – and avoid the spatial impediments – of the historic midways with the name Tivoli Pier. Or the 2013 development project by Resorts Casino that added a bar and grill to the former site of Steeplechase Pier. Atlantic City is not ready to give up on the nineteenth-century fantasy of conquering ocean development – it just does not have the capacity at this point to realize the vision.

But what happens in the near future if Atlantic City revives its floundering economy? What if endeavors to

promote the resort town as a family-friendly destination succeed, bringing record numbers of tourists back to this stretch of the Jersey shore? History has shown a clear correlation between the success of the city and investment in the piers; if the loss of the piers accompanied the city’s downturn, then it is likely that their rebirth will follow Atlantic City’s pending upturn. It is important to anticipate the possibility that the piers are not a development trend of the past and that they are poised to become a focal point for growth as the city recovers. With this foresight, it is important to ensure that future development does not cloud what the values represented by the piers. Thus there is a pressing need to document Atlantic City’s amusement pier heritage that may be used as a guide for informed development of the ocean front real estate that captures the past significance of the site – regardless of whether or not the built fabric remains – so that the past may be present in Atlantic City’s future.

## GOALS OF INTERPRETIVE INTERVENTION

However, recovering the heritage of Atlantic City’s piers would be in vain if there did not exist a means of experiencing history in the present. The Heritage Pier Project takes research to an actionable level through the construction of a new public realm pier in Atlantic City that captures the historic experience of the piers and relates those intangible values to new generations of visitors. The endeavor is grounded in four distinct goals that address issues of lost heritage, “binge development,” and a sense of disconnection in Atlantic City today.

### The Four Goals

1. To apply a basic documentation approach to each of the seven pier sites to recognize historic significance, development factors, and future potential. This is intended to provide a fundamental understanding of their relevance in Atlantic City; however, it is by no means comprehensive. Beyond cataloging each of the sites, it should serve as a foundation for future research into this unique development typology.
2. To create a new public space - The Heritage Pier - based on the piers’ intrinsic historic, social, and economic

values that advances the presence of heritage on the Boardwalk while simultaneously stimulating urban revitalization. Through the interpretation of the piers’ significance within Atlantic City, this project will seek to incorporate best practices from historic preservation, city planning, and urban design. Furthermore, it will support the application of the studio’s comprehensive conservation plan by emphasizing the use of heritage as an asset and adhering to an overall vision of improve conservation practices in Atlantic City.

3. To develop a set of design principles for this intervention that may serve as a basis for future public realm projects similarly combining heritage in the contemporary city. The Heritage Pier Project is, at its core, a reinterpretation of the piers’ outlandish sense of normalcy, updated to factor in 130 years of lessons gleaned from the piers’ existence. As such, the possibilities for its design are endless. However, all potential plans should remain grounded in the defining characteristics of pier infrastructure in Atlantic City, forward-thinking engineering for ecological performance and coastal resilience, and a clear understanding of what people want in their public spaces.

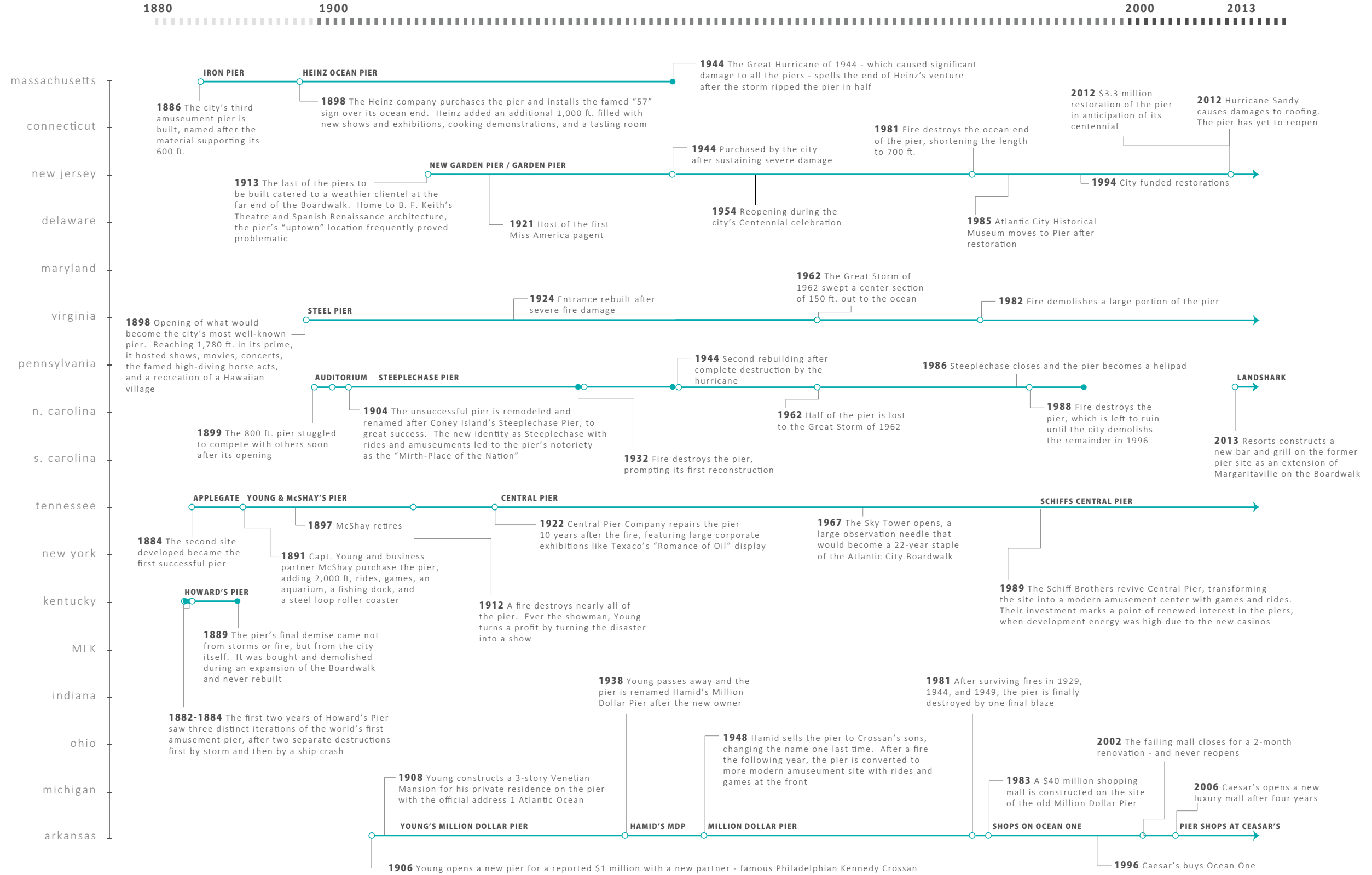
4. To design a work plan for progressing the Heritage Pier from the conceptual framework included here to a physical entity engaging with the people of Atlantic City. This report recommends a five-phase approach to project implementation, but it does not prescribe any single design. Rather, the physical form of the pier itself will be a product of future design work - quite possibly a design competition - to be determined in the early work phases of the Heritage Pier Project.

## BACKGROUND

### Origins of Atlantic City Pier Development

The emergence of the “amusement pier” in Atlantic City marked a pivotal moment the city’s history that would dictate how people interacted with the coastal environment for year to come. Though the building form was incendiary, it simply merged two common concepts already in play in the city - as well as the rest of the world - by 1882. One core element of the amusement pier was

Pier Development Timeline



its physical configuration extending from dry land out into the ocean. This was not a new building technique at the end of the nineteenth century; in fact, the first ocean pier in Atlantic City was the "Excursion House" built by the West Jersey and Atlantic Railroad to serve as the waiting area for passengers, and fishing docks had long been staples of the inlet. However, it became revolutionary this form of engineering was paired with the second concept: public entertainment. Once the railroads were built and the hotels erected, Atlantic City's entrepreneurs turned their attention to creating an aura of excitement that kept visitors coming in droves.

Colonel George Howard was the first to recognize the financial potential of the piers for recreation and entertainment. He opened the world's first amusement pier, a 650 foot long wooden extrusion from the Boardwalk at Kentucky Avenue named Howard's Pier. When it opened in 1882, Howard's Pier instigated a new wave of development, "inaugurating a building form," according to Atlantic City scholar Charles E. Funnell, "that was not only to be one of the chief appeals of the resort but would also threaten to obliterate the waterfront."

Howard's Pier stood testament to the inherent successes and failures by this new building form. It proved a viable business plan for future entrepreneurs that followed his example less than two years after the pier's construction. Yet it also exposed the risks of this form of development and the inherent vulnerability of its position. The first Howard's Pier lasted under a year before it was destroyed by a storm. Howard rebuilt the pier and opened its second iteration - now 856 feet long, supported by deep-sunk pilings, and featuring three pavilion - in 1883. Again, the pier only survived intact through one season. This time, the structure was severely damaged in 1884 when a sailing ship known as the Robert Morgan crashed into the end, taking down two of the three pavilions and most of its ocean end. Howard salvaged what he could after the wreck and reopened a somewhat limited version to summer crowds. In 1889, the city elected to condemn the property in the course of constructing the fourth generation of the Boardwalk. Atlantic City paid Howard for his creation before demolishing it, thus bringing the story of the world's first amusement pier to an end.

By the turn of the century, four new amusement piers had emerged on Atlantic City's shore and two more would join them in just over a decade. Together, these piers carried the legacy of Howard's Pier, serving as a reminder of the nascent city's fervent development of the oceanfront and the efforts to fully transition old Absecon Island into a modernized resort town where anyone could experience the luxury of escape.

#### Visualizing Atlantic City's Historic Piers

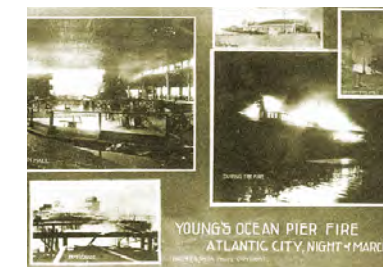
The piers standing today hardly resemble the first piers that sprung out from the iconic Boardwalk. These first (and, in some cases, second or third) generation piers from 1882 to 1922 spoke to the public's desire for excitement, wonder, and - above all else - distraction. While Atlantic City was the idyllic middle-class escape from reality, the piers were the manifestations of their wildest dreams. The following series of images emphasizes the importance of the piers' function the "portals between the ordinary and the extraordinary."

HOWARD'S PIER (1882) // Kentucky Avenue



Images Courtesy of The Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce; The Atlantic City Historical Society; Detroit Publishing Company; *Images of America Series: Atlantic City* and *Atlantic City Revisited*; U.S. Library of Congress; Temple University Digital Archives

APPLGATE PIER (1884) // Tennessee Avenue



IRON PIER (1886) // Massachusetts Avenue



STEEL PIER (1898) // Virginia Avenue



MILLION DOLLAR PIER (1906) // Arkansas Avenue



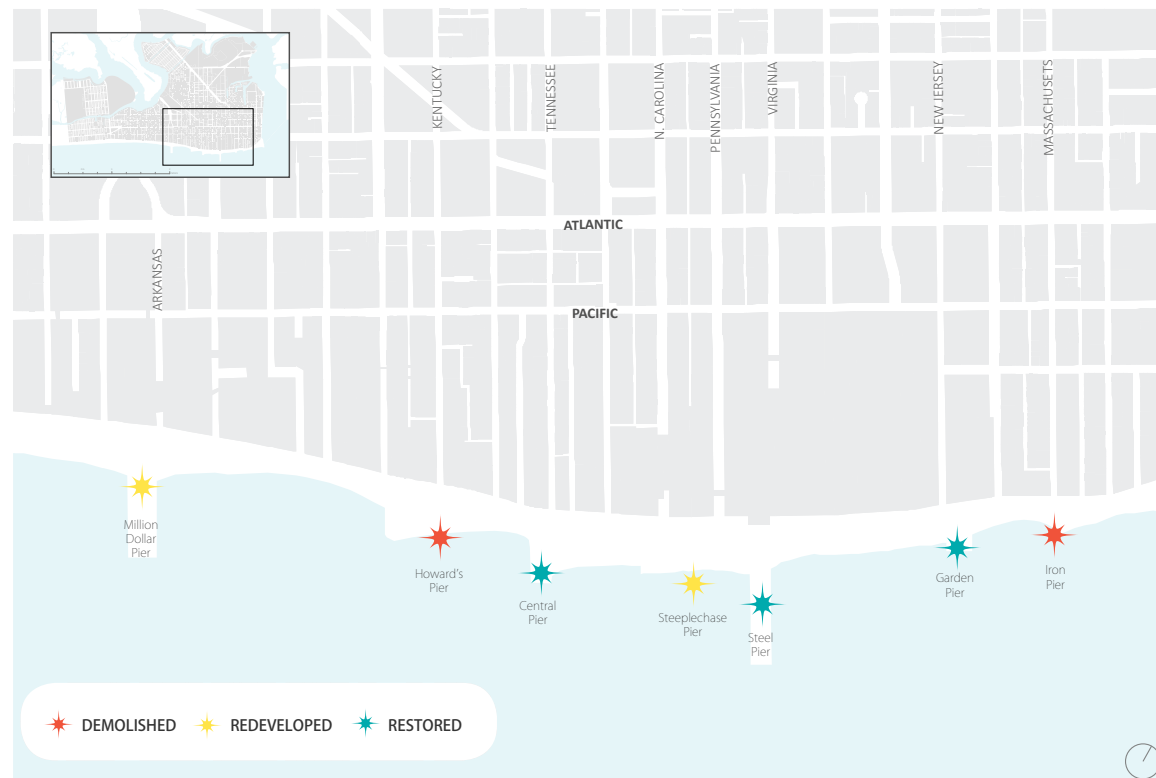
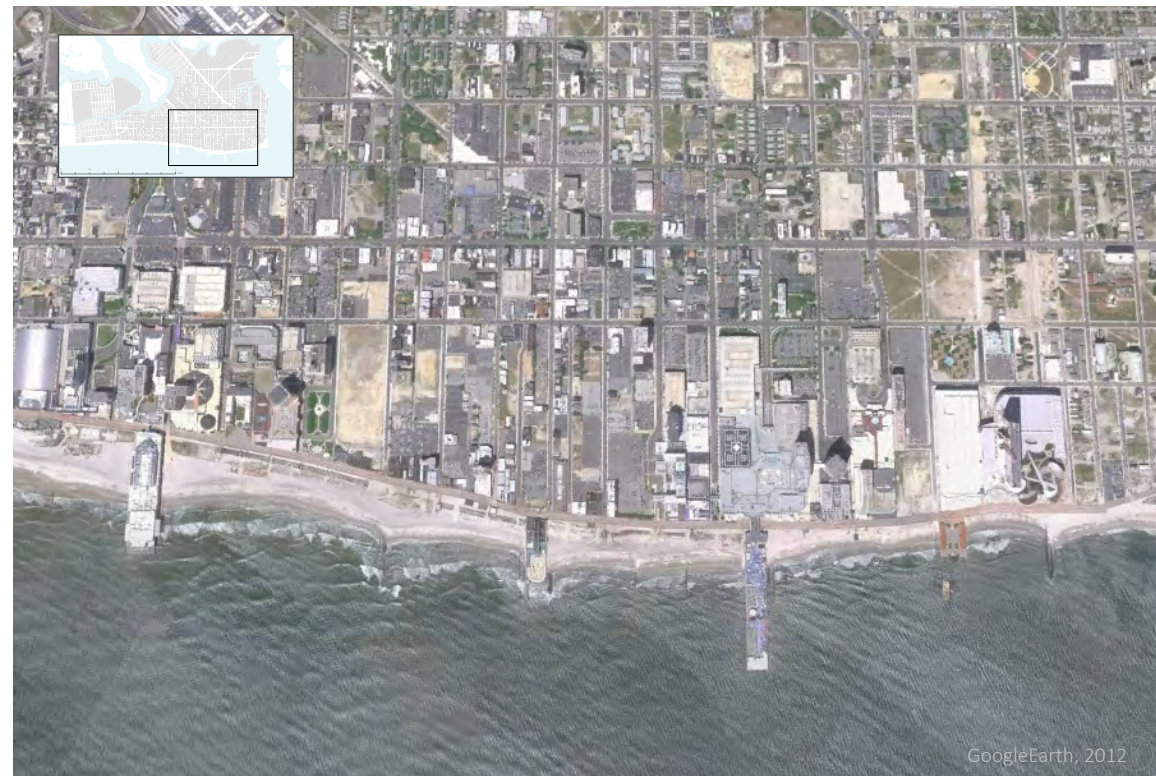
AUDITORIUM PIER (1889) // Between Pennsylvania + N. Carolina Avenues



NEW GARDEN PIER (1913) // New Jersey Avenue



CURRENT CONDITIONS

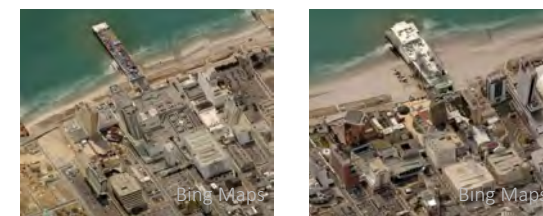


Site Situation

All seven historic pier sites are located on the southeast side of the Boardwalk between Arkansas Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue. Six of the sites are located on the city grid as it extends toward the ocean, with the only exception located directly between two the pier sites. The strategic - albeit vulnerable - location of the piers was mainly defined by the historic accessibility and visibility from the dense city to the north. This connectivity is discernible in the historic image below with the clear articulation of Kentucky Avenue in the foreground seaward until it reaches Howard's Pier on the opposite side of the Boardwalk.



The same cannot be said today. The remaining sites are cut off from the rest of the city by contemporary super-block casino development.



Form and Function

Atlantic City's coastline was transformed in a mere three decades following the construction of that first amusement pier. Though the surrounding context and original structures have changed immensely as the built environment adapted to fit modern needs, the shoreline still bears the marks of pier development. As seen in the aerial from 2012 (top-left), the curved shoreline is periodically interrupted by the four remaining pier-like structures jutting out from the Boardwalk. More telling,

however, is the shape of beach itself. At the locations that previously supported pier development there is a noticeable peak where the sand bank extends toward the ocean. Whether this is caused by years of manipulating the land to support the massive amusement piers or merely a geological coincidence, the effect remains undeniable. Atlantic City's historic piers are physically imprinted on the landscape.

This effect is, however, virtually unnoticeable from any vantage other than bird's eye. Much like heritage embedded in Atlantic City, the piers themselves are eclipsed by modern casino growth and socioeconomic intricacies. Relics of an earlier time, the remaining piers have fallen from their historic prominence and appear today as follies - as opposed to the groundbreaking sites that promoted the city as premier resort destination.

At best, the modern generation of piers seem gimmicky, offering the same goal of entertainment as their predecessors without the innovation or exhilaration. Schiff's Central Pier and Steel Pier - the only true "amusement" piers remaining - feature standard arcade fare contained within and extending seaward from the worn facades. Although unlike that of Steel Pier, the entrance to Central Pier is the historic structure erected during its reconstruction in the 1920s (and, of note, the only identifiable historical aspect of the piers besides the heavily remodeled pavilions on Garden Pier). At worst, they are marginalized. Garden Pier, for example, received millions of dollars toward its restoration in 2012 but has remained closed for over a year now since Hurricane Sandy struck. The city, which has owned the pier since World War II, intends to reopen the site considers it of low priority compared to more urgent demands.

Together, the seven pier sites exist as a diverse collection of private and publicly owned spaces that fail to express the vast trove of their shared history. In their prime, the piers were destinations in and of themselves and contributed to the appeal of Atlantic City for visitors and residents alike. However, that significance is lost on users, most of whom do not recognize the value of the resources at their disposal.

## Pier Integrity Assessment

From 1882 to 1913, seven distinct sites between the Boardwalk and the Atlantic Ocean emerged as prime entertainment, commercial, and advertising nuclei for the city. But in the century since that last pier site developed, the fates of each pier diverged as each owner struggled to maintain operations following increasing competition, disasters, and the general economic climate. Today, the sites fall into one of three categories that describe the integrity that remains:

1. **Restored** Piers, retaining a fair amount of historic fabric in addition to continuing historic functions;
2. **Redeveloped** Piers, significantly altered and serving new functions;
3. **Demolished** Piers, permanently removed.

The following assessment catalogs the current status of each of the seven original sites and offer insight into the conditions that led to the piers' modern manifestations.

**Restored** // Schiff's Central Pier  
(a.k.a. Applegate Pier; Young & McShay's Pier; Young's Ocean Pier; Young's Old Pier; Central Pier)



Central Pier's history almost ended with a fire in 1912 that became a legendary spectacle encourage by then owner Young. It found a second life a decade later, when the Central Pier Company rebuilt the ruins into a new amusement pier featuring exhibition space for large corporations such as Texaco. The mid-20th century saw a shift from advertising to amusement, and the pier remains today as an arcade.

**Restored** // Steel Pier

Steel Pier became the city's most celebrated amusement pier in the 20th century, but the wooden structure was hindered by frequent fires. After one such disaster in the 1980s, the site was left in ruins until the Trump Entertainment Group purchased and remodeled the pier in 1992. Trump sold the pier for over \$4 million in 2011 to the pier's operating entity, which intends to keep the pier running with additional amusements and eventually energy-generating wind turbines.

**Restored** // Garden Pier  
(a.k.a. New Garden Pier; B. F. Keith's Pier)

The last pier built in Atlantic City remains one of the only standing today. The site that hosted the first Miss America Pageant in 1921 was bought in 1944 by



the city, which still maintains ownership. Subsequent restorations have maintained the diminutive pier, including a recent \$3.3 million restoration. However, the pier never reopened due to damage by Hurricane Sandy and it remains shuttered today.

**Redeveloped** // The Pier Shops at Caesar's  
(a.k.a. Young's Million Dollar Pier; Hamid's Pier; The Shops on Pier One)

Young's decadent sophomore venture concluded with one final fire in 1981. The site was then developed into a shopping mall, and has remained as such since conversion in the 1980s. Updated by the adjacent Caesar's Hotel and Casino in the 2006, the mall recalls the historic luxury by way of its upscale retailers; however, the property has been rapidly losing value along with customers.

**Redeveloped** // Land Shark Bar and Grill  
(a.k.a. Auditorium Pier; Steeplechase Pier)

Steeplechase survived fires and hurricanes for nearly a century only to be closed down by the economic uncertainty of Atlantic City in the 1980s. Remodeled by G. C. Tilyou in 1904 after his successful Steeplechase Pier in Coney Island, the so-called "Mirth Place of the Nation"



was torn down in 1996 after operations as a helipad ended by fire. The site was recently developed into a bar by the Resorts Casino across the Boardwalk.

**Demolished** // Kentucky Avenue  
(a.k.a. Howard's Pier)

The world's first known amusement pier was never resuscitated after its final demise in 1889. Rebuilt three times in less than seven years, the property was condemned by the city during a campaign rebuild the Boardwalk. Since then, it has remained a standard state street entrance from the Boardwalk to the beach, sited between the main commercial pier, the Pier Shops at Caesar's, and an amusement pier, Schiff's Central Pier.

**Demolished** // Massachusetts Avenue  
(a.k.a. Iron Pier; Heinz Ocean Pier)

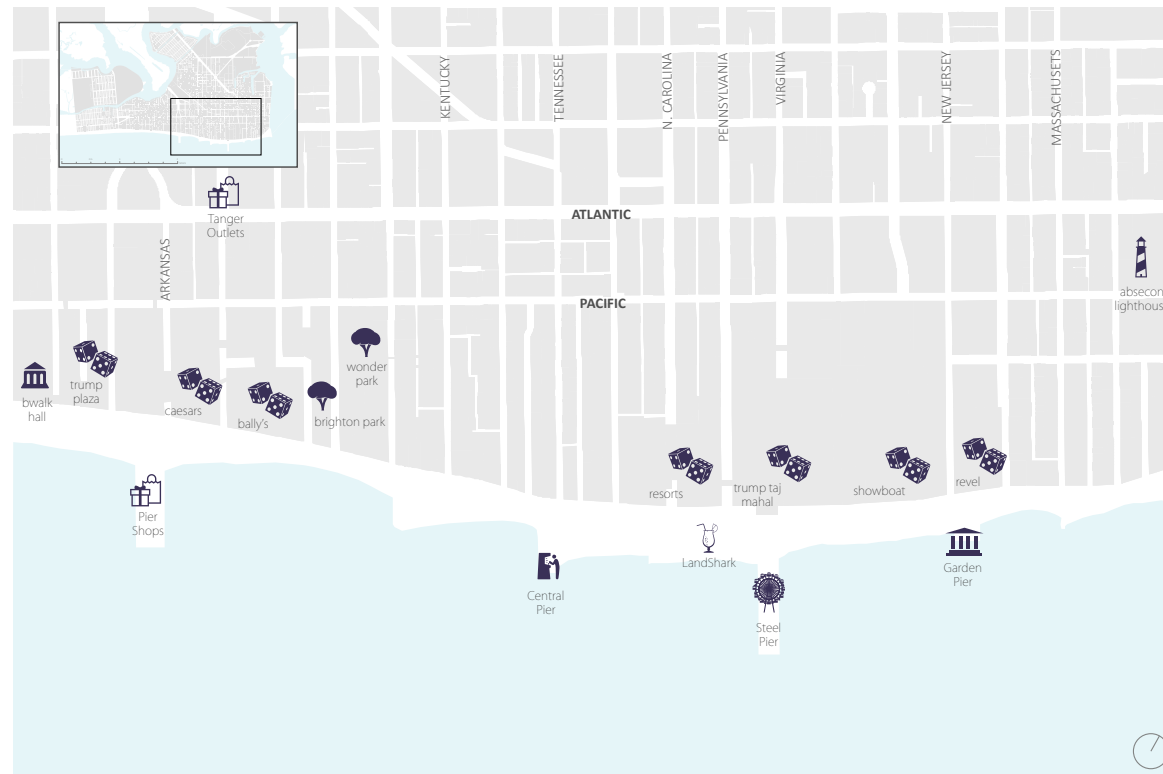
The 900 foot pier became a casualty of the Great Hurricane of 1944. At the time of its demise, it had been transformed from a revolutionary steel construction - more resilient to fires than its peers - into an one of H. J. Heinz's most effective means of advertising. However, the damage wrought by the hurricane proved too much for the company and Heinz Ocean Pier was soon torn down, never to be redeveloped.



Facing Page: Schiff's Central Pier (*top left*); Steel Pier (*bottom left*); Garden Pier (*top right*); The Pier Shops at Caesar's (*bottom right*)

Current Page: Land Shark Bar and Grill (*top left*); Kentucky Avenue (*bottom left*); Massachusetts Avenue (*top right*)

Images courtesy of S. Kuntz, 2013



### Surrounding Conditions

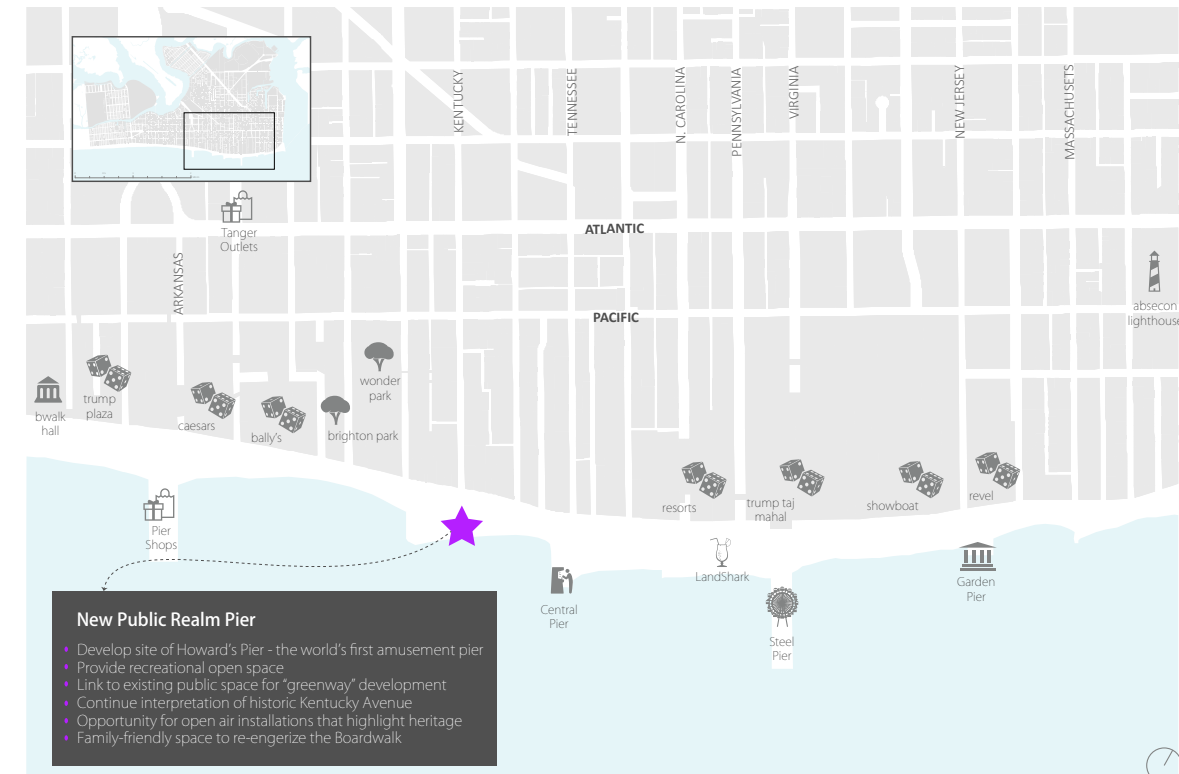
The city blocks immediately adjacent from shoreline indicate the development interests of the city as it impacts the piers. In the mile and half span from Mississippi Avenue to Rhode Island Avenue, there are seven major casino complexes - Trump Plaza, Caesars, Bally's, Resorts, Trump Taj Mahal, Showboat, and the newly developed Revel. The style of development expressed by the casinos features an imposing, high rise that is built up to the Boardwalk on the ocean-facing elevation, and extends all the way back to Pacific Avenue. Many of the casinos also have parking garages situated between Pacific and Atlantic Avenues, and use skybridges to connect the parking to the hotel. The result is an approximate 850 to 1,500 feet (depending on the casino parcel) separating the piers from the rest of the city.

Despite this barricading development, there are also public resources that suggest a opportunity to influence positive interventions in this part of Atlantic City.

Across from the piers' focus area there are two public parks - Brighton Park and Wonder Park, the recent ARTlantic installation - and two recognized historic sites - Boardwalk Hall (*National Register of Historic Places; National Historic Landmark; New Jersey Register of Historic Places*) and the Absecon Lighthouse (*National Register of Historic Places; New Jersey Register of Historic Places*). These resources are valuable reminders that the Boardwalk is one of the city's most important public open spaces, and show that there is more to Atlantic City today than its casinos. They will also support future efforts that seek to promote the social and cultural values of the city.

### Acting on Opportunity

The moment is now prime from intervention. If the newly constructed Land Shark Bar and Grill on the former site of Steeplechase Pier is any indication, interest is growing in development along the beach side of the Boardwalk. In the past, this type of development foreshadowed a positive growth in economic security



and further development of the city itself. Today, it may be viewed as an indication that the existing institutions are prepared to take new risks to improve the current economic climate. It would be prudent to take heed and reclaim buildable space for the people before private interests magnify.

Historically, the state has intervened with pier development only a few times so that the conditions did not detract from the public good. One notable moment came with the 1894 Park Act which gave the state eminent domain over the beach front to rectify blight. Another key moment came with the Park Deeds of 1900, which sought to ban development on the ocean side of the Boardwalk. Both interventions acted to enforce "civic good" in development practices concerning one of the city's most vulnerable assets.

Thus in the same vein of promoting the civic good, the Heritage Pier Project proposes to create a new public use pier, simultaneously protecting the sites from impending private development and advancing social, cultural, and

historic values of the piers, the Boardwalk, and Atlantic City as a whole.

### THE HERITAGE PIER

#### Site Selection

Of the seven historic pier sites, there are only two that could support new development at this moment: Iron Pier on Massachusetts Avenue and Howard's Pier on Kentucky Avenue. Both sites are directly located on state avenues and are free of any structures, not requiring demolition in addition to new construction. But for the purpose of this project, **Howard's Pier** provides the ideal site to implement the intervention for three reasons: location, accesibility, and legacy.

**Location** | Kentucky Avenue offers a more suitable site for constructing the Heritage Pier. First, the site is in a central position with respect to the Boardwalk activities. This will more conducive to attracting and engaging visitors who are more likely to pass by this site than they

are to pass Massachusetts Avenue, which lies beyond the farthest built casino on the Boardwalk. Second, the Howard's Pier site is farther removed from the only civic use pier, Garden Pier, thus better distributing the presence of social and cultural values along the Boardwalk. Third, it the site is more removed from the bend of the shoreline toward the inlet, which has borne the brunt of storm damage in recent years.

**Accessibility** | Due to the location of Kentucky Avenue on the Boardwalk, the site formerly occupied by Howard's Pier is more accessible to pedestrians than the old Iron Pier site. This increases the potential to link the pier to other public spaces or other historical design projects such as Kentucky Avenue in future phases of the project development. Additionally, there are also more amenities within a close walk such as public restrooms, concessions, parking, and security.

**Legacy** | Though it was never the most enduring, successful, or popular pier, Howard's Pier is perhaps the most significant pier in Atlantic City's history. It was quite literally a game changer, envisioning a new dimension of commercial potential for the resort town and altering the trajectory of development. Its business model, soon mimicked by like-minded entrepreneurs, lent to the allure of Atlantic City as a middle-class escape and contributed to the city's rise to prominence around the turn of the century.

The site's individual history thus makes the Kentucky Avenue intersection the ideal place for reimagining how collective heritage is interpreted, experienced, and appreciated in Atlantic City.

**Vision**

This project aims to develop a new public realm pier extending Kentucky Avenue from the Boardwalk toward the shoreline. Heritage Pier, as it will be known, will serve as a green outdoor recreation amenity adorned with installations that interpret the heritage values of Atlantic City's groundbreaking amusement piers. The new pier will advance a conservation plan for the city by leveraging the city's historic assets to develop a better city for residents, guests, and future generations.

**Design Principles**

**1. Emphasize Accessibility.** Atlantic City's shoreline both spatially and mentally separated from the city. New design should incorporate strategies that help to lessen the divide, such as inclusive programming and connecting paths that physically and/or thematically link to other sections of the city.

**2. Honor the scale of surrounding development.** By building high rise hotels for the casinos in the 1970s and 1980s, Atlantic City became host to a distorted built environment. Therefore new construction should attempt to conform to adjacent conventions to maintain the scale. Heritage Pier, for example, would be an impressive addition to the landscape if it extended out into the water like the piers of yore. However, its neighbors - the Pier Shops at Caesars and Schiff's Central Pier - do not extend far beyond the boundaries of the beach. Therefore the new pier should be kept within 450 to 850 feet in keeping with the conventions of the existing piers.

**3. Do no harm to the natural environment.** Pier development encroaches on a delicate ocean ecosystem. All precautions must be taken to ensure that the construction respects the landscape for two reasons: first to preserve the natural resources for the future; and second, to avoid the disasters that felled the historic piers. With the coastline susceptible to storms, it would be prudent to develop with strong, sustainable materials that work in harmony with the land.

**4. Employ design elements that reflect historic design intentions.** All too often, heritage often outlives its physical form and deserves to be interpreted for the public good. However, exact reconstructions are rarely the most effective means of addressing historic values. A better recourse for interpreting the value of lost or significantly altered sites is through new development that grounded in the historic design intentions. The Heritage Pier will incorporate the values of Howard's Pier as well as the six other altered pier sites without seeking to recreate the failed nineteenth century iteration.



**Contemporary Views of Howard's Pier** // (clockwise from top) Entrance from Kentucky Avenue and the Boardwalk to the beach; View of ramp from ocean; Boardwalk scene in front of entrance; Conditions across from the entrance; Detail of existing infrastructure.



## DEVELOPMENT COMPARABLES

### Ocean Breeze Fishing Pier // Midland Beach, NY

The history of Midland Beach closely parallels the growth of Atlantic City in the late-eighteenth century. Established as the Woodland Beach resort town in 1896, the Staten Island neighborhood emerged as a popular seaside destination for New York and New Jersey residents, complete with hotels, amusements, and even gambling. Operating at a far smaller scale than Atlantic City, Woodland Beach featured a single pier for recreational fishing. The pier did not survive through the twentieth century; however, it found a second life in 2003 when a new fishing pier was constructed for public use, acknowledging the significance of the lost structure while reinvigorating the beach with a new, valuable public amenity.

Opened | September 2003

Dimensions | 835 feet (l); 30 feet (w)

Materials | Steel and reinforced concrete

Leadership | Department of Parks and Recreation, City of New York; Mayor's Office, City of New York, Staten Island Borough. Attributed to joint efforts of former Mayor Giuliani and former Staten Island Borough President Molinari

Design | Reza Mashayekhi (Structural Engineer), Richard Robbins (Architect), Ricardo Hinkle (Landscape Architect)

Cost | \$9,000,000.

Funded by \$6,000,000 mayoral funds, \$2,500,000 Staten Island President, \$500,000 grant from New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Additional Details | Wavy design evokes ocean waves; T-shaped with pavilion at end similar to the historic pavilion on the lost fishing pier; facilitates deep-sea fishing off the end and populated with cleaning stations, running water, and rod holder stations; embedded plaques in concrete (160 bronze medallions) featuring

ocean life. 160-car parking lot constructed. Free access.

### Race Street Pier (Pier 11) // Philadelphia, PA

The historic Pier 11 on the Delaware River was originally built in 1896 as a two-tiered construct used for shipping activities as well as for additional public space on the water. It was redeveloped in 2011 as recreational space after years of disuse, part of a larger vision to revitalize the Delaware waterfront. Race Street Pier serves as a valuable precedent for Heritage Pier in that both projects seek to achieve similar goals: activating use of the waterfront, reestablishing the connectivity between the waterfront to the city, and adding more open recreation space for the city.

Opened | May 2011

Dimensions | Approx. 550 feet (l), 80 feet (w)

Materials | Steel trussed supports; concrete decking; Trex synthetic paving and geofoam; Metal grating

Leadership | City of Philadelphia; The Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (DRWC)

Design | James Corner Field Operations (Landscape Architect), W.J. Castle & Associates (Design and Engineering), AP Construction

Cost | \$6,500,000.

Funded by the City of Philadelphia, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, \$1,000,000 William Penn Foundation grant, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (Coastal Zone Management) and a challenge grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts

Additional Details | Two-tiered recreational pier that reinterprets the historic dual level construction. Intended as a connection point in the ongoing revitalization of the Delaware Waterfront. Includes extensive greenery, sustainable building materials, and solar lighting for nighttime use. End of pier features steps down to the lower level to be used for a viewing area and diversity of

seating options. Free access and free WI-FI

### The High Line // New York City, NY

Though the High Line is not a pier, the new public park is a paradigm for combining historic preservation advocacy and urban revitalization. The project features adaptive reuse of historic elevated freight lines constructed between 1929 and 1934 for the New York Central Railroad Company. After almost two decades of vacancy, the structure was saved from demolition in 1999 by a community non-profit touting its historic value and advocating for its reuse. These efforts succeeded in raising the public interest and political support that enabled the first section of the High Line to open a decade later.

Opened | June 2009 (Phase I); June 2011 (Phase II); **2014 (Phase III - Projection)**

Dimensions | 1.45 miles (l), 30-60 feet (w)

Materials | Rehabilitated steel and concrete

Leadership | Friends of the High Line; The City of New York; The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation; The New York City Planning Commission; The State of New York; CSX Transportation, Inc.

Design | James Corner Field Operations (Landscape Architect), Diller Scofidio + Renfro (Architects); Piet Oudolf (Garden Designer)

Cost of Phase I-II | \$238,500,000

Funded by \$112,000,000 City of New York, \$20,300,000 Federal Government, \$400,000 State of New York, \$44,000,000+ Friends of the Highline. Additionally, 90% of the annual operating budget from private funds raised by Friends of the High Line

Cost of Phase I-III | \$90,000,000

Additional Details | The design created "urban oasis," elevated above the city grid; valuable public realm space in a dense city where land is at a premium; Innovative financing strategy involving multiple stakeholders

## NEXT STEPS

Heritage Pier requires strong leadership to champion the project, advocate for supportive legislation, and implement a diverse funding strategy that packages public and private financing opportunities. Once a leader is identified - either a non-profit friends organization, a private developer with public realm experience, or a city agency - the project may progress in five distinct phases.

### Phasing Implementation

#### Phase I // Design and Planning

Before constructing "Heritage Pier," it is crucial to spend additional time researching the appropriate design for the site, the city, and the significance. This step involves the Heritage Pier stewards building a team of engineers, architects, landscape architects, and historians to work closely with CRDA and the Planning Commission of the City of Atlantic City. The end of this phase should produce an actionable plan and financing strategy.

#### Phase II // Pier Construction

Construction should begin with enough time for the opening to coincide with the beginning of summer. While building is in progress, historians - either contracted or borrowed from the Atlantic City Free Public Library - should be continuing the research process and developing installations for the new pier that allow the site to become an open air display of Boardwalk history.

#### Phase III // Historic Installations and Landscape Design

In the absence of any remaining historic fabric, one of the first additions to the pier should be the interpretive installations that allow visitors to engage with the site's history and express the justification of the new pier. The significance must be ascertained by users in two ways: first by the historic exhibition and then in the use value of the site. Thus the second focal point of Phase III must be the natural installations (trees, planters, beds, etc.) that define the circulation of the space for users. The completion of this phase will be the official opening of the site for users.

#### Phase IV // Specialty Site Programming

One of Atlantic City's most enduring characteristics is its tendency to reinvent itself for the sake of adapting to external forces. Typically, this involves large scale transformations, like becoming a booming seaside resort in the 1850s or a gambling destination in the 1970s. But what if it were possible to capture that energy, that propensity for evolving within a single site? Phase IV will provide the opportunity to explore ways for flexible programming on site that fosters a more dynamic experience.

Considerations for temporary programming may include large scale art and lighting installations for exhibitions; constructing display cases for local artifacts that can help stimulate interest in local history by briefly removing the resources from the museum; developing an outdoor classroom space in conjunction with Stockton College that offers free adult education seminars to local residents or an interactive classroom space featuring science and history for youth school trips; creating mobile cafes and beer gardens; and a summer arts series that books performances and screens films on site. The only requisites for programming the space are that the designs remain impermanent attractions, that they seek to involve all manner of people and not any single



demographic, and that they translate the adaptability of both Atlantic City and the historic piers into their activation of the site.

#### Phase II // "Greenway" Design and Connectivity

The previous phases addressed how the site will connect to the history, the location, and the people. The final consideration for the Heritage Pier will be its connection to the city as a whole. The enduring success of the pier - both physically and psychologically - rests on its ability to dissolve barriers that separate the oceanfront with the larger city. The site is poised to become an amenity for residents as well as visitors, but will only serve tourists if it is unable to reach Atlantic City's resident population. The connection can be established through the development of a greenway, a defined path that implements green design to link this recreation site to other parks in the city. The logical progression from the pier into the city would be through Wonder Park and Brighton Park, linking other public realm locations.

#### CONCLUSION

By reinterpreting the past to benefit the present, the Heritage Pier Project will offer future generations the chance to experience Atlantic City reach its new prime.

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Atlantic City Free Public Library      *Postcard History Series*

Atlantic City Historical Society      Shorpy

Detroit Publishing Company      Temple University Digital Archives

*Images of America Series*      United States Library of Congress

# REKINDLING THE MAGIC

Kentucky Avenue Corridor Improvement

The historically significant section of Kentucky Avenue located in the Northside, running from Baltic Avenue towards the beach ending at Atlantic Avenue, was once a great source of pride for Atlantic City, but today lies underutilized as an expanse of blank walls and parking lots with only a smattering of its original fabric remaining. During its heyday between the 1920s and the 1970s, Kentucky Avenue was a cultural mecca anchored by famous nightclubs, venues, and local restaurants drawing crowds that transcended both geographic and social boundaries, as tourists and residents, African Americans and Caucasians, wealthy and poor all gathered together to enjoy the cultural offerings of this world famous entertainment hub.

Through strategic activation and programming of the traditional corridors, this intervention proposes to utilize the remaining historic fabric along Kentucky Avenue to anchor a vibrant business district through a music and arts based revitalization plan to leverage the robust tourism market of Atlantic City while servicing the local residents.

## SITE BACKGROUND

Business directories reveal the abundance of local eateries, shops, hotels and entertainment that operated out of Kentucky Avenue, which together gave the street its defining character. True to the seasonal nature of the beach town resort, many of the venues were only open during the summer; and from June to September the street was bustling nearly 24 hours a day. Residents were just as likely to visit Kentucky Avenue for a doctor's appointment or a beauty shop appointment during the day, as they were to return at night to cruise around the block, walk the streets or attend a 6 AM breakfast show on stages that gave rise to many of the preeminent jazz musicians of the day.

Three crown jewels, the famous Club Harlem converted from Fitzgerald's Auditorium, Wonder Bar, and Grace's Little Belmont, served as the primary entertainment circuit that attracted visitors from across the region to see local staples as well as guest performances by jazz music industry giants of the time including Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole and Sammy Davis Jr., while popular local restaurants like Rex's Sub Shop, The Fishery, Sapp's Barbeque and Wash's

Restaurant fed patrons throughout the day and into the night. Atlantic City's reputation as a 24 hour city is well earned, as locals to this day struggle to name a bar that ever closed. Beauty and barber shops, cigar and record stores, doctors' offices, and cleaners and shoe repair businesses intermingled with the anchor establishments that drew the crowds, creating a dynamic and diverse strip. Behind these daytime businesses, Kentucky Avenue also operated on a thriving illicit gambling economy. These businesses and the experiences they enabled collectively earned the street a solid place in the nostalgic memories of long-time residents. While the vibrancy of Kentucky Avenue endured the test of time for 50 years, the end of racial segregation altered the delicate community infrastructure that allowed Kentucky Avenue to thrive. As legal restrictions containing African Americans within the black neighborhoods for all purposes aside from work were lifted, and African Americans were allowed to patronize former white-only establishments south of Atlantic Avenue, business diminished for the Northside establishments and Kentucky Avenue began to decline.

Club Harlem met its symbolic end in 1972, when rival drug gangs from Philadelphia engaged in a shootout killing five people inside the club, heralding the end of an era, signaling to many how times had changed. The famous nightclub officially shuttered its doors in 1986 after a storm further damaged the iconic venue and the club, like many other older buildings that harbored Kentucky Avenue's characteristic businesses, was demolished. Today, only one continuously operated business and

few original buildings remain along Kentucky Avenue from its heyday, as large sections of the block were cleared in the late 1980s and early 1990s. 1995 saw the groundbreaking for Renaissance Plaza, which was a \$13 million supermarket development project which required the acquisition and demolition of 31 properties. Major tenants of Renaissance Plaza include a Save-a-Lot supermarket, CVS drug store, and a McDonald's Express. Three historic buildings remain at the corner of each major intersection along Kentucky Avenue: the Church of the Ascension at Pacific Avenue, a national and state registered Spanish Renaissance church built in 1893, the old Five and Ten store at Atlantic Avenue, an example of early American commercial architecture, and the corner building at 1600 Arctic Avenue, which formerly housed a doctor's office and London Drugs.

#### DRIVING PRINCIPLES

A preservation-based revitalization plan of Kentucky Avenue will see to uphold the following guiding principles and challenges:

- Protect the remaining heritage assets along Kentucky Avenue.
- Bolster local economic and community revitalization by backing investment opportunities that benefit the local community and permanent residents by providing accessible jobs and services.
- Leverage Atlantic City's robust tourism market through projects that will generate regional appeal without excluding the inner-city residents.
- Foster community pride in Atlantic City's urban neighborhoods by preserving and re-activating historically significant sections of the city.
- Establish a vibrant local business district through business retention and funding assistance activities and diversifying the local economy.
- Commemorate and educate regarding the rich entertainment history of Kentucky Avenue, connecting the local narrative to the broader phenomenon of the power of cultural appreciation in overcoming racial segregation.
- Demonstrate how leveraging historic properties

can help create sustainable, culturally robust neighborhoods by anchoring communities, providing a cohesive and familiar sense of place, contributing character enhancing physical forms to surrounding districts, and enhancing economic development.

- Guide new construction to maintain and enhance neighborhood cohesion in terms of scale and use.
- Generate social and economic interactions through well designed public space.
- Improved safety through increased street-front activity and natural community surveillance.

#### CURRENT CHALLENGES

Safety Concerns | The site of interest along Kentucky Avenue between Baltic Avenue and Atlantic Avenue is surrounded by a predominantly low income neighborhood. The median income level of the surrounding residents is under \$20,000 per year primarily due to the large number of low-income housing projects in the vicinity of the site. Brown's Park meets Kentucky Avenue from the west just north of Arctic Avenue and is a popular site for drug activity and loitering. Large street facing blank walls behind modern day Renaissance Plaza, excessive expanses of parking lots and vacant lots minimize healthy street activity and lends poorly to natural community policing. Perceived safety would need to be addressed in order to successfully attract target patrons to the area on the large scale.

Food Desert | The juxtaposition of the low income residents and the millions of tourists of wealthier economic class that flock to Atlantic City each year make it difficult to reconcile the preferences and needs of these two distinct market groups. Investment primarily favors high margin tourism based developments, while permanent residents in Atlantic City lack basic amenities, such as accessible fresh food grocery stores. The Save-A-Lot located in Renaissance Plaza was the first grocery store to open in Atlantic City in years, however, it is mostly a purveyor of processed, pre-packaged foods with a dearth of healthy options. The revitalization

strategy will need to reconcile the local community needs as well as attracting regional consumers to generate a sustainable level of income.

Lack of lighting and signage | To enhance the perceived and actual safety of the site and its surrounding area, the inadequate night lighting and signage will need to be addressed. Currently only Atlantic Avenue and further south are endowed with cross walk signals, and the long stretches of black walls create a dark desolate environment. The revitalization plan will need to address this lack of lighting and directional signage to encourage more traffic.

Funding Resources | Very little original historic fabric remains on Kentucky Avenue that are relevant to its cultural significant. Because much of the blocks are vacant, consisting only of parking lots, revitalization attempts to achieve higher uses for the real estate will need to address funding sources available for new construction.

Location | Kentucky Avenue is located two blocks northwest of the Walk and extends further into the Northside than the currently developed tourism area. Though Kentucky Avenue as far north as Baltic Avenue is included within the official Tourism District under CRDA jurisdiction, the relative isolation of the block from other tourism based activities will need to be addressed. Previous revitalization efforts such as the original Kentucky Avenue Renaissance Festival have cited the street as a difficult location to hold events, so additional measures to enhance interconnectivity to other attractions within the city are anticipated.

## IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The proposal for a preservation-based revitalization plan for Kentucky Avenue will seek to build off of previous redevelopment efforts—primarily the research conducted in coherence with community visioning exercises and aspirations for the area performed by the Kentucky Avenue Renaissance Planning Committee and the Kentucky Avenue Renaissance Enterprise Foundation—while emphasizing the use of existing historic assets. The revitalization of Kentucky Avenue

has generated continued interest from community and investor stakeholders and redevelopment of this historic corridor is expected. Previous efforts to plan the future development of Kentucky Avenue have revolved around economic development by way of entertainment, through the development of public-private partnerships to improve the quality of life for visitors and residents of Atlantic City alike. Due to the current conditions and challenges associated with the site, the development goal will be achieved through multi-phased development stages that will eventually result in a vibrant local business corridor that is anchored by a performance entertainment venue on Atlantic and Kentucky Avenue. The stages of the development concept are described below:

### Phase 1: Protect existing heritage assets that contribute to Kentucky Avenue

Significant historic assets along Kentucky Avenue should be recognized and protected for their contribution to the character of the street. When possible, extant fabric that contributes to and highlights the original character of the street should be protected. Of over 100 businesses that once operated out of Kentucky Avenue, very few of the physical structures that housed these businesses still remain. The CRDA acquired and cleared 31 properties along the block for the construction of Renaissance Plaza in 1995 and the former site of Club Harlem is now blanketed by a parking lot. Significant properties along the block that should be actively protected under the proposed regulatory ordinance include the Church of the Ascension located at 1603 Pacific Avenue, the old site of the H.L. Green Five and Ten Store located at 1600 Atlantic Avenue, and the historic corner building that was once the site of London Drugs and a neighborhood doctor's office. Other historic buildings such as Sonny's Barber Shop and the neighboring establishment housing Mutual Taxi (38 and 40 Kentucky Avenue), as well as row houses with ground floor retail at 26 and 24 S Kentucky Avenue (between Atlantic and Pacific), also contribute to the neighborhood character representing the historic scale of the street while exemplifying the resiliency of small local businesses that are most suitably operated out of smaller scale historic buildings.

## Phase 2: Temporary programming to activate vacant lots along the street starting from the Boardwalk

Pop-up events are affordable interim solutions that generate interest and drive traffic to underutilized areas. On Kentucky Avenue between the Boardwalk and Pacific, lies an expanse of vacant lots, with virtually no street front activity or attractions to drive foot traffic further north up Kentucky Avenue from the established tourist center. After speaking with members of the community, individuals expressed doubt that tourists would be willing to travel to the portion of Kentucky Avenue where the entertainment took place during its heyday, but expressed that programming the street further down towards the boardwalk would have a higher chance of success. The large open space on this block is suitable for temporary festivals and markets, which can enliven otherwise empty streets, attracting regional visitation. As neighborhoods surrounding Kentucky Avenue are located in an area with a dearth of fresh food suppliers, a weekly farmer's market may be the most beneficial to the local community as a strategy to activate the dead space, connecting the rest of Kentucky Avenue to the Boardwalk. Due to Kentucky Avenue's rich entertainment history, the market should also incorporate live entertainment of local performers who can generate a local draw and a flea market where local/regional vendors can sell vintage goods, historic Atlantic City memorabilia and crafts.

Additionally, well-orchestrated street fairs, such as the Kentucky Avenue Renaissance Revival, a recent resurgence of the original two-day commemorative street festival held annually from 1992 to 2002, may operate in synergy with the pop-up market to continue to expand traffic and investment further up the street towards Baltic Avenue. Street festivals are popular within the local community and offer an opportunity to show visitors that there is more to Atlantic City than casinos. Street festivals should feature additional live music and entertainment, promote current and anticipated local businesses and showcase indigenous foods from local restaurants in a street festival setting; they are an excellent opportunity to promote urban activities away from the boardwalk which can eventually

lead to the generation of private interest.

Food Trucks have proven that they are not merely a temporary trend, but an enduring strategy that can be used to quickly program underutilized space, often operating in supply constrained markets, offering affordable delicious food in areas that lack decent restaurants. They are exceptionally popular with workers and students and help to enliven the street attracting people to take part in street-side transactions increasing social and economic activity in the area. Through good marketing, social media updates and targeted communication, food trucks could be organized to park in a parking lot or vacant lot on Atlantic Avenue to draw the working lunch crowd from surrounding offices. A potential location could be at the site of the vacant lot across the street from the old five and ten store during the day, while the trucks could move to the site of the market places when they are held, or near Kentucky Avenue musical events or festivals in the evening.

## Phase 3: Rehabilitate the Church of Ascension on Kentucky and Pacific Avenue for musical events

The Church of Ascension on the northwest corner of Kentucky and Pacific Avenue, at 30 S. Kentucky Avenue is currently occupied by the Episcopal Church. At the conclusion of this project, we were unable to establish whether the congregation actively holds services in the building, as attempts to contact and visit the Church were unanswered. The building is not currently utilized to its full potential, and should serve as an anchor for Kentucky Avenue. It could be a part-time performance arts venue, where the Church could lease out the property for use as performance space to responsible lessees. Using the Church as a performance space would serve the dual purpose of highlighting the cultural heritage of Kentucky Avenue through the creative use of a historic asset while aligning with the traditional music performance activities that this corridor is famous for.

The Church started a Hip Hop performance series in 2007 to connect to a younger audience and is in the process of establishing a part-time leasing relationship with Hollywood for the historic property to be used in

films. The Church receives funding from a variety of sources including the St. James Endowment Fund for its Cultural Series, the City of Atlantic City for repairs and community services. The Church is listed on the National Register and is eligible for federal rehabilitation tax credits.

#### Phase 4: Rehabilitate and convert 1600 Atlantic Avenue (at Kentucky Ave, the old Five and Ten)

One of the last remaining prominent structures alluding to Kentucky Avenue's past is the building at 1600 Atlantic Avenue at the southwest corner of the Atlantic Avenue and Kentucky Avenue intersection, which the locals know as the old "five and ten" store from the decades when building served as the H.L. Green variety store. "The carpet store and Wagenheim's meat market are long gone, but the old 'Five and Ten' is still there," one historian reports, indicating it as an asset to the street that provides orientation to residents and is one of the last recognizable anchors of the old Kentucky Avenue. It signified, "...part of the routine, workaday world people left behind when they crossed the Avenue to the North Side and the intriguing, decidedly non-routine world of North Kentucky Avenue" and perhaps can once again serve as an anchor to the local community. The building, representative of early American commercial building architecture, is located one block north of the Church of the Ascension, and denotes the informal boundary between the Northside residential neighborhoods from the beach side commercial districts. The reuse of this building should capitalize on the increased attention and foot traffic brought by the temporary programming of the street, exhibit a use that would complement the music and culture anchored revitalization of Kentucky Avenue, and benefit both the local and tourist communities.

One concept may include ground floor retail space featuring a music store with records, instruments and musical equipment, while the top floors could be renovated and rented out as studio/rehearsal space. Another consideration might include a coffee shop type space with a liquor license, with rotating art collections that showcased local history through photographs,

paintings, and/or poetry with a small scale performance venue in the back to house open microphone nights, and other intimate style performances.

Precedents: Kress Stores, a trademark five and dime department store chain across the United States have seen their buildings converted to a variety of new uses including residential, office space, loft space, night clubs, supermarkets, restaurants, taverns and other uses. Five and Ten Cent stores grew popular in the late 19th century, after Frank Winfield Woolworth popularized the retail type. The S.H. Kress Company became a major developer of this type of store, and employed an in-house architectural division that designed depression-era commercial buildings, which became instant landmarks, recognized for their significance in American commercial architectural history and contributions to the economic vitality of and main street development in cities across the country.

#### Phase 5: New construction of a performance venue on Atlantic and Kentucky Avenue

The temporary programming of the vacant space along the street with the reactivation of the Church of the Ascension and the old five and ten building across Atlantic Avenue should establish a buzz about the area. Announcing the intention to bring back Kentucky Avenue through strategic investment will also further stimulate local interest, which has remained strong as evidenced through multiple ongoing discussions that have spanned across three decades for how to "bring back the magic" of this corridor that remains a source of pride for the local community and a bastion of achievement for an underserved population. The phased out development of Kentucky Avenue, should culminate in the new construction of a state of the art performance venue on Atlantic and Kentucky Avenue, with a proposed location at the vacant lot that currently sits between 1601 and 1613 on the bay-side of Atlantic Avenue as there are no more existing structures that can house the type of event space that is necessary to anchor and draw visitors to Kentucky Avenue. The venue can feature a regular house performer, with occasional guest performances and can offer food and drink as an additional draw. To

capitalize on the loyal following that many long time institutions in Atlantic City have, procuring an existing well known Atlantic City restaurant to service the venue would be beneficial to increase business. Food Trucks could also operate from the street at night to serve the venue patrons as they prepare to enter and exit the shows. An agent responsible for the booking of the venue should be organized, and perhaps can coordinate with other more established venues within the central Tourism District.

### Next Steps and Opportunities

*Form partnerships with local institutions and community stakeholders* | Atlantic Cape Community College has a presence on the street and may be interested in partnering with this development by offering local knowledge to inform the creation of the venue.

*Capitalize on existing publicity* | Kentucky Avenue is slated for a permanent exhibition in the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Smithsonian's 19th museum set to open in 2015 located in Washington DC. Ralph Hunter's African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey is scheduled to form a semi-permanent exhibit on Kentucky Avenue in the Noye Art Garage in Atlantic City. These installations can help generate interest and promote future growth of the area. If the programming of Kentucky Avenue is successful, there may be opportunities to link the two events through transportation (shuttle service), programming, and promotion.

*Facilitate Visitation* | Set up a multiple stop shuttle service that would transport visitors from one attraction to another throughout the city beyond the Boardwalk, as redevelopment expands into the neighborhoods. Walkability and traditional transportation utilization would be the ultimate goals, however, current conditions may necessitate this additional transportation provision to account for safety concerns, lack of signage and lighting, and lack of sufficient development connecting relatively isolated attractions throughout the city. During the interim solution of providing transportation, improving signage and lighting in areas targeted for redevelopment should be a top priority.





Club Harlem, Courtesy of The Music and Entertainment Report



Grace's Little Belmont, Heston Room, AC Free Public Library



Club Harlem Stage, Heston Room, AC Free Public Library



Club Harlem with Louis Armstrong and the George Hudson Band Heston Room, AC Free Public Library



Church of the Ascension at Pacific and Kentucky



1600 Arctic Avenue



Vacant Lot on Atlantic Avenue near Kentucky, proposed site for new music venue



H.L. Green Silver Five and Ten Cent Store on Atlantic and Kentucky



Google Sketchup View of Improvement Plan



Display of Pop-Up Market and Fair Grounds on Pacific



Proposed new music venue located on Atlantic and Kentucky



Display of Pop-Up Market and Fair Grounds on Pacific with food trucks, tents and performance space

## END NOTES

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# RESURRECTING THE CLARIDGE

A PLAN FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF DEAD CASINOS

The skyline of Atlantic City today is dominated by the towering casino hotel complexes that were constructed after the 1974 casino referendum, heralding in massive redevelopment along the iconic seaside Boardwalk. However, long before Pacific Avenue became the gambling mecca of the east coast, the jewel of the seaside resort town was the Claridge, a 29-story luxury hostelry known affectionately as “The Skyscraper by the Sea.”<sup>1</sup>

## HISTORY

The Claridge was a relatively late arrival to the Boardwalk, coming only at the very end of the boom period that marked the pre-war years of Atlantic City. However, before the hotel was built on the land at Pacific Avenue and Park Place (behind today’s Brighton Park), this prime piece of real estate was occupied by the lavish summer home of Henry Disston, a wealthy sawmill entrepreneur. The Disston family built the home in 1872, when Atlantic City was little more than a small resort town, and they owned the property for over 50 years, as the city became one most popular tourist destinations on the east coast.

By 1926, when the area became crowded with tourist and hotel development, the family sold the property to the Sealands Corporation for the staggering sum of \$2 million. The Sealands Corporation began planning to construct a large skyscraper on the site, modeling it off of one of the famous London hostelry, Claridge’s. Taking not only inspiration but also its name, the new hotel, called simply the Claridge, was planned to be just as fine as its London counterpart, with luxurious amenities such as saltwater baths, grand dining rooms, and rich material finishes. The 29-story brick and terra cotta tower was designed by Philadelphia architect, Charles H. Roberts at a cost of \$5 million and included 24 floors of hotel rooms (400 in total) and support spaces crowned by a 5-story cupola, which gave the Claridge its distinctive silhouette.

Although planning for the Claridge began during the Roaring Twenties, when Atlantic City was experiencing its greatest boom period and enjoyed record visitation

levels, its dedication on December 17, 1930 marked the end of an era, as the United States entered the Great Depression. With the Depression keeping the boardwalk and beaches of Atlantic City empty, the construction of new hotels came to a sudden halt, not to resume again until the introduction of casino gambling nearly a half century later. However, despite the waning visitation to the shore, the Claridge managed to maintain a steady business through the 1930s with its reputation as one of the finest hotels in Atlantic City. Catering to visiting dignitaries, movie stars, and other wealthy clientele, the hotel remained one of the only bright spots amid the Depression’s gloom.

In 1941, America entered World War II and Atlantic City joined the war effort, transforming its famous seaside thoroughfare into “Camp Boardwalk.” On July 7, 1942, the Claridge became the fifth hotel in Atlantic City to be “drafted” by converting its facilities into temporary housing during wartime training. During this period, it became most famous as the birthplace on the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, hosting the group’s first official session in November 1942. While the resort was being “militarized” and the army was taking over many of the great beachfront hotels, the owners of the Claridge began the construction of a large convention hall addition in an effort to diversify their programming.

The construction of the hall marked the first major building operation for the hotel and was the largest improvement since the hotel was built. When construction completed in 1943, the convention hall was considered one of the largest and most



Site Plan

modern facilities of its day, with acoustic paneling, loud speakers, microphones, air-conditioning, and indirect lighting. The main hall, known as the Claridge, was the largest of four convention halls and could accommodate up to 500 people in its 5,000 square feet of area.<sup>2</sup>

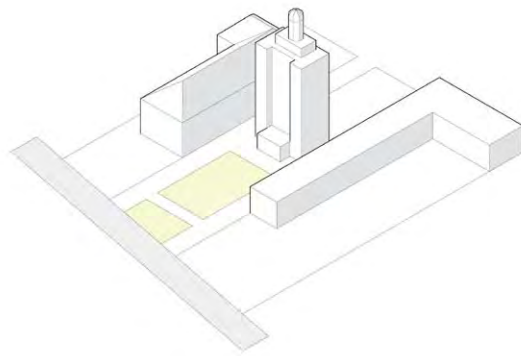
Despite its best efforts in expanding its appeal to a wider audience, the hotel never regained its popularity following the War. According to Elias G. Naame, then counsel for the owners of the Claridge, the decreased revenue was a direct result of the increased construction of modern motels, which offered more modern facilities and other various conveniences not enjoyed by boom-period hotels. Between 1959 and 1960, the hotel claimed a loss in gross income of nearly \$700,000 (from \$2,500,000 in 1959 to \$1,856,000 in 1960) and was operating at a loss of \$149,000 that year.<sup>3</sup> However, while most hotels were torn down or converted into apartments, the Claridge hung on until 1976, when the hotel declared bankruptcy and was auctioned off and much of the interior furnishing and fixtures were sold off. In 1979, Connecticut

entrepreneur Fiore Francis D'Addario announced plans to renovate the Claridge and hired the Del E. Webb Corporation, then the nation's biggest hotel casino operator, to manage it.

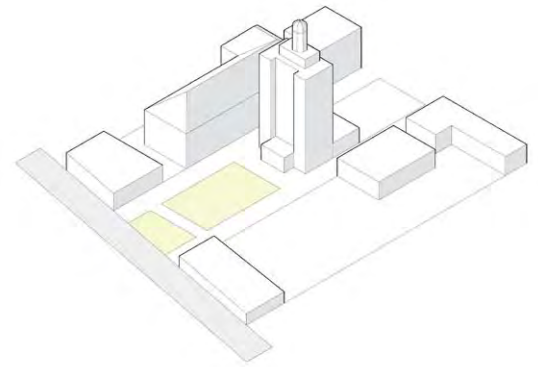
#### Claridge | Casino Conversion and Renovation

In 1981, Max Luber of Del Webb Hotels renovated and expanded the building, adding a large 21-story addition to the west side (rear) of the building that contained the additional hotel rooms (from 385 to 504 rooms), restaurants, convention halls, and the casino floor. While the architects were careful to match the terra cotta brick of the steel framed addition to the older structure, the addition turned its back to Pacific Avenue by presenting a blank wall to the street. The new restaurants and informal dining areas in the hotel catered to a wide range of tastes and interests: the glass-enclosed London Pavilion offered continental cuisine and a sweeping view of the ocean while The Half Shell served sea fare, "fresh from the fisherman's net," in a setting of ebony, walnut and brass. The renovation also included the expansion of entertainment programming

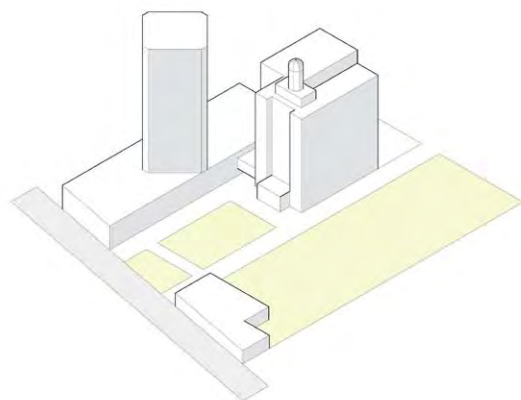




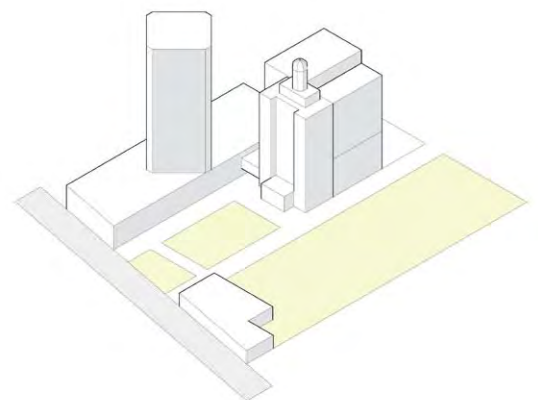
1930



1950



1980



2013

with the addition of the Bombay Bar, Mayfair Lounge, and hi-Ho Lounge as well as the Cabaret Continental Theater. For relaxation and recreation, the owners added a glass-enclosed swimming pool, health club, and roof garden. Also included in the renovation was the complete renovation of the conference complex, which comprised of 19 rooms ranging in size from 250 to 14,000 square feet on the second, third, and sixth floors. Several of the rooms were designed with sliding acoustic walls that expanded or subdivided the areas according to need.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the renovation and redevelopment of the Claridge as a casino-hotel, this period also saw the construction of both the Bally's and Sands casino complexes. Unlike the Claridge, which was set back from the street behind the expansive open green space of Brighton Park, both Bally's and the Sands filled their entire lots, abutting the Boardwalk directly with retail space and the casino floor. This not only completely

redefined the visitor experience on the Boardwalk, it also disregarded the inherent logic of the traditional *parti*, which avoided building within the "buffer zone" that was most susceptible to damage from storm water and tidal surge. In addition to changing the historic character of the boardwalk, the new casino developments also diminished the quality of the urban experience on the street level.

All three casinos – the Claridge, Bally's, and the Sands – were connected with elevated walkways from the second to the sixth floors, a common characteristic of casino development in the 1980s, which pushed for the increased interiorization of the gaming experience to keep visitor expenditure within the casino walls. Although these connections were later severed with the demolition of the Sands Casino in 2007, there is still evidence of this connection both in plan, where the doorways are still evident, and on the north façade of the Claridge, which is largely blank, punctuated

only by doorframes and mechanical shafts that once connected the two buildings at the level of the convention complex.

Shortly after the demolition of the Sands Casino, the Claridge underwent a \$20 million renovation and development campaign in 2009 in an effort to appeal to a younger audience. In addition to the rebranding effort – changing the name of its casino floor to “the Ridge” and opening up a dance club – the hotel also renovated and updated its guest rooms and public spaces. However, despite its best efforts in remarketing itself, the Claridge failed to reach out to a broader audience, due in part to the construction of more modern facilities in Atlantic City and the surrounding regions. In October, 2013, the Claridge was sold by Bally’s to TJM properties, a Florida-based hotel operator, which operates 10 hotels and more than 19 senior living communities in the Tampa Bay region.<sup>5</sup>



Blank facade left after demolition of the Sands

#### CURRENT STATUS

According to Kevin Ortzman, senior vice president of Bally’s, Caesars Atlantic City, and the Showboat Casinos, TJM’s current plan for the Claridge is to keep the hotel open and operating while it upgrades the rooms, installs a new reception area and restaurant, and adds non-gambling amenities to the building. However, while it is clear that the new development will not involve casino programming, the scope and extent of these renovations and the new programming initiative is still uncertain. What is clear is that the sale of the Claridge signals a greater trend in the economic development of Atlantic City, which is increasingly seeking to diversify its appeal amongst non-gambling visitors, and the casinos themselves, which are consolidating their resources and focusing on a smaller footprint due to decreasing profits.

In the first half of 2013, Bally’s reported a profit of \$192.6 million from gamblers, down nearly 20 percent from the same period in 2013. Even so, the casino still ranks fifth among Atlantic City’s 12 casinos in terms of the amount of money gained from gamblers.<sup>6</sup> If this trend continues as it’s projected, it is very likely



Second Floor



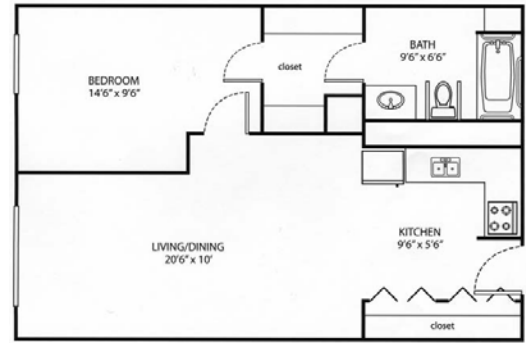
Third Floor



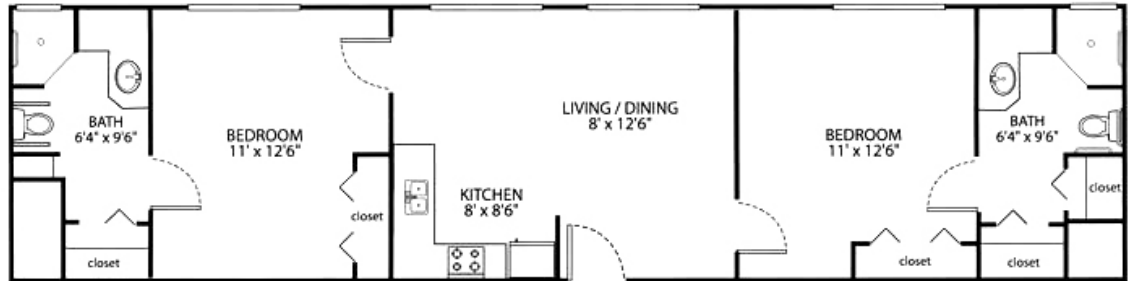
Sixth Floor



Princess Martha Hotel



1 BR Unit



2 BR Unit

that the sale and redevelopment of the Claridge will not be an isolated incident. Considering this trend and the likely demand for future redevelopment plans, the Claridge will set an important precedent for future programmatic diversification strategies.

### PRECEDENTS

With plans still uncertain about the future redevelopment of the Claridge Hotel, it is useful to examine a variety of precedents that dealt with the similar challenge of the adaptive reuse of historic hotels in urban areas. This report will examine two projects that approached the challenge in different way: the Princess Martha Hotel in St. Petersburg Florida, a property owned and operated by TJM properties, the current owners of the Claridge Hotel, and Harvest Commons in Chicago Illinois, a project that addresses both social and environmental sustainability.

#### The Princess Martha Hotel | TJM Properties

The Princess Martha Hotel, formally the Mason Hotel, was built in 1925 in St. Petersburg and was one of ten

major hotels built during the Florida Boom Era. As a boom-era hotel, the neo-classical redbrick building at 411 First Avenue left an indelible footprint on the city's history, welcoming visitors to St. Petersburg with her bright neon roof-top sign. However, despite its association with the city's Golden Age and southern hospitality, the Mason Hotel filed for bankruptcy within two years, yet another victim of Depression era development.<sup>7</sup>

During WWII, the hotel also became a military camp for inductees that were going through basic training in what is now Al Lang Field. After World War II, the building was purchased by St. Petersburg attorney Samuel H. Mann, whose family operated the hotel until his death. In 1977, the hotel was sold to the adjacent First Baptist Church, which briefly operated the hotel as a short term living facility, but was converted to a commercial hotel shortly after. In 2011, William R. Hough of WRH Realty Services purchased the hotel and transformed it into a senior living facility, improving all of the services and amenities in the building. Today, the Princess Martha is owned and operated by TJM Properties.



Harvest Commons, Sustainable Features

With approximately 2,000 rooms in a 9-floor low-rise building, the Princess Martha Hotel, a steel frame building with brick applied masonry, is similar in construction to the Claridge. Because of its location within the dense historic downtown district of St. Petersburg and its interior configuration, with smaller individual rooms with en suite baths and large public spaces on the ground level, the building lent itself to easy conversion into a senior living facility with minimal changes to the interior building geometry. Likewise, the public amenities of the hotel, from the beauty salon, dining rooms, and beauty salon, to the large pool and sundeck, provides a wide variety of features desirable for its senior residents.

While the exterior character of the building remains largely unchanged, the architects only needed to make small interior changes in order to reconfigure the single hotel rooms into 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom units. By keeping baths in the same locations and installing kitchens using the existing vertical plumbing stacks, the developers were able to save money in infrastructural changes to the building and focused exclusively on the reconfiguration of the interior

partitions. Because the units are essentially adjacent hotel rooms linked together with doorways and openings, the resulting plans are long and linear, with kitchens located in the middle and bathrooms at either end. Because it shares many of the features – room size, configuration, etc - of the Princess Martha Hotel, the interior of the Claridge could be similarly reconfigured by linking adjacent rooms to form larger 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom suites. This helps to inform both future interventions and programmatic strategies for the proposed reuse of the Claridge.

Harvest Commons | Landon Bone Baker Architects

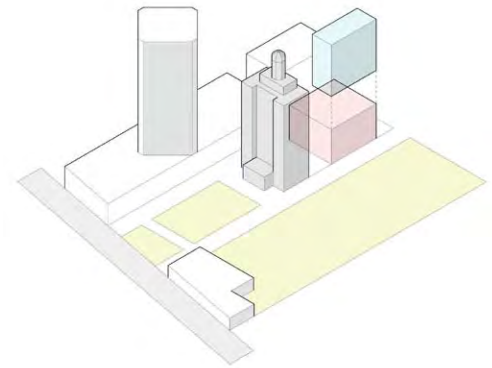
Harvest Commons Apartments, formerly the Viceroy Hotel, is an 89-unit affordable residential and supportive services project and a historic sustainable rehabilitation. The former art-deco hotel from the 1930s opened as an “apartment hotel” for immigrant workers new to Chicago and in need of temporary housing. From 1966 through the early 2000s, the hotel fell into serious decline and gained a reputation for both its squatter residents and association with drug use. In 2009, Heartland Housing in association

with the First Baptist Congregational Church won the request for proposal to transform the building into a transitional affordable living facility and community center. Designated as a historic building in 2010, the 6-story, terra cotta and brick clad building received an exterior façade restoration as well as the preservation of the original interior features such as the historic lobby, front stairway, and barrel vaulting on the residential floors.

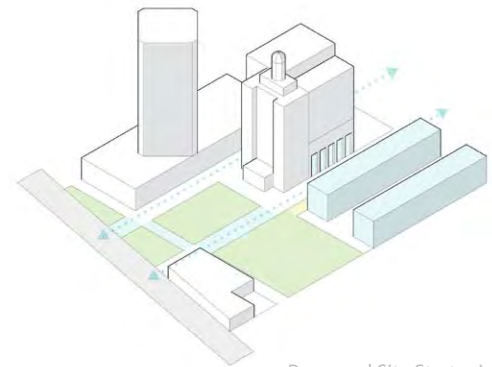
The real challenge, however, was how to incorporate innovative programmatic strategies in affordable housing, considering the tight budget and resources. In addition to the residential units and traditional support services, Heartland Housing was adamant about incorporating such programs as a community garden, test kitchen, chicken coop, and an on-site café as well as a full-time nutritionist and gardener to work with the residents. According to Landon Bone Baker senior associate Jake Schroeder, sacrificing programs for pricier design choices was not an option as “Heartland has a singular focus on making sure that it happened.”<sup>8</sup>

In order to include these ecological, environmental, and social sustainable features, the architects saved money in the budget by working within the organization of the existing guest rooms, only minimally intervening in order to convert two single hotel rooms into one larger residential unit. Instead, most of the effort and resources were spent on developing progressive supportive programming and the incorporative green design elements, such as low-flow water fixtures, permeable paving, native planting, rain gardens, a green roof system, geothermal heating, and a community garden, where residents help grow some of the vegetables used in the on-site café. In addition to creating a sense of community, this programmatic strategy is also intended to serve as a community space and revenue generator, helping to offset the operational costs of the facility. vv

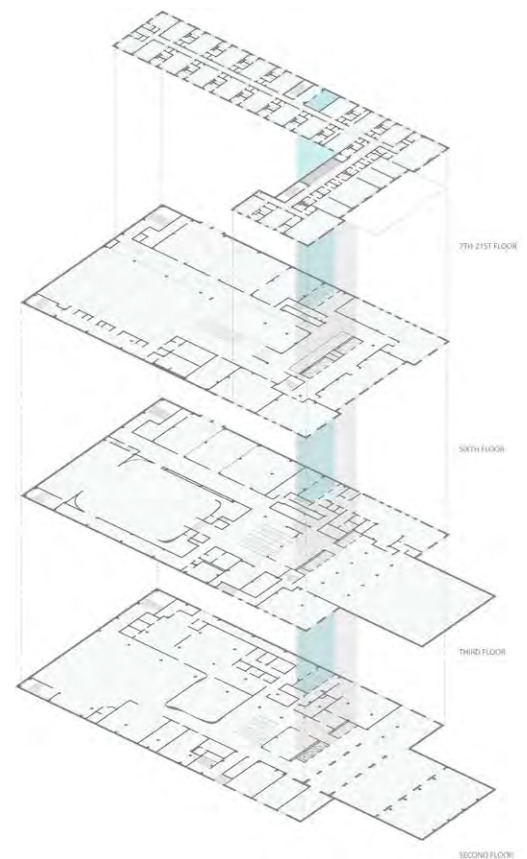
The transformation of the Viceroy Hotel has attracted much attention from the community and potential residents, who acknowledge the progressive ideas of



Programmatic Diagram



Proposed Site Strategies



both the organization and their approach to sustainable design. Additionally, the reuse of the historic building was a meaningful gesture to the neighborhood, which has struggled for years with high crime rate, building vacancy, and lack of community engagement. For its efforts, Landon Bone Baker Architects have received numerous accolades and awards, including the 2013 AIA Chicago Distinguished Building Award, the 2013 J. Timothy Anderson Award for Excellence in Historic Rehabilitation: Most Innovative Adaptive Reuse, and the 2013 Affordable Housing Finance Readers' Choice Award Winner.<sup>9</sup>



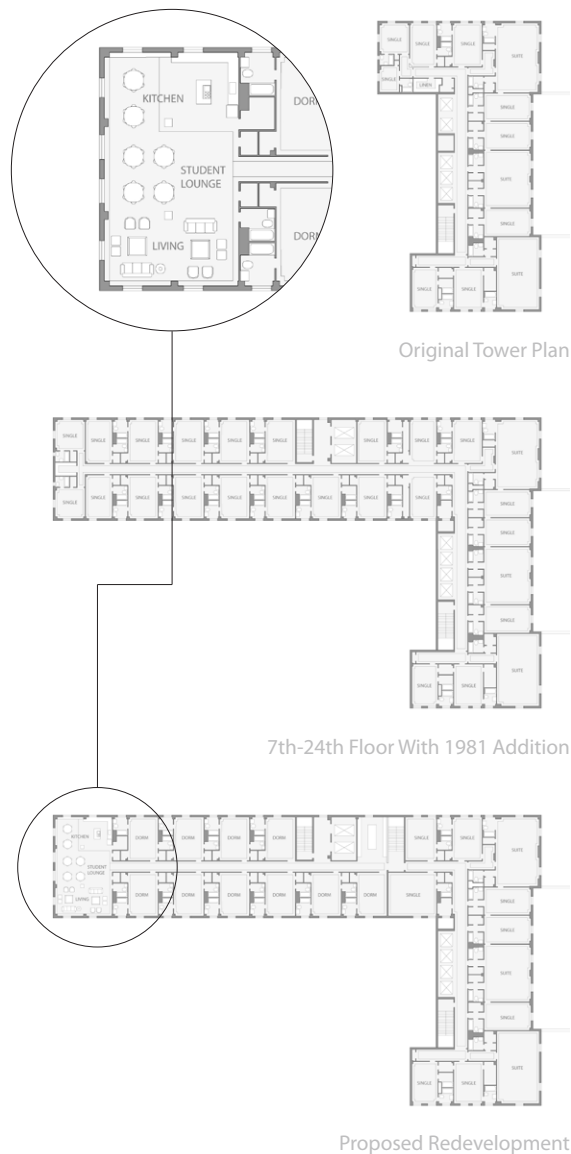
Student Common Space

**PROPOSED PROGRAM AND IMPLICATIONS**

The programmatic logic of the redevelopment plan is based on the logic of the historic development of the site. Because many of the hotels in Atlantic City are suffering from increasing vacancy rates, the programmatic strategy seeks to reduce the overall number of hotel rooms in an effort to diversify both the program and the hotel's revenue base with the development of a dormitory in the 1981 expansion. Additionally the proposal examines larger urban strategies, such as breaking the connection with Bally's Casino to restore street life, and addressing storm and hurricane threats.

Similar to both of the precedents presented previously, the interventions at the Claridge will be targeted changes that work within the current configuration of the hotel. Because the hotel was recently renovated and the interior spaces are largely in good condition, the historic tower and guest suites will retain its existing organization and function, acting as an immediate revenue generator during the renovation of the dormitory wing. The upper volume of the 1981 addition will be converted into 150 double occupancy student dormitories and on each floor, four guest suites will be converted into common spaces, containing a shared kitchen, lounge, and dining spaces.

Much of the architectural interventions are based off of the existing vertical circulation cores – one in the historic 1930 tower and the other in the 1981 addition





URBAN STRATEGY

Mixed use development with ground floor retail/public with residential above

Detained water also filters into the soil, helping to recharge the groundwater

Solar shading system speaks to traditional architectural typology

Ground level opens to sidewalk to enliven street and engage with community

First floor lifted off of the ground for storm water surge



**BIOSWALES**

Instead of going directly into storm drains, stormwater is diverted into bioswales

Native plants help slow down stormwater surface runoff, start filtration processes, and reduce need for irrigation, fertilizer, and pesticides

Plant and tree roots and soil microbes help clean the water

Storm drains help carry off excess water

Detained water also filters into the soil, helping to recharge the groundwater

Site Strategy Rendering



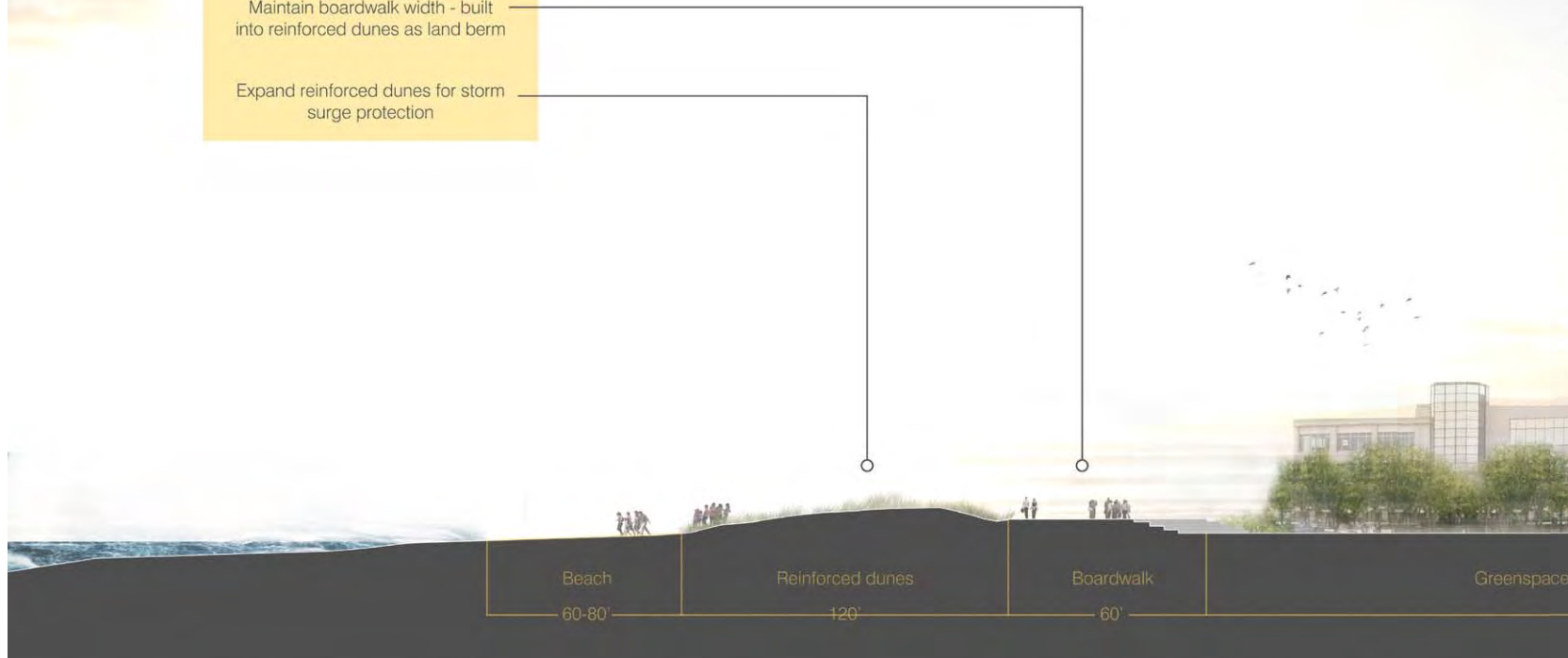
## SITE STRATEGY

Restore street-level retail to knit boardwalk to Pacific Avenue. New construction should respect setback.

Restore historic setback where possible as protection from storm surge (soft landscaping as mitigation)

Maintain boardwalk width - built into reinforced dunes as land berm

Expand reinforced dunes for storm surge protection



– which will serve to programmatically divide the two volumes. The original set of elevator banks and fire stairs (visible in red in the diagram) will continue to serve the hotel complex, while the newer bank of elevators will service the renovated dormitory and retail space (in blue in the diagram). Dividing the program in the building also necessitates the construction of an additional fire stair near the junction of the two building volumes. This fire stair will not only serve to provide an additional means of egress, but will also divide the volumes programmatically. On the ground level, the blank wall left after the demolition of the Sands Casino in 2007 will become the primary entrance to the dormitory complex and contain a variety of classroom, public, and retail space.

## Urban Strategy

In addition to the introduction of retail on the north façade of the building, the reuse plan suggests a number of larger site strategies that address the issues of street-level programming, non-vehicular circulation, and the threat of storm water and tidal surge. Through the introduction of street-level programming on Indiana Avenue by opening up the north façade, the new dormitory will help to re-knot the urban fabric between the Boardwalk and Pacific Avenue. By encouraging visitors to move from the Boardwalk to the interior historic commercial corridors, local businesses and the tourism industry can begin to establish stronger and mutually beneficial



relationships and the “urban wall” condition presented by the casino developments will slowly become increasingly permeable. Concerning development patterns, the redevelopment plan recommends restoring the historic setbacks established by the Claridge and suggests that future development also respects these setbacks. Additionally, “soft-scaping” and permeable surfaces should be implemented to help mitigate the effects of storm-water runoff and tidal surge.

Along the street, new development should be set back from the curb edge a minimum of 20 feet to accommodate a bioswale system that will mitigate storm-water surge, remove silt and pollution from

surface water runoff, and act as a physical barrier between the street and the sidewalks. This is intended to encourage pedestrian circulation on the street and reverse the vehicular centered development that characterized development patterns since the 1970s. Through the site to the north of the Claridge is currently part of the Artlantic development, the zoning strategy recommends that it is slowly developed as low rise, mixed-use space that takes design cues from historic beachfront typology, including raised first floors that can accommodate tidal surge and outdoor public and retail space that will enliven the street-level development along Indiana Avenue.

## END NOTES

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