



Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Action Strategy

Submitted to:
New Jersey Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
June 24, 2022

Submitted by:
Pleasantville Housing and Redevelopment Corporation

Prepared by:
Rutala Associates

Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Action Strategy

Funding for the Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Action Strategy was provided by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA). Pleasantville Housing and Redevelopment Corporation (PHRC) spearheaded the Strategy in cooperation with the City of Pleasantville.

The Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Committee developed the Strategy with the support of Rutala Associates, a local planning firm. Rutala Associates acknowledges and expresses their gratitude to all the participants in the planning process including the Committee and all those who attended the public forums, interviews, stakeholder meetings, and focus groups. Their ideas and feedback form the basis of this Strategy. The general principles, specific redevelopment strategies, and recommendations are the direct result of their involvement.

We also want to thank the many organizations that supported this effort. Special thanks to the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City for designing our logo and Jonathan Diego, Esq. for preparing the legal documents to establish the Pleasantville Midtown Community Development Corporation.

Pleasantville Neighborhood Revitalization Committee

Dawn Rice-Bivens, President, Future Leaders Organization
Doris Rowell, Pleasantville Board of Education
Cindy Pitts, Pleasantville Business Owner
Jonathan Diego, Esq., Midtown Business Owner
Rodrick L Green, Midtown Business Owner
Manuel Cabral Cuevas, Midtown Business Owner
Kimiasia Justice, Sunflowers Life Skills
Bertilio Correa, 2nd Ward Councilperson
Julio Sanchez, Pleasantville Board of Education
Rev. Isaac Abban, Church of Pentecost
Celeste Fernandez, Midtown Business Owner
Kenneth Barnshaw, VP, South Jersey Federal Credit Union

City/PHRC Representatives

Mayor Judy Ward, Mayor, City of Pleasantville
Linda Peyton, Business Administrator, City of Pleasantville
Jackie Amado-Belton, City of Pleasantville
Vernon Lawrence, Secretary, PHRC; Executive Director, Pleasantville Housing Authority
Leonard Golden, PHRC, Board of Trustees
Deborah Nicholson, Pleasantville Housing Authority
Rick Ginnetti, Brooke Group

Planning Team

James M. Rutala, PP, AICP, MBA, CFM, Principal, Rutala Associates
Brian Kempf, PP, AICP, Planner, Rutala Associates
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Michele Snyder, Intern, Rutala Associates

Section 1. Cover Page

FORM NP-1, page 1: COVER PAGE FOR SUBMISSION OF A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Neighborhood: Midtown Neighborhood NJ Legislative District: NJ - 2

Eligible Municipality: Pleasantville Mayor: Judy Ward

Name of Applicant Organization: Pleasantville Housing and Redevelopment Corporation

Name of CEO/Executive Director: Vernon Lawrence

Address: 156 North Main Street

City: Pleasantville State: NJ Zip Code: 08232-0569

NJ Charities Registration Number: _____

Contact Person for this Application: Jim Rutala

Phone: 609.743.0354 E-Mail: jmrutala@comcast.net

Cellphone
(optional): _____

What is the time period for this Neighborhood Plan? 10 years
(may not exceed Ten (10) years)

Did you partner with another organization to develop the Neighborhood Plan?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	(if YES, complete NP-1 Page 2)
	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Certification: To the best of my knowledge and belief, the data in this application are true and correct. The governing body of the applicant has duly authorized the document.

Vernon Lawrence Chairperson
Name Title

Signature of Board Chairperson Date June 24, 2022

Section 2. Executive Summary

The Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC) is designed to foster the revitalization of New Jersey's distressed neighborhoods. NRTC offers business entities a 100 percent tax credit against various New Jersey state taxes. Credits are provided to business entities that invest in the revitalization of low- and moderate-income neighborhoods in eligible cities. Sixty percent of the tax credit funds must be used for activities related to the development of housing and economic development. The remaining balance may be used for complementary activities such as the provision of assistance to small businesses, removing barriers to self-sufficiency, and promoting the integration of mixed-income neighborhoods. A total of \$15 million per year is available in tax credits.

NRTC funds are used by neighborhood-based non-profit organizations that have prepared, submitted, and received approval from NJDCA for a revitalization plan for the neighborhood they serve. The funds must be used by the eligible organizations for projects and activities that will implement the goals and strategies of the approved neighborhood plan. The maximum amount per application is \$965,000. NRTC rules and policies govern the number of applications and grants that an eligible organization may submit and receive.

The Pleasantville Master Plan recommended that a non-profit be designated, and a plan be prepared for the Midtown Neighborhood to qualify the City of Pleasantville for NRTC funding. This Plan was made possible by a NRTC planning grant provided to the Pleasantville Housing Redevelopment Corporation, a non-profit associated with the Pleasantville Housing Authority.

The Midtown Neighborhood is bounded on the west by Route 9 and on the north by the Atlantic City Expressway. On the south, it ends at Bayview Avenue and on the east at the bay waterfront. The Neighborhood has a central axis at the junction of Washington Avenue and Main Street in the heart of downtown Pleasantville. Downtown Pleasantville was selected to participate in the NJDCA Neighborhood Preservation Program, and a portion of the Downtown and the Lakes Bay area has been federally designated as an Opportunity Zone.

Residents and business leaders in Midtown have been collaborating cooperatively with local partners to develop strategies to improve their neighborhood for the last year. Now with their Plan completed, we are requesting NJDCA approval so that the neighborhood can compete for Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit support.

The City of Pleasantville has a long history of bringing residents and businesses of Midtown together. In 2002 the City implemented a Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) through the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA). This program identified neighborhood needs, located resources to address these needs, and designed neighborhood strategies for the Midtown area. Community engagement and surveys were completed.

The Neighborhood Preservation Program was reinstated by the State in 2020. Pleasantville was one of the first communities to join this program. Again, the Midtown section of the City was the focus of this program. Now in its second year, the NPP effort is showing results with the active participation of its steering committee.

In 2021, the City joined forces with the Pleasantville Housing and Redevelopment Corporation to pursue funding through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program. The community

realized that in order to qualify for NRTC support, it must develop a resident driven neighborhood plan.

The Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Plan was completed in June 2022 after over a year of steering committee meetings, focus groups, and stakeholder engagement. The Midtown Plan includes several community endorsed initiatives that have been identified as critical for improving outcomes for neighborhood residents. Measurable outcomes are associated with each activity.

- Abandoned/Foreclosed Property Rehabilitations. Implementation activities A.4; A.7; J.3a; J.3h.
- Façade improvement program. Implementation activity A.6.
- Trash Abatement. Implementation activity A.9.
- Placemaking enhancements. Implementation activity B.7.
- Seed funding for new enterprises. Implementation activity G.1a.
- Neighborhood park at Washington Avenue and First Street. Implementation activity G.2a.
- Mutual aid program set-up. Implementation activity J.1b.
- Adult education/GED classes sponsorship. Implementation activity J.2b.
- Workforce training/immigration assistance. Implementation activity J.1d; J.2c.

The Pleasantville Housing and Redevelopment Corporation (PHRC), the Applicant Organization, has a distinguished history of funding and managing community programs.

Many recent activities have occurred in Midtown to build momentum for the implementation of the Midtown Plan:

- A strong Steering Committee has been established including residents and business owners from the Midtown Neighborhood to build the necessary capacity to implement the Midtown Plan.
- Several meetings have been held with the NJEDA, ACIA, Atlantic Cape Community College, AtlantiCare and other major stakeholders in the community to start to build partnerships.
- The City has prepared an application for the Neighborhood Preservation Programs Capital Grant Program to purchase, demolish, and build a pocket park at Washington Avenue and First Street.
- The City is completing an Environmental Assessment for the Duell Fuel site in the Center City Redevelopment Area.
- The City is securing funding to replace sewer lines and pave various roads in the Midtown Neighborhood.
- The redevelopment plan for the Pleasantville High School site and Jokers Field is moving toward implementation and will result in a mixed-use development and a waterfront park.
- The NPP implementation has resulted in new murals, a decorative clock, flowerpots, and other enhancements in the heart of the Midtown Neighborhood.
- The City is pursuing federal funds to construct a pedestrian bridge over the Atlantic City Expressway to connect the schools (Pleasantville Middle School and Pleasantville High School) with the neighborhoods.

Section 3. Organization Information

(a) Organizational Profile

A. AGENCY INFORMATION

What was the organization's date of incorporation? 12/13/2005

What was the original purpose for which the organization was formed?
The Pleasantville Housing and Redevelopment Corp. (PHRC) is dedicated to providing affordable housing opportunities to area residents.

What is the organization's current mission statement?
The PHRC has strong ties to the City of Pleasantville and works closely with the city Planning and Development Committee as well as the Pleasantville Housing Authority to improve housing and quality of life for the city's residents.

Is the organization in "Good Standing" with the NJ Department of State?

YES NO

When did the organization file its current N.J. Charitable Registration and Investigation Act Report (CRI-300R)?

Date: Not completed

Documents to be submitted as Attachment(s):

- "Certificate of Good Standing" certificate from State of New Jersey (attached)
- Copy of current NJ CRI-300R form (attached)

B. BOARD OF DIRECTORS INFORMATION

FORM NP-2: ORGANIZATION PROFILE

C. PERSONNEL - TOTAL AGENCY

What is the current agency staffing level?

Full Time:	<u>1</u>
Part Time:	<u>0</u>
Volunteers:	<u>0</u>

Provide the following information regarding full-time staff employed by the organization in the past 5 years:

Year	Annual Employee Turnover Percentage	Leadership / Senior Staff Included?	
		YES	NO
2014	NA	X	

2015	NA	X
2016	NA	X
2017	NA	X
2018	NA	X

For any year in which employee turnover percentage exceeded 20%, provide an explanation:

NA

When was the Executive Director hired? NA

Documents to be submitted as Attachment(s):

- *Resume for the Executive Director (attached)*
- *Organization Chart (attached)*

FORM NP-2: ORGANIZATION PROFILE

D. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

What is the organization’s fiscal year?

Start Date: January 1
 End Date: December 31

When was the organization’s current year total budget approved by its Board of Directors? 5/18/2022

Did the organization incur a deficit at the end of its most recent fiscal year? YES NO

If YES, what is the amount, and how will the agency reduce/address the deficit?

When was Form 990 most recently completed and submitted to the IRS? 2021

When was the organization’s most recent annual audit report (audited financial statement) completed? 2021

What was the time period covered in the audit report: January 1 to December 31

Were there any internal control or compliance findings from the organization’s most recent annual audit report? YES NO

Documents to be submitted as Attachment(s):

- *Organization’s total budget for the current year, with funding sources listed (attached)*
- *Copy of the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting at which the organization’s current year total budget was approved (attached)*
- *Copy of the three (3) most recent annual audit reports for the organization (attached)*

- *Copy of the corrective action plan related to internal control or compliance findings from the organization's most recent annual audit report, if applicable (NA)*

(b) Financial Resources.

The only current revenue of the PHRC is unit rental income. No NJDCA income has been incurred, except for the NRTC Planning grant.

(c) Community Involvement.

The Pleasantville Housing and Redevelopment Corp. (PHRC) is dedicated to providing affordable housing opportunities to area residents. The PHRC is certified as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) making it eligible to receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The PHRC had begun as the support entity created by the Pleasantville Housing Authority during its HOPE VI Project. Since the completion of the HOPE VI project in 2008 PHRC has successfully completed rehabilitation of 25 homes in the Midtown neighborhood of Pleasantville, NJ as the development partner of the Pleasantville Housing Authority on two Neighborhood Stabilization Grants (NSP) in 2009 and 2011 from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Most recently the PHRC completed five single family, new construction homes for use as affordable rentals in the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP). This grant has come from CDBG-DR funds for Hurricane Sandy disaster relief and is also being administered through the New Jersey DCA. The houses are being leased to families making 50% to 80% of area median income. The PHRC has strong ties to the City of Pleasantville and works closely with the city Planning and Development Committee as well as the Pleasantville Housing Authority to improve housing and quality of life for the city's residents.

Section 4. Organizational Capacity and Experience

(a) Organizational capacity.

The Pleasantville Housing and Redevelopment Corporation (PHRC), a CHDO, is proud to sponsor this NRTC Neighborhood Planning Grant effort. Alongside the City of Pleasantville as our partner, the PHRC is excited to build a foundation for revitalization efforts in the heart of the City of Pleasantville.

The PHRC has wide experience with community engagement and stakeholder processes that aim to improve the quality of life for residents. In the past few years, the PHRC has sought and received several grants for a variety of activities. The robust array of assistance to Pleasantville needs to be accompanied by even more robust community outreach to help ensure that residents and stakeholder groups are heard.

The PHRC is located in Pleasantville, New Jersey and housed in the Pleasantville Housing Authority. This organization primarily operates in the Urban Planning and Consulting Services industry within the Engineering, Accounting, Research, and Management Services sector. This organization has been operating for approximately 13 years.

Consultants are used at the discretion of the PHRC Board to conduct the directives of the PHRC. Some of the functions of consultants for this organization are accounting, legal, project management, and

administrative duties. The PHRC has hired The Brooke Group LLC as its Project Consultant as well as its Administrative Staff.

PHRC has excelled in creating affordable rental and home ownership opportunities while maximizing available resources to combat urban blight. The staff leadership of the PHRC includes:

Vernon Lawrence – PHRC Board Secretary and interim Chair and has also functioned as the Executive Director/CEO/CFO of the Pleasantville Housing Authority since 2009.

Reverend Dr. Milton L. Hendricks – PHRC Board Trustee and Pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Pleasantville for over 30 years. Reverend Hendricks has also served as the Chairman of the Pleasantville Housing Authority for the past 20 years.

Richard Ginnetti – Managing Director of The Brooke Group LLC who provides administrative and development consulting support to the PHRC. Mr. Ginnetti has over 30 years of Real Estate and development experience including the successful completion of Pleasantville's HOPE VI Project which was completed in 2008.

The PHRC Board has a total of 7 members which are comprised of the PHRC Board Chairman, Board Secretary and 5 Trustees. The Board has contracted with The Brooke Group LLC to perform administrative duties as well as finding opportunities for the PHRC to conduct its mission to the community. Other consultants and partnerships are utilized at the discretion of the PHRC Board.

The PHRC Board Chairman and Secretary are authorized to sign commitments on behalf of the Board. Resolutions for commitments on behalf of the Board are voted on by all Board members. The consultant, The Brooke Group LLC, is authorized by the Board to carryout project management duties of the organization's projects.

(b) **Current Activities.**

Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) (2013 – present) – This project involves the building of single-family homes on 5 scattered sites in Pleasantville. The homes are rented to low-income families. The construction of all 5 homes has been completed and all homes have been rented. The project completed its close out phase in June of 2017, however the sites remain carefully monitored for code compliance Funding: NJ DCA CDBG-DR funds. Budget: \$1,118,000. Project is complete.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) III (2011 – 2015) – This is a 10 unit scattered site acquisition and rehab of abandoned or bank owned foreclosures. The properties have been renovated for affordable homeownership or rental. We are providing the developer and project management services. Funding: Sources \$1,500,000 NSP III grant, HOME funds, program income, sales proceeds. Budget \$1,875,000. Project is complete.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) I (2009-2014) – This is a scattered site acquisition of 10 homes. All 10 homes have been acquired and rehabbed. Currently all but one of the original houses have been leased or purchased. The DCA has given PHA additional grant funds for the acquisition of 3 more houses as well as the procurement of contractors for rehab. Funding: Sources \$2,133,017 NSP grant, HOME funds, program income, sales proceeds to pay construction loans. Budget \$2.9 million. Project is complete.

HOME Funds (2016-2017) – Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA) approved additional funds in the amount of \$180,000 for acquisition and rehab of 2 more houses for low/moderate income rental or homeownership. The properties, 625 Cresson Avenue and 717 Fernwood Avenue were completed and sold in 2019.

(c) Development and service delivery capacity.

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(d) Capacity of partners.

The PHRC has significant capacity and experience in supervising and monitoring the activities of its partners as demonstrated by the many successful projects that the PHRC has executed. There are many willing and committed partners of the Midtown Plan effort and some of the major partners are discussed below.

City of Pleasantville – A strong partnership is maintained with the Mayor, City Council, Police Department, Public Works, and Planning Department.

Pleasantville Board of Education – Works jointly with the neighborhood for various activities.

New Jersey Economic Development Authority – The NJEDA has a new suite of grant and loan programs that target issues in the City of Pleasantville including food desert mitigation, small business assistance, historic preservation, and housing incentives.

New Jersey Redevelopment Authority – The NJRA is a multi-million-dollar independent financing authority created by the State of New Jersey via the New Jersey Redevelopment Act in July 1996 to transform specific urban communities including the City of Pleasantville through direct investment and technical support.

South Jersey Transportation Authority – The SJTA operates the Atlantic City Expressway and the Atlantic City International Airport. The SJTA is a critical partner needed to provide a pedestrian connection over the Expressway to link the schools and the neighborhoods to provide safer access.

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs – NJDCA not only offered the NRTC program that is the subject of this Plan but also the Neighborhood Preservation Program and other initiatives that can support the redevelopment of Midtown.

Hispanic Association of Atlantic County – HAAC advocates for housing, education, employment rights, civic engagement, and basic needs for the Hispanic community through projects such as Food Drives, Book Bag Drives, COVID-19 testing, among many more.

Atlantic County Improvement Authority – ACIA is the county’s redevelopment and economic development entity. ACIA has successfully completed housing rehabilitation for several years. ACIA has been working with the City and the PHRC on various projects. The ACIA will assist in implementing housing rehabilitation, abandoned housing, first time homebuyer programs, and façade improvement programs.

Atlantic County Utilities Authority – ACUA is the regional utility responsible for trash disposal, recycling, and wastewater treatment. ACUA can provide support for green events and neighborhood cleanups.

Atlantic City Arts Foundation – The Atlantic City Arts Foundation’s diverse programs and partnerships activate community pride and civic self-esteem through interaction with public art, including the Midtown mural arts program. The ACAF partnered with the City to develop two murals in Downtown Pleasantville.

AtlantiCare Foundation – The AtlantiCare Foundation was established in 1977 and charged with generating significant charitable support to ensure AtlantiCare’s vision of building healthy communities was conducted to benefit current and future generations residing in southeastern New Jersey. AtlantiCare provides Pre-K and after school care in Pleasantville.

Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City – The B&GC provides resources for the development of young people from all backgrounds to realize their full potential as responsible and caring adults. The B&GC is rolling out a new STEAM Lab program this summer to prepare the City’s youth for careers beyond hospitality. The B&GC is developing a logo for the Midtown Neighborhood planning effort.

Communities Revolutionizing Open Public Spaces – C.R.O.P.S. is a non-profit organization that promotes healthy, connected communities. C.R.O.P.S. is actively involved in the community garden and farmers market in Pleasantville.

Stockton University – Stockton University works closely with the City of Pleasantville. For example, Stockton University is working with the Pleasantville Elementary Schools to increase literacy among students and provide training for future teachers. This program is made possible by an OceanFirst Bank model classroom grant.

Pleasantville Police Foundation – A non-profit that raises funds for community organizations. The foundation provides scholarships to local students and is working to restore the Pleasantville Police Explorer Program.

Atlantic County Workforce Development Board – The WDB has established a partnership with the City of Pleasantville, local businesses, community organizations and educational institutions to provide a seamless system of employment, training, and social services to residents and employers. The WDB’s offices are located in the heart of downtown Pleasantville.

Atlantic City Electric – the local electric utility which provides grants through Sustainable Jersey for neighborhood improvements and will work with the City to improve streetlighting.

(e) Lapsed Neighborhood Plans.

This is the first time that a plan for the Midtown Neighborhood of Pleasantville has been submitted to NJDCA.

Section 5. Neighborhood Description and Statement of Need

(a) Describe the neighborhood.

The Midtown Neighborhood is bounded on the west by Route 9 and on the north by the Atlantic City Expressway. On the south, it ends at Bayview Avenue and on the east at the bay waterfront. The Neighborhood has a central axis at the junction of Washington Avenue and Main Street in the heart of downtown Pleasantville. Downtown Pleasantville was selected to participate in the NJDCA Neighborhood Preservation Program and a portion of the Downtown and the Lakes Bay area has been federally designated as an Opportunity Zone.

The Midtown Neighborhood is made of all or part of four census blocks. In Census Tract 119, it consists of all of Block 3. It is part of Block 2 in Census Tract 120 and is composed of parts of Block 1 in both Census Tracts 121 and 122. Part of Block Group 1 in Census Tract 121 is within a federal Opportunity Zone. The entire neighborhood is eligible for the NRTC program. The requested maps are provided in the Attachments.

Pleasantville is a city united by strong community business relations and an aggressive redevelopment program. It is strategically located just seven miles from downtown Atlantic City and is prepared to meet the challenges of rapid economic growth. Pleasantville truly is a "City on the Move," featuring an active mix of retail, professional and light industrial businesses.

Beginning as one of Atlantic County's initial settlements in the 1700's, the City of Pleasantville has grown to become a regional center of commerce and bedroom suburb in service of the Atlantic County economy. Pleasantville is often defined by its relationship to neighboring Atlantic City, which is accessed via the Atlantic City Expressway and located just across a marsh meadow and tidal waterway. When casino gambling was legalized in Atlantic City in the 1970s, relocated residents from Atlantic City's urban renewal programs and new casino employees found Pleasantville desirable for its access and affordable housing. According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, nearly half (46 percent) of Pleasantville's workers commuted to Atlantic City.

Pleasantville has been ground zero for experiencing the impacts of Atlantic City's economic volatility and structural challenges. Despite this, the City has been guided by a steady hand and has made large strides in improving quality of life for residents and businesses. Even with the decline of casino gambling in the late-2000s and early-2010s, the City has retained economic stability and its position as a viable working-class suburb of Atlantic City.

The 2020 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn will be a further challenge to Pleasantville, but the City has a demonstrated ability to survive downturns and renew itself through worse economic downturns. Even though Pleasantville currently ranks 13th of the 565 municipalities in New Jersey for the Municipal Revitalization Index, it has made demonstrated strides in re-envisioning and revitalizing itself, particularly its downtown.

The recently approved NJDCA Neighborhood Preservation Program Grant, comprising the core of the proposed Midtown Neighborhood Plan has a foundation in resident input, including surveys and focus groups. Work on this Preservation Plan will facilitate and provide a strong backdrop for the proposed Midtown Neighborhood Plan.

Recent investments in the Midtown Neighborhood can be found on Main Street including the new Milan & Main apartment complex, South Main Street streetscape, and many new businesses. These

positive signs toward revitalization indicate the need for an overall Midtown plan to encourage further investment.

The Midtown Neighborhood Study Area overlaps Census Tract 21 which is designated a federal Opportunity Zone. This area is already seeing new investment. A mixed-use redevelopment project, Spyglass, has recently been approved for the old high school site within the Lakes Bay Neighborhood, part of the Opportunity Zone.

In addition, over \$2 million in NJDEP Green Areas funds has been secured for development of a waterfront park and enhancements to the City Marina. New development around the City Marina, which borders the Midtown Neighborhood on the waterfront, will have a positive ripple effect economically on this attractive real estate waterfront area.

The Midtown Neighborhood is appropriate for revitalization because it is the heart of Pleasantville and reflects the multicultural patchwork of races, ethnicities and ages that constitute Pleasantville. With its center at the intersection of Pleasantville's walkable downtown, the Midtown Neighborhood radiates out to include struggling, but stable residential housing. The entire Midtown Neighborhood echoes Pleasantville's population's struggle to maintain itself above the poverty level. The City-wide poverty rate of 22.6% is slightly below the Midtown Neighborhood's rate of 24% but that percentage difference is reflected in actual households coping with the reality of poverty level income.

While the Midtown Neighborhood is typical of many of the social indicators, such as income and race (as seen in the chart below), of Pleasantville as a whole, there is one statistic that sets the four Block Groups making up the Midtown Neighborhood apart from the rest of Pleasantville by several percentage points. The City-wide vacancy rate is 11.3% (non-seasonal units) while the non-seasonal vacancy rate in the Midtown Neighborhood is 16.2%. In addition, the Midtown Neighborhood has a significantly higher percentage of rental households (52.4%) than the city as a whole (44.2%). These two statistics speak to a greater need for revitalization efforts.

The Midtown Neighborhood has many assets to aid its revitalization. It is a densely populated, multi-lingual, and walkable area. It is located on established public and private transportation routes and accessible to Atlantic City, which will emerge from the pandemic with many of the positive aspects of the past several years intact. The Midtown Neighborhood is the commercial heart of Pleasantville but retains the local retail, religious fixtures, and local schools of a neighborhood.

As part of the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program, the Midtown Neighborhood's physical state would be improved and, simultaneously, the needs of its most important resource, its citizens, would be supported. The Midtown Neighborhood is composed of residences and businesses, homeowners, renters, and workers. A Neighborhood Plan evolving from within the community will empower these individuals to realize their force through the power of networks and associations. This empowerment will support and stimulate revitalization in the Midtown Neighborhood.

(b) Conditions and need for neighborhood revitalization.

When looking at the census data for the Midtown Neighborhood based on Block Group, it is important to remember that parts of three of the Block Groups are not included in the Midtown Neighborhood. In particular Census Tract 120, Block Group 2 and Census Tract 121, Block Group 1 both have large areas that are not part of the Midtown Neighborhood and that tend to skew the data. Some of these, particularly the northern part of Census Tract 120, Block Group 2, are waterfront, more recently developed condominium, and apartment neighborhoods of greater affluence than the Midtown

Neighborhood. The data for Census Tract 119, Block Group 3 is more typical of the income generated within the Midtown Neighborhood.

1. People

The total population of the four block groups is 7,085.¹ This is a little over one-third (34.7%) of the total Pleasantville City 2018 population count of 20,374 but constitutes the densest area of the City constituting less than 1 sq. mile of the City’s 6 square mile land area. Pleasantville, as a whole, is 41% Black, 43% Hispanic and 11% white. As can be seen in the chart below, ethnicity is not evenly distributed within the city. The Hispanic population is evenly distributed among the four Block Groups of the Midtown Neighborhood while the Black and White populations tend to be more clustered in certain neighborhoods. Over twenty percent of the Midtown population had limited English proficiency.

2. Income

The four block groups within which the Midtown Neighborhood lies comprise 2,340 households. Almost one third (30.4%) of those households have at least one person with a disability. Almost one quarter (24%) of the families have incomes below the poverty rate, compared to 15.3% in Atlantic County, and 10.7% in New Jersey.

The median per capita income in the Midtown Neighborhood is \$20,083 which is 64% of the per capita income for Atlantic County and less than one-half (46.9%) of the New Jersey per capita income of \$42,815.

	Population	Median Per Capita Income	Black	Hispanic	White
Pleasantville	20,374	\$18,887	40.7%	43.5%	11.0%
Tract 119, BG 3	1,904	\$16,071	42.9%	45.2%	9.1%
Tract 120, BG 2	2,226	\$28,721	28.6%	38.9%	17.8%
Tract 121, BG 1	1,210	\$20,017	33.4%	45.2%	18.9%
Tract 122, BG 1	1,745	\$15,526	51.7%	38.5%	2.8%
Midtown Neighborhood	7,085	\$20,083	37.4%	43.6%	12.1%

The City of Pleasantville is located in Atlantic County and data is provided on a county basis by the US Census as shown below. The median household income in Pleasantville is much less than the County total as demonstrated by City-Data.com which documents a median household income for Pleasantville in 2017 of \$47,869. Over 50 percent of the homeowners in the Midtown Neighborhood are cost burdened, meaning that their housing cost is more than 30 percent of their household income. These homeowners need assistance to make code required and other improvements to their homes. Interestingly, the percent of homes with mortgages is surprisingly low, around 20 percent.

	Atlantic County	New Jersey	
2016	\$55,672	\$71,645	77.7 percent
2017	\$59,309	\$72,977	81.3 percent
2018	\$60,826	\$74,176	82.0 percent

¹ All data in this section is from ACS 2018 5-year unless noted

	Census Tract 119, BG 3	Census Tract 120, BG 2	Census Tract 121, BG 1	Census Tract 122, BG 1	Total	% of Total Hhlds
Median Household Income (2017)	\$50,369	\$32,717	\$43,393	\$40,438		
Median Family Income (2018) ²	\$42,941	\$57,986	\$44,943	\$48,284		
Atlantic City-Hammonton MSA Median Household Income (2018)	\$61,212					
Atlantic City-Hammonton MSA Median Family Income (2018)	\$70,984					
# Low-Income Households	158	372	143	276	949	40.56%
Moderate-Income Households	91	184	84	139	498	21.28%
Low + Moderate Income	249	556	227	415	1447	61.84%
Above Moderate-Income	262	308	147	176	893	38.16%
Total Households for LMI Calculation	511	864	374	591	2340	

Data Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census (data matched to 2010 Census Tract boundaries), 2010 Decennial Census, and 2014-18 ACS 5-Year Estimates; HUD, 2012-16 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data (special tabulation of 2012-16 ACS 5-Year Estimates data)

3. Education

About 77 percent of residents have a high school diploma or its equivalent and over 12 percent have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

4. Housing

The homeownership rate in Pleasantville is among the lowest in the County and it continues to drop. In 2000 the homeownership rate was 56.3 percent, and it has dropped to 48.2 percent in 2018. Only Atlantic City (26.7 percent) has a lower rate than Pleasantville. While there were 470 abandoned homes registered in 2014, there was a significant drop by 2021 to 80 homes. The housing stock is older, with over 1,000 units in the neighborhood built prior to 1940.

5. Employment

Pleasantville is an employment hub in Atlantic County hosting 6,796 total jobs in 2017. Many of the jobs are in health care and social assistance (1,957), accommodations and food services (1,037), retail trade (714), education (709), and wholesale trade (428).

(c) Evidence of Neighborhood Distress.

The Midtown Neighborhood clearly meets the definition of “eligible neighborhood” as per the revised NRTC Statute in that at least 50% of the households are low moderate income (72% of the households meets LMI requirements) and at least 25% must be low income (56% of the households are low income).

² Median Family income is by census tract only

Pleasantville is considered one of the poorest communities in New Jersey, ranking 14 of 566 on the Municipal Revitalization Index. A high unemployment rate, several abandoned homes, and a high percentage of people living in poverty has impacted Pleasantville.

The Brookings Institute rates the Atlantic County area in their top three regions in the nation to have long term impacts from COVID-19, calling the region a “recession-vulnerable metro area” due to its heavy reliance on the leisure and hospitality sector.

The number of people living in poverty has continued to increase. In 2000, 15.8 percent of the population lived in poverty compared to 21.3 percent in 2018. Family poverty has increased at an even higher rate from 12.2 percent in 2000 to 21.4 percent in 2018.

21ST Century Demographic Changes²

YEAR	TOTAL POP	POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL (Percent)	MEDIAN AGE	HISPANIC/LATINO (Percent)
2000	18,625	15.8	32.7	21.9
2010	20,249	18.2	33	36.1
2018 ¹	20,362	21.4		

¹ American Community Survey

(http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml)

² (US Census.gov) unless otherwise specified

The net taxable value of Atlantic County has dropped from \$47,827,529,564 in 2010 to \$30,431,638,147 in 2021. The net taxable value of the City of Pleasantville has dropped from \$1,066,759,750 in 2010 to \$793,970,700 in 2021. To fund a basic level of municipal services, the effective tax rate has more than doubled from \$2.365 in 2010 to \$4.906 in 2021, the second highest rate in Atlantic County. Only Egg Harbor City has a higher tax rate. The property tax increase has been a severe strain on property owners in the City, contributing to tax liens, foregone repairs, and abandoned housing stock. Alternative funding, like NRTC dollars, are needed to address the City’s housing needs and to encourage ratable growth.

(d) Photographs of Neighborhood Conditions.

Photographs are provided in the Attachments.

(e) Description of Other Plans.

Redevelopment Plan for the Expanded City Center Area. January 31, 2007.

Redevelopment Plan for the Lakes Bay Waterfront Development Area. May 10, 2011.

Pleasantville Master Plan Reexamination. November 10, 2015.

Pleasantville Community Development Plan for Business Districts. February 2016.

Pleasantville Neighborhood Preservation Plan. 2021

(f) Mayor’s Letter of Support. - Letter of support from Mayor Judy Ward is attached.

Section 6. Neighborhood Assets and Involvement

A. Neighborhood Assets

1. *Community Assets*

Medical

Medcom Health Services	258 North New Road
Reliance Medical Group	400 W Black Horse Pike
United Healthcare	900 N New Road
Southern Jersey Family Medical	932 South Main Street

Transportation

Pleasantville Bus Terminal	16 E West Jersey Avenue
NJ Transit Bus Service	Shore Road - Neighborhood Wide
Absecon Train Station	Station Avenue - Absecon

In addition to access to rail transit at the nearby Absecon Train Station, the neighborhood has robust access to ground mass transportation. The Pleasantville Bus Terminal is conveniently located in the center of the downtown area. Several New Jersey Transit bus lines serve the neighborhood through individual stops; many of these stops are located on Shore Road. The New Jersey Transit bus routes serving the neighborhood include: 502, 507, 508, 509, 553, 554, and 559.

The Atlantic County Transportation Unit Program utilizes a “first come, first served” reservation model to provide mobile-dependent qualified county residents with free transportation for “life essential” and “life enhancing” tasks. The program operates weekdays only between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Qualified County residents include:

- Seniors (60 or older);
- Disabled;
- Veterans for medical care;
- Residents living in Federal Transit Administration “rural areas” (western part of the county);
- Low-income residents traveling to jobs, education, or job training.

The tasks covered by the program are fairly broad and include the following life-essential services:

- Dialysis treatment
- Chemotherapy and/or other forms of ongoing cancer treatments
- Daily nutrition site services
- Prescribed physical and occupational therapy programs
- Non-emergency medical and laboratory appointments
- Weekly regional grocery shopping programs
- Compensated/volunteer employment and/or educational/job training
- All general public rural travel requests

In addition, non-grocery related shopping and other social and recreational services are included as life-enhancing services.

Education

Washington Avenue School	225 W. Washington Avenue
North Main Street School	215 North Main Street
AtlantiCare/Library	810 S. Main Steet
AtlantiCare/Community	1311 S. Main Street
Gateway Preschool	49 N Main Street
Decatur Avenue Early Childhood Center	115 West Decatur Avenue
Leeds Avenue School	100 West Leeds Avenue (outside Midtown)
South Main Street School	701 S Main Street (outside Midtown)
Pleasantville Middle School	801 Mill Road (outside Midtown)
Pleasantville High School	701 Mill Road (outside Midtown)

Parks and Recreation

Pleasantville Bike Path	Various
Woodland Avenue Park, New Hope Commons	400 Woodland Avenue
Bayview Park and Marina	350 S. Hampden Court
Bus Station Park	100 S. Main Street
Brighton Recreation Complex	400 Brighton Avenue (outside Midtown)
Max Manning Complex	1100 Lincoln Avenue (outside Midtown)
North Pleasantville Little League	141 Walnut Avenue (outside Midtown)

Community

Atlantic County Library	First Avenue
Gateway Women, Infant & Children Center	927 N. Main Street

Celebrations

Pleasantville Farmer's Market	City Hall parking lot
Trunk or Treat	City Hall parking lot
Winter Wonderland	City Hall parking lot

Fire and Police Stations

Fire Department Building	First Avenue
Police Department Building	First Avenue

Retail/Commercial

Cedar Market	220 N. Main Street
La Putlequita Grocery Store	38 N. Main Street
La Escondida Mexican Market	418 N. Main Street
Johnny D's Pizza	44 N. Main Street
La Cosecha	306 S. Main Street
Jo Jo's Italian Grill	2 E. Black Horse Pike
Mambo Cafe	226 S. Main Street
Essl's Dugout	7001 Black Horse Pike
Randall's Seafood	301 Ansley Boulevard
Pleasantville Shopping Center	756 E. Black Horse Pike (outside Midtown)
Sam's Club	1025 Black Horse Pike (outside Midtown)
Many additional shops and eateries	City-wide

2. Regional Assets

Atlantic City Expressway	North Boundary of Midtown
Atlantic City Rail Line	Accessible in Absecon & Atlantic City
Atlantic City International Airport	101 Atlantic City International Airport
Garden State Parkway	West of Pleasantville
Pleasantville to Somers Point Bikeway	

Regional assets of the Greater Pleasantville Area also include the Atlantic City casino industry, the regional tourism industry, and the general economic base of Atlantic County.

3. Municipal Revitalization priorities.

The Midtown Neighborhood is a key element to the revitalization of the City of Pleasantville. The entire City of Pleasantville has been designated as an area in need of rehabilitation. A section of the Midtown Neighborhood has been federally designated as an Opportunity Zone and the Downtown District has been targeted for assistance through the Neighborhood Preservation Program.

The City of Pleasantville continues to make significant investments in the Midtown Neighborhood. Some of the actions that the City has taken to help implement the revitalization of Midtown include:

- The City has inventoried all abandoned properties in Midtown.
- The City is working toward a program to convert all streetlights in the Midtown Neighborhood to brighter LED technology to improve public safety.
- Through the NPP the City has created new murals, banners, flowerpots, and lighting improvements. In 2022, the City plans to continue the Farmer’s Market, create an Arts & Music district Downtown, and promote façade improvements.
- The City is implementing a multi-year plan to install decorative streetlights throughout the Downtown.
- The City has worked to implement the Center City and Lakes Bay Redevelopment Plans.

The City was an active participant in the Midtown planning process. Mayor Judy Ward, Business Administrator Linda Peyton, and Economic Development Director Jackie Amado-Belton attend all steering committee meetings.

4. Recent Investment

There has been some investment in the Midtown Neighborhood in the past five years. These investments include:

- Milan & Main at City Center – A new affordable rental apartment complex located at 49 S. Main Street in the heart of the Midtown Neighborhood. This four-building redevelopment project was completed in 2017 by RPM Development Group.
- Atlantic County Parking Lot Expansion – Atlantic County Government expanded their parking capacity with a new lot at the northeast corner of Main Street and Washington Avenue. This was completed in 2021.

- Duell Fuel – The City was awarded a NJDEP grant to prepare an environmental assessment of the Duell Fuel site located in the Center City Redevelopment Area off of Old Turnpike.
- NJDOT Streetscape – The City was awarded a \$500,000 grant for lighting and paving improvements on Old Turnpike to extend the current streetscape design to this section of the Downtown.

B. Neighborhood Involvement.

1. Community Organization Effectiveness

The PHRC has been actively involved in the Midtown Neighborhood for several years. Specifically, the PHRC has implemented the following projects.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) III (2011–2015) – This is a 10 unit scattered site acquisition and rehab of abandoned or bank owned foreclosures. The properties have been renovated for affordable homeownership or rental. We are providing the developer and project management services. Funding: Sources \$1,500,000 NSP III grant, HOME funds, program income, sales proceeds. Budget \$1,875,000. Project is complete.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) I (2009-2014) – This is a scattered site acquisition of 10 homes. All 10 homes have been acquired and rehabbed. Currently all but one of the original houses have been leased or purchased. The DCA has given PHA additional grant funds for the acquisition of 3 more houses as well as the procurement of contractors for rehab. Funding: Sources \$2,133,017 NSP grant, HOME funds, program income, sales proceeds to pay construction loans. Budget \$2.9 million. Project is complete.

HOME Funds (2016-2017) – Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA) approved additional funds in the amount of \$180,000 for acquisition and rehab of 2 more houses for low/moderate income rental or homeownership. The properties, 625 Cresson Avenue and 717 Fernwood Avenue were completed and sold in 2019.

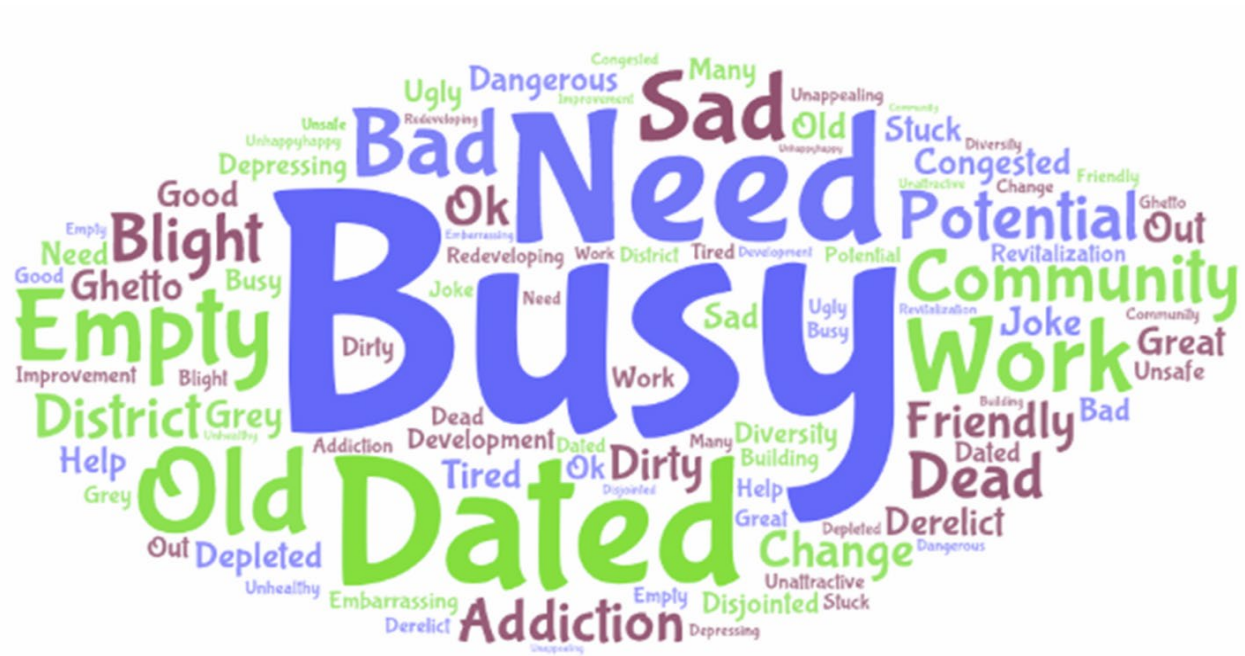
2. Community support and engagement

The PHRC, the City, and Midtown Neighborhood Committee led a robust community engagement process for the development of this neighborhood plan, despite the difficult conditions resulting from the global pandemic. Working in partnership with groups such as the Atlantic Cape Community College, the Pleasantville Housing Authority, the Pleasantville Green Team, the Pleasantville Police Foundation, and AtlantiCare, the Midtown Neighborhood Committee is poised to leverage these relationships to benefit the Midtown Neighborhood. Community engagement opportunities include the following.

1. November 2019 – Ribbon cutting for a new business, Ideal Institute of Technology, at 121 S. Main Street, 60 in attendance. Community Food Bank hosted a Thanksgiving Meal Distribution at the Fire House, 200 in attendance. 2020 Census meeting at the Library, 19 in attendance.
2. December 2019 – Community focus group at 121 S. Main Street, 20 in attendance. Community Food Bank of NJ hosted a Holiday Food Distribution at the Fire House, 300 in attendance.
3. January 2020 – Bus tour of Atlantic City's 48 Block mural project hosted by AC Art Foundation; 10 people in attendance. Census meeting at the Library, 13 in attendance. Townhall meeting (Public school event – security /safety).
4. February 2020 – Volunteers of America outreach event at 16 West Jersey Avenue. AMI mammogram screening, in City Hall's Public Parking lot.

5. April 2020 – Hispanic Association food distribution for residents out of work due to COVID-19. Blast emails to the business community regarding COVID-19 State and federal help information.
6. May 18, 2020 – Public Meeting, City Council supports Resolution 68-2020 for Transit Village Grant for Old Turnpike Streetscape Project.
7. May 8, 2020 – Two Hispanic Association food distributions for residents out of work due to COVID-19, held on May 8th, and May 29th at City Hall's Public Parking lot.
8. May 29, 2020 – Blast emails to the business community regarding COVID-19 State and Federal help information.
9. June 2020 – Final planning stage to host a Farmer's Market in the Downtown.
10. June 1, 2020 – Pleasantville City Council adopts Resolution in support of the effort to prepare a neighborhood plan for the Midtown Neighborhood.
11. April 19, 2021 – Public Meeting, City Council supports Resolution 70-2021 for Local Recreation Improvement Grant for Bayview Park Improvements.
12. May 8, 2021 – Community Cleanup.
13. June 2021 – Transit Village Grant for Old Turnpike Streetscape Project.
14. July 9, 2021 – Solicited interest in serving on the Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee.
15. September 27, 2021 – Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee Meeting
16. November 30, 2021 – Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee Meeting
17. December 21, 2021 – Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee Meeting
18. January 5, 2022 – Press of Atlantic City article “Pleasantville Plans Virtual to Discuss Midtown Neighborhood”
19. January 7, 2022 – NJBPU application submitted to start the process of converting the streetlights throughout the neighborhood to brighter LED technology to improve safety.
20. January 13, 2022 – Meeting with City officials to identify capital needs including several projects in the Midtown Neighborhood.
21. January 13, 2022 – Public Meeting to discuss draft Midtown Plan
22. January 16, 2022 – Press of Atlantic City article “Pleasantville Residents, Officials Gather to Discuss Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Plan”
23. January 16, 2022 – Meeting with Congressman Van Drew regarding funding for a pedestrian bridge over the Atlantic City Expressway to connect the schools to the Midtown Neighborhood.
24. January 18, 2022 – Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee Meeting
25. February 15, 2022 – Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee Meeting
26. March 4, 2022 – Meeting with representatives of the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office regarding preserving various building on Main Street in Midtown.
27. March 7, 2022 – Toured potential sites for ACCC satellite campus with the Vice President of Atlantic Cape Community College, the Pleasantville Housing Authority, and RPM Development Group.
28. March 8, 2022 – Held a lively focus group session with residents and business owners from the neighborhood.
29. March 15, 2022 – Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee Meeting
30. April 19, 2022 – Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee Meeting
31. May 17, 2022 – Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee Meeting
32. June 1, 2022 - Midtown Neighborhood Community Advisory Committee Meeting
33. June 20, 2022 – Public Meeting to discuss draft Midtown Plan

Community Survey – In October 2019, a survey was conducted for input for perception of the Midtown Area. Over 100 residents and business owners responded. Those surveyed were asked to describe Downtown Pleasantville in one word and response is provided below:



The respondents were also asked for one word that may describe Downtown Pleasantville five years from now and the response was:



SWOT Analysis – Three focus group sessions were held on December 21, 2021; March 8, 2022; and April 25, 2022. The attendees provided the following responses.

SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location (Route 40, Atlantic City Expressway, Route 9, Atlantic City: financial hub of the region) • Main Street • Mom & Pop Businesses • Walkable Neighborhood with bike path, sidewalks, parking, transportation access, bus station • Full-Service Community (Strong police force, all services provided) • Streetlights • Variety of housing • The people (residents and business owners) • Potential for private and public partnerships • Community history • Bayfront property and City marina • Diversity • Churches • Early childhood centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of businesses and patrons • Lack of trust • Poor communication, language barriers • School system needs to be improved to attract families • Abandoned, disrepair homes, older housing stock • Lack of recreation • Lack of lighting (Bike path and citywide) • Loitering, homelessness, and panhandling • Lack of cameras and security (bus station and citywide) • High unemployment • Roads and infrastructure in need of repair • Lack of social and economic development • Poor public perception • Lack of community support • Lack of organizations making positive impact • High taxes • Food desert • Family breakdown • Resistance to change • Lack of safety
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Waterfront Park at Lakes Bay • Create Arts & Music District • Develop the second phase of Center City • Partner with investors and new businesses to create jobs • Engage children and offer more activities • Partner with Atlantic City and other communities to address issues • Strengthen core facilities (recreation center; citywide, multilingual newsletter) • Provide jobs and financial empowerment • Become a sustainability leader • Unify the community, work together (i.e., City, School Board, State) • Utilize NJEDA programs (i.e., food desert, historic preservation, Main Street) • Leverage airport expansion, offshore wind industry, and cannabis growth in Atlantic City for economic development • Mentor young people • Alter community perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing crime rate • Worsening school system • Bad public relations • Poor public perception • Loitering • Shuttered businesses • Casino closures (North Jersey & New York Casinos) • Lack of support • Lack of pride • Corruption • Drug use, including opioids • Inappropriate land uses, such as the John Brooks Center • Climate change

Actions

- Focus on Main Street
- Rehabilitate existing housing
- Partner with Atlantic Cape Community College to utilize the college's English as a Second Language/Workforce Development services and other Institutions
- Expand recreational services (Park rehabilitation, bike path improvements, programming)
- Enhance safety
- Centralize Communication
- Improve Public Relations
- Engage small businesses
- Promote strong leadership, especially in schools
- Promote community building to establish a sense of pride

Organization Structure

The Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Action Strategy will rely on a dedicated network of public and private sector partners to implement the recommendations. The recommendations, committee input, public meetings, and focus groups have culminated a clear and specific agenda to address quality of life and economic opportunity in the neighborhood. The agenda cannot be accomplished unilaterally, and will require an unprecedented cooperation of agencies, businesses, and residents to succeed.

A Community Development Corporation (CDC) should be established to provide a strong neighborhood based organizational structure to implement this Strategy over the long term. A CDC is a non-profit entity that can serve as an agent through which grants, financing, and community development funds pass in order to improve the neighborhood. A community development corporation entails a full-time staff, budget, and resources to deliver services to the neighborhood and serves as a representative between the community and government. There are several distinct benefits of creating a non-profit specifically for the Midtown Neighborhood:

- a. A non-profit organization separate from business and government will provide accessibility and connectivity to address resident/business issues.
- b. A non-profit can qualify for special funding and financing that for-profit and government entities cannot.
- c. A distinct non-profit can focus exclusively on the issues facing the Midtown Neighborhood.
- d. A non-profit can hire staff and enlist volunteers to serve a variety of functions, including the provision of some resident and business services.
- e. A non-profit can serve as an organizing and driving force to address neighborhood needs from both the bottom-up and the top-down.
- f. The non-profit will be accountable to the neighborhood and the general public through Board representation, outside counsel, and representation of local leaders on the organization's Board.

A CDC is an incorporated 501(c)(3) organization. 501(c)(3) is the code used by the Internal Revenue Service to exempt non-profit organizations from paying corporate taxes. A CDC has representatives of its community on its Board of Directors. CDCs undertake projects in housing, economic, and commercial development in coordination with human services, community organizing, community planning and a variety of other activities.

Community Development Corporations represent a truly integrated approach to neighborhood revitalization. They blend public and private resources to re-weave the physical and social fabric of the neighborhoods. Such efforts represent unique, comprehensive solutions for different types of neighborhoods. Projects are greater than “units built” or “clients served,” because of the amount of synergy created by the very efforts attached to such projects. Neighborhoods are stronger not just for the physical improvements added, but for the empowerment of the residents who control the work.

Ultimately, a CDC is an organization that is responsible for neighborhood improvement, increased economic vitality, and the overall implementation of an approved strategic revitalization plan for a specific area. A CDC qualifies for Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit funds authorized the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

The Pleasantville Midtown Community Development Corporation (PMCDC) will help to enable many of the implementation action items identified in this Strategy. The role of the non-profit would be to coordinate these efforts and maintain them in perpetuity. The non-profit will essentially execute the planning and listening functions of the neighborhood revitalization plan and allow for a continuous loop of feedback between residents, businesses, property owners, local leaders, and organizations. The purpose of the non-profit is to sustain the information and resources that have flowed to the Midtown Neighborhood throughout the neighborhood planning process.

The implementation ideas described on the following pages address major topic areas outlined in this Strategy: Capacity-building, economic development, human capital and planning and development. This includes a tentative schedule, deliverables, outcomes, evaluation metrics, potential partners, and estimated costs of implementing recommendations. This document will be updated and maintained as a living document once the Strategy is adopted, a non-profit is formed, and the corporation and its partners work to implement the Strategy’s vision and recommendations.

Section 7. Proposed Vision, Strategies, Activities & Outcomes

(a) Vision Statement

The Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Action Strategy is a collaborative effort between the Midtown Neighborhood Steering Committee comprised of residents, community leaders, business owners and representatives from local institutions, the City, and the public at large. The purpose of the plan is to improve this Midtown area for the City of Pleasantville which is bounded by Route 9 to the west; the Atlantic City Expressway to the north; the bay waterfront to the east; and Bayview Avenue to the south. This resident-driven plan is focused on improving the quality of life for residents and energizing a broader transformation of local parks, schools, housing, and businesses. Over the past year, the process has brought together residents, community groups, local institutions, non-profits, city representatives, and local businesses to discuss how they envision their community improving over the next decade, and how they can work to achieve that vision together. This document represents countless hours of work volunteered by resolute residents and stakeholders wishing to make Midtown a better place to live, learn, play, and do business.

The overall goals of the proposed revitalization effort are to:

- Promote the livability of Midtown for current and future residents;
- Enhance Midtown’s viability and economic resiliency by supporting a varied commercial base;
- Make Midtown a sustainable neighborhood; and

- Address quality of life and safety concerns and enhance the day-to-day experience of Midtown residents, visitors, and businesses.

(b) Strategies

The Midtown Plan outlines strategies in five distinct, yet interconnected focus areas meant to address the long-term revitalization of the community. The focus areas are:

- Make Midtown a Clean and Safe Neighborhood
- Improve Housing for Current and Future Residents
- Promote Economic Development
- Enhance Youth Programming & Recreation
- Strengthen the Midtown Community

Based on the data analyzed and the engagement of Midtown residents and stakeholders, this strategy seeks to build on the neighborhood’s assets, address perceived weaknesses and threats, and position the community to take advantage of opportunities for everyone to thrive. The strategies in this plan address the social determinants of health – economic stability, neighborhood and physical environment, education, food, community and social context, and the health care system. Broadly speaking, the strategy’s five focus areas seek to foster community, increase economic opportunities, and provide for better housing for all residents.

Goal 1: Make Midtown a Clean and Safe Neighborhood

Early on in the neighborhood planning process, public safety emerged as a primary, if not the primary, neighborhood concern. City officials have been working to improve public safety for several years; however, the effort must continue. Loitering, drug trading, homelessness and litter are issues affecting the safety and cleanliness of the Midtown Neighborhood. With the help of our partners, these issues can be addressed by the following means to improve health, safety, and quality of life.

- 1. Support additional street lighting throughout the neighborhood and camera infrastructure on Main Street.** Street lighting was a priority for the residents of Midtown. New lighting is needed in areas of the neighborhood that are dark. To address unwanted behavior in and around Main Street and throughout the neighborhood, additional street lighting and expansion of the surveillance camera system are recommended to deter loitering and crime. The Police Department should continue to partner with social service agencies to provide outreach once individuals in need of help are identified so that they can be referred for health, housing, and social services focused on long term solutions.
- 2. CPTED Training & Implementation.** Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach of crime prevention that uses urban and architectural design and the management of built and natural environments. CPTED strategies aim to reduce victimization, deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts, and build a sense of community among inhabitants so they can gain territorial control of areas, reduce crime, and minimize fear of crime. These improvements can include increased lighting, increased open space, security cameras and the removal of places for offenders to hide before and after they act. Residents, business owners, landscapers, architects, and others can adopt a “safer by design” approach to improve their community and reduce crime. The incorporation of CPTED techniques will be within appropriate means, will not use hostile architecture, and will not sterilize the community.

CPTED techniques that can be implemented in the neighborhood include symbolic barriers, natural surveillance, and defensible ground. This strategy recommends that the City work through the local organizations to host CPTED training workshops for property owners and provide small grants to participants to implement CPTED tactics.

3. **Mobilize a Neighborhood Watch Group.** Reducing loitering and crime was a major priority for the public. Neighborhood watch programs have great potential to prevent crime and improve safety. To be effective, implementation will require collaborating with the Police Department to recruit and educate volunteers. It is important that a neighborhood watch group has a visible presence on the streets, with reflective vests or other indicators that they are actively observing the neighborhood. Town watch signs should be posted around the patrol area to further deter crime or undesirable behavior.
4. **Continue to organize annual neighborhood clean-ups.** The Green Team should be engaged to host neighborhood clean-ups. This event should be held quarterly to continue to build pride in the community and improve the appearance of the neighborhood. Vacant lots should be targeted for clean-up along with streets, alleys, parking lots and planters.
5. **Monitor negligent property owners to address code violations.** Neighborhood disinvestment has resulted in vacant and dilapidated buildings that deserve code violations. The Pleasantville Midtown Community Development Corporation (PMCDC) should develop a list of properties that appear to be abandoned or in disrepair. Working with the City's Building Department, they can pressure negligent property owners to act or to have the property listed for demolition or as abandoned. This code violation campaign should continue to provide a simple way for residents to flag problem properties and ensure that action results. With the support of NRTC funds, an app can be developed to allow residents to report code enforcement issues. This program will be coupled with the housing rehabilitation program that will be discussed later in this strategy.
6. **Improved Pedestrian Infrastructure.** Work with the City and other partners to develop, install, and maintain innovative pedestrian infrastructure improvements in Midtown (e.g., decorative crosswalks, street trees, pedestrian countdown clocks, etc.). The City is pursuing federal funds to construct a pedestrian bridge over the Atlantic City Expressway to connect the schools (Pleasantville Middle School and Pleasantville High School) with the neighborhood. The pedestrian bridge will utilize adequate lighting, high rails, and other safety features. The pedestrian bridge will have trash and recycling bins at either end or in the center to prevent litter. A crossing attendant may be used at the bridge during peak hours, such as after school, to enhance safety and deter delinquent or roughhousing behavior. Safety improvements are also needed at the intersection of Route 9 and Reading Avenue for safe access to the schools.
7. **Expand neighborhood maintenance efforts.** Trash on streets and sidewalks makes the wrong first impression to visitors and potential investors and effects the quality of life for all who live in Midtown. Recognizing that many of the residents and businesses consulted during the plan preparation indicated a need to keep the neighborhood clean, listed below are a few ways to address this issue:
 - Use NRTC funds to purchase additional trash and recycling containers.
 - Promote and enforce the requirement that trash totes be removed from the curbside by 5 pm on trash collection day to reduce clutter on the streets.
 - Use NRTC funds to complete periodic pressure washing of sidewalk.
 - Work with the City to extend regular street sweeping services.

Goal 2: Improve Housing in the Midtown Neighborhood for Current and Future Residents

Homeownership is central to the revitalization of the Midtown Neighborhood. Less than fifty percent of homes in the Midtown Neighborhood are owner occupied. With such a high percentage of rental properties, people come and go, often without getting to know their neighbors or becoming involved in the neighborhood. The Midtown Neighborhood wants more of its residents to be vested in their homes and thereby vested in the community. Homeownership will deepen residents' roots in the neighborhood and deepen their commitment to effecting positive change at home and in the neighborhood.

There is a supply of vacant and abandoned properties in the neighborhood that could be turned into homes while removing the negative externalities that these vacant and abandoned properties inflict on the neighborhood. During the community meetings, residents strongly endorsed home ownership. Residents felt that increased homeownership would benefit the whole community, as owner-occupants tend to take better care of their properties than absentee property owners.

- 1. Promote and incentivize homeownership.** More than half the residential units in Midtown are not owner occupied. Homeownership spawns' community pride, increasing home values, investment, and personal wealth. Incentives should be provided to ensure that new units built in Midtown are owner occupied market rate housing. This plan seeks to facilitate and encourage Midtown renters to become homeowners, reducing the likelihood of long-term displacement and preserving the neighborhood's diversity, by hosting homeownership events and connecting them to housing and credit counseling organizations. The PMCDC will also take a targeted approach to incentivize local homeownership for community builders such as teachers, mentors, social workers, first responders, and health care professionals, as well as employees of Pleasantville employers.
- 2. Implement the City's Abandoned Properties Ordinance.** Through a concerted effort working with the City and the Midtown stakeholders, the PMCDC will implement the City's Abandoned Properties Ordinance in the neighborhood to create further opportunity for the acquisition and rehabilitation of abandoned homes. Implementing this Ordinance may require initial investment in public policy research and advocacy but promises significant returns for the neighborhood. By monitoring vacant properties and properties that are at risk of becoming vacant, a new housing supply can be established while also benefitting current homeowners. Abandon properties result in a strain on municipal budget, lost tax revenue, higher service costs, decreased value of adjacent properties, and higher insurance premiums on adjacent properties due to increased risk of damage. As such, eliminating abandoned properties will result in an increased quality of life for current Midtown Neighborhood residents. One such property that is targeted for demolition and redevelopment is a 172-186 North Main Street.
- 3. Home Renovations and Façade Improvement Programs.** PMCDC and PHRC will direct residents to existing home repair programs, provide new home renovation grants, and partner with organizations such as ACIA to bring home repair classes to homeowners in the Neighborhood. PMCDC and PHRC will partner with local organizations to implement weatherization, alternative energy, flood prevention, and other measures for homeowner occupants in the form of grants, technical support, and referrals.

Lead exposure in residential buildings has well-documented health impacts for residents. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 87 percent of homes built before 1940 contain lead-based paint. Over 1,000 homes in the Midtown Neighborhood were built before

1940. Lead is also found in pipes, dust, soil, and other household items. Lead can impact brain development, attacks the nervous system, and leads to other physical maladies. Addressing lead will reduce the risk of lead poisoning in Inlet children, many of whom are living in older housing stock. A program put in place to abate lead (such as through group/cooperative purchasing of services and coordinating dumpsters/demolition) could assist or defray costs of property owners seeking to abate lead.

4. **Property & Block Beautification.** PMCDC and PHRC will hold competitions for residents to compete for community building and beautification projects (e.g. block parties, installation of decorative flags, landscaping improvements, banners, etc.). Additional measures include code enforcement of eyesore properties, landscape maintenance of vacant lots, and general streetscape improvements such as landscape buffers. Existing trees along rights-of-ways should be conserved and a tree planting program should be implemented.
5. **Housing & Neighborhood Advocacy.** PMCDC will collaborate with residents to advocate for sensible ordinances and policies related to housing maintenance, short-term rentals, and quality of life issues.
6. **Support ordinance revisions that require that rental units be inspected every two years to ensure compliance with building code requirements.** Rental unit inspections help ensure tenant safety and address unsafe conditions in housing units. Currently, the City's Rental Property ordinance does not address inspections. Only multifamily properties with three or more units are subject to State inspection every five years. Illegal units may not be inspected at all. Regular, more frequent inspections of rental units can address housing quality issues preemptively, or those that may go undisclosed.
7. **Strengthen the City's housing inspection, registration, and tenant relief system to ensure that tenants have recourse for housing issues and can bring forward complaints without fear of deportation or other potential impacts.** Tenants seeking relief from unsafe building conditions, rent theft, and similar issues may have limited recourse due to immigration status, language barriers, or the time involved in filing a complaint. Strengthening the tenant relief system and aiding tenants seeking to address housing issues can improve quality of life and housing without threatening the livelihood of those filing complaints.

Goal 3: Promote Economic Development in the Midtown Neighborhood

The Midtown Neighborhood has a number of commercial nodes, such as Main Street. These commercial areas lack the design and beautification elements that make surrounding and competing shopping districts more attractive. This issue is compounded by Pleasantville suffering from negative perceptions regarding public safety. The Midtown Neighborhood presents ample opportunity for economic flourishing; however, the current incomes and wealth in Pleasantville alone are insufficient to change the economic conditions without connections outside the City. To do this, there are three development strategies to pursue:

1. Minimize the leakages of spending by City residents to businesses outside the City. Ethnic markets are helpful for this strategy.
2. Provide places for non-residents to spend on shopping/food/services. Car dealers, Jo-Jo's restaurant and Mambo Café are good examples.
3. Involve residents in programs that will help upgrade income and wealth. Training programs, participation in regional business development that provides opportunities for higher

incomes, and preparation of available land or facilities for new business or start-ups will all help accomplish this strategy. These strategies will be advanced through the below recommendations.

- 1. Activate Strategically Located Vacant Properties.** Market vacant commercial district storefronts to businesses. The PMCDC will work with property owners to address barriers to leasing/selling space to a mix of different business types. Grant and loan funds will be used to leverage occupancy of vacant building by conditioning funding on long term tenant leases.
- 2. Fast Track Lakes Bay Redevelopment.** The location of Pleasantville as the local and regional transportation network allows it to be connected with both regional consumers as well as visitors from outside the region. Being on Route 40/322 and with easy access to the Atlantic City Expressway gives the City visibility to commuters who work in Atlantic City as well as those arriving from more distant places.



In addition, being centrally located for intra-regional travel along the two primary north-south routes of New Road and Shore Road/Main Street gives the City easy access to those from surrounding communities.

The City needs a distinct area that attracts both tourists as well as regional consumers. That area needs to be themed and easily accessible without it being a part of the downtown. This would

include separate parking and access to the major routes mentioned above. The former high school site meets these needs. Some marketing ideas are:

- The elevation of Route 40/322 planned by NJDOT in 2024/2025 will create a better connection from Franklin Boulevard to Bader Field and to Atlantic City. Making this access as easy as possible, including proper signage and advertising, would optimize traffic by both Ventnor residents and Atlantic City visitors.
- A distinct name, such as Lakes Bay, would separate this district from downtown Pleasantville, which functions mostly as a local shopping area. The name, use and theme need to emphasize the connection to the broader tourism industry while still attracting regional patrons.

This strategy would take advantage of the diversity of market segments present in the surrounding communities. A project that would appeal to this larger community would be able to appeal to a wider consumer audience. This could include a small theater or waterfront restaurant with an active transient marina.

- 3. Continue to Promote Transit-Oriented Development.** A transit-oriented development (TOD) is a residential, commercial, or mixed-use development project, made up of one or more buildings, which has been designed to take advantage of nearby transit and includes features that encourage walking, biking, and transit ridership. The Center City Redevelopment Area provides a wonderful opportunity to fully implement a TOD project that can enhance the Downtown. The TOD will create a symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship between the transit station and surrounding development, as development patterns and density will affect transit ridership and

improved transit characteristics will influence development demand. Factors that are known to drive TOD success are the certainty of transit service, the frequency of that service and the number and desirability of destinations in the transit station area. Given the neighborhood's proximity to Atlantic City and transit service throughout South Jersey, these conditions are met. The transit station that will anchor the TOD is the Pleasantville Bus Terminal. Some guidelines for TOD development in the heart of the Midtown Neighborhood include:

Compact, traditional building and site design

- Buildings are located close together and face wide sidewalks.
- Building entrances are oriented towards transit stops.
- Buildings are normally three stories or higher.
- There are no blank walls where pedestrians walk.
- At street level, walls are at least 75 percent windows and doorways.
- Short block lengths are preferred.
- Mid-block pedestrian cut throughs are provided on long blocks. Parking lots are located to the rear and sides of buildings.

A high-quality walking and biking environment

- Ease of walking or biking to the transit station is a top priority.
- Pathways are clear and direct with no barriers.
- Sidewalks are wide, crosswalks are well-marked, and lighting and landscaping are ample.
- Covered bicycle parking is available.
- Ensure that the Pleasantville bike path is well lit and properly maintained.

A mix of transit-supportive uses

- The project includes a complementary mix of uses, including housing, offices, shops, markets, hotels, restaurants, salons, services, coffee shops and boutiques.
- The mix can be in the same building or within the same neighborhood.
- A desirable combination consists of retail on the first floor and residential use of the upper floors.
- A wide variety of housing types is available to a range of ages and incomes.
- Immediately adjacent to the transit station, shops are open until 8 p.m. or later.
- Auto-dependent uses such as gas stations, tire and automotive service shops, big appliance stores, motels and big box stores are inappropriate.

Attention to place-making and the pedestrian realm

- The transit station is the prominent feature of the town center.
- Small parks or plazas are created near the transit station, a great example of this is the proposed pocket park at the corner of Washington Avenue and First Street. A derelict building would be demolished and replaced with a neighborhood park.
- Comfortable and safe places to sit are provided near building entrances.
- Cues regarding orientation are conveniently located.
- Landmarks that help to identify a place or provide orientation are preserved.
- Street fairs and community celebrations make streets vibrant.
- Build on the established mural in the Downtown to create an Arts District to enhance the attractiveness and viability of this area.
- Secure permission and paint the Route 40/322 bridge to provide a welcoming message.

Tallest buildings are located closest to transit station

- Highest-density uses are clustered immediately around the transit station.
- The transition between higher- and lower-density neighborhoods is managed by stepping down building heights.

Transit-supportive parking

- Parking lots are located to the rear and sides of buildings.
- Parking-space requirements become lower the closer you are to transit.
- Parking decks should be “wrapped” or otherwise hidden. First floors should be retail whenever possible.
- Parking should be carefully located, designed, and managed.

4. Leverage Regional Economic Development Growth - It is imperative that Pleasantville participates in the implementation of the region’s economic development efforts. Offshore wind and airport development are two of the major industries that will bring jobs and supply chain opportunities to the Pleasantville region. The location of new or growing businesses is competitive. Given Pleasantville’s UEZ status, generous NJEDA incentives, transit village designation, NRTC and NPP funding, access and central location, participation can only result in positive results. Millions of tourists pass by the U.S. Route 40/322 area each year on their way to Atlantic City, Ventnor, and Margate. The City’s goal is to provide for a wayfinding system that will promote the U.S. Route 40/322 corridor, the Central Business District and all the sites in Pleasantville and direct visitors to these points of interest. All of this signage will be branded with the City logo to provide a visible and consistent message.

5. Streetscape Improvements. It is recommended that streetscape design guidelines be established for the major business districts of Pleasantville, particularly U.S. Route 40/322 and Main Street. The City has put in place the basic street design on North Main Street. Pedestrian-level decorative lighting, street trees and crosswalks already exist and are in good condition. These improvements should be augmented with additional crosswalks at key intersections, traffic-calming features, bike racks, trash and recycling containers, banners, flowers, and other amenities.

U.S. Route 40/322 presents the biggest challenge. This state highway was originally designed to convey traffic along the coast from Philadelphia to Atlantic City. With the construction of the Atlantic City Expressway, the function of this roadway changed forever, but many of the old design features remain. The turning radius at the intersection of U.S. Route 40/322 and U.S. Route 9 reflects the past and should be reduced to calm traffic. Sidewalks should be separated from the curb by a grass strip to enhance the pedestrian experience and provide a safer walkway. The entire length of Route 40/322 should have sidewalks on both sides. Crosswalk, pedestrian signage, and push pads must be included at all signalized intersections. Bike racks and trash and recycling containers should be added. Site design should encourage landscaped frontage and parking in the rear of the property to promote a more attractive streetscape. While U.S. Route 40/322 is a state highway, such improvements require the strong support and lobbying by the City.

6. Use Historic Preservation as an Economic Development tool. Historic preservation has been used as an economic development tool for communities around the world. Neighborhood historic preservation, including the placement of buildings and neighborhoods on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, brings attention to areas with significant, historic, and cultural contributions. An historic property inventory is needed to identify qualifying properties.

- 7. Provide support to businesses.** Partner with various agencies such as the Greater Atlantic City Chamber, the Latin American Economic Development Agency, New Jersey Community Capital, Stockton's Small Business Development Center, the Small Business Administration, and others to administer training and support to small businesses, entrepreneurs, and microenterprises.
- 8. Neighborhood Branding & Marketing.** Engage in a branding process leading to the creation of a cohesive identity for the entire Midtown Neighborhood. Specific marketing support will be given to the business district and to promote the Midtown Neighborhood as a great place to live. Funds should be allocated to retain a branding and marketing consultant to develop a range of identity graphics that reflect the many facets of the City's character. The graphic identity can be expressed through postcards, posters, and web sites. Online and print media should be supplemented by physical installations at the entrances to the neighborhood using the same graphic look. Given that Midtown is home to many local businesses, the marketing campaign should incorporate a "buy local" initiative. The intent is to promote local business and encourage neighbors to discover new amenities, shop and dine in the Midtown Neighborhood. Pleasantville businesses should take all possible steps to purchase necessary goods and services from local businesses.
- 9. Undertake façade improvements.** Many of the commercial buildings on Main Street were built in the early 20th century and have faced over a century of weathering, repairs, and tenant fit outs. These buildings remain in varying degrees of conditions, ranging from well-kept and decorated buildings to those with apparently damaged wood, masonry, broken/covered windows, and other signs of deterioration. A façade improvement program can be funded through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program, Neighborhood Preservation Program, and other economic development funds to assist property owners in aesthetically improving building façades. A façade improvement program would benefit all users of the neighborhood's commercial districts, making the neighborhood more desirable as a place to live and spend time and money. This could also have the effect of encouraging new tenants to establish businesses in the neighborhood.
- 10. Provide business counseling and seed funding.** Midtown would benefit from having a bilingual business development point-person who assists new or prospective businesses to connect with the City administration and existing business services and provide information to businesses about incentives and other initiatives. This individual would help new businesses navigate various aspects of development and potentially provide micro-loans or other seed funding to benefit businesses needing marginal assistance. The organization of local businesses into a hyper-local chamber of commerce or involving them with the PMCDC would further build local support and capacity to advocate for the neighborhood. This should be one of the responsibilities of the PMCDC Coordinator.
- 11. Bridge the Digital Divide.** Work with internet providers and local institutions to increase the accessibility of the internet, access to computers, digital literacy education, and online learning.
- 12. Youth and Young Adult Education & Training.** Support the expansion of youth and young adult career exploration and training programs administered by local partners such as the Boys & Girls Club. Support and referrals for individuals seeking to complete their GED will be provided.
- 13. Leverage the Opportunity Zone designation to develop economic opportunity and jobs for neighborhood residents.** The Opportunity Zone designation may facilitate an influx of

investment into the neighborhood. The neighborhood should develop and support projects that are ideal candidates for Opportunity Zone funding. This can be accomplished through marketing select products and enhancing the City and neighborhood as a place for doing business. This can occur concurrently with larger attempts to grow the regional economy.

- 14. Promote the availability of tax abatement as a home construction/renovation incentive.** - The City of Pleasantville offers a five-year exemption and/or abatement for new construction and renovations of dwellings. A dwelling is defined as “Any building or part of a building used, to be used or held for use as a home or residence, including accessory buildings located on the same premises, together with the land upon which such building or buildings are erected and which may be necessary for the fair enjoyment thereof.” This Strategy will increase awareness of and promote the use of this tax abatement.

Goal 4: Enhance Youth Programming & Recreation

The Midtown Neighborhood consists of many diverse families. Action should be taken to enhance the quality of life for families through providing a variety of opportunities for youth engagement and development and recreation for all ages.

- 1. Compete and Celebrate Lakes Bay Waterfront Park.** Expedite the completion of the Lakes Bay Waterfront Park. A linear park and multi-use park approximately one and a quarter mile long is proposed for the Lakes Bay waterfront area. This park can provide public access to the Lakes Bay shoreline, catalyze development, and provide opportunities for conservation and natural-resource interpretation.
 - Create Park Programs: Partner with neighborhood groups to host small- and medium-scale events (e.g. food truck festival, movie nights, yoga, farmer’s market, etc.) at Lakes Bay Waterfront Park.
 - Friends of Lakes Bay Waterfront Park. Formation of a “Friends of Lakes Bay Waterfront Park” entity that can fundraise for and support the upkeep of the waterfront park. This group will advocate for municipal support for the park and apply for funding to support programming.
- 2. Improve and Expand Existing Recreational Facilities.** Work in partnership with the City to secure resources to improve the maintenance of and expand the existing recreational facilities, as well as supporting neighborhood institutions to add or expand recreational facilities for the community. Recreation, activity space and programs for senior citizens and citizens with disabilities should be provided.
- 3. Organized Recreational Programming.** Work with the City and local organizations to develop and promote a calendar of recreational programs offered by public and private organizations locally. Work to ensure programming is varied, accessible, and convenient. The calendar can be part of a larger events calendar accessible on the City web site.
- 4. Work with teachers and education professionals to identify barriers to student achievement and assess gaps in service available to students.** Students in the Pleasantville Schools underperform compared to peers statewide according to several indicators discussed in the School Performance Report. The PMCDC and City should collaborate with the schools to help address place-based root causes impacting students that is beyond the control of the school

system. This dialogue may yield critical information that can be used to increase quality of life and socioeconomic outcomes of those living in the neighborhood.

5. **Work with the Neighborhood, City, and regional institutional employers such as the Federal Aviation Administration, the casino/hospitality industry, AtlantiCare, offshore wind industry, and others to pursue mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities for Midtown students.** The region is home to large institutional employers that anchor economic development in the region. Working with these anchors can provide residents with quality job opportunities and guidance in pursuing careers, vocations, and higher education. Anchor institutions often have philanthropic operations with which the neighborhood can build relations to fund neighborhood initiatives. Strengthening the ties between these institutions through mentorships, internships, and apprenticeships can be mutually beneficial for both the institution (who are supplied with young, local workers with significant potential) and the neighborhood (where young residents live and may eventually choose to settle).
6. **Promote ways for youth to express pride in the neighborhood creatively.** The PMCDC should engage school children to participate in this poster contests held in conjunction with a neighborhood clean-up. This effort should continue to build pride in the neighborhood's ongoing revitalization. The PMCDC can collaborate with the schools to coordinate an effort to engage the students to participate in this and other events, such as beautification projects and community gardening. Engaging students in the neighborhood revitalization will build lasting pride in the Midtown Neighborhood as the students will carry their newfound pride in the years to come.
7. **Partner with local and national organizations to increase access to youth programming.** Neighborhood youth want the opportunity to work in meaningful careers without having to move out of the area. Several local organizations (e.g. ACIT, Atlantic Cape Community College and the Boys & Girls Club) recognize these gaps and have begun expanding their life skills, educational, and career programming to expose area youth to career pathways in fields such as STEAM, Healthcare, IT, Green Energy, Building Trades, Culinary, and Aviation.

In addition to career-focused programming, organized recreational programming was found to be lacking. Cultural activities administered by organizations such as the Spanish Community Center, the Hispanic Leadership Association of New Jersey, and faith-based organizations expose youth to cultural programming while teaching them interpersonal and other life skills. Additional programs (e.g. soccer, crew) can be promoted in the neighborhood as options before/after school or during the summer months. Potential activities include:

- a. **Youth Development.** PMCDC and PHRC will collaborate with local partners to promote their existing offerings as well as youth development courses on subjects of particular interest to Midtown youth (e.g. balancing a checkbook, applying for college and financial aid, etc.). These organizations will also host career development nights focused on different pathways and industries.
- b. **Youth Sports.** PMCDC and PHRC will work with the City and local partners to develop youth sports teams (e.g. soccer, cricket, crew, etc.) that offer quality, affordable programming for boys and girls.
- c. **Makerspace, Robotics, and STEAM Programs.** PMCMC and PHRC, in partnership with Stockton University, the Boys & Girls Club, and Neighborhood Schools, will provide programming involving Robotics and other STEAM subjects. Mentors and volunteers will be

sought from neighborhood employers such as Orsted and Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Company. A Makerspace will be developed in Midtown to support youth entrepreneurs and creatives.

Goal 5: Strengthen the Midtown Community

The Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Action Strategy will facilitate the strengthening of the community. Social infrastructure will be enhanced through improved communication, community spaces, mutual support between local businesses, and educational and workforce training in interpersonal settings. As a result, residents will grow both individually and as a collective community. Strengthening the community will lead to civic pride which will motivate residents to upkeep the neighborhood and make the neighborhood appealing to new investors.

- 1. Establish a Community Fund.** The City of Pleasantville and surrounding areas have several non-profits that provide job training, skill development, and other important services. A Community Fund should be established to privately raise funds to support these important non-profits. Fundraisers can be held to support this effort and the PMCDC would develop criteria for awarding grants to the non-profits. A formal application and selection process would be established.
- 2. Develop a Strong System of Communication.** In order to build trust and foster resident and business involvement, a strong system of communication has to be established. An electronic newsletter should be provided on a regular basis in several languages to keep the neighborhood informed. This would be the primary responsibility of the NRTC funded neighborhood outreach coordinator, if there were not any neighborhood volunteers who would assume this responsibility. This newsletter would be supported by a web site and social media outlets.
- 3. Develop a program for paid or volunteer “point guards” working in the immigrant communities that can connect residents to services and help establish lines of communication between immigrant communities and local leaders.** People in these positions should be multi-lingual, local residents and stationed in the community to establish trust and build relationships with residents. Additionally, they should be proficient at navigating various government programs and be able to navigate issues such as immigration and healthcare.
- 4. Utilize the neighborhood’s religious institutions and the schools as a way to reach out to parents about education and assistance programs.** Midtown has the benefit of established educational, cultural, and religious institutions that comprise a key part of life in the neighborhood. For residents who typically have no interaction with the government or neighborhood associations, engaging adult residents through the schools or places of worship utilizes existing facilities to build trust, establish legitimacy, and better coordinate assistance and education.
- 5. Incentivize provision of affordable produce at local stores.** Access to quality food is an issue in Pleasantville. Pleasantville is defined as a “food desert” by the State of New Jersey. Food deserts, based on U.S. Census Bureau data, are defined as areas where at least 20 percent of families are at or below the federal poverty line, or make 20 percent less than the median family income in surrounding areas, and a third of the families in that area are a mile away from a supermarket in urban areas, or 10 miles away in rural areas. Convenience stores are located throughout the City and Midtown; however, many of these stores do not sell fresh fruits and vegetables or have limited selection. Efforts should be made to encourage store owners to offer fresh produce and healthier food options. Store owners can partner with participants of the

Farmer's Market and the community garden to introduce fresh, affordable produce in their stores.

- 6. Encourage community gardens in existing public space.** AtlantiCare has partnered with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Atlantic County to build six community gardens in Atlantic City. A community garden in Midtown would be a welcomed addition to the neighborhood. Community gardens on public land can be permitted through the use of a Land Use Agreement for non-profit entities engaged in community development activities. The community garden of Midtown will promote a larger vision of urban agriculture in the City and advance the neighborhood's goal of increasing fresh produce. Educational and charitable events should be held at the community garden to teach participants how to create and operate community gardens in their neighborhoods and how to maintain personal gardens.
- 7. Encourage and provide workforce training and adult education.** The education achievement gap in Midtown compared to the surrounding area is high and may be hampering opportunities for residents to seek better jobs. The neighborhood should seek funding for and promote adult education and workforce training tailored to the needs of residents, of whom only 77 percent of those 25 years old or older have high school diplomas. Empowering residents to acquire GEDs, have job-ready skills for existing and prospective industries in the area, and pursue higher education if desired would greatly assist residents in achieving better jobs, higher incomes, and greater opportunities for families and households. The Atlantic Cape Community College offers free college to qualifying residents. This program will fund the cost of tuition and approved education fees. The residents of Midtown should be encouraged to take advantage of this extraordinary offering. A satellite campus of Atlantic Cape to serve the residents of Midtown and beyond should be pursued.
- 8. Work with neighborhood employers and institutions such as Atlantic Cape Community College to offer low-cost classes for adults looking to enhance their skills and seek higher education.** Cooperative efforts to provide access and financially support adult education should be pursued. Workplaces and institutions can sponsor or coordinate adult education for neighborhood residents. A campaign or concerted effort to do so may yield better outcomes than institutions acting separately.
- 9. Cultural Events & Programs.** Work with cultural organizations to organize, promote, and facilitate events and programs highlighting the diversity of the Pleasantville. The fine performing and culinary arts are areas that can be highlighted.
- 10. Develop a network of Street Captains.** Engage Midtown Neighborhood residents in the designation of street captains to assist with community building activities. Street captains would receive training on topics such as code enforcement, block beautification, and leadership.
- 11. Building the Capacity of Cultural Organizations.** Help cultural organizations to execute elements of this plan. Examples would be training on non-profit management, grant writing, and financial and program management.
- 12. Establish a Community Hub.** Assist in establishing a place for Midtown residents and businesses to utilize for education, referrals, and resources. This Center will have space for events, activities, and informational sessions and will be supported by community partners such as Atlantic Cape Community College, AtlantiCare, and other neighborhood groups.

13. Arts & Beautification. Continue to work with arts organizations to identify artists for neighborhood beautification projects (e.g. murals, vacant storefront window displays and graphics, branding and promotional art, decorative bike racks, decorative waste receptacles, decorative electrical boxes) and the development of an Arts & Music District.

14. Empower residents to become community leaders. The residents of the Midtown Neighborhood have a deep love of their community and are interested in expanding their civic involvement. Resident leaders can play a role in the implementation of this plan. By offering regular informational and educational sessions on critical and timely topics such as immigration, anti-racist/implicit bias trainings, and health issues, PMCDC and PHRC hope to further promote a knowledgeable and confident resident base from which leaders will evolve. No neighborhood organization has existed in the past. The mailing list for this planning effort can be used as a first step to gain resident involvement in neighborhood and municipal affairs. The neighborhood group can expand membership, help develop a network of street captains, and promote active resident participation in the implementation of this plan. It will also help residents engage with smaller organizations through volunteerism and sponsorships.

C. NRTC Investment as a Catalyst

The strategies identified above focus on neighborhood development at all levels from the redevelopment of properties in the neighborhood to providing education and mutual aid opportunities for residents. A major tenet of the Plan is to set the stage for economic development through both tangible and non-tangible assistance to residents and businesses. The recommended activities have been successfully implemented in other communities and are well within the capacity of potential partners and non-profits. Pleasantville's existing businesses, religious institutions, and anchor institutions (which include Atlantic Cape Community College, and AtlantiCare) have shown support for the program and have affirmed their assistance in implementing the plan.

Many of our partners have already become engaged in Midtown and its agenda. For example, representatives from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority are collaborating with the Steering Committee and City leaders to leverage new development; Atlantic Cape has proposed a satellite campus in Midtown; the Atlantic County Improvement Authority and AtlantiCare have met with the Steering Committee to provide more services in Midtown. These are just examples and there has been much more interaction with partners.

The PHRC brings a high degree of experience to this effort. PHRC has a strong commitment to improving Midtown and making this effort a model. The tax credit program, through the provision of crucial financial resources, serves as leverage for the initial implementation of identified projects of the Midtown Plan.

D. Form NP-3 is attached.

E. Form NP-4 is attached.

Section 8. Participatory Planning Requirements

The Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Action Strategy was created with a foundation of diverse participation and support from the community. The planning process reflects significant public participation that consisted of community residents and stakeholders such as local businesses, property owners, non-profit organizations, and City officials. The community outreach effort for this Strategy was extensive. See Attachments.

Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Committee

To ensure the planning process directed attention to each focus area equally, PHRC and the City formed a formal Neighborhood Committee in August 2020 made up of twelve representatives. The members of the committee are well-respected figures in the community and have built a trusted relationship with the residents. Neighborhood Committee members were chosen to provide representation during the planning process and to expand outreach efforts to each member's considerable network. They were responsible for promoting public meetings and focus groups. Neighborhood Committee members were responsible for leading meetings, providing insight into area focus area topics, directing the planning process to helpful networks, and helping to set the agenda for the implementation of this Strategy. The Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Committee consists of the following individuals:

Dawn Rice-Bivens, President, Future Leaders Organization
Doris Rowell, Pleasantville Board of Education
City Pitts, Pleasantville Business Owner
Jonathan Diego, Esq., Midtown Business Owner
Rodrick L Green, Midtown Business Owner
Manuel Cabral Cuevas, Midtown Business Owner
Kimiasia Justice, Sunflowers Life Skills
Bertilio Correa, 2nd Ward Councilperson
Julio Sanchez, Pleasantville Board of Education
Rev. Isaac Abban, Church of Pentecost
Celeste Fernandez, Midtown Business Owner
Kenneth Barnshaw, VP, South Jersey Federal Credit Union

Community Meetings

The community outreach effort for Midtown was extensive. See Attachments.

Public Officials

The City of Pleasantville and many other public officials were contacted in advance of the development of the Midtown Plan, and they were early advocates of these planning activities. This is demonstrated by the attached letter of support provided in the Attachments. Pleasantville's Mayor, Business Administrator, Economic Development Director, and Police Chief also participated throughout the planning process, offering important insight, and building connections with community members. In addition, the City Council representatives provided important input on several focus topics. This is demonstrated by the attached letter of support provided in the Attachments.

Associations & Community Groups

The planning process was supported by several local associations and community groups. Representatives from Atlantic Cape Community College, Stockton University, AtlantiCare, Sunflowers Life Skills, Future Leaders Organization, and C.R.O.P.S. have made meaningful contributions

throughout the process. Their input and continued support is essential to meeting the goals of this Strategy.

Letters were provided by Senator Chris Brown; Assemblymen Vince Mazzeo and John Armato; County Executive Dennis Levinson; Francis Kuhn, Executive Director of the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board; Merydawilda Colon, Executive Director of the Stockton Center for Community Engagement; John Schroeder, Executive Director of the Pleasantville Police Foundation; Dennis Anderson, Superintendent of Pleasantville Public Schools; Michael Price, Economic Director of the Pleasantville Economic Development Advisory Board; Joyce Hagan, Executive Director of the Atlantic City Arts Foundation; Alicia Newcomb, Co-President of CROPS; Dawn Rice-Bivens, President, Future Leaders Organization; Shurlana Stewart, Chair, Pleasantville Green Team; and Joanna Famularo, Chair, Pleasantville Planning Board.

As demonstrated in the attached letter, Mayor Judy Ward has expressed her strong support of the Midtown Neighborhood planning effort and the implementation of this Strategy.

The Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Action Strategy is posted on the City of Pleasantville web site. [City of Pleasantville, NJ \(pleasantville-nj.org\)](http://www.pleasantville-nj.org)

Section 9. Implementation

1. Establish a Non-Profit to Implement the Pleasantville Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Action Strategy.

2. Secure Funding through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program

The NRTC is designed to foster the revitalization of New Jersey's distressed neighborhoods. NRTC offers business entities tax credit against various New Jersey state taxes. Credits are provided to business entities that invest in the revitalization of low- and moderate-income neighborhoods in eligible cities. Sixty percent of the tax credit funds must be used for activities related to the development of housing and economic development. The remaining balance may be used for complementary activities such as the provision of assistance to small businesses, infrastructure, removing barriers to self-sufficiency, and promoting the integration of mixed-income neighborhoods. A total of \$15 million per year is available in tax credits.

NRTC funds are used by neighborhood-based non-profit organizations that have approval from NJDCA for a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy for the neighborhood it serves. The funds must be used by the eligible organizations for projects and activities that will implement the goals and strategies of the approved Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy. Given the recent designation of Atlantic City as a NRTC eligible community, a new urgency exists for developing this the Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy.

3. Utilize the Opportunity Zone Designation as a Catalyst for Improvements

Opportunity Zones are low- and moderate-income areas (defined by Census Tracts) in which qualifying investments are subject to preferential tax treatment as a method of spurring economic development in distressed areas. Opportunity Zones were designated as part of the 2018 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which gave States the ability to designate a certain number of Census tracts. The ocean front portion of the Midtown Neighborhood was designated one of four Opportunity Zones in Pleasantville and one of eight in Atlantic County.

Opportunity Zones work through investors placing money in Qualified Opportunity Funds, which are “any investment vehicle[s] which is organized as a corporation or a partnership for the purpose of investing in qualified opportunity zone property (other than another qualified opportunity fund) that holds at least 90 percent of its assets in qualified opportunity zone property.” In other words, the opportunity zone property, such as a neighborhood small business or development project, is the investment in which an investor puts his or her money. In return, the investor receives capital gains tax deferral through 2026, a 10 to 15 percent step-up in tax basis after five and seven years, and no taxes on appreciation.

The upshot of an Opportunity Zone designation for the Midtown Neighborhood is that investing directly in the neighborhood becomes more desirable for investors. The tax deferments are essentially incentives to reinvest capital gains in projects in low-income areas such as the Midtown Neighborhood. Shovel-ready projects and those that could be mobilized in the short term should be identified and promoted to potential Opportunity Fund investors.

4. Consider using the NJEDA Historic Property Reinvestment Program

The Historic Property Reinvestment Program is a \$50 million competitive tax credit program to leverage the federal historic tax credit program to support rehabilitation projects of identified historic properties. To receive tax credits through the Historic Property Reinvestment Program, a project must:



- Demonstrate that without the tax credit, the project is not economically feasible.
- Prove that a project financing gap exists, and the tax credit award being considered for the project is equal to or less than the project financing gap.
- Not have commenced any construction or rehabilitation activity at the site of the rehabilitation project prior to applying and not commence any construction or rehabilitation activity until the execution of the Rehabilitation Agreement (with certain limited exceptions).
- Include business entity contributed equity of at least 20 percent of the total project costs; or 10 percent of the total project costs, if located in a government-restricted municipality.
- Meet minimum cost requirements where the cost of rehabilitation for the selected rehabilitation period cannot be less than the greater of the adjusted basis of the structure or \$5,000.
- For a residential project, the structure must serve a residential rental purpose and also contain at least four dwelling units.
- Be a rehabilitation project.

Qualified Project is defined as a property located in the State of New Jersey that is an income producing property, and that is:

- Individually listed, or located in a district listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the New Jersey Register of Historic Places; or
- Individually identified or registered, or located in a district identified or registered, for protection as a significant historic resource by a municipality in accordance with criteria for identification or registration that has been approved by the Officer as suitable for substantially achieving the purpose of preserving and rehabilitating buildings of historic significance within the jurisdiction of the municipality.

If located within a district the property must be contributing to the historic significance of the district.

Award Size

- 40 percent of the cost of rehabilitation up to a maximum of \$4 million, for rehabilitation projects NOT located within a qualified incentive tract or a government-restricted municipality

Award size is based on the cost of rehabilitation (eligible costs).

5. Utilize the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the new Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) discretionary grant program, funded with \$1 billion over the next 5 years. The program's funds can support planning, capital construction, and technical assistance to restore community connectivity equitably and safely through the removal, retrofit, mitigation, or replacement of eligible transportation infrastructure facilities that create barriers to mobility, access, or economic development.

6. Utilize NJEDA Food Desert Funding

Pleasantville is ranked the #25 food desert in the State of New Jersey. Pleasantville experiences similar food scarcity, specifically as it relates to fresh produce, and is considered its own food desert. The Food Desert Relief Act directs the NJEDA to address the food security needs of communities across New Jersey by providing up to \$40 million per year for six years in tax credits, loans, grants, and/or technical assistance to increase access to nutritious foods and develop new approaches to alleviate food deserts.

7. Maximize the use of NJEDA funding for business improvements and new tenants

Two NJEDA economic development programs have been expanded to help existing business in the Midtown Neighborhood. The first program provides grants of up to 50 percent of the project costs, to a maximum of \$20,000, for improvements made to the first floor of any business. The second program offers reimbursement of 15 percent of the annual lease payments for two years to for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations in the target area that lease between 500 and 5,000 square feet of new or additional market-rate, first floor office or retail space for a minimum of five years. An applicant leasing over 5,000 square feet can be eligible, but the grant will only incentivize the first 5,000 square feet.

8. Use Redevelopment as a Tool to Encourage Desired Improvements

Designating an area as one in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation qualifies a property or group of properties for property tax abatements. When used purposefully, these designations spur the revitalization of targeted sites and allow the City to receive more tax revenue than it would with an existing site. The site's redeveloper, in turn, would also forego the cost of a full tax assessment for a

certain number of years. This tool can be used in the Midtown Neighborhood to target sites for redevelopment.

9. Define clear data to gauge the Midtown Neighborhood's progress

Developing clear metrics including timeframes and goals and tying those goals to equity and well-being for residents of the Midtown Neighborhood.

10. Recreational Programming Support

City should continue to invest in the youth of Atlantic City for youth programs, training, and recreational opportunities.

11. Funding for Abandoned Property Compliance

PHRC, working with the City, should take control of vacant and abandoned homes and rehabilitate them.

12. Funding for Homeownership

NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency and NJ Community Capital may provide first-time homebuyer mortgages as well as down payment and closing cost assistance.

13. Funding for Energy Assistance

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program provides grants in varying amounts based on a household's income size, type of fuel, and type of dwelling, with no pay back required. The Universal Service Fund also helps make energy bills more affordable for low-income customers (www.energyassistance.nj.gov). Eligible customers may also receive financial assistance through Helping Hands, a program funded by Atlantic City Electric, providing \$1 million annually to help struggling customers meet their energy needs. These funds are dispersed each year to low-income residents through the [Affordable Housing Alliance](#), [New Jersey SHARES](#), [Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Camden](#), and the [People for People Foundation](#).

14. Funding Opportunities

Bank Contributions - The Community Reinvestment Act or "CRA" is a federal regulation that was first passed in 1977. It is designed to encourage insured financial institutions (i.e., banks) to help meet the credit and community development needs of all income levels in the communities where they operate. The CRA requires banks to demonstrate their performance in meeting the needs of everyone in their community. All banks are periodically evaluated by their federal banking regulator to ensure that their lending is meeting the needs and is inclusive of all income levels in their markets. Larger banks must also show how they support their communities through community development services and qualified investments. Non-profit organizations are important partners in bank community development. Non-profits understand the areas of need in a community and are on the front line of meeting those needs through their own programs and services. Banks often partner with and support local non-profits as part of their overall CRA strategy. The following banks are located in the Atlantic City area and assist non-profits.

OceanFirst Foundation (www.oceanfirstfdn.org)

OceanFirst Foundation provides grants that help families, organizations, schools, and communities in southern New Jersey. The project must fit within their four core priority areas: Health and Wellness, Housing, Improving Quality of Life, and Youth Development and Education.

Wells Fargo Bank

Wells Fargo Bank collaborates with community organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local governments, and other stakeholders to deliver capital, credit, financial education, and other solutions that meet the needs of their customers and communities and, ultimately, help make our economy stronger. Some of Wells Fargo Bank's key initiatives include:

- The Wells Fargo NeighborhoodLIFT program supports sustainable homeownership and helps stabilize low- to moderate-income neighborhoods by providing down payment assistance and homebuyer education in collaboration with NeighborWorks® America and local non-profit housing organizations.
- Wells Fargo Works for Small Business® provides a wide range of resources, guidance, and services that help entrepreneurs take the next step toward their goals.
- The Hands on Banking program and its Spanish-language counterpart, El Futuro en tus Manos® is a free and fun money management program that teaches people in different stages of life the basics of responsible money management. Two of their newest programs include Hands on Banking for Military and Hands on Banking for Seniors.
- Wells Fargo Community Lending and Investment supports economic development by investing debt and equity capital in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods with limited access to traditional financial services.
- CommunityWINSSM Community Wins Opens Dialog (Working/Investing in Neighborhood Stabilization) in collaboration with the U.S. Conference of Mayors provides \$3 million over 3 years to non-profits and cities that support neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and job creation initiatives.
- The Wells Fargo Works for Small Business®: Diverse Community Capital program provides diverse-owned small businesses with access to capital, technical assistance, business planning and other tools and resources.

TD Bank

- Community Sponsorship - Sometimes, communities and the non-profits that serve them need a onetime boost to reach a specific goal or they want to offer an educational or entertainment series that enriches their neighborhood and expands their community's connections. From Maine to Florida, TD Bank sponsors events, programs, projects, and activities that make a positive local impact, investing in the places and people.
- Housing for Everyone Competition
- Non-profit Resource Training Fund - Non-profit organizations are often the backbone of a community, providing necessary services like job placement, meal delivery and training that would not be available otherwise. Their employees, who are dedicated to their organization's mission, can spend long hours performing a variety of tasks, sometimes reaching outside of their own professional knowledge and experiences. Through the Non-Profit Resource Training Fund, eligible community-based organizations can receive grants of up to \$1,000 for

employees to attend approved classes and receive the education they need to help themselves and their programs succeed.

PNC Bank

PNC Foundation has been supporting non-profit organizations for decades. The Foundation exists to establish partnerships with community-based non-profit organizations in order to enhance educational opportunities for children and to promote the growth of targeted communities through economic development initiatives. PNC Foundation concentrates its charitable giving on non-profit organizations focusing on the following areas:

- Education – The Foundation provides sponsorship to less-fortunate children, ages 0-5; to programs that focus in the areas of math, science, financial education and also provide direct services to children in their classroom; professional development to teachers; family engagement, and more.
- Economic Development & Community Services – Sponsorship is provided to community development initiatives that promote the growth of targeted low-and moderate-income communities and/or provide services to these communities, such as job training programs, early learning, and educational enrichment programs for children in low-and moderate-income families.
- Affordable Housing and Community Development – Grants are provided to non-profits that provide transitional housing and/or counseling services, as well as non-profit organizations that provide services for small businesses.
- Revitalization and Stabilization of Low-and Moderate-Income Areas – Support is given to organizations that help stabilize communities.
- Arts & Culture – Grants are provided for cultural enrichment programs.

Bank of America

In 2019, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation issued two requests for proposals on the priority focus area of economic mobility:

- The first will focus on the needs of individuals and families by investing in workforce development and education and basic needs.
- The second will focus on the needs of the community by addressing economic development and social progress by investing in affordable housing, revitalization, arts, and the environment.

Reinvestment Fund

Healthy Food Financing Initiative (www.investinginfood.com)

Targeted grants are available for eligible projects or partnerships that seek to improve access to healthy food in underserved areas. Approximately \$1.4 million will be available to fund applications under this program. Grant awards range from \$25,000-\$250,000.

USA Today

A Community Thrives (www.act.usatoday.com)

A Community Thrives empowers communities to take on local challenges and share the issues important to them around education, wellness, and culture on a national platform. USA Today does more than just provide grant money to local organizations. They promote ideas and communities.

Geraldine Dodge Foundation (www.grdodge.org)

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation supports arts, education, environment, informed communities, and poetry to connect communities and influence social change to achieve an equitable New Jersey.

New Jersey Community Capital (www.newjerseycommunitycapital.org)

New Jersey Community Capital is a non-profit community development financial institution that provides innovative financing and technical assistance to foster the creation of quality homes, educational facilities, and employment opportunities in underserved communities of New Jersey.

15. Building Momentum: Partnerships and Resource Development

Throughout the life span of a community development project or organization, it is important to always be focused on partnership and resource (financial and otherwise) development. The following are some contacts and informational resources that may help that process:

Elected Officials Directory and Legislative Information

<http://www.montclair.edu/newsinfo/findofficial.html>

<http://congress.org/congressorg/officials/state>

These online resources provide information about State and local elected officials and current legislative issues.

New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA)

PO Box 990

Trenton, NJ 08625-0990

Phone (609) 292-1800

<http://www.njeda.com/notforprofits.asp>

This State entity provides low-interest loans and other resources to help businesses and non-profit agencies get the capital they need to invest and expand in New Jersey.

New Jersey Economic Development Directory

http://www.ecodevdirectory.com/new_jersey.htm

If your issues are focused on or related to urban or economic revitalization, this site can help you find existing economic development agencies.

State of New Jersey Grant Resources

<http://www.state.nj.us/grants.html>

This Web page provides information on types of grant programs offered by the State of New Jersey.

Council of New Jersey Grantmakers

315 West State Street (Office)

101 West State Street (Mailing)

Trenton, NJ 08608

Phone 609-341-2022 Fax 609-777-1096

www.cnjg.org

E-mail: brambo@tesc.edu

This is a regional association of Grantmakers in New Jersey. Additional information about the forum can be found at http://givingforum.org/about/profile_newjersey.html

Fannie Mae Foundation

Phone 202-274-8057

grants@fanniemaefoundation.org <http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/grants/grants.shtml>

The Fannie Mae Foundation awards grants to non-profit organizations that create affordable homeownership and housing opportunities in cities, towns, and rural areas across the United States.

Ford Foundation

320 East 43 Street New York, NY 10017

<http://www.fordfound.org/about/guideline.cfm>

One of the areas of interest for this national Grantmaker is its Asset Building and Community Development Program.

Section 9. Attachments

- a. Signed certification on Form NP-1 (Applicant Organization only)
- b. "Certificate of Good Standing" from State of NJ
- c. Copy of current NJ Charitable Registration and Investigation Act (CRI – 300R) form
- d. List of current members of the Board of Directors, as January 1, 2021
- e. Resume for Executive Director
- f. Organizational Chart
- g. Organization's total budget for the current year, with funding sources listed (Applicant Organization only)
- h. Copy of the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting at which the organization's current year total budget was approved (Applicant Organization only)
- i. Copy of the three (3) most recent annual audit reports for the organization (Applicant Organization only)
- j. Copy of the corrective action plan related to internal control or compliance findings from the organization's most recent annual audit report, if applicable (Applicant Organization only)
- k. Incorporation Documents
- l. Neighborhood maps (At least one of the maps must be "plain," showing streets and street names.)
- m. Evidence of community outreach & engagement efforts
- n. Midtown Neighborhood Photos
- o. Evidence of local government support
- p. Evidence of nonprofit organizations support