

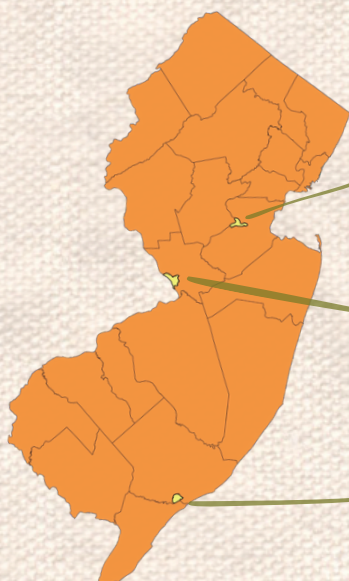
NPU INSIDER

Neighborhood Programs Unit



Somers Point Bike Path – Glyn Neath Shelter, Somers Point

3 NEW NRTC-APPROVED NEIGHBORHOODS!



Livingston Ave South,
New Brunswick

Battle Monument,
Trenton

Northeast,
Somers Point

PROGRAMS

Neighborhood
Revitalization
Tax Credit (NRTC)

Neighborhood
Preservation
Program (NPP)

Community
Development Block
Grant (CDBG)

Moving People Forward in New Brunswick

Livingston Avenue South and Esperanza

The Neighborhood Programs Unit (NPU) team conducted a site visit of Livingston Avenue South in New Brunswick to wrap up the review of the NRTC Neighborhood Plan (NP) submitted by **New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT)**. President Jaymie Santiago, Senior Director Charles Bergman, key NBT staffers and planning consultant Jason Rowe met the NPU team to discuss the Plan and tour the neighborhood. Residents, local business owners and community leaders including Councilman Manuel J. Castañeda attended in support of the Plan and New Brunswick Tomorrow, which is currently as their motto says, “Moving People Forward” in the city’s Esperanza NRTC neighborhood.



Highlights of the neighborhood tour included the New Brunswick Recreation or **HUB Teen Center**, a free-of-charge haven for city youth aged 13 through 19. Superintendent of Recreation Ivan Adorno commented, “We create a safe, fun, and inspiring space for New Brunswick’s teens. It’s where they connect, find healthy entertainment, and unleash their energy and creativity. Teens bring a powerful spark, and here, they channel it through sports, gaming, dancing, art, and whatever else ignites their passion.”

During a walk-through of the **Greater Brunswick Charter School**, Director of Education Hector Alvarez shared that services provided to students and their families extend far beyond bilingual academic instruction and extra-curricular activities.



The Livingston Avenue South visit concluded with a meal rich not only in flavor, but in the authentic culture and traditions of a small town in Puebla, Mexico that **Las Maria's** proprietor and Livingston Avenue South resident Lupita Nieves hails from. The next stops were the sites of two NRTC Community Capital Needs (CCN) housing rehabilitation projects nearing completion in the Esperanza neighborhood. Three families will soon call these units “home.”

The NPU team left New Brunswick with insights about the pride, progress and potential in both NRTC neighborhoods and inspiration from Charles Bergman: “**When a grant is utilized for spreading goodwill, it creates a cascade of positivity.**”

On the Ground in Trenton

Battle Monument

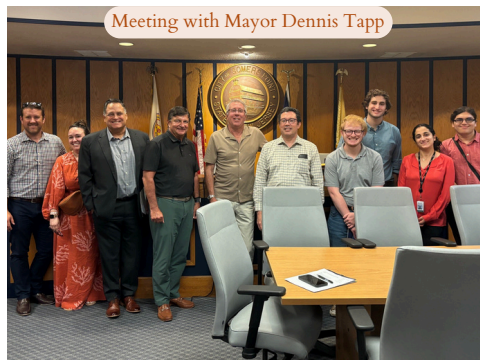
The NPU team braved sweltering heat to join **Trenton Health Team (THT)** for a tour of the Battle Monument neighborhood, where the effects of long-term disinvestment are apparent. In the **Donnelly Homes and the Humboldt-Sweets area**, abandoned housing units and vacant lots neighbor many occupied homes in need of long-deferred maintenance.



On **Sweets Avenue and Sanford Street**, many lots have already been cleared; the Neighborhood Plan includes the demolition of **250 or more blighted homes** to make way for new affordable and mixed-income housing. THT has rehabilitated several homes on or near **Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard**, a central corridor that includes schools, churches, and small businesses. The Plan will further THT's efforts to assist long-term residents, including seniors and grandparents raising children, to remain safely in their homes. Trenton Health Team is committed to building trust with residents and delivering results with NRTC funding.

Bold Revitalization Plans for Somers Point

Northeast



Housing rehabilitation, support of local businesses, and programming for youth are part of the recently approved Neighborhood Plan for the Northeast neighborhood in Somers Point. Planned grant-funded activities include workforce training, tree planting, wayfinding signage and streetscape enhancements. A gazebo, bayfront observation area, and living shoreline will grace a vacant waterfront site on **Bay Avenue**. Local businesses will benefit from façade improvement programs and branding campaigns. NRTC-funded activities are planned to increase community engagement, grow the local economy, improve housing stock and support the residents of Northeast Somers Point. **Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA)**, currently managing NRTC in Atlantic City's Ducktown, is the lead community based nonprofit organization for the Northeast neighborhood.

CDBG and NPP in Cape May City

In historic Cape May City at the southern tip of New Jersey, CDBG activities focused on park improvements and beach accessibility; NPP funds restored the fire-damaged **Allen AME Church**. The nearly 200-year-old building is now home to Cape May's active art and history communities where live events, as well as theater productions are held.

The **Kiwanis Community Park's** paved pathway was designed to increase safety. The pathway allows cyclers and pedestrians to avoid heavy main-road motor vehicle traffic. Accessibility mats have been installed along the entire length of Cape May City's beach. Mobility-challenged beach goers may request grant-funded beach wheelchairs and assistance getting to the beach.



Allen AME church during and after the fire



Former sanctuary of Allen AME Church



Cape May Beach Mats



Kiwanis Park Pathway

INTERVIEW WITH MAYOR ZACK MULLOCK



Although the year-round population is only about 2,800 residents, Cape May is a destination for over 100,000 visitors annually. Cape May prioritizes safety and accessibility, using grant funding to expand walkways and improve public access throughout the city.

"The DCA grants that we've received have been so important to the city of Cape May, because they've allowed us to do these projects that we wouldn't be able to do otherwise" Mullock said. The mile-and-a-half ADA beach-walk is a standout. "We have families now that are experiencing the beach that haven't experienced it maybe ever, and sometimes in decades." he added.

Click the postcard to "visit"
Cape May City on YouTube



NRTC Neighborhood Plan Transfers



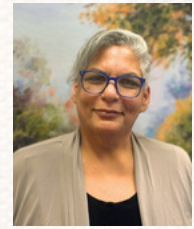
Caring Inc. is the new lead nonprofit community based organization for the NRTC Midtown neighborhood in Pleasantville, formerly led by Pleasantville Housing and Redevelopment Corporation. Caring Inc. is new to the NRTC program. One notable activity planned will transform a vacant graffiti'd warehouse on an overgrown lot (pictured) into a thriving center for senior citizens. In Atlantic City, NRTC welcomes **Chelsea Economic Development Corporation** as the new lead organization in the neighborhood which shares its name. The Chelsea neighborhood was previously led by Atlantic City Development Corporation (ACDEVCO).



Terence Schrider
Program Manager
(Former NPP Supervisor)

NPU Insider Exclusive Interview

Terence “Terry” Schrider, who has been on both sides of the Neighborhood Preservation Program, shares his perspective on the program’s past, present, and future.



Susan Catlett
Neighborhood Programs Unit Manager

Susan:

During what period did you supervise the Neighborhood Preservation Program?

Terry:

I first worked with NPP in 1985 as Coordinator for Woodbury, joined DCA’s NPP Unit in 1989 and became Administrator in 1996 after serving as Program Manager. I ran NPP until 2003, when it merged into DCA-DHCR’s 26-person Program Implementation Unit, overseeing 476 grants worth over \$200 million.

Susan:

Can you share what the funding amounts and program structure were during that time?

Terry:

Since 2003, NPP’s direction shifted with available funding and staffing. The State Legislature typically allocated \$3–\$3.5 million annually, though not guaranteed, so we sometimes stockpiled funds and held competitive rounds every 3–5 years. Awards usually went to 12–15 cities, sometimes over 20 when funding was strong! Because the program was popular with legislators, DCA ensured geographic balance. In the early ’90s, we updated policies to raise the annual award from \$100,000 to \$125,000, with \$25,000 for the initial six-month “Phase-1” planning period.

Susan:

Housing rehab seemed central during your tenure. What were some projects from that time?

Terry:

My experience in Woodbury was to target the most distressed properties in the neighborhood with the City’s/County’s CDBG program. Then, NPP grants would be directed to the less distressed properties and allow modest exterior improvement grants up to \$5,000. Exterior paint/materials grants of up to \$500 were also allowed. We often focused on exterior aesthetic improvements to lift the spirit of the neighborhood.

Susan:

As you know, the NPU team is working on fine-tuning the Neighborhood Preservation Program. Do you have any advice to offer us?

Terry:

NPP has shifted toward the Main Street Program, which emphasizes economic development, not neighborhood improvement. Main Street’s place-making tools are valuable, but revitalization should be resident-driven. The program should be municipally led, not by a nonprofit or consultant, and grants can support the resident organization.

Susan:

Any closing thoughts on NPP’s past, present, or future?

Terry:

The \$125,000 annual funding is most valuable when leveraged with other public dollars, many from other DCA offices. NPP staff should coordinate with these programs to maximize resources. If the program shifts back to focusing on neighborhood housing, it should partner with Housing Production and Affordable Housing Trust Fund staff to meet those housing needs. NPP can assess neighborhoods, identifying units needing major funding versus basic or cosmetic work. The program should follow a 5-year process, with DCA management support to keep towns on track and document accomplishments. NPP staff should hold quarterly district meetings to share ideas, plus monthly or bi-monthly Teams meetings. It’s a true joy and honor to return to the program and see it continue to evolve and thrive.