

ATLANTIC CITY

Building A Foundation For A Shared Prosperity

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
APRIL 1, 2019 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2019

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
August 20, 2019



ATLANTIC CITY: BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR SHARED PROSPERITY

REPORT FOR THE THREE MONTHS OF APRIL 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2019

This is a report by the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office (“ACIPO”). This report discusses the office’s progress on key initiatives during the second quarter of 2019 as they relate to the transition report titled *Atlantic City: Building A Foundation For A Shared Prosperity*, released on September 20, 2018, by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (“DCA”).

In the second quarter, the Implementation Plan, which is the road map for putting the Transition Report into operation, was presented to the public on April 23, 2019. The Implementation Plan sets deadlines for accomplishing specific initiatives. The purpose of the Implementation Plan is to be transparent in the work being done and to be answerable to the community.

KEY DELIVERABLES

BUILDING MUNICIPAL CAPACITY

1. Training Initiatives

- A. Certified Public Manager training was provided to senior municipal managers of City of Atlantic City, which was administered by Rutgers University on March 12, 2019. The managers attend classes one day a week for ten months. Each manager was required to identify problems and recommendations for solutions for their respective responsibilities.
- B. Trust in government, while shaped by a sense of professionalism, rests on a foundation of integrity and honesty. Atlantic City has been plagued for decades by a distrust of ethics within City Hall. This distrust, which has

been reported by residents and businesses, has inevitably led to a reluctance to invest in the city. As a result, all municipal employees have now received ethics training.

- C. Providing access to professional development and continuing education is the cornerstone to the Implementation Plan. In that spirit, DCA in collaboration with Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) and Rutgers University provided Faulkner Act training for the Mayor and Municipal Council members.
- D. Open lines of communication are key to efficient municipal operations. As a means of improving communications between municipal leadership and the workforce, weekly meetings have been instituted by all directors and with municipal leadership. In addition, all directors are now required to provide a weekly report to municipal leadership to improve accountability and to ensure that all initiatives are moving forward.
- E. Atlantic City needs to ensure that its technological infrastructure is suitable to meet the needs of the municipality. The City has made significant strides in selecting a data-driven management system designed to monitor and improve the performance of city departments in real- time. This system will use computer software to track a myriad of government performance indicators.
- F. A new Chief Financial Officer was hired and has begun the process of reorganizing the

Department of Revenue and Finance and implementing procedures to enhance control over expenditures and stewardship of assets.

- G. A vendor has been retained to perform a city-wide revaluation of all properties. The project is expected to be concluded before the end of 2019.
- H. ACIPO established a social media presence utilizing Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. ACIPO also has a Spanish language Facebook page.
- I. The State announced that the City of Atlantic City had reached a balanced budget, which does not raise taxes on the residents of Atlantic City for 2019-2020. The budget provides for a compensation increase for the City's full-time, non-uniformed employees.

2. Planning and Development

- A. Interviews are ongoing to add an Engineer and additional administrative support to the Planning and Development Office.
- B. Monthly meetings have been established between all departments and organizations involved with housing policy for the City of Atlantic City.
- C. CRDA and the City of Atlantic City's Planning Office agreed to co-locate their staff effective March 2019 to streamline the housing/redevelopment process under one roof.
- D. A review of the licensing and permitting process has been conducted and efforts are underway to streamline processes and to create checklists for applicants.

- E. A new publication was distributed to the Executive Council. Council members have been asked to share it with their employees. The publication outlines the foreclosure process, provides pertinent contact information to foreclosure counselors and mediation services.
- F. The Atlantic City Development Corporation ("ACDEVCO") received approval to begin the second phase of a development project in conjunction with Stockton University. Funding has not yet been released by the State Treasurer. This phase will include the construction of a six-story, 105-unit dormitory building with retail space available on the ground floor. The building will be built on Atlantic Avenue between Hartford and Providence Avenues. Part of the project will involve converting an old building into this development. When complete, the new building will house an additional 405 students.

- G. On May 7, 2019 the Atlantic City Planning Board held a public hearing to receive and consider public comment on a proposed amendment to the master plan to incorporate the Ducktown Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. The amendment was

The Ducktown Neighborhood Revitalization Plan was the product of a nearly year-long process which included community meetings, door-to-door surveys of residents and analysis of date all aimed at improving the long-term viability of the neighborhood and improving the quality of life for the residents.

approved. Approval of the plan creates the opportunity for new funding and incentives which would spur economic growth in the

Ducktown neighborhood. The Ducktown Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is the first of several proposed neighborhood plans as amendments to the master plan. The plan was the product of a nearly year-long process which included community meetings, door-to-door surveys of residents and analysis of data all aimed at improving the long-term viability of the neighborhood and improving the quality of life for the residents.

LAND USE DEVELOPMENT

1. One of the findings in the Transition Report was that Atlantic City residents lack access to high quality food. CRDA has issued a request for proposals for a Supermarket Developer and a Supermarket Operator. Poor nutrition is one of the key contributing factors in Atlantic City's Public Health challenges. The primary supermarkets are off the island and require transportation. This becomes a burden for many residents and the default is to rely on convenience stores. Poor food choices lead significant health issues in addition to obesity. A new supermarket is proposed for Atlantic City and the request for proposal is an initial step toward the goal of breaking ground on the supermarket in the fourth quarter of 2019.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. New Jersey is crafting a plan to develop an offshore wind industry with Atlantic City a major player in this rapidly emerging industry. The plan sets a goal of 3,500 megawatts of offshore wind farm generation by 2030. A draft plan is expected by next July, followed by the selection of offshore wind power developers who will build the first 1,100 megawatts of the State's 3,500 goal predominantly off Atlantic City. Developers in contention to build the initial wind fields off Atlantic City include Ørsted, EDF-Shell New Energies, and US Wind. With the assistance the Atlantic

County Economic Alliance (ACEA), Ørsted has performed a site survey and analysis of available air and port resource in Atlantic City and the greater Atlantic City region and has consequently opened an office in Atlantic City.

2. The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) awarded \$100,000 to the City of Atlantic City to partner with Stockton University to study the feasibility of a proposed Center for Marine & Environmental Science that would be located in the city.
3. ACIPO has convened an economic development working group to continue to assess additional ways that economic development can be encouraged in Atlantic City.

JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Atlantic City has long suffered from high unemployment. The Transition Report noted that a core strategic aim must be a reduction of those unemployment levels through job training and placement.

1. Shortly after the work of the Review Team began, the Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce formed a Jobs Council which will now move forward under the leadership of the ACIPO. The Jobs Council has found a home for meetings at the Arcade Building which also houses the New Jersey Casino Control Commission. Atlantic Cape Community College has also expressed an interest in hosting the Jobs Council as needed.
2. In late 2018, ACEA (in conjunction with Atlantic County) was awarded a \$120,000 Innovation Grant from the NJEDA. This grant is funding a study to build an Aviation Maintenance and Technical Academy at Atlantic City International Airport. This Academy

will offer students from Atlantic City and the surrounding region the opportunity to pursue high-paying, high-demand careers in the aviation and offshore wind industries in Atlantic County.

3. College Credit for Aviation/STEM Education in High School. The ACEA is working with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) to plan an Aviation Maintenance and Technical Academy and help provide Aviation/STEM education to high school students in Atlantic County. ERAU, headquartered in Daytona, FL, is recognized as the world's leading aviation education and research university. In December 2018, representatives from ERAU's Gaetz Aerospace Institute met with all Atlantic County high school superintendents. Gaetz Aerospace Institute leads an Aviation STEM program in Florida and several other states. This program, now under consideration by the Atlantic City High School district and others in the county, offers high school students up to 17 fully transferrable college credits in Aviation/STEM, dramatically reducing tuition costs and providing a pathway to college acceptance.
4. The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City in collaboration the AC Arts Foundation created a new program for at-risk youth which provides employment opportunities during the summer as well as offers support services.

PUBLIC SAFETY

1. On March 12, 2019 the CRDA approved funding for a Neighborhood Coordination Officers program. This program assigns 16 veteran officers to a special unit. There are two officers assigned to each political ward and four additional officers assigned

to social services patrol. The officers were selected, trained and the program was fully

This program will provide for 15 veteran officers to be assigned to a special unit. There will be two officers assigned to each political ward and three additional officers assigned to social services patrol.

operational in early May. On May 21, 2019 the Neighborhood Coordination Officers were presented to the public at a press conference and then began patrol.

2. A Citizens Advisory Board has been established and has held monthly meetings including its first public meeting.
3. A new initiative created by the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office called Pathways to Change was launched on June 26th.
4. The Fire Department received additional funding totaling \$250,000.00 as well as two new fire trucks and apparatus.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

1. The Atlantic City Board of Education entered into an agreement to work with the Search Institute to conduct a Developmental Assets Profile ("DAP") survey of Atlantic City youth between 4th and 12th grade. The purpose of the study was to better identify needs of the youth and provide a strong basis for funding for community-based youth programs. DAP was completed in March. Following the release of the results of the survey a training

was conducted by the Search Institute for stakeholders who work with youth in Atlantic City. One of the outcomes of the training was the idea to form a youth advisory board.

2. A recreation master plan was created which identified city assets and summer programming centered around youth. The major stakeholders such as the Boys and Girls Club, City of Atlantic City, AtlantiCare, PAL, Stockton University, Volunteers of America and Atlantic Cape Community College have collaborated in providing various opportunities throughout the City. The plan will also serve as a tool to assist in identifying and obtaining grant opportunities to expand the number of youths served throughout the City.
3. During the summer of 2019, the City of Atlantic City provided 60 summer jobs for high school students and an additional 41 college internship positions. The college internships were a direct result of ACIPO'S request for more opportunities in the executive council

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meeting as well as a donation from Live Nation obtained through the Mayor's Office. Internship positions were placed at Stockton University, Atlantic Cape Community College, Volunteers of America, AtlantiCare, several camp locations, the municipal courts, CRDA, various City Hall offices such as the Mayor's office, Planning and Development, and ACIPO.

4. On May 23, 2019, through a grant from the Department of Community Affairs, the Search Institute provided a day-long training session for individuals whose primary work is in youth development. The training was attended by approximately 60 individuals.
5. Governor Murphy, Lt. Governor Oliver and Special Counsel Jim Johnson conducted a youth violence intervention meeting with many of Atlantic City's key youth development and intervention stakeholders to discuss youth violence intervention and prevention.
6. A Youth Advisory Board has been formed and its first meeting will occur in August 2019.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. ACIPO has been meeting with Stockton University to develop a city-wide calendar of events to be housed on a central site.
2. For the first time in several years the Gardner's Basin concerts returned. The first concert drew roughly 3,000 people. A food truck festival took place in April and ACIPO is currently working on reestablishing a Latino Festival for late summer.
3. The Transition Report & Implementation Plan were translated into Spanish and made available to the Spanish speaking community during a Spanish language Town Hall.
4. ACIPO in collaboration with CRDA was able to identify funding to bring back the Latino Festival which was on hiatus for over 12 years. This event is scheduled for September 22, 2019.

CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. On June 18, 2019 ACIPO in collaboration with the Hispanic Association of Atlantic County held a Latino Town Hall. Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver, Mayor Gilliam, City Council members and Special Counsel Jim Johnson attended. The town hall followed similar formatting as the first town hall held in January 2019. This town hall provided a real-time translation of programming as well as breakout groups facilitated by bilingual leaders. After enthusiastic and lively discussions, the primary concerns of each group were presented to the attendees. As a result of this town hall, other forums are new planned such as “Know Your Rights” in collaboration with the Department of Labor as well as “Immigration Services for Atlantic City Residents”.
2. The office of the Mayor of Atlantic City and ACIPO held the first Social Services Town Hall event on April 17, 2019. The event brought together over 25 agencies currently providing services in the Atlantic City area. Over 70 individuals worked collaboratively to share issues, concerns and best practices. The objective was to develop ways that the several agencies could begin to work more collaboratively to address common issues. This town hall was so well received that the group voted to hold these types of forums on a quarterly basis. The second Social Services Town Hall is scheduled for October 2019.
3. As a follow up to the first Town Hall held in January 2019, ACIPO has created a new initiative that focuses on Atlantic City’s wards. The first “Mini Town Hall” is scheduled for August 2019 starting with wards 1 & 2.

