

# ATLANTIC CITY

Building A Foundation For A Shared Prosperity

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD  
APRIL 2020 THROUGH JUNE 2020

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs  
OCTOBER, 2020



# ATLANTIC CITY: BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR SHARED PROSPERITY

REPORT FOR THE THREE MONTHS OF APRIL 2020 – JUNE 2020

This is the 2nd quarterly report of 2020 by the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office (“ACIPO”). This report discusses the office’s progress on key initiatives from April 2020 through June 2020. This report reflects the framework discussed in both the Transition Report titled Atlantic City: Building A Foundation for A Shared Prosperity, released on September 20, 2018, and the Implementation Plan, released on April 23, 2019.

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to disrupt the health and welfare of Atlantic City residents and the area economy. Measures begun by collaborative partnerships to contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus, address food insecurity, support access to federal and state relief for business, and provide housing security remained top priorities. As in the first quarter, however, progress on key items in the Implementation Plan continues.

## KEY DELIVERABLES BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY & ADVANCING COORDINATION

The Atlantic City Executive Council (“Executive Council”) met twice during the second quarter in

April and June. The Council met virtually and will continue using virtual mediums while concern for the spread of the virus remains high. Mr. Andrew McNally joined the Council as representative for South Jersey Industries, replacing Mr. Nicholas DiRocco.

Despite the impact of Covid-19 on their individual organizations, members of the Executive Council joined together to meet the pressing needs of Atlantic City businesses, industry employees, and residents. Members of the Casino Association of New Jersey joined with labor leaders, the City administration, the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA), the school district, community groups, houses of worship and social service agencies to provide much needed food assistance to displaced workers and City residents. Business associations collaborated with the City administration to deliver vital information to local

Measures begun by collaborative partnerships to contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus, address food insecurity, support access to federal and state relief for business, and provide housing security remained top priorities.

businesses regarding special relief through federal and state loans and grants for business operations. AtlantiCare collaborated with the City and the business associations in developing health and safety protocols. The City formed a policy group under the auspices of its Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and invited members of the Council and other stakeholders to join in formulating a coordinated plan for re-opening

the City in accordance with a relaxation of the Governor's Executive Order No. 104.

Newly appointed Deputy Director India P. Still worked to build relationships in the areas of workforce development, education, economic development, and public health. She forged connections with the Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA), the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board, Atlantic Cape Community College, the Atlantic City School District, Rutgers Agricultural Extension Network, and several social service and non-profit organizations.

Additionally, Ms. Still, as a member of the leadership team of the South Jersey ecosystem of the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network, worked to gauge interest in creating an Atlantic City cohort of the Network. The STEM Pathways Network is a statewide initiative to create a cradle-to-workforce pathway to connect STEM education to workforce development.

## BUILDING MUNICIPAL CAPACITY

- The City administration proactively activated the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to develop a plan to manage and oversee the City's response to the Covid-19 crisis. Among other actions, this included the procurement of adequate personal protection equipment (PPE) for City employees, implementation of health and safety protocols, staffing changes to enforce the Governor's Executive Orders related to Covid-19, and the establishment of two (2) City-managed Covid-19 testing sites. Essential personnel continued to report on-site in shifts to ensure continuity of daily operations and the delivery of critical services to constituents, while other City employees performed work tasks

from home. The Atlantic City Department of Information Technology swiftly provided City employees with portable devices, conducted trainings as needed, and enabled a smooth transition to virtual meetings of the City Council, boards and commissions, and City departments. The Mayor created a weekly newsletter issued via the Police Department to provide continued updates on the City's response to the Covid-19 crisis and spearheaded a food assistance program for senior citizens.

- ACIPO worked in collaboration with the Department of Information Technology and the Business Administrator to continue the rollout of the GovPilot data management tool. GovPilot is a web-based management platform developed exclusively for local governments to help them operate more transparently and efficiently. Modules have been built for the City Clerk's office and City Solicitor's office. Among the first modules completed and now available online include modules for GIS, Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests, dog licenses, parking permits, vital records, marriage licenses,

The City administration proactively activated the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to develop a plan to manage and oversee the City's response to the Covid-19 crisis.

report-a-concern and landlord registration. Modules related to construction, licenses and permits, and zoning and planning are in progress to be completed during the spring and early summer of 2020.

- The Implementation Plan contemplates rebuilding the capacity of the City to deliver improved health services for city residents. The City hired two key employees, Dr. Wilson Washington and Dr. Kifle Mihrete, to staff the Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Washington was appointed the Director of the department and Dr. Mihrete was appointed as the Health Officer, satisfying a state mandated requirement.
- The first class of supervisor-level City employees graduated from the State of New Jersey Certified Public Manager® Program. Fifteen (15) City supervisors in departments such as City Clerk, City Solicitor, Information Technology, Licensing and Inspection, Municipal Court, Planning and Development, Public Safety, and Public Works voluntarily completed the yearlong course in an effort to strengthen their work performance and better serve the public. The City selected the second cohort of managers for the Certified Public Manager’s course delivered by Rutgers University- Newark’s School of Public Affairs and Administration. The program participants will attend class over a 10-month period, complete weekly assignments and readings, and undergo periodic assessments. To successfully graduate, each participant is required to complete a capstone project that would benefit their department.

## LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Transition Report highlights the need to address two critical land use issues: blight and foreclosure. The Report also cites the need to increase available housing stock to attract new residents.

- Work on revising the City Master Plan is a priority project and continues to progress.

The targeted date for completion of a first draft is early June.

- The Mayor’s Office developed a 10-week small business academy in partnership with Atlantic Cape Community College, Stockton University Small Business Development Center, New Jersey Economic Development Authority, and the New Jersey African American Chamber of Commerce. Throughout the course, participants would gain business advice from developing a business plan to making full-fledge pitches for capital funding. The academy was set to launch in April but was postponed due to Covid-19.
- The revitalization of neighborhoods is critical to an overall vibrant, economically healthy, and safe city. Atlantic City benefits from having strong community organizations with a long history of vested interest and efforts in maintaining thriving neighborhoods. The Chelsea Economic Development Corporation launched its plan to apply for the DCA Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit funds, beginning with a series of town hall presentations and listening tours with Chelsea residents to garner feedback and input for the application.
- To further reduce blight, the City and the CRDA collaborated to address the proliferation of rooming houses in the city. The Mayor’s office established a code enforcement review board to aggressively address violations. The CRDA developed a conversion plan to convert rooming houses to affordable housing units. The CRDA Board approved allocating \$1.2 million for the conversion program to cover approximately four (4) projects. The funds provide incentives for developers to convert the rooming houses into better quality housing and mixed-use projects.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

- The Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCO) program continues to receive positive feedback from the community. The CRDA considered a request from the Citizens Advisory Board to extend the program and add additional officers.
- The Citizens Advisory Board canceled the March meeting and reconvened in April. The board reviewed crime statistics during the time of Covid-19. Mirroring a national trend, incidents of domestic violence were higher than usual. The Board also noted that youth seemed to be staying out later in the evening than in pre-Covid times. Lastly, the anonymous 911 hotline, TIP 411, has been working well. Flyers announcing this new resource have been posted around the City.

agencies active in Atlantic City. The meeting was held on March 11, 2020. at the Old Soldier's Home (All Wars Memorial Building). Thirty-two participants representing 19 agencies were in attendance. The group met for over two hours and had a roundtable discussion on two topics. A survey of the group revealed that they appreciate having the summits and would like to continue meeting on a quarterly basis. They also expressed interest in initiating pilot projects to bring innovative solutions to ongoing challenges. The next summit will occur in the summer.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The original plan to replicate and double last year's summer youth work program was put on hold due to Covid-19 and the need for social distancing. Most of the stakeholders who originally agreed to participate were unable to offer the same opportunities while obeying the social distance requirements. However, Jingoli Enterprises continued to plan with Pastor Collins Days of Second Baptist Church, Vision 2000, and the CRDA to offer a program that was safe and meaningful for the youth participants.

The ACIPO office is working with other local stakeholders such as Atlantic Cape Community College, Rutgers Agricultural Extension Network, and the Atlantic County Economic Alliance in creating new educational programs for youth.

## CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The ACIPO continued its community outreach efforts and conducted a summit of social service

