

**Undergraduate Planning Studio**  
**Spring 2026 | Dr. Meenar**



# **Reimagining Abandoned Properties in Chelsea, Atlantic City: *A Vision Plan***

Department of Geography, Planning, and Sustainability  
School of Earth and Environment  
Rowan University



## Studio Members



(From left) Samuel Scilio, Ryan Goodhart, Matthew Donatien, Victoria Basara, Christian Palmisano, Adam Montgomery, Ciara Mulligan, Ethan Theurer, Benjamin Wellner, Sean Olcese, Nolan Wilkins

Advisor: Dr. Mahbubur Meenar

# Acknowledgements

## Interviewees & Guest Speakers:

**Alice Woods, Sharon Zappia, Stacey Jaskol** (Chelsea EDC)

**Elizabeth Terenik**, AICP, PP (Terenik Land Use LLC)

**Tim Edmunds**, PE (Atlantic County Improvement Authority)

**Novelette Robinson** (Atlantic City Tax Assessor)

**Ayana Plummer** (Department of Planning and Development, Atlantic City)

**Frank Montufar** (The Homeownership Path)

**Michael Atkins** (Atlantic City Arts Foundation)

**Stan Slachetka**, FAICP, PP (Pennoni), Author, *The Redevelopment Handbook*



**Client / Community Partner**

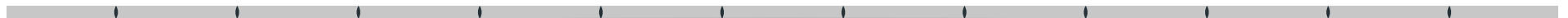


**Academic Partner**



**Department of Geography,  
Planning & Sustainability**

**Institutional Partner**



# Presentation Outline

1. Introduction — *Nolan*
2. Background — *Adam*
3. Context — *Adam*
4. Community engagement — *Adam*
5. Abandoned property prioritization model — *Sean*
6. Recommendations — *Sean*
7. Implementation strategies — *Nolan*
8. Concluding remarks — *Nolan*

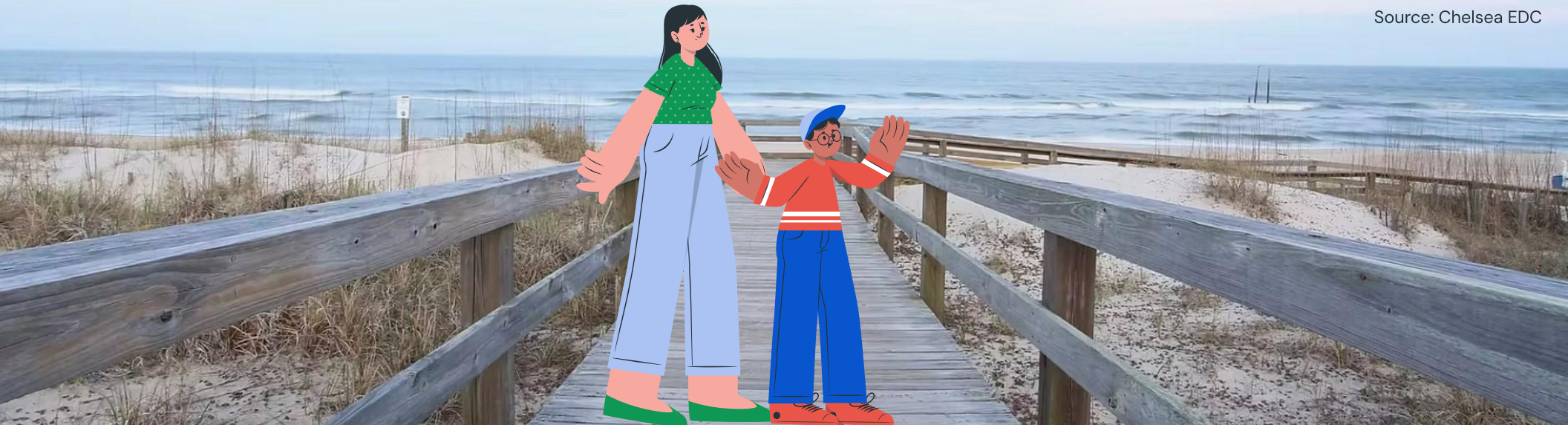


# 01

## Introduction

Nolan Wilkins

Source: Chelsea EDC



# Project Overview



## Location

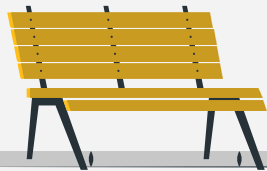


## Goal & Objectives

- Property ranking tool
- Vision plan

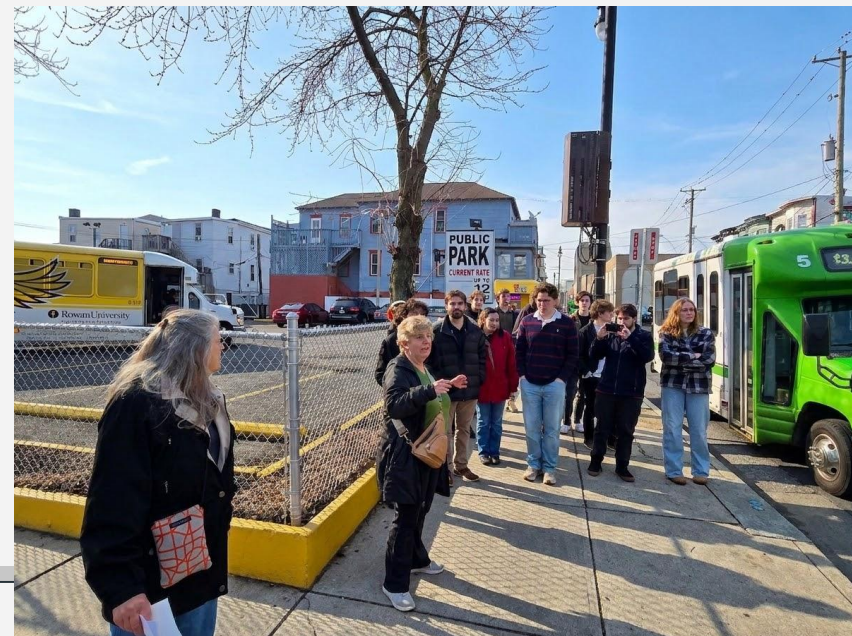


## Project Importance



# Project Methodology

- Literature Review
- Secondary Data Collection
- Field Observations
- Primary Data Collection and Community Engagement
  - Workshop
  - Online survey
  - Key Informant Interviews
- Geospatial Analysis and Property Evaluation



# CHELSEA NEIGHBORHOOD

Ten Year Plan  
2020 - 2030

A Catalyst For Change



New Jersey Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program  
Submitted July 2020



# Background

## Adam Montgomery

# 02



## The Redevelopment Handbook

A Guide to Rebuilding New Jersey's Communities

Stan Slachetka  
FAICP, PP

David G. Roberts  
AICP, PP, LLA, RLA, LEED AP ND

3rd Edition

## Journal of the American Planning Association



ISSN: 0194-4363 (Print) 1939-0130 (Online) Journal homepage: [www.tandfonline.com/journals/rjpa](http://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rjpa)

## Lessons Learned From a Citywide Abandoned Housing Experiment



# Topics Covered in the Report

- Abandoned properties – definition + reasons
- Why are abandoned properties a problem?
- Public sector roles in addressing abandoned properties
- Revitalization/redevelopment strategies
- Planning/zoning considerations
- Legal or policy tools – acquiring/managing abandoned properties
- Case studies



# Vacant vs. Abandoned Properties

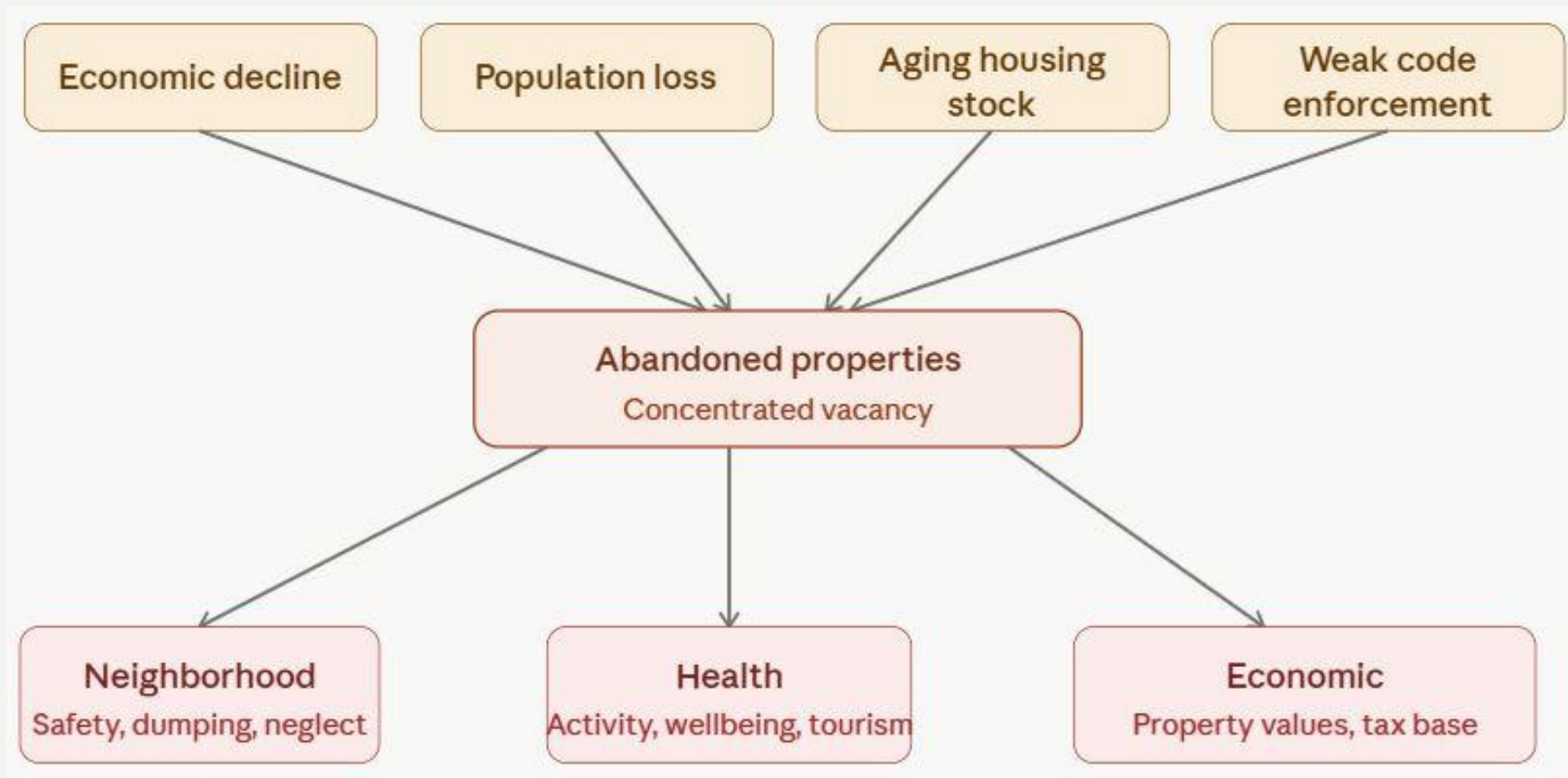
Vacant are unused or unoccupied, but may still be maintained, where abandoned show longer-term neglect and inactivity

## Abandoned Property and Statutory Authority

**Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act:** a property is deemed abandoned if it has not been legally occupied for at least six months + other criteria



# Causes & Impacts of Abandoned Properties



# Legislative Framework - Atlantic City

## Atlantic City declared rehabilitation area in 1994

- More grant eligibility
- Tax abatements
- Abandoned property list
- Vacant property receivership

## Other rehabilitation tools

- Code enforcement
- Liens and foreclosures



# Plans and Policies

## Atlantic City Master Plan and Chelsea Neighborhood 10 year Plan

- Share goals – housing rehabilitation and economic development
- AC Master Plan: policy-driven, permits condemnation & demolition
- Chelsea EDC Plan:
  - Community-centered
  - Renovation over demolition
- Top-down vs. bottom-up

Master Plan Reexamination Report

April 2016

Prepared For  
City of Atlantic City  
1301 Bacharach Boulevard  
Atlantic City, NJ 08041

Prepared By  
Maser Consulting P.A.  
Perryville III Corporate Park  
53 Frontage Road, Suite 120  
PO Box 4017  
Clinton, NJ 08099  
908-238-0900

  
David Roberts, AICP/PP, LLA

and  
Atlantic City Planning and Development Department  
Elizabeth A. Terenik, PP, AICP, Director

## CHELSEA NEIGHBORHOOD

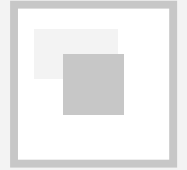
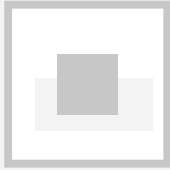
*Ten Year Plan*  
2020 - 2030

.....  
*A Catalyst For Change*



*New Jersey Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program*  
Submitted July 2020





# 03

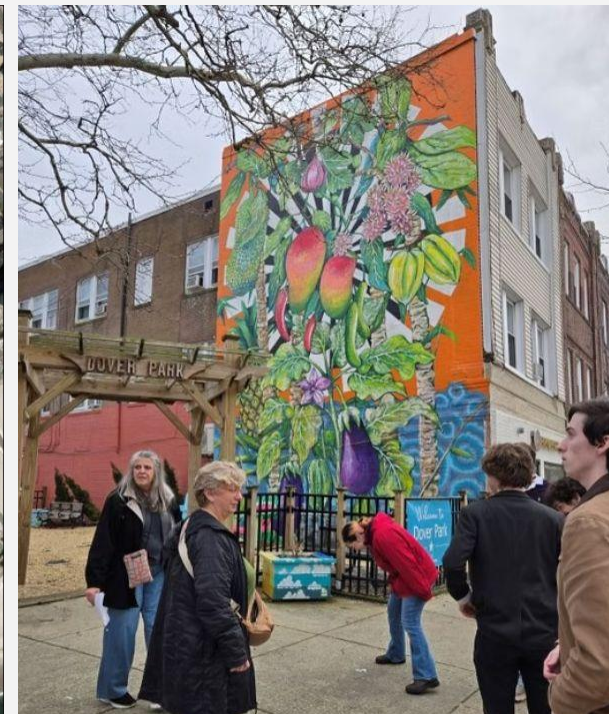
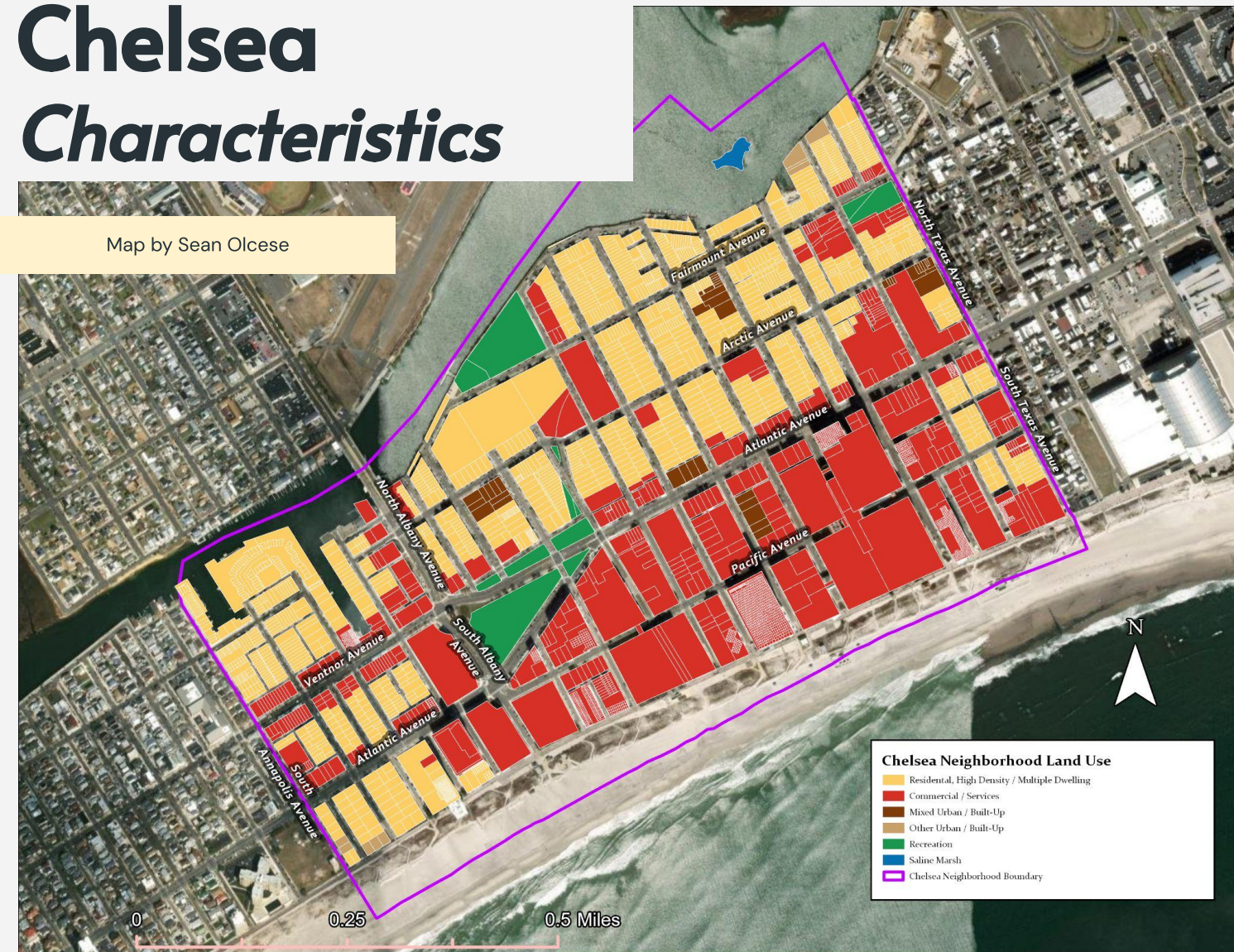
## Context

Adam Montgomery



# Chelsea Characteristics

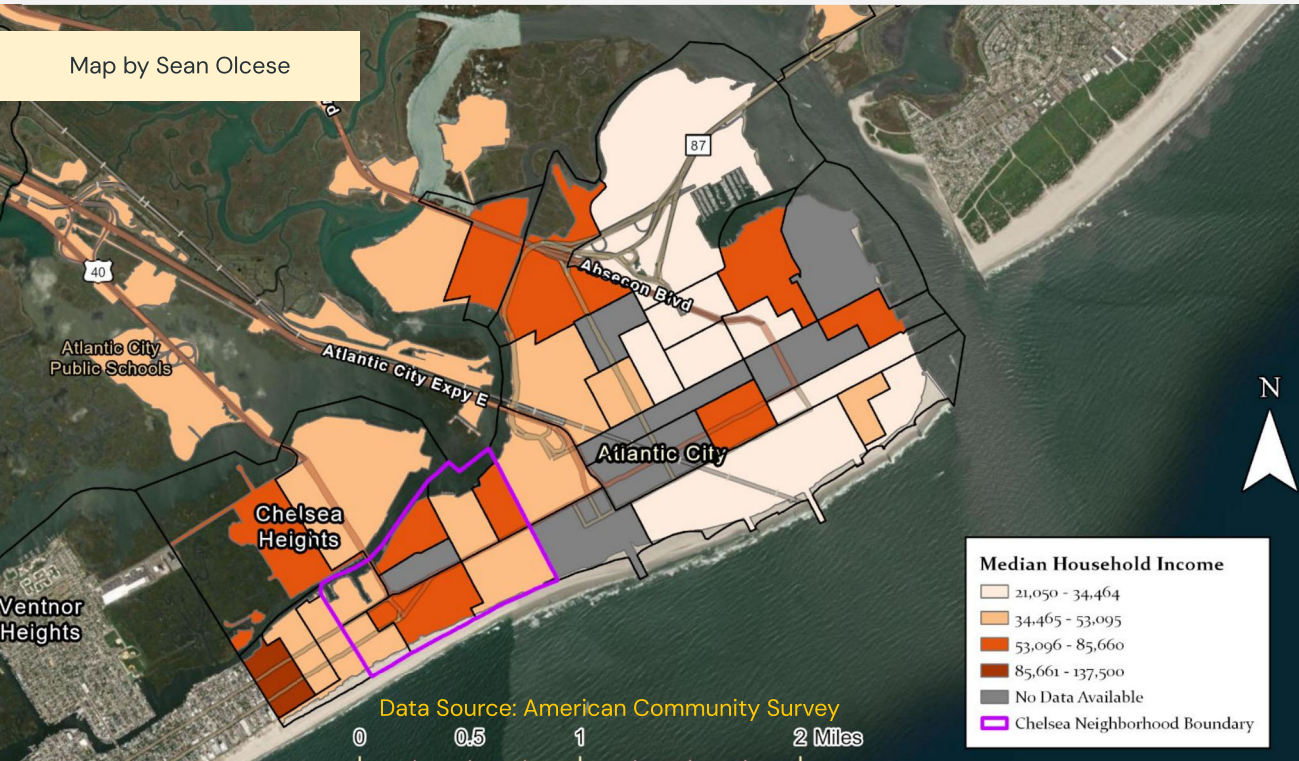
Map by Sean Olcese



- 0.75-square-mile
- Dense mixed-use
- Walkability and urban grid
- Lacks access to many basic services

# Chelsea Demographics

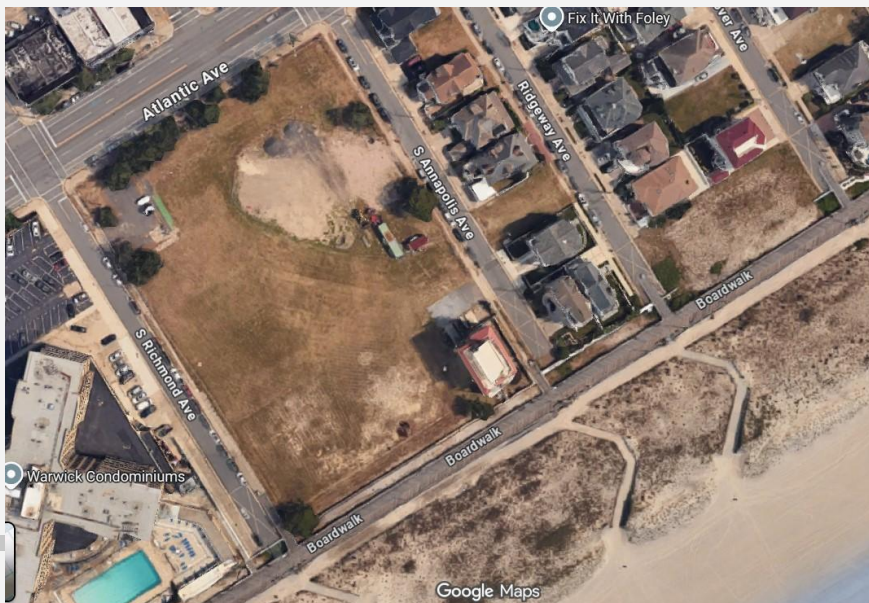
- About 11,000 residents
- Highly diverse, 42% Latinx, 34% Asian
- Median HH income: \$31k – \$38k



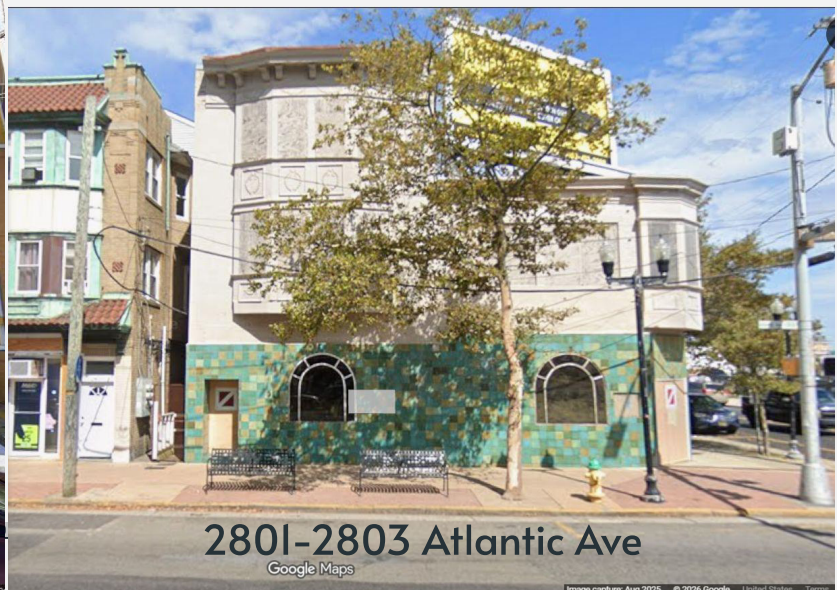
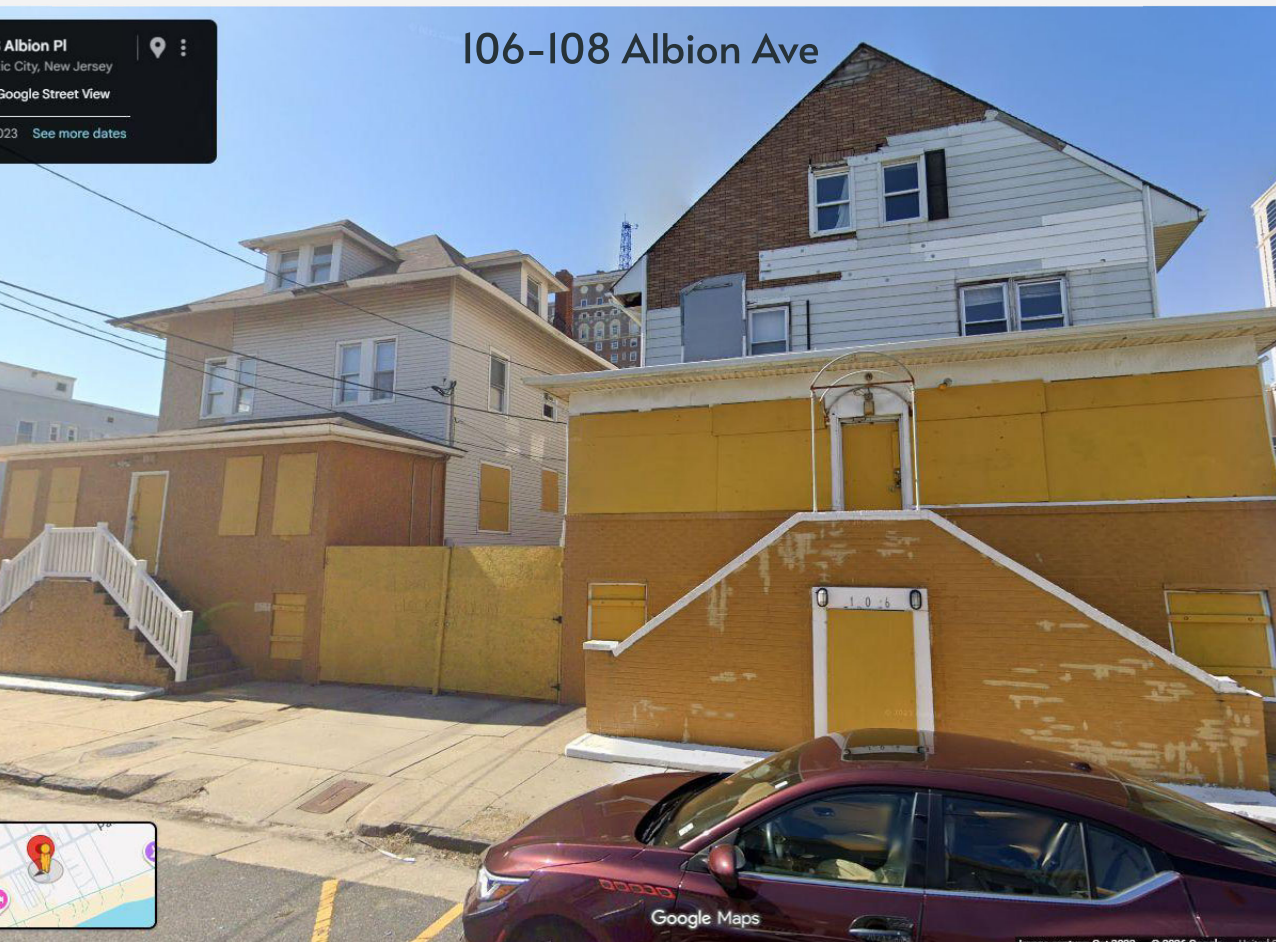
# Abandoned and Vacant Property Issues

- Vacant lots and boarded buildings
- Inconsistent maintenance across blocks
- Gaps in the urban fabric from abandonment

*95 vacant properties in Chelsea, of which 22 have been abandoned.*



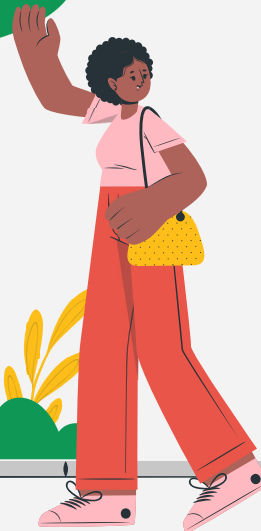
# Abandoned and Vacant Property Issues



# 04

## Community Engagement

Adam Montgomery



# Community Workshop



Join us for a conversation on community planning with Rowan University's Planning Studio. This is the perfect opportunity to share your ideas on blight and housing in the Chelsea neighborhood!

SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER



**Wednesday**  
February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Time**  
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

**Chelsea EDC Office**  
3701 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ 08401

(609) 761-1499

[www.ChelseaEDC.org](http://www.ChelseaEDC.org)

- Hybrid
- 14 participants

A screenshot of a news article from The Press of Atlantic City. The article is titled "A new plan aims to turn Atlantic City's vacant homes into opportunities" and is dated March 11, 2026. The author is Buzz Keough. The article discusses a housing strategy launched by Chelsea Economic Development Corp. to reduce blight and redevelop vacant properties in Atlantic City's Chelsea neighborhood. The screenshot shows the newspaper's masthead, navigation menu, and the beginning of the article text.

**THE PRESS OF ATLANTIC CITY**

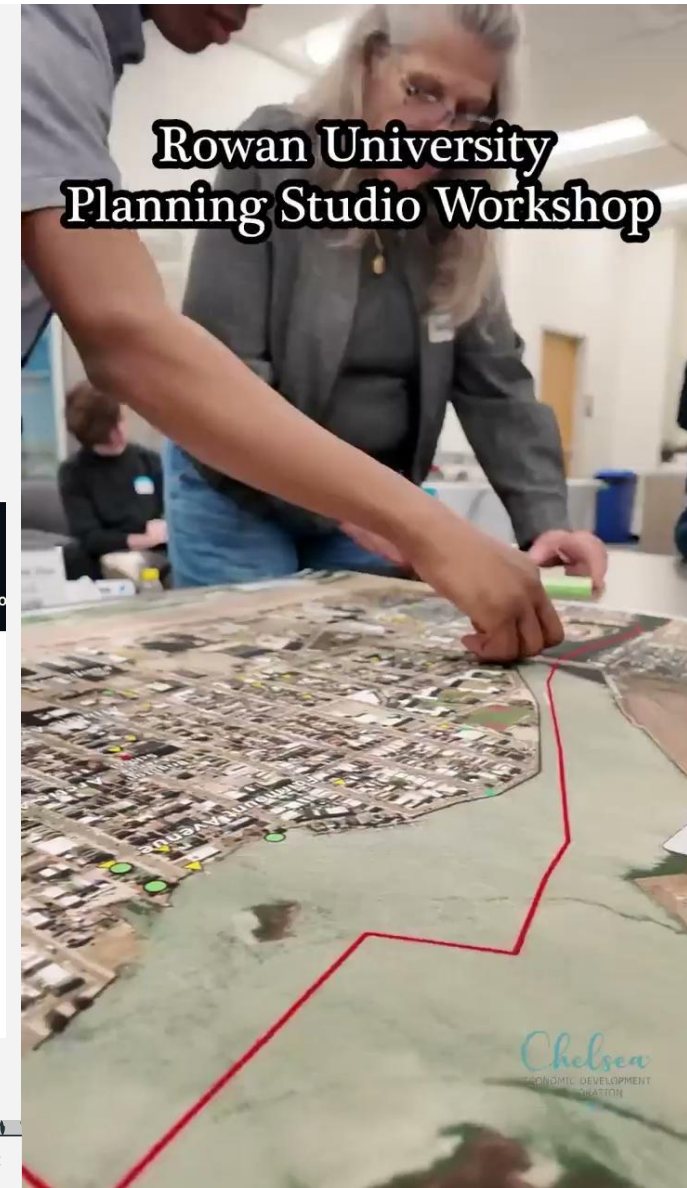
E-edition News Obituaries Opinion Sports Puzzmo Puzzles Jo

DEVELOPMENT

## A new plan aims to turn Atlantic City's vacant homes into opportunities

Buzz Keough | Mar 11, 2026

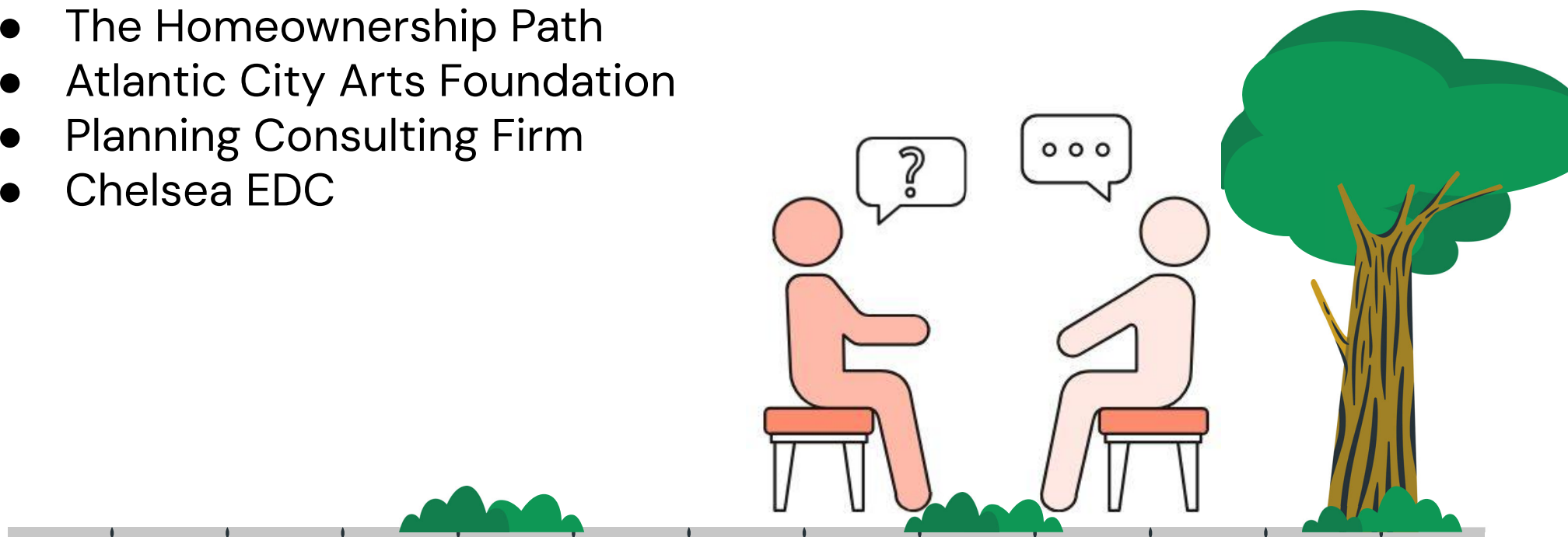
Chelsea Economic Development Corp. launched a housing strategy to reduce blight and redevelop vacant properties in Atlantic City's Chelsea neighborhood, including a pilot program, university research partnership and community input.



Source: Chelsea EDC

# Key Informant Interviews

- Atlantic County Improvement Authority
- Planning & Development, Atlantic City
- Tax Assessor's Office, Atlantic City
- The Homeownership Path
- Atlantic City Arts Foundation
- Planning Consulting Firm
- Chelsea EDC

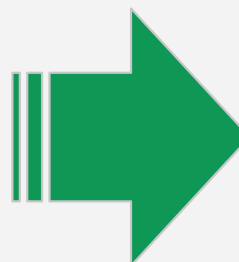


# Community Surveys

- Online survey – 37 responses
- CEDC distributed the survey to community residents who could not attend the workshop



***Prior Engagement by CEDC***

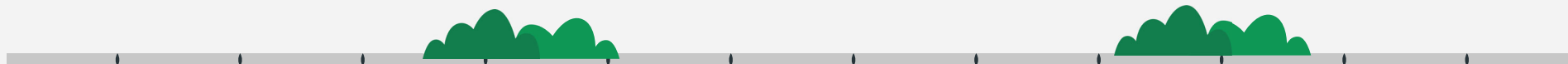


11 Focus Groups

*65 participants*

Public Safety Survey

*102 responses*



05

# Abandoned Property Prioritization Model

TOOL **ReVAMP**

REVITALIZATION ASSESSMENT MODEL FOR PROPERTIES

Sean Olcese



# ReVAMP – Data

## Collection

### PARCEL & BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS

<b>Zoning compatibility</b>	Residential zoning scores higher — fewer barriers to housing-oriented reinvestment	Data
<b>Zillow Sale Value</b>	Lower values score higher — indicate lower acquisition cost and easier entry for redevelopment	Data
<b>Year Built</b>	More recent construction scores higher — fewer age-related rehabilitation challenges	Data
<b>Lot Size</b>	Smaller lots score higher — more manageable and less costly to stabilize or redevelop	Data
<b>Building Size</b>	Smaller buildings score higher — more feasible for rehabilitation with limited resources	Data

### ACCESS & PROXIMITY

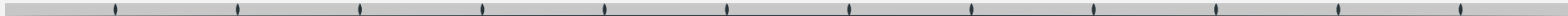
<b>Distance to Schools</b>	Closer scores higher — supports family-oriented reinvestment near neighborhood anchors	Data
<b>Distance to Open Space</b>	Closer scores higher — access to parks improves neighborhood livability	Data
<b>Distance to Grocery Stores</b>	Closer scores higher — daily needs access supports long-term residential viability	Data
<b>Distance to Places of Worship</b>	Closer scores higher — proximity to social and institutional anchors in the neighborhood	Data
<b>Distance to Beach</b>	Closer scores higher — beach proximity is a major locational amenity in Chelsea	Data

### SITE & NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

<b>Building Condition</b>	Fewer visible issues scores higher — indicates stronger rehabilitation potential	Subjective
<b>Street Type</b>	Local neighborhood streets score higher — calmer, more residential character	Subjective
<b>Neighborhood Stability</b>	Fewer vacancies on the block scores higher — more stable surrounding context	Data
<b>Crime</b>	Safer areas score higher — based on NeighborhoodScout sub-area boundaries	Data

### COMMUNITY PERCEPTION / LOCAL INPUT

<b>Green / Red Dot Net Perception</b>	More positive community event sentiment scores higher — net green minus red dots	Data
<b>Survey Hotspot</b>	Closer to community-identified problem corridors scores higher — aligns with priority areas	Subjective



# ReVAMP – Criteria

## Score

PARCEL & BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS		
Criteria	Scale	Rationale
Zoning Compatibility	1–2	2 = Residential zone 1 = Non-residential zoning
Zillow Sale Value	0–3	3 = ≤ \$227,500 2 = \$227,500 – \$353,199 1 = \$353,200 – \$454,250 0 = > \$454,250 OR no data available
Year Built	0–3	3 = 1960–1970 2 = 1930–1959 1 = 1900–1929 0 = < 1900
Lot Size	0–3	3 = ≥ 2,501 sq ft 2 = 2,502 – 4,000 sq ft 1 = 4,001 – 7,000 sq ft 0 = > 7,000 sq ft
Building Size	0–3	3 = ≤ 2,000 sq ft 2 = 2,001 – 4,000 sq ft 1 = 4,001 – 6,000 sq ft 0 = > 6,000 sq ft OR no data

ACCESS & PROXIMITY		
Criteria	Scale	Rationale
Distance to Schools	0–3	3 = ≤ 0.25 mi 2 = 0.25 mi – 0.5 mi 1 = 0.5 mi – 0.75 mi 0 = > 0.75 mi
Distance to Open Space	0–3	3 = ≤ 0.25 mi 2 = 0.25 mi – 0.5 mi 1 = 0.5 mi – 0.75 mi 0 = > 0.75 mi
Distance to Grocery Stores	0–3	3 = ≤ 0.25 mi 2 = 0.25 mi – 0.5 mi 1 = 0.5 mi – 0.75 mi 0 = > 0.75 mi
Distance to Places of Worship	0–3	3 = ≤ 0.25 mi 2 = 0.25 mi – 0.5 mi 1 = 0.5 mi – 0.75 mi 0 = > 0.75 mi
Distance to Beach	0–3	3 = ≤ 0.25 mi 2 = 0.25 mi – 0.5 mi 1 = 0.5 mi – 0.75 mi 0 = > 0.75 mi

SITE & NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS		
Criteria	Scale	Rationale
Building Condition	0–3	3 = good condition, no visible major issues 2 = minor deterioration; minor rehab will not severe 1 = major deterioration; substantial rehab likely needed 0 = severe failure, collapse, or no visible data
Street Type	0–3	3 = Local neighborhood street 2 = Minor connector / transitional street 1 = Secondary arterial / intersection with primary arterial (Arctic) 0 = Primary arterial (Pacific/Atlantic)
Neighborhood Stability	0–3	3 = 1–2 vacant/abandoned properties 2 = 3–4 vacant/abandoned properties 1 = 5–6 vacant/abandoned properties 0 = 7+ vacant/abandoned properties
Crime	1–3	3 = Chelsea Northwest 2 = Chelsea North 1 = Chelsea (near Casinos)

COMMUNITY PERCEPTION / LOCAL INPUT		
Criteria	Scale	Rationale
Green / Red Dot Net Perception	0–3	3 = net +4 to +6 2 = net +2 to +3 1 = net -1 to +1 0 = net -4 to -2
Survey Hotspot	0–3	3 = directly on a strongly mentioned corridor/problem area 2 = immediately adjacent to one 1 = elsewhere in Chelsea, but not clearly in a repeated hotspot 0 = outside the survey concern pattern

# ReVAMP – Analytical Approach

## Multi-Criteria Model

Parcel, neighborhood, and community factors combined

## Transparent and Replicable

Consistent criteria applied across all properties

## Context-Based Evaluation

Site conditions assessed alongside surrounding context

## Community Informed

Public input helped shape final priorities

GIS Code	Market	S_Market	Zoning	S_Zoning	Built	S_Built	SqFt_Lot	S_SqFt_Lot	SqFt	S_SqFt	S_School	S_Park	S_Grocer	S_Worshp	S_Street	S_Beach	S_Condit	Stable	S_Stable	S_Crime	G_Dots	R_Dots	Net_Dots	S_Dots	S_Surv	S_Total
1	\$432,900.00		1 RS-C		1	1930	2	2,622	4306	1	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	5	1	1	2	2	0	1	3	31
2	\$192,000.00		3 RS-C		1	1930	2	5,244	3000	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	5	1	1	2	2	0	1	3	33
3	N/A		0 R3		2	1920	1	6,801	5880	1	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	5	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	27
4	\$494,500.00		0 NC-2		1	1970	3	3,301	5400	1	3	3	3	3	0	3	2	1	3	1	3	1	2	2	1	31
5	\$189,900.00		1 R2		2	1970	3	2,625	2564	2	2	3	3	3	0	3	2	16	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	29
6	N/A		0 NC-2		1	1960	3	6,876	18885	0	3	2	3	3	0	2	3	1	3	1	6	0	6	3	3	31
7	N/A		0 NC-2		1	1920	1	2,501	0	0	3	2	3	3	0	2	2	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	3	28
8	\$359,100.00		1 RS		1	1900	0	6,251	3180	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	1	3	0	3	2	2	32
9	\$1,100,000.00		0 MC		1	1970	3	18,009	0	0	3	3	3	2	3	1	3	4	2	2	0	4	-4	0	1	27
10	\$225,000.00		3 R3		2	1940	2	5,581	0	0	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	6	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	32
12	N/A		0 MC		1	1860	0	8,296	0	0	3	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	2	2	4	1	3	2	2	25
13	\$288,800.00		2 R2		2	1910	1	1,513	1742	3	3	2	3	3	2	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	0	1	2	34
14	\$353,200.00		1 R3		2	1900	0	748	3822	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	0	5	1	2	0	2	-2	0	2	30
16	\$475,600.00		0 RS-C		1	1930	2	4,026	4080	1	3	2	3	3	0	3	2	5	1	1	0	2	-2	0	3	26
17	N/A		0 RS		1	1930	2	2,925	3176	2	3	2	3	3	0	3	3	5	1	1	5	0	5	3	3	32
18	N/A		0 RS		1	1920	1	6,050	14800	0	3	2	3	3	0	3	1	1	3	1	6	1	5	3	3	28
20	\$230,000.00		2 RS-C		1	1925	1	2,100	1166	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	0	5	1	1	0	1	-1	1	3	32
21	N/A		0 NC-2		1	1950	2	14,253	0	0	2	3	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	1	0	1	1	1	29
22	N/A		0 RM-2		2	1930	2	13,604	37344	0	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	6	1	3	3	2	1	1	1	28

Highest Score

Lowest Score

# ReVAMP – Results

## Ranking of abandoned properties:

### Rank 1: (31-34)

- 13 (34) – 28 N Iowa Ave
- 2 (33) – 108 Albion Ave
- 17 (32) – 2643 Pacific Ave
- 8 (32) – 3 S Chelsea Ave
- 10 (32) – 1 N Hartford Ave
- 20 (32) – 106 S Texas Ave
- 1 (31) – 106 Albion Ave
- 4 (31) – 3901 Atlantic Ave
- 6 (31) – 2718-20 Atlantic Ave

### Rank 2: (28-30)

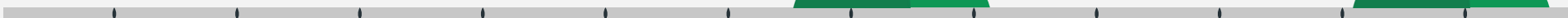
- 14 (30) – 103-105 Maxwell Ave
- 5 (29) – 3805 Atlantic Ave
- 21 (29) – 3711 Ventnor Ave
- 7 (28) – 2801-2803 Atlantic Ave
- 22 (28) – 3515 Ventnor Ave
- 18 (28) – 2707 Pacific Ave

### Rank 3: (25-27)

- 3 (27) – 2715 Arctic Ave
- 9 (27) – 2827-2829 Fenton Pl
- 16 (26) – 2639 Pacific Ave
- 12 (25) – 211 N Iowa Ave

### *Being Developed:*

- 2609 Pacific Ave
- 203 N Iowa Ave
- 114 N Texas Ave



# ReVAMP – Results



Spatial concentration matters

Corridor influence is visible

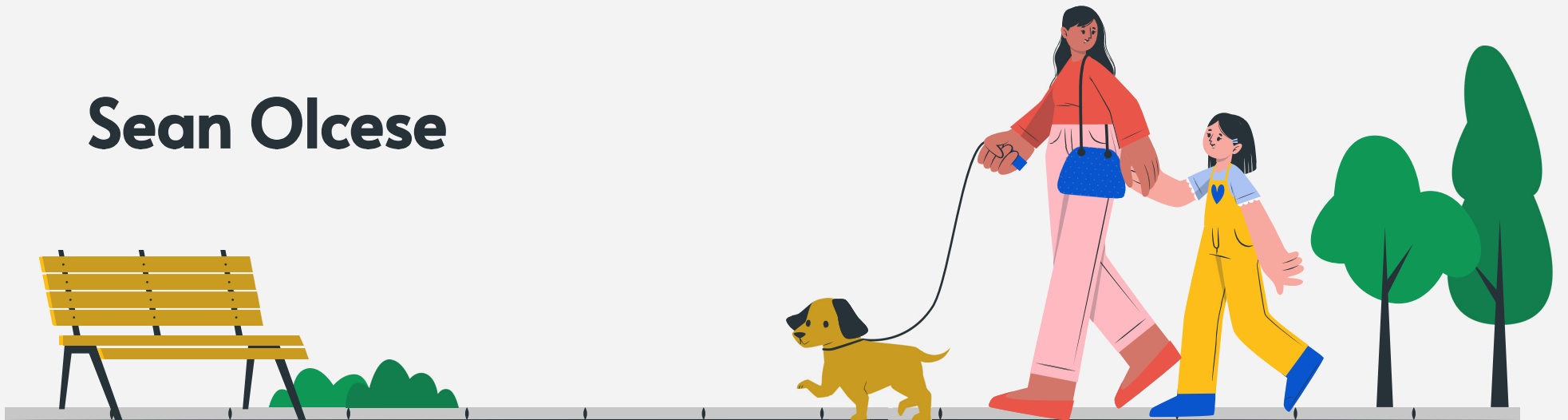
Clustered investment may be strategic



06

# Recommendations

Sean Olcese



# High Priority Properties



2643 Pacific Avenue



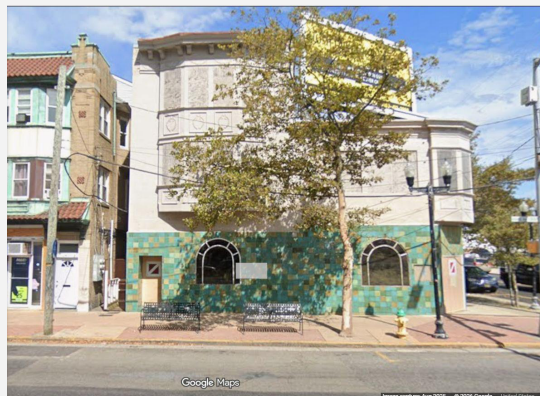
3901 Atlantic Ave



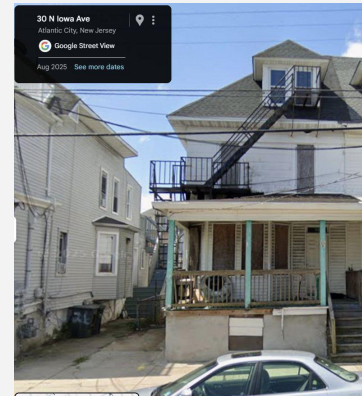
103-105 Maxwell Ave



2827-2829 Fenton Ave



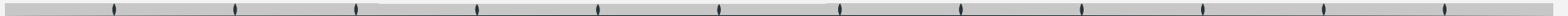
2801-2803 Atlantic Ave



28 N Iowa Ave

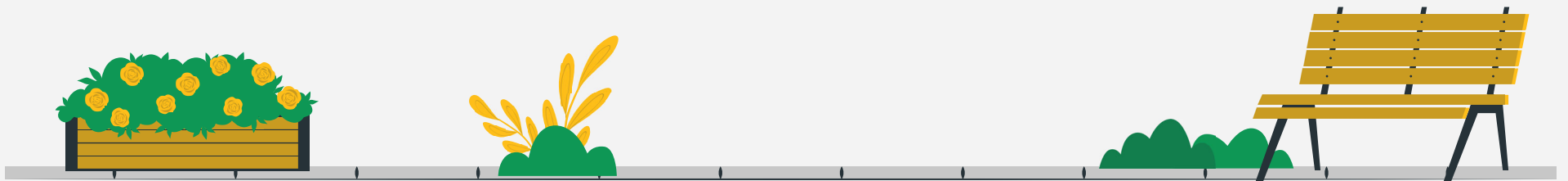
## How sites were selected:

- ReVAMP Model Results
- Ease of rehabilitation/reconstruction
- Location
- Chelsea EDC's input
- Facilitated group discussion

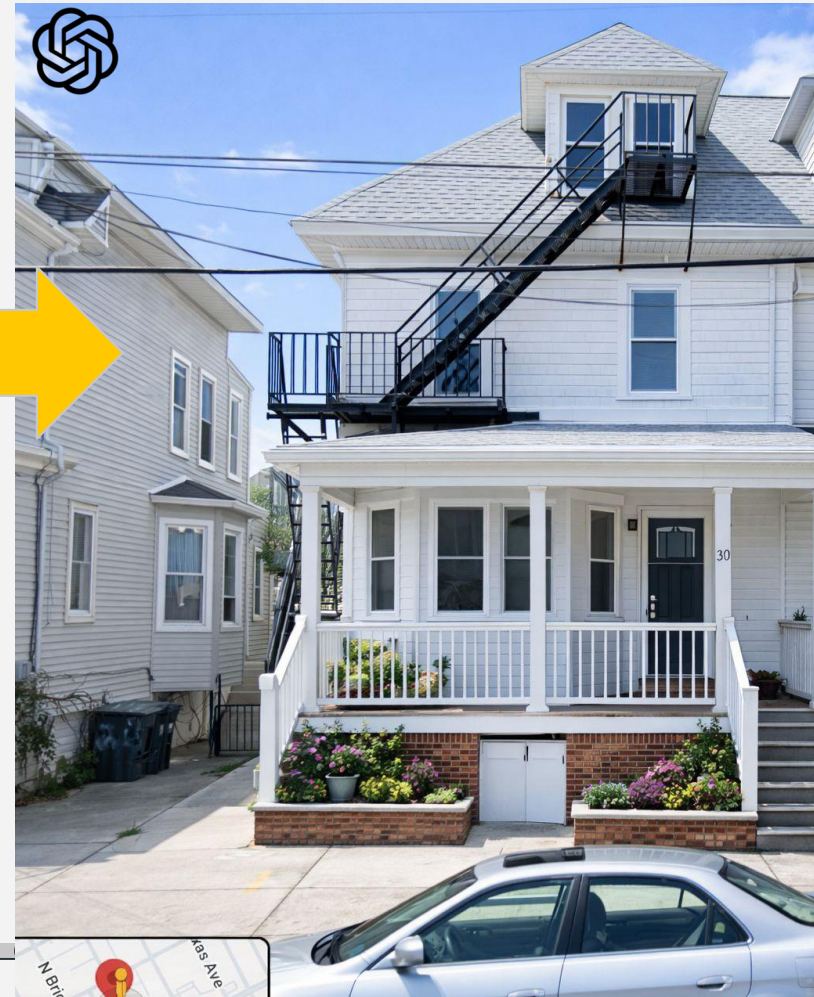
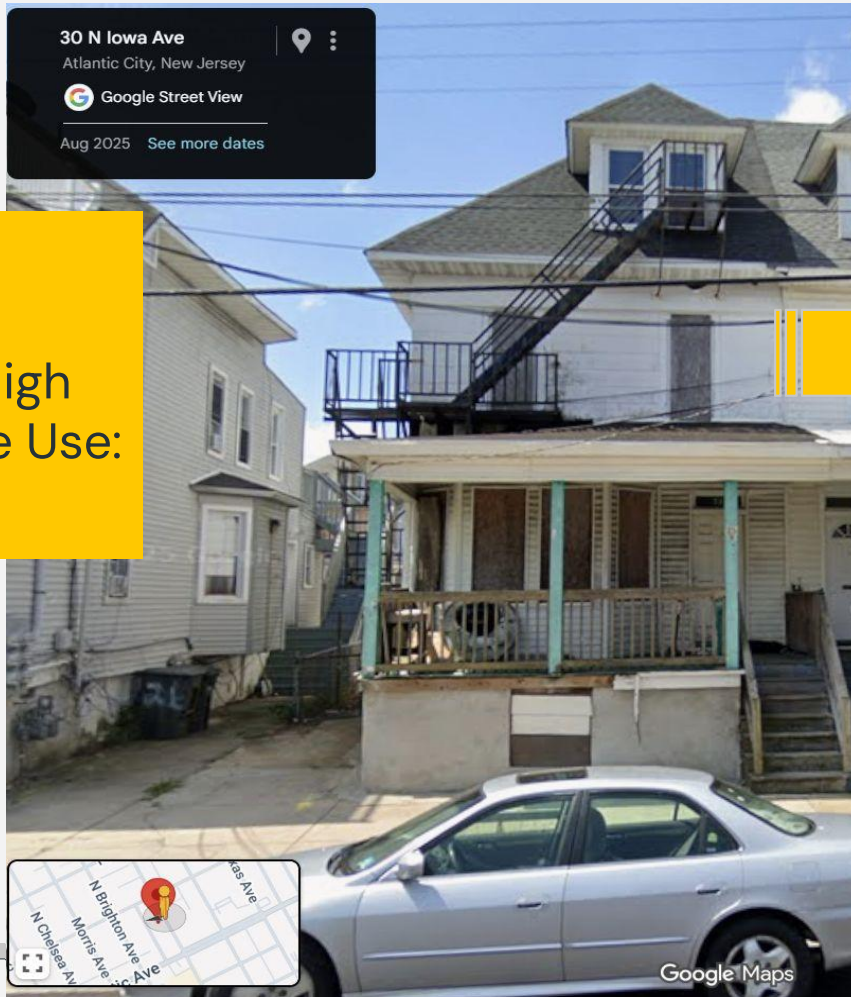


# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise

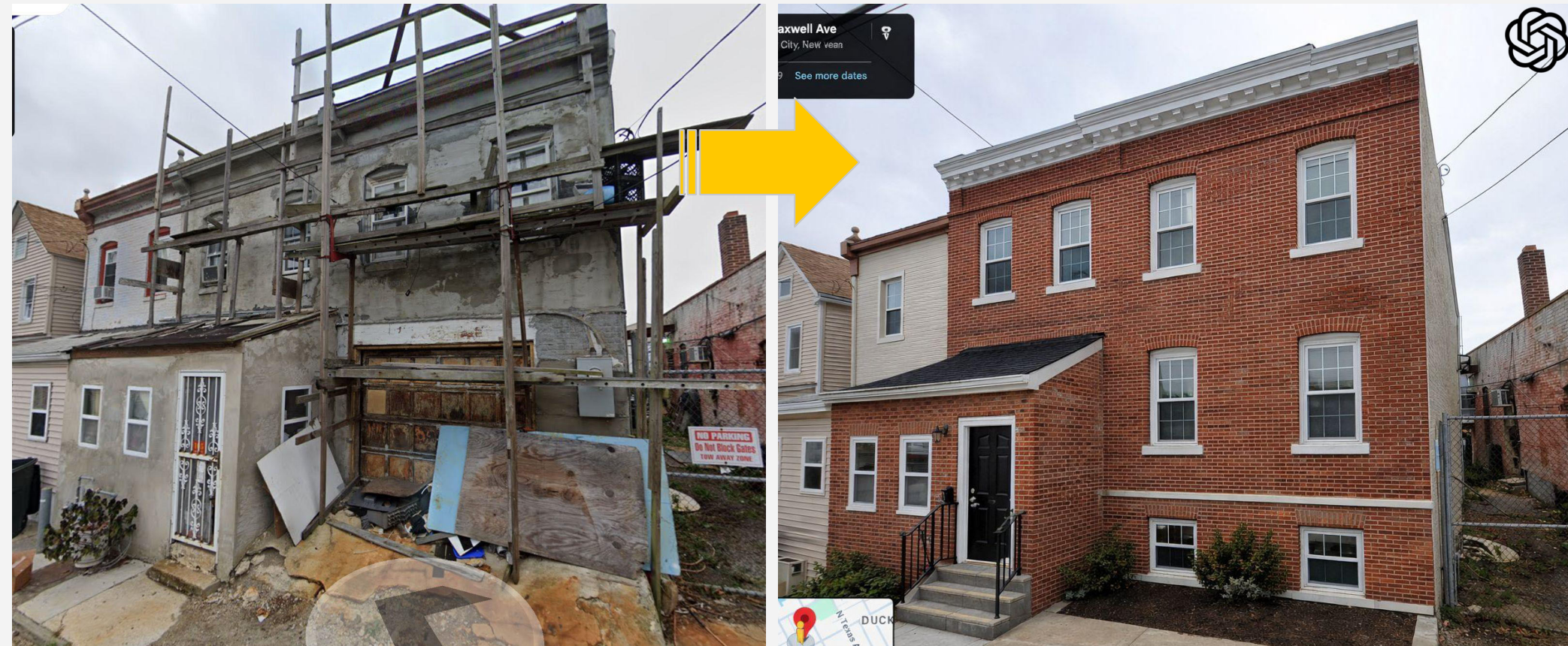
- Three categories explored: residential, mixed-use/commercial, and parks/community amenities
- Examples drawn from across Chelsea, not limited to high-priority sites
- AI-assisted image generation used as a planning visualization tool
- For illustrative purposes only, not design recommendations



# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise

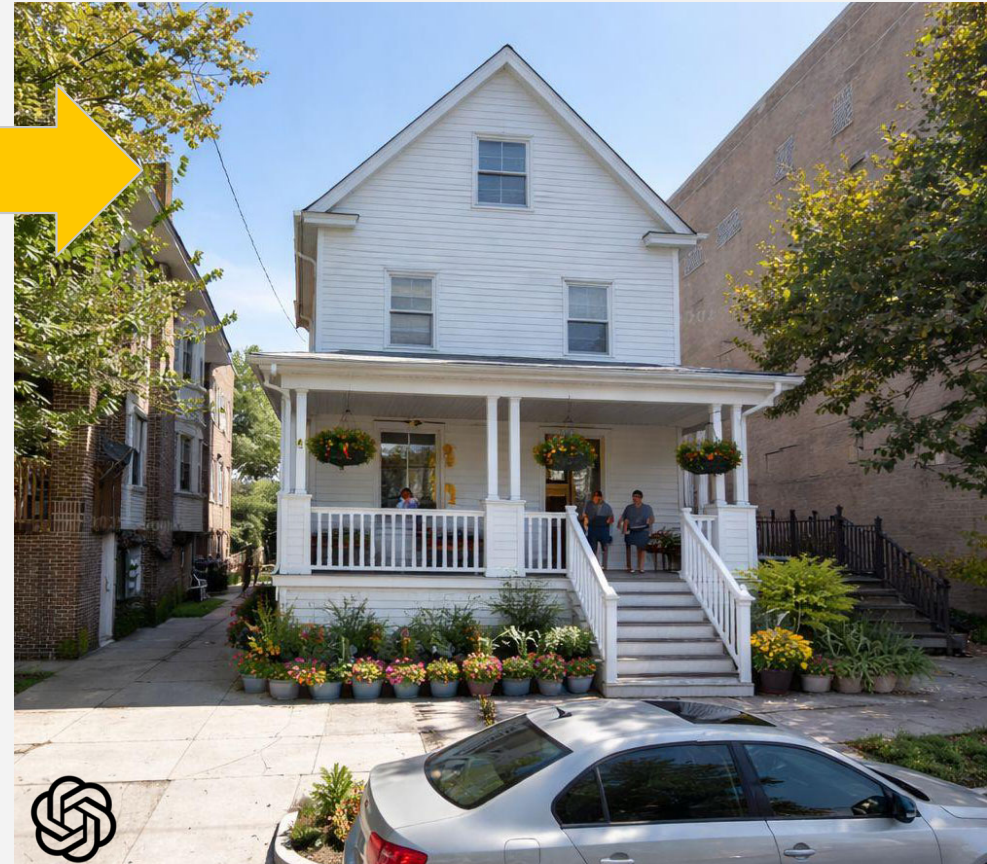


# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



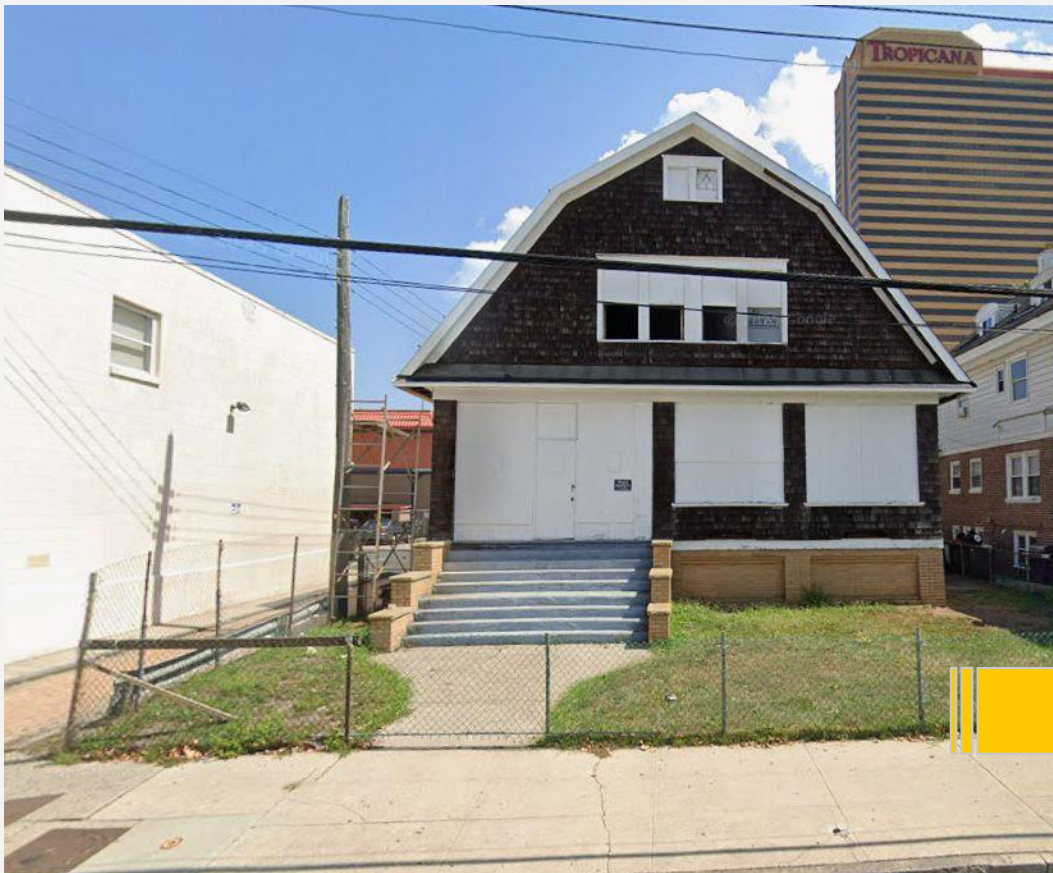
103-105 Maxwell Ave | Zone: R-3 | Priority Level: High  
Potential Future Use: Residential

# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



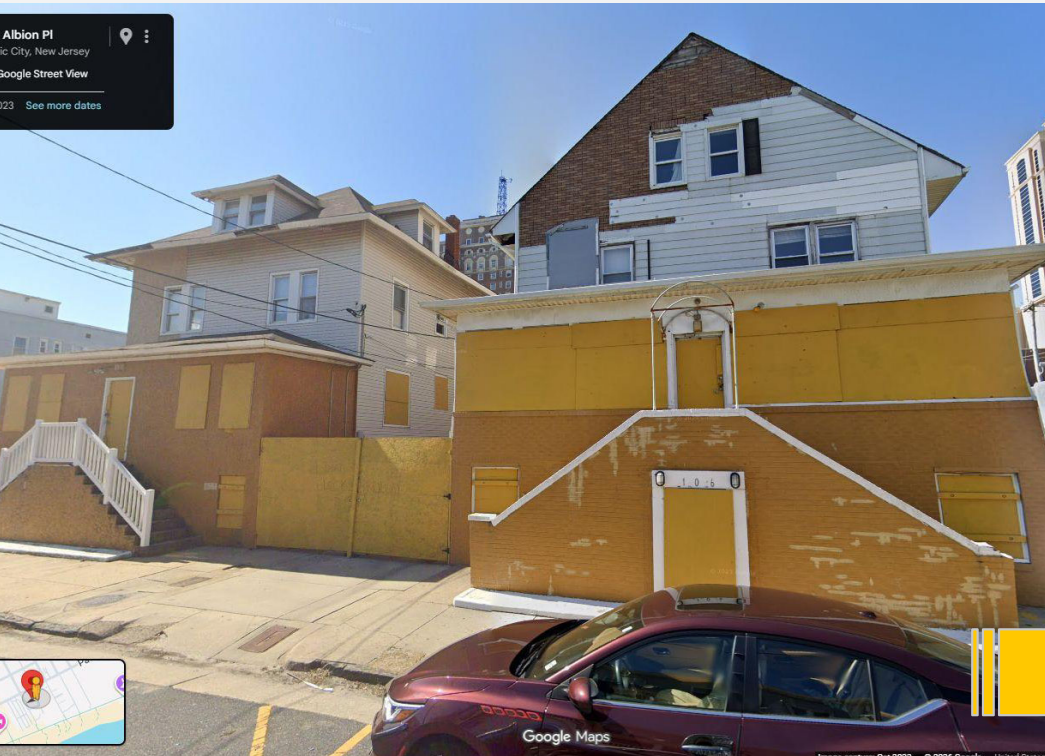
1 N Hartford Ave | Zone: R3 | Priority Level: Medium  
Potential Future Use: Residential

# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



3 S Chelsea Ave | Zone: RS-C | Priority Level: Medium  
Potential Future Use: Residential

# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



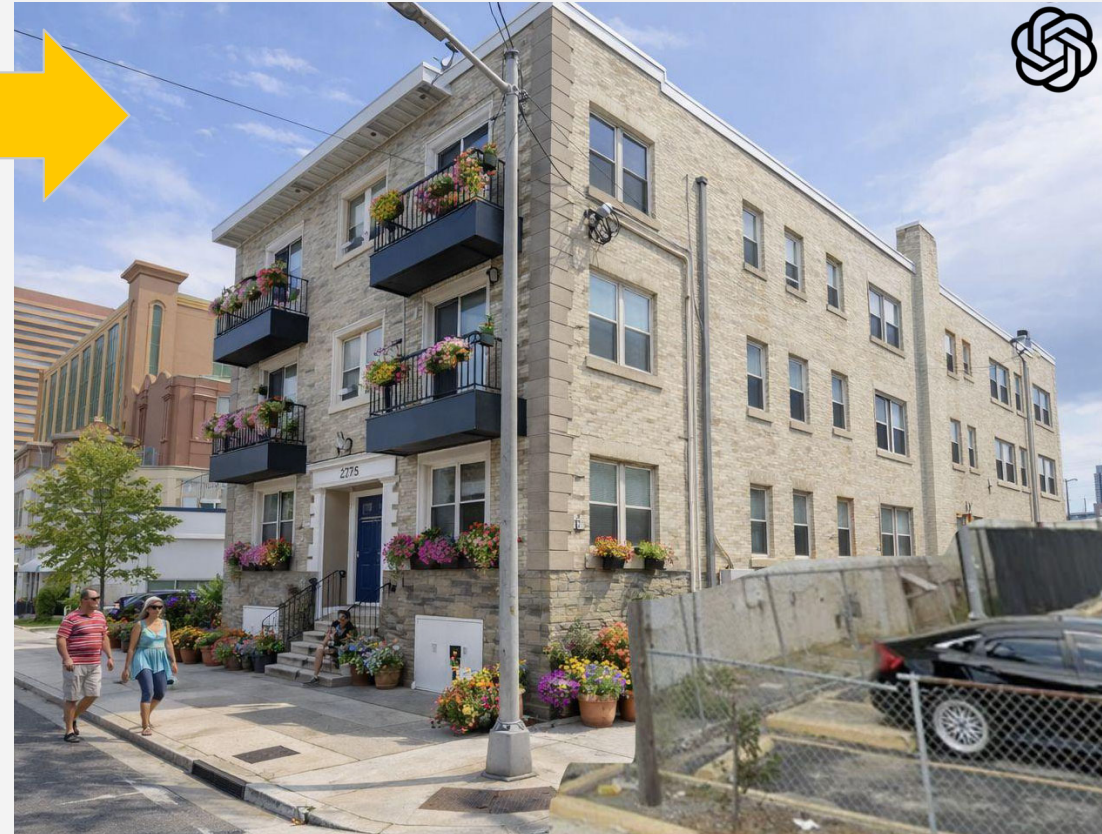
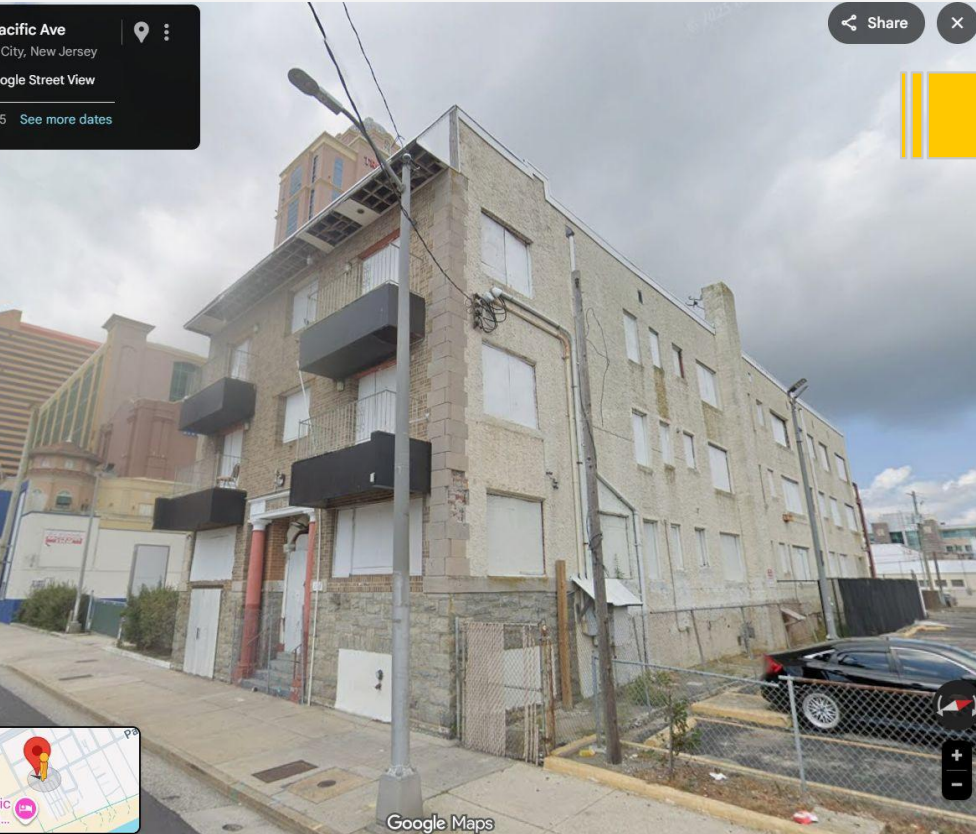
106 and 108 Albion Ave | Zone: RS-C | Priority Level: Medium  
Potential Future Use: Residential

# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



2639 Pacific Ave | Zone: RS-C | Priority Level: Medium  
Potential Future Use: Residential

# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



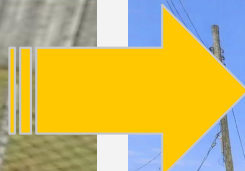
2707 Pacific Ave | Zone: RS-C | Priority Level: Low  
Potential Future Use: Residential

# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



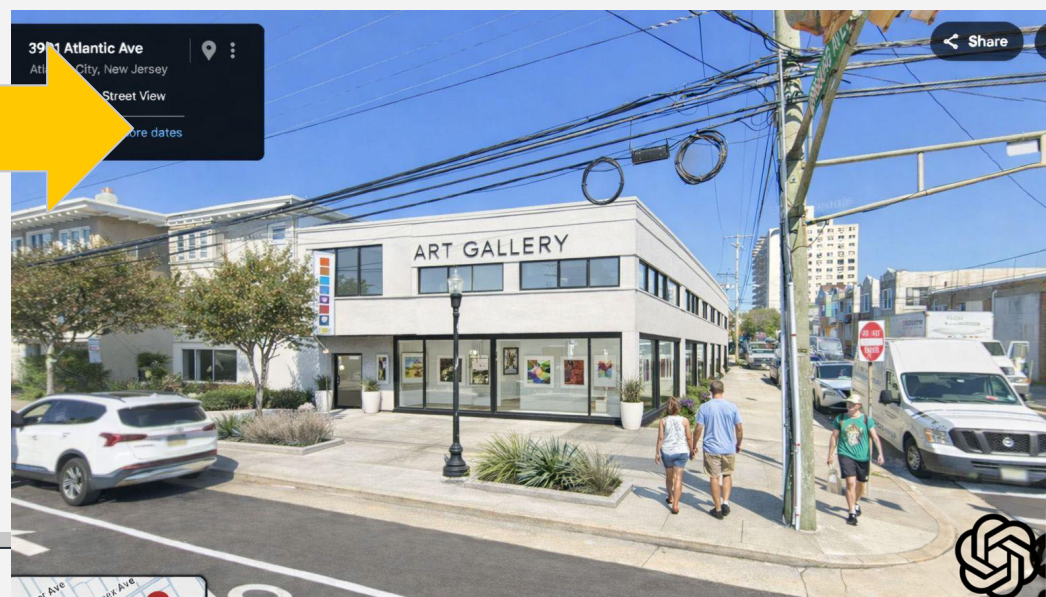
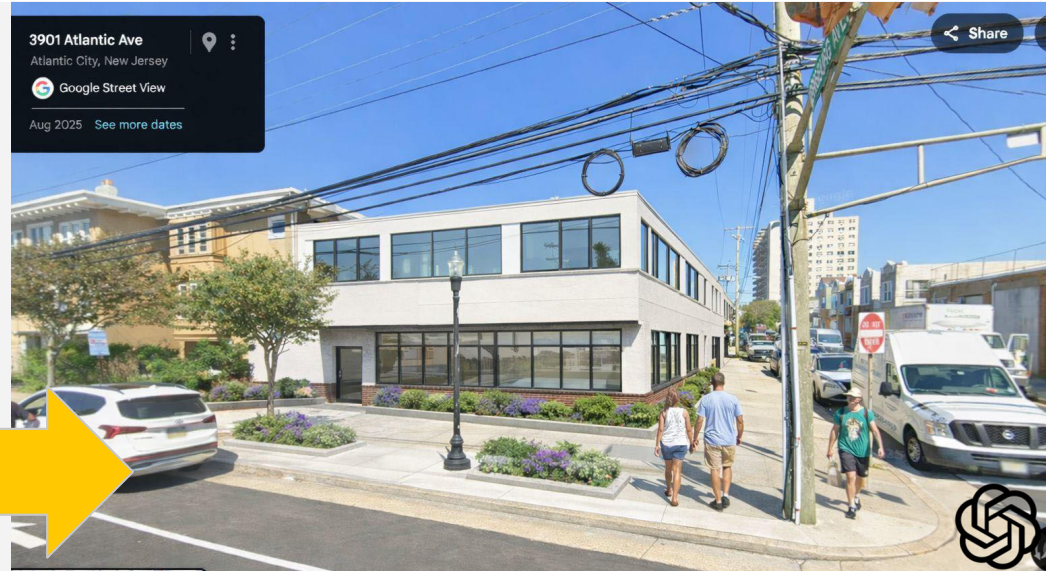
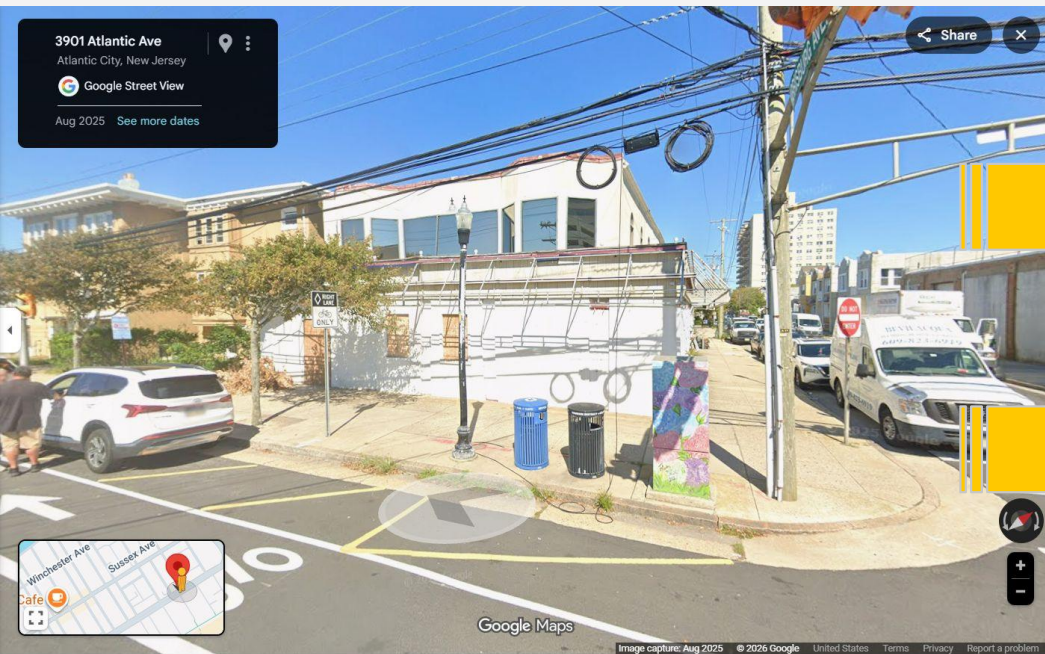
211 North Iowa Ave | Zone: MC | Priority Level: Low  
Potential Future Use: Event Space/Resturant

# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



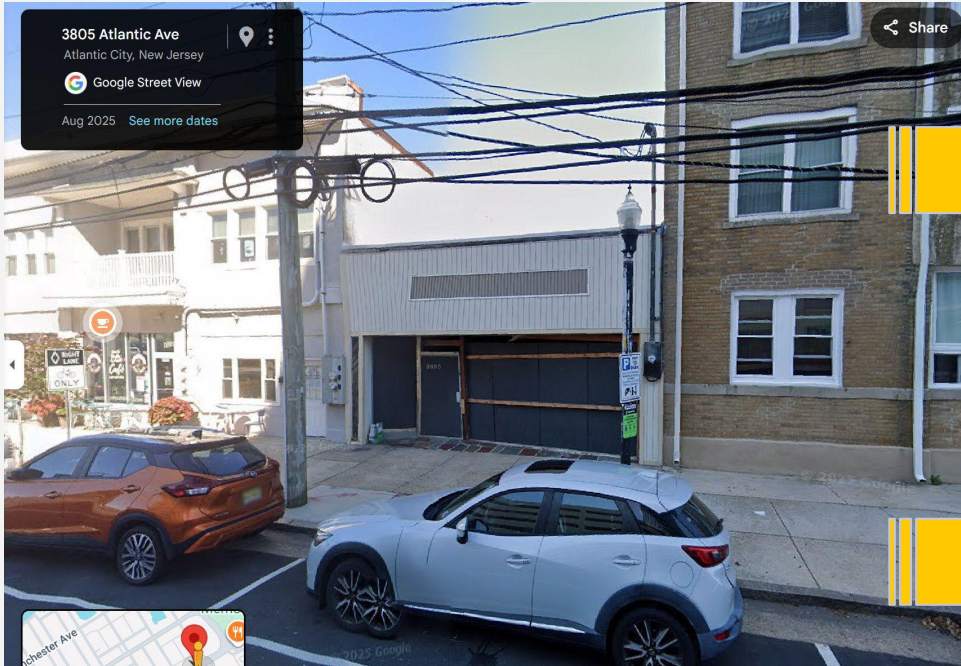
2827-2829 Fenton Ave | Zone: MC  
Priority Level: High  
Potential Future Use:  
Residential or Pocket park

# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



3901 Atlantic Ave | Zone: NC-1  
Priority Level: High  
Potential Future Use: Mixed Use

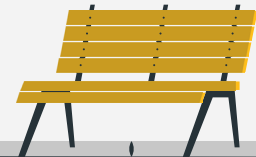
# Abandoned Property Visioning Exercise



3505 Atlantic Ave  
Zone: NC-1  
Priority Level: Medium  
Potential Future Use: Commercial

# Recommendation – Start Small

- Small scale rehab projects offer immediate wins
- Take opportunities to increase housing stock
- Small scale beautification
- Preserve community character



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# Implementation

Nolan Wilkins



# Phasing Strategy

**Short Term**, **Medium Term**, and **Long Term** Projects

High feasibility,  
immediate impact

Moderate Complexity

High Cost / Strategic  
Opportunity

Prioritize structurally intact  
properties that align with  
existing land use patterns

Higher costs, additional  
coordination, or uncertainty  
that limits immediate  
implementation

High cost or strategically  
complex  
  
Involve substantial  
reinvestment, coordination,  
and involvement

# Priority Property Details + Cost Estimate

- Detailed profiles provided for the top four priority properties
- Key metrics include lot size, floor area, projected units, businesses, and community amenities
- Cost estimates are approximate, based on assumptions informed by a local real estate agent



# Development Process

- 1 Site Identification, Owner Engagement, and Acquisition Control
- 2 Feasibility Analysis and Project Definition
- 3 Secure Financing
- 4 Build the Project Team
- 5 Permitting, Approvals, and Regulatory Coordination
- 6 Construction and Rehabilitation
- 7 Project Completion and Occupancy
- 8 Stabilization, Monitoring, and Anti-Displacement Measures



# Funding Sources and Incentives

## Funding Sources

- Atlantic City Revitalization Grant Program (NJEDA)
- Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC)
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)
- Opportunity Zones / Opportunity Funds

## Incentives

- Property tax reductions or abatements
- Reducing or waiving permit and impact fees for projects that create economic or community benefits



# Thank you!

Project webpage:

<https://www.planviz.org/undergrad-studio-2026>



## Questions?

