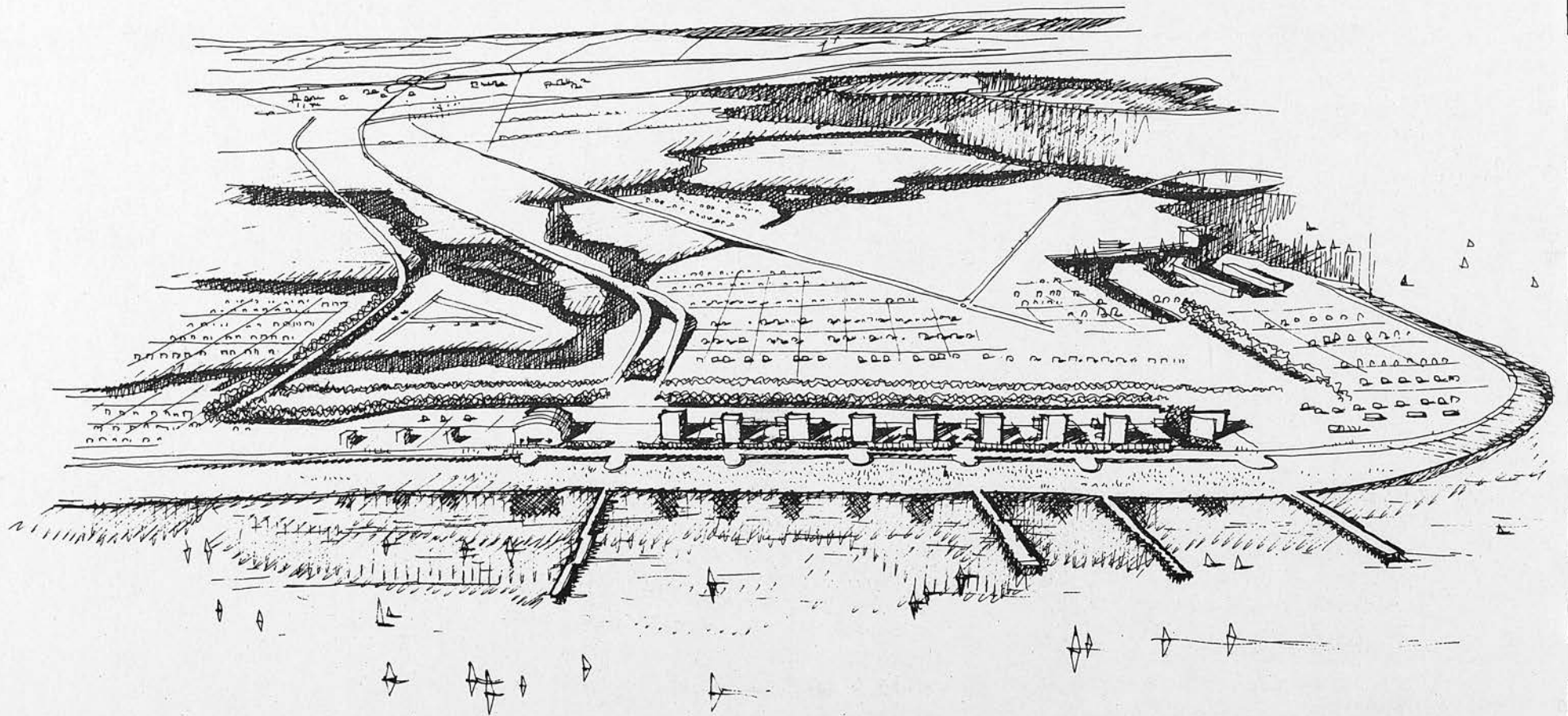


# R/UDAT **ATLANTIC CITY**

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS  
REGIONAL\URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM

NOVEMBER 1975

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STRUCTURE OF THE CITY

SUMMARY

Atlantic City is a unique but complex community with numerous opportunities and many serious problems. In the pages which follow, we do not pretend to offer a simple "solution" for Atlantic City. Instead, we summarize our impressions and undertakings, analyze, and present ideas about the community's problems and prospects as expressed by you the community and our own intense involvement here. Some of our suggestions are general, others quite specific; some, we hope, will stimulate action; others, we know may be disturbing. In short, we think Atlantic City can "turn itself around" But only with more imaginative leadership, a broader deeper and a more sincere community base of participation, and a greater sharing of rewards and responsibilities can Atlantic City bolster its primary industry, diversify its economic base, broaden economic opportunity, improve its neighborhood and housing stock, and create a more exciting and satisfying physical environment.

Atlantic City can have a Boardwalk that effectively provides for both its traditional resort trade and the growing number of short time visitors by functional and design improvements as well as regulations to guide its renewal.

Suggestions for a modified Up-town Urban Renewal Area include commercial recreation facilities which can serve residents as well as visitors, provide opportunities for local performing artists and could include a wide range of other uses such as sports arena, farmers market and new commercial facilities.

Some suggestions are specialized in nature, reflecting our understanding of unique needs. These are largely social and educational in response to low income minority citizens whose talents and human resources still are under utilized. Others reflect special needs to improve the city's appearance such as at its major entries now visually cluttered to the point of eroding identity and confusing native and visitor alike.

But we believe most improvements should be organic in nature dealing equally with all the critical issues whenever feasible. In line with this concept the Absecon Inlet Development Plan as proposed seeks to unify diverse community interests and needs. We believe it could become a symbol of community unity expressive of the principals of leadership, participation, opportunity and responsibility Atlantic City needs to achieve its renaissance.

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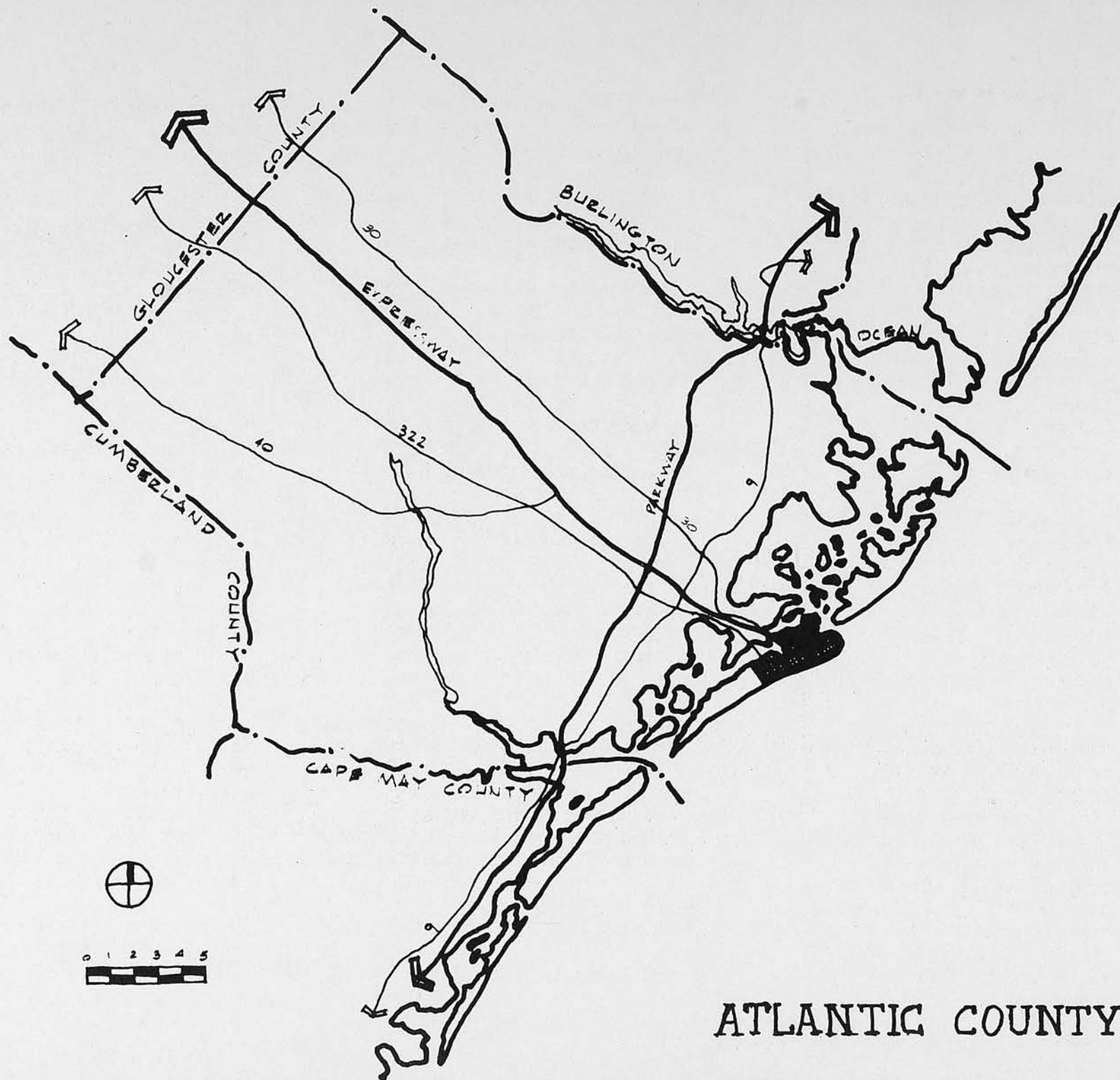




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Framed pages contain quotations from  
members of the Atlantic City community.



ATLANTIC COUNTY

## INTRODUCTION

Atlantic City is a unique community by virtue of its special physical setting, its human scale and the large reserves of human resources yet untapped. The grandeur of its beach is surpassed only by the limitless vista of the Atlantic Ocean. Human appreciation of the generally mild climate and other natural features have long been reflected in the Boardwalk, a pedestrian path with wide appeal which provides a setting for diverse beach front stores, shops and hotels and for the contemplation of sand and sea beyond. At season height as a summer resort or convention center, the Boardwalk becomes an intensely used area where people as diverse in interests as they are numerous, share the unifying pleasure of a walk in the sun.

Despite its function as a world meeting place, Atlantic City is not overly large, but an island traversed by car in 15-20 minutes or a leisurely hour and a half walk. Its form is easily comprehended as a generally flat island on which neighborhoods and special areas are readily perceived in relation to the

large scale, commercial district along the ocean. It's landward side is marked by inland waterways whose varied courses produce a tentative quality so the island seems attached.

The human resources of the city are also singular. Despite the widespread expression of persistent frustrations and serious concern about the future viability of the city, residents generally declare themselves to be devoted to Atlantic City. Those whose feelings of alienation seem strongest and of longest duration, members of the black, Puerto Rican and low income white community, nevertheless seem to possess skills and aptitudes still available to meet opportunities and responsibilities.

Atlantic City's unique setting, the special services it presently renders to the world and the depth of existing and underutilized human resources available could combine to make a healthier and more livable community for all its inhabitants and their visitors.

Yet Atlantic City is a troubled

community. Everyone who lives or works in the city recognizes the seriousness of its problems. The local economy is on a decline, reducing employment, discouraging investment, and shrinking the tax base. Atlantic City's overspecialized economy faces increasing competition from newer and more exotic resorts and convention centers. Even in better times, the local economy failed to generate a broad range of economic opportunities for the upwardly mobile.

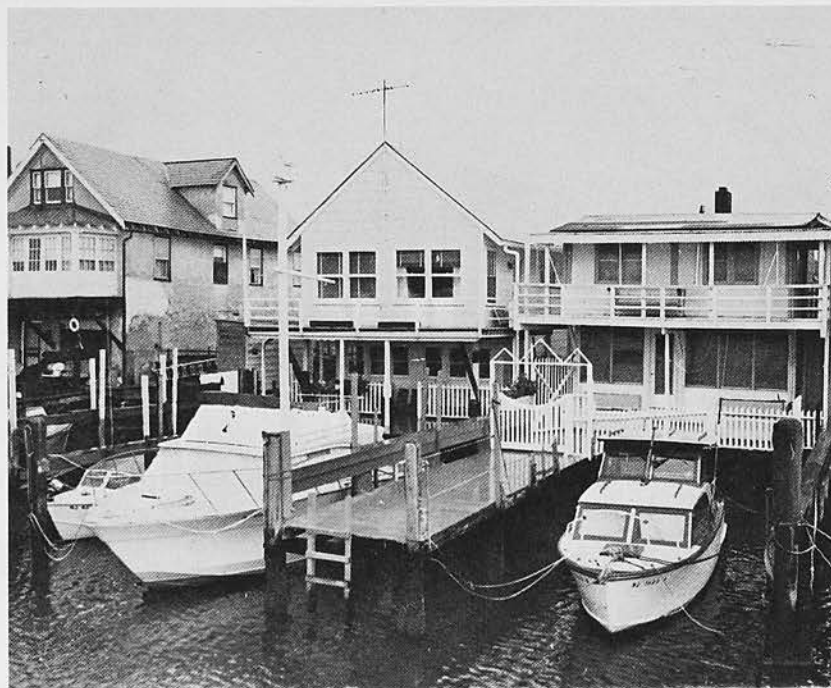
Because of these economic realities, thousands and thousands of residents have departed for greener pastures, substantial portion of those who remain have very low incomes. Within the City's contracting population, blacks and Puerto Ricans comprise a growing majority whose opportunities are extremely limited, both by the nature of the economy and the realities of racism and discrimination. Inadequate housing plagues the poor and the elderly, and drives even more families out of the city.

Atlantic City faces its formidable problems with considerable trepidation. Despite universal



concern, many citizens from all walks of life doubt whether the city's diverse interests can find the collective will to turn Atlantic City around. The business community is neither cohesive nor optimistic about the city's prospects. Distrust of the business leadership is widespread among the general population. No one is very enthusiastic about the capabilities of the city government to provide leadership in the quest for a more prosperous and equitable community.

Atlantic City's problems are difficult. Even more troublesome is the city's lack of cohesion, especially in light of the widespread recognition in the need for action and the multitude of proposals which have been made in the past. Before Atlantic City can act, its people need to come together. Next we analyze the city's problems in more detail; then, we offer some suggestions about what might be done.



"The natural advantages of Atlantic City are so great that its deterioration into a Newark or Camden is inconceivable. You and I know that this is a delightful place to live."

"I am writing to you and the R/UDAT team. I was born and raised in Ventnor, and know and love Atlantic City and this whole seashore area. First and foremost - this area has been so blessed by God to have these beautiful natural resources, the beach and ocean, and fresh air. Without these, the area might be hopeless as a resort, but with these, we are foolish to give up on Atlantic City."

"We have here the social foundation as we still cater to 15 million guests with the best Boardwalk in the world, fine hotels, rated second as a convention city and a good wide beautiful beach."

"Our weather, our beaches, the ocean and bays all contribute to this being a fine place to live. Conventioners can get from their hotel to the convention hall by walking the beautiful Boardwalk. Compare that scene to a smelly cab ride through a traffic jammed city. Compare our convention hall - its facilities and comparative cost to operate against other cities - you'll find we are better and cheaper. There are many people in Atlantic City willing to work hard to bring our town around towards financial recovery. We are anxious to hear your suggestions and comments."

"The Boardwalk - the longest, safest street in the world."



"The city not only has the normal urban problems of today but also faces many unique challenges as a resort and convention center."

"It seems that development of something new is needed. Something here that they haven't got at home. Our beach and Boardwalk does not seem to have the strong appeal of the past."

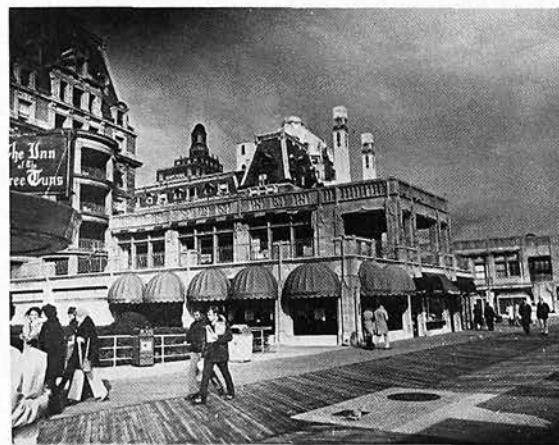
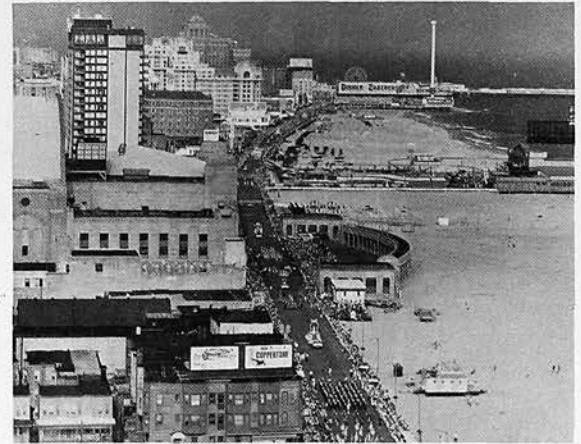
"Generally our economic conditions are poor and with little hope of improvement in the future. Faced with this picture we arrive at many statements but factually little else. The underlying thought seems to be based on a thought of "Rip-Off". This does not begin or end at any one level. The business man being just as guilty as the employee or the politician. Maybe it is really a sign of the times in general. At this point we find our social problems and general economics more or less merge. Most blame one on the other and unfortunately the racial issue seems to be predominate."

"A very great deal of emphasis is being placed on providing attractions and entertainment for visitors. There are, however, conditions and practices that drive visitors away from here or discourage them from coming here. In the order of their importance, I think, they are: 1) public safety; 2) employee responsibility, courtesy, and knowledge of this city; 3) public transportation; and 4) clean sidewalks and streets."

"People who live here are too negative and create problems that don't exist instead of promoting the area and coming up with constructive criticisms."

"I have been a resident here since 1913 have seen the town grow and am watching it fall apart."







"I think one area that should be explored is whether Atlantic City realistically can hope to survive on tourists, conventioners and vacationers."

"The major problems of the area are poor transportation, low income jobs, lack of jobs, seasonal employment, insufficient and inadequate housing. These problems have been delegated to social agencies which cannot adequately deal with them since in reality they are economic problems. Atlantic City needs a more diversified economy."

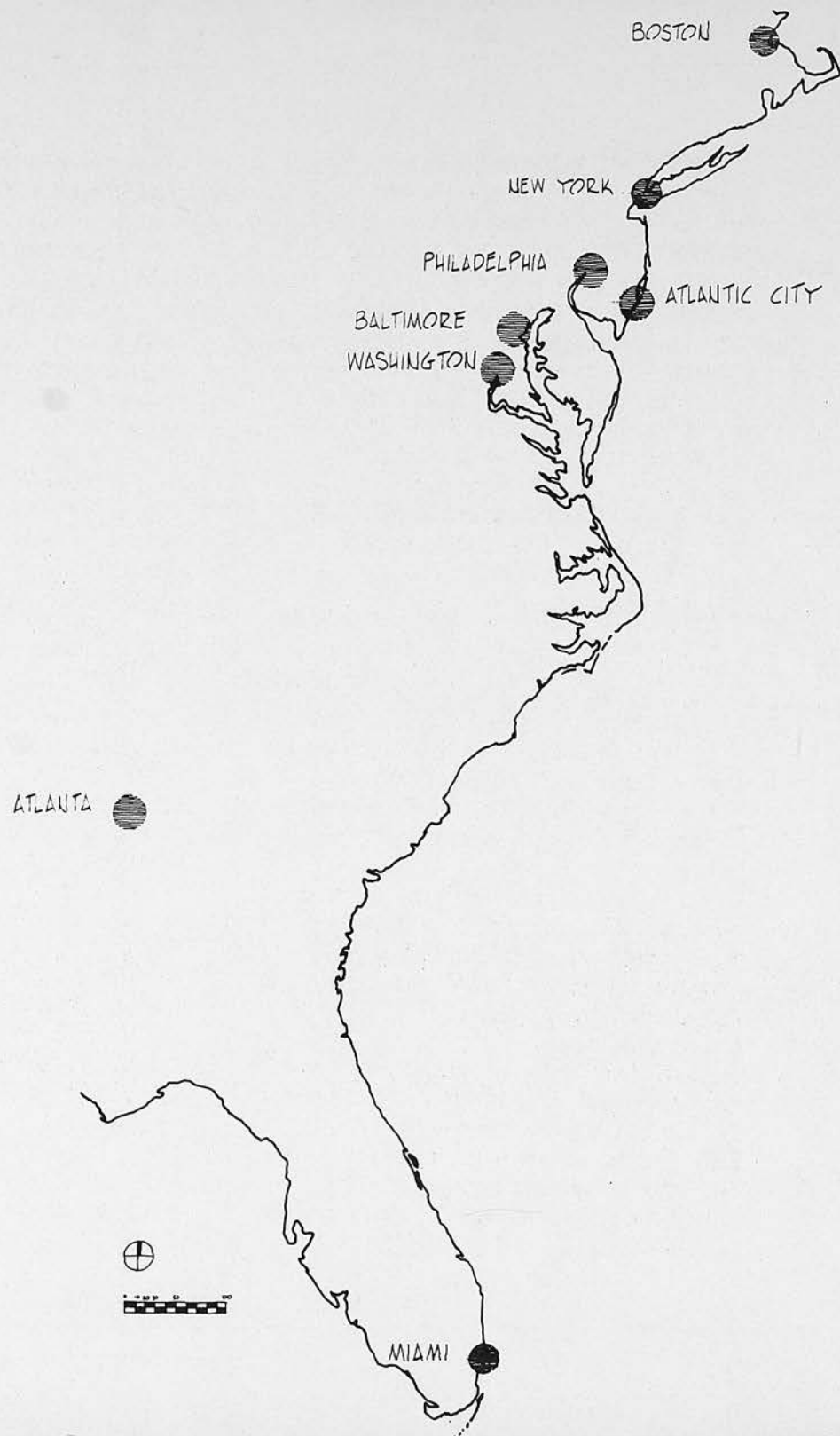
"Atlantic City has the best, already built shopping mall around."

"Why not return to the original concept of Atlantic City- a health resort par excellence? If a father and two sons could turn a small Minnesota town into a world health center, how much more is available in Atlantic County, sun, sea, sand, clean air and a population interested in human service as evidenced by burgeoning lists of applicants for health careers."

"The deterioration of hotel accommodations has a tremendous impact on our convention business. These accommodations are in an economic deplorable condition and need to be cleaned up."

"New concepts to attract and entice people are a must. The administrators of Disneyland have the answer, as their attendance shows. This is a combination of reasonable prices and a lot of free attractions. On a three month economy we cannot make this same offer to our guests; so we must move to provide year round attractions, to bring in people and thus round off our lopsided economy. Once we have done this, reasonable prices, adequate hotel/motel rooms and better municipal services will follow."

"Undertaking and arson are Atlantic City's two growth industries."



## THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

The general economic situation in Atlantic City today is one of declining money making opportunities, uncertain investment climate, lack of positive action on the part of the community to attack the problem, and deteriorating image as a place to live or visit. This conclusion emerges from our review despite the following considerations:

- Relative maintenance of the convention visitors level, in spite of increasing competition.
- Increasing retail sales in general.
- Interest on the part of out-of-town investment interests to help redevelop the hotel industry.
- Positive efforts of various parties to improve the economic base of the city.

The principal reasons which account for the present situation are:

- The mainstay of the economic base of Atlantic City is, in essence, a single industry in its present structuring is sensitive to general economic

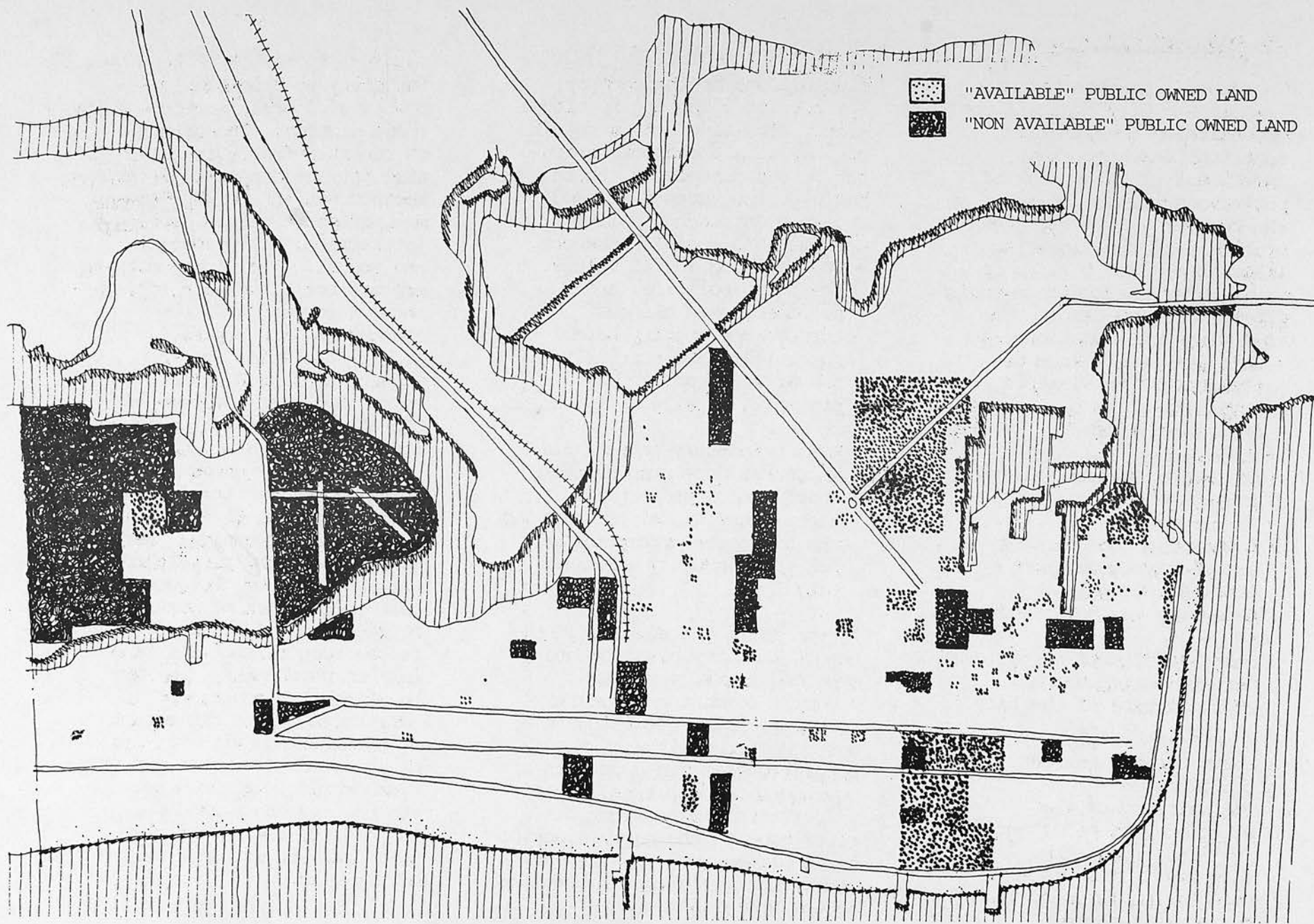
fluctuations of the country. Its tourist component is also highly sensitive. As a result of this single economic orientation and dependence, there has over the years developed a deeply entrenched political, economic and social hierarchy.

- The changing social values, the socio-political and socio-economic changes through the country have intensified the currently prevailing economic pressures locally.
- Resort industry competition which has developed elsewhere under modern and highly functional conditions, has reduced the expansion opportunities for this industry in Atlantic City.

In the past, the success of the resort industry has produced over the years, a sense of economic comfort and security for many, today resulting in a reduced capability of the population base to cope with new economic realities. This is reflected in frequent references to the past, singling out deficiencies, physical or otherwise, of limited importance to the whole, and general

inability to understand problems of other sectors of the local economy. The growth of resort industry in the past also attracted people of various backgrounds in search of money making opportunities causing interaction, both economic and social. The opportunity to improve one's standard of living, accompanied by the changes in life styles, led to population shifts within the region. The result has been movement of the affluent population to the suburbs, and movement of economically underprivileged into the inner-city areas. The development of political, economic, and social hierarchy paralleled the evolution of the economic base in the form of control of resources of the region. It has been reflected in the form of government, the ways in which this government is administered, and the extent of satisfaction with the system. Changing socio-economic and political conditions throughout the country, have tended to polarize the established political and economic system of the city.





# CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES

New competition from other resorts adversely affected local opportunity for growth needed to meet its basic socio-economic obligation, that of expanding money making opportunities at home. Sophistication of the competition and the hesitation of the local resort industry to stay abreast of the changing market conditions has finally resulted in the closing of several hotels, thus further reducing money making opportunities of the region.

The interaction of these factors discussed need not be belabored. The result, as evident from our interviews, is problems. A multitude of problems. As viewed by the local population, these problems have been defined as lack of year round jobs, lack of participation, harmful attitudes, lack of sense of belonging, inadequate housing, dirty politics, street safety, inequitable wage system, and numerous others. Their suggested solutions to these problems, include developing playgrounds for children, improved transportation within the city, planting new trees, improved store fronts on

Atlantic Avenue, Boardwalk cover, build new hotels, build more housing, more participation in decisions, reduce taxes, build a high fashion mall, diversify the economy, change the city charter, redevelop the Inlet, redevelop the urban renewal site bring in another fashion mall, reopen Atlantic City Airport, bring glory and pride back to Atlantic City.

Underlying the variety of suggestions of how to solve current problems is one important factor. The desire on the part of most participants to do something about undesirable situations in the city which affect him directly.

The situation suggests that priorities must be established based upon the desired effect, its intensity in terms of impact on the local economy, the degree of need, and practical feasibility.

To reduce the spectrum of possible courses of action to manageable proportions, suggestions advanced by participants, our review of the economic base of the region, and the widespread desire of the community for change suggest four broad categories of

required action: First, diversification and broadening of the economic base, in order to reduce economic fluctuations. The diversification of the economic base can take two basic forms: (1) vertical, or broadening of the principal asset of the region, that of the resort industry, by increasing the supply of hotel rooms, improving the quality of environment, provide modern amenities, and otherwise improve its competitive image; and (2) horizontal or attraction of new industries into the city. Second, to the extent that the objective of diversifying the economic base requires changes in the socio-political structure, institute such changes. Third, eliminate discrimination, social, economic, and political, through the opening of opportunities and assistance in reaching such opportunities. Fourth, undertake programs to improve the physical image of the city utilizing private, business, and government resources.

Of these four major approaches, only the first one, diversification of the economic base, is strictly of economic nature and will be dealt with in detail in the remainder of this







section.

The action suggested by the economic conditions and status of Atlantic City, the necessity to act, the desire to achieve the broadest impact on the economy suggest the following priorities:

- Increase the supply of hotel rooms to secure large conventions. The improvement of the position of the convention business is deemed to be of the first priority. Along with the expanded supply of hotel rooms, existing amenities should be upgraded in the convention areas. At the same time new convention attractions including casinos, the proposed cultural center, recreation facilities, and bar clubs.
- Broaden the economic base by adding new industries thru active solicitation, procurement of adequate sites in appropriate locations and retraining of existing labor force. Scrutinize entry of new industries by their impact on the existing base of the city.

To implement an economic improvement program, Atlantic City needs to:

- Develop a comprehensive master plan for the city under full participation of all segments of the economy. Such a master plan is to be developed with full understanding of all elements of the economy involved, under simultaneous recognition of consequences which such a plan will entail.
- Establish a vehicle to deal with investment interests and the city, a quasi-public corporation, (Atlantic City Development Corporation), headed by professionals in active development, both commercial and industrial, familiar with technicalities in dealing with private developers and investors on one hand and city officials on the other. Funded from both private and public funds, the Atlantic City Development Corporation would take an active part in soliciting new industries.
- Establish a system with which the city would serve, whenever needed, as a financial back-up vehicle, such as tax abatements, land write downs, physical improvements adjacent to proposed developments, and the like.
- Support the efforts of marketing organizations concerned with the promotion of the city as a place to visit and to live by taking active part in civic and business activities.

"Promises, Promises is the name of the game in Atlantic City ... patience is running out."

"The County and Atlantic City go together and it depends on where you stand as to what you think is the dog and what is the tail. Does it matter?"

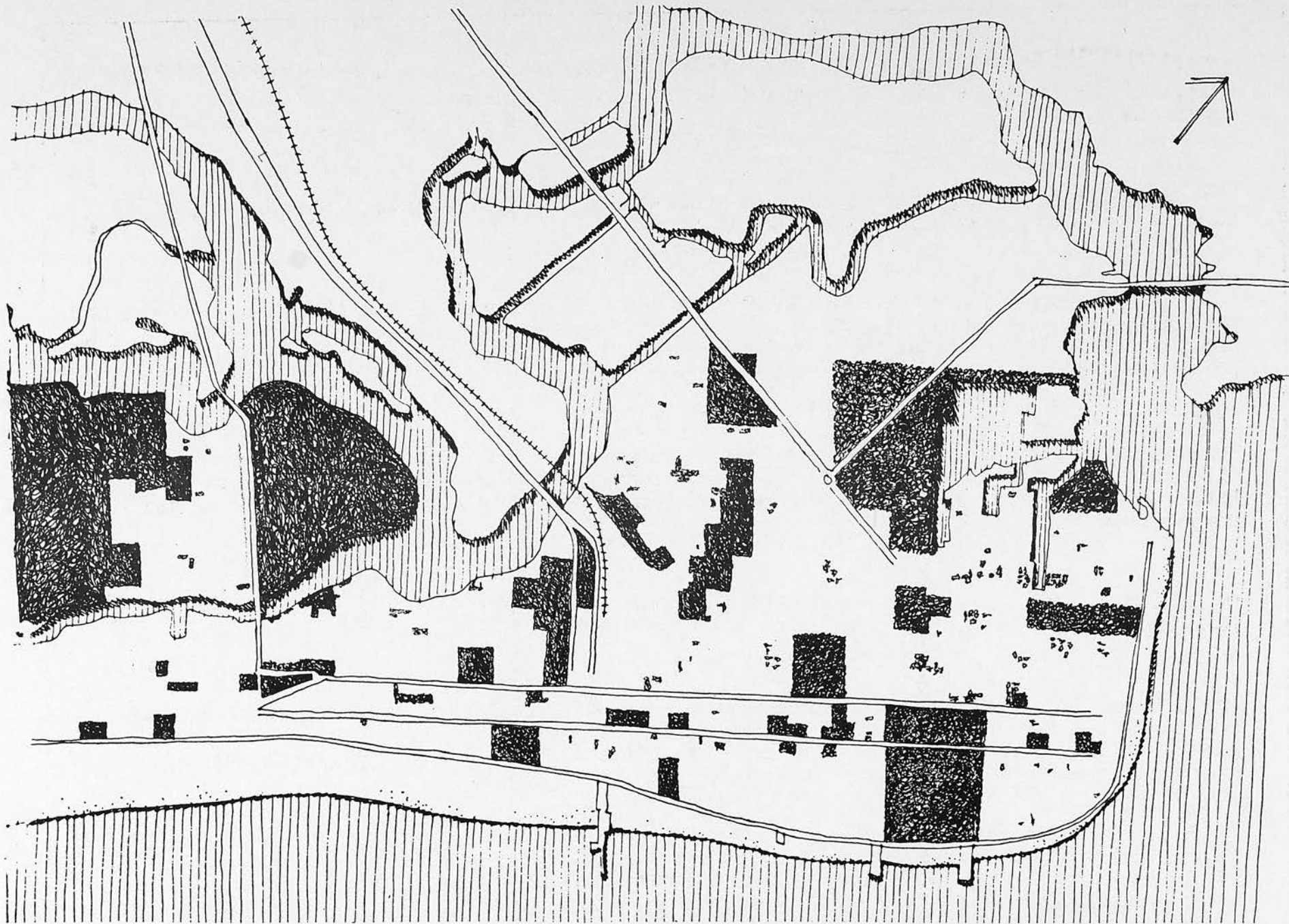
"The mayor has come out in favor of a charter study leading to a change of city government ... the rest of the commissioners are against it. The Black Community is violently opposed to any change. Their argument is that any change will bring favor to the whites and diminish the power of the black politicians. We are in a "Catch 22" where evil leads to evil."

"Trash piled on the sidewalk left overnight to be scattered thru out the neighborhood by morning. I think this situation typifies the attitude of an irresponsible business community and an inresponsive city hall. Complaints bring only half hasted and short term relief with the attitude your lucky we stay and pay taxes."

"We must review and overhaul the deterrent of governmental restraints created by a bottleneck of conflicting state laws that seriously effect the existence and growth of our Tourist Industry."

"Every possible angle should be explored to induce the federal government provide the Boston-New York type turbo-trains for the Penn-Reading Seashore Lines. As the Philadelphia-New York-Atlantic City roadbeds still exist, this could be done for a mere fraction of extending the high speed line to Atlantic City and be in service years in advance."

"Atlantic City needs the help of the County not only financially but also for its skills and leadership. Somehow the entire county must be sold on this concept. When it comes to pass, everyone will be better off and Atlantic City will not be left alone to try and solve major problems which need the brains and resources of the county area for solution."



**TAX-EXEMPT PROPERTIES**



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government is also widely seen as part of the problem in Atlantic City. Whatever its virtues, local government does not bring the city's people together. Almost everyone speaks of the city government's inability to generate leadership, and its frequent failure to deal with problems and opportunities comprehensively or cohesively. Business leaders complain of the lack of central direction and the ineffectiveness of many public activities.

Neighborhood groups do not feel their interests are adequately represented, or their concerns heeded by local officials. Opportunities for meaningful community participation with public decisions that affect their neighborhood appear to be meager. Especially disheartening to many grass-roots interests is their inability to secure information from local officials that would permit involvement before, rather than after, decisions are made.

Certainly these problems are not unique to Atlantic City. Effective local governments are not the hallmarks of our civilization, particularly in older cities with diverse

populations, declining economies, and severely limited resources. In the case of Atlantic City, the development of effective and responsive local governmental institutions has been strongly influenced by political and organizational considerations. Atlantic City's political history has not fostered independent participation or leadership. The commission form of government encourages neither leadership nor coordination. Moreover, by employing at-large elections and subordinating the commissioners' representative role to their administrative functions, the existing system reduces the responsiveness of city government to grass-roots interests.

Other factors strongly influence the capabilities of city government in Atlantic City, many of them beyond the effective control of the commissioners and their agencies. As noted earlier, the tax base continues to decline. One-third of the land in the city generates no tax revenue today. Outside assistance, particularly from the state government, is grossly inadequate to the city's needs. The resort/tourist

industry generates very heavy demands for certain local public resources, such as police and fire protection. Seasonal employment and the low wage rates characteristic of the industry also increase the social burdens on city agencies.

In the face of these formidable constraints, the city performs many of its functions more effectively than other cities in New Jersey. None the less, alienation and frustration with city government are widespread. Recent scandals have enhanced public cynicism about the plans, policies, and practices of the commissioners. The existing system, in short, seems incapable of generating the vision, leadership, and responsiveness needed to develop and implement programs in concert with the city's multiple interests.

Charter revision is no panacea. Changing the structure of government in Atlantic City by itself will cure few of the ills that affect the city and its people. Charter reform, however, can create a more effective and responsive local political system.

Atlantic City needs local government which has:

- More effective leadership.
- Mechanisms to insure coordination of planning, policy making, and implementation.
- Focused executive responsibilities to facilitate accountability to the voters.
- Electoral arrangements which permit the representation of the city's plurality of interests.
- Community institutions such as neighborhood councils and review boards which insure grass roots participation in a wide range of public activities.

In short, stronger, more accountable, and more accessible city government is needed.

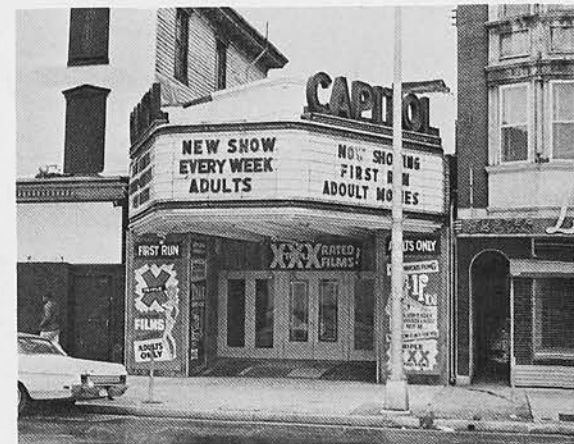
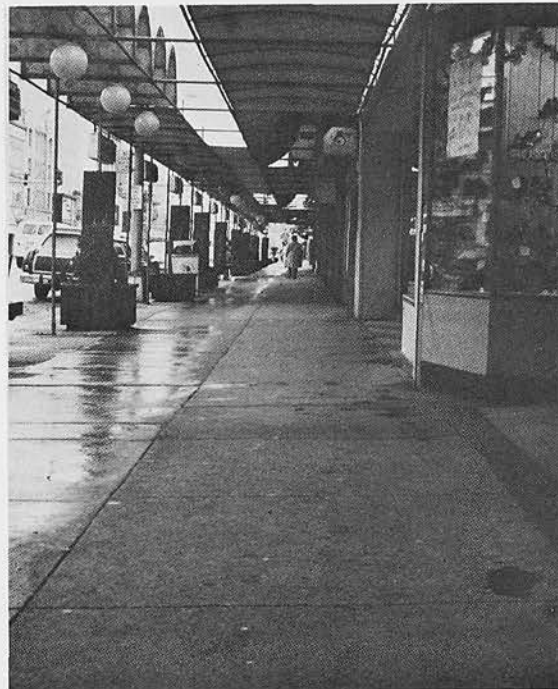
Detailed recommendations on the specific arrangements which would best meet these general objectives lie beyond the scope of this study. Devising such arrangements, and insuring they are adapted to local needs and circumstances, is properly

the task of local citizens. Those responsible for charter revision, however, must represent all segments of the city. Otherwise, charter reform will be seen by large numbers of local citizens as no more than an effort by the influential to preserve their position. Charter revision is a good place for Atlantic City to insure participation by those who feel excluded from its political system.

Regardless of whether charter revision proceeds, implementation of other recommendations in this report would necessitate the following changes in the city government:

- Establishment of a Development Coordinator in the Department of Public Affairs to direct the development of the Boardwalk District, Gardiners Basin District, and the Inlet Waterway Residential District, and to orchestrate the activities of all city and other agencies which affect the implementation of plans for these three areas.
- Creation of Neighborhood Preservation Districts in

Chelsea, West Side and Bungalow Village to provide direct citizen involvement, facilitate coordination of public and private activities, and to manage community facilities.







# BROADER CONTEXT

Atlantic City is not an island into itself. Absecon Island is shared with Ventnor, Margate and Longport. The city is the urban core of the Atlantic City Metropolitan area, which comprises all of Atlantic County. From the city's founding, its fortunes have been closely tied to Philadelphia. Increasingly the city depends on Trenton and Washington for resources. And its specialized economy is peculiarly sensitive to national and even international developments, such as the westward movement of the nation's population and business, the development of newer resorts and convention centers, and the increased accessibility of those areas made possible by the jet airplane.

Because Atlantic City is part of so many contexts, many of its problems result from developments outside its borders over which the city has little or no control. The concentration of the area's poor and minority families in Atlantic City results both from the availability of old and lower-cost housing in the city and the absence of such

housing in surrounding jurisdictions. Atlantic City lacks effective means to increase housing opportunities for the poor beyond its boundaries, given the strong opposition in neighboring jurisdictions to subsidized housing. National economic and demographic trends are even less subject to the city's influence.

By the same token, help with many of the city's problems must come from outside. The gambling casinos that certainly would enhance the city's competitive position in the quest for tourists and conventions depend on approval by the state's voters, state action, as well as federal funds, will determine the fate of improved rail connections to Atlantic City, which would increase the resort's accessibility, particularly to lower-income residents of Philadelphia and Camden. Aggressive local efforts can increase Atlantic City's share of some federal and state aid programs, but not the total resources available for these purposes.

Without question, Atlantic City would face a more promising

future if regional and federal were more favorably inclined toward the city and its residents. Consolidation with Ventnor, Margate and Longport would ease many of the city's burdens. So would regionalization of selected services at the county level, or increased county-wide taxation with some form of local revenue sharing, or the preparation and implementation of an area-wide fair-share housing plan which would increase housing opportunities for poor families beyond the city limits. Atlantic City also needs more equitable state financing of public education, more aid from Trenton, and federal assumption of all the public costs associated with welfare, social services, and other poverty-related expenditures.

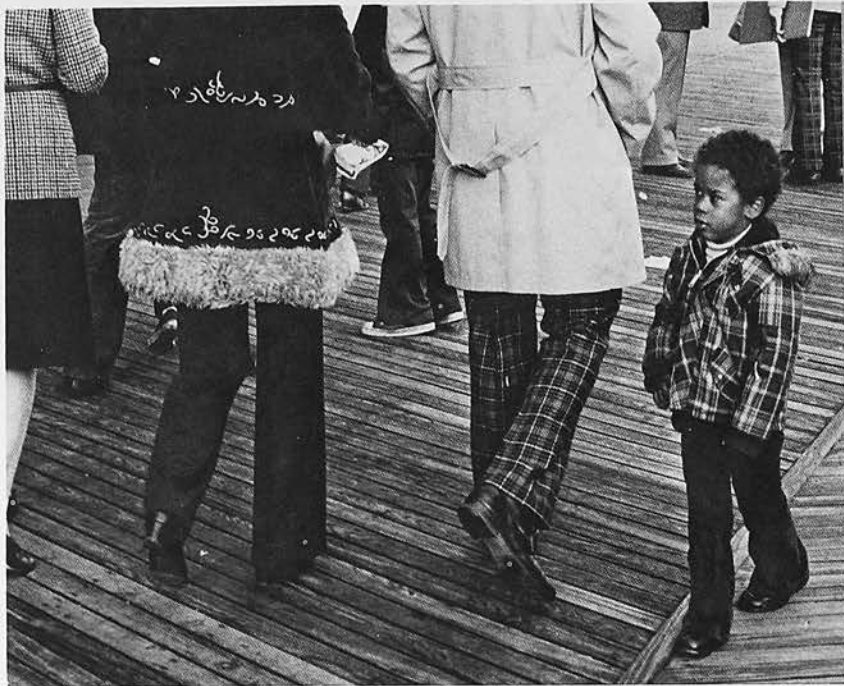
Unfortunately, much of the evidence suggests that the region, state and nation need Atlantic City much less than it needs them. Most of these changes, no matter how desirable, are not liable to occur in the near future, if ever. Few if any incentives exist for Atlantic City's neighbors to share its

burdens. As the city's problems worsen, its attractions as a partner, obviously never great, steadily decline. The proportion of residents in the county who have any direct economic connection with the city also is falling. At the state level, Atlantic City's influence in particular, and that of older cities more generally, is not great as suburbanites dominate more and more legislative seats. Similar political changes in Washington make doubtful the commitment of large amounts of new federal funds to older cities. And in both Trenton and Washington, retrenchment rather than expansion is the order of the day in the face of economic difficulties and popular resistance to increased government spending and taxation.

In the light of these circumstances, Atlantic City can expect little new help from outside in the years immediately ahead, and may well face increased problems because of the loss of existing state funds for bus subsidies or federal housing aid. These developments dictate local strategies that depend heavily on existing resources.

By and large, our suggestions concern changes that do not require major inputs from outside public parties, desirable as such changes surely would be.





## HUMAN RESOURCES

The residents of Atlantic City have revealed themselves, through interviews, testimony and correspondence, as a population with unusual development possibilities. For example, extensive experience in tourism and conventioning has rendered a sizable segment of the adult population experts in this field. An appropriate use of this expertise is the development of institutions which would train young people in the trades which have made this city reknown - hotel and restaurant management, retailing, and exhibitions. The development of programs in these areas and the founding of a school might serve residents economically and professionally. By converting under-used hotel space into classrooms or training space, a building may become a useful educational facility. By converting the skills and information of experienced hotel workers into a training program, a group of seasonal employees may become off-season teachers. An Atlantic City School of Hotel Service and Management would have a good chance of succeeding.

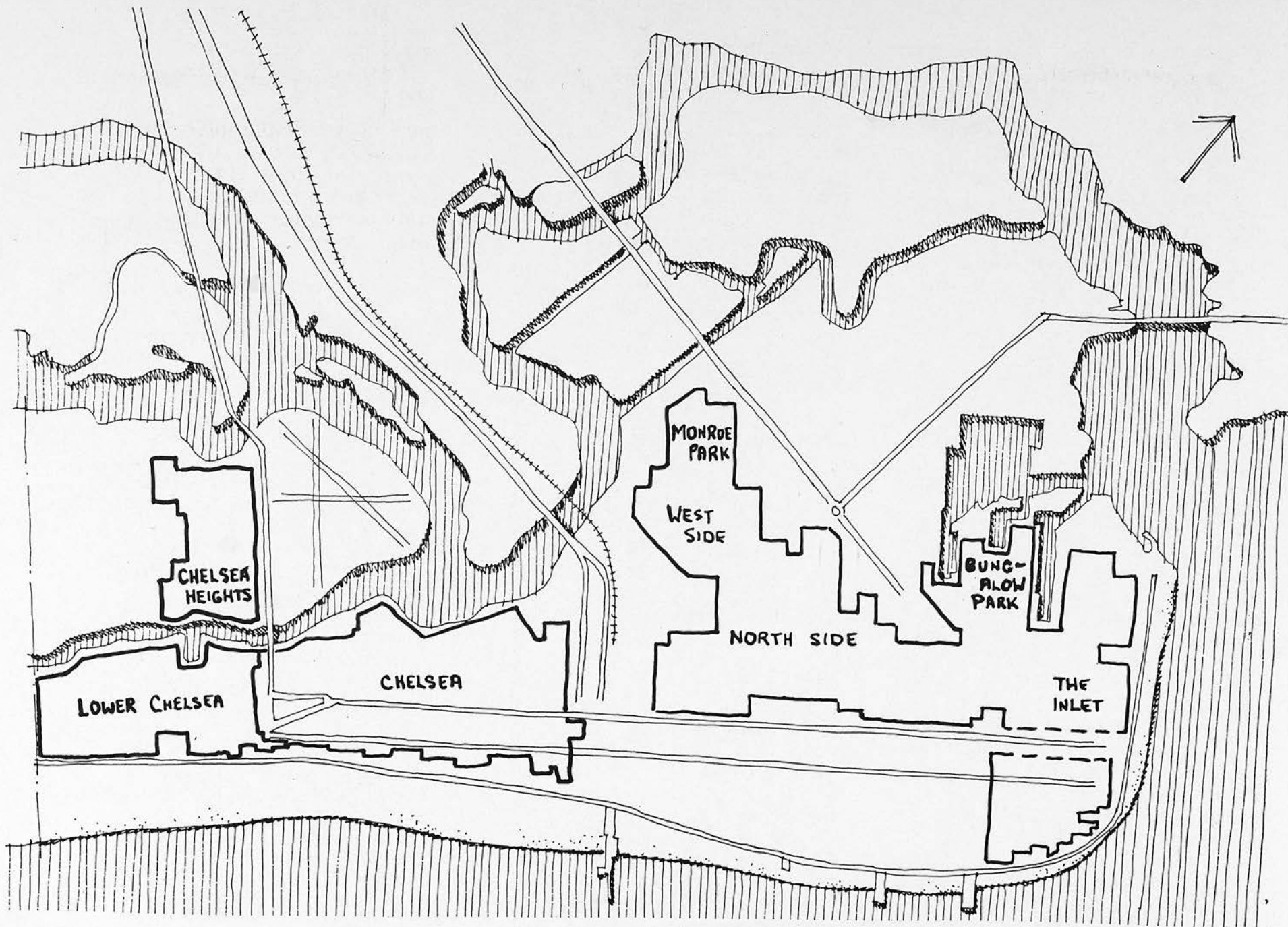
Other areas of local expertise such as restaurant management and retailing might be considered from the viewpoint of their educational potential by experts in those areas.

Enterprises which would elicit the partnership of black and Puerto Rican residents, making them more visible contributors to the commercial life of Atlantic City, should be explored. Both groups are prominent in the social profile of Atlantic City; however, they appear less prominently in its economic profile. Opportunities for increasing the access of blacks and Puerto Ricans to the business sector of the city should be sought. Establishing their participation in the upper echelon of the city's economic activity would go a long way toward increasing morale and the aspiration levels of blacks and Puerto Ricans. Their sharing significantly in the control and distribution of economic resources in the city would necessarily improve their relations with the white power structure. An obvious opportunity lies in the develop-

ment of ethnically-oriented (but attractive to all) commercial enterprises such as restaurants, night clubs and other entertainment facilities.

Jobs provided by city, county and state government appear to be distributed equitably with respect to race and ethnicity. For example, in the areas of public safety, public works, parks and public property, there are opportunities for the inclusion of blacks and Puerto Ricans which have not been utilized fully. It is evident that people are available for positions in those departments; only the opportunities are lacking. A review of the distribution of government positions with regard to race, ethnicity and sex is recommended.

The cultural life of the city may be revitalized by the creation of the proposed Atlantic Performing Arts Center. The preparation of the city's population for their full participation in the center may afford an opportunity for expanding the



# NEIGHBORHOODS



educational and cultural base of the city. The situation calls for a school for the performing arts. A talent search among people of all ages and ethnic groups is likely to uncover a sizable number of gifted persons with an interest in teaching and studying in what might be termed a training ground for the center. The development of several resident groups in the lively arts would insure APAC of programming and a local audience throughout the year. The possibility of eliciting from the people of Atlantic City their creative potential is high; the respect is exciting. The formation of a training program or school for APAC is strongly recommended.

Another aspect of the creative potential of the people of Atlantic City might be turned toward the city's residential environments, i.e. housing and residential neighborhoods. Creativity is needed to organize the human and economic resources to improve the quality of housing and neighborhoods in sections of the city.

Imaginative efforts on the part of individuals and groups are

needed to develop as demonstrations housing and neighborhood rehabilitation projects which could be supported by available federal programs such as the Urban Homesteading Act and Section 8. Although it has been reported that the city owns relatively few sound structures which might be rendered livable with a modest economic investment, it seems essential to explore fully the extent to which federal opportunities may be used to improve the available properties. We recommend that the NAACP proposal for the use of the Urban Homesteading Act be adopted initially in the Northside community and specifically in the Inlet. We support the suggestion of Atlantic Human Resources (1975) which calls for an effort "to coordinate counselling and rehabilitation services in the area of housing". It is important to recognize the decision to improve one's housing as an occasion to review other aspects of the lives of families and individuals.

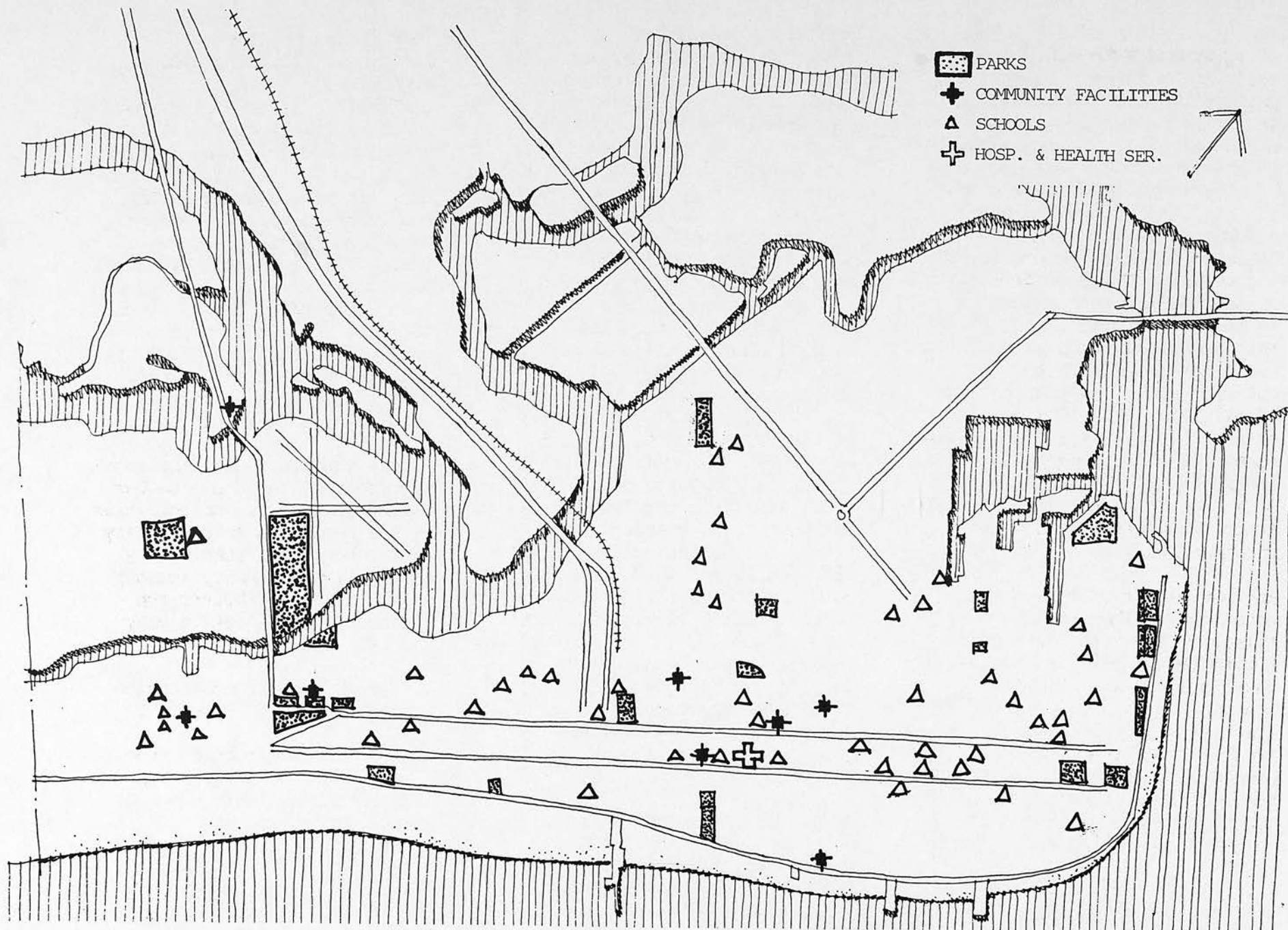
Opportunities for housing and neighborhood rehabilitation and new construction bring with them opportunities for employment. AHR (1975) recommended

cooperation with "the industrial relations and economic development commissions in enhancing the opportunities for minority training and employment". The black and Puerto Rican communities with the support of AHR and other responsible Atlantic City organizations should insure the employment of blacks and Puerto Ricans in construction and public works in their communities. Their representation on work crews should be the equivalent to the proportion they represent in the population of Atlantic City.

A more equitable distribution of opportunities and a better use of the skills and abilities of the people of Atlantic City will enhance the possibility of positive community actions which will serve better the interests of the entire city and its citizens.

In summary the recommendations are as follows:

- The development of a school with training programs in hotel and restaurant management, retailing and exhibitions.
- The search for business opportunities for blacks and



# PUBLIC FACILITIES

Puerto Ricans and the encouragement of ethnically oriented businesses.

- A review of the distribution of local and state government positions with respect to race, ethnicity and sex and the adoption of employment recruiting and hiring policies and practices which would reduce the inequities.
- The development of an APAC training program or school. The adoption of the proposal to apply the Urban Homesteading Act in the Northside community, specifically in the Inlet.
- The employment of blacks and Puerto Ricans in construction and public works in their communities in proportion to their representation in the population of Atlantic City.



### Growing Old In Atlantic City

The elderly inhabitants of Atlantic City have the distinct advantage of living in a city in which they represent a substantial (30-35%) portion of the population. It is an advantage in that considerable attention is drawn to the circumstances surrounding the lives of older people. For example, there is a high level of awareness of their housing, transportation and health services needs - met and unmet. Despite the allocation of hundreds of units of public and private housing expressly for older people, it is estimated that presently there are more than 300 applicants for public housing units whose requests cannot be filled.

Generally, housing for the elderly is favorably situated, allowing the active ambulatory older resident easy access to commercial areas and services. For older people with limited motor or sensory abilities, however, there are physical barriers, inconveniences and additional costs which limit their access to sectors and services of the city. Adaptation of buses to enable the physically handicapped to board is one means of in-

creasing the mobility of some older people. Others require escort services which could be provided.

In the opinion of one knowledgeable local observer, an adolescent escort service for the elderly might present a means of bridging the gap between the very young and the very old. Increased contact of a positive nature might reduce the anxiety some older people experience when they encounter kids. Kids, in turn, might gain a better understanding of the paces and problems of the older person.

Several informants indicated that the coordination of services for older people is needed. The office on aging is attempting to make some critical connections among health and social services and private physicians and nurses who assist the elderly.

A telephone "hotline" for elderly persons is a suggestion which appeals to those acquainted with the city's geriatric population.

It was pointed out that there is a demand for suitable entertainment for the elderly.

Older film-goers, for example, are finding that inoffensive films are presented less and less frequently. Attention should be given to the type of entertainment which might be provided to enliven the afternoons and evenings of Atlantic City's older people.

AHR (1975) proposed the stimulation of an economic development strategy with jobs for the elderly. The need for creating useful roles and occupations for persons who remain active and able in their later years need to be reiterated.

## Young In Atlantic City

### Education

It is remarkable to find even occasional expressions of satisfaction with the public schools in an urban area in 1975. The geographic distribution of schools, transfers of teachers and administrators, and an open-enrollment plan apparently have been reasonably responsive to the changing requirements of the school population at the elementary level. Plans for the new elementary school building with community facilities are anticipated with an expectation of their success. Dissatisfaction with present facilities was expressed poignantly; e.g., many schools lack cafeterias and so students have lunch in the corridors. It is assumed that the new facilities will reduce this aspect of dissatisfaction.

Descriptions of the social climate of Atlantic City High School suggest that its effectiveness as a learning environment is diminishing. Atlantic City High enjoys a distinguished history and the loyal affection of its exceptional alumni. Today it is said to be a good high

school for the intelligent, motivated student whose first language is English. Its value to other students is in question.

The plan for a new high school is questionable, also. The factors which appear to have strongly influenced the site selection raise questions about the suitability of the location vis-a-vis the social experience and community connectedness which should be encouraged during the adolescent years. It is certain that building a new school in a section of the city where teenagers, contact with other residents, particularly the elderly, will reduce the frequency of conflicts in public places. It is also certain that relegating kids to an isolated area of the city will increase the distrust between generations which has caused the public life in some communities to wither away.

Atlantic City must make an effort to find a place for the education of its future high school students which is near the heart of the city.

### Recreation

Despite the immense array of recreational and entertainment

facilities which stretch from one end of the Boardwalk to the other, a frequent observation of Atlantic City spokespersons, black, white and Puerto Rican, old and young, is that there are not enough recreational settings for young people in the city. It is paradoxical that the "playground of the world" seems short on spaces and places for its young people to play. To be sure, there are a number of attractive recently built playgrounds with equipment suitable for young children; however, there are relatively few facilities which are suitable for the recreational needs of adolescents, between the ages of 12 and 17 years - relatively few courts and ball fields for athletics, few community centers and commercial establishments (ice cream parlors, drug stores, and pool rooms) where kids can enjoy activities with their peers. The few places that are available to kids appear to enjoy an eager engaged clientele. Regrettably, there are too few places and possibilities for their constructive recreational use.

Complaints about the occasional disruptive behavior of kids were explained, even by those

registering the complaints, as a consequence of their not having suitable activities which might interest and occupy them.

Playing fields and community centers per se will not provide a simple solution to some of the problems attributed to kids. Programs per se offer little genuine aid. Rather, the development of healthy connections between kids and adults in their communities are important. Reports on Atlantic City Renaissance suggest that there are adults making significant connections with kids. People, places and programs which will assist Atlantic City kids toward maturity with a measure of success are needed.

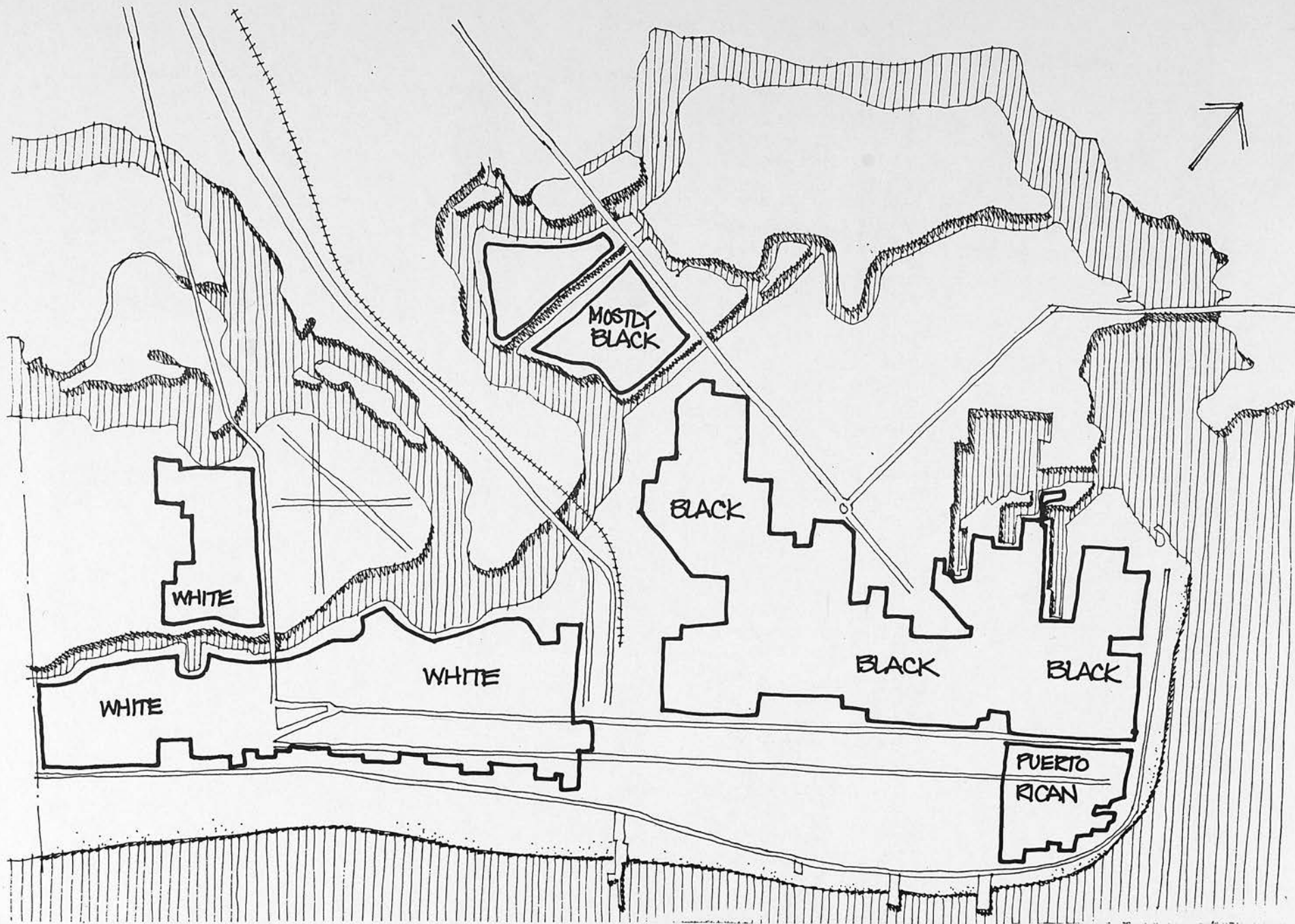
#### Health Services

Many of the health care and nutritional requirements of infants and young children in Atlantic City are being served by federal programs such as Headstart and a nutritional program for women, infants and children recently introduced by the United States Department of Agriculture. The health needs of adolescents are not as readily met, however. An expanded health

education program which focuses on not uncommon adolescent health problems such as alcoholism, drug abuse and venereal disease is an important preventive measure which should be supported enthusiastically. Information about the location of clinics and treatment centers and the nature of treatment is needed. Some programs such as NARCO are well established and successful. Others are less visible. Ancillary social services and follow ups which treat adolescents with sensitivity and dignity are recommended also.







# RESIDENTIAL AREAS

### Low-Income In Black And White

An exploration of some of the issues surrounding the status of low income blacks and low-income whites in Atlantic City suggests that they have some common concerns and perhaps a common cause, the lists of needs of both groups emerge in approximately the same order of priority: regular employment, improved housing, better educational opportunities, ill-imitation of crime in their communities, better transportation facilities and health services. Both blacks and whites complained of lack of participation in political processes and planning decisions which affect their destinies.

While their problems are similar, their expressions of discontent are different. The grievances of blacks are long-standing. They are presented with an air of resignation and more than touch of bitterness. The grievances of whites are in response to the recently restricted opportunities for upward mobility. Then, are delivered in anger with an air of militancy.

The differences in style, however, should not interfere with the opportunity for them to form political coalitions. For example, coalitions should be formed

to pressure local businesses and industries to employ local workers. Groups such as the National Welfare Rights Organization unite blacks around problems which stem from inadequate of the welfare system.

Together they should press for local and state political representation which is attentive and responsive to their problems.



### The Puerto Ricans in Atlantic City

During the past decade, a significant number of Puerto Rican families have settled in Atlantic City. They have found housing in the Inlet, an area which offers them little else in the way of neighborhood facilities and amenities. They are concerned about their poor housing conditions, a lack of responsiveness on the part of landlords, inadequate heat in their homes, little or no recreation facilities in their neighborhoods and the failure of the public schools at the secondary school level to serve Puerto Rican students adequately.

It is felt that official Atlantic City is indifferent to their plight, that there is little interest in their situation and little effective political activity on their behalf.

Separated geographically, linguistically and culturally from other Atlantic City residents, many reports suggest that Puerto Ricans in Atlantic City show signs of extreme alienation. References to the Beach Front Gardens incident might be

interpreted as symptomatic of the alienation.

The impact of the incident is felt still. And some of the frustrating conditions and cultural ambiguities which might account for the incident are being experienced daily by the Puerto Ricans. Changing these conditions and reducing the cultural ambiguities may be a step in the direction of developing a more hospitable social climate for Spanish-speaking citizens of Atlantic City.

There is a need for a high level bi-lingual educational program for adults as well as children which will permit them to enjoy the occupational, social and economic opportunities Atlantic City offers. AHR (1975) recommended "day care and bi-lingual education programs for Hispanic population". Individual and family counseling and, needless to say, adequate economic assistance should be extended also to Atlantic City's most recent immigrant group. With the encouragement of their positive participation in the life of the city, it is inevitable that their support of the city will be forthcoming.

### La población puertorriqueña en Atlantic City

Un apreciable número de familias puertorriqueñas se ha asentado durante la última década en Atlantic City. Dichas familias han encontrado vivienda en el Inlet, área que pocas amenidades y facilidades vecinales ofrece. Es así como las mayores preocupaciones de esta población conciernen las malas condiciones de la vivienda, la falta de respuesta por parte de los propietarios, la inadecuada calefacción de las casas, la poca o total ausencia de facilidades recreacionales y el fracaso de las escuelas públicas en servir adecuadamente a los estudiantes puertorriqueños de secundaria.

Este sector de la población siente que los sectores dirigentes son indiferentes ante su grave situación y que existe poca actividad política efectiva en su favor.

Numerosos reportes sugieren que la población puertorriqueña de Atlantic City, separada geográfica, lingüística y culturalmente de otros residentes de la ciudad, muestra signos de alienación extrema. Las referencias a los incidentes sucedidos en Beach Front Gardens podrían ser interpretados como síntomas de tal alienación. Este impacto se siente aún y algunas de las condiciones frustrantes y

y ambigüedades culturales que puedan explicar este incidente son experimentadas a diario por los puertorriqueños. El cambio de tales condiciones y la reducción de las ambigüedades culturales pueden representar una etapa en el desarrollo de un clima social más hospitalario para los ciudadanos de habla hispana de Atlantic City.

Se requiere entonces una educación bilingüe de alto nivel tanto para adultos como para menores que permita a todos ellos gozar de las oportunidades ocupacionales, sociales y económicas que la ciudad ofrece. Así como AHR recomiendo "cuidado diario y programas de educación bilingüe para la población hispánica"; la consejería individual y familiar y, sobra decirlo, adecuada asistencia económica deberían ser extendidas al grupo de más reciente inmigración. Es indudable que el hecho de incentivar la positiva participación de los puertorriqueños en la vida de Atlantic City, tendrá como respuesta el apoyo de éstos hacia la ciudad.





"I submit the following not just as a "Gripe" but as an inquiry as to why we and the governmental agencies must continue to tear down and destroy livable quarters before adequately replacing what they have decided must go."

"The success of the Federal Homestead Act of 1862 is indisputable. Perhaps an adoption or modification of this government-people venture is a possible answer to developing our Nation's present Urban Frontiers. URBAN HOMESTEADING could be that adoption."

"The large retiree population in the area needs a focal point for an interest in life. They can be drawn into such a project as a useful method of using their time and effort, answering phones, mailings, etc."

"Our neighborhoods which would be self sufficient, with elementary schools and recreation areas, and Piazza style living to promote a graceful, social type of atmosphere."

"I have resided at this address for the past five years and have resided in the First Ward since 1923. My present residence is beautiful. However, rumor has it that this building, a sound, well constructed building will be demolished either in the Spring or Fall of 1976. Why? Why? Why?

"The way it is now, no one will ever be free."

## HOUSING

The housing program is divided into three major categories:

- Neighborhood Preservation
- Residential Development of the Inland Waterways
- The Inlet Redevelopment

The program includes both new construction and rehabilitation. Zoning recommendations, neighborhood organization of the residents, and special government action programs relating to specific neighborhoods are also included. The recommendations concern areas as throughout the city and are closely related to the primary natural assets of the city - the beach and the inland waterway. The housing recommendations include all income levels and wherever possible make no income distinctions.

### Neighborhood Preservation

Neighborhood preservation includes zoning recommendations for the beach frontages in lower Chelsea and the Inlet, as well as the designation of neighborhood preservation districts. With regard to the zoning changes both areas are

recommended to be maintained as low-rise residential areas.

In lower Chelsea there is a significant quantity of residential environment to be preserved. It is the only part of the Atlantic City beachfront that represents the historical development of residences. This area is also unique to the boardwalk and cannot be reproduced. With respect to present and residential development practices, there is little if any opportunity to repeat or improve upon the pleasant and attractive character of these magnificent homes and the impression they make on the boardwalk.

At the other end of the boardwalk at the Inlet; low-rise is also recommended, but for different purposes. There are again some historical considerations. It has always been a low-rise residential area. From the examples of the recently built high-rises in lower Chelsea, primarily negative impact can be expected with respect and to the scale of the upland residential streets, pedestrian access to the beach and boardwalk, and

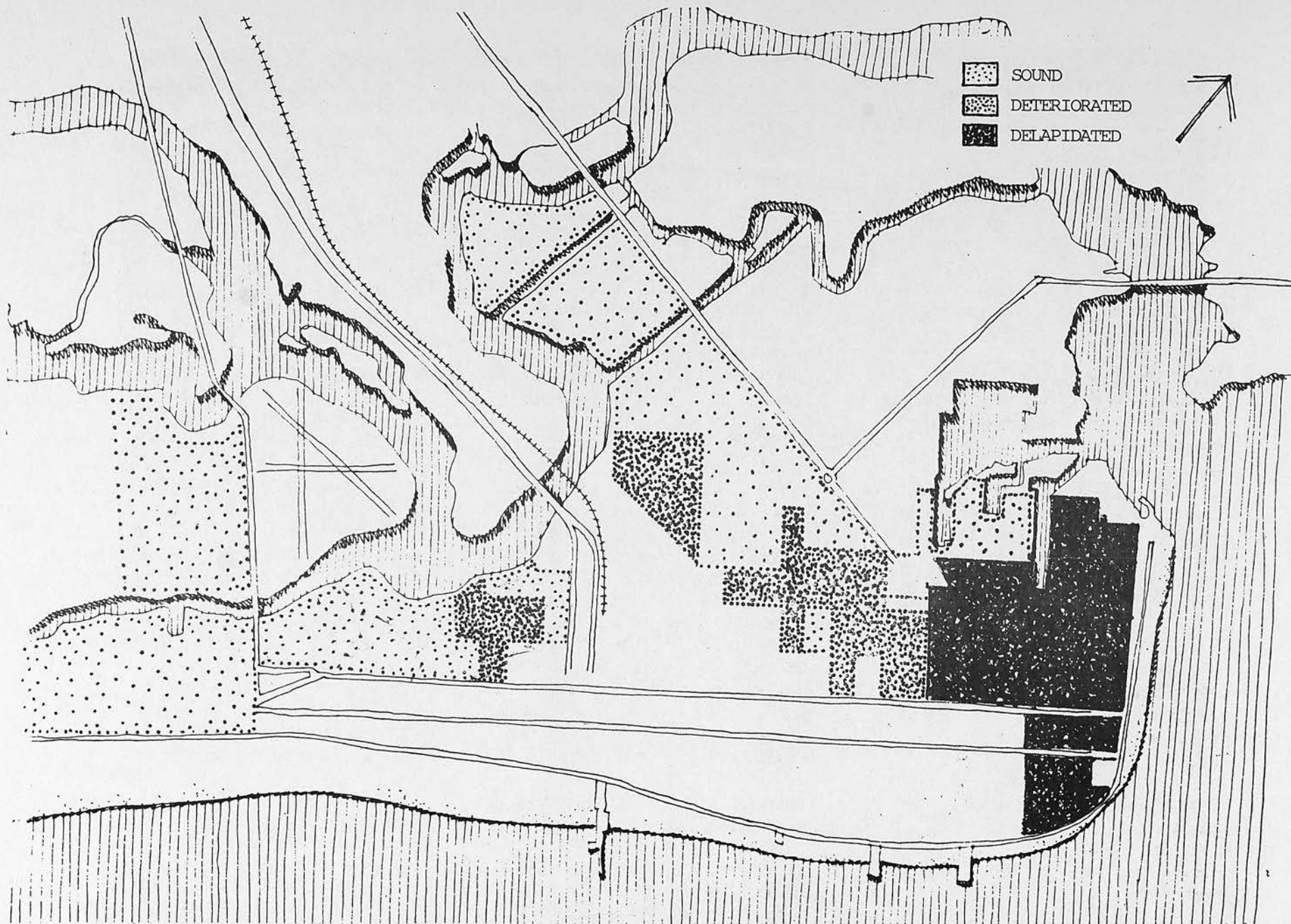
finally the scale and character of the boardwalk.

The above is not meant to preclude high-rise condominium development in Atlantic City. Instead, we recommend that such development to the major commercial/hotel portion of the boardwalk between Albany Avenue and the Uptown urban renewal area, an area described later in this report as the Boardwalk Development Plan. Within this area, major opportunities exist for developing both vacant and marginal properties. The addition of housing to the main boardwalk district will add another type of use that can increase the sagging volume of business, and help support off season business activity. It also seems appropriate that the highest activity of housing be located where the most services, the best transportation access, and the type of amenities relating to multiple dwelling use are presently found.

A second part of the neighborhood preservation program is the designation of the Chelsea, Westside, and Bungalow Park neighborhoods as Neighborhood Preservation







Districts. These are stable, typically owner occupied neighborhoods. Highly visible signs of property improvements and pride exist in these neighborhoods, in an attempt to build upon past efforts including code enforcement and rehabilitation. We recommend the following program be implemented first in these three neighborhoods and then elsewhere:

Street improvements with regard to the special characteristics of each neighborhood: street name signs, sidewalk paving, trees and shrubs, traffic controls, - all the normal street facilities and services, but developed and provided in consultation with resident associations or councils for each area.

Street maintenance and roadway repairs are also to be carefully monitored. Low interest rehabilitation loans and home financing to be orchestrated around these areas.

Strong public efforts to influence local banks to relax present mortgage policies with regard to at least these districts.

In the end, the public inter-

vention in these neighborhoods should be able to at least match the private interest and commitment.

#### Residential Development of Inland Waterways

It is recommended that there be a comprehensive review of the present and proposed zoning map in order to encourage and stimulate residential development along the inland waterway system. This comprehensive review of the waterway represents the only major opportunity besides the boardwalk for growth of new housing for middle and upper income residents. Many areas are presently zoned for light industrial and heavy commercial. Because of this comprehensive zoning review, it becomes possible to spot opportunities within the single family home zones for the development of multiple dwellings. This selective site designation can and should only be part of a comprehensive review of the waterways and the uplands.

In addition to the zoning map change we recommend a related special action program where the city, state, and federal agencies that normally review development adjacent to a single set of controls and

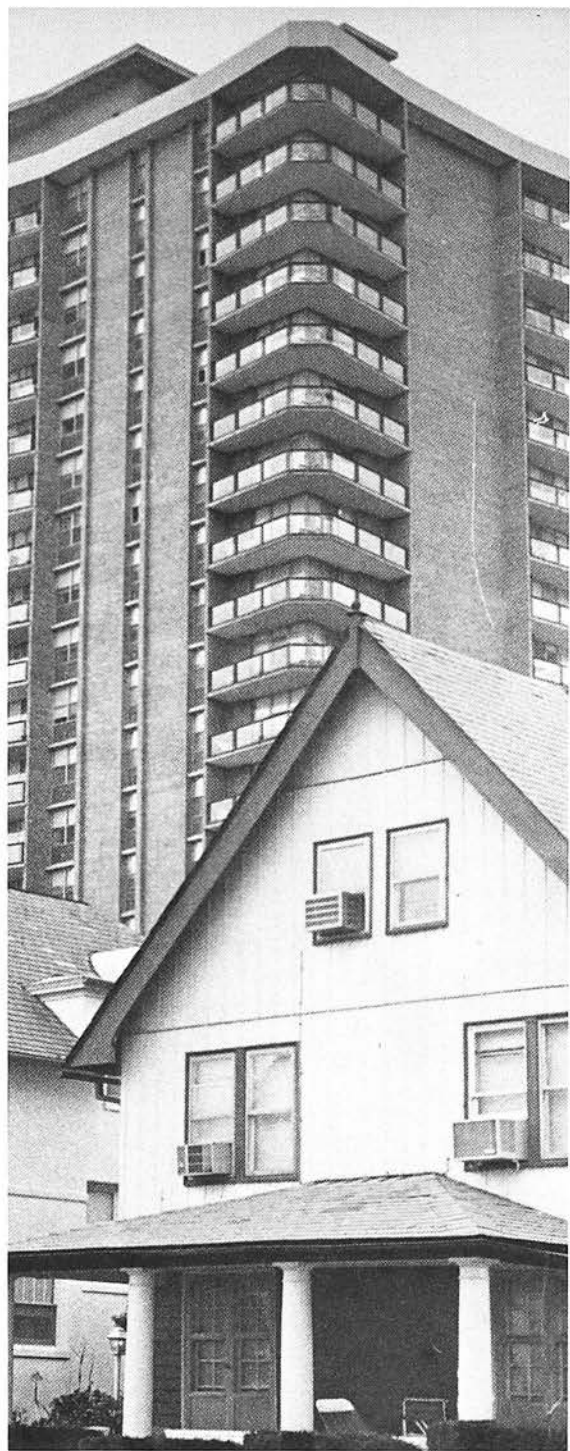
review of the project by a single agent. This would greatly reduce the time in design review thus accelerate the process, even with the map change.

#### Inlet Redevelopment

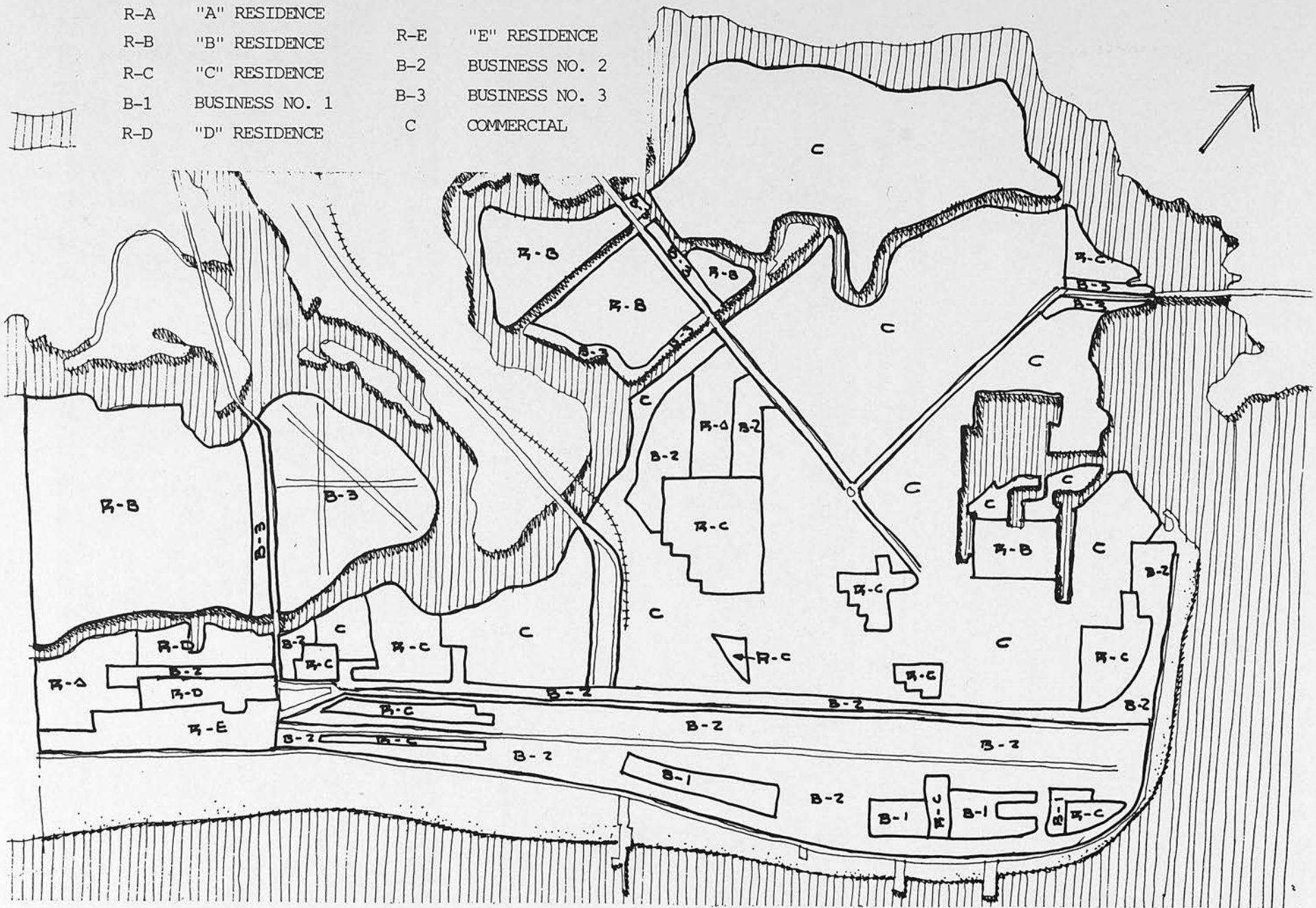
The Inlet represents the one portion of this package of recommendations that has a long history and includes many different interests and points of view. In our view, the area be redeveloped by selective clearance. New development is to be primarily low rise. Urban homesteading should be implemented primarily in this area. All housing actions should be oriented to the northern end to take direct advantage of the energies and dollars spent on the Uptown School Complex and the proposed Gardiner's Basin development. The school complex is intended to be the focus of a residential neighborhood. Priority sites should be designated immediately adjacent to and fronting on the school - this includes new construction, rehabilitation, and homesteading efforts. Priority sites should also be assigned to the blocks and the frontages along Rhode Island Avenue which take better advantage of the Gardiner's

Basin project and a main path to the School complex. Demolition is to be kept to a minimum. For further discussion of the design development of the residential area, refer to the portion of this report dealing with the Gardiner's Basin Development Plan.

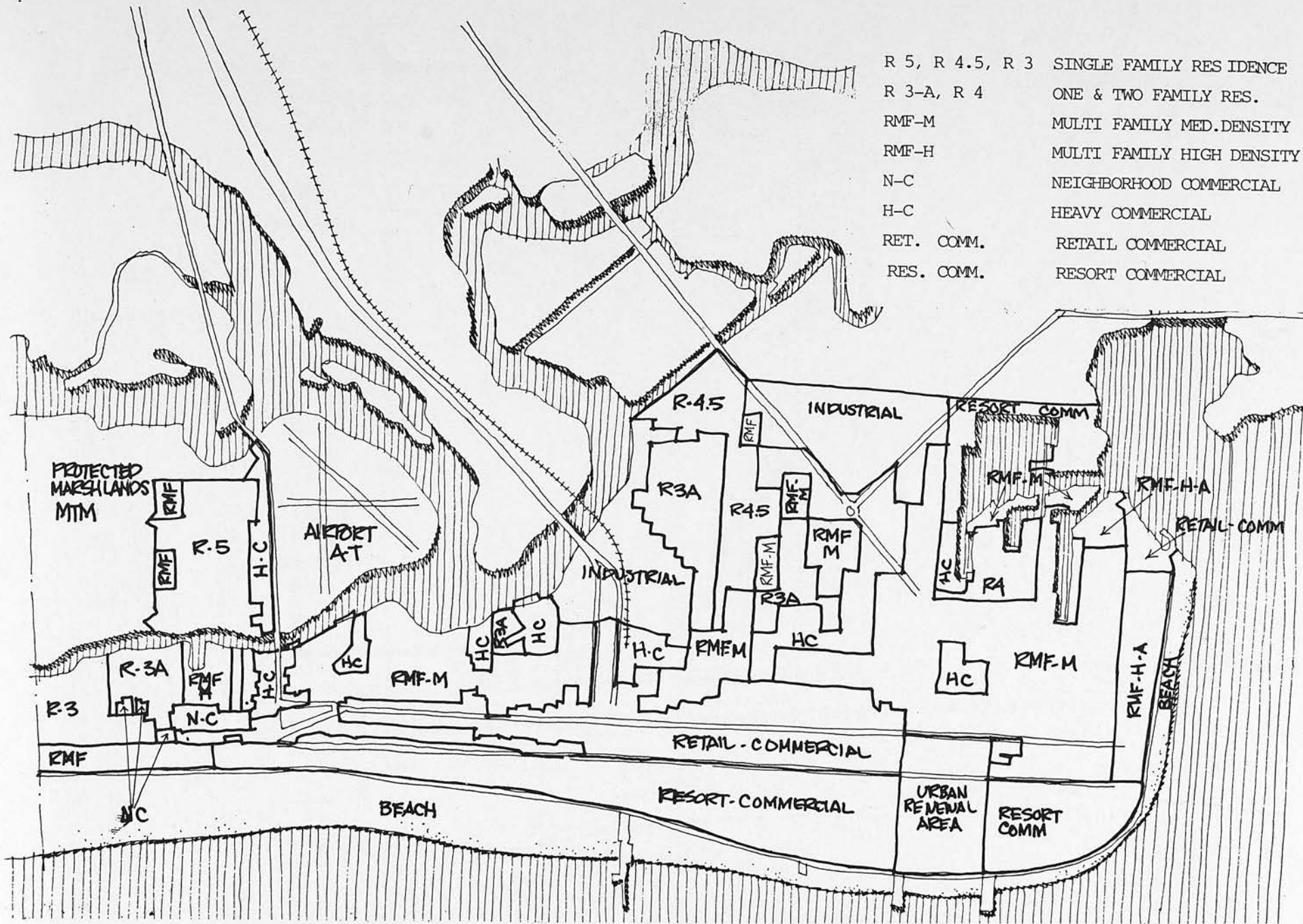




R-A	"A" RESIDENCE	R-E	"E" RESIDENCE
R-B	"B" RESIDENCE	B-2	BUSINESS NO. 2
R-C	"C" RESIDENCE	B-3	BUSINESS NO. 3
B-1	BUSINESS NO. 1	C	COMMERCIAL
R-D	"D" RESIDENCE		



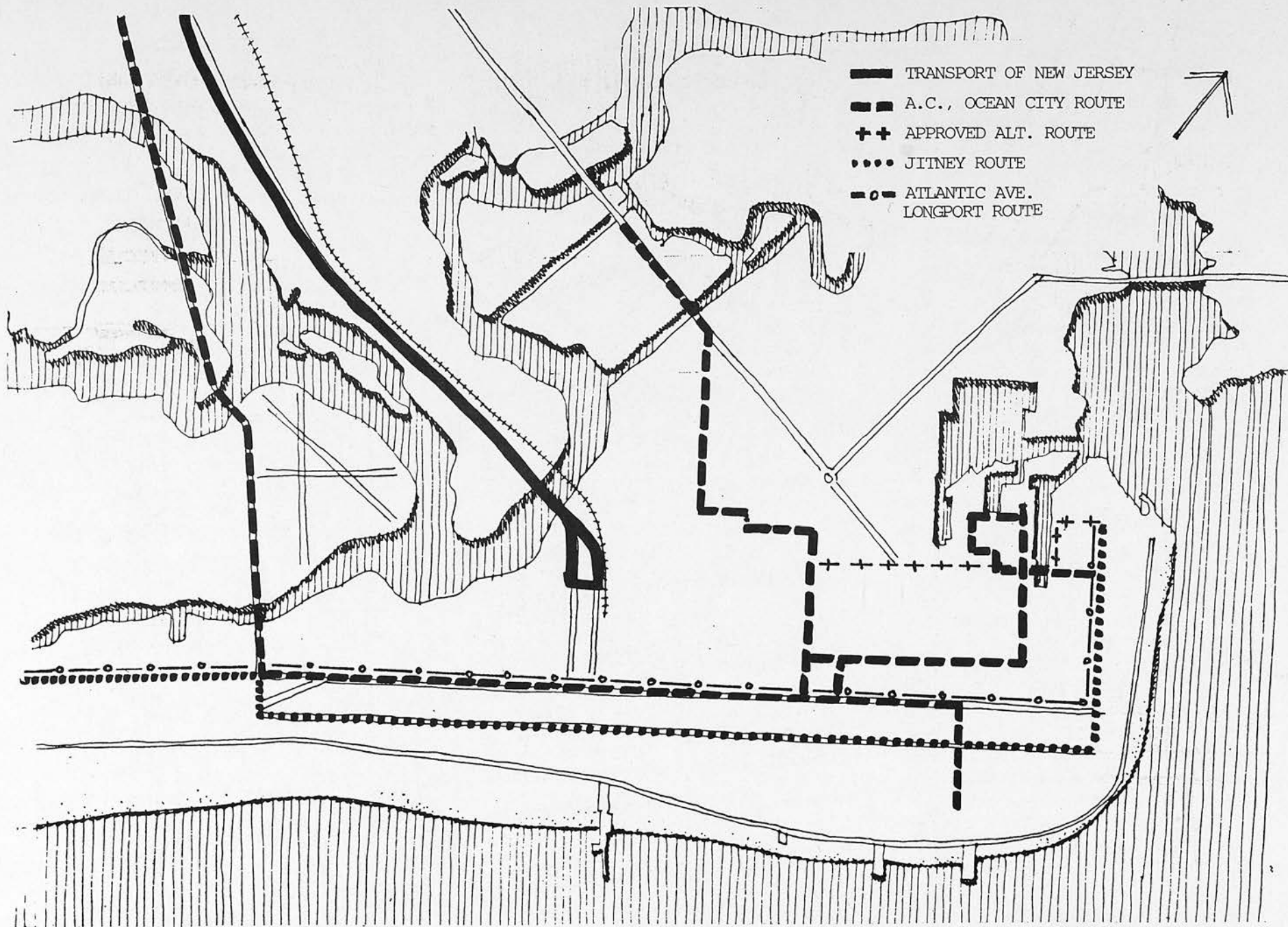
# EXISTING ZONING



- R 5, R 4.5, R 3 SINGLE FAMILY RES IDENCE
- R 3-A, R 4 ONE & TWO FAMILY RES.
- RMF-M MULTI FAMILY MED.DENSITY
- RMF-H MULTI FAMILY HIGH DENSITY
- N-C NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- H-C HEAVY COMMERCIAL
- RET. COMM. RETAIL COMMERCIAL
- RES. COMM. RESORT COMMERCIAL

# PROPOSED ZONING





# TRANSPORTATION

## TRANSPORTATION

As an island\*, Atlantic City needs an efficient transportation system if its limited land area is to be kept for productive activities and essential land uses. Private auto storage and circulation with its attendant environmental and esthetic impacts must be evaluated against other transportation systems which consume less land, meet the diverse needs of visitors and residents and are generally compatible with the city's scale and environmental qualities.

The city's existing transportation system is privately owned and consists of jitneys, unique vehicles with good, flexible service characteristics, intra city buses, an intercity bus between Atlantic City and Ocean City and taxicabs. The city buses are subsidized by the state. In addition there are the unique Boardwalk trams and motorized carriages. The latter vehicles are distinctive in appearance, easily recognized and generally pleasant to use. The city buses are standard in appearance without distinctive identifying features other than their green and white surface color.

While present capacities and demand may be adequate several factors should be addressed which will affect the future quality and sufficiency in the system.

Transit users are usually those persons who are obligated to use public vehicles because they do not own or cannot drive a private car or possibly cannot afford to hire a taxi. This group includes the elderly, those under driving age, low income and handicapped persons. Assuming future growth and development constraints and increasingly stringent environmental and energy standards, Atlantic City's ability to depend on the private vehicle will decline. In addition, there are vacationing visitors, tourists and conventioners who walk by preference, or use public transportation as a desirable change from their daily routine at home. This latter group may increase if economic improvements occur. Adding this group to the transit dependent group results in a large number of users.

The relationship between land use and transportation is presently a workable one because of the relatively low intensity of development.

However, continued lack of coordination between patterns of use and transportation will result in inefficiencies, inconvenience, energy waste and possibly problems of appearance.

The following recommendations are suggested to assure an improving system, responsive to the city's needs:

- Improve existing transportation service for transit dependent groups such as the elderly, the young, the handicapped and others having no alternative means of travel as follows:

1. Remodel older existing equipment to accommodate the needs of these groups.
2. Purchase new equipment to meet their needs.
3. Assure that service patterns (frequency, routes, access points) truly meet needs of users.
4. Provide new service as required for dependent users.

- Increase service in high intensity areas to reduce congestion, need for parking, and disruption to pedestrian frontages.

- Encourage land use patterns which increase transit effectiveness within framework of comprehensive planning and development policy for city.

1. Create transit station development districts.
2. Local public facilities near stations.
3. Increase residential densities at stations.

- Utilize Transportation activities more fully as an economic opportunity.

1. Apply affirmative action in management, operations, maintenance agreements, and the purchasing of goods and services.
2. Provide public interest message space.

- Organize transportation terminal activities to increase convenience and minimize spread of negative impacts.

1. Consolidate visitor information facilities, long term parking and mode or system transfers.
2. Provide appropriate design and development guidelines.
3. Exploit new development possibilities as opportunities for minorities in construction, ownership management and operations.

- Adopt parking policy which reduces negative impacts on visitor and residential improvements.

1. Build parking areas and structures which allow attractive foot pedestrian access and visual links to and from the Boardwalk.

2. Minimize curb cuts which create pedestrian safety hazards .

3. Encourage air rights development over parking as a means of providing for new development, economic opportunity, and to enhance appearance.

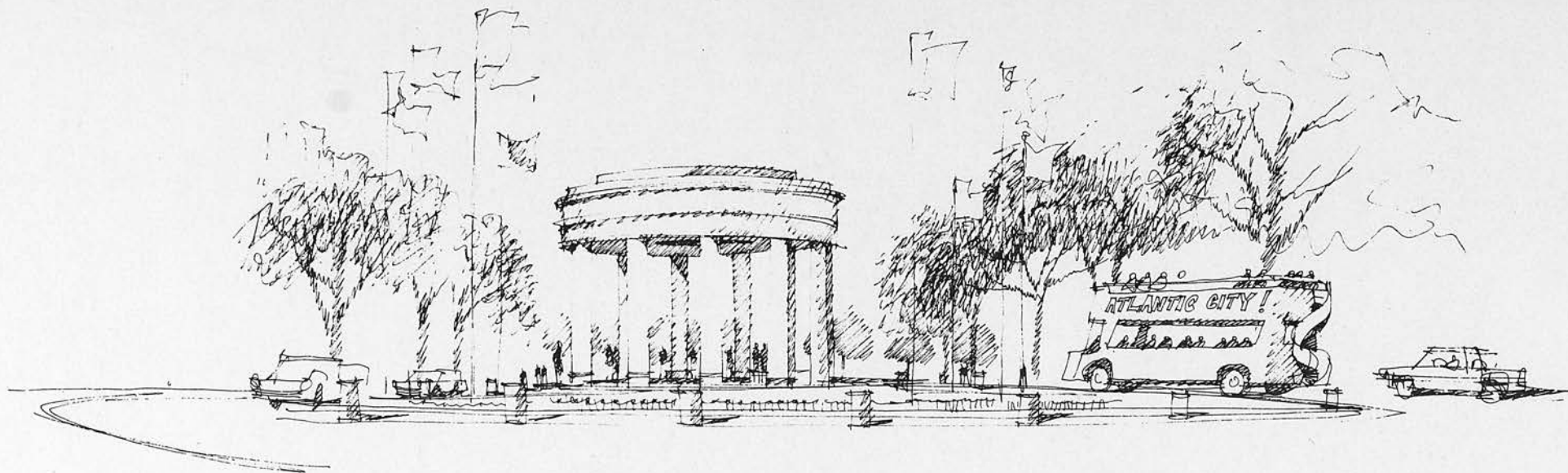
4. Constrain or reduce parking where public transportation service is sufficient.

- Generally enhance and extend pedestrian parkways throughout the city.

1. Provide weather protection, landscape, street equipment, signing, conveniences, etc.

\*Absecon island includes Atlantic City, Ventnor, Margate and Longport.





CITY ENTRANCE AT WAR MEMORIAL

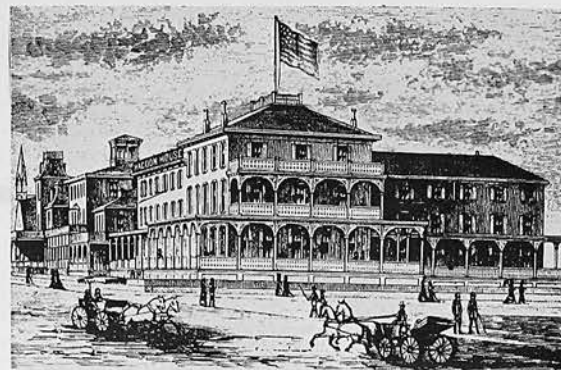
"The decaying pier and piling vista seen when strolling North is most depressing. As a symbol of deterioration and decadence, such a scene must exert a powerful dampening effect on any vacationers or conventioners who still visit what should be one of the scenic spots of our country."

"Atlantic City is a mass of swinging, hanging signs, particularly in the main business section. In several instances two signs appear on the same spindly pole. These are most unsightly and when there is a combination of these signs and dirty sidewalks the appearance is extra poor."

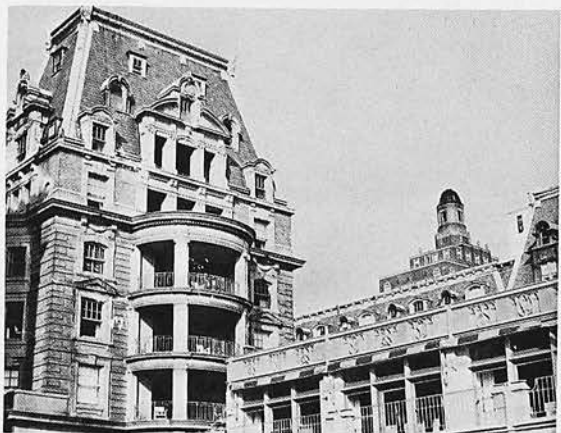
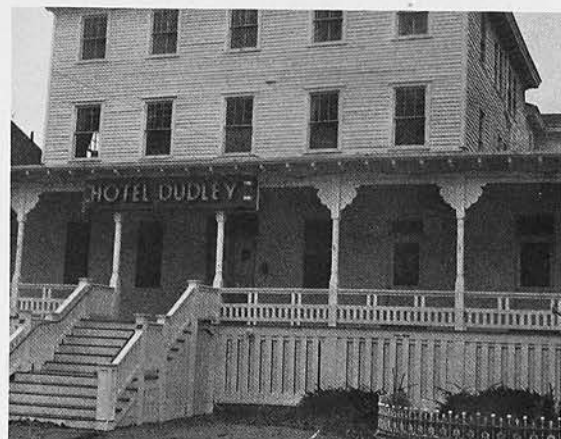
"New Orleans has signs stating "We are proud of our city. Do not litter! and their sidewalks and streets are clean. Why can't local merchants have someone sweep the sidewalks in front of their property."

"All Boardwalk ends landscaped, including all high rise buildings. This should be done on a competitive basis awards being plaques and ribbons."

"We would like to see the flags of all nations flying from the top of Convention Hall and also at Kennedy Plaza."



HADDON HOUSE—EDWIN LIPPINCOTT, PROPRIETOR.





## PHYSICAL QUALITY

Visual incoherence: Evident throughout Atlantic City is the conflict between a past era of uniform social behavior and design tasks and the present contemporary world of many choices and different standards. The motorist's entry is a succession of competing billboards whose messages succeed in obscuring each other's message. Debarking from the automobile occurs in random fashion. Parking service often produces small disconnected lots at the end of streets near the beach rendering "walk to the beach", incoherent. Nor are there other visual pedestrian clues to the vast and beautiful natural phenomenon ahead. Billboard signs and displays are also conflicting in scale, and tend towards an ambiguous total abstraction of color and light within which specific information about services to be obtained or goods to be sold. Such visual incoherence is of course itself a message, but one narrow in appeal, of shallow content and, where people and vehicles meet, possibly fatal. Architectural Standards: In a climate of low growth expectations nationally a concern about the quality of

architectural and urban design may seem frivolous. But such a period allows for local stock-taking and preparation for a future period of increased building as well as more rigorous attention to existing physical design assets. Aside from examples of shabby workmanship and the inevitable results for short term life, the architectural quality of buildings and their urban design settings are generally below the standards now found in many cities.

In the case of commercial structures and transient facilities, there is ample evidence elsewhere that skilled designers can meet reasonable budgetary constraints while still producing visual results appreciated by an increasingly astute public. Where there is little choice the public cannot avoid poor design. But changes in the travel economics now allows the mass market to travel abroad as readily as its luxury counterpart.

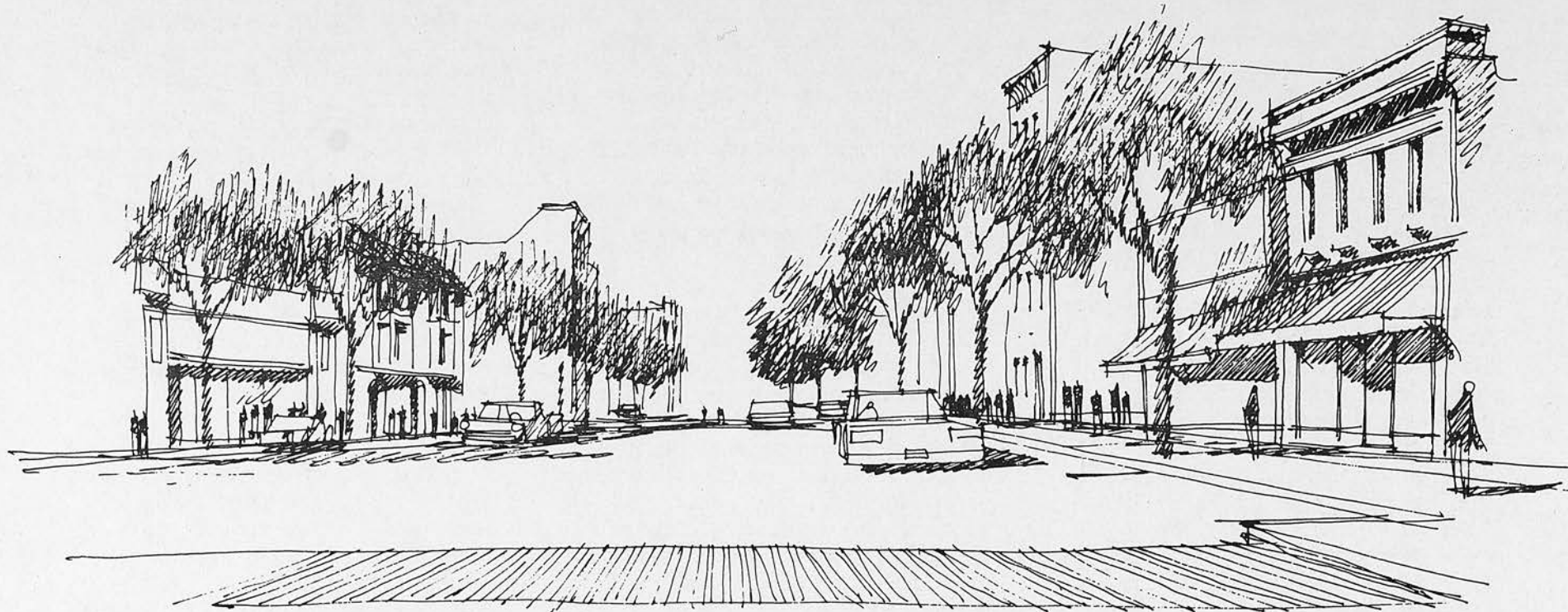
Recent design analysis of user needs and the relation between behavior and design suggest

strong correlations between failure to provide an adequate set of amenities, and increased antisocial behavior, and public costs. Thus it may be appropriate to define new design outlines for private and publicly supported housing in anticipation of future demand.

Finally a number of neglected but architecturally meritorious structures and districts have been noted. These are too few to make a significant impact on the general problem of building rehabilitation and neighborhood conservation, but they are part of the history of the city and therefore contribute to its unique identity.

Obsolescent or Vacant Structures: While these are frequently unsightly, they should only be demolished if well beyond being rehabilitated. Otherwise, they should be considered for adaptive use, relocation to other sites or use in homestead programs and vocational training opportunities.

Enhancement of the natural setting: The power of and



DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE

appeal the ocean can be vitiated by the impacts of mismanaged efforts to exploit nature's wealths. Off-shore oil exploration is beyond local control and sensitive to expanding economic needs. However, land-side waste disposal and development activity can and must be controlled to avoid ocean pollution.

**Tree Planting:** The proposed program is a first attempt to recognize the potential benefits of extending the recent tree planting along Atlantic Avenue. Atlantic City, while it enjoys a truly unique natural setting, suffers considerably from the lack of natural vegetation. Seashore vegetation is often sparse, however compatible species exist and there is evidence in the Chelsea neighborhoods that natural vegetation can survive and prosper near buildings and within the streets.

Most of the city is completely built up with the hard surfaces of buildings, parking lots, and a large percentage of paved streets. These hard surfaces provide no cooling effects for pedestrians and motorists well beyond the beach and there is a noticeable amount of discomfort

from reflected glare.

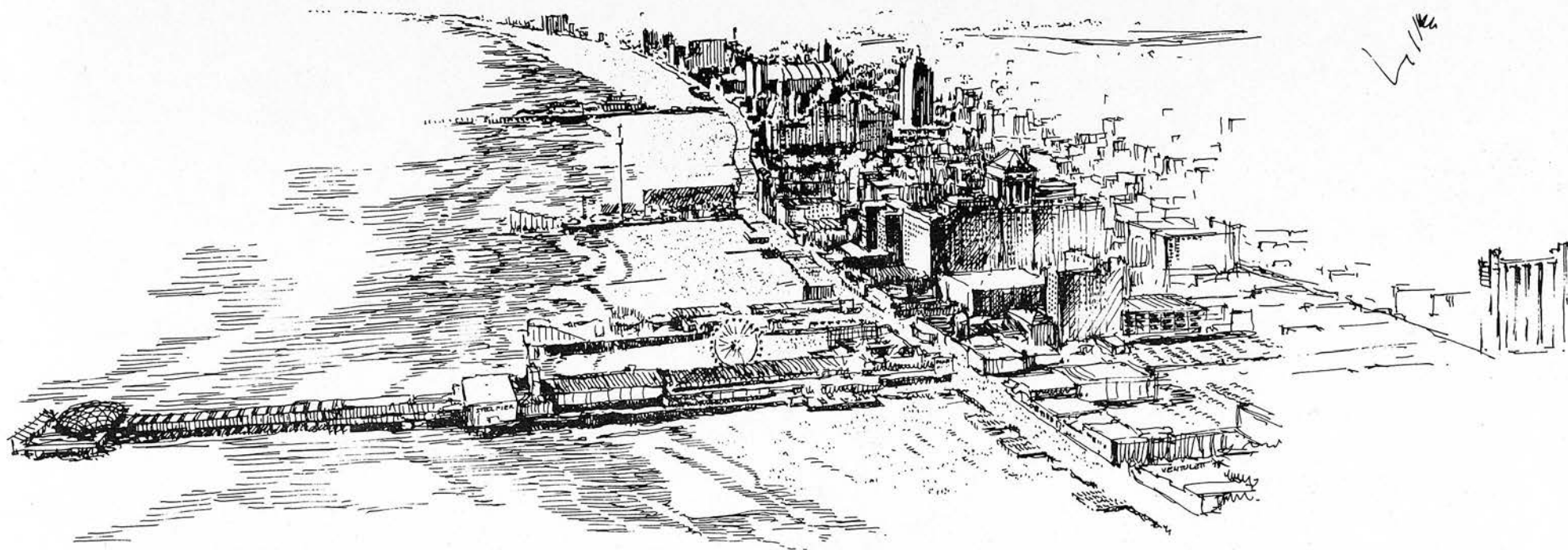
It is therefore, recommended that a street tree program be implemented, starting with the major entrance corridors followed by the streets carrying the greatest volume of vehicles and pedestrians. This is shown on the accompanying diagram. The tree planting program is also offered as one technique to obscure unattractive public and private buildings.

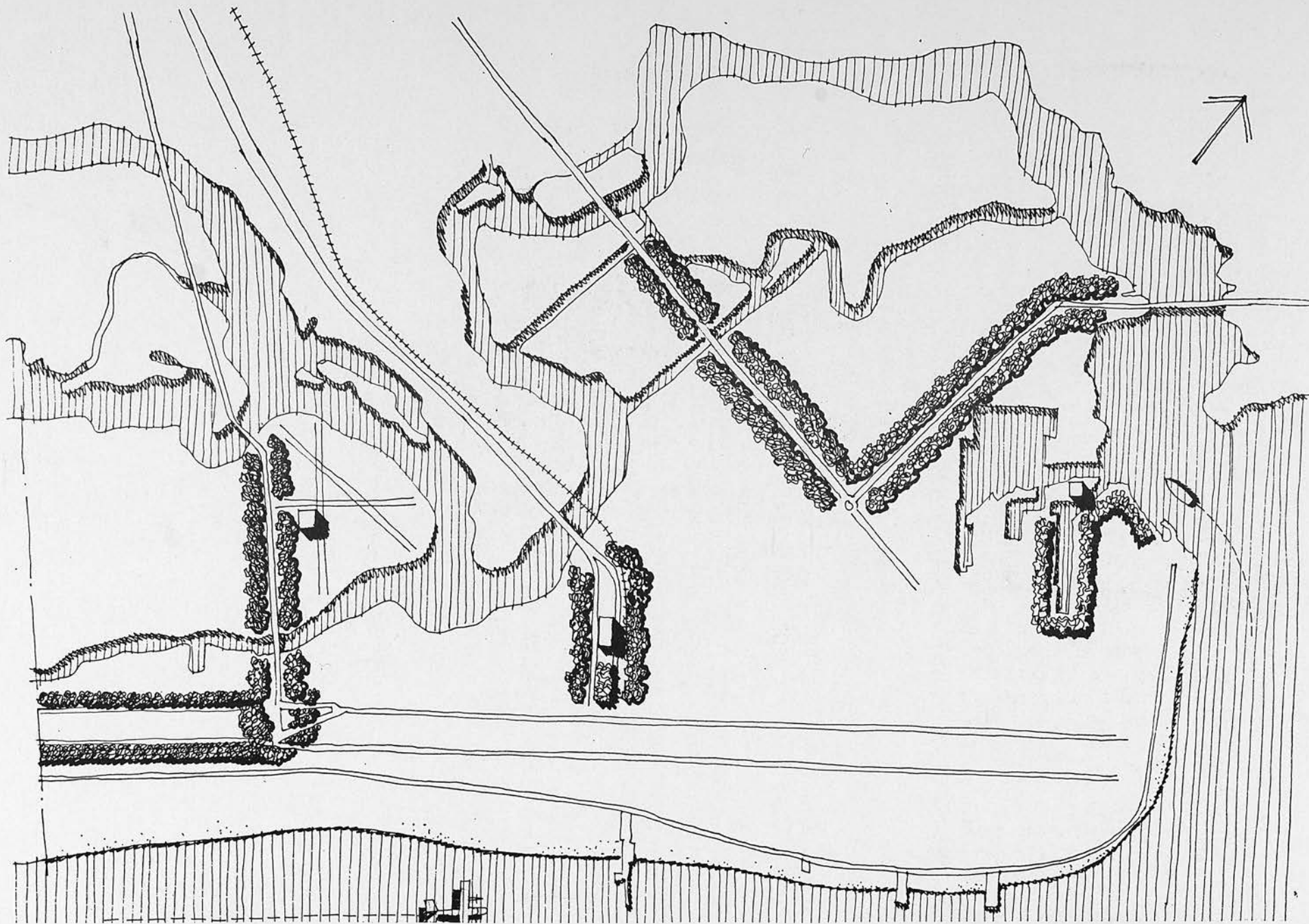
**Streets and other public paths:** While these are well surfaced and generally well illuminated, they are frequently out of scale, visually cluttered and provide for only a minimum of pedestrian needs. For example, little or no weather protection exists, sidewalks are too narrow, public information and convenience facilities do not exist, nor do provisions for rest/sitting, and street activities other than entry or display are minimal. Opportunities to provide additional neighborhood identity through distinctive lighting, planting, surface textures and signs should be exploited, both in residential and commercial areas. In areas of strong ethnic or cultural presence, street design treatments should, as a

result of community input, express and reflect those design determinants.

Public parking areas provide a way to extend pathway design improvements to off street locations if they are well designed, in proper scale relation to surrounding areas and maintain sidewalk pedestrian visual interest. Roofs may be used for tennis or other recreation and retail frontages or landscaped surfaces should exist along the sidewalk-pedestrian areas.







**CITY ENTRIES**

## PROJECTS

### Entrances to the City

#### Automobile

- Highway beautification is needed both as a gateway and as a mechanism to orient people to destinations within the city. The actual entry locations work well as a system. What is required is tree planting a signage system and billboard controls.

#### Bus

- The terminal requires a review by the city as to maintenance, safe pedestrian access and exit, and like most terminals visual enhancement. This is more true of Atlantic City because it is the point of entry and critical to image.
- Service from the terminal to town should be improved by either Jitney service or rerouting of the Atlantic Avenue bus during the peak summer season. Pedestrians lugging suitcases to destinations is too common.
- There is potential as well as visual need for development around Columbus Plaza.

#### Rail

- Improvements to the bus terminal should not preclude future rail access.

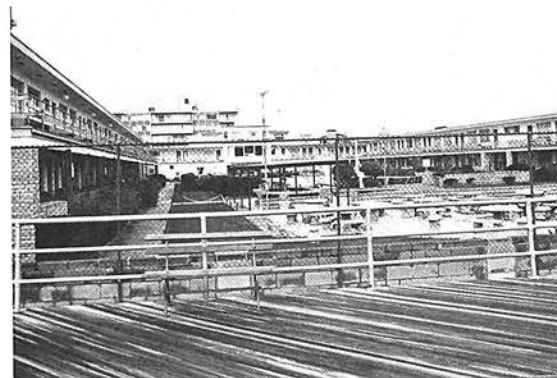
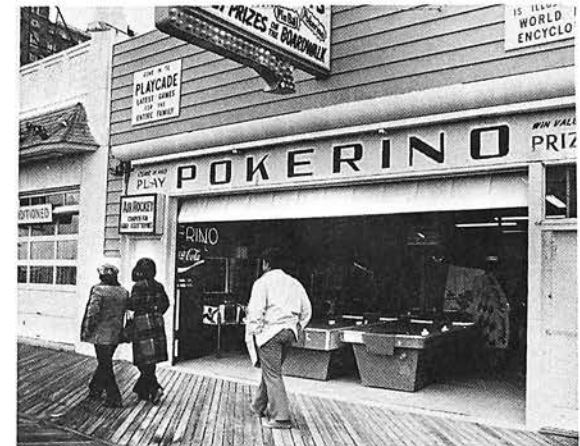
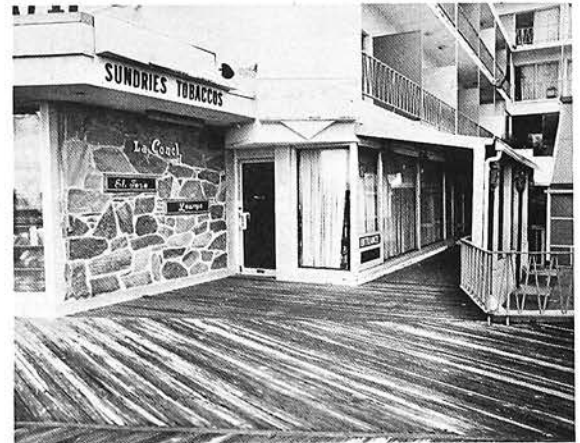
#### Air

- The terminal, now a prefabricated structure is a poor portal. Assuming continued use of Bader Field and a commitment of airline scheduling improvements should be undertaken.
- Flight paths should be revised to the extent possible so people fly over the oceanfront before landing.

#### Boat

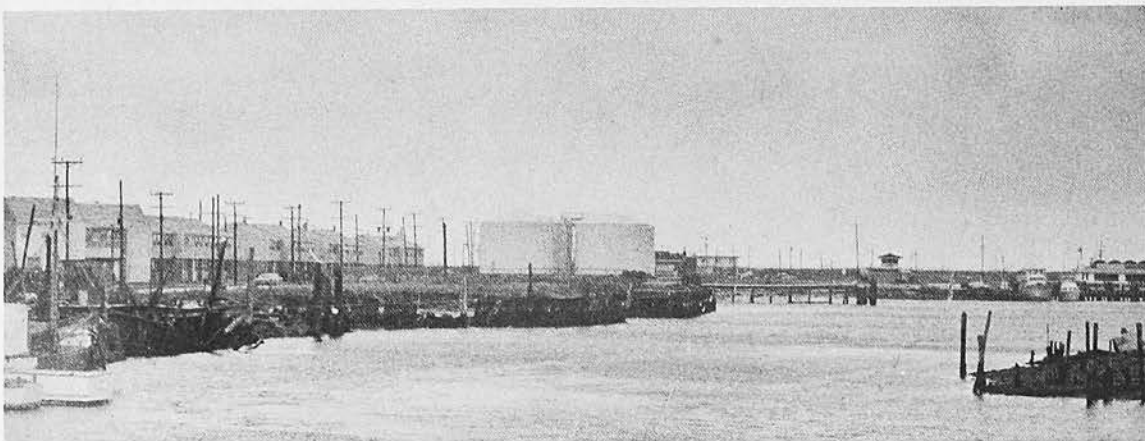
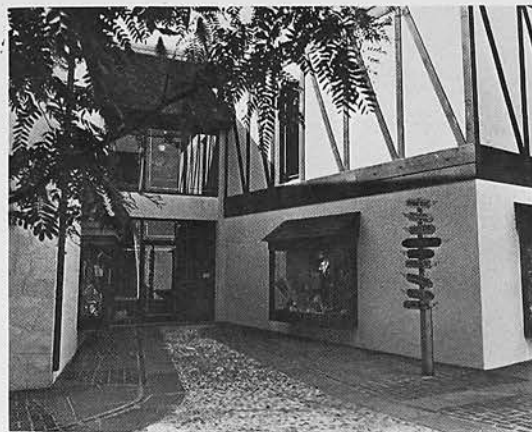
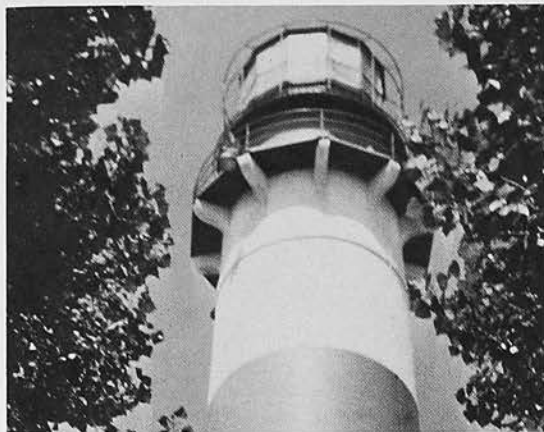
- There should be a comprehensive development of the Absecon Inlet entry including a marine service center and attempted marketing of a boater complex.



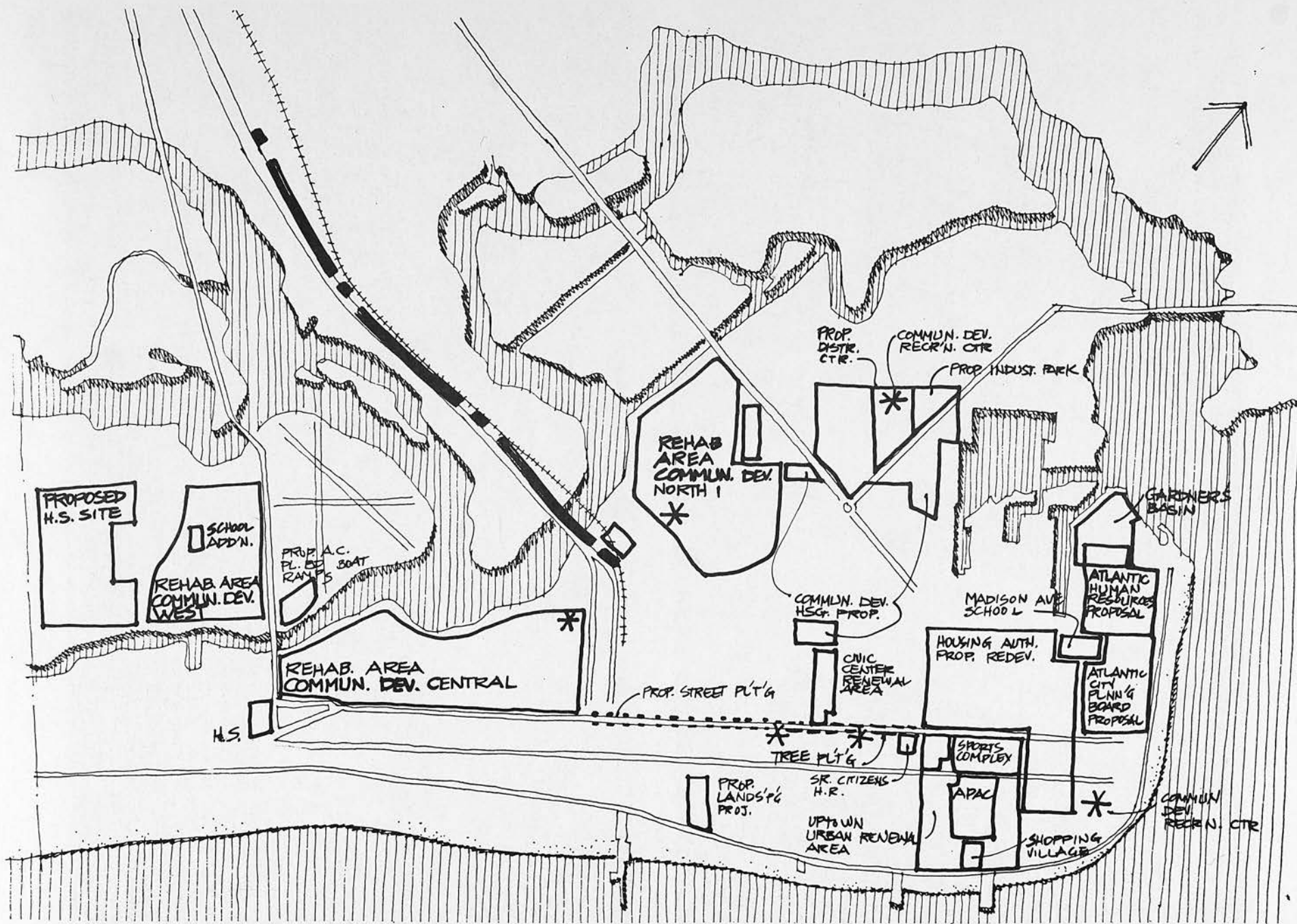




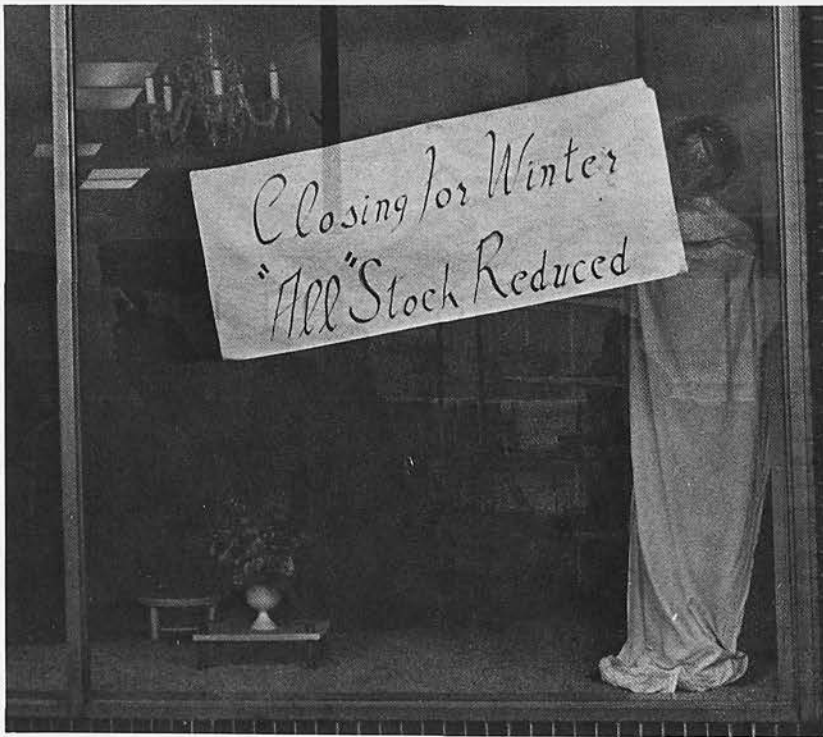
BOARDWALK CHARACTER







# PROJECTS





## The Boardwalk

While the convention center may be the functional magnet of Atlantic City's economic life the Boardwalk is a key symbol in the city's image. The image has slipped because of negligence, and because a differing economic climate has applied a new set of values on Boardwalk property. For example a McDonalds can pay twice the rental amount as a fine apparel store. A return to opulence is unlikely but the new standard illuminates problems which were less troublesome in a past era.

The new economic climate produces quick turnover stores which sell mass produced goods to a generalized market. These stores compete for attention by overloading our senses rather than orderly understatements. It is unrealistic to try to go back to the past. It is equally unrealistic to ignore the new realities.

There are three kinds of action which should be taken to improve the legibility of the Boardwalk's signs:

- Legislated actions to be incorporated within a Boardwalk Zoning District

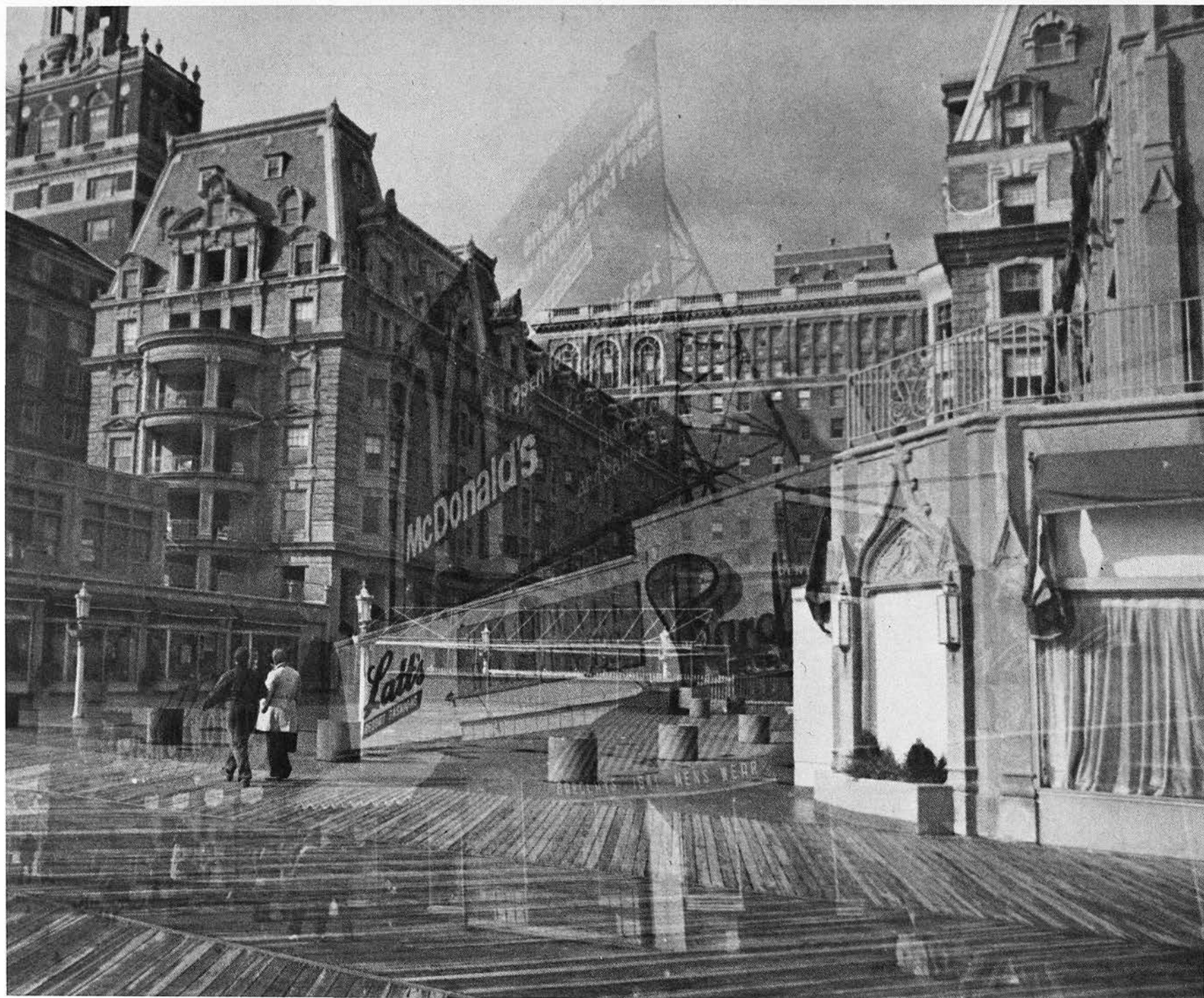
- Establishment of design review and enforcement mechanisms based upon explicit development design guidelines on all properties abutting the Boardwalk
- Public policies regarding location of public uses and the design of public infrastructure

Capital improvements of a public and private nature

Legislated actions include:

- Gambling, if introduced to the economy, should be limited to commercially zoned properties abutting the Boardwalk so as to strengthen the existing activities. Permitted random placement,
- Casinos would gravitate to the least expensive property in town creating another center and dealing a final blow to the Boardwalk.
- The area from Florida to North Carolina streets is the prime convention and tourist recreation commercial area. Special controls should be exercised within this district to control image. Current limitations exclude gaming establishments and lease provisions initiated by the hotels encourage year round operation. No formal mechanisms are available to preclude seasonal leasees.
- Seasonal leasees in the prime area should be constrained in the manner in which they close for the winter season. Temporary boarding should be prohibited. Security measures must be of a permanent nature(i.e. metal grilles) and said devices should conform in color to the design of the store.
- Sign restrictions now existing should be enforced - particularly those regulating the projecting signs. Tighter sign restrictions should be designated and enforced within the primary district except at designated intersections of particular streets and the Boardwalk where









orientation to visitors' facilities is appropriate. Billboards should be prohibited in prime areas. Outside this area there should be no restrictions.

- Extensions of the Boardwalk onto private property shall utilize wood decking in accordance with the design of the current Boardwalk.
- The powers of the Municipal Arts Society should be legally expanded to specifically include historical architectural designation. Funding should be provided by the city for the Society to undertake an immediate survey of buildings of historical merit. Alternative forms of financing preservation should be examined.
- Uses that provide window take-out service should provide an increase in a Boardwalk width of at least one foot for each 5 feet of frontage with a minimum widening of 5 feet.

Fences separating private open space from the Boardwalk should be subject to Design Review and should be generally discouraged. It is incumbent that this transition be handled architecturally in a manner consistent with the design of private structures and complementary to the public space of the Boardwalk.

Parking lots should not be permitted to abut the Boardwalk or rise above the Boardwalk level.

#### Design Review:

Any design review process must be accompanied by strict time restrictions on the public sector in order not to inhibit development. In order to expedite the process and to inhibit arbitrariness on the part of the public sector it should publish its standards shortly after the enactment of any design review law. They must be explicit enough to assume that review consists of judging performance rather than negotiating design. (Models in

existence that might be referred to are New York's Housing Quality Study and the San Francisco Urban Design Plan) These standards should include such items as bulk distribution, relation of lobby space to the Boardwalk, utilization of the Boardwalk in inclement weather and provision for outdoor seating and dining.

#### Public Policies:

- Arkansas and Missouri Streets should be treated as extensions of the Boardwalk (which is in itself a legally mapped street). They are the principle pedestrian connections from the regional bus terminal to the beach. A traffic analysis should be undertaken to determine the feasibility of eliminating automobiles from these two streets between Atlantic and the Boardwalk.
- A study should be undertaken of utilization of various access points to the Boardwalk to determine





which streets serve as major pedestrian conduits. A tree planting and sidewalk improvement program should be instituted on those streets.

- Curb cut controls should be initiated between Pacific and the Boardwalk on principal pedestrian streets, and continuous curbcuts should be eliminated where existent. A phased removal program of more than X curbcuts per parking-space should be commenced. 5 years as a reasonable time to amortize such changes.
- Attempts should be made to bring quality merchandising back to the Boardwalk.
- Parking should be treated as a discrete land use and a parking plan developed which includes the area between Atlantic and the Boardwalk. Improved automobile accessibility to the Boardwalk should be compared with the needs for new commercial use sites.
- The transition between street and boardwalk must be made easy to identify and pass through. This is

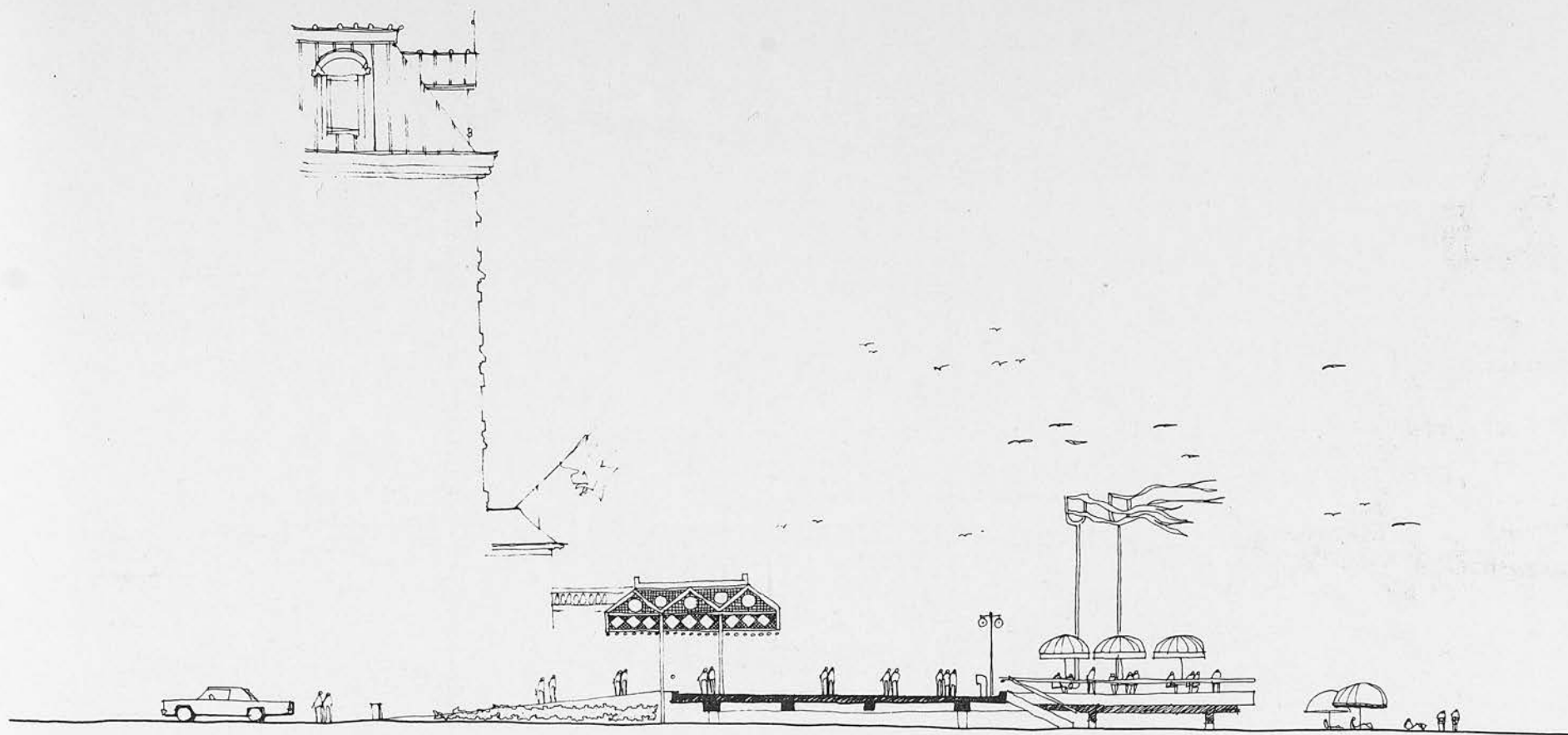
not the case today.

#### Capital Improvements:

- While the city can place restrictions on existing uses and advertising on the Boardwalk, and can provide mandatory guidelines as well as incentives of a fiscal nature to potential developers, it cannot avoid capital expenditures of both a short and long term nature. The following are suggestive not necessarily in order of importance.
- "Gateways" to the Boardwalk should be constructed at principal pedestrian entry from city streets. These will increase visibility from afar and make entries an event. These additions to the boardwalk itself should reflect its initial design character and historic origins. The wood and metal pipe with both structures shown are elaborate but indicative of that style.
- A particularly strong gateway should be made at Arkansas and Missouri streets (illustrated). It should

include a widening of the Boardwalk. Money must be spent to maintain the Boardwalk. Damage to the Boardwalk must be treated like a pothole in a street and repaired immediately.

- Phone booths and other public convenience facilities should be relocated adjacent to entries to the Boardwalk but should not be the dominant visual entry feature as is now the case.
- Develop a theme for the design and placement of street furniture such as trash receptacles, benches, etc.. The Jones Beach Boardwalk in New York is a good example where a navigation theme was chosen.
- Boardwalk lighting should reflect the pedestrian nature of the walk.



NODE CANOPY

STREET

HOTEL

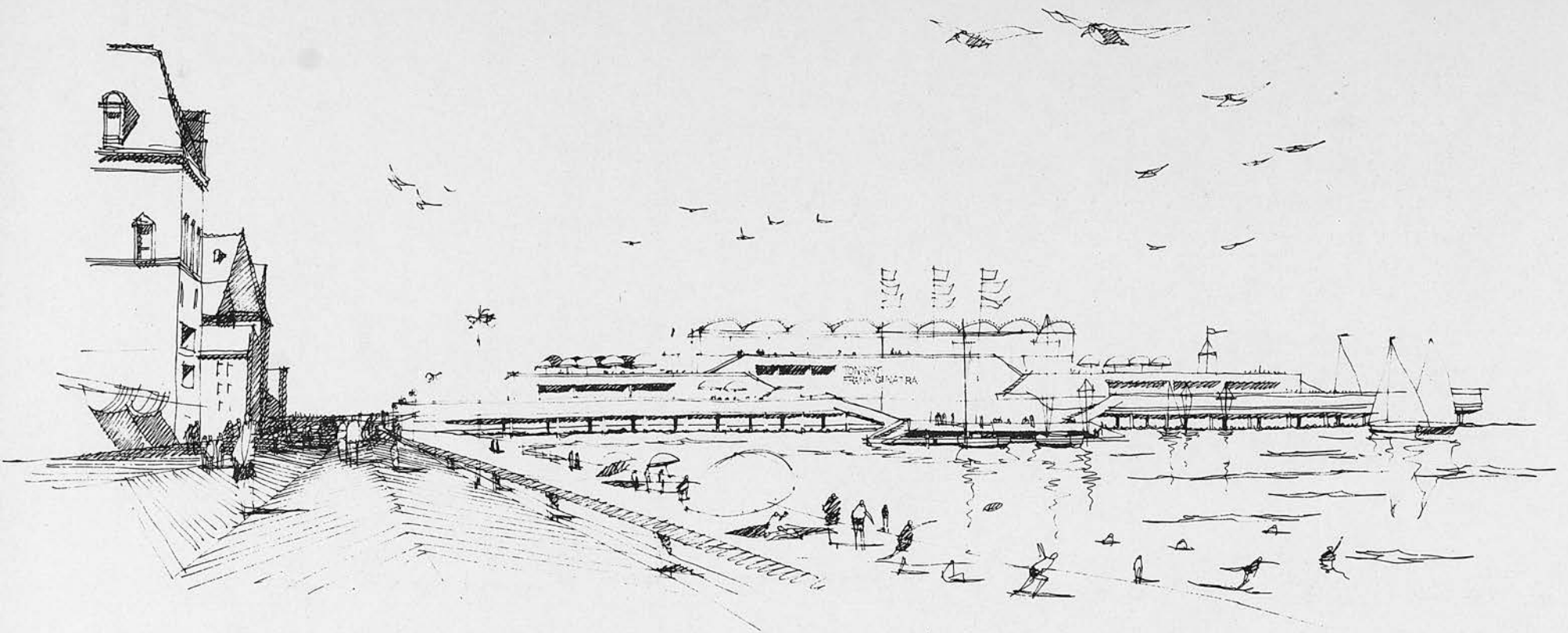
PLANTS

BOARDWALK

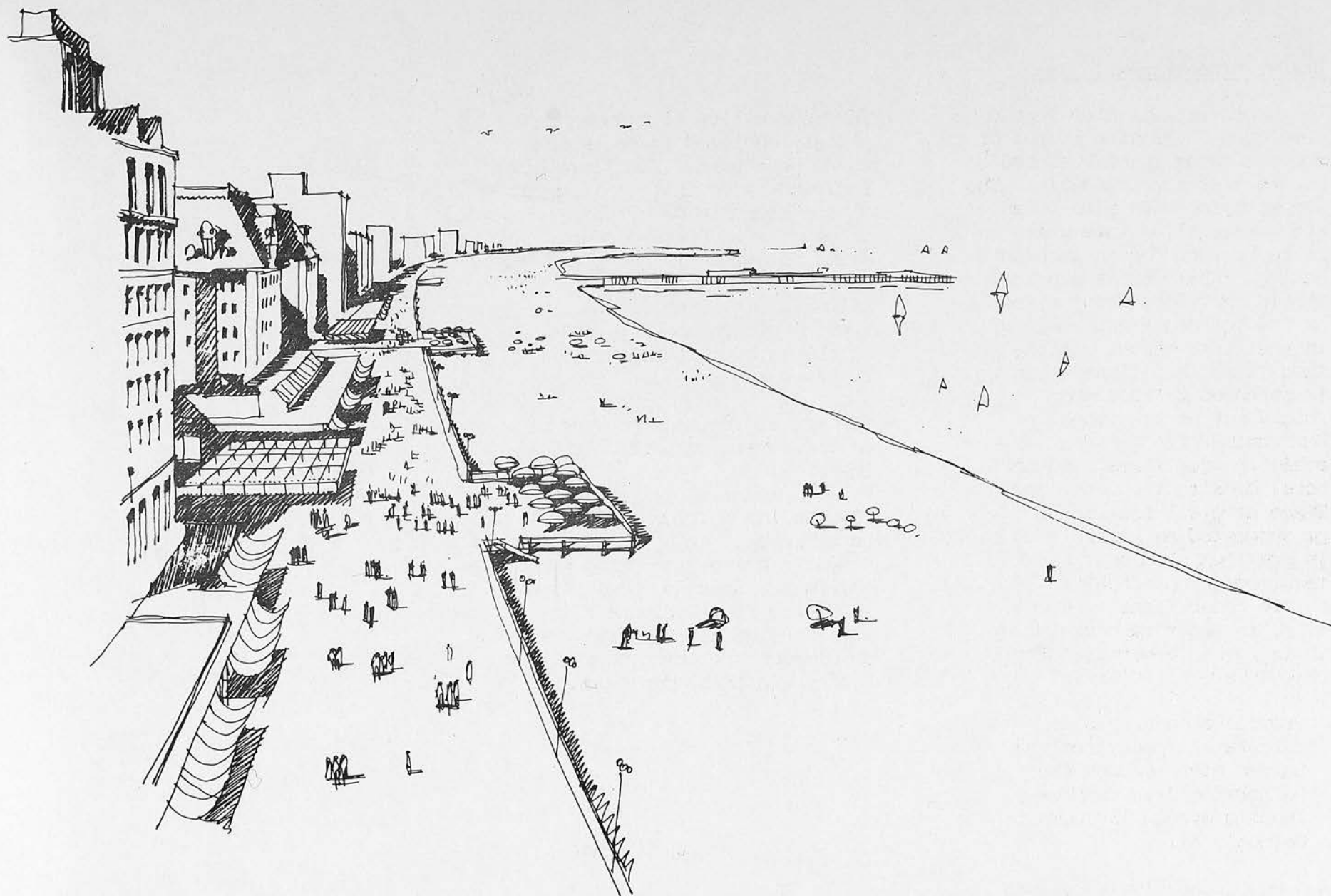
OUTDOOR DINING

BEACH





ENTERTAINMENT PIER



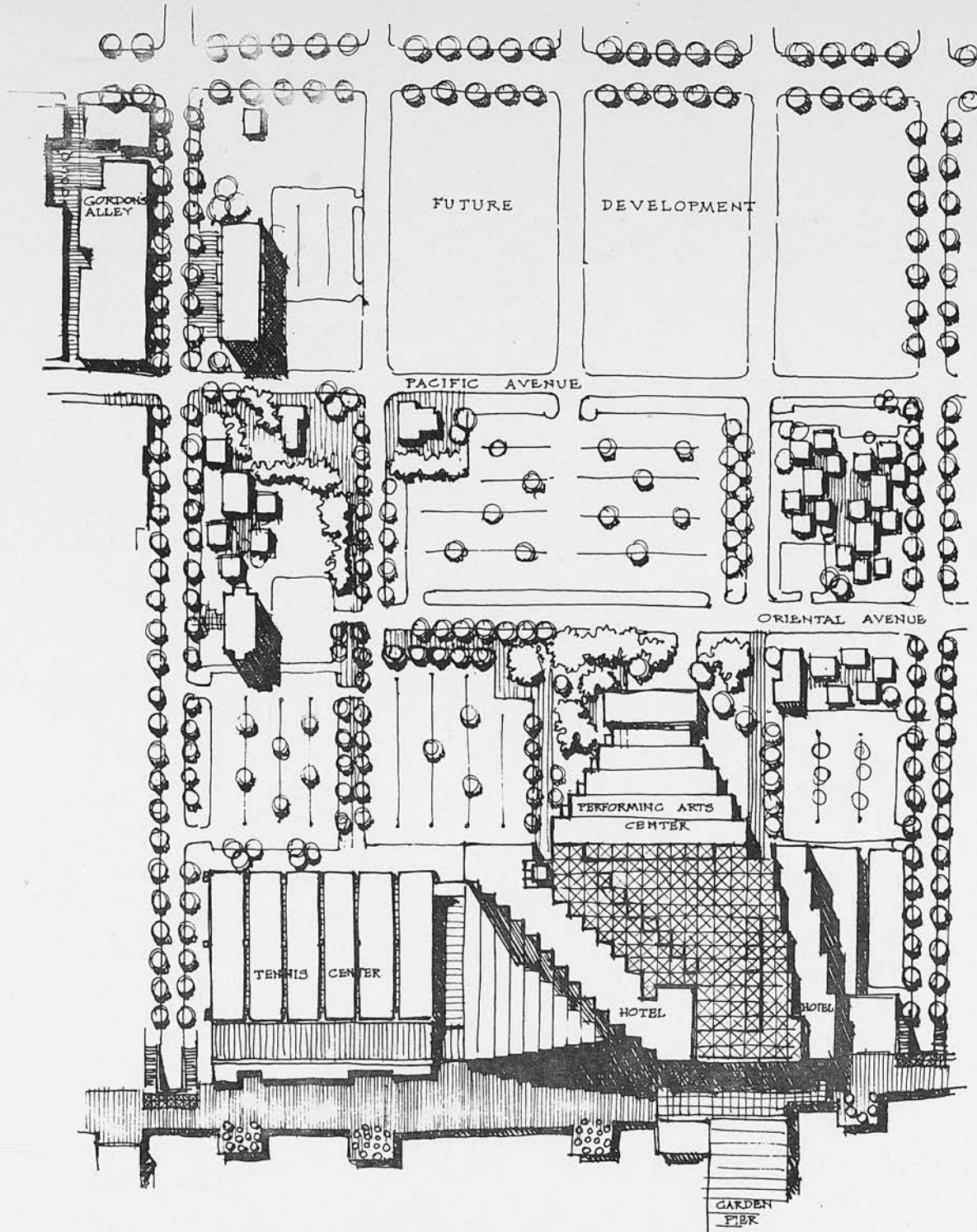
BOARDWALK AERIAL

### Uptown Urban Renewal Plan

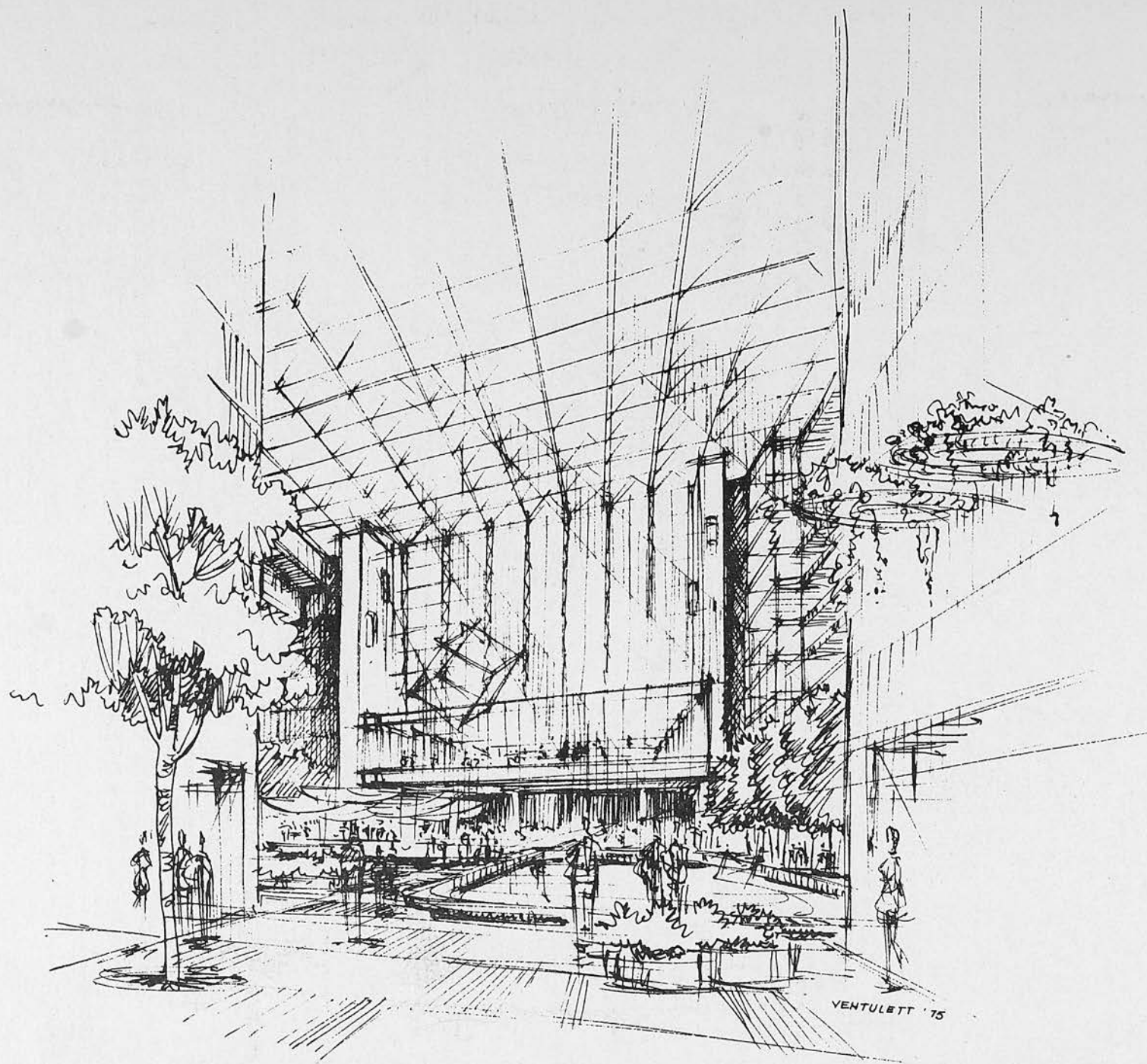
The urban renewal area should be developed to provide an anchor for the major hotel/business district of the boardwalk. The accompanying site plan is an attempt to illustrate what is to be included in such an ending. Whatever is provided should therefore front directly on the boardwalk and, hopefully, in the first stage. At the same time, the illustration is intended to show what should not be precluded. Performing Arts Center, athletic facilities, and new hotel construction are shown. These have all been included or suggested as possible uses in previous studies. Our recommendations seek to relate these ideas to each other in order to maximize their public benefits. The changes are as follows:

- Provide a major public circulation path from the Garden Pier through the Performing Arts Complex leading eventually down to Gordon's Alley.
- A major and simply defined urban space created by the Performing Arts Center and commercial/hotel buildings.
- The possibility of a completely enclosed space is not to be precluded. Finally, this enclosed space is to be framed on the fourth side by the Garden Pier. Space of this size and nature is not presently found anywhere in Atlantic City; yet is the type of public amenity found in the major cultural centers of the world.
- Commercial frontage provided on the remaining portion of the site.
- Develop the portions of the urban renewal area towards Atlantic Avenue according to the market demands, possibly resulting from Gordon's Alley such as a Farmer's Market, or development relating to the Performing Arts complex and hotels.

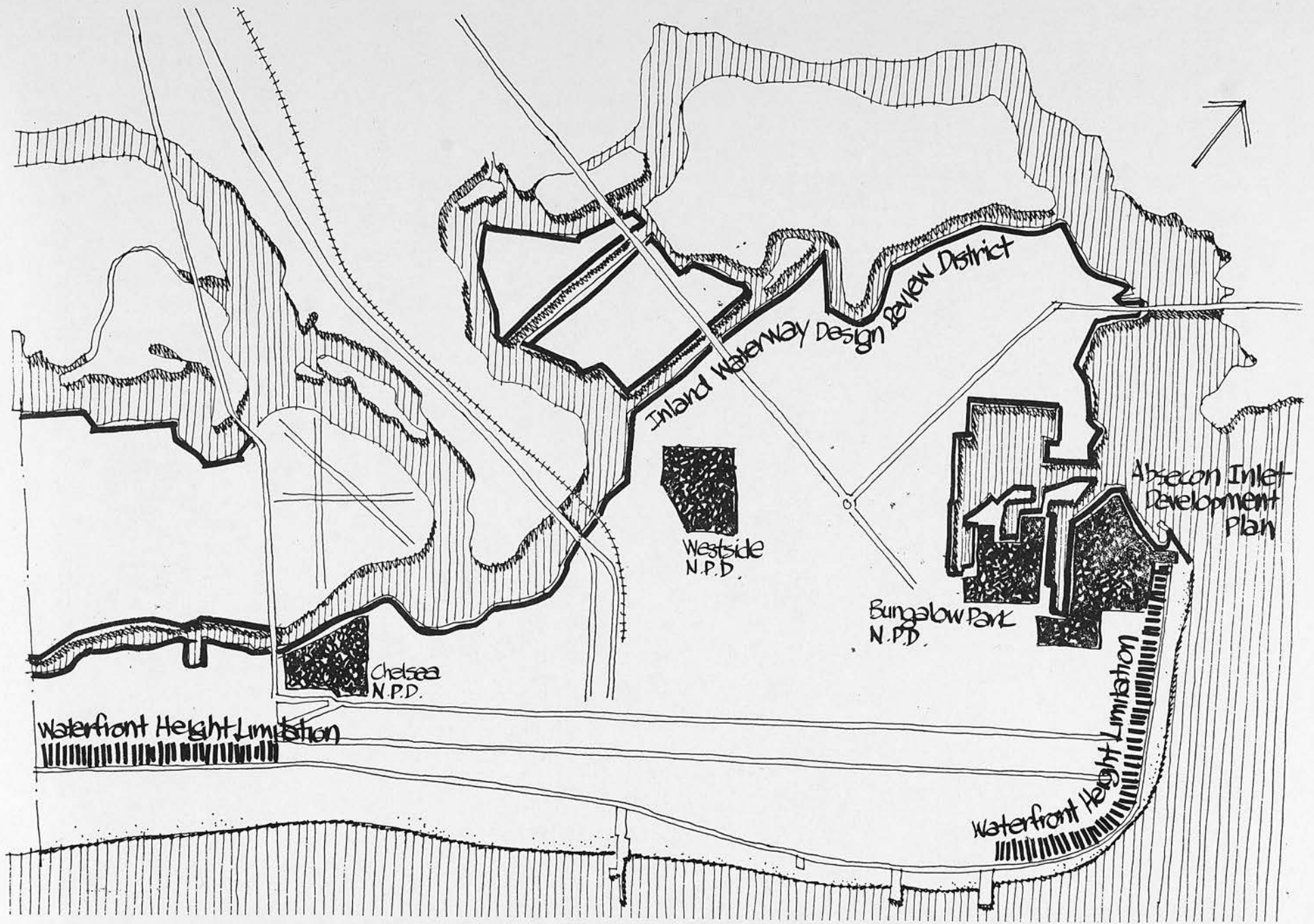




UPTOWN REDEVELOPMENT



PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



# HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY





### Absecon Inlet Redevelopment

There are a number of independent major proposed planning actions and approved projects located adjacent to each other at the northern end of the Inlet. The Gardiner Basin project is proposed to generate economic development relating to the historical and present maritime activity. The project takes advantage of the existing commercial and recreational fishing piers and the unique natural setting. The proposal includes a restaurant, shops, a South Jersey Seacraft Museum, a permanent berth for the "Flying Cloud", marine services, and parking.

Immediately upland from this waterfront development is another project, recently proposed by the Atlantic Human Resources, Inc. for residential redevelopment of approximately 40 acres for 1,040 new and rehabilitated housing units under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The approved Uptown School Complex is adjacent to both these projects and should be related directly to the housing

renewal which it would presumably serve.

There are also existing opportunities, Captain Starn's is one of the most diversified commercial establishment in Atlantic City. It caters to a variety of income groups, permanent residents and transients and offers both food and entertainment. It is a reasonable model for waterfront development. Bacharach Park is another amenity for both the residential renewal and the waterfront development. It is also city owned and consequently a possible lever for development action.

The accompanying site plan illustrates how these efforts and opportunities can be combined into a single and more comprehensive redevelopment of the Absecon Inlet. This plan would enable the redevelopment of the Absecon Inlet to do the following:

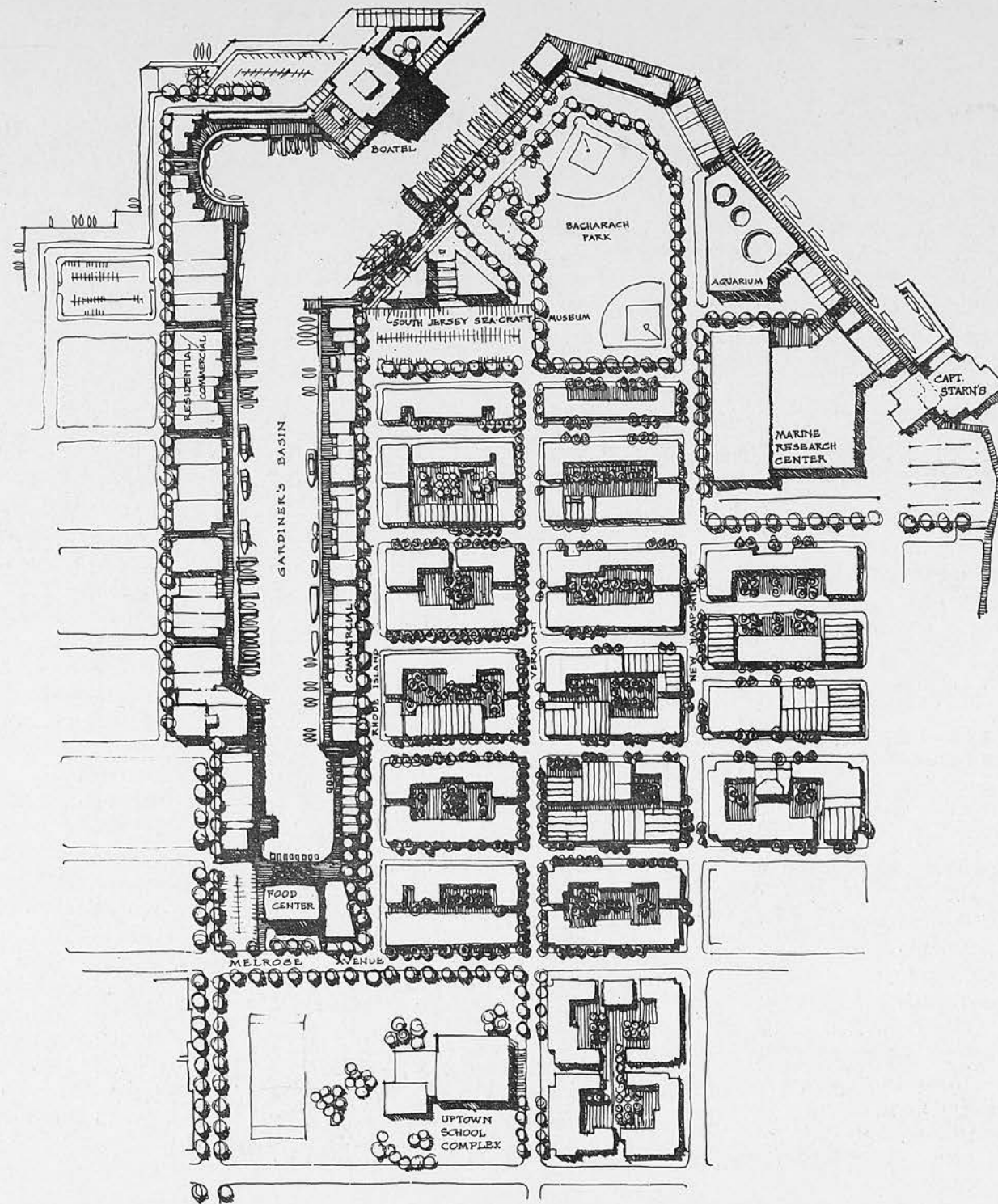
- take better advantage of such opportunities as Captain Starn's;
- Add other maritime uses such as an aquarium, a boatel, a maritime/environmental

research facility,

- Minimize the taking of Bacharach Park and thereby maintain this neighborhood park on the waterfront.

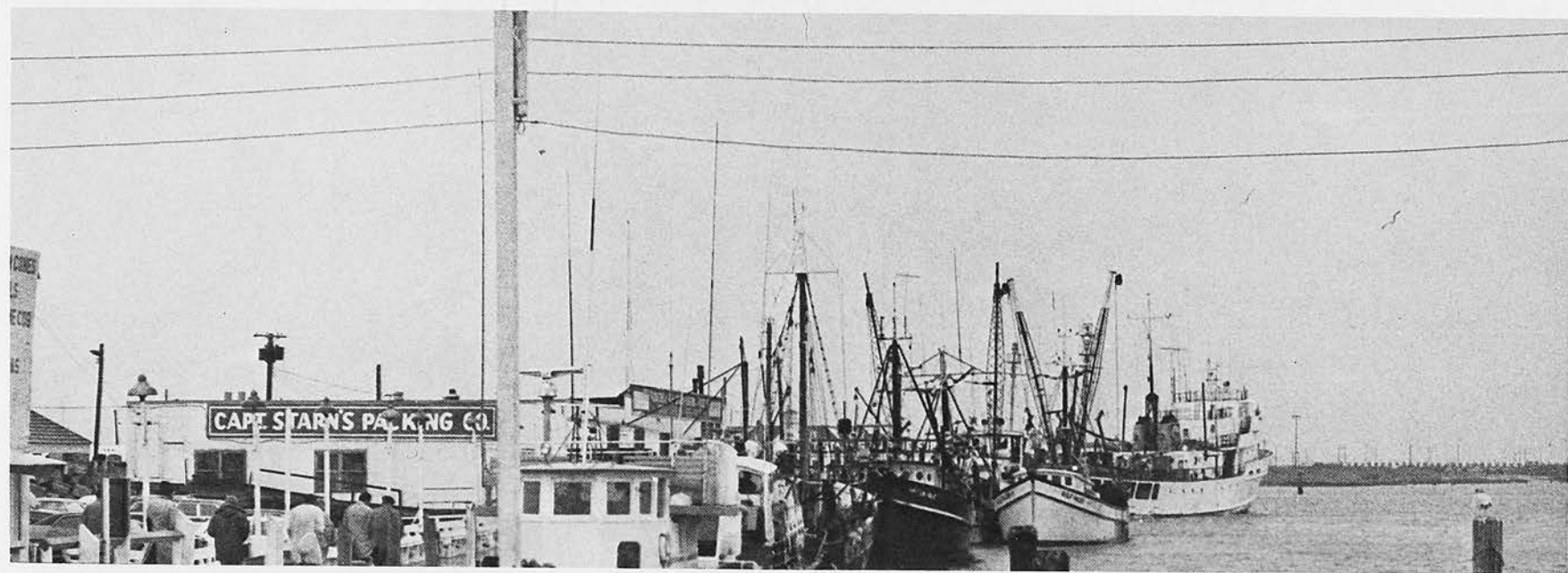
The existing Atlantic City Transportation Company bus garage is an inappropriate use in the context of such a comprehensive waterfront development. The structure however, is worth saving and can be used as the housing for some of the additional maritime functions. This re-use proposal is important in that it links the majority of the available waterfront frontage with Captain Starn's. In return for the obvious benefits that accrue to Captain Starn's in terms of the new and additional attractions to increase traffic to this relatively isolated location, it is recommended that an agreement be drawn to guarantee a free and easy public path from the end of the existing boardwalk at Caspian Avenue through the Captain Starn's complex where it is then possible to continue around the Gardiner Basin to Melrose Avenue and the Uptown School Complex Park.

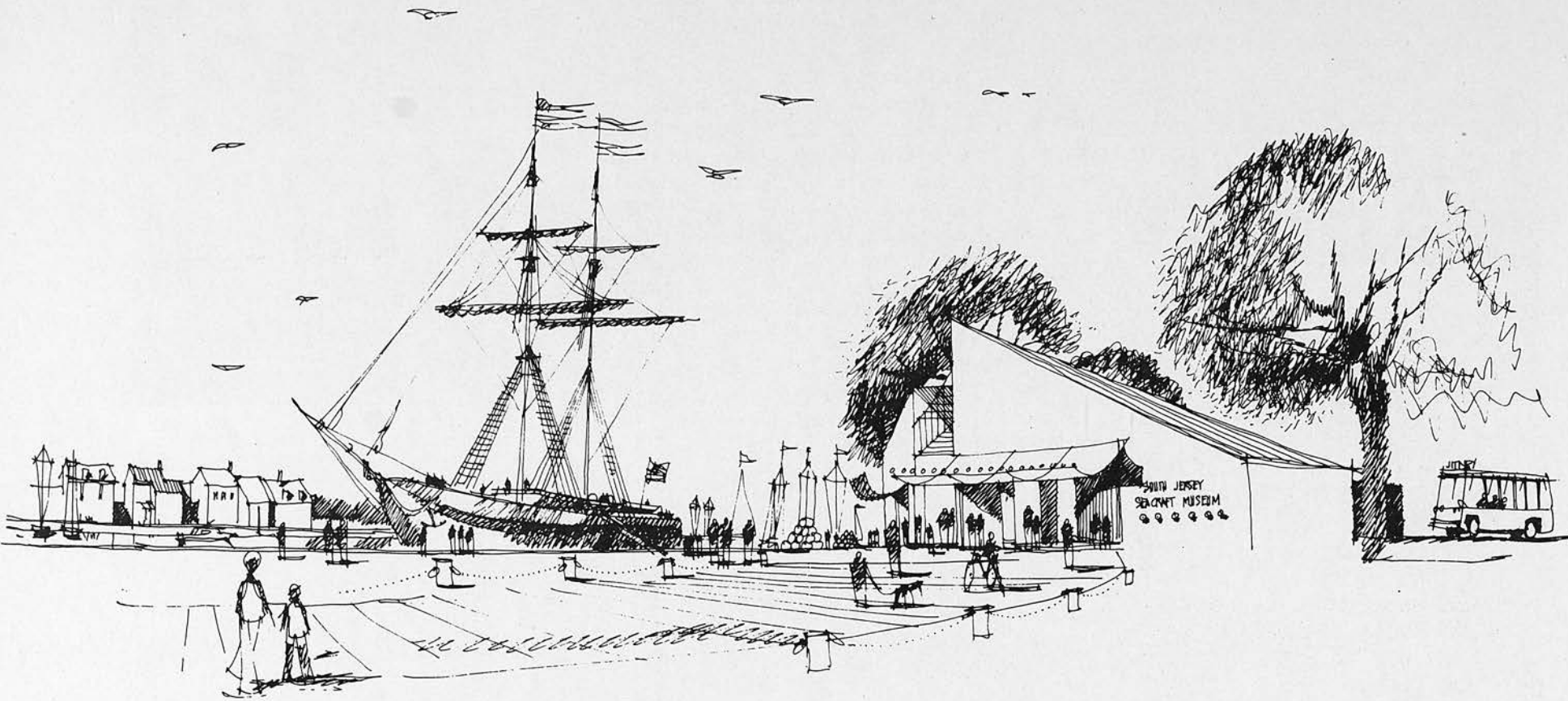




ABSECON INLET DEVELOPMENT PLAN







ABSECON INLET DEVELOPMENT

Access to this area can be further increased by extending Jitney service on New Hampshire Avenue and around the waterfront edge and back on Rhode Island Avenue.

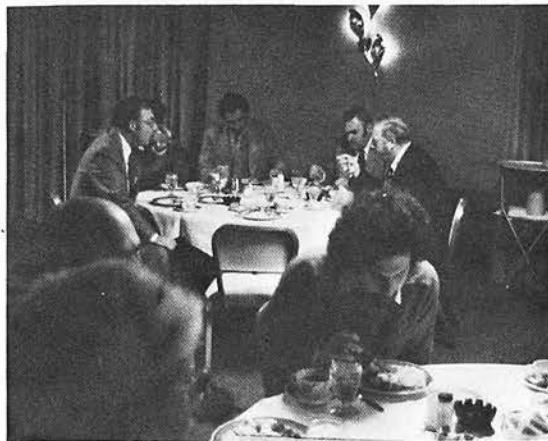
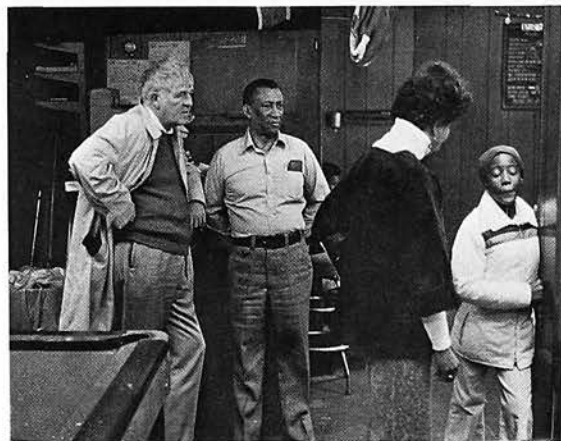
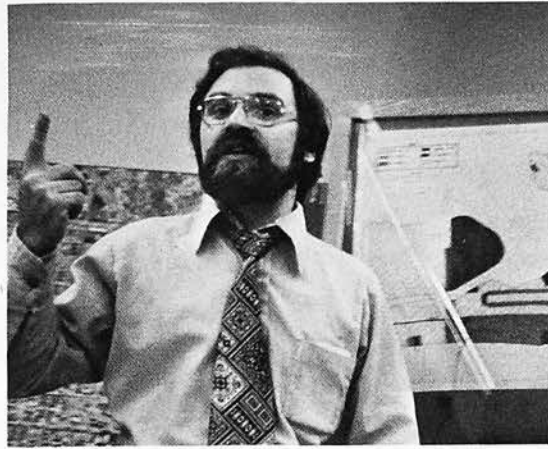
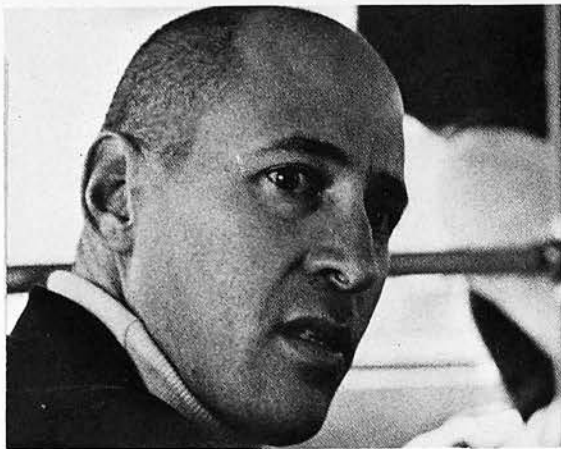
With regard to the housing portion of the Absecon Inlet Development, it is not necessary to do wholesale clearance. Rehab wherever possible, should occur. The new housing should conform to the existing street patterns and the alleys to be used as access to a series of residential courts. The priority of sites should be delegated first to the frontages around the School and then the waterfront. The Bungalow Park Neighborhood Preservation District is recommended for the West Side of the Basin.

A comprehensive design of the entire public path system along the waterfront is recommended. It should include the landscaping, graphics, furniture and lighting of the paths as well as controls on the buildings and shop fronting these paths. It is further recommended that this physical development plan also be interpreted to include minority job opportunities and business participation in the construction and operations of

the project.

In conclusion it is important to note that this is the one area where there is considerable interest from all segments of this divided city. There appears to be little conflict in their independent plans. There is a great opportunity to come together, if for no other reason than to advance their own individual goals. Through cooperation even more benefits can result than would be separately realized. Moreover, it is important that a cooperative venture of this kind be undertaken and succeed. Atlantic City needs successful endeavors that bring together diverse interests and perspectives. Absecon Inlet can be that success.





## THE R/UDAT PROGRAM

In response to requests for assistance from local communities the Urban Planning and Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects has been sending teams of design professionals to various American communities since 1967. Each team includes people from a variety of disciplines. The number of team members and their areas of specialization vary as each team is carefully assembled to address those issues facing the community to be visited. Fundamental to the program is the concept of public service. Team members are selected for their particular expertise in specific problem areas and serve without remuneration and agree not to accept commissions for work resulting from their recommendations. Their general charge is to acquaint themselves with the community and its people, to analyze the existing conditions from a fresh perspective and to offer recommendations for urban design frameworks and concepts.

The objectives of the R/UDAT program are as follows: to improve the regional/urban condition in the nation;

to illustrate the importance of the urban design framework for community development and regional planning; to stimulate public awareness and action and focus efforts toward improving communities through citizen involvement in urban design and planning issues and to support local AIA chapters in their efforts to improve the physical design of their communities.

### The Visit

The request for a R/UDAT team was approved last spring and later Ronald A. Straka, AIA, representing the AIA Urban Planning and Design Committee, made two reconnaissance visits to Atlantic City to observe and discuss the details of the team's visit. The team was organized and was sent extensive background material in advance on the study area, and on November 14-17 the team made its visit. After meetings with city, county and other officials and planners, civic leaders and organizations, together with interested citizens' groups, the team surveyed the city by jitney, boat, air and on foot.

With this information, the team engaged in intensive work

sessions which culminated in a public presentation on November 17, when this report was presented.

The expenses for the R/UDAT visit were underwritten by the South Jersey Chapter of the New Jersey Society of Architects and the Atlantic City Improvement Association.

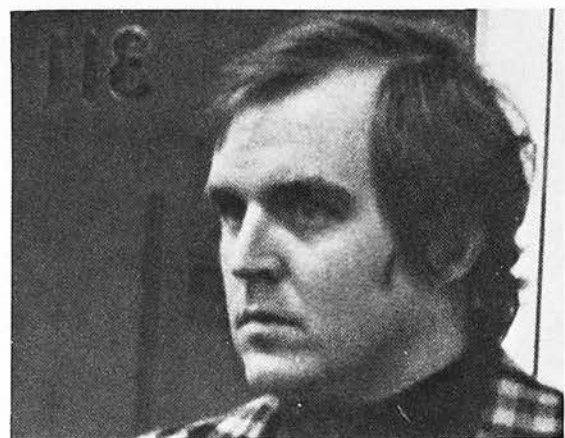
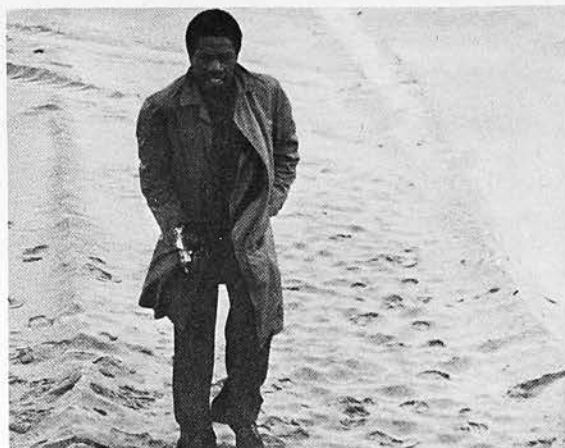
### The Team

This study was prepared by the following members of the Atlantic City R/UDAT team:

Rai Y. Okamoto, FAIA, AIP, Team Chairman, heads his own urban design firm, the Okamoto Associates in San Francisco. He has lectured extensively at Stanford, MIT, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania and at the Royal Danish Academy. His current projects include the Downtown Plan for Vancouver, Washington, the Urban Design Plan for San Francisco and the San Diego Transit and Urban Design Impact study. His publications include Urban Design Manhattan published by Viking.

Stanton Eckstut, is Associate Professor of Architecture at Columbia University where he is Assistant Director of the







Graduate Program in Urban Design. He has been a Research Associate at the Center for Advanced Research in Urban and Environmental Affairs as well as a member of the Urban Design Group at the New York Department of City Planning.

Peter M. Hasselman, AIA, is a member of the firm of Smith, Segreti, Stillwell and Hasselman in Washington. He was AIA Project Chairman for the Architect's Plan for Downtown Washington and Chairman of the Committee on Industrial Siting. He has been a critic and lecturer at Catholic University, Gettysburg College and Howard University.

Florence C. Ladd, PhD. is an environmental psychologist and is Associate Professor in City Planning in the Department of City and Regional Planning in the Graduate School of Design at Harvard. She has written extensively on adolescents in public places, residential environments and the family life cycle and gerontology.

Jerome J. Michael, an economist, is President of his own firm specializing in market research, development

consulting, and urban development. His firm has worked with such urban agencies as the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the Urban Development Corporation of New York. Foreign assignments include Carleton Centre in Johannesburg, World Trade Center in Jakarta and Marmonte Roble in El Salvador.

Michael M. Danielson, PhD., is Professor of Politics and Public Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton. His writings on urban matters are varied and have been published widely. He has served as consultant to many organizations such as the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Task Force on the Cities and the Ford Foundation.

Thomas W. Ventulett, III, AIA, is a member of the firm of Thompson, Ventulett and Stainback, Inc. of Atlanta. He is the principal in charge of Design and has experienced the development of more than three hundred million dollars worth of construction since the

firm was founded. His experience with a broad range of projects of varied use contribute to the firm's awareness and special care in providing the humane qualities in all architecture. The firm is currently planning a \$125 million Atlanta Omni/Georgia World Congress Center complex.

Graduate Students in architecture and urban design from Princeton and Columbia Universities played significant roles on the team. They are: Robert L. Andrews, C. Steven Gilbert, Steven F. Gilliland, Andrew S. Mazurek, Robert M. Meyer and Juan Manuel Salazar from Princeton and Daniel Shao-Huang Sze from Columbia. They worked under the direction of Christopher Chadbourne, of Chadbourne Associates, Urban Design and Land Development, New York, Visiting Lecturer at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at Princeton.



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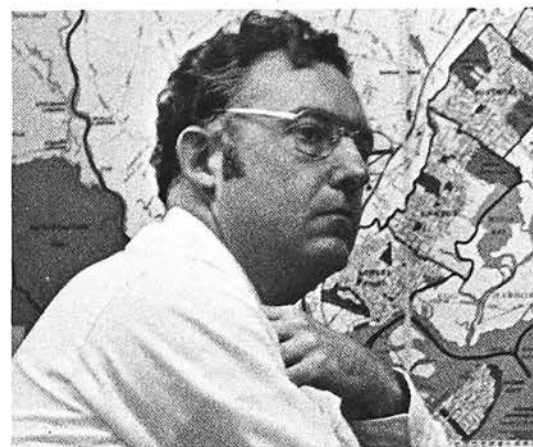
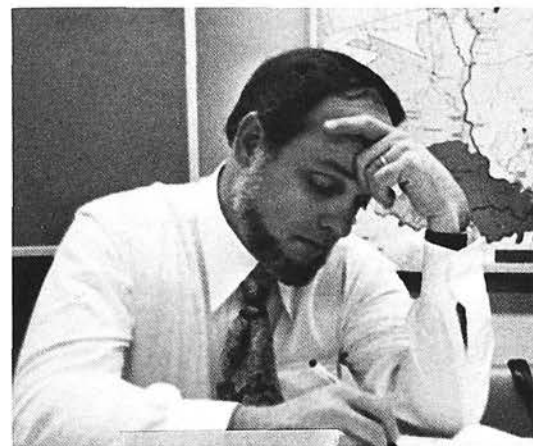
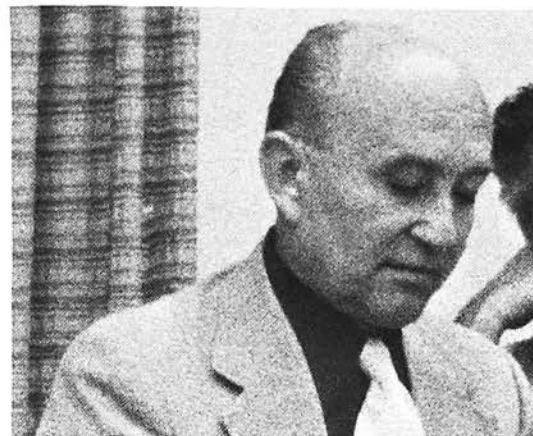
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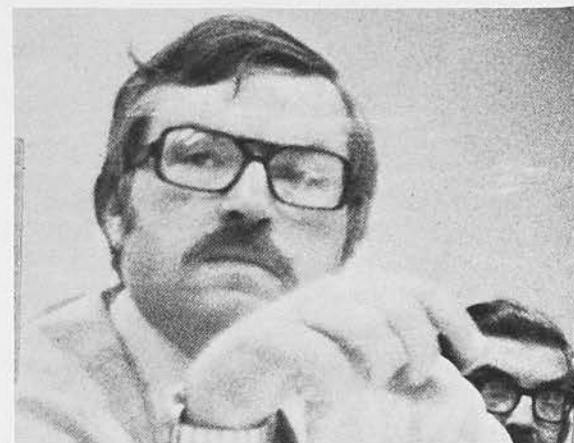


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Program.

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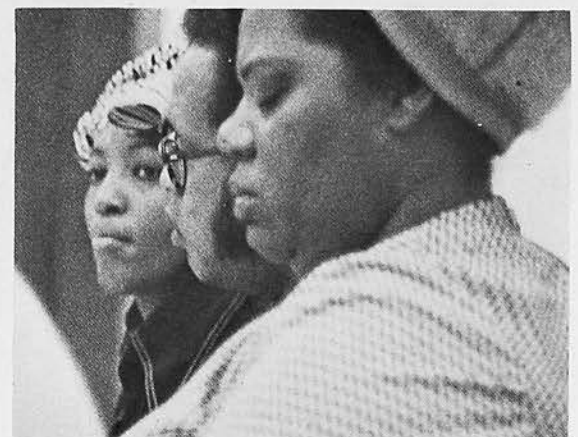
Atlantic City Renaissance  
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Association of New Jersey  
Knights of Pythias  
Rotary Club of Atlantic City  
Radio Station WMID  
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Women's Club

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Atlantic City Jitney's  
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