

Perth Amboy

Section 1: Overview of Perth Amboy and Its Waterfront



USGS, Aerial Photo, 1995

1.1 Geographical Overview

Perth Amboy was founded in 1683 and today is 4.7 square miles in size. The city is located along the eastern border of Middlesex County in central New Jersey with Woodbridge Township to the west and north and to the east, is the Arthur Kill waterway that meets the southern boundary of the Raritan River. This location places Perth Amboy only 24 miles from New York City and links it to a highly developed and accessible transportation infrastructure, including the NJ Turnpike, Garden State Parkway, Route 1, Route 9, Route 35, and linkages to mass transit buses and trains along the NJ Transit Coastline Rail-line. The train line runs from New York City down to Point Pleasant. The Arthur Kill, Raritan River and Raritan Bay are accessible waterways linking routes to New York City, Sandy Hook Bay, and out to the Atlantic Ocean.

1.2 Demographics



According to the 2000 Census, Perth Amboy's population is hovering just under 50,000. The racial composition is predominantly white with individuals of Spanish origin or nationality rising to comprise 40% of population.

Approximately, 19% of the city's total population was born in foreign countries.

From 1962 to 1988 single-family and two-family residential land use, mixed-use, heavy industrial use, vacant land, railroads and road percentages decreased while multi-family residential use, commercial use, public uses, quasi-public uses, recreation, and light

Source: Bonnie J. McCay, Debbie Mans, Satsuki Takahashi, and Sheri Seminski. 2005. "Public Access and Waterfront Development in New Jersey: From the Arthur Kill to the Shrewsbury River ." Keyport, New Jersey: NY NJ Baykeeper. <http://www.nymjbaykeeper.org>

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industrial use increased. The trend seems to be continuing and encouraged based on the City's new Master Plan. In April 2005 CNN Money named Perth Amoy one of the hottest zip codes in the country based on a national, independent mortgage and housing study. Home values in Perth Amboy have appreciated by 126.90% over the past five years and are expected to increase by another 13% over the next year. The median house value is \$260,000.

Major sources of revenue in Perth Amboy are common to that of most municipalities throughout New Jersey: namely, property tax and increasing the number of homes that in turn increase the existing municipal tax revenue base. Additionally, the major sources of employment in the city are the "Raritan Bay Medical Center" Hospital and the Perth Amboy Board of Education.

1.3 Historical Overview of the Waterfront



Over the years, Perth Amboy's waterfront has undergone many major changes. The history of this city dates back to the Colonial Era when Perth Amboy served as the capital of the Province of East Jersey. The city served as a major import, export, and fishing port as well as an entry point for many immigrants. As a result of its extensive waterway access, railway and roadway infrastructure, and skilled workforce, the port served as a major entry point for raw materials making the City a manufacturing hub.

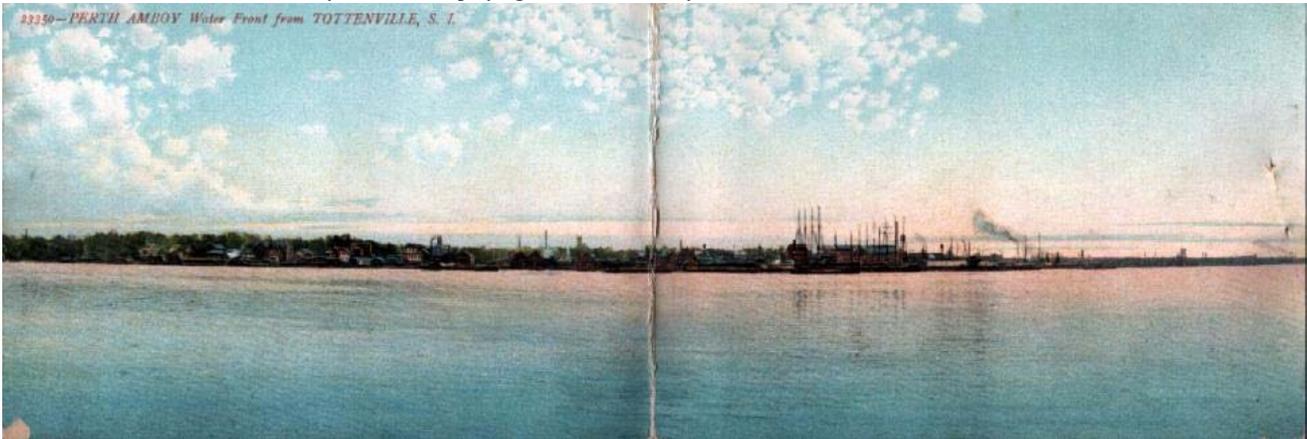
In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this major manufacturing center continued to flourish. Perth Amboy's natural clay deposits proved highly profitable and suitable for the terra cotta industry, which provided a robust industrial economy. Additionally, the port also served as a major supplier of ship building in the Northeast region. With the combination of manufacturing, industry, the deep water port amenities as well as the proximity to major transportation routes via land, petro-chemical companies and primary

Source: Bonnie J. McCay, Debbie Mans, Satsuki Takahashi, and Sheri Seminski. 2005. "Public Access and Waterfront Development in New Jersey: From the Arthur Kill to the Shrewsbury River ." Keyport, New Jersey: NY NJ Baykeeper. <http://www.nynjbaykeeper.org>

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metals refining developed and thrived. The city also had the ferry service called the “Tottenville Ferry” with service beginning 1709 and ending in 1963 due to a fire. This ferry service’s route once provided transport connecting Perth Amboy to Staten Island, some New York destination and other New Jersey shore points. The old ferry terminal has been restored and stands as a Historic Site.

Photo: Turn of the Century Postcard Displaying the “Perth Amboy Waterfront” from Tottenville, Staten Island



In looking to recent decades, transformations in the economy and industries occurred with the advancement of technologies, shifting demands for and availability of raw materials which left the City economically depressed. These impacts were also reflected in the decreased use of the waterfront as this once thriving port and its associated economy suffered throughout the post-industrial era. Some additional major changes within the recent decades include some older industrial companies leaving, relocating and closing their businesses; however, Hess, Chevron, General Cable, ASNR, National Lead, Dry Dock, CeloTex, Stoll Terminal Pipeline, Kinder Morgan Tank Farm (pumps to destinations), Texas Colonial PoxAir are all still active and own property along the waterway.

In 1978, the City’s administration began to reactivate the dormant waterfront area through redevelop beginning with tearing down the old docks and plans began for waterfront improvements as applications for federal, state, and other grant funds were explored and acquired. Public and private partnerships were created in an effort to

Source: Bonnie J. McCay, Debbie Mans, Satsuki Takahashi, and Sheri Seminski. 2005. “Public Access and Waterfront Development in New Jersey: From the Arthur Kill to the Shrewsbury River .” Keyport, New Jersey: NY NJ Baykeeper. <http://www.nynjbaykeeper.org>

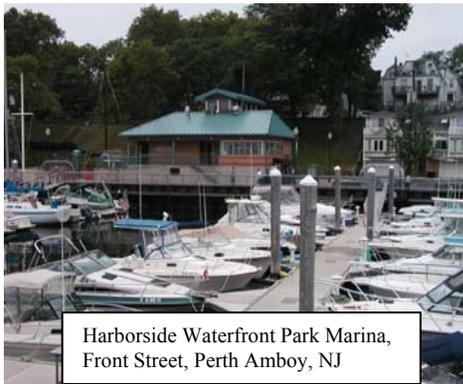
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rebuild the City's economy beginning with the waterfront. The Perth Amboy Waterfront's Development and economic viability continue today to be the focal point of plans and activities.

Section 2: Perth Amboy Waterfront Use

2.1 Summary of Waterfront

Today, Perth Amboy's waterfront area comprises three miles, half of which is owned by the municipality and the remaining half owned by private industry. The waterfront area of town has been designated as a Marine District. As stated earlier, the waterfront itself consists of the Raritan River, the Arthur Kill, and the Raritan Bay.



At the waterfront, the public engages in both active and passive recreation. The marina currently has one privately-owned party boat, the "Sea Pigeon," for fishing and one privately owned dinner cruise boat called the "Cornucopia Princess."

Additionally, in April 2005 the Tallship Unicorn, a 118-foot long first class charter and sail training

boat, has moved to Perth Amboy's Harborside Marina. There is also the "Seabra's Armory Portuguese Restaurant" which opened in the mid-1980s. This restaurant is located in the old ammunition "armory" building during World War 1 and World War 2. Other recreational waterfront uses include social and civic events, special events such as The Raritan Yacht Club's Red Grant Regatta, the Summer Breeze Jazz Cruise Concert Series and the Concerts By the Bay, photography for weddings and other special occasions, walking and jogging along the beach or the half mile waterfront walkway, enjoying the beautiful views, fishing along the four fishing piers, sun-bathing, boating, sailing, kayaking, flying kites or simply sitting on one of the many benches lining the waterfront facing the water.

Source: Bonnie J. McCay, Debbie Mans, Satsuki Takahashi, and Sheri Seminski. 2005. "Public Access and Waterfront Development in New Jersey: From the Arthur Kill to the Shrewsbury River ." Keyport, New Jersey: NY NJ Baykeeper. <http://www.nymjbaykeeper.org>

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There are also several commercial and industrial businesses in the city that depend on waterfront access and the deep-water port. These businesses include the Perth Amboy Yacht Club, Kinder Morgan, Hess, Chevron, and Co-Steel Painter.. .

At present, there are no bait shops or marine railway. Within the City's redevelopment plans, there are plans to add bait shops and more restaurants within the waterfront area. Additionally, two thousand units of "Brownstone" style homes are being planned for the "Landings at Harborside" development. The development is currently in its first phase. According to the City's Administration, the eventual completion of the \$600 million, 49 acre project being developed by a private developer- Kushner Companies- will include: 2000 residential units, town-homes and mid-rise condominiums, 150,000 square-feet of retail, a community cultural arts center, a public waterfront promenade, new parks, and open spaces.

2.2 Waterfront Access



Harborside Flag,
Perth Amboy, NJ

As noted earlier, the waterfront's three mile length is currently half owned by the municipality and half owned by private industry.

Public access to the municipally-owned waterfront is highly evident.

Based on interviews and site visits, there are signs all throughout the municipally-owned waterfront. The City's signs guide the public towards the waterfront area. One brochure show photos and a walking map to guide readers through sights of historic buildings listed on the federal historic registry throughout Perth Amboy. (1993, City of Perth Amboy, "Old Perth Amboy Walking Guide)

Still, signage in Perth Amboy will increase throughout the City's waterfront area including the newly redeveloped beaches noting the approved and intended public uses of these amenities. Specifically, improvements in signage along the newer fishing piers are

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planned. The existing piers of waterfront near the marina on Front Street have adequate signage but require maintenance due to frequency of missing signs.



Parking along the waterfront is available in public lots, such as on Front Street, Second Street and Sadowski Parkway, and along city streets throughout the waterfront area. Still, on weekends and for special waterfront events-like festivals, holidays, and boating events- there is always a shortage of parking. Plans are being explored by the municipality to expand the existing “trackless trolley system” to transport tourists from off-site parking to the waterfront area during increased demand for parking in the summer months.

Currently, there are also plans to improve connections to better link the city and its community by way of the planned “Rt 440 -to- High Street extension” into the residential development of “Harbortown” and “River View Drive” to connect to Sadowski Parkway.

Presently, no private residential owners have waterfront property due to the need to have a protected area between the bulkhead and the Pier line. Residences and restaurants are not permitted to line the docks. There are public access points to the waterfront all throughout the municipally owned areas of the city. Specifically, there are open areas in residential developments, such as “Harbortown,” the marina, Bayview Park, along Sadowski Parkway, and in the future with the planned walkway/esplanade along the stretch of waterfront from the fishing piers to the Outerbridge Crossing Bridge, and within the plans for the mixed residential and commercial development called the “Landings at Harborside.” The city’s vision is for all the existing waterfront and planned redevelopment to have links to the waterfront.

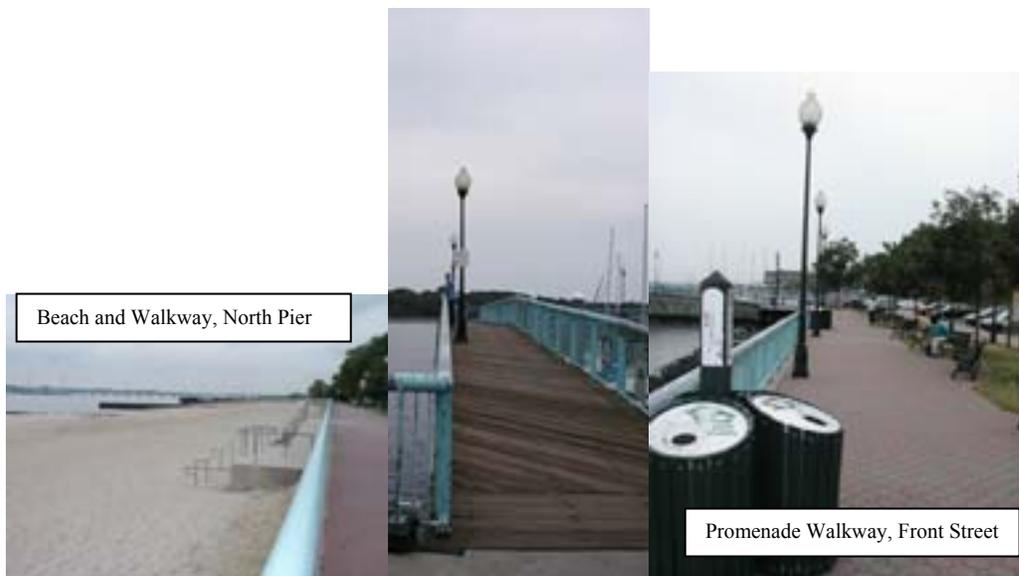
Many shoreline improvements have been made with city, state and federal funds. There are one and the half miles of waterfront walkway, four fishing piers (referred to as North

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fishing pier, South fishing pier, High Street fishing pier and Brighton Street fishing pier), sunbathing beaches, parks and marina. Currently, there are no public boat launches and swimming is not allowed. It is important to note that all of the land along the existing waterfront is considered “park land” because “Green Acres” funds were used to acquire, refurbish, and maintain it. Based on the guidelines “Green Acres” funds, these areas must remain public.

Some portions of Perth Amboy’s waterfront are closed to the public due to private industrial use and ownership.



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	Common Name/Facility	Address/ Location	GPS	Fishing	Private Marina	Public Marina	Trailer Launch	Hand Launch	Passive Recreation	Birdwatching	Swimming	Parking	Handicapped Accessible	Picnic Facilities	Food Concessions	Restroom Facilities	Fee	
Publicly recognized sites	Municipal Fishing Pier- "North Fishing Pier"	Parallel to Front Street		X					X			X						
	Municipal Fishing Pier- "South Fishing Pier"	Parallel to Front Street		X					X			X						
	Municipal Fishing Pier- "High Street Fishing Pier"	End of High Street		X					X			X						
	Municipal Fishing Pier- " Brighton Fishing Pier"	End of Brighton Street		X					X			X						
	Harborside Waterfront Park (Marina)	Front Street		X		X			X	X		X	X		X	X		
	Harborside Waterfront Park	Water Street							X									
	Harborside Walkway & Parking	Front Street							X	X		X	X		X			
	Waterfront Promenade/ Walkway	Along waterfront from Front Street up along Water Street down to Brighton Avenue		X					X			X						
	Sadowski Parkway Waterfront Park	Along Sadowski Parkway		X					X	X		X	X					
	Sadowski Parkway Tennis Courts	Along Sadowski Parkway							X			X	X					
									X		X	X						
	Caledonia & Roessler Park	High Street & Sadowski							X			X	X					

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		Parkway													
	Bayview Park	Front Street		X				X			X	X			X
Informally used and accessible	None														
Private Property	Seabra's Armory Portuguese Seafood Restaurant	200 Front Street									X	X		X	X
	Raritan Yacht Club (RYC)	160 Water Street		X		X		X			X	X		X	X
	Chevron Industries	1200 State Street													
	Hess Industries	State Street													
	Kinder Morgan Tank and Pumping Station Industries	920 State Street													X
Others	"Cornucopia Princess" Dinner Cruise Service	Sales Office on Front Street						X			X	X		X	X
	Tallship Unicorn	Harborside Marina		X											X
	Sea Pigeon Fishing/Party Boat	Charter Party Boat Pier		X	X			X			X	X		X	X

Publicly recognized sites



North Fishing Pier: This is a municipally owned fishing pier that runs parallel to Front Street along the municipally owned Harborside Waterfront Park Marina next to the Seabra's Armory Portuguese Restaurant.

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Municipal Fishing Pier/“South Fishing Pier”: This is a municipally owned fishing pier that runs perpendicular to Front Street along the municipally owned Harborside Waterfront Park Marina by the Seabra’s Armory Portuguese Restaurant.

Municipal Fishing Pier/“High Street Fishing Pier”: This municipally owned fishing pier is located at the end of High Street in the historical waterfront section of Perth Amboy. There is an impervious bulk head at the base of the pier. This pier is also referred to in planning documents as Groin #1. Each “Groin” serves as a pipe for transporting water from storm sewers into the bay as needed, such as during peak storm events.

Municipal Fishing Pier/“Brighton Fishing Pier”: This municipally owned fishing pier is located at the end of Brighton Street in the historical waterfront section of Perth Amboy. This pier is also referred to in planning documents as Groin #5. Each “Groin” serves as a pipe for transporting water from storm sewers into the bay as needed, such as during peak storm events.

Harborside Waterfront Park (Marina): Located along Front Street in Perth Amboy. This park’s marina has 119 boats slips, two fishing piers (North Fishing Pier and South Fishing Pier), a Harbor Master building with restrooms, benches, and walkways.

Harborside Waterfront Park: Located on Water Street. It has benches and walkways.

Harborside Walkway & Parking: Along the Harborside Waterfront Park (Marina) on Front Street, there is also the Harborside walkway, benches and free-parking lots for about 80 cars.

Waterfront Promenade/ Walkway: The City of Perth Amboy is continuing to maintain and develop a Waterfront Promenade and Walkway. Currently, the promenade is along

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Front Street, Water Street, and along the Sadowski Parkway. Although the promenade is not yet complete or contiguous, the length was stated to be about 7.6 miles in length.



Sadowski Parkway Waterfront Park:

Located along the Sadowski Parkway. The park has a gazebo, benches, beaches, fishing piers (High Street Fishing Pier and

Brighton Fishing Pier), and open areas.

Sadowski Parkway Tennis Courts: Located along the Sadowski Parkway across the street from a stretch of Sadowski Parkway Waterfront Park. This park has bleachers, tennis courts, and a recreation building.

Caledonia & Roessler Park: This park is located on the corner of High Street and Sadowski Parkway. It is within viewing distance of the water and has a baby swing set, adult swing set, benches and a children's play system.

Bayview Park: Located along Front Street. The park has a covered open-air pavilion used as a bandstand, restrooms and benches.

Private Property

Seabra's Armory Portuguese Seafood Restaurant: Located at 200 Front Street. It is a spanish, Portuguese, seafood, barbeque restaurant. The restaurant uses some municipal parking in the lot adjacent to its property.

Perth Amboy Yacht Club: The Raritan Yacht Club (RYC), an organization run by RYC members for its members, is located at 160 Water Street. It was founded in 1865. The Club's main use is for sailing and social activities for the four hundred members. The Club has a main building with a Grill Room containing a dining area and bar, the Surf

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Room containing a separate bar and sitting room, a few meeting rooms as well as the Club offices and the galley. The Galley service is provided by a concessionaire.

The yard has restrooms and showers as well as lockers and dinghy storage racks. There is boat storage in both summer and winter, available on a seniority basis. Members may use the yard crane to launch trailed boats weighing up to 7,500 lbs. A gin pole for mast work is also available.

Chevron Industries: Chevron Industries has a refinery in Perth Amboy surrounded the Woodbridge Creek is to the north property border, the Arthur Kill is to the east, other private industrial properties to the south and Route 35 (locally known as Convery Blvd) to the west. The facility is located at 1200 State Street in Perth Amboy.

In operation since 1920, this facility reduced its business of petroleum refining in 1983 to refining crude oil into asphalt cement and gasoline blending components and operates wharf and storage facilities for crude oil, asphalt, and light hydrocarbon products. Today, approximately 90 employees work on-site in operations, maintenance, technical, and administration functions. The facility, formerly known as Chevron Products Company, is a division of Chevron USA Incorporated.

According to a facility report by EPA, this 368 acres facility is responsible for releasing contaminants into the surrounding waters. Assessment and clean-up plans continue to date.

Hess Industries: The Hess Terminal, part of Amerada Hess Corporation, is located on State Street in Perth Amboy and according to sources is the only company that still brings ships up Raritan River.

Kinder Morgan Liquids Terminal: The Kinder Morgan Liquids Terminal (KMLT), also referred to as tank-farms and pumping station, is located along the Arthur Kill at 920

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State Street in Perth Amboy. It has one shipping dock, one barge dock, 104 tanks and handles commodities of chemicals, petroleum, and cry bulk materials.

Other

“Cornucopia Princess” Dinner Cruise Service: Cornucopia Princess is a dinner cruise liner and sight-seeing vessel docked at the foot of Smith Street at Front Street in Perth Amboy. The vessel belongs to the Cornucopia Cruise Line which operates two vessels for meal cruises and moonlight cruises. It is was established in 1998 and leases the old Naval Marine Academy Complex from the City of Perth Amboy. Parking is available in the nearby free-municipal parking lots adjacent to the dock.

Tallship Unicorn: In April 2005 the Tallship Unicorn, a 118-foot long first class charter and sail training boat, has moved to Perth Amboy’s Harborside Marina. The Tallship was open during the summer for public deck tours and private charters and will be permanently moored in the marina.

Sea Pigeon Fishing/Party Boat: "Sea Pigeon" is a 75 foot Fishing/Party Boat docked and running out of the Perth Amboy Waterfront Marina located on Front Street. Parking is available in the nearby free-municipal parking lots adjacent to the dock.

Section 3: Waterfront Issues and Planning Initiatives

3.1 Waterfront Issues

Based on interviews and archival document reviews, Perth Amboy is experiencing major redevelopment. Considering the focus of this study to identify and claim the coastal commons in industrialized and gentrified places, the existing design and future plans seem to be intent on providing public access; however, the area will incur added congestion along its waterfront roadways already in need of additional parking amenities.

Source: Bonnie J. McCay, Debbie Mans, Satsuki Takahashi, and Sheri Seminski. 2005. “Public Access and Waterfront Development in New Jersey: From the Arthur Kill to the Shrewsbury River .” Keyport, New Jersey: NY NJ Baykeeper. <http://www.nynjbaykeeper.org>

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Furthermore, evidence exists that the area is encountering gentrification as a by-product of the rapid pace of progress with redevelopment plans throughout the City.

The planned development projects for increased commercial and residential development may in fact lead to further gentrification as most of the current projects and pending initiatives seek to infill and redevelop the area with high-end stores, restaurants, and encourage more residential and light-use industrial development. In the summer of 2005 the Tri-State Shipyard and Ship Repair Industries, also referred to as the Perth Amboy Dry Dock, was dismantled to make way for residential development. This dry dock was one of the last in the area that serviced tug-boats, barges and naval vessels.



3.2 Planning Initiatives

Several documents exist proposing, endorsing and designing development plans, many of which involve the waterfront area in Perth Amboy. The 2004 Master Plan's Vision includes new residential and mixed-use developments; Perth Amboy as a destination for dining, entertainment and recreation; and improved access with new roads, ferry service and bike and pedestrian routes. The Master Plan also includes as objectives preservation of the history of Perth Amboy, creation of a maritime museum and increased access to the waterfront and more waterfront amenities.

In 2005 Perth Amboy received \$500,000 in Green Acres funding for improvements to the Bayview Park. Improvements will include restoring the Park's access steps and reorienting the bandshell so that it features the waterfront as the backdrop. Perth Amboy also recently spent over five million dollars on the Harborside Marina Waterfront Park.

Source: Bonnie J. McCay, Debbie Mans, Satsuki Takahashi, and Sheri Seminski. 2005. "Public Access and Waterfront Development in New Jersey: From the Arthur Kill to the Shrewsbury River ." Keyport, New Jersey: NY NJ Baykeeper. <http://www.nynjbaykeeper.org>

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Some of the initiatives and proposed projects listed in the documents that may affect the Perth Amboy waterfront include:

- The development of a shore trail along the Raritan Bay in Middlesex County connecting with Monmouth County's shore trail.

- *Perth Amboy Focus 2000* includes three redevelopment areas:

- Redevelopment Area #1- the Riverview Center project which includes a warehousing, office and restaurant along the Raritan River west of Second Street
- Redevelopment Area #2- the southern parcel between Pearl and Smith Streets will be the site for the Landings at Harborside shoreline development that will include 2,000 dwelling units, a hotel, 150,000square feet of retail space and a cultural center
- Redevelopment Area #3- shoreline parcel plan to be privately developed into an Arenum (an arena and stadium) by the Bay with high tech office buildings, retail and restaurants as well as the site for a ferry landing

-Three proposed ferry landings for Perth Amboy: (1) Arenum by the Bay with parking, (2) site near the Victory Bridge (Route 35/Victory Bridge is currently being removed and replaced) with parking, and (3) Harborside townhouses development for pedestrian access only.

-Dredging (periodically) the deep sea port and waterways surrounding the Perth Amboy waterfront to provide for shipping, water transportation, and recreational boating

-expanding marina and boat launch facilities

-Ferry transportation (as opposed to car, bus and light rail) to link areas of future development along the Middlesex County shoreline

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- Increasing the capacity for recreational boating on the Arthur Kill/Raritan Bay to increase tourism
- Expansion of the existing Perth Amboy City Marina from 119 to 140 boat slips along Front Street
- Shoreline Improvement Project- the beaches have already been replenished with sand and the 3 fishing piers have been constructed; plans for boat docks, boat launch and a dry dock facility are still underway.
- Developing lodging in relation to plans for marina expansion in Perth Amboy
- Development of a waterfront trail to increase public access to the waterfront and neighboring municipalities' waterfronts and shorelines
- Increased public access and use of waterfronts will increase tourism and support any new or enhanced commercial retail and entertainment facilities, which may increase job opportunities within Arthur Kill/Raritan Bay region
- Development of housing in waterfront areas, such as Harbor Town expansion now up to 1,600 units, and the Landings at Harborside with 2,000 dwelling units, a hotel, 150,000square feet of retail space and a cultural center
- Permits and zoning adjustments to anticipate and redevelopment, improvements, in-fill and development that will increase population and hit total build-out capacity
- Creation and coordination of strategic plans from regional level to county, municipality and communities/neighborhoods.

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Section 4. Summary

This discussion has not been exhaustive. The plans, reports, documents, materials referenced and interviews conducted can only paint with broad strokes the big picture. This information can be used as a tool and certainly will require more observations, assessments and examinations. It is apparent upon visiting Perth Amboy and its waterfront area things are in full swing to change and transform amenities to build the local economy, to bring in more tourists, attract a wealthier cohort of consumers and potential residents into its City limits. Still, Perth Amboy's Renaissance and various partnerships between developers, municipalities and government officials may serve as an "indicator" area for more study as lessons are learned and progress, as defined by the current plans, continues to affect its residents, the waterfront and its usage, accessibility, and other related matters.

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Source: Bonnie J. McCay, Debbie Mans, Satsuki Takahashi, and Sheri Seminski. 2005. "Public Access and Waterfront Development in New Jersey: From the Arthur Kill to the Shrewsbury River ." Keyport, New Jersey: NY NJ Baykeeper. <http://www.nynjbaykeeper.org>