

### **C. Riverfront Recreational District Strategic Plan**

Gloucester City's Riverfront Recreational District consists of a little less than one-half of a mile of riverfront starting at the old Coast Guard Station and ending at Proprietor's Park. In contrast to the rest of the riverfront in Gloucester City, the land uses in this area are recreational, except the Senior Citizens housing complex located at the base of Market Street, which is residential. Collectively, these uses provide 2,224 l.f. of frontage along the Delaware River and represent approximately 18% of the total shore line of the river in Gloucester City (See Figure E-17).

While the industrial shore line along remaining edges of the river support the existing and potential economy of the City, the Riverfront Recreational District becomes a focal point for a non-industrial economic stimulus. As such, the existing and proposed land uses within this small riverfront district will support a recreational riverfront economy, as well as provide critically needed open space connecting the river and adjoining residential areas.

From a physical standpoint, this district essentially occurs at the apex of a triangle where King Street and Jersey Avenue join. Where they come together, both streets provide a natural focal point for linking this portion of the City with the river's edge. Thus, this one-half mile of riverfront is distinctly different from the balance of the shore line along the river. It is an area that has physical appeal by virtue of its location and linkage with the adjoining residential area. Connection to the river at this critical junction provides a vital linkage with the River for the entire neighborhood designated in this report as the West Broadway District.

In the built-up and high density urban environment of Gloucester City, the presence of water is a particular attraction. Waterfronts, with their sense of openness and freedom, also tend to be "everybody's domain." In this case, the Recreational Riverfront District is a natural gathering place for the residents of the West Broadway District.

The use of Gloucester's riverfront district for recreational purposes offers a different kind of economic opportunity. Previously, we have discussed the potential of linking the City's industrial lands along the river with the port activities of the Camden/Philadelphia Port. However, the economic opportunity afforded by enhancing the Riverfront Recreational District represents a unique opportunity to provide an aesthetic benefit to the residents of the City, which will strengthen the value of real estate in the West Broadway District and create recreational economic opportunities along the river.

**FIGURE E-17**

**AERIAL VIEW OF THE RIVERFRONT RECREATIONAL DISTRICT  
GLOUCESTER CITY, NJ**



Photo by: Peter P. Karabashian Associates, Inc.

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*Located between the Koch oil property (top) and Holt's port facilities (bottom), the Riverfront Recreational District becomes a focal point for a non-industrial economic stimulus, as well as providing open space connecting the river and adjoining residential areas.*

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Of substantial significance to the economic revitalization of the Riverfront Recreational District is the redevelopment of the Old Coast Guard Station, known as the Gloucester Point project, which is a public/private partnership facilitated by the action of the governing body in cooperation with a private development group. As a result of this effort, implementation is progressing for the development of a marina to accommodate 200+ boats in a rack storage facility located essentially at the foot of Somerset Street on a site that will also provide parking, a large waterfront restaurant, and shops in a theme setting. This project represents the first step in revitalization of the waterfront from the northern edge of the Coast Guard Station properties to the Koch property.

From an economic development perspective, it is vital that the marina component of this project develop a critical mass to attract people to this area. This is based upon the fact that there is no direct access to the site since the site is somewhat offset from key streets leading to the waterfront area. Therefore, it will be extremely important to provide a critical mass of activity along this corridor to create a sought out "destination." Accordingly, it is recommended that a redevelopment plan be initiated to encompass the entire Riverfront Recreational Development District. One of the fundamental principles of the plan would be to support and encourage other related marina developments and to designate corridor streets, such as Market and Monmouth, that lead to and from the site along the riverfront corridor.

Currently, this portion of the riverfront is fragmented and does not enjoy a system of integrated land uses. Each component, the Coast Guard Station with its proposed development, the Senior Citizens housing facility, and Proprietors Park have been built as independent facilities along the river's edge. There is a critical need to link these facilities as part of a comprehensive plan to maximize their recreational and economic potential along the river's edge and the adjoining historic district west of King Street. Accordingly, the following recommendations are made:

- Provide parking to accommodate marina patrons and park users;
- Include utilities throughout Proprietors Park for electric, water, and sewer to support special events that may be scheduled at the Park;
- Provide a river walk from King Street extending along the water's edge from the Coast Guard Station to the terminus of the park at the boundary with Koch Fuel and return along Jersey Avenue to King Street;
- Actively "manage" the facilities of the park to provide an attraction for residents and visitors. This is best accomplished by a designated program manager that would schedule special events, such as craft fairs, boat shows, art shows, concerts, and food festivals;
- Encourage the expansion of the mixed residential/commercial use along King Street to stimulate activity along this corridor;

- Expand the activity at Proprietors Park to encourage public-private partnerships that will stimulate production of revenue, as well as services to the community, such as kiosks, food concessions, swim clubs, craft fairs, and entertainment;
- Encourage mixed commercial activity along King Street to support and expand the "historic waterfront and marina theme" and carry it into the historic area along King Street;
- Encourage the upgrading of existing commercial activities at Water and Jersey Avenues and expand the waterfront marina theme;
- Expand the area of the Riverfront Recreational District by reallocating to enable the necessary expansions of the area;
- Highlight the historic importance of the area with a comprehensive system of interpretive signs;
- Relocate the existing ballfield in Proprietors Park and place it in a location more accessible to the public. Use the land of the ballfield for water-oriented activities, such as rack boat storage, marina parking, and a waterfront restaurant;
- Identify sites for urban murals at key locations within the historic district and along the waterfront to establish an identity and theme for the entire area.

A conceptual plan detailing these recommendations is illustrated in Figure E-18.