



A MARGATE BOARDWALK FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The Margate Boardwalk Committee Inc.

July 1, 2019

Revised: February 28, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Purpose	4
A Boardwalk Culture: Margate’s First Boardwalk – 1907 to 1944	5
Something Special: the Margate Beach as it Once Was, 1944 – 2017	6
What Went Wrong? A Dune System forced on us by NJ and ACOE	7
What have we lost? Views, Access and Connections	8
What can we do? How can we repair the damage?	9
Our Proposal: Build a Margate Boardwalk – the Why, How and Where	10
Our Choice: Margate’s Ideal Boardwalk	11
Increased Safety: The Boardwalk makes us safer by giving us extra eyes	14
Impact on Police Staffing	15
What’s it going to cost me to build a Boardwalk in Margate?	18
Calculating your contribution to the Boardwalk	18
How did we arrive at these numbers?	19
Margate taxpayers likely will only have to pay for part of the Boardwalk costs. Why?	19
There are multiple, highly motivated sources of funding available for the Boardwalk	19
In fact, Margate has a track record of success in getting grants	20
Boardwalks are <i>streets</i> and categorized as infrastructure investments	20
We are exploring 4 Boardwalk Versions	21
Investing in the Boardwalk is well within Margate’s Financial Capacity	21
What can we expect in terms of maintenance costs? Minimal	22

A Choice: Spending or Investing in a Social and Recreational Asset	22
The enduring Legacy that we could create now would...	
Bring back what made Margate special!	23
Financial Appendices	23
Maintenance: The City Grossly Overestimates these Costs	25
Material: Choosing the right material will extend the Boardwalk's lifespan and reduce maintenance cost	25
Impact on Real Estate Values: Favorable	26
The Environmental Impact: Minimal	26
Additional Issues	27
Fire Prevention: No significant source of fire exists on Boardwalk	27
The Storm Drainage System: can easily be accommodated in the design	27
Beach Patrol Operations	28
The Boardwalk Substructure can carry vehicles	28
Parking – the need for parking will decrease from a Boardwalk by providing a safer path for walkers / bikers to transit the town	29
Biking will be safer	29
Insurance rates for accident liability should be lower	29
Legal Issues and Costs should be minimal since most of the work has already been done	30
Conclusion: Build a Boardwalk in Margate	31
Next Steps: Process and Politics	32
About Us	32
Exhibit 1: Diagram of Margate's Current Beachscape	8
Table 1. Design Specifications for Four Versions of the Boardwalk	11
Exhibit 2. Report on Safety/Security by Dr. Marissa Levy, Ph.D. Stockton	16
Table 2. Source of Grants to Fund a Boardwalk	20
Table 3. Cost for Each Boardwalk Version	21
Table 4. Construction Cost Comparisons	23
Table 5. Bond Table / Payment Schedule	24

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

- Margaret Mead

Our Purpose

We are all here – full time as well as summer residents – because we love the beach and the ocean. The smell of the sea, the taste of the salt air on our tongues, the wind on our face, the warmth of the sun on our skin, the sound of laughter, the incessant call of the gulls, the pounding of the waves and the crashing of the ocean in our ears. These pleasurable sensations are what make our life at the beach so beautiful.

In the last two years, we have seen momentous changes, and setting aside the debate about whether they were necessary or not, these changes have damaged our experience of our beloved beach.

The question is, do we have to live with this injury, or is there something we can do to heal the damage and improve the situation for everyone?

This is the question the members of The Margate Boardwalk Committee (Glenn Klotz, Ellen Lichtenstein, Stefanie Bloch and Steve Davidson) set out to explore. And our conclusions as well as recommendations are contained in this report.

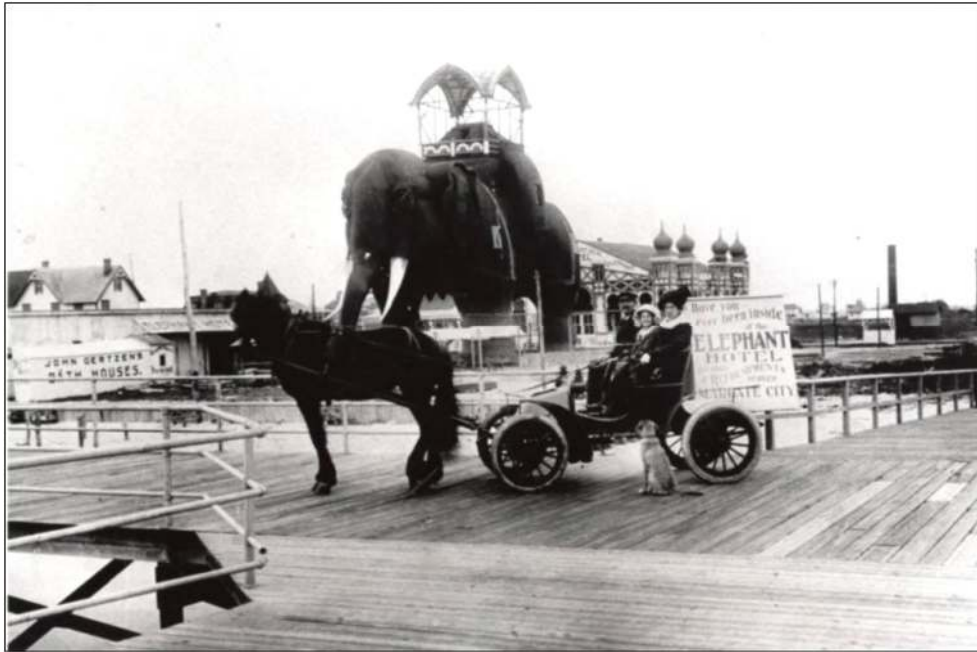
We believe that the harm done can be repaired by building a residential (non-commercial) Boardwalk in Margate, extending from Ventnor’s Boardwalk at Fredericksburg Avenue to 36th Street in Longport.

Everyone is free to make their own decision – and we encourage that. We only ask that you consider this information with an open mind as well as heart, and focus on the reality, not on negative emotions and unsubstantiated opinions.

In our democracy, the people decide. So we submit this report to the citizens and homeowners of Margate, to deliberate on and collectively decide what kind of city they would like to live in.

"Under the Boardwalk, down by the Sea. Under the Boardwalk. just you and me."
Recorded by the Drifters, 1964

A Boardwalk Culture: Margate's First Boardwalk – 1907 to 1944



Back in 1907, before Margate was even a town, we had a Boardwalk. It was our first street, our town square and along with our Elephant attraction – the only place around to see and be seen. In fact, Absecon Island (on which Atlantic City, Ventnor, Margate and Longport sit), is known as the birthplace of Boardwalks, having established its first promenade in the late 19th century.

We're a Boardwalk town and we have a *Boardwalk culture*. It's built into our social DNA, even though only small signs remain of that Boardwalk after it was destroyed in the infamous Hurricane of 1944.

How many of you walk the boards?

One home owner at the south end of Ventnor's Boardwalk told us, that of the thousands of people she regularly sees walking the boards in the summer, 85% of them are from Margate. And they regularly include our elected and government officials. The truth is many of Margate's residents enjoy the Ventnor / Atlantic City Boardwalk on a daily basis year round. It's an essential part of the Margate lifestyle.

We want to rebuild Margate’s Boardwalk. Once completed, we will have a dedicated, 16-mile round trip path on which to walk, bike, sit, host marathons and most importantly, reconnect us to our beach.

“Life takes you down many paths but my favorite ones lead to the beach.”

– Unknown

Something Special: the Margate Beach as it Once Was, 1944 – 2017



Although most of us never saw the original Margate boardwalk, we did have the great fortune to have experienced a beach that was, by all standards, magnificent.

The soft “sugar sand” was the finest in the world. It was a hallmark by which all others were measured. The flat trajectory was easy to traverse, used as a straightaway for walking or running and especially, to connect us to our fellow Margate friends. It was well known which beach you and your friends sat on, and they were easily reached.

Its beauty rested in its simplicity and lack of manmade structures.

The old boardwalk – something seen in old photos or stumbled upon at low tide when its pilings were exposed – was not missed... ***until the whole beach-scape changed.***

*“On Margate Sands. I can connect Nothing with nothing. The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble people who expect Nothing.”*

– The Wasteland – TS Eliot

What Went Wrong? A Dune System forced on us by NJ and ACOE

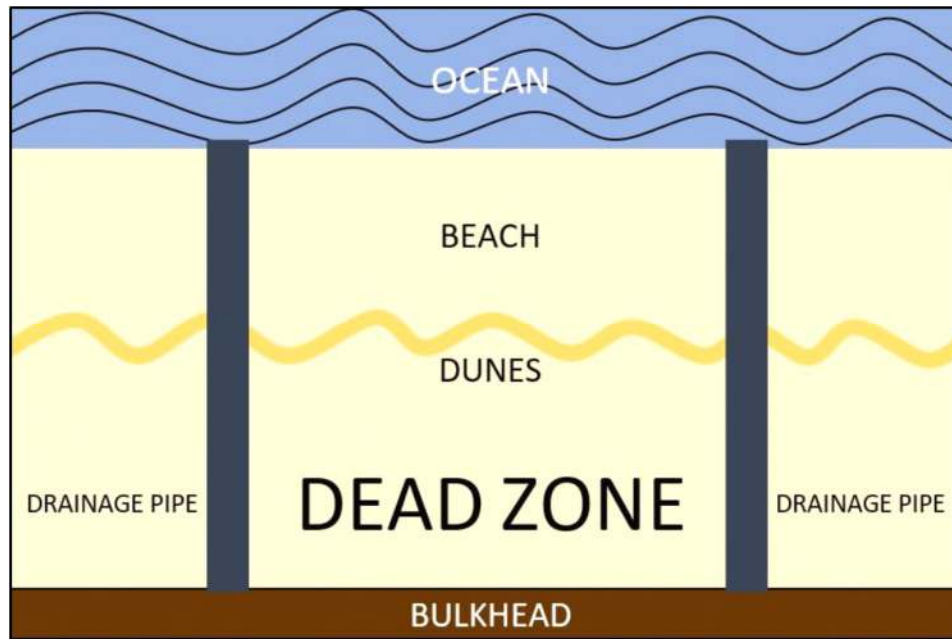


In the aftermath of Super Storm Sandy, a dune system was forced upon us by the State of New Jersey and the Army Corp of Engineers. The result is a radically altered landscape and a degraded experience of our previously magnificent beach.

Once flat, wide and easy to access, our beach is now home to a huge wall of sand placed directly in its middle, horizontally dividing the ocean from the rest of Margate. This has created a very large “Dead Zone” between the bulkhead entrances to the beach and the dunes, as long as a city block in many areas.

In addition, the beach itself is now vertically divided by five huge new storm water outfalls (consisting of pipes and) that reach out to the sea.

Exhibit 1. Diagram of Margate's Current Beachscape



What have we lost? Views, Access and Connections

1. *The view of the sea and the ocean breeze:* Residents of Margate have lost the view of the sea and we can no longer feel the ocean breeze from our streets and homes.
2. *Access to the beach* – has become extremely difficult, if not impossible, for large segments of our population:
 - The elderly, who cannot scale the dunes to get to the water
 - Individuals with disabilities, who have no railings to help themselves over the dunes
 - Young families, loaded with gear, who get stuck moving their wheeled carts over the dunes, and
 - Boaters, who used to bring their catamarans from the bulkheads to the water (as well as people who play other types of sports)

All of us have at least one family member or friend for whom independent access to our beach is no longer possible or easy.

3. *The physical and social connections that make us a beach community.* The huge storm water outfalls that now bi-sect the beach, have disrupted our ability to move along the water's edge, and undermined the connections that we had with each other and with the ocean.

Our beautiful beach has been broken, degraded.

Whether we realize it or not, no one in our community is untouched by these changes.

Everyone has had different emotional reactions – from sadness, to anger, to stoic denial. Do you remember what you felt – your first impressions – when you saw our new, industrialized beach? We often don't realize the pleasures we've enjoyed until they're gone.

We believe the degraded condition of Margate's beach will soon harm our precious reputation as a 1st class family-style resort town. It is in nobody's self-interest to let that happen.

The status quo is not good enough. And we strongly object to leaving it this way. Something can and must be done about it – now.

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path & leave a trail."
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

What can we do? How can we repair the damage?

Erasing the dunes & pipes and returning to the past is not possible. The changes to our beach brought by the state and the Army Corp of Engineers will be with us for a very long time.

Ironically, there is a silver lining in this situation – a viable solution that transforms the damage done by the dunes and the "Dead Zone" into an asset.

How?

By building a Boardwalk to restore the magic to Margate!

“Build it and they shall come.”

- Field of Dreams

Our Proposal: Build a Margate Boardwalk – the Why, How and Where

We propose to build a Boardwalk the length of the city (1.57 miles) – extending from Ventnor’s Boardwalk to 36th Street in Longport. It should be placed at the back toe of the dunes, meaning that it will occupy the “Dead Zone” and be *located away from the bulkheads as well as the homes along the beach.*¹ Ramps will connect the Boardwalk to the street end as well as to the ocean, as the existing Boardwalks in Ventnor and Atlantic City do today.



View into Margate from the end of the Ventnor Boardwalk today

The Boardwalk actually resolves and repairs much of the damage created by the dune project, and is essential to return Margate’s beach to its first class status. The Boardwalk will:

- Provide easy access to the beach for everyone – especially young families, the handicapped and the elderly
- Connect the beaches and the people that are physically separated by drainage pipes

¹ In their response to this Report, the city is claiming that if the Boardwalk were to be built at this spot (at the back toe of the dune where the drainage system is located), it would make it very difficult to properly maintain and repair the drainage system. After examining the detailed drawings and the actual site, our consulting Civil Engineer (a retired 30-year veteran of the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection) has concluded that a route can be engineered around 85% of the storm drainage system and over the remaining part of that system without impeding access to it for repairs and maintenance. In addition, after consulting with the cities of Ventnor and Atlantic City, neither of them have a problem with keeping the areas behind the dune clean.

- Reclaim our view of the ocean
- Restore our ability to feel as well as taste the salty sea breeze again without having to cross to the beach
- Create safer, more direct access to the entire boardwalk for the thousands of walkers, runners, bikers, baby carriage strollers and children who must first traverse the busy Atlantic Avenue
- Mitigate the many seasonal accidents that occur from attempting to get onto the boardwalk

By turning the wasted dead space behind the dune into a useful, product and pleasurable attraction, the benefits of the beach become available to everyone in Margate. We will soon wonder how we lived without it!

Our Choice: Margate’s Ideal Boardwalk

There are four possible versions of the Boardwalk to choose from (see Table 1), which have different specifications.²

Table 1. Design Specifications for Four Versions of the Boardwalk

Version Design Specs	Ventnor Basic	Ventnor Current	Margate Basic	Margate Premium
Length	8,500 feet	8,500 feet	8,500 feet	8,500 feet
Width	20’ feet	20’ feet	20’ – 27’ feet	20’ – 27’ feet
Bike Path	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ramps	25- 30 10’ Wide 1 – 2 vehicle ramps	30 – 35 10’ Wide 1 – 2 vehicle ramps	30 – 35 10’ Wide 2 – 3 vehicle ramps	35 – 40 10’ Wide 2 – 3 vehicle ramps
Pavilions	0	0	2	4
Restrooms	0	0	0	2
Outdoor Water	No	No	Water Fountains	Showers and Fountains
Railings	Y	Y	Y	Y

² We have introduced a fourth option since the original version of this report (the Margate Basic). This option is a less expensive alternative (than Margate Premium) and would allow the additional amenities, if desired, to be easily added at a later date.

Benches	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lighting	Basic LED	Basic LED	Basic LED	Solar-powered LED

We believe the best choice is the Margate Basic, a residential (non-Commercial) Boardwalk that is:

- The length of Margate from Ventnor to Longport
- Wide enough for a dedicated bike lane (27')
- 30 – 40 access ramps 10' wide
- 2 Seating Pavilions, equipped with water fountains and a foot shower
- LED lighting powered by a solar array
- Black Locust decking instead of ipe wood



A view of a proposed Margate BW design looking south at Fredericksburg Ave.³

³ Graphic design of new Margate Boardwalk created by Wendy Cohen of Zumup



The endless amenities a Boardwalk would add to the community



Ramps for easy access from all our street ends to the Boardwalk

“We have no more fundamental obligation in government than to ensure the safety of our citizens.”

- Bob Ehrlich

Increased Safety: The Boardwalk makes us *safer* by giving us *extra eyes* on our city



The security and safety of people and property are critical concerns for every community. To evaluate the effect of the Boardwalk on these issues, the Committee requested the expertise of Dr. Marissa Levy, the Dean of Students at Stockton University and a professional criminologist whose specializes in crime prevention and designing safe public spaces.

Dr. Levy believes a residential boardwalk will *increase* property safety.⁴ She gives four reasons:

1. Formal surveillance would increase because a Boardwalk is a road and roads are patrolled. It gives police the ability to easily and regularly patrol an area that is currently very difficult to access.
2. Better access for emergency and fire vehicles will result in saved lives as well as property on and off the beach.⁵

⁴ See the full text of the March 13th, 2019 letter that Dr. Levy submitted to the Margate Boardwalk Committee on the results of her analysis, on Page 16 – 17 of this document.

⁵ Currently, anyone walking on the beach during the off-season is essentially cut off from any help should they need it.

3. The Boardwalk is likely to increase informal surveillance (from individuals who are biking, walking, jogging or sitting) and “*act as a protective factor against burglaries to those houses directly on the beach as well as on the beach blocks.*” This is especially important in Margate where 95% of the Beach block homes are second homes that are unoccupied most of the year – and thus perfect targets. Dr. Levy argues that these properties in particular will actually experience **vastly improved security**.
4. Ventnor, with a Boardwalk, does not have significantly more crime than Margate.

The more eyes on our community, the more protected we are.⁶

Impact on Police Staffing

The City Report states that “...Margate (police officers currently patrol the beach on all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) during the summer season.” The City staff then argues it would need to increase its staff by four more officers if Margate had a Boardwalk.

Why not simply split the number of officers that currently patrol the beach in the summer months, placing half of them on the beach and half of them on the Boardwalk? From the Boardwalk a police patrol will easily be able to patrol the largely empty beach behind the existing dune as well as the Boardwalk itself. In the off season, a Boardwalk patrol would be required, but such a patrol would provide better surveillance of the beach blocks as well as off-season patrols of the beach itself.

⁶ In its Staff Report, the City of Margate agrees with Dr. Marissa Levy’s (March 16th, 2019) letter to the Margate Boardwalk Committee that a Margate Boardwalk would increase informal surveillance of the beach district. However, they then state “...that safety would not necessarily improve. Formal surveillance would be significantly better for [preventing] individuals wanting to commit crimes.” No reasons are given; not a single fact, nor statistic or proof of this *opinion* is provided.

Sadly, the City then goes on to invoke an old bugaboo designed to strike fear in the hearts of Margate residents – the case of petty thefts of bicycles from “suspects [who] are *transients* from larger urban areas of Atlantic City.” Again, without any facts, only the use of innuendo, suspicion and bias against certain groups, they argue that a Boardwalk would grant easier access to perpetrators of petty theft into the area. The city chooses to ignore:

1. The fact that any potential criminal can already access Margate today via the existing roadways, streets and sidewalks today as well as the beach.
2. That a Boardwalk will introduce lighting to the deck and to the Dead Zone – and it’s a well-known fact that lighting an area *reduces* crime.
3. That our Boardwalk will have NO commercial businesses on it, and that this fact removes a major attractor to criminals.

Exhibit 2. Report on Safety and Security by Dr. Marissa Levy, Ph.D. Stockton University



101 Vera King Farris Drive | Galloway NJ 08205 0411
stockton.edu

School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
P: 800.652.4512 • F: 800.826.5559

March 13, 2019

Mr. Glenn Klotz, Director
Margate Boardwalk Committee Inc.

RE: Margate Boardwalk

Dear Mr. Klotz,

It was a pleasure to meet you on Friday, March 1, 2019. Our meeting was arranged after you contacted me about the prospect of crime increasing in connection with a proposed boardwalk extending from the existing Ventnor boardwalk and through Margate City. I am a criminologist with expertise in crime prevention and a specialization in site surveys used to design safe public spaces.

Prior to our meeting we had discussed by phone the approximate length, width, and placement of the boardwalk. The proposed boardwalk would start where the Ventnor boardwalk ends, connecting to the existing boardwalk, and continue to the end of Margate. Prior to our meeting on March 1, 2019, I conducted a site survey starting at the other end of Margate and making my way to our meeting spot at the end of the Ventnor boardwalk. I took photos of the area including that of the location of the proposed boardwalk as well as landuse within three blocks of the boardwalk. Landuse consists of mostly residential dwellings including: large single-family homes, small single-family homes, and large apartment/condominium complexes with single unit dwellings. There are a few restaurants, some public space (beach, Lucy the Elephant, playground, library, public restrooms), and a few small businesses, including a bank.

During our meeting you discussed the proposed site in greater depth, including the following:

- The proposed boardwalk is for residential, not commercial use.
- There would be access to the Margate boardwalk at every street, similar to that of the Ventnor boardwalk.
- The boardwalk proposal is for a boardwalk ~27 feet wide (existing boardwalk is ~20 feet wide).
- The boardwalk would contain a bike path.

I have analyzed the data and photos collected during my site survey and make the following statements with regard to a residential boardwalk:

Crime attractors are created when targets are located at nodal activity points of individuals who have a greater willingness to commit crimes. **Given the setting and current landuse in Margate, I do not believe a residential boardwalk would serve as a crime attractor.** I come to this conclusion based on the following:

- The crime rates, currently, in Margate and Ventnor are similarly low. Ventnor (with a board walk) does not have significantly more crime than Margate.

- Generally, landuse that contributes to generating or attracting crime is commercial and typically within three blocks from the (potential) crime attractor. The landuse in Margate is mainly residential in the three blocks surrounding the site of the proposed boardwalk.
- The proposed boardwalk could increase informal surveillance. Residents biking, walking, jogging, or sitting could provide increased levels of surveillance which could deter residential burglaries. In fact, the boardwalk could serve as a protective factor against residential burglaries for those houses directly on the beach and on the blocks between Atlantic Avenue and the boardwalk.
- Assuming Margate police would utilize the boardwalk as Ventnor police do, the proposed boardwalk could increase formal surveillance. Police could patrol the boardwalk, assist residents and visitors, and respond faster to calls for service.

In addition, the following benefits are possible with the installation of a boardwalk in Margate:

- Increased pedestrian/runner/biker safety – residents may be more likely to walk, run, or bike on the boardwalk and less likely to impede traffic on Atlantic Avenue or on other streets in Margate.
- Residents and visitors would have easier access to the beach. This could positively impact those with children and the elderly. It could also provide greater access to the beach for those with physical limitations.
- It could maximize public use of the stretch of beach that is between houses and the dunes. Currently, portions of the beach are underutilized since there is no view of the ocean due to the obstruction of the dunes. The boardwalk would elevate sightlines putting the ocean in view.
- First responders, including Emergency Medical Services, may have faster and less obstructed access to residents or visitors utilizing the beach.

As noted above, in my best professional judgement, I do not believe that extending the residential boardwalk from Ventnor through Margate would lead to an increase in crime experienced by residents or visitors to Margate.

This report is based on my own professional judgment and is not endorsed or otherwise supported or approved by Stockton University.

If I can assist in any other way as you make your decision about the boardwalk, or any other crime related matter, please feel free to reach out.

Best,



Marissa P. Levy, Ph.D.
Professor of Criminal Justice

What's it going to cost *me* to build a Boardwalk in Margate?

For most of you, this may be the most important question you have.

It would be natural to think that we're talking about a big number; that each homeowner will have to pay thousands or tens of thousands of dollars for a board walk.

The actual cost of the Margate Boardwalk to individual homeowners is quite small.

The reality is that for a mere \$.44 to \$.76 / day from the average homeowner⁷, we can build the Margate Boardwalk. That's equal to one dinner out for four people (between \$162 – \$278 annually).

For illustrative purposes, we will use \$220 to represent the annual cost of the boardwalk, which is the cost of the mid-range Boardwalk version (the Current Ventnor Boardwalk version). This is equivalent to \$.60 / day.

The average home in Margate, on which these particular figures were based, is valued at \$534,800. If your home is valued for less, you will pay less than these figures; if your home is valued for more, you will pay more.

These numbers assume that the Boardwalk will be paid for entirely by taxes – which we have good reason to believe will not be the case – and we will explain those reasons shortly.

Calculating your contribution to the Boardwalk

How can you calculate what your contribution to the Boardwalk could be?

1. Determine what you paid in city taxes last year
2. Take that number and multiply it by the following percentages, each representing a different version of the boardwalk:

• Ventnor Basic	.0303%	(.000303)
• Ventnor Current	.0411%	(.000411)
• Margate Basic	.0476%	(.000476)
• Margate Premium	.0520%	(.000520)

3. The numbers represent your share in annual taxes for each version of the boardwalk⁸

⁷ The range of numbers we're giving here, represent the lowest and the highest cost versions of the Boardwalk.

⁸ Should you want some assistance in calculating this number, please contact a member of the Margate Boardwalk Committee.

How did we arrive at these numbers?

1. We collected construction estimates for 4 versions of the Boardwalk⁹
2. Created a bond schedule for each version¹⁰: 15 year repayment at a 3% interest rate¹¹
3. Arrived at the % tax increase per household, by calculating increase from annual debt payments over current budget

Margate taxpayers likely will only have to pay for part of the Boardwalk costs

The numbers just provided, assume that taxpayers will have to pay for 100% of the boardwalk costs. That is a worst-case scenario which is unlikely.

Why? Because...

There are multiple, highly motivated sources of funding available for the boardwalk

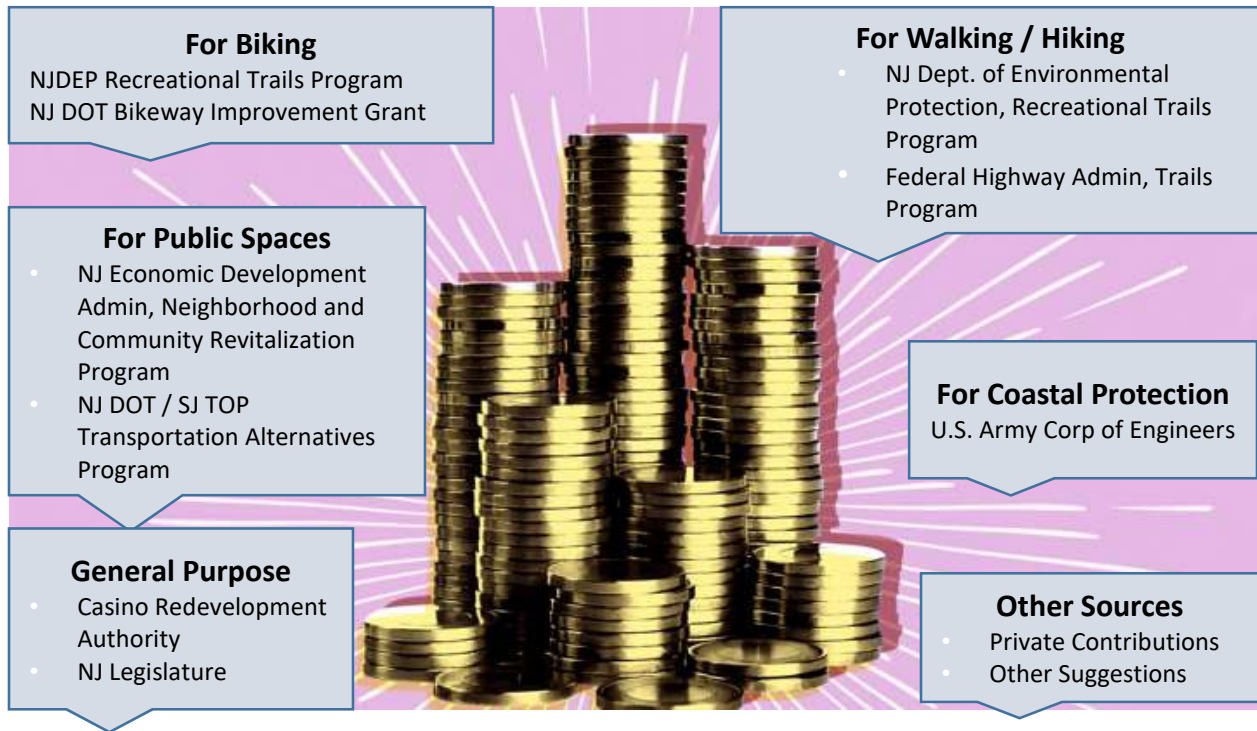
Taxpayers are just one source among many. The next diagram contains a partial list of relevant grant programs organized by various categories of interest.

⁹ See Table 4 on Construction Cost Comparisons at the end of this section (Pg. 23) for the data on which our cost estimates were based.

¹⁰ Data on bond payments are listed in Table 5 on Pg. 24 at the end of this section of the report.

¹¹ This interest rate is appropriate for infrastructure projects and appropriate given Margate's excellent AA bond rating, and has been agreed to by the city in their Staff response (dated October 16th, 2019) to this Boardwalk report (version dated 7/1/19).

Table 2. Sources of Grants to Fund a Boardwalk



And you may know of other sources – if you do, please tell us.

In fact, Margate has a track record of success in getting grants

- Raised \$623k in 2017 from 10 different federal, state and other sources for a variety of purposes
- The total raised by grants in 2017 constituted 78% of the annual cost of the Stripped Down Boardwalk version and 45% of the Ideal version

Any grants the city receives will reduce the amount to be financed.

Many cities in New Jersey, have successfully raised grant funding. And we feel certain we will also.

Boardwalks are *streets* and categorized as infrastructure investments

Before reviewing the total cost for the three versions of the Boardwalk, it's important to understand that Boardwalks are categorized as infrastructure investments. And decisions about infrastructure and streets are rarely brought to the attention of individual homeowners on a large scale.

The fact is that the city of Margate has a lot of experience in funding and supervising the construction of large infrastructure projects.

- For example, \$9.85mm for Road Improvements in 2019 (as a part of Capital Budget)
- \$7.2mm in outstanding bonds and notes for local schools

We are exploring 4 Boardwalk Versions¹²

Table 3. Costs for Each Boardwalk Version

Version Financial Element	Ventnor Basic	Ventnor Current	Margate Basic	Margate Premium
Est. Construction Costs¹³	\$14mm	\$19mm	\$22mm	\$24mm
Down Payment (5%)	\$700k	\$950,000	\$1.1mm	\$1.2mm
Amount to be Financed	\$13.3mm	\$18.05mm	\$20.9mm	\$22.8mm
Financing Costs (Interest Payments)	\$3.4mm	\$4.6mm	\$5.5mm	\$5.8mm
Total Costs	\$16.7mm	\$22.7mm	\$26.2mm	\$28.6mm

Investing in the Boardwalk is well within Margate’s Financial Capacity

- The city has excellent bond rating (AA) – S&P (2016)
- As of 2018, Margate is carrying ~ \$38.8mm in net debt
- Boardwalk would add between 2% to 4% to this figure
- Annual bond payments are well within Margate’s debt capacity of 3.5% of its total tax base; net debt in 2018 is 0.96%.
- State regulations require a 5% “deposit” on a bond issue

¹² Note that the city, in their staff response to our Boardwalk Report (dated October 16th, 2019), only estimated the financing costs for the most expensive of the Boardwalk options we were proposing, without specifically identifying their choice as the *worst-case scenario*. To accurately represent the financing costs of ALL of the boardwalk, these new changes to calculating a Bond Amortization Schedule must be applied to *each* option (which we do in Table 3).

¹³ These are our estimates based on engineering input and actual construction costs that are described in Table 4 at the end of the finance section, on Pg. 23.

- Municipalities have the option to increase annual payments to an amount no more than twice the size of the smallest annual payment, in any given year, in order to reduce interest costs

What can we expect in terms of maintenance costs? Minimal

- Minimal – the Boardwalk is a street, only much simpler and less costly
- In initial years, maintenance costs will be close to zero
- Maintenance costs for boardwalks are *typically so minor* that they are included in municipal street dept. budgets and not broken out separately
- Over the life-span of the boardwalk, costs will increase
- New materials and regular maintenance will minimize total expenditures¹⁴

A Choice: Spending or Investing in a Social and Recreational Asset

The bottom line: If the city’s tax base does not increase, and the city is unable to raise any additional funding for the Boardwalk from the considerable number of sources that exist (and are enumerated in our Report), ***the average taxpayer that owns a home worth \$534,800 will have to pay \$220 in taxes annually for a Boardwalk (as represented by the mid-range version – the Current Ventnor Boardwalk) for a period of 15 years. This is equivalent to \$.60 / day.***

If the city’s tax base continues to increase (as it consistently has done in the past and will continue to do in the foreseeable future), and the city’s excellent grant writing team is able to raise grant funding or attract private endowments, **the amount taxpayers pay for the Boardwalk will be lower.** The evidence, which is what we should use to evaluate these questions, suggests that both outcomes (an increased tax base and that we will attract grant funding) are highly likely.

The ability and willingness to fund the Boardwalk are a function of choices; how we want to spend our money as taxpayers. Are the homeowners in Margate willing to spend \$220 to invest in a Boardwalk that will last for 45 years and be a permanent source of pleasure to family, friends and their community?

The enduring Legacy that we could create now would...

- Insure beach access for everyone in your family
- Keep your kids safely off the street
- Create a gathering place, a new social and not just recreational, center

¹⁴ See section on Maintenance on Pg. 25 for more detail.

- Recreate the Boardwalk as the social artery of the city
- Make a lifetime of magical memories
- Bring back what made Margate special!

Financial Appendices

Table 4. Construction Cost Comparisons

Estimates

- Remington & Vernick estimate for Margate – \$19.3mm, based on Ventnor’s current boardwalk
- Walter’s Marine estimate for Margate: \$14mm - \$21.5mm, based on Ventnor and Belmar’s (NJ) designs
- Atlantic City (estimate) for compete rebuild: \$54mm
- Wildwood, NJ (estimate) for complete rebuild: \$65mm

Actual Builds

- Belmar (actual build) in 2013 – 2015: \$15mm for 1.5 miles x 27’
- Atlantic City North End (actual build): \$12mm for 1,650’ x 60’ on concrete piers

Table 5. Bond Table / Payment Schedule for Each Boardwalk Version

Boardwalk Type Financial Element	Ventnor Basic	Ventnor Current	Margate Basic	Margate Premium
Est. Construction Costs	\$14mm	\$19mm	\$22mm	\$24mm
Interest Rate ¹⁵	3%	3%	3%	3%
Bond Term / Period ¹⁶	15 years	15 years	15 years	15 years
Down Payment (5%) ¹⁷	\$700,000	\$950,000	\$1.1mm	\$1.2mm
Amount to be Financed	\$13.3mm	\$18.05mm	\$20.9mm	\$22.8mm
Financing Costs (Interest Payments)	\$3.41mm	\$4.63mm	\$5.36mm	\$5.85mm
Total Costs / Payments	\$16.7mm	\$22.7mm	\$26.3mm	\$28.6mm
Annual Debt Payments ¹⁸	\$1.11mm	\$1.51mm	\$1.75mm	\$1.91mm
Tax Rate Per \$100 of Assessed Property ¹⁹	0.0303	0.0411	0.0476	0.052
Annual Tax on Property Assessed at \$534,800	\$162	\$220	\$255	\$278
Soft Costs (2%) ²⁰	\$280,000	\$380,000	\$440,000	\$480,000

¹⁵ The choice of the 3% interest rate accurately reflects the conditions in the bond market right now (rates are at historical lows).

¹⁶ Bond financing for structures like boardwalks are limited to 15 years in New Jersey. Although not specifically named in the statute, boardwalks fall into a class of assets (e.g., Marine Improvements, such as Bulkheads) whose maximum useful life for financing purposes is estimated at 15 years (see N.J.S.A. 40A:2 - The Local Bond Law, Section 40A:2-22, https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/misc_docs/local_bond_qualified_bond_11-09.pdf). While we agree with this bond term in calculating a bond amortization schedule for a Margate Boardwalk (for financial and statutory reasons), *this in no way means that we accept the idea that the useful life of the Boardwalk is 15 years*. In fact, using the Ventnor and Atlantic City Boardwalks as appropriate references (since the climate and surf is the same), **the experience of our sister cities suggest that the lifespan of our boardwalk will be between 30 to 45 years**, (requiring only minor repairs during that period). This is particularly likely given the long-lasting materials we are recommending for its construction.

¹⁷ A capital ordinance to fund the Boardwalk would require a five per cent down payment from the then current operating budget.

¹⁸ This figure is calculated for simplicity's purposes by using straight line method. The city is using the effective rate for calculating annual interest costs, as well as a step-up function (these are not the only options available). *The differences these two method yield in terms of total interest costs is insignificant*

¹⁹ These rates (as well as the ones used by the city in their response) are based on Margate's tax ratables as of 2018, found on the cover page of a municipalities Annual Financial Statement - https://www.marqate-nj.com/sites/marqatenj/files/uploads/2018_afs.pdf. The 2018 ratable amount is being used for the entire projection when Margate has seen substantial increases in ratables over the past several years. **A realistic projection would recognize a modest increase in the ratable base over the bond period**, meaning the cost for the average taxpayers should decline.

²⁰ Estimated as a percentage of construction costs.

Maintenance: The City Grossly Overestimates these Costs

The experience other municipalities who have built and manage Boardwalks (e.g., Atlantic City, Ventnor which is 57 years old and has a similar Boardwalk width, Belmar which is 7 years old and has a similar Boardwalk length, etc.) do not support ANY of the city's claims regarding maintenance, which they make without providing any data (see Margate Professional Staff Response to Boardwalk Proposal, October 16, 2019)

Our research shows that municipalities around the country are using materials that are not expensive and are not environmentally controversial (e.g., domestically grown and sustainable black locust), while achieving life spans of 30 – 45 years, without re-decking and with limited maintenance.

Not only will a new Boardwalk require limited maintenance (as per our conversation with the Belmar City Administration), any necessary work could easily be performed on an as-needed basis by a subcontractor with carpentry skills. ***The city seriously overestimates the maintenance required; no additional employees will be necessary.***²¹ Ventnor's Public Works Dept. has NO permanent staff dedicated to their Boardwalk.

Material: Choosing the right material will extend the Boardwalk's lifespan and reduce maintenance cost

The choice of the right materials to deck the Boardwalk will extend its lifespan and reduce maintenance costs. We recommend the use of domestically grown and sustainable black locust that would extend the life of the Boardwalk well past ones that use less durable materials like yellow pine (a wood we do not recommend for many reasons). Black Locust is the best choice, is readily available and if bought with proper inspection and guarantees beforehand, is an excellent sustainable, highly durable domestically grown and sustainable product. We can provide the city with a long list of recent cases where Black Locust was used for decking in large public and private infrastructure projects.²²

There is still a conversation to be had about materials. Belmar, NJ built its new Boardwalk in 2013 using Trex (an artificial wood product) for its decking and is getting extremely good reviews for it. There is IPE as well and other tropical hardwoods, although we do not

²¹ See Margate Professional Staff Response to Boardwalk Proposal, October 16, 2019

²² There was an issue with Black Locust many years ago when the market for this product was new. The issues regarding quality have been remedied and we stand by this recommendation.

recommend them for sustainability reasons. Both Atlantic City and Ventnor have chosen IPE while considering the environmental impact. Their logic was that using these woods lowered the environmental impact because they would require far less use of resources that also damage the environment like the extra logging and its massive effects on the land, water and air. For these reasons, using yellow pine instead of a tropical hardwood is not without its own serious environmental impacts. Frankly, it is difficult to say which option is environmentally better.

Impact on Real Estate Values: The Boardwalk will *maintain* or *increase* real estate values – just look at what’s happening in Ventnor

While it is extremely difficult to find economic studies of the effect of non-commercial boardwalks on real estate values for situations comparable to Margate’s, the evidence from our closest neighbor Ventnor, whose situation is similar, suggests that the impact on real estate values in our city will be *favorable*. The beach blocks in Ventnor are currently enjoying a building boom.

In fact, we believe that increasing the security of beach block properties, will serve to maintain real estate values, if not actually increase them.

That the sea is one of the most beautiful and magnificent sights in Nature, all admit.

- John Joly

The Environmental Impact: Minimal

The construction of the Boardwalk will have limited impact on the environment, in part because the beach as it now exists is already a mostly manmade construct.

If anything, an elevated walkway above the beach lessens the human impact because people don’t directly access its surface area. It is also our understanding that the Army Corp of Engineers / NJDEP Environmental Impact study conducted for the dune project found no endangered species in the Project zone.

The Boardwalk we are planning (particularly the decking), will be built almost entirely of sustainable, biodegradable wood products from the U.S. (black locust).

An environmental Impact study will need to be conducted by the state of New Jersey as a part of the application for a Boardwalk construction permit.

Additional Issues

Fire Prevention: No significant source of fire exists on the Boardwalk

According to our Civil Engineer, a recently retired Senior Engineer for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the City is overinflating the dangers of fire on a non-commercial wooden Boardwalk. The Ventnor City Fire Dept. told us the same thing in November of last year (2019). They said that in the entire history of the Ventnor Boardwalk there has never been a recorded fire. They felt that since **no significant source of fire would exist on the proposed Boardwalk**, the chance of a fire was extremely unlikely. They also felt the materials involved in building such a structure lessened the danger of a fire. In a phone conversation they said, "You could take a blow torch to Ventnor's Boardwalk and it still would be hard to get it to burn."

The City argues that it will be necessary to "install a water hydrant system along the entire length of the Boardwalkin excess of \$2.5mm."²³

This is simply ridiculous. There are ample hydrants on Margate's beach blocks and on Atlantic Avenue, well within the 1,000 ft. range of the hoses that all Fire Departments in New Jersey are required to carry. This is how the Ventnor City Fire Department handles the situation and it has worked for them.

The Storm Drainage System can easily be accommodated in the design

According to our Civil Engineer, the Boardwalk will NOT impact the existing drainage system.²⁴ He assured us that for most of the proposed route, a Boardwalk could be offset from the new Storm drainage system. (Examples of this exist in the southern end of the Atlantic City Boardwalk where such a drainage system was installed after the Boardwalk was built.) He closely examined the one area where a Boardwalk would need to come directly over the system from Osborne Avenue to Kenyon Avenue. Even there, he saw no problem, as long as access to the manhole covers were engineered into the Boardwalk itself, which he saw as a minor design issue.

²³ See Margate Professional Staff Response to Boardwalk Proposal, October 16, 2019

²⁴ In January of this year (2020), we asked our Engineer to do a site survey of the existing situation on the Margate Beach as regards the Army Corp. Beach Project and the new Storm Drainage system built as a result of the Project. He specifically looked at the drawings we have of the Storm Drainage system supplied to us by the NJDEP, mapping out where the system now exists. He walked the entire length of the Project with one of our Committee members, Mr. Klotz before making his analysis.

In addition, engineering openings for beach maintenance equipment through a new Boardwalk shouldn't present much of an engineering challenge given that such openings exist on every existing Boardwalk in New Jersey and elsewhere along coastal beaches.

In the final analysis, he saw no major engineering issues that would stand in the way of such a Boardwalk project.

Beach Patrol Operations

Although, the lifeguard shacks would be on the other side of the Boardwalk from the ocean beaches, it's our belief, based upon similar situations along Ventnor and Atlantic City's Boardwalk that this wouldn't impede the lifeguards from using them. The shack at Osborne Ave, however, would probably have to be moved. The rest do not appear to be in the proposed route of our Boardwalk.

The Boardwalk Substructure can carry vehicles

The City argues that our proposed Boardwalk dimensions "...are not conducive to motor vehicle traffic such as police ... or fire dept. ambulances."²⁵ This statement is simply untrue! For evidence, one only has to look at Ventnor as anyone who has ever walked on the Ventnor Boardwalk can attest. Ventnor's 57 yr. old 20' wide Boardwalk provides daily access to full sized Police, Emergency and Maintenance vehicles. Our report proposed either a 20' wide (a Ventnor style Boardwalk) or a 27' wide (Margate style Boardwalk).

As for the City's contention that we would require some special kind of substructure to support the Boardwalk, we dispute this as there are many examples of standard Boardwalks today that are built with 100% treated heavy construction grade lumber and stainless-steel bolts and braces. Ventnor's Boardwalk is just such an example; it easily carries full sized Police, Emergency and repair vehicles upon it daily.

The City also states that Margate currently has four vehicle access points from the street to the beach. They state that three of these access ramps can handle large oversized equipment. Our engineer tells us that all four of these access points can be readily converted to access ramps that are structurally designed to cross a Boardwalk to access the ocean beaches.

²⁵ See Margate Professional Staff Response to Boardwalk Proposal, October 16, 2019

Parking – the need for parking will decrease from a Boardwalk by providing a safer path for bikers and pedestrians to transit the town

As for the contention that because Atlantic Ave. now has parking and four lanes and a bike lane, a Boardwalk could be considered non-essential, we disagree.

It could be argued that not allowing beach block parking at least on one side of the street ONLY during the summer also took hundreds of possible legal parking spots away from people looking for parking. These were certainly some of the reasons parking in Margate today during the summer months is such an issue.

A new Boardwalk, in our opinion, will not increase this problem with parking. Rather, it will decrease it by **providing a safer path for bikers and pedestrians to transit the town** by moving them away from vehicles. We believe our residents would be less likely to get into their vehicles: to visit with friends, go to the beach, go out for a meal, go shopping, go to the Library or visit Lucy, etc.

Weather permitting and most certainly, during the summer months when the streets are overcrowded and parking is scarce, people would utilize the well-lit Boardwalk and walk back and forth, to and from, their planned destinations. Not only would they get to once again enjoy the beautiful ocean views (totally absent now from the streets because of the dune project), they would also reap the benefits of healthy exercise, without the added stress of looking for parking.

Parking is an issue in Margate – one that needs to be addressed – but we do not believe this problem will be exacerbated by the Boardwalk.

Biking will be safer

As for the bike lanes on Atlantic Ave., they are an improvement, but bikers are still far more at risk riding next to automobiles than they would be on a new boardwalk with a dedicated bike lane.

Insurance rates for accident liability should be lower

While we agree that a new Boardwalk might involve some added expense as regards Margate's general liability Insurance, we believe the increase would be minor.

A Boardwalk would likely lower the number of accidents, on the city streets, especially involving bikes, pedestrians and cars. We believe a new Boardwalk would lower, not raise, Margate's liability exposure.

Legal Issues and Costs should be minimal since most of the work has already been done

We agree with the city that there will be legal costs incurred in constructing the Boardwalk (which is why we have included an estimate of these “soft” costs at 2% of the total construction in last line of Table 2 above). However, **we believe that most of the legal work has already been done** as part of the Dune Project. By using OPRA (Open Public Records Act) to obtain that research from the state of New Jersey, the city can save the cost of having to duplicate it.

We also believe that when we get to the stage of applying for the State permitting, most, if not all of the 12 known riparian claims would be given to the city without any need to condemn and take the properties.

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

- Nelson Mandela,
President of South Africa

Conclusion: Build a Boardwalk in Margate



Margate has had a dune system imposed on it that was designed for a Boardwalk town, not a seaside community²⁶, and we are being forced to deal with the serious problems that created: a lack to access to the beach by large portions of our community, lost views of the sea and ocean breeze from our streets and homes and the loss of the physical and social connections that make us a beach community and a wonderful place to live.

Ironically, we now have an opportunity to transform the damage done by the dunes and the “Dead Zone” and turn them into an asset. How? By building a Boardwalk that will restore the Magic to Margate.

A new Boardwalk would upgrade for our present beach-scape and serve as a wonderful new attraction for residents and visitors alike. It will quickly become the pride and the joy of our community – a legacy for many generations to come.

Building a new Boardwalk here is very DOABLE. And it can be done quickly.²⁷

We hope that we’ve done our job and given you sufficient information to make an informed choice. If you agree with our recommendations, please join us in advocating for A Margate Boardwalk for the 21st Century.

²⁶ Ventnor built their dunes in order to protect their Boardwalk. If we build a Boardwalk in the Dead Zone, the dunes will act to protect it.

²⁷ Although the circumstances are different, the Belmar Boardwalk, which is the exact same length as the one we are proposing for Margate, was constructed in 3 months.



“Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people.”

- Harry Emerson Fosdick

Next Steps: Process and Politics

Over the next several months, The Margate Boardwalk Committee will be discussing the recommendations contained in this report with various local and regional elected and appointed Representatives in pursuit of our goal.

The decision to build a Boardwalk in Margate should be made by the entire community – year-round as well as part-time residents.

Here are what we believe to be the next steps in the process:

1. Sign our (MBC's)²⁸ petition on the Boardwalk requesting a public referendum for local voters and a public poll of all property owners
2. Express your views in support of a Boardwalk to all three commissioners and request that they conduct a referendum on this matter
3. Talk to your neighbors and encourage them to support the Boardwalk
4. Help us continue to advocate for the Boardwalk by donating your time and / or money to make this vision a reality by visiting our GoFundMe page:
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-margate-boardwalk-committee>

About Us

This report has been created by the collective efforts of **The Margate Boardwalk Committee**, whose members are: **Glenn Klotz, Stefanie Bloch, Ellen Lichtenstein** and **Steve Davidson**.

²⁸ MBC – The Margate Boardwalk Committee

The Margate Boardwalk Committee, Inc. is a Non-profit 501c3 (Charitable) Corp. registered in the state of New Jersey.

The Margate Boardwalk Auxiliary – is the associated public group of volunteers that is working alongside the Margate Boardwalk Committee Inc. The Margate Boardwalk Auxiliary is free to join and open to the public. Simply give us your name, and email address or mailing address. Your phone number is optional. You will be put on the group's email list for its monthly Newsletter.

Donate and Volunteer

The Margate Boardwalk Committee & The Margate Boardwalk Auxiliary needs donations to do our work (e.g., printing and renting facilities and equipment for presentations). Please visit our crowdfunding site at: GOFUNDME.Com (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-margate-boardwalk-committee>) and contribute to our work. Or visit our website at: www.themargateboardwalk.com to join.

We also need volunteers to help us with our various projects. Come talk to us. Thanks!!