

Project Narrative

Ideal Education, a New Jersey non-profit corporation doing business as the Institute of Technology, proposes the renovation and adaptive reuse of an existing four-story, approximately 20,000-square-foot vacant building located at 7 S. South Carolina Avenue (Block 141, Lot 3), within the RC Zoning District. The project will convert the underutilized structure into a multi-use facility designed to serve both community and educational purposes.

The proposed development will include a community marketplace, cloud kitchen, indoor aquaponic farming facility, collaborative workspace, three classrooms, a lobby with reception area, and open storage. Specifically, the first floor will be developed as a next-generation supermarket. The second floor will be utilized for a cloud kitchen and indoor aquaponic farming operations. The third floor is planned for educational and institutional use and will include three classrooms, collaborative space, and a lobby with reception. The fourth floor will be used primarily for open storage.

Due to the site's urban location and existing conditions, variances are requested for several pre-existing nonconforming conditions, including lot area, lot depth, impervious lot coverage, building coverage, and building setbacks. In addition, a use variance is requested for aquaponic farming, as this use is not permitted within the RC Zoning District.

The primary hardship associated with the project is the absence of on-site parking, which constitutes a nonconforming condition and necessitates a parking variance. No parking is available on the subject property. However, adjacent properties with accessible off-street parking have expressed a willingness to participate in a limited shared parking arrangement, and the applicant intends to lease several off-site parking spaces.

Parking demand for the proposed uses is anticipated to be minimal. The cloud kitchen component is primarily oriented toward online ordering and delivery services, significantly reducing the need for on-site customer parking. Additionally, due to the project's urban setting, it is expected that a substantial number of employees and patrons will access the site on foot or via alternative modes of transportation. The availability of online ordering further minimizes on-site parking demand.

The proposed multi-use community development will provide substantial benefits to the City of Atlantic City, including workforce development opportunities, enhanced sustainability and food security through the aquaponic farming facility, and urban revitalization through the adaptive reuse of a long-vacant building. The project will also serve as a model for sustainable urban redevelopment and entrepreneurial growth by offering affordable rental space for food entrepreneurs, thereby supporting local businesses and contributing to the city's tourism-driven economy.