

Trenton250
Master Plan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT BRIEF

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JULY 06, 2016

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Introduction

TERMINOLOGY

The following terminology is helpful for understanding the purpose of this brief and how it is organized.

Initiative: A collection of policy, programs, partnerships, and similar efforts to achieve a desired goal (e.g. Reduce Water Pollution and Enhance the Natural Environments).

Action: An individual policy, project, program, partnership, study, or advocacy position that the City and the community must execute to support an initiative to achieve a goal (e.g. Green Infrastructure Program, Assunpink Greenway Daylighting Project, or an Anti-Litter Campaign)

INTENT

The following document is a “Economic Development Report Brief”: a shorter version of the final Topic-Focused Report (also called an Element) that will be presented to the public for adoption. This document clearly identifies the goals associated with Economic Development as well as the strategies for achieving those goals.

What makes this document a “Brief” is that it does not include a detailed explanation of every Action, but instead summarizes them at the end of the document. This “Key Actions” section can be used like a glossary. The explanations for each action are placed at the end of the document because they are often mentioned in more than one strategy.

The City is presenting the information as a brief for the following reasons:

- The City understands that residents, business owners, elected officials, and stakeholders have a limited amount of time to review these documents. A shorter “top-level” presentation of recommendation should allow more people to read and comment on the City’s overall approach to addressing its goals.
- The time and expense required to write all the actions and identify the implementation framework is considerable. The City would like to ensure that it has support for or disagreement about strategies before writing detailed explanations of all the actions. Moreover, presenting information in this way allows residents and stakeholders to make recommendations on additions or changes before a first draft of the Topic-Focused Reports are complete.

Nonetheless, providing a succinct overview of the approach does not come without limitations. When reading

the Brief, many readers are likely to have important questions about these Strategies and Actions. Among others, questions might include: Who will implement this action? How will it be funded? And when will it be completed?

Answering these questions requires an immense investment of time and resources. In the past, efforts to fully elaborate ideas before they are presented publicly has resulted a need to rework entire sections or even re-draft plans, a process that comes at a significant cost. The intent is to avoid that situation. Instead, the City would like residents, businesses, and stakeholders to identify which strategies have an initial level of support and what modifications they see may be necessary, with the understanding that more information is needed to fully evaluate the document. The City understands that this places the reader in a tricky position: they may support an idea but only if it is implemented in a certain way or they may be skeptical of an idea unless they know more. We appreciate this, and encourage readers to submit their concerns about implementation as part of the review process.

BRIEF STRUCTURE

The document is organized around four sections: Background, Goals, Strategies, and Actions. Each Strategy is supported by a series of proposed Actions. These Actions are listed as bullet points at the end of each strategy. More detailed explanations of their meaning can be found at the end of the document in the section titled “Key Actions”.

COMMENTS

You may email your comments to Jeffrey Wilkerson, Planning Director, at info@trenton250.org or hand deliver written comments to the Division of Planning, Department of Housing and Economic Development located on the 3rd floor of City Hall.

You can also send your written comments by mail to:

Division of Planning
City Hall, 3rd Floor Annex
319 E. State Street
Trenton, NJ 08608

Economic Development Report Brief

BACKGROUND

Economic development can be defined as actions by communities and policymakers that improve a region's well-being by growing its tax base, increasing residents' incomes, and creating jobs with the intent of an improved standard of living and quality of life. In this context, Trenton is poised to reestablish itself as the economic and cultural center of Mercer County and the mid-Jersey region. As the state capital of New Jersey, more than 28,000 workers arrive in Trenton each weekday, providing significant opportunities to exploit multiple markets of products and services. As a former manufacturing hub with a still-relatively strong industrial workforce and ready-to-work immigrant population that can be trained for today's industries, there are opportunities for expanding the City's industrial base.

With convenient access to New York, Philadelphia, and the Shore through many modes of transportation, Trenton's location and transportation infrastructure give it a major advantage over many other New Jersey cities. Moreover, the City is surrounded by multiple public and private institutions, and there are opportunities to forge new partnerships to better educate Trenton's residents and prepare them to help grow the city's economy. Equally important, Trenton offers a unique heritage to visitors unlike any other city because of its significant place in American history. Combined with the emerging arts scene incubating in downtown, Trenton has the opportunity to position itself as the region's capital of arts and culture. Such efforts will only enhance Trenton's potential to offer a unique urban lifestyle not found anywhere else in the area, and attract a more creative and innovative demographic

Regionally, Trenton is also located in the heart of an economy encompassing Bucks and Mercer Counties. While Trenton is the center for State government, it is surrounded by many private-sector industries experiencing significant growth. According to On the Map, a resource of the US Census, the following industries experienced the largest growth in employment in the combined Mercer/Bucks area from 2002 to 2014 (growth indicated in parentheses):

- Management of Companies and Enterprises (139%)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (50%)

- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (38%)
- Accommodation and Food Services (33%)
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (21%)

Because of their relative strength in the region, these are the industries for which Trenton is best positioned to exploit in terms of capturing a portion of this growth and employment, enabling Trenton to better capitalize on its existing infrastructure and the region's workforce. Therefore, they should be the focus of the City's near-term efforts to expand business development and increase employment. In some ways, the City has already begun to position itself to do so. Arts, entertainment, and recreation are focused on Downtown Trenton and expanding. Moreover, as demographics change, these large private-sector companies will need to offer the types of amenities their employees are looking for. As a segment of millennials continue to seek urban, transit rich, and walkable communities, Trenton is well positioned to be an asset to these traditionally suburban industries.

Nonetheless, the City is not currently capitalizing on these advantages. To develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the City must be clear about what prevents it from doing so, though the obstacles are serious and often entrenched. Trenton's economy is currently highly dependent on government as a base industry. While this base economy encourages other related businesses, such as lobbyists and social service organizations, to locate in Trenton, a high concentration of non-profit entities results in much of Trenton's lands being either tax exempt or producing little income: 35% of all land in Trenton is non-taxable. This severely limits the ability of the City to leverage tax revenue to address many of its entrenched issues and forces it to place a significant tax burden on residents: Trenton has the highest effective Tax rate in the Mercer County Region. Combined with high-concentrations of poverty, crime and struggling schools, the City currently lags attracting residents who have the financial resources to invest in the city and make it successful.

Trenton faces a variety of other economic development challenges impacting its ability to capitalize on its assets. Trenton has a limited supply of retail goods and services, slow business growth, and a shortage of readily developed industrial sites. The arts and culture industry too faces numerous challenges that are impacting its potential for being an economic engine for the City. In addition and directly related to economic development, the city faces a variety of workforce, job-skill, employment access, and education-related issues, which are addressed in the Education and Workforce Development report of Trenton250. Trentonians, as well as stakeholders, have identified improving all of these sectors as critical for achieving the community-driven Vision. Collectively, Trenton's economic development challenges are limiting its ability to reach its potential.

To successfully build a Premier Economic and Cultural Center, the City, County and State must abandon its efforts to create "silver bullet" solutions to the City's problems and begin strategically investing in efforts that will build a sustainable healthy economy that provides opportunities for a diverse residential community. Our analysis finds that the key to meeting Trenton's long-term economic development goals lies in unlocking its potential by building off of strengths. To accomplish this, this Report recommends focusing on simultaneously strengthening the three key pillar of Trenton's economy: the downtown & waterfront, the industrial areas, and the neighborhoods. Each of these areas has relatively unique challenges and solutions, but success in these areas will have City wide impact. Moreover, they represent three mutually reinforcing strategies for moving the City forward: make the Downtown a destination to live and work, expand and enhance opportunities for industrial development, and support the growth of neighborhood commercial areas.

DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT

As the economic engine of the City, Trenton's downtown must be a major focus for economic revitalization. The adjacent waterfront, with its tremendous redevelopment potential, should be considered an extension of downtown. Key economic development issues affecting the downtown and waterfront include a limited capture of retail demand, limited downtown development and growth, a fragmented arts and culture industry, and a disconnected waterfront dominated by highway infrastructure and underutilized lots. As outlined in the Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study, Trenton's weak downtown retail market is defined by significant gaps in retail opportunity due to both market conditions and negative perceptions of the city. Simply stated, there is demand for services but the downtown does not provide the right business supply to capture these workers and its regional share of retail. As a result, shoppers either don't seek amenities in Trenton or are forced to go outside the city due to market limitations. While there is surplus in some retail categories, downtown workers are generally leaving Trenton because there are not enough grocers, convenience stores, personal services, and general merchandise stores to serve their daytime needs.

Compounding these downtown retail challenges, Trenton has experienced a prolonged period of limited development and business growth, and a lack of market-rate housing construction. Major investments in Trenton, including the Trenton Transit Center, the Sun National Bank Center, and Arm & Hammer Park, have not attracted sufficient spin-off development. Few businesses have been created as a result of these facilities and many businesses that do exist near these venues have not successfully capitalized on the foot traffic. Developable parcels near these facilities remain vacant or underutilized. Further exacerbating the challenge, many large parcels in key development locations - including the waterfront area - are owned by the state or county. These parcels remain extremely underutilized, unproductive, and generate no tax revenue for the City.

In instances where the City has used redevelopment as a tool for sparking private investment, there have been mixed results. Various projects have been constructed, only to have been converted into office space for the state or county when no private sector tenants could be found. In addition, many plans have simply sat on the shelf, largely unsuccessful in advancing toward implementation. Interviews with stakeholders and City staff indicate several reasons for lack of progress:

- in some cases, these efforts have failed to meet state requirements for financial support;
- in other cases, project visions were too large to be feasible;
- a few efforts have lacked sufficient coordination between City leadership and developers;
- lack of coordination between City departments and accountability to the plans;
- some have been plagued by recent unfavorable market conditions for redevelopment; and
- redevelopment sites have not been widely marketed to prospective developers due to limited budgets and staff resources.

Trenton's primary challenge regarding arts and culture is the fragmentation of the industry. Despite having a significant presence in the city with a wealth of attractions and venues, Trenton arts and culture groups do not effectively communicate their efforts, including marketing/promotion, branding, and event coordination. In addition, several venues and facilities are significantly underutilized. Furthermore, Trenton has tended to focus its tourism efforts on its historical heritage more than its arts and cultural heritage. Funding to support the industry is a challenge as well.

INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Industry is another key component of Trenton's economy and a significant economic development opportunity. Despite the city's history as an industrial powerhouse, its relatively strong industrial workforce, and economic development trends pointing toward a resurgence of manufacturing, a lack of industrial growth and development is another significant issue for Trenton. While the City has an abundance of abandoned industrial properties, many lack the physical characteristics demanded by modern industry. Most industrial businesses (particularly light industry) require large floorplates to accommodate their desired production plan. Parcel characteristics sought by prospective industrial companies - parcels larger than 60,000 SF with adequate parking and good highway access - are difficult to find in Trenton. Moreover, Trenton has limited large, undeveloped, and "shovel-ready" sites available for industrial development. Sites that are vacant are often fragmented and owned by multiple entities, while properties that are available have not been well-marketed. There is also a disconnect between Trenton's industrial workforce skills and business needs. Better matching the two for both existing and future businesses will require partnerships among the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Also problematic is a lack of adequate transportation access to jobs, both inside and outside of the city. Finally, stakeholders have identified Trenton's relatively inexpensive energy resources and water capacity as an asset. But those assets have not been effectively marketed as a means for attracting water-based industrial businesses.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AREAS

A third major facet of Trenton's economy is the neighborhood-level service economy that meets the needs of residents near their homes. It is in these locations that immigrant entrepreneurs and ethnic small businesses have an opportunity to flourish with the right assistance. However, Trenton's neighborhoods experience a variety of challenges impacting economic development. The Housing Report addresses the numerous housing impediments facing many of Trenton's neighborhoods; however there are obstacles to the commercial realm that impact the neighborhoods as well. Specifically, there are a lack of resources and support to encourage the growth of retail and service amenities in neighborhoods. As a result, shortages in retail options exist in many categories throughout the City's neighborhoods, particularly in the west ward. There, a significant lack of retail exists in almost every major category, including general merchandise, food service, clothing and accessories, and health and personal care. This area is also located farthest from shopping options outside the City, and therefore should experience the least competition. The north and east wards are also underserved but to a lesser degree than the west ward, and have several similar opportunities for additional retail stores.

The City must recognize that economic development should be approached comprehensively. As indicated in the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, long-term economic development must be driven by education investments, and the City, County and State must take an integrated approach to providing educational opportunities to residents of all ages. In doing so, they must balance two critical needs. The first is an immediate need to address short-term issues and train residents for jobs that are available now. At the same time, any educational initiative must take into consideration what might be demanded in a 21st Century economy and give guidance for how Trenton can position its residents to succeed in a rapidly shifting environment. Moreover, investments in open spaces, reducing the prevalence of brownfield sites, and improving mobility options will all make Trenton a more desirable place to live and work. These efforts are not mutually exclusive, but instead must work together.

Relevant Goals

1. **Overall:** Trenton will have a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy with a broad range of employment opportunities for residents
2. **Downtown:** Trenton's downtown and waterfront will be the economic center of Mercer County and the Mid-Jersey Region
3. **Industrial:** Trenton will attract employers to its industrial areas that generate comparatively high rates of job opportunities
4. **Neighborhood Commercial:** Trenton will have vibrant neighborhood business districts

STRATEGIES

This Economic Development Report of Trenton250 will address Trenton's economic challenges by focusing market-based strategies on three major concentrations that define Trenton's economy: downtown/waterfront, industrial areas, and neighborhoods. The report outlines strategies that the City can initiate immediately and simultaneously, and will be reinforcing. Efforts to develop and attract industries with regional strength into the city will exploit the city's workforce and available land, increase tax revenues, and place more money in the pocketbooks of residents, making neighborhood retail more viable. A stronger downtown will be more attractive to regional employers and professional workers looking for high-quality places to live, which will in turn bring jobs and economic opportunity to all residents. This evolution will further the appeal of downtown, luring even more higher-wage industries and companies to Trenton. Moreover, stronger neighborhood commercial centers will make neighborhoods more attractive to new and future residents, strengthening efforts to make Trenton a regional destination.

These strategies will improve the retail environment; create new development and business opportunities in key locations; create an improved business environment that provides high-quality employment to residents; take advantage of the region's employment strengths and growth areas; better exploit Trenton's arts, culture, and heritage tourism; and promote all of these attributes to the outside world. With multiple departments working in coordination, including both Economic Development and Planning Divisions, the City will maintain an environment that is conducive to accomplishing these strategies through a series of detailed actions, outlined below.

DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT INITIATIVES

For the purposes of this economic development report, downtown is defined as Old Trenton as well as adjacent areas of central Trenton that include the waterfront, Trenton Transit Center, Arm & Hammer Park, and Sun National Bank Center.

The economic development initiative for downtown is focused on continuing to create a great place for people to live, and simultaneously ensuring that appropriate residential development occurs to increase housing downtown. As the City attracts more residents and ensures flourishing neighborhood retail for current residents, business owners should see expanded opportunities for retail growth. If Trenton is able to steadily build stronger residential and retail sectors, the downtown is likely to become a destination for new or relocated businesses, regardless of the industry. This is because Trenton is the natural downtown of the Mid-Jersey Region, a region that has a strong economy but which provides little alternative to suburban offices. As employers begin to compete for high-quality talent, it is likely that some will see urban amenities (e.g. walkable streets, access to Transit, and cultural diversity) as a competitive advantage.

In executing these initiatives, the first thing the City must do is ensure that the State remains a stable employer in downtown Trenton and that it does not lose its base economy. Next, the City should strongly support efforts to establish an arts district downtown and strengthen Trenton's arts and cultural offerings. Such districts have been proven to attract new younger residents that interject vibrancy into areas that need it. Strategies such as improving regional bike-pedestrian trail access, connecting the downtown to the waterfront, and placemaking strategies will further reinforce the "livability" of downtown.

However, in order for these and previous investments to have the desired revitalization effect, the City must leverage its best redevelopment opportunities to attract market-rate rental housing development downtown. There are currently limited quality market-rate rental units available in the heart of Downtown. However, these types of units are exactly the kind that new residents, looking for modern urban living, are seeking out. Not only are these potential residents less likely to have the financial ability to buy homes but they are also less likely to do so in an unproven market like downtown Trenton. However, new market-rate residential construction will not happen without City support: the market downtown is untested and there are few high-quality "shovel ready" sites. As such, the City must incentivize new residential development to provide the catalyst for future change.

These investments in creating housing options downtown are likely to have a snowball effect on the downtown economy. Each new resident increases the total number of dollars that will be spent downtown. Moreover, they will diversify the kinds of retail that is in demand and increase demand for retail after traditional business hours. This later point is critical. A more diverse client base downtown will likely give downtown retailers a better opportunity to capitalize on the thousands of employees who come to Trenton every day. It is difficult for a business to remain profitable by only serving a government-salaried 9-to-5 workforce. However, the combination of both residents and office workers should give more retail establishments a stronger foundation for growth. More retail will make downtown an even more attractive place to live, which will in-turn attract new residents to downtown.

More residents, and more retail to support them, will make downtown significantly more appealing to higher-wage industries and companies. Nationally and regionally, a segment of businesses are looking to re-locate in urban areas to attract and retain high quality employees who do not want to work in suburban office parks. Trenton is the natural and historic downtown for the Mid-Jersey region which has a robust and diverse economy. By creating a downtown that is amenity rich and which provides a variety of housing options, the City will attract new business and diversify its economy.

Moreover, continued new residential development will demonstrate to investors that there is a market for redevelopment in Trenton. Establishing a market record is critical, since it will reduce the risk of future investment by demonstrating that profits can be made by developing in the downtown. Stated differently,

establishing a development record in the downtown will “fertilize the ground” for future investments. This will put the City in a strong position to capitalize when major infrastructure and amenity investments, such as the re-alignment of Route 29 or the extension of the RiverLINE, do become reality.

Efforts to attract residents to the Downtown are strongly supported by other recommendations made in this and other Trenton250 topic-focused reports. Strengthening arts and culture amenities in Trenton should be a cornerstone for making the city, and downtown especially, an attractive place to live. Moreover, recommendations to improve parks and trails, as well as improved mobility options, will be welcome amenities to anyone looking to live in the city. Nonetheless, these investments will only have the desired spillover effects if the City, County and State can continue to encourage the development of market-rate housing in the downtown.

ENCOURAGE FURTHER CONSOLIDATING AND CONCENTRATION OF STATE OFFICES DOWNTOWN

As the largest employment sector in the City, Trenton’s state government workforce is a key component of the Downtown economy and an important part of its growth potential. While recognizing the opportunity to redevelop the abundance of surface parking lots serving the state office buildings, the future of Trenton depends, in part, on these offices and workers remaining Downtown without expanding its non-ratable footprint. State employees are Downtown customers and potential future residents who will further expand the Downtown market for goods and services. This growth will encourage additional private investment in the Downtown office market, leading to additional employment opportunities. Therefore, it is critical that the City make strides to ensure this workforce remain in Downtown Trenton.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. In addition, it will support the City’s efforts to achieve its Land Use and Transportation Connections goal identified in the Circulation Report.¹ The City should implement or continue to implement the following actions to execute this initiative (for further explanation of the specific programs, see Policies and Programs Section at the end of the document):

- Monitor state employment activity to understand trends and needs of the state workforce
- Identify any barriers to state offices locating in Downtown Trenton
- Create partnerships with state and county officials to identify, agree on, and resolve issues that impede Downtown and waterfront vibrancy
- Create a live where you work program
- Develop the Trenton250’s Arts and Culture Topic-focused Report
- Market Downtown as a “cool” place to live with a unique urban lifestyle

¹ Trenton will have walkable neighborhoods and an active downtown that are supported by a multi-modal transportation system that includes, but is not limited to, high quality transit-oriented developments. Parking will no longer be a dominant land use in the City’s downtown and will be managed effectively to support active land uses, streetscapes and economy, in accordance with Trenton’s multi-modal objectives.

EXPAND DOWNTOWN MARKET-RATE HOUSING

Trenton has successfully created “place” along Warren Street and W Lafayette St. In addition, the Mill Hill Neighborhood has been a major success as an established and desirable downtown market-rate residential neighborhood. The city must continue to capitalize on such efforts to encourage a strong residential community downtown, which can support local retail, entertainment, and dining establishments. Aside from rehabilitation and infill projects, key locations to consider for new market-rate housing development include the parking lot at City Hall, the Perry Street surface parking lot, the Merchant Street surface parking lot, the N. Willow Street surface parking lots, the parking garage across from Mill Hill Park, the Transit Center area, and the waterfront area.

In the initial phase, the City must concentrate its efforts on facilitating the process for developers to invest in market-rate rental housing downtown, while promoting the Downtown lifestyle to prospective residents. Successful downtown market-rate housing will establish a critical mass of residents and increase the demand for additional goods and services while making the Downtown an attractive location for an expanded office market – all leading to solidifying Trenton as Downtown to the Mid-Jersey region.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. In addition, it will support the City’s efforts to achieve its Land Use and Transportation Connections² goal identified in the Circulation Report as well as its Overall Housing³ and Market Rate Housing⁴ goals identified in the Housing Report.

To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Establish a Rental Development Incentive Program
- Establish an Upper Floor Restoration Program
- Undertake a Parking Management Plan for Downtown and the Waterfront with zoning ordinance modifications on parking requirements
- Identify and market parcels and buildings suitable for new market-rate housing
- Develop design guidelines for new development that reinforces high-quality, urban-scale design
- Create attractive streetscapes and public spaces – develop placemaking strategies for the Downtown area
- Implement changes to the City’s development review process for efficiency, effectiveness, and a predictable and transparent approval process
- Market Downtown as a “cool” place to live with a unique urban lifestyle
- Improve the City’s staff capacities in both Economic Development and Planning Divisions
- Develop Trenton250’s Public Safety Topic-focused Report
- Develop Trenton250’s Capital Improvement Plan
- Update the City’s zoning ordinance

² Trenton will have walkable neighborhoods and an active downtown that are supported by a multi-modal transportation system that includes, but is not limited to, high quality transit-oriented developments. Parking will no longer be a dominant land use in the City’s downtown and will be managed effectively to support active land uses, streetscapes and economy, in accordance with Trenton’s multi-modal objectives.

³ Trenton will provide a variety of for-sale and rental options for households of all types and residents at all income levels

⁴ Trenton will have a strong housing market and will be perceived as a choice location for residency

IMPLEMENT A TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AROUND THE TRENTON TRANSIT CENTER

The Trenton Transit Center directly links Downtown Trenton to the entire Northeast Corridor, thus making it a key economic development opportunity for the city – both commercial and residential. Despite its current disconnectedness from Downtown, with several parcels prime for redevelopment, the potential for implementing new transit-oriented development (TOD) in the vicinity of the station is significant, along with creating new pedestrian connections.

Several sites around the Transit Center should be considered for transit-oriented development, primarily mixed-use buildings with ground-floor retail and residential/commercial above. These locations include assembled parcels at the corner of N. Clinton Ave. and E. State St. and along E. State St., the existing parking lot on Barlow St. across from Mercer Cemetery, and the parking lot opposite Trent Center Apartments at the corner of Greenwood Ave. and Hudson St. For the City, this initiative involves the focusing efforts on encouraging and facilitating mixed-use development in these specific areas initially to take advantage of the Transit Center's location and access.

At this time, the City is working on a strategic plan to move TOD forward. What follows are a starting point to support efforts to review property ownership, development rights, market potential in the area, and concrete steps forward for development.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. In addition, it will support the City's efforts to achieve its Land Use and Transportation Connections⁵ goal identified in the Circulation Report as well as its Overall Housing⁶ goal identified in the Housing Report.

To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Develop and implement a Transit Center Area Development Strategic Plan
- Identify, assemble, and market developable parcels
- Identify possible locations for retail expansion to support new residential development and nearby employment
- Develop design guidelines for new development that reinforces high-quality, urban-scale design
- Implement changes to the City's development review process for efficiency, effectiveness, and a predictable and transparent approval process
- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections and safety between the transit center area and downtown
- Create attractive streetscapes and public spaces – develop placemaking strategies for the Transit Center area
- Exploit the adjacent Mercer Cemetery as a cultural heritage destination
- Improve the City's staff capacities in both Economic Development and Planning Divisions
- Develop Trenton250's Public Safety Topic-focused Report
- Develop Trenton250's Capital Improvement Plan

⁵ Trenton will have walkable neighborhoods and an active downtown that are supported by a multi-modal transportation system that includes, but is not limited to, high quality transit-oriented developments. Parking will no longer be a dominant land use in the City's downtown and will be managed effectively to support active land uses, streetscapes and economy, in accordance with Trenton's multi-modal objectives.

⁶ Trenton will provide a variety of for-sale and rental options for households of all types and residents at all income levels

- Develop Trenton250's Technology Topic-focused Report
- Update the City's zoning ordinance

STRENGTHEN ARTS AND CULTURE IN TRENTON: REINFORCE AND SUPPORT A LIVE-WORK ARTIST COMMUNITY IN OLD TRENTON

Old Trenton is home to Trenton's emerging yet active arts and culture scene. In addition to advocating for a district that fosters space for innovation, art creation and supportive businesses, there is a need for more residential development to restore critical mass in Old Trenton. The Bell Telephone building will contribute to that housing provision with market-rate apartments once complete and can spur additional market-rate residential development in the area. Housing in Old Trenton must also be affordable for makers and artists and other lower income residents, and provide opportunities for live/work space. This could occur through new infill construction, rehabbing historic homes, and adaptive reuse of structures, such as the YWCA building and Stockton Arms. Partnering with and leveraging institutions within Old Trenton such as Mercer County Community College, the Central Public Library, and the high school can advance enrichment of the makers community with programming, social opportunities, and community development.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Utilize Redevelopment Powers
- Implement changes to the City's development review process for efficiency, effectiveness, and a predictable and transparent approval process
- Zoning amendments to encourage multi-family rehabs and new construction as live/work space
- New Construction 5-Year Tax Abatements
- New Uses For Vacant Buildings Program
- Vacant Lot Program
- Live Where You Work Program - Marketing
- Live Where You Work Program - State Partnership
- Direct rental assistance
- Tax relief for low-income homeowners
- Energy Retrofits
- Home Improvement Incentives
- Home Ownership Incentive Program
- Establish Old Trenton as an Arts District with a neighborhood plan
- Develop the Trenton250's Arts and Culture Topic-focused Report
- Develop the Trenton250's Community Facilities Topic-focused Report
- Develop the Trenton250's Public Safety Topic-focused Report
- Develop Trenton250's Technology Topic-focused Report

STRENGTHEN ARTS AND CULTURE IN TRENTON: ESTABLISH A COLLABORATIVE MARKETING CAMPAIGN FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

Arts and cultural organizations can be significant economic drivers in Trenton; nonprofit arts expenditures per capita in 2010 were higher in Mercer County than several nearby counties according to the National

Endowment for the Arts. Trenton has multiple arts and culture-related institutions that organize well-attended events. Furthermore, the city has an incredible wealth of historical heritage attractions. However, limited coordination among entities exists to create a comprehensive marketing campaign for the arts in Trenton. To make Trenton a premier destination for historical tourism and those seeking unique arts and culture amenities, the City should coordinate all of its arts and culture organizations to establish a collaborative marketing campaign for the arts.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Investigate and advocate for the merits of creating a Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Joint market/advertise among organizations for programs, events, and venues
- Create an Arts Council to provide synergies among arts organizations
- Market Old Trenton as a center for creative activity
- Investigate and advocate for the merits of an integrated, official web-based arts calendar that contains all arts and culture-related events in Trenton
- Market underutilized state facilities for arts-related uses
- Develop Trenton250's Arts and Culture Topic-focused Report

STRENGTHEN ARTS AND CULTURE IN TRENTON: CONNECT ARTS AND CULTURE ASSETS THROUGH PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

In order to successfully make Trenton a destination for history, art, and culture, its arts and culture assets must be connected physically to encourage increased visitation. In essence, this initiative aims to establish paths and districts that unite Trenton's arts and cultural assets. The historical "triangle" in downtown could be reinforced through this effort.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Assess and create a cohesive Historic Corridor/Path of Trenton's downtown historical sites
- Investigate and advocate for the merits of bundling Battle Monument and Washington Crossing State Park to increase visitation
- Place new historical markers and informational signage along the Delaware and Raritan Canal Park, other trails, and bicycle-pedestrian network to lead to historic sites
- Establish Old Trenton as an Arts District with a neighborhood plan
- Assess the merits of a trolley to connect cultural assets
- Develop Trenton250's Arts and Culture Topic-focused Report
- Develop Trenton250's Public Safety Topic-focused Report
- Develop Trenton250's Capital Improvement Plan

STRENGTHEN ARTS AND CULTURE IN TRENTON: SUPPORT ARTS-RELATED DINING OPPORTUNITIES

As the Downtown Arts District continues to evolve and flourish, opportunities will also increase to expand Downtown Trenton's dining scene. While Trenton's restaurants currently tend to cater to the weekday office worker, closing before 5:00, the arts and culture industry tends to flourish in the evening hours and

on weekends. This activity creates demand for Downtown food and drink establishments that can serve patrons of evening and weekend arts and culture events. Trenton should position itself to better capture this opportunity.

The primary challenge regarding new restaurants, however, is the prohibitive start-up costs, which can inhibit restaurant start-up and growth activity. Financing for restaurant improvements can be difficult, and the failure rate of individual restaurant operators is generally high. A Downtown restaurant fund could help ease the risk of opening restaurants and stimulate investment. Such a fund has been successful in other cities, including Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The City's role could be assisting with initiating the program and securing funding for a revolving fund that could be offered to prospective Downtown restaurateurs, as well as identifying restaurant development ventures in which to invest the funds.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Develop an implementation model building on prior successful efforts
- Secure financing for the fund and manage its administration
- Identify specific priority locations for investment
- Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for the fund
- Institute a restaurant recruitment campaign
- Develop Trenton250's Arts and Culture Topic-focused Report

STRENGTHEN ARTS AND CULTURE IN TRENTON: DEVELOP NEW ARTS AND CULTURE ASSETS

Complementing the initiative to promote its existing wealth of arts and cultural assets, the city should strive toward developing new assets to further help make Trenton a destination for history, art, and culture.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Investigate the viability of a museum in Downtown Trenton that focuses on American Pottery
- Partner with Mercer County to promote all of the county's 18th century buildings
- Support the construction of a new Downtown convention center
- Develop Trenton250's Arts and Culture Topic-focused Report
- Develop Trenton250's Community Facilities Topic-focused Report
- Develop Trenton250's Capital Improvement Plan
- Develop Trenton250's Technology Topic-focused Report

STRENGTHEN ARTS AND CULTURE IN TRENTON: EXPAND STAFF CAPACITY TO BETTER SUPPORT AND PROMOTE THE ARTS COMMUNITY

The City should consider expanding staff capacities to assist the arts community toward the goal of making Trenton a destination for history, art, and culture. Achieving that goal also requires funding. While many cities have a dedicated funding source for promoting historical and cultural assets, often through hotel or special district taxes, Trenton does not. Therefore, the City should consider dedicating the hotel tax or other related revenue to support a marketing/tourism campaign or creating a special improvement district tax on businesses likely to benefit from tourism.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Improve the City's Staff capacities in the Department of Housing and Economic Development to support the arts community and related economy
- Assess and create a dedicated funding source for tourism to better promote the arts community
- Develop the Trenton250's Arts and Culture Topic-focused Report
- Develop Trenton250's Technology Topic-focused Report

STRENGTHEN ARTS AND CULTURE IN TRENTON: CREATE A TRENTON TOURISM CAMPAIGN

To achieve the goal of making Trenton a destination for history, art, and culture, the City should create a Trenton Tourism Campaign. This program could be undertaken by a newly-formed Convention and Visitor's Bureau or another entity if a CVB is not created. Either way, this initiative would be intended to actively advertise Trenton's cultural assets to promote tourism through a coordinated effort among related entities.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Assign a designated entity to facilitate coordination among existing organizations to promote Trenton for increased visitation
- Create visitation packages with local businesses
- Promote historical and cultural assets to visitors and residents
- Promote cultural events
- Partner with neighboring jurisdictions to combine efforts into a larger heritage tourism drive
- Exploit business demand created by Trenton's history, arts, and culture and heritage tourism industry

ENCOURAGE MULTI-PURPOSE USE OF THE SUN NATIONAL BANK CENTER AND ARM & HAMMER PARK FOR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Sun National Bank Center and Arm & Hammer Park are underused event venues that could contribute significantly toward the goal of a more vibrant entertainment business district if used more frequently. With many colleges in the region, the venues could continue hosting various championship games for several sports, as well as host pre-season games for professional sports teams in New York and Philadelphia. While not in use for these events, the Center could be more available to the surrounding community. These are regional amenities which will most help activate the downtown

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City along with community partners should implement the following actions:

- Create a strategic redevelopment plan in partnership with Mercer County Improvement Authority (MCIA) for the Sun National Bank Center area and Broad Street entertainment business district with concrete steps, phases to achieve the Broad Street Vision Plan with an inclusion of parcels along Broad St. to Rt. 129 overpass and along Hamilton Ave. (between Broad St. and Rt. 129)
- Develop a Waterfront Reclamation and Revitalization Strategic Plan
- Assess the merits of a dedicated revenue for improvements and redevelopment of the arena area/Broad Street entertainment business district

- Leverage public/private partnerships for redevelopment with a transparent and efficient process
- Work with MCIA and Mercer County to establish relationships with professional teams to host pre-season games
- Work with area colleges and universities to host college tournament games at the facilities
- Work with MCIA and Mercer County to promote the facilities for local organizations' events

CREATE A STARTUP AND MAKERS CULTURE

A makers' culture can be described as a "learn-through-doing" culture that breeds an entrepreneurial innovation spirit with emphasis on an informal, networked, peer-led, and shared learning community. Such cultures comprise of artisans, software developers, food producers, researchers, those interested in open technology, and the likes.

The City can help foster a successful climate for entrepreneurs and makers to create an innovation identity for Trenton by providing new companies the necessary resources to develop their products, creating opportunities to interact with potential investors and grantors, and offering affordable rental space. In order for Trenton to create a thriving startup environment, the City must implement policies and programs that will nurture and advance such an initiative.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- University Start-up Partnership: Identify and establish partnerships with regional universities and research centers to develop and facilitate startup businesses
- Start-up Mentorship Program: the City and/or its community partners should create a mentorship program that will attract entrepreneurs, business incubators, and accelerators. This program should connect people starting new businesses with professional advisors
- Zero to Maker Program: create a program that aligns potential makers with required skills and access to the necessary means of production
- Maker to Maker Program: Encourage collaboration and creation of community groups to catalyze innovation and creation
- Regional business partnership: Partner with local companies that have an interest in entrepreneurship for financial and human capital
- Collaborative Lab: Utilize incentives and leverage partnerships to encourage the creation of a collaborative lab for prototyping, testing of products, and educational opportunities
- Co-working Space Incentive Program: Consider providing development bonuses to private developers who create co-working spaces in close proximity to transit
- Innovation Zone Tax Credits Advocacy: Support and promote a program that offers tax credits to for-profit companies that operate within specific targeted industries in a specific location, similar to Pennsylvania's Keystone Innovation Zone program
- Trenton Makers' Day: Further enhance Trenton Makers' Day as an exhibition for makers and provide youth outreach
- Community Facilities Makers Programing: Utilize community facilities as enablers of the "learn-through-doing" culture with community-led activities, services and programs.
- Marketing Strategy: Market Trenton's low-cost of living to entrepreneurs as well as its high-quality transit access to New York and Philadelphia
- Develop Trenton250's Technology Topic-focused Report

RECLAIM AND REVITALIZE THE WATERFRONT

Currently, Trenton's waterfront is overwhelmed by a sea of mostly state-owned parking lots and is further disconnected from Downtown by Route 29. A reclaimed waterfront will create the opportunity to development of a vibrant, mixed-use community that could offer new commercial and residential space, and serve as a magnet for new private investment. It could also become a regional destination as a great public space for creative patterns of use and define physical, cultural, and social identities as the heart of Trenton.

Route 29 has been re-envisioned to be a very different facility – one that will fit into its context and better serve both the transportation needs and social and economic goals of the city. The current Route 29 will be re-designed as an urban boulevard that will move traffic efficiently, but at lower, safer speeds. It will form the spine of the waterfront redevelopment area in the downtown and will provide physical and visual connections to the river.

Reclaiming the Waterfront is a significant undertaking. It will require significant additional planning, property acquisition and assembly, programming the Route 29 project on the Transportation Improvement Program, engineering design, an environmental review process, significant stakeholder involvement, and substantial investment. However, in the meantime, the City can begin the process of moving the process forward.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. In addition, it will support the City's efforts to achieve its Land Use and Transportation Connections⁷ goal identified in the Circulation Report as well as its Natural and Cultural Resources⁸ goal identified in the Environment Report. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Develop a Waterfront Reclamation and Revitalization Strategic Plan
- Develop final engineering design based on the Route 29 re-alignment and the Waterfront Strategic Plan
- Undertake a Parking Management Plan for Downtown and the Waterfront
- Identify potential redevelopment sites through the Waterfront Strategic Plan process
- Identify and market developable parcels - include a one-stop site selectors portal
- Advertise economic incentives to attract developers
- Ensure that the Waterfront Strategic Plan is consistent with the Land Use Element and updates the Zoning Ordinance
- Develop design guidelines for new development that reinforces high-quality, urban-scale design
- Implement changes to the City's development review process for efficiency, effectiveness, and a predictable and transparent approval process

LEVERAGE THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE AND MCCC AS DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC ANCHORS

This initiative recognizes Thomas Edison State College and Mercer County Community College's (MCCC) James Kerney Campus as important Downtown institutions and drivers for economic development Downtown. Students, faculty, and staff of these educational institutions are customers, as are their visitors, all of whom

⁷ Trenton will have walkable neighborhoods and an active downtown that are supported by a multi-modal transportation system that includes, but is not limited to, high quality transit-oriented developments. Parking will no longer be a dominant land use in the City's downtown and will be managed effectively to support active land uses, streetscapes and economy, in accordance with Trenton's multi-modal objectives.

⁸ Trenton will protect and promote access to its natural, cultural and historic resources, including natural ecosystems.

contribute significantly to the Downtown economy. Colleges support retailers, service businesses, and hotels. They also can supply residents to further support these entities. In addition, indirect economic benefits of these institutions can include spin-off businesses affiliated with the colleges. The potential expansion of educational offerings at MCCC Downtown could amount to even greater economic opportunities. The City should ensure that Downtown Trenton leverages these opportunities.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. In addition, it will support the City's efforts to achieve its Workforce Development⁹ and Personal Enrichment¹⁰ goals identified in the Education Report. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Establish relationships and continue dialog with each college
- Create agreed-upon common goals
- Coordinate with the colleges to understand the needs and habits of students and staff
- Consider a "live where you work" incentive (such as down payment/mortgage assistance) program with the colleges
- Identify opportunities for creating Downtown student housing
- Work with the colleges to align long-term development goals with the City's master plan
- Implement changes to the City's development review process for efficiency, effectiveness, and a predictable and transparent approval process
- Encourage other area educational institutions to develop Downtown satellite campuses

DOWNTOWN RETAIL STRATEGIES: EXPAND DOWNTOWN RETAIL

This initiative is aimed at exploiting the retail opportunities that exist in Downtown Trenton to fulfill the goal of creating a vibrant Downtown commercial district while filling vacant commercial space. Downtown retail opportunities include grocers, convenience stores, personal services, and general merchandise stores. Overall, the growth and expansion of Downtown retail will provide services to residents, workers, and visitors, while creating new business and job opportunities for residents. This initiative should involve coordinating efforts with the Trenton Downtown Association and Greater Trenton.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Create a database of properties available to accommodate downtown retail expansion, particularly along Warren and State Streets, as well as the South Broad Street
- Consider and identify additional possible locations in Downtown Trenton for retail expansion within the one-stop site selectors portal
- Identify locations capable of accommodating larger format retail
- Identify a location and strategy to establish a permanent market in Trenton (a more diverse farmers market with prepared foods, products, and fresh whole foods) as part of a local food hub

⁹ Trenton's diverse adult residents – including those involved in the correctional system - will have access to a wider range of quality jobs and high-demand career pathways

¹⁰ Trenton will provide residents of all ages with opportunities for lifelong learning and personal enrichment.

initiative to improve access to food and provide business opportunities

- Identify arts-related opportunities to support retail development
- Create a pop-up storefront initiative and identify specific Downtown locations
- Work with Downtown event venues to encourage visitors to patronize Trenton businesses
- Develop and implement an upper floor vacancy restoration plan
- Downtown Retail Strategies: Utilize Urban Enterprise Zone funds to assist existing businesses and support new business development
- Develop Trenton250's Technology Topic-focused Report
- Continue with an annual Trenton business conference for networking and business development opportunities

DOWNTOWN RETAIL STRATEGIES: PROVIDE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT DOWNTOWN RETAIL GROWTH

To ensure that the goal of vibrant retail areas is satisfied, and a retail expansion strategy throughout Trenton is successful, it will be important for the City to provide services where possible to prospective business owners that empower them with the resources necessary to start and sustain their businesses. This assistance can range from financial to educational, and physical to programmatic.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Downtown goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Encourage and expand programs that provide technical support to assist retailers
- Target small-scale business incentives in the Downtown
- Utilize Urban Enterprise Zone funds to assist existing businesses and support new business development
- Maintain an inventory of vacant commercial space and make it available to prospective retailers within the one-stop site selectors portal
- Institute a retail recruitment campaign
- Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for retail districts
- Develop Trenton250's Technology Topic-focused Report
- Continue with an annual Trenton business conference for networking and business development opportunities

INDUSTRIAL AREA STRATEGIES

Strategies must also focus on Trenton's industrial areas. The City must consolidate industrial parcels and market them in an effort to attract industries with regional strength to Trenton. The City already has a strong industrial workforce and if land is properly assembled and marketed, the City is likely to attract new businesses to Trenton. If successful, the City will see increase tax revenues and more money in the pocketbooks of residents. In turn, this will make neighborhood retail more viable and give the City more revenues to invest. With an emphasis on supporting the growth and expansion of environmentally-friendly industries, Trenton has the potential of becoming a green manufacturing city.

CAPITALIZE ON CITY-BASED INDUSTRIAL WORKFORCE

With its manufacturing legacy, Trenton's industrial workforce remains relatively strong in several parts of the city. To achieve the goal of having a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy with a broad range of employment opportunities while attracting new business development to the city, Trenton should capitalize on its city-based industrial workforce. In essence, this initiative is about fostering partnerships and connections between government agencies, between businesses and educators to match needs with training, and between prospective employees and the appropriate job opportunities to fit their skills. This initiative is also addressed in the Education and Workforce Development Element.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Industrial Areas goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Partner with the County and State to assess Trenton's workforce needs
- Create a Workforce and Educational Task Force including educational institutions, workforce development centers, and economic development agencies
- Develop a path for residents to connect with skilled jobs in partnership with the Mercer County Workforce Investment Board
- Develop partnerships between local businesses and Trenton high schools and colleges
- Support training and educational programs that match skill development with local business needs
- Solicit businesses seeking a wide range of skill levels to match the Trenton workforce

CREATE DEVELOPMENT SITES THAT MEET MODERN INDUSTRIAL NEEDS

This initiative improves opportunities for and facilitates large-scale redevelopment in Trenton's industrial areas to help create a more sustainable diverse economy in the City with new employment opportunities. It is a combined effort to make land available specifically for industrial development and its unique infrastructure requirements, make it known that the available land exists, assist with acquiring the land, and facilitate the land development process. To do this, the City must acquire and assemble lots to create parcels larger than 60,000 SF, and ensure those parcels have adequate parking and good highway access. The City must also make it known – through marketing efforts - that the available land exists, and ensure that its regulations facilitate the land development process.

To carry this out, the City must encourage the redevelopment of key parcels in the vicinity of Route 1 and New York Avenue targeted for industrial development. Many redevelopment opportunities exist in this vicinity, including a portion of Capital Health's 750 Brunswick Avenue campus, which has a surplus of land from underutilized parking lots and abuts a number of vacant/underutilized properties along New York Avenue. This area would be ideal to accommodate more traditional light industrial users, such as recyclers and warehouse companies, as well as med/tech companies, small manufacturers, and startups.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Industrial Areas goals as well as the Safe City Environment¹¹ Goal identified in the Environment Report. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Assess, acquire and assemble properties carefully to create suitable parcels for redevelopment

¹¹ Trenton will have a safe City environment where residents are free from the hazards of land and building contamination.

- Market developable parcels to attract desired industries and appropriate users
- Enhance access to developable sites through transportation improvements
- Market sites that cannot be assembled to companies that could accommodate a smaller building footprint
- Modify any regulations that inhibit development (i.e. reduce “red tape”)
- Implement changes to the City’s development review process for efficiency, effectiveness, and a predictable and transparent approval process

EXPLOIT THE REGION’S ‘EDS AND MEDS’ INDUSTRY TO CREATE SPIN-OFF BUSINESSES

Considering the Bucks/Mercer region’s employment concentration in the growing ‘eds and meds’ sector, Trenton is well-positioned to take advantage of this growth. A potential focus for Trenton is the med/tech industry, such as the production of medical equipment, product development, laboratory technical work, and smaller-scale distribution activity. This emphasis could strengthen and exploit some of the industry’s assets that remain in Trenton, particularly Capital Health Regional Medical Center’s campus at 750 Brunswick Avenue that retains a number of medical functions and specialties, but is reducing its Trenton presence. This facility, with surplus capacity and land, is located in the vicinity of Route 1 and New York Avenue targeted for industrial development.

For the City, this initiative is about fostering partnerships and connections with the ‘eds and meds’ industry to exploit its needs and opportunities as a means for creating new spin-off startup businesses that can employ Trenton residents. As with the more traditional industrial opportunities, it is also fostering relationships between businesses and educators to match employer needs with training, and between prospective employees and the appropriate job opportunities to fit their skills.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Industrial Areas goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Partner with ‘eds and meds’ industry leaders to assess employment and production needs
- Develop a path for residents to connect with skilled jobs in partnership with the Mercer County Workforce Investment Board
- Encourage partnerships between local ‘eds and meds’ businesses and Trenton high schools and colleges
- Support training and educational programs that match skill development with ‘eds and meds’ business needs

CREATE A HEALTH REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER ADVANCE FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRIES

Based on the City’s street network, central location, close proximity to local farms, and potential industrial base, the City can be an ideal location to re-introduce a centralized food production and distribution network as a food hub. With the Trenton Farmers Market located just outside the city limits in Lawrence Township, this effort could serve both that farmers market and a new downtown market. A food hub located in the industrial area can help alleviate the barrier to fresh food and help advance a culture of health within Trenton. Food production in Trenton could take advantage of the city’s relatively inexpensive utilities and water capacity (see below), and be further exploited to produce energy from food waste. The food hub idea is also mentioned in the draft of the Health and Food Systems Topic-focused Report.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Industrial Areas goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Partner with the Trenton Market Growers Co-op Association to assess food production needs in the area and how a Trenton food hub could assist
- Encourage and expand programs that provide technical support to assist food production businesses
- Identify potential food hub area and target business incentives Utilize UEZ funds to assist existing businesses and support new business development
- Develop a path for residents to connect with food hub-related jobs in partnership with the Mercer County Workforce Investment Board
- Support training and educational programs that match skill development with food production business needs

EXPLOIT TRENTON'S RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE ENERGY RESOURCES AND WATER CAPACITY

PSE&G provides reliable energy at highly competitive prices relative to energy suppliers in other regions of the Northeast. At the same time, Trenton's access to the Delaware River positions the city uniquely to take advantage of a freshwater supply. Therefore, Trenton could be considered an attractive location for industries with high energy and water needs. To work toward the goal of attracting small- and large-scale development to Trenton, the City should exploit its energy resource as a locational advantage.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Industrial Areas goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Market Trenton's low energy costs to energy-dependent employers outside the region
- Market Trenton's water capacity to water-dependent industries
- Market Duck Island as a traditional working waterfront for water-dependent uses
- Entice suppliers of larger companies to move to Trenton for cheaper energy
- Continue to pursue funding and advice through the Energy Savings Improvement Program
- Develop Trenton250's Utilities Topic-focused Report
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NEIGHBORHOOD AREA STRATEGIES

Finally, the City must work diligently to strengthen its neighborhoods. An economic development strategy that neglects the City's neighborhoods is likely to produce an unbalanced economy and create tensions around gentrification. The Housing, Environment, and Circulation Topic-focused Reports all detail approaches for the development of strong, diverse neighborhoods that provide high-quality amenities to a variety of residents. However, the focus of these initiatives this Economic Development Report strategy is strengthening neighborhood commercial areas.

Neighborhood commercial efforts aim to exploit retail opportunities in Trenton's residential areas, many of which are composed of a various ethnic groups, to help create vibrant commercial areas in the neighborhood business districts while filling vacant commercial space. In these initiatives, it will be important for the City to provide services to prospective business owners that empower them with the resources necessary to start

and sustain their businesses. Moreover, the City must support immigrant entrepreneurs and the growth of neighborhood-based businesses. This will allow the City to capitalize on its multicultural demographics and heritage. These neighborhood initiatives go hand-in-hand with the housing policy: a stronger housing market will strengthen adjacent retail and vice-versa. Therefore, the City must closely coordinate these efforts.

As the Housing Topic-focused Report discusses in detail, the City needs to target investment in areas most likely to be catalysts for city-wide change. And there are some neighborhoods in Trenton that are ripe for this type of investment. These areas are unique because of their building assets, location, existing amenities, and/or the existence of successful revitalization efforts. Moreover, these areas have the market conditions to change relatively quickly. As with housing, these initiatives calls for attracting new commercial development to the areas in an effort to spur development. Furthermore, these areas will be the focus of circulation investments that seek to make them more attractive to private investment.

EXPAND NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL

This initiative is aimed at exploiting the retail opportunities in Trenton's residential areas, many of which are composed of various ethnic groups, to help create vibrant commercial areas in the neighborhood business districts while filling vacant commercial space. Neighborhood retail opportunities are the strongest in the West Ward, where demand exists for almost every retail category. In the North and East Wards, demand is strong for general merchandise, food service, clothing and accessories, and health and personal care stores. This initiative involves the City refocusing its efforts for strengthening and expanding retail to neighborhoods and not just Downtown. It will capitalize on the consumer habits of Trenton's immigrant population. Overall, the growth and expansion of neighborhood retail will provide needed services to residents while creating new business and job opportunities. In addition, stronger neighborhood retail services will make neighborhoods more attractive to potential residents, which will support the City's effort to make Trenton a choice location for residency.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Neighborhood Commercial goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Identify specific locations to expand retail in each Ward
- Identify locations capable of accommodating larger format retail (e.g. supermarket)
- Consider a pop-up storefront initiative for specific neighborhood locations
- Implement an upper floor vacancy restoration plan on commercial corridors
- Utilize Rehabilitation Area designation
- Utilize Urban Enterprise Zone funds to assist existing businesses and support new business development

PROVIDE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL GROWTH

To ensure that the goal of vibrant retail areas is satisfied, and a retail expansion initiative in Trenton's neighborhoods is successful, it will be important for the City to provide services where possible to prospective business owners that empower them with the resources necessary to start and sustain their businesses. These services will help support the growth of unique/niche businesses that can serve both residents and visitors. This assistance can range from financial to educational, and physical to programmatic.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Neighborhood Commercial goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Create a program to provide technical support to assist neighborhood retailers
- Utilize Urban Enterprise Zone funds to assist existing businesses and support new business development
- Maintain an inventory of vacant commercial space and make it available to prospective retailers
- Institute a retail recruitment campaign
- Develop individual marketing strategies for the different retail districts
- Continue with an annual Trenton business conference for networking and business development opportunities

SUPPORT GROWTH OF NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED BUSINESSES AND IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS

Similar to its efforts to support retail growth, the City should seek new ways to assist neighborhood-based businesses of all types with the goal of supporting the growth of immigrant entrepreneurs as well. Overall, this initiative emphasizes fostering home-grown small business development through the sharing of resources and information, while providing existing businesses with outreach and critical ongoing support measures as well.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Neighborhood Commercial goals. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Coordinate potential economic development partners to create a microenterprise support program of various types in Trenton
- Promote the NJ Economic Opportunity Act and ensure that it is being utilized to its full potential
- Expand and organize the philanthropic community as a potential funding source for entrepreneurs
- Create a business development portal as a “one-stop” resource of information for new and existing businesses and a single port of entry in any dealings with the City
- Continue with an annual Trenton business conference for networking and business development opportunities

REVITALIZE LARGE CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT SITES

Outside of the Downtown, and in neighborhood areas considered catalytic in terms of potential for city-wide change, there are key sites that are significant in terms of redevelopment potential, namely the Roebing Complex and Mercer Hospital Complex. Portions of the Roebing Complex have undergone redevelopment in the past, including the portion that contains Roebing Market. Currently, plans are underway to redevelop Block 3 of the Roebing Complex, also called the Wire Rope District. This continued redevelopment will be key to revitalizing areas south of Downtown, including Chambersburg.

In 2014, Capital Health sold the Mercer Hospital Complex to a private company Global Life Enterprises, which was looking to redevelop the 650,000- square-foot space into a health and wellness complex. The intent was for the campus to host a network of medical and healthcare offices that can supplement services offered at the hospitals in the area. As of 2016, the site remained vacant. To effectively drive the revitalization of the Hospital District, the redevelopment of the Capital Health Mercer Hospital Complex is critical. The City should work with the property owner to create a Mercer Hospital Complex Feasibility Study and Redevelopment Plan. This plan should take into consideration the housing options available in the vicinity

and how such a redevelopment plan could support the City's goals of creating strong residential neighborhoods that have a deep sense of community and history.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Neighborhood Commercial goals. In addition, this initiative will support the City's efforts to achieve its Overall Housing¹² and Market-Rate Housing¹³ goals as well the Safe City Environment¹⁴ goal identified in the Environment Report.

To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Create a Mercer Hospital Complex Feasibility Study and Redevelopment Plan
- Identify, assemble, and market developable parcels
- Develop design guidelines for new development that reinforces high-quality, urban-scale design
- Implement changes to the City's development review process for efficiency, effectiveness, and a predictable and transparent approval process
- Create attractive streetscapes and public spaces— develop placemaking strategies for the Hospital Complex area
- Improve the City's staff capacities in both Economic Development and Planning Divisions
- Update the City's zoning ordinance

CREATE AFFORDABLE AND EASY ACCESS TO GOOD-PAYING REGIONAL JOBS AND AMENITIES

In order to accomplish the goal of having a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy with a broad range of employment opportunities for residents, Trenton workers must have adequate transportation to get to their places of employment. Approximately 2/3 of Trenton residents leave the city for work and 30% of residents do not have a car. Therefore, this initiative focuses on creating the necessary connections to jobs, whether they are located in the city or outside. This is addressed in the Circulation Element as well.

This initiative will help the City meet its Overall Economic Development and Neighborhood Commercial goals. In addition, it helps support the Access to Jobs¹⁵ goal identified in the Circulation Report. To successfully execute this initiative, the City should implement the following actions:

- Work with area organizations, Mercer County, and the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association to expand workforce shuttles to employment centers outside Trenton
- Advocate for Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit connections within Trenton

¹² Trenton will provide a variety of for-sale and rental options for households of all types and residents at all income levels

¹³ Trenton will continue to provide its fair share of affordable housing opportunities

¹⁴ Trenton will have a safe City environment where residents are free from the hazards of land and building contamination.

¹⁵ Trentonians will have reliable and affordable transportation options to local and regional destinations.

KEY ACTIONS

Several of the above strategies refer to policies and programs that should be highlighted. They include:

Comprehensive Internal Data Management Project: The City must update its internal data management systems. The City still uses a lead lot system to record tax data, which makes pairing that valuable source of information with other data sets nearly impossible. In addition, the City does not have a comprehensive database that connects information about properties across departments. The City must develop a real-time comprehensive GIS properties database that will be utilized across City departments including Planning, Taxation, Board of Education, Parks and Recreation and Public Works. Among other uses, the database should identify key properties so that they can be monitored, and if appropriate, acquired to compile redevelopment. When available, student blood-lead level results should be tied to properties. All property based data must be available in a single system that allows users to understand and track data.

Convention and Visitor's Bureau: To make Trenton a destination for history, art, and culture, the City should consider creating a Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB). The CVB would boost the local economy by attracting tourism and conventions that could be accommodated downtown. A CVB for Trenton could be the city's face for tourism, serving as a broker and point-of-contact for all tourism-related efforts.

Downtown Marketing Program: Market Downtown as a "cool" place to live with a unique urban lifestyle

Economic Redevelopment and Growth (ERG) Program: As a GSGZ, ERG provides incentive grants to developers in Trenton who prioritize development and job creation in smart growth locations with infrastructure in place, particularly in urban areas and those near train stations. These incentives are perfect for urban redevelopment and transit-oriented developments.

Food Hub: A food hub is a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers in order to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.

Garden State Growth Zones: The Act designates Trenton as one of five Garden State Growth Zones and Urban Transit Hubs. The definition of what constitutes a capital investment in a Garden State Growth Zone (GSGZ) is expanded to include any and all redevelopment and relocation costs, such as site acquisition (if made within 24 months of application to the authority); engineering, legal, accounting and other professional services; and relocation, environmental remediation and infrastructure improvements for the project area, such as on and off site utility, road, pier, wharf, bulkhead, or sidewalk construction or repair.

Grow New Jersey Assistance Program (Grow NJ): As a GSGZ, Grow NJ Assistance Program will be available in Trenton. Grow New Jersey provides tax credits for projects that can receive up to a maximum of \$15,000 per job, per year, for up to 10 years. The threshold for the investment size a company needs to make to qualify for tax breaks has been lowered to 10 full-time jobs for technology start-ups and 25 new jobs in targeted industries, including transportation, manufacturing, defense, energy, logistics, life sciences, technology, health, and finance.

Micro-Entrepreneurship: A microenterprise, or "mom and pop" business, is one with five or fewer employees. According to Entrepreneur Works in Philadelphia, microenterprises represent 18% of all private employment and 88% of all businesses in the United States. They are good for local economies such as Trenton's because they help people become more economically self-sufficient by increasing private income and developing

economic assets, diversify local economies and build well-being in the economy, preserve the distinctive character of the communities that foster them, and contribute to the local economy through tax ratables.

NJ Economic Opportunity Act: The Act represents a long awaited modernization of New Jersey's incentive programs that will allow New Jersey to attract jobs and capital investments. The act will consolidate five of New Jersey's economic incentive programs for businesses into two -- the Grow New Jersey ("Grow NJ") Assistance Program and the Economic Redevelopment and Growth Grant Program ("ERG"). These programs are incentives for developers and businesses to address revenue gaps in development projects, defined as having insufficient revenues to support the project debt service under a standard financing scenario. It can also apply to projects that have a below market development margin or rate of return.

Open Data Program: The rise in the need for data to make more informed decisions has corresponded with calls for cities to publish data that is freely and easily available to everyone to use and republish as they wish, without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control (typically known as "open data"). Such open data is increasingly used by the development community, social service agencies, and others to make mission critical decisions. Without the access to such data, it is likely that Trenton residents will suffer. The City of Trenton must publish data online and keep its databases updated. This information is increasingly important to those who undertake property development analysis and will lighten the workload of social service providers.

Public data interface for data sharing and acquisition: The City must find tools that allow residents to share data they have about problems in the city. Such tools have quickly become both time saving techniques and powerful tools from improving cities. In addition, these tools often allow residents to see property information, which is equally important.

Rental Development Incentive Program: Offer incentives (such as tax abatements) to encourage new market-rate rental housing aimed at moderate to high-income residents. See also the Housing Element Brief.

Train employees and hire people with data management and data visualization skills: Data is only as good as the people who manage and visualize it. The City must build capacity both within City Hall and outside of it. Employees trained to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS), with coding and programming experience, and who have backgrounds in visualization and design will become increasingly valuable in the upcoming decade. Cities who are not building a workforce to use these new tools will not be able to compete.

Train Station TOD Strategic Plan: The City should develop a strategic plan for the redevelopment of the Train Station area. As part of this, the City will need to identify master developers to redevelop Train Station.

UEZ funds: Trenton is part of the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone. Businesses located within the zone that become a Certified UEZ business receive significant benefits, including financial assistance, subsidized insurance, various tax credits and incentives, and the ability to offer reduced sales tax to customers

Upper Floor Restoration Program: A key action for attaining vibrant retail areas throughout the city is eliminating vacant upper floors in commercial districts. This can be achieved by property owners if they can be provided with financial assistance. To execute this action, the City should create an upper floor restoration program with grants for owners to return them to use.

Waterfront Reclamation and Revitalization Strategic Plan (aka Route 29 re-alignment): The City should develop a strategic plan for the redevelopment of the Route 29 area. As part of this, the City will need to

identify master developers to redevelop the realigned Route 29 to open up development opportunities and increase access to the waterfront.