

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES REPORT

MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT

TRENTON250
1792-2042
Adopted February, 2017





City of Trenton

PLANNING BOARD

Dear Community Members,

The City wants to sincerely thank all for taking time to participate in the development of the Trenton250 Master Plan. Without the considerate and dedicated efforts of the Trenton Community and the Capital City Region, we would not have reached the great lengths we have in the project's development thus far.

The release of the Trenton250 Issues and Opportunities Report establishes a consensus around issues and potential opportunities that will provide the foundation on which the Trenton250 Master Plan development will be based upon. Throughout the Trenton250 Master Plan development process, the City has been incredibly impressed with the level of thoughtful and constructive input that was received from all members of the community: citizens, business owners, stakeholders and members of the surrounding communities. We look forward to continuing these efforts in the future.

Sincerely yours,

Jeffrey R. Halpern, PhD

Chair

City of Trenton Planning Board

Welcome and FAQ

Welcome to the Issues and Opportunities Report. Below are some frequently asked questions that will help you navigate the document.

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What is this report?

The following is a report on the issues and opportunities associated with achieving the following Vision for Trenton:

**Trenton First: A premier economic and cultural center built on
arts, industry, and education.**

This vision is community-driven and the result of an extensive public outreach process. From February through August 2014, more than 10 different methods were used to reach out to the community and get their input on what they hoped Trenton would be. The resulting [Vision Statement and set of Guiding Principles](#) will guide Trenton through 2042 and serve as the foundation for Phase II of the Master Planning Process.

This report is the product of public meetings (which occurred during both Phase I and Phase II of this project), more than two dozen stakeholder interviews, and extensive review of previous planning efforts, and includes Mayor Jackson’s Transition Report.

The report is principally focused on city-wide issues and opportunities that can be addressed in the following core master plan elements: Economic Development, Education, Housing, Environment, Land Use, Circulation/Transportation, and Health. Readers should note that this report does not claim to account for every issue and opportunity at all scales. Instead, it focuses on those that are appropriate to a city-wide master plan.

Who contributed to this report?

The report is the product of five major efforts:

1. **Previous Plans:** The Consultant Team undertook a complete review of all previous studies and plans, a list of which can be found [here](#). This effort attempted to cull the extensive amount of information that has been collected over the course of decades, and served as a jumping off

point for later investigations. It should be noted that three recently developed documents were included in this review: Mayor Eric E. Jackson’s transition report; the Trenton Housing Market Conditions Study; and the Trenton Economic Market Study. These three documents provided a wealth of up-to-date information.

2. **Stakeholder Interviews:** The Trenton250 Team conducted interviews with approximately two dozen stakeholders representing city, county, and state agencies; not-for-profits; for-profit businesses and organizations; developers; and public interest groups. A list of those interviewed and the organizations they represent can be found [here](#). This document serves as a public record of the findings from those interviews. However, it should be noted that, as of publication of this document, there remains a small number of outstanding interviews to be conducted. It is not anticipated that these will substantially alter the findings presented here.
3. **Public Meetings:** A public meeting was held in each of the city’s four wards on April 25th, 2014. Approximately 60 people attended these meetings, along with a large number of volunteers who staffed the event and facilitated the activities. At each event, attendees participated in [a number of activities](#) that were designed to encourage discussion and facilitate their ability to communicate their direct experience with Trenton.
4. **Technical Review:** The Consultant Team conducted its own research. This included, but was not limited to, conducting site visits, examining census data, and creating and analyzing maps (including land use, vacancy, floodplains, traffic patterns, bike lanes, and more). This information helped the Consultant Team contextualize its other efforts and delve deeper into the nuances of critical topics.
5. **Public Vetting:** A draft of this report was submitted to the public for review and comment. The public was asked to submit comments directly into the google document or to send their comments to the City. Those comments have been attached as an appendix to this report and include what action the City undertook in response.

How is this report organized?

This report is organized around the [Guiding Principles](#). This ensures that the project continues to be driven by the priorities articulated by residents and stakeholders in the Vision Element.

This report is presented in outline format. The reasoning behind this choice is simple: an outline format provides an opportunity for those involved to review an extensive amount of information as quickly as possible. In general, more detailed explanations are provided where issues are complex, contentious, or even controversial. In instances where there was broad public consensus the ideas are presented directly.

What are these “Possible Responses”?

Within this document you will find sections titled “possible responses”. **These are not “recommended responses”**. Possible Responses are merely the accounting of those strategies, policies, and programs which were raised by those who were interviewed or have participated in the public meetings. They

are presented here as starting points for discussion and are an important account of all ideas. They are presented here for discussion and will be considered as this and other planning efforts continue.

How will this report be used in the master planning process?

This report is a tool for the city. The goal is to build a shared understanding that takes into consideration multiple perspectives and opinions. As such, this document provides a common point of departure for discussion on how best to achieve the city-wide Vision. In essence, this document ensures that all ideas regarding the existing state of Trenton are on the table so that there can be a robust and healthy discussion on how to move forward.

In the short term, the final draft of this document will serve as the foundation for future recommendations related to Economic Development, Education, Housing, Environment, Land Use, Circulation/Transportation, and Health. In the long term, it will serve as a departure point for [future elements of the Master Plan](#).

How should this report be used in future planning efforts?

This serves as an official record of the mutually agreed upon Issues and Opportunities in Trenton. However, it should also be considered a “living document”. As such, all future planning efforts should start with a review of this document. After the appropriate analysis and public engagement is conducted, those efforts should then make suggested amendments to this document, which may include recommendations for new issues and opportunities. These recommendations should be reviewed and adopted by the Planning Board.

Such an approach is vital for keeping this document relevant. As new planning efforts are undertaken, they will view the City from new and valuable perspectives. For example, when the City undertakes the task of creating the Technology element, it may uncover new issues related to broadband access in Trenton that could not be explored in this first effort. Likewise, a group undertaking a small neighborhood plan may uncover larger city-wide issues and opportunities that should be addressed. If this document is kept current, each successive iteration will add depth to the report while ensuring that there remains a high level of agreement on the issues and opportunities in Trenton.

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Opportunity: The Great Connector Greenway

Opportunity: Daylighting of the Assunpink Creek

Opportunity: Belvidere Greenway

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Foster Social Opportunity and a Vibrant Economy through Education

Education

1. Issue: Low Graduation Rates¹ for Trenton

a. Background:

1. Over the past four years, high school graduation rates for all students have improved district-wide by 5.3%, from 47.6% to 52.9%. (Trenton Public Schools 2015-2018 Academic Plan).
2. Despite this improvement, graduation rates remain significantly lower than that of surrounding communities. Trenton has a graduation rate of 52.9% compared to surrounding communities that have graduation rates around 80% to 90%. (Trenton Public Schools 2015-2018 Academic Plan).
3. Graduation rates for Trenton Public Schools (TPS) vary drastically, with the traditional schools (83.8% at TCHS Main and 67.2% at TCHS West) producing significantly higher graduation rates than Daylight/Twilight, an alternative school for students who leave the traditional high schools (14.3%). (TPS 2015-2018 Academic Plan)
4. According to stakeholders interviewed, differences in graduation rates are related to the challenges presented when working with former dropouts (Daylight/Twilight's primary population), transfers, new admittances, and counting requirements that calculate their 4-year graduation rate from their first day in ninth grade, disregarding the time they spent out of school.
5. According to the NJ School Performance Reports for TPS, every school in Trenton, including elementary and middle schools, lags or significantly lags behind statewide statistics in at least two of three indicators: Academic

¹ Graduation rates are used within this report as an indicator of academic performance because they are the primary precursor to success in postsecondary education and/or a career. For more information on how graduation rates are calculated please visit the [State of New Jersey Department of Education FAQ page](#).

Without a high school degree, individuals are significantly limited in the labor market. Therefore, a school district's ability to graduate a high percentage of its students is a key indicator of its success. This report also references the [NJ School Performance Reports](#), which compare schools against statewide statistics and peer schools according to three metrics: Academic Achievement, College and Career Readiness, and Student Growth. Peer Schools are schools that have similar grade levels and students with similar demographic characteristics, such as the percentage of students qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch, Limited English Proficiency programs or Special Education programs.

Academic Achievement measures the content knowledge students have in language arts literacy and math. College and Career Readiness measures the degree to which students are demonstrating behaviors that are indicative of future attendance and/or success in college and careers. Graduation and Postsecondary measures the rate at which students who begin high school four years earlier graduate within four years. Also included is a measure of the rate at which students in a particular school drop out of school.

Achievement, College and Career Readiness, and Student Growth. When compared to peer schools:

- i. 71.4% are lagging or significantly lagging in academic achievement.
 - ii. 90.5% are lagging or significantly lagging in college and career readiness. 76.2% of TPS schools are in the bottom 19.9th percentile for this metric.
 - iii. 47.4% are lagging or significantly lagging in student growth performance.
6. As part of Phase One of the Trenton250 Master Plan (Vision Element), it became clear that there is a strong perception among community residents that the city lacks a “culture of graduation.”
 7. According to TPS, 28% of Trenton youth attend non-TPS schools (i.e. private schools, Catholic schools, receiving districts, or charter schools), which decreases the amount of state funding TPS receives. As noted in [Issue: Trenton Public Schools Capital Condition](#), the TPS receives approximately 88% of its revenue from the State. As such, decreases in State funding have significant impacts on the District’s budget and ability to serve Trenton students.
 8. In a recent [Trenton250 poll](#) conducted in the first quarter of 2015, nearly 1/3 of respondents stated that improved after-school programming would improve their quality of life.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Take a Community Approach: Trenton should focus on innovative and creative educational learning opportunities to increase the desire to learn. Trenton Public Schools should strengthen the existing learning community approach within the high schools. Include charter schools.
2. Universal Preschool: Research based studies (e.g., the [Perry Preschool Project](#)²) that show significant positive outcomes for children who attend preschool, especially children who are "at risk." It can also help alleviate costs for families that are associated with preschool programs.
3. Publicize School Options: Information should be shared about attending non-TPS schools. Parents will be able understand what their choices are in regards to schools. This can be thorough a periodic report created by the community for parents. This information should also be standardized and clear for all to understand.
4. Collect Additional Graduation Data: Trenton charter schools, homeschoolers, and private schools graduation rates are not captured in order to provide a citywide graduation rate. A real calculation of graduation rates for all students in Trenton will be beneficial to monitor. The City should attempt to collect and analyze this data.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perry_Preschool_Project

5. Address the Challenges of Concentrated Poverty in Schools: The City and the County should have an honest and in-depth conversation in regards to concentrated poverty in Trenton and the challenges it presents in educating its population and building a strong regional economy. They should consider finding innovative responses and regional solutions to address the significant barriers Trenton residents face in obtaining a quality education.
6. Address chronic absenteeism beginning in elementary school: According to the NJ School Performance Reports, being present is one of the biggest predictors of post secondary success and high school graduation. Trenton's schools perform very poorly on chronic absenteeism measures, starting with the elementary schools. Having neighborhood truancy teams to respond on a neighborhood level to truancy might help alleviate absenteeism and connect families to resources they need that could be affecting school attendance.
7. Consider a Voucher Program: The City may wish to consider a voucher program that allows Trenton students to attend private schools. Proponents argue this would have the immediate effect of improving the overall graduation rate in Trenton by attracting new families to the city and Trenton families would be better able to find schools that better match their children's educational needs. There are others who feel this would result in a significant defunding of public schools and eliminate an important institution in the City. Such a strategy would be a drastic change and require extensive public engagement before moving forward.
8. Youth Enrichment Programs: Establish programs like City Year in Trenton to help bridge the gap in high-poverty communities between the support that students actually need, and what our schools are designed and resourced to provide. Through partnerships, collaborations, and data-driven research City Year has been successful throughout the country in improving educational outcomes for students.

2. Issue: Limited Linkages Between Educational Institutions and Employers

a. Background

1. According to stakeholder interviews, there is no current relevant pipeline between the educational or training programs offered within the City by educational institutions and workforce development centers and the needs of local and regional employers. This problem has been exacerbated by the fact that workforce development in Trenton has not traditionally had heavy business involvement. Effects of this disconnect include:
2. Local workforce skills may be insufficient to compete in the region. A need to increase local workforce skills to fulfill economic development goals and objectives.
3. According to the Trenton Economic Market Study, the sectors that employ the most Trenton residents are Office and Administrative Support; Transportation and Material Moving; and Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance, which tend to offer jobs that do not require advanced degrees.
4. A need for technical and occupational education opportunities within Trenton that align with City and regional workforce needs.

5. Interviews revealed that key stakeholders have had limited communication with each other to date in order to make strategic decisions.
 6. Stakeholders indicate that while Trenton Public Schools (TPS) has Career Technical and Education (CTE) programs it is unclear how well aligned offerings are with employer needs.
- b. Possible Responses:
1. Workforce and Educational Task Force: A task force shall be created that will include all educational institutions in the region, workforce development centers, and economic development agencies to provide research on the curriculum needs for the workforce demands and higher education, employment trends for Trenton, provide strategies to increase educational retention and decrease recidivism, advocate for the necessary strategies.
 2. Continue to work with WIB: Housing and Economic Development is beginning to coordinate with the Mercer County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to create employer roundtables in key industries and gather input. TPS, MCCC, and the One-Stop are all on the WIB and could use this information to influence programming. Industries of interest could include New Jersey's Talent Network clusters (advanced manufacturing, financial services, healthcare, life sciences, retail, hospitality and tourism, technology and entrepreneurship, and transportation, logistics and distribution), which meet the skills of Trenton residents. Improving relationships between state the local government will facilitate this process.
 3. Enhance CTE Programs: Trenton Public Schools should review and enhance CTE programs to teach the skills needed, based on employer feedback.
 4. See also [Explore interest in city-based industrial workforce](#)
 5. Create Technical schools and alternative youth programs: The county vocational schools should provide a campus in Trenton where the greater need for job readiness, and the highest density of student exist. Alternative youth programs for workforce development such as Job Corp, Youthbuild, and Isles Youth Institute are ideal for preparing at-risk youth of Trenton for the job market. Currently there is only one other Job Corp program in the State, located in Edison.
 6. Provide Specialized high schools and advanced placement courses: TPS can provide specialized high schools or learning communities to address regional business needs and advanced placement courses for those students who seek advanced degrees. (e.g., Magnet schools, STEM School, School of Public Service, etc.)
 7. Align TPS with the City's vision and goals: As the City establishes an Economic Development Plan and an Education Plan, it will be critical for the TPS and Board of Education to align itself with the City's vision and goals in order to help the City achieve the workforce needed.
 8. Develop Graduate and University Satellite Programs: Establish graduate and university satellite campus programs in Trenton to align with regional

employer demands and leverage proximity to transit, transportation infrastructure, and central location.

9. Regional Businesses Partnering with Schools: Local and regional businesses partner with Trenton high schools to develop the appropriate pipeline for their business needs and advance education opportunities.
10. Opportunities Awareness Campaign for Trentonians: An educational awareness campaign on what opportunities that currently exist for those seeking development and personal enrichment.

3. Issue: Trenton Public Schools Capital Condition

a. Background:

1. Stakeholder interviews revealed that capital improvements are needed in Trenton Public Schools, ranging from physical aspects of the buildings to IT infrastructure.
2. Trenton currently projects \$257,901,771 in operating budget for fiscal year 2015-2016. Of that budget, approximately 9% (\$22,115,662) comes from local sources, 88% comes from the State of New Jersey (\$229,020,976), and 2% comes from Federal or other sources.³ In comparison, Princeton Township has a total projected operating budget of \$81,028,824 of which 90% (\$73,153,942) comes from *local* sources.⁴ This makes clear that Trenton is highly dependent on State revenues to support its school system relative to some neighboring municipalities. And as a result, its relationship to the State has a particularly large effect on the quality of education that it can provide.
3. According to stakeholder interviews, there has been a history of bad relationship between the City and State government which may have negatively impacted the Trenton Public Schools funding.
4. Over the past two years TPS has put \$20 million into upgrading schools through a maintenance and capital plan. According to TPS leadership, significant needs remain including IT, plumbing, roof, heating, AC, and other building improvements.
5. TPS should work with the New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority to complete construction projects in the schools.
6. TPS plans to build a new high school campus in the next four years. When the new facility is opened, the new campus will house 10th through 12th graders while the current TCHS West building will be home to 9th graders.
7. The US Department of Education identifies 20 research studies that found a connection between a school's physical condition and its students learning outcomes. Good school facilities can contribute to a student's ability to learn.⁵

b. Possible Responses:

³ For more information, please see the [User Friendly Budget](#) released by the Trenton Public Schools.

⁴ For more information, please see the [Princeton Public Schools Preliminary Budget for 2015-2016](#).

⁵ <http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OESE/archives/inits/construction/impact2.html>

1. Collaborate on Grants: Trenton Public Schools and the City of Trenton could collaborate to identify grant funding opportunities to improve capital conditions.
2. Retrofit Existing Spaces: TPS could retrofit existing space to provide opportunities for community services. For example, an existing industrial kitchen at one of the schools could be leveraged for after school nutritional programs as well as a commercial kitchen for entrepreneurs needing space to bake or cook.
3. Create a Liaison: The City should have a liaison with the Board of Education to coordinate between City Departments and related work with the Board of Education on a multitude of opportunities with Health, the School Environment, Curriculum, Home, and Recreation.
4. Improve Relationship with State: The City of Trenton should continue to build a stronger relationship with the State, especially with regards to education. See also [Issue: Lack of Strategic Partnerships with the State and County](#)
5. Crowd-fund School-Related capital Improvements: The City consider allowing local citizens to invest up to and including any and all of their tax dollars in the form of school-related capital improvements. The reasoning is that, as the quality of Trenton Public Schools (TPS) increases, so to should land values (as a result of TPS being more in demand). To negate or even mitigate the negative impacts of rising land values, citizens should be able to capture any such increase in value as a return on their investment. If the outcome of citizen investment in TPS is positive, it may set precedence towards shifting tax dollars away towards tangible, “on-the-ground” investments in the City’s built environment.

4. Issue: Monument Elementary School Closure

a. Background:

1. Monument Elementary School will be closed starting the 2015-2016 school year. Students will be relocated to two other district schools in an effort to close a \$19 million budget gap. According to a [newspaper report](#)⁶, “The district is hoping to continue to use the Monument school building for other purposes during the school day and continue after school activities there, Smallwood Johnson⁷ said. She said the additional uses have not been determined yet.”

b. Possible Response:

1. Adaptively Reuse: The school sits on an almost 3-acre site. There may be opportunities to adaptively reuse the site for non-educational purposes. The sale of the property could provide a source of funds for the school district to address capital needs.
2. Adult Education Center: Any effort to improve education in Trenton will require a lot of parental involvement. Many parents would benefit from an

⁶ Pizzi, Rojas. “Trenton's Monument Elementary School will close as part of plan to close \$19M budget gap”. *NJ.com* January 30, 2015

⁷ Smallwood Johnston was the District’s spokeswoman at the time of publication.

adult education programs that range from GED courses to job training skills. As such, the City should consider re-purposing the Monument school as an adult education center. Some have pointed to the Skills Center, formerly located on Prospect Street, as a model.

5. Issue: Limited School Funds Must Support Diverse Set of Needs

a. Background:

1. Trenton has experienced an increase in English Language Learners over the past decade. According to the 2010 census, the Latino population, some of whom may not speak English, increased 56% over a decade. Latinos comprise roughly one-third of Trenton's population.⁸
2. In 2013, Trenton Public Schools began to operate a dual language pilot program, which provides education in Spanish and English with the goal of promoting bilingualism and appreciation for other languages and cultures.
3. As of 2013, 1400 students participated in bilingual or English as a Second Language programs. 990 of these students were Latino, indicating that 70% of these bilingual classes are likely for Spanish speakers although exact numbers are not available at this time.⁹
4. Trenton Public Schools has recently started offering a small number of English as a Second Language and civics classes to parents after school, as a means of improving parent engagement. As a result, parents will likely be better able to access information about community services that could benefit the entire family.¹⁰
5. Out of a total budget of \$139 million for 2015-2016, TPS proposes spending \$15.5 million on special education and \$8.7 million on bilingual education. (User Friendly Budget 2015-2016)

b. Possible Response:

1. Mandate Multi-lingual Materials: The City of Trenton and Trenton Public Schools could mandate the provision of informational materials in more than one language.
2. Form After School Club: Each school could create an after school club for English language learners that allows them to practice conversational skills in English and help them with their homework. Elementary schools could pair the kids up with high schoolers or late middle school. Provide an incentives for students to help the ELL's.

6. Issue: The Digital Divide

a. Background

⁸ [Rojas, Cristina. "Census proves latino population has grown in Trenton". *Hunterdon County Democrat* June 27, 2011](#)

⁹ [Rojas, Cristina. "Census proves latino population has grown in Trenton". *Hunterdon County Democrat* June 27, 2011](#)

¹⁰ [Prizzi, Jenna. "Trenton school district launches English language, civics classes for parents". *The Times of Trenton* December 21, 2014](#)

1. Many residents do not have access to the internet. The [Trenton Digital Initiative](#)¹¹ has noted that there are neighborhoods in the city where as few as 20% of the homes have reliable Internet access, citing a Senior Comcast VP Dave Breidinger.
2. Not only do residents not have reliable internet access at home, but it is likely that many residents may lack the skills necessary to use the internet for employment information, housing, and other quality-of-life issues. As noted in a [Trentonian article](#)¹² in 2013, "inner city youth every year fall further behind from accessing those jobs mostly due to lack of early computer science training."

b. Possible Responses

1. Increased Support for the Trenton Digital Initiative¹³: Providing computer access at home to Trenton residents may be an effective means of increasing computer and internet literacy.
2. Tap into High Usage of Smartphones: May be able to circumvent the problem with internet access with high levels of smartphone usage. The digital divide initiatives may focus on smartphone platforms over website platforms.
3. Provide WiFi at City Facilities: City facilities can offer the public to access wifi within and around its facilities where appropriate.
4. Continue to Build Partnerships: Trenton Public Schools should continue to build relationships with regional colleges and universities to promote efforts like a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) Program. Additional partnerships may be possible with [Mercer County Technical Education Center](#)¹⁴ and local and regional businesses.
5. Create Program to Giveaway Second Hand Computers: Another aspect of the digital divide is access to computers and computer supplies in general. Starting or expanding a program where families will be given computers, along with computer education, would help to bridge the digital divide. This is something that could be done through the Trenton Public Library.
6. Provide City-Wide WiFi: The City should consider seeking investment partner(s) to provide city-wide WiFi access throughout the City.

7. Opportunity: Urban environmental education

a. Background:

1. Trenton is rich in history, culture, and various landscapes. Place-based education immerses students in Trenton heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, using these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum.

¹¹ <http://www.tdi-trenton.info/?p=299>

¹² The Trentonian, "Trenton students learn key to success is knowing the code". The Trentonian December 09, 2013

¹³ <http://www.tdi-trenton.info/?p=299>

¹⁴ <https://www.edline.net/InterstitialLogin.page>

2. Urban environmental education is emerging as a distinctly different approach. It helps students create transformative approaches to their current habitats and learn through practice. First hand experience has been shown to be particularly conducive to learning and this has led to a growing interest in place-based education.
3. As urban citizens living within a human dominated ecosystems, also viewed as 'social-ecological systems', we face growing challenges in sustaining human livelihoods and ecological disturbance. Students can learn how to restore the ecosystem that supports human health and wellbeing within the context of their daily lives.

8. Opportunity: Expand Programming at Mercer County Community College's Trenton Campus

a. Background:

1. Stakeholder interviews indicate that by expanding educational offerings at MCCC's Trenton campus, including its connections to high school students, Trenton residents will have more easily accessible opportunities for higher education and occupational training by providing certificate programs for workforce demand.
2. This is connected to the [Limited Linkages Between Educational Institutions and Employers](#) issue, as MCCC could expand trainings based on employer needs.
3. MCCC is currently expanding its footprint in Trenton and hopes to expand educational programs to include cyber security and a greater focus on allied health.
4. MCCC currently operates several programs with TPS, which could potentially be expanded or enhanced to offer greater opportunities for high school students to learn about higher education, access mentors, and enroll in college-level courses.

9. Opportunity: Pipeline for Trenton Residents to Job Opportunities with City Development Projects

a. Background:

1. First source hiring programs require developers or businesses working with a government (and receiving over a certain amount in government funding) to post open positions with the government's workforce development system (One-Stop). Businesses are not required to hire individuals referred to them by the One-Stop but must make a good faith effort to interview individuals referred and, upon identifying qualified candidates, to hire them. San Francisco has operated a successful model, San Francisco First Source Hiring Program, since 1998.
2. According to stakeholders, there is a gap between activities in the workforce development field and economic development.
3. Interviews revealed that Trenton enacted a local hiring ordinances - 14-42 and 14-43 - in 2014 but the ordinances has not been completely implemented.

The City of Trenton is in the process of hiring a consulting firm that will be overseeing implementation.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Strengthen Requirements: Trenton should strengthen requirements regarding local hiring efforts into development projects, specifically connecting to planned and ongoing residential housing development.

10. Opportunity: Strong support for investments in Education

a. Background

1. In a Trenton250 poll, 46% of respondents felt that investing in education would encourage economic growth. This was in comparison to 21% who felt that small businesses were the best place to invest, and 15% who felt that Downtown Living was an important place to invest to encourage economic growth.

Vibrant Economy

1. Issue: Weak Retail Market

a. Background:

1. The city is currently in the process of finalizing the [Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study](#)¹⁵, which includes both housing and business recommendations. This study will provide a valuable tool to the city for making strategic decisions regarding the investment of resources for improving economic development.
2. According to the Market Study, Trenton’s retail market exhibits significant gaps in retail opportunity due to both market conditions and negative perceptions of Trenton. As a result, shoppers either don’t seek amenities in the city, or are forced to go outside the city due to market limitations. (For more details, see pages 50-51 in the [Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study](#)¹⁶)
3. As the Market Study suggests, there is a slight surplus of food service and drinking retailers (restaurants and bars) in the downtown relative to the existing demand. There is also a surplus in clothing and accessories stores as well as health and personal care stores.
4. Daytime workers are leaving Trenton because there are not enough retailers who provide service in the following categories: food and beverages (grocers and convenience stores); and general merchandise.
5. As indicated in the Market Study, there's also significant [market leakage](#)¹⁷ with neighborhood residents. They shop outside the city due to a lack of retail options in the city and, with easy access via Route 1, there is a wider range of shopping options outside the city. The following is a brief summary of the

¹⁵ Larisa Ortiz Associates and Urbanomics. “Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study”, Prepared for the City of Trenton Office of Housing and Economic Development. Fall, 2014.

<http://www.trentonnj.org/documents/TrentonCityWideMarketStudy.pdf>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/leakage.asp>

neighborhood findings in the Market Study . For more details, see pages 52-56 in the [Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study](#)¹⁸

6. The west ward of Trenton has a significant lack of retail in almost every major category and is farthest from outside shopping options, yet it is one of the most populous parts of the city.
7. Both the north and east wards are also underserved by retail, and accordingly have opportunities for additional retail stores, particularly in the categories of general merchandise, food service, clothing and accessories, and health and personal care.
8. The south ward of the city has the most retail surplus, particularly in the food and drink categories due to the wide variety of options available. As a result, these retailers attract patrons from outside of the neighborhood, bringing outside spending in.
9. For decades, Trenton has focused energy on targeting downtown office workers - particularly state office workers - as a driver for economic development. This approach has largely been unsuccessful. Office workers are not good pioneering candidates to *begin* the revitalization of downtown for a variety of reasons. According to a survey of state office employees in downtown Trenton conducted in the early 1990s, downtown office workers typically have limited disposable income, bring their lunch to work, and/or have access to cafeterias that the city has no ability to close. These habits were recently confirmed by stakeholders as well. Nonetheless, downtown office workers may provide a healthy client base once an attractive and vibrant downtown is created.
10. Stakeholders report that there is an overwhelming amount of ground-floor space that could be used for retail is currently being used by NGOs (e.g., churches) that do not pay taxes. However, this condition will likely change as the retail market improves, and demand for retail space increases. At that point, nonprofits may seek upper floors or other vacant space downtown.

b. Possible Response: **Expanding retail in strategic locations**

1. Expand Retail Downtown/Warren and State Street: Opportunities exist for additional general merchandise, and food and beverage store retailers to serve workers and residents, according to the Market Study. Redevelopment plans have existed for many years for these areas, providing potential opportunities for new retail locations to accommodate this demand. Policies should permit sidewalk dining and food trucks in strategic locations to further enliven this downtown area and possibly generate new demand.
2. Revitalize S. Broad Street corridor: South Broad Street, from Perry Street to Dye Street, is receiving particular attention due to its strategic location, according to city staff. Efforts to improve the streetscape have been initiated by the City as a means of attracting business activity to the corridor. Nearby

¹⁸ Larisa Ortiz Associates and Urbanomics. "Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study", Prepared for the City of Trenton Office of Housing and Economic Development. Fall, 2014.

<http://www.trentonnj.org/documents/TrentonCityWideMarketStudy.pdf>

Warren Street has experienced a small revitalization effort that could connect to Broad Street through additional physical improvements. Therefore, S. Broad Street should be targeted as a location for small-scale business incentives to assist future retailers to take root and cater to the existing community.

3. Renew Focus on Hamilton Street corridor: This emerging corridor meets S. Broad Street at the Sun National Bank Center, the intersection where the new office of the NJ Association of Realtors is to be built. It is also close to the new Block 3 development. As employment and residential activity in this area increases, so will significant opportunities for new retail.
4. Consider additional possible locations in Trenton for retail expansion: Areas of Trenton experiencing more organic retail growth should be targeted to promote businesses in those areas, including the South Ward area of Clinton Street towards the Hamilton border as well as the North Ward area of Brunswick Ave near the Lawrence border. Other potential areas will be investigated.
5. Leverage New Immigrant Communities: Because of the Latino population influx in the south and east wards, population is growing in these areas of the city, and many residents are opening small businesses to support the population. Market conditions favor the expansion of certain types of retailers (particularly general merchandise) to further support the population growth in these areas and to truly evolve it into a new retail hub for Trenton. See [Capitalize on Immigrant Communities](#)
6. Identify Locations capable of accommodating larger format retail (e.g. large supermarket and other anchor retail): While Trenton does have several shopping areas containing limited retail - including Westside Plaza, Lalor Plaza, and Roebling Market - opportunities exist to further capture retail gaps with larger retailers, particularly food stores. At the same time, traditional “big box” stores are increasingly developing smaller “urban” products that may fit a need in Trenton. Strategic blocks should be identified that could accommodate such development. See also [Attract a Supermarket](#)
7. Support Ethnic Restaurants / Niche Attractions: Trenton’s unique retailers, (particularly ethnic restaurants), attractions (Mill Hill Park, event venues, historic attractions), and events (Art All Night, Punk Rock Flea Market) bring in thousands of visitors. Opportunities exist for a variety of new businesses that could serve these visitors while complementing and supporting the retailers and businesses that already exist.
8. Establish a Food Hub: Because of Trenton’s transportation infrastructure and central location, Trenton is ideal as a Food Hub. Food Hubs present an opportunity for communities to make healthy food sourcing a profitable enterprise for producers, distributors, and retailers, while simultaneously improving access to local foods. See [From Food Desert to Food Hub](#)
9. Provide a Pop-Up Storefront Initiative: Pop-up storefronts allow local businesses to test the market on their products and their ability to sustain a permanent storefront. Also, the pop-ups creates foot traffic and use of empty storefronts while providing economic vibrancy. Area foundations and NGOs

should be considered for sources of funding and program management to support this initiative.

10. Leverage Event Venue Patrons:

- i. According to stakeholders, visitors to Trenton’s major events venues, including Sun National Bank Center and the Trenton Thunder Baseball Stadium have traditionally not patronized area businesses in conjunction with their outing. However, these visitors provide a direct customer base if exploited properly. Nearby businesses, particularly serving food and drink, should employ creative ways to attract customers, including specials and vouchers (e.g. game tickets permit a discount). A key to the success of such a campaign is advertising and promoting these offers.
- ii. There should be a coordinated effort among the various stakeholders to make the events successful and entice attendees to stay in the city before or after the events occur. This could include ensuring that restaurants/shops are open before and during concerts downtown, starting a “First Friday” event, and/or weekend farmer's market downtown.

11. See also [Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment](#)

c. Possible Response: **Providing resources to support retail growth**

1. Provide Technical Support: The various forms of technical support geared toward assisting retailers should be identified and promoted. These could include tips for pursuing grants, advertising and marketing assistance, tech support, substantive analyses, and assistance with preparing a business plan.
 - i. Several organizations in the Trenton area provide this type of support, including the NJ Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Princeton SCORE (a small business mentoring program).
 - ii. There are many cities that have successfully used technical support techniques to improve their retail environments that Trenton could use as a resource, including Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Milwaukee. The final document should provide case studies that enumerate successful technical support strategies.
2. Utilize 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 the ability to offer reduced sales tax to customers, financial assistance, subsidized insurance, and various tax credits and incentives. Mayor Jackson has announced that he would be creating a new capital program that would use \$1.5 million of the City’s Urban Enterprise Zone funds and a matching contribution from local banks to form the Trenton Capital Fund to help businesses in the city. Such a fund could be an effective tool for targeting business development in Trenton.
3. Expand and Encourage [Micro-Entrepreneurship](#)

4. Employ a Retail Recruitment Campaign: Many techniques exist to help attract new retailers to commercial districts and specific sites identified as desirable for retail. This could include reaching out to developers to assist with implementing existing retail redevelopment plans, inviting established retailers to forums to develop retail growth plans for specific areas, and using the services of a retail recruitment firm to identify and contact appropriate retailers. The City should consider these techniques as new and different ways to potentially achieve retail success.
 5. Market Retail Districts: See [Technical support](#) above. The city may develop a comprehensive marketing strategy that highlights assets and attracts visitors. An example of a recently successful campaign to raise the profile of a city is [Visit Philly](#)¹⁹ (and their [annual report](#)²⁰) which supports the popular website [uwishunu.com](#)²¹ (pronounced “You Wish You Knew”). In a [Trenton250 poll](#), when respondents were asked what’s the best way to make Trenton a premier cultural and economic center, this approach was frequently cited. See also
 - i. [Marketing parts of Trenton as “Cool”](#)
 - ii. [Marketing Trenton as Mercer County’s Livable Downtown](#)
 - iii. [Marketing Trenton’s Neighborhoods](#)
 - iv. [Marketing the Arts](#)
- d. Possible Response: **Reorient the target market**
1. Market Focus on Residents First: City residents should be an increasing focus market for expanding retail opportunities, using [Expanding retail in strategic locations to ensure success](#) as a guide. Trenton should be targeting specific markets for retail expansion (not just state employees) and marketing to these potential customers.
 2. Capitalize on Immigrant Communities: Policymakers and researchers are increasingly looking at the impact of immigrant communities on economic development in cities across the country. A 2007 [study](#)²² by the Center for Urban Future on the impact of immigrants in New York City, for example, discovered that immigrant communities in the city have an enormous [impact](#)²³ on economic development, entrepreneurialism, and job creation.
 3. Create a regional draw to ethnic restaurants: See [Ethnic Restaurant/Niche Attractions](#) above.
 4. Capitalize on Arts-related opportunities: The City of Trenton has many arts and cultural assets that - if appropriately leveraged - could become a major

¹⁹ <http://www.visitphilly.com/about/>

²⁰ <http://www.visitphilly.com/2015-visit-philadelphia-annual-report/>

²¹ <http://www.uwishunu.com/about-uwishunu/>

²² Jonathan Bowles and Tara Colton. “A World of Opportunity” Center For an Urban Future. February 2007.

https://nycfuture.org/pdf/A_World_of_Opportunity.pdf

²³ Jonathan Bowles. “Immigrant Entrepreneurism: An Engine For Economic Recovery”. Center for an Urban Future. December 2009.

<https://nycfuture.org/research/publications/immigrant-entrepreneurism-an-engine-for-economic-recovery>

regional draw. Capitalizing on these assets and using them as a catalyst for increased development could be an effective strategy for expanding the economy in Trenton. See [Establish a Preeminent Arts and Culture Destination](#)

e. Possible Response: **Develop New Opportunities**

1. **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 rates.
 - i. Microenterprises can grow into larger businesses, paving the way for additional generations of microenterprises, and further contributing to the local economy. With the proper resources and assistance, strong potential exists for micro-entrepreneurship to thrive in Trenton.
 - ii. Many models exist of organizations aimed at fostering the creation, growth, and success of micro-enterprises through technical resources and financial assistance. Examples include:
 - a. [Small Business Assistance Corporation \(SBAC\) in Savannah, GA](#)²⁴
 - b. [Entrepreneur Works in Philadelphia](#)²⁵
 - c. [The Intersect Fund](#)²⁶
 - iii. These organizations are nonprofit entities created to specifically assist microenterprises by providing access to capital through a variety of loans, one-on-one technical service, business training, and networking opportunities.
2. The city should consider:
 - i. Taking the lead role in coordinating potential economic development partners to assist with the creation of a similar microenterprise support program in Trenton that can provide financial assistance.
 - ii. Since banks, foundations, and private donors are the primary financial source for these organizations, the city should coordinate these efforts.
 - iii. There are existing resources in the Trenton area that currently assist small businesses, such as the NJ Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Princeton SCORE (a small business mentoring program). These agencies should also be consulted.

²⁴ <http://www.sbacsav.com/>

²⁵ <http://www.myentrepreneurworks.org/>

²⁶ <http://intersectfund.org/>

- iv. Formulate a micro-enterprise incubator
- 3. See also: [Exploit the NJ Economic Opportunity Act](#)
- 4. [Expand and Organize the Philanthropic Community](#): The City and Partners should organize and expand the philanthropic community to help achieve Trenton's goals and fulfill its needs. Possibly create an Office of Philanthropic Liaison very similar to Newark.
- 5. [New Business Opportunity Materials](#): Develop a business portal where potential businesses can get all the information they need to consider when opening a business in Trenton. In addition to printed materials, the City should consider including information on a new overhauled City website.

2. Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment

a. Background:

- 1. According to city staff, little or no positive impact has been witnessed after large investment in the Trenton Transit Center. Retailers in the area remain scarce and no new residential development has occurred nearby. The station continues to operate in a fairly isolated fashion. See also discussion on [Transit Oriented Development](#)
- 2. Stakeholders report that major institutions such as the Sun National Bank Center have not attracted associated spin-off development. Businesses that exist near these venues are not capitalizing on their foot traffic, and developable parcels near these facilities remain under-developed. See also [Event venue patrons](#)
- 3. Many large parcels in key development locations - such as the waterfront adjacent to downtown - are owned by the state (many of which are parking lots for state employees), remain extremely underutilized and unproductive, and generate no tax revenue (since the state is not required to pay local property tax). See also [Opportunity: Waterfront Revitalization and Access: Route 29 as a Boulevard and A Regional Destination](#)
- 4. Stakeholders report that redevelopment plans in Trenton have been unsuccessful for a variety of reasons. These include redevelopment plans not meeting the State requirements, redevelopment plans covering areas that are too large, and City leaders not reaching out to redevelopers to fully engage their support. At the same time, for developers to be interested in Trenton, market conditions must be favorable for redevelopment, and funding must be attainable, both of which have not occurred for years. However, market conditions are improving, particularly for residential, and financing is increasingly available. As a result, market-rate redevelopment is beginning to occur in Trenton.
- 5. City staff reports that little or no marketing of available or potential developable sites exists on a large scale. Budgets and staffing resources are limited to undertake an initiative of this type.
- 6. See also [Issue: Zoning and Redevelopment](#)

7. See also [Opportunity: NJ Economic Opportunity Act](#)

b. Possible Responses:

1. Develop Marketing: Developable parcels should be well-advertised to ensure the best projects, and the development process should be facilitated as much as possible.
2. Development Incentives: Economic incentives for commercial development should be better advertised to attract developers
3. Utilize the Master Plan: The Master Plan - and subsequent planning efforts - provide an opportunity to identify possible locations for large scale commercial and residential development. Redevelopment of such sites will likely be complex, possibly requiring the acquisition and assemblage of parcels. The creation of neighborhood plans, in conjunction with redevelopment plans, provides a vehicle for the meticulous public outreach effort necessary to ensure local concerns are addressed.
4. Provide Wrap-around Services for New Development: Providing needed services in the immediate areas of new development investments to ensure successful investments.
5. Update Redevelopment Plans: As noted in [Issue: Zoning and Redevelopment](#), the Planning Board is currently undertaking a review of all Redevelopment Plans. Once that is complete, it should be incorporated into the Land Use Element and the city should proceed with a full scale effort to update, remove, and generally clean up its redevelopment plans.
6. Identify Regional and Mega-Regional Opportunities: The City should investigate which industries and sectors may wish to be close to New York or Philadelphia but would prefer to pay lower rents or to be located in a smaller city. Such an effort may allow Trenton to develop an economic base that works in service of those larger metropolitan economic engines.
7. Wrap Parking Lots and Parking Garages with Retail and Commercial Land Uses: Flagrant exposure of parking lots to the public realm and omission of land uses both deter streetscape activity. This issue can be addressed by planning for retail and commercial uses along the edges of city blocks, and moving parking lots and garages to the center of these blocks.
8. See also [Opportunity: NJ Economic Opportunity Act](#)

3. Opportunity: Leverage Cultural Resources to Promote Economic Development

a. Background

1. The City of Trenton has many arts and cultural assets, including Artworks Trenton, Mill Hill Playhouse/Passage Theatre, SAGE Coalition, Trenton Film Festival, Trenton City Museum, Old Barracks Museum, and New Jersey State Museum.
2. If appropriately leveraged, they could become a major regional draw.

3. For more discussion on strategies to develop these assets, see [Establish a Preeminent Arts and Culture Destination](#).

b. Possible Response

1. **Leverage Cultural Assets:** The city should also develop a strategy to leverage these assets to create [multiplier effects](#)²⁷. In addition to providing needed social opportunities, growth in the arts and cultural industry has the opportunity to create demand for other business, especially services such as restaurants, and hotels. For more information on this topic, see this article published by the [American Planning Association](#)²⁸ and [this publication by the National Governors Association](#)²⁹. Capitalizing on these assets and using them as a catalyst for increased development could be an effective strategy for expanding the economy in Trenton.
2. **Provide a New Immigrant Welcome Center:** Provide a one stop place for all new immigrants to orient themselves to opportunities.

4. Issue: Lack of Industrial Development

a. Background

1. Despite the abundance of abandoned industrial properties in Trenton, many of these parcels lack the physical characteristics demanded by modern industry, according to city staff.
2. Many businesses (particularly light industry) require large footprints to accommodate their desired floor plate. Parcel sizes sought by prospective companies are difficult to find in Trenton.
3. In particular, Trenton has very limited large, undeveloped, and "shovel-ready" sites that have been environmentally-remediated if necessary.
4. Sites that are vacant are often fragmented and owned by multiple entities.
5. The city does not actively market sites to potential businesses. While the Citywide Market Study does provide direction on what industries to focus, the City will now need to market to these industries with appropriate potential locations.
6. The following outlines the characteristics of sites that are likely to be attractive to today's industrial users.
7. **Parcel Characteristics:** The city is aware that sites most suitable for light industrial development have the following conditions, and that it should strive to meet these conditions to best attract and cater to desired companies:
 - i. Accommodate 60,000 - 100,000 SF of development

²⁷ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/multiplier+effect>

²⁸ M. Christine Dwyer, Kelly Ann Beavers, Kimberley Hodgson. "How the Arts and Culture Sector Catalyzes Economic Vitality". American Planning Association 2011 <https://www.planning.org/research/arts/briefingpapers/pdf/vitality.pdf>

²⁹ Chris Hayter and Stephanie Casey Pierce. "Arts & the Economy: Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate State Economic Development". The National Governors Association (NGA).

<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0901ARTSANDECONOMY.PDF>

- ii. Adequate on-site parking
 - iii. A single-level structure
 - iv. Offer assembly, warehousing, and loading dock features
8. Access Characteristics: Ideal sites will have sufficient access from major roads or railways, particularly for trucks. These potential sites would most likely be situated along New York Avenue in the Route 1 corridor, as well as the Route 129 corridor. As noted in [Opportunity: Outstanding transportation access to the local region and ideally situated in the heart of the northeast corridor](#), highway capacity is sufficient for current and future transportation needs but industrial areas in North Trenton may lack sufficient access to Route 1 (also discussed in [Insufficient Access to Highways due to limited interchanges](#))
 9. Job Characteristics: Trenton is seeking development offering high job density; large manufacturers requiring large areas of land should offer high employment numbers for the city to consider the development worthwhile given limited space and resources.
 10. Marketing: Little or no marketing of available or potential large developable sites exists on a large scale. Budgets and staffing resources are limited to undertake an initiative of this type.
- b. Possible Responses:
1. Acquisition and Assemblage of Properties:
 - i. The city may have the opportunity to acquire and assemble properties within existing or future redevelopment areas. However, it is clear such efforts should proceed cautiously. As a result of decades of such activity that gutted the city's downtown and fundamentally changed the fabric of the city, residents understandably view acquisition and assemblage efforts with skepticism. As such, any such efforts should be undertaken with caution. Acquisition and Assemblage, when possible, should be advanced through cooperation with redevelopment companies that have proven their abilities to revitalize locations in other cities.
 - ii. Unfortunately, the city currently lacks funding for such efforts. Overcoming this barrier will be a significant step in advancing a comprehensive industrial development strategy. However, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are available and can be used for this purpose.
 - iii. Also, stakeholders report that area foundations have an interest in funding property acquisition and assemblage for redevelopment purposes. The city should reach out to these resources.
 2. Market Properties:
 - i. Developable parcels should be well-advertised to ensure the best projects, and the development process should be facilitated as much

as possible. Furthermore, economic incentives for commercial and industrial development should be better advertised.

- ii. Current and future sites that are available for light industrial development should be adequately marketed to attract desired industries and firms (see [Issue: Lack of Industrial Development](#)). Key potential locations for such sites include the Route 129 corridor and the New York Ave/Route 1 corridor.
 3. [Enhance Access to Sites](#): Sufficient access to these sites, particularly by trucks, must be ensured to attract desired light-industrial businesses. See: [Insufficient Access to Highways due to limited interchanges](#)
 4. [Target Sites to New Industries](#): Considering the challenge of offering large developable industrial sites in Trenton, the city should market sites that could accommodate a smaller building footprint for "maker space" and high-tech employment facilities for small start-up companies.
 5. [Capitalize on interest in city-based industrial workforce](#)
 6. [Utilize Brownfields as Assets](#): The City of Trenton should view brownfields as both a liability and an asset. For further discussion of this, see [Issue: Brownfields and Contaminated Sites](#)
 7. [Opportunity: NJ Economic Opportunity Act](#)
- 5. Issue: The City, County and State have Problems Maintaining and Attracting Highly Qualified Employees to Trenton**
- a. Background:
 1. Stakeholder interviews have indicated that the State, County, and the City have all suffered an inability to attract and maintain highly qualified employees to Trenton for work. There are many issues that they face, but they include a general lack of high-quality housing options and a weak downtown retail / entertainment market. A more vibrant Trenton would make these anchor institutions more attractive places to work.
 - b. Possible Response:
 1. [Partnerships with Anchor Institutions](#): Given that vibrant cities are important for attracting the brightest and best employees, the State and County have a vested interest in Trenton's vibrancy. The City should work with the State and County to assess their abilities to promote and develop a more vibrant Trenton. Such an effort should include a clearly articulated strategy for moving forward that includes measurable indicators.
- 6. Opportunity: Capitalize on Interest in City-based Industrial Workforce**
- a. Background:

1. Despite a 26% loss of manufacturing jobs in the city from 2009 to 2012, according to [Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study](#)³⁰, manufacturing is relatively strong as an industry in certain areas of Trenton.
 - i. In the north ward, manufacturing constitutes 13% of the jobs in that area.
 - ii. In the east ward, manufacturing constitutes 15% of the jobs in that area.
 - iii. Manufacturing employs 15% of the working residents of the south ward, though not all work in Trenton.
 2. Opportunities exist to re-employ the manufacturing-based workforce that remains in Trenton.
 3. See also [Issue: Limited Linkages Between Educational Institutions and Employers](#)
- b. Possible Response:
1. Training:
 - i. Programs should be created in conjunction with businesses, local schools, and community colleges to assist in skill development that will match business needs. The City should consider ensuring that local manufacturers having a financial stake in the training equipment and administration of programming.
 - ii. The Mercer County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) should continue to play a significant role in ensuring that Trenton residents are appropriately skilled and prepared for industrial-based jobs, and assist with connecting residents to those jobs.
 - iii. The city and other recruiting partners should solicit light manufacturing and industry-based businesses seeking a wide range of skill levels to match those of the Trenton workforce.
 2. Prepare Sites: In the attempt to lure potential manufacturing and light-industrial employers, sites targeted for industrial development should be adequately assembled and prepared (see [Issue: Lack of Industrial Development](#)).
 3. See also [Opportunity: NJ Economic Opportunity Act](#)

7. Opportunity: Energy - Gas and Electric Utility

- a. Background:
 1. PSE&G provides reliable energy at highly competitive prices relative to energy suppliers in other regions of the North East. As such, Trenton may be a very attractive location for industries with high energy needs.

³⁰ Larisa Ortiz Associates and Urbanomics. "Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study", Prepared for the City of Trenton Office of Housing and Economic Development. Fall, 2014.

<http://www.trentonnj.org/documents/TrentonCityWideMarketStudy.pdf>

2. As access to Domestic Energy Supplies is strengthened (pipeline access, electric transmission upgrades) power will remain abundant and affordable in the Northeast.
3. Nearly 20% of the city is within the 100 and/or 500 year floodplain. See [Floodplains](#) for further discussion of this issue.
4. City of Trenton facilities and buildings are not using the best technology to reduce energy costs.

b. Possible Response:

1. Capitalize on Electric and Gas Infrastructure :

- i. The City of Trenton should consider partnering with utilities to reinforce city wide infrastructure networks to address floodplain issues.
 - ii. Promote a marketing plan for factories and other energy-dependent employers (from areas with high energy costs) to get their energy from Trenton’s strong utility network.
 - iii. A strategy should also be developed to entice suppliers of the larger Trenton-area companies to move to Trenton to save on energy costs.
 - iv. Promote combination of real estate affordability, utility strength and access to multi-modal transportation networks such as rail, highway, and the nearby ports in Falls Township.
 - v. Auction energy supply services to receive comparably services at lower costs.
 - vi. Continue to pursue funding and advice through the Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP) by completing the application process, administering energy audits of buildings and facilities and implementing improvements approved and funded by the program.
2. Solar Energy: Capitalize on solar energy wherever possible to reduce municipal energy costs
 3. Energy Use: City of Trenton should be doing the proper studies to lower energy costs within its facilities and buildings.
 4. Citywide Microgrid: The City should consider the development of a microgrid that will allow essential city/community buildings to have power during outages.

8. **Opportunity: Waterfront Revitalization and Access: Route 29 as a Boulevard and A Regional Destination**

9. **Opportunity: Leverage Strategic Locations with Significant Economic Development Potential**

a. Background:

1. Trenton has many untapped civic attributes in key locations that provide opportunities for spin-off economic development from usage, attendance, and high visibility. These include:

- i. Sun National Bank Center (see [Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment](#))
 - ii. Areas around major transit hubs, particularly the Trenton Transit Center and light rail stations (see [Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment](#) and [Transit Oriented Development](#))
 - iii. Downtown (see [Weak Retail Market](#))
 - iv. Museums (see [Establish a Preeminent Arts and Culture Destination](#))
- b. Possible Responses:
 - 1. Better connect regional attractions to economic development opportunities
 - i. Available development sites that could benefit from proximity to regional attractions should be better marketed (see [Issue: Lack of Industrial Development](#) and [Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment](#)). Priority sites should be those with greatest transit access and proximity to downtown.
 - ii. Physical improvements (e.g. sidewalk/streetscape treatments, landscaping) should be considered for key locations that would visually connect regional attractions to each other as well as existing businesses.
 - iii. Marketing techniques should be employed by local businesses that could benefit from attendance at regional attractions to increase their customer base, such as specials and vouchers.
 - 2. Create Project Guidelines for Development: The city should have clear development guidelines for key projects that engage the public. In addition, the city must be committed to following those plans.
 - 3. See: Wrap Parking Lots and Parking Garages with Retail and Commercial Land Uses

10. Opportunity: Leverage Available Water Capacity for Water-based Industries

- a. Background
 - 1. Trenton's access to the Delaware River at the head of tide position's the City uniquely to take advantage freshwater from the tidal water.
 - 2. This is a large commodity as freshwater for manufacturing and job creation. 7,000 square miles of freshwater watershed.
 - 3. Trenton has treatment capacity to provide for wastewater discharges from those industries.
- b. Possible Responses:
 - 1. Market Water Capacity: The City can market it's water capacity to water-based industries who are looking to locate in both the NYC and Philadelphia metropolitan regions. Also, market to industries who rely on an inexpensive supply of fresh water.

11. Opportunity: Infrastructure Incubator for Engineers

a. Background:

1. The City of Trenton owns both the water and sewer system in the City. As a result, it controls the raw water intake on the Delaware and the sewage discharge into the Delaware. There are few if any Cities in the region who control both.
2. The City of Trenton sees green infrastructure as a vital part of its future, as evidence by the “Cultivate a Healthy City” guiding principle.
3. A portion of the City of Trenton continues to use a combined sewer overflow system (CSO), an issue it must address . See [Issue: Combined Sewer System](#)
4. There are a number of Universities in the region with engineering and engineering technology programs that may be interested in practice-based learning, including: the College of New Jersey, Princeton, Rutgers School of Engineering, Mercer County Community College, and Thomas Edison State College.

b. Possible Response

1. Engineering Hub: The City of Trenton should consider approaching regional universities as well as the State of New Jersey to discuss the possibility of creating an engineering hub in Trenton. Trenton could act as a “lab” for innovative engineering projects, host regional symposiums, and be the place where large infrastructure firms locate so they have easy access to regulating agencies.

12. Opportunity: Public Service Magnet - State, County, and City Public Employees Talent Pool and Resources

a. Background

1. The State of New Jersey and Mercer County has concentrated a large number of government employees in Trenton, many of whom have advanced degrees and high level of expertise in their field. This workforce is multicultural and on average has 10 or more years of experience.
2. State government has agencies located in downtown Trenton that are a resource of data, people and buildings.

b. Possible Response:

1. Advance Public Service Industry and Education:. Concentrate advance degree programs of public service in Trenton where practice meets theory and enriches the classroom experience with those already working in public service. Create pipeline relationships between agencies, lobbyists, and non-profits in Trenton with local public service schools.

13. Opportunity: NJ Economic Opportunity Act

a. Background

1. The following is drawn from [this summary of the EOA](#)³¹ by EisnerAmper and [this summary by ChooseNJ](#)³².
 2. 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”).
 3. Garden State Growth Zones: Most importantly, 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. The minimum capital investment required is lowered by one-third in these areas, and the minimum number of new or retained full-time jobs required is lowered by one-quarter in these areas.
 4. Grow New Jersey Assistance Program (Grow NJ): As a GSGZ, Grow NJ 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 lowered³¹ 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.
 5. The Economic Redevelopment and Growth (ERG) Program: As a GSGZ, ERG provides incentive grants to developers 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. For more more information on ERG program, please review [this site](#)³³.
- b. Possible Responses:
1. Up until 2019, the Act will be an important tool for the City of Trenton when seeking to address the following issues and opportunities:
 - i. [Issue: Weak Retail Market](#)
 - ii. [Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment](#)
 - iii. [Issue: Lack of Industrial Development](#)
 - iv. [Opportunity: Capitalize on interest in city-based industrial workforce](#)

³¹ Gina Giordano. "Economic Opportunity Act of 2013". EisnerAmper State And Local Tax Blog. <http://www.eisneramper.com/economic-opportunity-act-new-jersey-tax-blog-0913.aspx>

³² "Tax Incentives to Help Companies Grow"

<http://www.choosenj.com/Site-Selection-Incentives/New-Jersey-Business-Tax-Incentives.aspx>

³³ http://www.njeda.com/large_business/economic_redevelopment_growth

- v. [Micro-Entrepreneurship](#)
- vi. [Opportunity: Transit Oriented Development](#)

14. Opportunity: Work with the Mercer County Sports and Entertainment Commission

a. Background:

1. Princeton University competes at the Division 1 level in the ECAC conference for Men's and Women's Ice Hockey this conference is also home to Harvard University, Cornell University, Yale, Dartmouth and a host of other schools that have recently competed for the national championship.
2. Sun National Bank Center would be a great venue for the ECAC hockey tournament especially with the passion of youth ice hockey in the region. Philadelphia hosted the 2014 NCAA Men's Frozen Four Hockey tournament. The two games brought in 36,503 fans, the 6th highest championship attendance.

b. Possible Response:

1. Establish Relationship with Professional Teams for pre-season games: The opportunity to see a professional team in such an intimate arena is great opportunity to bring in fans. Establish a relationship with the New Jersey Devils, Philadelphia Flyers, and Philadelphia 76ers to host pre-season games at the Sun National Bank Center.
2. Host Tournaments: Trenton may wish to consider hosting NCAA Division 1 Baseball Tournaments at Thunder Stadium, IVY League and MAAC tournaments. The stadium may be an excellent location to host NCAA tournaments in basketball, Hockey, and Baseball. Additional opportunities include hosting NCAA basketball tournaments for the MAAC Conference which Rider University competes in.

Social Opportunity

1. Issue: Lack of Opportunities to Build Social Capital in the City

a. Background:

1. Social, professional, leadership, and youth organizations help expand social capital and community organizing that provides different opportunities based on their social networks that can affect what opportunities one might have.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Encourage Community Development Organizations: Encourage further development of existing organizations while helping to expand and develop organizations to increase social capital and strengthen leadership.
2. Trenton Public Schools and charter school buildings should be leveraged as community hubs: They should be used to connect parents and students to community support. Doing so should lessen external pressures that distract from education by expanding passive educational opportunities provided by the community.

- i. School District/City should create a Community Facilities program that permits organizations to use facilities after hours.
 - ii. Schools should be open to community after hours for permitted programming that is open to the community. Community organizations should be allowed to use school/city facilities to further educational goals, personal enrichment and development by providing programs for the community.
 - iii. More adult lifestyle programs needed for the community – urban gardening, yoga, healthy food preparations, etc.
 - iv. Costs incurred by keeping schools buildings open and/or staffing such initiatives should be considered before launching such programs. Determine ways of covering and alleviating costs to taxpayers.
 - v. Provide additional after-school programming similar to successful programs in the past. Such as “Scoop”.
3. Re-establish Leadership Trenton/Create Youth Leadership: Leadership Trenton in the past has engaged a diverse cross section of emerging and existing leaders to take a comprehensive look at our community along with influential organizations and individuals that shape our city. A high school version should also be established to build youth leadership through meaningful engagement in real community issues.

2. Issue: Lack of Affordable and Easy Access to Regional Jobs and Amenities

a. Background:

1. According to the [Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study](#)³⁴, 33% of employed Trenton residents work in Trenton; ⅔ of residents leave the city for work. Specifically:
 - i. 13% work in Hamilton Township: 7% in Lawrence Township; 22% in the rest of Mercer County.
 - ii. 16% work in NJ outside of Mercer County.
 - iii. Furthermore, 30% of residents have no car (according to the 2013 American Community Survey), which significantly limits their transportation options.
 - iv. Public transportation (mainly buses) doesn’t take prospective employees to most places of regional employment.
 - v. Work shuttles do exist (e.g. Amazon), but they are limited and operated by individual companies.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Connect to Job Hubs: Opportunities should be examined to connect Trenton residents to the regional office markets where many good-paying jobs are

³⁴ Larisa Ortiz Associates and Urbanomics. “Trenton Citywide Economic Market Study”, Prepared for the City of Trenton Office of Housing and Economic Development. Fall, 2014.

<http://www.trentonnj.org/documents/TrentonCityWideMarketStudy.pdf>

located. However, a wide range of skill levels are needed for Trenton residents to have. (See [Issue: Limited Linkages Between Educational Institutions and Employers](#)).

2. [Connect to the South Jersey Port](#): Opportunities should be examined to connect residents to the South Jersey Port with growing import/export trade. The skill issue is the same as above, but with a different set of skills.
3. See also [Capitalize on interest in city-based industrial workforce](#)
4. [Expand Workforce Shuttles](#): The many manufacturing and distribution centers in outer Mercer County and Burlington County should be utilized to serve as employment centers for residents by exploring the expansion of workforce access to these areas (e.g. Amazon). Mercer County is examining the potential for creating similar shuttles for other companies outside of Trenton.
5. [Connect Regional Jobs to Public Transit](#): Financial resources for creating regional jobs that are accessible by transit should be pursued as well. Possible sources might include NJ Community Capital and UEZ funding.
6. Related:
 - i. [Capitalize on Location and Urban Form to Support a Multi-Modal Transportation Network](#)
 - ii. [Poor Access at the Trenton Transit Center](#)

3. Issue: Population Turnover and Instability

a. Background

1. The [City Profile Report](#)³⁵ notes that the City's population has remained relatively stagnant since 2000 (the city lost only 504 residents from 2000 to 2010). However, this top level analysis hides the fact that there has been significant in and out migration over the past 20 years. According to the US census
 - i. The share of Trenton residents born abroad has doubled in the past twenty years to its highest percentage since before the 1950s at nearly 20% of the current population.
 - ii. From 2000 to 2010, the City of Trenton saw an increase of approximately 10,200 people who self identified as Hispanic. Over the same period, the city lost an almost equal number (10,700) of non-Hispanic residents, 9 in 10 of whom were non-Hispanic whites. This represents a 13% turn-around in population over the course of 10 years.
 - iii. Nearly a third of Trenton's population claim Spanish as their primary language.
2. Interviews with residents and stakeholders indicate that such turnover is the result of residents who can afford to leave Trenton moving out and the City becoming a low-cost option for those who have few housing options. As one

³⁵ <http://trenton250.org/wordcms/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Trenton250-City-Profile-Report.pdf>

stakeholder noted, those applying for first-time homebuyer assistance were almost exclusively looking to purchase homes outside of Trenton.

3. Moreover, residents have noted that the high turnover of the population makes it difficult for it to address problems such as education. If a student is only in the City for a few years, any investment the City makes in that student may not materialize until after they leave. As such, early education programs and other efforts that seek to intervene early in a child's life may have reduced impact on key education indicators such as high school graduation rates.

b. Possible Responses

1. Focus on Retention: Early efforts should focus on retaining residents in the City and encouraging them to find housing options that meet their needs. If all 10,000 residents who left Trenton from 2000 to 2010 would have remained, the City would have seen a 12% increase in population. Although such analysis oversimplify the complex housing dynamics, they do underscore the value of retaining residents.
2. Promote Stability: There is no single effort that will address this issue. Instead, the City should see the Vision and Guiding Principles as a comprehensive effort to create a city that people want to live in.

Establish a Preeminent Arts and Culture Destination

1. Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries

a. Issue:

1. Despite having a significant presence, Trenton arts and culture groups do not effectively coordinate their efforts, according to stakeholders and city staff. These groups do not collectively market their events and there is limited coordination regarding how to effectively brand Trenton as an arts and cultural destination. Specifically:
 1. Trenton does not effectively market itself well to visitors.
 2. The city has a significant number of tourism destinations and events.
 3. There is a lack of coordination among tourism-related agencies.
 4. There are no packages or incentives to attract tourists to Trenton.

b. Arts Background:

1. Arts and Cultural organizations are significant economic drivers in Trenton. According to the National Endowment for the Arts, nonprofit arts expenditures per capita in 2010 were higher in Mercer County than nearby Essex, Bucks, and Hunterdon Counties.
2. There are multiple arts and culture related institutions in Trenton. Examples include Artworks Trenton, Mill Hill Playhouse/Passage Theatre, SAGE Coalition, Trenton Film Festival, Trenton War Memorial, NJ State Auditorium, Trenton City Museum, Old Barracks Museum, and New Jersey State Museum.
3. Many of these organizations put on excellent, well attended events, such as Art All Night, but the events are rarely planned in any coordinated fashion among the institutions.
4. State owned cultural facilities, e.g., state owned arts, performing arts, science, and museum facilities, are either not utilized or underutilized and are not connected to a larger Trenton tourism strategy.

c. Historical Heritage Background:

1. Trenton has an incredible wealth of visitor attractions, including the New Jersey State House, the New Jersey State Museum, the World War II Memorial, the War Memorial, the Patriots Theater, the Old Barracks Museum, William Trent House, Trenton Battle Monument, Ellarslie Museum, and the Trenton City Museum.
2. These sites are reportedly not promoted enough and those interviewed indicated a need for Trenton to embrace its history and show it off better, according to stakeholders.
3. To date, the city's historical tourism efforts have not been comprehensively coordinated. The city, county, and state all have important roles in supporting

and promoting Trenton's assets. Nonetheless, there is no comprehensive coordinated approach taken.

4. The tourism office is often closed and some staff lack the knowledge and training to effectively support historical tourism.
5. In addition, according to city staff, there is a lack of coordination between the different levels of government (City, County, and State) when it comes to tourism. These government entities do not work in a cohesive manner to jointly promote the city. For example, the Old Masonic Temple would be drastically improved as a cultural resource if the State Park were developed.
6. The city's tourism efforts have overly focused on the city's revolutionary history and have neglected the important role Trenton played in the industrial development of the United States. However, these industrial heritage sites are more loosely connected geographically and will require more work to market jointly.

d. Culture Background:

1. Trenton has seen significant growth of foreign immigrants. See [Immigrant Communities](#) for background.
2. One of the things that distinguishes Trenton from surrounding areas is the diversity of its population. Events like the Puerto Rican Pride Parade, the Pork Roll Festival, the Trenton African American Cultural Festivals, and Guatemalan, Ecuadorean, and Saint Patrick's Parades, among others, help to establish Trenton as a destination for cultural events. As one respondent to a [Trenton250 poll](#) pointed out, "Diverse cultures are already here. We as a community, should use this to our advantage and celebrate our diversity"

e. Possible Responses:

1. Create a Convention & Visitor's Bureau: A Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is a not-for-profit organization charged with representing a specific destination and enhancing the long-term development of communities through a travel and tourism strategy. A Convention and Visitors Bureau is usually a membership-based organization, bringing together businesses, public entities, and organizations that rely on tourism and meetings for revenue.
 1. *How is CVB different from a Chamber of Commerce?* Chamber of Commerce focuses on boosting the local economy by bringing new businesses into their area. A Convention and Visitors Bureau focuses on boosting the local economy by bringing in tourism along with small regional "conventions" that could be accommodated in the 10,000 SF of meeting space at the Wyndham Garden.
 2. *What does a CVB do for a potential visitor or event planner?* For visitors, a CVB is like a key to the city. As a balanced resource, a CVB can serve as a broker or an official point of contact for convention and meeting planners, tour operators and visitors. CVB staff can assist

planners with meeting preparation and encourage business travelers and visitors alike to visit local historic, cultural and recreational sites.

- a. CVBs offer impartial information about a destination's services and facilities.
 - b. CVBs save visitors time and energy as they are a "one-stop shop" for local tourism interests.
 - c. CVBs can provide a full-range of information about a destination.
 - d. CVBs charge nothing for services.
3. *If CVBs don't charge for their services, how do they survive?*
Convention and Visitors Bureaus do not charge clients (the visitor, the business traveler or the meeting planner) for services rendered. Instead, like many CVBs, the CVB is funded through membership dues.
2. Arts Marketing: A more collaborative marketing campaign/effort should be conceptualized and executed. This should include:
1. Joint marketing/advertising for programs, events, and venues
 2. Create an Arts Council to create synergies
 3. Marketing Old Trenton as an arts district
 4. Creating an integrated, web-based arts calendar that contains all arts-related events taking place in Trenton.
 5. Including the State and its facilities to program and market events to its optimal levels. Since State facilities are currently underutilized, they should be marketed to potential event organizers. Competitive rates should be offered to users in comparison to other facilities in the region.
 6. A display case in City Hall atrium should be created to highlight the various art curating and museums throughout the City.
 7. See Also [Marketing Retail Districts](#)
3. Tourism Campaign
1. By formulating and executing a tourism campaign, Trenton can attract more visitors, create a tourism economy, and improve economic development, particularly downtown. The city could particularly benefit from a Heritage Tourism campaign that capitalizes on the city's important assets.
 2. A designated entity should facilitate coordination among existing organizations (as well as residents and businesses) to better promote Trenton as a united front for increased visitation (leading to increased economic development, revitalization, and investment).

3. Visitation packages should be created to attract tourists and facilitate their visit. Packages should combine sites, restaurants, and hotels. Efforts that provide discounts or coupons may also increase tourism.
 4. With respect to historical assets, the city should consider targeting school children, suburban communities which lack the kind of history that Trenton has, and Trenton residents.
 5. In developing their Tourism Campaign, the City may wish to consider partnering with neighboring jurisdictions and “wrapping” their effort into a larger heritage tourism drive. Such an effort could give more credibility to their efforts, especially early on.
4. Connect Assets:
1. Trenton’s arts, cultural, and historical assets need to be connected through physical interventions. Visitors should - to the greatest extent possible - understand that they are entering into “districts” and/or are following “paths” that connect arts and cultural assets. One of the key locations Trenton should consider reinforcing is the historical “triangle” in downtown, which contains many of Trenton's major Revolutionary era historical sites.
 2. Trenton should consider creating a “Historic Corridor” running down Warren Street from the Battle Monument past St. Michael’s (including the dead Hessians in the burial ground) and down brick-topped Front Street to the Old Barracks. It should consider seeking State and/or National Historical Park designation, with suitable requirements on private property owners along the route to maintain historically compatible standards. Consider returning Broad and Warren Street to their pre-colonial names: King Street and Queen Street.
 3. Trenton should consider advocating for the State Division of Parks and Forestry to bundle Battle Monument and Washington Crossing State Park as a paired attraction. Washington Crossing draws many more historic-heritage visitors from around the country to see where Washington crossed then come to Trenton to see where Washington salvaged the Revolution once he got here. Pairing the two could increase visits to Trenton.
 4. The city should consider placement of historic markers and informational signage at the exit points from the Delaware and Raritan Canal Park path that lead to historic sites.
 5. See also [Opportunity: Increase Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility throughout Trenton](#)

5. Create an Arts District: The City of Trenton, the Passage Theatre Company, and Isles have received funding to create an [arts district in the Old Trenton Area](#)³⁶. This is a positive step in creating a clear center for Art in Trenton.
6. Develop New Assets:
 1. New Museum:
 - a. Trenton should consider a strategy to attract a national museum to the City of Trenton that focuses on American Pottery. There is currently no National American Pottery museum in the US. However, for more than [100 years, Trenton, New Jersey was one of the two major pottery centers in the United States](#)³⁷. A major, nationally important museum could be a significant cultural resource as well as economic driver for downtown businesses.
 - b. In addition, the Trenton City Museum in Ellarslie Mansion in Cadwalader Park has a pottery collection owned by the Trenton Museum Society. It is one of largest collections in the country.
 - c. As such an effort would require considerable expense, the City should consider providing funding for a Director of the Museum, administrative support, or providing assistance in attracting major donors.
 2. Partner with County: Trenton should consider partnering with Mercer County to advertise all of Mercer’s 18th century buildings, with particular emphasis on the pre-1800 structures of greatest import in history. This would allow Trenton to capitalize on Princeton’s cachet to help put Trenton’s treasures on the heritage traveler’s circuit.
 3. Build a Convention Center: Trenton should consider supporting the construction of a convention and auditorium space that would support multifaceted events, small conferences, and programs. Ideally, Such a space should be located near the Trenton Train Station to capitalize on its access to New York and Philadelphia.
7. Promote Cultural Events: The city should consider how it can promote and/or facilitate cultural events, like the Puerto Rican Pride Parade. Moreover, they should consider how they can capitalize on these events to support retail establishments.
8. Provide City Support: The city should consider dedicating Housing and Economic Development staff/support for the arts community as an initiative to foster economic development.

³⁶

http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2014/07/federal_grant_will_help_create_arts_district_in_downtown_trenton.html

³⁷ “The Pottery Industry in Trenton” The Trenton City Museum at Ellarslie. <http://ellarslie.org/collection/pottery/>

9. Catalytic Approach: The city should also capitalize on the significant number of tourism destinations and events to catalyze other economic and community development efforts. See [Cultural Resources are Not Leveraged to Promote Economic Development](#) for more discussion.
10. Establish more convention space: As Trenton begins to effectively market its assets, more convention space may draw more visitors and travelers to the City, and more convention space may be needed to host more events. Trenton is centrally located in the State, is the State Capital, and has a nexus of transportation options. It's ideal for statewide conventions. New space should be initially targeted to existing underutilized facilities downtown, such as the State facilities and Sun National Bank Center. Eventually, depending on demand, the City should consider developing a new convention center.
11. Promote Accessibility via Public Transportation: The city is considering providing shuttle / trolley service from the Trenton Transit Center to the various historic and cultural destinations to promote accessibility via public transportation.

2. Issue: Arts and Culture attractions are not bundled with retail and restaurant offerings

a. Background

1. Making Trenton a destination will require promoting events and venues, as well as promoting restaurants and retail that support those venues. In short, The restaurants and retail need to be part of the arts planning efforts as well.

b. Possible Responses

1. Include Retail and Restaurants in Arts Planning: Arts planning efforts should include related retail and restaurant recommendations. This may necessitate including the use of economic development experts in those efforts.

3. Issue: Trenton lacks dedicated funding for Tourism campaigns

a. Background

1. Cities that seek to promote their historical and cultural assets often have robust tourism bureaus or other organizations supported through local taxes. One of the most common sources of funding for these entities is hotel taxes and/or special district taxation on those businesses most likely to benefit from increased tourism.
2. In Fiscal Year 2014, the City collected approximately \$54,000 in Hotel Tax revenues.

b. Possible Responses

1. Create a dedicated funding source: Trenton should consider specifically dedicating the hotel tax revenue to support a marketing / tourism campaign and/or creating a special improvement district tax on businesses likely to benefit from tourism. By linking the funding and those who benefit from it, Trenton can generate a positive cycle of increased tourism leading to

increased funding to attract more tourism. These [case studies](#)³⁸ may provide insight.

³⁸ <http://www.tourismimprovementdistrict.com/case-studies.php>

Build a Safe City

1. Issue: Trenton Crime

a. Background

1. Although the City's crime rate has gone down by 30% overall, previous cutbacks in the number of police officers, ongoing gang activity, and poverty all contribute to Trenton's high crime rate.
2. Crime is particularly bad in some neighborhoods where the constant threat of violence significantly inhibits residents ability to live peacefully. See [City Profile Report](#)³⁹.
3. Open air drug dealing and lack of outdoor space "ownership" has allowed crime to escalate in many communities and public open spaces.
4. In a [Trenton250 Poll](#)⁴⁰, respondents were asked, "Trenton aims to become a premier cultural and economic center. In your opinion, what's the best way to accomplish this?" One of the frequent responses was that the City needs to address crime. As an example, one respondent wrote, "Ensure safety first. Create opportunities for creative activities and make it attractive both in cost and design. Reap the rewards."

b. Possible Responses

1. Youth Intervention: Give youth alternatives to gang culture such as opportunities for job training programs and apprenticeships. The [Trenton Violence Reduction Strategy \(TVRS\)](#)⁴¹ provides just that. There is hope that an extension of the program will be granted due to its success. Additionally, the Trenton Police Youth Explorers program provides a means for young men and women ages 14 - 20 an opportunity to experience life as a police officer. There has been an increased interest in the program and our hopes are to expand it even further. A successful summer youth initiative provided youth age 8 - 14 with an opportunity to travel outside of the City and experience new places and activities. It is paramount to continue to work with the youth on a "year round" basis in order to provide a positive environment for them to live and grow in.
2. Quality education and workforce development: Ensuring quality education and workforce development programs that align with the region's business demands for jobs.
3. Recidivism Initiatives: Implement recidivism Initiatives that provide those transitioning from incarceration with a path to become a productive member of society.
4. All Hands on Deck: Mainstreaming crime prevention concerns across the agendas of City departments may pay significant dividends. Coordinated policy

³⁹ <http://trenton250.org/learn/city-profile/public-safety/>

⁴⁰ <https://textizen.com/polls/806>

⁴¹ "Trenton Violence Reduction Strategy". Bonner Institute for Civic and Community Engagement. The College of New Jersey. October 16, 2013. <http://bonner.tcnj.edu/2013/10/16/trenton-violence-reduction-strategy/>

and action in spatial planning, transport and urban design in particular can contribute to lessening fear and reducing crime and violence.

5. Community Safety Audits: A community safety audit is a way to create safer cities and communities. A safety audit can be used as a tool to bring attention to potential violence in public spaces. In a safety audit, individuals come together to walk through a physical environment, evaluate how safe it feels to them, identify ways to make the space safer, and organize to bring about those changes.
6. Community Outreach: It is essential that the community participate in the various outreach groups in the City. The Capital City Community Coalition, Citizen Police Advisory Councils (CPAC), Trenton Council of Civic Associations all meet within the community to discuss issues and develop solutions to them. Also, Greater community participation in the policing process thru established communication links (i.e. My Block).
7. Make Safety an Issue in Every Plan: The Planning Division should consider setting a policy that every plan and element should include an evaluation of ways that the City should improve public safety.
- 8.

2. Issue: Distressed Environment Contribute to Safety and Crime Issues

a. Background:

1. One of the major issues related to safety, and the perception of safety, is the number of vacant buildings in Trenton. These homes are often poorly secured and become “attractive nuisances” (they attract illegal activity).
2. For more background see [Vacancy and Abandonment](#)
3. Although the new administration has worked to diligently address trash and debris, uncleanliness and low property maintenance continues to contribute to the idea that no one cares, which can attract further illegal activity.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Strategies
 1. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design. The goal of CPTED is to alter the physical design of the communities in which humans reside and congregate in order to deter criminal activity. Opportunities range from small-scale interventions - such as the strategic use of shrubbery - to more intensive interventions – such as encouraging architecture that promotes "eyes on the street".
 2. The City should consider incorporating CPTED principles into the zoning code as well as creating a CPTED checklist as part of the Site Plan review process.
2. Stabilization, Demolition, and Redevelopment: The ability of people to gain access to vacant structures and use them for illicit purposes is a major factor

affecting safety in many neighborhoods. As part of a neighborhood approach to vacancy and abandonment, the city must balance the need to eliminate the risk posed to the health and safety of residents with the need to protect historic resources and maintain the urban form that makes Trenton unique. There is no one-size fits all approach. See [Issue: Vacancy and Abandonment](#) for more information.

3. Establish Community Sense of Place/Ownership for public spaces: Recreational planning encourages regular usage of open spaces and ownership of space. Examples include some reaches of the D&R Canal, parks and pools.
4. Incorporate urban design and streetscaping standards: Poor urban design decisions result in a poor physical environment which can increase the incidence of crime. The City should develop streetscape design standards and funding mechanisms that promote their implementation.
5. More mixed use development: Mixed use development increases opportunities for active and passive surveillance. Combining residential, workplace and commercial destinations within neighborhoods can reduce the exposure to possible violence, and allowing commercial activities around-the-clock will attract pedestrian activity and thus passive surveillance.

3. Issue: Socio-economic Costs of Crime

a. Background:

1. Crime has significant socio-economic costs for the city. It alienates investment and tourism, inhibits local entrepreneurial spirit, and damages social cohesion.

4. Issue: Safe Public Transport

a. Background:

1. Urban design and frequency of transit service prevents crime in transport. Most transport-related violence episodes occur when riders are not on the transport vehicles but when they are waiting in stations and stops or walking to and from them.

b. Possible Response:

1. Designing stations as 24-hour activity hubs can improve safety by facilitating pedestrian flow and maximizing passive surveillance.
2. Waiting areas, bus stops, and taxi stands can be attractive to offenders, particularly when they are in isolated locations. Improvements include abundant illumination and clear direction signs. Shelters should be made of transparent materials. The location of stops should be near built up areas and existing road and pedestrian networks.
3. Specifically address women's safety in public transport.

5. Issue: Maintaining Safe Environments During Severe Weather Events and Public Emergencies

a. Background:

1. Trentonians have expressed that they feel uninformed during severe weather events and public emergencies. It is not understood exactly what is needed to stay safe during an event or emergency.
- b. Possible Response:
1. Leverage Social Media: Leverage social media to disseminate emergency management information during events.
 2. Marketable Website: Establish a “catchy” marketable website that can be well understood that everyone should go to during emergency events. Market the site.
 3. Education Campaigns: Education campaigns that indicate what to do during public emergency events.
 4. Safe Havens: Identify community facilities that the public can utilize during public emergency events. Make awareness of these facilities to the public in advance and clearly identify these facilities with visuals.
 5. Establish Neighborhood Storm Committees
 6. Communicate Aid Programs: Communicate aid programs after events that will help residents get back on their feet or assist with damages.
 7. Local Radio Stations: Utilize local radio stations to communicate important information and announcements to Trenton residents.
 8. Preparedness Planning: The City’s Department of Health & Human Services has been doing preparedness planning with its partners in educating the public about being prepared during severe weather, to include how to “Shelter in Place” when movement away from a dwelling may be dangerous.
 9. Vulnerable Population: Significant work has been done in meeting with Property Management and Residents in many of Trenton’s High Rise Buildings where vulnerable populations reside to talk about Sheltering, Medication management, keeping a written medical history and prescriptions in a place where management has access to the information during an emergency and working with our Red Cross Partners.

6. Issue: Noise Pollution During Public Emergency and Extreme Weather Events

- a. Background:
1. Noise such as generators - especially commercial generators - can contribute to putting the community at risk of public safety and public health. There is evidence that noise, especially continuous noise, above certain decibel levels have health related effects on individuals that are subject to that noise.
- b. Possible Response:
1. Public Safety: Establish policies that address noise that puts the community at risk of public safety.
 2. Awareness of Noise Policies to Potential Polluters: Identify all commercial generators and make them aware of the noise policies.

3. Community Empowerment: Notify the surrounding community of the commercial generators and make them aware of the noise policies.
4. Understand the Regulations: Research State Department of Health and the State Department of Environmental Protection for regulations that deal with Noise Decibel levels in a number of situations.

7. Issue: Maintaining and Enhancing Police Force

- a. Background:
 1. Police force training is currently insufficient.
 2. Police force should be optimized to handle current and future objectives to enhance a sense of safety.
- b. Possible Response:
 1. Increase training budget for the police force.
 2. Optimize the Police Force: utilizing technology and creative/innovative policing strategies to optimize the police force efforts.
 3. Identify the Underserved: Provide an analysis of underserved areas in the city with a correlation of number of police officers, firefighters, police stations and fire stations in the City.

8. Issue: Hazardous Substances that Affect Trentonians' Health

- a. See [Environmental Health](#)

9. Issue: Pedestrian and Bicyclists Safety

- a. See [Opportunity: Increase Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility throughout Trenton](#)

10. Issue: Limited Physical Activity and Poor Health Habits as a Result of Crime

- a. See [Limited Physical Activity](#)

Advance Good Governance

1. Issue: No Guiding Principle for Immigrant Issues and Opportunities

a. Background:

1. As noted in the [City Profile Report](#)⁴², approximately 20% of the current population of Trenton (1 out of every 5 residents) was born outside of the United States.
2. During the formulation of this Issues and Opportunities report it has become clear that residents and stakeholders viewed new immigrant communities as an asset to the community. Although many spoke of the spanish speaking immigrants in particular, the discussion was not exclusive to these communities.
3. Many felt that immigrants will be very important as the city looks to strengthen its economy, market its cultural resources, and address its housing issues. However, it was also clear that accommodating these new residents poses a number of challenges for the City, especially in regards to education and the provision of services.
4. Although these immigrant issues and opportunities were addressed under various guiding principles in this report, it became clear that the Vision Element lacked a clear policy statement regarding these communities.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Add “Support Immigrant Communities” as a Guiding Principle: The Vision Element should be amended to include “Support Immigrant Communities” as a guiding principle. This should be done before the completion of Phase II of the Master Planning Process.
2. Provide Translation Services: The City of Trenton currently does not have the capacity to translate important documents, such as the Master Plan. The City should investigate contracting professional translation services to address such a need.
3. See Also
 1. [See Immigrants as a Strength](#)
 2. [Opportunity: Immigrant Communities](#)
 3. [Leverage New Immigrant Communities](#)
 4. [Capitalize on Immigrant Communities](#)
 5. [Provide a New Immigrant Welcome Center](#)
 6. [Expanding retail in new immigrant communities](#)
 7. [Promote cultural events](#)

⁴² <http://trenton250.org/learn/city-profile/demographics/>

2. Issue: Insufficient Revenue, Budget Cuts, and High Tax Rates

a. Background:

1. Only a quarter of the city's budget comes from tax revenue.
2. Property tax revenue relies too heavily on residential development, which places a stress on already cost-burdened homeowners and makes Trenton a less desirable place to live.
3. According to the [State of New Jersey](#)⁴³, the City of Trenton has the highest effective tax rate (4.665%) in Mercer County. As noted in this 2012 [Times of Trenton](#)⁴⁴ article, "Due to cuts in state aid, a shrinking tax base, high debt load and employee salaries and benefits that increase each year, Trenton has spent the last several years grappling with budget deficits, ranging from a whopping \$56 million in 2010 to an estimated \$4 million this year. Those budget holes often require tax increases to fill, making Trenton's municipal tax rate the highest in Mercer County." See [Issue: Weak Housing Market](#) for more discussion of the effect this has on housing.
4. As a Transitional Aide City of Trenton is mandated to raise its taxes no less than 2% each year. The increase in taxes coupled with no additional benefits seen by residents causes dissatisfaction with the quality of life in the city.
5. Too many large parcels are tax exempt and not at optimal use to facilitate a vibrant economy, mostly owned by the state. For more discussion of tax exempt properties please see [Non-Ratable Properties Downtown](#)
6. The City of Trenton is too reliant on state funds and subsidies. Relying heavily on state funds and subsidies leaves the city with no opportunity to expand their budget and provide improved services. In addition, the City carries a significant amount of risk that their budget will change outside of their control. For example, in 2010, the State slashed support to the city by 16%, lowering state funding from \$86 million in the fiscal year that ended in June 2010 to \$71 million in 2011, according to the [Wall Street Journal](#)⁴⁵.
7. The City's economy is currently not diverse enough to offset the homeowners tax rate.
8. Currently, State oversight makes it a difficult and cumbersome process to govern. State oversight increases the time it takes to process even simple transactions which makes the City less efficient and effective.
9. Risk management and insurance – The City has an incredible amount of liability claims and workers compensation claims. The City should ensure having the right amount of insurance to cover such claims.

⁴³ "2015 Abstract Of Ratables For The County Of Mercer"

<http://nj.gov/counties/mercer/commissions/pdfs/2015gentaxratebreakdown.pdf>

⁴⁴ Erin Duffy. "If approved, Trenton property tax hike would make the city's tax rate the highest in Mercer County". Times of Trenton. October 7, 2012

⁴⁵ Kate King. "Trenton's Christie Problem". The Wall Street Journal. Aug, 31 2015

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/trentons-christie-problem-1441069687>

10. The City has undergone a number of rounds of layoffs and budget cuts that have significantly reduced its ability to effectively govern. In 2012, the City laid off 105 police officers, and as many as 42 non-uniformed city employees.^{46 47} In addition, the school board is anticipating laying off 250 to 350 employees in 2016.⁴⁸ Such staff shortages significantly reduce the City's ability to provide essential public services.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Public Private Partnerships: City, County, and State can devise an efficient and cohesive mechanism for public/private partnerships to put publicly owned land to optimal use. The City has the greatest interest in the potential tax ratables, where the State and County's bottom line does not require them to use their land for optimal use.
2. Efficiency Plans: Department's shall review its current programs and identify where revenue is lost and provide effective plans to address lost revenue. (e.g. Parking Management Plan)
3. Departmental Work Plans: Utilizing department work plans that focus attention on achieving the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles will help the City maximize resources and reduce inefficiency.
4. Use the Master Plan: The Master Plan is designed to be an effective playbook to assist the city in its efforts to develop a vibrant economy that has the effect of increasing tax revenues. Efforts such as Waterfront Revitalization, repurposing the Downtown Parking Lots, and promoting Transit Oriented Development are key to growing the City's tax base which will allow it to reduce its tax rates and restaffing City agencies.

3. Issue: Timely Administration of Government Services - Customer Service

a. Background:

1. The City of Trenton does not quickly move projects through the requisite approvals process. This problem is not unique to the development process. Community groups have lamented about the amount of time and cumbersome "red tape" required to do everything from get support for trash cleanup to transferring properties for use in redevelopment/revitalization efforts. This is a major issue for the city because it (1) adds cost for private development and (2) makes it more difficult (and costly) for community partners to support the city in its revitalization efforts.
2. Technology upgrades and goals are not very specific to needs and efficiency. No access to internal data across departments and there is a number of

⁴⁶ "Mass Trenton police layoffs take effect as officers lay down boots outside headquarters" Alex Zdan. The Times of Trenton. http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2011/09/laid_off_trenton_police_office.htm

⁴⁷ "Trenton plan for 150 city worker layoffs, including 108 police officers, is approved by state" Matt Fair. The Times of Trenton. http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2011/07/trenton_plan_for_150_city_work.html

⁴⁸ "Trenton school district may cut up to 350 jobs to close \$19M budget gap for next year" Jenna Pizzi. NJ.com http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2015/01/up_to_350_employees_may_be_cut_school_may_be_conso.html

non-integrated major applications. Many applications need updating, a verification if the application still serves the purpose, and workers need training. No remote access to data and services. No public access to City's data and services online.

3. Stakeholder interviews make clear that the City's website (trentonnj.org) is not meeting the needs of city hall employees, community partners, or residents. Stakeholders, both inside and outside of city hall, complain that the website is not up to date, is poorly organized, and often lacks crucial information necessary to provide adequate public services. Many complained that it is difficult to get permission to update and that it is unreliable as a source of good information. In addition, many felt that the website's look and feel was dated.
4. Staffing is a problem. More staff is needed to provide the necessities to be properly responsive.
5. Some City Hall employees complain about the excessive amount of paperwork required to complete their jobs. Some have argued that this paperwork, at the very least, could be more efficiently completed digitally. However, some also complain that this paperwork is completed only to end up in a file and never to be seen again. Such work, takes valuable staff time away from already understaffed departments and divisions.

b. Possible Response:

1. Hire an IT Director: An IT Director can provide direction and implementation for efficient workflows, data sharing, open data for the public, increased customer service, and long term technology goals for all departments and the City as a whole.
2. Technology Goals and Upgrades: In order to have better informed employees, increased efficiencies, and public access to online services and data, the City should consider developing a plan to integrate data across departments and improve public access to information.
3. Upgrade the City's Website (trentonnj.org): The City can better provide services through the web that can efficiently handle customer service and inquiries. This can allow staff to push information to the web that is considered FAQ or frequently requested information and data.
4. Get Inspections Online: Getting the inspections scheduling and required forms online is one possible option for improve government services. This would reduce the amount of staff time devoted to these activities and allow residents and stakeholders and opportunity to perform some functions during non-business hours.
5. Departmental Work Plans: Create Departmental Work Plans for efficiency. Departmental Work Plans shall speak to ways to be more efficient with staff time and priorities.
6. Hold staff to higher standards: Holding staff up to higher standards. Provide needed training and professional development to be effective workers.

Produce annual reviews of staff. Provide specific annual job duties per staff member using the goals and priorities from the Departmental Work Plan.

7. Leadership: Have a complete understanding of Department goals and priorities. Introduce creative ways to boost morale. Reward staff that go beyond duty and/or use creative out-of-the-box thinking for efficiency and achieving goals. Incorporate an Employee of the Month reward program.
8. Efficient workflow: Workflow assessments for efficiency, coordination, reduce costs, ensured legality, and improved customer service.
9. Strong Culture: Incorporating common values throughout City Government with clear guidelines for workers as they strive to achieve shared goals. Creating great workplaces built on trust, a strong workplace culture is considered key to achieving goals and success as an organization. Also, a strong culture helps attract and retain quality employees.
10. Have a Strong Community Engagement: Utilize various communication venues, technology, and social media platforms to communicate community services, events, meetings, and announcements. Provide a portal of information for City residents and businesses.
11. Boards and Commissions Meetings must meet Quorum: Ensure commitment is kept by the members of all City Boards and Commissions to make quorum for all scheduled meetings. It diminishes the effectiveness of the City to provide adequate services when meetings are canceled.
12. Civic Software: Acquire and train city staff in the use of “civic software” to simplify and streamline services and programs, automate as much as possible, and make public meetings efficient and available online.
13. Empower Citizens with Technology: Consider a program that uses phones to create a central reporting mechanism with QR code for citizens to report issues they have in Trenton. The system can improve enforcement of health codes in food stores and restaurants, standards for rental properties, attendance in school, and fight crime, among others.
14. Enforce Ordinances: The City of Trenton needs to do a better job of enforcing the ordinances they have passed. At times, this is a staffing issue and the City may need to find ways of increasing capacity. In other instances, this requires better coordination between departments and a clear mandate on the key ordinances that should be enforced.

4. **Issue: Lack of Strategic Partnerships with the State and County**

a. Background:

1. Over the years, the relationship between the City and the State has floundered with the changes of administrations at both levels of government with no specific strategy or agreement on use of land to help make Trenton vibrant. The objective of such a strategy should be to use public land at its highest and best use. Same with the County.

2. State assets in Trenton can be better leveraged or coordinated to attract tourists and promote the City as a Capital City.
 3. Stakeholders have noted that this poor relationship has had a variety of negative effects on Trenton that include, but are not limited too, valuable space in the downtown being dedicated to non-ratable uses, stalling of the Route 29 boulevard project, and Trenton Public School not receiving the support it needs.
 4. City Departments have established better working relationships with County, State and Federal agencies. These relationships have developed recently by the City's willingness and actions in addressing long-standing non-compliances that have limited other agency's acceptance of the city as a professional and progressive partner.
- b. Possible Responses:
1. Develop a coordinated strategy: this should focus on using publicly owned land at its highest and best use for the City's vibrancy. Possibly reinstate the Joint Coordination Commission.
 2. Create a Convention and Visitor's Bureau to coordinate and market State and City assets.
 3. Develop capacity: The City should work with the County to pursue state and federal grants, where appropriate.
 4. Reboot the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation (CCRC): The CCRC currently has all the powers vested to it by the State and a board of directors. However, there is no staff for this organization. If it were properly staffed the CCRC could help build a strategic partnership between the State and the City.
 5. Partner on School Attendance: The City should investigate building partnerships with State and County officials to ensure attendance at school, including use of truancy officers.

5. Issue: Poor Coordination of Community Partners and Community Leaders

- a. Background:
1. In the past, the city has not done an effective job of managing its community partners. In response to past mayoral administrations, a number of strong community partners have arisen at both the city-wide scale, as well as the ward and neighborhood level. However, these groups have been ineffective at communicating and coordinating amongst themselves. As a result, these groups compete to provide similar services to the same populations, and likewise often find themselves competing for funding.
 2. These organizations often find it difficult to navigate the bureaucracy of City Hall. Many stakeholders expressed frustration when trying to get basic support for City Hall on initiatives that align with the City's goals and objectives. This included everything from the most basic - like getting support for trash clean-up days - to the more complex - like accessing city owned

property to undertake initiatives. Overall, there was a feeling that a more streamlined approach would be helpful.

3. There are many people in Trenton who are not the heads of organization or institutions but who nonetheless are leaders in the community. These “[mavens](#)”⁴⁹ are often key sources of information about what is happening in the City. In addition, they help to disseminate and enforce community norms and standards. The City has not clearly articulated a message that it would like these leaders to promote.

b. Possible Response:

1. Share goals, objectives, priorities and strategies: Providing shared goals, objectives, priorities, and strategies around identified issues we all care about will help align the City and community partners to better communicate and coordinate. Trenton250 will be that document of shared goals and priorities for the City and the community.
2. Establish a NGO-City Liaison: The City should consider designating a member within City Hall who is responsible for coordinating efforts between the City and its local partners. This liaison would help organizations access services they need from the City and ensure that efforts of one NGO are not overlapping with or working against efforts of other organizations.
3. Clearly Articulate Community Expectations: The City should consider clearly articulating the kinds of civic behavior it would like its community leaders to promote. Among other things, this may include promoting programs or talking to their neighbors about the negative effects of littering on the City.
4. Form and/or Collaborate with Issue Oriented Stakeholder Groups: In 2011, the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey organized a group of local and regional stakeholders interested in addressing vacant and abandoned properties in Trenton. The resulting Trenton Neighborhood Restoration Campaign (TNRC) has been an effective forum for the coordination of efforts to address the vacant and abandoned properties. The ability for members of the Department of Housing and Economic Development to work collaboratively with community partners has been one of its most successful accomplishments.
5. Social Service Resource Inventory: The City of Trenton could benefit from an effort to catalogue all the social services groups working in the City and detailing the issues they are currently work on. Similar to a Natural Resource Inventory undertaken by DVRPC, the inventory would describe the social resources of the community and provide the City with a better clear picture of where there are inefficiencies and gaps in service.

6. Issue: City Council Responsibilities

a. Background:

1. As elected officials come and go, it is beneficial for the City to inform new Council Members on their role and responsibilities as a Councilperson,

⁴⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tipping_Point

structure of Council, steps to creation of city policies, best practices in municipal budgeting, and structure of City Hall.

2. Communication is a key factor for the City's progress. Determination should be made for the best ways of communication between Council and constituents, City Hall staff, and Administration.

b. Possible Response:

1. Orientation Program: An official orientation program for newly elected officials to provide important information for the position they were just elected. It should be a coherent, planned introduction that combines information, experiences, and a transmission of history, all of which are aimed at giving new members the foundation they need to do their job proficiently and to integrate themselves into the Council.
2. Create a City Hall Booklet: A booklet for ALL that clearly describes business at City Hall, the process of ordinances/resolutions, budgets, and checks and balances.
3. Communication to Council on Projects: Council members shall be aware of proposed projects, specifically projects within their Ward. Define triggers of communication on proposed projects.
4. Professional Development Opportunities: The City should seek professional development opportunities of all elected officials to be aware of best practices in their role.
5. Administration/City Council Retreats: Establish retreats to better facilitate communication, break down barriers and perceptions between each other. Objective is to work together to move the City forward.
6. Awareness of Roles and Charge of Boards and Subcommittees: Provide an understanding of the role of Council in respect to Boards and Sub-Committees under their purview. An example is the "Board of Health". City Council members convene a Board of Health meeting twice a year, which is a public meeting, where the Health Officer and staff present the state of health of Trenton residents, issues, problems, and solutions.

7. Issue: No Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

a. Background:

1. A Capital Project is a project that helps maintain or improve a city asset, typically infrastructure. Generally, a capital project is either (1) a new construction, expansion, renovation, or replacement project for an existing facility or facilities that requires large investments over a number of years, or (2) a purchase of major equipment that will be used by the city for a number of years.
2. A Capital Improvement Plan⁵⁰ identifies capital projects and equipment purchases, provides a planning schedule and identifies options for financing the plan. Essentially, the plan provides a link between a municipality, school

⁵⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_Improvement_Plan

district, parks and recreation department, and/or other local government entity, to both a comprehensive/strategic plan and the entity's annual budget.

3. The city does not have a Capital Improvements Plan. As a result, the city has no way of deciding what long-term investments need to be made in the city and no mechanism for funding those improvements.
4. With no CIP, the City can not proactively get ahead of its infrastructure and community equipment needs and problems in order be a competitive city.
5. No “end game” identified in order to make priorities. No guidance given for Capital Budget purposes.
6. Under the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) the preparation of a CIP may be assigned to the Planning Board.

b. Possible Response:

1. Trenton250 as the mechanism to devise the CIP: A Capital Improvement Plan is devised from the Trenton250 Master Plan and Departmental Work Plans to align with goals identified within Trenton250.
2. Vet budget items: Establish guidance or mechanism for vetting and adding items to the budget.
3. Bonding: Connect the CIP with bonding opportunities
4. Long-term vs Short Term: Items should be established and divided as long-term or short-term goal items.

8. Issue: Zoning and Redevelopment

a. Background:

1. Lack of a cohesive comprehensive master plan doesn't allow for informed decisions, increased efficiencies, best land uses, and strategic approaches
2. Trenton's Zoning Ordinance was last updated in 2010. However, some of the city's redevelopment investigations and plans go back at least until 1990. Some plans are no longer valid because the projects have been completed, they have a variety of levels of detail, and many have not been updated since the zoning ordinance was updated. As a result, the redevelopment process in Trenton is confusing and unnecessarily cumbersome.
3. The cumbersome redevelopment landscape makes it more difficult for the city to attract the type of development it desires. Among other issues, Stakeholders have noted that some Redevelopment areas are too large and, since they are written as overlays of zoning, they are difficult to complete. They also noted that many of the redevelopment plans have languished for 20 to 30 years without significant advancement. The plans are often too broad and it has been suggested that breaking down redevelopment into smaller areas may make them more achievable. The Planning Board is currently working on an assessment report regarding redevelopment areas.

b. Possible Response:

1. Re-evaluate Redevelopment Areas: The city should continue to undertake a complete inventory and re-evaluation of its redevelopment designated areas and plans. Once that is complete, the recommendations should be included in the Master Plan Land Use Element.
2. Designate all of Trenton an Area in Need of Rehabilitation.

9. Issue: Plans Not Used to Improve Outcomes

a. Background:

1. The City of Trenton has undertaken a number of extensive planning efforts over the course of the past 10 years. Such efforts include the Downtown Capitol District Master Plan, the Climate Action Plan, the Route 29 Reroute, the Trenton Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study, among others.
2. Nonetheless, these plans are rarely used by City Hall, the City Council, or the Planning Board when making decisions about long-term investments (capital improvements), land-use, economic development, or related issues.
3. The City is currently under an effort to produce its first comprehensive master plan effort - Trenton250.

b. Possible Response:

1. Department Work Plans: The Trenton250 Master Plan Framework adopted by the Planning Board recommends that all departments align their budgets and work to the Trenton250 Master Plan. These department work plans will ensure that City Hall is using the plans it creates, and will enhance its ability to effectively monitor its progress in achieving the Vision and Guiding Principles. Departmental Work Plans shall be updated every fiscal year with quarterly updates. For more information, please see [this short video](#)⁵¹. Departments should provide annual presentations of their work plans and alignment with Trenton250 goals.
2. Capital Improvement Plan: A Capital Improvement Plan is devised from the Trenton250 Master Plan and Departmental Work Plans to align with goals identified within Trenton250.
3. District Plans: The City is divided into 5 Planning Districts. The District Plans will primarily be implementation plans for Trenton250 at the district geographic level.
4. Get “Buy-In”: Ensuring Administration and Staff have “buy-in” with the Vision and Plans of Trenton250. Keep Department Directors engaged.
5. Clear Vision: Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals, and Strategies should be clear and aligned. Communication from Mayor should be clear that everyone is working to align with the vision. Mayor sets the tone.
6. Action Items: Action items should be established in all plans indicating who’s responsible, cross-section of responsibilities, timeframe, and implementation metrics. Steps to achieve goals/objectives.

⁵¹ <http://www.trenton250.org/learn/planning-101/listening-tour/>

7. Periodic Evaluation Reports: Periodic evaluation reports will be created to measure the City's progress toward the stated goals and implementation of strategies. Published reports. Measurable indicators incorporated throughout Trenton250.

10. Issue: Lack of Understanding of the Master Plan

a. Background:

1. A [Trenton250 Poll](#)⁵² asked residents which is true about the City Master Plan (A: Required by the state; B: Adopted by City Council; C: Written by the Mayor; D: I don't know). Only 25% of residents correctly answered that it is required by the State. This shows a significant gap in who understands the purpose of the master plan and how it works.

b. Possible Response:

1. Use the Process: The Trenton250 planning process should continue to focus on educating residents on the importance of a master plan.
2. Investigate an Educational Campaign: The City may wish to consider dedicating funding and staff time to an educational campaign that teaches residents how to use the Master Plan.
3. Incorporate Master Plan in Civics Course: The City of Trenton should consider incorporating the master plan as an educational tool in local civics classes. This may be something that the City could find funding for through a local, regional or national foundation.

11. Issue: Non-Conforming Uses in the Zoning Code

a. Background:

1. The City of Trenton's zoning code creates a number of "nonconforming" use issues that make it difficult for residents who are trying to put their property to productive use.
2. In some instances, this is the result of a zoning code that does not have a great deal of nuance. For example, most residential areas are covered by only one zone: the RB zone. This Zone allows for Detached single-family dwelling units, Semidetached single-family dwelling units, Row house dwelling units but applies the same lot standards across the City. This is especially problematic in Trenton, where a number of neighborhoods have historically been made up of a mixture of uses and where the RB Zone does not permit neighborhood service commercial uses. Disparity between the existing conditions and the current zoning adds cost to anyone looking to rehabilitate or develop property in these areas.
3. This issues are particularly problematic in Industrial Zones where the lot and building are not suitable for modern industrial needs. Property owners only choice for making them productive is to utilize the buildings for non-conforming uses.

⁵² <https://textizen.com/polls/806>

b. Possible Response:

1. Update zoning codes: This issue can be address in an update to the Zoning code that will likely result after the Trenton250 Master Planning Process is complete.

12. Issue: No Shared Data or Expressed Technology Goals

a. Background:

1. Trenton has a number of different property information databases running on different technology systems throughout City government. This makes information difficult to access across departments and means there is no centralized database of information.
2. There is not a clear protocol for recording information and some departments are using different protocols for recording inspections.
3. The Tax department uses a “lead lot” system for recording information about block and lots. As a result, the MOD-IV Tax data often does not have information about property class, ownership, and building information.

b. Possible Response:

1. Hire an IT Director: An IT Director can provide direction and implementation for efficient workflows, data sharing, open source data for the public, increased customer service, and long term technology goals for all departments and the City as a whole.
2. Create a Single Property Management Database: A singular property database management system that incorporates data from all departments that is accessed and shared throughout City government. Based on credentials.
3. Open Data Policy: Establish an open data policy that allows public access to datasets in order to encourage innovation, provide transparency, collaboration, and public participation
4. Online Services: An online system of government services that automates processes, provides greater customer service and a better understanding of expectations.

13. Issue: City Has Not Responded to Changing Demographics

a. Background:

1. Trenton’s demographics have changed significantly since its population peaked in the 1950s. For example, in 1990 only 15% of residents in southeast Trenton identified as Latino, by 2010 that number had spiked to 47%.⁵³ Like many post-industrial cities, Trenton has struggled to meet the needs of new residents who have different social and economic needs. One simple example raised in the Spanish Speaking Public Meeting as part of Visioning process was the lack of soccer fields in the City.

⁵³ Eeyeon Bae, Lauren Deutsch, Alejandro Franqui, Alexander Hartley, Soyoung Kim, D. Lex Powers. University of Pennsylvania School of Design, Department of City and Regional Planning Workshop. “Southeast Trenton, NJ: A Plan for Revitalization”

b. Possible Response:

1. Assessment of Trenton's Community Needs: The City has undertaken an assessment of Trenton's demographics and published it in the City Profile Report. However the City can do better at understanding the needs of its diverse community. The City shall consider undertaking an additional outreach effort that specifically targets non-english speaking populations and recent immigrants to Trenton. Strategies for improving outreach to Trenton's diverse community should be included in the Community Engagement Element of the Master Plan.

14. Issue: City Budget is Not Strategic

a. Background:

1. The City Budget is a reflection of current issues to resolve, or it identifies needs to get through the current fiscal year. Not related to strategies or long-term priorities.
2. Takes too long and time consuming to produce. Too many layers.
3. The budget process is not clearly defined and understood by all parties.

b. Possible Response:

1. Departments Align their Budgets: Each Department align their budgets to identified goals, strategies, and priorities in their Department Work Plan that aligns with the Vision and Guiding Principles of Trenton250.
2. Collaboration and Coordination: Collaboration and coordination of all parties to introduce the budget to City Council at once.
3. Define Process: Clearly define an agreed upon process by all parties for the budget that is efficient. Come to a resolution in a timely fashion.
4. Introduce Long-term Budget Planning: Long-term budget planning (2 to 5 years in advance)
5. Partnering with the Community: Identify ways to partner with the community to address challenges that may alleviate a City Budget item.

15. Issue: Difficulty finding appropriate comparisons

a. Background

1. Throughout the process, residents have taken issue with comparing Trenton to other low performing cities like Camden and Newark. They have expressed concern that making such comparisons indicates that the City is setting low standards for achievement.
2. At the same time, it may not be useful to compare Trenton to cities that face significantly fewer challenges and/or have not faced the same problems with deindustrialization.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Identify a Target: The City of Trenton should consider identifying a target city (or cities) that currently outperforms Trenton on issues like crime, education,

and economic activity. This city should be one that has faced significant deindustrialization. If possible, it should also be a state capital or seat of major government entity. The city (or cities) should be used in all reports as a benchmarks for success.

2. Learn from Success: When identifying its vision for the future, Trenton should be looking to other state capitals that have had success in promoting attractive places to live. Examples such as Annapolis with thriving shops and small businesses and active waterfront, Providence with successful retail and hotels in the downtown and waterfront areas, and Hartford that sustains anchor businesses in the insurance industry. We need to compare with other successes and avoid comparing with low performance.

16. Opportunity: Expand Project Application Review Committee (PARC)

a. Background

1. The Project Application Review Committee (PARC) was created by the City of Trenton to assist individuals interested in developing properties in Trenton. The committee consists of staff members from the following city departments:
2. Department of Inspections-building, fire, plumbing, electrical, and zoning
3. Department of Public Works-water and sewer utilities
4. Department of Housing and Economic Development - Planning
5. The committee meets on a monthly basis to review and provide comments on proposed projects in the City of Trenton that are in the conceptual or schematic stages of development.
6. This committee has received very strong reviews and is seen as a program that other communities wish to emulate. Expanding this program, or finding other applications for it may help residents and stakeholders better navigate City Hall.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Include other departments: Such as Department of Health and Human Services-health and Department of Housing and Economic Development - Housing Production

17. Opportunity: The Trenton250 Master Plan

a. Background

1. The City of Trenton has undertaken an extensive and well organized effort to create a community-driven Vision for the City and to identify the best courses of action to achieve that vision. As confirmation, in 2015 the project won the President's Award for Outstanding Public Outreach from the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association.
2. As evidenced by this report, the issues and opportunities the plan seeks to address are complex, many of which have been identified many years prior and are common to most cities caught within the "transitional" part of the "life and death" of cities cycle.

3. As a result, the Plan provides an opportunity to be a comprehensive strategic roadmap for the city. At the same time, this will likely culminate in an extensive number of recommendations that will continue to grow as the additional elements are written.
- b. Possible Responses
1. Start Small: The Master Plan should consider identifying those items that can be remedied most immediately. Pick small projects with easy fixes, available resources, result in visible, positive changes/outcomes. Accomplish many of these projects over a short period of time, over and over again.
 2. Set Realistic Goals: As the the Master Plan continues to evolve the City should continue to set realistic measurable goals. These will allow residents and stakeholders to understand the desired outcomes as well as track progress of the project over time.
 3. Make it Accessible: The Master Plan should be as accessible as possible. The large number of recommendations that are likely generated will be too much for any one person to quickly and easily process. As such, the final deliverable should be packaged in a manner that allows easy access and the ability to view it through different perspectives.

Promote Civic Unity and Pride

1. Issue: Trash, Recycling, and Solid Waste Management

a. Background:

1. One of the major issues that was raised throughout the process (including Phase 1 - Visioning) was the pervasiveness of litter and trash in Trenton. This not only projects an image of Trenton as being dirty and not worthy of respect, but also poses health risks to residents and contributes to environmental contamination of rivers and natural environments.
2. Recycling is not fully leveraged in the City. Residents do not understand the current recycling program and no education campaign exists. There are reports that residents are throwing away things that should be recycled; while trash collectors ignore recycling bins, leaving residents confused. As a result, very little recycling is accomplished in the City.

b. Possible Response:

1. Anti-Litter Campaigns: Anti-litter campaigns have become commonplace in major urban areas such as Trenton. As an example, Jersey City has developed a “Stop the Drop” anti-litter program in partnership with Jersey City Medical Center-Barnabas Health. According to [NJ.com](#)⁵⁴, “More than 180 Jersey City youth were hired [in 2014] to clear litter and debris from residential streets. During the summer, anti-litter crews took to the streets from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Saturday, in an effort to clean up neighborhoods throughout Jersey City.”. A similar campaign in Philadelphia, called Unlitter Us⁵⁵, run by the Philadelphia Streets Department, serves as an educational platform for teaching residents how to properly dispose of their trash.
2. Massive Recycling Education Campaign and Bins: A recycling campaign is needed for residents to understand what it exactly entails and motivates them to recycle.
3. Health Related Campaign: The City should provide a campaign that correlates poor solid waste management with poor health or Trenton residents.
4. Deputized Solid Waste Inspectors: The City’s Solid Waste Inspector’s were deputized in the Spring of 2015, therefore providing them the ability to issue summons immediately upon observation of violations.
5. Trash Compaction Stations: The City will establish trash compaction stations curbside to collect pedestrian rubbish. Secured compaction stations are also proposed for designated downtown and retail areas, where currently daily trash bags are an unsanitary eyesore to pedestrians and visitors. The establishment of collection stations will reduce the required frequency of

⁵⁴ The Jersey Journal. “Jersey City expands anti-litter campaign with nonprofit partner” The Jersey Journal. October 23, 2014. http://www.nj.com/hudson/index.ssf/2014/10/post_632.html

⁵⁵ <http://www.philadelphiastreet.com/unlitter-us/take-action>

trash collection, provide a more healthy environment, and aesthetically improve the sidewalk areas.

6. Create a Composting and Mulch Program: The City should consider creating a mulch and composting program that would allow residents to dispose of yard clippings and food waste. In exchange, residents could be eligible to receive free compost.

2. Issue: Negative Perceptions of Trenton

a. Background:

1. There is a perception within the region that the city is not a good place to live, work, and play. Often this is directly tied to a perception that Trenton is dangerous. However, these fears are exacerbated by news coverage that many residents feel only focuses on the negative things happening in Trenton.
2. There doesn't seem to be any interest in positive stories from within Trenton, just sensationalized stories. It appears our local news outlets are formulaic in the stories that make it to print.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Trenton Stories from a Multitude of Avenues: Leverage social media, technology, local area newspapers, local tv and radio broadcasting to produce positive stories about Trenton. Break the formula! Be creative and innovative with technology to attract and garner a large regional following that produces information and news that really matters to the residents of Trenton and the region and are starving for consumption.
2. See [Build a Safe City](#)
3. See [Foster Social Opportunity and Vibrant Economy through Education](#)
4. See [Establish a Preeminent Arts and Culture Destination](#)
5. See [Cultivate a Healthy City](#)
6. See [Waterfront Revitalization and Access / Route 29 as a Boulevard - A Regional Destination](#)

3. Opportunity: Trentonians see change as possible

a. Background

1. In a [Trenton250 poll](#)⁵⁶, 78% of respondents felt that, Trenton could become the economic center for the region in 10 years? (126 respondents answered this question via Text message as part of the Trenton250 outreach campaign).

4. Opportunity: Establish a Preeminent Arts and Culture Destination

- a. See [Opportunity: Establish a Preeminent Arts and Culture Destination](#)

5. Opportunity: Promote Cultural Events

- a. See [Opportunity: Promote Cultural Events](#)

⁵⁶ <https://textizen.com/polls/806>

Cultivate A Healthy City

Physical Health

1. Issue: Chronic disease

a. Background:

1. Trenton residents have higher rates of chronic illnesses than Mercer County as a whole, the state of New Jersey and the nation. The most significant chronic diseases in Trenton are diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. Heart disease and cancer are two of the three leading causes of death in Mercer County. Unmanaged chronic illness leads to acute, costly, avoidable emergencies.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Adopt evidence-based practices: Adoption and implementation of consistent, evidence-based practices throughout the city.
2. Education Campaign: Educational efforts aimed at increased screenings for cancer and improving self-management of chronic conditions. Include an educational component for the mentally ill and elderly.

2. Issue: Limited Access to Physical Activity, Increased Obesity, Unhealthy Lifestyles

a. Background:

1. See Trenton Health Team's [Community Health Needs Assessment Report, 2013](#)⁵⁷
2. Nearly half of the city's children - including those as young as three to five years old - are obese.
3. The Trenton CHA noted that only 34 percent of Trenton children meet U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommended exercise guidelines of 60 minutes of activity per day. Hispanic children are least active, with 75 percent not meeting this requirement.
4. 47 percent of children ages three to eighteen years old are not active for even 30 minutes a day in Trenton, with Hispanic children again least likely to be active for at least 30 minutes a day (58 percent).
5. Lack of exercise is compounded by a high prevalence of sedentary activity among Trenton's youth. For instance, 34 percent of children ages three to eighteen spend more than two hours a day on weekdays in front of screens, with Trenton boys (40 percent) and adolescents (41 percent) more likely to do so.
6. Sedentary behavior is more than twice as high in non-Hispanic black children compared to Hispanic and non-Hispanic white children.

⁵⁷ Kalla Gervasio and Carol McAloon. "Community Health Needs Assessment Report Trenton, New Jersey". New Jersey Health Initiatives and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. July 2013

<http://www.capitalhealth.org/~media/B67A9807E88E472287BCADB9CB7BCD67.ashx>

7. One reason that many children are not getting enough physical activity is related to crime, as there are not many safe places that children can play or exercise outdoors. In fact, 45 percent of Trenton parents feel that their neighborhoods are somewhat or very unsafe. In addition to crime, traffic levels and the poor condition of the city's sidewalks and parks deter children from getting sufficient exercise.

1. See also: [Issue: built environmental issues contribute to problems with safety and crime](#)

b. Possible Responses:

1. **Re-establish Recreation Department:** The City is continuing to re-establish the functions of the city's recreation department, including programs that include physical activity at community centers and parks, park maintenance, park security, and safe routes to parks and centers. In addition the department is working to promote activities to encourage residents to partake of established sidewalks, roadways and trails by hosting walk and bike-a-thons and running events throughout the city.
2. **Increased Hours:** Pursue the creation of joint use agreements between school district and City of Trenton that would allow opening of school parks outside of school hours and including weekends.
3. **School-Police Partnership:** Reestablish a partnership among police commissioner, school superintendent, and City of Trenton to address safety/security problems.
4. **Improve Trails and Open Space:** Additional access to a safe and maintained trail networks and open space for residents. In a recent [Trenton250 poll](#)⁵⁸, 28% of residents said that investments in parks and recreation would improve their quality of life. For more discussion of the trails issue, see [Issue: Poor Condition of Trails](#)
5. **Increase Programming:** Physical activity is often dependent upon sufficient programming that encourages active lifestyles. There is an opportunity to encourage more activity through expanded programming of public and open spaces.
6. **Safe Routes to Parks:** Ensuring that residents have safe routes to parks refers to infrastructure improvements that facilitates access to parks through walking, biking, or transit. For more information see [this American Planning Association publication](#)⁵⁹
7. **Incorporate youth programs:** To ensure physical activity of our youth and providing them positive options beyond illegal activity, increased youth programs are needed.

⁵⁸ <https://textizen.com/polls/806>

⁵⁹ "Safe Routes to Parks" American Planning Association. June 2015
<https://www.planning.org/nationalcenters/health/toolsforhealth/pdf/saferoutestoparks.pdf>

8. Incorporate elderly/disabled programs: To ensure physical activity of the elderly, disabled, and those suffering from mental health issues, the city should provide programming and activities to support their active lifestyles.
9. Establish Parks Criteria: Parks must meet certain indicators to be deemed a park. Parks should be evaluated against these indicators to continue with that designation.
10. See also [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design](#)
11. Tennis: Leverage Trenton’s state-of-the-art tennis facilities as holistic wrap-around programs that can be utilized as a pipeline to produce local professional tennis players.
12. Athletic Field and Facility Improvements: The City will continue to construct improvements to the established but deteriorated athletic facilities based upon conceptual plans developed over the past several years. The plans will be enhanced as necessary to include current and future needs of the City’s residents and visitors.
13. Educational Campaign for a Healthy Lifestyle: Creating an educational and awareness campaign on how to obtain and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Advocate for amenities/facilities that support a healthy lifestyle.

3. Issue: Limited Access to Healthy Foods and Nutrition

a. Background:

1. With only three true supermarkets in the city and an incredibly high number of limited food service restaurants (51 percent of outlets) and bodegas (29 percent), Trenton has been identified by the Trenton Health Team⁶⁰ as a food desert that would have to triple its number of supermarkets to adequately serve its residents (as of 2013).
2. There is limited access to healthy food options in Trenton. The convenient location of bodegas allows Trenton’s youth to frequent these venues before, during, and after school, despite the fact that a majority of students qualify for federal meal programs such as the National School Lunch Program.
3. Trenton area supermarkets are inaccessible without a car, causing a major disparity between residents who own cars and those who do not .
4. Healthy food outlets in and around the city are often more expensive, posing a problem to the majority of residents who live below federal poverty level.
5. Food insecurity affects about one in five Trenton households. Hunger is also an issue, with 17 percent of Trenton households regularly lacking enough food to eat. This rate is substantially higher for children (22 percent).

⁶⁰ Kalla Gervasio and Carol McAloon. “Community Health Needs Assessment Report Trenton, New Jersey”. New Jersey Health Initiatives and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. July 2013
<http://www.capitalhealth.org/~media/B67A9807E88E472287BCADB9CB7BCD67.ashx>

6. In a [Trenton250 poll](#)⁶¹, 18% of respondents said that investments in healthy food access would improve their quality of life.
 7. For more discussion of this issue please see this [Trenton250 blog post](#)⁶².
- b. Possible Responses:
1. Healthy Food Options:
 1. Provide incentives for bodegas to provide healthier food options
 2. Expand the Healthy Corner Store initiative of NJPHK. For more information on [Healthy Corner Stores see this page](#)⁶³.
 3. Increase the availability of fresh produce at Trenton food pantries either through new partnerships or grants.
 4. Provide incentives for restaurants to provide healthier food options.
 2. Attract a Supermarket: Trenton should consider using economic development strategies to bring larger affordable supermarkets into Trenton. See also focusing development in [locations capable of accommodating larger format retail](#).
 3. Urban Gardens:
 1. The city should consider expanding the number of urban gardens by adding plots at schools, in parks, and in other public spaces. In addition, the city should consider classes for those interested in urban gardening and/or raised beds on their properties.
 2. The City already has many partners already doing community gardens. As such, efforts to expand these programs must be coordinated with those partners. Clarifying what role each entity (City, County, Community Partner, etc) should be a high priority. See
 4. Cooking Classes: Offer cooking classes in publicly available spaces such as neighborhood schools, community and senior centers, and area churches.
 5. Enhance farmers markets: Encourage farmers markets to accept food coupons and stamps, allow for roadside food stands, provide opportunities for affordable CSA, and consider food assistance programs.
 6. From Food Desert to Food Hub: Because of Trenton’s transportation infrastructure and central location, Trenton is ideal as a Food Hub. Food Hubs present an opportunity for communities to make healthy food sourcing a profitable enterprise for producers, distributors, and retailers, while simultaneously improving access to local foods.
 7. Food Policy Initiative: Introduce a food policy that increases access to health and affordable food through a holistic and comprehensive food systems approach.

⁶¹ <https://textizen.com/polls/806>

⁶² <http://trenton250.org/blog/news/do-you-live-in-food-desert/>

⁶³ <http://www.healthycornerstores.org/healthy-corner-stores-q-a>

8. Resource: Hire a Food Access and Policy Coordinator

4. Issue: Substance Abuse/Behavioral Health

a. Background:

1. See the Trenton Health Team's [Community Health Needs Assessment Report, 2013](#)⁶⁴
2. Drug use is related to all barriers reported in the Community Needs Scores (CNS) and reflects an intersection of health, environment and social conditions illustrated in the Venn diagram developed from our community engagement efforts.
3. In 2012, 55 percent of Mercer County's hospital admissions for substance abuse occurred in Trenton. The majority of hospital admissions in Trenton involved marijuana or alcohol. Of all alcohol licenses issued by the State in Mercer County, 41 percent reside in the City of Trenton.
4. Minority populations are very unlikely to seek and receive mental health services. Between the stigma associated with mental illness and inadequate screening by primary care practitioners, identification is often missed. Only 25 percent of persons with a mental illness actually receive professional help.

b. Possible Response:

1. Education campaign: Education campaign on prevention and managing substance abuse. Provide a source to obtain information on all resources to help overcome substance abuse.
2. Screening and Referrals: Expand screening and improve referral to quality behavioral treatment services, including reducing cultural barriers for behavioral health treatment
3. Prevention Services: Improve access to and utilization of prevention services
4. Diminish easy access to illegal drugs: Address the ability to easily access illegal drugs and the dealing of drugs and empower the community to address illegal drug dealing. See also [Community Safety Audits](#).
5. Treatment Services: Provide and improve treatment services for those addicted to drugs

5. Issue: Safety of Neighborhoods and Public Spaces for Better Health Outcomes

- a. See [Build a Safe City](#)

6. Issue: Health Literacy and Disparities

a. Background:

1. There are obstacles to building health knowledge and communicating the importance of healthy living and how residents can access available services. For example, many foreign born residents struggle to adapt to a different

⁶⁴ Kalla Gervasio and Carol McAloon. "Community Health Needs Assessment Report Trenton, New Jersey". New Jersey Health Initiatives and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. July 2013
<http://www.capitalhealth.org/~media/B67A9807E88E472287BCADB9CB7BCD67.ashx>

healthcare system in a new country. Diverse and complex language barriers also impact health literacy in Trenton, where over 35 percent of the population speaks a language other than English in the home.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Promote a Culture of Health and Wellness: Increase access for everyone to accurate and actionable health information; support lifelong learning to promote good health
2. Health and Safety Awareness: Developing and Disseminating Health and Safety Information
3. Create Strategies: Create strategies for print, audiovisual, and electronic media, area employers, and health care executives
4. Further Support Trenton Health Team: The Trenton Health Team Community Advisory Board comprised of 45 community organizations continue to work on increasing access for everyone to accurate and actionable health information; support lifelong learning to promote good health, and deliver person-centered health information services.

7. Issue: Lead Based Paint in Housing

a. Background:

1. Elevated lead concentrations (<5 micrograms per deciliter) was detected in 23% of children entering Trenton kindergarten in 2011-2012 school year ([Natural Resource Inventory](#)⁶⁵ 2014, Isles Study 2011)
2. Elevated lead concentrations have been linked to [poor scholastic performance](#)⁶⁶. As a result, some of the education issues - including low graduation rates - may be linked to problems with lead in Trenton homes.
3. Lead exposure is one of the most common preventable poisonings of childhood. Data from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) shows that 6% of all children ages 1-2 years and 11% of black (non-Hispanic) children ages 1-5 years have blood lead levels in the toxic range. Lead is a potent poison that can affect individuals at any age. Children with developing bodies are especially vulnerable because their rapidly developing nervous systems are particularly sensitive to the effects of lead.
4. Common sources include lead paint and lead contained in water and soil. Housing built before 1950 has the greatest risks of containing lead-based paint. Some children may eat or swallow chips of paint (pica) which increases their risk of exposure to lead.
5. Exposure to lead can have a wide range of effects on a child's development and behavior. Even when exposed to small levels of lead, children may appear inattentive, hyperactive, and irritable. Children with greater lead levels may

⁶⁵ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. "City of Trenton: Natural Resource Inventory (NRI)". February 2015. <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/14043.pdf>

⁶⁶ Jianghong Liu, Linda Li, Yingjie Wang, Chonghuai Yan, and Xianchen Liu. "Impact of Low Blood Lead Concentrations on IQ and School Performance in Chinese Children" May 29, 2013 [10.1371/journal.pone.0065230](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0065230)

also have problems with learning and reading, delayed growth, and hearing loss. At high levels, lead can cause permanent brain damage and even death. ([American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, November 2012, Facts for Families No. 45](#))⁶⁷

b. Possible Responses:

1. Support Safe and Healthy Housing: Ensure that housing is safe and healthy for all levels of income.
2. Monitor: Schools should continue the practice of testing the blood of incoming students to identify those suffering from lead poisoning. Additionally, the city should continue to offer testing services for the public to identify if their homes are contaminated.
3. Educate: The City will continue its education program for childhood lead poisoning to all homeowners about the dangers of lead and the steps they can take to reduce their risk of lead poisoning by doing home renovations where lead is present.
4. Stabilize: Isles has stabilized more than 100 homes in Trenton through an approach that does not remove the lead but does make it safe to live in the home. These renovations have an average cost of \$6,000 to \$8,000. Finding funding to continue and expand this program may result in significant health benefit for residents.
5. Advocate: The State of New Jersey has cut funding for the Lead Hazard Control Assistance Fund. This fund was the primary source used to finance home inspections, emergency relocations for affected families, and efforts to educate the public about the risks of living in homes built before lead-based paint was banned in 1978. Partial or complete refunding of this program could help Trenton address this problem.
6. Grant Proposals: The City's Departments of Health & Human Services and Housing & Economic Development will continue to work with community partners in applying for funds from the US Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Healthy Homes Agency for lead abatement funds when requests for proposals are announced.

Environmental Health

1. Issue: Brownfields and Contaminated Sites

a. Background:

⁶⁷ American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. "Lead Exposure in Children Affects Brain and Behavior" November 2012.

https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/facts_for_families/45_lead_exposure_in_children_affects_brain_and_behavior.pdf

1. Historic Fill (pottery) has been utilized as fill material across the city. This fill has a high metal concentration, which is linked to serious negative health effects. ([Southeast Trenton Final Report](#)⁶⁸ – 2014)
 2. The City of Trenton has a large number of [Known Contaminated Sites](#)⁶⁹. These sites have been identified by NJDEP as contaminated and will likely pose some obstacles should they be targeted for redevelopment ([DVRPC Natural Resource Inventory](#)⁷⁰ 2014)
- b. Possible Responses:
1. Brownfield Programs: “Brownfield funding has brought millions of dollars into Trenton, and the Brownfield Program’s success has been used to leverage funding for the redevelopment aspects of projects. Redevelopment of brownfield sites can be a catalyst for bringing new jobs and tax revenues into the city.” ([Brownfield Program Action Plan](#)⁷¹, p 19, 2014)
 2. Create Line Item in Budget: To the extent that matching funds are required for state or federal grants, include a line item in the city budget for the Brownfields Program, when needed.
 3. Auctions: Conduct routine auctions of city-owned brownfield sites and partner with real estate brokers to successfully transfer city-owned properties to private ownership, thereby increasing city revenue and reducing long-term liabilities.
 4. Redevelopment: Increase Trenton’s tax base by redeveloping abandoned, idled, or underutilized properties and ensuring a balance of redevelopment reuses.
 5. Continued use of funds: Continue to use the Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund that was awarded by the EPA to clean up city-owned sites that require additional levels of funding. Repay outstanding obligations to the EPA Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund.
 6. Use Natural Resource Inventory (NRI): Utilize newly published NRI from DVRPC to establish and direct Environmental Commission to promote sustainable redevelopment of the city.
 7. Empower an Environmental Commission: Empowering an Environmental Commission to advocate for the strategies identified for brownfield remediation. Recommend tax incentive areas for businesses willing to locate/remediate in Trenton (Trenton Economic Development /Environmental Commission Liaison).

⁶⁸ Eeyeon Bae, Lauren Deutsch, Alejandro Franqui, Alexander Hartley, Soyoung Kim, D. Lex Powers. University of Pennsylvania School of Design, Department of City and Regional Planning Workshop. “Southeast Trenton, NJ: A Plan for Revitalization” https://www.dropbox.com/s/gyn9ycz0mxkwzi0/Southeast%20Trenton_FinalReport.pdf?dl=0

⁶⁹ <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/seeds/contam.htm>

⁷⁰ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. “City of Trenton: Natural Resource Inventory (NRI)”. February 2015. <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/14043.pdf>

⁷¹ City of Trenton Better Environmental Solutions for Trenton (BEST) Advisory Committee. “Brownfields Program Action Plan” June 2014 http://www.trentonnj.org/Documents/BEST_Action_Plan_6-20-14.pdf

- c. Possible Funding Sources:
 - 1. State Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund (HDSRF)
 - 2. USEPA Cleanup and Assessment grants
 - 3. Trenton Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund
 - 4. NJ Green Acres Program
 - 5. NJDEP Watersheds grants

2. Issue: Combined Sewer System

- a. Background:
 - 1. The oldest sections of the city (South Trenton) were once mostly combined sewer systems (sanitary sewerage/storm water). In the 1960's and 1970's Trenton took advantage of grant funding and separated much of the [combined sewer system](#)⁷² (CSS) in this area.
 - 2. An area of approximately 500 acres in Chambersburg area still operated using a CSS, due to the difficulty and level of other infrastructure disturbance that would be necessary to separate the services. In 1980 a twenty (20) million gallon detention basin was constructed on the Sewer Plant property to accommodate the combined sewer flows and minimize overflows from this area.
 - 3. The city also has one (1) combined sewer sewer outfall (CSO) to the Delaware River. It is located on the river bank just outside the Sewer Plant entrance at 1502 Lamberton Road. It was equipped with a treatment system in the late 1980's and later equipped with monitoring instruments. This outfall is in compliance with all regulatory requirements.
 - 4. [Combined sewer systems](#) (CSS) are used for the management of Stormwater and Wastewater. They are traditionally found in historic and older major cities like Trenton. Untreated CSS are known to cause serious water pollution problems. When large volumes of water enter the system from major rain events, the system overflows and spills directly into water bodies (rivers and streams).
 - 5. USEPA/NJDEP regulates combined sewer system overflow quality, quantity and flow.
 - 6. The City's stormwater management ordinance complies with the NJDEP Municipal Stormwater Regulation Plan.
- b. Possible Responses:
 - 1. [Green Infrastructure](#): The City of Philadelphia - which also has a CSS - has become a [national leader](#)⁷³ in addressing the issue through [green](#)

⁷² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combined_sewer

⁷³ Leila Atassi & Andrew Tobias, Northeast Ohio Media Group, "Philadelphia leads 'green' movement to address sewer overflows, Northeast Ohio sewer officials call plan impractical". February 25, 2014
http://www.cleveland.com/drain/index.ssf/2014/02/philadelphia_leads_green_movem.html

[infrastructure](#)⁷⁴ investments. Such investments create opportunities for enhanced public spaces, improved micro-climates, and better linkages throughout the city.

2. **Stormwater Surcharge:** The City could explore stormwater surcharge model similar to the Philadelphia Water Department as a means of increasing control over stormwater runoff.
3. **Greening the City:** The City should consider utilizing riparian buffers and greenways for infiltration of smaller storm events from regional areas. In addition the creation of wetlands along marginal lands may lead to positive results.
4. **Develop a Stormwater Management Plan:** An updated stormwater management plan will provide a strategy for the City to effectively deal with storm surges, provide green infrastructure strategies, pollution prevention strategies, substantiate gray infrastructure capital improvements, offer a path to restore waterways, and assess the area watersheds.
5. **Long Term Control Plan Funding Through NJEIFP:** According to the NJDEP website, The Department may be offering 100% interest free financing through the NJEIT's Planning and Design Loan Program to help CSO permittees develop long term control plans for the CSO sewershed with the expectation that such plans will result in a capital improvement project. The Department is considering reserving \$10 million in SRF loan repayments for this purpose.⁷⁵
6. See also [Opportunity: Infrastructure Engineering Incubator](#)

3. Issue: Climate Action Plan Not Implemented

a. Background:

1. In 2010, the City of Trenton published a [Climate Action Plan for the City of Trenton](#)⁷⁶. However, there is no designated entity within City Hall that is responsible for advancing the plan and ensuring that benchmarks are being met. There is a volunteer body led by Trenton residents and advocates - called the Green Team - that has taken ownership over some of the recommendations of that plan. Nonetheless, they are a volunteer organization that has taken on other initiatives, including ensuring that Trenton maintains and advances its [Sustainable Jersey](#)⁷⁷ Certification.

b. Possible Response:

1. **Personnel and Department Assignment:** The City of Trenton should consider designating a department and an employee that are responsible for advancing the Climate Action Plan. A Resiliency Officer.

⁷⁴ <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/index.cfm>

⁷⁵ Long Term Control Plan Funding Through NJEIFP; <http://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/pdf/NJEIFP-and-CSOs.pdf>

⁷⁶ New Jersey Sustainable State Institute in the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University, New Brunswick. "Climate Action Plan for the City of Trenton" 2010

⁷⁷ <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/>

4. Issue: Flooding

a. Background:

1. Nearly 20% of Trenton is within the 100 and/or 500 year floodplain
2. Approximately 50% of the Transportation/Communications and Utility Area of the city is affected by Floodplain Issues ([DVRPC Natural Resource Inventory](#)⁷⁸, 2014)
3. The City is in the process of selecting and designating a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) who will establish the municipal flood preventative measures and requirements, and review applicant's requests for changes proposed within flood areas.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Control Development: The city must develop a city-wide understanding of Floodplain Areas and use them to control the issuing of building permits. The City should utilize its existing GIS to create a map of the current and official flood data published by FEMA.
2. Partner: Pursue partnerships with Rutgers Center for Urban Environmental Sustainability to develop "Flood Plain and Sea-Level Rise" mitigation strategies.
3. Identify Key Areas: The city should identify key infrastructure areas and work with utilities (PSE&G, Verizon, Comcast, etc.) to provide urban power resiliency.
4. See [Develop a Stormwater Management Plan](#)

5. Issue: Air Quality

a. Background:

1. The City of Trenton experiences an average of 100 days per year of moderate or unhealthy air quality days per year ([DVRPC Natural Resource Inventory](#)⁷⁹, 2014). This is likely linked to increased respiratory disease among residents ([Climate Action Plan for the City of Trenton](#)⁸⁰, 2010).

b. Possible Responses:

1. Green Team Partnership: The Green Team may wish to partner with major utilities, State of NJ (major Land Use), city, and NGOs to develop a comprehensive approach to dealing with this issue. (See [Climate Action Plan for the City of Trenton](#)⁸¹, 2010 for more details.)

⁷⁸ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. "City of Trenton: Natural Resource Inventory (NRI)". February 2015. <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/14043.pdf>

⁷⁹ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. "City of Trenton: Natural Resource Inventory (NRI)". February 2015. <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/14043.pdf>

⁸⁰ New Jersey Sustainable State Institute in the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University, New Brunswick. "Climate Action Plan for the City of Trenton" 2010

⁸¹ New Jersey Sustainable State Institute in the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University, New Brunswick. "Climate Action Plan for the City of Trenton" 2010

2. Quantify Standards: The city may consider establishing a green-area to developed-area ratio for all new development. This would set a standard for improved air quality and meet needs for expanding open space in the city.
3. Incentivize Small Interventions: The city should consider incentives for public and private entities to reduce emissions. For example, the city might include better filtration systems in schools, given their amount of exposure.
4. Utilize Planning: The city should utilize comprehensive planning to ensure that the placement of greenways, bike paths, and other amenities that attract residents are located away from mobile source polluters (especially trucks).

6. Issue: Open Space

a. Background:

1. Condition: Some facilities in the City of Trenton are under-maintained. Interviews with residents, stakeholders, and the initial results of an [Open Space Survey](#)⁸² suggest that the quality of Open Space varies greatly in Trenton. Some parks are relatively well maintained and have strong community support. Others suffer from underinvestment and lack of community ownership.
2. Safety: Residents throughout Trenton have identified that public spaces are often not used because they are home to open air drug dealing and associated crime.
3. Lack of Community Ownership: Residents have identified that some open spaces assets lack community ownership. In particular, the D&R Canal and Stacy Park were mentioned as examples.
4. Lack of Connection: The last Open Space Element of the Master Plan was completed in 1990. Moreover, the city's open space is not comprehensively planned, resulting in a fragmented system that does not capitalize on opportunities to provide connections across the city and within neighborhoods.
5. No Parks Division: The City of Trenton does not have a division or personnel who are dedicated to ensuring that residents have access to high quality open space.
6. No programming for healthy activities.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Focus on Safety: The City of Trenton should focus on making open spaces safe places.
2. NGO's/church site adoptions: Some organizations in the city may be interested in "adopting" parks. The city should develop a program that would provide them with additional support, such as trash bags and special pick-up days for community clean up events.

⁸² <http://www.trenton250.org/blog/news/rate-trentons-public-spaces/>

3. Route 29 Project: The Route 29 reroute project provides a long-term opportunity to create valuable open space and connect the city to the river. For further discussion of this issue see [Opportunity: Waterfront Revitalization and Access: Route 29 as a Boulevard and A Regional Destination](#)
4. Dedicated Parks Staff: The City of Trenton should consider creating dedicated positions for parks.
5. Programing: The City should establish a schedule of programming activities for city parks

7. Issue: No Environmental Commission

a. Background

1. In February 2015, the Planning Board adopted a stormwater management resolution which stated that the planning board must consider storm water management concerns in the master plan.
2. However, the City is not poised to receive special consideration for aids and grants for storm water management activities because it does not have an Environmental Commission.
3. There is no single steward of all environmental health issues in Trenton. As a result, there is not a single location where advocates for progressive and innovative approaches to a clean, green, and healthy environment can go for information.

b. Possible Responses

1. Establish an Environmental Commission: The City should investigate whether it should establish an environmental commission. If deemed necessary, it should clearly articulate its roles and responsibilities as they related to master planning and the site plan approval process.
2. Ensure Concurrency with Master Plan: The city should review the adopted stormwater management resolution and ensure that the information is expressed in the Master Plan.
3. Explore Sustainable Strategies: If established, the Environmental Commission should explore opportunities for ensuring that future generations of Trentonians will have access to clean water and land. Among other issues, the City may wish to consider its policies on chemical and gas pipelines and whether the City is using best practices to prevent environmental contamination.

8. Issue: Lack of Community Engagement on Environmental Issues

a. Background

1. It is often difficult to understanding the complex relationship between environmental conditions and one's personal quality of life. There are currently no efforts underway to routinely engage and educate residents about these important issues. Lack of formal education, language barriers, and

limited amount of time to get involved may be contributing factors that limit participation.

b. Possible Response

1. Education Campaign: The City should consider developing and implementing an education campaign to highlight the important environmental risks that Trentonians face. Such a campaign should take into consideration language and cultural barriers that have historically prevented people from engaging in these issues.

9. Issue: Trash, Recycling, and Solid Waste Management

Reinforce High-Quality Neighborhoods and a 24/7 Downtown Trenton

Downtown

1. Issue: Abundance of Surface Parking Lots Downtown

a. Background:

1. The use of land is fragmented and frequently interrupted by parking facilities. The problem with excess parking is a frequent concern of Trenton residents and planners, and is often mentioned in previous reports, stakeholder interviews, and during public engagement.
2. There is a lack of on-street parking, but excess, though unavailable, off-street parking. An on-street space can provide between 2.5-3 times the amount of available parking compared to a private space. Much of the off-street space is dedicated and unavailable to the public (Downtown Parking and Sidewalk Report – 2008).
3. Authorized state parking accounts for over 70% of structured spaces and over 80% of surface lot spaces. It is also important to note, however, that state owned spaces account for only 54% of all state spaces and only about 40% of total downtown spaces (Downtown Parking and Sidewalk Report – 2008).
4. The City of Trenton is currently engaging the services of a consultant to prepare a Downtown Parking Management Plan. Implementing the recommendations of this report will be an important step in solving the land use issues in the Downtown.
5. Surface parking lots are not the highest and best use of land. These surface lots are a detriment to Trenton’s ability to become an economically vibrant city.
6. See [Issue: Lack of Great Public Places](#)

b. Possible Responses:

1. Mixed Use Development: See [More Mixed Use Development](#)
2. Implement the Parking Management Plan: The City of Trenton is currently engaging the services of a consultant to prepare a Downtown Parking Management Plan. Implementing the recommendations of this report will be an important step in solving the land use issues in the Downtown.
3. Coordinate Efforts:
 1. Trenton should investigate coordinating with the state on parking. This may include centralizing parking functions and responsibilities, including parking enforcement.

2. There is an opportunity to build a partnership with the state to transition downtown parking lots to better land uses and ratable properties.
3. See [Opportunity: Waterfront Revitalization and Access: Route 29 as a Boulevard and A Regional Destination](#)
4. Supporting Redevelopment through Parking Fees
 1. A number of cities have used funds generated through parking fees and fines as a tool for supporting redevelopment. Parking fees have a number of advantages: they are generated regularly, they are predictable, and they are relatively stable. In addition, they are often collected by Parking Authorities who can issue bonds under NJ Law. As a result, these fees can be leveraged, through the issuance of bonds, to support capital improvement projects that will encourage redevelopment.
5. Pop-up events: Pop-up events and parks are temporary installations that help to demonstrate the potential of a space to be something greater. The City should consider creating small pocket parks in parking lots and programming these space.
6. Incorporate parking into street design guidelines: Rather than encouraging more off street parking allowing for bike lanes, use on street parking as a buffer or safeguard between bike lanes and flowing traffic.
7. Redevelop the Parking Lot near the Trent House: When the City sold the land to the state around 1980 for parking lots (to retire urban renewal debt), it was leased to the Trent House. The initial 15 year lease term has long since expired. If renewed, the City should consider selling the property to a developer for housing or other purposes. The state should build a parking garage for replacement parking as envisioned in the Renaissance Plan.

2. Issue: Non-Ratable Properties Downtown

a. Background:

1. Only 38% of 2013 Revenues were generated by property taxes ([City Profile Report](#)⁸³).
2. Trenton has an abundance of non-ratable properties, especially downtown. 35% of all taxable land in Trenton is exempt ([City Profile Report](#)⁸⁴). This includes:
 1. Non-vacant/foreclosed city-owned land: 10%
 2. State-owned land: 8%
 3. Land owned by nonprofit agencies: 5%
 4. Vacant/foreclosed city-owned land: 4%

⁸³ <http://trenton250.org/learn/city-profile/city-government/>

⁸⁴ <http://trenton250.org/learn/city-profile/city-government/>

5. Land owned by faith-based organizations: 3%
 6. Land owned by the Board of Education: 3%
 7. County-owned land: 2%
3. As a result, the city:
1. cannot reap the full benefits of capital improvements expenditures, limiting its opportunities to build momentum through infrastructure investment;
 2. is heavily dependent on the State for operating expenses; and
 3. has limited opportunities to encourage the types of development residents want to see downtown.
4. See also: [Issue: Insufficient Revenue and High Taxes](#)
- b. Possible Response:
1. Build a partnership: The City Should build a partnership with the State and County to transition downtown parking lots and publicly owned land/buildings into ratables by utilizing the land and buildings at its highest and best use.

3. Issue: Upper Floor Vacancy

- a. Background:
1. Many properties downtown are currently vacant on the upper floors. According to the Downtown Master Plan, this is primarily due to the fact that downtown property owners were permitted to abandon the upper floors of their buildings in the 1950s. Many owners demolished the stairways that provided access to the upper floors in order to maximize ground level square footage.
- b. Possible Responses:
1. Upper Floor Restoration Program
 1. According to the Downtown Master Plan, property owners in Trenton have expressed the desire to renovate the upper floors of their buildings though the cost to do so has proven to be prohibitive.
 2. Since the stair was removed, a new stair must be built to modern building code standards. In many cases, the required size of the new stair is larger than the structural opening of the original stair, making expensive structural reconfigurations necessary. Fire-safety standards such as sprinkler systems are also required. The cost associated with these requirements has prevented the majority of eager and well-intentioned property owners from renovating the upper floors of their downtown properties. If a building still has its original stairway, then New Jersey historic structure building codes (NJAC 5:23-6.33) apply, which are less financially burdensome.

3. As such, returning the use of upper floors may require a grant program to subsidize the significant costs owners would have to incur, which would not likely be re-captured immediately through rents.

4. Issue: Lack of Great Public Places and Social Spaces

a. Background:

1. Trenton's downtown is currently a collection of disjointed, similar businesses/enterprises that are only loosely understood and form informal "districts" within the downtown. These districts (in most instances) need significant improvements to the quality of the private and public spaces, more clearly defined borders, and improved branding and wayfinding. Generally speaking, the following "districts" exist:
 1. State Street Office and Commercial Corridor: The buildings fronting onto State Street from N. Clinton St to Calhoun St. In addition, those buildings fronting onto N. Broad between State and Bank as well as North Warren between State and Bank.
 2. Capitol Complex
 3. South Warren Street (and small scale retail development on adjoining streets). This district is one of the few places in downtown with a well established (positive) sense of place.
 4. "Nomans Land": Everything East of Mill Hill Neighborhood to the Waterfront, bounded to the north by the Assunpink Creek and to the South by Route 1. This area is a sea of parking. See [Issue: Abundance of Surface Parking Lots Downtown](#)
2. Trenton lacks major urban gathering places. In a recent [Trenton250 poll](#)⁸⁵, when asked what would be the best way to make Trenton a premier cultural and economic center, one respondent noted, "Break down barriers between different communities that already share Trenton - create open public spaces where different people can mingle and gather"

b. Possible Responses

1. Create Great Public Places: Trenton should look into opportunities to create central gathering spaces downtown, or enhance existing spaces. These spaces are important for encouraging civic pride, enhancing quality of life, and providing residents opportunities to "mingle" with each other.
2. Encourage Social Spaces: Foster social interaction and create a sense of community and neighborliness. Provide a sense of comfort or safety to people gathering and using social spaces. Encourage use and interaction among a diverse cross section of the public. Provide activities make the space attractive to people and encourage social interaction
3. Streetscape Beautification: The City should investigate efforts to beautify the downtown streetscape. As an example, Hightstown hung flowering baskets on lamp-poles through the central business district. Such an effort would improve

⁸⁵ <https://textizen.com/polls/806>

the area aesthetically and indicate to visitors that Trenton cares about its downtown.

4. See [Opportunity: Waterfront Revitalization and Access: Route 29 as a Boulevard and A Regional Destination](#)

5. **Opportunity: Waterfront Revitalization and Access: Route 29 as a Boulevard and A Regional Destination**

a. Background:

1. The Waterfront revitalization can 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. Access to the Trenton waterfront could be significantly improved by the conversion of a limited access facility into an urban boulevard.
2. For a number of years, several state, county and city projects have been envisioned to revitalize the Trenton waterfront. The major projects include the Route 29 Boulevard, the Capital City Renaissance District (waterfront redevelopment), the New Jersey Capitol Park, County Courthouse extension, and the South Broad Street Bridge project. For many people, this is simply known as the “Route 29” project. This project was first discussed in the Capital City Renaissance Plan, and many city planning documents since. NJDOT completed a boulevard study in 2005, and more recently, a feasibility assessment in 2009.
3. “Trenton’s Delaware River waterfront, currently cut off by highways, also has a lot of potential. This is especially true now, as cities are focusing on innovative uses for waterfront space. The threat from future flooding and the damage that it can cause provides the opportunity to combine utility and amenity in the form of storm mitigation wetland parks.” (Southeast Trenton Final Report – 2014 pg 39)
4. The project is not on the [Transportation Improvement Program](#)⁸⁶ (TIP), the regionally agreed upon list of priority transportation projects, as required by federal law. However, there is still interest among Trentonians, stakeholders, NJDOT, and others to get it onto the TIP.
5. Performing a [National Environmental Protection Act](#)⁸⁷ (NEPA) review is costly and currently unfunded. A NEPA Review is an evaluation of the relevant environmental effects of a federal project or action, including a review of a series of alternatives.
6. In order for the project to move forward, there is a need for property consolidation and subdivision. Such efforts are both time and labor intensive, requiring a number of stakeholders to buy into the project.

⁸⁶ <http://www.dvrpc.org/TIP/>

⁸⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Environmental_Policy_Act

7. Some development sites are already occupied by land uses, though much of the waterfront area is currently surface parking. See [Issue: Abundance of Surface Parking Lots Downtown](#)
 8. Significant time has elapsed since the concept plan and feasibility study was conducted. Most importantly, the real-estate market has undergone significant shifts as a result of the Great Recession. As a result, there are questions about the mix of land uses that could be supported.
6. Possible Response:
1. Take the lead: Trenton may consider taking the lead on moving this project forward, coordinating with stakeholders, and establishing the city as the major project advocate.
 2. Increase Depth of Delaware River: The City should investigate the costs and benefits of increasing the depth of the water. This is likely to be an expensive and highly regulated effort but the water is so shallow that there is a limit to the amount of activities that can take place (such as recreational boating). Such activities can increase the draw to the area. It can also help alleviate the flooding issues. The City should also investigate whether some of the dredged material (excess soil and sand) could be donated to the shore towns.
 3. Reinstate the Fishing Wharf: The City should consider the potential economic opportunity and regional attraction of reinstating the Fishing Wharf and whether it should be included as part of the overall waterfront revitalization planning.

7. Opportunity: Transit Oriented Development

a. Background:

1. Residents and stakeholders alike continuously cited the proximity of Philadelphia and New York City as a strength. They emphasized the connection by rail as a major opportunity for development.
2. Additionally, Trenton has stops along the RiverLine which provides continuous service to South Jersey towns between Trenton and Camden.
3. Previous studies have also indicated a desire for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) near the RiverLine stations.
4. Despite prior efforts to encourage development around the Transit Center, little headway has been made. This was due, in part, to the lack of appropriate incentives. See also [Issue: Poor Access at the Trenton Transit Center](#) and [Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment](#)

b. Possible Response:

1. New Developer Agreements: After several years and little to no development, many of the development agreements have lapsed. As such, there is an opportunity to renegotiate the contracts, identify new developers who may be more motivated to break ground, and to provide the appropriate level of incentives for them to do so.

2. Economic Opportunity Act of 2013: This new state incentive package has the possibility of creating big opportunities by providing much greater incentives for developers and thus increasing the likelihood that the city will see timely and appropriate development around the Trenton Transit Center. See [Opportunity: NJ Economic Opportunity Act](#)
3. Seek Transit Village Designation: NJDOT has a Transit Village Designation Program that allows all designated locales priority for State incentives.
4. Create a Strategic TOD Plan: Create a strategic plan that aligns all incentives and opportunities with strategic action items to encourage development.
5. Provide Shuttle Services: Create a jitney or municipally operated transportation service to shuttle transit riders from strategic locations throughout the city to the Trenton Transit Center.
6. See also [Capitalize on Location and Urban Form to Support a Multi-Modal Transportation Network](#)

8. Opportunity: Capitalize on Trenton’s Location and Urban Form

a. Background:

1. “A primary attraction for new households to move to Downtown Trenton is the access its location provides to jobs. Additionally, the lifestyle choice to live in a city center as opposed to the suburbs, especially in new construction or renovated housing, is a strong motivator. Downtown Trenton could become an exciting alternative to life in the suburbs, or to established urban neighborhoods in Trenton like Mill Hill, which may already be overpriced for some segments of the Downtown target market. Housing products that are currently missing from the Downtown mix are primarily new, for-sale units in varying price points.” (Downtown Master Plan - [Ch 3: Economic Assessment](#)⁸⁸) That plan identified the following districts as amenable to residential development:
2. Central Business District / Hanover Academy Neighborhood (Mixed-use site between State Street and Hanover Street across from City Hall)
3. Downtown Transit Village I (Former Miller Homes site, developed as a high quality, mixed-income neighborhood)
4. Downtown Transit Village II (Mixed-use building at State Street and Wallenberg Avenue, wrapping around the existing parking structure, with additional residential across on the north side of State Street)
5. Riverfront District (Mixed-use district between Warren Street and the River, north of Market Street)
6. Capital District Neighborhood (Canal Banks Redevelopment Area, along the D&R Canal north of Hanover Street, featuring rowhouses or townhouses).
7. The Downtown Master Plan was written just before the housing market collapse of 2007-2008 and the Great Recession that followed. As has been

⁸⁸ URS Corporation. “Downtown Capitol District Master Plan” Prepared for the City of Trenton.

documented in Trends and Conditions in Trenton's Neighborhoods (2015), this had a significant negative impact on Trenton's neighborhoods. As such, the feasibility of these locations must be re-evaluated.

9. [Opportunity: Daylighting of the Assunpink Creek](#)

Neighborhoods

1. Issue: Vacancy and Abandonment

a. Background:

1. The fundamental problem with vacancy and abandonment in Trenton is that there are more houses than there are people/families to occupy them. In addition to attracting new residents to occupy these homes, the city must identify how it will address the large number of properties that will not likely be occupied in the next 5 to 10 years.
2. Vacancy and abandonment is having a major negative impact on the housing market in Trenton; neighborhoods with the highest levels of abandonment are suffering from the lowest median sales prices.
3. Specific neighborhoods have high concentrations of abandonment. Those with the highest vacancy rate include Miller/Wall (40% vacant), Central West 2, Wilbur 1, North Trenton 3, and Hanover Academy (27.3% vacant).
4. Nonetheless, the efforts to create a [comprehensive inventory of vacant and abandoned buildings](#)⁸⁹ and properties gives the City an incredible tool for addressing the issue.
5. See also [Issue: built environmental issues contribute to problems with safety and crime](#)
6. Causes of Vacancy and Abandonment:
 1. Some homes are in an undesirable location for residences being adjacent to conflicting land uses. As a result, residents want to move to a better location. If the value is too low, in some cases residents will abandon the house altogether.
 2. An aging population (according to the US Census) is typically unable to maintain their homes due to costs or magnitudes of repairs. If the homes continue to deteriorate, they can become uninhabitable.
 3. Certain housing typology/sizes can be undesirable for today's families and lifestyles. These homes will be difficult to sell and may remain vacant.
 4. Some owners may be facing an inability to make mortgage payments. If foreclosure ensues, the owner may abandon the house.
 5. Many vacant parcels are not selling because they are in private ownership. The property owner has limited interest in improving the

⁸⁹ <http://www.restoringtrenton.org/#!vacant-property-stats/c4hb>

property because of reduced values, and similarly would get very little return on sale.

6. According to stakeholders, political tensions exist with converting residential properties to other uses even in areas with high vacancy rates (due to past history of eminent domain).

b. Possible Responses:

1. Develop Neighborhood Specific Strategies:

1. The city is currently developing tools necessary to effectively address vacancy and abandonment (See 5-Point Plan below). However, there is no doubt it will also need to create additional tools and strategies. Most crucially, however, the city must customize the deployment of these tools to each of the neighborhoods in the city. The city can not take a one-size fits all approach and must work with the current conditions in each neighborhood as well as the unique needs of localized communities.
2. 5-Point Plan: In late 2014, Mayor Eric Jackson announced a 5-Point Plan for dealing with vacant and abandoned properties. The goals are to facilitate the immediate stabilization and repair of properties; to ensure that the properties are maintained properly while vacant; and to get properties back on the tax roles by transferring them to responsible owners and investors. The following programs are underway and include:
 1. Homesteading pilot program: As of December, 2015 the City is currently developing an initiative targeted to a predetermined set of properties that allows potential buyers to purchase city-owned properties for a little as \$1 as long as they are a first-time buyer/someone looking to relocate to Trenton, have documented ability to rehabilitate the property, and commit to maintaining the property as a primary residence for at least 10 years.
 2. Vacant Property Registration Ordinance: The City has passed an ordinance that requiring owners of vacant properties to register them. They pay an escalating annual fee for registration, and must maintain the property to the standards set forth by the City of Trenton. As of the December 2015, the registration ordinance has been in effect for almost a full year. In 2016, the fines will increase. For more information see the [Restoring Trenton website](http://www.restoringtrenton.org/#!vpro/cbvf).⁹⁰
 3. Property stabilization program: an initiative that focuses on strategic boarding, property maintenance, and demolition on a pre-determined subset of properties that are adjacent to prospective development projects and along major gateways.
 4. Strategic sales and foreclosure program: a strategy that includes holding auctions of city-owned property on a semi-annual or quarterly

⁹⁰ <http://www.restoringtrenton.org/#!vpro/cbvf>

basis and engaging foreclosure counsel to move on strategic property foreclosures.

5. Neighborhood Conditions Market Study (“Laying The Foundations For Strong Neighborhoods”):
 - a. As of December 2015, the City had completed a [comprehensive analysis](#)⁹¹ of the housing market in Trenton. The report, conducted by New Jersey Community Capital and the Center for Community Progress. It built upon the vacant and abandoned property survey by providing additional market information about Trenton's current housing stock, analyzed against demographics and other variables.
 - b. Since it uses block-level data aggregated to the neighborhood level, it will provide a comprehensive picture of what strategies are most appropriate in each neighborhood given the local housing market.
 - c. The City should use this report as the foundation for all housing recommendations made in the City of Trenton. Furthermore, the City should undertake an effort, in collaboration with its community partners, to use the data available in the report to make decisions about how to properly utilize its “toolbox” of ordinances and resources to restore, stabilize and strengthen neighborhoods in Trenton.
3. Leverage Income from Vacant Property Registry Ordinance (VPRO): The city has recently enacted the [VPRO](#)⁹², which is collecting income that will likely continue into the foreseeable future. This income is a major asset that may be leveraged to support increased inspections, stabilization or demolition programs, and/or hiring new staff. Since this revenue will be steady and predictable, there may be an opportunity to bond against the income from this ordinance to support larger anti-blight efforts. Regardless, the city should dedicate these funds to addressing vacancy and abandonment and have a clear approach for how the money is spent.
4. Land Bank: Under current New Jersey law, while a municipality can acquire and hold properties itself, it cannot delegate this authority to other entities that could better focus on this critical mission. However, there are many people who are advocating for the State to enable municipalities to create land banks. If the Land Banking Bill (A.1648/S.583) passes, it could be an effective tool for addressing the serious vacancy and abandonment issue.
5. Take Advantage of the State’s Accelerated Foreclosure Law: Given the huge increase in the number of abandoned properties, the City should consider taking advantage of the state's accelerated foreclosure law which permits foreclosure on tax sale certificates held by the City after just 6 months. Obtaining title and reselling abandoned houses with a rehabilitation

⁹¹ <http://www.restoringtrenton.org/#!neighborhoods/zqams>

⁹² <http://www.restoringtrenton.org/#!vpro/cbvf>

requirement may be an effective tool for achieving neighborhood stabilization and revitalization goals.

6. Designate all of Trenton as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation:

1. Designation of an Area in Need of Rehabilitation is a special designation allowed under New Jersey Law that empowers the City with tools for improving the area designated. The below outlined tools are critical for the successful revitalization of Trenton. Specifically, it would allow the city:
 - a. To undertake a program of repair and improvement to structures, including providing five-year property tax exemptions and abatements to support redevelopment and rehabilitation of properties.
 - b. Exercise all the redevelopment powers EXCEPT that they could not acquire private property by eminent domain
 - c. Of particular note, the designation would provide the city with enhanced tools for the disposition of property. Specifically, the city could transfer property to certain entities without having to go through auction. As a result, the city could choose developers who are best equipped to achieve their goals and to set a price for the transfer of properties that is appropriate for the type of development it seeks.
 2. Designation as “in need of rehabilitation” is legal term and does not mean that all properties are blighted or in need of significant repair. Instead, an area may be designated if more than half of the housing stock in the area is at least 50 years old, or a majority of the water and sewer infrastructure in the delineated area is at least 50 years old and is in need of repair or substantial maintenance. Under this definition, the City of Trenton would almost certainly qualify.
 3. Cities across the State of New Jersey are using redevelopment and rehabilitation designation to take advantage of the special incentives the State provides. Without the use of such a tool, the City will be at a competitive disadvantage when attracting development.
 4. The City should undertake an exhaustive effort to explain the pros and cons of this designation and to get citizen input on the decision process.
7. Stabilize vacant structures: One of the City of Trenton’s greatest assets is its historic urban form and the buildings that define that form. Vacancy and abandonment will not be addressed overnight. Moreover, an approach that idealizes “new” development that is inconsistent with the surrounding context will likely destroy the very thing it seeks to save. As such, the city should actively investigate a stabilization strategy that seeks to preserve character and maintain assets that are likely to have market value in the future.
8. Strategic redevelopment

1. Redevelopment that includes demolition is a justifiably contentious issue and should be approached with extreme care. One of the key urban elements that distinguishes Trenton from its neighbors - and makes it an attractive place to live - is its abundance of historic residential buildings. Thoughtless redevelopment is likely to destroy the very thing that will ultimately make Trenton a highly desirable location to live.
2. Nonetheless, the city must consider where acquisition, consolidation, and redevelopment may be appropriate. One issue currently facing the city is an oversupply of housing. This depresses the housing market making it more difficult to financially justify improving housing. As such, the city should investigate opportunities where vacant residential buildings could be converted to nonresidential uses.

9. Strategic Demolition of Vacant Structures

1. Demolition in Trenton is a justifiably contentious issue and should be approached with extreme care. One of the key urban elements that distinguishes it from its neighbors - and makes it attractive place to live - is its abundance of historic buildings. Thoughtless demolition is likely to destroy the very thing that will ultimately make Trenton a highly desirable location to live.
2. There are buildings which have deteriorated past the point of being cost-effective to rehabilitate and/or have become significant problem structures in their neighborhood. These structures should be considered for demolition. Careful consideration should be given to identifying those structures that have the greatest negative impact on their surrounding community and to develop a strategy (with appropriate funding) to demolish them.
3. Demolition should be paired with stabilization and CPTED strategies to ensure that vacant lots are properly secured so that they do not become or remain attractive nuisances in neighborhoods.
4. Demolition must be done in tandem with a clear plan for what to do with the vacant lot once the structure is demolished. Residents have suggested converting lots to open space, community gardens, and gifting the lot to adjacent property owners for private use. There are a number of models throughout the United State that can serve as examples for how to exercise strategic demolition in a manner that has the greatest positive impact for residents.

10. Identify New Uses for Abandoned Buildings and Lots:

1. The city should consider developing a menu of alternative uses for vacant and abandoned properties, especially vacant parcels. Trenton, like many other cities, has had success in expanding green space and parks and offering opportunities for urban gardening. Additionally, the city may consider transferring property to adjacent owners for private use.

2. The city may wish to consider allowing non-traditional uses in limited amounts in certain residential areas. Such uses may include space for community groups, shared working spaces, live-work units, and others. In addition, the city should consider using vacant and abandoned properties as local neighborhood community centers for youth.
11. Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act (APRA): The APRA is a state statute that allows municipalities to place properties on an “abandoned properties list” if it meets certain criteria. Placing a property on an abandoned property list triggers significant municipal powers with respect to that property. Specifically it can use “spot blight” eminent domain and the municipality can use special tax sales that allow it to set performance requirements on those who purchase the property. The city should use its APRA as part of a larger tool kit for rehabilitating properties and neighborhoods. For more information see this [Housing and Community Development Network](#)⁹³ explanation of the act.
 12. Receivership: Receivership is a mechanism by which the City can effectively encourage the rehabilitation of properties that have market value but which have owners unwilling to make the investments necessary for them to be safe. If an occupied residential building meets certain conditions outlined under State statute, the court may appoint a receiver to both operate and restore the property. The receiver has broad powers, including the power to borrow money to rehabilitate the property. Once the receiver has been appointed, the owner must meet stringent requirements to regain control of the property, including paying back all rehabilitation costs and tax liens. If the owner fails to do so, the court can authorize the receiver to sell the property to a third party, restoring the property to productive use.
 13. Artistic Board Up Program: Cities have used artistic board up programs in order to reduce the stigma of blight that is synonymous with vacant boarded buildings. Artistic Board-Up programs involve painting the boards on vacant buildings in order to improve the structure's appearance as well as to engage residents, community organizers, and local artists as part of the creative process. Currently, Isles Inc. has funding for such an effort and the City should coordinate its property stabilization efforts with Isles to streamline implementation of the program.

2. Issue: Scrapping of Vacant Buildings

a. Background

1. There are a number of unsecured vacant buildings in the City of Trenton, especially residential structures. These structures are often left unsecured, and thus become attractive nuisances that become home to drug use and prostitution.

⁹³

http://www.hcdnnj.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=19:site-content&id=605:abandoned-property-list

2. Interviews suggest that one of the major contributors to this problem are people who raid these homes for scrap, including but not limited to metals and copper wire. According to stakeholders interviewed, the buildings are often secured only to be cut open. The scrappers have the tools (specifically, power saws), to break through the windows or doors. Once they have finished, the building is left open and becomes an attractive place for illegal activity.
3. In addition to creating nuisances, illegal scrapping of vacant buildings increases the cost of rehabilitation and returning them to active use.

b. Possible Solution

1. Controlled Scrapping: The City may wish to investigate a program that allows for the controlled scrapping of buildings. Owners of long vacant buildings could be offered an option - and possibly incentives - to allow licenced scrap salvagers to enter buildings and safely removed. These buildings would then be visibly identified as cleared, removing the incentive for scrappers to enter the building.

3. Issue: Weak Housing Market

a. General Background:

1. According to the Trenton Neighborhoods Conditions Study, Trenton has a weak housing market, as evidenced by a relatively high vacancy rate, low homeownership rate, high rate of investor-owned properties, low median sales prices, and high tax delinquencies.
2. The housing crisis hit Trenton hard: there are a high number of foreclosures in Trenton. The result has been a significant increase in speculation purchases. These owners typically do not maintain properties and seek to squeeze as much profit out of them without investing anything into the structure or neighborhood.
3. The lack of housing diversity discourages people with higher spending power to live in Trenton. Furthermore, Trenton workers living outside the city do not find the city an attractive place to live and they do not see any incentives to move there, according to stakeholders.
4. Trenton’s housing stock is historic and diverse. Nonetheless, the stock of housing in Trenton is mismatched with the goals of diversifying the population and expanding the number of middle and upper income residents. Housing in many neighborhoods does not appeal to middle and upper-income people who seek larger, open floorplans, outdoor living/entertainment areas, and amenities such as garages. In other neighborhoods, housing is particularly attractive to low and moderate income houses because they have easy access to transit and smaller/more affordable units.
5. Trenton effective tax rates are significantly higher than those in surrounding municipalities. As noted in [Issue: Insufficient Revenue](#), Trenton has the highest effective tax rate in the City and taxes have increased significantly in the past few years. Since many residents and property owners are operating on very

limited resources, this additional fix cost results in deferred maintenance, tax delinquency, and fewer investments.

6. Quality sales housing is limited to certain neighborhoods, creating a limited supply.
7. Upwardly-mobile residents can not "graduate up" to better housing because this type of housing does not exist in Trenton.

b. Rental Market Background:

1. Rental housing in Trenton is in poorer condition than owner-occupied housing. In most cases this is due to absentee landlords not investing in their properties to maintain them adequately and properly.
2. Concentrations of neglected rental housing results in deteriorated neighborhoods and lower median housing values than other parts of the city. According to the Trenton Neighborhoods Conditions Study, this is evidenced in the North Trenton neighborhoods (North Trenton, East Trenton South, Battle Monument, Coalport, Miller/Wall), where 62% of the homes are renter-occupied (among the highest) and the median housing value is \$95,000 (the lowest).
3. The city lacks the capacity to inspect rental properties and enforce their proper maintenance.
4. Very little quality market-rate rental housing exists in the city and downtown.

c. Owner-Occupied Market Background:

1. There are issues in qualifying potential homeowners for loans due to credit scores, down-payment requirements, and low income of potential residents. As a result, early efforts to build more owner-occupied housing will likely result in slow absorption and/or vacancy.
2. Construction of owner occupied housing requires large subsidies and therefore is costly for the city to incentivize.

d. Possible Responses:

1. Jumpstart Housing Through New Rental Construction Aimed at Moderate to High Income Residents:
 1. Jumpstarting the market-rate housing market in Trenton would be best accomplished through rental housing, whether building new or rehabilitating existing housing stock. Rental housing requires less financial commitment and risk to developers and is the easiest development type to get financed.
 2. New market-rate housing would improve and diversify the city's housing stock. New housing construction does not have to be homogeneous and the city's overall housing stock should be diverse. To achieve more parity in the housing market, the city needs more

options for those earning closer to the [Area Median Income \(AMI\)](#) (approximately \$77,000 for a family of 3).⁹⁴

2. Attract a Not-For-Profit Developer:

1. Non-profit development corporations (which may also be referred to as Community Development Corporations) are community-controlled real estate development organizations dedicated to the revitalization of cities and neighborhoods. They are NOT, by definition, affordable housing developers, although they may be involved in those activities.
 2. Typically, they undertake physical revitalization but may also be involved in economic development, social services, and organizing and advocacy activities. They tend to develop a range of product types. For example, DEVCO was involved in the development of The Heldrich Hotel & Conference Center in New Brunswick.
 3. The city should consider what partnerships could be leveraged with area businesses and institutions to establish a not-for-profit developer. For more information on this topic, please read this [Trenton250 Blog Post](#)⁹⁵.
3. Strategic Property Code Enforcement: The city should enhance code enforcement, but only in targeted neighborhoods. Efforts to blanket the city with more stringent code enforcement will likely lead to increased abandonment/vacancy, when owners decide the cost of improvements outweigh income generated on the property. However, code enforcement may be very effective in pushing up property values in neighborhoods with stronger markets, those on the edge of becoming stronger, and those losing ground. In particular, the city should improve the enforcement of its [Absentee Owner Program](#)⁹⁶, including the registration of rental properties inhabited by tenants. For more information, read this policy paper published by [The Reinvestment Fund](#)⁹⁷.
4. Target Neighborhoods: The city should be selective where it encourages and incentivizes new construction. Specific neighborhoods should be targeted for new market-rate housing, building off the strength of those locations.
1. Development should also be targeted around the city's major amenities/attractions (e.g. downtown, Sun Center, train station, etc.). For example, 15% of respondents to a [Trenton250 poll](#)⁹⁸ said that investing in Downtown living would encourage economic growth. This was third, behind Education and Small Business investments.
 2. Existing housing stock that the community determines is worth preserving should be maintained/improved in select areas.

⁹⁴ <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dhcr/offices/docs/nsp/hudincomelimits.pdf>

⁹⁵ <http://trenton250.org/blog/news/devco-and-the-economic-revitalization-of-downtown-new-brunswick/>

⁹⁶ <http://www.trentonnj.org/Cit-e-Access/webpage.cfm?TID=55&TPID=6625>

⁹⁷ The Reinvestment Fund, Policy Solutions. "Strategic Property Code Enforcement and its Impacts on Surrounding Markets" August 2014. http://www.trfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/TRF_StrategicPropertyCode.pdf

⁹⁸ <https://textizen.com/polls/806>

3. New infill housing should be considered for neighborhoods with a stronger housing market.
5. Design guidelines: The city should consider developing design guidelines for any new housing that is built in the city. In particular, these guidelines should ensure new construction contributes to the character of neighborhoods that Trentonians have come to appreciate and that many see as the foundation for building a more attractive place to live.
6. Court New Residents: The city will need to attract new residents for market rate housing, whether it is rental or owner-occupied. Some possible groups include millennials, upwardly-mobile commuters, city workers, and established immigrants. For more discussion of this issue see:
 1. [Opportunity: Trenton’s urban character and image as a “cool” place to live](#)
 2. [Opportunity: Changing Demands of Mid-Jersey Region Employees](#)
7. Provide Assistance: Programs to encourage new residents to move to Trenton should be considered (e.g. down payment assistance, reduced interest rates for state employees, homesteading programs, etc.)
8. Marketing Trenton’s Neighborhoods: Trenton should consider strategies that promote its neighborhoods as places of choice. A marketing strategy should: emphasize neighborhoods, and what about those neighborhoods would be attractive to homebuyers. At the same time, it should emphasize people, and why those who are buying in the neighborhood are choosing to live there and not somewhere else. See also
 1. [Opportunity: Trenton’s urban character and image as a “cool” place to live](#)
 2. [Marketing Trenton as Mercer County’s Livable Downtown](#)
 3. [Marketing Retail Districts](#)
9. Incentives/assistance: The city should consider providing incentives and assistance to homeowners who wish to improve the property. This effort should be targeted to neighborhoods where it will likely have the greatest impact. Moreover, it should focus principally on exterior improvements, emphasizing that the area is moving in a positive direction. Incentives should be offered for low-income homeowners to make improvements.
10. Reduce Red Tape: The process to obtain a building permit for housing improvements should be more user-friendly to encourage more legal improvements.

4. Issue: Illegal Rentals and Subdivision

a. Background

1. According to stakeholders, the City of Trenton has a number of areas where landlords are illegally renting properties. At the same time, leasees are also illegally dividing up rental properties and subletting rooms for rent.

2. This is often in response to a need for cheaper housing, and is commonly found in neighborhoods with large immigrant communities.
3. Since they are illegal, many of these rentals are not up to code. Work is often substandard and dangerous. Renters are occupying basements, attics, and rooms that are illegally constructed. Often, locks are placed on doors to facilitate this activity.
4. It has been indicated by various stakeholders that renters are often unaware of their rights as tenants. In addition, immigrant communities seem to be particularly vulnerable to these activities and there are reports that landlords threaten eviction and/or threaten to call the police, despite being the one in violation of the law.
5. The City of Trenton has no rooming house designation in its zoning code. As a result, there is no legitimate way to provide lower cost housing in existing structures. This is particularly problematic in areas with larger homes, where one family can not support the rent for the entire structure.

5. Issue: Quality Affordable Housing and Concentration of Poverty

a. Background:

1. Affordable housing is defined by the city as a dwelling with its own kitchen and bathroom that is deed-restricted for a period of time to limit its sale or rental to households that have been certified with incomes at or below 80% of area median income (AMI).
2. City staff has indicated that Trenton has an excessive amount of affordable housing as a proportion of total housing stock and regional "fair share". Using data from the NJ Department of Community Affairs Division of Codes and Standards, the NJ Housing Mortgage Finance Agency, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the city has identified 8,282 affordable units in the City of Trenton, or 24% of the city's housing stock.
3. Deed restricted affordable housing in Trenton is often low quality and poorly maintained. Most apartments in city operate "on the line," with small profit margins that make it difficult for developers to invest in basic upkeep and maintenance.
4. Trenton has a high concentration of poverty, both within the city and within certain neighborhoods. 27% of Trenton residents live in poverty, and many neighborhoods have poverty rates that exceed 20%. See [City Profile Report](#)⁹⁹.
5. Nonetheless, there is still too little affordable housing to meet the needs of some residents. Due to the fact that some residents live in extreme poverty, a relatively high percentage of low-income residents pay too much for housing. As of 2010, almost all (93%) of the city's poorest residents (those earning less than 30% Area Median Income) are rent burdened¹⁰⁰ or severely rent burdened¹⁰¹, as are approximately 60% of low income residents (those earning

⁹⁹ <http://trenton250.org/learn/city-profile/income-and-poverty/>

¹⁰⁰ Rent burden is defined as spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent.

¹⁰¹ Severe Rent burden is defined as spending more than 50% of household income on rent.

30 – 50% AMI). ([Consolidated Plan Appendix](#)¹⁰²). 50% are cost burdened right now.

6. In addition, multiple problems exist with the current affordable housing stock in Trenton, according to city staff.
 1. The city cannot properly maintain its affordable housing due to budgetary constraints.
 2. Affordable housing built in the past is generally of poor quality, so it regularly experiences costly maintenance issues.
 3. "Project"-style housing still exists, exacerbating the problem of concentrated poverty.
 4. The city's policy goals on affordable housing have been unclear.
 5. The many housing entities in Trenton don't necessarily agree on an effective affordable housing policy.
 6. Interest groups that have become active in housing policy need to be properly educated to ensure that any actions taken complement city policies and are in the best interest of the residents.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Encourage New Affordable Market Rate Rental Construction:

1. New market-rate housing intended to improve and diversify the city's housing stock. There is a lack of nuance in this discussion; market-rate housing in Trenton can be affordable for residents of relatively modest income levels. The critical difference is that this construction would not be deed restricted (see background above).
 2. Encouraging market rate construction in Trenton, even if targeted to lower income residents, will help signal strength in the market and reduce pressures on the city to heavily subsidize any new construction.
 3. At the same time, the city needs more options for moderate and high income earners. See [Jumpstart Housing Through New Rental Construction Aimed at Moderate to High Income Residents](#)
2. Strategic Property Code Enforcement of Affordable Units: The city should enhance code enforcement of deed restricted affordable housing units. The city should consider incentives and other programs that encourage affordable housing developers to maintain their units to a higher standard.
3. Incentives and Assistance: Incentives and assistance should be offered for low-income homeowners to make improvements. This assistance should be targeted to areas and neighborhoods where they are most likely to have the biggest impact.

¹⁰² Green Door Advisors. "City Of Trenton, New Jersey Housing Market Analysis 2010-2015" Appendix to the 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan. City of Trenton.

4. Substantive Certification: The City should pursue substantive certification to exit the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to reduce the pressure to concentrate low-income housing in areas targeted for housing diversification. [According to the Department of Community Affairs](#)¹⁰³, substantive certification is "COAH's determination that a municipal fair share plan presents a realistic opportunity for the production of affordable housing to address the town's portion of the affordable housing need." The certification is valid for 10 years from the municipality's date of petition. Additionally, the certification provides protection from a builder's remedy lawsuit, a suit filed by a developer claiming a municipality is not in compliance with COAH's affordable housing regulations.
5. Design guidelines: The city should consider developing design guidelines for any new affordable housing that is built in the city. These guidelines may also be a tool for enhanced inspection.

6. Issue: Ad-Hoc Inspections

a. Background

1. The Trenton Division of Housing Inspections is understaffed and has limited opportunities to do targeted inspections of properties in particularly problematic areas.
2. Inspections do work with Trenton Police. Two detectives are responsible for the City and will call the inspections department when they are having issues with properties. However, further coordination could be beneficial.
3. Most "inspector generated inspections" come when Inspectors are out doing work scheduled by property owners and they come across violations. This limits Trenton's ability to target inspections to areas where they are most useful.

b. Possible solutions

1. Expand staffing: Increasing the number of inspectors, or hiring part-time inspectors, would provide the office with more capability to perform enhanced inspections.
2. Develop a Targeted Approach: Targeted inspections in areas where they are most likely to have the greatest impact has been an approach that has worked in other communities. For more information, see [Strategic Property Code Enforcement](#) for further discussion of this issue.

7. Opportunity: Historic Preservation

a. Background:

1. One of City of Trenton's greatest assets is its historic urban form and the buildings that define that form. This ranges from historic homes to landmark buildings which played an important role in the history of the city, state and country.

¹⁰³ Kimberly Redmond, "Township receives third round COAH certification". Hackensack Chronicle. August 21, 2009 <http://www.northjersey.com/story-archives/township-receives-third-round-certification-1.995295>

2. The City of Trenton has an impressive stock of historic homes that showcase a variety of important architectural styles. Homes range from those built early in the colonial era (1700s), the industrial revolution, as well as contemporary housing.
3. These historic neighborhoods are unique within the Mid-Jersey region. They are often quite walkable, characterized by smaller streets, and generally have high quality construction. As such, they are an asset to the city and - if leveraged properly - could attract moderate to high income residents with the disposable incomes necessary to maintain these homes.
4. The city has already experienced success in promoting historic preservation as a tool to promote city beautification, preserve important historic assets, and attract new residents to the city. The experience of [Mill Hill](#) should be considered a model for improvements in other neighborhoods.
5. One of the major obstacles to owning a home in Trenton is the difference between the cost of maintaining and rehabilitating historic structures and the market value for those structures. This is a problem for all home owners but is especially true for historic homes. As a result, many of the city's historic homes are not appropriately preserved, some of which fall into disrepair, vacancy and abandonment.
6. Efforts to promote historic preservation have, at times, placed a burden on low and moderate income residents living in historic homes. As a result, some historic homeowners choose to make illegal improvements to their homes that detract from the historic quality of the neighborhood.
7. The State of New Jersey does not have a historic preservation tax credit which would provide an important tool for improving homes.
8. Improvements to and maintenance of historic features has not included the preservation of materials or characteristics as originally constructed. For example, slate sidewalks and bluestone curbs have been replaced with concrete. Brick and/or concrete roadway gutters have been resurfaced with asphalt. Also, the removed historic materials have not been saved or stockpiled. The City has recently moved back toward preserving these materials and/or replacing them with contemporary materials while maintaining the character of traditional items.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Target Neighborhoods: Historic preservation efforts should target those areas that are most likely to be successful. The investments to restore a home are often costly, and the market price of the home must justify the cost. Targeting neighborhoods will ensure that investments made in one home will have positive cumulative effects on adjacent properties, making it easier for subsequent improvements to be financially justified.
2. Advocate for a State Historic Tax Credit: The city should actively advocate for a historic property act that provides homeowners and corporations with an economic incentive to help revitalize older neighborhoods and historic downtowns.

3. Build Partnerships: Trenton’s historic assets are not just important to Trenton residents. They are crucial pieces of New Jersey and Mercer County heritage, and those entities have an interest in and responsibility to promote their preservation. The city should build partnerships with the state and county to provide funding and technical assistance for historic preservation.
4. Identify and Stabilize Vacant and Abandoned Assets: A historic preservation strategy in Trenton must take a long-term approach. As such, there will likely be many historic properties that will remain vacant for a number of years. In the meantime, the city should develop a strategy for identifying and stabilizing assets until the point when the market can support their rehabilitation. See also [Stabilize vacant structures](#)

8. Opportunity: Immigrant Communities

a. Background:

1. Between 2000 and 2010, Trenton saw a major influx of immigrants to the city. The number of foreign born residents living in Trenton increased by 152% from 2000 to 2009-2011. This influx of approximately 10,000 immigrants - from a variety of mostly Latin-American countries - helps to ensure that Trenton’s population remained constant, despite a loss of almost an equal number of non-Hispanic whites.
2. These immigrants will create new challenges for the city in terms of [education](#)¹⁰⁴, [law enforcement](#)¹⁰⁵, and on the provision of [basic services](#)¹⁰⁶. The complicated nature of these issues are most evident in housing.
3. It is unclear (and difficult to predict) whether this flow of immigrants will abate in the near future, an issue that is likely to be affected by national immigration policy. As such, it is unclear whether the city can expect this population to continue to grow.
4. Immigrants who are in the US illegally are a difficult population to serve and are unable to access legitimate housing and employment opportunities because of their legal status. Without national legal reforms, this population will likely continue to struggle in poverty or near-poverty.
5. Immigrants are often bolstering the housing market in some areas by providing much needed demand, while at the same time contributing to problems of overcrowding and illegal occupation/subdivision. This population is particularly vulnerable to unsavory housing practices because of their lack of knowledge about housing rights and their inability or unwillingness to access the resources available to correct inappropriate landlord actions.

¹⁰⁴ Joan Montgomery Halford. “Focusing Policy on Student Achievement”. Bilingual Education March, 1996 Number 4 <http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/mar96/num04/toc.aspx>

¹⁰⁵ Amalia Greenberg Delgado and Julia Harumi Mass. “Costs and Consequences: The High Price of Policing Immigrant Communities” ACLU of Northern California. February 2011.

https://www.aclunc.org/sites/default/files/costs_and_consequences_0.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Kirk Semple, “In Trenton, Issuing IDs for Illegal Immigrants” New York Times. May 16, 2010

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/17/nyregion/17idcard.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1

6. Past immigrant communities (including Italian and Polish) assimilated into society and ultimately built strong neighborhoods in Trenton that made it an attractive place to live with unique place character.
- b. Possible Responses:
1. See Immigrants as a Strength: The influx of immigrants can evolve over time into a major strength for a community. Like their Italian, Polish, and Irish predecessors, immigrant communities can become destinations for food, and build neighborhoods that are attractive places to live. The City of Dayton, Ohio has been one of the early adopters of this strategy. For more information read more [here](#)¹⁰⁷ and [here](#)¹⁰⁸.
 2. Address Educational Issues: See [Issue: Limited School Funds Must Support Diverse Set of Needs](#) for more discussion of this topic.
 3. Create Alternative Code Requirements: The city may benefit from developing alternative code requirements that allow for micro-units, community housing, and rooming houses that better fit the needs of this population. Such efforts will have to be balanced against the need to protect neighborhood character and to ensure that - if implemented - the standards lead to improved housing conditions.
 4. Be a destination for Syrian and Iraqi war refugees: There are many post-industrial low-income communities in New Jersey and the country that have the invigorating mix of immigrants from Latin America, and from Africa and the non-Latino Caribbean as well. However, Trenton may be able to position itself as unique by attracting Syrian and Iraqi refugees. Such an effort would have a number of positive outcomes
 1. There will be US federal funding to aid the refugee resettlement, which can help reinvigorate Trenton's housing market.
 2. The Syrians fleeing their country's civil war are not only religiously diverse, they are also disproportionately educated, so Trenton could be attracting a new professional class.
 3. It should, at the same time, win back to a concentrated restaurant district the kinds of people from places like Princeton and Bucks County who used to flock to Chambersburg, for whom Middle East cuisine would be a new and hip discovery.
 4. Finally, it would create an infusion of much needed residents which would help strengthen the housing market and may lead to increased market pressure to rehabilitate or redevelop vacant and abandoned properties.
 5. Expanding retail in new immigrant communities

¹⁰⁷ Welcome Dayton: Immigrant Friendly City Plan. Prepared for the Human Relations Council: City of Dayton. September 2011.

<http://www.welcomedayton.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Welcome-Dayton-immigrant-friendly-report-final.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.welcomedayton.org/>

6. [Capitalize on Immigrant Communities](#)

7. [Promote cultural events](#)

9. Opportunity: Trenton’s Unique Urban Character and Image as a “Cool” Place to Live

a. Background:

1. Trenton has a variety of neighborhoods that are attractive to many different types of residents. Many people interviewed saw some neighborhoods within Trenton's as possessing the opportunity to be marketed as “cool”. Stakeholder cited the legacies of its industrial past, affordable housing options, uniqueness compared to the more ubiquitous suburbs, and lack of pretentiousness as possible attractions in certain neighborhoods for millennials and artists seeking a “cool” urban lifestyle.
2. Trenton is the urban center of Mercer County, and as such, has unique qualities not found elsewhere in the region, including density, walkability, transit-access, interesting architecture, and attractions.
3. Trenton is relatively affordable and can provide a high quality of life for a segment of the region’s population.
4. Trenton is conveniently located equidistant from New York City and Philadelphia, and can offer an urban alternative for people who want the city lifestyle but would prefer not to live in those larger cities.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Marketing Trenton’s Urban Lifestyle : As part of an overall marketing campaign for Trenton, the city’s unique urban character and image as a “cool” place to live should be promoted. This strategy may not be applicable to all places in Trenton and such an effort should reflect that. The demographic that is most likely to be attracted by such a campaign will be young people, artists, and those seeking an affordable place to live so they can develop a business. Focusing on workers employed in growing arts, food, and niche manufacturing industries in New York and Philadelphia should be considered. This strategy should emphasize:
 1. Trenton is the urban center of Mercer County, and as such, has unique qualities not found elsewhere in the region, including density, walkability, transit-access, interesting architecture, and attractions.
 2. Trenton is relatively affordable compared to Greater Mercer County, as well as Philadelphia and New York metro areas. As such, there is an opportunity to live a high quality of life at a reasonable price for a segment of the region’s population. This affordability factor is strengthened by the strong - yet often underutilized - transportation hub, which makes it an easily accessed place to live along the Northeast corridor.
 3. See also [Marketing Trenton’s Neighborhoods](#), [Marketing Trenton as Mercer County’s Livable Downtown](#), and [Marketing Retail Districts](#)

2. Neighborhood Identification: All of Trenton does not meet this “urban-cool” standard. The city should be explicit about which neighborhoods, particularly downtown, are most attractive to these types of residents (for example, those with good transit connections to New York) and reinforce the qualities that will make them places of choice for new residents. While some city neighborhoods do meet this standard, others have attributes better suited for different lifestyle choices, such as larger detached homes, historic character, access to open space, proximity to the suburbs, etc.
3. Preserve the Unique Character of Trenton that makes it a Desirable Place to Live: In its attempt to attract new residents to Trenton seeking an urban lifestyle, the City should ensure that the qualities that make Trenton unique remain intact, such as its history, neighborhoods, and industrial past. See also [Historic Preservation, Opportunity: Waterfront Revitalization and Access: Route 29 as a Boulevard and A Regional Destination, Capitalize on Interest in City-based Industrial Workforce](#).
4. Reinforce Mixed-Use Neighborhoods and Streetscapes: Increase the odds that people will find employment and have easy access to such opportunities by creating mixed-use neighborhoods and streetscapes. Where appropriate, retail and commercial activity should be located at street level and residential space in the floors above.

10. Opportunity: Changing Demands of Mid-Jersey Region Employers

a. Background:

1. The Mid-Jersey Region is home to a number of large office developments, corporate headquarters, hospitals, and universities. These businesses employ many of the moderate and high income residents Trenton aims to attract. However, many of them are located in suburban and exurban locations. Historically, this has been an asset for these companies. However, these businesses are having an increasingly hard time attracting younger employees who prefer to live in urban areas. As such, Trenton is well positioned to be seen as an asset to these larger companies.
2. Unlike many historic urban centers, Trenton does not have a large anchor institution - such as a university, hospital or corporate entity - that has a vested interest in making long-term capital investments in the city.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Partnerships: The City of Trenton should consider working with regional employers to understand their changing needs. This could ultimately lead to investments in the city that make it both more attractive to prospective middle and high income residents as well as to current Trenton residents.
2. Live Where You Work Program: Many anchor institutions throughout the country have partnered with their communities to encourage employees to live close to where they work. Often, this includes special home mortgage incentive programs and/or direct subsidies. A modified version of this program that encourages regional employees to reside in Trenton should be considered.

3. Neighborhood Identification: Just as all of Trenton does not meet the “gritty-cool” standard, not all of Trenton will be attractive to regional employees. The city should be explicit about which neighborhoods are most attractive to these types of residents (for example, those neighborhoods with easy road access to Route 1) and reinforce the qualities that will make them places of choice for new residents.
4. Marketing Trenton as Mercer County’s Livable Downtown: As part of an overall marketing campaign for Trenton, the city’s urban image should be promoted. This campaign should be targeted to professionals and should be seen as distinct from its strategy to attract “gritty-cool” residents. See also:
 1. [Marketing Trenton’s Neighborhoods](#)
 2. [Opportunity: Trenton’s Unique Urban Character and Image as a “Cool” Place to Live](#)
 3. [Marketing Retail Districts](#)

11. Opportunity: Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC)

a. Background:

1. The [Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program](#) (NRTC) provides business entities a 100% tax credit for funds provided to nonprofit entities carrying out comprehensive revitalization plans. Nonprofit entities must use at least 60% of the tax credit funds for housing and economic development; the remaining funds may be used for supportive services and other activities that promote neighborhood revitalization. Qualified projects include, but are not limited to, production of new housing through rehabilitation or new construction; preservation or upgrading of existing housing; and rendering existing housing more affordable.
2. In 2014, \$985,000 was made available to Isles and Trenton Historic Development Collaborative (THDC) for the following five projects in the West Ward.
 1. Clean and Green
 2. Securing of Vacant Buildings
 3. Targeted Demolition
 4. Recreation Plan Implementation
 5. Mercer Street Friends Purposeful Education Project
3. The city has no direct influence on how the NRTC money is spent. As such, any effort would require working in close partnership with the organizations responsible for administering the funds. Nonetheless, discussion with these groups indicates that they are either amenable or eager to partner with the city.

b. Possible Response:

1. Use the Master Plan: The Master Plan could provide a framework that can ensure that the continued strategic investments of these funds complement other efforts undertaken by the city.
2. See Also [Opportunity: Designating all of Trenton as an Area in Need of Revitalization](#)

12. Opportunity: Green Community Initiatives

a. Background:

1. The Initiatives will be to help promote and provide healthy living environments while conserving costs of water and energy, with a focus on low-income households. Also, introduce low impact stormwater management techniques
2. According to stakeholders, currently the City has a sustainability issue with conserving costs in respect to energy and water, providing clean healthy living environments indoors and outdoors, access to local fresh food, and remaining resilient to natural extreme weather events.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Build a Green Communities Initiatives Program: Ascertain goals from the adoption of the comprehensive Trenton250 Master Plan in respect to sustainability and build a Green Communities Initiatives program with action items on how to implement and develop policies. Create a handbook for residents to partake in the Initiatives.

Capitalize on Location and Urban Form to Support a Multi-Modal Transportation Network

1. Issue: Insufficient Access to Highways Due to Limited Interchanges

a. Background:

1. Previous studies have identified that freight access to Route 1 should be improved. For more information see [NJDOT 2008 Supplement](#)¹⁰⁹, and the [Trenton Transportation Master Plan](#)¹¹⁰ of 2004.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Remove Truck Ban: Explore the possibility of lifting the truck ban on Route 29. Possible alternatives include a combustible only ban.
2. Add Interchanges: Discuss the need for additional interchanges in the industrial area to the north of downtown.
3. [Route 29 As a Boulevard](#)

2. Issue: Trenton Transit Center feels disconnected from downtown

a. Background:

1. The Trenton Transit Center is cut off from downtown by Route 1, the Assunpink Creek, and the railroad tracks.
2. Previous study of ways to improve connections (Trenton Train Station Linkage Plan – 2008) has not been implemented but remains a viable approach.

b. Possible Response:

1. Enhanced Connections

1. Enhance transit between the Station and the Capital Complex.
2. Improved wayfinding: Though the distance along State Street is not far, it appears far – visually. Better wayfinding could help make these areas feel more connected.
3. Below State Street a more clear connection from Market Street should be established.
4. Improve pedestrian connections by following recommendations from the existing Linkage Plan.
 - i. Improve Market Street Connection to the Transit Center – improve the condition of the Market Street underpass, and the intersection with Greenwood Ave. Reconfigure the ramps to

¹⁰⁹ DMJM Harris, AECOM, “New Jersey’s Long-Range Transportation Plan - Urban Supplement Report: City of Trenton” Prepared for New Jersey Department of Transportation and NJ Transit. September 2008

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/njchoices/pdf/trenton.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Nelson Nygaard, “Transportation Master Plan” Prepared for the City of Trenton. January 2004

<http://www.trenton250.org/learn/previous-plans/city-of-trenton/transportation-master-plan-2004-city-of-trenton/>

Route 1 to calm traffic. Sidewalks should be added along the length of Market Street.

- ii. Additional recommendations included a path along Wallenberg Boulevard, and a path along Barlow Street could connect to a proposed trail running along the eastern edge of Route 1. The plan suggested a non-motorized bridge over Route 1 between Market and State Streets (shown at Front St).
- iii. Additional or improved sidewalks were recommended for Chestnut and Walnut Avenues. A widened sidewalk was recommended for Greenwood Avenue as it approaches Walnut Ave.
- iv. The plan suggested traffic calming at the following intersections: State Street and Wallenberg Boulevard (Roundabout), Clinton Street and Wallenberg Boulevard, and Barlow Street and Market Street/Route 1 Ramps.

2. See also:

1. [Opportunity: Transit Oriented Development](#)

3. Issue: No bus station

a. Background

1. Trenton has no bus station for either long-distance travelers or for regional NJ Transit buses.
2. BoltBus, MegaBus, and Greyhound do not provide service to Trenton, despite the fact that it is a hub for regional and commuter rail service (Amtrak, NJ Transit Rail Service, SEPTA Regional Rail, and the River Line). Some of this may be due to the fact that Trenton is not located off the Interstate 95 corridor, so stopping in Trenton on longer journeys would add significant time to Philadelphia-New York trips. Nonetheless, the lack of a facility to support such activity may also be a contributing factor.
3. There is no station for NJ Transit buses at Train station or downtown.

4. Issue: Confusing Street Pattern

a. Background:

1. The historical street pattern in Trenton involves many overlapping grids that can make orientation difficult.
2. This grid was significantly damaged by large scale downtown redevelopment efforts in the 1950s and 1960s. This substantially changed how downtown fit within the larger city-wide street network.

3. Local streets are hampered by one-way, overlapping street grids, and non-linear orientation ([NJDOT 2008 Supplement](#)¹¹¹).
 4. It is clear that there are geographic features that form barriers to separate neighborhoods.
 5. Street grids are important to wayfinding: “In the process of wayfinding, the strategic link is the environmental image, the generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world that is held by an individual. A good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security. He can establish a harmonious relationship between himself and the outside world. This is the obverse of the fear that comes with disorientation.”(Image of the City – Lynch)
- b. Possible Responses:
1. Wayfinding: Consider wayfinding programs to clarify the urban form.
 1. For example, Broad Street could have a signage or banner system that makes it easy to recognize and follow, even as it changes orientation.
 2. Consistent Street Names: Develop a program to avoid changing a street's name and to identify locations in which direction of travel could be improved. Avoid changing a street's name or direction of travel.
 1. As an example, Chambers Street has a strong identity in the Chambersburg neighborhood. Yet traveling toward downtown, it becomes Lincoln Ave for a few blocks, before changing to Perry Street, then Bank Street, then Passaic Street.
 2. Another example – South Warren Street is a major street through the downtown and waterfront district. It takes a sharp turn as it approaches Route 1 and becomes New Warren Street. Adding to the confusion is a small block of South Warren Street on the other (south) side of Route 1. This block does not relate well to the rest of Warren Street; it does not logically align.

5. Issue: Poor Condition of Streets

- a. Background:
1. Many residents have complained that streets are in poor condition and are not regularly repaved. In addition, there are problems with utility poles that have fallen over and have not been repaired, street lights that have remained out for long periods of time, issues with trash clean up, and flooding problems.
- b. Possible Responses:
1. Advertise Road Work Plan: The City should regularly publish its plan for which streets will be improved in the upcoming fiscal year. This will help residents understand that work is underway.

¹¹¹ DMJM Harris, AECOM, “New Jersey’s Long-Range Transportation Plan - Urban Supplement Report: City of Trenton” Prepared for New Jersey Department of Transportation and NJ Transit. September 2008
<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/njchoices/pdf/trenton.pdf>

2. Manage Program: The City should consider developing a pavement management system to track deterioration and schedule low-cost maintenance treatments. Allow residents to report potholes and pavement issues that are logged into a geographical information system.

6. Issue: Poor Condition of Trails

a. Background:

1. Some of the existing trails are in poor condition. Most notably, the East Coast Greenway, which runs along sections of the D&R Canal trail, are not bike compatible (between Route 1 and Calhoun Street). The Canal trail intersects frequently with city streets, its condition and surface-type varies, and it occupies narrow spaces. The Belvidere Greenway presents a more trail-like experience through this stretch, though it could also be improved.
2. There are substantial barriers to implementing proposed trails. Completing a trail along the Delaware Waterfront will be difficult as long as Route 29 remains an expressway. A proposed trail along the Assunpink Creek will have difficult sections to traverse.
3. For further discussion of how this affects the health of Trenton residents, please see [Issue: Limited access to physical activity](#)

b. Possible Responses:

1. Expand and Enhance the City's Trail Network: Introduce expansion and improvements of the existing multi-use, off road trail network, as well as discussing places where gateways can be added to link the trail network to the on-road bicycle network.
2. Connect the D&R Canal: The City should place curb cuts, directional signs, and highlight the belgian-block crossing lanes in an effort to better connect the disparate parts of the D&R Canal.

7. Issue: Poor Condition of Alleyways

a. Background:

1. Alleys are not provided throughout the City of Trenton but are present, especially in the East Trenton areas near Trenton Central High School (see [this map](#)). Many of these alleys need paving and improve drainage. Some alleys have overgrown and are difficult for residents to access. Alleys also are flooded after rainfall.

b. Possible Responses:

1. Include Alleyways in City Street Improvements: The City should consider creating a plan for addressing alleyways in the same manner that it deals with improvements to streets. In doing so, the City should take into consideration the multiple uses that alleways serve, including serving as pedestrian movement areas.

2. Regular Maintenance and Cleaning: The City has recently developed an alley cleaning and maintenance schedule which provides regularly attention to alleys that tend to be prone to dumping, as well as others that simply require regular cleaning and sweeping. The trial schedule has netted noticeable improvements, and will likely be introduced for approval as an Ordinance, similar to the street cleaning schedule.

8. Opportunity: Transit Oriented Development

- a. See [Transit Oriented Development](#)

9. Opportunity: Waterfront Revitalization and Access: Route 29 as a Boulevard and A Regional Destination

10. Opportunity: Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

- a. Background

1. The Central Jersey Transportation Forum completed a [Route 1 BRT Alternatives Analysis in 2006](#)¹¹² and [here](#)¹¹³. This project possesses immense potential to connect Trenton to the larger Mercer County and Mid-Jersey Region. However, Trenton is not the terminus of the BRT service. Instead Trenton has the opportunity to provide feeder bus service to the BRT.

- b. Possible Responses

1. Advocacy: The City of Trenton should actively advocate for the extension of the BRT into Trenton. The city may wish to identify possible routes for the BRT as it enters into the city and connect with the three regional rails and Amtrak.
2. BRT Light: The City should coordinate with NJ Transit to identify and develop express bus service ('BRT light') from high-ridership remote locations to and from Trenton.

11. Opportunity: Improved/Additional Transit Services

- a. Background:

1. Mayor Jackson's Transition Report, and the NJDOT-LRTP Trenton Supplement have suggested an extension of the River Line to the State House and the Airport.
2. Stakeholders have indicated that there may be missing service to suburban job centers. Recently the Mercer TMA started the Z-line between the Hamilton Marketplace and the Amazon facility at the Matrix business park.
3. Stakeholders and Residents have identified that one issue in using NJ Transit bus service is that the routes are not intuitively understandable.

- b. Possible Responses

¹¹² Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), "Central Jersey Transportation Forum Executive Summary". July 2002. <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/02027.pdf>

¹¹³ STV Incorporated, "Central Jersey Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Study". February 2016. http://www.dvrpc.org/LongRangePlan/CentralJerseyForum/pdf/2006-03_brtextec.pdf

1. Extend the RiverLine: Between the Trenton Transit Center and the State Capital Complex, with possible continuation further west to the West Trenton Station or the Airport.
2. Expand Service: The city may wish to look into options for adding bus connections to suburban destinations that would increase access to regional jobs and amenities. For more discussion of this topic see also [Expanding retail in strategic locations](#)
3. Understanding of Regional Transit Services: Create a Capital City Regional Transit Map (especially of bus services) that can be easily interpreted and connects with understood, desired destinations.
4. Optimize Signalization: Optimize signal progression on transit corridors and consider implementing transit signal prioritization.
5. Relocate Bus Stops: the City should consider relocate bus stops to the far side of signalized intersections.
6. Arts and Transit: The City should consider a program that uses arts to inform residents about the routes that buses travel within Trenton and where they go once they leave the City.

12. Opportunity: Increase Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Throughout Trenton

a. Background:

1. Trenton is uniquely located at the crossroads of multiple cycling trails in New Jersey and Pennsylvania: northwest to Lambertville and New Hope, southwest to Bristol, south to Bordentown, northeast to Princeton and New Brunswick. This is a major asset for drawing cyclists to this area from the large metropolitan areas in the Northeast Corridor.
2. There is an opportunity to expand the bike and pedestrian trail network by adding the Assunpink Greenway, the Trenton to Princeton Rail Trail, the Delaware and Bound Brook Rail Trail, and completing sections of the Delaware Waterfront Trail. Improvements to existing trails could enhance the user experience.
3. Opportunities exist to complete the bike network by striping bike lanes or shared lanes. Many potential routes have already been identified. On-road solutions can connect the trail system together.
4. Wide intersections and roadways are candidates for traffic calming. Consider road diets or lane reductions at intersections to calm traffic and improve the pedestrian environment. Consider bump-outs to shorten crossings and enhance pedestrian visibility.

b. Previous Plans:

1. Trenton, working with DVRPC, recently completed a Downtown Trenton Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

2. NJ Partnership for Healthy Kids recently completed engineering plans for the Wellness loop, which will add bike lanes on Broad and Warren, between the Battle Monument, and the Assunpink Creek.
 3. D&R Greenway Land Trust is interested in adding on-road treatments to connect the southern portion of the Canal Trail, to the portion of the canal further north, by using the routes identified for the wellness loop.
 4. Mayor Eric Jackson wants to “make Trenton a model for alternative transportation, especially bicycles.”
- c. Possible Response:
1. Create a City-Wide Multi-Modal Network: The city should consider developing a comprehensive multi-modal network that connects the city along streets, greenways, and trails. The Network should indicate types of facilities needed for each traveling mode, wayfinding signage, safety recommendations, and infrastructure improvements. This should include extending downtown bicycle corridors into neighborhoods.
 2. Utilize Vacant Lots for Parking: The City should consider converting vacant lots into permit-controlled off-street parking spaces. The space currently dedicated on-street parking could be used for bicycle lanes.
 3. Make Trenton a Walking City: Trenton’s size and population density make it an incredibly walkable City. At standard walking speed, one could easily walk from the East to the Western edges of Trenton in under two hours. The City should consider setting as a goal that Trenton will be known as one of the most “walkable” cities in New Jersey.
 4. See also
 1. [Opportunity: Daylighting of the Assunpink Creek](#)
 2. [Opportunity: Belvidere Greenway](#)
 3. [Opportunity: The Great Connector Greenway](#)
 4. [Connect Assets](#) in *Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries*

13. Opportunity: Daylighting of the Assunpink Creek

- a. Background:
1. Assunpink Creek is a defining element of Mill Hill Park. When the block between South Broad and South Warren Streets was redeveloped for the Department of Human Services, the Assunpink was piped into a culvert below grade. This disrupted the continuity of the greenway around which Trenton was founded.
 2. According to [NJ Future](#), “the City of Trenton has been working with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to return this segment of the creek to the surface, a process known as “[daylighting](#).” While this project has been nearly a decade in the making, it is anticipated that construction may begin within the next year.” The contract for construction is anticipated to be awarded during

the fall of 2015 and construction commencing shortly thereafter, weather permitting.

14. Opportunity: Belvidere Greenway

a. Background:

1. The Belvidere Greenway bisects a number of neighborhoods and provides a major opportunity to link parts of Trenton. However, it is ill-cared for, difficult to access, and could be more inviting to residents.

b. Possible Response:

1. Improve Maintenance and Safety: The City should investigate strategies to improve maintenance of this area as well as make recreational enhancements to it. To allow people to take full advantage of these resources, access must be improved and safety must be ensured. Additional lighting is needed, as is redesign of the edges of the park. In many places both the greenway are edged by an inconsistent series of homes and fences in various states of repair or disrepair that detract from the beauty of the resources as well as perceived safety on them. Façade improvements to houses and fences that line the canal and greenway should be implemented.

15. Opportunity: The Great Connector Greenway

a. Background:

1. Starting at the D&R Canal, an abandoned railroad right-of-way located between Perry and Market Streets, along Route 1 next to the Federal Courthouse and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, provides an excellent opportunity to develop a linear green space and bike trail to connect the D&R Canal Greenway to the Trenton Transit Center and the Assunpink Greenway.
2. See also [Opportunity: Increase Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility throughout Trenton](#)

16. Opportunity: Outstanding transportation access and well situated within the northeast corridor.

a. Background:

1. Residents, Stakeholders, and City Officials are regularly cite Trenton's transportation infrastructure as a major asset. The City is well connected to other cities along the Northeast Corridor both by rail and highway.
2. Internally, Trenton is well served by roadways, passenger and freight rail, and the river port.
3. Highway capacity is sufficient for current and future transportation needs.
4. Trenton is only 90 minutes from New York and 45 from Philadelphia, by either rail or car.

5. See also [Connect to South Jersey Port](#).
- b. Possible Responses:
1. [Capitalize on Industrial Development](#): Modern industrial development requires large sites and transportation access. Potential industrial sites exist throughout Trenton, and most have excellent access to regional highway network. For further discussion, see [Issue: Lack of Industrial Development](#).
 2. [Improve Access](#): Industrial areas in North Trenton may be better connected to Route 1 and the Master Plan should investigate which improvements could be made. See [Insufficient Access to Highways due to limited interchanges](#)

Website Development

The follow is a summary of stakeholder interviews and investigations as they relate to the development of an updated Trenton250.org. The City envisions this website as being the home of the Master Plan.

Quotes

The following quotes represent some of the more compelling statements that came out of the stakeholder interviews and will be used as a point of reference as we move through the research and discovery process.

“I am a big fan of beauty and there is a lot of latent beauty in Trenton - in people, in places and in the environment.”

“The plan needs to take into account work that’s already going on and also be visionary, building on the current work. Once it’s created, it needs to be public and become a living document.”

“It will be successful if the plan is continually used as a point of reference.”

“How can this interact with city data?”

“Represents coming out of a dark period from the past administration.”

“People don’t tend to travel from Ward to Ward. Gang boundaries are really real for younger folks. There is also a sense of because people by and large are struggling in multiple ways. There is jealousy and animosity - ‘I want mine, cause they got theirs.’ People don’t feel like the good stuff a couple blocks away is their good stuff.”

“ Something uplifting that folks can interact with.”

“The future of the city is less subject to the individual leaders. It will provide the rationale on why things are done. The plan will be able to provide a ‘this is **where** we are going’ but also ‘this is **why**’.”

“A way to document the process, not just the outcomes. Document the rationale and the strategy. In the future, when decisions are made, you know why the previous ‘course’ existed.”

“For this community of immigrants, cell phone apps and infographics are the way to go. Some consideration is needed for older community as well.”

“What’s going on in the city (event-wise and development-wise). For the next 5 years, the most important thing is to show how vibrant and safe the city is. Promote it, the history, the culture. Bring in tourism. Rebrand a vibrant city, welcoming, safe. Change public perception. They think it’s not safe

and not clean and nothing's happening. Showcase the underground movement going on in the arts and music communities. There's a lot of things going on."

"The vibrancy. Ease. Positivity."

"Has to have some built in flexibility. Show that it gets updated regularly enough. It has to stand the test of time and have flexibility."

"Other cities have created successful links between data so that when a house collapses, all of the relevant data is pushed to the right people."

"Over time, as things start to happen that reflect suggestions made in the plan, incorporate before and after pictures. Let's use the website as a way to highlight the good impact that the plan is having."

"To force people to go to multiple websites to find out about abandoned building information and development information and the master plan is silly. There should be a one-stop shop."

"The city's planning documents, basically just get written, a box gets checked off and a binder gets put on a shelf that no one ever refers to. That impact on the community is enormous, but there is a small level of community input. The city has traditionally not been a good steward of the documents and has not followed them. "

"One of the biggest challenges will be building credibility with the public. What does community input mean? What does planning mean? We need to redefine that for people."

I. High Level Findings

The following stakeholder information and viewpoints were collected during stakeholder interviews. . *This outline does not encapsulate everything we will incorporate into the new website as these interviews are a starting point in our research process. What we've learned will inform our further research.*

A. Audiences

1. Residents of Trenton
2. Individuals, businesses, and corporations who are looking to move to Trenton
3. Informed populace of Trenton
4. Youth
5. Latinos and new immigrants. Liberian, Nigerian, Haitian, Costa Rican, Guatemalan, Colombian.
6. NJ Residents
7. Developers
8. The state

9. Nonprofit and civic partners
10. Former Residents

B. Goals of the Online Master Plan

1. Influence decision making process of policy-makers and developers
2. Connect people and organizations to resources and to each other
3. Cross-link with Restoring Trenton
4. “Key people can see the process and make a decision based on that process. Understanding how you go about planning and guiding development over the next 27 years.”
5. Motivate the people that are part of these communities by showing that their contributions are valued.

C. Most Important Information

1. Vision Statement
2. Community conversations
3. Timeline and benchmarks for the plan as well as successes
4. Show activity - a safe and vibrant city

D. Actions and Interactions

1. The ability to have conversations or ask questions and receive answers

E. What Puts the Project at Risk

1. If people don't access or utilize the website
2. Inertia - apprehension because it's going to be extra work.
3. Buy in from residents - that it's good for them. “Many residents feel like they have been planned to death and studied to death.”

F. How can we mitigate that risk?

1. Generate buzz via social media
2. Reach out to educators and youth
3. Advertising on the streets
4. Partnering with nonprofits and community institutions
5. Hackathons

G. Issues

1. Communicating to both residents and more informed individuals
2. Fostering a sense of ownership around the plan for a diverse audience
3. “There is jealousy and animosity - ‘I want mine, cause they got theirs.’ People don't feel like the good stuff a couple blocks away is their good stuff.”

H. Opportunities

1. Location-based delivery of information

2. Social media
3. Connecting with and collaborating with neighborhood organizations and nonprofits
4. Integration with Restoring Trenton
5. Community sourced I/O

Appendix A: List of Stakeholders Interviewed

The City of Trenton would like to thank the following stakeholders for taking the time to be interviewed for this project. Their thoughtful comments and insights were invaluable in the creation of this report.

- City of Trenton - Department Heads
- City of Trenton City Council Members
- Residents of Trenton who attended The Mayor's Community Forums in 2014
- Residents of Trenton who attended the 4 Wards - One Conversation Event in April 2015
- Trenton Green Team
- Allen, Lorraine – American Small Business Development Center - College of NJ
- Boulan, Cassidy – Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
- Capasso, James - Brownfields Coordinator, Division of Economic Development, City of Trenton
- Colangelo-Bryan, Jeremy – NJ Transit
- Carabelli, Anthony – Mercer County Office of Economic Development and Sustainability
- Davis, Marissa – NJ Partnership for Healthy Kids
- Denson, Walter – Director, Division of Real Estate, City of Trenton
- Diane Sterner – New Jersey Community Capital
- Dixon, Chad – Greater Mercer TMA
- Duran, Francisco – Superintendent, Trenton Public Schools
- Durlacher, Alexis – Trenton Police Department
- Foushee, Jacqueline – Director, Department of Public Works, City of Trenton
- Hatch, John – Architect, Clark Caton Hintz
- Henderson, David – HHG Development Associates
- Hunter, Richard W. – Hunter Research, Inc.
- Johnson, Marty – Isles
- Kasabach, Peter – NJ Future
- Kieffer, Jr., Mark – Trenton Police Department
- King-Viehland, Monique – Director, Housing and Economic Development, City of Trenton
- Kingsland, Debbie – NJ Department of Transportation
- Lawson, Matthew – Mercer County Planning Division
- Leckington, Marc – Chief of Housing Production, City of Trenton
- Marshcerin, Marie – New Jersey Community Capital

- Mills, Beverly – Mercer County Workforce Investment Board
- Muoio, Elizabeth – Office of Economic Development and Sustainability
- Pilere, Margie – New Jersey Economic Development Council
- Pruitt, George – President, Thomas Edison State College
- Rogers, Diana – Director, Division of Economic Development, City of Trenton
- Rodgers, Carol – Trenton Landmarks Commission for Historic Preservation
- Santora, Anthony – Traffic and Transportation, Department of Public Works, City of Trenton
- Stephen, Hoggarth – Engineering, Department of Public Works, City of Trenton
- Stout, Mark - Stout Consulting
- Taylor, Julia – Isles
- Watson, Jr., John – D&R Greenway Land Trust
- Weaver, Monica – Dean and Provost, Mercer County Community College, James Kerney Campus
- Wospil, Thomas – NJ Department of Transportation

Appendix B: List of Previous Plans

The following is a complete list of all documents reviewed for this report.

Most plans can be found for [download here](#).

- 1999 Land Use Plan
- 2002 CyberDistrict Report
- 2008 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)
- 2015 Market Study
- Academy Park - Canal Banks South
- Access and Circulation Study (2004)
- Arena Parking Lot Plans by MCIA
- Arts Build Downtown Trenton
- Assunpink Creek in Mill Hill
- Brownfields Program Action Plan (2014)
- Canal Banks Homeownership Zone Plan
- Capital City Renaissance Plan (1989)
- Capitol Hill District Plan (1999)
- Cass Street Light Rail District Plan (2003)
- Climate Action Plan
- Comprehensive Planning Process for Trenton
- Cultural Campus Landscape Standards
- Delaware River Heritage Trail Commission - Delaware Concept Plan (2002)
- Delaware River Island Study
- Discover Canal Banks Neighborhood Plan
- DMJM Harris Parking Study (2008)
- Downtown Bike+Ped Plan - Outreach Meeting 3 Presentation
- Downtown Capitol District Master Plan
- Downtown District Parking Ordinance and Sidewalk Design Standards
- Duck Island Mini Master Plan
- DVRPC CEDS
- Economic and Environmental Impact of State Government
- Five Year Consolidation Plan
- Historic Preservation Plan

- Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites
- Master Plan for Cadwalader Park
- Master Plan for Cadwalader Park - Tree Survey and Hydraulic Assessment
- Mercer County Master Plan
- Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Natural Resource Inventory - NRI (2014)
- NJDOT Route 29 Plan (2005)
- NJ Transit - Transit Friendly Plan for Trenton Train Station Area (2005?)
- North 25 Park - Battle Monument Neighborhood Plan
- PennPlanning - Southeast Trenton_FinalReport
- PennPlanning Existing Conditions Presentation (N and W)
- PennPlanning Existing Conditions Presentation (S and E)
- PennPlanning Final Book (N and W)
- Recreation and Open Space Inventory
- Redevelopment Area Plans
- Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy
- South Broad Street Vision Plan (2013)
- Stakeholder Workshop Survey of Policies (in Parent Folder)
- Sustainable Brownfields Development Project
- Sustainable Design Guidelines
- Train Station Redevelopment Area - Station Area Analysis
- Trenton Community-Based Schools Master Plan
- Trenton Enterprise Initiative
- Trenton Housing Market Conditions Study
- Trenton Open Space Master Plan
- Trenton Open Space Master Plan - A Plan for Action
- Trenton Open Space Master Plan - Capital City District Element
- Trenton Open Space Master Plan - Neighborhood Element
- Trenton Public Schools Long Range Facilities Plan
- Trenton Re-examination of Land Use Plan (2005)
- Trenton Station Linkage Plan
- Trenton Transportation Master Plan
- Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Action Plan

Appendix C: Comments Submitted Via Email

The Mercer County Planning Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on the *Trenton 250 Phase II: Issues and Opportunities Report*. Because the report obviously represents input from so many people, stemming from a masterful public outreach process, there are very few items missing that our staff could think of. Certainly the Issues are well covered. Nevertheless, I have compiled the staff comments and our suggestions follow:

Digital Divide (p.19): Seek investment partners to provide city-wide WiFi access.

[ADDED] “Provide City-Wide WiFi: The City should consider seeking investment partner(s) to provide city-wide WiFi access.” (p. 20)

Leverage Event Venue Patrons (Pg. 24): **Opportunity:** Work with the Mercer County Sports and Entertainment Commission and the area universities/pro teams to support Sun National Bank Center and the Thunder Baseball Stadium. Host NCAA tournaments in basketball, Hockey, and Baseball. Princeton University competes at the Division 1 level in the ECAC conference for Men’s and Women’s Ice Hockey this conference is also home to Harvard University, Cornell University, Yale, Dartmouth and a host of other schools that have recently competed for the national championship. Sun National Bank Center would be a great venue for the ECAC hockey tournament especially with the passion of youth ice hockey in the region. Philadelphia hosted the 2014 NCAA Men’s Frozen Four Hockey tournament. The two games brought in 36,503 fans, the 6th highest championship attendance. Host NCAA basketball tournaments for the MAAC Conference which Rider University competes in. Establish a relationship with professional NHL & NBA teams for pre-season games. The opportunity to see a professional team in such an intimate arena is great opportunity to bring in fans. Establish a relationship with the New Jersey Devils, Philadelphia Flyers, and Philadelphia 76ers to host pre-season games at the Sun National Bank Center. Host NCAA Division 1 Baseball Tournaments at Thunder Stadium, IVY League and MAAC tournaments.

The following opportunity was create: “Opportunity: Work with the Mercer County Sports and Entertainment Commission” (p.35) See section for full discussion

Strategic Partnerships (p.51): Should there be mention here (or elsewhere) of the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation?

[ADDED] Reboot the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation (CCRC): The CCRC currently has all the powers vested to it by the State and a board of directors. However, there is no staff for this organization. If it were properly staffed the CCRC could help build a strategic partnership between the State and the City.

CIP (p.53): Develop capacity to pursue state and federal grants, where appropriate.

[ADDED] “Develop capacity: The City should work with the County to pursue state and federal grants, where appropriate”

Open Space (p.71): Establish a schedule of programming activities for city parks.

[ADDED] Programing: The City should establish a schedule of programming activities for city parks

Issue: Abundance of Surface parking lots in downtown (Pg. 73): Pop up events, create small pocket parks in parking lots, program these spaces.

[ADDED] Pop-up events: Pop-up events and parks are temporary installations that help to demonstrate the potential of a space to be something greater. The City should consider creating small pocket parks in parking lots and programing these space.

Issue: Abundance of Surface Parking Lots Downtown (Pg. 73): Incorporate parking into street design guidelines. Rather than encouraging more off street parking allowing for bike lanes, use on street parking as a buffer or safeguard between bike lanes and flowing traffic.

[ADDED] Incorporate parking into street design guidelines: Rather than encouraging more off street parking allowing for bike lanes, use on street parking as a buffer or safeguard between bike lanes and flowing traffic.

Condition of Streets (p.100): Develop a pavement management system to track deterioration and schedule low-cost maintenance treatments.

[ADDED] Manage Program: The City should consider developing a pavement management system to track deterioration and schedule low-cost maintenance treatments. Allow residents to report potholes and pavement issues that are logged into a geographical information system.

BRT (p.102): Coordinate with NJ Transit to identify and develop express bus service ('BRT light') from high-ridership remote locations.

[ADDED] BRT Light: The City should coordinate with NJ Transit to identify and develop express bus service ('BRT light') from high-ridership remote locations to and from Trenton.

Improved Transit (p.102): (1) Optimize signal progression on transit corridors and consider implementing transit signal prioritization. (2) Relocate bus stops to the far side of signalized intersections.

[ADDED] Optimize Signalization: Optimize signal progression on transit corridors and consider implementing transit signal prioritization.

[ADDED] Relocate Bus Stops: the City should consider relocate bus stops to the far side of signalized intersections.

Bike/Ped Mobility (p.102): (1) Extend downtown bicycle corridors into neighborhoods. (2) Create space for on-street bicycle lanes by using vacant lots for permit-controlled off-street parking.

[ADDED to “create a City-Wide Multi-Modal network] This should include extending downtown bicycle corridors into neighborhoods.

[ADDED] Utilize Vacant Lots for Parking: The City should consider converting vacant lots into permit-controlled off-street parking spaces. The space currently dedicated on-street parking could be used for bicycle lanes.

There are a lot of complex issues, most of which have been identified for years and are common to most cities caught within the “transitional” part of the “life and death” of cities cycle. With that said, the document should identify those items that can be remedied most immediately. Pick small projects with easy fixes, available resources, result in visible, positive changes/outcomes. Accomplish many of these projects over a short period of time, over and over again.

[ADDED] *Opportunity: The Trenton250 Master Plan* was added to the document to address these and other points.

Other comments: Jobs to keep in Trenton: partner with New York and Philadelphia. Create jobs to keep in Trenton that support those markets - “Trenton is in service to these two metropolitan areas”. New Jersey is essentially those two cities—north Jersey is a suburb of New York and south Jersey is a suburb of Philadelphia --Trenton is in the middle of these two, a perfect opportunity.

[NO CHANGE] The close proximity of New York and Philadelphia was identified in *Opportunity: Transit Oriented Development*.

[ADDED under *Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment*] Identify Regional and Mega-Regional Opportunities: The City should investigate which industries and sectors may wish to be close to New York or Philadelphia but would prefer to pay lower rents or to be located in a smaller city. Such an effort may allow Trenton develop an economic base that works in service of those larger metropolitan economic engines.

Congratulations on your draft plan - no doubt the most comprehensive in Trenton history.

Thank you!

One state parking lot site which might be looked at for market rate housing (to provide more purchasing power in the downtown) is next to the Trent House. When the City sold land to the state around 1980 for parking lots (to retire urban renewal debt), I proposed that the city lease, not sell, the property next to the Trent House as a possible future housing site (perhaps for a high rise with views of the Delaware or historic looking townhouses). The initial 15 year lease term has long since expired. If renewed, the City should consider selling the property to a developer when the lease expires. (The state should be given advance notice so that it can build a parking garage for replacement parking as envisioned in the Renaissance Plan.)

[ADDED as possible response under *Issue: Abundance of Surface Parking Lots Downtown*] Redevelop the Parking Lot near the Trent House: When the City sold the land to the state around 1980 for parking lots (to retire urban renewal debt), it was leased to the Trent House. The initial 15 year lease term has long since expired. If renewed, the City should consider selling the property to a developer for housing or other purposes. The state should build a parking garage for replacement parking as envisioned in the Renaissance Plan.

Given the huge increase in the number of abandoned properties, I question whether the City has been taking advantage of the state's accelerated foreclosure law which permits foreclosure on tax sale certificates held by the City after just 6 months. Obtaining title and reselling abandoned houses with a rehabilitation requirement (for homesteading or bundling for a developer) is critical to neighborhood stabilization and revitalization.

[ADDED as possible Response to Issue: Vacancy and Abandonment] Take Advantage of the State's Accelerated Foreclosure Law: Given the huge increase in the number of abandoned properties, the City should consider taking advantage of the state's accelerated foreclosure law which permits foreclosure on tax sale certificates held by the City after just 6 months. Obtaining title and reselling abandoned houses with a rehabilitation requirement may be an effective tool for achieving neighborhood stabilization and revitalization goals.

Thanks for the reminder to participate in long range planning for the City through the announcement in The Times. As a Trentonian it is especially important for me to have some small part in this process.

You are very welcome. And thank you for taking the time to review the document! We very much appreciate that it is an investment of your time to participate: so thank you.

Although all the planning principles are critical I will only focus on the Environment. On October 1 the League of Women Voters organized a forum for Trentonians to discuss the "potential perils of the PennEast Pipeline and Fracking" and other related subjects. I was out of town and could not attend, but was thrilled that the Trenton community would be part of the discussion. We need to be active participants in understanding the threats to our environment yet I am concerned that the majority of Trentonians are unable to be part of the discussion due to poverty, lack of education or language barriers. Are there any new ways we can get information about programs to people? Most do not read the newspaper, and only home owners receive mail. Tenants have a right to know, but are not given any status, unless the homeowner shares the information. How can we encourage more grass roots participation?

[ADDED] *Issue: Lack of Community Engagement on Environmental Issues*

Information about recycling is not comprehensive. Most people do not understand what is recyclable, or do not see the purpose of this program. Many have cynically claimed in conversation with me that the recycling program is "stupid" as all of the trash is brought to the land fill. Others have limited education or language challenges, so do not understand what recycling services are available, how things work, and what needs to be done by 1-the resident and 2-the City. My husband and I have tried to explain to people who dump TV sets on the curb for pickup that these items must be brought by the resident to another location. How can we better educate our residents?

[NO CHANGE] The following expert from *Issue: Trash, Recycling, and Solid Waste Management* address these concerns: “Recycling is not fully leveraged in the City. Residents do not understand the current recycling program and no education campaign exists. There are reports that residents are throwing away things that should be recycled; while trash collectors ignore recycling bins, leaving residents confused. As a result, very little recycling is accomplished in the City.”

Does the City currently have a resolution against transport of chemical and gas via pipeline through the City? It would be an excellent idea to add this to the agenda. We want this city to be vital and as green as possible. This move would provide a legacy of clean water and land for future residents and this type of action would unite Trenton with many other communities locally and throughout NJ. (find out more at Food and Water Watch’s website)

[ADDED to Background under *Issue: No Environmental Commission*] There is no single steward of all environmental health issues in Trenton. As a result, there is not a single location where advocates for progressive and innovative approaches to a clean, green, and healthy environment can go for information.

[ADDED to Possible Responses under *Issue: No Environmental Commission*] Explore Sustainable Strategies: If established, the Environmental Commission should explore opportunities for ensuring future generations of Trentonians will have access to clean water and land. Among other issues, the City may wish to consider its policies on chemical and gas pipelines and whether the City is using best practices to prevent environmental contamination.

Could we also consider other Mercer County communities efforts in our own planning? I recently read about the mulch program opening up to residents outside of Hamilton. It would be great if we could recycle our yard clippings and leaves and then get mulch for our planting beds! Lawrence Township has initiated a compost program. Maybe that could be realized here in Trenton, too.

[ADDED] Create a Composting and Mulch Program: The City should consider creating a mulch and composting program that would allow residents to dispose of yard clippings and food waste. In exchange, residents could be eligible to receive free compost.

It would also be great if we had more street cleaning, especially in the autumn. Most of my neighbors don’t pick up the leaves and litter from the gutter and we have a tremendous problem with poor drainage, especially in the fall and winter.

[NO CHANGE: The following language from Issue: Poor Condition of Alleyways addresses these concern] “Regular Maintenance and Cleaning: The City has recently developed an alley cleaning and maintenance schedule which provides regularly attention to alleys that tend to be prone to dumping, as well as others that simply require regular cleaning and sweeping. The trial schedule has netted noticeable improvements, and will likely be introduced for approval as an Ordinance, similar to the street cleaning schedule.”

It is exciting that Trenton has decided to create a long-range plan. Thank you for all of your efforts!

We think so too! Thanks!

Thank you for asking for input through the Times of Trenton on October 13th, on how we can improve Trenton.

I have lived in the City for most of my life and have witnessed the good, the bad and the ugly. How can we turn it around and make Trenton a city to be proud of? Well!!!

First of all: Jobs for Everyone. Work is important. No one gets 5 days until everyone gets 4 days. We could do that but the corporations don't want it! Also the churches are part of the problem. They give out free food and clothes, so, why work?

[NO CHANGE] The goal of creating jobs and improving the economy is identified both in the Vision Element as well as in the first guiding principle: Foster Social Opportunity and a Vibrant Economy through Education.

We should and must repair old houses. Save our history. Many old houses are left to rot, and then have to be torn down. They could have been restored!

[NO CHANGE] This issue is addressed in Opportunity: Historic Preservation

Repair many of the streets and roads, also sidewalks.

[NO CHANGE: The following language from Issue: Poor Condition of Alleyways addresses these concern] “Regular Maintenance and Cleaning: The City has recently developed an alley cleaning and maintenance schedule which provides regularly attention to alleys that tend to be prone to dumping, as well as others that simply require regular cleaning and sweeping. The trial schedule has netted noticeable improvements, and will likely be introduced for approval as an Ordinance, similar to the street cleaning schedule.”

Make Trenton a “walking city” again. Make it easier for people to get what they need in neighborhoods. Make it more pleasant to walk our streets. Maybe a free bus, like in Princeton? Then we would stop being so car dependent and parking space needy downtown.

[ADDED to Possible Responses under *Opportunity: Increase Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Throughout Trenton*] Make Trenton a Walking City: Trenton's size and population density make it an incredibly walkable City. At standard walking speed, one could easily walk from the East to the Western edges of Trenton in under two hours. The City should consider setting as a goal that Trenton will be known as one of the most “walkable” cities in New Jersey.

[NO CHANGE] It should be noted that this point is addressed globally in the Guiding Principle: Capitalize on Location and Urban Form to Support a Multi-Modal Transportation Network. It is also addressed specifically in the “recommended responses” for these issues and opportunities: *Issue: Confusing Street Pattern; Issue: Poor Condition of Trails; and Opportunity: Increase Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Throughout Trenton*

Thank you friends and keep on trying,

You are very welcome. Thank you for your comments!

Page 22: “For decades, Trenton has focused energy on targeting downtown office workers - particularly state office workers - as a driver for economic development.”

I don’t think this statement is correct. How has Trenton focused its energy on targeting downtown office workers? What actual engagement has the City of Trenton done? I don’t believe they have done much. They definitely haven’t taken the steps of engagement laid out by Brookings Institution, JGSC Associates, DANTH Incorporated and/or the University of Wisconsin.

[RESPONSE] This comment was the result of a number of stakeholder interviews who have indicated that the City has seen the state office workers as primary targets in efforts to generate economic growth in the downtown. Many expressed that this has been seen as one of the keys to making the Downtown successful. In addition, Urban Partners (a current subconsultant on this project) was hired in the early 1990s by the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation (CCRC) to conduct a thorough study of State office worker consumption habits in Trenton. The goal of that study was to identify ways the City could leverage their purchasing power to spur economic development.

Capitalizing on the purchasing power of downtown office workers will be a critical path component in the Economic Development Strategy. However, our analysis suggests that early efforts should be focused on developing other markets (see Possible Response: “Reorient the target market” under *Issue: Weak Retail Market*) and creating opportunities for new residents to move to Trenton (see Possible Response: “Jumpstart Housing Through New Rental Construction Aimed at Moderate to High Income Residents” under *Issue: Weak Housing Market*). We anticipate these efforts will create a condition that attracts office workers to leave their offices for lunch and stay after work to patronize businesses in Downtown.

We anticipate extensive discussion on this issue going forward and look forward to your input.

Page 22: Policies should incorporate sidewalk cafes and food trucks in strategic locations to accommodate this demand.

Doesn’t this contradict a statement from earlier in the document? “As the Market Study suggests, there is a slight surplus of food service and drinking retailers in the downtown relative to the existing demand.” If the market is already saturated, how would bringing food trucks help? Maybe there is a reason, but you might want to make this clearer. Is there an unstated problem with variety, for example?

The confusion here is over "food service & drinking", which really means restaurants and bars (of which there is a surplus), vs. "food and beverage stores", in this case meaning grocery or convenient stores (of which there is an opportunity for more). The background section of *Issue: Weak Retail Market* report was amended in the following ways to clarify this confusion:

- As the Market Study suggests, there is a slight surplus of food service and drinking retailers (restaurants and bars) in the downtown relative to the existing demand. There is also a surplus in clothing and accessories stores as well as health and personal care stores.
- Daytime workers are leaving Trenton because there are not enough retailers who provide service in the following categories: food and beverages (grocers and convenience stores); and general merchandise.
- Expand Retail Downtown/Warren and State Street: Opportunities exist for additional general merchandise, and food and beverage store retailers to serve workers and residents, according to the Market Study. Redevelopment plans have existed for many years for these areas, providing potential opportunities for new retail locations to accommodate this demand. In addition, policies should permit sidewalk dining cafes and food trucks in strategic locations to further enliven this downtown area and possibly generate new demand.

Establish a Preeminent Arts and Culture Destination: Trenton often makes the mistake of believing that destination marketing plans (whether for arts or history or sports) has to do solely with venues and events. Your description here seems to echo that mistake. As JGSC Associates correctly points out, any destination has three coordinated parts—events/venues, restaurants and retail. The restaurants and retail need to be part of the arts plan—1) there needs to be supporting retail to capture economic impact, and 2) they need to have as their target the same target audience (you want retail and restaurants that arts people will go to near your arts venues and events, for example).

When people are planning trips to destinations, the rule of thumb is that people will accept a travel time $\frac{1}{4}$ of the amount of time they will spend at the destination. So if people are travelling to a 2 hour show at Passage, in general they will travel up to 30 minutes. But if they are travelling to a 2 hour show at Passage, 1 hour dinner at Settimo Cielo and 1 hour window shopping, they will travel from as far away as 1 hour. Arts plans that don't plan complementary retail and restaurants, cripple our arts and history stakeholders.

[ADDED] *Issue: Arts and Culture attractions are not bundled with retail and restaurant offerings* was added to the Establish a Preeminent Arts and Culture Destination guiding principle. For full description, see document.

In addition, if you want to foster a community of artists (part of any real arts destination), you need to figure out 1) artists housing and 2) ways for them to make money. Otherwise, you will never have an arts community.

Reinforce High-Quality Neighborhoods and a 24/7 Downtown Trenton: Why is the goal to have downtown active at 4 am?

[NO CHANGE] The “24/7” is a convenient and easy-to-understand way of expressing the idea that Trentonians want to see Downtown active throughout the day and week. “Active” at 4:00 am may not mean the same thing as “active” at noon: at 4:00 am this may mean people are up early going to work or coming home from an evening work shift. We believe this statement accurately reflects the desire of Trenton residents to have more people using the downtown at all times of the day and week.

Draft is excellent I am willing to work with city employees & residents to help reshape our city, all of the 5 E's are very important.

Thank you! We very much appreciate the time you took to review the document: it has made it stronger.

If possible to boost the shopping in Downtown Trenton, could we get a scaled down version of Walmart or Target to come here.

[ADDED TO “Identify locations capable of accommodating larger format retail” within *Issue: Weak Retail Market*] “At the same time, traditional “big box” stores are increasingly developing smaller “urban” products that may fit a need in Trenton.”

I'm hoping that the land use act will stop allowing recycling centers & junk-Yards in residential & industrial areas. Big industry has left the state. These business are not Healthy.

[NO CHANGE] Currently, the City’s Industrial and Residential Zones do not allow junk-yards or recycling centers. Future land use recommendations may include recommendations on how to make pre-existing nuisance land uses more compatible with new and proposed land uses.

The Education part of your Draft will require a lot of Parental involvement. So those Parents that lack parenting skills no High School Diploma & without jobs would benefit from an adult education program at Monument school. Something to the former Skills Center that was located on Prospect Street years past, many residents are familiar.

[ADDED to Possible Responses under Issue: Monument Elementary School Closure] Adult Education Center: Any effort to improve education in Trenton will require a lot of parental involvement. Many parents would benefit from an adult education programs that range from GED courses to job training skills. As such, the City should consider re-purposing the Monument school as an adult education center. Some have pointed to the Skills Center, formerly located on Prospect Street, as a model.

Thanks.

You are welcome. Thank you for taking the time to review and comment.

Below are four areas I would like to discuss;

Leadership activities. The perceptions of Trenton are based largely upon observations behaviors of Trenton Residents. Each of the possible response areas should include an aspect of leadership to address higher standards of civic behavior. State the actions we expect of our leaders. For example:

- Addressing Education: “Leaders focus and outwardly advocate education through institutional, civic and religious organizations.”

- Addressing Property Ownership: “Leaders verbalize and advertise standards for property ownership to ensure property values are maintained.”
- Addressing Littering: “Leaders enforce standards that eliminate careless acts of littering.”
- Addressing Citizenship: “Leaders advocate the attributes of good citizenship and act to enforce laws associated and advocate pathways to legal residency.”
- Addressing Redevelopment: “Leaders acknowledge the need for redevelopment and take actions to advance redevelopment plans.”

[AMENDED] *Issue: Poor Coordination of Community Partners* was changed to *Issue: Poor Coordination of Community Partners and Community Leaders*

[ADDED as Background on *Issue: Poor Coordination of Community Partners and Community Leaders*] There are many people in Trenton who are not the heads of organization or institutions but who nonetheless are leaders in the community. These “mavens” are often key sources of information about what is happening in the City. In addition, they help to disseminate and enforce community norms and standards. The City has not clearly articulated a message that it would like these leaders to promote.

[ADDED as Possible Response under *Issue: Poor Coordination of Community Partners and Community Leaders*] Clearly Articulate Community Expectations: The City should consider clearly articulating the kinds of civic behavior it would like its community leaders to promote. Among other things, this may include promoting programs or talking to their neighbors about the negative effects of littering on the City.

The I&O report should focus more sharply on the powers of Redevelopment. The City has plans for redevelopment but failed for many years to utilize the full capacity of redevelopment to improve the distressed Areas.

[NO CHANGE] The report already makes clear the City has not been effectively using its redevelopment powers (See Background discussion under *Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment*). It also clearly articulates that the City should use the powers of Redevelopment to further its community driven Vision (See Possible Responses: “Update Redevelopment Plans” under *Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment* and “Acquisition and Assemblage of Properties” under *Issue: Lack of Industrial Development*)

I do not agree with declaring the whole City in need of rehabilitation. That idea ignores advances that have been made and will devalue the properties of neighbors who have remarkably maintained some properties, while other areas have declined into blight.

[RESPONSE] The City understands that there is concern among many community members about designating the City an Area in Need of Rehabilitation. The Trenton250 Team is currently speaking with other municipalities in New Jersey who have designated their entire city as an area in need of rehabilitation to better understand the effects that such a designation had on their communities. What is included here are possible responses, and further discussion will ensue to determine if this should become a recommended response. We look forward to hearing your input on this as the conversation continues.

[ADDED to “Designate All of Trenton as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation” under *Issue: Vacancy and Abandonment*] “The City should undertake an exhaustive effort to explain the pros and cons of this designation and to get citizen input on the decision process.”

The report should be more consistent in the messages about marketing the City. Trenton is a small city and marketing messages need to consistently strive for higher level accomplishments that include high culture museums, national historic sites, and world renowned architecture and design. Marketing that describes a gritty atmosphere embraces lower achievement and reinforces negative perceptions of Trenton.

[RESPONSE] Your comment about consistent marketing are noted. This is a difficult question to answer and not one that can be resolved without further discussion. On the one hand, Trenton is a small city and marketing messages targeted at different audiences have the potential to be confusing. At the same time, the City has a diversity of neighborhoods that will be attractive to different demographics and groups for a variety of reasons. Any marketing campaign will have to balance these tensions.

Your concern about promoting a gritty atmosphere is also noted. There is strong consensus amongst Trenton residents that the City needs to promote high standards and we anticipate making that a cornerstone of the project. Some stakeholders interviewed have suggested that there are current and potential residents who see gritty as an attractive feature in a City and something that sets it apart from surrounding communities. In this sense, they are working more with a concept of grit that means “showing resolution and fortitude; plucky; courageous; hardy; and/or resolute.” Nonetheless, the term grit also carries the implication of “dirty” which, as you note, may reinforce negative perceptions of Trenton.

We appreciate your comments and we look forward to further discussing this issues as we begin developing recommended responses.

Also, the report should avoid comparing with low performing cities like Camden and Newark. Comparisons should be made with other state capitals and their successes such as Annapolis with thriving shops and small businesses and active waterfront, Providence with successful retail and hotels in the downtown and waterfront areas, and Hartford that sustains anchor businesses in the insurance industry. We need to compare with other successes and avoid comparing with low performance.

[ADDED] *Issue: Difficulty finding appropriate comparisons* was added to the Advance Good Governance guiding principle.

The report needs stronger focus on enforcement of Ordinances and Standards and leverage electronic tools.

[ADDED as a possible response under *Issue: Timely Administration of Government Services - Customer Service*] Enforce Ordinances: The City of Trenton needs to do a better job of enforcing the ordinances they have passed. At times, this is a staffing issue and the City may need to find ways of increasing capacity. In other instances, this requires better coordination between departments and a clear mandate on the key ordinances that should be enforced.

[NO CHANGE] Better enforcement of ordinances and standards, as well as the need to leverage electronic tools, has been addressed in a number of the possible responses under *Issue: Timely Administration of Government Services - Customer Service*.

The report should expand on opportunities to cooperate with Federal, State, County officials and citizens.

- Continue cooperation with Fed, State, and County officials on crime fighting, because it is working and must go further.

[NO CHANGE] The City will be developing a Public Safety Element that will amend safety and law enforcement related issues into this report.

- Cooperate with State and County officials to ensure attendance at school, including use of truancy officers.

[ADDED] “Partner on School Attendance” as possible response to *Issue: Lack of Strategic Partnerships with the State and County*

- Empower citizens and leverage the use of smart phones and electronic devices by implementing a central reporting mechanism with QR code for citizens to report issues. The system can improve enforcement of health codes in food stores and restaurants, standards for rental properties, attendance in school, and fight crime.

[ADDED as possible response under *Issue: Timely Administration of Government Services - Customer Service*] Empower Citizens with Technology: Consider a program that uses phones to create a central reporting mechanism with QR code for citizens to report issues they have in Trenton. The system can improve enforcement of health codes in food stores and restaurants, standards for rental properties, attendance in school, and fight crime, among others.

- Cooperate with Fed, State, and County officials to enforce immigration laws.

[NO CHANGE] The City will be developing a Public Safety Element that will amend safety and law enforcement related issues into this report.

I applaud the excellent work that the Planning Board and the Division of Planning have done in responding to Mayor Jackson’s call for wide community input to outline a “vision” of Trenton’s potential and future to guide policymakers over the next three decades. The Trenton250 Issues and Opportunities Report, even in its current draft stage, is already a formidable accomplishment.

Thank you! The more than three year effort initiated by the Planning Board to create a community-drive vision for Trenton has been an important accomplishment and we look forward to having more community input in the process going forward.

Kindly allow this one citizen of long standing to offer some comments and suggestions for enhancing Trenton’s prospects over the next several decades. I would have first figured in census counts as a

three-month-old in Trenton's "peak" year, 1950, at precisely the moment when the nation embarked on fateful transitions in economic and labor policy, housing and transportation preferences driven (literally) by the automobile, internal migrations to and from de-industrializing urban centers, and much more. The consequences are amply and ably documented in the draft report. They have fueled a deeply negative psychology among Trenton's inhabitants and former inhabitants, which has become a self-fulfilling prophecy of pessimism. The report admirably collects ideas aimed at disproving the city's psychology of pessimism by positive action.

I would suggest that upending the pervasive pessimism would make for a self-fulfilling virtuous circle, so to some extent we look to influence the views of audiences outside the city in order to build the confidence of those who live here and those who might live or invest here. The draft report's emphasis on historical and cultural heritage is well placed, I think, less for the "tourist dollars" that might be attracted than for the confidence that rising outsider interest in the city can build. So let me start with that.

[RESPONSE] That is a valuable insight. We agree that promoting the historical and cultural heritage in Trenton serves a number of functions including, but not limited to, promoting a better image of Trenton, generating tourism dollars, and better educating Trenton residents about the important role their city has played in the nation's history.

On pages 37 et seq., the report catalogues Trenton's failure to capitalize on its historic heritage. The steps it suggests, while self-evident, by do seem a trifle inadequate to the challenge; the heritage resources themselves need to be enhanced and united as "a destination":

[SEE BELOW: "Connect Places" and "Develop New Assets"]

Trenton should embark on a plan to package a Historic Corridor running down Warren Street from the Battle Monument past St. Michael's (including the dead Hessians in the burial ground) and down brick-topped Front Street to the Old Barracks and seek State and, even better, National Historical Park, with suitable requirements on private property owners along the route to maintain historically compatible standards.

[SEE BELOW: "Connect Places"]

As part of its packaging, Trenton would be smart to return the names of the colonial town's two north-south avenues to their colonial names: King Street and Queen Street (post-independence Broad and Warren respectively). As an aside, one can imagine a bit of gay-themed businesses taking advantage of Warren Street's renaming as Queen Street south of State Street.

[ADDED to "Connect Places" possible response within *Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries*] Trenton should consider creating a "Historic Corridor" running down Warren Street from the Battle Monument past St. Michael's (including the dead Hessians in the burial ground) and down brick-topped Front Street to the Old Barracks. It should consider seeking State and/or National Historical Park designation, with suitable requirements on private property owners along the route to maintain historically compatible standards. Consider returning Broad and Warren Street to their pre-colonial names: King Street and Queen Street

Trenton should press the State Division of Parks and Forestry to bundle its two facilities—the Battle Monument (dismayingly neglected by the State) and Washington Crossing State Park—into a conjoined pairing. Washington Crossing draws many more historic-heritage visitors from around the

country to see where Washington crossed then come to Trenton to see where Washington salvaged the Revolution once he got here.

[ADDED to “Connect Places” possible response within *Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries*] Trenton should consider advocating for the State Division of Parks and Forestry to bundle Battle Monument and Washington Crossing State Park as a paired attraction. Washington Crossing draws many more historic-heritage visitors from around the country to see where Washington crossed then come to Trenton to see where Washington salvaged the Revolution once he got here. Pairing the two could increase visits to Trenton.

Trenton should partner with Mercer County on brochures of all Mercer’s 18th century buildings, with particular emphasis on the pre-1800 structures of greatest import in history. To oversimplify, we must rely on Princeton’s cachet to help put Trenton’s treasures on the heritage traveler’s circuit.

[ADDED to “Develop New Assets” possible response within *Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries*] Trenton should consider partnering with Mercer County to advertise all of Mercer’s 18th century buildings, with particular emphasis on the pre-1800 structures of greatest import in history. This would allow Trenton to capitalize on Princeton’s cachet to help put Trenton’s treasures on the heritage traveler’s circuit.

The city should aim to obtain placement of historic-marker description displays at the exit points from the Delaware and Raritan Canal Park path that lead to historic sites.

[ADDED to “Connect Places” possible response within *Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries*] The city should consider placement of historic-marker description displays at the exit points from the Delaware and Raritan Canal Park path that lead to historic sites.

There are two observations in the draft that I think may be misguided.

Trenton’s undertaking a “heritage tourism” campaign will have little credibility on its own (and the notion that CVBs that are created to “sell” their town will be seen by travelers to “offer impartial information” may have scant purchase with most travelers). Trenton needs to be wrapped into a heritage tourism drive by a jurisdiction that has more credibility—hence suggestions #3, 4, and 5.

[ADDED to “Tourism Campaign” under *Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries*] In developing their Tourism Campaign, the City may wish to consider partnering with neighboring jurisdictions and “wrapping” their effort into a larger heritage tourism drive. Such an effort could give more credibility to their efforts, especially early on.

The proposal to de-emphasize the Revolutionary period and try to generate tourism around the abandoned brick shells of 19th and early 20th century industry is not a very promising route. There are a hundred cities around the Northeast and Midwest that hatched dynamic industries over those hundred years that have now disappeared; Trenton is in no way unique as a graveyard of the Industrial Revolution, and I suspect that even Lowell, Massachusetts, doesn’t draw huge tourist flows. Trenton is unique as the rescue point for America’s revolutionary success, and travelers from west of the Appalachians do marvel at the 18th century underlay found exclusively along America’s Atlantic seaboard. There’s a reason the 18C has been the selling point for Philadelphia, New Jersey, and

Massachusetts: it's what the entire American population has been taught to see as the stirring origins of the country's history.

[RESPONSE] Your concerns about this effort are noted. The purpose of these background statements were to indicate that Trenton has not successfully promoted the important role the City played in the industrial development of the United States. That said, your concerns about the ability of the City to leverage that history as a tourist attraction are reasonable. We anticipate further discussion on this issue and look forward to discussing it further as we develop recommended responses.

Regarding "high-quality neighborhoods/downtown" (pages 73 et seq.), one might consider adopting the superficial, but nonetheless very mood-altering, effect that Hightstown has employed on Main Street in what passes for its downtown: Hanging flowering baskets on lamp-poles through the central business district, and perhaps also in some of the neighborhood business districts in a few of the major neighborhoods.

[ADDED as Possible Response under *Issue: Lack of Great Public Places and Social Spaces*] Streetscape Beautification: The City should investigate efforts to beautify the downtown streetscape. As an example, Hightstown hung flowering baskets on lamp-poles through the central business district. Such an effort would improve the area aesthetically and indicate to visitors that Trenton cares about its downtown.

In that same section (pages 92-93) the draft report rhapsodizes about the new immigration. It is true as far as it goes, but there are many post-industrial low-income communities in New Jersey and the country that have the invigorating mix of immigrants from Latin America, and from Africa and the non-Latino Caribbean as well. But look to Paterson and you will see its swelling Arab Quarter (out Main Street toward the Clifton line) as a unique draw, bringing cultural, gastronomic, religious, and even fashion diversity to that city. Right now a window is opening for Trenton to step up and seek a major infusion of a new immigration, by organizing itself to be at the head of the line to resettle Syrian and Iraqi war refugees. First, there will be US federal funding to aid the refugee resettlement, which can help reinvigorate Trenton's housing market. Moreover, the Syrians fleeing their country's civil war are not only religiously diverse, they are also disproportionately educated, so Trenton could be attracting a new professional class. It should, at the same time, win back to a concentrated restaurant district the kinds of people from places like Princeton and Bucks County who used to flock to Chambersburg, for whom Middle East cuisine would be a new and hip discovery. Put in for a couple thousand refugees!

[ADDED] A possible response "Be a destination for Syrian and Iraqi war refugees" was added to *Opportunity: Immigrant Communities*. For complete details please review that section.

Talking about refugee resettlement, this section might at least mention in passing the refugee-immigrants from Myanmar who have been resettled here—I think Trenton is among the top ten destinations for them in the U.S.

On Multi-Modal Transportation (pages 98 et seq.) , allow me a few observations:

I do not know where the suggestion for lifting the truck ban on NJ Route 29 came from, or whom it is supposed to help, but this hardly seems to be a major competitive disadvantage to Trenton's economy. It also seems a bit at odds with the next suggestion to revive the riverfront boulevard idea.

[NO CHANGE]

Truck access to Route 1 has been listed as a problem in previous reports and stakeholder interviews. Police discussed truck congestion on surface streets in Chambersburg due to need to get between 295 and Route 1.

The Truck issue was mentioned in the following Plans/Studies: NJDOT-LRTP Trenton Supplement (2008), Trenton Transportation Master Plan (2004)

The 2008 Supplement also states that “NJDOT should revisit the Route 29 tunnel truck ban and consider feasible alternatives for removing the ban.”

On page 100, ¶15(a)(1) seems to view the D&R Canal’s winding path through the downtown as making the trail as not “bike compatible,” and seems to endorse the Belvidere Greenway as an alternative. Instead, since it’s the canal that many riders would prefer to hug in their ride, the plan should call for placing curb cuts and directional signs, and highlighting the Belgian-block crossing lanes (the Mack administration unconscionably asphalted over the stone crossing lane for the canal path at Passaic Street) that connect these disparate parts.

[ADDED as possible response under Issue: Poor Condition of Trails] Connect the D&R Canal: The City should place curb cuts, directional signs, and highlight the belgian-block crossing lanes in an effort to better connect the disparate parts of the D&R Canal.

On pages 102-103, on cycling, I would reiterate the utility of placing historical markers at “gateway” points along the major D&R Canal paths. Ocean County’s Barnegat Branch Trail provides a wondrous model.

[ADDED] Cross reference to previous addition.

On page 103, the Report might link to the DVRPC bicycle and pedestrian plan.

[NO ACTION] Agreed. Once DVRPC has officially released the report a link should be added to the document.

Overall, the Report might note Trenton’s unique location at the crossroads of multiple cycling trails in New Jersey and Pennsylvania: northwest to Lambertville and New Hope, southwest to Bristol, south to Bordentown, northeast to Princeton and New Brunswick. This is a major asset for drawing cyclists to this area from the large metropolitan areas in the Northeast Corridor. They may not be big spenders (though even cyclists need to eat, and sleep overnight), but they can enhance the Trenton community’s self-image as a place of value.

[ADDED to Opportunity: Increase Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Throughout Trenton] Trenton is uniquely located at the crossroads of multiple cycling trails in New Jersey and Pennsylvania: northwest to Lambertville and New Hope, southwest to Bristol, south to Bordentown, northeast to Princeton and New Brunswick. This is a major asset for drawing cyclists to this area from the large metropolitan areas in the Northeast Corridor.

On page 107, under “High-Level Findings,” I would suggest one additional audience: those who formerly lived or grew up in the city. There is considerable nostalgia worth tapping there.

[ADDED]

Great job. The City Profile Report and the subject Issues and Opportunities Report benchmark the near past and provide us with an opportunity to measure the performance of City in the next five years. I have not reviewed the Waterfront development or the Economic Study reports as yet.

The Opportunities Report does not highlight the two unique attributes of Trenton that are the basis for Trenton's future.

1. State government agencies that are located downtown are a partially tapped resource of people and data. Both the data and people can address most of the marketing questions posed in the "possible responses". From another perspective the uniqueness of this great capital City is that the State has 566 municipalities and perhaps 10000 autonomous planning agencies. Is this democracy in action or chaos? State personnel must find the answer to that question every day if the State is to function. So what makes this State capital unique is both the nature of State governance and the concentration of those talented State employees in one municipality, Trenton.
2. State agencies provide the management, regulatory, and financial plans for infrastructure in the State. Because each road, bridge, sewer line, water main, solid waste, telecommunication system must cross a municipal boundary, that infrastructure must be professionally managed if the 566 municipalities are to work together. Individuals for example, Professional Engineers are responsible by State Statute NJSA 45:8 et seq. for planning land and water resources, provide the 'ligaments' that bind the infrastructure together in a technically and institutionally savvy fashion. How are those individuals trained?

[ADDED] Opportunity: Public Service Magnet - State, County, and City Public Employees Talent Pool and Resources under the guiding principle Foster Social Opportunity and a Vibrant Economy through Education.

3. This great capital City is uniquely situated both legally and geographically to serve as an 'engineering infrastructure incubator'. From the legal and ownership perspective, the City owns both the water and sewer system from raw water intake on the Delaware to sewage discharge into the Delaware and all the distribution and collection systems in between. No other City owns both. No other City has both in such close proximity to one another and to the State agencies that regulate all municipal water and sewer operations. So if the City is to market the educational and training advantages to the engineering schools and municipalities, the marketing plan may focus on the "engineering infrastructure incubator". There are 6000+ engineering students at Rutgers, NJ IT and MCCC and 1000+ municipal engineers. It is possible that the nearly vacant NJN building be offered to a collaborative of engineering schools for the purpose of educating and training and retraining the managers of municipal infrastructure.

[ADDED] Opportunity: Infrastructure and Concentration of Engineers under the guiding principle Foster Social Opportunity and a Vibrant Economy through Education.

'engineering infrastructure incubator'

4. In addition to the City as an educational and training center and incubator for municipal infrastructure management, access to the Delaware River at the head of tide is unique. The head of tide below the Trenton Makes bridge, separates the freshwater from the tidal water; separates the 7000 square miles of freshwater watershed from the 20,000 +square miles of tidal waters below. That is access to more freshwater for manufacturing and job creation than any other municipality or region in the State. Not just any industry but industries- totally

dependent on a reliable and inexpensive supply of fresh water. Trenton also has the treatment capacity to provide for wastewaters discharges from those industries.

[ADDED] as an Opportunity within Foster Social Opportunity and a Vibrant Economy through Education

The flip side of the geographical advantage is the disadvantage of cost and travel time to the major employment hubs in NYC and Philadelphia. The City can not compete with other municipalities or those world class cities with the residential, commercial, retail, arts or cultural opportunities that those municipalities have.

[RESPONSE] The City of Trenton needs to stake out a niche within the larger region and capitalize on it. There is a lot of “space” between NYC/Philadelphia and the suburban communities in Central Jersey. On top of this, Trenton has unique set of assets that make it attractive relative to other small and mid-sized cities. The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles are a means of articulating how the City can further develop that niche and exploit it.

The data to support both the positive and unique attributes of Trenton must be imbedded in the Plan and then the Plan will work to the unique advantage of Trenton.

[RESPONSE] We agree. As an initial effort, Trenton250.org has all of the data from the City profile report. In addition, the Issues and Opportunities Report includes a number of references for the need to improve data access.

Thank you for the opportunity you have afforded the Region and the State

You are very welcome. Thank you for taking the time to review the document.

Appendix D: Comments from Open House

The following comments were noted and do not require changes:

- liked the 'paradigm' shift the City says they are doing with this document as their new base.
- liked that department budgets would be tied into the Master Plan. The group wanted to know how will this be done: how can a department be held accountable?
- liked that there would be partnerships explored, stated we should look at 'new' partners, not go back to 'tried and true'
- liked the statement even with a 'new Bible' there will need to be a 'change in the mindset' - felt this was a very powerful statement.
- they expressed concern that this Master Plan was another smoke screen and expressed hope that it would not be.
- They wanted to know what resources are available for the document to happen in real life
- Everyone wants to know how to keep the document alive, keep it real and tangible
- The group wanted to express their interest in building a health and safety conscious city
- There was discussion about what was the best and most productive way to get the word out as the document moves forward and become part of the city planning

Comments:

safety should be included with each component/plan until it is not the overarching topic

[ADDED as Possible Response under *Issue: Trenton Crime*] Make Safety an Issue in Every Plan: The Planning Division should consider setting a policy that every plan and element should include an evaluation of ways that the City should improve public safety.

The document should include an issue that talks about the reality of budget cuts

[AMENDED] The *Issue: Insufficient Revenue, Budget Cuts, and High Tax Rates* was amended to address this comment

The City should have all the area newspapers on board

[AMENDED "Trenton Stories from a Multitude of Avenues" under *Issue: Negative Perceptions of Trenton*] "local area newspapers" was added to the list.

Now that the city has detailed the master plan, how do we find the broader audience? Once this is adopted there have to be an investment in marketing

[NO CHANGE] This was addressed in “Use the Process” and “Investigate an Educational Campaign” under *Issue: Lack of Understanding of the Master Plan*

Used the example of Providence, RI - got businesses to rent their empty storefronts for \$1 per month until a 'real' market-rate tenant moved in., then the \$1 per month tenant moved to the next empty storefront - BUT - no one would have heard of it or acted on it if there had not been a very very strong marketing/newspapers/social media action plan.

[NO CHANGE] This is addressed under “Provide a Pop-Up Storefront Initiative” under “Expanding retail in strategic locations” in *Issue: Weak Retail Market*

Expressed the Christiana Seix Academy model, - liked how it took charge of the environment and moved the kids forward, - seems as if the thought is to move Trenton forward with 21st Century energy and new thinking about old cities.

[ADDED] As *Opportunity: Urban environmental education and Place-based Education to the Foster Social Opportunity and a Vibrant Economy through Education* guiding principle. For complete details please review that section

The group was concerned how this plan information was made known to city residents - just about all there received the notice about the meeting from their civic association, either through email, personal contact, worried how to include those not living with strong social network. Derided the paper for listing the meeting notice in that same day paper. - felt not part of the change.

[NO CHANGE] The City has been using a multitude of sources to reach many within our community. Not exactly a clear formula on how to reach everyone, but we continue to leverage technology and other sources as we learn of them.

The group wanted to know if civic leadership can get a mailing list?

[RESPONSE] As a result of input obtained during the creation of Trenton250, the Department of Housing and Economic Development has recently begun sending out regular emails to

-Utilize the Spanish newspapers, some of them are free

[ADDED] A possible response “Communication and Dissemination of Information” was added to *Issue: Not Accommodating Today’s Trenton Community*. For complete details please review that section.

Trenton is should be a 'safety person' city

[NO CHANGE] The City will be developing a Public Safety Element that will amend safety related issues into this report.

The City needs a critical mass of social places to have 'hipsters' gravitate to after work

[NO CHANGE] See *Issue: Lack of Great Public Places and Social Spaces*

The City needs to address the parking problem

[RESPONSE] The City is underway with developing a Parking Management Plan that will amend parking related issues into this report. We will take note to include rental parking.

The City needs to address the misuse of apartments and overcrowding that occurs.

[NO CHANGE] See *Issue: Weak Housing Market*

Appendix E: Comments Submitted on Google Document

ID	Requested Edit / Change	Action
1	That any reference to the mayors name be replaced by “the mayors office” or current administration.	[NO CHANGE]
2	Industry is a loaded term. Typically used to mean manufacturing which just can’t be what we want to do. What is the vision really?	[NO CHANGE]
3	An additional opportunity for the city is to use vacant and abandoned properties as local neighborhood community centers for youth	[ADDED] "Identify New Uses for Abandoned Buildings and Lots" in <i>Issue: Vacancy and Abandonment</i>
4	How does any of this affect graduation rate? Rather its a distraction from the central goal of improving graduation rates.	[MOVED] This section was seen as more appropriate for Social Opportunity
5	Add "Expand" to Universal Preschool	[NO CHANGE]
6	Delete "Make Awareness of School Options" and make "Publicize School Options"	[CHANGED]
7	This information should also be clear for all to understand, instead of parents re-inventing the wheel to determine what their school choice options are and transportation means.	[ADDED] "Publicize School Options" was amended to include the following statement, "This information should also be standardized and clear for all to understand."
8	Perhaps its interesting to know but not useful when used to measure against other districts. Our central goal is to improve our graduation rate as calculated by the state formula. Another metric is a distraction.	[NO CHANGE] Although Public School graduation rates are very important for comparing to other districts, it is not the only issue. It is also important to understand how Trenton as a whole is educating its population and to understand the diverse landscape of education available in the City.
9	Dan Dodson suggests that "Address the Challenge of Concentrated Poverty" be deleted. His comment was, "If this is sideways attempt to lobby for vouchers then be honest about it and do that."	[AMENDED] This is not an attempt to lobby for vouchers. "Address the Challenges of Concentrated Poverty in Schools" was amended to clarify.
10	A voucher program allowing students to attend private schools will improve the the graduation rate of private schools. I am under the impression that the discussion is regarding the graduation rate in the public school system; where the problem actually lies.	[ADDED] "Consider a Voucher Program" under <i>Issue: Low Graduation Rates for Trenton</i>
11	Recommended adding: "Create a Voucher Program: A voucher program that allows Trenton students to attend private schools would have the immediate effect of improving the overall graduation rate in Trenton by attracting new families to the city. In Addition existing Trenton families would be better able to find schools that better match their children’s educational needs (i.e. more options)."	[ADDED] "Consider a Voucher Program" was added within <i>Issue: Low Graduation Rates for Trenton</i>
12	Crowd-fund School-Related capital Improvements: The City should work to allow local citizens to invest up to and including any and all of their tax dollars in the form of school-related capital improvements. The reasoning is that, as the quality of Trenton Public Schools (TPS) increases, so to should land values (as a result of TPS being more in demand). To negate or even mitigate the negative impacts of rising land values, citizens should be able to capture any such increase in value as a return on their investment. If the outcome of citizen investment in TPS is positive, it may set precedence towards shifting tax dollars away towards tangible, “on-the-ground” investments in the City’s built environment. 1.	[ADDED] See Possibile Responses within <i>Issue: Low Graduation Rates for Trenton</i>

13	Suggested Add: Form After School Club: Each school could create an after school club for English language learners that allows them to practice conversational skills in English and help them with their homework. Elementary schools could pair the kids up with high schoolers or late middle school. Provide an incentives for students to help the ELL's. 1.	[ADDED] See Possisble Responses within <i>Issue: Low Graduation Rates for Trenton</i>
14	Tax assessor to provide basic information on income and expenses ratio of businesses by various business types in the City of Trenton. (i.e. bodegas, restaurants)	[AMENDED] "Providing resources to support retail growth: Provide Technical Support" within <i>Issue: Weak Retail Market</i>
15	There should be a coordinated effort among the various stakeholders to make the events successful and entice attendees to stay in the city before or after the events occur. This could be something like having restaurants/shops open before and during concerts downtown, First Friday events, a weekend farmer's market downtown.	[ADDED] See "Leverage Event Venue Patrons" in <i>Issue: Weak Retail Market</i>
16	Suggested Add: Wrap Parking Lots and Parking Garages with Retail and Commercial Land Uses: Flagrant exposure of parking lots to the public realm and omission of land uses both deter streetscape activity. This issue can be addressed by planning for retail and commercial uses along the edges of city blocks, and moving parking lots and garages to the center of these blocks.	[ADDED] Possible Responses in <i>Issue: Lack of Large Scale Redevelopment</i>
17	Exploit is a loaded term, I would opt for Increase/Expand to make it a positive opportunity.	Changed
18	This should include local manufacturers having a financial stake in the training equipment/administration of programming. i.	[ADDED] "Training" under Opportunity: Capitalize on Interest in City-based Industrial Workforce
19	Suggested Add: Citywide Microgrid: Research the development of a microgrid that will allow essential city/community buildings to have power during outages.	[ADDED] "Citywide Microgrid" under Opportunity: Energy - Gas and Electric Utility
20	Strengthen the civic associations to promote leadership and community involvement	[AMENDED] "Encourage Community and Development Organizations" in <i>Issue: Lack of Opportunities to build social capital in the City.</i>
21	Suggested Add: Create Mixed-Use Neighborhoods and Streetscapes: Increase the odds that people will find employment and have easy access to such opportunities by creating mixed-use neighborhoods and streetscapes, with retail and commercial activity at street level, and residential space in the floors above the aforementioned land uses.	[MOVED AND AMENDED] Added as a Possible Response for <i>Opportunity: Trenton's unique urban character and image as a cool place to live.</i>
22	Convention space/Auditorium space should be created and realized to accommodate multifaceted events, small conferences, and programs.	[ADDED] "Build a Convention Center" under "Develop New Assests" within <i>Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries</i>
23	A display case in City Hall atrium should be created to highlight the various art curating and museums throughout the City.	[ADDED] as bullet point 6 under "arts marketing" possible reponse within <i>Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries</i>
24	The Trenton City Museum in Ellarslie Mansion in Cadwalader Park has a pottery collection owned by the Trenton Museum Society. One of largest collections in the country. Budget should be provided by the City for a Director of the Museum and/or administrative support. Museum also needs major donor support.	[ADDED and AMENDED] "Develop New Assets" under <i>Issue: Fragmented Arts, Culture, and Historical Heritage Industries.</i>

25	Suggested Add: Implement the Principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): Incorporate CPTED principles within existing or re-written versions of the zoning code.	[AMENDED] "Implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Strategies" was amended to include this language.
26	Suggested Add: Acquire and train city staff in the use of "civic software" to simplify council and board meetings, automate as much as possible, and make public meetings efficient and available	[ADDED and AMENDED] "Civic Software" under <i>Issue: Timely Administration of Government Services - Customer Service</i>
27	My understanding is that this is a problem with the statewide tax assessment system. It is not unique to Trenton and is a problem faced by all municipalities in NJ.	[NO CHANGE]
28	How do you link this section back to education	[ADDED] Possible Response "Educational Campaign for a Healthy Lifestyle" under <i>Issue: Chronic disease</i>
29	Include mental health patients and elderly stats as part of seniors	[AMENDED] Possible response "Education Campaign" under <i>Issue: Chronic disease</i> was amended to address this comment.
30	Include incorporating mental health patients/disabled and elderly to have more physical activities	[ADDED] Possible Response "Incorporate elderly/disabled programs" under <i>Issue: Limited Access to Physical Activity, Increased Obesity, Unhealthy Lifestyles</i>
31	The City already has many partners already doing community gardens. we should be sure outline what community members are already doing the work	[ADDED and AMENDED] "Urban Gardens" under <i>Issue: Limited Access to Healthy Foods and Nutrition</i>
32	clarify what illegal drugs are being discussed here. Also discuss the decriminalization of marijuana . the health piece should be added that says "we should treat users that are addicted to illegal drugs"	[ADDED] "Provide treatment services for those addicted to drugs" to Possible Responses under <i>Issue: Substance Abuse/Behavioral Health</i>
33	We cant ignore recidivism in the community	[NO CHANGE] This comment is addressed in "Recidivism Initiatives" under <i>Issue: Trenton Crime</i>
34	drug dealing is a quality of life issues that we must fix. we must change the culture were citizens become active participants in not ignoring drug dealins	[ADDED] "Diminish easy access to illegal drugs" under <i>Issue: Substance Abuse/Behavioral Health</i>
35	We need to add an additional issue that reads: "Trenton must establish an environmental commission." In February 2015, the Planning Board adopted a storm water management resolution which stated that the planning board must consider storm water management concerns in the master plan. However, the City is not poised to receive special consideration for aids and grants for storm water management activities because we do not have an Environmental Commission. We should look at the adopted resolution and ensure that the information is expressed in the Master Plan.	[ADDED] <i>Issue: No Environmental Commission</i> under the guiding principle: Cultivate A Healthy City
36	We should have an development applications include a environmental impact statement to assess and potential environmental issues	[ADDED] <i>Issue: No Environmental Commission</i> under the guiding principle: Cultivate A Healthy City
37	Fix fishing pier that fell down	[ADDED] "Reinstate the Fishing Wharf" under <i>Opportunity: Waterfront Revitalization and Access: Route 29 as a Boulevard and A Regional Destination</i>
38	The City Should add an opportunity that states: The City to continue to support and encourage the diversity of the immigrant population.	[ADDED] <i>Issue: No Guiding Principle for Immigrant Issues and Opportunities</i> under the Advance Good Governance Guiding Principle
39	Issue: Lack of a bus station for long distant travelers. Provide the infrastructure that encourages intercity bus services to access and utilize Trenton.	[ADDED] <i>Issue: No Bus Station</i>