

Chapter 2

# Vision & Guiding Themes

Downtown Capital District Master Plan  
Trenton, New Jersey



# Vision & Guiding Themes

## Plan Vision

"Deriving its vitality from its desirability as a "**Residential Community of Choice**," Downtown Trenton is a source of pride as the State Capital of New Jersey and fulfils its potential as a center of business, culture, education and heritage."

**In the Year 2020, Downtown Trenton will be recognized as a:**

### ***Business Center***

Downtown Trenton will leverage the strong presence of State and County government as well as its transportation infrastructure to attract businesses to the core of the region. The commercial sector of the economy will include a diverse mix of uses including offices, retail establishments, government centers, institutions and visitor attractions.

### ***River City***

Trenton will promote social, recreational and economic activity along and around its three downtown waterways: the Delaware River, Assunpink Creek and the Delaware and Raritan (D&R) Canal.

### ***Green City***

Trenton will increase the amount of high-quality downtown open space and utilize it to link its neighborhoods with its businesses and government centers and the River.

### ***Arts, Culture & Entertainment Hub***

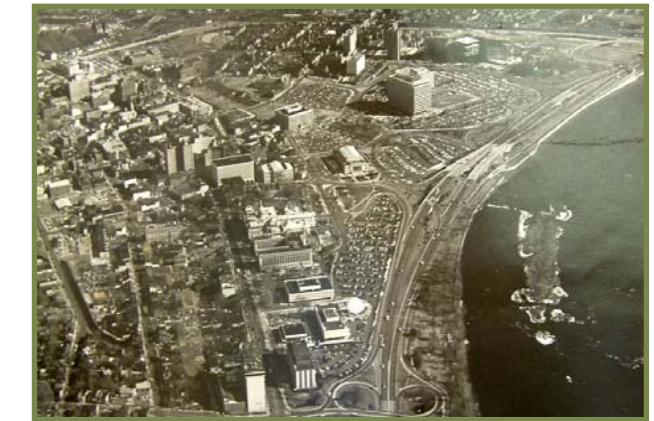
Trenton will enhance Downtown as the place for artists, art galleries, playhouses and related attractions, such as coffeehouses and cafes, normally associated with the fine and performing arts.

### ***Historic Destination***

Trenton will preserve and protect its historic buildings and open spaces, and develop an active heritage tourism industry.



**Before:** Stacy Park was historically the signature green space of New Jersey's Capital City.



**After:** Stacy Park and the East-West Highway along the riverfront were demolished in 1957 to make way for Route 29 and surface parking lots.

### Redevelop State Parking Lots to Unlock the Potential of the Capital City

Over the past 50 years, large areas of Downtown Trenton have been cleared to make way for surface parking lots to service State government. These lots have a blighting effect on the character of Downtown Trenton and impact its neighborhoods, business districts and open spaces.

Partnerships must be forged to address the parking needs of Downtown and the State, while freeing parcels for redevelopment into high-quality, tax-generating mixed-use structures.

## Guiding Themes

The guiding themes for Downtown Trenton serve as the “Rules” of this plan. These provide the basis for future development and a framework for making decisions.

### Theme 1

#### Establish Downtown Trenton as a “Residential Community of Choice.”

- Renovate existing housing stock within Downtown.
- Construct new mixed-density, infill housing in the neighborhoods to reflect the scale and character of historic housing stock.
- Construct new mid-rise, mixed-use condominium and rental developments.

### Theme 2

#### Balance tax exempt & income producing properties in Downtown.

- Redevelop surface parking lots into high-quality, mixed use development.
- Integrate parking structures with district capacity into new developments.
- Integrate commercial uses into new development to generate sales tax.

### Theme 3

#### Enhance the character of streets & open spaces to anchor investment.

- Implement streetscape improvement projects for each downtown subdistrict.
- Develop Assunpink Creek park corridor system to link business districts and neighborhoods to the Delaware riverfront.
- Develop the D&R Canal system to link business districts and neighborhoods to the Capital District and the Delaware River.



## Master Plan

This Downtown Capital District Master Plan defines a bold vision for the future of Trenton. This Master Plan identifies a series of private and public sector improvement projects that together hold the key to unlock the potential of Downtown Trenton. As Downtown Trenton transforms into a **“Residential Community of Choice”** within New Jersey and the Northeast Corridor, business, shopping and entertainment investment will follow.

The following sections of this report are organized in accord with six areas of downtown that have been classified as subdistricts due to distinguishing land use and development characteristics.

- Capital District
- Mill Hill District
- Transit Village District
- Riverfront District
- Central Business District
- Hanover Academy District



The illustration to the left depicts the development vision for Downtown Trenton. Opportunity sites and recommended development prototypes are depicted in orange. Public park and trail improvements are depicted in dark green.

