



Chapter 4

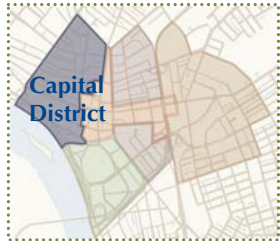
Capital District Neighborhood

Downtown Capital District Master Plan
Trenton, New Jersey

Capital District Neighborhood

The Capital District Neighborhood is anchored by the New Jersey State House and a host of cultural and educational features. With reinvestment in housing and infrastructure, this district will become a signature neighborhood in Trenton.

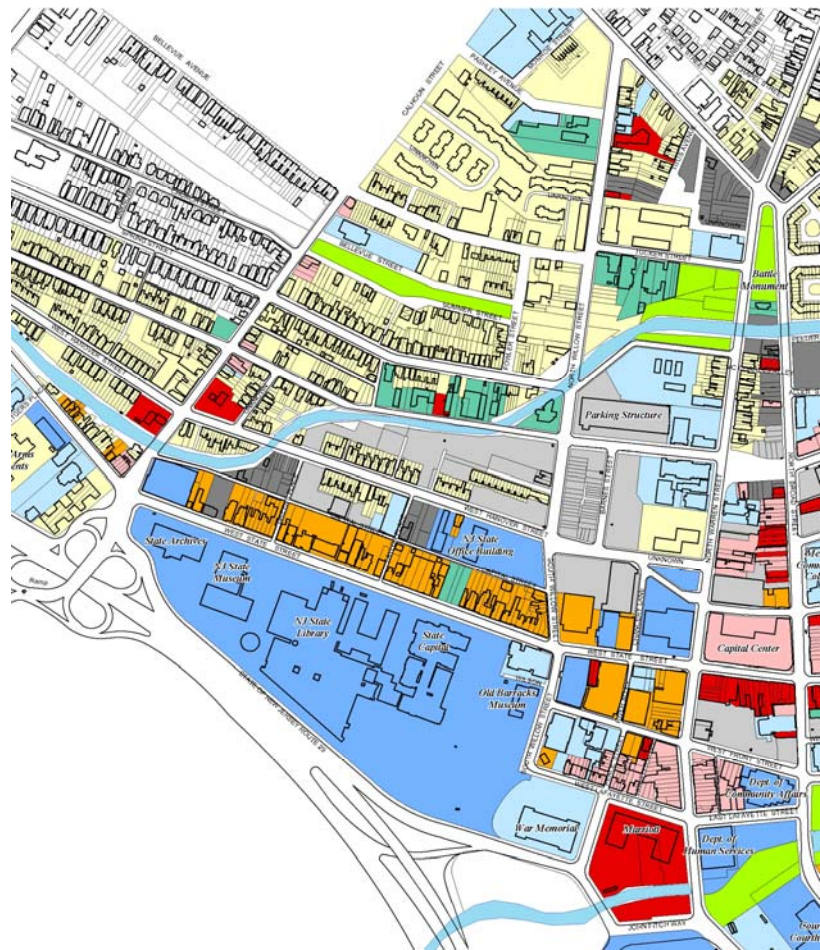
Description



The Capital District Neighborhood is bounded by State Route 29 and the Delaware River on the south, Calhoun Street on the west, Pennington Avenue on the north, and North Warren Street, the D&R Canal and Willow Street on the east. Although the majority of this district is comprised of residential land uses, the Capital Neighborhood is also the home of the New Jersey State House complex, Thomas Edison State College, and several businesses and non-profit organizations. These nonresidential uses, along with a large number of surface parking lots that service state government, are located primarily south of the D&R Canal focused along West State and West Hanover Streets.

Housing redevelopment within the Capital District Neighborhood is a key recommendation of this plan. North of the D&R Canal, the housing types primarily include two- and three-story brick or wood clad structures. Although portions of these residential areas are well maintained, the majority of housing units is in a state of disrepair. Open space resources include the area along the D&R Canal and a former railroad right-of-way present opportunities to establish amenities around which residential reinvestment can occur.





Legend

- Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Office
- Government Office
- Church/School/Institution
- Workshop/Auto
- Train Station
- Open Space
- Parking
- Vacant Parcels
- Vacant Buildings

Existing Land Use – Land uses within the Capital District Neighborhood include a mix of office, cultural, parking, commercial, service, residential and open space.



Existing Configuration – Development within the central area of the Capital District Neighborhood has been negatively impacted by the preponderance of surface parking lots. The D&R Canal is a character feature that should be restored and utilized to anchor new development.



Opportunity sites are depicted in orange.
Key sites and projects are keyed to the text that follows.

Improvement Program

Given the tremendous potential for upside appreciation in residential property values, restoration of the Capital District Neighborhood should be driven primarily by private sector investment. However, in order to support this investment, a series of public actions are required. These include the relocation of surface parking lots into mixed-use parking structures, the creation of a high-quality State Park behind the State House, and the development of a neighborhood-scale linear park and bike trail. Investments in character enhancement elements such as street lighting, trees and signage is also required.

The illustration to the left highlights redevelopment opportunities within the Capital District Neighborhood. Opportunity sites are depicted in orange. Many of these sites are infill opportunities where the scale and character of existing development should be maintained. Other sites represent large scale opportunities for change and are therefore described in greater detail on the following pages.

A. Capital Complex Enhancements

Renovations to enhance the architecture, urban design and visitor attractions of the New Jersey State House have been underway over the past few years. As a result, this area now offers a more pleasant work environment, and attracts ever-growing numbers of visitors to Trenton each year. Key attractions in the Capital Complex vicinity include the State House, the New Jersey State Museum and Planetarium, the State Archives, the Old Barracks Museum and the Trenton War Memorial.

In October 2006, Governor Jon S. Corzine announced the winner of a national design competition for a new state park to be located at the State Capital in Downtown Trenton. An overview of the winning design created by Philadelphia-based WRT is featured on a following page and has been incorporated into this plan to support its implementation.



The New Jersey State House and gardens are pictured here with adjacent attractions including the Old Barracks Museum and the Trenton War Memorial. Reconnection of the Capital Complex to the Delaware Riverfront is a key goal of this plan.

This new state park will celebrate Trenton's history and cultural heritage, and attract visitors from around the nation to learn about the importance of the Capital City and the critical role it played during the American Revolution. The park will benefit city residents by providing a clean, healthy space for families and children and improving the overall quality of life in Trenton. A key objective of the park is to reconnect the Capital Complex to the Delaware Riverfront.

B. Willow & Hanover Street Office/Parking Structure

A parking structure lined with office use is envisioned for the surface parking lot located at the southwest corner of North Willow and West Hanover Streets. This 53,000 sf site could accommodate a three-story structure with approximately 200 parking spaces and 75,000 sf of liner office space. Using this site for a mixed-use parking structure provides for strategic relocation of surface parking spaces utilized by State employees, thus freeing land for housing and park redevelopment along the D&R Canal.



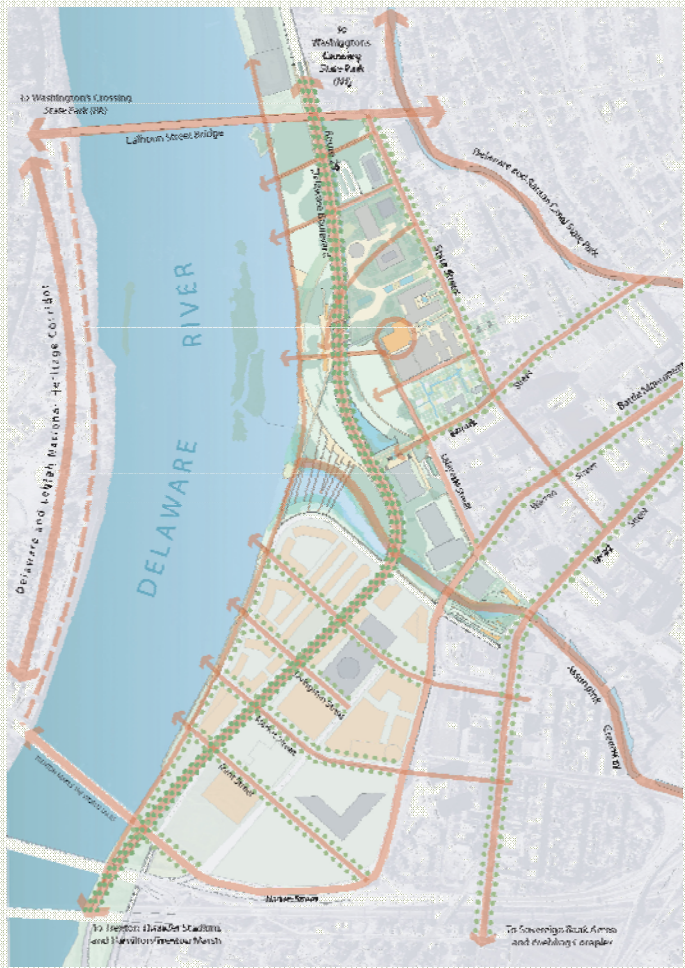
Current Configuration



Proposed Improvements

Design for the Capital City State Park

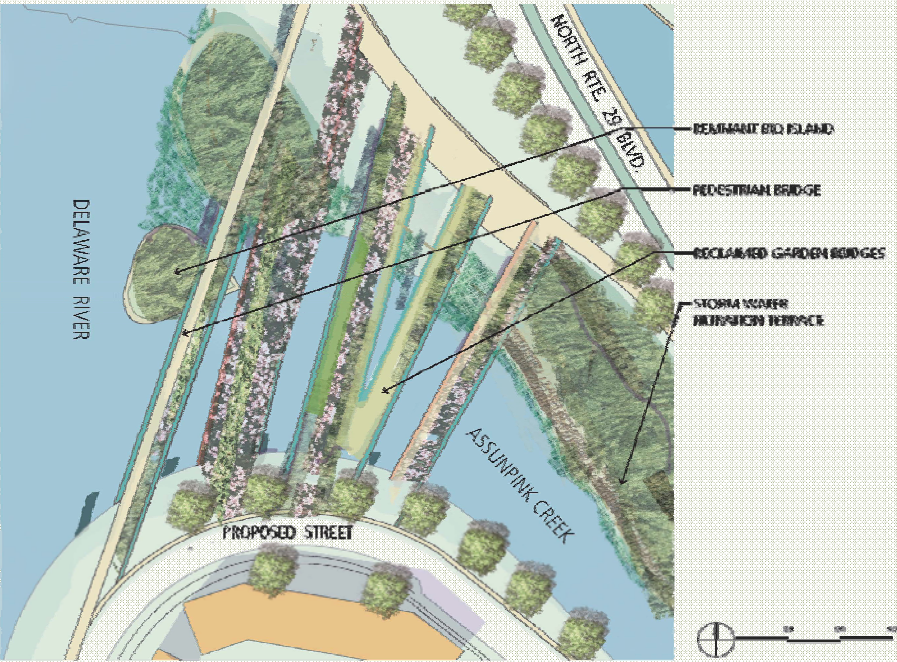
Design and Graphics by Wallace, Roberts & Todd, LLC



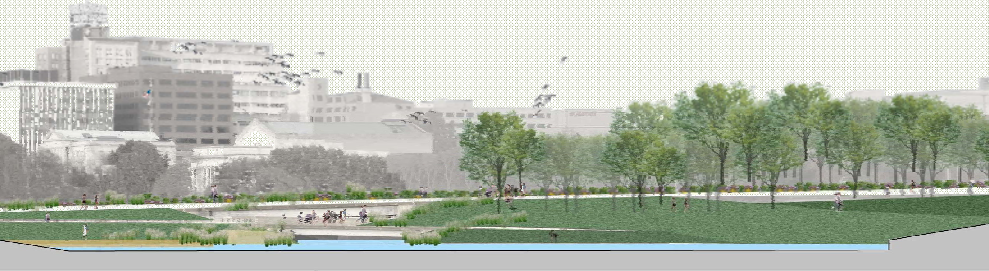
These vignettes from the winning park design developed by WRT, Philadelphia, depict an exciting new era for Downtown Trenton and the Capital Park System.

The design builds upon key proposals of the Downtown Capital District Master Plan including the reconstruction of Route 29, reclaimed connections to the Delaware River and establishment of a new mixed-use riverfront neighborhood.

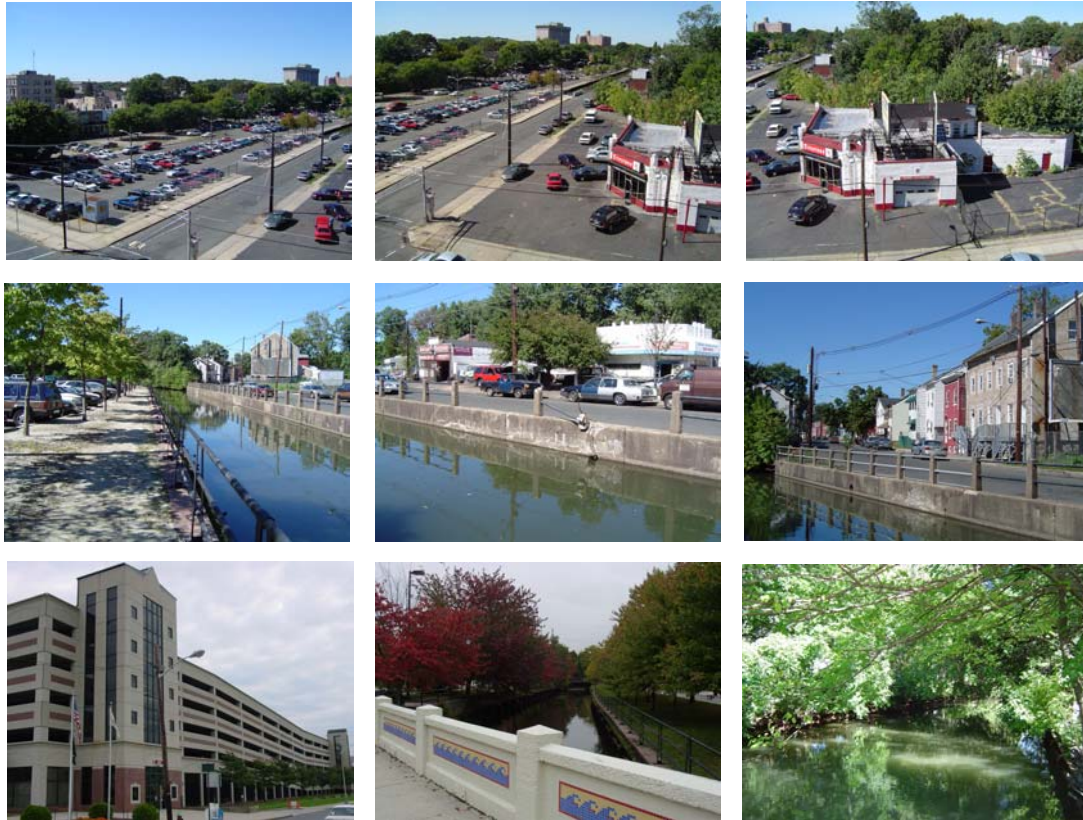
Features include improvements to the Capital Complex grounds, pedestrian bridge and walkway features to link the State House and the riverfront, activity centers such as an environment education center, river cafe and media area, and a series of garden bridges to a new riverfront neighborhood.



Garden Bridges at the confluence of the Assunpink Creek and Delaware River link the Capital Complex with a reclaimed riverfront and new mixed-use neighborhood.



View of Downtown Trenton from the reclaimed Delaware Riverfront.



The D&R Canal is envisioned as the axis for redevelopment in the Capital District, with residential and open space development replacing the existing landscape of surface parking lots.

C. Canal Banks Residential Redevelopment & Park

This triangular parcel north of West Hanover Street and adjacent to the D&R Canal is a major opportunity site for residential and open space redevelopment. As illustrated in plan view and in the image on the following page, a series of attached townhomes or row houses could be constructed facing a new public park. The State-employee parking that is currently serviced on this lot would be relocated into new structured parking facilities.



Mixed-density prototypes such as these are suitable for Sites B and D.

D. Willow Street Mixed-Use Development

Although technically part of the Downtown Core subdistrict, this site is an essential element of the Capital District Neighborhood redevelopment strategy. A major mixed-use development is proposed for the entire city block bounded by Bank and West Hanover Streets, east of Willow Street. This approximately 95,500 sf area is currently utilized as a surface parking lot.

The development could include a major parking structure within the center of the site, lined with one or two stories of commercial uses and a mix of residential unit types, as illustrated by the pictures above. Three levels of parking could be constructed within the core of the development, yielding approximately 470 parking spaces and allowing for 35,000 sf of commercial/office liner space per level. Residential development is proposed as a series of mixed-density, medium- and low-rise buildings with a total of approximately 350 residential units.



Capital District Neighborhood Vision

These photos document the character of the Capital District Neighborhood as viewed from Willow Street today. The environment is dominated by surface parking lots which are filled throughout weekday work hours but sit vacant during off hours.

The Concept Plan below depicts the tremendous potential of the Capital District Neighborhood to become a **“Residential Community of Choice”** in Trenton. This opportunity site along the D&R Canal should be a key piece of Trenton’s strategy to attract businesses and workers back into the heart of the City. As this vision involves the strategic reuse of surface parking lots for State employees, Trenton will require State partners if this vision is to become reality.



Capital District Neighborhood Park
Development of a signature park at the corner of Willow and Bank Streets would establish a neighborhood focal point and an amenity around which new residential development may be focused.



Residential Reinvestment
Open space and residential development in the heart of the Capital District Neighborhood will provide the impetus for broader residential reinvestment in the neighborhood.



Expanded Choice in Housing Types
The Capital District Neighborhood is envisioned to feature a variety of housing types and styles to appeal to a wide cross-section of residents, including families, empty nesters, working professionals and State officials.



Neighborhood Commercial Opportunities
The redevelopment of residential areas will provide new and expanded opportunities for commercial and retail services in the neighborhood.

E. Capital District Neighborhood Commercial

A small node of commercial space would benefit residents and workers within the core area of this neighborhood. Building upon the commercial service land use that is already in place at the corner of Willow and Bank Streets, depicted as Site E, new uses such as a coffee shop, restaurant and/or other types of small business could flourish here. Existing structures could be renovated for adaptive reuse, or new structures could be constructed. Redevelopment of these sites is envisioned to occur when current property owners decide to redevelop or sell their properties.

F. Belvedere Greenway

In addition to the D&R Canal, an abandoned railroad right-of-way located between Spring and Bellevue Streets, west of Willow Street, provides an excellent opportunity to develop a linear green space and bike trail to anchor new residential development in the northern portion of the Capital District Neighborhood.

The Belvedere Greenway would intersect with the D&R Canal near Willow Street, and linkage of these two greenway corridor amenities support the broader strategy to develop an interconnected regional trail system that links each neighborhood to the Delaware River.

G. Pennington Avenue/Battle Monument Redevelopment

This site is targeted for an Early Childhood school built by School Construction Corporation and operated by Trenton Board of Education. Any alternate uses for this site should take the context and scale of surrounding historic uses into consideration. Potential uses could include open space or mixed-use development.



A linear park and trail amenity along an abandoned railroad right-of-way is proposed to anchor housing renovation and new housing development in the northern portion of the Capital District Neighborhood.