

CCRC RENAISSANCE PLAN UPDATE

Public Comments Received

PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THROUGH PORTAL:

1. Dan Fatton, Trenton Planning Board Chair
2. Andrew Giraldi
3. James Harford, Friend of the Trenton Meeting
4. Trish Long
5. Eric Maywar, City of Trenton, Division of Economic Development
6. Charlie Romanow
7. Nick Shedlock
8. Temple Graduate Students and Eric Tamulonis, PLA, ASLA, LEED AP, Adjunct Professor, Tyler School of Art & Architecture, Temple University
9. Janice Vasicek, Colony at Mill Hill Resident
10. The Honorable Robin Vaughn, Trenton City Council

SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL

11. Randy Baum, Trenton Planning Board

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC HEARING – 8/17/21

12. The Honorable Joseph Harrison, Trenton City Council
13. Anne LaBate, President, Segal Labate Commercial Real Estate
14. The Honorable Santiago Rodriguez, Trenton City Council

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC HEARING – 8/19/21

15. The Honorable Reed Gusciora, Mayor, City of Trenton

Daniel P. Fatton

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Capital City Redevelopment Corporation
28 W State St # 714
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September 25, 2021

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the CCRC Renaissance Plan. Special thanks for extending the deadline to allow the City of Trenton Planning Board members time to fully review the 80+ page plan.

Overall, this plan is a marked improvement and makes some really helpful recommendations. Here are some additional thoughts to clarify and strengthen the document:

On page 17, "Trenton's future role as a full partner in the region's development will spring from a renewed ability to add private investment to its already solid base of history, culture, and the public sector." This role is not some hypothetical for the "future" and that word should be deleted. Trenton is the capital, and has a role as a full partner right now, today.

Also on page 17, there is a laudable list of goals. Thank you for articulating them. However, I'd strongly suggest adding at least one item related to the state's own facilities - the state buildings and especially the surface parking lots occupy a large percentage of the developable land. "Assessing and regularly revisiting the state's own footprint to fully align/integrate with the vision for a revitalized downtown core, as articulated within the Trenton 250 master plan," or something along those lines seems like a missing element which is addressed throughout the plan, but not captured as an overarching goal.

Page 18, might consider inserting "proposed" revisions to the Land Development Ordinance. It was recently introduced, but has not yet been formally adopted.

I think the section on page 21 about outreach and engagement is quite strong. However, the paragraph about the planning approach includes this line, "Private sector investment in Trenton is needed to broaden the City's economic base and make it less dependent upon the **growth of State government**." Agreed that private sector investment is needed, but no one is asking for the state government to *grow* in order for Trenton to succeed. However, there have been clear calls for a more responsive partnership with the state, particularly for EXISTING development. This document does not even mention, let alone fully address the need for the state to fairly compensate the City for use of prime developable land, the wear and tear on streets, fire service, etc. My understanding is the state now provides zero PILOT payments for the new Health and Taxation buildings. Although the Murphy administration has rightfully restored Capital City Aid in the state budget, it is woefully small, particularly compared to previous state support. State aid is not explicitly mentioned anywhere in the document?

The goals and objectives on page 25 are great. Thank you. 2a should be reordered to "provide ease of access for **residents**, workers, and visitors alike."

On page 26, under 5 for circulation goals, it might be worth mentioning the electric vehicle car share program (funded by NJDEP, managed by Isles) which we are trying to initiate in 2022 to provide more mobility options (without GHG emissions) for low-income residents.

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On page 34, the paragraph about the State Capitol Park could really use some additional text. The current status is depressing. Any progress that was made on that site has been lost with a literal mountain of dirt welcoming folks to Trenton. What is the timetable? What will the state do to further the vision? The image is pretty, but the current status certainly is not. Please expand.

On page 35, the paragraph about Calhoun Street bridge is good. However, the other issue is the maintenance of the existing overpass bridge. IF pedestrians can navigate the terrible intersection at State and Calhoun to approach the bridge, they are regularly met with trash, dirt and debris on the "existing sidewalks". Is it the state's responsibility to maintain that stretch of road? Something should be mentioned about maintenance, which is currently non-existent.

On page 38, it might be worth mentioning that the City formally adopted the Creek to Canal District plan as the first neighborhood plan adopted as part of the Trenton 250 master plan. I was also under the impression that either Trenton Parking Authority or Greater Trenton had already circulated the RFI/RFP for 120 Front Street garage, but thank you for calling attention to this and underscoring the need for **immediate** action.

Yes for the joint action on the Marriott hotel, but the piece that the State could help activate right away, even before the property is rehabbed is the Canal path in the back of the hotel. I believe that is State property and it's overgrown and in desperate need of attention and regular maintenance.

Page 39 - Battle Monument Park - great section. Worth noting that the D&R Canal Path crossings at Warren and Broad are poorly marked, and not accessible for those in a wheelchair or traveling by bike. Curb cuts, mid-block crosswalk signage/stripping, etc. would greatly improve visibility and safety.

The Central Business District section does not mention two critical opportunities to foster redevelopment, walkability, livability, etc. First, the daylighting project....Army Corps of Engineers considers this done, but we can already see the deficiencies in the upkeep of the new park parcel, an extension of Mill Hill Park, but treated as a different space. It's overgrown after one season. The State could help finish the area that HHS employees used to park on by adding seating, etc. The Broad Street Bridge is another major omission, and NJDOT could assist the City with pushing Vicinity to relocate pipes (used to heat State buildings) under the bridge, as the City has formally requested on multiple occasions.

Converting Assunpink Way to a one-way street should be an easy fix and allow the removal of the hideous highway guardrail that currently mars the new park. You mention the activation of Assunpink Creek walkways in the Mill Hill section, but this could certainly be strengthened and the State/CCRC contributions need to be spelled out.

On page 42, the mention of the trolley is great, but maybe it could be updated to include electric options, more of a circulator bus in the style of Washington, DC. RGGI funds could certainly be used for the purchase of the vehicle, but the State and City could also coordinate with Isles to make use of the charging infrastructure being developed for the e-mobility project I mentioned earlier.

On page 45, the priority action for Route 29 realignment is nicely written. It might also make sense to mention that the current configuration is an environmental injustice and reconnecting Trenton to the riverfront would be in service of the State's commitment to equity.

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Page 46, number 4, the Health and Ag buildings are in the midst of being demolished, when this was written it may have been scheduled, but now is the time for additional community dialogue about the future of this site.

Page 49, number 3, thank you! YES.

On page 55, looking at the figure, it seems the most northern section of the Riverfront district could instead be utilized as open space for a continuous green/park system, connecting Stacy Park to Mill Hill, etc. Thinking about at least a sliver of that property (currently a parking lot, I believe) south of War Memorial to provide continuity in the park system might be worth considering.

On page 56, I like that list, but is it prioritized? It's not in alpha order, and hard to know if CCRC is suggesting that DEP parking lots are first priority, or if that was just random. Might help to say, "presented in no particular prioritized manner," or something like that. Or to put them in alpha, or to actually rank them.

On page 58, under number 4, private entities such as whom? Vicinity? Who else? Please provide examples or be specific.

On page 59, for signage, there also needs to be care and consideration for removing old signs. Part of the reason way finding is difficult in some areas is an overabundance of signs, some of which aren't even relevant any more. It would be helpful if the CCRC and State could take care to inventory and assess the State's own signage. The new State office signs look great. Can old signs also be removed? The image on that page is a great example (not for the State) but of old irrelevant signs that still exist even when restaurants are long gone.

On page 66, in discussing the roadway, it is written in a car-oriented manner. "High volumes of traffic" should really be "high volumes of vehicular traffic" and it would be nice if it could be noted here that although there is a decent amount of bicycle and pedestrian traffic, the roadway system is entirely oriented toward vehicles.

On page 72, great ideas for interventions of the Calhoun Street overpass, please add regular maintenance to the list.

Within the transportation demand section, not totally clear, but I hope you are suggesting *eliminating* the free parking for all state employees. If so, maybe clarify the language?

On page 73, it might be worth mentioning that both Mercer County and the State of New Jersey also have Complete Streets policies.

On page 74, love number 5 - that would be very appreciated. Just hoping you might add "Market, Broad and State Streets" to the list as major thoroughfares that I believe are partially State roads.

On page 74, number 3 in multi-modal access references figure 31 as showing a bike map, but figure 31 is about off-street parking. Need to update the figure, or the text. Later in the parking section, the plan references figures 32/33, but it really is figures 31/32, so maybe a map was dropped?

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On page 77, you reference parking ratios from the LDO, but I believe the draft LDO eliminates parking minimums except for very dense new developments...so maybe update that text?

Thanks again to the folks that drafted this plan. Lots of good material here, and I'd love to see a Top Ten list, or some other visual about the CCRC priorities once the plan is adopted.

Please let me know if I can clarify any of these comments.

Best Regards,

Dan Fatton
Chair
Planning Board of the City of Trenton

Capital City Renaissance Plan (2021 Update): Comments

- P. 21-22: Hyphenate “minority owned.”
- P. 22: Item #3 (Land Use Element)
 - i.: Remove “Recommend.”
 - li.: Remove “Contain.”
 - lii.: Remove “Propose.”
 - Iv.: Remove “Set forth.”
- P. 26: Item #5 (“Improve the circulation and parking network downtown”)
 - b.: For the sake of equity, I would prefer if this plan encouraged the prioritization of walking, biking, and mass transit over automobiles. Please consider rephrasing the sentence from “Establish a balance between mass transit and private auto access to the District.” to “Prioritize walking, biking, and mass transit over private automobiles to improve equitable access to the District.”
 - Considering the talk in this document of redeveloping under-occupied parking lots, encouraging walking and biking, and making Trenton an attractive option for citizens to call “home,” why shouldn’t I expect some government workers who currently drive into Trenton choose to reside within the city? The more attractive Trenton becomes and friendly to non-motorized commuters, the more likely commuters will decide to live in the city, and the more likely they will decide not to drive.
- P. 32: It’s not “Delaware Valley Region Planning Commission,” but “Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.”

- P. 35: “The CCRC will actively work to support efforts to identify and implement solutions to that build on previous planning findings.”
 - Remove “to” from between “solutions” and “that.”
- P. 45: “Most of the traffic on the highway has destinations within the Capital District, however, the existing design of Route 29 does not provide easy access to much of core of the downtown area.”
 - Break up and simplify this sentence into two sentences: “Most of the traffic on the highway has destinations within the District. However, the existing design of Route 29 does not provide easy access to much of the downtown core.”
- P. 47: Figure 17
 - The key to this map skips over the number “3.”
- P. 49: “Most of these sites are comprised of vacant and abandoned properties or surface parking lots: underutilized for their proximity to a transit asset.”
 - Simplify this sentence as: “Vacant and abandoned properties and underutilized surface parking lots comprise most of these sites.”
- P. 59: Item “E” (“Signage”)
 - “Sign should be placed so that they do not impair traffic safety.”
 - Change “Sign” to “Signs.”
- P. 63: “If the District is to become an increasingly vital and enjoyable place to work, shop and live, it will be important to implement policies, goals, and objectives discussed throughout the Renaissance Plan which are intended to accommodate all modes of traffic while not allowing vehicles to dominate the

urban environment. The needs of vehicles should be balanced with the other needs of the city.”

- Echoing comments that I made earlier in this document, I want to see this narrative about balancing transport modes to stop. Of course, there’s a role for cars, but they shouldn’t inconvenience non-motorized travelers.
- P. 67: “Streets and the amenities provide are a key tool for creating a sense of place, safety, and community within an area.”
 - I don’t understand this sentence. For clarification, please rewrite it.
- P. 68, 72, 73, 74: I’m confused by the two sections labeled “A.” It seems that the section on page 72 should be labeled “B,” which would affect the labeling of sections on pages 73 and 74.
- P. 72: Section “A” (“Management of Transportation Demand”)
 - “Policies such as the provision for free parking to all public employees as well as additional housing policies should be reviewed to incentivize these employees to live in the District, thus reducing the strain on the transportation network and infusing the District with activity beyond business hours.”
 - How will providing “free parking” incentivize public employees to live in the District and reduce “the strain on the transportation network”? If anything, I fear that providing free parking will impede the ability of governments and the CCRC to fulfill the goals and objectives of this plan and instead put more of a strain on Trenton’s road network. What incentives exist to change how commuters and

tourists travel about Trenton and Mercer County if parking is free? Why should I expect commuters and tourists to choose alternative travel modes over private automobiles when they know that parking throughout this District will be free? The more available and accessible free parking is, the more people want it, and less land might exist for more necessary and beneficial land uses as the District's needs change over time. Land use placement and intensity magnify impact in a land-locked town such as Trenton and one as small in scale. I consider the goals and objectives of this plan to be worth pursuing. Please don't let car culture get in the way of fulfilling this plan.

- P. 74: Section "C" ("Automobile Access")
 - Item "2": "To serve the Capital District's many different visitors, a highway system should balance the goal of direct access to local streets with the need for adequate peak-hour capacity."
 - Multi-modal urban boulevards might accomplish this goal. Route 29 as an urban boulevard is a step in the right direction. However, I don't want to see Trenton stop there: I want to see a study conducted on converting Route 1 (between Warren Street and the Business Route 1/North Route 206 interchange) into an urban boulevard. A multi-modal urban boulevard version of this section of Route 1 could increase its carrying capacity by allowing a bus-only

lane in each direction and permit better connectivity with streets on both sides of it to improve accessibility.

In general, I appreciate the effort of creating the Capital City Renaissance Plan, its layout, and content.



September 23, 2021

The Capital City Redevelopment Corporation
C/O The New Jersey Economic Development Authority

To whom it concern,

I am responding to your request for public comment on the recently published CCRC + The Renaissance Plan document.

The Problem: It is common knowledge since the 1955 flood the city of Trenton has become a hollowed out hub of automobile commuters, absentee or distant property owners, low income service workers expected to commute elsewhere and the endless stream of the impoverished who know that Trenton is a place where no one goes hungry and will always find some kind shelter from the weather.

20 years of urban planning you say? Yes there are signs of a turn around but by pure incompetence or criminal negligence it remains a dysfunctional city. This plan doesn't address any issue satisfactorily. After reading about the intentions of the CCRC it is clear to me there is no urgency to make the city one that will ever achieve the proposed Renaissance but continue developing with poorly administered and insufficient incentives.

The plan continues to treat the automobile as a "priority" and seeks revival sparked by the lure of tourists. This isn't going to make the city more desirable for those who wish to live where they work. The crisis at hand is far greater than the small area carved out in the central district marked out in this document. That doesn't mean Trenton can't be become a beacon for the great change that is being asked for by so many. The gestures toward separating automobile traffic from pedestrian and bike pathways are good intentions but your plan really doesn't offer much to facilitate the great change needed.

The Goal: To respond to the looming economic and environmental crisis. Trenton is a key city for this kind of turn around. Make the autoless the priority. Who is this? The next generation student, the young urban professional and the current underserved.

The Solution: Invest in mass transportation. Number 1 on the list would be the urban bus. A twenty-year-old female should not be fearful of taking a bus from North Trenton to State and Montgomery. A universal pass transit card should be purchasable at many places and cash exchange on the bus should be reduced. More buses. We should be able to get to Trenton from Princeton and the reverse by 8am every day of the week. The 45 minute door to door anywhere within in city limits should be an immediate goal. Divest in parking profit. There are enough empty lots. Why is it so hard to park and so expensive? Free on Saturdays until noon. Free on Sundays. Give the residents a break. Affordable housing. I don't mean subsidized housing. Affordable housing policies through out the states have made a mockery of the 15\$ living wage that won't be in effect for years to come. I don't mean building substandard housing that is government subsidized to keep developers profiteering. (this is a complicated one but there are those that are addressing this). Develop MCCC and Thomas Edison into Universities with housing. Create advanced safe and car-free passageways for the pedestrian by building over and underpass ways. Install safe passage emergency kiosks through out the city. The Non-profits like TDA and Passage Theatre should have office space that employees should be proud to work in.

The money exists. New technologies exist.

Jim Harford Jr.

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CCRC RENAISSANCE PLAN COMMENTS

AS OF SEPT. 27, 2021

4. Name: Trish Long

Email: trishkabobber@gmail.com

Phone Number: 6092035590

Are you a Trenton Resident: Yes

Comments: Where can I find a list of the members of the CCRC?

CCRC RENAISSANCE PLAN COMMENTS

AS OF SEPT. 27, 2021

5. Name: Eric Maywar

Organization: City of Trenton, Division of Economic Development

Email: emaywar@trentonnj.org

Phone Number: 6099893529

Are you a Trenton Resident: Yes

Comments: Overall, I have no objections.

Note, the Division of Economic Development of the City of Trenton in coordination with the Trenton Downtown Association is creating a detailed, business and property owner focused, property-by-property, issue-by-issue action plan for Broad Street from Perry to Front including Veterans Park. It will address vacant properties, safety, business attraction, building improvement, beautification and anti-loitering measures. As a viable action plan it will detail deliverables, timetables, funding sources and the responsible parties for each action item. Anybody with resources is welcome to join us in implementation. Contact me at emaywar@trentonnj.org.

I am uncomfortable with any active displacement of commercial or residential tenants as detailed in the relocation plan (where the government forces a sale of a property from a private individual). I am glad that you are including measures to mitigate secondary relocation due to rising rents.

CCRC RENAISSANCE PLAN COMMENTS

AS OF SEPT. 27, 2021

6. Name: Charlie Romanow

Email: romanowc@gmail.com

Are you a Trenton Resident: Yes

Comments:

1. on page 10, may be good to label Pennsylvania
 2. on page 10 the labels for U.S. 1 and U.S. 206 are formatted like an interstate; should have a U.S Route icon
 3. on page 10 the labels are too small; may also want to label the State House, and the River Line
 4. on page 10 there are numbers all over the map (perhaps block numbers?); these don't seem necessary and are distracting; if include should be in a legend
 5. on page 10 the scale and north arrow are very difficult to read with the black text; perhaps white text would show better
 6. There's a white rectangle on page 12, shouldn't be there
 7. On page 15, "Kerney" is misspelled
 8. On page 17 there's an extra space between "attend" and "events"
 9. The map on page 19 is difficult to read, even when zoomed in
 10. On page 30 there's an extra space between "it" and "altogether"
 11. In the map on page 41, it looks like Livingston St continues through Mill Hill to Jackson and Mercer Streets, but it dead ends southwest of Jackson. Perhaps moving the road's label would make this clearer.
 12. On page 44, it states that NJ 29 goes "from outlying suburbs to the east and west..." Perhaps saying "north and south" would be more accurate.
 13. On page 45 it states "as the result, Downtown Trenton became disconnected from the river, both physically and spiritually." I don't think "spiritually" is the correct word for this. Perhaps "symbolically" or "socially" would be more apt.
 14. On page 45 the word "of" is missing in "enabling the restoration Stacy Park"...
 15. Are several white rectangles on page 50
 16. In the map on page 64, U.S. 1 and U.S. 206 have Interstate labels instead of U.S. Route labels
 17. Are several instances of Figure's being improperly cross-referenced. One example is "Figure 25 highlights the location..." on page 67. Should be Figure 24.
 18. The legend on the map on page 73 is illegible.
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CCRC RENAISSANCE PLAN COMMENTS

AS OF SEPT. 27, 2021

7. Name: Nick Shedlock

Email: Nshedlock84@gmail.com

Phone Number: 6095100903

Are you a Trenton Resident: Yes

Comments: I would love to see Trenton become the up and up. Let's all do this together.

PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THROUGH PORTAL

**Temple Graduate Students and Eric Tamulonis, PLA, ASLA, LEED AP,
Adjunct Professor, Tyler School of Art & Architecture, Temple University**

Sharefile link: <https://njeda.sharefile.com/d-s11fc29a0845c463fa9a9179b761a56b7>

CCRC RENAISSANCE PLAN COMMENTS

AS OF SEPT. 27, 2021

9 Name: Janice Vasicek

Organization: Colony at Mill Hill resident

Email: jvasicek4@comcast.net

Phone Number: 6093961215

Are you a Trenton Resident: Yes

Comments

It is an interesting plan, but none of the already finished projects have made any difference to Trenton residents. There is no safety, garbage is all over, police need help.

CCRC RENAISSANCE PLAN COMMENTS

AS OF SEPT. 27, 2021

CCRC RENAISSANCE PLAN COMMENTS

AS OF SEPT. 27, 2021

10. Name: Robin Vaughn

Organization: City Council and Redevelopment Authority

Email: rvaughn@trentonnj.org

Phone Number: (609)331-6555

Are you a Trenton Resident: Yes

Comments: Has this plan been presented, submitted, reviewed and approved by the City of Trenton's full governing body, the city's redevelopment authority, and its redevelopment counsel? We must ensure that the plan is fully compliant with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1.

COMMENTS SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL

Randy Baum, Trenton Planning Board

Sharefile link: <https://njeda.sharefile.com/d-s17f9692b60b242ffb62362950f39c901>

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC HEARING, 8/17/21

Trenton Councilman Joseph Harrison

Councilman Harrison stated that the draft update was positive and thanked everyone involved for their hard work. Councilman Harrison asked how soon after the presentation to the Planning Board on August 26th would one be given to the City Council. Ms. Esser said there is no presentation planned for City Council.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC HEARING, 8/17/21

Anne LaBate, President, Segal LaBate Commercial Real Estate

Ms. LaBate addressed the board stating that she was familiar with the Renaissance Plan regarding the Boulevard in 1989. She asked if there were any budget allocations for the boulevard moving forward, and what happens next? Chairman Inverso stated that financial resources are needed. Ms. LaBate asked how can we position the City to get national recognition. Ms. LaBate said that there was extensive work done during the McGreevey administration. She asked if engineering was next, and if DOT could release the work done and put stimulus money into it.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC HEARING, 8/17/21

Trenton Councilman Santiago Rodriguez

Councilman Rodriguez stated that he agrees with Ms. LaBate, and added he's been following since 1989. Thousands have been spent on planning, but nothing ever happens. He stated that there are not many Trentonians on these committees, and there's a total disregard for City Council. He's been in City Council for three years and hasn't heard from the CCRC in the last three years.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC HEARING, 8/19/21

Mayor Reed Gusciora, City of Trenton

stated that he would like an opportunity to sit with Ms. Hindenlang and provide some tweaks. He noted that there is a slight diversity of businesses but no diversity of residents, and the report looks like it has gentrification all over it. There is one small sliver of redevelopment projects with the Renaissance Plan Update. The City is about to lobby for the Boulevard project.

Mayor Gusciora added that recently, he met with residents of the Kingsbury Twin Towers, and that they would like the buildings taken down. He noted that the buildings are a product of 1960s Urban Planning and are still there in the presentation.

The Mayor added that the City is trying to install an Arts District on East Hanover Street, east of North Broad Street.

The mayor added that the presentation didn't really mention Mercer County College, which is part of the fabric of the community. Also, regarding the Central Business District, the City does not want a new parking garage. The City would like a new mixed-use space there, to link the Capital District with the rest of the City.