



**CAPITAL CITY  
RIVERFRONT PLAN:  
FRAMEWORK**



CAPITAL  
CITY

*Riverfront*

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# INTRODUCTION

## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

This Capital City Riverfront Plan: Framework (the "Framework") provides the foundation for the creation of a Capital City Riverfront Plan ("CCR Plan" or "the Plan"). It does NOT provide land use, transportation, or economic development recommendations. Instead, it provides recommendations for how to organize and coordinate efforts to reclaim, revitalize, and redevelop the Capital City Riverfront. This framework includes:

- **A proposal for the creation of a Capital City Riverfront Alliance:** The Alliance will be a consortium of stakeholders who are working together to make the riverfront a better place for residents.
- **A detailed scope of services for the creation of a Capital City Riverfront Plan:** That Plan will have a number of components, including a Civic Vision Plan and Action Plan.
- **Recommendations on potential ways to fund the various components of the Capital Riverfront Plan.**

The following section provides a brief history of efforts to revitalize the riverfront. It is followed by a summary of the recommendations made in the "Capital City Riverfront Alliance," "Capital City Riverfront Plan: Scope of Services," and "Funding The Capital City Riverfront Plan" sections of this report.

## BOUNDARIES

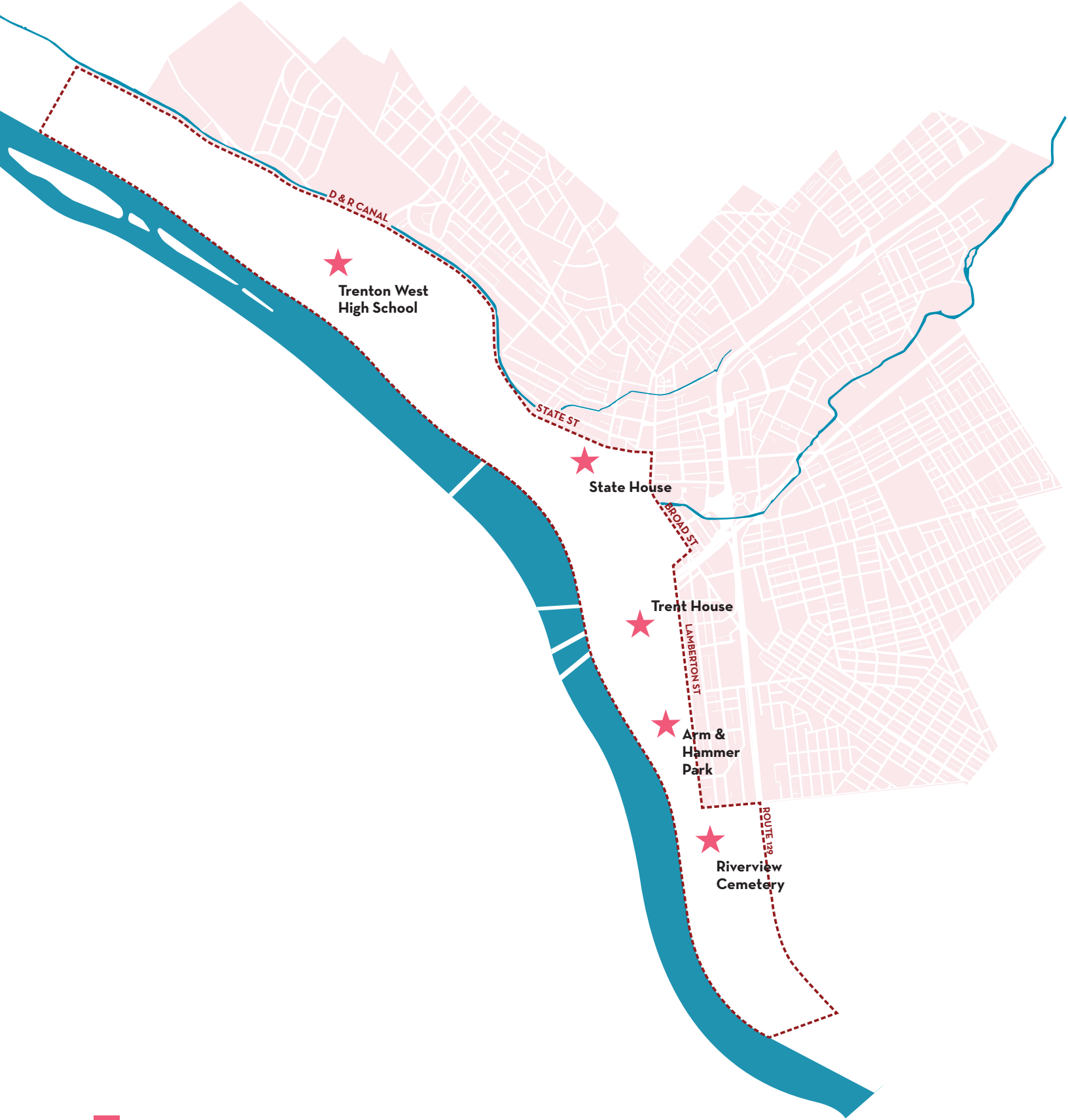
The map on the following page provides a preliminary boundary for the Capital City Riverfront Plan. This boundary should be refined as part of the continued planning process.

## SUPPORTING MATERIALS

This framework is accompanied by a number of products that provide additional background on the project or serve as promotional material that the Alliance can use to advocate for the riverfront:

- The Case for the Capital City Riverfront
- Capital City Riverfront Booklet
- Capital City Riverfront Video
- Capital City Riverfront Website
- Route 29 Boulevard Project History and Case Studies

# CAPITAL CITY RIVERFRONT BOUNDARY



# HISTORY OF RIVERFRONT REVITALIZATION PLANNING AND KEY FINDINGS

## HISTORY OF RIVERFRONT REVITALIZATION PLANNING

The following provides a brief summary of the Trenton's efforts to reconnect the city to its riverfront. More detailed discussion is included in the supporting documents identified at the end of this section.

### Early Ideas

In 1988, the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation (CCRC) was formed to guide the redevelopment efforts of the Capital District in the City of Trenton. As part of the redevelopment efforts, the CCRC and the City adopted a redevelopment plan (The Capital City Renaissance Plan, 1989) for downtown Trenton that called for the conversion of Route 29 from a high-speed, limited-access facility to an urban boulevard. That work culminated in 2009 when the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) published the NJDOT Route 29 Feasibility Assessment Report. Due to a number of factors, the project stalled shortly thereafter.

### Trenton250 Master Plan

In 2014, the city began its Trenton250 Master Planning process. The project developed a much needed community-driven vision for the City and strong policies for achieving it. In 2017, the City

adopted the first “core elements” of the Trenton250 Master Plan that identified the development of the Waterfront as a major Downtown initiative (For more details, see [Trenton250.org](http://Trenton250.org)). The Master Plan identified the development of a “[Waterfront Reclamation and Redevelopment Strategic Plan](#)” as key action to support its “[Reclaim and Redevelop the Waterfront](#)” initiative.

### "Strategic Planning"

**Phase I:** In 2015, the City contracted Group Melvin Design to lead a small project team to begin the development of a strategic plan for the waterfront. The team included:

- Dewberry, the original consultant on the NJDOT Route 29 Feasibility Assessment;
- Econsult Solutions, an economic development specialist able to provide input on the market potential in the area; and
- Gary Toth, a former DOT official.

Although Trenton250 had yet to be adopted, it was clear at that time that a strategic plan was necessary. The City also wanted to be prepared to lobby for funding if and when the state raised the gas tax to fund the Transportation Trust Fund.

This effort was primarily exploratory focused on reacquainting city officials with the previous planning work that had been completed and developing a strategy to advance the realignment of Route 29 as a means of improving access to the riverfront and creating development opportunities.

At that time, the project was referred to as the “Trenton Waterfront Reclamation and Redevelopment Project” and was primarily focused on the downtown. Given the political realities at that time, that plan recommended that the City try to attract development interest to the area. To do so, the City would need a detailed economic study that showed where there could be market demand, case studies demonstrating that boulevard re-alignment had been successful elsewhere, and strong promotional materials to persuade developers to take an interest in the project. To develop those materials, the plan recommended that the City apply to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission for a grant under the their Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI). In 2016, that grant was awarded.

**Phase II:** Like the first phase, the second phase of the project placed particular attention on understanding the political and technical realities that the City faced as they sought to revitalize the riverfront. Over the course of that project, those realities changed dramatically.

First, outgoing governor Chris Christie announced plans to build state office building in the downtown. That decision revealed that there was no shared vision for how development should proceed on riverfront. It was also clear there was a need to better coordinate efforts between multiple levels of government. The process also revealed that the

existing regulatory document controlling both public and private redevelopment along the riverfront were outdated.

Second, Phil Murphy was elected governor of New Jersey in 2018. His policy positions on the economy, environment, health, and transportation indicated that the City would have a strong partner in its efforts to revitalize the riverfront.

Third, Greater Trenton, an independent 501c-3 nonprofit, was formed with a mission to support and coordinate efforts to address community needs in the city. As an independent nonprofit, its foundation created an opportunity for a non-governmental entity to serve as a project coordinator.

During this phase, the project was renamed the “Capital City Riverfront” project. The project team determined that “Capital City” more accurately captured the spirit of this project as benefiting not only residents of the City of Trenton but also those who live in the region and state. The use of the term “riverfront” was intended to make the project less generic and call attention to the specific quality of Trenton’s waterfront.

## Stakeholder & Resident Engagement

Over the course of both phases of the project, the consultant team met with dozens of stakeholders and interested parties, including representatives from the City, County, and State as well as stakeholders who had experience or interest in the project. A public meeting was held in June of 2018 to present the findings and get participant feedback.

The City also developed an informal steering committee to help guide the process. Participants, many of whom have been working in Trenton for decades, provided much needed background information and direction to the consultant and City on how best to approach the project, as well as assistance with arranging meetings and feedback on the many iterations of the framework.

## STATE OF RIVERFRONT PLANNING

This section provides a summary of the findings of the first two "strategic planning" efforts.

After a thorough review of previous plans; additional technical analysis; and in-depth conversations with stakeholders, including local, county, and state officials; it became clear that:

- Implementation of the re-alignment concept as developed in the NJDOT Feasibility Analysis was unlikely to happen in the next 10-years. The cost of the project, estimated at \$136,600,000 in 2009 dollars, was unlikely to be funded by the state and would not be paid for by a private developer.
- There is a need to improve access to the waterfront along the entire stretch of Route 29, not just in the downtown.
- There are multiple, sometimes competing, ideas for what redevelopment along the riverfront should look like and little agreement on what plan, if any, should be followed. This is especially true in the Downtown.
- There is an ineffective regulatory framework for controlling both private and public development along the waterfront, especially in the Downtown Riverfront District.
- There is no entity, organization, or body that was in a position to effectively advocate for improving riverfront access or who could coordinate and implement the multiple ideas on how best to revitalize the waterfront.

## SUMMARY OF NEXT STEPS

Case study analysis demonstrated that successful revitalization was often dependent on cooperation between public-sector, private-sector, and community leaders. This finding was supported by the Brookings Institution publication, "Restoring Prosperity: The State Role in Revitalizing American's Older Industrial Cities." Often, leaders came together to form task forces, coalitions, and corporations to guide the revitalization process.

As such, it is recommended that a **Capital City Riverfront Alliance** be formed to advocate for the revitalization of the riverfront and to coordinate project implementation. The Alliance must include representative from the city, county, and state as well as residents of the City of Trenton. See "**Capital City Riverfront Alliance**" (page 9) for a detailed discussion of the goals, purpose, organization, and membership of the Alliance.

The Alliance should lead the formation of a Capital City Riverfront Plan, a key component of which will be the **Civic Vision Plan and Action Plan**. The Vision Plan must develop an incremental approach achieving the project goals. It must also create a "design vision" for redevelopment, especially in the downtown. This work must be developed with extensive involvement from residents throughout the region as well as representatives from key city, county, state, and federal agencies. Having political support at all levels of government is critical.

Once this plan is completed, the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation's (CCRC) Renaissance Plan must be substantially amended. That plan was written in 1989 and was supposed to guide CCRC through 2009. Likewise, the city's redevelopment plans should be amended to reflect the updated vision.

A detailed scope of services for this work is provided in "**Capital City Riverfront Plan: Scope of Services**" (page 19).

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# CAPITAL CITY RIVERFRONT ALLIANCE

## SUMMARY VISION FOR THE RIVERFRONT

The Capital City Riverfront is more than 6 miles of unrealized potential. It can be a local and regional destination, a source of pride for residents of the city and region, and a place that reconnects the region to its river roots.

It can be a place where people can run, relax, kayak, barbeque, or just take a really nice picture. Investments along the Riverfront can reveal the areas unique geological, historical, and ecological assets, making it a place not only to have fun but also a place to learn.

The Riverfront can be a place where people live and work. It can be a place where people get to enjoy the serenity of living next to a river, while being minutes away from a bustling downtown filled with restaurants, theaters, art studios, shopping, and more. It can be a place where people get to choose whether they walk, bike, take public transportation, or drive to the region's unparalleled economic and cultural opportunities.

All of this can be done in concert with improvements to the city and region's long-term environmental resiliency. New investment can promote cleaner air, reduced flooding, and better management of natural resources. The riverfront can be a place that contributes to the health of the residents of the entire region.

The potential for the Capital City Riverfront is almost endless.

## ALLIANCE GOALS

The Alliance will work to better connect the City of Trenton, and the region as a whole, to the Delaware River. The Alliance's primary goals will be to:

- Improve access to the riverfront and its natural resources;
- Create new public spaces along the riverfront;
- Attract new development to appropriate areas along the riverfront;
- Improve the environmental quality of the riverfront;
- Mitigate flooding and promote long-term resiliency;
- Promote the City's riverfront history;
- Ensure revitalization is equitable; and
- Involve residents and stakeholders in the revitalization process.



## ACTIVITIES OF ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP

Members should expect to be actively working on supporting the goals of the Alliance as well as advocating for the recommendations that come out of the Capital City Riverfront Plan. The primary activities of the Alliance will include:

### Supporting the creation of the CCR Plan

Members will support:

- The creation of the Capital City Riverfront Plan, including the Civic Vision Plan and Action Plan.
- Updates to the CCRC Renaissance Plan.
- Updates to the City's redevelopment plans and Trenton250 Master Plan to reflect the Civic Vision and Action Plan.

### Facilitating Public Engagement

Members will identify and support the creation of a public engagement strategy that ensures residents have meaningful involvement in the reclamation and redevelopment process.

### Advocating for the Plan

Members will advocate for the realization of the goals of the Alliance. This will include:

- New and improved connections across Route 29 along the entire riverfront, and especially in the downtown, that will improve the connections between the City and its river; and
- Converting Route 29 into a road that connects to the city's street grid and moves traffic at a speed that allows for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the street and access riverfront amenities.

### Identifying Projects

Members will work to identify:

- Short-term projects and activities that are geared towards improving access to the riverfront for Trenton and Mercer residents and visitors.

- Events and activities that could take place on the Riverfront that could demonstrate the transformative impact that reclamation and redevelopment could have on the area.
- Funding to support those efforts.

### Identifying Additional Partners

Members will work to identify potential (master) developers, businesses, institutions, and other entities who may be interested in investing in the riverfront.

### Finding Funding

Members will work to find funding for the creation of the Capital City Riverfront Plan as well as the necessary funds to implement the recommendations of the plan. This should include the identification of potential subsidies for private development that meets the vision articulated in the CCR Plan.

### Networking

It will be critical for Alliance members to gain the support from potential members early. As such, early Alliance members should expect to:

- Have unofficial meetings with stakeholders to gain their support.
- Make official presentations to stakeholders under the banner of the Capital City Riverfront Alliance.
- Set up meetings or other conversations between stakeholders and Alliance members.
- Get feedback from stakeholders and reporting back to the Alliance.

## ALLIANCE STRUCTURE

The Alliance will be made up of a broad range of stakeholders who have an interest in promoting the Capital City Riverfront. "**Potential Alliance Members**" (page 14) provides a detailed list of the organizations who should be invited to join the Alliance. In general, the Alliance should be as inclusive as possible.

### Executive Committee

The Alliance will have an executive committee, its membership will include representatives from:

- Greater Trenton
- Mayor of the City of Trenton
- Mercer County Executive
- Capital City Redevelopment Corporation
- Trenton Council of Civic Associations
- Capital City Community Coalition
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
- Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission
- NJ Treasury
- NJ Economic Development Authority
- NJ Department of Transportation
- NJ Department of Environmental Protection
- The Friends of the Capital City Riverfront
- Trenton residents (three), appointed by the Mayor

### Sponsoring Organization

Greater Trenton will serve as the sponsoring organization. They will be responsible for:

- Setting meeting agendas
- Organizing and staffing working meetings to resolve conflicts
- Coordinating advocacy efforts, including who should be approached about the project and when
- Approving all materials that are released under the Capital City Riverfront Alliance logo
- Coordinating the development of the Capital City Riverfront Plan and updates to Trenton250, as needed

### Citizen Participation

There is clearly strong interest from the public in revitalizing the Riverfront. There are, however, questions about how best to organize that energy.

The project team has suggested that residents join together to form a "**friends group,**" modeling the approach taken in many other cities. This group would be given representation on the executive committee, ensuring they remain informed about the project.

However, concern was raised by some residents that the group could be redundant, and also unnecessarily utilize one of residents most valuable resources: time. No definitive alternative course of action was defined.

The Alliance should continue to work with residents to identify the best mechanism for engagement. The goal should be to: **(1)** keep people informed about the process and **(2)** ensure they have ample opportunities to contribute to the revitalization of the Riverfront.

## POTENTIAL ALLIANCE MEMBERS

The following is a detailed list of agencies, institutions, and organization that should be invited to join the Alliance. This list is currently a DRAFT and may be expanded based on the feedback of new members as they join.

### City of Trenton

Mayor of Trenton  
City Council  
Directors of Public Works  
Director of Housing and Economic Development  
Trenton Parking Authority  
Landmarks Commission

### County

Brian Hughes, County Executive  
Freeholders (Board)  
Freeholders (Individual)  
Mercer County Improvement Authority  
Mercer County Departments of Planning and Economic Development and Sustainability

### State and Federal Legislators

Shirley Turner, State Senate  
Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, General Assembly  
Bonnie Watson Coleman, 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
Cory Booker, United States Senate  
Bob Menendez, United States Senate

### Governor's Office

Deputy Chief of Staff for Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs

### State Officials

Lt. Governor  
State Treasurer  
Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation  
Administrator of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

### Capital City Redevelopment Corporation

Board Members

### Regional Entities

D&R Greenway Land Trust  
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission  
Central Jersey Transportation Forum  
Delaware Joint Toll Bridge Commission

### Surrounding Municipalities

Morrisville, PA      Lawrence, NJ  
Ewing, NJ              Hamilton, NJ  
Hopewell, NJ

### New Jersey Economic Development

#### Authority

Chief Executive Officer  
President & Chief Operating Officer  
Executive Team  
Board Members

### State Agencies

NJ DOT  
NJ Department of Health  
NJ Department of Human Services  
NJ Department of Environmental Protection  
NJ Transit

### State Office Workers Union

Local Representative(s)

## POTENTIAL ALLIANCE MEMBERS

### Utilities / Service Providers

PSE&G  
Veiola Energy  
Waste Management

### Federal

US Army Corps of Engineers  
Federal Highway Administration  
US EPA

### Business Groups

Mid-Jersey Chamber  
Trenton Downtown Association  
Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce

### Universities, Colleges, Schools, Museums, and Other Institutions

Mercer County Community College  
Thomas Edison  
TCNJ  
Rider University  
Princeton University  
Trenton Public Schools  
Foundation Academy  
Trenton House  
Old Barracks Museum  
William Trent House  
New Jersey State Museum  
New Jersey State Library  
Patriots Theater at the War Memorial

### CDCs, Community Groups, Civic

### Associations, and Churches

Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association

Trenton Historical Society  
Shiloh Community Development Corp  
Reverends from churches throughout the City of Trenton

### CDCs, Community Groups, Civic

### Associations, and Churches (Cont'd)

Housing and Community Development Network  
GREEN TEAM - TRENTON  
Art Works  
Isles, Inc.  
Habitat of Humanities  
Trenton Council of Civic Associations  
I AM TRENTON  
Princeton Area Community Foundation  
Alliance for the Delaware River Watershed  
Trenton Health Team  
Trenton YMCA  
Children's Futures  
New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids  
New Jersey Future  
Audubon Society  
Rotary

### Media

Times of Trenton Editorial Board  
Trentonian  
Philadelphia Inquirer  
Star Ledger  
NJ.com  
Local Broadcast TV News Channels  
TRENTON350, WIMG

## SUPPORTING THE ALLIANCE

For the Alliance to be effective, it will need to demonstrate that it has support from its members. The following provides a variety of ways that members can demonstrate their support for the Alliance's efforts.

### Participation

The most important thing that a member can do is participate in the Alliance. That will include work on the activities identified on **page 11** of this Framework.

Organizations may further show support for the goals of the Alliance by designating an official representative from the organization or agency to serve on the Alliance.

Members who may not be able to formally join the Alliance should be encouraged to sending a non-member representative to the Alliance's meetings to ensure the agency or organization is well informed about the activities of the Alliance.

### Material Support

As the Alliance works toward revitalization of the Riverfront, there will be a need to obtain material support for both the Plan as well as the projects it identifies. Members can support these effort by providing:

- Funding for specific phases of the plan or the projects it recommends
- Support through the approvals process for projects. The support of representatives from the government agencies has the potential to streamline the approvals process
- Expert advice, training, or logistical support throughout the planning and project development process

### Publicizing Support

Participation and material support for the Plan and its recommendations will be critical. However, the importance of publicizing an agency's or organization's support should not be overlooked. To publicize support for the project, members and supporters should consider:

- Adopting resolutions and letters of support which can be published on the project website
- Writing to various media outlets in support of the effort
- Allowing the Alliance to use the agency or organization's logo on flyers and informational brochures
- Promoting the Plan and its recommendations on social media

## FIRST ROUND INVITATIONS TO ALLIANCE

### Executives

#### Governor Phil Murphy

- Capital City Redevelopment Corporation
- New Jersey Economic Development Authority
- New Jersey Department of Transportation
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
- New Jersey Treasury
- Potential Additions
  - › Department of Health
  - › Department of Labor and Workforce Development
  - › Department of Community Affairs

#### County Executive Brian Hughes

- Mercer County Improvement Authority
- Planning Department
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Economic Development and Sustainability
- Mercer County Community College
- Treasurer

#### Mayor of Trenton, Reed Gusciora

- Housing and Economic Development
- Public Works

### Legislators

- Verlina Reynolds-Jackson
- Shirly Turner
- Bonnie Watson Coleman
- City Council President
- Freeholder President

### Regional Governments, Community Groups, and Businesses Associations

- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
- Trenton Council of Civic Associations
- Princeton Area Community Foundation
- Trenton Health Team
- Capital City Community Coalition
- Trenton Downtown Association
- Mercer County Community College
- Thomas Edison
- Isles, Inc.
- Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission
- Mid-Jersey Chamber of Commerce
- Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission



## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TRENTON250 MASTER PLAN

The Capital City Riverfront Project supports the "Reclaim and Redevelop the Waterfront" initiative of the Trenton250 Master Plan.

The goals of the Alliance are consistent with the following goals identified in the Trenton250 Master Plan, a community-driven plan for the City of Trenton:

1. **Multi-Modal Transportation:** Trenton residents and visitors will characterize the city as "bikeable" and "walkable." Trentonians will be able to safely walk, bike, access transit, and share the streets with motorized vehicles. A high-quality, safe, and clearly navigable trail system and in-street network will form the foundation for a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network. People and goods will efficiently move throughout the City and beyond its borders.
2. **Natural Resources and Open Space:** Trenton will protect and promote access to its natural resources and open space, including natural ecosystems.
3. **Overall Economic Development:** Trenton will have a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy with a broad range of employment opportunities
4. **Downtown Economic Development:** Trenton's downtown and waterfront will be the economic center of Mercer County and the Central Jersey Region.
5. **Safe Environment:** Trenton will have a safe environment where residents are free from the hazards of land, air, water, and building contamination.
6. **Climate and Natural Hazard Resiliency:** Trenton's citizens, assets, and operations will have the best possible protection from the future effects of natural hazards.
7. **Land Use and Transportation Connection:** Trenton will have walkable neighborhoods and an active downtown that are supported by a multi-modal transportation system that includes, but is not limited to, high quality transit-oriented developments. Parking will no longer be a dominant land use in the City's downtown and will be managed effectively to support active land uses, streetscapes and economy, in accordance with Trenton's multi-modal objectives.
8. **Legibility:** Trenton will be a city that is easy to understand and navigate when driving, biking, walking, or taking transit.

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# CAPITAL CITY RIVERFRONT PLAN: SCOPE OF SERVICES

## INTRODUCTION

The following scope of services represents the third phase of an effort to reclaim and redevelop the Capital City Riverfront. The first phase, funded by the City of Trenton in 2015, took an exploratory approach and mainly focused on how to advance the realignment of Route 29 as designed by the New Jersey Department of Transportation in 2008.

### Phase I Strategic Planning

The City hired a consultant team which consisted of economic development experts, former NJDOT officials, transportation planners who specialize in the integration of land use and transportation, as well as former members of the Feasibility Analysis consultant team. That team identified a preliminary path forward for the realignment of Route 29.

At that time, the City also decided to rebrand the effort as the Downtown Capital City Riverfront Reclamation and Redevelopment Project. This new title emphasized the City's ultimate goal, reconnecting the City to the riverfront and redeveloping the underutilized land, and made clear that this effort was about more than promoting an infrastructure project.

Based on the recommendations from Phase I, the City of Trenton applied for and was awarded funding from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to continue work on the project. The scope of the project included the development of case studies, review of flood regulations, financial analysis, the creation of promotional materials for further advocacy, and amendments to what was then called the "strategic plan" and is now the Capital City Riverfront Plan: Framework.

### Phase II Strategic Planning

As part of Phase II, a steering committee was formed. This steering committee included representatives from Mercer County as well as local stakeholders. The steering committee has grown steadily as new members are identified. Ultimately, that group re-branded itself as the Capital City Riverfront Alliance. This new name emphasized that the group was an alliance for combined action that would help support reclamation and redevelopment that was consistent with a local and regional vision for the Riverfront.

## CURRENT STATE OF WATERFRONT PLANNING

This Framework is the result of two strategic planning efforts, a summary of which is provided in "[History of Riverfront Revitalization Planning](#)" (page 5). The following represents a summary of findings from the strategic planning work:

1. The Capital City Riverfront has been the focus of significant planning and design. Although much of the past work is still valid, many recommendations are infeasible because of their cost, the current state of the economy, and/or lack of an entity to lead their implementation.
2. Many of the stakeholders, especially political stakeholders, who participated in previous planning efforts are no longer in their positions.
3. Residents are no longer engaged in the effort to revitalize the riverfront and many are fatigued by past efforts that have produced limited outcomes.
4. Political, institutional, and public support for revitalization is fractured. There is little agreement on what the ultimate goals of revitalization should be or how those goals should be achieved.
5. There is no shared "design vision" for the riverfront. There is strong agreement around "revitalization," but no consensus on what that means to everyone. Different planning efforts have shown a variety of imagery to represent the scale, form, and style of future development, leaving residents and stakeholders with conflicting visions about what to expect from the process. The CCRC Renaissance Plan and the City's redevelopment plans provide little guidance because they are outdated.
6. Previous planning efforts tended to focus more on the physical vision and less on the strategy, actions, and partnerships needed to overcome the significant political, bureaucratic, and financial barriers to revitalization.
7. The focus on Route 29, and the costly re-alignment, as the preferred effort for remaking the riverfront has run into obstacles due to the lack of funding, limited institutionalized ownership of the project, and skepticism that such investments would attract the type of development envisioned.

These findings suggested that a new approach was needed. Instead of taking a "silver bullet" approach, the Alliance needs to take a strategic and incremental approach. This was supported by the case study analysis, which showed that in all instances in which a major infrastructure project was funded and constructed, it was the result of sustained efforts to win "small victories" which ultimately demonstrated the potential impact of the infrastructure investment.

In furtherance of that strategy, the Alliance will need to develop:

- A clear "design vision" for the Riverfront
- Codified measurable standards to evaluate public and private development and an efficient review process at all levels of government
- A framework that clearly defines the roles of the various agencies and government in overseeing reclamation and redevelopment

A strong yet flexible framework is needed to guide what is anticipated to be a multi-decade process to transform the riverfront. It will ensure that any new construction on the riverfront will reinforce the vision of reconnecting the city to the river and reclaiming it as a vital and vibrant part of Trenton and the region.

## PROPOSAL

The Capital City Riverfront Alliance will lead the development of the Capital City Riverfront Plan. The plan has been divided into sections to facilitate understanding and provide an opportunity to fund it incrementally.

### Immediate Opportunities

Time stops for nobody. Right now there are clear opportunities to better coordinate projects along the Riverfront as well as opportunities for "quick, cheap, and easy" wins to build support for the project.

**Meet and Coordinate:** The Alliance should begin meeting to discuss ongoing projects. They should begin working with community groups, residents, and stakeholder to identify early projects that can proceed without the need for comprehensive planning.

**Work and Publicize:** Participants at public events suggested early opportunities to build public support such as clean-ups, barbeques, river walks/runs, and riverfront tours, among other activities. Work should begin on planning and executing these projects. At the same time, the Alliance should leverage them as opportunities to talk about future phases of the Riverfront revitalization effort.

### Research & Analysis

The following research and analysis could be conducted prior to the following phases. However, it will be critical that such phases start shortly after the research is complete, to ensure that it remains relevant.

**Market Analysis:** A market report must be the foundation of the Plan. It should detail the trends in the local and regional market for residential, retail, commercial, and green/active public space. This information should be presented by defined sub-areas designated in conjunction with the Alliance.

The market analysis should provide, to the greatest extent possible, information about the impacts that public investments are likely to have on the value of private property. This information is often difficult to quantify, thus a presentation on the current literature may provide the necessary information to guide future planning.

Finally, the report should include information about existing subsidies and incentives that may be leveraged to encourage development. It should make recommendations on programs, incentives, or legislation that currently do not exist but which could potentially support the project goals.

In 2014, the city completed the "[Trenton City Wide Market Study](#)" which may form a strong foundation for this work. In 2018, Greater Trenton released the "[Downtown Trenton Residential Study](#)" which will also likely be useful.

**Mapping:** The Plan will require the creation of detailed maps of the area that include everything from geographic features, to flood elevations, and the location of utilities. Much of this information is already available but it must be collected into one place. Furthermore, a report on the existing conditions would be immensely valuable. This would ensure that everyone is "on the same page" regarding the existing opportunities and constraints facing revitalization. The reports from the Route 29 Boulevard Project as well as the Route 29 Tunnel are likely to be excellent resources for this work.

## Community & Stakeholder Education

A key component of Phase III will be educating residents, stakeholders, and representatives from all levels of government on the opportunities for and obstacles to revitalization, as well as the current conditions on the site. A robust public education effort will focus on:

1. **History of Revitalization:** There is a need to understand the extensive planning that has already been done on the riverfront, what was proposed, who was involved in the process, and what kept those proposals from moving forward.
2. **Technical Understanding:** Much technical work has been done to analyze the riverfront and make recommendations on how to address key issues. Much of that work is still valid. However, participants need to be educated on what is already known, what must be updated, and how those updates will impact revitalization efforts.
3. **Market Realities:** What can realistically be expected to be built on the riverfront in the next 5 to 10 years? What are the needs of the development community and what will make the site more or less attractive to them as they seek to invest?
4. **State Needs:** Much of the property is owned by the State of New Jersey, and stakeholders must be aware of their needs and how they will impact what is built on the riverfront.
5. **Implementation Tools:** The project must clearly identify what regulatory tools are available and what is possible or not possible to control.
6. **Funding:** There is a need to understand where project funding could come from and how that money is allocated. A realistic assessment of the viability of obtaining funding sources should also be presented.
7. **Environmental Constraints:** It will be critical to understand the environmental constraints of the current site and how that will impact revitalization.

## Public Meeting for Trenton250 Master Plan





## Civic Vision for the Riverfront

The Civic Vision will be the primary planning document that will form the foundation for the action plan, updates to the CCRC regulations, and the City of Trenton redevelopment plan. The Civic Vision plan should include the following components:

1. **Boundaries:** Refine the boundaries of the “riverfront” as well as necessary sub-areas or districts within the riverfront.
2. **Mapping:** Undertake a comprehensive mapping of the study area and complete plan review.
3. **Market Assessment:** Develop a realistic market assessment that projects the 10-year development potential within each sub-area.
4. **Design Vision:** Establish a “design” vision for the riverfront that is based on market realities and what the community desires that include: appropriate and inappropriate uses; and appropriate form and architectural elements, with a particular focus what should and should not be permitted on the ground floor of buildings. This design vision must establish a list of “must haves” and “must not haves” that development must follow. These must be rigid enough to ensure new construction meets the shared vision for the riverfront, but flexible enough to allow for the inclusion of unanticipated projects that would conform to the shared vision. The goal should be to have a plan that is viable for 10 years and does not have to be redone as market realities change.
5. **Route 29 Crossings:** Identify a practical long-term vision for new and improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Route 29 in the downtown as well as concrete short-term steps that ensure that the long-term strategy is not disrupted by new development.
6. **Public spaces and active recreation:** Identify locations along the riverfront that will allow for both passive and active recreations. This effort should include unlocking existing assets as well as opportunities for new spaces.

## Examples from "A Civic Vision for the Central Delaware" in Philadelphia



## Action Plan

The Action Plan will clearly articulate how the Civic Vision should be implemented. The approach should be incremental. To the greatest extent possible, projects should not be designed to rely on a single big move to realize the vision. The Action Plan should include the following information:

1. **Project Identification:** Identify short-, medium-, and long-term projects and activities that will help to reactivate the riverfront with an emphasis on projects that are either funded, have clear opportunities for funding, and/or are grounded in current market realities.
2. **Phasing:** Provide a sequence and phasing scheme that identifies early phase projects to overcome critical obstacles in order for revitalization efforts to begin. Chief among these, in the downtown, is addressing a long-term solution to surface parking and its impact on sites for future development.
3. **Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly identify the role of each government entity in guiding changes to the riverfront and make recommendations on how, if necessary, those entities ability to enforce regulation should be modified.
4. **Recommended Regulatory Changes:** Clearly identify the regulatory changes that need to take place to implement the Civic Vision. A critical question will be the role of the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation and to what role it plays in regulating public development in the area.
5. **Next Steps:** Many key stakeholders will already likely be members of the Alliance. Nonetheless, it will be critical to get all decision makers from all public entities to agree on the Civic Vision and the next steps. The plan must clearly identify the next steps that each entity must execute to demonstrate that they are committed to the revitalization process (e.g., allocate funding for a project, adopt a regulatory framework, dedicate staff time, pass legislation, etc.)
6. **First Project:** Develop a first-step project, even if temporary or seasonal, that clearly demonstrates how the Civic Vision will be implemented going forward.



## Capital City Redevelopment Corporation Renaissance Plan Update

The CCRC was created to plan, coordinate, and promote the public and private development within a capital district. New public projects are evaluated against the Capital City Renaissance Plan (1989). There is no requirement that development comply with the plan but its review provides an important forum for discussions about how things should develop within the boundaries of the CCRC district. The following tasks have been identified:

1. **New Plan:** After the development of the Civic Vision, it will be critical to fund, write, and adopt an update Capital City Renaissance Plan to ensure that it accurately reflects the civic vision. Ideally this document should resemble a zoning ordinance and provide clear, measurable standards for new development.

2. **Plan Review Process:** This process should carefully examine the process by which public projects are reviewed and investigate whether public projects should be required to conform to the CCRC plan or whether that plan should continue to be advisory.

## City of Trenton Redevelopment Plans

The City of Trenton's redevelopment plans, especially in the Downtown Waterfront District, will have to be updated to be in conformance with the Civic Vision.

### Trenton250 Updates

The Civic Vision should result in amendments to the Trenton250 Master Plan. This may include recommended changes to the Land Use and Community Form Plan, which would provide the foundation for updates to zoning and redevelopment.

## COSTS

The cost for this scope of work is likely to exceed \$1 million dollars. The high cost of this planning work may necessitate that the project be divided up into multiple phases, as detailed in the following section.

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# FUNDING THE CAPITAL CITY RIVERFRONT PLAN

Case studies of waterfront revitalization efforts in other cities have shown that securing seed funding for planning and implementation from a major stakeholder can demonstrate to other stakeholders the potential of the project. Securing this level of funding is difficult but achievable.

The Delaware River Waterfront Corporation's (DRWC) effort to revitalize the Philadelphia riverfront is instructive. In 2007, the "Civic Vision for the Central Delaware" was published which was the product of a year-long period of intense civic engagement and thinking about the future of the Delaware Riverfront. The plan was funded by the William Penn Foundation. That resulted in the Master Plan for the Delaware Riverfront, which later laid the groundwork for the development of I-95 Park Cap Project. That project, estimated to cost \$225 Million, is now currently funded through city, state, and philanthropic resources.

It is recommended that the Alliance develop two approaches to secure funding. The first focuses on approaching a philanthropic organization to provide a majority of the funding. Before doing so, the Alliance should demonstrate that the project has broad support in the greater Trenton community.

It is therefore recommended that the Alliance first approach the following organizations and attempt to secure partial funding before approaching a major funder:

- The Fund for New Jersey
- Mercer County Improvement Authority
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Authority
- City of Trenton (the Alliance should count the funding already invested by the City of Trenton)
- State of New Jersey (potentially as a commitment to fund the rewriting of the CCRC plan)
- Robert Wood Johnson
- Resiliency / Sustainability Funding
- Private and citizen donations, possibly raised through a fundraising event

At the same time, the Alliance should have an incremental strategy for moving forward, in case a major funder can not be identified. The Phase III Scope of Services could be broken down into smaller project that could be funded incrementally. Each of the deliverables (Immediate Opportunities, Research & Analysis, Community & Stakeholder Education, Civic Vision, Action Plan, Capital City

Redevelopment Corporation Renaissance Plan, and City of Trenton Redevelopment Area Plans) could potentially be funded independently. In addition, the preliminary mapping and market assessment could potentially be funded and completed before the work began on the education and civic vision efforts.

It should be noted, however, that the time and effort to manage revitalization of the Riverfront under an incremental approach will likely be higher. As such, the Alliance will need to identify ongoing funding to support project management.

Finally, the City should consider approaching regional universities as potential partners. A partnership with one or more universities could lead to a “studio” where students could provide recommendations on how to move the goals forward. A potential partnership between an urban planning, community development, engineering, or architectural program could add much needed ideas and recommendations to maintain interest in revitalization efforts while the Alliance seeks funding.

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