



THE CASE FOR THE CAPITAL CITY RIVERFRONT



CAPITAL
CITY

Riverfront

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Prepared by
Group Melvin Design

with the support of
EConsult Solutions, Dewberry, Gary Toth, and Josue Lora

Who ARE WE?

The Capital City Riverfront Alliance is a **non-partisan group** that advocates for rebuilding Trenton’s riverfront as a valuable resource to enhance quality of life and economic opportunities. Our membership includes residents of Trenton and the greater-Mercer region. We are business owners, civic leaders, community advocates, and pastors. Our members also include representatives from the city, county, and state government as well as the state legislature.

The coalition is committed to the **long-term, incremental revitalization of the Delaware River riverfront in Trenton**. Our work is guided by lessons learned from similar efforts in mid-sized cities across the country. Equally important, our work is grounded in the political and economic realities of development in Trenton.

Our goal is to **balance the needs of all stakeholders**, a task that is not easily achieved but to which we are very much committed. We are aware that there have been many ideas presented about what a “successful” riverfront should look like. We are committed to resolving these differences and developing workable strategies that produce tangible results.

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WHAT IS THE vision?

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 Delaware river roots.

It can be a place where people can run, relax, kayak, barbecue, or just take a really nice picture. Investments along the Riverfront can reveal the area's 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 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, it just needs your help to make it happen.



THE WORLD TAKES



WHAT ARE THE *goals?*

The Alliance will facilitate short-, medium-, and long term projects that promote the following goals.



IMPROVE RIVERFRONT **DF F HW**



Create new **PUBLIC SPACES**



Promote **RESILIENCY** & mitigate flooding



Improve the quality of the **ENVIRONMENT**



Highlight **HISTORICAL ASSETS**



Attract **DEVELOPMENT** to appropriate areas



Ensure revitalization is **EQUITABLE**



Facilitate **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

HOW WILL THIS BENEFIT *Trenton?*

Revitalization of the Riverfront has the potential to bolster many of the efforts that currently make Trenton a place residents are proud to call home.

A reclaimed and redeveloped riverfront has the potential to attract substantially more patrons to support the many vibrant performing and visual-arts communities in Trenton. The Riverfront is in close proximity to the emerging Creek to Canal Arts District, which elevates and supports local art. Trenton is also home to multiple venues for performing arts including the Cure Auto Insurance Arena, Patriot's Theatre, and Passage Theatre. These venues provide excellent acoustics and engagement at events from 10 to 10,000 patrons.

A revitalized riverfront also has the potential to bring renewed attention to the city's history through increased visitation. Trenton is one of the most historical cities in the country, let alone the state. The William Trent House, the oldest structure

in Trenton, is situated in the center of the Riverfront revitalization area. The Trent House is currently a museum which serves to educate people on the differences between everyday life in the early eighteenth century and the lifestyles people are familiar with today. Also in close proximity are the Old Barracks Museum, The War Memorial, the State House, and Battle Monument, among others.

Finally, ***new development would generate taxes that would substantially improve the city's financial health.*** Revitalization has the potential to change the riverfront into a thriving urban neighborhood that attracts rateable business, new residents to support local business, new recreation amenities, as well as high-quality housing options. Additional revenues generated could be dedicated to supporting and improving city services, which would directly improve the lives of residents. More city tax revenue also has the potential to reduce the state's obligations to the city.



WHY INVEST IN *Trenton?*

The State of New Jersey has been one of the most attractive places for people to live in the northeast for decades. High-quality schools, ample access to open spaces and recreational opportunities, world-class businesses and institutions, and a plethora of housing choices have all attracted residents and businesses to the state. Mercer County, in particular, continues to be a highly sought-after location to live and work. ***What is now changing, however, is the desirability of cities, and Trenton is poised to benefit.***

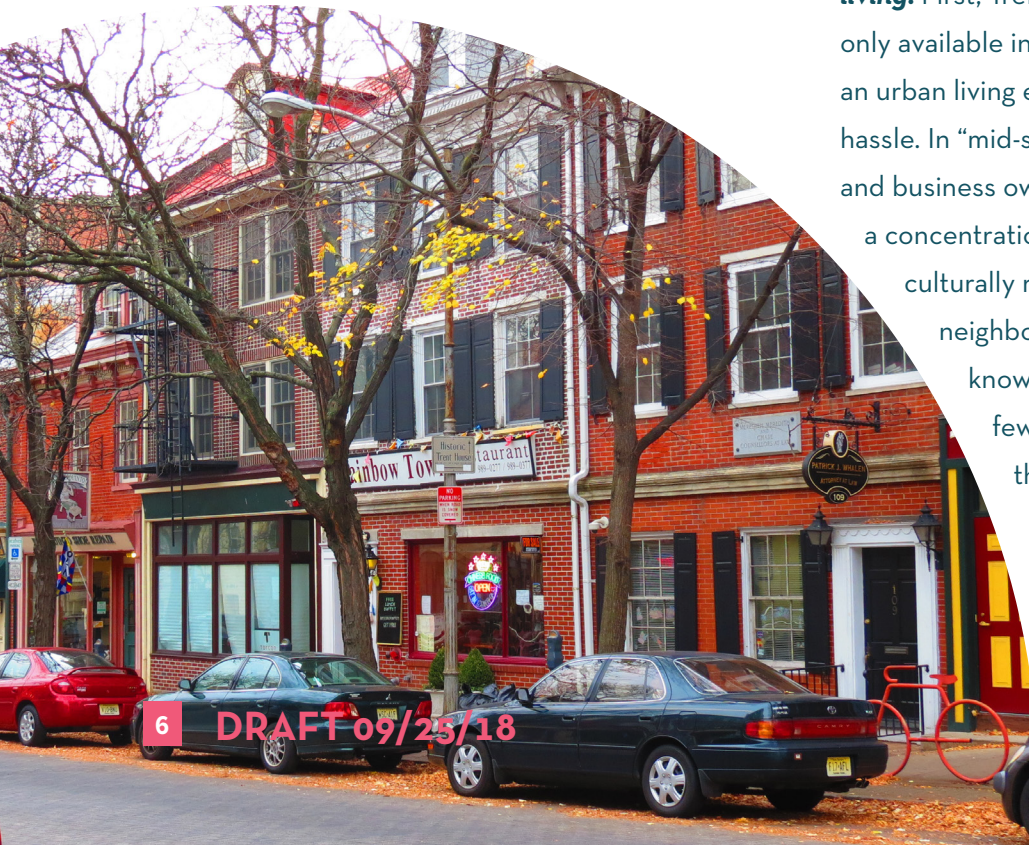
INCREASED DEMAND FOR URBAN LIVING

Interest and demand for city living and working has blossomed over the last decade. Many cities have seen higher levels of private investment than at any time in the post-War era. This investment is both the result of, and the cause of, greater demand. As cities get better, more people want to live and work in them, which in turn leads to further investment. ***The values and preferences of these potential residents are decidedly urban. They value human-scale walkability, public transit, and authenticity.***

Cities throughout the region have begun to capitalize on the renewed interest in urban living. The revival of Manhattan and Center City Philadelphia are well known, but ***smaller cities like Morristown and Hoboken in New Jersey, and Allentown and Lancaster in Pennsylvania, have also revived.***

The latter two locales are important examples for Trenton, as they are similar in scale and also provide convenient access to Philadelphia and New York.

Trenton is well positioned to take advantage of housing and economic trends that favor urban living. First, Trenton offers something that is currently only available in a few municipalities in the region: an urban living environment without the “big city” hassle. In “mid-sized cities” like Trenton, residents and business owners have the best of both worlds: a concentration of amenities in a diverse and culturally rich environment, coupled with strong neighborhoods where you can still get to know your neighbors. There are only a few places in New Jersey that offer this experience, and those places are increasingly becoming very expensive places to live.



CHANGING STATE-WIDE DEMOGRAPHICS

As preferences are changing, so too are the demographics in New Jersey. The population in New Jersey is aging significantly, and in ten years there will be significantly fewer 35-55-year-olds and significantly more people who are older than 55. ***The shift means that there will be a decrease in the number of people in prime child-raising years and an increase in so-called “empty nesters”.***

The second major demographic change is the increased proportion of immigrants that make up New Jersey’s population. There is significant out-migration of the US-born population, which has been offset by international in-migration, keeping the state’s population stable. As this population continues to be an important segment of New Jersey’s populations, ***Cities that are able to attract immigrants will be those that continue to grow*** while those that do not are likely to stagnate or shrink.

Trenton is well positioned to take advantage of these demographic trends, which also favor urban living. Some empty-nesters will choose to age in place, but many will not. Many will want to reduce the maintenance and upkeep burden of houses that were appropriate for raising families, but become a burden as their household size shrinks. A place like Trenton - with its manageable scale, good transportation infrastructure, and historic neighborhoods - is ideal for many of this growing “empty nester” segment.

At the same time, ***Trenton’s cultural diversity, high-quality public transportation system, and affordable housing opportunities already make it a destination for immigrants.*** These immigrants play

an important economic role in the region’s economy by greasing the wheels of the market by flowing into industries and areas where there is a relative need for workers – where bottlenecks or shortages might otherwise damp growth. High-skilled immigration, on the other hand, has been linked to innovation and helps to make the region more competitive both nationally and internationally.

The City of Trenton benefits from having over 1.2 million students in over 200 higher education institutions within 70 miles of the downtown.

This gives the City a major opportunity to attract millennials who are interested in urban living. Many of the same factors that make the City attractive empty nesters and immigrants will also make the City attractive to millennials.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

New Jersey is home to 21 of the Fortune 400 companies based on revenues. Mercer County and the Route 1 Corridor is home to many leading companies and major employers. As a result, Trenton is proximate to a diversity of businesses that operate across a variety of industries.

Employers are increasingly responding to employees’ desires for workspaces that are integrated into vibrant communities with nearby retail opportunities – like local dining, gyms, supermarkets, and specialty food stores – amenities that don’t typically congregate near employment centers in the suburbs. ***Trenton is well positioned to take advantage of the renewed interest in urban workplaces*** and may begin to attract businesses to the city who are looking to provide urban amenities for their employees.

THE CAPITAL CITY AT THE CENTER OF THE CENTRAL-JERSEY REGION

Trenton is the geographic and historical center of its region, unlike any other major urban center in the state. Hoboken and Jersey City are dependent on the economy of New York City, while Camden is deeply tied to the growth of Philadelphia. As such, these urban centers are largely dependent on the success of cities outside the control of New Jersey residents. Trenton is not.

Furthermore, **Central Jersey is one of New Jersey's strongest economic regions and most desirable places to live**. The Central Jersey economy is a major driver for the state, anchored by Princeton and the Route 1 Corridor. However, this region lacks a major urban center, which disadvantages it relative to regional and national competitors. **With Trenton as a strong urban center, the entire region would be enhanced** and there would be increased potential for expanded growth. This enhanced potential would make it easier for the region as a whole to attract younger residents, empty nesters looking to downsize housing, and employers looking to offer their employees an alternative to the suburban office park experience.

Finally, the City of Trenton is the state's capital. Tens of thousands of people come into the city every day to work, attend meetings, visit historical sites, and enjoy recreational and entertainment amenities. **Highly visible investment in Trenton would send a strong message: the State of New Jersey takes pride in its urban centers, and it's capital city.**

IMPACTS ON OTHER PARTS OF NEW JERSEY

The shift occurring in housing preferences impacts all parts of New Jersey. In Mercer, and adjacent counties, as demand increases for urban-type places, prices start to increase in these places, such as Princeton and Lambertville. This results in increased development pressure, and the potential for development to degrade the qualities that made the towns special in the first place. It also makes these communities less and less affordable to average New Jerseyans. **To relieve the pressure on surrounding communities, the region needs to provide additional options for affordable urban living, and Trenton is the ideal location for this.**

Employment preference shifts are also an issue for all of New Jersey. If New Jersey does not offer the appropriate living options, the workers will look elsewhere, and all of New Jersey will suffer. The largest challenge for many employers is attracting and retaining talent, and increasingly, the talent wants to live and work in urban settings. Even if an employer is located in a suburban setting, workers are often looking to live in an urban area and “reverse commute” to their job. If there aren't enough suitable housing options attractive to these workers, they may resist employment offers, demand greater pay, or simply not consider applying in the first place. Thus, **a stronger Trenton has the potential to ensure that New Jersey is able to retain and attract high-quality workers.**

WHY THE *Riverfront?*

HIGH-QUALITY NEW DEVELOPMENT TO MEET MARKET DEMAND

The Riverfront is particularly ***well-suited to accommodate new housing and employment to meet a growing market demand*** that bodes well for Trenton generally. Trenton's impressive stock of historic homes and neighborhoods provide one set of options for households looking to downsize. The Riverfront is an ***ideal location for modern housing options*** which would fulfill an unmet need in Trenton. ***New residents would expand the market for retailers, restaurants,*** and other services in the downtown. A more robust housing and retail environment could also spark new investment in the surrounding wards.

ACRES OF UNDER-DEVELOPED LAND

The Riverfront is comprised of acres of land and is one of the ***largest under-developed areas in the region***. It is ***close to high-quality multi-modal transportation infrastructure, a mixed-use downtown, and impressive natural resources*** with access to a strong, diverse regional workforce. If properly positioned, these assets would make the area attractive to large companies and anchor institutions who are looking to establish campuses with the potential to grow.

IMPROVING THE REGION'S FISCAL HEALTH

The revitalization of the Riverfront will play an important role in improving the fiscal health of the city, county, and state. Currently, many properties along the Riverfront are tax exempt or generate little to no taxable revenue. As a result, they generate no financial benefit to the city or the region. Revitalization has the ***potential to attract "rateable" new businesses, residential development, and regional amenities***. In Wilmington, state investments in the riverfront resulted in nearly \$78 million dollars in revenues for the city. Revitalization thus has the ***potential to substantially improve the city's financial health***, providing additional revenues that can be dedicated to supporting and improving the lives of residents.

Examination of waterfront revitalization efforts in other cities demonstrates that significant investment in urban areas can result in regional benefits. For example, investments in Wilmington waterfront has resulted in approximately \$300 million in state revenues. Downtown Chattanooga's urban core comprises less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the county's geographic footprint but makes up nearly 4.5 percent of the county's overall property tax revenues.

WHAT CAN WE *learn?*

Other urban centers are investing heavily in their riverfronts in recognition that they are unique urban assets that must be promoted. Most notably in New Jersey, Hoboken has understood the value of its waterfront and aggressively promoted recreation and development along its water's edge.

The following section focuses on cities that are comparable to Trenton in terms of size and history. Two of the cities that have already seen substantial construction on their waterfronts: Chattanooga and Wilmington. This section also includes a report on Allentown's riverfront, which is currently in the implementation phase. These case studies show what these cities have done, how they have achieved it, and what lessons can be learned from that process.

Finally, this section also includes a summary of lessons learned from a nationwide study of revitalization efforts in medium-sized cities.

These urban centers demonstrate that waterfronts are unique and provide an opportunity to:

- Highlight cultural and natural resources;
- Provide unique recreational amenities;
- Address environmental considerations while promoting sustainability and resiliency;
- Attract residents, businesses, and visitors; and
- Catalyze redevelopment.

Quick Facts

CHATTANOOGA

- Population: 177,000
- Quick growth due to river commerce & railroad
- By 1960s, industry had made Chattanooga "America's dirtiest city"
- City was characterized by a depressed downtown, dying waterfront, and "no sense of community"

WILMINGTON

- Population: 72,800
- Post-industrial city
- Riverfront was full of industrial activity (e.g. first iron shipyards were built there; 700 ships during WWII)
- Suffered significant job and population loss as part of post-war de-industrialization

ALLENTOWN

- Population: 118,000.
- Riverfront decimated from years of historical industrial, rail and truck transportation use
- Example of waterfront transformation that is still in progress



Downtown Chattanooga on Flickr.com

CHATTANOOGA, TN

Background

Chattanooga, population 177,000, is the fourth largest city in Tennessee. The city was founded in 1839 and grew quickly because it was well-located for river commerce. With the arrival of the railroad in 1850, Chattanooga became a boom town. However, by the 1960s the city's growth as an industrial center had produced a major problem: Chattanooga was known as America's dirtiest city.

By the 1980s, city residents and leaders were tired of the bad reputation and the city's economic prospects. Strategic investments made through public-private partnerships - dubbed the "Chattanooga Way" - produced a dramatic turn-around. The city's population has since seen significant growth, the downtown has been transformed, and it is once again poised to prosper in the new economy as it had in the old.

The How

The modern-day revitalization of Chattanooga is due in no small part to the investments made by the Lyndhurst Foundation, a foundation that, "identifies and invests in initiatives, institutions, people, and programs that contribute to the long-term livability and resilience of the greater Chattanooga region."

Project Overview

Riverfront revitalization was driven by a public-private partnership which focused on creating major visitor attractions: a stadium, an aquarium, a restored theater, a renovated pedestrian bridge, and a cultural center. This was complemented with Downtown redevelopment efforts which sought to attract new residents and businesses to the city.

Reactivation of the riverfront was fully realized with the conversion of a five-lane highway into a two-way surface street, with new sidewalks and a wide pedestrian promenade.

In 1981, the Lyndhurst Foundation also funded “Chattanooga in Motion,” an effort that encouraged civic leaders to visit other cities seeking to turnaround their downtowns. As a result, several dozen community leaders traveled to Indianapolis and were impressed with both the city’s efforts and the role of one local organization—the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee (GIPC).

Inspired by GIPC, a handful of local officials, civic leaders, and business executives decided to take action outside of the political process. They established a non-profit organization, called the Chattanooga Venture, which was funded by the Lyndhurst Foundation. The Venture’s first project was Vision 2000, an extensive collaborative visioning process. The process, which included over 2,000 citizens, created a grassroots, participatory method for the community to articulate its goals and objectives. It resulted in more than 40 goals for the city, many of which supported the citizens' emphasis on the quality of life. The key feature of the plan was Riverwalk, a 22-mile greenway along the Tennessee River that would serve as a catalyst for new development, generating jobs and tax revenues benefiting both the city and county

The RiverCity Company, later renamed RiverValley Partner, was created to coordinate redevelopment projects along the riverfront and downtown. The group drove the master planning process and coordinated public/private collaboration. Initially, they were given \$12 million, contributed by eight local foundations and seven financial institutions. The money was used as a revolving fund for beginning and completing development projects.

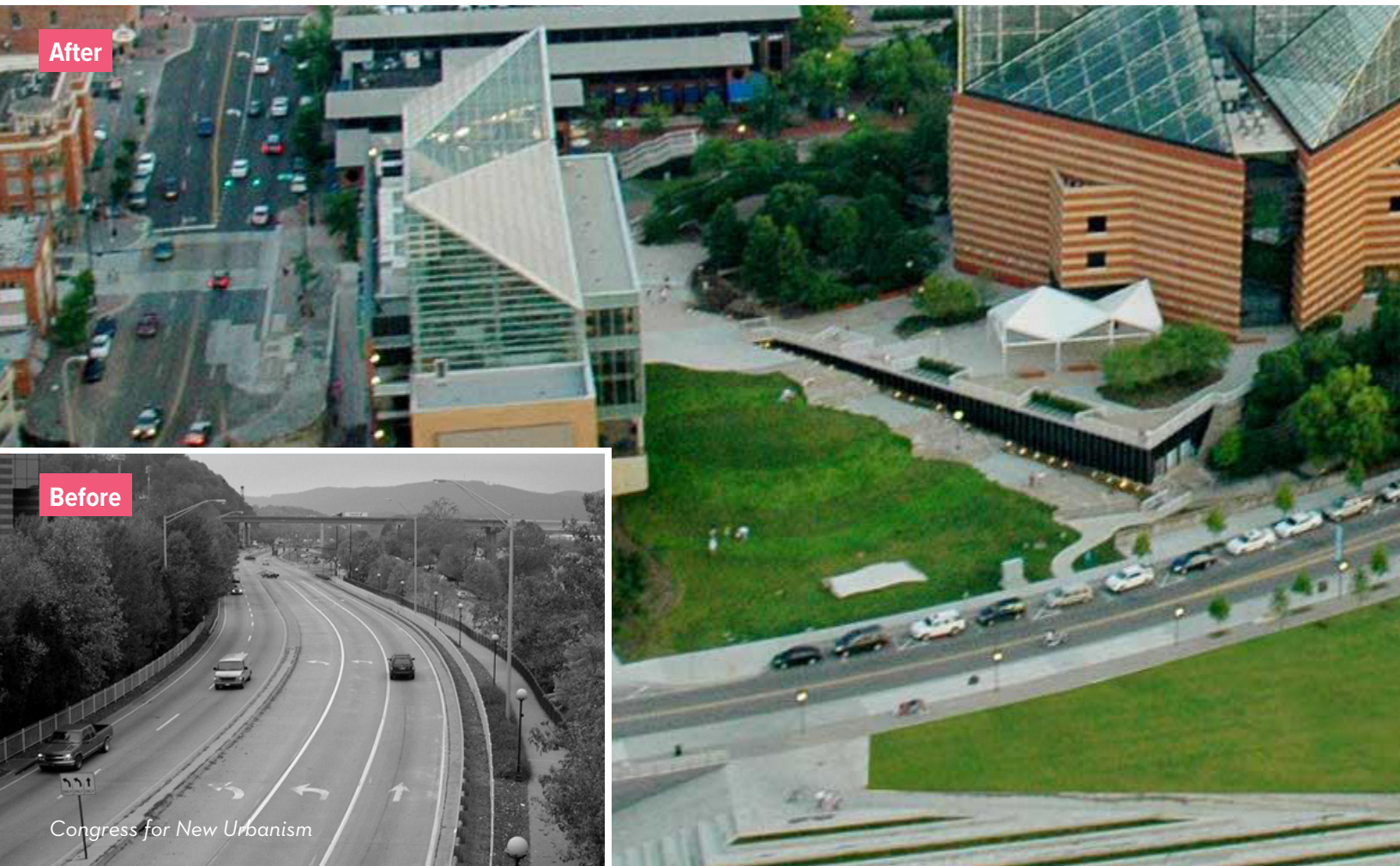
One of RiverValley Partners' first projects was to acquire, for \$4.5 million, several riverfront properties adjacent to downtown. This was the place where John Ross established a trading post in 1815, in the process founding the city of Chattanooga. Known as Ross's Landing, it was here that the Tennessee Aquarium was built. All of the funds were provided by private gifts.







Exchange at Cameron Harbor



After



Before

Congress for New Urbanism



Outcomes

Vision 2000 led to the revitalization of the riverfront as well as major investments in downtown Chattanooga. Projects have created thousands of **jobs** and brought in nearly a billion dollars of **investments**. The **Riverwalk** parallels the Tennessee River from the Chickamauga Dam to Ross's Landing Park, extending more than 16 miles along the riverfront. Rich in industrial and cultural history, the Riverwalk expansion is a testament to the river's role in the development of Chattanooga.

Revitalization efforts have resulted in more than **one billion dollars** in construction projects, a 50% **growth in population** since 1970, and substantial **growth in tax revenues**.

Revitalization of the riverfront has also led to a major infrastructure change. A five-lane, limited-access highway that separated the city from its waterfront was converted into a two-lane surface street with new intersections at downtown streets, continuous sidewalks, a 13-foot (4-meter)-wide riverfront promenade, and pedestrian access to major visitor attractions. A once-decaying bridge was also renovated and is now the world's longest footbridge.

Lessons Learned

- Cooperative plan making can overcome a culture of polarized and divided decision making
- Large public and stakeholder participation can create a sense that the investments were for everyone
- Investments in riverfronts can have positive spill-over effects on the adjacent downtowns
- Sustained commitment from a philanthropic institution can help ensure stability over decades of work
- Public amenities – such as trails, public spaces, and an aquarium – can catalyze private sector investments
- Numerous single-site successes can pave the way for major changes to infrastructure



Mapio

Project Overview

Redevelopment brought new corporate offices, high-end residences, and cultural amenities to the Christina River riverfront. Office and residential properties on the riverfront are located closer to downtown Wilmington, while cultural attractions and auto-oriented retail are mostly located along the southern portion of the site, further from downtown.

WILMINGTON, DE

Background

Wilmington, population 71,000, is the largest city in Delaware. The area was originally settled by the Lenape because of its strategic location at the confluence of two rivers, the Christina River and the Brandywine Creek.

The greatest growth in the city occurred during the Civil War. The war created enormous demand for goods and materials supplied by Wilmington including ships, railroad cars, gunpowder, shoes, and other war-related goods. As with many cities in the northeast, Wilmington suffered from de-industrialization and suburbanization of working-class whites. The 1981 Financial Center Development Act liberalized the laws governing banks operating within the state. This attracted national banks and financial institutions and spurred job growth and office construction. Moreover, Delaware's courts, tax system, laws, and policies have made it an attractive state for businesses to incorporate, with many of them doing so in Wilmington.

The What

The Wilmington Riverfront straddles both sides of the Christina River and saw high levels of public and private investment over the last two

decades. Redevelopment brought new corporate offices, high-end residences, and cultural amenities. Office and residential properties on the Riverfront are located closer to downtown Wilmington, while cultural attractions and auto-oriented retail are mostly located along the southern portion of the site.

Dilapidated warehouses have been replaced with restaurants, shops, and a regional conference facility. Vacant historic buildings have been preserved and restored to serve as corporate headquarters for major employers. A shoreline once strewn with litter and debris is now lush with native plantings.

Redevelopment has also focused on environmental improvements to accommodate revitalization efforts, enhance the landscape and restore the ecology. A scenic Riverwalk and new roadway are providing access to the once-hidden beauty of this meandering waterway.

The Russell W Peterson Wildlife Refuge was also established in 1998. It has already enabled beneficial vegetation to flourish in the marsh and provide habitat for wetland wildlife. Efforts include stabilizing the shorelines, re-excavating water channels to their historical patterns, developing a trail system and installing wildlife nesting structures. The Dupont Education Center opened in 2009.



The How

In 1992, Governor Michael Castle created a state-level task force to examine the possibility of revitalizing the Wilmington Riverfront. In 1994, the task force released its “Vision for the Rivers” plan. The plan focused mainly on creating a tourist-driven destination, which included a convention center, sports arena, marinas, entertainment venues, restaurants, and hotels.

In 1995, the state created the Riverfront Development Corporation of Delaware (RDC) to oversee the futures of the Brandywine and Christina Rivers. It was established with primary funding from the State of Delaware and some additional contributions from the City of Wilmington and New Castle County.

The RDC mission was to plan, develop, manage, and promote recreational, residential, commercial, and industrial programs and projects on the riverfront. This original revitalization plan sought to replicate the success of other waterfront redevelopment like Baltimore’s Inner Harbor, Fisherman’s Wharf in San Francisco, Navy Pier in Chicago, and the Tennessee Riverfront in Chattanooga. However, in response to changing market demands, RDC’s development strategy shifted away from a purely regional tourist and retail destination to developing high-end residential properties and corporate office space.

The RDC advances its mission in part by attempting to acquire site control in the district through direct acquisition, long-term leases, or in participation with private developers. The RDC can act as developer, construction manager and leasing agent servicing the area along the Brandywine and Christina Rivers within the city of Wilmington.

Investment & Return

Public investment mainly focused on tourist-driven amenities, which included a convention center, sports arena, marinas, and entertainment venues. The project received more than \$414 million in public investments from the state, city, and other sources. These investments resulted in \$402 million in revenues, 1,078 residential units, and 2,950 net jobs paying an average wage of \$82,000.

Lessons Learned

- Commitment from state and regional governments can lead to sustained investment that transforms industrial waterfronts.
- It is valuable to have an entity that can act as a master developer for the entire site and has the ability to gain site control over properties.
- Investments in major urban areas can have state-wide benefits.
- Waterfront redevelopment has the potential to attract new residents, create new jobs, and generate revenues for the city, county, and state.
- Redevelopment can produce substantial environmental benefits, resulting in restored habitats and high-quality opens spaces.
- Leveraging existing transportation assets – such as rail service – can compound the attractiveness of riverfront revitalization.
- Redevelopment can contribute to wider income inequalities within the city and equity issues should be discussed early in the process.



Getaway Mavens



DRAFT 09/25/18 **19**



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Allentown is currently working on their waterfront revitalization. The city took a market-based approach to planning. The master plan was also flexible: the area was divided into districts and alternatives were created to provide a flexible development program.

Allentown has leveraged economic incentives to attract new development, including the “The Waterfront: Lehigh Valley,” which is planned to be built on a twenty-six-acre campus formerly home to the Lehigh Structural Steel company.

ALLENTOWN, PA

Background

Allentown is located on the Lehigh River and is the largest city in the Lehigh Valley, with a population of just over 118,000. Although the river played an important role in the founding of Allentown, the opening of the Lehigh Canal caused a fundamental change in the nature of Allentown and the Lehigh Valley, as it transformed both from a rural agricultural area into an urbanized industrialized area. It expanded the city's commercial and industrial capacity greatly. With this, the town underwent significant industrialization, ultimately becoming a major center for heavy industry and manufacturing. However, by the 1970s, the city began to suffer from de-industrialization. At the same time, the Lehigh Riverfront had been decimated after years of historical industrial, rail and truck transportation use.

Planning

Allentown began its rediscovery of the Lehigh River riverfront with a site-specific master plan for Lehigh Landing, a small portion of the riverfront. Since that time, redevelopment and implementation along the river have been primarily focused around two key areas: the America on Wheels Transportation Museum & City Visitor Center and recreational improvements at the city's Bucky Boyle Park. Until late

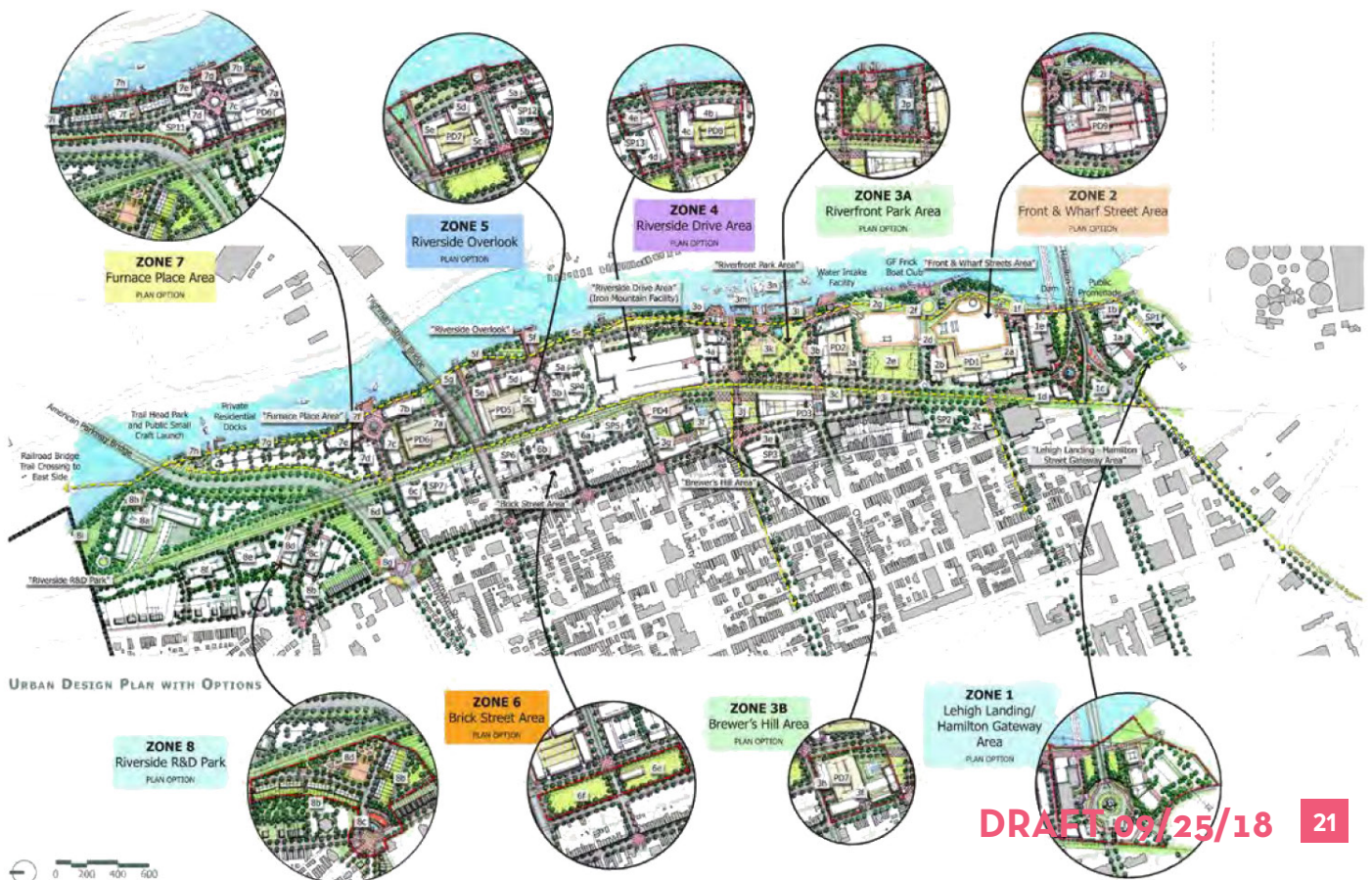
2010, redevelopment of other areas of the riverfront had been primarily encouraged through the city's Comprehensive Plan, traditional zoning incentives, a relatively new Riverfront Redevelopment Overlay District and the Pennsylvania Keystone Opportunity Zone program for key sites.

Riverfront Master Plan

In August 2012, the City of Allentown published, "**The Lehigh Riverfront Master Plan**" which covers 120 acres along the waterfront. The master plan was developed through an **open public planning process** designed to encourage transparency and idea-sharing amongst riverfront and community stakeholders throughout Allentown and the Greater Lehigh Valley. Stakeholder involvement consisted of three community forums and a charrette session, three Lehigh Riverfront Task Force work sessions, a number of individual stakeholder interviews, and numerous meetings and webinars with the city's Resource Team.

A key directive from stakeholders was that the Master Plan be built upon a **market-based development program** that could be predicted with some certainty over the following decade. As a result, the project team developed an "Estimated Market Demand" for everything from retail, restaurants, and residential uses to hotels and office. The goal was to attract development that might otherwise be difficult or costly to assemble and develop in the downtown.

The "Estimated Market Demand" formed the foundation of the **"base master plan and options"** for development (below). The final Master Plan is comprised of the Base Master Plan, which joins eight Riverfront zones into one cohesive plan. Unique development plan options were also proposed for each of the eight zones. The options were prepared to document either another mix of uses, another physical layout, or a second phased development



approach that were also viable within the Base Master Plan framework that had received majority consensus. This gave the overall master plan considerable flexibility to be implemented over a long period of time.

The Plan further called for the creation of a **new zoning district** to regulate the area, presented as a **form-based code** with a strong focus on regulating land uses as well as development form and character. Allentown currently uses a **Riverfront Redevelopment Overlay District** to control development in the area. Among many provisions, developers are only eligible to use form-based regulations in this district if the developer commits to providing public access to and along the Lehigh River riverfront.

Funding

The project was funded through a federal grant administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, under its Pennsylvania **Community Transportation Initiative Fund**.

Incentives

The City of Allentown also used strong incentives to encourage redevelopment. The **Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ)**, established in 2011, allows state and local taxes collected by businesses within the boundaries of the Allentown NIZ to be used to repay bonds issued by the **Allentown Economic Development Corporation**. Those bonds fund various economic development projects within the zone. The NIZ can be used to offset the initial

development costs of a project, thereby allowing the developers to offer lower, more marketable rental rates.

Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZs) were designated for a number of properties in the City of Allentown during the Governor Ridge administration to spur redevelopment. Businesses that locate within a KOZ enjoy the waiver, abatement or exemption of certain state and local taxes. For the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania these include the corporate net income tax, capital stock and foreign franchise tax, personal income tax, sales and use tax on purchased consumed by businesses in the zone, mutual thrift institution tax, bank and trust company shares tax and insurance premiums tax. For the City of Allentown, these taxes would include earned income/net profits tax, business gross receipts, business occupancy, business privilege and mercantile tax, sales and use tax on purchases consumed and used by a business in the zone, property taxes including the school district.



The Lehigh Riverfront Master Plan



The Lehigh Riverfront Master Plan

Results: The Waterfront-Lehigh Valley

“The Waterfront: Lehigh Valley” is planned to be built on a **twenty-six-acre campus** formerly home to the Lehigh Structural Steel company. It is located on the western banks of the Lehigh River in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The development plan calls for the integration of **Class A office space, modern holistic living options, and an active main street promenade** lined with bustling retail and restaurant locations. The goal is to attract thousands of visitors to the Waterfront each year with dynamic outdoor programming and entertainment along with seasonal festivities.

A major selling point of The Waterfront is its access to the Lehigh River. The signature **Riverwalk** was the first element to be designed, providing a unique destination and the only place individuals can directly access the Lehigh River from a mixed-use lifestyle campus. Part of the riverwalk's splendor is a half-mile garden-lined pathway that brings new life to the banks of the Lehigh River while offering pristine water vistas and relaxing garden views for the buildings surrounding it.

Along with the riverwalk, sprawling modern office space, and residential complexes including three apartment buildings, each with unique design elements and technology advancements are proposed. Altogether the campus is planned to include **554 market-rate apartments**.

The project itself is a private-sector driven development. However, it has benefited from significant local government planning and incentives.

Lessons Learned

- Open public planning encourages idea sharing and makes residents feel that the process is transparent.
- Planning that is grounded in market realities produces plans that are implementable.
- Planning documents can provide a flexible framework for redevelopment while still ensuring public goals are met.
- State and regional incentives are important drivers of change in post-industrial waterfronts.
- A variety of zoning strategies can help ensure that the plan recommendations are actually built.



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REVITALIZING CITIES

In 2007, the Brookings Institution issued, “Restoring Prosperity: The State Role in Revitalizing America’s Older Industrial Cities.” The report examined how 302 U.S. cities fared on eight indicators of economic health and vitality. Most were older industrial communities in the Northeast and Midwest that were under-performing relative to their peers nationwide. The analysis came to the following conclusions, which should guide the revitalization of the Trenton Riverfront.

Strong leadership is essential

Strong leadership was vital to the revitalization of each of the communities examined. In each city, civic and political leaders’ willingness to come together to develop and implement a bold vision for recovery was the key driver of change. Without such leadership, these cities would have been unable to move beyond the parochialism, conflict, and inertia that continue to weigh many older industrial regions down.

Success requires vision and planning

In all communities examined, strong leadership was manifested in the creation and implementation of a defined vision and plan for reaching it. While serendipity and luck are often cited as important, if underrated, components of economic success, bold vision and a clear strategy are stronger bets.

Everyone needs to be in it together

Strong leadership comes in many forms and emerges most forcefully when leaders from different sectors work with one another toward common goals. These communities were able to turn their best-laid plans into concrete actions—and concrete successes—

because business, government, and the non-profit communities all recognized the dire need to change their city’s current trajectory, and put their respective strengths to work, collaboratively, for change.

Place matters—take advantage of it

The history of where, why, and how cities grew as they did provides an important backdrop to their present economic, cultural, and social development. Just as cities can overcome the disadvantages of place—limited water supply, cold weather, earthquakes—so, too, must they recognize, and maximize the advantages. Each city had made capitalizing on their respective assets a principal part of their recovery strategy.

These findings bode well for the Trenton Riverfront, which is a unique and special asset in the region. The Capital City Riverfront Alliance is both demonstrating strong leadership and helping to bring together all the stakeholders needed to move revitalization forward.



WHAT ARE THE *next steps?*

The following is a **recommended framework** for the development of a Capital City Riverfront Plan. This framework is likely to evolve as new issues and opportunities are identified. Nonetheless, it provides a strong blueprint based on the analysis of other waterfront revitalization efforts.

It is recommended that the Capital City Riverfront Alliance lead the development of the Capital City Riverfront Plan. The plan has been envisioned as a set of individual elements to facilitate understanding and provide an opportunity for incremental funding.

IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITIES

Time stops for no one. 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.

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

An initial market analysis and detailed mapping of the area will provide a strong foundation for the Civic Vision Plan, an element of the Riverfront Plan. This analysis could be conducted prior to, or as part of, the following recommendations:

Community & Stakeholder Education

A key component of the planning process

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
2. Existing conditions of the ecology, transportation infrastructure, utilities, and other systems
3. Market conditions
4. State, county, and city needs
5. Institutional capacity for implementation
6. Funding opportunities
7. Environmental constraints

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



CIVIC VISION FOR THE RIVERFRONT

The Civic Vision should be a consensus-driven comprehensive plan that will serve as a foundation for the other documents. The Civic Vision should establish a “design” vision for the riverfront that is based on market realities and what the community desires to be included, such as appropriate and inappropriate uses; and appropriate form and architectural elements, with a particular focus on what should and should not be permitted on the ground floor of buildings.

This plan should be rigid enough to provide direction, but flexible enough to allow for the inclusion of unanticipated projects that would conform to the shared vision. Among other tasks, the plan should identify a practical long-term vision for new and improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Route 29. It should also identify locations along the riverfront that will allow for both passive and active recreation. This effort should include unlocking existing assets as well as opportunities for new spaces.

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: identify the phasing of project, clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each government entity, and make recommendations regarding the regulatory changes that need to take place to ensure the vision is built.

RENAISSANCE PLAN UPDATE

The Capital City Redevelopment Corporation was created to plan, coordinate, and promote public and private development within the Capital District. New public projects within the district are evaluated against the Capital City Renaissance Plan (1989). The plan is outdated and a new plan is needed for the area. At the same time, there should be a detailed review of the public development review process and amendments should be made based on that review.

CITY OF TRENTON REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

The City of Trenton’s redevelopment plans, especially in the downtown, will need to be updated to conform with the Civic Vision plan.

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.



HOW IS THIS *different?*

We know what you're thinking: ANOTHER plan? Why should I invest time and energy in another effort when the last ones haven't produced any results? The answer is that there is no guarantee that this will be any different. We would be dishonest if we said otherwise. However, we believe this effort has the potential to be different.

The Plan will take a strategic and incremental approach to revitalization. Past efforts have stalled, in part, because the need for large up-front costs made them difficult to implement in an environment where state, county, and local budgets are limited. This plan will take into consideration funding and implementation from the start;

The process will be grounded in economic realities. Past efforts have too often overestimated the burden that the developers could reasonably shoulder. The result has been visions for a riverfront that nobody is willing to build because there is no incentive to invest.

Developers will have the opportunity to take advantage of new funding streams not previously available. This includes a number of programs offered through the state, including Opportunity Zone Funding as well as EDA's Grow NJ and Economic Redevelopment and Growth (ERG) Programs.

The Plan will result in the amendment of the key regulatory document. Past efforts have created some regulatory documents, but often the agencies responsible for them have no authority to enforce them. This effort will work to ensure that new construction on the riverfront - whether it is by the state, county, city, or private developer - will be codified in a document that requires builders to adhere to the vision identified in the plan.

Past plans are still incredibly valuable and your time was not wasted. The work that was put into those efforts is still overwhelmingly relevant and will likely inform many of the recommendations that are made in this next phase. Revitalizing areas like the riverfront takes decades, and although it can be hard to see, each step gets us closer to the goal.

YOUR *notes!*

