

trenton historic development collaborative



NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



Community-Driven Neighborhood Revitalization

April 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks go to the Trenton Historic Development Collaborative (THDC), which provided the impetus for this planning process and has been a driving force behind community building efforts in this neighborhood; to Shiloh Baptist Church and Shiloh Community Development Corporation (SCDC), which provided the leadership to convene the THDC; and to the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, which supported this process by use of their facility at the Carver Center.

This neighborhood plan would not have been possible without a year's worth of hard work and dedication by many stakeholders, including the following:


THDC Steering Committee


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Ms. Hope Bradley, Bellevue Area Civic Association
Mrs. Pamela Bush, West Hanover Area Civic Association
Mrs. Barbara Cobb, New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs
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Ms. Carolyn Dunn, Resident
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Mr. Jerome C. Harris, Shiloh Community Development Corporation
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Mr. Ed Hill, Rutherford Heights Civic Association
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Mrs. Jessie Tossie, Resident
Ms. Edythe Wilson, Resident

Additional Residents, Stakeholders, and Advisors

The 150 residents and stakeholders who participated in community meetings between April 2010 and March 2011
The 324 residents who shared their views by responding to the Success Measures Survey in October and November 2010
The more than 30 volunteers who conducted the Success Measure Survey
Mr. Alex Allen, (formerly of) Isles, Inc.
Ms. Kimberly Allen, Wells Fargo Regional Foundation
Rev. Darrell Armstrong, Shiloh Baptist Church
Mr. David Byers, Photographer
Mrs. Marge Caldwell-Wilson, North Ward Councilperson, Trenton, NJ
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Capital Health-Mercer Campus
Cityworks
City of Trenton
Mercer Street Friends
Trenton Board of Education
Trenton Police Department, West District

Project funding was generously provided by the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation.

Planning and facilitation was managed by  Isles
Self-Reliant Communities

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a bridge spanning a river. The bridge is a simple, light-colored structure with a flat top. The water in the river is calm and reflects the bridge and the surrounding trees. The trees are mostly bare, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The overall tone of the image is muted and somewhat somber, with a focus on the natural and built environment.

As proud members of our community,
we envision our neighborhood to be
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Introduction

This planning project was initiated by the Trenton Historic Development Collaborative (THDC), a coalition of more than 40 community stakeholders from the West and North Wards of Trenton who are committed to building capacity in and revitalizing their neighborhood. Supported by the participation of more than 450 community members, public participation has guided this plan toward its focus on the services and programs needed to help residents achieve and sustain an improved quality of life over the next five years.

The THDC neighborhood has been included in more than ten recent planning studies, but none addressed the neighborhood as a whole and none provided a detailed look at how to support the residents of the area while also pursuing redevelopment. The THDC identified a need for a different kind of plan to work in tandem with those proposing more detailed physical improvements for the community.

This neighborhood's unique location is the main reason for the prevalence of plans related to it. To the south, it borders downtown Trenton and the Capital District, and is near many of Trenton's most important historic assets. To the north, Capital Health System's Mercer Campus on is a major presence, covering approximately 16 acres.

Especially important from the land use and economic development perspectives is Capital Health's planned relocation from its Mercer Campus to new facilities outside of the City. According to a representative from Capital Health, as of March 2011, the prospective reuse of the CHS Mercer Campus is the subject of ongoing discussions between CHS and the New Jersey Department of Health, which are expected to be finalized sometime in the Spring or early Summer of 2011. What is known for certain at this time is that the Family Health Center at 433 Bellevue Avenue will continue in its function as a primary care and ambulatory care referral center, and the Regional Medical Center will continue to operate at 750 Brunswick Avenue (which is not in the THDC neighborhood). The new CHS facility on Route 1 in Hopewell Township is expected to be completed in October 2011. The community is extremely concerned about the blighting influence that the CHS campus could become if it goes dark without a clear plan for future redevelopment and/or reuse.

The THDC

The THDC includes the City of Trenton, the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, the Capital City Partnership (CCP), Capital Health System, the Bellevue Area Civic Association, the Rutherford Heights Civic

Association, the West Hanover Area Civic Association, and many other residents, organizations, and businesses. Convened by Shiloh Baptist Church and the Shiloh Community Development Corporation (SCDC), the THDC

This plan is intended to:

- Review and make accessible the results of previous planning studies that affect the THDC neighborhood.
- Address the programs and services necessary to meet residents' needs and prepare them to take advantage of physical redevelopment in their neighborhood.
- Assist the community in becoming and remaining an active part of plans for reuse of CHS Mercer Campus.

has met on a monthly basis since 2006. Proud of its open door policy, the THDC invites all interested parties to the table to work toward its three primary goals: to provide a forum for community discussion, to coordinate the services offered and projects undertaken by member organizations, and to strengthen and support the area's civic associations.

The THDC has forged strong relationships with people and organizations that are working to improve the neighborhood, which have resulted in positive outcomes for the community.

For example:

The THDC has successfully encouraged CCP to expand its focus beyond the West State Street commercial and government corridor so that its work will positively affect residents.

Capital Health has partnered with the THDC to ensure that when the hospital leaves its Mercer Campus on Bellevue Avenue, some of the key services it provides to residents will remain.

Before some areas of the neighborhood were rezoned, the City of Trenton consulted the THDC about the effect such changes would have on residents.

Preeminent among the positive community outcomes that the THDC engendered is the successful application to the Wells Fargo Regional

Foundation (WFRF) for the Neighborhood Planning grant that has made this plan possible. The grant has allowed community stakeholders to review the existing plans that affect their neighborhood and identify the 'soft structures' that residents need.

Soft structures, a phrase coined by a member of the Steering Committee that guided this planning process, refers to the social and human services required to ensure that residents are able to take full advantage of physical redevelopment.

History

The THDC defined itself and its area of focus based on the thriving African-American community that has lived here for decades and on the rich history of the neighborhood. Since the mid-19th century, the THDC neighborhood has been central to Trenton's African-American community. A thriving black middle class full of skilled tradesmen, lawyers, and teachers resided in the neighborhood and influenced public policy throughout the city and state for decades.

The city's oldest African-American Masonic Lodge is located on Bellevue Avenue. In 1857, the Higbee School (renamed the Nixon School in 1896, after Justice John T. Nixon) opened on Bellevue Avenue as the city's first school for black children. The First Lincoln School on Bellevue Avenue, now occupied by the Freemasons, emerged a few years later in 1872 as a second all-black school. The development and success of these schools proved the community's will to educate its children despite exclusion from the city's mainstream public school system.

The community's efforts to ensure racial equality for its children came to a head in 1943 when parents of two black school children, Leon Williams and Janet Hedgepeth, successfully sued



The Nixon School circa 1930

the city of Trenton for refusing to allow their children to attend the all-white middle school. The Hedgepeth-Williams case was not only a victory for Trenton’s black community, but also an important precursor to the national civil rights victory in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

Rev. S. Howard Woodson

Founded in 1880, Shiloh Baptist Church has played a prominent role both in the THDC neighborhood specifically and throughout the city. Shiloh Baptist Church was the city’s first black Baptist church. While it started with a small congregation of only 16 members, the congregation grew steadily and rapidly



The Buffaloes playing baseball on Church Street

throughout the twentieth century. The congregation reached its peak in the 1950’s under Reverend S. Howard Woodson. Rev. Woodson led a long and distinguished career in public service that centered around his continuing role in the THDC neighborhood, where under his leadership Shiloh initiated programs to support residents and improve the neighborhood.

In the 1960’s, Rev. Woodson became the president of the state conference of the NAACP and the first black legislator elected in the City of Trenton or Mercer County. He worked toward milestone victories for civil rights across the state, including calling for a statewide conference addressing the need for increasing minority homeownership and eliminating “block busting.” As a result of this conference, New Jersey passed legislation to eliminate many discriminatory housing policies. As Chairman of the segregated Board of the Carver YMCA (the current Carver Center at 40 Fowler Street), Rev. Woodson fought to have Carver establish its own branch of the YMCA and remove itself from the white-dominated central YMCA organization.

Industry

Situated along the historic Delaware and Raritan Canal and the former Belvidere and Delaware (“Bel Del”) rail line, the THDC neighborhood has a significant industrial past. Because



Shiloh Baptist Church, founded in 1880

of its key location along trade routes, businesses could easily transport manufactured and raw materials in and out of the neighborhood. Two of the most prominent industries in the neighborhood included the Thermoid Rubber Factory on Prospect Street and Fitzgibbon and Crisp Carriage Manufacturers, which produced carriages and, later, Ford automobiles. Trenton as a whole and this neighborhood in particular have long ties to the automotive and related industries – in the early 1920’s, more rubber tires were produced in Trenton than anywhere else in the country. Though these industries have long since departed, their legacy is a reminder of the important role that Trenton played in the growth of the United States during the Indus-



The historic Delaware and Raritan Canal

trial Revolution and beyond. Their legacy can still be felt as one walks along the canal on Passaic Street and notices the cluster of successful tire and auto repair shops, situated a mere block from where Fitzgibbon and Crisp began their operations more than a century ago.

Landmarks & Character

The THDC neighborhood is bordered on the south by the Capital District, which is home to the State House, the State Museum and Planetarium, the

State Archives, the Old Barracks, the Trenton War Memorial, and two historic canal tender houses near the intersection of Calhoun and West Hanover Streets. Many other places and structures of historic significance can be found in and around the neighborhood - including those on or certified as eligible for the New Jersey and/or national registers of historic places. Most immediately visible, the area boasts a variety of buildings that represent architectural styles from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and give the area its unique character.

Planning Area

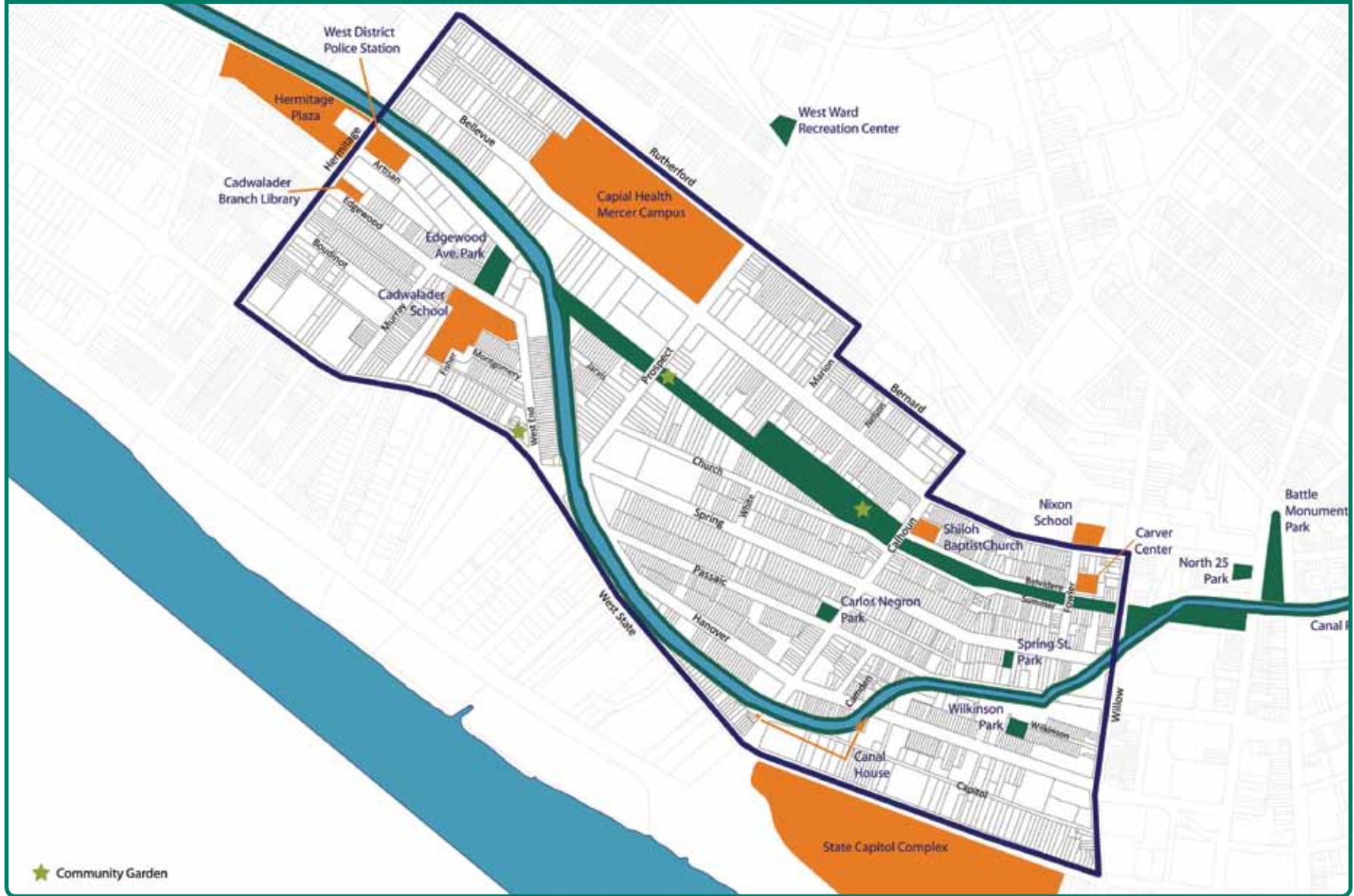
The THDC neighborhood is generally bounded by North Hermitage Avenue to the west, West State Street to the south, Willow Street to the east, and Rutherford and Bellevue Avenues to the north. The vast majority of the neighborhood is in Trenton's West Ward, while a small portion lies in the North Ward. Covering approximately .3 square miles, the planning area is roughly a mile long east to west, and a third of a mile long from north to south.

Despite its history and current committed leadership, the neighborhood has suffered from years of destabilization as a result of insufficient investment in people and places, out-migration of many long-time residents and businesses, increased numbers of abandoned homes, and a sense of deepening isolation among the community. In recent years, the area has been plagued by increased violence coupled with decreased opportunities for employment and a lack of positive role models and activities for children and young adults. The THDC and its partners are poised to reverse these trends.



1922 Fitzgibbon & Crisp advertisement

The THDC Planning Area





Planning Process

This planning process has been about starting from strength – identifying community assets and recognizing how those assets can be marshaled to help combat the issues that residents and other stakeholders are most concerned about. Without a doubt, the people that live here are this community’s greatest asset. The people in the THDC neighborhood are ready to take their neighborhood back from, as they put it, the drug dealers and troublemakers on the corner. One of the most inspiring moments at a community meeting came when one of the Steering Committee members, who is 86 years old and does not like to speak in public, said with much gusto that, “There are more of us than them.”

“There are more of us than them.”
—86 year old member of the Steering Committee

By that she meant that if the ‘good guys’ work together and refuse to be scared off of their own streets, positive change will follow.

Community Participation

The good guys have come together behind this planning process, which has asked for and received an impressive amount of public participation; more than 450 people have been actively involved. Shiloh CDC provided outreach

support for the project, which included passing out flyers, knocking on nearly every door in the neighborhood, and regularly attending City and neighborhood meetings as representatives of this project. Outreach also sometimes included picking people up and driving them to meetings to ensure their participation.

The project Steering Committee, a group of more than 20 dedicated stakeholders, has met 16 times since April 2010 to provide oversight and guidance for the planning process. The guiding vision for this project was developed by the Steering Committee early on: “As proud members of our community, we envision our neighborhood to be safe, clean, enjoyable and focused upon empowering individuals and families to be healthy, educated, and positive citizens.” The Steering Committee helped the planning team to prepare for community meetings and vetted all major project decisions and milestones. The Steering Committee also developed and administered a Youth survey to more than 50 of the neighborhood’s young people.

In addition, nearly 30 project partners volunteered their time over one month from October to November 2010 to attend trainings and to administer the Success Measures survey to 324 residents.

“As proud members of our community, we envision our neighborhood to be safe, clean, enjoyable and focused upon empowering individuals and families to be healthy, educated, and positive citizens.”

Ten public meetings took place between April 2010 and March 2011. Three of these were held specifically to elicit the input of businesses and institutions in the neighborhood, as business owners remain difficult to reach. Highly targeted outreach for these events included



Making Good Choices while asset mapping

Ten public meetings took place between April 2010 and March 2011:

April 13, 2010
(Community Kick-Off)

July 29, 2010
(Business Stakeholders Focus Group)

December 16, 2010
(Review of Existing Plans)

January 20, 2011
(Asset Mapping)

February 7, 2011
(Business Stakeholder Focus Groups, two sessions)

February 10, 2011
(Identifying Issues & Solutions)

February 24, 2011
(Prioritizing Issues & Solutions)

March 30, 2011
(Presentation of Recommendations)

sending invitations via email and postal service and/or via in-person visits. The remainder of the meetings were structured to bring the community on a journey starting from a position of strength and ending up armed with the confidence and tools needed for change, all the while

developing an understanding of the planning process and of the key indicators that describe the current state of the neighborhood. Four meetings in particular were fundamental to the success of this planning process: In the first, the community was introduced to the many other plans that have studied this neighborhood and the recommendations that resulted from that work; in the second, community members identified neighborhood assets; in the third, they identified issues facing the neighborhood as well as potential ways to address those issues; and in the fourth, they set priorities for action.

To supplement the public and Steering Committee meetings, an email listserv was created to disseminate project updates and correspondence, and a website, www.thdcplan.com, highlights the key components of the planning process. In addition, the planning team made itself available for phone calls or meetings for those without access to the internet.

Existing Plans

Almost all of the THDC neighborhood has been studied as part of one or more existing plans. The map on

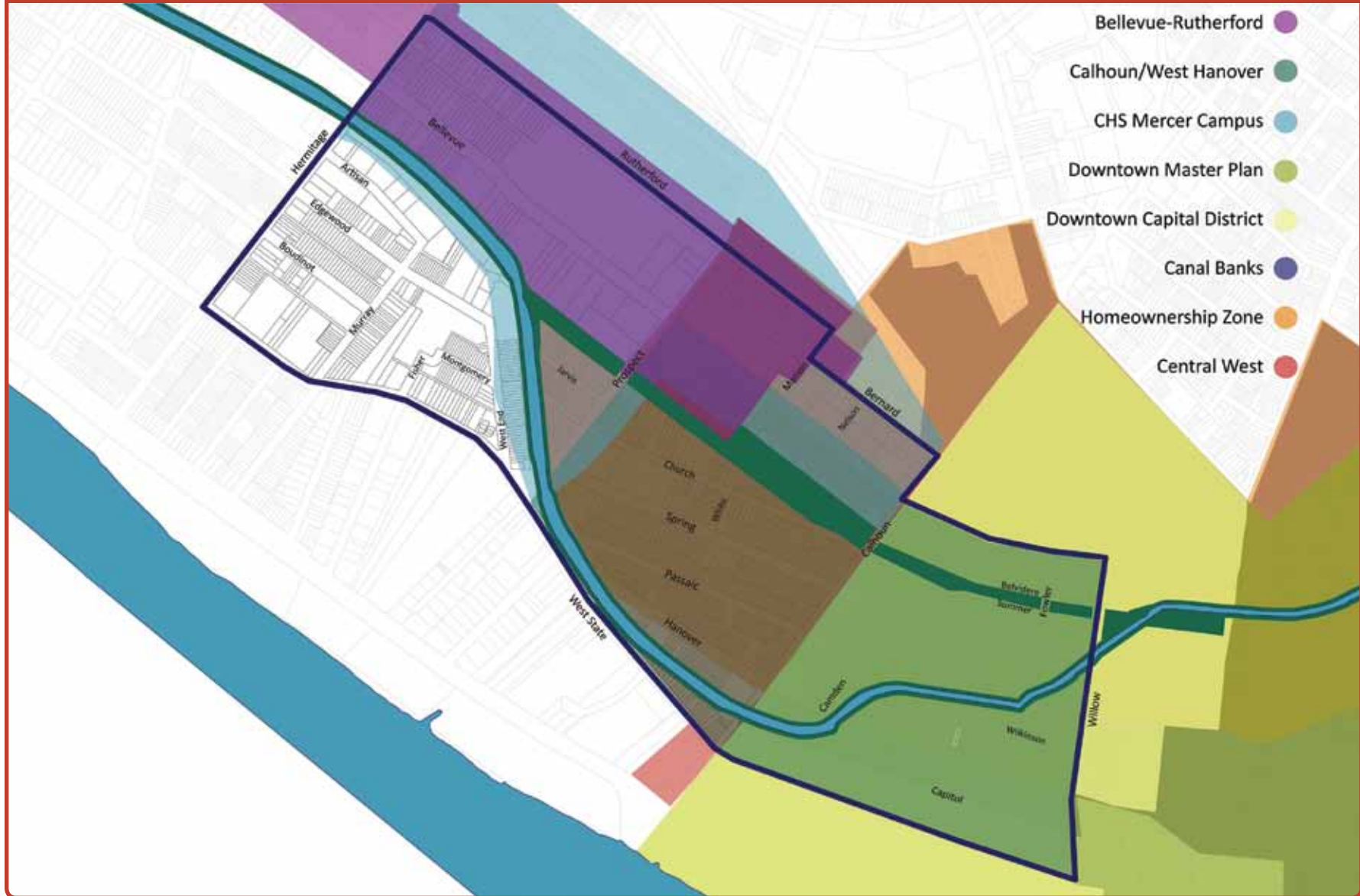
the following page shows how the study areas of the plans discussed here overlap the THDC neighborhood. The north west corner of the neighborhood is the only area not covered by other plans. (This happens also to be the part of the neighborhood with the lowest incomes and the lowest home values; the THDC should focus its efforts here.) Most of the plans reviewed here take a similar view of the neighborhood but have slightly differing views about how redevelopment should move forward. Those views are shaped by the different stakeholders who initiated the plans and their particular goals and objectives.

This neighborhood is unique in that it is primarily residential but is bisected by major recre-



Housing on Bellevue Avenue

Existing Plans - Relationship to THDC Planning Area



ational resources and is bookended to the north and south by major governmental and institutional uses. Planning for the redevelopment of this neighborhood must be coordinated among the different groups of stakeholders and end users of the neighborhood, be they residents, employees, or visitors. Cooperation will be essential to the success of any redevelopment efforts and to making sure that residents receive the services they need in order to actively take part in and benefit from the redevelopment process. The THDC will be a guiding force in coordinating future planning in this neighborhood and in fostering cooperation between organizations and stakeholders.

The following describes the study area, primary purpose, and key recommendations of existing plans that, to one degree or another, include the THDC neighborhood. Most of the plans are not regulatory and cannot be enforced. Others have been adopted by the City of Trenton pursuant to New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing law, which allows municipalities to designate eligible areas in need of redevelopment and then to plan for and effectuate the redevelopment of those areas. As such, these plans are regulatory, meaning that they contain not only recommendations but also requirements that developers working in the designated areas must meet. Redevelopment under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, while at times controversial,

affords municipalities greater flexibility with regard to eminent domain, selecting a redeveloper, and extracting community benefits from developers, than they typically have under standard zoning and land use ordinances. There are 42 redevelopment areas Trenton, eight of which intersect the THDC planning area and two of which are discussed below.

All of the plans reviewed here identify similar challenges and opportunities in the THDC neighborhood: safety, parking, and the condition of housing are major concerns; the D&R Canal and towpath and the Belvidere Greenway are underutilized assets that should play a prominent role in the redevelopment of the neighborhood; the historic character of the neighborhood and the housing stock are unique and should be highlighted; neighborhood scale commercial uses are lacking; and proximity to the State Capitol and related uses along with the presence of what could be major recreational amenities and a number of key gateways make this a prime location for mixed use revitalization. What these plans do not address in as

much detail, and what this plan focuses on, are the programs and services that the people of the community need in order to be primed to take advantage of all of the benefits that will accrue from the proposed physical upgrades to the neighborhood.

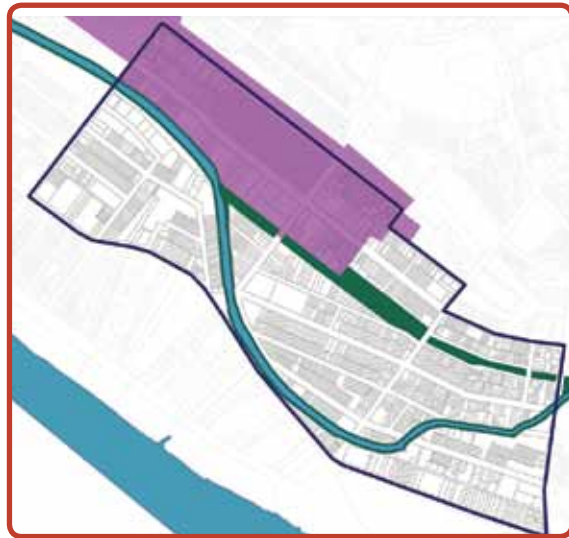
Other plans considered during the THDC planning process but not discussed here are the Trenton Community-Based Schools Master Plan, developed in 2002 by ICON Architecture; the Trenton Downtown Parking Policy and Sidewalk Design Standards, prepared in 2008 by DMJM Harris - AECOM; the City of Trenton Sustainable Design Guidelines, 2005; the City of



Capital Health System Mercer Campus, Bellevue Avenue

Trenton 2010 5-Year Consolidated Plan; and the Trenton Master Plan. Three on-going endeavors – the Mercer Street Friends West Ward Alliance, the New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids - Trenton project, and Capital Health System’s plans for reuse of its Mercer Campus – have also been reviewed. The Rutherford Heights Civic Association is pursuing the creation of a new redevelopment area in its neighborhood; related developments must be monitored by the THDC.

Bellevue-Rutherford Neighborhood Plan



**Heyer, Gruel & Associates
February 2010**

This plan covers a 23-block, 69-acre area surrounding the Capital Health System (CHS) Mercer Campus. Capital Health provided a grant to the City of Trenton to undertake this plan, given Capital Health’s planned relocation to new a new facility outside of the City. The primary goal of the plan is to assess the current and potential future uses of the Capital Health campus and to link those future uses to stabilization of the surrounding neighborhood. The plan recommends mixed-use redevelopment of the CHS site that can be phased – since it is unlikely that a single developer will take on the entire project, and that is compatible with and can realistically attract developers and tenants in the context of the surrounding neighborhood. Specific proposals include approximately 160 new residential units, a 100 to 125 bed assisted living facility, more than 100,000 square feet of non-residential development that is estimated to create between 215 and 265 new jobs, as well as two new parks. During the planning process, the community was presented with five different redevelopment alternatives. The preferred alternative included the demolition of most of the current Capital Health Campus. The community focused on redevelopment that will generate tax revenue, improve the neighborhood, and ensure that the length of time that the buildings and site are vacant is minimalized. While reuse of the Capital Health facilities is the primary focus of the plan, it also addresses other issues of concern to resi-

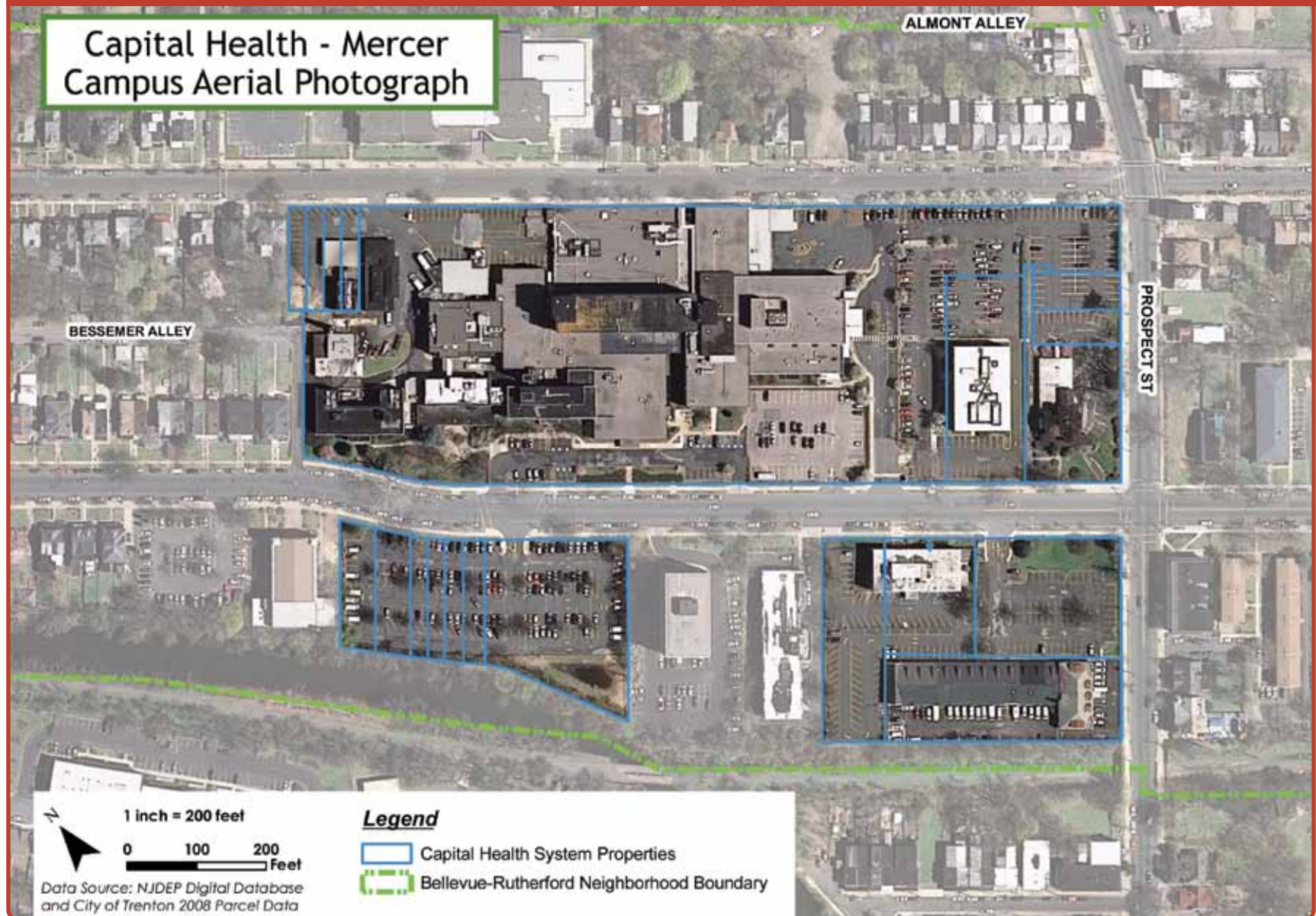
dents – crime, open space, lack of jobs, conditions of housing and streets, and circulation and parking. The plan provides details about the housing stock in the neighborhood, specific recommendations for streetscape and façade improvements, and a useful overview of hospital reuse efforts in other areas.

Capital Health System Mercer Campus Neighborhood Revitalization Study



**Isles
April 2005**

Capital Health System announced its intentions to relocate to new facilities outside of Trenton in February 2005. At that time, CHS engaged Isles to conduct a revitalization study of the neighborhood surrounding the CHS campus.



Residents and business owners identified needs including more open space, activities for youth, and greater police presence. The plan recommends rehabilitation of housing with a focus on in-fill development that matches the scale and character of the neighborhood, a crack down on building code violations, widespread façade improvement programs similar to that initiated by the City on the 200 block of Bellevue Avenue, neighborhood clean up programs, creation of new and improvement of existing open spaces, refurbishing and highlighting the D&R Canal and towpath, and developing new neighborhood-scale commercial uses. In addition, the plan makes specific observations about the CHS campus, including the fact that the CHS block is 1,900 feet long with insufficient north-south circulation for both cars and pedestrians, and recommends urban design strategies to address the campus. These urban design strategies and related recommendations dealing with increasing the health economy in the neighborhood have become less relevant with the certainty that CHS will leave the site.

Calhoun Street / West Hanover Street Community Redevelopment Study



Clarke Caton Hintz April 2007

This plan was funded by the State Street Group, an informal coalition of stakeholders located in and around West State Street, to assess how visitors perceive the area and how residents and workers experience it. The focus area of the plan comprises approximately half of the THDC planning area, with particular attention paid to the intersection of Calhoun and West Hanover Streets. The plan observes that the architectural and historic character of the neighborhood are key assets to be built upon; open space is lacking, but the D&R Canal and

the Belvidere Greenway are potential amenities in need of improvement; the existing conditions of building and streets vary throughout the neighborhood, but redevelopment over the past decade on Bellevue Avenue between Prospect and Calhoun Streets by the City of Trenton and Isles has resulted in those blocks presenting fairly good building conditions; streetscapes need improvement; abandoned buildings and absentee landlords are a perennial problem that contribute to blight and the perceived lack of safety; retail operations are in some instances nuisances associated with crime and drug use, but are also seen as important uses that can add to the neighborhood's tax base; a grocery store, a dry cleaner, and other neighborhood-scale retail development is needed; extensive amounts of surface parking detract from the historic character of the neighborhood, represent underutilization of property, and, because of the lack of nighttime uses associated with these lots, result in higher rates of actual and perceived crime; and the lack of safety; and, traffic and incompatible uses at major gateways to the neighborhood as well as along side streets make the neighborhood difficult for residents to operate in and present obstacles to future development. The plan offers detailed options for physical improvements at Calhoun and Hanover Streets, along the Belvidere Greenway between Calhoun and Prospect Streets, and in the area near the D&R Canal and Willow Street.

Downtown Capital District Master Plan



URS
May 2008

This plan covers the large area that the City of Trenton identifies as ‘downtown.’ Downtown is comprised of six distinct districts; the Capital District encompasses part of the THDC planning area. The vision statement guiding the plan is: “Deriving its vitality from its desirability as a “Residential Community of Choice,” Downtown Trenton is a source of pride as the State Capitol of New Jersey and fulfills its potential as a center of business, culture, education and heritage.” The plan looks to the year 2020, when Trenton will be recognized as a Business Center; River City; Green City; Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Hub; and a Historic Destination. Three major themes serve as ‘rules’ of the plan: establish Downtown Trenton as a

“Residential Community of Choice;” balance tax exempt and income producing properties in Downtown; and enhance the character of streets and open spaces to anchor investment. The plan cites surface parking lots, the condition of the D&R Canal and the Belvidere Greenway, and the lack of streetscape improvements and lighting as major problems. The canal is highlighted as an asset that should become a focal point for redevelopment. Key recommendations for the Capital District include gateway redevelopment of surface parking lots along West Hanover, Willow, and Passaic streets into mixed use buildings that include structured parking, offices, and new residences at a variety of scales. A new park is proposed along the canal on Passaic Street, along with the redevelopment of the Belvidere Greenway into a linear park. The cluster of commercial uses on Passaic Street is recommended to be replaced by neighborhood commercial uses when existing business owners sell or redevelop their properties

Canal Banks Redevelopment Area Plan



City of Trenton
Adopted March 1994

The Canal Banks Redevelopment plan was last amended in September 2005. The redevelopment area (shown in blue) stretches roughly from Prospect Street on the west to Route 1 on the east, and from Pennington Avenue on the north to East State Street on the south. All of the THDC neighborhood covered by this plan is zoned residential except the corner of Willow and Passaic Streets; redevelopment under this plan must confirm to this proposed zoning. The east side of Willow Street along West Hanover and Bank Streets is zoned for mixed use development, while the area south of Bank Street and west of Willow Street is zoned for commercial use. One of the core goals of this plan is to

promote homeownership. As a result, in 1997 the Canal Banks area was designated as a US Department of Housing and Urban Development Homeownership Zone (shown in orange with boundaries that extend farther west than the redevelopment area) with the goal of increasing homeownership by 60%. Canal Banks was one of only six communities in the nation to be selected for this pilot program. Other goals of the plan are to foster a mix of housing types and compatible non-residential uses, ensure the redevelopment of Canal Plaza along North Broad Street, provide design guidelines for future development projects in the area, and to create new and enhance existing open spaces such as the D&R Canal and the Belvidere Greenway. In particular, the plan calls for mini parks and village greens along with new residential development of for sale and rental units, with a focus on the surface parking lots along Willow and surrounding streets. Preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock is recommended when feasible. Several recommendations in this plan, including redevelopment of North Broad Street and redevelopment of the former Magic Marker site, have been implemented with the construction of Monument Crossing, the Catherine S. Graham houses, and other projects.

In addition to the redevelopment plan for the Canal Banks area, in May 2003, Isles created

the Canal Banks Redevelopment Plan for the Old Trenton, Monument Crossing, and Magic Marker neighborhoods. (This is not a regulatory plan.) Recommendations in this plan are similar to those put forth in the other plans discussed here, but the plan has a more pronounced focus on community organizing and capacity building.

Central West Redevelopment Area Plan



City of Trenton Adopted March 1988

The Central West redevelopment area is bounded roughly by Stuyvesant Avenue to the

north, the D&R Canal to the south, Calhoun Street to the east, and Prospect Street to the west. Initially adopted in 1988, this plan was amended in 1998 to align with the objectives set forth in the Canal Banks Homeownership Zone Plan. The primary goals of the plan are to preserve existing housing through rehabilitation and to create new open spaces.



THDC Neighborhood

People

DEMOGRAPHICS

The THDC planning area was defined based on cultural and historic factors, not necessarily on census tracts or other characteristics related to neighborhood indicators. As a result, the neighborhood does not fit easily within US Census boundaries. The planning area incorporates all or some of Census Tract 11, Block Groups 2, 3, and 4; Census Tract 14.02, Block Group 4; and Census Tract 15, Block Groups 4 and 5. Most of the information presented here is derived from Census 1990 and 2000 data at the block group level. Some key indicators are described using Census 2000 data at the block level to provide for a greater level of accuracy. (Census 1990 data is not available at the block level). However, it should be noted that based on an analysis of block group versus block level data, block group level data is accurate to within a few percentage points, suggesting that the THDC neighborhood shares similar characteristics to surrounding neighborhoods. It should also be noted that as of this writing, Census 2010 data has not yet been released, nor has American Community Survey five-year data at the block level. When new data is available, this information will be updated.

Population

The THDC area is home to 4,478 people organized into 1,619 households. Like the rest of the city, this neighborhood has experienced decades of population decline. The area's population decreased by approximately 5% between 1990 and 2000, while Trenton's population declined by about 4%. Although black residents account for 51% of Trenton's overall population, the THDC neighborhood maintains its identity as a historically black community with 89% of residents identifying as black or African American. Other races make up a very small portion of the population; the white population in the THDC neighborhood decreased by about half between 1990 and 2000, and now represents only 3% of the population.

Households

Two thirds (67%) of THDC area households rent their homes. Of the more than 2800 housing units in the neighborhood, approximately 20% are vacant.

This neighborhood is home to three key groups of people to whom resources and attention should be directed. Residents under the age of 18 make up a third (33%) of the population. Such a large population of young people commands a greater need for more educational and recreational activities and resources, both during after school hours and in the summertime.

“The majority of children reside in families with a single female head of household... This population of single mothers is one that likely requires education, financial, and emotional support to take care of themselves and their families.”

The majority of children reside in families with a single female head of household. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of families with a single female head of household and children under the age of 18 increased from 54% to 66%. (Based on 2000 block level data, the percentage of families with children headed by a single female is higher at 71%.) This population of single mothers is one that likely requires educational, financial, and emotional support to take care of themselves and their families.

More than a quarter of residents (28%) identify as disabled. Although this percentage is only slightly higher than that for the city as a whole (27%), it is important that this group of residents have access to assistance and resources that ensure their livelihood.

Income

The median household income in this neighborhood is \$27,946. This number is about \$3,000 less than the citywide median income and, when adjusted for inflation, households in the THDC neighborhood are making approximately \$2,000 less than they were in 1990. The blocks along the eastern portion of the neighborhood have higher incomes, while blocks farther west have lower incomes. In this neighborhood, nearly a third (29%) of families live below the poverty line. This is striking despite the fact that between 1990 and 2000 the percentage of families experiencing poverty decreased by about 4%. Poverty is especially difficult on children and can have significant negative effects on their learning. The follow shows the prevalence of students at THDC area schools who are eligible for free and reduced lunches as of February 2011: Cadwalader – 80%, Gregory – 72%, Monument – 79%. The perpetual financial problems facing this neighborhood are fundamental to decisions about what services are needed and how provision of those services is prioritized.

Education

Access to quality education for children and adults is an ongoing issue in the THDC neighborhood. Nearly half (44%) of the neighborhood's residents do not have a high school diploma, and less than 10% have earned a Bachelor's Degree or higher. These numbers have stagnated since



Cadwalader Elementary School

the 1990s, which suggests there has been little change in the quality and availability of educational resources to residents.

Proficiency scores on the statewide fourth grade (NJASK4) exam further highlights barriers to educational opportunity in Trenton in general and in this area in particular. According to the 2010 School Report Card, Trenton fourth graders' scores in math and language arts continue to fall short of the average scores of other urban districts and fall very short of the statewide average. However, in the THDC neighborhood, Cadwalader elementary school achieved above city average test scores for 2010. On the other hand, the area's other two elementary schools, Gregory and Monument, scored lower than the city's average on these statewide exams. So although the academic performance of many of the children who attend school in this neighborhood appears

to be improving, it is not a foregone conclusion that every child has access to the resources and support necessary to ensure their success.

SUCCESS MEASURES SURVEY

An essential element of the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation planning grant process is the Success Measures survey, which is intended to quantify residents' satisfaction with their neighborhoods. The THDC Success Measures survey was conducted over four weeks from mid-October through November 2010. The survey reached 324 neighborhood residents who were selected from a random sample. The results from the survey are statistically significant at a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. The following is an overview of the key findings from the survey. Detailed results can be found in the Appendix. This overview of survey results is structured around residents' satisfaction with the neighborhood, feelings about neighborliness, and opinions about neighborhood amenities and conditions.

Neighborhood Satisfaction

The survey asked respondents about their level of satisfaction with the neighborhood, their desire to stay in the neighborhood, their likelihood of recommending the neighborhood to others, and, if currently renting, their desire to purchase a home in the neighborhood. Based on responses to the question about neigh-

neighborhood satisfaction, 51% of respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with the neighborhood, while 27% are somewhat satisfied. When asked whether they would recommend the neighborhood to others as a good place to live, two-thirds (66%) of residents said they either definitely would recommend or probably would recommend the neighborhood. When asked whether they would recommend the neighborhood to families with children or to seniors, the numbers slipped slightly to 64% and 57%, respectively. Respondents were asked if they would continue to live in this neighborhood if given the choice and to explain their answers. The 39% of respondents who would not remain in the neighborhood cited crime as the primary reason, with crime making up a third of all responses.

Respondents were evenly divided between renters (52%) and owners (48%). Of the renters, 46% would consider buying a home in the neighborhood. Of those who said that they would buy in the neighborhood, the main reason that they have not yet done so is due to their personal financial situation (40%), followed by the available housing stock (17%). Of those who would not consider purchasing a home in this neighborhood, crime or other safety concerns is the main roadblock for 25% of respondents. Other reasons are respondents' personal financial situations (24%) and the physical conditions of the neighborhood (19%). Several of the survey questions provide additional insight into these ratings of neighborhood sat-

isfaction. When asked what they liked best about living in the community (respondents were able to respond with more than one item) a quarter of the responses were 'my house or apartment' and 20% were 'my neighbors.' **When asked what they liked least about living in the neighborhood, 31% of respondents indicated 'safety in the community.'**

Neighborliness

The aspect of the community with which respondents appear most satisfied is their neighbors. When asked to rate certain aspects of their community, 59% of respondents rated the friendliness of neighbors as good or very good. In addition, more than half of respondents consistently indicated that they believed people in the community were likely or very likely to help out if they needed basic assistance such as a ride, a favor such as picking up mail or borrowing a tool, or having someone take care of a child in an emergency.

Neighborhood residents also appear to be fairly well connected, as 32% speak to one to three neighbors on a regular basis, 28% speak to four to six neighbors, and 32% speak to seven or more. Unfortunately, 8% of respondents reported that they speak to no neighbors on a regular basis – it is these people, and the third of residents who speak to only a few neighbors, in particular, that we must make a concerted effort to reach.

While residents are happy about their neighbors and how friendly the community is overall, one of the greatest needs they see is a lack of community engagement.

When asked what residents can do to make the neighborhood a better place to live, 42% of answers related to increasing community engagement. These answers included specific suggestions such as have and attend community meetings and events, love and respect one another, work together, and support community centers.

Amenities & Conditions

Respondents were asked to evaluate the amenities and conditions within their neighborhood by rating the quality of certain characteristics of the community and then by rating to what extent these characteristics improved or declined compared to three years ago. The characteristics that were assessed include cleanliness of the community, condition of homes, physical condition of streets and public spaces, safety, quality of public services, goods and services available for purchase, access to transportation, access to employment centers, and affordability of housing. All of the characteristics assessed received a fair rating from approximately 40% of respondents.

Two characteristics received higher ratings: 47% rated access to transportation as good and 40% rated access to employment centers as good. While a third of respondents rated safety as fair, another 41% rated it as poor or very poor. **Perhaps surprisingly, renters were more than twice as likely as owners to rate safety as very poor.** One quarter of respondents noted that access to goods and services for purchase is poor or very poor.

Residents feel that, over the past three years, the neighborhood has generally improved some, 36%, or stayed about the same, 36%. Only 17% of respondents feel that the neighborhood has declined some or a lot, while 11% feel that it has improved a lot. When asked why they feel that the neighborhood has changed in the way that they perceive, 43% of answers given by those who said that the neighborhood has declined some or a lot had to do with crime, while 33% of the answers given by those who said that the neighborhood has improved some or a lot had to do with new development or rehabilitation of homes. One positive note is that 37% of respondents expect the neighborhood to improve some over the next three years, while 15% expect a lot of improvement. When asked why they feel this way, 23% of respondents' answers had to do with community engagement and 19% had to do with new development or rehabilitation of homes. One third of respondents expect things to stay

the same because they have not seen and do not expect significant change. Only 12% of respondents expect the neighborhood to decline. When asked why they feel this way, 21% of responses had to do with crime or a lack of safety and 13% related to a lack of community engagement.

Conclusions

Residents of the THDC planning area are generally satisfied with their neighborhood and are able to identify some positive aspects of it. They are also able to identify the positive outcomes from things like new housing development. At the same time, though, respondents were realistic about the issues facing the community. Crime, a lack of community engagement, and a lack of cleanliness are perennial problems that must be addressed in support of any revitalization efforts.

YOUTH SURVEY

The Steering Committee wanted to ensure youth participation in the planning process. As a result, a Youth Sub-Committee developed and administered a survey to 58 young people. The results, while not statistically significant, provide a snapshot of how youth perceive the neighborhood. The following is an overview of survey results. Detailed results are in the Appendix. Survey respondents ranged in age from 10 to 21 years old; 41% are 10 to 14, 58% are 15 to 20, and 2% are older than 20. Females comprised 57% of

One thing is undeniable: residents are clear about what needs to be done to make the neighborhood a better place to live:

Increase community engagement	42%
Reduce crime / increase safety	12%
Clean up neighborhood	11%
Improve housing	6%

respondents, and males 43%. The vast majority of respondents, 93%, are African American.

A key goal of the Youth Sub-Committee was to find out how to be more successful at engaging youth in the future. When asked how to more actively engage young people in the community, the two most frequent answers were recreational sports leagues, 32%, and big brother / big sister programs, 31%. Other responses included mentoring programs and after school programs.

Perhaps the most encouraging results from the youth survey are that the respondents are in school, have high hopes for the future, and have a remarkable level of self confidence. All

but one of the respondents reported being in school. When asked where they see themselves in five years, the most prevalent answer given by respondents was college, with 64% of responses, followed by working, with 22% of responses. Almost all of the youth surveyed reported being very self confident. On a scale of one to five, with five being the highest, 84% rated their level of self-confidence at 5 and 14% rated it at 4. When asked to rate how important it is to solve problems without using violence, 63% of respondents rated it at 4 or 5, but 16% rated it lower at 1 or 2. Another positive result is that 63% of respondents reported that they have a mentor or someone who takes an active role in their lives and gives them advice.

The youth feel that the neighborhood is lacking in recreational amenities. When asked what they would like to see more of in the community, half of all responses given were parks and recreational facilities, followed by clothing stores and community pride, with 27% and 15% of responses, respectively.

Respondents were asked to rate certain aspects of their community on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest. The survey results show that there is not great consensus among respondents about the neighborhood. For instance, 45% of respondents rated safety highly at 4 or 5, while 34% rated it on the bottom of the scale at 1 or 2.

...Young people feel that the neighborhood is lacking in recreational amenities. When asked what they would like to see more of in the community, half of all responses given were 'parks and recreational facilities'...



Wilkinson Park

Similarly, 43% of respondents rated cleanliness highly at 4 or 5, but 26% rated it lower at 1 or 2. The condition of streets received the lowest rating, with 42% putting it at the bottom of the scale. Schools, school programs, and teachers were generally rated at 4 or 5 by 50% or more of respondents.

Land

LAND USE & ZONING

Trenton's 1999 Land Use Plan is the document that guides how land in the city currently is and should in the future be utilized. It is the City's official plan and is the basis for the City's zoning and redevelopment regulations. The plan looks at the City as a whole as well as at 25 special planning areas organized into eight groups. Three of the groups and six of the special planning areas touch the THDC Neighborhood.

Downtown Trenton Group

In the Downtown Trenton Group, the State Street and Capital Complex Special Planning Areas are relevant. For the State Street area, which includes the southeast corner of the THDC neighborhood, the Land Use Plan recommends attracting new cultural and commercial uses, reuse of existing buildings, addressing parking issues, installing a wayfinding system, and implementing high urban design standards. For the

Capital Complex area, which is centered around the State House, recommendations include creating an entertainment, cultural, and conference destination, implementing programs to support residents and tenants of the historic row houses along West State Street, pursuing the redesign of Route 29 as an urban boulevard, and reconnecting the city to the Delaware Riverfront.

Canal Banks Group

The Canal Banks area, as discussed above, encompasses nearly 265 acres, and stretches roughly from Route 1 to Prospect Street just north of downtown. Special Planning Areas under the Canal Banks group that touch the THDC neighborhood include Central West and Magic Marker. The Central West Special Planning Area encompasses almost the entirety of the THDC

neighborhood, stretching from Willow Street to Prospect Street and from the State House to North 25 and the Magic Marker/Catherine S. Graham Square site. Problems identified for this neighborhood in the land use plan a decade ago mirror what the community sees today – a high percentage of renters, abandoned and dilapidated buildings, and a lack of recreational resources. Recommendations in the land use plan include cataloging vacant properties and planning for their redevelopment, assisting homeowners with façade improvements, assisting renters to become homeowners in the neighborhood, creating new housing options through Homeownership Zone projects, implementing streetscape improvements, revitalizing the neighborhood commercial corridor along Calhoun Street, and working with the D&R Canal Commission and other stakeholders to develop additional recreational areas along the canal and elsewhere throughout the neighborhood. The goals for the Magic Marker site have largely been achieved – clean up of the brownfield conditions and redevelopment as single family housing. Plans for a new elementary school near the site have not yet come to fruition.

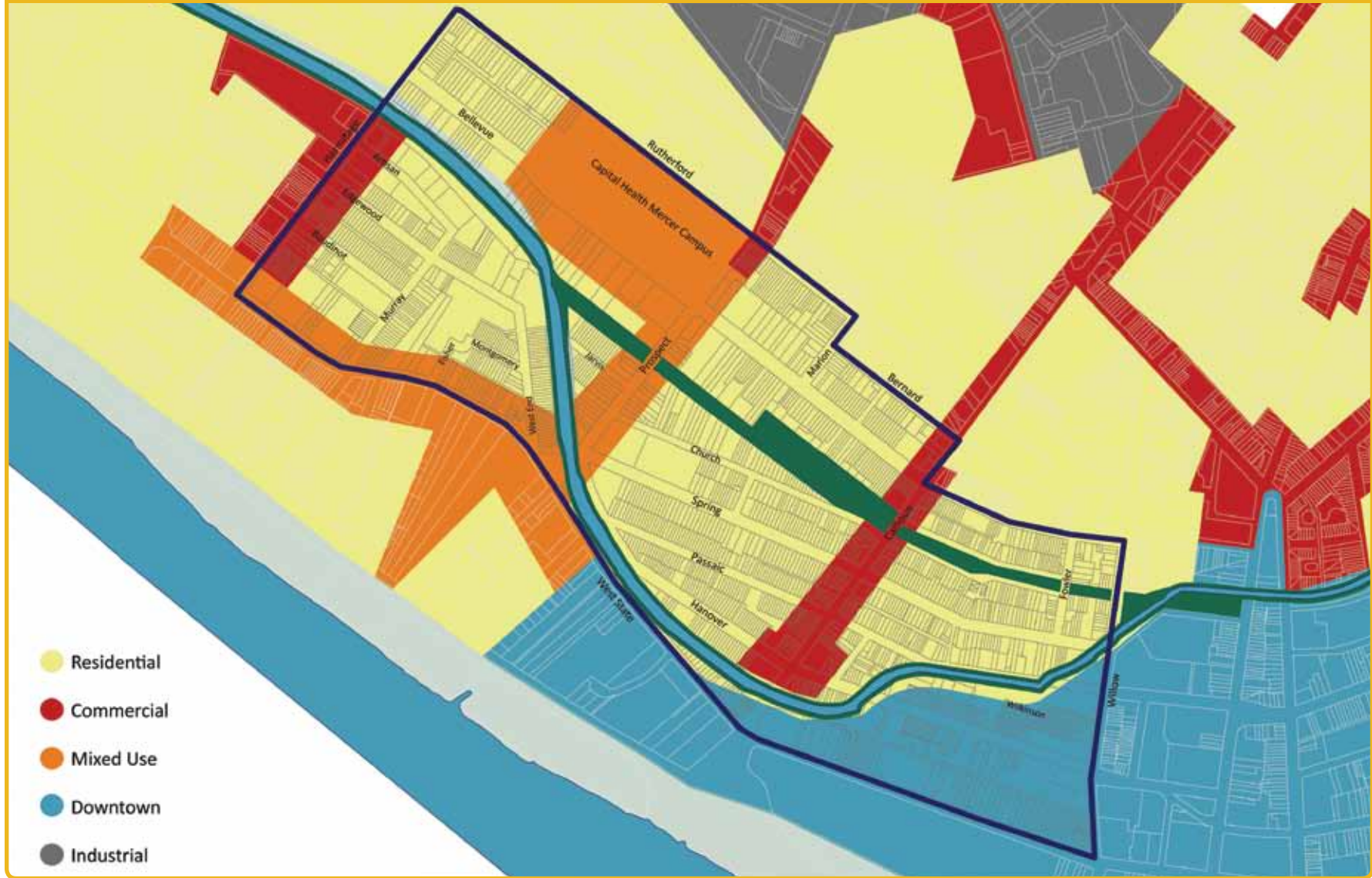
West Ward Group

Within the West Ward group, three Special Planning areas affect the THDC neighborhood. The Reading Railroad Right-of-Way and Oakland Street Area to the north of the THDC neighbor-



Historic rowhouses on West State Street

City of Trenton Existing Land Use



hood deals mostly with reintegrating a now defunct right-of-way into the existing urban fabric and creating new opportunities for housing and neighborhood scale commercial and recreational amenities. The West End / Hermitage Avenue Area is centered around Hermitage Avenue and bordered by West State Street to the south, the D&R Canal to the north, Prospect Street to the east, and Overbrook Avenue to the west. The Land Use Plan recommends redeveloping the Hermitage Avenue commercial corridor as a regional commercial center and strengthening the existing residential neighborhood by developing new housing, redeveloping abandoned and vacant sites, providing for façade improvements, and enhancing the condition and use of the canal. Recommendations for the Stuyvesant / Prospect Area focus on reclaiming the many abandoned buildings and sites, improving streetscape conditions, and improving neighborhood commercial offerings.

Zoning

Zoning recommended under the Land Use Plan largely reflects existing conditions. Proposed zoning for most of the THDC neighborhood is low to medium density residential, with neighborhood commercial along Calhoun Street and Hermitage Avenue, regional commercial near the Westside Plaza, and multi-family residential and mixed use office along the corridor from Capital Health down to West State Street. It



Rowhouses on Edgewood Avenue

should be noted that some of the proposed zoning, especially along West Hanover Street, Bellevue Avenue, and Passaic Street, is in conflict with existing commercial and institutional uses. While the mix of uses that currently exists is at times problematic, that has less to do with the uses themselves than with the way uses were developed, the lack of attention paid to protecting residences from other uses, and the edge conditions between uses that fail to demarcate zones and create an orderly look and feel along streets.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The THDC neighborhood is primarily residential with attached rowhouses being the most prevalent housing type. There are some large multi-family buildings in the neighborhood as well, including Rowan Towers, J. Connor French Towers, and Delaware View Terrace on West State Street; North 25 Apartments on Willow Street; and Bellevue Plaza on Bellevue Avenue. These large multifamily facilities are, for the most part, located on the edges of the neigh-

borhood. Commercial, educational, and institutional uses are concentrated in the southeast and northwest portions of the neighborhood. To the southeast, along West Hanover and West State Streets, are uses related to the state government and statewide organizations. These include New Jersey Future, the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey, Thomas Edison State College, and the Office of the Child Advocate, to name a few. Neighborhood commercial uses are scattered along Calhoun Street, larger scale commercial uses are concentrated along Hermitage Avenue near Edgewood Avenue and Artisan Street, and a concentration of auto-related businesses are on Passaic Street. To the north, Capital Health, a major institutional use, covers nearly 16 acres primarily along Bellevue Avenue. The neighborhood is also home to many religious institutions.

Housing

Housing in the THDC planning area is comprised mainly of attached rowhouses, but also includes detached single family homes and large multi-family structures. While some areas, such as the 200 block of Bellevue Avenue, have received facade improvements or remain in-tact residential enclaves, much of the housing is in need of aesthetic and structural improvements. With 20% of buildings vacant or abandoned, many people live on incomplete blocks where abandoned buildings decrease safety and prop-

erty values. While some new construction or major rehabilitation has taken place in recent years, as highlighted by responses to the Success Measures survey, detailed analysis of the condition of housing should be done as a basis for comprehensive redevelopment plans.

Commerce

Commercial uses are concentrated along Calhoun Street and Hermitage Avenue. Many of the businesses along Calhoun Street draw criticism from residents because of the services they provide and the fact that they draw loiterers.



J. Conner French Towers at 630 West State Street



North Hermitage Plaza



A number of independent businesses line Hermitage Avenue leading to the Westside Plaza shopping center. The condition of the buildings, the way that businesses utilize the public space of the street to show their wares, and the snaggletooth effect of an incomplete commercial corridor all detract from the success of this corridor. Compounding this is the fact that Westside Plaza is largely vacant and feels more like a suburban strip mall than a shopping center in an urban core. A large and highly underutilized parking lot engulfs the shopping center at the same time as it backs up to an incongruous edge condition – the backs of residential lots on Edgewood Avenue literally form the border of the parking area. This serves neither the residents nor the shopping center well.

Additional commercial uses dot the neighborhood, but the mix of goods and services easily accessed by residents is not satisfactory – one quarter of respondents to the Success Measures survey rated the variety of goods and services available in the neighborhood as poor or very poor. A better mix of commercial offerings is needed in this neighborhood.

Parking

Many of the commercial and institutional uses in the neighborhood are accompanied by large parking areas. These include the state parking lots and structures along Willow and



Parking near Willow and West Hanover Streets

West Hanover Streets, the large parking lots at religious facilities throughout the neighborhood, and Capital Health’s multiple parking lots. These parking facilities are not shared, so most are used for only half of the 24-hour day. Moreover, they do not have fencing, lighting, or landscaping that is appropriate for the neighborhood – they do not respect the historic character of the neighborhood, do not help to improve streetscape conditions, and do not help to improve the reality or perception of safety. The placement, regulation, and design of parking facilities in and around the neighborhood must become a central element in any plans for redevelopment. In addition, it is important to consider the dense mix of uses near the intersection of Willow and West Hanover and West State Streets. Proper consideration must be

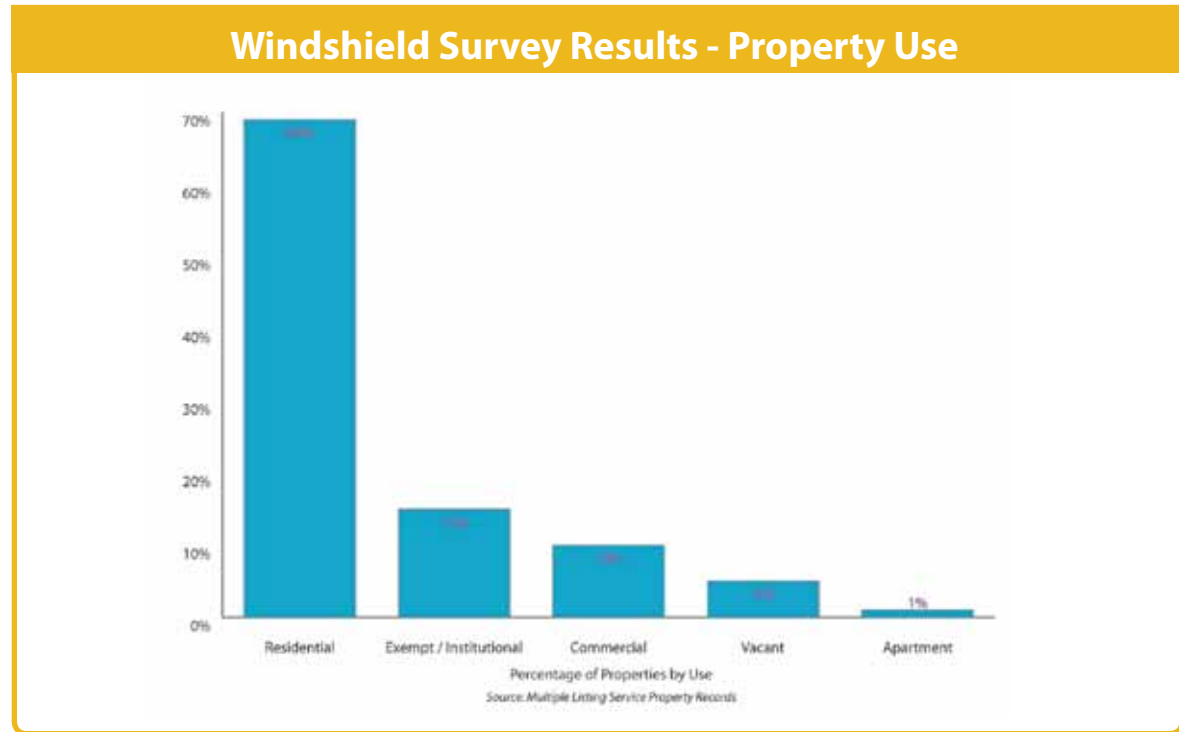


Top and Bottom: Parking lot at Westside Plaza

given to ensuring that all uses can coexist in harmony. There are a number of similar instances in this neighborhood where uses that can be made compatible are incompatible based on urban design and streetscape problems that negatively impact residents, employees, and visitors of the neighborhood.

Windshield Survey

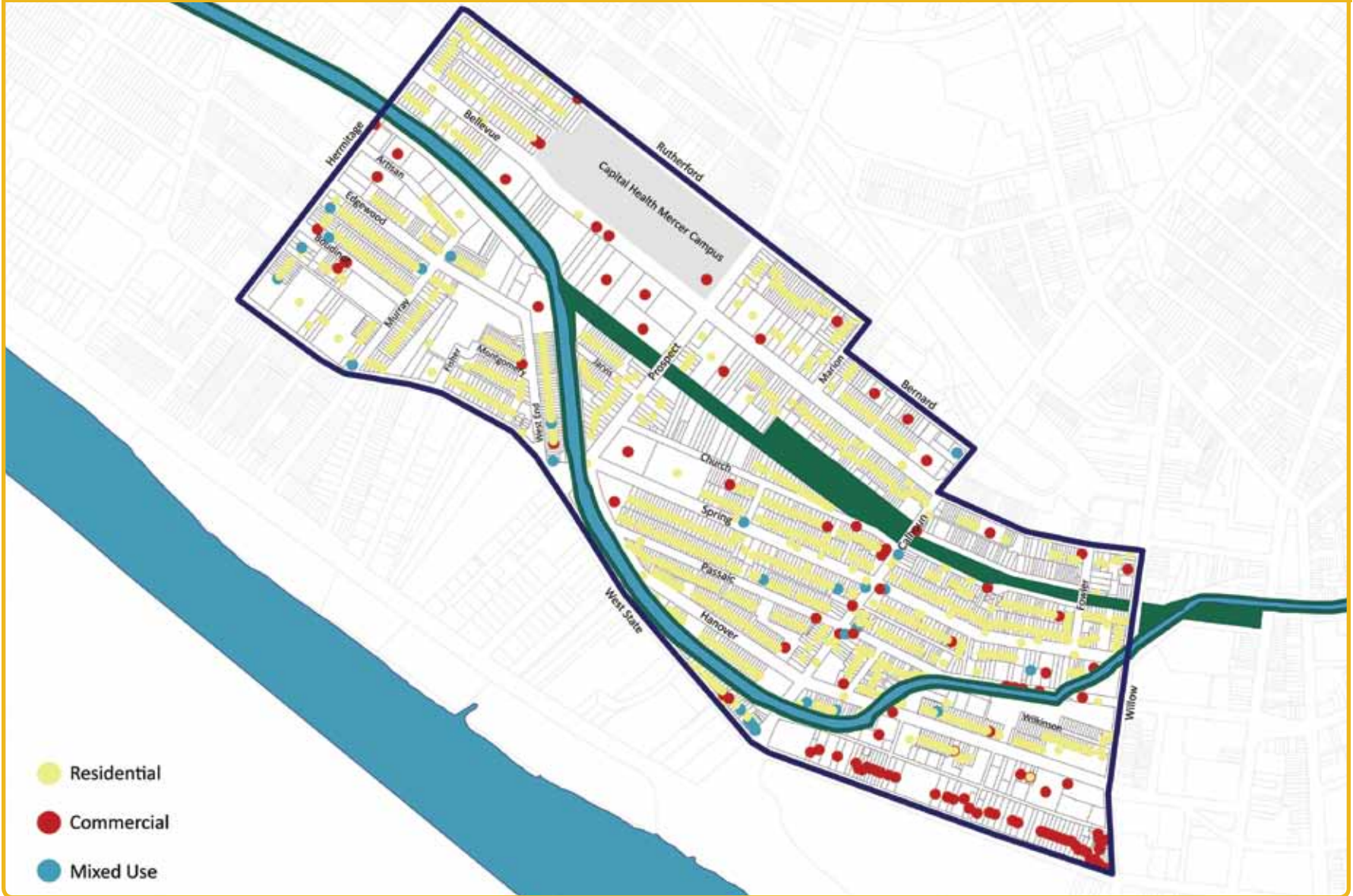
The existing conditions information presented in the THDC Neighborhood Use and Occupancy maps was collected during a 'windshield survey' conducted during the winter of 2010. The maps are intended to provide a snapshot of the existing conditions of the planning area. They show that the planning area is primarily residential with some concentrations of commercial uses and some scattered mixed use buildings. They also show that vacant or abandoned buildings and parcels are present throughout the area. The results of the windshield survey show that approximately 90% of the neighborhood consists of residential uses, while 80% of buildings are occupied, 15% are vacant or abandoned, and about 5% of lots are vacant. By another measure, based on data gathered from the Multiple Listing Service, approximately 70% of the neighborhood consists of residential uses, 15% is exempt or institutional uses, 10% is commercial, and 5% is vacant lots. One key thing to note is that of the exempt properties in the planning area, as characterized by the MLS, the City of Trenton owns



54%, many of which are abandoned homes. This means that the actual percentage of residential use in the neighborhood is closer to that identified during the windshield survey. It also means that City-owned properties can be targeted for redevelopment and code enforcement efforts to prevent or reduce the blighting effect these properties can have on the neighborhood. Occupancy and use status of buildings and parcels changes frequently. An important part of the ongoing monitoring of neighborhood indicators should be the creation of an existing conditions survey

of buildings and parcels that can be administered over time at regular intervals and produce comparable results.

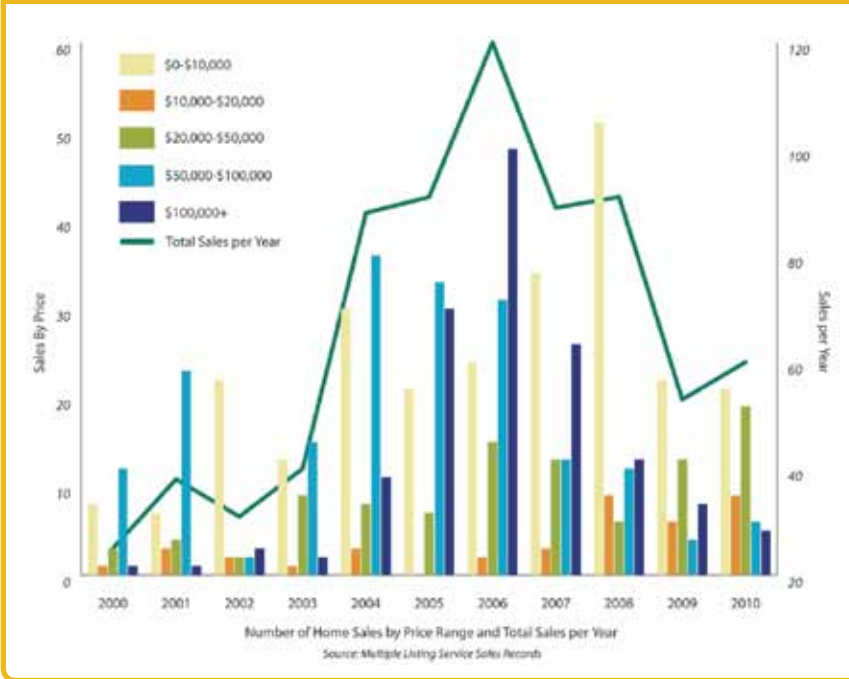
Windshield Survey Results - Property Use



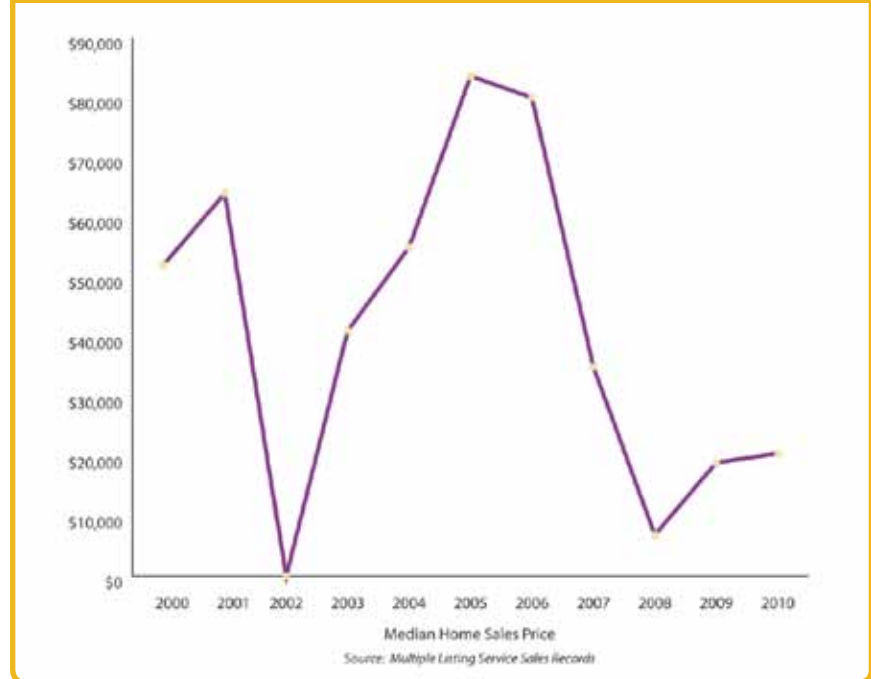
Windshield Survey Results - Occupancy



Home Sales by Price Range



Median Sale Price



REAL ESTATE

The real estate market in the THDC neighborhood has tended to fluctuate with the broader economy over the past ten years. During the last two recessions, early and late in the 2000's, both the number and price of home sales dropped. During the boom years in the middle of the decade, both the number and price of home sales increased. In 2006 more sales occurred than in any other year during the past decade. In the same year, there were 48 sales at \$100,000 or greater – the highest number of any year be-

tween 2000 and 2010. By 2007 that number had dropped to 26, and by 2009 it decreased even further to eight. In a related trend, the highest number of sales at \$10,000 or less occurred in 2008, after the recent downturn in the housing market. The overall number of sales decreased significantly between 2008 and 2009, but started to slowly pick back up into 2010. Median sales prices reflect these trends. (The median sales price in 2002 was \$1, as there were a disproportionate number of sales for \$0 or \$1.) Census data show that median home values are high-

est – higher than for Trenton as a whole – in the portion of the neighborhood between Willow and Calhoun Streets followed by the area surrounding CHS.

The real estate market in Trenton and the THDC planning area trend together. For Trenton as a whole, using data provided by PolicyMap, there were nearly 12,000 sales in 2006. That number fell to just under 2,000 in 2007 and to 1,200 in 2009. The latest data available from this source are for the first and second quarters of 2010, which

show that sales in 2010 were on track to near 2009 levels. Median sales prices in Trenton fell from \$98,000 in 2006 to \$46,000 in 2009.

Low housing prices can signal problems for a neighborhood in terms of lackluster demand as well as lower tax revenues. However, low housing prices can also help to keep stable low-income families in the neighborhoods where their friends and family live. Affordability of housing is an appreciated characteristic of the THDC neighborhood; 64% of respondents to the Success Measures survey agree or strongly agree that homes in this neighborhood are affordable. When asked why they chose to live in this neighborhood, residents cited the affordability of housing almost a quarter of the time, and half of respondents rated the affordability of homes in the area as good or very good.



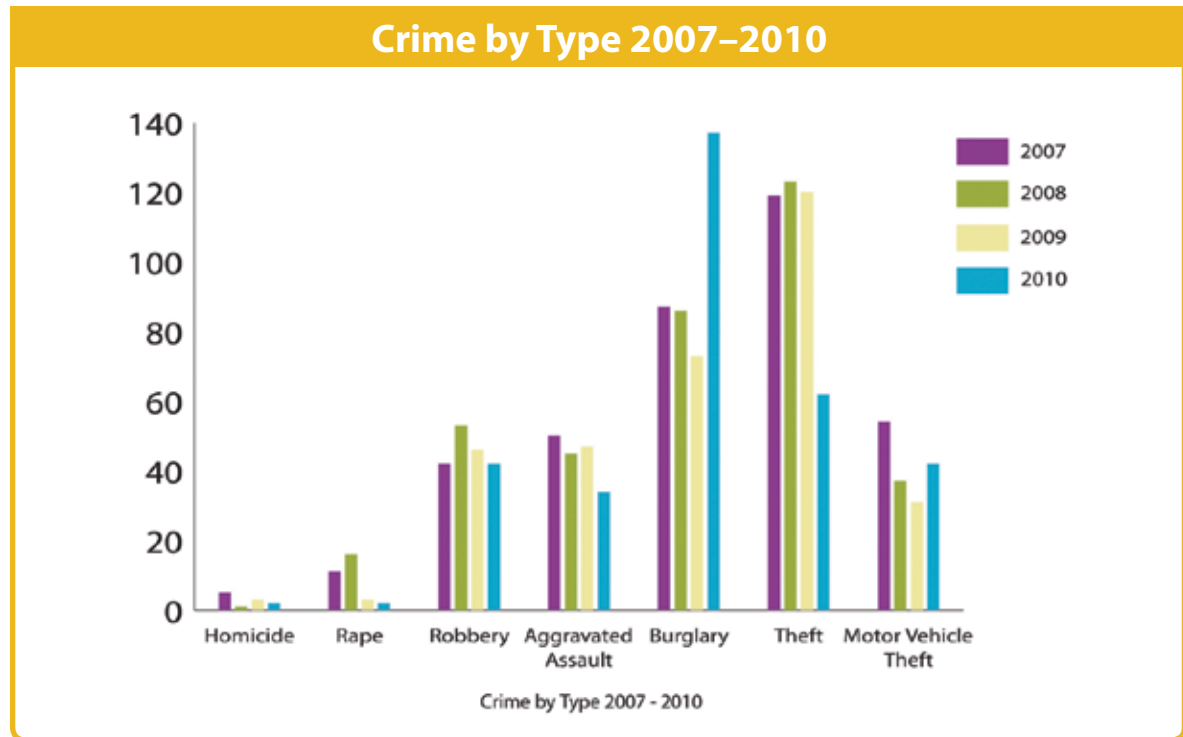
Abandoned buildings reduce property values and detract from residents' sense of safety

Safety

Residents of the THDC neighborhood are very concerned about crime, including the presence of gangs and the use and sale of drugs. Results from the Success Measures survey show that a lack of safety is the thing residents like least about their neighborhood. Residents are concerned about their own personal well being as well as about others' perceptions of their neighborhood, how crime rates can negatively impact

opportunities for redevelopment, and how a real or perceived lack of safety can reduce residents' willingness to get out of their houses and participate in the community. At the same time, fear of crime prevents people from walking outside and utilizing recreational areas, which leads to both poorer health outcomes and decreased community bonding.

While residents are justifiably concerned, there is evidence that crime rates in the neighborhood are decreasing. Data provided by the Trenton



Police Department show that over the four years from 2007 to 2010, the period for which data are available, violent crimes such as homicide and rape were relatively rare, while burglary and theft were more frequent. Crimes of all types except for burglary and motor vehicle theft were less prevalent in 2010 than in prior years. The spike in burglary and motor vehicle theft is alarming and should be investigated further.

Recreation

The lack and poor condition of recreational amenities in the THDC planning area is of serious concern. Fifty percent of Youth Survey respondents said they would like to see more parks and recreational facilities in the neighborhood, and a third of respondents said that more recreational sports leagues would help to engage youth in the community. During the prioritization of issues facing the neighborhood, the community ranked the provision of recreational services to youth

highly. In conversations with the community, the need for increased recreational opportunities – especially those other than basketball – came up often.

The D&R Canal and the Belvidere Greenway, which bisect the neighborhood and should be major recreational amenities, are sadly ill-cared for, difficult to access, and, because of their general appearance and condition, scary and



D&R Canal along Passaic Street - there is no separation between the towpath and the parking lot



Community garden on Belvidere Greenway at Calhoun Street

uninviting to residents. A primary recreational oversight in this neighborhood is the lack of development of the canal and the greenway. When walking or driving through this neighborhood, these two linear parks are almost omnipresent. Though they are sometimes at grade and sometimes below grade, sometimes obscured by overgrown bushes and trees, buildings, and fences, they are always there. Appropriate care and development of these resources must be a priority not only for stakeholders in the THDC neighborhood, but also for the City of Trenton and for the State of New Jersey, who has ultimate responsibility for their upkeep.

Located primarily in the West Ward, the THDC planning area is between 1.3 and 4/10 of a mile from Cadwalader Park; those living closer to the western boundary of the neighborhood have easier access to Trenton's largest recreational resource. Interestingly, Cadwalader Park did not receive significant attention from residents during the planning process, almost as if it is too far away and too mentally inaccessible to be considered as a resource for the neighborhood. This indicates that neighborhood-scale recreational options that respond to the specific needs and culture of the community are necessary.

Neighborhood recreational options are few and far between in the THDC area:

- **Carlos Negrón Park**, at the corner of Calhoun and Passaic Streets, is in poor condition and is under utilized. It is located on a busy commercial corner where at all times of the day and night people loiter on the corner near the bodega and the liquor store. This corner is close to the Calhoun Street Bridge and is a major gateway into and out of the city, so particularly at rush hour this is an inhospitable place to recreate as workers leaving the city clog the roads.



Top and Bottom: Edgewood Avenue Park

- **Wilkinson Park** is located at the end of one-way Wilkinson Place and has a playground and a basketball court. It is steps from the canal, but it does not feel like a welcoming place to relax or get some exercise. It is surrounded by a sea of parking and is not adequately screened from the rear yards of homes that back up to it.

- **Spring Street Park** is little more than a vacant lot that needs major improvements to be considered a true recreational resource.

- **Edgewood Avenue Park**, located across the street from Cadwalader School and renovated in 2004, offers a playground, basketball court, and shaded seating. It is located along the canal and provides direct access to the towpath. This is a well-maintained and heavily used recreational resource.

- **Community Gardens** are located along the greenway just west of Calhoun Street, on the greenway at Prospect street, and at the corner of West End and West State Streets. Isles assists these gardens and is working with the D&R Canal Commission to address the unsightly mounds of dirt near Calhoun Street.

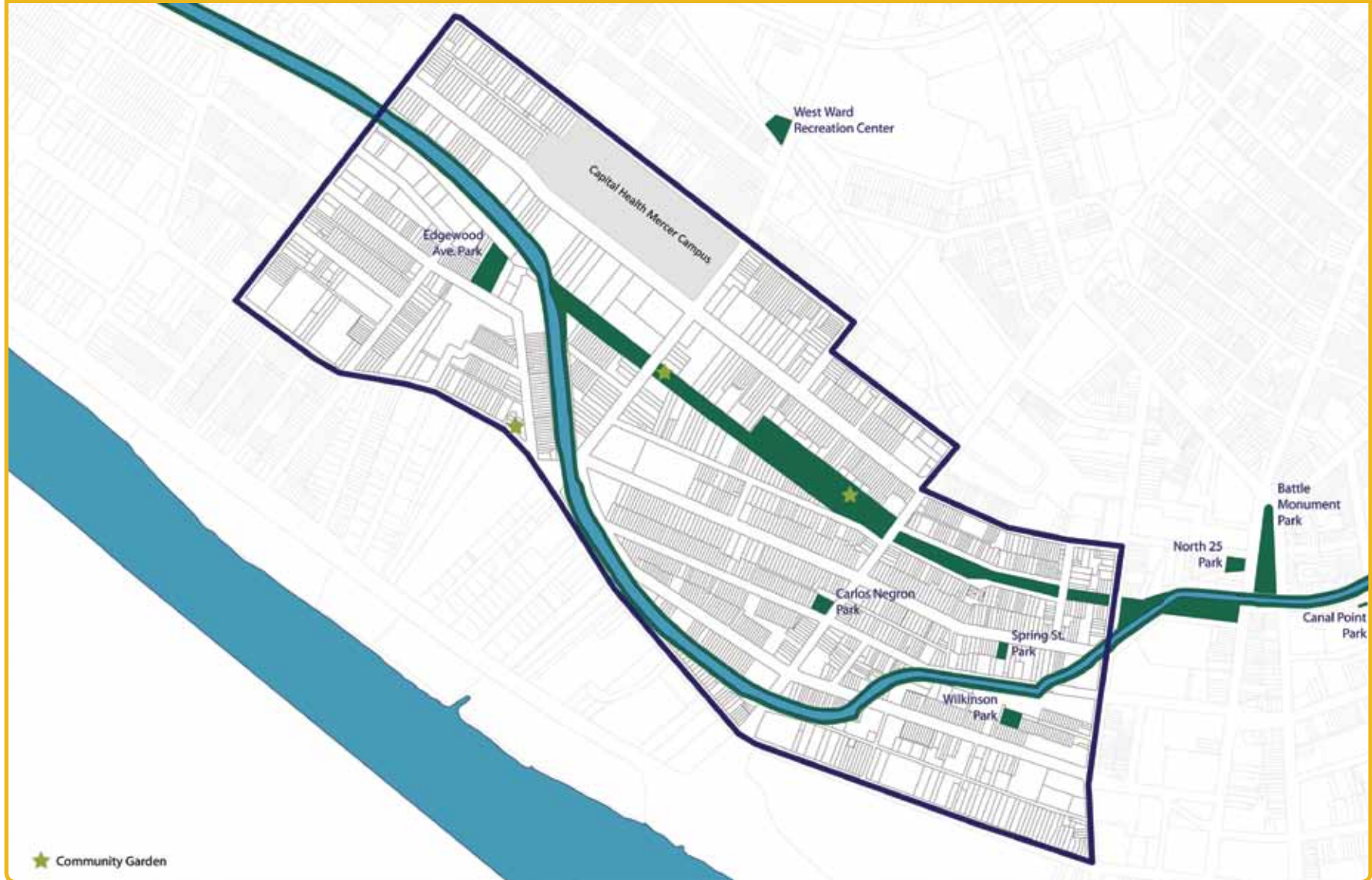
- Just beyond the eastern border of the neighborhood are **Battle Monument Park**, **North 25 Park**, and **Canal Point Park**. Battle Monument Park provides for passive recreation and is more

of a tourist destination than a neighborhood resource. North 25 Park is a vacant lot on a portion of which the City of Trenton has allowed Isles' YouthBuild program to construct a community garden. Canal Point Park is a pocket park geared toward the residents of the Monument Crossing Development.

- The **West Ward Recreation Center** is just outside of the planning area and offers recreational basketball as well an outdoor challenge course.

There are other public spaces nearby, such as the Warren Street Plaza and the Pennington/Willow Plaza, but these are hardscape areas that do more to enhance street conditions than offer opportunities for even passive recreation. The generally small size and poor condition of the recreational resources available to the neighborhood is an issue that must be addressed. At the same time, organized recreational opportunities, in the form of after school programs and sports leagues, do exist but need to be enhanced and better marketed to residents. Recreation in this area needs to be re-imagined to provide more than playgrounds for the young, basketball courts for adolescents, and shaded seating for older people.

Recreation Resources



Transportation

Residents noted that access to transportation is one of the most attractive characteristics of the THDC neighborhood. Three quarters of Success Measures survey respondents rated access to transportation as good or very good, while nearly a quarter of respondents think that access to transportation has improved a lot over the last three years and more than a third think that it has improved some. The Willow Street end of the neighborhood is approximately 7/10 of a mile from the newly-renovated Trenton Transit Center, and the Hermitage Avenue end is just over twice that distance. In addition, a number of New Jersey Transit and Mercer County buses service the area.

The NJ Transit Northeast Corridor Line provides train access to northern New Jersey and New York City. Riders can travel from Trenton to New York City in one and a half hours for \$31 round trip to NY Penn Station. For \$3.00 per round trip, the NJ Transit Riverline light rail provides easy access to southern New Jersey and Philadelphia via Camden. Total trip time from Trenton to the last stop at the Camden Entertainment Center is just over one hour. The Septa Trenton Line provides direct access into Center City Philadelphia passing through the Philadelphia Suburbs before ending at Temple University. Riders can purchase round trip tickets for less than \$20 and

get from Trenton to Center City in just over one hour. Amtrak provides regional access to residents, as Trenton Transit Center is a stop along its Northeast Corridor, which runs from Boston to Virginia Beach. However, travel on Amtrak is far more expensive than on other carriers.

NJ Transit buses and shuttles circulate throughout Trenton and Mercer County. The bus system provides residents with access to employment and shopping. All bus and rail routes stop at the Trenton Transit Center. On the 601, residents can travel to the College of New Jersey and Briarwood Shopping Village, while the 606 stops at Rider University, the Princeton Shopping Center, and Project Freedom. The 609 and 616 buses transport riders to the NJ Library for the Blind, Mercer County Community College, and the Capitol Complex. The 608 will transport riders to the State Police Barracks, the West Trenton Rail Center, and the State Capitol, providing residents access to city and state public services.

NJ Transit and Mercer County also account for the travel needs of the area's elderly and disabled population. NJ Transit offers an alternative bus system for disabled residents, Access Link, while the county offers Transportation Resources to Aid the Disadvantaged and Elderly (T.R.A.D.E.) for the elderly and disabled.

But while residents of the Trenton Historic District have reasonable access to surrounding areas by public transportation in the form of bus, train, and light rail, they are not able to easily walk to the Trenton Transit Center due to concerns about safety and the physical conditions of the city on the routes between the neighborhood and the center. There are few, if any, bus shelters in the THDC area, which makes use of the buses less comfortable. Trenton's streets are in poor condition, which makes bicycling difficult – compared to other urban cores, one rarely sees people bicycling for transportation in Trenton. Overall, there are significant opportunities to improve access to transportation and to support biking and walking as transportation options.



Assets, Issues, and Priorities

This planning process has centered around getting broad stakeholder buy-in related to what is needed to improve the quality of life for those who live and work here. This was achieved by:

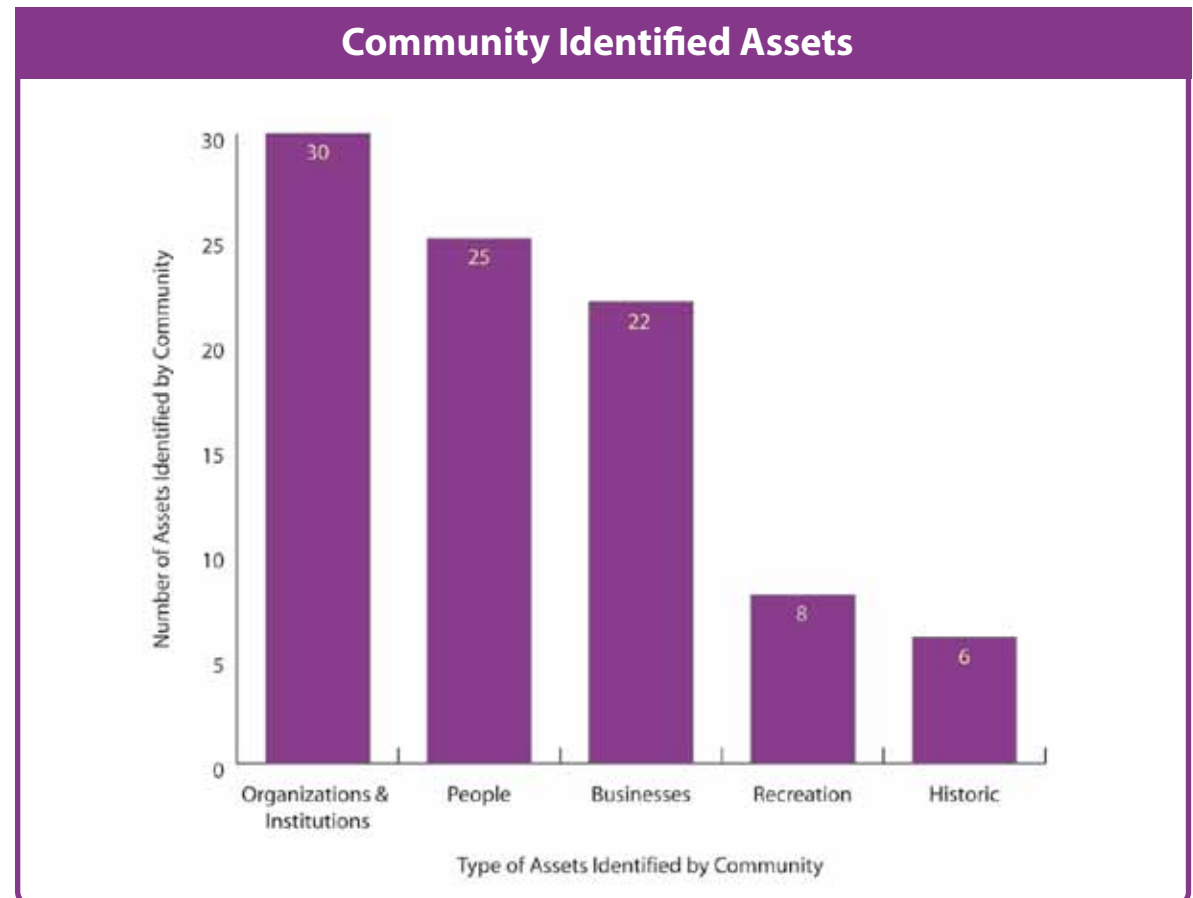
- Making sure that residents understand the goals of and recommendations provided by all of the other plan that touch this neighborhood.
- Encouraging residents to focus first on the assets that exist in the neighborhood and can provide a springboard for positive change, and second on the issues that need to be addressed in order to sustain positive change.
- Prioritizing which issues to address first, with the understanding that community change does not happen over night, and that to achieve it takes the commitment of time and human and social capital.

Community members came together in January & February 2011 to identify the assets in their community, highlight issues to be addressed, and set priorities for taking action.

Assets

The planning team organized an asset mapping exercise to help stakeholders think about the strengths that support their neighborhood. Participants were unsure of the process at first, as they saw few assets to identify. But by the end of the process, participants expressed that they were

shocked to discover that they had identified 91 assets. Recognizing the rich mix of educational, faith-based, and community service uses in the area, a third of the assets identified by the community were organizations and institutions. Not far behind, about a quarter of the assets were individuals and a quarter were businesses. Only eight assets had to do with recreation, and they included



One clear result of this planning effort is that THDC area stakeholders appreciate their community and have respect for and confidence in the people that live, work, and provide services here. This bodes well for the future, as Success Measures survey results show that the number one thing residents can do to improve this neighborhood is to be more actively engaged.

the Belvidere Greenway and the D&R Canal. Other prominent assets include the historic character of the neighborhood; interesting and unique housing stock; a key location near downtown and the State Capitol, which attracts institutions and special interest organizations that should be more fully engaged to support the neighborhood. A complete list of community-identified assets is in the Appendix.

Issues

After identifying assets, the planning team asked stakeholders to identify issues of concern in the neighborhood and to think about how those issues could be addressed using the identified assets. Seventy issues (some stated more as desires) were identified, ranging from abandoned buildings, to the mindset of those who do not take pride in the community, to bullying, to the lack of services for seniors. These issues were grouped into ten major categories in preparation for prioritization. Some issues were repeated among categories with the recognition that, for instance, lack of recreation as an issue was raised both on its own and specifically as it related to youth. The categorized issues are shown here.

Community Engagement

community integration, involvement in community by local colleges, role models, church engagement, recognize/understand history

Community Services

resource center, childcare, health and wellness, internet access, senior programs and housing

Economic Development

job training, access to employment, local goods and services, Capital Health Campus



New Jersey State House

Education

basic life skills, financial literacy, parenting skills, job training

Housing

abandoned and nuisance properties, affordable housing, homelessness, historic preservation, foreclosure prevention, condition and maintenance of housing units

Municipal Services

library access, road repairs, snow removal, traffic and speed calming, high property taxes

Physical Improvements

abandoned properties, beautification, Capital Health Campus, litter clean up, streetscape improvements, D&R Canal

Recreation

condition and amount of open space, recreational facilities, community gardens

Safety

crime, drugs, loitering, street lighting, safety in specific locations, safety in recreational areas

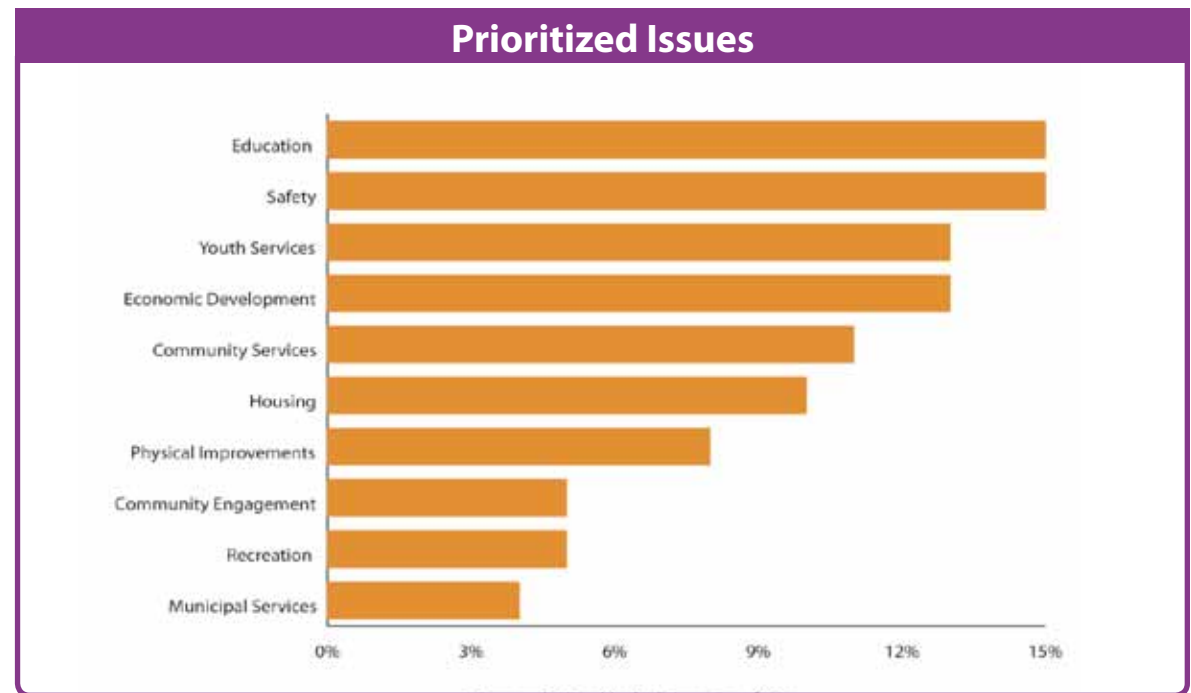
Youth Services

internet access, recreation, opportunities to engage, job training, college prep, after school programs, bullying

Priorities

With assets and issues identified, the planning team brought the community together to set priorities for action towards positive community change. All of the participants at the priorities meeting were given six poker chips that they could distribute however they chose among the ten issue categories. Each category was represented by a bucket that participants could fill with their chips. This exercise was useful in that it both allowed participants to ‘vote’ and made the discussion tangible. Participants were forced

to get up out of their chairs and physically make choices about how future work in the neighborhood should be organized. Many participants thought for quite a while before making their choices, others conferred with friends. Participants took the exercise seriously, since throughout the planning process the THDC and the planning team stressed that a major outcome of this process would be to seek funding to implement this plan. After all participants had cast their chips, the buckets were weighed and results were presented.



The issues prioritized the highest were education, safety, and youth services. While results of the prioritization exercise, shown on the previous page, give a clear mandate for action, they also show that the community understands that all of these issues are important. The community focused on those issues that they felt both needed the most help and could most readily be addressed.

Solutions

The planning team asked stakeholders and THDC members to suggest solutions that could help to address the issues identified by the community. These suggestions, listed here, helped to inform the recommendations presented below and show the depth of capacity and commitment in the neighborhood to implementing this plan.

These programs, at a proposed cost of more than \$1.5 million, were suggested by THDC area stakeholders as ways to address community concerns.

Children's Futures

Incredible Years Parent-Educator
Cooperative Project

Mercer Street Friends

Youth Enrichment Program
Parent-Child Center West
Trenton Healthy Families Home
Visitation Program

Moe Shea Corporation

Basic Skills/Job Readiness Program
Practical Nursing Training

Mr. Isiah Scott

Youth Golf Recreation Program

New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs

Community Resource Center
Intergenerational Health and
Fitness Program

North 25 Housing

Neighbor Network Education Center

Shiloh CDC

Capital City Career One-Stop Center
Youth Ambassadors Job Training and
Cultural Awareness Program
Freedom School Children Defense
Fund
Reverend S. Howard Woodson Family
Life Center

Trenton Community Charter School

School Wellness and Nutrition Program

Urban Promise Academy

Youth Summer Camp

West Trenton Community Center

Youth Cultural Enrichment Summer
Program



Recommendations

Recommendations

The recommendations presented here respond directly to the considerable public input gathered throughout this planning process. They focus primarily on the programs and services that residents expressed a need for, and are balanced by an unavoidable recognition that this neighborhood requires significant physical improvements and that redevelopment will be pivotal to helping residents achieve the quality of life they desire. The overall goal is for the community to become sustainable by focusing work around seven core areas – build capacity, engage community, improve quality of life, create beauty, promote learning, secure funding, and develop youth. In this context, becoming sustainable means that residents of this historic community, one that has sustained for centuries, must take stock of the current situation and find a way to capitalize on the assets in the community so that it continues to sustain for centuries more. The recommendations presented here each address one or more of the seven core areas listed above. Taken as a whole, they represent a highly integrated, multi-faceted approach to meeting residents’ most fundamental needs over the next five years. This is a realistic plan. Even without funding, many of the recommendations can be implemented – in whole or in part – with resources that are currently available. In fact, when these recommendations were presented to the

community for approval, one very active member of the Steering Committee closed the meeting by reporting with satisfaction that addressing the issues facing the community seemed very manageable when looked at from this perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION—IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

The following recommendations are the community’s highest and most immediate priorities. They will be included in an application to the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation for a Neighborhood Implementation Grant. The total cost to implement these programs over three years, based on detailed input from program partners, is more than \$3.2 million; the THDC is requesting approximately \$740,000 over three years under the implementation grant. The existing programs listed here have other sources of funding that can be used to leverage the WFRF funding, if awarded. Program partners will leverage their own funding, including donations, to support the new programs proposed.

Community Resource Center

The THDC will create a Community Resource Center at the Carver Center. Use of space at the Carver Center will enliven this historic building, provide a stable source of rental income that

can be used to help upgrade the structure, and provide the community with a central location to come together and learn about available programs and services.

Residents expressed a need for a wide range of support in the realms of education, homeownership, job readiness, health and wellness, recreation, and youth services. While not all of these needs are currently being met, some of them are - but residents are not well enough aware of the variety of programs and services that already exist. The Resource Center will offer residents access to computers and the internet, as well as to information about and help taking advantage of the programs and services available to them. The Resource Center will be staffed by someone with a background in social work and who is knowl-



The Carver Center

edgeable about the programs that residents are interested in. Referred to as the **'Community Librarian'** in stakeholder meetings, this person will be responsible for making sure that the resource center always has the most up-to-date information about programs and services. This will include being a liaison to service providers and keeping a database of the programs and services that exist. This will not only help residents access needed services, but it will also allow the THDC and the community to track program offerings over time and to identify areas where new programs and services are needed. A community calendar that includes block association meetings, school functions, recreational activities, etc. should be maintained at the Resource Center and made readily available.

The Resource Center will also be staffed by an experienced professional who will serve as a liaison for the THDC to the City of Trenton, Capital Health, and others within and outside of the community. This person will be responsible for identifying and applying for funding opportunities for the THDC as well as other neighborhood groups so that the projects in this plan and those yet to be developed can be sustainable. This **'Community Ombudsman'** will help to coordinate the efforts of THDC partners so that funding requests are integrated and bring maximum financial support to the neighborhood.

One of the major things that the community identified as a way to improve the THDC neighborhood was increasing community engagement. The Community Resource center is intended to become the central hub of activity in this neighborhood where people come to learn, to meet, and to grow. To get people to the center and to keep information flowing regularly throughout the community, an **Outreach Specialist** will be hired to work with the THDC. This person will work out of the Resource Center and form a team with the other staff to assist the THDC in achieving its long term goals for the neighborhood.

All of the staff located at the Resource Center will be hired by THDC member organizations and located at the center. They will be people hired from the community providing services to the community for the long-term benefit of the community.

Materials for the resource center will be acquired over time, but should begin with as much information as possible about available programs and at least three computers. While some technology resources may need to be purchased, the resource center staff will seek out donations from area educational institutions and businesses.

The community is concerned about the recent closing of the Cadwalader Branch of the Trenton Public Library on Hermitage Avenue. The staff

of the Resource Center should consider providing a small library and researching whether the main branch of the Trenton Public Library can provide materials or staff assistance to set it up.

Neighborhood Watch

Working closely with existing civic associations and other stakeholders, the THDC will coordinate the creation of a neighborhood watch. Some of the community's primary concerns include a lack of safety, the number of property crimes that take place in the neighborhood, and the presence of drug dealers and loiterers on the streets. A neighborhood watch will provide a number of related benefits: more eyes on the street, greater perceived safety, potentially lower crime rates, opportunities for community participation, and opportunities for meaningful exercise as people walk the streets together. Perhaps one of the greatest positive outcomes from the implementation of a neighborhood watch is the clear sense of responsibility for their own neighborhood that participants will gain.

The THDC should hire a community-based coordinator specifically for the neighborhood watch. This person will be responsible for researching neighborhood watch models and working with stakeholders to determine the best fit for the neighborhood, enhancing the already good relationship that the THDC neighborhood has with the Trenton Police, encouraging greater police

presence on the streets, and engaging youth as much as possible so that they can learn from the positive example their elders are setting. Once the neighborhood watch is created, the community will need to decide together whether it should be run through the THDC, through one of the existing civic associations, or if it should become its own entity.

The History Project

From the earliest stages of the planning process, community members remembered fondly the way the neighborhood used to be, who grew up on what block, the details of favorite houses. They discussed with reverence the historical significance of many of the structures and institutions in the neighborhood. They also noted with some degree of sadness that many people, including the area's youth, do not have an appropriate understanding of or appreciation for the history of their neighborhood or the elders who can provide insight into that prominent past. The history project will address these issues while building intergenerational relationships that will help to facilitate redevelopment of the THDC planning area in the long run and providing employment and training opportunities to young people.

The THDC will develop the details of the program and hire area youth to work with community members, particularly seniors, to

collect historical artifacts that they are willing to share with the community. These could include newspapers, photographs, playbills, political paraphernalia, or whatever else residents feel can help to bring the area's history to life. Relationships with professional archivists and librarians will be developed so that the youth can be trained to properly handle and document their findings. The results of this work can be combined with the existing community museum at Shiloh Baptist Church, displayed at the Community Resource Center, and/or displayed at City Hall in the main foyer or at the State Library. At the same time, this work can provide the basis for investigation into the potential for historic tourism in the neighborhood. Significant historic events, organizations, and people have ties to this neighborhood, particularly in terms of both African-American and American Colonial history.

The history project will also include a visit to the neighborhood by StoryCorps. StoryCorps is a



StoryCorps provides on-site recording services

non-profit whose mission is to provide Americans from all walks of life the chance to record, share, and preserve their stories. Each story will be recorded and provided to the storyteller on CD and then archived in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Beyond StoryCorps, the THDC and partner organizations should consider on-going ways to record the oral history of the neighborhood. StoryCorps offers resources to help organizations and individuals to conduct their own oral history projects.

Existing Resources

As noted above, some of the programs and services that residents identified as lacking are already being provided. It is important that those programs and services are better aligned with specific resident needs, better marketed to residents, and are supported by the THDC and future revitalization efforts. The following are high priority existing services that the THDC will support in the immediate future. Support for these programs should not imply that other existing programs are not necessary or relevant to the community.

Job Training & Placement Services

A common refrain heard at public meetings throughout this planning process was: "What is this plan going to do to help us get jobs?" Shiloh CDC operates a job training and placement program called the **Capital City One Stop Career**

Development Center (Project Connect). Located in Rowan Towers at 620 West State Street and linked to the state-wide network of One Stop centers, it provides a community-based alternative to other related facilities in Trenton. Since March of 2010, the One Stop Center has assisted more than 800 individuals with job searches, resume development, job placement, and referral to other work support services. More than 80 people have secured employment and more than 30 employers have signed on to provide employer and/or training referral services.

In addition to typical One Stop Center services, which are geared towards adult, the center will begin a new service geared toward young people. The **Community Jobs Board** will connect community residents who need help with odd jobs – for instance, moving lawns, picking up packages, home maintenance, or delivering groceries – with young people ages 12 to 15 who are eager to prove their responsibility, develop a work history early on, and earn an income at the same time. Those receiving services will pay for the work done on their behalf but the One Stop Center will manage the transaction and provide oversight of the youth, helping them to develop skills along the way. This model is intended to provide youth with positive activity and opportunities for work, and to encourage greater community engagement, particularly between generations.

Life Skills & Job Training For At-Risk Youth

In Trenton, the school drop-out rate is nearly 40%, as compared to the state rate of just under 7%. THDC community members are worried about their children and the role models available to them. They want positive outcomes for their kids, including a future of educational achievement, gainful employment, and freedom from gangs and crime. To help achieve these positive outcomes, Mercer Street Friends (MSF) offers the **Youth Enrichment Program** (YEP), which began in 2004 as an after-school job training program for youth ages 12 to 18 at risk of dropping out of school. YEP promotes improvements in critical thinking, decision making, effective communication, conflict resolution, anger management, team work, professionalism, organization, budgeting, and research. The program uses evidence-based curricula to teach kids the importance of staying in school and the consequences of dropping out, and uses journaling as a way to encourage youth to explore their feelings and to understand how their experiences have affected their behavior. Outcomes for participants in YEP include 80% being able to recognize the consequences of dropping out and the relationship between a lack of schooling and employment options, 75% will know how to maintain employment, and 75% will exit the program with leadership skills that they report have been helpful to them in finding and maintaining employment. The program is comprised of two

12-week sections; the first is focused on intense classroom training and the second is comprised of experiential learning in the form of paid internships. For THDC area youth, internships will be prioritized by their location in the planning area. The THDC will assist Mercer Street Friends in identifying youth who can benefit from this program.

Coordinated Social & Health Services

Mercer Street Friends' **Parent Child Center West** (PCCW), located in MSF's facility on Artisan Street, offers a diverse range of programs and services aimed at increasing the self-sufficiency and overall wellbeing of those who participate. PCCW addresses to some degree nearly all of the concerns raised by THDC stakeholders. PCCW's target population is young families who have a child under five years of age, parents of children who are at risk of being or have already been removed from their homes, adults trying to obtain a GED or take vocation entrance exams, or children under seven years of age who are adjusting to their first three years in school. Services offered include but are not limited to parenting skills, lead screening, immunizations, family planning, general adult basic education, early literacy and language development for children, and links to additional resources for welfare, medical insurance, substance abuse, domestic violence and other issues. PCCW receives support from a broad range of funders and will

be able to leverage that support against funding provided by the THDC. THDC support of the center will include targeted outreach to residents of the THDC neighborhood who can benefit from PCCW's offerings. While PCCW and the proposed Community Resource Center are very different, there is some positive overlap in services. Located at opposite ends of the mile-long THDC planning area, THDC support of these resources will ensure that area residents have better, more coordinated access to critical services and programs.

Financial Literacy

The typical household with an annual income below \$35,000 has average credit card debt of \$6,500. This kind of debt can be crippling to low and moderate income families trying to position themselves for upward mobility. Financial literacy programs to prevent people from getting into this kind of situation is one of the things that THDC stakeholders identified as needed in the community. Isles offers evidence-based financial literacy training throughout Trenton that can be easily targeted to THDC area residents. Isles' **Financial Fitness Club** (IFFC) aims to help people build new long-term behaviors around money management and financial decisions that will keep them out of debt. It offers one-on-one coaching and classroom-setting training around money management, on-line banking and budgeting tools, smart spending, saving, low-cost

loans, and more. The IFFC is broken down into two parts – Wallet Workout Workshop sessions for small groups to provide foundational financial education, and personal counseling to set up and implement a monthly budget, reduce late fees and interest, and gain access to low-cost credit. IFFC one-on-one services are usually provided over one year. IFFC members will be able to expect savings of between \$300 and \$3000 in the first year.

Existing Conditions Research

As part of this planning process a review of existing plans that affect this neighborhood was conducted. It was found that, for the most part, they make similar observations of and recommendations for the physical redevelopment of this area. In addition, a windshield survey was conducted to assess the existing conditions of the neighborhood, including the location and names of businesses and the occupancy of buildings. The windshield survey, like any study of existing conditions, can only provide a momentary snap shot of neighborhood conditions. That is especially true in a neighborhood like this there where both residential and commercial properties can quickly move from active occupancy to abandonment or from reasonably well-maintained to a state of disrepair. The THDC will develop a survey tool to track the physical conditions of the planning area over time such that results can be compared year on year – one problem with many

existing conditions surveys is that they are not conducted on a regular basis or with appropriate training to surveyors so that a building in 'good' condition one year is comparable to a building in 'good' condition the next year. Initially, the tool should track the use of all properties, including parking, recreation, and vacant lots; the mix of uses in mixed use buildings; occupancy status; the names of businesses and institutions; and general physical conditions. In the future the survey data set can include property ownership information as well as real estate transaction data. The results of such a survey can help the THDC to describe the needs in the planning area over time and to seek out funding to support specific needs or redevelopment agendas. Eventually this tool will provide data to help the THDC, the City of Trenton, and other stakeholders identify lots that are prime for redevelopment; areas where rehabilitation, as opposed to demolition and new construction, is or is not feasible; areas where needed physical improvements can replace dilapidated current uses; and the effects on the real estate market of specific interventions such as streetscape improvements, a community garden, or new housing. Analysis of commercial uses over time can help to show whether residents' desires for a strong mix of neighborhood-scale goods and services are being met, and can provide a springboard for discussions with business owners about residents' needs. Tracking of nuisance properties can lead to direct requests

of the City's Inspections Department to enforce codes and standards. This kind of work on the neighborhood scale can be rolled up to interface with other related work. For instance, the Trenton Council of Civic Associations has initiated an abandoned buildings survey and the City, in partnership with Isles, is pursuing Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) funding from the EPA to address the City's three highest environmental concerns – abandoned buildings, litter, and the amount and condition of open space.

RECOMMENDATIONS— YEARS 1 TO 5

Implementation of many of these recommendations is possible immediately, even without funding, if the appropriate existing resources are capitalized on and volunteer resources are marshaled effectively. Implementation of other recommendations will require greater financial resources and human capital, as well as significant cooperation from regulatory and other entities that may or may not yet be at the table. The community, with the THDC taking the lead, should begin right away to prepare for this work so that as resources become available, the group is ready to take action.

Existing Resources

The THDC

The THDC has been meeting for five years and has brought needed cohesion, awareness, and resources to its target area, resulting in this plan. As an outgrowth of the THDC, a core group of stakeholders formed the Steering Committee that guided the creation of this plan, but not all Steering Committee members are members of the THDC. The THDC should review its membership, ensure that all necessary stakeholders and organizations are represented – including those from the Steering Committee, and position the THDC to be the entity responsible for overseeing the implementation of this plan. Perception of the THDC throughout the planning area is important; it must be recognized as a stand-alone entity that represents the neighborhood, and not as an arm of Shiloh CDC or Shiloh Baptist Church. To ensure that perceptions match reality, the THDC members should develop a Memorandum of Understanding that will guide the roles and responsibilities of all members. At this time it is not recommended that the THDC become its own charitable organization. While on one hand that development could make it easier to seek funding, on the other hand, it could contribute to greater confusion and competition among organizations that should ideally be cooperating. Where the THDC can play a very important role is in bringing partners to the table, reviewing the services and programs

being provided or planned, and trying to coordinate work among THDC member groups so as to create an environment of cooperation rather than competition. That is a difficult task when multiple groups are competing for scarce financial resources, but it needs to be addressed for the good of the neighborhood. While the THDC works to position itself as the umbrella organization representing the needs of this community, it must also work to create a hierarchy of interests and inputs that respects the roles of all related organizations from block associations to the City of Trenton.

In its capacity as a representative oversight organization for the community, the THDC can become a role model for how to implement the kinds of programs that the community needs. For instance, the THDC should invite young leaders to take a permanent seat at the table and create a **Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)** to the THDC. The YAC can provide critical insight into the ways that service providers can most effectively help youth find the after-school help, job training, and recreational resources that they need to stay in school, stay out of trouble, and become successful, healthy adults. The THDC should also work with member organizations to create a special YAC seat on their Boards of Trustees to provide additional leadership and skill development opportunities for young people. Participation in the YAC will help young

people to learn leadership skills, promote inter-generational learning and sharing of ideas, and help service providers develop programs that more directly meet the needs of young people.

Potential Partners

The THDC planning area is home to a significant number of organizations and institutions that have not yet or not fully been incorporated into the vision for the future of this neighborhood. Organizations like the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey and New Jersey Future, to name just two, should be invited to share their expertise in their own backyards – literally; many of these offices face the backs of residential streets in the THDC planning area. Other more local organizations offer a range of programs and services that meet the expressed needs of residents. These include Children’s Futures, HomeFront, the New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids – Trenton, the Urban Promise Academy (which is coming to Trenton in the summer of 2011), the West Trenton Community Center, and area schools. Part of the work to develop these partnerships can be done by the staff at the Resource Center, but some of it will require higher level relationship building to be carried out by representatives of the THDC.

D&R Canal & Belvidere Greenway

The Delaware and Raritan Canal and the Belvidere Greenway are unavoidable in the THDC

planning area. They should be the kind of amenities that attract people to the neighborhood but, as it stands, they are underutilized, ill-maintained, and largely perceived as unsafe. At the same time, community stakeholders have made clear the need for more opportunities for recreation. The THDC should develop a strategy to reclaim these recreational resources. Any such strategy will require strong partnerships with the City of Trenton, the D&R Canal Commission, and organizations that have already begun to investigate ways to clean up these resources. The New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids – Trenton has made clean up of the canal one of its key priorities; the Bellevue Avenue and West Ha-

ver Area Civic Associations have initiated multiple canal clean ups; and the Trenton Council of Civic Association has partnered with New Jersey YouthCorps to work on CARE-related treatments of litter and open space. To allow people to take full advantage of these resources, access must be improved and safety must be ensured. Additional lighting is needed, as is redesign of the edges of the park. In many places both the canal and the greenway are edged by an inconsistent series of homes and fences in various states of repair or disrepair that detract from the beauty of the resources as well as perceived safety on them. Façade improvements to houses and fences that line the canal and greenway should



Boston's Emerald Necklace Source: Emerald Necklace Conservancy



View down Jarvis Place from Prospect Street

be implemented. Use of the canal as the spine of a ‘necklace’ of recreational spaces throughout the neighborhood – paying homage to Boston’s Emerald Necklace – should be investigated. Similar work is being done in East Trenton, as the City pursues plans for the Assunpink Greenway. As new recreational spaces are developed, they should be located along or with clear access to the canal and/or the greenway. Signage along the canal should be linked to a city-wide wayfinding system that highlights distances and link-

ages between sites accessible via the towpath. As plans for neighborhood redevelopment are considered, they should focus on blocks that can easily take advantage of the canal and greenway. For example, Jarvis Place, a one way street off of Prospect Street is located at the confluence of the canal and the greenway and across the street from a community garden. This street should be targeted for themed redevelopment that takes advantage of access to the towpath and the greenway. For instance, this could include amenities in individual units that make it easy to store bikes and canoes, or it could include community amenities such as a bike shed and tools for use in maintaining landscaping of newly installed streetscape and plantings along the towpath

Recreation

Recreation was cited as a need by adults and young people alike. There are not enough recreational resources available to this community. Those that exist are not maintained properly and do not offer a satisfactory mix of uses. The THDC should work with the City to understand the level of resources that the City has available for recreation in general and for recreation in this neighborhood in particular. As of this writing, the City is facing a major budget shortfall and is unlikely to invest significantly in upgrading small-scale recreational resources. The THDC and other partner organizations can work together to identify funds to provide mainte-

nance for existing and to create new neighborhood scale recreational spaces and activities. The THDC, working with TCCA and others, can help to coordinate volunteer efforts to provide upkeep for existing spaces. At the same time, the THDC should regroup the Youth Sub-Committee of the Steering Committee to develop an improved youth survey that can be administered to more young people and result in statistically significant reporting. It will be important moving forward that the THDC is able to argue for the development of those recreational resources that are the highest priority for young people. Two suggestions for new recreational facilities made by Steering Committee members included a skate park and a golf facility. While these are valuable ideas, before funds are committed to them, the neighborhood must be sure that they will be used. As part of ongoing existing conditions analyses, the THDC should identify where new recreational facilities should be placed and argue for their location near schools, the canal, and other places where kids congregate. At the same time, greater attention must be paid to recreational opportunities that meet the needs for all community members, not only youth.

Community Cleanup

Throughout Trenton as well as in the THDC planning area, litter is a major concern. In the City-wide CARE process, it ranked as the number two highest priority environmental health

concern after abandoned buildings. As of this writing, Trenton City Councilperson Phyllis Holly-Ward has recently begun the UnLitter Us campaign, modeled after a successful such program in Philadelphia. TCCA has been working to involve area youth in clean up efforts through a partnership with the New Jersey YouthCorps, and civic associations are taking increased responsibility for their blocks. The THDC should partner with these and related initiatives and help to coordinate how they are implemented in the THDC neighborhood. Litter clean up is especially important in an area like this, where the canal – a waterway – often becomes a dumping ground that transports trash and pollutants into other waterways. Beyond the environmental importance of cleaning up litter is the negative effect that it has on the perception of a neighborhood and how insidious the presence of litter is – people are more likely to litter where there is already litter. It also attracts vermin that cause severe problems for residents and are a health hazard. The THDC should consider creating a program that will result in regular litter clean ups. One local example to consider is the Old Mill Hill Society’s Adopt-A-Spot program, in which members of the group take responsibility for keeping a specific part of a street or park clean. As part of its work to track the existing conditions of the neighborhood, the THDC should begin to research ways to clean and green vacant lots so that as they wait for redevelop-

ment, they are assets rather than liabilities to the community. A well-known precedent for this is the Philadelphia Horticultural Society’s Green City Strategy, which became a part of the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative to address abandoned buildings and blighted properties.

Parking & Design

Parking

There is an unfortunate amount of surface parking in and around the THDC planning area. Much of this is clustered near state office buildings. The City of Trenton, the Trenton Parking Authority, the Trenton Downtown Authority, and the State of New Jersey have been in discussions about this issue for years, but no resolution has been achieved. While it is unlikely that a resolution will be reached in the near future, the THDC should keep abreast of discussions and work to influence how changes in parking will affect the planning area. In the short term, the way that parking is situated with little to no landscaping or screening should be documented. As funds become available, improving the edge conditions of large surface parking lots should be targeted as part of overall efforts to improve the neighborhood. The Westside Plaza, which is largely empty but has a large parking lot should be targeted for aesthetic improvements to the parking lot and more creative ways to use the parking lot until the shopping center is fully occupied should be sought.

In other parts of the neighborhood, it is primarily institutions and religious organizations that have significant amounts of parking that is often underutilized. Religious organizations, in particular, should be invited to discussions about how the community as a whole can make better use of existing parking. A **Share and Shuttle** program should be considered, whereby some parking is consolidated and some is redeveloped into other uses. A shared fleet of shuttles and drivers could provide service to and from shared lots during times of high volume and could provide neighborhood transportation at other times. Not only would this reduce single-driver trips and reduce the amount of surface parking, it would provide stable jobs for community members.

Urban Design & Streetscapes

The THDC area, while primarily residential, has a unique mix of uses in and near it. Generally speaking, this is an asset for the neighborhood. However, where uses have grown together organically, without proper attention to edge conditions, fencing, and streetscapes, it highlights the bad rather than the good of mixed use neighborhoods. The THDC should work with the City of Trenton and other area organizations, especially those with significant amounts of parking, to create design guidelines that are cost effective and help to preserve the character of the neighborhood. General streetscape and façade work is needed in this area.



View down Passaic Street from Willow Street

Gateways

Any coordinated urban design study of this area should focus on redeveloping key gateways into the neighborhood. Work currently planned by the Capital City Partnership to improve lighting and add planters to the area near the intersection of West State Street and Willow Street will make a significant difference at that gateway. Other gateways should be looked at for themed improvements that will also help to give the overall neighborhood a unique and identifiable character. For instance, the intersection of Bellevue and Hermitage Avenues could, depending on how much of Capital Health's services remain in the neighborhood, become a gateway to health; the intersection of West Hanover, Spring, and Prospect Streets could become the gateway to the canal; and the intersection of Passaic and Willow Streets could become '**Motor Row.**' At that intersection currently there are a concentration of auto-related industries. In and around

that intersection historically were auto-related industries. While the business owners would certainly have to agree, the stretch of Passaic Street between Willow Street and Kafer Street could be transformed into a showcase commercial corridor for auto-related industries. A targeted façade improvement and property management program could assist business owners to make better use of their space to allow for easily accessible and inviting front doors, upgraded sidewalks with clearly marked curb cuts for safety, and better storage of cars as they are being worked on. Motor Row could host Cruise Nights, featuring classic and muscle cars, as are popular in other places, and Motor Row businesses could take advantage of their location near the towpath by encouraging people to walk or bike while waiting for work on their cars to be completed.

Goods & Services

Residents pointed out again and again that they want a better mix of easily accessible goods and services. A quarter of respondents to the Success Measures Survey said access to goods and services is poor or very poor. In the Youth Survey, young people pointed out that they would like to see more clothing stores. During community meetings, stakeholders expressed a desire for more neighborhood-based business so residents can become less dependent on downtown. The THDC should track commercial uses in the neighborhood and work with business

owners and business organizations to ensure that residents' needs are being met. The New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids – Trenton could be engaged to facilitate discussions with bodegas about offering more fresh and healthy food choices and to assist with research into the overall availability of fresh fruits and vegetables to the neighborhood. The THDC should also work with neighborhood business people to create a youth mentoring program that will guide participants through the process of developing a business plan and setting up shop in the neighborhood. With appropriate resources, the THDC could assist this program in redeveloping an abandoned building as a new commercial facility run by youth.



Appendix

The following are the complete results from the Success Measures survey. The survey was completed by volunteer surveyors who received a small stipend for their service. Surveyors were recruited from the neighborhood. In the end, 28 surveyors were chosen from a pool of 60 applicants. The surveyors, who ranged from young adults to senior citizens, were trained and sent out in teams to go door-to-door to reach the target sample. They were successful in getting the required number of completed surveys. The survey reached 324 neighborhood residents who were selected from a random sample. The results from the survey are statistically significant at a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.

There may be a bias against residents who live in large apartment buildings, a number of which are located in the THDC neighborhood. Some of these buildings were not accessible to surveyors and/or their management companies would not return phone calls requesting access, so their residents could not be surveyed. There may also be a bias against those who live in small multi-family buildings because it was not possible to get from the City of Trenton, the Trenton Post Office, or the Trenton Water Works a complete list of all residential units in the City.

In a number of cases, either surveyors did not administer the survey properly or record responses properly, and/or respondents did not provide responses as directed in the survey. For instance, on questions where respondents should have provided only a specific number of answers, more answers were provided. In these cases, all answers were aggregated and percentages reported represent the frequency with which answers were provided rather than the percentage of respondents who provided those answers. This also means that for questions such as Question 2, “What is the major reason that you decided to live in this community?”, it is not possible to determine the ‘major’ reason that people live in the community as opposed to the general reasons that people live in the community. This is the case for Question 2, as described above; Questions 6 and 7, for which respondents were asked to provide up to three responses, but often provided more; Questions 12 and 13, two-part questions for which

respondents were asked to choose from a list both as many answers as applied to them as well as just one primary answer, but often provided more answers than appropriate for one or more parts of the question; and Questions 21 and 22, for which respondents were asked to provide only one answer but often provided more.

For questions where respondents were asked to provide more than one answer, all answers given were aggregated and analyzed as described above. For open ended questions, responses were coded and the coded answers were analyzed. Responses that were provided only once or a very few times were coded as ‘other.’ Percentages of ‘other’ responses are not shown below, except where they merit discussion.

Question numbering does not align exactly with question numbering on the survey tool; in some instances, in order to be able to properly analyze the data, additional question numbers needed to be added.

1. How long have you lived in this community?
(306 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

< 1 year	4%
1 to 5 years	26%
6 to 10 years	29%
11 to 15 years	11%
16 to 20 years	9%
21 to 25 years	8%
26 to 30 years	6%
> 30 years	7%

2. Why did you decide to live in this community?
(319 of 324 respondents provided 390 responses to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

To live near family	30%
Affordability of housing	21%
Born here	13%
To be close to work	8%
No choice/nowhere else to go	7%
Schools	6%

3. How satisfied are you living in this community?
(324 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Satisfied	40%
Somewhat satisfied	27%
Somewhat dissatisfied	11%
Very satisfied	11%
Dissatisfied	6%
Very dissatisfied	5%

4a. How likely are you to recommend this community to someone else as a good place to live?
(318 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Probably would recommend	54%
Probably would not recommend	23%
Definitely would recommend	12%
Definitely would not recommend	11%

4b. How likely are you to recommend this community to families with children as a good place to live?
(312 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Probably would recommend	52%
Probably would not recommend	23%
Definitely would not recommend	13%
Definitely would recommend	12%

4c. How likely are you to recommend this community to seniors as a good place to live?
(315 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Probably would recommend	46%
Probably would not recommend	23%
Definitely would not recommend	20%
Definitely would recommend	11%

5a. If you had the choice, would you continue to live in this community?
(317 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Yes	61%
No	39%

Success Measures Detailed Results

5b. With regard to question 5a, please describe why you feel this way.

(261 of 324 respondents provided 309 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

110 of the 123 respondents who answered no to Question 5a provided 130 answers to this question:

Crime	32%
Don't like the neighborhood	13%
Drugs	11%
I'd leave if I had the choice	8%

151 of the 194 respondents who answered no to Question 5a provided 179 answers to this question:

Like the neighborhood	27%
Quiet	9%
Length of time in community	7%
Safe neighborhood	7%
Close to family	6%

6. What are the things that you like best about living in this community?

(318 of 324 respondents provided 648 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

My house or apartment	25%
My neighbors	20%
Distance to work	13%
Affordability of housing	13%
Public transportation	8%
Schools for my children	7%

7. What are the things that you like least about living in this community?

(314 of 324 respondents provided 503 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

Safety in the community	31%
Schools for my children	12%
Access to job opportunities	10%
Access to amenities	8%
My neighbors	7%
Types of housing available	6%

8. With how many of your neighbors do you speak regularly for five minutes or more?

(309 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

1 to 3	32%
4 to 6	28%
10 or more	18%
7 to 9	14%
None	8%

9a. How likely do you think it is that people in this community would help out if you needed a ride somewhere?

(316 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Likely	39%
Very likely	22%
Somewhat likely	18%
Not very likely	14%
Not at all likely	7%

9b. How likely do you think it is that people in this community would help out if a package was delivered when you were not at home and it needed to be accepted?

(319 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Likely	40%
Very likely	24%
Not very likely	16%
Somewhat likely	12%
Not at all likely	7%

9c. How likely do you think it is that people in this community would help out if you needed a favor, such as picking up mail or borrowing a tool?

(320 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Likely	40%
Very likely	22%
Somewhat likely	17%
Not very likely	16%
Not at all likely	5%

9d. How likely do you think it is that people in this community would help out if you needed someone to watch your house while you were away?

(313 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Likely	35%
Very likely	26%
Not very likely	16%
Somewhat likely	13%
Not at all likely	11%

9e. How likely do you think it is that people in this community would help out if an elderly neighbor needed someone to periodically check on him or her?

(317 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Likely	41%
Very likely	35%
Somewhat likely	15%
Not Very likely	6%
Not at All likely	3%

9f. How likely do you think it is that people in this community would help out if a neighbor needed someone to take care of a child in an emergency?

(318 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Likely	47%
Very likely	29%
Somewhat likely	10%
Not at all likely	8%
Not very likely	6%

10. Do you currently rent or own your home?

(320 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Rent	52%
Own	48%

11. Would you consider buying a home in this community?

(159 of 168 respondents who reported in Question 10 that they rent their homes or live with family or friends answered this question.)

No	54%
Yes	46%

Success Measures Survey Detailed Results

12. Why have you not yet bought a home in this community?

(69 of 73 respondents who reported in Questions 10 and 11 that they rent their homes or live with family or friends and would consider buying a home in this community provided 123 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

Personal financial situation	40%
Houses available	17%
State of the economy	12%
Crime or other safety issues	11%
Physical conditions in the community	11%

13. Why would you not consider buying a home in this neighborhood?

(80 of 86 respondents who reported in Questions 10 and 11 that they rent their homes or live with family or friends and would not consider buying a home in this community provided 170 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

Crime or other safety issues	25%
Personal financial situation	24%
Physical conditions	19%
State of the economy	12%
Houses available	11%

14a. How would you rate the cleanliness of this community?

(320 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Fair	39%
Good	35%
Poor	15%
Very good	8%
Very poor	2%

14b. How would you rate the physical condition of homes in this community?

(320 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Fair	45%
Good	31%
Poor	14%
Very good	8%
Very poor	3%

14c. How would you rate the physical condition of streets, sidewalks, and public spaces in the community?

(318 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Fair	44%
Good	28%
Poor	18%
Very poor	7%
Very good	3%

14d. How would you rate safety in the community?

(320 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Fair	30%
Good	25%
Poor	24%
Very poor	17%
Very good	3%

14e. How would you rate the friendliness of neighbors in this community?

(314 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Good	42%
Fair	33%
Very good	17%
Poor	5%
Very poor	3%

14f. How would you rate the quality of public services in the community?

(311 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Fair	41%
Good	33%
Poor	12%
Very good	10%
Very poor	4%

14g. How would you rate the variety of goods and services available for purchase in the community?

(315 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Fair	38%
Good	27%
Poor	19%
Very good	10%
Very poor	6%

14h. How would you rate access to transportation in this community?

(318 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Good	47%
Very good	28%
Fair	21%
Poor	2%
Very poor	2%

14i. How would you rate access to employment centers in this community?

(317 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Good	40%
Fair	31%
Very good	15%
Poor	8%
Very poor	6%

14j. How would you rate the affordability of homes or apartments in this community?

(317 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Fair	39%
Good	34%
Very good	15%
Poor	8%
Very poor	4%

15. Compared to three years ago, how has this community changed overall?

(303 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Improved some	36%
Stayed about the same	36%
Declined some	12%
Improved a lot	11%
Declined a lot	5%

Success Measures Survey Detailed Results

16. With regard to question 15, please describe why you feel this way.

(201 of 324 respondents provided 222 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

Of the 51 respondents who answered 'Declined a Lot' or 'Declined Some' to Question 15, 37 provided 42 answers to this question:

Crime / lack of safety	43%
Drugs	12%
Abandoned houses	10%
Condition of houses	7%
Condition of streets & sidewalks	7%

Of the 143 respondents who answered 'Improved a Lot' or 'Improved Some' to Question 15, 108 provided 122 answers to this question:

New development/rehabilitation of homes	33%
Decreased crime	13%
Positive change	10%
Increased police presence	8%
Decreased drugs	7%

Of the 109 respondents who answered 'Stayed About the Same' to Question 15, 56 provided 58 answers to this question:

No change	50%
Other	29%
Crime/lack of safety	7%

The percentage of 'other' responses given is shown here because it is so high.

17. Compared to three years ago, how have the following aspects of this community changed?

Cleanliness of the community

(317 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Stayed about the same	44%
Improved some	33%
Improved a lot	10%
Declined some	9%
Declined a lot	4%

Physical condition of homes in the community

(317 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Stayed about the same	45%
Improved some	30%
Declined some	12%
Improved a lot	10%
Declined a lot	3%

Physical condition of streets, sidewalks, and public spaces in the community

(320 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Stayed about the same	45%
Improved Some	26%
Declined Some	18%
Declined a Lot	6%
Improved a Lot	5%

Safety in the community

(319 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Stayed about the same	35%
Improved some	23%
Declined a lot	21%
Declined some	16%
Improved a lot	5%

Friendliness of neighbors in the community

(316 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Stayed about the same	39%
Improved some	35%
Improved a lot	17%
Declined some	5%
Declined a lot	3%

Quality of public services in the community

(317 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Stayed about the same	44%
Improved some	32%
Declined some	12%
Improved a lot	10%
Declined a lot	3%

Variety of goods and services available for purchase in the community

(316 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Stayed about the same	45%
Improved some	27%
Declined some	13%
Improved a lot	9%
Declined a lot	5%

Access to transportation

(316 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Improved some	37%
Stayed about the same	37%
Improved a lot	23%
Declined some	3%
Declined a lot	1%

Access to employment centers

(320 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Stayed about the same	39%
Improved some	36%
Improved a lot	14%
Declined a lot	5%
Declined some	5%

Affordability of homes or apartments in the community

(316 of 324 respondents answered this question.)

Stayed about the same	41%
Improved some	33%
Improved a lot	16%
Declined some	8%
Declined a lot	3%

18. How would you say this community is likely to change in the next three years?

(315 of 324 respondents provided 200 answers to this question.)

Improve some	37%
Stay about the same	36%
Improve a lot	15%
Decline some	9%
Decline a lot	3%

Success Measures Survey Detailed Results

19. With regard to question 18, please describe why you feel this way.

(217 of 324 respondents provided 226 answers to this question.)

Of the 38 respondents who answered 'Declined a Lot' or 'Declined Some' to Question 18, 35 provided 38 answers to this question:

Crime/lack of safety	21%
Lack of community involvement/pride	13%
Capital Health closing	11%
Lack of good government	8%
Lack of investment in community	8%

Of the 164 respondents who answered 'Improved a Lot' or 'Improved Some' to Question 18, 121 provided 126 answers to this question:

Community involvement/pride	23%
New development/rehabilitation of homes	19%
Positive change	13%
Home	10%
Increased homeownership	6%

Of the 113 respondents who answered 'Stayed About the Same' to Question 18, 61 provided 62 answers to this question:

No change in neighborhood	24%
Economy	8%
Negative change	8%
Lack of community involvement/pride	6%
Lack of good government	6%
Lack of investment in community	6%

20. What can the people in this neighborhood do to make it a better place to live?

(247 of 324 respondents provided 277 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

More community engagement	42%
Reduce crime / increase safety	12%
Clean up neighborhood	11%
Improve housing	6%

Youth Survey Detailed Results

Early in the planning process, the Steering Committee felt strongly that it was important to engage young people. Although it was not part of the original project plan, a Youth Sub-Committee was created in the summer of 2010 to develop and administer a youth survey. Surveying took place in August and September 2010.

1. What would you like to see more of in your community?

(54 of 58 respondents provided 62 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

Parks / recreation facilities	52%
Clothing stores	27%
Community pride	15%

2. How do you usually spend your free time?

(56 of 58 respondents provided 74 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% of less of the total are not shown.)

Hanging out with friends	41%
Playing sports	27%
Church activities	7%

3. Are you in school?

(58 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

Yes	98%
No	2%

(This represents one respondent.)

3a. If you are in school, what school do you attend?

(53 of 58 respondents answered this question. Responses given by 5% or less of respondents are not shown.)

Trenton Central High School	16%
Mercer County Community College	9%
Trenton High West	9%
Joyce Kilmer	7%

Some of the other schools attended by respondents include Daylight/Twilight, Hamilton High West, Cadwalader, Peddie School, Ewing High School, and Trenton Community Charter School. These results show that at least ten of the youth that completed

the survey likely do not have their primary residence in Trenton.

3b. If you are not in school, why not?

The one respondent who reported not being in school in Question 3, reported that he is not in school because he was expelled.

4. Where do you see yourself in five years?

(57 of 58 respondents provided 67 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% or less of the total are not shown.)

College	64%
Working	22%
High School	7%
Military	6%

Nine respondents reported that they see themselves both in college and working, while one respondent reported that he sees himself both in college and in the military.

5. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, please rate the following aspects of your community:

Friendliness of neighbors

(58 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

3	31%
4	29%
5	26%
2	7%
1	7%

Cleanliness

(58 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

3	31%
5	22%
4	21%
1	16%
2	10%

Condition of streets

(58 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

1	33%
4	26%
3	22%
2	10%
5	9%

Safety

(56 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

4	29%
3	21%
2	20%
5	16%
1	14%

Schools

(57 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

4	40%
3	33%
5	16%
2	7%
1	4%

School teachers

(55 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

4	33%
3	27%
5	20%
2	18%
1	2%

School programs

(56 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

3	36%
4	30%
5	20%
2	9%
1	5%

School buildings

(57 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

4	28%
2	26%
3	18%
1	14%
5	14%

6. Who do you talk to when you have a problem?

(58 of 58 respondents provided 73 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% of less of the total are not shown.)

Mother	33%
Sibling	22%
Friends	15%
Grandparent	7%
Religious leader	7%

7. Do you have a mentor or someone who takes an active role in helping you and giving you advice?

(57 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

Yes	63%
No	37%

8. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how confident do you feel about yourself?

(58 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

5	84%
4	14%
3	2%

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how important is it to you to solve your issues without using violence?

(57 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

4	37%
5	26%
3	21%
2	9%
1	7%

9a. When you are unable to solve your issues without using violence, why is that?

(47 of 48 respondents answered this question. Responses given by 5% or less of respondents are not shown.)

I feel threatened	42%
I have to be violent to make my point	33%
People will think that I am weak if I do not use violence	13%
I feel stronger when I am violent	8%

10. How can we get more young people actively involved in the community?

(57 of 58 respondents provided 72 answers to this question. Responses that were 5% of less of the total are not shown.)

Recreational sports leagues	32%
Big brother / big sister programs	31%
Mentoring programs	19%
After school programs	8%

D1. What is your age?

(58 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

10 to 14	41%
15 to 20	58%
> 20	2%

D2. What is your gender?

(58 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

Female	57%
Male	43%

D3. What is your race or nationality?

(56 of 58 respondents answered this question.)

African American / Black	93%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4%
Other	4%

Community Identified Assets List

Community Identified Assets	Category	Community Identified Assets	Category
Belvidere Greenway	Recreational	Lighthouse Outreach Ministry	Orgs/Inst.
Community Garden	Recreational	Mercer County Community College	Orgs/Inst.
D&R Canal	Recreational	Mercer St. Friends	Orgs/Inst.
Edgewood Ave. Playground	Recreational	Monument School	Orgs/Inst.
North 25 Park	Recreational	Mt. Bethel	Orgs/Inst.
Spring Street Park	Recreational	NJ League of Municipalities	Orgs/Inst.
West Ward Recreation Center	Recreational	NJ Partnership for Healthy Kids-Trenton	Orgs/Inst.
Wilkinson Park	Recreational	North 25 Tenants Association	Orgs/Inst.
Amini Sababu	People	Rowan Towers Social Services	Orgs/Inst.
Assm. Bonnie Watson-Coleman	People	Shiloh Baptist Church	Orgs/Inst.
Assm. Reed Gusciora	People	Shiloh CDC	Orgs/Inst.
Barbara Cobb, NJSFCWC / Carver Center	People	State House	Orgs/Inst.
Bernice Mayes	People	State Library & Museum	Orgs/Inst.
Bill Dressel, NJ League of Municipalities	People	Thomas Edison State College	Orgs/Inst.
Bobby Thomas	People	Trenton Church of Christ	Orgs/Inst.
Councilman Zac Chester	People	Trenton Police Department	Orgs/Inst.
Dennis Dooley, Capital Health	People	Canal House	Historic
Dr. George Pruitt, TESC	People	Carver Center	Historic
Edyth Wilson	People	Dr. Sullivan's Office	Historic
George Bradley, Bellevue Ave. Civic Association	People	Nixon School	Historic
H. Lee Wearing, Esq.	People	Old Barracks	Historic
Juanita Taylor, NJSFCWC / Carver Center	People	Petty's Run Archeological site	Historic
Leroi Banks, Roi Realty	People	Amefika's	Business
Lil Sapp	People	Anderson Funeral Home	Business
Rev. Darrell Armstrong, Shiloh Baptist Church	People	Bank of America	Business
Rev. Donald Medley, Cadwalader Asbury UMC	People	Bell Boy Cleaners	Business
Rev. Stanley Justice, Mt. Zion AME	People	Ben's Furniture	Business
Rose Richardson	People	Bradley Hair Salon	Business
Senator Shirley Turner	People	Candlelight Lounge	Business
Tom & Joan Summers	People	Capitol Copy	Business
US Representative Rush Holt	People	City Deli	Business
Willie D. Townsend	People	CMI Advertising	Business
Yvonne Jackson	People	Firestone Tire	Business
Ambulance Services	Orgs/Inst.*	Gift Shop at the State Museum	Business
Cadwalader Asbury UMC	Orgs/Inst.	Hughes Funeral Home	Business
Cadwalader School	Orgs/Inst.	Hundley Real Estate	Business
Capital City Partnership	Orgs/Inst.	Larry's Tire	Business
Capital Health	Orgs/Inst.	Law Office (Next to Assm. Watson-Coleman)	Business
Change Ministries CMC	Orgs/Inst.	Dr. Les Haley (Dentist)	Business
Children's Futures	Orgs/Inst.	Riggins Service Station	Business
Cycle Kings	Orgs/Inst.	Rite Aid	Business
Episcopal Diocese of NJ	Orgs/Inst.	Ross Used Car Sales	Business
Ethnic Church	Orgs/Inst.	Tina's Beauty Salon	Business
Grace Community Church	Orgs/Inst.	Westside Plaza	Business
Gregory School	Orgs/Inst.		
Henry J. Austin Health Center	Orgs/Inst.		
King David Lodge	Orgs/Inst.		

*Orgs/Inst. = Organizations and Institutions



NJ STATE CAPITOL DOME - VIEW FROM THE CARVER CENTER