

The Brownfields Element in Trenton250

“The Brownfield Program of the City of Trenton will serve as a nexus for the redevelopment of blighted property in the city, by assisting the Department of Housing & Economic Development in bringing needed public space, services, housing, jobs and tax revenue. The brownfield program will be staffed with technical professionals who are looked to as national leaders in municipal brownfields redevelopment programs, and will utilize innovative financing programs to the extent possible to achieve redevelopment goals.” (Brownfields Action Plan, June 2014)

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to connect the City’s Brownfields Program to Trenton250, the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan, to summarize the key achievements, and the current and future programmatic goals, and to check the “alignment” of the program with other elements of Trenton250. This “alignment” should inform the Trenton250 program team as to the placement of the Brownfields Program into an existing element, or into an existing group of elements.

It is important to incorporate the mission of the City’s Brownfields Program into Trenton250 as it is currently incorporated into the City’s revitalization strategy. The Brownfields Program is an important aspect of, and tool for, the City’s efforts with: real estate (acquisition and disposal); land use planning; site planning; environmental compliance; environmental risk assessment and minimization; land stewardship; housing production; economic development (job creation and revenue enhancement); and environmental health. Similarly, the City’s Brownfields Program activities directly relate to the following elements of Trenton250: Economic Development; Housing; Historic Preservation; Parks, Open Space and Recreation; and Solid (hazardous) Waste & (land) Recycling. In addition, the Brownfields Program commonly incorporates additional elements of Stormwater Management, Technology, and Effective Action Planning into its projects.

Definition of Brownfields

...any former or current property that is currently vacant or underutilized and on which there has been, or there is suspected to have been, a discharge of a contaminant. This includes old commercial and industrial sites common to “post-industrial” Trenton.

II. HISTORY

The Trenton Brownfields Program has been successfully supporting the redevelopment of contaminated sites in the city for approximately 20 years. The inception of the program in the early/mid 1990s corresponded to the realization that the City's revitalization efforts at that time, especially on old, former industrial properties owned by the City, were obstructed by the need to remediate contamination in accordance with relatively recent State standards.* The program's inception also corresponded to the State providing of certain environmental liability exemptions to local government entities, and state and federal grant programs for site assessment and investigation, and contaminated site remediation.

Trenton's Brownfields Program maintains a listing of over 100 brownfield sites located throughout the city. Of these, more than 50 have been redeveloped following assessment, investigation and/or remediation. Key achievements over this time period have included: the receipt of six Phoenix Awards for excellence in brownfields redevelopment for various projects in the city (Trenton has the distinction of winning more Phoenix Awards than any other community in the country). Over the years, Trenton has leveraged more than \$34 million in funding from state and federal sources from its original \$200,000 in EPA Brownfield Assessment Demonstration Pilot funding.

Remediated sites include: Magic Marker/Gould Battery; Champale; Thropp Brothers; Youngs Rubber; CV Hill; Warren Balderston. Brownfield sites have been redeveloped for public, commercial/retail, industrial, mixed, recreational and residential use. Five hundred thirty-seven (537) units of affordable and market-rate housing have been developed on remediated brownfield sites.

The City's Brownfields Program is nationally recognized for its impact on the community it serves. The program is often invited to have input in policy formulation at the state (NJDEP) and federal (USEPA) level, and is involved with several national and international groups working on brownfields issues (US-German Bilateral Working Group; Interstate Technology Regulatory Council; National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals and others).

*Most state environmental programs and remediation requirements, involving underground storage tanks, industrial sites and general site remediation requirements, were enacted during the 1980s and 1990s.

III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

To date, out of the approximately 4,800 total acres in Trenton (~7.5 square miles), over 165 acres of brownfields have been remediated and redeveloped. That is about 3.5% of the City's total acreage. Brownfield site redevelopment is a key component in the revitalization of Trenton and is crucial to the overall economic development of the city. Redevelopment of underutilized brownfield sites can be used to enhance Trenton's neighborhoods and improve the quality of life for all of its citizens, in addition to increasing tax revenues in the long term.

Every four years, the Brownfields Program publishes a Brownfields Action Plan (June, 2014; http://www.trentonnj.org/Documents/BEST_Action_Plan_6-20-14.pdf). The *Brownfields Program Action Plan* provides the City of Trenton with a blueprint for action to maintain a successful, sustainable Brownfields Program, by setting forth program goals, recommendations and associated metrics.

Key program components and policies that have contributed to the overall success of the Brownfields Programs include:

- Instill a high level commitment and support of Trenton's brownfield goals through performance and track record;
- Successfully assessing nearly 100 sites, of which over 50 have been redeveloped;
- Maintain broad-based representative support among the members of the City Administration and Trenton City Council;
- Inclusion of community leaders and neighborhood residents;
- Partnerships that form the basis for strong, long-term relationships with key stakeholders at the local, county, state and federal levels, as well as local private-sector developers, landowners and the business community
- Performing activities in-house, where possible, as a means to save capital funding;
- Funding, often with grant money, a full-time Brownfields Coordinator;
- Integrating federal and state brownfield initiatives into the Trenton Brownfields Program to maximize opportunities;
- Successfully seeking out and employing a multitude of funding sources, including more than \$34 million in federal, state, county, municipal and private funding; and
- Contributing to State and Federal policy directly relating to the sustainability of municipal brownfields programs.

Brownfields Program roles impact the City's revitalization efforts in ways that include:

- more efficient and effective transfer of city-owned real estate to developers for redevelopment projects;
- more efficient and effective disposal of city-owned real estate through negotiated sale, auction or other means;
- identifying future land use options or restrictions on properties based on their environmental condition;
- identifying appropriate zoning restrictions on properties based on their environmental condition;
- helping in prioritizing sites for marketing and redevelopment based on environmental condition;
- increasing property value and removing brownfields "stigma" through environmental compliance;
- remediating sites for all types of redevelopment (residential, commercial/industrial, open space, etc.), thereby increasing tax revenue, jobs and quality of life;
- supporting other Departments (Public Works; Recreation, Natural Resources & Culture; Inspections; Health) in resolving environmental matters.

IV. GOALS (TRENTON BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM OBJECTIVES)

The Brownfields Program has maintained consistent goals that include the continuation of the following action items and or components:

- **Financing and Economic Sustainability**: Financing of brownfields involves obtaining funds from various sources to cover the cost of environmental assessment, investigation, remediation, and ultimately development of the property. Currently, the city takes advantage of a variety of available financing to redevelop brownfield sites including: State Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund (HDSRF) monies; USEPA Cleanup and Assessment grants; other state grants such as the NJ Green Acres Program and NJ DEP Watershed grants; and other sources.
- **Maintaining Partnerships & Outreach**: Strong partnerships make successful brownfield projects possible, and bring funds to city projects. Notable partners of the Brownfields Program include:
 - The BEST Committee: the local steering committee of the Brownfields Program.
 - Community and non-profit organizations: including NJ Future, East Trenton Collaborative, Habitat for Humanity, Trenton Green Team, Isles, Inc., and D&R Greenway Trust.
 - Mercer County
 - State agencies: NJDEP; NJEDA
 - Federal agencies: Primarily USEPA, but also USEDPA, HUD and USDOT
 - Private interests: private developers, real estate brokers and technical professionals.
- **Site Identification and Brownfields Inventory**: Site inventories serve as a marketing and planning tool. The Brownfields Program also maintains an inventory of current and former retail petroleum (gasoline) stations and is currently preparing a current and former dry cleaner database for informational purposes;
- **Brownfield Leadership**: Trenton is acknowledged as a national leader in brownfields, resulting in funding opportunities and developer interest. Trenton has achieved many "firsts" including receiving one of the EPA's first Assessment Demonstration Pilot grants, and receiving the State's first HDSRF grant (both in 1995). Trenton's brownfield professionals have been highly active in participating in local, state, and national forums and meetings, and are respected within the brownfields community.
- **Brownfields Marketing**: A strong marketing component can advertise the availability of brownfield sites for redevelopment.
- **Area-wide Brownfield Programs**: Brownfield redevelopment is a key component to thoughtful revitalization. The impact of brownfields redevelopment can be multiplied if a concerted effort is made to address multiple sites in a priority neighborhood.
- **Regulatory Matters**: As a leader in local municipal brownfields, Trenton has taken an active role in advocating for municipalities as the State of New Jersey.

Additional details on programmatic goals can be found in the Brownfields Action Plan (June 2014).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

For continued achievement in revitalization and redevelopment, we recommend the following actions and programs:

- To the extent that matching funds are required for state or federal grants, include a line item in the city budget for the Brownfields Program, when needed.
- Conduct routine auctions of city-owned brownfield sites and partner with real estate brokers to successfully transfer city-owned properties to private ownership, thereby increasing city revenue and reducing long-term liabilities.
- Increase Trenton's tax base by redeveloping abandoned, idled, or underutilized properties and ensuring a balance of redevelopment reuses.
- Continue to use the Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund that was awarded by the EPA to clean up city-owned sites that require additional levels of funding. Repay outstanding obligations to the EPA Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund.
- Be an advocate for the use and expansion of state HDSRF refunding and for the expansion of other state brownfield programs.
- Be an advocate for the use and expansion of federal brownfields funding sources.
- Seek out opportunities to attract private funding into Trenton for brownfield redevelopment and site restoration. Partner with private developers to assist in utilizing state and city financial incentives.
- Tap into other potential sources of funding, such as Congressional earmarks, Department of Transportation grants, and private foundations utilizing the assistance of a paid lobbying firm, where beneficial.
- The city should continue to successfully leverage partnerships on the local, regional, state, federal and private levels. The city should especially work to establish more relationships with parties who have an interest in the economic development of Trenton, including business leaders and professionals, financiers and real estate professionals.
- The city should hold periodic meetings with leaders of the various community groups to disseminate information on all of the city's environmental activities and to discuss related redevelopment plans, where applicable.
- Community involvement and education should be proactive and started as soon as practical in the redevelopment process.
- Maintain current brownfields inventory to provide continued program metrics, and to meet brownfields program criteria of the "Sustainable Jersey" program requirements;
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive, city-wide industrial sites database, based on a thorough site inventory, which includes all brownfield sites. Link this database to a GIS mapping tool, make it searchable by attributes to serve as a marketing tool as well as a mechanism for prioritizing economic development efforts and responding to developer inquires, and make it publically available.

- Brownfields Program staff will engage all future incoming mayors and administrations to ensure awareness of the program's successes to date and the benefit of the program to the city's revitalization efforts.
- Professionals in Trenton's Brownfields Program office should continue their capacity building efforts through participation with EPA- and NJDEP-sponsored activities as well as other brownfields forums.
- Trenton should continue to seek opportunities for its Brownfields Program staff to make presentations and prepare papers for professional and trade meetings, particularly focusing on real estate and economic development.
- Thought should also be given to the development of a separate environmental division which would house the Brownfields Program and would conduct all environmental work for the city, including work currently disbursed across the city in Public Works, Recreation, Natural Resources and Culture, and Inspection departments. This would result in efficiencies and cost savings for the city.
- To promote the city as a whole, Trenton should initiate a major marketing campaign that highlights the city's many assets, including its walkability, historic housing, heritage tourism and the arts. This campaign should include a notable slogan that differentiates the Greater Trenton Area from other metropolitan areas.
- Trenton should initiate conversations with potential county, state, and federal agencies that would fund a large-scale and sustained local and regional marketing campaign.
- The City of Trenton should publicize, within its own ranks and throughout the city, the many accomplishments of its Brownfields Program, including the contributions to the redevelopment of numerous sites, our role as a national leader in municipal brownfields redevelopment, and a contributor to state and national brownfields policies.
- The Department of Housing and Economic Development should actively market individual brownfield sites and should include brownfield sites in city-owned property auctions. Standardized fact sheets should be developed for each brownfield property owned by the city, and should be posted on the website.
- The Trenton Brownfields Program should improve and enlarge its current webpage, which should be part of the city's website. This webpage should include information on sites available for purchase, success stories regarding previous brownfields accomplishments, and links to related resources.
- Utilize other existing databases, such as the State's "Choose New Jersey" and "Site Mart" programs for brownfields property marketing.
- Focus on the redevelopment of the waterfront as a means of revitalizing the urban areas, a technique recognized and promoted by the Urban Land Institute.
- Build upon the train station renovation to spur development in the neighborhood surrounding the station.
- Continue the focus on the downtown and the Canal Banks area.
- Conduct a demand survey to determine what the market will support and what the community needs.

- Work toward the extension of the light rail into the downtown area to stimulate spinoff development and reduce the need for parking.
- Encourage the reuse of surface parking lots as mixed-use development with structured parking.
- Identify and prioritize specific problem sites which cause blight in Trenton's neighborhoods.
- Identify the highest and best use of properties, and advocate for smart growth and green buildings. These should be incorporated into the design guidelines of each redevelopment area.
- Continue to advocate for changes to the program to benefit municipal programs, to include the addition of a mediator at DEP and waiving of fees in certain instances.
- Continue to nurture a group of like-minded municipalities to form a committee to press for change in the program.
- Continue to follow regulatory changes and evaluate the impacts these have on Trenton brownfields program, and serve as a voice for change.

With continued support of the City's leadership, and incorporation into Trenton250, the Trenton Brownfields Program will continue to support the City of Trenton's redevelopment goals. To continue to receive the support that it needs, the Brownfields Program will continue to demonstrate leadership, provide integrated technical and project management, achieve and measure success, and meet its short-term to long-term programmatic goals.

RESOLUTION

13-360

No. _____

Date of Adoption

JUN 20 2013

Approved as to Form and Legality

Craig M. Amara

City Attorney

Factual content certified by

Walter D. Deane

Title, Department of Housing and Economic Development

Councilman /woman

Zachary O. Christ

Christ

Christ

presents the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING AND ACCEPTING THE CITY OF TRENTON PLANNING BOARD'S COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK AND RELATED ELEMENTS FOR THE UPDATE TO THE TRENTON MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Trenton's current Master Plan was implemented in 1999; and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Land Use Law, P.L.2011, c.65 (MLUL) requires that the Master Plan be periodically updated or re-examined every ten (10) years; and

WHEREAS, the City conducted a re-examination of the Master Plan and subsequently adopted the same in 2005, which resulted in the amendment of the City of Trenton Land Development Ordinance that was resolved and adopted in 2010; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the MLUL, the City of Trenton is required to update or re-examine its Master Plan by 2015; and

WHEREAS, on January 24, 2013, the City of Trenton Planning Board passed a resolution (see attached) agreeing upon a comprehensive framework and all related elements (see "Comprehensive Master Plan Framework and Related Elements", attached hereto) as an update to the City's Master Plan and development regulations; and

WHEREAS, the completion of the Master Plan update is a very significant undertaking which involves a substantial amount of work and costs (see "Outline of Master Plan Development", attached hereto); and

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has requested, and the Division of Planning advises, that the City acknowledge and accept the Comprehensive Master Plan Framework and Related Elements to update to the City's Master Plan by 2015 to ensure compliance with the MLUL.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Trenton that the Comprehensive Master Plan Framework and Related Elements is hereby acknowledged and accepted.

	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent		Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent		Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
BETHEA	✓				MCBRIDE	✓				HOLLY WARD	✓			
CALDWELL WILSON	✓				MUSCHAL	✓								
CHESTER	✓				REYNOLDS JACKSON	✓								

This Resolution was adopted at a Meeting of the City Council of the City of Trenton on JUN 20 2013
Shirley Hoel, Mayor *James Butler*

City of Trenton PLANNING BOARD

RESOLUTION

250 PLAN

THE CITY OF TRENTON PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDS A FRAMEWORK FOR THE CITY'S MASTER PLAN AS THE FIRST LEVEL OF PROCEEDINGS TO PRODUCE A PLAN BY THE YEAR 2015 AS REQUIRED BY THE MUNICIPAL LAND USE LAW (MLUL) N.J.S. 40:55D-89

WHEREAS, the City of Trenton's current master plan was produced in 1999; and

WHEREAS, a re-examination of that plan was conducted and adopted in 2005 which led to the amendment of the City of Trenton Land Development Ordinance that was resolved and adopted in year 2010; and

WHEREAS, stipulated in the Municipal Land Use Law, Section 40:55D-28, the Master Plan has to be periodically updated or re-examined every ten years, requiring the City of Trenton to produce a plan by 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has begun the proceedings to produce a plan by carefully considering the attached summary of frameworks for the City's Master Plan as presented by the Division of Planning on Thursday, January 24, 2013; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Planning Board of the City of Trenton, and in the best interest of the City of Trenton, the Planning Board has approved to recommend the "Master Plan for Sustainability" framework for the City's Master Plan to City Council for authorization, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Division of Planning will proceed to present and outreach to community organizations, businesses, and related government offices within the City of Trenton the "Master Plan for Sustainability" framework for their input and endorsements to the level of satisfaction of the Planning Board.

Vote on: Approval for the adoption of the framework for the Master Plan for Sustainability.

5 In Favor
1 Abstention


Peter Yull
Planning Board Chairperson

Memorialized: 2/28/13
date

Prepared by: 
Jeffrey Wilkerson, Principal Planner



Trenton250 Framework

The City's Long-range Comprehensive Master Plan

