

City of Trenton 2014 Mayoral Transition Report

Mayor Eric Jackson



Honorary Chairs:

Senator Shirley Turner
Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman
Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes
Honorable Douglas Palmer
Gilbert Medina
Ray Pocino

Co-Chairs:

William Guhl
Gwendolyn Harris

Executive Director:

James Gee

Steering Committee:

Bill Watson
Jeannine LaRue
Charles Hill
Marty Johnson
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INTRODUCTION

The preparation of a Transition Report to ease the change of chief executives and their administrations is a common practice at most levels of government. We see it routinely with State and County administration changes as well as with most major cities after elections. Ideally, such a report is prepared so that it is available at the point when the incoming chief executive assumes office. For several reasons, such a timetable could not be met for Mayor Jackson's inauguration.

Primary among those reasons is the election schedule. Trenton has a non-partisan form of government and conducts its elections in May every four years. A candidate must receive 50% plus one of the votes cast in the May election to secure the office; otherwise a run-off election is held in June with the two high vote getters for each office on the ballot. Such was the case in this mayoralty election. Only after the run-off election results are certified is a candidate declared the winner. As the change in administrations occurs on July 1, the few weeks between the run-off election and inauguration is simply insufficient time to conduct the study work necessary to prepare a worthwhile report.

Additionally, the transition had other complications in that the former elected mayor was forced from office after a criminal conviction only months before the election. The interim mayor who was appointed by Council to fulfill the remainder of the unexpired term was exceedingly cooperative in the transition, but the lack of attention to the municipal operation during the former mayor's trial posed great difficulty. It is under these unique circumstances that the Mayor-elect began the process of transition.

The transition process started with the designation of Honorary Chairs. As Mayor-Elect, Eric Jackson then selected Transition Co-Chairs Gwendolyn L. Harris and William Guhl, who would provide guidance to the full Transition Team in this effort to perform the due diligence necessary to present a comprehensive transition report that would serve as a reference document for the new administration.

Working closely with the Co-Chairs were the Executive Director and Steering Committee, whose task was to manage the activities of the Transition Sub-Committees. Each of the eleven sub-committees was asked to study a single operational function of the city government. The committees were responsible for gathering information from the Trenton City government and related entities, conducting interviews with City personnel, determining best practices statewide and providing a report for Mayor Eric Jackson.

Due to the significant time constraints imposed by the election calendar and other surrounding issues, a decision was made that a thorough report by July 1 was unachievable and that the two month timetable generally available when elections are held in November for offices assumed in January was more feasible. Recognizing that the circumstances were not ideal, the Mayor directed that the written report should be completed in early August. He further directed that he should be informed of any matter discovered during the investigation period that required the immediate attention of his administration so that it could be addressed in a timely fashion. In addition, during the transition process the Mayor was provided with an unpublished, interim document that summarized recommendations for operational and programmatic changes. Those recommendations are included more fully herein.

It is important for anyone reading this report to recognize the fiscal realities that the City of Trenton faces. In this time of limited economic resources, more money is not the sole solution to dealing with the challenges facing urban New Jersey. Leadership, professionalism and vision are vital ingredients as well. But those qualities are essential *in addition to* sufficient economic resources. It is within this context that the Transition Committee seeks to present a report that gives a comprehensive set of recommendations for the incoming administration to consider. The report contains recommendations that can be achieved in the short-term and with limited additional funds. But, in addition, many of the recommendations can only be implemented with significant additional funding. Whether many of the recommendations can be effectively implemented will depend on the availability of that funding.

We would be remiss if we didn't thank the hard working men and women who make up the City's employee workforce for their eagerness to provide the Transition Team with initial information, for making themselves available for interviews, and for being on call to answer any additional follow up questions that our committees had for them. It is through this level of cooperation that Mayor Eric E. Jackson is presented with this Transition Committee Report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Transition Team performed a study of each of the functions of the municipal government. From the information obtained a general statement of the operational condition of each of those functions was made and is contained in the “Findings” that introduce each study area. Following the “Findings” are a number of recommendations believed to be necessary to improve the quality of services provided to the public or to achieve compliance with State or Federal regulations and/or recordkeeping requirements.

Many of the recommendations generated by the Transition process envision a “best case” scenario without factoring in the limited economic resources available to the new administration. As the City’s budget is supported significantly by State revenues and at the time of the Transition effort, an assessment of the City’s financial condition could not be made, many of the proposals contained herein are likely to be deemed unaffordable, albeit desirable, in the near term. As such, implementing many of the recommendations will need to be postponed until such time as economic resources are available. At this time a zero-based budget for the City would make the most sense. In this way the budget would be targeted to best provide economic resources based on the Mayor’s priorities for municipal services.

There are two sets of recommendations (entitled “Critical” and “Operational”) that should be addressed immediately. Included in the first set are items which, if left unattended, will likely cause the City to incur additional costs/penalties. These include such matters as DEP violations, non-compliance with grant funding regulations and neglect of capital improvements necessary to avoid greater capital expenses. The second set of recommendations is operational in nature and proposes modifying the manner in which some services are delivered. These recommendations are intended to address services that are being delivered by the City with limited effectiveness, usually due to insufficient staffing. In some cases, consolidating the City’s service delivery approach may be possible; in other cases, seeking other entities to share responsibility for providing those services may be necessary. In the alternative, there may be some services that the City is forced to discontinue altogether or at least until such time as economic resources become available.

CRITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. City-owned property—The City has acquired a great many properties, generally through foreclosures, which are in various degrees of disrepair. Those properties are principally residential, some of which are occupied, and it is reported that some former owners continue to collect rent from occupants. This situation presents immediate concerns in that the City has responsibility for the condition of its properties and as a result may have tort liability should a claim be filed resulting from events/injuries occurring at any of those properties. In addition, the City, as owner, should be collecting rent from tenant occupied property.

The Department of Housing and Economic Development must be equipped to conduct an inventory of the properties, assessing their physical condition and occupancy, as soon as is reasonably possible. Any health and safety violations in occupied properties need to be

addressed and unoccupied properties should be secured. Recommendations of a less immediate nature are contained in the sub-committee report.

2. Labor Counsel for negotiations—The City has labor agreements with collective bargaining units which have not been modified in as long as four years. Both Police and Fire union personnel are working with expired contracts as is one civilian union. Discussions with union representatives on those contracts have been conducted by City personnel who are insufficiently equipped to negotiate public sector labor agreements. The City should contract with an experienced labor attorney to represent management in labor discussions.
3. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) compliance—The former administration utilized the CDBG source of revenue to fund staff whose responsibilities were not eligible for reimbursement under grant guidelines. These discrepancies are and will be identified during a program audit. Any costs determined to be ineligible under the program will result in the City refunding those costs. The City should evaluate the responsibilities of all employees funded by the CDBG to assure reimbursement eligibility and remove from CDBG funding any employee whose responsibilities do not qualify for reimbursement. In addition, the CDBG financial records are not in compliance with grant requirements. To avoid having to refund costs for which the City's financial records are not adequate, a significant effort should be made to cure the recordkeeping shortcomings.
4. Regional Contribution Agreement (RCA) administrative costs—The City is a receiver of funds from other New Jersey municipalities to provide affordable housing under the Fair Housing Act. Revenue from RCAs is dedicated to affordable housing with a portion permitted to fund administrative costs. Some employees in the Department of Economic and Community Development are either partially or fully funded using RCA funding. This source of funding will be exhausted in the near-term and an alternate source of funding will be necessary to fund those staff. The City should identify alternate funding for those positions.
5. City facility capital needs—The various sub-committee reports are replete with references (Police Headquarters, Ellarslie Museum, The Trent House, and The Trenton Library as examples) regarding the neglect of public facilities and the need for capital improvements. In some cases the facilities are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The City should examine all of its public facilities and develop a plan to make all capital improvements necessary to meet ADA compliance and to perform those capital improvements necessary to prevent greater expense through continued neglect.
6. Utility environmental violations—The City's Water Utility (TWW) is under order by the NJDEP to make capital improvements to its system by August 31 of this year. Compliance by that date is unachievable. The new administration should communicate with the NJDEP regarding a time extension and develop a plan to complete any capital improvements necessary to avoid further violations. This is an area where the City's financial condition should not be a barrier to compliance. TWW serves more suburban customers than City residents and businesses and the majority of service fees are derived from those suburban users.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All vacant positions as well as any new positions should be filled as funding is available, only after scrutinizing how essential each position is to a statutorily required function and/or to the Mayor's stated priorities. This recommendation is intended to eliminate redundancy and cover all recommendations for filling staff vacancies or creating new positions across all departments.
2. Integrate the Inspections function into the neighborhood stabilization and economic development efforts of the Department of Community and Economic Development by making Inspections a Division of that Department.
3. Consolidate the capital planning, repair, and maintenance functions for all city buildings into the Departments of Public Works, thereby requiring responsive, prioritized attention to all departments' space problems where the public is served and/or employees work. A chargeback system should be considered, whereby the budgetary allocation for repair and maintenance would be made to the department using the space and then credited to Public Works upon completion of requested and authorized work.
4. Consolidate the remaining recreation programs, health programs, and social service programs into a new Department of Community Services. This new department should be encouraged to develop and maintain partnerships with community not-for-profits to enhance the delivery of direct services to Trenton's youth, seniors, and other residents, as well as to consider shared services with/through the County.
5. Engage in serious discussions with the State regarding the policing of the Trenton downtown Capital District. Similarly, look for opportunities to share specific police functions with/through Mercer County.
6. Sell all parking related functions to the Parking Authority, generating immediate revenue for the City in consideration of the revenue potential of the City's parking meters over the next several years. The Parking Authority can then upgrade and manage the entire system.
7. The function of issuing and recording Handicapped Parking permits, and permits for Block Parties, Parades, Bazaars, and Festivals, and Recreational Area permits, as well as Parks and Other Facilities including distributing and tracking the boating permits during the spring and summer months, should be co-located with Vital Statistics and consolidated into the new Department of Community Services.

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Findings

Headed by the City's Business Administrator, the Department of Administration is responsible for preparing and monitoring the City's Budget. Currently, the City's total appropriation is \$186.2 million, which reflects a 1 percent increase over the previous year. The Department of Administration is addressing ways to close the 2015 deficit, which is projected to be approximately \$9 million. Because State aid in its various forms makes up such a significant portion of the City's budget – and Transitional Aid in particular – the City cannot begin to finalize its budget until the State makes clear the amount of Transitional Aid the City will be receiving. Hence, the budget is the first priority. The Department of Administration has other key responsibilities in the areas of Information Technology, Risk Management, Purchasing and Human Resources.

Recommendations

Short-term

1. Immediately address ways to close the 2015 deficit, which is projected to be approximately \$9 million.
2. Immediately begin negotiations with the State for a migration away from Transitional Aid towards additional formula-based aid; truly phasing out of Transitional Aid without some new complement of aid will be impossible.
3. Quickly fill key positions, including those that have remained vacant for years; move to retain vital personnel:
 - Business Administrator
 - Budget Officer (previous holder retired July 1st)
 - Federal and State Grant Coordinator (vacant)
4. Issue an RFP to obtain a labor counsel to assume negotiation with the City's Collective Bargaining Units representing:
 - 2 Police Unions – 4 years without contract
 - 2 Fire Unions – 2 years without contract
 - 1 Civilian Union – 3 years without contract
5. Carefully consider the ramifications while preparing for the Department of Community Affairs-mandated shift from a Fiscal Year to Calendar Year budget.

Long-term

6. Move forward with the Court-ordered City-wide reevaluation and begin to discuss its meaning with the public and other City stakeholders.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Findings

The Department of Finance continues to lack vital positions that have remained vacant for years due to the major budget cuts and retirement. Within the Department of Finance, the Tax Assessor, the Tax Collector, and the Deputy Tax Collector are all eligible to retire. The Comptroller will be eligible within the next 2 years. There has not been a Treasurer or a Director of Finance in 4 years. The loss of Division heads within the Department of Finance would be catastrophic, especially as there is not a succession plan or the necessary staff in place currently who would be eligible for promotion. Several positions require certification, such as the Chief Financial Officer position (the current Comptroller, who has this certification, has been serving as the Chief Financial Officer).

Recommendations

Short-term

1. Quickly fill key positions, including those that have remained vacant for years; move to retain vital personnel:
 - Director of Finance (vacant for 4 years)
 - Treasurer (vacant for 4 years)
 - Tax Assessor, Tax Collector, and Deputy Tax Collector (eligible to retire)
 - Comptroller (filling in as CFO, eligible to retire in 2 years)
 - Staff Accountants

Long-term

2. Ensure that the City remains in a strong cash position and fully complies with the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the State that accompanies the Transitional Aid disbursement.
3. The City must ensure the public and the State that it will collect all the revenues it can currently claim and that State financial assistance will not be spent in a negligent and unaccountable manner.

LAW DEPARTMENT

Findings

The Law Department acts as the legal advisor to the Mayor, Council and all departments within the administration handling a range of responsibilities from employee disciplinary matters, oversight of contracting and preparation of legislation. The Law Department litigates matters in all Courts and manages litigation handled by outside counsel. Currently, various departments procure and manage their own outside counsel without the input and oversight of the Law Department. Hence, the Law Department's focus and structure needs to be organized to make best use of its resources to meet all of the City's legal needs.

Recommendation

Short-term

1. Experienced outside counsel with a particularized specialty should be procured as needed for legal matters. This will insure that in-house counsel is available to address the numerous issues that arise at City Hall and to effectively manage outside counsel.
2. The Law Department should institute a more delineated procurement process for retaining outside counsel. We recommend that the Law Department issue a "Request for Qualifications" in the various areas of law that are generally required by a municipality. Thereafter, the Law Department can recommend a Qualified Vendor List in each of the disciplines for adoption by the City Council.
3. Currently, various departments procure and manage their own outside counsel without the input and oversight of the Law Department. The administration should cease this practice and centralize all legal matters in the Law Department, with, of course, the exception of those that are statutorily required to be separate.
4. As part of the management of outside litigation, the Law Department should track the erosion of its self-insured retention through legal fees under its existing liability policy.
5. The Law Department should institute reporting and billing guidelines to ensure effective management of outside litigation.
6. The Law Department should undertake a review of the Municipal Court prosecutors' workload to determine whether additional prosecutors are required.

Long-term

7. The administration should consider joining a Joint Insurance Fund to protect the City from large exposure cases.

PUBLIC SAFETY: POLICE DEPARTMENT

Findings

The Police Department's structure and method of administration clearly play a significant role on the quality of life in Trenton. The presence of crime, especially violent crime, imposes a threat both physically and psychologically to the City's residents. The presence of crime also directly impacts economic development by limiting the City's ability to market itself as a place for business, tourism, culture, and the arts. The Trenton City Police Department has been successful in attaining two federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Grants for the retention and hiring of police officers and reportedly enjoys strong partnerships with the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office and the Mercer County Sheriff's Office. However, there currently is inadequate manpower to supervise at the street level. Also, the lack of communication between the Bureaus and the lack of partnership between the police and the community has made it difficult for the department to fulfill its mission.

Recommendations

Short-term

1. It is recommended that the Internal Affairs Unit be temporarily increased in order to perform the necessary background checks for the potential upcoming recruit class.
2. Field supervisors' duties should be revised to reflect an increased focus on the patrol function with the expectation that patrol operations be better managed.

Long-term

3. It is recommended that the Department re-establish the Community Oriented Policing Program and assign individual officers as community liaison officers. Officers should be identified by their knowledge of the particular ward. Language spoken should also play a part in the assignment.
4. Additional support should be obtained for both the technology and grant functions.
5. It is recommended that the agency's rules and regulations and standard operating procedures be brought in-line with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agency (CALEA). The ultimate goal is to have the Agency fully accredited through CALEA.
6. It is recommended that greater security measures be taken in the area of the water treatment plant, the reservoir, and the natural gas transfer station. These areas provide County wide resources and if compromised, would be disastrous. Homeland Security could be a source of funding for this measure.
7. It is further recommended that greater security measures be taken to ensure that there are safe corridors for children going to and from school.

PUBLIC SAFETY: FIRE DEPARTMENT

Findings

The Trenton City Fire & Emergency Services manages both the City's Fire Department and Trenton Emergency Medical Services (TEMS). The Department has positive community outreach and is perceived well by the citizens. Recently the Department has successfully applied for two federal SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) Grants with a value of approximately \$30 million. TEMS is managed by the Fire Department but financial support for TEMS does not come from the department. Additionally, TEMS provides the emergency function of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), standby ambulances for all police tactical assignments, and all initial and recertification training to the Fire Department's first responders. On the other hand, the department as a whole has budgetary constraints restricting required equipment replacement, support personnel and fire fighters.

Recommendations

1. Update the Standard Operating Procedures & Standard Operating Guidelines.
2. Upgrade Communications training to include more practical experience, perhaps employing retired fire fighters to manage the task.
3. Critical review of the Fire & Emergency Services budget is essential, and if plausible it should be augmented to include allowances for PEOSH & NFPA equipment replacement.
4. An analysis of support staffing levels with a concentration on regular turnover, retirement turnover, and knowledge and skill loss.
5. Coordinated ongoing training efforts between the Trenton Police and Fire & Emergency and EMS are necessary.

PUBLIC WORKS

Findings

The Department of Public Works is limited in productivity and ability due to the lack of middle and upper-management staff. This matter has led to missed opportunities for grant funding, lack of proper oversight of the City's employees, and missed opportunities to evaluate and correct departmental procedures and approaches. Many employees are currently on long-term workers compensation leave and/or are borrowed by or loaned to other departments, and working out of title/without proper training, leading to less efficient work time.

There are no systems in place to manage processes like maintenance required for issued permits, playground maintenance to address safety, or lists for tree trimming. In general, maintenance appears to be at an all-time low and parks are becoming overrun with weeds and plant species such as poison ivy. Additionally, there is a lack of coordinated information and effort within the Department among the divisions, but also outside the Department particularly with, but not limited to, Inspections and Planning.

Recommendations

Short-term

1. Immediately work to resolve the DEP violations with respect to the Utilities. Also immediately address limits imposed by the City's Administration and/or DCA that prohibit the resolution of the violations.
2. Appropriate staff should attend necessary training to address deficiencies that have made Trenton ineligible for certain federal transportation aid (e.g. Design of ADA Curb Ramps, Work Zone Safety Awareness Workshop, Grant Management for Federal Aid Projects, Work Zone Safety for Municipal and County Public Utilities and Public Works Personnel).
3. Communicate with the Green Acres Program to inform them that this Administration will be working diligently over the coming months to correct any deficiencies of the previous Administration. This is necessary in order to avoid cancellation of current grant obligations and ensure a smooth transition of grant responsibilities.
4. There are a great number of employees on long term medical leave, workers compensation leave, and/or working "light duty". We recommend that the policies and procedure to designate an employee for these statuses be evaluated, specifically to assist management in enforcing appropriate actions for employees who may abuse these systems.

Long-term

5. A full assessment of the organizational structure of the Department of Public Works should be performed in order to help the Department run efficiently and cost effectively. This assessment should include: staffing patterns; an examination of the cost versus the benefits of outsourcing solid waste collection and/or building maintenance; a review of technology improvements that could reduce injuries and possibly costs; and an exploration of opportunities to share other public works services with Mercer County, e.g. parks, snow removal, street cleaning, shade trees. An immediate effort to curb injuries and absenteeism must be initiated.

6. Provide training to employees as a preventive measure to reduce the number of job-related injuries. Many employees have been temporarily or permanently assigned to alternate departments or positions without proper training. In addition, employees performing physical work should be retrained in the correct methods to perform tasks without injury.
7. Park management should be managed by Public Works and consist of maintaining all city-owned parks and open spaces, recreation areas, public plazas, playgrounds, and outdoor park and recreation facilities such as park restrooms, clubhouses and picnic pavilions. The maintenance of indoor recreation facilities and cultural sites should remain under the Division of Public Property and should be managed in partnership with the various organizations using those facilities. Shade tree management should include all trees on public property including parks, streets, public plazas and public buildings such as City Hall. A current conditions survey should be conducted in each park and a prioritized corrective action plan should be instituted.
8. The primary management and implementation of new park construction, rehabilitation and restoration projects is currently being conducted under contract through the Department of Housing and Economic Development to a private vendor. This activity should be transferred to the Department of Public Works to enhance coordination with ongoing park maintenance and repair works. The Public Works Department should also consider the reestablishment of a Landscape Architect position to oversee this work in the parks as well as other City venues.
9. Park security is currently operating under the Division of Public Property with responsibility for City Hall security and park security. In its current state, this appears to be functioning, although both units are understaffed. Consider Security Officer Certification training for security staff and park rangers as currently offered by the State Police.
10. Consider increasing the support functions that can be provided by city departments to the Sewer and Water Utilities at a cost (e.g., equipment maintenance, equipment and vehicle wash).
11. Evaluate the use of CitiStat to develop and monitor performance metrics for this and other City Departments.
12. Shade trees should be maintained on a 5 year rotation. Ideally a complete tree inventory should be conducted, implemented and periodically updated. This should be performed by a Forester or Certified Tree Expert. There are several organizations such as the NJ Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture, the NJ Shade Tree Federation, and Cook College of Rutgers University who could be called upon to help. This should be a long range goal for the Division. In the interim, the backlog of tree complaints needs to be evaluated and prioritized by a Forester or Tree Expert consultant. Trees can be a valuable asset if they are properly cared for or a huge liability if they are not.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Findings

Neither the Department of Recreation, Natural Resources and Culture, nor the Department of Health and Human Services can be reconstituted to their former functions. The two departments have lost significant staff over the past few years but between the two continue to provide some services to special populations within Trenton. The Department of Recreation, Natural Resources & Culture, has the Division of Recreation's functions currently coordinated by the Department of Administration and Parks administered by Public Works. There is only (1) one part-time employee who operates in the office issuing permits for use of recreational facilities. The Health and Human Services Department, after undergoing a 65% staff reduction, maintains programming in five divisions: Health, Environmental Health, Vital Statistics, Community Relations and Social Services, and Animal Care Services.

Within both departments, service planning, coordination, and accountability are often lacking, jeopardizing their capacity to fully embrace their mission. Nevertheless, programs and services for youth, adults and families, and seniors are critically needed in Trenton. There is a particular need to assess the service needs for these populations on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis to determine how best to build upon the good work of existing community organizations as well as the best use of available city facilities to provide access to the most needed array of services in a manner that builds community. It is therefore necessary to determine a manner in which the remaining strengths of these two departments can be organized to meet the community's needs.

Recommendations

Short-term

1. It is therefore recommended that the City combine the remaining program components of these two departments, Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Recreation Natural Resources and Culture into one new department, a Department of Community Services and then charge that new department working in partnership with key stakeholders to plan for the organization of its services on a neighborhood basis in such a way as to maximize resources and address its new merged mission.

Long-term

2. Begin with an operational assessment of current mission, staffing, functions, and productivity; followed by a review of the departments' non-statutory requirements to determine:
 - Services that should continue to be administered by the City, in light of its expertise, capacity, and expected budget scenario;
 - Program components that could become regionalized through a merger with Mercer County; and
 - Functions that would benefit from outsourcing to non-profit, community-based entities.
3. It is recommended the Administration engage non-profit organizations and community groups to ensure that programming is provided and coordinated such that all city residents have access to community services and recreational opportunities. The Administration should assist these organizations by identifying and coordinating resources to support their work. The City should consider modeling its supportive services similar to the approach being used by the County,

providing resources through grant funds. The County Department of Human Services for the most part does not directly provide services, but instead utilizes organizations that have expertise in specific areas to do the work.

4. Increase opportunities for operational effectiveness:

- Improve staff's visibility at community meetings and within health and social service planning bodies, such as: the Trenton Prevention Policy Board (TPPB), East Trenton Collaborative, Trenton Stakeholders, and Mercer County Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC);
- Strengthen communication with Trenton's and Mercer County's provider organizations by convening quarterly meetings with executive directors to seek advice on meeting the needs of the city's low-income and vulnerable residents, and foster collaboration across service arenas;
- Measure, track and publicly report benchmarks and outcomes related to high-quality care and quality of life;
- Establish ongoing technical assistance, professional development, and skills training for staff to improve customer service, knowledge of local resources, and cooperation in serving youth, needy individuals and families;
- Promote transparency and collaboration among organizations to collectively raise the maximum amount of government and private funding possible for Trenton;
- Create the in-house capacity to write grant applications; and increase partnerships with universities and affiliated entities.

5. Accessibility:

- There are many organizations already providing services and doing great work for the residents of Trenton, but the community is having challenges connecting to the services or discerning that they even exist. It is the committee's recommendation that the Administration should put itself in the position to identify existing resources and connect the community to those resources.
- Establish a Mayor's SOS or Special Office for Services to:
 - Receive telephone, in-person or online assistance in completing and navigating government benefit applications;
 - Trouble-shoot delays in receiving assistance;
 - Receive information and referrals for services at local social service organizations; and
 - Report irregularities, impediments and complaints regarding the use/receipt of online or on-site government benefits or social service agency assistance.
- Make this Administration – its Offices, Staff, Services and Literature – Culturally and Linguistically Accessible:
 - Develop a language and cultural competence policy for ALL City staff and strictly enforce it;
 - Conduct ongoing cultural competency training for all types and levels of staff;
 - Assess the numbers and titles of bilingual Spanish/English City staff;
 - Evaluate City staff ratios with other languages spoken by Trenton residents, e.g. Polish, French Creole;

- Appoint a Cross-Cultural Committee to advise the Administration on the unique needs and concerns of Trenton's ethnic communities.

6. Recreational Programming:

- In order to provide recreation programming in the short term, it is recommended that the new department have a coordinator position that will be responsible to ensure the City's most viable programs are operational. These include; the Summer Food Service Program, coordination of the various leagues (baseball, basketball, softball etc.) and the operation of the municipal pools. Some of these programs should be run in house, but the majority of them should be outsourced given the City's lack of staffing and funding. The Summer Food Service Program when run properly pays for itself and leverages state resources to provide greater services for children in the summer. This program should continue to be run by the City as it creates seasonal work opportunities and provides a valuable service.
- It is further recommended that the coordinator position should be responsible to ensure that recreation programming is marketed and accessible. The Recreation Coordinator would be responsible for developing RFPs and MOUs for outsourcing the management of City services and venues where recreation programming occurs including city pools and both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.
- It is recommended that the recreational centers should be part of an RFP package that would include seed funding of \$60,000 each with a 100% match by the organization receiving the grant to provide safe havens and accessibility for City youth.

7. Create a Culture of Health in Trenton:

Strengthen and expand the City's relationship with the Trenton Health Team (THT) to:

- heighten visibility of THT's work;
- increase the capacity of behavioral health resources, especially as NJ expands drug courts and its treatment of non-violent, addicted offenders;
- serve as the Mayor's Health Advisory Council;
- advocate for the integration of public health into THT's Accountable Care Organization (ACO).

8. Promote and Foster Positive Early Childhood Development and Learning for ALL of Trenton's Children and Families:

- Review current data describing the well-being of Trenton's infants, toddlers and pre-school age children to determine health, social and safety risks and how to set ALL children on a positive path to early learning and healthy development;
- Partner with Children's Futures to convene an early child development committee called All Babies and Children Succeed (ABCs), comprised of local early childhood service agencies to advise the Administration on best practices and effective outreach strategies to support young children and their families;
- Use the Mayor's Office as a bully pulpit to support and advocate for local, state and national policies supporting healthy emotional, social, pre-k, and physical development of children, and increased funding for maternal and child health programs.

9. Maximize the Entitlements Available to Trenton Residents to Increase Annual Individual/Family Income:
 - Convene press conferences and information forums to promote access to government income supports such as the State and Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); and
 - Form an alliance with the faith community and social service agencies to educate and assist individuals in applying for ALL available benefits and income supports.

10. Disease Prevention and Establishment of Early Detection of Disease Programming:

Partner with local hospitals and health clinics to bring routine health screenings to City Hall and other public venues. Prevention and early detection, in the form of blood pressure and glucose screenings, weight monitoring and nutrition counseling, smoking cessation forums and other non-invasive measures, have proved to reduce morbidity and promote wellness.

11. Improve Heart Health:

Establish Neighborhood Walking Clubs to promote improved heart health. As little as 30 minutes of walking per day can improve cardio fitness and health; and walking in groups with “walking buddies” increases motivation and safety.

12. Facilitate Substance Abuse Treatment on Demand:

Appoint a committee to work with Mercer County government to improve access to local detox, outpatient and residential drug and alcohol treatment at the point in time when the user is committed to seeking help. Currently, certain system-level barriers prevent timely access to rehabilitative care, causing myriad personal, family, employment and financial hardships.

13. Appoint Grassroots Community Health Ambassadors:

Create a citywide initiative called Community Health Ambassadors for Trenton or CHAT to identify volunteers who share the same cultures and languages, values, socioeconomic experiences and ethnicities to serve as trusted, frontline paraprofessionals to improve Trenton residents’ health. CHAT associates will educate residents about their health conditions, link them to resources and improve their capacity to act as self-advocates; provide informal health counseling and reinforce healthy behaviors; provide critical support in disease management; and serve as translators in formal health care settings.

14. Create Healthy Homes:
 - Immediately pursue HUD Lead and Healthy Homes grants to make homes lead safe. Usually there is funding to improve 125 homes per grant. The City of Trenton is the only city with housing stock known to have a high percentage of units with lead contamination that has not received HUD funds.
 - Create a Trenton Healthy Homes Advisory Committee comprised of public and private stakeholders from health, housing, social services and the community to develop a healthy homes plan for the City over the next six months. The committee will review protocols, policies, outreach and trainings related to healthy homes,

compare same to best practices nationally, then recommend changes (if any) to the Mayor. Some examples for review would be to consider whether there is an economically feasible way to: conduct cyclical inspections of one to two units' rental properties, review housing code to better meet the housing challenges of today, improve code enforcement, establish medical legal partnerships and create a communications campaign about healthy homes.

15. The City needs to take greater advantage of technology to enhance the distribution of information as well as to engage the community in actually getting work done. This should be at its greatest level of display for programs that the City funds to provide services to its CDBG recipients.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Findings

Due to a shortage in staff, the Department of Housing and Economic Development has faced difficulty meeting the mandated requirements of the Trenton City Administrative Code or engaging in the necessary economic development strategies to facilitate the revitalization of the City. The Department is divided into three operating divisions: Economic Development, Planning, and Housing Production. In addition to the three functioning divisions, there is also a Bureau of Property Management that presently does not have any staff members. In total, there are 13 employees across the four operational areas including the Director. The department budget for FY 2015 is approximately \$515,000 not including federal grants or the \$3.5M in Urban Enterprise Zone funds and the remaining Regional Contribution Agreement funds. The departmental staff size is comparable to cities of similar size; however some of the positions are open.

Recommendations

Short-term

1. Complete a full assessment of the City's CDBG Program within the next 45 days with an emphasis on clearing up the deficiencies related to approximately 200 projects deemed deficient by HUD.
2. Ensure that the CDBG Action Plan, due August 15th, is in alignment with the Mayor's proposed economic development strategy. Additionally, ensure that the CDBG Consolidated Plan, due in 2015, is in alignment with the Mayor's proposed economic development strategy.
3. Restore Bureau of Property Management in the Department and fill the position of Real Estate Officer and/or Real Estate Manager.
4. Move Department of Inspections to be a Division of this Department and implement the following recommendations:
 - Re-organize Inspections around customer service, to create a process that is as quick and efficient as possible within the requirements of the codes in order to get needed projects approved and underway.
 - Implement a tight management control system to ensure that department staff review and act on plans within a strict timeframe.
 - Develop a strategic code enforcement approach based on varied strategies for neighborhoods with different levels of real estate market activity and stability.
 - Improve technology (portable devices, website, apps, etc.) to better manage code citations and follow up, to increase efficiency and to expand the number of complaints current staff can process.

Long-term

5. Overhaul the City's website to serve as a primary vehicle promoting the assets and opportunities in the City. Commit the resources and staff necessary to operate and update this website daily. Develop an interactive page for the Department of Housing & Economic Development that acts as a "portal" for developers, investors and property owners in the City of Trenton.

6. Develop a clear “gateway” for the development community that includes a formal intake and triage process that ensures that all projects move forward in a clear and expeditious manner. An Ombudsman’s desk, strategically placed in City Hall (entrance of H&ED) where it can be easily found, should always be manned. Assign an existing staff person from H&ED who is familiar with the Department’s various programs as well as Inspections to occupy the position (person who currently manages the Project Application Review Committee would be a possible candidate).
7. Bring together all of the public, ad-hoc, private and non-profit groups or entities involved with economic development in Trenton (e.g., Trenton Downtown Association, Mercer County Improvement Authority, etc.) and determine how the City can coordinate these various groups to deliver one consistent strategy for redevelopment. Create an Economic Development Advisory Committee, which includes representative of the development community, to advise and assist the Mayor on issues that may be beyond the capacity of the City’s Division of Economic Development.
8. Work closely with the Hispanic and African-American trade groups to schedule and meet with their members and others to explain the development process.
9. Conduct quarterly business meetings with contractors to discuss the process of accessing contract work in the City.
10. Develop an economic, housing and community development strategy that
 - Focuses on the creation of a downtown investment strategy but also leverages specific projects in each ward that can facilitate neighborhood based revitalization;
 - Focuses on historic preservation, arts and culture as economic drivers;
 - Includes a comprehensive branding and marketing strategy for the City of Trenton;
 - Facilitates the growth and expansion of existing businesses in the City through the creation and implementation of a business retention and expansion program.
11. Reform parking requirements and programs in alignment with TOC best practices, including the use of shared parking and other methods to reduce parking requirements for new development.
12. Advocate for priority funding for high-capacity transit and high-performing Transit Oriented Communities in regional transportation plans. In particular, work with the Mid-Jersey Chamber of Commerce and other partners to encourage NJ Transit to extend the Riverline into downtown Trenton and to the State House.
13. Maximize Trenton’s train station potential as a high-capacity transit asset that supports TOC.
 - Work with New Jersey Transit and Amtrak to continue to promote the Trenton Transit Center.
 - Create a working committee of city staff, residents and developer stakeholders that is focused on development around the Trenton Transit Center and along the Riverline.
 - Improve the pedestrian experience to and from the Trenton Transit Center.

- Encourage mixed-use development at the Trenton Transit Center and at all of the Riverline stops.
 - Encourage a full range of housing types and affordable housing in close proximity to Trenton’s rail station.
14. Promote the use of the Economic Opportunity Act of 2013, which provides extraordinary incentives for development in Trenton, particularly related to public transportation.
 15. Work with various partners, including the Trenton Downtown Association, Trenton Cycling Revolution, Mercer County, the MCI, DOT, etc., to continue to expand Trenton’s “Complete Streets” program, and to connect Trenton’s bicycle routes into a coherent whole.
 16. Make Trenton a model for alternative transportation, especially bicycles. Seek grants and work with Trenton Cycling Revolution and the Trenton Downtown Association to radically increase the number of bicycle racks in the downtown area, and to create bicycle rental opportunities.
 17. Restore the City Historic Preservation Office within H&ED by hiring a staff person trained in historic preservation.
 - Have the Ombudsman and Historic Preservation Office be adequately trained to assist interested developers with Historic Tax credits or other incentives which encourage the preservation of a building’s historic façade at a reduced cost.
 - Consider creating a revolving fund to stabilize sound and historically important properties pending revitalization. Properties would be liened and the money would be recovered upon sale if not before.
 - Work with the Office of Public Property to identify those historic City owned properties that are in need of protective stabilizing measures while they are vacant.
 - Work with Inspections to have property owners remove building “improvements” that are in violation of the building codes in historic districts.
 18. Promote the historic buildings of Trenton through frequent postings on the Trenton websites and other media formats. Update promotional materials for each of the 11 historic districts and distribute to residents in each district.
 19. Reconstitute the Trenton Arts Coalition comprised of members from the various existing non-profits and community groups promoting the Arts. A representative from economic development or planning should staff this Coalition. Work closely with the Trentoniana Room staff, the Arts Coalition, TDA and others to create a variety of self-guided historic tours in the City made available online.
 20. Create an events calendar on the City website indicating all of the art and cultural events—structuring it as a “What’s happening today” and “key events this month”
 21. Develop a state-of-the-art real estate data platform in partnership with the Trenton Neighborhood Restoration Campaign (TNRC).

22. Create a targeted neighborhood investment strategy that focuses on identification of key neighborhood development projects in each ward of the City.
23. Develop a strategy to inventory, convey and reuse City-owned, vacant and abandoned properties.
24. Increase the staff capacity in economic development and property management to be able to manage the economic development initiatives (existing and proposed) and to manage the vacant properties to the point where they once again generate revenue for the City and pay for the staff necessary to manage the operations.
25. Inventory the City's current portfolio of approximately 1,500 – 1,700 properties. Develop a property database to track City-owned property, and evaluate each property in terms of its condition and market potential. Two initiatives currently being undertaken by members of the Trenton Neighborhood Restoration Campaign should be a huge help with this.
26. Focus CDBG funding on reclamation and disposition of vacant and abandoned properties, blighted property demolition and Section 3 initiatives.
27. Pursue the strategic demolition of unsound City-owned properties to reduce blight, create attractive redevelopment opportunities and address health and safety issues, maximizing the use of limited demolition resources to generate additional revenue for the City.
28. Deposit vacant property registration fees, rents collected on City-owned properties, sales proceeds on City-owned properties, and other revenues into a dedicated trust to be used to maintain the City's property inventory, and address other vacant and abandoned properties.
29. Contract with a third party (THA or private management company) to manage occupied City-owned properties; create a plan and realistic budget within the Real Estate Division to properly manage the rest of the City's portfolio while properties are being held for redevelopment.
30. Support artistic boarding efforts that reduce visual blight, improve safety, and secure and mothball selected properties for future redevelopment.
31. Use Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act tools (spot blight, eminent domain, special tax sales, etc.) to begin limited, targeted acquisition of abandoned properties in support of activities by for-profit and nonprofit developers ready to move forward with viable projects in order to ensure that these acquisitions will not end up going into the City's inventory.
32. Build on Trenton's current landlord registration program to promote the improvement and maintenance of small rental properties in the city by instituting a more robust rental-licensing program involving regular health and safety inspections. Over half (55%) of the City's rental housing stock is made up of one and two family homes, which fall to the City to monitor. These properties constitute the biggest maintenance challenge in a city whose code enforcement operation has been overwhelmed for many years. Potential elements of a rental-licensing program could include:

- Taking active steps to make sure all landlords register;
 - Conducting regular health and safety inspections;
 - Developing landlord performance ratings based on inspections and police calls and implementing a rating system, similar to Health Department ratings for restaurants, that is published on the City website and in print;
 - Depending on their rating, good landlords could go to less frequent inspections and receive incentives to continue their good performance;
 - Bad landlords could be required to attend training and come up with remedial plans for their properties.
33. Develop a disposition/reuse strategy for all properties with short-term market potential, consistent with Trenton's master plan and existing neighborhood or redevelopment plans. Use targeted redevelopment RFPs for assembled sites to attract appropriate development for larger tracts in areas where there is a market for development; create a separate incentive program to encourage prospective homeowners to purchase and rehabilitate scattered site homes.
34. Work with CDCs, civic associations and other City institutions to identify interim and long-term uses for properties that are unlikely to have long-term redevelopment potential, including expanding parks, urban farms, and other green infrastructure.
35. Create a Trenton Revitalization Task Force made up of City staff from relevant departments, as well as Trenton Neighborhood Restoration Committee members and other stakeholders, to help get tools and strategies in place to repurpose Trenton's problem properties and turn them into redevelopment opportunities.
36. Create an official abandoned property list in accordance with the Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act (APRA) with the help of the updated abandoned property inventory being developed.
37. Look at ways to increase revenue by collecting on City liens more aggressively, going after other assets of owners of abandoned properties as permitted by APRA, and creating downstream revenue sources from properties conveyed by the City.

STATE-LOCAL RELATIONS

As Trenton is the state capital, it is mutually advantageous for the City and State government to have a strong relationship. The State-Local Relations Committee was charged with determining the degree to which the state government departments and agencies offered increased opportunities for Trenton to access services and resources previously underutilized by the City. Time constraints limited the committee's review to those departments and agencies most likely to provide the opportunity for assistance. They are as follows:

- Department of Environmental Protection
- Department of Law and Public Safety
- Department of State
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Treasury

The state personnel contacted by the committee were very responsive. They expressed an interest in establishing a constructive relationship with the City and willingness to assist the City on an ongoing basis.

Recommendations

Short-term

1. Submit an application for a COPS grant in the next funding round. Last year, the governing body declined to submit an application expressing a concern that the City would be unable to meet the required match. In certain other municipalities that received COPS grants, the State provided the required match. Assuming that the City is making responsible fiscal decisions, the State is likely to provide the match for Trenton as well.
2. Ensure full participation by the Mayor or his designee as a member of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, an important source of planning expertise as well as funding opportunities for transportation and related projects.
3. Make appointments to the current vacancies among the Mayor's appointees to the CCRC.
4. Accept the DEP's invitation to participate in a presentation about DEP's most recent successes with the Camden Collaborative - a state, county, municipal, business, non-profits and citizen effort to address environmental problem and develop a sustainable city.
5. Meet with the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers Trenton Affinity Group – a collection of private sector and family foundations that have a specific interest in funding projects and programs in Trenton.
6. Accept the Department of State's invitation to convene the clergy and school district leadership to explore how the state's cultural facilities and resources can be made more readily available to City residents.

Long-term

7. Ensure that relevant staffs are trained in the SAGE on line grant application program which is used by the departments of Transportation, Community Affairs, Health, Education and Labor for submission of grant applications.
8. Consider entering into an agreement with the Mercer County Park Commission to assume responsibility for maintenance (not ownership) of one or more City parks and re-direct resources to improve the maintenance and expand programming in the remaining parks.
9. Consider participation in the State program which subsidizes energy audits for public buildings. Details are available on the Office of Clean Energy website (www.njcleanenergy.com/commercial-industrial/programs/local-government-energy-audit/local-government-energy-audit).
10. Establish a strong working relationship with the State Division of Property Management and the Economic Development Authority so that the City is positioned to impact the outcome of the feasibility study which will determine the disposition of the Health and Agriculture buildings, the location of new or leased space to house the displaced agencies and the disposition of the now vacant former Mill Hill tax processing center. The Mill Hill building is located on South Broad Street adjacent to the vacant TPA garage. A decision about each of these buildings is critically important to redevelopment of the downtown area.
11. Develop a partnership with TCNJ, Rutgers and other colleges to tap into ongoing research that may be relevant to the City's needs.
12. Establish a leadership group to develop a plan to re-focus the State's approach for management of the War Memorial.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND AUTHORITIES

It is very clear the City government by itself cannot do all that is needed in or for Trenton. There are many other organizations and stakeholders invested in the well-being of the City. Some of those entities are organizations to which the Mayor makes appointments. These contributors have as their mission the advancement of the quality of life in Trenton. Therein lies the importance of the Boards, Commissions and Authorities.

The Boards, Commissions and Authorities Committee is charged with providing the Mayor and his administration with information about those organizations, including those with respect to which he has the ability to make appointments upon taking office, and when the current appointees' terms expire. When considering candidates, it should be noted that appointees must have the expertise to fulfill the respective organization's mission, but the Mayor should also ensure that his appointees are cognizant of his vision, priorities and expectations for the City.

There is a distinctly different role for the Mayor to play with respect to independent boards to which he appoints members, e.g. school board, housing authority board, etc., as compared to those boards that function as municipal entities, such as the planning board or library board. It is important that the Mayor, his administration and the public are aware of the distinction, as prescribed by law, to avoid any inappropriate or unreasonable expectations.

The Mayor's Office should have an individual, perhaps in the Office of The Chief of Staff, who is responsible for keeping informed on issues before each of the boards, authorities and commissions, as well as coordinating the board appointment process. In order for these entities to function as good partners to the City, the City must maintain timely appointments and lines of communication.

Recommendations

Short-term

1. Assign the responsibility for coordinating the activities and appointments of the boards, commissions and authorities; this does not preclude the designated responsibilities by departmental representatives participating with identified boards. Maintain files regarding each entity with by-laws or authorizing legislation, appointees and prospective appointees, minutes, etc.
2. Make appointments to all boards, commissions and authorities where there are expired terms:
 - Trenton Board of Education - Three (3) holdover appointments whose terms expired in May 2014.
 - Construction Board of Appeals - Three (3) appointment terms expire 12/31/14.
 - Planning Board - Two (2) expired vacant appointments; One (1) term expired 6/30/14; One (1) holdover appointment; Two (2) terms expire 12/31/14.

- Public Library Board of Trustees - One (1) holdover appointment; One (1) term expires 6/30/14.
- Landmarks Commission - One (1) appointment is an Alternate; Mayor appoints a Delegate; Currently two (2) vacant positions; Five (5) terms expire 12/31/14.
- Rent Stabilization Board - Four (4) holdover appointments whose terms expired 12/31/13.
- Capital City Redevelopment Corporation - Four (4) appointments made by the Mayor; Two (2) terms expire 6/23/14; Two (2) terms that have possibly expired; Appointments serve four (4) year terms.

Long-term

3. Create a web presence for each Board/Committee/Authority for which appointments are made. Ensure that information accessible by the public is accurate and updated, in a timely matter, when changes are made to boards.
4. Strengthen relationships with the various Boards/Committees by hosting quarterly meetings with the board chairs, where permitted by law.
5. Evaluate the capacity of the Trenton Parking Authority to play a role in redevelopment similar to the pivotal role that the New Brunswick Parking Authority has played in that city's redevelopment plan.
6. Trenton's Public Library has been in need of improvements and remodeling. The current status and long term plans for the Trenton Public Library deserve careful examination and analysis, with consideration to available funding, the condition of facilities, and the requirements for accreditation. Most importantly, we must start with the needs of the community, recognizing that they may have changed and will continue to change, and partnership with the City to determine a feasible plan of action given current resources and opportunities.
7. Trenton's educational institutions, from its public education system to its post-secondary institutions, will be crucial components in developing Trenton into a prosperous city. Nevertheless Trenton's education community has struggled to keep up with federal and state mandates. It is therefore imperative that the Mayor establish a rigorous recruitment process for the appointment of competent and committed school board members.
8. The Capital City Arts and Culture Commission is made up of appointees by the Mayor. The Mayor's designee on the Commission should be the Director of Economic Development. The commission is intended to create a connection between the City and organizations in Trenton that have the expertise to keep cultural events and programs thriving. It has also been recommended that the Commission review and possibly revise its membership and that the Commission be integrated into the City's economic development strategy.

9. Recruit and plan for the subsequent board appointments to:
- Parking Authority - Two (2) appointments; One (1) term expires 6/30/16; One (1) term expires 6/30/17; Appointments serve five (5) year terms.
 - Trenton Housing Authority - One (1) appointment; Term expires 6/30/15; Appointments serve five (5) year terms.
 - Trenton Board of Education - Each of the nine (9) appointments made by the Mayor; Three (3) terms expire 5/15/15; Three (3) terms expire 5/15/16.
 - Construction Board of Appeals - Each of the four (4) appointments made by the Mayor; One (1) term expires 12/31/15; Appointments serve three (3) year terms.
 - Planning Board - Each of the nine (9) appointments made by the Mayor; Two (2) appointments are Alternates; Mayor appoints a Delegate; One (1) term expires 12/31/15; Appointments serve four (4) year terms.
 - Public Library Board of Trustees - Each of the five (5) appointments made by the Mayor; Two (2) terms expire 6/30/15; One (1) term expires 6/30/17; Appointments serve five (5) year terms.
 - Landmarks Commission - Each of the nine (9) appointments made by the Mayor; One (1) appointment is an Alternate; Mayor appoints a Delegate; One (1) term expires 12/31/16; Alternate serves a two (2) year term; Other appointments serve four (4) year terms.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITY FORUMS

During his transition, Mayor Jackson held Community Forums across the City seeking input from residents and business leaders on key areas affecting Trenton. Five highly interactive community forums were held attracting more than 700 residents, community and business leaders, school officials, clergy and elected officials within the county. It is important to note that the majority of the City Council, Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes, Princeton Mayor Liz Lempert, and two Trenton mayoral candidates (Bucky Leggett and Jim Golden) attended at least one forum. Mayor Jackson's full Cabinet attended each forum.

Mayor Jackson opened up each two-hour forum calling on participants to provide input on the following critical issues: education, economic development, public safety, public works, jobs and tourism/cultural/recreation initiatives. This is a synopsis of what will appear in a more comprehensive report from organizers of the community forums.

Recommendations

1. Re-establish community libraries.
2. Institute community policing in all neighborhoods.
3. Enforce truancy policies.
4. Establish Office of Constituency Services in City Hall.
5. Devise a strategy for abandoned buildings.
6. Coordinate efforts of the multi-groups evaluating issues in the City and writing reports.
7. Develop a customer service training program for City employees.
8. Provide a communications tool to distribute timely, critical information to Trenton residents, business leaders, and non-profit groups.
9. Seek corporate/business sponsorships to off-set cost of some credible services/activities that government may be unable to afford.
10. Provide more comprehensive services for the City's senior citizens.
11. Rename Trenton as 'Trenton, the Capital City' for branding purposes.
12. Create an official opportunity for civic-engagement of Trenton youth that could range from having Youth Mayors and Ward-level Youth representatives to annual Youth Summits planned by and presented by the youth.
13. Establish a mobile government that will travel throughout the City on a predetermined,

published schedule to bring basic services and information to residents.

14. Utilize police chaplains throughout the City.