SECTION VII. POLICY, ORDINANCE and STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessment work documented in the preceding chapters provides the basis for assembling and proposing a comprehensive parking management policy for the downtown area. Each element of the policy indicates its implementation path. Strategies and recommendations are discussed in general categories.

A. Centralize Parking Policy and Administration

A comprehensive study is useful in providing a snap-shot of parking issues and their implications for the City. However, in order to affect the ongoing needs of revitalization efforts in the Downtown, and to implement many of the recommendations of this report, the City needs to focus all parking planning, administration, management and enforcement into one centralized and independent agency that can monitor and make recommendations for modifications to parking policy on a regular basis.

1. Centralized Agency Functions

a. Support its costs through parking revenues.

b. Implement and manage programs to develop and enhance publicly accessible parking through techniques such as managing “fee in lieu of” programs, and creating and maintaining Parking District Programs to use revenues to complete streetscape enhancements.

c. Properly account for and deliver to the City treasury resources needed to maintain and enhance City infrastructure.

d. Regularly and consistently enforce all on-street parking regulations.

e. Regularly inventory, and as necessary, repair and replace meters.

f. Incorporate parking management strategies to

• Regularly review the duration and rates of on-street spaces to maximize utilization of the City’s valuable on-street resource.

• Clearly and comprehensively delineate parking restrictions for all on-street parking areas

• Decrease delay and double parking on city streets by identifying appropriate locations for passenger and truck loading zones at the corners of streets in areas that would benefit from 20 minute parking restrictions.
• Develop plans to provide better signage and information for available off-street parking areas.

g. Oversee the requirements for the temporary bagging of metered parking.

h. Provide a forum and coordinate regular efforts with State and County government to address the complications created by employee parking.

2. Steps to Effectuate the Centralization of Parking Policy

Consolidating parking policy under one entity is something that would likely require a transition period to determine the roles and responsibilities of the entity. To implement such a transition we make the following recommendations:

a. Convene a taskforce of key stakeholders to make a formal recommendation to the administration and City Council on the appropriate agency to be provided with the responsibility for all parking functions in the City. The Trenton Parking Authority (TPA) would appear to be the logical entity to be given the responsibility, and TPA does have the authority under state law to effectuate planning, implementation and enforcement functions. However, since to date the TPA has not actually had the responsibilities that the recommended centralized function would entail, the task force could conduct a more detailed review assessment of TPA abilities and resources to take on the function.

b. Establish the process through which City Administration and Council convey and approve policy priorities for the centralized parking agency. This process could include looking at the board nomination and election process to provide membership consistent with the needs of a more active authority.

c. Identify, draft and approve the new and revised ordinances needed to implement the change.

B. Improve Enforcement

Field reviews of downtown streets, at varying times of the day, have observed large areas, over long periods of time, where parking regulations are not enforced in the downtown. We are not aware of any specific reason for why parking regulations are not being enforced; however, it is evident that without regular and consistent enforcement there will be no incentive for parking violators to change their current all-day parking patterns, and as previously noted, if all on-street
spaces are occupied for long periods of time, there will be a detrimental impact on opportunities for economic development in those areas.

C. Address Disabled Placard On-Street Parking Abuse

Even if enforcement of on-street parking regulations is improved dramatically, it will be limited in improving on-street parking turn-over, since current state law permits anyone with a handicapped person placard or license plate to put one coin in a meter and then stay at the meter without regard to time limitation.

While the intention of the legislation is laudable, i.e. to allow a person with disabilities to complete shopping and errands without needing to return within a time limitation that may be untenable given their disability, it is evident from the repeated observations of vehicles with placards parked day after day in the same on-street spaces, that the intention of the statute is being abused. To address this abuse, the following steps are recommended:

1. Pursue revisions to the state statute that currently allows unrestricted on-street parking for vehicles with handicapped plates or placards.

2. Until such time as the language of the existing statute can be modified, modify on-street parking restrictions to prohibit parking on City streets until after 10am. Since most commuters begin work prior to that time, on-street parking will be less feasible for those abusing the system. Since all vehicles, including those with handicapped parking placards, can be ticketed during periods when parking is prohibited, enforcement of this provision before 10am should free up on-street parking for its intended purpose.

3. Document through digital photography the use and abuse of on-street parking over a period of days and then ticket the vehicles, forcing the drivers to justify their actions to the municipal court.

D. Properly Value and Maintain On-street Supply

1. In conjunction with increased enforcement, review existing meter rates and assess the need to increase the rates to bring about the proper balance of supply and demand for on-street parking.

2. Achieve the cooperation of downtown employers and employees in directing workers not to park in on-street spaces. Emphasize locating suitable off-street parking areas for persons with disabilities. (This would be another function that could be addressed by a centralized parking agency).
VII. POLICY, ORDINANCE and STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Implement a process through the site development review to minimize curb cut impact on removal of on-street parking spaces and enforce recommendations for curb cut requirements provided in Appendix D of this report.

E. Establish and Enhance Parking District Programs

Outcries over increases in meter rates do not need to be a foregone conclusion. By bringing local merchants and residents into the process, and demonstrating how increases in rates can be used for the benefit of their neighborhood/district, other jurisdictions throughout the country have been able to establish successful parking management practices.

1. Enlist the support of downtown businesses for increased enforcement and increased rates by establishing a process / mechanism for directing all, or a portion of, meter revenue increases into a parking district program (managed by the central parking agency) that can be used to fund streetscape improvements in the downtown area.

2. Enhance the residential parking permit program through annual renewal of permits. The current program does not require an annual permit renewal process as in many jurisdictions that have residential parking permits. Since residents and business owners are not required to prove residency each year or obtain new permits or visitor placards, outdated permits and placards can overwhelm the effectiveness of the program over time. The annual permit renewal should include business owners and should be coupled with increased enforcement and/or an increase in parking fines for parking in violation of the program. A portion of the fine increase and the increase in revenues from meters in the parking district could be used to fund the annual permit renewal.

3. Aggressively collect the yearly per-space parking fee through a space inventory program. There is currently a requirement in the code for all businesses to pay a yearly parking license fee per parking space. This parking fee is applicable to all commercial spaces, not just those used for public parking. At the present time, the fee is only collected if a commercial establishment decides to pay it. There is no current mechanism to determine the percentage of parking spaces for which the fee is being collected. The centralized parking agency could conduct a survey of spaces and aggressively work to collect the fee, which is currently collected in the City Clerk’s office (the Parking Authority or parking meter collectors also are permitted to collect the fee under the existing ordinance). The fee can be increased to fund the inventory and collection process, with a portion of any excess being split between the City general fund and the parking district program costs.
($30/space is a typical average in other jurisdictions with such fees). The existence and ongoing collection of the fee can be emphasized to developers as an incentive to reduce the total number of parking spaces for their developments.

F. Intergovernmental and Business Parking Coordination

1. Working with and/or through the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation, convene regular meetings with State, and county officials, and downtown business to further investigate opportunities for programs to locating suitable off-street parking areas for persons with disabilities, shared parking for state and non state functions occurring during different times, reduced parking demand through employee commute options programs, and converting surface lots into redevelopment parcels with comparable parking in structured and/or alternate locations.

2. Work with the State to develop a screening program that would allow surrounding business owners to lease available spacing in the parking garage under the State House.

3. Work with the State to promote greater use of the Perry Street park-and-ride lot by state workers and non-state workers.

G. Zoning Ordinance Modifications

The City of Trenton currently has a number of zoning code provisions that address many of the proactive parking strategies discussed below in further detail. However, these provisions are not currently being enforced. Since there is apparently a reluctance to discourage development, recommendations for further code revisions emphasize the benefits that can accrue to development when specific policy objectives are incorporated into the projects.

1. PROPOSED PARKING DISTRICT PROVISIONS

The Downtown, as defined for the study area boundaries of this project incorporates a number of different land use types with varying existing and proposed densities of development, as well as differing proximities to major roadways and transit facilities. To better address the parking needs of these distinct areas, the proposed zoning ordinance for parking creates 10 distinct sub-districts in the downtown for the purposes of setting parking requirements and limitations. The proposed Downtown Parking Districts are delineated in Figure 8 and are as follows:

District 1: West State District - This district is located in the area west of Calhoun Street between W. State Street and Route 29. The district has a multi-use zoning designation and also contains a small portion of the Central West Redevelopment Area.
VII. POLICY, ORDINANCE and STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

District 2: State/Hanover District – Located from Capital Alley north to the Canal and Bank St, and east to N. Broad Street.

District 3: State House Area District – Located from Calhoun Street east to S. Warren Street, and from just south of Capital Alley to Route 29.

District 4: Downtown Commercial District – The district is bounded from Willow Street going west to Broad Street at the eastern boundary, with Hanover Street as the northern limit, and Lafayette Street at its furthest point south.

District 5: State Office District is bounded by Bridge Street and Route 1 to the southeast, Broad Street to the east, Lafayette Street to the north and Route 29 to the west.

District 6: Academy Street District – District 6 has Perry Street as the northern limit, State Street as its southern limit, with Broad Street as the boundary to the west and Route 1 as the eastern limit.

District 7: East State Street District – In District 7, State Street serves as the boundary to the north, Front Street and Board Street are boundaries to the south, with Stockton Street to the west and Route 1 to the east.

District 8: Mercer Jackson District – The District is bounded by Front Street on the north and Route 1 on the south, with the western boundary at Broad Street and the eastern boundary at Stockton Street.

District 9: Ewing Carroll – District 9 is located between Perry Street to the north, State Street to the south, Clinton Street to the west and Route 1 to the east.

District 10: Trenton Station - The Train Station District is bounded by Lincoln Street to the north, Route 1 to the south, State Street and Clinton Avenue to the west and the Trenton Station train tracks to the east.
VII. POLICY, ORDINANCE and STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 8  Downtown Parking Districts
The following specific parking criteria are recommended for each District as provided in the Appendix D Zoning Code Provisions.

- Parking Minimums
- Parking Maximums
- Parking Adjustment Factors and Credits for Special Uses
- Limitations on Constructing Surface Parking
- Limitations and requirements for removal of on-street parking spaces with provision of Fee in Lieu of meeting those requirements.
- Restrictions on Location of Parking

These parking criteria are summarized for the 10 districts in Table 11.
## VII. POLICY, ORDINANCE and STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Table 11 Proposed Downtown District Parking Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>District 1</th>
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<td>State Offices</td>
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<td>Residential (Per Unit)</td>
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<td>2.0 2.5 0.1</td>
<td>2.0 2.5 0.2</td>
<td>2.0 2.5 0.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.7 2.7 0.5</td>
<td>2.7 2.7 0.5</td>
<td>2.7 2.7 0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel (Per Room)</td>
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<td>1.0 1.1 .05</td>
<td>1.0 1.1 .05</td>
<td>1.0 1.3 .05</td>
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<td>0.25 0.3 .05</td>
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<td>0.25 0.3 .05</td>
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<td>0.3 0.5 0.1</td>
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<td>5.0 5.0 .05</td>
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<td>0.2 0.2 .05</td>
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<td>Other (Per 1,000SF)</td>
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<td>2.0 3.0 .05</td>
<td>2.0 3.0 .05</td>
<td>1.6 2.0 .05</td>
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<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<td>Ewing Carroll</td>
<td>Train Station</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential (Per Unit)</td>
<td>1+ .5/ea bedroom</td>
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<td>1+ .5 per bedroom</td>
<td>1+ .5/ea bedroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office (Per 1,000SF)</td>
<td>2.0 3.0 0.1</td>
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<td>2.0 3.0 0.1</td>
<td>2.0 3.0 0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail / Commercial (Per 1,000SF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel (Per Room)</td>
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<td>0.2 0.2 .05</td>
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<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Bicycle Space Requirements are for Re/developments of 5 or more Residential Units or 5,000 s.f. or more of Retail, Commercial or other space. Two bicycle parking spaces is the minimum where required.
In addition to District specific provisions, the following elements are recommended for the Downtown Parking Code.

a. **Shared Use Parking Provisions**

As noted in the review of existing ordinances, Trenton currently has a shared parking provision, however there are no standards for how and when the program is implemented.

**Definition:** Parking utilized jointly among different buildings and facilities in an area to take advantage of different peak parking characteristics that vary by time of day, day of week, and/or season of year.

**How the Program Works**

- Language is incorporated in ordinances to permit and encourage shared parking within a specified maximum distance to meet minimum parking requirements.
- Site-specific assessments must be completed for the land uses subject to the requirements to determine if the uses are complementary.
- Developers must then enter into an agreement regarding use of space, maintenance and other issues.

**Advantages:**

- Development project overall construction costs may be reduced.
- Total number of spaces required for mixed-use developments or single-use developments in mixed-use areas is reduced.
- Developers benefit, from the “captive markets” stemming from mixed-use development.
- Encourages use of large centralized parking facilities and discourages the development of many small facilities.
- Redevelopment projects involving historic buildings can avoid constructing parking that would compromise the character of the buildings.
- City can ensure that existing parking facilities will be more fully utilized.
- City can encourage continuous storefronts that are uninterrupted by parking lots.

**City Parking Issues Addressed:**

- Provides a policy that encourages the redevelopment of existing City buildings.
- Addresses developer/financial institution concern about having adequate parking for a project.
- Allows for fewer curb cuts, providing for a safer walking environment.

**Issues Created:**

- Agreements between developers must be established along with a procedure for enforcing standards.
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- Changes in land use can alter the compatible nature of the shared parking arrangement.

**Examples of Shared Parking:**

Trenton itself already has several examples of shared parking including the following:
- State parking areas near the War Memorial are used during evening and weekend events.
- The Health and Agriculture lot is used as overflow parking for arena events.
- The Crescent Temple lot is used for evening and weekend events.
- The Station Plaza structure is used by both commuters and state workers.
- The DMV surface lot is used by employees, visitors, and Artworks.
- The former Looman lot had been used by the Mill Hill Playhouse during evenings and weekends.

Morristown --- The Mall Lot has 275 spaces. The town has issued 175 residential permits and 250 commercial/business permits for this lot. Despite oversell, spaces are always available.

Montclair --- The parking authority is planning a new 262-space structure, which will serve both commuters during the day and residential parking in the evening.

South Orange --- NJ TRANSIT owns and parking authority manages a 273-space lot, which serves both commuters and daily users.

Hoboken --- The Midtown Garage provides parking for residents, hospital staff and visitors, and the general public. A private bank lot on Washington Street is used as a public pay lot during evenings.

**b. In-Lieu Parking Fees**

As with shared parking, provisions in the existing zoning ordinance currently permit a developer to provide the City with a payment per space in-lieu of meeting its minimum parking space obligation. While authorized in the code, these fees are not currently being collected.

**Definition:** Developer pays the City a fee per space needed, and in turn the city provides adequate publicly-owned parking spaces that are made available for the development’s use.

**How the Program Works**

- Fees are established by the city as alternative to requiring on-site parking.
- Fees are generally based on the cost of providing parking.
- Flat fee paid for parking spaces not provided by a developer on-site, or development-specific fees established on a case-by-case basis.
The city then provides centralized, off-site parking that is available for use by the development’s tenants and visitors.

Fees can be imposed as a property tax surcharge.

**Advantages:**

- The payment of the fee allows the City to provide the necessary parking to maintain a vibrant downtown where the waiver of minimum parking standards can lead to an undersupply of parking needed in particular areas of the downtown.
- Development project overall construction costs may be reduced since the parking fee is typically less than the cost of constructing and maintaining the parking spaces.
- Construction of awkward, unattractive on-site parking is avoided.
- Redevelopment projects involving historic buildings can avoid constructing parking that would compromise the character of the buildings.
- The City can ensure that existing parking facilities will be more fully utilized.
- The City can encourage continuous storefronts that are uninterrupted by numerous small parking lots.

**City Parking Issues Addressed:**

- Provides a policy that encourages the redevelopment of existing City buildings without sacrificing the need to address parking.
- Addresses developer/financial institution concern about having adequate parking for a project.

**Issues Created:**

- City must provide sufficient public parking that is conveniently located and efficiently operated.
- Per space costing must be developed and updated on a regular basis.
- A mechanism must be created for collecting the fees and then using the fees to create adequate public parking.

c. **Parking Maximums**

Maximum parking standards would increase the area available for development and ideally would encourage alternative modes of travel, especially public transit. For some time, Jersey City has had a maximum parking ratio of .9 spaces per 1000 square feet of non-residential space, and Newark may consider a similar parking maximum for its downtown area.
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d. Require Bicycle Parking

Many towns have incorporated minimum bicycle parking requirements into their parking ordinances. These requirements aim to improve convenience, safety, and security for bicyclists. A common approach is to require bicycle parking as a certain percentage, perhaps 10%, of vehicular parking.

H. Other City Code Provisions

Establish a formal policy for permitting only the temporary “bagging” of meters for private use and for prohibiting the permanent allocation of on-street spaces for private use.

I. Location-Specific Recommendations:

1. Establish on-street parking restrictions along the south side of West Lafayette Street between Barrack and South Warren Streets.

2. Strictly prohibit parking on sidewalks and plazas, including along Peace Street and the plaza of the state Health and Human Services building off the 100 block of Lafayette Street.

3. Enforce existing “no parking” restrictions in all areas, especially including the 0-100 block of West State Street, the 0-100 block of North Broad Street, the 100 block of Lafayette Street, and the north side of Ernie Kovacs Place.

4. Revise existing “no parking” restrictions to permit on-street parking in areas including the west side of Chancery Lane, the 100 block of East Front Street, and the southern half of Barry Hogan Way.

5. Install better signage and striping to indicate on-street parking regulations, for example, along the 100 block of East Hanover Street.

6. Establish 20-minute truck and passenger loading zones at the corners of streets in certain areas, including the 100 and 200 blocks of East State Street and the 100 block of South Warren Street.
CONCLUSION

While ideally all recommendations for parking should be incorporated, some suggestions will have a greater impact than others and therefore should receive the primary focus of the City. It is anticipated that implementing the following six recommendations will have the greatest impact on parking, and as a result, the greatest impact on improving the vitality of the downtown:

1. Centralize Parking Functions and Responsibilities, including Parking Enforcement
   The most successful parking policies are implemented by an agency that is focused on the comprehensive parking and enforcement needs of the downtown. A centralized agency will be able to fund its own staff needs through enforcement and other programs. Existing City staff, while capable, does not have the depth of resource to properly plan, implement and maintain parking policies and programs on an ongoing basis.

   One of the first planning tasks of a centralized agency would be to identify locations for additional public owned parking throughout the downtown.

   The Trenton Parking Authority has not to date been engaged in a city-wide comprehensive strategy, although it has the legislative mandate and capacity to perform such a function. If the TPA was given the responsibility, the Mayor and City Council would need to give consideration to the appointment of board members who could assist in the implementation of that change.

2. Create Parking and Streetscape District Programs that can be Administered by the Centralized Parking Agency
   Using a portion of funds collected from increases in parking fines, meter and garage parking rates, parking and streetscape improvement districts can be put into effect to fund many of the recommendations for parking and sidewalk improvements in the downtown. Such an approach would not take existing revenues from the City treasury, but would allow for self-sustaining parking and local improvement programs from which both residents and business owners will see tangible benefits. Reviews of parking district programs implemented in other jurisdictions have shown a much higher acceptance of parking fee increases when residents know that the proceeds are being used to improve the area. A portion of these increases also still be allocated into the City’s general treasury to help address parking and other concerns outside of the downtown.
3. Address the Frequent and Persistent All Day Parking by Drivers with Disabled Placards at City On-street Metered Spaces.

On street parking should be short term parking in the Trenton Downtown. New Jersey State law provides that a driver with a handicapped license plate or placard can park at any metered space, put in the first coin, and then need not be subject to the time limitations that are otherwise imposed. State and other workers have abused the intent of this law to use on-street parking as full time employee parking. In many instances field observations showed that between 40 and 60% of parking spaces on certain blocks are filled all day long by the same vehicles displaying disabled parking placards. Addressing this problem will require a multi-faceted approach that will include:

a. Parking enforcement along downtown streets during the hours when State workers are coming to their jobs, generally 8:30 to 9:30am. The presence of parking violation officers (PVOs) may dissuade some parkers, and minimally the PVOs will be able to see that the first coins are placed in the meters and to issue warnings to vehicles that are noted to be at the same spots throughout the day and throughout the week.

b. Modification of the hours of parking on City streets so that parking is prohibited during the times when most workers are coming to their jobs. No one, including disabled parker, is legally permitted to park in a space where parking is prohibited. If parking regulations were changed so that no one could park on City streets until after 10am, all day commuter parking would no longer be attractive for many parkers who currently “beat the system.”

c. Implement a regular information campaign to provide noted long term disabled parkers with information about the intent of the state legislation and long term parking alternatives.

d. Work with representatives in the state legislature to modify parking statutes so that drivers with disabled placards are no longer able to park all day at short term spaces. Since meter technology can now be put in place to tell a violation officer how many minutes a meter has been in violation, a more limited allowance for drivers with a disabled parking placard, for example, permitting the parker to park up to two times the parking limit would be more in keeping with the original legislative concern that a disabled parker might not be able to get back to the parking space within the allotted time frame.
4. Enforce the “Fee In Lieu of” Parking Space Requirements for Developers in the Downtown and Use the Collected Fees to Develop Additional Public-Owned, or Public Accessible Parking.

Finding land and developing the funding to construct public parking will be a longer term endeavor. However, in the interim, portions of the fee paid in lieu of parking could possibly be used to lease excess available parking that is privately owned so that it can be made available for public parking purposes.

To maximize the use of parking in the downtown, as much of the parking as possible should be used to create public spaces, since as with the removal of on-street parking to create comparable off-street space, when the off-street private space is vacant, no one else can park in that space and as a result, more parking is needed than if the vacated space could be occupied by another vehicle.

5. Convene an Ongoing Parking Task Force with the State of New Jersey, Mercer County, and Downtown Business Owners

The City of Trenton is severely limited in the type of parking management that it can undertake because such a large percentage of existing parking is leased and managed by the state. To effectuate real change, regular and consistent coordination and cooperation between the local, county and state government is necessary.

6. Approve suggested revisions to the zoning code related to parking and enforce the new and retained regulations.

Concurrent with revisions to parking policy and better enforcement, revisions to the zoning code should be adopted. Those revisions pertaining to residential development need to be submitted to the Department of Community Affairs to the extent that they vary from the state Residential Site Improvement Standards to obtain Special Parking Standards approval such as those standards approved for Hoboken.