## SECTION VI. LINKING PARKING TO THE DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE

Various recent development proposals for the downtown area have included new off-street parking structures. The City is interested in additional parking structures to accommodate private and public users and to provide "park once and walk" opportunities to shoppers, tourists, and other visitors. This section identifies potential locations for new parking structures, recommends standards for designing pedestrian linkages with these structures, and provides general streetscape design standards. It also includes an example of integrated parking structure design and pedestrian access for the downtown area.

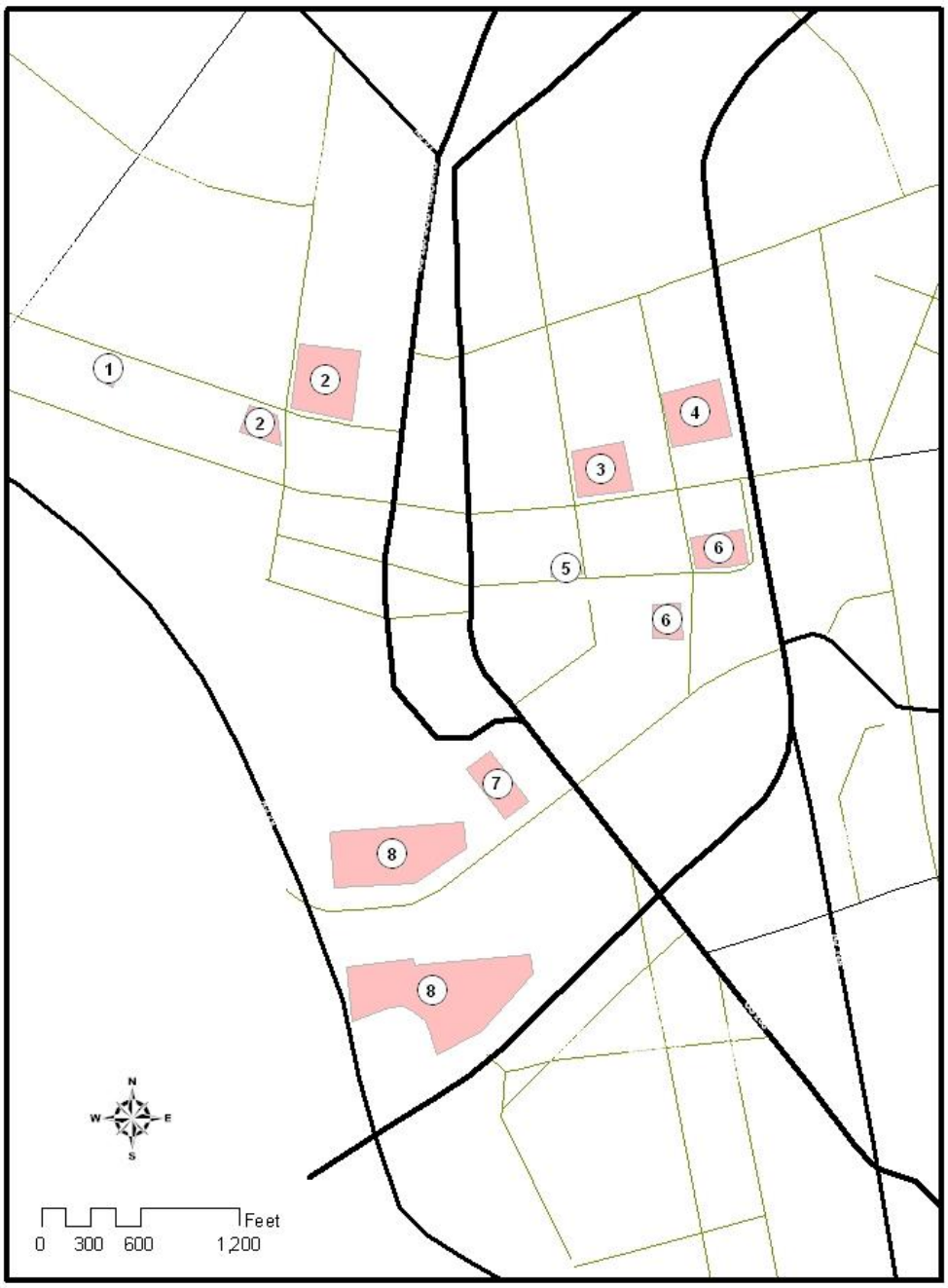
### A. Potential Locations for New Parking Structures

The following is a list of potential locations for new parking structures in the downtown area (see **Figure 4**). These locations may be part of redevelopment projects and / or existing surface parking lots.

1. Surface lots along Capitol Alley behind the 100 block of West State St.
2. Surface lots in the area near Willow and Hanover Streets
3. Proposed Trenton Town Center in the 200 block of East State Street.
4. Merchant Street Lot (currently operated by Trenton Parking Authority)
5. Surface lot at corner of Front & Montgomery Streets (previous Looman lot managed by the Trenton Parking Utility)
6. State Parking Area #21 along Stockton Street and / or the nearby City Hall lot.
7. Existing County Courthouse parking structure
8. Surface lots, for state employees, surrounding the state Labor, Health, and Agriculture buildings and Justice Complex

**Figure 4**

Potential Locations for New Parking Structures



**B. Parking Structure Design and Pedestrian Access**

In general, parking structure design should be compatible with the surrounding area, be aesthetically appealing, and create a safe and attractive environment for its users. The design should incorporate several elements relating to safe and efficient pedestrian egress and access. These elements include the following:

**Location / Site**-- the structure should be located within reasonable walking distance (about 1,500 feet, or a 5-minute walk) of major destinations including offices, shops, restaurants, and other attractions. The structure should have minimal street frontage. Ideally, the structure will not be located along a major street but behind buildings in the interior of a block, in order to preserve streetscapes. The site should, however, balance streetscaping with visibility and vehicular access. The site must be large enough to accommodate the structure, but the structure should not be considerably taller than surrounding buildings.

**Interior** -- good interior design and layout is the starting point for safe and efficient pedestrian flow. The design should minimize conflicts between autos and pedestrians. The structure should have clearly marked pedestrian ways to elevators and stairs, and adequate lighting is essential. Departing vehicles should travel over adequate level space and have good peripheral views before crossing pedestrian paths or sidewalks. The length of curb cuts should be minimal.

**Exterior** -- Many façade treatments are available for blending the structure with its surroundings and creating an attractive street edge. Ground floor uses are important to providing continuity between the structure and the adjacent uses. Pedestrian-level wayfinding signage (different than signage for vehicles) is an especially important element for persons leaving the structure. Other standard streetscaping treatments (sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, et al.) should unite the front of the structure with the surrounding area to forge the parking-pedestrian linkage. Streetscaping improvements will expand the pedestrian "domain," i.e., increase the distance that people are willing to walk from the parking location. In turn, this design will reduce the perception of parking "shortages" and increase the attractiveness of destinations in the downtown area. Figure 5 shows two nearby examples of parking structure design integrated with the surrounding streetscape.

**Figure 5 (a) and (b)**
Examples of Integrated Parking Structure and Streetscape Design

5(a) Spring Street Parking Garage, Princeton, NJ

5(b) Bicentennial Parking Garage, West Chester, PA

The following section provides more details on preferred streetscape design standards for the downtown area.

### C. Example of Integrated Parking Structure Design and Pedestrian Access

As noted, one possible location for new parking structures is in the area of Willow and Hanover Streets. The draft Capital District Master Plan proposes two new mixed-use redevelopment projects, both incorporating parking structures, for this area (see **Figure 6**, locations B and D). One project is a mixed-use office / parking structure (about 200 spaces) on the existing surface lot at the southwest corner of Willow & Hanover Streets. The other project is a major mixed-use development (including commercial and residential) on the opposite corner, which also is currently used for surface parking. The development would wrap around a parking structure with about 470 spaces.

**Figure 6**
Proposed Parking Structures for Willow and Hanover Area


Source: Downtown Capital District Master Plan (draft July 2007), URS Corp.

The plan envisions that these projects would link to redevelopment in the adjacent residential neighborhood as well as business and commercial uses in the West State Street area. Thus, the following proposed pedestrian linkages would serve these areas (see **Figure 7**).

1. West Hanover Street, linking parking structures with residential neighborhood and canal greenway
2. Willow Street, linking parking structures with West State Street
3. Capitol Alley, linking Willow Street with park across from State House
4. Pedestrian path located between 36 West State Street and 50 West State Street, linking Hanover Street with West State Street
5. Chancery Lane, linking Hanover Street with West State Street

**Figure 7**

Willow and Hanover Area
Proposed Parking Structures and Pedestrian Linkages

## D. Streetscape Design Standards

An important element of vital and walkable downtowns is the streetscape, including sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, trees, benches, signage, and other amenities. Such amenities can combine to create distinct districts with a cohesive character that is attractive and inviting to both residents and visitors.

The work on this project included administering a Visual Preference Survey© (VPS), aimed at identifying the streetscape elements that people find most desirable. The VPS evaluates the acceptability of various alternative design characteristics, and the result is recommendations for streetscape design standards. The following is a summary of the recommended design elements by category:

Sidewalks

- In commercial areas, wide red brick sidewalks with trees, benches, and outdoor cafes
- Sidewalks are edged with large windowed storefronts and restaurants
- Quality building edge facing sidewalk
- Connected sidewalk network
- In residential / live-work areas, wide sidewalks with clear definition between sidewalk and "semi-public" edge, i.e., small area between sidewalk and house.
- Front stoops and other gathering places
- Heavy landscaping / decorative fencing adjacent to surface parking lots

Crosswalks

- Brick crosswalks with striping in lighter zone
- Basic piano bar stripe crosswalk

Street Amenities, Signage, etc.

- Tree grates, covering the root system, surrounded by patterned brick
- In more residential areas, raised planters with decorative fencing
- Historic lighting styles – uniform, Victorian-style lighting
- Colored metal benches surrounded by matching decorative planters
- Outdoor tables and benches
- Organized system for housing newspaper boxes
- Metal trash receptacles that match planters and benches

Appendix C includes more detailed information, including photo-simulations of the desired streetscape elements. It also provides specific recommendations for each of five districts

(Government, Market, Residential, Mill Hill, and Train Station) in the downtown area. The individual characteristics of each district suggest the need for a unique streetscape. For each district, the appendix provides a "Development Matrix" of the basic design considerations, which provide a guide to preparing a distinctive and cohesive streetscape in that district. The district streetscape will signify entrance to the district, provide design guidelines for development projects, and ensure a consistent, appealing pedestrian environment. The City can incorporate these design standards into its zoning ordinance or other relevant ordinances relating to parking.

### E. Process to Identify and Prioritize Pedestrian Corridors

As development and redevelopment occurs within the City, areas of additional pedestrian attraction will be created. Additionally, any new development should be reviewed to assess the directness of pedestrian connections on and through the site. In particular development site plans should be laid out so as to:

- Provide the most direct route to surrounding major pedestrian attractors, preferably with pedestrian connection routes spaced at distances no greater than 600 feet.
- Eliminate the possibility of unsafe crossings by considering the paths that pedestrians will want take to and from site access points and either creating opportunities for a more direct and safe access routing or improving the condition of the unsafe crossing location through pedestrian safety treatments.

In addition to projects undertaken as the result of a particular development project, overall pedestrian enhancement projects should be reviewed to assess priority based on the following elements:

- Proximity to transit locations, including the Train and LRT stations, as well as bus stops;
- Locations where pedestrian safety is at issue (points of high pedestrian and vehicle friction; such as the path of pedestrians from the DMV building to the visitor parking area across Stockton Street, and at other locations where pedestrian accidents occur);
- Locations where alternative access is limited (e.g. crossings of major roadways or other land areas such as rivers, creeks, railroad rails, etc.);
- Locations where existing pedestrian treatments are not adequately addressing pedestrian needs because of indirect routing (e.g. the recent NJDOT sidewalk treatments along Barlow Street crossing to Market Street for pedestrians coming from the train station); and
- Locations of existing high pedestrian travel volume