

# THE RIVER LINE: DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT THE CASS STREET STATION

FINAL REPORT

Y?



October 2003



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

New Jersey Transit's new River Line (originally designated Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System) is slated to open in March 2004. The Light Rail line will provide new public transportation service between Camden and Trenton, with service in Trenton to include three station stops at Cass Street, Hamilton Avenue Station and the Trenton Station. The Trenton stop will provide connections to SEPTA and New Jersey Transit regional rail, as well as to Amtrak service along its Northeast Corridor. At present there is interest, but no plans, to extend the River Line to continue on to downtown Trenton.

The City of Trenton's Department of Housing and Economic Development, under the leadership of Mayor Douglas H. Palmer, Dennis Gonzalez, Director of Housing and Economic Development and Andrew Carten, Director of Planning, engaged Econsult Corporation, Hillier and Portfolio Associates, Inc. (together, the Consultant Team) to develop the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan (the Project). The Project's purpose is to provide a plan for development around the Cass Street station, a triangular area bounded by South Broad, Schenck and Second streets (the District). Due to its availability of properties, the District is seen as a particularly appropriate site for development that leverages the accessibility offered by the River Line.

The key objective for the Project is to define a vision for the District that aims to derive the greatest benefit from Light Rail for the affected neighborhoods. In completing the Project, the Consultant Team carried out three public community meetings, designed to brief residents about the River Line and its potential impact, as well as to elicit community input for the Concept Master Plan.

The present report is the final deliverable for the Project. Section 2 provides a comprehensive evaluation of the River Line' potential positive impact on the District and areas beyond, as well as recommendations for feasible development options feeding off the River Line. Section 3 describes the Recommended Plan for the District, incorporating community and stakeholder input from the public meeting. Section 4 contains the Implementation Plan to put into practice the recommendations in Section 2 and Section 3.

*The key objective for the Project is to define a vision for the District that aims to derive the greatest benefit from Light Rail for the affected neighborhoods.*

Figure 1: Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System Station Stops



Source: New Jersey Transit

Figure 2: The Cass Street District and its Wider Influence Area



## 2.0 THE SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY LIGHT RAIL'S POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE CASS STREET DISTRICT

In the following sections the potential impact of the River Line on the District is analyzed. Specifically, the following issues are addressed: What are the expected increases in accessibility afforded by the light rail? How will this translate into a change in the attractiveness of the District? What will this mean in terms of potential real estate and land use impacts?

*What accessibility improvements are afforded by the River Line?*

The notion that transit-based accessibility can leverage localized development is not new, and is commonly referred to as transit-oriented development (TOD). On the public policy front, there has been wide support in the form of funding and initiatives such as New Jersey's Smart Growth Plan, where transit-oriented development is a key tool. Developers are also increasingly interested in transit-oriented development as creating profitable opportunities.

*How will this affect the District?*

Public and private interests in TOD are in part a response to several demographic trends. The foremost is uneven suburban growth throughout the country. Of 2,586 suburbs in the 35 largest metro areas 63 percent gained population, while the remainder lost population or stayed the same. These interior-ring suburbs, with their historic downtowns as centers, are ripe for redevelopment spurred by TOD. On another demographic front, households seeking an urban environment and its associated amenities are an increasing presence, providing a market for transit-accessible housing.

*What are the potential real estate and land use impacts?*

Another source of support for transit-oriented development is growing alarm and frustration at the increase in road congestion. While the U.S. population grew 24 percent between 1980 and 2000, the number of registered vehicles increased by 46 percent, and vehicle miles 80 percent. Mixed-use developments, with significant residential components, centered around transit stations are seen as a way of alleviating congestion by offering a greater range of transportation choice.

The analysis below contains several potential outcome scenarios for the District based on rigorous assessments of the change in the District's attractiveness to potential residents and businesses. These scenarios are developed to provide a *realistic* estimate of the light rail's beneficial effects for the District. These estimates in turn provide an understanding of what types of development plan would be feasible given existing conditions and likely impacts.

### 2.1 A SNAPSHOT OF THE CASS STREET DISTRICT

An area slightly larger than the District is analyzed. This area contains approximately 10 percent of the City's population, with an economic status roughly equal to that of the City as a whole, but significantly below the average for the State.

### 2.1.1 Demographic and Income Profile of the District

In order to describe the demographics, economic status and housing conditions in the Cass Street Light Rail District, the Census 2000 Data (principally the *Summary File 3* data) is used. The District is a relatively small area, and it does not coincide perfectly with a geographic definition in the Census. However, using an amalgam of several smaller block groups, one can define an area that extends several blocks further than the District in all directions. This area, which we call the Census 2000 Focus Area (CFA), is comprised of the block groups 5.1 and 1.2<sup>1</sup>, which extend from Cass Street south to Loror Street, block group 3.4, which essentially extends to Chestnut Avenue, and block groups 2.8, 3.10 and 3.8, which extend to Hamilton Avenue to the north and Lambertson Road to the east.

Block Group 5.1



Block Group 1.2



<sup>1</sup> To simplify, we have abbreviated the actual names of the component block groups. For example, block group 5.1 refers to Block Group 5, Census Tract 1; block group 1.2 to Block Group 1, Census Tract 2, and so on.

Block Group 3.4



Block Group 2.8



Block Group 3.8



Block Group 3.10



The City of Trenton as a whole had an estimated population in 2000 of 85,258. The City's median household income was equal to \$31,074, equal to 56 percent of the median household income for the state as a whole. While the 1990s were a period of income gains for some in New Jersey, this was a period where Trenton's relative position worsened somewhat, as its 1990 median income was nearly 63 percent of the state median<sup>2</sup>.

The CFA itself has a population of 8,926, which is approximately 10 percent of the City's population<sup>3</sup>. The general economic status of the population in the CFA is roughly equal to that of the City as a whole, but with important differences within the areas that comprise the CFA. While household median income in the CFA is essentially equal to the City's, block groups 1.2 and 2.8 (in the southeast and northeast sections of the CFA) are significantly below the average for median income (see Table 2.1 below). A similar finding also extends to the incidence of households below the poverty threshold<sup>4</sup>, with block groups 1.2, 2.8 and 3.10 showing a higher than average incidence of poverty.

As block groups 1.2, 2.8 and, to some extent, 3.10 are areas of lower incomes and greater incidence of poverty, block group 3.4 is one whose median income is well above the City's. Block group 3.4 is also the area within the CFA that includes the greatest concentration of retail activity, in this case centered on the Capital South Main Street District and its South Broad Street retail core. The block group also includes some portions of the Chambersburg neighborhood and its concentration of restaurants.

Not surprisingly, indicators of labor market outcomes and educational attainment by block group are closely correlated to those for income and poverty. Table 2.3 reports unemployment rates at the time of the Census, while Table 2.4 details educational attainment for the working age population. Table 2.5 reports the racial composition of the CFA, and compares it to the City and state. As shown in the table, the CFA has a somewhat different composition than the state as a whole, with a higher proportion of African-American and Hispanic residents.

*The CFA itself has a population of 8,926, which is approximately 10 percent of the City's population.*

*The general economic status of the population in the CFA is roughly equal to that of the City as a whole, but with important differences within the areas that comprise the CFA.*

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<sup>2</sup> This finding is in keeping with national evidence regarding income growth in the 1990s, which shows gains heavily concentrated in the upper ranges. For municipalities like Trenton, with income distributions more skewed to middle and lower middle incomes, the 1990s were actually a period of essentially stagnant income growth if inflation is accounted for.

<sup>3</sup> Note that the Census figures do not account for New Jersey State Prison, whose prison population is currently 1,879 inmates.

<sup>4</sup> The definition of the poverty threshold is the amount of income needed for a sound diet multiplied by three and adjusted for household size.



**Table 2.1: Median Household Income In the CFA, Trenton and New Jersey**

Block Group 5.1	Block Group 1.2	Block Group 3.4	Block Group 2.8	Block Group 3.8	Block Group 3.10	Total CFA	Trenton City	New Jersey
\$26,908	\$23,207	\$37,292	\$22,841	\$32,083	\$30,156	\$29,624	\$31,074	\$55,146

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

**Table 2.2: Percent of Households Considered Poor In the CFA, Trenton and New Jersey**

Block Group 5.1	Block Group 1.2	Block Group 3.4	Block Group 2.8	Block Group 3.8	Block Group 3.10	Total CFA	Trenton City	New Jersey
17.4%	24.7%	12.7%	24.0%	14.4%	39.1%	19.5%	21.1%	8.5%

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

**Table 2.3: Unemployment in 2000 In the CFA, Trenton and New Jersey**

Block Group 5.1	Block Group 1.2	Block Group 3.4	Block Group 2.8	Block Group 3.8	Block Group 3.10	Total CFA	Trenton City	New Jersey
11.8%	10.1%	6.3%	8.8%	11.1%	6.8%	9.0%	10.5%	5.8%

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

**Table 2.4: Educational Attainment In the CFA, Trenton and New Jersey  
For Working Age Residents**

Attainment	Block Group 5.1	Block Group 1.2	Block Group 3.4	Block Group 2.8	Block Group 3.8	Block Group 3.10	Trenton City	New Jersey
Less Than HS	40.0%	39.7%	46.5%	57.0%	39.3%	50.7%	37.6%	17.9%
High Schools	37.6%	28.6%	27.5%	24.5%	34.4%	32.6%	32.0%	29.4%
Associate Degree	17.8%	25.4%	13.5%	9.1%	22.1%	7.6%	21.2%	22.9%
BA Degree and Above	4.7%	6.3%	12.4%	9.5%	4.2%	9.1%	9.2%	29.8%

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

**Table 2.5: Racial Composition In the CFA, Trenton and New Jersey**

Race:	Total CFA	Trenton City	New Jersey
White	46.2%	32.7%	72.5%
African-American	21.2%	51.5%	13.4%
Hispanic <sup>5</sup>	26.7%	11.3%	5.4%
Other	5.4%	4.3%	8.7%

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

<sup>5</sup>This category includes all other responses not included in the "White," "Black or African American," "American Indian or Alaska Native," "Asian," and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander" race categories. Respondents providing write-in entries such as multiracial, mixed, interracial, or a Hispanic/Latino group (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban) in the "Some other race" write-in space are included in this category.

### 2.1.2 Economic and Commutation Patterns in the City and the District

In order to assess the potential future role of the River Line in Trenton's economic development, it is important to examine the current employment base in the City. The City's current employment is one possible determinant of the local economy's potential to attract commuters, as well as to attract future residents and businesses seeking specific types of jobs or an existing agglomeration of firms.

As detailed in Table 2.6, The City of Trenton boasts a significant employment base. Despite a successful attraction strategy (such as the planned Manex film production facility locating at Hamilton Avenue) the economy of Trenton is still, not surprisingly, dominated by public sector employment<sup>6</sup>. While the data below is lacking in detail<sup>7</sup>, it shows that Trenton's employment base has a relatively low representation of producer services and other higher wage industries. For example, Finance, Insurance and Real Estate accounts for less than 4 percent of private employment, while the same industries account for 15 percent of employment in nearby Princeton and Princeton Township.

Interestingly, most CFA residents are not filling these jobs described in Table 2.6. As a whole, CFA residents work overwhelmingly for private employers (see Table 2.7), and over 60 percent of workers living in the CFA work outside the City of Trenton (see Table 2.8). Nearly 38 percent work in the remainder of the metropolitan area (including the Route 1 and parts of the Route 130 corridors), and over 23 percent in a different metropolitan area (with the Philadelphia metropolitan area capturing some of these workers).

*The economy of Trenton is dominated by public sector employment.*

*Surprisingly, most CFA residents work for private employers with over 60 percent working outside the City of Trenton.*

<sup>6</sup> The actual number of New Jersey State employees in Trenton is, surprisingly, unavailable for recent dates. Included instead is the state Department of Labor's estimate for Mercer County.

<sup>7</sup> The Census 2000 *Journey to Work* data provides a much more detailed picture of Trenton employment, but is not available as of September 2003.

**Table 2.6: Employment Base in Trenton City, March 1999**

Industry:	Employment:
<b>Private Sector Employment:</b>	
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining	35
Construction	1,057
Manufacturing	2,711
Transportation, Communications	655
Wholesale Trade	1,179
Retail Trade	2,489
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	911
Service	14,839
<b>Total Private Sector:</b>	<b>23,876</b>
<b>Public Sector Employment:</b>	
Federal and Local Government	6,694
State Government (Mercer County)	34,400

*Source: New Jersey Department of Labor*

*Note: State employment data is for Mercer County as a whole*

**Table 2.7: Industry of Employment for CFA Residents, 2000**

Industry:	Employment:
All Industries:	3,506
Private for-profit wage and salary workers:	2,500
Employee of private company	2,450
Self-employed in own incorporated business	50
Private not-for-profit wage and salary workers	236
Local government workers	259
State government workers	297
Federal government workers	46
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	147
Unpaid family workers	21

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

Table 2.9 and Table 2.10 contain information about transportation mode to work and travel times for the CFA residents. With respect to mode choice, residents overwhelmingly rely on cars for their journey to work, reflecting in part the large proportion of residents working outside the City. Car using commuters working in locations served by the River Line form part of the rail service’s potential users, as do some CFA residents whose commute involves buses, walking or bicycle.

*Roughly 30 percent of CFA residents face commuting times of over 30 minutes. For some of these residents, there may be substantial transportation benefits from the River Line.*

**Table 2.8: Work Location for Residents of the CFA**

Employment Location	Total CFA
Total Employed Residents	3,393
Percent Working in:	
Trenton City	38.4%
Remainder of Metropolitan Area	37.8%
Different Metropolitan Area	23.2%
Other:	0.6%

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

The data in Table 2.10 reveals that 30 percent of CFA residents face commuting times of over 30 minutes. For these workers in particular, there may be substantial transportation benefits to be gained from the River Line. The travel time data is instructive, as empirical studies have found clear and consistent links between accessibility afforded by a particular location and the amount residents were willing to pay for housing in the location. In other words, commuting cost savings due to the River Line will tend to increase the value of real estate in the CFA. This capitalization of transportation benefits is closely tied to the actual cost savings, with the greatest component typically being the value of saved travel time. The analysis of potential benefits of the River Line is largely based on these relationships.

**Table 2.9: Journey to Work Mode for Residents of the CFA**

Mode	Total CFA
Total Employed Residents	3,393
Percent Using the Following Modes:	
Car, Truck or Van	76.7%
Bus or Trolley	10.3%
Rail	0.9%
Walked and Bicycle	8.4%
Other	3.6%

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

**Table 2.10: Travel Time to Work Mode for Residents of the CFA**

Travel Time	Total CFA
Total Employed Residents	3,393
Percent With Travel Times:	
Less Than 30 Minutes	69.7%
30 to 44 Minutes	17.0%
45 to 59 Minutes	6.3%
60 or More Minutes	7.0%

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

### 2.1.3 Discussion

One approach to assessing the degree to which the River Line will lead to significant *short term* changes in the District is to evaluate how different users will be affected by it. The City of Trenton boasts a significant employment base but, at present, the River Line will not directly serve downtown Trenton, where the greatest concentration of employment is located. This implies that the light rail service is unlikely to improve the commute to downtown Trenton for District residents, as existing bus service is arguably more convenient. It should be noted that if the River Line were extended to downtown Trenton, it would significantly enhance the attractiveness of the Cass street neighborhood from a commuting perspective. If in the future the River Line were extended downtown, Cass Street would be well positioned to attract young households working in Trenton who often seek urban environments.

The data reveals that there is already a well-established pattern of reverse commutation from the Trenton urban area to other locations, with over 60 percent of workers living in the CFA working outside the City of Trenton. While more precise employment locations will only be revealed with the Census *Journey to Work* data, one could infer that some of these workers are employed along the Route 130 corridor served by the River Line, where such municipalities as Bordentown, Bordentown Township, Burlington and Burlington Township have significant employment bases.

Besides implying a current market among reverse commuters resident in the CFA, it could also define a potential *future* resident that would find a CFA location, with its light rail accessibility to Burlington County, attractive. The remainder of this section will therefore examine the potential for more long-term dynamic impacts to the District from the River Line.

*Currently the River Line will not improve CFA residents' access to downtown, but if extended downtown, the CFA would be well positioned to attract young households working downtown.*

*There could e a significant reverse commute market served by the River Line.*



## 2.2 THE SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY LIGHT RAIL SERVICE AND ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

### 2.2.1 Current Ridership Estimates

New Jersey Transit’s latest estimates are for 4,500 daily trips on the River Line at opening. Ridership estimates at specific stations are included below in Table 2.11. As shown, ridership forecasts are substantial at the Trenton stop, largely due to its access to rail traveling on the Northeast Corridor as well as at Bordentown, where a large number of riders are forecast to take the light rail to the Trenton stop. However, estimates for Cass Street ridership are low at less than 100 boardings a day. As is always the case with transportation demand modeling, various assumptions were relied upon to derive future ridership numbers.

**Table 2.11: December 2003 Weekday Ridership for the River Line at Selected Stations**

Stations:	Total Boardings:
Cass Street	91
Hamilton Avenue	96
Trenton	1,451
Bordentown	759
Beverly	833

*Source: New Jersey Transit*

The modest ridership estimates do not reflect a problem with the price of the service. In terms of pricing, the River Line is aggressive in trying to attract users with fares to be a flat rate of \$1.10 a ride. Other pricing options will be introduced as well, including an unlimited service monthly pass for \$44 that will include free transfers to feeder bus service, as well as pass options including transfers to New Jersey Transit Rail service.

In part the low ridership estimates reflect the fact that New Jersey Transit assumed low ridership from Trenton Thunder and Sovereign Arena patrons. One reason that New Jersey Transit did not assume significant ridership by Trenton Thunder and Sovereign Arena patrons is that the River Line faces obstacles in serving the entertainment venues. The River Line’ present the agreement with the freight railroads that share the right-of-way is that last River Line trains have to leave Camden or Trenton by 9PM to arrive at their final stop by 10PM. This means that patrons heading south from the entertainment venues would be facing a last train at around 9PM, which may eliminate River Line as an option for evening events. In conversations with New Jersey

*Estimates for Cass Street ridership are low at less than 100 boardings a day, despite the fact that the River line is aggressive in trying to attract users with fares of only \$1.10 a ride.*

Transit officials, it was indicated that the possibility of extending service hours was being examined closely, particularly between Trenton and Bordentown. The potential for extended hours in this case would be due to sparse freight traffic on that segment of the line after 10PM.

Another aspect to consider with respect to these ridership forecasts is the existing level of bus service. The District and the wider CFA is currently served by the New Jersey Transit 607 Bus service to the business district along North Broad Street. The 603 Bus route includes South Broad Street as it passes through the CFA and on to downtown Trenton. Other bus lines that pass through the CFA and relay downtown Trenton include the 606 Bus (which stops at Hamilton Avenue and South Clinton Avenue) and the 601 Bus (which serves South Clinton Avenue). In other words, the River Line does not always provide a significant addition to accessibility for certain types of trips within Trenton.

The estimates do not contain an accurate estimate of visits to prison inmates, only trips by prison employees. They also do not include future employees of the planned Manex film production facility at Hamilton Avenue, which, according to the company itself, could eventually employ up to 500 people.

Finally, as estimates of ridership upon opening in March 2004, these estimates make no attempt to incorporate estimates of *potential* Cass Street District residents working in Burlington County, for example, and using the River Line. The estimates are based only on current patterns of commutation. However, as is discussed below, the River Line impact on accessibility will be great for those making a reverse commute from Cass Street to Burlington County stops. To the extent that there is increased development in the Cass Street District, ridership could increase as well. At the time of this report there were serious development proposals by the Performa group for new residential units adjacent to the Cass Street Station.

*Ridership estimates make no attempt to incorporate estimates of potential Cass Street District residents as residential and commute patterns change.*

### **2.2.2 Accessibility Improvements for Reverse Commuting**

The ridership forecasts are admittedly static in nature, derived from existing patterns of residential and employment density. They explicitly do not include potential dynamic development effects that could be stimulated by the River Line following *changes* in location and employment patterns in response to changes in accessibility and travel options.

One potential source of users would be District or CFA residents working along the Route 1 corridor in Mercer County. In absence of the Census *Journey to Work* data this market cannot be assessed with any accuracy, but Summary File 3 data reported previously implies the number could be significant. For these workers, the River Line could provide accessibility to the Northeast Corridor trains, including stops at Princeton and New Brunswick, as well as to existing service provided by the 600 Bus currently serves major employment centers along the Route 1 corridor without requiring mode transfers.

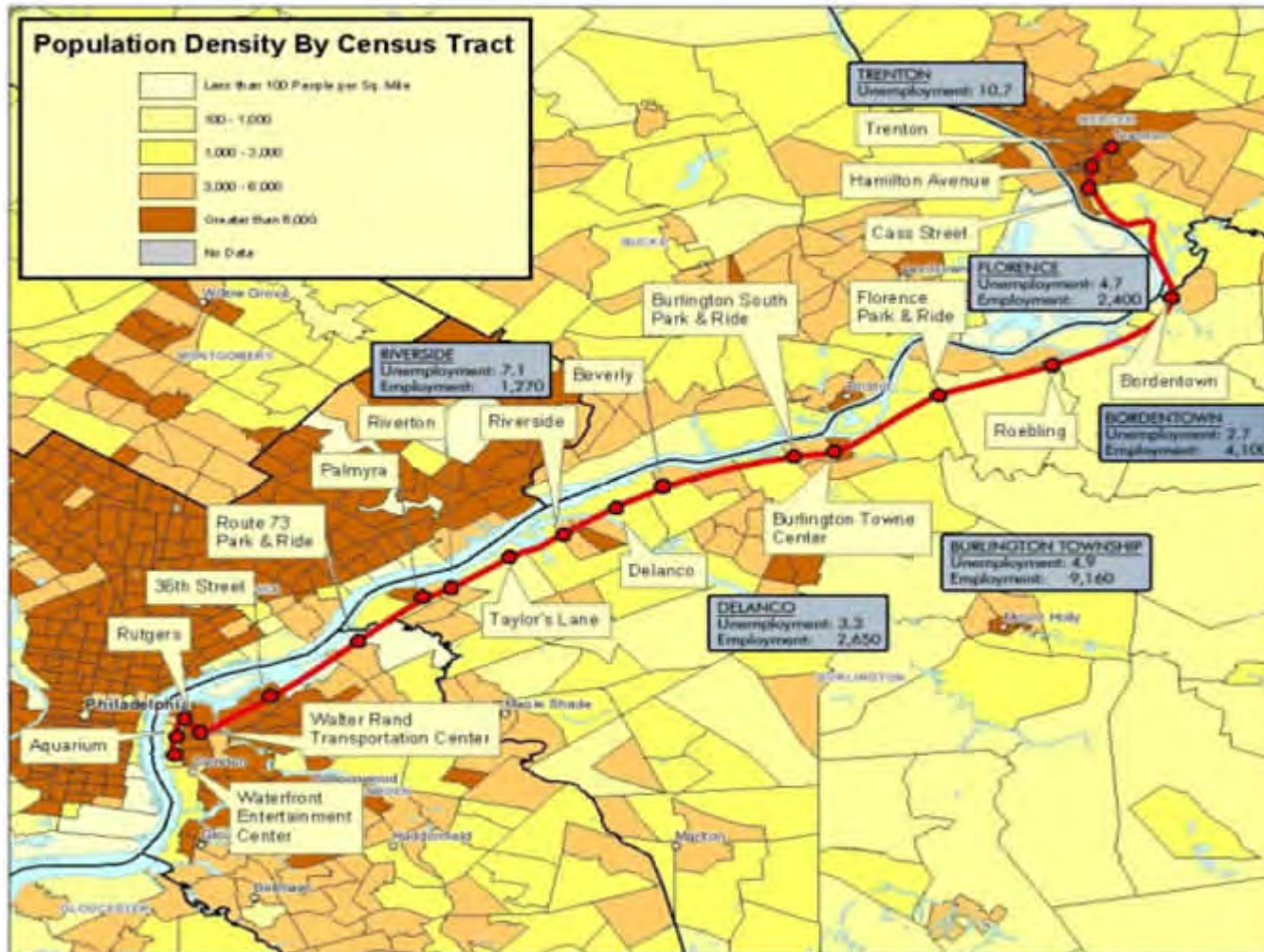
Perhaps a more significant source of potential users could be District or CFA residents working in Burlington County. For example, Bordentown and Burlington (including townships) have total private sector employment bases of nearly 21,000 – roughly equal to Trenton itself. In general the Route 130 Corridor has seen significant renewal and some commercial development. A particularly intriguing new development (and a potential source of reverse employment for District reverse commuters) is the Haines Industrial Business Center in Florence and Burlington, which includes 2.2 million square feet of industrial and warehouse space, with up to 5 million more planned for future development. The current facilities have tenants that are essentially in distribution functions, with some manufacturing as well, employing approximately 800.

As the River Line runs on an existing freight right-of-way, it is not surprising that it passes by the sites of several significant employment centers. For example, most of the Haines Industrial Business Center is within easy walking distance of the Florence Park & Ride stop on the River Line. Discussions with the Center’s developer revealed that tenants consider proximity to the light rail an asset, enabling them to draw on larger pools of labor from Trenton and Camden.

Figure 3 shows the River Line stops in Burlington County with population density and employment near the station areas. While population density at the station stops is not particularly high, stops such as Bordentown, Florence and Burlington are areas of significant employment density. Also as indicated, data from the New Jersey local unemployment rates reveal significant differences in the tightness of these local labor markets relative to the City of Trenton. This combination of local employment opportunities and the accessibility offered by the River Line imply a considerable increase in the ease of reverse commuting to Burlington County from District or CFA residents.

*Bordentown and Burlington (including townships) have total private sector employment bases of nearly 21,000 – roughly equal to Trenton itself. While population density at the station stops is not particularly high, stops such as Bordentown, Florence and Burlington are areas of significant employment density.*

Figure 3: Burlington County Employment Along The Southern New Jersey Light Transit System



Source: Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3; New Jersey Department of Labor

At present, travel to these destinations requires a car, or a relatively lengthy trip by bus. As shown in Table 2.12, the accessibility benefits provided by the River Line compared to current bus service is dramatic, while the time saving compared to car use is also positive. These accessibility benefits will have an impact on the real estate markets in Burlington County, as accessibility to Trenton, the Northeast Corridor and Camden has improved<sup>8</sup>. To what degree would this accessibility affect real estate markets and land use in the District? This is the question examined below.

**Table 2.12: Travel Time Between Selected River Line Stations by Mode, in Minutes**

<b>Cass Street and:</b>	<b>River Line</b>	<b>Car</b>	<b>409 Bus*</b>
<b>Bordentown</b>	6	12	28
<b>Florence Park and Ride</b>	15	20	45
<b>Burlington Town Center</b>	20	22	60

*Source: New Jersey Transit*  
*\*Departure from Trenton Rail Station*

<sup>8</sup> This point is made convincingly in a recent study by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. (Delaware Valley Regional planning Commission (2002). *Transit Village Design in Burlington County*. Philadelphia, PA).

Area around the Riverside Station



Area around the Burlington Station



In proximity of the Bordentown Station



## 2.3 POTENTIAL LAND USE AND REAL ESTATE IMPACTS

The analysis below calculates the potential real estate impact on the District and the CFA from the River Line. In particular, the analysis assesses how accessibility benefits could be capitalized into real estate values. Under plausible assumptions, it is estimated that the River Line could lead to a 12 percent premium on values in the Cass Street area due to the River Line.

### 2.3.1 Current Real Estate Market Indicators

Table 2.13, Table 2.14 and Table 2.15 give a brief summary of the real estate base in the CFA. With a total of nearly 3,200 occupied housing units, the area is over 60 percent renter-occupied – an important point to keep in mind in defining development alternatives that imply increasing the value of rental housing.

Patterns within the CFA were not entirely consistent with income and poverty patterns reported earlier, in particular with block group 5.1 and block group 3.10 showing the highest values.

**Table 2.13: Housing Tenure Characteristics In the CFA, Trenton and New Jersey**

	Block Group 5.1	Block Group 1.2	Block Group 3.4	Block Group 2.8	Block Group 3.8	Block Group 3.10	Total CFA
Total	931	331	878	513	322	207	3,182
Owner-Occupied	314	154	381	147	158	85	1,239
Renter-Occupied	617	177	497	366	164	122	1,943
Percent Renter	66.3%	53.5%	56.6%	71.3%	50.9%	58.9%	61.1%

*Source: Census 2000, Summary File 3*

**Table 2.14: Median Value for Owner-Occupied Housing  
 In the CFA, Trenton and New Jersey**

Total CFA	Trenton City	New Jersey
\$54,500	\$64,500	\$162,500

*Source: Econsult Corporation, estimated from Census 2000, Summary File 3  
 Note: Median values are mid points of ranges in the Summary File 3*

**Table 2.15: Median Value for Owner-Occupied Housing  
 Within the CFA**

Block Group 5.1	Block Group 1.2	Block Group 3.4	Block Group 2.8	Block Group 3.8	Block Group 3.10
\$64,500	\$54,500	\$54,500	\$54,500	\$54,500	\$74,500

*Source: Econsult Corporation, estimated from Census 2000, Summary File 3  
 Note: Median values are mid points of ranges in the Summary File 3*

**2.3.2 Simulations: Potential Residential Real Estate Impacts**

The estimation of potential impacts on this housing base in the CFA is essentially indicative. Due to the low *initial*/ridership forecasts, it is hard to generate a significant measure of real estate impacts based solely on those figures. What, then, might realistic dynamic development trends imply for land use and real estate values?

The dynamic benefits of a future transit service are challenging to predict. As opposed to the prediction of benefits for a static residential and commercial population, these benefits accrue over time based on how the changes in transportation (and associated other induced neighborhood changes) increase the relative desirability of the neighborhood. Depending upon the number of people who find that the light rail system makes the neighborhood more attractive to inhabit than other competing locales, will indicate how great an impact a transportation investment has on a neighborhood like Cass Street.



Past studies shed some light on what could be real estate outcomes for the District or the CFA. In a 1977 study previously cited, Bruce Allen (Allen) found that accessibility to a rail station was capitalized into housing values, regardless of whether the occupant actually used the service. In particular, Allen found that each \$250 in annual transportation cost savings (including out-of-pocket expenses such as parking, capital and operating costs for vehicles, and travel time values) translated into a capitalization of \$443<sup>9</sup>. This capitalization was associated with a premium for houses with transit accessibility on the order of 7 percent. Various other studies have tended to find similar house price premiums attributable to transit accessibility.

What could be the potential travel benefits for District or CFA residents due to the River Line, and what would this mean for houses within the District or CFA with easy access to the light rail? The first step in carrying out this evaluation is to estimate the *user benefits* that would accrue to District or CFA residents thanks to the use of the River Line. User benefits would include all savings in travel time, out-of-pocket expenses on vehicles, and parking. The expenses related to vehicle operations could include simply variable costs directly related to use, such as gasoline, oil, maintenance and tire deterioration. If a household living in the District or CFA is able to avoid the cost of a car entirely thanks to the existence of River Line, cost savings are far more extensive<sup>10</sup>.

In order to assess the potential savings, two commutes are examined, in particular those between Cass Street and Bordentown and Cass Street and Burlington. These two areas are chosen as they contain sizeable employment centers, and could potentially be places of employment for District or CFA residents<sup>11</sup>. They are also chosen because they are well-served by the River Line from Cass Street, as evidenced by the estimated travel time between Cass Street and selected stops on the River Line outlined in Table 2.16.

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<sup>9</sup> Since the capitalization is so closely tied to an income-sensitive measure (the value of time), these relationships between cost savings and capitalization can essentially be generalized across income groups.

<sup>10</sup> According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, variable costs for an average automobile are approximately 12 cents a mile. Fixed costs of automobile ownership (including insurance, depreciation, registration, taxes and finance charges) are equal to \$5,764 a year (Bureau of Transportation Statistics 2002. *National Transportation Statistics 2002*. Washington, DC: US Department of Transportation).

<sup>11</sup> Private sector employment in Burlington, Burlington Township, Bordentown and Bordentown Township is over 20,000, not substantially different from that of Trenton itself.

**Table 2.16: Travel Time Between Selected River Line Stations**

<b>Cass Street and:</b>	<b>Travel Time:</b>
<b>Bordentown</b>	6 Minutes
<b>Roebling</b>	11 Minutes
<b>Florence</b>	15 Minutes
<b>Burlington Town Center</b>	20 Minutes
<b>Burlington South</b>	22 Minutes

*Source: New Jersey Transit*

For the standard commute between Cass Street and the general areas around the station stops at Burlington and Bordentown, there would be small travel time saving for River Line users, as the commute by automobile would take 12 minutes (Bordentown) and 22 minutes (Burlington). If one were to value these time savings according to the value of time saving for Trenton commuters, this could reflect pure savings of up to \$500 a year for the Cass Street to Burlington commute: given an average private sector wage in Trenton of roughly \$21.5 per hour<sup>12</sup>, this would translate into a value of transportation time saving of roughly \$10.80 an hour<sup>13</sup>.

There would also be some saving in “out-of-pocket costs”, as the cost of fuel and other variable costs would be greater than those for River Line users (at least for commutes to Burlington). As shown in Table 2.17, estimated out-of-pocket cost savings would be equal to over \$320 for those making a Cass Street to Burlington commute.

For some commuters, the availability of the River Line could translate into the saving of an entire vehicle, for example a household’s second vehicle. As estimated by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the capital costs of a typical vehicle (including depreciation, insurance, taxes, finance charges) average \$5,764 a year. If we assume that 10 percent of commuters are able to avoid the purchase and upkeep of a car due to the River Line (possibly a conservative assumption), this would translate into an “average” fixed cost saving of \$576 per commuter. Adding the various components of the typical commute by River Line and automobile, it is estimated that the former affords substantial savings, as detailed in Table 2.17: in the case of a Cass Street

*The River Line allows commuters to avoid expenses related to vehicle operations, such as gasoline, oil, maintenance and tire deterioration. It also may allow a household to avoid the cost of a car (or second car) entirely, which yields far more extensive cost savings.*

*In the case of a Cass Street to Bordentown commute, the annual savings is nearly \$990, while the commute from Cass Street to Burlington is nearly \$1,100 cheaper on an annual basis.*

<sup>12</sup> This figure is estimated on the basis of current annual earnings for Trenton residents, adjusted for the average annual number of hours worked as contained in the 2000 Census.

<sup>13</sup> Numerous empirical studies of travel behavior indicate that travelers value a time saving in commuting at roughly 50 percent of their wage rate.

to Bordentown commute, the annual savings is nearly \$990, while the commute from Cass Street to Burlington is nearly \$1,100 cheaper on an annual basis.

Could these potential cost savings translate into changes in commuting patterns? Predicting a change in commuter patterns is not attempted here. Rather, one can point out that there is consistent evidence that transportation improvements lead to changes in commuting patterns, as journey to work patterns adapt to changes in accessibility<sup>14</sup>. If there is a response on the part of residents in terms of their journey-to-work patterns, and if new residents choose to relocate to the CFA in part for its transit accessibility, we could expect positive real estate impacts to occur.

A large body of existing studies can guide estimates of what that impact could be. In the figures shown below, it estimated that capitalization effects reflect the average daily cost saving that could accrue to someone living with the District or CFA by using the River Line. For example, if the accessibility offered by the light rail would save, on average, \$1 a day to residents using the service, this would translate into an annual saving of \$250. This in turn could yield an increase in real estate sales value of approximately \$1,670 for residential units<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, *if the daily transportation cost savings were to reach \$4 a day (roughly the benefits estimated for a Bordentown or Burlington commute in Table 2.17), the capitalized effect on real estate values would be over \$6,600.*

*The daily transportation cost savings for a Bordentown or Burlington commute is estimated to be nearly \$4. The capitalized effect of this savings on real estate value is over \$6,600.*

While these calculations should be seen as primarily indicative, numerous studies that commuting costs savings are translated into increased house values. If a significant reverse commuting market evolves between the Cass Street area and Burlington and Bordentown, we expect Cass Street area real estate to appreciate in response. It is interesting to note that the estimate premium in Table 2.18, under plausible estimates of user benefits from the River Line, are very much in step with the estimated real estate premium attributable to transit accessibility as found in the studies cited above.

<sup>14</sup> See for example McDonald, John F. and Clifford I. Osuji, 1995. "The Effect of Anticipated Transportation Improvement on Residential Land Values". *Regional Science and Urban Economics*. Vol. 25. pp: 261-278.

<sup>15</sup> Following standard practice, the capitalization formula is simply the (discounted) present value of a perpetual flow,  $D/r$ . In this case  $D$  is the annual transportation cost savings and  $r$  the discount rate.

**Table 2.17: Simulations of Potential Cost Savings for Residents of the CFA by Using River Line Instead of Automobiles for Commuting**

Commute:	Annual Cost, River Line*	Annual Vehicle Operating Cost**	Annual "Out-of-Pocket" Saving (1)	Annual Travel Time Saving (2)***	Annual Vehicle Fixed Cost Saving (3)****	Total Saving (1)+(2)+(3)
Cass Street to Bordentown	\$528	\$401	-\$127	\$538	\$576	\$988
Cass Street to Burlington	\$528	\$859	\$322	\$179	\$576	\$1,077

Source: Econsult Corporation

\*Note: Annual cost computed on the basis of a \$44 monthly pass.

\*\*Note: Annual cost computed on the basis of average variable costs of \$0.12.

\*\*\*Note: Annual travel time saving assumes a commute between Cass Street and Bordentown or Burlington.

\*\*\*\*Note: Annual vehicle fixed cost saving assumes that 10 percent of commuters are able to dispense with one vehicle in their household, saving annual fixed costs of \$5,764.

**Table 2.18: Simulations of Real Estate Impacts Within the CFA Due to the River Line**

Daily Cost Saving	Annual Cost Saving	Real Estate Capitalization*	Real Estate Value Premium**
\$1	\$250	\$1,667	3%
\$2	\$500	\$3,333	6%
\$3	\$750	\$5,000	9%
<b>\$4</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$6,667</b>	<b>12%</b>
\$5	\$1,250	\$8,333	15%
\$7.50	\$1,875	\$12,500	23%

Source: Econsult Corporation

\*Note: The discount rate used to derive capitalization is 15 percent, higher than some authors have argued is the appropriate rate. The use of a high discount rate reflects the greater uncertainty facing house prices in the CFA market.

\*\*Note: The real estate value premium reflects a median house value of \$55,000 in the CFA.

Do existing patterns of real estate values in Trenton support such an increase? Patterns of valuation in other neighborhoods, notably Mill Hill, imply that residents are prepared to pay higher prices in areas that are seen as providing requisite amenities. In Mill Hill, the median house value was \$94,500 in 2000, compared to \$54,500 in the District, and over one third of housing units are valued at more than \$100,000. While the District and Mill Hill are not necessarily comparable, these trends show that units in Trenton can attract higher prices under the right circumstances.

To summarize, despite the low initial ridership estimates, the accessibility benefits offered by the River Line suggest that longer-term real estate impacts are likely. Numerous empirical studies have shown that travel cost savings offered by transit are eventually capitalized into the value of real estate within proximity of the service. Such patterns of capitalization would imply a potential increase in values of 12 percent for properties within proximity. This rough estimate does not assume significant changes in land use density. However, to the degree that densities increase in the District, and to the degree that this increase in densities is accompanied by a successful re-use of under-utilized or vacant properties, as well as an increase in local amenities (retail, parks, restaurants) then this potential increase would be a conservative estimate.

*The River Line could lead to a 12 percent premium on values in the Cass Street area.*

### 2.3.3 Other Potential Impacts

**Arts and Entertainment:** Development strategies proposed for the District by the City and the Urban Land Institute<sup>16</sup> focused more on building upon an existing base of entertainment and sports activities at Waterfront Park, Sovereign Bank Arena, and a nascent arts activity centered on the now-closed Urban Word Café (see footnote 20). The attraction of such a strategy is that it builds on an existing base of activity and success. However, the degree to which the River Line itself could influence such developments appears limited *at the present*. As mentioned, a significant issue facing the River Line in serving the entertainment venues is that last trains have to leave Camden or Trenton by 9PM to arrive at their final stop by 10PM. This means that patrons heading south from the entertainment venues would be facing a last train at around 9PM, which may eliminate River Line as an option for evening events. *This does not discount the validity of an entertainment-based strategy, but simply limits the role transit could currently play in it.* This also does not discount the importance of developing arts and entertainment facilities as part of a mixed-use TOD strategy for the District.

**Commercial and Offices:** In terms of commercial businesses locating in the District or CFA due to the River Line, this could be a possibility, but such activity is a better fit for the Hamilton Avenue Station. Current developments there are consistent with commercial redevelopment with a focus on TOD. The Keatting Group is developing one nearby site, whose primary tenant will be the YMCA. The building behind the station stop is being developed for the Manex film production company, as mentioned.

<sup>16</sup> The Urban Land Institute (2000). *Trenton, New Jersey: Development Potential for the Triangle of Opportunity*. Washington, D.C.

In its report, the Urban Land Institute recommended that the Roebling complex be developed as an employment center, building on the complex's existing buildings as base. In the case of this on-going redevelopment, the accessibility offered by the River Line will clearly play a significant role. In short, given the availability of suitable buildings, commercially focused TOD development is more suited to the Hamilton Avenue station.

**Retail and Restaurants:** A visual survey of existing retail activity in the District, supplemented by data from Capital South, reveals that the area's retail corridor (centered on South Broad Street) is relatively vibrant. However, approximately 13 percent of District stores are currently vacant. In occupied stores, retail activity falls in such categories as clothing (8%), food (12%), realtors (18%), beauty services (2%), restaurants (18%), social services (10%), entertainment (12%), home and furnishings (12%), and other (6%).

There is currently little retail that could be termed destination retail. The same could be said for restaurants, keeping in mind that the decidedly destination restaurants of the Chambersburg District do not fall with the District as defined in this analysis. Given this, can the River Line leverage new retail, specifically retail whose market base is beyond the District, CFA or even the City?

Discussions with several shop owners in the District confirmed the view that currently the District does not do well in attracting customers from outside the City (again, Chambersburg is not included in the District, and we make a distinction with the destination entertainment discussed above). In part, this is due to the perception of Trenton as somewhat unsafe. Another is the lack of a critical mass of activity and destinations as one finds in Chambersburg.

It would appear that increased retail activity (as well as entertainment activity) would be a goal as part of a general mixed-use approach to TOD in the District. This would allow the retail base to grow in tandem with the residential base, allowing the nurturing of a destination retail base supported by local residents: Patterns in Trenton, as one finds elsewhere, are for each household to support approximately one job in *local* retail and service. As population in the District would grow, this would increase the possibility for some new retail to be specialized into more destination-oriented products.

### 2.3.4 Conclusions

*The analysis above suggests that residential and mixed-use development would be the most appropriate TOD based on the River Line in the District. Mixed-use TOD would also encourage further retail development, initially supported by new residents but eventually specialized towards destination retail. While the District could also consider TOD oriented towards commercial development of the type seen at Hamilton Avenue, it is not clear that potential developers and employers would find a location at Cass Street more attractive than one at Hamilton Avenue, with its existing infrastructure geared to such uses.*

*The analysis above suggests that residential and mixed-use development would be the most appropriate TOD for the River Line in the District.*

Benefits from the River Line could lead to significant real estate premiums, as new residents capitalize the accessibility benefits into housing values. This will not necessarily be immediate: New Jersey Transit's forecasts for ridership at the Cass Street Station confirm that current residential and commutation patterns are not based on the River Line and the accessibility it offers. However, transit-oriented development is an inherently dynamic process, whereby

attractiveness of a location is improved by increasing connectivity and accessibility. We therefore must consider what the potential *dynamic* changes that could occur due to the River Line, in particular those resulting from inflows of residents and businesses to the District or CFA.

With respect to inflows of residents whose employment would be in Trenton proper, the potential benefits derived from the River Line may be limited. The private sector employment base of the City is important, but may not provide the higher-wage jobs that could lead to substantial increase in median incomes in the District or CFA. Also, while the City's public sector employment base is large and relatively well paid, the River Line does not serve these locations, at least not better than existing bus service. However, it is highly likely that an extension of the River Line to downtown Trenton would significantly improve the attractiveness of the area as a residential location, especially for younger households seeking easy commutes and an urban environment.

On the other hand, residents of the District or CFA commuting to locations outside the City may benefit from the River Line to more significant degrees. As noted, the existence of express bus service to Route 1 employment centers already exists, but the possibility of integrating the River Line with rail service on the Northeast Corridor and shuttle services from Hamilton and Princeton stations could provide improvements over existing bus service. Ridership forecasts above do not reflect such service integration. Perhaps the most intriguing possibility for generating user benefits for District or CFA residents could be reverse commuters to Burlington County. As mentioned, Bordentown and Burlington (including townships) have total private sector employment bases of nearly 21,000 – roughly equal to Trenton itself. These areas are extremely well served by the River Line, as evidenced by the travel time between stations outlined in Table 3.6 above.

In short, the greatest benefit conferred by the River Line to potential District or CFA residents is arguably to a market that does not currently exist to any significant degree. Given the analysis contained above, it may well be that the most promising potential market, in terms of potential residents enticed by the River Line service, could be those making a reverse commute to Burlington County.

Given the accessibility benefits conferred by the River Line, mixed-use development with a primacy on residential uses is appropriate for the District. The current land use pattern is appropriate for the typical *transit village* of mixed-use residential developments within walking distance of rail or rapid bus services. Due to the typical scale of transit villages, as well as their application to infill parcels, this model is appropriate to the Cass Street District. The mixed use or transit village approach would not only leverage the River Line, but other assets in the District or CFA and the City, including historical sites, entertainment, riverfront access, and parks that are attractive to residents<sup>17</sup>.

*For commercial TOD, it is not clear that potential developers and employers would find a location at Cass Street more attractive than one at Hamilton Avenue, with its existing infrastructure geared to such uses.*

*Extending the River Line to downtown Trenton would significantly improve the attractiveness of the District as a residential location, especially for younger households seeking easy commutes and an urban environment.*

<sup>17</sup> For a listing of features of the District and Trenton valued by residents attending the Project's public meeting, see the Appendix of this report.

In general, a mixed-use approach to TOD would be in keeping with patterns of urban development observed in the last two decades, when American cities that grew were those that provided a rich choice of amenities for its residents. With new urban migrants increasingly seeking an urban experience for its own sake, rather than as simply a by-product of employment, this has led some experts to suggest that an increasingly important function of urban areas is to provide the setting for “consuming” culture, the arts, sporting events, architecture, or history. The fact that urban areas act as places to consume culture and other amenities (such as architecture, historical sites, sports events) has led some observers to dub successful cities “consumer cities”, whose reason for being are as centers of consumption as well as centers of production<sup>18</sup>.

*Mixed-use TOD is therefore the strategy suggested for the District.* The strategy is a feasible one in the sense that it plays to the area’s strengths and incorporates realistic assumptions regarding the potential impact of the River Line and the degree to which the new transit service could influence developments at Cass Street. Besides the River Line itself, other basic foundations for a transit village strategy are in place: The residential density of Trenton is adequate to support a successful transit-village development<sup>19</sup>, and all points in the District are proximate, within ½ mile, of the Cass Street Station. Finally, there is an availability of land for development or redevelopment in amounts sufficient to create economically viable development.

What would be the financial feasibility of such a strategy? The analysis above is general and does not permit rigorous conclusions regarding the potential for transit village developments at Cass Street to be fundable entirely from the private sector. Rather, such analyses should incorporate specific assumptions regarding building and operating costs of development projects in order to determine the degree to which public funding would play a role in TOD at Cass Street.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDED PLAN

Having addressed issues of markets and potential development feasibility, the following section describes the Consultant Team’s Recommended Plan for the Cass Street Light Rail District (the Plan). The Plan’s purpose is to assist in revitalization of the station vicinity by providing a development framework for the 62-acre District and environs. The framework plan for the District will enable stakeholders to anticipate, guide, and evaluate proposed development actions. The plan is outlined in four sections to direct development: Vision, Strategy, Development Framework, and Design Guidelines. The framework does not *prescribe* projects, but is flexible with predictable expectations.

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<sup>18</sup> Glaeser, Edward L., Jed Kolko and Albert Saiz (2001) “Consumer City”, *Journal of Economic Geography*, 1: pp. 27-50.

<sup>19</sup> A rule of thumb for successful TOD is that there be at least 7 residential units per acre. The City of Trenton has over 6 residential units per acre.



### 3.0 RECOMMENDED PLAN

Having addressed issues of markets and potential development feasibility, the following section describes the Consultant Team's Recommended Plan for the Cass Street Light Rail District (the Plan). The Plan's purpose is to assist in revitalization of the station vicinity by providing a development framework for the 62-acre District and environs. The framework plan for the District will enable stakeholders to anticipate, guide, and evaluate proposed development actions. The plan is outlined in four sections to direct development: Vision, Strategy, Development Framework, and Design Guidelines. The framework does not *prescribe* projects, but is flexible with predictable expectations.

#### 3.1 VISION

Redevelop the District so that it may function more effectively as the “center of” and “link between” communities in the influence area.

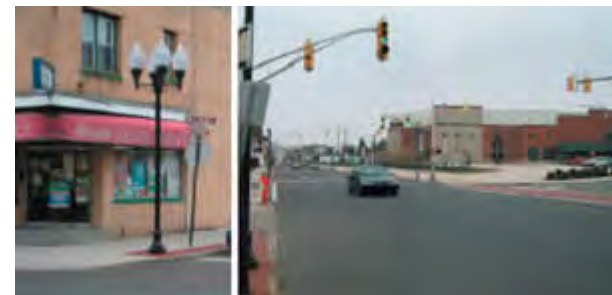
#### 3.2 STRATEGY

##### 3.2.1 Corridors

The Cass Street Light Rail District Plan uses the concept of *corridors* to provide a framework for development. Corridors are linear districts along a major route of travel such as highways, streets, trails, or rivers. They commonly include the land and buildings that are directly adjacent or related to that route. Creating a framework for a corridor will influence how that district and the surrounding areas are developed.

The vision for the District is to be realized through a series of redevelopment actions focused on three corridors:

- Broad Street (divided into North and South)
- Route 129
- Cass Street



*South Broad Street, a district of local businesses and regional attractions, such as the Sovereign Arena*



*Looking north along Route 129*

Each corridor has a unique purpose, which would be enhanced through the development effort. The Broad Street corridor is comprised of two parts - South Broad Street and North Broad Street, separated by its intersection with Route 129.

South Broad Street provides neighborhood-oriented services, shopping, and economic activities. The vision for South Broad is to make it a “**great place for neighborhood business and shopping**”. Redevelopment activities would focus on attracting more neighborhood-oriented businesses, shops, and small restaurants. To the extent there is a regional demand for an “urban experience”, this corridor may serve that need with a mix of restaurants and neighborhood arts/craft shops.



*Looking west along Cass Street*

The northern part of South Broad Street is an emerging regional destination with the Sovereign Arena, Urban Word Café<sup>20</sup>, and the anticipated Arena Plaza Development, a mixed-use project including offices, fitness center, and entertainment spaces. The vision for North Broad is to make it a “**great place to visit**”. Redevelopment activities would focus on attracting restaurants and retail with a regional appeal that would benefit from proximity to the Arena.

Route 129 is a well-used component of the regional transportation system, primarily linking residential communities around Trenton to employment destinations in the City and beyond. The vision for Route 129 is to make it a “**great place to travel along**”. Redevelopment activities on parcels fronting Route 129 would focus on enhancing the experience of using the corridor and improve the image of Trenton.

Cass Street is the only street that provides uninterrupted pedestrian connections between the riverfront stadium, the LRT station, South Broad Street, and residential communities throughout the influence area. The vision for Cass Street is to make it a “**great place to walk on**”. Redevelopment activities would focus on improving streetscape continuity and attractiveness of the corridor for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles.

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<sup>20</sup> The Urban Word Café is temporarily closed. Its web site indicates a change of management and future re-opening.



### 3.3 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

#### 3.3.1 Land Use Overlay

The district plan recommends enabling land use strategies that compliment the vision for each corridor.

##### South Broad Street Corridor

Building on its existing business base as the South Capital District, South Broad Street will serve local residents as a primarily commercial corridor:

- Retail and restaurants should occupy the ground floor.
- Residential and small office uses should be encouraged on upper floors.
- Massing of new construction should be consistent with existing structures.
- Parking should be located behind the building, in public lots, or on street.

##### North Broad Street Corridor

North Broad Street will also function as a commercial corridor. Land use in this area, however, should focus on uses that add to the place as a destination.

- Larger restaurants and retail will compliment the adjacent Sovereign Arena.
- Businesses should have a regional and local appeal.
- New construction should create a strong, pedestrian-oriented relationship with the street.

### **Route 129 Corridor**

Development along Route 129 should be uses that benefit from proximity to light-rail and highway access. However, it is more important to regulate the image that is portrayed than the activity on the site.

- Development, regardless of type, should present an impressive image of the Cass Street District to those passing through.
- Loading docks, refuse containment, and other “back of the building” functions should not front on the highway and rail line.
- New construction should create a strong relationship with Route 129 and the light rail line.
- Vegetated buffers and trees should be planted and maintained on either side of, and between the highway and rail line.

### **Cass Street Corridor**

The Cass Street corridor will serve to connect the station area to the waterfront and the South Broad Street corridor with a mixture of land uses. This strategy will activate the corridor increasing the perception of Cass Street as a safe, pedestrian-friendly area.

- Towards the station, encourage retail and other commercial uses to occupy building storefronts.
- Away from the station, retain the existing residential character.
- Preserve existing neighborhood retail and restaurant establishments.
- Permit both single and multi-family residential units.
- Implement traffic calming strategies at major intersections.



### 3.3.2 Development sites

Four large parcels were identified within the District for development to anchor the redevelopment of the influence area. A few smaller buildings and parcels were identified for possible renovation or infill. Additionally, residents identified local landmarks that should remain in the neighborhood.

Site one is a 2.5-acre parcel located at the northern edge of the District, along the North Broad Street corridor. Currently the site is a surface parking lot supporting the Sovereign Arena. Existing parking, and additional demand, should be accommodated in structured parking. Participants in a community workshop suggested the site might be appropriate for a live theater or cinema, also attracting local residents. Regardless of how the site is used, it is important that the new construction have an active street wall that engages passersby. The site development should respond to:

- Proximity to Sovereign Arena.
- Prominent setting along North Broad Street.
- Corridor as a regional destination.
- Scale of residential neighborhood to the west.
- Adjacency to gateway between North and South Broad Street.

Site two, the Apex Lumber Site, is an 8.0-acre parcel located along Route 129 in the center of the District. The site is already under the control of a developer who has issued plans for the parcel. The proposal includes plans for market-rate housing, retail, other commercial, and parking. Additionally, the area to the east of the site, extending to Hudson and South Broad Streets, is planned for future acquisition and development. This construction will not only act as a catalyst for future development in the District, but will also help to activate the South Broad Street corridor and improve the image of the area along Route 129.

Site three is a 1.5-acre parcel located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Cass Street and Route 129. Currently, the site is a surface parking lot for state prison employees. This is a critical location, with strong access to transit. Existing parking may be replaced by a garage. However, that should not be the only use on the site. The site development should respond to the:

- Prominent setting along Route 129.
- Proximity to Cass Street Light Rail Transit Station.
- Pedestrian traffic along Cass Street.
- Scale of the residential neighborhood to the west.

Site four is a 2.0-acre parcel located along the south side of Cass Street at Hancock Street, just east of the intersection with Route 129. Currently the site is a surface parking lot for the Sanitary Pump Station. The site development should respond to the:

- Prominent setting along Route 129.
- Proximity to Cass Street Light Rail Transit Station.
- Pedestrian traffic along Cass Street.
- Proximity to South Broad Street commercial District.
- Scale of the residential neighborhood to the southeast.



### 3.3.3 Infrastructure Investments

#### Transit

A key infrastructure investment for the District is the River Line itself. As described previously, the River Line will run from Trenton to Camden along freight right-of-ways. The line will not only connect people to major points of interest along the route, but it will also provide access to NJ TRANSIT, Amtrak, SEPTA, and PATCO trains. The addition of light-rail service to Trenton, specifically the Cass Street area, not only gives residents the opportunity to travel easily for work or recreation, but also brings people to the district.

#### Pedestrian access

Throughout the District, improved pedestrian access is needed to link neighborhoods, destinations, and transit. In order to create a pedestrian-friendly environment it is necessary to:

- Establish or repair sidewalks.
- Provide adequate street lighting.
- Plant street trees to improve air quality and offer shade.

#### Parking

Much of the land proposed for development is currently used as surface parking. Redevelopment would have to address not only the parking lost, but also the additional demand created by new traffic to the area. As is the case with most development around transit stops, the land closest to the station is the most valuable property in the area.

Using this land for surface parking is not the highest and best use of the parcels when more revenue can be generated through other development. Some general guidelines for parking in the District are:

- Use structured parking near station and in other areas where land is valuable.
- Where structured parking is not feasible, move surface lots to the rear (preferable) or side of the building.
- Parking structures fronting on public right of ways should include retail or other commercial uses on the ground floor.
- Surface lots should contain trees and plantings to mitigate undesirable environmental effects.
- Parking amounts may be reduced to account for shared parking among different buildings, facilities, and uses.

### **Traffic Calming**

To improve the pedestrian environment and reduce the potential for conflicts and collisions the recommended plan calls for traffic calming measures along some corridors and at specified intersections. To reduce travel speed in the District:

- Introduce street parking.
- Use curb bump-outs at intersections.
- Change the paving for pedestrian crosswalks.

Reducing the travel speed is especially important in and around the intersection of Cass Street and Route 129, where the safety of pedestrians walking to and from the LRT Station is of particular concern. Another area that has been identified as requiring traffic calming is the intersection of Cass Street and John Fitch Way, adjacent to the waterfront.





### 3.3.4 Open space enhancements

#### Gateways

Gateways mark places of transition. Within the District, gateways signal intersections of corridors. Two critical points of transition within the District are at the intersection of Cass Street and South Broad Street and at the juncture of the South Broad and North Broad Streets. Additionally, local residents perceive gateways as entrances to the district at either end of North and South Broad Streets. Gateways should be marked with elements that signify the transition experienced such as:

- Signage incorporating public interest and way-finding information.
- Attractive, well-maintained plantings.
- Visually engaging public art.
- Kiosks providing information on transit, parking and pedestrian areas.

### **Streetscape**

Streetscape improvements are recommended throughout the corridors in the District as indicated on the plan. These should include façade renovations, especially along proposed commercial districts where reuse and rehabilitation is important, such as South Broad Street. Additionally, streetscapes may be enhanced through:

- Utilizing adapted guidelines from the Arena area.
- Consistent sidewalk design using a minimum of scored concrete at 4' intervals with a 24" brick verge along the curb line.
- Street trees planted 26'-30' on center.
- Street furniture (Benches, Light fixtures, Planters, Signage, Trash Receptacles, Outdoor cafe seating, etc.)

### **Neighborhood Parks**

Two sites have been identified as optimal locations for neighborhood parks. Converting a vacant triangular parcel at the southeast corner of Cass Street and Adeline Street into a park will provide respite for people shopping along South Broad Street. This new space and another proposed park at the northwest corner of Cass Street and Second Street will benefit those pedestrians traveling along Cass Street. Additionally, both of these small (approximately half-acre parcels) open spaces will serve local residents for passive recreation. Investing in the creation and maintenance of neighborhood parks not only increases the quality of life for residents, but also may contribute to increased property values surrounding the park.

### **Public Art**

Within the District, installation of public art is recommended on the wall of the state prison site that is along Cass Street. This piece would help to animate the streetscape and planning should involve the community. In addition, neighborhood pocket parks should be upgraded with smaller installations reflective of the surrounding community.

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## **3.4 DESIGN GUIDELINES**

### **3.4.1 Framework plan**

Combining the development framework elements of land use, development sites, infrastructure, and open space forms the plan to guide development in the District. Using the concept of “corridors” allows the community to focus specific attention on the critical pieces of the District. Additionally, development of these distinct corridors will encourage growth and strengthening of the influence area.



*Photograph of Broad Street "before"*

### 3.4.2 Design Guideline Sketches

#### South Broad Street

The "before" image was taken looking south, towards Watson and Roebling Streets. The northern section, or Arena area, has already begun to create a consistent streetscape with brick pavers, lighting, and street trees. These guidelines should be adopted for the length of the corridor. Additionally, the development framework proposed for this corridor will strengthen the existing commercial district.



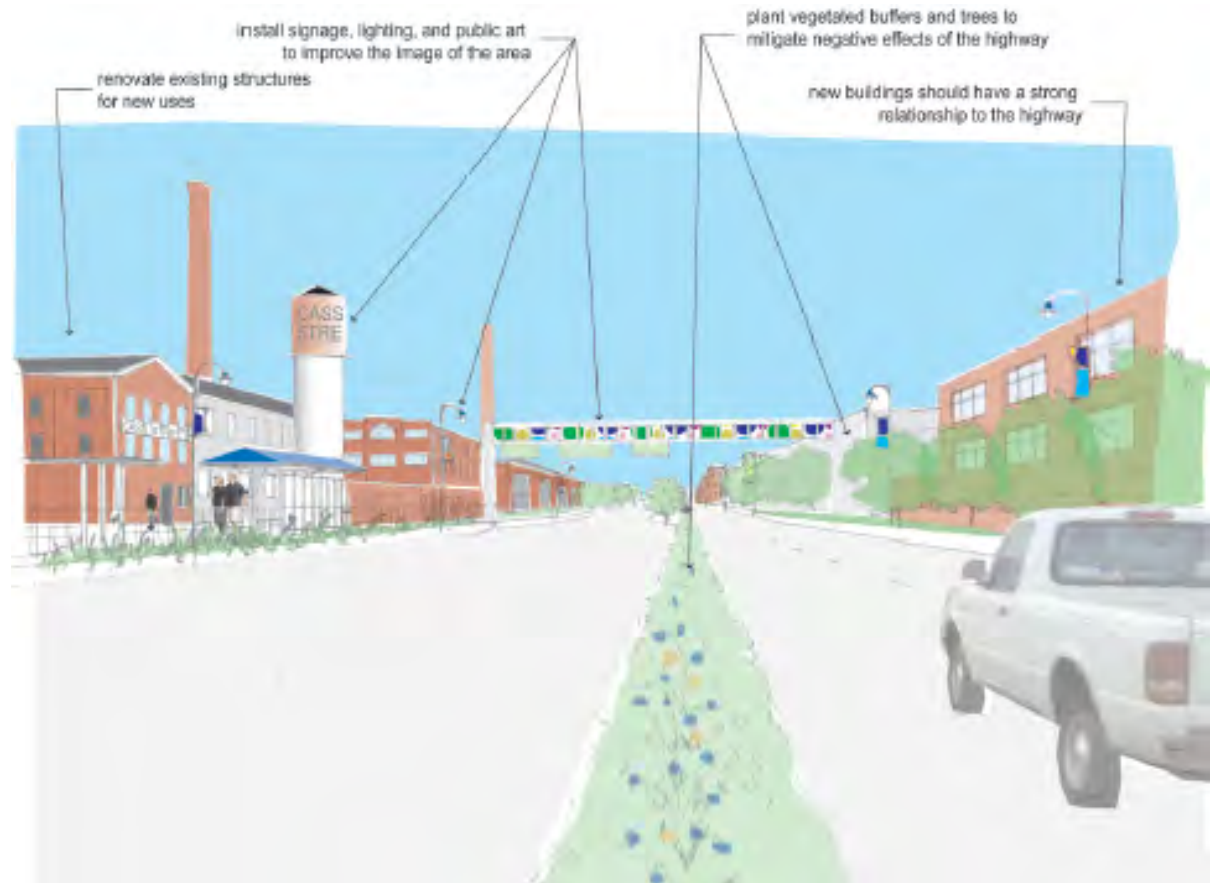
*Sketch of Broad Street with development guidelines*



*Photograph of Route 129 "before"*

### Route 129

Looking south from the intersection with Cass Street, Route 129 is bordered by a mix of industrial buildings and car lots. The new Cass Street LRT station is positioned just inches from the northbound lanes of the highway. The "after" sketch uses the development framework principles to improve the "image" of the Cass Street District to those traveling along the Route 129 corridor. Existing visually interesting buildings and other structural elements provide opportunities for reuse, signage, or public art.



*Sketch of Route 129 with development guidelines*



*Photograph of Cass Street "before"*

### **Cass Street**

The “before” photo illustrates the current conditions along Cass Street; crosswalks are fading or non-existent in some places and street lighting is aimed at the street, not at the sidewalks. The vacant lot on the southwest corner of the intersection of Cass Street and Adeline Street is a prime location for a neighborhood park. The park will not only provide recreation for local residents, but also contribute to an improved pedestrian environment along Cass Street. Additionally, open space and infrastructure investments are proposed along the corridor.



*Sketch of Cass Street with development guidelines*

## 4.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The remainder of this report is concerned with implementation of the recommendations contained in Section 2 and Section 3. Recent developments in the District of particular relevance include the announcement of predevelopment activities for South Broad Street Village, a proposal by Performa Entertainment Real Estate Incorporated, a developer out of Memphis, Tennessee. South Broad Street Village is explicitly based on the transit village concept, incorporating housing, retail, restaurants and, eventually, nightclubs. The proposed project, if fully built, is to occupy bordered by South Broad Street, Route 129, Cass Street, and Hudson Street. Initial phases would be on the Apex Lumber Site (referred to as Site two in Section 3), an 8.0-acre parcel located along Route 129 in the center of the District. The proposal for the Apex Lumber Site includes plans for market-rate housing, retail, other commercial, and parking. The area to the east of the site, extending to Hudson and South Broad Streets, would be used in later phases planned for future acquisition and development.

At present, the status of South Broad Street Village is at predevelopment stages. *The broad concept fits cleanly into the recommendations of Section 2. For specific use and design issues, Section 3's Concept Plan should act as a guiding reference that reflects a community and stakeholder vision for the District.*

### 4.1 THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

#### 4.1.1 The Importance of the Public Sector In TOD

As experience with TOD increases, it is not surprising to see that some consensus has developed regarding what are in general important components for its success. As mentioned, beyond the need for transit service itself, such factors as density and station accessibility are most frequently cited as important factors. Beyond these, a series of factors that entail some public involvement are also identified. These may include a public role as confidence builder, funder, or even marketer. It will also include a public role in other areas including:

- Station Area Planning: Necessary steps may involve zoning, public improvements, marketing, financing and other incentives.
- Pedestrian-Supportive Infrastructure: Steps may involve traffic calming, or weather protection.
- Parking Management: Rational parking strategies may be required, with the need to balance parking needs and space constraints. In general, limited space may eventually create a tradeoff between more parking and increased TOD.

*The public sector will have to play the role of confidence builder, marketer, regulator, and funder.*

The history of the Midtown Direct service to Manhattan is illustrative of the benefits of a proactive local role in planning and implementation. The service, begun in 1996, greatly reduced commute times to New York City to riders on the Morris and Essex lines. Certain communities, such as South Orange and Maplewood, organized early to establish a successful framework for TOD. In the case of South Orange, this included several comprehensive measures, including significant traffic calming on South Orange Avenue. Seven years later, South Orange has dramatically improved its downtown, historically centered on its station, based on mixed-use development with primacy on new shops, street life, new housing, and arts and entertainment. Maplewood has seen property values increase, and its downtown shopping district revitalized.

Other communities were slower in seeing changes. For example, East Orange, which borders South Orange but is a much lower income community, has only now begun to see TOD. In part this is clearly due to the fact that East Orange's station areas would be less attractive as investments to a developer, meaning that TOD could have been slow to occur regardless of the level of public involvement. However, there was also very little station area planning in anticipation of any TOD, with necessary station improvements at Brick Church still to be carried out. In the end, East Orange was able to attract a developer for a nearly 100-unit mixed-use TOD project with various incentives, including 30-year tax abatements.

#### 4.1.2 A Public Sector Role for TOD in the District

With respect to the District, a public role for TOD includes various actors, including the City of Trenton's Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED), New Jersey Transit (NJT), Mercer County Improvement Authority (MCIA), New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and others.

The City's role would, as expected, include regulations, controls and restrictions, which are determined by the City Zoning and Land Development Ordinance. As written in the most recent Redevelopment Plan for the District<sup>21</sup>, the City's DHED should also be actively involved in making recommendations for site planning and design. The present report's recommendations should be the DHED's reference in this task.

In general, the public sector role for TOD in the District should be organized around the NJDOT's *New Jersey Transit Village Initiative (TVI)*. The TVI is a partnership set up specifically to streamline the process for municipalities seeking to pursue TOD. Essentially, TVI brings together the various entities that would be involved in the process under one roof: NJT, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), NJHMFA, NJEDA, New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA), New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission (NJCEGC), Main Street New Jersey and New Jersey and the New Jersey Council on the arts.

*The City's DHED should also be actively involved in making recommendations for site planning and design. The present report's recommendations should be the DHED's reference in this task.*

*In general, the public sector role for TOD in the District should be organized around the NJDOT's New Jersey Transit Village Initiative (TVI).*

<sup>21</sup> City of Trenton, Department of Housing and Economic Development (2002). *Cass Street Redevelopment Area Plan*. Adopted January 1992 and amended February 2002.



A community applies for Transit Village designation, and an inter-agency Transit Village Task Force recommends whether or not to grant Transit Village status<sup>22</sup>. A municipality can be designated a Transit Village only after much of the planning and background work has already been done on the municipal level. It may only be designated a Transit Village after many of the transit village criteria have been met. These include:

- The candidate must demonstrate a commitment to grow in jobs, housing and population.
- A designated Transit Village must have a transit facility (rail or light rail station, ferry terminal, a hub or bus transfer station).
- The candidate must have vacant land or underutilized or deteriorated buildings within walking distance of transit where redevelopment can take place.
- The candidate must have an adopted land-use strategy for achieving compact, transit-supportive, mixed-use development within walking distance of transit. This can be in the form of a redevelopment plan, zoning ordinance, master plan or overlay zone.
- The candidate must have a strong residential component, and should demonstrate pedestrian and bicycle friendliness.
- A successful candidate must have at least one transit-oriented project that can be completed within three years.
- The transit station should be the focal point of the community, with the station plaza a gathering place for community activities (festivals, concerts, public ceremonies and farmers markets).
- A candidate should include its transit station in a station area management plan, in a special improvement district (SID) or as part of a *Main Street New Jersey* designation.

Being designated a Transit Village provides a municipality with real benefits. Besides the immediate benefit of having the municipalities' TOD project known to all the relevant State agencies, there is also an explicit State commitment to the municipality's TOD vision that follows Transit Village designation. This will also include priority funding from some state agencies, technical assistance (if necessary), and eligibility for grants from annual \$1 million in NJDOT's Transit Village funding. The Transit Village Task Force, which reviews applications, meets quarterly.

Preliminary results from research currently being completed by the Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University confirms the notion that the TVI has been a factor in helping municipalities with their TOD initiatives. Specifically, they have found a link between Transit Village designation for municipalities and subsequent level of grants for TOD. Of course, this finding may be simply illustrating that Transit Village designation reflects the quality of applicants TOD plan. But it may also reflect the fact that the TVI application and designation process itself is a helpful aspect of creating a successful TOD plan.

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<sup>22</sup>To date there are eight designated Transit Villages since 1999: Pleasantville, Morristown, Rutherford, South Amboy, South Orange, Riverside, Rahway and Metuchen. The objective is to double the number of designated transit villages within several years. For details on TVI, its eligibility requirements and its goals, see <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/village/index.shtml>.

An application for Transit Village designation has currently been submitted on behalf of an area that includes the District. The application package did not include the present report or the Consultant Team's previous report, *Cass Street Light Rail District Plan: Feasibility Analysis and Market Study*. If the current application for Transit Village designation is rejected, it is recommended that both documents be used as evidence of planning efforts towards TOD in the District. It is also recommended that MCIA and DHED collaborate actively in all future actions towards developing TOD in the District.

## 4.2 THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The role of the private sector in TOD for the District would be as developer. As always, the investment rule for a developer would be to act only if the discounted future value of any investment exceeds the cost of construction. This basic rule, true for homeowners and developers, could be expected to determine if private investment were to occur.

Many projects seeking to redevelop an urban area that has seen some disinvestments will not meet strict financial profitability criteria. TOD for the District may well require public subsidies to lower the cost of investment. As should always be the case in such instances, a cost-benefit analysis should be carried out to determine if the value of any public subsidy is warranted by the expected social benefits attributable to the project(s).

As mentioned previously, there is significant private sector interest in TOD for the District. The proposed South Broad Street Village, by Performa Entertainment Real Estate Incorporated, is explicitly based on the transit village concept. The broad concept, as contained in the developer's proposal, is encouraging: A mixed-use strategy for the District is the one recommended in this report as feasible and most likely to successfully leverage the accessibility benefits of the River Line. However, the proposal has not incorporated the input of the community or stakeholders in defining the vision. It is therefore strongly recommended that future steps in the development of South Broad Street Village incorporate the recommendations of Section 3 of this report.

*TOD for the district may well require public subsidies to lower the cost of investment. As should always be the case in such instances, a cost-benefit analysis should be carried out to determine if the value of any public subsidy is warranted.*

### 4.3 CONCLUSIONS AND STEPS FORWARD

The City of Trenton's Department of Housing and Economic Development engaged the Consultant Team to develop the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan to provide a plan for development around the Cass Street station. The key objective for the Project was to define a vision for the District that would derive the greatest benefit from Light Rail for the affected neighborhoods.

The Team's analysis revealed that the River Line benefits would be limited immediately following the introduction of light rail service. However, longer-term benefits could be substantial due to the accessibility to Burlington County as well as to connections on the Northeast Corridor. Simulations contained in the report's analysis show that, within reasonable boundaries, real estate impacts could be significant. More specifically, *residential and mixed-use development would be the most appropriate TOD for the District*. Mixed-use TOD would also encourage further retail development, initially supported by new residents but eventually specialized towards destination retail. The mixed use or transit village approach would not only leverage the River Line but other assets in the District and the City, including historical sites, entertainment, riverfront access, and parks that are attractive to residents. Finally, it is clear that the River Line would be a greater asset to the Cass Street neighborhood if it were extended through to downtown Trenton. This enhancement would make the Cass Street area significantly more attractive to young households with at least one member working downtown.

The Consultant Team's Recommended Cass Street Light Rail District Plan uses the concept of *corridors* to provide a framework for development. The vision for the District is to be realized through a series of redevelopment actions focused on three corridors (Broad Street (divided into North and South), Route 129 and Cass Street). In each case, the corridor has a unique purpose, which would be enhanced through the development effort.

A detailed Development Framework and Design Guidelines were developed by the Team and contained in Section 3. As well as reflecting the professional judgment and concept of the Consultant Team, the Framework and Guidelines reflect the input of community residents and stakeholders elicited during two public meetings held on May 5 and June 19, 2003.

*Steps forward for the District should include reinforced cooperation between various actors, including the DHED, MCIA as well as various State agencies.* The City's role would, as expected, include regulations, controls and restrictions, which are determined by the City Zoning and Land Development Ordinance. The City's DHED should also be actively involved in making recommendations for site planning and design. The present report's recommendations should be the DHED's reference in this task.

The DHED and MCIA should ensure that the District be designated as a Transit Village under the NJDOT's New Jersey Transit Village Initiative. The TVI partnership streamlines the process for municipalities seeking to pursue TOD, bringing together the various entities that would be involved in the process under one roof. Transit Village designation would be a crucial step towards successful TOD in the District.

*Real estate impacts of the River Line could be significant.*

*Residential and mixed-use development would be the most appropriate TOD for the District.*

*The River Line would be a greater asset to the Cass Street neighborhood if it were extended through to downtown Trenton.*

*The vision for the District is to be realized through a series of redevelopment actions focused on three corridors (Broad Street (divided into North and South), Route 129, and Cass Street). In each case, the corridor has a unique purpose, which would be enhanced through the development effort.*

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The private sector will obviously be an essential partner in successful TOD for Cass Street. Current proposals by the Performa Group are extremely encouraging, and conform to the broad recommendations of Section 2. It is strongly recommended that, in all future steps in all TOD in the District, the DHED work to ensure the integration of the recommendations of Section 3 of this report in all executed plans.

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## APPENDIX A: NOTES FROM THE CASS STREET LIGHT RAIL DISTRICT PLAN PUBLIC MEETINGS

### Notes from Community Meeting 1 of Cass Street Light Rail District Plan (May 5, 2003)

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Workshop 1 was held at the offices of New Jersey HMFA and was attended by a mix of residents and officials. Andrew Carten welcomed participants and gave a brief overview of the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan (the Project). Also welcoming participants were Peter Kasabach (New Jersey HMFA) and Donna Lewis (Mercer County). The Consultant Team then introduced itself; described the public participation program; described the Project Area; described the Cass Street light rail service, and its potential impacts on development; discussed the way forward to define a vision for the neighborhood.

The discussion with participants was lively and informative. It is interesting to note that of 21 completed attendee questionnaires, 9 indicated residence within the Cass Street Light Rail District, and another 9 as within 3 blocks of the District's southeast border of Schenck Street, indicating a strong community interest.

Participant residents described the assets of their neighborhood, both in discussions and in the questionnaires. The questionnaire results reflect the comments at the meeting, with participants expressing satisfaction with the sense of community in their neighborhood. The next most frequently cited asset was accessibility, usually mentioned in the context of road access (such as that offered by Route 129). Other neighborhood assets mentioned included the level of home ownership<sup>23</sup>, housing quality and various amenities (restaurants, entertainment, retail, churches).

In terms of neighborhood needs, safety and the need to address drug dealing were dominant themes in the meeting, though less so in the questionnaire responses, where the need for housing rehabilitation was the most frequently mentioned neighborhood need. It is interesting to note that very few residents cite the prison as an obstacle to neighborhood development, an attitude also voiced by residents attending the Advisory Committee Meeting.

In terms of the light rail service, few participants saw it as transforming the District in a fundamental way. In fact, it is surprising to note the degree to which it was mentioned as a *negative* factor, affecting the neighborhood through increased noise, localized traffic and increased parking needs.

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<sup>23</sup> However, taken as a whole, the District has relatively low home ownership rates. Census data for 2000 reveals that over 60 percent of housing units are renter-occupied, nearly double the rate for Mercer County as a whole.

**Table 1: Top Neighborhood Assets Listed by Participants of the  
Cass Street Light Rail District Plan Community Meeting 1**

<b>Neighborhood Assets:</b>	<b>Number of Mentions:</b>
Neighbors & family	10
Accessibility	7
Historic features	5
Homeownership	4
Housing	4
Retail	4
Churches	3
Restaurants & entertainment & sports	3
Foot traffic	1
Parking	1
Parks	1
Restaurants	1
River	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>45</b>

**Table 2: Top Neighborhood Needs Listed by Participants of the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan Community Meeting 1**

<b>Neighborhood Needs:</b>	<b>Number of Mentions:</b>
Housing rehabilitation	10
Restaurants & entertainment	7
Safety	7
Street lighting	4
Recreation facilities	3
Retail	3
Retail	2
Sidewalks	2
Prison relocation	1
Street cleaning	1
Vision	1
<b>Grand Total of Mentions</b>	<b>41</b>

**Table 3: Most Important Light Rail Service Impacts Listed by Participants of the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan Community Meeting 1**

<b>Effects of Light Rail Service:</b>	<b>Number of Mentions:</b>
Negative (noise & traffic & parking)	4
Environmental benefits	3
Accessibility	2
Residential development	2
Tourism	2
Access to arts	1
Drug dealing	1
Prostitution	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>16</b>

The findings above are surprising as many participants also voiced enthusiasm about the light rail service for the accessibility it will offer. Participants ranked the greatest need for transit service to be downtown connections (which the light rail will not serve in its current configuration), followed closely by connections to the North East Corridor (NEC) and the Train Station (which it will).

**Table 3: Most Important Light Rail Service Impacts Listed by Participants of the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan Community Meeting 1**

<b>Current Needs for Transit Connections:</b>	<b>Number of Mentions:</b>
Downtown	11
NEC / Train Station	10
Camden	2
Lawrenceville	2
Extended service hours	1
Waterfront	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>27</b>

**Conclusions:**

In summary, many participants indicated reservations about the light rail’s potential impact on the District. Several were extremely thoughtful, pointing out that activity at Waterfront Park would not provide enough of a base to generate sustained ridership. The current schedule constraints (with a 9PM final southbound train departure) were seen as compounding a limited role for light rail to serve Waterfront Park. Several others were enthusiastic about the potential for the light rail to bring in patrons for Trenton’s performing arts activities.

Few of the participants mentioned the potential for *residential* development offered by the light rail. This could point to a crucial need to discuss such potential in a more sustained manner for the visioning process. At present, it appears residents do not see the light rail as providing a potential boost to residential development through its improving of the District’s attractiveness as a location. What is needed is a (brief) discussion during the next community meeting of this potential, such as the benefits that could be based on the light rail’s service to Burlington County and other points south.



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### Notes from Community Meeting 2 of Cass Street Light Rail District Plan (June 19, 2003)

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The Vision Workshop was held at the Lutheran Advent Church and was attended by nearly fifty residents. The Workshop received significant media coverage, including a write-up in the Trenton Times and coverage in Vision Latina.

Andrew Carten welcomed participants and gave a brief overview of the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan (the Project). The Team then summarized work on the Project to date and the previous community meeting (Beverly Harper), and presented brief discussions of the development process (Dick Voith) and success stories in transit-oriented development (Pierre Vilain). Presentations were conceived to provide residents a context within which to evaluate proposed actions with respect to the Cass Street area.

Anish Kumar then presented the Team's proposed vision statement for the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan. The presentation, titled Corridors of Opportunity, summarized the vision statement, strategy, redevelopment framework, and design guidelines. The Team in essence used the ideas and comments generated in the first workshop to inform a draft development framework outline and map (see presentation slides for Community Meeting 2 for details).

Participants broke into working groups to evaluate the redevelopment framework map. Groups were given 40 minutes to discuss a series of statements and / or directions and then reach consensus and revise their respective maps. Consideration was to be given to:

- Four corridor districts and their boundaries
- Vision statements for each district
- Development site uses (sites 1 through 4)
- Reuse or rehabilitation of existing buildings
- Infrastructure investments (pedestrian linkages, parking, and pedestrian enhancements)
- Open space enhancements (gateways, streetscape, green or plaza space)

Four different development framework maps were generated during the visioning workshop and have been illustrated using computer graphics software for clarity. A synthesis of comments and map revisions was organized by categories (modified district boundaries, modified visions, additional uses, infrastructure improvements, and rehabilitation or reuse) and depicted on each team's drawing (see attached maps).

A common elements analysis was completed by overlaying the four development maps and highlighting ideas, comments, and revisions that repeatedly appeared. Each group agreed that the corridor districts and visions were appropriate. However, two groups did suggest extending the Broad Street - South district towards Liberty Street and widening it southeast to Grand Street. Overwhelming consensus was apparent for preserving the "historic" neighborhood retail feel of South Broad Street. Improved pedestrian connections to and from this area via Cass Street were important to all groups. Upgrading the intersection of Cass Street and Route 129 was of particular interest to all groups as well. Below is a list of 8 common elements that were common to the 4 groups:

1. Gateways
2. New arts or theater use on parcel 1
3. Park or open space at Dye and South Broad Streets
4. Traffic and intersection upgrades at Cass Street and Route 129
5. Parking garage with retail on parcel 3
6. Streetscape enhancements and better pedestrian connections on Cass Street
7. Rehabilitation of the Doll Factory
8. Vision and boundaries of districts

Participants were actively engaged throughout the Community Meeting, and raised numerous substantive issues. Of sixteen evaluation forms completed, 15 felt the Community Meeting had given you a better understanding of the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan; 12 stated it had caused them to want to become actively involved in the public process, and 11 felt they were more positively inclined with regards to the Cass Street Light Rail District Plan.

Several participants expressed strong pessimism regarding the light rail's ability to leverage redevelopment in the district. Others found the transit-oriented development successes of communities such as Maplewood and South Orange irrelevant to Trenton. One participant mentioned that the exterior walls of the New Jersey State Prison might not be an appropriate structure for hanging and presenting art due to the potential for pedestrian injuries from inmates throwing objects.