

URBAN PLANNING WORKSHOP: PARKSIDE NEIGHBORHOODS, CITY OF TRENTON

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2004 Urban Planning Workshop will focus on a study of two adjacent residential neighborhoods located on the west side of Trenton, NJ. The study will be carried out on behalf of the State of New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA) and the City of Trenton Department of Housing and Economic Development.

The two neighborhoods - - Parkside West and Parkside East - - are located near the western boundary of the City and extend for approximately one mile along the south side of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. The Parkside West area is defined by Sullivan Way to the west, Route 29 to the south, and Parkside Avenue to the east. The Parkside East study area extends eastward to Hermitage Avenue, with West State Street as the southern border (see attached location maps).

2. PLANNING ISSUES

The HMFA recently undertook a preliminary study of the City's residential neighborhoods in order to assess their economic strengths and weaknesses, particularly in relation to the area's housing market. The Parkside Neighborhoods were identified as areas that needed special attention and study given that they compared unfavorably with their immediate neighbors in terms of a number of economic parameters including income levels, land values, property maintenance, etc.

The HMFA has suggested a number of study objectives that will guide the workshop program:

- To identify factors that have led to the deterioration of housing stock in the Parkside neighborhoods.
- To prepare a detailed inventory of physical conditions including building condition, environmental assets and problems, natural features etc.
- To evaluate and assess quality of life issues (e.g. social services programs, education, etc.)
- To develop proposals for neighborhood revitalization that will encourage future housing investment in the area and include an action plan defining initial implementation programs.

Both neighborhoods are dominated by housing uses which include single family homes, duplexes, townhouses and a number of apartment complexes such as Edgewood Commons. Adjacent to the study area are a number of major assets that include the canal and the recreation facilities within Cadawalder Park; the Holland Middle School and the Mercer Street Friends Center.

3. WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENT

The Planning Workshop will prepare an illustrated planning report that will analyze existing conditions within the neighborhood and identify recommendations for future revitalization. Information will also be collected on relevant case studies and programs conducted in other urban areas in the USA where efforts have been made to revitalize urban neighborhoods.

The twelve-week work program for this workshop will include the following steps:

- Meet with State and City officials and staff to review study objectives, background information, etc.
- Conduct site analysis and on-site surveys to establish land uses, conditions, housing and economic data, zoning characteristics, and other data needed to gain an understanding of the major issues affecting the study area.
- Conduct meetings and interviews with relevant State and City agencies and departments, local stakeholders, and others to determine needs and opportunities and begin the process of formulating neighborhood revitalization strategies.
- Prepare detailed plan proposals encompassing land use recommendations, housing investment proposals and proposals to improve the quality of life for study area residents.
- Develop presentation material (maps, PowerPoint presentation, etc.) and a final, illustrated report.

In addition to the planning work required to complete the above assignment, the workshop will seek to cover the following areas of interests/skills:

- Examination of selected urban planning case studies, focusing on urban projects in the local region.
- Provide a general introduction to planning practice including elements such as land-use and urban design analyses; environmental impact studies; zoning; transportation planning; market studies and community participation.
- Presentation techniques: reports, graphic presentation, slide presentation, etc.
- Provide insight in urban planning/design consultancy (e.g. client promotion, job administration, work process).

4. TIMETABLE

The 12 week program will be divided into two sections, and will include an interim presentation as well as a final presentation. The first half of the semester will focus on detailed analyses of existing conditions and issues; the second will concentrate on the preparation of ideas and proposals for the study area. The preliminary schedule is outlined below:

Week 1	Workshop introduction; overview of assignments.
Week 2	Site meeting in Trenton; meeting with State and City officials.
Week 3-4	Work on individual assignments related to site analysis; site surveys; meetings and interviews with residents and local stakeholders; review of relevant case studies.
Week 5	Prepare findings for interim presentation.
Week 6	Interim presentations to client (in Trenton).
Week 7	Mid-term break (Possible travel program to review relevant case studies in other cities).
Week 8	Review study objectives and assignments for remainder of workshop; submit draft report of existing conditions/issues.
Week 9-11	Follow-up meetings with area representatives; preparation of recommendations.
Week 12	Preparation for final presentation
Week 13	Final presentation to HMFA, City officials and other study participants (in Trenton)

A written report will be prepared prior to the end of the semester.

5. SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER 19-OCTOBER 24

Regular workshop sessions are scheduled weekly, on Wednesdays from 1:00 pm - 4:10 pm in Room FR205. Additional meetings and on-site work will involve regular visits to Trenton. The schedule for the first part of the semester is as follows:

Week 1	September 15 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to workshop• Assignments for existing conditions analysis
Week 2	September 22 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case Study: Willow Street, Waterbury, CT• Site visit and survey• Meeting with HMFA and City officials (2:00 p.m.)
Week 3	September 29 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review individual assignments. Topics to

include:

- Existing land uses
- Building conditions
- Natural Assets
- Market and Economic conditions
- Transportation (roads, transit, parking)
- Context: linkages and surrounding uses/facilities
- Best practices (relevant case studies)

Week 4 October 6th

- Follow-up site visit/surveys
- Interviews with selected study area and City representatives

Week 5 October 13th

- Review study area issues
- Prepare for interim presentation
- Guest: Frank Fish, Principal, BFJ:
Zoning analysis. Case study: East 76th Street, Manhattan

Week 6 October 20th

Interim Presentation to Client Group, in Trenton
(2:00 p.m.)

6. CONTACTS

Our client and other potential study participants include the following:

CLIENT GROUP:

- Peter Kasabach (609) 278-7457
Policy & Community Development
New Jersey Housing & Mortgage Finance Agency
637 South Clinton Avenue
P.O. Box 18550
Trenton, NJ 08650-2085

- Andrew Carten, Director (609) 989-3502
 Division of Planning
 City Hall Annex – Third Floor
 319 East State Street
 Trenton, NJ 08608

OTHER CONTACTS

- James Lytle, Superintendent, Holland Middle School (609) 989-2730
- Councilwoman Annette Lartigue (609) 353-3858
- Wendy Nardi, Trenton Public Library (609) 392-7188
- Sally Lane, Trenton Convention & Visitors Bureau (609) 777-1770
- Michael Carne: Mercer Street Friends (609) 396-1506
- Marty Johnson, Isles (609) 393-5656

7. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

As far as possible, the workshop has been structured to enable workshop students to work as “consultants” for the HMFA and the City’s Department of Housing and Economic Development. This will involve teamwork as well as work on an individual basis. The workshop requirements include:

- Regular attendance at classes
- Full participation in necessary field work and data gathering
- Completion of writing assignments for the mid-term and final reports
- Participation in oral presentations to client