



Mayor Gusciora alongside Olympic Champion Athing Mu at her Victory Parade

MAYOR W. REED GUSCIORA'S

STATE OF THE CITY REPORT

FALL 2021 / CITY OF TRENTON





A WORD FROM THE MAYOR

Trenton is a city that demands progress, and that progress is never easy. Sometimes, we have to fight tooth and nail for every inch of improvement. Every derelict house taken down. Every pothole filled. Every deadly weapon seized. Every young resident who can finally spend a fun, safe day in a park or pool.

Trenton is at a crossroads – a crossroads that offers us considerable opportunity if we can find common ground and work together. The signs are all there. Our last virtual auction attracted record offers on dozens of Trenton homes. This year's census has our population increasing for the first time in 70 years – there are now more than 90,000 of us that call this city home. Trenton has also been listed as a top three municipality statewide with growing property values.

On top of all of this is \$73 million in direct federal aid via the American Rescue Plan that will help us recover from COVID-19.

But we have to do our part to continue to nurture this progress, and, most importantly, ensure that the growth of the city benefits all our residents and not just a select few.

As this report will show you, we're using unprecedented federal and state aid, smart budget planning and extensive community engagement to renovate city parks, modernize public safety and make long overdue infrastructure improvements across Trenton. And we can do all of this without asking for a local tax increase from our residents.

God bless America, and God bless the City of Trenton. Let's continue to lift this city together.

W. REED GUSCIORA
MAYOR

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: *Nurture new and existing businesses and facilitate tax-producing residential, industrial and commercial properties.*

- Issued **955 new certificates of occupancy**.
- Major **Van Sciver Housing Project** underway in Downtown Trenton.
 - This will transform three vacant buildings into **120 brand new apartments** with more than 7,500 square feet of **ground floor retail spaces**.
 - Of the 120 homes, most will be **market rate**.
- **TerraCycle**, a top-100 *Forbes* company and worldwide player in the recycling industry, bought two vacant lots in Trenton to expand their main office.
- Approved a loan to **relocate Princeton Hydro headquarters and employees** to a vacant industrial site that hasn't been occupied in 25 years. The lot will be transformed into three floors of unique, state-of-the-art office space.
- Passed a cannabis ordinance that allows for **10 dispensaries citywide** and permits related businesses to operate in the downtown area.
- Promoted neighborhood beautification with **Adopt-a-Lot and Community Gardens Programs**, through which residents can legally maintain vacant lots as agricultural or botanical gardens, reading spaces or anything else that would benefit their neighborhood.
- **Partnered with 12 Trenton influencers** in music, arts and local news as part of a video campaign showcasing a variety of Trenton businesses.

Welcome to Trenton



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Nurture new and existing businesses and facilitate tax-producing residential, industrial and commercial properties.

- The Division of Economic Development manages multiple **programs dedicated to commercial assistance**, including Business Improvement Incentive and the Job Creation Loan, as well as state and federal incentives.
 - The city's **Building Improvement Grant** is helping 104 Perry fix up a gutted commercial space.
 - **Job Creation Loan for Princeton Hydro** to relocate jobs to Trenton.
- Trenton's business community has weathered the pandemic better than other New Jersey cities, facing fewer than a dozen business closures due to COVID-19 in contrast to similar cities with much higher rates.
- Leveraged the **Building Improvement Grant** to help update the façades at **Sabor Latino** and **R. Giaquinto Shoe Repair**.
- Leveraged **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** money to help **1911 Smokehouse BBQ** expand their three-season dining in their back patio.
- The **Trenton Emergency Loan program** has been approved and has provided essential funds to **keep 38 Trenton businesses open**.
- **52 new businesses** have opened in the city this year to date, including:
 - Royal Cake Creations, Food Bar and Grill, North Side Café, Lucky's Lunchbox, Success Barber Shop, Dylilah's Sweet Sin'Sation, A Prepared Place Natural Haircare and BeSuted.
- **Shop Trenton program** and **Eat Local Club** supports local businesses by promoting them through a variety of means including YouTube videos and other social media promotion.
- Assisted **15 senior citizen households** across all four wards in securing loans through the **Emergency Rehabilitation** Program to renovate their homes.



Ribbon cutting ceremony for local business BeSuted



Vessel groundbreaking on Perry Street

TRENTON WATER WORKS

GOAL: Continue to maintain Trenton Water Works (TWW) as a state-of-the-art facility that provides clean drinking water to our residents and customers.

- To date, more than 6,300 **lead service lines** have been replaced with a safe copper alternative.
- Over the next eight months, TWW will replace more than **3,600 lead service lines** in Lawrence, Hamilton and Ewing Township.
- Replaced all **24 filters** at the water filtration plant.
- A **\$5.5 million project** to renovate the plant's raw water intake is in the works.
- The city is issuing **\$4 million in ARP funds** to replace the water main in the Olden Ave business district that is notorious for flooding. The project will replace approximately **1.8 miles of water main** in Ewing Township beginning in the fall of 2022.
- Launched the **new TWW Training and Apprenticeship Program**, which for the first time in the utility's history provides current employees with education necessary to pursue higher-level jobs in water treatment and distribution. In the last year, the program **graduated 14 students** and **welcomed 14 new students** for the 2022 class.



Mayor Gusciara with members of the TWW Training and Apprenticeship Program



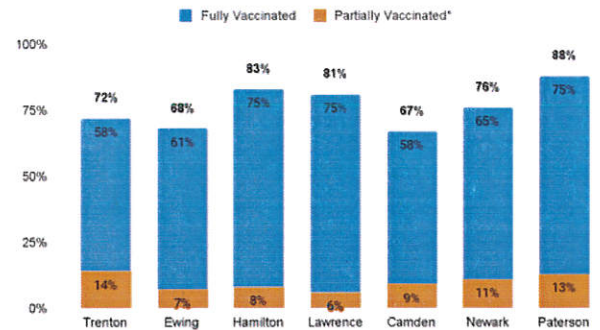
Mayor Gusciara and Councilman Rodriguez welcome a student from the TWW Training and Apprenticeship Program

PUBLIC HEALTH

GOAL: Ensure the health and safety of all city residents, especially those who are the most vulnerable.

- More than **73% of Trenton residents** have received the COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Highest vaccination rates** are among our African American community at **47%** and Latino community at **40%**.
- **Vaccinated 518 residents** unable to travel to a clinic on their own through the **Homebound Vaccination Program**.
- **Provided 200 families, 152 singles, and 418 children** with rent expenses.
- **Helped more than 800 homeless households, fire victims and seniors** secure housing or avoid eviction.
 - **32 families** with condemnations or evictions, and **six families** affected by fires were placed in secure housing by Community Relations and Social Services (CR/SS).
 - CR/SS helped **36 seniors locate subsidized senior housing** placements.
 - CR/SS helped **56 seniors maintain their present housing placements and avoid eviction**.
- **Delivered up to 800 meals a day to seniors and COVID-impacted households** thanks to the help of Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, Meals on Wheels and the Mercer County Office on Aging.
- **Served more than 60,000 breakfast and lunch meals** during the summer months thanks to our City Parks Summer Food Service Program.
- Advanced a proposal to allocate ARP funds for a **Mental Health and Wellness Program** staffed with a clinical psychologist, social worker, and nurse who will work with community and municipal mental health resources.

Percent of Population Vaccinated (18+)



Percent of population vaccinated in comparable towns and cities



COVID-19 testing took place in parks across the City



Mayor Gusciura touring TPS COVID-19 prep

PUBLIC SAFETY

GOAL: Improve the safety and wellbeing of our residents through community-focused policies, modernized police and fire technology and an emphasis on improving quality of life for all residents.

- **Commit \$4 million in ARP funds** to update our outdated 911 emergency system and radios.
- **187 guns, 6,154 grams of cocaine, 42,377 decks of heroin** and **more than \$870,000 in suspected illegal proceeds** have been seized this year to date.
- To date, the City's Office of Returning Citizens has processed more than 100 applicants, **54 of which resulted in successful employment for formerly incarcerated individuals.**
- Since partnering with the Red Cross Home Fire Campaign, TFD has installed more than **1,100 smoke detectors** in homes throughout the city.
- Fire and Emergency Services have administered more than **21,000 vaccinations** at Trenton Fire Headquarters.
- Four firefighters were recognized with the **American Legion Firefighter of the Year Team Valor Award** for exemplary bravery for their response to a June 2020 house fire.
- A **new fire engine** was ordered and will be delivered in 2022.
- **\$500 thousand** from the American Rescue Plan earmarked for new SCBA equipment for the department.
- The city introduced the new **State Police Real Time Crime Center**, where law enforcement officers from across federal, state and local agencies collect and analyze data to track suspects and predict future criminal activity.



TFD firefighters receive the American Legion Firefighter of the Year Team Valor Award



Mayor Guscia swears in Lieutenant Bethesda Stokes, the first Black woman in TPD history to hold that rank.

HISTORICAL SITES AND PARKS

GOAL: *Maintain and improve Trenton's parks, sports facilities and cherished historical sites to provide residents with safe sites for recreation, outdoor activity and community programming.*

- **\$4 million in American Rescue Plan funds** will go towards **repairs and improvements to the Trenton Free Public Library** on Academy Street, including a new HVAC system, a new roof and extensive exterior and interior repairs.
- Ongoing HVAC, electrical and cosmetic improvements at the **Passage Theatre, Douglass House and Cadwalader Pavilion.**
- Painted and refurbished the **historic Jackson Street Bridge** in Mill Hill Park.
- **Proposed \$1.9 million for sweeping improvements at recreational fields across Trenton.** These fields include North Trenton Athletic Fields, West End Athletic Fields, Hetzel Field, Wetzel Field, Chambersburg Field, 611 Field and Cadwalader Park. The funds will be used for repairs and improvements, including new batting cages and bleachers.
- A plan to repave, repaint and install new backboards at **14 basketball courts** across the city is in progress.
- Received a **\$1 million Green Acres Grant** to construct a skate park and associated sports surfaces at **Amtico Square.**
- **Made safety improvements in playgrounds city-wide,** including MLK Park, which was completely remodeled last winter.
- Director Maria Richardson and the Department of Recreation, Natural Resources and Culture received the **"Excellence in Design" award** in May from the New Jersey Parks and Recreation Association for the new layout of Hetzel Pool and spray ground complex.



Mayor Gusciara at the Hetzel Pool Jump Ceremony

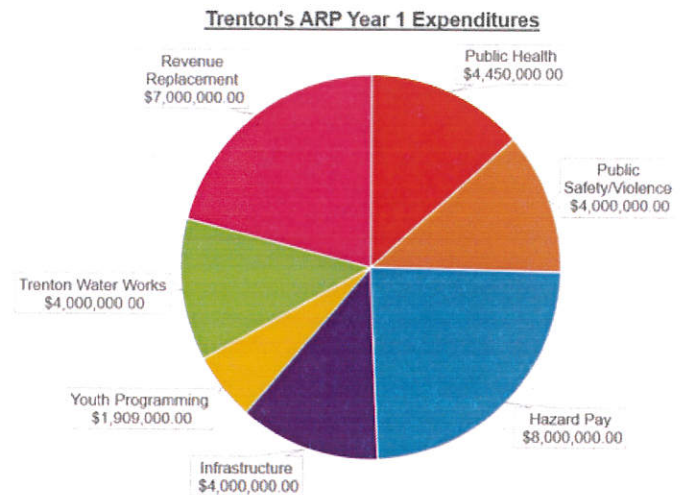


Rendering of the Amtico Square Sports Complex

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

GOAL: Maximize state and federal funding to improve services for city residents and reduce the property tax burden.

- Partnered with DCA to secure **\$10 million in capital city aid** and **\$10 million in transitional aid**, including a **bonus \$5 million** allocated specifically to update our aging police fleet and parks in all four wards.
- We are set to take advantage of more than **\$30 million in additional state aid** from **transitioning to a calendar year budget**. As a bonus, residents will only have one tax bill a year instead of quarterly estimated installments.
- Provided **hazard pay** to our municipal workforce that was heavily impacted by COVID-19.
- Our recently passed budget includes **long-overdue back-pay** and **pay increases** that will increase the salary of some employees 20% over the life of the new contract. **More than 95% of these employees reside in Trenton.**
- Finalized preliminary **American Rescue Plan** proposal focusing federal aid into three critical categories:
 - **\$20.94 million on building youth and neighborhood resilience**
 - **\$35.12 million on transforming aging infrastructure**
 - **\$15.63 million on investing in local jobs and businesses.**
- Developed website at **www.talktrenton.org** where residents can view Trenton's American Rescue Plan proposal and leave questions, comments or concerns for everyone to see.
- Strategic use of American Rescue Plan funds, transitioning to a calendar year budget and additional state aid will enable us to present **three budgets in a row that call for zero percent local tax increase.**



Mayor Gusciora and Business Administrator Adam Cruz celebrate the budget transition

PUBLIC WORKS & INSPECTIONS

GOAL: *Ensure that all municipal buildings and properties are properly maintained, secured and safe, and enforce all rules and regulations governing the use, occupancy, construction and alteration of all property within the City.*

- This year, our Public Works Department has filled more than **2,700 potholes**, replaced **790 street signs**, cleared more than **300 alleyways** and cleaned **1,350 properties**. They also issued more than **2,000 tickets for violations**. Even our Parks Department abated another **323 vacant properties**.
- HED inspectors carried out **1,250 additional inspections** as part of a **blight reduction campaign** focused on vacant properties to be cleaned and secured.
- This has resulted in **223 properties referred for cleanup**, **271 properties abated** and **98 summonses issued for violations**.
- Altogether, HED conducted **3,700 complaint inspections**, including **290 rental complaints**.
- HED processed more than **2,000 inspector generated complaints**, of which **1,400** were called into the Division directly or reported via the GovAlert app by City residents. **1,100** of those complaints were abated and **1,000 court summonses** were issued for violations.
- By the end of October 2021, PSE&G will **repave more than 30 roads** all over the city that were torn up for line maintenance.
- Our \$2 million plan to **pave 57 additional city streets** will start in Spring 2022.



City employees beautify a City park



Maintenance of a City traffic light



Track blight reduction at www.trentondemolition.com