



**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

**NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION TAX CREDITS PROGRAM (NRTC)**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS, 2016**

The information on the following pages is intended for use as part of the NRTC Program “Qualified Projects Pool” (or Q.P.P.), as a companion document to the “Information about Qualified Projects” spreadsheet. It contains further information and details about the proposed activities for each project listed in the Q.P.P. The information herein was composed and submitted by the organizations which submitted NRTC applications in the fall of 2016; it has been edited only as necessary, to correct typographical errors, for clarity and for spacing/formatting/length purposes.

The Table of Contents contains hyperlinks for each listed project. By hovering the cursor over a listing name, then left-clicking with the mouse, you will move in the document to that listing’s text. A hyperlink at the end of each listing text will return you to the Table of Contents.

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## Camden Lutheran Housing, Inc.

### North Camden 2017

Camden Lutheran Housing, Inc.'s ("CLHI") Decorative Board-Up Campaign has completed 113 decorative board ups in North Camden with enthusiastic support of the neighborhood residents over the past 3 years. This effort supports the "Public Safety" goals of the Plan by "brightening and beautifying the neighborhood". CLHI contracts with The Neighborhood Foundation to implement the activity with CLHI recruiting neighborhood residents who are trained to use power tools, paint and install the panels and earn a stipend. We have been very pleased with the visual results and believe this activity has spurred an amazing domino effect of positive investment by community residents, property owners, local businesses and homeowners. We need to keep this momentum moving in the positive direction we're witnessing in this neighborhood. In 2015, CLHI surveyed the entire neighborhood and found 236 vacant, boarded buildings. To date, we have completed 113 decorative board ups so that leaves 178 boarded up properties left scattered throughout the neighborhood in various states of ugliness and neglect. The City has now completed about 80 demolitions of the previously counted vacant, abandoned properties in North Camden which now leaves 43 which have not undergone the decorative board up process. CLHI needs to complete the 43 remaining properties and offer the economic opportunity to neighborhood residents to participate. We will also "touch-up" the 113 properties that were previously completed. Eliminating these eyesores which inflict a tremendous amount of blight and safety issues for the surrounding neighbors is vast improvement than just allowing them to exist in their current conditions.

CLHI launched the "Block Supporter Initiative" during the summer of 2015. This incredible effort has already resulted in tangible results that has North Camden undergoing real change in the physical environment and resident attitude. It supports goals of the Plan's "Public Safety" goals by getting the neighbors to get to know each other and work together to make North Camden a safer place for everyone. The concept is simple: engage residents right where they live, right in front of their home to get them to actively improve the quality of their life and their children's lives where it matters most - at home. The initiative promotes neighborhood pride and respect with responsibility and accountability by the residents. The BSI encourages neighborhood beautification through keeping the front and back of the homes clean and free of trash and debris, the installation of window boxes and planters on front porches, decorative flags and tree lights all at no charge. CLHI also is able to learn about the residents' concerns and needs and potentially assist them in connecting with existing resources they may not be aware of. More than 275 households and 15 bodegas are currently participating. We propose to engage and "sign-up" another 225 families in 2017. Funds requested will assist in purchasing much needed landscaping equipment, power tools, decorative materials such as flower boxes, plants, tree lights and more.

Over the course of the last two years CLHI staff has spent a lot more time looking at the physical conditions of the North Camden neighborhood. After decoratively boarding up houses and engaging the residents to clean up and beautify their homes with BSI window boxes and flags another negative problem was quickly noticed and it seemed for the first time – the billboard messages! Once you look at the pictures of the billboard messages in North Camden, you soon realize how negative, destructive and demoralizing they really are. These billboards are some of the first impressions new visitors are greeted with – death (funeral home advertising), guns & jail (for straw buyers) and (quick/cheap/no spouse signature needed!) divorce are just some of the messages. As you travel farther into North Camden you see there's really no need for good credit to buy a car and liquor, cigarettes and paying your child support are just a few of the not so subtle suggestions. CLHI is proposing to "change the message" with leasing all remaining 6

billboards with more positive advertising and marketing! Image children seeing a billboard that welcomes them back to school in September or Rutgers, Rowan and Camden County College encouraging some prospective students to consider continuing their educational pursuits after high school but at a much younger age than just high school juniors or seniors. After School and Summer free programming provided by the YMCA in the North Camden Parks is spread word of mouth and by use of neighborhood flyers, but seeing a happy child's face larger than life on a billboard might have a more lasting impression for the Mom looking for safe places for her children to play near home. There are millions of positive messages we could be sending and sharing in North Camden, we just need the resources to CHANGE THE MESSAGE! This effort strongly supports the neighborhood plan Public Safety goals of improving the neighborhood public perception and effecting positive change in the environment.

The NJ Tree Foundation (NJTF) plans to plant 15 trees with 25 volunteers. Tree plantings will implement Section 5.8 of the Plan, reforesting the existing residential core by planting trees in front of residents' homes, and Section 2.6: incorporating a landscape planting and maintenance program, reclaiming and maintaining vacant land to create a cleaner, safer environment. The NJTF will incorporate tree maintenance, addressing maintenance needs of trees on streets, in reclaimed lots, and in parks, with the NJTF Green Streets Crew. The Crew is comprised of men under parole supervision trained to plant and maintain trees. NRTC funds will provide extended work for the Crew. Through TreeKeepers, residents will learn tree maintenance. Residents and organizations will submit applications for trees in their communities, which will be reviewed by the NJTF's Program Director. Trees will be planted by-hand in partnership with residents, local organizations, and volunteers. The NJTF will lead by example with tree maintenance by using a trained crew of men under parole supervision to assess, inventory, prune, and mulch the trees. This maintenance work will create six transitional job opportunities on the NJTF Green Streets crew. The NJTF will meet all proposed objectives while maintaining a 95% survival rate on all plant material, to be monitored 1-year post planting.

Housing instability disrupts college plans, jeopardizes financial aid options and hampers youths' ability to build on their early successes at Hopeworks and stick to the path that will help them achieve their goals. In 2010 Hopeworks expanded the opportunities available to Camden youth when we launched the CRIB (Community Responding In Belief) – a community house where up to ten Hopeworks youth live, study, and work together. Our CRIB program offers advanced Hopeworks youth a supportive community and a place to live while they work part-time and complete their Associate's Degree at nearby colleges, including Camden County College, Rutgers University and others. We propose to use these funds to help cover the cost of continuing success at the CRIB by helping to cover the cost of youth and staff salaries. The youth who live in the CRIB are employed by Hopeworks. CRIB youth earn approximately \$1000 per month and can only hold a job at Hopeworks if they are also enrolled in school. In this way, Hopeworks leverages these job opportunities in order to get youth back in school and to stay in school. The CRIB is in alignment with the neighborhood plan by addressing and increasing the workforce readiness goals and by protecting the youth's future by effecting positive change in their environment.

Respond Inc. is requesting start-up funding for the Auto Repair Program which will begin operation in 2016. The funding is for Auto Training Mechanics, Auto Technology Trainer and Repair Shop Manager, a Service Desk Adviser in the repair shop and 4 part-time Auto Techs. The repair shop plans to become self-sufficient during the second year of operation. The repair shop will provide graduates of the training program hands on experience prior to becoming employed in the industry. The work experience at the repair shop will guarantee a higher opportunity for employment while preparing for the Automotive Service Excellence Certification (ASEC).

Respond's Clean and Green Program is carrying out the goals and objectives of SOW's Neighborhood Plan to transform the 9 square block area back to its appearance of over 50 years ago. Clean and Green workers have stabilized over 100,000 square feet of derelict lots. These neglected lots have become green with grass, flowers and deciduous shrubs and rose bushes. Many lots have been fenced with vinyl or stockade fencing. Pocket parks have been created for recreational use of neighborhood residents. Local residents have planted flowers and shrubs on their own properties transforming entire neighborhoods. In the winter, months the Clean and Green workers keep snow off the sidewalks, making it safe for elderly residents to maneuver their way outside. In the fall, mulch is added to the landscaping to protect the new plantings and trees over the coming winter. Members of the Clean and Green crew received certificates of accomplishment from Camden County College for completing the landscaping course. Several have started their own businesses or are working for landscaping companies. GED preparation is available to members of the Clean and Green crew during their attachment to the program.

Our 'Safe Places to Play' Initiative is in accordance with the Plan's "Open Space and Recreation" reclaiming of recreational spaces and provides structured, safe recreation in public parks to children ages 4-16 administered by trained YMCA staff. Our commitment to the city is reflected in our team, with Camden City residents representing approximately 80% of program staff. As we move into the fourth year of park programming, we continue to see a strong need for more well-trained staff, with the appropriate job-specific and general professional skills needed to implement 'Safe Places to Play' and other entry level positions. For our 2016 program, we seek to enhance our 'Safe Places to Play' Initiative programming by investing in the training and development of our staff. The YMCA's Youth Intervention Department currently operates R.E.A.C.H. (Realizing Educational and Career Hopes), a Workforce Readiness and Life Skill Training program for young adults between the ages of 18-24. The focus of this program is to assist a young person in becoming labor or higher education ready while also enhancing the individual's life and leadership skills. Through classes, workshops, individual mentoring sessions, leadership retreats, and individual coaching sessions, youth are able to become "work-ready" while having access to YMCA professionals who serve as a support system. Building on the success of our R.E.A.C.H. program, we would like to offer similar job-readiness, mentoring and training components to our Safe Places Play staff development plan. Beginning in March, staff hired to work as 'Safe Places to Play' Park Counselors will automatically be entered into an intensive staff development plan designed to suit his/her professional development needs.

Cooper's Ferry Partnership (CFP) proposes to manage the design and engineering of renovations to Cornelius Martin Park, a large but underutilized park on the eastern edge of North Camden (10th St.). At present, it is primarily utilized for softball and soccer. North Camden Little League (NCLL) is interested in further utilization of the park, but requires additional baseball fields to do so. With the Cooper's Walk housing development being constructed across the street, there is expected to be increased demand for high-quality park space in this section of North Camden. Working with the Save Our Waterfront stakeholders, including NCLL and CLHI, CFP will engage an engineering firm to design and engineer upgrades to the park. During that time, CFP will identify and work to secure funding for construction to move forward with construction in an expeditious manner. This project closely aligns with Goal 3 of Section 5.0 (Open Space and Recreation) of the North Camden Neighborhood Plan- "Reclaim, improve, and maintain the recreational resources that exist within North Camden today".

CFP proposes to manage the design, fabrication, and installation of neighborhood signage to beautify North Camden and express the neighborhood's unique identity. This Gateway and Corridor Signage Campaign could include

prominent gateway signs and streetlight banners. Working with the SOW stakeholders and the community at large, CFP will engage an artist to design the campaign, strategically select locations, and oversee fabrication and installation. This project closely aligns with Goal 4 of Section 6.0 (Circulation and Infrastructure) of the North Camden Neighborhood Plan- “Beautify the neighborhood’s gateways and call attention to North Camden’s presence with new signage and art.” The project is also closely aligned with Recommendation 6.6 Poynt to North Camden- “Launch a signage campaign to increase awareness of North Camden.”

Respond needs to address the failing roof at one of its neighborhood day care facilities at the Vine St. Infant and Child Care Canter. This center has been serving the neighborhood for the last 30 years and its services are in great demand by the families it assists in meeting their child care needs. Preserving this institution is in alignment with the neighborhood goals in the Human Capital and Community Building section of the plan by ensuring that neighborhood services serve the neighborhood and reinforces the focus on the families and young parents as they try to increase their educational attainment and allowing parents to pursue employment opportunities.

Respond is also in need of replacing a Hot/Cold Food Delivery/Distribution Truck which is used to service the breakfast, lunch and snacks of the Respond owned and operated child care facilities. Respond has 5 such facilities in North Camden serving more than 500 infants and children on a daily basis. The purchase of the truck will ensure that the neighborhood services and jobs associated with the Respond Culinary Arts training program and catering service will be able to meet these needs in North Camden.

Finally, Respond has proposed to rehabilitate 4 properties that they own but are in desperate need of repair. The four properties are currently boarded and all are located on N. 5<sup>th</sup> St which is one of the most blighted and dismal streets in North Camden. With the recent changes and intolerance of illegal drugs, and the sale of such, by the new Camden County Metro Police Department, N. 5<sup>th</sup> St is poised for dramatic change. The rehabilitation of these four homes will vastly improve the area and its appearance will be transformative to the families who have remained during the worst of times. Respond will make the homes available for rent by low and moderate income families once they are completed.

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## Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen

### Unity Square 2017

The Unity Square 2017 NRTC Project is designed to achieve and continue to advance the outcomes of Unity Square's NRTC Neighborhood Plan. Among the specific Neighborhood Plan outcomes in this Project are: the creation of affordable homeownership opportunities; the strengthening of both the Housing Resource Center and Unity Square Community Center; the development of "Neighborhood Networks" and local leaders; the continuation of our Latino crime watch; and the improvement of the Remsen Ave. commercial strip.

The Project is also tailored to address distress, particularly with respect to local housing conditions. There are currently 48 distressed residential properties in the neighborhood: 21 abandoned properties, 20 properties in pre-foreclosure, and 7 recently foreclosed homes. Homeownership opportunities have declined, as in 2013 and 2015 only 7 mortgages were originated for the purchase of a home to reside in. The majority of real estate transactions were undertaken by investors.

Distress is also present in the rental housing market, which is both expensive and of low quality. Two thirds of renters in the Unity Square neighborhood were cost burdened in 2013. The neighborhood has an aging housing stock – with most residences built before 1940 – and the current investor class of landlords has not, as a whole, maintained these properties well. The City of New Brunswick's Consolidated Plan 2015-2019 notes that among Low Income Households (31-50% of AMI) in New Brunswick, 85.2% of such households suffer from at least one of the four HUD-identified housing problems.

Objective 1 of the Project is the rehabilitation of 9 abandoned or foreclosed neighborhood homes into affordable homeownership opportunities targeted at homebuyers earning between 50% to 75% of County Median Income. These rehabs will reduce distress in the local housing market by returning units to the housing market, adding housing supply accessible to standard homebuyer-occupants, and creating positive externalities that will have shared market-wide benefit.

This Objective will be completed in collaboration with partner Community Asset Preservation Corp. (CAPC), which will work with Catholic Charities to acquire properties to rehabilitate and oversee the construction. CAPC has a \$5 million active line of credit that it will use for acquisition and construction. Due to CAPC's external financing, the leverage ratio on NRTC funds is anticipated to be around 4. The rehabilitation work on each property is expected to take approximately 90 days.

Properties will be acquired through the National Community Stabilization Trust, direct REO purchases from financial institutions, the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac HomePath and HomeSteps programs, the City of New Brunswick's Abandoned Properties List, and the open market. Using a similar acquisition model in Unity Square's 2016 NRTC project, Catholic Charities and CAPC acquired their two targeted rehabilitation properties just a few weeks after the grant was awarded.

Objective 2 addresses distress in the rental market by amplifying the impact of the Housing Resource Center, a key outcome of the Neighborhood Plan. There is a clear, continued need for the work of the Housing Resource Center, and in this Project, the Center is engaging in several new initiatives that will broaden its impact.

The Housing Resource Center will continue its education to tenants working with tenants, the City, and other stakeholders to address substandard housing conditions. It will increase awareness of the health effects of housing, by educating the community on hazards like lead and mold.

The Center will also address information asymmetries that adversely affect the neighborhood rental housing market by acting as a clearing house for tenants seeking housing vacancies and landlords seeking responsible tenants. In so doing, the Center will also build a network of relationships with quality, responsible neighborhood landlords. The Center will work with landlords to spruce up the external appearance of their properties, making them more attractive to tenants and benefiting the neighborhood real estate market.

The Center will also work with area realtors to more effectively market properties in the Unity Square neighborhood, helping to highlight the community's positive aspects and further transform Unity Square into a "neighborhood of choice."

One of the greatest revitalization successes in Unity Square was the transformation of an abandoned fire house into the Unity Square Community Center. Objective 3, Community Leadership, Events, and Activities, helps fund programs and activities that maximize the Community Center's impact. Among the programs are ESL classes, youth programs, and family-fun activities. They also include Unity Square's Spanish-language crime watch group, a Neighborhood Plan Outcome, which meets regularly with the New Brunswick Police to identify community trouble spots and discuss patrol strategy.

Objective 3 also supports continued community outreach, organizing, and leadership development in the neighborhood, which is essential to the success of all of the revitalization activities in Unity Square. In this Project, community organizing efforts will take on a renewed block-oriented focus as proposed in the "Neighborhood Networks" Neighborhood Plan outcome. Block captains will work with their neighbors on implementing small initiatives on their blocks aimed at beautification or improving lighting and safety. In this way, block captains are empowered to address small signs of distress.

Objective 4 addresses the Neighborhood Plan outcome of improving Remsen Avenue, Unity Square's primary commercial district. The Objective seeks to install gateway signs at entrances approaching the commercial strip. It will also further beautify the commercial strip through neighborhood banners, flower planters, and public art. The gateway signs and neighborhood banners will create an identifiable sense of neighborhood down the commercial strip. This will make the area more attractive for customers and potential new businesses, and aid in attracting customers from outside of the neighborhood.

The activities in Objective 4 follow recommendations provided in 2010 by consultants from the Metro Company following a study of the Remsen Avenue commercial area commissioned by the NJ Office of Smart Growth. They will build upon other, already implemented recommendations for Remsen Ave., most notably the completion of the Unity Square Community Center and the installation of dedicated bike lanes and bike parking down the entire length of the Remsen Avenue commercial strip.

Taken together, this NRTC Project advances key outcomes of the Unity Square Neighborhood Plan, creating affordable housing, addressing distressed properties and a distressed housing market, and building upon prior investments in developing both community leadership and the Remsen Avenue commercial district. Catholic Charities and its key partners, CAPC and MCS, have proven capable at creating housing, meeting NRTC objectives, and managing finances. Based on this record, all of this Project's proposed activities are both feasible and ready to proceed. Moreover, this Project leverages other private funding, especially in its rehab initiative.

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**Community Loan Fund of New Jersey, Inc.****East Trenton Collaborative 2017**

The East Trenton Collaborative (ETC) is a partnership of nonprofit organizations, community leaders and residents working to revitalize the East Trenton neighborhood, according to a neighborhood plan updated/created in 2015. East Trenton spans the length of North Clinton Ave from Perry Street / Lincoln Ave to just past Mulberry Street, and is flanked to the north by Route 1 and to the south by the North East Corridor train line. The neighborhood plan contains goals and strategies across seven areas: community assets and programming, infrastructure, housing and redevelopment, crime and public safety, parks and open space, education and recreation, and economic development. This project addresses all of these areas, building on successful programs and piloting new initiatives rooted in plan priorities.

The project continues to focus on North Clinton Avenue as the “spine” of the neighborhood, with strategies aimed at generating excitement and momentum to strengthen and grow existing businesses, attract new businesses to the corridor, and draw new residents to the neighborhood. As part of ETC's 2016 grant, NJCC acquired and has begun redeveloping four properties at the intersection of North Clinton and North Olden Avenues, including the East Trenton Center. Radiating out from this intersection, ETC plans to acquire and fix additional properties, install art projects, gardens and pocket parks and improve the facades of vacant buildings. ETC partners have begun work to promote and improve an active business node a few blocks away, across from the Police Station and the now active and productive Capital City Farm. We are increasingly involving residents in the revitalization and place making work, including employing local contractors for rehabilitation and homeowner repairs, creating paid opportunities for youth to work with ETC partners and local businesses, and providing incentives for residents to recruit friends and family members to buy homes in the neighborhood. The project also aligns with the City of Trenton's Trenton 250 Master Plan, as East Trenton is one of the Plan's "catalyst neighborhoods." This project will also be supplemented by Isles' and the City of Trenton's Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Planning Grant, which will focus on the Assunpink Greenway Park which runs along the south end of the neighborhood.

**Physical Redevelopment**

A cornerstone of this project is a comprehensive approach to reducing abandonment and improving the building stock in order to generate positive momentum and attract additional investment by both current and future residents and businesses. The components of this approach include the acquisition and rehabilitation work mentioned above, strategies to strengthen and grow homeownership, and efforts to improve and repurpose city-owned and privately owned lots. Leveraging grant funding from other sources, ETC will target pivotal properties most likely to spur further redevelopment by others.

Building on work to be completed before year's end at the East Trenton Center, New Jersey Community Capital's (NJCC) real estate subsidiary, Community Asset Preservation Corporation (CAPC), will acquire/redevelop 5-10 units of housing and commercial space along the North Clinton Avenue corridor. First will be 615 North Clinton Ave, which CAPC is redeveloping as a mixed use building with community or commercial space and two to three housing units. CAPC is in negotiations to purchase 565-567 North Clinton Ave, the former Public Meat Market, which occupies the major corner across from the East Trenton Center. This property will provide a newly renovated commercial space,

another 2-3 housing units, and site for a public art project (see below). CAPC also intends to buy two additional properties along North Clinton Avenue being pursued by the City through tax foreclosure that will provide one commercial and at least four residential units. CAPC has secured \$160,000 in additional subsidy for housing acquisition and rehabilitation through the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation's Priority Markets Program to supplement NRTC funding. Additional physical improvements are incorporated in the Economic Development strategy (below).

ETC is also taking proactive steps to address nuisance lots and other problem properties that drive down property values and prevent the neighborhood from attracting private development. Partnering with the Department of Public Works and other City officials, ETC helped draft a stronger anti-dumping ordinance with much higher fines for violators that is now before City Council, secured the promise of at least 4 cameras to monitor sites with frequent dumping, and initiated the City's demolition of five severely derelict properties on North Clinton Ave. Isles' Clean & Green program supplements these efforts in a critical way by working on the ground to maintain and repurpose city-owned lots that would otherwise remain neglected and deter other redevelopment efforts. Isles is seeking permission to act on the City's behalf to intervene in private lots which remain a plague on the neighborhood as well.

NJCC recently conducted an updated assessment of investor-owned properties in the neighborhood which identified patterns of property sales and ownership. With housing tenure composed of 40% owner-occupied and 60% investor-owned properties, and 98% of all properties in recent years being purchased by investor owners, additional strategies are needed to preserve and grow home ownership, improve rental housing and restore the neighborhood's housing market.

To support low income homeowners, over 400 volunteers will be deployed as part of the Group Work Camp program in summer 2017 to fix 50 - 60 homes in the neighborhood. An ongoing 8-week summer work camp staffed by working age neighborhood youth will supplement that effort. A small repair fund will be administered by NJCC to assist additional homeowners needing critical repairs on a case by case basis and to make targeted external improvement on a block by block basis. NJCC will also create a homeowner recruitment and retention program, coordinating with NJCC's Mortgage Platform, local realtors, and lenders with down payment assistance programs. The program will feature "finders' fees" for residents that recruit new homebuyers and gift certificates to incentivize new owners, and will offer counseling to help at-risk home owners to stay in their homes.

#### Economic Development

One of the biggest priorities to emerge from last year's planning process was the need for youth employment. ETC is planning a Youth Employment program in which partner organizations and local businesses will employ up to 30 working age young people in internship positions, with a specific focus on activities that help implement the neighborhood plan. HomeFront will employ 8 to 10 youth to assist with their programs; A Better Way will extend their Work Camp to conduct neighborhood improvements through the summer; Isles will employ youth in their community gardening and outreach, and NJCC will connect youth with part time work at local businesses. ETC partners will collaborate to provide weekly civic leadership and mentoring sessions to youth in the program; the latter activity will be continued throughout the year by A Better Way. To help additional residents secure employment, HomeFront will assign a workforce development coordinator to assess residents' interests and capacities, connect them to education, training and jobs, and support them in their pursuits.

As a part of the 2016 grant, NJCC commissioned a study of businesses in East Trenton to determine the extent of activity, their interests and needs, their potential to expand and hire local residents, and their willingness to undertake improvements to contribute to neighborhood pride and sense of place. A key finding is that East Trenton is still one of the industrial/maker hubs of the city. Our business consultant spoke with the full range of retailers, restaurants, bodegas and industrial owners, uncovering new opportunities - including a cluster of active sculptors and metal fabricators - as well as several businesses open to moving into the neighborhood, with a particular focus on fresh food distributors to build on the neighborhood's location and the growing Capital City Farm. As part of this project we will begin implementing recommendations from the study, including offering matching grants to improve existing businesses' storefronts or production equipment, strengthening the resident-business connection, working comprehensively on retail clusters to achieve highly visible impact (including streetscaping, façade improvements, marketing and events to bring visibility, and fixing and filling vacant storefronts.), as well as engaging East Trenton businesses themselves to help implement as many of these things as possible, such as working with local fabricator businesses to create distinct street furniture such as benches, garbage cans, and planters.

Finally, our 2017 project will utilize the arts to drive economic development by employing a local muralist or sculptor to design a piece of public art and provide stipends for resident trainees to assist in the art installation. The site of the arts project will be the corner of North Olden and North Clinton Avenues, across the street from the East Trenton Center. This effort is aimed at further increasing residents' pride in the neighborhood, and building the momentum for positive change and investment by new businesses and homeowners.

#### Community-Building and Supportive Services

Continuing to engage and build resident leadership capacity remains an important priority for ETC's efforts. Isles' outreach team will expand to include one full-time and one part-time, bilingual community liaison. The team works to organize community meetings, promote ETC partner programs, and build relationships with residents in order to engage them and keep abreast of emerging issues in the neighborhood. Currently, the Outreach team is helping to launch the Small Grants program, which includes a "neighborhood pride" component, organize neighborhood clean-up days, and pilot a new Front Porch Light program on one block. By next year the Outreach team will be updating the newly launched website, publishing a monthly newsletter, organizing regular community building events and working group meetings, and helping neighbors organize their blocks to collaborate on improvements.

Other important neighborhood services will continue or be added. HomeFront will continue to provide a case manager on a part-time basis to provide services and resources to individuals and families to meet their immediate needs, ranging from food and clothing to back rent. Residents needing their GED or workforce development assistance will be enrolled in programs at HomeFront's Ewing campus or participate in ABW's forklift training program. Weekly produce distribution will continue through donations from Terhune Orchards in Princeton and the Capital City Farm.

The project will continue supporting the education of East Trenton youth through the Learning Lab, an after school and summer program for elementary school youth now under the direction of Urban Promise, and HomeFront's summer camp, which provides summer enrichment activities to at risk youth.

Preserving and memorializing the Locust Hill Cemetery, an historic African American cemetery that sits indistinguishable from the neighborhood's many vacant lots, is a key priority in the Plan. The City plans to finish

remediation and work with ETC to engage residents in the design process for the site. To supplement the physical redesign, this project will fund a participatory research project to uncover more information about those interred at the Cemetery and share this information with the Community.

To ensure that these activities are coordinated and on track, NJCC's Revitalization Coordinator and Community Strategy Advisor will oversee ETC development activities, promote collaboration between partner organizations, build ETC's capacity, and raise funds for other activities to benefit the neighborhood. The project will continue to support offices in the East Trenton Center, recently purchased by CAPC, as a base for ETC's activities. NJCC, Habitat for Humanity, HomeFront and Isles will all have staff working out of this facility, which will also provide space for community meetings and programming by other organizations.

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## Elizabeth Development Company of New Jersey Trinitas Emergency Department-Training & Education Facility

The Elizabeth Development Company respectfully requests a \$985,000 grant for training and education that will directly contribute to the economic vitality of the City of Elizabeth. Expanding and modernizing the Trinitas Regional Medical Center (TRMC) Emergency Department (ED) will maximize this facility's potential as a vital resource for education and training, employment and healthcare. NRTC funding will cover a significant portion of the \$4.3 million in remaining construction costs for this \$18 million project, and may be eligible for a 100% match from a generous private donor.

This project directly addresses the Midtown Elizabeth Plan for Community Revitalization's economic revitalization goal, which still remains in effect. This goal is to "Create, preserve, enhance and attract commercial establishments and service based industries in/to the Midtown business district". It also addresses the plan's family development, health and enrichment goal, which is to "Strengthen and improve the quality of life for youth, seniors and families by providing a wide variety of convenient and accessible services that support health, education, recreation, employment and personal development of neighborhood residents". The new emergency department ("ED") will serve as a training ground for over 678 individuals annually, at least 175 of whom will live locally. It will create 179 jobs for local tradesman and laborers and at least 30 part-time back office jobs during its construction phase. Additional permanent employment growth within the ED is also expected. Based on industry statistics, the economic impact of this \$18 million project will be at least \$27 million during its construction phase alone, due to the multiplier effect of vendors and workers whose earnings are put back into the local economy through local consumption and taxes.

### Emergency Department Construction Specifics

The \$18 million project will increase the size of the TRMC ED by 5,503 square feet and create a state-of-the-art facility for the over 73,000 people it serves. The bold plan will not increase the physical size of the plant, but will instead make better use of the existing infrastructure and create new, usable space for patient care. The specific improvements will be:

1. An in-house technologically advanced Diagnostic Imaging Unit (completed March 2016)
2. ED Interior Expansion- will be accomplished by building a 2nd floor addition for patient care space into the former waiting room's high ceilinged atrium. Trinitas is also building new patient areas in underutilized spaces near the ED. This will facilitate the increase in beds from 27 to 48 to accommodate high patient volume. (To be completed by March 2017)
3. Newly constructed areas in the ED will be built and equipped to improve efficiency and to specifically accommodate areas of specialized care. (I.E.-Behavioral health will reside in a remote, quiet area with soundproofing). Specialty units for pediatric, geriatric, behavioral health, non-urgent care and critically ill/wounded patients are being constructed. (To be completed by March 2017)
4. Upgraded diagnostic and patient care equipment and technology throughout the ED (To be completed by September 2017)

5. ED's interior will be reconfigured for improved workflow and remodeled. Equipment and technological upgrades will also be introduced as needed. (To be completed by September 2017)

6. An easily accessible and visible façade will help showcase Elizabeth's newest full service facility. (To be completed by September 2017)

#### Trinitas Training & Education

Upgrading and modernizing the ED will facilitate growth in both the size and scope of the vast array of medical/nursing education, training and career advancement opportunities that Trinitas offers to the people of the region, all of which focus heavily on the residents of Elizabeth and the Midtown District. Trinitas' offerings span the full educational continuum, starting with introductory healthcare career education for local high school students to residency programs in the ED to scholarship programs that advance the skills and credentials of existing staff.

Investments will ensure that Trinitas' large and growing pool of trainees are exposed to the most advanced medical equipment and technology for proper career preparation, while the ED's new, innovative design will provide targeted training in the high demand specialty fields of geriatric, pediatric, behavioral health and critically ill/wounded emergency patient care.

The Trinitas ED currently trains 678 students and skilled professionals annually, all of whom will directly benefit from this investment since emergency care plays a central role in their preparation. At least 175 of them are known to be from the City of Elizabeth and are noted below, though the actual numbers are likely higher. The ED will annually train:

- 61 Residents & Fellows -50 are TRMC employees; 21+ Elizabeth residents
- 240+ Medical Students-Approximately 20 live in Elizabeth currently-limited tracking
- 83 EMTs – Typically 20+are Elizabeth residents
- 2 Paramedics - Union County and often Elizabeth residents
- 12+ ED RN Residents -Not tracked, though typically Union County residents
- 60 Seton Hall Nursing Students -Not tracked
- 90+ Patient Care Technicians from Union County College & Berkeley-Limited tracking-at least 10 Elizabeth residents
- 130- Observational Training-High School & College Medical Education Programs- at least 105 are Elizabeth residents

#### Commitment to Local Upward Mobility

1. Trinitas' career exploration programs for Elizabeth High School students (noted above) have been highly successful in transitioning students into gainful employment and careers in the healthcare field. Currently, 84 Trinitas employees are graduates of this program. Hundreds of others are now successful doctors, nurses and healthcare workers, while many others consider this program the turning point that instilled them with the ambition and perseverance they needed to become successful in other fields.

2. Twenty of the ED's 21 Patient Care Associates are Elizabeth residents. This is because the department actively recruits current Trinitas School of Nursing/Union County College students. This helps students cover their college costs while putting them on the fast track to be hired as nurses by Trinitas upon graduation.

3. In the past five years, Trinitas has hired 83 Trinitas School of Nursing graduates, 16 of whom are Elizabeth residents. Five of them currently work in the ED.

4. Once hired by Trinitas, nurses are eligible for their scholarship program, which covers the cost of the bachelor's and master's degrees, thereby further promoting upward mobility.

#### Trinitas' Strength as a Local Employer

By directly recruiting and employing locally, Trinitas' hiring practices are in keeping with the Midtown Plan's employment goals, which seek to reduce the high levels of local unemployment while increasing salary levels.

- TRMC Staff Size- 2,797 employees; 607 Elizabeth Residents; 492 Residents with Midtown District Zip Codes; 105 with an Elizabethport zip code.
- TRMC ED- 118 employees; 33 Elizabeth residents; 27 employees with Midtown District zip codes.
- TRMC Payroll- \$140.9 million & growing
- According to a recent Ernst & Young study that used sophisticated employment analytics, there is almost a 1:1 ratio between the size of a NJ hospital's workforce and the number of jobs it supports through vendor relationships and hospital and customer consumption. Using their exact ratio of 82%, Trinitas' 2,797 jobs support an additional 2,295 full and part time positions in Elizabeth's immediate area, for a total employment impact of 5,091 positions. These numbers will only increase due to the impact of this project on TRMC's reputation and regional presence, which will in turn grow its workforce. ([www.NJHA.com/eyreport](http://www.NJHA.com/eyreport))

#### Trinitas' Broader Economic Impact

Trinitas' continued strength is essential to the City of Elizabeth's economy, which struggles with high levels of unemployment and poverty. By promoting investment in this important enhancement to Trinitas' services, the NRTC will help to expand the Medical Center's positive impact on the local market. The hospital's direct consumption through its vendors, and indirect consumption through the 1,000,000+ employees and visitors who frequent local businesses each year, have a multiplier effect that ripples throughout the economy. According to a recent American Hospital Association study, every dollar spent by hospitals supports roughly \$2.30 in additional business activity. This means TRMC's total 2016 budgeted expenses of \$297 million translates to \$683 million in current annual additional local business activity that the hospital, its vendors, employees and visitors generate. The NRTC's investment in this project will expand TRMC's influence, spending power and ability to generate additional local business activity. (<http://www.aha.org/content/00-10/2010econcontrib.pdf>). In essence, the NRTC's investment will carry through the economy many times over.

### Trinitas ED Expansion's Impact on Elizabeth & the Midtown District

A modern, properly equipped hospital is an essential ingredient to a thriving city's infrastructure. By corollary, as the "front door" to the hospital, an emergency department creates the all-important first impression on the quality and orderliness of care. This directly impacts the public's perception of the hospital, which affects the local economy in two important ways.

1. The availability of high quality healthcare is known to be a determining factor in a city's current and future ability to attract and maintain a strong local business presence. Businesses shy away from relocating to areas where there is a lack of quality medical care.
2. Hospitals with a solid reputation attract patients and visitors to a city, where they spend money and spur economic growth. The opposite is true of hospitals held in low regard.

### Return on Investment

Based on industry statistics and using ratios from a comparable ED expansion study, the total economic impact of this \$18 million project on the local economy will be \$27 million. This estimate takes into account the multiplier effect of the expenditures of vendors and workers whose earnings are put back into the local economy through local consumption and taxes. ([https://www.bozemanhealth.org/documents/BDHSEconomicImpactReport\\_-2012.pdf](https://www.bozemanhealth.org/documents/BDHSEconomicImpactReport_-2012.pdf))

### Trinitas ED Expansion's Impact on Employment

Trinitas' builder projects that the ED's construction phase will require 179 full-time tradesmen for successful completion. As in the past, they will hire subcontractors who utilize a local union based labor force whose territory is specific to the Elizabeth area. Most direct hires will be laborers who reside in the City of Elizabeth. In the case of Trinitas' highly respected CORE project, most direct hires lived within walking distance of the construction site, meaning the builder has a track record of hiring employees who reside in and around the Midtown District. The project will also require "back office" support of approximately 30 people who will be dedicated to the project on a part-time basis. They will include accountants, estimators, administrative assistants, project managers, engineers and other positions of this nature.

Improvements to the TRMC ED will ensure the continued migration of skilled workers to Elizabeth, a designated medically underserved area with a demonstrated need for a larger, more qualified pool of healthcare personnel to meet the needs of the local population. Although volume will dictate final decisions on increases to the ED's 181 person workforce, staff increases are expected based on volume, including a number of specialized professional positions. Additionally, at least 10 new hires can be expected due to regular staff turnover. Recruitment for openings will focus on residents of the City of Elizabeth.

### Relationship to Midtown District's Family Development, Health & Enrichment Goal

This project will also directly address the Midtown District's Family Development, Health & Enrichment goal, particularly when viewed in light of the following statistics.



- The Trinitas ED conducts 73,000 patient visits per year in a facility built for 45,000. An expanded facility with a more efficient design and technologically advanced equipment will speed time to treatment so the hospital can accommodate its large and growing patient base, while providing the highest quality medical care.
- Trinitas is the only hospital in Elizabeth, New Jersey's fourth largest city. Access to local healthcare is a critical issue in Elizabeth. The latest census bureau statistics indicate that 48% of local households have only one vehicle and 25% do not own a car at all. This makes Trinitas their only viable alternative for medical care.
- This expansion will put TRMC in a better position to respond to the region's documented emergency care shortage.
- High quality, accessible healthcare is critical in Elizabeth, particularly due to the high numbers of people who are uninsured in the city. Currently, 28% of the local population is uninsured, while 37% of people who work in Elizabeth lack insurance. It is a well-documented fact that people who lack insurance utilize emergency care at a much higher rate than people with private insurance.

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**Garden State Episcopal Community Development Corp.****I Love Greenville Community Plan 2016**

The I Love Greenville Community Plan (GCP) is a comprehensive and ambitious strategy for improving the quality of life of an underinvested neighborhood in Jersey City, which is rapidly gentrifying and creating a paradox for its low income population. Recognized as one of the country's most diverse cities, Jersey City has experienced considerable population growth, with most of its newest residents hailing from various parts of New York City, where the cost of living is higher. While other sections of Jersey City, the downtown area in particular, has seen rapid development and improvements, the Greenville section is still flooded with issues ranging from unsafe streets, to a failing public school system. Practically every part of the City is experiencing significant investment and increased housing costs, including the Heights, Morris Canal, and West Side. This has moved investors to take a closer look at Greenville where land and property costs remain significantly lower than other parts of the City. International and investors from New York City have already purchased a significant amount of property in the neighborhood with the intent to develop as market rate housing. A racial and socioeconomic divide, suggesting a tale of two cities, is broadening daily and increases the vulnerability of longtime Greenville residents, most recently due to the unintended consequences of gentrification. Created in direct response to existing inequity and with and input from over 500 community stakeholders, GCP is a empowerment tool which seeks to improve quality of life issues related to housing employment, education, health and wellness activities and economic development. The gentrification is likely to improve some neighborhood conditions as it will increase neighborhood incomes. However, it is also likely to displace low income persons or increase the disparity between the cost of living and incomes in the neighborhood. While the goal of the plan is to improve neighborhood conditions, it also recognizes the need to create opportunities that will allow current residents to enjoy in Jersey City's growth. It is the goal of this plan to continue to improve the quality of life of the neighborhood for current and future residents. In many cases, gentrification only moves poverty from one area to another and this plan can help to make sure that there is long term stability, opportunity and diversity in the neighborhood.

The I Love Greenville Community Plan's (GCP) 2016 application includes four highly prioritized community development activities which demonstrate the commitment of local nonprofit organizations and highlights the collaborative and inclusive nature of the GCP effort. These activities will be executed by Garden State Episcopal Community Development Corporation, Rising Tide Capital, a longstanding GCP member, and newly participating organizations: New City Kids and Boys and Girls Club of Hudson County.

**1) 90 Virginia Avenue Home Ownership Initiative:**

Garden State Episcopal Community Development Corporation (GSEDC) aims to realize the goals of the neighborhood plan by reducing the stock of abandoned or foreclosed property and vacant lots in the neighborhood while creating quality, affordable housing. The goals of GCP include: 1) addressing housing affordability issues by decreasing the number of individuals paying more than 30% of income toward housing costs and increasing area homeownership by at least 5% or 65 units and 2) tackling the issue of problem properties by reducing the number of vacant lots by 25%. The 90 Virginia Avenue Home Ownership Initiative involves the acquisition of one 100x108 vacant lot/property from the City of Jersey City for the infill new construction of five (5) attached affordable two family homes in the Greenville Neighborhood for a total of 10 new affordable housing units. These homes will sell for \$250,000 each and will be

affordable to low and moderate income households with a minimum income of \$39,500 (49% AMI) annually. Total housing costs for both buyer and renter will be approximately \$1,000 per month, which at no more than 30% of total household income, helps to reduce the number of cost burdened residents in GCP area. GSEDC will use NRTC funding for land acquisition, predevelopment construction, and construction costs for this project. GSEDC has a commitment from PNC Bank for short term financing and has applied to the Jersey City Affordable Housing Trust Fund for the balance of subsidy necessary to carry out this project. To date, GSEDC has developed and sold a total of 97 units (rehab and new) in and around this neighborhood with a \$22 million investment that repurposed over 50 different abandoned sites that now provide quality affordable housing to 92 families. These efforts have stabilized the community, generated new tax revenue for the City of Jersey City, and provided affordable housing in a rapidly gentrifying area within a City where housing costs are skyrocketing.

## 2) Greenville Small Business Support Initiative:

Rising Tide Capital's (RTC) proposes to serve residents of Greenville who are current or aspiring business owners through the Greenville Small Business Support Initiative. This activity aligns directly with the neighborhood plan goals of reducing business turnover and increasing the number of business owners within Greenville by providing entrepreneurship training and technical assistance to residents. The plan aims to enroll and graduate at least 25 current, local business owners in a course on good small business practices (i.e. effective advertising, displays, bookkeeping, succession, etc.). RTC currently works with over 700 entrepreneurs per year across 4 cities in NJ and prior to receiving the NRTC funding for this project, RTC did not have the capacity to focus exclusively on businesses in one specific geographic area. With the initial support of NRTC funding, RTC was able to designate sustained year-round services exclusively to businesses in the Greenville neighborhood and coordinate with the activities of other members of the Greenville Community Plan to harness the role that local small business owners as stakeholders will play in the work ahead. With 2014 NRTC funds RTC provided year-round consulting services solely to businesses within the targeted Greenville neighborhood, which resulted in 53 GCP residents/business receiving technical support services, as well as 8 new businesses started and 15 jobs created within the GCP target area. This initiative also provided tangible improvements to Greenville businesses like Property Maintenance Guys owned by Greenville resident Geoffrey Allen. Through the RTC's training and technical support services Geoffrey has seen a 37% increase in his business sales and continues to work with one-on-one with the coach to expand his business. The focus of the next two years of this project is to continue this strategy and deepen RTC's level of service to Greenville residents by providing entrepreneurial training & technical assistance services to 25-50 Greenville residents per year, over 2 years. As a result, we project that at least 5 new businesses will be started and at least 10 businesses strengthened or expanded by Greenville residents each year.

## 3) BGCHC Hive at PS 41:

The Boys and Girls Club of Hudson County (BGCHC) proposes to help further the goals of the plan by establishing sustainable after-school programs for youth. The neighborhood plan, includes as a priority, enhancing educational opportunities for Greenville youth, working with the school district to identify and provide new, sustainable After-School programs for youth which help reduce crime, mischief, and promotes greater focus and guidance for young people. The BGCHC aims to address this issue by establishing the BGCHC After School Hive at P.S. 41, designed to provide after-school educational enrichment and physical recreation activities for 80 students in kindergarten through 8th grade. This project is a collaborative effort with the Jersey City Board of Education and will be housed in a public

school. The need for a quality afterschool program in the selected school, P.S. 41, Martin Center for the Arts, located in the heart of Greenville, is supported by numerous risk factors that point to the needs for educational enrichment, physical recreation, and character development activities. The 2014-15 school performance report reveals 23.2% of the students are enrolled in special education programs, 96.7% of the student enrollment is Black or Hispanic, 18% of the students met or exceeded expectations in language arts (measured by PARCC assessment), and only 10% met or exceeded expectations in math. Even more troubling is that Language Arts proficiency at PS #41 dropped by 18.9% between 2012 and 2014, and by 6.8% in Math proficiency. BGCHC will engage 80 youth daily in educational activities, such as homework help and high-yield learning activities, STEM programs and literacy-focused activities. BGCHC will also offer physical education activities and include flag football, basketball, and other sports. Programs aimed to empower youth to make informed decisions, improve their knowledge of healthy habits, good nutrition and fitness will also be provided. For over 30 years, BGCHC has provided guidance, academic support and enrichment and social-emotional learning and character development for youth through its daily activities, twelve months a year. It is the largest youth serving organization in Hudson County, providing services to thousands of youth each year. Without NRTC funds, these essential services will not be available to the youth in the Greenville community. The vast majority of current BGCHC participants in Jersey City come from Greenville neighborhoods. BGCHC has two buses that transport youth from their schools to the Jersey City Clubhouse after school each day. For the past two years, BGCHC has maintained a waiting list since both buses are full to capacity. Without opening a satellite program at P.S. 41, many deserving and needy youth and families will continue to be unserved.

#### 4) Greenville After School Center:

New City Kids (NCK) aims to further the goals of the plan by empowering local residents and strengthening families. Through the Greenville After School Center NCK will provide quality, reliable after school programming as well as employment and leadership development opportunities for high school students. This activity will proactively address poverty in the next generation by providing an after school program for 60 children to attend development focused programming everyday. Children would be provided academic services working with a tutor to aid them in completing their homework and musical instruction. The After School Center site will be staffed by 20 local high school students employed as tutors and music teachers for the younger children. This rounded internship experience aimed not just at employment but also developing the youth as leaders, related to their musical ability, academics and character. This transformative experience for the teens involved is in direct contrast to the social conditions impacting them leading to high drop out rates, poor college matriculation, gang activity and substance abuse. Access to high quality After School programming is a high priority for Greenville neighborhood parents. Providing employment opportunities for high school students would also empowering the young people in the Greenville neighborhood to be leaders and view themselves and their future in a different perspective. Successfully operating after school programs since 2005, NCK serves approximately 240 children each day across 3 sites in Jersey City. However, none of the 3 sites are located in the Greenville neighborhood. In conjunction with the afterschool programs, NCK currently employs 100 high school students – just over 25% of whom reside in the plan target area. NCK believes the neighborhood would be better served if these teens made impact in their local communities and eliminate the barrier of transportation.

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## **HANDS, Inc. (Heart of Orange)**

### **Heart of Orange Job Training Center**

The two-story, 3,300 sq. ft. brick building at 164 S. Center Street in Orange, NJ has been vacant for at least a dozen years. It sits adjacent to and is currently owned by Unity Baptist Church within a 15 block core of the Heart of Orange neighborhood that has suffered the ravages of deterioration, property abandonment, neglect, foreclosure, violent crime and poverty. In this small area surrounding the Oakwood Avenue Community School, there are 55 vacant and deteriorated properties. Add youth unemployment, gang activities and violence to this unstable mix. Recent shootings and one death on nearby Taylor Street has given a sense of urgency to two related challenges – ridding the neighborhood of vacant problem properties and providing paid employment for youth vulnerable to the negative forces that surround them.

HANDS and several partners have made a five-year commitment to help lift up the Heart of Orange neighborhood. With Unity Baptist Church, the vacant building at 164 South Center Street will be renovated using the paid labor of unemployed youth from the neighborhood into a center where construction training and job preparedness will put local youth of this neighborhood to work – rebuilding their own neighborhood.

During 2017, the building will evolve into the Job Training Center for housing rehabilitation and construction. The building will be completely renovated. HANDS is partnering with YouthBuild Newark, a capable organization with experience in construction training and supportive services to work with HANDS and the first group of youth in establishing the Center. YouthBuild will serve as the general contractor for this project. After the first year, the YouthBuild staff and trainees will work in tandem with HANDS - tackling the rehabilitation of vacant problem properties in the immediate neighborhood and making them available for sale to low and moderate income homebuyers – while employing and training more youth. The recruitment of Heart of Orange youth in the YouthBuild program is already underway.

HANDS, Unity Baptist Church and YouthBuild Newark have committed to the Center being a permanent YouthBuild Newark satellite in Orange and to continue fundraising for its ongoing existence beyond the two year pilot period.

HANDS and Unity Baptist Church have incorporated a new nonprofit entity, Hands in Unity, to own and oversee the Center.

Three objectives will be met: Employing and training youth for work in the construction trades, reviving the neighborhood through rehabilitation of problem properties, providing the opportunity for local families to own a home, and rebuilding a sense of pride in the neighborhood.

HANDS is seeking \$750,000 in Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit funding for acquisition and rehabilitation of the property; to support the first two years of job training and social services with at least four youth each year from the neighborhood; and support a variety of crime prevention and community activities in the immediate neighborhood. YouthBuild Newark with more than ten years' experience of successful construction job training with urban youth ages 16 to 24 has agreed to partner on the job training component.

In 1987, HANDS rehabilitated its first property with two carpenter/trainers and successive crews of homeless young men as their helpers. Since then, HANDS has redeveloped 176 more properties in Orange, East Orange and Newark. HANDS just recently completed 5 new homes - now occupied by first-time buyers - in the immediate neighborhood of the proposed Center.

## CREATE THE JOB TRAINING CENTER

Acquisition and rehabilitation of the vacant property at 164 S. Center Street, Orange, NJ plus equipment to outfit the training space

## SUPPORT THE JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

Support for the trainers, stipends for the trainees and overhead costs that include insurance, utilities and other operating costs.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Support for program partners addressing public safety, civic engagement of all sectors of the population, continuing education, youth activities, cultural enrichment and community arts.

Funds will be targeted toward supporting the Urban Essex Coalition for Smart Growth, a coalition of municipalities, planning organizations, developers and stakeholders who are governed by the steering committee and promote policies and programs that increase the transit and pedestrian friendly nature of development and infrastructure projects in urban Essex County. Right now, the focus is on a study to improve the look and safety of the service roads adjacent to I-280 that cut through the Heart of Orange neighborhood. Planning is centered on narrowing the current 3 lanes of traffic with corner bump-outs at crosswalks for safety, adding parking and improving the experience of crossing with more greenery and trees.

The funds will also support the HUUB, a nonprofit organization that started as an outgrowth of the historic Unitarian Church in Orange with a mission to be a force that brings people together so that they can use their gifts to advance peace, economic justice, respect, and educational attainment. They have many projects that use "asset based community development" as their foundation. They work with other organizations including Worldwide Orphans (early childhood development), Spirit of the Wind (immigrant workers organizing) and also run programming themselves like community safety and housing justice forums. We will support the operations at the HUUB as well as contract with them to run a small grants program to support initiatives of smaller, grassroots organizations and public programming. Grantees may include the anti-violence youth group Not Orange, the two Community Schools in the Heart of Orange, ethnic festivals and other public safety, youth services and immigrant civic involvement activities. A three member grant review committee will review applications and make grant decisions.

An AmeriCorps member will be recruited to assist in working with the Orange municipal departments to take possession of vacant problem properties in the Heart of Orange using the powers of the Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act and to participate in real estate management activities. One of these properties will be the site of the second year YouthBuild construction job training.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF HEART OF ORANGE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN GOALS

This grant will implement activities that support specific goals and strategies of the Neighborhood Plan including:

- \* Redevelop major vacant and deteriorated sites including mixed income housing and retail/commercial
- \* Stabilize and revitalize residential blocks
- \* Expand economic opportunity
- \* Engage youth and adult residents in neighborhood improvements
- \* Promote lifelong learning

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## **HANDS, Inc. (Valley)**

### **Valley Gateway Center**

Utilizing NRTC 2016 project grant funding, the Valley Gateway site has been acquired and improved as a public open space. Additional improvements including signage and public amenities will create a gateway into the Valley Arts District. In 2017, HANDS intends to develop the previously blighted site at Scotland Road and Freeman Street adjacent to the Highland Avenue NJ Transit commuter rail station with a new two story 2,800 sq. ft. building to house a Business Incubator for entrepreneurs launching “creative enterprises”. The building in a park-type setting will also serve as the Gateway to the Valley Arts District.

This project is one initiative costing \$1.6 million with the City of Orange responsible to rehabilitate and re-open the historic Highland Avenue NJ Transit commuter rail station and HANDS creating the Gateway Center and the public open space that will become a “Gateway” to the Valley Arts District. Rehabilitation of the station and site improvements have been funded with NJ DOT Transportation Alternatives Program and the City hopes to have the station building reopened in late 2017 or early 2018.

The Gateway Center will not only enhance the re-opened train station and provide an attractive and visible gateway entrance at Freeman Street to the Valley Arts District which is immediately west of the elevated RR tracks, but will beautify and bring vibrancy to Scotland Road which is Orange’s commercial arterial for north/south traffic from neighboring suburbs, South Orange to the south and Montclair to the north. This project is part of an initiative further brand and to raise the visibility of the Valley Arts District.

There is a huge demand for affordable space for business start-ups. The Gateway Center will help fill that need. ValleyArts, the Valley Art District community arts organization with experience as an artists' cooperative manager will operate the center.

HANDS is looking to raise \$750,000 in NRTC funds to support building construction, site improvements including landscaping, benches etc., associated soft costs and programmatic costs described below.

#### **COMMUNITY PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT THE HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

NRTC funds will support a wide variety of neighborhood activities and music programming throughout the Valley Arts District that will elevate the vibrancy and level of economic activity.

Community Theater and Youth Engagement – These funds will support the work of Luna Stage repertory theater located in the Arts Garage. Luna has a year round program of producing plays on their main stage, theater education programs connected with local schools, summer and weekend acting classes for youth and a variety of performance art that takes place on both of their stages.

Youth Arts Programming – These funds to University of Orange and ValleyArts will support staff of the emerging artist center and the ORNG Ink youth arts program. The funds support arts programming in a number of disciplines for middle and high school aged artists after school, weekends and summers. In addition it provides staff that work with a



group of older artists aged 20-30 who in exchange for studio time work as mentors for the middle and high school aged artists.

Festivals, Events and Community Art – These funds will help ValleyArts, Inc. support their year round program of community festivals, gallery exhibitions and installations.

Community Musicians Program – These funds will help ValleyArts, Inc. support Hat City Kitchen Presents which is a year round initiative three evenings a week and every Sunday at Hat City Kitchen where amateur musicians can perform on stage with professional musicians in an “open-mic or jam” format. The program is very popular with amateur musicians as a training ground for up and coming (young and old) musicians but it’s not supported by an earned revenue source. Any given week more than 80 amateur musicians can perform on stage and hone their craft within this supportive format.

Business assistance to entrepreneurs - NRTC funds will support ValleyArts to deliver business services and skills assistance to creative entrepreneurs/tenants at the Gateway Center and the Artist Co-op

## IN SUPPORT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

The objectives of the Valley Gateway Project directly reflect several goals from “The Plan for Revitalizing the Valley Neighborhood of Orange and West Orange, NJ”. These goals are:

- Redevelop vacant problem properties/pivotal underdeveloped sites
- Strengthen the Valley’s commercial areas
- Assure safer streets
- Strengthen neighborhood identity
- Improve the area's appearance
- Create jobs, attract new businesses and build the tax base.

The ancillary programs and services directly relate to the Plan's Goals:

- \* Strengthen neighborhood identity
- \* Establish an arts district and involve artists in the community

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## Heart of Camden

### Heart of Camden Creating Change

Heart of Camden, Inc., is requesting funding for four undertakings which will in four different ways improve the quality of life in the Waterfront South Neighborhood of the City of Camden. One project will “finish up” three residential blocks by rehabilitating four dilapidated homes. Another project will stabilize existing homes on two residential blocks by addressing the health and safety issues presented by five dilapidated properties. The third project will bring to Waterfront South a program which has successfully reduced the children’s health issues presented by substandard housing. The last funding request is to cover the completion of two earlier projects, the complete cost of which has turned out with city requirements to be greater than expected.

Rehabilitation of residences at 432-424 Jasper Street, 2018 Broadway, and 414 Emerald Street. The rehabilitation of three of those four residences will “finish off” two blocks in the heart of the neighborhood.

#432 and #424 on Jasper Street, “the twins on Jasper” are eyesores on a block in which every structure has been rehabilitated (using public funds, grant money, or private funds) or which had always been maintained by their owners. It has proximity to the neighborhood’s central intersection, all of the commercial establishments in Waterfront South, and a city park with a playground. The residences at 2018 Broadway and 414 Emerald Street will move toward finishing up their respective blocks and will sell quickly because of the appeal of the location, where the Heart of Camden has sold other nearby properties. The residential structure at 2018 Broadway was already gutted by volunteers from the Campbell Soup Company and it is ready for reconstruction.

Stabilization of five residential properties on Fillmore Street: house #1811, #1819, #1820, #2009, and #2019.

The stabilization of four row-houses on the 1800 block of Fillmore Street will significantly improve that block and stabilize it until additional housing construction or reconstruction can be undertaken by private parties or in future Heart of Camden efforts. In one instance a house renovated by Heart of Camden has not found a buyer because the renovated structure is next door to a wreck. Stabilization of those five structures (which may include propping up some structures and grading others) will remove the health and safety issues posed by the abandoned buildings and their potential to cave in on themselves.

Improvements under the HUD “Healthy Homes Initiative” to several row-houses rebuilt years ago by Heart of Camden.

The federal department of Housing & Urban Development (“HUD”) created the Healthy Homes Initiative (“HHI”) in 1999 in response to a Congressional Directive. The HHI includes direct grants to non-profit organizations (and to local and county governments) to reduce childhood diseases and injuries resulting from growing up in residences which expose children to mold, lead, allergens, asthma, radon, and carbon monoxide. We have in view a Waterfront South program modeled on the success of The Healthy Rowhouse Project, an effort among the Philadelphia city government, St. Christopher’s Children’s Hospital, and the Barra Foundation to address healthy housing issues particularly associated with row-houses, which present a combination of age, architectural, water-flow, and other issues. These issues together can create a “contagion” effect in which a health issue present in one row-house spreads to neighboring residences. The Healthy Rowhouse Project estimates the cost of making an existing row-house healthy as between \$10,000 and \$15,000 while construction of a new row-house is around \$190,000.

Gap funding to cover the difference between previous grant funds and the actual total expense of the renovation of both (a) a residential structure at 1921 Fillmore Street and (b) the former physician's office at Jasper Street and Broadway which will become the Nick Virgilio Writers House.

Most of the funding of the reconstruction of 1921 Fillmore Street was provided by a September 2016 award of federal H.O.M.E funding through the City of Camden. The Heart of Camden rehabilitates many homes on Fillmore Street and has even built a park there for the families to enjoy. However due to the rise in the cost of building materials and skilled labor, this will bring the final cost of this home over the previous grant total by \$40,000.

The Writers House will be named after Nick Virgilio, the late Camden poet acknowledged as the master (in a language other than Japanese) of the haiku, the short and rigorously structured lyric poem which is a central part of Japanese literature and which has been transplanted to several other cultures and languages. The Writers House will serve as a word-centered community center, provide quiet working space for neighborhood writers and students, host neighborhood literary events, and contain and small library of literary and reference works.

Almost all of the funding for the renovation of the building at the intersection of Broadway and Jasper and its conversion into the Nick Virgilio Writers House was provided by NRTC grants in 2013 and 2014. Since then there were unforeseen and expensive requirements necessitated by changes in City of Camden building occupancy regulations. Skilled labor and materials to finish up the Writers House will exceed the previous grant total by \$40,000.

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## Interfaith Neighbors Inc

### West Side Asbury Park NRTC Project VII

Interfaith Neighbors NRTC Project application focusses three major areas of need in the Westside Asbury Park Neighborhood. These include employment training and job placement; programming and services for youth; and housing, including both homeownership opportunities and supportive housing for at risk youth. As with our previous NRTC Projects, we have included a number of Interfaith Neighbors' own initiatives and have also included a number of initiatives for other agencies providing services to the residents of the West Side Asbury Park neighborhood.

The West Side Asbury Park NRTC Project VII application includes the following programs/initiatives:

Employment training and placement:

- Community Affairs and Resource Center (CARC) – job placement program

Programs to support West Side Neighborhood Youth:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters – youth mentoring program
- Funds to support the Junior Entrepreneur (JET) program
- Funds to support a Fine Arts & Technology Summer Camp program
- Funds to support a Film & Video Summer Camp program

Homeownership and Supportive Housing:

- Funding to support initial operation of the Rights of Passage Program – Phase I
- Construction subsidy for the Rights of Passage program – Phase II
- Construction subsidy for the Turf Club Residence housing project- Phase II
- Construction subsidy for expansion of IFN's 'Rent to Own' program

We believe these initiatives build on the successes achieved through previous NRTC funding and we look forward to reporting additional successes as these new initiatives work to revitalize the West Side Neighborhood of Asbury Park. Please find below a more detailed description of each of these initiatives:

Community Affairs and Resource Center (CARC) has successfully run their Let's Work Program for the past several years and have had great success preparing local residents for employment and then in placing them in meaningful, sustainable jobs. The Let's Work project offers a holistic approach, tailoring support and services to the individual needs of the participants. Participants will meet one-on-one with a Career Counselor/Program Facilitator in order to identify individual personal qualities, strengths and weaknesses. Realistic goals are established with overall focus on assisting the individual in obtaining gainful employment. In past funding cycles, CARC has found employment for a total of 316 West Side residents. That track record of success has prompted us to again include CARC in the current application for NRTC funding. No other local agency has demonstrated the ability to find employment for so many residents.

Similarly, we are again including Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Monmouth and Mercer Counties (BBBSMMC) in the current NRTC application. BBBS has provided one on one mentoring programs for the young children of the West Side. For more than three decades, BBBSMMC has provided comprehensive mentoring and other programs for nearly 6,500 disadvantaged youth in our communities and currently serve over 150 kids from Asbury Park. Through this funding, BBBSMMC will create 15 new matches and sustain 55 matches they currently have between a volunteer mentor (Big) and child (Little) from the West Side of Asbury Park and offer gang prevention workshops and presentations. These funds will also allow BBBSMMC to continue to operate the School-based mentoring programs that they have developed. Each year, BBBSMMC measures the impact of these mentoring relationships have on the children participating in these programs. The results regularly demonstrate improved school performance, higher self-esteem and fewer issues with peer violence, substance abuse and other risky behaviors. It is for these reasons that we continue to support the BBBSMMC programs.

#### Junior Entrepreneur (JET) program

In 2015, the IFN Business Development Center launched the Junior Entrepreneur Training Program (JET) as a pilot program intended to introduce students to what is involved in starting a business. Asbury Park Middle School students worked with business mentors during a 12-week after-school program to develop a business plan, develop a product and ultimately to showcase their businesses at the annual Made in Monmouth Expo at Monmouth University, held every spring. Two teams successfully completed the program, developed a product and successfully marketed their products at the Made in Monmouth event.

In the spring of 2016 a second session of the JET program was run with 3 student teams and 23 students participating in the program. Each team developed a business concept that included a product to sell. They prepared a presentation to secure 'financing' each team received a \$200.00 'start-up' loan, they developed their products and again presented their products at the Monmouth County "Made in Monmouth" event at Monmouth College. All three teams made a profit and repaid their business loans.

Students reported many positive results from participating in the program. They reported better team skills, improved leadership skills, improved communication skills, better money management skills and a stronger desire to start a business. In fact, 69% reported an increased interest in college because of attending the JET program.

In this second year of the program, the IFN BDC worked with Konscious Youth Development & Service (KYDS), a local 501(c)(3) organization providing programming and activities for local youth, with the intent that KYDS would continue to offer this program on an ongoing basis. In this application, we are seeking funding to allow KYDS to continue to offer the JET program to Asbury Park students over the course of the next two years.

Interfaith Neighbors sees the JET program as a precursor to the type of programming that will be offered at the Asbury JAMS facility once that facility is up and running.

#### Fine Arts & Technology Summer Camp program

This past summer, Second Baptist Church of Asbury Park ran a weeklong pilot program for 20 local kids using the model Inspire LIFE Fine Arts & Technology Summer Camp. Based on the success of that pilot and the positive

experience of the participants, we are seeking NRTC funds to allow this camp to be expanded to a two week offering for 45 to 50 students for each of the next two summers.

This uniquely designed camp will give children in the Asbury Park community an opportunity to experience extended learning in a fun, healthy, and wholesome environment. The minds and bodies of all camp attendees will be richly engaged in positive and productive age appropriate activities. The camp is a hands on and performance intensive week long camp designed to expose young and creative minds to the principles of fundamental music theory, creative artistry, dance, technology concepts, song composition and production, creative writing, various aspects of theater, and vocal techniques.

In addition to exposing the students to concepts and techniques in music, theater, and performance, the camp is purposed to inspire their intellect and prepare each student for the upcoming academic year. A few of the central themes which will be used to accomplish this during the camp will be self-empowerment, leadership, and individual excellence.

Interfaith Neighbors sees the Fine Arts and Technology Summer Camp program as a precursor to the type of programming that will be offered at the Asbury JAMS facility once that facility is up and running.

#### Film & Video Summer Camp program

In an effort to expose Asbury Park youth to another aspect of technology during their summer school break, Asbury Park residents Michael Sodano and Nancy Sabino, who have 20+ years in a corporate communications business producing videos for business, are proposing to offer a weeklong course in film and video production.

Each filmmaking course is comprised of a 1 week, 4 hour per day session. Ideally comprised of 10 participants broken into two 5 person teams, each will create a finished 3-5 minute video, learning the general techniques of camera, sound, lighting, story structure and editing. The course consists of mainly hands-on filmmaking projects produced by a group of emerging, motivated students ages 13-15.

The curriculum will be structured so as to expose students to the varied creative and team building aspects of video production. Through “hands on” applications, participants will come to understand that what they see on the screen as a finished product takes skill and teamwork to assemble. In the process, students will be exposed to various elements of video production that they wouldn’t normally see, thereby potentially triggering a desire to pursue areas of production in their higher education.

Interfaith Neighbors sees the Film & Video Summer Camp program as a precursor to the type of programming that will be offered at the Asbury JAMS facility once that facility is up and running.

#### Operational support of the Rights of Passage Program – Phase I

In a previous NRTC funding cycle, funds were provided as subsidy for the construction of a facility to operate a program for at-risk Asbury Park youth who were experiencing unstable housing situations. IFN became aware of the extent of this problem in Asbury Park over the course of the ten years that we operated the Monmouth County Chapter of the NJ Youth Corp. Those NRTC funds were part of subsidy that has allowed Interfaith Neighbors to acquire a property and develop a facility that will be used to provide safe, reliable shelter to 5 at-risk youth in Asbury Park.

Working with Covenant House NJ, the facility will be used to operate a “Rights of Passage” program modelled after similar transitional housing programs Covenant House currently operates in Newark and Atlantic City.

The Asbury Park facility was limited in size to five bedrooms in order to fit into the residential character of the neighborhood in which it is located. The property that was initially acquired was large enough to allow for subdivision into two adjacent lots, each of which will eventually be developed with its own facility. The first will provide transitional housing for young men and the second will provide transitional housing for young women. Construction is scheduled to begin on the first ROP facility this fall with occupancy scheduled for late spring/early summer of 2017.

When the first facility comes on-line with only 5 residents, it presents a challenge to support the staffing needs and operational costs that Covenant House will incur until the second facility comes on-line in approximately 2 years. We are seeking NRTC funds to help support the Rights of Passage program during that initial two year period.

#### Construction subsidy for the Rights of Passage program – Phase II

As noted above, NRTC funds were provided in a previous funding cycle for construction subsidy for the development of Rights of Passage, Phase I. Pre-development work on that project is now completed and construction is scheduled to begin this fall. As part of the pre-development of ROP Phase I, the property that was acquired was subdivided so that IFN now controls a property adjacent to the ROP Phase I property that is ready to be developed with the ROP Phase II facility. All of the architectural design work and site planning has been completed.

We are seeking NRTC funding in this application that will be part of the construction subsidy for Rights of Passage Phase II, a facility to serve at risk young women in the Asbury Park community.

#### Construction subsidy for the Turf Club Residence housing project- Phase II

The Turf Club Residences project will produce a total of 20 high quality residential units. The project will consist of a total of 5 three-story buildings with 4 units per building. Environmental investigations, site engineering and architectural designs have been completed for the entire project. The project is scheduled for Planning Board review in November of this year. Phase I of the project, consisting of the construction of the first two buildings, is expect to begin early next spring. All site work necessary for the entire project will be completed prior to the construction of Phase I with Phase II ready to commence as soon as Phase I is complete.

In a prior NRTC funding cycle, construction subsidies were awarded for Phase I, making up a part of the financing stack needed to begin the project. In this NRTC application, we are requesting additional construction subsidies for Phase II.

#### Construction subsidy for expansion of IFN’s ‘Rent to Own’ program

IFN’s Rent to Own Program is designed to help potential first time home buyers prepare for the process of purchasing a home and successfully obtaining a mortgage. Program participants are assisted in addressing any outstanding credit issues, completing course work to obtain a HUD First Time Home Owners Certificate and accumulating funds for a down payment.

One of the obstacles many low income potential homebuyers face in Asbury Park is that the rental market is so high that they find it difficult to accumulate the funds necessary for a deposit or down payment. It is difficult for many

families to simply find an affordable rental unit in the City that is not in sub-standard condition. IFN currently operates a Rent to Own program in a facility we own in Long Branch, but many Asbury Park residents who have kids in the local school system do not want to re-locate to Long Branch and have to move their children to a new school district when they are trying to purchase a home in Asbury Park within 12 to 24 months and be forced to have their children change school districts again.

The requested NRTC funds included in this application would allow IFN to expand their Rent to Own program and open a new facility on the West Side of Asbury Park.

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**Isles, Inc.****OTN NRTC 4 2017**

The NRTC plan submitted to DCA for the Old Trenton Neighborhood (“OTN”) is focused on eight goals: (1) affordable housing, (2) financial and educational strength, (3) community safety, (4) open space development, (5) recreation opportunities, (6) leadership development, (7) community cleanliness, and (8) environmental health.

In large part because of NRTC funding, in partnership with Passage Theatre, we secured funding from the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town program to plan for Trenton’s first Creative District, which is centered on OTN. OTN 3 funding helped to support this planning process as well. The plan for the Creek to Canal Creative District was released to the public last week and substantially updates the OTN neighborhood plan. The Creative District plan was originally conceived as a plan covering only OTN. However, after a citywide planning process, it was determined that it made sense to expand the boundaries in order to include more of Trenton’s major arts, culture, and historic destinations. The boundaries of the Creative District are Rt. 1 to the east, the D&R Canal to the north, the Assunpink Creek to the south, and Willow Street to the west. The plan identifies community needs and priorities, and offers recommendations specifically for OTN, for development of the district overall, to support the arts and artists citywide, and to connect development of the district with the citywide arts scene. Some of the most prominent needs and priorities in the Creative District plan mirror those identified in our original plan – safety, community cleanliness, recreation opportunities (though the tenor of the discussion around them has shifted), affordable housing (with the additional acknowledgement of a need for live/work housing as well as mixed-income housing), and employment options.

This NRTC project addresses the majority of the goals in both the original OTN plan and in the Creative District plan. It also acknowledges that on one hand, despite the good work of Isles and our partners, indicators of neighborhood health remain weak in OTN but, on the other hand, we have seen convincing evidence that dynamics in the neighborhood are shifting in a positive direction. We are confident that OTN will become a neighborhood of choice within five years.

Isles has invested more than 30 years and significant effort and capital into revitalizing the Old Trenton Neighborhood. We and other stakeholders have made real progress from when more than 80% of neighborhood buildings were vacant and abandoned. Our initial efforts focused on salvaging distinctive architecture in the neighborhood, while simultaneously breathing life and activity back into these centrally located but troubled streets. To achieve this, Isles partnered with other developers and created affordable rental housing developments in the OTN. When sufficient progress enabled the OTN to function as a living part of the city, Isles shifted its focus to developing owner occupied units as a pathway to greater stability. Currently, there is a resurgent need for safe, clean, affordable rental units, and we are working with stakeholders and developers to ensure the creation of high-quality affordable and market rate units in the neighborhood. Our objective has remained constant: to increase the self-sufficiency of neighborhood residents and families, and to improve the overall physical and social conditions in the neighborhood.

This project is part of an overall strategy, as noted in the Old Trenton Neighborhood Plan, to revitalize the OTN by addressing the physical needs of the neighborhood while at the same time helping OTN residents to become more self-reliant. In the past 15 years, Isles completed the gut rehabilitation of 5 single-family low-income housing units in

the neighborhood along with 84 additional units just outside the northwest border of the neighborhood. In early 2012, Isles completed 6 single-family homeownership units along Stockton and Academy Streets. The renewed Roberto Clemente Park reopened for community enjoyment in August 2013 and additional upgrades are underway. Stockton Arms, a 34-unit apartment building has been substantially rehabilitated and after a concerted property management effort by Isles, the drug dealers who formerly called it home have moved on. In collaboration with Ajax Management, we are almost complete with Stockton Street Apartments, the rehab of a failed LIHTC project into 29 apartments and a coffee shop. At the same time, Ajax, a private developer, is making a major play to acquire and rehabilitate several buildings in OTN, including the Bell Building, in their signature modern (yet respectful of OTN's status as a local historic district), high-quality style.

We have been told repeatedly by Ajax – and the other developers following their lead by taking a chance on OTN – that they are doing so because of our commitment to and achievements in the neighborhood, none of which we could have accomplished without NRTC support. As noted above, Ajax has acquired a significant number of properties on E State St, E Hanover St, and Perry St. Two other private developers have acquired properties on E Hanover St and Academy St over the past six months. A third private developer recently acquired the former YWCA building at auction for nearly \$1m. We are seeing properties listed and sold within in weeks in OTN – this is a vast departure from not too long ago when buildings would sit unsold for years. Developers understand that change is coming to OTN. The potential of the area is highlighted in the Creek to Canal Creative District plan, as well as in the City of Trenton's new master plan, Trenton250. The Trenton Downtown Association (TDA), under a new Executive Director with experience overseeing economic development in Asbury Park during its recent resurgence, is becoming increasingly engaged in the area and is focused on reoccupying long-vacant storefronts. A new nonprofit funded by private businesses from around the region, Greater Trenton, is being led by an experienced real estate professional whose goal is to bring new jobs and companies, as well as larger scale developments, to downtown.

#### Predevelopment & Design for Scattered Site Infill

In light of all of this positive momentum in and near OTN, there is an even greater need for us to think carefully about how and where we preserve affordability in the long term – for both existing residents and artists as well as those who might move here in the future. This is considered at length in the Creative District plan, which also highlights the need for infill development and new types of homes and workspaces to suit the needs of creative makers and doers. One of the other related issues highlighted in the Creative District plan is that infill development is difficult in OTN due to minimum lot sizes and setbacks. Trenton's current zoning code makes it nearly impossible as of right to rebuild where older rowhomes have been torn down. This leaves the neighborhood with a 'snaggletooth' effect, and illustrates how Trenton's outdated zoning is incompatible with the kinds of development envisioned by both the Creative District plan and Trenton250. Relatedly, OTN is synonymous with the Hanover-Academy Historic District, which means that the Trenton Landmarks Commission has jurisdiction over all developments. Despite the good intentions of the Landmarks Commission, their sometimes overly strict interpretation of historic preservation guidelines results in a lack of interesting new development and essentially no contemporary design incorporating the kinds of colors and materials that would both offset and celebrate the historic character of existing buildings and seem at home in a Creative District.

Isles seeks to undertake a strategic acquisition and predevelopment program to address the issues laid out above. Initially, we are targeting four City-owned vacant lots – 43 N Stockton, 208/214 Academy, and 212 N Montgomery. In

2005, the City of Trenton passed an ordinance designating Isles as the developer for these properties. That ordinance is still on the books, but we are working with City staff to go through the current property purchase application process in order to complete acquisition as quickly as possible. Once we have acquired the properties, we will move into the predevelopment and design phase. Our goal is to get buildable plans, and approvals for those plans, completed for all of the sites so that we can package the properties as one development project. Regardless of whether Isles does the redevelopment or we RFP the packaged properties to a reputable developer, our goal is to take the lead on discussions about what is needed in terms of zoning and historic preservation regulations to allow for the kinds of infill development OTN needs in order to thrive as a Creative District that offers a mix of housing types and affordability levels. We want to pave the way for more streamlined development in OTN that is at once relevant for a Creative District, appropriate in a historic district, and designed to meet the varied needs of both existing residents, many of whom face severe adversity, and future residents, who may represent a greater diversity of race, ethnicity, and income levels.

#### Studios @ 219/219 E Hanover St

We are seeking funding to support the complete rehab of the Studios @ 219. This is a critical location in OTN and has a long history as a center for the arts. TDA has owned and operated it as an arts facility since 2004. The facility was forced to close in late 2014 due to HVAC malfunctions and damage caused by multiple break-ins. As highlighted in the Creative District plan, 219 should be brought back as a community asset. We are working with TDA and developer partner Ajax management to rehab the building. Ajax would own and operate the building, and TDA and Isles would help to program the public space and gallery on the first floor. TDA will sell the building at a discount, while Ajax will put significant private capital into the project. We all will collaborate to identify additional funding sources from grants or elsewhere.

#### Pop Ups

Pop ups are popular all over the world and now, thanks to NRTC, are popular in Trenton as well. We hosted a successful pop up parklet on W Hanover Street, a block party with a pop up on Passaic St, and another parklet in East Trenton. For this effort, we will partner with TDA as they seek to occupy vacant storefronts in OTN with local vendors over three months in 2017. Two pop up retail locations will be created. To the greatest extent possible, we will hire local artists for all graphic design and related aspects of this work. Two part-time jobs will be created. We are excited to do more retail pop ups based on the success of last year's holiday market, which drew 4,000 people. At least one of our pop ups will be held in the same location as last year's market.

As part of a targeted strategy to reactivate vacant commercial buildings along East State St, TDA has created a database of vacant commercial space and the barriers that keep them empty. TDA has also conducted surveys of residents, workers, and business owners to identify gaps in existing retail, and is working with small businesses to create co-op shops in shared storefronts. We hope to use pop ups as a means to demonstrate the value of short term uses or leases to activate spaces, build economic activity, and build demand for goods and services downtown.

## Commercial Façade Improvement

TDA has an existing small matching grant program for façade improvement available to businesses in its catchment area. We seek to augment that by providing more extensive support to at least two businesses in key locations that will highlight how important facades are to customer attraction, streetscape, and perceptions of place. One target business is the bodega at 45 N Stockton St, across from the new café developed as part of Stockton St Apts and next to a proposed infill site. We will also target one additional business on either the 100 block of E State St or the 100 block of N Broad St. In both locations there are clusters of small businesses that draw ample crowds to the sidewalks. We will engage local artists as much as possible in the design work.

## Small Grants

We launched a successful small grants program in the “THDC” (West Ward) neighborhood two years ago that is now being replicated in East Trenton. We hope to bring it to Old Trenton with a particular focus on arts and on implementing the Creative District Plan.

## A-Team at 51 N Stockton St

51 N. Stockton Street was an Isles-owned abandoned carriage house that backs up to Shepard’s Alley. The house that once fronted on N. Stockton St. was removed. We renovated the carriage house so that the Trenton A-Team, a group of underserved artists that formed while operating out of and with the support of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, could occupy it. The A-Team is a new nonprofit with an active board. As this entity grows, Isles will continue to support this organization by providing a rent subsidy and operational costs for their 51 N Stockton occupancy. The A-Team will provide a safe place for people to make art in the community, provide community art events, and help to lay the groundwork for the new arts district in OTN.

## Clean & Green

This project will bring our Clean & Green program, which is currently operating in the THDC and ETC neighborhoods, to OTN. Through Clean & Green, we will work with the City and the TDA, as well as other neighborhood stakeholders and volunteers, to clean up, beautify, and maintain neighborhood parks, vacant lots, and gardens. This work will help to improve the overall appearance of the area and begin to change residents’ and others’ perception about the quality of life in OTN.

## HomeFront Summer Camp & Neighborhood Based Case Management

This project will include continued operations of HomeFront’s neighborhood-based case management services and a 4th year of offering 15 OTN children the opportunity to attend HomeFront’s summer camp.

## Outreach & Organizing

Isles will hire a new community liaison who will work half-time in OTN to become an integral and trusted part of the community that can help to identify needs, engage residents in redevelopment activities, and work with stakeholders to ensure that they are offering services that meet resident needs. Convening the OTN stakeholders group is more critical now than ever, as so much investment is happening or is planned for OTN. We must ensure that we do not duplicate services, that residents are part of the change happening around them, and that policies are in place, even at this early stage, to prevent resident displacement in the future. We will also continue to work with stakeholders to develop a fledgling OTN civic association and to implement the Creative District plan.

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## **New Jersey Community Development Corporation Great Falls Education & Training Center**

New Jersey Community Development Corporation's (NJCDC) approved neighborhood plan is an ambitious one which seeks to change the physical, economic, and social conditions within our boundaries. It is an active plan that has an end date of 2019 and for which we submitted a Plan Review Update in November of 2015. We intend to create lasting change through the implementation of a number of different economic development and social service activities, many of which have received previous NRTC support.

Through this application, we propose to finance the acquisition and renovation of a derelict property within our neighborhood--the former American Legion Hall--and transform it into a neighborhood center to provide educational, job training, and microenterprise development services to neighborhood residents.

As our application will demonstrate, our project clearly addresses distress and it also is and will continue to attract investment. We are pleased to have financing support from TD Bank, and a pledge of Community Development Block Grant funding from the City of Paterson to further leverage an NRTC investment in this project. Documentation of these commitments is provided.

We also believe that this project addresses a Priority Need in our state. Specifically, this project will provide instruction in cutting edge fields such as audio and video production to engage disaffected young people in meaningful job training and to serve as a pathway to employment. A 2016 report by the Great Cities Institute revealed that in 2014, 79 percent of Black 16 to 19 year olds and 74 percent of Hispanic or Latino 16 to 19 year olds were jobless in the United States. This is felt disproportionately in urban centers like Paterson. We believe, therefore, that our efforts to address employment and training needs for young urban residents does in fact address a priority need in our state.

### Economic Development - Great Falls Education & Training Center (GFE&TC)

NJCDC's Greater Spruce Street neighborhood plan calls for the physical revitalization of the neighborhood through the rehabilitation of current structures or the construction of new facilities, particularly for the purpose of benefitting neighborhood youth. Through this application we are seeking funding to finance the acquisition of the former American Legion Hall property located at 52-59 Front Street in Paterson, and renovate the building's interior and exterior to transform the site into a community hub where local youth and young adults, aspiring artists, and arts-based entrepreneurs can receive job training, professional development, and career mentorship and support.

The current two-story structure is approximately 1,800 square feet on a 1.727 acre parcel. Located near John F. Kennedy High School, the proposed site is situated on Lots 1 and 18 of Block 1414, within census tract 34031-1802.02. According to U.S. Census data, total population was approximately 7,200 in 2010, which includes an estimated 1,500 family households. Updated demographic data from the American Community Survey (ACS) indicates total population grew substantially since 2010, to approximately 8,500 people in 2014. Median annual income for workers employed full-time is less than \$30,000, and just 25% of current housing units are owner-occupied.

Once renovations are complete, the currently vacant and dilapidated property will be restored to productive use as a space for education and job training activities, arts-based business incubation, microenterprise development and

youth recreation. The rehabilitated site will feature shared workspaces, workshop rooms, recreation rooms, and recording studios for audio and video production. The recording studios and workspaces will be made available to neighborhood residents at no cost or nominal cost, and to arts-based micro-enterprises for a modest rental fee. This adaptive use is consistent with survey data in our neighborhood plan that indicates the need for expanded access to technical training and job readiness programs, and for expanded access to arts programming and cultural development opportunities.

Completing this project will enable NJCDC to provide assistance to entrepreneurial artists and arts organizations that seek affordable workspaces, business mentorship, networking opportunities, and resources necessary to achieve short-range and long-range career objectives. We also hope to offer administrative support and technical assistance to nascent arts organizations.

NRTC funds for this project will be used to pay outstanding debt service on the purchase note and to finance construction costs. As outlined in the social services component of this application, additional NRTC funding is being requested for a new staff position that will oversee and coordinate daily site operations.

In summary, NRTC funding will finance the acquisition and renovation of a currently derelict property located on a prominent corner in the neighborhood, directly adjacent to one of the city's large high schools. It will allow neighborhood residents to take advantage of many different job training, career development, and microenterprise opportunities, and repurpose the building to enhance the neighborhood's economic vitality.

#### Social Services - Great Falls Promise Neighborhood Initiative

Through this application, NJCDC also seeks funding to support programs, services, and activities designed to promote our approved plan's objectives to enhance the well-being of children and families residing within our neighborhood, with a specific emphasis on youth and young adults.

More specifically, the funding is for our Great Falls Promise Neighborhood Initiative, through which we are working to replicate the pioneering work of the Harlem Children's Zone. This continues the work we began in the summer of 2011 when Governor Christie visited NJCDC and designated us as the state's non-profit partner in bringing the Harlem Children's Zone to Paterson.

Though the Great Falls Promise Neighborhood Initiative, we are expanding upon our substantial base of successful programs for children and their families to create a pipeline of services that address the needs of children throughout every phase of childhood from birth through adolescence--with the ultimate goal of all 8,000 neighborhood children reaching adulthood ready for college and careers.

There are three distinct programs within our Great Falls Promise Neighborhood Initiative for which we are seeking NRTC funds. Each of these is linked directly to the relevant portion of our approved neighborhood plan, specifically to develop Paterson's arts and cultural potential; to expand youth activities; and to coordinate job readiness programs and technical training.

- Paterson Youth Arts Program: We are seeking to continue our successful Paterson Youth Arts Program, which has been funded through a previous NRTC award. We intend to continue to provide comprehensive instruction in the creative arts to

at-risk youth throughout the neighborhood. Research consistently demonstrates that access to the arts can positively impact childhood success and in the long term can impact adult success as well.

Given limited school district funding and the financial limitations of Paterson parents who are predominantly low-income, Paterson's children have very limited access and exposure to arts programming. We intend to address this through a continuation of the Paterson Youth Arts Program, with the objective of positively impacting the educational and life outcomes of the low-income students in our neighborhood through exposure to arts programming. Our goal is to meaningfully engage at least 400 students over a two-year period. We will offer artistic programs including audio arts (e.g. piano and percussion), visual arts (e.g. painting and drawing) and performing arts (e.g. dance and theatre) and will do so during school, after-school and in the summer as a part of a summer youth arts program. Programming will be carried out in NJCDC facilities and neighborhood schools.

The funding we are seeking for this component will support hiring consulting art professionals, purchasing materials and supplies, and providing cash match for two full-time AmeriCorps members who will be assigned to the program for two years. Continuing this highly successful program will only be possible only if we obtain funding through this NRTC application.

- Great Falls Education & Training Center (GFE&TC): The Economic Development component of this application describes our intent to acquire and renovate the former American Legion property in our neighborhood and transform it into the GFE&TC. The main objective of the Center will be to provide educational, job training, and microenterprise development services to a minimum of 200 neighborhood youth and young adults over the grant period. This will be achieved through the construction of recording studios for music and video, a dance studio, a training kitchen and a graphic arts suite. We will both expose participants to careers in these areas through instructors who will impart skills, and we will also link participants with volunteer mentors to help them build skills and obtain internships and employment.

The funding we are seeking for this component will support the salary and benefits of a Program Coordinator over a two-year period, and also to purchase equipment for the studios and kitchen.

- Neighborhood Help Center: We have been operating a Neighborhood Help Center (NHC) for the past three years. It is located at our headquarters building at 32 Spruce Street in the heart of our neighborhood, and serves as a one-stop shopping center where residents gather for information and referral services in areas that range from housing to immigration to employment. Each year we serve hundreds of residents through different classes (such as computer and citizenship classes) and monthly workshops/seminars on a variety of topics of interest to neighborhood residents (such as financial literacy and personal safety).

We intend to expand the work of the Neighborhood Help Center by creating the Great Falls Street Team. The Street Team will consist of 8-10 neighborhood youth and young adults who will undertake weekly neighborhood cleanup and beautification projects.

The funding we are seeking for the Neighborhood Help Center will be used to provide modest stipends of \$50/day for Street Team participants, as well as purchase materials and supplies to carry out the cleanup and beautification projects. In addition, we will utilize funding to hire instructors and purchase materials and supplies for NHC classes and activities (ie: computer training instructors, workbooks, etc.).

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## Saint Joseph's Carpenter Society

### My East Camden, the Fourth Wave

“Cultivating Community” is at the center of My East Camden – building upon the existing assets within the Neighborhoods of East Camden and the values of East Camden residents to ensure a healthy and viable future. What is My East Camden? It is a stable neighborhood, a diverse and inclusive community, a safe and protected community, a neighborhood that values its young people, a neighborhood with employment centers, a cultural destination, and an integral part of the City of Camden.

There are four overarching goals set out to help achieve this resident-driven vision, and guide the strategies of My East Camden:

1. Improve Housing,
2. Improve Neighborhood Conditions,
3. Foster Commercial Revitalization and Economic Development,
4. Enhance Culture, Arts, Open Space and the Public Realm.

There are also three partners, each with a long history of successful impacts within the City of Camden:

- Saint Joseph’s Carpenter Society (SJCS) began revitalization efforts in East Camden in 1985. Thirty years later, SJCS has created over 950 homes for families of which over two-thirds are homeownership. This work has greatly reduced the vacancy rate in East Camden and has created a residential real estate market which has allowed for an enhanced commercial district based on increased population.
- Cooper’s Ferry Partnership (CFP), who began working in downtown Camden in 1984, started working in neighborhoods in 2001 and has partnered with SJCS in East Camden on infrastructure issues as well as working on the commercial corridors.
- The NJ Tree Foundation is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to planting trees in New Jersey’s most urban neighborhoods, where the need is greatest. Through tree planting, volunteerism, and partnerships, they assist numerous communities in improving their environment and quality of life. Since 1998, the NJ Tree Foundation has planted 203,661 trees across the state with volunteers, by hand. Beginning small by planting whips with volunteer groups, the Tree Foundation now plants large shade trees in some of NJ’s toughest neighborhoods. Undaunted by crime statistics, Tree Foundation staff believe that even in our roughest communities, planting a tree can bring hope. Community-based tree plantings work. They involve the residents who in-turn care for the trees and allow us to report a 95% survival rate for our trees. Community-based tree plantings bring outside volunteers into inner cities and change their perceptions about the city and its residents. Planting trees in this manner makes the Tree Foundation a leader in the tree planting field. We do not do the work for the people, we train them to take charge and complete the project themselves. That is empowering for folks who must face some of life’s most difficult circumstances.

This fourth phase identified as The Fourth Wave will contribute to all four goals: included in this phase are housing, a green initiative and park improvements. Each of these initiatives touch on objectives as prioritized by residents.



### Carpenters Square, Phase 2

Fifteen years ago, an area known as "The Alley" between Morse and Boyd streets in East Camden was home to one of the city's largest open-air drug markets. Dealers and prostitutes conducted their business in vacant buildings there. Police officers were shot during raids, one officer left paralyzed from the bullet to his chest. Long-time residents said The Alley's notoriety as one of the most dangerous places in the city began in the late 1970s. By the late-1980s, a violent network of street gangs, suppliers and drug dealers led by Jose Luis "J.R." Rivera had taken control of the block bordered by Morse, Bank, Boyd and Baird streets. Police said the dealers used the T-shaped alley to their advantage, stationing look-outs at all three entrances to warn of approaching police. Buyers could then exit in whichever direction was clear. Police raided "The Alley" several times in the 1990s. In February 1998, city and state agencies arrested 98 people in a sting operation that left one suspect dead and three police officers wounded. One of them, Lt. Leroy Palmer, was paralyzed after being shot in the chest. Shortly after that, Rivera was arrested and his drug ring was shut down.

The multiphase project known as "Carpenter Square" targeted the two-hundred block of Boyd and Morse Streets in the Marlton neighborhood just off of Baird Boulevard and Admiral Wilson Boulevard, once the largest and most notorious open air drug market in the City of Camden. This project is intended to do the following:

- improve the infrastructure in the immediate area
- provide safe and affordable housing that is attractive and well-suited for the existing neighborhood
- provide redevelopment to a community in an effort to increase the homeownership ratio and, in turn, decrease the crime rate and drug activity of the community.

Working with area residents, SJCS designed a plan that will allow for the homeowner occupied, single family homes to remain. Redevelopment will occur predominately in the location of the abandoned and now demolished duplex rental units. Included in this project, problematic alleys have been redesigned and local infrastructure was updated. Also, streetscape improvements were incorporated into the infrastructure phase. Decorative street lighting is now located along Boyd and Morse Streets and continues down Baird Boulevard and Marlton Pike from an earlier project. Also included was the trimming and pruning of existing trees, the removal of dead trees and stumps, and the planting of new trees along the center median of Baird Boulevard from Marlton Boulevard to Raritan Street.

SJCS partnered with CFP to do the infrastructure work. The area was in need of large scale infrastructure work. CFP assessed and improved the sewers, streets, lighting, and the problematic alley system for these two blocks. There was frequent flooding that occurred in the alleys and this work is intended to alleviate that issue. All sewers and water lines were replaced. PSE&G has upgraded their gas lines to a high pressure system. Fencing and lighting were also replaced and curbing, paving, and new sidewalks were added.

SJCS completed the first housing phase, an 18-unit new construction and rehab project (1 unit). The 17 new construction units were three-bedroom, 1 ½ bathroom homes. Each house has a rear driveway which accommodates parking for one car as well as a one-car garage. All units were Energy Star certified. The total development cost for that phase was \$4,281,000 for the 18 units which includes City of Camden HOME funds.

SJCS is seeking to fund Phase II – new construction of 8 single-family houses for homeownership, to be located across the street from the 18 houses built in Phase I.

This project responds to two goals of the plan including improve housing and improving neighborhood conditions.

### myHome

Typically low-income residents have a difficult time in accessing capital for major renovations if the work was delayed and not accomplished as routine maintenance. In researching Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data, the home improvement denial rate for minority homebuyers is very high (61.8%). While it is also high for white buyers (38.6%), the minority denial rate is still 60% higher than white buyers. Combining this data with the older housing stock in East Camden as well as the low incomes of homeowners in the area lead to the need for this type of program providing access to capital for safe and healthy renovations or sometimes even simple upkeep and maintenance, particularly for more elderly homeowners.

Over the past few years, SJCS gained valuable experience in working with existing residents in their homes. SJCS successfully administered the Camden Home Improvement Program, Phase IV, completing 197 loans.

The pilot of the East Camden Home Repair Program now known as “myHome” was launched on May 4, 2016; the NRTC funds were totally committed by 10/18/16. The program is helping SJCS achieve two results. The first is to stabilize clients’ largest assets, their homes, and ensure that this portion of their investment portfolio (perhaps their only asset) is on solid ground. The second is to continue to stabilize the neighborhood. In achieving these two goals at once, East Camden will continue on its path to being a neighborhood of choice.

### Clean and Safe Ambassadors

The Camden Special Services District (Clean and Safe Ambassadors), a subsidiary of CFP, will employ local residents to help with litter, graffiti, weeds and snow removal along Federal Street and Westfield Avenue. These commercial corridors are the most vibrant in the City and will benefit from these services. This project fosters commercial revitalization and economic development as well as improves neighborhood conditions. This program is a job program for local residents; however, in addition, these Ambassadors improve public safety and the attractiveness of the commercial district as well as the entire neighborhood. It also helps to develop a more vibrant, walkable, mixed-use commercial district in the middle of East Camden.

### Park Renewal

Is it true that some residents in our communities have better parks than others? It may depend on whom you ask. SJCS certainly feels that may be the case for Camden County: the "haves" have more and better parks, while minority and underserved communities often have fewer parks, and those that exist are in disrepair. If you research on internet, you will find no parks from Camden list among the list of bests, must sees, etc. This is a gap SJCS is trying to address in its Park Renewal Project.

Park-poor neighborhoods and communities, where the most vulnerable and underserved residents tend to reside, are also frequently on the front lines of exposure to negative environmental impacts such as urban heat island effects,

flooding, and lower environmental quality conditions that magnify the growing threats of severe weather and climate change, and have negative impacts on residents' health and quality of life.

East Camden has a number of public parks and open spaces which are underutilized, and as such, become a haven for dangerous activity, instead of serving as centers of recreation, relaxation and community building. CFP and SJCS will work on park programming, placemaking and community building. This initiative speaks to the community's desire to improve the public realm.

#### East Camden Green Initiative

The public realm continues to be a focus for the next activity, East Camden Green Initiative which aims to increase the number of trees in the community and maintain the ones that are there.

#### Why?

- **Clean Air.** Researchers at the Davey Institute found that urban trees and forests are saving an average of one life every year per city because of the particulates that they remove from the air. A study in the Journal of Preventative Medicine found that people experienced more deaths from heart disease and respiratory disease when they lived in areas where trees had disappeared. Trees are often referred to as the “lungs of the planet” because of the oxygen they provide to other living things.
- **Jobs.** According to the U.S. Forest Service, recreation visitor spending in National Forests amounted to nearly \$11 billion in 2012. All that economic activity sustains about 190,000 full- and part-time jobs. And that’s just in our National Forests!
- **Clean Water.** Forests provide natural filtration and storage systems that process nearly two-thirds of the water supply in the United States. When you drink a glass of tap water in a New York City restaurant, you’re drinking water that was filtered largely by the forests of upstate New York. The forests do such a good job that the city only needs to do a minimum of additional filtering.
- **Carbon Sequestration.** Burning fossil fuels puts heat-trapping carbon dioxide into our atmosphere, changing our climate in dangerous ways. Planting trees can slow down this process. A tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year, and can sequester one ton of carbon dioxide by the time it reaches 40 years old.
- **Reduced Crime.** Neighborhoods with abundant trees have significantly fewer crimes than those without. Researchers think that this is because green spaces have a calming effect and encourage people to spend more with their neighbors outdoors, bolstering community trust.
- **Increased Property Values.** People are drawn to homes and businesses near trees. The proof is in the prices: property values are 7 percent to 25 percent higher for houses surrounded by trees and consumers spend up to 13 percent more at shops near green landscapes.
- **Mental Health.** Feeling down? Take a walk in the woods. Several studies have found that access to nature yields better cognitive functioning, more self-discipline, and greater mental health overall. One study even found that hospital patients who can see trees out their windows are hospitalized 8 percent fewer days than their counterparts.
- **Temperature Control.** The shade and wind-breaking qualities that trees provide benefit everyone from the individual taking shelter from a hot summer day to entire cities. The annual mean air temperature of a city

with 1 million people or more can be 1.8–5.4°F (1–3°C) warmer than its surroundings. Planting trees reduces this “heat island effect”. And households with shade trees could spend 12% less on cooling costs in the summer.

- Flood Control. Trees can hold vast amounts of water that would otherwise stream down hills and surge along rivers into towns. That’s why trees are such an important part of stormwater management for many cities.
- Wildlife Habitat. Wildlife use trees for food, shelter, nesting, and mating. These habitats support the incredible variety of living things on the planet, known as biodiversity. By protecting trees, we also save all the other plants and animals they shelter.

These planned projects/activities address the four priority objectives and strategies. East Camden has greatly benefited from continual investment over the past twenty-five years. This Fourth Wave of My East Camden implementation is poised to further push East Camden and her residents to begin to see an overall community change. Improving East Camden along all four objectives and targeting to address issues linked to families, youth, employment, housing, and neighborhood bring together a comprehensive approach to revitalizing the entire community.

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## Stand Up For Salem

### VOICES FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Center of Salem Neighborhood Plan identified several key areas of development needed to improve quality of life in the Oak to Olive neighborhood. Past NRTC efforts have focused primarily on housing issues, successfully creating homeownership opportunities and improved housing conditions for city residents by implementing over 170 projects, including façade improvements, financial incentives to create new homeowners, the tearing down of dangerous vacant structures, and decorative board up of structurally sound properties.

Following our successful 2016 application we (Stand Up For Salem, or SUFS) now hope to turn our attention to building a resilient community by engaging and empowering residents towards a sustainable Salem. In keeping with our approved NRTC neighborhood plan's goals of boosting economic development and social capital, with this grant we hope to enhance the local economy through Community Business Development that is resilient over the long term, and create Safer & Healthier neighborhoods through strong community engagement.

#### COMMUNITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The goal of the Community Business Development project is to assist residents in Salem City to develop a small local economy that is sustainable over the long term. As indicated by the approved NRTC neighborhood plan, the main vehicles for revitalizing the local economy are through job training and small business development. The project components we are proposing are detailed below.

##### *Youth Building Preservation Arts Training Center*

In the midst of Salem's heavily blighted commercial district, one of the most prominent and contentious properties has been the old JC Penney department store building. In the hands of a private owner who used it as a storage facility for 18 years, it has long been a sore spot with the community. Primarily unused, the building remained boarded up and despite numerous attempts to purchase and redevelop the property, the owners held fast to the building until 2016, when we were able to purchase it. SUFS's intention is to create a youth education center, of which the centerpiece will be a Building Preservation Arts program where both in-school and out of school youth can learn skilled and fine art trades applicable to the preservation of historic buildings, including stained glass work, welding, iron work, stone carving, plasterwork and the like.

The economic development goals of such a program are to produce skilled crafts people able to meet the building preservation demands of the region by providing high quality products for historic renovation work. An Associate's degree and certificate programs in collaboration with Salem Community College will be explored as will partnerships with 4 year colleges offering similar degrees in the region. As a rising tide lifts all ships, this project is designed to complement other economic development art projects in the region, not compete. This will help in branding the southern region of the state as an arts locale, making it beneficial beyond the boundaries of the city.

The organization has funding in place including NRTC funding, to take the project through the Schematic Design, Design Development and Construction Document Phase Services and roof repair/replacement. Additional funding is

requested to begin the next phase of renovation which will include the interior demolition of the building, structural repairs to the floor and begin installation of major systems such as plumbing, electric, HVAC and fire suppression.

#### *Small Business Development*

SUFS is requesting funds to start a Business Improvement Grant and Loan Program with alternative credit requirements to assist low income entrepreneurs with matching micro-business development loan funds and small business grants. Many residents want to start micro-businesses, but are in need of loan amounts that are too low for most lenders, who also have credit requirements that are still too stringent for Salem residents to meet. In addition SUFS would also like to offer business plan development assistance more broadly, provide website design help, and set up a small business center for residents to have an access to a computer and business resources.

#### SAFE & HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

The goal of the Safe & Healthy Neighborhood Project is to improve the quality of life and build social capacity in the NRTC neighborhood as highlighted in the approved plan. A large portion of this project revolves around engaging the neighborhood and helping resident take control of their lives by providing the training and resources necessary for self-sufficiency and mutual protection and support.

#### *Crime Prevention*

The greatest challenge discussed by residents in the NRTC zone is crime. Chief among residents' complaints are young adults that trespass and loiter in the streets in front of their homes committing nuisance crimes; and drug dealers who by default bring violent crimes into the neighborhood.

With continued funding SUFS will implement a pilot project in collaboration with city Police and local residents, in the most crime ridden section of the NRTC zone from Olive to Wesley Streets, installing anti-loitering devices which emit high pitched sounds only heard by people of a certain age; installing No Trespassing signs so police can enforce them and starting a "Crime Free" rental housing program to work with landlords on better tenant screening and appropriate behavior enforcement. In addition SUFS would like to improve relationships between the Police and residents with the development of a "Citizen Police Academy", a national program designed to increase the understanding of the police department with a "behind-the-scenes" look at the various functions within the department.

#### *Neighborhood Grants Program*

Successful community development relies heavily on creating leadership within the community. Using the proven Heart & Soul® community engagement model designed by the Orton Family Foundation, staff and volunteers will engage community residents in leadership development training. After the completion of training, resident groups that identify issues on their block that they desire to change will be able to apply for a small project grant. Projects can include beautification, community gardens, play areas or other identified goals; however neighbors must work together on the project.

## *Faith Based Small Grant Program*

Salem City has 33 active churches in a two square mile radius. While some churches implement standard charity programs such as food pantry's or school supply distribution, most do not fully engage with the neighborhood surrounding their church, nor have they been trained in community development. The project will host a 2-day intensive in Christian Community Development by the Christian Community Development Association which works to engage churches in responding to community issues. At the end of the intensive, small grants will be available for church-initiated community development projects in the NRTC neighborhood designed to improve the quality of life for residents through the building of social capital or economic development.

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## The Cooper Health System

### Cooper Plaza Housing and Economic Development Phase V

This project will provide a variety of activities with four of Cooper's non-profit partners. The activities have been specifically identified with our partners to further implement the identified outcomes in the neighborhood plan. These diverse projects will address the specific outcomes to reduce vacancies, provide mixed income housing, improve occupied housing, maintain parks, vacant lot stabilization with partners and increase access to job training programs for residents. The diverse set of activities implements the neighborhood plan through traditional development projects and both innovative and creative approaches to support the residents. This includes rehabilitation of 3 vacant and dilapidated units, workforce training and development to address high unemployment rates, innovative approach to support residents with improvements to their homes who do not have the resources that will preserve homes, clean and safe services and further stabilization of a former vacant site now a community garden to give it some permanency in the community.

#### Cooper Plaza Workforce Training and Development Program

One of the most persistent issues Camden City and Cooper Plaza residents face is a high unemployment rate, substantially higher than the national average. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national unemployment rate as of July 2016 is 4.9%, Camden's is 11.6%. The Cooper Lanning neighborhood, where this program will be hosted has an unemployment rate of 22.5%; triple that of Camden County and almost double of Camden City. Residents face steep barriers to successful employment from a young age and youth who do not finish high school struggle to find gainful employment and often underprepared for the jobs that are available. Lack of education creates and exacerbates a skills gap impacting residents past high school years and to adulthood, making it difficult for individuals to make a living.

This training program is designed by Center for Family Services (CFS) to work with residents and potential employers to make sure residents are effectively trained in needed skills to be successfully employed. The program will be based in the heart of Cooper Plaza and expand its reach for training programs. CFS will recruit participants, provide life skills curriculum focused on job readiness and tailored to some of the areas that Camden City employers have identified as most important. The program will have three central areas of focus: intensive job and life skills training, workforce employability skills curriculum, and extensive support services. The goal is to tailor job training to equip participants with the specific skills they need most to be successful in the workforce long term. The training will connect participants with technical and occupational training in a variety of industries and emphasize intensive training programs and work to make hands on training opportunities like apprenticeships with area businesses available to participants so that they can learn relevant skills to create a successful pathway and transition into the workforce. This needed training program will implement the neighborhood plan's identified outcome to increase access to job-readiness programs for Cooper Plaza residents and specifically the number of Cooper Plaza residents enrolled in job-readiness programs.



### Center for Family Services Rehabilitation of Vacant Unit

As one of Cooper's Camden based non-profit partners, the Center for Family Services (CFS) will rehabilitate a vacant and abandoned unit at 574 Benson Street in the Cooper Plaza neighborhood. This economic development activity will take a unit that has been vacant for several years and is the only remaining vacant unit on this block. CFS will immediately utilize the facility for a Training and Success Center to serve as a community-based, family-centered neighborhood center for Cooper Plaza residents to go to for family support, information, workforce development and job readiness training, and other services. The CFS workforce training & development program will ultimately move to this location as well.

CFS will purchase the unit with its own funds and has an agreement of sale for the property. NRTC funds will cover rehab, construction and development related costs. CFS will own and operate the facility as a neighborhood training center. As a non-profit, CFS will use the rehabbed unit to link families to resources in the community, family support programming, provide referral services, workforce development training, education programs, family health services, housing services, financial education, parenting workshops, life skills training, job search and resume help and also advocacy for residents. This unit is the last vacant property on the block and upon completion it will have an immediate and lasting impact on the community as it will stabilize and preserve a vacant property that is a nuisance on the neighborhood. The exterior of the unit remains in decent condition, but the interior is in very poor condition and requires significant rehab. This activity advances the specific outcomes to improve conditions of commercial and retail buildings, reduce vacancies and facilitate institutional and educational development.

### Clean & Safe Cooper Plaza

With major investments in the neighborhood include parks, green space, streetscape improvements, residential development, retail and institutional growth it's critical to maintain neighborhood conditions, preserve community assets and provide a reliable presence in the neighborhood. The Clean and Safe Cooper Plaza program, through the Camden Special Services District (CSSD), will provide maintenance and security services in Cooper Plaza to directly support the neighborhood. Uniformed ambassadors will serve as a visible presence in the neighborhood daily at 96 hours per week with supervision. Ambassadors will provide services to pick up litter, clean graffiti, power wash sidewalks, remove trash, park cleanup, weeding and minor landscaping, snow removal from ADA accessible ramps, offer assistance to residents or visitors and report issues to the City or address concerns immediately. Ambassadors provide assistance at special events, community activities and free public concerts in the park and work to keep the homeless population out of public areas. CSSD employs only Camden residents as ambassadors, which provides job opportunities to Camden residents with salaries and benefits. CSSD has a successful track record for more than 10 years providing services in the City of Camden. Expansion into Cooper Plaza has had a dramatic impact on the neighborhood over the last several years and has been a vital piece of implementing the Cooper Plaza neighborhood plan and helping to improve conditions in the neighborhood. The ambassadors have become the backbone for maintaining the neighborhood which has a dramatic effect on encouraging ongoing investments. This activity implements the NRTC Plan to improve neighborhood conditions, specifically outcomes to support vacant lot stabilization and maintain improved parks. The services are helping to reverse conditions that have plagued the neighborhood that compound the challenges facing the community: vacant lots as havens for trash and dumping; graffiti throughout the neighborhood; trash and litter impacting the streets; sidewalks and common areas that were never addressed; overgrown common spaces that encourage illegal activity and parks that were not cleaned or

maintained. This is critical to maintain and preserve community assets and the neighborhood plan goal to improve neighborhood conditions and also supports the outcome to attract new retail, maintain parks and lot stabilization with partners.

#### St. Joseph's myHOME Improvement Program

The housing stock in the neighborhood is older and in many cases showing signs of neglect. Improving the condition of the occupied housing in the neighborhood is a key outcome for the implementation of the neighborhood plan. Many residents lack the funds and sometimes the ability to make important repairs to their homes themselves, which further fosters deterioration of the housing stock and potentially contributing to an increase in vacant homes. In addition, low-income residents have a difficult time in accessing funds for home improvements to keep their homes safe. HMDA data shows that home improvement denial rates for minority homeowners are very high at about 61.8%. Combining this data with the older housing stock in Cooper Plaza and low incomes of homeowners in the area, a free home improvement program is needed to preserve existing occupied homes, support safety improvements and provide repairs that have been neglected over time, especially for elderly homeowners. The program will offer a maximum of \$5,000 in improvements for a home (may exceed \$5,000 if a case is clearly warranted to fix immediate safety issues). Improvements cover basic home repairs with a focus on safety and major systems that includes roofs, electrical, plumbing, heating and cooling systems. The program will also address other safety upgrades for the interior of the home and some exterior improvements to address neglect. St. Joe's will be responsible for implementation to include: resident outreach, eligible improvements per homes, eligibility requirements for program, application process, permits and hiring contractors to complete the repairs.

#### St. Joseph's Acquisition and Rehabilitation of 7th Street Home

Improving the quality and availability of home ownership opportunities in the neighborhood plays a vital role in the continued development of a vibrant community. The neighborhood has seen new and rehabilitated homes through a variety of housing developers that is starting to change the landscape to include new construction of vacant lots, rehab of vacant homes and residential façade improvements. However, there are still vacant, abandoned and blighted homes that are dramatically impacting the condition and safety of the neighborhood.

To reduce the number of vacant and abandoned homes, provide quality home ownership options and rehab blighted homes, Cooper's non-profit partner St. Joseph's Carpenter Society (SJCS) will utilize NRTC funds for the acquisition of a vacant unit they are acquiring from the Camden Redevelopment Agency and the rehabilitation of the home for home ownership. The home located at 515 South 7th Street has been vacant for approximately 10 years, is in extremely poor condition and on a key block in the neighborhood. SJCS rehabilitation of the home will build upon past successes and strengthen the goal to complete housing block by block. The rehab will preserve the exterior facade of the home to bring it back to the intended character, consistent with the existing housing stock. The home will be gut-rehabbed and brought up to code to be sold to a qualified homebuyer. The rehab will include interior, exterior, roof, site and mechanical system improvements, new appliances, flooring and exterior improvements. It will also include an alarm system, energy star appliances, green components and forced hot air heating and central air-conditioning. SJCS will use its management team and experienced contractors with expertise in rehabbing homes in Camden to complete the work. The acquisition and rehab will implement the Neighborhood Plan through the specific outcomes to reduce vacant properties and provide mixed-income housing.

### Habitat for Humanity Housing Rehabilitation

Camden County Habitat for Humanity provides quality affordable home ownership opportunities in Cooper Plaza by building or renovating homes to foster a strong community. NRTC funds will support Habitat in the rehabilitation of 650 Clinton Street into a 4 bedroom 1.5 bath home. The property is a corner unit located on 7th and Clinton streets next to occupied homes. Habitat will do a complete rehabilitation of the home and fully implement the project including permits, materials, construction activities, construction labor and related construction and/or rehabilitation needs for the properties including the contractors. Work will include restoring the exterior facade and all new interior, exterior, roof, mechanical systems along with new appliances, flooring and exterior improvements. Habitat will use its experience in Camden and community outreach to identify a qualified family to purchase the home after it is completed. They will select a qualified homeowner through its rigorous homeowner orientation program, a homeowner academy and will receive a sub-prime mortgage through Habitat. The property will be deed restricted for income levels using HUD guidelines. This advances Neighborhood Plan to improve housing and neighborhood conditions and specifically support the outcomes to reduce vacancies and provide mixed income housing opportunities.

### Cooper Sprouts Community Garden Improvements

Cooper was a partner with the Cooper Lanning Civic Association, community residents and Camden Children's Garden to create the only community garden located in Cooper Plaza on vacant land owned by the civic association. The garden was something that the neighborhood wanted and the partnership was able to get the garden started. As Camden is an identified food desert, the garden now provides an opportunity for residents to support a healthier lifestyle by growing fresh food and provide children a chance to learn about healthy diets and proper nutrition. Residents tend to garden plots and support other families in the community in need of food as well. The garden has been successful and has become an important part of the fabric of the community. A willow tree is now a center piece in the garden and in September won the Plant One Million Tree of the Year award. The garden should be a focal point for the community but lacks a defined sense of place in the community and with its current conditions looks unfinished. The garden has some temporary fence around a portion of the site that provides the appearance of a construction site and some old chain link fence that encloses some sections of the garden and is dangerous and falling down. To define the significance of the garden, a new decorate fence will give the garden a true sense of place in the community and clearly identify the garden. It will improve the safety by removing the hazardous portions of fence that really serve no purpose. To further recognize its presence and significance to the community, decorative signage will be installed in the garden to clearly identify the garden and support community pride. The fence and signage will develop a sense of place in the community, provide some permanent improvements that are lasting and impactful and stabilize the garden as a permanent part of the community. This activity will further support the implementation of the neighborhood plan and outcomes to improve conditions and stabilize vacant lots.

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**Tri-County Community Action Agency, Inc. (t/a Gateway Community Action Partnership)  
Mill Creek Crossings at Southeast Gateway - Phase II**

The grant will provide funding for Phase II of the agency's Mill Creek Crossings at Southeast Gateway Project. The second phase of the project will allow for demolition of up to six vacant, dilapidated homes and construction of three new single family homes to be available to eligible low-income buyers. In addition, the program will allow for neighborhood safety and beautification projects, including new fencing around an existing basketball court, new surfacing and fencing around an existing playground, and a new gazebo and site lighting at an entryway pocket park.

Funds will also be used for supportive services, such as homeowner and budget counseling.

The Mill Creek Crossing development includes single family homes for low income families. The primary initiative of this project is to address the issues of affordable housing and housing counseling. The development aims to transition qualified, low-income families who rent their homes into homeownership. Homeownership expands individual opportunities, creates incentives for households to better maintain their homes, and may benefit children of homeowners. Homeownership also benefits local neighborhoods because an owner-occupier has a financial stake in the quality of the local community.

As a condition of sale, existing tenants must agree to participate in the program and wish to become first time homebuyers. Renters will go through Gateway's Financial Literacy program, attend classes that teach general home maintenance skills, as well as pre- and post-purchase housing counseling. Upon completion of all required counseling, Gateway will assist renters in repairing their credit and applying for a mortgage in order to purchase their home and transition into homeownership. Many families who rent are currently paying more than 40 percent of their monthly income on rent. Becoming homeowners will allow them to keep more of their income by paying less in a mortgage than their current rental payments.

The overall project goal is the construction of 15-20 new homes to complete the project regarding new home construction. Outlined goals will be met in two phases. Phase I - funded by NJDCA HOME Funding and 2013 Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program - is under way and will result in the construction of 10 new homes. Completion of the first 10 homes will be accomplished before the end of the 2016 calendar year. Phase II of the project will include up to eight additional homes - three funded through this NRTC proposal.

The Southeast Gateway neighborhood is one of the most distressed neighborhoods in Bridgeton. It is part of the Federal Empowerment Zone, and the neighborhood population is changing and the number of suitable available housing units is on the decline. The existing housing stock consists of small duplexes, dilapidated buildings and less than attractive facades. According to the most recent 2010-2014 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, there are 328 more renter occupied homes than there are owner-occupied homes in the designated census tract.

In addition, this is a neighborhood in transition both economically and demographically. There has been an influx of Mexican and other Hispanic families in the neighborhood. This is primarily driven by jobs in the large Cumberland County agricultural economy.

The high school graduate rate is 26 percentage points less than the state average. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the median household income from 2007 through 2011 was \$35,084, or 49% of the State average, and 29% of the neighborhood's residents live below the poverty line compared to the State's 9%. These figures describe a neighborhood that easily meets the low- and moderate-income benchmarks established by the N.J. Department of Community Affairs.

Gateway currently has site control of 11 properties and funding to build 10 new dwellings in Phase 1 (five via NRTC). The project in totality includes acquiring additional sites for new construction and converting a grassy area to a nicely manicured green open space as an introduction to the neighborhood.

The vision of the project represents a tremendous opportunity for us to revitalize one of the most distressed neighborhoods in the State. Incomes lag well behind the state average, housing conditions are depressed, and many of the challenges of the larger, urban areas of the state, also face this community. However, one considerable difference between this rural area and a recognized urban area is that resources aren't readily available as they may be in urban areas. Being located in the southern part of the state, the area is often overlooked by investors.

While rehabilitating the housing stock would be a tremendous improvement, improvement to the streetscape and open spaces will only make the new homes more appealing and attractive to potential homebuyers. By educating the homebuyer, owners will take a greater stake in the neighborhood to ensure their homes and the neighborhood remain in quality condition. An investment in the neighborhood includes the entire neighborhood, from houses to lights to public spaces and home buyer education.

#### About Bridgeton's Southeast Gateway neighborhood

In the Spring of 2004, Gateway Community Action Partnership, developed a strategic plan for the "Southeast Gateway" neighborhood of Bridgeton. The area targeted for development improvements is the section of land between Southeast Avenue to the Cohansey River and Route 49 to the Fairfield Township line, referred to in its entirety as the "Southeast Gateway". Through a collaborative planning process, neighborhood residents identified a series of goals, strategies, and projects to enhance the neighborhood. These initiatives are centered around three areas of need as:

- 1) Increasing the wealth and prosperity of the neighborhood;
- 2) Enhancing the physical condition of the neighborhood; and
- 3) Expanding the availability of services and facilities.

The specific goals developed for 'Enhancing the physical condition of the neighborhood' are: 1) revitalize the existing housing stock; 2) clean up sidewalks and common community areas; 3) construct and rehabilitate sidewalks and street lighting; 4) provide better community parking and street circulation; and 5) provide new gateway projects that enhance the entrances to the neighborhood.

Mill Creek Crossings at Southeast Gateway is a housing development designed to convert qualified low-income families who rent into homeowners. The project represents an investment in the entire neighborhood designed to instill a sense of civic pride and community esteem within the residents. The Phase II project will meet the goals

outlined above. The two-story dwellings are proposed to be 1,500 square feet and will include three bedrooms, two and one half baths, a living area, dining area, kitchen and laundry area. Gateway will also offer housing and budget counseling to qualified buyers through a series of workshops and classes.

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