

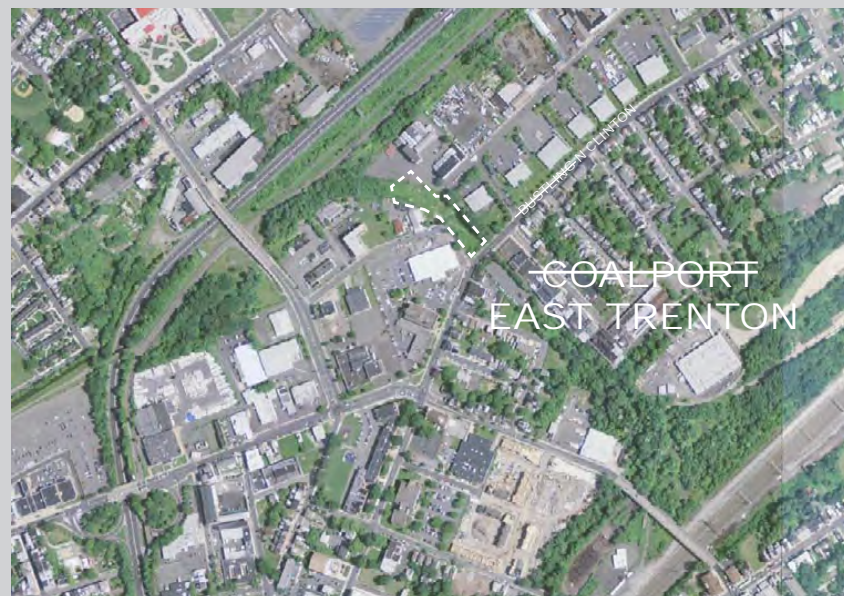
A Coalport Revival
Trenton, New Jersey

Beginning at the scale of the block, we collaborate with diverse partners from rural to urban, to develop strategies centered on systemic change. Our work aims to heal, restore, and repair societal systems reflective of the very democratic values and principles that for far too long have been selectively accessed and undemocratically applied. In doing so, we cultivate a societal lived experience that anchors the full potential of democracy.

As a public benefit corporation, our research and design services center on serving the public in ways that enhance the societal conditions impacting the full potential of a practice of democratic principles and values for all.

Our methodology of pedagogy, process, and practice, cultivates shared-value purpose, addressing multiple social and spatial conditions across various scales and timeframes. Through the power of innovation, action, and design we achieve meaningful outcomes within communities, maximizing transformational impact, while making democracy a tangible and accessible practice for all.





Trenton as an ecosystem of change

The City of Trenton continues to face numerous challenges impacting the quality of life and economic advancement. Socio-spatial conditions from toxic industrialization, Redlining, urban renewal, deindustrialization, service cuts, environment degradation, and now the specter of gentrification reinforces inequitable outcomes to the future potential of this great city.

This engagement is a deliberate and interdisciplinary process, co-authored by a diasporic community of people-not titles, activating the full potential of the Greater Coalport community. The successful planning and conceptual projects developed in conjunction with the community collaborators for this neighborhood can serve as a case study model actualizing the rhetoric of equitable systemic change. This is especially important in this critical societal moment as diverse stakeholders are increasingly looking for processes exemplifying the transformational capacities of spatially focused restorative justice.

Beginning with in-depth research, immersive public engagement activities, and design and visioning services this project's scope is developing, planning and designing a hybrid project which would result in an innovative transformative vision. Big questions remain such as:

- What is the clear unifying vision for the project? • How will this project support a broader desire to respond to the community needs?
- How will the creation of a hybrid community asset result in the intended impacts?
- What projects are feasible for the organization to build, operate and maintain for the long term?
- What will it take for others in the community and in other institutions to align and invest in this vision?

This scope of work aims to answer those questions and provide the necessary tools and resources to share their vision with other community stakeholders, funders, and beneficiaries. We must co-create a design process to listen to a range of stakeholders to create opportunities to develop a revitalization model to simultaneously advance and empower a community.

East Trenton

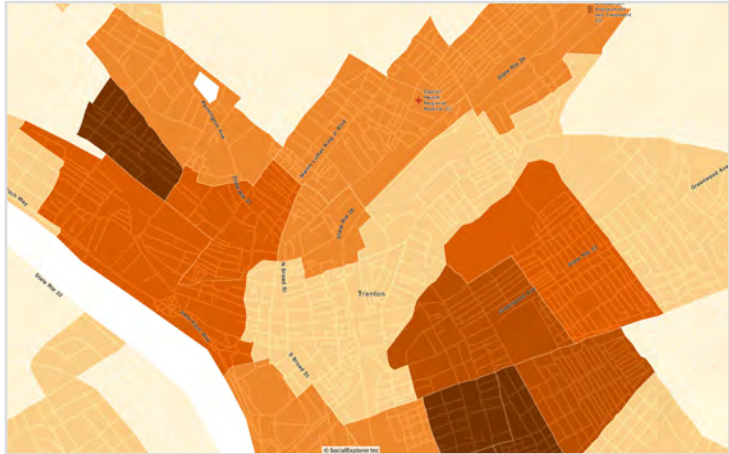


The Hollowing out of East Trenton

1940



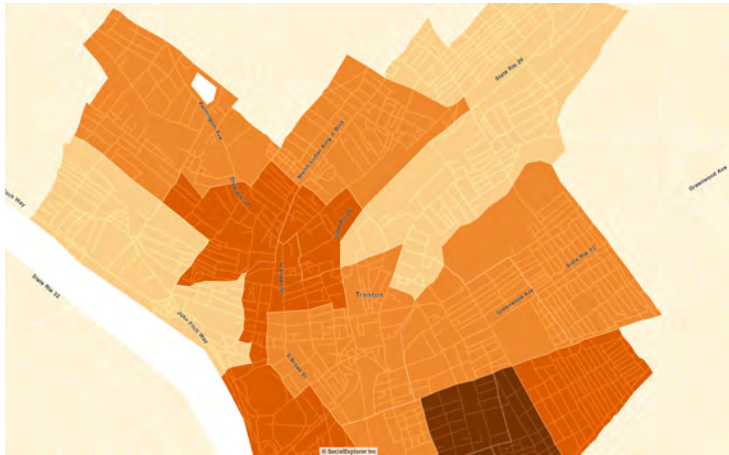
2000



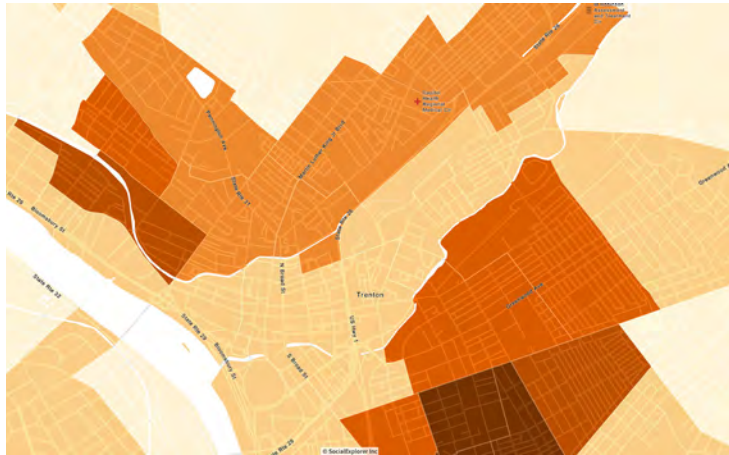
In visualizing the population density of East Trenton from 1940 on, we witness a neighborhood hollowing out in terms of population, a pattern that is also occurring in adjacent neighborhoods.

From redlining and disinvestment to crime and health epidemics, this section of Trenton has been subject to phenomena that have reduced the census tract's population fourfold.

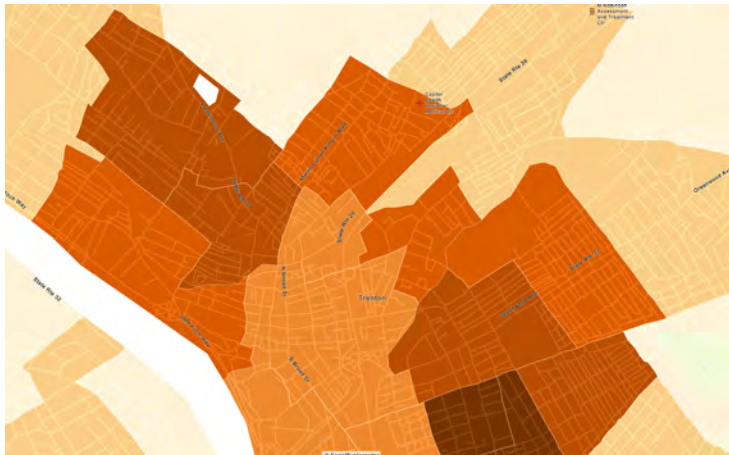
1960



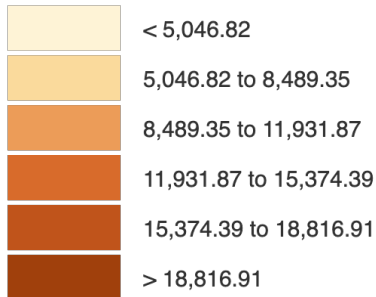
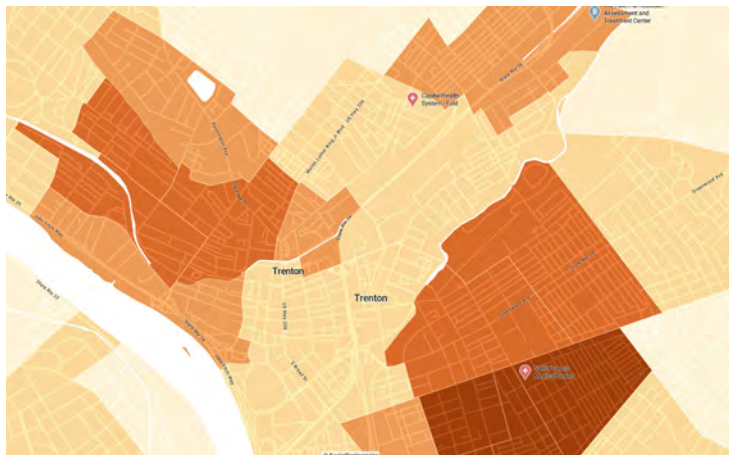
2010



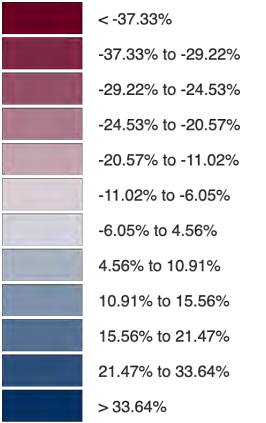
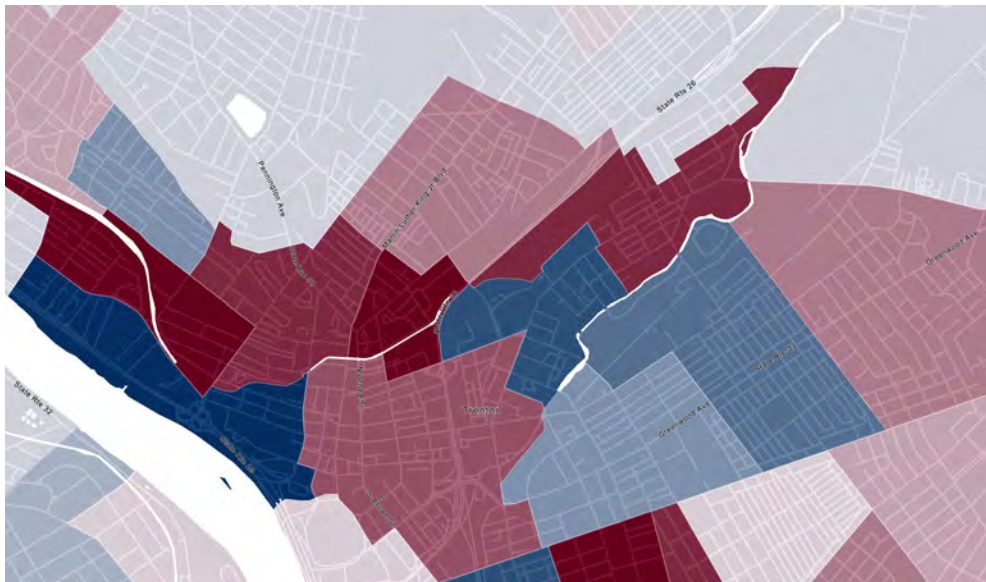
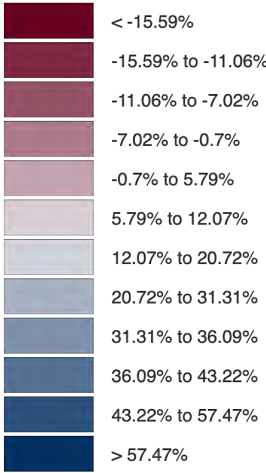
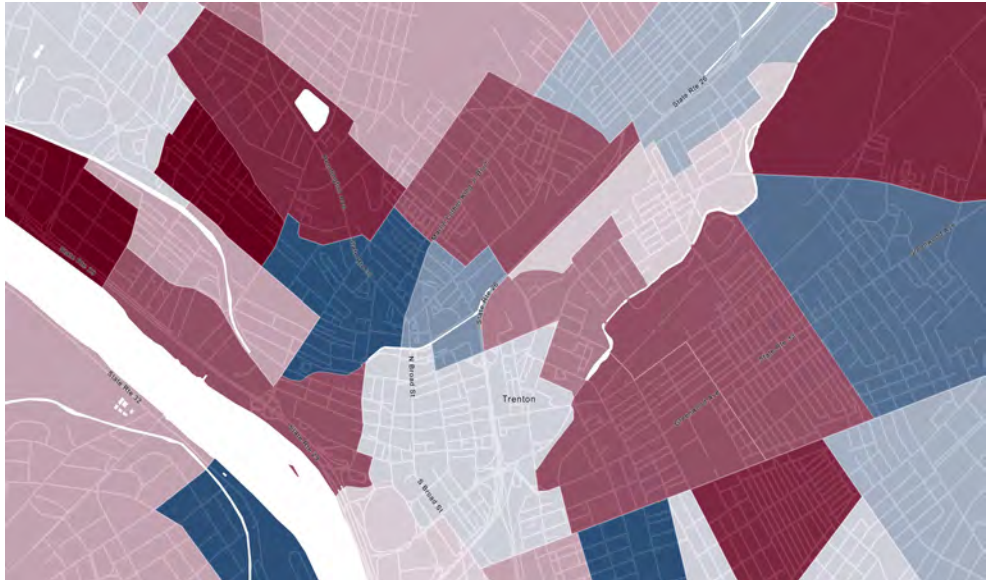
1980



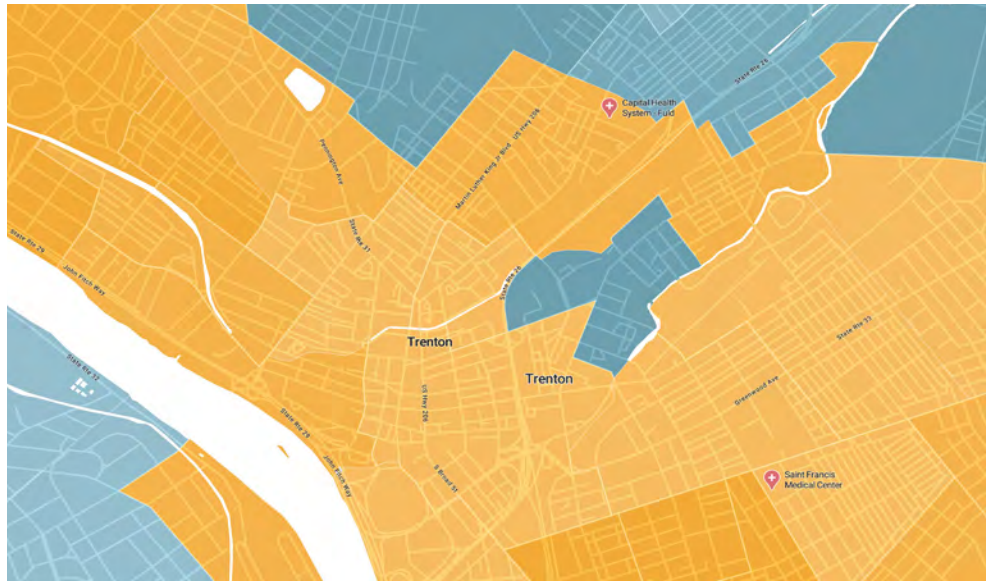
2020



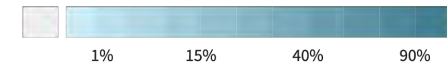
Disparities and Displacement in Progress



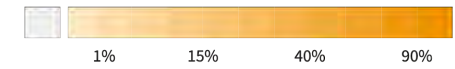
In this series of maps, we bear witness to a community that is experiencing cost-burdening, evictions, displacement, and financial insecurity. There is a defined decrease in the number of renters over the past five years; but, by the transit station, there is an increase in owners as development takes place. As development occurs, we witness increases in rent outpacing people's incomes, resulting in tracts where the majority of residents are paying more than 50% of their income in housing costs.



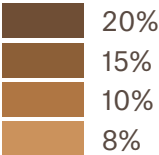
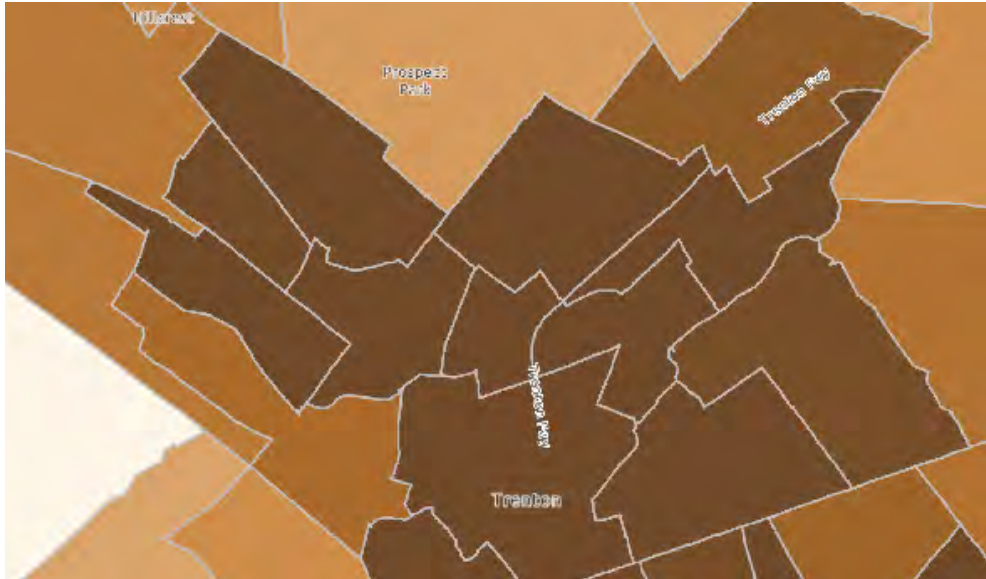
% Renter Occupied Housing Units: 30 to 49%



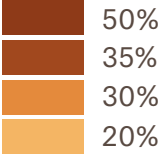
% Renter-Occupied Housing Units: 50 percent or More



Health Expectations and Impacts



As per the Centers for Disease Control’s PLACES platform, which displays localized health data at a census tract level, we can see that in these two examples, mental health and obesity, are at rates of prevalence exceeding Trenton’s suburban surroundings and other places. These are just a few of the statistics that indicate the long-lasting impacts of detrimental epidemics of fires, displacement, violence, drugs, and other negative social influences.



According to the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index, most of Trenton’s city limits, including East Trenton, ranks a few digits below the 1, a value meaning significant ratings on 15 social factors, including unemployment, minority status, and disability. This informs government agencies and municipal authorities to prepare and allocate for matters of emergency and funding.

Cultivating A Productive Landscape: A Coalport Revival



A Coalport Revival: Community Engagement In Action

Opportunities that allow us to understand our most pressing systemic challenges in more substantial ways begins to create disruptions of dominant mental models holding systems in place. In doing so, we can reframe current narratives that have for far too long created and perpetuated conditions of dehumanization and inequity towards pathways that embrace complexity in a more informed way.

From this informed space we can begin to identify shared values systems that cultivate a more inclusive and just human condition steeped in empathy, understanding, and healing.



A neighborhood tour is walking exploration of an area. A photo study captures vignettes of the neighborhood. We answer the question: what's happening? Practitioners use these tools to understand the quality of daily life in a neighborhood, the experience of the people living there, the geography and architecture, and identify nodes of neighborhood networks where relationships can plug-in.

These conversations are vital to understanding and sharing the hopes, anxieties, needs, and value of neighbors, business owners, and different generational views. This tool is helpful during a community engagement process to delve deeply into co-generating an understanding of the people who live in an area. These discussions are the first steps of longer relationship that can blossom as these needs and experiences are developed into opportunities in the project. The value exchanged during these interactions set a direction for what types of programs, issues, and opportunities should be emphasized.

Anthropological research of policies, plans, processes and populations informs participatory engagement and design. Without understanding history, we are adrift.

Gathering data on community input is facilitated by these informal surveys, which allow us to look unbiased at the opinions of the neighborhood. Surveys are used in conjunction with other, more in-depth forms of information gathering, like interviews. Taking informal surveys also gives us a chance to interact with neighbors, explain the project and get them involved. We can use this data as a general guide moving forward.

Cultivating A Productive Landscape: A Coalport Revival



A Coalport Revival: Community Engagement In Action

In order to redesign systems that reflect shared values of a neighborhood, requires an in-depth process that visualizes how the built environment can be designed from a shared value perspective. This process allows relationships, connections, and power dynamics to be explored in ways fostering a transformative engagement with diverse stakeholders committed to systems change. Further, redesigning allows for innovation to be incorporated from a reframed perspective, looking at potential outputs that simultaneously shift dominant mental models but move beyond topical solutions to our most pressing social challenges.



Public engagement spaces ensure that opportunities exist to disseminate information to a broader scope of people and organizations. Traditionally, information is shared with the expectation for people to come to a set location to obtain information. Instead, this method of activates pop-up spaces throughout various locations that brings the information to people and organizations. This is particularly important because it takes into consideration realities that often surround community involvement, including distrust and a feeling of not being welcomed to participate.

What could be possible with a larger community of stakeholders envisioning the various ways they can define their place of value in using the capital city farm to make a positive difference. This tool helps to envision and develop models based on the information collected to create shared value between the various stakeholders involved in the project.

Information mapping ensures that opportunities exist to disseminate information to a broader scope of people and organizations. Traditionally, information is shared with the expectation for people to come to a set location to obtain information. Instead, this method of activates pop-up spaces throughout various locations that brings the information to people and organizations. This is particularly important because it takes into consideration realities that often surround community involvement, including distrust and a feeling of not being welcomed to participate.

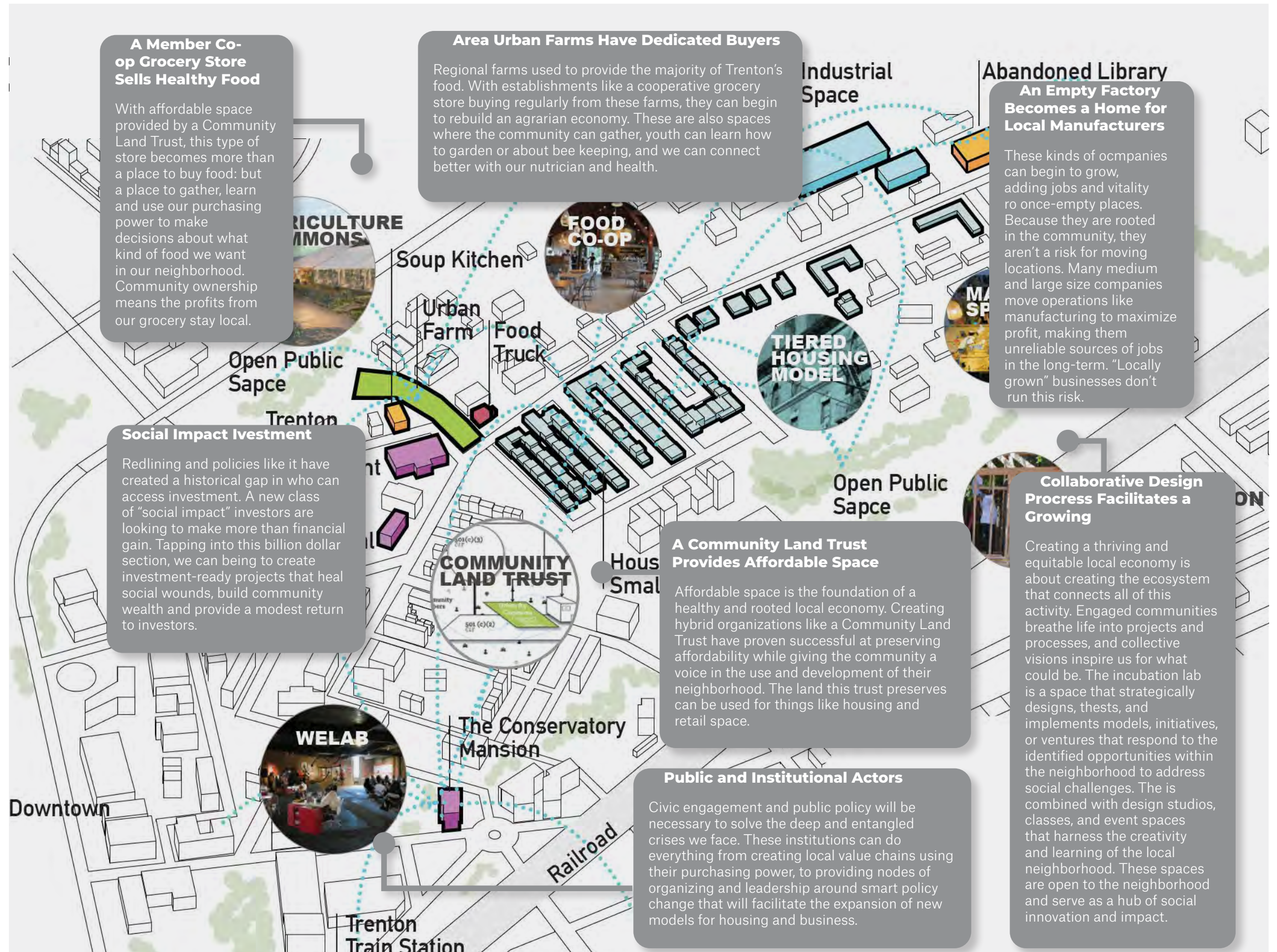
Cultivating A Productive Landscape: A Coalport Revival



A Coalport Revival: Community Engagement In Action

Projects and opportunities vetted through and engaged community process that focuses on reframing and redesigning systems, creates investment pipelines seeking to move beyond siloed solutions.

A process that encourages outputs within the built environment that simultaneously address a myriad of systemic challenges while reframing and redesigning a diverse paradigm offers diverse stakeholders numerous opportunities to define their value in the ecosystem of social change. This creates a stronger and more cohesive neighborhood "WE," looking at how to effectively use resources and networks to address pervasive socio-spatial challenges that have continually reinforced a hierarchy of human value within the built environment.

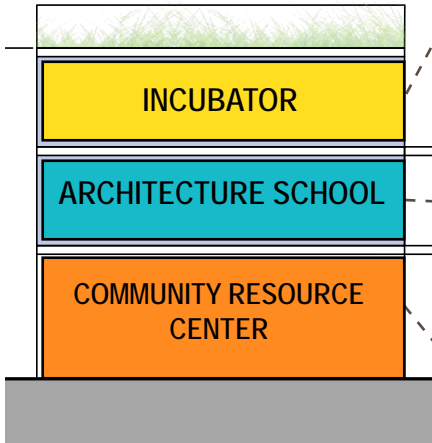


Potential Projects Developed From Community Engagement Process

A Multi-Use Facility Addressing Numerous Community Needs



Teaching Hospital



Teaching Hospital as a Model for Teaching Design

Colleges of Medicine, and the communities they serve, have benefited by using teaching hospitals as integral elements of their programs. The hospitals provide services to their communities, and emphasize connection with the public for their doctors-in-training. And, they are economic resources as well.

Our proposed center would utilize this model to address the built and human environment in areas often under-served by professional skills and academic resources. This center of excellence in outreach efforts would bring faculty, students, and recent graduates, as well as professionals from the private sector, non-profits organizations, and private companies into a community to work together on the real issues that affect that community: economic, social, political, design, and environmental. The center would be an institution to the community where it is located, a resource to the state, and a valuable component of higher education - all working together

Development Site 1

78 Wall Street



9,800 SF
Industrial Building
\$750,000 (\$77/SF)
1.2 Acres
Zoned RB



Development Site 2

576 East State Street



80,000 SF
Vacant Industrial Building
\$3,250,000 (\$41/SF)
.75 Acres
Zoned BB



Organizational Chart

