

THIS WAY FORWARD

THE BUILDING BLOCK



Site plan shows Trenton's Vista Center (in orange) in relation to train tracks and train station.

Vista Center

>>> *A planned modern structure promises to enhance the City of Trenton and offer an array of benefits to its occupants.* **By George N. Saliba**

More than seven years ago, Daniel R. Brenna, Jr., founder and principal at Trenton-based Capital Real Estate Group, began acquiring property next to the Trenton Transit Center.

Brenna says, "I recognized a long time ago that there was an opportunity to bring Class A office space and employers into Trenton by taking advantage of Trenton's train station, a premier hub along the Northeast Corridor." The station was recently re-built with an \$80-million NJ Transit investment.

Brenna collaborated for several years with architect Sergio Coscia of RMJM, and now Capital Real Estate Group is marketing "Vista Center": a planned 25-story, 700,000-square-foot Class A office building that will be situated next to the station. The development will include 14,000 square feet of ground-level retail, a parking garage for more than 1,150 cars and two public art components: a plaza with a sculpture and a lobby with a video

art installation. Moreover, the design targets LEED Platinum certification by the U.S. Green Building Council and is expected to achieve more than 40 percent energy savings, making Vista Center "the premiere sustainable office building in New Jersey," according to Capital.

Vista Center's design emerged from a larger urban plan that envisioned a vibrant, mixed-use sustainable community: the center's tower and plazas will effectively fill in the gaps around the train station and provide pathways to the surrounding communities. Also, Vista Center will be the tallest building in Trenton, creating a new iconic landmark.

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RMJM's Coscia cites Vista Center's array of environmentally-friendly components, explaining, "We [even] have solar panels on the roof to generate electricity and we'll use storm or rain water to irrigate plants on the property and to mitigate the amount of water that we release into the sewer system. Also, [we'll be] using efficient plumbing fixtures such as waterless urinals to reduce water usage."

Brenna says the building could be delivered by 2012 if "critical mass" with tenants is achieved in the coming months. "We are having good conversations with a number of companies," he explains. Of note, Vista Center is the first office building in Trenton to qualify under the state's new Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit (breakthrough legislation that provides major tax subsidies to Vista Center tenants/employers). Also, the Vista Center is located within an Urban Enterprise Zone, offering advantages for tenants including credits for certain new hires, unemployment insurance discounts and sales tax exemptions on purchases of supplies and equipment. Utility discounts also are available under PSE&G's urban area rate program.

Brenna concludes, "We are offering something which is unavailable anywhere else in central New Jersey: the ability for a company to save an enormous amount of money over 10 years by moving into Vista Center and having practically free rent (via tax credits), Class A office space and probably the most energy efficient office space in the state. Also, they can increase their productivity by having very comfortable space inside." **NJB**