
Trenton
Of the small, comes the great.
TRENTON MAKES
THE WORLD TAKES

Contents

- Introduction & Purpose 01
- Core Values 03
- Audience Insights 04
- Brand Positioning 08
- Value Proposition 10
- Messaging Framework 11
- Visual & Verbal Identity 12
- Resident Journey 14
- Metrics for Success 15
- Brand Personality 16
- Logo Usage 17
- Illustrations 19
- Brand Implementation Vehicle 20

a city of makers

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The bridge still says it: Trenton Makes, The World Takes. But somewhere along the way, the world started taking our story too. Headlines reduce us and try to define us by our struggles alone. But our streets tell a different truth: the music, the food, the art, the hustle. From young entrepreneurs to olympic gold medalists, Trenton brews talent that can't be ignored.

This brand is our reclamation. It's every artist, business owner, neighbor, and student who refuses to be defined by anything other than ambition and grit. We're not erasing the hard parts. We're just refusing to let the hard parts be the whole story. Trenton is ambition, talent, and community. It's time the world, and we ourselves, see it that way.

una ciudad de creadores

INTRODUCCIÓN Y PROPÓSITO

El puente todavía lo dice: Trenton Makes, The World Takes. Pero en algún momento del camino, el mundo también empezó a tomar nuestra historia. Los titulares nos reducen e intentan definirnos solo por nuestras luchas. Pero nuestras calles cuentan una verdad diferente: la música, la comida, el arte, el esfuerzo. Desde jóvenes emprendedores hasta medallistas de oro olímpicos, Trenton cultiva talento que no se puede ignorar.

Esta marca es nuestra reivindicación. Es cada artista, dueño de negocio, vecino, y estudiante que se niega a ser definido por algo que no sea ambición y determinación. No estamos borrando las partes difíciles. Solo nos negamos a dejar que las partes difíciles sean toda la historia. Trenton es ambición, talento, y comunidad. Es hora de que el mundo, y nosotros mismos, lo veamos de esa manera.

Core Values

Creativity

We're a city full of "makers",
our creativity is how we express ourselves
and solve our problems.



Community

We're neighbors, friends, family,
peers, who show up for each
other and collaborate to make
our dreams feel like reality.



Character

The way we tell our stories, carry
ourselves, treat others and
maintain individuality says a lot
about who our city builds us to be.





Resilience

It's part of our DNA, we struggle, but
survive to tell everyone how much
better it made us be as people.

Ambition

We dare to see beyond all we've seen.
We believe in the bigger picture.



Meet Trenton

Who lives in Trenton?

Trenton is home to the makers creating art and building businesses from their bedrooms, the hustlers balancing multiple jobs, and the dreamers training at dawn and studying at night. The city is full of young entrepreneurs, service workers, artists, athletes, students, parents, and grandparents who are all working toward something.

What unites us?

Most Trenton residents are working class, predominantly from Latino and Black communities. Many commute to jobs in wealthier surrounding areas like Princeton and Philadelphia. The community shares the experience of being underestimated solely because they're from Trenton. Despite their different circumstances, there's a collective understanding of what it means to work hard in a city that's been written off by outsiders.

What do we need?

Trenton needs a brand that represents it's residents honestly without reducing their lives to stereotypes. They need messaging that reflects the reality of their daily experiences. While all the makers, hustlers, and dreamers have different goals, they all need the same thing: to be seen as complex people with real potential, not defined by their zip code or the headlines written about their city.

The Maker



"I'm gonna make it happen, no matter what."

Demographics:

- Age: 16-40
- Occupation: Artists, musicians, entrepreneurs, cosmetologists, designers, barbers
- Education: College, trade schools, self-taught

Motivations:

- Fully expressing their identity
- Building something from scratch
- Wants the world to see their talent
- Turning their passion into income or a full-time career

Paint Points / Challenges:

- Limited access to resources, tools and funding
- Lack of exposure outside the Trenton bubble
- Burnout from having to be independent
- Difficulty scaling their craft into sustainable income

The Hustler



"I get it done, even when I'm running on empty."

Demographics:

- Age: 25–55
- Occupation: Service jobs, hospital staff, warehouses, retail, schools, graveyard shifts
- Education: High school or college

Motivations:

- Stability for their family
- Breaking cycles they grew up in
- Providing opportunities their parents didn't have
- Making ends meet even when it's hard
- Not wanting handouts

Paint Points / Challenges:

- Financial pressure
- Long commutes and unpredictable shifts
- Feeling stretched between work, family, and personal goals
- Limited time for themselves

The Dreamer



"I want to see the world and come back with something worth bringing home."

Demographics:

- Age: 16-25
- Occupation: High school or college student, often with part-time work (retail, food service, tutoring)
- Education: First-generation college student or aspiring to be

Motivations:

- Achieve goals that prove their potential extends beyond Trenton's reputation
- Pursuing opportunities that might help them travel
- Be the first in their family to graduate college or achieve professional success

Paint Points / Challenges:

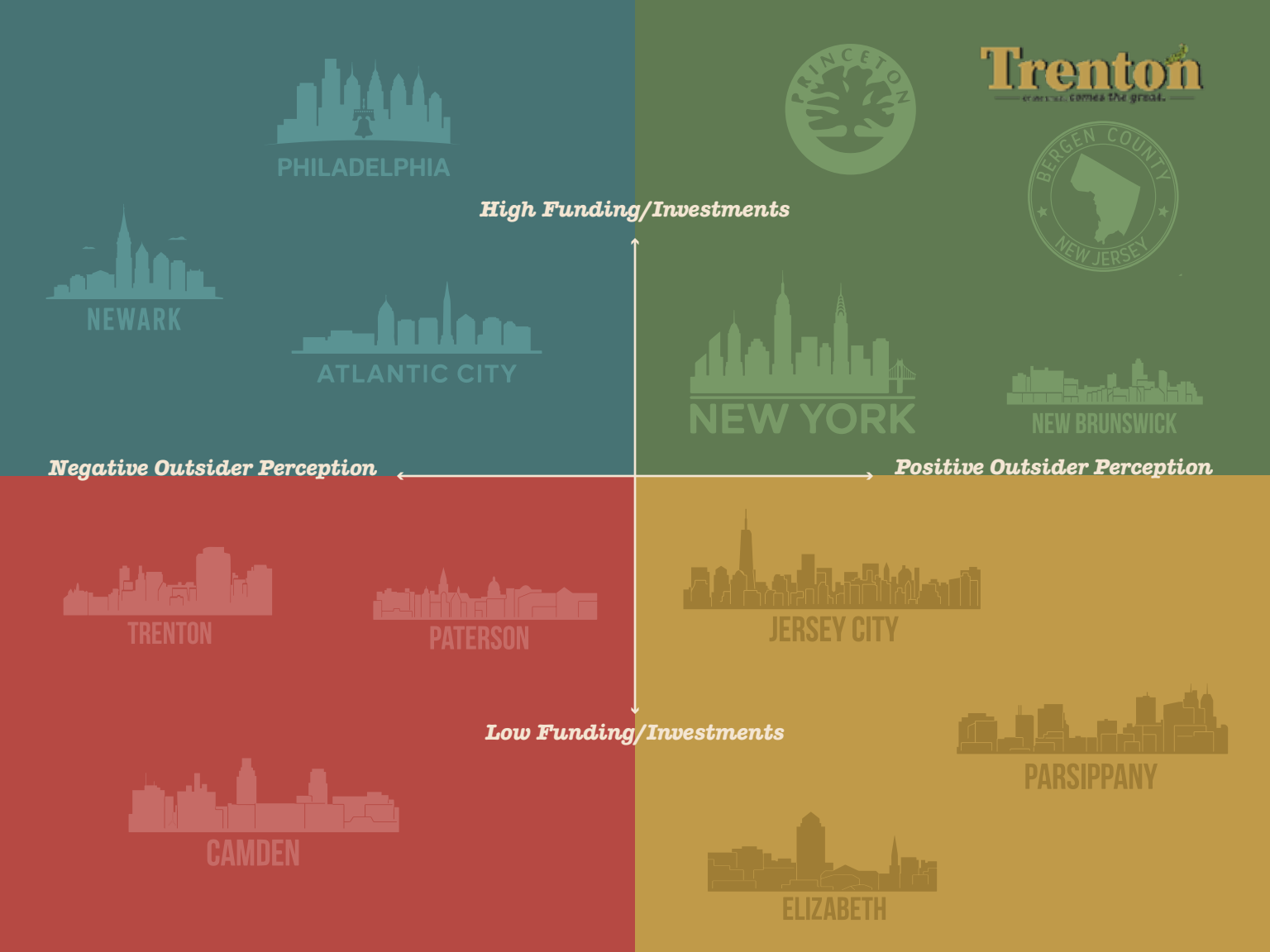
- Limited local opportunities force them to look elsewhere for advancement
- Financial pressure to contribute to family while pursuing education or training
- Lack of mentorship or role models

Brand Positioning

This map positions Trenton against comparable cities in the region based on two key factors: outsider perception and level of investment/funding the city receives. It also envisions where Trenton would be with new branding.

Cities like Princeton, New Brunswick, and New York City occupy the upper right quadrant with positive perceptions and high investment. The way in which people view a city impacts the funding, creating a cycle that limits opportunity and reinforces stereotypes.

This brand addresses shifting perception first. When the story changes, investment follows. →


PHILADELPHIA
PRINCETON
Trenton
BERGEN COUNTY
NEW JERSEY
High Funding/Investments
NEWARK
ATLANTIC CITY
NEW YORK
NEW BRUNSWICK
Negative Outsider Perception
Positive Outsider Perception
TRENTON
PATERSON
JERSEY CITY
Low Funding/Investments
PARSIPPANY
CAMDEN
ELIZABETH

Value Proposition



We show you how Trenton works...
through its talent, entrepreneurship, resilience, and creativity.

To make you feel...
proud of where you come from and ambitious for more.

So that the city can grow...
with better opportunities and investments for residents, more visitors, and an improved perception.

Messaging Framework

Tagline:

Of the small, comes the great.

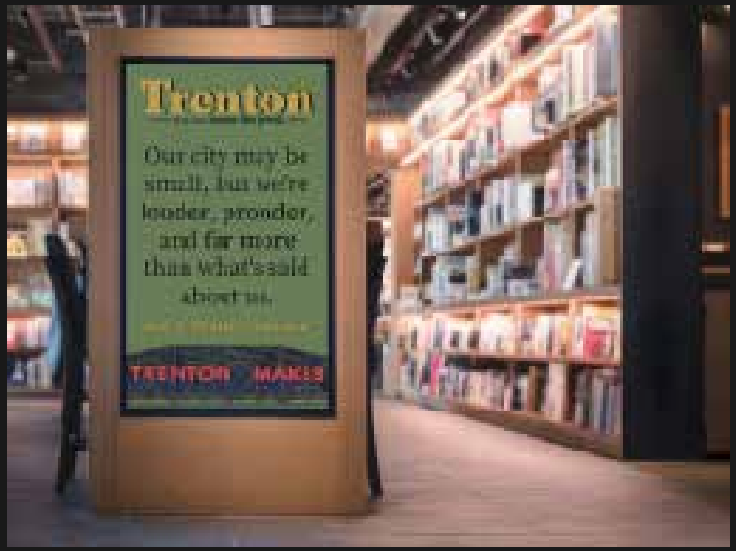
Key Message:

Our city may be small, but we're louder, prouder, and far more than what's said about us.

Call-To-Actions:

See what Trenton Makes.

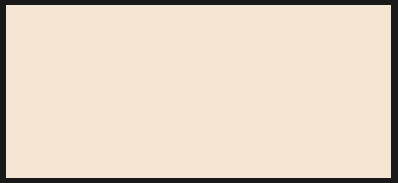
Show Us What You're Made Of.



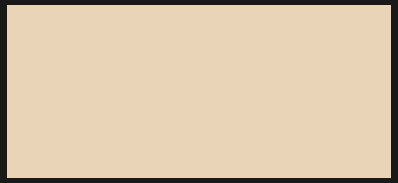
This poster mockup shows how the brand's messaging appears in community settings like libraries, schools, and Trenton public buildings.

Color Palette

Primary Colors:



Lighter Cream
#F4E5D3
Primary text, body



Warm Cream
#E8D4B8
Accents, small quotes



Tan Gold
#D4A574
Headlines, emphasis

Secondary Colors:



Bridge Green
#5F7A52



Delaware River
#467373



Colonial Brick
#B54842



Vision Yellow
#C19A4A



Wisdom Plum
#6B5D7A



Charter Blue
#344C5C

Use secondary colors for:

- Core value cards
- Section accents
- Geometric elements
- Visual emphasis
- Brand Implementations

Typography

Headline Font

Source Serif Variable Bold

36pt

Subheading Font

Source Serif Variable Semibold

16-24pt

Body Font

Source Serif Variable Regular

10-24pt

Display Font

American Typewriter ITC Pro Bold Italic

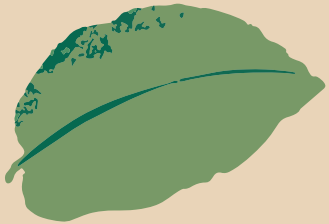
16-36pt

Our primary typeface is Source Serif Variable, a versatile serif font that brings warmth and authenticity to the brand. We use Regular weight for body text, Semibold for section headers, and Bold for headlines and emphasis. American Typewriter ITC Pro Bold Italic is reserved exclusively for display like taglines, quotes, and captions.

Resident Journey Map

Milestone 1:
Brand Launch
Create brand book and social media presence

Milestone 2:
Community Testimonies
Document local creatives, business owners, and athletes through interviews, videos



Phase 1: Establishing the Brand (2025–2026)

Milestone 3:
Promoting Creativity
Newsletter, influencer partnerships, spotlight local businesses

Milestone 4:
Youth Engagement Series
Workshops connecting Trenton students with mentors



Phase 2: Building the Culture (2026–2028)

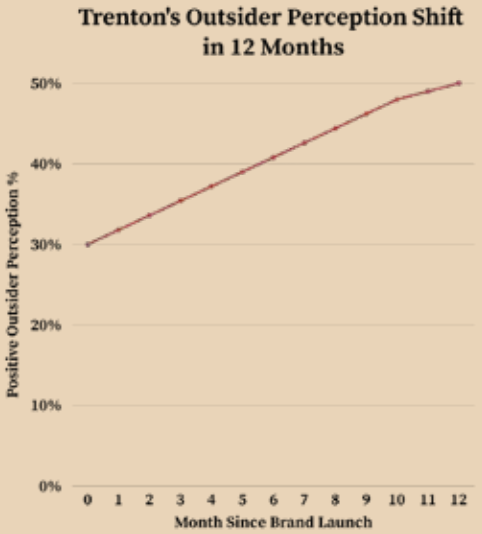
Milestone 5:
Citywide Adoption
City officially adopts the brand to feature the brand identity on buses, public spaces, and city communications

Milestone 6:
Trenton Digital Archive
Online hub preserving Trenton's arts and history and physical showcasing at Trenton Public Library

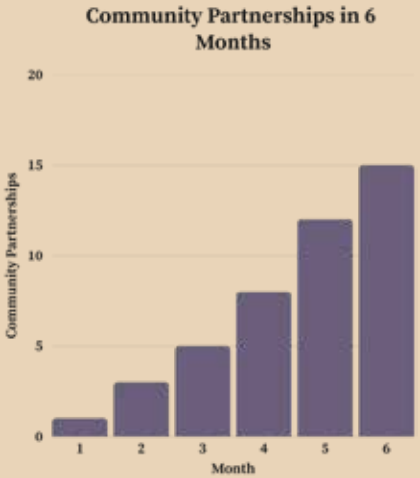


Phase 3: Long-Term Implementation (2029–2030)

Metrics for Success







Perception Shift:
Increase positive perspectives in outsider conversations about Trenton from 30% to 50% within 12 months, measured through social media interactions and surveys.

Brand Awareness:
Achieve 60% brand awareness among Trenton residents within 8 months, measured through community surveys at events and online.

Community Partnerships:
Partner with 15 local businesses and organizations to display brand materials within 6 months of launch.

Brand Personality

The Creator

Inspiring

Playful

Talented

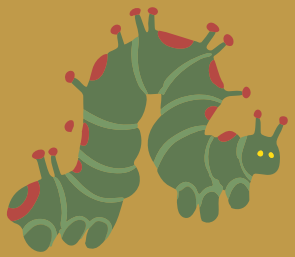
Innovative

Tone:

"Show us what you're made of"

"Trenton Makes, The World Takes"

Messaging:



Imagery:

The Hero

Courageous

Faithful

Gritty

Resilient

Tone:

"Of the small, comes the great"

"We're far more than what's said about us"

Messaging:



Imagery:

Logo Usage



Logo Overview

The logo integrates the caterpillar symbol into the Trenton wordmark, representing the concept that greatness emerges from small beginnings.

The green tone references the iconic "Trenton Makes, The World Takes" bridge, while the tagline derives from the city's original seal motto, "E Parvis Grandes" (Out of the Small, Comes the Great).

The design balances boldness with an inviting nature, reflecting the brand's dual focus on strength and community.

Logo Versions

The preferred logo treatment includes both the Trenton wordmark with caterpillar and the tagline positioned below with the dashes.

When space is limited, the wordmark may be used alone. The tagline should always be centered beneath the wordmark with equal spacing on both sides. Color change on the Trenton wordmark is not allowed besides the colors presented. The tagline may change.

With Tagline:



Without Tagline:



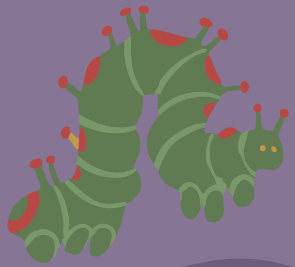
Wordmark Colors:

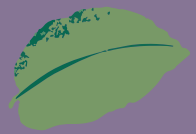


Illustrations

Illustrations can be created in either a playful style or a gritty style, as both reflect the brand's duality between The Creator and The Hero archetypes. All illustrations should relate to the caterpillar motif, reinforcing "out of the small, comes the great." Examples include caterpillars consuming leaves, metamorphosis stages, or individual caterpillars and butterflies. The playful style works for community messaging and youth engagement, while the realistic style suits brand positioning and external communications.

Cartoon/Playful Style:









Realistic/Gritty Style:





Brand Implementation

City Bus Advertisement



This transit ad demonstrates how Trenton's Of the Small, Comes the Great branding can adapt across different city environments.

By placing the metamorphosis process and message on public transit, the brand becomes visible, accessible, and connected to the people who shape Trenton. The messaging can be tailored to its placement while still maintaining the core meaning of the overall tagline.


Trenton hustles
'til we fly.
Of the small, comes the great.

Appendix

Mood & Vision Board



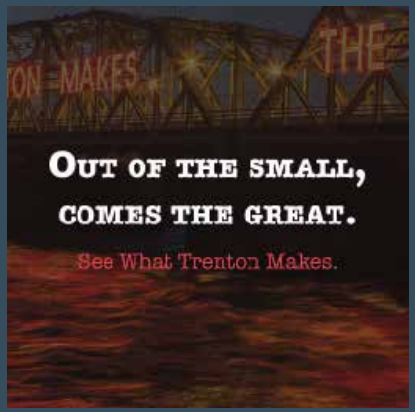
Appendix

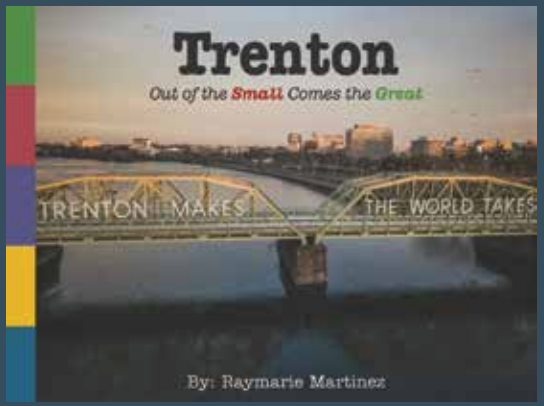
Sketches & Drafts











Works Cited

Abramovitch, Seth. “How Bollywood, Cabs and MetroCards Led to Zohran Mamdani’s Winning Visual Campaign.” The Hollywood Reporter, 26 June 2025, www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/politics-news/bollywood-zohran-mamdani-graphic-logo-campaign-1236300580/

Alexbush. Swallowtail Caterpillar on White Background. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Cotten, Joshua J. Monarch Butterfly Chrysalis (Early Stage). Unsplash, 2021. Monarch Butterfly Chrysalis (Late Stage). Unsplash, 2021.

Dariia. Various Green Leaves Chewed by Insects. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Deeplab. City Bus Mockup. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Demirbag Kaplan, Melike, et al. “Branding Places: Applying Brand Personality Concept to Cities.” European Journal of Marketing, vol. 44, no. 9, 2010, pp. 1286–1291.

Firoz. New York Skyline Vector Silhouette. Adobe Stock, Education License. Newark Skyline Silhouette. Adobe Stock, Education License. Philadelphia Skyline Vector Silhouette. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Frank, A. / peopleimages.com. Mother Working from Home with Baby. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Works Cited

Hunter Leader. Stairs Icon — Man Walking Up Staircase. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Jin. Aerial of Trenton, New Jersey. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Mandritoiu. Aerial Panorama of Trenton, New Jersey at Sunset. Adobe Stock, Education License.

MarkRademaker. Stickman Stopping Falling Dominoes — Business Resilience Concept. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Nargis. Atlantic City Skyline Horizontal Banner. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Rawpixel.com. Friends Hanging Out in the City. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Rabbitti. Monarch Butterfly Emerging from Chrysalis. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Vilogsign. Teamwork Thin Line Icon Set. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Vincze. Set of 9 Cities in New Jersey. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Wavebreak3. African American Male Painter in Studio. Adobe Stock, Education License.

Wheeler, Alina, and Rob Meyerson. Designing Brand Identity: A Comprehensive Guide to the World of Brands and Branding.



Raymarie Martinez

Identity & Brand Design

Professor Margarita Barrios Ponce

Northeastern University, Fall 2025

Trenton