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[Media](#)
[Administration](#)
[NJ's Priorities](#)
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[Press Releases](#)
[Public Addresses](#)
[Executive Orders](#)
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[Reports](#)
[Home](#) > [Newsroom](#) > [Press Releases](#) > 2017

Governor Christie Announces Trenton Public Safety Initiatives To Bolster Revitalization

Tuesday, May 30, 2017

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Trenton, NJ – Continuing to fulfill his pledge to revitalize Trenton, Governor Chris Christie today announced a number of initiatives to make the Capital City a safer place to live and work by providing city police more tools to do their jobs.

"By improving public safety in Trenton, we are opening the door to more residential and commercial development that will increase economic activity, create jobs and make the city a more attractive home to families, workers, tourists, entrepreneurs and job creators," Governor Christie said. "My administration, working with city officials, will continue to take any and all steps to accomplish a holistic revitalization of Trenton."

Governor Christie announced an Urban Blight Reduction Pilot Program that will enable the City to demolish approximately 400 to 500 vacant, abandoned, and blighted properties in Trenton to stabilize neighborhoods, reduce crime, and spur positive redevelopment of those sites. There are currently about 3,000 abandoned structures, the majority of which are owned by the city, that have become magnets for criminal activity, including gangs and drug dealers. The \$11.5 million program, which will be funded through the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, will strategically target residential and limited commercial properties.

Studies have shown that blocks with vacant buildings are more likely to have a higher number of police calls and those buildings usually show evidence of criminal activity. Vacant properties also lower the property values of surrounding homes and businesses.

Governor Christie's plan also includes a plan to install up to 150 additional surveillance cameras, adding to the 80 existing cameras, and increasing the efficiency of the city's central monitoring system. The State Police will provide funding and work with the Trenton Police Department to facilitate the installation of the cameras. The Trenton Police Department's integrated camera system covers about 5 percent of the city, focused on those areas deemed critical to public safety. These new cameras will cover new sites in highly populated crime areas, such as housing complexes and streets, providing a sorely needed investigative tool and crime deterrent.

To enhance the effectiveness of the surveillance cameras and increase safety and security, improved street lighting is part of the Governor's public safety initiatives. The Board of Public Utilities will fund and coordinate an audit of the 5,000 to 6,000 street lights in Trenton to determine the design and implementation of an improved lighting system, especially in high crime areas.

Finally, the State will supplement the efforts and resources of the Trenton Police Department through:

- **Expanded police presence around Trenton Transportation Center.** The NJ Transit Police will expand the area it patrols around the Trenton Transportation Center, providing overlapping coverage with the Trenton PD for greater security and flexibility.
- **Aid in local shooting investigations.** The Attorney General's Office Shooting Response Team will be activated to assist city police handle the large volume of shooting investigations, supplementing or supplanting local police manpower.
- **Enhancement of after-hours enforcement near bars and bodegas.** Alcoholic Beverage Control and New Jersey State Police will focus enforcement efforts on ensuring licensees in Trenton maintain legal hours and ensure that premises are vacated upon closure to reduce the potential for alcohol-fueled violence and exposure to victimization of inebriated patrons. Bars and nightspots that attract criminal elements or misconduct after hours will face more stringent, focused enforcement of liquor laws, imposition of penalties for violations, and could be shut

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down.

"These initiatives show the State's commitment to investing in Trenton and willingness to work with city officials to improve the quality of life in our capital city," said Governor Christie. "The end result will be a reduction in crime and an increase in new businesses and housing opportunities, continuing the progress sparked by my administration."

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