

Downtown Kingston



BACKGROUND

The Kingston Waterfront and sections of West Kingston were designated under the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) 1968 Act for urban development. This was to be the beginning of a long standing relationship between the UDC and downtown Kingston.

The first redevelopment plan initiated for the city was that prepared by Shankland-Cox and Associates in the 1960s, which resulted in the Ocean Boulevard and the construction of the Kingston Mall among other developments.

Again in the 1990s, the plan was revisited through the establishment of the Kingston Restoration Company (KRC), which saw the restoration of some private and public buildings as well as the development of the Vision 2020 Plan for Downtown. The Tax Incentive Programme for the Urban Renewal of Downtown Kingston launched in 1995, also in a bid to stimulate redevelopment by providing incentives to prospective tax compliant investors.

2002 saw the establishment of the Kingston City Centre Improvement Company, another public private sector initiative with the mandate to lead the redevelopment of the Downtown business district.

In 2007, the UDC launched a far reaching redevelopment plan with objectives to -

- Arrest physical blight
- Define the capital as the seat of Government
- Improve the physical and social infrastructure
- Stimulate renewed interest and increased economic vibrancy for urban regeneration, economic growth and human development

Elements of the plan include

- A multimodal transportation hub
- A Festival Marketplace and Waterfront Promenade
- The Kingston Business Centre
- 200- Room Five Star Hotel and Conference Centre
- New Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Headquarters
- West Kingston Market District
- Railway Museum and Trade Centre
- City Centre Park
- Ward Theatre Cultural Square
- The New Parliament Building
- Justice Square

The programme is being implemented in four phases as follows –

- Phase 1 – Multi-modal Transport Centre, City Centre Park and Market District
- Phase 2 – Festival Marketplace, 200 Room Hotel and Conference Centre, Foreign Affairs Headquarters and Diplomatic District and Parliament Building
- Phase 3 – Justice Square and Ward Theatre Square
- Phase 4 – Railway Museum and Trade Centre

STATUS

The Downtown Transport Centre was opened on January 15, 2011. The Centre, has streamlined /rationalized public service by housing non-JUTC buses which now traverse the Downtown routes and currently terminate in several locations in the city.

The St. William Grant Park has also been refurbished as part of the move to restore the historic Parade area and construction has also commenced on the Simon Bolivar Cultural Centre at North Parade and Love Lane, in honour of the Venezuelan National Hero who lived on Princess Street, Downtown in 1813.



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