

Arima, Trinidad





Arima, Trinidad

The official home of the first peoples

The city of Arima, Trinidad is located on the banks of the Arima River in the foothills of the Northern Range. It is the third largest city on the island, and is considered the gateway to the north-eastern section of Trinidad. Arima, which is the Amerindian word for “water,” was founded in 1757, by Capuchin monks from Spain who had travelled to Trinidad to convert the natives to Catholicism, as part of that country’s colonizing efforts.

Trinidad was taken over by the British in 1797, and by the 1850s, Arima, because of its strategic position,

had grown large enough to be regarded as one of the key villages in Trinidad. The 1870s brought further transformation to Arima, when the cocoa industry began to spread into the central regions of the island. Planters insisted on a system of improved transportation to get their goods into Port of Spain so, on August 31, 1876, Arima saw the inauguration of the first passenger and freight railway line in the country. On the first day of August 1888, Arima was granted the status of a Royal Borough. Today, Arima extends over an area of approximately 4.6 square miles and has a population of approximately 41,000.

Arima still remains a town of great historical and cultural significance. It is the official home of the First Peoples of Trinidad. It hosts an annual Borough Day anniversary celebration every August, which incorporates Carnival-style street parades and usually coincides with the staging of the Santa Rosa Carib Community annual festival. The annual Arima Carnival includes street parades of masqueraders on Carnival Tuesday, J'ouvert bands on Carnival Monday, as well as a local calypso competition.

Arima also plays an important role for North Eastern Trinidad, as it is a Multi-Modal transportation hub for many nearby towns and neighborhoods. The main international and domestic airport serving Arima is Piarco International Airport, commonly referred to as the Port of Spain International Airport, which offers International flights to cities in Europe, South America, North America, Central America, and the Caribbean.

Almost all the land in the municipality is under built development, with a small forested area in the north-

west and some small-scale agriculture in the vicinity of the Arima River in the east. Office activities, as well as retail and wholesale trade is concentrated in the central core, while light manufacturing and warehousing takes place in the O'Meara Industrial Estate in the city's southwest region. The Princess Royal Park is a major open space feature in the town core, and the remainder of the town is filled with housing and community amenities.

The Mayor of Arima is George Hadeed. He is one of

AT A GLANCE

WHO: Arima, Trinidad

WHAT: A borough of 41,000

WHERE: East Trinidad

WEBSITE: www.arimaborough.gov.tt






seven Councilors and two Aldermen who are responsible for the management of the city's affairs and its 500 employees. The city's funding comes from the central government, but according to Hadeed, there is an impending change to Trinidad's local government structure which will soon require each municipality to collect its own funds from property taxes in order to underwrite any future development projects.

Current projects in Arima include the building of the 150-bed Arima Hospital, which is a project of the central government, and two new community centers and a senior citizens' activity center which is a municipal project. In addition, says Hadeed, "We continue with our usual infrastructure in terms of our drains and sidewalks. We are also going to refurbish our sidewalks in the town center, and we are installing a welcome arch into the town."

Many other revitalization projects are summarized



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in the Arima Urban Regeneration Project (AURA), as outlined in the Arima Borough Corporation Municipal Investment Plan and the Arima Draft Spatial Development Plan which were prepared for the borough by a private consultant in collaboration with many community groups and government agencies. These plans reflect the realization that the population of Arima is expected to grow to between 56,000 to 70,000 by the year 2020.

The main development objectives of Arima for the next several years, according to the Spatial Development Plan are as follows:

- Environmental and cultural sustainability
- Meaningful and secure jobs
- Functional efficiency and aesthetic appeal
- Accessibility and permeability
- Equitable distribution of social and physical infrastructure
- Housing adequate to meet the needs of all

- Effective municipal management

Specific projects include:

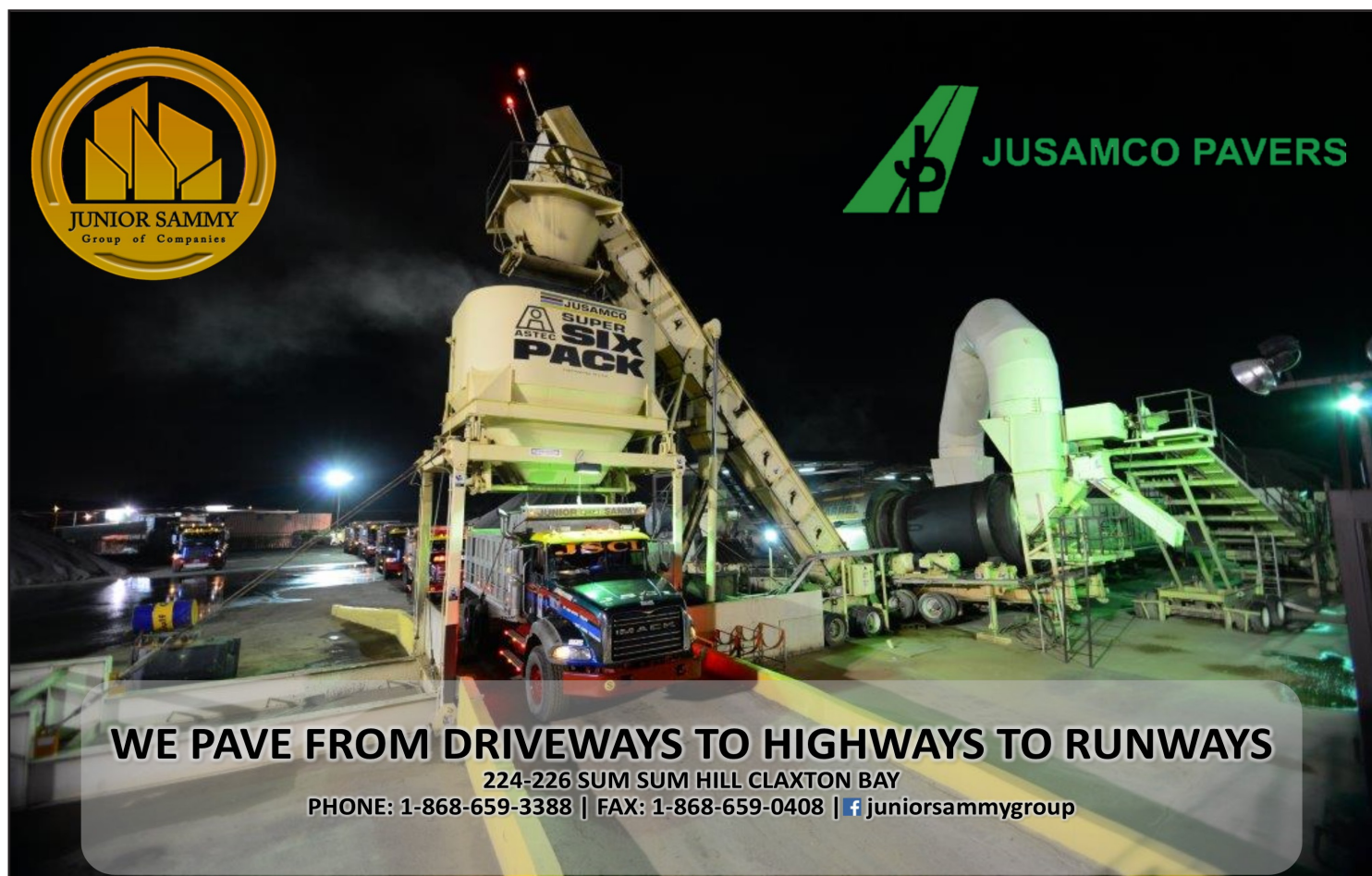
- Providing additional parking in the town centre to improve traffic management
- Providing more public conveniences within the town centre
- Providing accommodation for a Night Food Market at the underutilized Arima Amphitheatre

It is hoped that these projects will contribute to the economic development of the Borough of Arima as well as add to the quality of life for all the city's residents.

PREFERRED VENDORS

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