



CITY OF PLAINFIELD

**Department of Public Works &
Urban Development, Division of Planning
515 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060**



Area In Need of Redevelopment & Area In Need of Rehabilitation Preliminary Investigation Report

Specifically for

501-637 South Avenue
Block 611, Lot 1 (E. Paul Building)
and
639-661 South Avenue
Block 611, Lot 2 (Royal Apex Building)

In Accordance with the Local Redevelopment & Housing Law
(N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.)

Date Prepared: May 5, 2016
Planning Board Hearing Scheduled: June 16, 2016

Prepared for the Plainfield Planning Board
Prepared by the Plainfield Division of Planning
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Mayor Adrian O. Mapp

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Adopted: _____

The original of this report was signed and sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12.

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Appendix A: Resolution #R 486-15

SECTION 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Redevelopment Area Investigation Report has been prepared to determine whether Block 611, Lot 1 and Lot 2 on the City Tax Map and located at 501-637 South Avenue, and 639-661 South Avenue (the “Study Area”) meets the statutory criteria for designation as an “area in need of redevelopment”, and/or an “area in need of rehabilitation” pursuant to the Local Redevelopment Housing Law (the “LRHL”, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.) of the New Jersey Statutes.

The Plainfield City Council directed the Planning Board to investigate the Study Area by Resolution #R 486-15, adopted December 14, 2015 (**Appendix A**).

This report presents a detailed analysis of the Study Area; based on the information and evidence collected, this report makes the determination that the Study Area satisfies statutory criteria to be designated an “area in need of redevelopment” as well as an “area in need of rehabilitation.” It is therefore the recommendation of the Planning Board that the Plainfield City Council designate Block 611, Lot1 and Lot 2 as a Redevelopment Area.

While recognizing that the authority to make this decision relies only with the Governing Body, the Planning Board strongly recommends that the City Council declare the Study Area a Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area, thereby removing the power of Eminent Domain from potential use by the governing body and/or redevelopment agency. A non-condemnation redevelopment approach will help to facilitate a more favorable, working partnership between the property owners and the City.

SECTION 2 INTRODUCTION

In order to designate a Redevelopment Area, a municipal governing body must first authorize the Planning Board, by resolution, to determine whether the proposed area meets statutory criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.

On December 14, 2015, the Plainfield City Council passed Resolution #R 486-15 authorizing the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether or not Block 611, Lot 1 and Lot 2 on the City Tax Map, and herein referred to as the "Study Area," qualified as an "area in need of redevelopment" and/or as an "area in need of rehabilitation" pursuant to statutory requirements as defined in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law ("LRHL," N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.).

As per Resolution #R 486-15, the Redevelopment Study Area consists of the following properties, as shown on the tax map below (Figure 1):

Tax Block	Tax Lot	Address
611	1	501-637 South Avenue
611	2	639-661 South Avenue

Figure 1: Redevelopment Study Area Map- Tax Map Location



The Planning Board, or its consultant, prepares the preliminary investigation report and then holds a duly noticed public hearing on the matter. After completing its hearing, the Planning Board makes its recommendation that the entire delineated area, a portion of the delineated area, or no part of the delineated area, is a redevelopment area. After receiving the recommendation of the Planning Board, the municipal Governing Body may adopt a resolution determining the entire delineated area, a portion of the delineated area, or no part of the delineated area, is a redevelopment area.

Upon designating an “area in need of redevelopment” (and / or an “area in need of rehabilitation”) a municipality may then prepare and adopt a Redevelopment Plan for the designated area(s). The Governing Body, acting as the redevelopment entity, may then engage in a variety of activities and use the powers of redevelopment and/or rehabilitation authorized in the LRHL to stimulate development and effectuate the plan’s purposes.

Eminent Domain

On September 9, 2013, the State of New Jersey amended the LRHL to require that municipalities from the on-set of the process, determine whether they will seek to use the power of Eminent Domain. When asking the Planning Board to investigate a redevelopment area, the Governing Body’s authorizing Resolution must now indicate whether it is seeking to designate a “Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area” or a “Condensation Redevelopment Area.” The intent of the amendment was to make redevelopment a more politically viable tool to spur economic development. It responds to concerns that the potential use of, or even just the threat of eminent domain has been an obstacle to viable redevelopment projects in New Jersey.

Plainfield City Council Resolution #R 486-15 addresses this requirement, stating “...the governing body has determined that this resolution authorizes the municipality to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area *other than the use of eminent domain.*” A non-condemnation redevelopment approach will help facilitate a more favorable, working partnership between the property owners and the City.

SECTION 3 CRITERIA FOR REDEVELOPMENT AREA DETERMINATION

A delineated area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment if, after investigation, notice and hearing as provided in section N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6, the governing body of the municipality by resolution concludes that any of the following conditions are found within the delineated area.

- a) **CRITERIA A-** The generality of buildings is substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions.
- b) **CRITERIA B-** The discontinuance of the use of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such buildings or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable.
- c) **CRITERIA C-** Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, development agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital.
- d) **CRITERIA D-** Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescent, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light, and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.
- e) **CRITERIA E-** A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise being detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general.
- f) **CRITERIA F-** Areas, in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished or altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the aggregate assessed value of the area has been materially depreciated.
- g) **CRITERIA G-** In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the "New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act." P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52-27H-60 et seq.) the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c. 79(C.40A: 12A-5 and 40A: 12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district

pursuant to the provisions of P.L. 1991, c.431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c. 431 (C40A:21-1 et. Seq.)

- h) **CRITERIA H-** The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.

Furthermore, Section 3 of the LRHL permits the inclusion of parcels necessary for the effective redevelopment of the area, stating:

“...A redevelopment area may include lands, buildings, or improvements which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area in which they are a part.”

SECTION 4 STUDY AREA CONTEXT AND LOCATION

The City of Plainfield contains a total area of six square miles and is located in northeastern New Jersey in the westernmost portion of Union County approximately thirty-five miles from New York City. Seven municipalities border Plainfield: Scotch Plains to the northeast; Watchung to the northwest; North Plainfield to the west; Green Brook and Dunellen to the southwest; Piscataway and South Plainfield to the south; and Scotch Plains to the east. The Study Area is readily accessible from New Jersey State Route 28 (South Avenue), East Seventh Street, and has access to areas north and south via Leland Avenue.

The Study Area contains two (2) lots, depicted within the City Tax Map Block 611, Lot 1 (501-637 South Avenue) and Block 611, Lot 2 (639-661 South Avenue). The Study Area is within 2010 U.S. Census Tract 390 and is located in the eastern portion of the City that occupies a total area of 6.47 acres. As shown in **Figure 2** below, the Study Area comprises the entire north side of the 500 and 600 block of South Avenue between Richmond Street to the west and Berckman Street to the east.

Figure 2: Study Area within City of Plainfield



SECTION 5 CITY PLANNING EFFORTS RELEVANT TO THE STUDY AREA

The Planning Division reviewed the City's most recent planning, zoning and redevelopment materials that provide the basis for land development policy and decision-making in the City, and in particular, those that guide the use and development of the Study Area.

Plainfield Master Plan & Reexamination Report

The City of Plainfield adopted an updated Master Plan in 2009. The Master Plan outlines Objectives and Policies that aim to guide the physical, social and economic development of the city. Specific to the context of the Study Area, certain master plan goals and policy objectives are as follows:

- **Objective 2-** Development and redevelopment should be responsive to the needs of the Plainfield community by ameliorating conditions suggestive of physical and economic deterioration, by supporting sustainability, creating economic opportunity and providing a variety of housing. Redevelopment planning is implemented in a comprehensive citywide manner and where appropriate to promote transit-oriented design (page 14).
- **Policy 2.2- Outside Agency Participation in Redevelopment Activity.** To assure high performance redevelopment and maximize the financial and technological involvement of outside agencies, the city should pursue high performance redevelopment through Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), Green Building Rating System accredited construction, brownfields remediation, increased open space, rain water harvesting, green roofs, transit friendly walkable cities, renewable energy sources, solar and wind power, environmentally friendly industry, eco industrial parks, use of low speed vehicles and/or light rail links, clean waterways with recreation areas, limited reintroduction of agriculture with a weaving in of cultural arts and historic preservation. The city's representative should act as a clearinghouse to assist redevelopers to acquire information and technical and financial support on these initiatives to meet the city's goals (page 14).
- **Policy 3.1- Vacant and Boarded Dwellings.** It is policy and continued priority of the city to eliminate the presence of all vacant and boarded structures through rehabilitation, redevelopment, enforcement of the Abandoned Properties Ordinance, and where necessary, demolition (page 15).
- **Policy 5.3- Industrial Business Growth.** The city should promote appropriate growth industries and clustered business within designated areas and strongly encourage the establishment of eco-business parks, technology based research centers, and other environmentally friendly uses and knowledgeable employers (page 17).
- **Policy 9.1- Promotion of the Arts in Redevelopment.** Redevelopment should seek to incorporate cultural activities whenever feasible, particularly within TOD areas and the CBD (page 20).
- **Objective 20-** Redevelopment activities undertaken by the city should be consistent with the Master Plan (page 25).

As evidenced above, a number of Objectives and Policies are relevant to city redevelopment efforts. The use of redevelopment planning is highlighted throughout the Master Plan as a tool for the city to use to revitalize vacant, distressed and underutilized properties.

The **Land Use Plan** categorizes land along both sides of the rail line west of Grant Avenue and east of Richmond Street as industrial and is targeted for uses requiring rail access and uses that may impact adjacent properties generally not considered acceptable in mixed-use areas (page 30).

The master plan recommends consideration of the use of redevelopment planning and makes policy recommendations to assist in the evaluation and administration of redevelopment planning (pages 46-48):

- The Planning Board, in consultation with the City Council, should prepare a strategic vision to serve as a framework within which redevelopment planning can be undertaken in an integrated, comprehensive manner (page 46).
- Zoning classification and existing conditions of land and improvements immediately adjacent to the RVL corridor should be evaluated to identify detrimental conditions and impediments to development, which may be highlighted through the employment of development or redevelopment planning, for the emergence of a comprehensive corridor vision plan (page 46).
- Development and redevelopment planning should capitalize on existing mass transit systems, and promote TOD proximate to multi-modal mixed-use transportation areas in areas around the Downtown Station, the Netherwood Station, possibly the former train stops at Clinton and Grant avenues, and city bus routes (page 46).
- To assure diversification of the city's economy and enhance employment opportunity, development and redevelopment planning should provide opportunity for the establishment of high technology uses and where appropriate the types of uses able to benefit from availability of rail spurs outside of areas developed consistent with a TOD land use pattern emphasizing mixed retail, service and residential uses (page 47).
- Subsequent to City Council declarations of areas in need of redevelopment, redevelopment plans for said areas should be prepared as soon as possible following designation. Plans should be prepared for Block 318 Study Area; Downtown Station South Study Area; West Second Street and Madison Avenue Study Area; South and Scott Avenues Study Area (Disco Aluminum); and the North Avenue Expanded Area (page 47).
- Advance comprehensive planning in the East Third and Richmond streets redevelopment area and seek partnership with Union County College and the Plainfield Municipal Utility Authority (page 47).
- Proposed redevelopment plans should have the three-prong emphasis of (1) preparation and consideration of economic feasibility studies to illuminate impact of plans in terms of tax base expansion and potential for job creation, (2) promotion of architecturally diverse, yet historically appropriate building styles to promote an aesthetically pleasing and interesting built environment, and (3) encouragement of LEED and sustainability principles in all designs/plans (page 48).

- A proactive community outreach program to educate and solicit public comment should be a component of all redevelopment planning initiatives in the city (page 48).
- All redevelopment plans should include the requirement that the redeveloper submit economic, traffic and sustainability impact statements to the Planning Board and City Council. Potential redevelopers should also demonstrate that the project is feasible, that they have the demonstrated ability, experience and financial wherewithal to complete the developments they are proposing to undertake (page 48).

Plainfield Zoning Ordinance

The City Zoning Map, dated June 2015, shows that both properties are located fully within the LI Light Industrial Zone District. The LI Zone District is bound by Richmond Street to the west, Berckman Street to the east, and extends to properties on the north side of North Avenue between Fillmore Avenue and Berckman Street (**Figure 3**). The city’s Land Zoning Ordinance at §17:9-17 states the purpose of the LI Light Industrial Zone District is “to call for industrial and economic development activities.”

Figure 3: Existing Zoning Map for Study Area



The LI zone permits childcare centers; manufacturing; assembly; automobile repair shop; warehouse and/or distribution facility; offices; print shops; health and fitness clubs; banquet halls; research facilities; automotive body shop; telecommunication facilities on existing buildings and structures; and taverns.

The LI zone also permits the following large scale retail and entertainment uses: supermarket; community shopping center; full service restaurant (other than drive-in, drive-thru and/or fast food establishments); indoor amusement facilities; bars and cocktail lounges (without live entertainment or dancing as part of indoor amusement facilities, including theaters, bowling alleys, and skating rinks). New large scale retail and entertainment uses must 1) have a lot area not greater than 150,000 square feet; 2) not be located on a site with greater than 650 feet of frontage; and 3) maintain a distance of 150 feet from any residential zone or property (City Zoning Ordinance §17:9-35A). **Figure 4** provides the bulk zoning requirement for industrial and commercial development in the LI zone.

Figure 4: Bulk Zoning Requirements

Bulk Requirement	Light Industrial	Commercial
Min. Lot Area (square feet)	20,000	5,000
Min. Lot Width (feet)	100	50
Min. Lot Frontage (feet)	100	50
Min. Lot Depth (feet)	150	100
Min. Front Yard Setback (feet)	20	10
Min. Side Yard Setback (feet)	10	5
Min. Combined Side Yard Setback (feet)	20	10
Min. Rear Yard Setback (feet)	15	15
Min. Floor Area Ratio	2	1.8
Max. Percent Building Coverage	60%	60%
Max. Percent Total Lot Cover	80%	80%
Max. Number of Stories	4	3
Max. Building Height (feet)	60	35
Minimum Improvable Area (M.I.A.)	9,600	1,500
M.I.A.- Diameter of Circle	69	27

Adjacent Redevelopment Areas

Plainfield is revitalizing many of its neighborhoods through various initiatives, including redevelopment. Numerous areas of the City are designated as Areas in Need of Redevelopment and implementation of redevelopment plans for many of these areas is under way. Properties directly south of the Study Area across South Avenue encompass the East Sixth Street and Scott Place Redevelopment Plan, and properties directly west of Richmond Street are part of the East Third and Richmond Street Redevelopment Plan.

Relationship to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) classifies all of Plainfield as Metropolitan Planning Area One (PA-1)- an area that is planned to provide for much of the state’s future development. The intent of PA-1 is to revitalize cities and towns, promote growth in compact form, and stabilize older suburbs. The SDRP promotes growth within existing urbanized areas, preferably in the form of compact development with ready access to existing infrastructure, including transit systems. Regarded as an existing urbanized area, the neighborhood surrounding the Study Area is characterized as being primarily industrial and commercial area.

The Study Area is located within one of 32 designated Urban Enterprise Zones (UEZ) in the entire State of New Jersey. Businesses located within a UEZ are provided benefits such as reduced sales tax, tax free purchases on certain items such as capital equipment, facility expansions, upgrades and certain personal property, financial assistance from agencies such as NJEDA and subsidized unemployment insurance costs for certain employees, among other benefits.

SECTION 6 METHODOLOGY

In the preparation of this report, staff researched, collected and reviewed a number of sources of information, including but not limited to, the following records, documents and sources listed below:

- Official tax maps of the City of Plainfield
- Tax Assessor property records
- Historical aerial imagery
- Property Code Violations
- Fire Division Records
- Police Division Records
- Contaminated sites information provided by the NJDEP
- Planning Board / Zoning Board development applications and approvals
- City of Plainfield Master Plan and Reexamination Report, adopted May 2009
- Zoning Map and Ordinances of the City of Plainfield

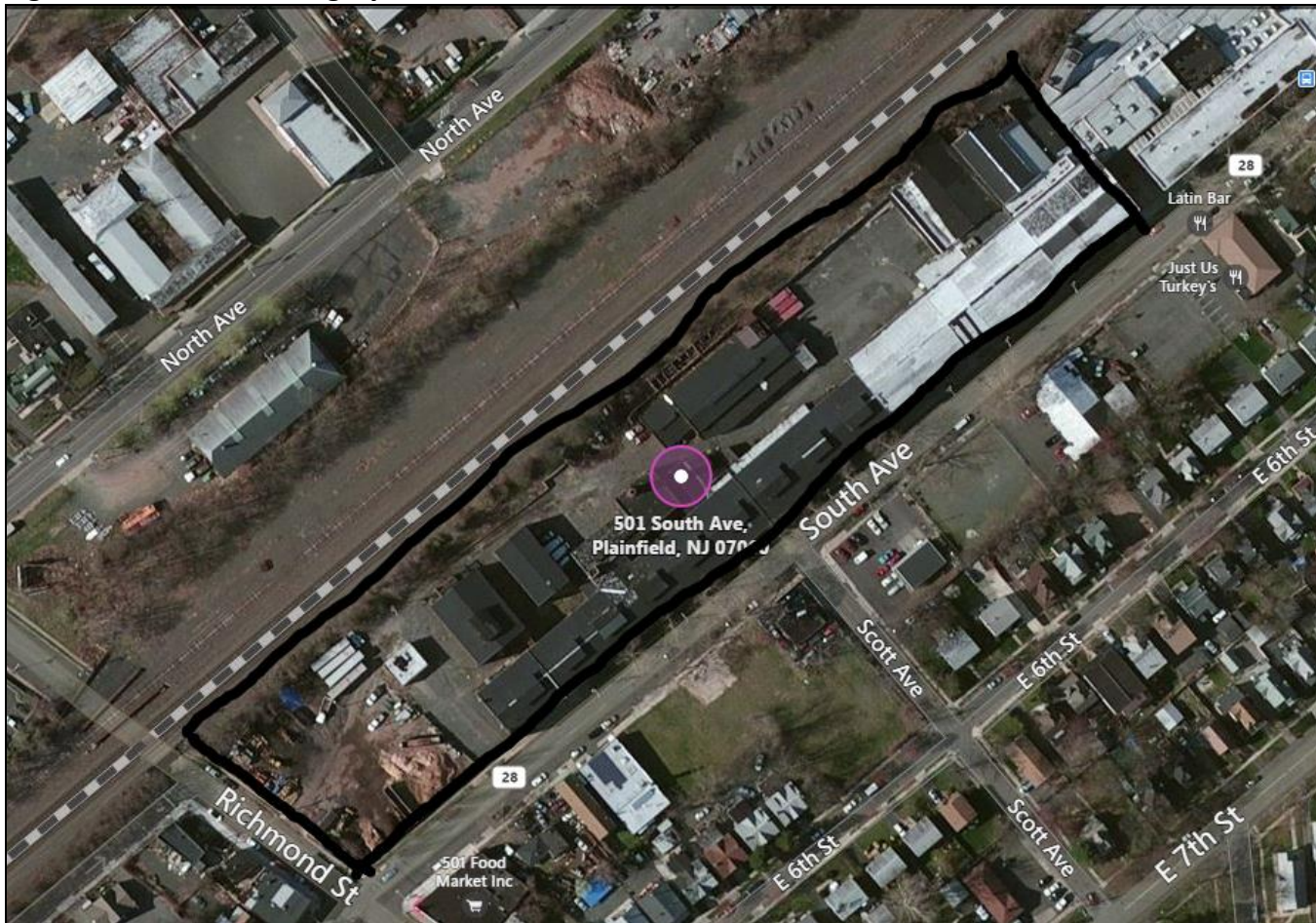
The Planning Division staff also conducted physical inspections of the exterior of the Study Area during a site visit on May 4, 2016. A detailed review of this cumulative body of evidence informed the determination of whether the Study Area meets the criteria to be “an area in need of redevelopment.”

SECTION 7 PROPERTY ANALYSIS: BLOCK 611, LOT 1. 501-637 SOUTH AVENUE

Current Conditions / Site Visit Analysis: Block 611, Lot 1

Block 611, Lot 1, commonly known as the “E. Paul Building”, is located at 501-637 South Avenue and is 5.13 acres (223,463 square feet) in size. The property is located in the east-central portion of the City, on the northerly side of South Avenue, between Richmond Street and Berckman Street. The site has 1,065 linear feet of frontage along South Avenue to the south, 205 linear feet of frontage along Richmond Street to the west, 1,106 linear feet of frontage along the Conrail / Raritan Valley Line to the north, and 200 linear feet of boundary shared with adjacent Lot 2 to the east. Commercial and industrial uses lie to the east, west, and south. As shown in the aerial image **Figure 6** below:

Figure 6: 2012 Aerial Imagery of Block 611, Lot 1



Lot 1 contains a series of buildings of varying size, height, and age. Vehicle access to the site is via driveways off of both South Avenue and Richmond Street. The driveways connect to parking and storage areas throughout the site. Within the site interior, there are unimproved access drives connecting the buildings. There is no network of walkways to enable safe pedestrian circulation throughout the site.

The buildings are in a state of abandonment; Planning staff met with property owner Andrew Ditti who provided a tour of the interior of several buildings. Large rooms are filled completely with equipment and storage. Leaks in the walls and roofing were evident. Photographs in the report show the extent of deteriorated building conditions. The issues impacting site conditions include but are not limited to, the following: mold on walls;

damaged ceilings; antiquated heating / cooling systems; non-compliant ADA facilities; high likelihood of asbestos; high likelihood of the presence of lead paint.



Looking east from Richmond Street



Looking north at front façade along South Avenue



Looking east from subject property



Looking north at front façade along South Avenue



Storage, building interior



Storage, building interior



Water damage to ceiling



Outdoor storage of vehicles and trailers



Building interior, vacant



Rear of property- unimproved, storage, dumping prevalent



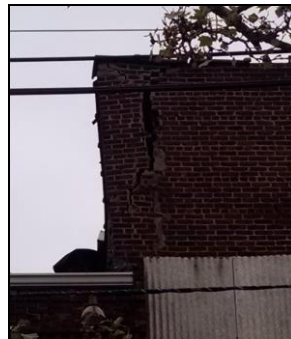
Building interior, vacant



Evidence of structural damage to cinder block wall



Broken windows, dilapidated building, graffiti



Evidence of damage to front façade facing South Avenue

NJDEP Environmental Data Review: Block 611, Lot 1

On April 18, 2016, the City Brownfields Coordinator April Stefel informed the Planning Division of the following:

Two (2) underground storage tanks (UST) removed September 2, 1999; #4 heating fuel. Remedial Action Permit (RAP140001) for soils issued October 27, 2015. Plainfield Inventory of Brownfields indicates hazardous category of contamination. Permittee shall conduct monitoring and maintenance on biennial bases and results submitted to NJDEP.

Property Code Violations: Block 611, Lot 1

On April 13, 2016, the City of Plainfield Division of Inspections provided the following history of property code violations:

Inspection Date	Notice Date	Property Maintenance Code Violation	Inspector
4-16-2015	4-28-2015	2.07. Board and secure vacant structure	L. Garcia
6-4-2015	6-22-2015	2.01. Remove all trash, debris, litter, and rubbish from location: illegal items at the curb	L. Garcia
8-7-2014	8-14-2014	2.02. Cut and maintain lawn, weeds, overgrowth. Including curb area	L. Garcia
5-6-2014	5-16-2014	2.02. Cut and maintain lawn, weeds, overgrowth. Including curb area	L. Garcia

Building Permit Records: Block 611, Lot 1

On April 13, 2016, the City of Plainfield Division of Inspections provided the following history of building permits issued:

Date	Owner	Construction	Permit #
10-1-1964	Ardico Corp.	masonry alterations	40714
12-20-1985	Ardico Corp.	200 amp service	61694
8-18-1986	Ardico Corp.	correct electrical violations	62304
7-25-1991	Joy Oil	electrical fixtures	91-527
6-22-1992	Ditti Corp	electrical fixtures	92-448
1-13-1994	Ditti Corp	exit signs and emergency lights	94-025
1-5-1996	Edward Paul	100 amp service	96-0010
2-1-1996	Edward Paul	4 receptacles	96-0010+A
9-12-1996	Ditti Corp	extend rear door	96-0010+C
3-29-1996	Edward Paul	electrical work	96-0010+B
9-27-1996	J Paul	electrical work	96-0010+D

Zoning Violation Records: Block 611, Lot 1

On April 15, 2016, Assistant Zoning Officer Ronald Johnson informed the Planning Division that there are no current zoning violations.

Health Division Violations: Block 611, Lot 1

No response received from the Health Division.

Fire Division Records: Block 611, Lot 1

On May 4, 2016, the Plainfield Bureau of Fire Prevention provided the Planning Division with the following email:

In response to Block 611, Lot 1 (501-637 South Avenue) we have several concerns. The first deals with the bricks that are falling from the front wall of the middle building, between 525 South Avenue and 639 South Avenue. The wall has a diagonal crack and is beginning to separate at the top of the wall. The Edward P. Paul building (525 South Avenue) has ornamental stars on the front wall which means that the walls have been braced into the wood joists because there was deterioration of the wall. The wall also has bracing on the front wall to keep it stable. The building is of heavy timber construction and has a railroad track inside. This was from the early days of the building when the occupant had rail deliveries directly into the building. The old chimney at the rear of the property received a violation for falling bricks from the chimney. The loose bricks have been remedied at this time but that doesn't mean that it won't continue. There was a repair garage in one of the rear buildings and the business owner did not have a certificate of occupancy with the City of Plainfield. There was also a truck repair and a landscaping company from South Plainfield who parked trucks in the rear of the property. Inside the Edward P. Paul building there is a heavy fire load which includes an inordinate amount of wooden crates, straw and stock. The building is sprinklered.

Police Records: Block 611, Lot 1

No response received from the Plainfield Police Division.

Tax Collector Records: Block 611, Lot 1

On April 12, 2016, the City Tax Collector reported that property taxes are paid through 1st Quarter 2016.

Planning Board & Zoning Board of Adjustment Records: Block 611, Lot 1

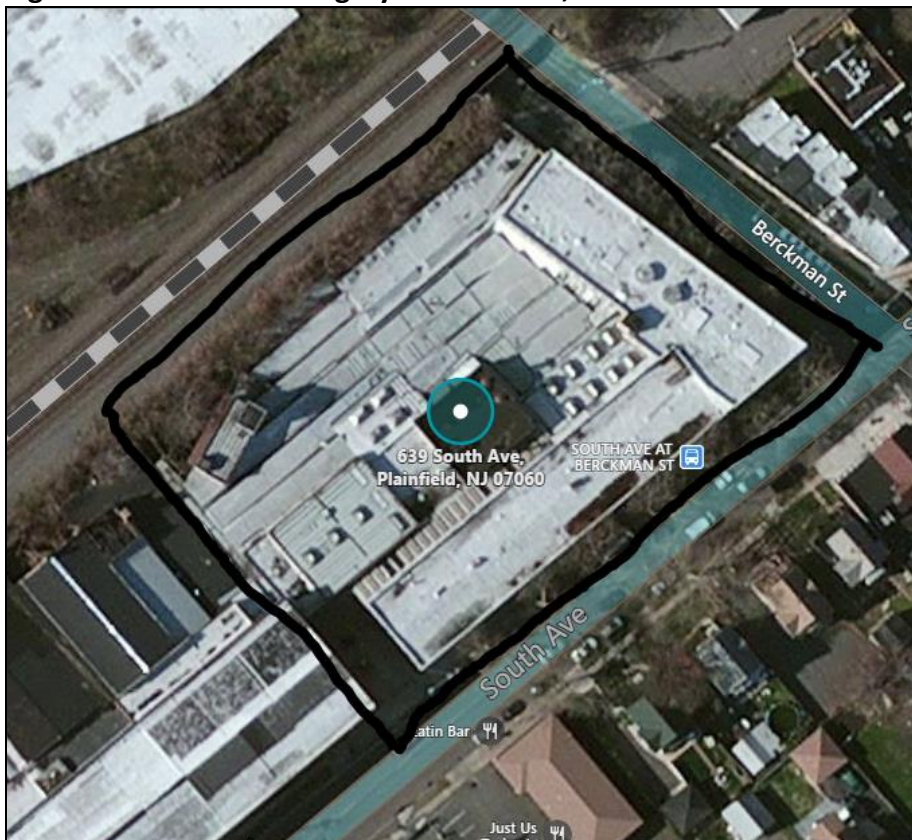
The Planning Division has no record of application made to either the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment related to Block 611, Lot 1.

SECTION 8 PROPERTY ANALYSIS: BLOCK 611, LOT 2. 639-661 SOUTH AVENUE

Current Conditions / Site Visit Analysis: Block 611, Lot 2

Block 611, Lot 2, commonly known as the “Royal Apex Building”, is located at 639-661 South Avenue and is 1.34 acres (58,370 square feet) in size. The property is located in the east-central portion of the City, on the northerly side of South Avenue, between Richmond Street and Berckman Street. The site has 310 linear feet of frontage along South Avenue to the south, 205 linear feet of frontage along Berckman Street to the east, 266 linear feet of frontage along the Conrail / Raritan Valley Line to the north, and 200 linear feet of boundary shared with adjacent Lot 1 to the west. Commercial and industrial uses lie to the east, west, and south. As shown in the aerial image below (Figure 9), Lot 2 contains a series of multi-story buildings.

Figure 9: 2012 Aerial Imagery of Block 611, Lot 2



The 2012 aerial imagery does not represent what is going on site today- presently there is demolition action taking place related to the self-storage facility approved by the Zoning Board in December 2015. Vehicle access to the site is via driveways off both South Avenue and Berckman Street. The driveways connect to parking and storage areas throughout the site. Site work and building demolition is ongoing.



Front elevation of 639-661 South Avenue “Royal Apex Building” along South Avenue (flagstone sidewalks being salvaged)



Rear of 639-661 South Avenue “Royal Apex Building” demolition work in progress



West elevation of 639-661 South Avenue “Royal Apex Building” demolition work in progress

NJDEP Environmental Data Review: Block 611, Lot 2

On April 18, 2016, the City Brownfields Coordinator April Stefel informed the Planning Division of the following:

In 1999 an underground storage tank was properly removed an unrestricted use no further action letter was issued by the NJDEP.

Property Code Violations: Block 611, Lot 2

On April 13, 2016, the City of Plainfield Division of Inspections provided the following history of property code violations:

Inspection Date	Notice Date	Property Maintenance Code Violation	Inspector
4-16-2015	4-28-2015	2.01. Remove all trash, debris, litter, and rubbish from location: entire property. 2.07. Board and secure vacant structure	L. Garcia
5-1-2015	5-5-2015	2.02. Cut and maintain lawn, weeds overgrowth including curb area. 2.02. Remove / eliminate graffiti on structure wall	L. Garcia

Building Permit Records: Block 611, Lot 2

On April 13, 2016, the City of Plainfield Division of Inspections provided the following history of building permits issued:

Date	Owner	Construction	Permit #
4-18-1903	A.J. Bronson	frame garage (auto store house)	1378
12-2-1904	A.J. Bronson	frame storeroom	1733
10-24-1905	S.W. Rushmore	frame extension	1946
5-18-1905	S.W. Rushmore	iron storage building	1825
11-24-1905	S.W. Rushmore	frame storage building	1970
6-14-1905	David Hand	repairs	1851
11-15-1906	S.W. Rushmore	frame capp. shop	2213
4-26-1907	S.W. Rushmore	reinforced concrete building	3020
4-22-1909	Rushmore Dynamo Works	frame storeroom	3590
3-29-1910	Rushmore Dynamo Works	frame shop	3853
2-27-1911	Rushmore Dynamo Works	storage building	4102
6-6-1911	S.W. Rushmore	concrete ext.	4201
10-14-1913	S.W. Rushmore	concrete blk ext.	4857
11-25-1913	Vanderventer Est.	gas tank	4881
8-22-1916	Bosch Magnato Co.	concrete ext.	5494
9-4-1916	Bosch Magnato Co.	concrete ext.	5495
2-7-1933	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	addition to boiler room	18632
9-29-1933	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	c.h.b. factory	18897
10-26-1934	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	c.h.b addition	19369
5-22-1935	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	frame alteration	19643
7-26-1935	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	c.h.b addition	19758
8-23-1935	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	c.h.b warehouse	19796
10-26-1935	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	elevator	19960
7-18-1941	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	elevator	23861
1-21-1943	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	frame alteration	24523
10-29-1943	Walker Turner Co., Inc.	c.h.b. storage	24684
2-7-1946	South Ave. Co.	c.h.b. alteration	25559
11-13-1959	Chelsea Prod. Inc.	steel alteration	38488

Date	Owner	Construction	Permit #
12-20-1963	Chelsea Prod. Inc.	metal stack	40398
3-11-1964	Chelsea Prod. Inc.	c.h.b. alteration	40456
10-21-1976	K.S.R. Realty Corp.	alteration	46673
1-16-1978	K.S.R. Realty Corp.	alteration	47379
10-16-1992	Royal Apex Man. Co.	asbestos management	92-839
6-4-1993	Royal Apex Man. Co.	gas connection	93-432
7-22-1993	Royal Apex Man. Co.	gas piping	93-432+A
9-9-1993	Royal Apex Man. Co.	three tanks	93-773
8-18-1995	K.S.R. Realty Corp.	elevator repairs	95-707
1-12-1996	Royal Apex Man. Co.	electrical	96-0045
1-12-1996	K.S.R. Realty Corp.	repair door	96-0045
3-5-1996	Royal Apex	recondition offices	96-0045+A
5-13-1997	Royal Apex	electrical work	97-0483
4-20-1999	Royal Apex	tank demo	99-359
10-13-2015	Mendham Assoc.	roof	2015279

Zoning Violation Records: Block 611, Lot 2

On April 15, 2016, Assistant Zoning Officer Ronald Johnson informed the Planning Division that there are no current zoning violations.

Health Division Records: Block 611, Lot 2

No response received from the Health Division.

Fire Division Records: Block 611, Lot 2

On May 4, 2016, the Plainfield Bureau of Fire Prevention provided the Planning Division with the following email:

Concerning Block 611, Lot 2 (639-661 South Avenue) Mr. Fred Lackland who bought the building within the last year, Lackland Self Storage, has demolished the rear building and the loading dock. He is in the process of building a new three story building in the rear and converting the building into a storage building, used for self-storage units for the public. He has also obtained all of his necessary permits and went to the Planning Board. Before the renovation process Mr. Lackland had to remove several 55-gallon drums of oil. The Union County Hazardous Materials Unit was called to the scene concerning the drums that was left in the building by the previous owner.

Police Division Records: Block 611, Lot 2

No response received from the Police Division.

Tax Collector Records: Block 611, Lot 2

On April 12, 2016, the City Tax Collector reported that property taxes are paid through 1st Quarter 2016.

Planning Board & Zoning Board of Adjustment Records: Block 611, Lot 2

On December 2, 2016, the Zoning Board of Adjustment acted on application ZB 2015-27, granting a use variance, floor area ratio variance, bulk variances, supplemental zone variances, and waivers from design and performance standards, as well as preliminary and final site plan approval, for the conversion of a portion of the building on site and the construction of a new three-story addition to house a new 111,572 square foot self-storage facility with fifteen (15) on-site parking spaces. The Zoning Board memorialized the Resolution on January 20, 2016, and to date the Planning Division awaits the submission of revised plans reflecting the conditions cited in the Resolution. The property owner has commenced with demolition needed to accommodate the new construction.

SECTION 9 DESIGNATION- BLOCK 611, LOT 1. 501-637 SOUTH AVENUE

The above analysis was conducted to determine if Block 611, Lot 1, commonly known as the “E. Paul Building”, located at 501-637 South Avenue meets the statutory criteria for designation as an “area in need of redevelopment” pursuant to Section 5 of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law of the New Jersey Statutes.

Criteria Applicability

The buildings on Lot 1 outlived their functional uses as warehouse, manufacturing, and distribution facilities. The limited freight activity on the Conrail line limits the ability of Lot 1 to function as a manufacturing and distribution facility. The property would be severely constrained for re-use considering its obsolete design. The sheer size and arrangement of the buildings limits what can be accommodated on the site. The obsolescence of the buildings, coupled with the expense of maintaining the buildings on 5 acres, makes the site undesirable from a re-use perspective. Significant investment is needed to modernize each building and convert it to another use. Massive investments would be required to bring each of the buildings into compliance with modern standards such as HVAC systems, electrical distribution systems, ADA accessibility, etc. Interior retrofitting of the building would also be expensive. The high cost of demolition work and the current zoning for the area has also likely contributed to the site’s prolonged vacancy and deterred any credible sale or development offers. The lack of regular use and maintenance has contributed to the site’s visible deterioration. The buildings are too large, too outdated, and too costly to maintain.

The continued vacancy of Lot 1 has negative implications for the surrounding neighborhood and is detrimental to the safety, health, and welfare of the community. Long-term vacancy negatively impacts property values for the surrounding area and deters investment in other locations. The abandonment of a once-thriving industrial building represents past disinvestment in businesses that were once prominent in the community.

Criteria Recommendation

Based on the above research and analysis, Block 611, Lot 1, commonly known as the “E. Paul Building”, located at 501-637 South Avenue meets the “a”, “b”, “d”, “g”, and “h” redevelopment criteria, as defined in Section 5 of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law:

- a) **CRITERIA A-** The generality of buildings is substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possesses any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions.
- b) **CRITERIA B-** The discontinuance of the use of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such buildings or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable.
- c) **CRITERIA D-** Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescent, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light, and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.
- d) **CRITERIA G-** In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the "New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act." P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52-27H-60 et seq.) the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New

Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c. 79(C.40A: 12A-5 and 40A: 12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L. 1991, c.431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c. 431 (C40A:21-1 et seq.)

- e) **CRITERIA H-** The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.

SECTION 10 DESIGNATION- BLOCK 611, LOT 2. 639-661 SOUTH AVENUE

The above analysis was conducted to determine if Block 611, Lot 2, commonly known as the “Royal Apex Building”, located at 639-661 South Avenue meets the statutory criteria for designation as an “area in need of redevelopment” pursuant to Section 5 of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law of the New Jersey Statutes.

Criteria Recommendation

Based on the above research and analysis, Block 611, Lot 2, commonly known as the “Royal Apex Building”, located at 639-661 South Avenue does not meet the redevelopment criteria, as defined in Section 5 of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. The new construction and self-storage facility is an accomplished re-use of the property that will have positive implications for the surrounding area and will encourage investment in other locations.

SECTION 11 REHABILITATION ANALYSIS

Overview

Designating an Area in Need of Rehabilitation pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law permits a municipality or redevelopment entity to use all of the powers of redevelopment, except that a municipality may not use eminent domain, nor grant long-term tax exemptions. A rehabilitation designation permits municipalities to grant short-term tax exemptions (5-year abatements) to developers and private property owners within a designated area to encourage property owners to rehabilitate and reinvest in their properties.

A Rehabilitation Area can be designated by Resolution of the Governing Body. The Governing Body is required to submit the proposed resolution to the Planning Board for its review and comment. A public hearing by the Planning Board, however, is not required by the Statute. The Planning Board must submit its recommendations regarding the proposed resolution, including any modifications, within 45 days of receipt of the proposed resolution. Thereafter (or after 45 days if the Planning Board does not submit recommendations) the Governing Body may adopt the resolution, with or without modification. Upon designating an Area in Need of Rehabilitation, a municipality can also prepare and adopt a Redevelopment Plan for that area. The process and content of a Redevelopment Plan is governed by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

Criteria & Evaluation for Rehabilitation Area Determination

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:A:12A-14(a), a delineated study area may be designated “in need of rehabilitation” by a municipality if it is determined that a program of rehabilitation, as defined by section 303 of P.L. 1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-3), may be expected to prevent further deterioration and promote the overall development of the community, and that there exists in that area any of the following conditions. A delineated area may be determined to be in need of rehabilitation if:

Criteria	Block 611, Lot 1 501-637 South Avenue	Block 611, Lot 2 639-661 South Avenue
(1) A significant portion of structures therein are in a deteriorated or substandard condition	satisfies criteria	satisfies criteria
(2) More than half of the housing stock in the delineated area is at least 50 years old	n/a	n/a
(3) There is a pattern of vacancy, abandonment or underutilization of properties in the area	satisfies criteria	satisfies criteria
(4) There is a persistent arrearage of property tax payments on properties in the area	n/a	n/a
(5) Environmental contamination is discouraging improvements and investments in properties in the area	satisfies criteria	satisfies criteria
(6) A majority of the water and sewer infrastructure in the delineated area is at least 50 years old and is in need of repair or substantial maintenance	satisfies criteria	satisfies criteria

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the Study Area qualifies as “an area in need of rehabilitation” in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:A:12A-14(a) and meets Rehabilitation Criteria (1), (3), (5), and (6). Further, a program of rehabilitation may be expected to prevent further deterioration of the area.

Appendix A: Resolution #R 486-15, adopted by Plainfield City Council December 14, 2015

R 486-15

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PLANNING BOARD OF THE CITY OF PLAINFIELD TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12A FOR PROPERTIES DESIGNATED ON THE CITY TAX MAP SHEET 33 AS BLOCK 611, LOT 1 THE "E. PAUL BUILDING" AT 417-431 RICHMOND STREET / 501-637 SOUTH AVENUE, AND LOT 2 THE "ROYAL APEX BUILDING" AT 639-661 SOUTH AVENUE / 416-430 BERCKMAN STREET, AND DIRECTING THE PLANNING BOARD TO HOLD THE PUBLIC HEARING AND REPORT TO THE CITY OF PLAINFIELD COUNCIL AS DIRECTED THEREIN

WHEREAS, in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. (the "Redevelopment Law"), the City of Plainfield (the "City") seeks to investigate certain areas within the City and determine whether said areas meet the statutory criteria warranting designation as an area in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, said properties include Block 611, Lots 1 and 2 on the City tax map, sheet 33 (attached hereto); and

WHEREAS, the City seeks to identify areas in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation, develop a plan for the redevelopment of such areas and to undertake or oversee the redevelopment of such areas, all as part of an overall comprehensive city-wide redevelopment initiative; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A, no area of a municipality shall be determined a redevelopment area unless the governing body of the municipality, by resolution, authorizes the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed area is a redevelopment area according to the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5, or an area in need of rehabilitation according to the criteria set forth at N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-14; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A.40A:12A-6 the governing body has determined that this resolution authorizes the municipality to use all of those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area other than the use of eminent domain; this resolution is a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area, and

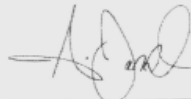
WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A, such determination shall be made after public notice and public hearing as provided in the statute.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Plainfield, New Jersey as follows:

1. The Planning Board is hereby authorized to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether Block 611, Lots 1 and 2 on the City tax map, sheet 33 is a redevelopment area according to the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A, and to report such determination to the City Council after public notice and public hearing.
2. A notice of this action shall be published in the official newspaper authorized to publish legal notices for the City as required by law.
3. A copy of this resolution shall be filed in the Office of the City Clerk.

ADOPTED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

December 14, 2015



Abubakar Jalloh, R.M.C.
Municipal Clerk

CLERK'S CERTIFICATION

I, Abubakar Jalloh, City Clerk of the City of Plainfield do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Plainfield City Council.

Abubakar Jalloh, R.M.C.
Municipal Clerk

✓ Vote Record - Resolution R 486-15		Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted	Tracy Brown	Mover	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted as Amended	Gloria Taylor	Voter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Defeated	Diane Toliver	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tabled	Vera Greaves	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn	Bridget B. Rivers	Voter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Consensus	Cory Skoeh	Voter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Rebecca Williams	Second	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>