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CITY OF CAMDEN  
NEW JERSEY

PO Box 95120  
Room 105, City Hall  
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Tele: (856) 757-7223 / Fax: (856) 757-7220  
Email: [clerk@ci.camden.nj.us](mailto:clerk@ci.camden.nj.us) Website: [www.ci.camden.nj.us](http://www.ci.camden.nj.us)

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Luis Pastoriza, R.M.C.  
Municipal Clerk

Elesha Johnson, R.M.C.  
Deputy Municipal Clerk

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## NOTICE TO ADDRESSED PROPERTY OWNER/OBJECTOR

Regarding Camden City Council's Adoption of  
"Resolution Approving the Lanning Square Area  
In Need of Redevelopment Study"

Sent Via First Class Mail

July 17, 2008

Dear Property Owner/Objector:

The records of the City Council of the City of Camden indicate you either: (1) have recently filed a written objection concerning the determination that the Lanning Square Area is an area in need of redevelopment; or (2) are the owner of a property within the Lanning Square Area that will be included in the area designated for redevelopment and, therefore, immediately affected by the aforementioned determination.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6b(5), you are hereby served notice that the City Council of the City of Camden approved, at its July 8, 2008 regular meeting, City Council's Resolution No. MC-08:\_\_\_, "Resolution Approving the Lanning Square Area In Need of Redevelopment Study". A copy of the above resolution is attached to this letter and may also be inspected at, or requested from, the City of Camden Municipal Clerk's Office, Room 105, City Hall, P.O. Box 95120, Camden, NJ 08101-5120.

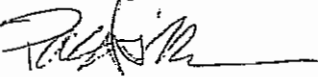
**NOTE:** Under N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6b(5), the determination that the Lanning Square Area is an area in need of redevelopment, which is contained within the "Resolution Approving the Lanning Square Area In Need of Redevelopment Study," if supported by substantial evidence and, if required, approved by the Commissioner of the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, **SHALL BE BINDING AND CONCLUSIVE UPON ALL PERSONS AFFECTED BY THE DETERMINATION.** Such affected "persons" would include you as a property owner within the Lanning Square Redevelopment Area.

Upon and after the approval of the "Resolution Approving the Lanning Square Area In Need of Redevelopment Study," the area in need of redevelopment determination contained in the Resolution operates as a finding of public purpose and, pursuant to State law, authorizes the City of Camden and the Camden Redevelopment Agency, their respective agents and instrumentalities, to affect and/or acquire your property against your will.

In turn, you, as a property owner within the Lanning Square Redevelopment Area, have certain rights under State law to, within **45 DAYS AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE AFOREMENTIONED RESOLUTION**, apply to the State of New Jersey Superior Court in order to preserve your legal rights with regard to your property. The Superior Court may grant further review of the City's determination in a court proceeding and may make an appropriate order in your matter. Your failure to timely challenge the City's determination and related actions may restrict your ability to challenge them in a future court proceeding.

**YOU MAY WISH TO CONSULT AN ATTORNEY TO PROPERLY ADVISE YOU REGARDING THE CONTENTS OF THIS NOTICE.**

Sincerely,



Luis Pastoriza  
Municipal Clerk

c: Edward Williams, Assistant Director, Development & Planning  
Lewis Wilson, City Attorney

MAR:dh  
07-08-08

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE LANNING SQUARE AREA  
IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT STUDY

WHEREAS, by Resolution adopted on January 22, 2008, the City Council of the City of Camden ("City Council"), pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6(a), assigned to the Planning Board of the City of Camden ("Planning Board") the task of undertaking a preliminary investigation and hearing regarding whether the Lanning Square Study Area is an area in need of redevelopment in accordance with the procedures and criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et. seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board caused to be prepared a report dated May 2008 entitled, "Lanning Square a Study to Determine the Need for Redevelopment" ("Report") by Edward Williams, AICP/PP of the City of Camden Department of Development & Planning which reviewed 49 blocks (inclusive of Tax Block 184 which has been consolidated into Tax Block 185 on the Official Tax Map of the City of Camden) that contain 1360 properties in the study area ("Area"), a map showing the designated blocks is attached hereto as Exhibit A. (ON FILE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE). The Area is also described and delineated as being within Census Tract 6003. The full Report is incorporated herein by reference thereto and is available for review and inspection in the Office of the Camden City Municipal Clerk, Room 105, City Hall, Camden, NJ; and

WHEREAS, consistent with the requirements for notice contained in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6(b)(3), the Planning Board specified May 29, 2008 as the date for, and gave notice of, a public hearing for the purpose of hearing persons who were interested in or would be affected by a determination that the delineated Area is a redevelopment area; and

WHEREAS, at the hearing, the Planning Board received and considered all verbal and written comments regarding the determination; and

WHEREAS, at that hearing, the Planning Board also received and considered evidence set forth below in support of the determination that the Area meets the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 as an area in need of redevelopment; and

(1) Consistent with the statutory criteria described in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5(b), by reason of the vacancy evidencing discontinuance of the use of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such buildings; or the same allowed to deteriorate as to be untenable as evidenced in a portion of the Area particularly described in the Report, the Area is an area in need of redevelopment.

(2) Consistent with the statutory criteria described in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 (c), substantial ownership of property in the Study Area by government or redevelopment agencies or entities evidences the determination of the need for redevelopment.

(3) Consistent with the statutory criteria described in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 (d), on Blocks particularly described in the Report there are properties with buildings or improvements which by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community.

(4) Consistent with the statutory criteria described in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 (g), the Study Area has been designated as a New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone under P.L. 1983, C.303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) the adoption by the municipality and approval of the New Jersey Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient evidence for the determination that

the area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6;  
and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of lands, buildings or improvements in the redevelopment area which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare is necessary for the effective redevelopment of the entire Study Area. Their inclusion is necessary to reverse the long term trend of blight and its spread; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board, by Resolution duly adopted on June 12, 2008 attached hereto as Exhibit B (ON FILE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE), recommended to the City Council that the Area be determined an area in need of redevelopment and rehabilitation; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Camden hereby accepts the study's determination that the Lanning Square Study Area is an area in need of redevelopment and rehabilitation.

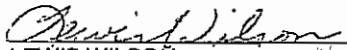
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Camden hereby approves the Lanning Square Area in Need of Redevelopment Study.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27BBB-23, a true copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the Chief Operating Officer, who shall have ten (10) days from the receipt thereof to approve or veto this Resolution. Notice of approval or veto shall be filed in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

On Motion Of: WILLIAM W. SPEARMAN

Dated: July 8, 2008

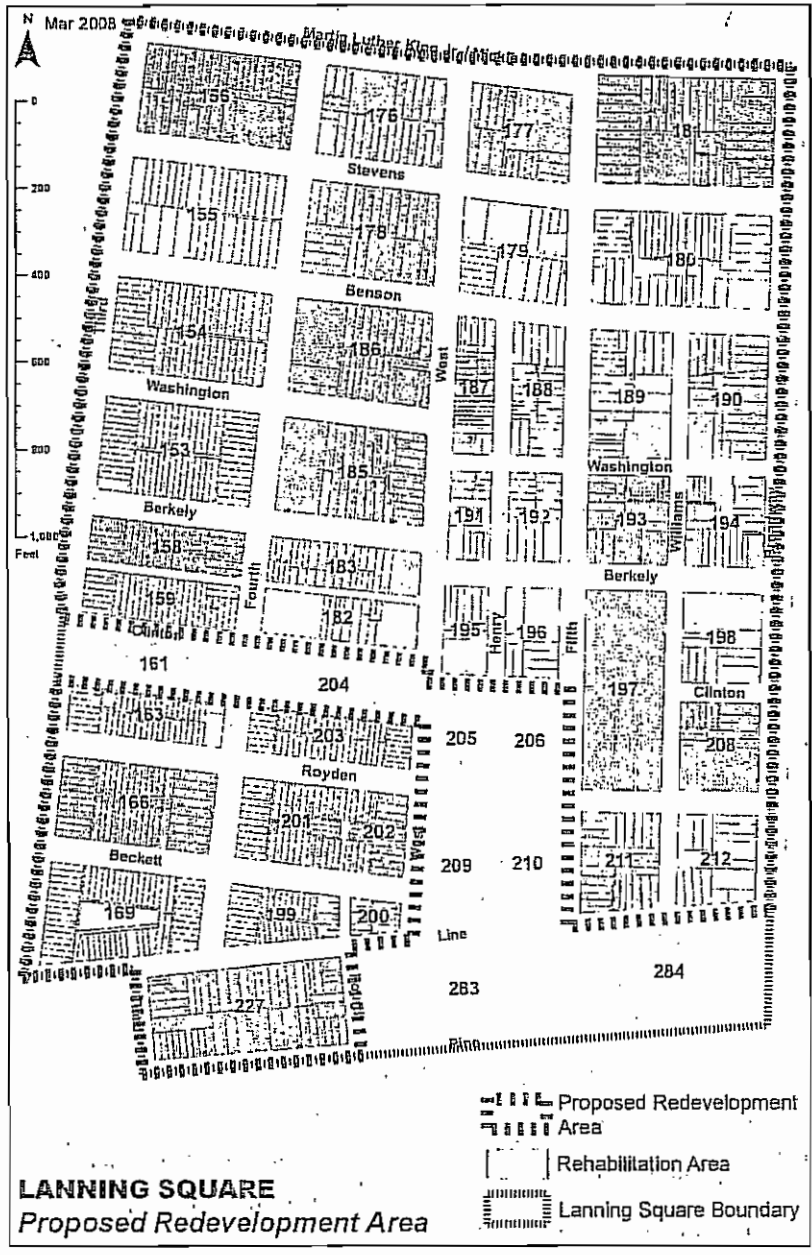
The above has been reviewed  
and approved as to form.

  
LEWIS WILSON  
City Attorney

  
DANA L. REDD  
Vice President, City Council

APPROVED: JULY 8, 2008

ATTEST:   
LUIS PASTORIZA  
Municipal Clerk



**Redevelopment Area blocks:**  
 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 159, 163, 166, 169, 176, 177, 178,  
 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191,  
 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203,  
 208, 211, 212, 227

**Rehabilitation Area blocks:**  
 161, 204, 205, 206, 209, 210, 283, 284

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING BOARD  
OF THE CITY OF CAMDEN  
RECOMMENDING TO CITY COUNCIL THAT THE  
LANNING SQUARE STUDY AREA  
CENSUS TRACT 6003

BE DETERMINED AN AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION

WHEREAS, by Resolution dated January 22, 2008, the Municipal Council for the City of Camden passed Resolution MC-08-30, assigning to the Planning Board of the City of Camden the task of conducting a determination of need study for the purpose of determining whether the Lanning Square Study Area is in need of redevelopment and if so determined to be in need of redevelopment to develop a redevelopment plan for the Lanning Square Study area, if the criteria have been met to determine that the area is in need of redevelopment in accordance with the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5; and

WHEREAS, the Lanning Square Study Area includes those parcels of land described and delineated on the official tax map of the City of Camden as those bounded by Martin Luther King Boulevard on the north, Pine Street on the south, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street on the west and Broadway on the east. The Lanning Square Study Area, which measures approximately 51 acres in size, is characterized by scattered concentrations of housing, the Broadway commercial corridor, several churches and social service agencies, as well as other local institutions, such as Lanning Square Elementary School, Broadway Community Center, and the home of famous poet Walt Whitman. The

quintessential downtown neighborhood, Lanning Square is just south of Camden's Central Business District and the area's transportation hub, the Walter Rand Transportation Center, just west of Cooper University Medical Center, and just east of Camden's waterfront entertainment district, home to the Susquehanna Bank Amphitheater, the battleship USS New Jersey, South Jersey Performing Arts Center and Camden County Marina, as well as South Jersey Port Corporation's shipping and warehousing operations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Camden Division of Planning has prepared the Study to Determine Need for Redevelopment for Lanning Square Study Area with assistance of the Camden Redevelopment Agency. The Division of Planning and Zoning Staff provided geographic information, specialist staff, and conducted a field investigation of land uses and property conditions within the Lanning Square Study Area. Property ownership information, tax maps and zoning information was obtained from the City of Camden public records and census data; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Planning and Zoning, through Edward C. Williams, PP, AICP, compiled said report which included a report on the present inventory uses with the Study Area. Said report dated May 2008, indicated the proposed findings and recommendations relevant to the determination of need for redevelopment of the Study Area; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board specified May 29, 2008, as the date for public hearing on said investigation and report for the purpose of hearing persons who were

interested in or would be affected by a determination that the delineated area is in need of redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, as part of the public notification process of said hearing date of May 29, 2008, a notice of said hearing was published in the Courier Post twice, the last notice being at least ten (10) days prior to said hearing; said newspaper being generally circulated in the County of Camden; and having been designated as the official newspaper of the Municipality; and a copy of said study and report was made available for public inspection and review at the office of the Municipal Clerk and the Office of the Planning Board at least ten (10) days prior to said hearing date. All property owners within the Study Area were provided notice of said hearing date at least 10 days in advance consistent with *Harrison Redevelopment Agency v. De Rose*; and

WHEREAS, members of the Planning Board of the City of Camden received a copy of said study and plan to review and formulate comments to same at least 10 days prior to the scheduled hearing date; and the Planning Board having marked as Exhibit 1 into evidence a signed and sealed copy of said study and plan dated May 2008, and said copy being maintained by the Planning Board Secretary of the City of Camden; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board after considering testimony presented as part of the investigative report dated May 2008, and the comments, both written<sup>1</sup> and verbal from the general public and all interested parties, hereby makes the following findings consistent with the Planning Board's function to conduct legislative hearings as opposed to quasi-judicial hearings regarding the determination of need study:

#### A. Municipal Rehabilitation and Economic Recovery Act (MRERA)

Camden is the only municipality in the State of New Jersey that is under the auspices of the Municipal Rehabilitation and Economic Recovery Act (MRERA) C: 52: 27: BBB et seq. The legislative findings in this Act describe the following key declarations:

- A continuing state of fiscal distress which endures despite the imposition of a series of measures authorized pursuant to law.
- Economically impoverished, those municipalities have a history of high crime rates, including arson, that has necessitated the maintenance of large police and fire departments, at enormous tax payer cost in municipalities without a sound tax base. 52: 27H-60
- The prior fifty years have witnessed the depopulation of those municipalities characterized by such problems.
- The unemployment rate in these municipalities is substantially higher than that of most municipalities.

#### B. Socio-Economic Profile

##### 1. Population.

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<sup>1</sup> All written comments were indexed by the Planning Board Secretary and forwarded to all Planning Board Members for review prior to a vote on the Study on June 12, 2008.

The 2000 Census of Population reports that the Lanning Square Census Tract is home to 3,989 residents as compared to 4,106 residents in 1990—a 2.8% decrease in the total area population.

## 2. Housing

The 2000 Census of Housing reports that the tract has a total of 1,235 occupied housing units as compared to 1,183 occupied units in 1990. Owner-occupied units account for 51% of this total (626 homes), while the 609 renter-occupied units make up the remaining 49%. In 1990, however, the ratio of owner-occupied units to rental units was 57% to 43% respectively. The current ownership rate in Lanning Square is significantly lower than the country's homeownership average of 70%, and the State's average of 65.5%. Housing units lacking complete kitchen facilities more than doubled from 51 in 1990 to 136 in 2000 (a 167% increase). Vacant housing units (neither for rent nor sale) accounted for 277 units as compared to 227 housing units in 1990. Despite the large number of demolitions within the tract based on the issuance of unsafe structure notices, the Census count of vacant units increased over these 10 years by 22%.

## 3. Education

The 2000 Census figures for educational attainment show that 48% of persons 25 years and older in the tract have a high school diploma or GED. Although this figure is similar to the City of Camden rate of 51%, it is drastically lower than the average for Camden County (80%) and the State (82%). Census data from 2000 show that 5.5% of persons 25 years and older (or 11% of those that graduated high school) hold a college degree. However, among persons with a least a Bachelor's Degree, there was a dramatic drop from the 1990 to 2000 Census. Persons 25 years and older with a college degree fell

from 176 in 1990 to 116 in 2000. This 34% decrease is vastly disproportionate to the total population decline of 2.8%.

#### **4. Per Capita Income**

According to the 2000 Census, the per capita income (in 1999 dollars) for the Lanning Square Census Tract is approximately \$8,828, as compared to \$9,815 for the City of Camden. This figure is exceptionally low when compared to the per capita incomes of Camden County (\$22,354), the State of New Jersey (\$27,006) and the Nation (\$21,587).

#### **5. Employment**

Jobs in Camden peaked in the 1950's and then declined steadily through 2000. This is primarily due to the shift from manufacturing to service sector jobs, as well the inability to adjust to several economic recessions that occurred over this period. In fact, manufacturing jobs fell from 12,000 positions to just under 5,300 positions over the last two decades. The Lanning Square area has reported just 976 jobs in mainly the health and education, retail trade, and arts and entertainment industries. Manufacturing jobs accounted for only 111 or 11% of the area's total jobs. The 2000 Census reports an unemployment rate for Lanning Square tract of 22.2% (persons 16 years or over and participating in the labor force). It is assumed that the underemployment rate (those persons who are no longer looking for work) could be dramatically higher. Camden's current unemployment rate is 8.8% which is twice the rate as compared to Camden County at 4.5%, and State of New Jersey at about 4.1%.

#### **6. Persons below Poverty Level**

As of the 2000 Census, there were approximately 1,690 residents in the Lanning Square tract living below the poverty level. This represents 43% of the area's population at the

time. This figure is substantially higher than Camden County (10.6%) and the State of New Jersey (8.4%).

## 7. Crime

Crime statistics report that there were 256 arrests in the Lanning Square Study Area which is approximately 6% of the city total of 4,150 arrests. This figure ranks in the top six among the city's 20 neighborhoods for arrests. Approximately 58% of all area arrests were drug based. A review of crime mapping data reveals that concentrations of arrests occurred along the Broadway Commercial corridor, in or near vacant buildings, and near vacant, unsecured lots throughout the Lanning Square area.

## C. Land Use

Lanning Square is a largely residential neighborhood (550 houses and apartments), with the additional mix of commercial (32), institutional (40), industrial (4), and mixed-use properties (26), as well as 19 garages. There are 671 buildings in the Lanning Square, which accounts for 49% of all 1360 parcels in the Study Area. Approximately 86% of all area structures and 42% of all properties in the Lanning Square Study Area are residential, most of which are clustered between Washington and Pine Streets, in the south end of the Study Area.

There are 689 various parcels of open space, that account for 51% of all properties in Lanning Square. Among this number of parcels are 466 vacant lots, accounting for 69% of all open spaces. Additionally, there are 98 side yards, 93 lots officially used for vehicle parking, 23 lots used for playgrounds and recreation, and 9 lots used for gardens.

#### D. Property Vacancy

Of the 1360 individual properties in the Lanning Square Study Area, approximately 50% have structures. Of these 671 improved properties, 111 buildings, or 17% of all structures are vacant. Although scattered, most vacant buildings are residential (87 properties; 13% of all structures) and can be found mostly between Washington and Pine Streets. However, 466 lots, or 69% of all open space or otherwise unimproved properties, area also vacant. These vacancies are mainly due to the demolition of unsafe vacant buildings and constitute a clear indication of blight.

There was testimony placed on the record by the Police Department that these vacant properties operate as a magnet for criminal activity in the Lanning Square Study Area. Drug activity and other crimes according to Captain Patrick Hall of the City of Camden Police Department. Ralph Roberts, City Fire Marshall, testified that the vacant properties allow for fires to quickly endanger occupied structures. Both the Police and Fire Departments testified that these conditions in the Lanning Square Study Area jeopardize the health , safety and welfare of the Lanning Square residents.

#### E. Environmental Sites

According to New Jersey State Law (NJSA 58: 10B-23d) a brownfield is "any former or current commercial or industrial site that is currently vacant or underutilized and on which there has been, or there is suspected to have been, a discharge of a contaminant." Because Lanning Square has traditionally been home to a variety of

industrial uses, there are numerous contaminated sites which will require environmental remediation before redevelopment can occur.

While there are only two known contaminated sites in the Study Area as identified by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, it is reasonable to assume that most active and dormant industrial sites, as well as many large vacant lots could have contaminants present. Such properties will become the focus of environmental assessments and investigations, as they are suspected to be contaminated.

#### F. Property Ownership

Two-thirds of all Lanning Square Study Area's properties (916 parcels) are privately owned. Local, state and federal government, including the City of Camden, and Camden Redevelopment Agency, own 379 properties or 28%. Institutional and non-profit organization ownership, including schools, churches, health clinics and social service agencies' offices account for 65 properties, or 5% of the total 1360 parcels.

Closer examination of the property ownership information reveals that of the 981 non-government properties, 2/3 have Camden-based owners. Of the remaining 341 private, institutional, or non-profit properties, most (273) are owned by those who live nearby in New Jersey or Pennsylvania. 68 parcels, or 5% of the 1360 total properties, have owners that reside outside of the two states—mostly from Florida, California, and New York.

#### G. Property Conditions

Of the 671 buildings (including 19 garages) in the Lanning Square Study Area, 50% are considered to be in **Good** condition. Twenty percent of these 335 properties are non-residential land uses. 222 properties were observed to be in **Fair** condition, accounting for 1/3 of all buildings in the Study Area and the majority of mixed-use and commercial properties. 114 buildings in Lanning Square were observed to be in substandard or deteriorated condition and thus have been classified as **Poor**, accounting for 17% of built properties. The vast majority of **Poor** properties are residential; however, nearly 80% of these are also vacant.

## **DETERMINATION**

The Study Area contains a considerable number of vacant lots (466) and buildings (111) or approximately 43% of the total number of parcels. The existence of these conditions clearly constitutes a significant hazard to the public health, safety, and morals of the community. Moreover property values are severely impacted by this preponderance of vacant buildings and land. Vacant lots throughout the Study Area often serve as the depository for trash, abandoned vehicles, drug paraphernalia and are extremely vulnerable to environmental contamination and other illegal activities. A

Neighborhood Plan for the Lanning Square West neighborhood from 1991 documents a number of vacant lots, many of which still remains so after nearly 18 years. A concentration of vacant buildings exist on Tax Block 185 located between Washington and Berkley Street (North/South) and 4<sup>th</sup> and West (East/West) as well as Tax Block 166 located between Royden and Beckett Streets and between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets.

A review of police crime statistics report that the existence of vacant buildings serve as a major impediment to the public by driving the drug trade throughout the city's neighborhoods. In fact, police statistics show that there approximately 256 arrests in Lanning Square (Census Tract 6003) with over 63% of reported crimes (Drugs, Arson, and Motor Vehicle Theft) associated with vacant buildings and vacant lots. A closer examination of the total calls for service from Jan 2006 to December 31, 2007, reveals that there were concentrations of police call activity on or near vacant lots and buildings. In addition, review of fire calls for the past two years in the Lanning Square Census Tract (6003) indicates that a 20% increase from 401 alarms with 60 fires of all types in 2006 to 498 calls with 71 fires of all types in 2007.

A review of demolition records between 2005 and 2007 reveal that there were approximately 27 properties demolished based on inspections conducted by certified building code officials, and the issuance of unsafe building citations by the City's Department of Code Enforcement. In addition, complaints from residents at four community meetings within the Study Area during 2007 cite the problem with the long term existence of these public nuisances. The existence of these conditions further exacerbate the city's inability to market sites for privately sponsored development, and contribute to the Study Area's increasing presence of deleterious land uses and progressive property deterioration.

IN addition to being part of the NJ-Camden Urban Enterprise Zone (criterion G), which addresses widespread property decline and disinvestments, the property conditions and dispositions documented in this study strongly indicate this Lanning Square Study Area contains numerous tax blocks that are in need of redevelopment, particularly by

meeting the following additional criteria from the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

**ABANDONMENT OF BUILDINGS PREVIOUSLY USED FOR COMMERCIAL, MANUFACTURING OR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES, OR THE SAME ALLOWED TO DETERIORATE AND BECOME UNTENABLE.**

The land use and building conditions survey depicting the number and pattern of building vacancies indicate that there are numerous commercial and industrial buildings in the Study area that are vacant, and have remained so for a number of years. The evidence of these conditions exist on Tax Blocks 189, 190, and 211. A search of building and zoning permit files reveal little rehabilitation and/or legal occupancy activity. An observation of exterior building conditions reveal that these structures may be considered "untenable" based on the unlikelihood of occupancy as a result of existing conditions.

Further, there are two known Brownfield sites located in the Study Area on unimproved vacant land. The evidence of these properties exist on Tax Block and Lot 194/51— Jonesies Welding Site. This site was the subject of a preliminary assessment and site investigation (Case No. #95-10-26-1441-44). It is well documented that contaminated land parcels and improvements (buildings) are difficult to convert to reuse possibilities without significant expenditure of private and public funds available to conduct preliminary site investigation, site assessment, remediation investigations, and the implementation of work plans to prepare these land parcels and buildings for physical development suitable for residential institutional and commercial end uses.

Additionally, an examination of commercial activity based on a review of mercantile license files from the Department of Code Enforcement indicate that there were no licenses issued to the owner or operators over the last seven years.

The continued absence of occupancy coupled with lack of evidence documenting rehabilitation/stabilization activities are clear indications of a "benign-neglect" effect which is likely to further the deterioration of unsafe and substandard building conditions, as well as promote vandalism, arson, and other unlawful activities. The effect of these factors will eventually result in the demolition of such properties. It is important to note that the continued existence of these deteriorated building conditions will create unsafe and unhealthy environments, endangering the public health and lowering property values and the occupied residential, commercial and institutional properties nearby. The combination of these factors provide a "blighting" influence greatly affecting surrounding occupied properties.

**LAND THAT IS OWNED BY THE MUNICIPALITY, THE COUNTY, THE LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITY, REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OR REDEVELOPMENT ENTITY, OR UNIMPROVED VACANT LAND.**

The Study area has approximately 249 properties owned by the City of Camden and 121 properties owned by Camden Redevelopment Agency, respectively. 240 of the city properties have been owned by the City of Camden for a period of ten years prior to the adoption of the resolution of January 22, 2008 and March 6, 2008 respectively. The evidence that these conditions exists on Tax Blocks 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 159, 163,

166, 169, 177, 179, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, and 203.

Approximately 159 city properties were acquired through foreclosure, and 40 properties through deed transfers (deed in lieu of foreclosure). The existence of long term publicly owned properties within the Study Area is indicative of the City's inability to lure and sustain suitable private and/or non-profit development opportunities. The acquisition of these properties through foreclosure and deed transfers is clear indication that establishes the failure of the prior property owner's ability to pay the real estate taxes and associated property costs. It is important to note that even under favorable market conditions at the regional or national level, there is evidence that the private real estate market lacks sufficient instrumentality (or means) to develop publicly held properties in Lanning Square. Most private, not for profit, and non-profit developers require large amounts of public subsidy in many forms—often exceeding the amount of private capital that can be invested for large scale, contiguous development. A review of city property records indicate that there were only 10 offers by the public requesting the sale of public properties. These requests were for the purchase of side lots near or adjacent to occupied residential properties.

A review of infrastructure improvement needs from the city's Division of Capital Improvements indicates that there is an urgent need to replace infrastructure (water and sewer lines, as well as road resurfacing) throughout the Study Area. Substandard infrastructure is often due to the lack of physical development activities, but is also an impediment to private market development occurring in the first place.

Furthermore, a review of the Flood Insurance Rate Map shows that the western portion of the Study Area along 4<sup>th</sup> Street between MLK Boulevard and Pine Street is located in

an AE (Flood Zone Hazard Area). This designation mandates the purchase of flood zone hazard insurance because of existing soil conditions, a high groundwater table, and the probability of silts, and clay (with exceptions). These factors contribute to an increased burden of annual housing costs to existing owner-occupants, increased construction costs for developers with finite capital equity, and a limited ability to the city to provide federal funding (CDBG and HOME) for housing rehabilitation and repair programs.

**EVIDENCE OF DELAPIDATION, OBSOLESCENCE, DELETERIOUS LAND USES DETRIMENTAL TO THE WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY.**

Evidence of conditions expressed in NJSA 40A: 12A exists on Tax Blocks 176, 180, 181, 208, 212, and 227.

It is important to note that surface parking lots as a land use represent an obsolete layout and are often excessive in land coverage. Surface parking lots in downtown locations are limited in function and are normally considered as interim land uses, serving as a precursor to economic development activities. The majority of Tax Block 176 is currently a surface commercial parking lot that has approximately 250 feet of frontage on Martin Luther King Boulevard. The abundance of vacant lots adjacent to Tax Block 176, coupled with minimal occupied units facing the parking lot do not provide adequate physical and psychological deterrents to criminal activity—often referred to as "eyes on the street." The church occupying the southwestern parcel of the block has removed all windows from the property for security reasons; however, this

further exacerbates the lack of "eyes on the street," inviting potentially unlawful activities to go unchecked on and around this expansive and unsecured parking lot. Tax Blocks 180, 181, 208, and 212 represent commercial retail and commercial/residential (mixed use) establishments. The current building layout for these retail establishments do not contribute to good civic design and balanced physical planning arrangement in a compact development form. Most of these structures were built prior to 1930, well before the City's first Zoning Ordinance in 1958. Individual commercial and mixed use properties on these blocks built in an attached fashion, with no access/egress through side yards and alleys. Additionally, there are no access paths from the rear of these properties, and most are cut off by fencing or adjacent attached buildings. When taken together, the arrangement of these commercial and mixed use properties as a whole is faulty. Access/egress points for these properties are restricted to the front entrance only, thus impacting public safety with regard to fire or other emergency situations.

The blockage of a major thoroughfare in the City of Camden (Broadway) by delivery trucks and other vehicles for these commercial businesses prevents fire apparatus from accessing the area and has an overall negative impact on the response time for all emergency vehicles to the Lanning Square Area. This directly jeopardizes the health, safety, and welfare of the residents and businesses of this community.

Furthermore, loading activities for these commercial and mixed use establishments occur frequently and are limited to front entrances on Broadway, causing traffic congestion. Because there are no reserved spaces or areas for loading activities,

deliveries are conducted on-street and trucks are often double parked in front of already parked cars. Poor vehicular traffic and pedestrian circulation is common along these blocks and is particularly severe during peak morning and afternoon commute hours as a result of traffic queuing on Broadway between Martin Luther King Boulevard and Benson Street. This queuing effect caused by on-street loading and delivery, which is itself a product of the faulty arrangement of commercial/mixed use properties on these blocks, severely impacts public safety, putting both pedestrians and drivers in jeopardy, which has an overall negative impact on the health, safety and welfare of Lanning Square residents.

## FINDINGS

The findings of this investigation clearly indicated that Lanning Square qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment. Criteria B, C, D, and G of the NJSA 40A: 12A have been met. Specific evidence of blight identified in the Study Area and thus establishing grounds for this determination include:

- Dilapidation and severe under-investment in numerous properties
- Substantial inventory and unproductive and undesirable government owned parcels
- Preponderance of unsecured vacant properties and several brownfields in need of remediation
- The reinforcing aspects of the above conditions that cause a sustained, downward trend in physical, social and economic quality of life, leading to greater disinvestment in the neighborhood and its residents.

It is important to note that the continuation of these conditions will cause a spread of the blighting effect—reducing property values and increasing the prevalence of adverse socioeconomic conditions in Lanning Square and the surrounding neighborhoods. Although the LRHL does not require that all land parcels in the Study Area be categorized as in need of redevelopment, it is important to note that based on the broad identification of distress in blight that exist within the Study Area, their inclusion in the redevelopment area is necessary to reverse the long term trend of blight and its spread.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Planning Board of the City of Camden that the Lanning Square Study Area (Census Tract 6003) be determined an Area in Need of Redevelopment pursuant to the criteria set forth in Sections (B), (C), (D), and (G) of NJSA 40A: 12A-5 et seq.; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Planning Board of the City of Camden that as part of its recommendation to City Council that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A: 12A-1 et seq., the following Blocks be determined an area in need of rehabilitation: Blocks 161, 204, 205, 206, 209, 210, 283 and 284. Based upon said recommended designation of rehabilitation said blocks are not subject to Eminent Domain proceedings through this Study; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board's findings and the Study dated May 2008 are hereby referred to City Council for consideration with this Board's recommendation

for approval as an area in need of redevelopment and rehabilitation. The Planning Board Secretary is hereby directed to forward to Council a copy of the Study marked Exhibit 1 along with a copy of said resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52: 27BBB-23 a true copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to the Chief Operating Officer who shall have ten (10) days from receipt thereof to approve or veto this resolution. Notice of approval or veto shall be filed in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Those in Favor  
Abstaining

6

Those Opposed

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Those

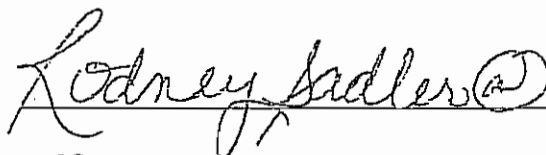
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The undersigned Secretary and Chairman of the Planning Board hereby certify that the above is a true copy of a resolution memorialized and adopted by said board on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of June 2008.

Planning

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Angela Miller, Secretary City of Camden

Board

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rodney Badler

Planning

Rodney Sadler, Chairman City of Camden  
Board