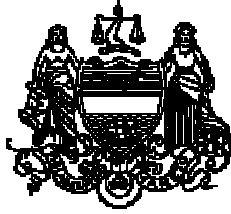


Blight Certification  
For the Area Generally Bounded by  
Louden Street, Marshall Street, Roosevelt Boulevard and 11<sup>th</sup> Street

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**Philadelphia City Planning Commission**  
**May 2002**



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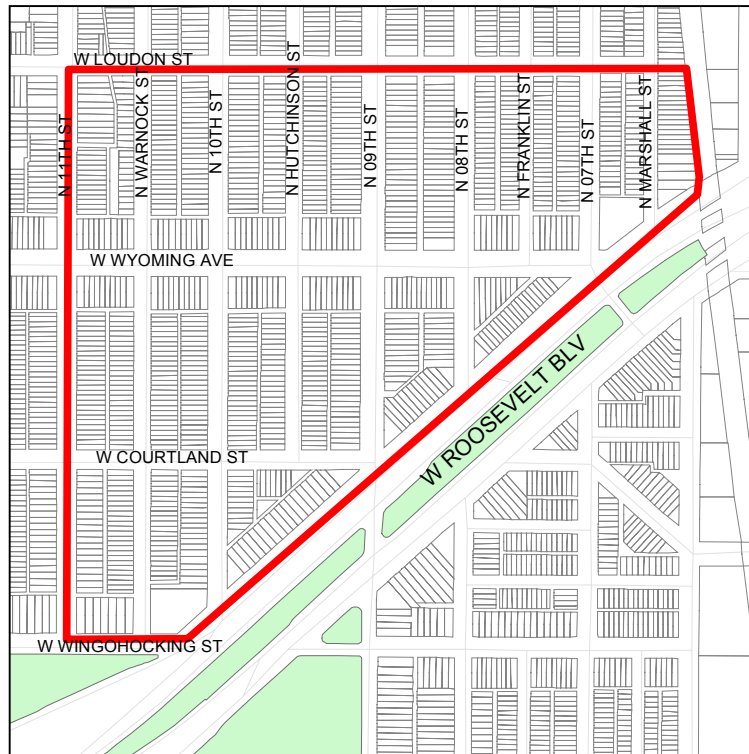
**Blight Certification  
For the Area Generally Bounded by  
Louden Street, Marshall Street, Roosevelt Boulevard and 11<sup>th</sup> Street**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Redevelopment Authority has asked the Philadelphia Planning Commission to determine if conditions are present that would warrant a certification of blight for the area bounded by Louden Street on the north, the railroad right-of-way on the east, Roosevelt Boulevard & Wingohocking Street on the south and 11<sup>th</sup> Street on the west. This area is in the southern part of the Logan section of Northwest Philadelphia.

In the 1980's it had become evident that Logan was a community in crisis. In a 35-acre section of the community, houses were developing cracks and the homes were shifting, leaning and sinking. This was happening in a 15-block area south of Louden Street and east of 11<sup>th</sup> Street. The housing was suffering from subsidence and related structural problems. In 1986 the City commissioned a geotechnical study by Lippincott Engineering Associates (LEA) to determine the cause and extent of the problem. LEA determined that many of the houses were built on 40 feet of fill consisting primarily of ash and cinder, without proper anchoring of the structures. This fill was placed in the area around 1910 and the homes were constructed by 1920.

Plans were prepared for relocation and demolition in the affected area. The Logan Assistance Corporation (LAC), a non-profit corporation whose board is composed of members representing government, the community and businesses was established to relocate owners and renters and purchase the affected properties. The City designated responsibility for demolition with the Department of Licenses & Inspections. The City's Office of Housing & Community Development currently supports the multi-year assistance program to Logan residents whose houses were sinking. The program is administered by LAC, using State and Federal grants combined with a \$5 million section 108 CDBG loan. The City has spent over \$33



Blight Certification boundary is shown in red.

million to purchase and demolish 933 houses and relocate the occupants. Since 1994, redevelopment options have been studied by the Planning Commission and its consultant, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, along with elected officials and the community. Conceptual redevelopment plans are discussed in a companion document entitled, Logan Redevelopment Area Plan, also approved by the Planning Commission in May 2002.

An initial step in the redevelopment process is to certify the area as blighted. This report presents an evaluation of blight within the area bounded by Louden Street, the railroad right-of-way, Roosevelt Boulevard & Wingohocking Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street.



## II. CRITERIA

Seven criteria were reviewed to determine whether or not blight exists in the study area. The criteria are set forth in Pennsylvania Redevelopment Law, which stipulates that only one of the criteria must be met in order for an area to be deemed blighted. The law also states that blighted conditions need not be evident throughout the area under study. The fact that individual

properties are free from blight does not make the finding of blight arbitrary, according to the law, because comprehensive planning requires that areas be considered in their entirety and not in their unservable parts.

This report cites specific examples of the conditions listed in two of the criteria. Blight does exist in the study area.

Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law established the following criteria for evaluating blight in a particular area:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions
2. Inadequate planning
3. Excessive land coverage
4. Lack of proper light, air and open space
5. Faulty street and lot layout
6. Defective design and arrangement of buildings
7. Economically or socially undesirable land use

## III. ANALYSIS

This section provides a detailed discussion of characteristics of blight evident in the area bounded by Louden Street on the north, the railroad right-of-way on the east, Roosevelt Boulevard & Wingohocking Street on the south and 11<sup>th</sup> Street on the west.

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, Inadequate or Overcrowded Conditions

Evidence of this criterion is presented in two categories: vacant structures and lots, and unsafe and inadequate conditions.

Most of the properties are vacant. Vacant lots and vacant structures are shown on the vacancy map. There are 996 vacant lots in the study area. Vacant land represents 97% of the total number of properties. There are 30 vacant structures remaining to be demolished. Of these 8 are occupied buildings, including 3 businesses and 5 homes.

Unsafe and unsanitary conditions are documented through the observation of several trash strewn vacant lots where high grass and weeds have overtaken the parcels. Additionally, many of the remaining buildings are officially designated as “dangerous,” providing further evidence of unsafe conditions.



2. Economically or Socially Undesirable Land Use

There is substantial evidence of economically undesirable land use throughout the study area. Tax delinquency represents economically undesirable land use. When real estate taxes are not paid, the owners of properties are benefiting from municipal services without contributing to the



Unsafe and vacant buildings on Hutchinson Street.

revenue base that makes those services possible. Within this certification area the City is directly owed \$497,947 for 217 tax delinquent properties, representing 21% of all separately-titled properties.

IV. CONCLUSION

The existing conditions in the area bounded by Loudon Street on the north, the railroad right-of-way on the east, Roosevelt Boulevard & Wingohocking Street on the

south, and 11<sup>th</sup> Street on the west exhibit two (2) of the criteria necessary for a finding of blight under Pennsylvania Redevelopment Law. Those criteria are:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or over crowded conditions.
2. Economically or socially undesirable land use.

The preceding analysis has demonstrated that these two (2) criteria are present and the area is eligible for certification as blighted.

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## RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law, Act of May 24, 1945 (P.L. 991) as amended, authorizes the Philadelphia City Planning Commission to certify as blighted specific areas which may then in whole or in part, be made the subject of redevelopment proposals formulated by the Redevelopment Authority in accordance with said Act, and

WHEREAS, after substantial review and study, the City Planning Commission staff has presented a report concluding that the area bounded by Louden Street, the railroad right-of-way, Roosevelt Boulevard and Wingohocking Street, and 11<sup>th</sup> Street as exhibiting characteristics of blight under terms of said Act, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission concurs with the findings and conclusions set forth in said staff report,

NOW THEREFORE, on this 22nd day of May 2002, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission hereby finds, based upon its staff report dated May 2002 that the



area bounded by Louden Street on the north, the railroad right-of-way on the east, Roosevelt Boulevard & Wingohocking Street on the south, and 11<sup>th</sup> Street on the west, exhibits the following characteristics of blight as established by Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions, and
2. Economically or socially undesirable land use,

and hereby certifies the above described area as blighted under the terms and provisions of the said Act.

Unsafe, unsanitary trash-strewn vacant lots along Hutchinson St.