

Residents, elected officials, board members, volunteers, family, and friends. We gather today for our annual reorganization of the boroughs governing body. As we close out 2025, we reflect on our recent accomplishments and prepare to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the borough.

Congratulations to Councilman Smith on your re-election and to Councilman McConville on your election to the Governing body. The opportunity to serve your fellow residents as a Council member is a great honor. I wish you great success during your term.

It's with deep gratitude that we thank Councilwoman Mott for her two terms on the Council. Over her tenure, she chaired both the Public Works and the Health, Welfare and Environment Committees. Over her tenure, the borough experienced a transformation in the

Public Works Department. The borough was also the recipient of millions of dollars in state and county grants. Thank you Councilwoman Mott for your service and best wishes for the future.

Chief Financial Officer Glenn Cullen and the Finance Committee introduced, and the Council adopted a budget that continued to put residents first and kept municipal property taxes in check. The borough's tax base increased nearly \$30 million dollars over two years. South Plainfield continues to enjoy one of the lowest tax rates in Middlesex County with a focus on balancing capital investment against a responsible debt burden. Thank you to our Council members, Department Heads and borough employees alike whose steadfast dedication to fiscal responsibility ensures that we will achieve the most benefit for each tax dollar received. All South Plainfield's taxpayers

appreciate your continued focus on fiscal responsibility.

The borough continued to invest in projects to improve many borough facilities financed in part by a mixture of Federal, State and County grants. Five miles of borough roads were resurfaced along with various roadway improvements. The borough received a NJDOT Local Aid Infrastructure grant for \$1,000,000 to partially fund Improvements to Oak Tree Avenue. This project also included roadway improvements to Diana, O’Laughlin, Babes, and Bori Drives as well as Puha Road and Pierce Street. A NJDOT Municipal Aid Grant for \$414,747 partially funded improvements to South Plainfield Ave, Vail Court, Minford Ave, Ten Eyck Street and De Fillipo Drive. The boroughs annual road program completed the resurfacing on additional roads. The South Plainfield Police Fueling Station is nearly completed, thanks to a NJ Department of

Community Affairs grant of \$1,000,000. When completed, a Shared Services agreement with the Board of Education will enable the districts buses to refuel at the station, saving time and money. The Senior Center benefited from a NJ Department of Community Affairs Local Recreational Improvement Grant for \$91,000. Improvements included resurfacing the parking lot and upgrades to infrastructure to achieve ADA compliance. And finally, Borough Hall received a new roof and additional upgrades partially funded by a Department of Community Affairs Legislative Grant for \$500,000. These projects are possible due to the efforts and dedication of our Engineering and Public Works, Administration and Finance departments, the Borough Council, Senator Diegnan, and our local assembly representatives. Thank you all for your continued dedication and focus.

The Department of Public Works continued to support the borough and our residents in many key areas. The department completed 2,487 bulk pickups, consisting of over 755 tons of waste in addition to 543 senior resident pickups. These services are still extremely popular and valued by residents across the borough. The department ensured the borough buildings, grounds and parks were maintained in addition to boroughs fleet of nearly 100 vehicles. Additionally, popular programs and services such as the street sweeping program, borough compactor and leaf pickup programs were enhanced and maintained. Thank you to Superintendent Miller, and the entire department for your excellent work throughout the year.

Our Senior Center continues to experience growth in membership and programming with daily attendance reaching 124 residents, up 20%. Popular classes and activities such as Chair

Yoga, Healthy Bones, and Zumba continue to be hits with our seniors. Chair Pilates and Chair Zumba continue to exceed expectations. The center sponsored trips across the tri-state area and internationally. Our seniors visited areas ranging from Hamilton Manor, West Point and the 911 Museum to Mystic Connecticut to Ireland. Partnerships with Hackensack Meridian and Saint Peter's to Twin City Pharmacy resulted in many speaking engagements, health screenings, flu shots, and pharmacy chats. Vital programs such as the Senior Outreach, Congregate Meal Program and Meals on Wheels remained strong in 2025.

The South Plainfield Library continued to service the residents of the borough. Annual circulation numbers increased by 15,000 to 165,000 items borrowed. Over 1,000 programs were offered for children, teens, and adults with nearly 25,000 attending. The Summer Reading program remained strong with 1,032

children taking part and reading a total of 25,534 books. The Friends of the Library contracted with Museum Key so that patrons could continue to take advantage of the popular Museum Pass program. The passes and vouchers to a variety of institutions in the tri-state area allow patrons to either free or discounted admission simply by using their library card. In July, the library launched a redesigned website resulting in a more user-friendly experience, improved administrative tools and free cloud-based servers hosted by the NJ State Library.

The Municipal Clerk's office continues to provide essential services to our residents in a timely and organized fashion. The office utilized Accuscan as a pilot project to digitize all environmental files. The staff responded to over 1,233 Open Public Records Act requests, processed 1,209 pet licenses, prepared 383 resolutions, and issued over 1,490 various

licenses to residents and business. The borough continues to keep residents informed via important tools such as Nixle and Facebook, with my assistant Anne Daley complementing the effort of our OEM and Police Department. Thank you to our Clerk, Administration and Finance employees who ensured residents continued to have access to complete vital services throughout the year.

Our Public Celebrations and Cultural Arts Committees continued to provide town-wide popular events for all residents. They planned and executed a successful Labor Day Parade that continues to delight residents as one of the borough most cherished annual events. Trunk or Treat continues to be one of the committee's most popular events. Working with our First Responders, the Committee orchestrated the fifth annual Holiday Light Parade and Tree Lighting event. Thank you for your tremendous efforts throughout the year.

Throughout 2025, Councilman White worked with our Building Department and the business community to aid local business owners and attract new entities to town. The borough continued to attract new businesses of all sizes to town, from national chains to local operations. We welcomed Safe Splash Swim School, Crumbl, Popeyes and Shinjuku Station Revolving Sushi just to name a few. We see this trend continuing in 2026 with T-Mobile and Sips and Souls scheduled to open soon. We also offer a sincere thank you to our Zoning and Planning Board members for your countless volunteer hours and your continued dedication to serving our community.

Public Safety was a key focal point for 2025. The July 14th flash flooding resulted in widespread roadway closures and nearly 50 rescues of stranded motorists. Police, Fire, OEM, and DPW responded simultaneously and

continued operations well into the aftermath of the storm. While many residents experienced significant property damage, there were no fatalities, and no municipal vehicles were lost. The Borough rebounded quickly, with DPW working continually, demonstrating that operational readiness and coordination were already in place before the event occurred.

The Police Department continued to strengthen its operational foundation through modernization, strategic planning, and proactive community engagement.

Noteworthy progress was made towards the departments first Police Accreditation in more than 20 years. The department hired two full time dispatchers and four new police officers, implemented the New Jersey Police Licensing process, and expanded leadership training, including participation in the NJSACOP Command and Leadership Academy in partnership with the United States Military

Academy at West Point. Community engagement remained central to the departments mission. The department held the popular National Night Out celebration, partnering with several borough organizations, committees, and private businesses. The Juvenile Division played a vital role in youth services and community engagement. School Resource officers delivered the L.E.A.D program. The Junior Police Academy was a success and the inaugural Bike with Blue event promoted bicycle safety and positive community interaction.

Throughout 2025, OEM continued to play a pivotal role in coordinating the boroughs response to tragic events and natural disasters. The office continued to play a critical role in large events such as the Labor Day parade and town wide fairs. The office continues to support the popular Community Emergency Response

Team or CERT. These resident volunteers assist our first responders throughout the year.

Fire Prevention continued to meet the needs of borough business and residents throughout the year, completing over 3,100 inspections.

Serving the borough since 1907, the South Plainfield Fire Department continues to attract and retain volunteers while responding to 1,150 alarms and events throughout the year. Thank you, Chief Campbell, for your leadership. A special thank you to our volunteer firefighters for your dedication to the borough.

2025 was another strong year for the Recreation Department. Under the leadership of Director Yarus, the department experienced major updates, expanded offerings and exceptional youth programs and sports. The Community Pool had another successful year with 28,760 individual visits representing \$490,000 in revenue. The Department also

offered the Legends Day Camp. This comprehensive 10-week full day camp offered early drop-off, late pick-up, arts and crafts, sports, daily recreational swim, and access to swim lessons. Each week provided a full day of activity for over 130 campers, totaling over 1,293 individual registrations resulting in over \$370,000 in revenue. The recreation basketball program continued its success with over 400 children taking part. The annual Bunny Hop provided over 600 South Plainfield children and their families with a chance to hop down the bunny trail at the PAL and gather treats in a safe and fun format. Popular programs such as T-Ball, youth softball and STEM were held and supported by over 700 participants. The Summer Parks program, Safety Town, Stem and Sports Camps among others were held during the summer months and supported by over 1,000 participants. Pickleball continues to be a hit. The department welcomed two new full time recreation staff to support the increasing

activity. Thank you, Director Yarus, Councilwoman Faustini, and the South Plainfield Recreation Commission for all your hard work and dedication throughout the year.

Efforts continued to streamline the operation of the recycling center, including improved signage throughout the facility and hours of operation. The Environmental Committee and Green Team once again achieved their Sustainable Jersey certification at the bronze level. Popular events such as the Annual Paper Shred Event were held with assistance from a Middlesex County grant. The annual Spring and Fall Town Clean Up events attracted over 300 participants who collected over 1.4 tons of litter. In August, the new curbside recycling program was rolled out. All residents were provided with a new 95-gallon recycling container. In October, the borough completed the Conversion to an In-House Drop Off Center. The purchase of 6 roll off containers will allow

the borough to transport materials to end markets providing a new revenue stream and ending a contracted cost. The Highland Woods Nature Reserve continues to remain open seven days a week, from dusk to dawn for the enjoyment of residents.

As we begin 2026, we remain committed and focused on providing essential services to our residents while keeping taxes and spending under control. This means adopting a municipal budget that adequately funds municipal operations while ensuring our residents get the maximum return for each municipal tax dollar spent.

Our Recreation Department will complete upgrades to our community pool kiddie area, new pickleball and basketball courts as well as a new pavilion. These improvements will be partially funded by a New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Recreational Improvement

Grant for \$600,000. We will examine opportunities to expand Putnam Park's playground to include a new 2- to 5-year-old section. In addition, we will look to further enhance and revitalize our parks and recreational programs and facilities.

Investments in our borough infrastructure will also remain a top priority for 2026. The Hadley Road Sewer Lining project will rehabilitate approximately 1,450 feet of sanitary sewer from Hadley Road to Hamilton Boulevard. With the assistance of a \$448,271 NJDOT Municipal Aid Grant, improvements will be made to Kennedy Road, Snyder Road and Pomponio Ave. Additional investments are planned for key equipment for our Department of Public Works.

Investments will continue to be made in our police officers, 911 communication operators and firefighters through additional personnel,

vehicles, training, supplies and technology. The Police Department will focus on maintaining a safe community for all South Plainfield residents through expanded education high visibility enforcement and data-driven strategies.

Our Boards and Agencies will be working to provide exciting activities throughout the new year. The Mayors Wellness program will look to revitalize the Fall Wellness Fair. On the Environmental front, EPA will continue work on the Bound Brook portion of their OU4 Remediation project.

South Plainfield in 2026 will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary. Throughout the year, all borough organizations will take part in events celebrating this historic milestone. From a re-enactment of the borough's first council meeting to the unveiling of Centennial Square at Putnam Park, to special programming from

our historical society to our library, residents, business owners, clubs, teams and organizations will have an opportunity to celebrate 100 years of South Plainfield history and the 250th anniversary of the United States. These celebrations will be memorialized in a time-capsule to be in a new vestibule in the South Plainfield Municipal Building.

Together, we have accomplished much this past year through the continued dedication of our Council members, employees, residents, and volunteers. Our efforts to ensure South Plainfield stays a desired destination for individuals, families and businesses alike continues to pay dividends. I look forward to celebrating the past 100 years of our history with you throughout the year. I continue to be optimistic about what lies ahead for South Plainfield and our ability to handle the challenges we may face. May God bless you

and protect you. Best wishes for a healthy, happy, and prosperous 2026.