



Legislation Text

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SPONSORED BY COUNCILMAN R. DANIEL LAVELLE

Resolution creating an Affordable Housing Task Force to assess the current and projected future landscape of housing affordability in the City of Pittsburgh, evaluate current programs and initiatives to produce new affordable units and preserve existing ones, and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council to create new programs and initiatives and/or expand existing ones to promote mixed-income development in neighborhoods across the city and ensure a vibrant mix of housing options for people of all income levels.

WHEREAS, the City is experiencing a severe shortage of both rental and for-sale housing that is affordable and available to very-low income (50% AMI) and extremely low-income (30% AMI) households; and

WHEREAS, the shortage of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing is causing tens of thousands of very-low income and extremely low-income households to pay over half of their income for housing costs. The severe cost burden faced by these households makes them vulnerable to health hazards, eviction/foreclosure, and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, much of Pittsburgh's existing affordable housing stock is both concentrated as well as oftentimes isolated in high-poverty/low-opportunity areas which have poor access to jobs, public transportation, and educational opportunities inadvertently perpetuating cycles of poverty; and

WHEREAS, affordable housing is one piece of a system of comprehensive housing policies and programs and must be considered as a part of, and integrated with, the whole in order to ensure feasibility and effectiveness;

WHEREAS, the City of Pittsburgh desires to significantly increase its population and grow its tax base in order to build a more resilient and vibrant city for decades to come; and

WHEREAS, while attracting new residents, the City of Pittsburgh also desires to retain existing residents and prevent potential displacement caused by rising housing costs; and

WHEREAS, before initiating a policy response to potential displacement, the City of Pittsburgh desires to study existing conditions, project future needs, evaluate current programs and initiatives, and study nationwide best practices in order to determine the appropriate mix of solutions; and

WHEREAS, the City of Pittsburgh desires to take a comprehensive approach to housing affordability in the context of, in some cases, rapid change to the city's housing market; and

WHEREAS, the City of Pittsburgh, in order to address housing needs holistically, desires to work closely with partners at the county, state, and federal levels to better coordinate affordable housing funding, programs, and initiatives to maximize opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in order to effectively achieve these goals the City of Pittsburgh will seek guidance and expertise from a diverse group of stakeholders inside and outside of government, creating an Affordable Housing Task Force which will make specific recommendations to the Mayor and City Council.

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Pittsburgh as follows:

Section 1. The Mayor shall appoint an Affordable Housing Task Force (Task Force), comprised of a minimum of nineteen (19) members, but more as necessary, as follows:

- two (2) members from Pittsburgh City Council;
- two (2) members from the Mayor's Office;
- two (2) members from the Department of City Planning;
- one (1) member from the Urban Redevelopment Authority;
- one (1) member from the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh;
- one (1) member from Allegheny County Economic Development;
- one (1) member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, or their designee;
- one (1) member of the Pennsylvania Senate, or their designee;
- one (1) member from the Pennsylvania Department of Economic and Community Development;
- one (1) member of the United States Congress, representing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or their designee;
- two (2) members from the construction or housing development industries;
- two (2) members from organized labor;
- two (2) members from organizations which produce and/or advocate for affordable housing.

All members of the Task Force shall be appointed by the Mayor. The Task Force shall publish a report by July 31, 2015 comprising its findings and recommendations regarding the existing landscape of affordable housing options and projected future needs, current programs and initiatives to create and preserve housing affordability, and recommended policy responses to ensure a vibrant mix of accessible housing options for all City of Pittsburgh residents.

Section 2. The specific tasks and deliverables of the Task Force shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a definition or definitions of 'affordable', as it relates to housing (rental and for-sale), which shall inform future policymaking;
- a housing study which includes current and projected future housing market conditions, an inventory of existing affordable housing, and a projected inventory of affordable housing through at least 2020;
- an analysis and evaluation of current policies, programs, and initiatives related to affordable housing production and/or preservation;
- recommendations for the creation of new policies, programs, or initiatives and/or the expansion of existing ones to increase the supply of affordable housing in the City of Pittsburgh commensurate with the current and projected future need.

Section 3. City Council, in partnership with the Mayor's Office and the Office of Management and Budget, shall make financial resources available to the Task Force for professional and technical services in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 should these resources become necessary in order for the Task Force to complete its work.

Section 4. The Task Force shall convene a series of televised public meetings throughout the community to receive

testimony about housing affordability and the needs and desires of residents and to share their findings.

Section 5. The Task Force shall present their findings and recommendations to City Council in a televised post-agenda meeting to be held no later than September 30, 2015.

Section 6. City Council, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, shall take action on the Task Force's recommendations no later than December 31, 2015.