



December 8th, 2014

Dear City Councilmembers:

Pittsburgh's real estate markets are surpassing national averages and home values are rising, yet the city still has approximately 35,000 distressed parcels, accounting for nearly 20% of all of our land.

While increased transactions and home values are one indicator of transition and stability, so is the presence and pervasiveness of blight. We cannot be successful as a city and region if we embrace one while continuing to disregard the other. *Code enforcement* is the single biggest way to revitalize our neighborhoods and create healthier communities, and while there have been dedicated, capable personnel for years within our city's enforcement divisions, for too long our city's code enforcement programs have long been under-resourced and under-supported.

We welcome new ideas and change in our City and within our city government is no exception. It is vital to continue to strive to streamline, update, and invest in systems in which our agencies will function better and become even more efficient.

We support the ideas brought forth in merging several city functions – Permits, Licenses, and Inspections - into one agency and elevating the Bureau of Building Inspection to its own full Department.

While this shift is meaningful and presents a significant opportunity to align and carry out City functions more effectively, the implementation itself will be critical. In making this change, we want to ensure that the transition is smooth, on both the City departments currently housing these functions as well as on the processes that our community groups, residents, businesses and neighbors currently utilize – clarity and transparency will be key.

In elevating BBI to its own Department, removing it from under the Department of Public Safety, we are hopeful that the impact on the force and authority of a building inspectors badge and the leadership and investment in our inspection and enforcement staff will continue to grow, as this significant step already demonstrates.

Community groups are heavily invested in our many unique neighborhoods and are the extension of the city's eyes and ears on-the-ground. We look forward to partnering with an enhanced agency to continue to provide for cleaner, safer neighborhoods with improved quality of life.

Thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration of this issue.

Ernie Hogan
Executive Director

cc: Mayor William Peduto
Maura Kennedy
Ray Gastil
Kevin Acklin

MEMBERS

Allegheny City Central Association
Allegheny Land Trust
Allegheny River Towns Enterprise Zone, Inc.
Bellevue Initiative for Growth and Revitalization
Bloomfield Development Corp.
Bloomfield-Garfield Corp.
Brookline Area Community Council
Carnegie CDC
Community Leaders United for Beechview
East Allegheny Community Council
East Liberty Concerned Citizens Corp.
East Liberty Development, Inc.
Economic Development South
Fineview Citizens Council
Friendship Development Associates
Garfield Jubilee Association
Hazelwood Initiative, Inc.
Highland Park CDC
Hill CDC
Hill District Consensus Group
Hill House EDC
Hilltop Alliance
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Lawrenceville Corp.
Lawrenceville United
Manchester Citizens Corp.
McKees-Rocks CDC
Mexican War Streets Society
Millvale Borough Development Corp.
Mt. Washington CDC
Northside Leadership Conference
Oakland Planning and Development Corporation
Operation Better Block
Penn Hills CDC
Perry Hilltop Citizens Council
Pittsburgh Downtown CDC
Pittsburgh Project
Polish Hill Civic Association
Ross Economic Development
South Side Community Council
South Side Local Development Company
South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association
Troy Hill Citizens, Inc.
Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh
Urban Innovations21
West Pittsburgh Partnership
Wilksburg CDC