

June 2019

Pittsburgh City Council
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

CC: Office of Management and Budget, Office of the Mayor

Dear Council Representative,

The City of Pittsburgh is home to a staggering **26,743** vacant parcels of land¹. Of the nearly **12,500** City-controlled parcels, a mere **2,500 (20%)** are maintained, many irregularly. This is a direct result of chronic underfunding that disproportionately affects our most vulnerable neighborhoods and communities. To begin addressing the scope of this problem, we are asking that the City **increase its vacant lot maintenance budget to \$2,000,000** in the 2020 Capital Budget.

Though the root cause of Pittsburgh's vacant land maintenance problem is that of industrial decline and population loss, the core of the solution is increasing resources and support for a basic public service. Only **\$450,000** is currently allocated for the maintenance of the three taxing bodies portfolio of land, far short of the estimated **\$6,200,000** needed for regular maintenance. This budget request seeks to incrementally address the challenges of the current funding mechanisms. If adopted, **\$2,000,000 would allow the city to regularly maintain 5,000 vacant parcels**. Over time, efficiencies and economies of scale would allow even more to be maintained.

Beneath the simple numbers of maintained versus unmaintained properties across the city are the very real impacts caused by this funding disparity in public investment. Overgrown vacant lots are more than a nuisance to neighbors, they create health and safety hazards, decrease adjacent property values, impact neighborhood cohesion and pride, and are disproportionately located in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods. The real impacts of this issue are felt at a residential-level, **affecting homeowners, business owners, and residents**, and are compounded by creating entire neighborhoods where basic maintenance needs are not being met.

The effects of unmaintained vacant land are well stated and researched. What is important now is to share the real concerns of residents and the consequences they and their communities bear as a result of public underfunding. **Please read their attached comments.**

¹ Pittsburgh Land Recycling Handbook (August 2016)

Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Pittsburgh, PA _____

Neighborhood: _____

Council District: _____

I am primarily concerned about unmaintained vacant lots because

This issue directly impacts me because

The effects vacant lots have on my community are

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Signature