

ED GAINY
MAYOR



JAMIL BEY
DIRECTOR

CITY OF PITTSBURGH
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

December 17, 2025

Honorable President and Members
City Council
City of Pittsburgh
510 City County Building
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

Re: Zoning Amendments – Council Bill 2025-1925

Dear President and Members:

Zoning legislation was introduced at City Council (Bill 2025-1925) to create and establish approval deadlines for all projects. City Council referred this legislation to Planning Commission for report and recommendation. The Planning Commission, at its meeting on December 16, 2025, made a negative recommendation on this legislation.

A copy of the Commission's report is also attached. The minutes of the hearing held on December 16, 2025, will be forwarded when they are accepted by Planning Commission. As per Zoning Code Section 922.05G, an amendment recommended for disapproval by the City Council shall require an affirmative vote of no fewer than seven (7) members.

As per Section 922.05.E (Hearing and Action by City Council), the City Council shall hold a public hearing on the text Amendment within one hundred twenty (120) days of the Planning Commission's action on the application, unless the applicant has agreed in writing or on the record to an extension of time. For your convenience, 120 days from December 16, 2025, is April 15, 2026.

Yours truly,

s/ Corey Layman

Corey Layman, AICP

Zoning Administrator

cc: Jamil Bey, Director
Andrew Dash, AICP, Deputy Director
Kyle Chintalapalli, Mayor's Office
Felicity Williams, Esq., Mayor's Office
Bobby Wilson, City Council
Theresa Kail-Smith, Councilmember District 2
File



**CITY OF PITTSBURGH, DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
PLANNING COMMISSION**

APPLICATION: Council Bill 2025-1925 Regarding Approval Deadlines
PROPERTY: City-wide
ZONING DISTRICT: Multiple zoning districts
PROPOSAL: Creating and establishing approval deadlines in the zoning code
DECISION DATE: December 16, 2025

DECISION:

The Planning Commission made a **negative** recommendation to City Council on the Zoning Code Text Amendment.

S/Lashawn Burton-Faulk
LASHAWN BURTON-FAULK, CHAIRPERSON

s/Jean Holland Dick
JEAN HOLLAND DICK, SECRETARY

Note: Decision issued with electronic signatures, with the Planning Commission review and approval.

LASHAWN BURTON-FAULK, CHAIRPERSON | RACHEL O'NEILL, VICE CHAIR

DINA BLACKWELL | JEAN HOLLAND DICK | STEVE MAZZA | MEL NGAMI

PETER QUINTANILLA | MONICA RUIZ | PHILLIP WU

412 Boulevard of the Allies | Suite 201

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT HEARING REPORT

ZONING: Council Bill 2025-1925 Text Amendment regarding Approval Deadlines
NEIGHBORHOODS: City-wide
ACTION REQUIRED: Report and Recommendation to City Council
DATE: December 16, 2025
SUBMITTED TO: The Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh
FROM: The Zoning Administrator

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. Council Bill 2025-1925 was sent to Planning Commission for Report and Recommendation on June 18, 2025. The legislation creates a new Section 922.01.E Approval Deadlines.
2. As per 922.05.D, Planning Commission has 90 days to make a recommendation to City Council, however City Council has introduced Resolution 2025-2197 to extend the deadline for final action to October 16, 2025.
3. The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on October 21, 2025 and it was continued until December 2nd, 2025 for time to collaborate on the legislation and report back to the Commission on this discussion. The Councilmember sponsoring the bill requested an extension on December 2nd for two weeks.
4. The legislation requires that the “body/planning agency” must review applications (excluding City Council); render its decision; and communicate it to the applicant, no later than 90 days following a specific starting point depending on the next meeting date or the 30th day after an application is deemed complete.
5. The legislation also requires:
 - a. A written decision be provided to the applicant “personally or mailed to him at his last known address” within 15 days of the decision.
 - b. If an application is not approved, the decision shall specify what is incorrect or missing and cite the relevant Code provisions.
 - c. If the deciding body does not make a decision and communicate it to the applicant, the application is approved, regardless of whether it complies with the Zoning Code.
6. Much of the text of this bill is taken word-for-word from Section 508 within Article 5 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). This part of the MPC applies only to Subdivision Plats. Articles 6 and 9 are the portions of the MPC that apply to Zoning. While Article 9 does establish timelines for Zoning Board and Conditional Use Application decisions, it does not establish this kind of approval deadline for all applications. Pittsburgh is exempted from the MPC as a Municipality of the Second Class, already has established timelines for ZBA and Conditional Use decisions, and this legislation would potentially conflict with those timelines.
7. The legislation requires a 90-day mandatory decision timeline, based on the following data:
 - d. The date that an application is deemed to be complete
 - e. The date of the “meeting that follows the deemed completion”
 - f. The date that the application is filed
 - g. 30 days from the date that the application has been filed

Presently, the City only regularly uses and tracks the date that the application is filed. The date that an application is deemed complete is an important and necessary date only in rare instances in determining whether an application is impacted by pending ordinance. Requiring this additional data to be tracked and implemented for every application will likely require the OneStop permitting

system to be modified. The ability to make those modifications is unstudied, and the associated cost is unknown.

8. The bill states that it applies to “all applications for approval (other than those governed by state or federal law, and public hearings conducted under Section 922.05.E of [the Zoning] Code), whether preliminary or final”, which amounts to approximately 3,000 applications annually.
9. The bill doesn’t differentiate between types of applications, which can range in scale from a fence or shed to large multi-story commercial development and institutional master plans, and does not clearly define the process for applications that aren’t decided at a regular meeting “of the body or the planning agency”, because they are simple by-right applications.
10. The bill is unclear regarding the relationship between this mandatory timing, and other notice and hearing periods established in the City Code relating to significant developments, including public notice and hearing requirements, and Development Activities Meeting requirements in areas with a Registered Community Organization.
11. In accordance with Section 922.05.F, the Planning Commission shall review Zoning Code text amendments based on the following criteria:

- h. The consistency of the proposal with adopted plans and policies of the City;
- i. The convenience and welfare of the public;
- j. The intent and purpose of the Zoning Code;
- k. Compatibility of the proposal with the zoning, uses and character of the neighborhood;
- l. The suitability of the subject property for the uses to which it has been restricted without
- m. the proposed zoning map amendment;
- n. The extent to which approval of the proposed zoning map amendment will detrimentally
- o. affect nearby property;
- p. The length of time the subject property has remained vacant as zoned;
- q. Impact of the proposed development on community facilities and services; and
- r. The recommendations of staff.

Not all of the criteria must be given equal consideration by the Planning Commission or City Council in reaching a decision.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

1. That the Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh makes a **negative recommendation** to City Council on Council Bill 2025-1925 Zoning Code Text Amendment proposal related to Approval Procedures.

SUBMITTED BY:

Corey Layman, Zoning Administrator