

ED GAINNEY
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 2025-1926

Dear President and Members:

Zoning legislation was introduced at City Council (Bill 2025-1926) to establish completeness check 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 2025-1926 Regarding Completeness Check
PROPERTY: City-wide
ZONING DISTRICT: Multiple zoning districts
PROPOSAL: Creating and establishing completeness check 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 2025-1926 Text Amendment regarding Application
Completeness
NEIGHBORHOODS: City-wide
ACTION REQUIRED: Report and Recommendation to City Council
DATE: December 16, 2025
TO: The Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh
FROM: The Zoning Administrator

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. Council Bill 2025-1926 was sent to Planning Commission for Report and Recommendation on June 18, 2025. The legislation amends Section 922.01.A General Requirements for All Procedures.
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 21st, 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 would require that the Zoning Administrator within 30 calendar days after application submission whether the application is complete in writing, and if not, identify any “defects or deficiencies”. If this does not occur, then the application is deemed complete.
5. When an application is resubmitted, the Zoning Administrator has 7 business days to “certify the application complete”. If not, the application is deemed complete. There is no process outlined if an application is still not complete.
6. The legislation defines “defect or deficiency” as “a material omission in the application, specifically, any document required by this Code to accompany the application.”
7. The legislation does not take into account the current completeness process and timelines which includes a PLI completeness check followed by a more integrated and iterative zoning review based on the type of application. By mandating a separate, front-loaded completeness determination, the proposed bill introduces an additional bureaucratic step and an arbitrary deadline that must be met before the substantive review can formally proceed as it does now.
8. The legislation does not differentiate between different application types. It imposes a blanket timeline on all application types, failing to account for the variation in complexity, required documentation, and public process.
9. Mandating a strict 30-day timeline with automatic approvals may force staff to prematurely approve or deny applications with unintended consequences. This could increase administrative burden, lead to confusion among applicants, and slow the overall permitting process. Conversely, proceeding with incomplete applications may expose the City to legal challenges.

10. The proposed formal "deemed completeness" process seeks to address a problem that does not appear to exist within the current zoning review framework. Based on the current zoning processes outlined in the zoning code and the lack of any formal complaints regarding delays related to completeness, there may not be a need to introduce a formal completeness process. It also adds a date-keeping and tracking element to when an application is "deemed complete". 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.
11. In accordance with Section 922.05.F, the Planning Commission shall review Zoning Code text amendments based on the following criteria:
 - a. The consistency of the proposal with adopted plans and policies of the City;
 - b. The convenience and welfare of the public;
 - c. The intent and purpose of the Zoning Code;
 - d. Compatibility of the proposal with the zoning, uses and character of the neighborhood;
 - e. The suitability of the subject property for the uses to which it has been restricted without
 - f. the proposed zoning map amendment;
 - g. The extent to which approval of the proposed zoning map amendment will detrimentally
 - h. affect nearby property;
 - i. The length of time the subject property has remained vacant as zoned;
 - j. Impact of the proposed development on community facilities and services; and
 - k. 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 2025-1926 Zoning Code Text Amendment proposal related to Application Completeness.

SUBMITTED BY:

Corey Layman, Zoning Administrator