Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title:	Resolution authorizing [and directing] the Pittsburgh City Controller to perform an audit of code violations that escalate to Magisterial District Court from point of origin to resolution, pursuant to the powers outlined in the Home Rule Charter.		
Sponsors:	Robert Charland, Theresa Kail-Smith, Anthony Coghill		
Indexes:	ASSESSMENT/STUDY		
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Attachments:	1. 2024-0016 GOLD_Plan_Report, 2. 2024-0016 KPB-Litter-Cost-Study		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
1/24/2024	2	Mayor	Signed by the Mayor	
1/23/2024	2	City Council	Passed Finally	Pass
1/17/2024	2	Standing Committees	AMENDED	Pass
1/17/2024	2	Standing Committees	Affirmatively Recommended as Amended	Pass
1/10/2024	1	City Council	Read and referred	

Resolution authorizing ~~and directing~~ the Pittsburgh City Controller to perform an audit of code violations that escalate to Magisterial District Court from point of origin to resolution, pursuant to the powers outlined in the Home Rule Charter.

WHEREAS, the preamble of the Pittsburgh City Code of Ordinances states that "a responsible city is one which expects aggressive action from its officials towards the achievement of dignified housing, useful employment, pure air and water, efficient transportation, excellent education, health, safety, recreation and culture, and the other conditions conducive to human growth"; and,

WHEREAS, yet code violations degrade the physical appearance of the City of Pittsburgh, reduces business and tax revenue, therefore inhibiting economic development, harm public health, and ultimately drives some Pittsburghers to move out of the city; and,

WHEREAS, there are more than 75 dedicated inspectors and supervisors across City Departments whose objective is to pursue code violations; and,

WHEREAS, the Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections (PLI) enforces the International Property Maintenance Code as adopted by the City of Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances Title 10 Chapter 1004 and also enforces the Zoning Code - Title Nine; and,

WHEREAS, code violations pursued by PLI include but are not limited to: Vacant Structures and land, Sidewalks and Driveways, Weeds, Deteriorated Fences and Retaining Walls, Junk Vehicles, Roofs and Drainage, Debris, Hedges, Parking Pads, and Upholstered Furniture Prohibited Outdoors; and,

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WHEREAS, the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) enforces violations in the right of away as outlined in the Pittsburgh City Code, Title IV: Public Places and Property; and,

WHEREAS, code violations pursued by DOMI include but are not limited to: blocked or closed off streets, sidewalks, or trails, dumpsters on streets or sidewalks, illegal curb cuts, and working without a permit; and,

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Works (DPW) enforces municipal waste and recycling standards outlined in Pittsburgh City Code Title VI: Chapter 619 and Pittsburgh City Code Title VI: Chapter 601.11; and,

WHEREAS, DPW has three dedicated Anti-Litter Inspectors and an Inspections Supervisor to follow up on more than 1,000 citizen 311 requests annually and work to eradicate the more than 800 known, recurring illegal dumpsites; and,

WHEREAS, from September 2022-August 2023 the City received more than 16,780 citizen 311 reports in just these four categories: weeds/debris (57%), refuse violations (17%), litter on public property (13%) and building maintenance (12%); and,

WHEREAS, when alerted to code violations, PLI, DOMI, and DPW inspectors follow the standard procedures of performing at least one, often multiple, inspections; and,

WHEREAS, if the violation is not abated by the owner, the inspector issues a criminal complaint which is heard in Magisterial District Courts; and,

WHEREAS, an audit by the City Controller to assess processes, outcomes, and fines for code violations for the purpose of informing City code updates by Pittsburgh City Council; and,

Now, therefore be it resolved by the Council of the City of Pittsburgh, as follows:

Section 1. AUDIT

A. The Pittsburgh City Controller is hereby authorized ~~and directed~~ to perform an audit to quantify the financial impact and labor obligation by inspectors from the Department of Public Works; Department of Permits, Licenses and Inspections; Department of Mobility & Infrastructure to enforce, file, and prosecute violations with Magisterial District Judges, including but not limited to:

1. International Property Maintenance Code, as authorized by Pittsburgh City Code Title X: Chapter 1004
2. Pittsburgh City Code Title VI: Chapter 619 - Municipal Waste and Recycling
3. Pittsburgh City Code Title VI: Chapter 601.11 - Littering and Dumping
4. Pittsburgh City Code Title VI: Chapter 609 - Weeds and grass

i. The audit of these violations shall include, if reasonable:

1. 311 citizen reports to the City of Pittsburgh for code violations specific to PLI, DOMI, and DPW
2. Lengths of time from first notice of violation to criminal complaint issuance to the scheduled court date
3. The number of court cases which are withdrawn by the inspector
4. City staff hours required to bring violations before local magistrates
5. Magisterial District Court case outcomes, divided by each magistrate in the City of Pittsburgh
6. Dollar amount of fines and number of hours of community restitution issued,

divided by each magistrate in the City of Pittsburgh
7. Ratio of owner-occupant defendants to rental property owners, Limited Liability Corporations, and Limited Partnerships and the corresponding rates of compliance
8. Age of defendants
9. 'Clean and Liens' routed to and performed by the Department of Public Works
10. Locations and/or defendants with most egregious and recurring violations

B. The scope of this audit shall be the calendar years 2021, 2022, and 2023, with attention noted to June 2023, when the Department of Public Works implemented the Computronix tracking system.

C. The City Controller shall present the findings of this audit to Pittsburgh City Council upon completion. It is the intent of City Council to use this audit to refresh City enforcement policies, further implement the Goals on Littering and Dumping Plan, and pursue a Quality of Life ticketing ordinance.