



Allegheny County Council

County of Allegheny
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Legislation Text

File #: 12940-24, **Version:** 1

Motion of the Council of Allegheny County encouraging local municipalities to adopt less restrictive zoning practices.

WHEREAS, final zoning authority in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania falls to the municipal level; and,

WHEREAS, in this context, exclusionary zoning refers to the use of zoning ordinances to exclude certain types of residential land uses from a given community; and,

WHEREAS, per publicly available purchase data aggregated by Realtor.com, the median cost for homes sold in Allegheny County has risen from \$199,995 in January 2021 to the present value of \$250,000; and,

WHEREAS, the median rent in the city of Pittsburgh has risen from \$1,250 in November 2021 to the present cost of \$1,495, as reported by real estate website Zumper; and,

WHEREAS, the January 2022 Housing Needs Assessment from the City of Pittsburgh projected that Pittsburgh will add over 9,700 households in the next 10-years; and,

WHEREAS, as of January 23, 2024, the Allegheny County homelessness dashboard shows that 718 people were staying in emergency shelters and at least 210 were unsheltered; and,

WHEREAS, the study, “The Effect of Density Zoning on Racial Segregation in U.S. Urban Areas,” by Rothwell and Massey found that exclusionary zoning practices are associated with higher housing costs and racial segregation; and,

WHEREAS, exclusionary zoning practices artificially limit the available uses of land, decreasing its desirability, and thus, market value; and,

WHEREAS, these decreased market values inevitably result in lower assessed values, limiting the resources that taxing bodies can provide, or causing the taxing bodies to raise millage to compensate; and,

WHEREAS, exclusionary zoning practices encourage horizontal sprawl, which necessitates increased motor vehicle usage, subsequently leading to increased air pollution and adverse health impacts, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory illnesses; and,

WHEREAS, this increased motor vehicle usage also leads to increased government spending to create and maintain infrastructure like roads and bridges; and,

WHEREAS, exclusionary zoning practices reduce the efficiency and level of service of our public transit system, resulting in increased commuting distances and times, elevated transportation costs, and

impeded access to good jobs and education; and,

WHEREAS, while many cities across the United States with exclusionary zoning practices have experienced slow housing growth, leading to increased rental costs and homelessness, cities like Houston and Minneapolis have reformed their zoning codes, leading to a growth in new housing, resulting in stabilized rental costs and decreased homelessness;

The Council of the County of Allegheny hereby moves as follows:

Council hereby urges local municipalities to reform their zoning codes to adopt less exclusionary zoning practices. Such reforms include, but are not limited to:

- Legalize the creation of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and single-room occupancies (SROs),
- eliminate parking mandates for all uses,
- reduce or eliminate minimum lot and unit sizes,
- allow for the building of duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes by right,
- legalize multifamily housing in commercial zones,
- encourage transit-oriented development with increased residential and commercial densities along transit corridors,
- and increase allowable building height and density.