

Property Maintenance Code Enforcement

Why it's important and the Role of Elected Officials



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QR Question #1

What is the Goal of the Property Maintenance Program in your Municipality?



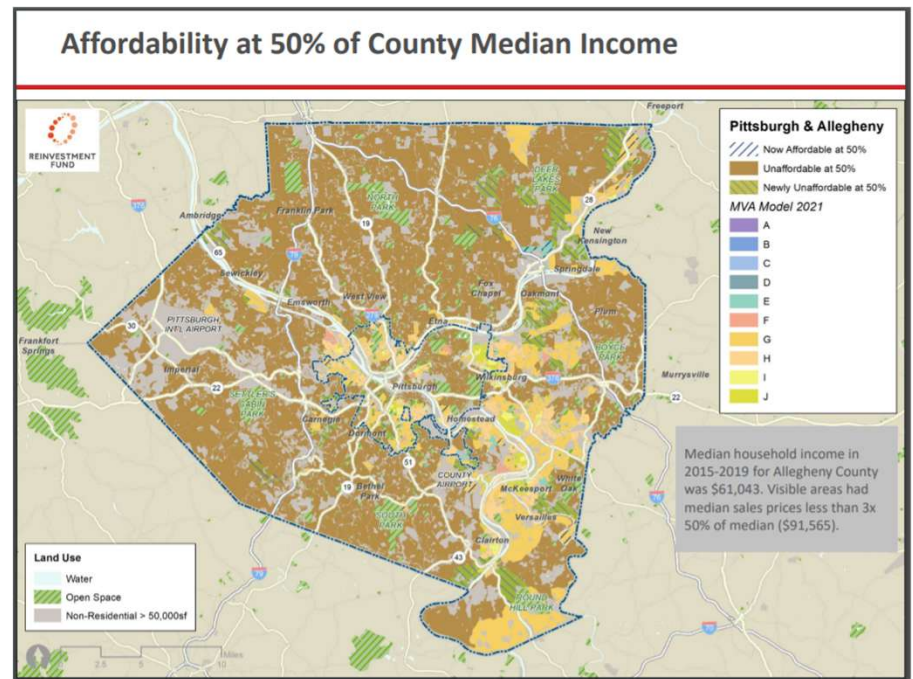
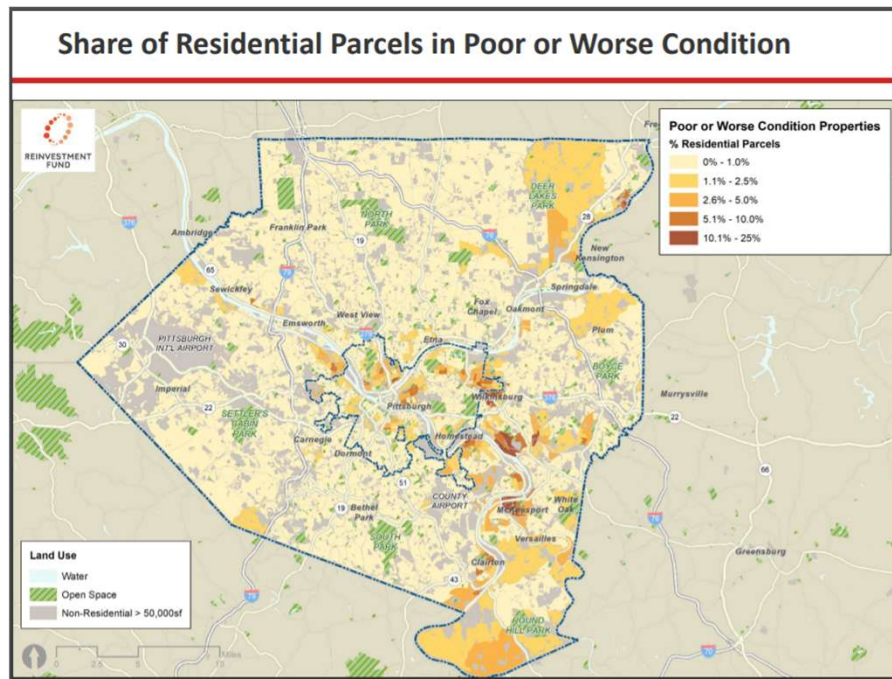


Cost of Blight

Impacted Item	Annual Cost to Tri-COG Communities ⁸
Municipal Services	\$10,720,302
Lost Tax Revenue	\$8,637,875
Lost Property Values	\$218 – 247 million

As a result of lost tax revenue and high maintenance costs, the communities with the most blight are often the least equipped to access the tools needed to address the problem.

Low Income Communities Disproportionately Impacted



<https://data.wprdc.org/dataset/market-value-analysis-2021>

Strategic Code Enforcement Addresses Blight and Health Hazards



- **Eliminates safety hazards:** fire, electrical, structural stability, plumbing, ventilation
- **Mitigates environmental toxins:** lead, asbestos, mold, rodents, pests, hazardous waste
- **Preserves quality of life** and stops structures from deteriorating to the point that they become abandoned
- **Provides critical protection for renters** who otherwise have limited options
- **Maintains infrastructure** needed to attract new residents and businesses





Social Determinants of Health



<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/sdoh/index.html>

CODENFORCE

Property Maintenance is an investment



PROPOSED BUDGET STRUCTURE BASED ON NEGOTIATED PERCENT:

	Parcels	Percent	10% Flat Participation Fee	(Flat fee-budget) x percent	Actual Annual Dues
Code Enforcement Budget (less Inspection Fees)					
Town 1	523	9%	\$ 22,803	\$ 7,993.57	\$ 30,796.47
Town 2	1266	29%	\$ 22,803	\$ 25,757.05	\$ 48,559.95
Town 3	3329	31%	\$ 22,803	\$ 27,533.39	\$ 50,336.29
Town 4	2309	31%	\$ 22,803	\$ 27,533.39	\$ 50,336.29
Total	7427	100%	\$ 91,212		
			\$ 88,817		
					\$ 180,029.00

SUGGESTIONS

1. Standardize inspection fees: \$75/inspection.





QR Question #2

How does your officer keep track of and report property maintenance information?

Caseload Manager

filter: all cases in muni ▼

[refresh](#) as of Fri 27 Mar 2026, 11:42

[activate batch mode](#)

148

open cases

48

past due

27

citation active

1

citation terminal

6

ready to close

1

abandoned
property

6

monitoring

59

opening

ADMINISTRATIVE TODOS

(attached to the 148 filtered cases)

47

Letter/NOV

62

Code Violation

6

Code enforcement case general



Code Violation Status as of Fri 27 Mar 2026

The following categories pull from all violations entered into the system before Fri 27 Mar 2026

Compliance achieved: 1208

Within compliance window: 20

Requiring ongoing action (but not cited): 120

Violations cited: 48

Citations

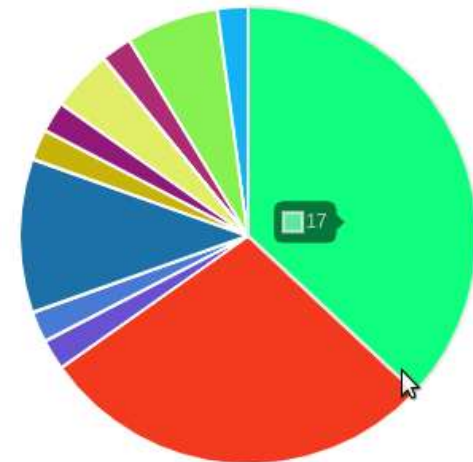
Citations (at any stage) on active cases within the reporting period: 46

Citations by status as of Fri 27 Mar 2026

Total citations as of Fri 27 Mar 2026: 46

The following breakdown may not total 46 because only citations with one or more status log entries are tallied.

	Issued to magistrate; awaiting hearing date: 17
	Draft: 13
	Hearing outcome: Withdrawn for compliance: 1
	Hearing outcome: Defendant found guilty; penalty imposed: 1
	Hearing Scheduled / Awaiting summary trial: 5
	Withdrawn (no hearing held): 1
	Admin Review : 1
	Hearing outcome: Continuance: 2
	Appeals hearing scheduled: 1
	Hearing outcome: Adjudicated; penalties imposed: 3
	Stalled: 1



QR Question #3

What should Elected Officials do to ensure a quality property maintenance program?



Council's Role – A Solicitor's Perspective

How to set your Property Maintenance
Program up for Success



Legality is Important

- Municipal authority comes from legally adopted **ordinances**
- Importance of **codification**
- Problems with **outdated ordinances**
 - 20+ year-old ordinances
 - Poorly written provisions
- Examples of enforcement gaps (Your inspector can only enforce adopted ordinances.)
 - Dangerous trees not in IPMC
 - Hedges and similar issues



Legality is Important

- Due process requirements – Compliance is the Goal
 - Appeal periods
 - Proper notice
- Why municipalities must regularly **review and update ordinances**
 - Ensures ordinances stand up in court
 - Avoids vague or unenforceable laws
- Relationships matter



Example of Problematic Ordinance Language

§10-301. Prohibiting Certain Growth. No person, firm or corporation as owner or occupant in possession of any property within the Borough of ____ shall permit any grass, weeds or other noxious vegetation whatsoever, not edible or planted for some useful or ornamental purpose whatsoever to grow or remain upon such premises in excess of a height of 6 inches...

§10-302. Nuisance. Any grass, weeds, ornamental tree or shrub or other vegetation growing upon any premises in said Borough in violation of§ 10-301 of this Part is hereby declared to be a nuisance and detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the Borough. (Ord. 612, 12/14/1972, §2)



Example of Problematic Ordinance Language

§10-303. Notice. The Borough Secretary, the Street Commissioner or either of them is hereby authorized to give notice by personal service or registered United States mail to the owner or occupant, as the case may be, of any premises whereon grass, weeds, ornamental tree or shrub or other vegetation is growing and being in violation...

In this case, your property maintenance inspector is not legally empowered to act.



QR Question #4

When should your code officer file charges in Property Maintenance Code Enforcement Cases?



Property Maintenance – the Court's Perspective

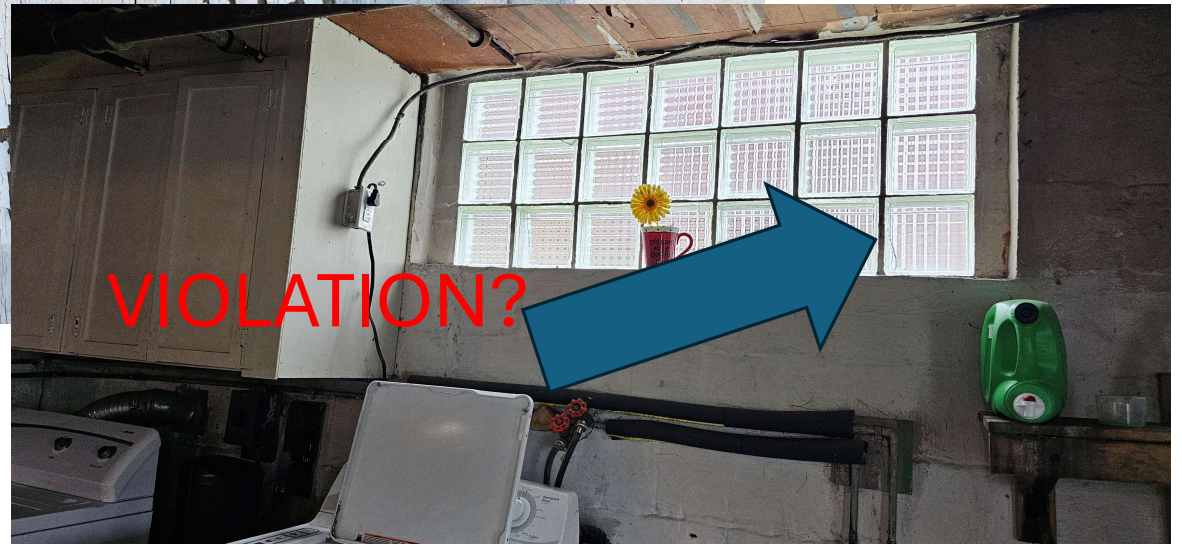


Best Practices

- Ordinance Quality affects Legal Outcomes
- When to file a Citation
 - Compliance is the goal – the legal process should be your last resort
- Build a Legal Case – Documentation Matters
- Importance of properly Trained, Professional Code Inspectors



VIOLATION



VIOLATION?







VIOLATION, BUT...



Thank you!

Questions?

