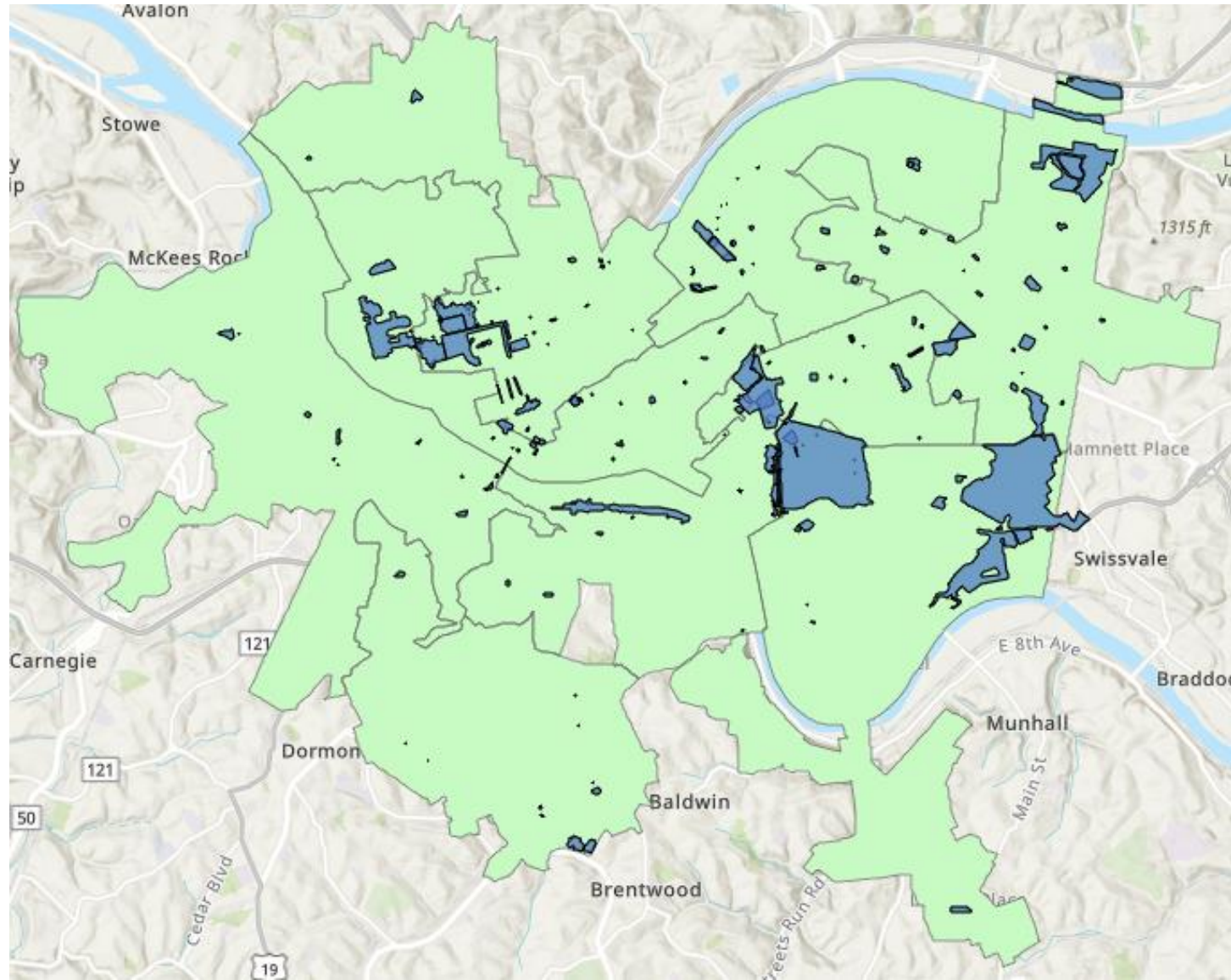




Title 11 – Historic Preservation Code Update

Historic Review Commission
Hearing & Action
October 2026

Map of Pittsburgh Historic Landmarks



What is Title 11?

Title 11 of the Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances is the city's primary legal tool for protecting its architectural, cultural, and aesthetic heritage. Title 11 provides the regulation needed to prevent the demolition or inappropriate alteration of significant local landmarks.

Why Update Now?

The current Title 11 should be rewritten to streamline processes, clarify roles, ensure all groups are represented, and update language and organization of the ordinance to reflect best practices in historic preservation.

Proposed Changes

- Commitment to inclusive preservation
- Reorganize sections for clarity and simplify language
- Make City staff ex-officio
- Expand and diversify Commission membership
- Streamline Commission reviews
- Clarify process timelines
- Include process for revoking landmark status
- Introduce framework for interior landmarking of public buildings
- Clarify demolition process

Inclusive Preservation

- **Cultural Significance.** It is directly associated with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation.
- **Neighborhood Development.** It exemplifies a pattern of neighborhood development or settlement significant to the cultural history or traditions of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation.
- **Notable Work.** It exemplifies the work of a recognized architect, landscape architect, designer, engineer, artist, craftsman, or builder, or it represents an important planning or urban design technique distinguished by innovation, rarity, or exceptional quality of detail.

Clarity

- **New Sections Added:** Dedicated sections for "Certificate of Appropriateness Process", and "Appeals".
- **Reordered Content:** The administrative section establishing the Commission moved to beginning of document.
- **Renaming:** Existing sections renamed to reflect updated, modernized language, ie "Penalties for Non-Compliance" is now "Enforcement and Penalties".

Simplification

Current	Proposed
Historic Structure "Anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires...a permanent location of land, including walks, fences, signs, steps and sidewalks..."	Historic Structure "Any structure...that is constructed for purposes other than human occupancy."
COA "Approval by the Historic Review Commission...of the appropriateness of any new construction, demolition, exterior alteration...which certification is required prior to the issuance of a building permit, demolition permit or sign permit..."	COA "If new construction, demolition or exterior alterations...is visible from a public right-of-way, a Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained ..."
Exterior Alteration "...projects which require a permit... the kind, color and texture of building materials; the type and design of all windows, doors, lights, stair railings..."	Exterior Alteration "Any change to the external appearance... that affects its historic, architectural, or visual character."

Make Up of the Commission

Current	Proposed
1 Architect	2 Design Professionals
1 Preservationist	1 Preservationist
1 Realtor	1 Development Professional
	1 Landscape Architect
2 Community Representatives	2 Community Representatives
City Planning representative	City Planning representative (ex-officio)
Permits, Licenses and Inspections representative	Permits, Licenses and Inspections representative (ex-officio)
7 total (7 voting)	9 total (7 voting)

Eliminate Commission Redundancy

Current		Proposed	
Historic Districts	Individual Landmarks	Historic Districts	Individual Landmarks
2 Planning Commission Meetings	2 Planning Commission Meetings	1 Planning Commission Meeting	--
2 Historic Review Commission Meetings	2 Historic Review Commission Meetings	1 Historic Review Commission Meeting	1 Historic Review Commission Meeting

§ 1101.03(g): The City Planning Commission shall consider effects of designation on adjoining properties and surrounding neighborhoods within the framework of established planning, development and land use objectives for the City of Pittsburgh.

Clarify Process Timelines

Process	Current Code	Updated Code
Completeness Check	Undefined	5 days
HRC Scheduling	Within 3 months from receipt of a complete application	At next available hearing
HRC Recommendation Deadline	Undefined	60 days from receipt of a complete application
Planning Commission Recommendation Deadline	Undefined	60 days from receipt of a complete application
Council Decision	Undefined	120 days from receiving recommendations
Emergency Demolition Delay	90 days	30 days with ability to extend for two additional 30 days periods.
Economic Hardship Completeness Check	Undefined	5 days

Revoking Landmark Status

- **Legal "Release Valve":** Provides a necessary mechanism for sites that have lost their integrity or were erroneously landmarked.
- **Transparent Due Process:** Replaces ad-hoc workarounds with a predictable, legally sound framework.
- **Safeguards True Landmarks:** A rigorous two-thirds City Council supermajority prevent frivolous or speculative de-listing.

Interior Landmarking

- **Safeguarding Civic Spaces:** Protects key features of shared public interiors as vital civic infrastructure.

Demolitions

- **Clear Rules:** Replaces vague guidelines with four legally defined pathways for approval.
 - Economic Hardship
 - Safety Threat
 - Loss of Integrity
 - Special Merit: The replacement project offers significant community benefits, and the developer can demonstrate they have the means to finish it.
- **Simplified Process:** Plainly states that all demolitions must be routed through the Certificate of Appropriateness process.
- **Proof of Safety Threat:** Mandates an engineer's report.

Tentative Timeline

Council District Update	May 1 to June 1
Planning Commission Briefing	June 2
Historic Review Commission Briefing	June-September
Planning Commission Hearing & Action	June 16
Historic Review Commission Hearing & Action	October 7
Submit for Mayor's Agenda	October 13

Ordinance Draft available for review in Commission documents provided for this hearing.



Questions and Comments?



Thank You!

WE APPRECIATE YOUR TIME