

2007 STATE OF THE CITY REPORT

Issued by the

Clean Pittsburgh Commission

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FOREWORD

The Clean Pittsburgh Commission (CPC) was established in August 2005 through legislation introduced to City Council by Councilman Doug Shields and co-sponsored by Council members Dan Deasy, Bill Peduto and then-Council member Luke Ravenstahl. The CPC's mission is: *to work to improve the environmental quality of life of Pittsburgh residents through litter and illegal dumping prevention, clean-up and enforcement.*

The CPC is comprised of 15 representatives from various City departments, local non-profits, individuals and community groups. The activities of the CPC are focused in three primary areas: 1) monitoring/awareness/prevention, 2) clean up, and 3) enforcement. The primary function of the CPC is to provide oversight, direction, leadership, resources and assistance to community groups and individuals while serving as the liaison between these groups and the appropriate city departments.

CPC is expected to issue an annual report on its activities to the Mayor and City Council. A report was not issued at the close of 2006. Therefore, this report covers CPC's activities for 2006 and 2007, establishes benchmarks in the three primary areas, and initiates a process to be followed for preparation of future annual reports.

INTRODUCTION

In April 2007, Pittsburgh, for the second time since 1985, was designated by *Places Rated Almanac* as "America's Most Livable City" in competition with 379 metropolitan areas.

While we as Pittsburghers are proud of this designation we know that we can make our city even better.

In the past two years, under two mayors, real progress has been made to make Pittsburgh cleaner. That work includes significant gains toward:

- Removing everyday litter and trash in all 89 neighborhoods
- Preventing illegal dumping all over the city in neighborhoods, rivers and streams
- Removing extreme blight in more than half of our neighborhoods
- Demolishing vacant and dilapidated houses
- Cleaning vacant and neglected lots
- Removing abandoned cars from streets and lots
- Removing graffiti from public and private property
- Fixing potholes as fast as they appear
- Fixing drab and broken streets and giving them new surfaces
- Increasing code enforcement on blighted, abandoned and disruptive properties

Much of this began when the late Mayor Bob O'Connor took office in January 2006. His vision as Mayor focused directly on making Pittsburgh the safest and cleanest City in America. Mayor Ravenstahl, who took office in September 2006, following the untimely death of Mayor O'Connor, continued that mission by introducing both new legislation and City processes that supercharged Pittsburgh's cleaning and greening efforts.

In 2006, the Clean Pittsburgh Commission presented the O'Connor Administration with a five-year strategic plan. The CPC's 2010 vision statement reads,

"Residents are engaged and empowered to clean their community. Pittsburgh is perceived nationally as a clean, safe, environmentally friendly city. City departments effectively and efficiently provide services to our stakeholders to address the environmental needs of the city in a collaborative way."

Both Mayor Ravenstahl's and Bob O'Connor's plans spoke to that vision:

- Creating the "Redd Up" team, which was done under Bob O'Connor, and continued by Mayor Ravenstahl;
- Tracking the number of clean-ups, number of residents involved in them, and how many tons of illegally dumped trash were removed;
- Aggressively eliminating the backlog of 1,200 structures that the city condemned;
- Removing abandoned cars and cleaning up graffiti eyesores;
- Fixing potholes within 48 hours of a complaint;
- Boosting street resurfacing efforts;
- Greening up vacant lots that blight neighborhoods throughout the City; and
- Fining the owners of disruptive properties who have been cited for nuisances.

Upon being named "America's Most Livable City" this past April, Mayor Ravenstahl wrote a message to the neighborhoods: "Much of the credit for the designation is owed to the people of Pittsburgh for the care and hard work you commit to our neighborhoods. Whether it is taking part in a Redd Up cleanup, calling 3-1-1 to alert how we can better serve you, or using the anonymous C-TIPS line to make our streets safer, you are making Pittsburgh the most livable City. Our neighborhoods are the cornerstone of our city and we will build upon that by putting our neighborhoods first."

In 2007, Mayor Ravenstahl began packaging his own version of Redd Up—a "Fight the Blight Toolbox". It is an action plan—supported by some new laws—to rid abandoned cars from our streets once and for all, get tougher with graffiti criminals, demolish vacant and deteriorating houses, put unproductive vacant lots in the hands of better owners, start a "Green Up Pittsburgh" program, and increase Public Works' emphasis on eliminating extreme blight in neighborhoods. Soon the Mayor will unveil a fresh Redd Up campaign enlisting the support of citizen volunteers against everyday litter. Additionally, the Mayor has initiated and supported new ordinances aimed directly at "individuals who continue to violate our rules and continue to drag down our community".

This is the State of Our City, category by category, as 2007 comes to a close.

WASTE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

LITTER

Status - Citizens Against Litter has been instrumental in engaging and supporting community involvement in litter abatement. The City of Pittsburgh's Department of Public Works (DPW), PennDOT, PA Resources Council and Allegheny CleanWays have supported the neighborhood initiatives with cleanup equipment and resources. The City DPW divisions have cooperated with community groups on the collection of debris for disposal. Allegheny CleanWays has an expanding program of coordinator education and is providing kits to community groups for ongoing litter patrols.

2007 — In the spring of 2007, 23 community groups participated in the Great PA Cleanup, a statewide event that is co-sponsored by Keep PA Beautiful, PennDOT, PA CleanWays, Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) and the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The groups reporting their results estimated that they collected 3,586 bags of debris, equaling approximately 36 tons of litter

In October, the largest neighborhood-by-neighborhood Redd Up was held over a three-day weekend. Eighty to eighty-two city neighborhoods participated. Approximately 5,500 volunteers, adults and youths, collected 3,200 bags of litter or 25 tons. Seventeen communities outside Pittsburgh also participated. For 2007, it is estimated that more than 300 neighborhood clean-ups were held.

A Clean Pittsburgh Steward Network was also established in 2007. There is now a representative in nearly every city neighborhood who has accepted the responsibility to deal with litter matters and clean ups and to spread the word to their neighbors. The network has been operating for several months. A "Meet and Greet" Clean Pittsburgh Steward Mixer will be held Jan. 17, 2008, by the Clean Pittsburgh Commission and the city's Neighborhood Initiatives program.

FUTURE: A second large Redd Up is planned for the weekend of April 18-20, just before Earth Day (April 22). The goal is for all 89 city neighborhoods to participate, along with communities outside the city. This event is concurrent with the Great PA Cleanup described above. For Fall 2008, a third Redd Up is planned to celebrate Pittsburgh's 250th anniversary with anticipated participation by 250 neighborhoods and municipalities in the Greater Pittsburgh area.

Year	# "Scattering Rubbish" Offenses	# Arrests
2005	36	32
2006	28	44
2007	25	NA

LITTER EDUCATION (Schools)

Status - Formal litter education has not been integrated into the curricula of Pittsburgh's schools (public, private and parochial). Most litter education is handled via a handful of non-profit environmental organizations including but not limited to: PA Resources Council, Conservation Consultants, Inc. and Lake Erie/Allegheny Earth Force. Each of these organizations, along with others, have developed lesson plans, assemblies, in-classroom presentations and other methods to spread the message of litter awareness/prevention/clean-up to K-12 age children in Pittsburgh schools.

Schools have been engaged in the process through the Stash the Trash program and local efforts for approximately 15 years. School participation in litter abatement is a strong focus of the PA DEP. The following numbers indicate the number of schools participating in Stash the Trash for the past three years:

**2005 – 26 schools
2006 – 22 schools
2007 – 35 schools**

Students representing participating schools have been recognized annually with a trip to City Hall, T-shirts and lunch.

2007 – CPC representatives met with representatives of the Pittsburgh Public Schools administration regarding the Stash the Trash/Clean School Zone program. Pittsburgh Public Schools will participate in the spring Stash the Trash on Friday, April 18, 2008, and the fall Stash the Trash event (date to be decided later). The Mayor's Office encourages schools to participate in more than two Stash the Trash events in 2008 as part of the Safety Zone Partnership Initiative.

ILLEGAL DUMPING

Status - Pittsburgh has a legacy of illegal dumping left over from days when waste disposal was not existent or limited. Expanded recycling services, drop-off center operations, and special trash collections by the City have helped to reduce the volume of illegal dumping but regionally limited options or fees for disposal of tires, lawn debris and remodeling and construction debris continue to contribute to illegal dumping of these items. Small, unscrupulous contractors and private haulers who are avoiding disposal costs in order to maximize their income, and/or homeowners who wish to avoid inconvenience are likely to be the largest source of illegal dumping. Therefore, while expanded waste disposal services help to reduce illegal dumping, there will continue to be some dumping until education, prevention and enforcement are effective in interrupting the cycle.

In 2002 Allegheny CleanWays conducted and published a survey of illegal dumpsites in the City of Pittsburgh, identifying 138 illegal dump sites. An updated

survey is scheduled for 2008. Since being formed in 2000, Allegheny CleanWays conducted litter and illegal dump clean-ups in and around Pittsburgh removing 224.5 tons and 2,435 tires prior to 2007.

2007 — The Redd Up and City Source programs are instrumental in removal of much illegally dumped debris. The volume of debris collected by these programs is included in their figures under Vacant and Neglected Lots below.

In 2007 Pittsburgh Allegheny CleanWays removed 13.75 tons of debris from three sites in the city. Two cleanups involved extensive support from the City of Pittsburgh. Two others were conducted under the auspices of the state COALS (Clean Our American Lands and Streams) program, a PA Department of Environmental Protection program now active throughout the state.

RECYCLING

Status - Recycling is mandatory for every resident, business, office and institution in the City of Pittsburgh (City Code 619). Recycling not only helps the City to recover valuable resources and save energy, but it also generates revenue and saves on landfill costs. Tonnages reported by private haulers, businesses and institutions also enable the City to attract more funding from the State through various recycling grants. The City’s Bureau of Environmental Services provides curbside recycling collection for residences, multi-family units and non-profit institutions that complete a service agreement form with the City. The City also provides a recycling drop-off service for residences and small businesses.

Year	Tons of Tires Recycled	Tons of Yard Debris Recycled
2004	53.15	5,190.07
2005	53.7	3,900.28
2006	74.09	3,270.66
2007		2,944.88

Year	Tons Household Waste Rec.	Landfill Cost Savings	Income to City
2004	9,749.21	\$187,964.77	\$149,371.97
2005	10,322.52	\$199,018.19	\$212,795.99
2006	9,539.97	\$183,930.62	\$338,495.45
2007	13,977	\$139,355	\$398,200.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT / BLIGHT ISSUES
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VACANT AND DILAPIDATED DWELLINGS

Status - There are 1,363 vacant and dilapidated dwellings in the city. The city has increased the budget to tear down these properties. However, every year a new crop of properties sprout. There is a direct relationship to elimination of these dwellings and budget assignment.

2007 — This was a pivotal year in the city’s efforts to increase the number of teardowns of nuisance dwellings scaring the appearance of neighborhoods, blocking streets and sidewalks, and creating unsafe conditions. A \$2 million budget made possible increasing by 50% the teardown of 300 dwellings from 200 in 2006. (The city pays \$6,500 per dwelling.)

Most of the removed properties were derelict and places of criminal activity. They stood within 1,000 feet of schools and were targeted as part of the Safety Zone Initiative Partnership, started in 2006, between the city and Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Year	Demolished	Budget
2004	170	Under \$1 million (est.)
2005	250	Under \$1.5 million (est.)
2006	200	About \$1 million (est.)
2007	300	\$2 million (actual)
[2008]	600	\$4 million (budgeted)
[2009]	600	\$4 million (projected)
[2010]	500	\$3 million (projected)

Properties Torn Down by Bureau of Building Inspection – 2007

300 properties razed (thru 12/12/07)

Properties Boarded up by Redd Up Program – 2007
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1,410 Buildings Boarded Up (thru 12/12/07)
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VACANT AND NEGLECTED LOTS

Status — The city owns 2,500 vacant lots. Recently the city bought back 10,000 property liens it had previously sold to a private company in the hope that some of these vacant and neglected lots would be purchased, cleaned up, maintained and become productive. The city has had a Side Yard Program since 1994. In 13 years, side yard sales to next-door homeowners have produced only 454 sales or 35 per year on average. In the past, the city has not marketed the program.

Since March 2006, Public Works has had an on-going Blight Removal Program. Fairywood was the first neighborhood addressed. Among the neighborhoods in which work was completed are: Homewood, South Side Slopes, Oakland, California-Kirkbride, Marshall-Shadeland, Allentown, Woods Run, Brighton Heights, West End, Hill District, Uptown, Greenfield, Manchester, Arlington, Beltzhoover, Knoxville, Chartiers City, Esplen, Hazelwood, Sheridan, Elliott, City View, Lincoln-Larimer, Lawrenceville, Stanton Heights, Mt. Washington, Brookline and Carrick.

2007 — Public Works has had two special Redd Up crews clearing blight during the year. The Redd Up Crew mission is to clean lots, secure properties, and remove debris on private and city-owned properties. Also, Redd Up Crews concentrate on business districts weekly.

In October, the city announced it would begin a direct marketing program. Letters were sent to 150 homeowners in Brighton Heights, Central North Side, Elliott, Greenfield and Lawrenceville. No sales projections were announced. Sales to date for the year are 21 which is behind the average of the previous 13 years.

Lots Cleaned by City Source - 2007		
	Total	\$ Spent
City	1,573	\$393,250
URA	1,597	\$399,250

Lots Cleaned and Houses Boarded Up by Redd Up Program – 2007		
	# Lots	Tons of Debris
Lots and Properties Cleaned (thru 12/12/07)	194	3,955

ABANDONED CARS

STATUS — A new state law enacted this year gives the city the authority to move more quickly to rid Pittsburgh streets of abandoned cars on public property. In fact, the state is considering expanding this law to include removal of abandoned cars from private property as well. The new law was requested by Mayor O'Connor in 2006. Actually, though, the focus on abandoned cars began with Mayor Murphy and his Operation Cleansweep when there were an estimated 7,000 illegal cars parked on city streets. Under the new law, police are required to investigate complaints within five days and remove cars within ten days. Also, if registration and inspection stickers have been expired longer than 90 days, the car must be towed. In Pittsburgh, an officer from each of the five zones is assigned to deal with abandoned cars. In the first six months since 3-1-1 was restarted last October 2006, 1,000 complaint calls about abandoned cars were received. By December 2007, under Mr. Ravenstahl, the City was able to eliminate the entire backlog of abandoned vehicles, and abandoned vehicles are now reported and removed within a one week turnaround period.

Year	Street Tows	Private Property Tows	City Property Tows	Total Tows
2005	2,476	339	52	2,867
2006	1,902	207	30	2,139
2007	1,180	185	38	1,403

GRAFFITI

STATUS — Graffiti vandalism is managed under the Public Works Traffic Division and Police Department. A report about graffiti prompts a work order for inspection and photography of the site and removal of the graffiti. A dollar value is assigned per square foot of graffiti which is considered an "incident". The Graffiti Task force removes damage from public buildings and places. They also remove damage from private property on a case-by-case basis. In addition, many neighborhood groups and organizations fight graffiti vandalism on their own level organizing watches, paint-outs and educating residents about what they can do to combat graffiti vandals.

The work of the Graffiti Task Force is compromised partly because not everyone, including some in media, government, the legal system and the public treat graffiti vandals as the criminals they are and instead regard their actions "as not so bad". Victims of graffiti vandalism and the police, of course, believe otherwise. Graffiti vandalism causes millions of dollars of damage every year. One confessed graffiti vandal has caused over \$711,201 damage. He was released after his first arrest for approximately \$608,000 in damages, but has a second arrest pending with 26 additional victims damaged. The pattern seems to be police make arrests, provide

evidence, get confessions in some instances, but the rest of the legal system lets graffiti criminals slide through the system usually with little or no penalties or jail time or full damage restitution.

Year	# Graffiti Incidents* Cleaned * 1 incident = 1 sq foot	Obscenities / Possibly Gang Related	Cost
2004	5,218	329 / 1,091	\$51,246
2005	6,366	296 / 236	\$55,420
2006	6,620	549 / 183	\$57,631

2007 – Enforcement: The Police Department reports that there have been 20 arrests of graffiti vandals in 2007. Another 15 arrests are pending until investigations are complete and warrants issued.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (NID)

Status - Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NID) are funded by property owners in specific neighborhoods. In some cases NIDs help a neighborhood’s Main Street compete with other shopping districts, specifically malls outside the city. Often a neighborhood with NID status hires private security, clean-up crews, improves facades and infrastructure, and marketing. In Pittsburgh there are three NIDs - Downtown, Oakland and Western Ave. (Allegheny West). The newest NID will be in East Liberty in two sections (around Penn Circle and a second circling Penn Circle) either this year or in 2008. NIDs, with paid cleaning crews, control litter better than other neighborhoods that rely on volunteers to clean up.

FUTURE - The area around Penn Circle as a NID will be less littered when the NIDs are approved this year or next.

GREEN RESOURCES

“GREEN UP” PITTSBURGH

Status - The Mayor announced the first part of a Comprehensive Vacant Lot Master Plan in October. “Green Up Pittsburgh” is a campaign to identify vacant weedy and trashy parcels owned by the city. The city and Penn State Cooperative Extension will work with community groups and agriculture experts to remove exotic invasive plants, assess the site, develop a planting design, and train local residents on planting and maintenance techniques. The aim is to transform blighted properties into beautiful properties. The city is pursuing foundation funding.

2007 - The five community group neighborhoods were chosen to participate in this pilot program based in part by community interest and capacity include: Hill House Association (12 lots), Beechview Community Council (2 lots), Manchester Citizens Corporation (7 lots), East Liberty Concerned Citizens Corporation (4 lots), and the Win-Char Civic Club (2 lots).

PITTSBURGH'S URBAN FOREST

Status - A full page of op ed articles in the Post-Gazette in October, written by Friends of the Pittsburgh Urban Forest, painted a bleak picture for Pittsburgh's trees since 1995 when a study was conducted. Twelve years later, the situation isn't much better. Nonetheless, Pittsburgh is in the midst of executing a seven-year program of activities, started in 2006, for removal, pruning and new tree planting. There are enough funds in the action plan budget to replace trees that are removed.

A 2005 study by the Shade Tree Commission and Public Works said in part:

- **Tree population along 1,000 miles of city streets is 31,524.**
- **3,185 trees are dead or in very poor condition.**
- **The average value per tree is \$1700.**
- **Four trees are removed for each one planted.**

Tree experts believe properly maintaining Pittsburgh's \$52 million investment in our street trees is an investment in creating a healthier urban ecosystem, and a healthier, more livable Pittsburgh.

Year	# Trees Pruned	# Trees Removed	# Trees Planted
2004	637	620	
2005	1194	796	
2006	806	1204	0
2007	541	983	70

CLOSING

In 2008, the CPC will focus on monitoring/prevention/awareness, clean-ups and enforcement through its five-year Strategic Plan. It will introduce a quarterly reporting process to collect information from city departments and agencies. It will accelerate communications with neighborhood Clean Pittsburgh Stewards and with public, parochial and private schools. It will demonstrate leadership to achieve the Mayor's goal for Pittsburgh to be one of America's cleanest and safest cities by 2010.

Information for this report was obtained from written materials as well as
City of Pittsburgh employees and records.