



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	2026-0564	Version:	1
Type:	Ordinance	Status:	Passed Finally
File created:	5/29/2026	In control:	Committee on Land Use and Economic Development
On agenda:	6/2/2026	Final action:	6/23/2026
Enactment date:	6/23/2026	Enactment #:	19
Effective date:	6/24/2026		
Title:	Ordinance amending and supplementing the Pittsburgh City Code, Title 4: Public Places and Property, Article VII: City Realty by amending Chapter 454 to update Pittsburgh's Adopt-A-Lot Program.		
Sponsors:			
Indexes:	PGH. CODE ORDINANCES TITLE 04 - PUBLIC PLACES		
Code sections:			
Attachments:	1. 2026-0564 Cover Letter-2026.5.19 Adopt-A-Lot Cover Letter, 2. Summary 2026-0564		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
6/24/2026	1	Mayor	Signed by the Mayor	
6/23/2026	1	City Council	Passed Finally	Pass
6/17/2026	1	Standing Committees	Affirmatively Recommended	Pass
6/10/2026	1	Standing Committees	Held in Committee	Pass
6/2/2026	1	City Council	Read and referred	

Ordinance amending and supplementing the Pittsburgh City Code, Title 4: Public Places and Property, Article VII: City Realty by amending Chapter 454 to update Pittsburgh's Adopt-A-Lot Program.

The Council of the City of Pittsburgh hereby enacts as follows:

CHAPTER 454 Adopt-A-Lot Program

§ 454.01 Definitions.

[Ord. No. 41-2015, § 1, eff. 11-2-2015]

For purposes of this Chapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) ADOPT-A-LOT LEASE

means a lease granted by the City to use a vacant City lot for a vacant lot project for a one (1) year term. Following the successful completion of the one-year term, then current lessees may have the option to renew the lease for up to an additional three (3) years. ~~At all times, the lease must be revocable by the City at its convenience, without cause, by providing ninety (90) days prior written notice.~~

(b) ADOPT-A-LOT LICENSE

means an annual, nonexclusive license granted by the City to use a vacant City lot for a temporary ~~flower or edible garden~~ **vacant lot project** by an individual. The duration of each license, including any permitted renewal, must be less than one (1) year. Current licensees may have the option to renew the license, subject to

compliance with the terms therein. At all times, the license must be revocable by the City at its convenience, without cause, by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice.

(c) EDIBLE GARDEN

means a garden containing annual and/or perennial flowers, herbs, seeds, berries, vegetables, fruit, and other plants that one can eat. Participants granted authority under an Adopt-A-Lot Program may harvest edibles from edible gardens solely for personal use and shall remain responsible to those who consume or otherwise receive harvested items from them.

(d) FLOWER GARDEN

means a garden containing displays of annual and/or perennial plants that are not intended for eating, sale, or donation.

(e) MARKET STAND GARDEN

means the accessory use of either an edible garden or a flower garden such that a lessee or authorized Program participants may keep harvested edibles or flowers for personal use, sell them, and/or donate them to the public, subject to the terms of a Market Stand Lease. Lessees or Program participants granted authority under a Market Stand Lease to harvest edibles for personal use, to sell them, and/or to donate them to the public shall remain responsible to those who consume, purchase, or otherwise receive donated or harvested items from them.

(f) MARKET STAND LEASE (c) VENDING LEASE

means a subsidiary category of an Adopt-A-Lot Lease for which prior approval is granted for: 1) the limited commercial on-site sale of less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) annually of unprocessed edibles or flowers grown on site, subject to all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations involved with the use of City property and/or the sale of food to the public, including, but not limited to, City vending requirements, Allegheny County Health Department regulations, federal and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania food and accessibility laws, FDA regulations, and the City's Zoning Code, including provisions relating to outdoor retail sales, and any other applicable local, state and federal laws; commercial on-site vending and/or 2) on-site donations to the general public the limited commercial on-site sale of less than twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) annually of unprocessed edibles or flowers grown on site, subject to all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations involved with the use of City property and/or provision the sale of food to the public, including, but not limited to, City vending requirements, Allegheny County Health Department regulations, federal and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania food and accessibility laws, FDA regulations, and the City's Zoning Code, including provisions relating to outdoor retail sales, and any other applicable local, state and federal laws; and/or 3) on-site donations to the general public of unprocessed edibles or flowers grown on site, subject to all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations involved with the use of City property and/or provision of food to the public, including, but not limited to, Allegheny County Health Department regulations, federal and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania food and accessibility laws, FDA regulations, and the City's Zoning Code, and any other applicable local, state and federal laws.

(g) (d) PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

means an individual granted authority by a lessee under an Adopt-A-Lot Lease to perform gardening activities authorized under the Adopt-A-Lot Program on the lessee's leased parcel.

(h) RAIN GARDEN

means a garden that takes advantage of rainfall and storm water runoff in its design and plant selection, including but not limited to, gardens with an excavated shallow surface depression planted with specially selected native vegetation to treat and capture runoff.

(i) (e) VACANT LOT(S)/VACANT CITY LOT(S)/CITY PROPERTY(IES)/CITY-OWNED VACANT LOT(S)/CITY LOT(S)

means a parcel or multiple parcels of land owned in fee by the City of Pittsburgh not occupied by buildings or structures. Parcels with documented uses, ~~such as paved parking lots~~, recognized City parks and greenways are not vacant lots hereunder.

(j) (f) VACANT LOT PROJECT(S)

means an authorized ~~edible, rain, and/or flower garden~~ **temporary activation of a City-owned vacant lot through gardening, public art, community signage, special events, beautification or maintenance, commercial vending, and recreation** permitted pursuant to this Chapter. No other types of ~~gardening or urban farming~~ activities are permitted under this Chapter except those ~~falling under the definition of a "market stand garden."~~ **outlined in the Vacant Lot Toolkit.**

(k) (g) VACANT LOT TOOLKIT

means a guide developed by the Department of City Planning regarding the ~~process, and available tools to reuse~~ **rules, requirements, and available resources for reactivating** vacant lots.

§ 454.02 Creation of Adopt-A-Lot Program; Powers of Director of City Planning.

[Ord. No. 41-2015, § 1, eff. 11-2-2015; Ord. No. 52-2015, § 1, eff. 12-9-2015]

The Director of the Department of City Planning (the "Director") is authorized to establish an Adopt-A-Lot Program (the "Program"), which will permit the granting of Adopt-A-Lot Licenses and Adopt-A-Lot Leases on City-owned vacant lots in accordance with all Program requirements. In connection therewith, the Director shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

(a) To appoint an open space specialist or other designee to administer the Program for the City, to coordinate with applicable City department representatives, and to serve as a single point of contact for all Vacant Lot Projects pursuant to this Chapter;

(b) To execute Adopt-A-Lot Licenses and Adopt-A-Lot Leases as defined herein on behalf of the City. All license and lease agreements authorized hereunder shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Solicitor; and

(c) To promulgate Vacant Lot Toolkit amendments, supplements and/or new additions and/or to promulgate other additional rules and regulations for licensees, lessees and Program participants, including, but not limited to, requirements regarding soil testing, ~~hours of operation,~~ **public art**, signage, **special events**, and ~~limitations on fencing and the use of temporary structures, entrance paths, refuse storage, tool storage, fertilizer use, water use, mulch use, composting, and approved vegetation.~~

(d) The Director shall file a ~~monthly~~ **an annual** report with City Council that is read, received, and filed at a City Council meeting that lists all applications filed for Adopt-A-Lot Licenses and Adopt-A-Lot Leases.

§ 454.03 Additional Program Conditions.

[Ord. No. 41-2015, § 1, eff. 11-2-2015; Ord. No. 52-2015, § 1, eff. 12-9-2015]

(a) All Vacant Lot Projects hereunder must comply with the applicable zoning laws for the zoning district in which the ~~garden~~ **project** is located, including, but not limited to, setback and use requirements.

(b) All Vacant Lot Projects hereunder must comply with the applicable Public Art & Civic Design Commission code requirements outlined in City Code Chapter 175.

(c) All Vacant Lot Projects hereunder must comply with the applicable Permitting of Special Events code requirements outlined in City Code Chapter 470.

(d) All Vacant Lot Projects hereunder must comply with the applicable Vendors and Peddlers code requirements outlined in City Code Chapter 719.

~~(b)~~ (e) All Vacant Lot Projects shall use the Vacant Lot Toolkit to the maximum extent feasible in order to complete applications for, as well as for the administration of, the Adopt-A-Lot Program.

~~(e)~~ (f) The City may, but shall not be required to provide any funding, tools, ~~water,~~ **utilities,** equipment or supplies to licenses, lessees, or Program participants.

~~(d)~~ (g) By creating this Program to permit authorized ~~gardening~~ **temporary** activities, the City is not intending to create or permit the creation of park spaces, parklets, or playgrounds on the vacant lots authorized to be licensed or leased under this Chapter.

~~(e)~~ (h) Consideration for Adopt-A-Lot Licenses shall be ~~garden~~ services rendered, plus other good and valuable consideration. Consideration for Adopt-A-Lot Leases shall be ~~garden~~ services rendered, plus other good and valuable consideration. Consideration for ~~Market Stand~~ **Vending** Leases shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) annually, plus other good and valuable consideration.

~~(f)~~ (i) Obtaining additional required permits and approvals associated with requested occupancy, building, structures, zoning and/or sales are the sole responsibility of the licensee, lessee and/or Program participants, as applicable.

~~(g)~~ (j) All licensees, lessees, and Program participants ~~gardening on~~ **utilizing** City lots under the Program must execute releases to hold the City harmless from all liability in a form approved by the City Solicitor.

~~(h)~~ (k) All lands and structures licensed or leased under the Program are subject to entry and inspection by the City and all licensees, lessees, and Program participants ~~gardening on~~ **utilizing** City lots under the Program shall be subject to violation notices and/or citations for failure to comply.

~~(i)~~ (l) All proposed Vacant Lot Projects on City lots under the Program shall be subject to community process as outlined in the Vacant Lot Toolkit.

~~(j)~~ (m) Indemnification provisions must be included in all Adopt-A-Lot Licenses and Adopt-A-Lot Leases authorized under this Chapter in a form approved by the City Solicitor. Insurance provisions naming the City as a certificate holder must be included in all Adopt-A-Lot Leases.

~~(k)~~ (n) Violation of the terms of this Chapter, any license or lease authorized hereunder or any rules or regulations promulgated by the Director as authorized hereunder may result in an immediate termination of the license or lease and/or a permanent loss of the privilege to participate in the Program in addition to any remedies the City may have for violations of applicable law or contract.