

Legislation Text

File #: 000041, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the Council's Committee on Streets and Services to hold hearings on the dangers and damage caused by the deterioration of retaining walls, driveways and alleys and the complications involved in coordinating necessary repairs by abutting property owners; and, to determine the scope of these dangerous conditions throughout the City and the cost to repair them; and further authorizing the Committee to formulate a program to correct these hazardous and dangerous conditions in neighborhoods through the City.

WHEREAS, As the City was developed it was necessary for certain support structures, such as retaining walls, driveways and alleys to be installed so as to permit construction of needed buildings and residences, and to allow for easy ingress and egress; and

WHEREAS, Without the construction of these retaining walls, driveways and alleys it would have been uneconomical and in some cases impossible to erect any buildings or develop certain areas of the City; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, many retaining walls, driveways and alleys have become so deteriorated and defective that they now constitute a dangerous and hazardous condition and pose an imminent threat to the health, safety and welfare of the general public; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to state law, the City may declare a public nuisance and compel the property owners to correct the dangerous condition; and if no corrective action is taken, the City may abate the nuisance itself and assess the owners for the cost of repairs; and

WHEREAS, Most Philadelphia homeowners or property owners are willing and able to pay a reasonable share of the cost for these necessary repairs and renovations; and

WHEREAS, Many of the areas involved, however, are low and moderate income neighborhoods with residents who are financially unable to make the required repairs; and, in many instances some of the properties abutting the retaining wall, driveway or alley are abandoned and no responsible owner can be located to effectuate the needed repairs; and

WHEREAS, At a public hearing held in May of 1999, the Streets Department testified that in 1978 the City had knowledge of at least 63 retaining walls in need of repair and that as many as 189 retaining walls are projected to be in need of repair today and that the cost to repair these 189 structures is estimated at \$20 million; and

WHEREAS, The cost to remedy these dangerous conditions will continue to escalate the longer the City fails to take action; and

WHEREAS, Failure to take immediate corrective action will result in continued unwanted blight in the neighborhoods and will be a great detriment to the residents and general public, subjecting them to the threat of bodily harm and injury for which the City may be liable; and

WHEREAS, It is the desire of the City to prevent any injury to its citizens, to preserve neighborhoods,

and to promote the necessary repairs to retaining walls, driveways and alleys; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Council Committee on Streets and Services hold hearings on the dangers and damage caused by the deterioration of retaining walls, driveways and alleys and the complications involved in coordinating necessary repairs by abutting property owners; and, to determine the scope of these dangerous conditions throughout the City and the cost to repair them; and, in further authorizing the Committee to formulate a program to correct these hazardous and dangerous conditions in neighborhoods throughout the City.