

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to hold hearings on the Storefront Improvement Program and its impact on small businesses and neighborhood economic development.

WHEREAS, The Storefront Improvement Program (SIP) is run by the Philadelphia Department of Commerce and provides eligible businesses owners on designated neighborhood commercial corridors a reimbursable grant to improve their storefronts; and

WHEREAS, SIP has been used by more than 342 small business owners since 2009 to turn unsightly, blighted storefronts into attractive facades; and

WHEREAS, SIP is primarily funded with federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, as well as some funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED); and

WHEREAS, SIP has benefitted small businesses that do not have access to traditional forms of capital in order to make investments in their properties; and

WHEREAS, Facades improved through SIP have helped small businesses attract more customers, increase sales, hire more employees and increase property values of the improved building and those nearby, which leads to a return to the City of Philadelphia in the form of sales, business, wage and property tax revenue; and

WHEREAS, SIP investments leverage additional private investment by the benefitting small business owner and leverage other private investment on nearby properties; and

WHEREAS, Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in Philadelphia have been aggressively promoting SIP and helping small business owners apply for the program in order to strengthen our neighborhood commercial corridors; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Department of Commerce had to revise the guidelines and requirements of SIP in December 2014 to comply with federal rules outside of the Department's control; and

WHEREAS, Small businesses and contractors are now deterred from participating in SIP under the revised guidelines and requirements; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,** That the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development hold a hearing on SIP and how the program can continue to serve as a tool for neighborhood economic development.