

# 1 (Rev. 2/01) COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMON COUNCIL

TO: THE COMMON COUNCIL:

DATE: October 22, 2015

FROM:

DEPARTMENT: Mayor

SUBJECT: Adopt the proposed Homestead Plan and repeal previous Homestead Plan

PRIOR COUNCIL REFERENCE:

This Honorable Body is requested to accept the new Homestead Plan which would increase the number of homestead eligible properties.

This Honorable Body has previously enacted a Homestead Plan in the City of Buffalo. While successful thus far, the plan must be modified to meet new challenges.

There are currently an estimated 5,100 abandoned houses and 12,500 vacant residential lots in Buffalo. During the past fiscal year, the city spent over \$24.5 million in local, state, and federal resources addressing these properties. Developing a comprehensive approach is essential to both lessening this cost burden and encouraging the reuse of these properties.

Since 1974, the Homestead Program has promoted redevelopment and reuse of vacant city-owned houses and lots. It was established as an Urban Renewal Plan so that properties within areas designated as blighted, deteriorated, or deteriorating could be sold for less than Fair Market Value.

To remain effective, boundaries must be regularly adjusted to align program benefits with changing markets and neighborhood dynamics. The revised Homestead Plan will allow homesteading of vacant structures throughout the city; permit new construction in residential zones of the Unified Development Ordinance; and enable homeowners to purchase an adjacent lot within HUD-eligible Low- and Moderate Income (LMI) block groups.

The Office of Strategic Planning is requesting that Your Honorable Body:

1. Repeal in its entirety the current Homestead Plan following the adoption of a Findings Statement as required by the State Environmental Quality Review Act. .
2. Adopt the attached Homestead Plan.
3. Authorize the Executive Director of the City of Buffalo's Office of Strategic Planning and/or other appropriate City staff to take all such steps and actions and to execute and/or process such additional documentation, agreements and/or modifications, amendments thereto as shall be necessary to facilitate adoption.

SIGNATURE: Byron W. Brown

DEPARTMENT HEAD NAME: Byron W. Brown

TITLE: Mayor

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