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Pennsylvania Resources Council, Inc.

"Working to protect the environment since 1939"

Effects of litter on property values

In a city often referred to as “filthadelphia” by visitors and residents alike, litter is a ubiquitous part of the city. Philadelphia is a regular on Travel and Leisure Magazine’s “Top 20 Dirtiest Cities” ranking #6 in 2016. (1) The 2009 “National Visible Litter Survey and Litter Cost Study”, commissioned by Keep America Beautiful, (2) confirms what real estate professionals already know, blight reduces property values and litter is an indicator of blight.

To measure these impacts of litter, the study surveyed homeowners, realtors, and business development officials. Here is some of what they found:

- 93% of homeowners say a littered neighborhood would decrease their assessment of a home’s value and influences their decision to purchase a property. And 40% estimated that litter would reduce a home’s value by 10% to 24%.
- 36% of business development officials say that litter impacts a decision to locate to a community.
- 55% of realtors think that litter reduces property values by about 9%.
- 60% of property appraisers would reduce a home’s value if it was littered.
- The presence of litter in a community decreases property values by a little over 7%, according to the National Association of Home Builders pricing model.

Litter is more than an eyesore and a nuisance. It is a measure of the disorderliness that negatively impacts the quality of life for most residents. A 2003 study, “Why is poverty unhealthy?” by Deborah A. Cohen, Thomas A. Farley & Karen Mason, (3) calls litter a predictor for many social ills. They cited a decrease in physical activity, increase in crime and poor relationships between neighbors as some consequences of litter.

The problem is obvious, so is the remedy. Projects like “Not In Philly” successfully attack litter, increase civic engagement and encourages neighbors to participate in the solution to the problem.

Not In Philly is a project of Pennsylvania Resources Council.

1)<http://www.travelandleisure.com/slideshows/americas-dirtiest-cities/6>

2)https://www.kab.org/sites/default/files/News%26Info_Research_LitterinAmerica_FactSheet_CostsofLittering.pdf

3)<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/671b/f3b3e003737190d18f72594d399fe8291281.pdf>