

# KDKA CBS News

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## Group Takes Protest to the Streets

*The Institute of Justice has plastered its anti- eminent domain messages in nearly a dozen locations city-wide*

(KDKA) Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy's downtown redevelopment plan is generating criticism from a Washington, DC-based watchdog group.

Denouncing Murphy's \$480 million Fifth & Forbes plan, the Institute for Justice is taking its message to the streets - in the form of a billboard campaign.

The group says the \$15,000 ad campaign is designed to educate the public about the mayor's plans to take 125 businesses through eminent domain if necessary as part of the redevelopment plan.



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Armed with messages directed to the mayor like, “Pittsburgh was built on steel -- not stealing,” and “Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s land,” the ads protest Murphy’s refusal to assure property owners that he won’t use eminent domain to take their land.

An attorney with the institute says that while the group is not opposed to development, it’s not right to take thriving existing businesses and replace them with new ones.

“The city couldn’t just level the area as they’re planning to do now,” argues IJ lawyer Dana Berliner. “What they certainly could do, though,” Berliner adds, “is engage in other kinds of redevelopment activities -- if that was even necessary in this area. So it would not prevent redevelopment, it wouldn’t prevent new retail -- but it would prevent taking a bulldozer and ripping out sixty buildings.”

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The billboards encourages viewers to call a Allegheny Institute phone line which then transfers callers to their city council member’s office where they can voice their opposition.

The Institute of Justice has plastered its messages in ten strategic locations throughout the city, and plans to leave the billboards posted for at least a month.

Mayor Murphy’s office is expected to respond to the group’s actions later today. City council is expected to vote on the downtown development plan later this summer.