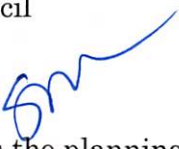


May 10, 2023

**To:** Mayor and Members of City Council  
**From:** Sheryl M. M. Long, City Manager   
**Subject:** Resolution for *Do You Live CT?* as the planning guide for the Columbia Tusculum neighborhood.

202301355

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Transmitted is a Resolution captioned:

**APPROVING** *Do You Live CT?* as the planning guide for the Columbia Tusculum neighborhood.

The City Planning Commission recommended approval of the plan at its May 05, 2023 meeting.

**Summary:**

The Department of City Planning and Engagement, along with the Columbia Tusculum Community Council (CTCC), *Do You Live CT?* steering committee and community members, are pleased to share the result of a two-and-a-half-year planning effort to create their first neighborhood-wide plan for Columbia Tusculum.

The purpose of this neighborhood plan is to establish an innovative direction for the eastern community, update it to 2023 and to plan out the next ten-to-fifteen years for the neighborhood. This plan documents Columbia Tusculum's visions for the future while focusing on four theme areas: Business, Transportation & Connections, Housing & Development, and Public Space & Community.

The City Planning Commission recommended the following on May 05, 2023, to City Council:

**APPROVE** *Do You Live CT?* as the Columbia Tusculum neighborhood's guiding comprehensive plan document.

cc: Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director, Department of City Planning and Engagement 

May 10, 2023

To: Chelsey Pettyjohn, Office of the Clerk of Council

From: Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director, Department of City Planning and Engagement <sup>KKS</sup>

Copies to: Jesse Urbancsik, Senior City Planner, Department of City Planning and Engagement

Subject: Scheduling of Resolution – Approving *Do You Live CT?* as the planning guide for the Columbia Tusculum neighborhood.

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The above referenced Resolution is requested to be scheduled for the Equitable Growth and Housing Committee and does not require a 14-day notice period.

Included in this submission are the following items:

- 1) The transmittal letter to the Mayor and City Council;
- 2) A copy of the City Planning Commission staff report dated May 05, 2023;
- 3) The Resolution (Transmitted by Law)

May 10, 2023

Cincinnati City Council  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Members of Council:

We are transmitting herewith a Resolution captioned as follows:

**APPROVING** *Do You Live CT?* as the planning guide for the Columbia Tusculum neighborhood.

The City Planning Commission recommended approval of the neighborhood plan at its May 05, 2023 meeting.

**Summary:**

The Department of City Planning and Engagement, along with the Columbia Tusculum Community Council (CTCC), *Do You Live CT?* steering committee and community members, are pleased to share the result of a two-and-a-half-year planning effort to create their first neighborhood-wide plan for Columbia Tusculum.

The purpose of this neighborhood plan is to establish an innovative direction for the eastern community, update it to 2023 and to plan out the next ten-to-fifteen years for the neighborhood. This plan documents Columbia Tusculum's visions for the future while focusing on four theme areas: Business, Transportation & Connections, Housing & Development, and Public Space & Community.

The City Planning Commission recommended the following on May 05, 2023 to City Council:

Motion to Approve: Ms. Kearney

Ayes:

Ms. Beltran

Mr. Eby

Seconded: Mr. Samad

Ms. Kearney

Mr. Samad

Mr. Stallworth

Mr. Weber

THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION



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Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director  
Department of City Planning and Engagement

**SUBJECT:** A report and recommendation on the proposed *Do You Live CT?* as the Columbia Tusculum neighborhood's guiding comprehensive plan document.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Department of City Planning and Engagement, along with the Columbia Tusculum Community Council (CTCC), *Do You Live CT?* steering committee and community members, are pleased to share the result of a two-and-a-half-year planning effort to create their first neighborhood-wide plan for Columbia Tusculum.

The purpose of this neighborhood plan is to establish an innovative direction for the eastern community, update it to 2023 and to *plan* out the next ten-to-fifteen years for the neighborhood. This plan documents Columbia Tusculum's visions for the future while focusing on four theme areas: Business, Transportation & Connections, Housing & Development, and Public Space & Community.

Neighborhood plans are crucial for residents to have a concrete vision of their neighborhood which may be used to reference and guide the future of their community. The plans make it easier to obtain grants or other funds for recommendations within their plan. Lastly, plans make it easier to get support from City Council on the direction the community wishes to proceed regarding future development and direction.

**NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROCESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

The *Do You Live CT?* planning process consisted of a two-and-a-half-year long community-led process. The Columbia Tusculum Community Council requested a neighborhood plan through the Department of City Planning and Engagement. This planning process began in early 2020, shortly before the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The kickoff meeting for *Do You Live CT?* was held on February 24, 2020 at the Carnegie Center. The kickoff was a success with over 35 residents and community members attending. This meeting allowed community members to become familiar with and learn about the neighborhood planning process and to voice their comments regarding their vision for the neighborhood. The kickoff meeting had boards and input stations showcased to gather feedback on what the priorities of the plan should be, including the plan name, *Do You Live CT?*, which was picked by residents.

The goal of the kickoff meeting was to identify the potential themes of the plan, while establishing a steering committee of residents, business owners, and community council officials who would oversee the planning process along with the Department of City Planning & Engagement. The four official theme areas were created at this time. These theme areas ultimately guided conversations between the steering committee, staff, and residents to assist them in moving forward in the formation of the goals, strategies, and action steps found in this plan. These theme areas are additionally found on p. 7 on the plan document or see "Theme Areas and Goals, Strategies, and Action Steps" section of this staff report.

The steering committee held meetings to plan future working groups and to prioritize topics and future goals. The working groups were split up and identified by the themes mentioned above. Following a pause during the Pandemic, the first working group meeting was held on June 21, 2021 at the Carnegie Center to outline the roles of each working group and to develop vision statements for each theme. The second meeting was held on September 20, 2021 with a focus on creating goals for each of the four themes. The third meeting was held on November 29, 2021 which finessed the goals and drafted strategies and action

steps for the theme areas. The last meeting was held on March 28, 2022 which finalized these strategies and action steps as well as oriented the conversations around land use and zoning. All working group meetings were notified via social media and the Department's webpage, as well as the inclusion of physical flyers in which steering committee members passed out to businesses and residences.

A total of four steering committee meetings were held, mostly virtually via Zoom due to the Pandemic, and a total of four working group meetings were hosted and held for the public. Snacks and beverages were additionally provided by generous members of the steering committee. Over 50 individuals from the Columbia Tusculum neighborhood attended or participated in providing input for this plan.

The planning process received additional support from a University of Cincinnati student, Jacob Gagnon, who curated a website that described the ongoing planning process, in addition to the draft priorities, existing conditions, history, and past plans. The webpage also enabled additional involvement from the public by allowing residents to sign up for updates, take a survey, and upload their favorite photos of the neighborhood.

This website may be accessed here: <https://do-you-live-ct-ucgissa.hub.arcgis.com/>.

**PLAN OVERVIEW:**

The neighborhood plan consists of 63 pages of detailed thoughts and goals which includes public input from a span of over more than two years. This document outlines the history, acknowledging the neighborhood's rich past and present, existing conditions, goals and strategies, and implementation timelines. This plan, created through the community-led, lengthy process, will guide Columbia Tusculum for future policy and development recommendations, investment and programming decisions, identification of key aspects for safe and viable connections, business-promotion, and community engagement.

***Introduction to the Columbia Tusculum Neighborhood***

Columbia Tusculum is located on the east side of the City of Cincinnati and is the City's oldest neighborhood. Columbia Tusculum offers a unique and historic experience to residents and visitors. Primarily a residential community, Columbia Tusculum boasts several well-known businesses such as Allyn's Café, Stanley's Pub, and The Precinct, and is home to the Carnegie Center. Containing several historic homes, Columbia Tusculum is known for its prestigious, hillside housing stock which offers beautiful views of the surroundings areas.

***Dedication to Jared Ellis***

The *Do You Live CT?* steering committee and project manager are ecstatic to dedicate this plan to former project manager and City Planner, Jared Ellis. Jared was a passionate City employee, colleague, and friend. Jared commenced the neighborhood planning process with the Columbia Tusculum community and collaborated with them before the COVID-19 Pandemic. He was the definition of the ideal public servant who was proud to serve Cincinnati and work with all 52 neighborhoods. This plan, among other efforts, will continue to carry Jared's spirit forward.

***History, Housing and Past Plans***

The history section of the plan contains a three-page summary of the history of the neighborhood, including a simple timeline and a section regarding the historical housing stock. It is interesting to note that approximately 31% of the housing stock within Columbia Tusculum was built in 1930 or before.

There have been a few plans in the past that have included Columbia Tusculum but *Do You Live CT?* is the first neighborhood plan to encapsulate the entire neighborhood. These plans included the *Neighborhood Business District Urban Renewal Study* (1996) and the *Neighborhood Business District Urban Design Plan* (1999). The neighborhood was additionally mentioned in the *East End Design Plan* (1977).

***Existing Conditions***

The existing conditions are presented in the plan with updated 2020 US Census data, highlighting information such as median income, median house value, types of households, educational attainment and more. Columbia Tusculum is the 42<sup>nd</sup> largest neighborhood in the City at just under 0.88 square miles and is bordered by Hyde Park, Mt. Lookout, Linwood and the East End. Approximately 1,500 residents reside in the neighborhood and it has a median income of \$113,000 as of the 2020 Census.

***Theme Areas and Goals, Strategies, and Action Steps***

There are four theme areas with a total of 13 goals, 26 strategies, and 69 action steps.

***Business:***

*CT strives to preserve and grow its strong collection of local businesses through emphasizing business diversity, walkability, and accessibility to Cincinnati's greatest playground while honoring our colorful heritage as Cincinnati's oldest community.*

The Business theme area has four (4) goals with eight (8) strategies and 23 action steps. The main objectives of this portion of the plan include increasing business density and developments. There is support in identifying creative options to attract new businesses, restaurants and entrepreneurial efforts while focusing on retaining and incentivizing existing small businesses.

Specific strategies outlined in this theme area include capitalizing on the proximity to existing and future bike trails, expanding and collaborating with City partnerships, and continuing to make Columbia Tusculum a unique destination by looking for opportunities to enhance social interaction via bicycle, vehicle or on foot. This plan lastly stresses the importance of business enterprises and highlights the desire to focus on small business enterprises (SBEs) and increasing opportunities for minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs), and women-owned business enterprises (WBEs).

Some innovative actions steps will allow the community to learn more about guerilla urbanism (tactical urbanism), education regarding tax incentives, participatory mechanisms where residents and stakeholders can provide input on priority reinvestment areas and incentivizing sustainable and energy efficient options for developments.

***Transportation & Connections:***

*Increasing safety and efficiency to promote a vibrant and diverse neighborhood for residents and visitors by implementing pedestrian safety, traffic calming, and beautification. Thereby creating connectivity within a balanced network of transportation and recreation options including enhanced roads, walkways, and trails.*

The Transportation & Connections theme area has four (4) goals, ten (10) strategies and 27 action steps. This theme area has the most action steps compared to the other three theme

areas. Transportation and connections are vital for thriving neighborhoods and the main objective of this section and reiterates the action steps of the Business theme area by promoting bike trail usage and continuing trail/biking efforts.

Specific innovative outcomes highlighted in this section include pursuing grants for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, conducting a neighborhood-wide transportation preference study, and engaging landscape architectural professionals and City resources for new streetscape efforts on top of street calming ideas.

***Housing & Development:***

*CT is a community embracing its historic roots and is inclusive of all incomes and backgrounds. We strive to maximize the 15-minute community model with an emphasis on walkability and accessibility, integrate business assets and housing in a safe and “green” way, and grow with a diverse range of structure types, sizes, costs, and uses.*

The Housing & Development theme area has two (2) goals, four (4) strategies and five (5) action steps. Columbia Tusculum wants to embrace and promote density within their neighborhood by providing and increasing a full spectrum of housing options and price points by focusing not just on single-family, but also only two-, three-, and four-family units including multi-family developments.

One of the action steps in this section specifically states to support the future inclusion of accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

***Public Space & Community:***

*Building on our history, CT is committed to developing and preserving a safe, walkable neighborhood filled with charm and areas for recreation and community engagement.*

The Public Space & Community theme area has three (3) goals, four (4) strategies and 13 action steps. The ideas in this theme area focus on continuing the connections with existing organizations such as Alms Park Allies, Cincinnati Park Advisory Council, 3 East Business Association, CROWN, and more. The neighborhood wants to continue to leverage the existing organizations and highlight all what Alms Park and Columbia Tusculum have to offer.

Lastly, Columbia Tusculum has a unique charm to it, also sometimes being known as the “San Francisco of Cincinnati”. This plan identifies these historic assets and roots and prioritizes the ongoing maintenance of existing historic buildings and aesthetic details with specific action steps of creating a historic maintenance plan and considering revisions to the Historic District Conservation Guidelines.

***Existing Land Use and Zoning***

The majority of Columbia Tusculum is predominantly residential, specifically single-family residential consisting of nearly half of the zoning within the neighborhood. Alms Park makes up 30 percent of the neighborhood. The existing land use and zoning maps may be found on p. 39 and p. 40 in the plan.

### ***Future Land Use and Existing Overlay Areas/Tools***

Future land use is important for neighborhoods, and the City as a whole, and is integral to building and managing the future of properties and vacant land. Considerate planning may also reduce environmental footprint, promote social connectivity, support transportation options, and enhance communities. Columbia Tusculum additionally has tools implemented within the neighborhood to help preserve its spirit and keep it unique.

Columbia Tusculum currently has an Urban Design Plan and a significant portion is located within an Urban Design Overlay District (UDOD). UDODs (referenced in Chapter 1437 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code) are intended to protect and enhance the physical character of the business district, prevent the deterioration of property and blighted conditions, encourage private investment to improve and stimulate the economic vitality and social character of selected business districts, and to ensure that infill development does not adversely affect the physical character of the area.

Columbia Tusculum is known for its vast hillsides. The majority of the community is located within the Hillside Overlay District which is an overlay district that mandates any development within this area to specific regulations to ensure the design is up to standards due to the steep topography.

Historic Districts (referenced in Chapter 1435-07-01 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code) are commonly found throughout Cincinnati, 26 in total, and Columbia Tusculum has one as well, the Columbia Tusculum Historic District. All of these districts mandate special requirements to continue preserving the neighborhood's character. They are comprised of two or more parcels and contain two or more Historic Assets typical of one or more eras in the city's history or representing an assemblage of structures important to the city's history.

Ideas for the future include preserving hillsides and ensuring that future development is consistent with homes and hillside standards and increase commercial density where appropriate within the neighborhood business district.

### ***Implementation Charts and Additional Appendices***

The Appendix includes implementation charts for each of the four (4) theme areas. The charts provide the following information on each action step within the plan's strategies and goals:

- *Time Frame:* The time frames are approximations of how long it would take an action step to be completed, ranging anywhere from 3 months up to 10 years, including multiple ongoing items.
- *Priority Level:* The priority level was determined by the steering committee in collaboration with City staff.
- *Potential Partners:* This identifies additional organizations that could assist in the completion of the action steps such as other City Departments, businesses, Tri-State Trails, and Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI).

### **CONSISTENCY WITH PLAN CINCINNATI (2012):**

*Do You Live CT?* is constructed upon and consistent with the comprehensive plan for the City of Cincinnati, *Plan Cincinnati*, that was adopted by City Council in 2012. The plan is consistent with all five Initiative Areas of *Plan Cincinnati* - Compete, Connect, Live, Sustain, and Collaborate. These Initiative Areas align with the Guiding Policy Principles by increasing our population, building on our assets, becoming



recognized, being aggressive and strategic in future growth and development, and to develop a culture of health embodied by thriving residents.

### ***Compete Initiative Area***

Goal to “Foster a climate conducive to growth, investment, stability, and opportunity” (p. 102) and Goal to “Become nationally and internationally recognized as a vibrant and unique city” (p. 121). As it states in *Plan Cincinnati*, “Cincinnati is a special place...our distinctive housing, unique and walkable neighborhoods...Cincinnati can begin to grow into a large city while maintaining the benefits of a smaller community” (p. 122).

Columbia Tusculum has stated their goals to increase business density, invest in multi-modal connection between businesses and the community, turn the attention to local business programs and certifications, and to continue promoting and encouraging affordability options in the business world. Emphasizing the importance of Business Enterprises is specially outlined in Goal 3 of this section, focusing on small business enterprises, minority owned business enterprises, and women-owned business enterprises.

### ***Connect Initiative Area***

Goal to “Develop an efficient multi-modal transportation system that supports neighborhood livability” (p. 129) and the Strategy to “Support regional and intercity transportation initiatives” (p. 144). Columbia Tusculum plans to capitalize on regional bicycle connections while promoting pedestrian safety and connectivity throughout the neighborhood. They intend to additionally promote access to quality transportation alternatives and to enhance community character while expanding its transportation infrastructure.

### ***Live Initiative Area***

Goals to “Build a robust public life” (p. 149), “Create a more livable community” (p. 156), and “Provide a full spectrum of housing options, and improve housing quality and affordability” (p. 164) and the Strategies to “Develop and maintain inviting and engaging public spaces to encourage social interaction between different types of people” (p. 150), “Become more walkable” (p. 157), and to “Support and stabilize our neighborhoods” (p. 160). Columbia Tusculum may have a high house value, however they plan to embrace and promote density throughout the entire neighborhood while continue embracing its roots and welcoming individuals from all backgrounds and incomes.

### ***Sustain Initiative Area***

Goal to “Become a healthier Cincinnati” (p. 181), specifically through the Strategies to “Preserve our natural and built environment” (p. 193), “Protect our natural resources” (p. 194) and to “Preserve our built history” (p. 197). Preserving the historic assets of Cincinnati’s oldest neighborhood is extremely vital. Columbia Tusculum has stated in its goals some sustainable ideas such as promoting group ride share trips to Downtown or other destinations and partnering with OES to pursue grants for public EV charging stations in the neighborhood.

### ***Collaborate Initiative Area***

Goal to “Work in synergy with the Cincinnati community” (p. 209) and the Strategy to “Unite our communities” (p. 210). The Public Space & Community theme area is very consistent with this Initiative Area as Columbia Tusculum will continue fostering relationships with the community while celebrating its historic charm and ensuring complete, safe connections within the neighborhood.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommends that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

**APPROVE** the proposed *Do You Live CT?* plan as the Columbia Tusculum neighborhood's guiding comprehensive plan document.

Respectfully submitted:



Jesse Urbancsik, Senior City Planner  
Department of City Planning and Engagement

Approved:



Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director  
Department of City Planning and Engagement