

I am writing to voice my objection to the
SID assessment. I strongly oppose these
fcs. Not only are these services ones which
the city should provide already, the fcs
are exorbitant compared to the services
rendered. I pick up garbage on my street and
in the alley behind me on a regular basis,
as do my neighbors (Republic Street), so we
are getting little benefit to the "services" being
offered.

CLERK OF COUNCIL

25SEP20AM10:59

Obviously, I voted against this SID assessment.

Thank you.

Orana Deng



Crawford, Nicole

From: Margy Waller
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 3:06 PM
To: ClerkOfCouncilEmail
Subject: [External Email] Objection to Special Assessment

External Email Communication

Dear Clerk of Council.

Pursuant to ORC 727.15, I am writing to file an objection to the proposed assessment of my property at _____ Cincinnati, OH _____ as part of a plan to assess property owners of the so-called "Over-the-Rhine South Special Improvement District".

I was notified of this plan in an unsigned letter from the Clerk of Council received on September 19, 2020.

I called the Clerk's office to ask about filing this objection and was told to send this email.

Margy Waller



Crawford, Nicole

From: Lisa Bohman
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 8:03 AM
To: ClerkOfCouncilEmail
Subject: [External Email] SID in OTR

External Email Communication

To the Clerk of Council -

I am writing to express my lack of support in the SID plans. The letter received last week made it sound like it was already approved and that we couldn't provide feedback. I thought there was going to be a vote that required 60% owner approval before this was passed.

I live on a small residential street where we do not need the 'benefits' of the SID. Instead, it feels as if we would be paying for benefits to the businesses. If they are services the businesses need then they should pay for them. My house has a mostly unused alley (aside from me and my neighbor driving to our driveways) that I am sure will not be taken care of despite my being charged for it. I do not want to pay for services I do not receive nor need.

From Lisa Bohman

Crawford, Nicole

From: E McEwan
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 12:23 AM
To: ClerkOfCouncilEmail
Subject: [External Email] My objection to the OTR South SID district

External Email Communication

Dear Councilmembers and Clerk of Council-

I am a private property owner and resident of Over-the-Rhine asking that Council please vote **in objection** to the establishment of a SID improvement district in South OTR.

My neighbors and I received notice last week, by way of certified mail, of the establishment of this district. This was the first formal notice we have received regarding this SID district. Apart from casual mentions on social media, **we have received zero engagement or information about this program.**

We believed we would have more time--14 days, according to the notice--to gather our opinions regarding the issue but I just saw a news article that stated Council is set to approve this new program today (Sept 23).

It has certainly not been 14 days since we received the notice.

A little bit about me and my reasons for objecting to the SID district--

I live on a residential street where most of our homes are owner-occupied. We clean up and shovel our own sidewalks. We take care of our own property and each other. If the estimates available on the OTRSouthSid.com website are accurate, our tiny little street will be responsible for more than \$5,000 of the tax burden, annually, for this SID program.

Frankly, our money would be better spent here on our own street and alleyway.

I would be happy to pay my 11 year old son to rake the leaves or donate \$220 (my estimated yearly cost) to improve our shared sidewalks or alleyways, but I refuse to pay for someone else to pick up a bar patron's discarded litter six blocks away.

The impression I've received due to the "hush-hush" nature of this program up until now and the speed at which it's being pushed through **during a pandemic** (when the average resident is simply not paying attention to things like this and does not attend public hearings/meetings) is that this SID district was created for the purpose of increasing **investment capital for for-profit property owners and non-resident business owners.**

It seems to me that the tax liability for a program like this should rest on the shoulders of the people who will benefit financially from it most--them.

I simply don't understand why a for-profit company should not pay **its own employees** to clean its property and why landlords cannot hold **their residents and visitors** responsible for cleaning their own living space. If bar and restaurant patrons make too much of a mess on Vine Street on Saturday evening, then bar and restaurant staff should be paid to clean up the mess on Sunday morning.

This is how a community functions in cooperation. **It cleans up after itself**

Regarding maintenance of public alleyways, sidewalks, and streets, there are already city maintenance plans and funds in place to pay for these services. They are certainly slow and, often, inefficient, but this SID district constitutes a **duplication of services**.

Even if I could be convinced of the necessity for a SID in OTR, there are **too many questions** left unanswered at this point to move forward with the SID district as it's been proposed.

Among them--

- Do we have any idea whether the largest stakeholders in the neighborhood plan to opt out of the program? (The City of Cincinnati, for example. Will they be paying their estimated \$75,000 annually in contributions to the program?)
- **What will the actual cost be to private property owners** after those who are exempt choose to opt out of the program? The estimated costs provided are based on every property owner paying their share. If churches and public entities opt out, for example, will the rest of us be saddled with the cost of a 3/4 Million dollar program?
- Why are churches exempt and not other nonprofits? Why should community organizations such as the Peaslee Neighborhood Center (whose estimated yearly cost is almost \$1,800) be forced to pay for this service if they don't need/want it?
- Who are the "60% of front footage or 75% of assessed value" owners who have already shown support for this district? **The Community Council, which is the formal representative voice of the residents, has opposed it.** If I and my neighbors never received formal notification before now, asking for our vote regarding its establishment, who supports this? Are they homeowners and residents or absentee landlords and business owners? It seems that the only people the planning committee has engaged in the process thus far are--intentionally--those who will benefit most. The rest of us--those who will pay for services they do not need, nor want--have been intentionally left out of the process.
- Why is there not an "opt out" for resident property owners who are willing to clean and maintain their own residential areas? If the majority of the "mess" is in commercial and entertainment districts, why should residents pay the cost?
- **How is this different from the services already provided** by the Department of Public Services, DOTE, etc. and their contracted partners? Will we be getting a real estate and city tax refund for any duplicated services?
- Isn't it a **conflict of interest** to hire 3CDC to oversee the services outlined in this program when they are also such large stakeholders in the neighborhood? Could residents choose other trusted contractors such as Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, etc., to provide services?
- Do we know how the money will *actually* be spent? The provided outlines I've found online do not really tell us anything specific about services provided and, yet, the cost seems astronomical in total. (I often watch a downtown Ambassador snooze in my alleyway during the day while he's being paid to work. Will we be paying for more like him?)

How can this resolution be passed without these questions answered for Over-the-Rhine property owners who bear the financial burden of the program?

I would be happy to speak to you personally about my concerns but I know this issue is urgent and I wanted to send my objection as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth McEwan

Crawford, Nicole

From: William Slone
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 8:43 AM
To: ClerkOfCouncilEmail
Subject: [External Email] Regarding the notice of special assessments

External Email Communication

To Whom It May Concern:

Opening the undated letter describing the Council's resolution of September 2, 2020 was one of my greatest disappointments in the City of Cincinnati.

To be clear: I strongly object to the Over-the-Rhine South Special Improvement District and this process for attempting to establish it.

I have lived in Over-the-Rhine since the year 2000 and have experienced a great deal in that time. I have been a homeowner in the neighborhood for seventeen years. I have been very involved in numerous neighborhood initiatives ranging for the City's Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan and mentoring programs for at-risk youth to ongoing arts events. Since moving here I have also made conscious and consistent efforts to support neighborhood businesses from Main Street to Vine Street to Findlay Market.

In the last eighteen months I attended two different meetings regarding the proposed ballot initiative for a SID for Over-the-Rhine south of Liberty. These meetings were put on by those proposing the SID. During each of those meetings, held roughly a year apart, it was stated that Ohio laws require the establishment of a SID to go through a specific process to allow property owners to vote on it. Any unreturned ballot would simply be counted as a No vote in order to ensure the fairness of protecting property owners from an improperly established levy.

In both of those meetings I asked the organizers if they had sought to reduce the cost to the minimum of absolutely needed services and expenses. Their answer was, "No." I asked if they had first sought to establish funding for their initiatives that did not rely on co-opting the power of taxation. Their answer was, "No."

Those proposing the SID had reached out to many property owners individually, and the most vocal and active supporter of the SID stated to many of them that he was keeping a spreadsheet of how each property owner would vote. The point being, once the spreadsheet showed that the required threshold had been crossed the initiative would go to the ballot.

Early this year, multiple social media posts were made by one supporter of the SID, and these posts stated it would be on a spring ballot. That did not happen. A few times this year, neighbors asked each other if they had received anything, and none had.

Then of course last Friday, September 18, residents received a letter saying that the City Council had resolved to create the SID on September 2. It is difficult to understand how Council would have held a vote to approve such a thing without first gathering public input. It is difficult to understand why the individual Council members felt this was in any way a fair or equitable thing to do to residents of Over-the-Rhine, to residents of Cincinnati.

The SID, as described by those proposing and supporting it, would primarily help to make the neighborhood clean and safe.

The difficulties with maintaining clean public spaces in Over-the-Rhine are caused primarily by individuals who do not live in this neighborhood. I state that firm personal opinion based, again, on twenty years of living here, walking the neighborhood for the majority of my basic shopping and living needs. I believe that most acts of litter and graffiti are done by people who do not live here.

I have also had numerous conversations with law enforcement members of varying levels confirming this.

This fact combined with the stated goals of the for-profit businesses that support the SID is to increase the marketability of Over-the-Rhine businesses means you are taxing people's home in order to underwrite private businesses. Supporting local businesses is of course not an objectionable goal, but to put the cost of supporting any businesses on the tax bill of a select set of homeowners is so objectionable that it seems in every way to be un-American.

This is because I cannot think of one of these vocal SID-supporting business owners who lives here—or ever has lived here.

This SID literally levies a special tax on residents' homes in order to support the businesses of people who do not live in this neighborhood or possibly even this city, county or state. I cannot understand how any elected city official thinks this is a justified thing to do.

And I do not understand how any elected official would think it right to levy some citizens more than others in order to provide for their safety. Again, when the levy is based on where in the city one lives even though the majority of the crime is committed by those who don't live in that neighborhood it is even more difficult to understand.

Any elected official who supports this unjust removal of their voters' money in order to financially benefit business owners who live in other cities will forever be remembered for it. To propose during this during a time of great local, national and global distress as so many deal with the health and economic effects of a pandemic is unconscionable. This levy and the process to even consider it has been hidden from public view, cloaked in legalese and certainly seems to have resulted from backroom maneuvering.

This should not be allowed to stand.

Sincerely,

William N. Slone

Crawford, Nicole

From: Ryan Smith
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 9:26 AM
To: ClerkOfCouncilEmail
Subject: [External Email] OTR South SID Review: 9-23-20

External Email Communication

Good morning,

On 9-21-20 I received a certified letter re the newly enacted OTR South SID assessment. The letter states that the Services Plan and assessments are available for inspection at your office.

I am the President of our OTR condo HOA, so at a minimum I would like to review my individual property, along with all HOA properties if possible so I may forward that information to all HOA owners.

Can you forward me a digital copy of all said documents, specifically the assessment estimates? If not, how may I review these in person, to include any issues with Covid, etc.

Thank you,

Ryan Smith

September 19, 2020

RE: Special Assessments within the Proposed Special Improvement District (SID)

To Who It May Concern:

This is within regards to the recent Notice to Property Owners of Special Assessments which was apparently passed by Cincinnati City Council and the State of Ohio on Sept 2nd, 2020.

For the record I received the official notice today, September 19, 2020.

I, as a property owner within the "proposed" Special Improvement District, due duly object to the enactment of this order on the grounds that the committee pushing this through did not fully comply with their own agenda regarding the surveying and voting of the property owners within the Special Improvement District.

On November 26th, 2019 the Special Improvement District "Working Committee/Group" held a public forum at Memorial Hall in Over-The-Rhine. They briefed residents on the proposals of the "SID" and their final point from their presentation was that they would be mailing surveys and "voting" to the property owners within a few months. That was the absolute last I heard of this until receiving your letter this evening. I have no record of casting of vote on the matter in the last few months.

I feel the current property owners of OTR are being taken advantage of during a time that more people are leaving this area than ever before. There is more property available on the market currently than there ever has been. Meanwhile, outside of the downtown area, property owners are putting their houses up for sale and having multiple competing offers within 24hrs. This doesn't exist at the current time within the downtown SID. Downtown and the areas within the "SID" have residents that no longer wish to live here anymore given the COVID-19 circumstances. Our building of 9 units has lost 3 residents within the last 6 months.

The committee behind the supposed Special Improvement District is trying to push their idea through at the expense of the residents. Many of the members on this committee are not going to be responsible for a paying an assessment and want their agenda/project pushed through no matter what.

I fully reject the idea of a Special Improvement District within the boundaries defined by the Committee. The area within is recessing in time as businesses close. More and more people will leave from these neighborhoods and the new property owners will be left with a ridiculous assessment cleaning up an area that very few people will visit.

**Thank you for your time,
Daniel Johnson**

Sept 18, 2020

To Whom it may Concern:

I object to the "special assessments" placed on residents of OTR property, as dated by your memo of 9/2/20. I just received this notice on 9/18/20.

Please register this objection to the
ASSESSMENT EQUALIZATION BOARD.

THANK YOU,

MARY FINCH



Cincinnati, OH