



**Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney**  
Councilmember

202101619

April 28, 2021

## MOTION

WE MOVE that Cincinnati City Council allocate \$40,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act to The Avondale Development Corporation (ADC) for the Avondale Fence Art Project in order to recruit neighborhood youth to ADC's Youth Ambassadors Program while beautifying and uplifting Avondale's business district. The Avondale Fence Art Project is one of the initiatives of the Avondale Safety Group that was formed in November 2020 because of escalating gun violence in the neighborhood, and particularly in the business district on Burnet Avenue. The Avondale Community Council, Avondale Development Corporation, Uptown Consortium, residents, ministers, and property owners joined together with Councilmember Kearney's Office to form the Avondale Safety Group in November 2020.

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## STATEMENT

**Purpose:** Recruit Avondale youth, especially those who seem to be heading in the direction of negative life choices, to paint art on placards on a temporary 2,900 SF fence in the Avondale Business District. Use the relationships built through this project to recruit the youth to the Avondale Development Corporation's newly formed Youth Ambassadors Program.

**Background:** In 2020, Avondale experienced more gun violence than any other Cincinnati neighborhood. Several murders occurred in the heart of the Avondale Business District on Burnet and Forest. Due to problems with loitering, Cincinnati Police Dept. District 4 asked the Uptown Consortium to put a temporary fence around a large vacant expanse of land in the Avondale Business District. Beth Robinson, president & CEO of the Uptown Consortium suggested some sort of positive messaging on the fence. In November 2020, Ms. Robinson asked Councilmember Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney to convene an Avondale Safety Group to work with the Avondale Community Council, Avondale Development Corporation, Uptown Consortium, residents, ministers, POAH Properties, business owners and other stakeholders.

At the initial meeting, it was said that youth are feeling "hopeless and bored," and these conditions are leading some to move toward gang life. Councilmember Kearney proposed using the temporary fence as a way of building community engagement with the youth, and bringing them into ADC's Youth Ambassadors Program.

**PLAN:** Artist Brent Billingsley, a therapist at Children's Hospital, led South Avondale School children in creating a mural on a large wall at the school. See attached article. He currently has plans for a Truth and Reconciliation art project across the city and proposes to use the Avondale fence as one of the sites for the paintings of iconic figures. Although the fence is temporary, the art will be permanent. Upon the fence being removed in a year or longer, the panels will be moved to another site.

**Cost:** Artist Brent Billingsley recommends approximately 20 youth as the painters. He and another artist will organize and lead the work. He estimates that the cost for materials will be \$30,000, and he recommends about \$10,000 to compensate the artists and youth for labor, for a total cost of \$40,000. The youth will be recruited by the Avondale Development Corporation.