

November 6, 2023

To: Mayor and Members of City Council
From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager
Subject: Self Evaluation 2022-2023

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I am excited and humbled to have reached a major milestone in my career as a public servant: one year as City Manager, at a moment when the Administration, Mayor, and Council are perfectly aligned in our efforts to lead the great city of Cincinnati. As many of you have heard me describe, a major theme of my first year as City Manager—and one that I expect to maintain going forward—is the notion of *breaking things down to build them back up*.

This theme became paramount during the development of the FY24 budget, where our challenge was to envision and maintain more effective, equitable, and impactful service delivery, but with less money available to do so. Also, the support of a Mayor and Council who have said they are prepared to “make the difficult decisions,” has allowed me to lead the team and provide a space in which they are comfortable really digging in deep to their operations and challenging the status quo. In this context, “breaking it down” was taking a close look at our operations, using data to determine what works and what doesn’t, and being transparent about what could be changed. Then, “building back up” involved designing efficient, creative, and sometimes envelope-pushing deployments to get the job done.

Our Strategic Initiative Execution Teams (SIET) were also borne of the theme of *breaking things down to build them back up*. SIET is a collaborative, data-driven project to analyze and improve our City operations, designed to investigate our status quo and ensure that we aren’t simply doing things for the sake of having always done them in a certain way.

SIET’s objectives—People-Centered Leadership, Customer Experience, Data-Driven Culture, Equity-Focused Delivery, and Open Dialogue with Community—match the broader goals of the most recent budget that we developed together, demonstrating the degree to which the elected and administrative wings of City government are aligned on what’s best for Cincinnati. As you will read below, our joint efforts to innovate and improve City policies and processes have been successful by any variety of measures.

I thank you for the opportunity to review my first year as City Manager and look forward to our future success as leaders, collaborators, and public servants.

Mission Statement

Through collaboration with our community and partners, we will work to preserve and improve our residents' lives by delivering effective, friendly, and efficient services.

We will employ the following strategies in pursuit of our mission:

- **People** – Create disciplined leaders at all levels of City operations who are passionate and committed to our mission, and who work effectively to accomplish it.
- **Accountability** – Develop a culture and practice that understands the importance of setting performance goals, measuring our progress, and following through on direction and obligations.
- **Focus** – Create strategic alignment around a common set of outcomes and prioritize resources and actions to advance them.
- **Collaboration** – Develop a culture and practice of collaborating, listening, and communicating with our colleagues, elected officials, partners, and community.
- **Impact** – Maximize impact through efficient use of resources, leveraging technology, optimizing revenues, and continual evaluation of the effectiveness of existing resource investments.
- **Equity** – Adopt an intentional, aggressive, and transparent approach to addressing inequities in our community through action at every level of city operations.

I. Excellent & Equitable Service Delivery

From the day I was appointed City Manager, I have felt aligned with this Mayor and Council on a key tenet: that Cincinnatians deserve a government that is accessible to all, and a City in which equity is a cornerstone. Unfortunately, basic functions of local government often fail to abide by these standards. The stereotypical “bureaucracy” and “red tape” associated with government practices can be signals that accessibility and equity are not valued enough to be considered when developing systems and processes.

To identify and address issues with Cincinnati’s service delivery, I have relied on expert employees, leveraged outside partnerships, and created new programs that center on accessibility and equity.

Strategic Initiative Execution Teams (SIET)

With a focus on successfully driving key strategic initiatives, I asked three questions: “What do we want to achieve?” (goals); “How can we achieve it?” (objectives); and “What will we do to achieve it?” (initiatives).

Five goals were identified:

1. **Public Safety** – Prevent criminal activity and protect the wellbeing of residents, communities, and organizations.
2. **Growing Economic Opportunity** – Ensure all residents and businesses have access to the tools they need to achieve economic stability and prosperity.
3. **Thriving Neighborhoods** – Ensure all residents have access to affordable, clean, and beautiful neighborhoods.
4. **Fiscal Sustainability** – Ensure the City plans for long-term financial stability that is reflective of the needs of the community.
5. **Excellent and Equitable Service Delivery** – Ensure the City delivers best-in-class services to every resident.

In November 2022, the Strategic Initiative Execution Teams (SIET) initiative was created to establish a framework and supporting routines toward a more proactive, collaborative, and disciplined approach to citywide decision-making.

The objectives of SIET are:

- **Identify, document, and communicate** the City's goals and objectives;
- **Prioritize and align resources** with our objectives;
- **Drive intentionality and accountability** for initiatives most critical to achieving our strategic objectives;
- Encourage and formalize **cross-departmental collaboration** for effective problem-solving;
- Promote **informed, coordinated, and efficient decision-making** in all levels of city operations.

SIET cohorts were designed to drive critical initiatives that support the City's identified strategic goals. These cohorts comprise department and program leaders who push tasks forward to support progress in the following focus areas:

- Housing & Economic Development
- Equity & Opportunity
- Financial Stability & Budget Management
- Service Delivery & Innovation
- Accessible Government
- Public Safety & Criminal Justice
- Pedestrian Safety, Sustainability, & Transportation Infrastructure

The SIET framework allows us to closely manage a diversified portfolio of projects. Designed to be dynamic and responsive to city needs, SIET has been leveraged to rapidly move from idea through implementation for programs such as Alternative Response to Crisis (ARC) and the Cincinnati Financial Freedom Blueprint.

Performance Management and Evaluation Programs

The Department Performance Management Process facilitates the creation of service catalogs and performance measures. Through this process, departments communicate what they do and select performance measures to monitor service delivery. Each department measures their top

10 performance metrics and tracks data using dashboards operated by department directors and the City Manager's Office. The departments of Buildings & Inspections, Transportation & Engineering, Community & Economic Development, Economic Inclusion, Planning & Engagement, Citizen Complaint Authority, Enterprise Technology Solutions, and Emergency Communications Center have completed this process. The Department of Public Services, Cincinnati Police Department, Department of Human Resources, Law, Greater Cincinnati Water Works, and Metropolitan Sewer District are currently underway.

The Evaluation process was also established earlier this year. Evaluation allows us to understand if we are achieving the desired program impact. For example, the ARC evaluation showed that the program was successful and should be expanded. This led to additional funding in the FY24 budget.

Data Solutions

As we continue to build a more data-driven culture within the City Administration, we have launched an enterprise-wide approach to monitoring key strategic areas. Our portfolio of *State of the Enterprise* dashboards already includes *State of the Workforce* and *State of Service Requests*, with *State of the Fleet* and *State of the Budget* in progress. This is a critical first step toward understanding our opportunities for continued improvement. Two immediate wins stemming from this effort: increases in service requests categorized "services close out by planned end dates" (52% increase YOY), and measured customer satisfaction rates (93% this calendar year).

Innovation Program: Procurement Working Group

Through the procurement innovation working group, a cross-departmental team identified both short- and long-term opportunities for increased process efficiency in the procurement space. Several quick-turn opportunities have already been implemented, including right-sizing the City Manager approval process; updating the DEI goal sheet with instructions and offering quarterly trainings for the goal determination process; DEI staff requirements at pre-bid meetings for contracts with prevailing wage; and streamlining EEO compliance review. Long-term projects the group is currently working toward include establishing standard goals for the most common commodity codes, improving workflow efficiencies, and improving the quality of training tools and materials.

Innovation Program: HR

The HR working group successfully launched the all-employee Temp Check Survey during Open Enrollment this fall. Data from this survey will provide the City Manager's Office with clear insights and feedback from the workforce regarding workplace satisfaction. Additionally, the working group is focused on our hiring and onboarding processes, with an eye towards hiring the best candidates in a competitive labor market.

Under my leadership, the City of Cincinnati officially partnered with Xavier University to offer City staff tuition discounts on more than 40 educational and professional development

programs. Employees can now receive a 25% tuition discount on Xavier's [Accelerated Undergraduate Degree Programs](#) and 15% off Xavier's [Graduate Degree Programs](#) or [Professional Development Programs and Certificates](#).

This year, the City of Cincinnati was named a recovery friendly employer. We join Hamilton County Public Health in our commitment to creating healthy, safe, and stigma-free work environments through the [Recovery Friendly Hamilton County \(RFHC\) Initiative](#). Recovery friendly employers encourage environments where employers, employees, and communities can collaborate to create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by substance use. To achieve a high level of employee health, safety, and productivity, we will educate, share resources with, and encourage all employees to reach out for help and support to overcome and treat substance use disorders.

Employee Resource Groups

Employee Resource Groups are a critical component for our workforce to feel supported and heard. This year, we have expanded the use of this tool, to now include the African American Women's Employee Resource Group. The inaugural meeting was held October 19, 2023, and I am proud to have been asked to speak to the group. We recognize that City employees are as diverse as the population we serve and we must create spaces where they can receive resources and training and create community. I've also worked closely with our City Pride resource group for LGBTQIA+ employees, Women in Fire, and Women of Water Works.

IT Systems Investments: OnBase

OnBase is a comprehensive document management, workflow automation, and case management system aimed at streamlining operations. Digitizing and centralizing documents reduces the City's reliance on paper, enhances collaboration, and ensures data security and compliance, ultimately improving productivity and lowering costs. OnBase gives us the ability to establish standardized processes, ensure consistency in operations, and retrieve valuable data for analytics and performance monitoring.

In the Law and Procurement departments, OnBase is replacing some of the city's legacy Microsoft Access applications with more robust and scalable solutions. These departments now have access to more extensive data analysis, improved multi-user support, and the ability to adapt to changing business needs.

One example of OnBase's success: the Law department launched a Request for Legal Services system launched in October, and received 138 trackable, actionable entries in the first eight days.

Operational Realignment: CAGIS

The Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System (CAGIS) is a powerful partnership between the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, along with several other stakeholders. In order to maximize the impact of the CAGIS staff talent and capacity and deliver operational improvement, I led a realignment of CAGIS management in the FY24 budget.

Management of CAGIS was moved from ETS to OPDA, so that the two teams can work in better coordination on furthering the objective of increased data-based management practices. Already this alignment has paid off by facilitating an overhaul of the Customer Service Request system in tandem with the consolidation of 311 services.

311Cincy Customer Service Program

In 2022, the City of Cincinnati established 311 telephone service as part of an initiative to streamline access to city services.

The 311Cincy Customer Service program is now the City's overall non-emergency customer service system. This includes our 311 call center, online service request system, and mobile app.

In October 2022, the customer service call-taking function within the Department of Public Services, which had operated during business hours, was merged into the larger call center at the Emergency Communications Center, which had also processed many types of non-emergency requests. Now, within ECC, a consolidated 311 call center has the bandwidth to answer calls 24/7, making the city more accessible to our residents and visitors. Our 311 call-takers are equipped to answer common questions and accept requests for services on behalf of many city agencies.

Recently, we've adopted a system that automatically sends a text message confirmation to 311 customers with their service request number, as well as a link that allows them to check on the status of their request.

In its first year of full operation, the 311 center answered more than 70,000 customer service calls. Across all platforms (including those that came in through the call center, or self-serve on the website and mobile app), more than 100,000 new customer service requests (CSRs) were created.

We have realized a 52% increase year-over-year in percentage of CSRs closed by their planned end date.

Recently, ECC has begun surveying 311 callers, asking them about their satisfaction with the 311 call-taker's performance while handling their call. ECC's 311 call-takers have achieved a 94.6% satisfaction rate.

Accessibility

My office is committed to ensuring that each community member has equitable access to the City's programs, services, and activities. In July 2023, the City released the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self Evaluation and Improvement Plan RFP. This work will ensure that the City not only meets federal accessibility standards but exceeds them.

With a focus on amplifying the voices of people with disabilities, the Cincinnati Accessibility Board of Advisors (CABA) is a mayor-appointed advisory board which considers and makes recommendations to the City Manager on issues of accessibility for people with disabilities. CABA's goal is to make Cincinnati more inclusive and accessible.

Our accessibility work—including the aforementioned RFP and continued collaboration with CABA—is bolstered by the hiring of Tonia Smith as Assistant to the City Manager (Chief Advocacy Officer for Aging and Accessibility). Tonia, a Master Certified Health Education Specialist and Registered Environmental Health Specialist, has worked for the City for more than 25 years, most recently managing the Health Department's Healthy Communities program. She joined the City Manager's Office in April 2023.

CAFE

In September 2023, the City of Cincinnati received the distinction of being recognized as a Certified Age Friendly Employer™ (CAFE) by the Age-Friendly Institute. The CAFE designation confirms the City's commitment to the retention and recruiting of age 50+ workers on an "age friendly" or age-neutral basis.

For CAFE consideration, the City underwent a structured evaluation of its human resources and management policies and practices, which focused on the following best practices: General Commitment and Workforce Policies; Training and Development; Organization Culture and Employee Relations; Job Content and Process Accommodations; Workforce Planning and Composition; Work Schedules, Arrangements, and Time Off; Employee Retention; Compensation Programs; Candidate Recruiting; Healthcare Benefits; Management Style and Practices; and Savings and Retirement Benefits.

GARE

With a keen understanding of the power and influence of local government in creating and maintaining racial inequity, my office is leading the way in operationalizing the City's commitment to achieving racial equity.

In April 2023, the City of Cincinnati joined the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a national network of over 400 jurisdictions working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. An internal Racial Equity Core Team, responsible for designing, coordinating, and organizing racial equity plans and activities, was formed to lead work focused on equitable systems change.

Personnel and Employee Development

Attracting, retaining, and developing talent was a priority for me in my first year as I focused on our workforce and filling key director-level vacancies. Immediately upon my appointment, I began work on the selection process for our 16th Police Chief. It was important to conduct an exhaustive, transparent search that allowed everyone to have a voice in the process. To inform my hiring decision, I relied on survey feedback from CPD staff and the community, participated in a forum to hear from local business leaders, spoke to CPD staff at roll calls, hosted two

community forums to provide residents with the opportunity to meet and ask questions of the finalists, and provided one-on-one touchpoints for Councilmembers and the candidates. I kept Councilmembers and the public apprised of each stage of the process through FYI memos and press releases. In the end, then-Interim Chief Teresa Theetge proved to be the best choice and I was proud to hire her as the first female police chief in the department's history. I paired her appointment as chief with accountability measures to ensure that our police department continues to thrive and that residents receive unparalleled public safety services.

With several director-level positions vacant or in interim status, I wanted to build the right team and provide stability for our staff City-wide. During my first year as City Manager, I am proud of the talented leadership team I have assembled including permanent director hires for Human Resources, ETS, Communications, Human Services, the Office of Environment and Sustainability, and Retirement. Other key appointments include Virginia Tallent as Assistant City Manager, Natasha Hampton as Assistant City Manager, and Emily Smart Woerner as City Solicitor. Most recently, I conducted a national search and appointed Frank McKinley as Fire Chief.

To foster my team's professional development, I have provided leadership training through the ICMA Leadership Academy, national conference options, and executive-level coaching for our directors to strengthen their skillsets. It is also important to me that our leadership team collaborates, thinks outside of the box, and avoids work silos. To that end, I have provided several unique team-building experiences, including improv comedy and a canoe adventure on the Mill Creek.

My directors have repeatedly heard me say I want them to pull from their benches as they evaluate project teams, implement process improvement, and get into the weeds of their service catalog. One shining example of this concept is our Communications & Community Engagement SIET Action Team. This group does not include any directors or supervisors and is doing excellent work brainstorming, prototyping, and developing a City-wide Community Engagement Guide and overall Strategic Communications Plan. The former deliverable, which will empower City employees in all departments to deliver equitable and effective community engagement, is expected in early 2024, with the Strategic Communications Plan to follow. Exposure to this type of impactful, high-level decision-making is crucial to developing the next group of leaders in our City workforce.

Ensuring a safe, inclusive work environment for all City employees is a charge I take very seriously. During my tenure as City Manager, I updated Administrative Regulation 25 to strengthen and clarify the City's position that use of hateful language by City employees is not acceptable. I expanded the City's parental leave policy to 12 weeks at full pay and added leave for fostering or taking legal guardianship of a child. I have allocated resources to conduct department climate assessments as needed to check the health of our work culture. Under my leadership, Women Helping Women began training within the Fire Department to ensure an inclusive, safe working environment for all. I continue to engage with the Women's Fire Employee Resource Group to elevate their voices and implement changes that will result in more female firefighters at every level of leadership.

City staff are the heartbeat of our City and I have worked hard to incorporate a variety of participatory events to bolster employee morale and pride. I expanded the celebration of our staff at Public Service Recognition Week, implemented a large Take Our Kids to Work Day event, invited employees to join spirit days to support our local sports teams, partnered with CRC to provide several City-wide recreational sports tournaments, and hosted Leading Ladies of Government.

I am very proud of our CRC lifeguard recruitment efforts for the 2023 pool season. Through a targeted lifeguard hiring campaign, we were able to open 19 of our 23 pools. Partnering with CPD, we implemented school resource officer coverage at our pools to ensure a safe and fun environment for everyone.

Communication and Outreach

Exceptional communication is paramount to government transparency. Being available, making information easy to find, and answering questions are all fundamental components of building trust; but beyond this, intentional and proactive outreach is necessary to reach people where they are. I am not satisfied to expect Cincinnatians to always “come to us,” i.e., to engage with City government only when we invite them to. Instead, it is my priority to bring the work of the Administration into the community where people already are, and to engage with them in frictionless ways.

Just as vital is a strong internal communications infrastructure for City of Cincinnati employees, and between the City Administration and elected officials. I proudly maintain an open-door policy for City employees as well as the Mayor and members of Council, and I hope you share my sentiment that collaboration and communication between the Administration and elected officials has been robust. I intend to always be accessible as City Manager, and to lead via conversation. As many of you know, I often talk about the concept of “having a seat at the table.” Decisions about who should have a seat at the table are pivotal, but just as important is the table itself—fostering discussion is the best way to engage experts, hear diverse viewpoints, and make effective decisions.

Communication and outreach highlights of my first year as City Manager include extensive community engagement at local events, the development of a monthly newsletter for City of Cincinnati employees, and the creation of Rock the Block, a signature project that invites staff members to more directly engage with residents everywhere.

The City Manager’s Office and wider City Administration have created or furthered visible, transparent relationships with communities across Cincinnati by presenting at the annual Neighborhood Summit, participating in events like River Trek and Oktoberfest, walking in parades, and more. I’m proud to represent Team Cincy and provide updates on City business at keynotes with Cincinnati Children’s, Cincinnati Women’s Club, the American Institute of Architects, and others; as well as speaking engagements with the Cincinnati Business Courier, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, and many more.

Recently, we expanded our collaboration with Adopt A Class, more than doubling the number of staff member classroom teams to total 30 partnerships between City employees and groups of

local students. Impactful youth outreach like this isn't limited to participation in third-party activities; in 2022, City consultant Iris Roley offered direct mentorship to a group of local teenagers who dubbed themselves Brothers N Motion, who seek to improve Black quality of life and reduce gun violence through entrepreneurship.

Meanwhile, Rock the Block was one of the first initiatives I created as City Manager, and it remains among my favorites. Many of you have participated in these bimonthly afternoon blitzes that invite employees to visit, eat, shop, and volunteer in neighborhoods citywide. In five Rock the Blocks so far, we've gone to Evanston, West Price Hill, Carthage, Findlay Market, and Roselawn; in addition to enjoying an afternoon out, we've partnered with local schools and organizations to do neighborhood cleanup and youth engagement that makes direct connections between City staffers and the communities they serve. In its relatively short life so far, Rock the Block has already evolved into a wide-ranging effort to bring City Hall to the people. I'm excited to continue growing the program and to see where it goes next.

Community Collaboration

My Administration recognizes the critical importance community partnerships have in achieving success Citywide. I have prioritized building strong relationships that have resulted in creative, new partnerships to better serve our community.

During the blizzard in December 2022, we quickly responded to residents who had lost power in the extreme weather conditions. As we activated our emergency crews, I reached out to Metro to help transport residents from recreation centers—where they were spending the day out of the fierce wind and cold—to overnight shelters. This partnership resulted in safe, convenient care for our residents as City crews worked to help landlords regain power to affected buildings.

That collaboration has extended to other programs, like Youth to Work. Metro provides free bus passes to our student employees, which removes a cost barrier that keeps some young people from job opportunities.

Just last month, I partnered with SPCA for an Adopt-a-Thon at City Hall, where five dogs and two cats were adopted by City staff. We know how overwhelmed our animal shelters are and that winter months are a critical time for foster and adoptions. I was incredibly proud of the response by my staff to take in these animals in need of a home.

The City Manager's Office partnered collaboratively with Dohn Community High School and Cincinnati Public Schools on different events in support of youth, including the first ever "Dinner with Dohn" event and multiple events with staff at students at Woodward High School. As a part of my Rock the Block series, we will continue to focus on connection with and support for local schools.

Of course, our partnerships extend well beyond these examples. I continue to collaborate with Legal Aid, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, Urban League, Black Art Speaks, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the African American Chamber, Cincinnati Development Fund, 3CDC, The Port, Invest in Neighborhoods, Chamber of Commerce, University of Cincinnati, and others.

Emergency Communications

Within one month of being named City Manager, I expanded our emergency communications operations to include alerts to our elected officials and a new, detailed process to alert the public in the case of an emergency. The addition of public alerts helps to build trust and reduce unnecessary panic.

The City Manager's Office worked closely with ECC, CPD, and CFD to quickly deploy these alerts within my first weeks on the job. We were able to increase public transparency without spending additional dollars, as this was a function available through the current contract with Smart911. We continue to encourage everyone to sign up for Smart911 and stay prepared should we need to use this service.

II. Public Safety

The City's current efforts reflect a comprehensive, community-centered approach to public safety, with a strong emphasis on collaboration, prevention, and engagement with the public. The City is committed to problem-oriented policing strategies and a public health approach to gun violence reduction.

Fire Training Center

The Fire Training Campus Project has been in process for several years now. The Design/Build was awarded to Megen Construction and the contract was executed in December 2022. The project includes a 20,000 square foot training classroom building, a double bay apparatus space, and a \$1 million allowance for a training tower. The design team worked diligently with City staff to approve a schematic plan and layout in June 2023. Work involved a careful review of programmed spaces, approval of the building floor plan, and reviewing how the site will be used for training exercises.

The project is now in design development. The Megen team meets biweekly with City staff, including Facilities Management (the team leading the project) and representatives from the City Manager's Office and Fire Department, including members of the Women's Fire ERG. Construction is scheduled to begin in late spring 2024 and will be complete in summer 2025.

Place-Based Investigations of Violent Offender Territories (PIVOT)

PIVOT is a strategy developed to address small areas where gun violence has been chronic and sustained. This strategy focuses on identifying place networks that facilitate violence. The goal is to disrupt offenders' ability to cause harm using a problem-oriented approach that capitalizes on focused deterrence and place network interventions.

PIVOT was launched in Over-the-Rhine at the beginning of 2022. After more than 18 months, the project has spurred better place management practices at key locations. Physical improvements have been made that disrupt the network of places facilitating violence, deterring

open air drug market activity and associated violence. Under my leadership we have modernized many programs to meet the needs of today. For example, we identified that there was a need to reorient city departments to the PIVOT process and develop a direct line to the me, as City Manager, to authorize immediate deployment of needs identified within the group to create community buy-in and to build trust. For example, in June 2023, following a shooting near Grant Park, I instructed DOTE to conduct a traffic study and speed humps were deployed in less than 30 days.

Since PIVOT began, the number of shooting victims in the area has dropped 60% (from 43 to 17).

Crime Gun Intelligence Center

CGIC puts people representing different parts of the justice system in one place to pinpoint the source of gun violence across the Tri-State.

Crime Guns Linked via NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistic Information Network)

September 2022	113	January 2023	94
October 2022	97	February 2023	79
November 2022	95	March 2023	89
December 2022	63	April 2023	116
TOTAL 2022	368	May 2023	116
		June 2023	128
		July 2023	115
		August 2023	113
		TOTAL 2023	850

This metric includes all guns entered into NIBIN via machines OH-CINCBR1 and OH-CINCBR2, which may include some from external departments/agencies.

CGIC Cases / Solve Rate

	2022	2023
NIBIN Leads Assigned	17	72
Total Cases	15	39
Closed	12	21
Closure Rate	80%	29%

Gun Recovery

2022

Month	Overall Guns Recovered	CGIC Guns Recovered
September	92	11
October	87	14
November	77	14
December	67	13

TOTAL	323	52
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2023

Month	Overall Guns Recovered	CGIC Guns Recovered
January	98	12
February	96	17
March	135	24
April	149	27
May	152	27
June	162	13
July	151	29
August	161	20
TOTAL	1104	169

Percentage of guns recovered by CGIC:

2022	16%
2023	15%

The CGIC unit comprises about 2% of the overall CPD force, but it recovers 15% of the firearms.

Violent Crime Reduction

2023 saw an overall reduction in violent crime. Thankfully, this decline reflects a reduction in gun violence as well—the number of shooting victims in 2023 is down 13% compared to the three-year average.

Over-the-Rhine (27), West End (25), and Roselawn (22) had the most shooting victims in 2023. The former two neighborhoods had the highest numbers of shooting victims in 2022 as well; Roselawn jumped from rank #13 to rank #3 due to activity concentrated in a few blocks of Reading Road around a club and smoke lounge. CPD and Law succeeded in shutting down these facilities in July 2023, which resulted in a decrease of violent activity.

Overall Shooting Victim Counts, Year-to-Date: January 1 – August 31

Fatal?	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change (2022)		Change (3-yr Avg)	
					Count	% Change	Count	% Change
Yes	62	49	41	45*	4	9.8%	-6	-11.2%
No	291	215	239	216	-23	-9.6%	-32	-13%
TOTAL	353	264	280	261	-19	-6.8	-38	-12.7

**There is one fewer fatal shooting than gun-related homicide because one of the fatal shootings was deemed a non-criminal shooting. CPD reporting practices accounts for only criminal shooting, but all homicides.*

There was a sizable increase in juvenile shooting victims in 2023 compared to previous years. However, the City saw a decrease in youth violence after a joint press conference with City and

CPD officials in June 2023 and the initiation of multiple summer opportunities for young Cincinnatians, funded by the City and other partners.

Summer in Cincy

Following an increase in juvenile shooting victims in early 2023, and knowing that the summer months are often correlated to spikes in crime, my staff collaborated with CPD, Parks, and Cincinnati Recreation Commission to craft the Summer in Cincy information hub. This set of pages, housed on the City website, provided summer resources for young people and their families, including links to assistance and information about a variety of safe, healthy activities around town. CRC and Parks added several engagement events throughout the summer to offer Cincinnati kids plenty to do, including roller skating parties, a golf outing, and evening pool hours.

As part of Summer in Cincy and in collaboration with the Mayor's office, Cincinnati once again presented two basketball tournaments, one with Smith League and one with the touring 3x3 initiative Hoop It Up. The latter event, renamed Queen City Slam for its second iteration, shut down Freedom Way as dozens of teams spent an August Saturday playing basketball along The Banks.

It is critical to address not just violence, but the root causes it's borne from. I challenge my staff to find new, creative ways to share that mission and engage vulnerable populations.

Commitment to Problem-Solving with Community and SARA

Building a strong partnership with the community is essential. Engaging citizens in ensuring safety can lead to better outcomes and greater trust in law enforcement. CPD and the City Manager's Office continue to work together to identify meaningful ways to collaborate directly with the public, especially to augment the work of existing groups and to respond to crime in specific priority areas. One example is a partnership with the University of Cincinnati to offer SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment) training for community council and other neighborhood leaders.

Working Groups

Following the tragic multi-victim shooting that occurred on Main Street in August 2022, the City Manager's Office convened the Main Street Working Group aimed at strategically addressing safety and disorder challenges in this area. CMO convened representatives from Police, Law, DOTE, and other departments, and invited community stakeholders—residents, business owners, and other concerned parties—to join the team. Councilmembers Keating and Johnson were instrumental in this work. We are so grateful for our community partners' commitment to this space.

Working group results include increasing lighting and security camera coverage in this area, nuanced use of parking restrictions, enforcement activity, and high-profile police visibility. DOTE has worked with rideshare companies to reduce traffic hazards and general disorder by

organizing rideshare pickup and drop-off locations. The Main Street Pop-Up Program, managed by 3CDC, has activated numerous vacant storefronts while providing important business opportunities for entrepreneurs.

While the area still faces challenges and the work is not done, we are glad to report a 31.3% decrease in violent crime in the Main Street area (YOY). We are also happy to report a 54.5% decrease in shooting victimization (YOY).

Main Street Area Shooting Victim Counts, Year-to-Date: January 1 – August 31

Fatal?	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change (2022)		Change (3-yr Avg)	
					Count	% Change	Count	% Change
Yes	0	1	0	0	0	(NC)	0	-100%
No	1	4	11	5	-6	-54.5%	0	-6.2%
TOTAL	1	5	11	5	-6	-54.5%	-1	-11.8%

In response to community complaints and multiple health and safety violations around the University of Cincinnati campus during the 2022-2023 academic year, the City sent two representatives to the International Town & Gown conference, joined by two representatives from UC. The City has worked in partnership with UC with the goal of aligning priorities and cultivating a stronger relationship in order to improve public safety and engagement with the community.

Brooke Lipscomb, the City’s Place Based Initiatives Manager, serves as a direct liaison between the community and the University. Understanding that constant communication and relentless collaboration are key to minimizing the friction between the University, City, students, and community, Brooke directly engages by attending meetings at the University, riding along with UC police, walking door to door in the CUF neighborhood talking to students and neighbors, attending student events to share the City’s “Party Smart” message, training UC student ambassadors, and listening.

All told, working groups have been a key tool to convene partners around problem-solving and have been replicated in several areas including Government Square and The Banks. These have resulted in improved stability and crime reduction in focus areas.

Alternative Response to Crisis (ARC) Pilot

ARC is a City of Cincinnati program designed to help those in crisis using the most appropriate and least invasive intervention available. Alternative Response refers generally to the model of response in which a team designed to address mental health, substance abuse, or other crises is dispatched to address such crises in lieu of a traditional law enforcement response.

Cincinnati 911 now dispatches an ARC Response Team, consisting of a behavioral health specialist and a medical professional, in lieu of a traditional law enforcement response, to check someone’s welfare, address basic needs issues, or provide connection to services. This is a collaborative effort between the ECC, CFD, and the Health Department. As of October 2023, an

ARC team has responded to more than 1,100 incidents, resulting in an estimated 3,500 hours of police time saved.

There have been no incidents in which ARC team members have been assaulted or needed emergency assistance from CPD.

Additionally, the Emergency Communications Center established a new partnership with Talbert House, the operators of the 988 Lifeline Call Center serving Cincinnati. Talbert House has demonstrated an exceptional ability to deescalate and safety-plan with callers in crisis, and fewer than 5% of such callers require an emergency response.

Since this new program began in March 2023, ECC transitions some Cincinnati 911 callers over to a 988 Lifeline Provider, when appropriate, in lieu of dispatching a traditional public safety response. ECC can also bring a 988 Lifeline Provider on the line with a Cincinnati 911 caller while help is on the way, when a response is necessary, to assist with de-escalation. This type of partnership between 911 and 988 is rare and will likely serve as a model for other cities.

With results as successful as these, we have allocated additional funds to expand the ARC area.

In addition to ARC, I have overseen an enhanced co-responder program between Cincinnati Police and UC Health. The Mobile Crisis Team (MCT), operated by UC Health, comprises mental health professionals that respond along with CPD officers to some behavioral health crises. The responding CPD officers are Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained, meaning they have completed a program for first responders focused on safe and effective interaction with people who are in crisis.

Historically, MCT was dispatched to respond at the request of police officers. Data showed a utilization of less than 15% on calls related to mental health crisis. By introducing a protocol-based call-taking system, ECC began automatically dispatching a co-response to mental health crises in March 2023 whenever such resources were available. Today, approximately 70% of these calls are receiving a co-response instead of police only.

Police and Fire Recruitment Efforts

Both CPD and CFD face looming retirements in the next four years, spurring a need for additional recruitment now. Through collaboration between my office and OPDA, we are launching new ways to attract candidates.

The police department is focusing on efficiency and outreach to attract new recruits. CPD has been working closely with Central HR to reduce time-consuming hiring practices while ensuring the quality of candidates is not affected. They're achieving this by moving to online testing with a monthly cadence of in-person testing, along with an ongoing application process that allows candidates to complete the application at any point in the year rather than during a short timeframe.

Data shows that many candidates do not pass the initial fitness exam. As a result, CPD has instituted voluntary workouts, three times a week, to help with preparedness and reduce the barrier for new recruits. This also creates an opportunity for relationship building; around two dozen candidates attend each session.

To reach young people interested in a policing career but not yet old enough to join the Police Academy, CPD is developing a Police Understudy and Apprenticeship program. This outreach connects the department to candidates that might otherwise not see an opportunity to join CPD and builds a strong pipeline of future police officers.

Career Pathways also provides opportunities for early public safety recruiting by sponsoring CPD co-op positions. These pre-Academy placements are for adults aged 18-24, who gain real-world policing experience in anticipation of later entry into the Academy as recruits. After a regional comparison of incentives and pay scales for police recruits, and in collaboration with the Police Chief, in October 2022 I initiated a pay raise to \$25/hour for new recruits (up from \$19/hour) as well as a \$2,000 signing bonus and a possible additional \$2,000 for prior law enforcement experience. Under my direction, we also recently launched a referral bonus of \$1,000 for City employees who refer a successful recruit applicant that graduates from the Police Academy.

Finally, CPD has attended two dozen events over the last year to expand its recruitment reach. At CFD, the fire recruiting office made intentional efforts to get out into the communities we serve, sharing information with our city residents, business members, visitors, and students. The established goal was to recruit a pool of candidates for the hiring process that reflects the demographics of our city. These efforts were supported by the Cincinnati African American Firefighter Association (CAFA), the Ignite Employee Resource Group, City of Cincinnati Human Resources through Jude Johnson, and other City departments. CFD used social media and printed materials to demonstrate the wide range of resources they provide, as well as show the diversity of the department's membership.

The Fire Department launched these initiatives in May 2023, just before the application process opened on June 1. CFD's recruiting team showed up in force at major local events, including Taste of Cincinnati, Juneteenth, Cincinnati Pride, Queen City Slam, Red Bull Flugtag, Black Family Reunion, and at sporting events and concerts. They also partnered with local businesses and organizations, including coffee shops, gyms, libraries, and YMCA of Greater Cincinnati to get the word out about joining CFD.

Community engagement opportunities were also used as recruiting events. The recruiting office was involved in the Cincinnati Fire Women's Weekend, Cincinnati Fire Cadet program, West End social services event, community council meetings and their related events, multiple local job fairs, National Night Out, and Rock the Block. Although school was not in session for most of this summer recruiting period, there was an effort in August to reach all greater Cincinnati area high schools, major public school systems in the region, and regional vocational schools and community colleges.

Under the leadership of the City Manager's Office, CPD, CFD, and ECC have re-envisioned Cincinnati Public Schools' Public Safety Academy to create interest in public safety and build a

stronger career pipeline. Stakeholders have been meeting regularly and anticipate launching in the 2024-25 school year.

III. Growing Economic Opportunity

My vision is that all residents and businesses have access to the tools they need to achieve economic stability and prosperity.

Community Development Block Grants: Expenditure Timeliness

For years, the City has struggled to deploy its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, received annually from HUD. These funds go to programs that help some of our residents most in need of support, including emergency home repairs for low-income homeowners. CDBG-funded programs also support neighborhood growth and development and small business needs.

A failure to achieve timely deployment of these funds means those dollars are not out in the community producing the intended impact. I have made it a priority that all departments who have funding are not letting those dollars sit, including federal funding. That direction and leadership, along with a lot of heavy lifting by the Office of Grant Administration and several departments, led to the City achieving HUD's timeliness objective for the first time since 2016.

This is due in large part to allocating additional resources and expanding the Office of Grant Administration. Director Morgan Sutter has added two new staff members who are integral in deploying resources and successful grant applications.

Leveraged Support Application Process

The annual leveraged support application process invites organizations with big local impact to petition the City for funding. Traditionally, this funding has been allocated fully by Council with little information on intended impact or past performance from the organizations, including an understanding of how much the City's money was actually being leveraged. Under my leadership, that changed with the FY24 budget cycle.

At my direction, an application process was established in spring 2023, which now requires detailed information from potential applicants on their projected impact and other data regarding finances and leverage. This process allowed the Administration to make informed decisions regarding the recommended allocations to Council in the FY24 budget. For those that received allocations, the Administration has established a reporting structure to drive performance accountability.

Neighborhood Catalytic Capital Improvement Program

The establishment of the Neighborhood Catalytic Capital Improvement Program is another process established to support Council in making more informed and ultimately impactful decisions regarding investing City funds. Like the previous leveraged support process, the end of year Carryover Budget process would historically result in quick decision-making with external parties directly lobbying Councilmembers for funding. Under my leadership and in coordination with Council, the Administration established and executed a new program to review

funding requests for neighborhood capital projects and to make recommendations to Council. This process resulted in more informed and impactful decisions from Council and enhanced the culture of informed decision-making when allocating resources.

Residential CRA Online Application

Another example of improved operational efficiency and customer service delivery is the development of the online residential CRA application. The application went live recently to support the changes to the Residential CRA program that were made by Council and effective September 1, 2023. The online application was developed internally through a collaboration with CAGIS, DCED, and several other departments. This change will not only allow for ease of operation by reducing a time-intensive paper form; it will also allow for collecting better data about the program itself. This new data source will facilitate future policy conversations by allowing for increased transparency and quicker analysis.

Financial Freedom Blueprint

The Cincinnati Financial Freedom Blueprint was the culmination of a yearlong collaboration with the Mayor's Office to develop a strategy to address the racial wealth gap in Cincinnati. This blueprint's goal is to ensure that every resident in Cincinnati can achieve financial freedom through asset ownership.

A cross-departmental team, led by OPDA and ACM Virginia Tallent, designed and underwent a yearlong process of data collection, community engagement, and research to understand the goals and barriers that were most pressing to the community. The goal of this process was to answer one central question:

“What is the City uniquely positioned to do to address the racial wealth gap and help all its residents gain financial freedom?”

The City Manager's Office and OPDA are now working to implement key strategic initiatives informed by the Financial Freedom, including but not limited to:

- Medical debt forgiveness program (including collaborative efforts to increase connection to medical care and health insurance);
- Children's savings account program (in collaboration with Preschool Promise and a banking partner);
- Investments in childcare expansion and support for childcare workers;
- Exploration of a guaranteed income pilot to address social determinants of health for pregnant women.

Career Pathways

In August 2022, the Mayor and I announced the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI), aimed at augmenting economic opportunities for young people in Cincinnati, age 14-24, through three tracks: expanding youth jobs across department and community partners, connecting young adults to entry level employment within the City, and entrepreneurship.

Youth jobs include Lifeguard, Park and Recreation Program Leader, Police and Fire Youth Cadets, and more, and internships and co-op opportunities are also available. Each youth employee receives financial literacy training and social emotional learning opportunities. Through this initiative, The City of Cincinnati has employed more than 700 young people as City

employees in a variety of positions. We continue to expand this program with the help of Vice Mayor Kearney, who has been an advocate for this work.

Central HR has established a dedicated team to recruit at all levels of City employment while placing an emphasis on youth employment. This team has visited dozens of schools, job fairs, and events to share employment opportunities. As a result of this effort, Human Resources received the 2023 Workforce Council of SW OH Award.

Department of Economic Inclusion (DEI)

The Department of Economic Inclusion continues to make strides in engaging minority business owners and building relationships across the City to promote equity in our business contracts. In September 2023, DEI hosted its second annual Business Enterprise Expo. The event followed a reverse tradeshow format that allowed DEI-certified MBE/WBE/SBEs to demonstrate their capabilities to major businesses in the Cincinnati area. This year's event offered a new matchmaker component, which allowed firms to make deeper networking connections with large businesses that expressed an interest in meeting partners in specific industries.

In collaboration with Procurement, DEI hosted a virtual event titled *How to Do Business with the City*. The recorded presentation included an overview of the City's procurement process and a how-to guide on properly completing DEI's inclusion forms. The recording is [hosted on the DEI website](#) alongside examples of properly completed forms for each bidding scenario.

The department also launched an event series focusing on access to capital, including business financial seminars and open houses aimed at relationship-building between certified MBE/WBE/SBEs and local financial institutions with products and services designed to help them.

Other important wins include a comprehensive update of inclusion forms used during bidding opportunities to reduce ambiguities, as well as the completion of an updated disparity study in February 2023. The study was conducted by Griffin & Strong P.C. Attorneys and Public Policy Consultants, and DEI implemented a new inclusion program based on the updated study.

IV. Thriving Neighborhoods

To create healthier, stabler, and more equitable neighborhoods throughout Cincinnati, my Administration adopted the following strategies:

- Seek improved outcomes in quality, healthy, stable rental housing.
- Preserve homeownership opportunities in City neighborhoods.
- Invest in social work and mental health resources for code enforcement.
- Make continuous improvements to pedestrian safety.
- Stand up to predatory landlords and problematic real estate investors through strategic affirmative litigation.

These strategies are designed to address both the physical and social aspects of housing, with a focus on promoting the well-being of residents and preserving the fabric of historically marginalized neighborhoods.

Separately, but importantly, the City is committed to generating a business environment and interactions with City departments to bring best-in-class events to the City of Cincinnati—thereby creating meaningful and attractive cultural experiences and generating important opportunities for fun and engagement.

Affordable Housing Communication and Service Delivery

The City often struggles to clearly communicate what funds are appropriated to affordable housing needs and what the impact of that funding is. To improve public transparency on this issue, the Administration created an [affordable housing dashboard](#), which clearly shows the amount of funding appropriated, and the units being created by that funding.

In addition to communication, the Administration has had to improve service delivery for affordable housing, as this Council and Mayor have appropriated three to four times more funding to affordable housing than was typical just a few years ago. By creating and maintaining an effective working relationship with the Cincinnati Development Fund, the Administration has been able to deploy this large influx of dollars effectively and quickly, delivering the expected impact.

Important to note is the connection between the City's financial practices and the funding of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The majority of funding directed to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund has been appropriated by Council in the City's Budget Carryover process, as part of the waterfall of funds that is established in the event that the City has a surplus at the end of its fiscal year. Due to sound financial management, including maintenance of reserves, the City again had a sizeable surplus at the end of FY23, which just in the last month produced another \$5 million for affordable housing through the established waterfall policy.

Code Enforcement Response Team and Place Based Initiatives Manager

The City's Code Enforcement Response Team (CERT) exists to bring City enforcement teams together to align around complex or multidisciplinary code enforcement issues. The multi-departmental response aligns goals and makes more efficient use of available resources. While success in addressing police and code issues in rental and commercial buildings is more quickly realized, owner-occupied properties have remained on the agenda for years with little to no progress.

Brooke Lipscomb, the City's new Place Based Initiatives Manager, began serving on CERT in May 2023. With the implementation of this new position, the City has been better able to address the multi-faceted problems faced by homeowners struggling with financial, medical, and mental health issues. This new position uses evidence-based approaches to these social issues, as opposed to more traditional code enforcement. The Place Based Initiatives Manager meets 1:1 with the homeowner, identifies the underlying issue(s) resulting in the noted violations, coordinates with City departments and outside social service agencies to provide needed services, and holds the homeowner accountable until compliance is achieved.

The CERT team has established a new subcommittee to seek to address hoarding cases, as these are difficult for the City to address because of the deep-seated mental health issues

underlying the outwardly noticeable hoarding condition. As a result of this work, the Place Based Initiatives Manager coordinated with DPS to provide four specially colored trash bins to two people with a hoarding condition for three weeks at a time. The Manager works with the resident to fill the three cans each week for DPS to collect. Most significantly, the Manager and Law have coordinated with the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas to establish a designated hoarding docket to be managed by one of the mental health court judges. When progress halts through City's efforts, cases will be taken to court with the goal of establishing mental health services to assist in reaching code compliance.

Improved Homeless Encampment Response

The City has diligently worked to reorient its response to homeless encampments to include effective collaboration with local street outreach teams (including Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health's Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness team and GeneroCity513), housing providers, emergency shelter providers, and others. The City's Place Based Initiatives Manager, a licensed social worker, instituted a revised workflow—leading to more holistic solutions for encampments and a more consistent response to customer service requests identifying people experiencing homelessness in our community. The Place Based Initiatives Manager is also able to partner with the Alternative Response to Crisis Team, leading to increased saving of police time related to such calls for service.

Prosecution of Bad-Acting Landlords

My Administration has taken steps to hold landlords accountable to make sure habitable, affordable housing is available to all City residents. The Quality of Life team in the Law Department supports the Administration by initiating litigation against derelict landlords providing substandard living conditions to bring them up to compliance with the City's housing, health, and fire codes and to hold them accountable under the law.

The Quality of Life team provides monthly training to B&I, Health, CFD on how to effectively escalate enforcement and to help identify the most problematic properties. Collaboratively, these departments use a more comprehensive, data-driven approach to spot problems citywide, track crime incidents, and respond to code complaints, allowing for coordinated enforcement.

Moreover, tools such as those provided for or proposed by the Rental Inspection, Essential Services, and Tenant Relocation ordinances empower the City to step in and assure tenants' needs are met when the landlords fail to meet their obligations to provide necessities, such as heat and water, and allow the City to bill the Landlord for those costs. The aim is to identify properties that are already problems, as well as proactively detect issues as they arise.

Nowhere were the actions of problematic landlords more evident than at the Williamsburg Apartments in Hartwell, a 976-unit complex whose out-of-state owner had allowed it to fall into extreme disrepair: endemic mold in dozens of units, broken plumbing and appliances, and hazardous wiring. In response to the deplorable conditions at Williamsburg, the Quality of Life team filed a nuisance lawsuit against the owner to force them to clean up the property. After the City sued the owner, the owner's lender foreclosed on the property, which led to the appointment of a receiver who was charged with stabilizing the conditions at Williamsburg. The Quality of Life team continues to work with the receiver to ensure that necessary repairs are performed to return Williamsburg as a vital source of housing for the Hartwell community and the City of Cincinnati at large.

The Quality of Life team also works to monitor institutional investor acquisitions in Cincinnati and, where necessary, hold these actors accountable to our state and local laws. In January 2023, the City sued VineBrook Homes LLC, which owns nearly 1,000 single-family homes in the City and 3,000 in Hamilton County. Our lawsuit exposed a myriad of illegal practices by VineBrook, including its attempts to shift maintenance responsibilities to its tenants and circumvent mandatory protections against unlawful eviction. On October 16, 2023, Judge Wende Cross denied VineBrook's motion to dismiss and ruled that the City's lawsuit could proceed on all claims.

Pedestrian Safety

The City established its own Pedestrian Safety Program Team in order to expedite pedestrian safety projects while simultaneously saving City resources. Councilmember Jeffreys has been a champion of pedestrian safety in our communities and worked closely with DOTE to see projects to fruition. The Pedestrian Safety Program Team has accomplished the following achievements over the last year:

- Designed and implemented the Centerline Hardening Pilot Project.
- Designed and installed Cincinnati's first two sets of concrete speed cushions.
- Worked with community councils to identify priority improvement locations and begin design on 40 projects.
- Established the Ped Bike Crew, which has completed four repairs and nine projects.



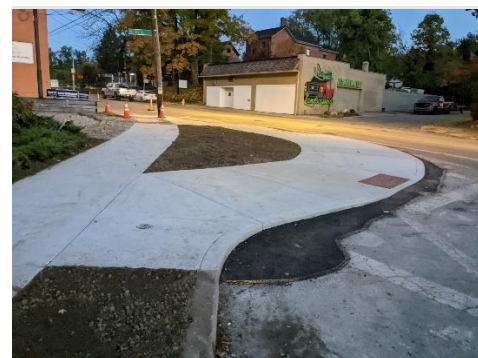
1 Hamilton Avenue quick curb bump-outs (August 2023)



2 Clifton & Woolper Centerline Hardening (June 2023)



3 Linn Street Speed Cushion (April 2023)



4 Madison & Blaesi concrete bump-out (October 2022)

Green Cincinnati Plan

This year, the City completed its 5-year update to the Green Cincinnati Plan (GCP), establishing Cincinnati as a national leader in sustainability and setting ambitious goals for the future. It is through community-driven collaboration that the plan identifies 30 goals, 40 strategies, and 130 actions through which the City will advance sustainability, equity, and resilience.

Councilmember Owens was a key partner and has elevated this message in City operations.

Notably, the City has committed to a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, and 100% carbon neutrality by 2050. We are investing in renewable energy by transitioning to solar energy provided by our solar array and, whenever possible, purchasing electric vehicles for the fleet.

The GCP specifically recognizes the inequities in our communities and provides solutions to increase tree canopy, promote green infrastructure, and eliminate disparities in our communities.

Connected Communities

As directed by the Mayor and Councilmembers Harris and Cramerding, the Department of City Planning and Engagement has begun the development of Connected Communities—a series of policy proposals, including zoning changes, that aim to increase housing production and affordability. Connected Communities kicked off in 2022 with the Cincinnati Housing Solutions Summit in June and continued throughout 2022 and 2023. To determine the most appropriate policy changes for Cincinnati, I directed staff to thoroughly research national zoning best practices and conduct robust community engagement.

City Staff held eight intensive public engagement events and activities throughout February, March, and April 2023 to introduce community members to concepts of zoning. Through small-group discussions, Cincinnati residents had honest conversations with their neighbors about options for increasing housing opportunities for people at all income levels and places in life. Under my direction, staff carefully considered the research and community input to begin crafting proposed policy recommendations, which will receive further public review in late 2023 and early 2024.

Special Events

Within the last year, Cincinnati was host to several large-scale, record-breaking events that required collaboration among departments and community partners. In October 2022, more than 2 million people visited BLINK over the course of four days. Our special events team was integral in its success, working with partners to provide permits, shut down streets, communicate information to the public, and ensure a safe weekend for everyone downtown. Teams from The City Manager's Office, CPD, CFD, DOTE, and DPS routinely met with event organizers to ensure the weekend went as seamlessly as possible.

Summer 2023 also saw huge musical guests choosing Cincinnati as part of their concert series. Taylor Swift performed at Paycor Stadium to sold out crowds on June 30 and July 1. Our special events team worked closely with Bengals staff, The Banks, and other community partners to

welcome fans and create a safe fan zone along Freedom Way. More than \$980,000 was generated in admissions tax over the course of the weekend, with no major safety issues reported.

Less than a month later, Cincinnati Music Festival drew international stars and again directed large crowds to The Banks, Downtown, and Over-the-Rhine. Once again, our special events team coordinated with event producers to create traffic and safety plans, ensuring the weekend was a success.

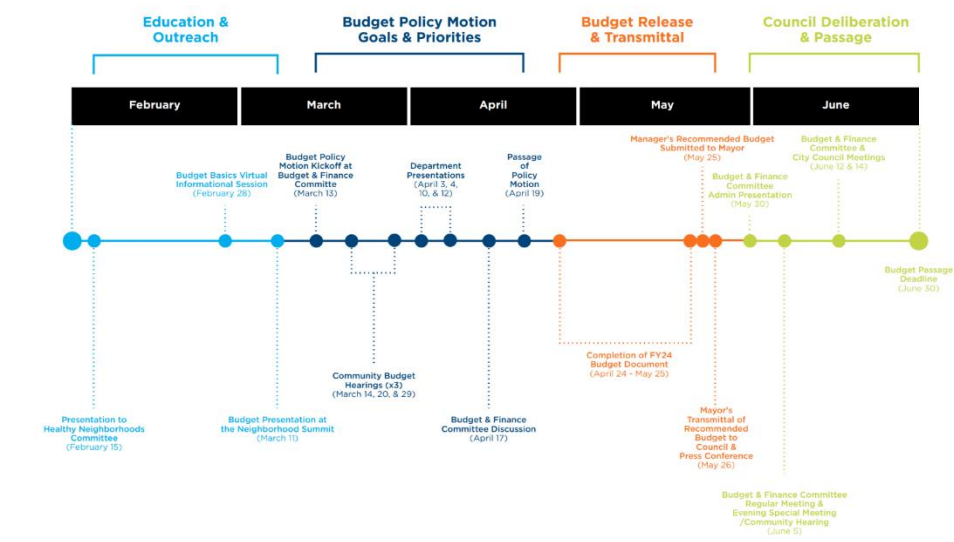
These are just a few highlights, as this team is involved with events throughout the City every weekend that require permitting and traffic detail. The City works hard to cement the success of events like Taste of Cincinnati and Oktoberfest Zinzinnati while also helping with art shows, festivals, running and biking events, and parades. Our City is vibrant and increasingly recognized nationwide as a destination for large scale events. We have proven that we are a great host and I continue to prioritize investing in those relationships through a talented special events team.

V. Fiscal Sustainability

Financial management of the City is critical to all that we do. This management encompasses effective budgeting and oversight of expenditures, but it also includes strategies for supporting and driving growth in revenues. The pandemic caused a great amount of uncertainty in the City's budget, and we are still relying on American Rescue Plan (ARP) dollars to support a portion of our operating budget. My first year saw the accomplishment of several key initiatives to get us ready for when ARP dollars are no longer available.

Approved FY24-FY25 Biennial Budget

One item of note for the first City budget approved under my direction was the efficiency and smoothness of its approval. This was in part due to several thoughtful and intentional administrative processes I implemented. Initially, my administration established a budget development schedule and pace that allowed for engagement and informed decision making. To prioritize clear communication, both internal and external, my office created a timeline graphic that depicts each step of the budget process, giving the public and local media a clear picture of what happens and when.



Budget Engagement and Education

In collaboration with Councilmember Harris, as Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, the Budget Policy motion process and hearings occurred earlier than previously, in order to give both Council and the Administration time to incorporate feedback into the initial draft of the budget. Additionally, the Administration conducted several educational engagement sessions—including several sessions of “Budget Basics” as well as a game show installment at the Neighborhood Summit. I recognize the importance of community input and relaying information that is easily digestible. I challenged our Budget Department to be creative, and the game show was a huge success. More recently, I have led by personally directing three budget engagement meetings focused on educating and soliciting feedback on the City’s capital budget as well as informing residents about the proposed sale of the Cincinnati Southern Railway.

Rollback Policy

The property tax rollback policy, in place since the late 1990s, capped operating revenue growth from property taxes. Over those two decades, expenses have grown immensely, as has the City’s property tax base. This year, under the leadership of the Mayor and Council, my recommendation to stop the rollback policy was accepted. This was a tough but critical step in preparing the City for the near future when ARP dollars will not be available; it is also a pivot point for diversifying the City’s operating revenue sources in the face of overreliance on and uncertainty regarding income tax revenue due to the effects of the pandemic.

Reserve Balances

Through the closeout process in late 2022 and just recently in fall 2023, the City’s reserves are very healthy. The current balance is approximately \$85 million, plus an additional \$50 million set aside regarding a contingent liability related to income tax refunds from 2020. This reserve balance represents a more than 100% increase over the last five years and is a testament to sound financial management of both expenses and revenues.

Job Creation Tax Credits

Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the businesses that we previously extended job creation tax credits to struggled to meet their obligations under the agreements. Many of these agreements and relationships had not been addressed when I took office, so I have prioritized resolving these situations in a way that acknowledges the “new normal” following the pandemic, while also ensuring maximum value to the City.

Performance-Based Budgeting

As part of preparations for future operating budget deficits, I am leading a move to performance-based budgeting over three fiscal years. This process began earlier this year and was evidenced in a small way with the FY24 budget’s performance agreements. Each department was required to establish clear and data-based key performance indicators, and a more robust internal process was set up for reporting on these indicators. During this year, the City Manager’s Office, Budget, and OPDA have been working to build and launch a department-by-department program to help each department establish a clear service catalogue and performance measures. Due to the complexity of the undertaking, the transition process will span FY25 and FY26. The goal for FY26 is to have established both performance information and resource allocation for each service, to help inform resource allocation decisions. More specific revenue generation information will also be incorporated.

Revenue Enhancements

As another planning measure for future fiscal years, I have directed an internal-facing initiative to explore opportunities for revenue enhancements. The two most prominent components of this initiative are research into fees that the City charges as well as a deep dive into our parking system. When I was appointed City Manager, there was no single database of all the fees that the City charges, and there was no holistic picture as to what fees were established and when. In summer 2023, I established an internal process to collect and aggregate this information from departments. It will be completed soon and incorporated into the FY25 budgeting process.

The second major component of this initiative is a deep dive into the City’s parking system that looks for opportunities to improve operations and revenue generation. In August 2023, some minor adjustments were made. Additional research and study is ongoing and will provide a foundation for any future recommendations to Council on revenue enhancements.

VI. What’s Next

My focus in my first year as City Manager has been *breaking things down to build them back up*, in service of more efficient ways of governing. This has positioned me to create stability and streamline operations in the next year. We will continue to improve upon the foundational changes we have identified and increase accountability, expand our use of new tools, and responsibly prepare for the future.

OnBase Advancements

I am already planning to expand our use of OnBase to improve efficiency and effectiveness through end-to-end automation and management of procurement activities. This will significantly improve contract management and a more efficient workflow. By doing so, we will achieve a

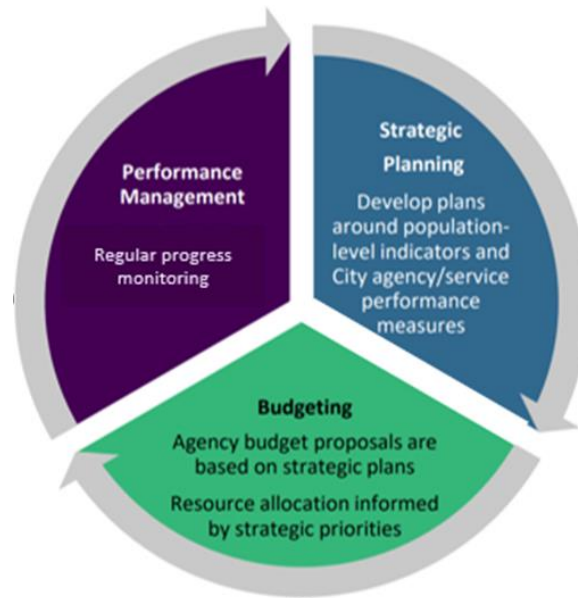
more streamlined operation for vendors and new businesses who may be unfamiliar with City processes. We will achieve this by automating contract routing, DEI Goal Determine, and Tax Payer in Good Standing. Updating the functionality of this core procedure will result in time and resources saved while reducing barriers for business opportunities.

Additionally, we must replace the management system for both the Office of Environment and Sustainability and Law.

Performance-Based Budgeting

Resource allocation is the single greatest tool in City government for achieving our mission, and budget deficits require allocating limited resources in a way that best achieves the City's mission. Performance-based budgeting will connect performance management and resource allocation decisions. This includes recommendations on whether to continue previous funding of existing services or to increase funding for services as necessary. It doesn't count if it's not measured.

I will continue to build off the work implemented this year. For the remainder of FY24 and during FY25, departments are developing service catalogues to identify all services provided with a focus on measuring performance. Performance-based budgeting will be fully implemented for the FY 2026-2027 Biennial Budget development process, with the City Manager's Recommended Budget reflecting resource allocation decisions that are data-driven and made through performance-based budgeting.



Matrix Assessment

My administration has contracted with Matrix Consulting to perform workforce climate assessments; the contract is for a two-year term with the option to renew for two additional

years. Climate and/or cultural assessments are independent, objective, credible, and comprehensive assessments of employee perception of their working environment, business, and safety culture. Matrix is charged with conducting interviews, anonymous employee surveys, and data collection to inform proposed recommendations and action plans to address areas in need of improvement.

This work helps ensure that our departments' organizational climates are aligned to meet core service functions while improving the overall experience of being employed by the City of Cincinnati. These assessments are commissioned on an as-needed basis by the Office of the City Manager. The Police Department is currently under assessment; the Fire Department will start assessment soon, followed by other departments as identified.

Duke Energy Convention Center

The Administration has been working closely with several community partners, including 3CDC and Hamilton County Commissioners, to realize a \$200 million investment in the Duke Energy Convention Center, recognizing the economic impact this will have on the rest of the City.

We have made great strides in critical funding and design aspects, setting us up for success as the renovation project is scheduled to begin in the coming year. We will continue to stay in lock step with the community and other partners to ensure this project stays on track.

Cincy on Track

Cincinnati citizens will decide on a potentially transformational deal to sell the Cincinnati Southern Railway for \$1.6 billion. As directed by Council, my office has prepared a 10-year, \$250 million spending plan based on deferred maintenance priorities identified by departments.

The increased cost of maintaining City infrastructure has resulted in nearly \$500 million worth of deferred maintenance. It is important we address the critical need and invest in our infrastructure for the betterment of our City. I am prepared, no matter what voters decide, to prioritize projects and engage communities ahead of investment. We are currently holding community workshops to provide information and solicit feedback about our annual budget. This will continue, regardless of the vote, through the annual budget process.

Futures Commission

We have proactively taken steps to internally address identified areas of improvement ahead of suggestions from the Futures Commission. We are positioned to receive the Commission's report and quickly act upon decisions by the Mayor and Council based upon its recommendations.

VII. Conclusion

The opportunity to serve the City of Cincinnati in the highest professional capacity is an enormous one, and the responsibility that comes with the role of City Manager is not one I take

lightly. I began my career as a public servant by wondering what I could do to alleviate housing and quality of life issues I saw every day; now, as administrative leader of a major U.S. city, I still place human consequences at the center of each decision I make.

From my first day as City Manager, I knew I wanted to lean on the strengths of our 6,000-strong employee workforce, taking advantage of the wealth of experience that exists across every department and team. At the same time, there were major problems to address: vacancies at the Director level, looming retirements in the Police and Fire departments, and policies and procedures in need of updating. I'm proud to have found success on both sides of this issue—we encourage, develop, and rely on Team Cincy every day, and we make bold moves to invite new team members into the fold.

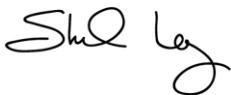
Like me, many of you are relatively new to City leadership, and like me, you observed a high level of dysfunction at City Hall prior to coming on board. I'm so grateful that we have been able to work together to forge a new path built on trust, problem-solving, and mutual respect. Our partnership not only allows the work to get done amicably and without incident, but it ultimately supports the health and vibrancy of Cincinnati as a whole.

I would be remiss if I did not thank my leadership team, including our ACMs, senior members of the Law department, and all our Directors, for their expertise and tenacious commitment to our mission. Thank you to the entire CMO, especially our support staff, for keeping the operation running smoothly.

And thank you to the entire City of Cincinnati workforce, 6,000-strong, for getting up every day and serving something bigger than yourself. I say thank you not only as City Manager, but as a resident of the great city of Cincinnati: we are stronger and better because of your dedication.

When we work transparently, we can better invite the public to join us. When we collaborate seamlessly, we engender pride in local government. And when we strategize intentionally, we find solutions that make our city the best it can be.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as City Manager and for your support in my first year of work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheryl Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sheryl" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Long".

Sheryl M.M. Long