

June 3, 2026

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager

202601801

Subject: Assessment of Need for Additional Lighting and Camera Infrastructure in Parks, Playgrounds, and Recreational Areas

REFERENCE DOCUMENT # 202600233

City Council's Housing & Growth Committee referred the following motion for review and report:

We MOVE that the Administration prepare a report within 30 days assessing the need for additional lighting and camera infrastructure across city parks, playgrounds and recreational areas owned by Cincinnati Parks and the Cincinnati Recreation Commission, with priority given to locations that have already experienced shootings and the five neighborhoods experiencing the highest levels of gun violence.

We further MOVE that the Administration prepare a separate subsequent report within 30 days of the initial report outlining the costs associated with installing, operating, and maintaining recommended lighting and camera improvements identified in the initial report, including any potential funding sources.

BACKGROUND

The City of Cincinnati maintains an extensive network of parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities through Cincinnati Parks and the Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC). These public spaces play an important role in supporting youth development, recreation, neighborhood cohesion, and community wellbeing. Safe and welcoming public spaces are also an important component of the City's broader violence reduction and prevention efforts.

Consistent with the City's violence reduction strategy, ACT for Cincy, the Administration conducted a place-based assessment focused on:

- neighborhoods experiencing the highest levels of gun violence;
- locations where shootings have previously occurred; and
- public recreational assets that serve youth and families.

The assessment reviewed existing lighting and camera infrastructure, analyzed environmental conditions surrounding parks and recreational assets, and identified areas where strategic infrastructure investments may improve both safety outcomes and perceptions of safety.

Priority analysis areas included Avondale, Over-the-Rhine, Walnut Hills, West End, and Winton Hills. Supporting maps identifying proposed lighting and camera locations are attached to this report.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Administration coordinated across the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD), Cincinnati Parks, Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC), Department of Transportation & Engineering (DOT), and Enterprise Technology Solutions (ETS) to assess current infrastructure conditions.

Cincinnati Parks recently completed a lighting inventory layer within CAGIS, which supported spatial analysis efforts related to lighting gaps and high-priority violence locations. Existing City lighting and camera infrastructure is currently concentrated primarily within the public right-of-way as a result of prior DOT and CPD investments.

The assessment identified several operational and infrastructure challenges:

- some CRC and Parks properties currently lack sufficient electrical service or network connectivity to support additional lighting or camera infrastructure;
- existing camera systems are distributed across multiple departments and technology platforms; and
- the City does not currently maintain a fully centralized inventory of all operational public safety cameras across departments and facilities.

CPD has initiated ongoing work to better centralize and validate existing camera infrastructure, including site verification and maintenance assessments. CRC is also coordinating with Duke Energy to evaluate electrical access challenges at recreation sites where future infrastructure may be needed.

In addition to locations identified in this report, Cincinnati Parks identified several other park locations citywide that may benefit from future lighting improvements. However, this assessment prioritizes locations connected to current violence reduction strategies and areas experiencing elevated levels of gun violence.

PRIORITY LOCATIONS

Based on violence-scoring analysis, existing environmental conditions, proximity to youth-serving assets, and current infrastructure gaps, the Administration identified the following priority locations for future lighting and camera investments:

Cincinnati Parks Locations

- Natural Resources Building area
- Hauck Botanic Gardens
- Ezzard Charles Park
- Grant Park (*This location is set to be under construction for improvements later this year.*)

Cincinnati Recreation Commission Locations

- Avondale Recreation Area
- Lincoln Recreation Center
- Queensgate Recreation Area
- New Findlay Recreation Area

Additional proposed lighting and camera locations are reflected in the attached neighborhood maps for Avondale, Over-the-Rhine, Walnut Hills, West End, and Winton Hills.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation of additional lighting and camera infrastructure will require coordination across multiple City departments and external utility partners.

Key implementation considerations include:

- **Electrical Infrastructure:**
Several proposed locations will require new or expanded electrical service in partnership with Duke Energy.
- **Connectivity & Network Access:**
Some locations may utilize existing City network infrastructure, while others will require new connectivity solutions to support camera systems.
- **Maintenance & Operations:**
Long-term operational planning will be necessary to ensure infrastructure remains functional, monitored, and maintained over time.
- **Site Verification:**
Additional field verification will be required to confirm final camera placement, lighting conditions, visibility considerations, and infrastructure feasibility.
- **Funding Strategy:**
Future implementation will require identification of capital funding sources and phased deployment planning.

SUMMARY

The Administration's assessment identified clear opportunities to improve lighting and camera infrastructure at select parks, playgrounds, and recreational areas located within neighborhoods experiencing elevated levels of gun violence.

While the City has existing infrastructure in portions of the public right-of-way, additional investments are needed within park and recreation spaces to support safe and welcoming public environments for residents, youth, and families.

Successful implementation will require:

- capital investment;
- continued cross-department coordination;
- infrastructure and connectivity improvements; and
- phased implementation informed by ongoing site verification and operational planning.

The Administration will continue coordinating across departments to refine infrastructure assessments, identify implementation priorities, and evaluate future funding opportunities.

cc: John S. Brazina, Assistant City Manager