

April 28, 2021

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Paula Boggs Muething, City Manager

**202101490**

Subject: Livingston Task Force Update

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### **REFERENCE DOCUMENT #202001432**

On August 24, 2020, the Law and Public Safety Committee referred the following for a report:

MOTION, submitted by Councilmember Mann and Councilmember Sundermann, WE MOVE that the City administration establish a task force aimed at solving the safety issues around Livingston Avenue. A multi-agency task force should be established, including Police, Building Inspection, Public Services, and Engineering, and outside agencies like the Port Authority for a comprehensive and sustainable approach.

Since October 12, 2020, the City Manager's Office has met monthly with Livingston area residents and community stakeholders including the West End Community Council, Seven Hills Neighborhood House, and Keep Cincinnati Beautiful. Those meetings also attended by representatives from Police, Fire, Health, Public Services, Transportation and Engineering, Buildings and Inspections, and Law. On October 23, 2020, the Administration submitted a report to Council announcing the launch of the Livingston Task Force, Item No. 202002064.

This report serves as an update from the Administration regarding the Task Force's progress, next steps, and provides Council with estimated costs for any outstanding requests made by residents.

### **RESIDENT REQUESTS**

The Livingston Task Force meets monthly, and City staff continue to work with residents on establishing a collaborative and productive dialogue on how to best improve the quality of life on Livingston Avenue. The following updates are in response to resident requests which have been collected over the course of Task Force meetings and supplemental surveys.

#### **1. Improve Street Lighting**

New LED streetlights were installed in December of 2020.

#### **2. Increase targeted patrols by Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) of Livingston and Baymiller Streets**

CPD District One had 400 dedicated patrols in 2020 and to date 97 dedicated patrols in 2021. This has been a significant commitment of police resources, at levels rarely matched. While targeted patrols can be an important component of public safety response, it is a short-term solution that often does not address underlying problems.

CPD is committed to working with the West End community on improving public safety and the quality of life for the residents of Livingston Street and the surrounding area. However, the concentrated patrolling in this area risks depleting service to other communities - with significant gunshot victimization probability - and from receiving an appropriate proactive response. It also risks misrepresenting to our communities that a high-profile police presence is the solution, although often it is not. CPD recommends continuing a commitment to focused patrols on Livingston, but not at the extraordinary levels of 2020.

**3. Increase/improve surveillance in the area (add a camera at Warner/Livingston Streets)**

CPD reported visibility issues with a camera at Livingston and Linn due to a tree on Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC) property. CRC was requested to have the tree trimmed and upon assessment, found disease. Subsequently, the tree was removed on March 18, 2021, resulting in improved visibility in the area. CPD has not indicated a need for additional cameras; however, the surveillance camera program is managed by CPD. District One, if needed, can process a request, at approximately \$6K per camera.

**4. Routinely clean the street and surrounding alley ways**

Since the launch of the Livingston Task Force, the Department of Public Services (DPS) has conducted two neighborhood cleanups of Livingston and area alleyways. Attached are images from the December and March cleanings. These targeted clean-ups were conducted by DPS' Neighborhood Litter Program (NLP). The program is operated in the Neighborhood Operations Division and is responsible for addressing litter and debris in the public right-of-way throughout all of our 52 neighborhoods. Service requests come from a variety of avenues including citizen calls to 591-6000 and the City's Fix-It-Cincy app, the Stormwater Management Utility "hotspot" list, and from various City departments including Buildings and Inspections and Cincinnati Police.

Cleaning this area (Livingston, Poplar, Findlay, Oliver, and Charlotte Streets) requires 10-20 personnel from various DPS programs and multiple days. "Routine" maintenance of Livingston Street would mean a deferred or delayed response to addressing litter and cleaning issues of other service request throughout the City. There are no additional costs, but limitations exist in the considerable demand for such services throughout the entire City.

Currently, City Gospel Mission hosts a volunteer clean-up around their men's shelter at 1805 Dalton on the weekends. Since DPS cannot dedicate a crew to this area each week or month, it is advised that the West End Community Council or Development Corporation partner with residents and a local agency to adopt a block and perform regularly scheduled neighborhood clean-ups or beautification projects.

**5. Ask city to remove all trash and non-city trash cans and replace w city cans.**

In early March of 2021, DPS removed an excess of cans along Livingston. Residents have been asked to monitor and contact DPS as needed for additional removals. During Task Force meetings both Keep Cincinnati Beautiful and DPS discussed how targeted placement of corner cans is preferential to additional cans, as additional cans tend to attract improper use of household or commercial debris. In response, residents are mapping recommended locations and DPS will work with a community point person to relocate current inventories once the map is completed.

6. **Divert Livingston Street traffic from Linn St. to Baymiller (Options: 1. Block off Livingston at Warner; 2. Consider Resident only parking; 3. Consider making Livingston St. one way; 4. Put up No Parking signs, intermittently)**

CPD and the Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOT) are working on a temporary closure of Livingston for the summer. The exact location of barriers will be determined at the April 2021 Livingston Task Force meeting, and the barriers should be in place by May 1. However, per Council Motion, Item No. 202100950, residents have expressed an interest in a Residential Parking Permit program. If a RPP is adopted, the temporary barriers will be removed.

7. **Investigate citations for vacant building owners that are in disrepair.**

Buildings and Inspections (B&I) and Law have been very active within the Task Force. B&I continues to inspect, cite, and work with Livingston residents regarding blighted properties in the area. B&I provides an update at each meeting on code enforcement and responds accordingly to community complaints. These inspections continue to occur during normal business hours, therefore there are no additional costs.

8. **Consider fencing off all building stoops.**

In order to accomplish this, each property must be individually investigated and inspected to determine the appropriate abatement efforts that will best target the underlying violations and abate any nuisance conditions. For those properties with deteriorated stoops or that create havens for nuisance or criminal activity, B&I can install temporary barricades to protect passersby from hazardous conditions and properties from trespassers.

At present, B&I has barricaded 810 Livingston after an inspection to determine level of hazard at the building. B&I does not have record of any other owner barricade stoops currently. After a cases-by-case property assessment from Law relating to nuisance conditions that would allow for barricading, the city would provide notice to the owners of record. If they fail to complete the barricading, notice to barricade would be sent to the City Contractor. The city contract is \$7.75/sf if contractor installs a barricade. If barricading is completed by the owner after the Contractor was provided a Notice to Proceed, there may be \$50 service charge. Invoices are sent to owners for payment.

## **SUMMARY**

City staff continue to meet monthly with the residents of Livingston and deploy City services in response to the problems in the area. This summer CPD will continue dedicating targeted patrols, DOT will install a temporary closure of Livingston between Baymiller and Werner, B&I and Law will continue enforcement of blighted properties, and DPS will continue to respond to customer services requests as received. With agencies such as Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, Seven Hills Neighborhood House, and the Community Partnership Center joining the taskforce, the Administration believes that these City services will complement the necessary neighborhood activation and beautification efforts we hope to see forged in the months ahead.