



City of Cincinnati

801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Agenda

Budget and Finance Committee

Chairperson Jeff Cramerding
Vice Chair Scotty Johnson
Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Kearney
Councilmember Anna Albi
Councilmember Mark Jeffreys
Councilmember Evan Nolan
Councilmember Meeka Owens
President Pro Tem Victoria Parks
Councilmember Seth Walsh

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

10:00 AM

Council Chambers, Room 300

SPECIAL MEETING

AGENDA

BUDGET POLICY MOTIONS

- [202500751](#) **MOTION**, submitted by Councilmember Cramerding, WE MOVE that the City Administration prepare a Fiscal Year 2026 Recommended General Fund Budget. (BALANCE ON FILE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE)
Sponsors: Cramerding
Attachments: [Motion](#)
- [202500670](#) **COMMUNICATION**, submitted by Councilmember Albi, regarding: Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget.
Sponsors: Albi
Attachments: [Communication - Albi](#)
- [202500679](#) **COMMUNICATION**, submitted by Councilmember Parks, regarding: Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget.
Sponsors: Parks
Attachments: [Communication](#)
- [202500704](#) **COMMUNICATION**, submitted by Councilmember Nolan, regarding: Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget.
Sponsors: Nolan
Attachments: [Communication](#)
- [202500711](#) **COMMUNICATION**, submitted by Councilmember Walsh, regarding: Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget.

Sponsors: Walsh

Attachments: [Communication](#)

6. [202500718](#) **COMMUNICATION**, submitted by Councilmember Owens, regarding: Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget.

Sponsors: Owens

Attachments: [Communication](#)

7. [202500731](#) **COMMUNICATION**, submitted by Councilmember Jeffreys, regarding: Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget.

Sponsors: Jeffreys

Attachments: [Communication](#)

8. [202500744](#) **COMMUNICATION**, submitted by Vice Mayor Kearney, regarding: Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget.

Sponsors: Kearney

Attachments: [Communication](#)

9. [202500745](#) **COMMUNICATION**, submitted by Councilmember Johnson, regarding: Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget.

Sponsors: Johnson

Attachments: [Communication](#)

ADJOURNMENT



202600751

Jeff Cramerding
Councilmember

4/8/25

MOTION

Council Budget Policy Direction to City Administration for Recommended FY2026 General Fund Operating Budget

WE MOVE that the City Administration prepare a Fiscal Year 2026 Recommended General Fund Budget which respects the following policy guidelines and priorities:

Public Works, Fleet, and Quality of Life

The top priority of this budget should be a renewed focus on Public Works and related departments to create real and measurable improvements in the delivery of basic City services. As the City's Quality of Life and Budget Priorities resident survey highlighted, these services are a priority for citizens and their expectations are not consistently being met. To do this we need to increase strategic investment in Fleet Services to ensure that our City employees have the tools necessary to accomplish their goals.

1. Strategic and funded long-term plan for upgrading the fleet and fleet support services.
2. Continue to improve 311 to better track Customer Services Request (CSRs), response times, and remediation rates.
3. Fully staffed Law Department, with a focus on the Quality-of-Life Division, with competitive pays schedules to attract and retain talent.
4. Continue funding for Rec at Night and opportunities for expanded youth programming.
5. Continue support for the Building Inspector Training Academy.

Public Safety

Cincinnati's Police, Fire, and public safety systems are best-in-class and consistently a top priority of constituents. We need to maintain funding to continue this high level of service and look for strategic upgrades.

1. Fully funded police and fire cadet classes.
2. Continue funding for the Emergency Communication Center's Alternative Response to Crisis (ARC) and Community Responders teams.
3. Additional funds for a new SWAT vehicle.
4. Continue funding for the CPD victim liaison unit.
5. Fund Act for Cincy violence reduction portfolio and action teams.

Equitable Economic Development

The City should focus on increasing economic development in neighborhoods that are not seeing investment or development. Priority should be low-income neighborhoods where the TIF (tax increment financing funds) are not sufficient to catalyze development.

1. Continue funding for the Affordable Housing Leverage Fund.
2. Another funded cycle for the Quick Strike program.
 - a. Funds should be leveraged from the Connected Communities Fund for Quick Strike projects.
3. Resources for the creation of the Office of Strategic Growth.
4. Support for the Building Futures program to create paths towards careers in the building trades.
5. Continue the Neighborhood Business District Improvement Plan (NBDIP), with support for the Neighborhood Catalytic Capital Investment Programs, and organizations including the ROMAC, Asianati, the Clifton Cultural Arts Center, and Artworks.

Pension

City government is as great as its employees. To ensure that their contributions are respected, as well as to retain and attract talent, the City must continue to work towards a sustainable pension system with a goal of 2045 solvency.

Fiscal Sustainability

The City must increasingly look for efficiencies, cost-savings, and new sources of revenue, including:

1. Study shared services and/or combining the City and county prosecutor's office.
2. An increased focus on parking enforcement, including expanded hours of enforcement.
3. Study increased user fees, particularly for non-City residents.

Cincy on Track

Council endorses the Cincy on Track plan. Deferred maintenance spending should increase to address failing infrastructure. This progress must be transparent and measured. Street rehabilitation should be the highest priority. There needs to be an emphasis on climate-informed investments and identifying green solutions.

1. Prioritize CSR proceeds to increase funding for the Street Rehabilitation Program.

Human Services and Leveraged Support

Despite the challenging environment, the budget should attempt to maintain leveraged support funding and other funding sources for organizations that support City priorities. These include:

1. Maintain Human Services Funding at 1.5%.
2. Support for the Human Services office with one new FTE.
3. Maintain funding for rental assistance and support for eviction prevention programs.
4. Continue funding for Boots on the Ground, Seeds of Change, and Safe and Clean at existing levels.
5. Follow through on Council’s prior commitments to funding Red Bike and mental health care for transgender youth.

Councilmember Jeff Cramerding

ETH

Budget + Finance



Anna Albi
Councilmember

April 4, 2025

Councilmember Anna Albi Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget

We believe Cincinnati's greatest days are still ahead, and we are in the midst of a Queen City Renaissance. Cincinnati is leading the way with world-class events such as BLINK and Oktoberfest Zinzinnati, a dynamic art scene and a skyline bursting with colorful murals, and vibrant parks, including our award-winning Smale Riverfront Park.

While growing our city is a top priority, our greatest responsibility as a City Council is to cultivate and maintain a safe community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. To do that, we must ensure our residents are paid enough to afford a roof over their heads, fresh food on the table and access to healthcare. Additionally, we must continue to use an equitable, data-driven and human-centric approach to invest at the grassroots level into community-based programs that serve those most in need.

Operating:

- Fund ACT for Cincy violence reduction portfolio and action teams
- Establish a hate incident reporting portal through 311 platform
- Increase funding for Human Services Fund above the 1.5% threshold to account for reform with leverage support categories
- Invest in community engagement and outreach, including the opt-in text messaging pilot
- Fund an additional full-time employee to support the Office of Human Services
- Continue funding for the Police Department Victim Liaison Unit led by Karen Rumsey
- Continue funding for the Emergency Communication Center's Alternative Response to Crisis (ARC) and Community Responders teams
- Continue funding for the Boots on the Ground and Safe and Clean grant programs
- Continue funding for Award-Winning Rec at Night and explore opportunities for expanded youth programming through the Recreation Commission
- Continue support for Community Councils and Community Budget Requests (CBRs)
- Expand Career Pathways to increase additional departments and kinds of roles and continue support for Building Futures program through the Urban League

Capital:

- Establish a sidewalk repair pilot program through Cincy on Track funding
- Increase funding for the Neighborhood Catalytic Capital Improvement Program, with priority given to neighborhoods experiencing the most gun violence to support ACT for Cincy
- Establish a fund for nonprofit community development projects to apply for capital funding
- Continue funding for the Affordable Housing Leveraged Fund through the Cincinnati Development Fund with increased emphasis on development projects aimed at 60 AMI and below



Councilmember Anna Albi



202500679

Victoria Parks
President Pro Tempore

April 3rd, 2025

Councilmember Victoria Parks Budget Policy Motion for FY26 Budget

Operating:

- Continued funding for the City's Alternative Response to Crisis Team.
- Continue funding for Boots on The Ground and Safe & Clean grant programs.
- Continued funding and focus on job training programs such as the Building Futures program through the Urban League of Greater Southwest Ohio and the City of Cincinnati's Building Inspectors Training Academy.
- Continued support for children and families through the organization Santa Maria Community Services.
- Continuing to make the City more competitive through exploring the hiring of another grant writer.

Capital:

- Invest in the City's need for affordable housing through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- The Budget should include capital investments into pregnancy counseling and programming through Just Choice.
- Continued support for community projects such as the Robert O'Neal Multicultural Arts Center (ROMAC).
- Continue funding arts programs aimed at fostering growth & improving the lives of children through the organizations The Childrens' Theater and Learning Through Art.
- Including funding for housing shelters such as the Greater Cincinnati's YWCA's Domestic Violence Shelter and Shelterhouse.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria Parks".



20250704

Evan Nolan Councilmember

April 4, 2025

Councilmember Evan Nolan Budget Priorities for the FY26 Recommended Budget

Cincinnati's recent growth has provided tangible momentum for the city, but it is not a given. We must be intentional with our policies and strategic direction to ensure we continue to grow decades into the future. Through deliberate investments in housing, economic development, and evolving the efficiency by which the City operates, we can be the catalyst for positively transforming disinvested neighborhoods, improving the safety and quality of life for all our residents, and achieving fiscal sustainability. The pursuit of these goals will require challenging the status quo and striving for racial equity through economic empowerment and recognition of the disparities that persist in our city today.

Operating

- Competitive pay schedules for the **Law Department** to attract and retain talent while bolstering our efforts in Quality of Life.
- Ensure necessary support for **Buildings & Inspections** as they implement the Vacant Building Registry and gather information on the vacant building stock in the city.
- Expand support for **Access to Counsel**, including rental assistance for tenants to avoid eviction and homelessness.
- Invest necessary resources for the creation of the **Office of Strategic Growth** to push Cincinnati towards being the most competitive municipality in the region and achieve our bold housing goals.
- Retain funding for and launch the **Child Savings Account** program that resulted from the Cities for Financial Empowerment Financial Freedom Blueprint.
- Continue to expand the **Alternative Response to Crisis Unit**, which ensures trained mental health professionals are responding to calls for service and supports the community's top public safety priority.

Capital

- Expand City investment in neighborhoods that have lacked new economic development and housing. We should support programs such as **Quickstrike, NCCIP, DCED business support and retention** and **other capital support for our CDCs** to put money directly in the hands of local mission-driven organizations driving positive development across the city.

- Adherence to the administration's **Cincy on Track Plan**, with a focus on the 6-year capital improvement strategy to address existing deferred maintenance and fulfill our commitment to voters. The goal should be the beneficiaries of projects, not geographic constraints.
- Commit to a strategy and long-term funding solutions for the **maintenance and replacement of the City's fleet infrastructure**, with an emphasis on technology upgrades to support our public service workers.
- Continued funding for the **Affordable Housing Leveraged Fund**, which has a proven track record and is the City's best tool to combat the housing crisis.
- Consideration of funding for **the rehabilitation of vacant buildings** in response to motion #202500567 (Nolan, Johnson, Jeffreys) to assist property owners in need and put long-empty buildings back into productive use.



Councilmember Evan Nolan



202500711

Seth Walsh
Councilmember

Budget Priorities for FY26 Recommended Budget *Councilmember Seth Walsh*

This is the third budget I've considered as a Member of Cincinnati City Council. Each year, this process is more than balancing revenues and expenses—it's our opportunity to write the next chapter in Cincinnati's future. Together, we have proven that thoughtful, community-centered investments can uplift neighborhoods, strengthen families, and inspire growth.

As uncertainty clouds the national landscape, Cincinnati must be the city that steps forward with clarity, creativity, and compassion. Our time is now to continue to reinvest in our neighborhoods and basic services to pave the way for growth and vibrancy throughout the city.

Now more than ever, we are called to lead boldly. We must protect what makes us strong—public safety, basic services, and access to opportunity—while building the kind of future where every neighborhood and every resident has the tools to thrive. In FY26, my budget priorities are as follows:

Safety and Basic Services

Safety and reliability are the cornerstones of a city where people choose to live, raise families, and grow businesses. In FY26, we should double down on these foundational investments:

Public Safety:

1. Invest in the CPD Wellness Unit, ensuring our officers are mentally healthy and mission ready.
2. Increase full-time fire staff to reduce costly overtime and support long-term staffing sustainability.
3. Replace all Violent Crime Squad (VCS) unmarked vehicles and create a program to ensure we rotated in new cars every 6-12 months moving forward.
4. Support and increase funding to Big Brother Big Sisters from the FY25 investment of \$50,000.

Basic Services:

1. Ensure the Department of Public Services receives the funding necessary to improve our snow response including increasing staff, replacing and/or retrofitting our fleet where necessary.
2. Utilize our bonding capacity to maximize necessary fleet upgrades, with priority to fire vehicles.
3. Revolutionize our pothole repair through technology upgrades and AI to be proactive, not just reactive, in pothole repair.
4. Provide funding to install sprinklers under major bridges and outdoor infrastructure to prevent the type of damage we saw in November 2024 with the Daniel Carter Beard Bridge.

5. Provide funding to replace the failing retaining wall in Mt. Adams visible from Columbia Pkwy.
6. Provide funding to have utilities along Bus Rapid Transit routes buried underground during the building of BRT.

Internal City Investments:

1. Continue to increase our funding contribution to the pension.
2. Continue to fund and support OPDA.
3. Create an Office of Strategic Growth.
4. Continue to invest in the Buildings and Inspections Building Inspector Training Academy.
5. Leverage City investments into outside partners and projects with private and non-profit funding to make sure the City's investment is as impactful as possible.

A Growing Cincinnati

We know that every one of our 52 neighborhoods has untapped potential and that cities that are not growing are dying. FY26 continues our push to deliver catalytic investments that unlock growth, fuel creativity, and help people put down roots:

Neighborhood Economic Development:

1. Create a Right of First Refusal program to secure long term control over important properties within communities for long term investment.
2. Dramatically increase funding to Quick Strike Acquisition Fund. There were over \$1.3 million in asks for the FY25 funding cycle, with three projects still anticipated to come through the process.
3. Continue the Catalytic Housing and Project Gap Filling Funding created in the FY24 closeout budget with an initial \$5.5 million investment.
4. Fund the Northside Gateway project to complete the financing structure.
5. Invest in South Fairmount stabilization and redevelopment efforts in collaboration with The Port, to leverage potential additional state funding.
6. Invest in an "Iconic Cincinnati" marketing strategy to improve and increase positive brand recognition of Cincinnati and to adjust national perception of our great city.
7. Support programs from the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio including expanding and growing Building Futures to continue to grow and manage a strong, diverse workforce.
8. Increase operating support to The Port to continue to be a major development arm in Cincinnati.
9. Support HOME operating funding needs.
10. Uncap Affordable Housing Trust Fund awards and maintain the AHTF at the current funding level.
11. Maintain CDC operating support through HomeBase Cincy, with priority given to invest in and grow smaller or emerging CDCs.

Neighborhood Vitality:

1. Invest in branding and activation of neighborhoods and their unique business districts.
2. Maintain NSP at \$10,000 per neighborhood and continue to support Invest in Neighborhoods.
3. Put aside money to upgrade City Hall into a destination in the city once again.
4. Maintain and expand the City's HARBOR program.

5. Continue to invest in the Safe and Clean fund and Keep Cincinnati Beautiful to keep our neighborhoods welcoming and clean.

Vibrant Neighborhoods

Small businesses, arts and culture organizations, and special events are more than economic engines—they're the soul of our neighborhoods. In FY26, we continue to stand with local entrepreneurs and creatives who are creating opportunities and building community from the ground up.

Small Business Support:

1. Continue to fund the tenant improvement program and increase funding as possible.
2. Uncap any funding application for small business support.
3. Create a loan or grant program for small businesses impacted by construction. Small businesses should not struggle or fail because of city related work or development.
4. Continue to provide support to the Avondale Town Center. It is difficult to create a new market, which is what we seek to do at the Avondale Town Center. Continued support is key.
5. Fund a pop-up shop program similar to the "Our Shop" program in College Hill through DCED.
6. Support CincyTech and Cintrifuse in growing a startup culture in Cincinnati.
7. Continue to support REDI in their business recruitment to Cincinnati.

Arts, Culture, and Special Events:

1. Continue to support the Cincinnati Sports Commission after our initial \$250,000 investment in the FY25 budget.
2. Complete our commitment to America's River Roots by matching our initial \$250,000 investment in the FY25 budget.
3. Provide operating support to BLINK to make it more than an event more than every two years.
4. Create and fund a Special Events Startup Incubator to find the next big event in Cincinnati.
5. Provide funding to lead the study of the capital stack funding needs for the new arena.
6. Provide \$750,000 support to Clifton Cultural Arts Center to finish the project.
7. Provide \$1.6 million to the Cincinnati Art Museum to create an ADA accessible ramp that goes with their steps up to the Museum.
8. Provide \$125,000 to the ArtWorks Creative Campus ArtPark project.
9. Continue to fund Film Cincinnati at the total FY25 level of \$150,000.
10. Support Asianati in their work to continue building a more diverse Cincinnati.

This budget isn't just a list of priorities. It's a blueprint for progress. A call to action. And a promise to every resident of Cincinnati: you matter. Your neighborhood matters. And your future is worth investing in.

Let's build this future, together.





Meeka D. Owens
Cincinnati City Councilmember

COMMUNICATION

Councilmember Meeka D. Owens Budget Priorities for FY2026-FY2027

As the City Administration prepares the FY2026 to FY2027 Biennial Recommended General Fund Operating Budget, General Fund Capital Budget, and allocations from the Cincinnati Railroad Sale through Cincy on Track, it should aim for an equitable allocation of resources that meets community needs, ensuring that funds allocated are spent transparently with accountability, and move the City of Cincinnati further toward address the climate crisis through green investments. I submit the following policy guidelines and priorities, which focus broadly on the Council's top priorities and the responses that were presented in the Quality of Life and Budget Priorities Survey.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety should always be this Council's top priority, and we as a Council need to be proactive in ensuring the expansion and maintenance of our public safety infrastructure. While the administration, directed by this Council, continues to do this work, I ask that they specially prioritize:

- Police and Fire should be funded in a manner that is consistent with bargaining agreements based on the department's plan to reach their approved full-strengthen complements.
- To further address the public health crisis of gun violence across Cincinnati, additional funding should be made available to CPD's victim liaison unit, mental health crisis intervention, gun lock distribution, and proper education and awareness. This can all be supported using the ACT for Cincy blueprint recently formulated by the administration.
- There should be priority placed upon the maintenance of our Public Safety fleet, a majority of CFD vehicles are currently overdue for maintenance that could have been seen as preventive but is now deferred. I ask that our public safety employees be able to get into vehicles that are properly maintained on a timely basis.
- The administration by the direction of Council should support a formative RFP regarding public engagement around the possible installation of a Gun Violence Victims Memorial. This is in reference to the report provided by the administration (#202500448).
- Further the collaboration with FLOCK software to enhance meaningful and effective public safety strategies in our neighborhoods. Actively, the city is functioning under an MOU with FLOCK for access to the software, but we should be looking for greater ways to institute their products.

THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS

Cincinnati's 52 neighborhoods make our city so special. While I and the rest of Council are aware that each neighborhood has specific needs, I ask that the administration focus on these needs to help our communities grow and thrive:

- Funding for infrastructure should support the formation of a multimodal transportation network. This will help in providing greater resources for residents for more affordable forms of transportation in our city. By supporting greater forms of transportation and reinforcing those investments we will create greater growth for Cincinnati neighborhoods.
- Home repair assistance programs such as HARBOR should continue to be funded at the previously biennium level to support our city's housing growth and sustainability. Programs similar to the one previously identified should also be considered to reinforce the housing conditions in our city. Including the ongoing conversations around a Cincinnati Rental Improvement Fund.
- Ensure that both capital and operating budgets reflect climate-informed investments. This includes vigorously applying for remaining federal funds and incentives, which will ensure that the city can have dollars from the federal government that are directly allocated for mitigating the climate crisis.
- Accelerate our efforts to remove lead piping through the Lead Service Line Replacement Program and continue to identify sources to ensure that this program can thrive, regardless of shifting federal priorities and timelines.
- In alignment with the Cincy on Track plan, the administration should identify green solutions for addressing deferred maintenance. Prioritizing green solutions while we allocate dollars from the CSR sale will help us build a city for the future that will also help reduce our effect on the climate crisis.
 - Reported by the Ohio Environmental Council's (OEC) *The Bill is Coming Due: Calculating the Financial Cost of Climate Change to Ohio's Local Governments* shows that Ohio municipal spending will need to increase annually by \$1.8b to \$5.9b by 2050 to keep up with current spending levels to properly address the impact of climate change. Further, if the reductions of the federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law continue this would impact Hamilton County \$1.7b in critical climate investments
- While we continue addressing our aging infrastructure and constructing possible new infrastructure, we should identify proactive maintenance plans to ensure that we can maintain the assets we currently have and are considering constructing.
- Cincinnati is a city made up of renters, 60% to be exact. We are continuing to see the crisis that is homelessness, housing insecurity, and eviction take place far too often. Over the past three fiscal years this Council has been incredibly proactive in address the needs of our most downtrodden residents. Through our investments we have helped hundreds of families stay in their homes over those three years, avoiding the adverse effects of having an eviction on their record. Therefore, this Council should prioritize continued investments in the Access to Counsel ecosystem while additionally being supported by Rental Assistance funding.
- Many of the properties that tenants reside in have insufficient utilities, risk infestation, crime, and general neglect. Ensuring safe and healthy housing stock is critical to tackling

our region's housing crisis. That is why code enforcement capacity should be maintained and expanded when possible. Expanding the Building Inspectors recruiting program to ensure there is a full compliment of inspectors.

- Supporting smaller grant programs that produce thriving communities should also be paramount in the face of lacking federal resources. We should continue the funding for Safe and Clean, Boots on the Ground, Seeds of Change, and other critical programs that support neighborhood-based improvements.

GROWING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

A city that has stagnant growth ceases to exist. Cincinnati is growing for the first time in a long time, and we need to capitalize on this moment. The administration should focus on the following to help our economic standing:

- In maintaining this Council's good government initiatives, organizations who are seeking funding from either Leveraged Support or Human Services Funding who did not go through the application process should not be allocated funds or recommended by the organization using those sources.
- The administration, through Leverage Support and Human Services Funding, should look for strategic impact and innovation for the focus of their recommendations. We also ask that there be a strong understanding of if we are supporting existing programs or new programs.
- In greater support of the City's environmental work, we ask that there be a prioritization of projects that might be able to access existing federal incentives in green investment (i.e. IRA tax credits).
- That the administration looks to identify possible sources of funding to aid local non-profit organizations who are in need of capital funding to complete transformative projects. Additionally, these projects should be supported by a competitive application process similar to Leveraged Support.
- As we continue to incentivize development and business in Cincinnati, we need to ensure that we have a strategic impact when it comes to city investment in development projects. Specifically, around funds that are allocated via TIF and Quick Strike.
- Since the passage of Connected Communities in June of 2024, this Council and administration should reenforce the funding for Neighborhood Business Districts. Specifically, maintain funding in the Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program (NBDIP).
- Furthering the city's efforts to encourage and enhance historic preservation needs to be a priority as we look toward what growth looks like in Cincinnati. Therefore, we should improve the service delivery and process improvements to enhance the historic nature of our 52 neighborhoods.
- Growing economic opportunities means growing for everyone in our city and in our collective region. Based on goal identified in the 2023 Green Cincinnati Plan we need to incentivize and increase the availability of green jobs going forward.
- Retaining and attracting small businesses needs to be paramount as we are in a resurgence of local innovation and entrepreneurship. I ask that we continue to support

the Commercial Tenant Improvement Program (CTIP), the Pop-Up Shop Program (OurShop) and the MicroCity Loan Program to support our local businesses further.

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

With the federal landscape changing every day, we as a city must be proactive in our approach to filling gaps and identifying new sources of revenue. That is why the administration should consider the following:

- The General Fund and Capital Fund budget must be balanced over the next two fiscal years (FY26 & FY27).
- The administration should ensure that a competitive process is established for all non-profits approaching the City through allocation processes, including the carryover process overseen by the Council.
- Regarding the aforementioned federal landscape, the city administration should identify ways to incentivize revenue-producing development, programming, and additional projects to grow the City's overall revenues. This includes reducing barriers to development for both large and small firms to help increase the population of Cincinnati to increase the tax base overall.
- Ensuring proper capacity within the City administration, specifically the Office of Grant Administration, to apply for all available federal funding opportunities. Right now we are in a moment of not knowing what federal incentives will be accessible, but having the ability to quickly and effectively allocate resources to applications will make our city more competitive for these critical funds.
- The administration should be committed to establishing and maintaining a transparent system for allocating funds related to the sale of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad.


EXCELLENT AND EQUITABLE SERVICE DELIVERY

Our city's primary mission should always be to supply national recognized services to the people of Cincinnati. Over 6,000 people come to work every day to supply these critical services to the residents of our city. Therefore, we should have the back of those who deliver those resources and services. I ask the administration to consider the following to address those service concerns that are in alignment with the requests of city departments and the citizens' survey:

- Investments in greater FTEs should reflect the services that citizens want to see improved, based on the citizens' survey.
- Our city cannot function without legal services. Therefore, I ask that the administration work reach a full complement of attorneys in the city Law Department as soon as possible.
- As stated in a previous priority, we want historic designation to become a more fluid and efficient process for community members to use. This will require greater support for the Department of Planning and Engagement, specifically the Urban Conservator. This position directly oversees the historic designation process from start to finish and is a position of one. If greater resources are allocated to assist the Conservator, then we can prioritize historic designation and preservation even more.
- A city prioritizing fighting the climate crisis should reflect that in the services that they deliver. Therefore, I ask that the administration continue the efforts around electrifying

our fleet and installing charging infrastructure at city facilities. Additionally, Cincinnati facilities should continue to find climate conscious measures that bring down energy costs. This could include energy-efficient appliances, solar installations, excreta.

- City employees should be granted greater professional development and training opportunities during their time of employment. We should prioritize getting city employees into regional/statewide/national programs that enhance leadership and communication skills that will improve the services that our departments provide.
- Improving and enhancing the Department of Human Services is a must have in this biennium. Not only is this department of one individual (Dir. White), but this department maintains critical contracts and relationships with critical service providers in our city. Therefore, the administration should look at adding an additional FTE to the Department of Human Services during FY26.



Meeka D. Owens

Councilmember Meeka D. Owens



Mark Jeffreys
Councilmember

April 4, 2025

MEMORANDUM
Budget Policy Direction to City Administration
for Recommended FY26 Budget

Operating Priorities

- Continued investment and implementation of ACT for Cincy to keep our city safe:
 - Safe and Clean Fund
 - Boots on the Ground Fund
 - Human Services Fund at 1.5%
 - Alternative Response Program
 - Necessary recruit classes to achieve authorized strength
- Incremental pension increase to achieve 2045 solvency
- Create and/or consolidate programs to assist low-moderate income property owners with home repairs and vacant building rehabilitations
- Invest in making Keep Cincinnati Beautiful's Bulk Item Drop Off year-round. This has reduced illegal dumping by 35%, saving at least \$500,000 in clean-up costs.
- Invest in Red Bike's "Strengthen and Sustain" plan, as outlined in Resolution #202500235 to support their operations
- Renew the investment in Mental Health Services for Transgender and Non-Binary Youth as outlined in Motion #202402384
- Create a Downtown Neighborhood Plan that incorporates the goal to create 20,000 new housing units by 2035 and multimodal connections into Queensgate
- Increase investment in community developments through the Neighborhood Catalytic Capital Investment Program (such as projects like CCAC, ROMAC, Artworks, Pig Works, etc.)
- Invest in additional parking enforcement officers

Capital Priorities

- Implement the Capital Improvement Program, as outlined in Report #202500559, to chip away at deferred capital maintenance needs
- "Pave, Pave, Pave": Utilize CSR proceeds to increase funding for the Street Rehabilitation Program to maintain our public roadways, pave additional lane miles, and advance the Complete Streets policy
 - Utilize the Complete Streets process to coordinate and implement green stormwater infrastructure such as "bioswales" and "rain gardens" to alleviate storm sewer capacity and overland flooding
- Increase investments in Pedestrian Safety Improvements and the Bicycle Transportation Program
- Outline a plan for necessary City Fleet replacements over the next 5+ years
- Increase investment in community developments through the Quick Strike Acquisition Fund

Opportunities for Revenue and Cost Recovery

Optimize Parking Revenue:

- Modernize and/or expand Paid Parking Zones, so the City can maximize parking revenues, while effectively managing heavily trafficked areas.
- Increase parking revenues via new enforcement officers and enforcement outside of the urban basin.

Implement Fees for Certain Services

- Implement “lift fees”. In partnership with City Council, pursue fees to counteract institutions who of call CFD to pick up patients who have fallen even when there is no medical emergency, ultimately shifting the cost onto taxpayers. Other cities such as Chicago, LA, Indianapolis have instituted “lift fees” charging the institution for that cost.
- “You break it, you pay for it”. In partnership with City Council, pursue charging reckless drivers fines for crashes that cause damage to public assets or other reckless behavior that causes damage to public assets. Many other cities such as LA, Columbus, Kansas City, Green Bay, Chicago, etc have some way of charging reckless drivers who are speeding for the cost of repairing damaged public infrastructure.
- Charge higher fees for non-city residents for certain city services (e.g. parks/rec rentals, summer camps, golf fees and other public use fees) similar to other entities that charge out-of-city users a higher rate e.g. Great Parks of Hamilton County charges higher rates for non-Hamilton County residents.

Get Reimbursed from the State of Ohio

- Pursue reimbursement from Ohio Highway Patrol for responding to & investigating crashes as well as traffic enforcement on Interstates within the city limits. OHHP handles these functions in rural and suburban jurisdictions throughout the state.
- Pursue reimbursement from ODOT for snow removal on State Routes that run through the City of Cincinnati. ODOT clears snow and ice on State Routes in rural and suburban communities.

Partner with Hamilton County to Identify Other Savings

- Form joint City/County task force to explore how to achieve shared services savings of at least 5% in next 10 years.



Councilmember Mark Jeffrey



Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney
Vice Mayor

April 4, 2025

MOTION

WE MOVE that the Cincinnati City Council ensure that the following entities receive funding allocations in the City of Cincinnati's FY26 Budget. There are amount recommendations included for some of the organizations, while amounts for others are to be determined upon further discussion with the administration, the Mayor, and City Council. The projects cited in this motion should be budget priorities because of their broad impact across the City of Cincinnati, and their importance in providing economic opportunity for residents and small businesses, resources for youth, and improving the quality of life for underserved communities.

Capital Funds

1. Projects that are shovel ready or already in process:

ArtWorks' Headquarters and Creative Campus (\$150,000)

ArtWorks has renovated a vacant building on Gilbert Avenue and turned it into a year-round, vibrant venue for artists' workshops, classes, exhibits, and community events. Its new park across from ArtWorks' headquarters on Gilbert Avenue will be a tremendous asset to the beauty and vitality of the Walnut Hills neighborhood.

Building Futures (\$300,000)

The goal is to increase the number of cohorts that the Urban League runs each year, and if possible, house additional classes in neighborhoods such as Winton Hills. Through a partnership with the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, the NAACP, the Urban League, and the Building Trades, Cincinnati created the second Building Futures program in the country, following the success of the Columbus program. Building Futures is a 12-week pre-apprenticeship program that helps participants overcome challenges that might prevent them from beginning a career in the building trades. In addition to learning about the construction industry, the program teaches life skills: financial literacy, math and reading. Building Futures prepares participants for careers in the skilled trades and places them directly in good-paying union apprenticeships including the Bricklayers, Carpenters, Iron Workers, Pipefitters, Cement Masons, Electricians, and Tile Layers. They receive union benefits and good, middle class wages during their apprenticeships. An additional \$300,000 would increase the number of cohorts per year by two.

Cadets

The Cincinnati Fire and Police Cadet Programs are important youth programs that provide a pipeline to future employment with the City. The programs are instrumental in providing the young people with opportunities for career exploration, skill building, and personal development. Acquiring 15-passenger vans is a necessary step to facilitate participation and logistics.

Cincinnati's Poet Laureate Program (\$7,500)

The City of Cincinnati partners with the Mercantile Library to implement Cincinnati's Poet Laureate Program. The Mercantile and the City each agreed to contribute \$250,000 annually to the program. While the program has

continued, the City's obligation has inadvertently fallen short. To date, the City owes the Mercantile \$2,500 per year for FY'24 and FY'25. Going Forward, the City's budget should include \$2,500/year to the Mercantile Library for the Cincinnati Poet Laureate Program.

Clifton Cultural Arts Center (CCAC) – (\$500,000)

Construction of the new CCAC began and was completed without 100% of the funding in place. There were several unexpected challenges including an anticipated \$1M donor/angel that did not arrive, and cost overruns pursuant to COVID. Yet, the new CCAC was completed and activated with more than 50,000 visitors from across Cincinnati. CCAC's Board has pledged another \$250K on top of their previous support, leaving a balance of \$500,000 debt. Assistance from the City would allow efforts to focus on providing more programming to serve residents of Cincinnati's 52 neighborhoods.

Habitat for Humanity (\$400,000)

Habitat meets three critical needs of Cincinnati: more housing that is affordable, more homeownership, and more workforce training. Habitat addresses all three needs and is requesting \$200,000 for a construction training program to provide hands-on experience, and \$200,000 to increase the number of homes being built in Cincinnati to 25 homes per year, and to make critical home repairs on 75-100 existing homes annually.

Imperial Theatre – (\$1,000,000)

The historic Imperial Theatre will be a catalyst for development and revitalization of the historic Mohawk neighborhood, and promote business growth, more resources for the performing and visual arts, and the growth of a business district.

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (\$150,000)

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful cleans up neighborhoods and highways, sometimes through neighborhood volunteers, and at other times through day-job hiring.

PigWorks (\$340,000)

The organization: Pig Works, a non-profit formally known as Cincinnati Marathon, Inc., is the parent company of premier events such as the Flying Pig Marathon, the Queen Bee Half Marathon celebrating female runners, and others. The Flying Pig Marathon provides an annual economic impact in Cincinnati of an estimated \$22 million. Pig Works partners with more than 300 charities and raises approximately \$1 million annually for their philanthropic partners. Pig Works awards to 14 high school students from the Greater Cincinnati area the amount of \$20,000 each year per student for post-secondary education.

The project: The property at 792 E. McMillan will serve as the permanent headquarters for PigWorks, the organization behind the Flying Pig Marathon and numerous other events that contribute to Cincinnati's health and fitness ecosystem. With this location, they will centralize operations, improve efficiency, and create a dedicated space for staff and community outreach efforts. This move will significantly benefit Walnut Hills by bringing more events and participants to the Walnut Hills area, fostering fitness, movement, and healthy living throughout Cincinnati, particularly in historically underserved neighborhoods like Walnut Hills, and supporting ongoing revitalization efforts in Walnut Hills.

Robert O'Neal Multicultural Arts Center (ROMAC) – (\$3,000,000)

The conversion of the historic Regal Theatre into the ROMAC will be a catalyst for the arts and small businesses to grow and thrive in the West End, creating jobs, programming (especially for youth), and revenue. The ROMAC will attract residents from all Cincinnati neighborhoods, as well as tourists from other states and countries. The ROMAC has been awarded \$1.2 million in Ohio tax credits, and will seek new market tax credits and historical tax credits. The City of Cincinnati contributed \$200,000 from the Neighborhood Catalytic Capital Investment Program (NCCIP) for predevelopment needs; the State of Ohio contributed \$200,000 from the Strategic Community Investment Fund; and the Greater Cincinnati Foundation contributed \$50,000 for roof repairs. The Haile Foundation has

pledged \$500,000 towards the capital campaign and operational infrastructure. The ROMAC is requesting a capital investment of \$3 million from the City of Cincinnati in order to begin construction in the fall/winter.

Winton Hills Community Center (\$250,000)

The Winton Hills Community Council is working to change the narrative of Winton Hills. Through the purchase of the Mother of Christ Church including its four acres of land, the Winton Hills Community Council will create a community hub. The community building will include workforce development classes, financial education classes, programs for youth, adults, and families, meeting spaces, healthy cooking classes, and more. The surrounding four acres will become a community urban farm community with assistance in design from the Cincinnati Zoo.

2. Programs to be created in order to meet an essential need:

Buy the Building/Vacant Building Renovation

This fund will help small businesses and small developers to acquire vacant buildings for the creation of affordable housing at 60% AMI or lower, or for mixed use where the buyer is a business owner and would locate their business would in the building. The program would be similar to Hamilton County’s Down Payment Match Program, but would allow residential units as well.

Rising 15 Economic Development Fund (\$3,000,000)

The fund was part of a general discussion pursuant to the 2023 debate on whether the City should sell the Cincinnati Southern Railway. The purpose is to incentivize development in underserved communities (the “Rising 15”) as indicated by socioeconomic status and lack of development and economic opportunity.

Sidewalk Repair Fund

Currently, homeowners are responsible for repairing the sidewalks adjacent to their properties although sidewalks are used by the public and some of the damage to sidewalks has been caused by trees planted years ago by the City of Cincinnati. Further, the cost of sidewalk repair for low to moderate income property owners can be prohibitive.

General Funds

1. Programs currently in existence:

All-In Cincinnati (\$250,000)

Through policy and systems change, advocacy, collaboration, and action, All-In Cincinnati works to shape a fair economy that benefits all. Some of All-In Cincinnati’s work includes collaboration with and support of Cincinnati City Council’s initiatives such as assisting with establishing the City’s Office of Opportunity, advancing anti-bias work in housing appraisals, recommending policy to close the racial wealth gap, and helping to fund the Food Policy Initiative in Winton Hills.

Art Academy (\$250,000)

The Art Academy located on Jackson Street hires additional year-round security for Jackson Street and the surrounding area to ensure the safety of their students, staff, and visitors, and also those in the OTR neighborhood who are not affiliated with the Art Academy.

Ascend 2030 (\$125,000)

Accompanying the MidwestCon Conference, now going into its third year, is the goal of making Cincinnati a national leader in AI and innovation. Toward that goal, the initiative includes CEO founders as well as academic leaders to partner with the City. There are numerous opportunities for digital transformation (including replacing outdated manual processes), investing in automation, and enhancing workflow to boost efficiency and reduce

costs. For example, the 311 system can be re-imagined to improve accessibility, response times, and transparency. Deliverables will be fast-tracking suggestions and solutions with a prototype.

Boots on the Ground Fund (\$500,000)

This fund, managed and contributed to by the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, provides funds for small non-profit organizations (under \$1 million in revenue) that do grassroots community work to address residents' needs in the areas of health, safety, and economic opportunity, as well as overall quality of life.

Center for Closing the Health Gap (\$250,000)

The Center for Closing the Health Gap is a grassroots mobilization organization and helps individuals to activate their agency to live healthier lives. Its mission is to eliminate racial health disparities in the Greater Cincinnati community through education, advocacy, and outreach. They target African American, Latino, and White Appalachian populations to fulfill their vision to make Greater Cincinnati a healthier region for all. The Center for Closing the Health Gap is leading the fight against health disparities in Cincinnati by addressing the social determinants of health disparities, and raising the muted voices of the community. The Health Gap meets people where they are and empowers them to make healthier, sustainable change within their families.

Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (CYC)

Established by former P&G President & CEO John Pepper three (3) decades ago, CYC has grown to encompass many youth-focused programs such as Saturday Hoops, Jobs for Cincinnati Grads, Mentors, and others. The majority of the youth served by CYC are Cincinnati residents.

Community Councils

Most of the City's 52 neighborhoods have community councils – volunteers who work tirelessly for the betterment of their community as well as the city as a whole. In FY'25, the community councils received \$10,000 per council in Neighborhood Support Program (NSP) funds, but several thousand dollars of these funds went to pay for increasingly high insurance, leaving councils with approximately \$7,000 for year-round programming. In addition to increasing the overall funding per community council, community councils that create a youth participation component should receive an additional \$2,000 to be spent specifically on youth programming by and for youth (18 years old and younger).

HomeBase Cincinnati (\$150,000)

HomeBase manages City funds and provides intermediary services to equip, support, and sustain Cincinnati's Community Development Corporations, Community-Based Organizations, neighborhood business districts, and small businesses through program administration, project management, technical assistance, and strategic capacity-building. The City's priorities include growth, increasing development, and increasing economic opportunity throughout the City, including neighborhoods that do not have formal community development organizations. Currently, HomeBase has a staff of three (3). To meet the growing need, HomeBase needs an additional \$150,00 to support and expand staff in order to continue to be an efficient and efficacious partner.

HomeSafe Property Tax Relief Program

Additional funding is needed in FY'26 to assist with delinquent property taxes for low and moderate income Cincinnati residents for their owner-occupied homes. The goal is to help residents to maintain ownership of their homes.

Karen Rumsey's Non-Violence Work

Karen Rumsey is a social worker who works through the Cincinnati Police Department with victims of violence and their families. She not only is present at the scene of the crime but in the ensuing months and years. She and her team hold survivor support groups, help families of victims obtain resources such as counseling, funds for funerals, victim services, and when the family is in danger, housing relocation. When perpetrators are prosecuted, Ms.

Rumsey's Cincinnati Citizens Respect our Witnesses (CCROW) program plays a crucial role in witnesses cooperating with the prosecution of the perpetrator. The work of Ms. Rumsey and her team occurs at all hours of the day, night, weekdays and weekends. Additional staffing is needed.

Ohio Justice and Policy Center (OJPC)

OJPC partners with the City of Cincinnati to implement Expungement Clinics that address barriers to re-entering citizens obtain employment and housing. Court actions such as expunging or sealing criminal records, and allowing prohibitive fees to be waived, allow the re-entering citizen to have the opportunity to be gainfully employed and appropriately housed, thereby reducing the chances of recidivism. OJPC, the City, the Hamilton County Public Library, and the Hamilton County Office of Re-Entry implemented a pilot clinic at the Hamilton County Public Library in December 2024. All but one pre-registrant appeared and met with an attorney to fill out the necessary paperwork and discuss options and next steps. Given the waiting list of more than 200 would-be applicants, the need for such clinics on an ongoing basis was apparent. To meet the need, OJPC needs to hire additional staff.

Safe and Clean Fund (\$500,000)

The Safe and Clean Fund managed by Keep Cincinnati Beautiful provides funds for small non-profit organizations that focus on cleaning up blight in communities and providing programs and resources to decrease violence.

Youth2Work (Cincinnati Recreation Commission)

The Cincinnati Recreation Commission's Youth2Work program is more than providing a summer paycheck for youth. The program includes college and other post-secondary planning, financial education classes, soft work skills training, and the requirement that the companies where the youth are employed expose them to the company's leadership. The idea is to expand their vision for themselves and their future. Rather than focusing on monitoring youth at transit centers, send them to afterschool and summer jobs where they can acquire skills, grow, get mentored, and change their mindset to a more positive future. The goal of Youth2Work must be to employ 1,000 youth annually, year-round.

2. Programs to be created to meet an essential need:

Small Business Assistance

Businesses often fail due to a lack of access to capital. The City previously had a fund where small businesses could apply for a small grant to assist with operations. This fund also would help businesses that were being harmed by nearby construction, and could be used for tools such as signage, as well as operations.

Youth Sports Leagues

Youth Sports Leagues are in need of assistance with funding, especially in underserved communities where costs such as fees, safety equipment, and uniforms are not affordable for many families. In addition, youth sports leagues need resources such as trauma counseling when a tragedy strikes, and training for coaches including conflict resolution.



Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney



Scotty Johnson
Councilmember

April 4, 2025

Please find the UPDATED budget priorities for Councilmember Scotty Johnson disclosed below:

1. African American Chamber (Full Funding)
2. Center for Closing the Health Gap (Full Funding)
3. Funding for ROMAC Theater (from the leverage funding of the \$5M from Sundance)
4. Funding for Bethany House