

April Town Hall: Q&A's

Thank you for attending our April town hall! Please know that we appreciate your engagement. The following were questions submitted to Councilman Landsman that we did not get to.

ON THE ARP FUNDING

In 2017, Candidate Landsman pledged to make community engagement support his fourth priority. The availability of the special relief funds is a way for him to keep his promise. What will he do to show this?

I will be shaping my recommendations off of what I hear from the public. I am a representative, who you elected to represent YOU. Not the other way around. That's why I'm committed to holding as many opportunities for community engagement as possible as we discuss appropriations of these funds. This town hall was just the first step, but we also know that not everyone is able to come to a town hall or public hearing; to make sure you're still heard, my office put together a [form](#) that people can fill out as well. If neither of these feedback formats work, you can always email my office to make sure your voice is heard.

Where do you stand on the City Managers/Mayor's use of these funds?

I appreciate the perspective of the Administration, and it's clear they put a lot of work into their initial proposal. Some of the suggested funding appropriations reflect my own priorities, while others leave room for discussion. I am committed to not officially endorsing spending until I hear robust community feedback, as I believe those closest to the challenges our city is facing will have the best ideas for how we can help. The job of Council these next few weeks is to make sure everyone is heard, and to bring folks together to ensure every dollar is invested in what Cincinnati needs most.

Is there an emphasis on spending this money on infrastructure ?

Absolutely. We need to not only build up Cincinnati to where we were pre-pandemic, but, as our President says: build back better. This means investing in infrastructure that will allow our city to grow and thrive for years to come.

Will the money only be spent on downtown or OTR development?

Absolutely not. You elected us to represent all 52 neighborhoods. Not just one. I'm aware of the need to spread out these funds — especially in neighborhoods that are rarely invested in, and may have key infrastructure or community-building projects that have been pushed aside due to lack of funding.

With the city's financial windfall, should city council increase the NSP funding the community council's receive annually to \$10,000.00? / Are there any proposals to increase funding to the community councils?

I believe there will be, yes. One of the things that has immediately emerged in these feedback sessions is the idea of a neighborhood recovery fund. This could boost spending on what CCs and their partners believe must happen in their respective neighborhoods. I will look further into this possibility.

Saving our older buildings is more effective than demolishing them. Funding for stabilization would provide short term jobs and long term community benefits. Do you support this?

Definitely. A key aspect of dealing with our housing crisis is the maintenance of housing and structures. Between 2010 and 2017, Hamilton County saw a loss of 3,134 units... mostly due to low-income homeowners, small landlords, and seniors being unable to access capital for repairs. When repairs are deferred, units become uninhabitable, which leads to evictions, blight, and a loss of housing stock. I am currently working on a robust plan for an affordable housing fund that utilizes public-private partnership — I believe strongly that any fund that is created should be flexible enough to be used for property improvements of old buildings owned by low-income homeowners, as well as building new units.

Do you support saving the bell tower at 1st Lutheran Church?

Speaking of saving an old structure — yes, I do. I have been working with those trying to find funding for this project. It's an important one.

Do you support improvements to River Road, State Ave. and W. 8th?

I do.

Are the funds being received enough to cover all of the short falls Cincinnati faces due to reduced revenue from the pandemic and still provide the necessary monies to fund current and future projects within the 52 neighborhoods?

Of course, we could always benefit from more funding. Cincinnati has been experiencing a decrease in city funding for years, and it has done irreparable damage to our infrastructure and services. However, this funding is enough that yes, it will be sufficient to cover our financial shortfalls, while also having extra to invest in community, neighborhood, and city-wide projects with long-term benefit. To do so, we have to be smart about spending, and making sure our spending plan is prioritized based on needs and sustainability.

Will you commit to taking a hard look at our zoning laws and how reforming them could help to alleviate some of our housing needs in the city?

Yes, and I really appreciate this question.

How do you intend to address the city's obligation to the pension system?

We're looking at ways to increase our pension obligation. It's a must do.

Why can't the city consider funding street improvements and the Western Hills viaduct with the COVID funds?

Yes, there will be significant funding for street improvements. As for the WHV, we are closing the gap, while also looking forward to the Biden administration passing a national infrastructure bill that will help us cross the finish line.

Do you support more collaboration between City and County Services? Including in the spending of this budget / Why is there a lack of collaboration and communication between City Government and County Government?

Yes, I do. In regards to budgets — I do believe that there are opportunities for innovation that could benefit both the city and county. I think it should start with reforming the MSD arrangement, which I've been pushing for some time now.

See, unlike Cincinnati's Waterworks, which is both owned and run by the City of Cincinnati, the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) is bifurcated; Hamilton County owns MSD, but the City of Cincinnati runs it. Due to this arrangement, the Cities' staff runs the utility, but the County has to approve all projects and high level governance — in order to do this, they spend millions on outside consultants and lawyers to perform their role in the MSD relationship, while we can't look into any relief programs ([like we did with Waterworks](#)). By streamlining MSD and reforming the bifurcated arrangement, we can save the county money; improve services; and, potentially explore relief programs. The complicated nature of the MSD arrangement is a direct

result of a lack of collaboration and communication between the City & County, and I look forward to continuing to change that status quo.

MISC.

What is your opinion on West Price Hill projects?

So far, I'm supportive.

What are some ways to get involved in solutions for our youth and low income communities?

Great question. I am currently really excited about our new youth jobs effort, which will be released in the coming weeks. If you want to be involved in this issue (which I believe to be one of the most important ways we can reduce rates of violence in our city; invest in our youth's success; and, contribute to our economy), email my office.

Do you support the [Belong be Strong Campaign](#)?

Digging in now. But I tend to be supportive of neighborhood-driven plans.

If you do not support other plans to address the "affordable housing crisis," what do you propose?

1. Improve Upon Successful Eviction Prevention Effort

The comprehensive eviction prevention reforms we passed have kept thousands of people in their homes. We need to continue this work, as well as establish a shared data system for improved programmatic coordination with our partners. The city should also pursue the creation of a right to counsel program for low-income families facing eviction, and set up a full-time housing court.

2. Incentivize Affordable Housing

We recently passed legislation to ensure the Administration can lift density restrictions if developers include affordability in projects; eliminate parking minimums on certain developments if affordable housing is pursued; and, leverage debt forgiveness tools to maintain current affordable housing. These, along with the new Balanced Development Priorities Analysis—a tool to help the city secure investments that lift up and support our residents and businesses—will further incentivize affordable housing on a systemic level.

3. Create "Housing for Everyone" Fund & Housing Advisory Board

We must establish a fund outside of city government to best consolidate public and private funds in one place. As the Administration has proposed, the fund would be supported by an external board,

appointed by the Mayor with consent from Council. Unlike previous proposals put forth, this fund would be flexible enough to support varying aspects of our housing crisis, such as: building new units, improving existing affordable units, subsidizing rents, and supporting low-income homeowners for property improvements. It would be funded by the city leveraging public dollars to find a significant private match from the private sector, with the help of local banks and philanthropy. I believe this alternative approach — a public-private partnership — would allow for the capital and flexibility the fund will need to begin to seriously address our housing crisis.

How can the city best assist residents to become homeowners and encourage developers to create affordable single family homes that residents of all economic status could have the opportunity to purchase in their community?

We need to invest in these projects in a way that we don't today. See my answer above.

How can we get more speed humps in neighborhoods?

Long-term: invest more in traffic safety, pedestrian safety, and infrastructure projects.

Short-term/immediate concerns: e-mail us and we'll work with you and DOTE on options.

Can we connect the Cincinnati streetcar to uptown? I know it's a big task, but it matters.

I think UC would have to take the lead. My sense is that they might.

What, if any, are some military veteran issues that city hall can address?

Two areas that I know of right now: mental health support, and small business inclusion. I support increased efforts regarding mental health in our city, especially for groups who have experienced trauma, but seek treatment at lower levels — such as our veterans, and our minority neighbors. Whatever city hall can do to support veterans at this level, I am for. Additionally, I support looking into the feasibility of adding disabled people to the populations of people who may be included in our [minority business-owners program](#). Adding disability as a protected category in our inclusion program could have an overwhelmingly positive impact for Cincinnati's veterans, as veterans have a much higher rate of disability than those who haven't served. Just as racial and gendered minorities experience barriers to opening businesses, our disabled residents do too (disabled Americans have one of the highest rates of unemployment of any demographic).

If you have any other ideas for initiatives/efforts that could help our veterans, feel free to email my office. I am here to listen.

Note: A couple folks responded that they were attending the town hall to take the temperature of other residents & see whether their priorities matched their own. So, we thought it might be fun to show what you answered to the question on the RSVP form, “What is one issue Councilman Landsman is engaged in that you are interested in?”

- Engagement
 - Community Engagement
 - Neighborhood Engagement
 - Constructive Civic Engagement
- Public Transportation
- Education
- Equity
- Veterans Issues
- Pedestrian Safety
- City Gun Violence Prevention
- Housing and Development
 - Gentrification
 - Affordable Housing
 - Development
 - Informing neighborhoods about development plans in their community-allowing feedback before decisions are made
 - Neighborhood enhancement & development
 - Developers "tax credits" & Tax abatements for high priced housing.
- Historic Preservation, including many issues such as affordable housing and retaining older buildings.
- Strategies/programs that help Greater Cincinnati women get back into the workforce (Many women lost jobs or otherwise left the workforce due to the pandemic, and women's equity and diversity in the workplace has been set back by more than a decade)