



**March 2011
Message from the City Manager**

There has been a lot of activity since I last communicated with you. This includes many positive things happening in our city, but unfortunately also the reality of working with fewer dollars. Although the 2011-12 budget resulted in many difficult decisions being made about service and employee reductions and eliminations, the City administration and staff remain committed to providing customer service excellence.

Budget Impacts

The approved 2011-12 budget did not impact the number of our police or fire fighters, or include a solid waste fee. It did, however, call for many other reductions or cuts including the elimination of the yard waste collection program; reductions to Health, Parks, Public Services and Recreation services and programs; the reduction of Neighborhood Support Program funding; and the elimination of our call center personnel. Although we no longer have live bodies necessarily answering customer service calls, requests can still be made going online to www.591-6000.com or calling 591-6000 and selecting from the extensive menu options.

Leadership Changes

We are pleased to welcome Fire Chief Richard Braun to Cincinnati. Since his swearing in ceremony on January 18, Chief Braun has been busy meeting with his staff and quickly acclimating himself to his new duties and to a new city. Prior to this appointment, Chief Braun served as Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Columbus, Ohio for the past 11 years.

Police Chief Thomas Streicher will be retiring this March, ending a career in the Cincinnati Police Department that began in 1971. The search for a new Police Chief has been suspended due to a directive from the City Council that the Administration enter into discussions with Hamilton County Sheriff Simon Lies to study the feasibility of merging police patrols and possibly the entire police department function with Hamilton County. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, the Administration will determine the need to resume the police chief selection process.

Major Initiatives

The Banks development is proving to be a very popular option for those interested in living downtown. More than 40 percent of the 300 units are pre-leased, and the first residential tenants are expected to move in on April 14. A number of restaurants have also signed leases for the retail space, including Toby Keith's I Love This Bar and Grill, Holy Grail Tavern & Grille, La Crepe Nanou, The Wine Loft, and Huey's 24/7 Diner out of New Orleans.

The City recently announced the 21 streetcar stop locations along the 4.9 mile streetcar route connecting the riverfront to the University of Cincinnati area. Consideration was given to spacing the stops approximately 2-3 blocks apart for greater accessibility, minimizing the number of times the streetcar has to switch traffic lanes, and connecting the main destinations and areas of town.

There is a lot of misinformation about this project floating around, so I'd like to provide some highlights about why this project is important to the city:

- Cincinnati's local economy will see **\$3 returned for every \$1 invested**. This has been confirmed in at least three separate studies of this area. This money can be used for general City services in all neighborhoods.
- The City is bringing in a modern streetcar system; it is not a trolley. The Cincinnati Streetcar is an enclosed electric mode of transportation operating with traffic in the streets. It will complement to the city's existing Metro and other transportation systems.
- Cincinnati's streetcars will connect the 130,000 people who live and work along the line in the Central Business District, The Banks, Riverfront Park and sports venues to Uptown, home to the University of Cincinnati, several major health-care centers and the Cincinnati Zoo. It has been proven in cities from Atlanta to Seattle that fixed rails in the ground with thousands of potential riders draws new storefronts and businesses as well as fixed up housing. That new development will put people to work and boost the City's tax revenue.
- The Streetcar will: **1) Revitalize the urban center**. The streetcar is an engine for transforming now vacant buildings and over 90 acres of parking lots into as many as 1,300 new housing units, storefronts, and creating new opportunities for office and retail development. **2) Grow the local economy**. Nearly 1,800 jobs are predicted to result from the construction of the Cincinnati Streetcar alone, and an estimated 9,000 jobs could be created in new businesses looking to serve the people riding the streetcar.
- The total project cost for phase one of the Cincinnati Streetcar is \$128 million, with an estimated operating cost of \$3.4 million per year. To date, \$150 million is identified in federal and state grants and local funding to build the first phase of the system.
- The capital funds set aside for the construction of the Cincinnati Streetcar cannot be used for police officers, fire fighters, trash collectors, or recreation center staff. Additionally, state and federal funds specifically for streetcar and transportation projects are also helping to build the streetcar.

To view the stops or to read more about the streetcar, visit www.cincinnati-streetcar.com .

World Choir Games

The countdown is on! Cincinnati will be the focus of world-wide attention in just 18 months as host of the 2012 World Choir Games. Imagine thousands of choir members from all across the globe, dressing in traditional attire and parading through the streets of downtown Cincinnati. That is how the seventh World Choir Games will get under way on July 4, 2012, when the largest international choral competition in the world comes to North America for the first time—right here in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Olympics of choral music will bring 20,000 participants and tens of thousands of visitors from more than 70 countries to Cincinnati USA from July 4-14, 2012 for what will be the largest and most significant international arts event in the city's history.

The World Choir Games is the signature event of [INTERKULTUR](#), a Germany-based organization that produces international choral events worldwide. Inspired by the Olympic ideal, the goal of the World Choir Games is to unite people from all nations through singing in peaceful competition.

The Open Competition is for all choirs, and The Champions Competition is for those who qualify. Champions Competition Choirs compete for gold, silver and bronze medals. The title of "Champion of the World Choir Games" is bestowed upon the top performers in each Champions Competition category. There will be 23 different musical categories in Cincinnati USA - 18 in The Open Competition - including barbershop, folklore, jazz, pop, gospel and spiritual. Judging is done by an impartial international jury.

There will also be entertainment-packed opening and closing ceremonies, awards ceremonies and hundreds of public performances, including "Friendship concerts," free choral performances on city streets, public squares, attraction venues, and parks.

For information to sign up for an e-newsletter, visit www.2012WorldChoirGames.com.

Development News

Rockfish Interactive, a rapidly growing digital innovation partner headquartered outside of Bentonville, Arkansas, recently selected Cincinnati as its Midwest headquarters. They will occupy office space in Mt. Adams, and have committed to creating 75 high-wage jobs within the next three years, which should contribute approximately \$600,000 to the City's general fund. Rockfish clients include Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, United Health Care, Cisco, and U.S. Playing Card Company. Rockfish was attracted to Cincinnati for several reasons, including a deep pool of talent in consumer marketing and branding, as well as the universities and amenities that will allow them to successfully scale up over the next three years. Additionally, Cincinnati has a broad base of potential clients and our market is cost competitive, particularly from a personnel and facilities standpoint, with the other cities where they operate.

The Department of Community Development has created the Cincinnati Commercial Site Portfolio to help businesses complete a quick and simplified site selection, expansion, or relocation analysis. Searches can now be done for vacant land, office, retail, industrial or warehouse buildings, and can be broken down by property type, neighborhood, whether for sale or lease, ZIP code, or street name. The user can create site specific demographic analysis, map businesses by industry, and even use interactive maps to identify the best location for a company. To see in more detail, visit <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/cdap/pages/-15704/>.

Neighborhood News

The 2011 Neighborhood Summit will be held on April 2 from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm at the Cintas Center on the campus of Xavier University. The community is invited to help prioritize Plan Cincinnati's goals, strategies and implementation techniques. To learn more about this year's Summit, visit www.plancincinnati.org.

The American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI) program, administered by the Department of Community Development, recently reached a milestone when it assisted its 300th homeowner. Created in 2005, ADDI has provided \$1.8 million in federal funds to first time home buyers with downpayment and closing cost assistance, which has resulted in over \$26 million leveraged in private financing.

The Cities of Cincinnati and Covington are co-hosting the 25th Annual Regional Neighborhood Network Conference to be held this September 22-24, with the Netherland Plaza in downtown Cincinnati serving as the host hotel. We anticipate at least 500 participants from our 20+ member cities in Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana and Tennessee. Attendees include representatives from all segments on society - from grassroot citizens, government, corporations, foundation, and nonprofit organizations - who will share ideas and strategies on improving our communities from the ground up. To learn more about this exciting event, visit www.rnnc.org.

Plan Cincinnati

As reported in 2009, the Department of City Planning & Buildings began the process of leading the City of Cincinnati through Plan Cincinnati, our first Comprehensive Plan in nearly 30 years. Since 2009, numerous meetings have been held throughout the community to gather input, and citizens were encouraged to participate in an online survey. For those interested in keeping informed on the process, they can be added to the mailing list by visiting http://www.plancincinnati.org/pages/working_groups.htm and scrolling down to “Join or Change your Working Group(s).” You can also contact Planning by email at plan.cincinnati@cincinnati-oh.gov or by phone at (513) 352-4845. More information is available at the project website www.plancincinnati.org and on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter under the name “Plan Cincinnati.” It is anticipated that Plan Cincinnati will be submitted to the City Council this year for approval.

Quality of Life

The U.S. District Court for Southwest Ohio gave formal approval to Project Groundwork, the Metropolitan Sewer District’s (MSD) multi-year, multi-billion dollar wet weather plan to control sewer overflows and basement backups across Hamilton County. Project Groundwork includes hundreds of sewer improvement projects, ranging from larger sewers to enhanced high-rate treatment facilities at sewer overflow points. The program is also focusing on solutions that control stormwater, such as removing streams from combined sewer intakes and controlling runoff from hillsides.

Roadways

As our winter turns into spring, we are once again dealing with potholes on city streets. Due to the speed at which potholes form, we are asking the public to report them via e-mail at Pothole@cincinnati-oh.gov or by calling the Communications Center at 591-6000 for a recorded menu option. Potholes can also be reported at www.5916000.com. Our crews will be better able to repair the potholes if the following information is provided:

1. The exact location, address (i.e., street name, street number, northwest corner, 5000 block, etc.)
- the more precise the location, the better.
2. Approximate size of pothole; (i.e.; 2’ diameter x 3” deep).

3. Number of potholes (i.e., how many and how close together).
4. Placement of pothole on the street (i.e.; in curb lane, in middle of street, at gutter, etc.).

Healthy Lifestyles

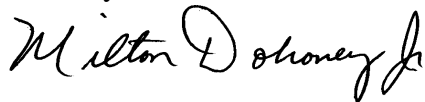
Last summer, the Cincinnati Parks' Summer Nature Camp program had a record number of 1,600 participants. This week-long program continues to build on its popularity and Parks looks forward to hosting even more children this summer. To learn more about the upcoming program, visit <http://www.cincinnati-parks.com/explore-nature/> and click of "Brochures and Registration."

Being Green/Staying Clean

The Park Board has received an \$88,000 grant to add 20 new Big Belly solar powered trash compactor units to its complement. These new units will be placed in Eden Park, Lytle Park and Piatt Park in downtown. The units being replaced will be sent to Parks' nature centers to demonstrate to students environmentally sound maintenance practices being used by the department.

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful began a new litter prevention education campaign called "Littering is Wrong Too." The campaign is geared toward young adults, who are the most likely offenders. One unique aspect of this campaign is that the public was able to contribute their own "wrongs" and show them in photos and videos that were featured on the campaign's website www.LitteringisWrongToo.org.

Sincerely,



Milton Dohoney, Jr.
City Manager