

**Date:** August 24, 2021

**To:** Councilmember Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney  
**From:** Andrew Garth, City Solicitor   
**Subject:** **Ordinance – Community Engagement Program and Policy**

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Transmitted herewith is an ordinance captioned as follows:

**REQUESTING** that the City Manager, with input and participation from citizens, community councils, community groups, and City partners, develop an additional community engagement plan, which includes a timeline and details the resources required in order for the plan to be implemented by the City of Cincinnati, including the Mayor, City administration, City boards, commissions and Council committees, in order to achieve the policy goals described in Attachment A attached hereto.

AWG/KMG/(lnk)  
Attachment  
344724

# City of Cincinnati

KMG

AWB

## An Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_

- 2021

**REQUESTING** that the City Manager, with input and participation from citizens, community councils, community groups, and City partners, develop an additional community engagement plan, which includes a timeline and details the resources required in order for the plan to be implemented by the City of Cincinnati, including the Mayor, City administration, City boards, commissions and Council committees, in order to achieve the policy goals described in Attachment A attached hereto.

WHEREAS, the mission of Cincinnati City Council is to provide, in a democratic and transparent manner, efficient and effective services that will make Cincinnati a better place in which to live, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, citizen engagement enhances the City's democratic processes, increases transparency and effectiveness, improves the quality of government decisions, and enlists the problem-solving capacities of the general public and organizations outside of the City; and

WHEREAS, this Council acknowledges that those affected by local government decisions should have the opportunity to participate in an engagement process; and

WHEREAS, there have been dramatic changes in technology, especially through broadcast media and the internet, allowing for greater transparency and citizen participation; and

WHEREAS, the City previously established a community engagement policy as summarized in the City Manager's FYI Memo dated February 26, 2021, and established the Department of City Planning and Engagement; and

WHEREAS, this Council requests that the City Manager present an additional community engagement plan that includes a timeline and resources required, with participation from community stakeholders; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That Council requests that the City Manager develop an additional policy to promote citizen engagement in City government, including the Mayor, City Council, the City administration, and City boards, commissions and Council committees, in order to achieve the policy goals described in Attachment A attached hereto.

Section 2. That Council requests that the City Manager (a) convene an initial public engagement session no later than 60 days after the effective date of this ordinance; (b) provide periodic updates to the Neighborhoods Committee on the development and/or implementation progress of the policy and further efforts by the City to enhance community engagement; and (c) present to Council an annual report on the status of the engagement program (e.g., goals, objectives, and benchmarks, and actual performance on goals, objectives, and benchmarks).

Section 3. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Passed \_\_\_\_\_, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Cranley, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

## ATTACHMENT A

### Section 1. Definitions.

- a. "Citizen engagement" includes equivalent terms such as "public engagement," "citizen participation" or "community engagement" and legal notice requirements. Citizen engagement methods include, but are not limited to, any form of in-person, technology-aided, or online communication that provides for discussion, dialogue, and/or deliberation among participants, encouraging citizens to meaningfully engage in the policy-making and/or problem-solving processes.
- b. "Policy process" is defined as "a course of action produced as a response to an opportunity, a perceived problem or issue involving a constituency, formulated by a deliberative political process and adopted, implemented and enforced by a public agency."

### Section 2. Community Engagement Mission and Vision.

- a. Vision—To be a thriving Cincinnati where all are engaged as empowered participants in shaping our shared future
- b. Mission—To strengthen the culture of citizen engagement in Cincinnati by providing opportunities for all to participate in meaningful and proactive ways in the city's decision-making processes

### Section 3. Community Engagement Principles.

- a. Right to Involvement: Those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the problem-solving/decision-making process regarding that decision.
- b. Careful Planning and Preparation: Actively pursue citizen groups, through adequate and inclusive planning and outreach, ensuring that the engagement design and the needs of the participants are met.
- c. Inclusion and Demographic Diversity: Actively reach out to equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy. Seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in the decision.
- d. Collaboration and Shared Purpose: Support and encourage participants, including government, community institutions, and other key stakeholders to work together to advance the common good. Promote sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the long-term needs and interests of all citizens.

- e. **Openness and Learning:** Help all involved listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options.
- f. **Transparency and Trust:** Be clear and open about the process and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed. Annually report on and rigorously evaluate citizen engagement efforts and activities for effectiveness and improvements to be made.
- g. **Impact and Action:** Ensure each participatory effort has potential to have a real impact and that participants are aware of that potential. Communicate to all participants how their input affected the decision making.
- h. **Sustained Engagement and Participatory Culture:** Establish and maintain a culture of ongoing and quality citizen engagement within departments, offices, programs, local agencies, business partners and institutions.
- i. **Accountability for Results and Financial Support:** City leaders and staff are held accountable for (a) ensuring meaningful citizen engagement in the policy making and work of the City and (b) providing the resources to ensure ongoing success.

#### Section 4. Community Engagement Policy.

- a. **Active citizen engagement and participation (to assemble, to deliberate and to take action on public problems or issues of community members) is important and highly valued by the City.**
- b. **The purpose of citizen engagement is to provide broad, inclusive, deliberative and meaningful participation in the policy process with the general public and stakeholders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The public should have the fullest opportunity to meaningfully participate in governance and the policy process and to provide the City and all related authorities with the benefits of their collective expertise and information.**
- c. **The principles for citizen engagement set forth in Section 3 are in addition to notice and comment or public hearings required by law.**
- d. **A Citizen Engagement Policy Manual could be a helpful tool to guide the City and its partners in the use of strategies satisfying the citizen engagement principles set forth in Section 3.**

#### Section 5. Implementation and Reporting

No later than 60 days from the passage of this ordinance the City Manager should convene an initial public engagement session. The City Manager should present periodic updates to the

Neighborhoods Committee on the development and/or implementation progress of the policy and further efforts by the City to enhance community engagement. The City Manager should present to Council an annual report on the status of the engagement program (e.g., goals, objectives, and benchmarks, and actual performance on goals, objectives, and benchmarks).