



The City of Cincinnati's Entitlement Approval Bodies and Processes

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Decision-Making Officials and Bodies

Administrative (City Staff):

- Director of City Planning
- Director of Buildings & Inspections
- Zoning Administrator
- Urban Conservator
- Zoning Hearing Examiner

Appointed/Elected:

- Historic Conservation Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Board of Building Appeals
- Cincinnati City Planning Commission
- Cincinnati City Council

Administrative Officials (City Staff)

Director of City Planning

- Administers the Department of City Planning
- Staff to the City Planning Commission – provides guidance and prepares reports
- Develops and amends zoning code and map
- Advises Council and City Manager on matters of physical development of the city; prepares comprehensive plans and other studies

Director of Buildings & Inspections

- Administers the Department of Buildings and Inspections and serves as the Chief Building Official for the city
- Permits and Inspections - ensures compliance with building, housing, and zoning codes, and other related codes and regulations, including the historic preservation code and historic guidelines
- Code Enforcement - may take enforcement action as necessary to abate nuisance, unsafe, and hazardous conditions and to otherwise ensure code compliant maintenance of buildings

Zoning Administrator

- Interprets and applies the Zoning Code
- Has discretionary authority to make minor approvals prescribed by the Zoning Code
- Supervises Zoning Plans Examiners, who review permits for consistency with Zoning Code
- Supervises Urban Conservator

Urban Conservator

- Administers Historic Preservation regulations
- Maintains Historic inventory and guidelines
- Provides reports and recommendations to the Historic Conservation Board when it considers appropriateness of alterations and demolitions of the city's historic assets and properties within historic districts
 - Includes facilitation of Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs), including approval of minor COAs

Zoning Hearing Examiner

Conducts quasi-judicial public hearings and makes decisions, subject to appeal to the ZBA, on applications for:

- Variances
- Special exceptions
- Conditional uses
- Expansion or substitution of nonconforming uses
- Development permission in Hillside Overlay Districts
- Development permission in Urban Design Overlay Districts
- Phased development in the Downtown Development District

Zoning Hearing Examiner

- Hearings every week on Wednesdays
- 805 Central Avenue, 5th Floor
Currently all Virtual on Zoom / YouTube
- Average Items-Per-Agenda: 5-7
- Approximately 5 week review process with additional 2 weeks for decision
- Typical Number of Items considered per year: about 200
- Open to the public

Appointed / Elected Bodies

Historic Conservation Board

- Hears and decides on Certificates of Appropriateness (quasi-judicial)
- Hears and decides on applications for conditional uses, nonconforming uses, variances or special exceptions in Historic Districts (quasi-judicial)
- Hears and recommends establishment of new Historic Districts/Guidelines to the CPC (legislative)
- Hears and recommends establishment of Historic Landmarks to the CPC (legislative)

Historic Conservation Board

- Advisory to City Planning Commission on Planned Development review and landmarks and districts, but makes final decision on all other items
- Meets 2 times a month on Mondays
- 805 Central Avenue, 5th Floor
Currently all Virtual on Zoom / YouTube
- Average Items-Per-Agenda: 4-6
- Approximately 6 week review process
- Typical Number of Items considered per year: about 100
- Open to the public

Historic Conservation Board Members

Seven members consisting of:

- One professional historic preservationist
- One professional historian
- Two architects registered in the State of Ohio, or one architect registered in the State of Ohio and one urban design professional
- One attorney licensed in the State of Ohio
- One person engaged in the real estate, development or construction industry
- One economist, accounting or financial professional

Appointed by City Manager and Confirmed by City Council

Zoning Board of Appeals

- Conducts de novo hearings on appeals from decisions of the Director of B&I and the Zoning Administrator
- Conducts record hearings on appeals from decisions of the Zoning Hearing Examiner, Historic Conservation Board, and in rare cases the City Planning Commission

Zoning Board of Appeals

- Meets 3rd Thursday of each month
- 805 Central Avenue, 5th Floor
Currently all Virtual on Zoom / YouTube
- Average Items-Per-Agenda: 1-2
- Typical Number of Items considered per year: about 10-12
- Open to the public

Zoning Board of Appeals Members

Seven members consisting of:

- One citizen member of the city planning commission (rotating)
- One person engaged in the real estate, development, or construction industry
- One urban design professional or city planner
- One architect registered in the State of Ohio
- One attorney licensed in the State of Ohio
- Two persons active in a community organization which is recognized by the council as a representative of a Cincinnati neighborhood

Appointed by City Manager and Confirmed by City Council

Board of Building Appeals

- Hears and decides appeals to written decisions, rulings, and orders issued by the Director of the Department of Buildings and Inspections

Board of Building Appeals

- Meets 1st Thursday of each month
- 805 Central Avenue, 5th Floor
Currently all Virtual on Zoom / YouTube
- Average Items-Per-Agenda: 1-2
- Typical Number of Items considered per year: 2-6
- Open to the public

Board of Building Appeals Members

Five members consisting of:

- One attorney, admitted to the Ohio bar
- One architect, registered in Ohio
- One structural engineer, registered in Ohio
- One mechanical engineer, registered in Ohio
- One person representing organized labor, knowledgeable in the construction and equipment of buildings and structures

Appointed by City Manager and Approved by City Council

City Planning Commission

- Hears and recommends Long Range Plans (Plan Cincinnati and Neighborhood Plans)
- Hears and recommends Zoning Code and Zoning Map amendments
- Hears and recommends Historic Districts and Landmarks
- Hears and recommends location and extent of City facilities including buildings, streets, parks, etc.
- Hears and recommends sales/leases of City-owned property, easements

City Planning Commission

- Hears and recommends location of public art and statuary
- Hears and decides dedication plats and recommends acceptance of rights-of-way
- Hears and decides applications for subdivision of land
- Hears and decides Final Development Plans in Planned Development (PD) Districts
- Hears and decides permits in an Interim Development Control District

The City Planning Commission

The City Planning Commission is an independent commission established by Article VII of the **City of Cincinnati's** charter:

The powers and duties of the commission shall be to **make plans and maps of the whole or any portion of the city** and of any land outside the city which, in the opinion of the commission, bears a relation to the planning of the city, and to make changes in additions to and extensions of such plans or maps when it deems same advisable. Such maps and plans shall show the commission's recommendations for the **location and extent of streets, alleys, ways, viaducts, bridges, subways, parkways, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds and public improvements, of public buildings and other public properties, and of public utilities whether publicly or privately owned, for water, light, sanitation, transportation, communication, power and other purposes; and for the removal, relocation, widening, extension, narrowing, vacation, abandonment or change of use of any of the foregoing public places, works, buildings, or utilities.** Such maps and plans may also include **the division of the city into zones or districts**, in accordance with the commission's recommendations for the limitation and regulation of the height, bulk (including percentage of lot occupancy and set-back building lines) and use of buildings and other structures and premises in such zones or districts.

The commission shall have the power to control the marking of **historical landmarks**; to control, in the manner provided by ordinance of the council, the **location of statuary and other works of art** which are or may become the property of the city, and the removal or relocation of any such works belonging to the city.

The city planning commission **shall be the platting commission of the city**, and, as such, shall have the control of platting and shall provide regulations governing the platting of all lands within the city.

City Planning Commission Actions: Legislative vs. Quasi-Judicial

A **Legislative action** is one related to the enactment of a law, ordinance, or regulation, or the performance of a rule-making function

- Zoning map amendments (rezonings, IDCs, PDs) and text amendments
- Notwithstanding ordinances
- Sales and leases of City-owned property
- Changes in the extent and use of City streets
- Approval of city and neighborhood plans
- Designation of historic districts and landmarks

A **Quasi-Judicial action** is one executing or administering a law, ordinance, regulation, or rule

- Final Development Plan Approval
- Review of a permit in an IDC
- Subdivision reviews

The City Planning Commission

- Advisory to City Council, but gives final approval to some items
- Meets 1st and 3rd Friday Each Month, 9 a.m.
- 805 Central Avenue, 7th Floor
Currently all Virtual on Zoom / CitiCable
- Average Items-Per-Agenda: 7
- Typical Number of Items Considered per year: about 150
- Open to the public

City Planning Commission Members

Seven members consisting of:

- The city manager (or her designee)
- One member of council
- Five electors of the city of Cincinnati

Appointed by Mayor; Councilmember is selected by City Council

Cincinnati City Council

- Hears and decides Long Range Plans (Plan Cincinnati and Neighborhood Plans)
- Hears and decides Zoning Code and Zoning Map amendments (2/3 of Council required to overrule CPC)
- Hears and decides Historic Districts and Landmarks
- Hears and decides sales/leases of City-owned property, easements
- Hears and decides acceptance of right-of-way
- Hears and decides extent of City facilities (2/3 of Council required to overrule CPC)

Cincinnati City Council

- Meets every Wednesday at 2:00 p.m., public comment at 1:30 p.m.
- City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor City Hall
Currently Zoom option for public comment / CitiCable
- Open to the public

Contact Information

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