

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

April 3, 2026

Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Cincinnati City Planning Commission for Friday, April 3, 2026, was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 801 Plum Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 and virtually on Zoom.

Pursuant to Chapter 121 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code enacted by Ordinance 298-2021, the Cincinnati City Planning Commission held its meeting on April 3, 2026, in-person and via videoconference (on Zoom). The manner of remote participation complied with all requirements of the Open Meetings Act. The meeting could be watched in real time on CitiCable or by livestreaming the meeting at www.cincinnati-oh.gov/media. Members of the public were invited to participate in-person by registering online to receive the Zoom link. Public comments and questions to be shared with the City Planning Commission could be submitted to the Department of City Planning and Engagement in advance of the meeting.

Present: Mr. Jacob Samad, Chair
Ms. Daniella Beltran, Vice Chair
Ms. Anna Albi, City Councilmember and Commissioner
Mr. Darrick Dansby, Commissioner
Ms. Anne Sesler, Commissioner (Zoom)
Assistant City Manager, Mr. William “Billy” Weber, Commissioner

Excused: Mr. John Eby, Commissioner

Staff Present: Ms. Katherine Keough-Jurs, City Planning & Engagement, Director
Ms. Stacey Hoffman, City Planning & Engagement, City Planning Division Manager
Ms. Emily Ahouse, City Planning & Engagement, Deputy Director/Zoning Administrator
Ms. Siobhan Bracken, City Planning & Engagement, Co-op Intern
Ms. Gabrielle Couch, City Planning & Engagement, City Planner
Ms. Maria Dienger, City Planning & Engagement, City Planner
Ms. Carly Evans, City Planning & Engagement, Administrative Specialist
Mr. Kyle Gibbs, City Planning & Engagement, City Planner
Mr. Doug Owen, City Planning & Engagement, Urban Conservator
Mr. Kevin Tidd, Law, Legal Counsel

Mr. Samad called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and asked that everyone join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

*Mr. Samad and Ms. Sesler were recused from Item 1.
Mr. Samad left the room and Ms. Sesler was placed in the Zoom Waiting Room.*

Ms. Beltran served as Chair for Item 1.

Consent Agenda – Legislative

ITEM 1

A report and recommendation on the proposed lease of the Convention Center Garage at 210 W. Fourth Street in the Central Business District. The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommended that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

- 1) **APPROVE** the proposed lease of the Convention Center Garage at 210 W. Fourth Street in the Central Business District.

Commission Action:

Adopted the staff's recommendation for Item 1 on the Legislative Consent Agenda.

Motion: Mr. Weber
Second: Mr. Dansby
Ayes: Ms. Albi, Ms. Beltran, Mr. Dansby, Mr. Weber
Nays: None

Mr. Samad returned to the room and resumed as Chair.

Mr. Weber and Ms. Sesler were recused from Item 2.

Mr. Weber left the room and Ms. Sesler remained in the Zoom Waiting Room.

Consent Agenda – Legislative

ITEM 2

A report and recommendation on proposed easements and the sale of City-owned land for the Winton Woods to Glenwood Gardens Trail project. The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommended that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

- 1) **APPROVE** the proposed easements and the sale of City-owned land for the Winton Woods to Glenwood Gardens Trail project

Commission Action:

Adopted the staff's recommendation for Item 2 on the Legislative Consent Agenda.

Motion: Mr. Dansby
Second: Ms. Albi
Ayes: Ms. Albi, Ms. Beltran, Mr. Dansby, Mr. Samad
Nays: None

Mr. Weber returned to the room.

Discussion Agenda – Legislative

ITEM 3

A report and recommendation on the proposed sale of City-owned right-of-way to include a portion of 5445 Beechmont Avenue in Mount Washington. The staff of the Department of City

Planning and Engagement recommended that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

- 1) **APPROVE** the proposed sale of City-owned right-of-way to include a portion of 5445 Beechmont Avenue in Mount Washington.

Commission Action:

Adopted the staff's recommendation for Item 3 on the Legislative Discussion Agenda.

Motion:	Mr. Weber
Second:	Ms. Albi
Ayes:	Ms. Albi, Ms. Beltran, Mr. Dansby, Mr. Weber, Mr. Samad
Nays:	None

Ms. Sesler returned to the meeting at 9:11 a.m.

Discussion Agenda – Legislative

ITEM 4

Ms. Gabrielle Couch presented a report and recommendation on a proposed Local Historic Conservation District designation in North Avondale. The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommended that the City Planning Commission take the following actions:

- 1) **APPROVE** the proposed Local Historic Conservation District designation of the North Avondale Historic District in North Avondale as described in the Designation Report included as Exhibit B;
- 2) **APPROVE** the attached map amendment designating the historic district as seen in Exhibit A;
- 3) **ADOPT** the staff recommendation to replace the “Demolitions” section on p. 20-21 of the Conservation Guidelines in Exhibit C with the text in the “Staff Proposed Revisions” section of this report; and
- 4) **APPROVE** the revised Conservation Guidelines as seen in Exhibit C.

Speakers and Discussion:

Ms. Keough-Jurs asked Deputy Director Ms. Emily Ahouse and Urban Conservator Mr. Doug Owen to join Gabrielle Couch for questions.

Ms. Beltran asked how the designation would interact with zoning, particularly with a collection of vacant properties on Reading Road. The properties are zoned Commercial Neighborhood – Pedestrian – Transit Corridor (CN-P-T). Mr. Owen replied that generally the historic conservation guidelines regulate the height and siting of the building in context to the district, but that the Historic Conservation Board would make the final decision on any proposal submitted to them.

Mr. Weber inquired about what situations would warrant a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) in reference to the Landscape and Site Features section of the proposed historic conservation guidelines. Mr. Owen stated that landscaping regulations are not uncommon in historic conservation guidelines and that there are other historic districts within the City that have landscape regulations. In general, the purpose of the Landscape and Site Features section in the historic conservation guidelines is to maintain the primary views of the properties from the street. Mr. Weber recommended specific guidance in the historic conservation guidelines to take any guesswork out of the equation.

Ms. Albi asked if a Certificate of Appropriateness would be required for other aesthetic items such as adding shutters. Mr. Owen replied that review would be required as it would be a new element to the property.

Ms. Albi asked how many of the properties within the proposed district are owner-occupied. Ms. Couch stated the applicant team may have that information.

Ms. Albi noted that there were sixteen different architectural styles within the proposed district and asked if it was common to have such variety. Mr. Owen replied that that is one of the items that makes the proposed district so unique and is not found anywhere else in the City.

Ms. Albi asked what options a property owner had if they opposed the district and did not want to be included. Mr. Owen stated that there was not an option to “opt out” of the district.

Ms. Sesler expressed concerns that the proposed historic conservation guidelines would increase the cost of maintaining a property. She asked what process the neighborhood would need to go through if they found the guidelines to be too onerous in the future and wanted to make changes. Mr. Owen replied that if there are proposed changes to the historic conservation guidelines after they are adopted, that it would go through a similar process, including the Historic Conservation Board, the City Planning Commission, and City Council. However, Mr. Owen stated the Historic Conservation Board does have the authority to review a project and waive any specific guidelines that they feel are too onerous, not appropriate for a specific project, or if there is valid justification for not following specific guidelines. Additionally, there is an economic hardship process outlined in the Zoning Code.

Mr. Samad asked if in-kind replacement of roofing materials was required. Mr. Owen stated that alternate materials would be considered and that it would require review by the Historic Conservation Board due to a change in material. The Historic Conservation Board would be looking for a similar appearance and would not require the same material for replacement.

Ms. Sesler asked who would make determinations regarding economic hardship. Mr. Owen replied that the criteria and information needed to prove economic hardship are outlined in the Zoning Code and all information is presented to the Historic Conservation Board to make a final determination.

Mr. Samad asked if staff had the capacity to provide alternate options to property owners looking to replace a slate roof or original wood windows. Mr. Owen confirmed that that is something he regularly does. Regarding windows, staff has a list of products that have been approved on past projects that the Historic Conservation Board has given authority to staff to complete a staff review of such replacements.

Ms. Sesler expressed concerns about the time and cost to the City associated with designating a historic district. Ms. Ahouse stated that while the historic conservation office is a staff of one, Mr. Owen does an amazing job balancing all the work of the existing landmarks and districts, returning phone calls within 24-hours, reviewing permits, and completing staff reports for the Historic Conservation Board. Mr. Owen really prioritizes customer service, and she has no concern about being able to meet the needs to cover the additional workload that would come with a historic district such as the one proposed. Ms. Ahouse continued and shared that staff works with applicants to understand all the possible alternatives that meet the historic conservation guidelines before sending them to an economic hardship hearing.

Mr. Samad asked how many historic districts are currently in Cincinnati, and of those, how many are mostly residential. Ms. Ahouse replied that there are currently 27 historic districts and shared that there was a substantial number of examples of primarily residential historic districts within the City of Cincinnati, specifically Old Bond Hill, Bella Vista in Bond Hill, Lincoln and Melrose in Walnut Hills, Cleinview Hackberry in East Walnut Hills, Uplands in East Walnut Hills, the Hyde Park Observatory District, and Columbia Tusculum.

Ms. Beltran asked how historic district designation impacts property values. Ms. Ahouse replied that Cincinnati Preservation Association is currently studying that and suggested that they may be better suited to speak to that.

Ms. Albi asked about the amount of time added to the process to get approval. Mr. Owen stated that general maintenance and repair items do not require review by the Historic Conservation Board. For items that require review, there are two tracks; a staff level review and review by the Historic Conservation Board. Staff level reviews are typically completed within 5-10 business days, depending on whether a building permit is required. New construction or additions require review by the Historic Conservation Board, which typically takes between 6-8 weeks.

Mr. Weber asked if there was a way to provide more clarity in the historic conservation guidelines regarding what would require a staff review and what would require review by the Historic Conservation Board. Mr. Owen stated that the Zoning Code gives all of the authority to the Historic Conservation Board to approve any Certificate of Appropriateness. The Historic Conservation Board has approved a delegation memo, which delegates certain authority to staff to approve on their behalf in the interest of saving time, money, and effort for all involved.

Mr. Dansby asked about economic hardship and whether there were considerations given regarding income levels. Mr. Owen replied that applications for economic hardship are reviewed by the Department of Community and Economic Development and they consider all the information presented to determine if there is an economic hardship. Staff rely on the analysis provided by the Department of Community and Economic Development to make recommendations to the Historic Conservation Board.

Mr. Dansby asked about the replacement of doors and windows and whether they need to be replaced with the same material. Mr. Owen reiterated that other materials would be considered if the window type (i.e.: double-hung) and configuration were retained. Regarding windows, repair is recommended over replacement, and storm windows are often recommended first.

Mr. Dansby expressed concern about adding over three hundred new properties to the list of historic properties in the City. Mr. Owen responded that while it is a large district, it is not a large increase to the overall number of historic properties within the City and its 27 historic districts.

Mr. Dansby asked what about the height restrictions in the proposed historic district. Mr. Owen replied that the height restrictions were tied to the specific underlying zoning of each property. Mr. Dansby asked about the properties along Reading Road specifically. Ms. Ahouse replied that she would need to look into the various zoning designations, but that most of the Reading Road corridor in the proposed historic district was also within an Urban Design Overlay District, which is already subject to design review.

Mr. Weber thanked City staff for answering their questions and for their patience as the Commission considers the policy dynamics of the current proposal.

Mr. Dansby asked if the historic conservation guidelines are universal or if they differed from district to district. Mr. Owen replied that each historic district has its own conservation guidelines which are based on the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*.

Vice Mayor Jan-Michelle Lemon Kearney, a member of the applicant team, shared her history in North Avondale and Avondale and a summary of the demographics and history of the neighborhood. Ms. Kearney stated that during a discussion regarding Connected Communities

someone recommended preserving the look and feel of North Avondale with a historic district, so they decided to pursue the idea.

Ms. Beth Sullebarger, historic preservation consultant and a member of the applicant team, gave a presentation outlining the benefits of the historic designation. The prospective boundaries determined for this designation largely follow original subdivision lines and historic development patterns and excludes areas with newer or less intact buildings.

Mr. Walter Koucky, North Avondale resident and a member of the applicant team, spoke on how the historic district designation would conform to Plan Cincinnati and provided background on the engagement process that was used.

Ms. Beth Johnson, Cincinnati Preservation Association and a member of the applicant team, provided statistics on the City's Historic Conservation processes and provided some cost comparisons for window and roof replacements.

Ms. Dawn Johnson, President of the North Avondale Neighborhood Association (NANA) and member of the applicant team, stated that they started a fund to assist neighbors with increased permit or material costs. They have also connected with People Working Cooperatively to create a grant program to assist with any financial hardships. In addition, they have a dedicated place on their website to help with questions regarding the historic district and communication with the Urban Conservator.

Ms. Beth Johnson noted that both NANA and the North Avondale Business Association (NABA) voted to approve the historic district. Additionally, based on a recent engagement session, they have elected to edit the guidelines regarding accessory structures (i.e.: garages or carriage houses) to be more flexible and in line with how accessory structures are treated in other historic districts.

Mr. Dansby asked why this team decided to start the historic designation process prior to the completion of their neighborhood plan. Ms. Beth Johnson replied that this initiative is part of the 2026 plan, but that it has been a desire of the neighborhood since 1974. They didn't want to wait for the plan to be adopted before initiating it. Ms. Dawn Johnson stated that they are in the final phases of their neighborhood plan process.

Mr. Dansby asked why The Belvedere was not included in the boundaries. Ms. Beth Johnson replied that the applicant team worked with the condominium association of The Belvedere and ultimately chose not to include it in the district due to an ongoing window replacement – this would ensure that the chosen windows could continue being installed, a unit at a time, for a cohesive look. Additionally, The Belvedere building is unlike anything else in the neighborhood and does not match the form of a majority of the district and should be considered an individual landmark.

Mr. Weber asked about a grouping of ranch homes on Redbud and East Mitchell that were not included in the boundary and pointed out other similar properties down the street were included. Ms. Sullebarger replied that she would have to look at the specific properties to know for sure but that it was based either on the date of construction or style of property; she would confirm if they needed to be added to the non-contributing list.

Mr. Weber asked the applicant team for suggestions on ways to address windows and roofs in the guidelines. Ms. Beth Johnson stated they could add appropriate substitutions to the guidelines, such as architectural asphalt roofing shingles and fiberglass windows. Mr. Weber asked about landscaping components and why they needed to be part of the guidelines. Ms. Beth Johnson replied and stated that it was important that newly installed landscaping not obscure the public view.

Ms. Albi asked about the ratio of owner-occupied property within the proposed boundary. Ms. Beth Johnson said they couldn't identify it within the specific boundary but that at a Census tract level, the proposed district has a homeownership rate of 56% and 64% for the two tracts. Ms. Albi asked if the respondents to the survey were within the proposed boundary or if it was general North Avondale residents. Ms. Couch replied that all, except maybe three responses, were from residents within the proposed district.

Ms. Aspen Dameron, resident of North Avondale, was opposed to the designation due to the potential cost increase that may be involved. Ms. Dameron questioned how the designation would affect BRT/bus lanes or bike lanes in the neighborhood. Mr. Owen replied that the historic district does not apply to the public infrastructure in the right-of-way and it is not subject to the historic conservation guidelines. Mr. Samad asked Mr. Owen if he agreed with the proposed amendment to the guidelines regarding accessory structures, and Mr. Owen stated he did.

Ms. Maura Wolf, NABA treasurer and North Avondale resident, spoke in support of the proposed designation, stating that the intent behind the designation is to protect the treasures of their community. Mr. Dansby asked Ms. Wolf if she felt that the designation had broad community support. Ms. Wolf replied yes. Mr. Dansby asked if she was comfortable with any extra costs that may come with it. Ms. Wolf replied yes. Ms. Albi asked whether Ms. Wolf lives within the proposed district. Ms. Wolf replied yes.

Ms. Sarah Koucky, resident of North Avondale, spoke in support of the proposed designation. Ms. Albi asked Ms. Koucky if she lived within the proposed district and if she was ok with any increased regulations and costs involved. Ms. Koucky stated yes and believed that it would be very minimal.

Dr. Tyra Oldham, resident of North Avondale, asked how residents deal with the rising costs of maintaining these homes and the decreasing number of specialized contractors for services. Ms. Beltran noted the job opportunity for this specific skilled labor. Mr. Owen responded that there are 27 other historic districts in the city and plenty of contractors that are experienced and qualified to do specialized work. Tree trimming does not require any additional approval, however removing a tree for aesthetic reasons may.

Mr. Ian Rexroad, who resides in the district, shared his concern regarding the time and fees that a historic district may require for repairs or improvements, and believed the designation needed more community engagement given the scale of the proposed district. Mr. Dansby asked Mr. Rexroad if he attended the meetings that were held. He replied that he was unable to due to scheduling conflicts. Ms. Sesler asked if he believed that a historic district designation would affect the resale value. Mr. Rexroad replied that when shopping for homes, he specifically did not want one with a homeowner's association or additional restrictions, which may have impacted his decision to purchase his home.

Ms. Marilyn McQueen, resident of North Avondale, was opposed to the proposed designation and said she was not notified until she received the City notice. She expressed concern about whether funds would be available for assistance when needed; she is on a limited budget and cannot afford the additional expense that this could require.

Ms. Sandra Jones Mitchell, president of the Avondale Community Council, expressed concern on the division between Avondale and North Avondale on these issues. She would like to hear more community feedback before the proposal is approved. She stated that the Avondale Community Council opposes the proposed designation due to the potential costs and lack of inclusion.

Ms. Jennifer Foster, resident of Avondale, opposed the proposed designation because of the division between North Avondale and Avondale, stating that goals for the community should be for everyone, not just specific people.

Ms. Sarah Cornell, resident of North Avondale, spoke in support of the proposed designation and outlined the engagement process. Ms. Albi asked if she resided in the district and if she was okay with any additional cost associated with the designation. Ms. Cornell stated that she does live within the proposed district and does not feel that there will be any additional cost associated with the designation.

Ms. Margherita Melegari, resident of North Avondale, spoke in support of the proposed designation. She moved to the area because she fell in love with the history of the neighborhood. She lives within the proposed district and is comfortable with any additional cost associated.

Mr. David Whelan, resident of North Avondale, spoke in opposition to the proposed district. He expressed concern that The Belvedere was given consideration on whether to be included, but no one else was offered that option. He lives within the proposed district and is not comfortable with any additional costs associated with the designation. Mr. Dansby asked if he would have bought the house if he knew it was in a historic district. He replied that he cannot fairly answer that question because he doesn't know that he would have known the impacts prior to this.

Ms. Teresa Harten, resident of North Avondale, spoke in support of the proposed designation. She stated that she loves the inclusivity of the neighborhood and wanted to protect that. She described some environmental and sustainability benefits of a historic designation. She resides in the district boundaries and is comfortable with any associated costs.

Mr. Ryan Eifert, resident of North Avondale and multi-family property owner, stated that he believes that this is a reaction to Connected Communities. He believed this will lower home values overall because of the availability of people who can afford them. Ms. Albi asked if the multi-family property he owns was within the district. Mr. Eifert said no. Ms. Albi clarified that there is no connection to Connected Communities in this case.

A recess was called at 12:01 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 12:12 p.m.

Vice Mayor Kearney stated that the North Avondale neighborhood took up this initiative to maintain the look and feel of the neighborhood. She was pleased that the North Avondale Neighborhood Association had already started a fund to help with repairs and was looking into other options with People Working Cooperatively. Ms. Kearney clarified that Ms. McQueen was within the proposed district, but that she will not be required to make any changes to her property. She stated that the proposed designation will not stop unity within the community. The reason for doing this now, rather than after the neighborhood plan was approved, was to stay ahead of preserving what matters to the community.

Ms. Albi thanked the Vice Mayor for her clarification and agreed that communities should pursue historic designations proactively. She shared her support for the proposed designation.

Mr. Weber stated that this was a hard decision, but his vote would come down to the guidelines and further clarity behind them. He stated he was in favor of holding this item for an additional staff conference and to allow for some revisions to the guidelines as discussed, specifically, verifying the noncontributing property list, addressing the accessory structures sections, providing alternative roof materials, consider changes to the windows, and reconsidering the landscaping and site features section.

Ms. Beltran agreed with the idea of holding the item; there was a lot of great discussion today and holding the item will give people more time with the idea. She suggested that some additional specificity and clarity around the Certificate of Appropriateness process would be helpful.

Mr. Dansby and Ms. Sesler agreed that they did not want to make decisions hastily.

Commission Action:

Recommended to hold Item 4 on the Legislative Discussion Agenda to allow for the completion of one additional staff conference organized by the City and for the applicant team to work with City staff on the areas the Commission delineated to revise the proposed Conservation Guidelines of the proposed district.

Motion:	Mr. Weber
Second:	Mr. Samad
Ayes:	Ms. Albi, Ms. Beltran, Mr. Samad, Ms. Sesler, Mr. Weber
Nays:	None
Abstain:	Mr. Dansby

Director's Report

Ms. Katherine Keough-Jurs thanked the Commissioners for their time and stated that the next City Planning Commission meeting was scheduled for April 17, 2026.

The meeting adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

The minutes for the April 3, 2026, Regular Meeting are approved as distributed.

April 3, 2026



Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director
Department of City Planning and Engagement

Date:

6/5/2026



Jacob Samad, Chair
City Planning Commission

Date:

6/5/26