

Cincinnati Hillside Initiative

Ensuring safe and responsible developments and solutions

Public Engagement Meeting

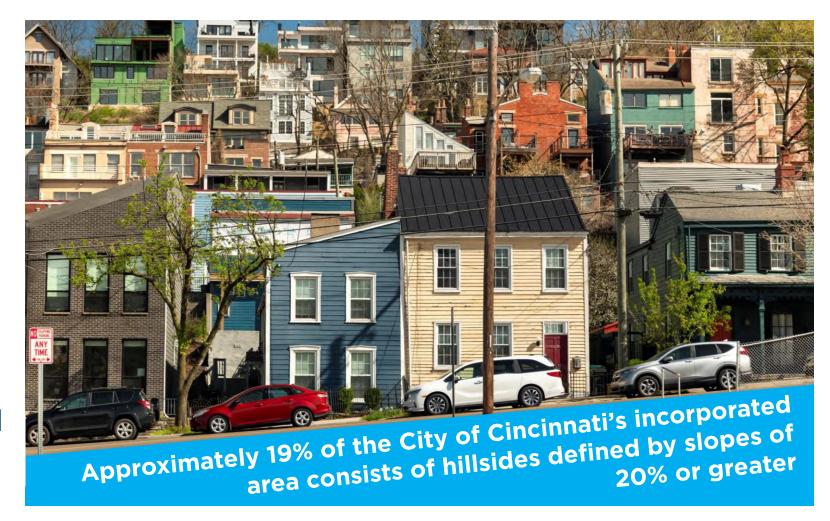
May 7, 2025

Cincinnati Hillside Initiative

Introduction

Cincinnati's hillsides are part of what make our city landscape unique.

They provide recreational green space with beautiful viewsheds as well as opportunities for residential and commercial development.



Meet Our Project Leads



Katherine
Keough-Jurs
Director
City of Cincinnati
Department of City
Planning &
Engagement



Art Dahlberg
Director
City of Cincinnati
Department of
Buildings &
Inspections



Eric Russo *Executive Director*The Hillside Trust



Justin Amlung, PE Vice President Civil Solutions, Inc.



Matthew Shad Division Manager City of Cincinnati Department of Buildings & Inspections



Emily Burns
City Planner
City of Cincinnati
Department of City
Planning &
Engagement



Emily Ahouse
Deputy Director &
Zoning Administrator
City of Cincinnati
Department of City
Planning &
Engagement



Session Agenda

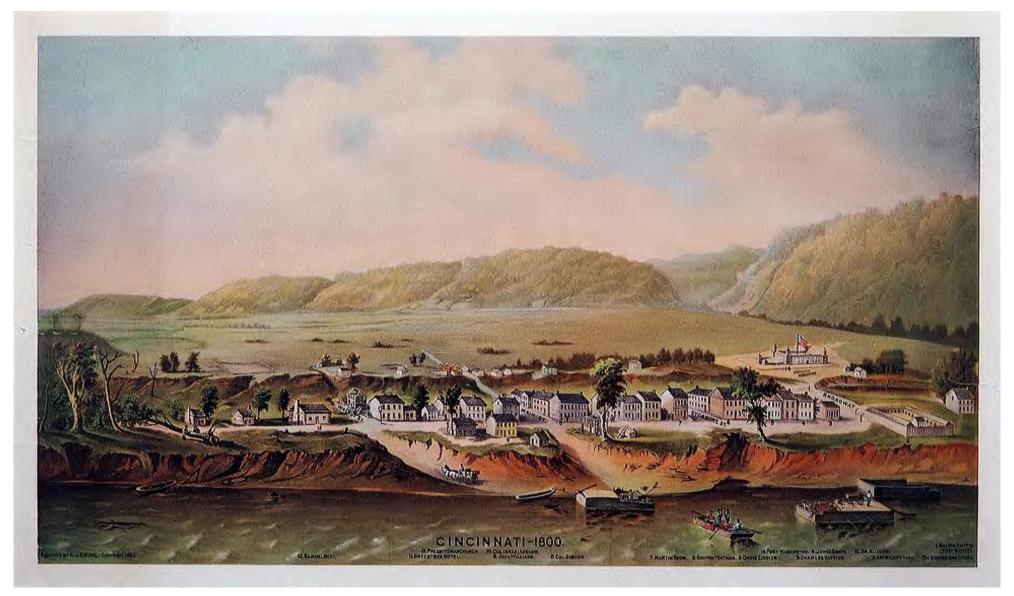
- Cincinnati's Hillside History
- Current Processes
- Small-Group Discussion
- Why the Cincinnati Hillside Initiative Matters: Project Goals and Benefits
 - Small-Group Discussion
- Closing Comments





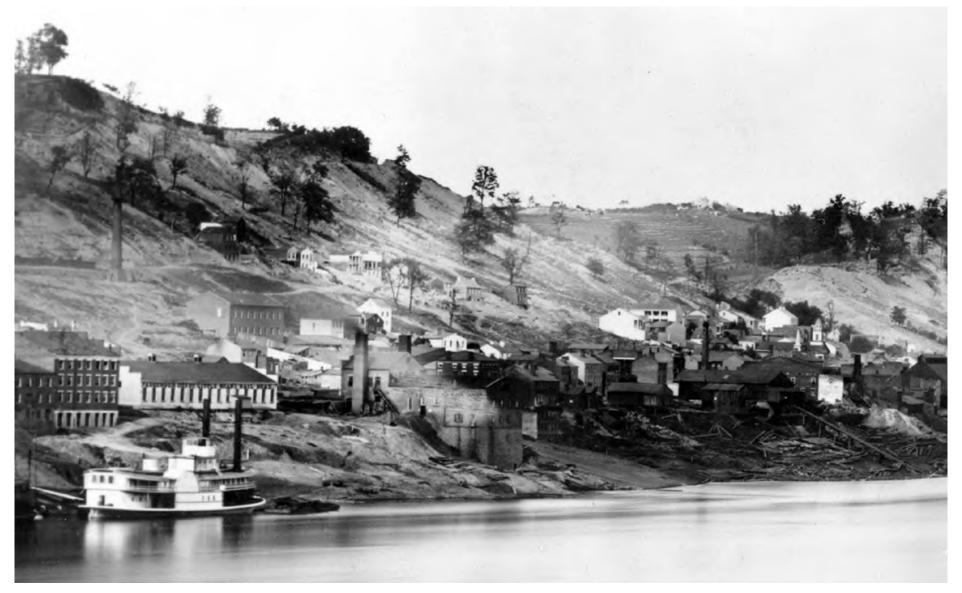
Overview of Cincinnati's Hillsides Since City's Founding





Cincinnati Basin, 1800 painting by A.J. Swing





Mt. Adams & Eden Park c. 1848 photo courtesy of Public Library of Hamilton Co.





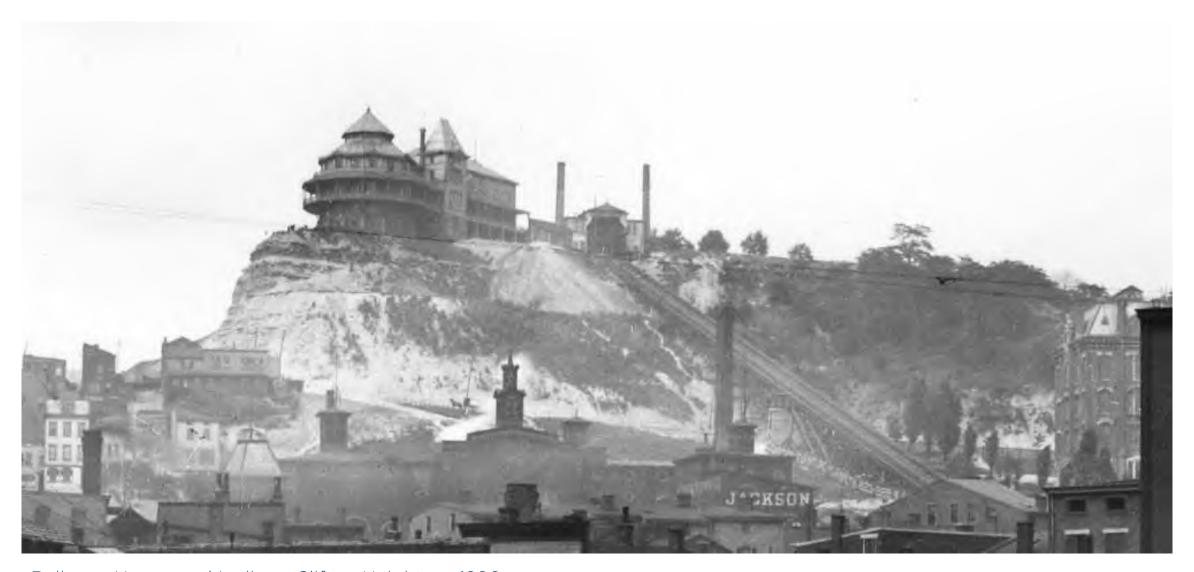
Downtown basin looking north to Clifton Heights c. 1860s photo courtesy of Public Library of Hamilton Co.





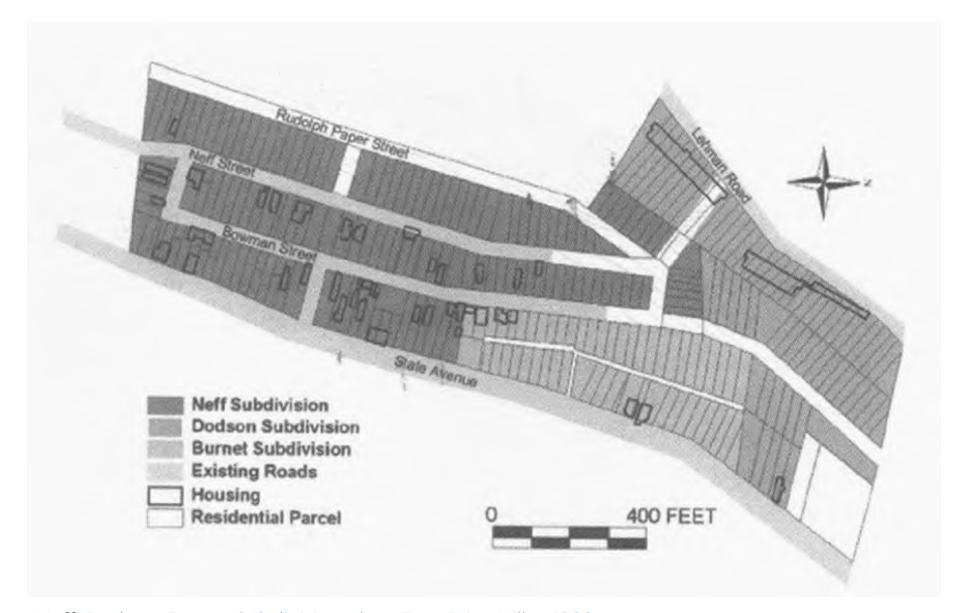
Developing the Hillsides and Beyond - 1870s





Bellevue House and Incline - Clifton Heights c. 1880s photo courtesy of Historical Society





Neff, Dodson, Burnet Subdivision plat - East Price Hill c. 1888



Development Post WW II





Highland Tower - Mt. Adams built c. 1963





Clifton Ave landslide, 1966 photo courtesy of Cincinnati Historical Society





Clifton Ave landslide, 1966 photo courtesy of Cincinnati Historical Society





Ashtree Shopping Center development - Hamilton Ave c. 1969





Citizen Activism and Community Engagement



Announcing an open

HILLSIDES

As an interested citizen you are urged to attend this discussion on the FUTURE of our hillsides.

Mr. Willis D. Gradison, Jr., Councilman, will make opening remarks.

The speakers will include:

Mr. Richard W. Haupt, Director, Cincinnati Historical Society

Mr. William R. Bogart, Architect, A.I.A. National Committee member on aesthetics

Mr. John U. Allen, Director, Department of Urban Redevelopment, Cincinnati

Mr. Clark P. Turner, Planning Consultant

Mr. Neil K. Bortz, President, Towne Properties, Inc.

Mr. Bret J. McGinnis, Superintendent of Recreation, Cincinnati

Mr. Herbert W. Stevens, Director of Planning, Cincinnati

Mr. C. A. Harrell, President, Better Housing League, Moderator

Mr. Pope Coleman, Contemporary Arts Center, Chairman, Environmental Arts Committee

Sponsored by the Better Housing League
Cincinnati Beautiful Committee
Contemporary Arts Center

May 4, 1967 at 1 p.m. - Cincinnati Art Museum





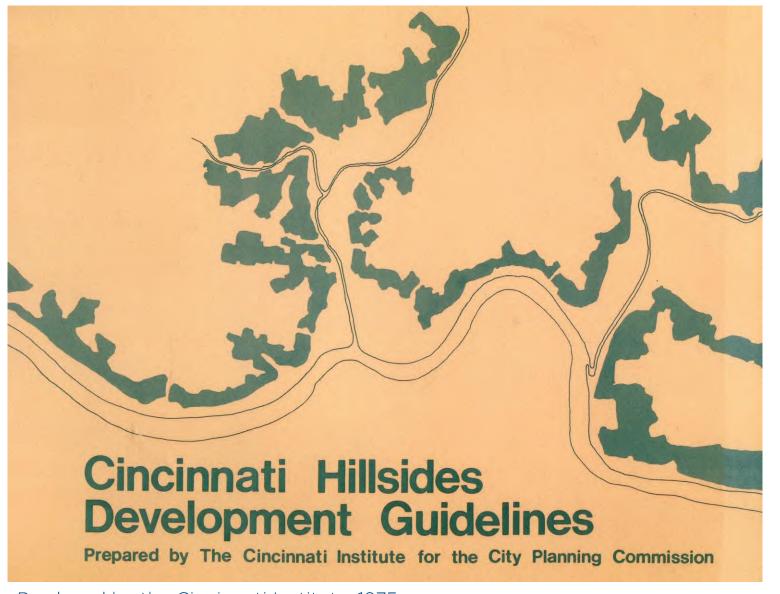
THE CINCINNATI HILLSIDES

RECOMMENDED DESIGN PROCESS AND ACTION PROGRAM

prepared for the CINCINNATI CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

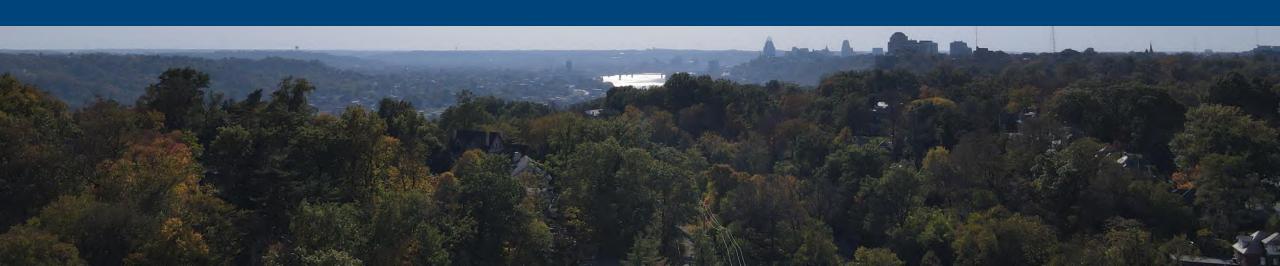
Produced by Richard A. Gardiner & Associates, Land Planning and Design, 1971







In 1976 Cincinnati adopted landmark EQ-HS zoning for nearly half of its hillside districts.





In 1976 The Hillside Trust is formed as a non-profit organization to advocate for the thoughtful use and preservation of our region's hillsides.

FINAL REPORT

CINCINNATI LANDSLIDE SUSCEPTIBILITY STUDY

Sowers and Dalrymple

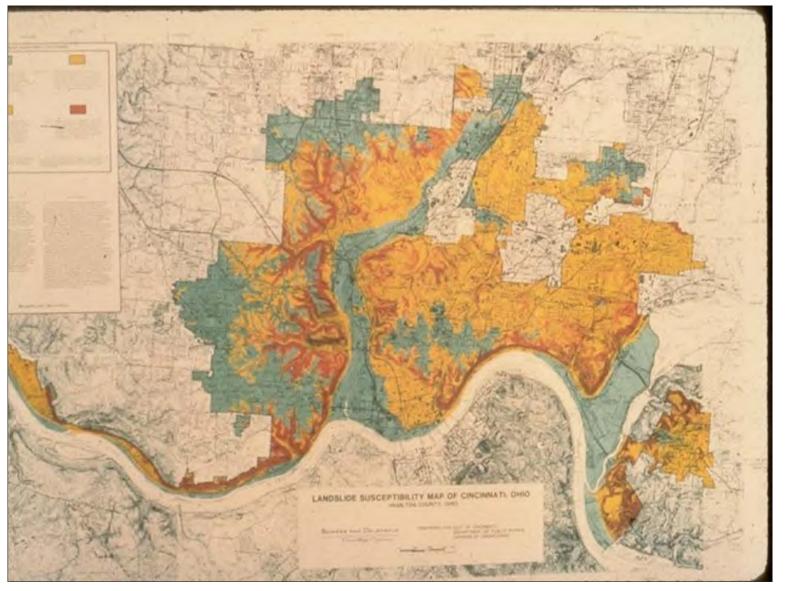
Consulting Engineers

March 1980

Prepared For:
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
Division of Engineering
City Hall
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

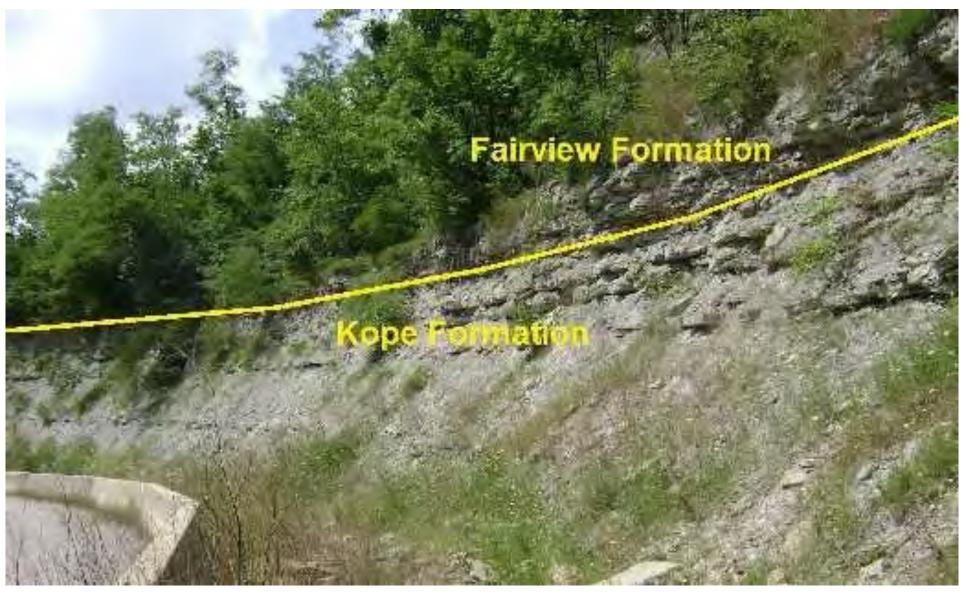






KOPE formation in combination with slopes of 20% and greater indicate landslide-prone areas image courtesy of Sowers and Dalrymple map, 1980





KOPE formation typically found between elevations 400 to 600 feet ASL, approximately 80% shale, 20% limestone





Columbia Parkway Construction c. 1931 photo courtesy Cincinnati Highway Dept.





In 2004, Cincinnati revised its zoning code, including the creation of Current Hillside Overlay Districts.



1433-09 Criteria for Establishment of a Hillside District (4 of 7 to Qualify):

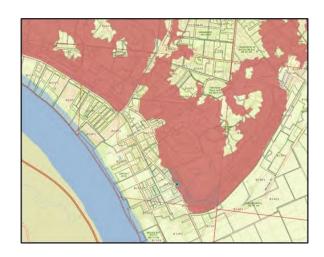
- a) Slopes of 20% or greater;
- b) Existence of Kope geologic formations;
- c) A minimum of one acre of contiguous land area;
- d) Prominent hillsides that are readily visible from a public thoroughfare in a valley below a hillside;
- e) Hillsides that provide views of a major stream or valley;
- f) Hillsides functioning as community separators or community boundaries as identified in a community plan accepted and approved by the City Planning Commission; and
- g) Hillsides that support a substantial natural wooded cover

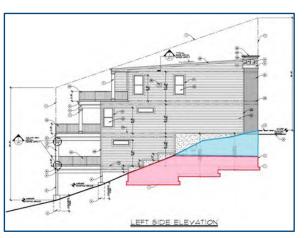


Current Process

1433-19 Base Development Requirements

- a) Maximum Building Envelope
- b) Height Versus Width
- c) Stepping
- d) Maximum Retaining Wall Height
- e) Rooftop Utilities
- f) Landscaping of Pervious Surfaces
- g) Excavation and Fills
- h) Preliminary Geotechnical Evaluation





Current Process

1433-23 Hillside Development Standards

- a) Avoid cliff-like vertical slopes
- b) Design buildings to fit the hillside
- c) Minimize excavation
- d) Cluster new development
- e) Maintain a clear sense of the brow
- f) Respect views from public viewing places
- g) Consider Cincinnati Hillside Development Guidelines report



Why the Cincinnati Hillside Initiative Matters

- Hillsides uniquely define Cincinnati's identity
- Development pressure is increasing
- Increase technical focus in review process



Updating Hillside District Areas and Project Approach



What We're Doing

- Reviewing and Considering Amendments to Hillside Overlay Districts (§1433)
- Considering placing some responsibilities within Building Code
- Continuing to align with Plan Cincinnati

Developing a Smarter Process

- Moving construction standards appropriate for hillside development into the Building Code
- Basing standards on sound geo-technical and structural engineering principles

Project Goals and Outcomes

- Reassess Hillside Overlay District maps and zoning design standards
- Evaluate, streamline and improve our hillside building and zoning codes (clearer permitting)
- Stronger hillside protections based on enhanced engineering standards
- Remove potential ambiguity in current guidelines
- Provide a set of prescriptive, alternative design methodologies through the building code
- Reassess construction management standards



Project Benefits



- Ensure projects are designed with sound engineering principles and responsible construction practices
- Managing new construction practices to minimize risk to existing properties and infrastructure
- Protect infrastructure and maintain natural drainage patterns
- Balance community growth with environmental responsibility
- Balancing development while maintaining the unique character and beauty of the hillsides.



To Learn More or Provide Feedback

Call or Email Our Team

For Engagement & **Zoning Questions**

EMILY BURNS

Phone: (513) 352-4855

oh.gov

For Building Dept. Focused & Project Questions

MATTHEW SHAD

Phone: (513) 352-3418

Email: emily.burns@cincinnati- Email: matthew.shad@cincinnati-

oh.gov

Project Webpage and Survey



www.cincinnatioh.gov/planning/projects/ active/cincinnati-hillsideinitiative

THANK YOU!