



Cleveland City Council

YEAR IN REVIEW



Dear Cleveland Residents:

With 2023 in our rearview mirror, we'd like to reflect on Council's work for Clevelanders in the past year – and what we hope to accomplish this year.

In 2023, Council passed 1,465 ordinances (laws) related to safety, service, economic development and more. Some of the major legislation included using federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to directly help residents. Below are highlights:

- ▶ Investing tens of millions in **providing affordable homes and rehabilitating homes** throughout the city.
- ▶ Mandating developers receiving City benefits provide **Community Benefits** for Cleveland residents, neighborhoods, minority businesses, female businesses, and Cleveland small businesses.
- ▶ Advocating for **Paid Parental Leave** for city workers who have or adopt a baby as well as support for those who experience pregnancy loss.
- ▶ Providing support for new **Veterans Housing** for struggling veterans.
- ▶ Increasing **Fair Employment Wage** rate to \$15.33/hour for people doing work with the City.

- ▶ Funding programs to **revitalize Cleveland's commercial corridors and neighborhoods.**
- ▶ **Toughening curfew law** penalties for parents or legal guardians of young people ignoring laws.
- ▶ Erasing some **\$181 million in Clevelanders' medical debt.**
- ▶ Providing **\$2 million in amnesty** for Cleveland residents behind on **utility bills.**

Council also enacted a new budget process in 2023. **One of the most important roles of the legislative branch of government is the role of fiscal oversight.** Council members covered much of what happens during two intense weeks in February, but at a measured pace through the committees to gain insight into how the year finished prior to determining how funding will be allocated this year.

This enabled council members to review more than just numbers but to also discuss obstacles to delivering quality services and programs to Clevelanders. This process allows Council to explore potential legislative

solutions that have little to no cost to the city. This is the first year. Council will still have February budget hearings. We hope to improve this process in 2024 and include more community input in the discussion.

But Council does so much outside of hearing and passing legislation. **We work to help our residents solve problems and get the services and programs they need and deserve.** We hold community meetings to hear from our residents, local businesses, and commuters. We host utility fairs to connect residents with help and resources in paying utility bills, hearing information about rental assistance, and learning about other residential programs.

Your City Council is committed to working for you. Thank you for your belief in us and your belief in Cleveland.

**Best,
Cleveland City Council**

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT
Blaine A. Griffin**
WARD 6 COUNCIL MEMBER

**MAJORITY LEADER
Kerry McCormack**
WARD 3 COUNCIL MEMBER

**MAJORITY WHIP
Jasmin Santana**
WARD 14 COUNCIL MEMBER

Upcoming For 2024



Job and Wealth Creation:

Council plans to examine factors restricting or amplifying residents' ability to find meaningful work and create family prosperity. We aim to improve the quality of life for Cleveland residents, business owners, and constituents.



Following Up on Council Initiatives:

Council plans to hold hearings on city initiatives developed through council actions, including briefings on accomplishments or impediments to getting Cleveland homes lead-safe and development projects sponsored by council members throughout the city. Council plans to offer opportunities to hear from stakeholders on these projects and any ideas on improving them or obstacles hurting progress.



Redistricting:

The number of Cleveland wards must be reduced from 17 to 15 after the 2020 census results. City Council will hire a consultant in early 2024 to help with the redistricting process, which must be complete by early 2025 to allow candidates for council to know the new ward lines. Council must vote on the new ward lines before they are approved. Council candidates, including current members seeking re-election, must collect signatures and submit petitions to seek office by June 2025.

Public Comment



During the Fall, Council began discussing potential modifications to public comment procedures. Rest assured, public comment is not going away. Council expects to continue the conversation in 2024 and will take feedback from Clevelanders to improve this significant aspect of Monday night meetings. Council will actively share any changes to public comment procedures with residents, constituents, and the media.

Council wants to hear from you! While Council discusses and deliberates potential modifications, here are a few ways residents and community members can make their voices heard.

► **Speaking in person at Monday Council meetings.** Sign-up opens on Wednesdays at noon. Learn more by scanning the QR code below or visiting www.clevelandcitycouncil.org/resources/public-comment

► **Providing a written public comment.** Submit your comment by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://www.clevelandcitycouncil.org/resources/public-comment>

► **Speaking in person at any Committee meeting.** Visit clevelandcitycouncil.org to view committee meeting schedules and agendas.



Council members spent the year working on projects big and small. Some are neighborhood-based and others benefit the entire city. Below are some of the projects and legislation Council members passed to help residents across the city.

JOSEPH T. JONES

Ward 1 Win

Councilman Joseph Jones is promoting a community-led plan to remake the Lee-Harvard neighborhood and develop a master plan. Councilman Jones is hosting neighborhood meetings to give residents a voice in the evolution, which includes developing a planned streetscape design for Lee Road that creates a seamless transition between Cleveland and neighboring Shaker Heights. It also includes developing and linking greenspace throughout the neighborhood and bringing in new retail to revitalize Lee Road.



KEVIN L. BISHOP

Veteran's Housing

After years of Ward 2 Councilman Kevin Bishop working with Union Miles Development Corporation to establish housing for veterans, the project is finally moving forward! Council passed legislation, sponsored by Councilman Bishop, to provide a \$750,000 grant to Union Miles Community Development Center for the Walter Collins Veteran Housing & Service Facility. The facility will provide affordable housing for eleven veterans, and will be located on Harvard Avenue, near East 93rd Street. The facility, when completed, will be the first facility designated for veterans living in the city.



KEVIN CONWELL

Opening of the Davis

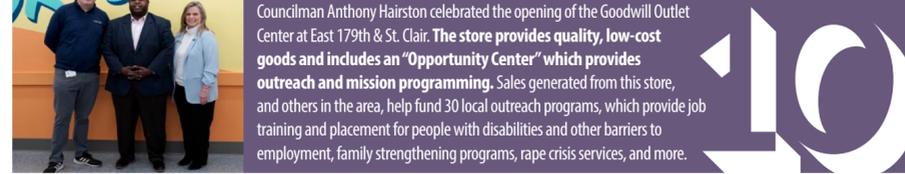
In November, Councilman Kevin Conwell (Ward 9) celebrated the opening of "The Davis" Housing Complex, located at 10700 Churchill Avenue. The complex provides 52 market rate units, which Councilman Conwell expects will benefit residents on fixed incomes, looking to remain in the Glenville neighborhood. In addition to living space, The Davis will include telehealth services, a food pantry, programs for pregnant mothers and senior citizens, a playground for younger residents, a workout facility, and onsite nurses.



ANTHONY T. HAIRSTON

Councilman Hairston Welcomes Goodwill to Ward 10

Councilman Anthony Hairston celebrated the opening of the Goodwill Outlet Center at East 179th & St. Clair. The store provides quality, low-cost goods and includes an "Opportunity Center" which provides outreach and mission programming. Sales generated from this store, and others in the area, help fund 30 local outreach programs, which provide job training and placement for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment, family strengthening programs, rape crisis services, and more.



DANNY KELLY

Minimum wage increase for Cleveland contract employees

The City of Cleveland uses numerous contract workers to provide services to residents. Prior to this past October, not all of them were making what is deemed a livable wage. That changed when Ward 11 Councilman Danny Kelly and other members sponsored legislation to set the required minimum wage at \$15.33 an hour for contract workers and ties future increases to inflation rates.



REBECCA MAURER

New Gym at Stella Walsh Rec Center

In July 2023, Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer (Ward 12), city officials, and residents celebrated the opening of a new gym at the Public Safety Training Complex at the Stella Walsh Recreation Center. In numerous community meetings, Councilwoman Maurer has heard residents' demands for the opening of the gym and additional recreational opportunities for Broadway-area youth.



KRIS HARSH

Medical debt relief

Last April, Cleveland City Council unanimously passed legislation approving a \$1.9 million investment to erase approximately \$181 million in medical debt for 50,000 Clevelanders. The legislation was cosponsored by Councilman Kris Harsh (Ward 13). Residents don't apply for the debt relief program. RIP Medical Debt, the non-profit responsible for assuming the medical debt, has identified qualified Clevelanders and began notifying them in November 2023. The non-profit will continue informing qualified residents throughout the 2024 calendar year.



KERRY McCORMACK

West Side Market investment

For years, community members, vendors and many others have been demanding change in how the West Side Market is managed. Last year, Cleveland City Council approved legislation to create an independent management model centering the success and wellbeing of the Market. Additionally, City Council allotted \$20 million in federal funding to support this transition. Onward to a bright future for our market!



DEBORAH A. GRAY

Councilwoman Gray's Support for Youth, Young Adults, & Trades Training

In November, Councilwoman Deborah Gray (Ward 4) introduced three new ordinances to support youth, young adults, and trades training. Those ordinances will bring a new behavioral health services facility to her ward, build a new trades training facility, and provide additional vocational training opportunities for Cleveland residents. Through community meetings, Councilwoman Gray learned these were some of the needs that her community were requesting. She was committed to turning community requests into action. With City Council voting in favor of her ordinances, Ward 4 and Cleveland residents will soon see these new facilities and training opportunities.



JASMIN SANTANA

CentroVilla 25 groundbreaking

Council Majority Whip Jasmin Santana (Ward 14) is fighting blight in her neighborhood while also providing more affordable housing and commercial opportunities. This effort is most visible with the CentroVilla 25 project, a \$10 million dollar project to transform the vacant H.J. Weber building — located at 3140 West 25th Street — into a neighborhood marketplace. The marketplace aims to meet the needs of the Clark-Fulton neighborhood by building wealth and supporting Latino-owned businesses, improving access to fresh and culturally significant food, and representing and celebrating Latino culture. Councilwoman Santana allocated \$1.5 million in federal funds to help make the project a reality.



JENNY SPENCER

Habitat for Humanity investment

Council Member Jenny Spencer (Ward 15) served as a cosponsor for legislation and led the charge for securing \$5 million in federal funding to Habitat for Humanity to help provide more affordable homeownership possibilities for Clevelanders. Homeownership improves financial outcomes, grows the middle class, and stabilizes neighborhoods. The investment in Habitat for Humanity will benefit historically underserved neighborhoods.



RICHARD A. STARR

Louise C. Stokes Scholar House Opening

City Council allocated \$1.2 million in federal funding to support the Louise C. Stokes Scholar House, a first-of-its-kind project in the state of Ohio. The Scholar House, located in Councilman Richard Starr's ward, provides affordable housing and wraparound services for 40 single adult college students and their children. With education being essential to increased earning potential, the Scholar House is an investment in Cleveland's young people and its future.



BLAINE A. GRIFFIN

Community benefits agreement & construction reform

Cleveland City Council believes residents and communities should receive tangible benefits when developers seek City assistance for new projects. For this reason, Council passed a law sponsored by Council President Blaine A. Griffin (Ward 6) to transform this belief into reality. The law establishes a floor for what benefits developers provide for Cleveland. Those benefits include, but are not limited to apprenticeship, internship and mentor-protégé programs, community meetings, neighborhood improvements, and investments in minority & female business enterprises. When developers receive support to build in Cleveland, the community must also benefit.



MICHAEL D. POLENSEK

Longfellow Senior Housing

Councilman Mike Polensek (Ward 8), a longtime advocate for repurposing historic buildings and expanding affordable housing for Clevelanders, proudly participated in the ribbon cutting for the Longfellow Senior Housing complex. The newly renovated senior living facility is located in the former Henry W. Longfellow School on East 140th Street. Eighty new affordable senior apartments are spread between the historic rehabilitation of the existing Longfellow School and a new building on site that includes an enclosed connecting walkway providing residents easy access to features in both buildings. The entire project cost about \$23.5 million.



BRIAN KAZY

Utility debt relief

Council sponsored and passed legislation to provide \$2 million in utility bill amnesty to qualifying residents. Councilman Brian Kazy (Ward 16), chair of the Utilities Committee, led the charge to provide the assistance to Clevelanders, many of whom are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no need to apply for amnesty. Qualifying residents were notified by Cleveland Public Power or Cleveland Water if their debts were forgiven.



CHARLES J. SLIFE

Paid family leave

Earlier this year, City Council passed legislation providing up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave to city of Cleveland employees in connection with the birth of an employee's son or daughter or the placement of a son or daughter with an employee for adoption or legal guardianship. The law, sponsored and championed by Councilman Charles Slife (Ward 17), strives to make Cleveland a more worker-friendly city while also providing better customer service to residents. This policy goes into effect in 2024.



Cleveland City Council LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



FAQS...

WHO WRITES LEGISLATION?
City Council members and the mayor write and submit legislation. Department directors can also request that City Council members submit legislation on behalf of a department.

HOW DOES LEGISLATION BECOME A PUBLIC RECORD?
Legislation is read aloud into the city record by the Clerk of Council as part of the proceedings of each City Council meeting.

WHEN DOES AN ORDINANCE BECOME A LAW?
After the ordinance is signed by the Council President, Clerk of Council, and the Mayor. Ordinances become laws immediately after being signed by the Mayor or after 10 days if not signed.

HOW AN ORDINANCE BECOMES A LAW...

Ordinance introduced by Council Members or Mayor on behalf of residents



- Set up in Law Department
- Outfitted for journey by City Clerk
- First Reading

Routed by City Clerk to appropriate departments for review.



- Returned to City Clerk and committees

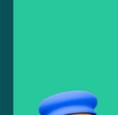
Council Committee hearings; amendments adopted at this stage



After either the First or the Second Reading, ordinances may be passed "under suspension" (requires 2/3 of council agreeing)



If needed, a Third Reading for final passage



Signed by Clerk of Council, Council President and Mayor



Becomes law!

To learn more about the legislative process of Cleveland City Council, visit: clevelandcitycouncil.org/legislation-laws/legislative-process

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CITY OF CLEVELAND
Cleveland City Council YEAR IN REVIEW

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Blaine A. Griffin
COUNCIL MEMBER, WARD 6

CITY CLERK, CLERK OF COUNCIL
Patricia J. Britt

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WATCH COUNCIL MEETINGS ONLINE!

YouTube (LIVE & RECORDED) youtube.com/user/clevelandcitycouncil **TV20** (LIVE) tv20cleveland.com/watch-now/

Committee meetings are held in-person at Cleveland City Hall (601 Lakeside Ave.) in the Mercedes Cotner Council Committee Room 217.

Regular Council meetings are held in-person on Mondays at 7p.m. at Cleveland City Hall (601 Lakeside Ave.) in City Council Chambers on the second floor.

To find listings of upcoming council and committee meetings visit: clevelandcitycouncil.org/resources/events

ABOUT COUNCIL MEETINGS

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Council welcomes Public Comment! To register to speak at the next regular Monday council meeting, please visit: clevelandcitycouncil.org/resources/public-comment

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