

DON DREIHAUS

Candidate for City Council – Responses

- 1. What motivated you to run for council/re-election, what parts of your professional and personal experience qualifies you to serve, and what measurable outcomes should voters hold you accountable for if you are elected?**

Cincinnati needs to improve. We currently have a problem with crime and neglected basic services. I have 30 years in Finance and understand how municipal financing works. I also served on the CMHA board for 4 years between 2004 and 2008. This experience gives me unique insight into housing issues in Cincinnati.

I will focus on cleaner streets, better services, and market rate development in our 52 neighborhoods. Measurable outcomes are: increased housing units brought online, initially increased services requests but then once culture of neglect is corrected service requests will be reduced since new standards will be set, observable and a measurable drop in crime, and increased interest in housing and business market because Cincinnati will be an attractive choice to the region.

- 2. Last year the Cincinnati Futures Commission released its report containing recommendations that chart a fiscally sustainable path forward for the City and develop a community-informed economic agenda for the future.**
 - a. How would you accelerate the implementation of the Futures Commission, and which specific recommendations do you believe are the top priority for the City?**

The city needs an office of Strategic Growth to be focused on growth not just every 2 or 4 years as administration turns over. This will give stability and commitment to our City's growth.

Creating a \$50 million neighborhood growth fund will accelerate investments in developing neighborhoods. Targeted funding for market rate housing, mixed use development and site acquisition is crucial.

The city needs to conduct industry-specific assessments of Cincinnati police and fire departments. The city needs to modernize billing protocols. We also need to modernize the accounting systems, requisition requests, and other document workflows to deliver better service to people wanting to do business in our city. This will strengthen and prioritize the focus on public services done by the Office of Performance & Data Analytics to modernize operations and create efficiencies.

Capture the 3% ticket tax on the increment between the initial sale and resale of tickets in Cincinnati is a bad idea because current accounting systems and ticket tax do not appear clear enough to be able to do so

b. Do you support the creation of the Office of Strategic Growth?

Yes

c. Are there recommendations you believe the City should not pursue?

Taxes are already overburdening residents a new earnings tax is not good to promote residents living/working and spending in our region.

A fixed waste collection fee: the city needs to review who is eligible for city collections and who should be on private waste haul collection.

Realized savings from utility and maintenance expense reduction from Cincinnati southern railway sale should not be used to support operational budget unless it's a true emergency. This is a money swap and may not be legal.

3. The City's budget is constrained, with major obligations to the pension, public safety, and infrastructure. Please describe your budget priorities, including where you believe the City can save money and where the City should grow its spending. What tradeoffs would you be willing to make to fund your key priorities?

The city needs to start with a zero-budget approach. The budget starts from what we have an obligation to spend and then what activities make those expenditures budget neutral.

Once obligations are identified, they should be graded by compliance factors and grant opportunities to mitigate liability and reduce direct cost of the city. The city can save money by becoming more efficient, effective, and promoting service that results in single-touch fixes. Spending should be spent to increase tourism, retain residents that have market choice and that can strongly participate in retail activities.

Tradeoffs that would make covering my priorities possible would be to capture services costs from those that are currently abusing city services to operate low quality and harmful operations in our city. We need to invest more in trusted partners that bring results and less with partners that continue to drain and strain our city with failure.

4. Do you support an increase in the City's earning tax in the next Council term? If yes, how much would you increase it and what would you utilize the revenue for?

No

5. The City has a number of external partners like REDI Cincinnati, The Port, CincyTech, Cintrifuse, 3CDC and others that help it achieve its growth goals.

a. Do you support continuing to provide funding to these organizations?

Yes.

b. Do you support continuing to fund the Affordable Housing Leverage Fund with the City's waterfall?

No. This should be handled by CMHA. The city has gone down this path before and it hasn't worked well.

c. What actions would you take to support job growth and site development?

High school graduates need degrees that can lead to gainful employment. A strong partnership with the trades is essential in building a productive work force.

Inventorying sites of opportunity based on interest, location, and surrounding opportunity will help guide cost savings through efficiency and promote vision and feasibility to attract investors.

6. Do you believe Cincinnati needs to grow? If so, what do you believe is Cincinnati's greatest opportunity for growth and what tools should City Council provide to make it successful?

Yes , Cincinnati needs to grow. Cincinnati should always be open to annexation of other jurisdictions if they are interested.

The city needs to attract corporations and enterprise into the city. We need to promote that the city's affordable cost of living and cost of doing business. We provide amenities and services greater than competing cities. This needs to be promoted nationwide to attract business and their employees to the region.

7. Connected Communities was passed to increase housing supply through zoning reform. Do you support this policy? What additional zoning or land use changes, if any, would you support to add new housing in Cincinnati?

No. Cincinnati has been thoughtfully and professionally designed. We see where density fits in on major streets and where some people prefer a more suburban high quality feel. We need to have professionals that focus on what people with economic choice want and design that again here in Cincinnati.

8. In 2021 the Chamber released *Embracing Growth*, which laid out a number of policy recommendations. Since then, Council has considered a number of policies to increase housing supply.

a. What specific actions should Council take to expand housing of all kinds across the City?

The city needs to make our neighborhoods desirable to attract residents and investors. People need to be excited about the city, including the westside and

Queen City. We need to tackle infill and fund gaps that provide housing that people where people can live comfortably and be active in their neighborhoods.

- b. Would you restore the residential tax abatement program if presented with evidence that housing production has slowed?**

The city needs a residential tax abatement program that promotes housing production where the market is not already driving production.

- c. What role do you believe that TIF districts should play in advancing the City's growth agenda? How do you think TIF funds should be utilized? What role should City Council play in prioritizing their use?**

We used the TIF funds to help develop the Incline. This site was an undeveloped site in an underserved neighborhood. City Council should make sure that TIF districts are as activated and successful as possible to quickly replenish the funds to be available for more development.

- d. How would you improve the city's permitting and development process?**

Workflows should be modernized and world class. The City needs to set professional standards for timely quick review. Communication should be clear and concise as not to impede projects progress or delay starts.

- 9. A number of development projects and policies in the last Council term have sparked debate over density, affordability, and neighborhood character. What responsibility does City Council have to advance pro-growth housing policy when individuals, advocates, or neighborhood organizations oppose specific projects, and how should Council weigh the importance of population growth and citywide housing needs against localized opposition?**

City Council must always put quality over quantity.

To attract and keep residents, residents must be mutually excited about growth. We must move the residents to an understanding how quality development is a win for them.

City Council's job is to make sure that service and quality of living is designed to a high standard so that density is not opposed.

- 10. The Chamber believes economic incentives have been essential to Cincinnati's growth. What role do incentives play in Cincinnati's future growth, and which types of projects do you think most warrant increased incentives?**

Incentives that bring business development and relocation into the city proper most warrant increased incentives. Job development and increased earnings tax revenue should be incented.

- 11. Cincinnati's economy depends on attracting and retaining talent. What role should City Council play in ensuring we grow a skilled workforce and remain attractive to young professionals and families?**

City Council must ensure that residents feel safe and that their needs are met within the city. As northern Kentucky and northern collar communities grow their amenities,

Cincinnati must make sure that schools and retail meet the needs of families that have economic choice.

- 12. Violent crime, quality of life issues, and residents' perception of safety are all pressing concerns in Cincinnati. What short- and long-term strategies or policies would you champion to improve actual safety and strengthen the community's sense of security, especially in the urban core? How would you measure success in both areas?**

Kids that don't learn, don't earn – short term we need to get our children in school and learning. We need to get police to full compliment and with more beat officers.

Loitering laws, particularly in the urban core need to be back on the books to help with problem areas, we have seen how that has directly helped The Banks in an immediate way. If people are coming out to Cincinnati or staying in Cincinnati to spend money and not going to NKY or up north, we can measure that people feel more safe.

- 13. What is one concrete way you would engage business leaders to improve public safety outcomes, and how would you ensure accountability?**

Businesses that have litter generally do not have good custodianship. Progressive fines and fees for businesses in business districts because of the economic harm should be imposed. Businesses need to invest in technology like cameras and help fund surveillance systems because having people in your business is a big responsibility and we cannot put a dollar amount of loss of life or loss of business for the neighborhoods.

- 14. Cincinnati's small businesses are the lifeblood of neighborhood business districts. How would you support long time and new small business entrepreneurs?**

Improved safety along the business corridors, including vehicular safety, is important. Business associations should be supported to promote activity, excitement, and culture of the local neighborhood. These neighborhood business districts should be supported with façade improvements and unique activation to promote excitement and attract visitors.

- 15. What is one existing barrier to growing small, minority, or women-owned businesses in Cincinnati, and what is the City's role in removing that barrier?**

We need more women and minorities in the trades. The city needs to promote and encourage a pipeline of young people to become skilled contractors. They need to know there is a major opportunity in accessing big contracts as small contractors. The City can incentivize and or require companies who take city contacts to host apprenticeships for women and minority apprentices.

- 16. The City funds arts, cultural institutions, and major events in different ways. Which types of cultural or tourism investments do you believe should be prioritized, and how would you pay for them?**

I love Blink and Symphony in the Park. Tourism investments should be prioritized, and the Hotel Tax and Ticket Taxes should be reinvested into supporting those industries. People who are successful at organizing and attracting events should be invited to host events here.

17. Solving major policy challenges, delivering efficient public services, and funding critical infrastructure projects requires the City to work with county, regional, state and federal leaders, some of whom are from different political parties. How will you engage these leaders to support the City's needs?

It is imperative to work with other government officials. Working across party lines is essential. I have worked with government officials for years. Only cooperation will bring real results to the region.