



Update on Implementation of the 2021 Neighborhood Platform
April 18, 2023

In September 2021, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress and CDCs from across the city released the Neighborhood Platform, a set of 50 recommendations to guide the work of Cleveland’s next Mayor and City Council. CDCs and CNP developed these recommendations over the course of six months, and they encompass changes in housing policy and economic development and investments in neighborhood infrastructure and modernizing government.

CNP and CDC leaders had one shared goal: Empowering Mayor Justin M. Bibb and Cleveland City Council, under the leadership of Council President Blaine Griffin (Ward 6), to rigorously challenge the way services are delivered and resources are leveraged across the City. Much more than maintaining the status quo, we wanted to see them pursue an ambitious vision for Cleveland that transforms our shared trajectory and opportunities.

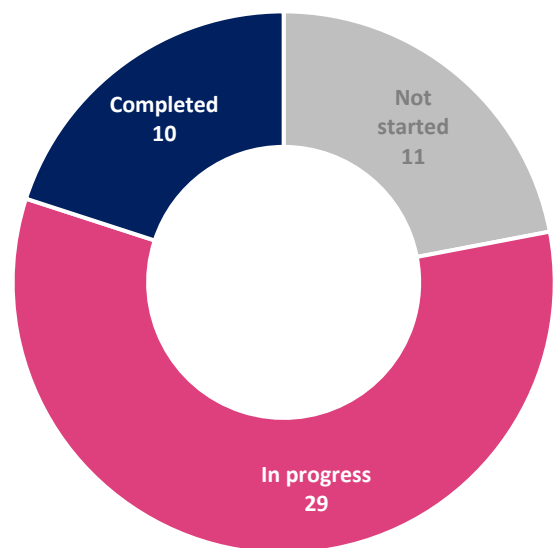
This report serves as a status update on the 2021 Neighborhood Platform. Each recommendation is evaluated against progress made to date. Each is also given a rating of completed, in progress, or not started, alongside a rationale for that rating. Some recommendations are quantifiable, while others should show incremental progress over the Mayor and City Council’s current term in office.

Making Progress, with More to Come

Sixteen months into Mayor Bibb’s term in office, we can share that marked progress has been made and more work lies ahead.

As outlined in detail in this report, ten of the 50 recommendations (20%) in the Neighborhood Platform have been completed and another 29 (58%) are in progress. That leaves 11 (22%) to be started.

In terms of the next two and a half years of work, 40 recommendations (80%) need to be led across the finish line by Mayor Bibb and Cleveland City Council.



Where Mayor Bibb, his Administration, and Cleveland City Council Should Focus in 2023

All the recommendations in the Neighborhood Platform will improve quality of life in Cleveland's neighborhoods, but some warrant particular consideration this year. Acting on the recommendations below will show a commitment to urgent challenges felt by Cleveland residents, will provide guidance and a shared vision to the many partners who help implement the city's work, and will hasten the positive impacts and outcomes that will flow from these recommendations.

Within the community development ecosystem, no recommendation is more important than working collaboratively to re-envision how the City works with and funds CDCs.

Empower CDCs to Help Transform Our Neighborhoods

- Within the first year of the new administration, engage CDCs, CNP, and other stakeholders in re-imagining community development funding with a focus on more effectively using CDBG funding to meet neighborhood needs and funding CDCs operations and programs through alternative non-federal sources.

In 2023 Mayor Bibb, his Administration, and Cleveland City Council should also focus on the following:

Housing

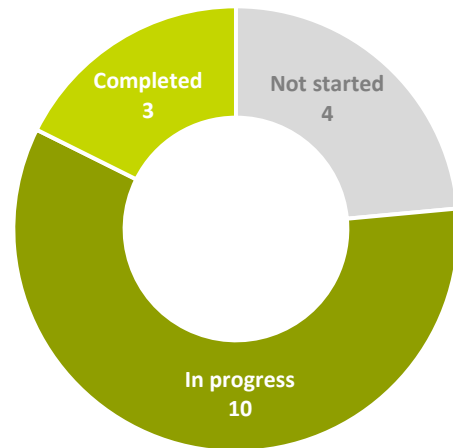
- Launch a locally funded Housing Trust Fund in partnership with Cuyahoga County to support the preservation and production of affordable housing...
- Create policies and practices that proactively deter predatory investing in Cleveland's housing market.
- Pass a tax relief program for low-income homeowners to lessen the negative impact for housing price escalation, thereby encouraging them to remain in the neighborhoods and enjoy wealth-building opportunities at the point of sale.

Economic Development

- Articulate at a public forum a clear strategy for neighborhood transformation in the first year of a new mayoral administration.
- Make new investments in the restoration and rehabilitation of main streets in order to build commercial corridors that attract and retain businesses.
- Within 18 months of the new administration, launch a comprehensive marketing plan for Cleveland and its neighborhoods that will be achieved by an external partner with public support and input from other external partners.

Housing

Mayor Bibb and City Council should adopt equitable development strategies that make Cleveland’s neighborhoods regionally competitive. These strategies should focus on restoration and rehabilitation of our existing housing stock, homeownership support, investments in affordable rental housing unit production and maintenance, stabilization of neighborhoods, and aging in place. These recommendations will lay the groundwork for other forms of investment to follow.



➤ Priority for 2023

Housing Policy

Status and Rationale

Engage CDCs and CNP to review the City of Cleveland’s 10-Year Housing Plan and recommend amendments and action for moving forward.

Completed: The Department of Community Development hosted a meeting in 2022 with staff and leaders from CDCs and CNP, among other stakeholders, to review the 10-Year Housing Plan.

➤ Launch a locally funded Housing Trust Fund in partnership with Cuyahoga County to support the preservation and production of affordable housing...

Not started: Changes to the City’s tax abatement ordinance will generate some revenue that will flow to Cleveland’s Housing Trust Fund, but it will not be enough to make a significant difference. We still would like to see collaboration with Cuyahoga County and non-federal investments to support the preservation of existing affordable housing.

Establish a committee that provides oversight on the compliance and reporting requirements of Cleveland’s Community Reinvestment Act Initiative.

Not started: Cleveland has hired a new Bank Relationships Manager, but we would still like to see City Council establish a new committee on this topic or use its current structure to provide oversight of bank’s CRA investments.

➤ Create policies and practices that proactively deter predatory investing in Cleveland’s housing market

In Progress: Mayor Bibb’s leadership team, Council members, and Cuyahoga County are collaborating on new ordinances and policies that would work together to deter predatory investing. We look forward to supporting these proposals and working with them to strengthen our neighborhoods.

Expand and monitor the city's Certificate of Disclosure program in lieu of point of sale inspections.

Not started: We understand that preliminary conversations are underway regarding this topic, and we look forward to action in 2023.

Housing Programs

Status and Rationale

Increase homeownership in the City by 5% in the first four years of the new administration.

In Progress: According to the US Census, in 2021 the homeownership rate in Cleveland was 41.2%. Achieving a 5% increase to 46.2% by the end of 2025 would require a 1.25% increase each year. Some ARPA investments are targeted at improving housing stock to attract new homeowners.

Update the city's tax abatement policy to: Use data to provide greater incentives in weak and middle markets, encourage rehabilitation and updating of housing stock, address transportation-oriented development, housing typology, and land use priorities; and expand environmental targets.

Completed: Cleveland City Council passed and the Mayor signed into law a new tax abatement ordinance in May 2022. The new policy is nuanced, recognizes different housing markets, and encourages the rehabilitation of existing homes. It does not prioritize transit-oriented development or expand environmental targets.

Triple the impact of Cleveland's home repair programs.

In Progress: In 2022, the City provided 170 houses with home repairs through the Department of Aging and 47 other repairs through the Department of Community Development. The City should aim to reach at least 651 homes per year between these departments.

Invest in community development financial institutions and other housing finance partners to amplify homeowners', homebuyers', and landlords' access to capital for down payment assistance, repair loans, low value mortgages, and other financial tools.

In Progress: Some of the City's ARPA investments are likely to address this recommendation, and we look forward to seeing those RFPs and future allocations.

Maintain and expand the loan loss reserve for Middle Neighborhoods that encourages private investment.

In Progress: Though the City of Cleveland has invested an initial \$1 million in loan loss reserve for Middle Neighborhoods, we look forward to seeing additional investments that tip these neighborhoods in the direction of growth.

Triple the impact of Cleveland's construction gap financing program, which subsidizes new home construction and full house rehabilitation to mitigate the impacts of appraisal gaps in Cleveland neighborhoods.

In Progress: The City's complemented its traditional gap financing program with additional ARPA funds in 2022. We look forward to seeing how the city leverages responses to its RFPs in 2023.

Renters & Landlords

Status and Rationale

Prohibit discrimination against renters based on their source of income.

In Progress: Mayor Bibb endorsed Source of Income Protections during his campaign, but legislation has not been advanced in Cleveland City Council to prohibit this type of discrimination.

Pass "Pay to Stay" legislation that allows renters to stay in their homes if they pay past-due rent and related costs in full to avert eviction.

Completed: In August 2022, Cleveland City Council passed and Mayor Bibb signed into law Ordinance 484-2022, which creates "Pay to Stay" protections for renters in Cleveland.



Pass a tax relief program for low-income homeowners to lessen the negative impact for housing price escalation, thereby encouraging them to remain in the neighborhoods and enjoy wealth-building opportunities at the point of sale.

In Progress: Members of Cleveland City Council have worked with CNP to advocate for the Ohio General Assembly to pass a permissive model of property tax relief that can be crafted and implemented at the local level.

Establish rental assistance, landlord/tenant abatements, and other incentives for landlords to keep rents affordable for Cleveland residents.

Not started: We look forward to working with the Mayor and City Council on this topic in 2023.

Engage in vigilant code enforcement and rental registration to hold absentee landlords accountable for maintaining their properties

In Progress: Cleveland's 2023 Budget includes additional funds for the Department of Building & Housing to hire building inspectors, and the Mayor's Administration is working with Cleveland City Council to develop new policies to increase compliance with the City's rental registry.

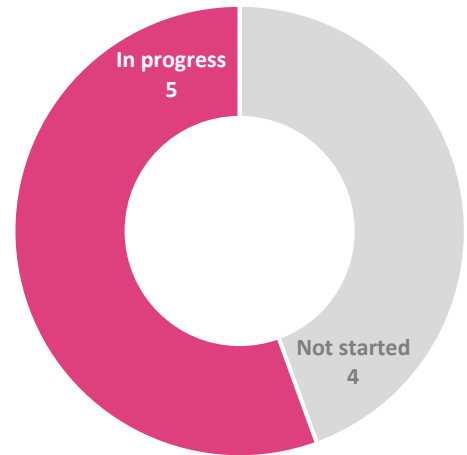
Pass legislation that holds property managers accountable for housing code violations ... and requires property owners outside of Cuyahoga County to appear physically in court for violations.

In Progress: Cleveland City Council, the Mayor's Administration, and Cuyahoga County are working together to create new laws and procedures to hold these bad actors accountable.

Economic Development

Mayor Bibb and City Council should focus on instituting equitable economic development strategies that nurture neighborhoods where businesses of all types provide competitive goods and services, create jobs, and foster wealth creation and income growth for all stakeholders.

> Priority for 2023



Neighborhoods & Main Streets

Status and Explanation



Articulate at a public forum a clear strategy for neighborhood transformation in the first year of a new mayoral administration.

In Progress: The development and use of the Neighborhood Typology Map - identifying strong markets, middle neighborhoods, and opportunity neighborhoods - was an important first step. In 2023, we want to know more about the Mayor's and City Council's plans for investments in each of those areas to improve quality of life, stabilize housing markets, and support businesses along main streets.



Make new investments in the restoration and rehabilitation of main streets to build commercial corridors that attract and retain businesses.

Not started: We anticipate Mayor Bibb and Cleveland City Council will allocate ARPA funds for investments in main streets later this year.

Establish a "white box" renovation program that refunds costs related to restoring the inside of commercial buildings in designated priority zones, like the Storefront Renovation Program.

In Progress: CNP's Economic Development Working Group, which includes representation from the City's Department of Economic Development, is currently piloting a whitebox renovation program. It has already demonstrated success in Old Brooklyn, and another pilot is underway in Slavic Village. This program can serve as a model for expanded investments across all neighborhoods.



Within 18 months of the new administration, launch a comprehensive marketing plan for Cleveland and its neighborhoods that will be achieved by an external partner with public support and input from other external partners.

In Progress: *Eat and Explore Cleveland* was a pandemic partnership between Destination Cleveland, CDCs, CNP, and the City that put a spotlight on Cleveland's neighborhoods and businesses in a meaningful way that brought customers to businesses. The City should double down on the momentum created by *Eat and Explore* and work with these partners to invest time, talent, and resources in marketing Cleveland neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods & Main Streets

Status and Explanation

Develop and/or expand investments in programs and partnerships to train small and minority business owners.

In Progress: The Mayor's commitment to equity demands a focus on small and minority businesses, and we look forward to watching him and his team continue to prioritize these entrepreneurs in 2023.

Establish temporary use variances for pilot projects that must be renewed on a scheduled basis to encourage innovation and experimentation in our neighborhoods.

Not started: We look forward to working with the Administration on ways to empower residents and CDCs to be creative and innovative in their neighborhoods with the use of variances for pilot projects.

Convene with financial, philanthropic, and economic development partners and leverage public investments and programs to establish a new fund for forgivable capital for business expansion for targeted enterprises, such as women- or minority-owned businesses. Operate the program through a third party, with CDCs and CNP involved in its execution.

Not started: The Business Growth Collaborative has started conversations related to this recommendation, and we anticipate Mayor Bibb and Cleveland City Council will allocate ARPA funds for investments in business support and expansion this year.

Development-Focused Policy

Status and Explanation

To provide clarity for future investment, implement form-based zoning that maintains Cleveland's urban fabric, allows more streamlined development processes, encourages density, includes non-automobile usage, and engages community members in the process.

In Progress: The Planning Commission is working on advancing form-based zoning across the City, beyond where it has already been piloted. We are cheering them on because it will simplify the City's zoning code and create clarity for residents, CDCs, developers, and other neighborhood stakeholders.

Advance progressive tax policies that encourage development and penalize the holding of vacant land and structures, especially when not done in furtherance of a neighborhood plan. Explore options that may include "split roll property taxes" and other forms of vacancy tax.

Not started: Reforming Cleveland's tax abatement policy was an important first step in creating a nuanced approach to tax policies, and there is more opportunity for the City to leverage its resources and policies to encourage investment in neighborhoods. Where the City may not have authority to adjust tax policies, it should consider tools – such as one-time increases in grants/loans, lower interest rates, more favorable repayment terms, or relaxed compliance standards – to incentivize businesses to locate in Cleveland neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Infrastructure

CDCs strongly encourage equitable investments to create neighborhoods with assets such as parks, green spaces, recreational amenities, safe streets, street lighting, and digital access is affordable for all citizens.

➤ Priority for 2023



Broadband Access

Status and Explanation

Support public-private partnerships that invest in digital infrastructure.

Completed: The City is working closely with Digital C to expand internet access. The next step is deploying ARPA funds to connect people and businesses.

Reduce by 50% the number of households and small business that are not connected to the internet by highspeed broadband. Progress should address both connection and affordability.

In Progress: According to the 2020 American Community Survey, 44% of Cleveland households had no wireline broadband connection and 27% have no broadband at all, including cellular. Programs and funds to increase connectivity should get Cleveland to 22% and 13%, respectively, by the end of 2025.

Greening Cleveland

Status and Explanation

To address the impact of climate change and increase regional resiliency, reduce by half the number of Cleveland neighborhoods where the tree canopy is projected to be below 30% by 2031.

In Progress: According to the Cleveland Tree Coalition's 2020 Tree Canopy Progress Report, only 2 of 34 neighborhoods (6%) have a canopy cover greater than 30%. Another 13 are between 18% and 29%. Only 3 neighborhoods had canopy growth between 2011 and 2017. To meet this recommendation, at least 16 neighborhoods need significant new tree plantings to project growth for 2031. The creation of the Urban Forestry Commission, legislation introduced by Councilmembers Kazy and McCormack and signed into law by Mayor Bibb, will aid in these efforts by advising on policies to increase the tree canopy across all neighborhoods.

Support the Cleveland Tree Coalition and its efforts to maintain and grow Cleveland's tree canopy.

Completed: While there is a lot that can be done to improve Cleveland's tree canopy, the city's new Complete & Green Streets ordinance, the formation of a cross-departmental working group, and the creation of the Urban Forestry Commission are all important steps in the right direction. There are more ways for the City to support the Cleveland Tree Coalition, and it's off to a great start.

Enforce and refuse occupancy permits for developers who do not implement and maintain landscaping as approved by the Planning Commission.

Not started: Planning Director Huang and Director of Building & Housing Sally Martin intend to dedicate staff to monitor projects and ensure that the conditions of approval are met. We understand that this change sits alongside other priorities, and we look forward to supporting their implementation of it.

Increase the adoption of street trees, commercial corridor trees, vacant land, parks, and other green spaces by neighborhoods, businesses, and community groups by working with a partner better equipped to administer programs to achieve scale and efficiencies.

In Progress: While there is a lot that can be done to improve Cleveland's tree canopy, increasing the adoption of trees is a strategy that we would like to see promoted and used to greater effect. The City's updated Complete & Green Streets ordinance should help create more opportunities for companies and neighborhood groups to get involved and have a level of ownership in the growth and maintenance of Cleveland's canopy.

Assess fees or accept land donations in lieu of fees on new development to increase park acreage across the city.

In Progress: The City does accept land donations for the purposes of expanding amenities like parks and trails. For example, City Council's Development, Planning, & Sustainability Committee recently held a hearing on Ordinance 251-2023, to accept a gift of land for the purposes of constructing a trail to connect the Cleveland Lakefront Bikeway to Herman Park. These kinds of actions are great, and we want to see more - especially if a formal can help this happen more often.

Identify which vacant lots controlled by the City Land Bank are not suitable for building and work with nonprofit partners to transform them into micro-forests, pocket parks, gardens, and other innovative uses that increase greenspace and quality of life.

In Progress: The City has completed a study of its land holdings, and it should use that information to inform which lots should be used for housing development and which should be used for greenspace. The City is also working with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy on the CleVLOT project, which aims to create a simple, transparent process through which people can learn about the disposition of City land bank lots. This project could create greater opportunities to identify land bank lots best suited for pocket parks and other green infrastructure projects.

Strengthening Neighborhood Infrastructure

Status and Explanation

Within the first year of the new mayoral administration, develop and launch a strategy with adequate funding for regular maintenance and repairs of neighborhood parks, green spaces, and bridges.

In Progress: The Mayor and Cleveland City Council passed a structurally balanced budget, and the City has improved its operations, staff deployment, and systems to better service parks, green spaces, and bridges. There is still a ways to go, but progress to date is positive.

Create a public access area on the City's website that collects stakeholder comments and monitors and regularly updates the status of maintenance and repair projects.

In Progress: Early in his Administration, Mayor Bibb commissioned a new website and a review of the city's information and permitting systems. We can't wait to see it when it's ready.

Work with partners to strengthen Cleveland's right-of-way ordinance.

Not started.

Launch a CDC-led Mainstreet Enforcement Program to quickly identify and coordinate neighborhood infrastructure trouble spots for resolution.

Not started.

Continue the current administration's commitment to leading the Vision Zero Cleveland Task Force.

Completed: The Bibb Administration remains committed to the Vision Zero Task Force, demonstrated by the passage of the Complete & Green Streets Ordinance and test piloting speed humps on certain roads. In 2023, we want to see more physical improvements to Cleveland's roads to improve safety for non-vehicular traffic and pedestrians.

Improve accessibility to city amenities by identifying and prioritizing funding for no less than 60 new miles of interconnected multipurpose trails, off-road trails, cycle trails, and protected bike lanes.

In Progress: Many projects are underway to expand trails to, from, and across the lakefront. Efforts to preserve the Superior Midway and Lorain Cycle Track were also critical. Getting to 60 new miles will take more work, but we are confident that this Administration will make gains every year.

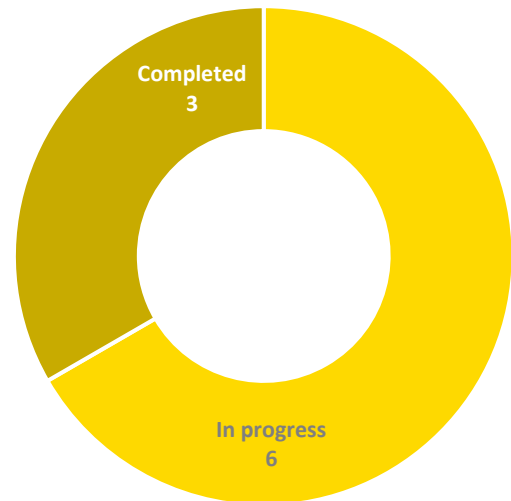
Coordinate and align requests for state capital funding with partners, including Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, the Downtown Cleveland Alliance, Enterprise Community Partners, and the Greater Cleveland Partnership.

Completed: In 2022, Mayor Bibb and Cleveland City Council coordinated with the County, the Greater Cleveland Partnership, and Cleveland Neighborhood Progress to develop and advocate for 10 projects in Cleveland. This amount of coordination and trust made a difference, and it set a strong precedent for future advocacy together.

Municipal Modernization

CDCs support the creation of a new vision for City Hall that re-imagines its operating systems, policies, practices, and culture to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, and accountability to all its residents, businesses and constituencies and pledges to work with all stakeholders to achieve this vision.

CDC's can and should be a trusted partner for the Mayor and City Administration to leverage resources on behalf of neighborhoods and to hold the city accountable, when necessary, as an objective stakeholder.



> Priority for 2023

Re-Envision Municipal Government for the 21st Century

Status and Explanation

Prioritize departmental reorganization to better deliver services and results for residents and neighborhoods, with a focus on three clusters: Development, Mobility, and Community Health.

In Progress: Mayor Bibb has hired talented, experienced leaders to serve on his cabinet. Acknowledging the "integrated" nature of development - between economic development, community development, planning, and building and housing - is an important change in the way we think about the City's role and responsibilities in this space. Greater alignment is still possible, and we would welcome other changes to better serve Cleveland residents.

Foster a workplace culture and restructure the municipal operations as warranted to create a City Hall experience that is friendly, respectful, responsive, and focused on residents, visitors, customers, and other stakeholders.

In Progress: "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Mayor Bibb and his team are doing extensive work to transform the culture at City Hall. These are some of the most important investments that the Mayor can make. This will transform the way municipal employees engage with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders.

Within the first year of the new administration, initiate comprehensive technology reforms that transform the way Cleveland collects and uses data to inform municipal operations, measure success, target resources, and engage the public. Goals should include improving the use of public resources, making data open and accessible to the public, enhancing residents and customer experiences with city services, and overhauling the way residents and businesses can interact with the city through digital interfaces.

Completed: The Mayor has hired a Chief Innovation & Technology Officer, contracted with firms to assist in evaluating the systems permitting system, and committed to updating the City's website. This overhaul is overdue. We can't wait to see what the Mayor has in store.

Increase by 50% the number of building inspectors within the first 36 months of the new administration.

Completed: The City's 2023 Budget allocated \$600,000 in additional funds for the Department of Building & Housing for the purpose of hiring additional staff.

Empower CDCs to Help Transform Our Neighborhoods

Status and Explanation



Within the first year of the new administration, engage CDCs, CNP, and other stakeholders in re-imagining community development funding with a focus on more effectively using CDBG funding to meet neighborhood needs and funding CDCs operations and programs through alternative non-federal sources.

In Progress: Cleveland Neighborhood Progress engaged Cleveland City Council in conversations about CDCs, CDBG, and the community development ecosystem in 2022. Though we are past 12 months from the start of the Bibb Administration, there is still time to engage stakeholders in re-envisioning how the City uses CDBG and how it partners with CDCs to do work across the city's neighborhoods.

Institute quarterly meetings between the mayor, members of his/her cabinet, CDC leaders, and CNP leadership to solicit input and feedback on community and economic development activities across Cleveland neighborhoods.

Completed: Throughout 2022 and into 2023, Mayor Bibb and members of the Integrated Development Cluster met with CDC leaders and CNP. With those meetings behind us, we are working to schedule a new round of meetings with the Cluster to improve coordination and alignment between the city, CDCs, and CNP.

Strengthen Relationships with Residents and Community Partners

Status and Explanation

Redesign, invest in, and reinstitute the City's language access plan to make municipal services accessible for people with limited English proficiency, including providing key documents and applications in various languages and timely third-party interpretation and outreach services.

In Progress: We understand the City is working on its language access plan – which will be critical as Cleveland's immigrant community continues to grow.

Establish dedicated coordination for philanthropic opportunities that require collaboration between city government and external partners to improve intake review, writing, awarding, and reporting.

In Progress: The City's use of Neighborly to administer community development grants and its use of the Center for Economic Recovery to vet ARPA proposals show a dedication to thoughtful and accountable grantmaking.

Institute regularly scheduled community meetings to engage neighborhood stakeholders in dialogue and decision-making to build trust and foster authentic communication.

In Progress: We know the Mayor has made himself and his team available for events throughout the City over the last 16 months. We encourage them to continue seeking regular engagement in all neighborhoods so that they can hear directly from residents.