Downtown Cleveland Improvement District

Comprehensive Services Plan

2026-2032

Downtown Cleveland Improvement District Background

Property owners formed the Downtown Cleveland Improvement District (DCID; "the District") in 2005 to enhance the safety, vibrancy, and attractiveness of the downtown neighborhood.

The District is governed by the board of directors of the Downtown Cleveland Improvement Corporation (DCIC). DCIC is the property owner engagement arm of Downtown Cleveland, Inc., which brings together property owners, businesses, residents, and civic partners to champion downtown.

Ohio law requires that the DCIC board be comprised of property owners within the District. In addition, the Mayor and the City Council President have statutorily required appointees. Through DCIC, property owners decide how DCID assessments are budgeted. DCIC Board Officers also determine the Comprehensive Services Plan. This document defines the services and terms that DCIC proposes for reauthorizing the district.

DCIC's flagship service is Clean & Safe. Over the last three years, DCIC has invested in re-energizing the Clean & Safe program to ensure more responsive, higher quality services. These investments include:

- Upgrading Safety Ambassadors to emphasize conflict de-escalation, as a new national best practice
- Increasing Ambassador wages
- Investing in equipment to provide more efficient cleaning and beautification services
- Implementing quality assurance management and protocols
- Auditing and reforming our dispatch systems to improve responsiveness
- Launching a Court Watch program to ensure effective communication between courts, prosecutors, and victims
- Reporting public infrastructure issues to the City of Cleveland for remediation

These Clean & Safe services are funded through an annual assessment that real property owners petition the City of Cleveland to levy.

Downtown Cleveland Improvement District Background

The current term of the Downtown Cleveland Improvement District expires at the end of 2025. To renew the district for another term, we must collect signed petitions representing 60 percent of the linear front footage in the district. The key elements of this Comprehensive Services Plan are:

- Prioritizing cleanliness and safety services
- Reducing the district's size to provide more efficient services
- Connecting DCIC members to the City of Cleveland's security camera sharing system
- Aligning the term to coincide with Cuyahoga County's sexennial appraisals
- Maintaining the same formula for calculating assessments that has been used since 2005
- Raising $5,800,000 district-wide in 2026 to account for increased demand for services and the rising costs of the Clean & Safe program ((the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County opting properties into the Distsrict is projected to account for the revenue increase)
- Limiting annual increases to 2.35 percent

Action Requested

Please review the Comprehensive Services Plan and the additional materials in your packet. Then, please sign your petition and follow the instructions listed on the petition to mail it to Downtown Cleveland, Inc. at the following address:

668 Euclid Avenue, Suite #101,
Cleveland OH 44114

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the DCID, please contact Special Improvement District Senior Manager Mark Pugacz at mpugacz@downtowncleveland.com.

Use and Leveraging of DCID Assessments

DCID assessments are incorporated as part of the Cuyahoga County property tax bill. During the upcoming term of the DCID (2026-2032), the assessment will generate $5,800,000. An example of how the 2026 budget may be allocated is to the right.

Leveraging District Assessments to Attract Additional Funding

DCIC funds the entirety of the Clean & Safe Program. In recent years, DCIC has budgeted over 75 percent of district revenue for Clean & Safe. While DCIC provides some support to economic development and placemaking services, Downtown Cleveland, Inc. raises $0.95 for every $1.00 that property owners contribute. These funds are raised from corporations, foundations, individuals, and government. Downtown Cleveland, Inc. uses these funds to create a physical and business environment that enables investment through safety, placemaking, and development initiatives.

Below are examples of funds Downtown Cleveland has raised and/or stewarded for public realm improvements.

Leveraging assessment revenue to fund our work to influence the downtown market

Project	Amount
Old River Rd. Development	$3,500,000
Flats East Bank Improvements, including a new riverfront performance stage	$2,000,000
Public Square improvements, including play features and a new kiosk	$850,000
Lighthouse Park and Superior Hill Park Construction	$500,000
New Tree Plantings Across the District	$97,000

Programs and Services

Clean + Safe

Clean and Safe is funded entirely by Downtown Cleveland Improvement District assessments, accounting for 75% of a typical budget.

Program Overview

Clean and Safe Ambassadors provide a visible uniformed presence working seven days a week, year-round, to create a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for all.

Clean & Safe services include:

- Employing Safety Ambassadors trained in conflict de-escalation to patrol the district
- Conducting outreach to connect individuals in need with shelter and services
- Connecting private security cameras to the City of Cleveland's shared camera system
- Conducting Court Watch to track notable offenders' court cases and advocate on behalf of downtown
- Removing graffiti tags, trash, and litter
- Cleaning up human and pet waste on sidewalks
- Recording and reporting public realm deficiencies to Downtown Cleveland, Inc. and City of Cleveland
- Maintaining public realm improvements

Economic Development

Our economic development work is primarily funded through earned income and philanthropic, corporate, and government support. Our sample 2026 budget projects that 8% of assessment revenue will support our economic development programs.

Program Overview

The Economic Development services that DCIC will partially fund include:

- Retail Corridor Development
- Market Research
- Office Building Outreach
- Business Technical Assistance
- Public Realm Improvements
- Marketing and Communications

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Public Space Management + Activation

The City of Cleveland has transferred responsibility for managing, programming, and marketing Public Square to Downtown Cleveland, DCIC's umbrella organization. A clean, safe, and vibrant Public Square is essential to downtown's economy and investment-readiness. Downtown Cleveland's management of Public Square will bring greater operational efficiency and align it with the organization's overall leadership of downtown.

Program Overview

People feel and are safer when there is ample foot traffic and an active environment. Since the last DCID reauthorization, DCIC's support has helped leverage the resources necessary to substantially increase the amount and quality of regular programming and activation in the District.

Typical public space maintenance and activation services include:

- Food Truck Events
- Live Music
- Festivals and Holiday Celebrations
- Recreational Opportunities
- Outdoor Markets
- Maintaining public realm improvements

2026-2032 Downtown Cleveland Improvement District Term

Each year of the term will bring a 2.35% annual inflation adjustment. Budgeting will be led by the Downtown Cleveland Improvement Corporation board directors, all of whom are assessment-paying property owners. Board meetings are open to the public.

Assessment Methodology

The method for calculating property assessments will remain unchanged from that of the current term. It is based on two factors: (1) linear front serviceable footage, and (2) certified value*. The formula is based on a budget derived from 25 percent of the serviceable linear front footage and 75 percent of the certified value of the parcels in aggregate within the service geography.

Certified Value is the total value within the DCID as determined by the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer as of December 8, 2023 for valuation purposes. The Certified Value is a fixed number and is not subject to fluctuation due to any subsequent revisions to the value of property. These values will be used for Years (2026 through 2032). A copy of the Certified Value of each parcel is on file and available for review in the offices of Downtown Cleveland, Inc.

Similarly, how assessments are spent is also a calculation of linear front serviceable footage and assessed value. The costs of DCID services are determined as follows:

Enhanced Maintenance Services *(ie, Cleanliness, beautification, maintenance)*

Focus on sidewalks throughout the district and provide direct benefit to the frontage of commercial properties. As such, costs for these services are calculated based on linear front footage. Enhanced maintenance costs account for 25% of the total assessment budget.

(25% of Total Assessment Budget)/(Total District Sidewalk Lot Frontage)
= $10.81 per linear foot of sidewalk lot frontage

Public Safety and Economic Development Services

Benefits all properties and their users, including residents, employees, and visitors. As such, costs for these services are calculated based on certified value. Public safety and economic development costs account for 75% of the total assessment budget.

(75% of Total Assessment Budget)/(Total Certified Value of Properties)
= 0.125% of assessed market value

Total Per Property Assessment Calculation

To calculate assessments for individual properties, the preceding variables will be combined in the following formula:

($10.81 x linear feet of sidewalk frontage) + (0.00125 x Certified Value)

Value Cap

A value cap is applied to individual properties that comprise more than $50 million in Certified Value and to any spatially contiguous properties under Single Ownership*, including vertically contiguous parcels such as air rights. The value cap is in recognition that benefits from SID programs will be diluted for properties with an extraordinary concentration of value. For properties more than $50 million in Certified Value, the full SID assessment rate on Certified Value will apply to the first $50 million in Certified Value and the SID assessment rate will be reduced by 50% for all Certified Value more than $50 million but less than $100 million. No assessment on Certified Value will apply to any value of an individual property more than $100 million. The owners of such properties already will be making very significant contributions to the SID. This cap shall not apply to the lot frontage portion of the assessment. The assessment formula for individual properties, incorporating the value cap, will be:

($10.81 x linear feet of sidewalk frontage)
+
1.0 (0.00125 x first $50 million of Certified Value) +
0.5(0.00125 x Certified Value in excess of $50 million but less than $100 million) +
0.0(0.00125 x Certified Value in excess of $100 million)

**"Single Ownership" shall mean: (1) ownership by a single entity; or (2) ownership by a single entity and one or more of the following: (a) any wholly-owned subsidiary of that single entity; (b) any partnership of which that single entity is a general partner; (c) any limited liability company the sole member of which is that single entity*

	Estimated Rate per percent of Certified Value	Estimated Rate of Assessment per linear foot of lot frontage
Year 1	0.12500 %	$10.81
Year 2	0.12794 %	$11.06404
Year 3	0.13094 %	$11.32404
Year 4	0.13402 %	$11.59015
Year 5	0.13717 %	$11.86252
Year 6	0.14039%	$12.14129
Year 7	0.14369%	$12.42661

Map + Boundaries

Boundary Changes

- If the District boundaries expand beyond the proposed boundaries, the total annual Assessment shall increase to an amount equal to the then-current total annual Assessment plus Assessments generated by additional parcels. Additional Assessments shall be calculated using the formula above.
- If the District boundaries contract from these proposed boundaries, the total annual Assessment shall decrease to an amount equal to the then-current total annual Assessment less the amount of Assessments that would have generated by properties excluded by the new boundaries using the formula above.

Governance

Downtown Cleveland Improvement Corporation (a non-profit organization) will continue to oversee the activities of the Downtown Cleveland Improvement District. Formed in 2005, DCIC has a 27-member board of directors composed of property owners that represent all geographic areas within the DCID. Board directors serve 3-year staggered terms, and an annual election is held to fill board vacancies. Specific duties and responsibilities for the DCIC board of directors include:

- Setting the annual budget and work programs
- Developing policies and procedures related to implementing the work program
- Recommending future plans for services or improvements
- Scheduling and conducting an annual meeting
- Developing a strategic plan for the continuing operation of the DCID

Exempt Properties

While federal, state, city, and county government-owned properties are exempt from special improvement districts, the DCIC board of directors will encourage these owners to opt-in to the District as voting, rate paying members.

Safeguards

The DCID will continue to have control or "safeguards" that maximize cost certainty and accountability to property owners, including:

- **Ongoing Property Database Update:** Each year the DCID property database will be updated.
- **Annual Report:** The DCID will provide an annual report to all property owners at its annual membership meeting. The report will summarize the progress made on each element of the DCID plan.
- **Plan Term:** The Plan is proposed to expire in 2032. At the expiration of its term, continuation of district operations will require the creation of a new business plan and a petition by property owners representing 60% of the front footage.
- **Protocol Agreements:** The DCID will renew the protocol and contractual agreement with the City of Cleveland that document existing levels of City services being provided in the DCID and will monitor those service levels on an on-going basis to ensure the service level remains constant.

Thank You for Supporting Downtown Cleveland

Over the last 18 years, Downtown Cleveland has experienced tremendous growth supported by the Downtown Cleveland Improvement Corporation. Thanks to our strong track record of success, the DCIC has received widespread support. Thank you for contributing to a brighter future in downtown Cleveland.

Next Steps

To ensure a smooth DCID renewal process, at your earliest convenience, please:

- Review the other materials in your packet
- Sign your petition and follow the mailing instructions
- Get in touch with Special Improvement District Senior Manager Mark Pugacz at mpugacz@downtowncleveland.com if you have any questions.