



City of Independence, Ohio

"THE HEART OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY"

6800 BRECKSVILLE ROAD

INDEPENDENCE, OHIO 44131

(216) 524-4131

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Members of Council

From: Finance Director Vernon Blaze

Date: Friday, November 12, 2021

Re: Finance Office Updates

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Received/To be Received

Just a reminder that the city received just over \$375,000 here in 2021 in connection with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and will received a similar amount in 2022 (By contrast, the City of Cleveland will receive over \$500 million, or over a half a billion dollars, as a result of this Act).

Although the City is not up against any deadlines yet to utilize those funds or lose them, the upcoming budget meetings and discussions might be a good time to revisit this funding source and the ultimate use of those funds.

On July 27, 2021, the Utilities Committee discussed some possible water and sewer projects that could be completed with 2021's funding allocation.

Recall that the five (5) broad categories of uses for these funds are:

1. Support public health expenditures
2. Address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency
3. Replace lost public sector revenue
4. Provide premium pay for essential workers
5. Invest in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure

If Category #3 (Replace lost public sector revenue) is selected for either part or all of the funding, it would be fairly straightforward to demonstrate how the Hotel/Motel Admissions Tax was way down in 2020 from the average of previous years, and how it will likely still be down some from that historical average here in 2021.

The Finance Office doesn't have a preference for the use of these funds, but does believe it would be prudent to decide on the ultimate use of them before too much time passes.



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It's Not All Bad News – Just Have to Keep Plowing and Chopping

The headline of an article published just yesterday offers hope to cities like Independence, which have key, but less expensive suburban locations near larger, more expensive metropolitan cities:

- *"The suburbs are winning in commercial real estate – Cities with expensive office space before the pandemic are still struggling"*

Infrastructure to Promote Healthy Living and an Attractional Community

This week's edition of *Crain's Cleveland Business* had an article in it titled Progress on cycling infrastructure is everywhere in Northeast Ohio in the **Government** section of it.

Following are some quotes from it that might be thought of as the 2021 – 2025 Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is refined and the 2022 – 2026 CIP is developed over the next few months:

- *There are more bicyclists on the road than there were just a few years ago.*
- *Good bicycling infrastructure is key to attracting the best and brightest new residents and employees – which means it's also key to retaining and rebuilding populations and driving growth.*
- *Asked how many of his developments have dedicated and secure bike storage, [developer] quickly answered "all of them."*
- *When Akron recently redeveloped its Main Street in central downtown, it drastically widened the sidewalk. That wasn't just for pedestrians. "This is the bike lane."*
- *There are signs of recent progress with regard to cycling infrastructure, and plans for additional investments across the region. "This was the summer of ribbon cuttings."*
- *Cleveland Metroparks' chief planning and design officer, Sean McDermott, works on cycling infrastructure with many local municipalities, which planners say ultimately hold the key to developing bike lanes and trails.*
- *Solon's bike path from SOM Center Road (Route 91) to the city's eastern border with Bainbridge is set to be built next year. In addition to that, Solon is about to create bike lanes along Aurora Road by the Solon Community Center and Park. Although neither project is high-mileage, they'll help cyclists get around and from one bike lane to*



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Infrastructure to Promote Healthy Living and an Attractional Community – Cont'd

- *another. "It's going to be a good foundation for the city to build off of and provide additional connectivity in the future. The city as a whole is excited, and there are definitely a lot of new cyclists out there now."*
- *But much of the region still needs to take cycling infrastructure more seriously. While a road with a bike lane demarcated by a painted line is better than a road with no bike lane at all, it's a far cry from a road with bike lane protected posts or a raised curb to keep motor vehicles in their own lane."*
- *"Our biggest push is really around the quality of infrastructure. You look at other cities that are doing bike work, and they're not just doing painted lines for bike lanes – they're doing protected bike lanes."*
- *Not feasible for a town like Cleveland? Don't tell them [cyclists] that. They'll point to cities like Minneapolis, known for great cycling features like ubiquitous protected lanes and trails.*
- *"It's only a seasonal option because we've told ourselves it's a seasonal option. Minneapolis actually puts money into plowing their trails during wintertime...because people use them."*