

City of Cincinnati

Council



Melissa Autry, CMC
Clerk of Council

Office of the Clerk

801 Plum Street, Suite 308
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
Phone (513) 352-3246
Fax (513) 352-2578

December 17, 2013

We wholly disagree that SORTA's offer is a "non-starter." It is, without question, a very good start to a sustainable funding solution for the continued operation of the Cincinnati Streetcar.

Last week, the Mayor stated that in order for the streetcar to move forward, he would need a legally-binding assurance that its operations would be off the City's books. He did not demand a check in hand, but rather a guarantee that the streetcar's operation would not interfere with the City's general operating budget, which funds police, fire, and other City services.

In response, and in remarkable time, a public-private partnership led by SORTA, the Haile Foundation, and the business community has guaranteed covering operating costs for 30 years—ensuring it is never on the City's books. The Mayor and other Councilmembers have been given an offer that satisfies their demands, yet have already emphatically said "no."

We trust the professionals, including SORTA's CEO, who say their proposal "is based upon assurances from the Cincinnati business and philanthropic communities that they will work with [them] in public-private partnership to secure the funds required."

SORTA has unequivocally guaranteed that this arrangement will have no effect on our local bus service, and we have every reason to trust them. They know their books, they know transit, and they have said yes. And the FTA has indicated that a region's principal transit provider—like SORTA—is often best suited for such a task.

It is time to stop rejecting every solution and try to find a responsible path forward for the Cincinnati Streetcar.

Councilmember Wendell Young

Councilmember Chris Seelbach

Councilmember Yvette Simpson