

The Urbanophile Interview: Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley

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Aaron M. Renn: Hello. I'm Renn of the Urbanophile, www.urbanophile.com. And I'm joined here today by Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley. Mayor Cranley, thank you for taking the time.

Mayor John Cranley: It's great to be here.

Renn: I want to first tell you a little bit about Cincinnati for those of you who don't know it. It's a really amazing city that I always say likes to have the single best collection of civic assets of any city its size in America. It's in a beautiful river valley setting, great geography of hills and trees, it's got fantastic historic architecture and neighborhoods like Over-the-Rhine which I happen to think actually has better bones than Brooklyn in a lot of ways, a lot of contemporary architecture as well, many large important corporations like Procter & Gamble and Kroger, fantastic cultural institutions like the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestra which, believe it or not, has sold over 10 million albums, great neighborhoods, all sorts of quirky, unique little cultural items of a type you don't see in other cities that much these days like Cincinnati-style chili. The City of Cincinnati itself has a population of around 300,000 people with a metro area of about 2.1 million, 28th largest in America.

Mayor Cranley is a Democrat. He was just elected this fall so he's relatively early in his administration but he's not new to local politics. He was on the city council for many years. He's also a Harvard Law grad who co-founded the Ohio Innocence Project and ran that organization for some years. That's a group dedicated to exonerating those wrongfully convicted of crimes. He's a Cincinnati native who grew up, I believe, in the West Side neighborhood of Price Hill. Once again, thank you for being here, Mayor Cranley.

Cranley: It's interesting that you note the Brooklyn connection to Over-the-Rhine. The Suspension Bridge which is a gorgeous real anchor for our river is the model for the Brooklyn Bridge, the actual Brooklyn Bridge which is not surprising because the Italianate architecture in Over-the-Rhine was built in the late 19th Century, not too long after both the Suspension Bridge and the Brooklyn Bridge were under construction post Civil War. So I agree with that. And I hadn't thought about the architecture of Brooklyn and Over-the-Rhine but I think it's a good point.

Renn: When I first visited Over-the-Rhine and some of these neighborhoods in Cincinnati in the early 90's, my first thing is "This is like Brooklyn." I mean it's different type of architecture even than you see in a lot of other kind of northern Midwest cities because Cincinnati was huge in 1830's.

Cranley: Yes.

Renn: It was out of control, how big the city was when Chicago was a trading post.

Cranley: Right. Exactly.

Renn: So I just rattled off some of the things that Cincinnati has. It's a lot. What are you most proud of about the city?

Cranley: I agree with your analysis that we have, for a city our size, we have more assets than any city in America. We have more Fortune 500 companies per capita. We have an incredibly deep economy. While we have a huge manufacturing base when manufacturing was lost and was the life blood of Pittsburgh and Cleveland and Akron, Toledo, et cetera. We were service before service was cool. We were a P&G city since 19th century. So we've been able to weather a lot of the changing economics for cities a lot better than others.

And we have, I think – as I like to say if you're pursuing your dreams, if you're a starving artist, you go to New York. But if you're a young entrepreneur who wants to get into consumer marketing, we are literally the consumer marketing capital of the world. P&G and Macy's and Kroger spend more combined on advertising than probably any equivalent city. We have over, I believe, it's 20,000 employees, not P&G and Macy's, but in the consumer marketing field. So we have, I think, a very vibrant culture of entrepreneurialism. We have, of course, just great history and pride. And we're poised at the moment to capture the new urbanism that is flooding the country in a sense that there's a great deal of new demand for urban living by young professionals and empty nesters. And I think we are better positioned to turbo charge and capitalize on that momentum than any city anywhere near our size and scope.

And candidly, it's already happening. We've essentially doubled our downtown population in ten years. We will double our downtown population again, I believe, in the next five years. We will double our population in Over-the-Rhine again in the next five years. And we've got -- I can get into the specifics -- but from our river, our Riverfront Park will be, frankly, more user-friendly and larger than Millennium Park of Chicago. As you head north, we have a revitalized riverfront area, Fountain Square, Over-the-Rhine, and we're going up to hill to Clifton into the UC, into a research and medical corridor up there. We have 80,000 jobs downtown, 60,000 jobs uptown. Many downtowns would encompass both our downtown and our Clifton area meaning geographically they'd be flat and they would have both. It would all be considered one large downtown. Like Columbus is spread out that way, cities are spread out. Indianapolis...

Renn: Yeah. Indianapolis' downtown is 5.5 square mile. In Indianapolis they would say Over-the-Rhine is downtown.

Cranley: Correct.

Renn: Here, you would think that's a separate neighborhood.

Cranley: Correct. But if you look at it, connecting uptown and downtown, 140,000 jobs and what most people would consider one large downtown. For a city our size, nobody can hold a candle to that kind of jobs. And these aren't just any jobs. These are extremely well paying, deep corporate roots, which then results to huge corporate philanthropy in the arts, into revitalization. Our revitalization is happening in large part because P&G and Macy's and Kroger's decided to invest in an organization called 3CDC ten years ago which I'm proud to say that I was instrumental in helping to get started as a councilman at the time. And we made a concerted effort to re-urbanize and repopulate our urban core. And we're bearing the fruit of that today and we're going to turbo charge those efforts.

Renn: I was an undergrad business major at Indiana University when I went to school and coming out of that -- it's a pretty big undergrad business school -- there were two companies that everybody seemed to want to work for. Either you wanted to be a brand manager at P&G, or you wanted to go work for Andersen Consulting, which is now called Accenture. And I went to work for Andersen Consulting. But Cincinnati, in going to work for P&G, was huge in terms of aspirational employment for people coming out of there. I had friends who did that, no historic connection to Cincinnati, but the P&G, they wanted to get in.

I mentioned that unlike a lot of places that have kind of been "Genericized," Cincinnati has really held on to a lot of the local cultural uniqueness and feel. How has it managed to do that?

Cranley: Well, I think it's -- I mean, first of all, we have these traditions of people who candidly stay, which is great. And we have sort of these brands that have some real staying power. So you have -- in the ice cream you've got Graeter's, which is famous. You've got Montgomery Inn ribs, which Bob Hope used to order from around the world from Cincinnati. Chili, you mentioned. Candidly I have my biases because my wife's family owns Gold Star Chili, which is one of the two big dominating companies. Skyline has larger market share, but Gold Star is coming on. And they both are doing very, very well and are very unique to Cincinnati in terms of their taste and approach. What am I forgetting in terms of the food? LaRosa's Pizza is insane -- local, he's a West Side guy. In fact, I lived next to the founder for years -- is there.

And then you've got the oldest baseball team in United States in professional baseball. So we have this history of being a major league city, both the Bengals and the Reds but predominantly the Reds, longer than any city in the United States. The Big Red Machine, the tradition is just so deep. And then you've got the natural beauty in the hills, the architecture that you already mentioned, the bones of the city. What modern new urbanist cities try to emulate candidly is what we were in the 19th century, and are again today increasingly. It's taking advantage of pedestrian friendly, mixed use, incredible architectural assets and repopulating those assets in a way that's incredibly dense for a city our size.

And then part of that is, as you point out, Over-the-Rhine is considered a different neighborhood than downtown. We maintained 52 neighborhoods with real, to this day, sense of culture and community that is unique and creates within, I think, the culture in the citizens living in these neighborhoods, a real sense of pride - both for Cincinnati but also for their particular neighborhood. So Price Hill has a long history of sort Catholic, German, Irish, West Side family friendly. Westwood had the home -- sadly, against my wishes, the previous administration tore down the historic building -- where the Procter & Gamble soap rose to the top of the tub. It was sort of the, in many ways, the most significant thing that ever happened in Cincinnati, was the creation of Procter & Gamble. And Westwood was the home of -- now, most of the money people live on east side, but at the time it was more distributed west and east -- and the founder of the Ivory soap lived in Westwood. Whether you've got Clifton, which of course is our sort of -- well, until Over-the-Rhine has really taken off -- more sort of eclectic, bohemian student/university/research. And then that blends into Northside, which has traditionally been the gay neighborhood, but it's now even getting more diverse than that, and it's been fantastic and has an identity. To the history of Mount Auburn where you got William Howard Taft house and where Christ Hospital is. You look down on the city, Mount Adams which, of course...

Renn: It's like a Midwestern San Francisco.

Cranley: Exactly. As I always say, if Chicago is the New York of the Midwest, we're the San Francisco -- in fact, that's exactly my mind is to say Chicago is the New York of the Midwest. We're the San Francisco. Because we have the hills, the architecture, the arts, the culture, the big league teams, all the advantages of a major city with the livability of a small town. And everyone has an opportunity to be a big fish if you got that kind of ambition. And it really is. Again, we've proven that's true because we've been able to maintain such a concentration of Fortune 500 companies which then, of course, leads to all kinds of spin-off businesses and a huge privately held company, group of businesses, that have really been family traditions that have lasted a hundred years and have really continued to come.

As I like to point out, what city our size has an entire company dedicated to Shakespeare? We have a Shakespeare theater that does all Shakespeare. And it has full on season. That's in addition to our Broadway play show at the Aronoff which is the big place, plus several smaller theaters including the Ensemble Playhouse in the Park, which another professional troop. We've got the Know Theater, which is real edgy stuff. And Over-the-Rhine you've got -- none of this, by the way, is Music Hall which is one of the greatest treasures anywhere in the country in terms of its beauty, its accessibility, its long term use. I was just reading this great book by Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Bully Pulpit*, about how William Howard Taft's wife actually founded the Symphony. It's got the May Festival, the Symphony -- well, the ballet's at the Aronoff. The amount of arts and culture is just unprecedented for a city our size -- and enduring.

Renn: One difference from difference from San Francisco, San Francisco is extremely politically left and Cincinnati has a long history of social conservatism. How does that play out in the modern era here?

Cranley: Well, I think that -- I mean, I think that's changed. Well, I mean it's different, I guess, but I'm proud to say that -- you take one rather prominent issue with gay rights. In 1993 an anti-gay law was passed in the city charter which was awful, and would stain our reputation for ten years. When I was on council we had a transvestite who was murdered, and even the very conservative polices, the chief of police, said that this was a hate crime. And I led the effort to ban -- or add sexual orientation to our hate crime law. And that was sort of -- this was 2002, I believe, 2002 or '03, it might have been 2003. And this had only been ten years since the charter thing had been passed. Remember, the charter thing was passed in the aftermath of Bill Clinton being elected and gays in the military, that first debate. And several cities, including Denver, Colorado, passed virtually identical -- had been ran by a right wing group around the country and they went on several states -- and what was passed her was also passed in Colorado, very progressive -- mean that we all believe is a fairly urban...

Renn: Less progressive at the time.

Cranley: The same as Cincinnati. But the difference was that the Colorado charter language for their state was struck down by the federal courts in that district. And we sued to get it undone. So the city council was virtually unanimously opposed -- maybe one or two folks were for it. And so...

Renn: Because there's an initiative process here right, that people can amend the charter without the politicians.

Cranley: It passed, but it passed in the frenzy of the post Clinton first reaction. My point is simply that, yes, the voters voted the wrong way, but did they also in Colorado. The difference was that in both cases the elected officials were more progressive oriented and against this charter amendment. Both the State of Colorado and the City of Cincinnati sued to have this done as unconstitutional. In Colorado it was struck down by the federal courts. In Cincinnati the conservative judges that were appointed in the Sixth Circuit upheld it. So we were stuck with it when Colorado got the benefit of having it taken out by federal courts. That was a huge problem for us. So then in 2003 I led the effort to expand our hate crimes law to include sexual orientation. And then a year later our entire community came together to repeal the charter language with actual vote of the people.

Remember Colorado -- which I love Colorado, I love Denver, it's an awesome city -- they never actually convinced their population to undo that law. It was undone by judges. Here, we went on a major effort and we progressively, in 2004, in the midst of Bush getting reelected in Hamilton County 54 to 46, got the thing repealed by a substantial margin, which showed a real shift in our culture and our attitudes. And then we immediately passed -- reinstated -- the human rights ordinance. We immediately reinstated the non-discrimination. We passed benefits for domestic partners and many, many other things. So candidly, and this is why I think it's so important that you're here, we need to get the message out that we're one of the new cities that actually ten years ago -- now you're seeing legislatures around the country pass gay marriage laws and things of that nature, but still that's mostly it's being done by the judiciary -- we're one of the few communities in the country that voted affirmatively to reject within ten years what was done in haste at a time, and obviously things have changed. But that was ten years ago that we repealed that ordinance -- that charter issue. So I believe that it is true that we have a history of very active conservative folks who pushed the original '93 charter language, but that was part of a national effort that included Colorado and others. And I believe that we have moved many, many miles since then.

In addition, let's not point -- I failed to point out -- that we have been incredibly progressive as it comes to civil rights and to police-community relations. We had, in 2001, a very difficult time with police and the community, the black community in particular. And we voted to invite the Justice Department in the Cincinnati to mediate rather than litigate allegations of police misconduct. And we led to the 2002 collaborative agreement -- which I'm proud to say I helped negotiate -- which is now held up as a role model for how to improve police community relations around the country. In fact, the judge in New York who struck down the "stop and frisk" law in New York City specifically cited Cincinnati's collaborative agreement as the right way for the police and the community to work together.

In fact, last week the Department of Justice, Ron Davis, who's the head of the COPS Program -- Community Oriented Policing, this is the Bill Clinton program to put 100,000 cops on the street -- they come on with symposiums, they tackle issues like this. Well [New York Mayor Bill] de Blasio made a big issue about stop and frisk and getting rid of it. And brought in [New York Police Commissioner William] Bratton to say we got to help heal the divide between New York Police Department and the black community. And they invited me to go and to serve as an example of how Cincinnati has grappled with these issues when other cities have ignored them.

Just last year in Cleveland, it was a very unfortunate shooting that has caused a lot of issues there. Fifteen years ago when we had our problems, the African-American ministers were leading the protest on City Hall. Now African-American ministers are leading night prayer

vigils and walks within the community to reduce the violence. That's how far we've come is that there's been a genuine improvement in civil rights in a sense that basic constitutional rights are protected, number one, but secondly when there are issues -- because people are human -- that there's a fair process in which those will be investigated and fully vetted, and a community collaborative approach to combating crime. And so I respectfully say that I understand that we have some baggage in terms of what happened in 1993 on gay rights, and we've had on the 80's and 70's...Larry Flynt...

Renn: Mapplethorpe...

Cranley: So I'm not denying that there isn't some reason for that reputation, but I don't think it's -- it's no longer fair, and it hasn't been fair for at least ten years since we repealed -- or actually I would say since the collaborative of 2002, and in 2004 -- the collaborative was dealing with civil rights issues -- then in 2004 when we repealed it -- our own people voted to undo the damage that had been done on the anti-gay rights charter and stuff.

Renn: One of the items from your campaign manifesto was around race relations and healing race relations here because you did mention that in 2001 there were some disturbances in the Over-the-Rhine area. And then -- which I know there had been still some tensions as there's kind of this gentrification with the historic black community. I've listened to some talk radio when I'm driving around here, people making some comments of a racial nature on there that I just can't even fathom. So I think race issues are prominent in northern cities. I find it odd that it's southern cities like Atlanta, Charlotte and Houston that have kind of done a better job of confronting their racism legacies. How do you heal those community divides? You talked about the one example but how do you overcome that?

Cranley: Well, I think we made huge progress on the civil rights constitutional side with the police-community relations piece. Now the big frontier which I'm devoting enormous amount of effort and time to is economic inclusion. I cited Atlanta over and over and over again in the campaign trail. If you look at Atlanta 40 years ago and today, I would argue, as I think you had pointed out in some of your writings, that we have more inherent natural assets in bones than Atlanta does although, of course, being the capital of south, maybe it's not a fair comparison. But the fact is we have better architecture, we have better companies, we have a broader base and we're more dense naturally than Atlanta is.

Renn: Atlanta and Birmingham were about the same size in 1950. Atlanta was nothing until they got some of the race issues sorted out and took a very forward looking approach.

Cranley: I couldn't agree with you more. And in fact, I pointed this out a million times, Atlanta which coined the phrase "A city too busy to hate" never had a race riot. Think about that. Ebenezer, Martin Luther King, his father's church in the heart of Atlanta, they never had a race riot of substantial size. I don't think -- I could be contradicted by some small thing. And Andrew Young who was a keynote speaker at an NAACP speech here in October -- and he's really one of my heroes, he was a mayor of Atlanta -- he talked about this in great length. And he actually -- I thought it was in the 50's, 60's and 70's that this got going -- but he said it really started in the 30's. The business community of Atlanta was so far more progressive in adapting and collaborating with the black community saying, "We're never going to survive unless we have a win-win."

So their efforts at building a broad inclusive economy that built a black middle class which is now the largest black middle class in the country, home of all this great -- now, one major advantage they have is being the home of all these great historic black colleges, several, which is a huge advantage we don't have. But they made a conscious effort to do that. And if you look at the population of Atlanta 40 years ago and today, it has quadrupled, a huge increase. Their GDP is far greater today than it was forty years ago. The Black community is the largest middle class in the country and white people are richer. So everybody is better off by adapting a progressive inclusive policy on race.

And if you look at Cincinnati, as you've pointed out, we have not grown at the rate of the national average. Our GDP is fine and doing great. We got a lot of natural assets but it hasn't grown nearly at the rate that Atlanta has grown. So when I have said throughout the campaign and since I've been in office is that it's not only the right thing to do from a historical baggage -- and we have a history of issues and racism like every American does -- that we need to confront and constantly deal with like we did on sort of clear civil rights issues coming out 2001 and '02. But we also need to build an economy that works for everybody. There is huge disparity at wealth and health between black and white in Cincinnati and white and Hispanic. And if we don't tackle that, we're not going to grow. And that's not just for African-American and Hispanics, it's for white people too -- I mean, it's for everybody. Atlanta, everyone is better off 40 years into their fairly aggressive inclusive policy.

So we have already launched a host of initiatives led by the biggest companies in town, Procter & Gamble, Macy's, Kroger, their supplier diversity. And sadly and ironically, they actually do a better job a supplier diversity than the city does. So P&G, Toyota, and Kroger's are all members of the Billion Dollar Roundtable, which means, essentially, they spend \$1 billion a year globally on African-American businesses. The city contracts about \$300 to \$400 million a year in a variety of services. And the last time they measured it which is a year and a half ago, only 1.5% of the contracts are on African-American businesses, zero to Latino, and only 6% to women. So we pledged to double the women-owned business contracts to quadruple African-American, to at least 15% by the end of next year, and to increase Hispanic contracts from 0% to 3% in the next couple of years, and then grow from there. And doing that by really changing the culture procurement and aggressive outreach.

And candidly, there's a way to do it that will save money too because a lot of what's happening essentially is contracts just getting renewed without a whole lot of thought to it. And when you -- this isn't a set aside -- this is about competition. And so when we enhance competition, we're going to save taxpayer money build *and* capacity among young African-American, Hispanic, women entrepreneurs in Cincinnati. I think if we get an aggressive -- we start from behind right now -- we're going to really tackle this in a very aggressive manner and create and change the culture inside City Hall, and then use that candidly in the leadership of the companies that have agreed to serve on this taskforce. One, to first clean up this house, and then continue the conversation regionally to really help market Cincinnati as a region, as a place where opportunity exist for everybody.

Renn: I think you hit on -- we talked about race and some of the issues. Cincinnati, it has -- I call this my Cincinnati conundrum. You got the best stuff, but the city has kind of underperformed from a population in job growth even versus regional peers like Columbus, Lexington, et cetera, over an extended period of time. So the city of Cincinnati went from 40% regional population share to 14% not dissimilar from everywhere, but I'm stunned that Hamilton

County, Ohio has lost 120,000 people since 1970. Marion County in Indianapolis, which is about identical, the same size, has gained 135,000. The city of Cincinnati is down from well into the 500,000s and slightly below 300,000. So it's kind of been this trajectory of the core in a negative way while places like Warren County have boomed. What have really been the factors that have driven some of the underperformance demographically here? And then kind of what's the -- what do you think the inflection point? What's going to turn that up to a more aggressive growth profile?

Cranley: Well, first of all, let me make a few points and then -- the first point is that -- the number one reason why our numbers have shrunk faster than other cities, and I'll get to the county in just a minute, is because we did not -- Cincinnati has not annexed anything since 1925. And Columbus was annexing as recently as five years ago. So now Columbus is virtually all of Franklin County and you've got metro government down in Louisville now, I believe.

Renn: Louisville, Nashville, Indianapolis.

Cranley: Indianapolis has got all that. So it's not fair to say, "Well, the city is 14%" because these other cities have annexed aggressively.

Renn: That's why I looked at the county populations.

Cranley: Understood. That's a different issue. But I think if you looked at the urban core, if you took in essence, if you took our small geographic city which is very small, at least the annexing in 1925, and you layered it to similar urban core to these other cities, Cleveland for example, Columbus, et cetera, you would -- we would crush any of those cities in terms of diversity, wealth, quality neighborhoods, safety. I mean, in Cleveland there's not a single neighborhood as nice as Clifton proper, let alone Hyde Park, Mount Lookout, Oakley, Mount Adams. I mean we have incredible density still in our urban core despite the fact that we lost population.

Renn: And I'll be honest, household sizes have declined so that's got an impact.

Cranley: Well, that's had a huge impact. I mean, you look at the big trends, over 50 years -- let me make the other point too. One is apples to apples, we didn't annex. The second point is this changing, literally, under our feet. First of all, I don't buy that our population is declining. In fact, in 2002-03 [2005] we challenged -- I forget what year was it now when we did it but we challenged the census to prove that they had undercounted a number of our people. I believe we are growing. I think building permit show that we're growing, construction permits show that we're growing, our downtown, Over-the-Rhine population is booming. We're now starting to see that it's so expensive -- it's moved so quickly that young professionals are increasingly moving into adjacent neighborhoods outside Over-the-Rhine because they can't afford Over-the-Rhine anymore. That's how fast the market is shifting. We're going to have thousands of new units built in downtown over the next couple of years. 3CDC is marching now north of Liberty Street towards Findlay Market. We're going to see this incredible explosion.

So first, let me say that I really believe that you're going to see and are seeing that these trends are changing for the city proper. Now, my history view is 1860, whatever, Lincoln signed Homestead Act and people who moved out of cities to the west. Amazingly, even with the advent of the car 1900, 1950, all cities got bigger and moved into the urban core. And then once

Eisenhower built the highways, you had this mass exodus to the suburbs where the -- well, they weren't factoring in all the additional cost that would eventually have to be paid for schools, infrastructures, sewers, water, all that stuff. It was very cheap for developers to take farmland and convert it to...

Renn: It's a total cost of ownership.

Cranley: Right. So that was, obviously, a national trend. And then you have -- in Cincinnati you have highly competitive Northern Kentucky, Butler, Warren, Clermont County, political jurisdictions that were actively marketing to bring people out of Hamilton County to those areas. So it may be the case that Hamilton County hasn't fared as well as other counties as you point out. But I believe that consistent with some of the things you've read or you've written in the past that we are more poised to recapture at least the city proper because of our bones, our culture, our sense of community. And I believe very pro-growth policies that we're adopting both in the city and the business community to really grow this economy. And I think we're already seeing that re-population and will see it turbo charge over the next several years.

Renn: Looking at it regionally -- you mentioned there are all these jurisdictions, three states. Hamilton County itself has got who knows how many municipalities in it. The City of Cincinnati is 14% of the regional population. Do you see yourself -- how does this region function as a region? And do you see yourself as, really, the mayor of Cincinnati the city or as more of a regional leader or how does that work for you?

Cranley: I think it's both. I mean, I think that -- there's no question that, virtually, everyone in our region, even people that live in Northern Kentucky think of themselves as living in Cincinnati, and that's good. I mean it binds our region. You don't have -- people who live in the suburbs don't say, "I'm afraid to describe myself as living in Cincinnati." And I got to tell you there's been a huge cultural shift consistent with my message that things are changing. When we got out of the race problems in 2001 I was on city council and I would have meetings with business leaders, they would almost inevitably say, "Why should I stay in the city?" Now after all the things we've done re-populate the urban core to invest with 3CDC to revitalize Over-the-Rhine, to build Washington Park, to really invest in our downtown urban population and create more restaurants and entertainment and amenities and seeing this amazing renaissance that's happening right now, people -- it's a huge sea change. Now business leaders say, "How do I get more people downtown?"

I mean, there's a real cultural shift and renewed pride in Cincinnati. More specifically though, there are some unique advantages that we have. If you take the corporate tax base of cities our size, well, of Midwestern peers -- as I already mentioned, we already have probably better and deeper companies. This year [2015], at some point, they already pinpoint the day in October. For the first time in our history, we're going to -- our GDP is going to surpass Cleveland with the largest economy in Ohio even though we're much smaller population wise. And Columbus has had a great run, there's no question. And they get the benefit, frankly, of all the state money being capital. They've gotten a lot of extra money that, frankly, has come from our tax dollars, invested because of the capital. We're going to try and change that. But they've had a great run and they've got some great thing happening. But Cincinnati, one of my goals is to -- we have -- think of it this way; if you look at Columbus -- if you took our Downtown and Uptown and the corporate base -- remember, we're getting 2.1% on earnings tax, corporate profits, Procter & Gamble. You take that same geographic area of companies -- let's say it's 70% of all of our

major jobs and income taxpayers. If you take the same exact area and map it in Columbus, they're going to have 70% of their companies Nationwide, et cetera, all within the same geographic area. The difference is that they have to spread that money among all of Franklin County. We have to provide for 300,000 people. And very quality 19th century historic neighborhoods that already have a sense of place and culture. And we get the benefit of, on a per capita basis, being able to invest way more in these urban neighborhoods than any of our peers because we didn't annex.

Now, historically, the attitude of urbanists had been, like myself, the we've got to have metro government, we better -- money flight, capital flight, white flight, all these things bad things have happened. In essence, the attitude has been, "We poor city." We need, in essence, you guys have to play Robin Hood for us. And they're fleeing purposely to get away from schools and the taxes and the crime. I think the shift is already underway. Now, we have more work to do but the shift is already underway that we're going to be a better choice for the dollar value because of our historic infrastructure, our density, our diverse economies of scale. The home owner to apartment mix which looks bad at a distance but, candidly, makes it more dense in which it makes labor pools a lot easier to transport inside the city.

What we haven't done, in my opinion, is be insistent enough on value for the dollar, because we're spreading our dollar over a much smaller population than cities of size. So why isn't the quality of customer service of all services of city government as superior? You still get complaints today of people who say, "I live in a nice suburb and my snow is picked up immediately and it's cleaner and my roads paved faster and less litter. Coming to a city, I can immediately tell it's a city." There's no excuse for that. And I believe that we can provide a better customer service because we have more money over less people than our competitors do. Which if you think about the fact that we lost population to cities this way, people kept moving one suburb out -- and I think most of us agree we're going to repopulate from the inside out -- we have more resources to invest in economic growth policies than our competitors do, and we intend to use that advantage to become the most exciting urban city in the country.

Renn: Looking at that repopulation -- I do want to touch, just briefly, on the streetcar because I think it's a good issue to illustrate that there do seem to be in Cincinnati some just fundamental disagreements. We just don't agree on how the city should be doing things or there's been a lot of tug of war on a lot of things here. Is there really -- is this a divided community that makes it difficult to get things done or is that just a single issue thing or can you square that circle? How do you see kind of that -- there does seem to be some fundamental philosophical differences about approach.

Cranley: Oh, I think it -- I mean, I think the short answer is it's just one issue and really investment strategy. And if you are spending time in the city in the next couple of years, the next couple of days, you're going to see an amazing renaissance and rebirth in Over-the-Rhine and downtown and the Riverfront. The streetcar is not going to be here for three years. The streetcar didn't produce that. What produced that is hundreds of millions of dollars invested by Macy's and P&G and Kroger and over \$150 million invested by the city in public-private partnership to revitalize and rejuvenate our urban core. The streetcar advocates all said and say that it's not about transportation, it's about economic development. From my point of view, it's never been emotional, it's been what is the best value for the dollar. And if you take the \$150 million that is being spent on the streetcar and we invested it with 3CDC and other public-private

partnerships that have already proven to be hugely successful for us, on my opinion it's a more efficient investment for the dollars.

Renn: So you don't think that – [you think] this thing is just a one off?

Cranley: Absolutely.

Renn: It sounds like you and the Millennials are going to be butting heads or...

Cranley: I am a Millennial -- I mean, I am a young person. I am an urbanist. I went in to Price Hill, which is a much tougher neighborhood now than Over-the-Rhine, and did a mixed use urban-friendly, pedestrian-friendly development. I was told by every bank that no one should invest in Price Hill. And unlike the revitalizations in Over-the-Rhine, I didn't have Macy's and P&G and others -- this is when I went into the private sector -- behind me writing huge checks. I wasn't walking distance in downtown. We were in West Side neighborhood that suffered severe stress and decline over 40 years, but it has amazing views, amazing infrastructure, amazing architecture, amazing park spaces. And we did a new restaurant and some condos and now a new community live theater is being built on the spot. And bankers told me they were doing me a favor by not lending to me. Restaurateurs said it would be a miracle if the restaurant grosses \$600,000 a year. Last year -- we have a percent rent -- last year they grossed \$1.8 million in 2,500 square feet of inside space. They got about 1,000 outside square space. Insane untapped demand for re-urbanism. And that is now increasingly young professional because they can't afford Over-the-Rhine.

I like to say, we tell ourselves we're revitalizing Over-the-Rhine and downtown for young professionals but increasingly it's divorcees who are bidding up the price. And now we're seeing Northside, Clifton, Walnut Hills, East Price Hill, which are close to downtown but not as close as Over-the-Rhine, starting to repopulate. So I've never understood the emotion on the other side of the streetcar. It's an investment strategy. What's the most efficient use of those dollars to get what we want, which is the most exciting urban city in America? If every city is doing the streetcar, then that doesn't set us apart. And frankly, the success we've already seen, the proof is already in the pudding. And this is a huge risk that the streetcar will work. I'm about to announce a major expansion of bike share from Downtown to Uptown which is very popular along the same lines but a fraction of the cost. A million dollars one time expense versus a \$150 million and never ending on-going operating expenses. So for my point of view, it's always been just a question of what's the best use of the dollar.

Renn: So what's with this "Where do [did] you go to high school?" thing in Cincinnati?

Cranley: I think that it's -- I mean, there's a lot of pride and good pride. And sometimes we got to make sure that it's not off putting to people who aren't from here. But to the point we made earlier about the sense of neighborhood and culture, there is good and bad to everything that you got.

Renn: So where did you go to high school and what would that mean to someone who is from Cincinnati?

Cranley: I went to St. X High School, which is a Jesuit Catholic high school. The parochial schools, the Elder, Moeller, Seton schools are, historically, were neighborhood based and St. X is

more of a magnet school. So that has a lot of connotations with it, it draws east and west, brings people together.

Renn: In Louisville, St. X and -- St. X and Trinity are the two elite Catholic high schools. Is that sort of a same thing here a little bit?

Cranley: People would say that. Yes.

Renn: That's what I say that when people ask you, you know that they're looking to, where's the cultural -- it puts you in a cultural box to know where you went to high school.

Cranley: There's good and bad baggage to all of this.

Renn: One thing I didn't highlight in your bio at the beginning that I saw that intrigued me is you have a Masters of Theology from Harvard Divinity School. You said that faith, you're a man of faith, that's important to you. How does that inform the approach you bring to your job as mayor?

Cranley: I think that all of this has to be done in the context of the common good and building a society that expands opportunity. And I think at the end of our lives we're fundamentally going to be asked did we make the world a better place for those who didn't have as many advantages as we had and did we leave it better than we found it. A sense of stewardship. And all that comes, I think, deeply from my faith, schooling and family, values, traditions, et cetera.

And so we spend an enormous amount of time thinking about how are we going to reduce the poverty rate. One of my major planks in my campaign was reducing the poverty by at least 5% over the next four years. We are engaged at every level, re-examining the dollars that are -- federal dollars that come in to the city budget that are earmarks for low income individuals and must be spent to the benefit of low income individuals -- are we really getting the most bang for the buck out of these dollars? We have some additional dollars that we free up out of our budget for the benefit of human services and extra investment of that nature. We're spending enormous amount of time on that. We are searching for any and every pot of money that exists out there that could help us combat long term unemployment and poverty. I've been to D.C. a few times to talk and work with their long term unemployment plan. I convinced Procter & Gamble and some other major companies to adapt some of the Obama policies on hiring practices to reduce the mental health tragedies associated with long term unemployment.

I think that we have different demographics, as you point out in a lot of your writings, between Portland which might have an average graduation rate, a college graduation rate of 50%. Cincinnati is probably 20%, 25% for the city proper. So the question is how do we turn that into an advantage. And if we invest, in my opinion, in good job training, workforce readiness programs so that we have -- right now we have a cohort coming out of the Great Recession of folks who have never had high school or college degree, with kids, who have got very bleak prospects, and that is not surprisingly where those folks live tend to be some of our toughest neighborhoods. If we can, I think, rise to the moral challenge of figuring out how to not write off this entire generation but invest in job training and skill set to get them at least ready to work at low skill, low paying jobs and bring the dignity back of having a breadwinner in the family, the social dividends of that are enormous in terms of turning those neighborhoods around, those families around, the city around.

But in addition, if we can do it on a systematic basis, we can then market Cincinnati as a place for companies who want to locate with a large, ready to work population. Whereas in Portland, where you have higher education turnouts, it's hard to get people to take lower skill jobs, real pricing out. Here, we have an opportunity to take what looks, by some studies, to be a disadvantage, low education rate compared to Portland, and turn it into an advantage -- and give ourselves a real marketing edge to bring companies here now.

Renn: More diverse workforce educationally?

Cranley: More diverse workforce. Now, obviously, 20-30 years from now I'd love for us to have a higher education rate. And I'm also invested in trying to figure out how to pay for expanded pre-school like De Blasio has in New York. We have a pre-school promise where we're trying to invest in three and four-year-olds into pre-school education. I'm not saying it's good and we just want to leave the education rates where they are, but given what we have today, how do we turn all that into an advantage and, at the same time, tackle the moral issues of poverty? And while it's not the same thing -- a very sensitive issue, this is not the same thing -- but building a more inclusive and welcoming society for immigrants and for African-American, Hispanics is also, I think, part of my faith tradition of -- it does come from a history of prejudice that Cincinnati has been part of. And so we do have a moral obligation to tackle those issues but I do think from a political standpoint, it's better -- and true, not just better political argument, which it is, but it's also true -- that it's better for all of us to have a more inclusive and welcoming city. So I've also launched a number of pro immigration strategies in the last couple of weeks.

Renn: Cincinnati's immigration rate has been very low.

Cranley: Correct

Renn: Is this some the same motivation that underlaid your work with the Ohio Innocence Project?

Cranley: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. I became a lawyer because I read *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a kid and said, "This is what I want to do." And if you think about the story of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it's identical to what the Innocence Project does on a daily basis. And so when I was young and didn't have family and I was on city council, I was at a big law firm, and I thought I can probably do something else besides council, which is part time. So it's a long story but the short version is that I've seen these Innocence Projects pop up in other states and I saw that there was none in Ohio and it would be great for UC, it would be great -- and, of course, we've gotten 16 people out of prison now in the last 10 years. Of course, I haven't been formally involved with it in seven years, but the co-founder and I are practically best friends, and he still runs it. We're very close. And my wife is on the board and I help raise money for them. And it's an amazing success story. But there's no question that it gets back to the tradition of wanting to see the world better and to deal with injustices and build a more just society.

Renn: Last question. I'm speaking at the University of Cincinnati tonight. I know the crowd there is going to want to know the answer to one question, and that is: what's your position on the Central Parkway protected bike lane?

Cranley: Well, first of all, under my leadership -- well, I shouldn't say my leadership. Under our public-private relationships and support of council and a very vibrant cyclist community, in my opinion, we're going to be the most bike-friendly city in America in four years. We have, literally, a bicycle trail that goes from Lunken Airport which is a small municipal airport on the East Side, with a few gaps connects to the Loveland Trail which is one the best dedicated bike trails in the region, in the suburban area but it goes north all the way up to Cleveland essentially. Hugely used great amenity for our region. It's missing that link to the urban core. One of the cities I reference often is Denver. And my wife and I personally rode on its dedicated bike trail. Have you been there in the...

Renn: I've been to Denver but not since they put that in.

Cranley: It's incredible. And you can literally ride a bike on a dedicated line, not in the street, in dedicated line -- it's jammed with runners and bikers all the way to downtown. Somehow they got lucky with kind of a -- I don't know what it is but it's like a gutter essentially, that's been cleaned up. And there are streams in parts of it and they have this bike trail that goes all the way into downtown Denver. But we have three major bike trails that can be connected on abandoned train tracks into downtown. And candidly, we intend to get all three of them build in the next four years. And there's just nothing like it in any city. I mean Denver has one great line that goes into their urban core. We're going to have three; one from the West Wide, one from the more northern part and one that goes directly on the eastern riverside all the way to Lunken and then connects to Riverfront trail. And the best part is that if we connect these other three bike trails into downtown, we're then going to have the connection to get into the Loveland bike trail. So, essentially, any bike trail that we're going to have in these three major lines will connect to the trail all the way up to Cleveland, essentially, with maybe two or three exceptions, never have to cross the street, get off the bike and ride with cars. In addition to that, we are launching, as I mentioned already, a huge which is -- frankly, the number one issue for the bike enthusiasts right now -- is bike share. Are you familiar with bike share at all?

Renn: I know what bike share is. Yeah.

Cranley: So we're about to -- which I do take a great deal of enjoyment in -- is that the streetcar folks have said we got to connect Downtown and Uptown which they won't even do the Downtown piece for three more years. This summer I'll have bicycles running from Clifton to Downtown for a fraction of the cost, in a public-private partnership, connecting those two job employment basis. It won't take us ten years. It'll take us for about three months. And so we're going to have -- and that is the number one priority for the bicycle community.

To your question, the question is simply whether the current configuration of that bike trail is the most effective. We've gotten complaints from businesses that being displaced. There was a guy who has -- I forgot. Is it Parkinson's? The guy has a business there who invested millions of dollars. And he has a -- one of his tenants is a Parkinson's community and they have daily activities for the members of this group. And they park between 7:00 and 9:00 AM. And the current configuration is to eliminate on street parking from 7:00 to 9:00 AM. There's got to be a way around that problem. There's got to be a win-win solution. And, frankly, from a pro pedestrian urban friendly point of view, you always want to save on street parking. On street parking slows down traffic because when you're driving, you're worried you're going to hit the car's windshield or mirrors. And what I want to see is pedestrian friendly, urban friendly neighborhoods and city, and so I'm very loathe to see on street parking to be taken away. Now,

they're talking about taking away just during rush hour but it has this hugely negative impact on these businesses, including a more sympathetic case of this Parkinson's group, which then really have a very hard time getting to where they're trying to go. So we're just trying to drill down into the oversight of it. In our view, the previous administration was often very sloppy and sort of, I would say, academically callous in how they read or imported passively -- progressive cities do bike lanes, so we'll do bike lanes. And damn the torpedoes, we won't think about doing it in a way that's consistent with existing business investment, preserving on street parking, things of that nature. So what I'm trying to do is bring oversight to make sure that all these things are done officially and with common sense.