

**Questions collected from City Budget Hearing on October 12, 2024**

- 1) Police Response times – Is this tracked and if so, where is this info available? How is the dept ensure equitable response times?

**Answer:** Lancaster County Wide Communications tracks and handles 911 and other calls for service. They have a method to rank calls by priority (**1** being most urgent, example: shooting, person down, assault in progress etc. Through **7** being the least urgent, example: theft not in progress etc.). It is standard for the sector officer to handle “not in progress calls” for their assigned sector, but the Street Sergeant will monitor time pending and can reassign if the sector officer is tied up on another call.

- 2) How can we increase the work of the office of civic engagement?

**Answer:** The Department of Neighborhood Engagement (DONE) continues to seek out new grant opportunities to support and grow community engagement efforts.

- 3) CRITICAL HOME REPAIR PROGRAM – How can we continue to fund this program?

**Answer:** The Office of Healthy Homes has expanded the amount and types of funding available for home repair programs and we will continue to seek grant funding for these programs. Programs include critical repair grants and loans, lead hazard control remediation, and mitigating other health hazards in the home. We anticipate continuing to allocate CDBG entitlement funds to both critical repair and lead hazard control annually.

New secured funding for programs include:

- a. \$7.75 million to continue to Lead Hazard Control Program for preventing lead poisoning through remediation of lead paint
- b. \$2 million in Healthy Homes funds to address a wide range of health hazards in homes
- c. \$250,000 in loan funds for critical repair
- d. \$300,000 in American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds for critical repair grants

- 4) How can State & Federal government make it easier for developers to build housing? IDEA: Hold public info session on city housing plan.

**Answer:** Nearly all affordable housing requires significant subsidy to be feasible. As such, state and federal government could spur more affordable housing through increased funding. In addition, many housing developers indicate that state and federal housing programs are very complicated and burdensome to administer. Simplifying regulatory requirements could encourage more interest in the programs, across a broader range of developers. Lending terms also drive both affordable and market rate housing development. A more favorable lending environment at the state and/or national level would make it easier for housing developers to build.

- 5) How can land dev. process be improved? What is City/State/Fed > responsible for?

**Answer:** Most land development decisions are controlled at the local level. The City of Lancaster offers a development-friendly environment (for example, we support building density) while also balancing this with important public policy goals such as preserving our historic assets and stormwater management. The land development process could be improved by investing in and streamlining land development reviews, as well as permitting. The City is actively working to achieve more consistency and efficiency in these areas. The state and federal government are responsible for the aspects of the process discussed in the response to question #4. The Commonwealth of PA could also play a larger role in supporting mixed-use housing development, through programs that fund site preparation and infrastructure upgrades, particularly in urban areas / metropolitan hubs.

- 6) Solicitor – Is it legal to silence the public and have us write questions on Paper? Will you answer all the submissions today?

**Answer:** The City Council Finance Committee meeting on October 12, 2024 was an information session scheduled for the City Administration to present information related to the 2025 budget to be formally presented to City Council later in the year at subsequent public meetings. In addition to the opportunity provided on October 12 for comment after each department presented information, further opportunities for public comment will be provided at such future public meetings. While City Council has no legal requirement or obligation to answer questions, as a convenience and service to the public, City Council legally established a process asking for questions to be submitted in writing with a mandatory response time of ten business days. This process assures that questions are in fact answered both accurately and timely.

- 7) Fire Budget – Is it safe to say that the EFG Grants = meeting the expectations of date today? With the new Fire stations in Lancaster City, is it safe to say that there were new vehicles placed the openings of with in the next 10 business days?

**Answer:** We are not sure what this question is asking.

- 8) Are you considering a low-income tax exemption for the income tax? Without Home Rule the max exemption is \$12,000. With Home Rule it can be higher. The median income in the City is ≈\$61,000. What level exemption is council considering with and without a Home Rule charter?

**Answer:** The proposed budget does not change the exemptions. If Home Rule is adopted, this could be considered by Council.

- 9) What City owned properties are being evaluated to create more capacity and survivable conditions for the unhoused residents of Lancaster City? This includes shelters for extreme heat or cold, showers, and restrooms.

**Answer:** The Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority Office for the Homelessness Coalition is the federally-designated coordinator of homeless services in Lancaster County and the City participates on the steering committee for this organization. Two projects are upcoming to serve homeless individuals. First, an 80-bed, low barrier shelter will be

opening on Clay Street in December 2024. Second, 132-134 S Prince Street will house a hub for homelessness services and permanent supportive housing is scheduled to be open in 2026.

- 10) How much money is being budgeted to increase services to, not policing of, unhoused residents? What is the long-term outlook for budgeting resources to that cause?

**Answer:** The City of Lancaster has committed \$1.6M of American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds and raised an additional \$450,000 to support homelessness services to help fund the Clay Street low-barrier shelter and the Prince Street hub for homeless services, both operated by the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority Office for the Homelessness Coalition. City staff also dedicate significant staff time toward homelessness response including the Health & Housing Social Work Case Manager, Police Social Workers, Bureau Chief of Health, Community Development Administrator, and Deputy Director of Health, Housing, & Community Development. The City is also leading efforts to increase available affordable housing units in the City, a critical component to prevent homelessness. The City dedicated an additional \$8.4 million in ARPA funds to create or preserve affordable housing units.

- 11) Will the City remain self-insured in 2025? Has there been any consideration or evaluation for returning to a provider?

**Answer:** The City will remain self-insured in 2025 and we are evaluating health care spending and identifying ways to reduced costs.

- 12) As I understand, the Oyster Point Project had used ARPA funds but then didn't qualify so we had to fund the improvements differently. Are those ARPA funds now available for reallocation? If so, where have they been reallocated or planned to be reallocated?

**Answer:** That is correct – a total of \$5.9M from the Water Bureau was allocated to repay ARPA funding. The remaining ARPA funds are set to be allocated by City Council in December for the purpose of revenue replacement.

- 13) What's the current situation with former Station 6?

**Answer:** An Invitation for Bid (IFB) for the Purchase and Redevelopment of 843 Fremont Street was advertised in LNP and posted on PennBid on August 20, 2024. One bid was submitted before the deadline on September 24. The City has declined to accept that bid and is considering its options.

- 14) What's the average cost of installing a pedestrian flasher on a State Road? Please break this into line items such as equipment, ADA improvements, signage, and administrative costs associated with PennDOT.

**Answer:** The average cost of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (along with associated infrastructure improvements) such as the ones on Walnut Street at Shippen and Christian Street ranges from \$150,000 to \$200,000 depending on the scope of work. Pedestrian flashers need to be approved by PennDOT regardless of whether they are installed on a State Route or on a local

city street. The costs below assume curb ramps on all four corners, roadway restoration associated with curb work, two pedestrian flashers, signs, poles, foundations, conduits/wiring, and power supply. The estimate does not include curb bumpouts, sidewalk replacement, roadway resurfacing, roadway lighting, green infrastructure, or drainage improvements that are often included in projects such as this.

| <b>Pedestrian Flasher Costs</b>   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Mobilization/traffic control      | \$ 45,000         |
| Pedestrian Flasher & Assoc. items | \$ 50,000         |
| ADA ramps                         | \$ 40,000         |
| Design/HOP                        | \$ 30,000         |
| <b>Total cost</b>                 | <b>\$ 165,000</b> |

### Questions from City Council:

- 1) Cost Savings for Mounted Police

**Answer:** The Mounted Police Unit was funded by City taxpayers and the Lancaster City Police Foundation. City taxpayers paid for the salaries and benefits of officers assigned to the mounted unit and the police foundation supported costs associated with the upkeep of the horses and other related costs. The primary reason for curtailing the mounted unit was staffing. As such, staff have been reassigned to other duties within the bureau to respond to resident needs.

- 2) Municipalities involved in Drug Task Force and services received from the Drug Task Force

**Answer:** The Drug Task Force is a county-wide organization. The County does reimburse the City for some expenses related to investigations. Additionally, the County purchased some surveillance equipment (\$25,000) for the Bureau's Selective Enforcement Unit. According to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report from the District Attorney's Office, the Task Force operated in 20 jurisdictions in Lancaster County.

- 3) What are the Costs Savings from Station 6 (total costs)?

**Answer:** The primary cost savings is averting costly repairs to the building or borrowing millions of dollars to renovate the existing station.

- 4) Share information about Special Events Public Safety Costs

**Answer:** The Administration would like to have a more robust policy discussion about public safety costs and special events and will coordinate a time for this conversation with Council President.