

The Utilities and Infrastructure Working Group discussed three main themes during their first Working Group meeting. These themes include: expansion issues, environmental impact of utilities and infrastructure projects, and the quality of service. The Working Group also requested additional information to help make sound recommendations.

The expansion issues include concerns about the capacity of Cincinnati's infrastructure and utilities as the population of the City and the region grows. One Working Group member suggested that excess capacity should be built in to the systems to accommodate increased demand. This theme also deals with upgrading services to be on the cutting edge of new technologies (e.g. fiber optics) as well as making technology more accessible to everyone (e.g. public wi-fi hotspots).

The environmental impact of utilities and infrastructure provided the most energy among Working Group members. There is an emerging theme in the national discussion about transitioning to sustainable or renewable energy including wind, solar, hydroelectric, geothermal, and nuclear energy. This Working Group mentioned each of these sources of energy, but they also discussed daylighting of streams. Daylighting is the process of taking existing stormwater out of the sewer system and returning it to a natural, day-lit stream. One comment specifically mentioned the Lick Run project, which is currently being studied by the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD). Another comment suggested a "green building" chapter in the building code.

The Working Group also discussed the energy supply and how to ensure that Cincinnati's utilities and infrastructure services maintain a high level of quality. The issue of environmental quality is also relevant to this theme. One particular comment within this theme mentions clean coal, and another mentions smart grid technology. Smart grid refers to increasing efficiency by automatically turning off outlets that are not in use, immediate feedback showing energy consumption maps, etc. Mainly, the issue of energy supply is about providing everyone in Cincinnati high quality service and preparing to adapt to changes in population. This includes providing energy at a cost that is reasonable and affordable to all. Some comments also cited innovative, alternative energy sources as methods of ensuring energy security. Among these are the renewable energy sources mentioned in the paragraph above.