

*Roberto Clemente Park Block Club Residents*

*Clark Fulton*

*Wards 3&14*

August 10, 2021

Regarding ARPA funds survey

City of Cleveland,

Thank you for reaching out to the residents of the City to identify key projects and services to potentially fund with the windfall ARPA money. In many cases we may indeed have the best read on the problems which need solutions, and also what those solutions may be. At a minimum we for certain know which ones are most important to us.

Some backstory.. The Clemente Park Block Club formed just over a year ago, motivated by the onset of the Clark Fulton Together master planning process. As such we have had many meetings, seminars, discussions, etc. to learn about and examine the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to improve our neighborhood and correct past mistakes. We indeed have taken a good hard look at ourselves and our systems of governance. And now, as fate would have it, the pandemic which we struggled through in our formative year now gives rise to our gift to ourselves to repair, recover and renew our city again.

So without further ado, let us present our wish list as we have met several times to discuss and vote on it. These are reflective of the core challenges facing our specific neighborhood and deal with housing policies, infrastructure, and improvements to our namesake Park. The values and principals tied to these ideas for solutions are equity, resilience, and health/well being.

Our overriding concern, challenge, and opportunity for solution is the preservation of the people of our neighborhood against the onslaught of gentrification we are now facing, the improvement of our existing homes, and the building of new, truly affordable homes to repopulate the vacant parcels in our area, particularly around the Park. Accordingly, we have submitted a dynamic, resident led housing proposal to our CDC, that we want prioritized, assisted, and funded.

Concurrent with the building of new homes, we want funds made available for loans and grants for us to improve and remain in our existing homes so that we can build wealth and have healthy and productive living quarters. Many in our service area may still need help with rent, mortgage, and utilities. Programs are also needed to allay the rising property tax burden which comes to improved districts. We want to be able to benefit from the rising tide that has been a long time coming for many of us, and therefore need to bolster our homesteads.

As for our Park, we need lighting and security camera monitoring. We still are in a high crime area, as we border on the Train Avenue valley, and have many visitors to the Park, particularly at night engaged in illegal activities. The parking lot and park itself are very dark at night.

On the upside for the Park, we brainstormed and developed the idea that only residents could, which was to trailblase a connection link from the Park to the Redline Greenway Trail. We in fact made the inaugural hike together last September during the Rally Cle weekend, and met Sean McDermott from the Metroparks at the West 41st Trailhead. Please help us make this happen, as connectivity and health are key to us and the master plan.

Our last big wish list item is to investigate, repair and replace the old storm sewer line under Erin Ave in our neighborhood, and to fully rebuild the street itself. The sewer failure, we believe, is what is behind the sinkholes in the properties alongside. This has been documented at City Hall with Councilwoman Santana, and has been featured on the local news. With the ARPA money tied to the new infrastructure bill in Congress we may have a way to solve this lingering problem.

We thank you again for reaching out, and please contact us with any questions or to arrange a meeting.

Good luck and choose wisely!

RCPBC