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U.S. accuses ex-chaplain of murder, terrorism

NEWS, 3A



Clockwise from top left: The vacant First National Bank Building, the former Knights of Columbus building, the historic Sonshine Building and the century-old Manchester Inn hotel building, all in Middletown, will have their fates decided by city officials. PHOTOS BY OTTO RABE/THE ENQUIRER

Police implement anti-crime initiatives

More officers on duty, task forces included

David Ferrara
Cincinnati Enquirer
USA TODAY NETWORK

As this summer in Cincinnati brought an uptick in crime and violence, particularly in the urban core, city leaders have put into place a number of new initiatives in response.

During a recent public safety meeting at the Aronoff Center, Cincinnati police Capt. Adam Hennie detailed a handful of previously unannounced ways the department is taking action.

Crime data shows a spike of reported violent crimes in Cincinnati's urban core of Downtown and Over-the-Rhine this year when compared with reported incidents by this point in 2024. As of Aug. 3, Downtown has seen a 50% increase in robberies, from 24 to 36, and a 46% increase in aggravated assaults, from 16 to 23.

Hennie, who is responsible for the Central Business Section of Downtown and Mount Adams, said much of uptick is during the evening and nighttime hours — from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. — and involve people known to the department, not Downtown visitors.

"A lot of these [robberies] are individuals that live mostly on the street robbing one another," Hennie said during the Aug. 5 meeting of mostly Downtown business owners. "The vast majority of these robberies are not patrons coming down here and being robbed while they're going to a show or a business. There is a few, but that's not what we're seeing here."

City leaders have come under pressure from residents, business leaders and politicians to take further action as the summer has continued. The break-in fatal stabbing of a well-known Over-the-Rhine gym owner, followed by a string of homicides across the urban core near Liberty Street and a recent viral fight in Downtown has turned up the heat.

"It has been no doubt a challenging time in the city," Pureval said during a city council meeting Aug. 6. "But I want to reiterate the city every summer has a safety plan, and every summer we monitor that plan week-to-week. We take public safety very

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'Biggest betrayal'

Middletown residents fight demolition of downtown buildings

Victoria Moorwood Cincinnati Enquirer | USA TODAY NETWORK

MIDDLETOWN — For some residents of this Southwest Ohio city, four abandoned downtown historic buildings evoke the days when Middletown thrived as an industrial town with a booming downtown. They bring fond memories of visitors and celebrations — weddings, banquets and even a campaign stop from John F. Kennedy.

But for city leaders, the city-owned buildings have become dilapidated relics — a costly problem that has passed from one council to the next.

Now, Middletown officials will meet to discuss the fate of these four buildings, which a group of residents has recently risen to protect.

City officials have discussed for years what to do with the four downtown buildings: the century-old, five-story Manchester Inn hotel, the adjacent Sonshine Building, the vacant First National Bank building and the former Knights of Columbus building.

In February, the city surveyed residents in Middletown, famously known as the hometown of JD Vance, about downtown revitalization. During a

town hall the next month, several people said they wanted those efforts to include the restoration of the four buildings.

The roof of the old bank building has a leak. A fence had to be put up around the Manchester Inn because of falling debris and to keep out trespassers. Some residents blamed the city, which has owned these buildings for years, for allowing the structures to get run-down.

Gabe Schoenlein, a member of Middletown's planning commission and the leader of Save Downtown Middletown, the group that's rallied behind the buildings, called it a "massive ball drop" by the city.

"You don't let major, high-rise downtown historic buildings fall into disrepair," he told The Enquirer. "That's a big, big no-no."

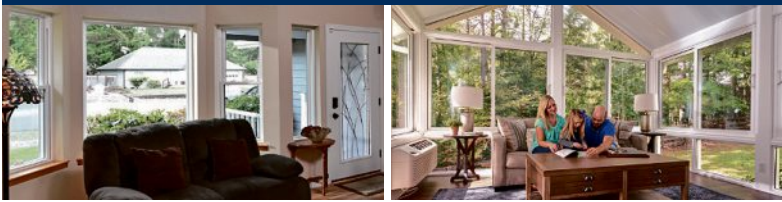
The city has tried to work with developers to renovate the Manchester Inn, a building on the National Register of Historic Places, said Middletown council member Steve West.

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"Like City Council, I want to make the decision that's best for this community."

Gabe Schoenlein
A member of Middletown's planning commission and the leader of Save Downtown Middletown, which doesn't want the buildings demolished

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