



County of Hamilton

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THE COUNTY'S REAL ECONOMIC REALITY

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County government is an administrative arm of the state and has prescribed duties. It is a limited form of government intended to provide specific services. We should work together to determine how best to do them instead of trying to imagine new initiatives which are not required and are not part of the purpose of county government.

Our current fiscal problems are the direct result of County Administrations extending themselves well beyond required duties for at least the past twenty years. While voters approved a half-percent county-wide sales tax to build two sports stadiums, I don't recall a massive, largely publicly funded new residential-restaurant complex between them as being part of the deal.

Yet "The Banks" took on a life of its own, egged on by "Enquirer" editorials and various downtown promoters. The general idea was that we are somehow incomplete without (a) lots of people living downtown and (b) various specialty restaurants near their abodes. It was never explained why the County had to assume responsibility for developing the City of Cincinnati's riverfront. Nor was it ever made clear why encouraging people to live there was a government duty.

What that has meant to taxpayers – in part – is millions of dollars to a private law firm, outrageous loans and subsidies to restaurants and over half a million dollars to an "inclusion" consultant. A county that last year was able to find \$2.75 million to "loan" to a country-western bar is now planning on laying off 300 employees and drastically cutting state mandated services, our real job.

The County may not be able to incarcerate or prosecute criminals, schedule court cases, do proper accounting, or respond to financial information requests from local governments and school districts but we sure can guarantee that a favored few can get a subsidized condo on the riverfront and drown their sorrows at a taxpayer funded bar at "The Banks".

A memorable moment during the past decade was the public meeting when one of our County Commissioners grandly announced, "We are going to create our own economic reality here in Hamilton County". They certainly have.

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