

Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell on Growth, Affordability, and Making It Easier to Stay in the City

Signature Required features Nashville's mayor in a conversation about housing, transit, and keeping Nashville affordable

NASHVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, November 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Signature Required, hosted by Spencer and Carli Patton, released a new interview today with Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell, focused on one defining question: How do you keep a fast-growing city livable for the people who are already here?

The logo for Signature Required features the word "Signature" in a large, blue, cursive script font. Below it, the word "REQUIRED" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif, all-caps font. A thick blue horizontal line is positioned directly beneath the word "REQUIRED".

O'Connell, now two years into his first term as Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, describes his overall approach to Nashville as about “quality of life and cost of living... giving people more opportunity to stay.” He noted that many people he talked to before running were starting to question whether they could afford to remain in the city they love.

“

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Mayor Freddie O'Connell

He explains that what drew him back to Nashville years ago were “consequences of public leadership,” smart civic decisions that produced “a high quality of life” and, at the time, “a relatively low cost of living.” The work now, he says, is about trying to protect those conditions for current residents.

Throughout the conversation, O'Connell returns to two themes:

1) Growth isn't the enemy — unmanaged growth is.

O'Connell says Nashville's challenge isn't that people keep coming; it's that, in his words, “we

grew pretty quickly through a period of instability in local government.” He notes that in the past decade, “we wound up having something fairly unprecedented, which is five mayors in 10 years, three mayors in three years,” at the same time the city was experiencing “incredibly rapid growth.”

O'Connell elaborated, "If we think about it from that standpoint of not managing our growth, but interacting successfully with our growth, it means those things like transit and infrastructure start to offer relief. It means you have to be intentional about housing affordability if you're going to find room for those new neighbors who are paying you that compliment of choosing to live in your city. The best compliment anyone can ever choose to pay a city is to choose to live there."



Mayor O'Connell with Spencer Patton and Carli Patton

2) Affordability is now Nashville's defining test.

O'Connell names housing affordability as Nashville's single biggest pressure point. He describes affordability not as an abstract statistic but as a daily decision point for families. "We knew we had been losing ground on housing affordability, so our work has had to put a lot of emphasis on how public policy and partnerships with the private sector help us tackle housing affordability," he says.

The mayor also speaks plainly about civic trust and public expectations in a 700,000-person city. He acknowledges that every decision creates disagreement but says disagreement shouldn't mean secrecy: "I try to be very clear and consistent in explaining at least the why of what we're doing. So if you walk away disagreeing, at least it's not going to be because there was a mystery. At least we're going to try to give you a basis for how we made the decision."

Host Spencer Patton reflected on the interview:

"What I appreciate about Mayor O'Connell is that even when people disagree with him, he invites the conversation. You get the sense that he's listening and that he takes every perspective seriously, even if the decision doesn't change."

About Mayor Freddie O'Connell

Freddie O'Connell is the Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson

County. A Nashville native with a background in technology and public service, O'Connell previously served on the Metro Council and has focused his administration on affordability, transportation, infrastructure, schools, and neighborhood safety. He lives in Nashville with his partner, Whitney Boone, and their two daughters.

About Spencer and Carli Patton

Spencer Patton is a Tennessee-based entrepreneur who grew his businesses from \$0 to over \$100 million in less than ten years. He and his wife, Carli Patton, co-founded the Patton Foundation and co-host the Signature Required podcast.

About Signature Required

Signature Required spotlights Tennessee trailblazers — entrepreneurs, policymakers, educators, and community leaders — who embody the state's entrepreneurial spirit. Hosted by Spencer and Carli Patton, the show invites listeners to think deeply about leadership, community, and impact. Learn more at www.spencerpatton.com/podcast.

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