

THE BANKS

Quarterly Review | July–September 2024

Behind the Beauty of Smale Riverfront Park

Plus:

DORA details • Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame inductions • And more!





Letter from The Banks Project Executive, Phil Beck

Welcome back! We are eager to share The Banks Public Partnership's Progress Review for Third Quarter 2024.

Each time our team members create the editorial outline to capture the activity during the past three months, I am amazed at what our calendar reveals! The Banks continues to deliver opportunities for education, engagement, and entertainment in a compact and well-cared for space from Mehring Way to Second Street, Joe Nuxhall Way to Elm Street. In addition to residential, educational, recreational, dining, and entertainment options available, Smale Riverfront Park beckons all year long.

In last quarter's report, we introduced the timeline of John G. and Phyllis W. Smale Park—from a seed of an idea to planning (and planting!), building, introducing, and continuing to maintain greenspace that educates, engages, and entertains us—naturally. Read on to learn more about how Cincinnati Parks maintains and sustains this award-winning park, and what plans are in place to ensure the Ohio River doesn't rob us of precious square footage prone to erosion.

This Report also offers updates on the Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame's 2024 induction ceremony and first anniversary of the opening of this interactive tourist attraction. We also report progress on the Parking Guidance System in the Central Riverfront Garage, and activities along Freedom Way in the DORA.

Thanks for your interest. See you at The Banks again soon!

Phil Beck, AIA, LEED AP
The Banks Public Partnership Project Executive

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to be 'P. Beck', located at the bottom left of the page.

Engage. Educate. Entertain.

THE BANKS

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Behind the Beauty of Smale Riverfront Park

Over 85 years in the making of Cincinnati's West Riverfront Park.

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Enjoy a beverage while touring 85 acres of riverfront.

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Photography by Samantha Grier and Joan Buttner

EDUCATE

Behind the Beauty

The Cincinnati Parks team nurtures an award-winning park all year long



Representing Smale Park's Maintenance Team are (left to right): Lou Sand, Adam McCann, Nigel Herbert, Makayla Holub, and Michael Evans.

John G. and Phyllis W. Smale Riverfront Park, one of Cincinnati's designated Riverfront Parks, has been called the Jewel in the Queen City's Crown. Occupying acreage along the southern edge of The Banks, Smale Riverfront Park is a year-round attraction for young and old, for residents and visitors, and for anyone who enjoys connecting with nature and exploring the outdoors along the banks of the Ohio River.

In the Second Quarterly Report issued in April, the timeline of Smale Riverfront Park revealed that planning for greenspace along the riverfront was an idea that emerged in documents and plans in 1937. Fast forward 88 years, and Smale Park today is a result of exceptional planning, designing, implementation, funding (from public and private sources), programming, and ongoing maintenance. In a phrase, all of Smale Park's "natural beauty" doesn't happen naturally. We have this park to enjoy only through a dedicated staff and a commitment to sustaining Smale's award-winning appeal for generations to come.



Horticulture Team poses for the camera in Cathy's Garden. Team members include (l. to r.) Mary Uetrecht, Jay Swanson, Gabby Ackemyer, Corrie Carswall, and Casey McCann from the Facilities Team.



Representing the Events Team are Lou Sand (l.) and Gage Bradford (r.). In the background are trees staged for an event at Smale Riverfront Park.



14 full-time park staff



100 species of trees and shrubs



65 annual events



Annual budget of more than \$360,000



30,000 spring bulbs planted annually



14 acres of lawn

Behind the Beauty (cont'd)



A member of the Cincinnati Parks horticulture team keeps the shrubbery free of weeds.



Another team member clears off the pathways near the Roebling Suspension Bridge.



The Cincinnati Parks Foundation has raised over \$46.5MM for the design, development, maintenance and programming of Smale Riverfront Park. Team members visiting the Women's Committee Garden include (left to right standing) Colleen O'Conner, Steve Landers, Lou Sand, Jen Buchholz. (left to right seated) Jennifer Hafner Spieser, Lindsay Wilhelm, Jen Devine, and Nicolette Rader.



What's Next for Smale Riverfront Park

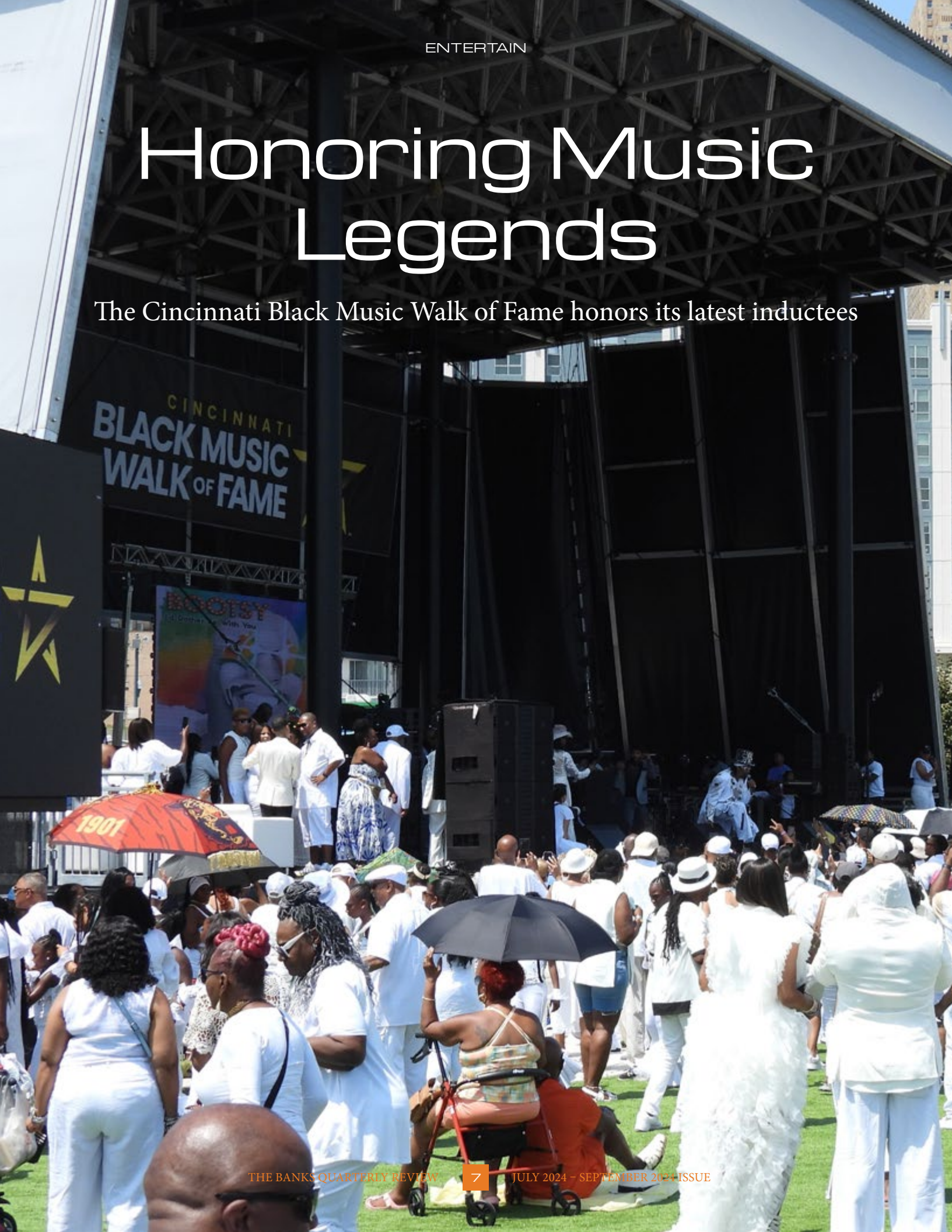


While Smale Riverfront Park's setting and beauty requires ongoing maintenance to keep it the envy of communities everywhere, sometimes it feels as if Mother Nature isn't on our side. The issue? Erosion from the Ohio River along the riverbank. The Cincinnati Park Board recently announced it will partner with the US Army Corps of Engineers on a \$2.5M project to improve and revitalize the Ohio River's edge along Smale Riverfront Park. Overall, the vision is to make the Cincinnati Riverfront a welcoming, safe, sustainable park which will serve as a gateway to connect people to their heritage, community, and the natural environment for generations to come.

The project will explore opportunities both for ecosystem restoration and recreation, while protecting Cincinnati's riverfront from erosion. The project's objectives are: 1) enhance Smale Park by creating a safe recreational connection between the usable areas of the Park and water, while reducing erosion potential; 2) provide educational signage and programming to inform park users about the natural and cultural resources in the area; and 3) improve the environment with native vegetation and shade trees. Underway since January 2023, the project is estimated to take three years.

Honoring Music Legends

The Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame honors its latest inductees



Honoring Music Legends (cont'd)



The Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame is making history with the induction of the fourth set of legendary Black music artists, while celebrating one full year of operations for the Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame tourist attraction! Prior to July 2023, the attraction was a dynamic and powerful vision led by Hamilton County Commission President Alicia Reece, whose commitment to the concept drew support from her fellow County Commissioners Denise Driehaus and Stephanie Summerow Dumas, and a host of sponsors including Procter & Gamble. One year later, over 60,000 have experienced the interactive musical engagement along the Walk of Fame, designed to educate, engage, and entertain audiences of all ages and cultures at the corner of Elm Street and Mehring Way.

The Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame's fourth annual induction ceremony on July 27, 2024, honored Randy Crawford, Donald Lawrence, Shirley Murdock, and Roger Troutman & Zapp. The induction ceremonies were held in conjunction with the first anniversary celebration held at The Brady Center and the ICON Music Festival Stage.

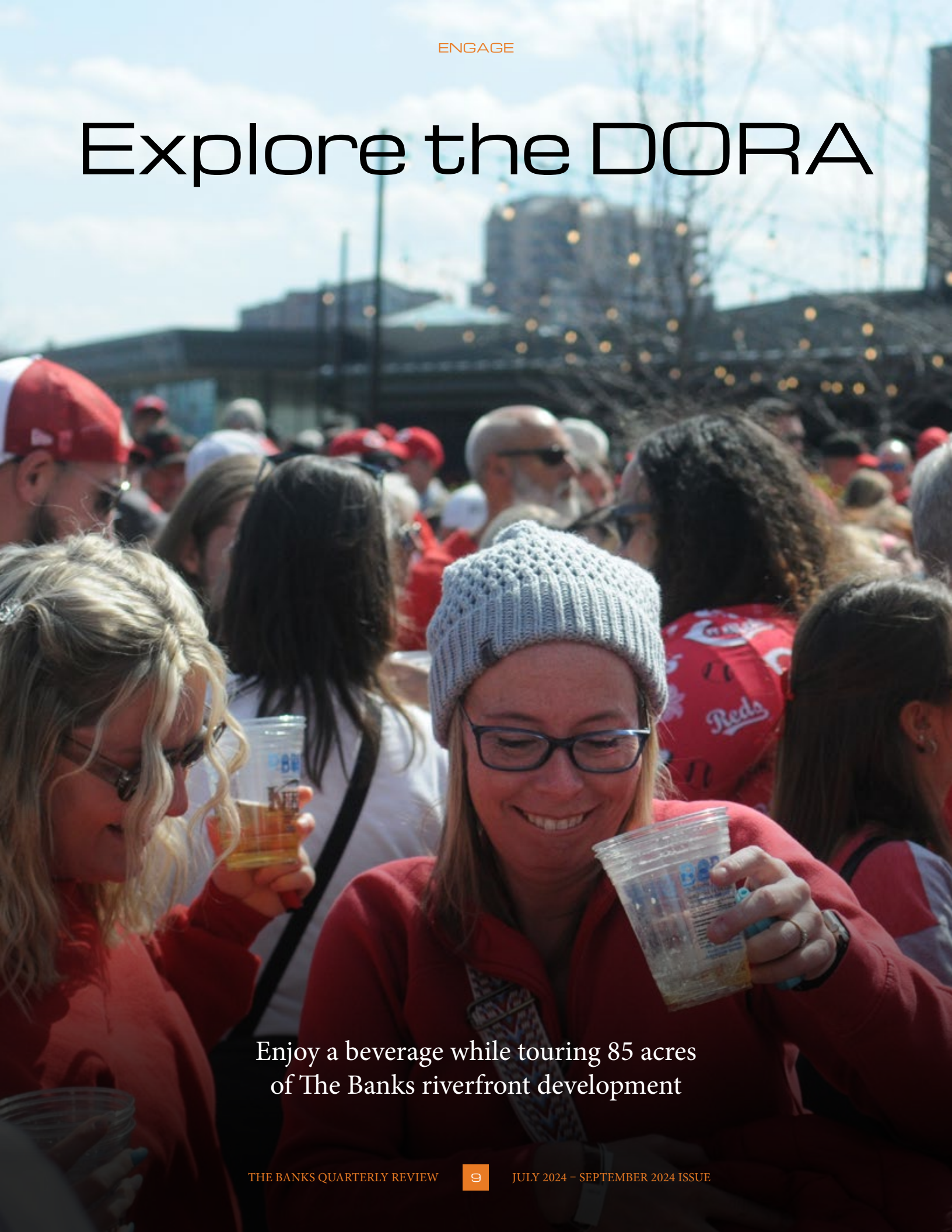
Named one of the 11 top museums and monuments celebrating Black musicians' impact on the country according to Blavity, the Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame was recently featured in ForbesBLK newsletter, a publication dedicated to elevating and empowering the world's top Black entrepreneurs, leaders and investors.

★ [Click here for more information about the Cincinnati Black Music Hall of Fame](#)



Since opening, more than 60,000 visitors enjoyed the Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame.

Explore the DORA



Enjoy a beverage while touring 85 acres
of The Banks riverfront development

Explore the DORA (cont'd)



The DORA (Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area) at The Banks is a popular feature that allows visitors to enjoy alcoholic beverages while strolling through the lively riverfront district. Located between Paycor Stadium and Great American Ball Park, this area is bustling with restaurants, bars, and attractions, offering a vibrant social atmosphere. The DORA program allows patrons to purchase drinks from participating establishments and carry them in specially-marked, biodegradable cups within designated outdoor zones. This initiative, which operates daily from 11a.m to 1:00a.m., has enhanced the entertainment experience at The Banks, making it a favorite destination for locals and tourists alike.



Opened in 2021



Spans 85 acres



Open 365 days per year

Discover the History of Cincinnati's Riverfront

BEFORE THE BANKS



This series of brief video vignettes, *Before The Banks*, tells the amazing stories of what came before the transformational development along the Cincinnati riverfront.

[Click here to begin your experience!](#)

CURRENT EVENTS



Veterans Appreciation Day at Great American Ball Park.



Music at the Esplanade entertained visitors throughout the summer months.



Families enjoy Cincinnati Music Festival weekend.



Castellini Esplanade becomes a co-working space with nature in Smale Riverfront Park.



The Banks played host to The Forbes Under 30 Summit attendees in September.

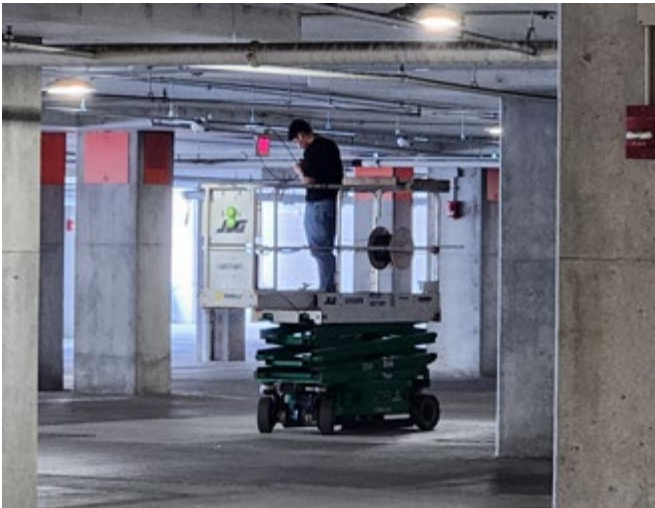


Smale Riverfront Park teams up with Bengal Jim and Friends to host Even More Before the Roar pregame festivities along the riverfront.

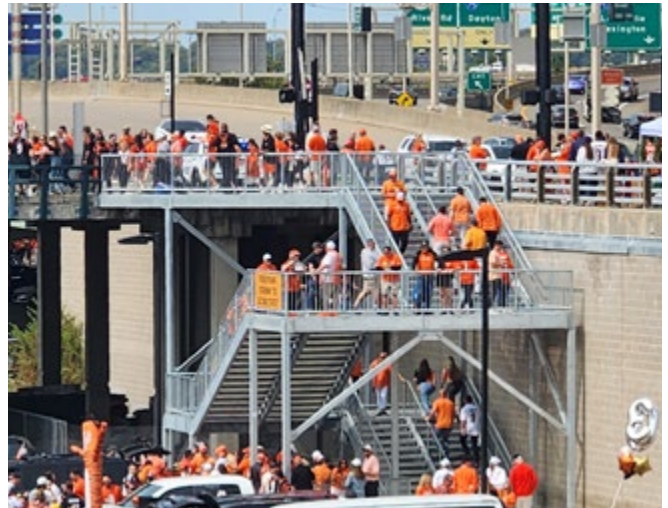
CURRENT EVENTS (cont'd)



The Banks turned into a German biergarten for Oktoberfest weekend in September.



Work in the Central Riverfront Garage continued with installation of interior Parking Guidance System elements, designed to make it easier for drivers to find available spaces and get them out of their vehicles and on their way.



Bengals fans make their way from Lot B to Paycor Stadium by using the new steps at Second Street.

CURRENT EVENTS (cont'd)



Football fans of all ages visit the Bengals Training Camp.



The City of Cincinnati's Streetcar circulates from Stop 1 at The Banks along a convenient 3.6-mile loop through downtown's Central Business District, to Over-the-Rhine, and back to The Banks.



The expanded Paycor Stadium Plaza is ready for Bengals fans this season.

WHAT'S NEXT

OCT



NOV



Here is just a sampling of the activities along the riverfront:

OCTOBER

18th-annual Hats Off Luncheon

The wonderful benefit hosted by Cincinnati Parks Foundation to raise funds for Cincinnati Parks. [🔗](#)

BLINK

This amazing event will light up The Banks, Fountain Square, OTR, and more! [🔗](#)

NOVEMBER

Cincinnati Bengals season is in full swing at Paycor Stadium

Go catch a game! [🔗](#)



DECEMBER

Christkindlmarkt

A wonderful winterland of treats and shops for the entire family. [🔗](#)

Before the Roar

Join the Bengals pregame celebration in Smale Riverfront Park. [🔗](#)

More information and an expanded list of events at Smale Riverfront Park [📅](#)



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Interested in the latest progress statistics at The Banks? [Click here for current and historical data.](#)