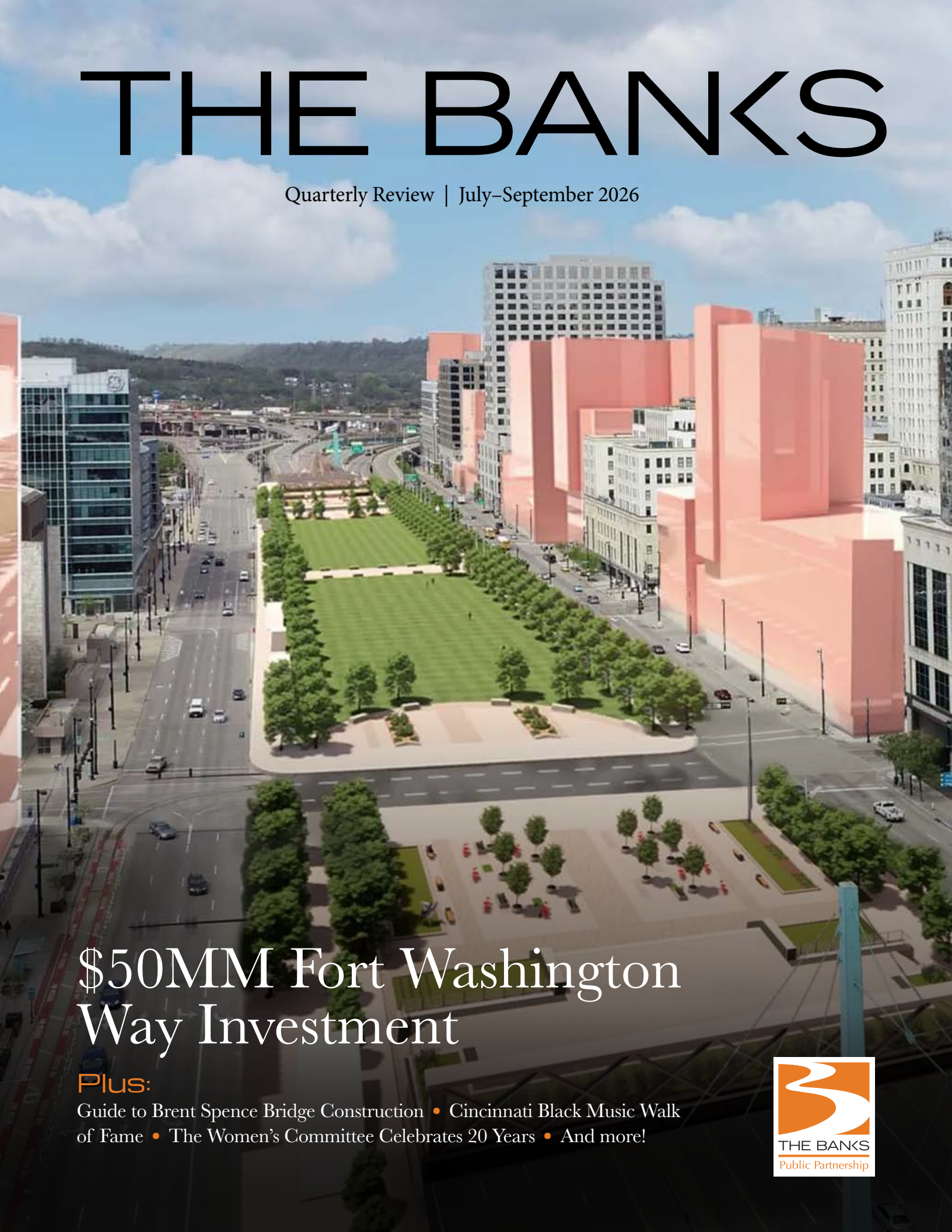
THE BANKS

Quarterly Review | July–September 2026



$50MM Fort Washington Way Investment

Plus:

Guide to Brent Spence Bridge Construction • Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame • The Women's Committee Celebrates 20 Years • And more!

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Letter from The Banks Project Executive, Phil Beck

We are pleased to chronicle progress at The Banks for July, August, and September. With City Council's approval of The Banks Urban Design Plan Update and zoning amendment in June, Hamilton County and City of Cincinnati are working together to develop construction cost estimates and potential funding sources for each lot of new public infrastructure. This close coordination addresses any issues that could stall a timely master developer search.

Cincinnati Regional Chamber's Brendon Cull welcomed Sen. John Husted and Rep. Greg Landsman to announce the award of a $25MM federal grant toward the capping of Fort Washington Way, requiring a $25MM local match. The $50MM investment will be the first step in a multi-phase infrastructure project. City and County officials praised the community vision, collaboration, and momentum that has resulted. The Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame announced its 2026 inductees, Heatwave and WCIN-AM radio. If you travel the Brent Spence Bridge corridor, you can click on the BSBC link on our website for the latest news on closures and detours. Cincinnati Parks celebrates 20 years of support from The Women's Committee whose vision and unflagging efforts make Smale Riverfront Park the award-winning greenspace it is.

Looking ahead to fourth quarter, a new attraction at The Banks is in the works! Find your sneak peek of the Cincinnati Legends Putt House at Freedom Park layout on page 13. Let's close out summer and welcome fall in Cincinnati at The Banks!



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

Engage. Educate. Entertain.

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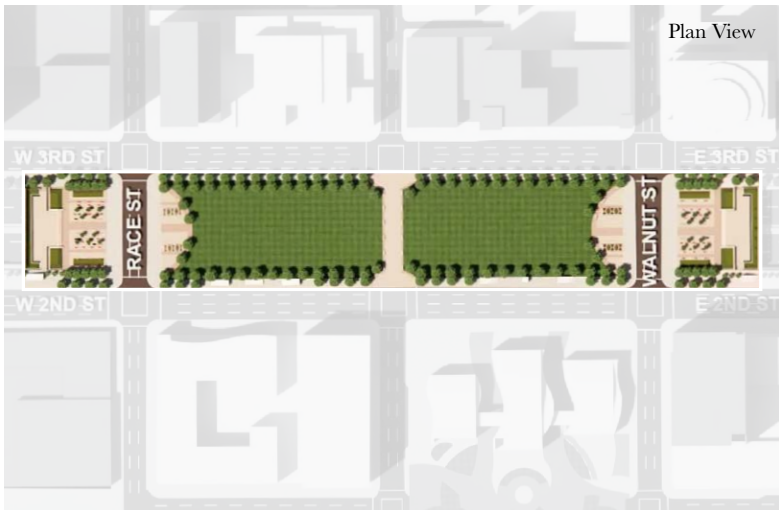
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Photography by Joan Buttner, Marie Gemelli-Carroll

$50MM Fort Washington Way Investment



Decades-long vision to reconnect downtown Cincinnati with The Banks advances



Plan View



Pavilion: Fan Zone


Pavilion


Lawn: Oktoberfest

It took patience and persistence to submit the grant proposal four times, since 2023 when the Fort Washington Way caps project emerged as a regional priority. The Banks Public Partnership worked closely with Cincinnati Regional Chamber officials, US Senator Jon Husted and US Representative Greg Landsman to identify the source of funds available and position the project for its economic impact as well as the place-making benefits to the city, the county, and The Banks.

In a July news conference, Sen. Husted, Rep. Landsman, Hamilton County Commission president Stephanie Summerow Dumas, and Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval thanked the teams of individuals who stood solidly behind the effort. John F. Barrett, Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer of Western & Southern Financial Group and a strong proponent of this project from its inception, complimented the stakeholders whose collaboration was key to securing the grant. This $25MM federal grant requires an equal match of local dollars. Together, the $50MM will jumpstart the first of four caps envisioned over Fort Washington Way.

"Invite me back for the ribbon cutting!"

– Sen. Jon Husted

"This is a story of collaboration; the community has come together to do this."

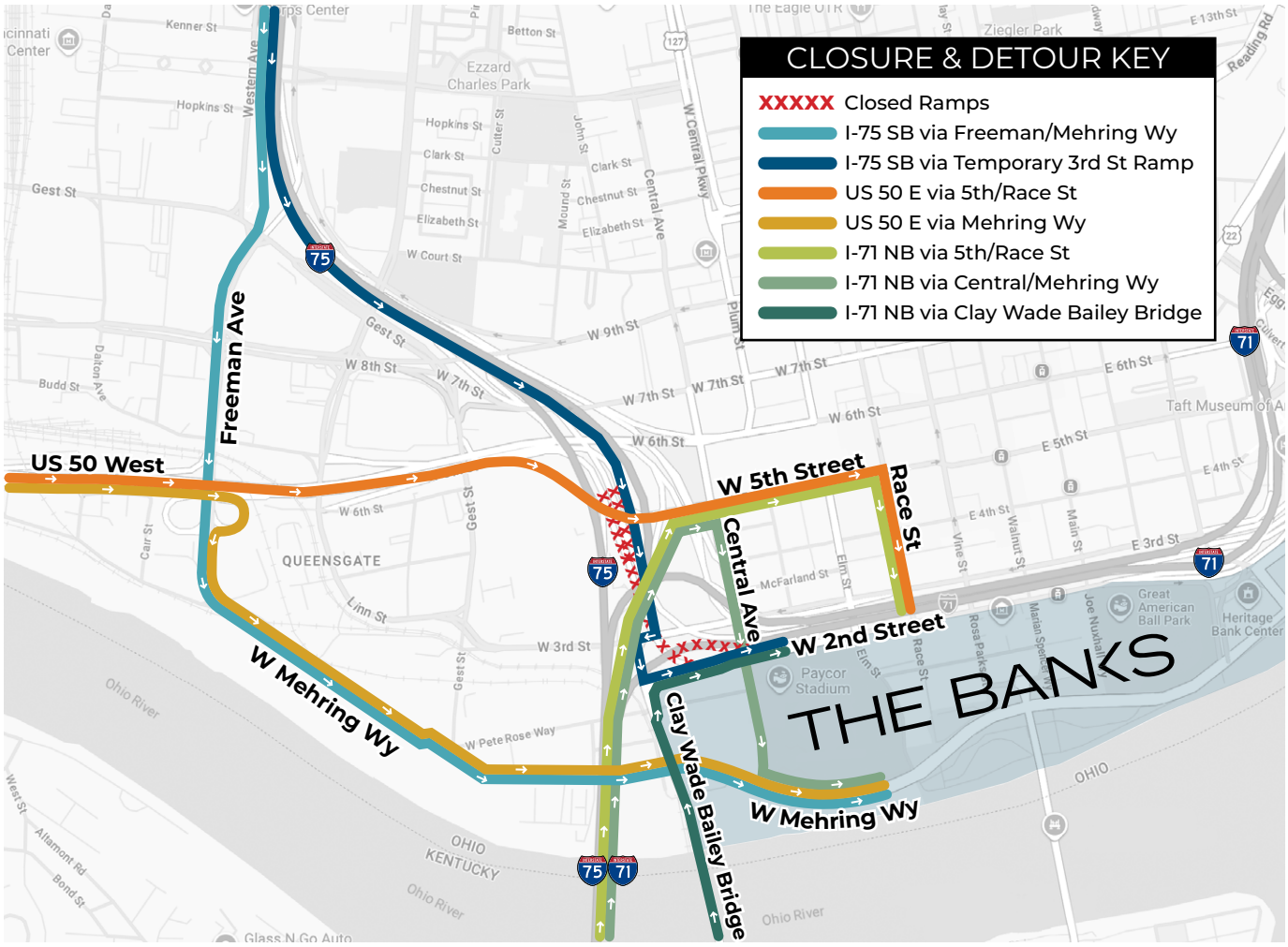
– Rep. Greg Landsman

Photo credits: KZF Design

Navigating With Confidence



Brent Spence Bridge Detours When Your Destination is The Banks



If you frequently travel I-71, I-75, and the Brent Spence Bridge, you can now link to travel advisories and traffic routes designed to make your visit to The Banks less of a hassle.

The Ohio Department of Transportation and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet publish updates to alert travelers as to placement and length of time these closures and detours are expected to be in place.

The map above is designed to help travelers effectively navigate the three ramp closures currently in place. Each detour is color-keyed to the closure site and designed to bring commuters directly to The Banks.

Get travel advisories that impact access to The Banks

Sign up for all traffic alerts from ODOT



Photo credits: Brent Spence Bridge Corridor

Access all Brent Spence Bridge Corridor project travel advisories and construction updates

Black Music Icons Take Their Place Among Legends



Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame celebrates 2026 inductees



At its July 25 induction ceremony, the Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame honored Heatwave and WCIN-AM radio with marble stars on the walkway. In an all-white attire event at The Brady Music Center, a full house of attendees and overflow crowd at the ICON Stage witnessed two music legends receive their honors.

Heatwave is a late-70s funk/R&B band directly linked to Dayton, Ohio, considered a hub of 1970s funk music. While formed in London in 1975, Heatwave is connected to southwest Ohio and Dayton specifically while featuring Johnnie Wilder Jr. and Keith Wilder (both born in Dayton). The band's international success was fueled by hits such as Boogie Nights, Always and Forever, and The Groove Line.

WCIN-AM Radio (1480) launched in 1953 and played a pivotal role in the rise of Black music in the region. The station was one of the first Black-formatted radio statements in the USA and the oldest Black radio station east of the Mississippi River. Created specifically to serve African American audiences when mainstream stations largely excluded Black voices, the station become known as "The Pulse of the City," reflecting its connection to Cincinnati's Black community and giving Black music (especially R&B, blues, jazz, and soul) a consistent, widely accessible outlet.

87,685 visitors from Jan–Sep '26 (433,834 total visitors to date) have enjoyed the Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame.

Photo credits: Hamilton County, Ohio, and Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame

Visit the Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame











From One Bold Challenge to a Lasting Legacy: The Women's Committee Celebrates 20 Years

What is now the John G. And Phyllis W. Smale Riverfront Park began with a bold challenge from John Smale, the former CEO of Procter & Gamble and a visionary civic leader. He, in honor of his wife, Phyllis, an avid gardener, invited a group of women to help raise support for a transformational riverfront park and offered to match their efforts dollar for dollar, up to $20 million.

The challenge did more than help build a park. It inspired a lasting movement of women who believed in the power of public space and the importance of welcoming people to Cincinnati's riverfront. Over time, that group became The Women's Committee of Cincinnati Parks, a dedicated group of advocates now nearly 1,000 members strong, who continue to champion the park, and the 51 others in the Cincinnati Parks system.

The legacy of The Women's Committee, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, is memorialized in The Women's Committee Garden of Smale Riverfront Park, adjacent to the Roebling Bridge. It stands as a beautiful reminder of the women who continue to welcome visitors to the riverfront and to parks all over the city.

From those early efforts to today, Cincinnati Parks Foundation has helped leverage $45 million for the original design, development and current expansion of Smale Riverfront Park. Carrying forward her father's legacy, the late Cathy Caldemeyer, former board chair of the Foundation, helped lead the next chapter, raising nearly $5 million for the park's continued expansion.











Today, The Women's Committee's impact can still be felt throughout Smale. The park welcomes families, children and visitors through free programming, like Smale Family Fun Days. This annual event welcomes over a thousand families into the riverfront each summer. With partners like the Cincinnati Fire Department, who distributes free bike helmets to visiting children, and many others, Smale Riverfront Park has become an important element of summertime family routines, making the park a place to gather, explore and return season after season.

Photo credits: Cincinnati Parks Foundation

Learn more about The Women's Committee of Cincinnati Parks

CURRENT EVENTS



Fans get an up-close look at the action during Bengals Training Camp.



Fireworks Fridays at Great American Ball Park.



Celebrating National Carousel Day with unforgettable fun for the whole family.



Singalong during Family Fun Days at Smale Riverfront Park.



World Cup watch parties drew cheering fans to the DORA in July.



Paycor Stadium construction crews withstood the summer's heat with ice cream breaks.



Families having fun creating music on the foot piano.



Rockin' the Roebling free concert series continues every Thursday evening at the Schmidlapp Lawn and Event Stage during summer.



Photo credit: Cincinnati Bengals

Improvements to Paycor Stadium included restroom renovations.



Enjoying a beautiful afternoon at the Castellini Esplanade in Smale Riverfront Park.



Even our furry friends know how to make a splash during August's dog days of summer!

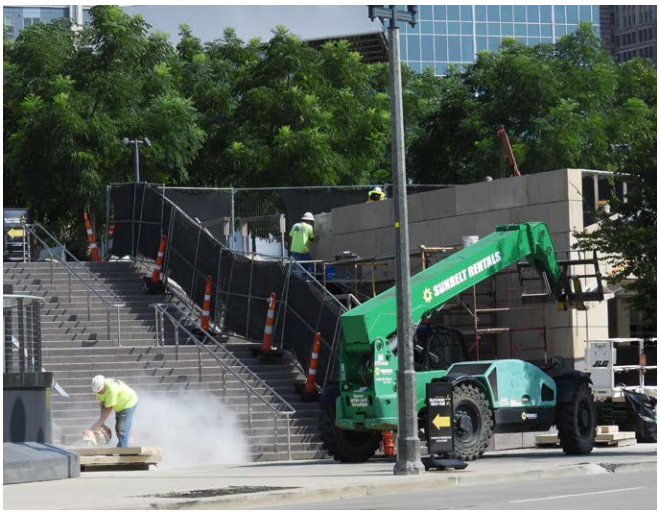


Photo credit: Jeffrey R. Anderson Real Estate

Plans for an 18-hole course on Lot 18 were approved by the Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners. Cincinnati Legends Putt House at Freedom Park is due to open in November.



The Cincinnati Bengals "opened in orange" to win first home game of the season against Tampa Bay Buccaneers.



Lot 23 crews cut stone as they work toward completion of the Cincinnati Parks Donor Wall.



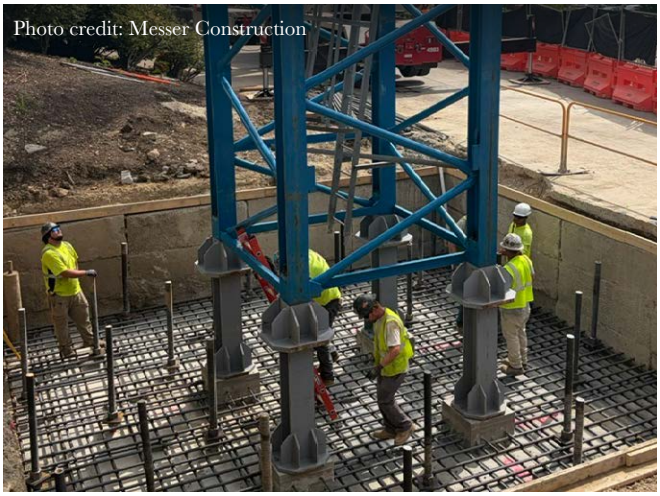
In September, the City of Cincinnati announced it is working with the community to create a new Downtown Master Plan to guide growth, investment, and development. The Banks Urban Design Plan Update, approved by City Council in June, will be incorporated into the overall plan for Downtown with a target completion date of third quarter 2027.



In September, Cincinnati Streetcar celebrated 10 years serving riders along its 3.6-mile route from The Banks (station #1) to Fountain Square, Over the Rhine, and back.



Finding balance in the jungle at the NamasDey yoga event at Paycor Stadium.



Crews stabilize base of a tower crane for installation of a new Paycor Stadium scoreboard.


Photo credit: WCPO

WCPO's reporter interviews The Banks officials (Mayor Pureval, County Commissioner Driehaus, and Project Executive Phil Beck) on what's now and what's next for The Banks.



New signage in the Central Riverfront Garage helps drivers find parking faster.


Photo credit: Game Day Communications

The Banks celebrated Dolly Parton on 9/25 with signature sips, a Dolly playlist, and book donations to the Imagination Library. Game Day Communications CEO Betsy Ross (pictured) reported collecting over 100 books from The Banks patrons.

WHAT'S NEXT



2024 BLINK Installation at Smale Riverfront Park

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

OCTOBER

20th-annual Hats Off Luncheon
October 2

BLINK
October 8–11

Panda Fest
October 16–18

Cyclones First Face-Off
October 24



Christkindlmarkt Food Court

NOVEMBER

Cincinnati Bengals Ring of Honor Induction Ceremony
November 1

Even More Before the Roar
Home game days

Cincinnati DAV5K
November 7

Christkindlmarkt
November 20–December 28



Photo credit: The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati

DECEMBER

Christkindlmarkt
November 20–December 28

The Children's Theatre on Tour Performs *The Day Before Christmas* at Schmidlapp Lawn
December 3 at 7:00 PM

The Children's Theatre on Tour Performs *Bah Humbug* at Schmidlapp Lawn
December 4 at 7:30 PM

(shows run 30 minutes)

Pregame at The Banks
Home game days

Santacon
December 12





Heekin Family/PNC Grow Up Great Adventure Playground in Smale Riverfront Park

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Interested in the latest progress statistics at The Banks? **Click here for current and historical data.**

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