

Perkins&Will

For immediate release

Cincinnati City Council Approves Master Plan to Complete the Next Chapter of The Banks Riverfront District

Perkins&Will-Led Plan Envisions Walkable, Dense, Mixed-Use Neighborhood Along the Ohio River—Completing a Vision More Than Two Decades in the Making

CINCINNATI, June 10, 2026 — The Cincinnati City Council’s approval of the urban design plan update for The Banks promises to transform the city’s riverfront along the Ohio River into a walkable residential, commercial, and entertainment district of sports stadiums, cultural institutions, and parks to elevate from a gameday-centered experience to an everyday neighborhood envisioned in the original plan for the district in 2000. Led by global design firm Perkins&Will in partnership with public and private-sector leaders, the plan establishes the next chapter for the riverfront by providing a coordinated development plan for five remaining development blocks surrounded by two stadiums – Paycor Stadium and Great American Ball Park - The Andrew J. Brady Music Center, the Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame, and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

“The Banks is the hallmark of a long-term public-private partnership committed to completing the vital link between the riverfront and downtown and concluding one of the largest riverfront revitalization efforts in the country,” says Phil Beck, project executive, The Banks Public Partnership.

Working closely together with Perkins&Will, the city, and county were: MKSK (Landscape Architecture + Public Realm Strategy); HR&A Advisors (Market Analysis + Development Strategy); Nelson\Nygaard (Mobility, Transit, and Parking); and Kolar Design (Wayfinding, Branding + Placemaking). The team was selected by a committee representing City, County, the Cincinnati Reds, and the Cincinnati Bengals.

“The Banks will complete the riverfront, producing a vibrant, walkable, high-density mixed-use district advancing the quality of design while capitalizing on the importance of Cincinnati’s riverfront gateway,” says Andrew Broderick, Senior Urban Designer and Associate Principal, Perkins&Will. The Banks follows such other signature Perkins&Will mixed-used, neighborhood plans as [Mission Rock](#) along the San Francisco waterfront and the [Turner Field Stadium Neighborhoods Livable Centers Initiative](#) in Atlanta.

The Banks brings renewed focus to the central role the Ohio River has played throughout Cincinnati's history, from the economic engine of the riverboats to its passageway for the Underground Railroad. Now, known largely as a sports and entertainment destination, the riverfront will become a cohesive 120-acre development including residential and commercial. A focal point to create a premier urban district are plans for two 25-story residential towers, bringing over 3,000 new residents to the area. The Banks will connect to Cincinnati's past and generate an estimated \$800 million in new public and private investment as it turns to its future.

Other conceptual elements for future consideration include:

- 2.5 million square feet of architecturally striking residential, hotel, office, and retail space arranged in a 'stepped' design reaching toward the downtown urban core;
- A signature civic plaza fronting the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, anchored by a sculptural canopy and designed for year-round activation and connection to Smale Riverfront Park
- A completely reimaged approach to mobility, highlighting pedestrian friendly connectivity: Freedom Way, now a typical street, becomes a curbsless street open to vehicles except for large events, creating the district's primary east-west spine; a highway cap that bridges over Fort Washington Way creates a seamless connections between downtown and The Banks while expanding the district's open space network; a sculpted, serpentine, pedestrian bridge eliminates the primary barrier between The Banks and Smale Riverfront Park;
- Completion of the Central Riverfront Garage and other investments in structural design and utility infrastructure to enable vertical development.

The development is designed to be phased in over 11 years, beginning with infrastructure and placemaking investment. The public-private partnership will be a catalyst for a new era of development that unites the riverfront and downtown – physically, culturally and economically – with a renewed vitality.

###

About Perkins&Will

Perkins&Will, an interdisciplinary, research-based architecture and design firm, was founded in 1935 on the belief that design has the power to transform lives. The firm is committed to creating a better, beautiful, more equitable world through [Living Design](#), an approach that integrates environmental, social, and design considerations to advance ecological health and well-being. *Interior Design* named Perkins&Will a "Sustainability Giant" in 2024; *Architizer* named it the world's "Best Sustainable Firm" in 2023; and *Metropolis* named it "Firm of the Year" in 2022 for its industry leadership in advancing climate action and social justice. *Fast Company* named Perkins&Will one of the World's Most Innovative Companies in Architecture three times, and in 2021, it added the firm to its list of Brands That Matter—making Perkins&Will the first architecture practice in the world to earn the distinction.

With an international team of more than 2,400 professionals, Perkins&Will has over 30 studios worldwide, providing integrated services in architecture, interior design, branded environments, urban design, and landscape architecture. Partners include [Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects](#); [McLennan Design](#); [Portland; Nelson\Nygaard](#); and [Pierre-Yves Rochon](#) (PYR). For more information, visit www.perkinswill.com.