



City of Cincinnati

801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Agenda - Final

Housing & Growth

Chairperson Mark Jeffreys

Vice Chair Anna Albi

Councilmember Jeff Cramerding

Councilmember Ryan James

Councilmember Evan Nolan

Councilmember Meeka Owens

Councilmember Seth Walsh

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

1:00 PM

Council Chambers, Room 300

AGENDA

PRESENTATIONS

Experience Mill Creek

Gus Ricksecker, Capacity Development Manager, HomeBase Cincinnati

Daniella Beltran, Planning Team Lead, Yard & Company

Rev. Saundra Davis, Working In Neighborhoods Board Member, South Cumminsille Resident

Derrick Feagin, President of the South Cumminsille Community Council

1. [202600162](#) **PRESENTATION** submitted by Councilmember Mark Jeffreys regarding Experience Mill Creek.
Sponsors: Jeffreys
Attachments: [Mill Creek Powerpoint](#)

2. [202600065](#) **ORDINANCE (EMERGENCY)** submitted by Sheryl M. M. Long, City Manager, on 1/14/2026, **APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING** the City Manager to execute a First Amendment to Community Reinvestment Area Tax Exemption Agreement with E.M.A. Freeman L.L.C., amending an agreement previously authorized by Council for a 100 percent tax exemption of the value of improvements made to real property located at 2022-2024 Freeman Avenue in the West End neighborhood of Cincinnati, removing the obligation for the company to obtain certification of compliance with LEED standards.
Sponsors: City Manager
Attachments: [Transmittal](#)
[Ordinance](#)
[Attachment](#)

3. [202600079](#) **MOTION**, submitted by Councilmembers Jeffreys, Owens, Nolan, Albi and James, **WE MOVE** that the administration report back within 90 days to identify opportunities to build income restricted housing atop new city facilities in the next several years. (BALANCE ON FILE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE) (STATEMENT ATTACHED)

Sponsors: Jeffreys, Owens, Nolan and James

Attachments: [202600079](#)

4. [202600091](#) **MOTION**, submitted by Vice Mayor Kearney, **WE MOVE** that the administration work with City Council to create a “Buy the Building (BTB)” program to assist small businesses in obtaining ownership of a building in which they will house their business. The City of Cincinnati’s Office of Opportunity would track the progress of the program, including participants’ demographics and report to Council on a quarterly basis. (BALANCE ON FILE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE) (STATEMENT ATTACHED)

Sponsors: Kearney

Attachments: [202600091](#)

ADJOURNMENT



CINCINNATI CITY COUNCIL



HOUSING & GROWTH COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

JANUARY 21, 2026

H O M E B A S E Y A R D
& C O .

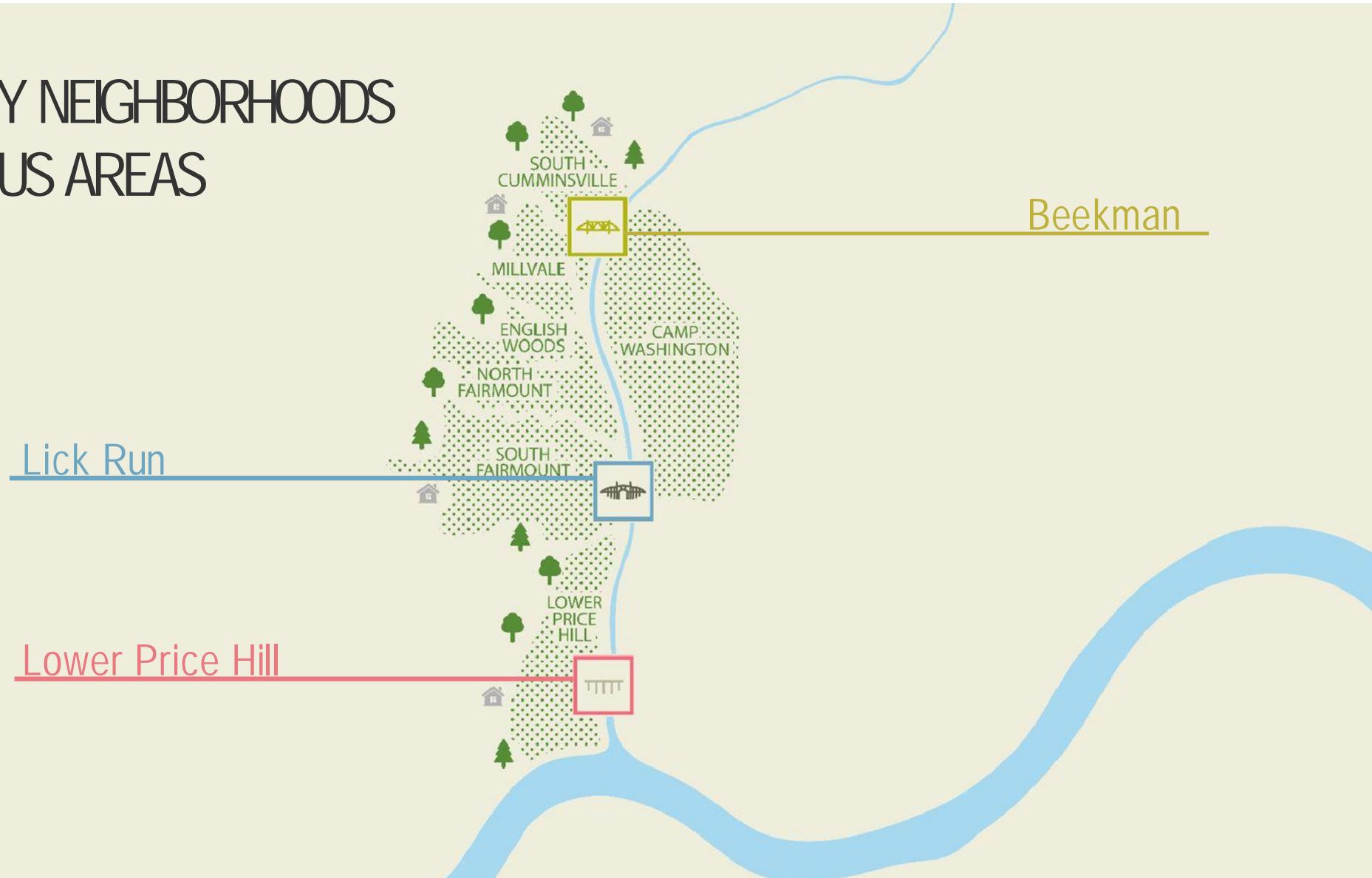
INTRODUCTIONS

An aerial photograph of a bridge spanning a valley. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a cloudy sky. The foreground shows a mix of green fields, industrial structures, and a highway. A large, bold, white text overlay reads "WE'RE READY FOR YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE VALLEY". The word "EXPERIENCE" is highlighted with a thick red oval.

WE'RE READY FOR YOU TO
EXPERIENCE THE VALLEY

INTERACTIVE STORY MAP

VALLEY NEIGHBORHOODS & FOCUS AREAS



H O M E B A S E

Co-lead for operations and community engagement

Leads the operating-system work, community outreach and activation strategies with residents.

PROJECT LEADS

YARD & CO.

Design-build and project lead for vision and planning

Leads small-area planning, testing and building semi-permanent installations, and overall project management.



Regional trail and greenway lead

Provides trail planning, technical input and regional coordination for the Mill Creek Greenway and related trail infrastructure.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Wade Johnson
Tri-State Trails



Adelyn Stroup
Community Learning Center Institute



Allen Woods
Mortar



Barbara Busch
Working in Neighborhoods



Darryl Franklin
North Fairmount



Dave Schmitt
Mill Creek Alliance



Michael Maloney
Urban Appalachian
Community Coalition



Pamela J. Adams
North Fairmount Resident



Philip Denning
The Port



Saundra Davis
Beekman Corridor Coalition



Sean Simpson
Mortar



Derrick Feagin
South Cumminsville



Mary Delaney
Community Matters



Jeff Dey
Urban Appalachian
Community Coalition



Jim Casey
South Fairmount



Rachel Hastings
NEST/Price Hill Will



Valerie Glenn
South Cumminsville Resident



Sarah Kent
Groundwork Ohio River
Valley



Tanner Yess
Groundwork USA

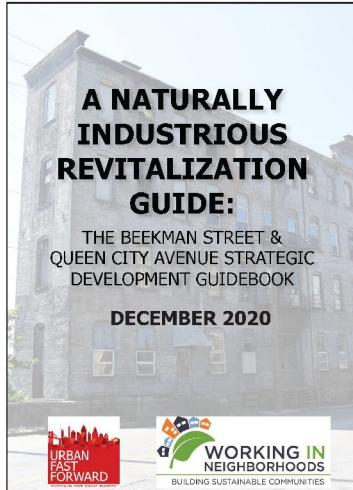
THE CITY'S INVOLVEMENT



- June 2024 ↵ Approved funding for Phase 1 of a Mill Creek Valley Vision Plan focused on Data Collection & Identity
- June 2025 ↵ Phase 2 was approved and funded to include Small Area Plans, Engagement and Activation Concepts
- DCED is managing the project contract
- Councilmember Mark Jeffreys is active with the Executive Committee and regularly participating in meetings
- Department Directors and City staff providing technical oversight, coordination, permitting, policy direction and implementation guidance

WHY THE MILL CREEK VALLEY

WE KNOW WHAT'S POSSIBLE

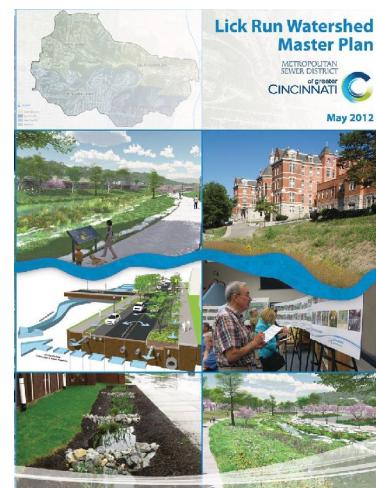
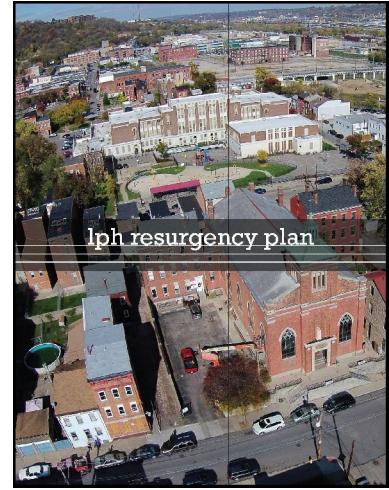
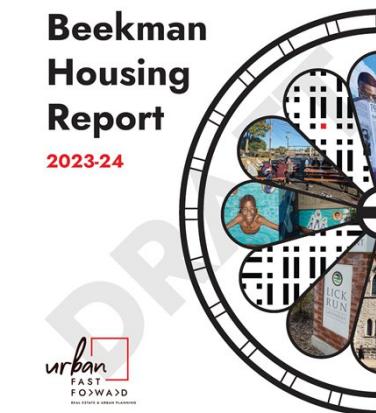


Green Cincinnati Plan 2023

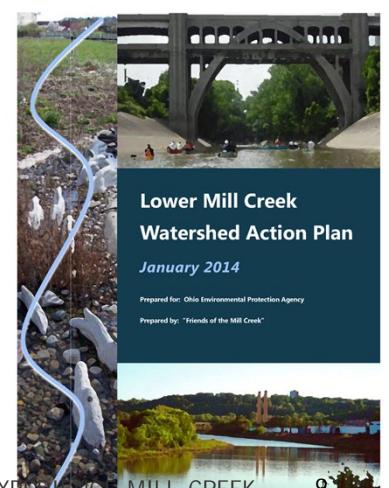


Beekman Housing Report

2023-24



Lick Run Watershed Master Plan
METROPOLITAN SEWER DISTRICT OF GREATER CINCINNATI
May 2012

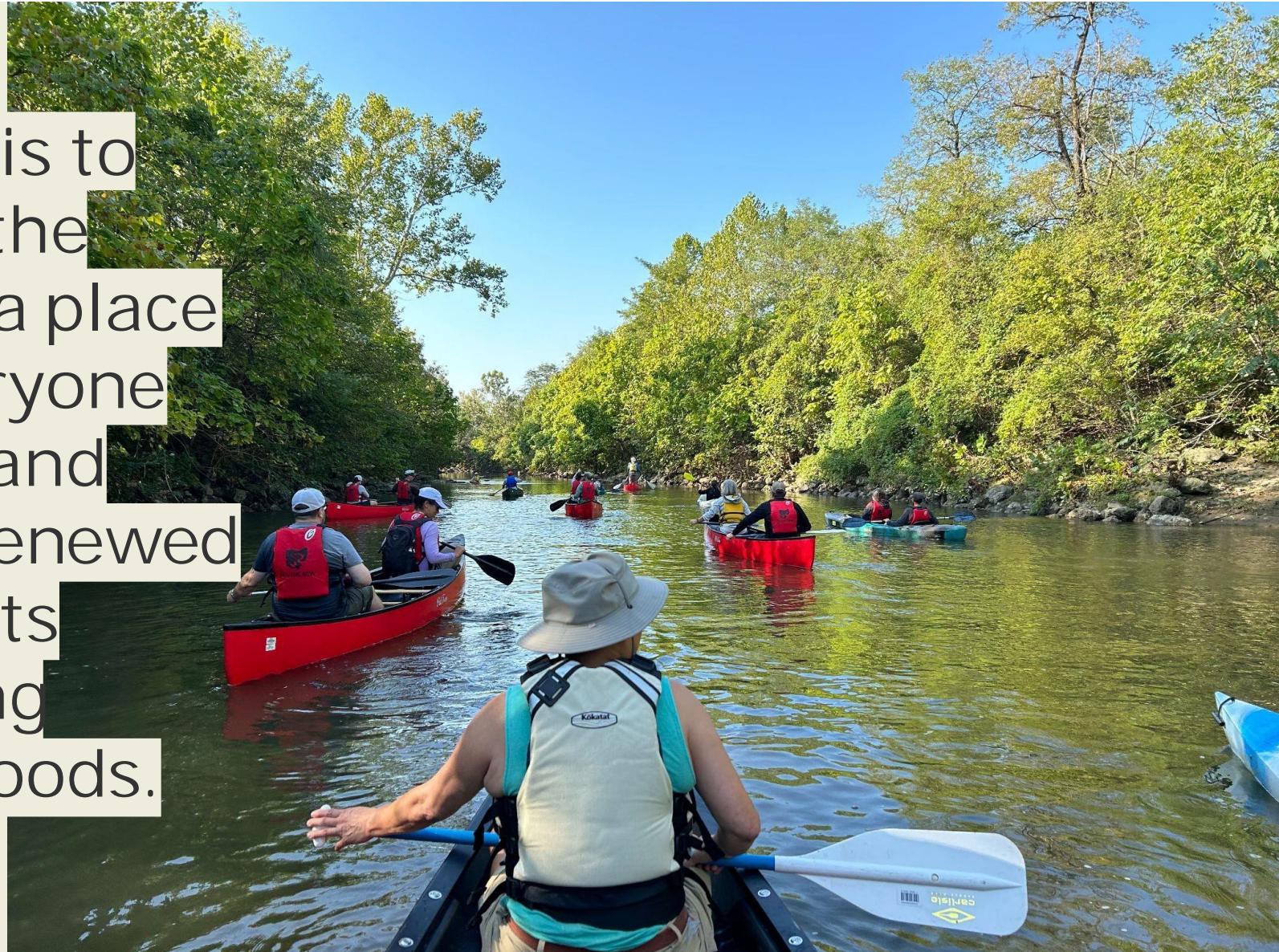


Lower Mill Creek Watershed Action Plan
January 2014

Prepared for: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Prepared by: "Friends of the Mill Creek"

XPERIENCE MILL CREEK

Our Vision is to transform the valley into a place where everyone can thrive and enjoy the renewed creek and its surrounding neighborhoods.



WE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN...

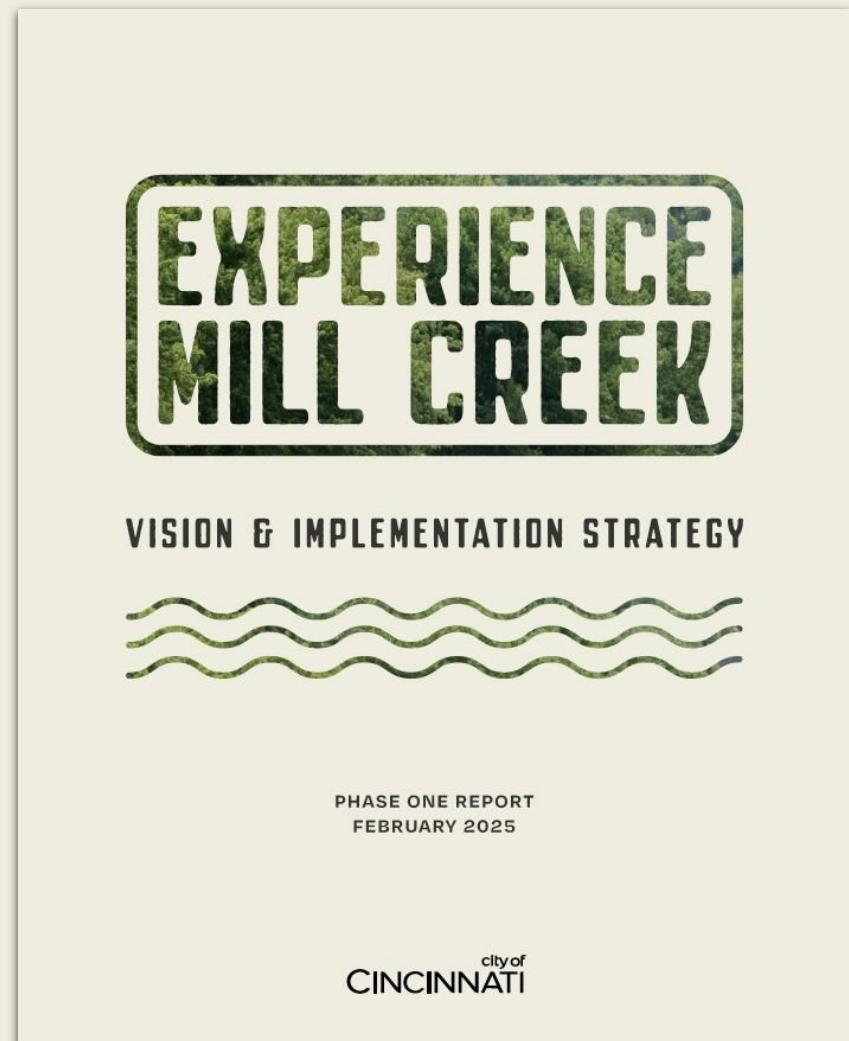
1. There are quality educational and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
2. We have new and improved public assets that have been shaped by the residents.
3. We are seeing improvements in both real and perceived safety.
4. Development is happening with us and for us, not to us.
5. We have jobs that help grow the region and employ those who call the valley home.
6. We have a cleaner and greener Mill Creek for all to enjoy.
7. Residents of the valley are leading the growth.
8. We have leveraged our public assets into private investment that is for us.



TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Stage 1 - Completed

- Established the Vision, Values & Success Metrics
- Highlighted achievements to date & planned investments
- Guided by Executive Committee
- Identified 3 focus areas
- Content can be viewed online at experiencemillcreekvalley.com



Stage 2 - Underway

- Advisory Committees established for Lower Price Hill, Lick Run, and Beekman areas.
- Participants are receiving a stipend to attend meetings.
- Multi-day design workshop held to create & refine scenarios.
- Ongoing stakeholder & technical meetings & case study research.
- 10-year revitalization plans are being drafted paired with near-term activations.





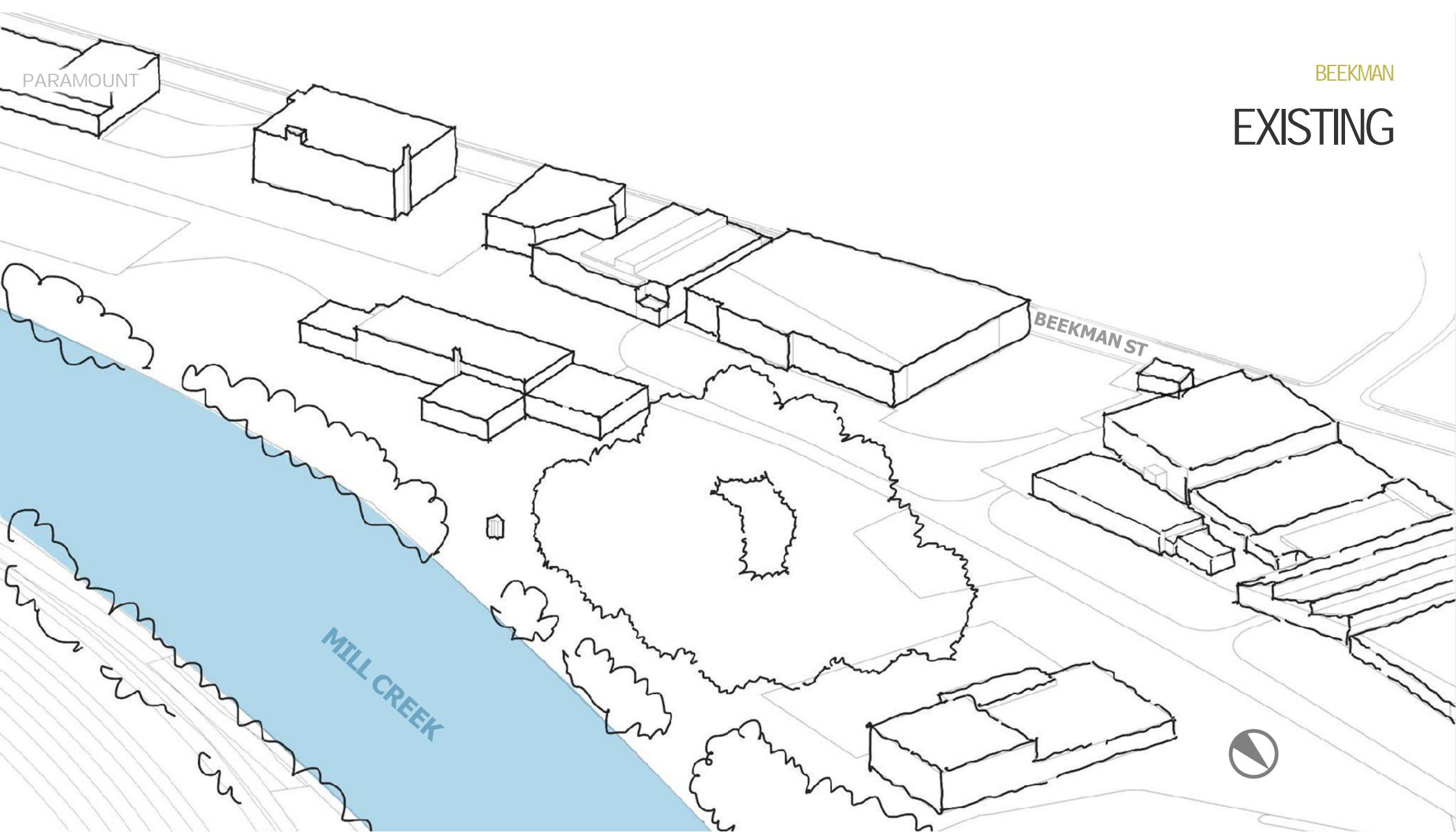
BEEKMAN

THE VISION



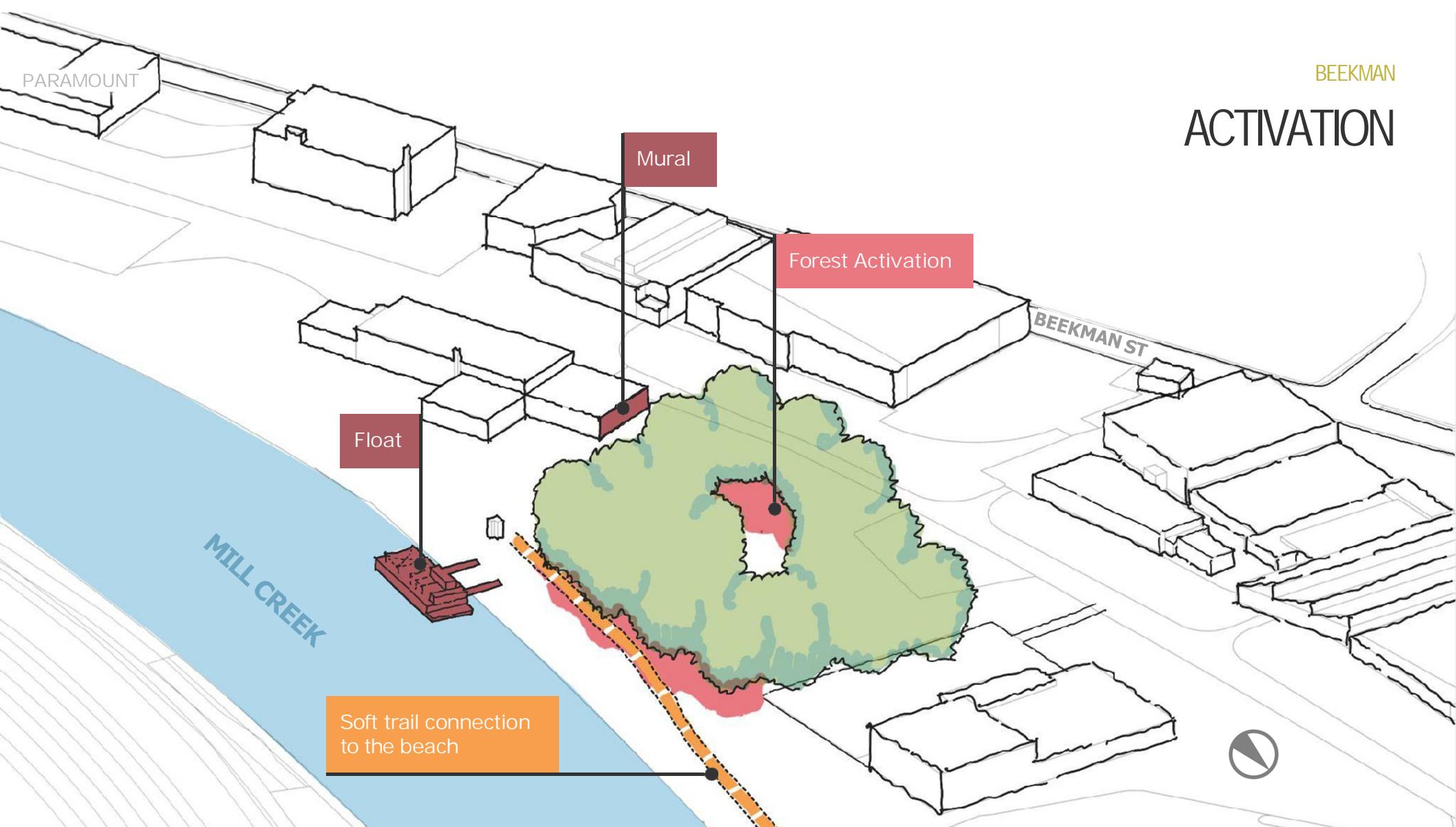
Rooted in the neighborhood's industrial past and community commitment, this new district is a launchpad for a new kind of industrious future. This is a place where Black-owned businesses are supported and celebrated, and where culture and creativity drive the transformation.

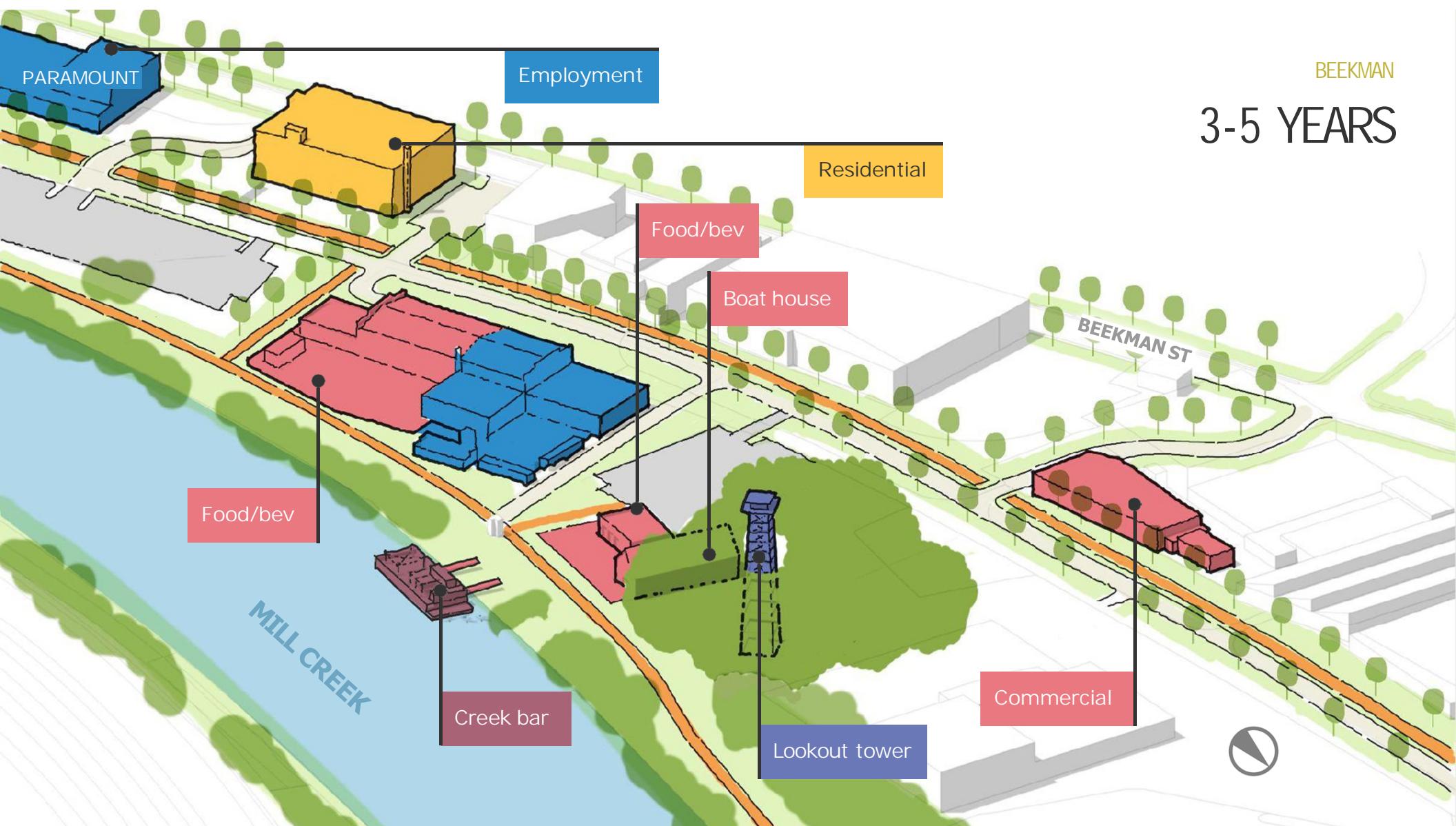
Short-term projects bring life and energy through art, food, and pop-ups. These early actions set the stage for long-term investment in adaptive reuse, mixed-use development, and a reinvigorated creekfront. This is a people-powered effort — bold, incremental, and grounded in community vision.



BEEKMAN
EXISTING

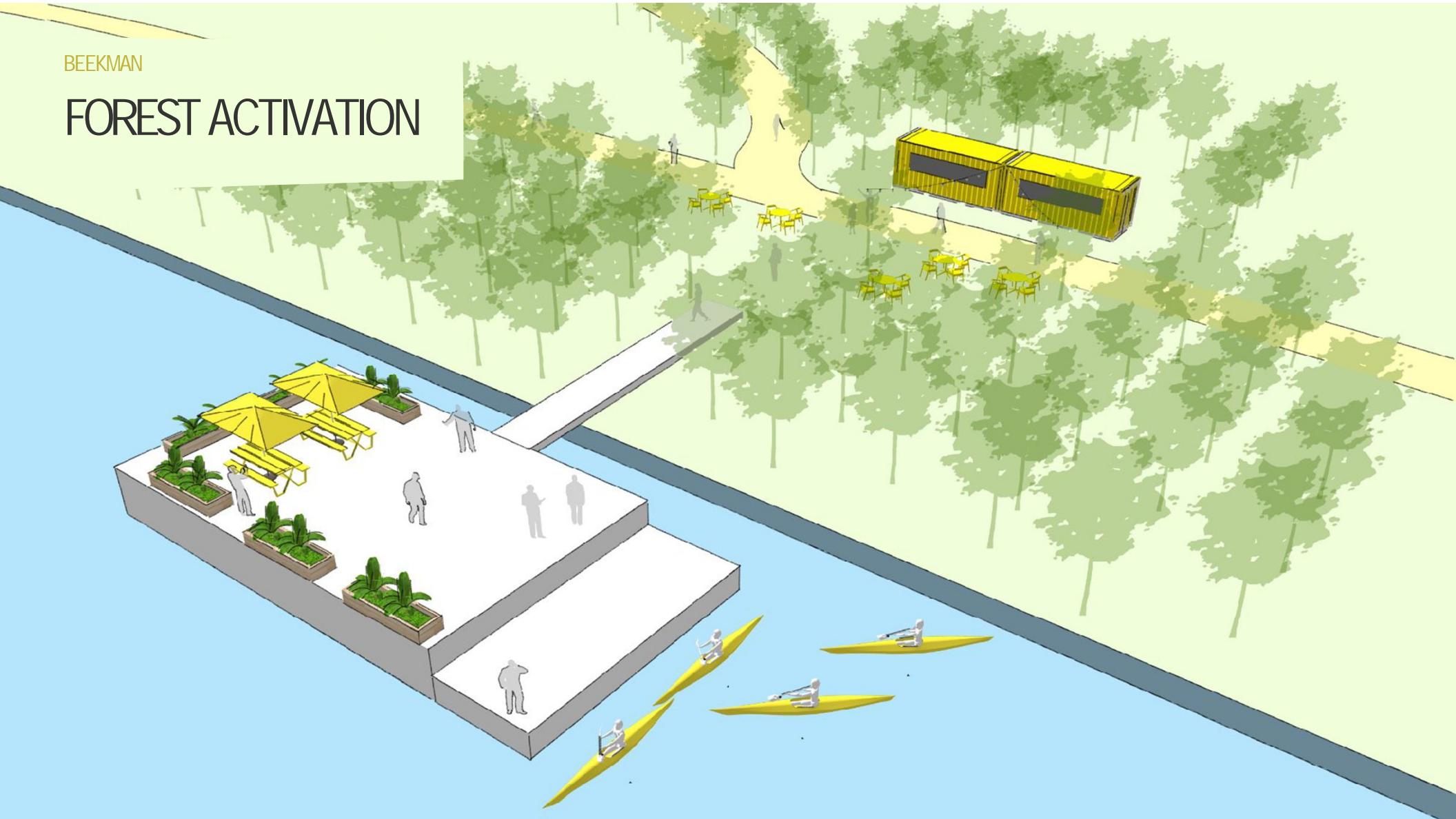
BEEKMAN
ACTIVATION





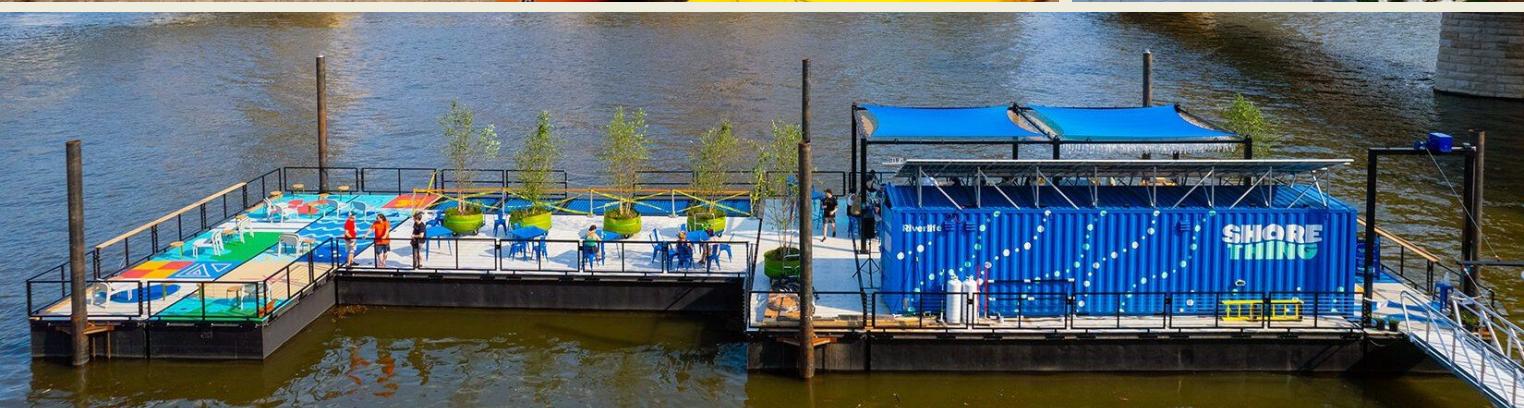
BEEKMAN

FOREST ACTIVATION



BEEKMAN

ACTIVATION



22

COST ESTIMATES

Dock: \$120,000

Container Kiosks: \$40,000 \square \$80,000

Furniture: \$10,000 \square \$30,000

Lighting: \$5,000 \square \$25,000

Planters: \$35,000

Art & Signage: \$5,000 \square \$20,000

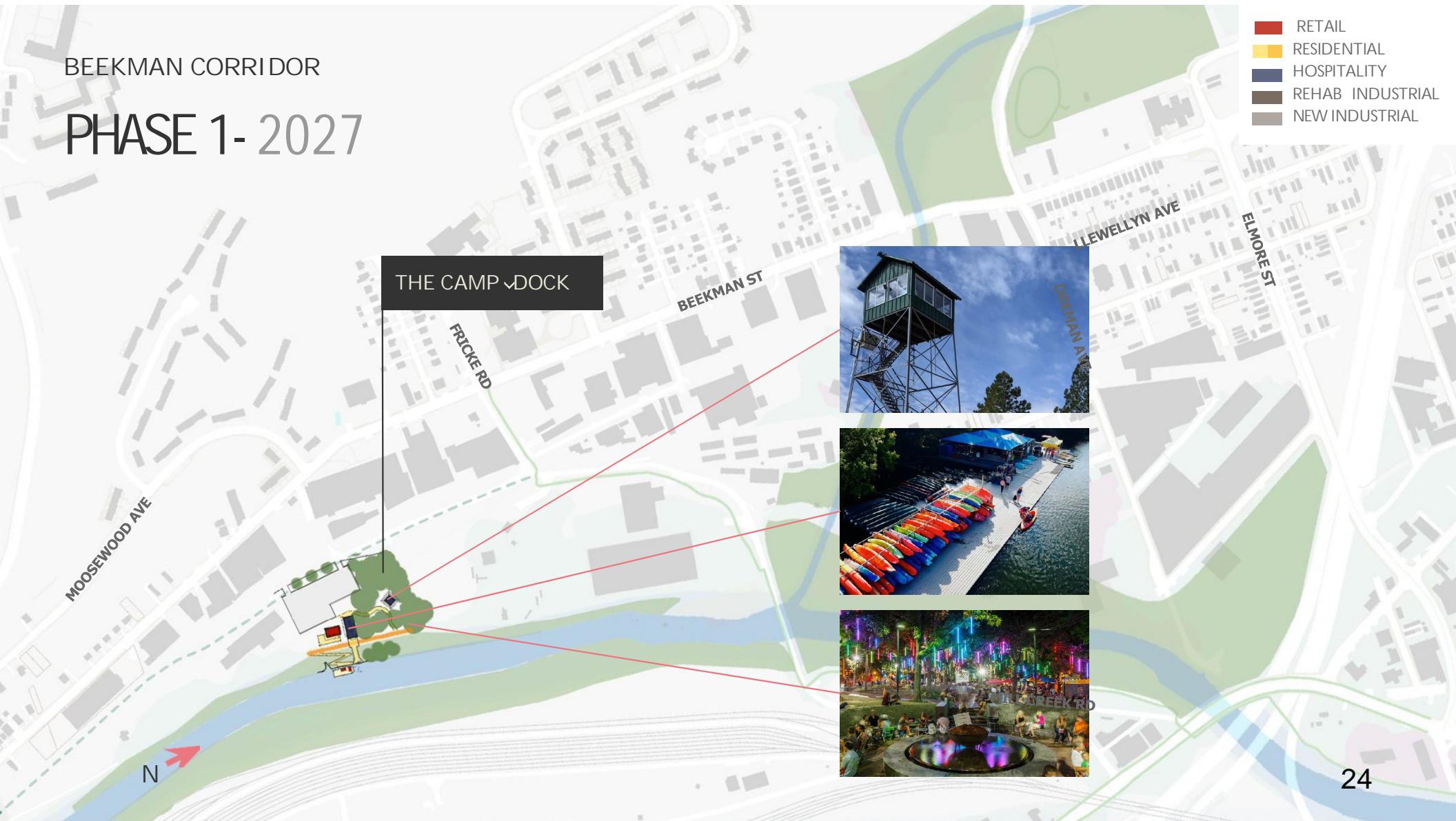
Canoe/Kayak Rental: \$20,000

Total estimated range: \$245,000 – \$340,000



BEEKMAN CORRIDOR

PHASE 1- 2027



BEEKMAN CORRIDOR

PHASE 1A - 2027-28

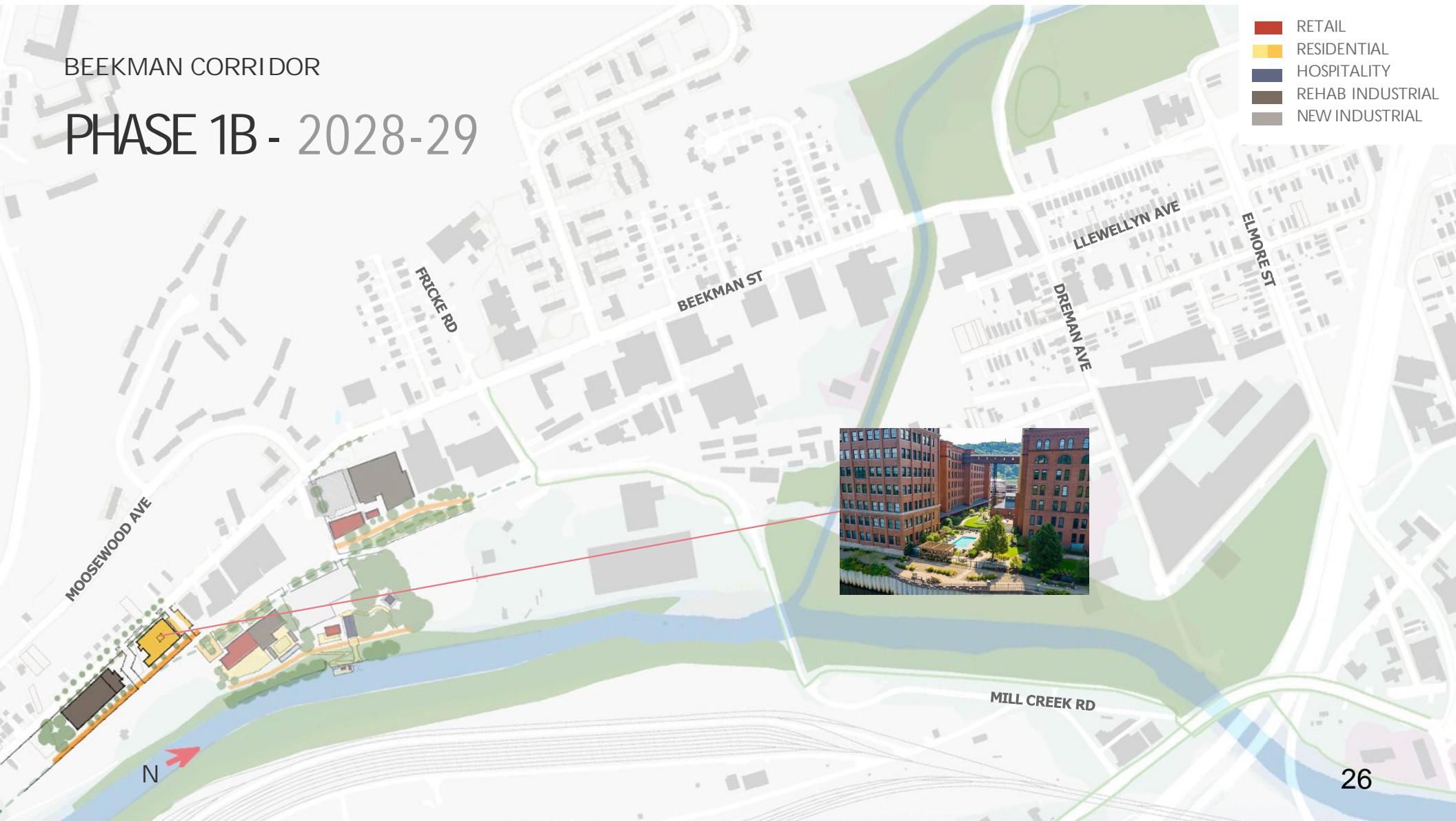


25

26

BEEKMAN CORRIDOR

PHASE 1B - 2028-29

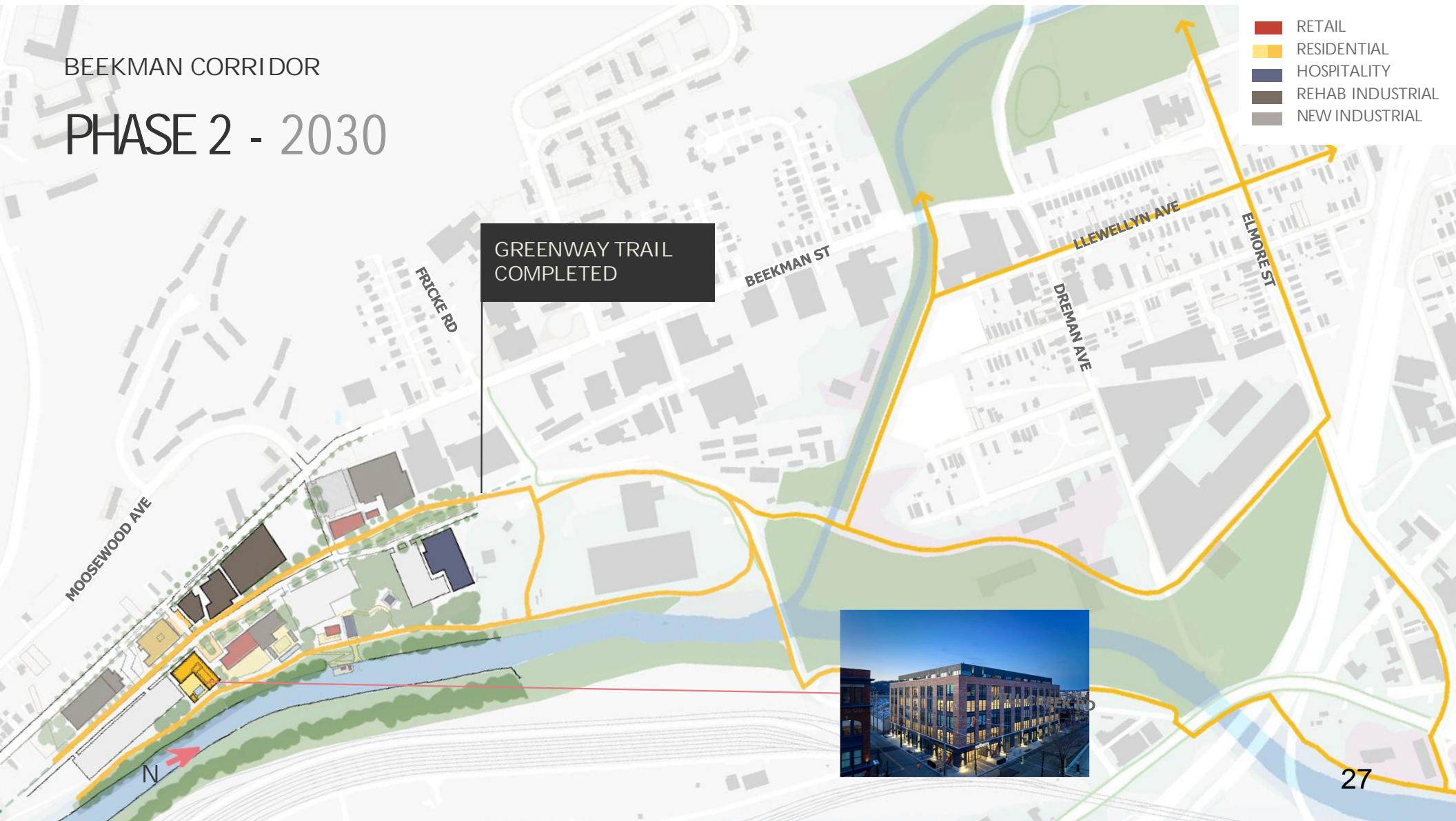


26

27

BEEKMAN CORRIDOR

PHASE 2 - 2030



BEEKMAN CORRIDOR

PHASE 2A - 2031



BEEKMAN

PHASE 3 - 2032-33



29

30

BEEKMAN

PHASE 4 - 2034-35



BEEKMAN

DRAFT 10-YEAR AREA PLAN

- RETAIL
- RESIDENTIAL
- HOSPITALITY
- EXISTING INDUSTRIAL
- NEW INDUSTRIAL



31





ROOM TO BUILD *ROOTS TO GROW*

www.ExperienceMillCreekValley.com

January 14th, 2026

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager 202600065

Subject: **Emergency Ordinance – Approving and Authorizing an Amendment to CRA Tax Abatement with E.M.A. Freeman LLC**

Attached is an Emergency Ordinance captioned:

APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING the City Manager to execute a First Amendment to Community Reinvestment Area Tax Exemption Agreement with E.M.A. Freeman L.L.C., amending an agreement previously authorized by Council for a 100 percent tax exemption of the value of improvements made to real property located at 2022-2024 Freeman Avenue in the West End neighborhood of Cincinnati, removing the obligation for the company to obtain certification of compliance with LEED standards.

STATEMENT

HOUSING: The additional housing units this project will provide will go toward helping to alleviate Cincinnati's strained housing market, which is currently experiencing increasing affordability issues due to lack of supply.

COMMERCIAL: The redevelopment of these commercial spaces will help contribute to Cincinnati's economic stability by opening more potential for future job opportunities by increasing space for new tenants.

BACKGROUND/CURRENT CONDITIONS

E.M.A. Freeman, LLC proposes a complete rehabilitation of the vacant historic building located at 2022-2024 Freeman Avenue in the West End. Upon completion of the project, the property will include approximately 13 residential rental apartments and approximately 1,350 square feet of commercial space. This amendment removes the obligation for the company to obtain certification of compliance with LEED standards.

DEVELOPER INFORMATION

E.M.A. Freeman LLC is owned by a Mr. Marc E. Scollar & Mr. Yehuda Alkobi of Staten Island, NY. The LLC members own several multifamily properties in Ohio and Kansas. This will be the partnership's first project in Cincinnati.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends approval of this Emergency Ordinance.

Attachment: Project Outline

Copy: Markiea L. Carter, Director, Department of Community & Economic Development

Project Outline

Project Name	2022-2024 Freeman
Street Address	2022-2024 Freeman Ave
Neighborhood	West End
Property Condition	Vacant Building
Project Type	Rehabilitation
Project Cost	Hard Construction Costs: \$1,459,802 Total Project Cost: \$1,459,802
Private Investment	CDF Loan: \$800,000 Investor Equity: \$659,802
Sq. Footage by Use	Residential: 8,500 SF Commercial: 1,350 SF
Number of Units and Rent Ranges	1 Studio; Monthly Rent \$1,050 6 1-BR Units; Monthly Rent \$1,162.50 4 2-BR Units; Monthly Rent \$1,350 1 Duplex; Monthly Rent \$2,100
Median 1-BD Affordable To	Salary: \$46,980 City Job Classification: Cleaner, Sanitation Helper, Secretary, Deputy Clerk, Water Works Guard, Utility Laborer, Reproduction Machine Operator 1, Laboratory Assistant
Jobs and Payroll	Created FTE Positions: 1 Total Payroll for Created FTE Positions: \$40,000 Average Salary for Created FTE Positions: \$40,000 Construction FTE Positions: 25 Total Payroll for Construction FTE Positions: \$180,000
Location and Transit	Located within the West End Transit Score: 58
Community Engagement	N/A
Plan Cincinnati Goals	Compete Initiative Area Goal 2 (p. 114-120), Sustain Initiative Area Goal 2 (p.193-198)

Project Image and Site Map



Proposed Incentive

Incentive Terms	15-year, net 60%
Incentive Application Process	Commercial CRA – Neighborhood (Non-LEED)
“But For”	Without Abatement: -0.06% rate of return (stabilized) With Abatement: -0.03% rate of return (stabilized) Project would not proceed without an abatement.
Environmental Building Certification	Non-LEED
VTICA	Neighborhood VTICA – 15%
SBE/MBE/WBE Goals	SBE Goal of 30%

Potential Taxes Forgone & Public Benefit

Taxes Forgone	Value
Annual Net Incentive to Developer	\$13,838
Total Term Incentive to Developer	\$166,059
City's Portion of Property Taxes Forgone (Term)	\$45,861
City's TIF District Revenue Forgone (Term)	\$0

Public Benefit	Value
CPS PILOT	Annual
	Total Term
VTICA	Annual
	Total Term
Income Tax Total Term (Maximum)	\$3,240
Total Public Benefit (CPS PILOT, VTICA , Income Tax)	\$113,946

Total Public Benefit ROI*	\$0.69
City's ROI**	\$0.07

* This figure represents the total dollars returned for public purposes (City/Schools/Other) over the benefit received.

**This figure represents the total dollars returned for City/ over the City's property taxes forgone.

E M E R G E N C Y

EVK

- 2026

APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING the City Manager to execute a First Amendment to Community Reinvestment Area Tax Exemption Agreement with E.M.A. Freeman L.L.C., amending an agreement previously authorized by Council for a 100 percent tax exemption of the value of improvements made to real property located at 2022-2024 Freeman Avenue in the West End neighborhood of Cincinnati, removing the obligation for the company to obtain certification of compliance with LEED standards.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ordinance No. 524-2019, passed by Council on December 18, 2019, the City entered into a certain Community Reinvestment Area Tax Exemption Agreement (LEED or Living Building Challenge) dated January 14, 2020 (the “Agreement”), with E.M.A. Freeman L.L.C. (the “Company”), which provides for a 100 percent real property tax exemption for the value of improvements to real property located at 2022-2024 Freeman Avenue in the West End neighborhood of Cincinnati, for twelve years, relating to the Company’s remodeling the building on the property into approximately 8,500 square feet of residential rental space, consisting of approximately thirteen apartment units, and approximately 1,350 square feet of commercial space (the “Project”), all as more particularly described in the Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Company had represented to the City that the Company has been working towards completing the Project with the intent to certify compliance of the remodeling to LEED standards, but due to the increasing development costs since the execution of the Agreement, the Company will not obtain a LEED certification for the Project as currently required under the Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Company has requested that the City agree to amend the Agreement to (i) remove the requirement that the Company obtain certification of the remodeling’s compliance with applicable LEED standards, and (ii) extend the completion deadline for the Project to October 31, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the City’s Department of Community and Economic Development (“DCED”) estimates that the real property tax exemption for the improvements will provide an annual net benefit to the Company in the amount of approximately \$13,838; and

WHEREAS, the City, upon the recommendation of DCED, is willing to amend the Agreement to (i) remove the language requiring the Company to obtain certification that the remodeling complied with the applicable LEED standards in the Agreement, and (ii) extend the completion deadline; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That Council authorizes the City Manager:

- (a) to execute an amendment to a certain Community Reinvestment Area Tax Exemption Agreement (LEED or Living Building Challenge) dated

January 14, 2020 (the “Agreement”), between the City of Cincinnati (the “City”), and E.M.A. Freeman L.L.C. (the “Company”), relating to real property located at 2022-2024 Freeman Avenue in the West End Neighborhood of Cincinnati, which amendment shall be in substantially the form of Attachment A to this ordinance (the “Amendment”), and which will authorize (i) removing the Company’s obligation to obtain certification that the remodeling complied with the applicable LEED standards, and (ii) extend the completion deadline for the project to October 31, 2026, provided the Company satisfies certain conditions as described in the Agreement, as amended by the Amendment, including compliance with all statutory requirements; and

- (b) to take all necessary and proper actions to fulfill the City’s obligations under the Agreement, as amended by the Amendment.

Section 2. That this ordinance shall be an emergency measure necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, safety, and general welfare and shall, subject to the terms of Article II, Section 6 of the Charter, be effective immediately. The reason for the emergency is the immediate need to execute the Amendment to allow the project and the corresponding revitalization of the City of Cincinnati and the benefits to the City’s economic welfare to begin at the earliest possible time.

Passed: _____, 2026

Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk

**FIRST AMENDMENT
to
Community Reinvestment Area Tax Exemption Agreement**

THIS FIRST AMENDMENT TO COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA TAX EXEMPTION AGREEMENT (this “**Amendment**”) is entered into on the Effective Date (as defined on the signature page hereof) by and between the CITY OF CINCINNATI, an Ohio municipal corporation (the “**City**”), and E.M.A. Freeman L.L.C., an Ohio limited liability company (the “**Company**”).

Recitals:

A. The City and the Company are parties to a *Community Reinvestment Area Tax Exemption Agreement (LEED or Living Building Challenge)* dated January 14, 2020, (the “**Agreement**”) where the Company agreed to remodel approximately 8,500 square feet of residential rental space located at 2022-2024 Freeman Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45214 (the “**Property**”), into approximately 13 apartment units, and approximately 1,350 square feet of commercial space, as more particularly described in the Agreement (the “**Project**”). Capitalized terms used but not defined herein shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Agreement.

B. The Company has informed the City that the Project was not completed by the October 31, 2020, completion deadline set forth in the Agreement, but the Company has been working in good faith toward completing the Project.

C. The Company has represented to the City that the Company has been working towards completing the Project with the intent to certify compliance of the remodeling with LEED standards, but due to the increasing development costs since the execution of the Agreement, the Company will not be able to obtain a LEED certification for the Project as proposed. The Company has requested that the City agree to amend the Agreement to remove the requirement that the Company certify compliance of the remodeling with LBC standards or LEED Silver, Gold, or Platinum standards.

D. The City, upon the recommendation of the Department of Community and Economic Development, is willing to amend the Agreement to (i) extend the completion deadline for the Project to October 31, 2026, and (ii) remove the language requiring the Company to comply with LBC standards or LEED Silver, Gold, or Platinum standards in the Agreement, on and subject to the conditions of this Agreement.

E. This Amendment has been authorized by Ordinance No. _____, passed by Cincinnati City Council on _____.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

1. **Removal of LEED Certified Abatement Eligibility.** Recital D. is hereby deleted and replaced with the following: “This recital is left intentionally blank.”

2. **Removal of LEED Standards from Project Definition.** Recital F. is hereby deleted and replaced with the following:

F. The Company has proposed the remodeling of a building located on the Property within the boundaries of the City of Cincinnati, as more fully described in Section 1 herein (the “Project”); provided that the appropriate development incentives are available to support the economic viability of the Project.

3. **Amendment to Project and Real Property Tax Exemption.** Section 1 and Section 2 of the Agreement are hereby deleted in their entirety and replaced with the following:

Section 1. **Project.** Upon issuance of the necessary zoning and building approvals, the Company agrees to remodel approximately 8,500 square feet of residential rental space on the Property, consisting of approximately 13 apartment units, and approximately 1,350 square feet of commercial space (the "Improvements") at an estimated aggregate cost of \$600,000 to commence after the execution of this Agreement and to be completed no later than October 31, 2026 *provided*, however, that the Director of the Department of Community and Economic Development (the "Housing Officer") may, in his or her discretion, extend such deadline for a period of up to 12 months by written notice if, in the Director's judgment, the Company is proceeding in good faith towards completion. The **Error! Reference source not found.** shall be in compliance with applicable building code requirements and zoning regulations. In addition to the foregoing, (A) the Project shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, together with any and all regulations or other binding directives promulgated pursuant thereto (collectively, the "**ADA**"), and (B) if (i) any building(s) within the Project is subject to the accessibility requirements of the ADA (e.g., by constituting a "place of public accommodation" or another category of structure to which the ADA is applicable) and (ii) such building(s) is not already required to meet the Contractual Minimum Accessibility Requirements (as defined below) pursuant to the ADA, applicable building code requirements, or by any other legal requirement, then the Company shall cause such building(s) to comply with the Contractual Minimum Accessibility Requirements in addition to any requirements pursuant to the ADA and the applicable building code or legal requirement. As used herein, "**Contractual Minimum Accessibility Requirements**" means that a building shall, at a minimum, include (1) at least one point of entry (as used in the ADA), accessible from a public right of way, with respect to which all architectural barriers (as used in the ADA) to entry have been eliminated, and (2) if such accessible point of entry is not a building's primary point of entry, conspicuous signage directing persons to such accessible point of entry.

Section 2. **Real Property Tax Exemption.** Subject to the satisfaction of the conditions set forth in this Agreement, the City approves exemption from real property taxation, pursuant to and to the fullest extent authorized by the Statute, of 100% of the amount by which the Improvements increase the assessed value of the Property as determined by the Hamilton County Auditor, for a period of 12 years, provided that the Company shall have entered into the Board of Education Agreement. Within 120 days after completion of the Project (unless otherwise extended in writing by the City's Housing Officer), the Company must file the appropriate application for tax exemption with the City's Housing Officer. The Company is solely responsible to take this action. Upon receipt of the application for tax exemption, the City will proceed with the exemption authorized by this Agreement. In accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 3735.67, the exemption is conditioned on verification by the Housing Officer of (A) the completion of **Error! Reference source not found.**, (B) the cost of **Error! Reference source not found.**, (C) the facts asserted in the application for exemption, and (D) if a remodeled structure is a structure of historical or architectural significance as designated by the City, state or federal government, that the appropriateness of the **Error! Reference source not found.** has been certified in writing by the appropriate agency. If the required verification is made, the Housing Officer will forward the exemption application to the Hamilton County Auditor with the necessary certification by the Housing Officer. Subject to the conditions set forth in this Agreement, the exemption commences the first tax year for which the Improvements would first be taxable were the Improvements not exempted from taxation. The dates provided in this paragraph refer to tax years in which the subject property is assessed, as opposed to years in which taxes are billed. No exemption shall commence after tax year 2026 nor extend beyond the earlier of (i) tax year 2037 or (ii) the end of the 12th year of exemption.

4. **Release.** In consideration of the City's execution of this Amendment, the Company hereby waives any and all defaults or failures to observe or perform any of the City's obligations under the Agreement and any other liability of any kind on the part of the City to the extent any such default, failure or liability occurred or arose before the Effective Date.

5. **Reaffirmation.** All terms of the Agreement not amended hereby or not inconsistent herewith shall remain in full force and effect, and the Agreement, as amended hereby, is hereby ratified and reaffirmed by the parties.

6. **Counterparts and Electronic Signatures.** This Amendment may be executed by the parties hereto in two or more counterparts and each executed counterpart shall be considered an original. This Amendment may be executed and delivered by electronic signature.

[Signature Page Follows]

Executed by the parties on the dates indicated below, effective as of the later of such dates (the "Effective Date").

CITY OF CINCINNATI

By: _____
Sheryl M. M. Long, City Manager

Date: _____, 2025

E.M.A. FREEMAN L.L.C.

By: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____, 2025

Approved as to Form:

Assistant City Solicitor _____

Certified Date: _____

Fund/Code: _____

Amount: _____

By: _____
Steve Webb, City Finance Director

City of Cincinnati



801 Plum Street, Suite 348
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Phone: (513) 352-3464
Email: mark.jeffreys@cincinnati-oh.gov
Web: www.cincinnati-oh.gov

20200719

Mark Jeffreys
Councilmember

Motion: Housing Where We Service

Building Housing on Top of New City Buildings

January 12th, 2026

WE MOVE that the administration report back within 90 days to identify opportunities to build income restricted housing atop new city facilities in the next several years. These could include:

- New firehouses
- New Cincinnati Recreation Commission buildings
- Other city-owned buildings

STATEMENT

With a housing crisis, and need for additional housing units, many cities around the country are adding housing on top of new city-owned buildings including firehouses and recreation centers. These new facilities would require public-private partnerships, which do not happen overnight, but represent a unique way to add housing, especially income-restricted housing at <60% AMI given that some of the fixed cost of construction are already being baked into the city building on the first floor.

Examples of Projects to Put Housing Over Firehouses and Recreation Centers

City	Project
Washington, DC	<i>Square 50 / West End Square 50</i> — A building with a fire station at the base, above which are 55 affordable/workforce housing units. Includes mixed use (fire station + housing + other uses) in a dense urban setting.
Atlanta, GA	Plans underway to build ~100 affordable housing units above Fire Station 15 in Midtown, renovating the station and placing housing above
San Francisco, CA	Proposal to build an affordable-housing tower above a new fire station (Station 13, on Sansome Street) in the Financial District, using the height limit/zoning to allow housing above.
Vancouver, BC	<i>Fire Hall No. 5 & Pacific Spirit Terrace</i> — Four stories of affordable housing (2- & 3-bedroom units for woman-led families) sit above a firehall.
Seattle, WA	<i>After a fire damaged the existing Lake City Community Center, the city is rebuilding a new community center and adding ~113 affordable rental homes above/alongside it</i>
San Jose, CA	<i>Four floors of housing above a youth-led community center (The HUB) which provides recreational / program space.</i>

Mark Jeffreys

Councilmember Mark Jeffreys

Mark D. Owen

Evan T. Nolan

Anna Albi

Peter Red

general concept

with Tweak

more to reflect

the style

the sample

H C

Z B

City of Cincinnati



801 Plum Street, Suite 356
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Phone (513) 352-5205
Email Jan-Michele.Kearney@cincinnati-oh.gov
Web www.cincinnati-oh.gov

Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney
Vice Mayor

January 12, 2026

MOTION TO CREATE “BUY THE BUILDING” PROGRAM FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

WE MOVE that the administration work with City Council to create a “Buy the Building (BTB)” program to assist small businesses in obtaining ownership of a building in which they will house their business. The City of Cincinnati’s Office of Opportunity would track the progress of the program, including participants’ demographics and report to Council on a quarterly basis.

Similar to the Hamilton County Down Payment Match Program, the City would consider the following for its BTB program:

1. Partnering with an entity such as Alloy to create the BTB program;
2. Establishing funding for up to \$50,000 as down payment assistance.
3. Requiring that part of the building is used for the small business.
4. Requiring that the building is owner-occupied.

In addition, the City of Cincinnati would consider:

1. Eligibility requirements;
2. Owner-occupied, commercial or mixed use (commercial and residential) property purchasers,
3. Property must be within the City of Cincinnati,
4. The business must meet the guidelines of the Small Business Administration’s 504 loan (see Attachment A) except the business may be a nonprofit as well as a for-profit.
5. Allowing mixed use of the building purchased so that its use could be residential as well as commercial.
6. Partnering with 3CDC to provide some of their inventory for the BTB program.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney".

Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

STATEMENT

Many entrepreneurs rent a space for their small business. However, there are many advantages to owning the business' building rather than renting a space in a building. Some of those advantages are as follows:

- **Stability in costs:** Fixed mortgage payments instead of fluctuating rent are predictable and give the entrepreneur more control over finances.
- **Freedom to customize space** without owner's approval and the improvements can add value to the building which further benefits the entrepreneur who owns the building.
- Ownership allows **equity building which increases wealth** and can also be a tool for building the business or in retirement planning.
- Potential for **property appreciation translates into increased wealth** for the entrepreneur.
- **Tax advantages** include the mortgage interest deductions as well as deductions for expenses for the maintenance and improvement of the building.
- Ownership provides a stable location for the business which creates **stability, and security**.
- Potential rental income: Renting out other parts of the building for residential or commercial use **add a stream of income**.

In creating the City's BTB program, most of the requirements of the Small Business Administration's 504 Loan Program (see Attachment A) should be considered for incorporation into the City's program. For example, the entrepreneur's business must have a net worth of less than \$15 million and have an average net income of less than \$5 million. However, the 504 loan program only serves for-profit businesses. The City should consider including non-profits in the BTB program.

The City should also consider a few deviations from the Hamilton County Down Payment Match Program such as not requiring that the business has operated for at least 24 months, and not excluding mixed use (commercial and residential) buildings. The model in many parts of the City such as OTR and College Hill is one where residents live above businesses in the neighborhood business districts.

Finally, the Office of Equity is the appropriate "home" for the BTB program, and should report on the progress of the program in helping small businesses to buy the property where their business is located, as well as track demographic information including race and gender of the participants to ensure equity.

Attachment A

Small Business Administration 504 Loan

What is the 504 loan program?

The 504 loan program provides long-term, fixed rate financing for major fixed assets that promote business growth and job creation.

504 loans are available through Certified Development Companies (CDCs), SBA's community-based nonprofit partners who promote economic development within their communities. CDCs are certified and regulated by SBA.

The maximum loan amount for a 504 loan is \$5.5 million.

Am I eligible?

To be eligible for a 504 loan, your business must:

- Operate as a for-profit company in the United States or its possessions
- Have a tangible net worth of less than \$15 million
- Have an average net income of less than \$5 million after federal income taxes for the two years preceding your application

Other general eligibility standards include falling within SBA size guidelines, having qualified management expertise, a feasible business plan, good character and the ability to repay the loan.

Loans cannot be made to businesses engaged in nonprofit, passive, or speculative activities. For additional information on eligibility criteria and loan application requirements, small businesses and lenders are encouraged to contact a Certified Development Company in their area.

How do I use a 504 loan?

A 504 loan **can** be used for a range of assets that promote business growth and job creation. These include the purchase or construction of:

- Existing buildings or land
- New facilities
- Long-term machinery and equipment with a useful remaining life of a minimum of 10 years, including project-related AI-supported equipment or machinery for manufacturing products

Or the improvement or modernization of:

- Land, streets, utilities, parking lots and landscaping
- Existing facilities

A 504 loan **cannot** be used for:

- Working capital or inventory
- Consolidating, repaying or refinancing debt
- Speculation or investment in rental real estate
- The financing of AI-related working capital, intellectual property, or consulting services soft costs

What do I need to apply?

504 loans are available exclusively through Certified Development Companies (CDCs). Find a CDC in your area to ensure you are dealing with a qualified lender. CDCs are uniquely qualified to understand 504 loan program regulations, and will help you navigate the lender channels to create your project financing.