

January 28, 2026

To: Mayor and Members of City Council
From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager
Subject: **Emergency Ordinance – Renewal of a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area at The Banks**

Attached is an Emergency Ordinance captioned:

APPROVING the continued operations of the existing designated outdoor refreshment area in the Central Business District of Cincinnati, known as the “DORA at the Banks,” for an additional five years pursuant to Chapter 838 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code, “Outdoor Refreshment Areas.”

STATEMENT

VIBRANCY: To further enhance the City’s riverfront area as a destination for urban living, tourism, work, and entertainment. By building off the synergy created by a thriving urban neighborhood adjacent to Paycor Stadium, Great American Ballpark, the Heritage Bank Center, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, and the Andrew J. Brady Icon Music Center, the designated outdoor refreshment area is intended to not only support existing businesses but to attract additional business and investment.

BACKGROUND

Ohio Revised Code (“ORC”) 4301.82, initially enacted in 2015, allows the executive officer of a municipal corporation to submit an application to its legislative authority for the establishment of a designated outdoor refreshment area (“DORA”). In 2015, City Council, enacted Chapter 838 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code (“CMC”), “Outdoor Refreshment Areas,” to provide for the creation of DORAs within the City of Cincinnati.

On February 10, 2021, City Council passed Emergency Ordinance No. 44-2021, approving an application for the creation of a DORA to be known as the ‘DORA at The Banks’.

Pursuant to the Emergency Ordinance No. 44-2021, City Council within five years following the effective date of the Ordinance, shall review the operations of the DORA to determine whether to permit its ongoing operation, under the same or modified requirements, or whether to dissolve it in accordance with applicable laws.

The DORA at The Banks was the City’s first DORA with DORAs in the neighborhoods of Westwood (2021), College Hill (2022), and Hyde Park (2022) to follow.

CURRENT OPERATIONS

On March 31, 2021, the City entered into a Professional Services Management Agreement with the Banks Community Authority (“BCA”) to manage and oversee the operations of the DORA at The Banks and the pedestrian plaza on Freedom Way between Marian Spencer Way and Joe Nuxhall Way (the “Plaza”).

The DORA at The Banks operates year-round in the boundary depicted in Exhibit A, with DORA alcoholic drinks served from 11:00AM ET to 12:00AM ET. Patrons must consume DORA alcoholic drinks within the DORA by 1:00AM ET.

Operationally, there have been no reported issues of DORA beverages circulating beyond the approved boundary. Consistent signage, regularly refreshed maps, and clear rules printed directly on DORA cups reinforce compliance and support enforcement. Beyond late night portering and trash collection, the BCA schedules approximately 1,700 CPD detail hours annually, ensuring a visible and coordinated public safety presence during peak periods. The Department of Community and Economic Development (“DCED”) reviews annual operating reports consisting of annual budgets, previous year financial reports, approximate attendance reports of DORA manager organized events, and inspection reports of the Plaza. DCED has found the BCA to be compliant with these annual operating reports for calendar years 2021-2024 (2025 will be due March 2, 2026).

From an economic standpoint, the BCA estimates that the DORA at The Banks generates \$5 million annually for local businesses, representing an average revenue lift of more than \$250,000 per participating establishment. Eighteen small businesses participate, alongside strong support from major stakeholders, including stadiums and event venues. Annual utilization of approximately 875,000 to 1 million DORA cups underscores both consumer adoption and program vitality.

Overall, the Administration and BCA believe the DORA at The Banks stands as a successful, well-managed model for urban entertainment districts. It delivers measurable economic impact, supports public safety, enhances visitor experience, and provides a replicable framework for cities across Ohio seeking to balance economic vitality with responsible district management. Therefore, the Administration and BCA seek renewal of the DORA at The Banks for another five years under the same requirements.

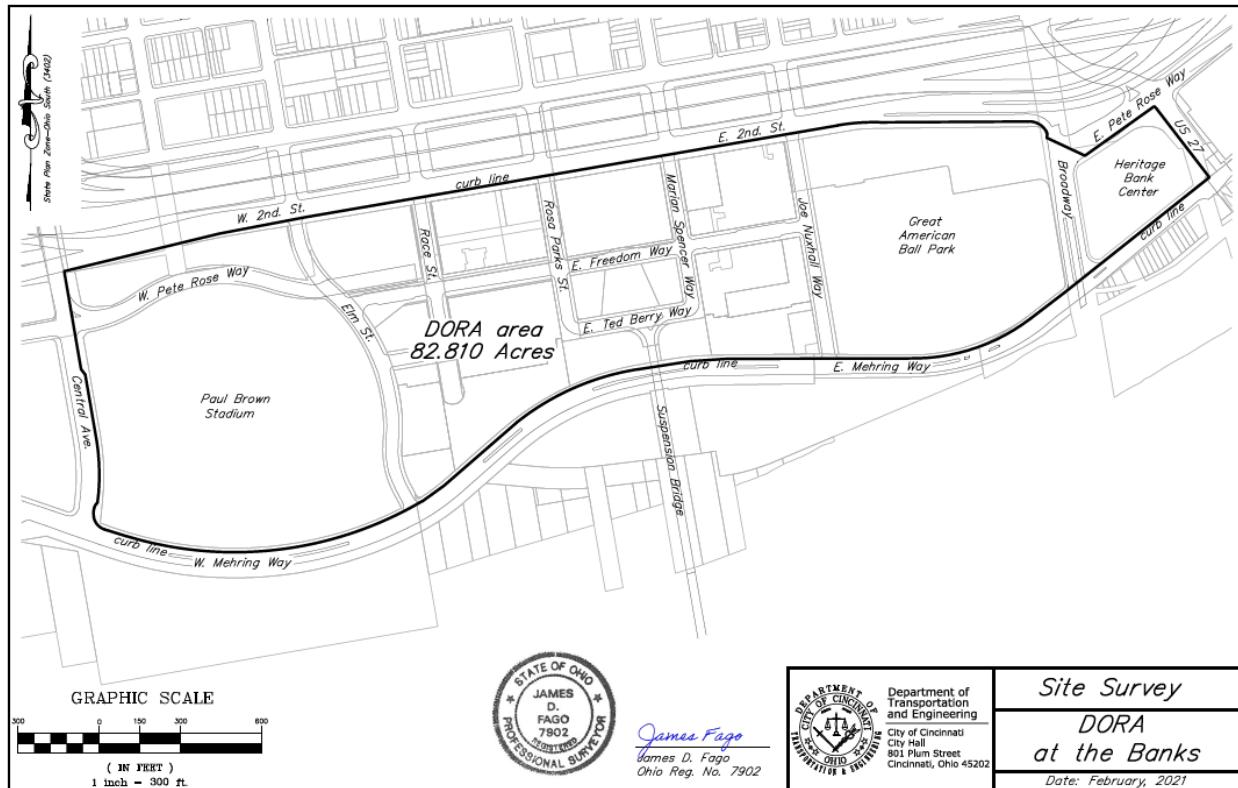
RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends approval of this Emergency Ordinance. The reason for the emergency measure is the immediate need to ensure the continuous and uninterrupted operation of the DORA at the Banks.

Exhibits and Attachments: [DORA at The Banks Site Survey](#)
[Letters of Support](#)

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

EXHIBIT A: DORA AT THE BANKS SITE SURVEY



**ATTACHMENTS: LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR
RENEWAL OF THE DORA AT THE BANKS**

CINCINNATI REDSTM

Great American Ball Park, 100 Joe Nuxhall Way, Cincinnati, OH 45202-4109, Phone: 513.765.7000, Fax: 513.765.7342, www.reds.com

January 9, 2026

Mayor Aftab Pureval
Cincinnati City Council Members
Cincinnati City Hall
811 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mayor Pureval and Members of Cincinnati City Council,

On behalf of the Cincinnati Reds and Great American Ball Park, I am writing to share our continued support of the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) at The Banks.

We believe the DORA District at The Banks is crucial to its vibrancy and enhances the guest experience while creating new revenue streams and sustaining current demand for the bar and restaurant establishments year-round.

We know the DORA District provides a positive experience with economic benefits for the business owners at The Banks.

Thank you for your consideration to continue the DORA District at The Banks.

Sincerely,



Phillip J. Castellini
President & Chief Executive Officer
Cincinnati Reds





January 8, 2026

Mayor Aftab Pureval
Members of Cincinnati City Council
Cincinnati City Hall
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Mayor Pureval and Members of City Council,

On behalf of the Cincinnati Bengals and Paycor Stadium, we strongly support the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) at The Banks as a key amenity that enhances the gameday and event experience.

The Banks DORA has become an extension of the Paycor Stadium fan experience, creating a vibrant, well-managed environment for fans to gather before and after games. It encourages earlier arrivals, longer stays, and positive shared experiences that strengthen connections between fans, the team, and local businesses.

We appreciate your support of the DORA and look forward to the continued success of this valuable program for The Banks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katie Blackburn".

Katie Blackburn
Executive Vice President
Cincinnati Bengals



January 6, 2026

Mayor Aftab Pureval
Cincinnati City Council Members
Cincinnati City Hall
811 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mayor Pureval and Members of Cincinnati City Council,

On behalf of Heritage Bank Center and the Cincinnati Cyclones, I am writing to share our support for the renewal of the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) at The Banks.

DORA at The Banks has been a proven economic win with a \$5M impact through its sale of \$5 cups during the years of its existence. DORA at The Banks enhances the experience for sports fans and concertgoers alike. We have a true arena/stadium district with bar and restaurant options for Cincinnatians and visitors to enjoy ahead of their ticketed event, and allowing them to carry their purchased beverage to the gates of our venue has been a welcomed benefit.

The Cincinnati Cyclones and our host of concerts and events are in full support of the economic and social benefits of a renewed DORA at The Banks will continue to bring to the businesses at The Banks all year round.

Thank you for your support of the renewal of DORA at The Banks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristin Ropp".

Kristin Ropp
Vice President & General Manager
Heritage Bank Center/Cincinnati Cyclones/Cincinnati Cyclones Foundation



January 6, 2026

Mayor Pureval, Councilmembers
Cincinnati City Hall
801 Plum St
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mayor Pureval and City Councilmembers,

Music & Event Management, Inc. is proud to be part of the Banks Entertainment District and to operate the Andrew J. Brady Music Center alongside fellow businesses and community stakeholders committed to delivering high-quality experiences for the Greater Cincinnati region.

Over the past year, MEMI, in partnership with our concession vendor, EVT Management Services, has seen firsthand the positive impact of the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA). The program has contributed to the overall vibrancy of the Banks by encouraging increased visitation, longer stays, and a more dynamic, welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors alike.

Based on its success to date, MEMI fully supports the continuation of the DORA. The program has proven to be a valuable neighborhood amenity that enhances the guest experience, strengthens collaboration among district businesses, and reinforces the Banks as a regional destination for live entertainment, dining, and community engagement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Smith".

Mike Smith
President
Music & Event Management, Inc.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Cahoun".

Jennifer Cahoun
CEO
EVT Management Services, LLC



Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame and Museum presented by Dinsmore

Great American Ball Park
100 Joe Nuxhall Way
Cincinnati, OH 45202-4109
Phone 513.765.7923

January 9, 2026

Mayor Aftab Pureval
Cincinnati City Council Members
Cincinnati City Hall
811 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mayor Pureval and Members of the City Council:

The Reds Hall of Fame and Museum is a national baseball museum attraction at The Banks that is highly-regarded as one of the finest sports museums in existence. Open year-round, our success relies heavily on visitor traffic to The Banks, a vibrant entertaining atmosphere, and successful businesses, restaurants, and bars working together to create superior experiences for guests.

The establishment of the DORA District added to the overall guest experience at The Banks, created a sense of unity and connection among the bars and restaurants and provided tangible economic benefits to the local businesses. The District is an important element to The Banks' future success and for all of the reasons stated above, the museum stands in support of continuing the Dora District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rick Walls'.

Rick Walls
Executive Director



January 7, 2026

Mayor Aftab Pureval
Members of Cincinnati City Council
Cincinnati City Hall
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Mayor Pureval and Members of Cincinnati City Council,

On behalf of Crawford Hoying, I am writing to express our strong support for the continued operation and success of the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) at The Banks and to share the value it delivers as a proven economic development and placemaking initiative in downtown Cincinnati.

As an investor and partner in The Banks, Crawford Hoying has been engaged in the district's evolution as a destination for sports, entertainment, dining, residential living, and public gathering. The Banks was intentionally created as an active entertainment district, and the DORA program directly supports that vision by creating a cohesive, welcoming environment that connects businesses, venues, and public spaces throughout the district.

The impact of the DORA at The Banks is clear and measurable. Serving more than 4.5 million visitors annually and supporting activity an average of 250 days per year, the program generates an estimated \$5 million in annual economic impact for local businesses. Eighteen participating establishments benefit from increased foot traffic, longer dwell times, and consistent patronage, while annual utilization of some 1 million DORA cups.

Crawford Hoying fully supports the City of Cincinnati's continued partnership in maintaining the DORA at The Banks. The program strengthens downtown vitality, supports local businesses, and enhances the overall experience for residents and visitors alike. We appreciate the leadership of the Mayor and City Council and look forward to continued collaboration to ensure the long-term success of The Banks.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brent Crawford".

Brent Crawford
Co-Founder and Principal
Crawford Hoying