

February 19, 2026

To: Mayor and Members City Council

From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager

202600905

**Subject: Emergency Ordinance – Transient Occupancy Tax Exemption
for Convention Center Headquarters Hotel**

Attached is an Emergency Ordinance captioned:

DECLARING a hotel to be developed on property located at 240 W. Fourth Street and 251 W. Fifth Street in the Central Business District of Cincinnati to be designated a convention center headquarters hotel for purposes of Ohio Revised Code Section 5739.093; **DECLARING** such convention center headquarters hotel and any associated convention center headquarters hotel facilities to be a public purpose; **DECLARING** lodging transactions occurring at such convention center headquarters hotel to be exempt from City of Cincinnati's lodging taxes levied pursuant to Cincinnati Municipal Code Chapter 312 for a period of thirty years; **REQUIRING** the convention center headquarters hotel's qualifying vendor to make payments in lieu of qualifying lodging taxes; **ESTABLISHING** new Fund 406, "Convention Center Hotel Lodging Tax Equivalent Fund," for the purpose of receiving payments in lieu of qualifying lodging taxes associated with the convention center headquarters hotel; and **AUTHORIZING** expenditures from the newly-created Fund 406, "Convention Center Hotel Lodging Tax Equivalent Fund," to facilitate construction financing for the convention center headquarters hotel and any associated convention center headquarters hotel facilities.

STATEMENT

The Convention Headquarters Hotel project is a critical component of the City's broader Convention District strategy and is essential to maintaining Cincinnati's competitiveness in the national convention and tourism market. The project will activate underutilized publicly controlled land, strengthen connections between the Convention Center and other Downtown assets such as Fountain Square, and support increased convention bookings, visitor spending, and long-term economic activity.

BACKGROUND/CURRENT CONDITIONS

A separate ordinance will request Council approval to authorize the City Manager to enter into a Development Agreement with Cincinnati CH (OH) LLC, pertaining to the development of the Convention Center Headquarters Hotel project at 251 West Fifth

Street and 240 West Fourth Street in the Central Business District. The project will include the construction of a 700-room premium branded hotel with full service amenities, approximately 63,000 square feet of meeting space, an approximately 17,000 square foot outdoor event area, approximately 4,500 square feet of leasable ground floor commercial space, and an attached elevated pedestrian walkway, which will connect the hotel to the Convention Center and the Convention Center Garage located at 210 W. Fourth Street (formerly Whex Garage). The Development Agreement provides for City assistance to the project in the form of a 30-year transient occupancy tax (TOT) exemption pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 5739.093, subject to passage by Council of this separate ordinance authorizing the tax exemption.

DEVELOPER INFORMATION

Cincinnati CH (OH), LLC is a subsidiary of Portman Holdings, a real estate development and management firm headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. Founded in 1957, Portman has developed more than 75 million square feet of hospitality, industrial, and mixed-use projects nationwide. Their portfolio includes multiple convention center headquarters hotels in major cities such as Salt Lake City, San Diego, and Charlotte.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends approval of this Emergency Ordinance. The emergency clause is necessary to confirm City support prior to financial closing and so that construction can commence at the earliest possible time.

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