### Honorable City Planning Commission Cincinnati, Ohio

**SUBJECT:** A report and recommendation on a proposed Notwithstanding Ordinance for relief from the signage standards in the Downtown Development (DD) zoning district for the stadium located at 1 Paul Brown Stadium Way in the Central Business District.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Location: 1 Paul Brown Stadium Way, Cincinnati, OH 45202

Petitioner/ Cincinnati Bengals, Inc.

Petitioner's Address: 1 Paul Brown Stadium Way, Cincinnati, OH 45202

Property Owner/ Hamilton County Board of Commissioners Property Owner's Address: 138 E. Court Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Provided in addition to this report are the following attachments:

- Exhibit A Location Map
- Exhibit B Notwithstanding Ordinance (NWO) Application
- Exhibit C Notwithstanding Ordinance (NWO) Application Part B1
- Exhibit D Notwithstanding Ordinance (NWO) Application Part B2

### **BACKGROUND:**

On August 5, 2022, the Department of City Planning and Engagement received an application for a Notwithstanding Ordinance (NWO) from the Cincinnati Bengals requesting the installation of permanent signage located at Paul Brown Stadium. Since constructed, it has been named "Paul Brown Stadium," home to the Cincinnati Bengals, a National Football League (NFL) team, and is now being renamed to "Paycor Stadium."

The subject property (the "Stadium") is located in the Central Business District and is owned by the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners. The property is zoned Downtown District (DD) Subdistrict D-Riverfront, which is located a subdistrict meant to enhance the downtown area by providing sites for commercial recreation, hotel, retail and office space and housing in an urban neighborhood along the Riverfront. The Stadium is situated south of W. Pete Rose Way, north of W. Mehring Way and the Ohio River, and is in between Central Avenue and Elm Street. The Stadium is highly recognized throughout the City of Cincinnati and is near Smale Riverfront Park, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center and Great American Ball Park. The Stadium is directly east of the Bengal's Interim Indoor Practice Facility, which received City approval in April of 2022 and is currently under construction.

The renaming of Paul Brown Stadium is universal in both the NFL and other sports arenas throughout the country. Similar stadiums that have been renamed within Cincinnati include Great American Ballpark (home to the Cincinnati Reds), TQL Stadium (home to Football Club Cincinnati), and Heritage Bank Arena (home to the Cincinnati Cyclones). The applicant is requesting this Notwithstanding Ordinance concurrently with a request for additional temporary sign variances through the City's Zoning Hearing Examiner, scheduled to be heard on August 24, 2022.

### PROPOSED NOTWITHSTANDING ORDINANCE:

The proposed language in the Notwithstanding Ordinance authorizes the construction and operation of the development notwithstanding Section 1411-39 (Signs) of the Cincinnati Zoning Code. Section 1411-39(f) (Building Identification Signs) states that: "Building identification signs must comply with the following:

- (1) One trademark or building identification sign identifying the principal occupant as determined by the building owner of a building is allowed for each building facade, with a maximum of four signs for the building.
- (2) The trademark or the letters comprising the occupant name must be affixed directly to the building facade.
- (3) The building facade underlying the trademark or name may not be painted or otherwise differentiated from the remainder of the building facade merely to draw attention to the sign.
- (4) The top of the sign may not project above the parapet, nor may the parapet be enlarged to accommodate a sign.
- (5) The sign may be illuminated, but may not be a flashing sign.
- (6) The maximum size of the sign cannot exceed the width of the wall on which the sign is attached multiplied by one foot for each 30 feet the top of the sign is located above street grade or 1,800 square feet, whichever is less. For example, a sign whose top is 400 feet above street grade is proposed to be located on a wall that is 150 feet in width where the sign is to be located. The maximum size equals the lesser of  $13 \times 150 = 1,950$  and 1,800. The maximum size is 1,800."

The proposed exterior Stadium signage needing Zoning Code Relief with the following approximate sign locations and square footages are listed below:

North	Type	Quantity	Square Footage
	Scoreboard Back	1	2,304
	Scoreboard Back – PBS	1	360
South	Scoreboard Back	1	2,228
	Scoreboard Back – PBS	1	360
East	Canopy	1	22,400
	Halo Beam	1	3,840
	Steel Mesh	2	5,760
West	Canopy	1	22,400
	Halo Beam	1	3,840
	Steel Mesh	2	5,760
Total		12	69,252

The applicant is requesting relief from the total number and dimensional sign limitations contained in Section 1411-39 of the Code to allow for the installation of the proposed signage (Exhibit D). The applicant is additionally requesting any relief that would be necessary to allow for the lighting of the proposed signage by backlit LED lighting, flood lighting directed at the signs, or other similar and reasonable means of light of the proposed signage.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The Department of City Planning and Engagement has consistently taken a position to not support Notwithstanding Ordinances because they do not comply with the Cincinnati Zoning Code that the Department is charged with developing and enforcing. The Cincinnati Municipal Code Section 111-5 establishes certain factors for evaluation by the City Council committee that considers a Notwithstanding Ordinance application, and the Department will therefore provide input on the following factors.

The City Planning Commission shall consider the following when making a recommendation on NWOs to City Council:

1) Whether the proposed application will not have an adverse effect on the character of the area or the public health, safety and welfare;

The proposed signage will not have any negative impacts on the character of the proposed location area, or the public health, safety, and welfare as the proposed signage will replace most of the existing signage that is already being displayed by the Bengals. There are also no residential properties within 400-feet of the subject property.

- 2) Whether the proposed application is consistent with the purposes of this code and the zoning district where the subject property is located including but not limited to:
  - (a) Providing a guide for the physical development of the city.

Not applicable to this application.

(b) Preserving the character and quality of residential neighborhoods.

Not applicable to this application.

(c) Fostering convenient, harmonious and workable relationships among land uses.

This proposed signage is situated harmoniously within the confinements of the larger entertainment district area along the riverfront, promoting a lively atmosphere ideal for sporting events.

(d) Achieving the arrangement of land uses described in the comprehensive plan for the development of the city as may have been adopted by council.

The proposed Notwithstanding Ordinance is consistent with Plan Cincinnati (2012) (see "Consistency with Plan Cincinnati" for further information in this staff report).

(e) Promoting the economic stability of existing land uses and protecting them from intrusions by inharmonious or harmful land uses.

*Not applicable to this application.* 

(f) Providing opportunities for economic development and new housing for all segments of the community.

The proposed signage will promote the new title sponsor, Paycor, of the Stadium and will replace all the signage associated with Paul Brown Stadium. The Cincinnati Bengals are intimately tied to the Cincinnati economy and this signage would promote their economic viability of the newly renamed stadium. This will lastly benefit Cincinnati as well as Hamilton County.

(g) Creating pedestrian-friendly environments to reduce reliance on the automobile for travel.

The proposed signage will not present any traffic or safety concerns and is position and designed in a way that will not interfere with roadway travel or affect the pedestrian environment found in the riverfront area, The Banks, and adjacent property of the stadium.

(h) Preventing excessive population densities and overcrowding of land or buildings.

Not applicable to this application.

(i) Ensuring the provision of adequate open space for light, air and fire safety.

*Not applicable to this application.* 

(j) Ensuring that development is compatible with the environment, particularly on the hillsides and along the riverfront.

This proposed request is compatible with the surrounding environment and riverfront and is consistent with entertainment district uses and signage commonly found on other NFL stadiums and entertainment districts.

(k) Promoting the conservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of the historic resources of the city.

*Not applicable to this application.* 

(l) Lessening congestion in the public streets by providing for off-street parking and loading areas for commercial vehicles.

Not applicable to this application.

(m)Providing effective signage that is compatible with the surrounding urban environment.

The applicant is proposing signage that is unique to the City and which is similar found with signage on Great American Ballpark, TQL Stadium, and Heritage Bank Arena. Strictly applying the provisions of the Cincinnati Zoning Code to this particular request would result in practical difficulties.

Paul Brown Stadium, soon to be Paycor Stadium, is an extremely large structure with large expanses of wall area. Stadiums in general, like many other stadiums in other cities, do not fit well within the regulations intended for storefronts at the ground level of high-rise buildings. The pure size of the stadium needs any signage to be appropriately scaled to the structure in order to be effective.

The applicant has also stated that the renaming of stadia is a common practice within the NFL, as 29 out of the 32 NFL stadia include some form of naming rights sponsorship. The unique nature of 'Paycor Stadium' does not fit well with the Downtown Development District regulations.

(n) Setting standards by which a nonconforming use may continue to function and to provide for the adaptive reuse of nonconforming buildings.

Not applicable to this application.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT AND NOTIFICATION:**

Notice for the August 19, 2022 City Planning Commission meeting was sent to property owners within 400-feet of the proposal in addition to the Downtown Residents Council. No comments have been received to-date.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH PLAN CINCINNATI (2012):**

The proposed Notwithstanding Ordinance is consistent with *Plan Cincinnati* (2012), specifically within the Compete Initiative Area. This proposed facility contributes to the goal to "Foster a climate conducive to growth, investment, stability and opportunity" (p. 103) through the Strategy to "Grown our own" by focusing on retention, expansion and relocation of existing businesses" (p. 104). This request is an important way to display the new stadium name and to retain the Cincinnati Bengals by meeting their needs and helping them achieve their goals. The new stadium name and signage will contribute to the City's energy, economic vitality, and job growth along with facilitating the development of the local professional sports industry.

This request is additionally consistent with the goal to "Become nationally and international recognized as a vibrant and unique city" (p. 121) and would "Provide support to businesses that focus on our City's historic heritage of...the arts and other cultural traditions" (p. 123).

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

This request for a Notwithstanding Ordinance will allow the Cincinnati Bengals to have the proposed signage installed and provide relief from the Cincinnati Zoning Code. The requested relief through the Notwithstanding Ordinance has been found to be reasonable since the proposed Notwithstanding Ordinance:

- Is consistent with the surrounding land uses;
- Permits the usage of additional signage in the Downtown Development (DD) zoning district;
- Grants relief from the Cincinnati Zoning Code;
- Is consistent with *Plan Cincinnati* (2012).

The Department of City Planning and Engagement has generally consistently taken the position to not support Notwithstanding Ordinances for land use decisions because they do not comply with the zoning laws that the department is charged with developing and enforcing. This request is similar to the proposed signage Notwithstanding Ordinances requested by the Cincinnati Reds for their video board, signage for The Foundry, and the Casino signage.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Department of City Planning and Engagement recommends that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

**DENY** the Notwithstanding Ordinance for relief from the signage standards in the Downtown Development (DD) zoning district for the stadium located at 1 Paul Brown Stadium Way in the Central Business District.

 The Department of City Planning and Engagement typically does not support Notwithstanding Ordinances for land use decisions because the ordinances do not comply with the zoning laws that the Department of City Planning and Engagement is charged with developing and enforcing. If the City Planning Commission decides to recommend **APPROVAL** of the Notwithstanding Ordinance, the City Planning Commission should consider the following conditions:

- 1) The signage for the Stadium should be placed and dimensioned consistent within the locations and dimensions identified on the plans proposed in Exhibit D Notwithstanding Ordinance (NWO) Application Part B2;
- 2) No more than one sign may be installed within each of the locations identified on the plans proposed in Exhibit D Notwithstanding Ordinance (NWO) Application Part B2;
- 3) The signage should be static and should not incorporate screens or other elements that flash or display video, animations, or moving images;
- 4) The illumination for the signage should be consistent with industry safety standards and avoid adverse impacts on adjacent properties; and
- 5) That, aside from the variances necessary to permit the installation of signs, the Stadium should remain subject to all other provisions of the Cincinnati Municipal Code, DD, "Downtown Development," zoning district.

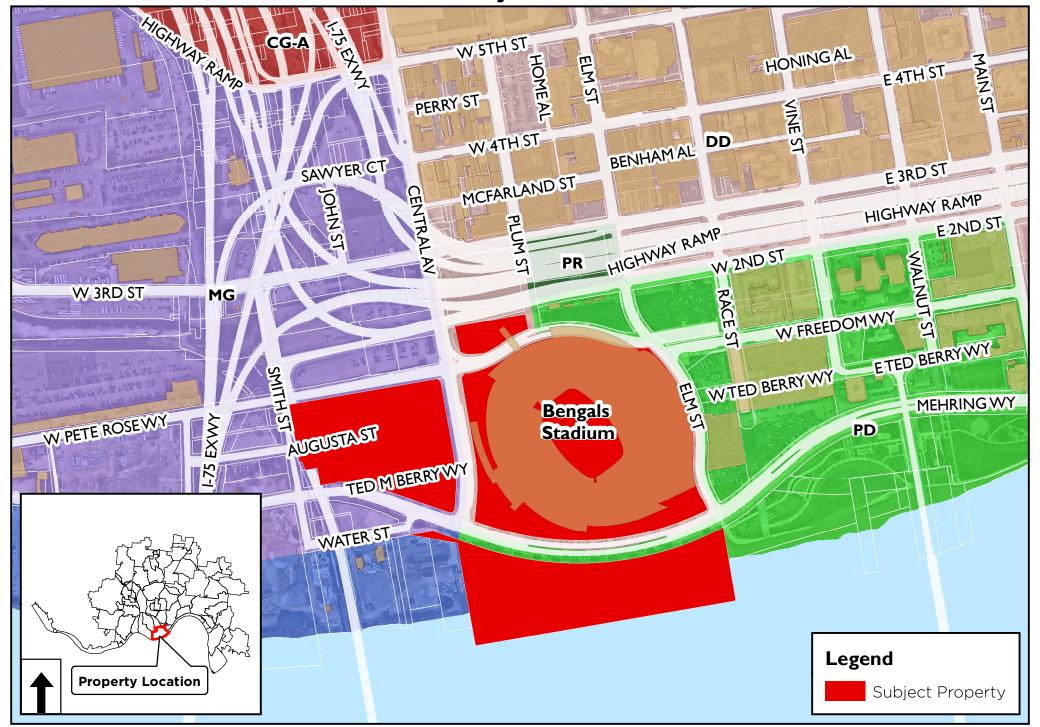
Respectfully submitted:

Jesse Urbancsik, Senior City Planner Department of City Planning and Engagement Approved:

Latherine Kenyh-Jus

Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director Department of City Planning and Engagement

# Proposed Notwithstanding Ordinance for Signage at 1 Paul Brown Stadium Way in the Central Business District





805 CENTRAL AVE, SUITE 720 CINCINNATI OHIO 45202 **P** 513 352 3271 **F** 513 352 2579 WWW.CINCINNATI-OH.GOV CAGIS.HAMILTON-CO.ORG

Notwithstanding Ordinance Application		
INITIALIZED BY		

Part A - Identi	ification				
Subject Property	Address (Please prin	nt in blue or black ink only)			
Applicant - Name	e (Print)	Phone	No	E-mail Address	
Street Number &	Name	City / State / Zip Code	Phone No / Fax N	No	
Relationship of A	pplicant to Owner:	Owner	Lessee	Attorney	
Property Owner	- Name (Print)	Phone	No	E-mail Address	
Street Number &	Name	City / State / Zip Code	Phone No / Fax N	10	
Part B - Subm	nission Requirem	ents (Please provide the	following for a com	nplete application)	
				may be obtained through .gov or by calling (513) 352-2430.	
	A written statement outlining all of the practical difficulties created by following existing legislative and administrative procedures.				
at 80	Submit one (1) paper copy and one (1) digital copy of the application to the Director of City Planning at 805 Central Avenue, Suite 720, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202. Payment must be included with the application. (Payable to the City of Cincinnati)				
Part C - Autho	rization				

### Part C - Authorization

The applicant or agent undersigned does hereby certify that the information and statements given on the application, drawings, and inspections are to the best of their knowledge, true and correct. The undersigned further certifies their authorization to grant consent to the inspection by employees of the City of Cincinnati of the described premises at any time when work on those premises is ongoing and hereby grants their consent.				
Applicant's Signature	Date			
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY				
Reviewed By:	Processing Fee			
City Planning Staff	Date Application Complete			

# CINCINNATI BENGALS, INC. NOTWITHSTANDING ORDINANCE APPLICATION PART B1

### City of Cincinnati Zoning Map Showing the Subject Property

The following image is excerpted from the City of Cincinnati zoning map found at <a href="Zoning(1).pdf">Zoning(1).pdf</a> (cincinnati-oh.gov) and depicts the DD zoning for Hamilton County Parcel ID No. 082-A02-0001-00



## CINCINNATI BENGALS, INC. NOTWITHSTANDING ORDINANCE APPLICATION PART B2

### Reasons for the Notwithstanding Ordinance Request

Cincinnati Bengals, Inc. (the "**Team**") respectfully files this application to seek the support of the City of Cincinnati for the installation of certain signs at Paul Brown Stadium to recognize a future naming rights sponsor. Specifically, the Team seeks relief from the maximum display area and maximum height limitations for building identification and wall signs contained in Section 1411-39 of the City of Cincinnati Municipal Code (the "**Code**") to allow for the installation of signs at the locations depicted on the attached **Exhibit B2-A** (the "**Signs**").

Sponsorship relationships that include stadium naming rights have become almost universal in both the National Football League ("NFL") and other sports arenas around the country. Indeed, at the time of this application 29 of the 32 NFL franchises enjoy such naming rights sponsorship relationships; as do, for example, Great American Ballpark, TQL Stadium, and Heritage Bank Arena here in Cincinnati. Approval of this request by the City of Cincinnati will therefore contribute greatly to the continuing operation of a successful NFL franchise in the City of Cincinnati by allowing the Team to pursue and benefit from the same type of sponsorship relationships enjoyed by its competitors in the NFL and its peers in the City.

The 2021 NFL season demonstrated the deep and important relationship between the Team and this community. The entire city came together to support the Team as it played its way to Super Bowl LVI. The Team's playoff run was more than just exhilarating; it brought tangible benefits to the City. According to one report, the Team's success helped generate \$4.4 billion worth of free advertising for Cincinnati. It gave the opportunity for Mayor Pureval and other City and civic leaders, including our Convention and Visitors Bureau, to promote Cincinnati to the world. Approval of this application will enhance the Team's ability to make the kind of significant investments on and off the field that should continue to allow the franchise to compete at the highest levels in the NFL.

Seizing on the opportunity created by the 2021 season as it relates to potential naming rights sponsors requires the Team be in the position to install the Signs during the 2022 season, which commences September 11 with a home game against the team from Pittsburgh. To accommodate this practical necessity, the Team is, on a parallel path, pursuing a temporary variance through the City of Cincinnati Zoning Hearing Examiner to allow for the installation of temporary signs on the east and west club windows and the east and west canopy roofs, all as depicted and described in the temporary variance application attached as **Exhibit B2-B**. The granting of that variance and the approval of this notwithstanding ordinance application will allow the Team to maximize the potential benefit of a naming rights sponsorship for this season by coordinating the installation of the window and canopy signs that can be more quickly installed with the potentially trailing installation of the "Halo Beam," "Steel Mesh," "Scoreboard Back," and "Existing PBS

Signage" signs depicted on Exhibit B2-A that may take more time to manufacture (the vinyl "Canopy" signs are included in both applications, as the Team intends for the Canopy signs to be permanent as well).

The notwithstanding ordinance requested here – together with the temporary variance application that has already been submitted – are the only practical avenues to allowing the installation of the Signs during the 2022 season. The Team submits that this application is justified both by the demonstration of that practical difficulty, but also the consistent position the City administration has taken over the years in recognizing that the strict application of the zoning code to Paul Brown Stadium and other similar venues is unreasonable because of the square peg/round hole relationship of the DD zoning district – which was designed to regulate signage on vertically-oriented downtown office, residential, and mixed-used buildings and storefronts – to horizontally-oriented sports and entertainment venues like Paul Brown Stadium. Indeed, the City administration has eloquently recognized the practical difficultly of strictly applying the wall sign regulations of the DD district to Paul Brown Stadium before when supporting previous sign-related variance requests:

"Paul Brown Stadium, along with Great American Ballpark and US Bank Arena, are unique building types in the downtown area. Strictly applying the provisions of the Zoning Code to the particular request would result in practical difficulties. The structure is very large with a horizontal orientation, rather than the vertical emphasis typically found in downtown buildings...the nature of the stadium and the signs themselves do not fit well within the regulations intended for storefronts at the ground level of high-rise buildings."

Similarly, in response to that same application, the Zoning Hearing Examiner found the Team had demonstrated that "[t]he sheer size of the Property makes it difficult for the Owner to effectively install signage at the property in a proportionally appropriate manner within the context of the overall development. In light of this unique condition and hardship, it is unreasonable to strictly apply the Zoning Code.<sup>2</sup>"

The previous findings of the City administration and Zoning Hearing Examiner support this simple point very well: the uniquely large scale and horizontal orientation of Paul Brown Stadium means that in order for exterior signs there to be experienced the same way by viewers, and to appear in similar proportions to the rest of the building, they must be larger than the limitations of Section 1411-39 which apply to other downtown buildings. In other words, signs at the Stadium must be larger in order for them to be useful as signs.

In reliance on the reasoning and descriptions described above, the Team respectfully submits this application and thanks the City in advance for its consideration.

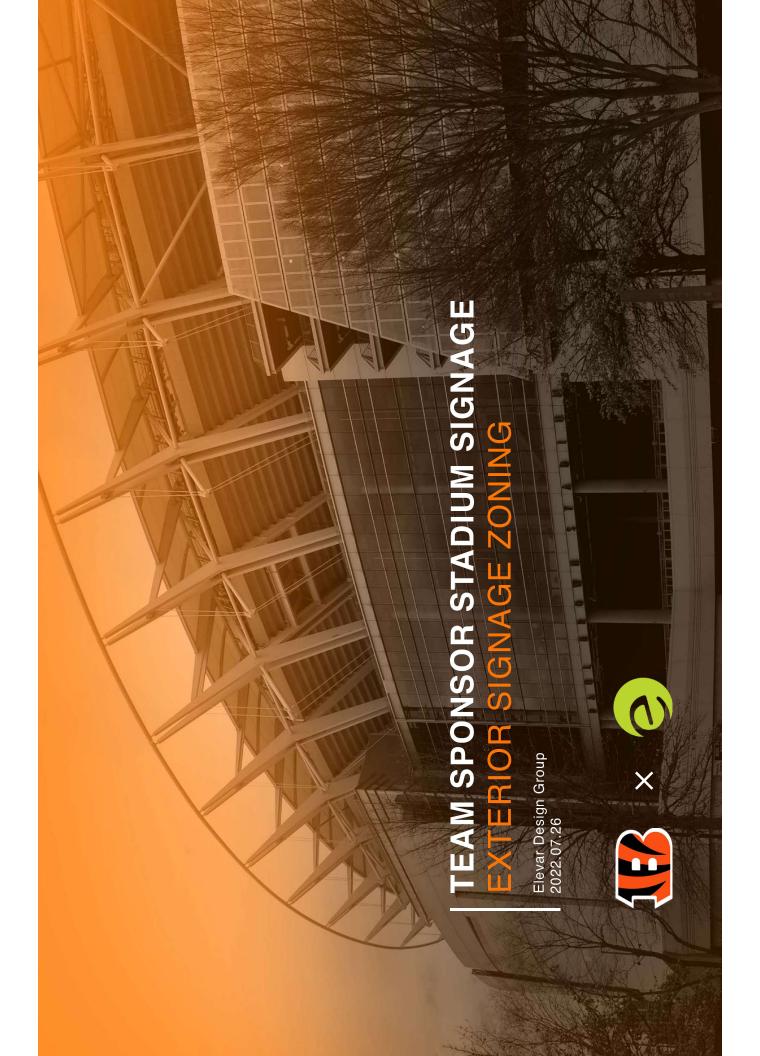
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Staff Report for Application #ZH20180145

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Decision of the Zoning Hearing Examiner, Case. No. ZH20180145

### **Description of Zoning Code Relief Sought**

The Team is requesting relief from the dimensional sign limitations contained in Section 1411-39 of the Code to allow installation of the Signs depicted on Exhibit B2-A. The Team also seeks any relief that would be necessary to allow the lighting of the Signs by backlit LED lighting, flood lighting directed directly at the signs, or other similar and reasonable means of lighting the Signs.

# EXHIBIT B2-A SIZE AND LOCATION OF SIGNS





### **CANOPY - WEST**

 "Canopy West"
 Type: Banner or Similar
 Lighting: Flood, LED or Similar Elevation (At top of sign): 668' - 6" at highest point Size: 64' X 350' = 22,400 SF

### **HALO BEAM - WEST**

2 "Halo Beam West" Type: Stainless Steel Lighting: TBD Elevation (At top of sign): 667" at highest point Size: 160' X 24' = 3,840 SF

### STEEL MESH - WEST

"Steel Mesh West - Left" Type: Stainless Steel Lighting: TBD Elevation (At top of sign): 581' - 6" Size: 80' x 36' = 2,880 SF

4 "Steel Mesh West - Right" Type: Stainless Steel
Lighting: TBD
Elevation (At top of sign): 581' - 6" Size: 80' x 36' = 2,880 SF

Grand Total: 32,000 SF

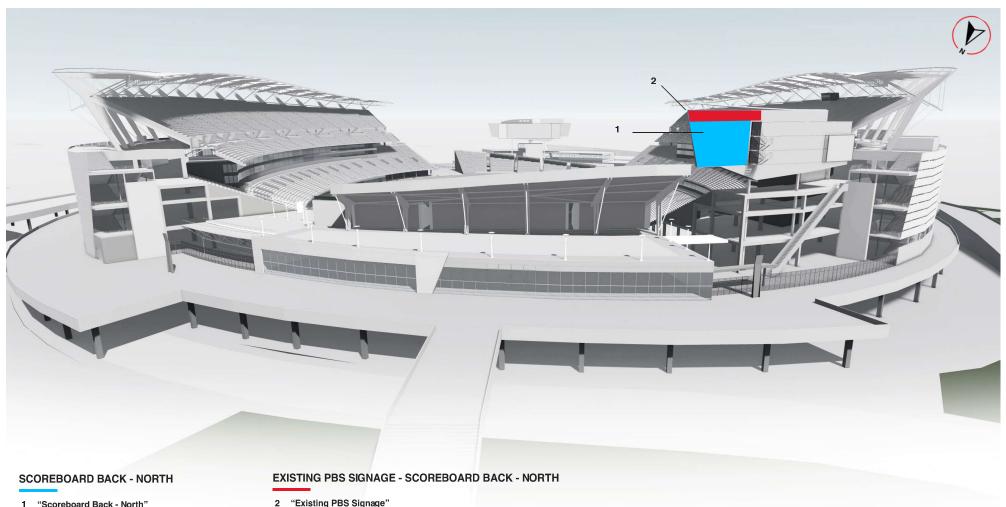
### Exterior Stadium Signage - West Side

2 • Team Sponsor Stadium Signage – Exterior Signage Zoning









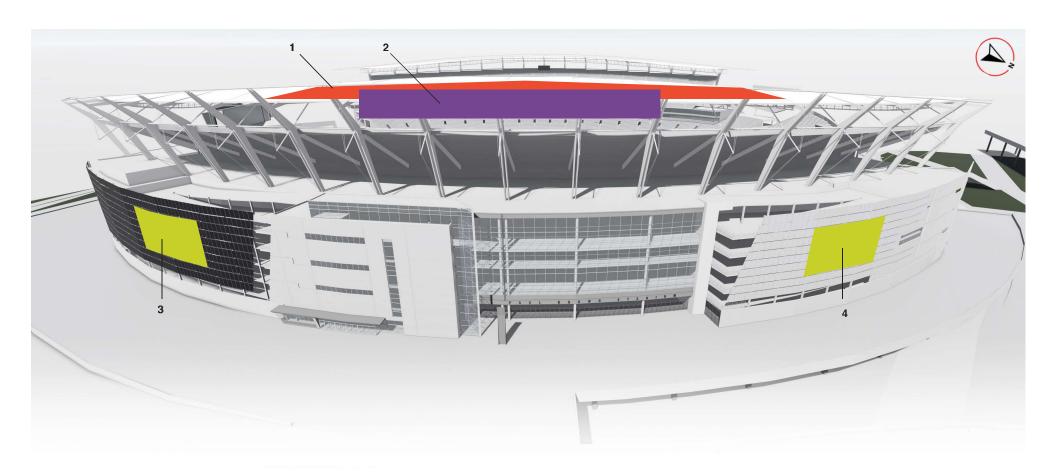
1 "Scoreboard Back - North" Type: Stainless Steel Lighting: TBD Elevation (At top of sign): 626' Size: 64' X 36' = 2,304 SF 2 "Existing PBS Signage" Type: Stainless Steel Lighting: TBD Elevation (At top of sign): 626' Size: 60' X 6' = 360 SF

### Exterior Stadium Signage – North Side









### **CANOPY - EAST**

1 "Canopy East"
Type: Banner or Similar
Lighting: Flood, LED or Similar
Elevation (At top of sign):
668' - 6" at highest point
Size: 64' X 350' = 22,400 SF

### **HALO BEAM - EAST**

2 "Halo Beam East"
Type: Stainless Steel
Lighting: TBD
Elevation (At top of sign):
667" at highest point
Size: 160' X 24' = 3,840 SF

### STEEL MESH - EAST

"Steel Mesh East - Left"
Type: Stainless Steel
Lighting: TBD
Elevation (At top of sign): 581' - 6"
Size: 80' x 36' = 2,880 SF

4 "Steel Mesh East - Right" Type: Stainless Steel Lighting: TBD Elevation (At top of sign): 581' - 6" Size: 80' x 36' = 2,880 SF Grand Total: 32,000 SF

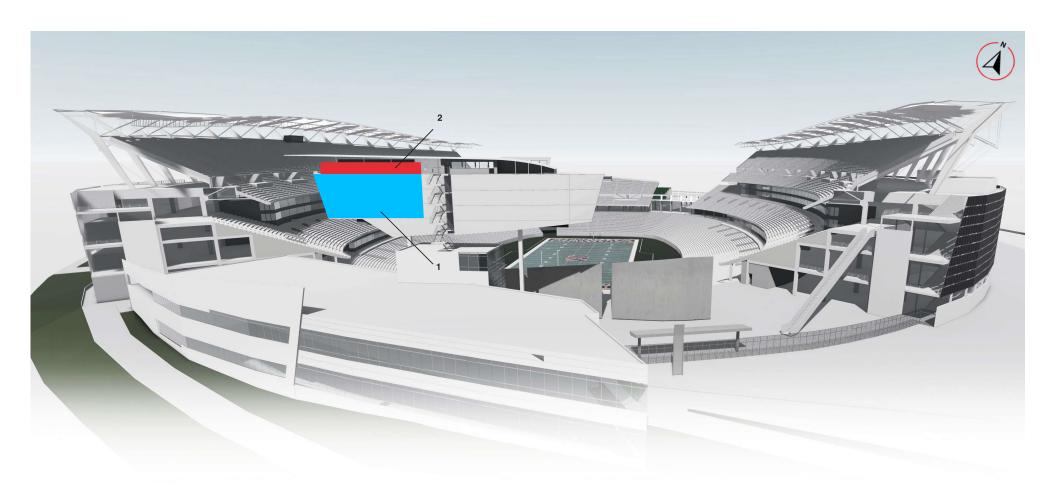
### Exterior Stadium Signage - East Side

4 • Team Sponsor Stadium Signage – Exterior Signage Zoning









### **SCOREBOARD BACK - SOUTH**

1 "Scoreboard Back - South" Type: Stainless Steel
Lighting: TBD
Elevation (At top of sign): 605'
Size: 76' X 30' = 2,228 SF

### **EXISTING PBS SIGNAGE - SCOREBOARD BACK - SOUTH**

2 "Existing PBS Signage" Type: Stainless Steel Lighting: TBD Elevation (At top of sign): 605' Size: 60' X 6' = 360 SF

### Exterior Stadium Signage – South Side





# EXHIBIT B2-B TEMPORARY VARIANCE APPLICATION



### **ZONING HEARING EXAMINER**

### Application for Zoning Relief

II Centennial Plaza 805 Central Avenue, Suite 500 Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 Monday- Friday 7:30 am- 4 pm 513-352-1559

Boards@cincinnati-oh.gov

Office Use Only

Case Number:

	Hearing Date:	
Section 1. SUBJECT PROPERTY		
ADDRESS 1 Paul Brown Stadium	COMMUNITY Downtown Riverfront District	
PARCEL ID(S) 00820A02001	HILLSIDE DISTRICT: □ Yes 🗷 No	
BASE ZONING CLASSIFICATION DD-D	ZONING OVERLAY (if applicable)	
HISTORIC DISTRICT: ☑ No ☐ Yes: (nar	ne)	
✓ Non-Residential Project ☐ Residential	ential Project (RCO) One -, Two -, and Three- Family Dwelling	
Section 2. APPLICANT	and the Diopher	
NAME Cincinnati Bengals	CONTACT PERSON (if legal entity) Luke Blocher	
ADDRESS 1 Paul Brown Stadium	CITY Cincinnati STATE Ohio ZIP 45202	
EMAIL lblocher@taftlaw.com	RELATIONSHIP TO OWNER (if not owner) Lessee	
TELEPHONE 513-357-9377		
Section 3. OWNER	. –	
NAME Hamilton County Board of Commissioners	CONTACT PERSON (if legal entity) Joe Feldkamp	
ADDRESS 138 East Court Street	CITY Cincinnati STATE Ohio ZIP 45202	
EMAIL joe.feldkamp@hamilton-co.org	RELATIONSHIP TO OWNER (if not owner)	
TELEPHONE 513-455-4955		
Section 4. NATURE OF RELIEF REQUEST		
✓ Variance □ Special Exception	n □ Conditional Use □ Use Variance  Iforming Use □ Hillside Overlay District Permission	
□ Urban Design Overlay District Permis	sion   DD District Phased Development Approval	
- Orban Design Overlay District Fermis	Sion District Plased Development Approval	
Section 5. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROI	POSED PROJECT (Do not write "see attached" or leave blank. You may	
	on if the space provided is insufficient to describe your proposed project)	
Installation of temporary sponsor-re-	cognition signs on the exterior windows and canopy roof of Paul	
Brown Stadium, as described in the	attached Section 6.	
Section 6. SUMMARY OF REASONS WH		
·	explaining how the proposed project meets the standards for all relief	
·	eparing this statement are attached. If you fail to follow the	
instructions for your type of request, <u>yo</u>	our application may be denied.	
Section 7 SIGNATURE The undersigned	d does hereby certify that the information provided in connection with	
this application is, to the best of his or h		
application is, to the best of fils of t		
Print Name Luke Blocher	Signature Luke Blocher of the Bloche	
rillit Name Lake Bloomer	Signature Signat	

### Section 8. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS.

If you fail to complete the application or provide all information requested, <u>your application may be denied</u>. All application transactions must be completed by 4:00pm. No exceptions.

	Submit two (2) paper copies collated, single sided and bound together, and
	one (1) digital copy in PDF format of all the documents listed below.
	All documents (forms, letters, etc.) must be formatted to 8.5x11.
	Plans or drawings may be formatted to 11x17 or 12x18, but no larger sizes will be accepted.
<b>/</b>	Zoning Hearing Examiner application.
<b>V</b>	Denial letter from Zoning Department, or signed letter from a Zoning Plans Examiner.
	Written statement required in Section 6 of application.
	Applications requesting development permission in a Hillside Overlay District must meet the additional requirements found in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1433-15. Please ensure your
	application meets these requirements.
	Accurate drawings, plans or surveys (including a graphic scale) showing boundaries,
	dimensions, areas, topography, and frontage of the property involved, as well as the location
	and dimensions of all structures <b>existing and proposed</b> from the nearest property lines.
	When landscaping is required by the zoning code, a landscaping plan must be provided.
	Detailed information (such as photographs, elevations, specifications) fully depicting the
	exterior appearance of the <b>existing and proposed</b> project, including parking and access,
	exterior lighting, landscaping, and signs involved in the application.
	The Hamilton County Auditor's record showing ownership of the property. If the Hamilton
	County Auditor's official records do not list the applicant or owner as the owner of the
	property, please provide a lease, contract to purchase, or other agreement demonstrating
	the applicant or owner's legal basis to seek the relief requested.
	A list of witnesses and expert witnesses who you expect to testify at the hearing on this
	application.
	Other documents or information you intend to introduce at the hearing on this application.
	A non-refundable application fee - a check made payable to "City of Cincinnati."
	• \$900.00 for Use Variances
	Variances, including Special Exception, Conditional Use, Expansion or Substitution of
	Non-Conforming Use, Hillside & Urban Design Overlay and DD District are as follows:
	\$300.00 for Residential Projects (RCO) One -, Two -, and Three- Family Dwelling
	\$500.00 for Non-residential Projects (Non-RCO)

To help avoid delays, it is strongly suggested that you present your application to neighboring property owners and any interested neighborhood community groups prior to the hearing on your application. This will give you a prior opportunity to address your neighbors' concerns or objections and can facilitate the approval of your application.

## CITY OF CINCINNATI ZONING HEARING EXAMINER APPLICATION FOR ZONING RELIEF FOR

PAUL BROWN STADIUM TEMPORARY EXTERIOR NAMING RIGHTS SPONSOR RECOGNITION SIGNS

### SECTION 6. SUMMARY OF REASONS WHY RELIEF SHOULD BE GRANTED

Cincinnati Bengals, Inc. (the "**Team**"), as the owner of the leasehold interest at Paul Brown Stadium (the "**Stadium**"), seeks a series of dimensional variances from the maximum display area and maximum height limitations for temporary wall signs contained in Section 1411-39 of the City of Cincinnati Municipal Code (the "**Code**") to allow for the installation of four (4) temporary wall signs at the locations depicted on the attached **Exhibit A** during the 2022 National Football League ("**NFL**") season (the "**Temporary Wall Signs**").

This variance application meets the requirements of Section 1445-15 of the Code as described below, and because (1) it is impractical and therefore unreasonable to strictly apply sign regulations designed for downtown storefronts to professional sports stadiums, and 2) naming rights sponsor recognition signs on and around stadiums are common both locally and at NFL stadiums around the country, including on canopy roofs, which demonstrates (3) the Team's property right is materially diminished, in comparison to similarly situated stadium tenants and owners, by the strict application of the Code. In addition, the variance sought for the Temporary Wall Signs to be located on the exterior glass panes of the east and west elevations is substantially identical to a variance previously granted by the Zoning Hearing Examiner in Case No. ZH20170067.

This variance application meets the requirements of Section 1445-13 of the Code as described below and is in the public interest, as defined in that section, because the Temporary Wall Signs are otherwise compatible with the Code and the surrounding neighborhood, while also providing significant public and private benefits through enhancing the aesthetic quality and commercial vitality of the Stadium, and expanding the Team's ability to attract sponsorship relationships that include community programs, among other reasons further articulated below.

### Meeting the standards outlined in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-15

The Temporary Wall Signs comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations other than portion of the Code from which the variance is sought, and the condition giving rise to the variance request was not created by the Owner or any predecessor in title, but rather the nature of the sign regulations in the DD zoning district, which were enacted to address signage on storefronts and high-rise commercial buildings, not professional sports stadiums. The Temporary Wall Signs further satisfy the standards in Section 1145-15 as follows:

**1445-15(a):** Owing to special circumstances or conditions pertaining to a specific piece of property, the strict application of the provisions or requirements of this Code or the Land Development Code, as applicable, are unreasonable and would result in practical difficulties.

In a previous application by the Team for dimensional variances for two 1200 square foot wall signs on the North and East elevations of the Stadium, the City administration succinctly articulated the practical difficulties presented in applying to professional sports stadiums the sign provisions of Section 1411-39 of the DD zoning district, which were designed to regulate signage on high-rise commercial buildings and storefronts:

"Paul Brown Stadium, along with Great American Ballpark and US Bank Arena, are unique building types in the downtown area. Strictly applying the provisions of the Zoning Code to the particular request would result in practical difficulties. The structure is very large with a horizontal orientation, rather than the vertical emphasis typically found in downtown buildings...the nature of the stadium and the signs themselves do not fit well within the regulations intended for storefronts at the ground level of high-rise buildings."

Similarly, in response to that same application, the Zoning Hearing Examiner found the Team had demonstrated that "[t]he sheer size of the Property makes it difficult for the Owner to effectively install signage at the property in a proportionally appropriate manner within the context of the overall development. In light of this unique condition and hardship, it is unreasonable to strictly apply the Zoning Code.<sup>2</sup>"

The previous findings of the City administration and Zoning Hearing Examiner support this simple point very well: the uniquely large scale and horizontal orientation of the Stadium means that in order for exterior signs there to be experienced the same way by viewers, and to appear in similar proportions to the rest of the building, they must be larger than the limitations of Section 1411-39 which apply to other downtown buildings.

In other words, signs at the Stadium must be larger in order for them to be useful as signs. For that reason, and as has been found by the Zoning Hearing Examiner in the past, strict application of the Code here would be unreasonable.

**1445-15(b)**: The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant possessed by owners of other properties in the same district or vicinity.

The variances that will allow the installation of these temporary naming rights sponsor recognition signs on and around the Stadium are necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of the Team's property right in manner consistent with both other professional sports stadiums in the area, and other NFL stadiums, because such signs are a common feature of both.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Staff Report for Application #ZH20180145

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Decision of the Zoning Hearing Examiner, Case. No. ZH20180145. See also Decision of the Zoning Hearing Examiner, Case No. ZH20211079 for a recent decision finding a variance allowing the installation of multiple permanent signs on and around the Stadium gate areas satisfied the criteria for variances for reasons substantially similar to those presented in this application.

**Immediate Vicinity:** the exterior signage at TQL Stadium depicted on **Exhibit B** illustrates how this property right is enjoyed by a similarly-situated facility in the vicinity. Specifically, in relation to this variance, Exhibit B shows the use of the canopy roof and canopy sides to recognize a naming rights sponsor in a manner substantially similar to the request made in this application.

Other NFL Stadia: naming rights sponsor-recognition signage on exterior windows and canopies similar to the proposed Temporary Wall Signs is common throughout NFL stadiums (examples from several stadiums can be seen in the attached Exhibit C). In the simplest of terms, the Team asks merely for the ability to enjoy its leasehold interest in the Stadium in the same manner as its peer stadium tenants and owners around the country. The Team submits this makes good sense for several reasons. First, such signage is quickly becoming a standard part of the NFL stadium experience and, as noted, signs must practically be of a certain size and scale so to be seen by the large crowds that attend NFL games. Indeed twenty-nine of the thirty-two NFL stadia include some form of naming rights sponsorship. Second, team naming rights sponsorships and partnerships are a practice among NFL franchises that bring significant benefits to the teams, their sponsors, and the communities that benefit from various activities the teams and sponsors engage in together. Third, part of the property right in any stadium is the ability to recognize partners and sponsors on the exterior of that stadium, and to the extent the Team's ability to make such recognition is limited in the absence of the requested variances, the Team is at a competitive disadvantage in attracting naming rights sponsors.

In summary, whether comparing the Temporary Wall Signs to TQL Stadium locally or other NFL stadia nationally, the Team's property right is materially diminished in comparison by strict application of the sign size limitations in the Code.

### Meeting the standards outlined in Cincinnati Municipal Code 1445-13

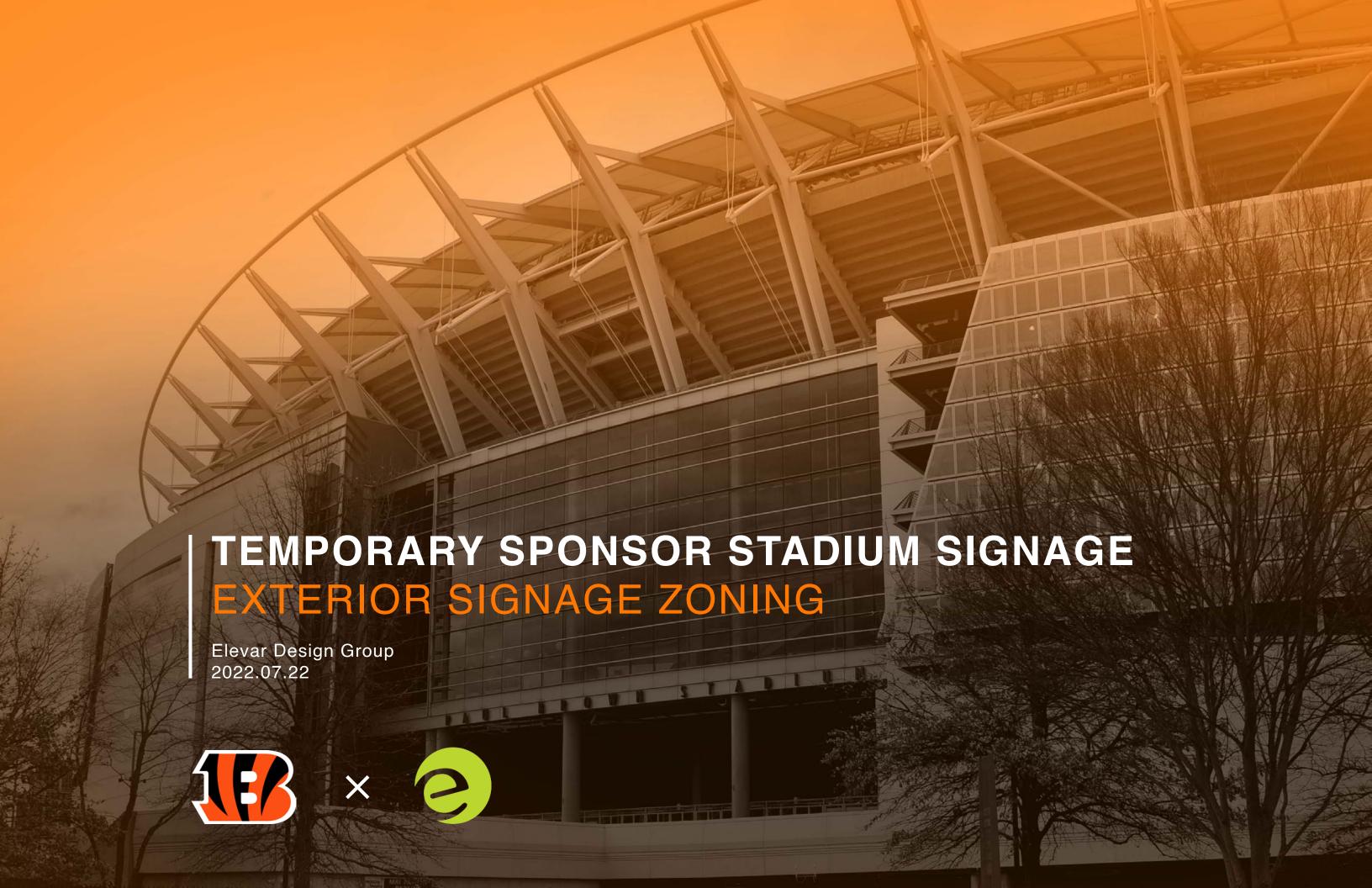
The Temporary Wall Signs are in the public interest, as defined in section 1445-13 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code, in the following ways:

- (a) **Zoning**. The proposed work conforms to the underlying zone district regulations and is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Cincinnati Zoning Code or the Land Development Code, as applicable. The Temporary Wall Signs conform to the underlying zone district regulations and are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Cincinnati Zoning Code because the variances will merely adjust the underlying sign regulations to fit more appropriately with the unique size and scale of the Stadium.
- (h) **Neighborhood Compatibility**. The proposed work is compatible with the predominant or prevailing land use, building and structure patterns of the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development and will not have a material net cumulative adverse impact on the neighborhood. The Temporary Wall Signs, in merely expanding the scope of existing signage at the Stadium, maintain the current compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. The Stadium sits in the Banks entertainment district, which also includes Great American Ballpark, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, the Heritage

Bank Center, and several other entertainment uses, and is therefore filled with extensive signage related to all of those uses. The relative neighborhood compatibility of the Temporary Wall Signs compare favorably, as well, to the approved exterior signs at TQL Stadium, which straddles the border of a residential area of the West End and a mixed-use area of Over-the-Rhine.

- (I) **Economic Benefits**. The promotion of the Cincinnati economy. The Temporary Wall Signs will enhance the aesthetic quality and economic vitality of Paul Brown Stadium, which will lead to an enhanced experience for visitors attending Bengals games, and expands the Team's ability to host games and other events that increase activity in the Cincinnati economy. In addition, the Temporary Wall Signs will further the public purpose of the Team's lease with Hamilton County, which includes multiple provisions designed to maximize the Team's ability to generate revenues from its tenancy, including through the use of signage.
- (o) **Private Benefits**. The economic and other private benefits to the owner or applicant. The Temporary Wall Signs will allow the Team to recognize naming rights sponsors in a manner consistent with other professional sports stadiums locally and other peer NFL stadiums nationally, which will materially enhance the Team's ability to attract such sponsors and partners.
- (p) **Public Benefits**. The public peace, health, safety or general welfare. The Temporary Wall Signs will enhance the aesthetic quality of Paul Brown Stadium as viewed from its exterior by making important signage more clearly visible. In addition, the Temporary Wall Signs will allow the Team to enhance the range and scale of partnership and sponsorship relationships, which relationships regularly include investments in various community programs. For example, current Team sponsorship programs include:
  - Bengals Play 60, presented by Care Source: through this program aimed at reversing obesity, the Team hosts multiple Play 60 events in the Greater Cincinnati community throughout the year.
  - Fuel Up to Play 60, presented by DMI: an in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by the National Dairy Council and NFL, in collaboration with the USDA, to help encourage today's youth to lead healthier lives.
  - Military Scholarship Giveaway presented by Ohio CAT: this program provides scholarships to current or past military service members pursuing higher education.
  - Bengals High School Football Tour presented by Ohio CAT: this tour visited 10 high school football games throughout the Greater Cincinnati area during the 2021 high school football season and will return in 2022.

### **EXHIBIT A**





### **CANOPY - WEST**

1 "Temporary Canopy - West"
Type: Banner or Similar
Lighting: TBD
Size: 64' X 350' = 22,400 SF

### **WINDOW SIGNAGE - WEST**

2 "Temporary Window Cling - West"
Type: Window Cling
Lighting: TBD
Size: 142' x 51' = 7,242 SF

### Temporary Exterior Stadium Signage – West Side





Grand Total: 29,642 SF



### **CANOPY - EAST**

1 "Temporary Canopy - East"
Type: Banner or Similar
Lighting: TBD
Size: 64' X 350' = 22,400 SF

### **WINDOW SIGNAGE - EAST**

2 "Temporary Window Cling - East"
Type: Window Cling
Lighting: TBD
Size: 142' x 51' = 7,242 SF

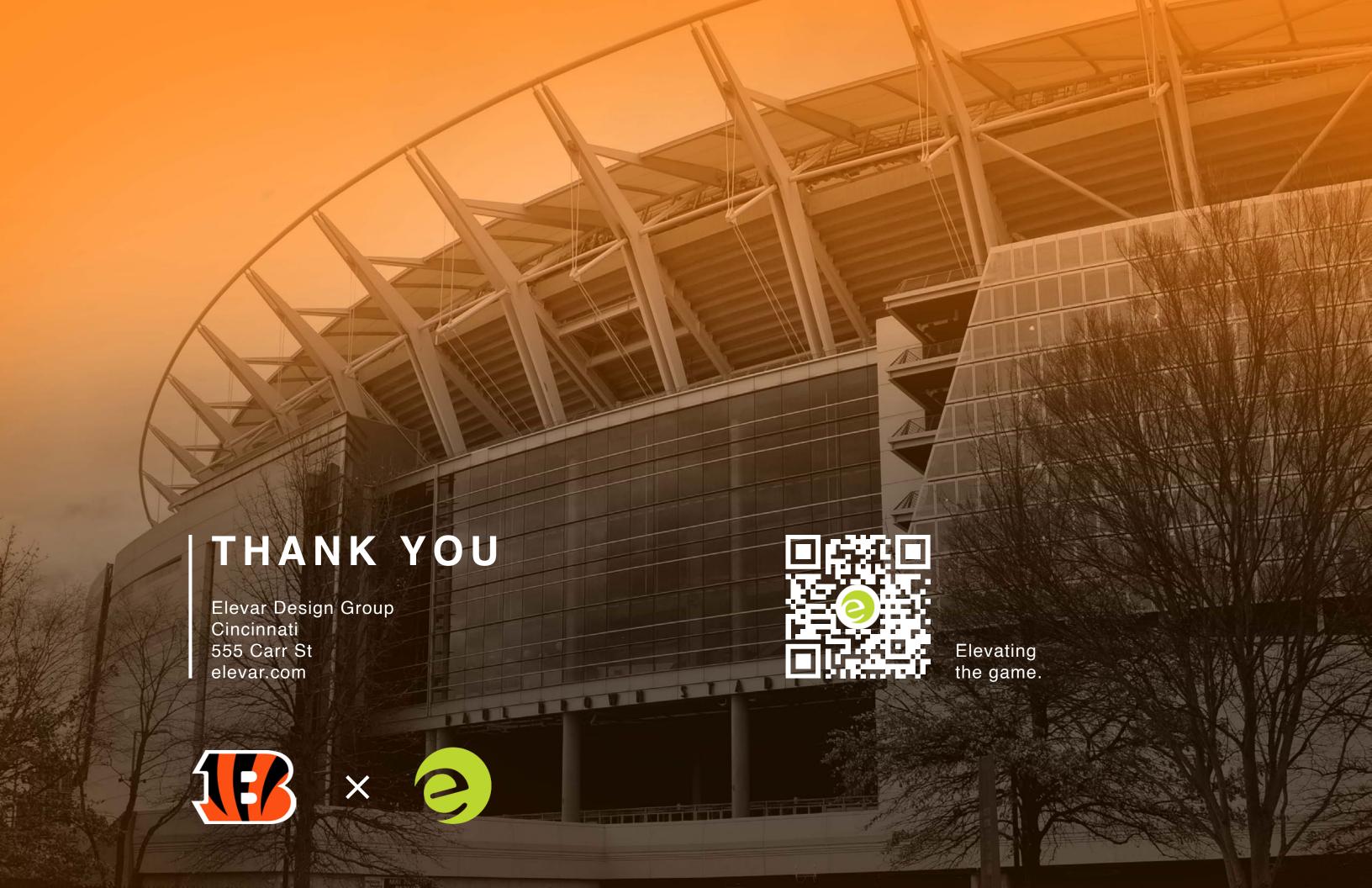
### Temporary Exterior Stadium Signage – East Side







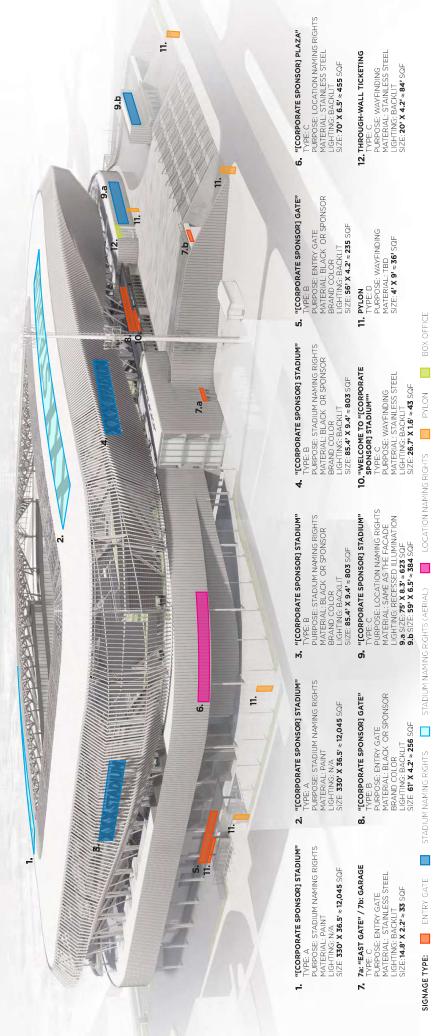
Grand Total: 29,642 SF



### **EXHIBIT B**

# EXTERIOR SIGNAGE // SOUTH EAST VIEW

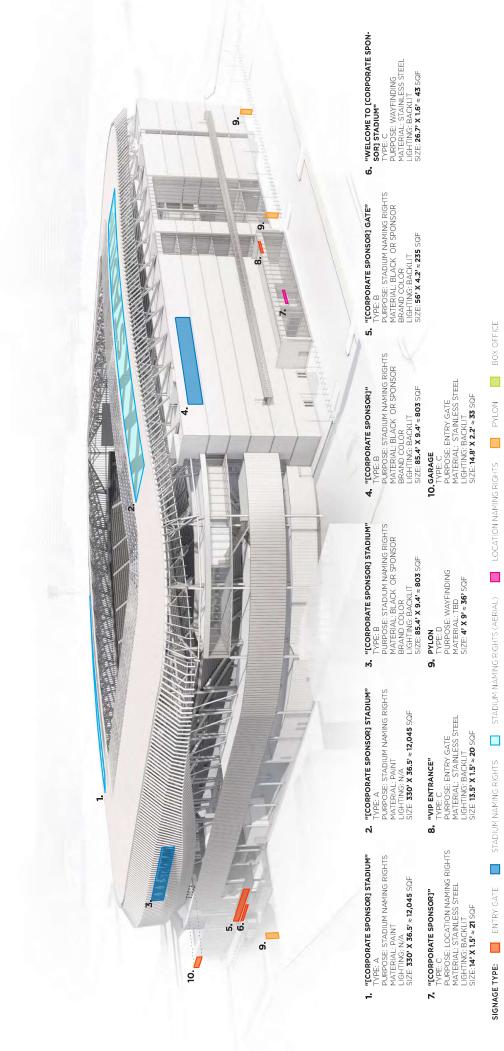
# **EXHIBIT B**





**POPULOUS** 

# EXTERIOR SIGNAGE // NORTH WEST VIEW





**POPULOUS** 

### **EXHIBIT C**

# NFL Sponsorships (window & roof graphics)















NIC RIVERBANKS RETAIL TWO LLC 1033 DEMONBREUN ST SUITE 630 NASHVILLE TN 37203 CINCINNATI DOCK PROPERTIES INC 1300 TATER KNOB RD PEEBLES OH 45660 BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF HAMILTON COUNTY 138 EAST COURT ST CINCINNATI OH 45202

CORELOGIC 3001 HACKBERRY RD IRVING TX 750630156 HILLTOP BASIC RESOURCES
50 E RIVERCENTER BLVD SUITE 1000
COVINGTON KY 41011

OHIO DEPT TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT 8
505 STATE ROUTE 741
LEBANON OH 45036

302 WEST THIRD TEI INVESTORS LLC@4
55 FIFTH AVE 15TH FLOOR C/O TIME
EQUITIES
NEW YORK NY 10003

LONGWORTH HALL LLC 700 W PETER ROSE WAY #137 CINCINNATI OH 45203 THIRD STREET ASSOCIATES
7374 RIVERPOINT LN
CINCINNATI OH 45255

CENTRAL R R CO OF INDIANA
GENESEE & WYOMING RAILROA 200
MERIDIAN CENTRE BLVD SUITE 300
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