

February 3, 2021

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Paula Boggs Muething, City Manager

202100562

Subject: Emergency Ordinance – E. Freedom Way Public Improvements TIF Project

Attached is an Emergency Ordinance captioned:

AUTHORIZING the establishment of new capital improvement program project account no. 980x164x211638, “E. Freedom Way Public Improvements – TIF,” for the purpose of providing resources to facilitate the construction of various public improvements related to the closure of a portion of East Freedom Way and creation of a pedestrian plaza; **AUTHORIZING** the transfer and appropriation of \$150,000 from the unappropriated surplus of Downtown South/Riverfront Equivalent Fund 481 to newly established capital improvement program project account no. 980x164x211638, “E. Freedom Way Public Improvements - TIF,” for the purpose of providing resources to facilitate the construction the various public improvements related to the closure of a portion of East Freedom Way and creation of a pedestrian plaza including, but not limited to, removable bollards placed in the street to prevent vehicular access to the area and minor electrical work to provide power to the area; **DECLARING** expenditures from capital improvement program project account no. 980x164x211638, “E. Freedom Way Public Improvements – TIF,” to be for a public purpose because the projects will foster local improvements and investment and increase neighborhood vitality.

Approval of this Emergency Ordinance creates a new project account and appropriates \$150,000 from the Downtown South/Riverfront Equivalent Fund 481 to such account for the purpose of providing resources for public improvements related to the closure of the easternmost block of East Freedom Way for the creation of a pedestrian plaza. Such public improvements include, but are not limited to, removable bollards placed in the street to prevent vehicular access to the area and minor electrical work to provide power to the area. The goal of this closure and investment is to foster investment and increase neighborhood vitality—including increased patronage of businesses located at The Banks.

The City is working in partnership with The Banks Community Authority (BCA) on this project to close the easternmost block of Freedom Way to create a pedestrian plaza. Additionally, the City is working with the BCA to establish a designated

outdoor refreshment area (DORA) at The Banks. The BCA will manage and operate both the DORA and the proposed pedestrian plaza.

The overall project budget for creation of the pedestrian plaza is currently estimated at \$750,000. If this legislation is approved, the City's contribution will be \$150,000, and the remainder will be contributed either from private sources or the BCA.

The City Administration presented the proposed closure of the portion of East Freedom Way and the DORA proposal to the Board of the Downtown Residents Council on January 11, 2021 and received their support. A letter of support has been submitted to the Cincinnati Planning Commission for the proposed closure. At the time of presentation, no City funding was expected to be needed for the conversion of East Freedom Way to a pedestrian plaza. However, following that meeting the City received word from the BCA that \$150,000 would be needed to fund public infrastructure associated with the closure. Once that was known, the City Administration provided an update and details of the proposed appropriation and expenditures to the Downtown Residents Council and, as of this writing, has offered to present additional details on the proposed expenditure to the Downtown Residents Council at their first meeting in early February.

This Emergency Ordinance is in accordance with the "Live" goal to "Build a robust public life" and strategy to "Develop and maintain inviting and engaging public spaces that encourage social interaction between different types of people" as described on pages 149-152 of Plan Cincinnati (2012).

The reason for the emergency is the immediate need to provide necessary financing in order to immediately begin construction to meet the April 1, 2021 construction deadline.

The Administration recommends passage of this Emergency Ordinance.

cc: Christopher A. Bigham, Assistant City Manager
Karen Alder, Finance Director

Attachment

