



American Planning Association

Making Great Communities Happen

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: January 9, 2013

Contacts:

Roberta Rewers, APA, 312.786.6395; rrewers@planning.org

The Cincinnati Central Riverfront Plan Receives National Planning Award

Washington, D.C. –The Cincinnati Central Riverfront Plan will receive the American Planning Association’s 2013 National Planning Excellence Award for Implementation. Its success in converting 195 acres of vast wasteland – between the Ohio River and Cincinnati’s Central Business District – into an economically successful and vital, mixed-use development with a dramatic new park is the result of turning a broad-based, comprehensive plan into reality.

The Implementation Award recognizes a project that demonstrates a significant achievement for an area — a single community or a region — in accomplishing positive changes as a result of planning. The award emphasizes long-term, measurable results that have been in continuous effect for a minimum of three years.

“The Cincinnati Central Riverfront redevelopment is an excellent example of plan brought to reality,” said Ann C. Bagley, FAICP, 2013 APA Awards Jury chair. “The fact that this development happened during an economic downturn demonstrates the strength of the plan and the importance of the public commitment that brought it into being.”

The Cincinnati Central Riverfront Plan is the result of a public participation planning process that started in October 1996 when Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati worked together with Urban Design Associates, Parsons Brinckerhoff, and the OKI Regional Council of Governments to give direction in two public policy areas – two new sports stadiums for the Reds and the Bengals and an overall urban design framework for the development of the central riverfront which would capitalize on the major public investment in the stadiums, structured parking, and transportation.

The first wave of activity from 1998 to 2002 reconstructed the freeway separating the project area from the central business district, depressing it into a trench, extending the CBD Streetgrid into the area, recapturing land and allowing the two stadiums to replace the 1960s-era Riverfront Stadium and the construction of The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

Cincinnati and Hamilton County developed an innovative design for the project based on lifting the street grid and the buildings out of the 100-year floodplain to above the 500-year flood level and tying it to excellent transportation facilities and fronting it with an inviting riverfront park. All this was done in a flood plain without measurable effect on the flow of the river.

“In planning terms, a project that goes from a concept to implementation in less than 20 years is impressive to say the least,” said Todd Kinskey, AICP, executive director, Hamilton County Regional



American Planning Association

Making Great Communities Happen

Planning Commission. “It is that much more impressive because, in this case, the implementation involved seemingly insurmountable physical, economic, and political barriers.”

The second phase, known as The Banks Project, broke ground on an 18-acre site on Cincinnati’s central riverfront in 2007 and completed its first development phase in 2011. Given the weak economy, the city and the county—working with a group of citizens, The Banks Project Working Group—had to collectively plan, design, and finance \$128 million for coordinated infrastructure work and to engage the successful private developer in a unique public-private partnership (The Banks Public Partnership). They selected Riverbanks Renaissance, LLC, a joint venture of Carter and The Dawson Company from Atlanta.

Results of the first phase, which was completed in 2011, include:

- The first six acres of a planned 45-acre, \$120 million public park;
- Apartments for 300 residents (100 percent leased);
- Entertainment venues (retail space 89 percent leased); and
- Creation of 900 jobs from both ongoing business operations and construction.

According to a University of Cincinnati study, Economic Impact of The Banks Project in the Redevelopment of the Cincinnati Central Riverfront, the ongoing impact of The Banks, once Phase 1A achieves full-occupancy, is projected to reach \$91.6 million annually, a good return on investment in planning.

The Central Riverfront Plan’s proven success has only increased the region’s desire to plan a sustainable future. Hamilton County’s community COMPASS, the City’s Plan Cincinnati, and the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Region Council have all undertaken planning efforts to deliver specificity and develop implementation plans similar to those focused on the riverfront.

The Implementation Award for the Cincinnati Central Riverfront Plan will be presented at a special awards luncheon at APA’s National Planning Conference in Chicago on Tuesday, April 16, 2013. In addition, it will be featured in an upcoming issue of *Planning* magazine, APA’s flagship publication.

To view all of the APA 2013 National Planning Excellence and Achievement Award recipients, visit www.planning.org/awards/2013. APA’s national awards program, the profession’s highest honor, is a proud tradition established more than 50 years ago to recognize outstanding community plans, planning programs and initiatives, public education efforts, and individuals for their leadership on planning issues.

The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning -- physical, economic and social -- so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. Members of APA help create communities of lasting value and encourage civic leaders, business interests and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives. APA has offices in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, Ill. For more information, visit www.planning.org.

###



Central Riverfront Plan Receives 2013 National Planning Excellence Award from the American Planning Association

A riverfront that many thought would never get redeveloped has been recognized by the American Planning Association as the 2013 National Planning Excellence Award winner in the Implementation category. The Banks Public Partnership (the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County) nominated the Cincinnati Central Riverfront Plan, beginning with the reconfiguration of Fort Washington Way through completion of the first wave of The Banks Project development. All 18 APA National Planning Excellence Award recipients will receive their awards in April in Chicago.

The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning -- physical, economic and social -- so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. The prestigious APA national awards program is the profession's highest honor.

Based on a plan drafted in 1997 under a joint effort of the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, and OKI Regional Council of Governments, the first wave of central riverfront redevelopment activity (from 1998 to 2002) reconstructed Fort Washington Way (the freeway separating the project area from the Central Business District), recapturing land and allowing two new sports stadia to replace the 1960s-era Riverfront Stadium and the construction of The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. The second wave --The Banks Project—the signature riverfront development funded and executed by The Banks Public Partnership and Riverfront Renaissance joint venture of Carter and The Dawson Company—broke ground in 2008 to create a 24/7 downtown neighborhood on the banks of the Ohio River. And at the same time, in 2008, the Cincinnati Park Board, with City and County support, broke ground on a new riverfront park, immediately adjacent to The Banks. Funded by a mix of State, City and Federal funds, and a significant amount of private funding, the new park – Smale Riverfront Park – was designed to be the new front yard for the region and the front door for downtown and for The Banks.

Entitled “**Cincinnati, Ohio Central Riverfront Re-Birth Through Planning,**” the submission to APA reviews how an enlightened vision, excellent plan, and on-time implementation of the plan resulted in the transformation of the Central Riverfront's acres of surface parking and



tired stadium. The results are now an emblem of great civic pride -- the new Fort Washington Way, Great American Ball Park, Paul Brown Stadium, intermodal transit center, spectacular riverfront park, 6,000 parking spaces topped with 300 apartments and 76,000 square feet of commercial space.

According to The Banks Project Executive John Deatruck, PE, AICP: “This honor from the American Planning Association is testimony to the tenacity and partnership of the City and the County elected officials and staffs in holding to their plan and to the vision of The Banks Working Group and the groups that came before them. When you add to that an enlightened developer and the countless hours invested by members of the federal and state financing partners, and the banking, development, construction, legal, leasing and marketing teams involved, it is easy to see why it is a success.”

ABOUT THE BANKS: The Banks Public Partnership is a working partnership between the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. The Partnership’s goal is to ensure timely, safe, efficient and inclusive management of the public infrastructure portion of The Banks project and deliver the best value for the public investment in parking facilities, street grid, streetscape and public park. With an investment of \$128 million in the public infrastructure, the Partnership’s work lays the foundation for the residential, dining, recreation and entertainment venues at The Banks—a new gateway to the Riverfront where the people of Cincinnati live, work and play.

###

For more information, contact:

Becky Fickenworth (513) 382-6139 becky@rasormarketing.com

Marie Gemelli-Carroll (513) 703-8495 mgc@starboardstrategy.com

John Deatruck (513) 946-4434 or john.deatruck@hamilton-co.org

1/9/13