

# Convention District Storylines

## 1. A Midwest Comeback Story: Why Cincinnati Is Betting Big on Meetings

- A citywide look at more than \$800 million in hospitality investments
- Commentary from civic and industry leaders on the city's strategy
- Why Cincinnati sees meetings and conventions as a key to regional growth
- Cincinnati is a city that knows how to throw major events, like the Cincinnati Music Festival, BLINK, America's largest projection mapping festival, the Cincinnati Open tennis tournament, and even the second-largest Oktoberfest in the world. Now the city knows it must start investing in the ageing infrastructure and focus on a race to excellence in the hotel market.
- Supporting resources:
  - Visuals of new and reimagined venues shaping the district
  - Interviews with key players, including but not limited to public officials, civic planners, and private investing firms

## 2. Designing for the Future of Meetings (The Future Meets in Cincy)

- How Cincinnati's Convention District is being built for flexibility and hybrid events.
- The 40,000-square-foot Cincinnati Ballroom, one of the largest in the Midwest, plus a second Queen City Ballroom adjacent to a new rooftop space, adds connection and flexibility.
- Supporting resources:
  - Renderings of new indoor/outdoor spaces and layouts
  - Interviews with the design team and CVB leaders on emerging trends

## 3. Elm Street Plaza: A New Model for Event-Friendly Public Space

- New 2-acre space opening in September 2025 for programming and event use
- Attendees can enjoy the greenspace, and planners can activate it.
- Space will be used as a public park/event space when not being used by conventions, which adds vibrancy to the area.

- It will also be the site for the downtown Cincinnati ice skating rink this fall and winter.
- Supporting resources:
  - Interviews with project stakeholders and designers
  - Visuals showing how the plaza connects to the center

## **6. How Cincinnati Wins With Walkability**

- What really sets Cincinnati apart is that our Convention District is in the heart of downtown.
  - Attendees step out into a safe, walkable neighborhood filled with restaurants, bars, sports, music, arts, and the Ohio Riverfront.
- Cincinnati has 14 unique entertainment districts or public parks within a 14-block radius, all walkable and connected by a modern streetcar.
- Supporting resources:
  - Walkability maps and visuals of connected hotels, venues, and nightlife
  - Interviews with CVB and city leaders

## **7. Inclusive Hospitality in Action: A Workforce Development Model**

- Visit Cincy has enhanced its strategy to become a national model for inclusive tourism through the expansion of its Inclusive Hospitality initiative.
- The mission is to expand access, equity, and leadership opportunities within the hospitality industry by investing in education, community partnerships, and reshaping hospitality as a force for cultural and socio-economic impact.
- Supporting resources:
  - Interviews with program leaders, students, and local partners
  - Access to training events, graduation photos, and success stories

## **8. Cincinnati's New Headquarters Hotel: What Planners Need to Know**

- Cincinnati is about to break ground on a new Headquarters Hotel, which will be connected to the Convention Center. (Brand to be announced week of July 14)

- Once that hotel is complete, each block of the convention district has a top brand hotel, offering planners both convenience and choice: There's a Hyatt Regency, the historic art deco Hilton Netherland Plaza, and the Westin Cincinnati.
- Expected to be completed in 2028.
- Supporting resources:
  - Interview with Civic and CVB leaders
  - Supporting map of hotels in the Convention District
  - Renderings
  - Development Timelines