Mayor Bibb and Council President Griffin:

On behalf of the North Coast Waterfront Development Corporation (NCWDC), I am pleased to share a new draft master framework to guide the long-term transformation of Cleveland's downtown lakefront into a vibrant, publicly accessible destination and driver of economic opportunity.

Over the past two years, NCWDC has worked with the City to secure $150 million in state and federal grants for the North Coast Connector, established Cleveland's first New Community Authority, selected a master developer for the stadium site and opened North Coast Yard, which has welcomed more than 75,000 unique visitors during its first two summers.

Developed in partnership with DiGeronimo Development and with input from the City's Planning Department, the framework builds on previous City planning and extensive community engagement while responding to new opportunities created by the planned departure of the Cleveland Browns.

Building on the City's Vision

The City's previous master planning process with Field Operations represented a significant investment in planning and public engagement. That work established important priorities—including public access, connectivity, recreation, climate resilience, celebration of Cleveland's heritage, and a welcoming, year-round destination—that remain central to the new framework.

The Browns' planned departure, however, fundamentally changes the opportunity—from approximately 20 acres anchored by an NFL stadium to more than 50 acres available for a new vision.

To respond, NCWDC, DiGeronimo Development and City Planning staff conducted a competitive selection process involving nine firms and selected MVRDV and DLR Group for their complementary experience in waterfront redevelopment, urban design and public spaces.

A Long-Term Vision with Flexibility

Rather than prescribing specific buildings, uses and development densities, the framework establishes a long-term vision for the infrastructure, public spaces and connections that will guide development over time.

As illustrated on page 24 of the accompanying presentation, proposed foundational elements—including the primary street network, waterfront access, major public spaces

and pedestrian connections—would help guide infrastructure planning and establish an appropriate balance among public space, private development and transportation needs. Individual development parcels, secondary streets and building uses would remain flexible to accommodate changing market conditions, investment opportunities and community needs.

Importantly, these are proposed elements for further consideration and refinement, not final or approved development decisions. This approach protects public priorities while providing the flexibility needed to achieve a bold but economically viable vision over many years.

Putting Public Access and Community Experience First

A defining priority of the framework is ensuring that the water's edge remains free and accessible to everyone, supported by a connected network of welcoming public spaces designed for year-round use.

The framework envisions a continuous waterfront promenade; a major gathering space connecting the Great Lakes Science Center, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and North Coast Harbor; and a central park incorporating the footprint of the current stadium playing field. Pedestrian pathways, including a proposed quarter-mile diagonal promenade, would connect these destinations, complemented by smaller public spaces throughout the district.

Equally important is how Clevelanders will experience these spaces. Community feedback has reinforced the importance of creating a lakefront where people feel welcome, can gather and connect, and have opportunities to participate in activities throughout the year.

Building on that feedback and the success of North Coast Yard, NCWDC is working with Third Space Action Lab to develop a complementary plan for programming and community activities that will bring these public spaces to life and foster a sense of belonging.

Connecting Downtown to the Lake: The North Coast Connector

The North Coast Connector remains a critical component of the City's vision to reconnect downtown with Lake Erie and is a City-owned project.

The framework includes conceptual recommendations involving the Shoreway's configuration and a land bridge that NCWDC believes could enhance connectivity and support the broader waterfront vision. These recommendations are offered for the City's consideration and do not represent approved changes to the connector.

We anticipate that the City and its progressive design-build team will evaluate these concepts as detailed design advances. Any refinements should preserve the connector's intended public benefits while protecting its funding and construction schedule.

NCWDC looks forward to continuing its close collaboration with the City to advance this important investment.

Community Engagement and Next Steps

The release of this draft framework marks the beginning of the next phase of community engagement and public review—not the conclusion of the planning process.

Working with Third Space Action Lab, NCWDC has already hosted six free public information sessions and planning workshops aboard the Goodtime boat, with additional opportunities planned throughout Cleveland.

Over the coming weeks, NCWDC will present the framework to the Downtown Design Review Committee and City Planning Commission for information and feedback only. Our goal is to incorporate community and City input before seeking formal approval in early 2027.

The transformation of Cleveland's lakefront represents an extraordinary opportunity to expand public access, create economic opportunity and establish a lasting destination for our community. Achieving that vision will require balancing ambition with economic viability and maintaining sustained collaboration among the City, NCWDC, community stakeholders and our public and private partners.

The accompanying framework and presentation materials are being made available for public review and comment as we continue refining the vision with the City and the community.

We appreciate your continued leadership and partnership. We welcome your feedback and would be pleased to present the framework at future public meetings throughout Cleveland, including those convened by the Mayor's Office and City Council members.

Best,

Scott Skinner

Scott Skinner
President and Executive Director