

# EXCLUSIVE: NAP transforming Newport on the Levee into bright, 18-hour destination

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North American Properties plans to start construction in earnest on the redevelopment of Newport on the Levee later this summer.

Since North American Properties acquired Newport on the Levee at the end of 2018, the downtown-based developer has shared few of its plans for the retail and entertainment center along the banks of the Ohio River.

Now, North American Properties is going into some detail about its plans for remaking the 360,000-square-foot property. Between its acquisition and redevelopment of the property, North American Properties is expected to invest more than \$100 million.

[Tim Perry](#), managing partner and chief investment officer with North American Properties, said the company was attracted to the property because of its “irreplaceable access, visibility and view.” The Levee also includes strong anchors with the [Newport Aquarium](#), a 20-screen AMC theater and a parking garage with more than 2,000 spaces. Now, it’s working to build on that base to create a destination that is active 18-hours a day.

“The bones here are so good,” Perry told me as we sat in the Gallery Building of Newport on the Levee. “There is no functional obsolescence that can’t be addressed.”

To get a look at some of the planned changes for Newport on the Levee, click on the images above.

The focus of the renovations is to turn the property inside out, creating a more porous environment for the community, whether arriving by car, on foot across the pedestrian bridge or from the levee walk, Perry said. The new designs are meant to embrace the waterfront, the property's views and help draw the community in.

Some of the planned changes include a new entrance on the Purple People Bridge side of the building. Perry said the plan is to activate this side of the building with a cafe or restaurant that includes outdoor seating.

Changing the western facade of the Gallery Building is another major change. The current brick facade will be replaced with an 80-foot glass wall, allowing more natural light into the building.

When guests walk up from Third Street to a new two-story building that will replace the former Mitchell's Fish Market, they will be able to see through a paseo to the river.

"You will feel the energy as you arrive, hearing music from outdoor seating as the skyline and river views welcome you," Perry said.

The developers also are working on a new arrival experience from Third Street.

Some of the aesthetic changes will begin this month. For example, the theater's ticket booth will be relocated to create a more open gallery environment.

With that gone, Perry envisions a hub of activity where office workers can work on their lap tops, get coffee and meet in a different space. What is now mostly polished concrete floors and empty space will be replaced with a variety of seating designed to foster interaction.

While significant physical changes are planned for Newport on the Levee, that alone will not make the property into an 18-hour-a-day destination. North American Properties also has focused on programming the property to make it serve as Newport's living room.

Already the Levee has seen significant traction with its programming and activation of spaces. Winter Wonder on the Levee at Newport on the Levee won an global award from the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Wellness on the Levee is a mix of free fitness classes that includes yoga, tai chi and dance fitness. Newport on the Levee also hosts a free summer concert series in partnership with [Braxton Brewing Co.](#)

The other part of the changes is the tenant mix. A few long-time tenants have closed recently, but Perry said the Levee had a very successful ICSC RECon in Las Vegas last month. Newport on the Levee has several signed letters of intent from new-to-market food and beverage tenants.

Perry said the idea is for visitors to be able to visit a wide range of restaurants, from quick service to white table cloth and from breakfast to dinner.

“The right mix is more important than filling space,” Perry said.

Construction will begin in earnest later this summer and will continue through 2020.

Long Wharf Capital LLC is North American Properties’ investment partner on the project. Jeffrey R. Anderson Real Estate Inc. is the leasing agent for the property, with [David Birdsall](#) of Anchor 360 added to focus on the redevelopment portion of the project. J.S. Held LLC serves as North American Properties’ owner’s representative and Turner Construction Co. is the construction partner.

Newport on the Levee is a regional draw with more than 3.5 million annual visitors. Current retail tenants include Barnes & Noble, AMC Theaters, Brio Tuscan Grill and Dewey’s Pizza. Office tenants include David J. Joseph Co., Constellation Brands and IntrinziC.

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