

# Fifth Third Bank to finance stadium

## Will provide \$55M for LouCity venue

**Danielle Lerner**  
Louisville Courier Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Fifth Third Bank will head private financing for Louisville City FC's new soccer stadium, the club announced Tuesday, adding to funding already secured from the city and the state.

The \$60 to \$65 million stadium, slated to open by March 2020, is part of a nearly \$200 million development district with hotels, retail and office buildings planned for the Butchertown neighborhood.

Fifth Third Bank, headquartered in Cincinnati, will coordinate financing from multiple banks to provide \$55 million for the stadium, which will be paid back by Louisville City FC owners.

Club owners will contribute roughly another \$10 million in cash to complete construction.

Louisville City FC was awarded \$21.7 million in tax-increment financing by the state along with a \$30 million bond from Louisville Metro Government. The soccer club's owners are on the hook for at least \$130 million total in private capital and agreed to pay back \$14.5 million to the city for the land.



Louisville City FC's new stadium in Butchertown is slated to open by March 2020.  
COURTESY OF LOUISVILLE CITY FC

The transaction with Fifth Third Bank is expected to close in August. Louisville City FC co-owner Tim Mulloy previously said the club hopes to have a general contractor hired by August and to begin laying foundations Sept. 1.

"Fifth Third Bank is proud to assist as part of the LouCity process for the Butchertown stadium development," Mike Ash, Fifth Third Bank regional president, said in a release. "Louisville City FC is building something special in

our city and we are proud to help them serve the community in this way."

Fifth Third Bank already owns the naming rights to Kennesaw State University's multipurpose athletic facility, and thus is unlikely to be considered as a naming rights partner the new stadium. Brad Estes, Louisville City FC's executive vice president, said such discussions have not yet taken place.

Metro Government paid \$24.1 million for land for the development and will

use the leftover bond money for infrastructure improvements, much of which will be completed during site prep in July and August.

Construction costs for the stadium itself were originally estimated at \$45 million, but owners revealed last month that the figure would be closer to \$60 million.

The club also expects to recoup money from the tax-increment financing district. TIFs are a common way to finance economic development projects. They allow local governments to divert future property tax revenues to pay for improvements expected to increase the general value of the area around the project, and encourage investment in what the government determines is a "blighted" area.

While a TIF doesn't divert current tax revenue, it can limit a government's future ability to raise money for other services and needs if too much tax base is locked up in TIFs.

The club and government officials held a groundbreaking ceremony for the stadium in June. Louisville City FC must be playing in the 11,300-seat stadium by 2020 in order to remain a member of the United Soccer League.

*Danielle Lerner: 502-582-4042; dlerner@courierjournal.com; Twitter: @Danielle\_Lerner. Support strong local journalism by subscribing today: www.courier-journal.com/daniellel.*