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# Welcome!

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1. Grab some food and a drink.
2. Find a seat.
3. Introduce yourself to your table.

Thank you to our hosts, Roberto Clemente  
Recreation Center!

We will begin at 6:10 PM!



# Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park Community Meeting



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# Agenda & Contact Info

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## Agenda

- Who and What make up the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy
- Meet our CEO
- Construction updates at Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park
- Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park interpretive plan and programming development

## Contact Us!

- Website: [detroitriverfront.org](http://detroitriverfront.org)
- Facebook: Detroit Riverfront
- Instagram: @detroitriverfront
- Email: [info@detroitriverfront.org](mailto:info@detroitriverfront.org)



An aerial photograph of a waterfront playground at sunset. The scene is dominated by a large, blue, conical canopy structure supported by metal poles. The playground is situated on a paved area with various play equipment, including a slide and a climbing structure. In the background, a wide body of water stretches to the horizon, with a line of trees and buildings visible in the distance. The sky is a mix of orange and blue, indicating the time is either sunrise or sunset. The overall atmosphere is serene and inviting.

**“BEAUTIFUL, EXCITING,  
SAFE, ACCESSIBLE...”**

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**...WORLD-CLASS  
GATHERING PLACE...**

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...FOR ALL™



# FOUNDING PARTNERS



THE  
KRESGE  
FOUNDATION





# Meet Our CEO







# 4P FRAMEWORK



## PROSECUTE

Support the justice process against criminal acts and pursue recovery funds



## PRESERVE

Continue the work that has made the Detroit Riverfront a great place for decades



## PROTECT

Modernize governance policies and internal controls to build a best-in-class structure and share lessons learned



## PROSPER

Secure a bright future through completion of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park in 2025 and a resource plan that supports the long-term sustainability of the organization

A photograph of two children sitting on a concrete pier, looking out at a large body of water. The child on the left is wearing a white t-shirt and a yellow baseball cap. The child on the right is wearing a white t-shirt, blue sunglasses, and blue jeans. A plastic water bottle is on the ground between them. The pier is bordered by a chain-link fence. In the background, there are trees and buildings across the water under a blue sky with light clouds. A dark blue rectangular overlay is centered in the image, containing the text 'THE VISION' in white, bold, sans-serif font, flanked by two horizontal white lines.

# THE VISION



# 5.5 MILES FROM BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE

— EXISTING RIVERWALK   
 — FUTURE RIVERWALK  
 PARKS & GREENWAYS





Development



Programming



Maintenance & Operation



Security & Monitoring

An aerial photograph of a park renovation project. The image is split horizontally to show the 'before' and 'after' states. The top half, labeled 'BEFORE', shows a large, flat, sandy area with scattered orange chairs and a simple wooden play structure. The bottom half, labeled 'AFTER', shows a more developed park with a colorful play structure, a paved walkway, and a grassy area with several young trees planted in circular pits. A person in a blue jacket is walking on the path in the 'after' section. The background features a body of water and a pier.

# BEFORE & AFTER



**CULLEN PLAZA**





**CULLEN PLAZA**



**ROBERT C. VALADE PARK**



**ROBERT C. VALADE PARK**



**UNIROYAL PROMENADE**



**UNIROYAL PROMENADE**



**UNIROYAL PROMENADE**



# UNIROYAL PROMENADE



**SOUTHWEST GREENWAY**





**SOUTHWEST GREENWAY**



**SOUTHWEST GREENWAY**



**West  
Riverfront  
Park  
2014-2021**





JOHN



AMELIA



RICHARD



VENEDA



TOYA

# 21 COMMUNITY ADVISORS



JACOB



ANN



JAYLIN



EDGAR



DENSIE

# 14 PARKS VISITED

# 17 GUESTS



DONOVAN



DONNA



MYRNA



JANLYNN



BOB



LUZ

# 1500+ MILES TRAVELED



MARISELA



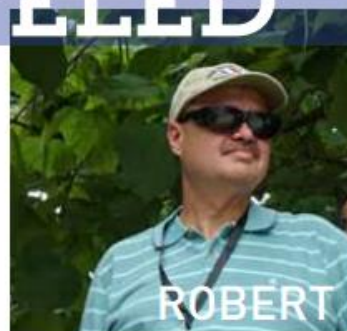
JESSICA



LESLIE



KHALIL



ROBERT



IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT, AND IT'S REALLY COMPLICATED, TO MAKE A PARK THAT FEELS LIKE IT EMERGED FROM THIS PLACE...



# INTERVIEWS DESIGN TEAMS

## 4 FINALIST TEAMS MOVING

### Gustafson Guthrie Nichol (GGN)

in collaboration with Arup and Guy Nordenson and Associates. Local partners include Rossetti (Detroit), Conservation Design Forum (Grand Rapids), Building Community Value (Detroit), Salonnière (Detroit), and Mannik Smith Group (Detroit).

### Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates

in collaboration with Utile and Mobility in Chain (MIC). Local partners include Limnotech (Ann Arbor), PEA (Detroit) and NTH Consultants (Northville).

### James Corner Field Operations

in collaboration with nArchitects, Sherwood Design Engineers, Milton Fearn, HR&A Advisors, Ann Zoller / Strategy Design Partners, ETM Associates and CMS Cost Management Services. Local partners include Austell Associates (Bloomfield Hills), Detroit Collaborative Design Center (Detroit), Giffels Webster (Detroit) and AKT Peerless (Farmington).

### Hood Design Studio

in collaboration with Diller Scofidio + Renfro, West 8, Richter, Arup, Fluidity, Ken Greenberg, Lotus Water and Altus.



## OPEN INTERVIEWS

- Four teams proposed park designs
- Winter 2018



## PARK DESIGN EXHIBIT

- Winter 2018
- 2 community engagement sessions



## COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- 5 in person
- 2 Virtual
- Groundbreaking in 2022



DETROIT  
RIVERFRONT  
CONSERVANCY

# Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park

# 4 Main Elements of the Park



**The Sport House**  
House

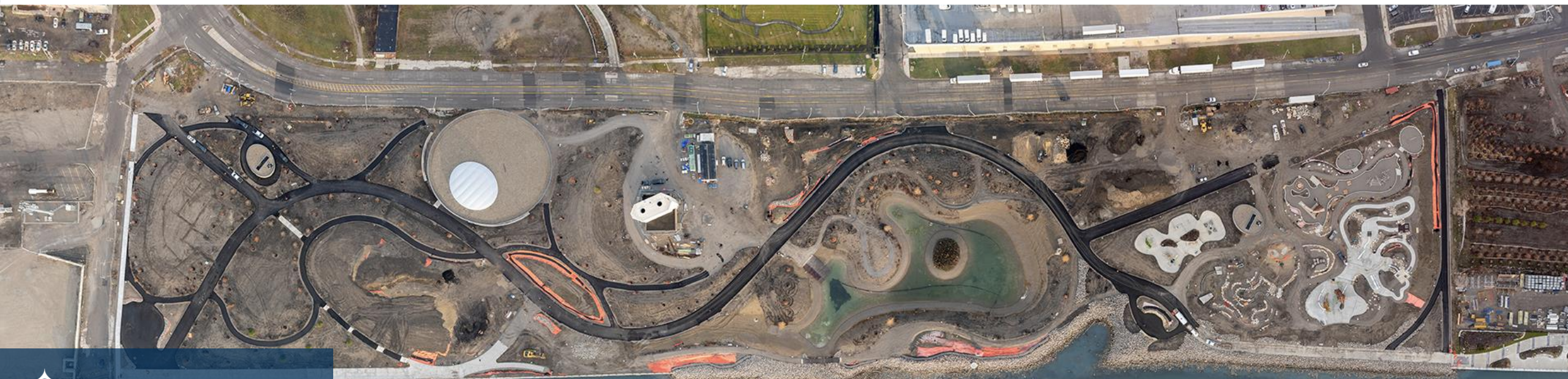
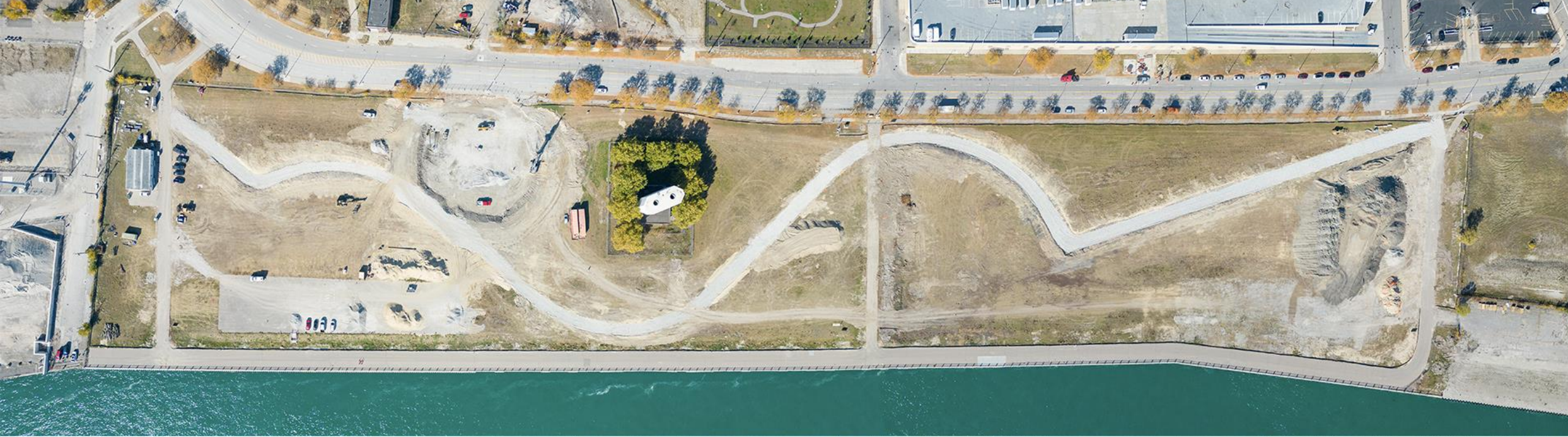
**The Hill**  
The Hill

**The Water Garden**

**Play Garden**  
Garden

**Water Play**





2023 vs. 2024



 **TREE PLANTING CREW**  
*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



 **DTE FOUNDATION HILL**  
*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



# DTE FOUNDATION HILL

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



# **WILLIAM DAVIDSON SPORT HOUSE**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*





# WILLIAM DAVIDSON SPORT HOUSE

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



**WILLIAM DAVIDSON SPORT HOUSE,  
DETROIT PISTONS COURTS**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



**HURON-CLINTON METROPARKS  
WATER GARDEN, BARBARA ERB COVE**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*





**HURON-CLINTON METROPARKS  
WATER GARDEN**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



**HURON-CLINTON METROPARKS  
WATER GARDEN**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*





**HURON-CLINTON METROPARKS  
WATER GARDEN**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



**DELTA DENTAL PLAYGARDEN,  
BERNSTEIN BEAR**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*





# DELTA DENTAL PLAYGARDEN,

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*





**DELTA DENTAL PLAYGARDEN,**  
*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*





# DELTA DENTAL PLAY GARDEN

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park



## DELTA DENTAL PLAY GARDEN

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park





**DELTA DENTAL PLAYGARDEN,  
BERNSTEIN BEAR,**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*





## DELTA DENTAL PLAY GARDEN

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park



**CHARLES & SARAH MCCLURE  
SLIDE BAY**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



# HENRY FORD HEALTH TOT LOT

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park



# HENRY FORD HEALTH TOT LOT

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park



## TREE HOUSES

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park



# DELTA DENTAL PLAYGARDEN, MORT HARRIS CLASSROOM

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



**DELTA DENTAL PLAYGARDEN,  
MORT HARRIS CLASSROOM**

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*







# EAST COMFORT STATION

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park

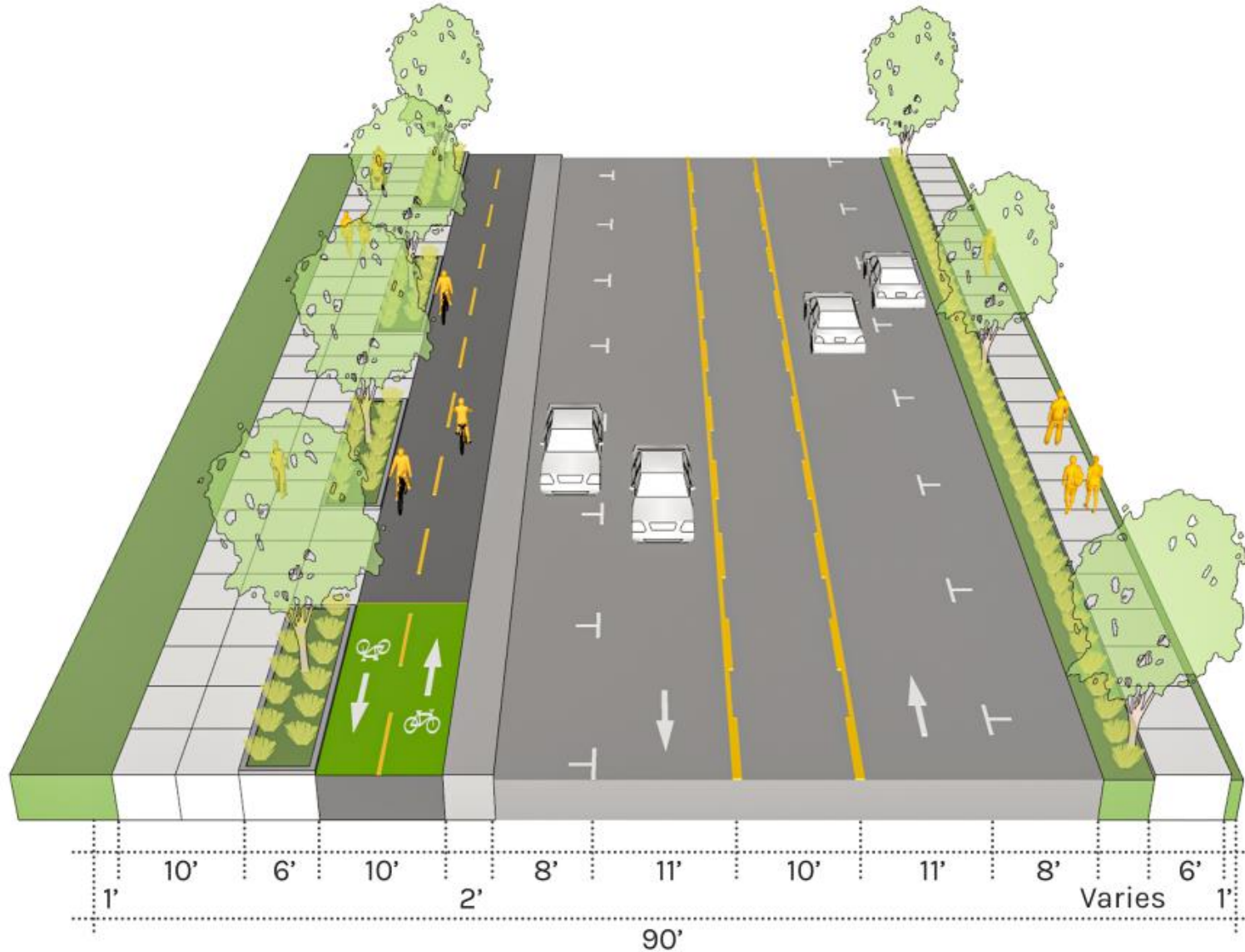


# EAST COMFORT STATION

*Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park*



# WEST JEFFERSON AVENUE





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# Q & A

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Follow along on social media!



Detroit Riverfront



@detroitriverfront

Email us at [info@detroitriverfront.org](mailto:info@detroitriverfront.org)

Grand Opening celebrations expected fall 2025!



# MOST FREQUENT COMMENT:

## “INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING”

WE HEARD THIS COMMENT DIRECTLY & INDIRECTLY.  
SAMPLE STATEMENTS FROM FIELDNOTES:

Community plays a role in programming through an advisory council

Neighborhood involvement is key to sustainability

Public helps define the parks activity

Look around the community and see what activities need space

Cultivate local partnerships

And more



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# PROGRAMMING

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**PLACE = PEOPLE**





# 2024 PROGRAMMING

**36,377**

Public Program Participants

**50k**

Harvest Fest Participants

**20k**

Winter at Valade Participants

**193**

Days of the year with Public Programs

**102**

Partners Engaged

**5,215**

Youth Served

**2,800**

Free books distributed at  
Reading & Rhythm on the  
Riverfront

**9,609**

WiFi Users

**1,818**

Surveys about Wilson Park  
Administered



*Greetings from the*  
**#1 RIVERWALK**  
*IN THE USA*  
*Detroit, Michigan*  
*AS VOTED BY USA TODAY 10 BEST*



**CONSERVATION**

*Kids Fishing Fest*



**EDUCATION, ARTS,  
CULTURE**

*Día de los Muertos*

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# How We Program

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## Passive

Structures, materials, signage, amenities, etc. that exist at a park with the purpose of engaging the visitor in self-facilitated activities.

## Active

Events, meetups, workshops, classes, experiences, etc. that are facilitated by Conservancy staff or program partners.



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# How We Program

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## Passive Examples

- Historical markers
- Junior Ranger activity booklets
- Sled Shed at Valade Park
- Sports equipment rental
- Fire pits at Winter at Valade
- Butterfly garden signage at Gabriel Richard Park

## Active Examples

- We Run 313 run club meetups
- Harvest Fest
- Yoga classes
- Friday karaoke at Winter at Valade
- Reading and Rhythm on the Riverfront
- Riverwalkers





# Wilson Park Interpretive Themes



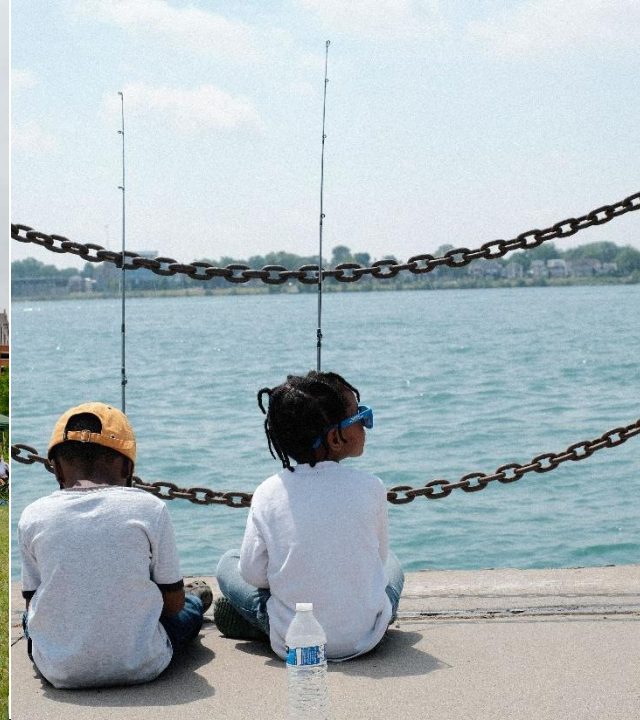
## Power of the Outdoors

Through the natural experiences provided at Ralph C. Wilson, Jr Centennial Park visitors will be inspired to connect with the power of the outdoors.



## Four Seasons of Play

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park's diverse landscape of play gardens, basketball courts, hills and water garden provide for four seasons of active activation through multi-generational play.



## Connecting with the Environment

The natural elements of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park create opportunities for citizens to learn about the environmental landscapes of Detroit and the Detroit River.



## Lessons from the River and Land

The location of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park is rooted in a rich, historical and cultural legacy which will allow visitors to connect with history of Detroit from indigenous roots to current day music.



# WILSON SURVEY NUMBERS

1,818

Total responses across five surveys

64%

Representing Detroit Zip Codes

70%

Respondents ranked Theme 1 as one of their top priorities.

49%

Respondents ranked Theme 2 as one of their top priorities.

47%

Respondents ranked Theme 3 as one of their top priorities.

34%

Respondents ranked Theme 4 as one of their top priorities.

"Continue to improve upon what's already been done. I think people really love the photos placed along the new extension to the Belle Isle Bridge. They've really helped develop a sense of joy and pride. The land preservation and landscaping, combined with art and education, really makes the Riverwalk Downtown special. More of that would be great."



# Youth Age 14-22 Wilson Survey Highlights

92%

Respondents Representing Detroit  
Zip Codes

57%

Respondents Representing Southwest  
Detroit Zip Codes

89%

Respondents Say Being Outdoors  
Helps Them to Feel Calm and/or  
Relaxed

49%

Respondents Reported Learning  
About Local Environmental Issues in  
School

82%

Respondents Say Learning About  
and Caring for the Environment  
is Important to Them

53%

Respondents Reported Learning  
About Detroit Specific History is  
Important to Them

“I would like to see more interactive opportunities for learning—for example, community gardening and a museum inside the park featuring information about the species and plants found and the historic character of the Detroit Riverfront.”



# Interpretive Theme Feedback

Find the paper with one of the four interpretive themes written on it. What words come to mind? Write those words on the post it notes and post them on the paper.

- Example: Theme – Power of the Outdoors
  - Hope, healing, meditation, breathe

Then, notice the second large paper on your table. With your table, brainstorm ways you can experience that theme BOTH through passive and active programming. Discuss. Jot your ideas down on the post it notes and post them on the paper.

- Example: Theme – Power of the Outdoors
  - Passive: mindfulness signage/markers, “quiet” areas
  - Active: guided meditation class, gardening workshop

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# THANK YOU

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Follow along on social media!



Detroit Riverfront



@detroitriverfront

Email us at [info@detroitriverfront.org](mailto:info@detroitriverfront.org)

Grand Opening celebrations expected fall 2025!

