



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Embargoed until Wednesday, May 29 at 6 a.m. ET

Delta Dental Announces \$5 Million Gift to Detroit Riverfront Conservancy

Delta Dental's Largest Corporate Gift Ever Reinforces Commitment to Building Healthy, Smart and Vibrant Communities

DETROIT (May 29, 2019) – Delta Dental and the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy today announced a \$5 million corporate investment in a five-acre playground on the West Riverfront in what will be the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park.

The Delta Dental Play Garden represents the largest company investment in the dental benefit provider's 62-year history and reinforces its commitment to supporting the communities in which it does business.

"Delta Dental is grateful for the opportunity to provide benefits to nearly six million people in southeast Michigan. In return, we believe that we must be a force for good in the region every day," said Goran Jurkovic, president and CEO of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. "This space will engage families downtown and in Detroit's neighborhoods and surrounding communities in fun and healthy activities for decades to come and help us achieve our purpose of building healthy, smart, vibrant communities."

Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates along with Monstrum, a creative firm from Copenhagen, are designing the Play Garden. The designers met with elementary school students from Detroit in workshops to imagine animals they would like to see as play equipment in the Play Garden. The playground will feature a large 20-foot bear play structure that children can climb up and slide down as well as otters, beavers and even a dragon dreamt up by one of the children.

"This gift from Delta Dental reflects their commitment to public spaces and programs that build a healthy community in Detroit," said Matt Cullen, chairman of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy Board of Directors. "This incredible Play Garden will spark a connection with nature and will help young Detroiters to develop a life-long love for active living and recreation."

Delta Dental's \$5 million investment marks a significant contribution to the overall project, which is estimated to cost \$60 million. The Delta Dental Play Garden is expected to be one of the most popular destinations within the park.

"Kids are going to love this park," said Mark Wallace, president and CEO of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy. "The community has been incredibly enthusiastic about the designs we have presented for the play garden, and we are sure that this will be the place where kids from Detroit and the SE Michigan region will make some of their favorite childhood memories. With the support of Delta Dental, we are able to build a world-class gathering space for all children to experience."

Construction on the park begins in 2020, with the grand opening in 2022.

In addition to the Play Garden, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park will feature a large swimming cove, which will allow visitors to experience the Detroit River by swimming in it during the warmer months and ice-skating on top of it during the winter.

West Riverfront Park is a 22-acre site location along the Detroit Riverfront that sits at the intersection of Detroit's Mexicantown, Corktown and Southwest Detroit neighborhoods. For nearly 100 years, the site was privately owned and closed to the public until the Conservancy opened the park in 2014.

Last year, the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy received support from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to start a community-driven international design competition for West Riverfront Park that has been recognized as one of the most inclusive and transparent processes that has been undertaken in public space design anywhere. World-renowned architects are designing the space. Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates was selected to lead the team, with Sir David Adjaye of Adjaye Associates designing the Sport House and the Park House structures within the park.

In October 2018, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation announced a commitment of \$50 million towards Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park on the West Riverfront with \$40 million for construction and \$10 million to support the broader efforts for long-term sustainability.

Throughout this process, the Conservancy will continue to raise the funds through public and private support for the project and completion of other key connections on the West Riverfront.

Completion of this park will contribute toward the Conservancy's ultimate vision to develop 5.5 miles of riverfront from the Ambassador Bridge on the west to Gabriel Richard Park, which is just east of the MacArthur (Belle Isle) Bridge. More than 85 percent of the 3.5-mile East Riverfront is complete, with Atwater Beach opening this summer and construction starting on the Uniroyal parcel this fall.

[Renderings of the Delta Dental Play Garden may be found here.](#)

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About Delta Dental

Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana, and its affiliates in Arkansas, Kentucky, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Tennessee collectively are among the largest dental plan administrators in the nation. In 2018, the enterprise paid out \$4 billion for dental care for 14 million members. Locally, offices are located in Okemos and Farmington Hills, Michigan.

About the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy

The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy is a non-profit organization founded in 2003 with the mission to develop public access to Detroit's riverfront and serve as an anchor for economic development. As the permanent stewards of the Riverwalk and the Dequindre Cut, the Conservancy is responsible for raising the funds needed for construction, operation, maintenance, security and programming of the public spaces located along the riverfront. The Conservancy's ultimate vision is to develop five-and-a-half miles of riverfront from the Ambassador Bridge on the west to Gabriel Richard Park, just east of the MacArthur Bridge to Belle Isle. Visit www.detroitriverfront.org for more information.

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