



2009 ANNUAL REPORT

the transformation OF
DETROIT'S RIVERFRONT





THE TRANSFORMATION HAS BEGUN

From a once desolate and neglected riverfront, the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy is bringing the Detroit River, our source of drinking water, irrigation, recreation and a gateway for shipping and transportation for more than 300 years, back into the spotlight. By creating a natural environment in an urban setting, we are reconnecting people with nature, each other, their communities and with the river that has been the very *lifeline of Detroit*.

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THERE IS MUCH TO CELEBRATE

With three miles of developed riverfront currently open and accessible for the community to enjoy.

the transformation OF DETROIT'S RIVERFRONT

It has been six years since the non-profit organization, the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, was founded with a mission of bringing public access to Detroit's riverfront and serving as a catalyst for economic development of the riverfront district and the City of Detroit. In that time, its vision has remained the same, five-and-a-half miles of connected riverfront, from bridge to bridge and beyond. And while more work remains to be completed, there is much to celebrate with three miles of developed riverfront currently open and accessible for the community to enjoy including lovely pavilions, plazas, parks and green space connecting the citizens of the City and region to the very waterway on which the City was founded.



The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy has transformed the riverfront from 19th century rail yards asphalted over for 20th century parking lots and city maintenance yards, into 21st century public gardens and promenades through the construction, operations, maintenance and programming of the Detroit RiverWalk. As it has since its inception, the Conservancy continues to raise capital funds necessary for building and maintaining the RiverWalk. As we continue to attract critical mass to a once-blighted stretch of this international waterway, our partnership with the public-private sector continues to drive this transformation.

While our mission provides for beautiful developed public spaces where visitors can watch freighters and fishing boats sail by, this project also serves to promote a thriving, walkable and connected area.



A LETTER FROM *leadership*

As you take a stroll along the RiverWalk, it's sometimes difficult to remember that just a little under five years ago it wouldn't have been possible. The transformation of Detroit's riverfront has been so dramatic that the vision of the abandoned industrial sites, vacant warehouses, shuttered businesses and cement silos are beginning to fade from our memory.

The restoration, which is currently underway, has now given a reason for thousands of people to visit the Detroit riverfront, many for the very first time. Their memories are now dotted with visions of trees, fountains, flowers, bicycles, ice cream cones, a carousel and most importantly, people. Lots of people – relaxing, fishing, exercising, playing, connecting with friends and making new friends.



It is this new vision that continues to inspire and drive our commitment to completing our ultimate vision of five-and-a-half miles of developed riverfront, from bridge to bridge and beyond.

With the tremendous progress made on the project in such a short time, 80 percent of the east riverfront

complete, and the challenges posed by the economic climate, 2009 was a critical year for the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy. In order to chart the right course for the organization and the riverfront for the next five years, the Conservancy's Board of Directors commissioned the development of a new strategic plan. Through the hard work of our Strategic Planning committee, we gathered significant feedback and input from many critical stakeholders on the riverfront.

The plan, completed in December 2009, serves as our roadmap as we continue development of Detroit's International Riverfront – the face of Detroit – into a beautiful, exciting, safe, accessible, world-class gathering place for all.

We thank you for your continued support and invite you to enjoy our 2009 annual report, which not only highlights our growth and progress this past year, but also reminds you just how far we've truly come.

Matthew P. Cullen
Board Chairman
Detroit RiverFront Conservancy

Faye Alexander Nelson
President & CEO
Detroit RiverFront Conservancy

GM PLAZA

The fountains at GM Plaza have quickly become a *vibrant and enticing* gathering place for all... whether for a lively summer time concert or a refreshing stroll through our *beautiful fountains*, adults and kids of all ages have come to enjoy this beautiful public space on their visits to the riverfront.





A LETTER
leader

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SEE THE
transformation ►







enrichment

Stories of geography, natural resources, water transport, and cultural history are embedded in the design of the Detroit riverfront. A sculptural glass wall traces the reach of the Detroit River within the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway giving visitors a quick geography lesson on maritime trade routes. A large-scale inlaid granite map set in the pavement shows the relationship of the Detroit River and its islands to the City and to Windsor, Ontario. Design studies of African textile design and kente

cloth patterns inspired paving colors and patterns, celebrating the ethnic heritage of the Detroit area, adding subtle cultural cues and accents. The Dequindre Cut Greenway, part of the inland access to the riverfront, retained its original graffiti and urban artwork along its route, making it a unique urban attraction. The custom-designed Cullen Family Carousel features creatures native to the river, as well as a whimsical river mermaid and sea monster.

THE EAST RIVERFRONT *development*

Working with the City of Detroit, community groups, private entities, foundations and corporations, Conservancy design teams developed plans for the riverfront based on the overarching goal of five-and-a-half miles of public access development, from the Ambassador Bridge to Gabriel Richard Park, just east of the McArthur "Belle Isle" Bridge connected by RiverWalk with plazas, pavilions, parks, harbors and green space. Today, 80 percent of the east riverfront project is complete, providing an array of amenities including cafés and concessions, a carousel, bicycle rental and sales shop, butterfly gardens, public art, docking facilities for a variety of water vessels, shoreline fishing, fountains and restrooms, which support the RiverWalk, plaza and pavilion development.



As the stewards of this walkable public space, the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy houses at Rivard Plaza its 24-hour security command center and operations team that is responsible for the cleaning, landscaping and other maintenance associated with the ongoing upkeep of the riverfront.

The creation of this beautiful space is already drawing thousands of guests annually through its four seasons of active programming including: the Detroit River Days festival, the international Red Bull Air Races, the annual fireworks display, yoga, walking clubs, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, a Detroit Riverfront Chapter of the Audubon Society, Canine Club social dog walking club, non-profit walks and runs, river boat tours and more.

PUBLIC PRIVATE *partnership*

Through a public/private partnership, the east riverfront development was launched in 2003 as a \$300 million project that is anticipated to leverage hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in the riverfront district over time. As to the non-profit Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, three key partners served as the catalyst for its launch and development: the City of Detroit, General Motors and the Kresge Foundation. Subsequent to the establishment of the Conservancy, funding support has been obtained from foundations, corporations, individuals, families, our Board and staff, and all levels of the public sector. Continuous fundraising



is underway to support the construction and operations costs necessary to complete this development.

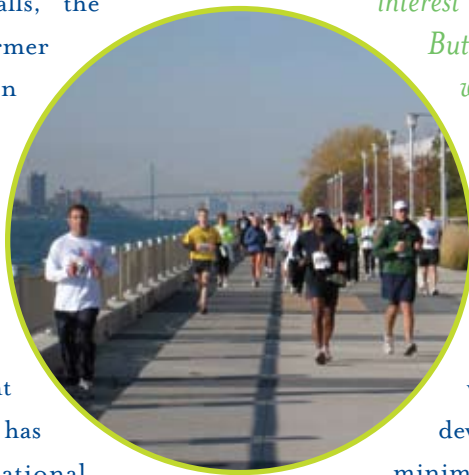
A broad cross section of public and private organizations and individuals represent the core components of the Conservancy's Board, its composition and overall effort reflective of a growing trend across the country on how communities sustain and revitalize their respective areas. The public/private collaboration has played a critical role in the Conservancy's accomplishments and will be looked to for continued support as it expands its development of public space.

Our capital campaign continues, and a newly created annual fund development and membership program now exist as sustainability continues to be a critical component of this project.



environmental

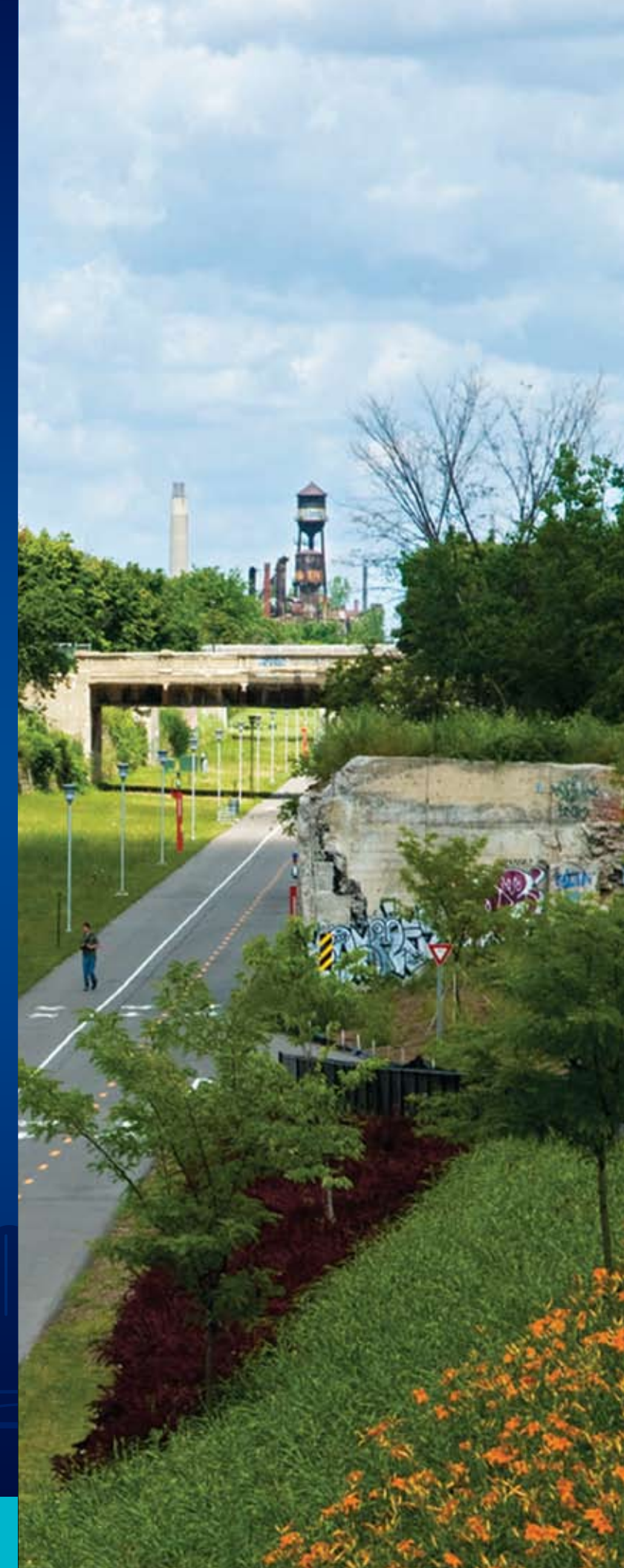
Taking care of the environment is an ongoing priority for the Conservancy. Our work to reclaim the Detroit riverfront for public use and enjoyment is resulting in the clean up and repair of numerous brownfield sites. Repairs to existing seawalls, the dredging and removal of former industrial debris and the addition of stone riprap along sections of seawall and shoreline have improved water quality and increased fish habitat in the river. Urban run-off from new parking lots is directed through a natural filtration for treatment prior to discharge. This project has also partnered with international pollution prevention and control programs. Together these efforts have helped increase native fish and waterfowl populations including bald eagles, peregrine falcons, osprey, sturgeon, whitefish and walleye. During construction, recycled materials were



used in construction of the pavilions, and recycled concrete became sub-base and aggregate for new paving systems. *Native plantings along the Detroit riverfront were selected for their hardiness, seasonal interest and habitat value. In particular, the Butterfly Garden at Gabriel Richard Park was specifically designed in recognition of the river's role as a major North American flyway, providing habitat for migrating butterflies.* The guiding principles for our landscaping program include organic-based turf management, water conservation techniques and devices, energy-efficient products that minimize energy requirements, recycling of landscaping waste and fuel conservation. In addition to environmentally friendly cleaners, biodegradable trash bags, pet waste bags and paper products are used to maintain the cleanliness of the RiverWalk.

DEQUINDRE CUT GREENWAY

Formerly a Grand Trunk railroad line, the Dequindre Cut is a *below-level greenway* with a decidedly urban feel stretching one-and-a-half miles. Opened in 2009, the Dequindre Cut offers a *paved pedestrian and biking path* that connects the riverfront district and the surrounding Near-end Neighborhoods to the Eastern Market area.



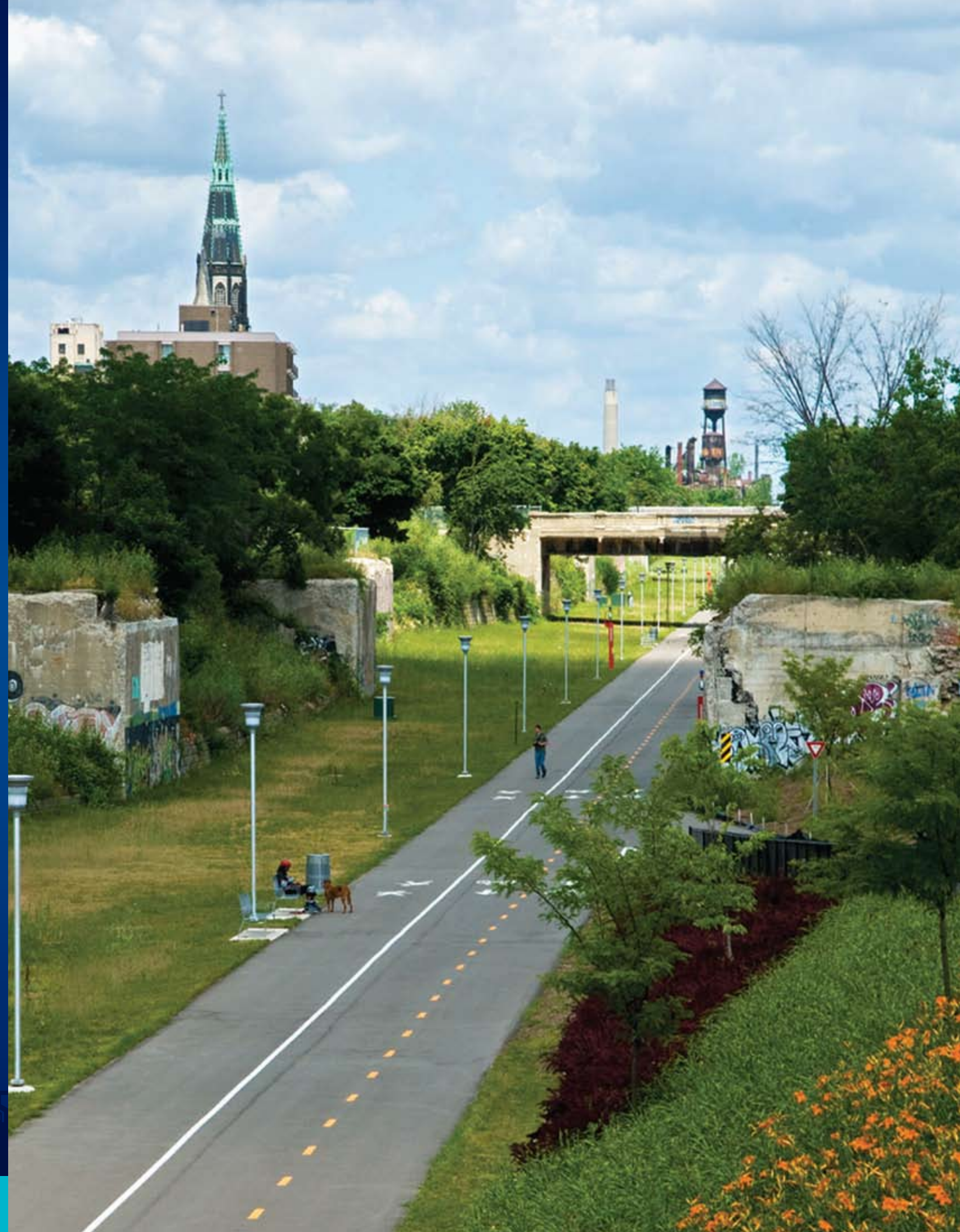


environ

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SOCIO/ECONOMIC
impact

A project of this magnitude brings along with it the anticipation of growth “beyond the blueprints.” The Detroit riverfront project has spurred development in and around its footprint that has further connected the community to the river.

The Conservancy’s public/private partners have made major progress with their respective riverfront developments providing vital linkages to the surrounding community. The following represents an update on these efforts.

William G. Milliken State Park and Harbor, the second phase of which opened in October of 2009. As Michigan’s first and only urban state park, the new phase coupled with the harbor portion of the park includes trails, shoreline



fishing, wildlife observation, interpretive signage, a wetland designed for storm water treatment, a 52-slip harbor, covered picnic areas and a 63-foot replica of the Tawas Lighthouse. The Park, 31 acres upon completion, brings to Detroit a wealth of educational and recreational opportunities for the community to experience on the riverfront.

The **Dequindre Cut Greenway**, formerly a Grand Trunk Western railroad line and part of the inland access to the riverfront, is a one-and-a-half mile long paved pedestrian and biking greenway that opened in May 2009 connecting the riverfront essentially to Eastern Market along with the surrounding neighborhoods to the waterfront. Having retained its original graffiti and urban artwork

along the route, the Dequindre Cut has quickly grown into a unique urban attraction and one for which the Conservancy has assumed the operations and maintenance responsibility. As part of the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan’s Greenways Initiatives, the greenways will continue to expand over the next five years, therefore connecting more communities to Detroit’s riverfront.

The **Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority Terminal and Wharf** just west of the Renaissance Center is anticipated to bring considerable economic and tourism opportunities to our City and to our region. Scheduled to be completed by late fall of 2010, the 21,000 square-foot facility includes a terminal and public



dock/wharf. The Authority’s headquarters, a visitors’ center and a U.S. Custom’s processing site will be located within the terminal. The public dock will be adjacent to the new terminal and will accommodate all types of vessels including cruise ships, ferries, water taxis and more.

The **University Prep Science & Math High School** – an academically competitive college preparatory school located in the riverfront district slated to open in the fall of 2010 – will ultimately serve nearly 2,000 students once fully populated in an original warehouse structure that has been redesigned into a state-of-the-art learning center.



PROGRESS *continues*

The next five years will continue to see more progress in the way of expansion and programs along the Detroit RiverWalk and its greenways. With an architectural and engineering team now in place, the Conservancy prepares to launch its final phase of construction on the remaining east riverfront parcels that have yet to be developed in the spring of 2011.

Progress also means improvements that extend on to Atwater Street, a primary artery to the RiverWalk and Dequindre Cut, that is expanding to accommodate cyclists and street-side parking, as well as upgrading its lighting and drainage systems.

Progress along the waterways means more progress along the greenways as the Dequindre Cut is in the planning stages of expansion to continue connecting more neighborhoods further establishing Detroit as a walkable community.



Progress means the Conservancy begins to move west in remaining focused on its overall vision to complete five-and-a-half miles of riverfront, which includes two miles from Joe Louis Arena west to the Ambassador Bridge. The Conservancy made its first footprint on the west riverfront in 2007, purchasing 26 acres in 2008, which was the site of the former Detroit Free Press printing plant, thanks to generous federal appropriations. A conceptual design plan that includes input from our key stakeholders, property owners, the City and community to develop the west riverfront, bringing access to the river on the west much the same as we did on the east, is in the final stages of completion.

The riverfront has already provided tremendous value as it continues to bring people together throughout the region and provides wonderful promise for the future.

CIVIC CENTER PROMENADE

From unsightly silos and a neglected and barren riverfront, the Conservancy has *transformed the water's edge* into a clean, safe, beautiful and accessible gathering place for all, *attracting thousands* of visitors annually who come to walk, bike, exercise or simply relax and reflect.





PROGRESS

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SEE THE *transformation* ►







It is a pleasure for me to extend heartfelt appreciation from the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy to our loyal and generous supporters. The broad based support we have received from foundations, corporations, individuals, the public sector, as well as the Conservancy's Board and administration, are helping to make our vision a reality. Many of our donors make annual gifts to provide for the operations and maintenance of the River Walk. Others have considered the long term and have invested in our capital campaign or our endowment. Both ways of giving are vital and, regardless of the level, meaningful. On behalf of the Conservancy's Board of Directors and staff, I would like to thank all of our donors for their support.

David K. Page, Esq.
Vice-Chair — Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, Chair — Advancement Committee

donors

\$10,000,000 +

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 \$5,000,000 – \$9,999,999
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 Human Services
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 State Legislature
 Department of Natural Resources
 and Environment
 Michigan Natural Resources
 Trust Fund
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 Economic Development
 Corporation (MEDC)
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 The Michigan Congressional Delegation
 U.S. Coast Guard
 National Oceanic & Atmospheric
 Administration (NOAA)
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 U.S. Department of Housing and
 Urban Development (HUD)
 Federal Highway Administration

Due to space limitations, only gifts of \$1,000 and above are listed here. Every gift is important, and the Conservancy gives thanks to all of our supporters. This listing reflects cumulative contributions made as of December 31, 2009. The Conservancy has made every effort to reflect an accurate and complete list of our donors. Please contact us at 313.566.8200 to let us know of any errors or omissions.



2009 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

REVENUES 2009

Foundation Contributions	\$1,752,817.00
Corporate Contributions	889,202.00
In-Kind Contributions	9,425,000.00
Individual Contributions	275,062.00
Investment Income	28,471.00
Grant Income	2,807,531.00
Other Income	99,445.00
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	742,320.00

TOTAL REVENUES: \$16,019,848.00

EXPENDITURES

East Riverfront Project	9,512,897.00
General and Administrative	1,265,876.00
Fundraising	927,791.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$11,706,564.00

EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES: \$4,313,284.00

2009 ASSETS

Cash and Current Assets	\$24,765,074.00
Easements	23,749,254.00
Endowment	4,347,020.00
Land	2,057,640.00
Pledges Receivable	761,061.00
Other Noncurrent Assets	28,534,701.00

TOTAL ASSETS: \$84,214,750.00

The financial statements for Detroit RiverFront Conservancy as of December 31, 2009, have been audited by an independent, certified public accounting firm. Copies of the complete audited financial statements are available upon request to:

*Detroit RiverFront Conservancy
600 Renaissance Center
Suite 1720
Detroit, Michigan 48243*

OMNI/TALON

Considered by many to be one of the most *beautiful and serene* locations along the riverfront, the portion of the RiverWalk alongside the Omni/Talon features a unique pile-supported *boardwalk extending out over the water*, making it an ideal spot for either a scenic run or quiet reflection.





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OVER EXPENDITURES: \$4,313,284.00

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transformation ►







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Manager, Volunteer & Programming Services

Sandy Partlan
Constituent Records Coordinator

William A. Smith
Senior Director, Finance & Administration

Pat Vintevoghel
*Executive Assistant to the President
& CEO & Office Manager*

Richard A. Warner
Director of Operations

Sandra van Meek
Director of Programming & External Affairs

Weiping Wang
Senior Accountant

Bianca Williams
*Programs & Community
Outreach Coordinator*





AND THE TRANSFORMATION CONTINUES...

While there is much to celebrate and many milestones have been reached, there is much work that remains to be completed. The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy continues to raise funds to support costs associated with construction and our ongoing operations, maintenance, security and programming, as we strive to complete our vision for *a beautifully transformed and vibrant riverfront* — from “bridge to bridge” and beyond.



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