



THE DETROIT RIVERFRONT

Welcome to the Detroit riverfront. Detroit is older than Chicago, Toronto, Cleveland and every other Midwestern city. Detroit is 75 years older than the United States. We were founded by the French, were briefly British and then blossomed into a great American city.

The Detroit River has always represented the life-line of the region. Founded by Antoine Laumet de Lamouthe Cadillac in July 1701 on the south bank of the river, Detroit was named the Strait – or in his own French tongue – le Detroit. The river connected Lake St. Clair on the north with Lake Erie to the south.

As early as 1707, settlers were awarded farm grants along the river - from 200-800 linear feet and extended back two to three miles. It gave each property owner access to a source for food, drinking water and a highway on which the farmer transported goods to and from the marketplace. These eventually became known as “ribbon farms” and are marked in today’s Detroit by streets, which bear the names of the original owners such as: Beaubien, Riopelle, St. Aubin, Chene, Campau and Livernois.

The Detroit River and riverfront has been the site of some of our most significant history. Little known **stats and facts** include:

- The inaugural voyage of the first steamship *Walk in the Water* arrived in Detroit in the 19th Century and was the beginning of Detroit’s manufacturing might. **Within 20 years, more than 200 businesses became located on the river** to support the new industry.
- More than **650 ships were built here from the 1800s to the 1960s**. The Detroit River was so busy that it was declared a public highway by an Act of Congress in 1819.
- The **last stop of the Underground Railroad** before Canada – and freedom.
- **The river is 32 miles long** from Lake St. Clair to Lake Erie.
- There are **21 islands** with **72 miles of shoreline**.
- **65 kinds of fish** and **29 species of waterfowl**, including blue heron, sturgeon and walleye.

If you look across the water, you will see Windsor, Canada. Detroit is the only American city with another country just five minutes away by bridge or tunnel, and where Canada is “south” of the USA.

Today, with newly developed public spaces and more to come, a growing number of people value the riverfront in their daily lives, accessing its many offerings from other cities, or neighborhoods, office buildings or boats. Here are just a few highlights that help tell the story:

- **3 miles** of newly developed riverfront.
- **3 million visitors** a year.
- **9 neighborhoods** surrounding its path.
- **2,434 new trees and shrubs and 10,000 plants**.
- Glorious **public art** along the RiverWalk Garden Rooms, and graffiti art in the Dequindre Cut.
- **Continued environmental stewardship**, from use of recycled materials in signage, to the storm water management system at Milliken State Park & Harbor.
- **One of the most successful public private partnerships**, founded initially by three key partners – the City of Detroit, which provided valuable riverfront land and significant infrastructure improvements; General Motors, which made additional investments into its waterfront renovations that included the construction of the G.M. Plaza and the first half mile of RiverWalk; and the Kresge Foundation, which provided its largest grant ever to a single project – a \$50 million challenge grant that served as an economic catalyst to launch the Conservancy’s efforts and allowed the Conservancy to attract additional funds from foundations, corporations and the private sector.
- A place to **recreate and reconnect** with nature for the nearly 150,000 employees in the greater downtown area.

And that’s just the beginning. We invite you to use this guide to explore what is one of Detroit’s oldest, and newly rediscovered treasures.

WHAT TO SEE

Joe Louis Arena Home of the 11-time Stanley Cup Champions, the Detroit Red Wings, Joe Louis Arena proudly stands on the banks of the Detroit River with a 20,058-seat arena.

Cobo Center A world-class meeting and convention facility, located along a beautifully restored international riverfront in the heart of vibrant downtown Detroit, undergoing a \$300 million transformation, which hosts the North American International Auto Show. Get more info at cobocenter.com.

Hart Plaza The 14-acre riverfront plaza, named in honor of Senator Phillip A. Hart, opened in 1975 and has the capacity for 40,000 people. It is the site of many of Detroit’s popular events and festivals. At the center of the plaza is the 30 ft. tall Horace E. Dodge and Son Memorial Fountain, designed by Isamu Noguchi. Hart Plaza is immediately south of Woodward and Jefferson Avenues. At the river’s edge is the international **Underground Railroad Memorial**, commissioned by Detroit 300. The 10 ft. by 12 ft. sculpture is of nine slaves and a railroad “conductor” looking and pointing towards Canada in anticipation of safety and freedom.

Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority A 21,000 square foot public dock and terminal on the downtown Detroit riverfront that brings new Great Lakes cruise visitors to the waterfront. Get more info at portdetroit.com.

G.M. Plaza As a part of its renovation of the Renaissance Center for its world headquarters, General Motors created the G.M. Plaza, a spectacular riverfront space that is a gathering spot and signature event venue. The synchronized water fountains and a granite world map are spectacular features. The Wintergarden serves as a backdrop to this vital piece of the Detroit riverfront.

Rivard Plaza The plaza is a favorite Detroit destination and signature event site. The plaza is home to many riverfront highlights, including:

- **The Cullen Family Carousel** Handcrafted and specially designed for Detroit, it features creatures native to the Detroit River, including sturgeon, egrets and walleye, along with the mythical River Mermaid and River Monster.

- **Riverwalk Café** The Riverwalk Café offers diverse menus at two locations; Rivard Plaza and Gabriel Richard Park. Grab a quick bite to go, or stay and watch the ships go by. More details on menus and café hours can be found at the café locations, or at detroitriverfront.org.

- **Diamond Jack’s River Tours** Diamond Jack’s provides boat tours on the sparkling waters of the Detroit River. Visit its dock at Rivard Plaza or get more info at diamondjack.com.

- **Waterways Maps** These beautifully designed three dimensional maps highlight the importance of the Detroit River within the international waterways. An inlaid granite map at Rivard Plaza highlights the 32-mile-long Detroit River and its surrounding communities. A standing glass map shows the entire St. Lawrence Seaway route.

- **Wheelhouse Detroit** Experience the Motor City on two wheels! Located on Rivard Plaza, Wheelhouse Detroit offers bike rentals, tours and services, seven days a week, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Two-hour, half-day, or full-day rental packages are available. For more information, visit wheelhousedetroit.com.

Milliken State Park and Harbor The first urban state park in Michigan, the William G. Milliken State Park and Harbor features a 52-slip marina, a 63-ft. replica of the Tawas Point lighthouse, covered picnic areas and interpretive signage, wildlife observation trails and fishing outlooks, a wetlands storm water treatment system, a memorial to Detroit River advocate, Peter Stroh, historical markers to the Jewish Soldiers of the Civil War and the Black Presence in Detroit, as well as Chapman Abraham markers. For more information or to reserve a picnic shelter or boat slip, visit Michigan.gov/Milliken.

Dequindre Cut Greenway Part of the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan’s Greenway Initiative, the 1.5 mile-long paved pedestrian biking greenway with its examples of public and graffiti art, connects the riverfront to its northern neighborhoods and to Eastern Market.

Eastern Market The largest open-air wholesale/retail market of its kind in the United States, Eastern Market was declared a historic area in 1977. It is more than 160 years old with over 150 currently operating food-related businesses. For more information, visit detroiteasternmarket.com.

Chene Park The 6,000 seat amphitheater on the banks of the Detroit River is just east of the Milliken State Park and Harbor. Regularly scheduled summer concerts attract more than 100,000 visitors annually. For more information, visit cheneparkdetroit.com.

Stroh River Place, Talon & Roberts Riverwalk Hotel The RiverWalk stretches for more than 1.25 miles along the east riverfront, starting at Joseph Campau Street and Stroh River Place, and continuing east past the Talon office building and the Roberts Riverwalk Hotel.

Formerly the home of Detroit-based pharmaceutical firm Parke Davis & Co., the buildings date back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Stroh family, owners of the Stroh Companies, Inc., purchased the historically designated site in 1979. The 25-acre mixed use campus brings together businesses and upscale living, which includes: The 4-star Rattlesnake Club, the Talon Building, the 108-room Roberts Riverwalk Hotel and the Roberts Bistro. For more information, visit detroitriverwalkhotel.com.

Mt. Elliott Park A complete redevelopment of this long-time city park, which is located at the foot of Mt. Elliott Street and adjacent to an active Coast Guard station, began in summer of 2012. The new park will be universally accessible to all and will include an interactive water feature and play scape, an improved shoreline, a plaza, a pavilion with a café, picnic areas and fishing outlooks.

Gabriel Richard Park At Gabriel Richard Park, visitors can stroll along paths through special gardens planted with flowers chosen for their personal appeal to butterflies, or take a winding tour of an inlaid brick labyrinth, donated by the Adcraft Club of Detroit. These peaceful amenities invite visitors to take a breath and enjoy the peaceful setting.

THE DETROIT RIVERFRONT CONSERVANCY

The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy is a non-profit organization founded in 2003 by a group of determined, forward-looking, civic, community and public leaders. They had the vision of what an accessible riverfront could become – and a plan to make it happen bridge to bridge, spanning 5.5 miles from Gabriel Richard Park at the MacArthur Bridge to Belle Isle, to the western most portion at the Ambassador Bridge, Riverside Park.

With a backdrop as one of the busiest waterways in the world, it would be the first time in its 300-year history that Detroit would have a vibrant, safe, green, and accessible riverfront that could be enjoyed by all.

The mission of the Conservancy is to develop public access to Detroit’s riverfront and serve as an anchor for economic development – all while working collaboratively to create more thriving, walkable and connected communities within Detroit.

The first phase of the project, which is 3.5 miles of the east riverfront, is now 80 percent complete. In July 2012, work began on the final phases of construction, which will allow for the completion of the east riverfront project. It is important to note that the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy is responsible for raising 100 percent of the costs to maintain and develop this beautiful asset.

It is only through your generous support that the Conservancy will be able to keep the Detroit riverfront a beautiful place for residents, workers and visitors to enjoy for generations to come.

Participate in this once-in-a-generation opportunity to make a difference in one of the great American cities – Detroit.

HOW CAN YOU HELP KEEP THE RIVERFRONT BEAUTIFUL?

- **Buy a brick** to be placed along the riverfront for someone you love.
- **Create a Living Memorial** through the endowment of a tree, plantings or a bench.
- Become a **Friend of the Conservancy**.
- **Volunteer** at the Conservancy.
- To support the Conservancy in the above ways, please visit detroitriverfront.org.

The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy is a non-profit organization founded in 2003 by a group of dedicated civic, corporate and community leaders who had the vision of what an accessible riverfront could become – bridge to bridge, spanning 5.5 miles from the Ambassador Bridge to Gabriel Richard Park just east of the MacArthur Bridge to Belle Isle. The Conservancy’s mission is to develop the public space of Detroit’s riverfront and serve as an anchor for economic development – all while working collaboratively to create more thriving, walkable and connected communities within Detroit. Please consider making a donation to help ensure the Detroit riverfront continues to be a beautiful place for all.

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www.detroitriverfront.org



DETROIT
RIVERFRONT

WHAT TO
SEE + DO

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POINTS OF INTEREST

- Joe Louis Arena (1D)
- Detroit Port Authority (3E)
- Cobo Center (2D)
- Hart Plaza (2D)
- Underground Railroad Memorial (2D)
- G.M. Plaza (4E)
- Rivard Plaza (5E)
- The Cullen Family Carousel (5E)
- Wheelhouse Detroit Bike Rentals (5E)
- Riverwalk Café (5E, 15D)
- Milliken State Park & Harbor (7E)
- Chene Park (8F)
- Stroh River Place (9F)
- Talon/Roberts Riverwalk Hotel (10F)
- UAW/GM (11F)
- Harbortown (11E)
- Coast Guard (12E)
- Mt. Elliott Park (12E)
- Gabriel Richard Park (15D)
- Dequindre Cut (7C)
- Eastern Market (7A)
- Belle Isle
- Scripps Conservatory
- Scott Fountain
- Nature Walk
- Bike Trails
- Picnics

Neighborhoods

- Downtown (3A,B)
- Corktown (1A)
- Midtown
- Lafayette Park (8A)
- Elmwood (9A)
- Island View (13A)
- Harbortown (11E)
- The Villages (11E)
- Jefferson East

WHAT TO DO ON THE RIVERFRONT

What to do for Children

- Cullen Family Carousel (5E)
- Riverwalk Café (5E, 15D)
- Kaboom! Playscape (5E)
- Fountain at G. M. Plaza (4E)
- Butterfly Garden & Labyrinth (15D)
- Rent Bikes at Wheelhouse Detroit (5E)
- Have a picnic at the Milliken State Park (7E)

Go Fishing:

- Milliken State Park (7E)
- Gabriel Richard Park (15D)
- Mt. Elliott Park (12E)

Take a River Cruise (5E)

- Diamond Jack diamondjack.com
- The Detroit Princess detroitprincess.com
- Private Yachts: The Infinity + Ovation infinityandovation.com

Dining

- Riverwalk Café (5E, 15D)
- Andiamo's (4E)
- Joe Muer's (4E)
- Coach Insignia (4E)
- Rattlesnake Club (9F)
- Roberts Bistro (10F)

Concerts + Events

- Chene Park (8F)
- visit cheneparkdetroit.com for concerts + events
- Rockin' on the Riverfront: Summer (4E)
- Mt. Elliott Park (12E)
- River Days Concerts: June (5E)
- Hart Plaza (2D)
- visit detroitriverfront.org for concerts + events

Free community partnership programming

- Visit detroitriverfront.org for details on all of our seasonal activities and programming.
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- RiverFront Canine Club
- River Walkers senior walking group
- Guided Tours
- Detroit Target Fireworks
- Run/Walk at the River Days Run
- Detroit Free Press Marathon
- Herbal Walk
- Motown in Motion
- Families in Fitness

WHILE IN THE PARK

Rules + Regulations

- To ensure that all visitors and residents have the best experience possible, the Detroit riverfront is governed by the same regulations established at other riverfront city parks:
- Be respectful of other guests around you.
- Cyclists & roller skaters should yield right of way to pedestrians and observe "slow" signs.
- Help us keep the riverfront clean & beautiful by depositing trash and recyclable bottles in appropriate receptacles.
- Fishing is permitted in designated areas.
- Pets are welcome when on a leash and waste bags are provided.

Hours

6 a.m. to 10 p.m., all seasons.

Photography and Filming

For commercial uses, permission is needed. Please contact our Security and Operations team at 313 656 2276.

For information about special events and wedding photography, visit our web site at detroitriverfront.org.

DIRECTIONS + PARKING

The Detroit riverfront is accessible from the Jefferson Avenue exits from the Lodge Freeway and I-375.

There are several public parking options near the riverfront in downtown Detroit.

People Mover Access to the riverfront can also be attained by using the Detroit People Mover and exiting at the marked stations. For more information on restaurants and attractions along the People Mover route, visit thepeoplemover.com.



THE DEQUINDRE CUT GREENWAY

