



# Position Specification

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**CONFIDENTIAL**



**President and  
Chief Executive Officer  
Detroit, Michigan**

**POSITION TITLE:** President and Chief Executive Officer

**REPORTING TO:** Board of Directors

**LOCATION:** Detroit, Michigan

**THE COMPANY:** *The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy*

[www.detroitriverfront.org](http://www.detroitriverfront.org)



The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) founded in 2003 by civic, community, business and public leaders who took the lead in putting together a plan to develop public space on Detroit's historic and international riverfront. The conservancy was launched by three key partners: the City of Detroit, General Motors and the Kresge Foundation. Key to the Conservancy's success is the public-private partnerships, including foundations, corporations, the public sector and the broad-based community that have been integral to revitalizing the riverfront through significant financial and in-kind support.

#### ***Background:***

The mission of the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy is to develop public access to Detroit's riverfront and to have this development serve as an anchor for economic revitalization – all while working with others to create a more thriving, walkable and connected community within Detroit.

The Conservancy's ultimate vision is to develop 5.5 miles of riverfront that spans the entire length of Downtown Detroit. When completed, the riverfront will encompass key assets such as:

- William G. Milliken State Park and Harbor: Michigan's first urban state park.
- General Motors World Headquarters and the G.M. Plaza.
- Chene Park: a 6,000-seat amphitheater.
- Dequindre Cut Greenway: a 1.5 mile-long paved pedestrian biking greenway connecting the riverfront to the largest historic public market in the United States. The Eastern Market is a selling point for a wide variety of produce, meat, spice and other products.
- Detroit / Wayne Port Authority: a 21,000 square foot public dock and terminal that brings new Great Lakes cruise visitors to the waterfront.
- Hart Plaza: a riverfront plaza that is the site of many of Detroit's popular events and festivals.

The riverfront will be anchored at one end by the bridge to Belle Isle State Park. Belle Isle is a 982-acre island in the Detroit River, between the United States mainland and Canada. At the other end of the riverfront will be the Ambassador Bridge connecting Detroit, with Windsor, Ontario. It is the busiest international border crossing in North America in terms of trade volume. More than 25% of all merchandise trade between the United States and Canada crosses the bridge.

The first phase of the project, 3.5 miles of the east riverfront, is 80% complete. East riverfront construction is currently underway to complete the remaining 20% of the project. To date, \$122 million has been raised for the east riverfront with the 2014 capital campaign planning underway to secure the remaining \$18 million needed to complete the first phase of this effort.

***Detroit Riverfront and the Region:***

Attractions along the Detroit riverfront include parks, plazas, pavilions, cafes, a state park, butterfly gardens, a carousel and beautiful landscaping, all connected by the ever-popular RiverWalk. The completed portions of the riverfront, along with its sister rails-to-trails greenway, the Dequindre Cut, are populated with approximately three million visitors annually. In 2013, over 100 events were held along the riverfront, ranging from small weekly gatherings to large annual events, such as the River Days festival. The organization also was awarded the 2013 Detroit Free Press Green Leader's award.

The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy's recently released Economic Impact Statement revealed that the last decade of riverfront transformation has resulted in more than \$1 billion in public and private investments, with another \$1 billion projected in future investments. The revitalized Detroit riverfront has therefore, demonstrated a significant impact in the region.

The United States maintains strong ties with its international neighbor, Canada. With the combination of an underwater highway tunnel and a bridge that spans between Windsor and Detroit, thousands of people cross between the United States and Canada each day. The Detroit region is the epicenter of the global automotive industry and home to other specialized industries, including health care, defense, information technology and homeland security. Bankruptcy has focused the national and international spotlight on Detroit, and while significant challenges remain, there is no denying the fact that a dramatic transformation is under way. The City and riverfront continue to receive attention and support from the Governor, the State, and a newly elected dynamic political leadership in Detroit. Increased investment is rejuvenating downtown, and driving growth as businesses, investors and entrepreneurs are recognizing Detroit as a city of opportunity. With assets that far outweigh the negatives, Detroit will ultimately emerge a stronger city and build on its foundation as a great global city. For more information, please visit [www.detroitmi.gov](http://www.detroitmi.gov), [www.detroitchamber.com](http://www.detroitchamber.com), [www.degc.org](http://www.degc.org) or [www.visitdetroit.com](http://www.visitdetroit.com).

***Governance:***

The Board of Directors consisting of up to 55 members, of whom 46 are currently seated, governs the Conservancy. Of this number, 26 are ex-officio (representing government, corporate, philanthropic, civic and community sectors) and 20 are at-large members representing key sectors throughout the region. Board Committees include Executive, Finance and Investment, Audit, Governance and Nominating, Programs and Community Engagement, Strategic Planning, and Advancement. The President and Chief Executive Officer will report to the Conservancy's Board of Directors through its Chair and Vice Chair.

The President and Chief Executive Officer will manage the Conservancy organization with a budget of \$4.5 million and a staff of seven direct reports that represent the following areas: accounting, finance, fundraising, project management, construction, operations, maintenance, programming, community outreach, communications and governance. The Conservancy staff will utilize the expertise of the Board Committees and outsourcing as appropriate. The President and Chief Executive Officer will also be the primary representative of the Conservancy in interacting with the City of Detroit in developing and implementing a master plan for the land adjacent to the Conservancy's public spaces.

**SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The President and Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for leading this public / private partnership, developing an annual budget and work plan, serving as the chief fundraiser for the organization and managing the Conservancy staff.

***Specific Responsibilities:***

- Take the lead in completing the design and construction of the public space portion of the east riverfront, which includes the RiverWalk and other public spaces.

- Lead fundraising for the remaining \$18 million (of \$140 million total), to complete the funds necessary to complete construction, maintenance and operations of the east riverfront.
- Oversee all aspects, including fundraising, of the planned west riverfront public space development, which will include a RiverWalk and green space development.
- Coordinate with the Department of Natural Resources on the completion of the State Park design and construction.
- Work with the city of Detroit and private investors in the Master Planning Process for adjacent land and develop a broad base of support for the Conservancy through partnerships with the City, State, federal government, private sector, philanthropic and individual communities both financial and otherwise.
- Oversee the operation, maintenance, security and programming of the east riverfront public spaces, which includes the Dequindre Cut, and for assuring there are sufficient funds to support all components of the project including perpetual stewardship.
- Serve as spokesperson and representative of the Conservancy when interacting with its multiple constituents.
- Develop an effective working and reporting relationship with the Board of Directors.

#### **EXPERIENCE REQUIRED:**

- Demonstrated success in fundraising and the ability to “close” a deal.
- Strong consensus building skills are essential.
- A record of accomplishment of successful executive experience is required, including project management, financial acumen and marketing skills.
- Real estate experience, structuring contracts and project development skills are a plus.
- Experience may have been gained in the corporate, academic, not-for-profit, government or military sectors.
- Having lived or worked in an urban environment is strongly desired.

#### **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:**

- The ability to articulate, with passion and detail, the vision and mission of the organization.
- He / she must be charismatic, motivational, with excellent communication skills, and high energy.
- The ability to inspire forward thinking, leadership, vision, strategy and guidance to the organization’s staff and volunteers.
- An entrepreneurial orientation, the ability to multi-task and “hands-on” work style is key to success.
- It is essential that the successful candidate possess excellent interpersonal and political / diplomatic skills.
- The successful candidate must be open and accessible, able to demonstrate immediate credibility, command the respect of, and work well with multiple constituents.
- The successful candidate must possess the highest level of ethical standards, and a commitment to and respect for diversity is necessary.

*Position Specification*  
**President and Chief Executive Officer**



**EDUCATION:**

- A bachelor's degree is required.
- An advanced degree in a related area or business is preferred.

**COMPENSATION:**

- A comprehensive, competitive compensation package will be provided.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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