



THE DETROIT RIVER



ALONG THE RIVERWALK



RIVARD PLAZA



BIKING THE RIVERWALK



MT. ELLIOTT PARK



FLOWER GARDENS IN BLOOM

## 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 lifeline 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 & 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:

- **3.5 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

**WEST RIVERFRONT PARK** Located along West Jefferson between Joe Louis Arena and Rosa Parks Boulevard, this park features 20-acres of lush, wide-open green space with spectacular views of the downtown Detroit and Windsor skylines and an extra-wide RiverWalk that is popular for running, walking and fishing.

**JOE LOUIS ARENA** The former 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, that is located along a beautifully restored international riverfront in the heart of vibrant downtown Detroit, it has recently undergone a \$300 million renovation and hosts the North American International Auto Show. Get more information at [cobocenter.com](http://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 Great Lakes cruise visitors to the waterfront. Get more info at [portdetroit.com](http://portdetroit.com).

The Portal View is a repurposed shipping container that is now used to educate visitors on Detroit River maritime history. An interactive computer inside allows users to track Great Lakes and Detroit River shipping traffic in real time.

**GM PLAZA** As a part of its renovation of the Renaissance Center for its world headquarters, General Motors created the GM 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 Mt. Elliott 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](http://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](http://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, sponsored by Cindy Pasky, 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](http://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.

The **Outdoor Adventure Center** features exhibits, displays and hands-on simulators introducing visitors to features in state parks, recreation areas, beaches, trails, and harbors throughout Michigan. For more information or to reserve a picnic shelter or boat slip, visit [Michigan.gov/Milliken](http://Michigan.gov/Milliken).

**DEQUINDRE CUT GREENWAY** Part of the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan’s Greenway Initiative, the almost two-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. An outdoor Fit Park, the Wilkins Street Plaza and the Campbell Terrace small-scale performance venue are all popular destinations along the Dequindre Cut. Open on the weekends, the Dequindre Cut Freight Yard is a unique seasonal destination that features entertainment, food, drink and shopping in nine repurposed shipping containers.

**EASTERN MARKET** The largest open-air wholesale/retail market of its kind in the United States, Eastern Market is more than 160 years old with over 150 currently operating food-related businesses. For more information, visit [detroiteasternmarket.com](http://detroiteasternmarket.com).

**CHENE PARK** The 6,000 seat amphitheater hosts regularly scheduled summer concerts that attract more than 100,000 visitors annually. For more info, visit [cheneparkdetroit.com](http://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.

The former Parke Davis & Co. buildings were purchased by the Stroh Family and date back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The 25-acre campus features upscale living, The Rattlesnake Club restaurant, the Talon Building and the Roberts Riverwalk Hotel & Bistro. For more info, visit [detroitriverwalkhotel.com](http://detroitriverwalkhotel.com).

**MT. ELLIOTT PARK** A complete redevelopment of the park was completed in 2014. The new park is universally accessible to all and features an interactive water feature, the Gilbert Family Schooner, as well as 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 through the David K. Page Butterfly Garden, take a winding tour of an inlaid brick labyrinth sponsored by the Adcraft Club of Detroit and stop at the Nicholson Family and Boli Family Fishing Piers. These amenities invite visitors to take a breath and enjoy the peaceful setting. Permanently installed birding scopes allow users to get a good look at the many waterfowl that frequent the area.

## 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 more than 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. Twenty additional acres along the west riverfront opened in 2014.

Today, the Conservancy is solely responsible for raising 100 percent of the costs to maintain, operate, program and further develop this beautiful asset for all. The generous support of individuals, businesses and foundations is crucial to keeping the Detroit riverfront a safe, beautiful and accessible place for residents 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?

- Join us as a Friend of the Conservancy by becoming an annual supporting member.
- Buy a brick or sponsor a bench along the riverfront with a message for someone you love.
- Create a living tribute through the endowment of a tree or support for our annual plantings.
- Become a volunteer and support our work by donating your time and expertise.
- Become a “goodwill ambassador” by actively sharing your love of the riverfront and Dequindre Cut with others and inviting them to take part!

To learn more about supporting the Conservancy, please visit [detroitriverfront.org](http://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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f t @



# DETROIT RIVERFRONT WHAT TO SEE + DO



**POINTS OF INTEREST**

- West Riverfront Park (1C, 2C)
  - Joe Louis Arena (4C)
  - Cobo Center (4D)
  - Hart Plaza (5D)
  - Underground Railroad Memorial (5D)
  - Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority (5D)
  - Portal View (5D)
  - GM Plaza (6D)
  - Rivard Plaza (7E)
  - The Cullen Family Carousel (7E)
  - Wheelhouse Detroit Bike Rentals (7E)
  - Rivervalk Café (7E, 13E)
  - Outdoor Adventure Center (8D)
  - Milliken State Park & Harbor (8E)
  - Chene Park (9E)
  - Stroh River Place (10E)
  - Talon/Roberts Riverwalk Hotel (11E)
  - UAW/GM (12E)
  - Harbortown (12E)
  - Coast Guard (12E)
  - Mt. Elliott Park (13E)
  - Gabriel Richard Park (15D)
- DEQUINDRE CUT**
  - Dequindre Cut Fit Park (8C)
  - Campbell Terrace (9B)
  - Dequindre Cut
  - Freight Yard (9A)
  - Wilkins Street Plaza (9A)
  - Eastern Market (8A)
- BELLE ISLE**
  - Scripps Conservatory
  - Scott Fountain
  - Nature Walk
  - Bike Trails
  - Picnics
- NEIGHBORHOODS**
  - Downtown (5B,C)
  - Corktown (4A,B)
  - Midtown
  - Lafayette Park (8A)
  - Elmwood (9A)
  - Island View (11A)
  - Harbortown (12D)
  - The Villages
  - Jefferson East

**WHAT TO DO ON THE RIVERFRONT**

- WHAT TO DO FOR CHILDREN**
  - Cullen Family Carousel (7E)
  - Rivervalk Café (7E, 13E)
  - Rivard Plaza Playscape (7E)
  - Sand Box (7E)
  - Fountain at GM Plaza (4E)
  - Butterfly Garden & Labyrinth (15D)
  - Rent Bikes at Wheelhouse Detroit (7E)
  - Outdoor Adventure Center (8D)
  - Gilbert Family Schooner Water Feature (13E)
  - Have a picnic at the Milliken State Park (8E)
- GO FISHING:**
  - West Riverfront Park (1C, 2C)
  - Milliken State Park (8E)
  - Nicholson Family East Fishing Pier at Gabriel Richard Park (15D)
  - Boll Family West Fishing Pier at Gabriel Richard Park
  - Mt. Elliott Park (13E)
- TAKE A RIVER CRUISE (7E)**
  - Diamond Jack diamondjack.com
  - The Detroit Princess detroitprincess.com
  - Private Yachts: The Infinity & Ovation infinityandovation.com

- DINING**
  - Rivervalk Café (5E, 15D)
  - Andiamo's (6E)
  - Joe Muer's (6E)
  - Atwater Block Brewery (10D)
  - They Say (10D)
  - Andrews on the Corner (10E)
  - Rattlesnake Club (10E)
  - Roberts Bistro (11E)
- FREE COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING**
  - Visit [detroitriverfront.org](http://detroitriverfront.org) for details on all of our seasonal activities and programming.
  - Free Yoga and Tai Chi classes
  - RiverFront Canine Club
  - DMC RiverWalkers senior walking group
  - Herbal Walk and Talks
  - Riverfront Walking Tour
  - Run This Town
  - Fishing Fest
  - Reading & Rhythm on the Riverfront
  - Ford Fireworks
  - Live the Riverfront
- CONCERTS + EVENTS**
  - Chene Park (9E)
  - concerts + events [cheneparkdetroit.com](http://cheneparkdetroit.com)
  - Rockin' on the Riverfront: SUMMER (6E)
  - River Days Concerts: JUNE (7E)
  - Hart Plaza (4D)
  - [detroitriverfront.org](http://detroitriverfront.org) for concerts + events

**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.
- Dogs 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 Communications team at 313 566 8240.  
For information about special events, walks and runs and wedding photography, visit our web site at [detroitriverfront.org](http://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](http://thepeoplemover.com).

**THE DEQUINDRE CUT GREENWAY**



- Portal View
- Little Free Lending Libraries
- Birding Scopes
- Bike Repair Station
- Parking
- People Mover Stops
- Restrooms
- Food + Dining
- Complete
- Coming soon
- Temporary
- MoGo BikeShare
- Fishing
- Bike Shop