

Detroit, Michigan

Parks and Open Spaces

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

March 31–April 5, 2019



 **Urban Land
Institute**

Detroit, Michigan

Parks and Open Spaces

Designing an Equitable Framework for the Financial
Sustainability of Detroit's Parks and Open Space

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

March 31–April 5, 2019

Urban Land Institute
2001 L Street, NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036-4948
uli.org

About the Urban Land Institute

THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 44,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 80 countries.

The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision-making is based on its members sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns.

Peer-to-peer learning is achieved through the knowledge shared by members at thousands of convenings each year that reinforce ULI's position as a global authority on land use and real estate. In 2018 alone, more than 2,200 events were held in about 330 cities around the world.

Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

More information is available at uli.org. Follow ULI on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

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About ULI Advisory Services

THE GOAL OF THE ULI ADVISORY SERVICES PROGRAM

is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies.

Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and are screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives, a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 100 key community representatives, and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

ULI Program Staff

Paul Bernard

Executive Vice President, Advisory Services

Thomas W. Eitler

Senior Vice President, Advisory Services

Deb Kerson Bilek

Vice President, Advisory Services

Paul Angelone

Director, Advisory Services

Lauren Callaghan

Director, Advisory Services

Jacqueline Canales

Director, Advisory Services

Cali Slepín

Senior Associate, Advisory Services

James A. Mulligan

Senior Editor

Laura Glassman, Publications Professionals LLC

Manuscript Editor

Brandon Weil

Art Director

Sonia Richardson

Designer

Craig Chapman

Senior Director, Publishing Operations



PAUL ANGELONE/ULI

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In addition, the panel would like to thank the over 100 residents, business and community leaders, and representatives from across Detroit who shared their perspectives, experiences, and insights with the panel over the week.



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SHANNON SCLAFANI/ULI

About the 10-Minute Walk Campaign

RESEARCH SHOWS that parks are essential to the physical, social, environmental, and economic health of people and communities. Parks help expand the economy by attracting homebuyers, tourists, and highly talented workers. They protect the environment, provide space for the enjoyment of arts and nature, and make people healthier, happier, and more connected.

Unfortunately, despite these known benefits, research shows that one in three Americans—more than 100 million people—do not have a park within a 10-minute walk of their home.

That is why ULI has partnered with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) on the 10-Minute Walk Campaign, a nationwide movement launched in October 2017 to ensure that there is a great park within a 10-minute walk of every person, in every neighborhood, in every city across the United States. The 10-Minute Walk Campaign is generously supported by The JPB Foundation.



So far, the 10-Minute Walk Campaign has been endorsed by more than 240 U.S. mayors—from across the political spectrum and from cities large and small—who have committed to working toward universal park access. ULI, TPL, and NRPA will be working with partners in selected cities on measurable policies and strategies to advance the 10-Minute Walk vision. This includes Advisory Services panels.

Success in this work will require the expertise, creativity, and close collaboration of public- and private-sector leaders. ULI has a powerful role to play in catalyzing its members, networks, and partners around a vision of a green, sustainable, connected, and resilient future for all people.



STEPHANY LIN

ULI Panel and Project Staff

Panel Chair

April Anderson Lamoureux

President
Anderson Strategic Consulting
Boston, Massachusetts

Panel Members

Neelay Bhatt

Principal
Pros Consulting Inc.
Indianapolis, Indiana

Michael Brown

Planner Supervisor
Montgomery County Planning Department
Silver Spring, Maryland

Savlan Hauser

Executive Director
Jack London Improvement District
Oakland, California

Stephany Lin

Associate
U3 Advisors
New York, New York

Ilana Lipsett

Founder
PublicDesign | PublicSpace
Oakland, California

Steve Qualkinbush

Partner
Q2 Real Estate
Northbrook, Illinois

Donald R. Schrottenboer

President and CEO
Private Equity Group
Fort Myers, Florida

Strategic Adviser

Alex Feldman

Managing Director
U3 Advisors
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ULI Project Staff

Paul Angelone

Director, Advisory Services

Grace Hill

Manager, Meetings and Events

Violeta Duncan

Senior Associate, Content



Background and the Panel's Assignment

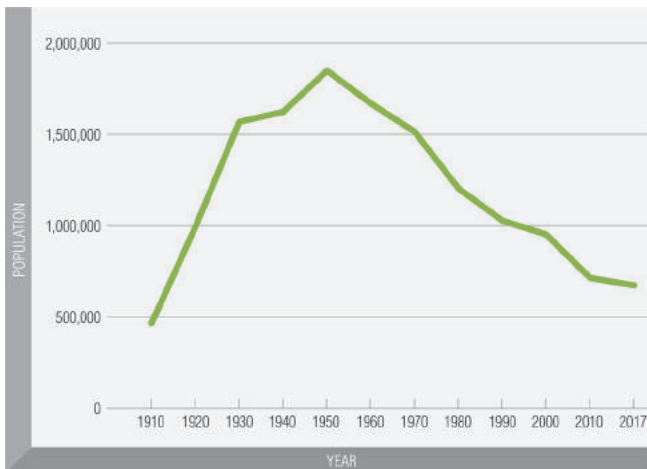
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ARE CENTRAL ASSETS in addressing a wide range of Detroit's needs, including community stabilization and revitalization, climate resilience, improved public health, and economic development. Parks and open spaces help reinforce physical and social connections and celebrate the cultural and historic significance of the people and places of Detroit. Detroit has a wealth of dedicated people with an opportunity to work together and grow more effectively.

Leaders in Detroit have made significant investments in visioning, planning analysis, weighing assets, and developing capacity to improve the quality of and access to parks and public spaces. These efforts include formulating the *Great Public Spaces: Creating Paths to Long-Term Sustainability* report, the *2018 Equity and the Detroit Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan*, and the *2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan* as well as fortifying the city's planning with robust equity and community engagement work.

Detroit has had an epic story of transformation from rapid growth to rapid decline and today presents a tipping point

in which parks, open spaces, and recreation opportunities are a part of the city's continued revitalization. Historically, the importance of parks to provide benefits to health, quality of life, business attraction, and strengthening social networks was well understood. During the economic growth of the first half of the 20th century, city leaders saw the importance of investing in parks through the creation of a large park system. As the city's economic fortunes declined, however, investment and ongoing maintenance of this park system lagged despite valiant efforts by residents volunteering their hard work and time.

Detroit's Population Change



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.



The city of Detroit's population growth resembles a seesaw that has teetered up and now down. The panel believes that investment in high-quality parks and open spaces can help increase economic and equitable outcomes. Just as the population can move toward stabilization and a positive trajectory, it can easily swing down again.

At this moment, an opportunity exists to leverage public, private, philanthropic, and community resources dedicated to parks and open spaces and return to the original view of the importance of a strong park system—one that enhances the quality of life and standing of the city of Detroit. To do this, parks must be looked at as more than just a line item in a budget and instead seen as a way to tell Detroit's story. This is a story of hard work and conviction and the ability to use Detroiters' generational knowledge to produce a future defined by social equity, collaboration, and financial sustainability.

The city of Detroit—along with leadership from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors—has made considerable progress in identifying and mobilizing partners to achieve this goal. This includes tremendous partnerships starting in the late 1990s to improve dozens of existing parks and playgrounds, planning for a regional greenway network and the Dequindre Cut Trail, investing in downtown spaces like Campus Martius Park, enhancing green alleys and small parks in Midtown, and now strategically investing in neighborhoods

outside the downtown core. By bringing in the panel, the sponsors made a deliberate decision to identify and design a more equitable framework for ensuring that investments into parks and open space increase financial sustainability and enhance the many hidden histories and cultural assets.

The Panel's Assignment

The panel was invited to help the community understand, consider, and recommend suitable financial methods and models to support the city's growing portfolio of parks, open space and trails, and commitment to the 10-Minute Walk Campaign. Specifically, the sponsors have identified the funding of operational support as the immediate focal point of the panel's attention. The following issues relating to long-term public space sustainability were presented for the panel to consider:

- Reduce the cost of delivery of services where possible through economies of scale;
- Increase earned income where it makes sense;
- Coordinate private, philanthropic, and city government expenditures and maximize the use of existing public-sector funding for public space;
- Find new ways to capture a portion of the economic value that comes from locating development adjacent to high-quality public spaces;
- Examine the potential for new sources of public-sector financing, including increased funding through regional or state systems;
- Continue to expand the available pool of philanthropy, including endowment, that is aimed at public spaces, in part by communicating more clearly the value proposition for the community;
- Achieve sustainability while preserving and increasing access for longtime residents of the city;
- Define factors funders should consider in ranking the urgency and sequencing of investments; and
- Describe the tangible and intangible characteristics that create a wonderful public space.

The discussion about the sustainability of parks and open space is critical to a city emerging from years of disinvestment. Given this experience, it is commendable that all stakeholders have recognized that the success of the city's parks and open spaces is integral to the success of the city as a whole—including the greater Downtown and Midtown areas specifically as well as the neighborhoods.



The panelists at Ella Fitzgerald Park.

The Challenges

Many challenges were outlined for the panel in a comprehensive briefing book and further articulated through conversations with nearly 100 Detroit public space stakeholders; in addition, the panel members explored these challenges firsthand through site visits and tours. Money and the need for financial sustainability was identified as a crucial challenge, but the issues are more comprehensive, including physical and human challenges.

Financial Challenge

Over a period of years, city government has lacked the strong leadership that typically delivers and manages dedicated funding and a high standard for parks. The current leadership team inherited a major backlog of deferred maintenance issues and substandard service delivery strategies. The effects of the Great Recession only exacerbated the problem of insufficient public resources to support the high-quality parks and open spaces that all Detroiters deserve. Today, the city of Detroit spends less than a majority of major American cities and about half the national median for maintenance expenditures on its parks. In addition to lack of resources, the city struggles to track and measure the true costs of delivering capital improvements, maintenance, operations, and programming for the city's parks and open spaces.

The city of Detroit receives generous support from philanthropic organizations to support park maintenance, operations, and programming. This support has contributed significantly to quality of life, economic revitalization, and

neighborhood stabilization. However, this source of funding may shift in the future, leaving a monetary gap for sustaining these critical assets. Although outside financial support has an important place in the overall funding strategy of the parks system, the city should consider the depth of current philanthropic and corporate support to be transitional.

To sustain and increase returns on park and public space investments, the city of Detroit should build a culture of business planning and develop diverse funding tools to generate income and capture value for its parks and public spaces. Even under the most favorable economic forecast, Detroit is unlikely to realize enough dedicated public funding to ensure a high standard of maintenance and operations of its parks, trails, greenways, community centers, and other parks facilities without major shifts in revenue generation. Acknowledging this current reality is important in formulating a basis for the panel's implementation strategies and for overall progress.

The panel believes the city along with other civic leaders should develop a long-term financing strategy that encompasses all available public sources (local, state, federal), all potential revenue models, and public/private partnerships. The panel has recommended some strategies to assist Detroit in this endeavor. As part of this strategy, the community at large must understand that parks contribute to the overall health, welfare, and economic well-being of the city. Not only do parks weave the community together in ways that promote a high quality of life and reward the human condition, but a strong

parks system can also directly affect private investment, workforce development, and municipal revenue generation. The panel believes that parks should be viewed as an essential element of a healthy city that must be maintained in perpetuity, thus making them less susceptible to future budget cuts in weaker economic conditions when government budgets get tight.

Physical Challenge

In addition to the challenge of maintaining more than 5,000 acres of public parks, Detroit has the unparalleled burden of maintaining more than double that (17 square miles) of publicly owned vacant space within its urban boundaries. This void has been created by decades of population decline, huge-scale demolition of vacant buildings, and insufficient resources. Though management of vacant land is outside the scope of the panel's assignment, the panel recognizes the need to coordinate investments in this form of open space with park investments. The panel encourages the city to continue supporting existing creative programs that address vacant land. By coordinating investments to transform vacant land and park open spaces from a liability to an asset, the city can improve perceptions of parks and create safe connections for residents to access these critical assets.

In managing Detroit's parks and public space portfolio, access is key and equitable distribution of baseline services is needed. The panel considered public open spaces holistically even if they fall under different administrative entities and serve distinct purposes.

Human Challenge

Detroiters have a uniquely challenging experience in the American narrative, and many of the city's neighborhoods show the profound scars of successive hardships. In taking on this assignment, the panel has kept displacement of Detroiters in the forefront and has considered how displacement triggered by disinvestment, neglect, and racial segregation manifests itself in Detroit distinct from other urban contexts, such as Washington, D.C., San Francisco, or New Orleans that have also been subject to disinvestment and neglect but are now experiencing more displacement from gentrification.

Detroit has heroic individuals stepping up to contribute to public need. The panel has heard impressive stories of sustained volunteerism by individuals whose dedication to their community public spaces and formation of neighborhood groups and associations maintaining



The city of Detroit has made great strides in community planning. This is evident in reports such as the 2017 Parks and Recreation and Improvement Plan (pictured) and the 2018 Equity and the Detroit Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan.

and programming parks go where city resources could otherwise never reach. Both public and private organizations have responded with innovative and generous contributions.

As Detroit sees wins in outcomes, these same stakeholders have expressed a need for coordination and overarching strategy and look to the city to develop a road map. Parks have a particular importance as a high-return investment in the lives and livelihoods of the people of Detroit. Under the leadership of Mayor Mike Duggan's administration and with the strong support of private and philanthropic leaders, the investment and standard of maintenance in parks have begun to grow. The city has created the departmental infrastructure and attracted the talent required to run an efficient and effective operation. However, the panel finds that many of these actors are uncoordinated. To fully harness the momentum and commitment to parks and green spaces, the city must lead to address the convoluted system of park actors (including public, private, nonprivate, and neighbors), who often lack clear roles and responsibilities—which creates confusion and leads to inequitable resource distribution and varying standards of maintenance. The city should articulate roles and allocate responsibility among public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic partners, as well as articulate and coordinate actions across public agencies.

For the city's park planning to succeed, more stakeholders must have a vested interest in parks. These stakeholders have expressed a need to coordinate local park investments and for the city of Detroit to play a lead role in developing an overarching strategy and road map to maximize the impact of parks on the lives and livelihoods of all people of Detroit.



III

Any successful framework needs to build from Detroit's most valuable asset—its people!

Call to Action

The panel has been impressed with the unique opportunity presented and inspired by the current momentum and an apparent alignment of critical stakeholders to overcome enormous challenges and make great things happen for the public good. The time is appropriate with city leadership, business leaders, and neighborhood groups all creating synergies and momentum to tackle this issue.

The panel believes that Detroiters must take the following actions:

- **Create a strategic framework.** The panel believes a strategic framework with strong leadership is necessary to identify priorities, define roles and responsibilities, and create a unified work plan for advancing this work on various levels in a coordinated way. A strategic framework will help coordinate siloed departments, leverage shared resources, and empower and enfranchise the broader public—all to provide effective and efficient park services. Partnerships should be driven by this road map and create equal opportunities throughout the city to improve trust, pride, and use of parks in communities that have heroically weathered the trauma of neglect, bankruptcy, and instability. To accomplish this action, the panel recommends a Detroit Parks Alliance (DPA), modeled after the structure of the Downtown Detroit Partnership, that will serve as a cross-sector coordinating body for park stakeholders, lead private-sector and philanthropic fundraising efforts, and provide support to park stewards. The DPA will provide a strong vision and support for grassroots community engagement in the park system.
- **Diversify and identify dedicated funding for ongoing maintenance and operations.** Best practices nationwide for those communities that excel in providing and sustaining a high-quality parks, recreation, and open-space experience tend to have dedicated funding sources that can help insulate them against market, economic, and political fluctuations.
- **Prioritize an equitable solution that leads to shared benefits throughout the city for all Detroiters.** The panel recognizes that to be truly sustainable, the implemented strategy must lead to shared benefits throughout the city for all residents. This sentiment is espoused in the “One Detroit” vision put forth by Mayor Duggan. The African American population currently accounts for over 80 percent of the city’s population. In a city with a deep history of racial disparities, it is important that the strategy not perpetuate or exacerbate this problem. An equitable lens should also be applied to ensure communities of low income and poverty are not overlooked because of their economic status. Last, consideration of intergenerational equity is important to ensure that current and future residents have equal access to high-quality parks and public places.
- **Encourage and enfranchise neighborhood groups as partners.** Neighborhood groups have organized for park stewardship in places where city resources have not been made available. As city services return, an opportunity exists to better define roles and leverage mobilized groups. Although neighborhoods vary in their capacity to organize and effect change, a model of civic engagement should be created to provide all neighborhoods the tools and resources needed to share ownership and responsibility in the success of their parks and open space. The panel believes that empowered communities should be encouraged and treated as partners in developing future strategies.



PARKSIDE.PJ/FLICKR

Guiding Principles

THROUGH THE LAST SEVERAL DECADES, ULI has found that working from a principle-based platform has become a best practice for many of its members. The panel recommends that guiding principles be established to support the implementation of this report and future policy development. Drawing upon previous research, panel observations, and stakeholder interviews, the panel developed a set of guiding principles to inform its work.

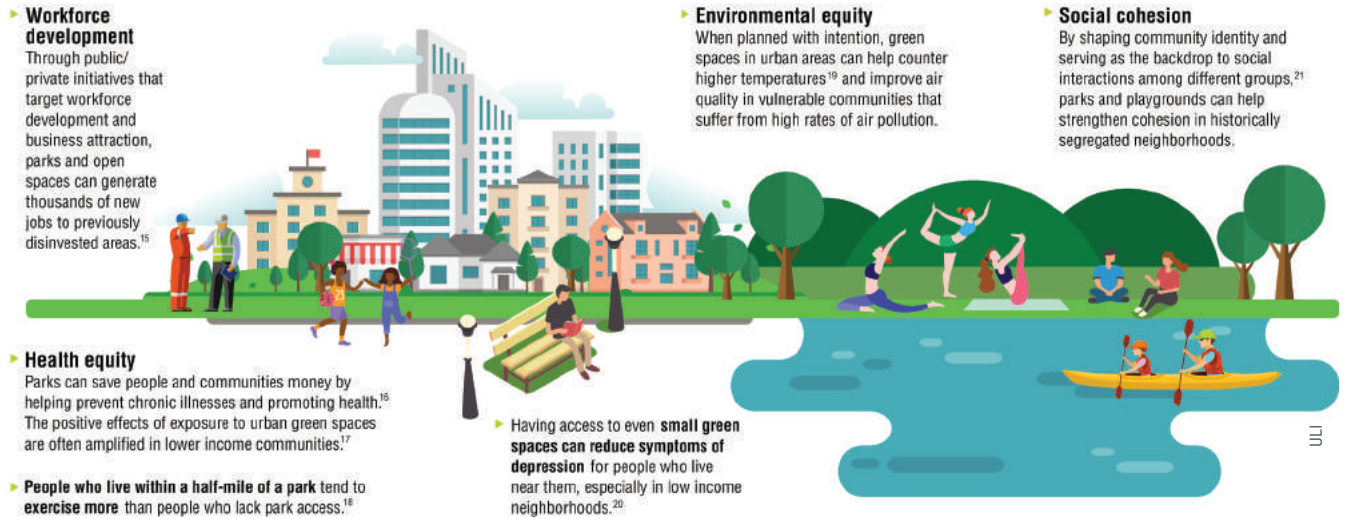
The panel encourages local stakeholders to adapt these suggested guiding principles to best represent the values of the community.

Contribute to the Health, Welfare, and Stability of Detroit

The *2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan* opens with this principle, and the panel heard belief in this fundamental principle from a broad swath of stakeholders. Activities such as walking, children’s play, gardening, sports play, art, and creative activities make us healthier while they teach teamwork and other life skills. Jobs in parks can be first experiences in the workforce.

Even the passive viewing of a beautiful landscape provides a sense of well-being and satisfaction with one’s

environment. In this world that is so heavily influenced by technology, interactions in public spaces become even more meaningful and valuable to quality of life. The panel believes that access to public parks serves as valuable a neighborhood function as schools, churches, grocery stores, banks, and libraries do. Well-maintained parks can add to the value of a neighborhood, whereas neglected parks detract from the value of a neighborhood. The panel believes that Detroit is well on the way to recovery and would like to see the public spaces convey that feeling in every neighborhood across the city.



Over one-third of Americans (38 percent) say their neighborhood lacks outdoor spaces where they can exercise—a barrier that disproportionately affects low-income African American and Latino communities.

Promote Access to Public Spaces for Detroiters of All Neighborhoods

Access to well-maintained and high-quality welcoming open spaces is a right for all Detroiters. Parks are amenities that provide substantial benefits (health, environmental, and economic) for individuals and communities. Parks, open space, and trails are key infrastructure elements that foster social interactions and enhance neighborhood identity. Each and every Detroiters should be able to access a safe, well-kept park within a 10-minute walk.

Protect Existing Assets and Investments

Detroit is blessed with signature parks, neighborhood parks, greenways, and other public spaces. When coupled with recent and planned investments, such as the Dequindre Cut Greenway, Joe Louis Greenway, and the Joseph Campau Greenway, the city is setting the stage for improved connectivity through enhanced mobility and a premier network of public spaces. The issue of long-term sustainability of parks is important because the lack of funding for ongoing operations and maintenance leads to deterioration and turns the one-time asset into a liability. Human and financial capital have been heavily invested in the development of parks and open space; strategies are needed to be intentional about protecting that investment.

Whether discussing a high-volume downtown gathering space, neighborhood park, or passive open vista, the panel believes that the community feels a deep connection to its open spaces, and preservation of these environmental and community assets is a part of the Detroit value system.

Adopt and Support Best Practices

The panel heard repeatedly that best practices are important in promoting a high-functioning park and open-space system, and the panel wholeheartedly agrees with this principle. Budgeting, maintenance standards, operating structure, and programs must be designed and improved with the benefit of best practices from other jurisdictions, national parks and open-space organizations, and other stakeholders. For example, service and maintenance standards should be measured based on the best-performing parks in the system, meaning that the best-performing parks should be the benchmark of success.

URBAN REVITALIZATION THROUGH PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Parks and open spaces can provide a tremendous boon to local economies and downtown areas. They are key assets for placemaking and help enhance mobility, connectivity, and environmental sustainability. Cities across the country are embracing these benefits and are increasingly turning to parks and open spaces as a strategy for urban revitalization and economic development.

Detroit, which has several leaders committed to improving public destinations such as Beacon Park, Beatrice Buck Park, Grand Circus Park, the Woodward Avenue Promenade and Esplanade, Campus Martius, Spirit of Detroit Plaza, and the RiverWalk, can build on current momentum to develop and connect downtown parks and public spaces by integrating and coordinating park investments with real estate development. In particular, there should be a stronger link made between the southern side of Campus Martius Park and the Detroit River via Woodward Avenue, the Spirit of Detroit Plaza, and Hart Plaza. An example of the power of parks to spur significant real estate development is in Los Angeles, California.

The Los Angeles Grand Avenue Authority, a joint powers authority comprising the county of Los Angeles, the city of Los Angeles, and the former Community Redevelopment Agency, worked with the Related Companies to transform publicly owned land, once a collection of parking lots and little-used chunks of public space, into a \$56 million, 12-acre green space surrounded by a \$1 billion mixed-use project. Opened in 2012, Grand Park replaced a largely inaccessible, fractured pedestrian plaza in the heart of Los Angeles's civic center. The adjacent Grand Avenue development, set for completion in 2022, includes 176,000 square feet of retail space anchored by restaurants, shops, a movie theater complex, a hotel, and 400

residential units, 20 percent of which will be affordable. Under the agreement approved by the Board of Supervisors, at least 30 percent of the construction jobs and permanent jobs is devoted to the local workforce.

Dubbed the “people’s park,” Grand Park created a link between two of LA’s most iconic buildings—Frank Gehry’s Walt Disney Concert Hall, home to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Los Angeles City Hall. The park, which sits adjacent to the Civic Center/Grand Park Metro station, is accessible by several bus lines and dedicated bike lanes. Free activities at the park include Sunday sessions, music concerts, a Fourth of July block party, yoga classes, dance performances, a farmers market, book festivals, and other activities. Grand Park has more than 60 local partners—including Self Help Graphics & Art, the band Ozomatli, artist Victor Payan, the Last Bookstore, the Colburn School for the performing arts, Homeboy Industries, and award-winning youth poetry troupe Get Lit Players—and is programmed and operated by the adjacent Music Center, a performing arts destination. Since the 2012 opening celebration, Grand Park has attracted more the 150,000 visitors.

Key to creating this new iconic space was a condition written into the development bid package, which required developers to prepay the 99-year ground lease (\$50 million, plus interest) to construct a public park. With the contribution from the Related Companies, the city and county of Los Angeles were able to create a world-class cultural and entertainment destination, accessible to Angelenos and visitors alike. Through this unique public/private partnership, the region advanced its goals to revitalize Los Angeles’s downtown, encourage transit-oriented development, and enhance park access.



The “People’s Park” along Grand Avenue in Los Angeles.

▶ **Investor support**

79% of surveyed investors believe that open space can act as a "crucial catalyst for economic development."²⁷

▶ Of surveyed real estate developers, investors, consultants, and public sector workers, **84 percent** believe that "both the public and private sectors should be responsible for the development of open spaces."²⁸

▶ **Market demand**

55% of U.S. residents say access to green space is a top or high priority when deciding where to live.²⁹



▶ **Funding need**

Many large U.S. cities have a substantial backlog in deferred maintenance for parks.³⁰ Estimates from 2018 suggest that New York City will need to invest **\$5.8 billion** over the next decade to bring its parks to a state of good repair.³¹

▶ **Economic development**

High-quality parks are one of the top factors that businesses cite in relocation decisions.³²

▶ **Public support**

83% of Americans believe they personally benefit from local parks.³³

If public spaces are not well maintained and activated, they can be a hindrance to economic development. Thoughtful programming can promote social interaction, community ownership, and pedestrian activity, thereby boosting economic development and creating vibrant, thriving neighborhoods.

Support and Leverage Economic Success of Neighborhoods

Parks, greenways, and bike paths contribute to the economic viability of the community. Attractive public spaces contribute to the desirability of residential and commercial land uses. ULI's *The Case for Open Space* report states that 55 percent of U.S. residents say access to green space is a top or high priority when deciding where to live. As Detroit looks to grow its population and commercial base, the panel believes that leveraging the city's public spaces will support that vision. Well-maintained and activated public spaces can change the character of a neighborhood, drawing more feet to the street, thus making street-level retail and small businesses more viable.

Activated and energized signature public spaces in downtowns can become part of the brand image of a vibrant community, like the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston, which positively influences commercial site location decisions and benefits the city's business and workforce recruitment efforts. And in neighborhoods, offering safe, attractive spaces for the community to gather to release energy and share ideas contributes to the overall health and life quality of nearby

residents, making them more likely to contribute to the economic condition of Detroit. Strong public parks play a role in economic development at every level.

Facilitate Inclusive Engagement Strategies

Inclusive stakeholder engagement is imperative to building public trust in the public park system and enhancing satisfaction and stewardship of public spaces. Ensuring that all members of the community have a voice that is valued and considered during park design and programming is a critical feature of engagement. The panel believes that Detroit's Ella Fitzgerald Park is a great example of what can happen when enhanced public engagement is realized and the needs and wants of a community are achieved.



Current Conditions

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO ESTABLISH NEW FUNDING STREAMS and longer-term financial sustainability requires an understanding of the current conditions within Detroit. This section describes stakeholders and entities, operations and capital sources, major pipeline projects, and how Detroit compares with other communities.

The Detroit Parks and Recreation Department operates within the General Services Department (GSD). As of February 2019, the GSD is responsible for 308 park properties, totaling 5,048 acres. Of these, a little over 250 are actively used. Another 12 were identified in the *2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan* for closure and disposition; these were typically extremely small lots, and all had an identified buyer. The GSD maintains another 64 parcels, including boulevards, cemeteries, golf courses, greenbelts, and parkways. According to the Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan, total parkland represents 6.4 percent of adjusted city area. In addition, the city of Detroit owns 18 recreation centers under the Parks and Recreation portfolio, six of which are

managed by external partners. Although this panel's scope focuses primarily on designated parks, the panel recognizes the significance of the citywide supply of publicly owned open space and vacant lots, comprising more than 17 square miles. Vacancy affects the quality and experience of parks but, depending on their use and condition, can also become an asset in Detroiters' access to open space. The GSD has devoted resources to basic maintenance of these vacant areas, such as mowing overgrown lots. Other lots have become de facto parks, and recently at least a few community groups have submitted proposals to acquire lots and convert them to park use.

Detroit Park Types and Sizes

Park type	Park size	Number of parks
Mini	Less than 3 acres	170
Neighborhood	3 to 20 acres	102
Community	21 to 200 acres	27
Regional	Over 200 acres	4
Plaza	Mostly hard-surface landscaping used for civic purposes (wide range of sizes)	5

Source: 2017 Detroit Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan: Expanding Recreation Opportunities in Detroit Neighborhoods (approved by Detroit City Council, January 24, 2017).

Stakeholders and Entities

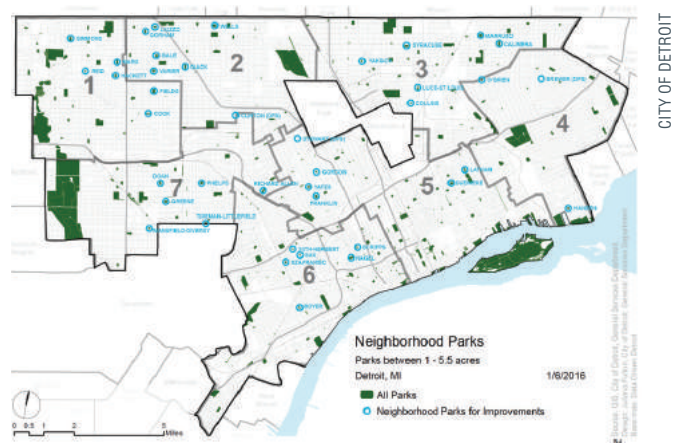
The city’s parks system, while overseen by the city directly, is also affected by a broad network of other stakeholders, from the nonprofit district organizations in Downtown and Midtown who contract with the city to manage parks directly, to the grassroots community members that served as the de facto primary stewards of their parks in past decades.

City of Detroit

The Parks and Recreation Department is in the GSD, which broadly oversees maintenance for city assets: vehicle fleet, city building maintenance, and vacant lot maintenance, in addition to parks and recreation center planning, design, improvements, and programming. Before 2018, a separate Detroit Parks and Recreation Department provided programming in parks, while the GSD physically maintained them. In 2018, Mayor Duggan consolidated the functions under the GSD, bringing recreation into the scope of the GSD.

The GSD’s priorities are currently guided by the *2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan*, developed by both the GSD and Detroit Parks and Recreation Department. The plan developed a ranking system to evaluate investment need across all parks in the city and prioritized 40 parks for capital investment.

The Planning and Development Department (PDD) also supports park functions, particularly strategic, catalytic investments aligned to its targeted planning areas. The PDD led the planning of the Strategic Neighborhood Fund



A map of Detroit’s neighborhood parks between one and 5.5 acres in size from the 2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan.

(SNF), a partnership made up of the city, foundations, and corporations. The SNF identified 10 neighborhoods for initial planning studies and implementation, with the understanding that the city would prioritize catalytic planning efforts in key areas while improving baseline services citywide, and continue to identify other areas of the city for future neighborhood planning. Each SNF neighborhood identified a catalytic park that was integrated into its planning strategy. The *2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan* preceded the SNF effort.

In some cases, the PDD has taken a direct role in park planning and development, in particular for the new Ella Fitzgerald Park that served as the catalytic park for the Livernois-McNichols neighborhood, one of the first and most high-profile SNF neighborhoods. The PDD envisioned state-

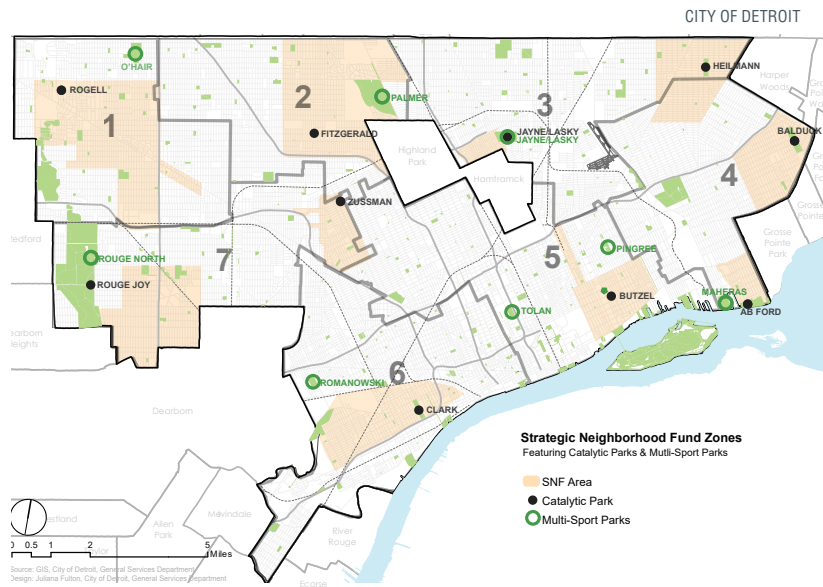


The Detroit Public Library system may be another agency that could coordinate to share resources to maintain its land across the city. This image is of the Jefferson branch.

of-the-art design to serve as the centerpiece of its park, which would in turn be one of the most significant investments anchoring the neighborhood. As a result, PDD planners led much of the design and development process, working with the Parks and Recreation Department and the GSD.

Other city or city-related entities relate to Detroit’s parks and open-space network as follows:

- The Detroit Land Bank Authority manages sales and dispositions of the city’s blighted and vacant properties, including city-owned vacant lots. The GSD is tasked with maintaining vacant lots, primarily mowing a few times a year citywide.
- The Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) operates separately from the city of Detroit and is run by a superintendent selected by the elected school board. DPSCD schools’ outdoor facilities are frequently used by the community for recreation (although formalized joint use agreements do not appear to be in place), and school sites are frequently located across from or directly adjacent to neighborhood parks. The GSD includes adjacency to schools as part of its evaluation criteria. The DPSCD does not include charter schools or private schools. Charter school enrollment constitutes about 50 percent of Detroit’s overall student enrollment.
- The DPSCD also holds significant vacant buildings and properties today. In 2014, Detroit Public Schools (the district entity previously responsible for public schools) transferred 67 surplus school properties to the city of Detroit, 20 of which the *2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan* recommended the acquisition of for eventual park use.



A map of the SNF and catalytic parks identified by the city of Detroit.

Nonprofits—High Capacity

Some high-capacity nonprofit organizations, primarily in Downtown and Midtown, formally contract with the city to manage parks at no cost to the city.

The Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP) draws upon funds from the Business Improvement Zone (BIZ), a special taxing authority established by downtown property owners in 2013. The DDP has developed, managed, and programmed downtown parks to build on downtown as a regional attraction and as major amenities for employees. These parks include Campus Martius, Cadillac Square (at Campus Martius), Grand Circus Park, Capitol Park, and the Woodward Esplanade. Beacon Park, also located downtown, is privately owned by DTE Energy but operated by the DDP.

Midtown Detroit Inc. (MDI), similar to the DDP, led redevelopment of public parks and plazas while also maintaining those spaces through a city contract. MDI also manages some privately owned parks and community gardens in the district. Similarly, the Eastern Market Corporation redeveloped public spaces of the market and continues to activate public spaces through art and other activities.

The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy (DRFC) is dedicated to the Detroit RiverWalk and its green space and holds a contract with the city for improvements, maintenance, and programming. As part of the goal of transforming the waterfront to a world-class destination, the DRFC is leading a \$40 million expansion of the park to the west, to be named the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park, funded by the Ralph C. Wilson Foundation.

Nonprofits—Medium and Emerging Capacity

Other park conservancies and “friends of” organizations support their respective parks in significant ways but do not maintain formal maintenance and operational responsibilities with the city.

The Belle Isle Conservancy, formed after merging four separate groups, helps advocate, plan, program, and raise funds for the park in partnership with the State Department of Natural Resources, which now runs the park, and the city. The conservancy is relatively high capacity, with 13 staff members and a dedicated fundraising team. Chandler Park Conservancy, by contrast, has a two-person staff but is a critical voice and advocate for the park, while also managing ongoing programs and site development plans.

Other community stewardship groups are organized as “friends of the park” groups, which are typically membership organizations, some incorporated as nonprofits. Most have no staff and rely on volunteer efforts to organize, fundraise, and program. Examples include Friends of Rouge Park, People for Palmer Park, and the Clark Park Coalition.

Neighborhood community development organizations such as the Villages of Detroit or Focus: HOPE in many cases also take a major role in their local parks. Although community development organizations have largely focused on efforts like placemaking, storefront activation, small business and workforce development, and youth programs, some have maintained an active parks role, such as bringing in new play equipment or offering programming. The capacity of these groups varies greatly, ranging from those with staff and financial capacity to those operating with very little. Block clubs operate at the smallest geographic scale, offering

ways for neighbors to organize. In many cases they organize neighborhood cleanups, engage in city of Detroit planning processes, and plan neighborhood events.

Philanthropic Organizations

Uniquely, Detroit is home to many foundations of significant size, and philanthropy has played a major role throughout the city’s history, perhaps most notably in the Grand Bargain deal to set Detroit on a path out of bankruptcy. Relative to parks, philanthropy drove major catalytic investments in parks and public spaces in Downtown and Midtown, including the RiverWalk and Dequindre Cut Greenway. Philanthropic leaders also led development of the Greenways Initiative, which today leads development of the Joe Louis Greenway, a 31.5-mile planned biking and walking trail in a wide loop around Detroit.

Major philanthropies investing in parks and public space include the Kresge Foundation, the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan, William Davidson Foundation, Hudson-Webber Foundation, Dresner Foundation, and the Erb Family Foundation.

Corporations

Major private-sector partners, primarily those clustered downtown, have invested heavily in parks near their offices to improve amenities and strengthen placemaking initiatives. In most cases, these efforts are funneled through organizations such as the DDP, but major corporate anchors also fund and sponsor park projects directly.

Corporate stakeholders can also engage in parks and public space through community-benefits agreements, such as those recently and currently in negotiation with Ford Motor Co. and Fiat Chrysler. However, these negotiations may happen in quick, compressed time periods, and park investments may not be included in the final outcome.

Regional and State Entities

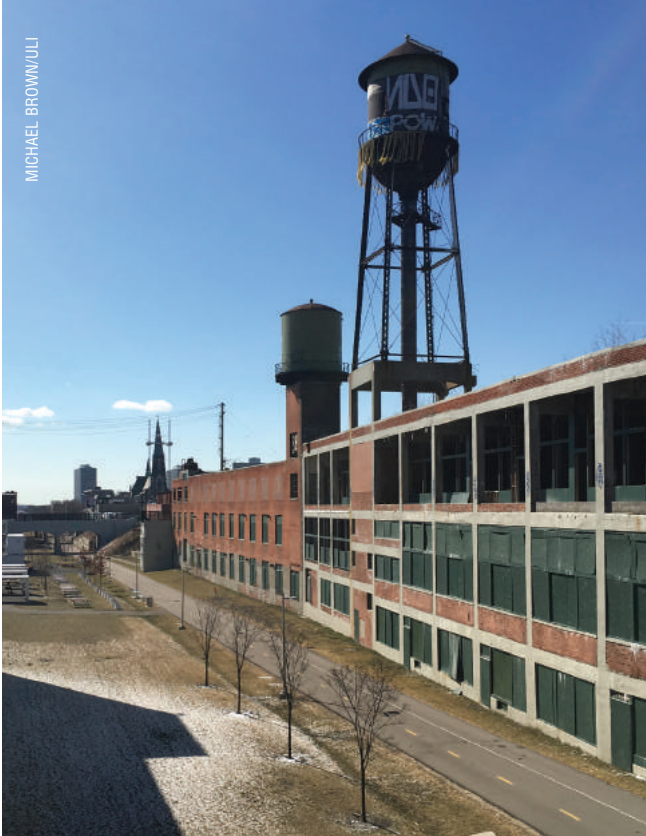
Detroiters pay taxes and fees to other government entities at the regional and state levels that affect the park system:

Huron-Clinton Metroparks Authority (HCMA) covers Oakland, Macomb, Wayne, and Washtenaw counties, with residents paying a 0.2146 millage to operate 13 regional parks. However, none of these parks, all located along the Huron and Clinton rivers, are located in Detroit proper. HCMA does partner with Detroit parks to operate mobile nature education units and recently has partnered with Rouge Park on river health efforts.



HEALTHIER MICHIGAN/FLICKR

The Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory in Belle Isle.



Overlooking the Dequindre Cut near Eastern Market. This is a part of the broader greenway network being developed across the city, region, and state.

Detroiters also contribute a 0.2459 parks millage to Wayne County, which pays for operation of the county parks. The only Detroit park operation included is the Chandler Park Aquatic Center, a county-run facility. Past county funds have paid for capital projects, such as a riverfront boardwalk, play equipment, and athletic fields. Allocation of funds is typically based on a pro rata share of property values.

Finally, Michigan's state parks, operated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, are funded by income taxes and recreation passes. The Department of Natural Resources operates the Milliken State Park and Harbor and the Outdoor Adventure Center along the RiverWalk, as well as Bell Isle, which converted to a state park in 2014 as city resources became more constrained. On capital projects, state funds have supported greenway projects, including the Dequindre Cut.

Federal Government

The federal government manages limited public parks and open space within the city of Detroit. Within the region, the U.S. Department of the Interior manages the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and the River Raisin National Battlefield Park. In addition, the area is designated as the Motor Cities National Heritage Area, which covers 13 counties to preserve, interpret, and promote Michigan's automotive and labor heritage. The federal government owns and manages lands within the city that sometimes partner with parks and open space initiatives. For example, the U.S. Coast

Guard's Detroit Sector worked on improving its facility for public space access along the RiverWalk.

Typically, the federal government acts as a funder for projects that pass through the state of Michigan or with established groups. For example, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and other sources, has funded the Friends of River Rouge Park as well as the city of Detroit on environmental restoration, and the U.S. Department of Transportation provides funding for trails and other public space improvements. Finally, the federal government coordinates—through the U.S. State Department—international treaties and agreements. Some applicable entities and treaties include the International Joint Commission, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and world heritage listing under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO).

Operations and Capital Funding Sources

The city's parks are developed and operated using a mix of government funds with significant contributions through philanthropy and corporate financial and in-kind sources. This mix makes the city's tracking of comprehensive data on investments in the park system as a whole difficult, particularly for operational costs.

City Operating Budget

The city of Detroit relies on the general fund for park operating expenses and does not have dedicated millage for parks and recreation purposes. Additional sources include philanthropy, partners who provide direct support to individual parks, and volunteer and in-kind services.

The city's general fund revenue consists of municipal income tax (28 percent of total revenue in fiscal year 2018), property tax revenue (12 percent), state revenue sharing (19 percent), casino tax revenue (17 percent), utility taxes (3.45 percent), and other revenues (20 percent). Property tax rates have reached roughly the 20-millage limit imposed by the state's Home Rule City Act, and municipal income taxes are currently higher than the maximum allowed by the state. Other sources include general obligation bonds, backed by the state rather than the city's credit, issued in 2016, and revenue bonds issued in 2017. Taxes for debt service payments on bonds are excluded from the 20 mill property tax limit. Notably, in 2024, under the Grand Bargain, the city will be required to fund its pension obligations again from its general fund, which may significantly impact its budget capacity.

Parks and Recreation Department Revenues and Expenditures, FY 2018

	Type	Amount
Revenues	Revenues from use of assets	\$753,000
	Grants, shared taxes, revenues	\$400,000
	Miscellaneous	\$32,500
	Total revenues	\$1,185,500
Expenses	Operating services	\$11,521,874
	Salary and wages	\$8,624,177
	Employee benefits	\$1,622,828
	Professional and contract services	\$1,049,995
	Operating supplies	\$924,263
	Other	\$94,000
	Total expenses	\$23,837,137
Budget shortfall		\$22,651,637

Sources: TPL Feasibility Report; Detroit Parks and Recreation Department Budget FY 2018; ULI panel.

The Parks and Recreation Department budget totaled \$23.8 million in fiscal year 2018. The department is heavily reliant on city general funds; only \$1.2 million of its budget (5 percent of operating expenses) comes from its own revenues, grants, and miscellaneous sources.

City-Funded Capital Improvements

The *2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan* identified 186 neighborhood parks prioritized for basic capital improvements, totaling \$108.8 million over 10 phases. The first phase was the 40 Parks Neighborhood Program, renovated from 2016 to 2017 and funded by \$12 million from unspent city bond funds allocated by the mayor. The GSD is now in phase 3 of implementation and currently has the budget for the next three years of identified improvements. Examples of these types of improvements include replacing play equipment, landscape and paving improvements, and building new playing fields.

Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan Cost Estimates

Phase	Number of parks	Total estimated cost
1	40	\$10,800,000
2	14	\$10,800,000
3	22	\$10,425,000
4	19	\$11,150,000
5	19	\$9,875,000
6	18	\$10,425,000
7	20	\$11,550,000
8	15	\$11,250,000
9	9	\$11,400,000
10	10	\$1,110,000
Total	186	\$108,775,000

Sources: TPL Report; *2017 Detroit Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan: Expanding Recreation Opportunities in Detroit Neighborhoods* (approved by Detroit City Council, January 24, 2017).

Philanthropy

As previously described, philanthropy has been a major source of funding for and champion of flagship park projects in recent years, particularly during the city's financial decline in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Funding was primarily targeted at the significant capital costs to create ambitious flagship parks, but sustaining and activating these parks has required major ongoing operational costs and will continue to do so in the future. Recognizing this need, philanthropy funded some longer-term operational pools, including an endowment for Downtown and Midtown organizations and some operating funds for specific park projects, as follows:

- 2000: Detroit 300 Conservancy, later merged with the Downtown Detroit Partnership, launched its effort to redesign Downtown's central square to become Campus Martius Park, a \$20 million fundraising effort to plan, design, and build.
- 2001: The Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan launched the Greenways Initiative, raising \$33 million from foundations and \$125 million from

matching investments from governments and other sources. The Greenways Initiative led the rails-to-trails program in Detroit and the surrounding area, eventually leading to planning the Detroit RiverWalk and Dequindre Cut Greenway development efforts.

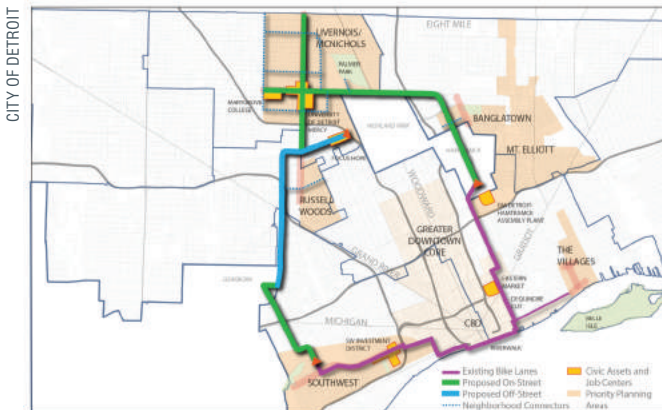
- **2003:** Kresge launched a \$50 million grant to develop the RiverWalk and fund the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy.
- **2007:** Kresge formed the Fund for Downtown Spaces, a \$12.5 million endowment dedicated to operations, which led to an endowment of \$12 million to sustain operations of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, the DDP, and Midtown Detroit Inc.
- **2015–present:** Kresge launched an \$11 million commitment to fund smaller-scale planning and implementation grants for neighborhood projects.
- **2016–2017:** Knight Foundation Knight Cities Challenge funded \$2 million for grants in Detroit, primarily for programming and activation. Much of these funds supported development of the new Ella Fitzgerald Park, a catalytic park in the SNF neighborhood of Livernois-McNichols. Fitzgerald Park totaled \$1 million in philanthropic funding.

sponsored by corporate anchors. However, the total value of these contributions has not been comprehensively quantified. The Detroit Pistons have also contributed the city of Detroit’s parks system since the fall of 2017, committing \$2.5 million to improve 65 basketball courts across the city in six years.

Major Pipeline Projects

Major signature park initiatives are underway. The city, philanthropies, and other partners are actively fundraising to cover capital costs of these ambitious and potentially transformative projects; however, stakeholders acknowledge the significant development costs will entail significant operating costs long term that will likely be a challenge to meet.

- **2017:** The city announced plans for the Joe Louis Greenway, renaming the Inner Circle Greenway concept first developed in 2007 and part of the Detroit Greenways Coalition Network Vision since 2009. The 31.5-mile project extends from the riverfront to many of Detroit’s neighborhoods, bringing greater high-quality green space and connectivity to the neighborhoods. The Wilson Foundation initially funded \$2 million for the city to develop a framework plan and initial drawings, and so far, \$34 million has been secured. The city and partners are continuing to raise funds for the estimated \$70 million total budget.
- **2018:** The Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation announced a \$50 million commitment to the West Riverfront, funding a new signature park on a 20-acre parcel, to be named the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park; \$40 million is dedicated to capital, and \$10 million toward an endowment. The RiverFront Conservancy is raising additional sources to fund the remaining costs.



This map shows the nonmotorized transportation projects underway in Detroit.

Other philanthropic sources have contributed to other city-led park renovations, such as Jayne/Lasky Park and Clark Park.

Corporate

Corporate giving has also long been a significant source of philanthropy and giving in the city. This is particularly evident downtown, as described earlier in the DDP activities, as well as other space activation and placemaking programming

National Benchmarks for Park Funding

Nationally, the National Recreation and Park Association study, *2018 Americans’ Engagement with Parks Report*, reveals a strong level of support for access and funding for park and recreation opportunities. Key statistics include that three in four Americans say they live within walking distance of a local park or other recreation facility and visit them, on average, more than twice a month. However, almost four out of five (78 percent) feel that parks and recreation are insufficiently funded and would like to increase park and recreation funding.



3 in 4
Americans say they live within walking distance of a local park or other recreational facility



Americans on average visit their local park and recreation facilities **more than twice a month**



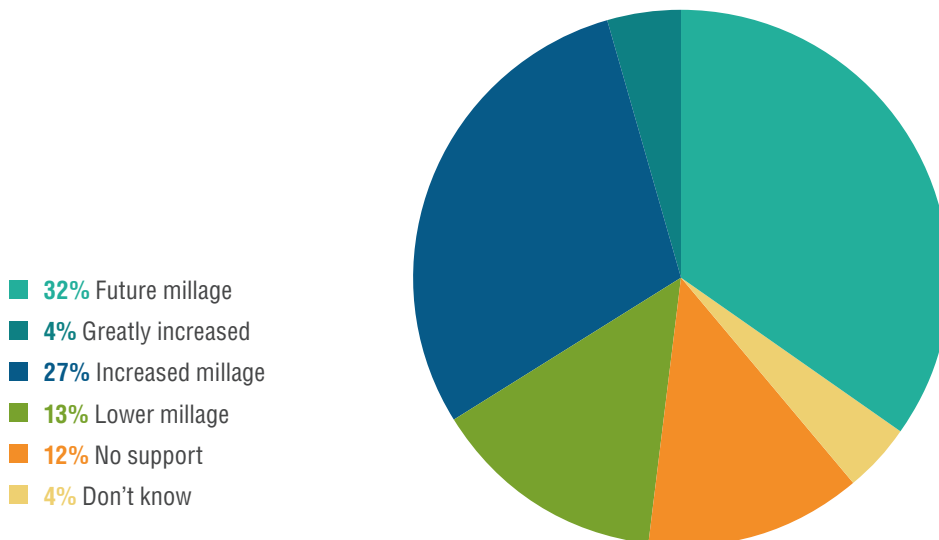
78% of Americans indicate they want to increase park and recreation funding

Locally as well, in a statistically valid survey done as a part of the Wayne County Parks and Recreation Plan in 2018, only one out of four respondents indicated that they would not support or would desire a lower millage to support Wayne County Parks, whereas 65 percent indicated a level of support for existing or increasing millage levels.

National per capita spending for all parks and recreation agencies is \$78.69, according to the National Recreation and Park Association's 2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review. When adjusted for jurisdictions by population size, the spending falls to \$69.98 per person in the upper quartile (top 25 percent of all agencies) with a median (midpoint) of \$35.11 per person. In comparison, Detroit's annual operating parks and recreation budget (\$23,864,069) for an estimated population of 648,000 works out to per capita spending of \$36.82, which puts the city just marginally higher than median spending.

When adjusted for jurisdictions based on acres maintained, the \$78.69 national per capita spending for all parks and recreation agencies increases to \$93.91 per person in the upper quartile (top 25 percent of all agencies) with a median (midpoint) at \$65.68 per person for agencies that maintain more than 3,500 acres. In comparison, based on the city of Detroit's annual operating budget (\$23,864,069) for 5,633 acres maintained (based on the *2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan*), Detroit's per capita spending of \$36.82 puts it in the bottom 30 percent of all agencies.

Maximum Amount Households Would Be Willing to Pay to Support Wayne County Parks*



Source: ETC Institute (2017) survey for the Wayne County Parks Master Plan

*by percentage of respondents



Strategies for Sustainable Park Funding

THE PANEL BELIEVES THAT FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY MEANS DECISION-MAKING with an eye toward low-cost maintenance, extended life span of products, and maximized utility throughout different weather conditions. For example, selecting grasses that are slow growing, drought resistant, and durable contributes to sustainability. Further, environmental sustainability and resilience is a cost-saving measure that should be incorporated into the park planning process. Park planning that balances the consideration of needs, utility, and longevity along with dedicated sources of revenue will support a sustainable park planning agenda.

In light of the information shared by the panel earlier in the report, the following three themes have emerged as key priorities to ensure that the city is positioned to leverage the upcoming development and ensure its longer-term sustainability.

Need for Dedicated and Sustainable Funding

As has been repeatedly stated, lack of resources and funding for parks and recreation resulted in large-scale cuts in service delivery and level of service provided to the Detroit community.

Agencies that excel in providing and sustaining a high-quality parks, recreation, and open-space experience tend to have

dedicated funding sources that can help insulate them against market, economic, and political fluctuations. In addition, such funding allows them to plan sustainably for long-term operations and maintenance of existing and future assets.

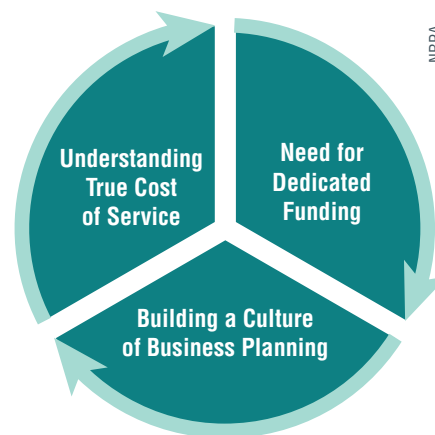
All of these are documented goals presented to the panel and thus lead to this panel making a strong case to identify and secure dedicated funding sources for the Parks and Recreation Department's existing operations and current and deferred maintenance needs while also ensuring that future projects plan for dedicated and sustainable funding along with their capital planning.

Building a Culture of Business Planning

It is encouraging to see the city has embarked on a much needed and ambitious track to develop signature parks, facilities, and greenways. These plans have been admirably supported by the public, private, and nonprofit communities to fund, design, conceptualize, and set them up for successful design implementation. They have also recognized the need for inclusive community input and have ensured that is an integral part of the planning process.

A complementary aspect to all planning projects and the design processes is to identify future staffing needs, programming ideas, revenue opportunities, and anticipated costs incurred simultaneously with the park or facility design. In effect, all projects need to adopt a business planning mindset that ensures something is not being built without an awareness of and ability to provide what is needed to adequately maintain or operate it.

To realize efficiencies and cost savings as a way to augment revenue generation and bolster the bottom line, one must first understand the true cost of providing a service. Whether it is maintaining a park, offering a program, or running a facility, an awareness and recognition of the true cost of offerings is key to anticipating funding gaps and levels of subsidy that need to be filled.



Variables to Evaluate Funding Strategies

The 2017 Detroit Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan has identified a 10-phase capital improvement process with over \$100 million in recommended spending to help address issues of ongoing improvements or deferred maintenance in the park system.

To that end, the plan also calls out the need for proactively seeking additional funding sources that help further the plan’s implementation goals. A good example is the existing after-school partnership with DPSCD to provide youth programming at schools, but other programmatic and nonprogrammatic opportunities will be needed to help close the gap in infrastructure building for recreation facilities, parks, open spaces, and greenways.

Variables for Evaluating Funding Sources

Variable	Definition	Range		
Implementation time frame	How quickly can this strategy be put into action?	Short term (12–18 months)	Medium term (2–5 years)	Long term (5 years and beyond)
Implementation ease	How easy/difficult will it be to implement this strategy based on political hurdles, state law changes, other hurdles?	Easy	Medium	Difficult
Revenue potential	What is the extent of revenue generation potential from this source?	\$	\$\$	\$\$\$
Dedicated funding	What are the long-term sustainability and predictability of the funds obtained from this strategy?	Yes	No	
Market conditions	If the tool effectiveness is affected by the local market conditions, under what market conditions would the tool be most effective?	Weak	Average	Strong
Partnership potential	To what extent does this strategy drive public, private, or nonprofit partnerships?	Low	Medium	High

Source: ULI panel.

Although myriad funding sources exist, not all may be applicable or currently viable for Detroit. However, the panel recognizes the need to explore sources beyond what currently exist to help fill the increasing gap between current and upcoming needs and available resources. The accompanying table outlines key variables that the panel recommends using as filters to evaluate and prioritize funding and revenue sources to help the plan’s implementation.

Following are revenue and funding strategies that the panel recommends exploring through such evaluation to support various system needs, ranging from small programmatic needs to large space capital development or maintenance and operations. The panel recognizes that the TPL *Parks and Conservation Finance Feasibility Report* has reviewed some of the following funding sources, and some of the panel’s recommendations may vary from TPL’s to a degree.

A summary of all funding strategies along with the variables shown in the previous table is provided below.

Matrix of Choices, Near Term

	Implementation time frame			Implementation ease			Revenue potential			Dedicated funding		Partnership potential			Market conditions		
	Short	Medium	Long	Easy	Medium	Difficult	\$	\$\$	\$\$\$	Yes	No	Low	Medium	High	Weak	Average	Strong
Concessions	X				X		X				X		X			X	
Grants	X			X			X				X	X			X		
Car rental tax	X				X		X				X	X				X	
Casino access fee	X			X			X				X		X			X	
Endowment	X			X				X		X				X		N.A.	
Value Increment Recapture Zone	X				X				X	X		X			X		
User fees	X			X			X			X		X			X		
Crowdfunding	X			X			X			X		X			X		
Corporate sponsorships/naming rights	X			X				X		X				X		X	

Source: ULI panel. N.A. = not applicable.

Matrix of Choices, Medium to Longer Term

	Implementation time frame			Implementation ease			Revenue potential			Dedicated funding		Partnership potential			Market conditions		
	Short	Medium	Long	Easy	Medium	Difficult	\$	\$\$	\$\$\$	Yes	No	Low	Medium	High	Weak	Average	Strong
Capital improvement fee		X			X		X			X			X			X	
Marijuana sin tax		X			X		X				X	X				N.A.	
Stormwater retention credits		X				X		X			X		X				X
Social impact bonds		X				X		X			X			X	X		
Special assessment districts			X													X	
Park impact fees			X			X		X		X		X				X	
Riverfront dedication as national/historic designation			X			X		X		X			X			N.A.	
Sales tax			X			X		X		X		X				N.A.	

Source: ULI panel. N.A. = not applicable.

Value Increment Recapture

Value increment recapture is a public financing method that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. Government redirects a percentage of property tax revenue increases on any rezoned properties and value differential at time of transaction.

The panel recommends further investigation into establishing a value increment recapture zone within the 10 SNF neighborhoods, Riverfront, and Midtown districts.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth pays for growth. • Coordinates/enhances identified SNF neighborhoods; recommend expanding to Riverfront and Midtown districts. • Is not overly complex to implement—lots of examples—“plug and play.” • Implementation can be achieved in the short term. • Does not create additional tax burden. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of property does not increase sufficiently or fast enough to achieve desired goal.

Social Impact Bonds

These bonds are an innovative way for governments to test out new models of financing without assuming the risk of a new program. A form of pay-for-performance, social impact bonds can be created to fund programs—with a predetermined set of desired outcomes—through an upfront infusion of capital from private or philanthropic sources. If and only if the outcomes are met, the city repays the bond to its private investors.

The panel recommends further investigation into raising social impact bonds to pay for capital infrastructure and programming at Detroit’s parks. Specifically, the panel recommends one of the foundations pay to undertake a feasibility study of the effectiveness of using social impact bonds to fund park needs.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates strong appetite for collaboration and engaging a diverse range of investors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires significant upfront costs and contracting expertise. • Changes the government-nonprofit relationship.

Cities Embrace Value Increment Recapture for Parks

Cities are developing innovative value capture mechanisms to develop iconic parks. In New York, the state worked with the city of New York to create the Brooklyn Bridge Park Increment Recapture, a value-capture mechanism through which the city is able to direct a portion of property tax revenue increases on any rezoned areas within 0.4 miles of the park to finance park operations. Since 2000, more than 1.7 million visitors have enjoyed the free events and activities of this \$365 million world-class park.

In Atlanta, the city is using a corridor-wide tax allocation district (TAD), known as tax increment financing (TIF) in other states, to fund the Atlanta BeltLine, a \$2.8 billion, 25-year redevelopment project. The city expects to raise \$120 million in TAD funds to support park design and construction, nearly half of total costs. The BeltLine TAD

will provide limited incentives for private development, with the majority of funds set aside for land acquisition, trails, green space, transit and transportation improvements, affordable housing, and Atlanta Public Schools projects.

Houston is also using value increment recapture to support parks as infrastructure. In 1995, the city created the 13-acre Main Street/Market Square TIRZ (Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone), to support the zone’s anticipated 905 housing units and 188,000 square feet of retail, commercial, and office development. The TIRZ dedicates tens of thousands of dollars each year for park capital improvement projects and provides the Buffalo Bayou Partnership \$2 million in annual funding to support ongoing maintenance of Buffalo Bayou Park.

Special Assessment Districts

These districts designate a unique charge that government units can assess against real estate parcels for certain public projects. This charge is levied in a specific geographic area that makes up the special assessment district (SAD). A special assessment may be levied against only those parcels of real estate that have been identified as having received a direct and unique benefit from the public project. The Detroit area already has an existing model for SADs in the Huron-Clinton MetroParks regional park system serving Southeast Michigan through recreational and educational opportunities.

The panel recommends further investigation into implementing a SAD (see “Path Forward and Structure” section for potential options).

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates equity. Ensures accountability of funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates an additional tax burden for all. Requires a referendum. Requires multiple stakeholder buy-in.

Park Impact Fees

A local government imposes these fees on a new or proposed development project to pay for all or a portion of the costs of providing public services to the new development. Impact fees are considered to be a charge on new development to help fund and pay for the construction or needed expansion of off-site capital improvements. These fees are usually implemented to help reduce the economic burden on local jurisdictions that are trying to deal with population growth within the area.

The panel recommends further investigation into the potential of instituting park impact fees and potential scenarios for implementation.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth pays for growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates additional burden for developer/corporations. May constrain and hurt the local economy by reducing jobs. Potentially increases cost of housing. Requires legislative change at state level.

Long-Term Funding for Park Maintenance and Operations

Parks are essential elements of healthy and sustainable cities. However, without consistent funding for maintenance and operations, these spaces can quickly turn into liabilities. To support these assets in perpetuity, cities are creating endowments to augment maintenance and operations dollars from the general fund.

In 2003, Portland, Oregon, established a parks maintenance endowment. The Parks Endowment Fund accounts for gifts, donations, and endowments of a permanent nature, whereby the donation principal is invested and interest earnings are available to help maintain the park system. Donors are asked to contribute enough money to the endowment so that the earnings from their contribution cover 40 percent of the maintenance. Assuming a 4 percent investment return, 40 percent of the maintenance cost is equivalent to 150 percent of the capital cost for plant infrastructure and 50 percent of the capital cost for other park improvements. The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, in its capital fundraising campaign, has developed an endowment and is allocating 20 percent of donations to its endowment fund.

Often, federal and state legislative appropriations may restrict bond revenues for operations and maintenance of improvements. But cities can capitalize maintenance costs by including anticipated costs in the specific levy or bond proposal and then setting the funding aside in an endowment to cover future costs.

Stormwater Retention Credits

This program provides the opportunity to generate and sell credits to earn revenue for projects that reduce harmful stormwater runoff by installing green infrastructure in passive parks and vacant lots. Developers invest in stormwater “parks” in lieu of paying a drainage fee. A portion of collected drainage fees is directed to stormwater parks.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes green infrastructure. Creates a means of providing park/open space while helping meet stormwater capture requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces drainage fee collections.

Endowment

Establishing an endowment creates the opportunity to designate a minimum of 10 percent of all philanthropic and corporate capital gifts for the ongoing maintenance of parks, greenways, and open space. The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy is already pursuing an ambitious fundraising strategy to ensure a healthy and sustainable endowment is in place in conjunction with the park’s design and development timeline.

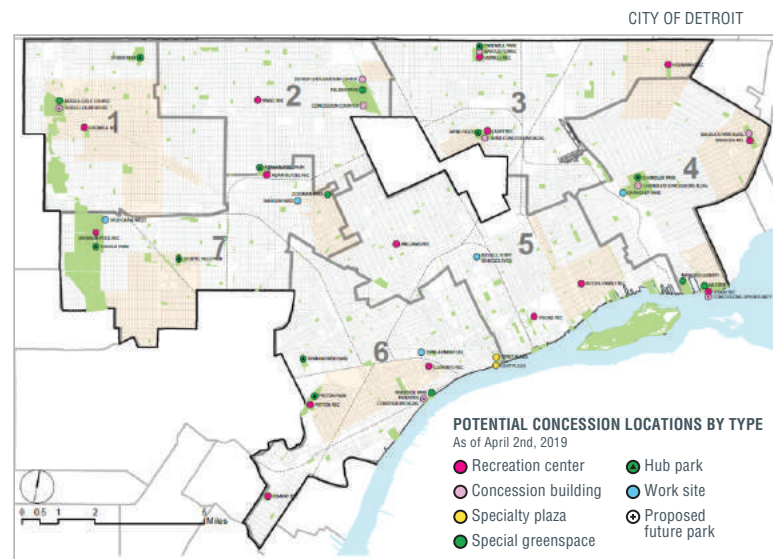
The panel recommends implementation of this funding opportunity immediately as a standardized practice across the system for existing parks and as a standard operating procedure for future development (parks, facilities, greenways etc.).

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a low implementation cost. Has philanthropic buy-in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philanthropic buy-in may be harder to come by for ongoing or deferred maintenance issues.

Concession Revenue

Concessions create an opportunity to bring in external vendors and partners to provide certain services in exchange for lease revenues or revenue sharing. Currently, the city of Detroit GSD, through the Office of Contracting and Procurement, is seeking proposals from qualified businesses to provide the city’s recreation centers, parks,

plazas, venues, and selected work sites with food options and merchandise where appropriate and has identified potential locations where they may be located. The panel recommends proceeding with that strategy.



Locations of concession services in parks citywide.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps generate revenue on existing offerings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibly creates perception of ownership or control of public amenity by a private entity.

Riverfront Dedication as a National/Historic Designation

Among the many potential tools available to help protect and revitalize historic resources, one of the most important—but sometimes misunderstood—is obtaining federal designation for a site. Given the historic and national significance of the Detroit riverfront, a federal designation embraces the cultural aspects of parks and open space. The panel recommends further investigation into having the Detroit riverfront dedicated as a national/historic park designation in an effort to tap into federal funding.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accesses federal funding. Increases tourism. Is a tribute to Detroit’s history and connection to Canada. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is difficult to obtain; numerous programs are chasing the same dollars. Strings are attached; donor expects agreed-upon actions to secure the funding.

Federal and State Grants

Numerous grant opportunities from federal, state, and local governments to acquire and conserve land to develop parks and recreational areas are available, such as those from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and National Park Service.

The panel recommends implementation of this funding opportunity immediately by identifying a full- or part-time grant writer to focus solely on pursuing and procuring grants for parks, programs, and open space.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of implementation is low. • “Free” money need not be repaid. • Prestige—winning a coveted grant can provide benefits beyond the dollar amount awarded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to obtain—numerous governments are chasing same dollars. • Strings attached—donor expects agreed-upon actions to secure the funding. • Is not a sustainable source of funding.

Car Rental Tax

More than 40 states levy a charge on rental cars, either by imposing an additional tax, a daily fee, or both. As governments grapple with budget cuts and seek to raise revenues, rental car taxes that are perceived as targeting visitors rather than locals can be more palatable than other options.

The panel recommends further investigation into establishing a car rental tax dedicated to the funding of Detroit parks and open space.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has minimal impact on local population. • Visitors pay for use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases cost to visitors.

Investing in the Public Realm: Prioritizing Equity, Inclusion, and Ownership

Parks and open spaces are critical assets of the public realm. They help enhance community resilience, support local economies, and provide social spaces for people to gather and play. These spaces are thought to be critical to the social and civic infrastructure of communities, given their unique ability to bring together friends and family and to create a shared space for strangers and new neighbors to meet. As communities make investments in parks and the public realm, they have begun to measure not only how their programs advance resilience, economics, and mobility, but also how their programs are impacting equity and inclusion. With this information they are developing metrics and tools to select and prioritize projects and programs for funding.

The Heinz Endowment, for example, adopted a vision statement for a just public realm and established an indicator framework to evaluate investments. The framework emphasizes equity, inclusion, and ownership as one of the core values and sets the following goals for Heinz investments in community parks, rights-of-way, plazas, and vacant land.

Additional information about the *Just Public Realm for Pittsburgh* report and metrics can be found here: <http://www.heinz.org/strategic-areas/learning/public-realm>.

Many other groups are adopting equity and inclusion tools to guide public realm investments. The Trust for Public Land, a partner in the 10-Mintue Walk Campaign, developed the online mapping/visualization tool ParkServe, which helps communities measure individuals’ access to parks within a 10-minute walk of home. Reimagining the Civic Commons, which is working with four cities across the country to revitalize and connect public places such as parks, plazas, trails, and libraries, is measuring civic engagement and socioeconomic mixing to understand their impact. Minneapolis is also leading this work. In 2016, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board developed equity-based criteria for prioritizing capital investment and large rehabilitation projects.

The Heinz Endowments' Metrics for Investing in the Public Realm

Goals	Description	Proposed metrics
Distribution and access	The geographic allocation of public open spaces in a manner that brings the greatest benefits to a community with convenient proximity to, quality of, and connectivity to public realm amenities, accessible via multiple modes of pedestrian, vehicular, and public transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acres of public open space by neighborhood; by regional municipality • Public realm walking radii • Bike, trail, and greenway mileage completed • ADA accessibility
User and design/ construction inclusion	The acceptance and valuing of difference and the intention to involve diverse populations, opinions, attitudes, cultures, and behaviors in the use, design, construction, and management of the public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User counts by race, age, income • MBE/WBE contracting and hiring provisions • Organizational leadership diversity • Programming by cultural theme • Programming by audience type • Seasonal programming
Retention versus displacement	The ability to have a stake in neighborhood property and processes that promote the ability to thrive physically, economically, socially, culturally, and civically in place without involuntary dislocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial retail occupancy • Commercial business ownership • Homeownership rates by race • Home sales • Rehab and new construction permits • Population growth or decline by race • Population income by race • Residential housing affordability • Commercial lease affordability
Capital and maintenance resources	The access to capital and sustainable long-term maintenance and operational funding distributed equitably across all geographies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative capital funding budgets • Comparative maintenance funding budgets
Public/private ownership	The sharing of property and process control between the public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors in a manner that retains the right to publicly accessible open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of privately owned public spaces • Number of community-owned public spaces • Operational compliance reporting • Number of public/private/community partnerships

Source: The Heinz Endowments, *A Just Public Realm for Pittsburgh: The Heinz Endowments' Vision for Investing in Pittsburgh's Public Realm* (April 2019).
Note: MBE = minority business enterprise; WBE = women's business enterprise.

Casino Access Fee

A tax is imposed upon the use and privilege of parking a motor vehicle in or upon any parking lot or garage in connection with the three casinos in the city.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors help pay for it. • Helps generate revenue on existing offerings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is perceived as regressive. • Increases ride sharing; not a sustainable source of funding.

Sales Tax

A sales tax is paid to a governing body for the sales of certain goods and services. Usually laws allow the seller to collect funds for the tax from the consumer at the point of purchase. When a tax on goods or services is paid to a governing body directly by a consumer, it is usually called a use tax. In many cities, sales tax revenue has played an important role in making up for revenue lost from other sources. The share of sales tax revenue generated by retailers is substantial.

The panel recommends further investigation into increasing the sales tax dedicated to the funding of Detroit parks and open space.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has potential for a significant revenue stream. • Visitors help pay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires constitutional change. • Additional tax burden; tends to hit lower-income residents harder. • Drives consumers to buy elsewhere.

Marijuana Sin Tax

A “sin tax” is specifically levied on certain goods deemed harmful to society and individuals, in this case marijuana. Sin taxes are used to increase the price of a product in an effort to lower its use, or failing that, to increase and find new sources of revenue. Increasing a sin tax is often more popular than increasing other taxes. Revenue generated by sin taxes supports many projects imperative in accomplishing social and economic goals including infrastructure.

The panel recommends further investigation into establishing a sin tax on the sale of marijuana dedicated to the funding of Detroit parks and open space.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pays for society’s costs. • Discourages unhealthy behavior. • Is popular with voters; more acceptable than other types of taxes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not a sustainable source of funding. • Creates an additional tax burden.

Capital Improvement Fee

A capital improvement fee can be added to an admission fee to a recreation facility or park attraction to repay the cost of developing the facility or attraction. This fee is usually applied to golf courses, aquatic facilities, recreation centers, stadiums, amphitheaters, and special use facilities such as sports complexes. The funds generated can be used to pay back the cost of the capital improvement or a revenue bond that was used to develop the facility. Capital improvement fees normally are charged based on use of the improved site or can be collected as a parking fee.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only facility users pay for it. • Helps generate revenue on existing offerings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might be a challenge in certain areas due to limited income or socioeconomic condition.

User Fees

These fees are paid by a user of recreational facilities or programs to offset the costs of services provided by the agency in operating a park or a recreation facility or in delivering programs and services.

The panel recommends identifying offerings that provide an exclusive or an individual benefit and be able to charge adequately to recovery costs on the same while ensuring the presence of scholarship programs that can help support those who are unable to pay.

For services where the department believes it cannot move forward on adequate user fees to obtain the cost-recovery goals, consider contracting with a nonprofit or private company to help offset service costs.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps generate revenue on existing offerings. Only users pay for it. Conveys a rightful perception of quality since what is free is often not valued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might be a challenge in certain areas due to limited income or socioeconomic condition.

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is a fairly new web-based source that aggregates funds from a group of people who are willing to support a specific project, be it program related or facility related. Some sites that successfully do this include Michigan Economic Development Council’s Public Spaces Community Places program (www.miplace.org/programs/public-spaces-community-places) as well as www.kickstarter.org and www.razoo.com. In addition, the NRPA has its own crowdfunding platform, www.fundyourpark.org, that Detroit can apply to with a specific project.



The panel recommends identifying projects varying from programmatic needs to smaller capital projects that can be crowdfunded and embarking upon this strategy right away.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taps into an alternate funding sources without adding user fees or new taxes. Is project specific, and affinity groups or individuals can support it from any part of the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has no guarantee of funding success and needs to be pursued on a project-by-project basis.

Partnerships

Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a nonprofit and a city department, or a private business and a city agency. Two partners jointly develop revenue-producing park and recreation facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management, based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

A relevant example is the Muskingum Recreation Center that is being developed in Zanesville, Ohio. This is a partnership between the Muskingum County Community Foundation, the Muskingum Family Y, Genesis HealthCare System, and Ohio University Zanesville (www.muskingumrecreationcenter.org/).



The panel recommends continuing to explore partnerships for joint use operations or development, where appropriate.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to pool resources and build shared capacity given limited resources. Creates greater support and advocacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could result in power struggle over operational control. Poorly performing partner could affect future success or reputation.

Corporate Sponsorships and Naming Rights

Corporations can underwrite a portion or all of the cost of an event, program, or activity based on their visible association with the service, as title sponsors, presenting sponsors, associate sponsors, product sponsors, or in-kind sponsors.

Advertising sales on sports complexes, scoreboards, gym floors, trash cans, playgrounds, in locker rooms, at dog parks, along trails, flower pots, and as part of special events held in Detroit parks and facilities to help support operational costs have been an accepted practice in parks and recreation systems for a long time and should be considered to support operational costs.

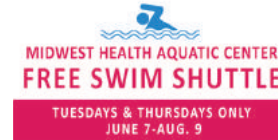


As for naming rights, corporations invest in the right to name an event, facility, or product within a park in exchange for an annual fee, typically over a 10-year period. This is not unusual for the private sector in Detroit, which already has Ford Field and Little Caesar’s Arena.

Many public agencies seek corporate support for naming rights, and this can be viable especially for signature parks or its amenities in the case that the park is already named by a sponsor. These can be sought via a 501(c)(3) organization such as a parks alliance or a parks foundation that also ensures the dollars received are invested back in the parks system.

Naming rights for park and recreation facilities are typically attached to sports complexes, amphitheaters, recreation centers, aquatic facilities, stadiums, and events. Some examples in the public space include city of Lewisville, Texas (Toyota of Lewisville Railroad Park) and Shawnee County, Kansas (Midwest Health Aquatic Center).

The panel recommends conducting a sponsorship valuation study to identify the sponsorable value of the various public parks and recreation assets and amenities citywide. Following this study, it would be prudent to obtain professional support in building sponsor packages and exploring sponsorship and naming rights opportunities with local, regional, and national brands.



Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earns revenue. • Creates greater partnership and connection with the private sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has potential for sponsor/partner misalignment with public values (e.g., Enron Field). • Possibly creates perception of ownership or control of public amenity by a private entity.



BRIDGET STEENEY/ULI

Path Forward and Structure

THE ENTITIES THAT HAVE OWNERSHIP (financial or otherwise) of the various parks currently lack a coherent structure. To address this issue, the panel recommends implementing various structural reforms to elevate parks within city government and better share resources. The panel recommends looking at the formation of a Detroit Parks Alliance (DPA): a 501(c)(3) public/private partnership that will operate as a cross-sector governing body. In addition, the panel provides three options for establishing a special assessment district as well as recommendations on community engagement and the establishment of a national monument along the Detroit River.



SAVLAM HAUSER/ULI; PHOTOS: MICHAEL BROWN/ULI, EXCEPT 2ND FROM LEFT, CAU SLEPIN/ULI

The panel lays out a vision for how to design an equitable framework for the financial sustainability of Detroit’s parks and open space. Ultimately, though, investing in people—and the places they live, work, and play—will begin to tip the momentum toward a future defined by social equity, collaboration, and financial sustainability.

The panel sees the clearest path forward to ensure an equitable approach to financial sustainability and leverage parks and open space for neighborhood revitalization in the establishment of a DPA. Multiple formal and informal organizations have emerged to act as stewards of Detroit’s parks, from formalizing a “friends of the park” group to fundraise for significant facility improvements, to mobilizing neighbors to organize cleanups and lawn mowing. Other community development organizations have been extremely active in aspects of neighborhood development such as street activation or youth programming and may be looking for opportunities to integrate parks advocacy into their activities. This Detroit asset opens opportunities moving forward to improve efficiencies and achieve economies of scale, spread expertise and capacity, and develop buy-in and trust in a citywide strategy of prioritizing park investments. Particularly as the city and stakeholders raise the level of

expectations for park quality across the city, neighborhood groups need to be equipped to continue to serve their community parks to the level residents deserve.

Elevate Parks and Recreation for Citywide Revitalization

The panel recognizes and applauds the great accomplishments Mayor Duggan has made toward reestablishing a baseline of services provided to the parks. With that in mind, for the Detroit park system to have world-class parks, this panel recommends elevating the status and visibility of the department to cabinet level, so that it can effectively coordinate with other departments and each can work to enhance the other. This will also help eliminate any siloed approaches to park services as well as better enable the city to facilitate true public/private partnerships.

Types of Stewardship Models and Agreements

Model	Scale	Functions	Funding	Capacity and requirements	Equity considerations	Example
Friends of parks	Park	Park cleanups, grassroots advocacy	Volunteer	Volunteer-driven	The composition of the group and its functions are often limited to the capabilities and interests of those able to volunteer.	People for Palmer Park, Detroit
Park conservancies	Park	Park operations, maintenance, programming	Raise funds (primarily donor solicitation)	Related to scope of activities, often starting with programming and then growing. Typically requires a 501(c)(3) status.	Funding often related to degree of affluence in locale, thereby creating disparities across city park system.	Chandler Park Conservancy, Detroit
Park development corporation	Park or neighborhood	Park development, operations, maintenance, programming	Private	Special purpose corporations set up through government, managed by developers for development or to manage large-scale commercial developments with extensive public facilities.	Funding structure and ultimate responsibility to corporation without a strongly defined charter.	Hemisfair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation, San Antonio, Texas

Sources: The Trust for Public Land and James Lima Planning + Development, *Building Bridges: A Community-Based Stewardship Study for an Equitable East River Park (2018)*; ULI panel.

Types of Stewardship Models and Agreements (CONT'D)

Model	Scale	Functions	Funding	Capacity and requirements	Equity considerations	Example
Community development corporation (CDC)	Neighborhood	Housing and economic development	Raise funds (donor solicitation, grants)	Related to scope of activities, typically starting with housing assistance and then growing. Requires 501(c)(3) status.	With a mission to support neighborhood revitalization, CDCs serve a community's most vulnerable.	Midtown Detroit Inc.
Business Improvement Zone (BIZ)	Neighborhood or group of neighborhoods	Economic development; public space beautification and activation	Special tax revenue from area property owners	Sizable workforce to carry out services, programming, and capital improvements. Requires 501(c)(3) status and combination of city and state legislation.	BIZ's funding structure and ultimate responsibility to property owners and business can lead to the organization's bias to those interests.	Downtown Detroit Partnership
Citywide parks advocacy organization	City	Advocacy, research, lobby on broader park issues	Raise funds	Tends to serve at city level, but can lend additional capacity to local park stewardship groups for specific research, training, or activities.	These groups are helpful partners for local park interests but do not necessarily address specific park equity interests.	Austin Parks Foundation, Texas
Traditional public management	City	Park development, operations, maintenance, programming	Tax revenue, bonds, concessions, raise funds (grants)	City led and operated.	Elected leadership prioritizes investment and operations.	Jayne Park, Detroit
Alliance/coalition/foundation	City, county, or region	Park advocacy, programming, and city coordination	Raise funds (donor solicitation, grants), lobby for public funds	Organizations contribute capacity through alliance membership; requires coordinator and liaison with city. Related to scope of activities, often starting with advocacy and programming, then growing.	Flat and representative structure ensures comprehensive community voice involved in alliance activities.	The Philadelphia Parks Alliance Recreation Advisory Councils

Elevating Parks and Recreation in City Government

Task	Responsible party	Associated cost
Consolidate parks staff (planning, operations and maintenance, capital projects, programming) and restructure within or outside GSD, identify a new parks director to implement changes	Mayor Duggan, new parks director	Staff time
Run assessment of services to see where overlap and potential for resource and staff sharing exist	New parks director	Staff time
Ensure a member of the mayor's chief development officer's team is responsible for researching, applying to, and ensuring compliance with state, regional, and federal grants for parks and recreation	Chief development officer	None, existing staff time

Source: ULI panel.

The panel recommends the restructuring of citywide government (see figure above) with the intention of elevating the importance of parks, recreation, and open space in revitalizing neighborhoods and enhancing baseline services.

Form a Detroit Parks Alliance

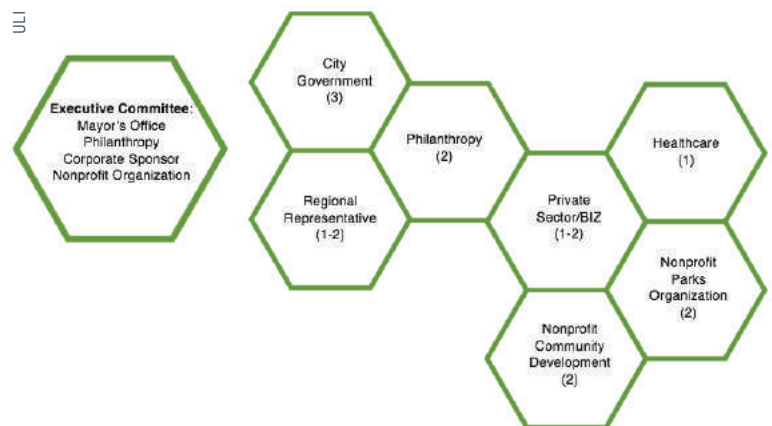
A newly formed Detroit Parks Alliance, governed by stakeholders from government, philanthropic entities, corporations, and community representatives, would be tasked with championing the citywide system of parks in close partnership with the city. The DPA would serve as a vehicle for stakeholders to develop and promote citywide park priorities; raise funds to ensure all parks—including those with the least resources—are working toward high standards of quality; and provide additional support, expertise, and resources to those who serve as parks' stewards, from formalized friends groups to neighborhood block clubs. This would enable provision of services above the baseline provided by the city of Detroit.



The function of the DPA.

Forming the DPA would not preclude these groups from conducting their own fundraising, but DPA's fundraising would be allocated toward defined citywide priorities, including support of under-resourced parks in communities

of high need but potentially low organizing capacity. This strategy will reduce the pressure on all groups to conduct their own fundraising and will address the potential for "philanthropic burnout." In addition, the ability to balance priorities would ensure equity among how and which parks are funded while also ensuring that donations or grants make significant impact and are not dispersed among so many parks that they lose their effectiveness.



Proposed governance structure of the DPA.

The panel believes that the DDP, Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, Midtown Detroit Inc., and other newly formed BIZs should be excluded from receiving funding through the DPA but are important stakeholders nevertheless. These organizations have been critical in Detroit's economic revitalization and should remain a funding priority. However, despite a continued need for investment in these established areas, it is important to ensure that all Detroiters are able to access high-quality parks and open spaces. Some city-owned and managed parks and open spaces within the geographic boundaries of these organizations could receive funding from the DPA.

Examples for the Detroit Parks Alliance

Similarly structured and tasked organizations to the Detroit Parks Alliance include the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation and the Philadelphia Parks Alliance Recreation Advisory Councils.

The Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation

The Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation is a registered nonprofit that bridges the gap between the city of Oakland's offices of Parks and Recreation and Public Works, helping fund the public's need for safe, clean, and well-maintained parks and recreation centers. It has improved parks and recreation centers across the city by providing fiscal sponsorship, fundraising support, and technical assistance to community groups working to improve their neighborhood parks. The foundation's involvement varies by project, but each project relies on collaboration among community groups, private businesses, and government agencies. Every project the foundation undertakes improves and expands Oakland's parks and green spaces. For more information visit www.oaklandparks.org/get-know-us/about.

The Philadelphia Parks Alliance Recreation Advisory Councils

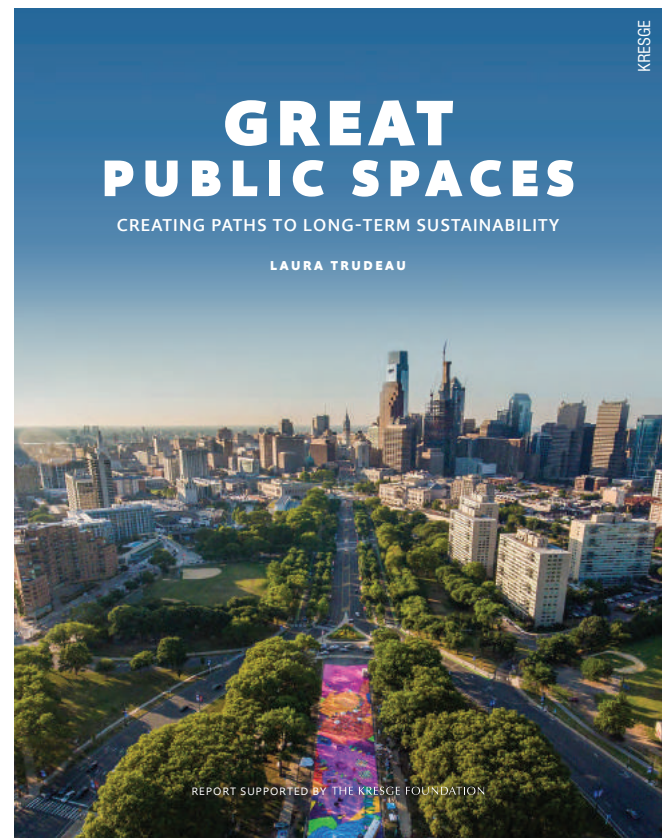
The Parks Alliance partners with more than 150 recreation centers and playgrounds in Philadelphia. At each site, it works with recreation staff and neighborhood volunteers to build advisory councils that fundraise, develop programs, and maintain the sites. The advisory council network creates a sense of community ownership over the spaces and ensures the community's voice is heard. For more information visit <https://www.philaparks.org/>.

Importantly, the city of Detroit would continue to execute on operations, maintenance, and city-level programming, and neighborhood groups would continue to develop their own programming and work with the city on improvements as advocates and partners. However, the DPA would serve as a point of entry for potential donors to the park system while assuring donors that their funds would be maximized for citywide impact.

DPA's Charge

Building on Laura Trudeau's excellent *Great Public Spaces: Creating Paths to Long-Term Sustainability* 2017 report, the panel recommends that the DPA be charged with the following tasks:

- Improving communications and coordination among funding partners (public, private, philanthropic);
- Raising money to support the parks, specifically by hiring a dedicated and experienced fundraiser who can build a fund and an ongoing endowment that will provide funding for ongoing maintenance, operations, and programming; and
- Acting as a support entity that interfaces with all park stewards (formal and informal) that oversee the parks and open spaces throughout Detroit.



The Great Public Spaces: Creating Paths to Long-Term Sustainability report should be reviewed.

As such, the DPA will

- Provide fiscal sponsorship to allow groups to raise funds;
- Provide technical support, capacity building, and resources and best practices to parks;
- Ensure equity by spreading resources to neighborhood, pocket, and pop-up parks;
- Help leverage resources (time, volunteers, money) of existing nonprofits;
- Empower neighborhood groups;
- Follow the lead of the city with regard to the prioritization of how funding is allocated to various parks based on need;

- Create streamlined/template operating agreements, opportunities for partnership, best practices for park stewards (i.e., standard memorandum of understanding outlining formal partnership policy with co-created measurable outcomes, systems for tracking outcomes and spending to ensure equity, and database development to track partners and partnerships); and
- Support the formation of park stewardship groups.

DPA’s Strategy and Timeline for Creation

The accompanying table outlines the panel’s recommended strategy and timeline for creating the DPA.

DPA Strategy and Timeline

Timeline	Task	Who is responsible
Months 1–3	Convene executive committee, including representatives from city, philanthropy, and corporate sponsor.	Mayor’s office and seed funder
	Conduct community engagement process (will need some funding to run outreach and engagement). The goal of this process is to determine how stakeholders of each group wish to use the parks and how they will work toward defining what makes a great public space for Detroiters.	
Months 1–6	Identify staff persons; prioritize experienced fundraiser (as previously described).	Executive committee
	Convene stakeholder groups and organizational meetings.	
	Map out board structure (include representatives from government, philanthropy, private sector, grassroots/community, existing friends and conservancy organizations, programming providers).	
	Establish key roles and objectives.	
	Spell out roles and responsibilities of the DPA and the city.	
Months 6–12	Fundraise DPA operational dollars.	Fundraising chair
	Create outcome metrics.	
	Develop citywide park investment strategy with board, stakeholders, and community engagement; set desired budget.	
	Create templates for a memorandum of understanding for park stewards to enter into with city and/or DPA.	
	Create a database of suite of options for park stewards	
Months 12–24	Begin to fundraise from philanthropic and private organizations.	Executive committee with DPA staff
	Convene quarterly meetings with park stewards and board.	
	Create a database of partners and types of partnerships.	
	Create a directory of best practices regarding resource sharing.	
	Conduct annual fundraising campaign.	
Months 24–36	Create endowment, with a goal of at least 10 to 15 percent of funds raised for capital improvements set aside for endowment.	Fundraising staff, hired consultant for evaluation
	Conduct a targeted fundraising campaign specifically for endowment.	
	Conduct an annual fundraising campaign.	
Months 24–36	Conduct a two-year evaluation of communications, streamlined programs/shared resources, programming and use of parks, and budget.	Fundraising staff, hired consultant for evaluation

Source: ULI panel.

Pursue Resource-Sharing Opportunities as a Top Priority

An assessment of needs, existing programs, and services across the parks should be conducted to see where resource sharing could result in cost reduction and economies of scale. The panel recommends that the prototype Detroit Parks Coalition (Belle Isle Conservancy, Chandler Park Conservancy, Clark Park Coalition, People for Palmer Park, and Friends of Rouge Park)—whose formation and function is currently being explored with a small grant from the Erb Family Foundation—facilitate this assessment. Examples of where resources could be shared among parks include marketing and outreach; best practices for operations and maintenance, including community and volunteer empowerment; and identifying examples of “barter” programs, such as a nonprofit sports organization maintaining a park in exchange for free use of recreation centers or sports facilities on site.

The creation of the DPA will also help foster local capacity building such that each active park should have a stewardship group. As part of the DPA’s responsibilities in its first two years of existence, the panel recommends that it create templates and advisory services for how to establish a “friends” group and other tools that can help build local capacity around parks. This will create a living document of best practices, including resource-sharing ideas.

The panel also recommends that the Parks and Recreation Department (or a hired consultant) conduct an assessment to determine where opportunities exist for alignment with other governmental and nongovernmental agencies for resource sharing. Although this list is not exhaustive, the panel recommends that this assessment address the following areas that have high potential for resource and staff sharing:

- Expanding existing partnership with Huron-Clinton Metroparks for streamlined operations, programming, and expanded transit access to parks;
- Improving transportation infrastructure and services, such as bike lanes, bike-share installations, and transportation services for seniors to include stops at parks;
- Educational programming, such as environmental education, after-school programs, and in-house school science/sports programs that could use park facilities and vice versa;
- Working with active neighborhood groups to ensure that park calendars include city-led as well as resident-led programming; and

DEVELOPING OPERATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

The panel believes that developing best practices and procedures can result in long-term cost savings. Instead of putting out fires, scheduled maintenance operations should be possible. Reporting processes and forms to record costs and overhead plus condition of facilities should be prepared and used. Transparent reporting on the results and a report card for each park should be made available to the public. Citizens should be able to report on park conditions through online portals in addition to telephone and mail if appropriate feedback systems are developed and maintained.



SAVLAN HAUSER/ULI

Public feedback should be encouraged for continual engagement with the public.

- Developing green infrastructure and stormwater management, identifying existing city funds that address stormwater management, and creating a map of overlapping locations for infrastructure development and service delivery.

The panel also recommends that the city ease permitting requirements and fees to encourage and enable resident-driven and nonprofit-led activations of spaces, which will have a win-win-win effect of

- Empowering residents and giving them a sense of agency over the space;
- Increasing the amount of programming in parks; and
- Reducing the programmatic cost burden on the city.

Explore Creation of a Special Assessment District

As referenced in the section “Strategies for Sustainable Park Funding,” special assessment districts for parks and recreation are prevalent in the Detroit vicinity, as they are all over the Midwest. In fact, some of the best-performing and national award-winning parks and recreation agencies nationwide are SADs—Cleveland MetroParks, Ohio; Chicago Park District, Illinois; and Willamalane Park and Recreation District, Oregon, among others. These agencies are able to achieve and sustain a consistently high level of service and guest experience in large part because of the dedicated funding and insulation from market, economic, and political fluctuations to which city departments are not immune.

The panel recommends exploring the potential for creating a SAD in the region for the following reasons:

- To foster regional cooperation and create cost efficiencies while eliminating service duplication and siloed operations;
- To help convey the importance of parks and recreation to the quality of life, economic vitality, and as an essential contributor to the region’s competitiveness for businesses, professionals, and families alike; and
- To help ensure sustainable operations and maintenance of existing and future development.

The panel has three options for this recommendation, including expanding the geographic boundary of Huron-Clinton Metroparks, creating a Detroit Parks District, and creating a Detroit Regional Park District.

Option 1: Expand the Geographic Boundary of Huron-Clinton MetroParks

The new boundaries would include all of Detroit. This option would not require the creation of a new special district but rather the expansion of Huron-Clinton Metroparks’ service area and consolidation of services with the city of Detroit’s Parks and Recreation Department.

Option 2: Create a Detroit Park District

This could be done by adopting a process similar to what Seattle did in 2014 when Seattle voters approved the Seattle Park District, a metropolitan park district authorized by chapter 35.61 of the Revised Code of Washington.

This district has the same boundaries as the city of Seattle, and the Seattle City Council members serve as the Park District’s governing board. Property taxes collected by the Seattle Park District will provide funding for city parks and recreation, including maintaining parklands and facilities, operating community centers and recreation programs, and developing new neighborhood parks on previously acquired sites.



The Medgar Evers pool in Seattle is funded through the Seattle Parks District. It is operated through an interlocal agreement by the Seattle Recreation Department.

The Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation will provide services on behalf of the Seattle Park District under an interlocal agreement between the city and district.

Option 3: Create a Detroit Regional Park District

This option would require a regional consolidation of services between multiple municipal agencies (including Wayne County and the cities of Hamtramck and Highland Park) and could have a transformational impact for the entire region. Along with the potential for economies of scale and subsequent cost savings from a regional approach to service delivery, it would help depoliticize parks and recreation and allow these assets to be leveraged to their fullest potential for revenue generation and economic benefit for the region. The panel recognizes the complexity of this process and the presence of multiple stakeholders who would need to be involved to make this option a reality. This implementation strategy, therefore, needs to be evaluated and viewed from a longer-term implementation lens (three to five years) to be potentially viable.

The panel recommends the creation of a city-led regional panel or committee that can study the feasibility of this strategy and, if found feasible, embark upon its implementation framework from an outreach, policy, and political standpoint within a window of one to three years from the conclusion of the feasibility study.

Pursue Community Engagement Strategies

The panel would be remiss in its evaluation of the park system if it did not discuss the goal of well-maintained, safe, and funded parks—activation and active use by the public! While the focus of this report is on the long-term financial sustainability of the parks, the importance of community engagement and activation is worth briefly discussing.

The panel feels strongly that inclusive community engagement strategies will yield dividends in the design and utility of public spaces. The Ella Fitzgerald Park is a great example of how enhanced engagement has produced a popular result for the community. The panel recommends community engagement meetings and proactive engagement strategies such as those deployed in Philadelphia, where the city conducted door-to-door research in the vicinity of a project to better understand what nearby residents were

Harry Thomas Sr Recreation Center

DC Department of Parks and Recreation

M P

PARK GRADES:
 Cleanliness: B
 Accessibility: B
 Exercise level: A

1743 Lincoln Road, NE

CONTACT INFORMATION:
(202) 576-5642

HOURS:
 Dawn to dusk
 Some areas open only:
 Mon- Fri 3:30 pm- 9 pm
 Sat 10 am- 4 pm

Pets: Not Allowed

GETTING THERE:
Metro: Noma/Galludet (Red Line)- Walk NW on Florida Ave, turn R onto N. Capitol then bear R onto Lincoln Rd.
 Shaw (Green/Yellow)- Walk East on S St to Lincoln Rd
Bus: 80- Stop at N. Capitol & Randolph Pl OR
 P6- Stop at R St & Lincoln Rd
Parking: Parking lot available from 1st St NE
Handicap Accessible: Yes

Things to Do!

* baseball * basketball * tennis *
 * go for a swim * exercise classes *

SPORTS AMENITIES: baseball field, basketball court, tennis court
PLAYGROUND: Playground is clean and in good condition
SWIMMING POOL: Outdoor pool and wading pool with lifeguard on duty.
 Open Mon-Fri 1- 8pm, Sat 12-6 pm. Closed Tuesdays.

Park Information

Restrooms are available and clean.
Drinking fountains are available and clean.

SIZE – Medium-sized with open space
SAFETY – Well-lit, safe during the daytime
PARK EXTRAS – Benches, trash cans, employee present.
AESTHETICS – Very sunny with shade provided by surrounding buildings.
SPECIAL FEATURES: Offers exercise classes and programs for all ages.

In Washington, D.C., pediatricians have begun prescribing park time. A District-wide inventory of parks was created to provide health care professionals with a tool to show which parks to prescribe near where children live. This inventory has the potential to influence future park planning. (See ParkRx website, www.aapdc.org/prx/.)

seeking for park amenities. That effort resulted in training and other human services being co-located in park space to make it easy and attractive for the residents, including those with children, to access services.

Activation Strategies

The Parks and Recreation Department should conduct a review of all public activities in the parks to evaluate the proportion of those organized by the city, those by park stewards and conservancies, and those by the general public. Determine what steps might need to be taken to empower noncity staff to increase their engagement, such as the following:

- Providing blanket insurance policies to individuals and organizations wishing to organize events, festivals, sporting events, and the like, in the parks;
- As mentioned previously, easing permitting requirements or waiving use fees for large public gatherings;

- Establishing an official process for free use of parks, facilities, and recreation centers in exchange for in-kind support such as maintenance and outreach; and
- Exploring how to offer other kinds of support for activations the public wishes to organize or see: art installations, local/holiday markets, farmers markets, cultural events, celebrations, community gatherings, political events, community wellness days, and so on.

Community Engagement

An active and engaged community is key to a great park system. Not only will authentic and sustained engagement foster a sense of ownership over the parks among the community (thereby leading to potential for additional volunteers), but the community will also help craft the narrative about the Detroit park system. The community of park users should be those that define what makes a great public space, and their input should help the city and the DPA determine its priorities. To that end, the panel recommends exploring and implementing the following community engagement strategies:

- Regular engagement meetings: In parallel with the official structure of the DPA forming, its stakeholders should hold regular (monthly to quarterly) meetings *in the parks and rec centers* to build relationships with park neighbors—who are potential park stewards. These engagement meetings should range from pure relationship-building/fun events to more curated gatherings to collect specific input such as the current use of the spaces, challenges and opportunities, design charrettes, educational meetings (especially related to environmental sustainability and infrastructure development), and budget charrettes. The panel recommends that a community organizer (and/or neighborhood leader) partner with an experienced facilitator, Parks staff, and a representative from the philanthropic community to plan and run these events.
- Vision statement: Within the first nine months of the formation of the DPA, have a goal of a co-created vision statement for the parks system and how neighbors define a “great public space.”
- Creative budgeting strategies: The panel has clearly defined the budget constraints of Detroit’s park system and identified potential solutions for reorganization, improved efficiencies, and revenue generation. However, the panel also believes that creative budgeting strategies

MICHAEL BROWN/ULI



Riding a swing at Ella Fitzgerald Park.

should be used during both short- and longer-term implementation scenarios. First, the panel recommends hosting community charrettes for budgeting whereby the city presents budgeting challenges and ideas for investment, and the community provides feedback on their priorities. Second, the panel recommends exploring the potential for participatory budgeting for the parks system as a long-term engagement strategy. An exploration of this method should look at participatory budgeting both for city dollars and DPA funds: the city sets aside a certain percentage of its park budget (likely programming and capital) and provides an opportunity for the community to essentially vote for their preferred spending alternative. These types of strategies accomplish two goals: (a) they help the

community understand budgeting constraints and explains why the city cannot reasonably meet every expectation of every individual or neighborhood, and (b) they give the residents a voice in how their tax dollars are being expended in parks, providing a sense of partnership with the local government and ownership in the end product. The panel believes that creating budgeting scenarios will generate enhanced enthusiasm from the public about the value of open spaces.

- Activation strategy: A strategy should be created for community-led activations, such as pop-ups, parklets, creative placemaking tactics, etc. This strategy should include a list of potential barriers to community participation (i.e., insurance requirements or fees) as well as the city's solution to removing these barriers.

For more resources on community engagement strategies, the panel recommends resources from Project for Public Spaces (<https://www.pps.org/>).



SAM SMITH/FLICKR

*The Gateway to Freedom sculpture is located where ferry boats departed carrying enslaved people to freedom. The monument features George De Baptiste, a conductor on the Underground Railroad, pointing toward the Tower of Freedom located on the other side of the river in Windsor, Canada, which served as a landing. More than 5 million people were enslaved in the United States, and of the 100,000 who escaped slavery through the secret network, about 25,000 traversed the Detroit region. The book *A Fluid Frontier: Slavery, Resistance, and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland* tells this joint American and Canadian story.*



Any efforts to better use Hart Plaza to generate revenue should keep significant public gathering space and better link Campus Martius, Woodward Avenue Promenade and Esplanade, and Spirit of Detroit Plaza. This photo, looking toward the Detroit River from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments offices, shows the viewshed depicted by the blue cone in the map above.

The map illustrates the panel's thoughts on enhancing the Detroit riverfront. The green dashed line represents a potential area that could be designated as a national monument. The entire border area could also be designated as a world heritage site by UNESCO. The blue cone represents the area the panel believes should be better unified.

Revitalize the Riverfront: America's Gateway to Freedom and Detroit River National Monument

The panel is very impressed by the efforts to revitalize the riverfront and strongly supports this effort. As a long-term implementation strategy, the panel recommends pursuing national monument designation through the National Park Service to provide federal funding opportunities for long-term maintenance obligations at the park. This would celebrate the international nature of the Detroit River as a gateway to freedom as the last stop on the Underground Railroad, as an entry place for thousands of immigrants, and as a center of workers' and labor rights. This would build on the extensive work already being laid for the designation of the Detroit River as a UNESCO world heritage site by the National Park Services' Network to Freedom efforts.

An example of this strategy is being successfully deployed in Pullman Park in Chicago, where the National Park Service funds capital, maintenance, and park operations, but the conservancy retains local control of the space. Another example is Fort Monroe National Monument in Hampton, Virginia, which was listed through the Antiquities Act of 1906.

The panel believes this is a significant opportunity for the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy to offset future operating and maintenance costs while acknowledging the importance of this river.



MICHAEL BROWN/ULI

Conclusion

THE CITY OF DETROIT HAS A LOT OF STRONG BONES in its parks and open space system. The city has signature parks like Campus Martius, Beacon Park, the RiverWalk, and Belle Isle where the city convenes for celebratory events; beautiful neighborhood and regional parks like Ella Fitzgerald Park, Clark Park, Jayne-Lasky Park, and Palmer Park, which residents frequent for recreation, exercise, or neighborhood-based gatherings; and greenways such as the Dequindre Cut that serve unique mobility and recreational needs of the community. And the city has a number of exciting signature efforts in the works, such as the Joe Louis Greenway, the West Riverfront Park/Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park, the Joseph Campau Greenway, and the Iron Belle Trail, all of which are worthwhile and exciting endeavors at various stages of planning and implementation. All of this combines to create an energetic vision for a robust and exciting park system that exemplifies the tangible and intangible characteristics that make great public spaces.

Ultimately, the panel believes that investing in people—particularly its longtime residents—should remain the main focus of park and open space investments, and through that lens the city of Detroit should adopt a goal of becoming a best-in-class public park system. This will lead to enhanced economic revitalization and Detroit serving as a global model for equitable development.

The panel has identified strategies for improving structure, stabilizing costs, and maximizing investment outcomes, and the panel believes that implementation of those strategies will make a significant difference in outcomes and longevity of resources. Even more important, the

panel witnessed this community's emotional connection to its park system. Stakeholders across the board—from residents to government personnel and from the business community to nonprofits—conveyed a sincere appreciation for strong public spaces. No doubt exists that high-quality parks and open spaces are part of Detroiters' value system. It is refreshing that the panel was commissioned for this scope of work and it signals to the panel that the leadership of Detroit understands its people, values their input, and wishes to reinforce synergies that already exist between native Detroiters and those newer and future residents. Now, it is up to those that commissioned this panel to ensure these strategies are implemented.

About the Panel

April Anderson Lamoureux

Panel Chair
Boston, Massachusetts

Lamoureux is president of Anderson Strategic Advisors, a Boston-area economic development and government relations firm that specializes in forging productive relationships between business and government. She has expertise in shaping public policy and putting government programs to work in real-world scenarios, and she has been a leading voice in economic development in Massachusetts for two decades.

With extensive government experience, Lamoureux served as Governor Deval Patrick's assistant secretary for economic development, regulatory ombudsman, and state permitting ombudsman; as Governor Mitt Romney's chief of staff for business development; and in other policy roles in the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives. She has worked with cities and towns for 20 years and has strong relationships with municipal governments across the commonwealth of Massachusetts. Lamoureux also served as public affairs director and director of the Center for Urban Entrepreneurship at the Pioneer Institute, a Boston-based think tank, and she remains involved with policy-making organizations in Massachusetts.

Lamoureux provides her clients with expert advice in the areas of navigating government regulations, building economic development strategy, accessing infrastructure financing tools and business incentive programs, developing public/private partnerships, and managing public affairs and government relations. She represents business before governments at the local and state levels and has successfully helped her clients secure millions of dollars in infrastructure financing and business incentives, and save countless hours navigating government hurdles and red tape.

She is a member of the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) and currently chairs the ICSC Infrastructure Task Force. As a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), she sits as an expert panelist for ULI's national Advisory Services panels throughout the United States and was recognized as ULI's 2016 Rising Star for her

work with Advisory Services. She sits on the Beth Israel Deaconess-Milton Hospital Board of Overseers and is an elected member of the Planning Board and Town Meeting in Milton, Massachusetts. She has served as a judge for the Pioneer Institute's nationally recognized Better Government Competition, and she is a member of the National Association of Industrial Office Properties. Lamoureux holds a BA in political science from the University of Massachusetts.

Neelay Bhatt

Indianapolis, Indiana

Bhatt's career on five continents includes Disney, the Super Bowl, and the Olympics, besides several years of consulting, public speaking, and training. TEDx, the global platform for ideas, describes him as a business and communications visionary, and his service on the National Recreation and Park Association's board of directors is committed to ensuring that "no child is left indoors." Most recently, he was chosen by the *Indianapolis Business Journal* as one of Indy's 40 under 40.

He is an alumnus of the Harvard Kennedy School and number-one ranked sports management program at Ohio University. Besides delivering multiple TEDx talks and coaching TEDx speakers, his keynotes and presentations on trends in parks and recreation, magical customer service, and the art of storytelling have benefited executives, professionals, startups, and students from North America to China and from Europe to New Zealand.

As the principal at Pros Consulting Inc. (headquartered in Indianapolis), he has led 130-plus strategic and master planning, sports facility development, customer service training, and marketing and branding projects in agencies including Los Angeles County, San Jose, Chicago Park District, Indianapolis, and the Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission in Prince George's County. These projects in agencies have recommended facility development and infrastructure improvements totaling over \$2 billion and are helping to shape a better vision for parks, recreation, and sports all over the world.

Michael Brown

Silver Spring, Maryland

Brown, certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners, supervises a multidisciplinary team producing comprehensive land use plans and implementation documents such as design guidelines, streetscape manuals, and placemaking guides, all to shape the built environment of Montgomery County, Maryland. His projects with the Montgomery County Planning Department range from visionary concepts to detailed site plan review and approval. With the county's mix of urban, suburban, and rural landscapes, he has worked on a range of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, mixed-use, and transportation projects at varying degrees of scale. With over 15 years of experience and passion at the intersection of architecture, urban design, community building, and real estate development, Brown manages collaboration among the many stakeholders with each assignment to deliver solutions balanced between the practical and the aspirational.

He is active with ULI, having participated in a variety of programs including Urban Plan for Public Officials, real estate instruction courses, and the Rose Center for Public Leadership. In 2016, he graduated from ULI Washington's Regional Land Use Leadership Institute. He has served on ULI panels for the 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, D.C., focusing on accessibility to the proposed elevated public park from established communities on both sides of the Anacostia River, and a panel for Montbello, Denver, Colorado, helping identify strategies to create a community gathering place and provide access to fresh food.

A certified planner, Brown is immediate past president of the American Planning Association National Capital Area Chapter and sits on the board of directors for Leadership Montgomery, an organization that educates, inspires, convenes, and connects leaders to advance Montgomery County. He is a member of Lambda Alpha International George Washington Chapter, an honorary association of professionals in land use and development, and was recently appointed to the advisory committee for the Urban Studies & Planning Program at the University of Maryland, College Park. He holds a master's degree in urban planning and policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago and an undergraduate degree in architecture from Hampton University in Virginia.

Savlan Hauser

Oakland, California

Hauser brings more than a decade of experience in urban design and development in Mexico City and the San Francisco Bay Area to her role as executive director of the Jack London PBID—Oakland's largest and newest Business Improvement District (BID), encompassing 1,400 parcels, 500 businesses, 3,500 residents, and 83 city blocks, with stakeholders ranging from regional transit agencies to individual homeowners. She also serves as chair of the Oakland BID Alliance, an advocacy group representing the 11 Business Improvement and Community Benefit Districts in Oakland.

Before her role in Oakland, Hauser worked in Mexico City, focusing on urban design and green building with Javier Sanchez Arquitectos in Mexico City from 2007 to 2008, where she led the renovation of a historic city park and design of various bus rapid-transit station area projects. From 2009 to 2011, Hauser worked as architectural studio director for artist Jan Hendrix, implementing large-scale artworks for public- and private-sector clients internationally. Returning to the Bay Area in 2012, Hauser worked on two major multifaceted Area Specific Plans as member of a consultant team to the city of Oakland, then worked with institutional public-sector and religious clients in site disposition and development feasibility studies as an independent consultant. She has also served as a Berkeley City Council appointed member of the Zoning Adjustments Board, a quasi-judicial body responsible for approving development projects of all scales within the city of Berkeley.

She holds a degree in architecture from the University of California, Berkeley, is a LEED Accredited Professional, and ULI's Chamberlin Public Sector Leader Fellow 2017–2019.

Stephany Lin

New York, New York

Lin joined U3 Advisors in September 2016, bringing experience in nonprofit development and urban planning. At U3, her projects have ranged from broad economic and neighborhood development strategies to site-specific real estate analysis. She has worked with foundations such as the Kresge Foundation in Detroit; universities including Washington University in St. Louis, New York Institute of Technology, and Drew University; and nonprofits such as Christ Church and Astor Services for Children and Families in New York City.

Before joining U3 Advisors, Lin served as the executive director of Schools That Can Newark, where she led the growth of a network of district, charter, and independent schools in Newark, New Jersey. She facilitated programming to allow schools to collaborate and share best practices in their classrooms, while also conducting fundraising and outreach initiatives.

Lin holds a BA and a master's in urban planning from Harvard University. During graduate school, she was a member of the winning team of the 2016 Urban Land Institute Hines Student Competition. She also interned at the NYC Department of City Planning Waterfront Division and participated in projects ranging from advising a new young adult homeless shelter in Harvard Square to researching trends in healthy cities.

Ilana Lipsett

Oakland, California

Lipsett is passionate about building community in urban settings and providing space and tools for people to reimagine their cities. She creates spaces and experiences that bring together people from vastly different backgrounds, using culture as a means for bridging divides and human-centered design as a guiding principle for economic development and urban planning. She works with city governments, community groups, small businesses, real estate developers, and international aid organizations to create spaces and experiences to bring together people, using art, culture, dialog, public input, and economic opportunity as a means for bridging divides.

She cofounded Just People, a consultancy that works to connect resources—money, time, people, media—to impactful projects around the globe. Her projects follow the lead—and needs—of locals to create the conditions that enable people to explore, design, experiment, learn, and create. Just People has active projects in refugee camps and disinvested communities in Bangladesh and in Uganda, where they are helping local organizations build cultural infrastructure and community gathering spaces, whether for arts and cultural happenings, educational purposes, or innovative project incubation.

Lipsett previously cofounded freespace (www.freespace.io), an initiative to temporarily transform vacant spaces into community cultural and arts hubs, and was recognized by the Obama White House as a “Champion of Change” for Civic Innovation. She has also worked with cities and property owners to provide cultural programming and temporary activations in both vacant buildings and public

spaces. She created and ran the social impact department of a Bay Area real estate firm, focusing on philanthropy, community engagement, affordable housing solutions, and space activation.

She has previously worked as the political director of a labor union, was a community organizer for workers' rights, and has led numerous advocacy and political campaigns for social and environmental justice, and she sits on the board of Code Tenderloin, a nonprofit dedicated to providing job training and placement for those with the highest barriers to employment.

Steve Qualkinbush

Northbrook, Illinois

Qualkinbush is an experienced developer, landlord, and investor in commercial real estate. All projects completed by Q2 follow a refined and vigorous process that delivers the best locations at the lowest cost.

He has more than 30 years of experience in adding value to properties for clients and for his own account. He has initiated and managed development projects totaling more than \$500 million. The projects range from capital costs exceeding \$100 million to less than \$1 million, but no matter how many commas the budget holds, every project follows a tried and true essential process allowing for innovation and new ideas. Qualkinbush believes the value of a project is created very early in the process. He worked in government, consulted with cities and towns, was employed for nine years with Homart Development Co., a large development company, and has worked for himself since 1993.

Qualkinbush graduated from Northwestern University's Kellogg School with a master's in management, has a master's in landscape architecture from the University of Illinois and a bachelor's from Purdue University.

Donald R. Schrotenboer

Fort Myers, Florida

Schrotenboer is president and chief executive officer of Private Equity Group, which has been directing equity investments in Florida for more than 30 years.

He is a member of the Advisory Council at Florida Gulf Coast University's Lutgert College of Business and was appointed by the Lee County Commission to the local planning agency and Conservation 20/20 Committee. Schrotenboer has nearly 20 years of experience in sustainable land development and strategic asset management. Before joining Private Equity Group, he served as president of Alico Land Development and vice president and director of development for Ave Maria and Ave Maria University.

He is member of the Urban Land Institute, Florida Land Council, Association of Florida Community Developers, Real Estate Investment Society, and the Lee County Business Economic Task Force. Schrotenboer has a BA in hotel, motel, and restaurant management from Siena Heights University.

Alex Feldman

Strategic Adviser
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Feldman is a vice president at U3 Advisors. Passionate about cities, he has led a number of the firm's engagements providing expertise in strategic planning, economic development, campus edge planning, and real estate strategy since joining U3 Advisors in 2009. Feldman has served as a project manager for U3 Advisor's work in Midtown Detroit. Working with key philanthropic and civic stakeholders and three major anchor institutions, U3 created and implemented a successful "anchor strategy" that leveraged the demand of the institutions into economic development and placemaking initiatives. As part of that effort, Feldman helped lead the design and implementation of the \$5 million Live Midtown employee housing incentive program, which has attracted over 1,200 new residents to Midtown Detroit; the Source Detroit local procurement program; and the formation of the community development organization, Midtown Detroit Inc.

He has translated the lessons from Detroit into another successful anchor strategy in Memphis, Tennessee. Since 2014, Feldman has worked with local philanthropy and the leadership from eight anchor institutions in the Memphis Medical District to design and implement strategies and initiatives aimed at increasing the economic and physical vitality of the district. This included the formation and launch of the nonprofit community development organization, the Memphis Medical District Collaborative, which is working with its anchor partners to strengthen the communities in the Memphis Medical District so that they are more livable, vibrant, and safe.

His other engagements with U3 across the United States and abroad include the vision and implementation plan for a new binational university in Chula Vista, California; neighborhood regeneration strategies for the American University of Beirut and the American University of Cairo; a community engagement framework for the new University of Texas Rio Grande Valley; and the implementation of key campus edge developments for the Terrapin Development Company at the University of Maryland, College Park. Before joining U3 Advisors, he worked with KPF Architects in London and New York City on large-scale master planning and design projects in Moscow, Abu Dhabi, and Hong Kong.

Feldman has been recognized by Next City as a 2015 Vanguard and by Leadership Philadelphia as a 2016 "Connector and Keeper." He earned his BA in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. He received a master's degree in city design and social science from the London School of Economics, as well as a master's in architecture and a certificate in real estate development from the University of Pennsylvania.



Urban Land Institute
2001 L Street, NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036-4948
uli.org