



A Placemaking Strategy for

Belle Isle

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introduction

Belle Isle is arguably one of the premier urban parks in the United States and as important a Detroit institution as the DIA, Orchestra Hall, or Eastern Market. Unfortunately decades of disinvestment have led to significant decline of this historically important landscape.

Despite these challenges, Belle Isle is still a place that attracts a large, diverse, and loyal clientele who continue to use and love the park. Moreover, in 2011, the four major Belle Isle park advocacy groups – the Belle Isle Women’s Committee, the Belle Isle Botanical Society, Friends of Belle Isle, and Friends of Belle Isle Aquarium—merged to form a new park conservancy organization, the Belle Isle Conservancy (BIC). Under its new president, the Conservancy is now in a position to begin to tackle the short and long term revitalization of this historic and community treasure.

In January 2013, Project for Public Spaces (PPS) received a grant from The Kresge Foundation to work with the Belle Isle Conservancy to develop “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” short-term improvements to the park for the summer of 2013. In addition, the goal of this project was to develop a longer-term Placemaking strategy to guide the incremental improvement of the park – place by place – in the context of the park’s 2006 master plan. This work focused on three places in Belle Isle

(Sunset Point, the Beach, and the Aquarium and Conservatory) that could become enhanced destinations with a wealth of possible activities, and serve as models for potential improvements to the larger park--whether the park continues to be managed by the City of Detroit, or if the management is transferred to the state’s Department of Natural Resources.

Through a series of workshops, focus groups, research studies, and a summer programming project called Belle Isle Summer Saturdays (BLISS), PPS and BIC examined the current state of the park, and explored and tested strategies for using Placemaking to strengthen and improve Belle Isle for all visitors. This report outlines how BIC can use incremental steps to strengthen strategic destinations in the park and to build linkages between the park, the riverfront, adjacent neighborhoods, and other public destinations in Detroit.

This strategy for Belle Isle is one piece of a citywide initiative to use Placemaking to bring new life and vitality to Detroit’s neighborhoods. While Placemaking has been most visible in 2013 in downtown Detroit, Placemaking improvements will be scaling up in Detroit neighborhoods as part of the initial implementation steps for the *Detroit Future City* plan. It is exciting that a coalition of public and private partners recognize that investment in public space is a key component to creating a safer, more livable, and more prosperous Detroit and are taking immediate steps to implement new projects across the city. Belle Isle can and should be an integral part of this citywide trend.



planning process

The planning process for this project was multi-faceted:

2010 Survey

In the summer and fall months of 2010, PPS worked with the Belle Isle Women's Committee, Friends of Belle Isle, the Belle Isle Botanical Society, Friends of the Belle Isle Aquarium (the four volunteer groups that were then in the process of forming the Belle Isle Conservancy) and the city's Belle Isle Park Manager, to find out more information about how people use the park and how it could be improved.

Two separate surveys were conducted; one for park users (onsite) and one for remote individuals and organizational supporters (remote), and a total of 2,237 surveys were collected. The surveys identified a number of opportunities for improvement. In general, both onsite and remote groups felt there wasn't enough "to do" for all potential users (kids, teens, or adults) in the park. They also hoped improvements would make the park cleaner, safer, and more accessible for pedestrians, bikes, and cars.

The survey also found a deep sense of connection between park users and the park. PPS's 2010 report stated:

The surveys tell the story of a great sense of ownership, pride, history and connectedness to Belle Isle. This is the kind of dedication parks around the US can only dream of.

Riverfront and Belle Isle Workshop



In February 2013, PPS conducted a Placemaking workshop with Detroit riverfront stakeholders including BIC, the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, and the Port Authority. Participants used PPS' "Power of Ten" approach to assess major destinations in downtown Detroit, along the riverfront, and on Belle Isle. After identifying these major destinations, participants discussed possible connections between them including ferry service, transit, and improved bicycle infrastructure. Opportunities for programming partnerships and cross-promotion of events between the Riverfront Conservancy and the Belle Isle Conservancy were also examined.

Belle Isle Focus Groups and Workshop



Following up on the initial Riverfront workshop, PPS and BIC conducted a series of focus groups and a Placemaking workshop with various stakeholders in March 2013. Five separate focus group meetings were held for the following categories: Arts and Culture, Active Recreation and Environment, Jefferson Corridor and Villages, Park Volunteers, and Riverfront partners.

The focus groups revealed a wealth of enthusiasm amongst BIC's partners for improving park facilities, expanding programming, and strengthening connections. The sessions provided a number of new programming ideas and helped to expand BIC's awareness of possible partnerships and opportunities.

The Placemaking workshop was held at the Detroit Yacht Club in Belle Isle Park, and included site visits to 3 destinations in the park: Sunset Point, the Beach, and the Aquarium and Conservatory. The workshop was attended by close to twenty stakeholders and included BIC board members, Emerging Patrons Council members, and Detroit Recreation Department staff.

The workshop helped these partners identify salient issues and collaboratively develop recommendations to address them. It began with a presentation by PPS showing examples of great urban parks and successful Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (LQC) interventions. After the presentation, participants split into 3 groups led by PPS staff to visit and evaluate Sunset Point, the Beach, and the Aquarium and Conservatory.

PPS used its Place Performance Evaluation "Game" to facilitate this process. This short, user friendly exercise helped synthesize PPS observation and analysis techniques for people to use along with their own common sense and intuition for a quick, but productive site assessment. The game gave participants an opportunity to observe on-site conditions for themselves and understand the dynamics and needs of selected sites within a structured context, allowing them to see very quickly the good and bad qualities of the area. At the close of the workshop, each group presented their findings and suggestions for the site they visited. (See Chapter 4)

Picnic Shelter Survey



Belle Isle's 20 picnic shelters are heavily used by Detroiters and visitors during the summer season. In particular many family reunions, church groups, and organizations have long held traditions about hosting their gatherings at a particular shelter on a particular date each summer.

In order to gather important feedback from these regular park users, PPS and BIC prepared a short survey that the Detroit Recreation Department distributed to group representatives making Picnic Shelter reservations for the summer 2013 season. (See findings in Appendix)

Belle Isle Summer Saturdays (BLISS)



Based on the focus groups and the Placemaking workshop, PPS began developing initial ideas for LQC improvements to the park for summer 2013. The strategy that offered the most potential given BIC's current resources was a series of special event days designed to showcase existing destinations in the park and test a variety of expanded programming options.

The program, Belle Isle Summer Saturdays (BLISS), consisted of two main components:

1. A branded promotional campaign to communicate the untapped potential of Belle Isle to Detroiters and visitors.
2. Expanded programming on four Saturdays (6/22, 7/20, 8/17, 9/21) that highlighted existing destinations and augmented current programs and activities in the park

PPS identified the need for a temporary staff person or consultant to manage BLISS and contracted with Tatiana Grant of Infused PR. Tatiana oversaw all elements of the BLISS program with regular input and guidance from BIC and PPS. PPS developed a logo and graphic identity for BLISS that was used consistently across digital and print media.

Press releases, printed materials, signage, a dedicated web page, and social media posts were used to promote the four days of expanded programming and raise awareness about Belle Isle destinations that are open every Saturday.

On each BLISS day, BIC deployed special BLISS signage across the island to alert park visitors to the expanded programming including 16' tall swooper flags and directional and informational signage. (See more on BLISS in Chapter 2)



chapter 1: what makes a great park?



The principles of placemaking

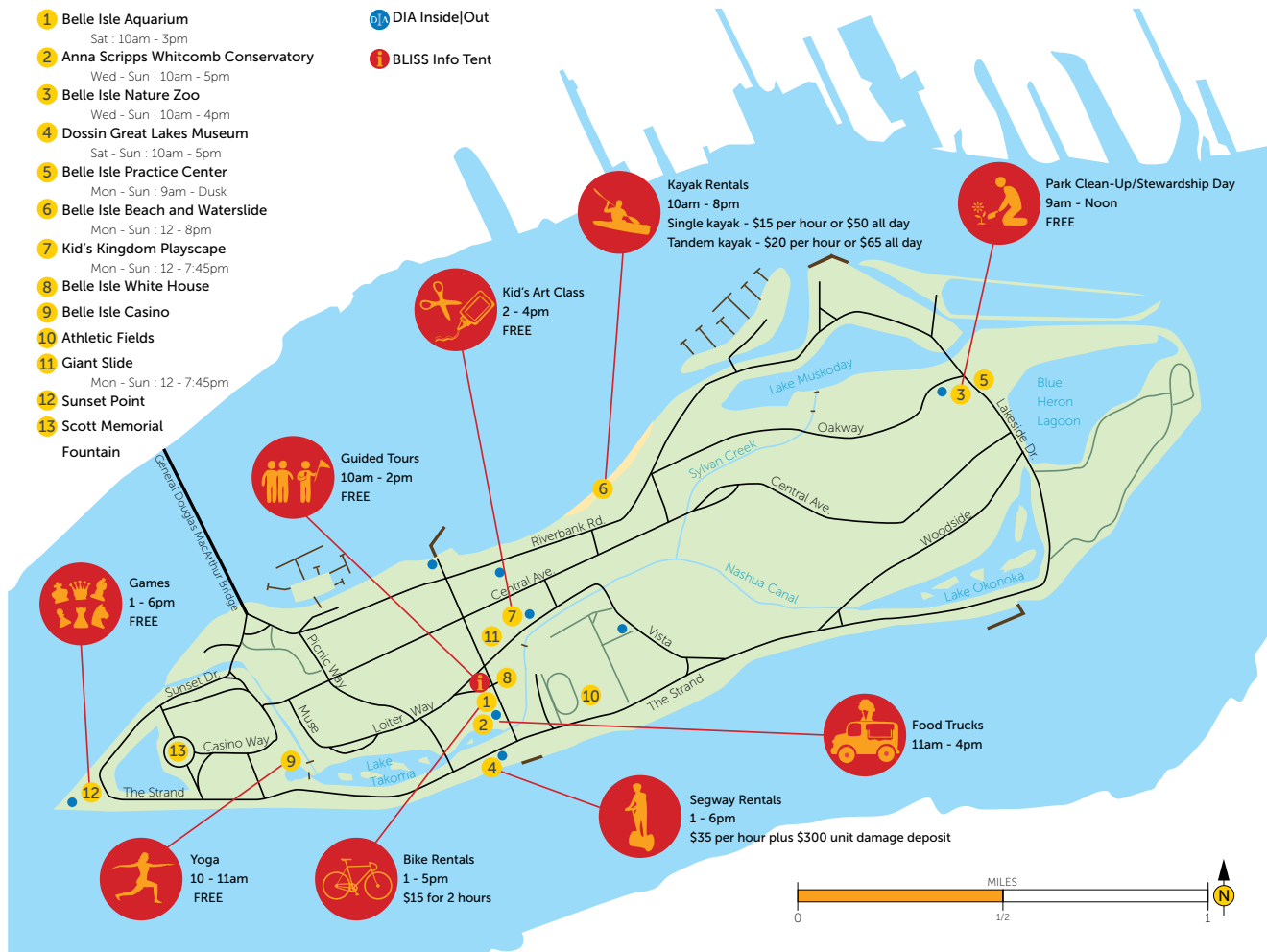
In studying how public spaces are used, PPS has distilled the qualities that make a great park into the following four basic ingredients:

Activities and Uses: A great park has a range of destinations and activities that attract a variety of community members, for exchanges, companionship, play or relaxation. The activities keep the park lively, inviting and safe at all times of day.

Access and Linkage: A great park is easy to get to and see in. Linkages and open sight lines should connect different destinations and help create a people-friendly environment that encourages interaction among neighbors and people of different ages. Institutions on the edges of the park should be open to it, provide easy access, but also have their own activities and be linked to one another through walkways and signage.

Comfort and Image: Great parks are comfortable to use and help give a neighborhood a unique identity. Amenities, such as benches, picnic tables, shade trees, play equipment, places offering food, bike racks, and bulletin boards, well-designed and in the right place, are essential in any good park. Carefully designed and well-maintained amenities can have a powerful effect – they signal to people that someone took special care in making a place welcoming and comfortable.

Sociability: A sociable place is one where people want to go to observe the passing scene, meet friends and interact with a wide range of people that are different from themselves. Large parks can easily contain sociable places, where park users come for a variety of reasons, where information and skills are shared among residents informally, where young and old interact comfortably and in a meaningful way.



BLISS Activities Map: July 20, 2013.

Placemaking through the Power of Ten

To be successful, all cities need great places and destinations. They need the places that give them an identity and character, that make them interesting and dynamic, that help attract new residents, visitors, businesses and investment. But they also simply need interesting places for people to go. A place might be a main street, downtown square, a park, a natural area, or a riverfront. Cities of any size should have at least ten great destinations where people want to be.

The Power of Ten is a concept to think about places, with the idea that the layering of multiple uses, activities and features creates the richness that all great places have, and

an exponential synergy that breeds and complements new and existing ones. Thus, 10 things to do in each district of Belle Isle will create a critical mass that will attract people and create a real destination.

A successful destination has sub-places within it. For example, a riverfront needs at least ten sub-places: a café, a children's play area, a place to fish or to experience the water, a place to sit and somewhere to meet friends. Within each of the sub-places, there could be ten things to do. Some of these activities could be very simple – sit comfortably, enjoy a great view, watch other people, observe wildlife, experience nature, learn about the place and its history, eat, play, exercise, etc. Cumulatively, these activities, places, and destinations make a great park.

Applying the principles of the Power of Ten, Belle Isle should have at least 10 great destinations within it. Then those destinations should be connected to form a compelling park experience, where even a full day is not enough time to explore and experience all that Belle Isle has to offer. Within each destination, at least 10 things to do should be clustered along with the amenities that support these activities to create a synergistic, vital place to go.

For example, a visitor center in a park is a destination that people will go to. A visitor center with a café, a bicycle rental shop, an outdoor classroom, and a natural play area for kids triangulates compatible uses and brings more people together and extends their stay in a meaningful way. Thus a family with kids may go to the visitor center for information and stay just a few minutes. But they could spend an entire afternoon at the triangulated visitor center and use it as an anchor of family members' individual explorations of the park.

Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper



"Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" (LQC) describes a moderate cost, high-impact framework for short-term, experimental intervention in the park. LQC experiments allow for lower risk, and lower cost improvements to become the launching pad for larger, long-term work. These experiments capitalize on the creative energy of the community to generate new uses, test ideas, and build a new image for places in transition.

Demonstration projects are essential to the LQC approach and draw upon local assets to transform under-utilized spaces into exciting laboratories that reward citizens with authentic places and provide a boost to areas in need. These projects provide a powerful means of quickly translating a vision into physical reality. Short-term interventions can take many forms requiring varying degrees of time, money and effort, but the spectrum of interventions aims to build lasting change.

This is an incremental strategy that can start with small steps. For example, an under-utilized park could attract people with seasonal programming and special events. At the same time comfortable, well designed light amenities such as movable chairs, tables, hammocks, fire pits, flags and banners could be used to spruce up the place and give it a new image. The park becomes a "stage" that could then host events and incubate new activities.

By championing use over capital intensive construction, short-term interventions help determine the public's interest in specific activities and can boost long-term transformative campaigns. Simply put, a great program of events can put a place on the map. When people have positive experiences during the experimental phase, they are likely to return for more, and return regularly, after larger capital improvements have taken place.



chapter 2. issues and opportunities



- Link Belle Isle to the Detroit Riverfront
- Make Destinations in the Park more Multi-Purpose
- Expand Park Programming
- Connect Belle Isle Destinations
- Implement Short-Term Physical Improvements as a strategy to implement the Long Term Belle Isle Master Plan
- Create a "Park Center"

Link Belle Isle to the Detroit Riverfront



Issues

In February 2013, the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and the Belle Isle Conservancy co-hosted a visioning workshop about creating better connections between public destinations on the Riverfront, including Belle Isle, and in downtown Detroit. The workshop began with a presentation by PPS of great waterfronts from around the world and the principles that help to create them, including the concept of the Power of Ten. The presentation was followed by a brainstorming session. Participants discussed ideas for better connecting key places on the river, in downtown, and on Belle Isle as parts of a system of waterfront attractions.

For the workshop, a large map was created (see Figure). This was the first planning exercise where Belle Isle and the Riverfront – along with nearby neighborhoods – were shown together on a single map. The visual and physical connections participants saw on the map revealed many opportunities

for collaboration, some of which were implemented during the summer of 2013.

Opportunities

Participants identified opportunities for linkages as well as for programs, sponsorships, economic development, and activities that would enhance physical, thematic and programmatic connections between existing destinations, tying them into a system of public spaces. These included:

- Develop a shared schedule of events and programs for the riverfront, downtown, and Belle Isle by compiling information from web sites, various calendars, and social media into one spot;
- Connect partners for joint marketing and communications of programs;
- Provide comprehensive info on what is available – web, social media, e-blast
- Improve signage connecting the Riverfront and Belle Isle
- Make multi-modal connections including ferry service, improved bicycle and pedestrian access, and shuttle services linked to the Rosa Parks Transit Center
- Work together to frame new waterfront development that can enhance and activate public spaces
- Implement “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Improvements” in public spaces and enhance each of the ten destinations identified at the workshop.

Enthusiasm from this workshop led the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy (DRC) to launch a summer 2013 Placemaking initiative including expanded programming and additional amenities along the River Walk between GM Plaza and Rivard Plaza.

These changes were popular additions to the amenities on the Riverfront and added to the “buzz” about how things were really happening downtown during the summer of 2013. The DRC has also supported BIC efforts through donation of tent space at their annual River Days festival and distribution of BIC promotional materials.

A detailed summary of the meeting is provided in the Appendix .

Make Destinations in the Park more Multi-Purpose



Issues

Belle Isle is already a major destination in Detroit, but it lacks some of the key ingredients that can make it a truly great destination that works well for the widest variety of residents and visitors. Belle Isle currently functions as a group of disparate, more or less single-use destinations. Visitors tend to drive directly to the place they know, park, visit, and leave. Families and groups using picnic shelters rarely explore the rest of the park, and in fact bring

other activities (music groups, play equipment, even their own port-a-potties) so they can be very self-sufficient and not truly interact with other groups in the park. Locals who use the ring road for daily exercise seem to stick to a set route.

Opportunities

If future improvements are focused on creating destinations within the park -- sub-places with triangulated activities within those destinations, and strengthening connections between destinations -- Belle Isle can realize its potential as one of the world's great urban parks.

Participants in the March Placemaking workshop identified a wealth of possible activities (active and passive use, food, comfort stations, kids activities, culture) that should be added to each of the three destinations they studied: Sunset Point, the Beach, and the Aquarium and Conservatory. These activities, along with supportive amenities, could transform each place into a “multi-use destination.” These recommendations are presented in the next chapter.

In addition to diversifying the activities of park destinations, more can be done to create shared activity zones between multiple picnic shelters. Given the demand for shelters, adding new shelters in closer (but not too close) proximity to existing shelters with a common playground would encourage interaction and contacts between family and reunion groups.

Finally, connections between destinations are crucial for providing access and bringing use to the entire park. Links within the park, and links to nearby destinations, can define and enhance the character of the entire area, making transitions between places and activities feel natural and seamless.

Expand Park Programming



Issues

While regular programming occurs in the park – ranging from the Grand Prix at one extreme to family reunion band concerts on the other – it is not coordinated and the financial condition of the city (and the limited capacity of the small but dedicated Belle Isle park staff) has exacerbated the situation. Groups that want to bring income generating uses to the park, like kayak rentals, face a daunting city bureaucratic process that has kept them essentially out of the park.

Through Belle Isle Summer Saturdays (BLISS), PPS and BIC were able to test a wide variety of new programming and give visitors a taste of how a denser layering of activity in Belle Isle will change the park. The first season of BLISS was a very fruitful experiment for BIC. By focusing their efforts on four days, BIC staff and the Summer Event Manager kept the event manageable, which allowed them to change and improve programming on each successive Saturday.

Through planning meetings and regular contact with the Summer Event Manager, BIC and the Detroit Recreation Department (DRD) established a solid partnership around producing the BLISS events. In order to streamline the approval and permitting process, DRD considered all BLISS programming as components of a single event. This approach allowed for much needed flexibility as the BIC team experimented with different activities and locations throughout the summer.

2013 BLISS programming included:

- BLISS Info Tent with free maps and info (BIC)
- Bicycle Rental (Wheelhouse Detroit)
- Segway Rental
- Guided Bus Tours (Detroit Bus Company and D:Hive)
- Free Yoga classes
- Park Stewardship (BIC)
- Kayak and Paddleboard Rental (Detroit River Sports)
- Food Trucks
- Free Kids Art Classes (Arts and Scraps)
- Adult Art Classes (Paint and Pour)
- Horseback Riding (Detroit Horse Company)
- Free Game Rentals (BIC)
- Beer Garden (Tashmoo Biergarten)

The success of individual programming varied. Detroit River Sports used social media effectively to promote their programming, and delivered a consistent experience to their customers. During the August 17 event, kayak rentals were so popular that there was a 1hr wait all afternoon. Free Kids Art Classes (Arts and Scraps) were very popular as well, mainly because they were staged in the

Playscape area where children were already congregating (proof of the Power of 10 and triangulation concepts). In contrast, free game rentals at Sunset Point and The Aquarium and Conservatory were lightly used. Based on the response from one BLISS event to the next, PPS and BIC modified and adjusted the programming to make it more effective.

Opportunities

Belle Isle Summer Saturdays has the potential to grow into a very robust suite of expanded programming in the park for Summer 2014. Depending on fundraising and capacity, BIC should consider increasing the number of BLISS days to twice a month (1st and 3rd Saturdays) and explore programming that could occur every Saturday in partnership with park institutions.

2014 Expanded BLISS Programming

Park Ambassadors and Park Stewardship

Expanded BLISS programming will require more staff and volunteers. Tapping into BIC's large network of potential volunteers and creating a Park Ambassador program will provide the needed human power to make the program a success.

In 2013 BLISS included "Park Stewardship" days, where volunteers help to eradicate invasive species from the forested eastern area of the park. These efforts should continue in 2014 as part of the Park Ambassador program

BLISS Info Tent

This is perhaps the most important element of the BLISS programming. The BLISS Info Tent is open all day during BLISS days with staff handing out free maps of

BLISS activities, answering questions, and managing nearby activities.

For 2014 the tent should continue to be located at the Aquarium and Conservatory. BIC should consider staffing the tent every Saturday, and making it the home base for the Park Ambassador program. Park Ambassadors at the Info Tent can help manage Placemaking efforts at the Aquarium and Conservatory such as tours, contests, rentals, and events. Park Ambassadors could also manage a set of expanded amenities for the area such as movable furniture and free game rentals.

Bicycle Rental

BIC offered Bicycle Rental on the July and August BLISS days in 2013. In July, Wheelhouse Detroit managed the concession, and in August BIC staff managed it, with bikes from the Detroit Bike Shop. Although there is a large potential user base for bike rentals, there were limited rentals on both days.

To succeed in 2014 bicycle rental needs to be well located, heavily promoted, and consistent. The rental vendor needs to tap into the Detroit cycling community in multiple ways, ideally the location should become the hub for all cyclists on the island, whether they are renting or not. BIC should meet with potential vendors by early 2014 to explore how to plan for a successful season.

Park Tours

Guided Bus Tours were moderately successful in 2013 and worth continuing in 2014. In addition, BIC should work with partners to establish a schedule of walking and biking tours of the park. These tours should start and end at the BLISS info

tent, where there is the best potential for attracting participants.

Bike tours should be arranged in partnership with the Bike Rental vendor. Walking tours can be arranged with a variety of partners depending on the focus of the tour. D:Hive provided excellent tour guides in 2013, but new partnerships should be explored as well.

Shuttle Service

BIC explored the idea of testing on island shuttle service during BLISS days in 2013, but decided there was insufficient budget and staff capacity to make it a success.

BIC should meet with potential partners in early 2014 to revisit the idea of shuttle service in the park during BLISS days. Rock Ventures is a potential partner as the fleet of Opportunity Detroit branded shuttle buses they use for employees on weekdays may be available for weekend use in the park.

To succeed, shuttle service will need to be well planned and consistent, with clear temporary signage designating stops and schedule. BIC should explore partnering with a local University engineering or design department as designing and planning the shuttle service and temporary signage could be a possible student project.

Adult Classes and Group Activities

Yoga and Painting classes were tested in 2013 and were both successful. Yoga classes were held close to the Casino, which is a beautiful location, but too far from other BLISS activities and destinations to triangulate. The painting class was held in the Conservatory gardens.

The conservatory gardens are an excellent venue for both these programs and other classes and group activities, but there is currently significant competition for the space with wedding groups. BIC should work with DRD in early 2014 to secure regular blocks of time in the Conservatory gardens for BLISS programming.

Watersports Rental and Beach Gear Rental

The Kayak and Paddleboard rental was the most consistently popular BLISS program in 2013. Detroit River Sports (DRS) managed the concession professionally and did an excellent job of promoting it.

BIC should work with DRS and DRD to investigate the possibility of expanding the watersports rental in 2014 beyond the BLISS days to Saturdays and Sundays for the entire summer season. BIC should also explore expanding the beach area concession to include "Beach Gear" such as umbrellas, chairs, towels, and games.

Food Trucks

The need for more food options in the park has been a consistent suggestion in surveys, focus groups, and workshops. Food Trucks were successful both at the Aquarium and Conservatory and at the Beach during BLISS 2013.

BIC should work with DRD to expand the food truck program for 2014 to include a rotating selection of trucks both at the Aquarium and Conservatory and at the Beach. In addition, BIC should explore deploying expanded amenities (movable tables and chairs, picnic tables, umbrellas) in proximity to the food truck locations to create sub-places at these destinations.

A “Food Truck Rally” special event where a large number of trucks are in the park at a single location should also be considered for one of the 2014 BLISS days.

Children’s Programs

The free art class program run by Arts and Scraps was a very successful part of the July 2013 BLISS day. BIC should expand children’s programming in 2014 to include a variety of classes, activities, and performances. The location should remain at the Playscape where there is a built in audience of children playing every Saturday.

Events at Sunset Point

2013 BLISS programming at Sunset Point was limited to free game rentals during the July BLISS day. Lawn games were popular, but the lack of triangulation to other activities prompted BIC to move the game rentals to the info tent for August and September.

Sunset Point is an excellent potential location for performances, especially in the evening when the audience can enjoy both the performance and the beautiful sunset views of the Detroit river and skyline. BIC should explore potential partnerships with local arts organizations such as the DSO to create a calendar of performances at Sunset Point for 2014.

Sunset Point could also be a venue for other events, such as the neighborhood barbecue cook-off competition that has been discussed with Detroit Harmonie. BIC should continue to explore the cook-off and other opportunities for programming this unique area of the park.

Free Game Rentals

BIC experimented with free game rentals at Sunset Point and the Aquarium and Conservatory in 2013. To succeed this program should be deployed in conjunction with other activities and amenities, such as seating, food trucks, children’s programs, or performances.

Food and Drink Events

For the final September 2013 BLISS day, BIC partnered with Tashmoo, the popular pop-up beer garden that began on a site in the Villages in 2011. The event was held on the grounds of the Belle Isle White House. BIC tried to stage the event in the Conservatory gardens, which would have been ideal, but there were previous reservations for wedding groups.

The event was a huge success with hundreds of visitors enjoying beer, food, games, the setting, and each others’ company. The concession was structured so that after paying a management fee to Tashmoo, BIC realized the profits of the endeavor, which were more than three thousand dollars.

The success of the Tashmoo event proves the demand for a high quality food and drink vendor on Belle Isle exists. BIC should explore making Tashmoo or similar events a regular part of 2014 BLISS programming with an eye to establishing a seasonal outdoor café in the Aquarium and Conservatory district.

Connect Belle Isle Destinations



Issues

A major factor in this use pattern is that automobiles are the dominant mode of transportation in the park. With city cut backs, transit service no longer serves Belle Isle so most people must drive in order to get there and to move between destinations in the park. Circling the park by automobile – on the park's very wide roads – is actually one of the most popular current uses of the park. Belle Isle – at almost 1000 acres – is huge. Creating better opportunities for walking, cycling, and transit is an essential step towards connecting existing destinations in the park.

The current signage systems in the park are inadequate:

- The design of the existing street signs, white lettering on light gray background, makes them very difficult to read at any distance.
- Existing park map signs are outdated and lack necessary information such as operating hours of park institutions.

- Display locations for special event information are limited and can be obscured by temporary signage installed by family reunion groups.
- No adequate wayfinding system for pedestrians and cyclists exists.

Opportunities

Important changes need to be made throughout the park to make it less auto-oriented and facilitate walking and biking:

- Provide regular shuttle service between major park destinations, potentially linking to the Detroit Riverfront and transit system.
- Explore altering traffic flow, closing redundant roads and roads through wilderness area to car traffic, and converting portions of the ring road to two-way traffic. (See 2006 Master Plan)
- Improve signage and way finding for all transportation modes.
- Enhance pedestrian safety improvements at key crossings.
- Introduce park wide 20mph speed limit, expanded safety signage, and traffic calming improvements.
- Create a stronger park "center" (Aquarium and Conservatory District) that can serve as a focal point for the entire park and a starting point for visitors who are new to the park.
- Establish a bike rental station.
- Expand ferry service to Belle Isle, working with the Port Authority, which already provides ferry service for the Grand Prix.

Implement Short-Term Physical Improvements as a strategy to implement the Long Term Belle Isle Master Plan



Issues

The City of Detroit commissioned a Master Plan for Belle Isle Park in 1996. Hamilton Anderson and Associates led the planning process and results were published in 2000, with an updated version published in 2006. While the Detroit city council has never formally adopted this Master Plan, many of the findings in the Master Plan are still valid today and relate to the Placemaking strategy, including recommendations to:

- Restore and improve picnic facilities and comfort stations.
- Improve facilities for programmed and unprogrammed active recreation.
- Expand cultural and educational facilities.
- Restore shoreline, lakes and canals, woodlands, and wildlife habitats

- Shift building uses to those most compatible with the type, architectural significance, location or prominence of the structure.
- Address roadway and parking capacity and improve traffic patterns.
- Shift emphasis to pedestrian and bicycle ways.
- Develop and maintain alternate means of transportation such as a tram or shuttle.
- Create Site Furnishing Design Guidelines.
- Establish a park-wide signage and way finding system.

In the absence of major funding to implement the master plan, however, there is a danger that efforts for park revitalization could stall unless an incremental approach with targeted investments is used to revitalize the park over the next 10-15 years.

Opportunities

As illustrated in the following chapter, all three project destinations can benefit greatly from an expanded set of amenities. As the summer season is when the park is most heavily used, BIC should begin work now to develop an expanded amenities program for Sunset Point, the Beach, and the Aquarium and Conservatory for summer 2014 – within the context of the long term master plan.

It is recommended that more specific plans be developed for each park destination, however, based on the experience of short-term implementation and programming. For example, the master plan calls for a very formal garden on Sunset Point, whereas the Placemaking workshop participants focused more on potential programming and uses that would not be accommodated within such a formal design.

Each destination will require a different approach; some amenities may be deployed for the entire summer season, while others may be used only during special programming days or during hours when a nearby institution is open. BIC and DRD will need to establish a management and maintenance plan for the amenities with clear roles and responsibilities.

Create a “Park Center”



Issues

The 2006 Master Plan also proposes a significant set of changes to the central area of the park to establish a “Cultural Campus” combining existing institutions (Aquarium, Conservatory, Dossin Museum) with new attractions.

This area has the potential to become a significant destination in the park, but currently lacks both the basic facilities and expanded amenities and programming necessary to operate as the “Park Center.”

Opportunities

The Master Plan recommends a capital intensive redesign of the entire district, but much can be done in the short term to begin to transform the Aquarium and Conservatory district into the Park Center.

During the 2013 BLISS days, the main information tent, tour bus stop, food trucks, bike rentals, game rentals, adult art class, horse back rides, and beer garden events were located in this area – in part, because the Aquarium has become a major Saturday destination in the park. This proved to be a successful strategy and we recommend BIC continue to emphasize this area as the central hub for BLISS activities.

There is a huge opportunity to focus Placemaking activities and future BLISS programming in this location, more ideas are presented in Chapter 4.

chapter 3: opportunities for the three focus sites



Based on the Placemaking Workshop hosted in March, 2013, a wide variety of recommendations have been developed to enhance three destinations on Belle Isle. This process could be expanded to other destinations in the park in the future.



Sunset Point

The park's westernmost area is known as Sunset Point. This area has received recent improvements completed in 2009: a new comfort station, additional sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, picnic tables, benches, and grills. Sunset Point provides the most plentiful and best quality first-come first-serve picnic facilities in the park.

Sunset Point has several assets that make it a promising location for short and medium term interventions. The picnic areas and comfort station provide the necessary facilities for a multi-hour visit. The excellent views of the Detroit River and downtown skyline make the open grass area at the westernmost tip of Sunset Point an ideal venue for special events and regular programming.

[There are, however, several current challenges to staging programming and implementing expanded amenities at Sunset Point. Although the area is accessible by the ring road, and some parking is available, it currently feels somewhat disconnected from other areas of activity in the park. The signage and wayfinding improvements recommended in this report would help to connect Sunset Point as would improvements to bike, pedestrian, and transit access.]

Events and programming could include:

- Concerts and performances
- Outdoor film screenings
- A large-scale temporary art installation
- Community events (neighborhood barbecue cook-off, etc.)

Belle Isle plays an essential role as a public arena for Detroit residents and visitors to celebrate the city they love. High quality programming at Sunset Point has the potential to create life-long memories of that connection. Imagine, for example, the Detroit Symphony performing its annual Fourth of July concerts at Sunset Point on Belle Isle, with the Detroit skyline behind it

Suggestions from the March workshop

Programming:

- Yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates
- Kite Flying (Instruction and performance)
- Park Ambassador with cart of board games and/or Lawn games (Giant chess and checkers, Hopscotch, Bocce, Croquet, Corn Hole, etc.)
- Buskers (roving musicians) at sunset

Amenities:

- Paint existing picnic tables in multiple bright colors
- Heavy moveable chairs (need weight because Sunset Point is windy)
- Temporary stages for performances

Signage, Decoration, Display, Public Art:

- Colorful flags, US + Canadian Flags, or temporary art
- Use existing security light pole as a May pole
- Telescopes with signs identifying locations on river
- Sign to encourage a Sunset Point Photo Op (Sign could say Belle Isle, could point out direction of Canada, etc.)
- A major public art "feature" on the point itself

Connections and Commerce:

- Bike Rickshaws to ferry visitors from parking lots to Sunset Point
- Encourage Belle Isle Bike Tours and to stop here
- Pizza or other food delivery in park would be very useful for this location

2013 BLISS Programming

- Free Game Rentals



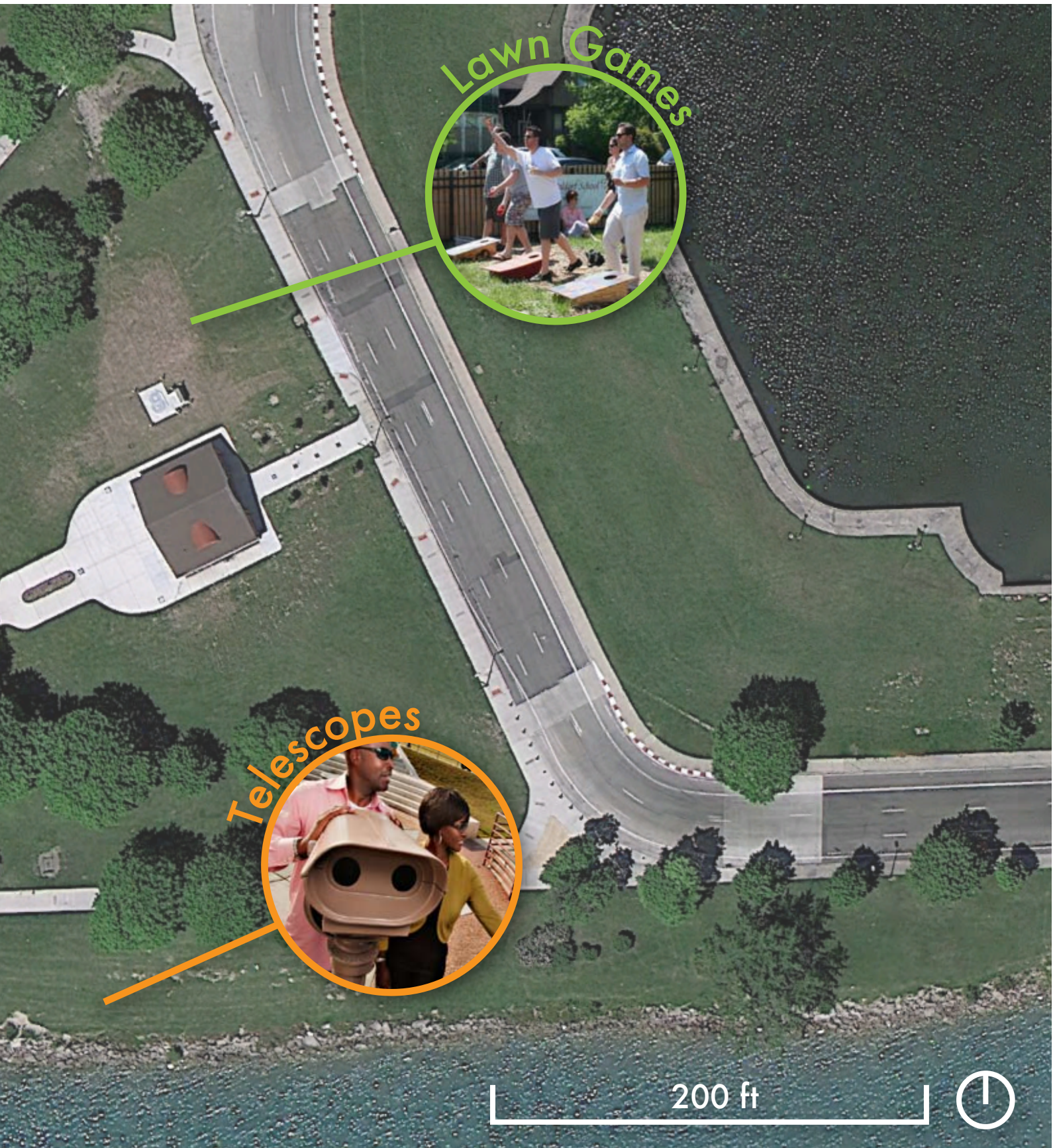
Photo Op

Concerts

Public Art

2014 Proposals

2013 BLISS Activities





Beach

The Belle Isle Beach is a half-mile long swimming area and is the only public beach in Detroit. Beach facilities currently include a Bath House with changing areas and restrooms, water slide, and parking lot. Current programming consists of the Jamz On the Beach music series on summer Sunday evenings from 6-8pm.

The size and quality of the beach landscape has been degraded by erosion and would benefit greatly from rehabilitation including new sand, and anti-erosion measures. The coarse quality of the current beach sand is not suitable for activities such as beach volleyball and other beach sports.

A traffic calming and wayfinding plan is needed for Riverbank Drive beginning at the Detroit Yacht Club entrance and continuing past the main beach facilities to Vista Dr. Reduced speed limit, warning signs, and highly visible pedestrian crossing zones are needed to:

- Establish safe pedestrian access to the beach and boat launch area from the parking lot just west of the DYC
- Establish safe pedestrian access to main beach facilities from parking lot on Oakway Trail

The 2006 Master Plan recommends an extensive boardwalk for this area. In the short-term BIC should explore the possibility of a smaller pedestrian path or boardwalk between the main beach facilities and the boat launch area. The kayak rental concession at the boat launch in 2013 proved that this area can be activated; the next step is to create a stronger link between the boat launch and the main beach area. A path or boardwalk could also create opportunities for additional amenities such as picnic tables along its length.

A safer zone for pedestrians around the beach would create the opportunity for a walkable beach district that includes the main beach facilities, the former golf clubhouse and course (now used for disc golf), the golf course comfort station (possible food kiosk), nearby picnic areas, and the public boat launch.

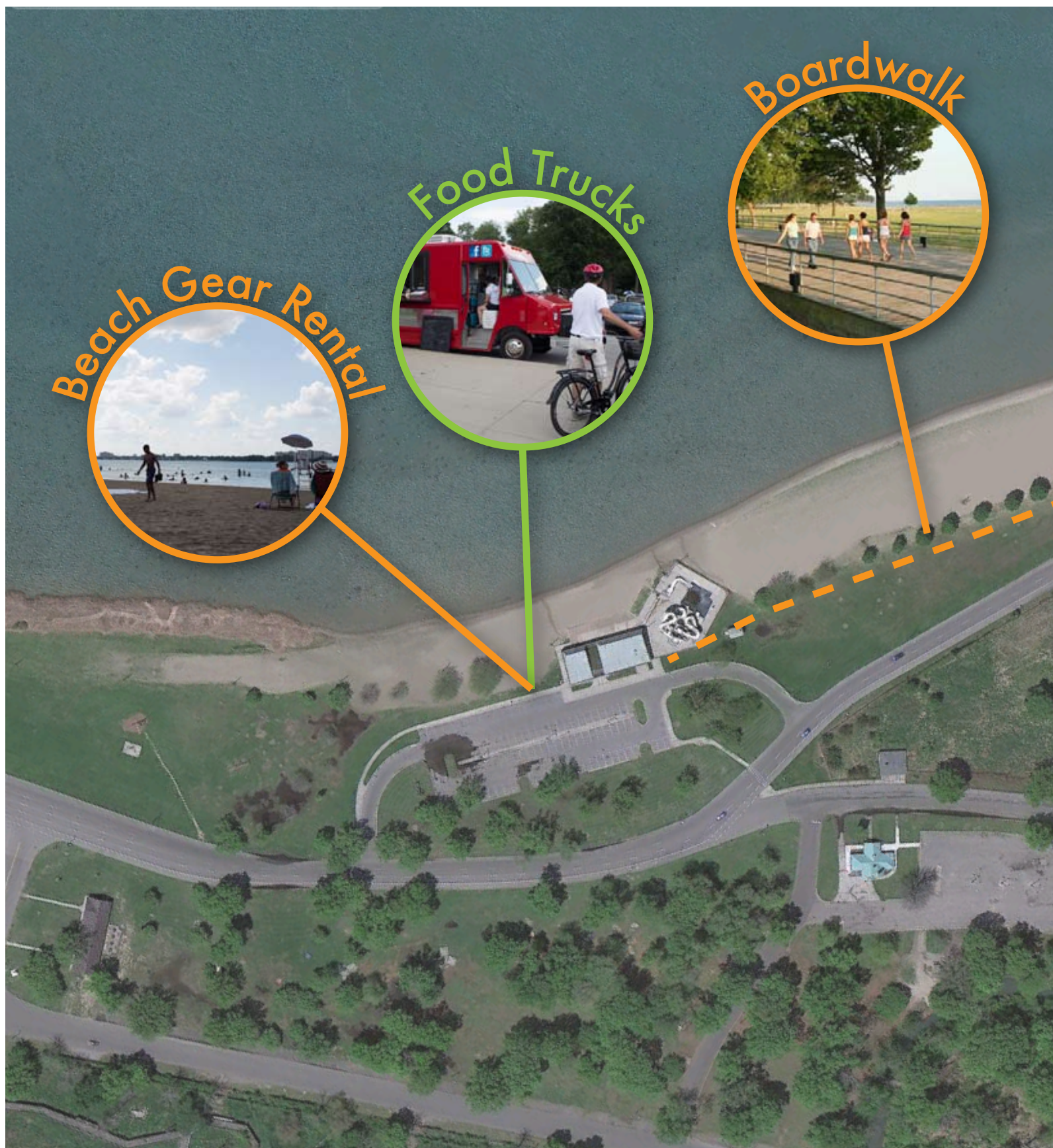
Despite its maintenance and landscape issues, the Belle Isle Beach and Waterslide is a hugely popular family destination. The area is well suited for investment in amenities and facilities that will support an expanded number of uses.

Suggestions from the March workshop

- Beach Gear Rentals (Umbrellas, Chairs, Towels, Games)
- Watersports Rentals (Kayaks, Paddleboards, Inflatables)
- Bike Rental
- Beach Volleyball, Badminton, Bocce
- Children's activities
- Food Kiosk and/or Food Trucks
- Art Installation on existing telephone poles
- Expand existing music programming
- Additional seating and tables
- Improved signage
- Sand Sculpture Competition
- Address goose droppings problem and invasive species
- Additional Showers, Foot Rinses, Play Fountains

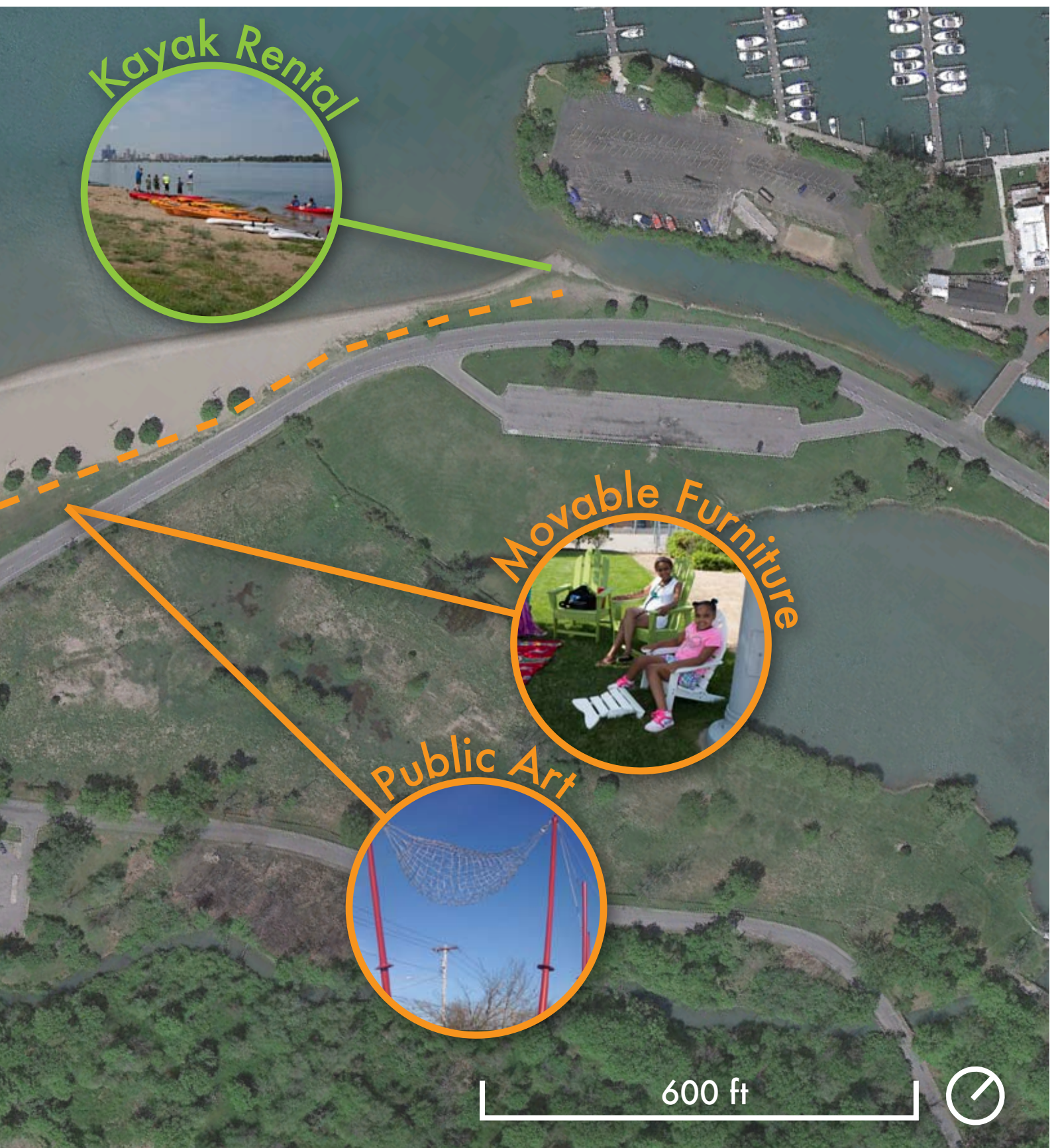
2013 BLISS Programming

- Kayak and Paddleboard Rentals (Detroit River Sports)
- Food Trucks



2014 Proposals

2013 BLISS Activities





Aquarium and Conservatory

This area includes the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory, Conservatory Gardens, and the Belle Isle Aquarium. The Aquarium and Conservatory District is already functioning as a major destination in the park and is well suited for a variety of short and medium term improvements.

As proposed in the 2006 Master Plan, this area of the park has the potential to become the park's "Cultural Campus." It also has the potential to function as a point for park visitors who arrive by car to transition to other modes of transportation.

The key to improvements in this district is the concept of triangulation. Visitors currently enjoy the exhibits at the Aquarium and Conservatory, but there is nothing else happening in the area to encourage them to stay longer. Many simply arrive, visit the institutions, and leave the park once they are done.

Several short-term improvements could begin to expand the potential of this area. Movable furniture should be deployed close to both the Aquarium entrance and the Conservatory entrance. The existing small number of benches are in constant use on weekend days and inadequate for the number of visitors.

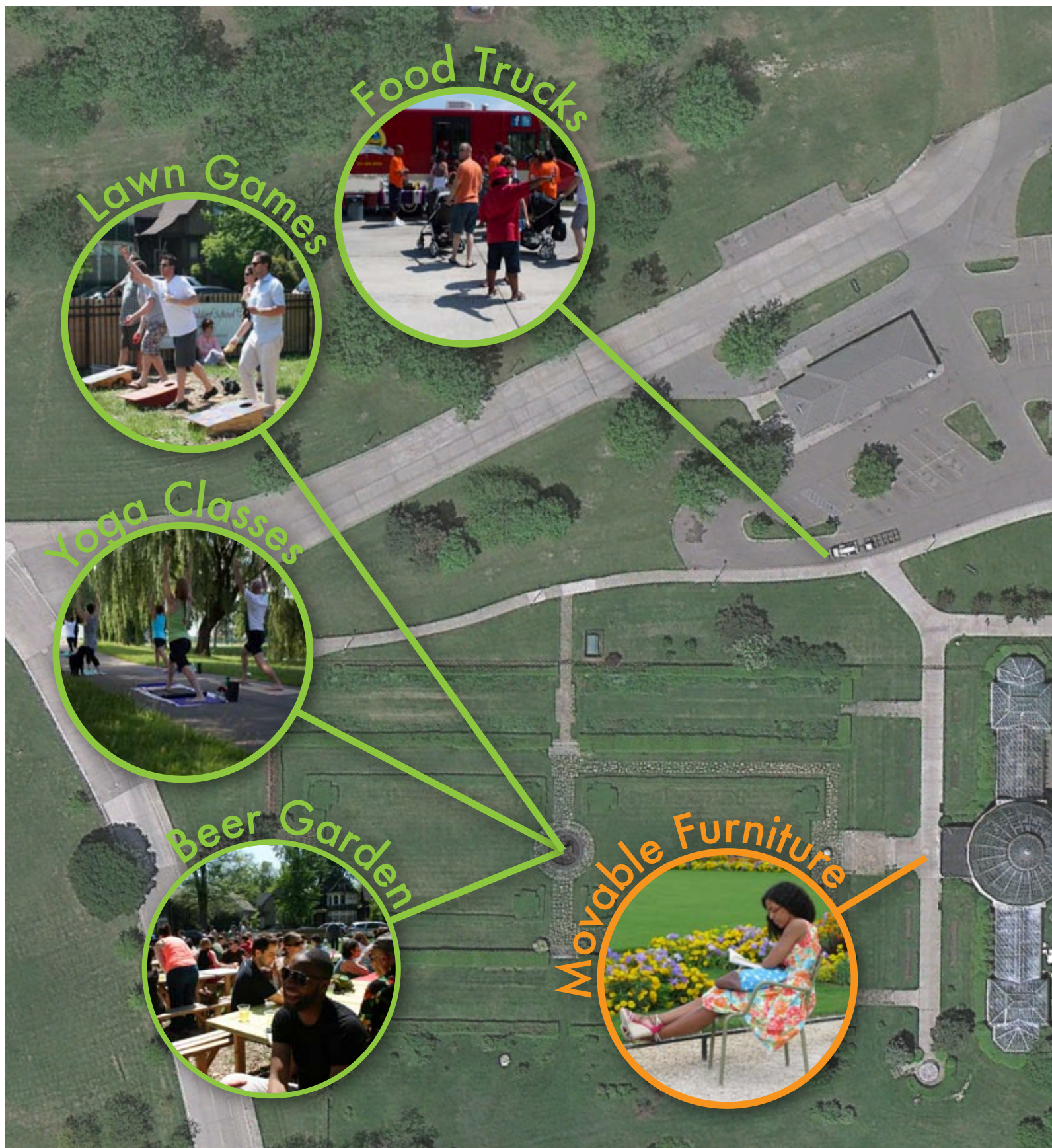
The addition of movable furniture would allow visitors to rest and enjoy the surroundings before and after visiting the institutions. Staff from the Aquarium and Conservatory could manage these amenities and lock and store them when the institutions are closed. A regular food truck concession or a seasonal temporary food cart would complement the movable furniture nicely and begin to transform the area into a place for longer visits.

Suggestions from the March workshop

- Movable and/or permanent furniture around the Aquarium entrance
- Aquatic themed art installation around the Aquarium entrance
- Improved Park Map and Information Kiosk
- Greenhouse style café along eastern edge of Aquarium
- Movable furniture around Conservatory entrance
- Gardening events in the Conservatory gardens
- Yoga classes in Conservatory gardens
- Capital improvements to buildings and grounds
- Bike Rental Concession
- Food Truck concession

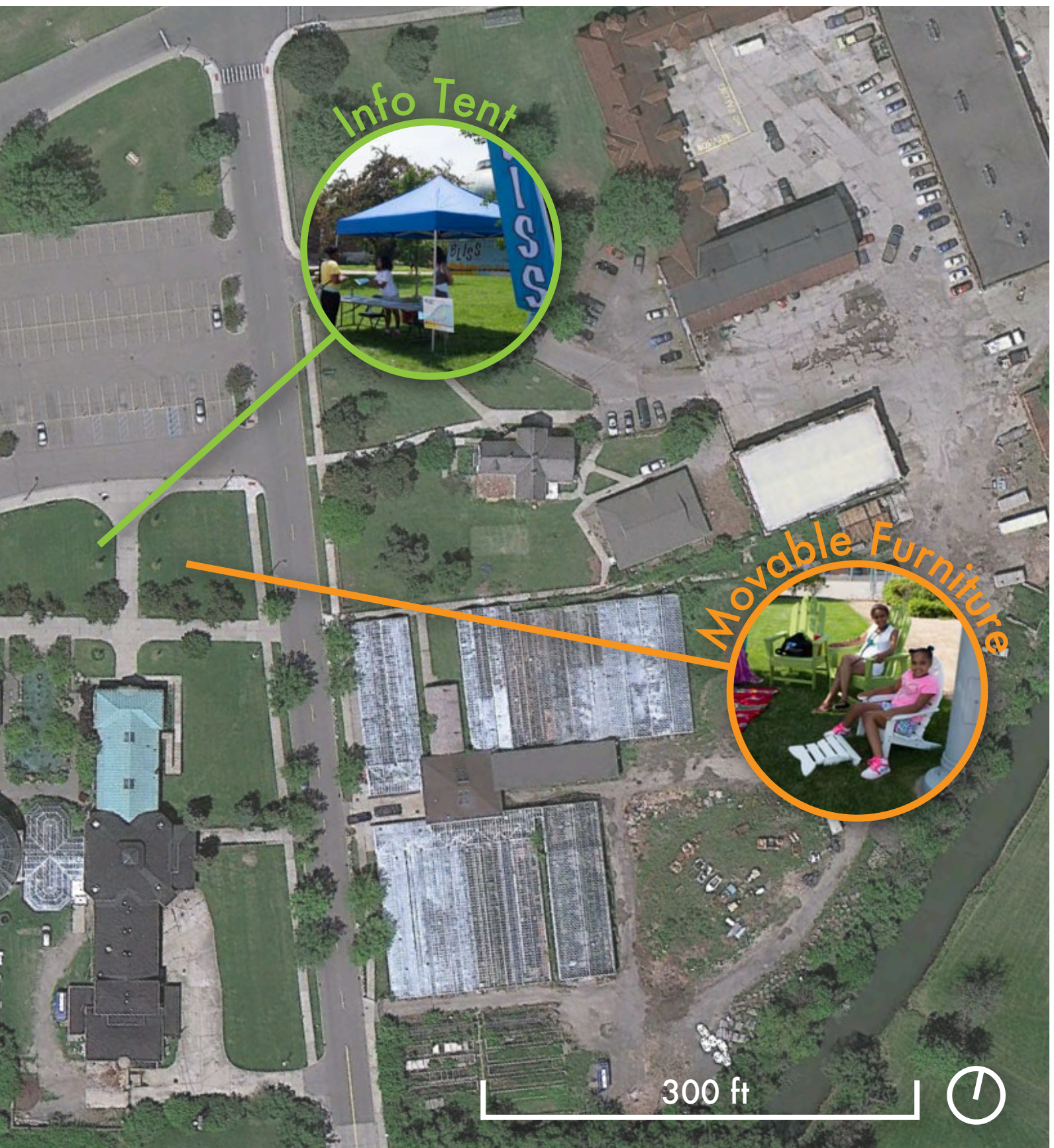
2013 BLISS Programming

- BLISS Info Tent
- Bike Rentals
- Game Rentals
- Tashmoo Beer Garden
- Food Trucks



2014 Proposals

2013 BLISS Activities





chapter 4: next steps



To advance a Placemaking strategy for Belle Isle will require actions in the following three areas:

- Organization & Partnerships
- Small-scale improvements
- Park programming and management

Organization & Partnerships

Establish Placemaking within BIC's mission

The mission of the Belle Isle Conservancy is to protect, preserve, restore and enhance the natural environment, historic structures and unique character of Belle Isle as a public park for the enjoyment of all – now and forever.

As the Belle Isle Conservancy continues to grow as an organization, it should put Placemaking at the center of its mission. All of the important and needed long-term capital projects that the Conservancy hopes to fund can be approached through the lens of Placemaking.

By putting Placemaking at the center of each project, BIC can craft proposals that address all aspects of what is needed to create layered, lively, inviting, and safe destinations throughout the park.

Continue Belle Isle Partnerships with the Riverfront Conservancy, Jefferson Corridor, and The Villages

A great deal of investment is taking place – and will take place -- around Belle Isle. BIC should continue to strategically partner with local development groups such as JEBA, The Villages CDC, and the Riverfront Conservancy. This area has been identified in the Detroit Future City plan as one where investments are a high priority to stabilize and revitalize the neighborhood which sits at Belle Isle's front door. BIC has already established partnerships with these groups, and continued partnering will open new opportunities for collaborations and funding that enable BIC to link Belle Isle Placemaking to neighborhood and Riverfront Placemaking. With regard to these partners, Belle Isle should definitely not be an island!

Small-scale Improvements

Make small scale improvements a core component of BIC's capital campaign

As a next step, short-term improvement plans – amenities, design features, signage, as well as elements that support programming -- should be made for all three key destinations presented in this report and where necessary, more outreach and Placemaking workshops conducted. All three areas are highly visible, important places in the park that many people already use.

Central Park was not transformed overnight; the Central Park Conservancy focused initially on high visibility locations before expanding their reach. Fundraising for implementation of these short-term improvements should then be integrated into the broader campaign. This approach should be expanded for other targeted areas.

While Belle Isle has an enormous backlog of capital needs, by implementing small scale amenities and improvements, BIC can make its capital support efforts more visible to the public which will help mobilize support for more costly investments. Another Placemaking principle – The Power of 10 – shows how important it is to cluster improvements, as was done by the Women's Committee for Sunset Point.

Mobilize families, organizations, and non-profits that use picnic shelters

Picnic facility users are some of Belle Isle Park's most devoted visitors. BIC should explore ways to engage them in the improvement of park facilities through an "Adopt-A-Shelter" program where groups can contribute directly to the upkeep and repair of their favorite picnic shelter.

Park Programming and Management

Expand BIC's role in park management.

BLISS has proven that a streamlined permit process facilitates programming of the park and the introduction of income generating activities. BIC should explore a master concession agreement with the City to oversee a comprehensive range of activities for which a fee may be charged (i.e., bike and kayak rentals, food trucks, admissions to the Aquarium, etc.), with the goal of creating a funding stream that can be put directly back into the management and maintenance of the park and its facilities. In the event that the park becomes part of the state system, a similar agreement should be explored with the Michigan Dept of Natural Resources. A master permit agreement for programming, as was done with BLISS, should become a standard agreement with the city or state as well.

Improve marketing and communications about activities and destinations in the park.

BIC needs to continue to expand their communications capacity across traditional media and social networks. The BIC website is in need of a refresh, and has the potential to become an important online destination for information about the park.

There are multiple opportunities to engage with Detroit residents through social media and raise awareness about the conservancy. A conservancy staff person should be trained in basic techniques to use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to expand the conservancy audience on social networks.

Expand BLISS and Hire a Full-Time Park Programming staff member

Programming should become a core piece of BIC's mission. In order to accomplish this BIC should create a full time position dedicated to programming. The right candidate will have event management, public relations, and volunteer management skills.

Fully Capture the Benefits of Belle Isle Volunteers as Park Ambassadors

Volunteers already keep Belle Isle going in many ways -- they even feed the fish in the Aquarium. Despite the hundreds of people that are involved in the park, they are virtually invisible to park visitors.

BIC should launch a Park Ambassador program as a way to further engage its volunteer base, and to develop a resource of available human power for BLISS programming and other initiatives. Park Ambassadors should receive training in the history of the park, its ecology, its current condition, and plans for the future. Ambassadors should be supplied with branded clothing (hats, shirts, jackets) to make them visible and approachable when they are volunteering in the park.

Conclusion

At PPS we often say that 80% of the success of a public space is management. While Belle Isle's capital needs cannot be ignored, Placemaking provides a tool and approach for the transformation of this Detroit treasure, step by step, place by place. In addition to providing focus for partnerships and engaging the broader community, Placemaking provides the foundation for the Belle Isle Conservancy to achieve visible and enduring change – not years from now, but now.



appendix



This word cloud is a visualization of word frequency given by using a weighted list for responses to Question 5: How could the pavilion(s), or park facilities adjacent to the pavilion(s), be improved in the future?

Belle Isle Picnic Pavilion Survey – Summary of Data Trends and Observations

Question 1: If you have a preferred pavilion or pavilions that you use on a regular basis, what is the name of the pavilion(s)?

- Pavilion 8 is the most popular (30% of respondents said either preferred 8, 8E or 8W). Potentially build or expand other pavilions to accommodate large groups (specifically requested by several people in subsequent questions).
- 5 Most Popular: 8 (30.1%), 7 (14.4%), 2 (13.7%), 1 (9.8%), 12 (8.5%).

Question 2: What type of group do you represent?

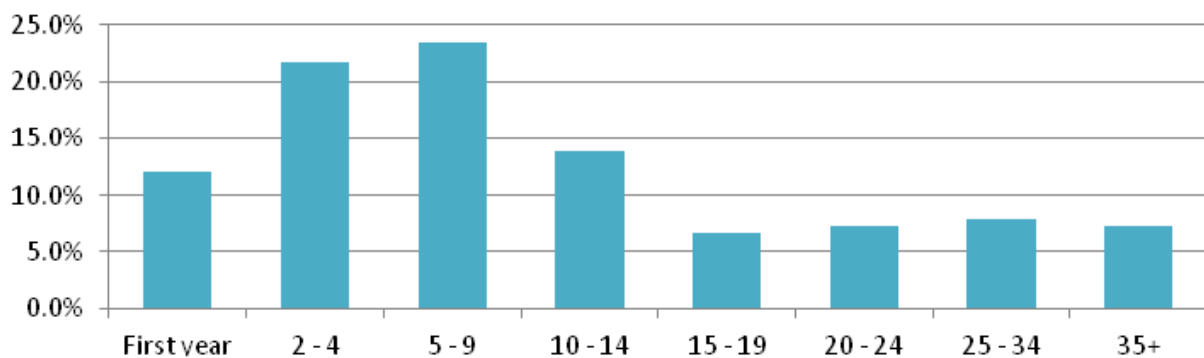
Family or friends group	80.1%	141
Non-profit organization	16.5%	29
For-profit company	3.4%	6
Other (please specify)		17
[Most of the "other" groups were churches]		

Question 3: When do you usually use the pavilion(s)? (Please be as specific as possible, such as "the third Saturday in July")

- July and August were the two most popular months (35% and 39%, respectively), followed by June (19%), May (6%) and September (1%).

Friday	6.0%	9
Saturday	53.0%	79
Sunday	19.5%	29
Weekend (either day)	10.1%	15
Weekday	0.7%	1
Holiday	4.0%	6
Any	11.4%	17

Question 4: For how many years has your group been using the pavilion(s)?

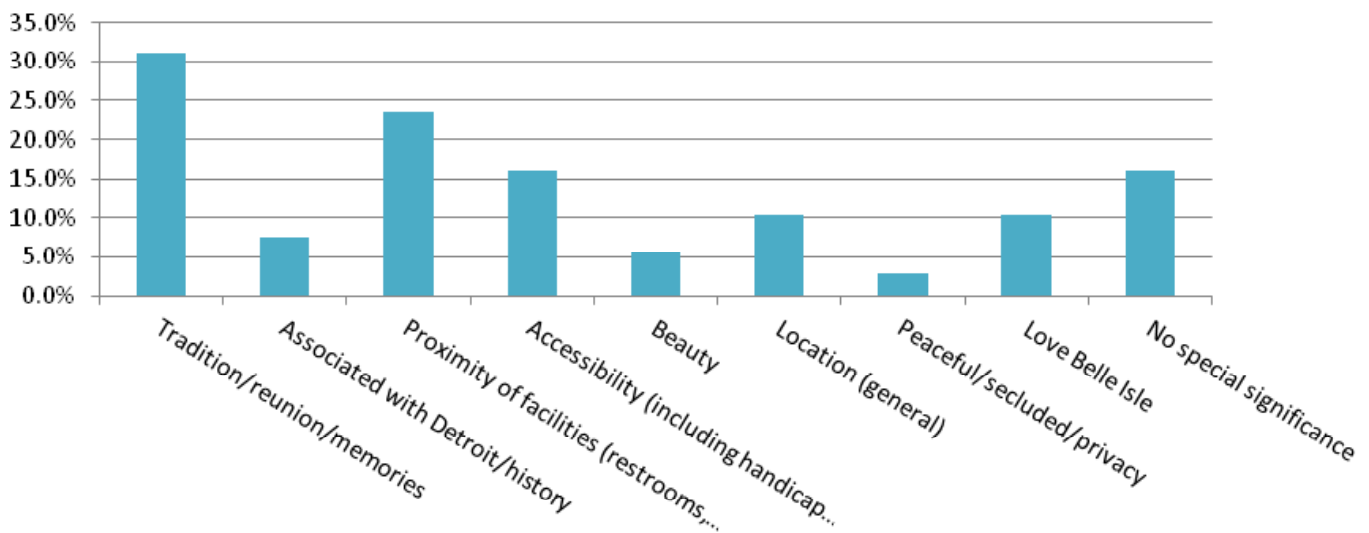


- 42.7% have been using the pavilion for over a decade
- 12 groups had been using the pavilions for over 35 years, including one group that stated they had been using the pavilions for 68 years

Question 5: How could the pavilion(s), or park facilities adjacent to the pavilion(s), be improved in the future?

- Restrooms were the most frequently cited facilities that could be improved (35% of those that answered the question). Common complaints were that the restrooms were unclean, closed, outdated or unmaintained, or were not close enough to the pavilions.
- General cleanliness of the facilities was also a common issue (32%), with several saying they arrived to find the pavilion had not been cleaned. One cause may be that there are not enough trash cans (10%) or that the existing trash cans are not emptied frequently enough (6%).
- Additional improvements respondents suggested included repainting facilities (18%), replacing or renovating the shelter structures (in particular, fixing the roof; 10%), adding or fixing the picnic tables (15 respondents, 12%), adding new grills or maintaining the existing ones (11%), cutting the grass (8%), improving walkways and parking access, providing more play-grounds/play space/activities, controlling pests (bees, bugs, and birds), and reforming the reservation process.

Question 6: What special significance does the pavilion have to your family or group?



- Many respondents to this question said the pavilion was significant to them for emotional/nostalgic reasons: it was a tradition to go there, it is the location of a reunion, and/or they have pleasant memories there (31%); others associated the pavilion and the park positively with Detroit or with family history (e.g. relatives' ashes spread there), said it could bring together groups from different areas, or simply stated they love Belle Isle. 40% said it was significant to them for pragmatic reasons—it was close to the restrooms, grills, electrical outlets, playgrounds, or other facilities and attractions (24%), or it was easy to find and access (16%).

Question 7: Would you like additional picnic pavilions added to the park?

- An overwhelming number of respondents to this question (92%) said they would like to see additional pavilions added. Only 7% said they do not.



Detroit Riverfront Power Of Ten

On February 6, 2013 the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and the Belle Isle Conservancy co-hosted a visioning workshop about creating better connections between public destinations on the Riverfront, including Belle Isle, and in downtown Detroit.

The workshop, made possible by the Kresge Foundation, was facilitated by Project for Public Spaces, and began with a presentation of great waterfronts from around the world and the principles that help to create them, including the concept of the Power of Ten. The presentation was followed by a brainstorming of ideas for better connecting key places on the river, in downtown and on Belle Isle as parts of a system of waterfront attractions.

Participants identified opportunities for linkages as well as for programs, sponsorships, economic and other activities that would enhance physical, thematic and programmatic linkages between existing destinations, tying them into a system of public spaces.

Below is a brief outline of the workshop discussion, along with proposed next steps, and proposed short-term, “ultra-light” interventions. Discussion topics include linking destinations, strengthening existing ones, and creating new destinations where needed.

LINKING DESTINATIONS

Connections should be made via wayfinding:

- Create an app for wayfinding and PLACEFINDING on the Riverfront and on Belle Isle
- Add signage throughout
 - » Directional
 - » Destination signage for the entire waterfront

- Create a website for a total riverfront experience including events and opportunities on Belle Isle, and downtown
 - » Integrate better existing web resources
 - » Get the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau involved
- Linkages
 - » De Quindre Cut – getting in and out of the cut at Eastern Market is really unclear and dangerous; new phase of the cut should solve the problem
 - » Highway 375 may be decommissioned – there is an ongoing public discussion about that – what could it be used for?
 - Could it be a canal, or a water feature?
- Linkages this summer
 - » The port has a grant to purchase ferries for runs to Canada
 - » Consider water taxi service from the port dock to Belle Isle for example with other stops along the riverfront, as well as stops to the west to Portofino restaurant for example, and to Gross Point area to the east
 - The ferry taxi ran for a weekend during the Grand Prix last year and was a huge success, it was fully booked
 - Ferry capacity is 60 -70 passengers, but port would consider bigger boats for 100 passengers if needed, bikes are allowed on board
 - Port is expecting large cruise ships this summer – tourists need somewhere to go quickly and easily

- » Expand bike rentals – provide bikes on Belle Isle too
- » Consider expanding bike share from Wayne State to the Riverfront to Belle Isle
- » Pursue the east-west trolley idea – proposed for Atwater
 - It should take people around downtown and the riverfront, but also go to Rosa Parks Transit center, Milliken Marina, Cruise Ship dock, etc.
 - Audiences – marina users, cruise tourists, transit users
 - Quicken Loans runs downtown shuttles on weekdays, maybe the same shuttles could be used on along the Riverfront on weekends. There may be a sponsorship opportunity here.
- » M1 Rail should eventually go to the river.

OVERALL PLANNING CONCEPTS

Numerous master plans exist for redevelopment of various parts of the riverfront, a number of high-end residential developments were announced before the recession, but no overall plan exists yet. Conversations are starting about creating a consistent plan.

- Use this workshop and other similar meetings for a collaborative conversation about the future of the riverfront as a whole – more meetings are needed.
- Develop re-development guidelines
 - » i.e. No residential at the ground floors facing the river and the public spaces.
 - » Establish a framework with interim steps leading up to long term plans.

ENHANCING EXISTING DESTINATIONS WITH PROGRAMS

- Bring a skate park with movable ramps to the Riverfront, maybe Belle Isle – ComePlay Detroit could help organize this
- Bring bike meet-ups to Belle Isle
- Bring a beach with activities in vacant lot(s) on the Riverfront – connect with the De Quindre Cut
 - » Alternative location for beach with floating pool at Port Authority dock
 - Lobster bake at the terrace by PA rental facility
- Beach volleyball courts for tournaments, at least 6 of them, on Belle Isle or Riverfront parking lots, or both
- Bring food options to the Riverfront – food trucks, seasonal cafes/restaurants, floating restaurant, carts & kiosks with terraces near the water
- Expand the music program at the GM Plaza summer stage
 - » Currently music is on Fridays but the stage is up and available all summer, so could be used for more music
- Spin-off related music events from bigger festivals like the Jazz Festival or the Techno Festival to create a MUSIC WEEK
- Spin-off ART WEEK expanding to downtown and the riverfront to connect the two
- Get the Public Art committee involved with art selection
- Improve amenities for Belle Isle users
 - » Leverage history of the island, celebrate the users and their history
 - Underground RR, prohibition, Edward Hopper's Automat

- Show multi-ethnic heritage
- Waterfront should be unique
- Showcase maritime history
- Activate social networks:
 - » Nearby residents, but also broadly Detroit residents
 - » Integrate various young professional networks via fun parties, athletic events etc.
 - » Connect DRFC young professionals group with BIC Emerging Patrons, Detroit Harmonie, Come Play Detroit, RenCen running group
 - » Organize common events and activities so people get to meet each other
 - » Identify other existing groups and connect to them
 - Connections need to be event-based & fun
 - For example the dodge ball tournament brings 18000 people together, they will be coming to Belle Isle
 - Big parties get hosted on the De Quindre Cut
- Offer spaces recreation groups/networks who are always looking for physical venues to host events, especially in winter
- Connect all info/calendars to coordinate events and audiences
- Connect with DMCVB – convention and visitors bureau to communicate together

ULTRA LIGHT INTERVENTIONS / NEW DESTINATIONS

Two places all done up, really fun, new, colorful, visible

- » One on Belle Isle
- » One on the Riverfront
- » Link the two with ferry, bikes, shuttle

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

- Develop a shared schedule of events and programs for the riverfront, downtown, and Belle Isle by compiling information from web, various calendars, social media into one spot;
- Connect the partners so they can do joint marketing and communications for their programs;
- Provide comprehensive info on what is available – web, social media, e-blast
- Develop basic signage for the Riverfront and Belle Isle
- Expand bike use
 - » Bring bike share to Riverfront and Belle Isle
 - » Bring Bike meet-up to Belle Isle
- Bring a pop-up restaurant on the water
- Bring food trucks to Belle Isle with special programming
- Plan a fun summer event that integrates the Riverfront and Belle Isle – i.e. an event for young professionals that can bring different groups together including for example sand volleyball with a party, food, music, ferry to take people from the riverfront to the island