

## **Riverside Park Conversion Project Community Engagement and Public Comment Summary**

As part of its proposed conversion of a portion of Riverside Park, the City of Detroit has undertaken the following community engagement efforts:

### **Community Outreach.**

The City has undertaken substantial efforts to ensure that its community engagements efforts have been well-publicized. Outreach efforts included:

- Notices were published in the Free Press, the Detroit News, and the Latino Press.
- Notices were posted in multiple City Recreation Centers.
- Notice was submitted to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).
- Flyers (English and Spanish) were distributed to multiple community organizations, including the Riverside Park Community Advisory Committee.
- An announcement was posted on the City's website.
- Announcements were distributed through Facebook and other social media.

### **Publication of Conversion Documentation.**

The City has published approximately forty documents related to Riverside Park and the City's proposed conversion. These documents were made available on March 24, 2017 through the City's website ([www.detroitmi.gov/riversidepark](http://www.detroitmi.gov/riversidepark)) and at the Patton Recreation Center, the Clemente Recreation Center, and the Northwest Activities Center.

### **Community Meeting.**

The City hosted a community meeting on April 25, 2017 at the Patton Recreation Center to share its vision for the Park's expansion and improvement and to provide information about the proposed conversion. Approximately 105 community members attended the meeting. The meeting included a presentation by the City and opportunity for attendees to ask questions from City officials.

### **Public Comments.**

The City has welcomed public comment from community members regarding the proposed conversion. Comments were accepted in multiple ways:

- By email ([riversidepark@detroitmi.gov](mailto:riversidepark@detroitmi.gov)),
- By postal mail to the Detroit Parks and Recreation Department,
- In person at the Patton Recreation Center, the Clemente Recreation Center, and the Northwest Activities Center, and
- In person at the City's April 25 community meeting.

The City accepted comments from March 25 until May 5, 2017. **The City received a total of 105 comments from members of the community. Of these, 76 comments expressed support for the redevelopment of the Park, including the proposed conversion.** The City is carefully considering all comments that it has received and will include them in its final application for approval of the proposed conversion.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Shannon Beckett  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48209  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: The park additions are gonna be great for Southwest Detroit! Looking forward to visiting the park in the future.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Connor Stanton  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City Royal Oak State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip 48073  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: The skate park is really cool. Community Push does a good job. Just look at the old Wiggle Recreation Center. Always packed and new kid faces. Pretty good.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Paula Rogers  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DETROIT State MI Zip 48209  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I'm very excited about the plans to  
renovate Riverside Park. We have waited so long  
for this. It will be great for the community  
THANK YOU



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Dennis Schreiber  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Birmingham State MI Zip 48009  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I think that approval of the conversion  
is the correct thing to do -- As it will allow full  
development of the park. Which Detroit Deserves



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Darnell Henry  
 Address [REDACTED]  
 City Detroit State Mi Zip 48217  
 Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: "Great Presentation"

This will for sure give our kids a positive Resource To Branch off into other Positive Creations, I support the Mayor to continue with Riverside Renovation's



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Ketsy Lewis  
 Address [REDACTED]  
 City Det State Mich Zip 48207  
 Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I feel if we can have a first class Sports Arena We deserve a first class park They should release the money that they're holding on to. Come On Now  
"I Support" "I Support"



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Chris Best

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City Windsor State Ontario Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: SUPPORTING OUR NEIGHBOURS  
PARKLAND EXPANSION, A SHARING  
THE CITY OF WINDSOR'S OPPOSITION TO  
ANY SECOND SPAN OF THE AMBASSADOR  
BRIDGE.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Anthony Wells

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State Mich Zip 48208

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address None at this time

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Well I think that this is a good  
thing for the children and to keep them  
out of the streets.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Stephanie Rodriguez  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48216  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I would love to see this park used for its potential. It would be wonderful for families. Very beautiful & safe area and would be great for a park. I would love to be able to take my daughter & grandmother there



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD


Name Harold A. Rudolph  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State Mich Zip 48205  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I'm in favor of the up coming changes that will allow for more usage within the community



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name JASON CRAWFORD  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Allen Park State MI Zip 48101  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I fully support the conversion of the ~~old~~  
park property. ~~also~~ I hope to see the  
Riverside park's future expansion. 



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Harry Master  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48226  
Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Please approve this conversion agreement.  
The park ~~is~~ means so much to the people + guests of  
Detroit. It would make everything safer + more walkable  
in the surrounding areas, and create interaction with  
the land + city.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name PAUL MAX  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DETROIT State MI Zip 48224  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I'M IN FAVOR OF THE CONVERSION SO THIS  
PARK CAN BE DEVELOPED AS PROPOSED



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Todd White  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: This is a very good deal for the city to  
improve and expand Riverside Park for some much needed  
recreation area. The concept/renderings look great!  
The improvements that have already been made are a  
wonderful start. The conversion should be approved!





# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Cleveland Jones  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State Michigan Zip 48208  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the Mayor on this Riverside Park Proposed Conversion. I believe this would help Detroiters and their children for years to come. I hope that many others will agree on the re-development of this park.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name SEAN P QUINN  
Address [REDACTED] REDFORD, MI 48240  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: THE SKATEPARK LOOKS FANTASTIC!  
THE PROJECT IS A WHOLE IS A  
GREAT, HEALTHFUL, INVESTMENT!  
THANK YOU!  
→



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name MIKE JACOBS + LAURA BEYER

Address [REDACTED]

City HAMTRACK State MI Zip 48212

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Excited for more beautiful  
Riverfront park space in this  
city!!!



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Franklin L Johnson

Address [REDACTED]

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I am fully in support of the conversion for this  
new endeavor regarding "Riverside Park!"



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: *Great area for a park with basketball court, maybe even a garden or soccer field.*



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name *Shanelle Jackson*

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City *DET* State *MI* Zip *48202*

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: *Please continue with the great improvements that are happening @ Riverside Park. I support the conversion.*



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Laura Kopack  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48235  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Support the park + build it  
for a better Riverfront.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Resident

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City Det State MI Zip 48209

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the conversion -  
The \$2 million is needed to complete this feature  
Premier park - Without \$5 million from budget,  
Riverside would have continued to deteriorate,  
and present a dangerous <sup>some</sup> ~~other~~ area. The city, <sup>some</sup> ~~community~~  
leaders & others do not have an alternative to  
rejuvenate Riverside. It appears that  
~~then~~ those that oppose the conversion would  
have us wait, and wait for what? no  
other monies are pending for this project  
The community loses!



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Shawna Jackson

Address [Redacted]

City Madison Heights State MI Zip 48071

Contact Number [Redacted] Email Address [Redacted]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I am in full support of the plan to expand Riverside Park. It will definitely enhance the beauty of Detroit.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Mary Carmen Muñoz

Address [Redacted]

City Detroit State MI Zip 48209

Contact Number [Redacted] Email Address [Redacted]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: As Operations Manager for LaSed I Fully support the rapid completion of all improvements to Riverside Park. Our Families, Seniors and youth need & deserve a First Class park in S.W. Detroit.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name HASAN SALEEM  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DET State MI Zip 48208  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: FIRST I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE MAYOR AND HIS COMMITTY FOR BRINGING MORE GROWTH ~~THE~~ TO THE CITY OF DET. ALSO I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WILL THE MAYOR BE REDEVELOPPING OTHER AREAS OF THE CITY AS WELL



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name DIANG DAVIS  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DETROIT State MI Zip 48207  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I SUPPORT THE EXPANSION & RENOVATION OF RIVERSIDE PARK.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name KEVIN HARRISON  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48208  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the Riverside  
Park Conversion Project.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name ROBERTO LANDIN  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48226  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Support





# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name MARK DENNIS  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DET State MI Zip 48208  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the conversion for riverside park



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name EVAN HITCHINGS  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48201  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Everything looks great! I personally hope the runway gets extended all the way someday!



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Shirley Jefferson  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DETROIT State MI Zip 48207  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I am here to support the  
Conversion of the expand Riverside Park.  
We as a hole need to stay together on  
this.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Christopher Dannard  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DETROIT MI State MI Zip 48227  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the conversion because its  
a all around good deal and it will help our youths  
stay out of trouble and give them something to  
do. Plus it will make Detroit look better.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Love Ruston  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State mi Zip 48207  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I am here in support of the  
Proposed Conversion of the Park



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Pamela Nelson  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Det State MI Zip 48234  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address N/A

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I think that the mayor's office is doing  
a good job at Riverside Park. So I support the conversion.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Patrick Sallena  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Washington Twp. State MI Zip 48095  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: This will be great! Excited for the boat launch & soccer field (both near my work).



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name George WAITE  
Address [REDACTED]  
City ECORSE State MIEN. Zip 48229  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

PREVENT Vandalism  
GUARD May be needed in OFF HOURS, PREVENT THEFT TO  
COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I came for support you people on Riverside Park, Yes, Its Badly needed The children of the city need places to go with a pool as well, and a updated bath Room Facility, The Play Time is needed.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Kimberly Anderson

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State MI Zip 48206

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the conversion of Riverside  
Park



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Ms. Susan Wilson-Bey

Address [REDACTED]

City DET MI State MICH Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I REALLY THINK THAT THIS  
IS A GREAT IDEAL, WIN WIN WIN  
FOR THE CITY OF DETROIT



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name HERMAN Wilson  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DETROIT State MICH Zip 48208  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the conversion  
plan and expansion of riverside park  
for all kids and the kid in me  
because when i was young we had  
the play mobile and swim mobile.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Parryl Johnson  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DETROIT State MI Zip 48208  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: It's time to work together for the  
Betterment of the City.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Nicole Jackson

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Im fully in support of the conversion of Riverside Park.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name TEDRA Wilson

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City Detroit State MI Zip 48219

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I am here in full support of the mayors (Duggin) plan to expand Riverside Park which will include A "New World Park" We NEED this in our city. No MORE PROCRASTINATION.... LET'S DO this.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Jonathan Lyons

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State MI Zip 48208

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the conversion and the mayor  
an council to help keep our children safe an out  
of harms ways



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Betsy ISAAC

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State MI Zip 48207

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I Support the conversion of the Parks





# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Judith Boston  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DET State Michigan Zip 48205  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I AM IN AGREEMENT OF RIVERSIDE PARK CONVERSION  
PROJECT, WILL BE GLAD TO SEE THIS HAPPEN



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Nancy White  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DETROIT State Mich Zip 48209  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Very very nice  
the park is going to BE FOR  
the kids in the city OF  
DETROIT and the people OF THE CITY  
OF DETROIT



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Ms. VIVIAN McGEE - MARTIN

Address [REDACTED]

City DETROIT State MI Zip 48213-1951

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I Am here to support the RIVERSIDE  
Park Conversion Project. And is looking for the  
change that is about to happen.

Thank you



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Perry Clark

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State Michigan Zip 48223

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I For one ~~am~~ very excited about the  
conversion and I do support what the mayor is  
doing for Detroit, this is something that is good  
for the whole city, I pray that it does not stop  
here there are so many places that need conversion in



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Theresa Caiac

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State MI Zip 48216

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: It looks good!



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name FRANCOIS DECOMBLE

Address [REDACTED]

City DETROIT State MI Zip 48216

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Park being done the right way, lots of meeting

and discussions. I really like all the activities offered

especially the skateboard part of it.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Deleek Dykas  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State Mi Zip 48201  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: im 100% in support of the conversion. It's a great  
deal for the community and if it results in recreation, I see no downside.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Anita Harrison  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Chelsea State MI Zip 48118  
Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Fantastic concept! Cant wait to start visiting  
the park. 100% for the conversion!



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Belda Garza  
Address [REDACTED] LASED  
City Dut State MI Zip 48209  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

I support it 100% we need  
the land to continue the  
process on the Riverside Park



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name John Robinson  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Ecorse State MI Zip 48229  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

I believe the Mayor really cares about  
the City and is doing a great job! I grew up  
at Riverside park and I am so thankful that my  
kids and grand kids can enjoy it as well.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name ANN BYRNE  
 Address [REDACTED]  
 City DET State MI Zip 48209  
 Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

*Love that Riverfront Access WAS retained on converted land*

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: *The land valuation was subjective at best but worth the trade the pay off - love the skatepark & festival area, confident that all desirable increasing activities are far enough from sport fishing areas. Still want to see diesel stack regulations and now is the time to put that in place. Still want more permanent great lakes/straight of Detroit - history & environmental teaching/learning area & materials*



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name BRAD DICK  
 Address [REDACTED]  
 City DETROIT State MI Zip 48224  
 Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: *This is a wonderful park and will be an amazing asset to the City of Detroit.*



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name RYAN STIPP  
Address [REDACTED]  
City ROYAL OAK State MI Zip 48073  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I SUPPORT ADDITIONAL PARK SPACE IN THE CITY OF  
DETROIT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AS WELL!



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Demond R. Smith  
Address [REDACTED]  
City HIGHLAND PARK State MI. Zip 48206  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Yes, my name Demond and I support  
the Conversion of Riverside. Also my concerns  
is about our children having a safe and fun  
place to go. I would <sup>(like)</sup> to more street lighting  
and police presents. Thank You



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Gloria McCastle  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48203  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the conversion at  
RIVERSIDE PARK. OUR KIDS NEED IT.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name MARTINI Bentley  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DETROIT State MICH Zip 48208  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I Am in support of the Riverside Park  
Project Brought by our Mayor and City Council, Etc.  
Our kids needs a safe place to do many things and  
to just be a kid





# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Raymond Scott

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State MI Zip 48219

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: This is wonderful for the community



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name KEITH FLOURNOY

Address [REDACTED]

City DETROIT State MI Zip 48206

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: This is a wonderful opportunity for the community and I am in support



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Sue-James Scott  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48219  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: This is wonderful for the community.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Riverside Needs to improve \$5 million  
Not enough - then should we rescue money do  
Nothing? Right? No way lets start and look  
for more \$\$\$  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name JEANNIE HUBERT

Address [REDACTED]

City DETROIT State MI Zip 48226

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: FULL support for land conversion.

Thank you city of Detroit for recognizing positive benefits  
to this swap. Looking forward to the finished park  
specificly the boat launches ~



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name JOHN DEQUITER

Address [REDACTED]

City DETROIT State MI Zip 48201

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: GREAT IDEA! GOOD TRADE!

WILL BE AN ASSET TO SOUTHWEST +  
THE ENTIRE CITY.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Adam Barrett  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48216  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support a park at Riverside but only if  
the Bridge Company is held to environmental standards before  
any land transfer occurs in which the City "gains" land  
that may need to be decontaminated at taxpayer expense  
I do NOT support any BridgeCo control of our park.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Dora - Southwest pride member  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Det State MI Zip 48202  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Something for everyone - looks good so far  
water activity  
wheel chair accessible  
gazebo would be nice



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name RON PATM  
Address [REDACTED]  
City STERLING HEIGHTS State MI Zip 48312  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I support the Riverside Park conversion.  
I travel regularly to the city for various  
purposes. Having access to recreational opportunities  
will not only increase my travel to the city  
but also provide citizens of Detroit greater  
recreational opportunities.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name ERMINIA RAMIREZ  
Address [REDACTED]  
City DET State MI Zip 48205  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: This park is greatly needed to  
be redeveloped. I look forward ~~to~~ take  
my grandson to this statue of the ART PARK.  
I support the redevelopment and  
why the conversion is needed.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Greg M. Ward  
 Address [REDACTED]  
 City Detroit State Mi Zip 48124  
 Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: The Riverside Park proposed conversion is to prepare for a second span of the Ambassador Bridge. What mitigation measures are being proposed to protect the public from the resulting bridge project. The Gardie Howe has certain mitigation requirements - Are the same requirements in place for the Ambassador Bridge?



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Sherylle Garner  
 Address [REDACTED]  
 City Det. State MI Zip 48235  
 Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: When will this be fenced? Will there be a fenced around the river so small kids won't fall in?



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Kimberly Anderson

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State MI Zip 48206

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Will the conversion cost the tax payers anything? How long will the conversion take?



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name James A. Danbrzsky

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State MI Zip 48209

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: What happens if Di Be (matty) renigs on the conversion plan. REMEMBER THE GATEWAY PROJECT.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name LEON NEWTON  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City DETROIT State MI Zip 48216  
Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: MORE POLICE PRESENT, DAY & NIGHT VIOLATORS  
AFTER HOURS DRINKING IN CARS, SEX ACTS, WEED SMOKING  
CARS PARKING ON STREET W. GRAND BLVD THAT DON'T  
LIVE IN THE AREA OR W. GRAND BLVD IN FRONT OF  
MY HOME, SPEEDING, DOUBLE PARKING, MOTORCYCLES NOISE



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name ROBERTA RALSTON  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City DETROIT State MI Zip 48210  
Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: WHAT IS MATTY MOURON GETTING  
OUT OF IT?





## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Thomas Lopez  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48209  
Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: \* Budget for maintenance same as that of more affluent areas  
\* Park hours? Security?  
\* Construction & destruction should be done in a way that does NOT  
further harm community or environment (air/water) quality  
\* % of workers who live in Detroit should be 750



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Patrick Densmore  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48207  
Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Keep the lights on til 2:00 A.M.!!



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Jason Wallace  
 Address [REDACTED]  
 City Detroit State MI Zip 48201  
 Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: It would be nice if there would be a light  
Setup at nite time. Mabge have lights to monitor  
the park as well and for extended Skate sessions.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name JAC Kyle have the Bridge company  
pay a % of their tolls to  
City of Detroit + Convert old  
 Address [REDACTED] Ambassador Bridge to a pedestr  
walk way.  
 City Detroit State MI Zip 48216  
 Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Beach,  
\* Kayak access & Swimming - I know it's a risk, but a  
girl can dream, eh?  
lots & lots of trees, Sections of habitat for monarchs + birds  
walking, no-paved trails for low impact lots of info about  
scooping the poop in dog  
park  
! milk the Bridge company for all their worth - that land is worth  
more than 5 million  
continuous bike access from



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Sister Consuelo Alcalá  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48209  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I would like to see connectivity  
along the Riverside, an actual reality between east  
and west Detroit. Don't take S.W. Detroit  
lightly.



## RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Kerry O'Connor  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48209  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Who will have daily control  
of the park, and who will grant permission  
to use the site for musical concerts, will  
the control be in Southeast Detroit?  
Will control be truly local?



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name State Representative Stephanie Chang  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48216  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

① The news warehouse  
site: How can we be certain the clean up of  
COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: this land will make it safe for families to play?

② will riverfront access be hindered by this land conversion

③ Does the land conversion process adequately consider  
the impact of a 2<sup>nd</sup> span on increase air pollution  
from trucks crossing?

④ with a public bridge coming, doesn't this  
address some issues w/ cross border traffic?



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Dorothy Alcalá  
 Address [REDACTED]  
 City Det Mi State Mi Zip 48209  
 Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: It was approved by the Council & we got  
some monies but still there is no way to get to  
the river, the parking lot can't be used. We can't walk  
there, ~~then~~ <sup>there</sup> are only two parks on the river front  
And both are in bad condition. How long do we  
(river)

South west

have to wait. The plans look great  
I hope all the monies are not used or  
just plans & talk. We were told we  
were going to have a Riverwalk that was  
over 20 years ago. And still they  
continue to expand the East side  
River walk. There ~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> many  
promises but little else.  
All I want is for you to get rid of the  
loud music, pot smoking, and <sup>give us</sup> some place  
we can take our children to enjoy the  
river.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Amy Amador

Address [REDACTED]

City DETROIT State MI Zip 48216

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: While I appreciate the diligent work of City staff and the Riverside Park Advisory Committee, I am opposed to the conversion of the park land. The conversion allows for the building of a second span which increases the negative public health impacts to the park. The agreement should go forward only if there is a legal stipulation that the converted park land not be used to facilitate

increased transportation projects or other uses harmful to the public enjoyment of Riverside Park. Further greater funds are needed to complete the vision for Riverside and complete remediation. The agreement should be renegotiated for the benefits of the City and its residents.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Sofia Nelson

Address [REDACTED]

City Detroit State MI Zip 48209

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: I oppose the conversion as it will  
allow the expansion of the Ambassador Bridge  
increasing truck traffic & pollution in the neighborhood.  
I am also concerned about contamination from  
the warehouse on the parcel the city would acquire.



# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Rino Borstolin

Address [REDACTED]

City Windsor Canada State Ontario Zip N9X 1P2

Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Please don't endorse a 2nd span for  
the ABC company.  
I'm a City Councilor in Windsor



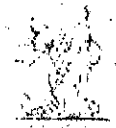
# RIVERSIDE PARK PROPOSED CONVERSION COMMENT CARD

Name Vic Able  
Address [REDACTED]  
City Detroit State MI Zip 48216  
Contact Number [REDACTED] Email Address [REDACTED]

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: Very disappointing meeting time  
attending the dog & pony show & not  
allowing more public dialog when  
you know many residents are opposed to  
swapping land with DBC. I remain

concerned with the health impacts of a new bridge  
when my own health has been severely impacted  
by existing environmental conditions. To have a park  
adjacent to the existing & new bridge will be a  
bad situation. To have developed with me & the  
land swap would help. I don't know that I will want to take  
my kids to use the park, if it's ever completed. Why you  
wouldn't have negotiated stronger for a better deal from  
the Macann's is beyond me. Then maybe we  
would really have a "world class park"  
by now!





**CITY OF DETROIT**  
**RAQUEL CASTAÑEDA-LÓPEZ**  
COUNCIL MEMBER DISTRICT 6

April 25, 2017

Mayor Michael Duggan  
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Ave., 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear Mayor Duggan:

I write to you to respectfully request you take the following issues regarding the proposed land conversion into consideration. While the approval of the conversion application will give the City an additional \$2 million in funding, there are multiple outstanding issues that must be addressed first. It is our responsibility as local government to protect our residents and critically examine long term impacts, not only the short term benefits. While the construction of the second span is still uncertain, given that the intent of the conversion application is to allow for the second span, we must engage in a thoughtful conversation around community benefits.

1. **Contamination at the News Warehouse site:** The environmental assessment and accompanying remediation plan must reassure residents and park attendees that the site is safe for our children to use.
  - a. What funding is available to remediate the land and any outstanding environmental issues?
  - b. What is the projected timeline for doing so?
2. **Riverfront connectivity:** Most of the work on the Riverfront completed thus far has been on the East Riverfront (Ren Cen to Belle Isle). However, numerous stakeholders have been gathering to work on a greater connectivity plan to the West Riverfront. Converting the Riverside Park parcel away from outdoor recreation use could significantly affect whether we truly have connectivity along the Riverfront.
  - a. How does the Administration propose to establish and maintain connectivity to the East and West Riverfront?
3. **Second span impact:** The Riverside Park parcel the City wants to convert from outdoor recreation use will be transferred to the DIBC, who intends to build a second span to the Ambassador Bridge. This increase of lanes will result in an increase of truck traffic, which is a concern given the already high air pollution in the neighborhood and surrounding areas of Southwest Detroit. The City, DNR and the MNRTF Board must consider potential effects on the environment. We cannot continue to push this conversation down the road. It is irresponsible to make our decisions based on



**CITY OF DETROIT**  
**RAQUEL CASTAÑEDA-LÓPEZ**

COUNCIL MEMBER DISTRICT 6

assumptions that the project will not occur (i.e. "The Canadian's will never approved their permit.").

- a. What is the Administration doing now to protect the community given the proposed use of the Riverside Conversion Parcel?
  - b. What additional commitments has the Administration received from the DIBC that it will enter into a legally binding community benefits agreement if and when the second span is approved?
4. **Alternatives analysis:** In the City's land conversion application, there is an "alternatives analysis" designed to explore whether other alternatives to this land conversion would better suit the needs of the citizens. The need for an increase in cross border traffic capacity is already being addressed by the publicly funded Gordie Howe International Bridge.
- a. Has the City looked at other parcels along the Riverfront that could provide recreational access and may provide better access than the News Warehouse site?
    - i. If yes, please provide the research that has been done?
  - b. What other studies or analysis has the City done to address the lack of access that residents have to the Riverfront on the West side of the City?

Given the significant implications of the proposed development in the conversion application, this warrants a more in depth conversation. I have great respect for the work the Administration has done to increase recreational opportunities in the City, and know that your Office is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of life for all Detroiters.

I look forward to continuing this conversation with you and your staff. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Raquel Castañeda-López  
Council Member, Detroit District 6

Cc: Keith Creagh, Director, DNR  
Janice Winfrey, City Clerk



April 25, 2017

By email to [detroitrecreation@detroitmi.gov](mailto:detroitrecreation@detroitmi.gov):

David A. Miller, Interim Director  
Detroit Parks and Recreation Department  
18100 Meyers  
Detroit, MI 48235

By email to [DebrabanderS@michigan.gov](mailto:DebrabanderS@michigan.gov):

Steve Debrabander, Manager  
Grants Management Section  
Finance and Operations Division  
Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Constitution Hall  
525 West Allegan St.  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Messrs. DeBrabander and Miller:

On or about August 4, 2016, the City of Detroit applied for approval ("Application") to convert a portion of Riverside Park ("Park"). We submit these comments, which ask that the City provide much more information in the Application as it is plainly deficient in its current state.

If it were to be considered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources ("DNR") for approval or denial in its current state, the DNR would have to deny it because it lacks fundamental information for an application of its kind. There is hardly any analysis of possible alternatives to conversion; there is no real way to know if the proposal will retain the public outdoor recreational value of the Park since there is no health impact assessment that compares pre-conversion and post-conversion; and it is premature to know whether conversion is

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*Protecting the world's greatest freshwater resource and the communities that depend upon it.*

Great Lakes Environmental Law Center  
4444 Second Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48201  
[www.glelc.org](http://www.glelc.org)

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worthwhile given the uncertainty with parcel cleanup and bridge expansion. We agree with the City of Detroit itself who, in 2011, summarized very clearly the requirements for conversion and opined that conversion would be problematic for numerous reasons.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.0 Introduction

The Application simply does not satisfy the legal standards that apply to conversion of land encumbered by monies provided under the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund Act and the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund Act. More worryingly, this request appears to us to benefit the Detroit International Bridge Corporation ("DIBC") without sufficient consideration of the burdens that will be placed on community members. Conversions must benefit the public above all other parties. If we assume that the missing Application information is unavailable or not forthcoming, then it seems clear that this conversion proposal will primarily benefit the DIBC, not the public.

### 2.0 Legal Standards

Generally, it is the DNR who is responsible for ensuring a conversion application meets both state and federal requirements. The responsible federal agencies rely on state agencies to ensure due diligence.

#### 2.1 Federal Law

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act is codified at Title 54 Chapter 23 in the United States Code Annotated. 54 U.S.C.A. §§ 200301 – 200310. The statutory provision most relevant to conversion is § 200305(f)(3), which reads as follows:

Conversion to other than public outdoor recreation use. No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary, be converted to other than public outdoor recreation use. The Secretary shall approve a conversion only if the Secretary finds it to be in accordance with the then-existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Eric B. Gaabo, Senior Assistant Corporation Counsel, to Representative Paul E. Opsommer (Sept. 20, 2011) (attached as Exhibit A).

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plan and only on such conditions as the Secretary considers necessary to ensure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location. Wetland areas and interests therein as identified in the wetlands provisions of the comprehensive plan and proposed to be acquired as suitable replacement property within the same State that is otherwise acceptable to the Secretary, acting through the Director, shall be deemed to be of reasonably equivalent usefulness with the property proposed for conversion.

More details about conversion can be found in the Federal Regulations, mostly at § 59.3 in Title 36. The National Parks Service, which executes the conversion process, also has a guidance manual called Land And Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program.<sup>2</sup> Those documents, as well as some case law, provide the legal standards that apply to conversion.

### 2.2 State Law

Part 19 of Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act establishes the Natural Resources Trust Fund. MCL 324.1901 – 1911. The law authorizes the state to provide grant funds for the development and improvement of parks and other resource areas. The law also creates a board (the "MNRTF Board"), which has issued a policy guidance document ("MNRTF Guidance") that interprets the law.<sup>3</sup>

### 3.0 Analysis

The proposed conversion does not comply with various requirements enumerated by the LWCF and MNRTF.

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<sup>2</sup> Federal Financial Assistance Manual, Volume 69 (Oct. 1, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board, Policies and Procedures (rev. Feb. 8, 2016), available at

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/IC1917\\_MNRTF\\_Policies\\_and\\_Procedures-November\\_2012\\_Revision\\_415295\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/IC1917_MNRTF_Policies_and_Procedures-November_2012_Revision_415295_7.pdf).

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3.1 The alternatives evaluation is inadequate and must be completely redone to adequately inform the public and the relevant agencies of the alternatives to conversion.

The Application lacks any serious evaluation of alternatives. The LWCF requires that "all practical alternatives to the proposed conversion be evaluated." (emphasis added)<sup>4</sup> The MNRTF requires the same.

The entire evaluation in the Application is barely one page. Nothing in the Application reveals a serious effort to identify let alone evaluate practical alternatives. The one alternative it mentions is a "no action" alternative, which is set up as a straw man.

First, the evaluation commences with the City proclaiming that it "has considered and rejected all practical alternatives to the Proposed Conversion, as no such alternative would confer comparable benefits to the community or provide the Park with as much added recreational value." It is not for the City to decide to withhold evaluation of feasible alternatives it deems to be inferior. The City must evaluate those alternatives in the Application to allow the public to properly weigh in and to allow the DNR to decide whether the evaluation was sufficient and if so whether there truly was no better practical alternative to the proposed conversion.

The City's proclamation reveals a second deficiency: we have no idea what we are comparing against what. The City's narrative communicates that it is either the proposal on the table, or the Park as it has been in the recent past, which is to say contaminated and totally unusable by the public. Significant investment in the Park has already been made. There have already been improvements. Additional monies are already committed and will be put to improvements regardless of conversion. The question the City fails to answer is, what will the Park truly look like without conversion given the investment that has already been committed as well as the investment that is possible given, to offer one example, the desire to extend the current Detroit Riverfront west of the Ambassador Bridge? The Application fails in this regard as it provides no helpful description of where the Park will be in the next few years even without the conversion and the DIBC payment that goes along with it. The City must provide nothing short of a detailed timeline of monies not entirely contingent on conversion that have already been invested and are to be invested in Park improvement, as well as an accurate picture – given past

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<sup>4</sup> 36 C.F.R. § 59.3(b)(1)

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and upcoming investment not contingent on conversion – of what the Park will look like anyway.

Third, there are viable alternatives that the City failed to analyze. For example, the City could hold on to the Conversion Parcel and purchase the Mitigation Parcel. Remediation of the Mitigation Parcel is underway and the City could purchase it after remediation is completed. Since appraisals have not been done, it is not possible to evaluate the feasibility of this option. However, the way to address this is not to ignore the option, but instead to obtain an appraisal to evaluate the feasibility of purchase. Also, the City could hold on to the Conversion Parcel, not purchase the Mitigation Parcel, and do what it has been trying to do for many years, which is to exercise control over the Park and to restore its public outdoor recreation value.

Ultimately, in an alternatives evaluation, there must be consideration of costs and benefits. The question in this case is, do the benefits of expanding the Park westward and obtaining \$2,000,000.00 (or some other figure) in funding outweigh the public health and other outdoor recreation-related costs of having a significant expansion of an already massive bridge immediately adjacent to the Park, especially in light of the fact that certain improvements have already happened and more will happen without conversion. In part as discussed below, because there is no proper evaluation of the public health and outdoor recreation consequences of the bridge expansion, and given that this is being proposed in an environmental justice area, the public and the DNR cannot properly consider all the applicable costs and benefits. Since the informational burden is on the applicant to make its case for conversion, this Application must fail since the City has not met that burden.

Fourth, there is also the matter of whether the Ambassador Bridge expansion will ever occur, especially given the pace of development of the Gordie Howe International Bridge. Development of the Gordie Howe International Bridge (GHIB) is already underway. The GHIB will be located several miles south of Riverside Park.<sup>5</sup> As we understand it, the DIBC does not have permission from the Canadian government to expand its bridge. Last fall a federal court held that the DIBC does not have a legal right to expand the bridge if the Canadian government continues to deny bridge expansion.<sup>6</sup> Until the DIBC has permission to expand the Ambassador

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<sup>5</sup> The Center takes no position on whether one bridge or another is better overall for public health or the environment.

<sup>6</sup> *Detroit Int'l Bridge Co. v. Gov't of Can.*, 133 F.Supp.3d 70 (D.D.C. Sept.30, 2015).

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Bridge allowing a conversion to occur would be premature and unnecessary. It may or may not be the case that the expansion of the Ambassador Bridge requires the eastern parcel; however, given the current circumstances that seemingly make that expansion impossible, it is premature and a waste of resources to consider converting land to make way for something that will not happen.

3.2 The City has provided no real information on whether a conversion that facilitates the expansion of a directly adjacent international bridge will improve Park user health and thus maintain the Park's value for outdoor recreational usefulness.

The LWCF and MNRTF require consideration of how a conversion will affect the outdoor recreational usefulness of a site.<sup>10</sup> While a conversion might not substantially affect the size or value of recreational land, some projects can negatively affect the use and enjoyment of the land after the conversion has occurred. Increased traffic from the proposed expansion will reduce accessibility to the park. Noise and air pollution from vehicles will make use of the park certainly less enjoyable and may also present health issues to those trying to use the park.

The Application's evaluation of the public health consequences is minimal. Two brief paragraphs full of generalizations and clichés constitute the full public health analysis.

The truth is that a health impact assessment is necessary. Health impact assessments are tools that determine a project's or policy's impacts on population health. An HIA is the only true way to know: 1) what the health consequences will be when one compares the Park without conversion given the improvements already made and those yet to come, with the Park post-conversion; and 2) the health consequences for a population of Park users that, should a conversion occur which express purpose is to expand a major international thoroughfare directly adjacent to the Park, will now be just as close to the Ambassador Bridge but exposed to the pollution of a near doubling of that thoroughfare.

Attached as Exhibit B is an analysis by Human Impact Partners, a California firm that specializes in health impact assessments. Human Impact Partners makes clear that the HIA tool is available to evaluate a circumstance just like this one, that the HIA is the only way to truly evaluate public health consequences to the Park user population, and that the health impacts of

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<sup>10</sup> 36 C.F.R. § 59.3(b)(3) & (5).



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bridge expansion have not been adequately studied. We incorporate the letter entirely into this comment.

To the extent the City is relying on the 2009 Finding Of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment ("Finding") by the United States Coast Guard to conclude that the conversion would not harm outdoor recreational value, it is mistaken. In the 2000s, pursuant to the federal National Environmental Policy Act, an evaluation of environmental impacts of bridge expansion was attempted. Putting aside the various shortcomings of the environmental impact evaluation and the Coast Guard's Finding, the Finding's premises and conclusions are not useful in this context. First, the Coast Guard did not specifically evaluate public health impacts to Park users, which is what matters when evaluating a proposed conversion that must at least maintain public outdoor recreation value. Second, the Coast Guard may have considered temporary construction-related impacts to a minimal extent, but it did not consider longer-term impacts from increased fugitive dust and other categories of pollution related to increased traffic.

3.3 Given the drastic uncertainty regarding fair market value, the Application is currently incomplete.

The LWCF also requires that the mitigation parcel have an equal or greater fair market value than the converted parcel.<sup>11</sup> This requirement is mirrored in MNRTF Board policies and procedures.<sup>12</sup> There are too many uncertainties for the fair market value of either parcel to be obtained, therefore any approvals at this time would be premature.

The City's request notes that the mitigation parcel is contaminated and is considered a "facility" as defined by P.A. 451, Part 201, as amended. Unfortunately, the levels of contamination, clean-up costs and methods of remediation are not adequately detailed in the City's request all of which will have a substantial impact on the parcel's value. A baseline environmental assessment conducted on the City's behalf states that "volatile organic compounds and semi-

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<sup>11</sup> 36 C.F.R. § 59.3(b)(2).

<sup>12</sup> Grants Mgmt, Dep't of Natural Res., Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board Policies and Procedures (2016)

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VOCs above Part 201 generic residential cleanup criteria."<sup>13</sup> There are numerous contaminants on the mitigation parcel including arsenic, mercury, lead and benzene to note a few.

We are concerned that because remediation of the mitigation parcel has not occurred, the City could be swapping uncontaminated land for land that is contaminated based on the promise of future adequate cleanup. Before any approval from the State or National Park Service occurs the mitigation parcel should be appraised after remediation. If remediation does not occur pre-conversion then the City must determine the cost of remediation and factor these costs when ascertaining the parcel's fair market value. Approving this project before the site is remediated is premature.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

Usable parkland in Detroit is precious. Riverside Park sits within an environmental justice community. Particularly given environmental justice concerns, it is all the more important for this Application to be significantly improved so that the public can truly understand the benefits and the costs. If you have any questions or would like clarification please feel free to reach out to us anytime.

Sincerely,

s/ Oday Salim

Oday Salim, Esq.

Senior Attorney

[oday.salim@glelc.org](mailto:oday.salim@glelc.org)

cell

Joined by the following organizations:

Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice

BridgeWatch Detroit

Springdale Woodmere Block Club

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<sup>13</sup> NTH Consultants, Ltd., Baseline Environmental Assessment 3801 West Jefferson Property Detroit, Michigan, NTH Project No. 62-140614-100B (2015).



April 4, 2017

Oday Salim  
Great Lakes Environmental Law Center  
4444 2nd Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48201

Dear Mr. Salim,

Human Impact Partners would like to highlight the potential for unintended health impacts of the proposed expansion of the Ambassador Bridge and the reconfiguration of Riverside Park to accommodate the bridge, as well as an action that could be taken to assess those potential impacts. Based on my professional knowledge of how public recreational spaces and transportation resources can impact health, I recommend that a health impact assessment be conducted to evaluate health consequences of this project.

Health impact assessment (HIA) is a practical tool that uses data, research and stakeholder input to determine a policy or project's impact on the health of a population. HIAs typically identify both positive and adverse health impacts of a given project that may otherwise not be considered by decision-makers or environmental review. HIAs also provide recommendations to address identified adverse impacts.

A number of HIAs have been conducted on park and recreational facilities and have resulted in projects that lead to greater improvements in population and community health. Gaining an understanding of the health impacts of the proposed Ambassador Bridge expansion before the project moves forward, as well as considering evidence-based recommendations to improve the health impacts of the project, will improve health outcomes for surrounding communities in Detroit.

Human Impact Partners has conducted over 50 HIAs and other public health research projects in locations across the country, from California to Maine. Findings from our research and our recommendations have been integrated into policymaking, planning, and project design and implementation. We have also provided training and technical assistance to organizations in over 25 states as they conduct their first HIAs.

With 20 acres of green space and planned recreational facilities such as a waterfront promenade, a picnic area, sports fields, and restrooms, Riverside Park has the potential to be a rich community resource that benefits health for the residents of Southwest Detroit. On the other hand, the park is adjacent to a bridge with a high traffic volume, which may pose health risks to park users. Based on the following brief summary of some of the health impacts commonly associated with green space, recreational facilities, and parks adjacent to high-volume roadways, proposed changes to Riverside Park may cause health impacts that should be identified and mitigated.

#### Health impacts of green space

Exposure to green space, or land that is partly or completely covered with grass, trees, shrubs, and/or other vegetation, positively impacts health. For example, research indicates that activities in and views of green space lead to improvements in attention span and mental health, decreased asthma and obesity, and faster healing. Green space can also reduce noise pollution, which causes negative health impacts.

#### Health impacts of recreational facilities

Recreational facilities such as walking and biking trails and sports fields provide opportunities for physical activity, which has numerous positive impacts on health. Benefits include reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, weight control, improved mental health and mood, reduced risk of some cancers, and strengthened bones and muscles.

Picnic areas and restrooms encourage the overall usefulness of a park as well as encourage its use for social and community building activities, which positively impacts the health of a community.

#### Health impacts of high traffic density

Parks and recreation facilities that are located near roads with a high traffic density get used less. Thus, if parks are located adjacent to a high-traffic area, all of the aforementioned benefits of using parks may not be achieved. Research studies have also found that people generally exercise less in areas with high traffic volumes.

Vehicle traffic generates air pollutants that cause and exacerbate a wide variety of health conditions such as respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular illness, heart attacks, cancer, and premature birth and low birth weight babies. The expansion of a busy roadway can increase exposure to these pollutants for nearby residents, workers, and users of parks and recreation facilities. Vehicle traffic can also generate levels of noise that can negatively affect stress, hypertension, blood pressure, and heart disease.

*Health impacts of the proposed Ambassador Bridge expansion and associated changes to Riverside Park have not yet been adequately studied.* Changes in the usefulness of Riverside Park as a green space and recreation resource, as well as changes in usage of the park due to increased traffic volumes, have not been studied at all. While the Environmental Assessment conducted by Detroit International Bridge Company included an air quality analysis, it did not evaluate impacts that the bridge expansion may have on air quality for users of the park. An HIA could analyze impacts like these and offer predictions of anticipated benefits and risks to health. By offering evidence-based recommendations to mitigate any potential health risks, the HIA could help efficiently steer resources to health-promoting mitigations.

In addition, an HIA could incorporate the voices of nearby residents, who stand to be impacted by the project, into decision-making and encourage their buy-in. Riverside Park is located in Southwest Detroit, where there is already an extensive transportation network including three interstate freeways, an international rail tunnel, a network of multiple rail lines and rail yards, and the Ambassador Bridge. Residents in this area have already voiced their fears that while this infrastructure benefits the broader region and state, the negative impacts of so much transportation infrastructure are disproportionately borne at the neighborhood level. An HIA could evaluate the project's health implications in the context of cumulative impacts faced by this community, and propose ways to address any identified health impacts posed by the project.

In summary, an HIA would benefit this bridge expansion project by making a judgment about how the proposal will affect health, providing recommendations to improve health impacts, and incorporating voices of impacted stakeholders into decision-making about Riverside Park and the Ambassador Bridge. Please don't hesitate to contact Human Impact Partners if you have questions about the HIA process or how it may benefit your project.

Sincerely,



Celia Harris  
Human Impact Partners



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660 WOODWARD AVENUE, SUITE 1650  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226-3535  
PHONE 313-224-4550 TTY:311  
FAX 313-224-5505  
WWW.DETROITMI.GOV

September 20, 2011

Paul E. Opsommer  
Michigan House of Representatives  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

**Re: Federal and State Legal Restrictions on Sale of Riverside Park to Detroit  
International Bridge Company**

Dear Representative Opsommer:

This letter is sent in response to your written request, dated August 16, 2011, for further information concerning legal impediments to any transfer of the City of Detroit's Riverside Park to the Detroit International Bridge Company.

**The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, ("LWCFA"), 16 U.S.C. 4601-1, et seq, was enacted to provide funds to assist in the development and preservation of outdoor recreational resources. (See 16 U.S.C. 4601-4.) The LWCFA is administered by the National Park Service.

The LWCFA provides that where property is acquired or improved with LWCFA funds, it may not be converted to non-recreational use. Instead, such lands are to be used in perpetuity for public recreational purposes. See, generally, L & WCF Grants Manual, §660.3, Attachment B, Part IIB.

Under very narrow circumstances, the National Park Service may authorize the conversion of LWCFA parkland to non-recreational uses. To request such a conversion, the grantee must substitute land of equivalent fair market value and "reasonably equivalent usefulness and location." 16 U.S.C. §4601-8 (6)(3).

According to LWCFA regulations, NPS will only consider approval of a conversion if all of the following prerequisites are met:

- (1) All practical alternatives to the proposed conversion have been evaluated.
- (2) The fair market value of the property to be converted has been established and the



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property proposed for substitution is of at least equal fair market value . . . .

- (3) The property proposed for replacement is of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location as that being converted. . . .
- (4) The property proposed for substitution meets the eligibility requirements for L&WCF assisted acquisition. The replacement property must constitute or be part of a viable recreation area. . . .
- (5) In the case of assisted sites which are partially rather than wholly converted . . . the unconverted area must remain recreationally viable or be replaced as well.
- (6) All necessary coordination with other Federal agencies has been satisfactorily accomplished . . . .
- (7) The guidelines for environmental evaluation have been satisfactorily completed and considered by NPS during its review of the proposed 6(f)(3) action. . . .
- (8) State intergovernmental clearinghouse review procedures have been adhered to . . . .
- (9) The proposed conversion and substitution are in accord with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and/or equivalent recreation plans. See 36 C.F.R. § 59.3(b)

The National Park Service possesses broad authority to seek coercive remedies against LWCF grantees who violate the act. See L & WCF Grants Manual, §660.3, Attachment B, Part IIC and §675.

#### Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Act

Like the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Act ("MNRFTA"), codified at MCL 324.1901, et seq., was enacted to acquire land or rights in land for public recreational purposes and to develop public recreation facilities. See MCL 324.1903 (1).



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The MNRTFA is administered by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board of Trustees ("the Board"), and the Grants Management Office of the Department of Natural Resources ("DNR"). The Board has promulgated written policies relating to the MNRTFA. Board Policy 94.1 provides:

"Property acquired or developed with Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRF) assistance, including both State and local projects, shall be retained and preserved in its natural state including development needed to provide for outdoor public recreation use as set forth in the MNRTF application. Property acquired or developed with MNTRF assistance shall not be wholly or partially converted to other than public outdoor recreation use without the approval of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and MNRTF Board and the implementation of mitigation measures approved by the DNR and the Board. The Board shall adopt procedures that further define and delineate the implementation of this policy."

The Board has adopted Policy Implementation Procedures for Board Policy 94.1, which are attached. Prohibited conversions include the following:

- "Leasing or otherwise granting control of all or a portion of the MNRTF-assisted project area to another entity;"
- "The sale or transfer (including trading, giving away or granting permanent easements) to lands or rights in land within the MNRTF-assisted project area to another entity.
- "Permanently closing all of a portion of the MNRTF-assisted project area to the public."

Policy Implementation Procedures for Board Policy 94.1 also provides that "For project areas that have also received grant assistance under other programs, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, . . . the most stringent of the program requirements will govern any proposed conversion."

#### **Application of Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Act to Riverside Park.**

Riverside Park was acquired and improved with funds provided under both the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Act. Therefore, the City cannot sell the park to another entity, such as the Detroit International Bridge Company, or allow the park to be used for purposes other than public recreation, such as the erection of a privately-owned bridge. If the City were to sell Riverside Park or permit it to be used for the construction of a privately-owned bridge, this would expose the City to potential sanctions by



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both the federal government and the State of Michigan.

Under certain circumstances, a grantee of LWCFR or MNRTRFf funds may request approval from state and federal authorities to convert property to non-recreational purposes. However, this would be problematic in the present case for several reasons:

- First, as noted above, the grantee must substitute land of equivalent fair market value and "reasonably equivalent usefulness and location." Riverside Park, is, as its name indicates, located on the Detroit River, which greatly increases its market value. Few - if any - riverfront parcels exist of reasonably equivalent size and value, having reasonably equivalent usefulness, which are located in the same general area.
- Second, under LWCFR regulations, the National Park Service will only consider approval of a conversion if "All practical alternatives to the proposed conversion have been evaluated." Arguably, there are practical alternatives to the use of Riverside Park to construct an additional bridge to Canada, because another potential site, the New International Trade Crossing ("NITC") site, has been identified to serve this purpose.
- Third, conversion of LWCFR/ MNRTRFf parkland must be consistent with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan ("SCORP"). Michigan's SCORP (which is available on-line) evidences a strong commitment to not only maintaining the amount of LWCFR/ MNRTRFf parkland, but increasing public outdoor opportunities in the state. In particular, Michigan's SCORP recognizes that maintaining outdoor public recreation opportunities for residents of urban communities, such as Detroit, is an important priority. Michigan's SCORP notes:
  - **"Urban Opportunities**  
**An important case for targeted action is restoring or enhancing impaired outdoor recreation resources in urban environments.** Urban residents often have borne the burden of pollution, and nearby potential recreational environments such as urban waterfronts have been less than desirable recreation sites. The growing movement for greenways, walkable communities and restoration of degraded **urban natural resources** to provide quality outdoor recreation opportunities represents a priority resource conservation issue in Michigan's SCORP."  
(Michigan SCORP, 2008 2012, page 71, emphasis added.)
  - "The conservation of natural resources was rated as the most important of all the priorities of the 2003-2007 SCORP by voters and local park and recreation agency administrators in our statewide surveys for the 2008-





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2012 SCORP. Natural resource based recreation brings all into close contact with nature and provides a compelling rationale and commitment to conservation. **These opportunities need to be expanded and given priority in urban areas.**"

(Michigan SCORP, 2008 2012, page 81, emphasis added.)

"The supply of recreational lands and facilities is not always readily accessible for much of the state's population and visitors, with the majority of public land in the northern two thirds of the state where 15 percent of the population reside. However, restoration of *urban environments* coupled with development/ renovation of outdoor recreation facilities in or near population centers is feasible and can provide significant outdoor recreation opportunities for the majority of the state's population. Land acquisition by local and state agencies in and near urban areas also provides increasingly valued islands of green space." (Michigan SCORP, 2008 2012, page 9, emphasis added.)

Fourth, requests for conversion of LWCF/ MNRTFA parkland are committed to the discretion of state and federal authorities. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has already indicated its desire that Riverside Park continue to be used for public recreation purposes. In a 2009 letter to the City (see attached), MDNR noted that Riverside Park was acquired and maintained with LWCF/ MNRTFA funds, and that as a condition of receiving these grants, the City committed to "keeping Riverside Park open and available for outdoor public recreation." The letter went on to acknowledge that a conversion request could be filed, but that:

"The Department would prefer the City to operate and maintain the facilities for the purpose for which these grant opportunities provided assistance for the development of Riverside Park."

The letter's author concluded by stating:

"I look forward to seeing Riverside Park available for the public recreation uses that it was originally intended to provide."

Fifth, the transfer of Riverside Park to DIBC for the construction of a privately-owned bridge would be contrary to the City's Master Plan of Policies ("the Master Plan"). The City's Master Plan shows Riverside Park as "PRC" - Recreation, and expressly includes the following in its "City-wide Policies for Parks, Recreation and Open Space:



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GOAL 4: Protect and utilize the riverfront as an open space and recreational area.

Policy 4.1: Require development projects to include public access along the riverfront.

**Policy 4.2: Protect and maintain existing parks and other public spaces along the riverfront. (Emphasis added.)**

A formal amendment to the City's Master Plan would be necessary for any change in land use. The Municipal Planning Act (P.A. 285 of 1931) spells out the steps for master plan amendments, which include public hearings, and require municipalities to notify and seek comments from neighboring jurisdictions, the county, the region, and any registered public utility company, railroad, or other government entities regarding the municipality's proposed amendment of revision of an existing master plan.

Sixth, only the grant recipient, the City of Detroit, may request conversion of Riverside Park to non-recreational uses, and this decision would be within the discretion of the Mayor's office, based on an analysis of multiple considerations relating to the best interests of the citizens of the City and other public policy factors. While the City's position could change at some point in the future, at the present time, there is no plan by the City to initiate this process. (Moreover, even if the conversion of Riverside Park were initiated and approved by state and local authorities, the actual transfer of Riverside Park would have to be approved by the Detroit City Council. There is no evidence that the Detroit City Council supports the transfer of the Park to DIBC at this time.)

Seventh, even if the both the Mayor's office and the Detroit City Council were to determine that it was in the best interests of its residents and consistent with broader public policy to transfer Riverside Park to DIBC to construct a privately-owned bridge, and that all of the requirements for such a conversion existed, this is a multi-year process. It would be improper to make decisions related to the NITC Project based on the assumption that Riverside Park can be transferred to the Detroit International Bridge Company unless and until this process has been initiated and completed.

In summary, both the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Act would prohibit the City of Detroit from transferring Riverside Park to the Detroit International Bridge Company or allowing the park to be used for the construction of



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a privately-owned bridge at this time. The City could request approval of such a conversion from state and local authorities, but the City has no plan at this time to initiate this process, and the conversion process and approval of the transfer would be problematic for multiple reasons in this instance in any event.

Please contact me if you have any other questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eric B. Gaabo".

Eric B. Gaabo  
Senior Assistant Corporation Counsel  
Direct Dial: (313) 237-3052  
E-mail: [gaabe@detroitmi.gov](mailto:gaabe@detroitmi.gov)

**riversidepark - Park Conversion**

---

**From:** Todd Goss [REDACTED]  
**To:** <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/24/2017 11:00 AM  
**Subject:** Park Conversion

---

The purpose of this email is to provide support for the proposed conversion of park land at Riverside Park. As part of this conversion process, it is our understanding that the park will be renovated, providing additional recreation space for the community. Additional recreation space allows more residence to use the space, while promoting better health to the community, a win-win considering the obesity epidemic that has swept our nation.

It appears that all of the terms for the conversion have been met by both parties. As such, we hope that this will be a swift conversion process, so the renovations can begin, and be enjoyed by the entire community.

Thank you,

Todd & Kattie Goss

**riversidepark - Riverside Park, public comments attached**

**From:** Rashida Tlaib <rashida@sugarlaw.org>  
**To:** "detroitrecreation@detroitmi.gov" <detroitrecreation@detroitmi.gov>, "De...  
**Date:** 4/24/2017 1:15 PM  
**Subject:** Riverside Park, public comments attached  
**Attachments:** RashidaTlaib.PublicComments.April2017.pdf

April 24, 2017

Mr. David A. Miller, Interim Director  
 Detroit Parks and Recreation Department  
 18100 Meyers

Detroit, MI 48235

[detroitrecreation@detroitmi.gov](mailto:detroitrecreation@detroitmi.gov)

[riversidepark@detroitmi.gov](mailto:riversidepark@detroitmi.gov)

Mr. Steve Debrabander, Manager  
 Grants Management Section  
 Finance and Operations Division  
 Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
 Constitution Hall  
 525 West Allegan St.  
 Lansing, MI 48909

[DebrabanderS@michigan.gov](mailto:DebrabanderS@michigan.gov)

Dear Director Miller & Mr. Debrabander,

I regret that I am unable to be at the hearing on April 25, 2017 regarding the conversion request of Riverside Park by the Detroit International Bridge Company (Bridge Company). I ask that you accept the following statement and respectfully request that it be submitted into the official public comments.

As a longtime resident of southwest Detroit and the former Michigan State Representative for the area that encompasses Riverside Park, I have witnessed firsthand the long fight to keep Riverside Park a public space. I urge the relevant agencies to consider the history, as well as legal requirements attached to Riverside Park due to federal Land & Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) and the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund Act (MNRTF). The proposed conversion does not meet the necessary requirements to protect the public, retain public use, and more importantly, protect the health of the public. Your agencies will also conclude that a decision is impossible due to the lack of documents, assessment, and testing of the properties involved.

#### History is important.

The host community of Riverside Park (including the "extension" portion) has dealt with numerous challenges to keep the park accessible to public. Since 2001, the Bridge Company has attempted to take the property for private use, first by illegally fencing off the park<sup>[1]</sup>. However, the City of Detroit was successful in a trespass lawsuit against the Company. The basketball courts and baseball diamonds that existed prior to the illegal taking by the Bridge Company disappeared; all that remained was construction debris they dumped on the park. The Bridge Company's persistence to take the park for private use continued as they pushed for the state of Michigan to close it off to the public because it was contaminated. DTE is actively remediating the property, but also discovered the Bridge Company "installing large diameter utilities along the eastern portion of the site without City of Detroit permission," disrupting the soil and leading to further contamination.<sup>[2]</sup> DTE has already begun the remediation process and has been working to open Riverside Park to the public soon. However, right on time, the Bridge Company submitted this conversion application. It is important to note that in 2009, the Bridge Company misled the U.S. Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Administration, and the State of Michigan by illegally claiming ownership of Riverside Park. The federal government came to the conclusion that they segmented the Gateway Project in such a way that was misleading to bypass the proper process, including environment and public impact requirements. The circuit court arrested the owner and president of the Bridge Company because they refused to comply with the court order.<sup>[3]</sup>

All this is to put all agencies on notice that the applicant has a history in not complying with the law and not acting in good faith to ensure that the public interests are parallel. Please make sure you are double checking all the claims and documents in the application.

#### City Overlooking Legal Requirements

In addition, this whole process has been tainted by underlying political pressure that has the ability to sway our city government to overlook requirements for the property. The levels of contamination, clean-up costs, and methods of remediation are not mentioned in the City's request. A baseline environmental assessment conducted on the City's behalf states that "volatile organic compounds and semi-VOCs above Part 201 generic residential cleanup criteria" are present.<sup>[4]</sup> There are numerous other contaminants on the mitigation parcel including arsenic, mercury, lead and benzene, to name a few. Since these contaminants make the mitigation parcel unusable for recreational purposes we would urge you to not consider any conversion until remediation has occurred. Our City may be swapping uncontaminated land for land that is contaminated. Another requirement that must be met is that before any approval from the State or National Park Service (NPS) occurs, the mitigation parcel must be appraised after remediation occurs. If remediation does not occur pre-conversion, then the City must determine the cost of remediation and factor these costs when ascertaining the parcel's fair market value. Approving this project before the site is remediated is in conflict with the legal requirements LWCF. The LWCF and MNRTF require that "all practical alternatives to the proposed conversion be evaluated." No other alternatives have been reviewed.

The City's claim that it "has considered and rejected all practical alternatives to the Proposed Conversion, as no such alternative would confer comparable benefits to the community or provide the Park with as much added recreational value," is misleading. The City has not evaluated those alternatives in the Application to allow the public to properly weigh in and to allow the DNR to decide whether the evaluation was sufficient and if so whether there truly was no better practical alternative to the proposed

conversion. Furthermore, the City seems to continue to mislead the public and not follow the accurate process set by federal law because there is no proper evaluation of the public health and outdoor recreation consequences of the bridge expansion. Given that this is being proposed in an environmental justice area, the public and the DNR cannot properly consider all the applicable costs and benefits. Since the burden is on the applicant to make its case for conversion, the application must be denied since the City has not met its burden.

#### Recreational Usefulness

The LWCF and MNRTF require consideration of how a conversion will affect the outdoor recreational usefulness of a site.<sup>[5]</sup> While a conversion might not substantially affect the size or value of recreational land, some projects can negatively affect the use and enjoyment of the land after the conversion has occurred. Increased traffic from the proposed expansion will reduce accessibility to the park. Noise and air pollution from vehicles will make use of the park certainly less enjoyable and may also present health issues to those trying to use the park.

Bridge Company's application is full of generalizations and clichés about the full public health analysis.

The truth is that a health impact assessment is necessary. Health Impact Assessments (HIA) are tools that determine a project's or policy's impacts on population health. An HIA is the only true way to know: 1) what the health consequences will be when one compares the Park without conversion given the improvements already made and those yet to come, with the Park post-conversion; and 2) the health consequences for a population of Park users that, should a conversion occur which express purpose is to expand a major international thoroughfare directly adjacent to the Park, will now be just as close to the Ambassador Bridge but exposed to the pollution of a near doubling of that thoroughfare.

#### Conversion Applications Fails to Meet Requirements

Public space on the Detroit River is rare in southwest Detroit due to the Port and other industry, so it is critical that Riverside Park remains an outdoor public space. No amount of money or political relationships should be able to taint this process. I respectfully request on behalf of my neighbors, families that depend on the public sector to protect their best interest, that the conversion application be denied 1) based on the mere fact that it is incomplete, 2) conversion doesn't meet legal requirements and 3) the other property is too contaminated.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rashida Tlaib, Resident, [REDACTED] Detroit, MI 48216

*Live in 48216 neighborhood with my family  
Bridgeward Detroit, member  
Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice, Attorney  
Former Michigan State Representative, District 06, 2009-2014*

Rashida Tlaib  
Maurice & Jane Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice  
4605 Cass Ave.  
Detroit, Michigan 48201  
(313) 993-4505 (office)  
[REDACTED] (cell)  
Fax: (313) 887-8470  
rashida@sugarlaw.org  
www.sugarlaw.org  
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\*\*\*\*\*

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[1] <http://wdet.org/posts/2015/07/13/81102-understanding-riverside-park/>

[2] <http://wdet.org/posts/2015/07/13/80991-detroits-riverside-park-vote/>

[3] [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/12/manuel-matty-maroun-sentence-ambassador-bridge-gateway-project\\_n\\_1201632.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/12/manuel-matty-maroun-sentence-ambassador-bridge-gateway-project_n_1201632.html)

[4] NTH Consultants, Ltd., Baseline Environmental Assessment 3801 West Jefferson Property Detroit, Michigan, NTH Project No. 62-140614-100B (2015).

[5] 36 C.F.R. § 59.3(b)(3) & (5).

**riversidepark - Riverside Park, Detroit**

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**From:** Andrew Goddeeris [REDACTED]  
**To:** <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>, <debrabanderS@michigan.gov>  
**Date:** 4/24/2017 2:33 PM  
**Subject:** Riverside Park, Detroit

---

Dear Mr. Miller and Mr. Debrabander,

I'm a lifetime Detroit resident, and a current resident of Southwest Detroit, writing you with deep concern about the Riverside Park conversion application by the Ambassador Bridge Company that is currently under review.

I am urging you to consider the legal requirements of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund Act as applied to this application. A review will show that the proposed conversion does not meet the necessary requirements to protect the public's health and retain public uses. Furthermore, because of a lack of documents and environmental assessments, making a legal determination on the conversion application is all but impossible. The Bridge Company must be made to comply with our laws if it wants our land. The proposal as currently written will destroy the peaceful nature of the park and subject my community to arsenic, mercury, lead, and benzene that the City *knows* have not been remediated.

The Bridge Company has a well known history of deceit and misleading the public. They have been miserable neighbors to the people of Southwest Detroit for decades, and they should not be rewarded for their past treachery with regard to Riverside Park, including illegally seizing its land in years passed. I urge you to apply the skepticism your job requires and put the people of Detroit ahead of corporate interests or scoring points for a political campaign.

You may not have to live with the fallout of your decision on this proposal, but I do.

Thanks for your consideration.

Andy

--

**Andrew Goddeeris**  
J.D., M.U.P., University of Michigan 2015  
[REDACTED]

**riversidepark - Riverside Park**

---

**From:** Jane Slaughter [REDACTED]  
**To:** "riversidepark@detroitmi.gov" <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/24/2017 8:59 PM  
**Subject:** Riverside Park

---

Dear Mr. Miller,

I urge you to reject the Bridge Company's request to convert part of Riverside Park for its pie-in-the-sky second span.

The Bridge Co. has a history of not complying with all sorts of laws. To accept its incomplete application would be to let the city be played for a sucker once again. The Bridge Co. has not shown how it would protect public health nor do remediation of the contaminated soil. Please don't be cowed by this corporate arrogance.

Jane Slaughter  
[REDACTED]  
Detroit, MI 48209



**riversidepark - Riverside Park conversion**

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**From:** Beth Hougas Patton [REDACTED]  
**To:** <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/24/2017 9:56 PM  
**Subject:** Riverside Park conversion

---

I urge the relevant agencies to consider the legal requirements attached to Riverside Park due to federal Land & Water Conversation Fund Act and the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund Act. **Your result will lead you to conclude that the conversion does not meet the necessary requirements that protects the public, retain public use, and more importantly, the health of the public.** Your agencies will also conclude that a decision is impossible due to the lack of documents, assessments and testing of the properties involved.

The applicant has a history in not complying with the law and not acting in good faith to ensure that the public interests are parallel. Please make sure you are double checking all the claims and documents in the application.

A baseline environmental assessment conducted on the City's behalf states that "volatile organic compounds and semi-VOCs above Part 201 generic residential cleanup criteria," **including arsenic, mercury, lead and benzene** on the mitigation parcel. Since these contaminants make the mitigation parcel unusable for recreational purposes we would urge you to **not consider any conversion until remediation has occurred.**

The LWCF and MNRTF requires that "all practical alternatives to the proposed conversion be evaluated." No other alternatives have been reviewed.

The LWCF and MNRTF require consideration of how a conversion will affect the outdoor recreational usefulness of a site. Increased traffic from the proposed expansion will reduce accessibility to the park. Noise and air pollution from vehicles will make use of the park certainly less enjoyable and may also present health issues to those trying to use the park.

Thank you,  
Beth Patton

[REDACTED]  
A concerned local resident  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** MD [REDACTED]  
**To:** <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/25/2017 11:38 AM  
**Subject:** DENY MAROUN'S LAND GRAB

David A. Miller,

The Bridge company has been a terrible neighbor to people who live in the Hubbard Farms Neighborhood. The Bridge Company has a long history of disregarding the law and its promises have zero credibility when it comes to the public good. I urge you to oppose this grab of public land by a private entity with a very poor record.

Sincerely,

Mark Dancey  
Detroit

**riversidepark - Riverside Park land swap :: An unethical deal with one of the city's most infamous slumlords**

---

**From:** Sarah Burger [REDACTED]  
**To:** "riversidepark@detroitmi.gov" <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/25/2017 11:47 AM  
**Subject:** Riverside Park land swap :: An unethical deal with one of the city's most infamous slumlords

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Mr. David A. Miller:

I urge you to consider the legal requirements attached to Riverside Park due to federal Land & Water Conversation Fund Act and the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund Act. Your result will lead you to conclude that the conversion does not meet the necessary requirements that protects the public, retain public use, and more importantly, the health of the public. Your agency will also conclude that a decision is impossible due to the lack of documents, assessments and testing of the properties involved.

Here are some important points to consider:

- 1) The applicant has a history in not complying with the law and not acting in good faith to ensure that the public interests are parallel. Please make sure you are double checking all the claims and documents in the application.
- 2) A baseline environmental assessment conducted on the City's behalf states that "volatile organic compounds and semi-VOCs above Part 201 generic residential cleanup criteria," including arsenic, mercury, lead and benzene on the mitigation parcel. Since these contaminants make the mitigation parcel unusable for recreational purposes we would urge you to not consider any conversion until remediation has occurred.
- 3) The LWCF and MNRTF requires that "all practical alternatives to the proposed conversion be evaluated." No other alternatives have been reviewed.
- 4) The LWCF and MNRTF require consideration of how a conversion will affect the outdoor recreational usefulness of a site. Increased traffic from the proposed expansion will reduce accessibility to the park. Noise and air pollution from vehicles will make use of the park certainly less enjoyable and may also present health issues to those trying to use the park.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.  
Best Regards,  
Sarah Burger

Sarah Burger  
Detroit Institute of Arts



DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

**riversidepark - Riverside Park conversion deal Detroit**

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**From:** nailed [REDACTED]  
**To:** "riversidepark@detroitmi.gov" <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>, "debrabande...  
**Date:** 4/25/2017 7:18 PM  
**Subject:** Riverside Park conversion deal Detroit

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I do NOT support the conversion of Ambassador Bridge Co. land for the expansion of Riverside Park. We already have plenty of land to make Riverside into a better park--and it doesn't necessarily need to be expanded just to help Matty Maroun unload a contaminated parcel in exchange for another one he wants more. A parcel that Kwame wanted him to pay \$10 million for! Detroit needs to STOP being such a pushover to this land speculator's whims and inappropriate demands. Do not sell/trade prime public land for less than it is worth! We already have enough contaminated land to clean up on the taxpayer's back--we don't need any more. And given Maroun's history of poor stewardship of his properties, and his illegal tendency to willfully close-off public access to public spaces, we should be approaching this deal with a much more skeptical eye. I own a home in the area, which is surrounded in Bridge Co. land, so I have a personal vested interest in this matter.

Sent with [ProtonMail](#) Secure Email.

**riversidepark - The New Park**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/25/2017 9:52 PM  
**Subject:** The New Park

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I just wanted to say any new park with all the up to date amenities called for at Riverside Park, for which all the residents of the City of Detroit are able to enjoy, is a good deal! ...no matter the cost, even tho I understand it isn't basically costing the City anything...Others are funding it!

Thank you you for taking my comments into consideration.

KS

**From:** Josephine Budnick [REDACTED]  
**To:** <Riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/26/2017 12:16 AM

Just writing this email to say I support the building of the Riverside Skate Park!!

Sincerely,  
Josephine Budnick

**riversidepark - Support for Proposed Conversion of Riverside Park**

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**From:** Dan Arking [REDACTED]  
**To:** <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/26/2017 11:25 AM  
**Subject:** Support for Proposed Conversion of Riverside Park

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Dear Mr. Flournoy,

I write to enthusiastically support the Detroit Parks and Recreation Department's proposed conversion of Riverside Park. By way of full disclosure, I am a City of Detroit employee and have participated in the Recreation Department's conversion application; however, I write these comments in my personal capacity as a Detroit resident, a frequent user of the City's parks, and an eager supporter of opening the Detroit riverfront to greater public recreational use.

Under the Recreation Department's proposal, the easternmost 3.78 acres of Riverfront Park will be converted, and this conversion will be mitigated by the addition of about 4.71 acres of formerly industrial property to the west of the existing Park. This exchange has been made possible by the City's land exchange agreement with the Detroit International Bridge Company and will result in a significantly improved Park in many ways:

- First, because the mitigation parcel is nearly an acre larger than the conversion parcel, the overall size of Riverside Park will increase.
- Second, given that the conversion parcel includes less than 200 linear feet of river frontage and the mitigation parcel includes over 500 feet of river frontage, overall access to the river will increase significantly. Riverfrontage is an incredibly important recreational amenity, not only for boaters and anglers, but also for bicyclists and pedestrians who enjoy being able to spend time outside along the River. The huge crowds who enjoy the City's river walk along its eastern river front prove this every sunny day.
- Third, the mitigation parcel provides much more recreational value than the conversion parcel. The conversion parcel is actually bisected by a private railroad, meaning that it actually consists of two separate parcels of approximately 2.5 and 1.3 acres. Neither of these areas provides very much room for substantial recreational amenities, such as a ball field, basketball courts, or playgrounds. By contrast, the mitigation parcel is a contiguous 4.71 acres, which will provide plenty of space for large and valuable recreational amenities. The City has indicated that it plans to develop the mitigation parcel with amenities including a sledding hill, public amphitheater, bioswales and other natural landscaping, and walking paths. These amenities could never fit on the conversion parcel.
- Fourth, expanding Riverside Park to the west will enable the City to create a proper formal entrance to the Park at the southern terminus of West Grand Boulevard. Riverside Park has historically suffered from limited connectivity to its neighboring communities. Improving the entrance to the Park at Grand Boulevard will substantially improve that connectivity and provide the neighboring communities with vastly greater access to the Park and the River.
- Finally, under the terms of the land exchange agreement, the conversion will leverage a variety of additional benefits for Riverside Park, including an additional \$2 million that will be invested in the Park's recreational amenities, as well as an easement across the conversion



parcel to ensure that even though it will be converted, park users will retain access to the River and no riverfrontage will be lost as part of the proposed conversion.

Many of the cities where I have lived, including New York City, Chicago, and Washington, DC have reclaimed their waterfronts for recreational use, all with huge benefits to residents and visitors alike. The proposed conversion, and the redevelopment of Riverside Park that the conversion would enable, will be equally transformative for southwest Detroit, a community that has historically borne the brunt of heavy industrial use and environmental injustice. Access to riverfront recreational space is an incredibly valuable amenity and can substantially improve the quality of life in the City for residents and visitors alike.

As a Detroit resident, I enjoy using the City's park spaces for a variety of purposes and particularly relish the opportunity to spend time along the River. The river walk, which runs along the eastern riverfront, provides an ideal venue to ride my bicycle, go for a run, or walk my dogs, and I am very excited by the prospect of being able to continue these activities along the western riverfront too someday soon.

For all of these reasons, I enthusiastically support the City's proposed conversion of Riverside Park.

Sincerely,  
Daniel Arking

**From:** Renaye Miller [REDACTED]  
**To:** <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/26/2017 12:07 AM  
**Subject:** Riverside skate park

Hello my name is Toba Davis and I am for the riverside skatepark 100%. Detroit needs a real full fledged skatepark. After wigle recreation center is demolished, everyone that calls the wig home i.e the skateboarders the basketball players the kids that come up there after school to skateboard or watch people skateboard are going to be devastated. Fun fact: in the past 3 year that the wig has been open people of all colors and walks of life gather there everyday and there hasn't been one fight...can you say that about any other place in this city?

**riversidepark - Hearing**

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**From:** Vic Abl [REDACTED]  
**To:** <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/26/2017 8:48 PM  
**Subject:** Hearing  
**Cc:** Rashida Tlaib [REDACTED] Joe Rashid [REDACTED]

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I attended your hearing last night, and came away terribly disappointed in the format. It felt like a pep rally to show how great the city thinks the deal they negotiated with DIBC is. Well, most of us in the neighborhood do not support it and didn't really have a chance to give that feedback, probably because you are aware of the opposition. It was very disingenuous to have a "hearing" like that. I want to request another one, with opportunity for public dialog.

In the meantime, please register my opposition to the entire process. We all have experienced over and over the DIBC's lack of consideration for the neighborhood and do not want a 2nd span, which this "deal" is helping to move forward. We request the city advocate for a full EIS on the second span, as well as a BEA for the land to become part of the park that will set the remediation level. NO land conversion should occur until remediation is COMPLETE, as well as all official processes have completed with relevant governmental agencies.

I also feel we are not getting a "world class park," as the mayor promised, with what was presented yesterday. The negotiation with DIBC led to a whole \$5m, far less than is needed. Without additional funding, which you admit you do not have, we'll have an average park at best, on prime land that should have fetched far more money from a billionaire.

The whole process you are forcing on us is ridiculous, and i don't support it. Have real dialog with the public, or don't bother with any more of your perfunctory hearings.

Vic Abl  
[REDACTED]

**riversidepark - Riverside Park Skatepark**

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**From:** "Farner, Erich J" [REDACTED]  
**To:** "riversidepark@detroitmi.gov" <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 4/28/2017 12:22 PM  
**Subject:** Riverside Park Skatepark

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To Whom It May Concern:

Having a dedicated skatepark as a part of the city and of an official park would be incredible in Detroit. As I'm sure you've taken notice over the last several years, the popularity of the sport continues to grow and Detroit is known around the world for our cityscape. Having a confirmed and dedicated part of the city would mean so much to the skateboard community.

The last two parks on city land were built on generous donations by people and organizations that care about the city, and more importantly the youth of the city. The problem is that there are end dates for these safe spots. The current announcement about The Wig is an example of this. I understand the need for the city to grow and develop space for that economic growth, but without parks and outlets for kids of the city to be active we lose focus on what's important; the youth of the city will shape the future of this city. The skatepark at Riverside is a step in the right direction.

Thank you,

Erich Farner  
Sr. Account Manager

[REDACTED]

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\*\*\*\*\*

**From:** Tim Karl [REDACTED]  
**To:** <riversidepark@detroitmi.gov>  
**Date:** 5/4/2017 8:19 PM  
**Subject:** Riverside Conversion

I fully support the conversion of Riverside Park. The nearly extra acre and extra water frontage is a win for the City and its residents.

Sent from my iPad