

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Marie McCormick, Executive Director
(734) 927-4901, mmccormick@therouge.org

October 12, 2018 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Why PARC Matters to Friends of the Rouge

Move to repurposed facility in Plymouth enables nonprofit to better serve mission and community needs

Plymouth, Mich. – In September 2018, the Friends of the Rouge (FOTR) moved to the Plymouth Arts and Recreation Complex (PARC) from their long-time home on the campus of the University of Michigan-Dearborn. The decision to move to PARC was made after almost a year-long investigation of potential new spaces across the 48 communities in the Rouge River watershed. The FOTR had dozens of options – and invitations – to move to various spaces across Southeast Michigan. After a recommendation from Traci Sincock, Maybury State Park Supervisor, to explore PARC, Marie McCormick, FOTR Executive Director, requested a tour of the facility.

“We had very specific needs when searching for a new home,” stated Marie McCormick, “space for a large conference room, shared meeting rooms, onsite place to host workshops and build-out of a functional laboratory.

“We also needed a large amount of first-floor storage with easy vehicle access, easy access to running water for event cleanups – and that was surprisingly difficult to find when paired with the other requirements.”

PARC not only met those needs but greatly exceeded them – providing 3,000 square feet of office space in the old library, and 300 square feet of space in the plumber’s garage with round-a-bout access for trailers and vans. The much-needed space includes storage for waders, bug trays, gardening equipment and supplies, and the incredible amount of volunteer equipment used for river cleanups to name a few. PARC also offers several shared conference rooms that can be reserved for special events, including the “Main Conference Room,” and the “Michigan Room,” as well as a 300 seat auditorium and an annex auditorium.

Additionally, the facility offers collaborative opportunities that most other business fronts can’t provide. With nearly 30 other organizations within the facility, the FOTR has already started in-sourcing needs for events such as food and music and plans to source artists for in house art installations and other promotional needs. “The collaborative spirit here at PARC is unlike any other facility we toured” added McCormick, “we feel so exceptionally welcomed and appreciated – it already feels like home.”

Also, with redevelopment on the forefront of PARC's future, the FOTR has already stepped up in applying for funding to support transformative sustainable landscaping for the site. This includes plans for permeable pavers, over one acre of rain gardens, attractive outdoor seating and gathering spaces to name a few.

"We wish to take a leadership role in assisting the PARC as they redevelop the parking lot and outdoor spaces to include practices that go above and beyond to protect the Rouge River," added McCormick, "we are so excited to be here at the start of this work – with PARC's incredible support for this vision as a shining example of redevelopment, re-purposing, sustainability, and community engagement."

On top of all the amenities and collaborative opportunities, PARC met the final sticking point – cost. Having an affordable space with access to a collaborative, community-focused facility in the heart of a safe, thriving, walkable-downtown provides the Friends of the Rouge and all of the other tenants here in PARC an opportunity that couldn't be realized without this type of facility.

"If we had to pay for the square footage that for-profits have to handle – we'd be priced out of the city," commented McCormick. "We hope that our history of community trust and leadership will bring a value to the city of Plymouth and Plymouth Township. Our reception in the community has already been incredible – and we want the folks who live here to know that we couldn't be here without them and without their support of PARC. PARC has literally made it possible for us to call Plymouth our new headquarters."

###

Friends of the Rouge (FOTR) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1986 to raise awareness about the need to clean up the Rouge River in southeast Michigan. Their mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the Rouge River watershed through stewardship, education, and collaboration.