WERNER



May 2019



Funding for this strategic plan was provided by the Erb Family Foundation and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

The Lower Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee is staffed and chaired by the Friends of the Rouge and others participating in the strategic planning process, including the cities of Allen Park, Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Detroit, Inkster, Melvindale, River Rouge, Wayne and Westland, Canton Charter Township, and Wayne County.





# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction	1
The Planning Process	17
Recommendations	21

# Appendix

- A. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- B. Public Meeting One Feedback
- C. Public Meeting Two Feedback
- **D. ADA Access Site Features**
- E. Bridge List
- F. Brochure
- G. Sign Standards

# **Access Site Descriptions**

Canton Center Road
Morton Taylor Trailhead
Lotz Road
Commerce Court
Newburgh Road
Goudy Park
Dynamite Park
Venoy Dorsey Park
Downtown Inkster
Inkster Park
Dearborn Hills Golf Course
Ford Field Park
Rouge River Gateway Trail
Rotunda Drive
Kessey Fieldhouse
Fordson Island
Fort Street Bridge Park
Forman Park
Belanger Park

# **Tables**

3.1	Access Sites	47
3.2	Distances Between Access Sites	48
Ma	ps	
1.1	Rouge River Watershed	4
1.2	Study Area	5
1.3	<b>Regional Non-Motorized Trails</b>	9
1.4	Michigan's Iron Belle Trail in	
	Southeast Michigan	10
1.5	Potential Duel Lower Rouge	
	Greenway and Lower River Rouge	
	Water Trail Connections	11
3.1	Lower Rouge Access Sites	49
3.2	Lower Rouge Access Sites	50
3.3	Lower Rouge Access Sites	51
3.4	Lower Rouge Access Sites	52
3.5	Lower Rouge Access Sites	53
3.6	Lower Rouge Access Sites	54
3.7	Bridges	58
3.8	Interpretive Signs	63
3.9	Interpretive Signs	64



# **CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION**

# **ORIGIN OF THE WATER TRAIL**

For the last 12 years, Friends of the Rouge (FOTR) has worked to organize and facilitate different ways to bring people to the Rouge River for recreational enjoyment. In 2003, FOTR began organizing paddling (canoe/kayak) trips on the Rouge. These early paddling trips were designed to help alter the perception of the Rouge as a polluted waterway, showing people that 40 years of restoration efforts had effectively returned the river to life and that the river could be used for recreation.

Due to the growth and popularity of the paddling trips over time, FOTR began offering two formal guided paddling trips every year. Through these established paddling trips and concerted efforts to explore the navigable branches of the Rouge, FOTR determined that the water levels of the lower branch of the river are consistent enough to support a water trail. In addition, despite encountering over 170 logjams, a three-day expedition along the Rouge in 2011 confirmed its potential as a water trail. In 2012, FOTR partnered with communities along the river, two local liveries, local paddlers and the National Park Service to begin developing a water trail on the Rouge River. Among other things, these collective efforts resulted in a paddling guide that highlighted interesting and open sections of the river to paddle, along with launch sites and points of interest.

In 2018, recognizing the continual need to connect people to the river, the extraordinary popularity of paddlesports, the growing development of water trails in southeast Michigan (and the entire state) and an opportunity to leverage the water trail for economic development in communities and downtowns along the river, FOTR kicked off a comprehensive planning effort to develop a *Strategic Plan* for the water trail. With generous funding from the Erb Family Foundation and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), this Strategic Plan provides the framework and direction for the sustainable development and management of the water trail.

# WHAT IS A WATER TRAIL, AND WHAT IS THE LOWER ROUGE RIVER WATER TRAIL?

A water trail is a designated route on a navigable waterway such as a river, bay or canal that is designed, implemented and managed to foster educational and recreational experiences for the user. Water trails are intended primarily for non-motorized uses such as kayaking, canoeing and stand-up paddleboarding.

The Lower Rouge River Water Trail is a 27-mile paddling route through 10 communities in Wayne County that reveals a river of two personalities. From its western reaches in Canton, the water trail carries paddlers through a series of parks (mainly owned by Wayne County) and heavily forested floodplains to the confluence with the main branch of the Rouge River, just downstream from the Henry Ford Estate Dam in Dearborn. From there, the water trail passes through the

#### Friends of the Rouge (FOTR)

Friends of the Rouge is a non-profit organization whose mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the Rouge River watershed through stewardship, education, and collaboration. channelized section of the river and into the heart of Detroit's industrial complex, including the Ford Rouge Plant, before it culminates at the Detroit River.

At the time of this writing, there is just one formal access site along the western reaches of the water trail, located in the City of Wayne (note: the City of Dearborn has funding to develop two formal access sites in 2019). However, there are a number of informal access sites where paddlers have traditionally accessed the river. These access sites are primarily located in parks or on land owned by Wayne County. In some areas along this stretch of the river, the tree canopy is so encompassing that first-time paddlers are hard pressed to realize they are paddling through the urban landscape of southeast Michigan. While beautiful, severe weather and seasonal changes, coupled with heavy clay soils and an overabundance of impervious surfaces, can result in frequent flash-flooding and/or severe water-level fluctuations that make this section of the river especially susceptible to fallen trees and logjams. Given the the lack of easy access in this area of the river, opening logjams is especially difficult. As a result, paddlers in this section of the river should expect frequent closures and/or portages. Despite these challenges, there are still large sections of the river in this area that are usually open for paddling.

The river below the confluence with the main branch is channelized and wide and therefore not susceptible to flooding, logjams or water-level fluctuations. Beginning at the confluence, this 7.4-mile section of the water trail also has just a handful of formal access sites at this time. However, there are plans and dedicated funding to develop more. In addition, there may be opportunities to connect to existing Wayne County parkland and unique cultural landmarks such as Greenfield Village. Paddlers are treated to a unique perspective of the automotive history and industrial buildings and machinery that span the banks of this section of the river, including the Ford Rouge Complex. Paddlers can circumnavigate Zug Island and may encounter freighters near the confluence with the Detroit River. Despite its harsh surroundings, wildlife including bald eagles can often be seen along this stretch of the river. This section of the water trail terminates at Belanger Park on the Detroit River, with spectacular views of the Ambassador Bridge and downtown Detroit.

#### Lower Rouge River Water Trail

The western reaches of the water trail are characterized by beautiful natural surroundings and frequent logjams.



Photo: FOTR

#### Lower Rouge River Water Trail

The eastern reaches of the water trail are channelized and characterized by industrial surroundings and potential interaction with freighters.



Photo: FOTR

# WHO WILL MAKE USE OF THE WATER TRAIL?

As previously noted, the number of people who use the Rouge River for paddling continues to increase. The steady increase in use parallels national trends for all paddlesports. According to the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), paddlesports, largely fueled by stand-up paddleboarding and kayaking, are one of the fastest growing outdoor activities in the United States. A 2015 Special Report on Paddlesports prepared by the OIA notes that more than 21.7 million people — or 7.4% of all Americans — participated in paddling activities in 2014. This marks an increase of more than 3 million participants since the OIA began collecting data in 2010. Kayaking, which is the most popular form of paddling, had approximately 13 million participants in 2014. This increase in use has been driven by several factors, including the relatively low cost of equipment, an increased number of accessible access sites on nearby waterways, and the fact that people of all ages and abilities can participate.

According to a 2017 study commissioned by the Huron River Watershed Council, the nearby Huron River Water Trail experiences roughly 2.8 visitor days throughout the five-county region annually. In Ann Arbor, the popular livery near the "cascades" averages nearly 100,000 boat rentals each summer. Due to its proximity to the greater Metropolitan Detroit Area, and given the success of other water trails like the Huron within southeast Michigan (see inset map at right), it is anticipated that the Lower Rouge River Water Trail will not only serve the residents of the communities adjacent to the river, but also serve as a destination for paddlers and trail-tourists from all over Michigan.

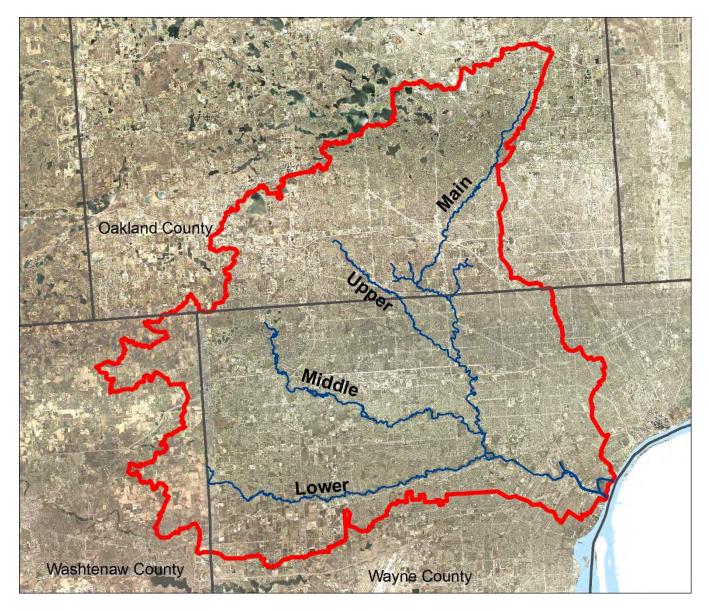
# **STUDY AREA**

The Rouge River Watershed encompasses 467 square miles in three counties (Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne) in southeast Michigan. The Rouge River has four major branches (Main, Upper, Middle and Lower) that make up roughly 126 miles of river. The Lower Rouge River Water Trail encompasses 27 miles of the Lower Branch of the Rouge River. The water trail begins in Canton Township and flows east through nine cities (Wayne, Westland, Inkster, Dearborn Heights, Dearborn, Allen Park, Melvindale, Detroit and River Rouge) before it connects with the Detroit River. A majority of the land adjacent to the river before the confluence with the main branch is owned by Wayne County or one of the municipalities. However, in areas where the river is predominately lined by industry, the land is privately held.

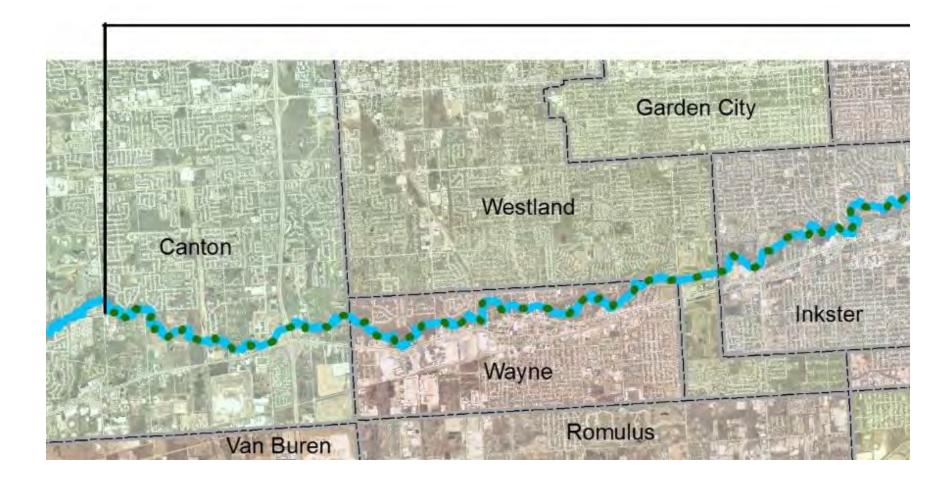
#### Water Trails in Southeast Michigan



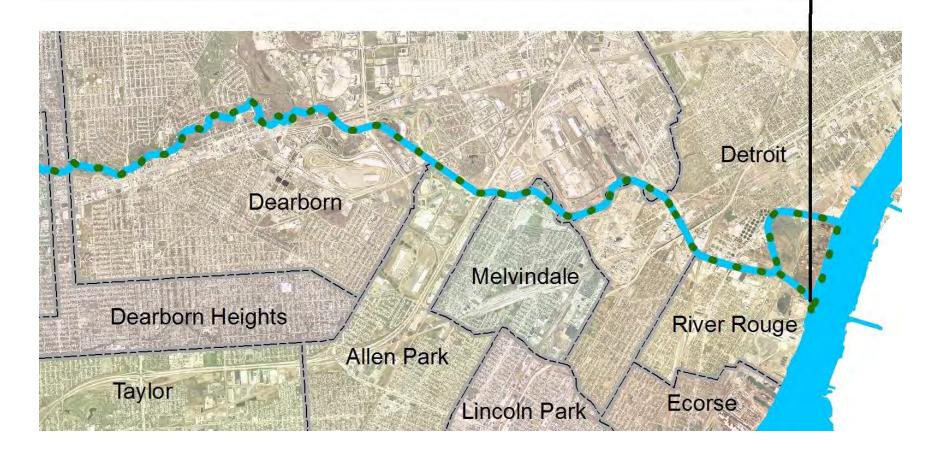
# Map 1.1 - Rouge River Watershed



Map 1.2 - Study Area



# Lower River Rouge Water Trail Length: 27.0 miles



# INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF THE ROUGE RIVER

Portions of the Lower Rouge River have an extensive industrial past that began in the late 1880s when Samuel Zug allowed the Rouge River Improvement Company to dig a shortcut channel through his property. The channel created Zug Island, which became home to several blast furnaces for the steel industry. To facilitate the production of Ford Eagle Boats for World War I, engineers deepened and straightened a shipping channel from Zug Island upstream to Henry Ford's property. This project paved the way to build the largest manufacturing complex in the world — one that took in raw materials to produce a car in less than 30 hours. The development of the Rouge Complex spurred on other industry, including an oil refinery and limestone plant. In an era before environmental controls were established, contaminants were regularly discharged into the river, causing oil slicks that killed migrating waterfowl and even caused the river to catch on fire. Over several decades, these contaminants settled into the sediment of the river.

In 1985, the Rouge River was designated an "Area of Concern" under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Among other things, this designation led to the formation of the Rouge River Advisory Council in 1992 and federal funding for the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project, which worked to implement stormwater remediation throughout the watershed. Due to modern environmental regulations, pollution that impacts the quality of the sediment is no longer being discharged into the river. However, the old contamination remains in the sediment. Remediation efforts are beginning again in the section around Zug Island, with plans to continue up to the Ford Rouge Complex as additional funding and partners are secured.

Since the early 2000s, the biggest environmental challenge for the Rouge River has been water quality. There are over 1.35 million people in 48 municipalities within the Rouge River Watershed. Over 50% of the land within the watershed is urbanized, and sewer and stormwater infrastructure have not been updated in many municipalities. As a result, most of the pollution in the river comes from stormwater runoff and combined sewer overflows.

# **CONNECTIONS TO REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS**

The Lower Rouge River Water Trail will provide recreational connections to several non-motorized trails throughout the region, including the Lower Rouge River Recreation Trail, I-275 Metro Trail, Hines Park Trail, Rouge River Gateway Trail and the Downriver Linked Greenway. In addition, the Lower Rouge River Water Trail will connect to the Detroit Heritage River Water Trail. Maps 1.3 and 1.4 illustrate the location of non-motorized trails within the region in 2019.

It is important to note that the Lower Rouge River Water Trail is being planned in synergy with the *Lower Rouge Greenway Plan*, a project headed by Wayne County Park to evaluate the feasibility of developing a 14-mile nonmotorized network of paths across six communities, including from west to east, Canton Township, and the cities of Wayne, Westland, Inkster, Dearborn Heights and Dearborn. The fact that the greenway and water trail are being planned simultaneously will ensure that both projects will be coordinated and that future elements such as trailheads, amenities and wayfinding signs are linked and complementary. For example, the Greenway Plan notes that the Canton Center Road location would serve as the trailhead or "western starting point" for both the water trail and greenway.

#### **Industrial Legacy**

Zug Island and the Old Channel in 1973, right after the Clean Water and Clean Air acts were signed into law.

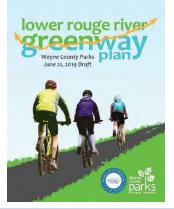


#### Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

This agreement provides a framework for identifying binational (United States and Canada) priorities and implementing actions that improve water quality. Under the agreement, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) coordinates all U.S. activities.

#### Lower Rouge Greenway Plan Connection

The Lower Rouge River Water Trail has the potential to seamlessly link to and compliment the planned nonmotorized Lower Rouge Greenway.



The Plan also notes the potential for additional connections and duel access at Morton Taylor Road, Newburgh Road, Dynamite Park, Venoy-Dorsey Park, the Dearborn Hills Golf Course and Ford Field Park (see potential connections on Map 1.5). In addition, the Plan notes that multi modal accommodations and services such as roads, sidewalks, bike lanes and public transit (discussed later in this plan) will serve both the water trail and the greenway. Additional trail planning efforts directed by Wayne County Parks within the study area propose to connect the Rouge Gateway Trail to Detroit's Rouge Park.

In addition to Wayne County Parks, the City of Detroit, the Detroit Greenways Coalition, Downriver Linked Greenways, the State of Michigan and other regional organizations are developing trails that will connect to the Lower Rouge River Water Trail. For example, the new statewide Iron Belle Trail that connects Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula to Belle Isle in Detroit will connect to the Lower Rouge River Water Trail at the new Fort Street Bridge Park. The City of Detroit is planning a non-motorized connection to their new outer ring Joe Louis Greenway Trail. Ultimately, the Downriver Linked Greenways will link to this trail along Jefferson Avenue. Finally, the announcement that the new Gordie Howe International Bridge will allow bicycles and pedestrians opens the potential for international non-motorized trail connections to the Lower Rouge River Trail, as the new bridge is being constructed just upstream of Zug Island.

#### **Regional Trail Connections**

The Lower Rouge River Water Trail will provide recreational connections to several non-motorized land trails in the region, including the Lower Rouge River Recreation Trail.



# Map 1.3 - Regional Non-Motorized Trails

2019



Map provided by Wayne County from the Draft Lower Rouge River Greenway Plan

### Map 1.4 - Michigan's Iron Belle Trail in Southeast Michigan



Map provided by Michigan Department of Natural Resources

## Map 1.5 - Potential Duel Lower Rouge Greenway and Lower Rouge River Water Trail Connections



Base map provided by Wayne County from the Draft Lower Rouge River Greenway Plan

#### Leadership Committee

A Leadership Committee, consisting of representatives from local units of government and community organizations along the Rouge, helped to guide the planning process and frame the issues and opportunities related to the water trail.

# WHO IS LEADING THE WATER TRAIL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT?

In September 2018, the *Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee* was established to provide oversight and direction for the Rouge River Water Trail. The Leadership Committee is made up of one representative (either a public official or qualified citizen) from the 11 jurisdictions that own, lease or operate land adjacent to the river. The Leadership Committee is charged with making decisions on the overall development, maintenance and management of the water trail.

FOTR is charged with staffing the committee and facilitating meetings. Budget and programming decisions regarding the water trail will be under the purview of the FOTR Board of Directors. However, the Leadership Committee may make recommendations to the FOTR Board.

Additionally, Wayne County Parks and Recreation and each of the local jurisdictions along the water trail will be charged will helping to oversee and maintain their access sites and associated amenities. The local jurisdictions will also work closely with the Leadership Committee and FOTR to secure long-term funding for the development and maintenance of the water trail. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the purpose, membership, and roles and responsibilities of the Leadership Committee can be found in *Appendix A*.

# **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### Leadership Committee

- Support and implement the strategic water trail plan and develop annual priorities.
- Collaborate on efforts to secure sustainable, long-term funding for the development and maintenance of the water trail.
- Hold quarterly meetings (or more, if needed).
- Inform and educate water trail users regarding paddling etiquette and interaction with other river users and adjacent property owners.
- Work with local jurisdictions and other access-site owners to manage, maintain and improve trailheads, secondary access site and rest stops.
- Work with local government members of the Committee to secure resolutions of support for the water trail, trailheads, secondary access sites and rest stops.
- Continually reassess and determine benchmarks and measurements of success.
- Establish standards for development and maintenance.
- Assist in developing and implementing a comprehensive safety plan for the water trail.
- Promote and market the water trail.
- Design water trail signage.

#### **Friends of the Rouge**

- · Convene quarterly or more frequent meetings of the Lower Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee.
- Develop progress reports.
- Serve as the primary liaison and contact between all water trail partners.
- Serve as the primary spokesperson for the water trail with the media.
- Coordinate volunteer activities and public events along and associated with the water trail.
- Coordinate collective efforts to secure sustainable, long-term funding for the development and maintenance of the water trail.
- Assist in securing resolutions of support for the water trail and access sites from participating jurisdictions.
- Provide final approval of relevant matters, based on recommendations of the Leadership Committee.

#### Wayne County Parks and Recreation & Local Jurisdictions

- Maintain and develop trailheads, access sites and rest stops.
- Install and maintain signage at trailheads, access sites and rest stops.
- Secure resolutions of support for the water trail and access sites.
- Collaborate on efforts to secure sustainable, long-term funding for the development and maintenance of the water trail.
- Appoint a member to the Leadership Committee.

# VISION

The Vision for the Lower Rouge River Water Trail is an open 27-mile recreational destination, recognized in southeast Michigan and the Great Lakes region as a dynamic destination for paddling, conservation and trail-based tourism.

The water trail provides a wide variety of natural, urban and industrial paddling experiences that can accommodate people of all ages and abilities. The water trail provides safe and unique outdoor recreation opportunities for the residents of its neighboring communities and ties into existing water and non-motorized trail systems throughout the region.

Local officials and citizens in the communities along the Lower Rouge River consider the water trail to be an important asset and integral part of their community. People can easily access the water trail, and users are also encouraged to explore the heritage, businesses and services of nearby communities. Paddlers interact with the water trail through a series of annual events and programs that celebrate the river's natural, cultural and recreational heritage.

The quality of the water, fisheries and wildlife habitat of the Lower Rouge River and surrounding watershed continues to improve through greater awareness, stewardship and partnerships with conservation organizations, municipalities, paddlers and interested citizens. In addition, the water trail continuously helps to enhance the perception of the river as an asset and dispel the environmental misconceptions of the river.

# **GOALS**

The Leadership Committee adopted the following goals for the water trail:

- 1. Continue to support and integrate ongoing public awareness, education, conservation and restoration efforts that enhance and promote the health of the river.
- 2. Secure long-term and sustainable management funding for the water trail.
- 3. Promote Leave No Trace principles.
- 4. Support, promote and improve river-related recreational activities, including paddling, boating, fishing and bird watching that are inclusive to all races, ages and abilities.
- 5. Develop and maintain high-quality access sites and user experiences.
- 6. Provide for a safe water trail by promoting and developing a comprehensive approach to emergency management.
- 7. Create an identity for the water trail to incorporate into public outreach and marketing opportunities.
- 8. Connect the water trail to nearby parks, public spaces, non-motorized trails and other water trail systems.
- 9. Support local and regional efforts to increase water-based tourism and connections with downtowns along the river that support and promote new opportunities for economic development.
- 10. Enhance partnerships with landowners, managers and decision makers along the water trail.
- 11. Manage woody debris to support fish populations and allow for recreational access with minimal impact.
- 12. Work to secure state and/or national water trail designation for the water trail.
- 13. Encourage new and non-traditional users to engage with the Lower Rouge.
- 14. Coordinate with multi-modal transportation.

# **STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK**

The Strategic Plan was developed using the methods, tools, and resources outlined in the 2017 *Michigan Water Trail Manual*. In addition, the Leadership Committee and FOTR used criteria and best management practices from state and federal water trail designation programs as the framework for the Strategic Plan. Once the following best management practices are met, the FOTR can apply for special state and federal water trail designations, including the following.

#### National Water Trail Designation, National Park Service

All applicants must demonstrate the following seven best-management practices. The page numbers containing descriptions of these best management practices are listed in red.

- 1. **Recreation Opportunities**. The water trail route has established public access points that accommodate a diversity of trip lengths and provide access to a variety of opportunities for recreation and education. (Pages 26-48)
- 2. **Education.** The water trail provides opportunities to learn about the value of water resources, cultural heritage, boating skills and outdoor ethics. (Pages 19-20)
- 3. **Conservation.** The water trail provides opportunities for communities to develop and implement strategies that enhance and restore the health of local waterways and surrounding lands. (Pages 19-21)
- 4. **Community Support.** Local communities provide support and advocacy for maintenance and stewardship of the water trail. (Pages 9-11)
- 5. **Public Information.** The public is provided with accessible and understandable water trail information, including details for identifying access and trail routes; cultural, historical and natural features; hazards; and water quality. The water trail is promoted to the community and a broad national audience. (Pages 61-64)
- 6. **Trail Maintenance.** There is a demonstrated ability to support routine and long-term maintenance investments on the water trail. Facilities are designed, constructed and maintained by incorporating sustainability principles. (Pages 57-60)
- 7. **Planning.** An applicant must also incorporate and maintain a water trail plan that describes a vision, desired future conditions, and strategies to strengthen best-management practices. (Pages 10-11)

#### State of Michigan Water Trail Designation, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

All applicants must demonstrate the following criteria:

- 1. Provide a quality trail experience.
- 2. Provide clear information for users.
- 3. Demonstrate broad community support.
- 4. Demonstrate a sustainable business, maintenance and marketing plan.

#### Pure Michigan Water Trail Designation, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

All applicants must demonstrate the following criteria:

- 1. The jurisdiction is easily accessible to the water trail.
- 2. The jurisdiction has adopted a formal resolution in support of the designation.
- 3. The jurisdiction has adopted a plan for providing support services for trail users.
- 4. The jurisdiction has established a formal water trail advisory committee.
- 5. The jurisdiction has hosted an annual trail-related event or project.
- 6. The school board within the jurisdiction has endorsed a trail-based learning component within the school district.
- 7. The jurisdiction's land use plans, ordinances and other planning documents recognize the relationship between the trail and the community's other assets, or there is demonstrated support to add these provisions.

# **CHAPTER TWO – THE PLANNING PROCESS**

# BACKGROUND

The development of this Strategic Plan required comprehensive data collection and analysis; community and stakeholder input; research and review of existing planning documents, projects, activities and programs; and site visits. Ultimately, all this information was used to provide recommendations regarding the development of a water trail on the Lower Rouge River. While the review of existing plans and programs and some site visits occurred early in the planning process, community outreach activities continued throughout the development of this Plan.

# **STEERING COMMITTEE**

A Rouge River Water Trail Steering Committee was established at the onset of this project to provide overall guidance to the planning process; help frame the issues and opportunities related to the water trail; solidify the primary vision and goals of the water trail; establish signage and maintenance standards; discuss long-term decision making/management options; and make recommendations for the Plan. The Steering Committee was led by FOTR staff members and made up of representative from the 11 jurisdictions that own, lease or operate land adjacent to the river, as well as local outfitters and community stakeholders. Monthly Steering Committee (and then ultimately Leadership Committee) meetings throughout the planning process were well noticed and the public was welcome to attend and participate.

# **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

In an effort to secure community input on the proposed water trail, the Steering Committee facilitated two public meetings. The first public meeting in June 2018 provided an opportunity for citizens to learn about the planning project and the proposed water trail. Meeting participants were asked to identify what they love about the Rouge River, how they currently use and interact with the river, which access sites they prefer, the location of hazards and obstacles along the river, and any concerns and opportunities that trail builders should be aware of. Meeting participants were also asked to review and comment on preliminary vision statements for the water trail and to note their preferences regarding the type of *experience, access* and *amenities* associated with the proposed water trail. A full list of the responses and feedback from the first public meeting is provided in *Appendix B*.

#### Rouge River Water Trail Steering Committee

The Rouge River Water Trail Steering Committee consisted of representatives from several local units of government and community organizations:

- Wayne County Parks
- Canton Township
- Dearborn
- Dearborn Heights
- Detroit
- Inkster
- Melvindale
- River Rouge
- Westland
- Wayne
- Allen Park
- Holliday Nature Preserve Assoc.
- University of Mich.-Dearborn
- Rouge River Advisory Council
- Michigan Sea Grant
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- Heavner Canoe & Kayak Rental
- Riverside Kayak Connection

#### First Public Meeting

Meeting participants were asked to provide feedback on the preliminary vision of the water trail and discuss preferences for water trail access and amenities.





Photos: LIAA

#### Safety Summit

In March 2019, FOTR hosted a "Safety Summit" with public safety agencies to discuss way to collectively respond to emergencies.



Photo: LIAA

In March 2019, the FOTR hosted a "Safety Summit" with public safety agencies from all the local and regional jurisdictions along the Rouge River. The goal of these meetings was to introduce the water trail concept to the public safety community, answer questions and address their concerns, and establish a collective "plan of action" for emergencies. More information about this meeting is described in *Chapter Three*.

A second public meeting, in April 2019, provided an opportunity for citizens to review the draft plan and maps, comment on the draft recommendations for capital improvements, programming and marketing, review the new logo and signage standards, identify priorities, and discuss next steps. A full list of the responses and feedback from the second public meeting is provided in *Appendix C*.

Second Public Meeting

In April 2019, a second public meeting provided an opportunity to review the draft of the strategic plan, including the new logo and sign standards.



Photos: LIAA

# SITE ASSESSMENTS

At the onset of the planning process, the Steering Committee identified approximately 16 existing and proposed access sites along the river. Some of the existing access sites were identified as "formal" access sites — sites identified on an existing map, overseen by a local unit of government and supported by some amenities. However, many of the existing access sites were identified as "rustic" — vacant land, parks or areas adjacent to bridges without any amenities where paddlers are accessing the river.

In addition, some of the proposed access sites were identified for existing parks that could more easily accommodate a formal access site and associated amenities. In fact, at the time of this writing, a handful of these parks (e.g., Dearborn Hills Golf Course, Venoy Dorsey Park) are already in some stage of formal planning and/or development by the managing municipality to serve as a formal access site for the water trail.

A number of other potential access sites were identified in accessible but remote areas along the river and would require quite of bit of investment and development.

To get a better understanding of how paddlers are currently accessing the river and to better identify the opportunities and challenges of proposed access sites, members of the Steering Committee and FOTR staff conducted a formal assessment of each existing and proposed access site along the proposed water trail. Using the *access-site assessment form* template from the Michigan Water Trails Manual, these assessments included field documentation of site conditions, available amenities, and a variety of other characteristics that typically support water trails. Additional assessments were conducted using maps and aerial photography and through discussions with community stakeholders.

In the end, the Steering Committee classified access sites for the water trail in three categories (which are described more thoroughly in *Chapter Three*):

- Trailhead
- Secondary Access Site
- Rest Stop

In another exercise, Steering Committee members worked together to identify locations along the river that highlight and/or feature the unique cultural, historical or environmental aspects of the river and its surrounding communities. This mapping exercise was used to identify the preferred location for the interpretive signs and is discussed in more detail in *Chapter Three*.

In a third exercise, Steering Committee members worked to identify the locations of — and discuss the opportunities and complications associated with — logjams and woody debris management along portions of the river. These discussions established the foundation for the woody-debris management recommendations discussed later in *Chapter Three*. Additional details regarding woody debris management will be identified in a seperate safety plan document to be completed in the summer of 2019.

#### **Access Site Assessment**

Steering Committee members and staff from the FOTR conducted a thorough assessment of each existing and potential access site along the proposed water trail.







Second Public Open House

# **CHAPTER THREE – RECOMMENDATIONS**

# **INTRODUCTION**

The following chapter outlines recommendations for programming, capital improvements and marketing for the Lower Rouge River Water Trail. It is important to recognize that many of the recommendations listed in this plan will take several years to realize. However, several recommendations could be implemented in the near term, and will be critical in moving the water trail forward.

# **RECOMMENDATIONS – PROGRAMMING**

### **Education and Safety**

Paddler education and safety are very important components of the Lower Rouge River Water Trail. While paddlers will be using the trail at their own risk, there are good sources of paddler education and training that should be made available to users of the proposed water trail. For example, the Coast Guard Auxiliary offers a variety of educational materials and programs to help teach paddlers about safety and decision-making skills, such as the Operation Paddle Smart Program, Paddle Smart "If Found" ID stickers for boats, and paddlecraft inspections. The Coast Guard offers these paddle stickers and paddlecraft inspections free of charge. Other lifesaving tools, such as developing "float plans," should be promoted as standard practice. Programs like these are often accompanied by brochures and other forms of media that can easily be incorporated into kiosks at access sites. FOTR should develop an educational and safety program that utilizes these types of materials.

River hazards can be broken down into two categories: personal and environmental. Personal hazards — such as alcohol consumption, diving into unknown water depths, paddling too close to freighters, paddling alone, or paddling without a personal flotation device (PFD) — are highly avoidable through basic education and responsible behavior, though accidents and injuries may still occur on the water. While environmental hazards like steep grades, woody debris and subsurface rocks can be sufficiently mapped and managed, the floodplain of the western reaches of the Rouge River will be consistently altered. In addition to somewhat unpredictable river terrain, severe hail and thunderstorms, flash floods, high winds and lightning can leave a paddler in a position of extreme vulnerability. With risks like hypothermia and drowning, it is vital that rescue crews are well prepared for expedient river entry and locating of victims.

As part of this strategic planning process, FOTR initiated meetings and discussions with public safety agencies from all the local and regional jurisdictions along the Rouge River. The goal of these meetings was to introduce the water trail concept to the public safety community, answer questions and address their concerns, and establish a collective "plan of action" for emergencies. These conversations culminated in a safety summit, during which representatives from several public safety agencies agreed to work with FOTR to develop formal operational guidelines for water rescue. In addition, FOTR will be working with safety representatives to address any equipment needs, training and certification **Education and Safety** In March of 2019, FOTR hosted a Safety Summit to discuss needs, standards, and guidelines for water rescue.



requirements, the mapping of entry points, the development and mapping of safety markers, and outreach and education needs. FOTR expects the safety plan to be completed in the summer of 2019.

In addition, to these formal safety measures, FOTR should work with local paddlers to establish a water trail ambassador program. Ambassadors would paddle sections of the river at least three times a year (in the spring, midsummer and fall) and make general observations (with photos as necessary) about the status of water trail launches, signs, trash, woody debris, water levels and trail etiquette. All information could be noted and cataloged with the local jurisdiction. In addition, ambassadors could help answer questions from the public about the river and water trail, help to plan trips, give advice about hazards, and teach proper trail etiquette.

### Paddling and Water Trail-Based Programs

The full potential of the water trail will not be realized unless the local and regional population base is aware of it and knows how to access it. The Leadership Committee and FOTR need to make sure local officials and residents are aware of the water trail and the different paddling experiences it will offer. FOTR should expand the number of paddling trips its hosts that both introduce paddling to novices and demonstrate the unique paddling experiences on the river. In addition, FOTR should reach out to and work with local school districts and community organizations to host paddling tours for kids, people with physical or learning disabilities and populations who may not have traditionally been engaged with the river or with paddling. Each of these paddling tours and/or events provides an opportunity for FOTR to discuss, inform and leverage support from participants about the environmental conditions of the river and ongoing conservation and restoration efforts.

Given the large geographic scope of the water trail, transportation (on land) between access sites could be cumbersome. At this time, there is no shuttle or livery on the Rouge River that could transport paddlers between access sites. However, SMART, southeast Michigan's regional public transportation provider, offers safe, convenient and reliable transportation to each of the communities along the Rouge River. In fact, a handful of the fixed routes in the area pass by several of the existing and proposed access sites identified in this plan. FOTR should initiate discussions with SMART about creating a special program that would support the shuttle needs of paddlers along the water trail. This program might include establishing new dropoff and pickup sites, reduced fares for paddlers, and even a kayak rack for a number of buses.

#### Woody Debris Management

As previously mentioned, in most of the "western" reaches of the water trail — from Canton Charter Township to the main confluence of the river — there is significant woody debris. The management of woody debris in a safe and sustainable manner is an important component to the river's health and to the water trail. Although woody debris is often considered a nuisance for paddlers, it is important to remember that woody debris is an important component of the stream's anatomy. Woody debris in a waterway that is at least four inches wide and six feet long is considered Large Woody Debris. Collections of Large Woody Debris are often referred to as logjams, snags or debris dams. In the past, Large Woody Debris was removed from a waterway to enhance recreational access or to prevent flooding. However, we now know that Large Woody Debris promotes the health of the river, controls erosion, slows runoff, provides food and cover for aquatic creatures, and creates deep pools that provide shelter for a variety of fish.

Woody Debris Woody debris continues to be a significant issue in the western sections of the water trail.



On the Rouge River, large woody debris should be managed using the "Woody Debris Management 101: Clean and Open Method" developed by Friends of the Rouge, the Rouge River Advisory Council's Habitat Committee, the Michigan Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) and the Wayne County Department of the Environment. This method provides specific guidance on how to manage woody debris and when a permit from the DEQ is needed. In general, if the proposed work only moves/removes tangled-up floating wood, cuts back wood that is secured to the banks or the bottom of the river, keeps impact to the riverbank and river light, does not secure anything to the bottom of the navigation, and does not secure structures to the banks or bottom of the river, it will not require a permit.

Some communities along the stretch of the river are actively working to remove woody debris on an annual basis, whereas other communities do not consistently have the resources to address consistent woody debris issues. Some communities that actively manage woody debris don't always use best practices. Given the heavy tree canopy along this area of the river and the frequency of flash-flood events due to severe weather, this section of the water trail will demand annual, targeted and consistent woody debris management. FOTR can direct paddlers to areas (routes) along this stretch of the river that are free of woody debris, but the entire length of the water trail should not be marketed as "open" until such time as the entire stretch of the river is cleared of woody debris to a consistent level.

Currently, River Restorations Inc., a small team of professionals, works to manage woody debris along sections of the Rouge River where local municipalities are able to provide support. Given the amount of woody debris in the water system, this small team of professionals does not have the necessary manpower, equipment and resources to adequately maintain the entire river. FOTR, in cooperation with River Restorations Inc., should develop a formal woody debris program to safely and properly manage woody debris along the river. This program would utilize support and resources from municipalities along the water trail as well as trained volunteers. The program should have many active components, including: a consistent method to inventory, assess and map woody debris; a robust training program on how to safely remove woody debris using best management practices; a safety plan; guidelines and practices for coordinating and working with volunteers; and a clear definition of roles and responsibilities. FOTR will need to identify and pursue funding sources to facilitate this comprehensive woody debris program. In the meantime, FOTR should continue to work with River Restorations and a small team of dedicated and trained volunteers (the "A Team") to address the most pressing and difficult woody debris issues on the river.

#### **FOTR Management**

The Lower Rouge River Water Trail will be a valuable asset for FOTR as well as Wayne County, the jurisdictions along the trail, and all of southeast Michigan. To most effectively accomplish the vision, goals, recommendations and capital projects identified in this plan, a water trail coordinator will be needed. This person can be part of the current FOTR staff or hired as new staff.

### Liability

The National Sea Grant Law Center conducted a legal review of liability issues potentially associated with water trail development, management, maintenance and use. This information is advisory only, and should not be construed as legal advice.

Water Trail Access Points. Private and public landowners who make water trail access available on their property would be protected from legal liability in most cases. Liability will likely be based in negligence, which simply means the landowner failed to follow normal standards of care against unreasonable risk of harm. In Michigan, the Recreational Use Act limits liability to public and private landowners who open their land to the public for recreational use or access, and specifically provides immunity for injuries arising out of persons entering or exiting a trailway. Exceptions to this immunity occur when injuries are caused by a landowner's gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct, or where a landowner charges a fee for use of the specific access point.

Additionally, local governments that operate launch sites or maintain access points would likely be subject to sovereign immunity. Under Michigan's Governmental Tort Liability Act, a local unit of government would not likely be liable to water trail users so long as it is engaged in the exercise or discharge of a governmental function. However, the operation of a proprietary concern that is intended to produce a profit and is not supported by taxes or fees is not a governmental function, and immunity may not apply.

Liability for Improvements. Water trail improvements can include maintenance of floating docks, signage, lockers or other amenities. The addition of these types of improvements will not increase a landowner's liability under the Michigan Recreational Use Act. However, governmental immunity may not apply to the management of a developed recreational area. In Michigan, recreational site improvements such as the addition of parking lots and signage may not qualify to make a site less natural or "developed."

Water Quality. In some parts of the Rouge River, under certain circumstances, the water may have high E. coli concentrations that exceed total and partial body contact recommendations. FOTR should consult with their respective counsel to better understand the legal liability if paddlers access the river under such conditions. The results of this research should be included in the Safety Plan currently under development.

# **RECOMMENDATIONS - ACCESS SITES**

At the beginning of the planning process, the Leadership Committee and participants at the public kickoff meeting identified several river access sites (both existing and potential) that could support the water trail. These sites included everything from formal boat launches to small stretches of shoreline in parks and areas near bridges and overpasses. Each identified site received an onsite assessment, was inventoried, and then was reviewed and discussed by the Leadership Committee. Based on these discussions, some of the identified access sites were eliminated from consideration. The Leadership Committee then worked to categorize the remaining access sites by type and <u>future</u> use — that is, what type of site it *should* be. This categorization is intended to identify priorities for future projects and investments. It is important to remember that before any improvements are made, each proposed access site <u>must</u> first be formally approved by FOTR and the site owner. The three access site categories are described below:

#### "Trailhead" Access Sites Should Have:

- ADA kayak launch
- Suitable launch surface
- Parking (paved) for multiple vehicles
- Other amenities (restrooms, green launch sign, interpretive signage, trash receptacle, kayak rack, potable water, pavilion, picnic table)

"Trailhead" access sites should stand out as the "signature access sites" for the water trail. Each trailhead should have a suitable launch surface (e.g., paved boat ramp or dock), designated and/or off-street parking (incl. trailers), a designated loading area, and restrooms (brick-andmortar or portable). Other amenities may include garbage and recycling receptacles, potable water, picnic areas, a covered pavilion, lighting, and boat racks/lockers. Directional signage from roadways, wayfinding signage along the water, green launch signs (facing the water and land), and information kiosks (w/interpretive panels) should be included at these sites. These sites should also feature barrier-free amenities (e.g., kayak launch, accessible parking, accessible route) where feasible.

## "Secondary" Access Sites Could Have:

- Unpaved path to the water's edge
- Limited parking
- Minimal amenities (portable restroom, trash receptacle)
- Access sign

"Secondary" access sites may or may not have a formal (e.g., paved ramp) launch surface. In most instances, these access sites will require the paddler to "carry in" to the water's edge (e.g., road-end, steep slop adjacent to the water) or require walking across a wide expanse or open space. Secondary access sites should be clearly visible from the water. These sites should also be signed with the green launch sign (visible from land and water) but may not require a kiosk. These access sites may feature roadside parking, a portable restroom and a trash receptacle. **Directional signage from the nearest** roadway should also be included. With additional investment, these sites may have the potential to become trailheads over time.

#### "Rest Stop" Access Sites Could Have:

- Limited river access (by vehicle)
- No formal parking available
- No signage
- Limited amenities

"Rest Stop" access sites are primarily accessed just from the water. These sites may or may not be easily accessed from a road or have an ideal landing surface but provide a relatively safe spot where paddlers can get off the river in inclement weather or to rest. Rest stops will likely feature very few (if any) formal amenities. However, each rest stop should include a blue rest stop sign facing the water. The following recommended site improvements were developed for each existing and potential access site. These potential site improvements should be used as a general framework and planning tool throughout the development of these access sites over time. It is important to note that these potential site improvements are not intended to be the final design of each access site. While some improvements might be easier to implement (e.g., signage), further design work will be required to incorporate all the recommendations into formal construction documents for implementation. It is also important to note that agreement as to the extent, funding, timeline and long-term maintenance for such improvements will require the approval of the owner of each access site.

Each access site recommendation is composed of at least two parts:

**1. Site Description:** The following pages provide an aerial photo and description for each access site, including all of its current amenities and features.

**2. Potential Improvements:** Also included on the following pages is a description of potential improvements for each site.

Cost estimates should be revised following additional design work, engineering and material/equipment specification. As noted above, recommendations for each access site will include a combination of amenities to provide an optimal, practical access site experience for paddlers. In doing so, the following amenities were considered. A few examples of these amenities are provided on the following page. A more thorough description of these amenities can be found in the Michigan Water Trails Manual.

- Launch Type (including universally accessible launch with accessible routes)
- Restrooms (flush and/or portable)
- Picnic Tables
- Pavilion/Shelter
- Trash Receptacles
- Signage (wayfinding, launch, rest stop, kiosk)
- Parking (paved or unpaved) and loading/staging area
- Potable Water
- Kayak Storage (rack/locker)
- Boat Slide

#### Boat Storage (Rack or Locker)

Boat storage allows paddlers to safely secure their watercraft at an access site. The size and materials of boat storage may vary depending on the amount of use and the physical characteristics of the site.





### Pavilion, Picnic Area, Trash Receptacle

Just a few simple amenities can support conscientious use of the water trail and establish a positive paddling experience.



### **Boat Slide**

A boat slide can help paddlers maneuver their boat up and down steep slopes or around large obstacles such as dams.



### Access Sign Signage identifies access sites to paddlers on the water.

# Portable Restroom

Portable restrooms can be placed at busy access sites or access sites where more formal bathroom facilities are not feasible.



**A Brief Summary on Universally Accessible Launches.** The following summary about universally accessible launches was provided by Cindy Burkhour of Access Recreation Group. Cindy is one of Michigan's foremost experts on universally accessible launches and was a key contributor to the design of the EZ Dock Accessible Launch. A detailed summary of site features for universally accessible launches can be found in *Appendix D*.

Paddlers of all abilities want to launch and land smoothly without capsizing or damaging their watercraft. They need firm surfaces that support their movement from their arrival place to the launch at the water's edge, and sufficient space to accommodate the length of their watercraft during put-in and take-out. In addition, paddlers must be able to stabilize their watercraft during transitions into and out of their vessel and into and out of the water.

It is important to consider universal design practices in the development of the complete water access facility, from car to launch. Simply stated, universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

#### **Universal Design**

Launch sites that consider universal design (including accessible launches) will ensure that people with all types of abilities are able to safely access the water trail.



Photo: Cindy Burkhour

Canton Center Road







Photos: LIAA

# SITE 1 – CANTON CENTER ROAD TRAILHEAD

#### Site Description

Located just north of the South Canton Scholars Charter Academy campus in Canton Township, this proposed trailhead would mark the official start of the Lower Rouge River Water Trail. Currently, there is no direct access to the river for paddlers at this location. However, access to the river's edge is provided through a gated driveway off the service road that circles the school campus as well as the Lower Rouge River Recreation (non-motorized) Trail that runs along the river.

#### **Potential Improvements**

With the large amount of open land adjacent to the river, this site could become a key trailhead for the water trail. Given the steep bank of the river at this location, any proposed launch would require a more formal pathway to the water's edge. The pathway (and subsequent launch) could be constructed of either geotextile mats or wooden stairs. Other potential improvements could include a kayak slide, loading/staging area, parking lot, kayak rack, trash receptacles, picnic tables, a pavilion and portable restrooms. The service road entering the school campus may have to be widened to accommodate increased vehicular traffic. In addition, wayfinding signs should be placed along Canton Center Road indicating the entrance to the trailhead, and the green launch signs should be placed near the parking area and near the launch area facing the river. Because this potential access site would serve as the start of the water trail, the access site should also include an informational kiosk.



# SITE 2 – MORTON TAYLOR TRAILHEAD TRAILHEAD

#### Site Description

This proposed trailhead in Canton Township would be located off Morton Taylor Road, near the existing Morton Taylor Trailhead that provides pedestrians with access to the Lower Rouge River Recreation Trail and mountain bikers with access to nearly five miles of single-track trail. The existing trailhead features a large unpaved parking lot, some signage, lighting and portable restrooms.

#### **Potential Improvements**

With the amount of unused parkland adjacent to the river, this site could become another trailhead for the water trail and provide a "bookend" for the two-mile segment of the water trail in Canton Township. Much like the access site at Canton Center Road, the steep bank of the river at this location would require a more formal pathway to the water's edge. This pathway (and subsequent launch) could be constructed of either geotextile mats or wooden stairs. Other potential improvements include a kayak slide, loading/staging area, a small parking lot, trash receptacles, and picnic table. Paddlers should be directed to use the existing trailhead facilities for main parking and restroom needs. A wayfinding sign should be placed along Michigan Avenue indicating the entrance to Morton Taylor Road as well as near the branch of the road near the existing trailhead. In addition, green launch signs should be placed near the proposed parking area and near the launch area facing the river.



#### Morton Taylor Trailhead







Photos: LIAA

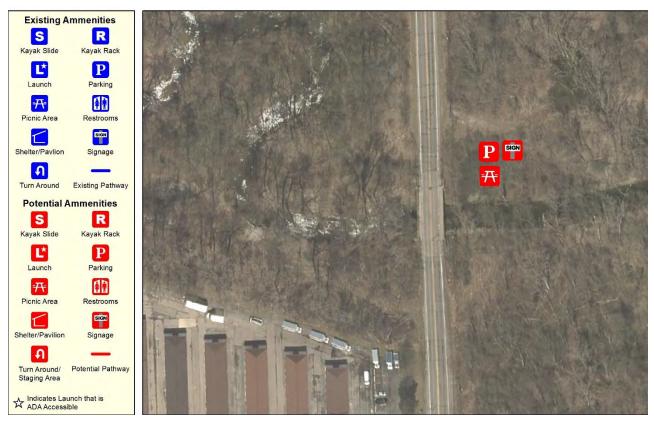
# SITE 3 – LOTZ ROAD SECONDARY ACCESS SITE

# Site Description

A third location in Canton Township, Lotz Road would serve as a secondary access site. At the time of this writing, there is a small unimproved parking area on the east side of the road just north of the bridge, but no other amenities.

#### **Potential Improvements**

This proposed secondary access site should include only minimal improvements. The parking area could be improved to more clearly articulate formal parking spaces (e.g., bumpers). Other potential improvements might include trash receptacles, a picnic table and the green launch signs facing both the parking area and river.



Lotz Road |



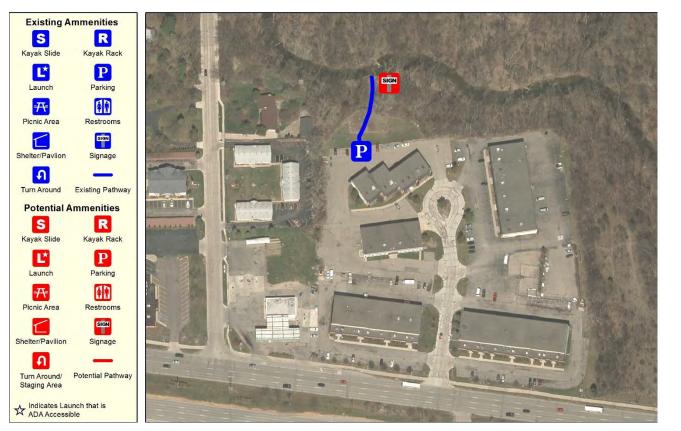
# SITE 4 – COMMERCE COURT SECONDARY ACCESS SITE (TEMPORARY)

#### Site Description

Despite the lack of amenities (besides parking and a small pathway), this site in the City of Wayne is currently being used by paddlers to access the Rouge River. The site is located at the rear of a large office park off Commerce Court and Michigan Avenue.

#### **Potential Improvements**

During the planning process, the Leadership Committee determined that this access site would no longer be used once basic amenities were provided at Lotz Road. However, until that time, this site will be featured as a secondary access site. Due to its uncertain future, no formal amenities are planned for this location. However, until a decision is made to no longer feature this access site, a wayfinding sign should be placed along Michigan Avenue, indicating the entrance to Commerce Court. In addition, green launch signs should be placed near the existing parking area and near the river.



Commerce Court



Photos: LIAA

# SITE 5 – NEWBURGH ROAD SECONDARY ACCESS SITE

### Site Description

Newburgh Road | writing. there is



Photo: LIAA

Located in the City of Wayne, Newburgh Road would serve as a secondary access site. At the time of this writing, there is a small informal parking area on the west side of the road just north of the bridge, but no other amenities.

#### **Potential Improvements**

This proposed secondary access site should include only minimal improvements. An unimproved parking area should be provided on the north side of the river, just west of the bridge. Other potential improvements might include trash receptacles, a picnic table and the green launch signs facing both the parking area and river.



# SITE 6 – GOUDY PARK TRAILHEAD

#### **Site Description**

Located just north of downtown Wayne, Goudy Park is an ideal location for a water-trail trailhead. Among other amenities, Goudy Park currently features a picnic area, a covered pavilion, formal restrooms (inside City Hall), trash receptacles and ample parking. Goudy Park also features a formal launch area (with a gravel mat) near the river. However, heavy rains and woody debris have repeatedly impacted the structural integrity of the launch area.

#### **Potential Improvements**

Potential improvements to Goudy Park should include a slight reconfiguration of the parking lot nearest to the river to better accommodate a loading/staging area as well as a kayak rack. In addition, wayfinding signs should be placed along South Wayne Road and Michigan Avenue indicating the location of the trailhead. The green launch signs should also be placed near the parking area and near the launch area facing the river. Goudy Park should also include an informational kiosk. The biggest need for Goudy Park is to determine the best type of launch given the dynamic conditions of the river. An accessible launch would likely get damaged due to frequent flooding and woody debris. Given the instability of the riverbank, the City of Wayne should consider installing geotextile mats near the launch area. In addition, a kayak slide would allow people to more easily carry their kayak from the parking area to the launch area.



#### Goudy Park





Photos: LIAA

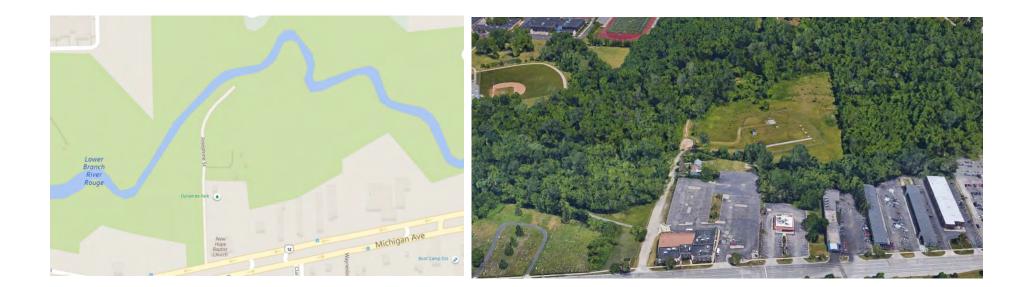
## SITE 7 – DYNAMITE PARK REST STOP

## Site Description

Dynamite Park is a 37-acre park located in the City of Wayne. The park features a large parking area, a walking trail and scenic overlooks of the Rouge River.

## **Potential Improvements**

This rest stop should include only minimal improvements. A blue rest stop sign should be placed at an area along the river where kayakers could comfortably get out of their kayak or near the walking trail that connects to the parking area. In addition, an informational kiosk (smaller version) could be placed near the scenic overlook to better illustrate the water trail to park users.



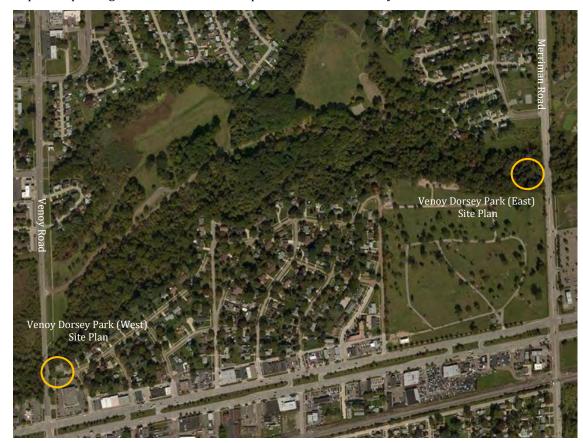
# SITES 8 & 9 – VENOY DORSEY PARK TRAILHEAD(S)

#### **Site Descriptions**

Located in the City of Wayne, this Wayne County park hugs the north shore of the Rouge River from Venoy Road to Merriman Road. The park features several large soccer fields, a baseball diamond and tennis courts. The park also has two large parking lots, one of which is located close to the river. However, a decaying seawall currently makes water access difficult.

#### **Potential Improvements**

Wayne County recently developed formal site plans (see next two pages) for trailheads at both the west and east end of Venoy Dorsey Park. The two trailheads would provide an opportunity for novice paddlers to experience a one-mile section of the river. Among other features, the two new access sites would include improved parking as well as concrete ramps with accessible EZ kayak launches.



#### Venoy Dorsey Park





Photos: LIAA

# VENOY DORSEY PARK (WEST) SITE PLAN



## VENOY DORSEY PARK (EAST) SITE PLAN



# SITE 10 – DOWNTOWN INKSTER REST STOP



Rendering: Hamilton Anderson, Old City Hall Development Plan

#### Site Description

In 2018, local officials in Inkster developed a Downtown Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for areas around the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Inkster Road. This planning effort — an offshoot of the city's 2017 Master Plan — details plans to bring more business activity and a mix of uses to downtown Inkster. The Revitalization Plan also details plans to establish a large active public space for residents that creates a unique sense of place and distinct identity for Inkster.

One of the listed "actions" in the Revitalization Plan states: *Continue working with the Lower Rouge River Water Trail Committee to create a launch site near downtown, with wayfinding signage to stores and restaurants.* 

#### **Potential Improvements**

At the time of this writing, due to the uncertain outcome of redevelopment within this area, no formal improvements are recommended. However, FOTR and the Leadership Committee should continue to provide support and guidance to local officials and staff members from the City of Inkster as plans continue to develop for a potential launch site.

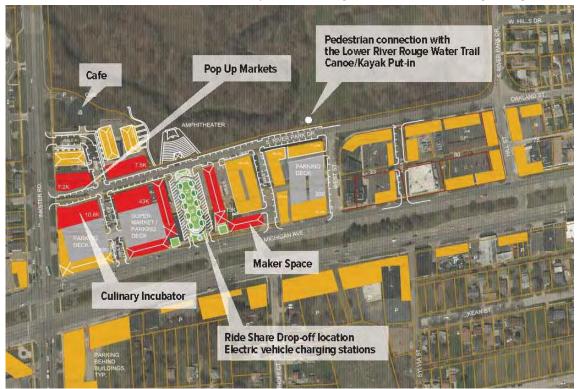


Image: McKenna, 2018 Downtown Revitalization Plan

# SITE 11 – INKSTER PARK TRAILHEAD

#### **Site Description**

Located in the heart of Inkster, this large Wayne County park features a large ball diamond, picnic shelter, restroom and children's playscape. The park also features a short pedestrian bridge over the river, providing peaceful views of the meandering river and its extensive shoreline tree canopy. At the time of this writing, Inkster Park does not have any formal amenities for paddlers.

#### **Potential Improvements**

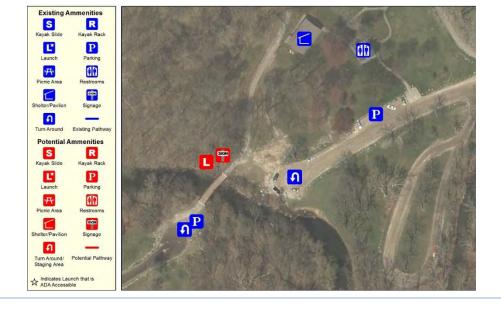
While un-improved at the moment, the parking and turn-around areas on the north and south side of the pedestrian bridge provide an opportunity for paddlers to unload and stage their kayaks and park their vehicles. Given the fluctuation of water levels in this area of the river and the erosive nature of the riverbank on the north side of the river (east of the pedestrian bridge) Wayne County should consider installing a launch on the north side of the river (west of the pedestrian bridge). Because of the heavy tree canopy and relatively stable shoreline near this area of the park, Wayne County should consider making this a natural surface launch. However, if shoreline erosion becomes an issue, the County could consider installing geotextile matting or wooden stairs. In addition, during instances of high water, it may be hard for paddlers to pass under the pedestrian bridge. A formal portage and access point may be necessary on the east side of the pedestrian bridge. In addition, a green launch sign should also be placed near the parking area and near the launch area facing the river.

If an access site is developed in downtown Inkster, this .27-mile section of the river to Inkster Park would provide a great opportunity for novice paddlers to experience the river in Inkster.





Photos: LIAA

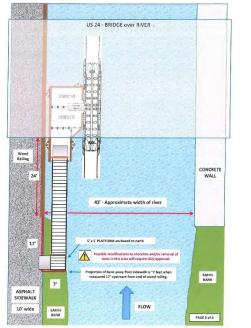


Dearborn Hills Golf Course





Site Plan for Launch



# SITE 12 – DEARBORN HILLS GOLF COURSE TRAILHEAD

#### Site Description

Built in 1923, the Dearborn Hills Golf Course is located along the Rouge River just north of the intersection of Telegraph and Michigan Avenue. Among other things, this public golf course features a large parking area (with turn-around) and a clubhouse with restrooms, a bar/grill and outdoor patio. In 2018, the City of Dearborn received a grant to develop an accessible launch (EZ Launch) on the north side of the river. The new launch is set to be installed in the spring of 2020.

#### **Potential Improvements**

Additional improvements to the Dearborn Hills Golf Course could include a slight reconfiguration of the parking lot to better accommodate a loading/staging area and parking for trailers, as well as a kayak rack. In addition, a wayfinding sign should be placed at the golf course entrance, off Telegraph. Green launch signs should also be placed near near the launch area facing both the parking lot and the river. Due to the historic significance of the golf course, this site should also include an informational kiosk.

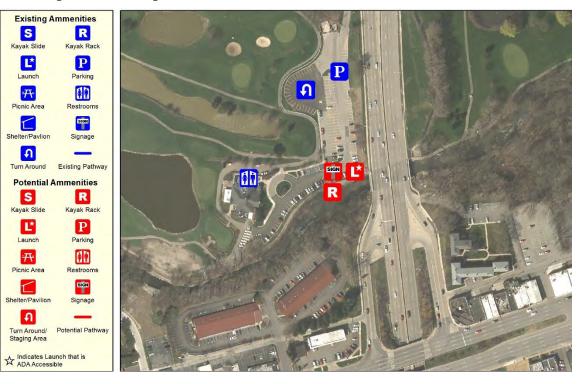


Image: City of Dearborn

# SITE 13 – FORD FIELD PARK TRAILHEAD

#### **Site Description**

Ford Field Park is located along the Rouge River on Monroe Street, just three blocks north of Michigan Avenue. Among other recreational assets, Ford Field Park incudes shelters, restrooms, ample parking and picnic tables. The park is also considered a trailhead for the *Rouge River Gateway Trail*. In 2018, the City of Dearborn received a grant to develop an accessible launch (EZ Launch) near the north side of the park. Due to the shallow depth of the river in this area, the launch will be accessed by a long gangway (w/railings). The new launch is set to be installed in the spring of 2020.

#### **Potential Improvements**

Additional improvements to Ford Field Park could include a slight reconfiguration of the parking lot/Monroe Street to better accommodate a loading/staging area. In addition, a wayfinding sign should be placed at the corner of Michigan and Monroe Street. Green launch signs should also be placed near near the launch area facing both the parking lot and the river. This site should also include an informational kiosk. Site Plan for Launch

#### **Existing Ammenities** R Kayak Rack S Kayak Slide Parking Launch Picnic Area Restrooms C SIGN Shelter/Pavlion Signage \* SIGN Turn Around Existing Pathwa **Potential Ammenities** S Kayak Slide R Kayak Rack Launch Parking Picnic Area Restrooms SIGN Shelter/Pavilio Signage Ð Potential Pathwa Turn Around/ Staging Area ADA Accessible

Image: City of Dearborn

#### Ford Field Park



Photos: LIAA

# SITE 14 – ROUGE RIVER GATEWAY TRAIL REST STOP

#### **Site Description**

The Rouge River Gateway Trail is a 2.3-mile long scenic bike path connecting Dearborn's Ford Field Park to the Hines Park Trail. The scenic bike path travels through the densely forested campus of UM Dearborn and across a bridge near the confluence of the Main and Lower Rouge River. A 2019 project to create a fish passage around the upstream dam resulted in the construction of a new pedestrian bridge.

#### **Potential Improvements**

This rest stop should include only minimal improvements. A blue rest stop sign should be placed at an area along the river where kayakers could comfortably get out of their kayak, most likely near the pedestrian bridge. Given its proximity to the Henry Ford Estate, an informational kiosk (smaller version) could be placed near the pedestrian bridge to better illustrate the water trail and local history to bikers and walkers.



# SITE 15 – ROTUNDA DRIVE TRAILHEAD

#### **Site Description**

Located in the City of Dearborn, this vacant parcel off Rotunda Drive is owned by Wayne County. Access to the parcel is provided by a long gravel service drive. From the end of the service drive, there is a gradual grass embankment down to the river channel.

#### **Potential Improvements**

Given the current condition of the site, just a few simple improvements could help establish this site as a more formal trailhead, including a more defined parking area with turn-around and signage. Given the relative gradual embankment along the river, an accessible launch is probably not needed. Paddlers could just stop and pull their kayak up onto the concrete channel. However, a kayak slide would help paddlers better access the river's edge from the parking area. A wayfinding sign should be placed at Rotunda Drive, and green launch signs should be placed near near the parking area and along the river (facing both the parking lot and the river).

Over time, additional amenities (e.g., pavilion, picnic tables, accessible launch, kayak slide, landscaping, formal entrance and service drive) could be added to make this parcel a more formal trailhead. Due to its proximity to the Detroit Lions Practice Facility, Greenfield Village and the Ford Testing Track, this site could also include an informational kiosk.



#### Rotunda Drive





Photos: LIAA

**Kessey Fieldhouse** 







Photos: LIAA

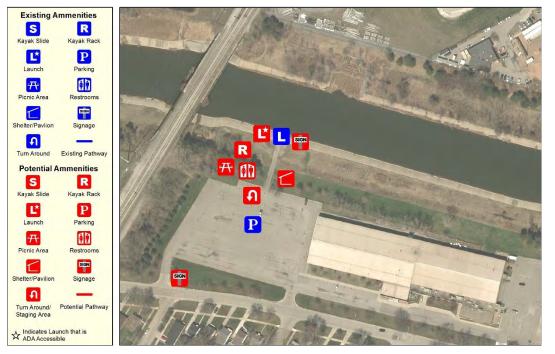
# SITE 16 – KESSEY FIELDHOUSE BOAT LAUNCH TRAILHEAD

## Site Description

Currently, access to the river is provided by a long concrete ramp, off the parking lot for the Kessey Fieldhouse in Melvindale. At the bottom of the ramp, a small metal grate was placed in the water to help trailers get in and out of the river. Given that this site is primarily used by motorboaters (w/trailers), any future improvements should consider ways to avoid potential motorboater/paddler conflicts.

## **Potential Improvements**

Potential improvements to this site should include a slight reconfiguration of the parking lot to better accommodate an initial loading/staging area and accessible parking (with room for trailers). An accessible route should be developed that would help people move their kayaks from the parking lot to the launch area. The launch area should be expanded to include a pavilion, portable restrooms, an accessible launch and kayak rack. In addition, wayfinding signs should be placed along Greenfield Road and South Dearborn indicating the location of the access site. The green launch signs should also be placed near the parking area and near the launch area facing the river. Because this site has been identified as a primary trailhead, it should also include an informational kiosk. A "mockup" of what this trailhead could look like is illustrated on the following two pages. Please keep in mind that all designs should be developed to avoid, as much as possible, conflict with existing motorboat use.



## Current Condition, Kessey Fieldhouse Site



Possible Improvements, Kessey Fieldhouse Site



# SITE 17 – FORDSON ISLAND REST STOP

#### **Site Description**

Fordson Island was created in 1917, when it was determined that the original path of the Rouge River was too shallow and wound too much to allow Ford Motor Company to get its manufactured submarine chaser Eagle Boats, meant for World War I, to the Detroit River. In an effort to rectify the situation, the Army Corps of Engineers cut and dredged a channel across the land just south of the Rouge Plant, creating the 8.4-acre island. Despite its predominately industrial landscape, the island was home to a handful of residents for many years. In more recent years, Marathon Petroleum had operated an asphalt transfer station (now decommissioned) on the island. In 2011, 21 abandoned boats were removed from the channel around the island, and FOTR is working on long-term plans to restore the island into a nature park. Over time, aquatic plants and fish have returned to the channel and a variety of wildlife (including fox) have returned to the island.

#### **Potential Improvements**

This rest stop should include only minimal improvements. FOTR should determine the best location to place a blue rest stop sign, preferably at a location where kayakers could comfortably get out of their kayak. Given its unique history, an informational kiosk (smaller version) could be placed near the rest stop area.



#### | Fordson Island Abandoned boats in Fordson Island

channel were removed in 2011.



Photo: FOTR

Fort Street Bridge Park







Photos: LIAA

# SITE 18 – FORT STREET BRIDGE PARK TRAILHEAD

#### Site Description

Under a unique collaboration between the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Erb Family Foundation, Fort-Rouge Gateway, Marathon Petroleum Company LP, Motor Cites National Heritage Area and United Auto Workers Local 600, this small parcel adjacent to the Fort Street Bridge has been committed as a future park. The park will be dedicated to those who lost their lives during the 1932 Ford Hunger March. Although design plans for the park are still being finalized, the park is expected to feature a gathering plaza, interpretive signage, artwork, a rain garden, and interactive/educational demonstrations about stormwater. In addition, the park should include a boardwalk and kayak launch.

#### **Potential Improvements**

At the time of this writing, due to the uncertain timing of the redevelopment efforts, no formal improvements are recommended. However, FOTR and the Leadership Committee should continue to provide support and guidance to MDOT as plans develop and mature for the park and subsequent launch site. At a minimum, green launch signs should be placed near the launch area facing the river. Renderings for the proposed park were developed and are provided below.



# SITE 19 – FORMAN PARK REST STOP

#### Site Description

This large park beneath the I-75 overpass is owned by the City of Detroit. At the time of this writing, there are no amenities at Forman Park. However, the heavily vegetated shoreline and gentle bank provide an opportunity to develop a rest stop. Unlike some rest stops, Forman Park is accessible by vehicle.

## **Potential Improvements**

This rest stop should include only minimal improvements. FOTR should determine the best location to place a blue rest stop sign, preferably at a location where kayakers could comfortably get out of their kayak.



#### | Forman Park







Photos: LIAA

Belanger Park







Photos: LIAA

#### Zug Island Sulfur Springs



## SITE 20 – BELANGER PARK TRAILHEAD

#### Site Description

Located in the City of River Rouge, Belanger Park marks the terminus of the Lower Rouge River Water Trail, even though it technically fronts the Detroit River. Among other features, Belanger Park has formal restrooms, a pavilion, picnic areas, ample parking (for trailers), benches, a fishing pier and two large concrete boat ramps.

#### **Potential Improvements**

The biggest need for Belanger Park is an accessible launch. The existing boat ramps are primarily used by motorboaters (w/trailers). Therefore, any future accessible launch should be tucked on the south breakwall of the launch area (circled below) so as to minimize potential conflicts. The grass area between the south breakwall and the existing parking lot could be developed into a more formal loading/staging area with a kayak rack. Wayfinding signs should be placed at Marion Avenue and Belanger Park Drive. The green launch signs should also be placed near the launch area facing the Detroit River. Belanger Park should also include an informational kiosk.



Table 3.1 Access Sites

Access Site	Jurisdiction/Site Owner	Proposed Access Type	
Canton Center Road	Canton Township	Trailhead	
Morton Taylor Trailhead	Canton Township	Trailhead	
Lotz Road	Canton Township	Secondary Access Site	
Commerce Court	City of Wayne	Secondary Access Site	
Newburgh Road	City of Wayne	Secondary Access Site	
Goudy Park	City of Wayne	Trailhead	
Dynamite Park	City of Wayne	Rest Stop	
Venoy Dorsey Park (west)	Wayne County	Trailhead	
Venoy Dorsey Park (east)	Wayne County	Trailhead	
Downtown Inkster	City of Inkster	Rest Stop	
Inkster Park	Wayne County	Trailhead	
Dearborn Hills Golf Course	City of Dearborn	Trailhead	
Ford Field Park	City of Dearborn	Trailhead	
Rouge River Gateway Trail	City of Dearborn	Rest Stop	
Rotunda Drive	Wayne County	Trailhead	
Kessey Fieldhouse Boat Launch	Melvindale	Trailhead	
Fordson Island	City of Dearborn	Rest Stop	
Fort Street Bridge Park	MDOT	Trailhead	
Forman Park	City of Detroit	Rest Stop	
Belanger Park	City of River Rouge	Trailhead	

## Table 3.2 Distances Between Access Sites

ACCESS NUMBERS	FROM ACCESS NAME	TO ACCESS NAME	MILEAGE
#1 to #2	Canton Center Road	Morton Taylor (Non-Motorized) Trailhead	2.0
#2 to #3	Morton Taylor (Non-Motorized) Trailhead	Lotz Road	2.1
#3 to #4	Lotz Road	Commerce Court	1.2
#4 to #5	Commerce Court	Newburgh Road	1.0
#5 to #6	Newburgh Road	Goudy Park	1.8
#6 to #7	Goudy Park	Dynamite Park	0.6
#7 to #8	Dynamite Park	Venoy Dorsey Park (west)	0.8
#8 to #9	Venoy Dorsey Park (west)	Venoy Dorsey Park (east)	1.0
(#9 to #10)	Venoy Dorsey Park (east)	Downtown Inkster	2.9
#10 to #11	Downtown Inkster	Inkster Park	0.3
#11 to #12	Inkster Park	Dearborn Hills Golf Course	2.3
#12 to #13	Dearborn Hills Golf Course	Ford Field Park	1.8
#13 to #14	Ford Field Park	Rouge River Gateway Trail	1.4
#14 to #15	Rouge River Gateway Trail	Rotunda Drive	1.7
#15 to #16	Rotunda Drive	Kessey Fieldhouse Boat Launch	1.1
#16 to #17	Kessey Fieldhouse Boat Launch	Fordson Island	2.1
#17 to #18	Fordson Island	Fort Street Bridge Park	0.4
#18 to #19	Fort Street Bridge Park	Forman Park	0.3
#19 to #20	Forman Park	Belanger Park	2.2
			27.0

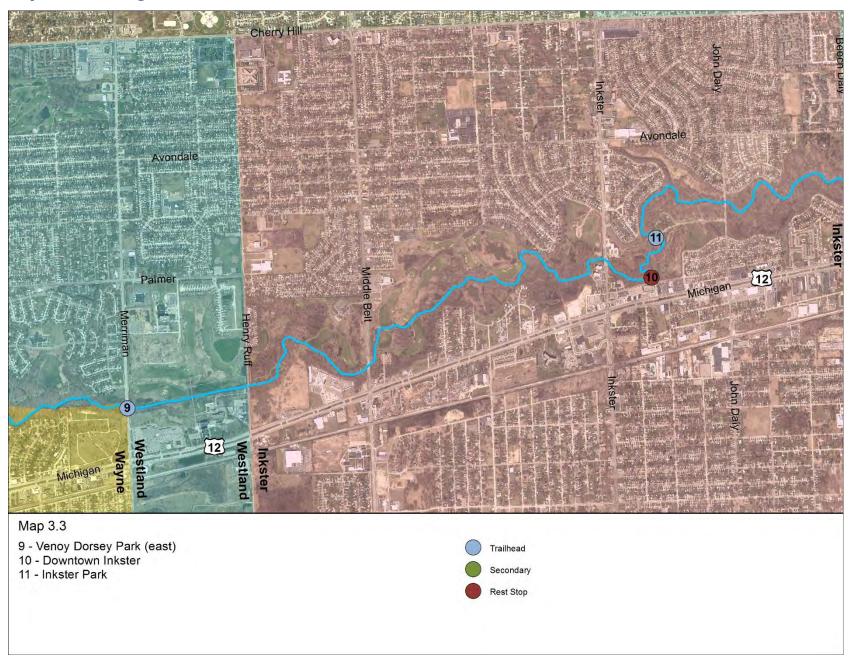
Map 3.1 - Lower Rouge River Water Trail Access Sites



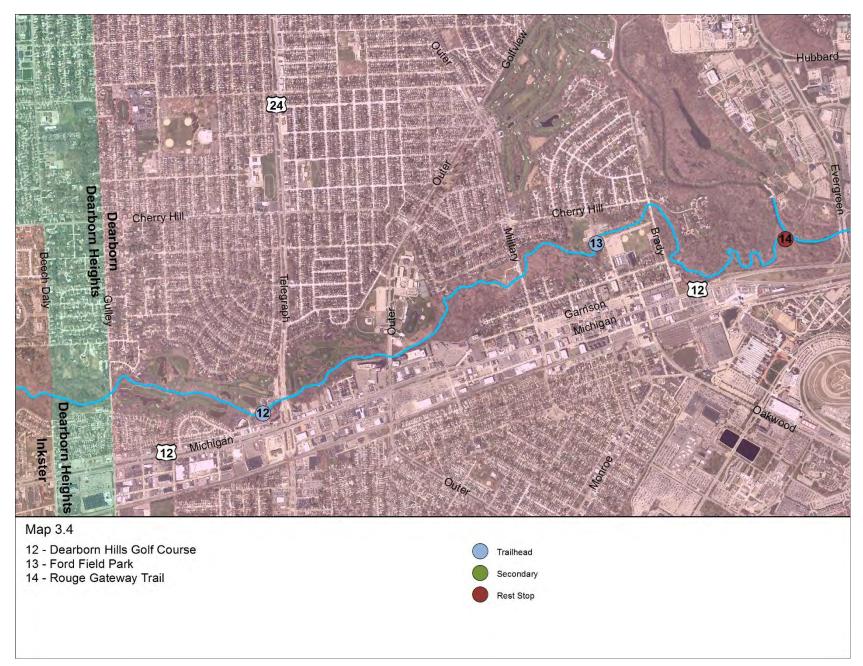


Map 3.2 – Lower Rouge River Water Trail Access Sites

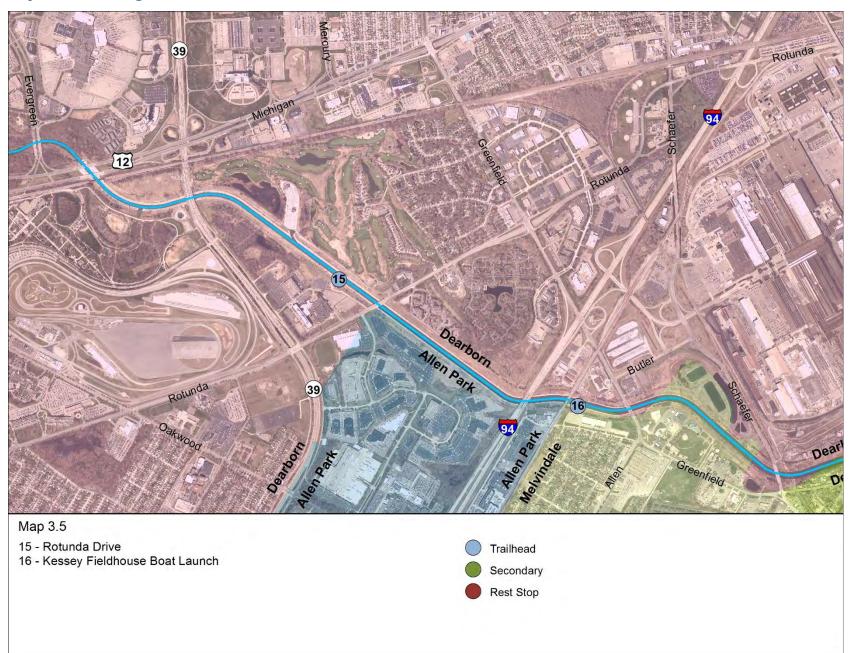
Map 3.3 - Lower Rouge River Water Trail Access Sites



## Map 3.4 - Lower Rouge River Water Trail Access Sites



Map 3.5 - Lower Rouge River Water Trail Access Sites



Map 3.6 - Lower Rouge River Water Trail Access Sites



## MAINTENANCE

For the Lower Rouge River Water Trail to be successful, a reliable and routine maintenance system must be established. Given the multi-jurisdictional scope of the water trail, the condition of the *collective* infrastructure of the water trail (e.g., launch sites, amenities, signage) will serve as a public measure of the overall quality of the water trail. For example, a broken sign and litter at an access site in Inkster may discourage paddlers from paddling the water trail in Melvindale. Ultimately, each jurisdiction will be responsible for ongoing maintenance and improvements (e.g., launch, parking area, trash receptacle, signs, etc.) at each access site within its jurisdiction. The MOU described earlier in this document ensures maintenance is addressed and information on each site is accurate. Periodic maintenance needs will be monitored through collaboration between the local jurisdiction and FOTR. If maintenance needs persist and/or are not addressed, the FOTR, with concurrence from the site owner, may assist the local jurisdiction with specific strategies or actions.

#### Level of Maintenance Standards

The following maintenance standards represent the optimal conditions for access sites and signs.

Parking. Parking lots should represent the carrying capacity of the particular characteristics (both historic and projected level of use) of the access site. Parking lots at trailheads should have barrier-free features (e.g., accessible space, barrier-free routes, etc.), resilient surface material or pavement (impervious is preferred), positive directional grading away from the river to natural vegetation or grass strips for infiltration, and proper and well-maintained signage. For gravel parking lots, provide periodic grading to maintain an even surface.

Restroom Facilities. Permanent restroom facilities must pass public health requirements for public use. They must also be barrier free. Routine cleaning is the greatest challenge for restrooms and is an essential responsibility. Faucets and hand dryers should be in working condition (no leaks) and toilets should be flushable. Restrooms should be well-stocked with toilet paper, soap and paper towel.

Porta-Johns. The device supplier should have a routine maintenance schedule consistent with the level of use. A portajohn is best located on a firm and level surface to avoid rutting and tilting from repeat servicing. A porta-john should be well-stocked with toilet paper, hand-sanitizer and odor strips. Porta-johns are the most frequent target for misbehavior and vandalism. Therefore, it will be important to remove graffiti and fix broken equipment (e.g., toilet seat, door lock) in a timely manner. Ideally, porta-johns should have barrier-free dimensions and be located on a barrier-free pathway.

Trash Receptacles. Trash is a common byproduct of trail users who often picnic before and after paddling outings. Access sites should have at least one routinely serviced trash container. An upgrade to this standard would be to provide a recycling container. Site maintenance for litter should be as frequent as all park maintenance activity within the jurisdiction. The presence of litter, when not addressed, sets a low-expectation standard for trail users, encourages disregard for other aspects of site care, and is an afront to the "Leave No Trace" ethic.

Picnic Facilities, Pavilion and Benches. These experience-enhancement site improvements are encouraged along with the obligation to maintain these facilities in good condition and with routine cleaning. At least one bench pad and picnic table should be barrier free.

Vegetation. The plants, trees and grasses at some access sites will require routine maintenance activity, whether it is mowing, pruning, invasive species management, or other vegetative needs for a particular site. Native plantings and grasses are encouraged as demonstrations to the public of how natural riverside vegetation can be planted and maintained.

Signs and Markers. While sign components, colors and placement relative to the sun are design considerations that may alleviate premature maintenance, signs do age over time. A tired, worn, vandalized or illegible sign is a must-replace item for maintenance providers.

Launch Ramp and Platform. Launch ramps should be designed, built and maintained at an acceptable grade of 8% or less. Any hard surface should include anti-slip features for secure footing while manipulating the water craft. The ramp should be cleared of debris through routine maintenance and especially after flooding, when slippery and defacing silt deposits can hinder its use. Wood platforms should also be cleared of debris through routine maintenance. Any loose or rotting board should be replaced in a timely manner.

Accessible Launch. Accessible launches should be well connected to barrier-free routes, parking and other access site features. These launches should also be cleared of debris and bird droppings through routine maintenance and especially after flooding. Accessible launches can be removed in the offseason to reduce damage. Signs on or near the accessible launch should indicate that the launch is restricted for paddlers and not intended as a swim or sunbathing platform.

Kayak Rack and Lockers. These experience-enhancement site improvements are encouraged along with the obligation to maintain these facilities in good condition and with routine cleaning. Doors and locks should also be routinely inspected to be sure they are in proper working order.

# **OBSTRUCTIONS**

#### **Portages**

Other than woody debris, the only physical obstruction along the entire 27-mile water trail (at times of high water) is a low-hanging pedestrian bridge in Colonial Park, just west of Inkster Road in the City of Inkster. New infrastructure (e.g., kayak slide and small dock platform) would be helpful to get paddlers out and back in the river on both sides of the bridge. Because of the frequency of high water along this stretch of the river, the Leadership Committee might one day recommend this site become a rest stop or secondary access site.



# **BRIDGES**

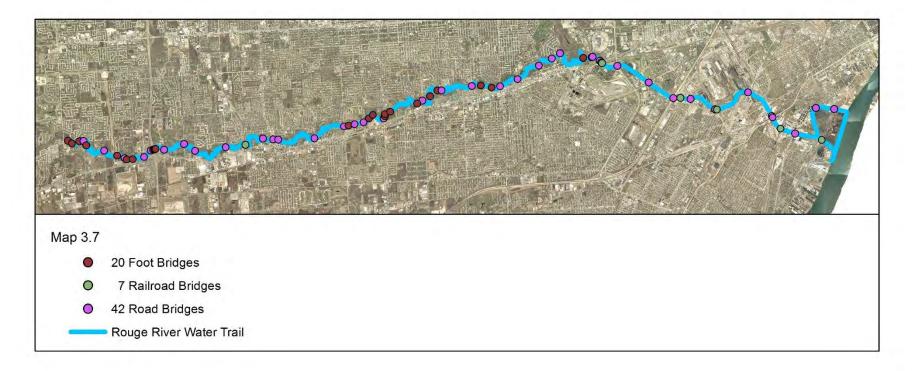
There are 68 bridges along the Lower Rouge River Water Trail. The height, use and materials of the 68 bridges varies significantly. For example, bridges over highways (e.g., Michigan Avenue) provide a great deal of clearance for paddlers. Smaller bridges on less traveled roads or pedestrian bridges may be lower, but still provide paddlers with ample clearance. These bridges can be useful landmarks for navigation and should be utilized for the wayfinding signs described in this document. A full list of bridges can be located in *Appendix E.* Map 3.7 illustrates the location of each bridge.

#### Bridges

There are 68 bridges along the Lower Rouge River Water Trail, including 19 pedestrian bridges, seven railroad bridges and 42 road bridges.



Map 3.7 – Bridges



# **RECOMMENDATIONS - MARKETING**

## Trail Branding and Identity

As part of the strategic planning process, a logo was developed for the Lower Rouge River Water Trail. The logo represents a brand for the water trail, helping to establishing it as a legitimate trail system while developing a positive, attractive image that the public can easily recognize and embrace. The new logo colorfully illustrates the unique natural and urban environment of the water trail, while also capturing the serenity of paddling the river. The characterless silhouettes of the male and female paddlers also reflect the inclusive nature of the water trail. The logo was designed with both oval and rectangle versions and in color and black-and-white to maximize its applicability. The logo should be placed on all signage along the trail as well as any online and print marketing materials (e.g., Paddler's Companion).

## **Trail Media**

#### **Trail Guide**

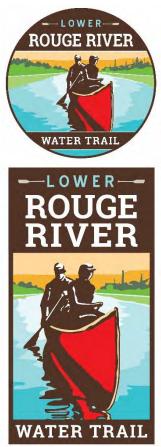
One of the most critical steps in establishing a water trail is to develop materials that identify the routes, features and access sites of the water trail. In many instances, unlike a land trail, a water trail does not have a singular route one can easily follow. Navigating a water trail requires a map to provide the paddler with information about the river and its system of access sites. This is especially important along the Rouge River, as the river has alternative portages (e.g., Zug Island, Henry Ford Estate) and different branches where the water trail has not yet been designated. In addition to being helpful on the river, a trail map (or paddler's guide) can provide paddlers with useful information about the water trail prior to getting on the water (e.g., safety tips, emergency contacts, gear recommendations, obstacles to avoid). This type of information can help reduce risky behavior, dangerous conflicts and emergency responses.

As part of the strategic planning process, FOTR worked with *livingLAB*, an innovative landscape and planning studio, to develop a "Paddler's Companion" — a foldable map and guide for the Rouge River Water Trail (see *Appendix G*.). The Paddler's Companion includes a large map that notes the location of trailheads and interpretive signs. In addition, the Paddler's Companion includes information about the Lower Rouge River, the water trail, safe paddling tips, emergency contacts, recommended river trips, and information about communities along the river.

Prior to printing the Paddler's Companion, it will be important to secure the placement of launch-site signage at each existing access site noted on the map. This will require a firm commitment from the Leadership Committee to only advertise the "first phase" of the water trail (essentially Dearborn to the Detroit River). The Paddler's Companion should be modified once more launch-site and interpretive signs are placed along the river. More language could also be added to the Paddler's Companion to address local history, paddling etiquette, water quality and the distance between access sites.

FOTR should distribute the Paddler's Companion to outlets and municipalities throughout southeast Michigan and venues throughout Michigan, including the MDOT welcome centers.

Lower Rouge River Water Trail Logo



## Water Trail Website

FOTR should update the Lower Rouge River Water Trail webpage on the existing FOTR website (www.therouge.org). The website should include an interactive trail map and the information provided in the Paddler's Companion (e.g., safety tips, emergency contacts, gear recommendations). The website should also include links to pictures and videos; popular paddling routes; up-to-the-minute reports about water conditions (USGS gauges) and weather; a blog where paddlers can interact and share stories, pictures and experiences; and contact information. The website should also include an interactive forum and data collection form in which logjams and issues around woody debris can be quickly identified. The trail route and associated access sites should also be placed on the Michigan Water Trails website at www.michiganwatertrails.org.

#### **Social Media**

FOTR should continue to use its Facebook page to spread information about future events, trail conditions, large accomplishments, interesting trail features and trail services.

#### **Public and Media Engagement**

FOTR should have a table and/or make presentations at recreation, river and/or watershed conferences and symposiums, such as the Quiet Water Symposium, Michigan Trails Summit, and the Mid-American Trails and Greenways Conference. In addition, wherever possible, FOTR should present at grant funding workshops.

FOTR should regularly develop and submit articles about the water trail to state and regional media outlets, including the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News, as well as outdoor adventure and paddling media outlets. FOTR should also include information about the Lower Rouge River Water Trail in the Michigan Trails Magazine.

FOTR should also work with at least one of the local broadcast news outlets to have a live shot of the Rouge River as the lead feed of their weather reports. FOTR could ask the meteorologist to include the conditions along the Rouge River Water Trail in their opening report. For example, "It's a beautiful 70 degrees and sunny on the Rouge River Water Trail."

In an effort to engage the larger Rouge River community, FOTR should make continual efforts to speak at local civic and community service meetings and have a presence at regional/community events and festivals. FOTR should also consider hosting a speaker's series about the water trail or the sport of paddling. These presentations may be provided by FOTR staff members, public safety officers and/or paddlesport athletes.

FOTR should hire a professional photographer to take pictures of the water trail and its associated features and amenities. The photographer should capture pictures of the unique natural and cultural aspects of the water trail, animals along the water, and water trail amenities (e.g., launch signs, accessible launches, interpretive signs, etc.). In addition, the photographer should capture several images of people paddling on the water trail and interacting with its associated features and amenities (e.g., freighters in the turning basin, paddlers in front of the Henry Ford Estate).

The collection of photos should include images of people of all ethnicities, ages and abilities. Any paddling event on the water trail should also be documented. Finally, the photographer should capture images of the water trail in different seasons and weather conditions. These images can be utilized in different formats on all the media outlets discussed above.

### Trail Signage

Signs and markers are essential components of a water trail. There are seven types of signs that FOTR and local leaders will need to develop and place at specific locations along the water trail and in the neighboring communities. As part of the strategic planning process, FOTR and the Leadership Committee worked with *livingLAB* to develop standards for several of these signs (see *Appendix H*).

**Land-Based Wayfinding Signs.** Land-based wayfinding signs are meant to direct visitors (primarily by vehicle) to an access site. In communities that already have their own comprehensive wayfinding program, "water trail access site" or "Rouge River Water Trail" could be placed on existing wayfinding signs. In communities without a wayfinding program, a small sign with the Lower Rouge River Water Trail logo and an arrow could be placed in strategic locations to direct visitors to the access site.

**Water-Based Wayfinding Signs.** Water-based wayfinding signs are meant to direct paddlers along the water trail and provide an awareness of their location on the water. During the strategic planning process, the Leadership Committee adopted a water-based wayfinding sign standard that features an 18" x 24" panel with a brown background and yellow and blue lettering. The top of the sign includes the Lower Rouge River Water Trail Logo, and the bottom of the sign includes the distance (from that point) to the Detroit River. The location (e.g., road, bridge, access site) where the sign is placed is named in the middle of the sign.

**Land-Based Access Site Signs.** A distinctive access site (or launch site) sign should be placed at each access site turn-in (off the primary road) and/or directly at each access site. During the strategic planning process, the Leadership Committee adopted an access site sign standard that features an 18" x 24" panel with a green background and white lettering. The top of the sign includes the name of the access site and the bottom of the sign includes the word "launch." The Lower Rouge River Water Trail logo is placed in the middle.

**Water-Based Access Site Signs.** Similar to the land-based access site signs described above, each access site should also include a sign that is visible from the water. Depending on the size and layout of the access site, the sign could be placed on a large stable tree or stake so it's clearly visible from the water. Given the potential for flashy conditions in portions of the Lower Rouge River Water Trail, the access site sign should be placed back far enough from the riverbank to avoid being damaged by woody debris. The green launch-site sign noted above could also be used for water-oriented access site signs.

**Rest Stop Signs.** During the strategic planning process, the Leadership Committee adopted a rest stop sign standard that features an 18" x 24" panel with a blue background and white lettering. The top of the sign includes the name of the rest stop and the bottom of the sign includes the words "rest stop." The Lower Rouge River Water Trail logo is placed in the middle.

**Supplemental Signs.** In an effort to complement the preceding signs, the Leadership Committee adopted a supplemental sign standard that features a 9" x 9" panel with a brown background and white symbology. These symbols identify assets and amenities at the access site (e.g., parking, restrooms, picnic area).

**Safety Signs. Markers.** FOTR, in collaboration with LIAA and the public safety agencies in communities along the Rouge River are currently working to develop a comprehensive safety sign (markers) package that would assist in responding

to emergencies. The sign standards will be completed in late June and should be added to this comprehensive sign package.

**Kiosks.** All the access sites identified as a "Trailhead" should include a kiosk. During the strategic planning process, the Leadership Committee adopted a kiosk sign standard featuring three 24" x 36" panels. Two panels are devoted to information about the water trail and one panel is devoted to a specific trip (with a map). Each panel was designed to allow for content and messaging that is unique to the specific access site. For example, the kiosk could include information about the unique environmental, cultural or historical features associated with a particular site or nearby sections of the water trail. In other instances, access sites closer to downtowns (e.g., Inkster) may also include information (and a map) about where to eat, sleep and shop within the downtown.

**Interpretive Signs.** During the strategic planning process, the Leadership Committee identified 12 locations along the river that highlight unique natural, historical or cultural features of the river and/or the surrounding communities. FOTR, in cooperation with local landowners, municipalities and stakeholders, should develop an interpretive sign that can be viewed by paddlers *on* the river at each of these locations.

In some instances, given the broad possibilities for where these signs could be placed (e.g., in the water, on a bridge), the Leadership Committee and FOTR should implement a "pilot" interpretive sign program. The pilot program would allow the Leadership Committee and the FOTR to work with local landowners and partners (e.g., MDOT, Coast Guard) to determine the best placement for six of the 12 locations. The pilot program would also provide the Leadership Committee and FOTR an opportunity to work with partners like the Henry Ford Heritage Association and the MotorCities National Heritage Area to develop the interpretive language for each sign as well as the design and fabrication standards for each sign. Due to the unique cultural heritage of several of the communities along the water trail, some interpretive signs may also include information in Spanish or Arabic. The pilot program would then provide the standard for development, design and fabrication for the remaining six signs. Maps, 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10 illustrate the relative location of each interpretive sign.

#### Interpretive Sign Locations (with single-letter identifiers on map)

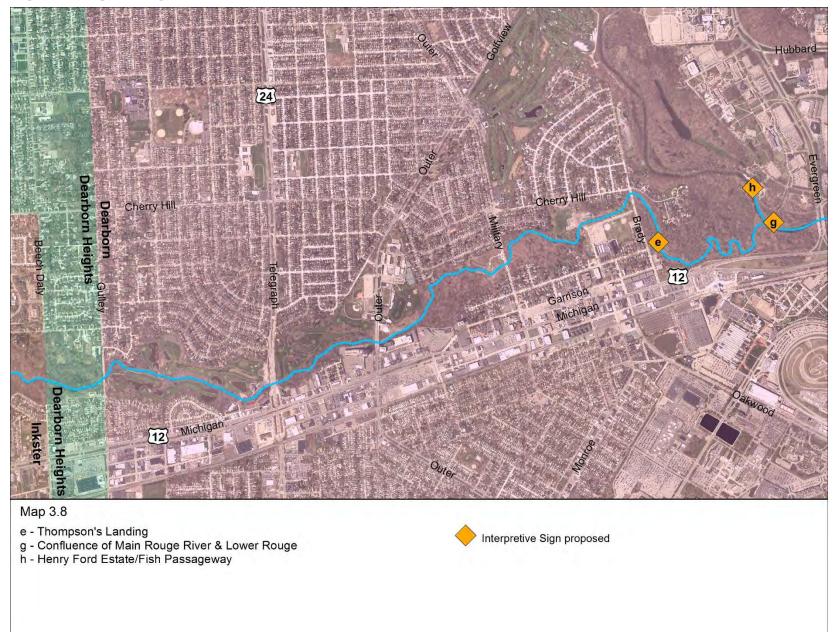
- 1. Thompson's Landing (e)
- 2. Confluence of the Main and Lower Rouge River (g)
- 3. Henry Ford Estate/Fish Pass (h)
- 4. Greenfield Village Oxbow (i)
- 5. Hubbell-Southfield CSO (j)
- 6. Ford Rouge Complex (k)
- 7. Historic Bascule Bridges (3) (l, p, r)
- 8. Detroit Wastewater Treatment Plant (q)
- 9. Zug Island (s)
- 10. Natural Sulphur Springs (t)

#### **Interpretive Signs**

Unique historical and cultural features along the river (like the Henry Ford Estate) provide an opportunity to tell the story of the Rouge community through interpretive signage.



## Map 3.8 – Interpretive Sign Sites



## Map 3.9 – Interpretive Sign Sites



#### LOWER ROUGE RIVER WATER TRAIL STRATEGIC PLAN

#### Map 3.10 - Interpretive Sign Sites



Map 3.10

- k Ford Rouge Complex
- I Historic Bascule Bridge
- p Historic Bascule Bridge
- q Detroit Wastewater Treatment Plant
- r Historic Jefferson Ave. Bascule Bridge
- s Zug Island Channel
- t Natural Sulphur Springs

Interpretive Sign proposed

#### Leveraging the Water Trail for Economic Development

Water trails can have a significant impact on the local and regional economy. Water trails help attract and support tourism and new business opportunities. In addition, local residents often spend money on trail-related activities and businesses. The outdoor recreation industry is now recognized as one of the leading economic drivers in the United States, surpassed only by Pharmaceuticals and Motor Vehicles and Parts in terms of consumer spending. In addition, the impact of outdoor recreation reaches beyond the outdoor industry, directly fueling such major economic sectors as manufacturing, accommodations, food services and retail trade. According to a 2013 report from the Outdoor Industry Association, spending on outdoor recreation supports 6.1 million direct jobs and \$80 billion in federal, state and local tax revenues. The report states, "outdoor recreation is a growing and diverse economic super sector that is a vital cornerstone of successful communities that cannot be ignored."

According to the Outdoor Industry Association, paddlesports — largely fueled by stand-up paddleboarding and kayaking — is one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities in the United States. A 2015 Special Report on Paddlesports prepared by the Association notes that more than 21.7 million people — or 7.4 percent of Americans — participated in paddling activities in 2014. Kayaking, which is the most popular form of paddling, had approximately 13 million participants in 2014. The Association also notes that the percentage of Americans participating in kayaking increased from 3 percent in 2010 to 4.4 percent in 2014.

Nationally, paddlers are evenly represented across age groups but tend to be more highly educated, with 49 percent of kayakers and 43 percent of canoeists achieving a college degree or higher. Furthermore, 55 percent of kayakers and 48 percent of canoeists have incomes greater than \$75,000. In 2014, kayakers across the United States took an average of eight trips during the year, contributing to 105 million trips overall.

In Michigan, the outdoor recreation industry generates \$18.7 billion in consumer spending annually. A comprehensive understanding of consumer spending on paddling in Michigan is still largely incomplete. However, *Michigan Blue Economy*, a report from the Michigan Economic Center and the Grand Valley State University Annis Water Resources Institute, noted that the small but growing canoe and kayak industry annually contributes roughly \$140 million to Michigan's economy. In 2013, the Huron River Watershed Council commissioned an economic impact analysis for the Huron River Water Trail from the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development. The analysis found that the Huron River Water Trail generates more than \$49.5 million annually from current users, including \$33 million in Washtenaw County alone. The report also went on to note that studies show that the average paddler will travel roughly 79 miles for a day trip and 117 miles for an overnight trip.

Another report from the River Management Society summarizes notable findings on the economic impact of water trails in three different communities in the United States. According to this report, "towns that already have dining, lodging and rental services are more likely to see an increase in paddlesports tourism when they advertise and promote their water trail, as contrasted with communities that market their water trail, but do not provide standard amenities for paddlers."

The River Management Society report also identifies the key "trail tourist" amenities that tend to successfully attract new audiences and generate economic activity:

- Access to the water
- Outfitters: rental and shuttling services
- Lodging: camping, bed and breakfasts
- Dining: restaurants, breweries, grocery stores
- Integrated recreation: hiking and biking paths
- Activities: museums, interpretive centers and other activities
- Proximity: neighboring towns with similar amenities

The report also noted that guides and outfitters, lodging and food are typically the top visitor expenditures for trail tourists. Therefore, communities with lodging, dining and outfitter/rental services already in place can expect to experience a more substantial economic benefit from a water trail.

Marketing of the water trail should incorporate the contemporary inclination of trail users to combine water-based recreation with land-based recreation. Therefore, it is essential to make physical connections between the water trail and regional land-based trails (where feasible) and to develop cross-promotional resources. It will also be important to be sure that there is at least one outfitter that can accommodate both water trail and land-based trail users.

As the link between water trails and economic development is better understood, FOTR and neighboring municipalities should look for ways to capitalize on the water trail to maximize trail-based tourism for future economic development opportunities — that is, to redefine the community as a "Trail Town." The Trail Town concept was first developed by the Allegheny Trail Alliance, a coalition of seven different trail organizations along the Great Allegheny Passage, a 150-mile multi-use trail running through Pennsylvania and Maryland.

A Trail Town is an active, attractive and interesting place with accessible and comfortable spaces, hosting a variety of activities and promoting social interaction and a strong sense of place. A Trail Town should meet both the needs of the trail users and residents of the community. A Trail Town has the physical amenities that support trail users such as accessible launches. A Trail Town also has the business amenities to support day-trip users (e.g., kayak rental) and overnight trail users (e.g., campground, casual restaurant and laundromat). Using the basic elements of the Trail Town strategy, local officials and economic development officials can help create local and regional tools for water trail-based economic development.

Basic Elements of a Trail Town Strategy:

- Entice trail users to get off the trail and go into the town.
- Welcome trail users to your town by making information about the community readily available at the trail.
- Make strong and safe connections between your town and the trail.
- Educate local businesses on the economic benefits of meeting the needs of trail tourists.
- Recruit new businesses or expand existing ones to fill gaps in the goods or services that trail users need.
- Promote a "trail-friendly" character of the community.

#### LOWER ROUGE RIVER WATER TRAIL STRATEGIC PLAN



#### **GETTING STARTED**

#### **Taking Those First Steps**

Development of the Lower Rouge River Water Trail will require significant investment in infrastructure, signage, promotional materials, programing and personnel. As such, funding for the water trail will need to come from a variety of different sources. FOTR, the Leadership Committee and the participating jurisdictions will need to work together over the course of several years to determine the best way to secure and dedicate funding for the development and maintenance of the water trail. This type of long-term, sustainable planning effort may require additional consultation with a program development consultant.

Through the strategic planning process, it was determined the first phase of development for the water trail should focus on the portions of the river from the City of Dearborn to the Detroit River. To that end, FOTR and the Leadership Committee should focus on the following "first-step" activities:

**1.** Secure Resolutions of Support for Each Access Site. Once the Strategic Plan is approved by the Leadership Committee, staff from FOTR should work with each jurisdiction in which an access site has been proposed to secure a resolution of support for the development and maintenance of the access site. These resolutions should be kept on file at the FOTR office and will form the backbone of long-term support for the water trail development effort.

2. Complete the Safety Plan. As previously discussed in this document, FOTR should complete the comprehensive Safety Plan for the water trail.

3. Develop Formal Site Plans for Each Access Site. FOTR should work with a landscape architect/engineer with experience in water access to develop formal site plans and cost estimates for each access site identified in the first phase of the water trail. Once these site plans are secure, FOTR and the local jurisdiction can develop strategies to fund site development.

4. Develop Standards for Interpretive Signs. FOTR should work with a water trail signage professional to develop standards for the interpretive signs identified in the Strategic Plan. Once these standards are established, FOTR and the local jurisdiction can develop strategies to fund each sign.

5. Fabricate and Install Signage at Each Access Site and Bridge. FOTR should work with the local jurisdictions to secure funding for the fabrication and installation of the signs outlined in this plan at each access site along the water trail. Temporary signs might be more appropriate at certain access sites that remain undeveloped at this time. However, the visual cues of the water trail signs will be a clear indication to the greater community that progress is being made.

6. Connect with Regional Non-Motorized Trails. FORT should continue to explore development (e.g., trailheads, amenities, wayfinding signs), etc..) and funding opportunities to tie the Lower Rouge Water Trail with the outcomes of the Rouge Greenway Planning Study and the non-motorized pathway which will connect to and run parallel the water trail.

#### APPENDIX

# Memorandum of Understanding for Trail Governance and Management Lower Rouge River Water Trail

local governments and Friends of the Rouge regarding the development, maintenance, and promotion of the This Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter, "Agreement") is made by and between the undersigned Lower Rouge River Water Trail (hereinafter, "water trail").

σ recreational destination for people interested in kayaking, canoeing, paddle boarding, and other related WHEREAS, over 1.35 million people reside in the Rouge River watershed, which has the potential to be activities.

make collaborative decisions regarding the development, maintenance, and management of the water trail. WHEREAS, the Friends of the Rouge has established the Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee to

WHEREAS, much of the Rouge River is within Wayne County parks, making it ideal for the development of trailheads and rest stops.

Therefore, the Friends of the Rouge and the Local Government agree as follows:

## 1. Definitions

### Water Trail

community partnership that declares its intention to be responsible for the long-term funding, development and launch sites and are typically located near significant historical, environmental, business and/or cultural boats, like kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddleboards. Water trails may feature well-developed access sites points of interest. A water trail is typically organized, supported and managed by a dedicated entity and/or A recreational paddling route along a lake, river, canal or bay specifically dedicated for people using small and management of the water trail.

#### Trailhead

A designated, approved access site that is promoted for use by the water trail manager and the site owner and signage from roadways, wayfinding signage visible from the water and information kiosks regarding the water serves as a traditional trailhead. Each trailhead will have a suitable launch surface (e.g. paved or gravel public have the most amenities. Communication materials will encourage users to launch and exit from these sites. boat ramp or dock), off street parking for vehicles and restrooms. Other amenities may include garbage and trail and other cultural/historical/business information will be included at these sites. These access sites will recycling receptacles, potable water, picnic areas, a pavilion, lighting, and boat rack/lockers. Directional These sites are ideal locations for barrier-free improvements and amenities.

## Secondary Access Site

access sites may have a suitable launching surface or access that presents some type of challenge (e.g. carryin) to get on the water. Secondary access sites may be located along an undeveloped road-end, steep slope adjacent to the water, or require walking across a wide expanse of open space or wading through muck or A designated, approved access site from which to launch and land a non-motorized watercraft. Secondary wetlands.

#### **Rest Stops**

sites may not be easily accessed from the road or have an ideal land surface. Rest areas may or may not have A designated, approved access site where the site owner has permitted paddlers to land a watercraft. These

amenities but do provide a safe haven for the water trail users. Rest stops should also have wayfinding signage visible from the water.

# 2. Roles and Responsibilities

The development, maintenance, and promotion of the Lower Rouge River Water Trail shall be done cooperatively by the Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee, the Friends of the Rouge, and local governments who own, lease, or operate land which touches the 29.25 stretch of the Lower Rouge River. Each shall have the following roles and responsibilities:

# A. Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee

lease, or operate land which touches the 29.25 mile stretch of the Lower Rouge River, nonprofit corporations, of chaired by the Friends of the Rouge staff. The Committee consists of local units of government who own, Committee is governed by committee rules and procedures approved by the Committee and the Friends The Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee is a committee of the Friends of the Rouge, which is businesses, consultants, and interested members of the public. The Rouge River Water Trail Leadership the Rouge.

The Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee and all of its members have agreed to make decisions on the development, maintenance and management of the Lower Rouge Water Trail. More specifically, the responsibilities of the Committee are as follows:

- Support and implement the strategic water trail plan and developing annual priorities. •
- Collaborate on efforts to secure sustainable, long-term funding for the development and maintenance of the water trail.
- Hold meetings quarterly (or more, if needed).
- Inform and educate water trail users regarding paddling etiquette, interaction with other river users and adjacent property owners. •
  - Work with local jurisdictions and other access site owners to manage, maintain and improve trailheads, secondary access sites and rest stops.
    - Work with local governments that are members of the Committee to secure resolutions of support for the water trail, trailheads, secondary access sites, and rest stops.
      - Continually reassess and determine benchmarks and measurements of success.
- Establish standards for development and maintenance and the Lower Rouge River Water Trail, trailheads, secondary access sites, and rest stops.
  - Trainreads, secondary access sites, and rest sit
    Design water trail signage.
- Assist in developing and implementing a comprehensive safety plan for the water trail.
  - Promote and market the water trail.
- B. Friends of the Rouge

promotion of the Lower Rouge River Water Trail with numerous public and private partners. More specifically, The Friends of the Rouge is a nonprofit corporation that coordinates the development, maintenance, and the responsibilities of the Friends of the Rouge are as follows:

- Convene quarterly or more frequent meetings of the Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee. •
  - Develop progress report to be distributed to the Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee •

- Serve as the primary liaison and contact between all water trail partners.
  - Serve as the primary spokesperson for the water trail with the media.
- Coordinate volunteer activities and public events along and associated with the water trail.
- Coordinate collective efforts to secure sustainable, long-term funding for the development and maintenance of the water trail.
- Assist the Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee in securing resolutions of support for the water trail, trailheads, secondary access sites, and rest stops from participating jurisdictions. •
  - Provide final approval of relevant matters, based on recommendations of the Leadership Committee. .
- C. Local Government

The local governments that own, lease, or operate land that touches the 29.25 mile stretch of the lower Rouge River agree to assist in the development of the Lower Rouge River Water Trail within its jurisdiction. More specifically, the responsibilities of the local governments are as follows:

- Maintain and develop trailheads, secondary access sites, and rest stops. •
- Install and maintain signage at trailheads, secondary access sites, and rest stops.
- Secure resolutions of support for the water trail, trailheads, secondary access sites, and rest stops.
- Collaborate on efforts to secure sustainable, long-term funding for the development and maintenance of the water trail.
  - Appoint a member to the Leadership Committee to regularly attend meetings or send alternate .
    - Provide public safety services (police, fire for medical treatment and/or rescue operations)

#### 3. Term

This Agreement will be regarded as in effect from the date upon which both parties sign this Agreement until it is modified or terminated.

## 4. Withdrawals and Additions

Any party to this Agreement may withdraw from the Agreement at any time by providing written notice to the facilitator of the Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee. Any person that withdraws from this Agreement shall also withdraw from the Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee.

Any local government that becomes a member of the Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee shall be required to sign this Agreement.

## 5. Modifications.

the Agreement must be approved by the Rouge River Water Trail Leadership Committee in accordance with its rules and procedures. If this Agreement is modified in accordance with this section, this Agreement shall be Any party to this Agreement may propose changes to the Agreement at any time. Any proposed changes to re-signed by all parties.

## 6. Additional Provisions

Leadership Committee members will be made in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and procedures. This Agreement is neither a fiscal nor funds obligation document. Any endeavor involving funds between Such endeavors, if any, will be outlined in separate agreements.

Signature & Title	Community/Organization	Date
Signature & Title	Community/Organization	Date
Signature & Title	Friends of the Rouge, Board of Directors	Date

#### Amenities



Lower Rouge River Water Trail Strategic Plan - June 5, 2018 Public Meeting



#### **River Access**













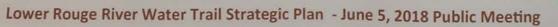


















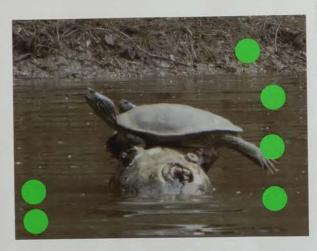
#### River Experience



















Lower Rouge River Water Trail Strategic Plan - June 5, 2018 Public Meeting



Knowing a water trail is being developed, what are three (3) things you hope planners keep in mind?

COMMUNITY BUDGET- CAPACITY

directional signage trash removal Barknes m5 Punking

SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS - WDM HAS EXPENSES

Interpretive signage/displays that high light natural features/ecologianly significant features.

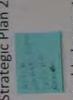
VERMIN-RESISTANT TRASH RECEPTACLES + SYSTEM IN PLACE TO REMOVE ON REGILAR BASIS NO OPEN FIRES, PLACE FOR EMBERS FROM GRICLING

"HADITAT RELPEAS" E BAT, MARTIN HOUSES, Duck BOXES [NUTGONE-SIJED]

LIAA

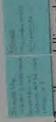
Rouge River Strategic Plan 2018

# Working Draft Mission Statement



To dispel the environmental misconceptions of the Lower Rouge River by providing a world-class water trail that can safely accommodate people of all ages and abilities, connect with nearby communities, and trails and promote trail-based tourism.

# **Revised Draft Vision Statement**



Michigan and the Great Lakes Region as a unique destination for paddling, conservation and trail-based The Lower Rouge River Water Trail is an open 27-mile paddling destination, recognized in Southeast tourism.

The water trail provides a wide variety of natural, urban and industrial paddling experiences that can recreation opportunities for the residents of its neighboring communities and ties into existing trail accommodate people of all ages and abilities. The water trail provides safe and unique outdoor systems throughout the region. Local officials and citizens in the communities along the Lower Rouge River consider the water trail to be Paddler's interact with the water trail through a series of annual events and programs that celebrate the an important asset and integral part of their community. People can easily access the water trail and users are also encouraged to explore the heritage, businesses and services of nearby communities. river's natural, cultural and recreational heritage.

conservation organizations, local municipalities, paddlers and interested citizens. In addition, the water watershed continues to improve through greater awareness, stewardship and partnerships with local trail continuously helps to enhance the natural perception of the river and dispel the environmental The quality of the water, fisheries and wildlife habitat of the Lower Rouge River and surrounding misconceptions of the river.

# Revised Draft Goals (Tenants)

- Continue to support and integrate ongoing public awareness, education, conservation and restoration effort that enhance and promote the health of the river. i
  - Secure long-term and sustainable management and funding for the water trail.
    - Promote Leave No Trace principles.
- Support, promote and improve river-related recreational activities, including paddling, boating, fishing and bird watching. w 4
  - Develop and maintain high-quality access sites and user experiences.
  - Provide for a safe water trail by promoting and developing a comprehensive approach to emergency management. 0 2
- Create an identity for the water trail to incorporate into public outreach and marketing opportunities. N 00 0
- Connect the water trail to nearby parks, public spaces as well as non-motorized and water trail systems. Support local and regional efforts to increase water-based tourism and connections with downtowns
  - along the river that support and promote new opportunities for economic development.
- Manage woody debris to supports fish populations and allow for recreational access with minimal Enhance partnerships with landowners, managers and decision makers along the water trail. 11. 10.
- Work to secure state and/or national water trail designation for the water trail. impact. 12.

June 5, 2018 Public Meeting

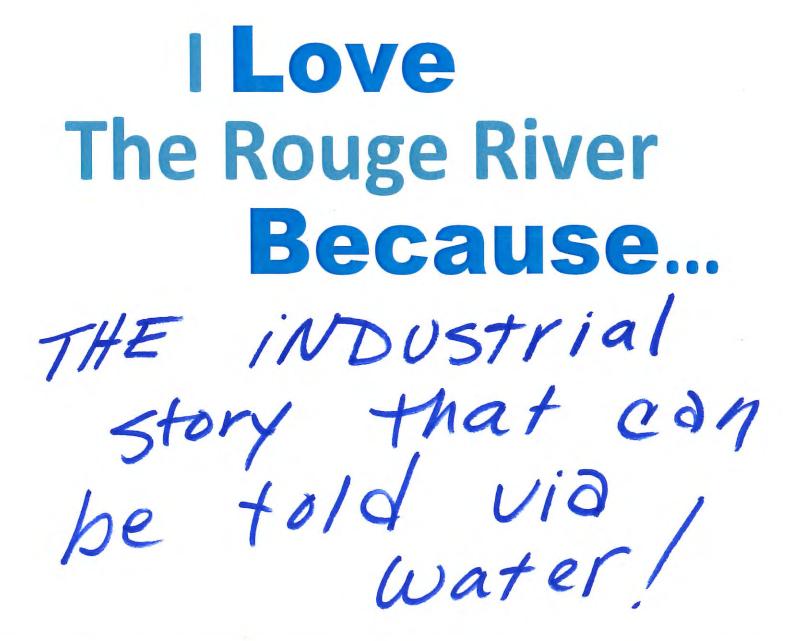
## **Love The Rouge River** Because... It's close to nome

### I Love The Rouge River Because...

It needs me

### I Love The Rouge River Because...

it is the defining natural feature in my community.



## **Love The Rouge River** Because... It drains the workershed feeds the land embraces the animistud like

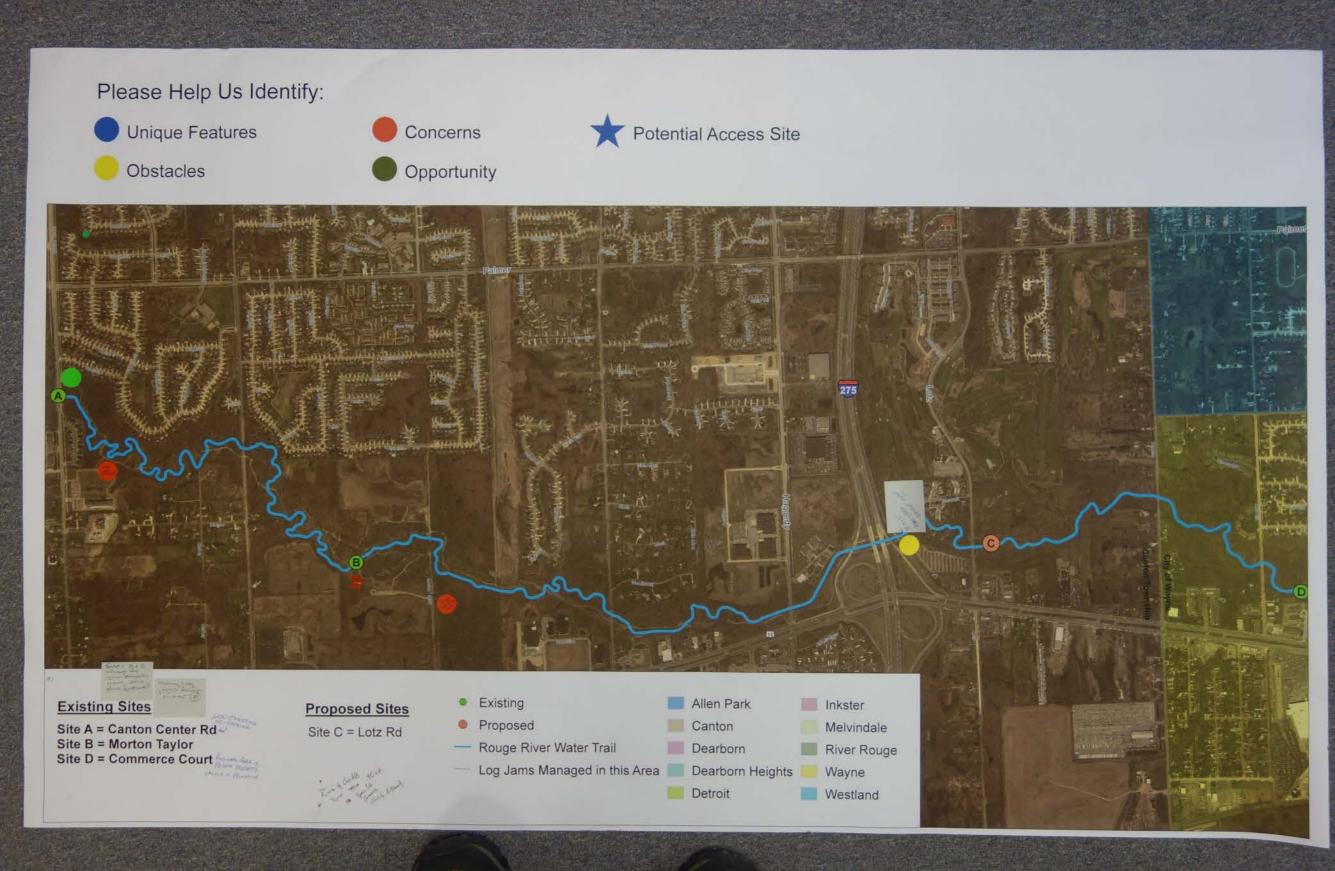
## Love **The Rouge River** Because... IT HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE SINCE CHILDHOOD

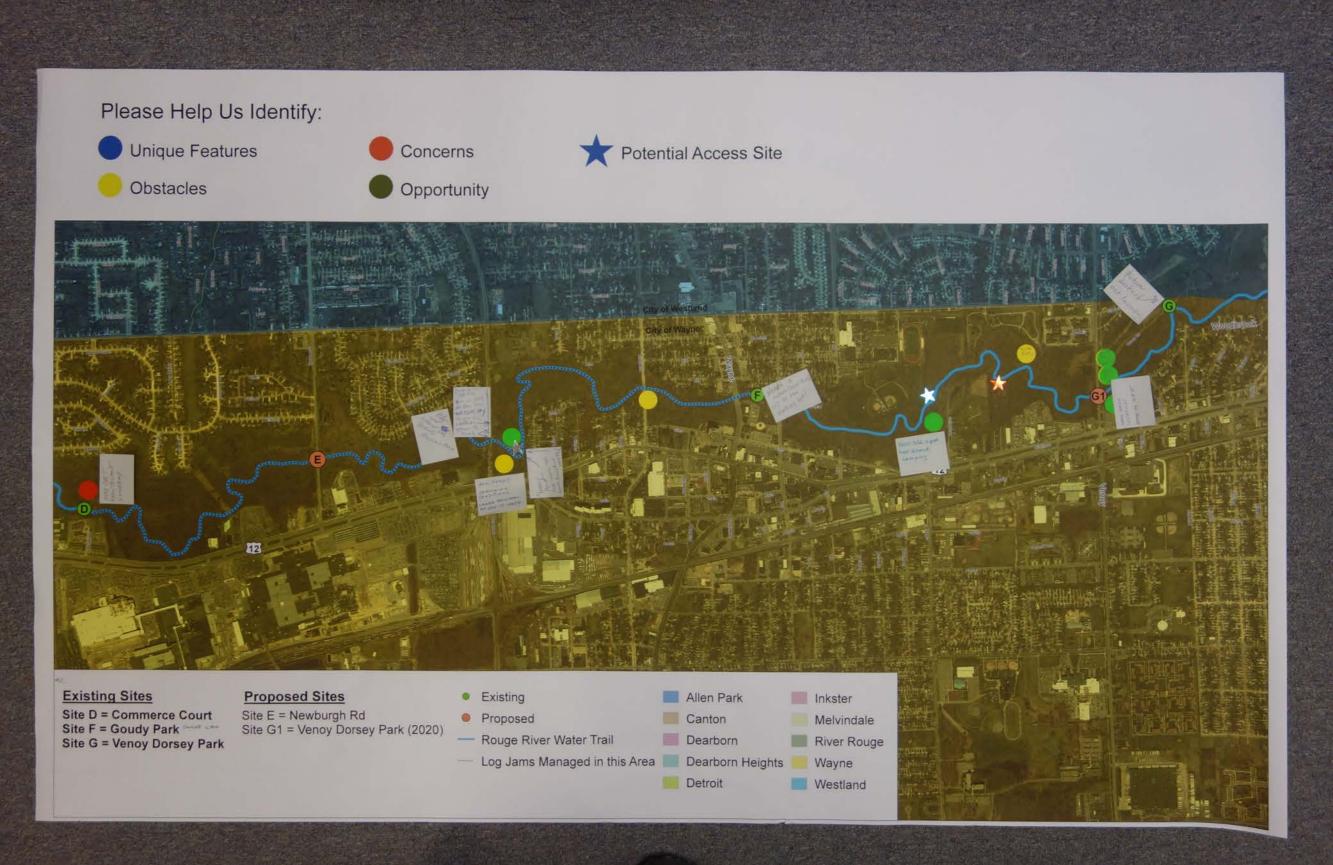
## I Love The Rouge River Because...

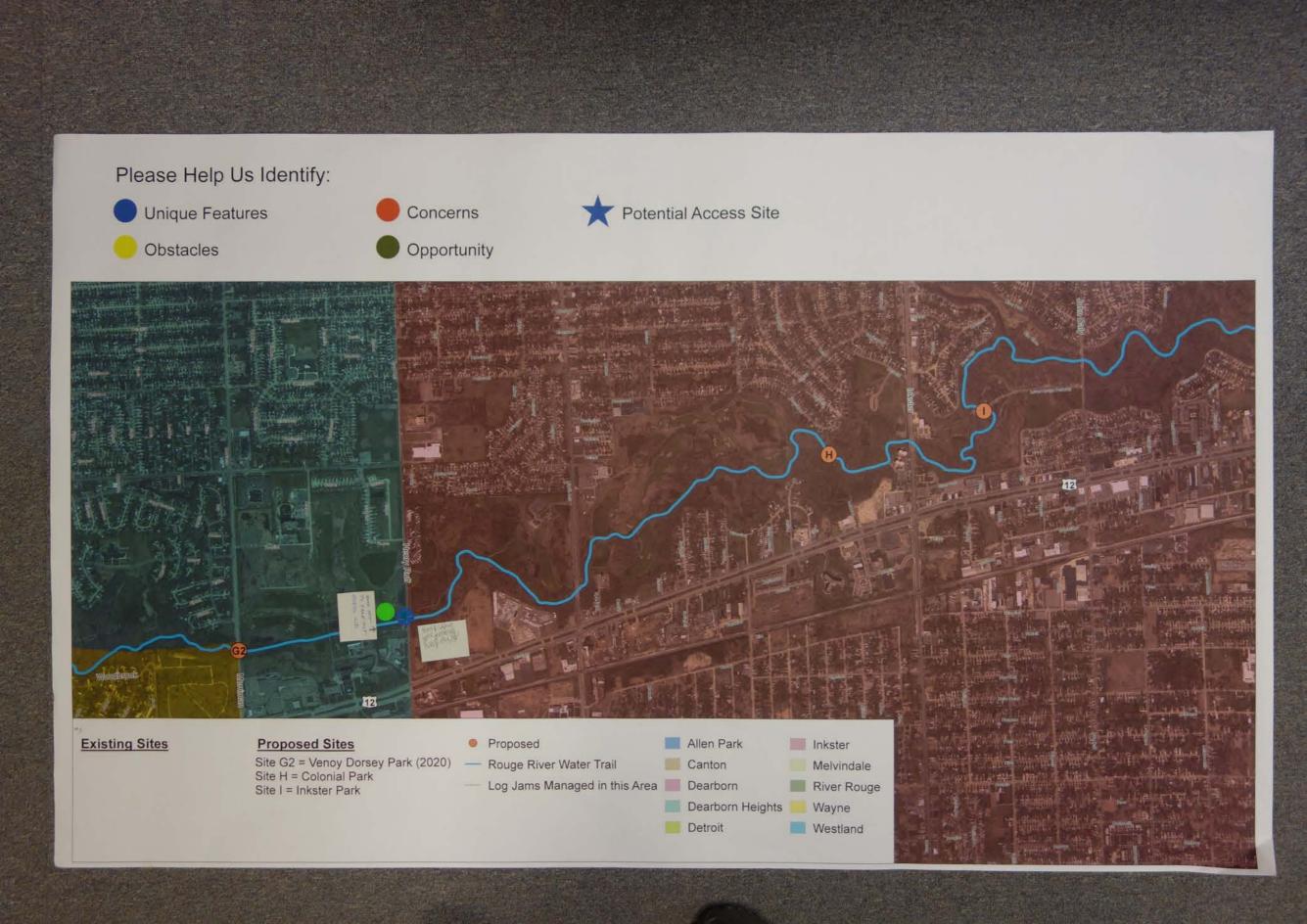
The Lay of the Land" all streams in the Rouge Watershed Create. Watershed Create. A stream in the City!!

## **Love The Rouge River** Because... Right in our back yards!

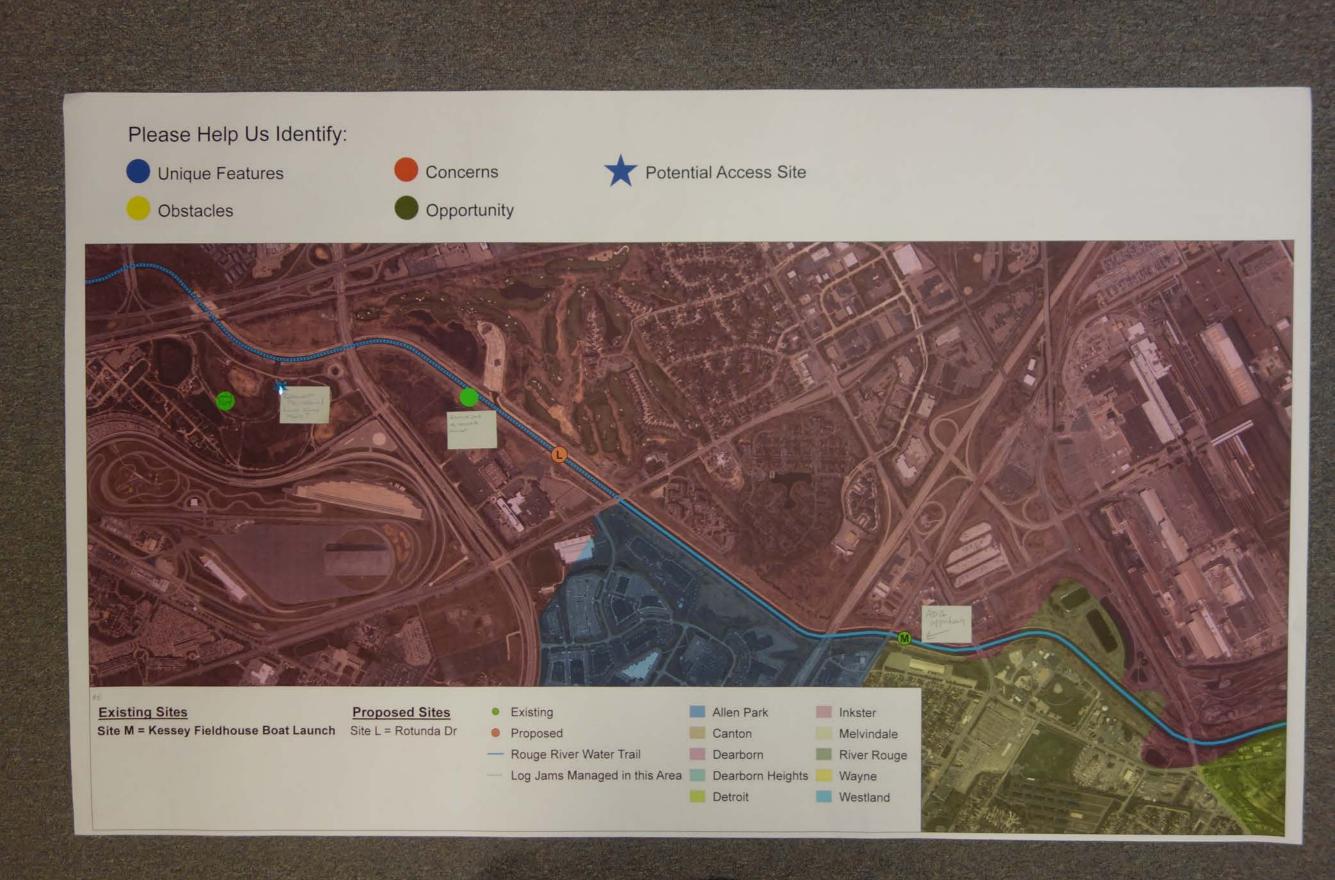
## Love **The Rouge River** Because... A GREAT STAY-CATION! VERY ECONOMICAL.













## Appendix C.

# Lower Rouge River Strategic Plan

Public Open House Notes: April 11, 2019

## Venoy Dorsey Park

Park is located in both the City of Wayne and Westland

## **Canton Township**

them to put a trash can behind it – on the Rouge River where people are throwing cups Someone should go to the Taco Bell in Canton on Warren and Ann Arbor Road and tell and trash into the river!

# **Draft Programming Recommendations**

- A roadblock will be concern for safety. This is what has caused bike paths to have low use. Need a lot of tours.
  - Include public school awareness and partnering opportunities.

# **Draft Marketing Recommendations**

- Partner with schools and recreation departments to have clubs, classes, etc.. •
- Don't spend money to hire a photographer. A contest for something small will bring many great submissions.

# Kayak Rack (general suggestions)

- Can't wait to be on the river.
- It will be wonderful just start
- In order to keep the partiers out, I would prohibit alcohol and music (Bluetooth speakers)

## Bright Idea Cards

- I would like a walkable trail by September, from Hannan to Merriman nothing fancy, just something walkable without a bushwhack •
- The Taco Bell in Canton on Warren Road or Ann Arbor Trail is on the Rouge river. In back of paper, cups, and junk into the river because there are no trash cans there. Someone from of a a nice wooden bridge that goes to a parking lot. The customers there throw lots of this organization should g out there and ask the manager to put a trash can out there? •

#### Appendix D.

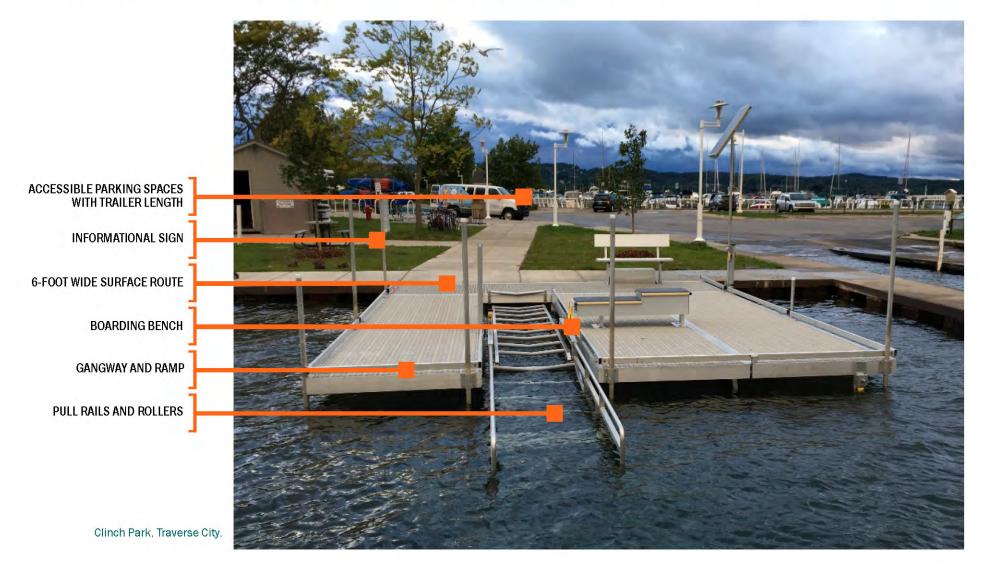
#### UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE LAUNCHES

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are approximately 56.7 million Americans (roughly 18% of the population) living with some type of disability characteristic. Every effort should be made to make your water trail accessible to people with disabilities.

People with disabilities enjoy paddling with friends and family just like everyone else. Therefore, it is important to make launch sites inclusive, universally accessible and easy to use by everyone together.



#### UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE LAUNCH FEATURES



#### WHAT MAKES AN ACCESS SITE "ACCESSIBLE?"

There are two approaches to consider when looking to develop an accessible access site along your water trail.

In 2010, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) established guidelines for newly designed, constructed and altered recreation facilities. The guidelines require that all public boat launches (which include fixed and floating structures of all sizes) comply with ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). These guidelines support previously established standards that address the traditional amenities of the surrounding access sites (e.g., routes, parking, restrooms, etc.). While these guidelines are well intentioned, they represent the minimum legal standards for accessibility.

While compliance with ADA guidelines is required, more and more communities are choosing to embrace the principles of "universal design." More of an inclusive and holistic philosophy rather than a legal requirement, universal design aims to create solutions that work for everyone, of all ages and abilities, together.

Whether a person uses a wheelchair, has knee or hip issues, has difficulty balancing, or just likes dry feet, paddlers of all abilities want to launch and land smoothly without capsizing or damaging their watercraft. They also want firm surfaces that support their movement from their arrival place to the launch at the water's edge, and sufficient space to accommodate the length of their watercraft during transitions into and out of their boat and into and out of the water.

There are a handful of launch systems that can be purchased and installed along your water trail to provide a stable system for boarding and exiting kayaks and canoes. One of the most popular launch systems currently on the market that incorporates the principles of universal design is the EZ Launch by EZ Dock. Currently installed in over 100 communities throughout Michigan, the EZ Launch System features a large floating platform, guiderails, rollers and a transfer bench. This system meets and exceeds all the accessible design requirements for clear space, maneuvering space, reach ranges, force for operating mechanisms, transfers, signage and information.

The following site-design features and amenities should be considered when providing for inclusive and universally accessible launch sites.



A boarding bench allows a paddler to center over his vessel.



Gangways and ramps should have slopes less than 8.33%.

#### LAUNCH

- A universally accessible canoe/kayak launch system (with the features listed below) that is connected to an accessible route, placed in a location that doesn't conflict with a traditional boat launch, and is at least 25 feet long to allow paddlers dry access to the entire length of their vessel when preparing to enter/exit the vessel.
- Gangway and ramp slopes that are below 8.33%.
- A means of transfer/boarding assistance, such as a boarding bench, that centers the paddler over the vessel.
- Pull rails and rollers to assist moving the vessel into and out of the water on a surface that stabilizes the craft and doesn't damage the bottom of the vessel.
- If there is not an accessible launch system, provide a good description (and photo) of the water's edge exit/entry point so the paddler can decide if it is usable before approaching the water.

#### LAND-SIDE FACILITIES

- Improved surface route, 6 to 12 feet wide with slopes no greater than 5%, from the parking lot to restrooms, potable water source, information kiosk, and launch.
- Routes that have switchback turns need level landings at every change of direction, and the landing should be large enough for the individual to carry down and turn the vessel without stepping off the route surface.
- Accessible restrooms with at least one universally accessible single-user unisex restroom.
- Accessible potable water source that is approachable on all sides, operable with one hand, doesn't require pinch-grasp or wrist-twist, and requires less than 5 pounds of force to operate.
- Kiosk information provided in accessible formats and approachable via accessible surface surrounding kiosk.
- Accessible parking space(s) located nearest to the accessible route to the launch.



A solar-powered accessible launch in Wyandotte raises and lowers paddlers into the water.

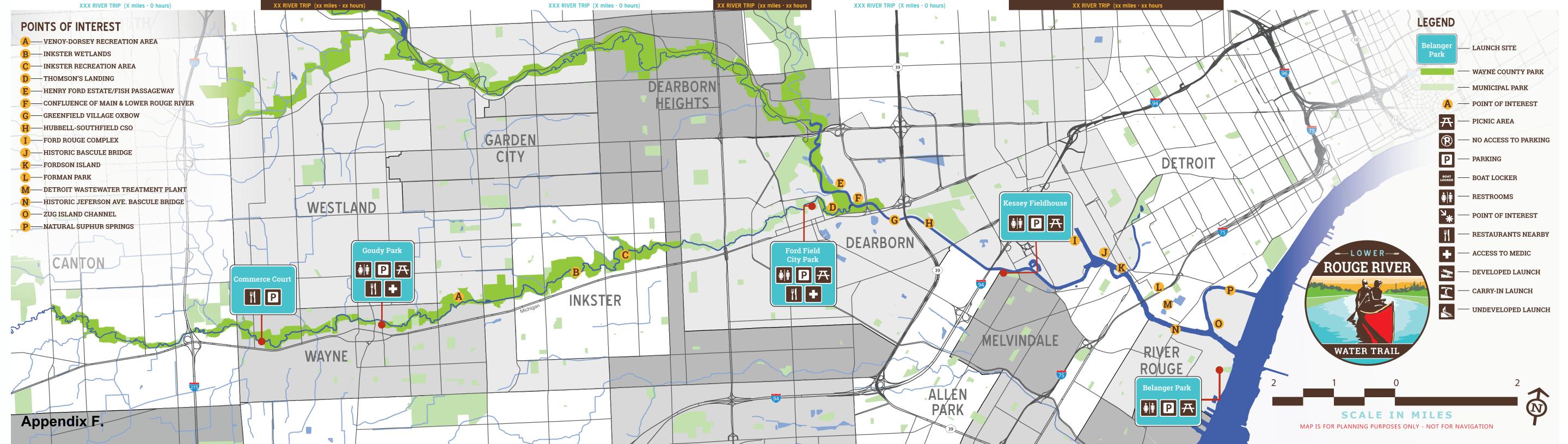


Depending on the physical limitations of your launch area, the gangway from the shoreline to the accessible launch may be quite extensive. This example is in Port Huron.

#### Appendix E.

Number	Type of Bridge	Jurisdiction	Latitude	Longitude
1	Foot	Charter Township of Canton	42.286713	-83.483828
2	Foot	Charter Township of Canton	42.285660	-83.481919
3	Foot	Charter Township of Canton	42.286331	-83.478305
4	Road	Charter Township of Canton	42.286418	-83.476348
5	Foot	Charter Township of Canton	42.284795	-83.475041
6	Road	Charter Township of Canton	42.282764	-83.466269
7	Foot	Charter Township of Canton	42.280705	-83.460122
8	Road	Charter Township of Canton	42.279700	-83.456556
9	Foot	Charter Township of Canton	42.279174	-83.455550
10	Foot	Charter Township of Canton	42.279282	-83.452581
11	Road	Charter Township of Canton	42.279904	-83.446911
12	Road	Charter Township of Canton	42.282238	-83.443564
13	Road	Charter Township of Canton	42.282459	-83.442426
14	Road	Charter Township of Canton	42.282554	-83.441942
15	Road	Charter Township of Canton	42.282626	-83.441605
16	Foot	Charter Township of Canton	42.282721	-83.441178
17	Road	Charter Township of Canton	42.282310	-83.437147
18	Road	Charter Township of Canton and City of Wayne	42.284254	-83.427293
19	Road	City of Wayne	42.281643	-83.421855
20	Road	City of Wayne	42.282521	-83.406923
21	Railroad	City of Wayne	42.283212	-83.397297
22	Road	City of Wayne	42.285346	-83.388693
23	Road	City of Wayne	42.284933	-83.383551
24	Road	City of Wayne	42.284732	-83.381162
25	Road	City of Wayne	42.284855	-83.363398
26	Road	City of Waye and City of Westland	42.288756	-83.348888
27	Foot	City of Westland	42.288986	-83.346537
28	Road	City of Westland	42.289380	-83.343657
29	Road	City of Westland and City of Inkster	42.289997	-83.339142
30	Foot	City of Inkster	42.291326	-83.336622
31	Foot	City of Inkster	42.292517	-83.334538
32	Road	City of Inkster	42.291131	-83.329419
33	Foot	City of Inkster	42.291906	-83.328895
34	Foot	City of Inkster	42.292689	-83.328661
35	Foot	City of Inkster	42.293554	-83.326144

Number	Type of Bridge	Jurisdiction	Latitude	Longitude
36	Road	City of Inkster	42.297252	-83.310210
37	Foot	City of Inkster	42.298737	-83.306458
38	Foot	City of Inkster	42.300729	-83.302659
39	Road	City of Inkster	42.300656	-83.300527
40	Road	City of Dearborn Heights and City of Dearborn	42.301895	-83.285897
41	Foot	City of Dearborn	42.302022	-83.281377
42	Foot	City of Dearborn	42.301115	-83.276151
43	Road	City of Dearborn	42.301426	-83.271938
44	Road	City of Dearborn	42.303884	-83.263351
45	Road	City of Dearborn	42.308572	-83.252651
46	Road	City of Dearborn	42.310915	-83.246366
47	Road	City of Dearborn	42.312770	-83.242294
48	Foot	City of Dearborn	42.310745	-83.230919
49	Road	City of Dearborn	42.310975	-83.226882
50	Road	City of Dearborn	42.311050	-83.226476
51	Road	City of Dearborn	42.309559	-83.222842
52	Road	City of Dearborn	42.309021	-83.222205
53	Railroad	City of Dearborn	42.308706	-83.221830
54	Road	City of Dearborn	42.307539	-83.214425
55	Road	City of Dearborn and City of Allen Park	42.301063	-83.199386
56	Road	City of Dearborn and City of Allen Park	42.295152	-83.187579
57	Railroad	City of Dearborn, City of Allen Park and City of Melvindal	42.295196	-83.184167
58	Road	City of Dearborn and City of Melvindale	42.294580	-83.179235
59	Road	City of Dearborn	42.290607	-83.167410
60	Railroad	City of Dearborn	42.290484	-83.166532
61	Road	City of Dearborn and City of Detroit	42.296307	-83.151039
62	Railroad	City of Detroit	42.287438	-83.139790
63	Road	City of Detroit	42.286853	-83.139428
64	Railroad	City of Detroit and City of Rouge River	42.282735	-83.135711
65	Road	City of Detroit and City of Rouge River	42.280807	-83.128773
66	Railroad	City of Rouge River	42.278145	-83.115781
67	Road	City of Detroit and City of Rouge River	42.289779	-83.118239
68	Road	City of Detroit and City of Rouge River	42.289175	-83.109307



#### WHO WE ARE

Friends of the Rouge (FOTR) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3)rganization that was founded in 1986 to raise awareness about the need to clean up the Rouge River.

#### MISSION

To restore, protect, and enhance the Rouge River watershed through stewardship, education, and collaboration.

#### VISION

We envision a future where a clean and vibrant Rouge River is the center of our community. Individual and community actions protect and improve the health of the Rouge River, assuring that its natural, economic, and recreational value enhances the quality of life in the Rouge River ecosystem.



650 Church Street, Suite 209 Plymouth, MI 48170

> 734.927.4904 313.593.0231 Fax

friends@therouge.ord www.therouge.org



Published xxx, 2019

Funding for this brochure provided by xxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx



#### THE LOWER ROUGE

The Rouge River, located in southeast Michigan, is an urban river with a long industrial history. As water quality improves in response to cleanup efforts, recreational paddling is now possible.

#### WAYNE COUNTY Wayne County parks PARKLAND

Most of the Water Trail goes through Wayne County parkland, from Canton through Wayne, Westland, Inkster, Dearborn Heights and Dearborn.

#### **THE WATER TRAIL**

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, guis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo conseguat Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie conseguat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim gui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, cons ectetuer adipiscing elit sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliguam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo conseguat Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliguam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam.



#### SAFE PADDLING TIPS

Check the Weather. Weather on the Great Lakes can change quickly. High winds and accompanying waves can easily swamp small watercraft. Before heading out, be sure to check local marine weather conditions.

Buddy Up. Paddling alone is unwise. Even the most experienced paddler can run into trouble. Having a buddy along will increase safety.

Have a plan. Make a plan and give it to someone who is staying onshore. Be sure to include the names of the people in your party, time and location of departure, anticipated route and time you expect to get back. Don't forget to check-in once back so people know you have arrived home safely.

Safety Gear is a Must! Always wear a properly fitting U.S. Coast Guard - approved personal flotation device (life preserver). Wear protective footwear and clothing that can get wet. Expect to be in the water at some point on your trip. Pack personal gear in a waterproof bag, and secure it to your boat to avoid losing items if capsizing occurs. Bring at least two signaling devices, such as whistles, waterproof flashlights and cell phones in waterproof containers.

**Know the Limits.** Not all boats are created equal and not all paddlers should venture out onto the lower industrial section of the Rouge River (downstream of the confluence with the Main) and onto the Detroit River.

Be Aware of Shipping Lanes. Although freighters can appear to be large and lumbering, they move much guicker than expected and may not be able to see smaller watercraft. High wakes trailing behind fast-moving, motorized watercraft are equally dangerous, and collisions can be deadly.

Improve Your Skills. Consider taking a paddlers safety course. Many local outfitters and paddling groups offer classes. Look for classes to enhance your canoeing and kayaking skill level, or join a paddling club to maximize your enjoyment when on the water.

Keep International Borders in Mind. The Detroit River is shared between the U.S. and Canada. U.S. and Canadian vessels, including kayaks and canoes, can freely cross the international boundary to explore neighboring waters. However, landing — anchoring, wading or touching bottom with a paddle — is illegal unless you immediately report your arrival to Canadian Customs. Violation of international border crossing laws can result in severe penalties. Returning from Canadian soil also requires that you report to U.S. Customs

#### KNOW

Paddling provides an opportunity to see some of the most scenic areas of the watershed that are not easily accessible by foot or vehicle in addition to an opportunity to get up close and personal with the unique industrial heritage of the Rouge River. Paddlers should be aware that some stretches of the river are NOT for beginners and that freighters can be encountered on the lower stretch!

Water can run very fast and high, especially after a rain event. When the river runs high, it carries with it a lot of woody debris that can block passage and create dangerous hazards. Sections identified in the map are generally navigable, but thatwoody debris is prevalent on the river and sections can be challenging.

This publication is provided only as a general guide. It is a graphic rendition of what paddlers might experience on the Rouge River. Do not rely on this guide as a navigational tool or to identify all hazards.

Remember that kavaking and canoeing have inherent risks and you are solely responsible for your own safety.



#### **RIVER TRIPS**

#### **RIVER TRIP XXXXXXX**

Beginning at XX launch and traversing xxx miles through a naturalized section of the Lower Rouge, the XXXX River Trip takes paddlers past XXXX and XXXX with opportunitites to dock and visit a variety of parks and historic sites. Approximately xxx minutes into the paddle you'll see XXX and XXX. A stop at the XXX allows for the perfect lunch break along the river's edge before continuing on through river sections that will include XXX and XXX before ending your trip in XXXX at the XX Park.

#### **RIVER TRIP XXXXXXX**

Beginning at XX launch and traversing xxx miles through a naturalized section of the Lower Rouge, the XXXX River

#### WHAT YOU SHOULD

Trip takes paddlers past XXXX and XXXX with opportunitites to dock and visit a variety of parks and historic sites. Approximately xxx minutes into the paddle you'll see XXX and XXX. A stop at the XXX allows for the perfect lunch break along the river's edge before continuing on through river sections that will include XXX and XXX before ending your trip in XXXX at the XX Park.

#### **RIVER TRIP XXXXXXX**

Beginning at XX launch and traversing xxx miles through a naturalized section of the Lower Rouge, the XXXX River Trip takes paddlers past XXXX and XXXX with opportunitites to dock and visit a variety of parks and historic sites.

Approximately xxx minutes into the paddle you'll see XXX and XXX. A stop at the XXX allows for the perfect lunch break along the river's edge before continuing on through river sections that will include XXX and XXX before ending your trip in XXXX at the XX Park.

#### **RIVER TRIP XXXXXXX**

Beginning at XX launch and traversing xxx miles through a naturalized section of the Lower Rouge, the XXXX River Trip takes paddlers past XXXX and XXXX with opportunitites to dock and visit a variety of parks and historic sites. Approximately xxx minutes into the paddle vou'll see XXX and XXX. A stop at the XXX allows for the perfect lunch break along the river's edge before continuing on through river sections that will include XXX and XXX before ending your trip in XXXX at the XX Park.

#### RIVER TRIP XXXXXXX

Beginning at XX launch and traversing xxx miles through a naturalized section of the Lower Rouge, the XXXX River Trip takes paddlers past XXXX and XXXX with opportunitites to dock and visit a variety of parks and historic sites. Approximately xxx minutes into the paddle vou'll see XXX and XXX. A stop at the XXX allows for the perfect lunch break along the river's edge before continuing on through river sections that will include XXX and XXX before ending your trip in XXXX at the XX Park.

#### **RIVER COMMUNITIES**

#### CANTON

Rouge River Miles xx-xx

#### vww.canton-mi.org

\*\*\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*

#### WAYNE

uge River Miles xx-xx

ww.ci.wavne.mi.us

#### VESTLAND

Rouge River Miles xx-xx

vww.citvofwestland.com 

#### INKSTER **Rouge River Miles xx-xx**

tp://www.citvofinkster.com

#### **DEARBORN HEIGHTS** Rouge River Miles xx-xx

http://www.ci.dearborn-heights.mi.us \*\*\*\*

#### **DEARBORN**

**Rouge River Miles xx-xx** 

#### http://www.cityofdearborn.org

\*\*\*\*\*\*\* **XXXXXXXXXX** 

#### **ALLEN PARK** ouge River Miles xx-xx

http://www.cityofallenpark.org

#### **MELVINDALE** louge River Miles xx-xx

nttp://www.melvindale.org

#### DETROIT Rouge River Miles xx-xx

http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us \*\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

#### **RIVER ROUGE** uge River Miles xx-xx

http://www.cityofriverrouge.com



ord Fie

ROUGE RIVER

**City** Par

#### ROUGE RIVER



#### WATER TRAIL **PADDLER'S** COMPANION

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

#### Appendix G. Project Goals

Understanding implications as River Access Increases

#### Inform Residents & Visitors

- About the Lower Rouge, generally.
- That Friends of the Rouge and partner organizations and communities are working to improve river quality and access to paddling.
- Of opportunities to paddle the river.
- How to use the river safely and respectfully.
- Provide information on River Trip experiences.
- Use template designs so they can be modified and added to as river access increases, staying relevant over time.

#### Showcase the River & River Towns

- Provide information about the river.
- Highlight the communities along the river.
- Identify points of interest along the River Trail.
- Engage users in a positive, unique river experience.



#### **Interpretive Panels**

Three styles\\ Two informational and One Trip Focused.

#### THE LOWER ROUGE cgvzd nhxmcjmccumc kuhi.pohpfuetnays nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vul eum riture dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim

qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugalt nulla facilisi. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, cons ectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna cgvzd nhxmcjmccumc kuhi.pohpfuetnays nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna

#### THE WATER TRAIL

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat m aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.ameorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea

WWW.THEROUGE.ORG

#### ROUGE RIVER



WATER TRAIL

miles of paddling adventure

#### XXXX RIVER TRIP

Beginning at XX launch and traversing xxx miles through a naturalized section of the Lower Rouge, the XXXX River Trip takes paddlers past XXXX and XXXX with opportunities to dock and visit a variety of parks and historic sites. Approximately xxx minutes into the paddle you'll see XXX and XXX. A stop at the XXX allows for the perfect lunch break along the river's edge before continuing on through river sections that will include XXX and XXX before ending your trip in XXXX at the XX Park.



#### ABOUT XXXX

cgvzd nhxmcjmccumc kuhi.pohpfuetnays nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eun iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et lusto odio dionissim auj blandit.

#### ABOUT XXXX cgvzd nhxmcjmccumc kuhi.pohpfuetnays nisl ut alinuin ex ea commodo conseguat. Duis autem

egycommune (including) of the second of the

OLIGE



#### SAFETY & EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Check the Weather. Weather on the Great Lakes can change quickly. High winds and accompanying waves can easily swamp small watercraft. Before heading out, be sure to check local marine weather conditions.

Buddy Up. Paddling alone is unwise. Even the most experienced paddler can run into trouble. Having a buddy along will increase safety.

Have a plan. Make a plan and give it o someone who is staying onshore. Be sure to include the names of the people in your party, time and location of departure, anticipated route and time you expect to get back. Don't forget to check-in once back so people know you have arrived home safely.

Safety Gear is a Musti Always wear a properly fitting U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (life preserver). Wear protective footwear and clothing that can get wet. Expect to be in the water at some point on your trip. Pack personal gear in a waterproof bag, and secure it to your boat to avoid losing items if capsizing devices, such as whistles, waterproof flashlights and cell phones in waterproof containers.

Know the Limits. Not all boats are created equal and not all paddlers should venture out onto the lower industrial section of the Rouge River (downstream of the confluence with the Main) and onto the Detroit River.

Be Aware of Shipping Lanes. Although freighters can appear to be large and lumbering. They move much quicker than expected and may not be able to see smaller watercraft. High wakes trailing behind fast-moving, motorized watercraft are equally dangerous, and collisions can be deadly.

Improve Your Skills. Consider taking a paddlers safety course. Many local outfitters and paddling groups offer classes. Lock for classes to enhance your canoeing and kayaking skill level, or join a paddling club to maximize your enjoyment when on the water.

#### ROUGE RIVER

#### WATER TRAIL

SEE SOMETHING | SAY SOMETHING

Suspicious Discharges: 800-292-4760 Trail Conditions: 734-927-4904

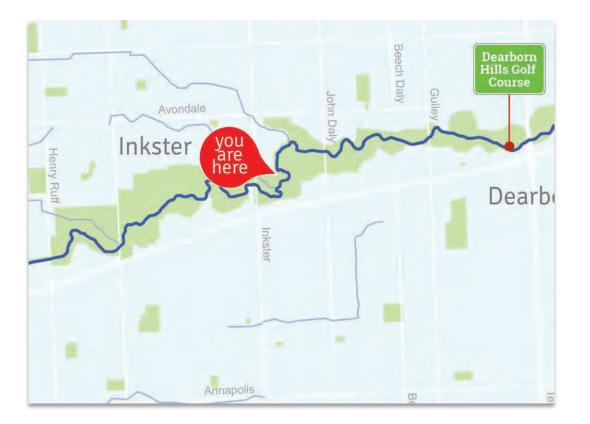
Keep International Borders in Mind. The Detroit River is shared between the U.S. and Canada. U.S. and Canadian vessels, including kayaks and canese, can freely cross the international boundary to explore neighboring waters. However, landing – anchoring, wading or touching bottom with a paddle – is illegal unless you immediately report your arrival to Canadian Customs. Violation of International border crossing laws can result in severe penalties. Returning from Canadian soil also requires that you report to U.S. Customs.

WWW.THEROUGE.ORG

24" x 36" Panels

#### **Interpretive Panels**

Example of scale of content





Example of printed scale



#### Launch Signage

Intended to be roadside or within parks.



#### **Distance Signage**

Intended to mark entrance into municipality or major bridge crossing and indicate distance to Detroit River.

18" x 24"

-LOWER-

**ROUGE RIVER** 

WATER TRAIL

Canton

mi

Distance to Detroit River

Panels



living**LAB** 

#### **Rest Stop Signage**

Intended to mark locations only accessible from the river.

9" x 9" Panels







#### Informational Supplemental Signage

Providing information on and off the river.

9" x 9" Panels

