



Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 21, 2023

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Virtual

Meeting began at 9:00 a.m.

No quorum established

Roll Call

Present for BIPAC

Attending remotely:

Michele Hodges; Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Michael Curis; Detroit, Michigan

Bud Denker; Walled Lake, Michigan

Lonnie Peek; Detroit, Michigan

Unexcused

Sommer Woods

Brad Dick

DNR Staff Present

Jacklin Blodgett

Tom Bissett

Karis Floyd

Amanda Treadwell

Todd Szyska

Nicole Hill

Dashika Hill

Griselda Trevino

Barbrea Young

Erika Compton

Marie Kaphengst

Others Present

Todd Platt, Friends of Detroit Rowing

Henry Goitz, Friends of Detroit Rowing

Lance Couturier, MSP

Ayo Thomas, Belle Isle Conservancy

Amy Greene, Nature Center Director, Detroit Zoological Society

Chair Hodges opened the meeting by saying she looks forward to getting these meetings back to in person as it is much more prolific in terms of what can be accomplished. She asked other members to introduce themselves.

Chair Hodges stated that the Conservancy just completed Kulture City training, which means the aquarium is now ready to provide all levels for sensory needs and to provide an all-inclusive experience, from having bags of equipment to help ease someone's experience to having quiet exhibits within the aquarium. They are proud of this as it is important to their mission.

Chair Hodges mentioned the fun fact that the Statue of Liberty gets on average 3.1 million visitors a year, while Belle Isle gets 5 million visitors. Also, the fallow deer that once roamed the island were a gift from the King of France, much like the Statue of Liberty to our country.

General Updates

Park Update

Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor, said they are happy to announce that the long vacant park supervisor position has been filled and the new person will start October 1. The Scott Fountain has been partially running since yesterday, with more repairs to be done on pump two. If everything goes well, it will run through October. They are working on the allocation of ARPA funding and will present details at the next meeting.

Karis Floyd, Park Manager, said they will start bathroom winterization the first week of November and will give prior notice to the public. Bus stop 7 restroom will be open all year. They have hired a full-time janitor and a new ranger at Milliken. Also hired was another general office assistant, Dashika Hill, who was on the call today. The Fountain will be run as long as possible, once repairs are complete. All summer help has returned to college, and they look forward to having them back next season. They are proud of their booth workers and events team who were able to hit \$1M in revenue. The events team booked a lot of events that got them over the hump to this amount, an amount not seen since before the pandemic.

Chair Hodges called the meeting to order at 9:14 a.m. with the addition of Rev. Lonnie Peek.

Member Curis asked if there will be port-a-johns around the island and asked if the \$1M in revenue stays on the island. He also asked that Rev. Peek give a

closure of prayer. Karis Floyd stated that there will be port-a-johns, and the money does stay on the island.

Infrastructure Update – Amanda Treadwell, Urban Area Field Planner

Amanda Treadwell provided project updates on the Athletic Complex handball courts, Sawmill, casino, flatwoods, and an update on the Mobility Study. (Report attached).

Member Denker asked what the sawmill structure will be used for once complete. Amanda Treadwell said the goal for the structure is to use the structure for educational purposes. Member Denker gave praise to Amanda for getting the funds to repair the casino, and that it should be a beautiful and cherished place to use for many years to come.

Law Update – Lt. Todd Szyska, DNR Law Enforcement

Lt. Szyska said they are at their winter staffing levels, working along with MSP. They are looking forward to MDOT's completion of the roadwork and parking situation. Bollards should be going up soon on Sunset to help with where traffic should be parking versus pedestrian walking. Speed is still an issue; they have certified more of their conservation officers for radar speed enforcement. Speeders have been going double to triple over the speed limit. They are asking people to stay at the 25-mph speed limit.

Belle Isle Conservancy Updates - Ayo Thomas, Belle Isle Conservancy

Ayo presented updates including the Belle Isle fall/winter facility hours, Island Stakeholder Updates, the aquarium Kulture City certification, and collaborative Rebel Nell collection. (Update attached)

Friends of Detroit Rowing Facility Updates and Plans – Todd Platt and Henry Goitz, Friends of Detroit Rowing

Todd Platt gave a presentation update that covered the club's goals, programs, accomplishments, partnerships, patterns of activities, site overview, operational challenges, and their future vision of the leased site.

Mr. Platt displayed a presentation to the group with graphics of what has been done on the site since they last came before the committee. The presentation included graphics of the structures that have been erected to house equipment and operate from after they were evacuated from the boathouse building due to unsafe conditions, and graphics of the safety zones they are currently operating from. Also included were graphics of their

near-term proposal to erect a structure in the parking lot for housing equipment and ultimately operate programming from. The proposal has gone through preliminary engineering work and is with the DNR now for comment and approval. Fundraising efforts by the group are geared up and ready.

Mr. Platt also discussed the assessment that was done by the Smith Group, which pointed out a number of issues and a high price tag. Thus, a site planning exercise was performed to look at other options: A) building on top of a barge in the harbor, B) a permanent boathouse in the parking lot, and C) a potential location for a new boathouse. He presented a graphic of what they think would be a future vision, Option C, as part of a concept that would create a watersports park stretching from the Bridge to the Beach. (Presentation attached.)

Rev. Peek asked how they recruited students for the program and if they have approached Detroit Public Schools, to which Todd Platt replied that they are constantly going to various organizations and schools, meeting with administration and students to encourage participation. Their head coach has had contact with Detroit Public Schools.

Chair Hodges said that given the DNR's responsibility for management of the facility, she asked if the DNR had any input. Tom Bissett said that it is important to understand what program is taking place despite the challenges. There is a significant cost to rehab the boathouse to make it habitable again. This is meant to be a presentation of what the club envisions, but right now the DNR is at the information and public comment stage, thus why it was brought forth to this committee for comment.

Rev. Peek said he understands the gravity of the situation, and they have a jewel that needs to be rehabilitated, and it is a struggle to do so. He asked them to keep the vision and that they will eventually get there.

Member Curis thanked him for the presentation and for reaching out to be a more diverse organization. He asked who pays for the building, how big it is and who owns it. Todd Platt said the Detroit Boatclub Social Club built the building and then leased it back. As for a model for the future, he thinks they will have to bring back a coalition of funders to fund the building and that it would probably have to be owned by the City of Detroit and then leased back. Member Curis said it would be to their advantage to identify those groups and what portions of the building they would occupy, then to put forth a plan.

Chair Hodges said it is important to have access to our waterways and Belle Isle is a unique location. It would be great to see their efforts continue. She said the Conservancy could be helpful with input from the community and it would be helpful to have priorities and next steps from the DNR.

Member Curis asked if their membership is a paid membership. Todd said it depends on what level of participation members have, there may be fees, but they consider them program participants; about 250 competitive rowers and outreach programs can reach 500 in addition to activities that are off-site.

Public Comment

Rich Rybicki – Asked about the traffic survey public input and the status of the one-way option. Amanda Treadwell said the option presented seemed to address concerns by the stakeholders and public, but the results were across the board. There are other tools to utilize and they are reviewing them with MDOT and DNR leadership. Mr. Rybicki is also hoping for the rehabilitation of the police station.

Debbie – Asked if there are any thoughts of returning the sawmill to milling trees that are brought down by the city. Amanda said at this time, she does not anticipate this and there is a portable sawmill brought to the site that has modern safety features. She asked if there were thoughts on building a pole barn or putting a new boathouse next to the existing one. Chair Hodges left her contact information to get answers to her questions.

Rev. Peek closed the meeting with prayer.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

Next regular meeting:
October 19, 2023
9:00 a.m.



Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Updates

September 17, 2023



Athletic Complex Handball Courts

Progress Status - Repairs:

- Final painting underway
- Schedule to be complete by the end of September



Repairs complete before final painting



Athletic Complex Handball Courts **Painting**



Athletic Complex Handball Courts **Painting**



Belle Isle Sawmill

Progress Status – Phase 2:

- Concrete and bollards removed for ADA entrance.
- Eyebrow window removed for restoration.
- Boarded front of building removed to make space for new sliding door system.



Boarded panels removed and concrete excavation

Belle Isle Sawmill

Final Illustration - showing Phase 2 and Future Phase 3



Belle Isle Casino Roof Replacement

Work Underway:

- Contractor preparing site for new equipment enclosure.
- Public access to utility maintenance area has been removed.
- Roof and internal combined drainage system inspection and removals underway.



Belle Isle Casino – Contractor preparing for new HVAC equipment

Belle Isle Casino Roof Replacement

New Equipment Enclosure Site:



Belle Isle Casino – Contractor preparing for new HVAC equipment



Belle Isle Casino Roof Replacement

Deteriorated Roof Drains



Drainage repairs will be important to stabilizing building.

Belle Isle Flatwoods



Contractor has installed trail amenities, items not complete and will require additional work

Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Study

- Project team sorting through community feedback
- Extended public comment period.
- Project team to present recommendations to DNR – PRD leadership.
- Project team continuing working with signage consultant to develop schematic design package.



Public Open House at Dossin, July 8, 2023

Belle Isle Aquarium Update

Boiler room roof structural repairs

- Roof repairs will begin today



Structural issue apparent in roof dip



Roof is under- supported and needs replacement and reinforcement to stabilize roof.



September Update



Island Stakeholders & Belle Isle Conservancy Community Engagement

September 21, 2023

BELLE ISLE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BIC STAKEHOLDER & ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Visit

BELLE ISLE

MAP KEY / ISLAND SITES

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory |  Kayak Launch |
|  Athletic Complex |  Lake Muskoday |
|  Belle Isle Aquarium |  Livingstone Memorial Lighthouse |
|  Belle Isle Beach |  Old Zoo |
|  Belle Isle Boat House |  Oudolf Garden and Nancy-Brown Peace Carillon |
|  Belle Isle Casino |  Parking Area |
|  Belle Isle Nature Center |  Restrooms |
|  Dossin Great Lakes Museum |  Sunset Point |
|  Flynn Pavilion |  Scott Fountain |
| |  Wet-Mesic Flatwoods |



FALL/WINTER FACILITY HOURS

(holiday hours may apply)

BELLE ISLE AQUARIUM

FRI-SUN | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

BELLE ISLE NATURE CENTER

DAILY | 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

DOSSIN GREAT LAKES MUSEUM (THROUGH 10/1)

WED-SAT | 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM | SUN | 1:00- 5:00 PM

\$5/PERSON OR \$20 FOR SIX ADULTS AND CHILDREN WITH THE SAME ADDRESS. UNDER 6, FREE

LOUDOLF GARDEN

DAILY | 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM

**ANNA SCRIPS WHITCOMB CONSERVATORY

CLOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION THROUGH MAY 2024

FOR BELLE ISLE UPDATES

TEXT GEM TO 80888

BELLE ISLE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MONTHLY ON THE FOURTH THURSDAY



ISLAND OPEN 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM DAILY

TAKE THE #12 CONANT OR #9 JEFFERSON BUSES TO BELLE ISLE!

MICHIGAN RECREATION PASSPORT IS ONLY REQUIRED FOR VEHICLE ACCESS.

Hunters of color event



All are welcome!

Meet up with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and new, interested or experienced hunters. No experience required.

Event details

When:
Saturday, Sept. 23
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Where:
Belle Isle Park
2 Inselruhe Ave., Detroit
Shelters 2 and 3

We'll have:

- Food trucks from noon – 2 p.m.
- Demonstrations.
- Archery and pellet gun shooting.
- Giveaways.
- Information to learn about hunting.
- And much more!

Come out and learn about hunting, from how to get started to expanding your skills, and meet others from a diverse community of hunters.

Mentored hunt

If you are interested in participating in a mentored hunt during the event, please scan the QR code and complete the survey!





Questions?

Contact Kathy Garland at 517-243-4258 or GarlandK3@Michigan.gov

Island Stakeholder Updates

MDNR | Hunters of Color Event

10/23 | 10 a.m - 4 p.m. | Shelters 2 & 3

For individuals interested in learning about archery and hunting.
No experience required.

Guests can expect:

- Food Trucks from Noon - 2 p.m
 - Demonstrations and Giveaways
 - Archery and Pellet Gun Shooting
- and much more!

Island Stakeholder Updates

Detroit Boat Club Crew



ADULT INDOOR ROWING CLASSES for beginners and experienced rowers

ADULT RECREATIONAL REGISTRATION CLOSING SOON:

For Adults who know and love rowing but not racing. **Ideal for those wanting to return to the sport, and is also the next step for those who have completed a Learn to Row Program**

8 Sessions - \$90 | Unlimited Sessions - \$150

For more information, visit www.detroitboatclubcrew.com.

Island Stakeholder Updates

Detroit Boat Club Crew



MOTOWN MADNESS RACE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN:

For more information, visit www.detroitboatclubcrew.com.



Island Stakeholder Highlight

Belle Isle Nature Center (Detroit Zoo)

SAVE THE DATE : BOO AT THE NATURE CENTER

Oct. 28-29 | 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Free, No Registration Required)

Boo at the Nature Center, the Belle Isle Nature Center's annual Halloween celebration, is returning with opportunities to trick-or-treat for goodies inside the Nature Center and along a paved outdoor path.

Reusable bags and costumes are encouraged. No bags will be provided.

visit belleislenaturecenter.detroitzoo.org for more info.



Microplastics
Here, There and Everywhere



Island Stakeholder Updates

Dossin Great Lakes Museum (Detroit Historical Society)

Open Wed -Sat 10 :00 AM - 5:00 PM and Sun 1:00- 5:00 PM Through 10/1

Admission: Free Under 6, \$5 for adults and Children

\$20 for a single household (up to 6 parents and children)

For more information, visit detroithistorical.org.

SAVE THE DATE | Nov 10 | 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

24th Annual Lost Mariners Remembrance

Check out the Microplastics Here, There, Everywhere exhibit (through April 2024)



Island Stakeholder Updates

Oudolf Garden (Friends of The Oudolf Garden)

Oudolf Garden Detroit is a Four Season Garden! Visit any time the park is open (year-round from 5 a.m.- 10 p.m., with the exception of special events).

Guided Tours are available by appointment, Monday through Thursday, for groups of 25 or more individuals. (Suggested \$5 donation.)

Directions: Oudolf Garden Detroit is easy to find on Google and Apple Maps. Parking is free, and picnic areas are available nearby. City bus service is also available to Belle Isle. Please check local schedules.

Check out the NOW BLOOMING Segment online!
(Pictured: Rattlesnake Master, A Bed)

Visit oudolfgardendetroit.org for more info.

BELLE ISLE AQUARIUM IS KULTURE CITY CERTIFIED



Guests can expect the facility and its programs to be sensory-inclusive.

Prior to their visit, families and individuals can download the free KultureCity® App to view available features and how to access them and a visual preview of the space.

BELLE ISLE CONSERVANCY X REBEL NELL

ANNA SCRIPPS WHITCOMB CONSERVATORY COLLECTION

**THIS COLLABORATIVE COLLECTION WAS CREATED
WITH REPURPOSED GLASS FROM THE ANNA
SCRIPPS WHITCOMB CONSERVATORY
RENOVATIONS AND FLOWERS FROM THE GARDEN**

- **EARRINGS**
- **NECKLACES**
- **RINGS**
- **BRACELETS**
- **CUFF LINKS**
- **TIE CLIPS**
- **DIVOT TOOLS**
- **BOTTLE STOPPERS**





**RETURNS TO REGULAR HOURS
VISIT FRIDAY - SUNDAY, 10:00AM - 4:00PM**

**JOIN OUR DIGITAL COMMUNITY. FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!
@BELLEISLEAQUARIUM**





Belle Isle Conservancy Impact Reporting



[Watch the 2023 Annual Belle Isle Update to Detroit City Council Here](#)



Ten-Year Impact Report Now Available

Belle Isle Aquarium Hours
10:00 AM-4:00 PM Thursday -Sunday

Visit www.belleisleconservancy.org for more information.





Friends of Detroit Rowing
A Non-Profit 501 (c)(3) Organization





The Detroit Boat Club Crew provides rowing programs for people of all ages and all abilities.



Vision:
Increase Access To
Rowing Programs
for Everyone



FLOOD





COVID





COLLAPSE

2023
USRowing Youth
National
Champions



FORTITUDE!

Masters World Champions

2023
U19 Women
World
Champions



2023 English Henley Masters Gold Medalists



Friends of Detroit Rowing
offers monthly learn to row
classes for adults and hosts
team-building events for
businesses and
organizations





Friends of Detroit Rowing launched its first STEM rowing program for middle school students in 2019

A new pilot program launched in spring of 2021 at Marcus Garvey Academy in Detroit





In 2019, Friends of Detroit Rowing reestablished its partnership with Wayne State University





EMBRACESPORTZ

Friends of Detroit Rowing is partnering with Embrace Sportz to provide after school programs to more than 1,500 young people





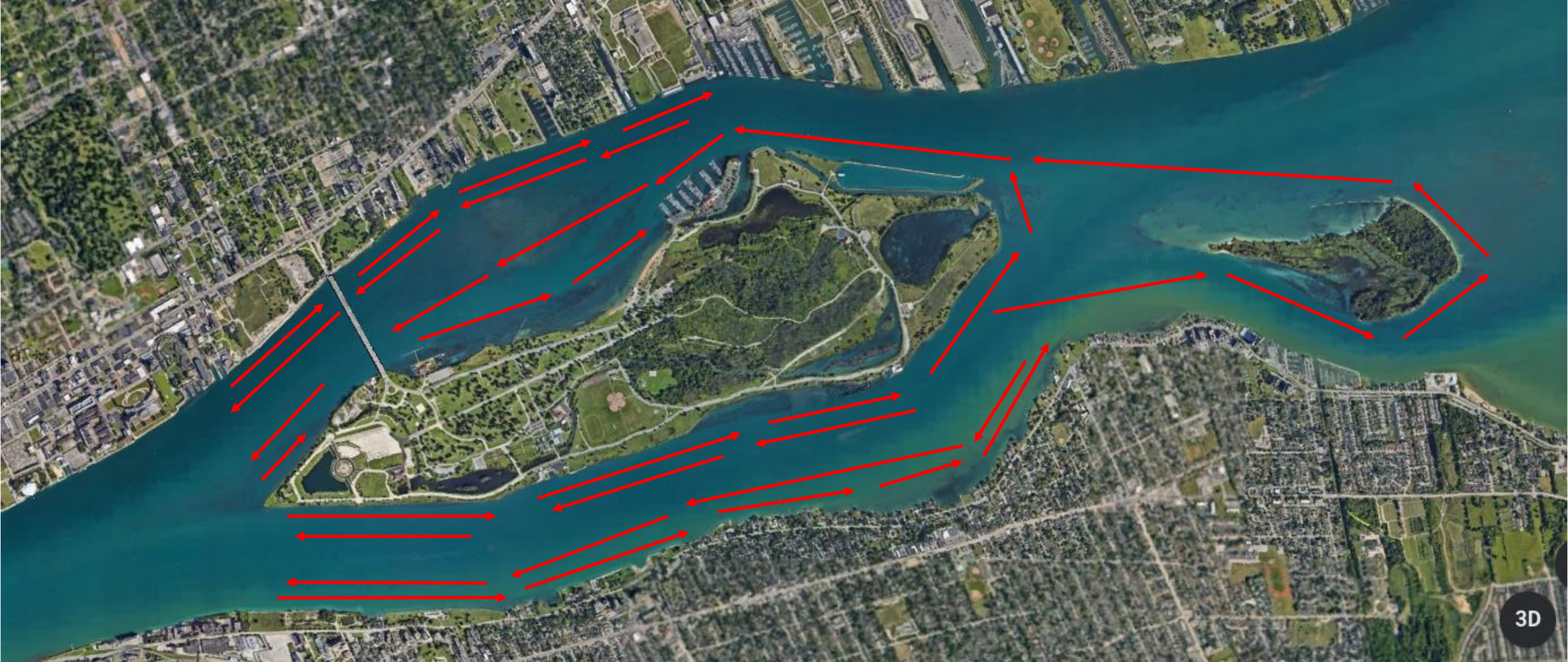
Since 2022, Friends of Detroit Rowing has partnered with Communities First, Inc. to provide community Learn to Row opportunities

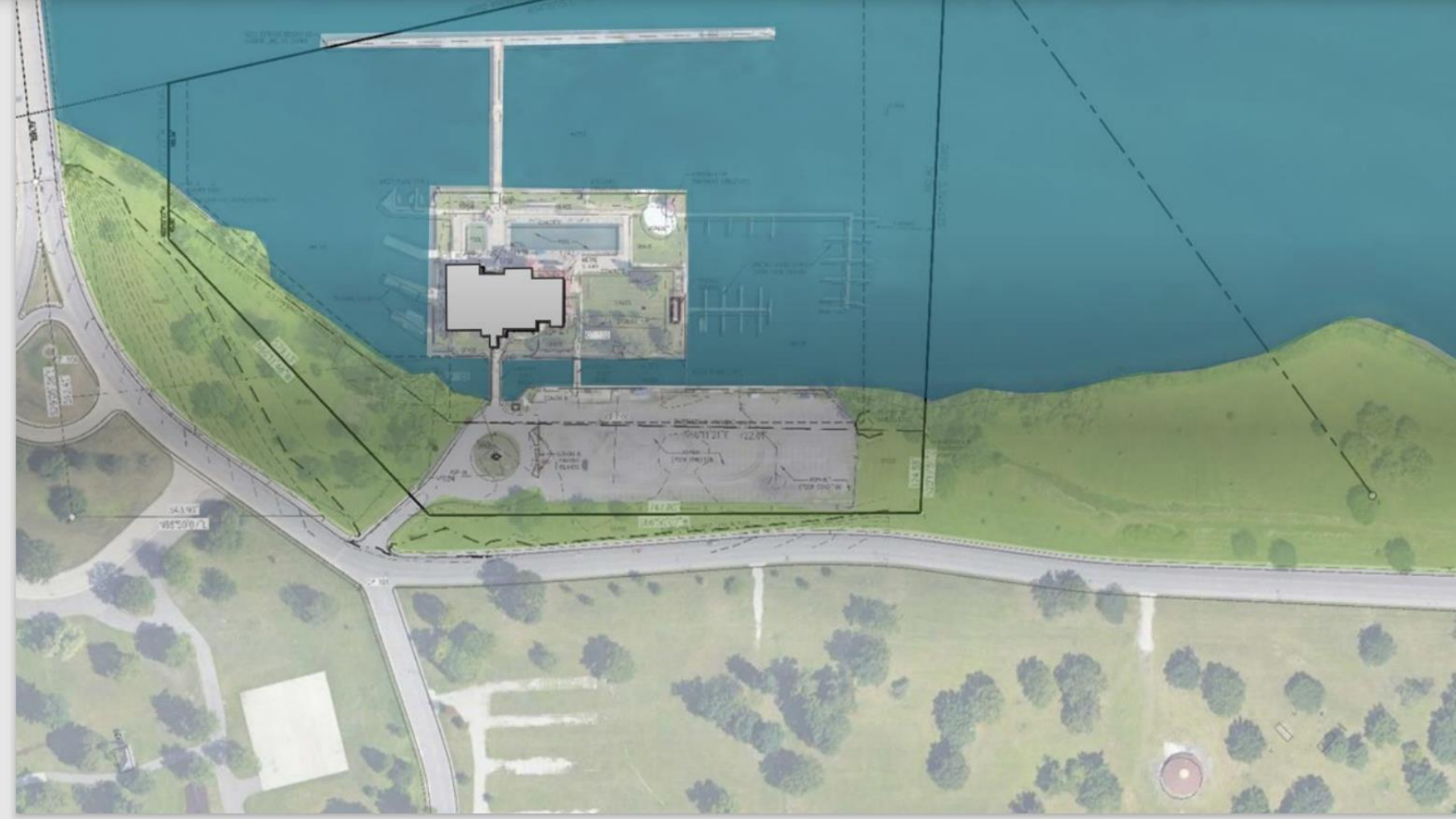


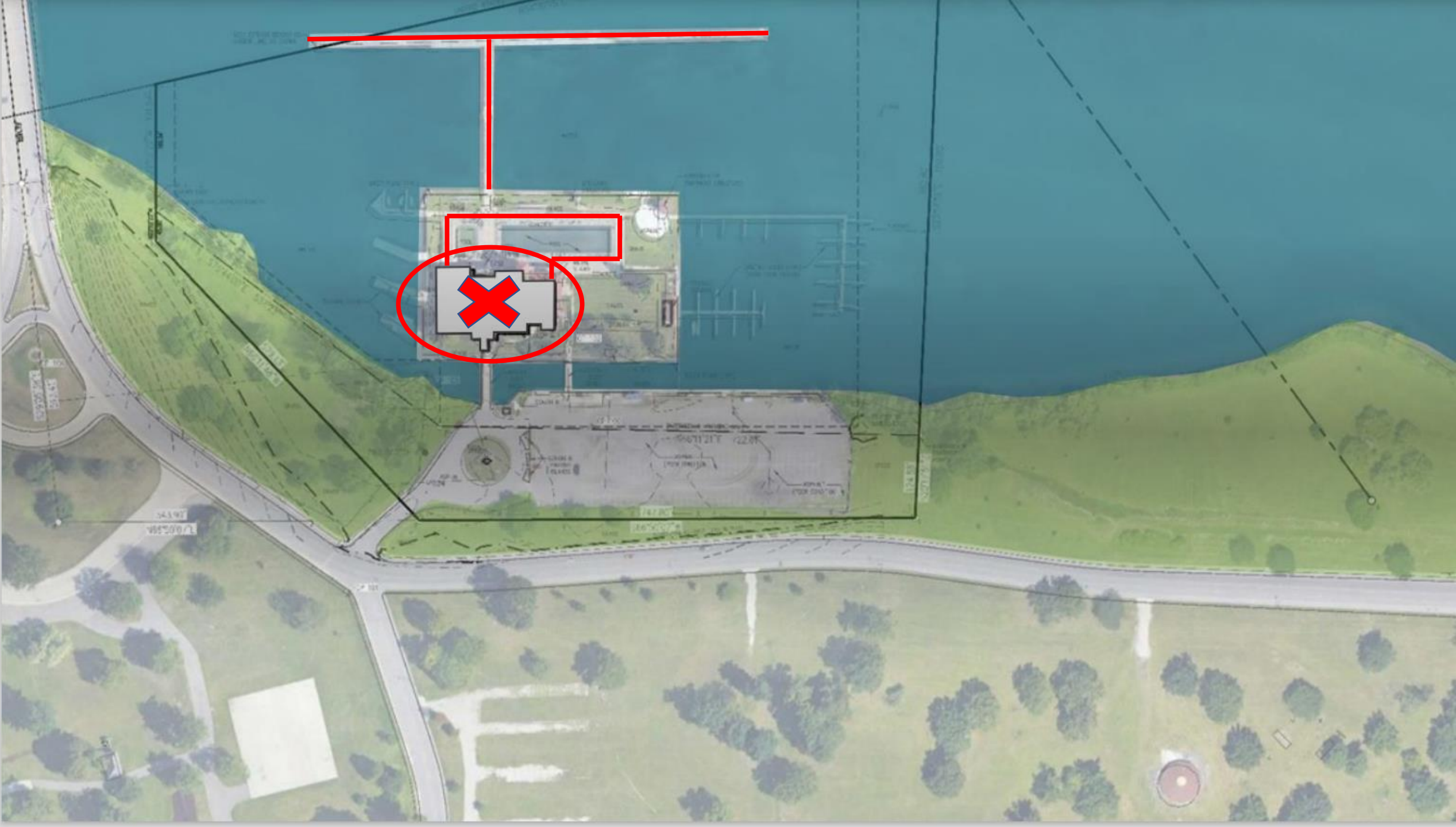


In 2018 Friends of Detroit Rowing partnered with Detroit Community Sailing to provide Learn to Sail programs for Detroit youth and adults



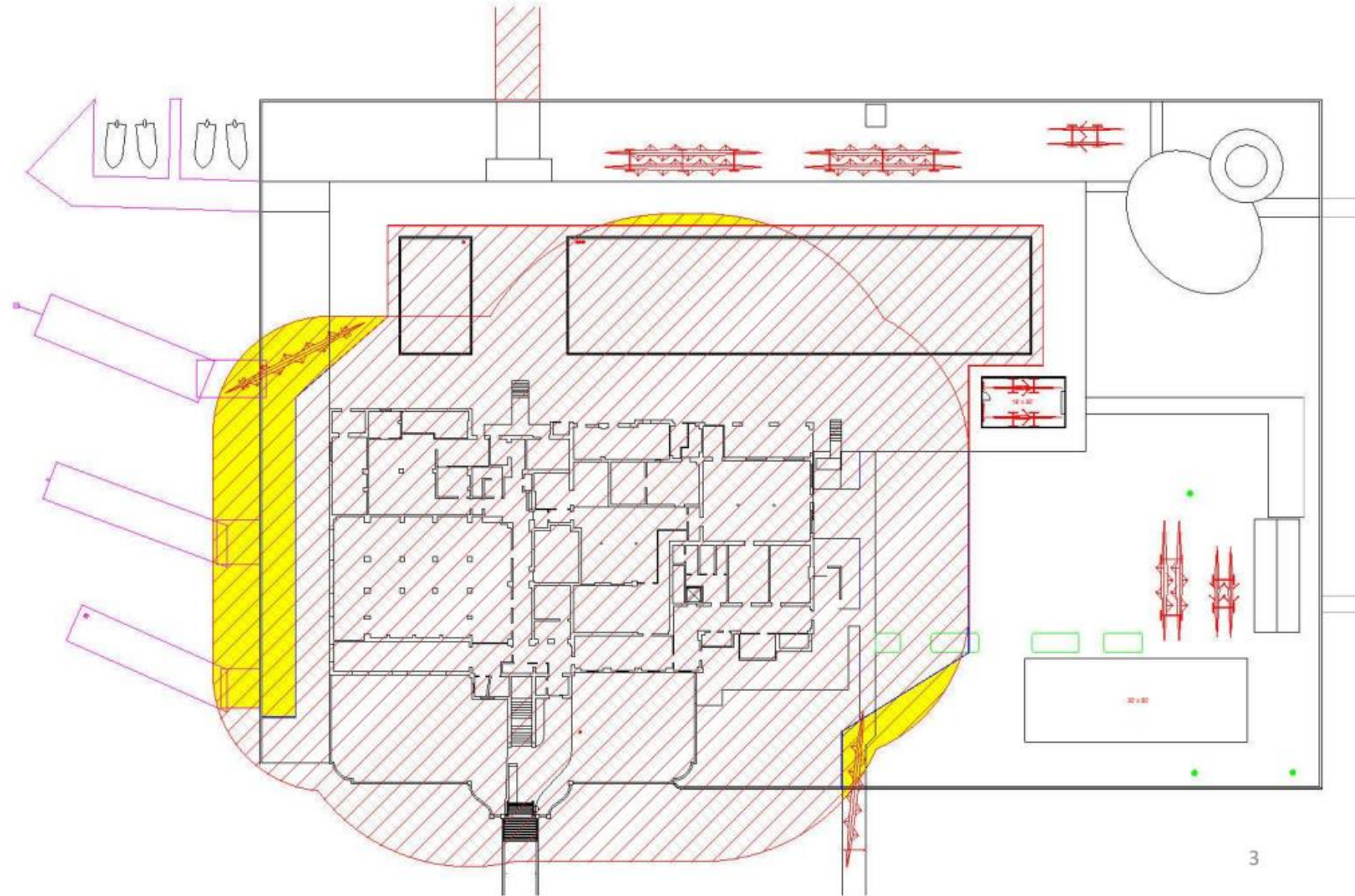






Safety Zone Agreement - Closure of Belle Isle Boathouse

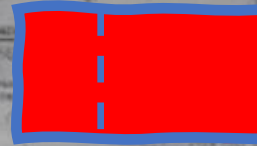
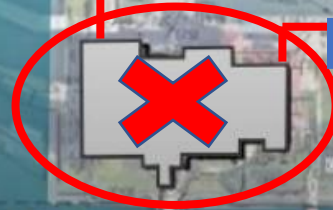
- 150% Safety Zone Area Overlayed on Boathouse Island
- Pool Fenced Area Added to Safety Zone
- Yellow Area Highlight Needed Programing Spaces Inside Safety Zone



Immediate
Need



Near-Term







A

B

C

Long-Term





Vision: An
Activated
Shoreline
from the
Bridge to the
Beach



From Detroit
To the Island
To the River



Belle Isle's northern shoreline is uniquely positioned to become a hub of activity for watersports and recreation. The gateway between the Bridge and the Beach.



Detroit

Yacht Club

Detroit River

Beach

Proposed Watersports Park

Boat House

Belle Isle

Belle Isle Nature Center

Lighthouse

The James Scott Memorial Fountain

Giant Slide

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

Belle Isle Aquarium

Dossin Great Lakes Museum

Detroit River

CANADA

From Detroit To the Island To the River

Together, We can transform public access to the Detroit River

Friends of Detroit Rowing has begun meeting with the City of Detroit, the State of Michigan, Belle Isle Conservancy, Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, and others in the Detroit community to identify partnerships.

We are building a coalition of activity providers -rowing, kayaking, swimming, fishing, sailing, and transportation.

Current partners include:

- Detroit Boat Club Crew
- Detroit Community Sailing

