THE ROAD AHEAD

I-75 CAP

Public Space Program Plan

I-75 Cap Feasibility Study

Downtown Detroit Partnership

October 2026

DOWNTOWN DETROIT PARTNERSHIP
EST. 1922

MDOT
Michigan Department of Transportation

CITY OF DETROIT

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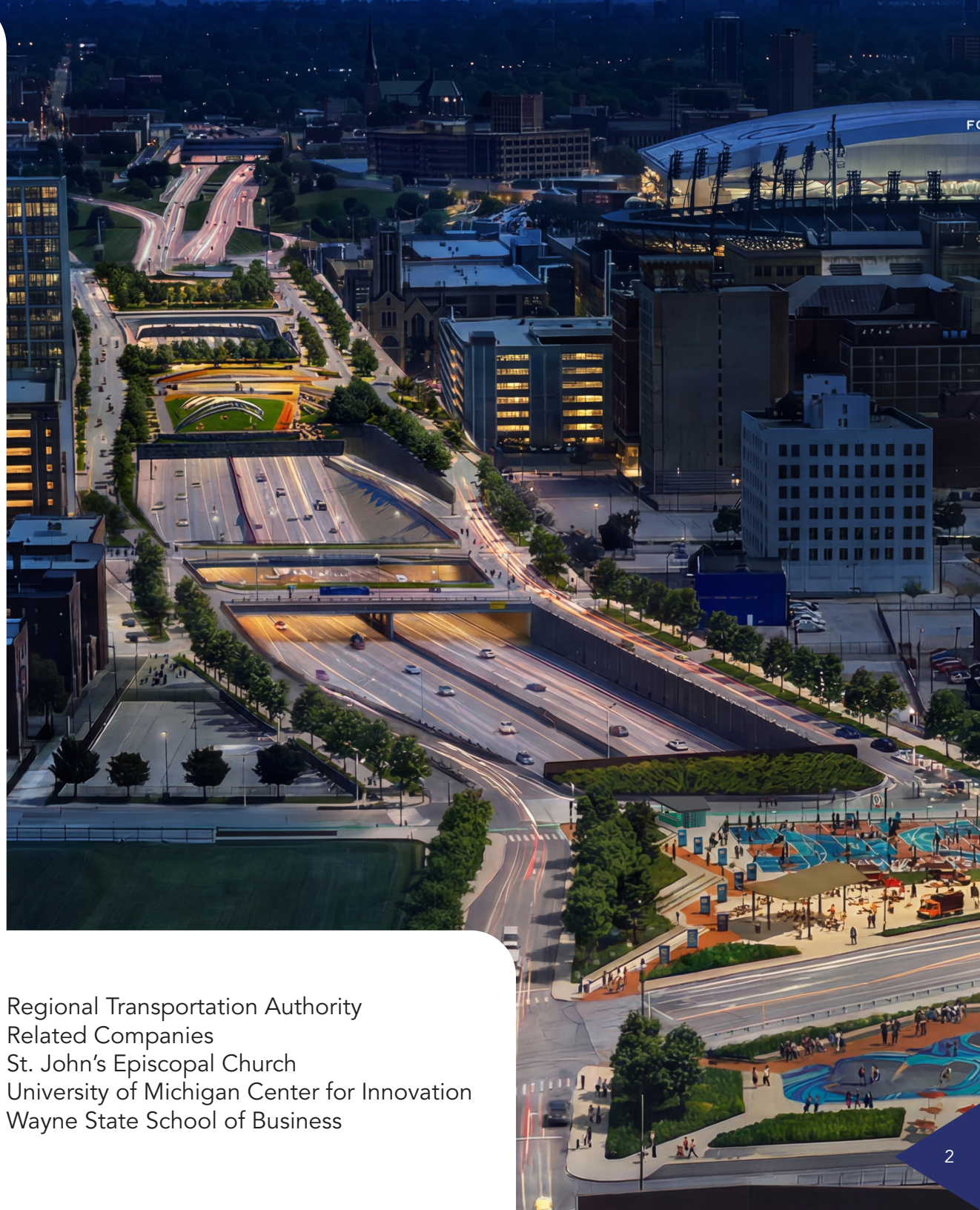


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1 Overview

The Park Program Plan documents how community feedback helped establish a complementary system of public spaces that reconnect neighborhoods, support everyday community life, provide destinations for citywide gatherings and events, and celebrate Detroit's culture, history, and creativity.

An Informed Design

A multi-year engagement process allowed the project team to work closely with residents, stakeholders, community organizations, and partner agencies to shape a shared vision for the I-75 Caps. Rooted in the broader goal of reconnecting neighborhoods divided by I-75, the engagement process sought to reflect the needs, aspirations, and identity of the surrounding communities. Through public meetings, design charrettes, online engagement, stakeholder interviews, and ongoing collaboration, the project team gathered input that informed both the overall vision and character for the public spaces.

The engagement process unfolded in a series of iterative phases, with each round of public input building upon the previous one. Early engagement identified the preferred cap locations over the I-75 corridor. Once the three cap locations were established, the community defined the desired character, amenities, and programming for each cap. That input, combined with the site's physical context and surrounding neighborhoods, informed a set of distinct public space visions that were then brought back to the public for additional refinement. Through continued engagement, these visions evolved into the programming frameworks and concept designs presented in this report.

May 2026 Public Meeting



May 2026 Public Meeting



2 Design Strategies

The team used three design strategies to develop park design and programming elements.

Design Strategy 1: Establish Guiding Principles

The team developed four core principles based on design best practices to guide the development of beneficial programming for each cap. For purposes of this Program Plan, program elements include the amenities, spaces, and activities envisioned within each public space.

Each cap will possess a **distinct identity** and role within the overall system, ensuring that the caps **complement** rather than compete with one another.

The public spaces will prioritize **daily use and community benefit,** creating spaces that are active and welcoming even when no formal event is occurring.

The public spaces will be **flexible and adaptable,** capable of accommodating a wide range of activities as community needs vary throughout the week and year and evolve over time.

Programming, design, and public art will **celebrate Detroit's culture, creativity, and history,** creating places that are uniquely rooted in the city and reflective of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Keeping in mind these four principles, the design team incorporated community feedback to ensure an efficient, deliberate, and intentional distribution of desired programming across all three caps.

Kids programming under a pavilion at Levy Park (Houston, TX)



Image Source: Levy Park Conservancy

Chess in Campus Martius Park (Detroit, MI)



Image Source: DDP

PopCourts! outdoor amenity space in the Austin neighborhood (Chicago, IL)



Image Source: Lamar Johnson Collaborative

Design Strategy 2: Translate Community Input

Community engagement generated hundreds of ideas for public space amenities, activities, and experiences across the three caps. To understand the feedback and identify common priorities, the project team organized the desired elements into six overarching programming categories. These categories provide a consistent framework for evaluating community input, balancing uses across the caps, and translating individual ideas into cohesive strategies that honor each unique public space while creating a complementary system of caps.

Social Connection defines elements that mitigate physical barriers and provide opportunity for people to engage with each other. An example of social connection could be a flexible plaza space for events to occur.

Wellness refers to opportunities for mental and physical restoration. These could be passive opportunities, like resting in a garden, or active opportunities, like participating in a yoga class.

Education opportunities include passive and active learning which can occur as interpretive signage or space to conduct a class outdoors.

Commerce defines opportunities that allow for purchase or sale of commodities, goods, and food such as art and farmers markets, food trucks, or permanent restaurants.

Recreation involves both passive and active recreation and focuses on programmed elements or spaces which encourage play.

Arts and Culture elements showcase physical art, provide space for artistic expression, or celebrate and honor Detroit history.

Yoga in the Park (Downtown Detroit)



Image Source: DDP

Fosse Park (Leicester, UK)



Image Source: Macgregor Smith

Mural (Philadelphia, PA)

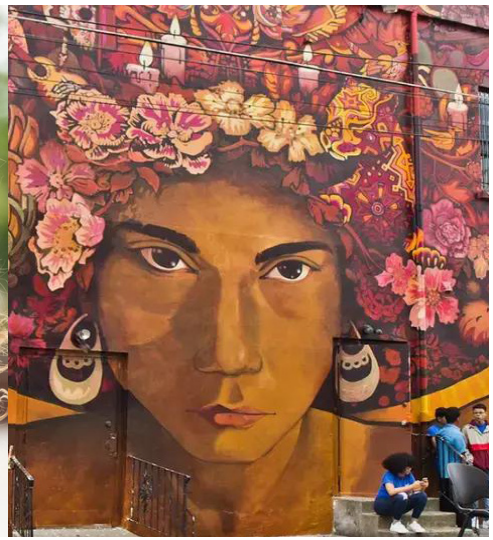


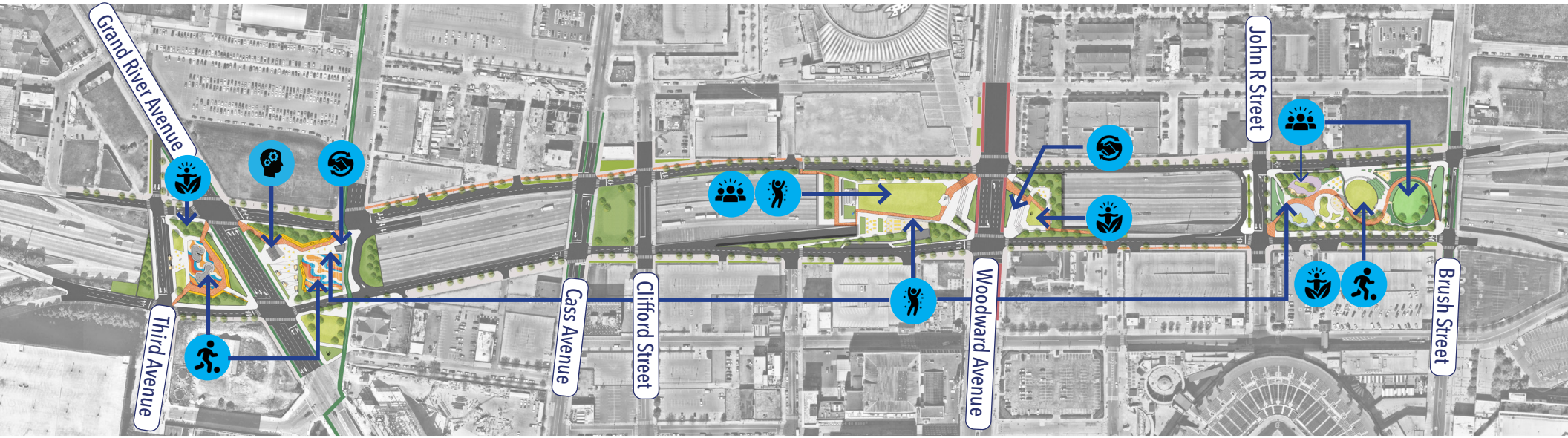
Image Source: Kimberly Paynter/WHYY

Design Strategy 3: Maintain a Holistic Outlook

A 15-minute walk will bring you from the farthest west corner of the West Cap (Third Avenue) to the farthest east corner of the East Cap (Brush Street). By zooming out to view the public spaces collectively, transportation improvements and cap public space improvements can be viewed together as a larger public space ecosystem that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Together, the full I-75 Cap system is envisioned as a network of public spaces that reconnect neighborhoods, create new opportunities for recreation and gathering, and strengthen Downtown Detroit's public realm. While each cap has a distinct identity and serves different user groups, the three caps are united by a common vision: to create welcoming, active, and memorable places that support everyday use while accommodating special events and community celebrations. Collectively, the caps will provide opportunities for *social connection, wellness, education, commerce, recreation, and arts and culture*, creating destinations that serve residents, workers, students, and visitors alike.

The caps provide opportunities for social connection, wellness, education, commerce, recreation, arts and culture



Social Connection | Wellness | Education | Commerce | Recreation | Arts and Culture

3 West Cap

The West Cap is envisioned as a pocket of daily activity. A playful and dynamic urban space, it serves as an everyday destination for students, workers, residents, and visitors.

Active Commons

Located between Cass Technical High School, the future University of Michigan Center for Innovation, and surrounding neighborhoods, the public space is designed to be a highly social and active environment that supports informal recreation, creativity, and spontaneous gathering.

Rather than functioning primarily as an event space, the West Cap is intended to be a place people use every day: a place to meet friends after class, grab lunch from a food & beverage seller, play a casual pickup game, skateboard, relax with friends, or enjoy a walk through the city. Its primary role within the larger cap network is to provide spaces for recreation and everyday activity, creating a destination that feels animated and welcoming year-round.

West Cap: Character Recommendations

The character of the West Cap is urban, playful, and dynamic. Multi-use sports courts, a skate plaza, flexible lawn areas, lounge seating, rotating food and beverage destinations, and shaded gathering spaces create a public space that is constantly animated by activity. Sculpture, murals, graphic pavement, and flexible plazas for small performances reflect the greater neighborhood's creative culture and provide opportunities for self-expression and community storytelling. Gardens, planted buffers, and meadows soften the urban setting while creating opportunities for environmental education and stewardship.
The public space's design encourages movement, exploration, and interaction, creating an active social landscape that appeals to a wide range of ages and interests, with a focus on students and young adults.

PopCourts! outdoor amenity space in the Austin neighborhood (Chicago, IL)



Image Source: Lamar Johnson Collaborative

Grand opening of a new skate park in United Nations Plaza (San Fransisco, CA)



Image source: Justin Katiqbak, the San Fransisco Standard

Biophony pop-up (New York City, NY)



Metropolis Ensemble

West Cap: Programming Recommendations

Programming on the West Cap emphasizes recreation, creativity, and small-scale commerce. Pick-up sports leagues, art workshops, educational programs, cultural events, and community gatherings will keep the space active throughout the year. Food kiosks, food trucks, and pop-up vendors create opportunities for local entrepreneurship while serving students, commuters, and nearby workers. Together, these uses establish the West Cap as a vibrant neighborhood hub and gateway that strengthens connections between surrounding institutions while supporting Detroit's next generation of residents, students, innovators, and creators.

Additional amenities encourage people to visit not just for events, but throughout the day. The public space offers comfortable places to relax through movable seating, shaded gathering areas, picnic spaces, and landscaped gardens. Supporting amenities such as Wi-Fi, charging stations, open lawns, and plazas can accommodate informal recreation, educational programming, art workshops, and small cultural events, while movable furnishings allow spaces to evolve throughout the day.

Arts and culture are integrated throughout the landscape through rotating public art, murals, interactive art walls, and opportunities for local artists to showcase Detroit's creative identity. Seasonal lighting and temporary installations ensure the public space remains active year-round while reinforcing the West Cap's role as an energetic and creative neighborhood commons.

Overall, the programming strategy prioritizes flexible, adaptable spaces that support both everyday use and periodic community events. The following page lists the specific programming elements identified for the West Cap.

Food truck vendor at Campus Martius (Detroit, MI)



Image Source: DDP

Programming at Fair Park (Dallas, TX)



Image Source: Fair Park First

West Cap: Program Matrix

The following matrix describes the programming and amenity spaces desired for the West Cap.

Program Name/Type	Surface Type	Frequency/Seasonality	Anticipated Attendance	Target Audience
Program Spaces/Amenities				
Informal lawn	Lawn	Year-round	N/A	All
Native species/pollinator meadow	Planting	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Multi-use sports court	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	Teen/young adult
Art installations	Lawn or hardscape	All seasons, rotating	N/A	All
Art wall/graffiti wall/ground mural	Hardscape	All seasons, rotating	N/A	Teen/young adult
Instagrammable moment	Lawn or hardscape	All seasons, rotating	N/A	Teen/young adult
Lounge/Adirondack chairs	Lawn or hardscape	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Umbrellas	Hardscape	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Movable tables and chairs	Hardscape, can temporarily be on lawn	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Shade/picnic pavilion(s)	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	All
Wi-fi/charging stations	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	All
Planted buffer from cars	Planting	Year-round	N/A	All
Trees	Planting	Year-round	N/A	All
Drinking water stations, misting poles	Hardscape	Warm season (winterized)	N/A	All
Skate plaza	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	Teen/young adult
Recess games: four square, tetherball, hopscotch, ping pong	Hardscape or play surface	year-round	N/A	Families
Larger Scale/Signature Events				
Cultural festivals and events	Hardscape	A few times a year	300-500	All
Winter lighting displays	Can vary	Winter season	Continuous	All
Music/dance performance	Hardscape	A few times a year	100-200	Teen/young adult
DJ night	Hardscape	A few times a year	100-200	Teen/young adult

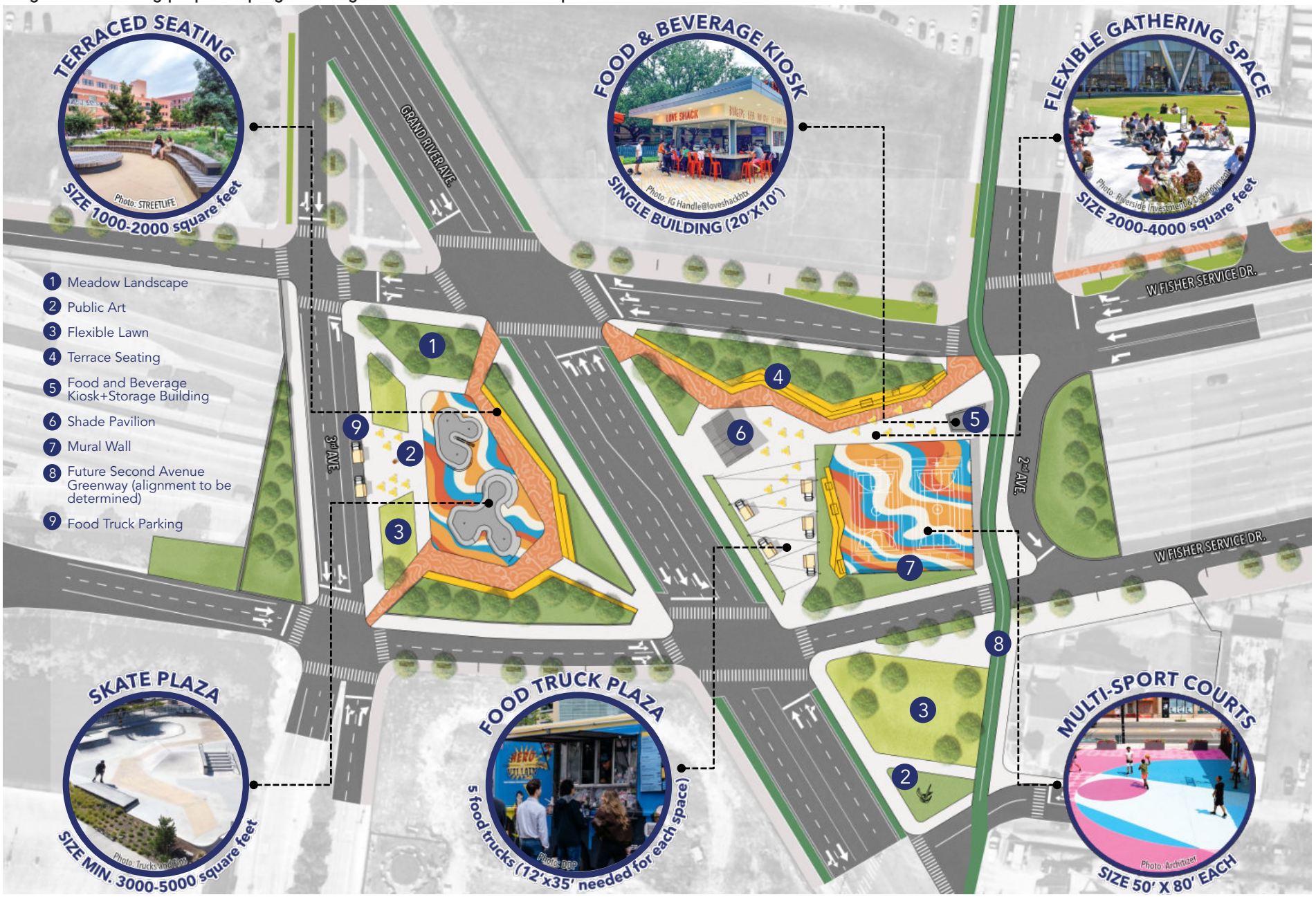
West Cap: Program Matrix (continued)

Program Name/Type	Surface Type	Frequency/Seasonality	Anticipated Attendance	Target Audience
Smaller Scale/Recurring Programs				
Smaller scale live music	Lawn or hardscape	Weekly, warm season	50-100	Teen/young adult
Art/craft workshops	Hardscape	Monthly, warm season	30-50	Teen/young adult
Educational programs	Lawn or hardscape	Monthly, warm season	30-50	Teen/young adult
Revenue Generating Uses				
Food and beverage kiosks	Hardscape	Warm season	N/A	Teen/young adult
Markets: Vendor/night/farmers/food	Hardscape	Monthly, warm season	200-500	Teen/young adult
Food trucks	Hardscape	Weekly, warm season	N/A	Teen/young adult
Supportive Infrastructure				
Power outlets	N/A	Year-round	N/A	N/A
Trash/recycling	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	N/A
Loading/unloading access for events	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	N/A
Programming/maintenance storage	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	N/A

West Cap: Program Plan

The plan below illustrates how the West Cap programming elements are organized within the public space.

Diagram illustrating proposed programming elements on the West Cap





4 Central Cap

The Central Cap is envisioned as a vibrant hub for the broader Detroit community. It is a signature civic space that celebrates Detroit's culture, energy, and identity while reconnecting neighborhoods across I-75.

Civic Pride and Celebration

Positioned at the heart of downtown and spanning Woodward Avenue, this cap creates a powerful visual and physical connection between the city on either side of the freeway. The public space functions as Detroit's outdoor living room: a place where residents and visitors come together to celebrate, gather, relax, and experience the city. Its primary role within the cap network is to serve as a premier gathering space, accommodating everything from informal daily use to major community celebrations and citywide events.

The east section of the Central Cap on the east side of Woodward Avenue is a flexible community greenspace that leverages a wide sidewalk full of daily and event-driven pedestrians to generate activity throughout the year. Wide terraced seating lines the Woodward Avenue edge and supports spectator seating for the Thanksgiving Day Parade or to enjoy watching people passing by. An open lawn on the upper terrace is surrounded by movable seating, casual swings, and comfortable benches. A robust tree canopy wraps the space to provide shade and buffer from the impact of the freeway beyond.



Central Cap: Character Recommendations

The character of the Central Cap is civic, refined, and vibrant. A central lawn and event space are framed by terraces, plazas, gardens, and active edges that support activity throughout the day and evening. A performance stage and lawn, public art, seating areas, food and beverage destinations, and shaded gathering spaces create a layered experience that is equally comfortable for a lunchtime visit, a community festival, or a pre-game gathering. Monumental art, seasonal lighting, and signature design elements establish the cap as a memorable destination within Detroit's entertainment district while creating a welcoming public space that remains active year-round.

DDP winter programming at Campus Martius and Cadillac Square (Detroit, MI)



Image Source: DDP

Programming at the Wasioto Park outdoor amphitheater (Nashville, TN)



Image Source: EOA Architects

Programming on the Klyde Warren Park cap (Dallas, TX)



Image Source: Klyde Warren Park

Central Cap: Programming Recommendations

Programming on the Central Cap focuses on large-scale community activation and citywide events. Concerts, festivals, holiday celebrations, outdoor performances, markets, social dance events, game-day gatherings, and cultural programming create a calendar of activity that reflects Detroit's diversity and creativity. Food kiosks, outdoor dining, and flexible commercial opportunities support both residents and visitors while activating adjacent development. Rooted in Detroit's culture and history through public art and storytelling, the Central Cap serves as the symbolic and social heart of the cap system—a place where Detroit comes together.

The Central Cap combines these signature civic amenities with flexible gathering spaces designed to support Detroit's largest public events while remaining welcoming for everyday use. The generous event lawn and performance terrace are complemented by plazas, outdoor seating, shade structures, gardens, public restrooms, and food and beverage destinations. Amenities such as movable tables and chairs, Wi-Fi, and seasonal dining options create comfortable spaces for daily recreation, lunchtime use, and evening activity. Public art, seasonal installations, signature lighting, and memorable design elements reinforce the Central Cap's civic pride and celebration of Detroit's culture while creating a recognizable destination that remains active across all seasons.

The layering of these programming items is intentional to accommodate both large-scale civic events and smaller recurring activities throughout the year. The following page lists the specific programming elements identified for the Central Cap.

DDP Programming at Campus Martius Park (Detroit, MI)

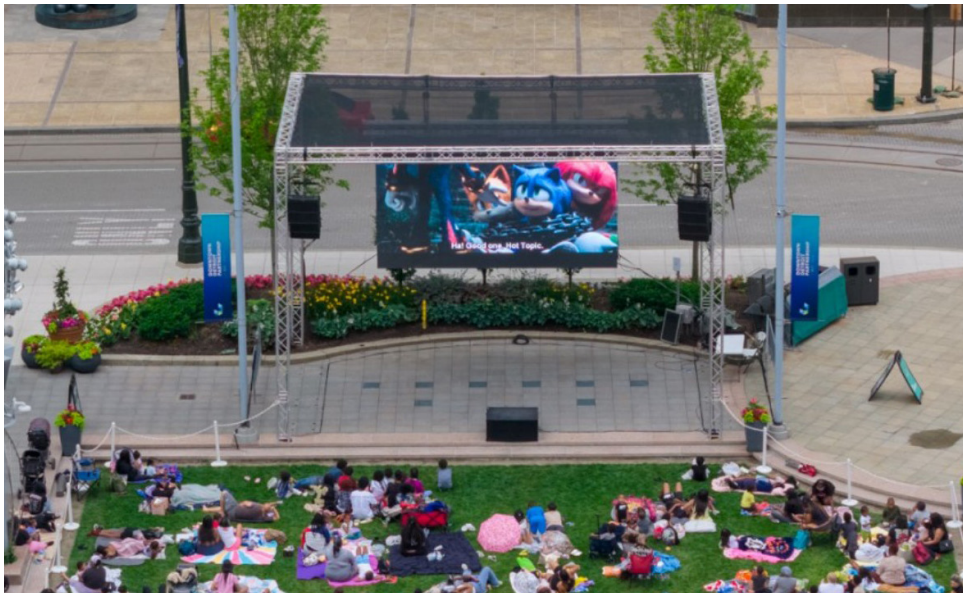


Image Source: DDP

Salesforce Park (San Francisco, CA)



Image Source: Transbay Joint Powers Authority

Central Cap: Program Matrix

The following matrix describes the programming and amenity spaces desired for the Central Cap.

Program Name/Type	Surface Type	Frequency/Seasonality	Anticipated Attendance	Target Audience
Program Spaces/Amenities				
Event/informal lawn	Lawn	Year-round	2,000+	All
Performance terrace/stage	Hardscape	Year-round	100-400	All
Public restrooms	Hardscape	Ideally-year round	N/A	All
Umbrellas	Hardscape	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Movable tables and chairs	Hardscape	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Lounge chairs	Lawn or hardscape	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Art installations	Lawn or hardscape	All seasons, rotating	N/A	All
Instagrammable moment	Lawn or hardscape	All seasons, rotating	N/A	All
Shade/picnic pavilion(s)	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	All
Native species/pollinator meadow	Planting	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Wi-fi/charging stations	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	All
Trees	Planting	Year-round	N/A	All
Larger Scale/Signature Events				
Civic celebrations	Lawn or hardscape	A few times a year	2,000	All, visitors
Holiday celebrations, winter lighting	Hardscape	Holidays	300-500+	All, visitors
Winter art installation	Lawn or hardscape	Winter season	Continuous	All
Cultural festivals and events	Hardscape	A few times a year	500+	Cultural communities
Social dance	Hardscape	A few times a year	200-400	Young adults
Music/dance performance	Hardscape	A few times a year	500-1,000	All, larger draw
DJ night	Hardscape	A few times a year	300-500	Young adults
Outdoor movies	Lawn for seating	Warm season	200-400	All, family friendly

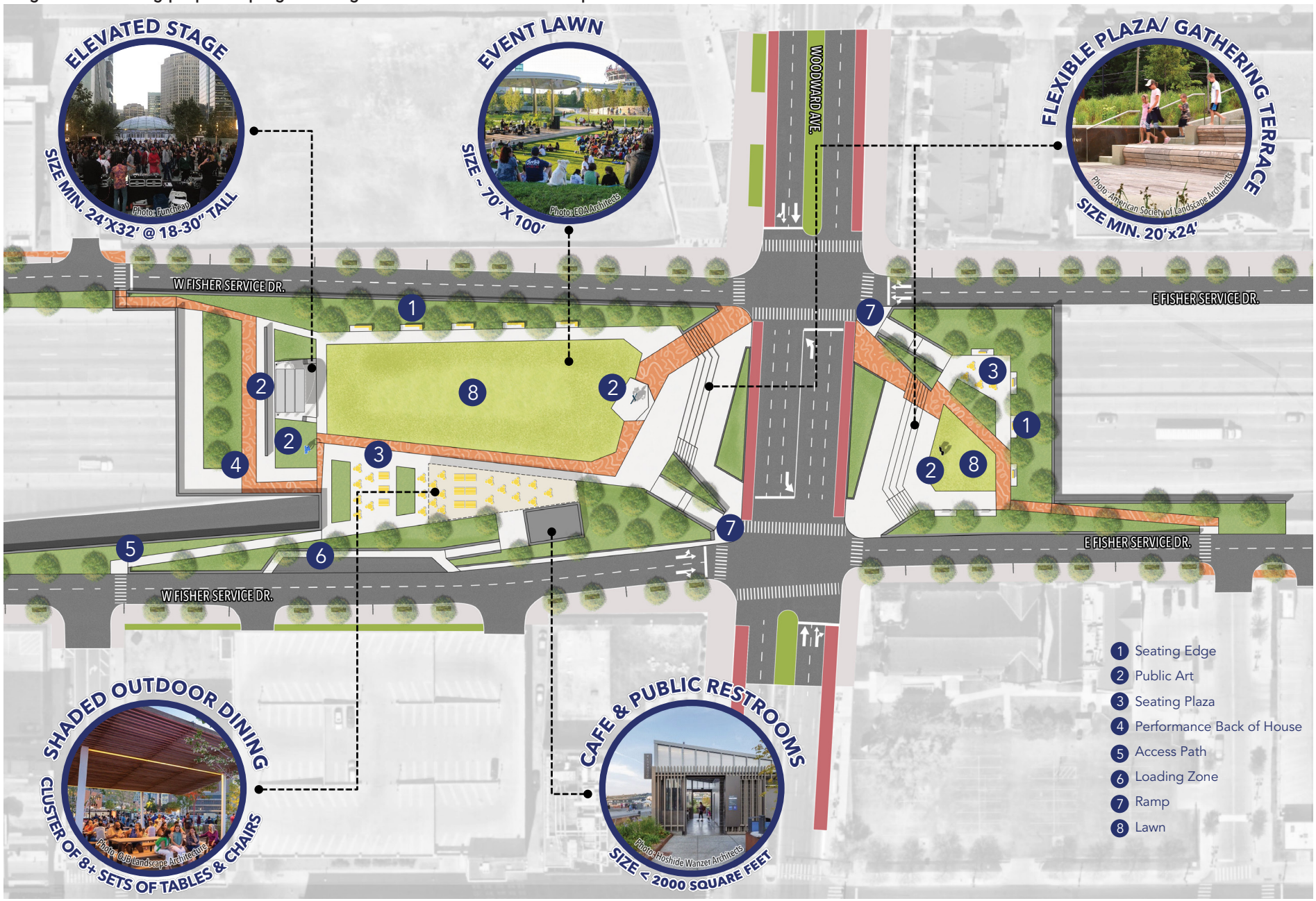
Central Cap: Program Matrix (continued)

Program Name/Type	Surface Type	Frequency/Seasonality	Anticipated Attendance	Target Audience
Smaller Scale/Recurring Programs				
Lunchtime/evening music	Lawn or hardscape	Weekly, warm season	50-100	All
Game socials	Hardscape	Monthly, warm season	30-50	Young adults
Trivia nights	Hardscape	Quarterly, warm season	30-50	All
Revenue Generating Uses				
Food and beverage café/porch	Hardscape	Warm season	N/A	All, pair with events
Food trucks	Hardscape	Weekly, warm season	N/A	All, pair with events
Markets: vendor/night/farmers/food festival	Hardscape	Monthly, warm season	200-500	All, pair with events
Supportive Infrastructure				
Programming/maintenance storage	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	N/A
Power outlets	N/A	Year-round	N/A	N/A
Trash/recycling	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	N/A
Loading/unloading access for events	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	N/A

Central Cap: Program Plan

The plan below illustrates how the Central Cap programming elements are organized within the public space.

Diagram illustrating proposed programming elements on the Central Cap



5 East Cap

The East Cap is envisioned as a neighborhood gathering space that strengthens connections between Brush Park, Brewster Homes, and surrounding communities through nature, play, learning, and culture.

Neighborhood Gathering Space

Designed as a welcoming and family-oriented public space, the East Cap prioritizes everyday neighborhood use while providing access to high-quality green space in the heart of the city. Landscaped pathways, gardens, play areas, a dog play area, and community gathering spaces create an environment that encourages people of all ages to spend time outdoors, connect with neighbors, and enjoy nature close to home. Its primary role within the larger network is to serve as a multi-generational neighborhood gathering space that celebrates community heritage, supports everyday recreation and wellness, and provides opportunities for families, youth, and seniors to connect with one another and the history of the neighborhood.



East Cap: Character Recommendations

The character of the East Cap is authentic, connected, and restorative. A network of meandering paths links playgrounds, lawns, sensory gardens, community gardens, dog-friendly spaces, fitness areas, and shaded seating zones. Nature-based play elements and informal gathering spaces create opportunities for exploration and discovery, while gardens and native plantings introduce seasonal interest and ecological value. Throughout the public space, public art and interpretive elements celebrate the history of Paradise Valley and the surrounding neighborhoods, ensuring that the landscape reflects the stories and cultural legacy of the community.

West Bund Riverfront, Shanghai



Image Source: Hassell

Pulaski Park (Northampton, MA)



Image Source: Stimson Studio

Urban Farming Program (Seattle, WA)



Image Source: Sylvia Jarrus, The Seattle Times

East Cap: Programming Recommendations

Programming on the East Cap focuses on children, families, seniors, and neighborhood life. Children's activities, educational programs, fitness classes, art workshops, gardening programs, game socials, and community celebrations provide opportunities for learning, recreation, and social connection. The cap's flexible lawns and picnic areas support both informal daily use and small neighborhood gatherings, while seasonal lighting, winter art installations, and year-round programming ensure the space remains active across all seasons. Together, these elements create a beloved community public space that complements the larger civic role of the Central Cap while providing a welcoming green heart for nearby residents.

The public space combines active recreation with quieter spaces such as picnic groves, community gardens, sensory gardens, native planting areas, and shaded seating. These amenities provide opportunities for passive recreation, relaxation, learning, and neighborhood gathering while supporting users of all ages.

Arts and culture are woven into the public space through storytelling elements, murals, rotating public art, and interpretive features that celebrate the history of Paradise Valley and surrounding neighborhoods. Seasonal lighting, winter installations, and year-round community programming ensure the public space remains active while reinforcing its role as a multi-generational neighborhood destination rooted in Detroit's cultural heritage.

Overall, the East Cap's programming focuses on flexible community uses that can evolve throughout the year. The following page lists the specific programming elements identified for the East Cap.

Campus Martius Park (Detroit, MI)



Image Source: DDP

Levy Park (Houston, TX)



Image Source: Morris Malakoff

East Cap: Program Matrix

The following matrix describes the programming and amenity spaces desired for the East Cap.

Program Name/Type	Surface Type	Frequency/Seasonality	Anticipated Attendance	Target Audience
Program Spaces/Amenities				
Informal lawn	Lawn	Year-round	N/A	All
Playground/nature play/musical play	Play surfacing	Year-round	N/A	Families
Small dog play area	Durable surface	Year-round	N/A	Dog owners, dogs
Native/pollinator meadow or sensory garden	Planting	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	Families
Umbrellas	Hardscape	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Movable tables and chairs	Hardscape	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Lounge/Adirondack chairs	Lawn or hardscape	Spring, summer, fall	N/A	All
Art installations/storytelling	Lawn or hardscape	All seasons, rotating	N/A	All, family focused
Art wall/mural/ground mural/stories	Hardscape	All seasons, rotating	N/A	All, family focused
Picnic/shade pavilion(s)	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	Neighbors
Picnic grove	Lawn or hardscape	Year-round	N/A	Neighbors
Community garden plots	Soil	Growing season	N/A	Neighbors
Fitness stations	Rubber or play surfacing	Year-round	N/A	All
Drinking water stations	Hardscape	Warm season (winterized)	N/A	All
Dog waste stations	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	Dog owners, dogs
Trees	Planting	Year-round	N/A	All
Recess games: four square, tetherball, hopscotch, ping pong	Hardscape or play surface	Year-round	N/A	Families
Climbing wall	Rubber or play surfacing	Year-round	N/A	Families

East Cap: Program Matrix (continued)

Program Name/Type	Surface Type	Frequency/Seasonality	Anticipated Attendance	Target Audience
Larger Scale/Signature Events				
Winter lighting displays	Can vary	Winter season	Continuous	Families
Smaller Scale/Recurring Programs				
Classes for seniors	Hardscape	Monthly or weekly, warm season	30-50	Seniors
Children's programs	Lawn or hardscape	Monthly, warm season	30-50	Families
Game socials	Hardscape	Monthly, warm season	30-50	Families, seniors
Art/craft workshops	Hardscape	Monthly, warm season	30-50	Families, seniors
Educational programs	Lawn or hardscape	Monthly, warm season	30-50	All
Ice sculptures (winter)	Hardscape	Winter installation	N/A	Families
Fitness and wellness activities	Lawn: yoga, tai chi, stretching, meditation; hardscape: cardio	Monthly or weekly, warm season	20-50	All, seniors
Supporting Infrastructure				
Power outlets	N/A	Year-round	N/A	N/A
Trash/recycling	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	N/A
Programming/maintenance storage	Hardscape	Year-round	N/A	N/A

East Cap: Program Plan

The plan below illustrates how the East Cap programming elements are organized within the public space.

Diagram illustrating proposed programming elements on the East Cap



6 Operational Considerations

This Program Plan establishes a high-level operational framework to guide future staffing, budgeting, governance, and implementation planning for the I-75 Caps as the project advances toward implementation.

High-Level Staffing and Cost Planning

Rather than developing detailed staffing plans or operating budgets at this stage, the planning process focused on identifying the relative operational needs, staffing assumptions, and anticipated operating cost considerations associated with each cap.

Through discussions with the Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP), the team developed a qualitative understanding of the desired level of activation, operational approach, management responsibilities, and resource requirements needed to support the long-term success of the three caps. The resulting staffing assumptions and order-of-magnitude cost estimates are intended to inform future governance, funding, and implementation decisions while establishing a foundation for long-term operational planning.

Discussions with DDP indicate that the caps would most likely be operated under DDP's existing parks management agreement with the City of Detroit. DDP would oversee cap operations while continuing to rely heavily on contracted service providers for landscape maintenance, janitorial services, security, and other day-to-day operational functions. DDP staff would primarily provide contract oversight, operational coordination, programming management, and partnership development rather than perform most maintenance activities directly. This approach builds upon DDP's successful management of other downtown public spaces while allowing operational resources to scale as public space activity increases.

Kids Programming



Image Source: Kennett Trails Alliance

DDP Ambassador



Image Source: DDP

Outdoor Movie at Campus Martius Park (Detroit, MI)



Image Source: DDP

Distributing Resources

Although envisioned as a coordinated system of public spaces, each cap will require a different level of operational investment based on its intended identity and programming focus. The West Cap is expected to function as an active neighborhood public space with daily recreation, a staffed kiosk, and recurring community programming developed in partnership with nearby institutions such as the University of Michigan Center for Innovation, local schools, neighborhood organizations, and recreational partners. The Central Cap will require the highest level of staffing and operating support, accommodating food and beverage operations, regular event production, markets, performances, rentals, and large civic gatherings while also functioning as an attractive public space between events. The East Cap is anticipated to remain primarily a neighborhood-focused public space, supported by modest recurring activities such as dog play area events, family programming, and seasonal community gatherings intended to encourage everyday use without requiring intensive staffing.

DDP emphasized that the overall programming strategy should balance passive daily use with recurring activities and signature events. Collectively, the three caps should maximize the number of days that public activity occurs while preserving the flexibility and accessibility of the spaces for everyday users.

Smaller recurring activities and community-based programming are expected to provide regular activation throughout the week, while larger signature events will primarily occur within the Central Cap. Programming should be concentrated during the spring through fall seasons, when outdoor use is highest, while also identifying opportunities for winter programming to encourage year-round activity and maintain a consistent public presence.

DDP Ambassadors



Image Source: DDP

Yoga in the Park in Downtown Detroit



Image Source: DDP

Downtown Seattle Association Ambassadors



Image Source: Downtown Seattle Association

Empowering Local Community Organizations

Partnerships will play an important role in the long-term programming strategy. DDP anticipates leading most programming directly while collaborating with neighborhood organizations, arts and cultural groups, universities, sports organizations, and community institutions to expand the range of activities offered. Existing DDP programs are generally not expected to relocate from elsewhere in the city. Instead, the caps should establish new partnerships and programming initiatives that reflect the unique identity of each cap while creating opportunities for sponsorships, shared programming responsibilities, and long-term community stewardship. If funding becomes constrained, DDP indicated that lower-cost activations, including lawn games, community-led programming, and partnerships with organizations such as Detroit's professional sports teams, should be prioritized over resource-intensive events.

Security and Maintenance Considerations

Several considerations related to long-term operations and maintenance are important to highlight. Each cap is expected to require an on-site security presence during operating hours, with the Central Cap potentially requiring around-the-clock security because of its higher activity levels. The design of the public spaces should accommodate operational needs such as convenient access and parking for maintenance vehicles, security patrols, event support vehicles, and landscape contractors. As design advances, additional coordination will also be needed to address variables such as structural loading limitations associated with the cap structures, snow storage, irrigation, water availability, and other long-term maintenance considerations that could influence operating procedures and costs.

A Long-Term Investment

From a financial perspective, DDP views the caps primarily as public amenities that will continue to require public investment and organizational support. While earned revenue opportunities—including concessions, event rentals, sponsorships, and vendor permits—can offset a portion of programming and operating costs, the public spaces are not expected to be financially self-supporting. Instead, these revenue sources should be viewed as complementary funding mechanisms that strengthen long-term operational sustainability while supporting a high-quality public experience.

The staffing assumptions and qualitative cost estimates summarized in the following matrices translate these operational considerations into a planning framework. Rather than projecting future budgets, the matrices illustrate the relative staffing requirements, anticipated operating costs, and management considerations associated with each cap, providing a foundation for future planning as the project advances towards implementation.

Kids Programming in Downtown Detroit



Image Source: DDP

QUALITATIVE STAFFING AND OPERATING COST PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The following matrices summarize the key components of the operational planning framework, including staffing assumptions, anticipated operating cost levels, management responsibilities, programming support needs, and potential revenue sources. Collectively, they provide a concise reference for the relative operational requirements of each cap.

Activation Levels

Category	West Cap	Central Cap	East Cap
Activation Characterization	Mostly informal activation	Intentional activation	Informal activation
Programming/ Events Level	Low	Medium	Low
Community Partnership Potential	Medium	Medium	Medium
Staff Intensity	Medium/low	Medium	Low
Programming Budget	Medium/low	Medium	Low
Equipment Needs	Medium	Medium	Low
Security Needs	Medium	High/ Medium	Low
Revenue Potential	Low	Low	None

Staffing Levels

Staff	Entity	Staffing Level
Programming/Events		
Program management	DDP	Year-round/shared
On-site event support staff	DDP	Event-based and seasonal
Revenue Offsets		
Sponsorships	DDP	Limited
Event rentals	DDP	Limited
Vendor / concession over-sight	DDP	Limited
Operations and Maintenance		
Landscape Maintenance	DDP	Year-round/shared
Janitorial (bathrooms, trash/ recycling, plazas)	DDP	Year-round/shared
Snow removal	City/DDP	Seasonal/as needed basis
General repairs	DDP	As needed basis
Structural repairs	MDOT	As needed basis
Utility servicing	City	As needed basis
Security		
Daily security	DDP	Year-round/shared
Event security	DDP	Limited
Emergency response	City	As needed basis

QUALITATIVE STAFFING AND OPERATING COST PLANNING FRAMEWORK (CONTINUED)

Programming and Event Expense Levels

Expense Category	Entity	Annual Cost Level
Staffing		
Year round staff	DDP	High
Hourly on-site staff	DDP	Medium
Fees		
Program partner fees	DDP/in-kind	Low
Performer/entertainment fees	DDP	Medium
Event permits	DDP	Low
Equipment and Event Support		
Programming supplies	DDP	Low
Movable furniture	DDP	Medium
Sound and A/V	DDP	Medium
Crowd control (stanchions, etc.)	DDP	Low
Event production	DDP	Medium
Additional event-related rentals	DDP	Medium
Event Support Services		
Additional event security	DDP	Medium
Additional janitorial service	DDP	Low
Marketing		
Outreach	DDP	Low
Social Media	DDP	Medium
Website	DDP	Medium

Programming Equipment

Item	Entity	West Cap	Central Cap	East Cap
Tables/ chairs	DDP owned	Medium-level need	Medium-level need	Medium-level need
Portable stage	DDP owned or rental	Rarely needed	Not needed (permanent stage)	Very rarely needed
A/V equipment	DDP owned or rental	Occasional need	Frequent need	Very rarely needed
Games/ recreation equipment	DDP owned	Occasional need	Occasional need	Occasional need
Storage	DDP owned	Need small storage	Need large-sized storage	Need small storage

7 Next Steps

This Program Plan is a community-driven framework for the I-75 Cap public spaces. Work following this plan will futher define design preferences, explore engineering considerations, and identify available funding for design and programming.

Design Development and Engineering

Building the public spaces will require further architectural and engineering design and documentation. These next steps would involve a more in-depth look at the interface with the street network, emergency access and service, structural loading, landscape and vegetation, drainage, and construction methods. Close coordination between the public space designers and the cap structure engineers will play a crucial part in assuring the development of safe, high-performing public spaces over the I-75 corridor.

Cap Construction Costs and Fundraising

High-level estimates have been prepared that express probable costs to design and construct the three caps as they are represented in this report. Estimated values are expected to evolve as design development continues and specific materials and quantities are allocated for each cap. Additionally, anticipated costs may fluctuate due to changes in market conditions prior to the time of construction. The current estimates serve as an important foundation for future planning and fundraising efforts to support project implementation.

Washington Boulevard Esplanade in Downtown Detroit



Image Source: DDP

Public Space Construction Cost Estimates

Cap	Estimated Cost (2026 Value)	Estimated Cost (Inflated 2030 Value)
West Cap	$9,413,000	$11,011,000
Central Cap	$12,634,000	$14,780,000
East Cap	$7,776,000	$9,096,000
Total	**$29,823,000**	**$34,887,000**