



01

CIVIC CENTER



# OVERVIEW

## ABOUT

Philip A. Hart Plaza, Spirit Plaza, and the Monument to Joe Louis make up the Civic Center area in Downtown Detroit. Collectively, these three assets comprise approximately 15 acres that are used for festivals, summer concerts, civic gatherings, food truck events, and other programmed activities as well as a place for residents and visitors to congregate unrelated to organized event activity. While these three sites are proximate to each other, they are separated by heavily trafficked vehicular roadways which prevent them from being utilized as one unified space.

## ASSETS

- Hart Plaza
- Spirit Plaza
- Monument to Joe Louis (“The Fist”)

## STUDY AREA STATS

<b>Above-Grade Site Area</b>	+/- 15 acres
Hart Plaza	+/- 14 acres (93%)
Spirit Plaza	+/- 0.8 acres (5%)
Monument to Joe Louis	+/- 0.2 acres (2%)
<b>Below-Grade Site Area</b>	
Hart Plaza	+/- 5.3 acres
<b>Linear Feet of Shoreline</b>	+/- 800 feet
<b>Historical Monuments &amp; Markers</b>	13
<b>Zoning Designation</b>	
Hart Plaza	Public Center District (PC)
Spirit Plaza	Not yet zoned
<b>Historic Designation</b>	
Hart Plaza	Eligible for designation



EXISTING SITE FEATURES



# HISTORY

## HART PLAZA

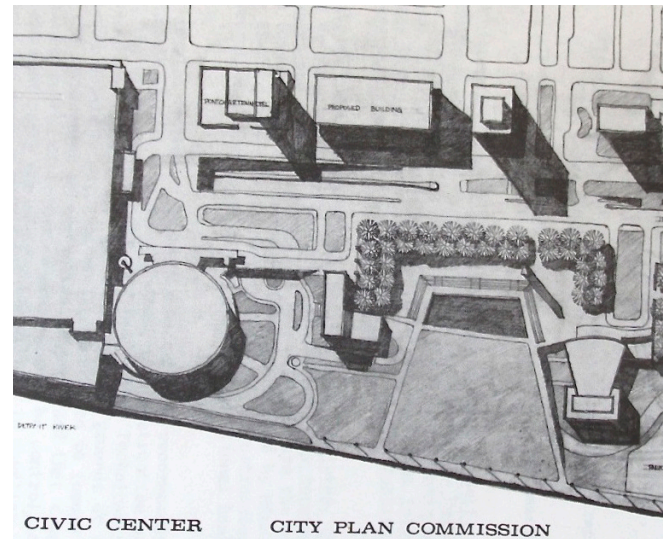
Hart Plaza is located on the approximate site where Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac landed in 1701 and founded the settlement that became the City of Detroit. Planning efforts for the plaza began as early as the 1920s when prominent architects Eliel and Eero Saarinen set forth a vision for a riverfront civic center. Hart Plaza (originally called Civic Center Plaza) opened in 1975 and was designed by notable Japanese-American modernist Isamu Noguchi. It was renamed Hart Plaza in 1977 for Senator Philip Hart. The site contains many historical monuments and markers, and the entire site is nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. Hart Plaza has been a long-time city riverfront destination and venue for summer festivals, concerts, and special events, with a total capacity of 40,000.

## SPIRIT PLAZA

Located next to the iconic Spirit of Detroit sculpture, Spirit Plaza opened in its pilot phase in 2017 when the City of Detroit closed a portion of Woodward Avenue to create this semi-permanent space. In 2019, the City Council voted to make Spirit Plaza permanent and the newly reconstructed plaza opened to Detroiters that fall. The plaza contains the Spirit of Detroit monument which was dedicated in 1958 and created by sculptor Marshall Fredericks of Detroit. Since the sculpture's dedication, this block on Woodward Avenue has been a natural meeting place for Detroiters to celebrate victories and to come together.

## MONUMENT TO JOE LOUIS

The Monument to Joe Louis, also known as "The Fist", was dedicated in 1986 and commissioned by Sports Illustrated magazine as a gift to the people of the City of Detroit. The sculpture was created by Mexican-American sculptor Robert Graham and poured by the legendary bronze artist Rolf Kriken. The 24-foot-long and 24-foot-high sculpture was designed by Graham as a symbolic statement against racism and to commemorate the life of Joe Louis who died in 1981. The median in which the monument sits was closed to vehicular traffic in 2017 when Spirit Plaza was created.



CIVIC CENTER CITY PLAN COMMISSION  
Civic Center Plan by Eliel and Eero Saarinen (1924) with proposed central green spaces



*Detroit Historical Society*  
Children play on the concrete cubist structure in Hart Plaza, 1979



Crowds fill Hart Plaza and Woodward Ave. during the Detroit Red Wings Championship Parade, 2008



Spirit of Detroit statue, c. 1960



Spirit Plaza pilot phase in 2017



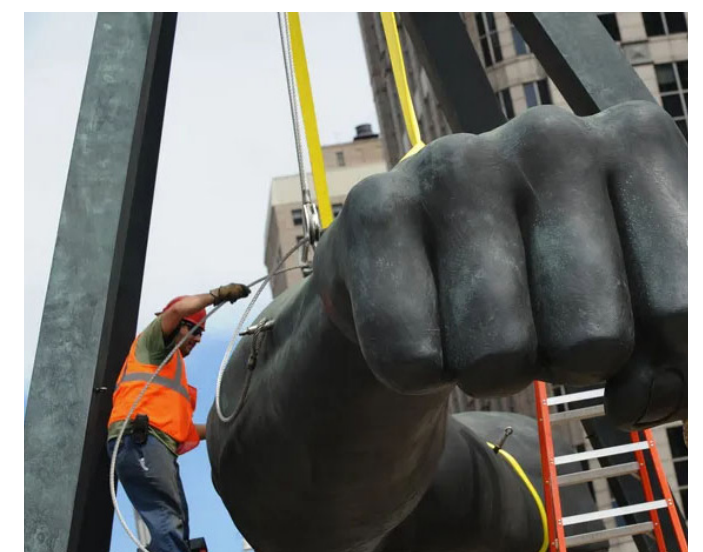
Red Wings championship parade near Spirit of Detroit



Monument to Joe Louis title and inscription on the back of the arm



Monument to Joe Louis, 1986



Monument to Joe Louis, close up of cables suspending the arm



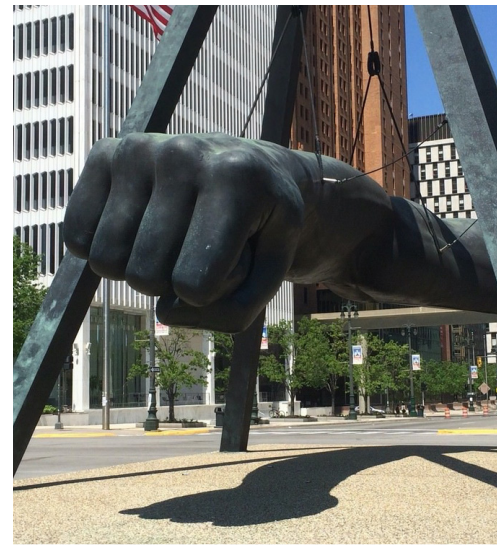
# MONUMENTS & MARKERS

Detroit's Civic Center contains four historical markers and nine monuments, ranging from statues to modernist sculptures. While some of these are considered historically contributing and others not, all of them tell stories of Detroit's rich history such as the city's founding in 1701, its riverfront heritage, and Detroit's role in the underground railroad.

Currently, there is not a commission or organization that exists to make decisions about the stewardship and ongoing maintenance of the existing monuments and markers, leaving their future uncertain.



1. The Spirit of Detroit



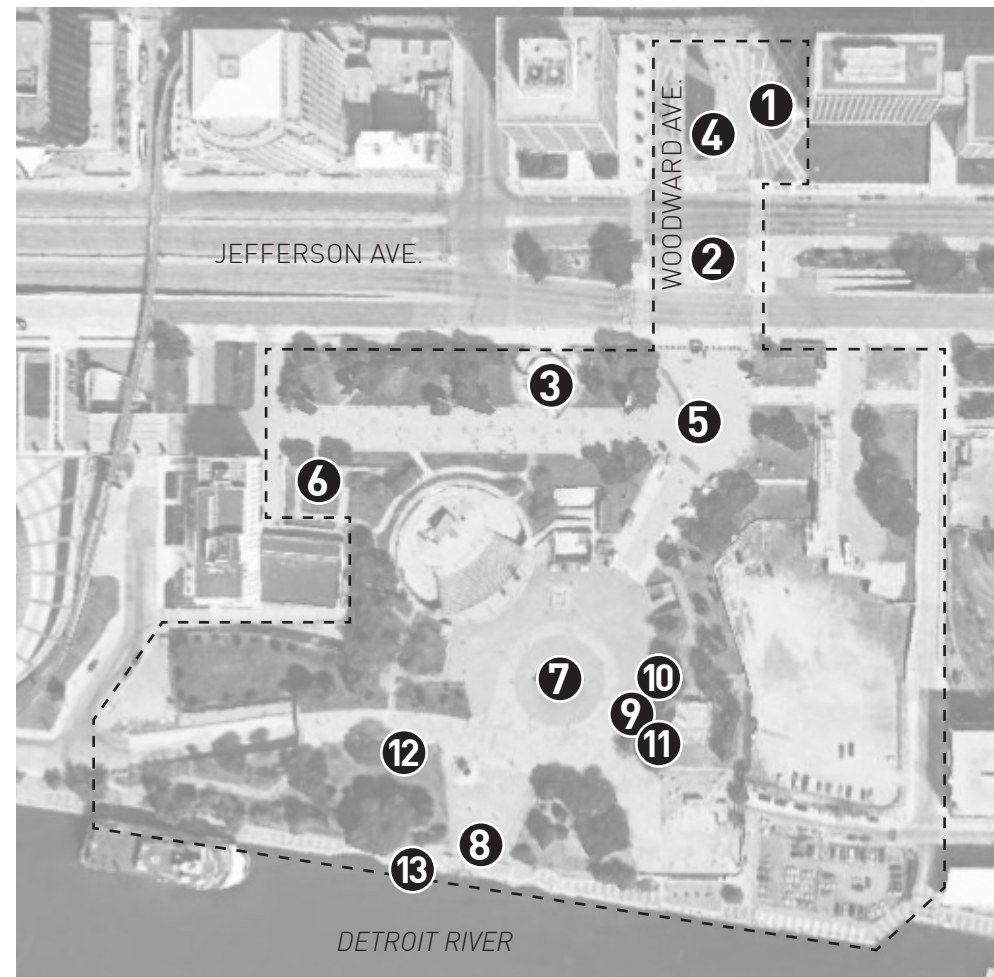
2. Monument to Joe Louis



3. Transcending, Michigan Labor Legacy Landmark



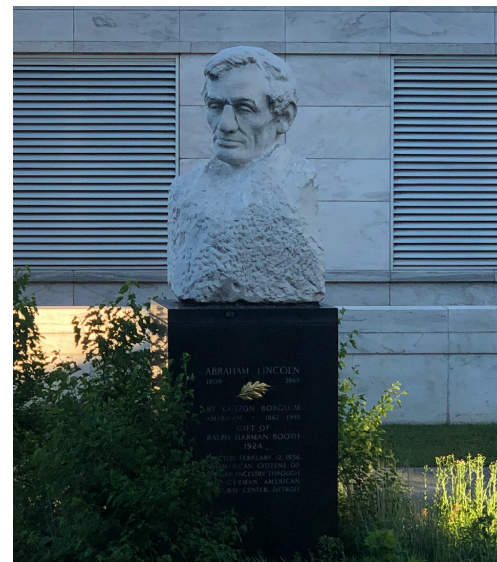
4. United Way Torch



CIVIC CENTER MONUMENTS & MARKERS LOCATIONS



5. Pylon



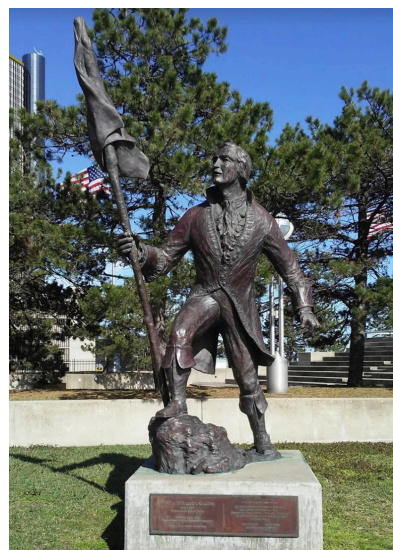
6. Abraham Lincoln Bust



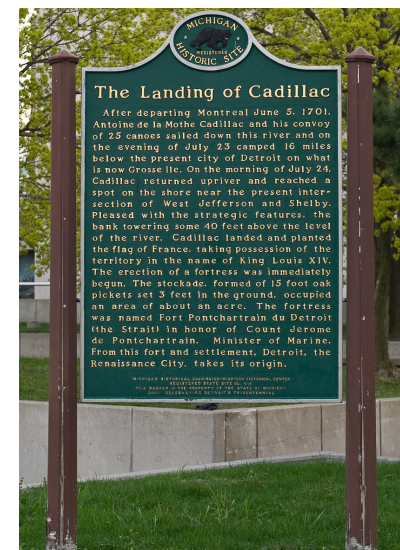
7. Horace E. Dodge & Son Memorial Fountain



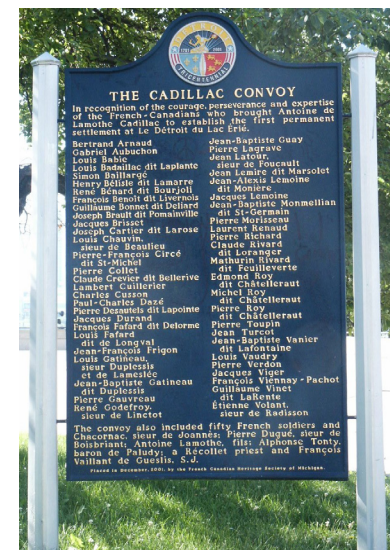
8. Gateway to Freedom



9. Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac Statue



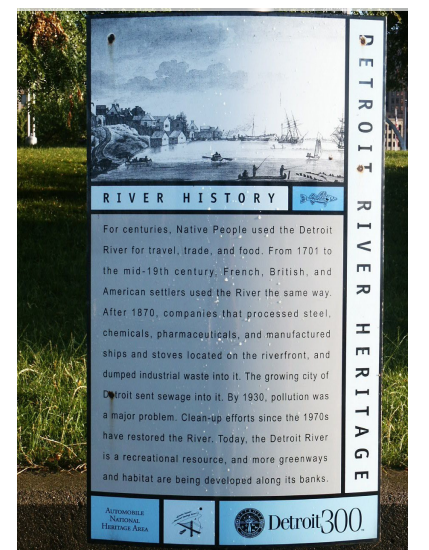
10. The Landing of Cadillac Marker



11. The Cadillac Convoy Marker



12. Ford Motor Company Marker






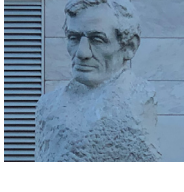



13. Detroit River Heritage Marker



# MONUMENTS & MARKERS



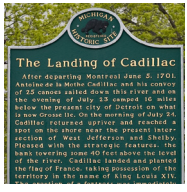


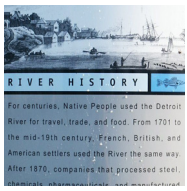
(CONTINUED)

#	IMAGE	TITLE	TYPE	DATE	ARTIST(S)	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
1		The Spirit of Detroit	monument with sculpture/statue	1958	Marshall Fredericks	Within Spirit Plaza on Woodward Avenue near Jefferson Avenue	The 26-foot, 9-ton bronze statue sitting on a 60-ton marble base was cast in Oslo, Norway, and created by the American sculptor Marshall Fredericks. The large seated figure holds in its left hand a sphere emanating rays to symbolize God, and in its right hand a family group symbolizing human relationships. As one of Detroit's most easily identifiable landmarks, a depiction of the statue regularly appears as a community symbol and in logos.
2		Monument to Joe Louis ("The Fist")	sculpture	1986	Robert Graham, Rolf Kriken	Within the Jefferson Avenue median where it meets Woodward Avenue	The sculpture, commissioned by Sports Illustrated magazine from the Mexican-American sculptor Robert Graham and poured by the legendary bronze artist, Rolf Kriken, is a 24-foot-long arm with a fisted hand suspended by a 24-foot-high pyramidal framework. Sports Illustrated presented this sculpture to the City of Detroit on the 100th anniversary of the Detroit Institute of Art. The sculpture is dedicated to the boxer Joe Louis and represents the power of his punch both inside and outside the ring.
3		Transcending	sculpture, boulders, plaques	2003	David Barr, Sergio de Guisti	Within Hart Plaza on the north side of the park near Jefferson Avenue	Transcending is a monument dedicated to the labor movement in Michigan. In 2000, the Michigan Labor History Society formed a non-profit to create a landmark for the labor movement, to which many labor organizations contributed. David Barr, an artist from Livonia, designed the 63-foot steel arcs, while Sergio de Guisti, an Italian artist from Redford, designed the base of the monument. The base of the monument includes fourteen Vermont granite boulders, each six feet tall, as well as plaques with quotes that speak to the labor movement throughout the years.
4		United Way Torch	sculpture	1969	Dario Bonucchi	Within Spirit Plaza, within the median of Woodward Avenue	This sculpture was constructed as a permanent symbol after many years of constructing a wooden torch structure and taking down each year during the campaign. This permanent torch glows each year throughout the United Foundation Torch Drive. A replica of this sculpture is located in the lobby of the United Way offices.
5		Pylon	sculpture	1981	Isamu Noguchi	At the entrance of Hart Plaza near Jefferson Avenue	Pylon is a 120-foot tall stainless steel spire sculpture designed by Isamu Noguchi. The design for the pylon was inspired by the double helix of DNA. The sculpture was commissioned by Smith, Hinchman and Grylls Associates, Inc. as a companion piece to Noguchi's Dodge Fountain which is also in Hart Plaza.
6		Abraham Lincoln Bust	sculpture/statue	1918	Gutzon Borglum	Within Hart Plaza on the northwest side of the park	The Abraham Lincoln statue is a marble bust set on a granite pedestal. It was created by world renowned sculptor Gutzon Borglum who is best known for his work on Mount Rushmore. In 1924 Ralph Herman Booth donated this sculpture to the Detroit Institute of Arts, but the sculpture remained in storage until the 1950s when it was installed outside the museum. In 1954 Marshall Fredericks redesigned the base and the sculpture was dedicated in 1956 with the help of American citizens of German ancestry through the German American Cultural Center in Detroit. After being vandalized in 1967, the sculpture was again put into storage. In a joint effort by the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Parks and Recreation Department, and the Civic Center, the sculpture was restored and relocated to Hart Plaza in 1986 and rededicated in 1987.
7		Horace E. Dodge and Son Memorial Fountain	sculpture/fountain	1978	Isamu Noguchi	Within Hart Plaza's main central plaza area	To make Hart Plaza more attractive and enjoyable, Mayor Jerome Cavanagh and Martin Hayden, editor of the Detroit News, started campaigning for donations for a prominent fountain, to which Anna Thompson Dodge of the Dodge family responded positively. The fountain is intended to honor the legacy of Horace E. Dodge, Sr. and his son for their contributions to Detroit and the auto industry. The stainless steel, 30-foot high fountain sculpture is composed of a ring suspended between two inwardly canted supports and a black granite pool directly under the ring. It was designed with 300 water jets to perform a series of 33 different spray patterns. The fountain serves as the focal point of Hart Plaza.



# MONUMENTS & MARKERS

(CONTINUED)

#	IMAGE	TITLE	TYPE	DATE	ARTIST(S)	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
8		Gateway to Freedom, International Memorial to the Underground Railroad	sculpture	2001	Ed Dwight	Within Hart Plaza on the south side of the park near the Detroit River	The work, which overlooks the Detroit River, includes a 10-by-12-foot sculptural group: eight escaping slaves and an Underground Railroad Conductor, who gazes and points towards Canada. Panels with engravings of quilt squares appear on either side of the figural group. Two gateway pillars (approx. 15 feet tall), topped with candles symbolizing the “Flame of Freedom,” flank the sculpture. The sculpture was dedicated in 2001 as part of Detroit’s centennial celebration and memorializes the estimated 45,000 slaves that passed through Detroit on their way to freedom in Canada. There is a companion piece to this statue located across the Detroit River in Windsor that depicts a former slave raising his arms to celebrate his emancipation while a Quaker woman offers assistance to a woman and her child as another child looks back toward Detroit.
9		Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac	sculpture/ statue	2001	William Kieffer, Ann Feeley	Within Hart Plaza on the east side of the park	The bronze statue is a portrait of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac depicted as he first stepped foot on the soil that would become Detroit. He wears his French soldiers uniform and holds a flag featuring the symbol of France, the fleur-de-lis, in his right hand. The sculpture was a gift from the French-American Chamber of Commerce in honor of the tricentennial of Cadillac’s arrival.
10		The Landing of Cadillac Michigan Historical Marker	marker	2001	-	Within Hart Plaza on the east side of the park	The historical marker describes the landing in July 1701 of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac and his convoy, who sailed from Montreal, and began the settlement that would become Detroit. The marker is inscribed on both sides, one in English and one in French. The marker was relocated from the river wall into Hart Plaza as part of the Riverwalk reconfiguration in 2003.
11		The Cadillac Convoy Marker	marker	2001	-	Within Hart Plaza on the east side of the park	The historical marker was erected in 2001 by The French Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan to recognize the courage, perseverance, and expertise of the French-Canadians who brought Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac to establish the first permanent settlement in Detroit in 1701. The marker lists 53 names, and states the convoy also included 50 French soldiers, a priest, Antoine Lamothe, and several others.
12		Ford Motor Company Michigan Historical Marker	marker	1978	-	Within Hart Plaza on the southwest side of the park	The Ford Motor Company historical marker shows the site where the company’s articles of incorporation were signed in 1903. Inscription: “Ford Motor Company was incorporated as an automobile manufacturer on June 16, 1903. The articles of incorporation were drawn up and signed in the office of Alexander Y. Malcolmsom, who operated a coal yard once located on this site. Henry Ford gave the company its name and designed its first product, the 1903 Model A... the Ford Motor Company has become one of the leading auto producers of the world.”
13		Detroit River Heritage Marker	marker	unknown	-	On the Detroit Riverwalk, south of Hart Plaza	Inscription: “For centuries, Native People used the Detroit River for travel, trade, and food. From 1701 to the mid-19th century, French, British, and American settlers used the River the same way. After 1870, companies that processed steel, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and manufactured ships and stoves located on the riverfront, and dumped industrial waste into it. The growing city of Detroit sent sewage into it. By 1930, pollution was a major problem. Clean-up efforts since the 1970s have restored the River. Today, the Detroit River is a recreational resource, and more greenways and habitat are being developed along its banks.”



# OBSERVATIONS

## HART PLAZA

Today, Hart Plaza continues to be a riverfront destination and venue for summer festivals, concerts, and special events. In 2020, the venue hosted ten major events and festivals from June to October. The plaza is open daily and year-round to the public and is visited by joggers, dog walkers, lunch breakers, and out-of-towners who meander through its multiple levels while enjoying excellent views of the city's central business district, the Detroit River, and public art.

The planning team performed an extensive analysis of the structural, civil, electrical, mechanical, and operational components of the existing park and plaza, and participants in community meetings and surveys provided valuable feedback about the site's existing conditions from a users' perspective. The following list summarizes key observations identified during the planning process.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Structural Components	Areas in fair or poor condition in need of repair or replacement include reinforced concrete walls, concrete columns/ beams, mass concrete structure (Pyramid), precast concrete walls, masonry walls, steel beam framing, precast concrete panels, and seawall components.
Concrete Pavement	Areas in need of repair or replacement include the area surrounding Transcending monument, the section adjacent to the drive to former Ford Auditorium, sections adjacent to the main plaza entrance, the ring around the fountain, the lower section of the amphitheater, and strips adjacent to the large stone pavers.
Stairs, Curbs, and Walls	Nearly all stairs are in very poor condition and need rehabilitation. Approx. 50% of the stone curbing is in need of repair. Most of the trench drains do not work and need to be removed and replaced. Drainage near the Gateway to Freedom sculpture needs to be fixed.
Sub-level Spaces	In general, severe damage exists throughout, resulting from water infiltration, lack of maintenance, and vandalism. All commercial kitchen equipment has been abandoned and is non-usable. Much of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing is original and outdated.
Site Access	In general, the site has accessibility challenges, including access to the Gateway to Freedom monument landing and unsafe pedestrian crossings leading to Hart Plaza across Jefferson.
Amenities	Public meeting participants suggested improvements such as turning the fountain on, better maintenance of green spaces, adding shade trees, positioning the monuments in a more intentional way, adding seating and picnic areas, more retail/restaurant/entertainment activity, and bringing back festivals.

### REFERENCE

The **Comprehensive Condition Assessment** provides a detail evaluation for the structural, civil, electrical, and mechanical components of the parks and plazas. See **Appendix A** for the full report.



Bird's eye view of Hart Plaza and Detroit River



The Dodge Fountain (currently not functioning)



Seawall was found to be in fair condition with noted deficiencies.



The mass concrete structure (Pyramid) is in poor condition and poses a safety hazard



Concrete Step with numerous concrete deficiencies at walkway locations and concrete seating location



Fire and water damage to outside masonry wall in recessed area. Significant damage to painted surfaces



Unused green space near the amphitheater



Severe horizontal cracking and significant moisture in the lower level.



Damaged air vents in the lower level



# OBSERVATIONS

## SPIRIT PLAZA

Spirit Plaza features a multitude of red and yellow picnic tables and umbrellas, a stage, recreation equipment for all ages, and phone charging stations. The recreation area features a geometric play sculpture for children. Woodward Avenue remains closed to vehicular traffic to keep the pedestrian-only plaza available for daily programming, live events, and gatherings.

The planning team performed an extensive analysis of the structural, civil, electrical, mechanical, and operational components of the existing plaza, and participants in community meetings and surveys provided valuable feedback about the site's existing conditions from a users' perspective. The following list summarizes key observations identified during the planning process.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Event Security	Event promoters explained insurance and security are challenging issues when holding events at Spirit Plaza.
Noise	Public meeting participants said noise is a concern for nearby office users and courts during business hours when there is entertainment happening at the plaza.
Jefferson Ave.	Public meeting participants described the need to improve pedestrian crossings on Jefferson Avenue to provide better access to the plaza.



Aerial view of Spirit Plaza



Planters and plastic delineator posts are placed along Jefferson Ave. to close Woodward Ave. to vehicles



Trees and planters along Jefferson Ave. block sight lines between Spirit Plaza, The Fist, and Hart Plaza



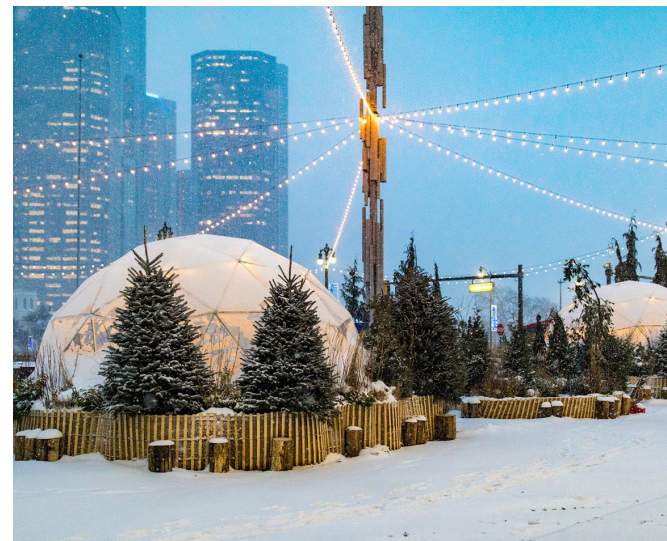
Tables and umbrellas



Play sculpture



Swings



Trees, lights, and geodesic domes during the winter



Yoga during summer



Street games during Spirit Plaza's pilot phase, 2017

### REFERENCE

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# OBSERVATIONS

## MONUMENT TO JOE LOUIS

Today the streets surrounding the median in which the Monument to Joe Louis sits remain closed to vehicular traffic through temporary means including plastic delineator posts/stanchions, concrete parking bumpers, boulders, and planters. The Woodward Avenue street closure increases the area around the monument for pedestrians from 2,000 square feet to 8,200 square feet. Despite its location amidst two major streets and challenges for pedestrians to access the site, the Monument to Joe Louis remains one of Detroit’s most iconic and photographed public places.

The planning team performed an analysis of the structural, civil, electrical, and mechanical components of the existing plaza, and participants in community meetings and surveys provided valuable feedback about the site’s existing conditions from a users’ perspective. The following list summarizes key observations identified during the planning process.

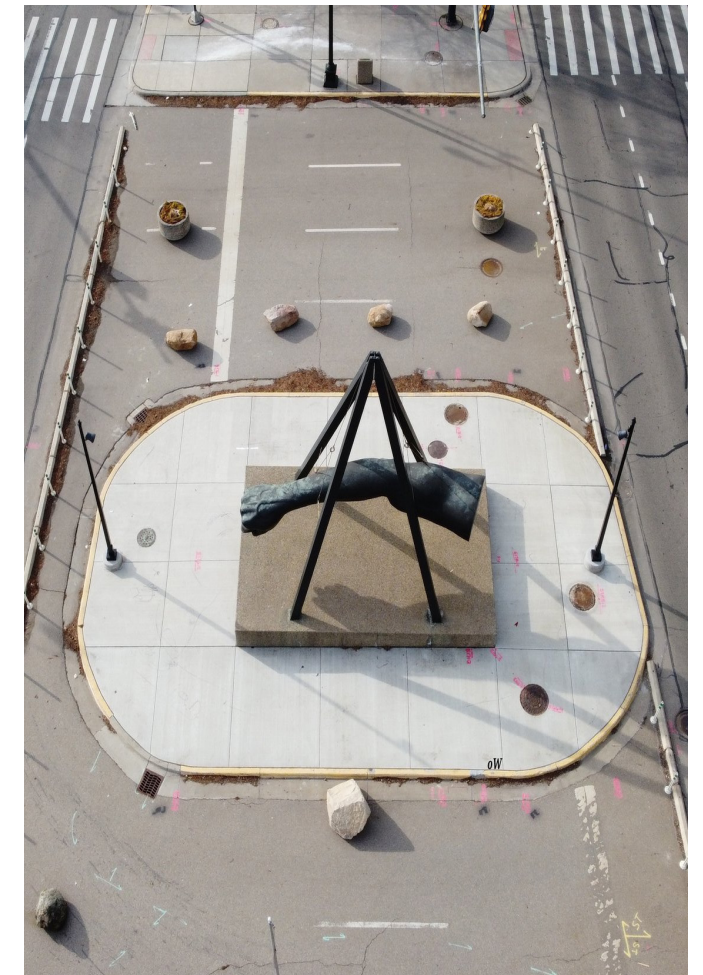
ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Access	The median on which the monument is situated is difficult to access given the busy vehicular traffic on Jefferson Ave. and its proximity to the downtown off-ramp of John C. Lodge Freeway.
Pedestrian Amenities	Public meeting participants suggested adding greenery and benches to the site to make the area more enjoyable for visitors.
Iconic Sculpture	Public meeting participants agreed they do not want the sculpture removed. Although this area does not host event activity, it is a popular destination for residents and visitors seeking to capture photographs at one of Detroit’s most popular civic symbols.



The Monument to Joe Louis at Jefferson Ave. and Woodward Ave., looking north



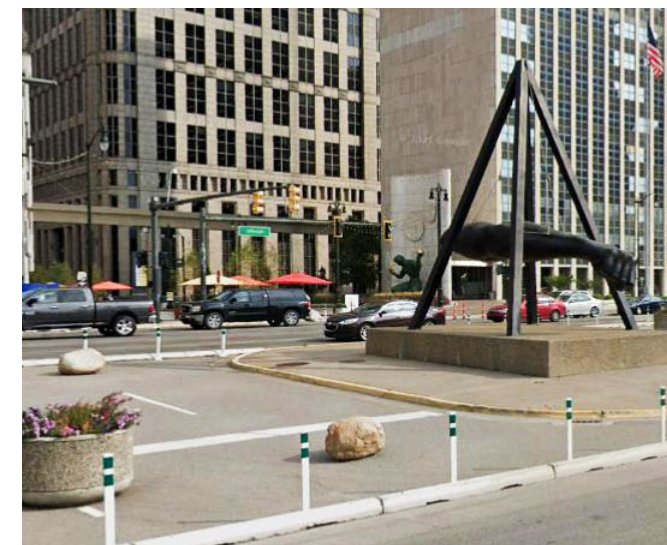
Street conditions prior to 2017 when the median was open to vehicular traffic



Current street conditions along Jefferson Avenue and within the closed median include concrete curbs, temporary bollards, planters, and boulders



Title and inscription on the back of the arm



Temporary street closure measures around the monument

### REFERENCE

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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HART PLAZA

As part of the planning process for the Hart Plaza, the City of Detroit and the planning team hosted a series of public engagement events that allowed residents, park users, and community leaders to review the opportunities and challenges of the sites and collectively propose ideas and recommendations to improve them in the future.

The following list summarizes key takeaways identified during the community engagements

### What do you love about this place?

- The fountain (but turn the fountain back on!)
- The view
- The location
- Quality/types of festivals and events

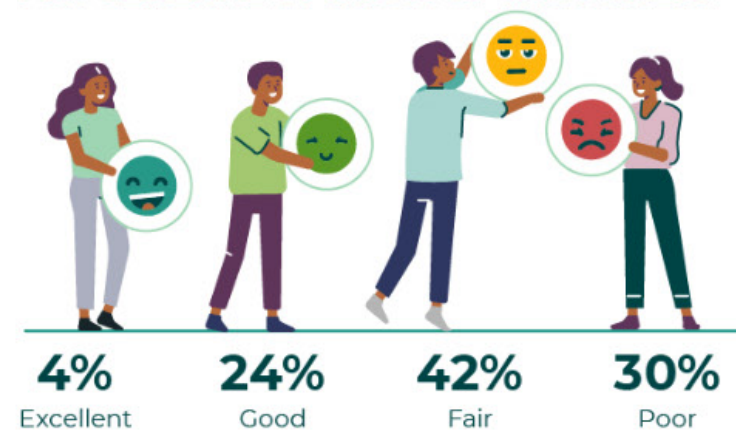
### What could be better?

- Better maintenance and addition / improvement of green spaces.
- Position the monuments in a “more intentional” way.
- Love the festivals, but activate/beautify for everyday use.
- Better bathroom facilities.

### Accessing the site:

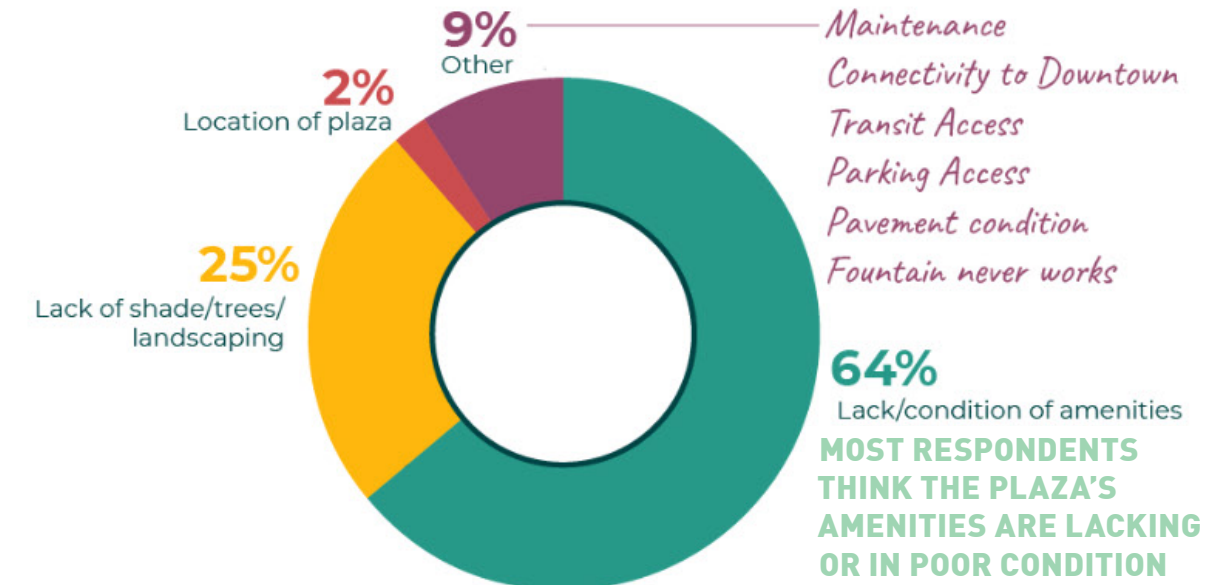
- Safer access from Spirit Plaza.
- Boaters listen from the water but have no docking access.
- More parking is needed for people working the events.

## WHAT IS YOUR GENERAL OPINION OF THE PLAZA?

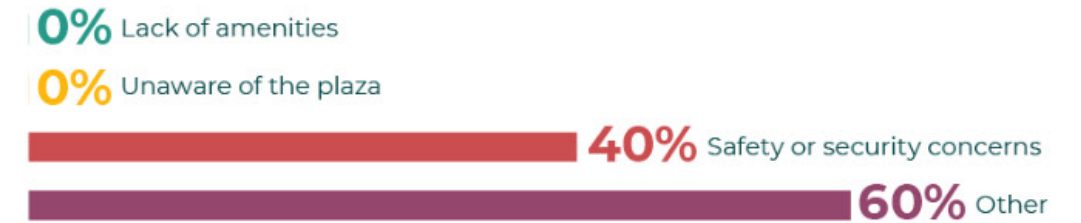


IT SHOULDN'T BE VACANT SPACE WHEN THERE ARE NO FESTIVALS. IT SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES ALL YEAR.

## WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

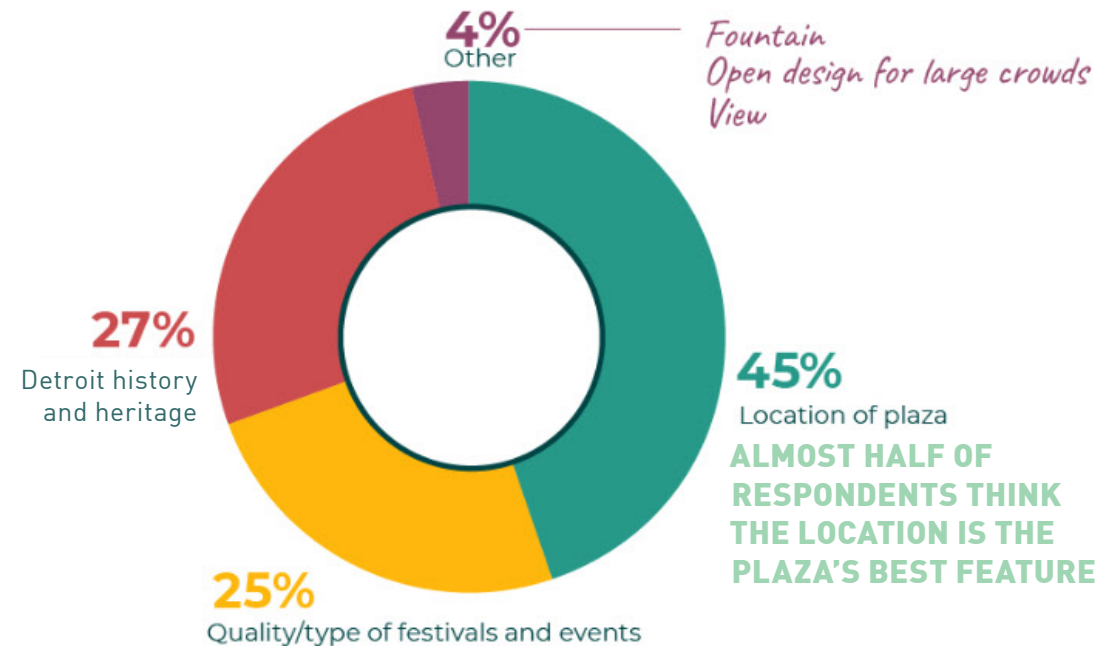


## IF YOU HAVE NOT VISITED HART PLAZA, WHY NOT?



*ALL OF THE ABOVE LOOKS RUN DOWN. NEEDS NEW CONSTRUCTIONS.*

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FEATURE OF THE PLAZA?



IT'S BEEN A BARREN MOONSCAPE WITH A MASSIVE NON-WORKING FOUNTAIN SINCE IT WAS CREATED... MOST OF THE PAVERS ARE BROKEN. THE LACK OF SHADE TREES AND LANDSCAPING MAKES IT VERY UNATTRACTIVE.

### REFERENCE

Participants at community meetings and in surveys provided feedback and about the plaza, parks and event facilities. See **Appendix B** for a summary of each **Community Engagement**.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## SPIRIT PLAZA AND MONUMENT TO JOE LOUIS

As part of the planning process for the Spirit Plaza and Monument to Joe Louis, the City of Detroit and the planning team hosted a series of public engagement events that allowed residents, park users, and community leaders to review the opportunities and challenges of the sites and collectively propose ideas and recommendations to improve them in the future.

The following list summarizes key takeaways identified during the community engagements

### SPIRIT PLAZA

#### What do you love about this place?

- The Spirit of Detroit Statue
- The central location

#### What could be better?

- Still feels like a temporary space.
- Respondents would like to see more consistent programming and family-friendly infrastructure.
- Lack of greening.
- Appreciation for the food trucks and local vendors, but sometimes that leads to a perception that you needed to buy something to use the plaza.

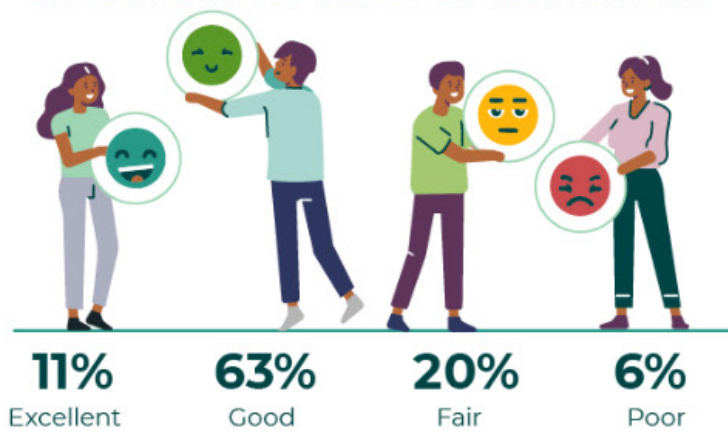
#### Accessing the site: via car, walking, biking, QLine.

- Most walk or bike there, drivers park in underground garage.
- Many survey comments wondered if returning access to Woodward could be considered.

### MONUMENT TO JOE LOUIS:

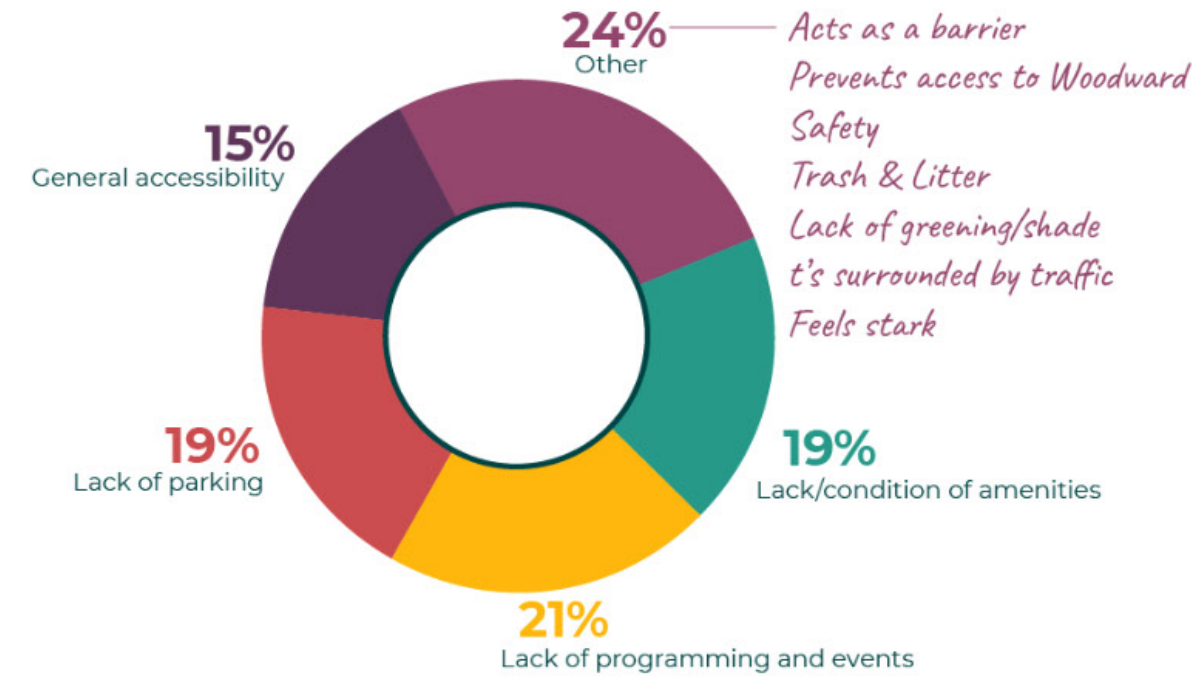
- Mostly did not want the sculpture moved.
- Strongly recommended access improvements across Jefferson.
- Wanted better maintenance of the area, added greenery and benches.

### WHAT IS YOUR GENERAL OPINION OF THE PLAZA?

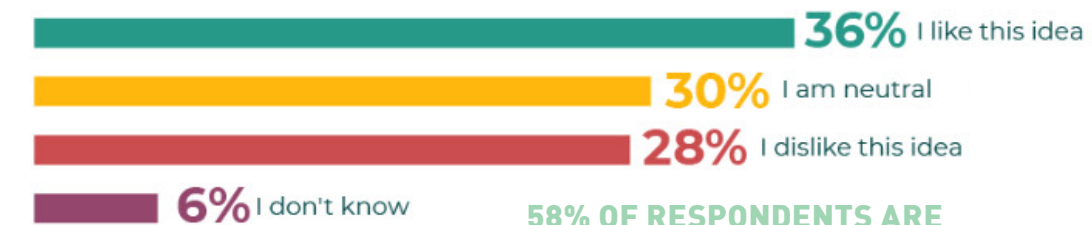


**LOOKS TEMPORARY. IF IT KEEPS BEING USED, RIP UP THE PAVEMENT AND MAKE IT A TRUE PARK. IF IT NOT USED ENOUGH, REMOVE IT. I MISS BEING ABLE TO TAKE WOODWARD ALL THE WAY TO JEFFERSON.**

### WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

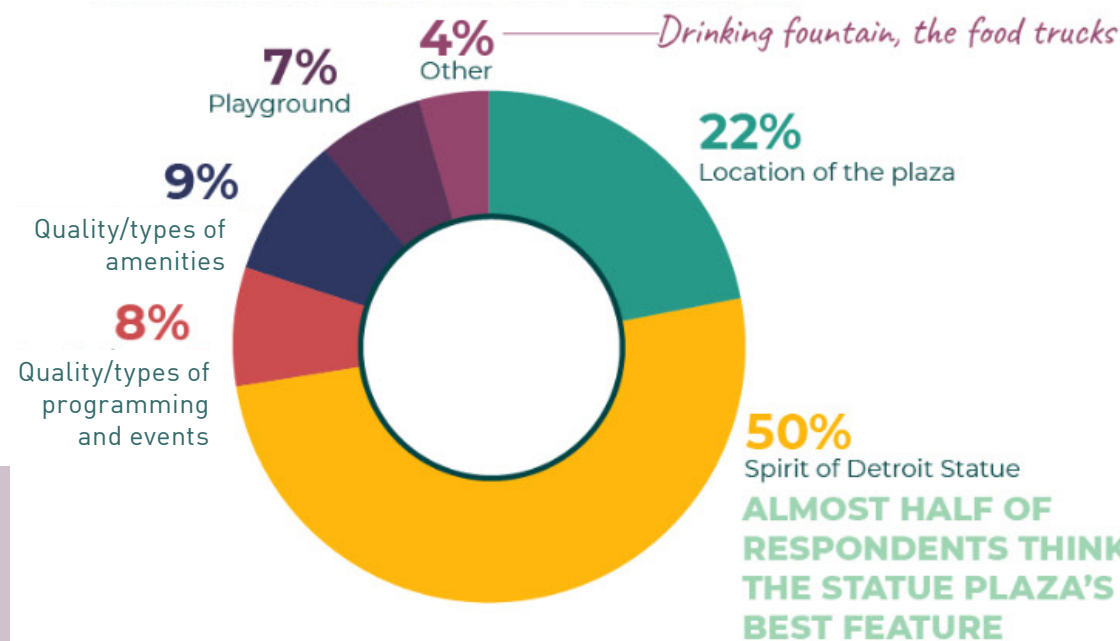


### HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT RELOCATION THE JOE LOUIS FIST?



**58% OF RESPONDENTS ARE NEUTRAL OR DISLIKE THE IDEA OF RELOCATING THE MONUMENT**

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FEATURE OF THE PLAZA?



**IT'S A GREAT START! BUT IT NEEDS TO BE BETTER CONNECTED TO HART PLAZA. SHOULD SERVE AS A GATEWAY TO THE PLAZA. ALSO NEEDS TO BE PEDESTRIANIZED MORE.**

### REFERENCE

Participants at community meetings and in surveys provided feedback and about the plaza, parks and event facilities. See **Appendix B** for a summary of each **Community Engagement**.



# GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## HART PLAZA

The following goals and objectives for Hart Plaza were identified and refined by stakeholder groups and the design team:

### GOAL #1 ENHANCE PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

**BE THE CIVIC HEART OF THE CITY**  
Welcoming, easy-to-navigate, and accessible public spaces.



### GOAL #2 REINVIGORATE THE PLAZA

**SERVE AS A GREAT RIVERFRONT PUBLIC SPACE IN DOWNTOWN DETROIT**  
Improve infrastructure, programming, and accessibility.



### GOAL #3 PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN HISTORY

**CELEBRATE DETROIT'S CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RELEVANCE**  
Preserve and steward the cultural monuments that memorialize Detroit's history



### GOAL #4 IMPROVE EVENT MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

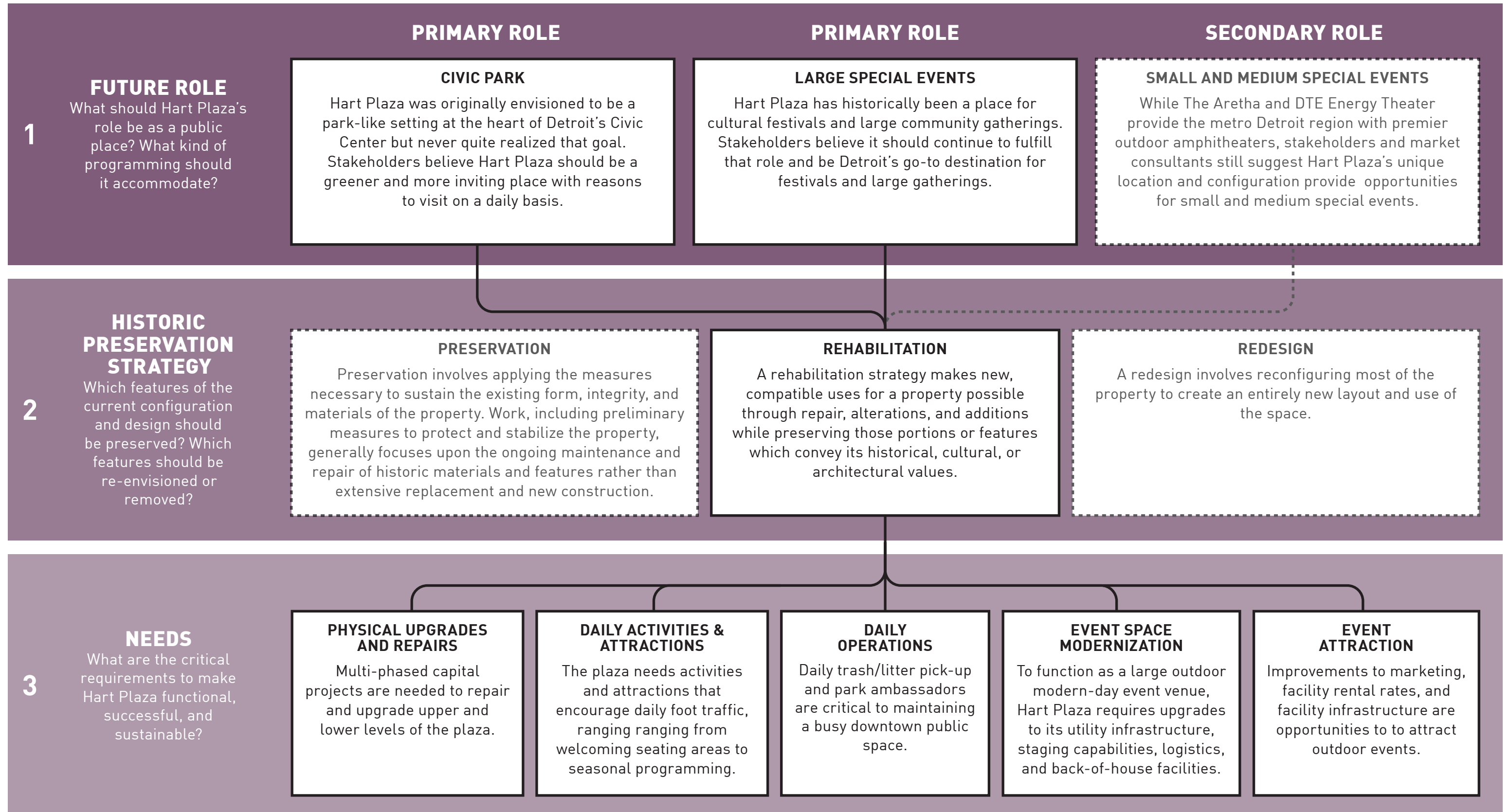
**BE HOME TO FLAGSHIP MUSIC AND OUTDOOR EVENTS FOR THE REGION**  
Visitor enjoyment, production staff efficiencies, and increased event attraction opportunities.





# VISIONING GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## HART PLAZA





## DESIGN APPROACH

### CIVIC CENTER

Throughout the planning process, the planning team and community feedback exchanged ideas and recommendations for the Civic Center's future. The following list summarizes key opportunities for improvement that came up repeatedly in discussions and were generally agreed upon by all stakeholders.

#### HART PLAZA

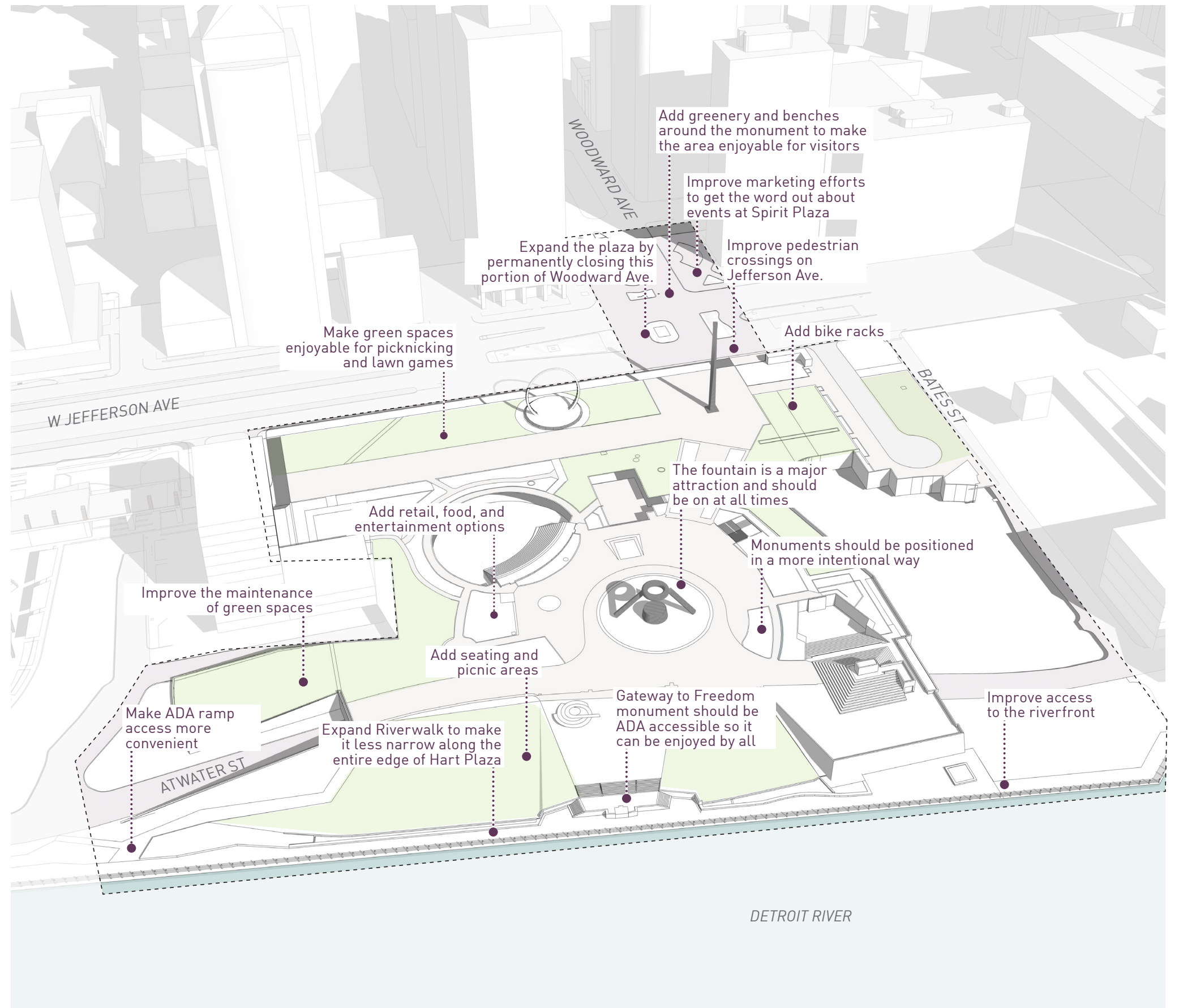
- **Make physical upgrades and repairs** to the plaza's upper and lower levels to ensure safety and functionality.
- **Provide places to sit and attractions** that lead to daily use.
- **Be an attractive event venue** by modernizing technology infrastructure, staging and loading, green rooms, and events operations and management.
- **Preserve elements of Hart Plaza that are essential to Noguchi's original design** by restoring many of the historic and well-utilized features of the plaza (such as the amphitheater, pyramid stage, and Dodge Fountain).
- **Improve main entrances** from Jefferson Ave. and the Riverwalk.
- **Increase green spaces** that invite picnicking, playing, and relaxing.
- **Provide public amenities** such as restrooms and concessions.
- **Generate more revenue** by making improvements to marketing and sales efforts, facility rental rates, and facility infrastructure.

#### SPIRIT PLAZA

- **Monitor and adjust programming** based on user interests.
- **Improve the design** and connect Spirit Plaza to Hart Plaza through an improved pedestrian crossing experience.

#### MONUMENT TO JOE LOUIS

- **Formalize the temporary Joe Louis median plaza** to expand space for pedestrians to enjoy the monument.
- **Introduce landscaping and seating** around the monument.
- **Install special paving** in the Jefferson Ave. right-of-way that physically and visually connects the site to Hart Plaza and Spirit Plaza.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



# VISION CIVIC CENTER

The diagram illustrates a proposed program and key circulation routes for Civic Center. The conceptual vision provides a future framework for planning, design, and implementation.

## PROGRAM

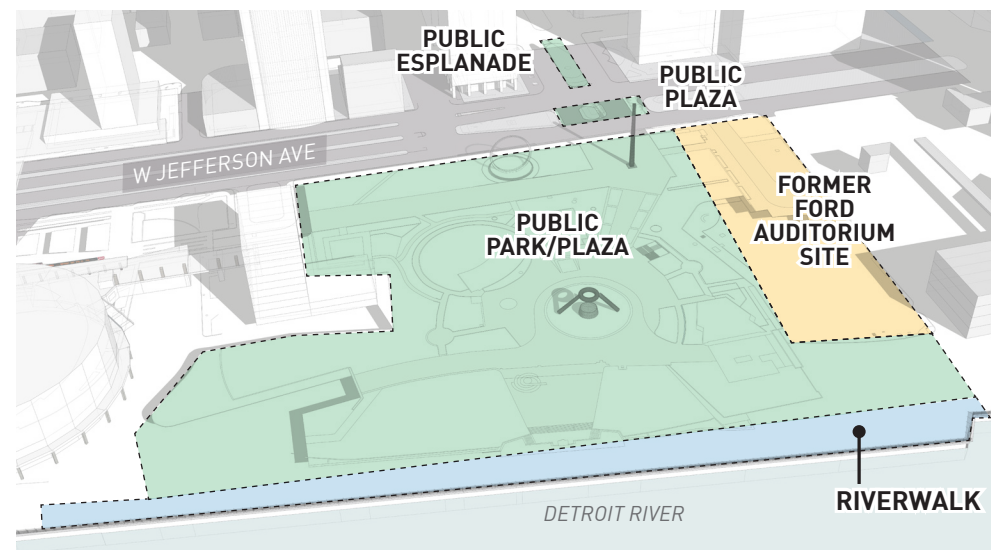
- PASSIVE LANDSCAPE
- ACTIVE LANDSCAPE (RIVERWALK)
- WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES
- PLAZA SPACE
- COMFORT STATION/CONCESSIONS

## CIRCULATION

- SUB-GRADE PUBLIC ACCESS
- VEHICULAR/MULTI-MODAL STREETS
- MAIN ENTRANCES

## REFERENCE

For detailed site diagrams that informed the urban design approach - see **Appendix C for Site Analysis Diagrams** for full information.



ACCESS ZONES



PROPOSED PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION & CIRCULATION



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RIVERFRONT CONDITIONS

The Detroit Riverwalk and the Gateway to Freedom monument are two of Hart Plaza's most popular and yet hard-to-access assets. The two options illustrate alternatives to improve access.

In both options, a new, large stairway provides a more direct connection between the plaza and riverfront, offering views, places to sit, and signifying a grand entrance from the riverfront to the plaza and towards downtown. The area around the Gateway to Freedom monument aims to be accessible to all and to allow visitors the opportunity to observe and interact with the monument. Currently the monument is not ADA accessible and cannot be fully appreciated it.

#### OPTION 1: WIDE FLANKING STAIRS

Advantages of this option include:

- New ADA access to middle landing is provided closer to the river.
- The monument remains in its original location.
- Two stair zones created for enjoyment of the river.

Disadvantages of this option may include:

- Some rework to the monument, such as plaques and granite podium, may be needed to accommodate the reconfigured stair.
- Existing pinch point at the Riverwalk remains, causing pedestrian conflict between Riverwalk users and patrons observing the monument.
- The bifurcated stair, pinched Riverwalk, and obstructed views from the riverwalk toward the plaza make it a less compelling gateway to Hart Plaza.

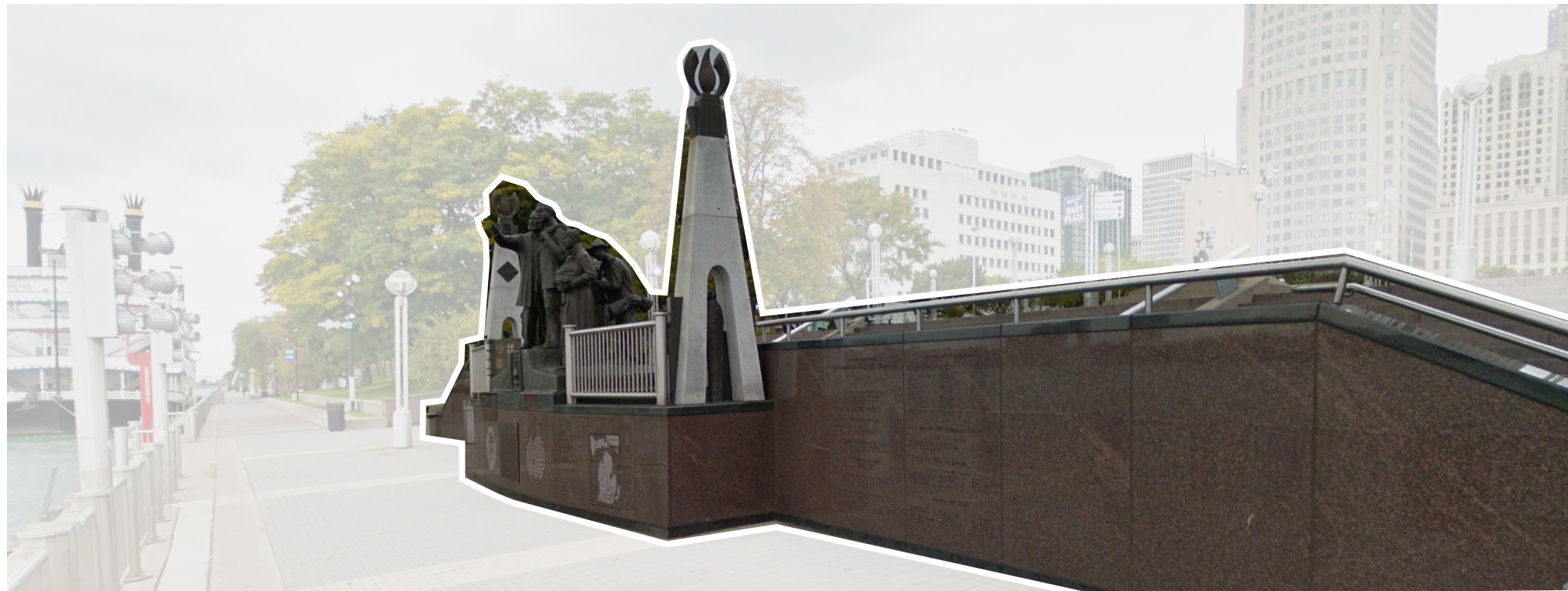
#### OPTION 2: GRAND STAIR

Advantages of this option include:

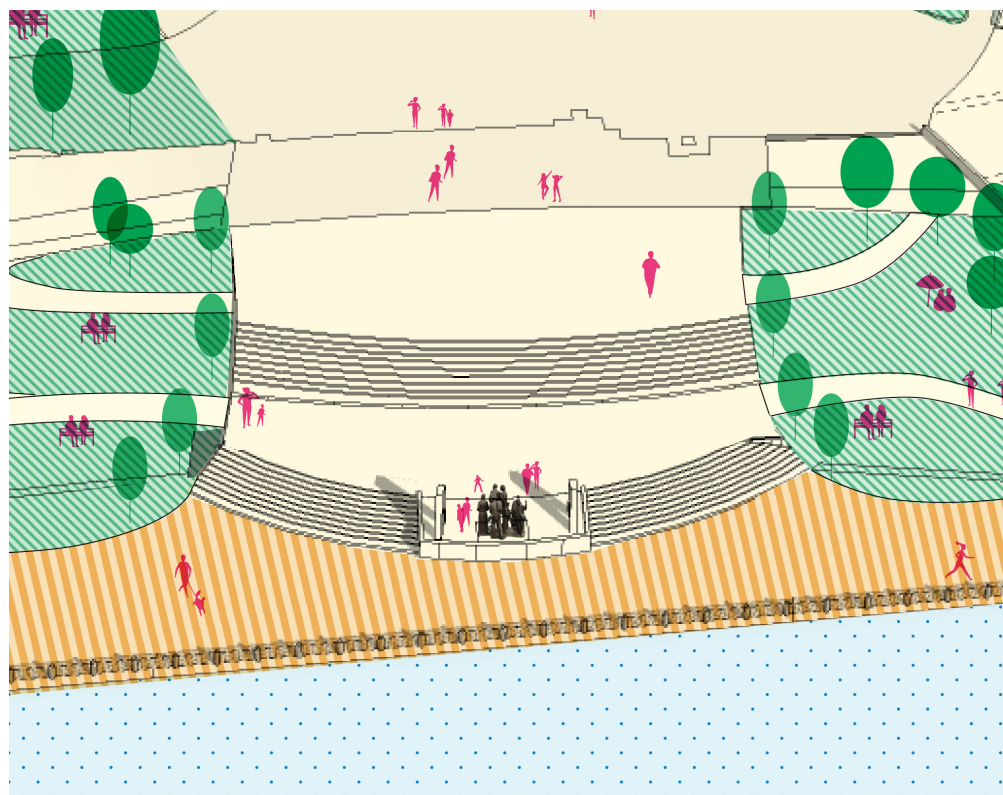
- An expanded Riverwalk relieves the current pinch point and allows for a wider Riverwalk; provides more space for gathering, events, and general use; and offers more direct views and access between the plaza and the riverfront.
- The higher elevation of the monument gives it prominence.
- The monument is more accessible from the plaza and has more space around it to gather and contemplate.

Disadvantages of this option may include:

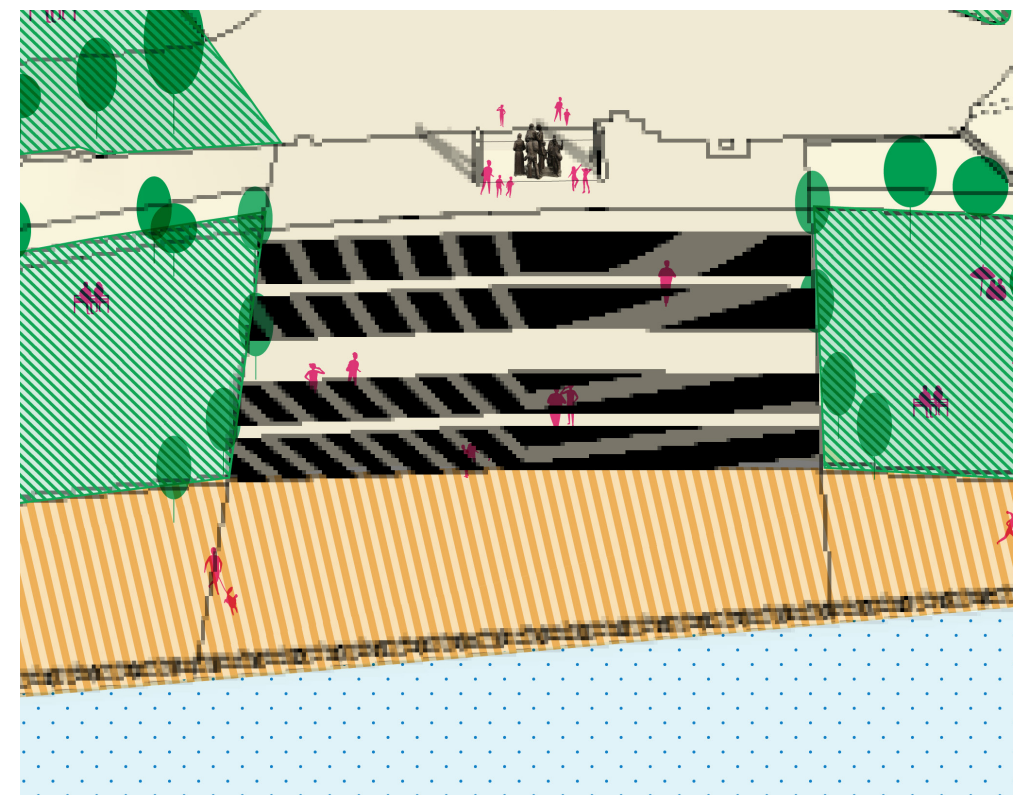
- The monument would shift from original location.
- Some rework to the monument, such as plaques and granite podium, would be needed as part of the monument shifting.



EXISTING RIVERWALK AND THE GATEWAY TO FREEDOM MONUMENT



OPTION 1: WIDE FLANKING STAIRS



OPTION 2: GRAND STAIR



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### WOODWARD CROSSINGS

Woodward Avenue is as iconic in Detroit as many of its monuments. The avenue, which runs 27 miles from Detroit to Pontiac, ends at Larned St. for vehicular circulation, becomes a pedestrian space at Spirit Plaza and connects the Joe Louis Fist and Hart Plaza, crossing Jefferson Ave. The spaces created as a result of each condition are unique and require thoughtful design solutions.

#### 1. Focus on pedestrian safety on Jefferson Ave.

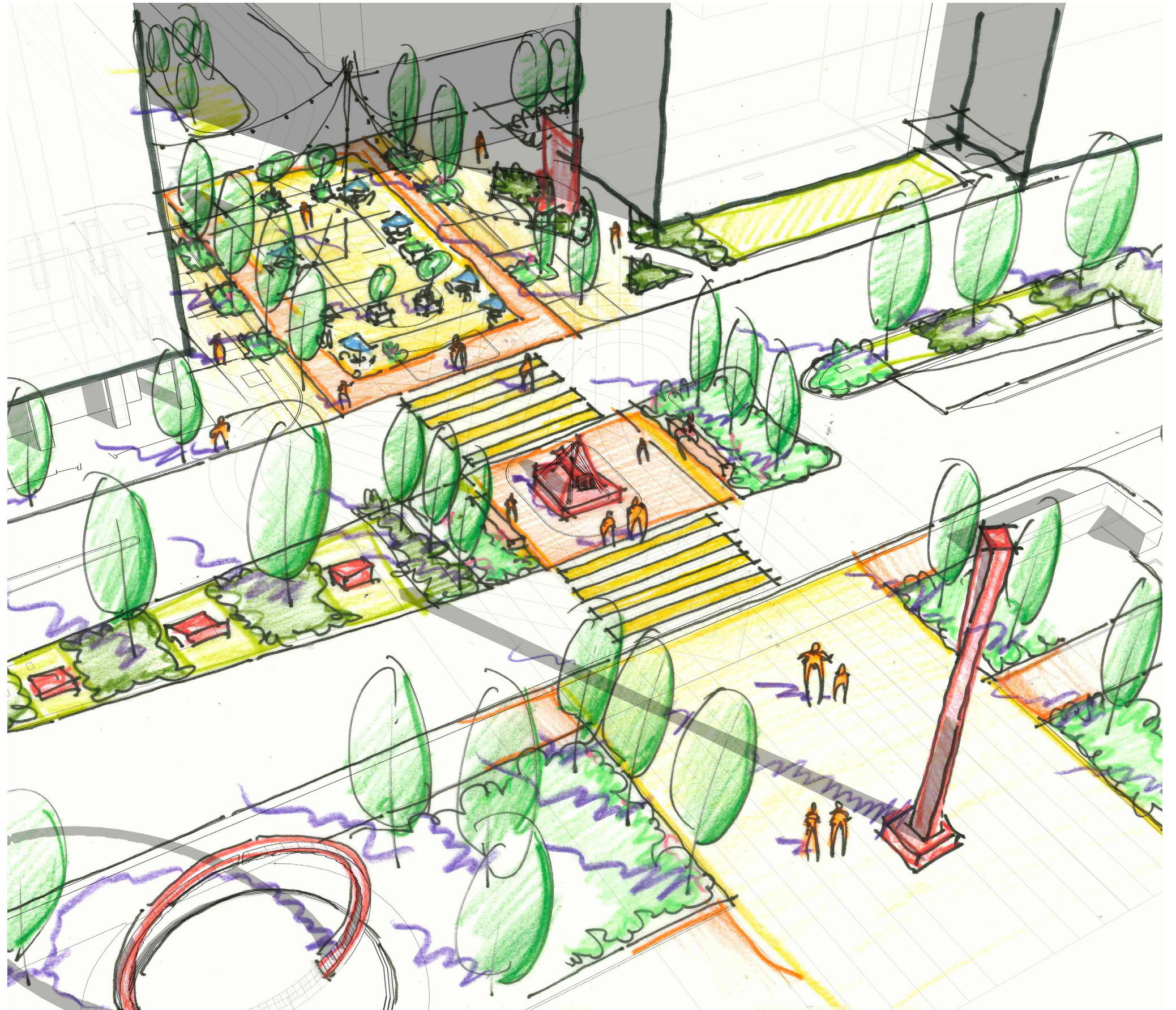
Improve the connectivity of these important civic center assets by improving the safety and comfort of the pedestrian crossing across Jefferson Ave. Design an improved pedestrian median / refuge at the Joe Louis Fist and create a safer connection for pedestrians to cross Jefferson Avenue to connect to Hart Plaza and the Riverwalk.

#### 2. Consider the broader connection to downtown public spaces

Design each space to complement and support each other. Resolve the Woodward Avenue terminus for all users with a priority on safety and retaining historic view sheds to Hart Plaza.

#### 3. Connect pedestrians to Hart Plaza and focus circulation towards the river and downtown

Jefferson Crossing at Woodward is one of the major entry points for downtown visitors to the riverfront. Likewise, river walk visitors will make their way to the broader downtown at this crossing. Thoughtfully select paving materials and use landscaping to direct circulation.



CONCEPTUAL IDEAS FOR CONNECTING THE THREE CIVIC CENTER ASSETS AT JEFFERSON AVENUE



# RECOMMENDATIONS

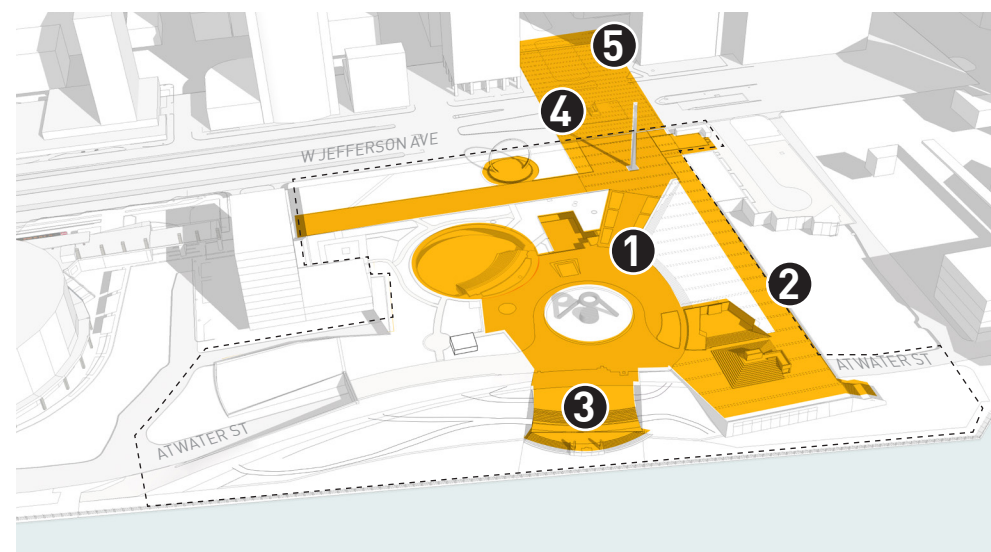
## HARDSCAPE

Hardscapes in the Civic Center are paved areas recommended to serve various purposes including daily foot traffic and vehicle circulation (loading/unloading), which is especially important for large events. Hardscapes comprise the pathways, promenades, and stairways getting people to and from different destinations within the plaza while being destinations in and of themselves. These zones also serve as observation areas around several large monuments and provide the stages and seating for the park's amphitheatres.

Hardscape materials throughout the plaza — stone, pavers, concrete, gravel, wood — should be chosen carefully to accommodate the intensity of traffic/wear-and-tear of an area, maintenance requirements, and materials should all work together to complement the plaza's overall style. If possible and where appropriate, permeable materials should be chosen to help with stormwater drainage.

The images at right illustrate the following hardscape environments:

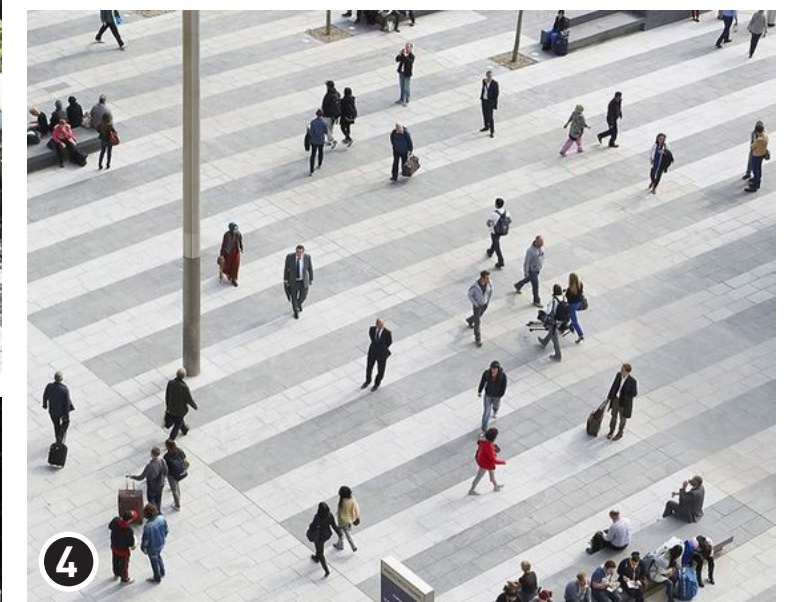
1. Main plaza at Hart Plaza
2. Woodward Promenade at Hart Plaza
3. Grand Stair at Hart Plaza
4. Joe Louis Plaza
5. Spirit of Detroit Plaza



PLAZA ZONES



PRECEDENT IMAGERY





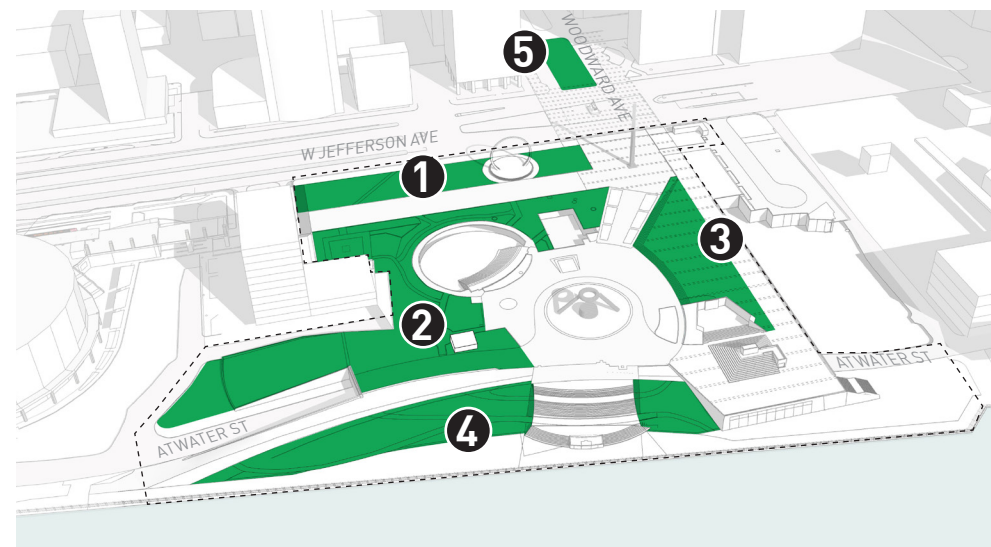
# RECOMMENDATIONS

## PASSIVE LANDSCAPE

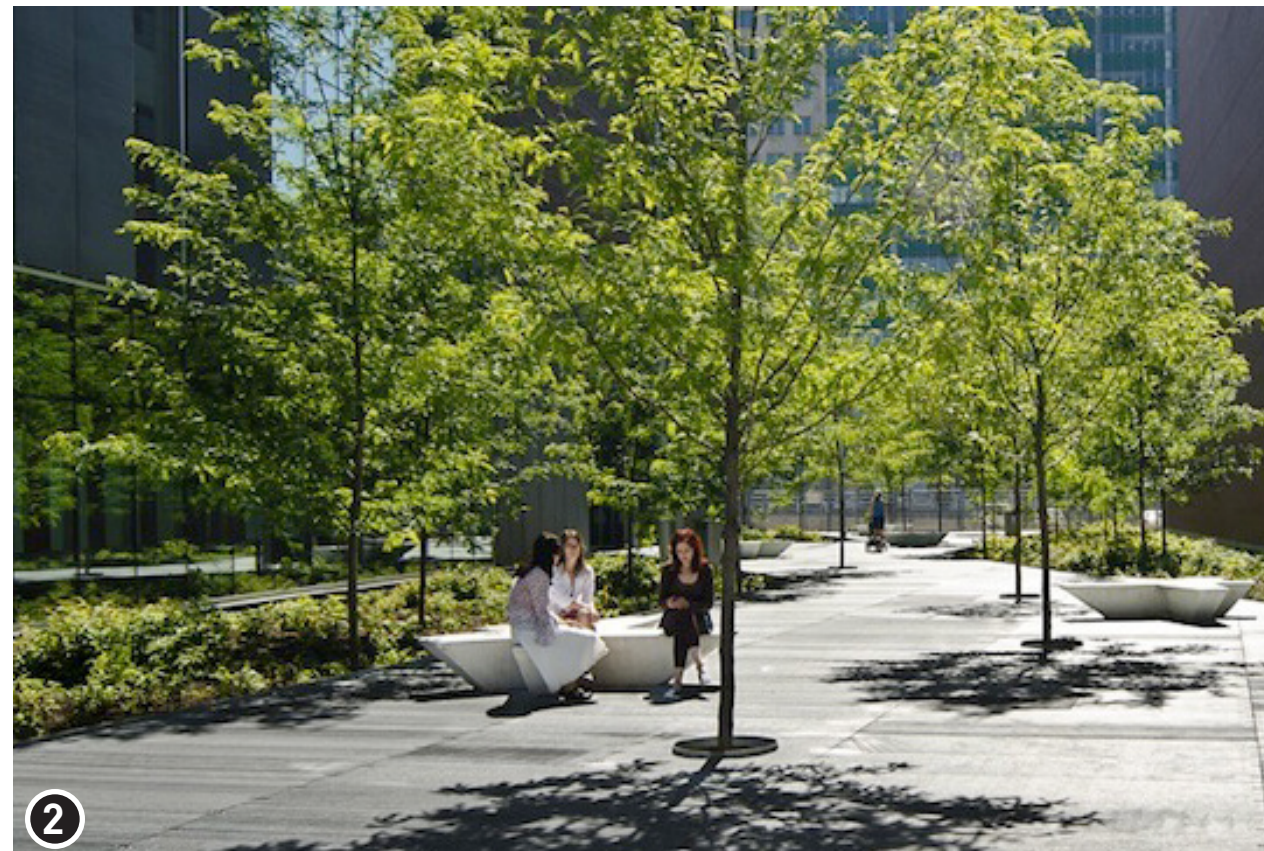
Passive landscapes in the Civic Center area are envisioned to be green places of grassy lawns, gardens, plantings and shade trees, walking paths, nature and habitat, and seating and picnic areas with views of the river.

The images illustrate the following green landscape environments:

1. Picnic lawn
2. Sculpture gardens where visitors can walk along meandering paths dotted with many of the site's monuments and markers
3. Gathering grove with shade trees
4. River terrace
5. Woodward Esplanade extension



PASSIVE LANDSCAPE ZONES



PRECEDENT IMAGERY





# RECOMMENDATIONS

## ACTIVE LANDSCAPE

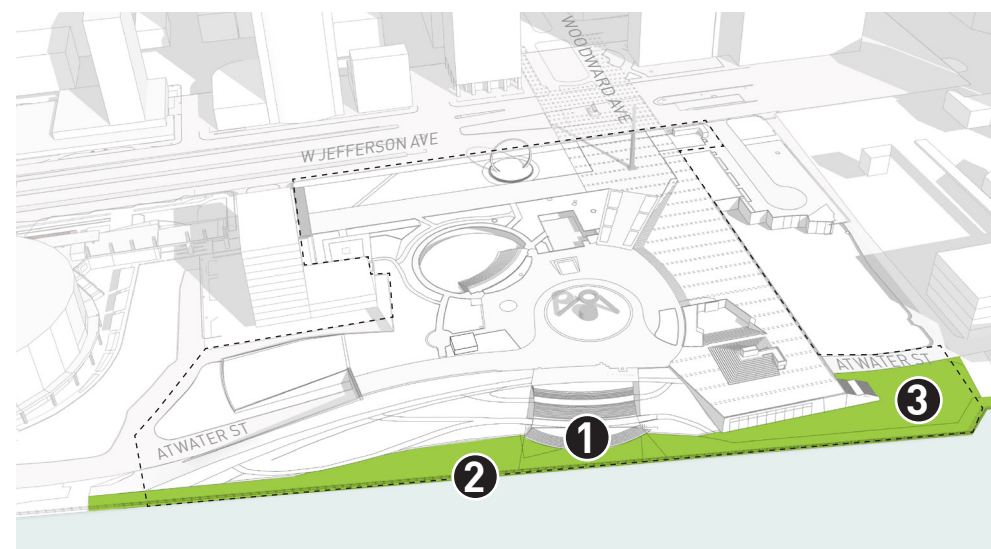
An active landscape at the riverfront edge of Hart Plaza is essential and would add vitality to this portion of the Detroit Riverwalk. Providing wide pathways for walking, jogging and bicycling should be maintained and enhanced. An active stair and terracing will serve as the front entrance to Hart Plaza / Downtown from the riverfront.

The images illustrate the following active landscape environments:

1. Riverwalk where it meets the proposed Grand Stair entrance to the plaza
2. Expanded Riverwalk to allow seating alongside the greenway
3. Riverwalk where it meets the proposed Promenade Stair entrance to the plaza



1



ACTIVE LANDSCAPE ZONES



2

PRECEDENT IMAGERY



3



## RECOMMENDATIONS

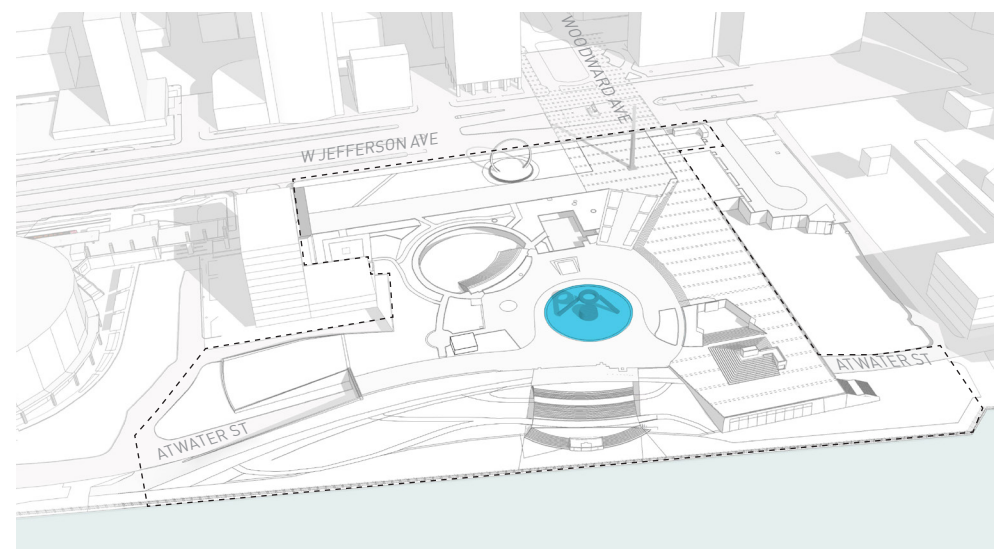
### WATER-BASED ACTIVITY

Water-based activities in the Civic Center are envisioned to take place around the Dodge Fountain, the centerpiece of Hart Plaza. The fountain attracts people, offers a playscape, creates a place to gather around, provides a natural element within a dense urban landscape, and can have a calming effect.

The Noguchi-designed Dodge Fountain is capable of creating different water configurations through its 300 jets and lights and is frequently cited as Hart Plaza's most popular feature.

The images at right illustrate the following water-based activity environments:

1. Tables and chairs positioned around the fountain
2. Playing at the base of the fountain
3. Water jets and lights



WATER-BASED ACTIVITY ZONES

PRECEDENT IMAGERY



## RECOMMENDATIONS BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

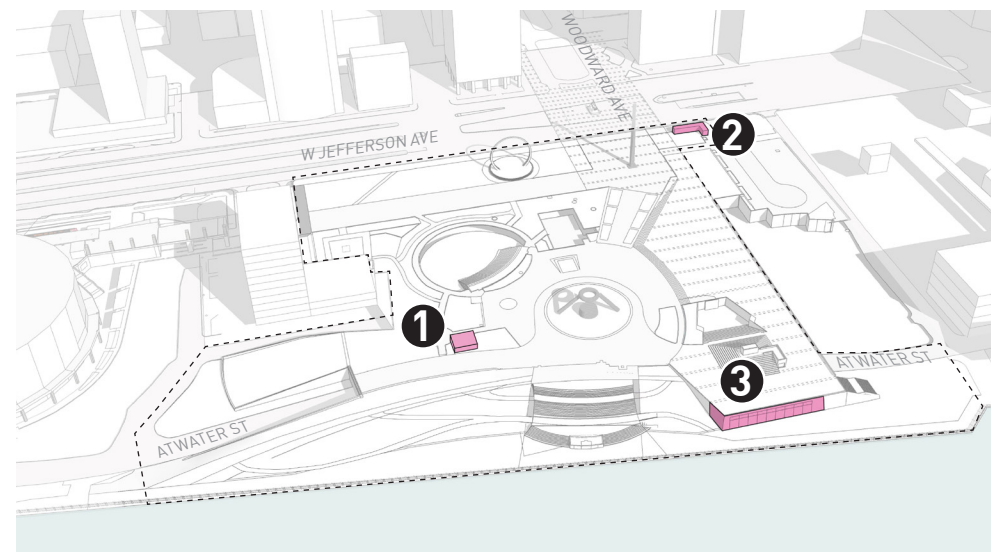
Buildings and structures at Hart Plaza are needed to support event goers, park users, and venue and event management with restrooms, shade and shelter, recreational amenities, and back-of-house facilities.

This plan envisions upgrades to existing buildings including the pedestrian access to sub-grade parking and the area below the plaza level adjacent to the riverwalk.

A potential new structure might include a Comfort Station set within the park that provides restrooms, concessions, and/or visitor information.

The images at right illustrate the following buildings and structures:

1. Comfort Station
2. Renovated access building at Jefferson Ave. entrance
3. Renovated sub-plaza level adjacent to Riverwalk



BUILDING & STRUCTURES

PRECEDENT IMAGERY



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## EVENT LOADING, PARKING AND STAGING

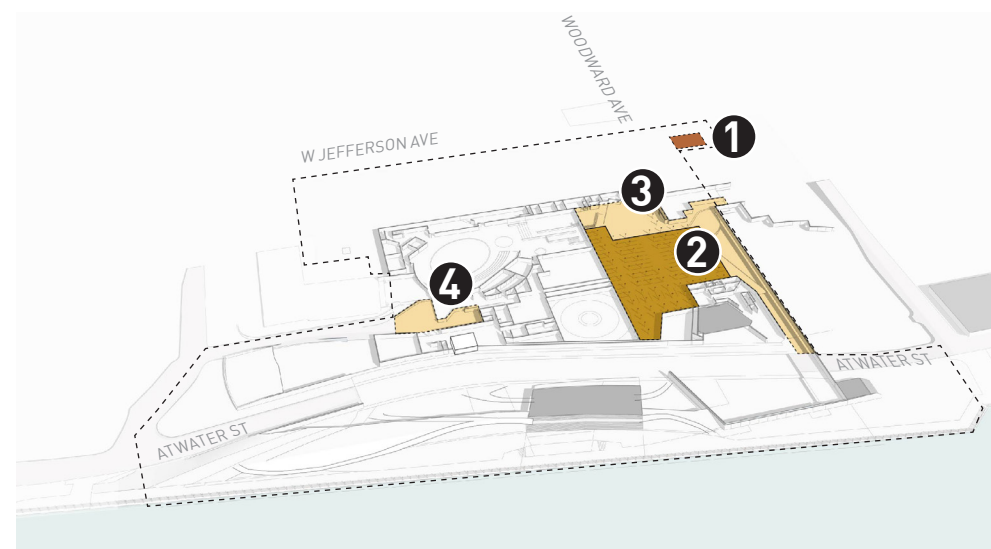
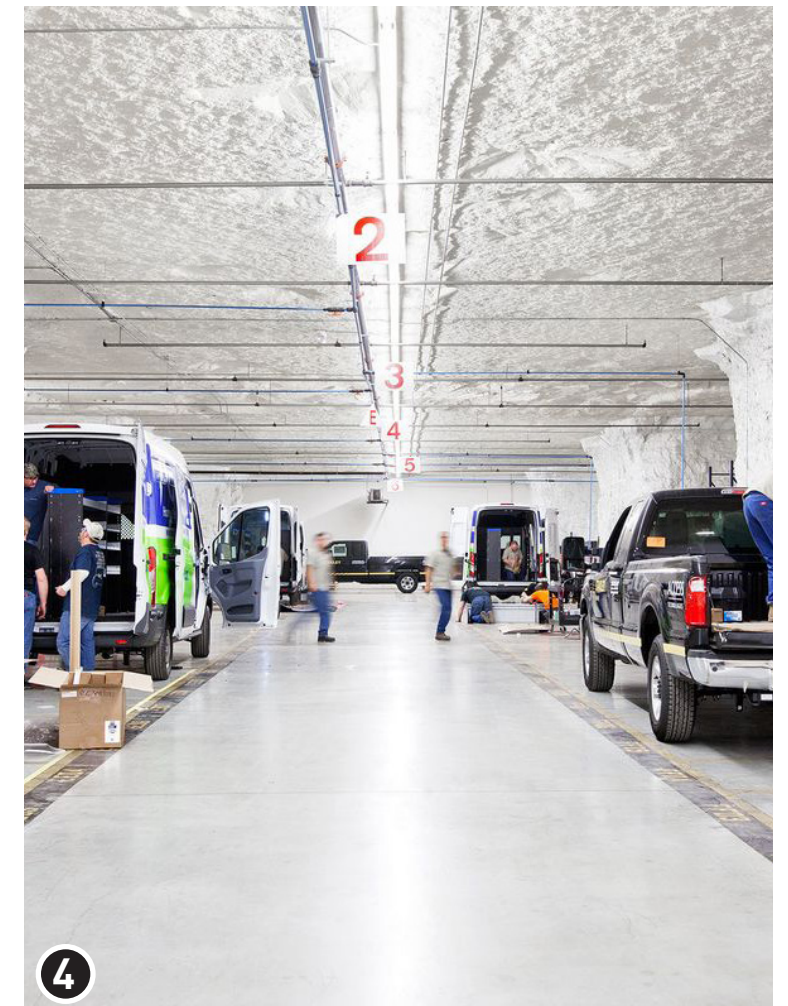
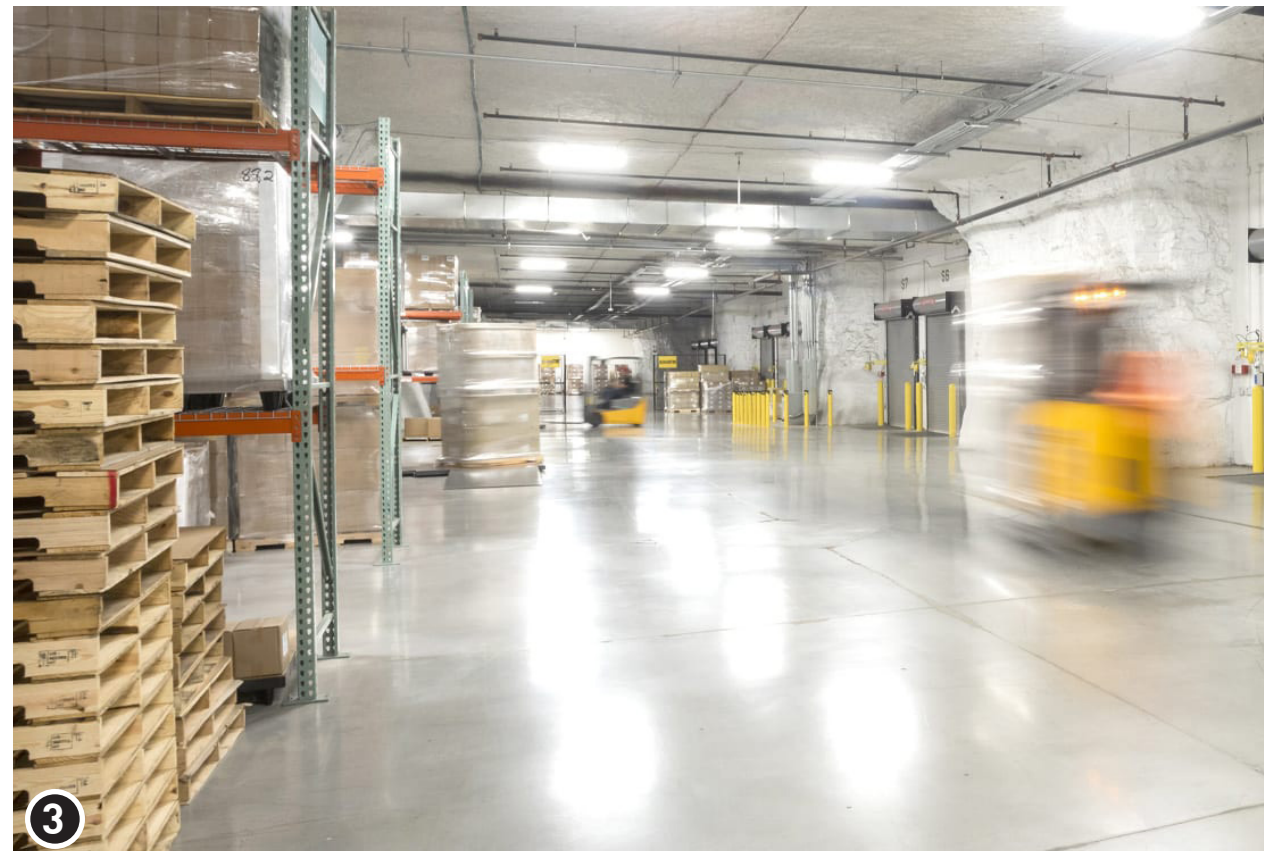
The existing below-grade area under Hart Plaza currently provides circulation and staging for trucks and other service vehicles as well as storage, utilities, a food court, offices, restrooms, and green rooms. Today, many of these areas are underutilized, not in use, or in need of significant renovation which provides the opportunity to reimagine how the sub-grade space can better serve current needs for the Civic Center.

This plan envisions reorganizing and renovating the sub-grade structure to better facilitate circulation and staging for trucks and other service vehicles catering to events. It also provides a new parking area which could be used for event vehicles, staff and volunteer parking, and other authorized vehicles as needed.

Additionally, this plan envisions a bicycle center at the main entrance to Hart Plaza on Jefferson Avenue where visitors to the Civic Center can park and repair their bikes and/or rent bikes.

The images at right illustrate the following parking, staging, and circulation environments:

1. Street-level bicycle parking/rental
2. Sub-grade parking
3. Sub-grade service vehicle staging
4. Sub-grade service vehicle loading



PARKING & STAGING ZONES (SUB-GRADE AREA)

PRECEDENT IMAGERY



## RECOMMENDATIONS OUTDOOR EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Because events vary from one another in many ways (e.g. duration of event, attendance size, utility needs, sponsorships, etc.), the current and future needs of promoters and producers at Hart Plaza also vary; however, there are some fundamental event-related features that are needed and/or desired by all parties to successfully operate an event in keeping with today's entertainment standards.

Currently, the City of Detroit - General Services Department is the lead department overseeing the operations and management of Hart Plaza. All major events are produced by independent event producers that pay a fee to use the space.

As physical improvements take place at Hart Plaza, so should improvements to the maintenance, management, and operations. A key recommendation is to make available separate spaces for activation. This will make Hart Plaza more attractive to events of various sizes. To accomplish this, a robust management and maintenance program must be in place, ideally one in which there is a dedicated team whose entire responsibility is to maintain and operate Hart Plaza. Thoughtful coordination will need to take place to fence off event areas.

The proposed event spaces are as follows:

### PRIMARY STAGE AREAS

- Main Stage / Main Amphitheater
- Pyramid Amphitheater

### SECONDARY STAGE AREAS

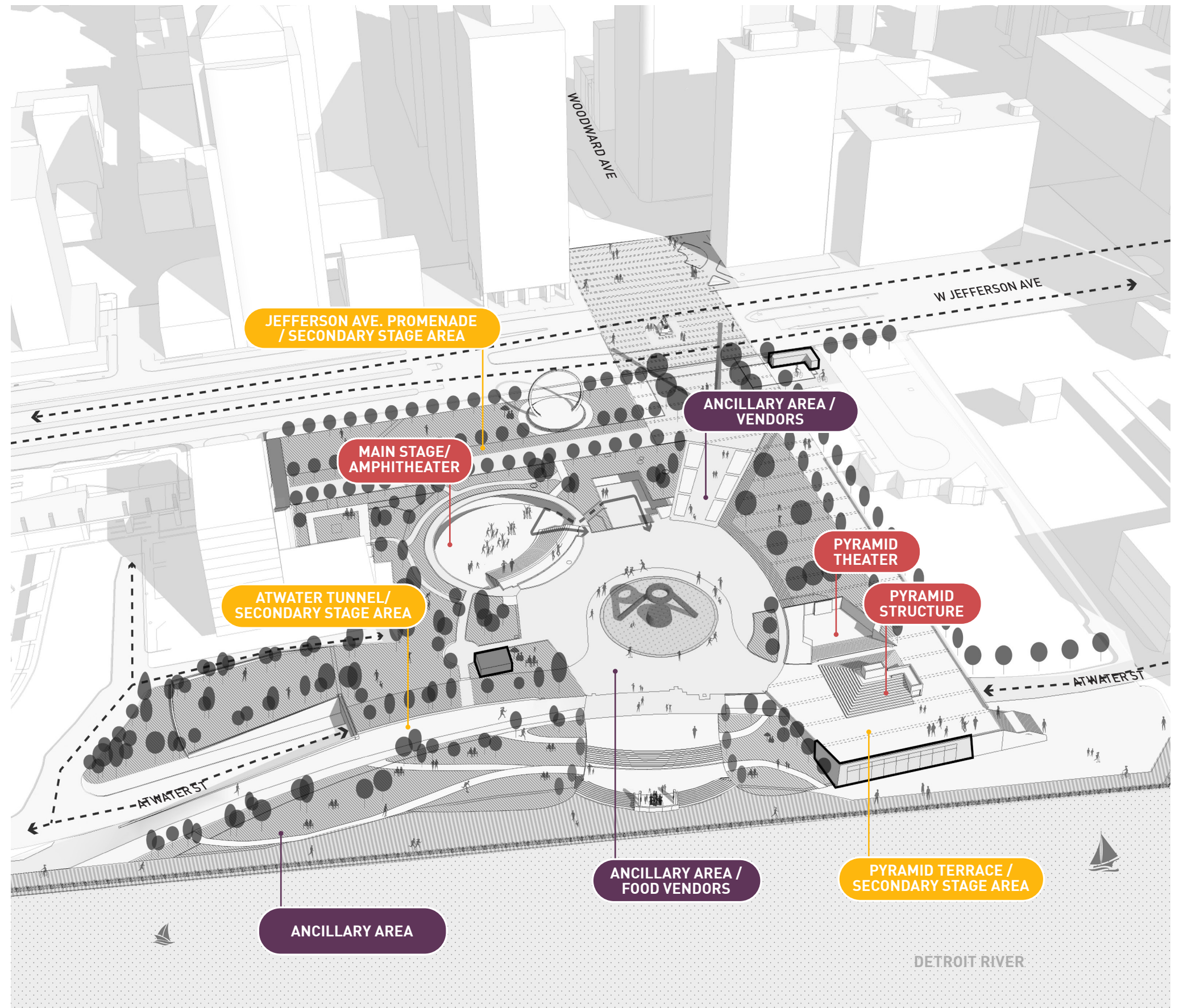
- Pyramid Terrace
- West side of Atwater Street tunnel
- Promenade parallel to Jefferson Ave.

### UPPER LEVEL ANCILLARY AREAS

- Promenades designed for retail and food vending
- Spaces allocated for lounging

NOTE:

\*All proposed demolition and construction may require coordination with HDC.



EVENT STAGE LOCATIONS & ANCILLARY AREAS



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## LOWER LEVEL EVENT SPACE

While the original lower level design of Hart Plaza involved ambitious designs for art galleries, concessions and fine dining, present-day maintenance capacity, funding and potential security issues no longer allow this environment to be maintained.

As a simple approach to the lower level, it is recommended that the kitchens, art gallery and other lower-level spaces - intended for daily occupancy, be decommissioned. The resulting space is proposed to be offered to promoters and event managers for event staging, storage and operations.

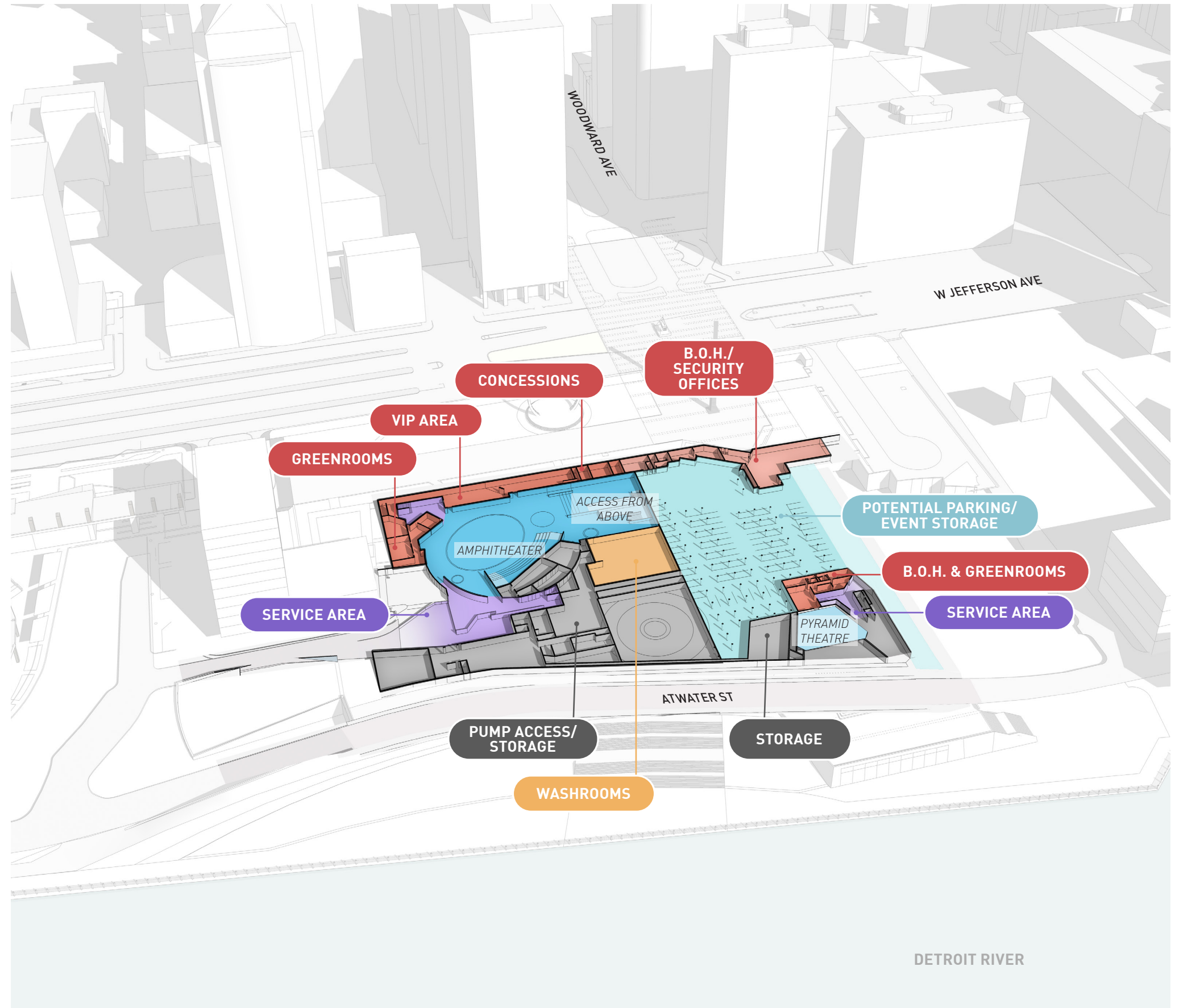
Through the proposed closure of most sub-level spaces to daily public access (open air) the maintenance and operations burdens are reduced, while still providing some multi-level "exploring" via the amphitheater steps and adjacent ramp.

New public restrooms are proposed to be utilized for limited access on event days only and existing conditioned spaces should be refreshed to allow for green rooms, and VIP staging. "Distribution only" concessions are also proposed.

### PROGRAM ZONES

- ENCLOSED B.O.H. SPACE (STORAGE)
- OPEN AIR SPACE
- CIRCULATION TO PLAZA LEVEL
- RENOVATED INTERIOR SPACE (EVENT ONLY)
- NEW RESTROOMS (EVENT ONLY)
- PARKING/EVENT STORAGE (REMOVE EX. DEMISING WALLS)
- GATED B.O.H. SPACE

NOTE:  
 \*All proposed demolition and construction may require coordination with HDC.



PROPOSED LOWER LEVEL EVENT SPACE



# IMPLEMENTATION

## CIVIC CENTER

Recommended implementable projects include capital projects and maintenance, operations and management considerations for the Civic Center sites. The following summarizes the overall implementation strategy, which is meant to guide future planning, engagement and design.

The Civic Center is recommended to be considered as a combination of public spaces within the network of Downtown. Hart Plaza is the anchoring public space that should take precedence while the Spirit of Detroit Plaza and the Joe Louis Fist Monument support it as connecting spaces.

The design of each should be carefully coordinated.

**Key Considerations:**

- Consider improving the connection between “The Esplanade, Spirit Plaza and “The Joe Louis Fist” and design them as a connecting spine.
- Consider these 3 public spaces in “every day mode” and during “large event days” and ensure that designs allow for flexibility.
- Where possible, introduce trees that can provide shade during the summer and can add to the efforts of greening downtown.
- Work across agencies to establish a monuments commission to guide the maintenance and future monument placement.

**Phasing and Project Priority:**

Projects identified in the study range from critical improvements, repairs, maintenance and major capital projects.

Project phasing will be sequenced and prioritized based on:

1. Health and Safety Improvements
2. Stabilization and Critical Repairs
3. Replacement / Re-design (based on component life cycle)
4. Transformational Impact

**Project Cost Estimates and Funding:**

Estimated costs for improvements and capital projects reflected in this implementation strategy are rough orders of magnitude, developed from current unit costs and early concepts. Funding sources for each project will depend on the project type, priority and funding availability.

SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TO LONG TERM		
<p><b>IMMEDIATE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately address severely deteriorated areas and monuments to prevent further damage.</li> <li>• Invest in landscaping in already planted areas. Ensure that green spaces are welcoming for users and introduce comfortable seating areas.</li> <li>• Close off lower level spaces of Hart Plaza from public access and decommission unusable space and equipment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>TRANSFORMATIONAL MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jefferson Crossing</li> <li>• Dodge Fountain</li> <li>• Spirit Plaza Refresh</li> <li>• Riverfront Improvement</li> <li>• Restroom Pavilion</li> <li>• Woodward Promenade</li> </ul>	<p><b>MARKETING, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE - EVERYDAY PUBLIC SPACE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-invigorate Hart Plaza’s identity. Create welcoming spaces and daily interactions. Collaborate in marketing the space to local residents and visitors.</li> <li>• Establish a dedicated operations and maintenance team (best practice)</li> </ul>	<p><b>MARKETING, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE - LARGE OUTDOOR EVENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicate a team towards marketing and plaza booking. If possible, consider a one stop shop.</li> <li>• Update space rental guidelines and rental rates. Work to attract more events of ranging sizes.</li> <li>• Ensure that event producers follow the rental guidelines and enforce remedies for any damages done to the space.</li> </ul>



# IMPLEMENTATION MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

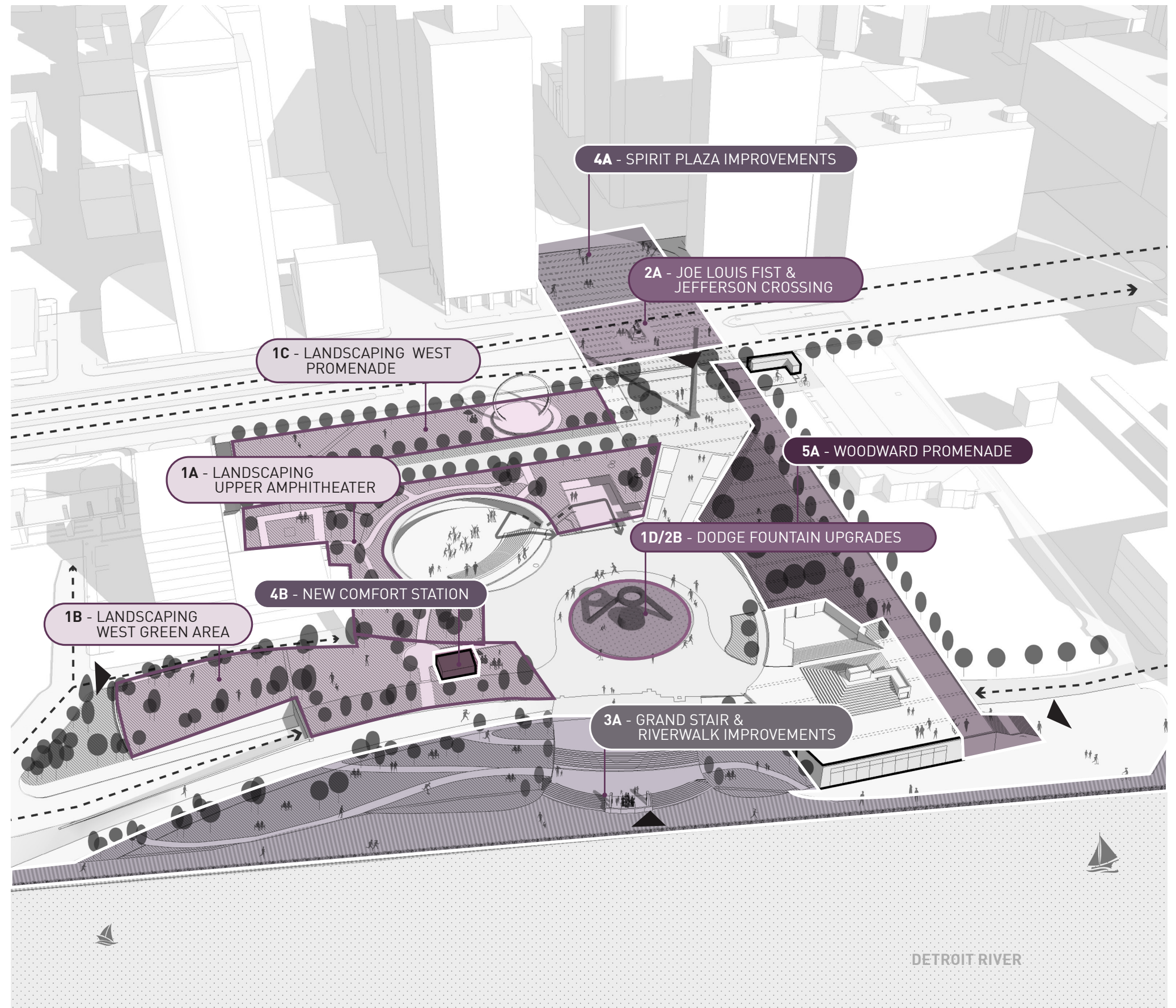
In addition to major capital improvements, Hart Plaza will require a consistent maintenance and repair schedule. An operations and maintenance plan is recommended to accompany the major capital projects.

PRIORITY	REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS <sup>2</sup>	COSTS <sup>3</sup>
HIGH	Currently Critical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monument rehabilitation - <i>in progress</i></li> </ul>	\$\$
MEDIUM	Potential Critical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concrete structures stabilization</li> <li>Amphitheater steps rehabilitation</li> </ul>	\$\$\$
MEDIUM	Necessary, Not Yet Critical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MEP systems renovations</li> </ul>	\$\$\$\$

HART PLAZA - UPPER LEVEL			
PHASE		MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS <sup>1</sup>	COSTS <sup>3</sup>
PHASE 1	1A	Planted/Landscaped Area Renovations	\$\$
	1B	Planted Area Renovations	\$
	1C	Lawn/Planted Area Renovations	\$
	1D	Dodge Fountain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative 1: Repairs to existing systems</li> </ul>	\$\$\$
PHASE 2	2A	Joe Louis Fist & Jefferson Crossing	\$\$\$\$
	2B	Dodge Fountain Upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative 2: Complete Renovation including plumbing, controls and basin</li> </ul>	\$\$\$\$
PHASE 3	3A	Grand Stair & Riverwalk Improvements	\$\$\$\$
PHASE 4	4A	Spirit Plaza Improvements	\$\$\$\$
	4B	New Comfort Station Pavilion	\$\$\$\$
PHASE 5	5A	Woodward Promenade (east edge)	\$\$\$\$

**NOTES:**

- Plan and coordinate capital projects across City departments including: HDAB, PDD, and DPW.
- See Condition Assessment And Seawall Report for the full list of repairs by priorities.
- Costs are estimates are rough orders of magnitude (ROM).  
Costs Key:  
  - \$: under \$10K: \$
  - \$\$: \$10K - \$100K: \$\$
  - \$\$\$: \$100K - \$1M: \$\$\$
  - \$\$\$\$: \$1M-\$10M: \$\$\$\$
  - \$\$\$\$\$: above \$10M: \$\$\$\$\$



IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS



# IMPLEMENTATION

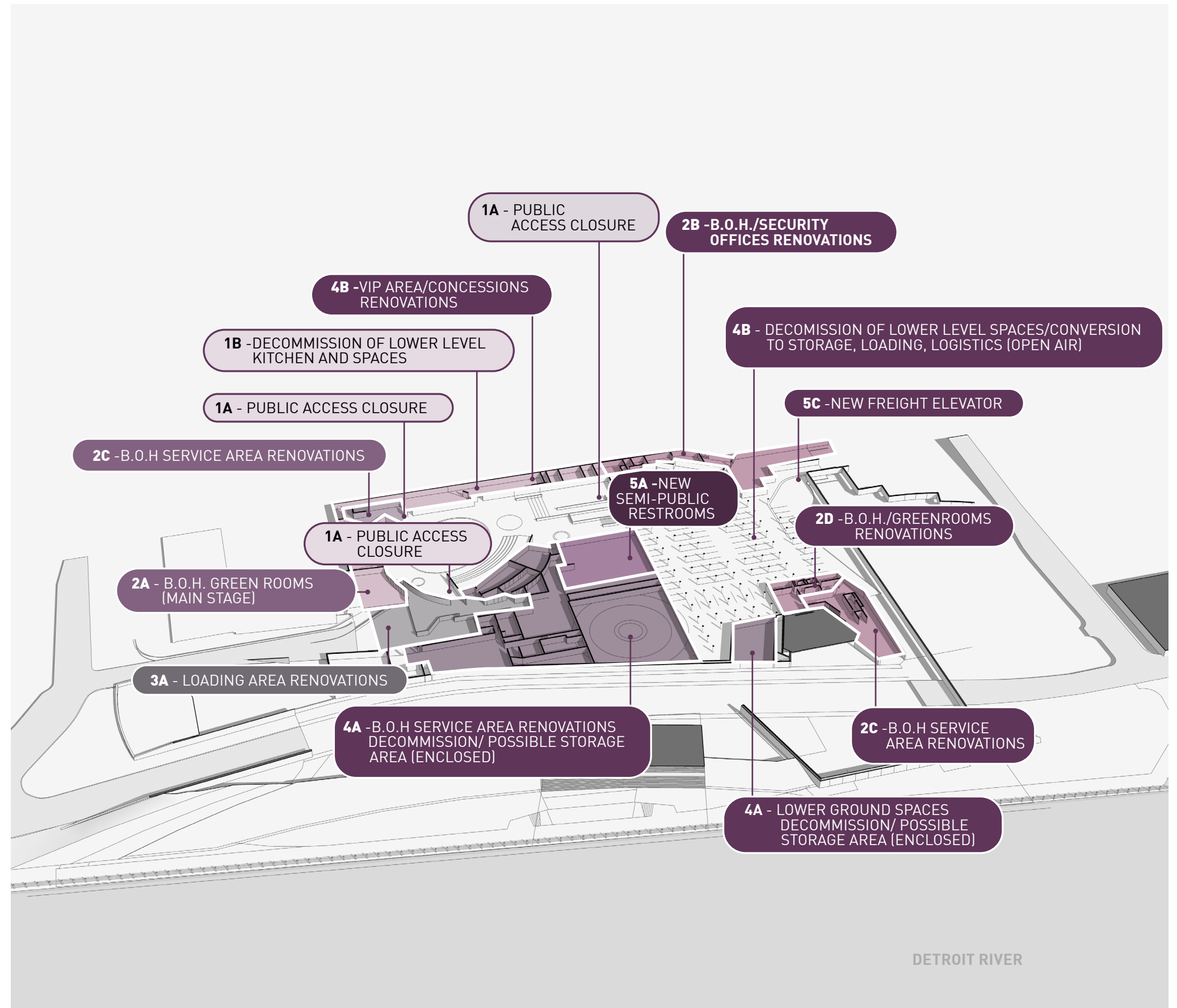
## MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

In addition to major capital improvements, Hart Plaza will require a consistent maintenance and repair schedule. An operations and maintenance plan is recommended to accompany the major capital projects.

HART PLAZA - LOWER LEVEL			
PHASE	MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS <sup>1</sup>		COSTS <sup>3</sup>
PHASE 1	1A	Public Access Closure (3 locations)	\$\$
	1B	Decommission of Lower Level kitchens and spaces	\$\$\$
PHASE 2	2A	B.O.H. /Green Rooms (Main Stage)	\$\$\$
	2B	B.O.H./Security Offices Renovations	\$\$\$\$
	2C	B.O.H./Service Area Renovations	\$\$\$
	2D	B.O.H./Greenrooms Renovations	\$\$\$
PHASE 3	3A	Loading Area Renovations	\$\$\$\$
PHASE 4	4A	Lower Ground Spaces Decommission/ Possible Storage Area (Enclosed)	\$\$
	4B	Decommission of Lower Level Spaces/ Conversion to Storage, Loading, Logistics (Open Air)	\$\$\$\$
PHASE 5	5A	New Semi-Public Restroom	\$\$\$
	5B	VIP Area/Concessions Renovations	\$\$\$
	5C	New Freight Elevator	\$\$\$

**NOTES:**

- Plan and coordinate capital projects across City departments including: HDAB, PDD, and DPW.
- See Condition Assessment And Seawall Report for the full list of repairs by priorities.
- Costs are estimates are rough orders of magnitude (ROM).  
Costs Key:
  - \$: under \$10K
  - \$\$: \$10K - \$100K
  - \$\$\$: \$100K - \$1M
  - \$\$\$\$: \$1M-\$10M
  - \$\$\$\$\$: above \$10M



IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS