

Reimagining the Civic Commons



Civic Commons Learning Journey: Detroit

August 5-7, 2017



Photo By: Nadir Ali

Welcome

Welcome to Civic Commons Learning Journey: Detroit.

One of the best ways to learn is to see things in person and talk with the instigators themselves. Civic Commons learning journeys offer exactly that.

We are so pleased to have you participate in this exploration of Detroit.

Thanks to our local hosts, the Detroit Civic Commons Team and Detroit Experience Factory, over the next few days you'll have the opportunity to immerse yourself in the public places and programs of Detroit that are most representative of socioeconomic mixing in practice. You will explore the city by bike and foot, conversing with leaders of Eastern Market, Detroit Riverwalk and Slow Roll to gain a deep understanding of the design, programming, communication and engagement practices that create experiences for all and places where everyone belongs.

Conversations with the advocates and doers behind Belle Isle and Clark Park will offer additional insights on cross-institutional collaboration and developing diverse constituencies.

On our last day together, you will visit the Fitzgerald neighborhood for an in-process look at the Reimagining the Civic Commons work with residents and team members.

And throughout you'll have a chance to experience some of the best local food and reconnect with colleagues from the Civic Commons Learning Network.

Come with a curious mind. Expect completely candid discussions. And leave inspired to tackle socioeconomic mixing in your own work.

I'm looking forward to learning together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget M." followed by a horizontal line.

Bridget Marquis
Director, Civic Commons Learning Network



Photo By: Lutz Patek



Photo By: Nahir Ali

Itinerary

Itinerary

Saturday, August 5

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Arrive and check luggage	Detroit Foundation Hotel 250 W. Larned Street
1 p.m.	Welcome	Detroit Foundation Hotel - Lobby 250 W. Larned Street
1 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Bike to Eastern Market (Shuttle transportation also available)	
1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	Lunch and exploration of Eastern Market	Eastern Market 2934 Russell Street
2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Conversation with Christine Quane, Eastern Market Corporation	Eastern Market 2934 Russell Street
4 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Tour of the Dequindre Cut with Mark Wallace, Detroit RiverFront Conservancy	Dequindre Cut Eastern Market to Rivard Plaza
5 p.m. - 6 p.m.	Break	
6 p.m. - 8 p.m.	Dinner and conversation with Abir Ali, The Platform and James Tate, City Councilman, District 1	Detroit Vegan Soul Food 19614 Grand River Avenue
8 p.m. - 10 p.m.	(Optional) Sidewalk Detroit Festival at Artist Village/Old Redford	Sidewalk Festival 17336 Lahser Road

Sunday, August 6

9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Hudson Café 1241 Woodward Avenue
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Tour and exploration of Detroit Riverfront with Ritchie Harrison, Detroit RiverFront Conservancy	Hart Plaza 1 Hart Plaza
12:30 p.m. - 2 p.m.	Lunch and conversation on Detroit Riverfront	Atwater Brewery 237 Jos Campau

Itinerary

Sunday, August 6, Continued

2 p.m. - 4 p.m.	Building Diverse Constituencies: Tours with Lori Feret, Belle Isle Conservancy and Anthony Benavedis, Clark Park Coalition	Belle Isle, Clark Park, 2 Inselruhe Drive, 1130 Clark Street
4 p.m. - 7 p.m.	Individual exploration	
7 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Dinner and conversation with Jason Hall, Slow Roll	El Asador 1312 Springwells Street

Monday, August 7

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Breakfast and conversation with Helen Johnson and George Roberts, Quicken Loans Community Investment Fund	Campus Martius Park 800 Woodward Avenue
10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Fitzgerald Neighborhood tour and conversation with Detroit Civic Commons Team	Fitzgerald Neighborhood Livernois Avenue & McNichols Road
12:30 p.m. - 2 p.m.	Lunch and reflections	1917 American Bistro 19416 Livernois Avenue
2 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	A farewell treat	Good Cakes and Bakes 19363 Livernois Avenue

Post Tour Activities

2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Alfonzo Wells Memorial Playground and the Birwood Wall tour	Alfonzo Wells Memorial Playground Birwood Street
3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Individual exploration	
5 p.m. - 8 p.m.	Slow Roll followed by dinner	Renaissance High School 6565 Outer Drive West Bucharest Grill 19492 Livernois Avenue



Photo By Jason Mirachina

Participant Biographies

Participant Biographies



Abir Ali

Director of Design & Culture, The Platform

Abir Ali is Director of Design & Culture at the Platform. She was born and raised in Detroit, before leaving for Toronto and eventually landed in Chicago, where she worked as an architect in affordable housing. She returned to Detroit in 2011, moving her design practice and family to the city while applying her skillset to the foundation world. “I came back to Detroit because it was always a magnet no matter where else I lived.” Abir has grown her career across architecture, furniture design, grantmaking, and now real estate development. Her interest is in architecture’s alignment with development and what we physically endow to a neighborhood and its people. “How is what we design and develop relevant? Is it going to be memorable or forgettable generations later?” Abir lives in a more than 100-year old home in Detroit’s Boston Edison.

Darnetta Banks

Retired Educator and Fitzgerald Resident

Darnetta Banks is a resident of the Fitzgerald community who moved back to assist her elderly mother. She first moved into this area with her parents in 1966. Educated in the Detroit Public School system, she returned there to teach and later became an administrator.



Anthony Benavides

Director, Clark Park Coalition

Anthony Benavides is a lifelong resident of Mexicantown and the Director of the Clark Park Recreation Center. In 1983, when the Clark Park Recreation Center Closed, Benavides and neighborhood residents came together to save the 30-acre park. Now the Clark Park Coalition exists to provide an array of diverse, high-quality recreational, educational, social and mentoring programs for southwest Detroit families promoting skills development which helps our youth grow into responsible, self-confident adults. Clark Park Coalition is a partner of the Detroit Recreation Department.



Dana Bourland

Vice President, The JPB Foundation

Dana is leading the creation of JPB's environment program, with a goal to enable resilient communities. Formerly Dana was VP of Green Initiatives for Enterprise Community Partners where she developed and oversaw all aspects of the award-winning Green Communities initiative. A Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Dana is a graduate of Harvard University's Graduate Program in Real Estate and holds a Master of Planning Degree. She is cited in numerous trade and popular publications for work on the intersection of health, poverty and the environment. Dana is an Ironman finisher and avid global explorer.



Alexa Bush

Landscape Architect and Planner, Planning and Development Department, City of Detroit

Alexa Bush is a licensed landscape architect and planner in the City of Detroit Planning & Development Department, where she plans and manages neighborhood development and open space projects. She is the project manager for the Livernois/McNichols Planning Initiative, which includes the Fitzgerald Revitalization Project and Reimagining the Civic Commons, as well as several green infrastructure and renewable energy initiatives. Previously, Alexa worked at SmithgroupJJR in Ann Arbor, Mich., as a project manager and designer, gaining experience in urban design, historic landscape preservation and large-scale planning. She received her bachelor's in visual and environmental studies from Harvard University, her master's in landscape architecture from the University of Virginia and is currently enrolled in the Real Estate Development Certificate Program at the University of Michigan.

Participant Biographies



Devon Buskin

Workforce Development Director, The Greening of Detroit

Devon Buskin is an administrator, department director and program developer whose imprint can be found on multiple Detroit agencies. He has overseen youth programs and departments in both the public and private sectors, utilizing skills like leadership, budget development and implementation, and job placement. Devon is experienced in recruiting staff and support team members during a 14-year career of professional supervision and management. He won the 2010-2011 Parsons Brinkerhoff Leadership Award, the 2010 Governor's Service Award, the 2010 Christ Temple Humanitarian Award and many employee service awards from Michigan Department of Transportation. He attended Western Michigan University, where he studied business management. Devon is a father of three who enjoys sports, mentoring at-risk youth and participating in community service activities.



Michael Dones

Fitzgerald Resident and Mo-Flo Garden Founder

Michael Dones lives in the Fitzgerald neighborhood and has been active in the College Core block club. He is the founder of the Mo-Flo Community Garden at the corner of Monica and Florence streets. Mo-Flo was built to fight poverty, teach people how to grow their own food and provide a space in which people can relax or gather together. Michael recently completed the Urban Roots program, a nine-week course focused on developing community organizing and horticulture skills through Keep Growing Detroit. Additionally, he completed an internship in Urban Agriculture through the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network.



Christopher Dougherty

Capital Projects Manager, Fairmount Park Conservancy

Trained as a historian and urban planner, Chris manages the design and implementation of the Fairmount Park Conservancy's portfolio of physical investments. Chris is passionate about restoring the ecological capacity of brownfield sites, designing landscapes that are healing and restorative and demystifying the practice of planning through community discourse and the embrace of non-traditional forms of problem-solving for the built environment.



Lori Feret

Former Board of Director, Friends of Belle Isle

Lori Feret is a former Board of Director for the Friends of Belle Isle. She volunteers with the Belle Isle Conservancy Historical Preservation Committee, Belle Isle Aquarium Committee, Belle Isle Conservancy Marketing Committee, Spring Clean Up Committee, Belle Isle special events and is co-editor of the Belle Isle Conservancy newsletter. She loves Belle Isle and has been visiting there since she was a child and has been volunteering there since 1995.

Participant Biographies



Michael Forsyth **Co-Director, Live6 Alliance**

Michael Forsyth joined Live6 Alliance as a founding member of the executive board in 2015, becoming co-director in 2017. Previously, Michael served as small business director for the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation. While there, he designed and managed two cutting-edge programs, Motor City Match and REVOLVE Detroit, to facilitate entrepreneurship, real estate development and arts investment in Detroit's neighborhood business districts, in particular the Livernois commercial district. Michael is a founding partner and owner of Detroit City Distillery in Eastern Market and Creative Place Consulting. Michael studied temporary use in Germany's post-industrial cities and, before coming to Detroit, worked for a Seattle consulting firm leading economic development projects. Michael earned a bachelor's in environmental studies and a master's in urban planning from Michigan State University



Maria Fuhrmann **Grants and Partnerships, City of Memphis**

Maria Fuhrmann oversees grants and partnerships for the City of Memphis, managing special projects and serving as the executive team liaison to the city's philanthropic, quasi-governmental and community partners. Maria came to city government in 2006 as a research analyst for the Memphis City Council and previously served as special assistant to the mayor for research and innovation. Maria is a graduate of the University of Memphis and has lived in her adopted hometown since 1991. Maria is passionate about leveraging Memphis's unique assets to create a vibrant and thriving urban core, encourage quality infill development in the inner city and provide a range of safe, convenient, sustainable mobility choices.



Anuj Gupta

General Manager, Reading Terminal Market

Anuj has served as general manager of the historic Reading Terminal Market – one of the nation's oldest and largest continuously operating public markets – since 2015. He oversees all aspects of the nearly 80-merchant market's operations, including leasing, property management, marketing and special events, financial oversight and reporting to the nonprofit's board of directors. He was a 2016 Knight Cities Challenge winner for the Breaking Bread, Breaking Barriers project, which has leveraged the market to bring an increasingly diverse Philadelphia closer together through cuisine-based cultural exchanges. Previously, Anuj served as executive director of Mt. Airy USA, a non-profit community development corporation in Northwest Philadelphia, and was a winner of the 2015 Knight Cities Challenge for the Philadelphia Immigrant Innovation Hub.



Jason Hall

Co-Founder, Slow Roll

Jason Hall is co-founder of Slow Roll Detroit, a large weekly bicycle ride that now attracts over 4,000 riders a week. An ambassador for the City of Detroit, he has won awards including the Best of Michigan Business Award, the Vanguard Award from Detroit Young Professionals, the 2014 D Show Ambassador Award from Adcraft and the Sierra Club's Green Cruiser of the Year. He has also seen Slow Roll gain the attention of many top companies, including Apple, which featured Jason and Slow Roll in an ad campaign for the iPad. In his free time, he enjoys relaxing with his dog Matlock and finding new restaurants.

Participant Biographies



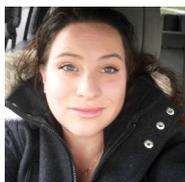
Ritchie Harrison
Community Development Planner,
Detroit RiverFront Conservancy

Ritchie is a life-long Detroit resident. Being a natural creative-thinker in difficult situations, Ritchie is passionate about finding scalable and lasting changes that can improve the lives of every Detroit resident. Throughout his life, he has had a deep fascination with urban development, especially within the context of Detroit and its region. Harrison has a Bachelor of Science in Urban Planning and a Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship from Eastern Michigan University. He is currently pursuing a Master of Community Development at the University-Detroit Mercy. Outside of work, Ritchie serves on the board of the Eastside Community Collaborative supporting their non-motorized connections on the eastside of the city.



Helen Johnson
Vice President, Community Activation,
Quicken Loans Community Investment Fund

Helen Davis Johnson is Vice President of Community Activation for Quicken Loans Community Investment Fund, the organization that serves and connects entrepreneur and Quicken Loans Founder and Chairman and majority owner of the NBA Champion Cleveland Cavaliers Dan Gilbert's Family of more than 100 companies, as well as his investments, real estate purchases and community activities. Previously, Johnson served as a Program Officer on the Arts & Culture team at The Kresge Foundation. Helen brings more than 20 years of solutions-oriented experience in development; implementation and evaluation of grant portfolios, cross-sector national initiatives and partner development.



Shannon Keeling
Special Projects Coordinator, Ohio & Erie
Canalway Coalition

Shannon Keeling moved to Akron from Punta Gorda, Fla., to complete her degree at the University of Akron. Upon graduation she began working as the special projects consultant for the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, a nonprofit in Akron dedicated to developing the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area and Towpath Trail. Shannon has a passion for people and enjoys collaborating with the community on events and projects. Her work at the Ohio & Erie Canalway has given her the opportunity to meet and engage various people and learn more about the community, its culture and the people who make Akron and the surrounding area such a great place.



Katy Locker
Detroit Program Director, Knight Foundation

Katy Locker joined Knight Foundation in 2013. As Detroit program director, Locker focuses on Detroit's unique opportunity to rebuild civic infrastructure to attract and nurture talent, promote economic opportunity and foster civic engagement. A Michigan native who lives in Detroit, she is passionate about championing the city's talented residents to drive economic growth, job creation and neighborhood revitalization. While at Knight Foundation, Locker has spearheaded efforts that promote economic opportunity, particularly supporting Detroit's entrepreneurs. She has also advanced planning for Detroit's signature places of civic engagement, including Eastern Market and the Detroit Riverfront. An advocate for Detroit's thriving arts community, Locker has helped Knight Foundation invest over \$20 million in Detroit art and artists. In 2016, Crain's Detroit Business named Locker one of the state's 100 most influential women.

Participant Biographies



Chris Maier

Creative Director, Made By Little

Chris Maier, principal at the Washington D.C. creative agency Made By Little, is a writer, storyteller and strategist. He's also founder of Little Salon and Little Academy, D.C.-based creative and learning experiences.



Bridget Marquis

Director, Civic Commons Learning Network, U3 Advisors

Bridget Marquis is the project manager for Reimagining the Civic Commons, a national initiative that seeks to counter economic and social fragmentation in our cities by revitalizing and connecting public places to bring together people from different backgrounds. In this role, she acts as director for the Civic Commons Learning Network, hosted by U3 Advisors, that provides coordinated learning, impact assessment and storytelling across the five demonstration cities. Prior to working with U3, Bridget supported the Knight Foundation's community and national initiatives portfolio as an independent consultant and served as program director of ArtPlace America and program director of CEOs for Cities.



Hanae Mason

Community Programs Manager, Mt. Airy USA

Hanae Victoria Mason is the community programs manager at Mt. Airy USA. The Montgomery, Ala., native graduated from Hampton University with a bachelor's in journalism and communications. After working in different capacities in the communications field, Hanae was drawn to a new professional path: community advocacy and development. She is a recent graduate of the Master's of Public Administration program at the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government. In her free time, Hanae enjoys cooking and dining out, going to concerts, reading novels and essays and binge watching TV shows.



Moria Miller
Strategy and Communications Manager,
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

As strategy and communications manager for Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR), Moria Miller has built the department's communications policies and programs from the ground up and managed high-visibility projects on behalf of leadership, such as organizational development initiatives, branding campaigns, new signage standards and a strategic plan. Prior to her five years working for PPR, Moria served in communications and project management roles for public, private and nonprofit organizations, including three years at NYC Parks.



Eric Nelson
Executive Director, Students With A Goal

Eric Nelson is executive director of Students With A Goal and a resident of Akron, Ohio. Originally from Cleveland, Eric moved to the Summit Lake community of Akron, where he immediately began working with the youth of the neighborhood. He is heavily invested in the development of community leadership. Eric is committed to the betterment of the Summit Lake community in Akron.



Anthony O'Leary
Executive Director, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority

Anthony O'Leary has served as executive director of Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority for 24 years. Previously he served as deputy mayor of the City of Akron and other positions in the city for 14 years. He is a graduate of Kent State University.

Participant Biographies



Ceara O'Leary **Senior Designer and Project Manager,** **Detroit Collaborative Design Center**

Ceara O'Leary is a senior designer and project manager at the Detroit Collaborative Design Center, where she leads collaborative community design and planning projects that support neighborhood revitalization efforts citywide. Ceara joined the organization in 2012 as an Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow. Previously, she worked as a community designer with bcWORKSHOP in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and was the inaugural public design intern at the Gulf Coast Community Design Studio in Biloxi, Miss. Ceara graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2010 with master's degrees in architecture and city and regional planning and earned her bachelor's from Brown University. She sits on the American Institute of Architects' Housing and Community Development Network Advisory Group and was recently named a Top Urban Innovator and 2015 Vanguard by Next City.



Jeanette Pierce **Executive Director, Detroit Experience Factory**

A lifelong Detroit resident, Jeanette Pierce founded the Detroit Experience Factory, a nonprofit that uses tours and experiences to educate people about Detroit's history, culture and community. The Detroit Experience Factory operates the Detroit Welcome Center and creates eye-opening experiences and innovative resources that connect locals and visitors to Detroit's people, places and projects. Over 90,000 people have taken a tour since its founding in 2006 to learn about Detroit's assets, small businesses, historic neighborhoods, city planning and development policies and innovative solutions to challenges. Jeanette was named a Top Twenty in Their 20s by Crain's Detroit Business and was awarded the Shining Light Future Leader Award from the Detroit Free Press, the Shooting Star Award from MichBusiness and the Detroit Young Professionals Vanguard Award.



Christine Quane
Wholesale Market Coordinator,
Eastern Market Corporation

Christine Quane joined Eastern Market Corporation (EMC) as the Wholesale Market Coordinator in 2011 and became Regional Food Hub Director in 2015. EMC is one of nation's largest and longest operating public markets. It serves both wholesale and retail markets in Southeast Michigan and is working to become the most inclusive, resilient food hub in America; addressing food access, nutrition education, economic development, work-force training, job creation, place making and community development. In her role as Regional Food Hub Director, Quane is primarily responsible for Grow Eastern Market, EMC's local food brokerage/wholesale farm development program and also working with state agencies, economic development organizations, major stakeholder organizations, producers, and various other supply chain partners to identify policy and procedural changes needed to facilitate increased procurement of Michigan-grown and/or produced foods by schools and hospitals.



Chera Reid
Director of Strategic Learning, Research and Evaluation,
The Kresge Foundation

Chera D. Reid serves as director of strategic learning, research and evaluation for The Kresge Foundation. Before joining Kresge in 2013, Chera worked in program development at MDRC, a national nonpartisan education and social policy research organization that works to improve programs and policies affecting the poor. At MDRC, she co-authored a brief on college match for low-income students. Chera previously held leadership positions at New York Needs You and the Phillips Academy Institute for Recruitment of Teachers; both are programs that expand educational and career opportunities for low-income and students of color. Chera has taught at LaGuardia Community College and New York University.

Participant Biographies



Dan Rice

**President and Chief Executive Officer,
Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition**

Daniel M. Rice is the president and chief executive officer of the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition. The coalition is the regional nonprofit organization working for the conservation, development and interpretation of the natural, historical and recreational resources along the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway from Cleveland to New Philadelphia, Ohio. Since 1994, Mr. Rice has worked with over 150 community partnerships and raised over \$50 million in development funds for the development of the 101-mile multi-use Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area. He has received numerous regional and national awards.



George Roberts

**Director of Community Activation, Quicken Loans
Community Investment Fund**

George Roberts is the Director of Community Activation at the Quicken Loans Community Investment Fund. In this role, George leads the Quicken Loans Family of Companies efforts to activate, animate, and redevelop Detroit's public places - parks, plazas, alleys, sidewalks, bike lanes, libraries, etc. George has been with Quicken Loans since March of 2016. Prior to joining Quicken Loans, George lived in New York City and worked on redeveloping parks and public spaces in Manhattan and around North America. George grew up in metro Detroit and attended the University of Michigan.



Lynn Ross

Founder, Spirit for Change Consulting, LLC

Lynn M. Ross, AICP, is the founder and principal of Spirit for Change Consulting, a boutique consulting firm dedicated to creative solutions for people and places working to serve the common good. Lynn has over 15 years of experience in housing affordability, urban planning, equitable development, evidence-based policy making and organizational change. Lynn is currently engaged with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation on the Reimagining the Civic Commons initiative. Past work includes leadership roles at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Obama Administration; ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing; National Housing Conference/Center for Housing Policy; and the American Planning Association. Lynn earned a Master of Regional Planning from Cornell University and a bachelor's in community and regional planning from Iowa State University.



Michael R. Smith

Director of Neighborhood Strategies, Invest Detroit

As Invest Detroit's director of neighborhood strategies, Mike oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization's revitalization initiatives for targeted Detroit neighborhoods. These activities include the collaborative prioritization and development of catalytic projects in each neighborhood, one of which is the Livernois/McNichols corridor. Mike joined Invest Detroit in 2015 through the Detroit Revitalization Fellows Program. Before that, he spent 15 years in Major League Baseball, most recently as director of baseball operations for the Detroit Tigers. He served as a board member of The Greening of Detroit from 2010 to 2016. Mike received a bachelor's in geology and geophysics from Yale University and a Master of Community Development from the University of Detroit Mercy. He has resided in Detroit since 2005 and lives in the Hubbard Farms neighborhood with his wife, Kristen.

Participant Biographies



James Tate **City Councilman, District 1**

James E. Tate Jr. was first elected to the Detroit City Council in 2009. He was re-elected to represent District 1 in 2013. Before his work on City Council, he served as Second Deputy Chief for the Detroit Police Department and as an Emmy-award winning assignment editor at WXYZ-TV (Channel 7). He is a graduate of Benedictine High School and Wayne State University. Councilman Tate has lived in District 1 his entire life. Councilmember Tate sits on the following boards: Detroit Zoological Society and Authority Health. He is the Chair of the Task Force on Black Male Engagement. Councilmember Tate also is the Co-Chair of the My Brother's Keeper Challenge. Additionally, he is a member of Triumph Church where he serves on the Men's Choir (Men of Valor).



Tiffany Thurman **Chief of Staff, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation**

Tiffany W. Thurman is the chief of staff of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, where she assists the commissioner with overseeing 10,100 acres of land, 500 buildings, 225 miles of trail, 250 playgrounds and thousands of programs and events throughout Philadelphia's parks and recreation system. Prior to joining the agency, Tiffany served as the executive director of the Philadelphia Delegation with the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Tiffany is a graduate of Temple University and recently earned a Master of Public Administration from the University of Pennsylvania.



Mark Wallace

President & CEO, Detroit RiverFront Conservancy

Mark Wallace serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy. The Conservancy is a non-profit organization founded in 2003 by civic, community and public leaders. The mission of the Conservancy is to develop public access to Detroit's riverfront and to have this development serve as an anchor for economic revitalization – all while working with others to create more thriving, walkable and connected communities within Detroit. The Conservancy's ultimate vision is to revitalize and transform 5.5 miles along Detroit's international waterfront. Prior to joining the Conservancy in August 2014, Wallace was a director with Hines Interests LP from 2003 to 2014 and most recently served as project manager of the River Point development in Chicago, a 1,050,000-square-foot, 50-story, state-of-the-art tower located on the Chicago River. The project includes a 1.5-acre public park that opens the West Loop neighborhood to the main branch of the Chicago River.



Ryan Whalen

Director, President's Office, The Rockefeller Foundation

Ryan Whalen currently serves as Director, President's Office at The Rockefeller Foundation. His responsibilities include the development of programmatic strategy, management of the President's Office, and oversight of various priority initiatives. Previously, Ryan served in the office of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg as Chief of Staff for Government Affairs and Communication, and before that as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for Senator Charles Schumer. Ryan received a bachelor's degree with honors from Trinity College and a master's degree in urban planning from New York University. He is a member of the Board of Living Cities, Manhattan Community Board 5, and co-chairs the advisory board of The Resolution Project, a social enterprise accelerator.

Participant Biographies



John Zoilo

Community Volunteer, Akron Civic Theater

John Zoilo is a member of the board of directors and serves on the executive committee of the Akron Civic Theater, one of Akron's leading cultural institutions. The Civic Theater is centrally located in the middle of the Cascade Plaza area, one of the three targeted geographic areas of the Akron Civic Commons project. John recently retired as the executive director of the Akron Children's Hospital Foundation.



Contact Information

If you need anything during the learning journey, please text:
Bridget Marquis at 443.562.1699
Jeanette Pierce at 313.268.6562



Photo By: Naadir Ali

Local co-hosts:

**Detroit Civic Commons Team
Detroit Experience Factory**