

The Detroit RiverWalk

Welcoming to All, With Benefits to All!

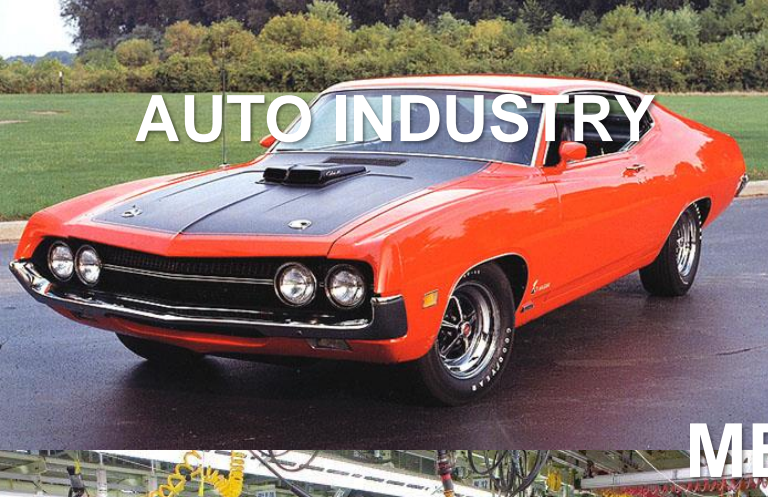
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University of Windsor

Great Lakes Science-Policy Advisor, International Association for Great Lakes Research





**WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU
THINK OF DETROIT?**



AUTO INDUSTRY



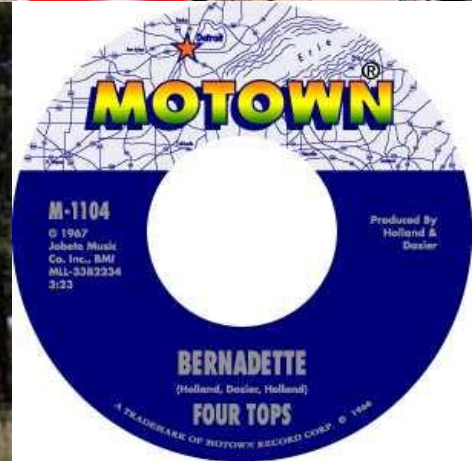
**DETROIT
METROPOLITAN
COMMUNITY**



SPORTS!



MANUFACTURING

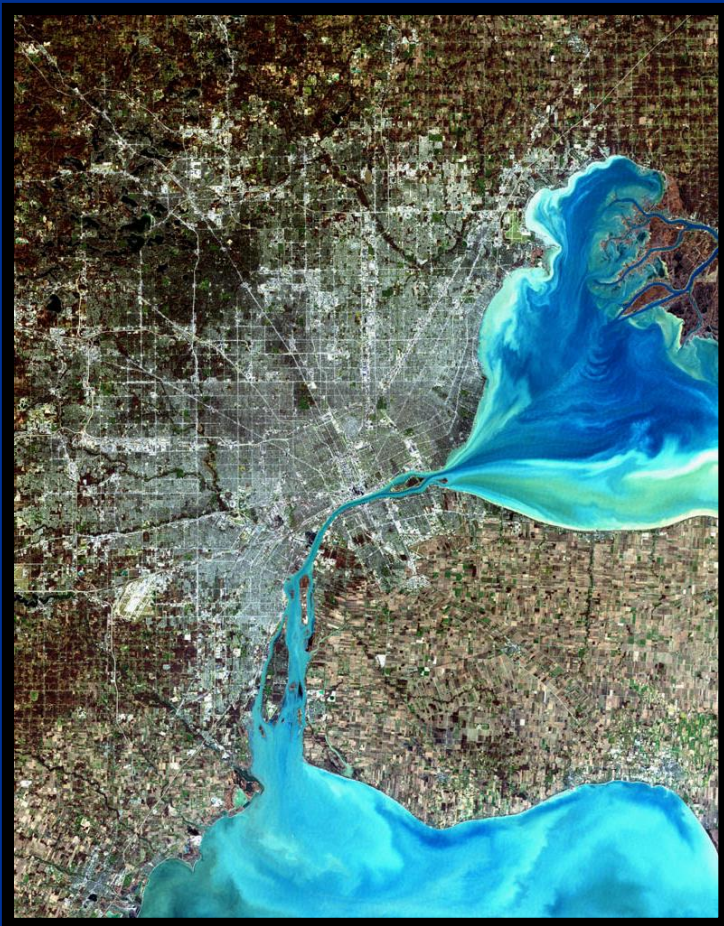


**AVAILABLE
LAND**

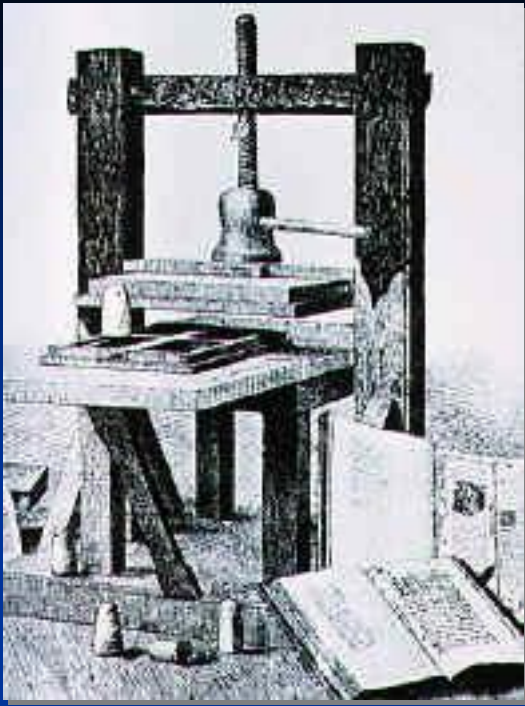


PUBLIC ART

Metropolitan Detroit has Experienced a Number of Paradigm Shifts



**Paradigm Shift =
a significant
change in thinking
that results in a
completely
changed view or
outlook**



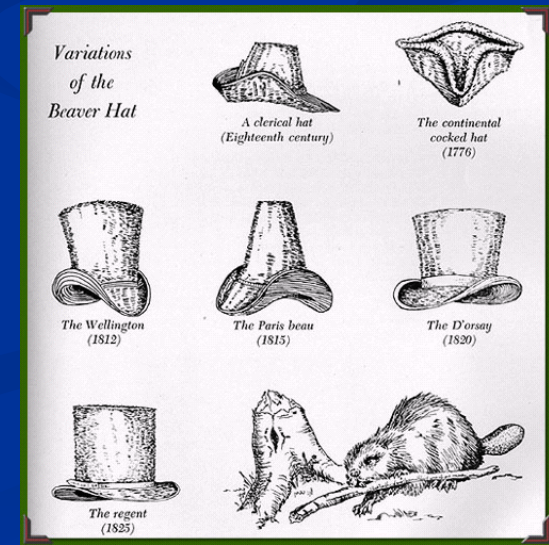
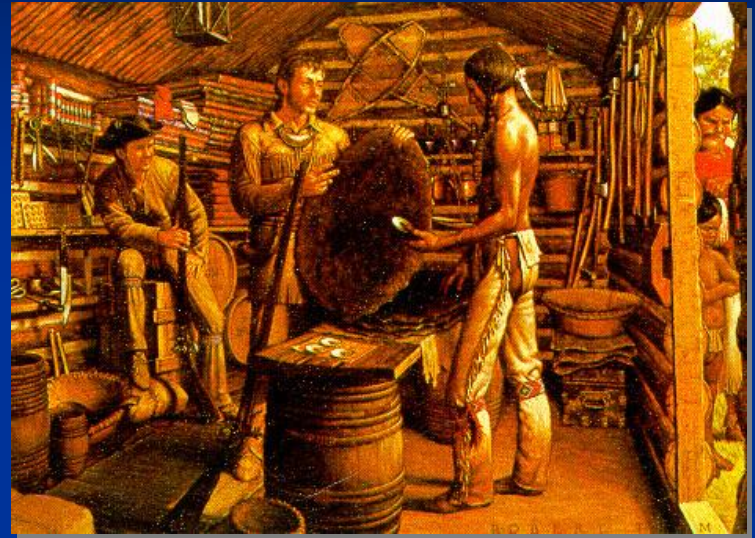
**PRINTING
PRESS**



PERSONAL COMPUTER

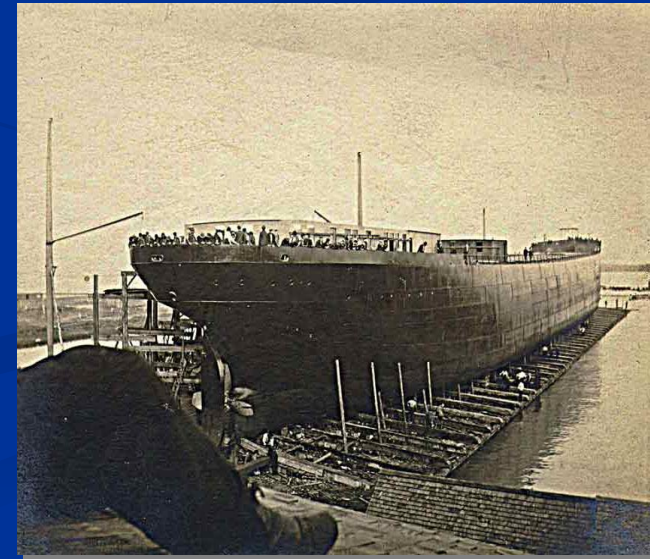
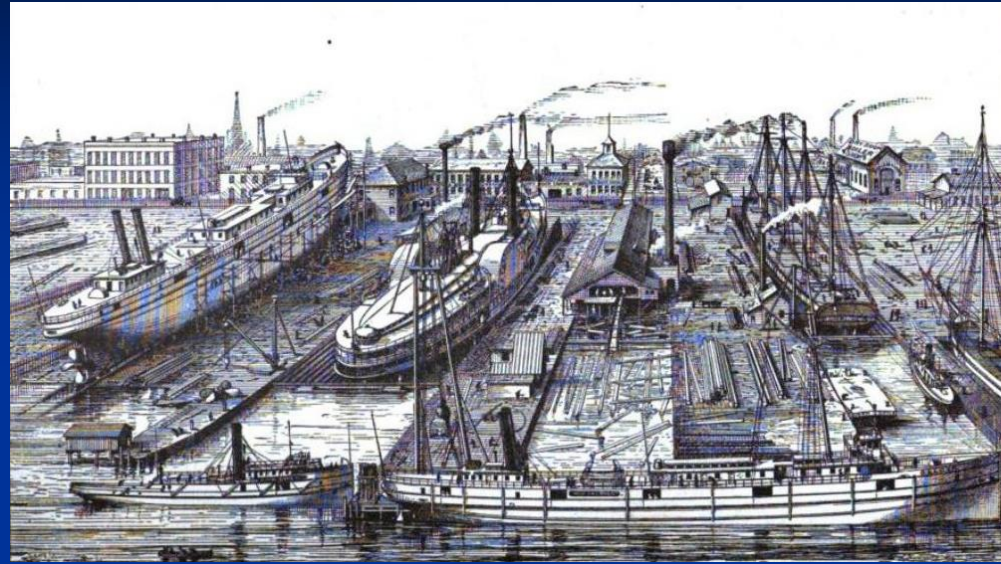
FUR TRADE – DETROIT’S FIRST PARADIGM SHIFT

- The height of the Fur Trade was in 1700s and 1800s
- Hundreds of thousands of beaver skins were exported annually



SHIP BUILDING PARADIGM SHIFT

- During the 1890s more ships were built along the Detroit River than any other city in America
- On December 3, 1819 the Detroit River was declared a public highway by Act of Congress



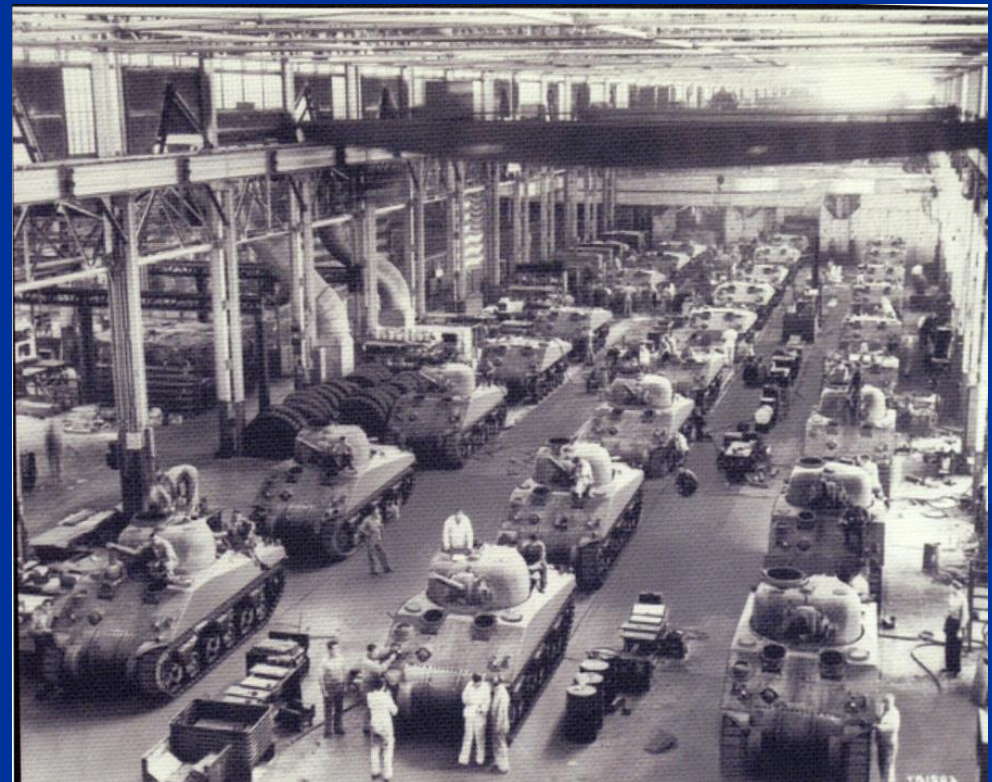
AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING PARADIGM SHIFT



ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY PARADIGM SHIFT



- During WWII President Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized the need to supply implements of war and called for the United States to become the great “Arsenal of Democracy”



CONSEQUENCES

- Frequently, there are unintended consequences of paradigm shifts
- The fur trade paradigm shift led to the virtual extinction of the beaver in our region
- the “Arsenal of Democracy” paradigm shift resulted in substantial oil pollution



Oil Pollution

- In 1946-1948, 5.9 million gallons of oil & other petroleum products were discharged into the Rouge and Detroit rivers each year
- Enough to pollute the entire western basin of Lake Erie



LAKE ERIE IS DEAD!

TIME

August 20, 1965



Citizen Protest in the 1960s



Raw Sewage and Industrial Waste Dumped Into the River





The Rouge River Caught on Fire in 1969



THE MERCURY CRISIS OF 1970



Earth Day 1970



Environmental Awakening

Catalysts:

- Winter waterfowl die-offs in 1960 and 1967
- Silent Spring
- Eutrophication of Lake Erie
- Burning of the Rouge and Cuyahoga rivers
- Mercury Crisis of 1970

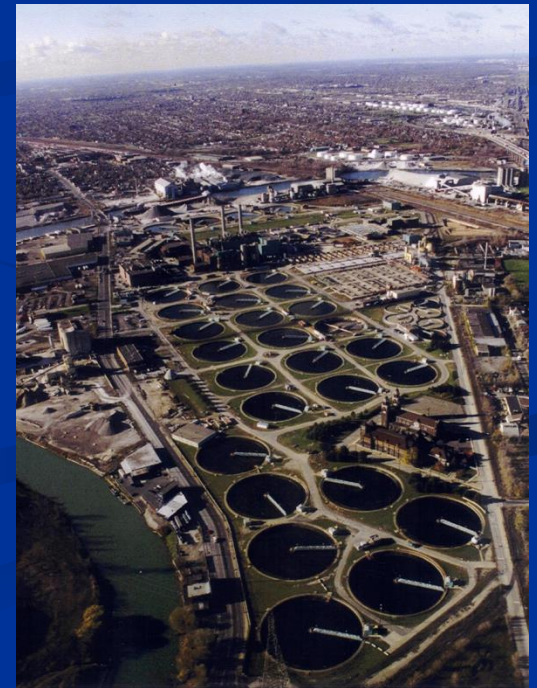
Led to:

- Earth Day in 1970
- Canada Water Act in 1970
- U.S. Clean Water Act of 1972
- Canada-U.S. GLWQA of 1972
- U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973

**Over Four Decades of Pollution
Prevention and Control under the
1970 Canada Water Act, 1972 Clean
Water Act and U.S.-Canada Great
Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and
1973 U.S. Endangered Species Act**



- Substantial reductions in oil discharges and spills have occurred, and winter duck kills due to oil pollution have been eliminated
- Billions of dollars have been spent on municipal wastewater treatment and virtually all plants in Michigan and Ontario are achieving 2^o treatment
- 90% decline in phosphorus concentration and loading from the Detroit WWTP
- Since 1960 there has been an over 80% reduction in untreated CSO volume from communities in southeast Michigan



- Between the 1960s and 1980s there was an over 4,000 tonnes/day decrease in chloride loadings to the Detroit River
- 70% decline in mercury and a 90% decline of DDT in fish (yet health advisories remain)
- 90% decline in DDE and 85% decline in PCBs in herring gull eggs
- Over one million m³ of contaminated sediment remediated at a cost of over \$154 million



**THESE
ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPROVEMENTS
ARE HEARTENING,
BUT THAT IS NOT
THE BEST PART OF
THE STORY!**

Ecological Recovery

- ❑ 25 active Bald Eagle nests after a 25-year absence
- ❑ Peregrine Falcons back and fledging 30 young
- ❑ Osprey nested in Gibraltar in 2009 – the first time in Wayne County since 1890s
- ❑ Sturgeon reproduction documented in 2001 – the first time in 30 years
- ❑ Whitefish spawning documented in the Detroit River in 2006 – first time since 1916
- ❑ In the 1970s, the walleye population was in crisis; today we are considered part of the “Walleye Capital of the World”
- ❑ Beaver are back in at least six locations in the watershed



One of the Most Remarkable Ecological Recovery Stories in North America!



Environmental and Natural Resource Challenges

- Population growth, transportation expansion, and land use changes
- Habitat loss and degradation
- Nonpoint source pollution
- Toxic substances contamination
- Introduction of exotic species
- Greenhouse gases and climate change

Detroit Made the River its Backdoor





- For over a century, city planners identified the highest and best use of the waterfront was “industrial”
- Detroit was an industrial town and it had a working riverfront that supported industry and commerce
- And the Detroit River was perceived as just a working river in the industrial heartland



- Fewer people and industries
- Much underutilized and undervalued riverfront land
- Out of the convergence of growing public and private support to gain access to the Detroit River, revival of the river, new designations as American and Canadian Heritage Rivers, and the establishment of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge came an opportunity to re-envision the downtown Detroit waterfront as a gathering place for both people and wildlife

Detroit Riverfront Conservancy



- Established in 2003
- 501 c 3 organization
- Public-private partnership
- 44-member Board of Directors
- Vision: Transform Detroit's international riverfront - the face of the city - into a beautiful, exciting, safe, accessible world-class gathering place for all

A vibrant, sunny day in a park. In the foreground, a gravel path winds through a lush garden of colorful flowers, including orange and red blooms. To the left, a blue river flows under a white stone bridge with multiple arches. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. On the right, tall green trees line a paved path. A modern, grey metal bench is visible on the gravel path. A black lamppost stands near the river. The overall scene is bright and inviting.

**“BEAUTIFUL, EXCITING,
SAFE, ACCESSIBLE...”**



**...WORLD-CLASS GATHERING
PLACE...**

..FOR ALL"

I ♥ Detroit
#SummerOnTheD



Detroit Riverwalk



- \$110 million raised in the first 10 years
- In addition, \$40 million invested in an endowment to operate, care, maintain, and steward the Detroit RiverWalk



Before



After – Milliken State Park



Before



After – GM Plaza



Before



After – Cullen Plaza



Before



After – Milliken State Park



Before



After Stroh River Place



Before



After – Gabriel Richard Park

And It Just Gets Better!



Detroit Riverwalk



- Nearly 80% complete
- 3.5 miles completed
- 3 million annual visitors (surveys have shown that 90% of these visits would not have taken place without the riverfront improvements)
- City's most attractive feature
- Open every day, free, welcoming to all, and rapidly becoming a major tourist attraction
- The Detroit RiverWalk is rapidly becoming the iconographic image of Detroit in the 21st Century and a key supporting element in Detroit's revival

Economic Benefits (CSL International, 2013)

CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS	
Riverfront construction and land value	\$1.548 billion
Portion attributable to riverfront	\$639 million
Construction period jobs	16,700
ANNUAL IMPACTS	
Total annual spending by visitors, residents, and employees	\$43.7 million
Combined annual spending: 2003-2013	\$360.6 million
Annual positive media value	\$600,000
Annual jobs	1,300
Total annual tax revenue generation	\$4.5 million

TOTAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE FIRST 10 YEARS - \$1 BILLION

A vibrant, sunny day on a boardwalk. In the foreground, a man in a black t-shirt and blue shorts walks towards the camera. To his right, a woman in a floral top and green pants walks away. Further right, a woman in a colorful striped tank top pushes a green stroller with a baby inside. Next to her, a man in a maroon t-shirt with 'TUSKEGEE' printed on it and black shorts walks towards the camera. To his right, a woman in a colorful patterned tank top and blue shorts walks away. The boardwalk is paved and lined with a metal railing on the left and lush green trees and bushes on the right. In the background, a large white boat is docked, and a suspension bridge spans across the water under a clear blue sky. The word 'PROGRAMMING' is overlaid in large, white, serif capital letters across the center of the image.

PROGRAMMING

WALKS & RUNS





GM READING & RHYTHM ON THE RIVERFRONT



FISHING FEST

A large, diverse crowd of people is gathered at an outdoor festival. In the foreground, a man in a light-colored uniform stands on a stage, speaking into a microphone. The crowd is seated on bleachers and is looking towards the speaker. In the background, there are various festival structures, including a colorful booth with American flags and a sign that says "FRESH CUT FRUIT". The scene is set in an urban area with tall buildings in the distance.

GM RIVER DAYS

An aerial photograph of a social event on a greenway. The scene is filled with people, some walking and some on bicycles. There are several blue tents and a large mural on a building wall featuring a blue and purple abstract design. A yellow bus and a black van are parked on the right side. The text "SOIREE ON THE GREENWAY" is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.

SOIREE ON THE GREENWAY



YOGA ON THE RIVER



MOONLIGHT YOGA

RAIN BARREL WORKSHOPS



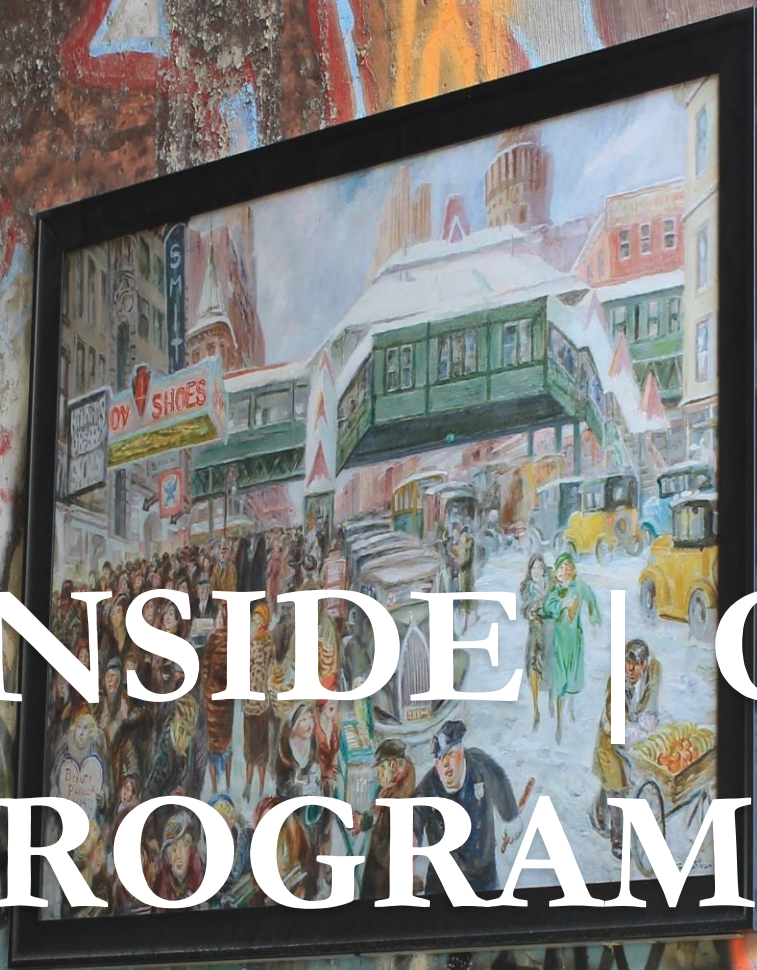


SLOW ROLL ON THE CUT



PUBLIC ART

DIA INSIDE | OUT PROGRAM



Fourteenth Street at Sixth Avenue, 1914
John Sloan
1914
The painting depicts a busy street scene in New York City, showing a mix of people, vintage cars, and buildings. The scene is filled with energy and movement, capturing a moment in time from the early 20th century. The artist, John Sloan, is known for his realistic and expressive style, often depicting the everyday life of the city.



HARVESTFEST IN THE D



The Detroit RiverWalk
is welcoming to all and
is striving to achieve
benefits to all!



- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.
- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- Detroit was the epicenter of the fur trade, an unparalleled leader of ship building for 100 years, the “Silicon Valley” of the industrial age, and the unquestioned leader of the Arsenal of Democracy.
- Detroit is a city of innovation, resilience, and leadership in responding to paradigm shifts.
- We have now entered the sustainability paradigm shift.
- Detroit has the ability to be a leader of sustainability paradigm shift, pivoting as it has at each previous paradigm shift, to redefine itself and lead the nation and world down a more sustainable path.



Thank you!