

Mayor Bing Announces Parks and Recreation Closures and Cuts Due to City Council's Belle Isle Decision www.detroitmi.gov

1/31/2013 – Detroit Mayor Dave Bing today announced that 50 Detroit parks will close this spring and the operation of other City parks and recreation centers will be severely impacted, due to the Detroit City Council's failure to approve a Belle Isle lease agreement with the State of Michigan.

"Recreation is a fundamental function for all citizens, and a key to the quality of life in any city," Mayor Bing said. "The inaction by City Council and resulting retraction of the State's participation not only negatively affects Belle Isle, but also has significant impact on the City's other parks and services."

Because Belle Isle costs the City of Detroit \$6.2 million each year to operate and maintain, the loss of the State lease therefore amounts to lost savings for the City. For instance, the 36 staff members who maintain Belle Isle could have been used to staff seven five-member mowing crews that the City's General Services Department could have employed at other parks and outdoor facilities.

Besides the closing of 50 Detroit parks, the loss of the Belle Isle lease will result in 38 parks being moved to limited service status. This means maintenance, such as grass cutting, will occur at these parks on a 25-40 day cycle, instead of the 10-14 day cycle that the City's premier parks receive.

In addition, a planned extension of operational hours will not proceed at six City recreation centers: Adams-Butzel; Coleman A. Young; Patton; Williams; Heilmann; and the Northwest Activities Center. The Recreation Department must also terminate plans to hire 10 fulltime employees and 40 part-time employees to help launch new programs, especially those designed for young people and senior citizens.