

## Hotel, Restaurants Considered As New York Consultant Develops Plan For Detroit's Belle Isle

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Belle Isle Conservatory (credit: Roberta Jasina/WWJ)

DETROIT (WWJ/AP) – A strategic plan is being developed for Detroit's Belle Isle that could lead to lodgings, restaurants and more on the island.

The Detroit Free Press reports the Belle Isle Conservancy met recently with a New York-based redevelopment and architectural consultant Biederman Redevelopment Ventures as it considers ways to redefine the island. The consultant has four to six months to complete the strategic plan.

Dan Biederman, president of the consulting firm, says there's a clear need for food facilities on the 982-acre island.

Conservancy president Michele Hodges estimates adding lodging — including a hotel, cabins and camping facilities — and restaurants would cost “hundreds of millions of dollars.”

She pictures more than just spiffed up pavilions.

“We’re talking bricks and mortar,” Hodges said in an interview. “...Everything’s on the table at the moment.”

Belle Isle became a state park last year as part of a cost-cutting effort for Detroit. Under the terms of a 30-year lease, the state took control of the Detroit-owned 985-acre island on Feb. 20, 2014.

Since then, some in Detroit have expressed concern that locals were being chased out of the park, which has long been popular as an evening gathering place for young people and a favorite spot for family reunions.

No matter what the consultant comes up with, Michigan Department of Natural Resources chief Ron Olson says the conservancy would need approval from the state for move forward with any plans for Belle Isle.