



Davis Park Riverfront Amphitheater Redevelopment

Rockford, Illinois

HSP was engaged by the Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau to conduct a market, feasibility, governance and impact analysis related to the redevelopment of Davis Park at Founder's Landing. Davis Park is on the riverfront in downtown Rockford, bordered by the Rock River and Main Street. The park is seven acres of grass and paved walkways that currently hosts outdoor festivals, fairs, concerts, and other community-wide events. The park was originally designed as an entertainment venue to include three main stages and 3 secondary stages.

Rockford worked with Gary W. Anderson Architects (involved with the initial development of the park) in order to create a development masterplan for the redevelopment of Davis Park. Planning priorities included the importance of maintaining park space for festival and concert activities and implementing versatile spaces that are able to be programmed and used by multiple audiences throughout the year.

HSP's preliminary findings revealed that Rockford's seasonality and its proximity to large-scale festivals and event venues in Milwaukee and the greater Chicago market limit the opportunity for an outdoor entertainment venue. However, regional promoters and industry experts believe that there is a gap in the competitive regional market for a high-quality, mid-size amphitheater development that features both covered, reserved seats and a general admission area. With a 4,500 to 5,500-capacity amphitheater that features the amenities and infrastructure required for modern concerts, an outdoor venue at Davis Park would likely be able to attract eight to ten ticketed concerts per year. The alternative is a smaller investment in an outdoor stage/amphitheater and general seating lawn setup that allows for opportunistic concerts to occur.

Client: Rockford Area CVB

Time Period: 2018 - Present