

Memphis Riverfront Concept



Location

Memphis

Status

Completed 2017

Type

Civic

Size

6 miles

Tags

Community, Ecological, Social Connectivity, Urban Design, Water

[View the Memphis Riverfront Concept book for more information about the project.](#)

The Memphis Riverfront Concept describes how six miles of the city's Mississippi riverfront can become a signature network of spaces and opportunities, tied into the city and its assets, that benefits the entire community and lifts Memphis as a whole.

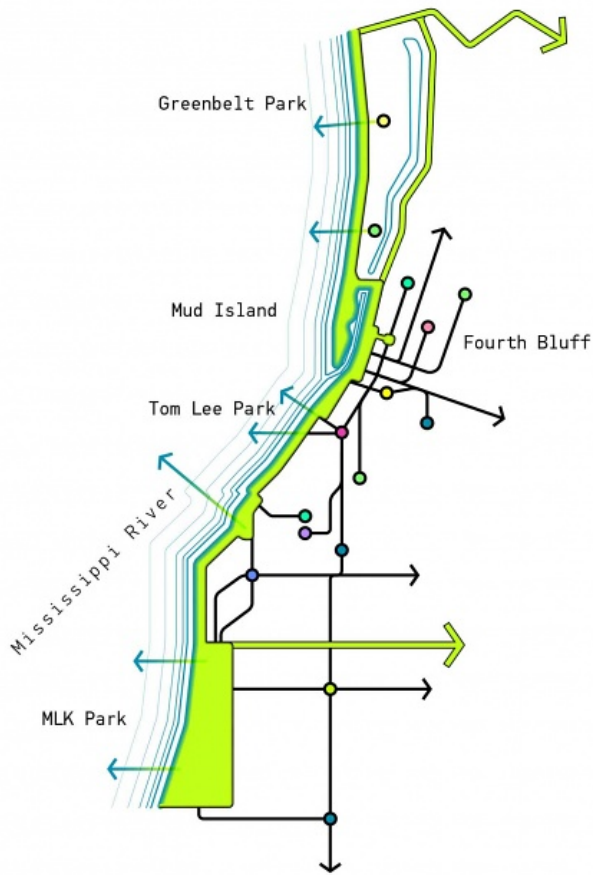
The Concept focuses on showing how five zones—the Fourth Bluff, Mud Island, Tom Lee Park, MLK Park, and Greenbelt Park—can leverage their particular strengths to become distinctive places offering activities and experiences that appeal to people of all generations, incomes, races, and backgrounds.

Many of the Concept's proposed uses, from an iconic adventure playground to a special outlook where people can listen to live music at sunset, come directly from community members' suggestions. Together, they are designed to offer something at all times of day and year—building on the dynamic rhythms of Memphis and the Mississippi to increase the riverfront's use, vibrancy, and economic potential.

Three design principles underlie the Concept's recommendations: **Foster** positive encounters, civic pride and identity, and new understanding of the Mississippi River; **Restore** natural conditions, native ecology, and a more dynamic relationship between people and the river; and **Connect** assets along the river, the riverfront to the city (downtown and the neighborhoods beyond), and people with each other. Developed through an integrated process of research, community engagement, and analysis, they ensure that the Concept works from the site's specific opportunities and challenges to achieve Memphians' aspirations for their riverfront.

The Concept's interventions are designed as a connected series of short-, medium-, and long-term investments. These can add up over time according to available funding and interest—demonstrating how a renewed Memphis Riverfront can not only be inclusive and inspiring, but

actionable and realistic as well.



Elevating visitors above the river in Greenbelt Park, a thick arch of native trees directs views across the Mississippi and provides great habitat for birds and other animals. Below the walkway, visitors can explore a native wetland on foot or by kayak, depending on the rise and fall of the river.



A variety of new amenities at Tom Lee Park, from an adventure playground to an elegant pavilion, would provide park users with many activity options in all seasons. Different types of trails would allow for different speeds of movement through the park, while areas of respite and shade encourage everyone to relax and take in the Mississippi.



Support

The Memphis Riverfront Concept was commissioned for the Mayor's Riverfront Task Force, with generous support from the Hyde Family Foundation and the Kresge Foundation.

A variety of new plantings and structures that amplify Mud Island's river ecology can help transform the peninsula into an active place offering a diverse array of opportunities for learning, teaching, research, gathering, and simply enjoying the outdoors.