



**Design Review Board (DRB)  
Staff Report**

*Art Installation*

Case # 19-42: “Memphis” Art Installation  
Mud Island River Park  
Memphis, TN 38104

Applicant/Owner: Memphis River Parks Partnership  
22 N Front St. Suite 960  
Memphis, TN 38103

Background: The proposed art installation to read “Memphis” is proposed by the Memphis River Parks Partnership in collaboration with the Memphis Brand Initiative, Downtown Memphis Commission and the City of Memphis. The installation is meant to create a new photo opportunity Downtown and promote the “We are Memphis” branding for Memphis’ Bicentennial.

Similar installations are popular around the world as they create new destinations in large cities and promote the city through social media. The large letters that spell “Memphis” will be placed on Mud Island to highlight Downtown’s skyline and create an iconic view of Memphis.

Project Description: The sign will measure 10 ft. (h) x 50 ft. (w) and use a typeface derived from the We are Memphis brand. It will be illuminated with separate fixtures not attached to the installation.

The letters that spell “Memphis” will be steel with steel plate front and back face. The sides of the letters will be wrapped in 11 gauge steel. Each letter will have a steel base plate that will be anchored to a concrete pad. The anchor hardware connecting the letters to the concrete footing will be stainless steel threaded rods.

Staff Report: The proposed installation is consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and Principles, and the outlined goals for the Riverfront Context. Goals for the Riverfront include preserving view opportunities to the river from public viewpoints, maximizing opportunities for outdoor uses that support recreational activities and promoting creative new designs for public features that complement the natural character and heritage.

The proposed design is consistent with these goals as it designates a new view for the public, creates a new destination and opportunity for activation on Mud Island, and introduces a creative design that has been proven successful in other cities. Collectively, this unique public art piece will help celebrate Memphis' Bicentennial and highlight the evolving Riverfront.

Staff is supportive and believes that the proposed installment will help capture the spirit of Downtown as the front door of Memphis.

**Staff Recommendation:**      **Staff recommends approval of the art installation as proposed.**