



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

Site Improvements

Case # 18-80: Memphis Park Improvements
Memphis Park
Memphis, TN 38103

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

Owner: Memphis Greenspace
40 S Main St. Suite 2900
Memphis, TN 38103

Background: Memphis Park is located on Front St. as a part of Fourth Bluff and bordered by Jefferson Ave. on the north, Front Ave. on the east, Riverside Dr. on the west and Court Ave. on the South.

As part of the Civic Commons project, the Memphis River Park Partnership is looking to continue public space enhancements along the River to Memphis Park. Building off of the existing assets and uses of the site, the design maintains open green space, highlights river views and increases connections at a critical location on Front St. The park is a keystone piece in connecting the city's riverfront network by tying into the greater circulation system.

Project Description: The proposed improvements will create a greener, leafier and more natural space that does a better job at connecting with both the bluff walk and River Garden. The park will be levelled to improve sight lines, new pathways will be added to improve travel patterns, new trees will be installed to create a more welcoming ambiance and the bird houses that mark River Garden will lead the way to the bluff staircase. Lightweight, flexible furnishings will be added and the park will become more versatile for large-scale events.

The new park trails will meet park visitors at the base of the pedestrian crosswalk on Front St. and lead them to the Riverwalk/Court Ave Bridge on the SW corner and the NW River Garden. This wood fiber path with metal edging will enhance

pedestrian connections between Downtown and other greenspaces along the river.

The new dining area will be created in the two central spaces in the park with a variety of movable tables, chairs and umbrellas to create a concentration of places to sit. Compacted stone fines will be added as the ground cover, in addition to a few new trees.

Trees will be planted along the Front St. frontage in addition to the new dining area to create shade and create a greener park. These trees will serve to replace a few unhealthy trees as well as increase the canopy of the park.

The pathway to the River Garden will also be embellished with birdhouses, similar in design to the ones in River Garden, on the NW corner of the park.

Lawn games and activities will be added throughout the park to foster a diversity of uses and users for the park and creating a play space using giant jenga, chess, checkers, etc.

Staff Report:

The proposed site enhancements are consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of promoting creativity, enhancing the public realm and providing signature open spaces.

The proposed design for Memphis Park creatively introduces new play and dining areas using movable furniture, while improving the landscaping for the whole park. The design encourages children and adults to interact with the space in a new way and creates an enhanced destination at the Fourth Bluff, similar to River Garden.

Staff believes the design elevates the park's present layout and user experience, inviting more people to the park and the riverfront. Whether someone is walking through the park or stopping to interact with one of the many elements, the design offers a variety of experiences that enhance the public realm as a whole and create a signature space for Downtown Memphis.

Staff supports the proposed design as a strong addition to the riverfront, destination to downtown and a positive direction for public spaces in Memphis.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval, with the condition the proposed improvements receive all additional necessary and required approvals.