

LOCAL

How many people have visited Tom Lee Park? Memphis River Parks Partnership gives update

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At a Shelby County Commission committee meeting on Wednesday, Memphis River Parks Partnership officials including CEO Carol Coletta, Chairman Tyree C. Daniels, and Director of Development Andrew Kiepe gave an update on the partnership.

According to the Memphis River Parks Partnership presentation at the meeting, 700,000 people from over 182 zip codes have visited Tom Lee Park since its opening on Labor Day of 2023. And 57% of those visitors say they are visiting Tom Lee Park using alternate forms of transportation.

The Memphis River Parks Partnership is a non-profit whose mission is to renovate and curate the six miles and 23 properties of the Mississippi Riverfront. In 2017, then-Mayor Jim Strickland and other city leaders created a task force to restore the riverfront.

Studio Gang, an international Urban Design Practice, was commissioned for the park's transformation. According to the Memphis River Parks Partnership website, "Work to execute the Concept started quickly with the reinvention of two former Confederate parks, now River Garden and Fourth Bluff Park, completed in 2018 and 2019. The River Line—a five-mile walking and biking trail that connects all river parks—opened in 2018. The most visible and accessible riverfront park in Memphis—Tom Lee Park—was next."

On June 6, the Memphis River Parks Partnership leaders announced a new addition to Tom Lee Park, a Mississippi River overlook: The Memphis Flyway. Upcoming renovations of the Mississippi River Museum at Mud Island dubbed the "River of Time" project entered the initial fundraising stages on June 10.

The Memphis Flyway is expected to be finished by 2026. Memphis River Parks Partnership leadership hopes the observation deck will be an iconic stop along the Mississippi River.

"We believe that this is going to be a great opportunity to draw in travelers who are looking for an intentional experience to get close to the waterway," Kiepe said.