

Wolf River Greenway could be completed in 2031

By [Wallis Rogin](#), Daily Memphian

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The Wolf River Greenway will be a 26-mile paved trail stretching from Mud Island to just past Shelby Farms Park, where it connects to paths to Germantown and Collierville. (The Daily Memphian file)

Mile by mile, the Wolf River Greenway has been steadily threading its way across Memphis.

It should be fully completed within the next five years, according to Wolf River Conservancy Executive Director Erik Houston.

“I hope that the Greenway provides access for every Memphian to go out and enjoy and experience the incredible natural heritage of their community,” Houston said during a meeting Wednesday, Aug. 19, to update the public on the greenway’s progress. “It’s connecting these 22 different communities, and it serves many roles for different people.”

Once completed, the Greenway will be a 26-mile paved trail stretching from Mud Island to just past Shelby Farms Park, where it connects to paths to Germantown and Collierville. The project is a collaboration with Memphis, Shelby County and the Tennessee Department of Transportation; the conservancy is managing the project while the City of Memphis maintains the paths.

During Wednesday's meeting, Findley Frazer, an environmental engineer who serves as the project manager for the Greenway, said that 16.75 miles of the pathway will be open by the end of 2026.

Attendee and regular biker Andy Greenman said he's encouraged by the conservancy's progress and also ready to have a continuous path across the city.

"I'm an avid biker, and right now it's all kinds of chopped up," Greenman said. "The sections are great, but it's not connected, so I think the public is looking forward to seeing the completion."

Frazer said the construction order for each section was intentional, meant to get different communities excited about the project. They also had to consider funding restrictions.

Frazer said that, by the end of this year, the Greenway will allow runners and riders to travel from the northern end of Kennedy Park in northeast Memphis to Cameron Brown Park in Germantown "without crossing a single road."

"There's so many people who don't have access to a park and this basically brings a linear park to Memphis," Frazer said. "There's 180,000 people living within a 20-minute walk of the Greenway, and it connects community points of interest."

In total, the Greenway is a \$95 million public-private project, according to Frazer.

In 2024, the Wolf River Conservancy was awarded a \$21.8 million federal grant through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program.

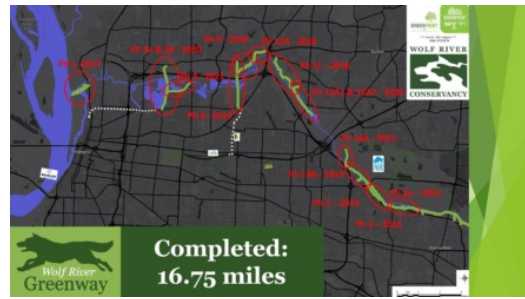
To date, only half a mile of the trail still lacks funding, Frazer said.

"Knowing that funding is secured for a majority of the Greenway is exciting for me," Greenman, the avid biker, said. "I'm happy with their work. They're going full steam."

The greenway's main obstacle at this point will likely be administrative setbacks related to permits, reviews and easements, given the number of government entities involved in the project. Houston said that despite it being a

"complex project," they appreciate support from local municipalities.

Attendees at Wednesday's meeting also brought up maintenance issues, specifically on South Highland Street. Memphis Parks maintains most of the Greenway, but roads such as Highland Street and McLean Boulevard fall under Memphis Public Works.



Greenway map. (Courtesy Wolf River Conservancy)

“I think that blight and illegal dumping — things like tires and couches — are prominent across the city, and the on-street sections of the Wolf River Greenway are not different,” Houston said. “We work very closely with public works and general services at the city, as well as our own team and volunteers, to go out and make sure that those areas are being cleaned up.”

Once the project moves past construction, Frazer said he’s excited to see the “activation” of the greenway and that public art could be part of that.

“Memphis has a reputation for many things. Beautiful green spaces are not usually one of them, but we disagree with that,” Houston said. “We think the Wolf River Greenway is a world-class asset that is unrivaled anywhere in the country. It’s something that this community can be incredibly proud of.”



Wolf River Conservancy Executive Director Erik Houston said once completed, he hopes the Wolf River Greenway will be a "world-class



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