

# Reimagining the Civic Commons



# Civic Commons Learning Journey: Memphis

June 8-10, 2023



**Welcome**

# Welcome to Civic Commons Learning Journey: Memphis

One of the best ways to learn is to see things in person and talk with the instigators who are bringing about change in their own communities. This Civic Commons learning journey offers exactly that.

We are so pleased to have you participate in this exploration of Memphis.

Thanks to our local host, the Memphis Civic Commons Team, over the next few days you'll have the opportunity to experience public places and neighborhoods that bring socioeconomic mixing and civic engagement to life. You will explore Memphis by foot & bus and have frank conversations with local leaders on the work they are pursuing, what works and what doesn't.

Leaders and community residents from many sectors including local government, design, urban planning and economic development will offer the context, successes and challenges they have faced in building and sustaining public places that foster communities where everyone belongs.

Along with active touring, we will also take time to reflect on and share how our experiences may influence our work at home.

And throughout you'll have a chance to appreciate local cuisine and reconnect with colleagues from other cities.

Come with a curious mind, ready for candid conversations. And leave inspired with new insights for your own work.

We look forward to learning together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget M." followed by a horizontal line.

**Bridget Marquis**

Director

Reimagining the Civic Commons

# Itinerary

## Thursday, June 8: The Memphis Riverfront

Time	Activity	Location
8:40 AM	Meet in Lobby of Hyatt Centric	33 Beale Street
9 – 10 AM	Welcome to Memphis with George Abbott Breakfast at Beale Street Landing	251 Riverside Drive
10 AM – 12:30 PM	The Fourth Bluff	
	A Nature-Forward Approach: River Garden with Harry Babb & Jhane Kunkel	51 Riverside Drive
	Programming to Rebuild a Sense of Joy: Fourth Bluff Park with Tonya Dyson, Penelope Huston & Jasmine Stokes	North Front Street
	A Civic Campus: Cossitt Library & Brooks Museum with Brian Lyles, Emily Marks, Keenon McCloy & Jeff Rhodin	33 South Front Street
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Lunch at Dos Hermanos Kitchen	33 South Front Street
1:30 – 3 PM	Free Exploration	
3 PM	Meet in Lobby of Hyatt Centric	33 Beale Street
3 – 5:15 PM	Tom Lee Park	Riverside Drive
	A Riverfront for All: Tom Lee Park Walking Tour with George Abbott	
	Fulfilling the Promise of Tom Lee Park: Creating Engaged, Inclusive and Welcoming Public Space with Carol Coletta, Michalyn Easter-Thomas, Tommi Laitio & Terrance Smith	
5:15 – 6:15 PM	Social Hour at the Sunset Deck	
6:30 PM	Dinner at Slider Inn	363 Mulberry Street

## Friday, June 9: Overton Park | Crosstown | The Heights

Time	Activity	Location
8:30 AM	Meet in Lobby of Hyatt Centric & Board Bus	33 Beale Street
9 – 11:30 AM	Overton Park	
	Welcome to Overton Park with Kaci Murley & Tina Sullivan Breakfast at Overton Park	East Parkway Pavilion
	Forest as Classroom: Old Forest Paved Trail with Eric Bridges & Malle Carrasco-Harris	
	Advocacy & Park Partnerships with Mickey Barker, Kaci Murley, Tina Sullivan & Nick Walker	Abe Goodman Golf Clubhouse
	Archive Exhibit: The Overton Park Shell	Overton Park Shell
11:45 AM – 1:15 PM	Centering Diversity in a Vertical Village with Todd Richardson Lunch at Crosstown Concourse	1350 Concourse Ave
1:15 – 1:30 PM	Engaging a Neighborhood in Adaptive Reuse: Northside High School by bus with Jamal Boddie	
1:30 – 2:20 PM	The Heights	
	The Nexus of Community Development and Public Space: Heights Line Design Studio with Jared Myers	751 National Street
	Building Community Through Small Business: Cxffee Black with Bartholomew Jones & Renata Henderson	761 National Street
2:20 PM	Board Bus at Cxffee Black	
3 – 3:40 PM	Gaston Park	1046 South 3rd Street
	Citywide Approach: Accelerate Memphis with Susannah Barton, Cleo Griffin, Maria Fuhrmann & Tiffany McCollins	
	Stewardship & Operations: Bloom with Jamal Boddie	
3:40 PM	Board Bus at Gaston Park to Hyatt Centric	
4 – 6 PM	Free Exploration	
6 PM	Meet in Lobby of Hyatt Centric Walk to Trolley	33 Beale Street
6:15 PM	Dinner at Wiseacre Brewing Co.	398 S.B.B. King Boulevard

# Itinerary

## Saturday, June 10: Bringing it Home

Time	Activity	Location
8:15 AM	Check out of Hyatt Centric	33 Beale Street
8:30 AM	Meet in Lobby & Walk to Trolley	33 Beale Street
9 AM	Rooftop Breakfast at Innovate Memphis	516 Tennessee Street
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Outing to Big River Crossing or South Main Farmer's Market	
10:30 – 11:15 AM	Remaking Downtowns in a Post-COVID Age with Carol Coletta & Paul Young	516 Tennessee Street
11:15 AM - Noon	Bringing it Home: Workshop	516 Tennessee Street
Noon – 1 PM	Lunch at Innovate Memphis	516 Tennessee Street

# Important Information

## What to Wear

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The attire for the trip is casual. Late spring in Memphis can be quite warm, with average highs in the 80's and lows around 70. We'll be out and about throughout the trip, so we encourage wearing loose, comfortable clothing like cotton tees and linen shorts and definitely your favorite walking shoes. Our site visits go on, rain or shine, so be sure to pack sunscreen and a hat; you may also want a light jacket for evenings.

## Contacts

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### **Bridget Marquis**

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### **Amanda Miller Amankona**

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## Social Media

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When you share insights and images on social media from our explorations, please tag **@CivicCommonsUS** and use hashtag **#CivicCommonsUS**.





# Our Local Hosts: Memphis



## **George Abbott • Memphis River Parks Partnership**

George Abbott leads marketing and communications, development, community engagement and programs for Memphis River Parks Partnership, the nonprofit leading the \$61 million transformation of Tom Lee Park on the Memphis Riverfront. Previously, Abbott served as Program Director (Cities) at the Knight Foundation. Abbott launched and led the Knight Cities Challenge and served as program director in three communities; Macon, San Jose and St. Paul. Abbott led communications at ArtPlace America, interned on the 2013 presidential inauguration and worked as an organizer on President Obama's 2012 reelection campaign. He is an author with published works including "The Economics Book: Big Ideas, Simply Explained." Abbott holds a bachelor's degree from Newcastle University in the UK.



## **Harry Babb • Native Roots Specialty Landscapes**

Harry Babb is a gardener/landscape designer that specializes in the implementation and management of native plant landscapes in the Mid-South. Growing up in North Mississippi, he developed a passion for the outdoors and natural environment. After a decade working in both commercial landscaping and outdoor recreation, he incorporated this love for nature into his landscape profession in 2021. He enjoys kayaking local waterways and spending time outdoors with his family.

# Our Local Hosts: Memphis



## **Mickey Barker** • Memphis Parks

Mickey Barker, PGA has served as Golf Administrator since 2014. Prior to 2014, served as Facility Manager/Head Golf Professional for the Links at Galloway. Mickey has been a PGA Professional for over 30 years. A Graduate of Lipscomb University, where he was a member of the golf team earning All-American honors in 1989. Mickey and his wife Michele live in the Oakland, TN area and have two children.



## **Susannah Barton** • City of Memphis

As administrator of the Office of Comprehensive Planning, Susannah Barton is responsible for directing the implementation of the City's comprehensive plan, Memphis 3.0, as well as the investment of nearly \$75 million in Memphis neighborhoods through the Accelerate Memphis initiative. She received her Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from SUNY Buffalo.



## **Jamal Boddie** • Bloom

Jamal Boddie is the Executive Director of Bloom, Inc., a park advocacy nonprofit in Memphis that focuses on creating stewards and parks friends' groups for neighborhood parks. As a native Memphian, Jamal cares deeply for Memphis and has been working to help the city grow and improve since he moved back in 2013.



**Eric Bridges • Overton Park Conservancy**

Eric is the Operations Director at Overton Park Conservancy and a PhD candidate in the Department of Forestry at Mississippi State University. His research is focused on the management of urban forested natural areas. Eric earned his B.S. in Forestry from Colorado State University and his M.S. in Forestry from Mississippi State University. He is a Society of American Foresters Certified Forester and an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist. He volunteers for the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council and was a founding member of the Memphis Tree Board.



**Malle Carrasco-Harris • Overton Park Conservancy**

Malle moved to Memphis to pursue her first job as a high school biology teacher, and she and her dog frequently sought solace on the trails in Overton Park. She started wondering about the challenges animals face living in urban environments, and she and her advisors at the University of Memphis pursued those questions through her copperhead research. Upon graduation, she transferred her skills in spatial analytics to support research in store development at AutoZone. She joined the Conservancy to develop programs that allow people to learn together about this gem in the heart of the city.

# Our Local Hosts: Memphis



## **Carol Coletta** • Memphis River Parks Partnership

Carol Coletta is CEO of Memphis River Parks Partnership, leading the relaunch of a nonprofit to develop, manage and program six miles of riverfront and five park districts along the Mississippi. Previously, she was a senior fellow at The Kresge Foundation and VP of Community and National Initiatives at Knight Foundation. Carol led the start-up of ArtPlace, a broad collaboration to accelerate creative placemaking and was president and CEO of CEOs for Cities. She also served as executive director of the Mayors' Institute on City Design.



## **Christina Crutchfield** • BLDG Memphis

Christina Crutchfield is the Director of Neighborhood Planning for BLDG Memphis.



## **Susan Dalton** • Innovate Memphis

Susan serves as Director of Strategic Initiatives with Innovate Memphis, a non-profit igniting change through programs and partnerships to address long-standing civic challenges related to public space, neighborhood vitality, transportation, and open data. She supports local Civic Commons partners, including parks conservancies, community development organizations, and the City of Memphis.



**Tonya Dyson • Memphis Slim House**

An accomplished professional performer as well as an energetic creator and supporter of the arts, Tonya is building on the hallowed ground of Soulsville and beyond. As the Executive Director of the Memphis Slim Collaboratory, she communicates the historic home's mission to foster new artistic expression, and manages a member-supported, collaborative performance, recording, rehearsal, meeting and event space. She also hosts the annual summer Soulin on the River concert series with Memphis River Parks Partnership.



**Maria Fuhrmann • City of Memphis**

Maria Fuhrmann serves as Chief of Staff for Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland. Maria came to city government in 2006 as a Research Analyst for the Memphis City Council and previously served as Special Assistant to the Mayor for Research and Innovation and Grant Coordinator for the City of Memphis. Maria is a graduate of the University of Memphis and has lived in her adopted hometown since 1991. Maria is passionate about leveraging Memphis' unique assets to create a vibrant and thriving urban core, encourage quality infill development in the inner city, and provide a range of safe, convenient, sustainable mobility choices.

# Our Local Hosts: Memphis



## **Penelope Huston** • Downtown Memphis Commission

Penelope Huston is the VP of Marketing, Communications & Events for the Downtown Memphis Commission, overseeing the organization's public engagement strategies. She is a native Memphian, and spent her entire professional career building community and creating strategies to grow engagement.



## **Jhane Kunkel** • Memphis River Parks Partnership

Jhane comes to Memphis River Parks as a Lead Ranger from a Parks Director role in Pennsylvania. She's worked on projects developing partnerships with conservancies building native plant greenhouses, served on conference boards for Pennsylvania Recreation & Parks Society, brought and organized The PA Master Naturalist Program to her county, and proposed, built, and just opened a new nature park before moving. She also served on the Board of Directors for the Horseshoe Trail. She's a lover of movement outdoors and looks forward to learning in her new role along the Bluff. She takes other people having fun very seriously.



**Tommi Laitio • Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation**

Tommi Laitio is the inaugural Public Innovation Fellow at the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins University. Tommi Laitio brings to the fellowship a decade of senior city leadership experience from Helsinki, which regularly ranks high on global livability and democracy rankings. He joined the City of Helsinki as Director of Youth Affairs and was later elected as the first Executive Director of Culture and Leisure - acting as a member of the mayor's executive team with an overall responsibility for arts and culture, sports, public library, and youth work. Laitio is currently conducting research on the topic of Partnerships for Parks and Libraries, which explores the idea of conviviality and seeks to identify institutional and relational practices that recognize friction as a natural state of affairs.



**Brian Lyles • Memphis Public Libraries**

Brian Lyles is the new Senior Manager of the Cossitt Library. Brian brings 15 years of sales leadership and operations management experience in the telecommunications industry. In his previous roles, Brian has provided peer-to-peer manager training, redesigned and facilitated career development programs for aspiring leaders and implemented team coaching to cultivate engagement, collaboration and participation within the organization.

# Our Local Hosts: Memphis



## **Emily Marks** • Memphis Public Libraries

Emily Marks is on the Programming Team of The Cossitt Library. She brings over 20 years of experience in Arts Management and Community Engagement to her role and was recently named a Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Fellow.



## **Keenon McCloy** • Memphis Public Libraries

Director of Memphis Public Libraries (MPL), Keenon McCloy has served the City of Memphis in various capacities since 1992. Since 2008, she has reimagined MPL to go beyond books with a wide variety of unique programs designed to reach all ages and learning levels. Her innovative leadership has yielded great success, including receiving the 2021 National Medal for top three libraries in the U.S. from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).



## **Tiffany McCollins** • Memphis Parks

Tiffany is the Youth and Family Services Administrator overseeing Community Centers and Senior Centers for Memphis Parks.





**Kaci Murley • Overton Park Conservancy**

In her role with Overton Park Conservancy, Kaci Murley helps lead a team dedicated to protecting, preserving, and improving 342 acres of public parkland – including the only urban, old-growth forest in the Southeastern U.S. – located in the geographic and symbolic center of Memphis, TN. Previously, she worked in various community development and advocacy roles in higher education, helping Tennessee in becoming the first state to offer free community and technical college. Kaci enthusiastically believes in the potential of the Memphis community and works each day to share that optimism with the world.



**Jared Myers • The Heights CDC**

Jared Myers is currently working as the Executive Director for the Heights Community Development Corporation. He is a native Memphian who received his masters in Urban Studies from Eastern University in Philadelphia and his bachelors in Psychology from the University of Memphis. Jared co-led the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program grant as part of President Obama's Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative from 2013-May 2015, which provided the Heights community of Memphis with a revitalization plan that is currently being implemented. Jared enjoys assisting neighborhood groups in developing strategies that focus on using public spaces as catalysts for community revitalization. The most recent project, the Heights Line, is a public green space improvement on an old streetcar line that will expand an existing median into a multi use promenade and park space. Jared, his wife Erin, and daughter June and son Patrick are proud Heights residents.

# Our Local Hosts: Memphis



## **Todd Richardson** • Crosstown Concourse

Dr. Todd Richardson is a co-founder of Crosstown Arts and Co-Leader of Crosstown Concourse. Richardson is also an associate professor of European Renaissance Art at the University of Memphis. Since 2010, he has led the effort to transform the historic, 1.5 million-square-foot Sears Crosstown building into a vertical urban village anchored in arts, education and healthcare. The \$210 million project has garnered local, national, and even international attention including winning the grand prize from the 2018 Congress for New Urbanism and a gold medal from the 2019 Rudy Bruner award.



## **Terrance Smith** • Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation

Terrance Smith brings over a decade of experience in the public sector to his role as one of the inaugural Bloomberg Public Innovation Fellows at Johns Hopkins University. Previously Terrance led an innovation team in the City of Mobile, Alabama that has drawn local praise and national attention for deploying innovative approaches to improving quality of life for residents. He is the founder of the Office of Strategic Initiatives, which houses the Innovation Team and Datacenter. Bloomberg's CityLab named Terrace one of "Six Innovators to Watch" and he has appeared on the cover of the Mobile Bay Magazine' Forty Under 40 issue. He is a graduate of the University of South Alabama and, as a native of Mobile, has a deep-rooted connection to Mobile County and its surrounding areas. Terrance leads research to help public innovation leaders, communities, and contributors across the globe better capture emerging opportunities that advance equity and improve the quality of life for people. He lives by the motto: Make Mistakes, Make Improvements, Never Make Excuses!



**Jasmine Stokes • Memphis River Parks Partnership**

Jasmine Stokes is the Director of Programming and Engagement for Memphis River Parks Partnership. She is responsible for opportunities that connect visitors to each other and the Memphis riverfront. Her work at the Partnership helps activate spaces creating fun, welcoming environments, encourages stewardship of the riverfront and moves forward the legacy of Tom Lee. Stokes earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology from New Mexico State University and a Master of Science in Sport Commerce from University of Memphis.



**Tina Sullivan • Overton Park Conservancy**

Tina Sullivan is the executive director of Overton Park Conservancy, which stewards historic Overton Park. The Conservancy's vision is to cultivate a beautiful, safe, and welcoming park for every Memphian. Drawing on her background in communications, conservation, and nonprofit management, Tina seeks to intentionally nurture a sense of community in which individuals from diverse backgrounds find a shared joy, belonging, and connection through their collective experiences in Overton Park.



**Nick Walker • Memphis Parks**

Where science and nature meet, you'll find Nick Walker. Nick has been director of Memphis Parks for almost three years after serving as deputy director for nearly two years prior. Through his work, Nick integrates analytics and measurement as he strives for quality and equality.

# Our Local Hosts: Memphis



## **Andrew Weda** • Overton Park Conservancy

Andrew is the Operations Manager at Overton Park Conservancy. He graduated from the University of Memphis with a master's in Public Administration, building on his degree in Professional Studies and Non Profit Administration. He started working with the Overton Park Conservancy in 2015 as an intern via the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, then joined as Visitors Services Coordinator in 2016.



## **Paul Young** • Downtown Memphis Commission

Paul A. Young currently serves as the President and CEO of the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC), the organization tasked with economic and community development in the Central Business Improvement District. In this role, Young leads the work to create a thriving and vital Downtown district that benefits the entire region. Young's passion for community service has been evident throughout his career. Before joining the DMC, Young served as Director of the City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD), where he was responsible for furthering city-wide community development initiatives, including administering an annual budget of over \$16 million from federal and local funding sources. Mr. Young holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, a Master of City and Regional Planning, and a Master of Science in Business Administration from the University of Memphis. He is married to Dr. Jamila Smith-Young. They have two children, Zoë (10) and Paxton (6).



# Participant Biographies



## **Harold Baillie • Lexington**

Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government

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Hal is a Senior Planner for Lexington's Division of Planning in the Long Range Planning Section. He has a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning and a Master's in Anthropology. His focus is on the historical development of policy and modernizing planning practices to ensure equitable and just solutions.



## **Aminata Sandra Calhoun • Philadelphia**

Centennial Parkside CDC

[scalhoun@centennialparkside.org](mailto:scalhoun@centennialparkside.org)

Aminata Sandra Calhoun lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and was formally educated at Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Her M.A. degree provided her with skills and resources to empower and enhance the quality of people's lives. Since then, she has become engulfed in creating a mindful zero waste public domain in underserved communities. She is expanding her interest and education in environmental sustainability, cannabis/hemp and industrial hemp, and her community activism parallels all that she does



**Andrea Cooke • Macon**

The Southern Center for Choice Theory

[Acooke@thesoutherncenterforchoicetheory.com](mailto:Acooke@thesoutherncenterforchoicetheory.com)

Andrea Cooke is a married mother of eight, and an MFT Doctoral Candidate in the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program at Antioch University in Keene, NH. She holds a bachelor's in social work from THE Fort Valley State University, and a masters in MFT from Mercer University. Andrea currently at the Southern Center for Choice Theory and started a non-profit called C-QUL. She's a Leadership Macon graduate, Middle Georgia Regional Leadership Champion, and founding member of Macon Periods Easier, was named to Macon Magazine's Top 5 under 40 and most recently, has helped form and operate the Macon Mental Health Matters Initiative.



**Kathryn Dennis • Macon**

Community Foundation of Central Georgia

[kdennis@cfcga.org](mailto:kdennis@cfcga.org)

Kathryn Dennis is the president of the Community Foundation of Central Georgia, which was founded in 1993 by a group of citizens interested in encouraging philanthropy, strengthening communities and enhancing the quality of life for the people of Central Georgia. Kathryn also serves on the boards of The Peyton Anderson Foundation, Community Health Services & Georgia United Methodist Foundation and is a University of Georgia graduate.

# Participant Biographies



## **Brian Dineen • Lexington**

Blue Grass Community Foundation

[bdineen@bgcf.org](mailto:bdineen@bgcf.org)

Brian is responsible for the financial management, investments, controls and long-range financial strategy of the Foundation. He also oversees human resources and information technology. Outside of the office, Brian enjoys playing golf and spending time with his wife and three children.



## **Tess Donie • Philadelphia**

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

[tess.donie@phila.gov](mailto:tess.donie@phila.gov)

Tess Donie has served as the Community Engagement Director at Philadelphia Parks & Recreation for the past four years working to increase capacity for engagement and inclusion in Philadelphia's public spaces. Tess' experience includes community organizing, community and economic development, leadership development, strategic partnership and programming, and trauma-informed care.



## **Nathaniel Echeverria • Camden**

Camden Special Services District

[NEcheverria@camdenssd.com](mailto:NEcheverria@camdenssd.com)

Nathaniel Echeverria, AICP is the Executive Director of the Camden Special Services District and the Camden Business Improvement District. In this role he oversees a clean and safe program, enhanced landscaping, economic development initiatives, and other placemaking projects in the Downtown, Waterfront and Gateway areas of the city. He has worked in economic development and place-based management in California, Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey.





### **Sidra Fatima • Detroit**

Kresge Foundation  
[sfatima@kresge.org](mailto:sfatima@kresge.org)

Sidra Fatima is a program officer for the American Cities Program at The Kresge Foundation. She supports Kresge's place-based programs and cross-city knowledge exchange. Sidra joined the foundation in 2019. Previously, Sidra held positions with the City of Boston's Community Preservation Department and was involved with creating the Community Development Learning Initiative at Harvard University. She also served as an associate environmental planner at Parsons Transportation Group, where she ensured environmental compliance and prepared environmental reports for transportation projects.



### **Derrick Feagin • Cincinnati**

South Cumminsville Community Council  
[dfeagin@fuse.net](mailto:dfeagin@fuse.net)

Derrick Feagin has lived in South Cumminsville Council for 63 years and is currently the president of the South Cumminsville Community Council. In 2022 Derrick got involved in environmental advocacy by participating in the Beekman Corridor Climate Advisory Group he has since served on the equity committee for the Green Cincinnati Plan, acting as the liaison for the mobility subcommittee Derrick graduated from Bowling Green State University, with a bachelors of arts and communication.

# Participant Biographies



## **John Carofalo • Akron**

Akron Community Foundation

[jgarofalo@akroncf.org](mailto:jgarofalo@akroncf.org)

John F. Garofalo has served as the vice president, community investment at Akron Community Foundation since August 2011. He's responsible for managing the foundation's grant distributions as well as all the affiliate fund grant processes. He has served on the Akron Civic Commons steering committee for the past 6 years.



## **Trina Harris • Miami**

Touching Miami with Love

[trina@touchingmiamiwithlove.org](mailto:trina@touchingmiamiwithlove.org)

Trina Harris is the CEO of Touching Miami with Love, a businesswoman and a change agent with 16 years of experience in nonprofit management, issues-based advocacy and small business development. She serves on the Executive and Governance Committee of The Underdeck, a project in Miami connecting Overtown and Biscayne Bay through a parkway under the new highway system.



## **Wade Johnston • Cincinnati**

Tri-State Trails

[wade@tristatetrails.org](mailto:wade@tristatetrails.org)

Wade Johnston, AICP is the Executive Director of Tri-State Trails. An avid commuter cyclist and outdoor enthusiast, Wade is working to change people's everyday interaction with the built and natural environment in Greater Cincinnati. Under Wade's leadership, Tri-State Trails has galvanized a diverse public-private partnership to build the CROWN 34-mile urban trail loop – raising \$10 million in private funds and leveraging \$15.6 million in public grants since 2019.



### **Tonja Khabir • Macon**

Jones Cafe

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Tonja Khabir is a culture and community curator with over ten years of experience in organizational development and ecosystem support. As the founder of Jones Cafe, she values culture creation, capacity building, and connection. Jones Cafe, a social enterprise facilitating the redevelopment of a blighted historic African American church in Pleasant Hill Macon into a revenue generating asset.



### **Kyle Kutuchief • Akron**

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

[kutuchief@kf.org](mailto:kutuchief@kf.org)

Kyle Kutuchief was named program director in Akron for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in May 2015. The foundation invests in journalism, the arts and the success of cities where its founders once published newspapers.



### **Bridget Marquis**

Reimagining the Civic Commons | U3 Advisors

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Bridget Marquis is the director of Reimagining the Civic Commons, a national initiative transforming public places to foster engagement, equity, environmental sustainability and economic development in cities. She manages the national Civic Commons Learning Network, housed at U3 Advisors, providing coordinated learning, impact assessment and storytelling across twelve U.S. cities.

# Participant Biographies



## **Lisa Martinez • Miami**

L.M. Genuine Solutions

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Lisa Martinez is a systems connector dedicated to uplifting the South Florida community where she's lived and worked for her entire life. In 2018, Ms. Martinez established LM Genuine Solutions, a strategic management and business-consulting firm, specializing in serving the needs of government, education, non-profit and private sector entities.



## **Maggie McCann Johns • Camden**

Camden County

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Director of Camden County Parks since 2018, Maggie manages over 4,000 acres of parkland and open space; leading a revitalization of aged parks infrastructure and working with diverse groups of partners to create access and support programs that reconnect people to their natural resources. Outside of work, Maggie enjoys spending time outdoors with her family and two dogs.



## **Charles McCoy • Detroit**

City of Detroit

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Charles McCoy is a Michigan State University graduate with a BS in Urban and Regional Planning. He is an employee in the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department.



### **Amanda Miller Amankona**

Reimagining the Civic Commons | U3 Advisors  
[amiller@u3advisors.com](mailto:amiller@u3advisors.com)

As the Learning Network expansion manager for Reimagining the Civic Commons, Amanda Miller Amankona works to curate and design spaces for convening, shared learning and connection. Her work is informed by her background in architectural design, and she is active in her local design community,



### **Alex Morrison • Macon**

Macon-Bibb County  
[amorrison@maconbibb.us](mailto:amorrison@maconbibb.us)

A believer that centralizing people in planning leads to the best results, Morrison has lead Macon's planning efforts in some way since 2007. He now serves in the Mayor's office in a role combining strategic efforts for public space and economic development and is the Reimagining the Civic Commons co-convener in Macon, Georgia.



### **Caitlin Murphy • Detroit**

Live6 Alliance  
[caitlin@live6detroit.org](mailto:caitlin@live6detroit.org)

Caitlin Murphy serves as the Interim Executive Director of the Live6 Alliance, a place-based community development organization in Northwest Detroit. She joined the organization in 2017 as the Reimagining the Civic Commons program coordinator.

# Participant Biographies



## **Joe Myers • Camden**

Camden Community Partnership  
[myers@camdencpinc.com](mailto:myers@camdencpinc.com)

Joseph graduated with a Bachelor of Political Science from the College of New Jersey in 1998 and from the University of Pennsylvania with a Master of Governmental Affairs and a Master of Political Science in 2000. Joe began working at Camden Community Partnership (CCP) as a graduate intern in 1999, became a full-time project manager upon graduation in the spring of 2000, and was promoted to COO/VP in October of 2009 and tasked with overseeing the development and neighborhood operations in the office. Joe has dedicated his time working on several downtown projects, which include the Camden Children's Garden, new infrastructure around Adventure Aquarium, and the Aquarium Fountain Park. Joe works closely with the private sector on planning the build out of the remaining downtown waterfront and also in North Camden with Save Our Waterfront on park design and neighborhood planning.



## **Torie O'Reilly • San José**

City of San Jose  
[torie.o'reilly@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:torie.o'reilly@sanjoseca.gov)

Torie O'Reilly serves as the Division Manager for Park Maintenance and Infrastructure for the City of San Jose. She has 24 years of experience with the City. She is passionate about promoting the use of parks and other public spaces to enhance community well-being and quality of life



**Erika Pinto • San José**

SPUR

[epinto@spur.org](mailto:epinto@spur.org)

As Planning Policy Manager, Erika leads SPUR's work in developing local impact policy priorities and collaboration with stakeholders in San José. Prior to joining SPUR, Erika worked in transportation policy, site analysis, and coalition building in Los Angeles County. She has a background in partnership building, research and advocacy, and a passion for finding solutions to our cities' complex problems.



**Dan Rice • Akron**

Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition

[drice@ohioeriecanal.org](mailto:drice@ohioeriecanal.org)

Daniel M. Rice is the President and CEO of the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, the regional non-profit organization working on the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway, Towpath Trail, and connector trails from Cleveland to New Philadelphia, Ohio. OECC serves as the convener for Akron Reimagining the Civic Commons.

# Participant Biographies



## **Chantel Rush Tebbe • Detroit**

The Kresge Foundation

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Chantel leads the American Cities Program at the Kresge Foundation. American Cities stewards the foundation's place-based work in Memphis, Tennessee; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Fresno, California. The team is also responsible for the foundation's national community development portfolio, including funding knowledge exchange among community development practitioners; national community development intermediaries; innovative, scalable solutions; pioneering research; and city-based dialogues aimed at promoting effective practice and policy.



## **Allison Schapker • Philadelphia**

Fairmount Park Conservancy

[aschapker@myphillypark.org](mailto:aschapker@myphillypark.org)

Allison is the chief project officer of the Fairmount Park Conservancy, where she leads their effort to transform and activate Philadelphia's key civic landscapes. Prior to joining the Conservancy, she worked as a developer on behalf of mission-driven organizations. These experiences range from building trail networks to working with Arizona State University to transform their stadium into a year-round Community Union. While a designer at Andropogon Associates, she led the development of a six-acre waterfront park that buffers the surrounding community from flooding and treats stormwater.





### **Jason Segedy • Akron**

University of Akron

[jsegedy@uakron.edu](mailto:jsegedy@uakron.edu)

Jason Segedy is a project manager in the Office of the President at the University of Akron and was formerly the director of Planning and Urban Development at the City of Akron. He is a lifelong resident of Akron, Ohio and has worked in the urban planning field for the past 28 years.



### **Boyd Sewe • Lexington**

Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government

[bsewe@lexingtonky.gov](mailto:bsewe@lexingtonky.gov)

A senior planner with a background in landscape architecture, Boyd specialized in academic institution design and consulting prior to joining the City of Lexington Division of Planning. From this background, Boyd believes in designing for future generations whether it's from a policy aspect or design.



### **Kim Tandy • Detroit**

City of Detroit

[tandyk@detroitmi.gov](mailto:tandyk@detroitmi.gov)

Kim Tandy works as the District 2 Manager for the City of Detroit, Mayor's Office. As the District Manager, she is responsible for the quality-of-life issues that present themselves in the neighborhoods in Council District 2. She works with current residents, potential residents, current and new businesses, city departments and the mayor to ensure residents of the city have the quality of life that they deserve. She has worked with the Fitzgerald/Civic Commons project from its inception. An architect by trade, Kim is a born and raised Detroiter and happy resident with her husband, William, and children, Lauren and Michael.

# Participant Biographies



## **Leonel Tapia • San Jose**

City of San Jose

[leonel.tapia@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:leonel.tapia@sanjoseca.gov)

Leo is passionate about increasing access for communities of color to parks and park planning professions. As a Chicano, Leo was often times the only person of color in many of his previous roles and in open spaces. This experience has motivated Leo's work towards building more equitable and inclusive planning.



## **Vonda Traylor • Akron**

Alpha Phi Alpha Homes

[vtraylor@alphahomes.org](mailto:vtraylor@alphahomes.org)

Born and raised in Akron, Ohio, Vonda attended the University of Akron and received her Bachelor of Arts in social work and a Master of Public Administration. As director of Supportive Services with Alpha Homes, Vonda advocates for quality affordable housing and mobilizes partnerships that strengthen the community.



## **Lindsay Wilhelm • Cincinnati**

Cincinnati Parks Foundation

[lindsay@cincinnatiiparksfoundation.org](mailto:lindsay@cincinnatiiparksfoundation.org)

Lindsay Wilhelm has experience in business development, marketing and community engagement. Prior to joining as a staff member, Lindsay served on the Cincinnati Parks Foundation Board. Now as the Director of Development at the Cincinnati Parks Foundation, she is responsible for fundraising for restricted projects in the Cincinnati Parks Master Plan.



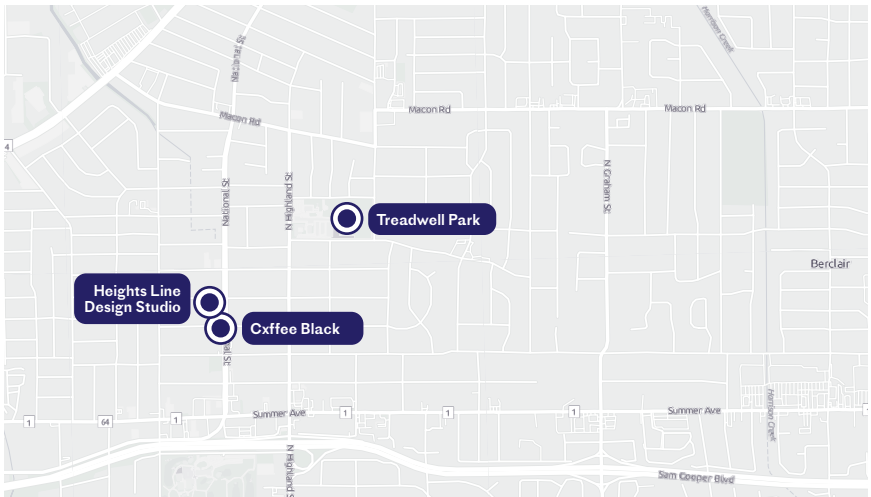
## Memphis Riverfront & Downtown



# Overton Park | Crosstown



# The Heights





# Site Visits

## Beale Street Landing

Beale Street Landing sits at the foot of the city's famed Beale Street, between Tom Lee Park and the historic cobblestone landing that was the original dock for steamboats and barges in downtown Memphis. The site includes a fanciful children's playground with water features, an indoor/outdoor event space, a green rooftop lawn and viewing platforms. Today, it serves as a dock for scenic river cruises on the Mighty Mississippi, and an anchor point between downtown and the riverfront parks and trails.

## River Garden

River Garden is a one-acre park on the banks of the Memphis harbor at the heart of the five-mile River Line pedestrian and bike trail that connects the riverfront from north to south. Formerly known as Jefferson Davis Park, the park was renamed in 2013 as Mississippi River Park. It became River Garden upon reopening in 2018, after a \$1.6M renovation as part of the Reimagining the Civic Commons demonstration project. River Garden features native meadow plantings ringing the park, an all-ages treehouse and play structure, human-size nests constructed from Mississippi River driftwood, a dining pavilion, swinging benches, and fabulous harbor-side views.

## Fourth Bluff Park

Fourth Bluff Park sits atop the river bluff on Front Street between Court and Jefferson, connected by a bridge along the Promenade to the University of Memphis School of Law and Cossitt Library. With sweeping views of the riverfront and beautiful shade trees, Fourth Bluff Park is unique, offering a green space in the downtown area that provides a visual connection between downtown and the Mississippi River. Improvements from the Civic Commons initiative have transformed this park into a functional and attractive place of relaxation and play for the entire community. The park hosts a variety of programs, art installations, outdoor concerts and performances, and Memphis Grizzlies watch parties.

## Cossitt Library

Cossitt Library was founded in 1893 as the first library in Memphis and sits atop the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. In 2023, 130 years since its founding, the historic branch has been reimagined and recently reopened. This historic branch in Downtown Memphis is now emerging as a modern community hub and a cornerstone of the civic commons. Cossitt Library offers more than book, featuring performing arts space, café, courtyard, flexible co-working areas, and technology equipment for audio recording, photography, videography, and more.

# Site Visits

## **Memphis Public Libraries**

Memphis Public Libraries is a \$20 million institution with 18 branches serving 935,000 visitors annually, and the first-ever two-time recipient (2007 and 2021) of the nation's highest honor, the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, given to libraries and museums that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Across the city at different branches, the library system offers a range of special programs, teen learning labs, youth innovation centers, mobile programming, and professional development.

## **Tom Lee Park**

Tom Lee Park is the most ambitious park project that Memphis has ever seen. A thirty-acre signature park, on the most visible and accessible part of the riverfront, is inspired by Tom Lee as well as the landscapes and rhythms of the Mississippi River. The park is an infrastructure-reuse project built atop a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dike wall. The \$61M transformation of the park restores habitat, bringing back nature and adding stunning structures and park amenities as well as reconnecting downtown Memphis to the Mighty Mississippi.

## **Overton Park**

Overton Park is a large, 342-acre public park in Midtown Memphis, Tennessee. The park grounds contain the Old Forest trails, Shell concert venue, Memphis Zoo, Brooks Museum, a 9-hole golf course, Rainbow Lake, Veterans Plaza, the Greensward, and other features. The Old Forest contains a 1.4-mile limestone running trail, over a mile of paved trails, and four miles of unpaved walking paths, including the popular Old Forest Loop.

## **Crosstown Concourse**

Originally built in 1927 as one of ten Sears Roebuck & Co. Distribution Centers, the building suffered two decades of blight before being reimagined and reopened 90 years later in 2017. The 14-story building has evolved into a 1.5 million square-foot mixed-use 'vertical urban village,' boasting restaurants, apartments, a small hotel, high school, clinic, and houses a sprawling contemporary arts organization with free and open galleries, shared art-making space, concert hall, theater, and artist residency program. Crosstown Concourse has been a catalyst for the revitalization of not just a distressed and abandoned building, but an entire neighborhood.



## **The Heights**

The Heights CDC is a non-profit focused on addressing blighted properties, rehabbing homes and renewing public green spaces in the Graham, Mitchell, and Highland Heights neighborhoods. Public engagement is paramount and they launched the Heights Line Design Studio to host events and spark conversations with neighbors. The Studio is an important access point for people in the community to stay engaged, with an outdoor space featuring community art, a water station and idea wall. In 2017, local residents developed a demonstration project that used excess road capacity and envisioned a new public space. Led by The Heights CDC, the City has committed \$4M from Accelerate Memphis for a permanent Heights Line. The 1.75-mile multi-use path and linear park will provide the first urban connection between two of Memphis' premier greenways – the Wolf River Greenway and the 13-mile Shelby Farms Greenline, and critical access to green space and safer streets for the neighborhood.

## **Coffee Black**

What started as a musical metaphor used to interconnect coffee and blackness, Coffee Black is a movement that seeks to inspire the uniqueness, authenticity and future of Black people through coffee. Their new storefront shop at the Heights Design Studio is now open and is home to The Anti-Gentrification Coffee Club. According to the cofounders, the intentional “x” instead of the traditional “o” represents the missing variable in all of us, the part of the equation that requires us to be unique in our humanity in order to help solve the problem that divides us.

## **Gaston Park**

Gaston Park, one of the recipients of the Accelerate Memphis program, covers 8-acres and includes a paved .25 mile walking and biking trail, 1 indoor and 1 outdoor basketball court, playground equipment, and a rental pavilion with grill. The Gaston Park Library and Gaston Community Center are both situated in the park.

## **Accelerate Memphis**

The City of Memphis has made an unprecedented \$200 million investment in catalytic community projects intended to accelerate its growth by improving quality of life, driving equity and inclusion, improving housing and connectivity, and solving stubborn problems:

- Activating Memphis 3.0—\$75 million
- Improving our parks—\$75 million
- Revitalizing citywide assets—\$50 million

