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## **National Initiative to “Reimagine the Civic Commons” Selects Memphis for \$5 Million Grant**

*Initiative supports Memphis’s plans to invest in revitalizing and connecting public spaces  
through The Fourth Bluff Project*

**MEMPHIS, Tenn.**—A new national effort to counter the growing economic and social fragmentation in our cities has awarded Memphis’ Fourth Bluff project a \$5 million grant. *Reimagining the Civic Commons* is a partnership of four national foundations that seeks to foster civic engagement, economic opportunity and environmental sustainability through revitalizing and connecting parks, libraries, community centers, and other public spaces.

Along the riverfront, the historic Cossitt Library, Memphis Park, and Mississippi River Park will be revitalized and transformed into places where Memphians from all neighborhoods and backgrounds can come together

“Memphis is honored to have been selected and join this cohort of great cities,” said Mayor Jim Strickland. “Creating opportunity in a civic commons for people to share experiences with people different from themselves grows a sense of community, engagement, and understanding between all Memphians.”

Memphis was one of four cities selected for the grant; the others are Akron, Chicago, and Detroit. The \$5 million grant for Memphis will be matched by local private and public sources.

*Reimagining the Civic Commons* seeks to counter the trends of economic and social divisions in cities and neighborhoods. The initiative will support a connected set of civic assets in each city— a civic commons —to yield increased and more equitably shared

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prosperity for cities and neighborhoods. The Memphis team aims to redefine the public's expectations of public parks and libraries, and foster socio-economic connections across boundaries in a culturally and environmentally sensitive way.

"The Mississippi River was Memphis' first great place and our riverfront has always been a vital part of our economy and culture," said Maria Fuhrmann, City of Memphis Grants Coordinator and a member of the Memphis Civic Commons team.

**FACT SHEET:**

- The Fourth Bluff project will activate these assets over the next three years with a variety of events, activities, prototypes, enhanced connectivity, signage, and public art.
- *Reimagining the Civic Commons* is a partnership among four national foundations—The JPB Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Kresge Foundation and The Rockefeller Foundation—and Memphis leaders, including the Memphis Reimagining the Civic Commons team. The total national investment in the civic commons by the national funders and local funds in each city total \$40 million.
- The plan will use art, entertainment, the natural environment and education as catalysts to renew a cross-cultural connection to the Mississippi Riverfront.
- As part of this grant the Memphis team will participate in the national Civic Commons Learning Network, which will host cross-city learning opportunities, provide tools, and grow the resources needed to reknit communities across the country through investments in public spaces.

Find out more about each city's plan online at [www.CivicCommons.us](http://www.CivicCommons.us)

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