

Program Summary:

A former working wharf becomes a connected riverfront park, stitching neighborhoods together through public space, adaptive reuse, ecology, and renewed access to the Mississippi.

Program Statement:

The project reimagines one of the last working stretches of the downtown riverfront as an elevated public park on an existing wharf structure, reconnecting the city to the water, stitching together historic neighborhoods, and transforming an industrial edge into accessible public space. What was once defined by sheds, trucks, and security fencing separating residents and visitors from the Mississippi is reframed as a continuous civic landscape at the edge of the French Quarter.

As the next chapter of a larger riverfront vision, the project converts former working wharves into a public park that completes a continuous riverfront experience, linking adjacent public spaces and closing a long-standing gap between the French Quarter, Marigny, and Bywater. The site becomes a civic hinge, connecting the Moonwalk, French Market, and Crescent Park while creating an intuitive access point for residents, tourists, and festival-goers arriving from surrounding neighborhoods.

The design introduces a tree-lined shaded promenade along the river's edge, connecting a sequence of distinct public spaces: an urban plaza, great lawn, play grove, overlooks, performance areas, concessions, habitat gardens, and a new civic gateway. At the heart of the project, a portion of the original warehouse structure is preserved and reimagined as an open-air pavilion, creating a flexible frame for food and beverage, markets, performances, and community gatherings.

Together, the project transforms a guarded industrial edge into a shared public stage: a place where infrastructure becomes public life, heritage and ecology coexist, and the city can face its river again with confidence, curiosity, and care.

MP110.01

Building Area: (sf)
6.3-acre park with 13,545 SF covered pavilion and 2,800 SF enclosed program space

Cost per Square Foot:
\$82/SF

Construction Cost
\$22.5M

Date of Completion:
2026



MP110.02

The park was shaped as much by process as by design. From the outset, the project was actively programmed and refined through a robust, multiplatform community engagement effort that included in-person town halls, digital forums, and ongoing dialogue with residents, cultural leaders, and adjacent neighborhoods.

Community feedback directly influenced how the park balances active and contemplative spaces, where performance areas should be located, how circulation should work, and even granular considerations like seating quantity, placement and shade. The resulting design is not an imposed vision - it is a collective one, grounded in what New Orleanians said they needed from their parks and waterfront.



MP110.03

This expanded riverfront park positions the city within a broader national movement. Across the country, great American cities – New York, Chicago, Detroit, Seattle – have spent recent decades reclaiming their waterfronts as cultural stages, ecological corridors, and economic engines. The park firmly places the city in that conversation by transforming former working wharves into a continuous, publicly accessible riverfront.

The project demonstrates how a world-class waterfront can shape daily civic life, fuel tourism, and strengthen cultural identity.



MP110.04

For decades, the riverfront along the edge of this new park was a hard industrial edge: sheds, trucks, and security fencing separating residents and visitors from the Mississippi.

After Hurricane Katrina, this plan reframed the waterfront as a tool for recovery, resilience, and long-term economic development, envisioning more than six miles of continuous public space along the river.



MP110.05

The site occupies a pivotal location between the lower French Quarter, Faubourg Marigny, and the Bywater. The design transforms an industrial remnant into a welcoming landscape that links the Moonwalk, the French Market, and the New Orleans Jazz Museum to Crescent Park, closing the last gap in the public riverfront.

Frenchmen Street in the Marigny acts as a cultural gateway, pulling the city's music and nightlife energy to the water. Esplanade Avenue terminates in a new civic threshold that weaves together pedestrian paths, rail, and transit, creating an intuitive access point for residents, tourists, and festival-goers arriving from the Quarter and beyond.





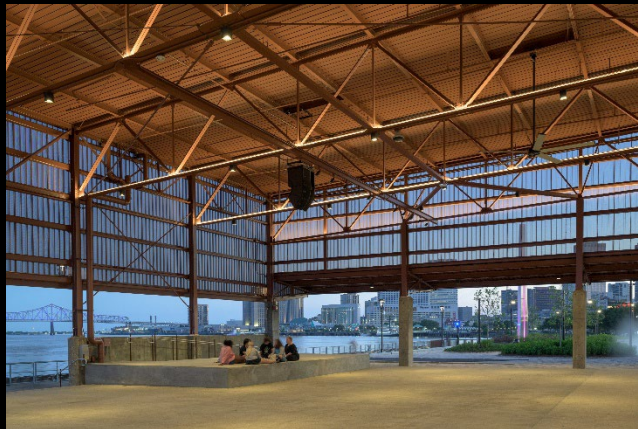
MP110.06

At the heart of the project is the Front Porch, a portion of the original warehouse is preserved and reimagined as an open-air pavilion – a flexible frame for the city's evolving cultural life.

The architectural intervention retains the muscular steel structure and industrial vocabulary of the wharf while opening the building to light, landscape, and public use. A perforated membrane acts as a scrim to filter daylight and at night transforms into a translucent, glowing presence.

MP110.07

This pavilion becomes an all-weather venue for food and beverage, small markets, performances, and community gatherings, with approximately 3,000 SF of enclosed support space tucked beneath an elevated roof for everyday social activity and events.





MP110.08

The mandate of the project was simple yet ambitious: to add green space along the river and transform a once-industrial edge into an accessible, flexible, and ecologically rich public park.

Designed for both everyday use and large community gatherings, the landscape introduces a continuous ribbon of green along the Mississippi.



MP110.09

What was once an expanse of pavement and metal sheds becomes a layered urban ecology. The planting strategy draws from regional riparian and coastal landscapes: native oaks, cypress, red maple, and magnolia form a shade canopy, with understory sweeps of grasses, perennials, and pollinator species turning the park into an ecological stepping stone along the Mississippi Flyway.

A marsh-inspired play grove introduces children to wetland ecologies and the role of healthy river systems in the region's future, turning play into environmental literacy. Shaded groves, misting elements, and generous tree canopy collectively cool the microclimate, making the park comfortable throughout much of the year and positioning it as a piece of soft climate infrastructure.



MP110.10

Instead of demolishing and rebuilding, the design reuses some of the existing wharf structure as the foundation for new decking, lawns, and public spaces, reducing material consumption and construction waste while leveraging the structural capacity and embodied carbon of the original platform.

The deck is thickened strategically to provide deep soil for over 120 new trees and expansive planting beds, while lighter promenades are located closer to the river. This structural choreography allows heavier program elements – shade canopies and trees – to sit over the strongest supports, while views and movement occur at the water's edge. Standing on the deck, visitors experience the river's sound, movement, and vast horizon up close – a sensory reminder of the city's enduring connection to the Mississippi.

Integrated utilities, drainage, and event infrastructure within the deck enable the park to host everything from everyday picnics to major festivals without compromising comfort or resilience in New Orleans' hot, humid climate.



MP110.11

The project converts former working wharves into a public park that will complete a 2.25-mile continuous riverfront experience, linking Spanish Plaza to Crescent Park downriver – promoted by the city and tourism agencies as the longest contiguous riverfront park in the United States.

Where the city once turned its back to the river, this park returns the river into everyday public life.

A tree-lined shaded promenade traces the river's edge, connecting a sequence of distinct spaces – the great lawn, the play grove, and the Esplanade plaza/gateway. From upriver to downriver, the experience shifts from urban plaza to open green space, from performance and concessions to quiet overlooks and habitat gardens, always keeping the river in view.



MP110.12

By creating a walkable, bike-friendly riverfront that links convention activity, the French Quarter, and neighborhood-scale cultural districts, the park is expected to increase dwell time, support local vendors and artists, and strengthen New Orleans' appeal for major events and large conventions throughout the year. Tourism leaders are already positioning the completed riverfront as a headline "what's new" attraction for visitors in 2026 and beyond.

Daily life remains the primary brief: concessions, flexible seating, and small performance spaces support local musicians, food operators, and markets; generous lawns and terraces invite families, joggers, and nearby residents to claim the riverfront as part of their routines.

Programming the site as a small-scale concert venue, festival platform, and corporate event setting a few times each month is central to the client's goal of making the park both inclusive public space and a self-supporting public asset.



MP110.13

This new park transforms a guarded industrial edge into a shared public stage – a place where infrastructure becomes public life, where heritage and ecology coexist, and where New Orleans can face its river again with confidence, curiosity, and care.