



From Idea to Implementation:

How Memphis Transformed
Resilience Plans into
Shovel-ready Projects

November 19-22, 2021
Nashville, Tennessee

Speakers



Dana Sjostrom, CFM

Planning and Programs Manager, Memphis-Shelby County Division of Planning and Development, Dept of Housing

Dana brings her background in ecology, facilitation, floodplain management, and work along the science- policy interface to better support coexistence of communities and the natural systems. Her work with Memphis-Shelby County's Division of Planning and Development works to engage policy and decision-makers to employ more data-driven decisions into government operations.



Vivian Ekstrom, AICP, LEED Green Associate

Chief Sustainability Officer and Community Redevelopment Associate, Memphis and Shelby County Community Redevelopment Agency

Vivian has over 10 years of experience as an urban planner and sustainability professional. In her current role at the Memphis and Shelby County Community Redevelopment Agency, she works on innovative solutions to tackle blight and disinvestment and to encourage quality, affordable housing and sustainable new development. In her previous role as the Sustainability Manager for Memphis and Shelby County, Vivian managed the development of Memphis' first climate action plan and contributed to land use planning and climate resilience projects.



Laura Adams, PE

Green Infrastructure Practice Lead, Black & Veatch

Laura leads Black & Veatch's Green Infrastructure Practice and worked with interdisciplinary teams to develop successful green infrastructure and stream restoration initiatives; participating in the design, installation, innovative delivery, and maintenance. Laura co-chairs the Collaboration Subcommittee for Water Environment Federation, supporting a collective understanding of stormwater challenges and solutions.

From Idea to Implementation

In 2011, the City of Memphis and Shelby County experienced extreme flooding that compromised area residents, business, and infrastructure along the banks and tributaries of the Mississippi River.

Following a disaster declaration, city and county staff applied for and were awarded funds through the National Disaster Resilience Competition to address unmet recovery needs resulting from the 2011 floods. By “making room for the river” and drawing on resilience principles from former planning efforts, Shelby County is implementing this \$60M effort and making strides to improve community resilience.

In 2018, the City pursued an opportunity through the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative and was awarded technical assistance from Quantified Ventures to issue its first Environmental Impact Bond. The Division of Planning and Development’s staff created an internal working group to identify potential stormwater projects that are well-suited to green infrastructure interventions, and created a cohesive project suite designed to address flood risk but also help bring thoughtful, equity-driven neighborhood improvements and park access to an underserved community. Now, the project is managed by our Stormwater Program Manager, working to fit into a larger program to prioritize stormwater investments and tackle a complex set of issues with collaborative, dynamic energy.

The coordination and collaboration across City and County divisions and with external contractors, along with community input and engagement make these projects meaningful, impactful, and proves the region’s commitments to resilient growth. From ideating to implementing, Memphis is growing to a national and international stage in the resilience conversation. Join us at this session to outline the nuts and bolts of these projects and hear from staff involved in these creative processes.



Learning Outcomes:

Four unique learning outcomes are required for each session. Each learning outcome should clearly and concisely describe what the attendee will learn in one sentence. Use takeaways

1.1

Attendees will be able to articulate how collaborative process in city/county government meet collective goals and missions.

1.2

Attendees will identify how innovative financing and funding opportunities can be used to address tangible resilience goals.

1.3

Attendees will be able to interpret how the co-production of shared goals and visions during the planning process helps build community trust and leadership buy-in to pursue innovative resilience strategies.

1.4

Attendees will be able to describe options for integration of these collaborative principles into their own work.



Content Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This particular session aligns well with a focus on equity, access, and an attempt to address longstanding disinvestment and historical prejudice prevalent through the nation. In Memphis we have the opportunity to follow the spirit of the civil rights movement, and bear the responsibility to continue the work of those before us in this effort. Our collective work aims to address policies that promoted segregation such as redlining, federal guidelines that enabled racist or prejudiced approaches, and local policy that did little to help undo these impacts.

It remains the focus of our resilience work to address inequitable access to resources, and focus our efforts to better enable our residents to have reliable access to parks, amenities, transportation, clean air, clean water, and reliable infrastructure. This perspective comes from outside the technical design profession and touches on critical and sensitive social issues relevant to all of our work. This session illustrates a key collaborative effort that is invaluable to the landscape architecture field in that government and agency collaboration is critical to getting more done.



