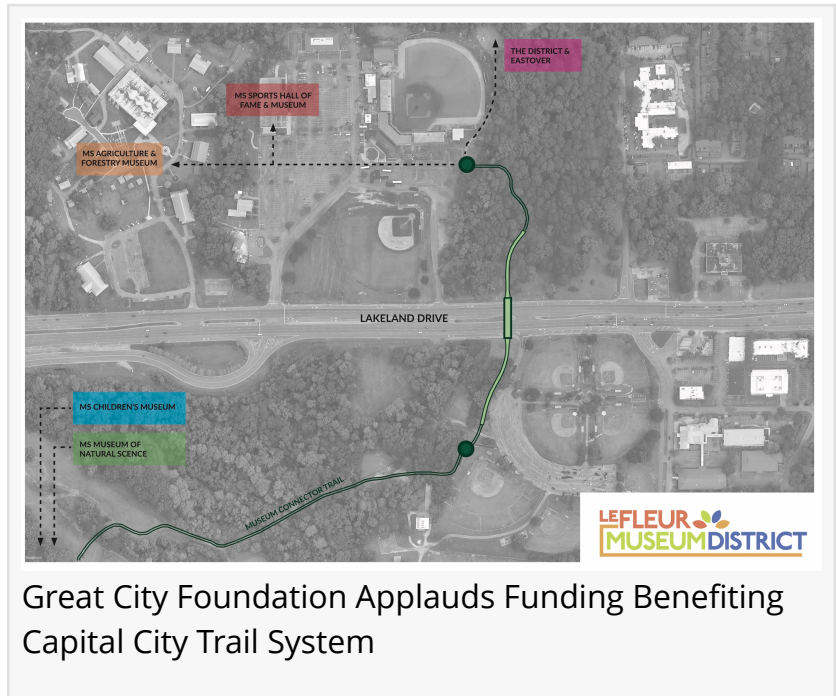


# Great City Foundation Applauds Federal Funding Benefitting State Museums and Capital City Trail System

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, UNITED STATES, March 11, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Great City Mississippi Foundation applauds passage of the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Act as part of a six-bill appropriations package cleared by the U.S. Congress on Friday, March 8th. The bill includes \$5 million of funding toward construction of a pedestrian bridge over Lakeland Drive (U.S. Highway 25), which represents an important step forward toward the long-time goal of creating a multi-use trail system connecting Mississippi museums across the capital city.



The vote, which passed in the U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday and the U.S. Senate Friday evening, is a testament to long-term commitment of community leaders working together with city, state, and federal leaders. "I'm grateful to Senators Cindy Hyde-Smith and Roger Wicker for leading the effort in the Senate and recognizing the importance of visionary projects that enhance access to our state's top assets," said Taylor Nicholas, Executive Director of the Great City Foundation. "This project will ultimately connect the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum to the Two Mississippi Museums downtown. It's an important step toward a functional multi-use trail system that will provide a significant economic impact for our state's capital city."

The bridge is also an essential piece of the LeFleur's Bluff Masterplan. Over \$10 million of capital improvements have already been made and enjoyed by more than 750,000 visitors, including \$5.5 million of private investment into capital projects. Additional private and state resources have been secured to execute additional improvements for outdoor recreation, education, and tourism impacts to connect to the Lakeland bridge project. "This is an important piece in ensuring destination tourism for our Mississippi museum assets," said Susan Garrard, President/CEO of the Mississippi Children's Museum and Board Chair of the Great City



A large part of our mission is to support a more vibrant Jackson through outdoor opportunities and connected communities. We will continue to work with community leaders to make this vision a reality."

*Taylor Nicholas, Great City  
Mississippi Foundation*

Foundation. "Connecting communities and enhancing pedestrian access to all museums creates new opportunities for exponential growth."

In 2021, LeFleur Museum District Museums produced nearly \$10 million of overall value-added impact for Hinds County, supporting 179 jobs and over \$6.5 million in labor income. In an economic impact study by the University of Southern Mississippi, the Trent Lott Center determined that the LeFleur Museum District museums continue to have a vast positive economic impact on a county and state-wide basis along with strong future impact potential in tourism, education, and the surrounding economy.

David Pharr, Co-founder of the Mississippi Museum Trail and board member of Great City is one of many who are proud to see the momentum behind this project and the potential that comes from this significant extension of the trail system. "This is a great example of what can be accomplished through community collaboration and working with leaders at every level of government. This is a vital piece of the broader trail system that benefits the entire City of Jackson", said Pharr. "The positive impact of other trail systems around the country bodes well for our city's future in the areas of quality of life for residents, economic development, and tourism."

The Museum Trail is a multi-use trail and partial rail-to-trail project that has been constructed from downtown Jackson to LeFleur's Bluff State Park. The planned bridge will safely extend and connect this system, enabling safe pedestrian passage across the busiest intersection in the state of Mississippi. Future hopes for the trail include extending connectivity south and west through downtown Jackson beyond Jackson State University and north to eventually connect to trails in Ridgeland and Flowood.

Following Friday's advancement, community and state leaders will continue working toward making the bridge a reality, including requesting matching funds from the state legislature. In addition, the plans need final approval from the Mississippi Department of Transportation before construction can begin. However, the passage of this bill is a benchmark achievement and an important step forward in a project that aims to build a better quality of life for the residents of Jackson.

"A large part of Great City's mission is to support a more vibrant Jackson through outdoor opportunities for recreation and more connected communities," said Taylor Nicholas. "We look forward to continuing to work with community leaders to help make this vision become reality."

#### About Great City Foundation

The Great City Foundation is a leading organization dedicated to fostering innovation, education,

and research in Jackson, Mississippi. Committed to advancing the city's standing on the global stage, the foundation supports initiatives that drive economic growth and community development through innovation and education. For more information, visit [greatcityms.org](https://greatcityms.org).

Lydia Moore

Great City Mississippi Foundation

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