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# Corporate dollars push Harahan Bridge project forward



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The business community is putting its money where its mouth is when it comes to the Main Street to Main Street Multi-Modal Connector Project, more commonly known as the Harahan Bridge project.

The \$30 million project, which includes improvements from Downtown Memphis to West Memphis as well as making the Harahan Bridge pedestrian-accessible, has received enough private donations to trigger federal dollars and move it forward.

The project needed a \$1 million private match for a \$15 million TIGER IV grant.

Local businessman [Charlie McVean](#) had committed to gift or raise that money, so it was never in jeopardy, according to project manager [Mike Carpenter](#).

However, McVean doesn't have to bear the whole burden as several companies and individuals have contributed to it.

Boyle Investment Co. recently announced a \$50,000 gift toward the \$1 million match.

This was not the first time the Memphis-based real estate firm has donated to pedestrian-friendly projects.

"Over the past several years, Boyle has made land donations and provided easements, both of which have allowed for the extension of the greenway between the Wolf River and Humphreys Boulevard from Walnut Grove to Shady Grove, and for the connection of the Memphis greenway to the Germantown greenway," [Paul Boyle](#), president of Boyle, said. "Likewise, we thought it was important to support the Harahan Bridge Trail Project, which eventually will connect to both the Shelby Farms greenline and Wolf River greenway."

The Harahan Bridge portion of the project consists of a boardwalk made of lightweight aluminum planking that will extend for one mile across the Mississippi River and connect to trails on the Arkansas side of the bridge. The boardwalk will allow pedestrians and cyclists to connect with both West Memphis on the Arkansas side and with the existing greenline that leads to Shelby Farms Park on the Memphis side. Planning for the project should be completed by this summer and construction should commence in September, with the boardwalk scheduled to open in 2014.

[Henry Morgan](#), co-chairman of Boyle, gave credit to McVean for spearheading the private fundraising.

"Memphis citizens, businesses and community leaders have responded positively to this new amenity and have expressed enthusiasm for additional greenway segments throughout the community, and so Boyle is proud to play a role in this significant initiative," Morgan said.

Key agreements between the cities, counties and federal government should be signed by June 28, obligating funds to the project, according to Carpenter.

Carpenter is leaving the project by June 10 to become executive director of the **Plough Foundation**, but will consult on it for up to 60 days. However, he said having the federal funds obligated and an operating agreement with the railroad signed should clear some of the project's major hurdles. Mayor A C Wharton is expected to pick a replacement for Carpenter soon.

Carpenter isn't surprised companies like Boyle have stepped up to the plate on the Harahan Bridge project.

"They realize the value these projects bring to the area as a whole," Carpenter said. "It has a benefit that goes beyond just folks Downtown who will be nearest to it."

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