

# Gene Leahy Mall at the RiverFront

Omaha, NE

*Gene Leahy Mall is the first of three phases that implements the RiverFront Revitalization Master Plan, drafted by OJB in 2018.*

The master plan was a two-year effort that re-envisioned the downtown Omaha and Council Bluffs park systems to reconnect the community spiritually and physically to the Missouri River. Constructed in 1974, the 14.8-acre Gene Leahy Mall had outgrown its role as a passive park and was looking to become a more active place, with additional social and recreational areas to serve the quickly growing downtown community.

The goal was to transform the space, which sits in the heart of downtown, into a vibrant and iconic regional destination. OJB worked closely with the city and local stakeholders to incorporate a multitude of amenities organized around a formal body of water, including a central event lawn and performance pavilion, multi-use social spaces, a sculpture garden, a dog park, an iconic children’s play area, an interactive water feature, restrooms, and a games area.

New public sidewalks, street trees, and energy-efficient lighting align the park periphery, and new cross-park connections better connect the north and south sides of downtown and the neighboring Old Market District. Water-efficient irrigation, bioretention facilities, and specialized soils ensure the long-term health of the native and drought-tolerant trees and plantings parkwide.

OJB also worked with the client, Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (MECA), on a multitude of operations, maintenance, and programming components, including operations analysis, revenue generation, community engagement, programming guidelines, governance, and staffing recommendations.

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## Client

Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (MECA)  
The City of Omaha

## Size

14.8 acres

## Dates

2019 - 2022

## Team

OJB Landscape Architecture  
HDR  
Gensler  
Applied Ecological Services  
RSM Design  
Alvine Engineering  
Studio Ludo  
Fluidity  
Pine & Swallow  
MR Global  
ADBC Architecture  
Atelier Ten

## Awards

Envision Platinum Award for Sustainability, 2021

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