

Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund

For Allston-Brighton

Application for Funding, 2019

Total Amount Requested \$ 395,000.00


Applicant Organization Name: Friends of Collins Park
Organization Address: 301 Washington Street City: Brighton Zip: 02135
Contact Person: Frank Hughes
Title: Community Service Officer, BPD District-14
Telephone Number: 617 343-4376
E-Mail Address: frank.hughes@pd.boston.gov

Application submission(s) must be authorized and signed by an authorized signatory of the Organization.

Name and title of Authorized Signatory:

Francis X. Hughes

Signature of Authorized Signatory:

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PROPOSAL TO THE HARVARD-ALLSTON PUBLIC REALM FLEXIBLE FUND FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO COLLINS PARK, ALLSTON

Overview

Initial funds received three years ago for preliminary landscape architect review and design for Collins Park resulted in several alternative layouts that provoked much discussion, however, no agreement or consensus was reached. Fortunately this process did clarify values and needs, and prompted a series of public discussions over the last two and a half years, resulting in a set of goals and specific objectives.

The Friends of Collins Park is proposing a complete redesign of the current park at the intersection of Franklin, Holton, and Fern Streets in Lower Allston. Named in tribute to a local resident who gave his life in WWII, the park is at the bend along what was the most direct path between Cambridge and Boston in the 17th C. Perhaps the oldest public space in Allston.

In recent years the park has undergone minor repairs, construction of planting beds, and maintenance taken on by neighbors, but overall the quality has declined year by year. Surrounded by long-time residents, artist studios, and close to two grade schools, the park is a quiet meeting place hosting bicycle clinics and participatory public art. However, it is not always inviting - the current design makes maintenance difficult, seasonally overgrown with weeds, and is often a garbage and dog waste collector.

With renewed energy from neighbors who have cared for the park for over 30 years, the Friends of Collins Park has developed a new design plan that builds on past efforts. This plan incorporates input from several years of focused public meetings, and benefits from input of design professionals, artists, engineers, woodworkers, and community activists.

Plan

Community agreement is rare, however a common vision is taking shape. The goal for the new design is to create a park that is open visually and physically but within the park one has a sense of enclosure and solitude. An improved park will show respect for the neighborhood and promote public use, leading to enhanced public safety.

The first proposed design action is removal of the chain link fence surrounding the site. This will provide visual and actual access to new landscape features, allowing ease of maintenance and trash removal, reduced "dog park" issues, and provide full corner-to-corner walking and wheelchair accessibility through the park.

Next, the two existing large trees have been considered from many points of view, and reviewed by a local registered arborist. Proposed is to prune and shape the White Pine at the south edge of the park allowing sun to enter, and cleaning up a tangle of shallow roots that

prevents all but the most weedy landscape to survive. This multi-stemmed tree is susceptible to breaking, the tree will be carefully evaluated and monitored to consider further work with the goal of avoiding potential danger during storms. The remaining Black Locust tree along the Franklin Street side will be shaped, pruned for safety, and cable stabilized.

Opening up the park's ground plain, and expanding one side of the park into an unused sidewalk area, allows for new planting sites and room for individual and group seating with tables. A perfect place for a coffee break, lunch or a picnic. The existing flip board, built by a local artist and her father, is a major draw to the park with people consistently stopping to engage with it. Proposed is an upgrade of stainless steel and powder coated metal, and relocation near the existing post box to eliminate the traffic blind spot in its current location. A new vertical overhead element, an 'elevated fence or canopy' of transparent perforated metal, is envisioned that will allow free movement through the park, while providing a feeling of containment at the park's edge. This structure will complement the planned tribute to Sargent Collins, an abstracted replica of his WWII era plane mounted ten feet above the ground near the corner of Fern and Franklin Streets. A tribute plaque with specific memorial text, and additional text honoring all service men and women, will be installed. These elements will be illuminated at night to improve safety, this will become a beacon to the surrounding neighborhood inviting all to come to the park.

Walking surfaces between the new landscape elements will be level and smooth, built with fully accessible stabilized crushed stone. Surface grading will be slightly crowned in the middle of the park, to direct site runoff and storm water in a sustainable way to perimeter landscaped infiltration swales at the park's edge.

New planting is planned with New England native perennials, pollinator attracting plants, fragrant herbs, and annuals and low evergreens protected within raised beds. Proposed is an additional feature replacement tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera* (Tulip tree), a stately deciduous tree native to Eastern North America. It is fast growing and will offer shade in the summer while letting light in during spring and fall.

The current flagpole will be relocated from its current location to increase visibility with sight lines along Franklin Street, and to receive direct illumination from an existing street light. We would like to see water service and power to the park, this will enable the City and the Friends of Collins Park to clean and maintain the area on a regular basis.

Process

Development of this proposal has proceeded with broad community engagement, with strong support from residents and Friends of Collins Park, representing a broad collaboration of residents and businesses in the immediate vicinity. Boston Parks and Recreation has also indicated their support for the redesign.

The firm of CBA Landscape architects, completed several schematic plans for the park after work that began in the summer of 2016. Since that time there have been ongoing discussions as mentioned above, and meetings with community design volunteers, development of goal checklists, concepts plans, and reviews with the Friends of Collins Park.

Requested now are the funds required to move this work forward to completion: to develop details, drawings and rendering of the proposed design for review and approval; to generate final designs, plans and bid documents; to contract a site survey; to fund site construction and fabrication of elements; and to oversee completion of the new Collins Park.

Support for this project is requested from HAPRFF because it is outside the usual realm of improvement and maintenance performed by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. Smaller scale projects like Collins Park are often passed over by the Parks Department as they often choose to work on larger active use fields in the area, leaving community parks like this to seek out their own independent funding.

We hope to develop designs for final community and City departmental approval in Fall 2019. We anticipate construction in the Spring of 2020, with planned completion by the fall of 2020.

Design will be undertaken by Clara Batchelor of CBA Landscape Architects and Ross Miller Studio, Inc. Clara Batchelor is the Founder and Principal of CBA, developed the first round Collins Park schematics, and has worked with Boston Parks Department for more than twenty-five years designing neighborhood parks throughout the City. Ross Miller has designed projects for the Central Artery, within Boston Parks and in BPS schoolyards, and will work in collaboration with artists and residents in the surrounding neighborhood.

With sustainable design considerations, safety improvements, energy efficient lighting, and cleaner and more accessible areas for residents to enjoy, we imagine this project standing for 25 years or more without any major improvements and with simply basic maintenance.

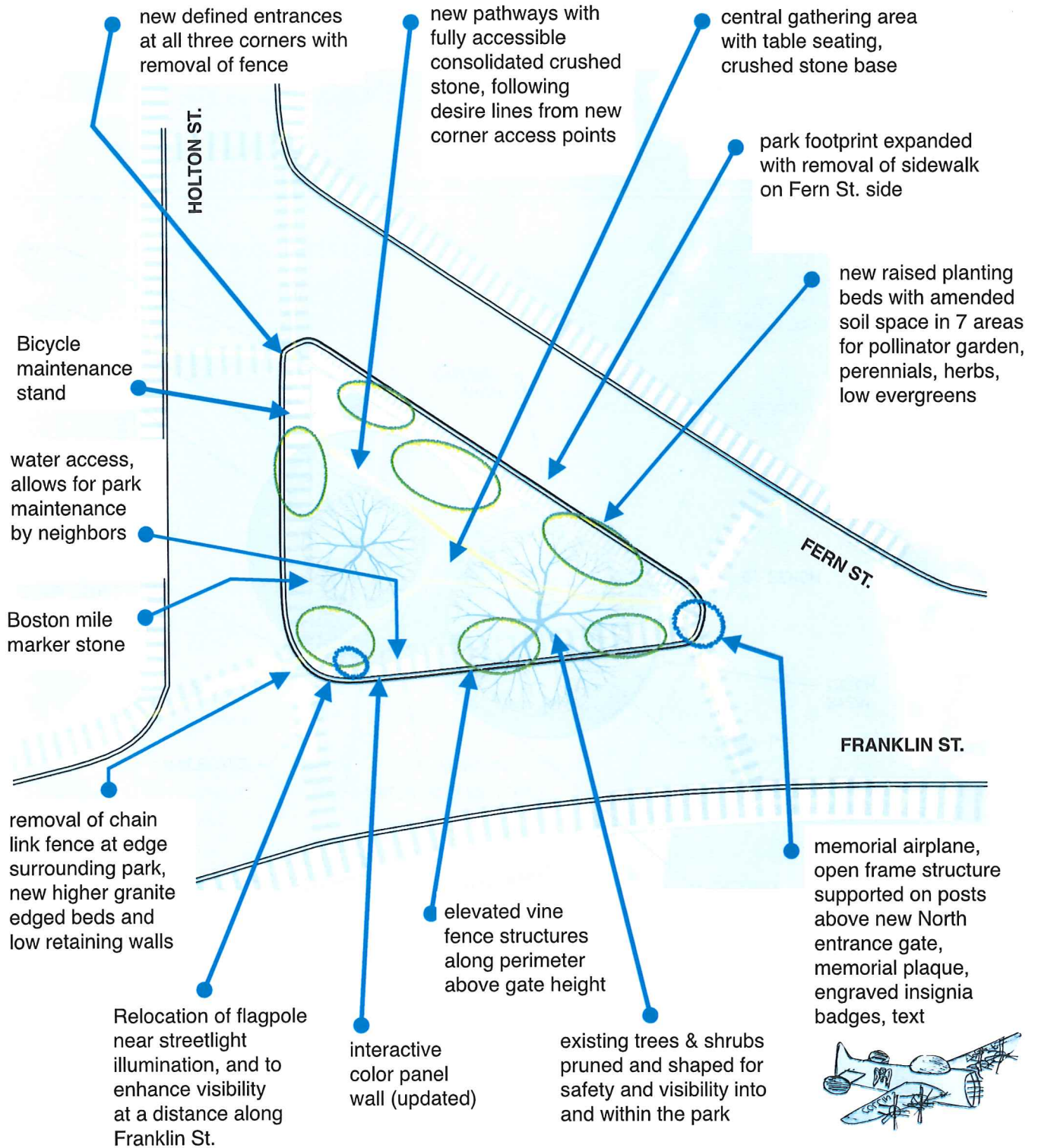
Budget

Landscape design, presentation drawings, memorial element details:	\$55,000
- Design development	
- Specifications	
- Final plans and bid documents - Survey	

Construction Costs:	\$340,000
- Demolition and prep, tree / shrub pruning, removal & trimming	
- Site protection, on-site construction materials, infrastructure, grading	
- Fabrication, design, and Installation of unique landscape and memorial elements	

James F. Collins Memorial Park, Allston.

design concepts noted below were gathered during first round preliminary design, follow-up public meetings and neighborhood workshop sessions, these ideas will be further developed and detailed for community review and the final design development phase



Partner Organizations- Boston Parks and Recreation Department
Boston Police Department

The Friends of Collins Park is not a 501C3 but the Boston Parks and Recreation Department does have a 501C3 in order to process grants such as the Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund. Boston Parks and Recreation will also be the entity that will be receiving the funds if the grant is awarded to the Friends of Collins Park.

Friends of Collins Park

Contact Information

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Friends of Collins Park Members and Key Personnel

Anthony D'Isidoro
Allston Civic Association,
Clara Wainwright
Artist and Abutter to the Park
Eth Wiseman
Artist and Abutter to the Park
Wayne MacKenzie
Resident
Galen Mook
Owner-Common Wheels
Less Arnold
Resident and Real Estate Agent
Marchelle Jacques-Yarde
Community Outreach, Boston Parks and Recreation
Michael O'Hara
Sergeant, Boston Police Department, District 14 Community
Oscar Lopez
Aide to State Representative Kevin Honan
Rick Hollahan
Allston Brighton Veterans Liaison
Ross Miller
Resident and Artist
Stuart Cody
Resident and Engineer
Tracie Smart
Resident
Jessica Gaddis
Resident
John Powell
Resident and ACA member
Dan Polanco
Aide to City Councilor Mark Ciommo

contact & email list for group meetings

Friends of Collins Park

When Wed Apr 19, 2017 6pm – 7pm [Eastern Time](#)
Where Charlesview Apartments, Litchfield St, Boston,

Who

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May 15, 2019

Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund
For Allston-Brighton

Re: Friends of Collins Park Application for Funding

To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of Brighton Marine in support of the Friends of Collins Park Restoration Project.

As you are aware, this project will revitalize an existing green space in Allston, Collins Park, which was named after a local hero who gave his life during World War II.

The Collins Park Restoration Project will provide the residents of the Allston Brighton community a new recreation space that will be utilized for decades to come. The plan is thorough, considerate and well developed. Consideration has been given to all aspects of the community. We strongly support this project and hope to see you award funds to allow the Friends of Collins Park to move forward with this fantastic opportunity for the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Marlene Calisi
VP – Administration & Finance

May 10, 2019

101 Franklin Street

Allston, Massachusetts, 02134

Friends of Collins Square

Frank Hughs

Dear Frank

I have been a resident of Lower Allston for 24 years. I live at 101 Franklin Street, across the street from Collins Square. Beginning in 1993, with my wife, now of blessed memory, Meryl Brater have collected trash, planted flowers and watered Collins Square. We fixed the flag pole and flew the flag, picked up after thoughtless dog owners, cut the lawn, cleared debris and kept the trash barrel empty.

Meryl died in 1996, since then I have witnessed a "revitalization" of the park, with inappropriate non drought resistant plants replacing everything we had planted. Now, close to ten years after that initial remake, I see another remake in process. I like this proposed iteration of Collins Square. It will preserve the yews and existing trees, pruning appropriately, creating a catch basin and replanting with drought resistant bulbs and perennials. I am particularly interested in a proposed "pollinator garden" that could become part of the new Collins Square. I also like the idea of letting people know who Mr. Collins was.

I see this plan as a real living and breathing idea of how Collins Square could be. I support this concept and idea

John Powell