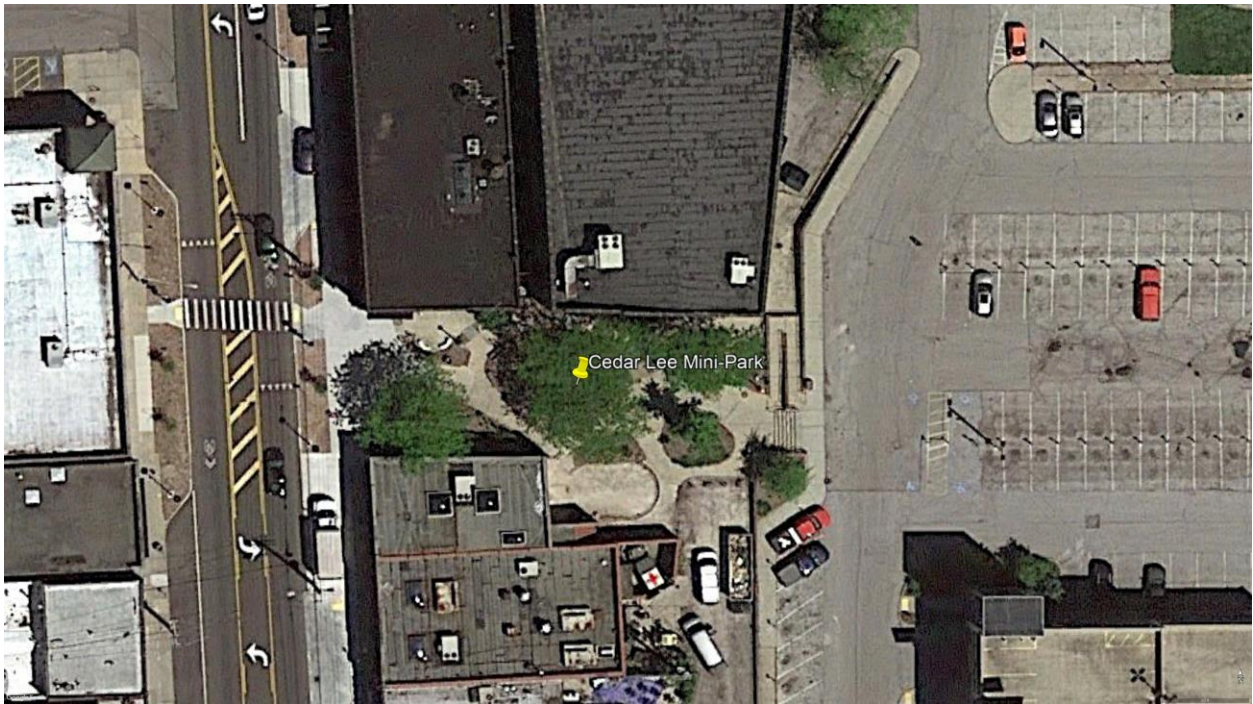


Cedar Lee Mini-Park Placemaking Project

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)



Issue Date: Aug. 5, 2019

Closing Date: Sept. 15, 2019

FutureHeights

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

FutureHeights, Inc. is seeking proposals from qualified firms that are interested in providing architectural and design services for the Cedar Lee Mini-Park in the Cedar Lee district in Cleveland Heights.

A. Background

The Cedar Lee District and the Cedar Lee Mini-Park

The Cedar Lee (CL) Mini-Park site was formed by closing a public right-of way (Cedarbrook Road) in the 1960s to accommodate additional parking behind the commercial structures on Lee Road. The site currently serves primarily as a pass-through for visitors, connecting the rear public parking lot and garage to Lee Rd businesses. The site, roughly 50' wide x 150' deep, is nestled between two key buildings: to the north, the iconic Cedar Lee Theatre and Heights Arts; to the south, the new Boss Dog Brewing Company. Heights High, with approximately 1,700 local students, is just across Cedar Rd., about 500 feet away.

The mini-park currently serves primarily as a pedestrian pass-thru between the CL district's public parking lot and garage and the businesses fronting Lee Rd. It has the potential, however, to be much more: an informal meeting and gathering place, an outdoor performance venue, an open-air art gallery, and a demonstration pollinator and native plant garden. FutureHeights (FH) will lead the transformation of this under-realized public right-of-way into a welcoming and inclusive space for the Cedar Lee (CL) Business District and surrounding residential neighborhoods of Cleveland Heights, Ohio (CH). The resulting Cedar Lee Mini-Park will be a vibrant outdoor space that reflects the diverse character of this inner-ring suburb of Cleveland and helps spur the revitalization of the neighborhood.

In 2016, FH commissioned a market study from Cleveland State University to guide improvements to the CL neighborhood, and improvements to the mini-park were one major recommendation. While the CL Special Improvement District (CLSID) completed a \$3.3 million streetscape project in 2017, mini-park improvements were not prioritized and it was left as is, in a semi-orphaned state. However, with cooperation from both the city and CLSID, FH has agreed to lead a collaborative visioning and redevelopment process for the mini-park and to explore a variety of long-term management strategies to cover maintenance and the year-round programming necessary to create an active and vital public space.

In 2018, FH created a Steering Committee of stakeholders, including residents, business owners, and representatives of area nonprofit organizations, the city and CLSID, to guide the project. The committee has determined that without an Architectural Landscape Design for the mini-park that supports its desired uses and activities, its potential to be a safe and inviting public gathering space that serves all people in the community could not be achieved.

Cedar Lee Mini-Park Steering Committee

Rachel Bernstein, Director, Heights Arts
Destiny Burns, Business Owner, Cleveland Urban Winery
Rhonda Davis Lovejoy, Board Member, FutureHeights

Jon Forman, Business Owner, Cedar Lee Theatre
James Haas, Business Owner, Westwork Architectural Studio
Chris Heitmann, Steering Committee Chair, Member of FutureHeights Planning and Development Committee
Joy Henderson, Community and Parent Communications Liaison, Cleveland Heights High School
Helen Hertz, Realtor, RE/Max Nancy Levin, Director, Heights Libraries
Brian Iorio, Development Officer, City of Cleveland Heights
Tom Masaveg, Artist, Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and Cleveland Botanical Garden
Rebecca Norton, resident
Kara Hamley O'Donnell, City Planner II, City of Cleveland Heights
Laura Skehan, Art Teacher, Cleveland Heights High School
Josh Sweet, Business Owner, Boss Dog Brewery

Following best practices in civic engagement and place-making, FH has coordinated ongoing volunteer and stakeholder involvement that enables community consensus to guide the future use and appearance of the site. These efforts to date have included an online and in-person survey taken by residents, business owners, and visitors to gauge current usage and ideas for improvements; interviews with adjacent property owners, and three interactive placemaking workshops with community members, including two specifically geared to Heights High students.

Most recently, FH partnered with an artist through Cuyahoga Arts & Culture's Learning Lab Program to initiate some early action projects at the park. With artist-in-residence, Tom Masaveg, FH developed a project that merges nature, public art, technology, and civic engagement. Tom developed a summer ambassador program for high school students, in which they crafted signage, completed public art projects, beautified the park through plantings and clean up, and created a welcoming environment by engaging with visitors of the park. Tom designed and installed a mural with augmented reality capabilities. FH purchased café tables and chairs that have been placed around the perimeter of the park. These initiatives have resulted in increased activity at the mini-park and helped create a more inviting and attractive space that encourages visitors to spend time in the park.

This iterative visioning and engagement process has informed the following goals and specific programmatic requirements for the re-design of the mini-park, and any design put forth should support these goals and envisioned uses and activities to the extent possible.

B. Project Goals and Design Elements

Goals: A successful project will meet, among others, the following goals, as defined by FH, the CL Mini-Park Steering Committee, and community stakeholders and participants, in an integrated manner:

1. **Create a vibrant, attractive and inclusive public gathering space that enhances the image of the neighborhood** and where all members of the community of all ages and abilities feel welcome, comfortable and safe.
2. **Improve access to and circulation through the Mini-Park** for pedestrians of all ages and abilities, while promoting transit and bicycle use to the district.

3. **Establish the park as a platform and showcase for public art**, integrating temporary and permanent, visual and performing, and improving its flexibility to accommodate a variety of small-scale programming.
4. **Enhance the park's function and appearance as a pollinator garden** that beautifies the space, showcases annual and perennial native plantings, and enables active and passive learning opportunities.
5. **Ensure that development of the space is environmentally and economically sustainable**, retaining the existing mature trees to the extent possible, improving and integrating storm water management (e.g. via bio-swales, permeable paving, et al), and ensuring an easily-maintained year-round right-of-way for the public.

Design Program Elements: A successful mini-park design should accommodate and integrate (but may not be limited to) the following elements in pursuit of the above goals:

COMFORT & IMAGE

- Permanent seating – a variety of seating options, from benches to sitting walls (e.g. framing raised beds on the periphery) to steps to a stage area, which welcome and accommodate people of ages and needs;
- Movable seating – as café tables and chairs are already in use on site, the design should preserve spaces for their continued use while keeping pedestrian rights-of-way clear;
- Signage & wayfinding that welcomes people, enhances their experience at the site, and orients and connects them to the business district and nearby amenities;
- Tri-level water fountain that is both ADA and pet-accessible;
- Opportunities for permanent public art, which can include sculpture, murals, mosaics, lighting, etc., including possible integration into the infrastructure of the park itself (e.g. sitting walls, stage, signage, etc.)
- Community bulletin board for promoting CL events and activities and to engage the public; and
- Water feature and/or design element that acknowledges/celebrates the site's natural history as Cedar Brook

SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

- Improved hard-scape pathways that improve “flow”, facilitating pedestrian traffic to and through the park;
- Reconfigured steps and ADA ramp that reframes the relationship between the public parking lot and garage and the mini-park, enhancing circulation into/out of the park, opening up sightlines, potentially providing seating and/or planting areas; and ensuring the safety of all users;
- Pedestrian-scale lighting that is both attractive and enhances safety; this could include re-using and/or -orienting the three existing streetlamps, incorporating overhead string lights; highlighting trees and/or architectural elements; and/or accommodating for lighting to be integrated into sitting walls;
- Bike racks to be located near both east and west entries to the park;
- Security cameras that tie into the existing Lee Rd infrastructure;
- Open and flexible circulation through the space, i.e. raised beds on periphery; and
- Open sightlines into and out of the space to the extent possible.

USES & ACTIVITIES

- Raised planting beds/planters that frame the space and allow users of all ages and abilities to participate in gardening activities, protect plants from through-traffic and minimize soil/mulch run-off into hardscaped areas;
- Small stage area that can serve double-duty as a flexibly programmed space and permanent seating area;
- Film screen for short films, video art installations, et al;
- Flexible, programmable space(s) that could accommodate anything from climbable sculptures to temporary art galleries, to a coffee or ice-cream cart, to pop-up tents and tables during events;
- Little Free Library (existing element that needs permanent location);
- Relocation of existing fire hydrant east towards Cedar Rd so as to remain accessible, yet not interfere with any of the above element;
- Power and water access to support a variety of uses and activities throughout the mini-park; and
- Consideration of potential new uses for vacant commercial spaces located at the northeast corner of the mini-park (near the ramp on the side of the Cedar Lee Theatre building).

OTHER SUGGESTED/POTENTIAL ELEMENTS

- Ensure that materials are environmentally-friendly, durable, and low/easy-maintenance;
- Swing(s) suitable for kids and adults;
- Bike Fix-It station (as at Lee Road Library, Cain Park, and Coventry Road and North Park Blvd.);
- Improved lighting for alleyway and consideration of space for temporary or permanent public art;
- Shade structure/canopy where not provided by mature trees

C. Scope of Work

The completed project will contain:

1. **Site Analysis and survey**, as needed, FH will provide base maps and utility line drawings that we have available;
2. **Draft site plan** which places and integrates the above design elements on the site, which will be presented by FH to the CL Mini-Park Steering Committee and community stakeholders at large for one round of feedback;
3. **Illustrative diagram** showing placement and integration of above design elements, which will be presented by FH to the CL Mini-Park Steering Committee and community stakeholders at large for one round of feedback;
4. **Final site plan** incorporating feedback from above;
5. **Design of permanent features** (pathways, walls, planting areas, seating, stage, et al) upon which future public art and programming can be layered;
6. **Construction drawings and specs for all of the above elements west of the current stairs and ramp** from the public parking lot for Phase I implementation; and
7. **Three (3) design concepts for a reconfigured ramp and stairs area** to be integrated into the emerging private mixed-use development on the public parking lot site and to be constructed during Phase II. Concepts should include consideration of pedestrian traffic from the parking lot and garage to the stairs/ramp, integration of existing and/or new landscaped areas, possible relocation of dumpsters behind the Cedar Lee Theatre, and rethinking of the current dumpster area to improve access and encourage complimentary uses and activities.

D. Submission Requirements

Each response to this Request for Proposals shall include the following elements:

1. **General overview of the design approach and preliminary schedule**
 - a. Describe the project and the scope of services as you understand them, and your approach to the project's selection criteria.
 - b. Provide concept drawings or a plan of design. We anticipate \$150,000 to \$200,000 to be available for final project implementation.
 - c. Explain how your firm will work with FH and the CL Steering Committee collaboratively throughout the design process to ensure that FH obtains the best possible combination of design quality and value.
 - d. Explain how your firm will incorporate public input into your designs
2. **Overview of firm and assigned team**
 - a. Please identify the individual who will assume overall leadership for the project and responsibility for the contract.
3. **Identify relevant project experience**, including designs for public plazas and parks, renovations to existing plazas and parks, and other projects that entailed a public process
 - a. Please list projects and your team members' specific roles:
 - Name of Client/Owner
 - Description of Project
 - Please specifically cite examples of how your design solutions encouraged active use of the space; and how your design was developed with cold weather usage and aesthetics in mind
 - Please include the estimated budget provided to the client and the actual construction costs
 - Completion date
 - Client references
4. Submit a fee proposal for design services for the total scope of work that is based upon the scope and schedule in this RFP.

E. Evaluation and Selection Process

All proposals received in response to this request will be evaluated by the CL Mini-Park Steering Committee. In its final evaluation of proposals, the committee will consider the following criteria and base its selection upon:

1. relevant experience and capabilities of the consultant;
2. relevant experience and qualifications of individuals to be assigned to the project;
3. office capacity to complete required work on schedule;
4. responsiveness of the proposal to the RFP and identification of additional or alternate tasks to better meet the study's goals;
5. technical appropriateness of proposed methodologies;

- 6. familiarity of the firm with conditions in the study area, based upon prior work experience;
- 7. cost of the proposal.

F. Schedule

The following schedule provides anticipated dates for the selection process and the services to be performed:

Activity	Date/ Completion
Release RFP	Aug. 5, 2019
Deadline for proposals	Sept. 15, 2019
Complete proposal reviews	Sept. 15 to Sept. 30, 2019
Interview finalists	Oct. 1 to Oct. 15, 2019
Select contractor(s)	Oct. 31, 2019
Finalize contract	Nov. 8, 2019
Community Meeting	Spring 2020
Conclude work	April 30, 2020

G. Compensation for Service

A budget of \$15,000 to \$17,000 is expected to be available for this project. Cost will be considered as a factor in competitively evaluating proposals.

H. Submission

Responses to the RFP shall be e-mailed to FH Director of Community-Building Programs, Sruti Basu, at sbasu@futureheights.org by end of day (before midnight) on Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019.