

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Playground Design Services for Clark Park

Introduction

The Friends of Clark Park (FoCP), in partnership with the City of Philadelphia and University City District (UCD), invites qualified landscape architecture and playground design firms to submit proposals for the design and development of a new playground within Clark Park, based on the **Clark Park Plan**.

This RFP is only for **Phase I**, as described in the Clark Park Plan document and attachments. The plan is available here: <https://www.friendsofclarkpark.org/the-clark-park-plan> (direct download link [here](#)). Phase I focuses on renovating the Clark Park playgrounds and other related elements. We seek proposals that do not exceed \$150,000 for the design and construction oversight of the project. There is an available budget of ~\$1.25M in capital funds for the realization of the playground design. Additional fundraising efforts are underway and may potentially expand the playground budget, or may be applied to other elements of the park's master plan.

As noted on page 73 of the Clark Park Plan, Phase I of the plan prioritizes the kids by constructing both the nature-based playground and the traditional playgrounds and introducing the new plantings to the park. A copy of cost estimates for Phase I and the other plan phases is available [here](#).

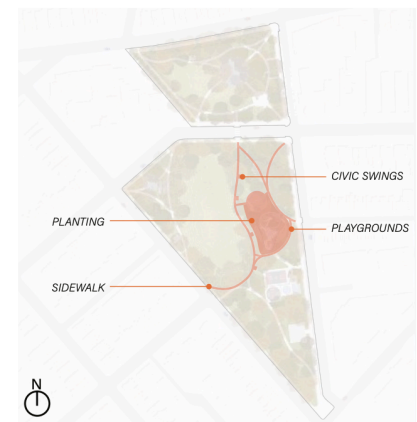


IMAGE 5.1: PHASE I

The proposed design should prioritize natural play elements and create a safe, engaging, and inclusive play space for children of all ages and abilities while adhering to all City of Philadelphia safety and accessibility standards. The constructed project will ultimately be donated to the City of Philadelphia.

Project Background

Clark Park, a cherished community space in West Philadelphia, serves as a gathering place for recreation, relaxation, and cultural events. The Clark Park Plan, developed by FoCP and UCD, identifies the need for a reimagined playground that integrates natural play features, complements the park's existing landscape, and fosters connection with the natural environment.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant will conduct:

1. Community Engagement

- o Conduct at least three (3) public-engagement sessions to gather input, present design concepts, and integrate feedback into the final design.
- o Conduct online surveys after at least the first two meetings to solicit additional public feedback from members of the public who were unable to attend the in-person meeting.

- Conduct additional public-engagement activities.
 - Collaborate with FoCP, local stakeholders, and city representatives to ensure the design reflects community needs and aspirations.
2. **Progressing Project from Concept to Completion**
- Develop a schematic design (SD) and conduct a site survey capturing the existing conditions for review and approval by Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR). (All stages of design will require review and approval by PPR prior to public engagement.)
 - Progress the approved SD into design development (DD) drawings, addressing detailed layout, materials, and safety features, and obtain approval from PPR prior to advancing to the next design phase.
 - Submit final designs to the Philadelphia Art Commission for review and approval.
 - Prepare construction documents (CD), specifications, and cost estimations detailing the final design, and obtain final approval from all relevant agencies, including PPR, the Water Department, and others as required.
 - Perform Construction Administration (CA), including additional stages of review through permitting and PPR.
3. **Deliverables**
- Plan view drawings and section drawings of the playground, showing layout and integration with the surrounding park.
 - Perspective drawings suitable for use in fundraising and promotional materials.
 - Final construction drawings and specifications, approved by The City of Philadelphia and serving as BID documents.
 - Construction administration through the completion of the project.
4. **Standards Compliance**
- Ensure all designs meet or exceed the City of Philadelphia's safety and accessibility standards, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines.
 - Incorporate durable, sustainable, and environmentally friendly materials.
 - Ensure compliance with Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) requirements.
 - Ensure the project meets requirements necessary to donate the completed project to the City of Philadelphia.
 - Ensure compliance with other grant requirements, as applicable.

Project Priorities and Focuses

- **Public Engagement:** Ensure that the project solicits and incorporates feedback from the Clark Park community.
- **Inclusive and Universal Design:** Ensure that the playgrounds are designed incorporating inclusive and universal design principles that offer a variety of user experiences.
- **Vibrant and Welcoming Public Spaces:** Clark Park is a diverse, vibrant, and welcoming public space, and the project should focus on enhancing the community's engagement with the space.

- **High User-Capacity:** Clark Park—and especially its playgrounds—are visited by tens of thousands of children every year, and the new designs should ensure that the new playgrounds and park spaces meet or exceed the current user capacity.
- **Natural Play Elements:** Emphasize natural play features such as boulders, logs, and landscaped mounds, creating opportunities for imaginative and sensory-rich play.
- **Respect of the Natural Environment:** Our trees are one of Clark Park’s greatest assets, and we hope to minimize the impact of construction on our mature canopy.

Proposal Requirements

Interested firms are requested to submit a proposal including the following:

- A cover letter summarizing the firm’s qualifications and interest in the project.
- A detailed approach and methodology for addressing the scope of work.
- Examples of similar projects completed by the firm, particularly those integrating natural play elements.
- Resumes of key personnel assigned to the project.
- A proposed timeline for community engagement, design phases, deliverables, agency approvals, and construction oversight.
- A fee proposal broken down by phase (Concept, SD, DD, CD, CA).

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Adherence to all project priorities and focuses, as stated above.
- Demonstrated expertise in playground design and natural play integration.
- Demonstrated expertise in, and a dedication to, driving public engagement and soliciting public feedback in a variety of forums and formats.
- Experience with community engagement and municipal approval processes.
- Quality and relevance of previous work.
- Demonstrated expertise in creating robust and low-maintenance designs.
- Understanding of the project goals and methodology for all phases (Concept, SD, DD, CD, CA).
- Cost and timeline feasibility.

Submission Details

Proposals must be submitted electronically to plan@friendsofclarkpark.org and nate@universitycity.org by December 12, 2025 by 5:00PM ET. Late submissions will not be considered.

Questions must be submitted by November 14, 2025. We will do our best to respond to questions on a rolling basis. Final responses to questions will be shared by November 21, 2025. Please submit all questions to plan@friendsofclarkpark.org and nate@universitycity.org. Responses to questions that impact proposals will be shared to all those who submitted questions and those who have requested responses to be shared with them.

The Friends of Clark Park and University City District will provide an optional pre-bid site visit in Clark Park, at the corner of 43rd and Chester, at 10:00AM on November 21, 2025, rain or shine. Please RSVP to plan@friendsofclarkpark.org and nate@universitycity.org by November 18, 2025.

Project Timeline

The design process is anticipated to commence upon selection of the design firm. We hope to commence construction of Phase I in late 2026 and complete construction by spring 2027, if possible.

Contact Information

For questions or additional information, please contact:

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The Friends of Clark Park, University City District, and the City of Philadelphia look forward to receiving your proposal and working together to create a vibrant, inclusive playground that serves as a model for natural play in urban environments.