January, 2020

CALL FOR LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS & ARCHITECTS

COGdesign seeks landscape architects and designers for eleven community-initiated, pro bono projects in the Boston area

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS:
1. Eliot K-8 Innovation School, North End — outdoor classroom
2. Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School, Roxbury — playground
3. Charlestown Peace Park, Charlestown — revitalization of existing park
4. Codman Burial Ground, Dorchester — new park
5. Factory Hill Park, Hyde Park — masterplan for renovation of existing park
6. Lewis Place Orchard & Dennis Street Park, Roxbury — renovation of each
7. Conservatory Lab Charter School, Dorchester — outdoor classroom/masterpan
8. Shore Road Park at Hardy Pond, Waltham — masterplan for small park
9. Fannie Lou Hamer Community Garden, Dorchester — renovation of community garden
10. Dixwell Park & Lawson Park, JP/Roxbury — renovation two small parks
11. Smith Street Community Garden, Lowell — outdoor living room

We’ll match landscape architects and landscape designers in teams of two to these projects BY THE END OF JANUARY. All members of the design community are welcome - experienced practitioners, current students… Let us know asap if you’re interested or if you’d like more information.

info@cogdesign.org
617.718.0354

Thank you,
Jennifer Kimball
Executive Director, COGdesign
www.cogdesign.org
1. Eliot K-8 Innovation School, North End — Outdoor Classroom

The school is looking to make the most of every inch of their very small, underutilized outdoor spaces for learning, play and tough greenery. Needs a creative design team to bring in the right plants to green the school grounds and to generate ideas for children's play in tight spaces. Project scope begins with this fenced area which is of primary concern to the school, but there is a playground on the other side which could also be part of this project.

Eliot has three campuses; this one is for the 214 youngest students. 36% have high needs; 12% are socio-economically disadvantaged; 7% have disabilities; 21% are LEP (limited English proficient). Overall the full K-8 school has 675 students: 61% are white, 5% African American, 10% Asian, 18% Hispanic, 7% multi-race.
2. Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School, Roxbury — playground

DSNC’s existing playground (built in 1980s) is non-compliant and in disrepair. The school would like to update the playground incorporating structures that promote imaginative play and exercise. Kids and families from surrounding neighborhood make use of this space after school hours. They’d like new design to be appealing to all. School is close to Melnea Cass Blvd., where a lot of drug use takes place (occasionally find needles in woodchips).

There is an opportunity here for a design team to help steer the scope and direction of the project, possibly taking on a masterplan. This would include the creation of a green play area for tots behind the school where there is blacktop now and increased plantings around the perimeter of the blacktop basketball area.

Confoundingly, the Parks Department has been telling DSNC that this lot is not in their jurisdiction while BPS says it is not in theirs either. There is a high concentration of underperforming schools in Dudley Square, where 54% of residents earn less than 25K/year; fewer than half are employed full time. The poverty rate is twice that of Boston.
3. Charlestown Peace Park, Charlestown — revitalization of existing park

This blighted 30-yr old park at Mt. Vernon Street Plaza is pushed right up against the highway in the border land between vastly different neighborhoods. Local nonprofit, the Charlestown Coalition would like to see it brought back to life to honor local victims of gun violence. The design team will need to generate ideas for improvements to satisfy the program and both communities.

An active Youth Group from the Charlestown Coalition called *Turn it Around* (30 teens from neighborhood) holds community events here and has spent many hours cleaning it up only to have it desecrated. One neighbor is believed to be responsible. Charlestown Coalition would like the renovation of the park to give this youth group a sense of ownership and hope; to honor loved ones lost to overdose and violence; and to make the space inviting for all in the community for everyday use and neighborhood events.

Goals are to enhance community resilience, and to prevent and respond to traumatic situations that affect community. Charlestown is 75% white, the Youth Group is primarily African American along with 11% of the population.
4. Codman Burial Ground Park, Dorchester — envisioning a new community park

This historic 3.5 acre Dorchester cemetery is no longer taking burials and wants to open the remaining open space (1 acre) to the neighborhood and nearby Codman Academy, but how do you share a park with tomb stones? Needs a design team that can come up with a creative program and design to reconcile these uses.

1,000 souls were interred here from 1846 through the 1980s on land gifted from John Codman. The grounds are laid out in a beautiful ‘Angel wings’ plan. Codman will not be an active cemetery again except perhaps for columbarium. The paths will need to be restored. Codman Square has a high population density and low amount of green space. 32% of residents are foreign born; 43% black, 27% white, 20% Latino, 9% Asian.
5. Factory Hill Park, Hyde Park — masterplan, renovation of existing park

This tired 2-acre DCR park includes an area paved with granite blocks and containing concrete benches, constructed around a playground that has been removed. Needs a design team that can make sense of what’s left.

Existing features - rundown community garden w/inconvenient water source; children’s playground (removed due to lack of compliance with current safety codes); cement checker tables and benches are dilapidated and old; apple orchard overgrown; sitting area 1/2 way down the stairs to the ball field overgrown and unsafe.

Community group would like to see Factory Hill Park as an active 2 acre with: children’s playground, outdoor exercise area, walking path, dog park, and seating area/gazebo overlooking view of Blue Hills and Turtle Pond. In addition they’d like to rejuvenate the existing community garden and small apple orchard now overgrown with weed trees. This park sits above other parks which are well maintained: Olsen Swimming pool, Kelly Field. Factory Hill is part of the Heartbeat Trail/Diamond Parkway Bicycle Path, which connects all the way to West Roxbury. This park has the potential to become a Hyde Park gem. Almost 50% of Hyde Park residents are African American, about 25% white, 25% Hispanic. About 30% of residents are foreign-born.
6. Lewis Place Orchard & Dennis Street Park, Roxbury — renovation of a community garden and small orchard

Two adjacent parks (connected by a path) need revitalization. These parks were built in 2005 by Dudley Neighbors Inc, but have become run-down, a cut through and a place for negative activity where trash accumulates. Many homeless folks sleep here. There are some fallen trees and broken fences. The community coalition envisions an urban orchard that will connect to a community garden providing a place for rest, recreation and exploration for kids, families and neighbors; a place of discovery, where folks can have access to healthy food and gardening. They'd like to see more intentional connection between the two parks with improved lighting and a walkway.

The Dudley area has many cultures including African American, Latinx, Cape Verdean and Haitian Creole. Average age is 29. 11% are non-english speaking. Median household income is $32,000. The community group includes members of Folsom Group, Speak for the Trees and the Food Project. Folsom group will work with DNI to maintain the parks.
7. Conservatory Lab Charter School, Dorchester — masterplan/outdoor classroom

CLCS wants to create a master plan for Learning Gardens surrounding their Lower School building. Their vision includes gardens to beautify the space and to provide hands-on learning experiences (aligned with national science standards for the school’s 444 students) as well as dedicated areas for quiet imaginative work and lively outdoor classrooms. The curriculum here is a combination of project-based learning and daily orchestral music instruction.

Demographics at CLCS: 50% of students are Black, 40% Latinx, with very small Caucasian, Asian and ‘other.’ Almost 50% are economically disadvantaged and 80% categorized as ‘high needs.’ 70% qualify to receive free or reduced lunch. The neighborhood has high population density with very little access to green space.
8. Shore Road Park at Hardy Pond, Waltham — masterplan

The neighborhood group and Waltham Land Trust would like this waterfront park in Waltham to look less like a parking lot and more like a natural waterfront destination. Needs a design team to create a masterplan. Designers will need to work with the Conservation Commission towards shoreline access and stabilization and associated planting.

Site of public beach in 1940s Shore Road Park is now a haven for bird/nature watchers and fishing. The Land Trust feels that necessary improvements include shoreline stabilization, planting of native vegetation, preventing spread of invasives, replacement of the rusted/damaged guard rail, a parking area, seating, plaza and fishing platform, possibly stepping stones to the water. One of most frequented sites along the 42-acre Hardy Pond in North Waltham, this park is a stone’s throw from Lazazzero park and ball field. Another goal is to improve habitat and food sources for birds, wildlife, pollinators and other insects. 65% of the population is white, 14% Latinx, 12% Asian; 6% African American.
9. Fannie Lou Hamer Community Garden, Dorchester — renovation of existing garden

The Bloomfield Park neighborhood association wants to revitalize this 40-yr-old community garden. Some fencing is broken. Wood in the raised beds is falling apart, and weeds are encroaching. There is some poison ivy. The neighborhood would like to create a pollinator garden, pathways, a seating area designed for gatherings and music and an interactive food forest or herb garden to engage children. A 2015 ‘Love Your Block’ grant for 3K enabled a new sign honoring civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer.

The proximity of ABCD Dorchester, a nonprofit which supports youth development and the Daily Table, a low-cost grocery store providing (donated surplus) fresh organic vegetables, provide possible programming ideas for the garden. Dorchester Gardenlands owns the land. The neighborhood is very diverse - primarily African American/Caribbean, Asian/Vietnamese and Latinx communities. The Fannie Lou Hamer garden is near Codman Square, Four Corners and Fields Corner.
10. Dixwell Park & Lawson Park, Jamaica Plain-Roxbury — renovation of two small parks

Two parks in view of each other, one at the corner of Dixwell and Columbus, and one at the corner of Washington & Columbus need rejuvenation. Both have mature trees and are heavily shaded. Soil is ‘rugged’ and there is no water hookup. The two parks should be revitalized in relation to each other and should provide a welcoming environment for Egleston Square. The community envisions each to be a safe, well-lit, welcoming space with nature-based elements for pedestrians who pass by and for residents and kids. They’re possibly interested in creating a wayfinding path from Stoneybrook T and the SW corridor to Franklin Park.

Egleston Square sits at the intersection of Jamaica Plain and Roxbury. Half the population is white, half people of color, mostly African American and Latino, largely low- and very low-income. Over a third of households speak Spanish. The community group includes: Egleston Square Neighborhood Association, members of Urban Edge, Egleston Square Main Streets, and Friends of Lawson Park.
11. Smith Street Community Garden, Lowell — “Outdoor Lounge”

Smith Street is one of several community gardens created and run by local urban agriculture nonprofit Mill City Grows. There is an area for sitting after working in the garden but it lacks structure. Mill City would like to create a designated gathering area with chairs and tables, conducive to community building - possibly with paving and/or a pergola. 42 community gardeners are active at Smith Street. 40% of neighbors were born outside the US; 60% speak a language other than English at home.

COG took on the Smith Street project last year, unfortunately the design team had to back out due to unforeseen issues. We are excited to match a new team with this deserving and patient client.