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# HARVARD-ALLSTON PUBLIC REALM FLEX FUND

Spring 2024 Grant Application

## MCKINNEY PLAYGROUND

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

Proponent/Owner:	Boston Parks and Recreation Department 1010 Massachusetts Ave, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Boston, MA 02118
Background:	Public Agency
Primary Contact:	Nelle Ward, Project Manager (617) 961-3035 <a href="mailto:nelle.ward@boston.gov">nelle.ward@boston.gov</a>
Key Personnel:	Nelle Ward, Project Manager for Boston Parks and Recreation Megan Tomkins, Principal of CBA Landscape Architects
Partner Organizations:	PALS Soccer Allston-Brighton Little League Friends of McKinney Park

### PROJECT INFORMATION

McKinney Playground is a 5.9 acre public park, located at 74 Faneuil St, Brighton, MA 02135, in a densely populated residential neighborhood. It is owned by the City of Boston and maintained by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD). The park currently hosts one large recreational field serving overlapping sports including little league, softball, baseball, and U13 soccer; a sports court serving basketball and street hockey equipped with sports lighting; a large playground; and pockets of natural grassy areas with mature shade trees. There are three entrances along Faneuil Street and one additional entrance at the back of the park on Leicester Street providing access to that neighborhood, including Saint Columbkille Partnership School (see Exhibit A).

The park is nestled in the heart of a residential area in close proximity to commercial corridors on Market Street, and it provides an essential resource to neighborhood families and school. McKinney Playground is across the street from the Environmental Justice community at Faneuil Gardens, a Boston Housing Authority owned multifamily development. The Boston Housing Authority is currently working on a separate project to renovate Faneuil Gardens; the renovations will include a new raised crosswalk directly connecting Faneuil Gardens with McKinney Playground. Saint Columbkille Partnership School and Saint Columbkille Catholic Church lie to the south of the park, and are connected to the park by its rear entrance off Leicester St.

### ***PROPOSED PROJECT***

BPRD completed a comprehensive Master Plan for McKinney Playground in 2016, which was used to kick off the second phase in 2020: the Improvements to McKinney Playground project. The second phase was initiated with funds from the City of Boston's Capital Improvement Fund. A grant from Boston College's Neighborhood Improvement Fund was also secured part way through the community engagement phase to help with funding for the sport field improvements.

Currently the project is at the tail end of the community engagement phase. Three community meetings have already been held, and there is one more (Community Meeting #4) scheduled for early June 2024. Feedback from Community Meeting #4 will be integrated into a final design for the park, which will then launch the Construction Documentation phase.

The upcoming Community Meeting #4 will feature the final Concept Design incorporating community feedback collected at Community Meeting #3 in January 2024 and feedback from an online survey issued in February 2024. Though the park's design is not completely finalized, community priorities for the park have been identified: a renovated natural turf sports field with overlapping baseball, little league, and soccer fields; athletic amenity upgrades; improved drainage at the natural turf fields; new sports court surfacing and lighting; a perimeter walking loop; a new playground; a new splash pad; a renovated entry plaza on Faneuil Street; improved walkways and ADA access; preservation and pruning of existing trees throughout the park; and fencing upgrades (see Exhibit B).

Currently the McKinney Improvements project is insufficiently funded, and BPRD is in the process of seeking additional funding from the City of Boston, in addition to applying for grants such as this one. The purpose of this application is to apply for funding specifically for the playground (equipment and surfacing), a (NEW) splash pad, and an Entry Plaza Pavilion located within the overall "Play and Entry Area" (see Exhibit C). The Play and Entry Area will be approximately 1 acre (43,560 SF). The cost for the playground, splash pad, and Entry Plaza Pavilion scope of work (including design fees and contingency) is \$900,000. The remaining park improvements are estimated to cost an additional \$2,900,000.

### ***PUBLIC BENEFIT***

Renovation of the Play and Entry Area will provide significant public benefit to the Allston-Brighton community, which has seen a steady increase in the number of young families over the last 10 years. In addition to providing active recreation for young children, a new splash pad (never before present at the park) will serve to cool off on a hot day, supporting the City of Boston's goals to create a Heat Resilient City and responding to the ever-increasing ramifications of the Urban Heat Island Effect in Boston. In addition to serving local families, the playground and splash pad will provide active recreation for the neighborhood, including Faneuil Gardens' community, and for students of Saint Columbkille Partnership School around the corner. The improved playground will significantly increase play capacity and play diversity for both 2-5 and 5-12 year olds. The improved Entry Plaza Pavilion will provide shade, a climate resilient cooling strategy for those seeking respite on a hot summer day. The Entry Plaza Pavilion will also help to increase legibility from the street and contribute to a sense of placemaking and cultural identity in the neighborhood, which this park and critical neighborhood asset readily deserves.

There are also several secondary public benefits to improving the Play and Entry Area. Improvements such as these are generally shown to increase property values, to reduce crime, to improve public health, to provide mental health benefits / stress reduction, and to foster community.

### ***TIMELINE***

The community engagement process will conclude at the end of June 2024. After that, the Construction Documentation phase will begin, which typically lasts about 6 months. Assuming BPRD is able to secure sufficient construction funding, bids for the construction of McKinney Playground will be solicited from contractors in early 2025 with construction beginning spring 2025. If all goes well, the renovated park would open late Fall of 2025.

**PROJECT MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS, PROTOCOLS, AND SOURCES OF FUNDING**

McKinney Playground is maintained by BPRD. Maintenance costs are funded through the City of Boston’s Operating Budget. The park will be designed in conformance with BPRD standard details. BPRD is always looking for opportunities to integrate best practices for stormwater management and energy efficiency into our park renovations projects; sustainable practices will be explored as part of this project.

**PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY AND LIFE SPAN**

BPRD capital projects always strive to make best use of public funds by balancing cost and durability, with the goal of using materials that are sustainable for both these objectives. Specifically, the play equipment and splash pad equipment will have an anticipated lifespan of 15 years.

**ANTICIPATED REGULATORY REVIEW AND NECESSARY PERMITS**

Proposed plumbing plans will be submitted to Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC). BWSC Coordination will be required and for the splash pad plumbing work. Coordination with Eversource and Boston Street Lighting will also be required for the new sports lighting and electrical cabinet.

The construction of McKinney Playground would be subject to all Public Bid Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Boston Residents Jobs Policy of the City of Boston.

**FUNDING**

The City of Boston’s Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) provides funding for many of the projects that BPRD pursues, however sufficient funding doesn’t always exist to cover all community needs. In this case, the Capital Improvement Fund had allocated additional funding in 2019 to go toward the athletic field improvements, but the scope of work was not fully funded. Construction prices were greatly influenced by recent post-pandemic inflationary pressure, and these influences exacerbate existing budget shortfalls. The City’s CIF working budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (and beyond) provides only \$2,010,000 million for the full project. However, that value was allocated based on a 2018 cost estimate, and since then construction costs and inflation have soared, and meanwhile the required design solutions for the fields have only increased in complexity. BPRD is in the process of seeking increased funding from the City’s CIF, but additional funds will still be required to make this project happen.

BPRD also applied for the Neighborhood Improvements Fund administered by Boston College and received a \$750,000 grant, which stipulates that sports lights must be included in the final Concept Plan. The Concept Plan that will be presented at Community Meeting #4 will include sports lights for community review. Note: the BCNIF funds *may* be reverted to Boston College if the community does not wish to include sport lights in the final plan.

The table below reflects the existing funding sources and amount.

<b>Funding Sources</b>	
City of Boston Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 2,010,000
BC NIF Grant	\$ 750,000
<b>Total Project Funding</b>	<b>= \$ 2,760,000</b>

In order to help close the current funding gap (further discussed below), this application seeks to secure HAPRFF funding to for a discrete section of the park with a high level of impact for the community: the playground, splash pad, and Entry Plaza Pavilion located within the Play and Entry Area (see Exhibit C).

**BUDGET**

The current funding falls short of the anticipated overall project cost. The project cost breakdown is as follows: \$325,000 has been allocated to Design fees; the estimated cost of construction for the playground is approximately \$3,800,000; and \$380,000 will be required for a 10% project contingency. This brings the anticipated overall anticipated project cost to \$4,505,000. However, after subtracting the existing funding of \$2,760,000, a gap of \$1,745,000 remains.

<b>Overall Project Costs</b>	
Design Fees (Including Cost Estimating and Permitting)	\$ 325,000
Construction Estimate (Overall)	\$ 3,800,000
Playground, splash pad, paved pathways, ADA Accessible grading, entry plaza pavilion, water bottle filling station, seating, natural turf field drainage improvements, arborist work, plumbing, site furnishings, and planting.	
10% Overall Project Contingency	\$ 380,000
<b>Total Overall Project Cost</b>	<b>\$ 4,505,000</b>
<b>Required Additional Funding</b>	
Total Overall Project Cost	\$ 4,505,000
Existing Funding	-\$ 2,760,000
<b>Total Gap in Funding</b>	<b>\$ 1,745,000</b>

BPRD is requesting \$800,000 from the HAPRFF to cover the cost of the playground, splash pad, and Plaza Entry Pavilion at the Play and Entry Area in order to help close the funding gap.

<b>HAPRFF Scope at Play and Entry Area</b>	
Playground (equipment and surfacing)	\$ 600,000
Splash pad (spray features and activator, installation)	\$ 80,000
Entry Area Pavilion	\$ 30,000
Overhead Costs (contingencies, bond, overhead & profit)	190,000
<b>Total HAPRFF Scope Cost</b>	<b>\$ 900,000</b>
<b>Required Additional Funding (after HAPRFF grant)</b>	
Existing Total Gap in Funding	\$ 1,745,000
HAPRFF Funding	-\$ 900,000
<b>Total Remaining Gap in Funding after HAPRFF grant</b>	<b>\$ 845,000</b>

With the help of the requested HAPRFF grant funds, the remaining funding gap will be only \$845,000, which BPRD will seek from City of Boston’s Capital Improvements Funding. Any funds from HAPRFF would greatly assist the project’s feasibility and momentum moving forward, and the community would be thrilled to have the HAPRFF support and sponsorship. Thank you for your consideration.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS - EXHIBIT A



# PROPOSED SITE PLAN | EXHIBIT B



# PROPOSED PLAY AND ENTRY AREA | EXHIBIT C



# Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund

For Allston-Brighton

Application for Funding, 2024

Total Amount Requested \$ 900,000

Applicant Organization Name: Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD)

Organization Address: 1010 Massachusetts Ave, 3rd Fl. City: Boston Zip: 02118

Contact Person: Nelle Ward

Title: Project Manager in Construction and Design Division at BPRD

Telephone Number: 617-961-3035

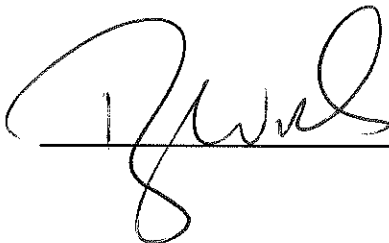
E-Mail Address: nelle.ward@boston.gov

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

Name and title of Authorized Signatory:

Ryan Woods, Commissioner

Signature of Authorized Signatory:



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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

SENATOR WILLIAM N. BROWNSBERGER  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 319  
BOSTON, MA 02133-1053  
TEL. (617) 722-1280  
WILLIAM.BROWNSBERGER@MASENATE.GOV  
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April 17, 2024

Christine Brandao  
Boston Planning and Development Agency  
One City Hall, Ninth Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Re: *McKinney Playground – Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund (HAPRFF) grant solicitation.*

Dear Christine Brandao,

I'm writing to you as the State Senator representing the Allston-Brighton community of Boston to show my support for recommending McKinney Playground as a recipient of the Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund (HAPRFF) grant.

McKinney Playground is an important park in an area containing a high concentration of youth and families and is in need of improvements.

I would appreciate the Boston Planning and Development Agency's consideration of McKinney Playground for HAPRFF funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William N. Brownsberger".

**William N. Brownsberger**  
State Senator  
Suffolk and Middlesex District



*Boston City Council*

**LIZ BREADON**

*Councilor – District 9*

April 26, 2024

Christine Brandao  
Community Engagement Manager  
Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA)  
One City Hall Plaza  
Boston, MA 02201

*TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL*

***RE: Boston Parks and Recreation Department McKinney Park Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund Application***

To the Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund Executive Committee:

As the Boston City Councilor for District 9, I am writing to express my strong support for the Boston Parks & Recreation Department's (the 'BPRD') application to 2024 Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund (the 'HAPRFF') for improvements to McKinney Park in Brighton.

McKinney Park is an approximately 6-acre open space with a playground, basketball courts, and athletic fields that have long served as essential recreation areas for Allston-Brighton residents. Significantly, McKinney Park is located adjacent to Faneuil Gardens, a BHA community that is home to ~300 children who utilize the Park's play areas regularly. Following an extensive community process that began in 2016, the BPRD has proposed to implement improvements to McKinney that will result in an improved park.

With this application, the BPRD seeks funding to support improvements to McKinney's playground, splash pad, and entry areas. This funding will enable the creation of a contemporary playground and a state-of-the-art sprayground, enhancements to park visibility and safety, provision of comfortable seating for parents and families, and the installation of walking paths that will promote circulation within the park and connections to the neighborhood.

I am thrilled to support BPRD's request for funding from the HAPRFF for McKinney Park and its proposed improvements to the park's play areas.

Thank you for your consideration,

Liz Breadon  
Boston City Councilor  
District 9- Allston-Brighton



April 16, 2024

Christine Brandao  
Boston Planning & Development Agency  
One City Hall, Ninth Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

**Re: McKinney Playground HAPRFF grant application**

Dear Christine,

On behalf of The Community Builders, Inc. (TCB), I am writing to express my strong support for the McKinney Playground redesign to receive a grant from the Harvard–Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund (HAPRFF). TCB is a nonprofit affordable housing developer whose mission is to build and sustain strong communities where all people can thrive; the proposed McKinney Playground redesign is entirely aligned with our mission and planned work in the area.

TCB is currently proposing to redevelop Faneuil Gardens, a public housing community located directly across the street from McKinney Playground. As one of the largest green spaces in the area, McKinney Playground is a critically important resource for families and youth in the Allston/Brighton neighborhoods, and the park is beloved and frequently used by residents—including hundreds of children—living at Faneuil Gardens.

Throughout the Faneuil Gardens redevelopment efforts, TCB is proposing a new raised table crosswalk that will directly connect Faneuil Gardens residents and their neighbors with the proposed McKinney Playground main entrance, and a sitewide pedestrian boulevard at Faneuil Gardens will act as an extension of and complement to McKinney Playground. The successful redesign of the park will be a key component of the future Faneuil Gardens redevelopment, and the park will be an invaluable asset for residents living in more than 400 affordable apartments at Faneuil Gardens.

TCB strongly recommends that the Boston Planning & Development Agency consider McKinney Playground for HAPRFF funding. The park is an important resource in the neighborhood today and has the potential to be an even stronger asset in the future. We very much look forward to seeing the new and improved McKinney Playground.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

*David Valecillos*

David Valecillos  
Senior Project Manager

Christine Brandao  
Community Engagement Manager  
Boston Planning and Development Agency  
One City Hall, Ninth Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

April 18, 2024

Dear Christine Brandao,

I write to you as a supporter of the Friends of McKinney Park to recommend McKinney Playground as a recipient of a 2024 Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund (HAPRFF) grant to fund the renovation of the playground and entry areas at McKinney Playground. The improvements will include:

- A formalized entry plaza adjacent to a raised crosswalk connecting Faneuil Gardens with McKinney
- Renovation of playground equipment and swings suitable for kids ages 2-5 and 5-12
- Installation of a splash pad
- Creation of a picnic area and preservation of existing mature trees

These additions and renovations will create a welcoming and safe environment for children to play and will reduce the urban heat island effect.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Steen

elizabeth steen  
[esteen@rcn.com](mailto:esteen@rcn.com)  
104 Goodenough St  
Brighton MA 02135  
617 803 2785

Christine Brandao  
Community Engagement Manager  
Boston Planning and Development Agency  
One City Hall, Ninth Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

April 24, 2024

Dear Christine Brandao,

This letter is in reference to McKinney Park in Brighton. As a supporter of the Friends of McKinney Park, I recommend the park as a recipient of the 2024 Harvard-Allston Public Realm Fund. This grant money will help fund the renovation of the playground and entry areas at McKinney Park.


The improvements will include:

- A formalized entry plaza adjacent to a raised crosswalk connecting Faneuil Gardens with the park
- Renovation of playground equipment
- Installation of a splash pad
- Creation of a picnic area and preservation of existing mature trees

These additions and renovations will create a welcoming and safe environment for all and will help reduce the urban heat island effect.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Ellen McCrave

  
Kevin Carragee

58 Cresthill Rd.  
Brighton MA 02135

Christine Brandao  
Community Engagement Manager  
Boston Planning and Development Agency  
One City Hall, Ninth Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

April 24, 2024

Dear Christine Brandao,

I write to you as a supporter of the Friends of McKinney Park to recommend McKinney Playground as a recipient of a 2024 [Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund \(HAPRFF\)](#) grant to fund the renovation of the playground and entry areas at McKinney Playground.

The improvements will include:

- A formalized entry plaza adjacent to a raised crosswalk connecting Faneuil Gardens with McKinney
- Renovation of playground equipment and swings suitable for kids ages 2-5 and 5-12
- Installation of a splash pad
- Creation of a picnic area and preservation of existing mature trees

These additions and renovations will create a welcoming and safe environment for children to play and will reduce the urban heat island effect.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tricia and Tim McGuirk  
93 Goodenough Street  
Brighton, MA 02135