



**Consultant Opportunity:
Reimagining the Civic Commons
Program Facilitator**

Introduction

Fairmount Park Conservancy in partnership with Bartram’s Garden, Centennial Parkside CDC, Knight Foundation, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, Strawberry Mansion CDC and William Penn Foundation seek a consultant to support the Reimagining the Civic Commons initiative in Philadelphia. Civic Commons is an initiative aimed at connecting and amplifying parks and public spaces to create thriving communities.

Reimagining the Civic Commons

Reimagining the Civic Commons is a national initiative that uses peer-to-peer learning to ensure that public spaces are promoting equitable outcomes for communities. Civic Commons began as a pilot in Philadelphia in 2015, growing to five cities in 2016 and to ten in 2020. Each city’s team is unique in terms of project partners, challenges and desired outcomes, though all are guided by national Civic Commons principles. More information about the national initiative can be found here: civiccommons.us

After completing a first phase of Civic Commons participation in 2015, Philadelphia has received over \$1 million in funding over 3 years from both local and national funders with a focus on three geographic areas – East Parkside, Strawberry Mansion, and Southwest Philadelphia. Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, both citywide entities dedicated to fostering resident stewardship of parks and public space, are the co-conveners of Philadelphia’s Civic Commons partners. Centennial Parkside CDC, Strawberry Mansion CDC, and Bartram’s Garden are community-based partners leading Civic Commons work in their neighborhoods. Funding and other support is provided by Knight Foundation and William Penn Foundation.

The above partners are seeking a Program Facilitator Contractor to assist with the second phase of the Reimagining the Civic Commons initiative in Philadelphia. The table below describes the partners’ desired outcomes for the initiative, as well as the Program Facilitator’s role in helping the group achieve them. The Program Facilitator will also help to further refine initiative outcomes as well as a system for learning from and assessing the Civic Commons project over time.

DESIRED OUTCOMES	PROGRAM FACILITATOR TASKS	CHALLENGES
<p>Partners feel that Philadelphia Civic Commons is reaching its full potential and fully leveraging the partnerships with City partners, namely Philadelphia Parks and Recreation</p> <p>Each Civic Commons partner feels engaged in the collective's work and perceives that it is of value to their organizations, to Philadelphians and to Philadelphia Parks & Recreation. Each Commons partner is engaged with the grant deliverables and national context.</p> <p>Each Civic Commons partner feels that Civic Commons participation is enhancing and strengthening its work to use public space to promote equitable outcomes for communities</p>	<p>Facilitate goal setting, scheduling, meeting agendas, meeting facilitation, communications, reporting, storytelling, and accountability structures. Help to navigate PPR and the City's internal structure and connect Commons partners to the right departments and staff.</p> <p>Review and revise grant work plans to align with shifting partner goals and outputs and vice versa, especially the goals of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation. Assist Parks & Recreation with neighborhood asset mapping.</p> <p>Work alongside national Civic Commons consultant Interface Studio on incorporating community-driven data collection strategies into each partners' practice as applicable</p>	<p>Limited staff capacity within partner organizations</p> <p>COVID-19 disrupting planning efforts and realistic goal setting</p> <p>Significant changes and/or delays in staff capacity and scope in light of the pandemic</p> <p>Measuring impact is critical but is hindered by staff capacity, job scopes and experience.</p>

<p>Embed Civic Commons learning network and principles of engagement and collaboration as new ways of working across public space sectors.</p>	<p>Review national Working Groups, Studios and Learning Opportunities and make recommendations on feasibility of partner participation.</p>	<p>Difficult to sustain beyond the grant term</p> <p>Limited staff capacity</p>
<p>Create realistic systems for regular, meaningful networking and learning across groups and individuals working on public space issues across the region.</p> <p>Go beyond organizational staff to reach and connect with passionate residents working on the ground.</p>	<p>Facilitate goal setting and long-term planning for learning network and peer-to-peer exchange</p> <p>Build dynamic curriculum for the learning network based on the needs and interests of the target audiences. Include neighborhood-based and citywide learning networks which will inform the Public Space Summit, a bi-annual day of peer-to-peer learning among hundreds of public space partners.</p> <p>Work with partners to engage key community groups as participants</p>	<p>Sustainability of new communications and/or forums will be important</p>

<p>Develop realistic, long-lasting goals and systems for Philadelphia Parks & Recreation engagement staff and programs to connect and collaborate with Civic Commons partners</p>	<p>Work with Parks & Recreation and partners to map potential partnerships, capacity, learning and communications strategies.</p>	<p>Philadelphia Parks & Recreation will be hiring engagement staff in 2021. PPR sites disconnected from Civic Commons partners and principles</p>
<p>Healthy and productive Civic Commons partner governance practices, especially related to decision-making, communications, learning, and accountability</p>	<p>Support with establishing group norms and processes around decision-making.</p> <p>Support with creating systems that help staff 'look up from the day jobs' to incorporate Commons learnings into implementation and practice</p> <p>Be a neutral facilitator of meetings and conversations. Help establish trust-building norms among the group.</p> <p>Through the tasks listed above, advise the partners on how to facilitate community conversations so that information gathering is not simply top down</p>	<p>Unclear methods for decision-making, especially given institutional/funder dynamics.</p> <p>Unclear how Commons learnings filter down through partners and communities and how the impact is captured.</p> <p>Despite intentions, communication and partner structure still reflects institutional/funder dynamics</p>

Contract Details

The Program Facilitator will be a Contractor of Fairmount Park Conservancy. Total length of the contract will be 12 months with an assessment and review by the partners after the first three months. The total contract award shall not exceed \$50,000.

Submission Requirements

All proposals must include the following:

- Resume
- Cover letter communicating at minimum:
 - Understanding of and approach to Civic Commons Program Facilitator role
 - Contract budget and hourly rate
 - Past work that demonstrates capacity to approach work with an anti-racist, trauma-informed perspective.
 - Examples of relevant projects completed in the last 5-7 years and insights gained. Experience in working with City Departments a plus.
 - Three (3) relevant references

Experience working in at least one of the three Civic Commons neighborhoods is strongly preferred.

An electronic submission of the proposal is due by 5pm EST on Friday, February 12, 2021 via this link: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/d250369117dd488baa22a899d5c26268>