



## Dickinson Square

# Conceptual Master Plan for Park Revitalization

4th & Tasker Streets Philadelphia, PA 19148  
December 2007 • Project Number 2007-20

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C O M M U N I T Y D E S I G N  
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# Dickinson Square

## Conceptual Master Plan for Park Revitalization

4th & Tasker Streets Philadelphia, PA 19148

December 2007 • Project Number 2007-20

Prepared for

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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19148

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## About Us

Building neighborhood visions as communities and design professionals work together; the Community Design Collaborative is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit that provides preliminary architectural, engineering, and planning services to nonprofit organizations.

Design professionals—volunteering their services *pro bono* through the Collaborative—help nonprofits communicate their goals for improving the physical and social fabric of their neighborhoods through design.

The Collaborative relies on a variety of resources to achieve its goal of assisting nonprofits in need of preliminary design services. Our programs are supported through grants from the City of Philadelphia's Office of Housing and Community Development, The William Penn Foundation, PNC Bank Foundation, Wachovia Foundation, Claneil Foundation, Connelly Foundation, AIA Philadelphia, Citizens Bank Foundation, NEA Design Arts, The Quaker Chemical Foundation and the Union Benevolent Association.

Operational support is also provided through the generosity of individual and corporate donors. The Collaborative's Annual Bowling Ball is a signature event, raising funds while offering a night of fun for firms, friends, and fans. In addition, the Collaborative's volunteers donate hundreds of hours of in-kind services each year.

To learn more about the Collaborative, visit our website at [www.cdesignc.org](http://www.cdesignc.org) or contact us at [cdesignc@cdesignc.org](mailto:cdesignc@cdesignc.org).

The Community Design Collaborative's products are intended to provide visual concepts and to assist in the preliminary phase of project design and planning. All drawings and construction budgeting figures are limited to conceptual design and are neither intended nor may be used for construction. The Community Design Collaborative and our project volunteers assume no responsibility or liability for our services including the recommendations of our volunteers, the technical accuracy of our work product or for any unauthorized use.

Building Neighborhood Visions...

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# Introduction

**Dickinson Square**

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Dickinson Square Park, located in the Pennsport neighborhood of South Philadelphia, is comprised of an impressive tree canopy, two masonry buildings, a basketball court and some colorful and worn play equipment. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the site functioned as the stockyard for Pascal Iron Works. When the park opened in 1898 after the closing and demolition of the Iron Works, the site included play equipment and was considered a model play ground. The park has retained elements of the original design including the layout of some of the pathways. The basketball court and the community buildings were added to the park in the 1950's.

In March of 2007 there was a daytime shooting on the basketball court resulting in the death of a young man. The incident was particularly troubling because of the children attending the Abigail Vare Public School, located directly across the street from the park. Despite the recent violence, the park is heavily used for both passive and active recreation. Daily, a diverse group of park goers include: parents and children, people walking dogs, kids and adults looking to take advantage of the basketball court, and those who want to just stroll or sit and use the park and its facilities. Children from the Dickinson Narrows neighborhood walk through the park on their way to and from school. The park is considered by many to be one of the neighborhood's best features.

Friends of Dickinson Square (FDS) is a community-based and volunteer-driven organization focused on continual improvement of the quality of life in the Dickinson Square neighborhood through directed efforts to improve and regularly maintain all of the park and its facilities. The group is dedicated to improving the park through direct and individual efforts. Towards this goal, FDS organizes weekly maintenance of the park. They pick up the ever-present litter, rake the abundant leaves that fall from the trees in autumn, and in the spring of 2007, they planted 25 trees. All of the trees survived the hot dry summer because of the weekly care they received from volunteer labor. The Community Design Collaborative (Collaborative) team was impressed with the motivation and the capacity if the FDS to improve their community and their park.

FDS requested assistance from the Collaborative in order to develop a master plan for park improvements that can be used to direct fundraising efforts, project time lines, purchase equipment and ensure maintenance of the park. The master plan will help FDS to successfully plan park renovations, repairs and additions. FDS has generated a sense of community pride and they have the will to perform many of the tasks required to maintain a safe, clean and successful urban park. The neighborhood residents care about the park and are willing to work to ensure its future as a neighborhood asset.

The Collaborative was asked to look at specific features within the park including lighting, horticulture, seating, play equipment, building improvements, and the possibility of adding a dog run to the park. In the first of two community task force meetings, three major factors were identified.

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(cont.)

1. The Building: Making it a more welcoming place, both inside and outside; encouraging the community to use the building as a resource for classes and workshops; the building will also house a collection of local maps and photographs and serve as an interpretive historical site.
2. The Playground Areas: Maintaining them for safety and updating the equipment and the play surfaces; finding the best options for the new placement of the equipment.
3. The Groundscape: The pathways and the greens areas, and the placement of trees, shrubs, perennials and ground covers.

FDS also expressed an interest in sustainable solutions for the issues facing their park.

The design services provided by Collaborative volunteers result from information gathered on multiple site visits and two task force meetings with the FDS. They include a master plan for the site, suggested renovations for the community building (interior and exterior), a maintenance plan, an opinion of probable cost, and supporting documents. In these documents, the team points out the major priorities facing the Friends of Dickinson Square.

Areas of concern include renovation of the community building, in order to simplify and modernize the facility. The building is used as a polling place, so accessibility is a priority. The Collaborative is recommending the demolition of the round house building. A high priority maintenance issue, which needs to be worked on in conjunction with the Department of Recreation, involves the use of the park buildings as storage sites for City equipment, not used within Dickinson Square. The community building upgrades and the new pathways should be considered the first phase of the master plan.

A major upgrade, crucial to the success of the master plan, is to address the condition of the play equipment. The park should regain its status as a model playground. The pathway surfaces leading to the center play area should be upgraded with sustainable paving before the new play equipment is installed. The site furniture of the park (lights, benches, trash receptacles, play equipment) should be considered the second phase of the master plan.

The current collection of trees in the park is one of the highlights of the park. Supplementing the stately canopy with shade trees in the empty tree pits, ornamental trees in select locations, and low shrubs, perennials and groundcovers at the park entrances and along the edges of the pathways, will enhance the grounds by providing seasonal color and additional food for urban wildlife. Labeling the plants to facilitate easy identification should be considered, as it will help experts to quickly diagnose problems and suggest treatment. Labeling will provide park users with knowledge of the valuable collection of plants that exists in their neighborhood. Adding to the plantscape of the park should be considered the third phase of the master plan.

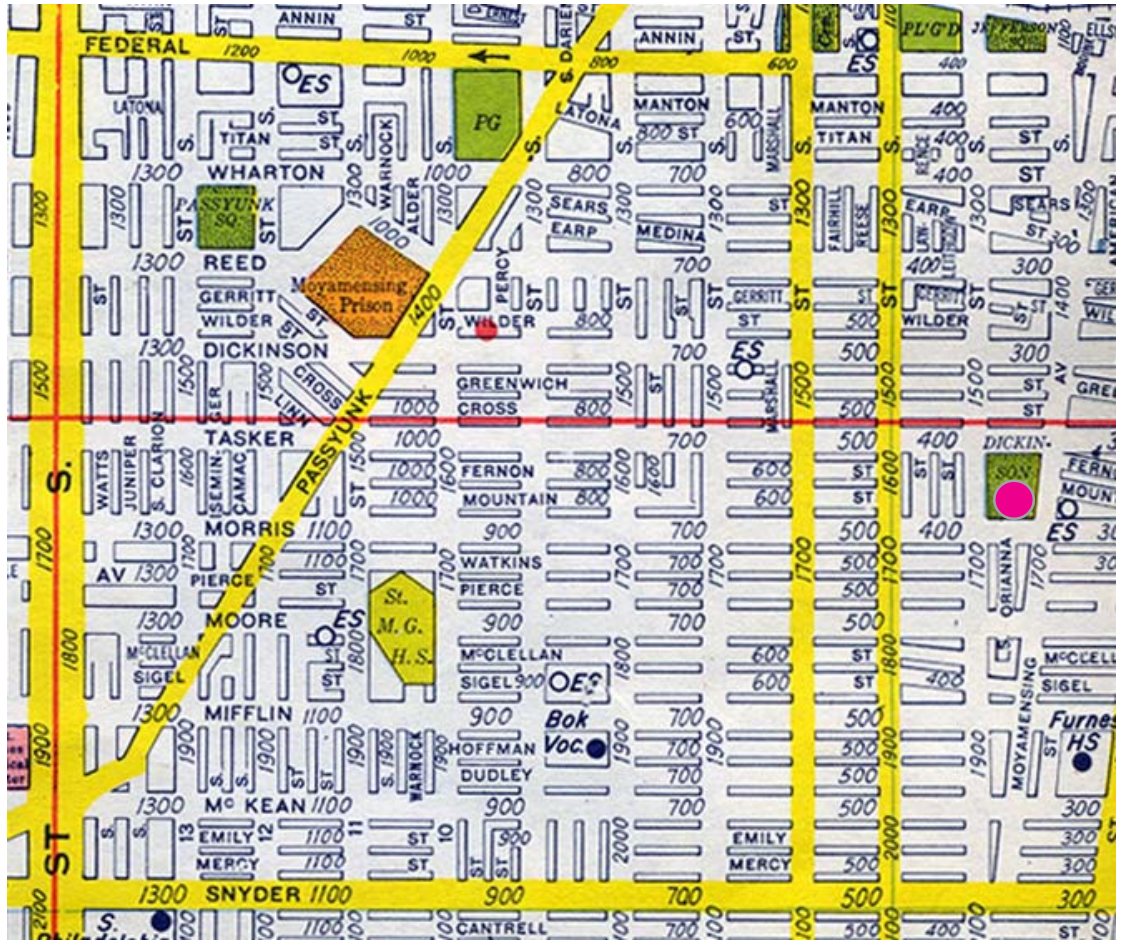
The master plan, the enumeration of these key issues, and the estimate of their projected costs will provide the Friends of Dickinson Square Park with a tool to pursue funding for these projects so that the group may continue to contribute to and serve their community.

# Project Location

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Dickinson Square  
4th & Tasker Streets  
South Philadelphia

Organization: Neighborhood Park Association  
Facility Type: Neighborhood Park



# Neighborhood Context

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Southwest edge of the park - 4th Street elevation



Northwest edge of the park - 4th Street elevation



North edge of the park - Tasker Street elevation



Northeast edge of the park - Moyamensing Avenue elevation



Southwest edge of the park - Morris Street elevation

# Historical Information

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# Existing Conditions

## Photos

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# Existing Conditions

## Site Plans

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# Existing Conditions Building Plan

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# Conceptual Design

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## Proposed Site Plan

# Conceptual Design

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## Proposed Park Entry Designs

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## Proposed Building Study

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## Proposed Plant Palettes

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## Proposed Signage

# Conceptual Design

## Design Precedents

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## Maintenance Guidelines Plan

One of the most critical issues in park management is inadequate funds for park maintenance. Too often, park maintenance costs are the first to suffer budget cuts. However, in the long run, costs to upgrade existing facilities will far exceed the costs of regular maintenance.

The Friends of Dickinson Square group is taking on many of the maintenance responsibilities for Dickinson Square Park and they need to understand the scope and costs of maintaining their new park.

Some of the more obvious benefits are:

- a rational, organized approach to providing the recreational experience the community needs and desires
- decreased serious maintenance problems resulting in decreased maintenance costs
- decreased crisis management
- avoiding unannounced, unplanned growth of maintenance responsibilities
- total costs are known so that at budget time rational trade-offs can be made as opposed to irrational budget cuts
- the community organization can solicit bids and raise funds for maintenance tasks and can account to the community in "real" terms - a given level of service at a given cost

A maintenance plan for the Dickinson Square Park should be ready for use before it is needed. Maintenance plans are usually done every 5 - 10 years and are revised every year, ideally, as the master plan is updated.

### Plan Requirements

The following guidelines are based on the proposed Site Plan and may be modified as the plan is further developed and implemented. As the Plan is developed and building materials and construction details are finalized, the following general plan will need to be refined and tailored to the community's goals and needs.

### GENERAL MAINTENANCE PLAN

- 1) Grounds - General
  - a) Mow and trim grounds on a 30-day rotation. Maintain grass to a height of 2.5 to 3 inches.
  - b) Pick up litter and trash weekly.
  - c) Check for hazards and correct them as soon as possible.
  - d) In the fall, rake leaves and shred for mulch, to be used in the plant beds. Compost remaining leaves on site for use on site and within the community.
  
- 2) Flower Beds
  - a) If necessary, change out plant beds with seasonal color twice per year.
  - b) Remove trash and debris weekly.
  - c) Weed weekly.

## Maintenance Guidelines Plan (cont.)

- d) Maintain leaf mulch at 3 inch depth and replenish twice per year with leaves harvested on site.
  - e) Water thoroughly, weekly, or as needed.
- 3) Trees
- a) Inspect for damage and disease in early spring and fall. Report significant or hazardous findings to Certified Arborist for recommendations.
  - b) Prune trees as needed to maintain health.
  - c) Water newly planted trees thoroughly on a weekly basis, or as needed.
  - d) Maintain a 3 inch deep mulch ring around trees to prevent mower damage and maintain soil moisture. Maintain a 6 inch distance from the base of tree when mulching.
- 4) Basketball Court, Bocce Court and Chess Tables
- a) Surfacing
    - (1) Clean litter and debris from court surfaces weekly and remove any hazards.
    - (2) Repaint, resurface or replenish courts when worn areas exceed 10% of court or when scheduled as per "resurfacing plan".
    - (3) Maintain a vacuuming schedule for porous asphalt as required.
  - b) Goals and Backboards
    - (1) Inspect goals and backboards weekly and repair as needed.
    - (2) Replace torn or tattered nets as needed.
  - c) Chess Tables
    - (1) Inspect tables and chairs weekly and repair as needed.
    - (2) Replace damaged equipment as needed.
- 5) Play Equipment
- a) Check play equipment and surrounding play areas weekly and repair as needed.
  - b) Notify Recreation Department of follow-up work or materials needed.
  - c) Perform monthly inspections on play equipment and surrounding play areas. Record any deficiencies and schedule repairs.
  - d) Isolate any hazardous deficiencies from use and repair as soon as possible.
  - e) Surfacing
    - (1) Check fall surfaces weekly.
    - (2) Remove debris and level the surfaces as needed.
    - (3) Add fall surface material as needed to stay within ASTM and NPSI standards.
    - (4) Repair or replace damaged rubber cushion surfaces immediately.
    - (5) Inspect fall surface for drainage problems after heavy rains. Fall surface should be free of standing water within 24 hours.
  - f) Borders
    - (1) Inspect playground borders weekly and repair as needed.

## Maintenance Guidelines Plan (cont.)

- 6) Walkways
  - a) Inspect walkways weekly.
  - b) Remove trash and debris weekly.
  - c) Edge walkways monthly.
  - d) Remove weeds and grass from sidewalk cracks and expansion joints as needed.
  - e) Vacuum porous paving as required.
  - f) Remove snow and ice without the use of sand on porous surfaces.
  
- 7) Drinking Fountains
  - a) Inspect fountains weekly.
  - b) Repair water leaks as soon as possible.
  - c) Winterize drinking fountain and water lines as needed.
  
- 8) Signage
  - a) Inspect signs weekly.
  - b) Replace or repair damaged or worn signs as needed.
  - c) Repaint wood signs every three years or as needed.
  
- 9) Trash and Cigarette Receptacles
  - a) Empty receptacles (pull liners) if more than half full, or sooner, if there is a strong odor or they are attracting numerous insects.
  - b) Wash out barrels monthly, or more often, if needed.
  - c) Inspect receptacles weekly for worn, damaged, or missing parts and repair as soon as possible.
  - d) Clean areas around receptacles as needed.
  
- 10) Benches
  - a) Inspect benches weekly and repair as needed.
  - b) Repaint or re-stain benches every 3 years.
  
- 11) Ornamental Steel Fencing
  - a) Inspect fences monthly and repair as needed.
  - b) Repaint ornamental fences every 3 years or as needed.
  
- 12) Lights: Park Entrance and Exterior Facility Lights
  - a) Inspect lights monthly and repair as needed, depending on availability of a Bucket Truck.
  - b) Report electrical problems to Recreation Department for repairs.
  - c) Isolate hazardous deficiencies from use and repair immediately.

## Maintenance Plan Guidelines (cont.)

- 13) Community Building
  - a) Inspect monthly for any structural, electrical, plumbing, and equipment damage and report to Recreation Department to make repairs as needed. Isolate any hazardous conditions from use and have repaired immediately.
  - b) Clean facility before and after every event.
  - c) Repaint interior every 3 years or sooner depending on deterioration.
  - d) Repaint exterior as needed.
  - e) Maintain vines on building's green wall. Prune and trim vines back to maintain a neat appearance and views from building. Inspect trellis for stability and repair as needed.
  - f) Inspect, weed and water green roof as necessary.
  - g) Inspect HVAC equipment and change filters yearly.
  - h) Clean and stock the restroom as necessary.



## Opinion of Sitework Probable Cost

DESCRIPTION	PHASE		
	1	2	3
<b># 1 - SITEWORK</b>			
DEMOLITION - Remove Round Building	4,200.00		
Remove existing Walkways			12,500
Remove Perimeter Sidewalks		22,000.00	
Relocate Existing Sculpture	1,500.00		
Re-grade area's for New Walkways			7,200.00
Re-grade area's for New Construction	6,500.00		
Basketball Court			
Pervious Paving	13,000		
New Perimeter Fence	12,500.00		
New Equipment	5,000.00		
Lighting	10,000.00		
Park Center			
Pervious Paving	10,000.00		
Berm w/ embedded Benches	5,000.00		
Play Pods w/ New Equipment	20,000.00		
Recycled SoftRay Surface	10,400.00		
Water Fountain	5,000.00		
Plant Wall on Trellis	3,500.00		
Benches Throughout Site	8,000.00		
New Exterior Sidewalks		100,000.00	
New Interior Pathways - Pervious Paving			70,000.00
Dog Runs w/gravel fines, including Fencing	12,000.00		
Plant Beds w/Steel Edging	15,000.00		
Water Fountain for Dogs	5,000.00		
Accessible Ramps	1,500.00		
Benches w/cigarette Receptables	4,500.00		
New Boccee Court	8,000.00		
New Leaf Composting Area	1,000.00		
Trash Area w/Berms & Trash Receptacles	6,000.00		
Chess Tables	1,500.00		
Benches at Basketball Court	5,000.00		
Plant Beds at entrances & Throughout Site	20,000.00		
Play Pieces and Swings	25,000.00		
Pedestrian Lighting	30,000.00		
Receptacles w/lids	6,000.00		
Rain Barrel for Building	500.00		
Plants, Shrubs and Grass	20,000.00		
Fence Banner	2,000.00		
<b>TOTAL SITEWORK</b>	<b>277,600.00</b>	<b>122,000.00</b>	<b>89,700.00</b>

# Conceptual Design

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## Opinion of Building and Probable Cost Overall Total

DESCRIPTION	PHASE		
	1	2	3
#2 - BUILDING: (Existing)			
Demolition	7,000.00		
New Partitions	15,000.00		
New Ceilings	10,000.00		
New Kitchen	10,000.00		
Tile/Carpet	10,000.00		
Bathrooms	12,000.00		
New Windows	15,000.00		
New Exterior Finishes	15,000.00		
Green Roof	10,000.00		
Plumbing	10,000.00		
Sprinkler	8,000.00		
H.V.A.C.	15,000.00		
Fire Alarm/Security	13,000.00		
<b>TOTAL BUILDING</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>		
<b>TOTAL #1 &amp; #2</b>	<b>427,600.00</b>	<b>122,000.00</b>	<b>89,700.00</b>
<b>G.C.O &amp; P 10%</b>	<b>42,760.00</b>	<b>12,200.00</b>	<b>8,970.00</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>470,360.00</b>	<b>134,200.00</b>	<b>98,670.00</b>
<b>CONTINGENCY</b>	<b>94,072.00</b>	<b>26,840.00</b>	<b>19,734.00</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>564,432.00</b>	<b>161,040.00</b>	<b>118,404.00</b>

# Description of Services

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