

FORWARD FUND

Final Selections Award Summary

Forward Fund Overview

Purpose And Goals

The CRA hopes to offer awards to a diverse set of entities whose proposals are both feasible and supportive of economic vitality, livability, and sustainability in Cambridge.

The CRA's Forward Fund is a micro-grant program intended to support specific physical improvement projects that better Cambridge's built environment for the benefit of all the city's residents, workers, and visitors.

The Fund's goals are to:

- Advance the CRA's mission to implement creative initiatives that promote social equity and a balanced economic system.
- Support innovative proposals that craft resourceful projects to take advantage of local knowledge in order to maximize potential benefits.

For 2017, the theme of the Forward Fund grant program is to support projects that create, maintain, or enhance [Connections](#) within Cambridge.

Available Funding

The CRA budget authorized the distribution of up to \$125,000 for 2017. The CRA reserved the right to allocate funding flexibly depending on the quality of applications received, and to request project modifications or other conditions before disbursement of funds.

Two Award Types

Applicants may apply for one of two award types. The award categories are:

- Community Infrastructure Capital Grants: Awards of up to a maximum of \$25,000 offered to applicants seeking to fund a physical improvement project that serves a civic facility that provides public services and facilitates community Connections or meets a neighborhood need regardless of innovativeness. This may include a building or infrastructure project for a non-profit or a Cambridge-based independent small business with a neighborhood function that touches a significant amount of the population.
- Civic Experimentation Capital Grants: Awards of up to a maximum of \$25,000 offered to applicants piloting innovative specific physical improvement projects. Something that encourages, enables, or executes a physical innovation, avant-garde placemaking, or tactical urbanism in a public and civic space, whether publically or privately owned.

Both award types require a 1:1 organizational match - which could include another outside funding source or in-kind/volunteer matching resource. Grants are to be paid 50% at the time of award, and 50% at the completion of the project. Funds are to be primarily for specific physical improvements, but up to 5% may be used for associated programming.

Eligibility Criteria

Projects must meet all of the following yes/no criteria in order to be eligible:

1. Located within Cambridge.
2. Achieves a physical improvement that does not require any additional ongoing funding from the CRA or the City to operate or maintain. Funds are not to be used for programming, only physical improvements.
3. Request does not exceed award maximums.
4. Applicant is a Cambridge-based nonprofit organization, an organization that has an agreement with a Cambridge-based fiscal sponsor, or is an independent small business. Individual artists, artist groups, civic organizations, and community organizations are eligible to apply for funds.
5. The applicant must have control over proposed installation site, or have a letter of support from the property owner.

Evaluation Criteria

Project proposals will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria by an advisory group to consist of a combination of CRA staff and City of Cambridge staff from various departments:

Project Related Scoring Criteria:

1. Alignment with the purpose and goals of the Fund and the CRA mission and operating principles
2. Increase the quality of the built environment / public realm, tackle a public need, or provide an amenity
3. Demonstrates a tangible public benefit in an under-resourced area of Cambridge designated by the City of Cambridge [Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas](#)
4. Alignment with and support of current Cambridge planning and development efforts
5. Level of public access and visibility of the project

Applicant Related Scoring Criteria:

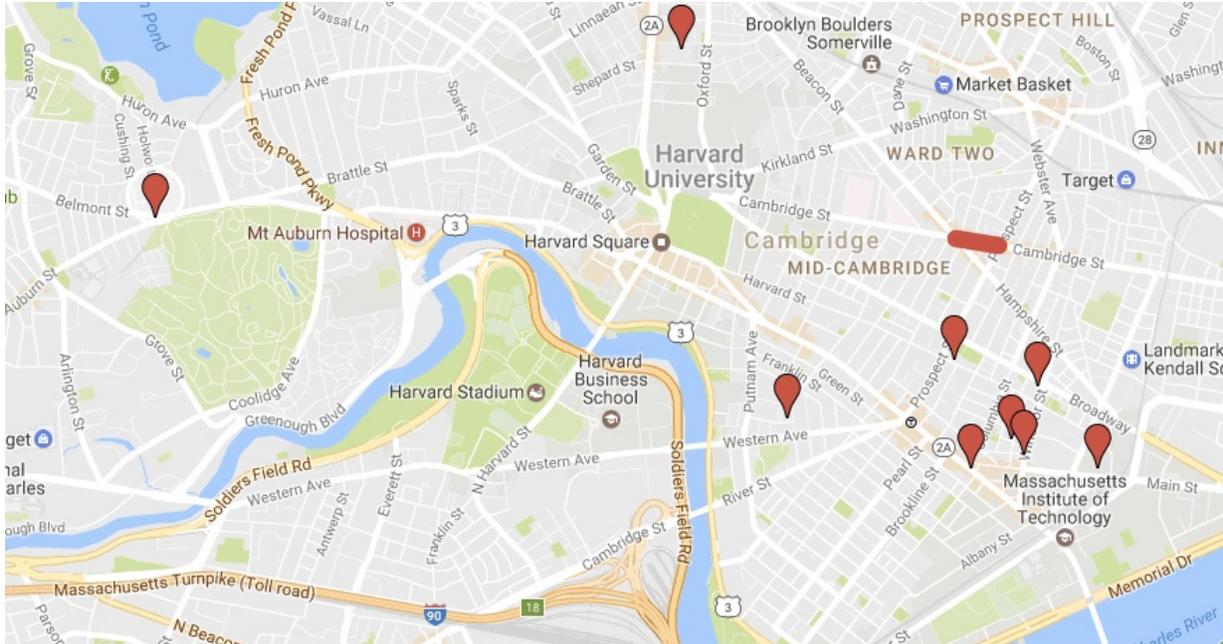
1. Demonstrated capacity of applicant to successfully implement the project
2. Realistic financial feasibility of the project
3. Financial need of applicant

Governance Structure

An advisory group consisting of CRA and City of Cambridge staff from various departments was appointed to evaluate proposals and recommend selections. The 2017 advisory group consists of the following members:

- Pardis Saffari, Economic Development (Community Development Department)
- Gary Chan, Community Planning (Community Development Department)
- Carlos Peralta, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
- John Nardone, Department of Public Works
- Lillian Hsu, Cambridge Arts Council
- Anthony Tuccinardi, Inspectional Services Department
- John Ziniewicz, Cambridge Housing Authority
- Nancy Tauber, Kids Council (Human Services Department)

Forward Fund Final Selections 2017



INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS (\$70,214)

1. Cambridge Street Beautification
East Cambridge Business Assoc.
2. Fort Agassiz Annex
Agassiz Baldwin Community
3. Building Pillar 1: Child & Teen Services
Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House
4. Port Kiosk
Community Art Center
5. Building Modernization Project
Cambridge Community Center

EXPERIMENTATION GRANTS (\$48,500)

6. Tunnel of Light
Friends of the Greenway, Inc.
7. Wayfinders - Connecting 2 the I.E. (Innovation Economy)
Innovators for Purpose
8. Moses Youth Center Vertical Garden
Carolyn L. Arts
9. Suitsculptures
ROLO

TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED (\$118,714)

Infrastructure Grants

Cambridge Street Beautification

EAST CAMBRIDGE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

\$5,214

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Jason Alves; Executive Director

Project Location: Inman Square to Prospect Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“The East Cambridge Business Association (ECBA) views our beautification efforts for Cambridge Street as public benefit for business owners, residents, and visitors to our business district. The streetscape improvements reach our residents and patrons on many different levels. First and foremost, it provides a positive visual impact for the business district. Many squares throughout Cambridge have participated in this program with the City but until ECBA committed to sharing the expense it was not practiced in East Cambridge. These decorations help to define our business district. Making the area attractive helps to attract new businesses as well as encourages pedestrian foot traffic. The American Flags we added in 2016 reinforce this notion and the Winter Baskets carry our efforts through the winter months.

Additionally, the decoration along the street are appreciated by our residents that benefit from the visual improvements in the their neighborhood and for some out their front door along Cambridge Street.

Showing that we care about our surrounding encourages business owners to take special care of areas around their stores and promotes keeping Cambridge Street clean.

Finally, in a business district such as Cambridge Street that currently experiences gaps in retail activity, visual connections help pedestrians venture beyond where they may naturally stop exploring. Connecting pedestrians from Inman Square across Columbia/Webster Ave and towards East Cambridge is a good example of this connection that we hope to achieve.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Late May 2017	36 Flower Baskets, 29 American Flags are purchased by ECBA and installed by the Public Works Department (DPW) in time for Memorial Day Weekend
Mid-Summer 2017	40 Holiday Baskets ordered
Early December 2017	40 Holiday Baskets installed by Cambridge Electrical Department and DPW

Fort Agassiz Annex

AGASSIZ BALDWIN COMMUNITY

\$5,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Maria LaPage; Executive Director

Project Location: Agassiz Baldwin Community, 20 Sacramento Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

"5 years ago, a group of middle school students enrolled in a workshop at the Maud Morgan Arts Center to design a play structure for Agassiz Baldwin Community backyard. Over the course of the workshop, a licensed architect guided them through the process. They met with the ABC Children's Programs Director to understand the needs and restrictions and get feedback throughout the process. They designed and built a detailed, scaled model and architects created drawings from the model. Once funding was in place, ABC contracted to get the major structural components built by a carpenter and the students returned to finish building several components. Last but not least, "Fort Agassiz," was presented to the community and is now used daily.

In the last 5 years, our programs have grown, and we've had to get rid of some of the other features of our backyard as they fell into disrepair, leaving us with only one small play structure, which gets very overcrowded. With so many children and families using our backyard, we are now hoping to build the "Fort Agassiz Annex," to expand the original structure to better meet the demand for this space. A new group of youth participated in a workshop recently and dreamt up creative design concepts. We would like to secure funding so they can reconvene to collaborate on final design, and then work together to build it with help from professionals. Both the process and the product of this project align with the CRA's theme of "connections." The youth designers and builders connect with peers, younger students, program staff, and professional architects and carpenters. Once the final product is complete, it becomes an inviting gathering and play space that enables countless connections to be made between hundreds of children and parents."

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

April 2017	Research all safety regulations Complete scaled model of the design created by middle school students
May 2017	Complete architectural drawings
June 2017	Hire Contractor Complete Fundraising
August 2017	Complete construction of the structure
September 2017	Complete all structural inspections in preparation for the first day of school

Building Pillar 1: Child & Teen Services

MARGARET FULLER NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE INC.

\$25,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Christina Alexis; Executive Director

Project Location: Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, 71 Cherry Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“Children, Black/African American and Hispanic/ Latino individuals experience poverty at nearly double the rate of the overall Cambridge population. The Port, where Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House (MFNH) is located, has higher concentrations of children and Hispanics/African Americans than most other neighborhoods as well as foreign-born individuals. One of the things that MFNH staff has observed is a major need for appropriate active play learning tools as a result of their learning challenges and adverse effects of trauma they have suffered.

The current reality is that the space at MFNH is not currently outfitted appropriately for the children we serve. Our proposed project is to support functional space design upgrades for our child-care program space to include three major areas:

- Life safety repairs, plumbing and electrical maintenance and repair
- Space redesign and soft demolition and rebuild
- Space redesigns and outfitting with appropriate child intervention infrastructure

Funds will be used to repair and improve the quality of the physical plant and provide appropriate resources and materials in the child care area. The goal is to have this project completed by December 2017. This project is one component of an agency-wide capital improvement project that is being implemented by MFNH to help us better serve our neighbors and the overall public in Cambridge by sustaining the agency’s historic presence in Cambridge.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Summer 2017	Obtain all permits for project implementation
September 2017	Life safety repairs Plumbing maintenance and repairs Electrical maintenance and repairs Space redesign
October - November 2017	Soft demolition Rebuild redesigned space
December 2017	Complete renovations/upgrades

Port Kiosk

COMMUNITY ART CENTER

\$25,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Eryn Johnson; Executive Director

Project Location: Corner of Windsor and School Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“The Port Kiosk is a shaded enclosure in the shape of a hand, brightly colored and with a stencil pattern inspired by photos of actual people from the Port neighborhood. Located in the curb bump out at Windsor and School Streets, the kiosk serves the community with useful information that people might need throughout their day. Standing 9 feet 7 inches tall, the Hand symbolizes the people of the Port and their shared values of community, friendship, and mutual help. A curved roof just touching the fingertips frames the shape while keeping off snow and rain, making a sheltered spot to pause and consult the kiosk or chat with a friend. The Port Kiosk, which has been designed by our Public Art Crew with support from artist Liz LaManche. The Kiosk was conceived through community meetings held in winter 2015/2016 and has been advised by the Port Public Art Leadership Group. The Kiosk will celebrate the recent name reclaiming of the neighborhood by featuring a new Port logo designed by Community Art Center (CAC) digital art students through a yearlong community process. The Port Kiosk is presented as part of Home Port, a multiyear initiative that uses pop up events, photojournalism, public art, and story collection, to strengthen the Port community. Home Port is guided by a group of neighborhood leaders, carried out by local youth and supported by a team of partners including the City of Cambridge, developers Alexandria Real Estate Equities and Boston Properties, and grassroots neighborhood groups.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Summer 2017	Final design production
September - October 2017	Technology and architectural specifications finalized Final design presented at Community Meetings and CAC's art truck
November - December 2017	Issue RFP's for contractor/fabricators Select contractor/fabricators
January 2018	Permitting and insurance finalized
February - March 2018	Offsite fabrication of kiosk
April 2018	Kiosk installation

Building Modernization Project

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTER

***\$10,000**

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Darrin Korte; Executive Director

Project Location: Location Cambridge Community Center, 5 Callender Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“We are respectfully requesting \$25,000 from the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority's Forward Fund to help purchase 35 iMac computers and two printers to replace our outdated equipment in our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) computer lab, Middle School Lab and staff offices, as well as ten iPads for our STEAM programming so that our children can learn to code on state of the art technology. In addition to the equipment, this project would include the labor and materials to create new computer stations and re-wire our computer labs.

At the Cambridge Community Center, we integrate STEAM programming because it aligns with our mission statement of empowering children and families in the Riverside community. Not only do the children we serve love our science and technology programs, such as coding and MinecraftEDU, we believe supplemental STEAM programming outside of the public school system is vital to ensure children are interested in these subjects in the future. Considering we serve a community that is at a socioeconomic disadvantage, we know that this is especially important in order to combat the poverty cycle.

In addition to improving our STEAM programs, we plan to open our updated computer lab to the public during the morning hours, Monday - Friday. Further, we will invite high school students to use the space during the evenings for homework or personal art projects that they are working on. We are one of the closest youth centers to Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, giving us a unique opportunity to be a valuable resource to the students there.”

**Forward Fund monies will be allocated for the infrastructure aspects of the proposed project.*

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Spring 2017	Phase I <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase computers• Remove current computer hardware from STEAM Computer Labs Phase II <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refurbish and build new computer stations in STEAM Labs• Rewire STEAM Labs
Summer 2017	Phase III <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Install new computers in STEAM Labs• Ribbon cutting for new STEAM Labs

Experimentation Grants

Tunnel of Light

FRIENDS OF THE GREENWAY, INC.

***\$10,000**

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Douglas Brown; Executive Director

Project Location: Watertown-Cambridge Greenway Multi-Use Path

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“We intend to repurpose an abandoned rail tunnel for use as an outdoor, public performance space. The performance space will eliminate much of the setup cost associated with hosting large-scale, short-term audio-visual and performance projects. This space would provide turnkey performance infrastructure, including onsite sound, lighting, staging, and support equipment. This space would appeal to audio-visual artists, dance and theater performances, and acoustic and electronic music performances.

First, the project would inject life into a dirt and forgotten urban space, creating new life in a space that currently lacks any. Second, the project would provide new options for small performances that would otherwise struggle to find an affordable home in Cambridge.

Because this project seeks to reclaim and celebrate a historic urban space, it will be unlike any other performance spaces currently available in the City. And because the necessary infrastructure will be in place in advance, performers will be able to host an event with very little advance effort or cost.”

**Forward Fund monies will be allocated for the infrastructure aspects of the proposed project.*

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Spring - Summer 2017	DCR Greenway path construction commences Convene artist' working group Community meetings Select final design in concert with CRA and the City
Fall 2017	Approve final design/budget/project plan Complete permitting Contract installer
Winter 2017	DCR Greenway path construction substantially completed Tunnel lighting installation begins
Spring 2018	Tunnel installations completed Opening ceremony and event

Wayfinder - Connecting 2 the I.E. (Innovation Economy)

INNOVATORS FOR PURPOSE

\$25,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Michael Dawson; Executive Director

Project Location: The Port, Kendall Square, Jill Brown-Rhone Park

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“We are proposing to create a student designed wayfinding signage and multimedia tour system that will connect youth, especially those residing in the Port, to Cambridge’s rich history and its thriving innovation economy. While the building-boom that is ongoing in Cambridge may be improving the city’s landscape, we have found that youth in the Port feel invisible and disconnected to that progress. By engaging local students in a wayfinding design project, we intend to connect them to the stories that have been and continue to develop around them and to showcase their own talents, hopes, and dreams.

Innovators for Purpose will engage the students in a highly collaborative design process with the guidance of Daniel Solomon Koff (Principal of Solomon Office, Adjunct Professor at Olin College of Engineering, and alumni of Harvard Graduate School of Design, MDesS ‘15) as well as design interns from MIT and Harvard.

The project will promote local establishments by making their history visible to the public. And because the wayfinding system will be designed by local youth, it will connect them to this history. The creation of a tour from the perspective of local youth will flip the current paradigm where the students feel invisible in their own neighborhood and will use the growth of the city as a mechanism to draw people into their own lives, showcasing their untapped source as future designers, scientists, technologists and entrepreneurs.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

April - July 2017	Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design framework options for the signs• Create case studies for various sites
July - August 2017	Production <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine shape and content of the signs• Student collaboration
August - September 2017	Post Production <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete fabrication drawings and solicit bids• Select fabricator
September - October 2017	Installation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete fabrication• Install signs and celebrate

Moses Youth Center Vertical Garden

CAROLYN L ARTS

\$6,000

Community Organization
Carolyn Lewenberg; Artist
Cambridge Art Center, Inc., 501(c)(3) Fiscal Agent

Project Location: Moses Youth Center, 243 Harvard Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“A vertical garden at the Moses Community Center will provide aesthetic, ecological, and social benefit. The vertical garden will be designed and planted according to favorite community recipes and will also have pollinator habitat built into it. Systems will be co-created in community art-build workshops and community members will learn techniques at art build events that they may apply to make their own vertical garden systems at their homes. For those that missed the art-builds, we will create online tutorials and support as part of this project to empower people to create vertical garden systems at their homes. This project will demonstrate that food can be grown in small spaces in an affordable manner. Like verdant island oases in a sea of hardscape, these vertical gardens will be interfaces between nature, art, food and community in the city. Youth in the Boys to Men program will care for the vertical garden systems at the Moses Community Center. We envision that the process will be a grounding experience for people to connect with their natural and built surroundings in a new way, and start to see the potential of more urban agriculture. The goal is for this project is to develop and refine inexpensive and small scale vertical garden prototypes and resources to support the replication of them in other sites around the Port and beyond.

We are combining a return to the Earth mentality with an urban approach in a DIY spirit. Using a similar visual vocabulary as other architectural elements in the urban landscape, we are essentially creating “hotels” for herbs, vegetables, pollinators, and pollinator food. Repurposing shipping pallets and involving the community in making the systems will empower people that they can afford to do this on their own, and have the skills to do so as well.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

April -May 2017	Document Earth Day Inaugural Franklin Park Zoo Vertical Garden Art Build Create how-to videos with Earth Day footage Develop curriculum with Moses Youth Center staff
May - June 2017	Develop designs and planting plans Youth training (how to build and care for vertical garden) Vertical garden prep work
June - July 2017	Oasis Art Build event at Moses Youth Center Install irrigation Launch website

Suitsculptures

ROLO

\$7,500

Community Organization
Laura Zittrain; Artist and Curator
Cambridge Art Council Fund, Inc., 501(c)(3) Fiscal Agent

Project Location: Third and Binney Civic Space

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“The Suitsculptures are comprised of two distinct statues, occupiable by any body, of any ability: the standing sculpture will be sized to accommodate able-bodied adults, and the seated one will be sized to accommodate shorter adults, children, and most importantly, be wheelchair accessible. We believe in the principles of universal design: building an inclusive sculpture that is accessible to any Cambridge resident is foundational to our project.

To that extent, visitors will be able to “try on” the space suit simply by walking or wheeling into an opening in the back of the statue. From the front, it will appear as though the person is actually inside a spacesuit (see support materials). We literally want people to step inside the sculpture and step into an alternate history -- and imagine themselves reaching for the stars.

By relying on a speculative design approach, we ask the public to expand its imagination to consider what might have been -- and what might be -- in Kendall Square. We see the absence of NASA, and subsequent presence of many thriving biotech and tech companies, as evidence that East Cambridge bursts with opportunity. Our hope is that the Suitsculpture’s provocative reimagining empowers citizens to imagine limitless possibility for the future of our community -- and themselves.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

April - May 2017	Archival research Design phase, structural analysis and mold design Site planning and approval
June - August 2017	Fabricate mold Installation
June - July 2017	Plan and invite panelist Convene Panel