



PUBLIC SPACES COMMUNITY PLACES 2023 & BEYOND

EXPANDING OUR IMPACT TO ENCOURAGE UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND ACCESSIBILITY IN PUBLIC SPACES

Looking ahead to the future of our Public Spaces Community Places (PSCP) program, we are interested in providing additional incentives for projects that focus on the accessibility of public spaces. While some projects such as skate parks or rock-climbing walls are inherently not accessible projects, most public spaces can be enhanced if they are created with the intent to be accessible for all users.

We recommend the incorporation of Universal Design/Inclusive Design as the guiding framework for all new construction and major renovation projects. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) remains landmark civil rights legislation; yet the ADA Accessibility Guidelines are a minimum compliance standard born out of a naturally imperfect legislative and regulatory process. As such, the ADA is far from being an ideal standard of accessible design nor does it achieve the most inclusive spaces. **By contrast, Universal Design/Inclusive Design encourages the development of spaces, products, and services that are easier for ALL users-- both with and without disabilities—to engage with.**

OUR PROGRAM UPDATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- PSCP will offer an **additional (up to) \$25,000 match for new public space projects that are “universally designed”**. This is in addition to the maximum \$50,000 match provided for the activation of new public spaces. These projects will be required to obtain a letter of support from a disability advocates group to qualify for the additional incentive amount.
- The program will now also be available to **existing public spaces that are upgrading with universal design elements – applicants can request up to a \$50,000 1:1 match to make these spaces more accessible to all.**
- To qualify for the additional funding applicants must obtain an accessibility/Universal Design review of their project from an organization representing people with disabilities. Please obtain a letter of support for the project.

UNDERSTANDING UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND INCLUDING IT IN YOUR PROJECTS:

Universal Design’s seven guiding principles as first articulated by Ron Mace, AIA, and the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University School of Architecture are:

- 1). Equitable Use
- 2). Flexibility in Use
- 3). Simple and Intuitive Use
- 4). Perceptible Information
- 5). Tolerance for Error
- 6). Low Physical Effort
- 7). Appropriate Size and Space for Approach and Use

The **Universal Design Guidelines 2.0** which Disability Advocates of Kent County has developed will inform this effort.

We look forward to seeing more public spaces that are truly accessible and usable to all , and encourage development in that direction into the future.



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