

**Request For Proposals (RFP)**  
Northfield Promise Community  
Town of Northfield, Vermont

**Statement of Purpose**

- The Northfield Promise Community is requesting proposals to design, procure, and install (1) accessible & creative outdoor playhouse/storytime space geared toward ages 0-6 and their families in Northfield, Vermont.

The Northfield Promise Community requires contractors to design a playhouse that meets or exceeds all current federal, CPSC & ASTM standards, and ADA requirements.

**Submission Deadline:**

May 31, 2018 - 4:00pm EST

**Project Start/Completion Date:** June 2018 - December 2018 (at latest)

**Contact Information for Questions/Submissions**

Bonnie Kirn Donahue  
Project Manager/Landscape Designer  
[bkdlandscape@gmail.com](mailto:bkdlandscape@gmail.com)  
802.238.8138

Pam Bailey  
Northfield Promise Community Steering Committee Representative  
[pbailey@gmunityedway.org](mailto:pbailey@gmunityedway.org)  
802.613.3989

*The Northfield Promise Community and Town of Northfield, Vermont shall be exempt for any liability for costs incurred by unsuccessful Suppliers in preparation of the proposals. The Northfield Promise Community and Town of Northfield reserve the right to accept partial bids or reject all bids.*

## **Northfield Promise Community Mission Statement**

“All of Northfield ensures a safe, supportive, and enriching community that will prepare our youngest children to start kindergarten ready to learn.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Background Information**

Northfield was awarded the Promise Community grant by the State of Vermont in the spring of 2017. The funds originated from the federal Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The Northfield Promise Community is tasked with “doing whatever it takes to help turn the curve for good outcomes for young children and families in that community. Outcomes include increasing school readiness and closing the achievement gap by 3rd grade for children with high needs.”<sup>2</sup> After months of extensive community meetings, conversations with local government & business owners, parents, kids, and concerned community members, the Northfield Promise Community is ready to develop (2) play spaces in Northfield geared toward ages 0-6, with very specific objectives to address kindergarten readiness needs specific to Northfield children.

The Northfield Promise Community will be utilizing the grant to create a universally accessible playground in the Northfield Falls, and a small park behind the local public library. Both spaces will be geared toward children 0-6 years old and their families. This decision was made based on multiple community meetings, consultation with town officials, and research conducted by team members. The two locations were chosen for a variety of reasons. The proximity to the Brown Public Library encourages the development of a relationship between young children and the library, which will be beneficial in helping to improve literacy. It will also enhance the library’s children’s programming by allowing them to hold their story times outside, which will not only increase the type of learning that occurs during story hour, but will also attract more families to utilize the programming. The library is also a hub for young families, and creating an outdoor community space will give caregivers the opportunity to connect with one another in a comfortable and child friendly setting.

The Promise Community chose to build the larger, universally accessible playground in the Falls because it will reach a part of the Northfield community that is often overlooked. Many young families live in Northfield Falls, yet there are not many spaces for families with young children to gather. This playground will create a much needed meeting space for families, and it will also be a draw for the families who live in Northfield’s town center, encouraging them to visit the Falls more regularly and to connect with the families who live there. Parents and caregivers will be able to meet up and get support, and this playground will create an environment where their children can learn and explore in a safe and engaging environment. The playground design will be intentional to ensure it is accessible to all children, including those with physical limitations and sensory disorders. This will further support the community by having all children and their families able to fully participate at this playground.

## **Grant Funds & Property Ownership**

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<sup>1</sup> Northfield Promise Community Roadmap, October 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Promise Community Handbook, State of Vermont, 2015.

The play space materials, elements, and installation will be purchased through the grant, and installed on land owned by the Town of Northfield, Vermont. The Town will be responsible for long-term maintenance.

**Project Goals:**

1. To help prepare ages 0-6 for kindergarten
  - a. By addressing the following (6) categories of kindergarten-readiness needs particular to Northfield:
    - i. *Communication and Socialization*
    - ii. *Imaginary/Fantasy Play*
    - iii. *Material Experiences and Sensory Play*
    - iv. *Fine Motor Skills and Hand Strength*
    - v. *Gross Motor Skills (including stairs and balance)*
    - vi. *Academic Skills (i.e, letters and numbers)*
2. To develop a universally accessible playhouse - meeting or exceeding ADA standards. This project is an opportunity to create a space that is accessible to all children in Northfield regardless of ability, income, or other circumstances.
3. To provide a safe play space for families, meeting or exceeding all safety standards including those from CPSC, ASTM, and other all other applicable state/federal standards.
4. To provide an inviting, and beautiful play space that will attract parents and children and feel like a magical tree/play house.
  - i. Working closely with our project manager/landscape designer will be highly important in achieving this result.
  - ii. We are open to your suggestions based on your expertise and experience regarding the style of this play space.
5. To provide the Town of Northfield with a long lasting and low maintenance play space.
  - a. *Suggestions for maintaining the playhouse will be critical as we develop a long-term maintenance plan.*

**Preferred Play System Qualities:**

1. All elements must demonstrate the highest level of durability in materials and finishes selected in consideration of child health and safety.
  - a. Example: Use of child-safe construction and non-toxic finishing materials are preferred.
2. The play space needs to be safe for children to use that are ages 0-6 and ADA accessible - so extra care would need to be taken to address the particular needs of this age group (ie. consideration for what might be within reach of a 0-6 year old, reducing fall risks, railings that resist climbing, accessible entry and maneuvering space, etc).
  - a. Following state guidelines for guardrails/handrails where fall height exceeds 30" & no openings larger than 3.5" - see regulations for further explanation (VT Fire Safety Requirements for Handrails and Guardrails & VT Child Care Licensing Regulations, etc).

- b. Keeping the state safety guidelines in mind, some fun additions could include small child-safe/non-opening windows at child's eye level to see outside, creative details in the rafters or at eye level, etc.
3. Vermont/New England manufactured or supplied materials are highly desired. "Green" construction practices and materials are encouraged.
4. Structures and elements should be unique to the Northfield, Vermont area.
5. Playhouse shall safely fit in the area as shown on the site plans (see attachment).
6. Contractors are encouraged to be creative in their designs and to maximize the concept of a magical play space for children ages 0-6.
7. Willingness to work with the project manager to develop the idea of a magical tree/play house that would be attractive to kids.

### **Budget**

We have a budget for our entire playground project that covers a play space for ages 0-6 at the Falls Ball Field and the playhouse at the site adjacent to the Library. Due to the fact that this is a custom item, we cannot project the cost of this element, and we will have to make a judgement call after we review proposals as to how much money to allocate toward this part of the project.

### **Intended Users/Age Group:**

The purpose of the Promise Community grant is to help support kindergarten readiness for children in Northfield, therefore the intended users are ages 0 to 6 and their caretakers, and is our highest priority. The Northfield Promise Community hopes however that the play elements we select will have timeless appeal and be attractive to children beyond this age range.

### **Site Descriptions**

#### **Site #1: Library**

A small pocket park behind our local Brown Public Library, on the edge of a historic residential community and Northfield's small walkable downtown. The site is currently covered in lawn, with a small flowering tree, a few shrubs and flowers on the edges. There is an ornamental granite table w/ seats, and a slight slope toward a swale/drainage ditch on the edge of the property. The park is surrounded on two sides by the Library, one side by a funeral home, and by (6) head-in parking spaces along Slate Avenue. In order to keep access to building sides for maintenance, we will attempt to keep about 10' away from the building (may be flexible), and 10' away from the property line (pending Zoning Administrator approval).

- Maximum Size: 18'x18' (shape can be square, round, hexagonal, etc)
  - See attached aerials for rough site plan

### **Project Description**

- a. We are looking for a multi-purpose exterior open-air structure to be placed adjacent to the Brown Public Library. The primary purpose of this structure is to be a playhouse for ages 0-6. We also hope that the structure can be large enough to host a story hour. Therefore, we would like to see this take the shape

of a rustic-style gazebo/pavilion, that would like it to feel like a treehouse/playhouse.

- b. Items to be included:
  - i. ADA accessible (there is not much room to ramp up to the structure from the parking lot, so the finished floor elevation will likely need to be low to the ground, unless a ramp system is planned; this can be determined at a further point).
  - ii. A roof for cover from rain/elements
    - 1. Please consider protection from snow falling from roof at entrance
  - iii. Flooring that is baby/toddler friendly (no splinters, easily cleaned, non-toxic, etc)
  - iv. Railings/walls with open-air windows (think gazebo/tree house)\*
    - 1. While considering safety. See: Preferred Play System Qualities
  - v. Built-in bench seating (along outside edge?), or a proposal for other seating (finished stumps? Large rocks, wood blocks? etc.)
  - vi. Built-in “stage” area or small platform for pretend play
  - vii. Interesting child-like details for rafters/walls:
    - 1. Think: natural tree branches, places to hang art/mobiles, places to hang bird feeder(s) on the exterior, etc.
  - viii. We are open to other ideas about how to incorporate fun kid-like elements into the design - especially those that help kids use their imaginations and pretend.

## **Outcome and Performance Standards**

### **Required Items:**

1. Structure must meet and/or exceed all applicable federal, ADA, CPSC, & ASTM guidelines.
2. Structure must follow all applicable town/state/federal codes related to exterior, open air structures for public use.

### **Deliverables**

Proposals must be submitted digitally to:

Bonnie Kirn Donahue at [bkdlandscape@gmail.com](mailto:bkdlandscape@gmail.com) by May 31, 2018 at 4:00pm EST

### *Information to be included with proposal:*

1. Cost estimate categorized by labor and materials for the playhouse as designed and installed (including site prep, footings, engineering costs - if applicable, etc).
2. Preliminary concept for playhouse/gazebo/pavilion.
  - a. Simple images/sketches, and/or material/design descriptions are appreciated.
3. Information regarding long term maintenance for the proposed structure/materials
4. Project Examples of projects applicant has completed that are similar to, or related to the type/style described in this proposal.
5. Provide certificate of insurance with proposal (see Compliance section).

## 6. Provide (3) Project References

### References

Please provide (3) project references that can attest to the quality of recent work.

### Compliance

- Any vendor proposals must comply with Davis Bacon act and the compliance can be found [here](#).
- All contractors, and any sub-contractors must carry adequate insurance coverage (not less than 1,000,000-per occurrence). \$1,000,000 - General Aggregate Applying, in total, \$1,000,000 - Products/Completed Operations Aggregate, \$50,000 - Fire/Legal/Liability, and \$1,000,000 - Automotive Liability. Provide certificate of insurance with proposal.
- All designs must comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All components must meet and/or exceed all federal, CPSC, & ASTM guidelines. Please provide documentation as applicable.
- The Supplier/contractor shall provide equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetics.

### Evaluation and Selection Process

Proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee based on the following criteria:

#### Criteria Points

1. Proposal addresses "Project Goals" and "Preferred Project Qualities," and "Project Description": 0-40
  2. Uniqueness of design/materials/construction 0-20
  3. Reputation, reliability, and applicable experience of contractor 0-15
  4. Cost (with consideration of material quality) 0-15
  5. Overall quality of proposal 0-10
- Maximum Points: 100

A Promise Community meeting will be held early in June 2018 to review and evaluate all of the RFP submittals. This meeting will be open to the public. The group will present their ranking, selection and justification at the selection meeting. The selection meeting will result in the selection of one proposed design or an appropriate short list of proposals. An interview may also be requested to aid in the selection of a contractor. The award will be made to the qualified contractor whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the project, all factors considered. The Promise Community will notify all applicants of decision in writing, whether or not the proposal was accepted or denied by June 30, 2018.

### Timeline

- May 31, 2018 - 4:00pm EST: Preliminary proposals based on RFP are due

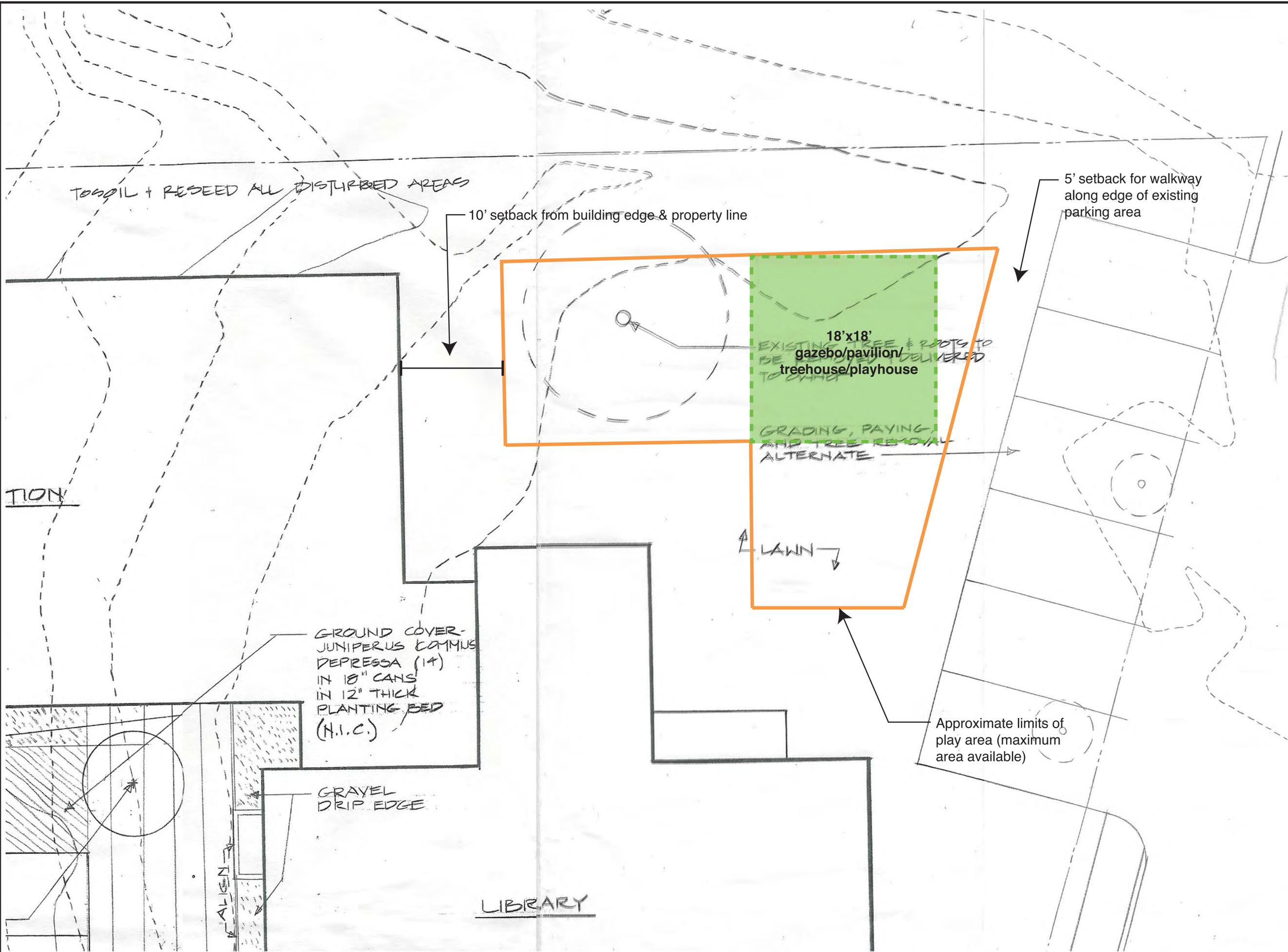
- Early June 2018 - 3:00pm EST: The Promise Community will review proposals and select a direction based on criteria outlined.
- June 30, 2018 - 12:00pm EST: The Promise Community will notify all applicants of decision in writing, whether or not the proposal was accepted or denied
- Summer 2018 - Build/install play space; working with supplier/contractor's schedule.
- December 31, 2018: Funding for the Northfield Promise Community project is available until the end of December 2018, and all work must be complete and invoices submitted well before December 31st, 2018.

### **Contact Information for Questions/Submissions**

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not for construction

northfield promise community

library play area

base diagram

date: 05.07.2018

scale: 1/4"=1'-0"

sheet:

L1.0

