



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL | Spring 2025

Design Connect is requesting applications for projects – partnering with municipal governments, neighborhood organizations and schools – for the Spring 2025 semester. Design Connect is a student-run community design and planning organization at Cornell University. We are committed to partnering with communities to assist with significant planning and design issues through a participatory and multidisciplinary process. This process requires a meaningful commitment of time and resources from both the community and Design Connect teams.

SERVICES

Design Connect offers preliminary community-based planning, design, and policy work in the following areas:

- Research and Analysis
- Participatory Visioning and Community Engagement
- Master Plans
- Parks and Open Space Design
- Community Gardens
- Streetscape and Pedestrian-Oriented Design
- Playscapes and Educational Landscapes
- Interiors for Public Space

PROCESS

With guidance from a faculty advisor, students from a variety of disciplines – including, but not limited to, City & Regional Planning, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Historic Preservation – form teams and work with community sponsors to complete the project. Teams engage community members to shape an initial project idea into a conceptual design that reflects local needs and inspires continued community action. Typically, teams work on projects within an academic semester (15 weeks). However, Design Connect will consider applications for multi-semester projects if they include distinct components with deliverables to be completed each semester.

Please note that outputs from the Design Connect process are conceptual and are intended to provide guidance and vision to the community as they move forward with a project. In most cases, further work with a professional firm will be required to fully implement the project.

COST

Design Connect requests a donation of \$600 per project/semester to cover a travel expenses and material costs incurred by student volunteers. If your project is over an hour away from Ithaca, you may be asked to for an additional \$200-\$300 donation to offset the additional travel costs for the team. **If your organization is unable to provide this level of support, please contact us to discuss alternatives.** The donation is expected at the beginning of the project, as described in the Memorandum of Understanding upon project selection.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL | Spring 2025

ELIGIBILITY

Projects must:

- benefit the public interest
- engage the public and relevant stakeholders in active dialogue
- be within a 2-hour drive of Ithaca, NY (exceptional projects further away may be considered)
- have a partner (a government agency, non-profit, citizen group, or individual) willing and able to work closely with the student team and to devote time throughout the semester
- involve design and planning up to a conceptual level

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Design Connect receives many applications each semester. In order to prioritize requests and ensure that projects will be fulfilling for students and useful for communities, we evaluate applications based on the following criteria:

- **Scope:** Does the scope of work fall within the boundaries of work students can reasonably complete?
- **Timing:** Can the project, or a significant project element, be completed in an academic semester? Is there enough work to fill a semester?
- **Community Support:** Does the community support the project? Will the community engage with the team to complete the project?
- **Partner Capacity:** Does the applicant have the capacity to support the project during and after Design Connect's involvement?
- **Education:** What will students learn from their involvement? Are lessons applicable to other communities?
- **Mission:** Does the project reflect Design Connect's goals of promoting social, environmental, and economic equity and sustainability through interdisciplinary and participatory design or planning?

SCHEDULE

November 4, 2024: Application due by the end of the day, <https://forms.gle/dEeEpQtKSq5wZSUHA>

Mid-November: Clients notified of selection for interview/site visit stage

Late-November: Clients notified of final project selection

If your organization is interested in partnering with a Design Connect team this fall, please complete the application Google Form no later than **November 4, 2024**. Once applications have been reviewed, select prospective clients may be asked to participate in an in-depth interview, online or in person, in order to more fully determine the scope and feasibility of the proposed project. Should Design Connect require any changes be made to a project's application, such changes will be discussed during the interview. Prospective clients will be contacted by mid-November for an interview and will be notified of selection by late-November.

Please contact us with any questions at designconnect@cornell.edu and yg97@cornell.edu or visit www.designconnectcornell.org for additional information.