

Title	<b>Capital Trees</b>	08/01/2023
	by <b>Shelly Barrick Parsons</b> in <b>Impact 100 Richmond Grant Application 2023</b>	id. 41525122
	200 S 3rd Street, Suite 101 Richmond, Virginia 23219 VA United States 8047886450 shelly@capitaltrees.org	

## Original Submission 08/01/2023

1. Name of Organization	<b>Capital Trees</b>
2. 501C3 Number	<b>47-2998043</b>
3. Geographic Area(s) Served:	<b>Powhatan Henrico Hanover City of Richmond Chesterfield County Goochland</b>
4. Application Contact Name:	<b>Shelly Barrick Parsons</b>
5. Application Contact Phone Number:	<b>+18047886450</b>
6. Application Contact Email:	<b>shelly@capitaltrees.org</b>
7. Organization Website (if applicable):	<b>www.capitaltrees.org</b>
8. Organization Executive Director/CEO Contact:	<b>Shelly Barrick Parsons</b>
9. Organization Executive Director/CEO Phone Number:	<b>+18047886450</b>

10. Organization  
Executive  
Director/CEO Email:

**shelly@capitaltrees.org**

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11. What is your  
highest rating on  
GuideStar (we  
recommend at least  
Gold):

**Gold**

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Provide a link to your  
GuideStar  
organizational profile,  
if applicable.

**<https://www.guidestar.org/profile/47-2998043>**

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12. Please confirm  
that the following  
grant criteria are met  
by the applicant:

**Organization has an annual operational budget above \$250,000.  
Organization has been in existence for 36 months or longer, and is  
currently in good standing in the state where the entity was formed.  
Project will serve needs in the City of Richmond and/or the  
surrounding counties (Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico,  
and Powhatan).  
Funds will be utilized within 12 - 18 months, and the program/project  
has demonstrated sustainability following the use of Impact 100  
Richmond funds.**

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13. Select ONE of  
Impact 100  
Richmond's focus  
areas where your  
proposed work best  
aligns:

**Environment & Sustainability**

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14. Summary:  
Provide 1-2  
sentences that  
summarize your  
specific funding  
request and the goal  
of this project or  
program effort?

**Renovating greenspace at Hotchkiss Field into an urban oasis with  
walking trails, seating, trees, a pollinator garden, native shrubs, and  
perennials.**

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15. Organization:  
Briefly describe the  
history and mission  
of the organization.

**Our mission is to build public landscapes and enrich the community. In 2010 the Boxwood, James River, Three Chopt, and Tuckahoe Garden Clubs collaborated to create more accessible green spaces throughout the city. The original concept grew into our current non-profit organization, and we've made an impact through our projects: the 14th Street Corridor, Great Shiplock Park, and The Low Line. Through our addition of and advocacy for urban green space, our vision for Richmond is one in which thriving public landscapes are an integral part of the RVA community's expectations, public policy, and practice.**

**In 2022, we completed a Strategic Plan to guide our growth, and have three focus areas: Build, Manage, Educate. We build urban green spaces, we manage them with financially and ecologically responsible methods, and we educate the community on the benefits of public landscapes.**

**Our completed projects are frequently visited urban landscapes in Richmond's East End, and have received numerous awards including the Harry J. Banker Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Landscape Beautification from the International Society of Arboriculture and the Golden Hammer Award for "Best Place Making."**

**Capital Trees has earned a reputation as an expert in urban landscapes, served in a consulting / advisory capacity, and have been approached for potential projects, including the one that we're asking for funding for today — The Hotchkiss Field and Community Center Green Space Project.**

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16. Community Need: **During the initial phases of planning, we garnered feedback from Hotchkiss Field & Community Center (Hotchkiss) management, frequent users of the Center, and neighbors to understand how we could best serve the community with the installation of a new urban landscape. The feedback emphasized the importance of: a walkable trail, safety and sight lines, retaining the existing community garden, a focus on pollinator friendly habitats, a food forest, and community gathering spaces. We used this feedback to inform our plans and design the green space that the community has asked for.**

**The green space that we add to Hotchkiss will be a focal point for the community, providing a restorative space to connect with nature and neighbors. The space will serve residents of Highland Park, Brookland Park, the Better Housing Coalition, Highland Grove subdivision, the Community High School, Overby Sheppard Elementary School and those living near or visiting the Cannon Creek Greenway.**

**We know that when people have access to green space, they feel better — mentally and physically. We also know that historically disinvested neighborhoods don't have adequate access to these essential amenities. The green space we have planned will provide a place for residents to exercise, commune with their neighbors, feel connected to nature, and cool down in the shade. The urban landscape we have planned is an investment in the health of the Highland Park community, now and in the future.**

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17. Community Need: **\$100,000 from the Impact 100 Grant is a significant portion of our construction costs for the Hotchkiss Project. That means that the Impact 100 Grant would have a tangible impact on bringing the urban landscape to life. That's \$100,000 towards protecting pollinators, providing a safe space for wildlife to raise their young, remediating stormwater runoff, and supporting our ecosystem.**

Describe how a \$100,000 Impact 100 Richmond grant for this program/project would be transformational for your organization and/or the community.

**That's also \$100,000 towards saving lives. This summer has seen record-breaking temperatures and 2023 is on track to be the hottest on record ([www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/07/climate-2023-hottest-year-on-record/](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/07/climate-2023-hottest-year-on-record/)). Climate scientists indicate that temperatures are only going to continue to rise. Neighborhoods that have been historically redlined are already dangerously hot, posing a risk to vulnerable populations and the elderly. What will the temperatures on the ground look like in five years? Or ten? We have to act now to protect our communities, to lower the temperatures on the ground. The Impact 100 Grant would enable us to invest in Highland Park's tree canopy to protect residents from the harmful impacts of heat — overheating, dehydration, heat stroke, and death.**

**For a neighborhood that has long been side lined, \$100,000 is proof that the Richmond community is working to right some of history's wrongs. That we're willing to invest time, energy, and resources into Highland Park because its families deserve and need access to protective and restorative green space.**

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18. Program/Project: Provide a high-level description of the program/project for which you are seeking funding.

**Built in the 1960's, Hotchkiss Field and Community Center is an anchor to the surrounding Highland Park Community. This neighborhood is home to the city's most vulnerable residents, the majority of whom are low-income and persons of color. Many residents suffer from asthma, diabetes, and have a below average life expectancy. These health concerns are exacerbated by the lack of equitable access to green space resulting from historical redlining — it's estimated that only 1/3 of Richmond's residents engage in the CDC's weekly exercise recommendations.**

**Hotchkiss currently provides sports-centric amenities and fields but lacks landscaped outdoor space for community gathering or resting in shade. As it stands, the land around Hotchkiss Center is a monoculture, composed of turf grass, compacted soil, and insufficient tree cover. If you were to look at the area on a heat island map, you'd find that the area does not have enough foliage to offset heat waves, making the area dangerously hot for residents.**

**Our project will transform the center's 1.88 underused acres of turf into an inviting urban landscape that includes walking trails, seating areas, lights, shade trees, a pollinator garden, and native shrubs and perennials. The green space is designed to meet the needs of the humans who call the surrounding neighborhoods home, and the wildlife and pollinators who need an oasis amidst a largely urban area.**

**Our philosophy around designing green space is to create "four season gardens" by adding diverse plants, trees, and shrubs that are beautiful year-round so that residents are encouraged to use the space throughout the year. We also consider the need for pollinators to have access to nectar and pollen for foraging, and strategically plant early and late blooming plants to meet this need. We are committed to planting native plants, trees, and shrubs whenever possible to sustain native pollinators. Our most recent project, The Low Line Green, incorporated 80% native plantings, and we'll implement a similar approach at Hotchkiss.**

**Urban green spaces can remediate air pollution. The installation of plants, trees, and shrubs at Hotchkiss will work towards cleaner air to improve quality of life for neighboring residents. Over time, the trees we add to the space will contribute to the City's tree canopy, cooling temperatures on the ground for residents to help offset the negative health effects of the urban heat island effect. The green space will provide immediate respite for residents, but will continue to do so for generations to come as the tree canopy becomes more established.**

**Our organization's mission is to build public landscapes and enrich the community. This project is the embodiment of our mission and would enrich the Highland Park community with a beautiful public landscape in the heart of the community. The requested funds will enable us to stay on course for breaking ground on this project in 2024.**

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19. Program/Project: **Capital Trees has been navigating the permitting process, fundraising, and installation of large scale green spaces in the City of Richmond for 13 years. We're fortunate to have this well of experience to draw on as we embark on the Hotchkiss project. As a result, much of the learning curves involved with installing a project of this caliber are behind us.**

What challenges are you likely to encounter? How will your organization address them?

**In addition, Capital Trees is fortunate to be partnering with the City of Richmond on the Hotchkiss Project. The City has a vested interest in seeing this project come to fruition, which we anticipate will aid us in executing the project plan without significant hiccups.**

**That being said, securing funding from corporations, foundations, and individuals is a time-consuming task for our lean staff. We need 80% of the project's estimated budget to stay on track for launching construction of the Hotchkiss Project in 2024. The Impact 100 Grant, along with individual donors, will amount to 80% of construction costs in time for breaking ground in 2024.**

**We are poised to make a significant and positive impact on the Highland Park Community, to show the residents that their feedback matters, that there are folks in their corner, and willing to listen — all by bringing their ideas to life at the Hotchkiss Project. The Impact 100 Grant would get us closer to this goal.**

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20. Program/Project: **Chris Felke, Director of Richmond's Department of Parks Recreation and Community Facilities asked Capital Trees to partner on improving the public landscape at Hotchkiss Field and Community Center. This partnership with the city is important because the city has committed to maintaining the green space after construction is complete. We know that there's more to creating green spaces than installing plants, and ongoing care will be crucial for the space to remain welcoming to the community for years to come.**

Will you collaborate with any other organizations? If so, who will be your partners, and what will they contribute?

**We have engaged Timmons Group for planning, design, permitting and construction. During the ideation process, we engaged with Reverend Ben Campbell, Pastoral Associate of St Paul's Episcopal Church, who has been involved in the community for over 50 years. He shared his invaluable insights into the Highland Park community, and the role Hotchkiss plays to area residents. We met with Highland Park business leaders and many members of the community at Hotchkiss to get their valuable feedback on how the new space can best serve the community.**

**While these meetings with community members aren't formal collaborations, we consider the community our partners in the adoption of this landscape. After all, residents will be playing, exercising, and resting in the new green space. By garnering feedback early and often, we've been able to design an urban green space that meets community needs and will immediately be supported by residents and become a mainstay of the neighborhood.**

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21. Program/Project: **Our goal is for the Hotchkiss project to make a positive impact on the health of the people of the Highland Park community, and the surrounding ecosystem. We will track our progress and document the success of this green space in several ways.**

Using metrics appropriate for your program/project, describe your goals, indicators of success, and plan for achieving success (i.e., people served, dollars raised, community outcomes, etc.).

- 1. Photography. We have already taken “before” photos of the space as it stands today. We will take photos throughout the construction process, immediately after construction is complete, and going forward as the plants and trees get more established to capture the transformation of the space.**
- 2. Ecosystem observations. Urban green spaces are designed to support the ecosystem, and by taking note of the number of wildlife and pollinators that are spending time in the finished green space, we’ll be able to see the direct benefit we’re having on the environment.**
- 3. Foot traffic. Our goals include providing a safe and welcoming space for nearby residents. When we visit the completed project, and see folks walking the trails, sitting on benches, or gathering with each other, we’ll know that this part of our goal has been met.**
- 4. Community investment. As part of this project, we have committed to hosting up to 4 community work days annually in the gardens, for three years immediately following installation, to invest volunteering hours into maintaining the space. Our hope is that nearby residents participate in these workdays, proving that the community has a vested interest in and takes ownership of the space.**

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22. Program/Project: **The Urban Design Committee and Planning Commission unanimously approved the Hotchkiss project this summer. We have submitted permitting paperwork and will begin contractor selection this fall. Our goal is to break ground in 2024.**

Is there a specific timeline for your program/project, or will it be ongoing? If ongoing, describe the metrics used to evaluate it in the long term.

**Once the urban green space is built, our active construction work will be complete. But the benefits to the community will be ongoing, as the finished green space will be a permanent feature in the community. Our green space experts will meet with City of Richmond staff to train them on the sustainable management of the finished green space, and our 4 annual community work days will also help to maintain the space for at least three years after construction while the landscape gets established.**

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23. Funding: Describe your organization's financial position, including current financial state, cash flow, endowments, annual fundraising, and goals related to revenue.

**Capital Trees relies on the generosity of the community in order to fund its work. In FY 21-22, Capital Trees raised \$245,144. Revenue sources included 26% from foundations, 9% corporate-business income, 64% individual donors, and 1% non-profits. FY 21-22 expenses were \$299,399. Net assets at the close of the 21-22 FY were \$347,863 (\$309,836 unrestricted, \$38,027 restricted to the Low Line). We are initiating our FY 22-23 audit in August; final reports will be available later this calendar year. For FY 22-23 unaudited expenses were \$ 326,000 and unaudited revenue totals were \$337,300. Capital Trees anticipates that the launch of this project will increase both restricted and unrestricted revenue in FYs 23-24 and 24-25. Our 23-24 fundraising goal is \$560,000. We have included the cost of the project into the next two fiscal year's budget as we anticipate construction in calendar year 2024. Capital Trees' fiscal year runs July 1 - June 30.**

**For a more detailed look at Capital Trees' financial position, please review our annual reports: <https://capitaltrees.org/about-us/annual-report/>.**

24. Funding: What is the total program/project budget request? Have you raised any other funds to date to support the program/project? If awarded, how will a \$100,000 grant from Impact 100 Richmond be used?

**The total budget for the green space transformation project is \$535,000. The budget includes the following expenses: project permitting, planning, and contractor selection, construction, Capital Trees' capacity to execute the project including supervision, community engagement and advancement, and project advising and management following the project during the establishment period (at least three years). Post-project advising would include consultation and education with Parks' staff on best practices and up to four work days annually. Capital Trees will break ground when 80% of construction costs are raised. The current construction budget is \$405,000; \$40,000 for Phase 2 planning including permitting, construction plans, and contractor selection, and \$365,000 for construction costs.**

**To date, Capital Trees has raised \$135,000 towards the project thanks to generous support of the Robins Foundation, Conserve the Future Fund of the Community Foundation, Winn Memorial Fund of Second Presbyterian Church, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church. We are actively raising support from the City of Richmond, individual donors, businesses, and foundations.**

**This grant would help us move closer to our 80% construction costs raised goal and keep us on target to break ground in 2024.**

**Capital Trees is requesting \$100,000.**



25. Funding: How will you fund ongoing expenses associated with the program/project if awarded the Impact 100 Richmond grant? If funding is for a capital project, what are the anticipated ongoing expenses (maintenance, utilities, etc.), and how will you sustain these expenses?

**If you have a chance to take a stroll along the Low Line Gardens on the Virginia Capital Trail, you can see that Capital Trees invests both in transformative projects and long term management. Capital Trees is committed to sustainably (financially and ecologically) managing its completed projects including 14th Street, Great Shiplock Park, and the Low Line. Capital Trees includes a program focus on management and incorporates ongoing management costs into the annual budget.. Like all aspects of our work, Capital Trees will fund the ongoing expenses associated with the project in the same manner it funds the management of other completed projects — with robust fundraising.**

**A key component of our sustainable management program is a thriving volunteer program. In FY 21-22, Capital Trees logged over 1100 hours of volunteer service. These hours included weed pulling, pruning, transplanting, and planting.**

**We plan to leverage our lived experience and expertise managing the Low Line to partner with Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (PRCF) to manage the completed Hotchkiss project.**

**Our project budget includes funding for post-project management for a minimum of three years. We will be in partnership with PRCF staff to manage the space once it is completed. Because Parks and Rec will take the lead in management, our ongoing costs will be reduced and the burden will not be passed to residents.**

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Upload: Organizations 501c3 Letter

[1\\_Capital\\_Trees\\_Exemption\\_letter.pdf](#)

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Upload: Organization Budget for this Current Fiscal Year (showing annual budget of \$250K or greater)

[23-24\\_working\\_budget.pdf](#)

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OPTIONAL Upload: Partner Budget for Current Fiscal Year (showing annual budget of \$250K or greater), if applicable n/a

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Upload: Detailed Program/Project Budget in a template of your choice (limit one page)

[IMPACT\\_100\\_2023\\_Hotchkiss\\_Field\\_Budget.pdf](#)

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Upload: List of Organization's Board of Directors

[2023-2024\\_Board\\_of\\_Trustees.pdf](#)

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OPTIONAL Upload: n/a  
Letter of Commitment  
or MOU from Partner  
Organizations (if  
applicable)

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Thank you for taking n/a  
the time to apply for  
the Impact 100  
Richmond grant!  
Once you submit you  
will receive a  
confirmation email.

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