



### **For Immediate Release**

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### **11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park Receives \$1.2 Million Grant from the Kresge Foundation**

*A Leading Investment Supporting Equitable Development in Washington, D.C.*

**Washington, D.C. (September 30, 2015)** – The 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park, a project of the Ward 8-based non-profit Building Bridges Across the River at THEARC, received a \$1.2 million grant from the Kresge Foundation, one of the country's leading philanthropic organizations. The Kresge Foundation works to expand opportunities in disadvantaged and underserved communities by investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development. "Kresge's investment in the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park is in support of equity-focused, large scale infrastructure projects that create positive impacts on local communities, health and the environment. This is an important project striving to create a new model for arts-infused placemaking work that is inclusive and synergistic" shared Helen Davis Johnson, Program Officer, the Kresge Foundation.

"The generous grant from the Kresge Foundation is a major step forward and a big boost to our work improving the connections between communities on both sides of the Anacostia River" said Chris Smith, Building Bridges Across the River at THEARC's Board Chair.

The investment is the Bridge Park's first seven figure philanthropic gift and will support:

- Continued work with the community to refine the selected Bridge Park design by OMA+OLIN;
- Implementation of the Bridge Park's Equitable Development Plan to ensure this future civic space will become an anchor for arts-infused, equitable and inclusive economic development;
- Measurement of the Bridge Park's public health goals through a Health Impact Assessment in collaboration with the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health;
- Installation of a mural and light artwork in a 295 freeway underpass linking nearby neighborhoods with the Anacostia River in collaboration with the Anacostia Arts Center;
- Creation of a 100+ foot long river mural near the future Bridge Park site in collaboration with Ward 8-based artist Tendani Mpulubusi-El and student artists from Ballou and Eastern High School;
- A series of urban pop-up food gardens in collaboration with the University of the District of Columbia and local faith communities to address the food desert east of the river; and
- A temporary "Anacostia Beach" next summer near the future Bridge Park site.

The Kresge Foundation's gift amplifies investments made by existing Bridge Park funders and the District government's \$8.35 million commitment to the project. It also allows the Bridge Park to continue to draw on its extensive community outreach and consultative process—anchored by nearly 600 stakeholder meetings for design development and economic impact—to ensure that the Bridge Park is a driver of *inclusive* development that provides opportunities for all residents regardless of income and demography. “The 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park is a wonderful example of community inclusion in leadership and design” said David W. Smith, Pearl Coalition Executive Director, President of the Deanwood Citizens Association and Bridge Park Design Oversight Committee member.

Over the next year, Bridge Park's staff will work with the community to develop programming and create temporary spaces near the future Bridge Park in order to test and evaluate planned spaces on the future the Bridge Park, slated to open in 2019. "UDC is proud to partner with the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park team and the surrounding community to install a series of pop up gardens around this future civic space. By working with nearby residents to install urban agriculture, we can improve public health by providing needed access to fresh and healthy food east of the river - a key goal of both UDC and the Bridge Park" said Dwane Jones, Director of the Center for Sustainable Development, College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES), University of the District of Columbia.

Bridge Park's layered approach, transparency and intentionality for responsible and inclusive development, and role as a convener around larger issues facing development in Washington, D.C., have positioned it as a groundbreaking project for the nation's capital.

### **About The Kresge Foundation**

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.5 billion private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grant making and social investing in arts and culture, higher education, environment, health, human services, and community development efforts in Detroit. The focus of the Foundation's higher education grant making is to improve access to and through postsecondary education for low-income and students of color. For more information, visit [kresge.org](http://kresge.org) or follow @kresgedu.

### **About the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park, a project of Building Bridges Across the River at THEARC**

As the old 11<sup>th</sup> Street traffic bridges that connect Washington, D.C.'s Capitol Hill and historic Anacostia neighborhoods have aged out, a local non-profit Building Bridges Across the River at THEARC – and the District government – are transforming this old infrastructure into the city's first elevated park: a new venue for healthy recreation, environmental education and the arts.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park will be a place unlike any other in Washington, D.C. – one that supports the community's physical, environmental, cultural and economic health. After a seven-month design competition informed by more than 500 community meetings, the design team of OMA+OLIN was selected in October 2014. With the design in place, Bridge Park staff has launched a capital campaign to construct this new civic space, securing more than \$10 million to date. For more information and to see the OMA+OLIN renderings, visit [www.bridgepark.org](http://www.bridgepark.org).

Building Bridges Across the River runs the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC), a \$27 million, 110,000 square-foot campus located east of the Anacostia River in Washington, D.C.'s Ward 8. The mission of THEARC is to improve the quality of life for residents of Washington, D.C.'s East of the River community, a key goal of the future 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park.

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