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## Village of Philmont selects Rice+Lipka Architects and Starr Whitehouse Landscape Architects design team.

### Contacts:

**Mayor Brian Johnson, Mayor of Philmont,**  
[clerk@philmont.org](mailto:clerk@philmont.org) | 518. 672 7032

**Sally Baker, Co-founder Executive Director, Philmont Beautification, Inc.**  
[info@pbinc.org](mailto:info@pbinc.org) | 518.697 0038

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### [images](#)

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The two-firm design team of [Rice+Lipka Architects](#) and [Starr Whitehouse Landscape Architects](#) was selected as 1<sup>st</sup> choice by the Village of Philmont Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Committee following a rigorous review process of 12 top-level Architectural and Landscape Architectural companies operating in New York State. The firms responded to the Village's [Request for Qualifications](#) to advance the designs for a new Community Center and Playground located on the Summit Lake waterfront, and an innovative design approach to reimagining the downtown Canal St area for parking and a community plaza. The downtown parcels are to include the historic artifacts remaining from the historic Aken Knitting Co Mill No 3 that once served as an anchor location in the downtown of the Village of Philmont.

The Village of Philmont completed a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) plan in 2018 and was subsequently designated as a Brownfield Opportunity Area by the NYS Secretary of State. The plan helped determine the vision for the redevelopment of the areas surrounding Summit Lake, and the designation opened up additional funding opportunities to the Village to further these plans. The advancement of the designs by the selected team will set the path for future capital improvements and redevelopment of the areas identified in the BOA plan.

**Rice+Lipka Architects** has been selected multiple times for the NYC's Design Excellence program, giving their design firm extensive experience working with government agencies/boards and community outreach. Lyn Rice served as a design partner and architect-of-record for Dia:Beacon, one of the world's largest museums of contemporary art. Internationally recognized for its expansive, daylit art spaces and exterior surrounds, the project set a new benchmark for the adaptive re-use of industrial space and was added to the National Register of Historic places after completion. RL's public projects range from small-scale installations, artist collaborations, exhibition work, and gallery design, to include libraries, community spaces and influential performance venues such as Choirciati Cultural Center and Nuyorican Poets Cafe.

**Starr Whitehouse** knows what it takes to design and operate public space. As Chief of Design for the Central Park Conservancy, Principal and Co-founder Laura Starr oversaw the renovation of Central Park in the 80's and 90's, teaming with Studio Director Jeffrey Poon to re-invigorate the Great Lawn, Harlem Meer, and other cherished spaces. Meanwhile, as Chief of Planning for the New York City Parks department, Principal and Co-founder Stephen Whitehouse directed such watershed initiatives as the Greenway Program, the expansion of the USTA National Tennis Center, and initial planning for Brooklyn Bridge Park, Hudson River Park, and other iconic

landscapes. Shaped by these beginnings, public space remains their greatest passion to this day. Starr Whitehouse has an office on Warren Street in the City of Hudson, and have extensive experience advancing the NY State's BOA plans, so will be in position to help advance Philmont's BOA plan, and has recently led the Promenade Hill Park Universal Access and Plaza Redesign, Hudson, NY.

"The selection of Rice+Lipka and Starr Whitehouse as the design team puts Philmont at the door of seeing the first public service building to be designed and constructed in the village for over 100 years. As such, it is a major step forward for the village's continued revitalization," said **Mayor Brian Johnson**. "A project that engages this level of architectural design quality, when executed fully, can encourage participation of the community and can spur economic growth by enhancing these two village-owned sites with improved public amenities and services."

"We are thrilled our two-firm team has been selected to work with Philmont," said **Lyn Rice, principal of Rice+Lipka**. "It's exciting to see how the development of these two truly unique, amazing sites, one on the waterfront and one in the downtown area, can reshape and engender the broader regeneration of downtown and historic Philmont infrastructure, creating a vibrant new destination with so much potential. We are extremely excited about this important project and look forward to working in the village."

"The architectural design selection process involved many community members committed to the ongoing revitalization in Philmont," said **Sally Baker, Co-founder, Executive Director of Philmont Beautification, Inc**, who is Project Manager. "The two years of pre-development discussions with the community and PBI's community-based Working Groups for these projects is invaluable. Led by Mark Rowntree, a resident and designer in the village, the Working Group for the Community Center and Playground had an active role not only in the selection process, but also acted to engage a broader community understanding of the site's potential. Several community presentations were conducted before releasing the Request for Qualifications. This pre-development work accomplished in the community provided a basis for goals and objectives, saving time and resources for the architectural firms to engage the community in the next steps for these two sites" **Ms. Baker added**.

The start date for both projects is scheduled for January 2024. Over a 10-12 month period, the two-firm design team of Rice+Lipka and Starr Whitehouse will produce next level plans and specifications advancing an existing concept for each of the sites including final design concepts, elevation drawings, section drawings, perspective drawings to convey how these strategic sites, streetscape, and other areas of interest have the potential to appear after development or improvements are completed. Each site will receive an order-of-magnitude estimate of probable construction cost for the selected final Preliminary Design plan to inform the Village of Philmont for the construction stage.

During the process of design, several community-based meetings will be held on each site to engage community residents in the design stage and ask for their input and feedback. Any community member in Philmont can join a Working Group by contacting Philmont Beautification, Inc., or the Village of Philmont Village Office.

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