

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Rachel Waldron
Parks and Recreation Director

Re: 2026 Brook Run Park Holiday Lights Display

Date: July 13, 2026

Action

Approval of a contract with Chitwood Studios for design, installation and on-site maintenance of the 2026 Holiday Lights display at Brook Run Park.

Summary

The City awarded a contract to Chitwood Studios in 2022, to provide the design, installation, and on-site maintenance of the Holiday Lights display at Brook Run Park. The contract allows for an option of four additional years. Chitwood Studios has submitted the attached proposal for the 2026 display.

Details

Holiday Lights began in 2020 as an effort to bring the community together in a self-guided and safe environment. Since that time, the display has expanded and now attracts an average of 60,000 visitors to Brook Run Park for its duration. The program was awarded the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association District 6 Outstanding Special Event Award in 2023.

This year's theme of "Chasing Aurora" features an entrance marquee sign, Frozen Mountain, an Aurora Forest, the popular Mega Tree, complete with a 10-minute synchronized music and light show, plus additional props and lighted areas that celebrate the beauty and wonder of a winter's night.

Funding for this project, in the amount of \$88,000 which includes a 10% contingency, will be allocated from the Parks Operations Budget.

Recommendation

Staff respectfully requests that Council: (1) award a contract to Chitwood Studios for design, installation and on-site maintenance of the 2026 Holiday Lights display at Brook Run Park, in the amount of \$88,000 which includes a 10% contingency; (2) authorize Staff to provide funding for the contract; (3) authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents.

CHITWOOD STUDIOS

Brandon Chitwood

404.391.7026

brandon@chitwoodstudios.com

Brook Run Park Holiday Display 2026

Project Area Break Down

Refer To the Overview Map for design placement and details.

Who We Are

Chitwood Studios is a full-service creative production company specializing in the visual disciplines of lighting, projection, and scenic design. With each project, we approach the work as a blank canvas—an opportunity to deliver something original, tailored, and impactful. Our team brings a refined blend of artistic vision and technical expertise to every production, ensuring that the final result not only meets expectations but exceeds them in creativity, precision, and execution. What distinguishes our work is a deep commitment to the craft of storytelling, a passion for innovation, and a dedication to our clients' unique goals. Rooted in the dynamic world of live entertainment, our work is driven by the belief that truly remarkable experiences are those that inspire, engage, and leave a lasting impression.

References:

Chuck Gibson	GM Philips Service Delivery & Business Operations at Funai Service Corporation	865.607.0477
Jeff Stinson	Rental Manager at 4 Wall Entertainment	404.601.6630
Howard Carter	Production Design Group	770.869.7693
Lyndell McDonald	World Games Birmingham 2022	334.221.6873
Suzanne Muck	Lead Dance Teacher for Gwinnett County Public Schools	404.310.7941

Relative Experience

Experience working in Live Entertainment Experiences with Disney, Facebook, World Games, WSB-TV, Philips Electronics, Funai Service Corporation, Stone Mountain Park, IM Creative, Gas South District, ACC Sports, Accredited Colleges and School Systems, City of Dunwoody, City of Stockbridge, Delta Airlines, and Crisp Video.

Project Breakdown

Main Entrance Sign into Park

Area Features:

As guests enter into the park they will be greeted with a lighted themed sign that will be located at the entrance of the park. The sign will feature a contemporary marquee aesthetic with vibrant RGB lighting, creating a welcoming entrance that invites guests into the display.

Entrance Sign Styling



Main Entrance Drive into Park

Area Features:

As visitors arrive at the park's main entrance from North Peachtree Road, they will be welcomed by two impressive RGB light curtains, each stretching approximately 80 feet along both sides of the entrance drive. Featuring dynamic color chases, flowing animations, and vibrant lighting effects, the curtains create a dramatic corridor of light that immediately captures attention and draws guests into the experience. Together, these illuminated installations provide a memorable first impression, building excitement and setting the tone for the immersive Chasing Aurora holiday experience that awaits inside the park.

Main Entrance Example



Meteor Forest

Area Features:

Tucked between the Mega Tree and the Deck Walk-Through areas, the Meteor Forest will radiate the magic of a meteor-filled night sky. A luminous canopy of glowing RGB meteor lights will stretch overhead, immersing guests in the feeling of walking beneath a brilliant celestial display. Suspended throughout the trees, cascading meteor lights will create the illusion of colorful shooting stars gracefully falling through the canopy, while the tree trunks wrapped in mini LED lights add depth and vibrant color throughout the landscape. Together, these layered lighting elements will transform the wooded area into a breathtaking celestial escape, offering guests a tranquil and immersive experience that celebrates the beauty and wonder of the aurora and the night sky.

Meteor Style Examples



Photo Opportunity Area

Area Features:

This area will serve as a show-stopping, life-sized photo destination, designed to create unforgettable holiday memories. At its center, an eight-foot-tall illuminated horse-drawn carriage invites guests to step inside and capture the perfect holiday photograph. A beautifully detailed horse, elegant carriage, and sparkling accents create the feeling of arriving at a magical winter celebration. Surrounding trees wrapped in cool white mini LED lights provide an elegant backdrop, while hundreds of warm white fairy lights woven throughout the landscape and surrounding gardens create the enchanting feeling of strolling through a glowing lighted garden. Together, these layered lighting elements transform the area into a warm, romantic setting, offering guests a timeless photo opportunity that they will remember long after their visit.

Photo Op Area Layout Example

Horse and Carriage Set Piece



Mega Tree Show Area

Area Features:

This area will feature an animated RGB Pixel Mega Tree with tree topper. The mega tree will sit on top of an approximate 6' tall base giving a total height of over 30 feet. The mega tree will be synchronized to an array of holiday music through an engaging 10-minute animated show that runs automatically throughout the evening. The show area will be equipped with mounted speakers, ensuring that every spectator can fully enjoy the festive performance.

The RGB Pixel Tree will be illuminated by a total of 4,800 RGB pixel lights and will display a dynamic mix of colors, images, videos, and media content, creating a vibrant and immersive visual experience.

To further enhance the Chasing Aurora theme, the lawn will feature two custom stained-glass-style faux fire pits that create the warm glow of a campfire while providing a unique, family-friendly photo opportunity. Centered at the front of the field, a 10-foot illuminated stained-glass Dunwoody Parks & Recreation "D" will serve as a signature landmark, reinforcing the park's identity and creating an iconic focal point for guests. Framing the display, eight illuminated architectural light pillars will trace the front half of the lawn in a graceful semicircle. Standing approximately 10 feet tall, the pillars feature an internal warm glow, adding depth, elegance, and visual structure while naturally guiding visitors into the display. Together, these elements create a welcoming gathering space that blends contemporary design with the magical atmosphere of the holiday experience.

Example of Stain Glass Logo



Example of Stain Glass Fire Pit



Example of Mega Tree



Main Playground Entrance

Area Features:

The Playground Entrance, located directly across from the skate park, will serve as the grand gateway into the Chasing Aurora holiday experience. Upon arrival, guests will be welcomed by a stunning 16-foot-tall illuminated 3D Castle Gate, creating an enchanting first impression and establishing the magical atmosphere of the display. The two trees framing the entrance will be wrapped in cool white mini LED lights, while soft uplighting will illuminate the canopies above, adding depth and elegance to the entrance.

Passing through the castle gates, visitors will journey beneath a series of vibrant RGB illuminated arches that create a colorful tunnel of light leading into the playground. As the pathway gently curves, guests will be greeted by a striking 11-foot illuminated 3D star motif, serving as the first major focal point within the display.

Main Playground Entrance Example



Example of 3D Star Motif



Playground Featured Areas

Upper Playground Area

Area Features:

The Frozen Mountain will serve as one of the signature centerpiece experiences within Chasing Aurora, transporting guests into a breathtaking frozen landscape. Rising approximately 18 feet tall, this illuminated mountain range features a collection of faceted crystal-like peaks that shimmer with brilliant shades of cool white, icy blue, and violet. Designed to resemble

towering frozen glaciers, the structure creates a dramatic focal point that can be admired from multiple vantage points throughout the park.

Subtle atmospheric fog drifting through the mountain peaks will enhance the illusion of a frozen alpine environment, while carefully placed lighting will add depth, dimension, and movement across the crystalline surfaces. Guests will be invited to gather around the mountain to capture memorable photos as they experience one of the most visually striking installations in the display. The Frozen Mountain introduces a sense of wonder and adventure, providing a dramatic transition into the magical world of Chasing Aurora.

Example of Frozen Mountain Display



Upper Playground Area 2

Area Features:

The Moon & Stars Photo Experience offers guests a whimsical, larger-than-life destination designed for unforgettable photos and family memories. At the center of the display is a beautifully illuminated crescent moon, accented with glowing stars and soft, cloud-like elements that create the feeling of sitting among the night sky.

Standing approximately 12 feet tall, the moon serves as an inviting walk-in photo opportunity where guests can step inside and capture memorable moments beneath the glowing stars. Warm white illumination gives the installation a soft, magical appearance, while the oversized scale creates a striking focal point that appeals to visitors of all ages.

Example of Moon Photo Opportunity



Deck Walk Through (located near the restroom building)

Area Features:

The Deck Walk-Through will provide guests with a cozy gathering place centered around an oversized illuminated hot cocoa mug, creating one of the most inviting photo opportunities in Chasing Aurora. Standing approximately 16 feet tall, the giant mug will glow with rich holiday colors and feature realistic details and gently rising illuminated steam, giving the illusion of a freshly prepared cup of hot cocoa.

The surrounding deck pavilions will be outlined with festive lighting to frame the space and create a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Guests will be encouraged to step inside the giant mug for memorable photos. The combination of the oversized interactive centerpiece, festive pavilion lighting, and cozy gathering space will make this destination a favorite stop for families and visitors of all ages.

Example of Cocoa Mug



Water Pathway Area

Area Features:

The water pathway will continue with the Chasing Aurora theming around the play area and will be lighted with a mix of blue wash lights and mini LED lights evenly spaced along the water pathway. The water pathway will finish at the pool of lights located near the Main Playground Entrance.

Example of Water Pathway Lighting



2nd Entrance into Playground

Area Features:

The Multi-Color Tunnel Entrance serves as a vibrant secondary gateway into Chasing Aurora, inviting guests into the heart of the display through an immersive corridor of light. Stretching approximately 40 feet, the tunnel is constructed from a series of illuminated arches wrapped in vibrant multi-color mini LED lights, creating a glowing passage that welcomes visitors as they enter the next section of the experience.

Brilliant multi-color mini LED lights surround guests as they walk through the tunnel, creating a bright, festive atmosphere and an unforgettable transition between display areas. The vivid colors, combined with the surrounding natural landscape, make this installation both a captivating walkthrough experience and a popular photo destination, encouraging guests to pause, explore, and fully immerse themselves in the magic of Chasing Aurora.

Example of Light Tunnel



Corner Area

Area Features:

As guests continue through Chasing Aurora, they will discover the Aurora Forest, where the landscape is transformed into a vibrant canvas of color. Powerful projection fixtures mounted throughout the area will cast dynamic, stained-glass-inspired textures across the ground, creating the illusion that the forest floor is glowing with the colors of the Aurora Borealis.

The ever-changing tapestry of vibrant colors will encourage guests to wander through the space, creating a peaceful yet immersive environment that feels both magical and alive. The colorful ground projections transform this quiet section of the park into a breathtaking nighttime experience, seamlessly blending nature with light while offering a unique visual experience from every angle.

Example of Texture Lighting



Playground Tree Lighting

Area Features:

The Crepe Myrtles (7) will be wrapped with mini LED lights. (Refer to Overview for placement)

The bushes around the Crepe Myrtles will be illuminated using a variety of up lighting and themed lighting. (Refer to Overview for placement)

The 8 matching trees located around the path of the sidewalk will be illuminated with a mixture of mini LED lights, and up lighting. (Refer to Overview for placement)

The bushes located along the Playground Main Entrance will be illuminated using a variety of up lighting and themed lighting. (Refer to Overview for placement)

Portions of the fence will be illuminated to provide background lighting for various themed areas.

A dynamic mix of colors will be used to illuminate the trees and bushes, capturing the vibrant and essence of the Chasing Aurora theme.

Other Features of the Displays

- * A variety of props will be strategically positioned throughout the display area to enhance and stylize specific sections.
- * We will use light timers with a battery backup to schedule when the lights will automatically turn on.

Display Maintenance

We conduct weekly walk-throughs and tests of all display elements to ensure they are operating correctly throughout the show's run. Additionally, a technician is always on call to address any issues that may arise during the display's operation. This approach guarantees a swift response to any problems and ensures that our maintenance procedures keep the display fully functional for the entire duration of the event.

Schedule

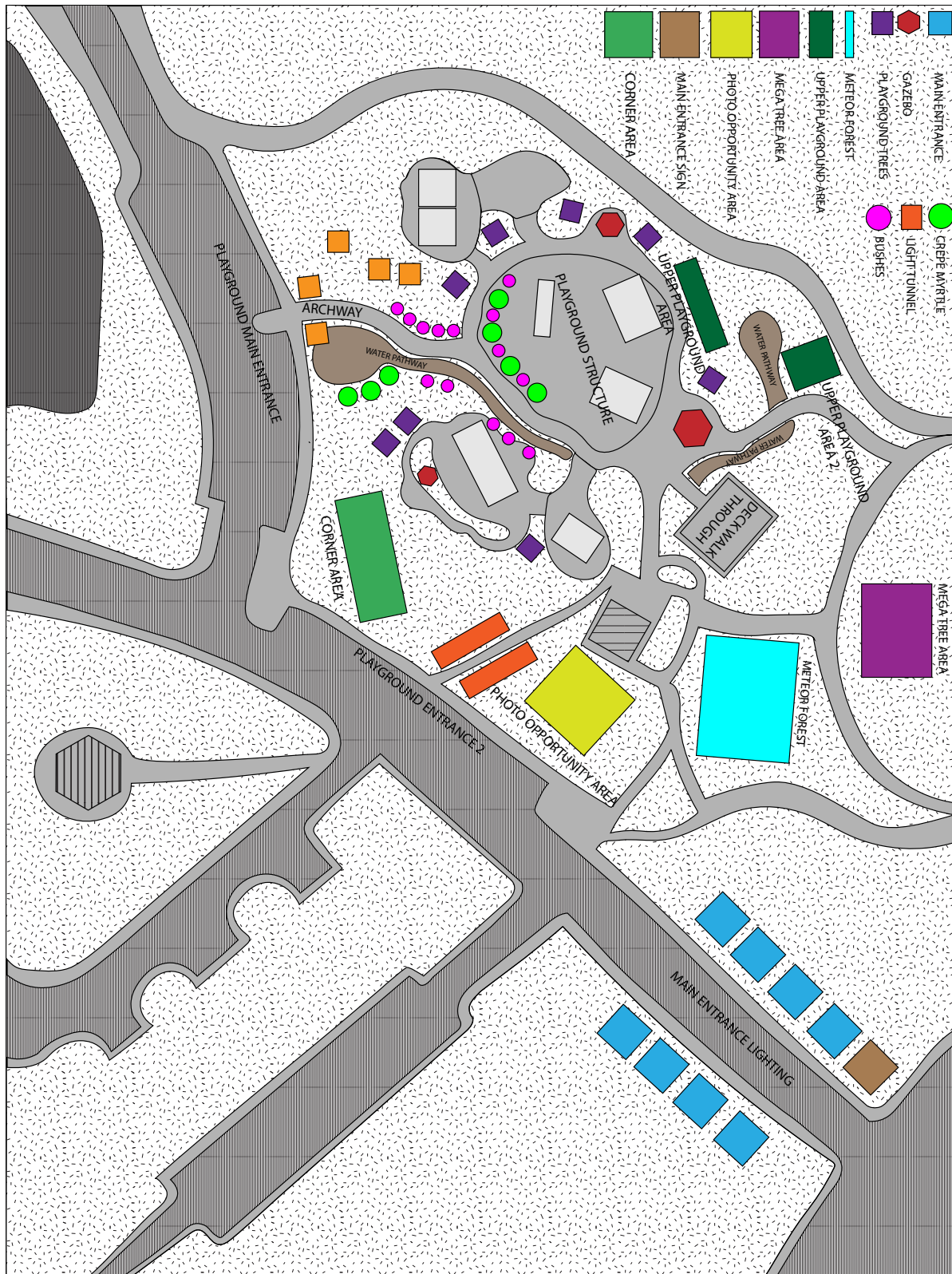
Load In Dates:
November 2026

Display Open:
December 1-31, 2026

Strike Dates:
January 2027

Proposed Fee: \$80,000

Overview Map



Submitted By:

CHITWOOD
S T U D I O S

Brandon Chitwood

404.391.7026

brandon@chitwoodstudios.com