

# Dallas engineering giant Jacobs gives \$8 million to Klyde Warren Park's second phase

The Jacobs Lawn will provide event space and a winter ice rink about the size of the one in Rockefeller Center.



The Jacobs Lawn as viewed conceptually from Akard Street looking west toward the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. The 37,000-square-foot multi-use venue will provide space for a variety of events, including festivals and markets. (Courtesy of Klyde Warren Park)



By Cheryl Hall  
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Jacobs wants to put its corporate signature on its new hometown.

The technology and engineering giant is paying \$8 million for the naming rights to a key portion of Klyde Warren Park's second phase being built over Woodall Rodgers Freeway.

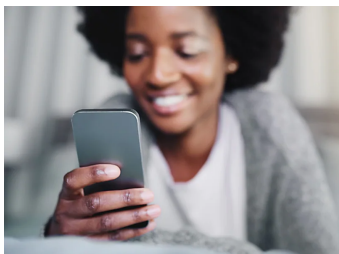
The western edge of the 1.65-acre expansion will be named The Jacobs Lawn. This 36,000-square-foot multiuse green space will host markets, festivals and other recreational community events. In the winter, it will be converted into an ice rink being designed in conjunction with the Dallas Stars.

"We moved our global headquarters to Dallas in 2016, after 70-plus years in California," said Steve Demetriou, chair and CEO of Jacobs, which had \$13 billion in revenue last year. "We've made other commitments to the community, but this is going to become our hallmark."

"Everything that Klyde Warren Park represents — especially around inclusion and diversity — perfectly aligns with our culture at Jacobs."



During the winter, The Jacobs Lawn will be transformed into a community ice skating rink that park operators hope will become a tradition along the lines of the Rockefeller Center ice rink in New York City. (Courtesy Klyde Warren Park)



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The gift is the single largest donation to the \$100 million expansion project by a corporation and the largest corporate gift in downtown Dallas since the AT&T Performing Arts Center opened in 2009.

The donation will be announced Wednesday morning, exactly eight years after the deck park made its debut in 2012 and two years since the expansion plan was announced.

Construction is scheduled to begin late 2021, with completion in 2024.

The timing of the gift is crucial, said Jody Grant, chairman of the board of Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation. The foundation was in the middle of its capital campaign when the pandemic hit, so the board had put its fundraising on pause.

“This gift will get us back in the game,” he said.

It will also help qualify the park if the federal government decides to fund infrastructure projects in a future stimulus package, Grant said. “This will get us to shovel-ready in quick order.”

Jacobs has been a key partner of Klyde Warren Park since the idea of the deck park first gained traction in 2005.

“Building a 5-acre park over a major highway is a remarkable, innovative architectural and engineering feat,” Grant said. “The brilliant minds at Jacobs made it possible. The success of the park has inspired similar efforts in major cities around the globe.”

Klyde Warren Park has had more than 10 million visitors and has had a broad economic impact on Dallas, Grant said.

“Dallas is Big D. We’re big. We’re bold. And we’re audacious,” the retired banker said. “Jacobs is making a huge bet on Dallas and its future with this investment at a time when there isn’t a lot going on except for raising funds to meet basic needs. They’re stepping in and making a very important investment for Dallas’ future.”

Demetriou said the company is happy to help. “We were intimately involved in the arrival in Klyde Warren Park as the designer of what we see today. To be able to make a major contribution to take it to the next level is just totally consistent with what we do at Jacobs.”

Energy billionaire Kelcy Warren, who gave \$10 million to name the park after his son in 2012, remains Klyde Warren’s largest benefactor with total giving of \$30 million. He and his wife, Amy, along with Oncor and Miyama USA Texas, have also donated to the expansion project.

The Jacobs donation gives the park foundation the \$50 million in private donations it needed to start construction of the deck. “There’s nothing between us and progress except building it,” Grant said.

The park’s expansion also includes a three-story, enclosed special events pavilion across Akard Street from Jacobs Lawn. It will provide special event space that can be used during inclement weather.

Klyde Warren offers more than 1,300 free programs and events each year.





An artist's rendering offers a bird's-eye view of the Klyde Warren Park extension. (Courtesy of Klyde Warren Park)

Kit Sawers, president of Klyde Warren, said the past seven months have been rough. The park had to reduce its operating budget by about 40% while spending \$75,000 on enhanced cleaning protocols. Sponsored events were canceled. Meanwhile, the park has remained open seven days a week.

“The exciting thing is that the demand for outdoor recreational activities has been enormous, because there haven’t been events in the community and families have

wanted to be outside,” she said.

“While we weren’t able to play an immediate role in the city’s emergency response to COVID by providing food or medicine, we’ve definitely been playing a role in our recovery.”

Klyde Warren Park put on the only city-sanctioned fireworks celebration for the 4th of July and recently held a socially distanced movie night where 750 people sat on the lawn to watch *The Wizard of Oz*.

“We’ve been highly focused on providing free opportunities for people to be with their loved ones in a safe outdoor space,” Sawers said.

She sees the ice skating rink, which will be about the size of the one in New York City’s Rockefeller Center, as a huge game changer that she hopes will become a holiday tradition.

“After all of the hardships with the coronavirus, this is something exciting to look forward to. It’s happiness,” she said. “It’s going to help the physical, the mental and the social well-being of our community.

“This is an inspirational announcement that provides a little light at the end of a long, long tunnel.”

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BUSINESS

**Two Black leaders are shaping the  
Dallas business community’s  
response to inclusion and COVID-19**

BY CHERYL HALL

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[Cheryl Hall](#), Business columnist. Cheryl, a journalism graduate of SMU, has covered business for more than 45 years and gets her phone calls returned. She’s won numerous awards including several Katies from the Press Club of Dallas and a lifetime distinguished achievement award from the Society of American Business Editors and writers.

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