

Druid Heights Peace Park

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Problem:

As a result of the 2010 global financial crisis that wrecked the local housing market, the Druid Heights neighborhood in Baltimore City is overwhelmed with vacant lots. Vacant buildings, compacted urban soils, and other impervious surfaces contribute to stormwater runoff that flows untreated into local waterways. The Druid Heights Community Development Corporation, whose goal is to accelerate the revitalization of the neighborhood while creating a stable and safe community environment, saw opportunities to address several community issues, such as a lack of green space and gathering places and a lack of stormwater management, with the Growing Green Design Competition.



Before: Vacant lot

Photo Credit: Growing Green Design Competition

Solution:

The competition created an opportunity for community groups to showcase innovative ideas for transforming vacant lots and blighted properties in Baltimore City communities. The Peace Park redeveloped two adjacent lots helping to revitalize Druid Heights. It created a colorful, functional, environmentally conscious, and sustainable site that serves as a gathering place for members of the community, in addition to treating stormwater runoff in its rain gardens and permeable pavers. This project was so well received by the community that Druid Heights is in the process of greening two more vacant lots that will also include stormwater management practices.



After: Peace Park

Photo Credit: Che-Wei Yi

Key Project Facts

Project Location: City of Baltimore, MD

Type of Project: Rain Gardens & Permeable Pavers

Size: 190 sq ft rain garden and 425 sq ft patio pavers

Total Cost: \$49,700

Funding Sources: Chesapeake Bay Trust, Baltimore City, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Partners: Chesapeake Bay Trust, Baltimore City's Department of Planning and Department of Public Works, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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What is Polluted Runoff?

The growth of our cities has resulted in too many paved surfaces, which prevent rain water from being absorbed by the ground. Instead, the water runs off streets and buildings, collecting trash and dangerous chemicals on its way. This contaminated water overflows into our streams and rivers, creating public health hazards and toxic waters.

Stormwater projects create safe paths for polluted runoff to be captured and filtered before it reaches our waterways. Projects like these keep communities healthy and the environment clean.

When communities and their local governments work together to solve big problems like stormwater runoff, that's a story worth telling!