Transforming Urban Spaces though Community Co-Creation

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Parks, Green Infrastructure and Equity: Background Research

- Green infrastructure provides Triple Bottom Line benefits and beyond
- Green infrastructure can provide “exceptional benefits for the urban poor” beyond stormwater management
- Poor and underserved neighborhoods have less access to green infrastructure (e.g., parks, tree canopy) than more affluent communities

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“When community members come together to correct environmental damage or to rehabilitate and redesign parks, they are able to actively participate in the decision-making process and gain a voice in improving the local environment and community livability.”

_EPA’s Green Infrastructure in Parks: A Guide to Collaboration, Funding, and Community Engagement_
Community Collaboration

Lessons learned from our Great Urban Parks Campaign partners

• Cast a wide net.
• You are not the (only) expert! Play the role of advisor.
• Leverage the efforts of others.
• Be willing to let go of expectations and be flexible – truly.
• Don’t make false promises. Be honest about challenges and limitations.
• Don’t take all the credit.
• Community collaboration isn’t easy or quick.

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Community Driven Projects
Boone Park West combines green infrastructure with passive and active recreational elements to create a park that provides a safe place for kids to play and for families and residents to gather. Most important, the park will reduce the impacts of stormwater flooding.

Curb cuts will direct stormwater to flow into the park during rain events, where it is directed to rain gardens and underground detention; there, it can infiltrate into the ground or move through the bioretention system, which helps reduce pressure on the pipes and can prevent flooding in the streets and in homes. The park design provides approximately 2,800 gallons of storage capacity for stormwater for a single rain event, and approximately 170,000 gallons annually. The design includes permeable paving and rain gardens that allow infiltration during storms.

Recreation and outdoor enjoyment are encouraged throughout the park. A wide multihouse path runs diagonally from south to north, eventually connecting Joseph E. Boone Blvd to the Atlanta Beltline three blocks to the northwest. Smaller paths wind their way around the park, creating a walking circuit for residents. A generous open lawn provides space for free play, pick-up ball games, festivals, and community gatherings. Along the lawn’s edges are two shade shelters with tables for picnics. Near the corner of Oliver and Boone, there is also an adult exercise circuit for fitness and strength training among residents, including older youths.

Comfort and safety are also priorities. Large trees are preserved where possible for shade and new plantings are planned to maintain car access from the street into the park to promote public safety. Additionally, the entire park will be lit with LED pool lights, increasing safety.

A large playground anchors the northeast corner of Proctor and Oliver streets. Two shade structures within the playground provide shaded areas for parents. One shade structure has exercise equipment for parents and children who like to exercise while their children play. A second shade structure provides seating. The playground also features a large wall designed to give children a place to get creative. Just outside the playground, a series of low seat walls provides a place to gather as a group or individually.