

Clean Water Community Healing Project

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Problem:

The 30-acre MedStar Harbor Hospital campus sits on the banks of the Patapsco River adjacent to a public recreational trail in a hyper-urban setting with impervious surfaces covering 18 acres. Every year roughly 20 million gallons of stormwater runoff is discharged directly into the river adding to pollutant totals and water quality issues.

Solution:

The hospital's green team and partners developed a green infrastructure master plan to reduce the impact of polluted water on environmental and public health. Bioretention systems were chosen as the most cost effective, attractive and educational solution that would meet the property's environmental goals as well. This project treats five acres of runoff from impervious surfaces and, with the addition of trees and conservation landscaping, hospital patients and visitors have access to a healing garden that promotes recovery and relaxation. Educational signage incorporated at this highly visible public facility increases awareness about stormwater runoff, green infrastructure and the direct connections between climate change, pollution, and public health and safety. Residents directly downstream also now have access to additional green space and improved local water quality. The project planning, design and installation employed the services of roughly 30 individuals and will employ even more for the ongoing maintenance.



Bioretention system and tree planting in progress



Conservation landscaping forms a healing garden

Photo Credit: Blue Water Baltimore

Key Project Facts

Project Location: Baltimore City, MD

Type of Project: Bioretention, Tree Planting & Conservation Landscaping

Project Size: 14,443 sq ft

Total Cost: \$1,455,066

Funding Sources: Chesapeake Bay Trust, MD Department of Natural Resources, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program

Partners: MedStar Harbor Hospital; Blue Water Baltimore; Plisko Sustainable Solutions, LLC; Neighborhood Design Center; CityScape Engineering; Rain Underground

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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, anchor institutions, such as hospitals, and their local governments work together to solve big problems like stormwater runoff, that's a story worth telling!