

## Druid Heights Gateway Park

[mostcenter.org/casestories](http://mostcenter.org/casestories)

### Problem:

The Druid Heights neighborhood is comprised of 41% vacant lots. Only three public parks cover 0.7% of the area within the neighborhood limits. The abandoned site located at the gateway of the community is highly visible, but lacked welcoming features that communicated community pride and Druid Heights' rich historical background as one of Baltimore's oldest neighborhoods.

### Solution:

Community members provided input on possible park elements such as seating areas, native plants and trees, and stormwater management features. University of Maryland Landscape Architecture students then created a design that incorporated the residents' needs. The new park provides urban wildlife habitat, environmental education, a dynamic gathering spot for residents, and improves public health and water quality.

**Job Creation:** The increase in community greening projects like Gateway Park has allowed the Druid Heights Community Development Corporation to re-establish its Environmental Stewardship Program that employs six part-time people to maintain community parks.



Before: Vacant lot  
Photo Credit: Environmental Finance Center



After: Gateway Park  
Photo Credit: Environmental Finance Center

### Key Project Facts

**Project Location:** Baltimore City, MD

**Type of Project:** Other—Reclaiming and Repurposing

**Pollution Reduction:** 0.26 lbs nitrogen, 0.01 lbs phosphorus, 20 lbs sediment

**Total Cost:** \$250,000

**Project Size:** 10 trees & 3 bioretention areas totaling 636 ft<sup>2</sup>

**Funding Sources:** Maryland Department of Natural Resources; Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

**Partners:** Druid Heights CDC; University of Maryland Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture; Druid Heights Green Thumb Club; Blue Water Baltimore; Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition

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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!**