SUCCESS STORY

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT: PARKS MATTER

IN SOMERVILLE, LIKE ALL densely populated cities with high percentages of impermeable surfaces, the problems created by stormwater runoff are becoming more urgent as the frequency of intense storms increases. Minimizing stormwater runoff, controlling flooding, and eliminating pollutants that are carried to regional water bodies are important goals for planners and engineers. One of the tools for achieving these goals are innovative retention and catchment features in parks and open spaces.

Chuckie Harris Park (CHP), completed in 2013 captures all stormwater runoff in lush rain gardens that run the length of the park. The new park increased the permeability of the site sixfold, and 70 water absorbing (and air cleaning) trees were planted. In addition, the water generated from the low-flow water feature travels into an underground pipe where it passively waters the street trees.

At Symphony Park, located in East Somerville and completed in 2015, an underground storage tank with a 2,000 gallon capacity, helps the environment in two ways: 1) it captures and recirculates stormwater and water from the low volume water feature for irrigation (which also means less water used from municipal supplies) and 2) it serves as a holding tank for 2,000 gallons of water during severe storms. Capturing and slowing down rainwater is an important way to ameliorate flooding, minimize pollutants in our waterways and recharge our groundwater supply.

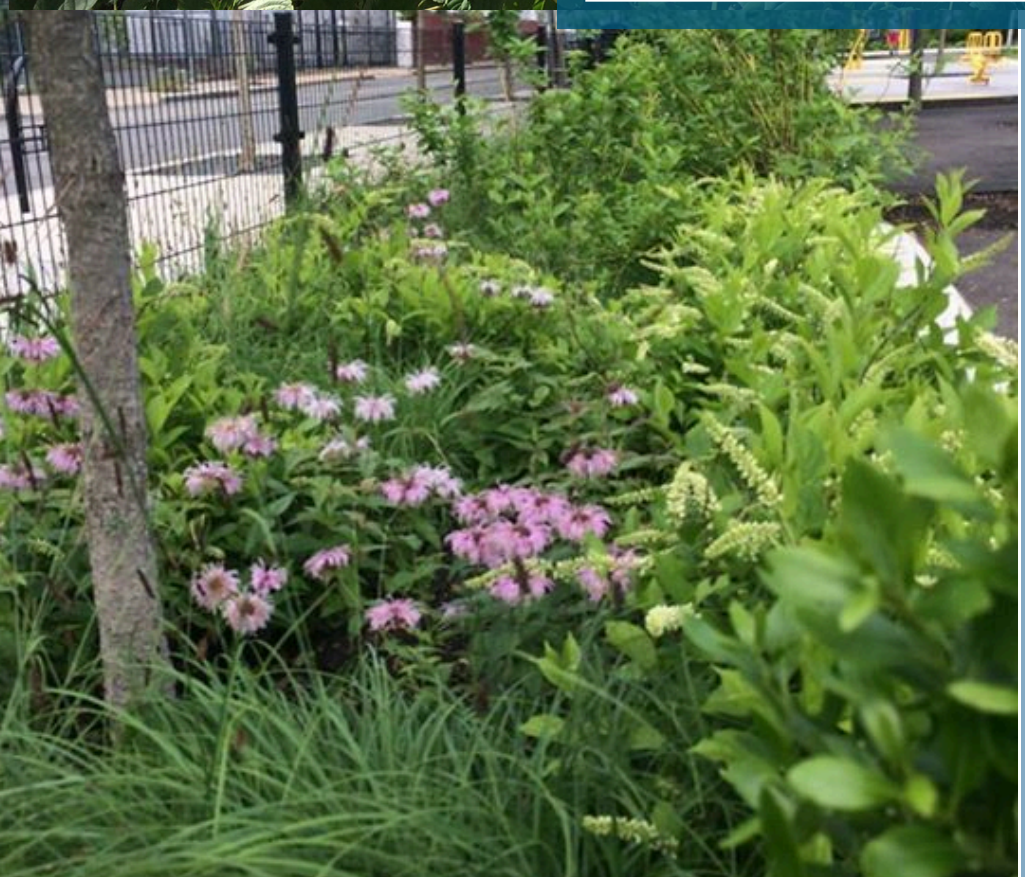
In addition to these innovative features, there are underground retention basins at North St Veterans Playground, Marshall Street Playground and Ed Leathers Community Park. Lincoln Park and Nunziato Field are two planned projects with large stormwater retention capacities (1.25 million gallons) designed into them. Somerville parks are not only beautiful, they are also doing important work.

Right: a 2,000 gallon stormwater retention tank is buried beneath Symphony park.

Opposite: The raingardens that run along Chuckie Harris Park capture and filter stormwater.

INNOVATE

When planning Somerville parks, aesthetics and recreation are not the only considerations. Planners and engineers include stormwater run-off and flood mitigation in their designs.



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▲ The new Chuckie Harris Park increased the site's permeability by six-fold

2,000 gallons

▲ Amount the stormwater catchment systems at Symphony Park retains

70 trees

▲ Number of water-absorbing trees planted at Chuckie Harris park