

Marshland Education Plaza

The Chandler Park Conservancy (CPC) is planning to construct an education plaza which will be located adjacent to the newly constructed marshland in Chandler Park and provides an area for school-aged children, community members, and Detroit residents at-large to learn about green stormwater management, wildlife habitat and potentially alternative energy sources. The plaza will incorporate pervious surfaces that will allow stormwater to infiltrate into the marshland.

The education plaza will be constructed using green stormwater infrastructure (GSI), which provides a platform for educational activities at the Chandler Park Marshland. The added plaza will allow users to sit next to the marshland and interact with nature. Users will hear the constant flow of water entering the marshland, see the wildlife that make the marshland their home (turtle, bird, and reptile habitat was created) and be able to relax in an area surrounded by the newly planted trees, shrubs and native plants, all while being in an ultra-urban, environmental stewardship and educational setting. Stress can be an amplifier for many health-related conditions, the new marshland and education plaza will also provide opportunities to address mental and physical health. Signage will also describe the function of the GSI (the newly created pervious pavement and the newly completed marshland) including its part in reducing combined sewer overflows on the Eastside of Detroit.

The area for the planned education plaza was previously an underutilized portion of the park because it was subject to standing water which resulted in overgrown grass. With the installation of the marshland, the ponding is eliminated but there is no seating for park users around the marsh. We anticipate that the installation of the seating and shade structure at the education plaza will draw users to this portion of the park. The entire project also helps to address the inequities in park amenities in the region between city and suburban parks.

The project supports triple bottom line (social, environment, and economic) benefits by improving the quality of life for eastside residents, providing a space for passive recreation, access to nature, and demonstrating how development doesn't have to add stress to the already overburdened utilities. Benefits to the environment are addressed through the marshland by providing capacity for stormwater runoff which can reduce combined sewer overflows. Lastly, the investment in the park, basement flooding and improved water quality in the Detroit River will increase the value of land surrounding the park which provides an economic benefit.

Chandler Park has approximately 75,000 visitors annually through various programs, events, and amenities located at the park. The environmental education plaza and the marshland will be the first of its kind in Detroit and has the potential to touch residents throughout the state. More people are visiting Chandler Park each year and we find there is program over-lap discovery. That is visitors come for one event or activity and discover something unexpected. For example, visitors may come to enjoy the water park, but while they are here, they may venture over to the marshland area and passively learn something about the environment. CPC proposes a growth of 15% within the next 12 months and 20% in the next 24 months.

The educational programming at the plaza will be sustained by CPC as part its mission to provide educational, recreational and conservation opportunities for youth and families on Detroit's Eastside. CPC will develop a long-term plan for use of the plaza. CPC will track the number of people using the plaza by recording the number of people participating in the educational programs for two years following construction. In addition, a photo log will be kept monitoring the plaza's conditions.



Example outdoor classroom