



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Time-lapse video captures Space to Grow transformation at Wadsworth Elementary School



Crews have demolished more than 34,000 square feet of impervious asphalt pavement, 1,000 square feet of concrete pavement and 2,400 square feet of playground rubber tiles at Wadsworth Elementary School as part of the Space to Grow program.



The finished product includes more than 50 percent permeable surface featuring a new playground, athletic field and rain garden.

The campus of an elementary school in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood has undergone a stunning transformation that will provide an education in stormwater management that extends beyond the traditional classroom, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) documented demolition through completion using time-lapse video. To view the three minute footage, visit <https://youtu.be/s5Hx3f2CkzM>.

Thanks to the Space to Grow program, the James Wadsworth Elementary School, 6650 S. Ellis Ave., has a new look to its schoolyard with a new play area, community space and landscaping that will retain more than 130,000 gallons of rainwater. Space to Grow converts Chicago schoolyards into community spaces for physical activity, outdoor learning, environmental literacy and engagement with art, while addressing neighborhood flooding issues. It is a joint venture formed between the MWRD, Chicago Department of Water Management, Chicago Public Schools, Healthy Schools Campaign and Openlands. Wadsworth is one of three Space to Grow schools, including Gunsaulus Scholastic Acad-

emy in the Brighton Park neighborhood and Corkery Elementary School in the Little Village neighborhood, which were completed in 2016.

"The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago is proud to participate in such an educational investment that imparts a lesson to both students and the community about the importance of stormwater management," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "The project at Wadsworth School will reduce flooding, reduce the load on the combined sewer system, and educate students and neighbors about green infrastructure techniques."

At Wadsworth, designers, landscapers and construction workers took a former 38,000-square-foot play area covered entirely in impervious asphalt and a 2,400-square-foot playground on rubber tiles and began transforming the area into an attractive space for the entire community. The new and improved play area includes an athletic field with artificial turf, a running track, a basketball court, a playground with poured-in-place rubberized surface and vegetable *(continued)*

Time-lapse video captures Space to Grow transformation *(continued)*

gardens donated by The Kitchen Community. Wadsworth, which is a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) focused school, plans to use the schoolyard to enhance their STEM curriculum, while exploring new options for gym class and recess and presenting healthy initiatives for the community.

“Wadsworth is one shining example of the positive impact Space to Grow has on the overall education and quality of life for a community. By lessening the load on our sewer system, we are reducing flooding and also improving area water quality,” said MWRD Commissioner

Kari Steele. “We are happy to partner on this program and make a difference in educating students and the community about the value of water.”

More than 50 percent of the new surface of the schoolyard will be pervious compared to the nearly 100 percent impervious grounds prior to construction. The campus features a cistern capturing roof runoff, a rain garden capturing runoff from the track and a subsurface aggregate-filled storage area holding stormwater for gradual release to the combined sewer. At least 33 trees, 42 shrubs, and 1788 perennials were planted.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrdd.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.