Hawthorne Park
12th and Catherine Streets, Philadelphia

**Site Context**

Hawthorne Park is a ¾ acres park located at 12th and Catherine Streets in Philadelphia, PA. The site is less than a mile from City Hall and just off Broad Street. The site includes a central lawn area with lounge seating, amphitheater/stage for performances, site-specific sculpture, multiple planting beds, and furnishings along the Park’s walkways.

**Project Overview**

Working closely with all stakeholders, the LRSLA Studio team crafted a modern, environmentally responsible infill park out of the debris-strewn lot left vacant after four high-rise public housing towers were razed in 1999. The Park’s holistic design has contributed to the neighborhood’s revitalization, incorporates unique site elements reflecting stakeholder goals and wishes, and maintains a timeless aesthetic, uniting classic forms and materials with modern line and proportion.

**Sustainable Practices**

**Water** - Hawthorne Park retains as much stormwater onsite as possible, through the incorporation of biosoils, underdrains, and permeable pavers. Supplemental water, when needed, is provided by a high-efficiency irrigation system with low-waste spray heads (60% more efficient than traditional systems), automatically operated by an onsite weather station with a smart controller. Permeable clay unit pavers surface the walkways along with the open green space, completely disconnecting the Park from the City’s aging, overburdened sewer system, and absorb water at the rate of 800 inches per hour.

**Natural Landscaping** - Hawthorne Park contains 46 new trees, a 19,000 square foot lawn, and 4,000 square feet of plant beds filled with tough, low-maintenance shrubs, groundcover and flowering perennials. Prior to the design and construction of the Park, the site was devoid of any topography, plants, trees or natural elements.

**Materials Selection and Construction** - The site’s existing fill was removed and replaced with custom-mixed sandy planting soil that soaks up rainwater. Hawthorne Park is approximately ¾ acres in size, and has 6,000 square feet of permeable paved surfaces which provide versatile, multi-purpose spaces for performances, farmers’ markets, and relaxation, in addition to circulation.
Sustainable Practices Cont.

Connecting People to Nature- The Park’s 19,000 square foot lawn is used both for active and passive recreation. “Friends of Hawthorne Park”, the neighborhood residence/community group, is responsible for tending and maintaining the Park’s planting beds, and has encouraged and involved neighborhood children in participating in this endeavor. Sited in a dense urban context, Hawthorne Park has become an enduring destination and hub for a well-deserving community, has established itself as Philadelphia’s newest treasured green space.

Operations and Maintenance- Hawthorne Park is maintained and managed by Philadelphia Park and Recreation Department. “Friends of Hawthorne Park”, is the eyes and ears of the Park, and monitors the site to help maintain safety and security. The “Friends” also organize concerts and other events in the Park’s performance space, and schedule regular parks cleanups. “Ready, Willing & Able”, a community based transitional work program, provides supplemental park maintenance and clean up.

Environmental Stewardship Messaging- Though Hawthorne Park is located in a dense urban environment, it has proven to be sustainable through its use of permeable pavements, low-energy lighting, native and low maintenance planting, and innovative stormwater management practices.

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