

Bike Gardens Bloom on the Beltline



Project: Historic Fourth Ward Park, Redevelopment; Phase II
Location: Atlanta, GA
Year of Installation: 2011

Product Used: Bike Garden Bike Racks
Landscape Architect: Wood+Partners, Inc.
General Contractor: Reeves Contracting

The Atlanta BeltLine is the most comprehensive economic development effort ever undertaken in the City of Atlanta and, at an estimated \$2.8 billion, among the largest redevelopment projects currently underway in the United States.

It is also an inspiring story of what can happen when a community comes together to better itself and the environment.

The idea was big: take an old, 22-mile railroad corridor that circles downtown Atlanta and convert it into a network of public parks, multi-use trails, fields and transit corridor.

The Historic Fourth Ward Park, a 17-acre greenspace stretching from North Avenue to Freedom Parkway, is the first of the new Beltline parks to be completed, and has been transformed into an urban oasis.



Bike Garden Bike Racks cast-in-place with Aluminum Texture powdercoat

Uprooting the Old

Beltline officials described the original site of the new park as “little more than cracked asphalt, trash-strewn fields, and an empty promise of something more.” The dilapidated area had become a dumping ground and posed many challenges to the new development.

First, nearby flooding issues needed to be addressed.

Additionally, when soil investigation began during the second phase of development, a host of soil conditions were discovered including lead and asbestos. Remediation of hazardous materials in the soil had to take place before the project could proceed.

Planting the New

In answer to the flooding problem near the park, the Beltline and the City investigated a number of options, and ultimately landed on a two-acre stormwater retention pond, which serves as the centerpiece of the new park. Completed in Phase I, the pond was a scenic way to solve the stormwater issue, and cost \$15 million less than a proposed stormwater relief tunnel.

After the flooding was addressed, the surrounding site was effectively demolished, remediated, and re-graded, and the Phase II design work on the North, South, and Cox properties could begin.

Kristen Mansfield, Project Manager for Wood+Partners, said, “The community was very involved in the whole planning process. The Beltline had a really strong framework as to what the people wanted.”



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What they wanted was a space where the whole community, the whole city, could gather and enjoy recreation together. The park now includes, in addition to the central stormwater pond, a popular splash pad, a playground, elegant walkways, a multi-use field, and a neighborhood skatepark, recently dedicated by Tony Hawk.

Seeds of Sustainability

The overarching goal of the Beltline project is to clean up the industrial debris along the corridor and create an environmentally responsible, sustainable greenspace for people to enjoy for generations to come.

Sustainability was top of mind during the planning and design process. The skatepark features photovoltaic solar panels which reduce energy consumption from Atlanta's grid, while regional materials and native plants were used throughout the park. New tree plantings will eventually provide shade from Atlanta's summer sun.

Bike Gardens in Bloom

With fresh soil, plants, and water features in place, Wood+Partners focused on the park's finishing touches – site furniture.

Mansfield said, "We knew the park had to be something special. We were charged with making it extraordinary, and the site furnishings had to match that vision. We wanted something sleek, modern and artistic."

In fact, there is an ongoing plan in place to incorporate artwork into the park – by bringing in sculptures, murals and other

showpieces. But Mansfield said that they also wanted to reflect those artistic themes in the details of the park itself.

"The Bike Garden Bike Rack was perfect – even the name was perfect. A Bike Garden in our urban oasis. We loved the aesthetic of it. It had a sculptural element that also served a functional purpose."

They specified 120 of our Bike Garden Bike Racks, which have been installed in groupings throughout the park. Unlike anything else on the market, our Bike Garden is comprised of individual "stems" in six heights that allow you to create project-specific layouts while providing multiple locking points and secure bike parking.

Mansfield admitted that they were a little afraid that people might not know how to use the Bike Gardens because they look so different from standard bike racks, but people figured them out right away.



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"Everyone knew what they were and how to use them. They are getting a ton of use."

Continuing to Grow and Thrive

Mansfield said, "We knew that bike racks from Forms+Surfaces would be durable and high quality. We needed to have in-ground mounts, because that park is going to be used a great deal."

She said that their sales representative checked in regularly to make sure everything was going smoothly, the website provided all the information they needed, and the installation went without a hitch.



Forms+Surfaces' Bike Garden Bike Racks in use at the unveiling of Historic Fourth Ward Park's skatepark in June 2012. (Photo credit: Dustin Chambers)

"It was a breeze to work with Forms+Surfaces. I would do it again in a heartbeat."

Now that the park is open it is quickly living up to everyone's hopes and aspirations.

Mansfield said, "We've gotten so much great feedback. The park is packed everyday — especially with the splash pad for summer. It's really impacted the neighborhood. We're seeing a real boom there."

"It's exciting to watch it grow; I think it's really going to flourish in the next few years," she said.

"We were not only thrilled with the site furniture but by the park in general. It was great to be a part of this project, and we're delighted to see the community really embracing it."

Forms+Surfaces is also proud to have been involved in this wonderful, sustainable gift to the people of Atlanta. If you are working on a project and our interested in our Bike Garden Bike Racks or any of our site furniture, visit www.forms-surfaces.com to learn more.