

53rd and Baltimore

Award Winning GSI Project



Students of Avery D. Harrington Elementary School now enjoy a scenic and safer route to class (August, 2022)

Overview

Before renovations, the northwest and southwest corners of **South 53rd Street and Baltimore Avenue** had **slip lanes**. These lanes let drivers turn quickly without stopping at traffic lights. A study by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and McCormick Taylor, Inc. showed that this made the intersection **dangerous**. It was especially risky for children crossing the street near **Avery D. Harrington Elementary School**.

Completed in 2021, the transformed intersection provides many benefits for Philadelphians. It is safer, looks better, and supports Philadelphia's **Green City, Clean Waters** initiative by reducing sewer overflow. These changes help the city become more resilient and create a better space for everyone.

The **Sustainable Business Network** awarded this project the **2023 Excellence in Public Project GSI Award**. #50158 53rd and Baltimore blends environmental sustainability with urban design, making it a model for future city improvements.

Project Information

Address

53rd St. & Baltimore Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Project Number

50158

Neighborhood

Cobbs Creek

Date Completed

2021

Watershed

Cobbs Creek

Council District

District 3, Jamie Gauthier

Volume of Stormwater Diverted from Sewer System

33,000 gallons

Stormwater Management Practices

Rain gardens

Partners

PennDOT, The Streets Department, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the Philadelphia School District, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Project Page

water.phila.gov/projects/p50158/



Participants on a West Philadelphia GSI tour admire the rain garden (October, 2024)

Native plants help to soak up runoff, boost biodiversity and support pollinators. (October, 2024)

Features of the Project

One of the main features of the project is the **rain gardens** on both sides of the intersection. These gardens, filled with **native plants**, help capture rainwater. Together, the gardens store 33,000 gallons of stormwater during a typical rainstorm, which reduces the strain on Philadelphia's sewer system. Public signage near the rain gardens educates visitors about the **environmental benefits** of these plantings.

The redesign improved pedestrian safety with better crosswalks and **speed bumps** to slow cars. For cyclists, an **Indego bike-share station** was added near the southern rain garden to give access to low-cost, alternative, transportation options for West Philadelphia residents.

Process & Funding

The **Streets Department** and the **Philadelphia Water Department** (PWD) worked together to redesign the intersection based

on **Complete Streets** principles. These principles focus on making streets safer and easier for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

The **U.S. Department of Transportation's** Transportation Alternatives Program provided funding for the project, helping pay for the green infrastructure and safety upgrades.

PWD worked with Hazen and Sawyer and KS Engineers to update traffic signals, improve roads, and add stormwater management features to the area.

Thank you

Many residents and community groups helped make this project happen. Collaboration with the Philadelphia Streets Department and recognition from the Sustainable Business Network were key in this project's success. These contributions helped create a safer and greener intersection for this neighborhood.

A Green City, Clean Waters Project

To meet state and federal regulations, The City of Philadelphia & PWD created *Green City, Clean Waters*: a 25-year plan to reduce the volume of stormwater entering combined sewers using green infrastructure and to expand stormwater treatment capacity with traditional infrastructure improvements.

The plan was formally adopted in 2011 and Philadelphia is scheduled to meet pollution reduction goals by 2036, in accordance with our Long Term Control Plan.