



# Bringing Green Infrastructure to Viola Liuzzo Park in 2016

## Project Overview and Update

### What's happening in Viola Liuzzo Park in 2016?

In 1982, the City of Detroit dedicated the Trojan-Forrer Playground, located at the corner of Trojan Avenue and Forrer Street in northwest Detroit, to the memory of Viola Liuzzo—a Detroit civil rights activist murdered in Alabama after the march on Selma in 1965. The Viola Liuzzo Park Association, with assistance from state and local partners, including the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Detroit Parks and Recreation Department, with support from the General Services Department, and the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), are working to revitalize and redesign the park space for the community's enjoyment and to continue to honor Viola Liuzzo by educating the community about her sacrifice and legacy. The proposed improvements will include a walking path, a new play structure and fitness equipment, picnic facilities, and pickleball courts. In addition to recreational features, DWSD recognized the opportunity to integrate innovative green infrastructure features into the park's redesign as a way to beautify the park while improving Detroit's water quality.



Current view of Viola Liuzzo Park in Detroit

### What is green infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is an approach to managing storm water that uses the natural processes of soils and plants to soak up storm water where it falls before it can enter and overwhelm the sewer system. DWSD is working with partners throughout Detroit to install a variety of green infrastructure practices, including bioswales, pervious pavement, rain gardens, bioretention, and tree planting.



## What type of green infrastructure will DWSD construct in the Viola Liuzzo Park?

DWSD will construct bioretention in the Viola Liuzzo Park. Bioretention features will be located on the north side of the park along Trojan Avenue and in the southeast corner of the park off of Winthrop Street. Bioretention will treat and infiltrate storm water from the streets and sidewalks. In addition, bioretention features will provide park landscaping that aligns with the community's vision for the park.

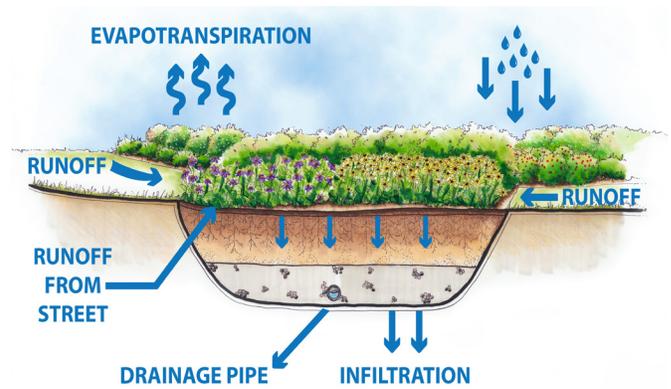


*Sites of new bioretention areas new recreation equipment, and new memorial in revitalized Viola Liuzzo Park*

Some of the plants selected in the planting plan for the bioretention areas include: purple coneflower, Lime Rickey Coral Bells, Obedient Plant, Gerald Darby Iris, Black Eyed Susan, Rising Sun Redbud, Little Bluestem, Yellow Twig dogwood, and Fragrant Sumac.

## What is bioretention?

Bioretention, sometimes referred to as a rain garden, is a shallow, depressed area in the landscape designed to slowly soak up or retain storm water over a 24 to 48 hour period. The plants and soils used in bioretention features can help to reduce ponding and flooding on streets, as well as help to beautify a neighborhood.



*A view of how bioretention works*

## What type of recreation activities will the City of Detroit install in the Viola Liuzzo Park?

The Viola Liuzzo Park Association's goal is to revitalize the Viola Liuzzo Park so community members have a safe, fun place to exercise and play. Conversations with residents near the park helped the Viola Liuzzo Park Association and the Parks and Recreation Department, with support from the General Services Department, redesign the park. Community residents' number one priority was a safe walking path—a key feature of the redesigned Viola Liuzzo Park. Through one-on-one conversations, parents and children who use the park also had a voice in choosing the new playground equipment. The community selected equipment that would interest toddlers and elementary school children and be very durable to withstand weather and use. The Viola Liuzzo Park Association also worked with the Parks and Recreation Department and the General Services Department to incorporate a small fitness area to provide the community with access to equipment that can improve the neighborhood's wellbeing. The pickleball court provides

a popular and unique recreational opportunity for the neighborhood that works well with the playground area intended for younger children. The redesigned recreational features in the Viola Liuzzo Park reflect a true collaboration between the community and the City of Detroit.

## Project Update (as of May 2016)

### What is the project schedule?

Construction of the bioretention features will begin in late June or early July 2016. Construction is expected to take two to three months to complete. Residents surrounding the Viola Liuzzo Park will receive a letter or postcard in the mail from the Viola Liuzzo Park Association and the City of Detroit approximately two weeks before construction begins. Construction of other park improvements, including the walking path, pickle ball courts, the updated playground and fitness equipment, and a reflecting area with a memorial sign for Viola Liuzzo, will begin later in the summer. The entire project is estimated to be complete by October 2016.



*Playground equipment selected by community residents for the Viola Liuzzo Park*



*Example of the type of fitness equipment selected for the Viola Liuzzo Park*

### Will the project disrupt traffic?

Residents should be aware that traffic patterns on Trojan Avenue and Winthrop Street may be temporarily changed to allow one-way travel during construction. Construction crews will assist drivers through these areas with flaggers and signs. Drivers should watch out for signs and follow changes in traffic patterns. A construction access drive for the project will be located on Winthrop Street.

#### *Project Partners and Roles*

<b>Project Partner</b>	<b>Project Role</b>
Viola Liuzzo Park Association	Project vision and fundraising Community outreach and participation
Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Project funding
City of Detroit	
Parks and Recreation Department	Park maintenance and oversight
General Services Department	Project funding and park redesign assistance
Water and Sewerage Department	Green infrastructure funding and community engagement
KEO & Associates, Inc. (supporting GSD)	Recreational improvement construction
Tetra Tech, Inc. (supporting DWSD)	Green infrastructure design, construction oversight, and community engagement
WCI Contractors, Inc. (supporting DWSD)	Green infrastructure construction
The Greening of Detroit	Funding administration and community engagement

## Frequently Asked Project Questions

### Are there other examples of bioretention in Detroit and southeast Michigan?

Bioretention is not a new approach to managing storm water. Property owners are using this type of green infrastructure practice around Detroit, throughout southeast Michigan, and around the country. DWSD recently partnered with the University of Michigan Water Center and the Detroit Land Bank Authority to design and construct four bioretention gardens in the Cody Rouge neighborhood. These bioretention gardens not only capture storm water before it goes in the storm sewer system, they also beautify these vacant lots.

### How does bioretention perform?

Research has shown that, during smaller storms, bioretention practices along roads can completely absorb storm water runoff by infiltrating storm water to the groundwater table and releasing water to the atmosphere. In the case of large storms, bioretention practices are designed to direct excess storm water to the sewer system.

### Who is responsible for maintaining bioretention features?

The City of Detroit will maintain the bioretention features in Viola Liuzzo Park. The project team designed the bioretention features with maintenance in mind to promote long-term function. Some maintenance activities will focus on maintaining the function of the bioretention feature, such as cleaning catch basins, overflow structures, and pipes. Other maintenance activities will focus on aesthetics of the bioretention feature, such as gardening and mowing.

## Project Contact Information

### Where can I get more information?

DWSD will provide updates about the Viola Liuzzo Park project, as well as other green infrastructure projects, on their website ([www.detroitmi.gov/dwsd](http://www.detroitmi.gov/dwsd)). More technical information about bioswales and how they work is available in Chapter 7 of SEMCOG's *Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan* (<http://www.semco.org/lowimpactdevelopmentreference.aspx>).

### Who can I contact to share my thoughts?

If you have questions or concerns about the bioretention areas in the Viola Liuzzo Park, please contact Parvez Jafri, DWSD Green Infrastructure Program, at 313.267.1224 or [jafrip@detroitmi.gov](mailto:jafrip@detroitmi.gov).

If you have questions or concerns about the new recreation equipment, please contact Juliana Fulton, Urban Parks Planner, General Services Department, at 313.628.2365 or [fultonj@detroitmi.gov](mailto:fultonj@detroitmi.gov).

If you have questions about the Viola Liuzzo Park Association, please email [vlpadetroit@gmail.com](mailto:vlpadetroit@gmail.com) or look for Viola Liuzzo Park on Facebook to get updates and information (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100004564876942>).

