



# Northside Commercial Projects

Item 5A.  
BCWMC 12-17-20

Metro Blooms



## Progress Report: December 2020

In addition to the clean water projects installed with Ripley Gardens, KNOCK Inc, and Venture North Bike Shop in 2019, we partnered with Masjid An Nur, the Regional Apprenticeship and Training Center (RATC) and All Nations Church in 2020 to implement raingardens, native plantings, and permeable pavement. Stormwater credit applications, operations and maintenance plans, and as built documents are underway. Signage is completed and installed for 2019 projects and in fabrication for 2020 projects. In conjunction with clean water and urban habitat, project focus remains on equitable development. The 2020 projects highlight this by supporting community-led projects, particularly at Masjid An Nur (striving to be the first eco mosque in the country) and the RATC. These projects were underway but required more funding support to reach completion and the Clean Water Fund grant was able to provide that final investment. Grant activities are nearly complete and will be wrapped up by year end 2020.



## By the numbers (project totals)

- 14 sites engaged
- 6 completed project sites
- 28 raingardens (10,014 sq ft)
- 8 native plantings (4,107 sq ft)
- 5 fescue/bee lawns (8,861 sq ft)
- 1 permeable pavement plaza
- 20 landcare stewards trained



Additional funding and support provided by:





## Northside Pollinator Project 2020

**Scope of Project:** The Northside Pollinator Project aims to replace conventional turfgrass lawns with gardens that will add beauty to the community, clean our water, and protect our bees and butterflies. Turfgrass currently accounts for much of the greenspace present on residential landscapes, despite providing little ecological value when compared to native plantings.

**Engagement Approach:** We placed an emphasis on environmental justice and equitable engagement, reaching out to racially diverse, low income communities that have been historically excluded from green infrastructure projects despite having greater exposure to environmental harm. Metro Blooms initiated a new, more targeted, recruitment approach to reach these engagement goals. We developed partnerships with local community leaders and strengthened existing relationships with neighborhood organizations to help us recruit project participants that were representative of the neighborhood. These efforts were highly successful, as the vast majority of the 25 project participants were Black Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community members. Metro Blooms strives to build capacity within communities by providing project participants with the tools needed to expand their knowledge and serve as leaders on future projects. As such, Metro Blooms staff invested a significant amount of time in educating project participants to ensure long term impacts after project completion.

**Project Outreach and Implementation:** All entities involved in the project (including community leaders, neighborhood organizations, and residents) were given a thorough description of the goals of this project, with Metro Blooms staff explaining how native plants can improve local water quality, protect our valuable pollinators, and add beauty through diverse trees, shrubs, and flowering plants. A site consultation was included for each project participant, where Metro Blooms landscape designers worked with residents to select planting templates that were best suited for their yard based on personal preferences and environmental considerations. Metro Blooms Landscape Designers developed planting templates that took into consideration different environmental factors, like shade and soil moisture.

**Residents Reached through Project:** After adopting the engagement approach of direct and targeted outreach with the help of community leaders, the project was really popular among people living in Bassett Creek Watershed as well residents living outside it. We were able to do a total of 25 projects in Northside, including five residents outside the Bassett Creek watershed that were interested in getting their own gardens. This led to an unexpected partnership with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) that allowed for 5 participants that were large influences in their community to be a part of this pollinator project. Beyond that, the MWMO was able to implement [a digital storytelling](#) piece interviewing two of the residents that had participated in this project and how this investment changes their interaction with the natural world and their community.



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### By the numbers

- 52 properties engaged
- 3 Neighborhood Associations engaged, 2 took lead on engagement
- 25 completed native plantings
- 5 renters participated
- 2,000+ square feet pollinator habitat
- 7 paid community project stewards (3 youth community stewards who served as liaisons)



### **Credit**

Illustration created by MCAD student Artist Katie Sartor-Duchene



Metro Blooms designer Jen Ehlert at a consultation with project participant