

Traffic Gardens

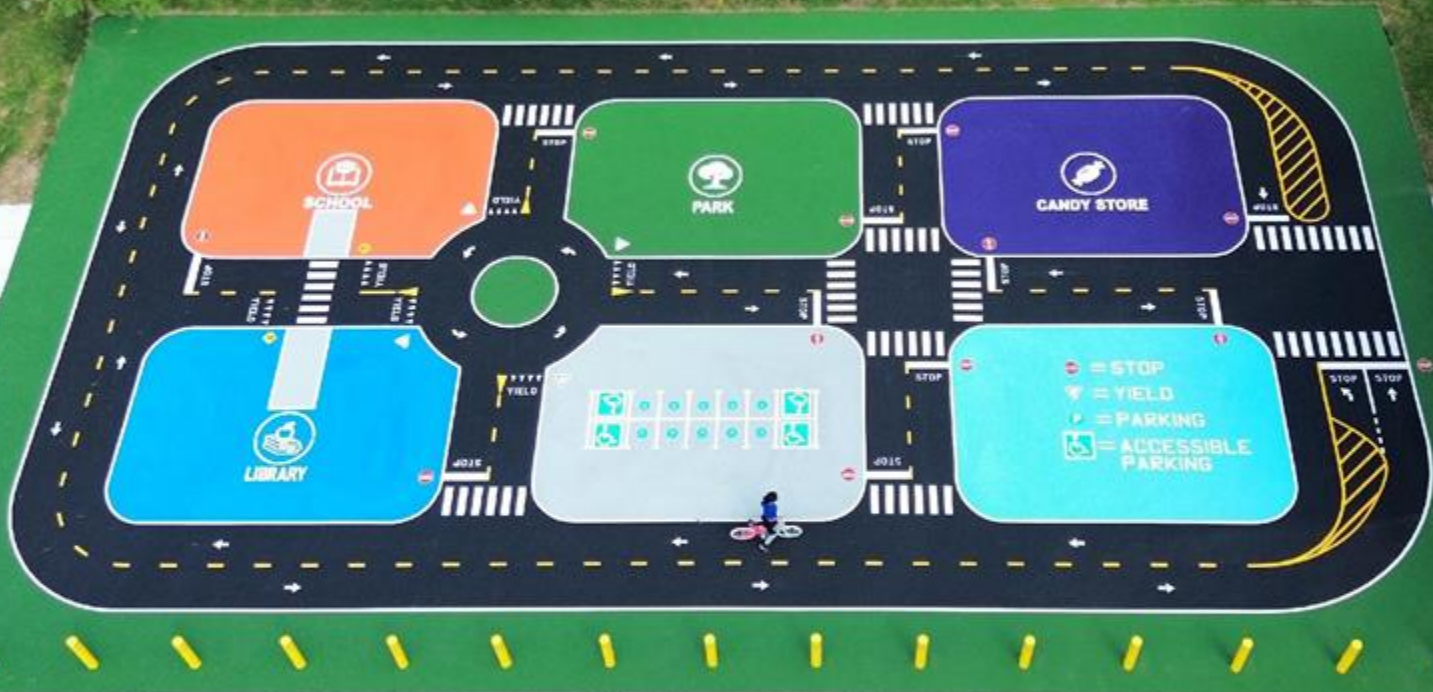
Nurturing Future Road Users



**TPB Meeting
September 9, 2025**

*Fionnuala Quinn
Discover Traffic Gardens
TrafficGardens.com*

What is a Traffic Garden?



A mini-world of streets and scaled-down traffic elements that is free of cars to practice skills & have fun

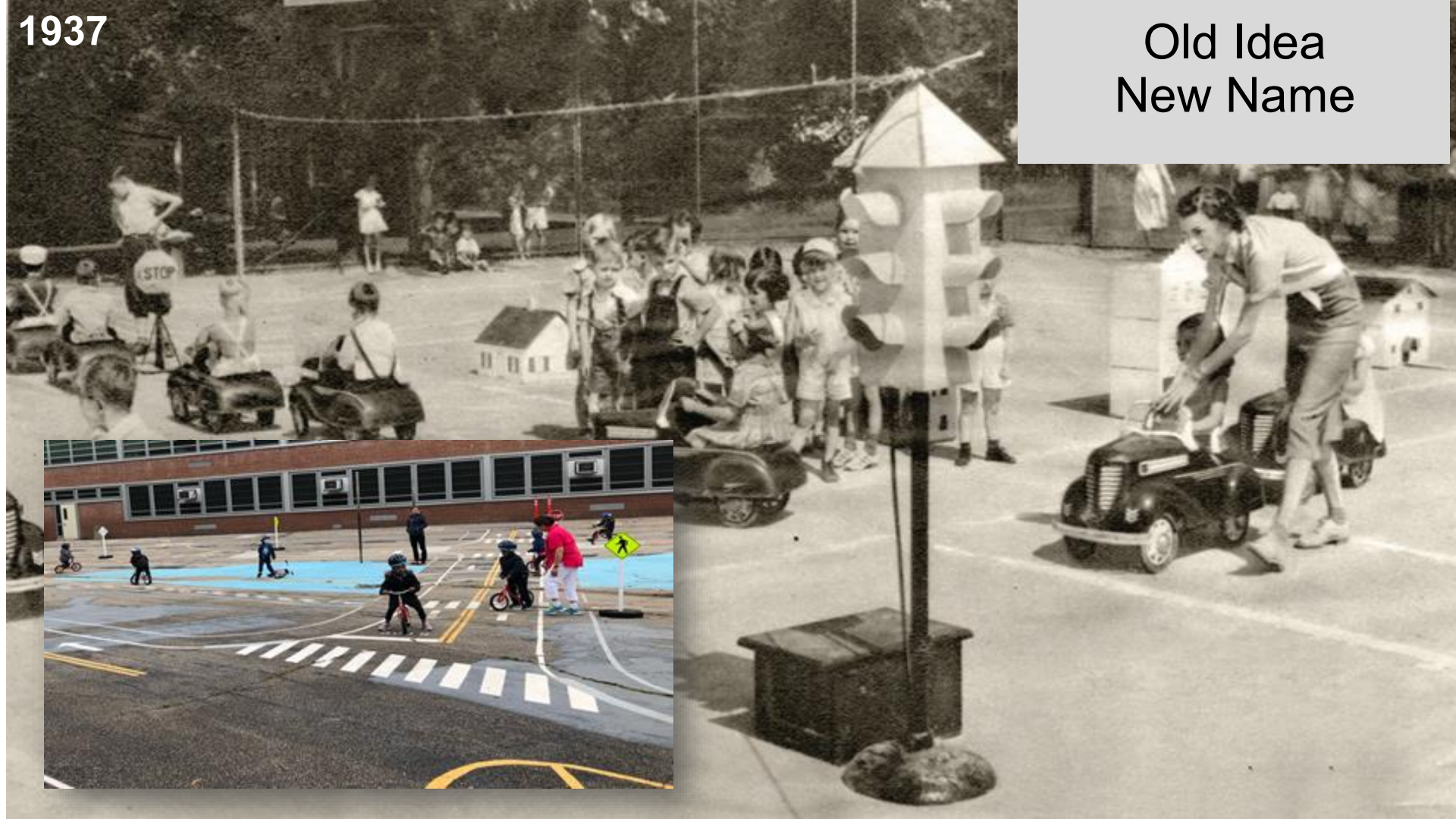
Kids Traffic Gardens



They are safe, inviting & comfortable places!

1937

Old Idea
New Name



Traffic Gardens Are a Community Amenity



Fills Bike Education Gaps: Many families lack time, resources, or safe spaces - traffic gardens provide community place to introduce safe biking & road skills.



Reverses Decline in Bike Skills: With biking rates down precipitously over last 15 years, they help rebuild early mobility and independence.



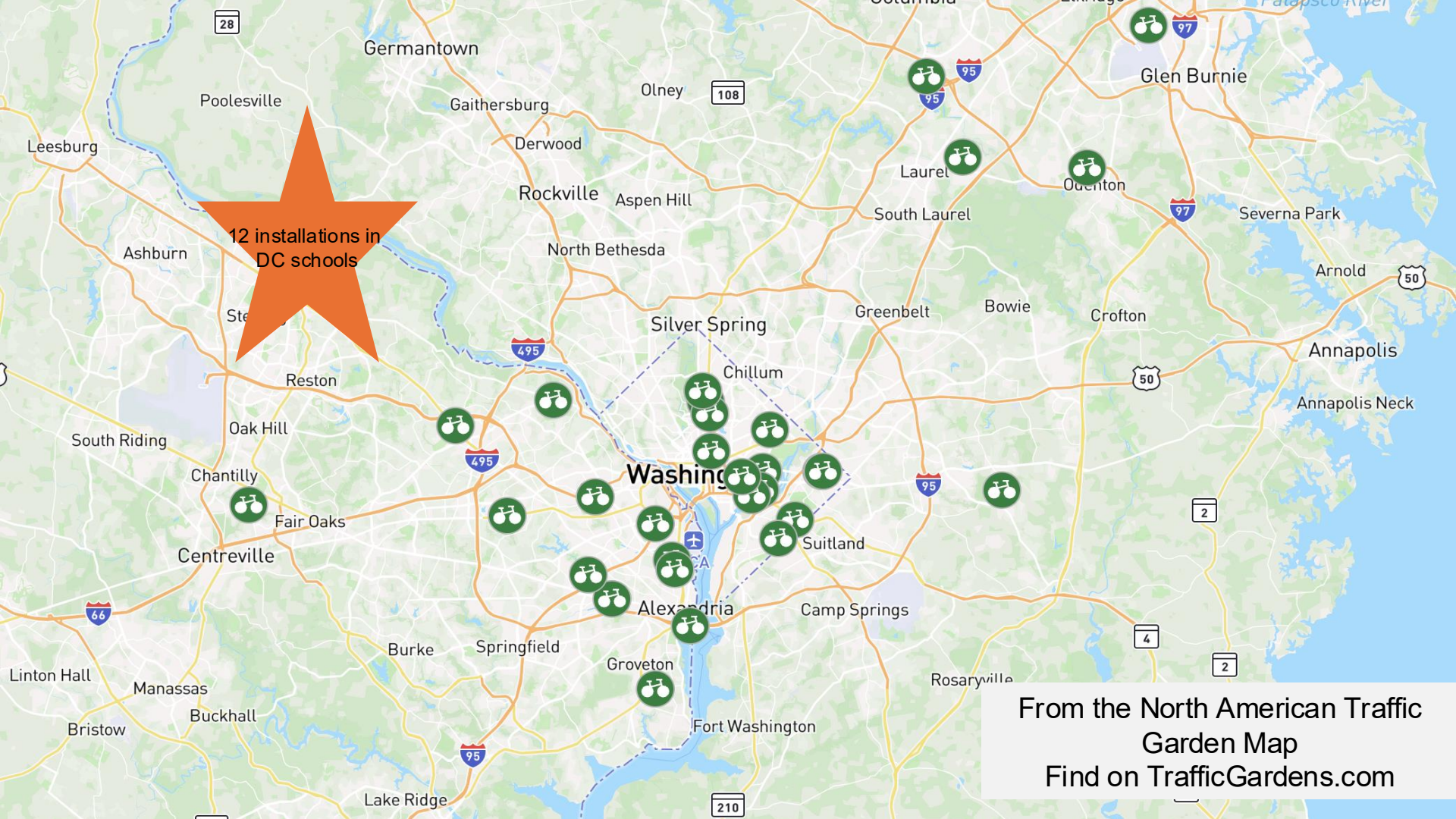
Safe, Hands-On Learning: Traffic gardens offer safe, engaging spaces to build real-world biking and navigation skills through programs and engaging play.



Easy to Install & Scale: Existing paved areas in schools, parks, & other underused spaces make traffic gardens straightforward to set up in many locations



Boosts Health and Community: They promote active play, STEM learning, and serve as hubs for play, programs, and family events.



From the North American Traffic
Garden Map
Find on [TrafficGardens.com](https://www.TrafficGardens.com)





physical streets



*painted or
surface-applied streets*

Many varieties of traffic garden installations



Most U.S. traffic gardens, including all in the DC-MD-VA region, use surface-applied designs

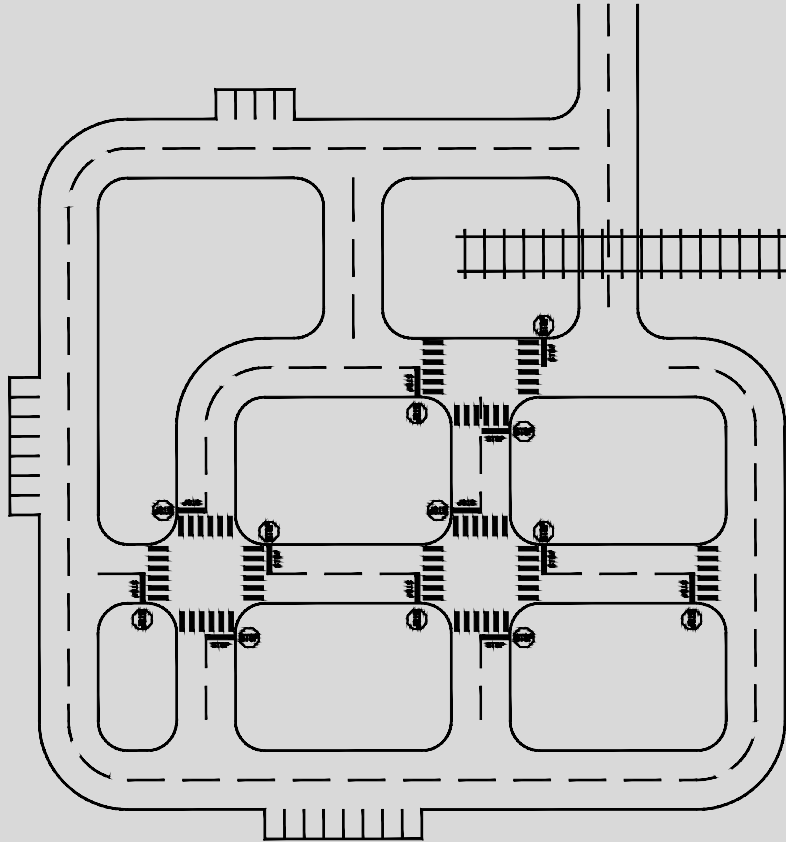


Site Before



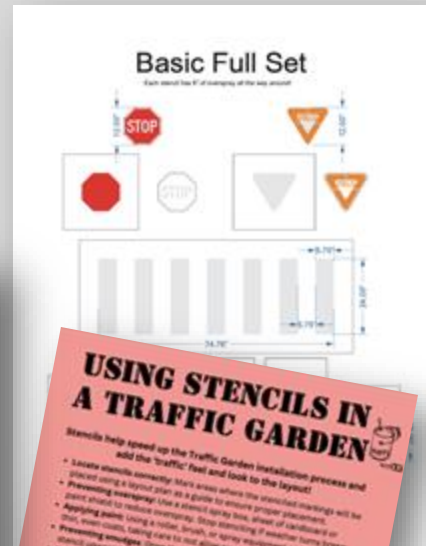
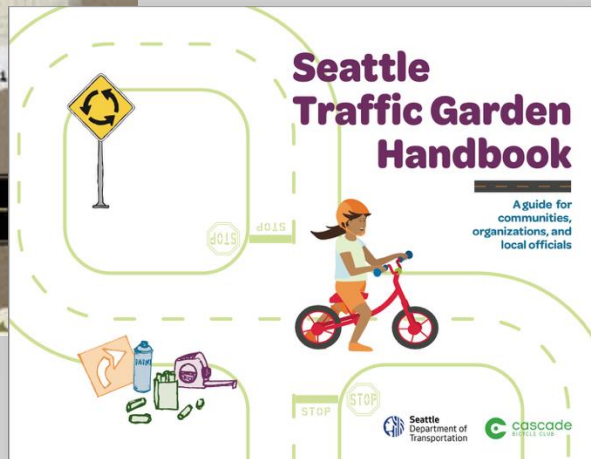
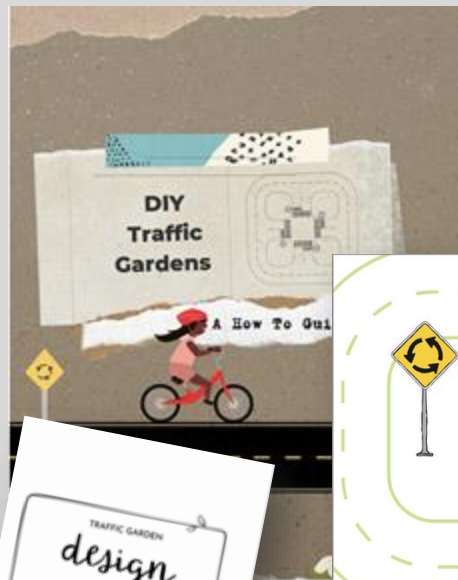
Site After

Typical Redeployed Hard Surfaces



Parking Lot
School playground
Basketball court
Tennis court
Roller hockey rink
Demolished shopping mall
In-between surfaces
Asphalt trailer pads
Under bridges

Projects Now Easier with New Resources



One Traffic Garden at a Time Regional Guide



Created through a partnership between Arlington County & Prince George's County

Funded through \$35K award from TPB's Regional Roadway Safety Program

Supports VZ goals to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries

Includes step-by-step instructions, design templates, local stories, checklists & activity sheets

A unique collaboration & the first cross-state partnership to create shared traffic garden guidance



Thomas Elementary Traffic Garden, Washington, DC



After first two installed through Vision Zero grant, District of Columbia Public Schools traffic gardens have since been installed through school modernizations. More being added on an ongoing basis. Goal to install in every elementary school.



**Cora Kelly Elementary Traffic Garden,
Alexandria, VA**

COVER STORY

COLUMBIA

Kids can practice bike skills at new traffic garden

By Allana Haynes

On a late summer afternoon, children rode their bicycles, scooters and kickers around the new traffic garden at Huntington Park in Columbia.

Branding the traffic circle, stopping for pedestrians at the crosswalk and yielding at the stop lines, they practiced their skills while having real-world road training.

The traffic garden is one of the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks latest additions to the park.

Opening Aug. 23, the traffic garden was created on the basketball court to teach inexperienced and young riders to follow directional signs, learn safe street skills and encourage proper etiquette when riding, according to a county government news release. A line of its kind in county parks, the Department of Recreation and Parks hopes to find additional locations in the future for similar bike-riding experiences.

"When we talk about Columbia, a balanced community, none of the things that come to people's minds are with interconnected and a place to live that does not require a car to get everywhere — but rather, can be navigated by walking or biking," Howard County Executive Robin Bell said in the release. "Biking offers numerous benefits that positively impact our health, the environment, and our wallets. In a world where time and resources are precious, biking stands out as a simple, efficient and sustainable mode of transportation."

The traffic garden was created through a collaboration between the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Howard County Bill and Proclamation Coordinator. The design assistance of Discover Traffic Gardens, according to Bell, was a valuable resource in creating the garden.

Situated on a previously vacant basketball court adjacent to the walking trail and next to the playground, the redeveloped space is now a colorful, engaging play and learning area.

That was no longer in use into Howard County's new Bicycle Traffic Garden not only promotes sustainability, but also ensures a dynamic and inclusive space for everyone. Department of Recreation and Parks Director Nick Monaghan said in the release. "It's a testament to the positive impact that can be achieved when we reimagine existing resources through



Hunter Fortin, 7, and Hunter Fortin, 5, of West Friendship, left, practice riding their bicycles on the Huntington Park Bicycle Traffic Garden in Columbia. The garden designed for young and novice riders to learn to follow directional signs, learn safe street skills and encourage proper etiquette when riding. JEFFREY BELL/STAFF PHOTOS



"In every world about getting kids outside and using their bodies to move as many ways as possible and Howard County has so many different options for that," she said. "All their playgrounds have something unique that we go to, and this one is super unique. There's nothing like this anywhere else."



Huntington Park Bike Park, Columbia, MD

**Westside
Elementary Traffic
Garden,
Roanoke, VA**



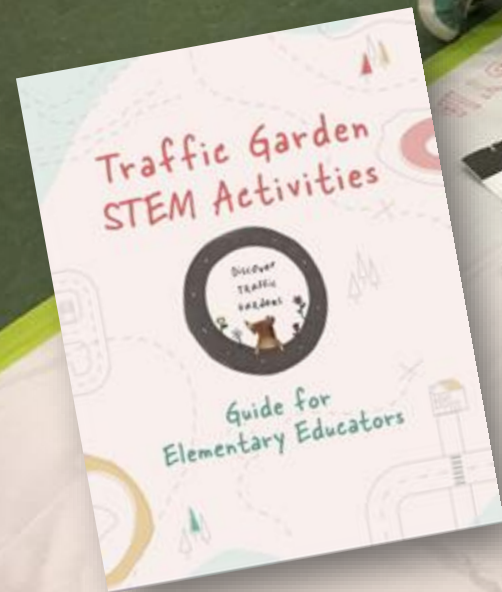
Demolished Mall Parking Lot The Heights, Vancouver, WA



Intended as a 3-year installation while area is being redeveloped into urban neighborhood. Teamed with artist to create story on surface.



Rotary Traffic Playground Information Signs

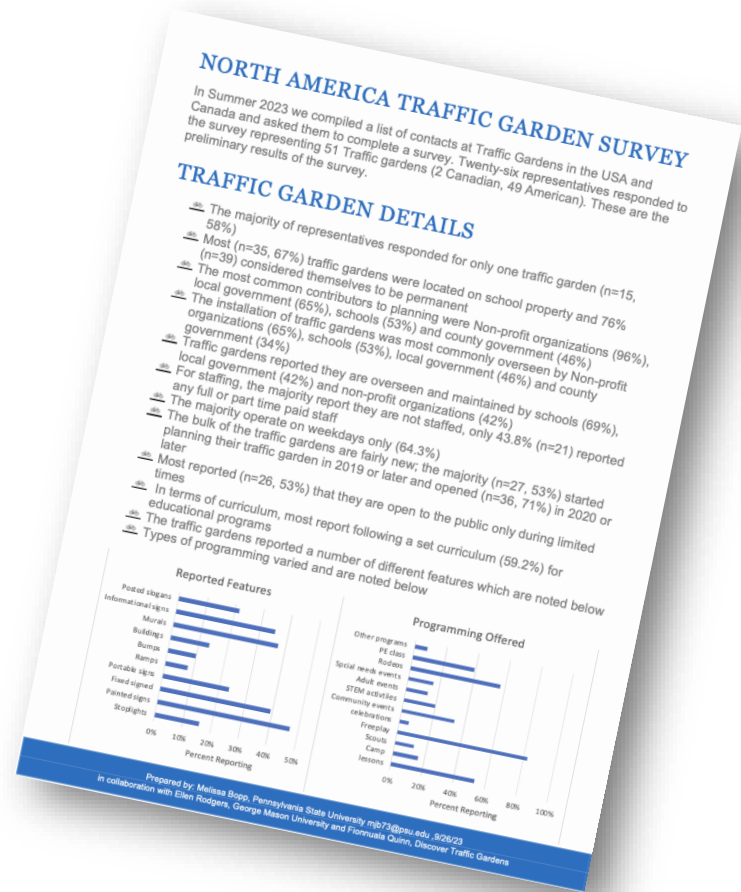


Involving Kids in Traffic Gardens = Making Connections with Safe Street Design



Traffic Garden Project	Source of Funding
Hillcrest Park Traffic Garden, Winterville, NC	AARP Community grant
Various Virginia elementary schools	State DOT SRTS grant
District of Columbia school system	School modernization process
Seattle school system	School modernization process + internal \$
Bike Safe Play Court, Hagerstown, MD	Maryland Department of Health
Mountain View Elementary Traffic Garden, Lacey, WA	State Farm funds plus community volunteer assistance
First two elementary school traffic gardens, District of Columbia	DDOT Vision Zero grant
Lil' Philly Safety Village, Philadelphia, PA	Play Everywhere grant
Montbello Bicycle Course, Denver, CO	SRTS Capital Improvement Program
Charlotte Bike Playground, Charlotte, NC	Knight Foundation community grant
Seven Oaks Traffic Garden, Odenton, MD	Community homeowner association
Westside Traffic Garden, Roanoke, VA	Department of Motor Vehicles safety grant

Projects deploy a range of creative funding sources



Emerging Research: George Mason University & Penn State University

**The real impact of traffic gardens is beyond the mini world
in everyday community life**

JKrr





Thank You!



TRAFFIC GARDEN HQ
TrafficGardens.com

Fionnuala Quinn
Finn@TrafficGardens.com
703.981.7052

Sign up for newsletter on website