



NEWS

The United States Conference of Mayors

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THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS (USCM) AND SCOTTMIRACLE-GRO TRANSFORM CITIES THROUGH GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT

\$160,000 in Grants to Cities Announced at Mayors' 85th Winter Meeting

Washington, DC – The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) and The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company's charitable foundation today announced the recipients of grants totaling \$160,000, through GRO1000, the landmark garden and greenspace development grant program. The 2017 GRO1000 Showcase Grant Cities are:

New Bedford, MA: [Abolition Row Park](#) (Mayor Jonathan Mitchell)
New Haven, CT: [Cherry Ann Park](#) (Mayor Toni Harp)
Rochester Hills, MI: [The Hills Sensory Garden](#) (Mayor Bryan K. Barnett)
Santa Monica, CA: [Ishihara Park](#) (Mayor Tony Vazquez)

"Mayors understand that cities receive an exponential return on their investment in public parks and greenspace development," said USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran. "We see The Conference's partnership with ScottsMiracle-Gro as an opportunity to help cities realize concrete benefits from this endeavor – from improving the public health of their citizens to stimulating economic development and increasing community engagement and pride."

The cities, announced at the Mayors' 85th Winter Meeting in Washington, DC, were chosen by a panel of former mayors and national garden experts. GRO1000 grant awardees each receive a total of \$40,000 in monetary support and in-kind donations, to develop gardens and greenspaces that will help improve their communities.

"We believe that gardens and greenspaces have the power to positively transform our cities," said Jim Hagedorn, ScottsMiracle-Gro Chairman and CEO. "We're honored to work with the U.S. Conference of Mayors to bring more public greenscapes to communities across the U.S. and their residents."

The GRO1000 program is part of The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation's commitment to bring the life-enhancing benefits of gardens and greenspaces to more people and communities. The initiative will support the creation of more than 1,000 community gardens and greenspaces in the U.S. by 2018, in conjunction with ScottsMiracle-Gro's 150th anniversary. To that end, more than 830 community projects have received GRO1000 funding to date. For more information, visit www.GRO1000.com.

Descriptions of the 2017 projects appear below.

- **Abolition Row Park** will be a transformational public greenspace at the edge of New Bedford's downtown core, replacing blighted property adjacent to three buildings on the National Register of

Historic Places—documented Underground Railroad sites and the first home in freedom of Frederick Douglass. The park will be a teaching and storytelling garden that will focus on the city's history in the 19th century as a community of tolerance and a haven for those seeking escape from the institution of slavery. The park will also feature Monarch gardens created to engage local schoolchildren and college students.

- A former derelict dumping site, **Cherry Ann Park** is now a five-acre greenspace in New Haven that serves to connect a predominantly low income African-American residential community, city park, neighborhood K–8 school and state university. The park's transformation, which began in 2014, will continue with environmental and health educational opportunities for students at the King Robinson Magnet School, job creation for local youth, and a series of raised edible garden beds to feed community members in need.
- **The Hills Sensory Garden** will be a 5,000 square foot garden located in Rochester Hill's Riverbend Park. The garden will be comprised of two different areas—a student designed and maintained space and a professionally designed sensory garden. The garden will include areas specifically devoted to schools from Rochester Hills, teaching students elements of ecology such as native plants, soil erosion, and pollination, and will encourage children to interact with nature through guided walks and a natural elements playground. The garden will also serve the public as a recreational sensory garden. The natural elements playground immediately adjacent to the garden will be designed with sensitivity towards those with autism.
- The result of community outreach to design a buffer area adjacent to a new Metro Rail, **Ishihara Park** is a public greenspace where the community can connect with nature while being buffered from a nearby maintenance facility and its 24/7 operations. Ishihara Park will cover 2.35 acres and serve as an urban revitalization effort to replace land formerly used as a parking lot with native trees and shrubs and creating open greenspace for the community. A Nature Garden will include flowering trees and plants, enticing natural pollinators, and will give residents access to natural beauty and tranquility. The open greenspace will allow residents to use the park as they desire—for meditation, celebrations, bird watching or just simply walking and talking. A Learning Garden and an urban orchard of citrus trees will provide the community with space to grow fresh produce and gain horticulture knowledge.

About The United States Conference of Mayors

The United States Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are more than 1,200 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Find us at usmayors.org, on facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.