

## CASE STUDY

# Stillmeadow PeacePark in Baltimore

## Green City

## Healthy City



### Climate Issue: Healthy Urban Forests

Urban forests are key green spaces that provide ecological and social benefits to residents. Sustainable forest management requires a consistent workforce and varied silvicultural tools.

- Pests and pathogens are responsible for damaging urban forests, leaving sudden gaps in key species
- Forest restoration approaches are needed that support diverse species for social benefits and ecological functions
- Community-owned processes for forest management are essential for sustaining vibrant green spaces and neighborhoods
- In many U.S. cities, the challenges of forest restoration are compounded by unequal access to green space due to decades of redlining and disinvestment.

### Stillmeadow PeacePark: Community Resource

The PeacePark is composed of 10 acres and a stream on the grounds of Stillmeadow Community Fellowship Church in southwest Baltimore.

- Church leaders, community volunteers, city staff, and urban forestry partners transformed the area from degraded forest land into a park-like community resource
- The site shows how religious organizations can be ideal for partnerships that increase public green space and generate environmental, social, and spiritual benefits.

### Social Cohesion & Urban Silviculture

Stillmeadow encourages intergenerational connection, outdoor access, and workforce development in a multi-racial church community.

- It has been the site of diverse volunteer-led initiatives ranging from beekeeping to urban heat monitoring
- The PeacePark also hosts the Baltimore Urban Forestry Training Program for young adults from the area
- The program offers exposure to the local landscape of urban forestry. It teaches the basics of plant identification, forest restoration, and land stewardship at different scales
- Through resume building and skills workshops, the program prepares trainees for environmental professions.

### Ecosystem Health & Natural Disaster Resilience

Beyond fostering social cohesion, Stillmeadow PeacePark plays a critical role in local efforts to build environmental resilience.

- After emerald ash borer entry and flood events, the PeacePark became a strategic site for forest restoration and stormwater management
- Volunteers maintain and monitor new trees and understory vegetation. They have installed fencing and natural repellents to stop deer from browsing new growth. This keeps soil in place to absorb water and prevent flooding
- Volunteers also remove invasive plants that would otherwise block the PeacePark's stream and cause flooding
- Stillmeadow Church is integrated into citywide disaster preparedness planning. As a Baltimore City Resilience Hub, it provides food, water and shelter to the community during extreme weather events.



### WHAT CAN YOUR CITY DO?

**INVEST** in training and green workforce development programs for local residents

**LOCATE** new green space in areas with a history of disinvestment

**SUPPORT** novel partnerships that cultivate local expertise in urban forestry while engaging with broader ecosystems

To find out more information on this case study, contact **Hannah Vase** at [hannah.vase@yale.edu](mailto:hannah.vase@yale.edu). This tool was supported by a Hixon Fellowship. Additional information on Stillmeadow Church and the Baltimore Urban Forestry Training Program is drawn from previous reports by Hixon Fellows Brandon Wilson-Radcliffe and Gabe LePage.