

Healthy Harbor Initiative and Pilot Projects

Baltimore, Maryland



The Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore, Inc. (WPB) envisions the city's Inner Harbor as a "swimmable, fishable harbor" that will serve as a model sustainable waterfront park. To help bring this vision to life, Biohabitats worked with the WPB to craft a planning document called the "Healthy Harbor Initiative" (HHI).

The HHI consists of goals and strategies that will transform the waterfront, creating a sustainable and engaging

landscape that informs visitors about the ecological problems impacting the productivity of the Chesapeake Bay, and the cultural and economic prosperity it has historically provided.

The HHI focuses on seven key areas: education and awareness; surface water; potable water; landscape and ecology; mobility; energy and climate change, and materials and waste. In addition to fulfilling WPB's vision, the HHI aims to reduce potable

A series of innovative, educational, and attention grabbing pilot projects such as floating islands, pedal-powered aerating pumps, and rainwater harvesting cisterns, bring the Healthy Harbor Initiative to life.

water demand; stimulate the development of alternative transportation; and work towards climate neutrality, waste re-use, and use of only sustainably sourced materials among WPB member properties.

The HHI led to the development of several water quality improvement and educational pilot projects in and around the Inner Harbor. Biohabitats designed, installed and implemented floating treatment wetlands, the first of the HHI's innovative pilot projects to improve water quality and habitat. The area of wetlands was expanded tenfold in 2012 and has become a central feature of the water in the Inner Harbor. An interpretive sign was prepared to explain the importance of wetlands in estuarine ecosystems.

Biohabitats also developed a concept to transform a dilapidated wharf into a living pier that cleans Harbor water, provides habitat and is an aesthetic attraction. Currently under design, the top of the pier will become a constructed tidal wetland. Harbor water will be pumped to the wetland, where microbial organisms will transform and filter pollutants. Waterfalls cascading over the perimeter of the pier will provide aeration. With the goal of being net-zero energy, the pier will be powered by solar and wind energy.

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