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Portland unveils Stantec-designed pop-up park along waterfront

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Portland, ME Stantec recently joined the city of Portland to celebrate the opening of the Park at Amethyst, a 1.5-acre public park along the downtown waterfront. Inspired by the 2017 concept plan prepared by Stantec, the pop-up park and outdoor waterfront retreat is a welcome addition to downtown. The new park, the 67th park in the city and the first to be added to the city-wide network in many years, maximizes the use of salvaged materials. In doing so, the city and Stantec greatly reduced the cost of construction while creating a new downtown destination.

“This new park preserves public recreational access to our treasured and historic waterfront by creating a peaceful and welcoming space for enhanced access to community boating, trails, seating, and gathering for events and programs,” said Ethan Hipple, director of the Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department for the city. “Through creative collaboration with the design team at Stantec, we’re thrilled to have been able to tactfully repurpose materials in the city’s stockpile, such as granite, soil, and gravel, for this project, making maximum use of our available budget and resources.”

Park features include a granite ramble formed by reclaimed material for informal seating, custom swinging benches, walking paths, an open plaza with food concession area, a waterfront promenade, and lush landscaped berms that have replaced an expansive area of asphaltic impervious pavement. The pop-up park is designed to reduce storm water run-off and to withstand coastal flooding.

“Our waterfronts hold immense potential for community enrichment and are the front-line defense for improved coastal resilience, especially in Portland where there is such a rich history and connection to the coast,” said Gary Sorge, discipline leader for landscape architecture at Stantec. “The Park at Amethyst represents a nimble and creative effort to repurpose this underutilized space to the long-term benefit of the community and local environment.”

As part of its role on the project, Stantec provided conceptual design, design documentation, and permitting and construction phase support. Park construction was completed by Seabreeze Property Services with full-time oversight of the construction provided by the City of Portland.

The Park at Amethyst serves as an initial phase in the city of Portland's broader plan for the eastern waterfront, which involves developing an underused three-acre parcel into a dynamic public space. The proposed park, Portland Landing, was envisioned by the city in Stantec's 2017 concept plan as a comprehensive, long-term strategy to reimagining this portion of the waterfront to its maximum benefit. In the meantime, the Park at Amethyst serves as an initial step to repurposing the eastern waterfront into a space for residents and visitors.

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