

At Perkins, Green Means Go

The construction of a new multipurpose space will meet a variety of needs at the center in a sustainable and creative fashion.

By [Matt Skoufalos](#) | [Email the author](#) | April 23, 2012



When the Perkins Center for the Arts had to come up with a way to bankroll and construct a new parking lot for its [Collingwood location](#), the nonprofit organization knew it would be doing some fundraising.

Simply constructing a new, blacktop parking lot would have been a standard approach to resolving the problem, but doing that would potentially flood the area during periods of heavy rainfall.

But through the lens of environmentalism, many seemingly commonplace problems may be resolved in a more lasting fashion with sustainable approaches.

Instead, Perkins Center found an elegant solution to its problems with the help of some local donors. Rather than just building an empty lot, the facility developed a proposal to transform its site into a multi-purpose space that would at once meet its need for additional parking and offer a place to host outdoor events.

As a combined reception courtyard/parking lot, the space will be paved with pervious eco-stones that allow stormwater to collect in the ground below without being diverted through stormwater drains and into other waterways.

The center itself will invite community members to paint and construct tiles with which to decorate benches in the plaza. Executive Director Alan Willoughby joked that these benches will recharge people as the rain recharges the ground below.

Willoughby points out that the \$40,000 project was made possible not only through the in-kind donations of materials—such as the pavers, which came from builder EP Henry—but also in the donation of labor and other services.

Landscaping donated by the Leonberg Nursery of Moorestown will be used to construct a rain garden designed in concert with Landscape Architects, Cairone & Kaupp and Rutgers University. Other sponsors include Insideout Design Studio, Chicks Block, Wharton Supply and the borough of Collingswood.

“There are a lot of people making this happen,” said Willoughby.



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