

Tanner Springs Park, Portland

Cities are expanding worldwide. Natural spaces such as forests, meadows and wetlands are being consumed and displaced. Quietly and permanently, an insatiable appetite for land is destroying the living spaces of sensitive wild animals and plants. In contrast, the recycling of abandoned industrial land for new mixed downtown uses is space effectively and ecologically used. The City of Portland, Oregon, chose to go down this ecological path with the regeneration of an old, industrial downtown city neighbourhood, the Pearl District.

Formerly a wetland, the Pearl District was bisected by Tanner Creek and sided by the broad Willamette River. Rail yards and industry first claimed and drained the land. Over the past 30 years, a new neighbourhood has progressively established itself – young, mixed, urban and dynamic, today the Pearl District is home to families and businesses. As the district expands into the last of the rail yards, the City of Portland engaged Atelier Dreiseitl to design a new park to bring green space into this previously industrial area.



Citizens presented their own ideas and opinions at several public workshops. Key design aspects were identified and developed during the workshops.



View towards the Art Wall. The inlaid glass pieces are an echo of the delicate grasses in the foreground.

The park seen from a neighbouring building. Property values have increased since construction.



The floating pontoon is the ideal setting for performances in the park.

The sustainable water concept entails the collection of rainwater from adjacent streets and other paved surfaces.

