

## Editorial: New park improves Lawrence neighborhood

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A park, complete with two playgrounds for children, is a vast improvement over a trash-strewn, polluted, former incinerator site.

Kudos go to all those who made the improvement possible.

The new Manchester Street Park is a welcome addition to the Lawrence neighborhood that was once home to an incinerator that closed in 1998 after 20 years of operation. The site along the Spicket River was filled with bricks, rubble and garbage. It was contaminated with industrial pollutants including dioxins and arsenic.

The community group Groundwork Lawrence led the effort to convert the site into a park.

The city purchased the site in 2007 for \$1 from former owner Covanta Energy. The cleanup of the site and construction of the park cost more than \$1 million.

The 5-acre site today is a wonder compared to its former dismal state. There are two playgrounds for children of varying ages. There is a pavilion overlooking the old millpond on the river and a walking path lined with trees. A community garden now grows squash, tomatoes and peppers.

"Before the park was built, there was very little green or open space in the neighborhood and many houses do not have yards for their kids to play," Heather McMann, acting executive director of Groundwork Lawrence, told reporter Yadira Betances.

It takes a lot of work and community support to turn a neighborhood eyesore into an asset like this. Credit goes to Groundwork Lawrence and also to Plus Company, a program for special needs people who worked on the garden areas of the park.

Well done by all involved.

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