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CAPITAL REGION WATER AWARDED GRANT TO DEVELOP GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN FOR HARRISBURG

HARRISBURG (October 23, 2014) – Last night, Capital Region Water announced that it was awarded a \$125,000 grant to develop a Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan for Harrisburg from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Green infrastructure is a broad term for trees, gardens, and other technologies that are designed to help reduce runoff (stormwater) by absorbing rainwater. Capital Region Water will evaluate using green infrastructure to reduce the impacts of runoff on the Harrisburg community, the Susquehanna River and Paxton Creek, and the underground infrastructure it operates.

“We thank DCNR for supporting this project,” said CEO Shannon Williams. “Green infrastructure can help us reduce expenses, protect our local waterways, and bring valuable social and economic benefits to the community we serve. We will use this grant to work with our customers and partners to evaluate how green infrastructure will benefit Harrisburg.”

“The health and vitality of our communities is reflected in the quality of their parks and trails, river access and conservation, open spaces and opportunities to be active outdoors,” DCNR Secretary Ellen Ferretti said. “We’re pleased to be able to invest in planning in the City of Harrisburg for ways to strategically manage stormwater while creating a healthier urban environment and improving waterways.”

Capital Region Water is currently updating its Long Term Control Plan to reduce overflows from the combined sewer system in Harrisburg. Built over a century ago, combined sewer systems receive both rainwater and wastewater and are designed to overflow into receiving waters during large rainfall events instead of backing up into homes or businesses. Harrisburg is one of over 700 cities across the United States that have a Combined Sewer System.

Green infrastructure has proven to be an effective tool to reduce runoff and sewer overflows in cities across the country. Lancaster, another city with a combined sewer system, found that using green infrastructure was half the cost of traditional methods to meet the same water quality goals.

“We need to work closely with the Harrisburg community and city government on this plan,” said Williams. “That’s why we’ll soon be asking customers and community leaders to participate on a Green Infrastructure Advisory Council to provide guidance on how to use green infrastructure most appropriately in Harrisburg.”

Williams also gave special thanks to the Harrisburg Young Professionals and the Dauphin County Industrial Development Authority who were the original applicants of the grant and transferred the application to Capital Region Water to broaden the scope of the project and benefit to the city.



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