





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CITY AS A NETWORK OF GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The 1902 City Beautiful plan envisioned the "City as a Park." The Community Greening Plan takes this one step further by extending nature and bringing green stormwater strategies into streets, businesses, schools, public spaces, and more.

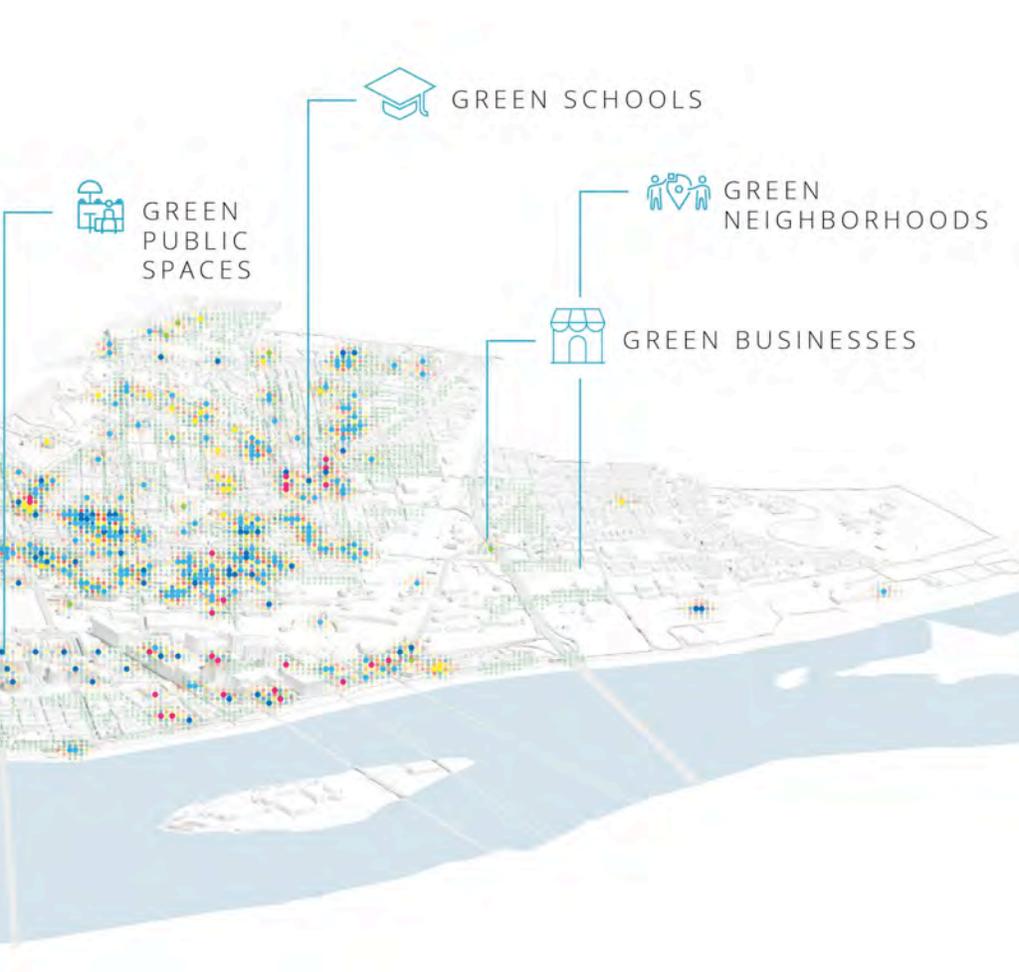
A GREEN VISION FOR HARRISBURG

Imagine streets lined with trees and planters. Intersections that are narrower and easier to cross. Homes and businesses that can save money in the long term on utility costs. Schools that lead by example and provide hands-on learning about the environment. Parks with water features and gardens filled with native, or adaptive plants that foster community. A clean Paxton Creek and a Susquehanna River that gleams from the riverfront steps. Now, imagine that this vision of greening, driven by the community, could be achieved while also satisfying regulations that require managing stormwater and reducing flooding.



As the operator of Harrisburg's drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems with a mandate to reduce combined sewer overflows, Capital Region Water is in a unique position to positively impact the environmental health of the region and its water. Capital Region Water's commitment to protect and support the long-term health of our community and environment has ripple effects that extend beyond the provision of clean, safe water to our residents and businesses.

This Community Greening Plan, Capital Region Water's Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan, focuses on identifying areas of opportunity for green stormwater infrastructure and assessing the feasibility of implementation in Harrisburg. While the main purpose of green stormwater infrastructure is to manage stormwater, the transformative nature cannot be ignored. Not only are the region's waterways poised to benefit from a green stormwater infrastructure master plan, but so are residents, businesses, and visitors of Harrisburg. Green stormwater infrastructure has the ability to enhance placemaking, stimulate economic development, and lead to the development of more memorable and enjoyable public space.



< A NETWORK OF OPPORTUNITIES

This diagram depicts green stormwater infrastructure opportunities and community greening potential throughout Harrisburg. Each small project starts to add up and create a network of green stormwater infrastructure that manages stormwater, improves the health of our waterways, and enhances and beautifies our surroundings.



Credit: Flickr // Axel Drainville

Harrisburg, like cities across the country, is facing the challenge of upgrading and maintaining water and sewer infrastructure that was built decades ago. About 75 percent of these sewer pipes are part of the city's combined sewer system. In a combined system, stormwater and sewage are conveyed in the same pipe. During dry weather, sewage is transported to a sewage treatment facility. However, when stormwater enters the system, the system may reach capacity causing a mixture of sewage and stormwater to overflow and discharge into the Susquehanna River or Paxton Creek.

As the cost of maintenance continues to increase, utilities and cities need to stretch fewer dollars further. Green stormwater infrastructure represents an exciting opportunity to leverage public dollars needed for infrastructure investment to effect positive change in Harrisburg.



< PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF OUR WATERWAYS

Managing stormwater and reducing combined sewer overflows will help protect our waterways from dangerous pollution.

“Green stormwater infrastructure has the power to transform our neighborhoods in Harrisburg, but only if driven by the neighborhood community itself. This plan is based on several exciting conversations with city residents, businesses and local organizations, and is the start of many more. Be a part of the transformation. It’s time to get involved.” – Shannon Gority, CEO Capital Region Water

Given that the issues surrounding green stormwater infrastructure are all connected, they require big picture thinking and partnerships. The City and community’s participation in the planning process to create this Community Greening Plan — from residents, to partner organizations, to experts in design and infrastructure — was essential and will continue to be vital to its implementation. For example, during community meetings, participants stressed the importance of improving streets, parks, vacant lots, schools, trees, and the river through community greening solutions. The opportunities to improve these public and open spaces are detailed and prioritized throughout the plan. There are numerous ways in which the projects will benefit the public, including improving water quality, attracting economic investments, reviving public space in distressed neighborhoods, providing new opportunities for recreation, and encouraging



redevelopment. Taken together, these greening projects will begin to improve the overall sustainability of Harrisburg — often described through the lens of the triple bottom line – the city’s environment, economy, and equity.

The Community Greening Plan is Capital Region Water’s commitment to partner with the community to focus on green stormwater infrastructure as a strategy to improve the health of Harrisburg’s waterways and provide additional benefits to city residents.

WHAT’S IN THE PLAN: THE COMMUNITY GREENING PLAN AT A GLANCE

The Problem:

Describes the issues surrounding stormwater and the city’s combined sewer system that is unable handle the volume of stormwater that enters the system during wet weather events.

The Solutions:

Includes information on the many ways that green stormwater infrastructure works to absorb and treat stormwater runoff and provides details on the different types of interventions – from stormwater bumpouts to pervious paving to stormwater basins.

The Opportunities:

Describes the network of potential green stormwater infrastructure projects that exist in Harrisburg.

What’s Next:

Identifies locations for effective early action projects that can be implemented and make an immediate impact and contains information on how the green stormwater infrastructure program can be funded and implemented through a combination of projects, public-private partnerships, incentives, and other means. The community’s input throughout the process, and its support for implementation, is essential to creating a successful stormwater management program.



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ENHANCING THE PUBLIC
REALM.

Green stormwater infrastructure has the potential to not only manage stormwater, but also improve public spaces and make a more enjoyable public realm.