

# Water department grants to help manage stormwater

**Damon C. Williams Tribune Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, December 18, 2014 6:15 pm**

The city is continuing its greening and sustainability efforts with \$8.5 million in grants to local businesses for their stormwater management processes.

The incentive program was designed to be a catalyst for transforming large, commercial properties that generate high volumes of stormwater runoff — burdening the city’s sewer system and waterways — into properties that build and maintain green stormwater management practices, and works in conjunction with the established Greened Acre Retrofit Program (GARP).

The stormwater management incentives program provides stormwater grants directly to non-residential property owners who want to construct stormwater retrofit projects; the greened acre retrofit program provides stormwater grants to contractors, companies or project aggregators who can build large-scale stormwater retrofit projects across multiple properties.

According to the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD), both programs are vital components of its “Green City, Clean Waters Plan,” that includes an ambitious goal to convert 9,500 impervious acres to “green cities” that capture and manage the first one inch of stormwater runoff to achieve beautiful, fishable, clean and healthy rivers and streams.

The grants are jointly funded by the PWD and the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC), and will specifically fund the Stormwater Management Incentives Program (SMIP).

“This grant program is a win–win for the water department and for our business customers who have been impacted by an increase in storm-water fees, resulting from our parcel-based fee for stormwater,” said water commissioner Howard Neukrug. “By working with customers who can manage stormwater from many acres of hard surfaces — and ideally public runoff from streets — we can transform pockets of our combined sewer areas into green acres in a cost-effective way.”



stormwater planter installed at the navy yard. philadelphia water department grants will allow for further stormwater runoff management systems

Stormwater planter installed at the Navy Yard. Philadelphia Water Department grants will allow for further stormwater runoff management systems. — Photo courtesy the Philadelphia Water Department

The winning projects include Global Dye Works, Norris Square Educational Corporation, MINK 1143 LLC, and PWD's own first GARP recipient, ISS Builds, which is working with Cardone Industries, Quaker City Flea Market, Pacifico Ford, Lasdon Real Estate, Warfiled LP, Pierce Phelps Inc., and William Staffieri.

Projects were evaluated based on a variety of criteria with cost-effective green acres bearing the highest percentage of points. These projects, with a combined total of 11 properties, will result in the creation of 92 greened acres.

The grants also allow businesses, institutions and other non-residential customers to reduce their stormwater rates by providing funding for the design and implementation of these green infrastructure projects and to join the city in its quest to be the greenest in the nation.

Mayor Michael Nutter embarked on making Philadelphia America's greenest city in 2009 with the announcement of Greenworks Philadelphia, which sets goals in five areas — energy, environment, equity, economy and engagement — and encompassed more than 150 initiatives.

“PIDC supports [the water department's] progressive stormwater management initiatives, which use green strategies to reduce stormwater runoff,” said PIDC President John Grady. “Through the SMIP grant program, PIDC is excited to partner with PWD to help local business owners mitigate the economic impact of PWD's stormwater initiatives while also increasing the city's green space.”