



OFFICE OF MAYOR WILLIAM PEDUTO

City of Pittsburgh and PWSA Release Draft City-Wide Green First Plan for Public Comment

PITTSBURGH, PA (December 2, 2016) -- Today, the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) released its comprehensive draft City-Wide Green First Plan for public comment. The plan outlines how Pittsburgh intends to use innovative, cost-effective, and green infrastructure approaches to manage stormwater. Implementing the plan will mitigate local street flooding and sewer backups caused by large rainstorms. The stormwater management practices outlined in the plan will help the City and the region comply with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) combined sewer overflow mandates and improve the quality of local waterways.

The City of Pittsburgh is largely served by a combined sewer system, where domestic and industrial sewage, and rainwater share the same conveyance pipes. During dry weather, flow from these pipes is sent to the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) where it is treated and returned to the Ohio River. During storm events, the combined sewer system is often overwhelmed, causing combined sewage and stormwater to overflow into our waterways and cause local flooding. These overflow events are water quality violations, and both the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and EPA have mandated that municipalities in the region take action to reduce their volume and frequency.

At the direction of the Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh, PWSA is developing a "Green First" approach that would locally manage stormwater at the surface level and keep it out of the combined sewer system during rain events. Green infrastructure practices such as rain gardens, tree plantings, water detention basins, stream restorations, and pervious pavement mimic natural processes to slow and capture rainwater. This approach reduces the frequency and volume of combined sewer overflows and reduces the likelihood of neighborhood flooding and backups. In addition, green infrastructure provides additional environmental, economic and social benefits that would not be provided with traditional sewer engineering projects.

"The draft Green First Plan provides evidence that green infrastructure solutions can provide water quality benefits comparable to more disruptive and costly gray construction projects," Mayor William Peduto said. "Going 'Green First' means we can meet our regulatory requirements while also reducing local flooding, decreasing basement backups, improving the resiliency of our communities to disaster during extreme weather events, and enhance economic development in the City."

The draft City-Wide Green First Plan examines the existing stormwater conditions that will guide where green infrastructure will be installed to achieve the most cost-effective and beneficial results to the residents of Pittsburgh. Creating the plan required extensive sewershed and hydrology analysis, community and stakeholder outreach, and consideration of future development projects within the City. The draft plan analyzed 13,700 acres in the City and proposes to manage runoff from 1,835 acres with green infrastructure over the next twenty years.

"PWSA is thrilled to release this extensive assessment for comment by our municipal and regional stakeholders, as well as the general public. The City and the region have the opportunity to manage stormwater by implementing a variety of engineering practices enhancing the quality of life in Pittsburgh. We anticipate the draft plan will be incorporated as an integrated solution to the water quality challenges facing the region," said PWSA Interim Executive Director Bernard Lindstrom.

The City and PWSA are providing the draft plan to federal and state regulators as part of a cooperative approach to modifying the region's wet weather plan. The City, Allegheny

Published:

Friday, December 2, 2016

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County, PWSA and Alcosan are working jointly to expand the opportunity for green infrastructure and to reduce the cost-burden on residents.

The draft plan released today includes concept-level details on six priority sewersheds where green infrastructure would provide significant benefits. The green infrastructure methods to be used in each sewershed were selected based on criteria that considered factors such as cost, and community impact. The public comment period for the draft plan will be open for 60 days. The entire document can be found at <http://pgh2o.com/City-Wide-Green-Plan> and comments can be sent to greeninfrastructure@pgh2o.com. Hard copies of the report can be made available at PWSA offices upon request.

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