



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD resiliency: Riverside lot offers more than parking spaces



(L-R): Metra Director Stephen Palmer, MWRD President Kari K. Steele and Riverside Village President Ben Sells prepare to cut the ribbon on the new permeable paver parking lot in Riverside, partially funded by the MWRD, that will give Metra commuters a place to park and ride and also a place to absorb more stormwater that will protect the community from flooding.

A partnership between the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) and Village of Riverside will yield more protection from flooding for the community and enhance a central part of the village by utilizing green infrastructure.

Officials with the Village of Riverside and MWRD cut the ribbon on the new commuter parking lot and bioretention area that will provide parking for Metra commuters and more than 237,000 gallons of stormwater storage per rain event. The permeable parking lot and rain garden at Bloomingbank Road and Barrypoint Road will reduce the current load to the combined sewer system and help alleviate flooding within the project area.

“We sent out a call for projects to fund and assist on local green infrastructure to manage stormwater, and to Riverside’s credit, they responded with a model plan that underscored the value of sustainability and protec-



Staff from the MWRD and Village of Riverside stand alongside President Ben Sells and MWRD President Kari K. Steele on the new Metra parking lot.

tion for their community and the water environment for years to come,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “We congratulate them for completing this project and thank them for their partnership, their commitment to local residents and willingness to manage stormwater.” The MWRD agreed to fund up to approximately \$560,915 toward the estimated \$1.1 million construction project. The parking lot is comprised of interlocking concrete permeable pavers to absorb more water and prevent it from running off into the nearby Des Plaines River. The rain garden uses bioswales filled with native plants that filter the stormwater runoff from the parking lot, reducing the concentration of pollutants.

“The Village of Riverside is committed to sustainable, green infrastructure,” said Village President Ben Sells. “This permeable parking lot and rain garden are great examples of how through careful planning we can protect our environment, beautify our community, and provide increased protection against flooding for our residents. We are very grateful for the MWRD’s support, without which this project would not *(continued)*

MWRD resiliency: Riverside lot offers more than parking spaces, *cont.*

have happened. I applaud their leadership in encouraging stormwater management throughout our region and look forward to future partnerships.”

The transit-oriented project is expected to reduce local flooding in the area, while providing educational opportunities for local property owners and commuters on the benefits of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure performs as a stormwater management tool designed to capture water and allow it to infiltrate into the ground before it would otherwise enter the traditional conveyance system. These engineered installations store, infiltrate, and evaporate stormwater, thereby mimicking the natural water cycle.

“This new parking lot promotes environmental sustainability in that it is both transit-friendly and water-friendly, collecting more stormwater and improving area water quality,” said MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore. “Positioned at the center of the village, next to the train station for all to see, we hope visitors and train riders alike take note of this excellent project and how we are working to protect our water environment through innovative means.”

Starting in 2017, the MWRD introduced the Green Infrastructure Call for Projects to scale up its investment in green infrastructure. The MWRD partnered with 19 communities and public agencies throughout Cook County in 2017 to fund and build green infrastructure projects, followed by 19 more additional partnerships in 2018. These projects will provide up to 5 million gallons of stormwater runoff storage to over 1,400 benefiting structures with the use of rain gar-



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dens, bioswales, and permeable pavement in parking lots, alleys, and residential streets.

The MWRD is now currently reviewing additional green infrastructure project opportunities for 2019 after another successful call for proposals was recently held. In addition to 15 permeable schoolyards the MWRD has implemented throughout Chicago Public Schools with partners at Space to Grow, the MWRD now has helped complete 16 permeable pavement projects across Cook County. This permeable infrastructure soaks up millions of gallons of water per rain event, preventing it from running off into area waterways, and improving area water quality.

A link to the ceremony can be found here: <https://youtu.be/7VDVDn4IMao>.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.