



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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For immediate release

June 10, 2020

Have a green infrastructure project in mind? MWRD seeks government partners to apply for assistance by Aug. 30

Now through Aug. 30, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is accepting applications from municipal, township and county agencies within Cook County to fund projects that utilize green infrastructure to soak up stormwater. Eligibility requirements and instructions are included in the application form which can be found at <https://mwrdr.org/green-infrastructure-partnership-opportunity-program-0>.

In 2019, the MWRD selected 20 green infrastructure projects across Cook County to provide funding and other assistance after a similar call for projects. Green infrastructure captures water and allows it to infiltrate into the ground before it enters the traditional conveyance system. This helps to reduce the amount of water flowing through pipes that can be overwhelmed by intense rain events.

“So many of the communities we serve across Cook County are pumping water from their basements and streets after another series of heavy May rains,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “We encourage communities to step forward and share their ideas of how we can collaborate together to invest in green infrastructure solutions that can minimize flooding and benefit our communities.”

Last year, the MWRD selected a variety of diverse projects that ranged from permeable parking lots and alleys to bike trails and bioswale installations. The MWRD ranked the eligible projects on a variety of factors, such as the total retention volume, number of benefiting structures, cost, project visibility and outreach, flooding prevalence, and median income of the community. The 20 projects selected in 2019 are in addition to 38 other



A farmer's market in La Grange, IL stands on a sustainable surface thanks to support from the MWRD. In 2019, the MWRD partnered with La Grange to install interlocking concrete permeable pavers that retain nearly 95,000 gallons of stormwater per rain event on two separate parking lots.

project partnerships the MWRD selected in 2017 and 2018. These previous projects provide up to 5 million gallons of stormwater runoff storage to more than 1,400 benefiting structures.

Conventional gray infrastructure enlists concrete pipes to convey stormwater. On the other hand, green infrastructure mimics the natural environment by collecting precipitation where it falls by detaining and infiltrating runoff through rain gardens, permeable pavement, cisterns and other practices.

Green infrastructure's impact is not limited to flooding concerns. It can reduce wet-weather flows to combined sewer systems, reduce combined sewer overflows to local waterways and protect water quality in these vital waterways. Green infrastructure also reduces runoff volumes and improves water quality in separate sewer service areas. In addition, green infrastructure provides social benefits that enhance the livability of communities. *(continued)*

Have a green infrastructure project in mind? MWRD seeks partners, *cont.*

“Through these partnerships, we can better build resilient communities so that we are prepared for the next round of record-breaking rains,” said MWRD Commissioner Marcelino Garcia. “As storms have increased in frequency and intensity, even these valuable gray infrastructure technologies cannot always keep up with all of the runoff. These natural solutions offer another layer of protection.”

The MWRD intends to provide partial funding towards the construction of the selected green infrastructure installations on public property. Project partners will be expected to provide long-term operation and maintenance of the installed green infrastructure practices, among other responsibilities to be defined through intergovernmental agreements with the MWRD and the selected applicant partners.



The time is now to apply for support from the MWRD for green infrastructure projects. Bioswales filled with native plants like these from an MWRD stormwater partnership project in Riverside can soak up more water to mitigate flooding and also reduce the concentration of pollutants in street runoff.

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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.