



Information Presentation

Commission Meeting: April 5, 2012

PROJECT

Clean Rivers Project and Green Infrastructure Project

Area-wide

District of Columbia

SUBMITTED BY

District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority

PRESENTER

George Hawkins, Esq., General Manager, DC Water

General Manager Hawkins will provide an update on the Clean Rivers Project and an overview of the proposed Green Infrastructure Project. DC Water is under a 2005 court-ordered consent decree to build a massive tunnel system to control combined sewer overflows to the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and Rock Creek. The program, called the Clean Rivers Project, is underway with the construction of a tunnel under the Anacostia River. When complete, it will reduce overflows to the Anacostia River by 98 percent.

The consent decree requires similar tunnels for the Potomac River and Rock Creek. DC Water is proposing a pilot Green Infrastructure project in these 'sewersheds' to determine if a large-scale green solution could reduce overflows enough to make the next tunnels smaller or eliminate them altogether. This pilot program would address 50 acres and cost \$10-30 million. In addition, green infrastructure could provide benefits to the community. This approach could also result in green entry-level jobs, greener neighborhoods and enhanced ecosystems. It may also reduce anticipated water and sewer bill increases.

Other cities under consent decrees have been allowed to do similar experiments to reduce runoff, including Cleveland and Saint Louis. A challenge is that the clock is already running on the District's consent decree, so there are very limited time windows to seek EPA's approval, implement the project, and evaluate its effectiveness. In addition, there is a possibility that the results of this pilot would not support reducing or eliminating the tunnels, so that ratepayers would need to address tunnel and pilot project costs.

Both the Clean Rivers Project and the proposed Green Infrastructure Project have implications for federal properties and agencies. Green infrastructure projects may be proposed for federal properties as part of the pilot project or any subsequent project. NCPC already reviews above ground stormwater projects and would likely review components of this proposal if implemented. The federal government also funds stormwater infrastructure in the District through various means. The federal government has also established policies promoting sustainable practices by federal agencies consistent with green infrastructure approaches, and also has long-standing commitments to water quality and the Chesapeake Bay.

DC Water has been actively seeking support for this proposal. The Commission does not typically take any action on information proposals; however, the Commission may choose to direct staff to continue to coordinate with DC Water on this proposal.

ATTACHED:

- Green Infrastructure Project brochure