

## City Of Akron Breaks Ground On Cascade Village Storage Basin Project

(A Part Of The City's Combined Sewer Overflow Program)

### City of Akron Press Release

From the desk of stephanie york

Published: 09-12-2014



### *Local Businesses and Residents Working on the Site*

Akron, Ohio (September 12, 2014) – Today, the City of Akron broke ground for the first in a series of projects that have been mandated by the U.S. EPA to address the City's combined sewer overflows (CSOs) which date back pre-1935. This could become the largest single investment in city infrastructure in Akron's 189 year history.

The Cascade Village Storage Basin Project is the first project in the new construction initiative that will address the City's combined sewer overflows (CSOs), with the potential to restore Akron waterways, the health of its environment, and the protection of its water to a level not seen in six generations.

The Cascade Village Storage Basin Project will create a minimum of 1.5 million gallons of storage volume of combined storm water and sewage during wet weather events. The basin will hold a mixture of storm water and a small amount of sewage for 24-48 hours, and then send the mixture to the sewer system for treatment at the City's wastewater treatment plant, Akron's Water Reclamation Facility located in the Cuyahoga Valley. This storage will provide added capacity during wet weather events when sewers are overtaxed. When the storm is over, the sewers will drain allowing the mixture to be sent for treatment. (This is 1 of 4 projects that the City was required to do immediately, before the EPA would even discuss an Integrated Plan for the City.)

The overall project – *Akron Waterways Renewed!* - includes seven sewer separation projects (four of which have been completed), two large tunnels, eleven storage basins (one of which has been completed), and improvements to the Water Reclamation Facility. The largest individual project will be the construction of the Ohio Canal Interceptor Tunnel.

Since 1987, Akron has spent over \$300 million to improve its sewer system and the Water Reclamation Facility, including millions of dollars on engineering studies of the sewer system and the receiving streams, to meet EPA requirements.

In 2002, to show good faith and to end the most significant sewer overflows, Akron spent over \$23 million to build a storage basin on Cuyahoga Street – which holds 9.5 millions of gallons of storm water and sewage from the combined sewers until it can be safely treated when the rain event ends. This project alone accounts for 33 percent reduction of the volume of overflows within Akron’s system.

Akron has been working to find an acceptable and cost effective way to deal with combined sewer overflows since at least 1993. Akron introduced a comprehensive Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) to address the issue in 2002, which was approved by the Ohio EPA, but not approved by the U.S. EPA. In 2009, the City, the U.S. EPA, and the Ohio EPA reached an agreement on a Consent Decree that was subsequently rejected by the federal judge in Akron. The City, Ohio EPA and U.S. EPA reached agreement on a new LTCP in 2011, and the federal court approved of the parties Consent Decree in January of this year. Despite prolonged litigation, the City has continued working on CSO controls and other projects throughout this period to improve the sewer system.

While the City is moving forward with the construction CSO control projects, it is also in the process of developing an Integrated Plan, pursuant to guidance recently issued by U.S. EPA. The Integrated Planning Process is intended to provide an opportunity to develop more cost effective solutions for addressing CSOs. The City is working with U.S. EPA and Ohio EPA while it is developing its Integrated Plan. However, the U.S. EPA has required the City to move forward with 4 projects before it would even consider an Integrated Plan for the City, the Cascade Village Storage Basin Project being one of those projects.

“Today is significant for the people of Akron,” said Mayor Don Plusquellic at today’s groundbreaking ceremonies. “We continue to look at ways that the City can take advantage of new U.S. EPA policies that allow cities to develop ‘Integrated Plans’ that make CSO remediation more sustainable, and in some instances more affordable. This marks a new chapter in Akron’s Combined Overflow timeline.”

The City has selected the international consulting firm MWH Global and a local minority business G. Stephens, Inc., to oversee Akron’s program to meet federal clean water standards. MWH has significant experience in managing long-term control plans with the U.S. EPA, and has managed projects in a number of U.S. cities to correct combined sewer overflows. G. Stephens, Inc. has a longstanding history of working on large complex projects in the City of Akron.

At the event, the Mayor also emphasized the effort that the City has made to ensure Akron residents get to work on these jobs. Many of the Akron residents who have taken advantage of an exceptional program announced by Plusquellic in 2013, to train residents to get their Commercial Driver Licenses (CDL’s), have been working on the basin site. Mayor Plusquellic created this pioneering program that provides CDL training and testing to residents at no cost, and then puts them to work. Many of these CDL licensed Akron residents go on to find work in the private sector, and others take jobs with the City. Several have been assigned to work on this construction site, which will be completed by the end of October, 2015.

Also introduced at the groundbreaking was Tanja McCoy from ETA Construction, a female minority owned local construction company. ETA owns construction equipment and has been working on the Cascade Village Storage Basin Project site.

“ETA showed up at City Council one evening and asked to be part of the sewer project,” said Mayor Plusquellic. “The City followed up that evening and ETA has been working on our basin site. I said the City would use City residents and local talent everywhere we could on these projects and that is exactly what we are doing. In fact, I believe that throughout the next several projects, Akron will have a higher percentage of City residents working on these jobs than any other city in the country.”

###