



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **For Immediate Release**

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### **EPA Approves Green Alternatives**

AKRON, OHIO (December 14, 2015) - Akron Mayor Jeff Fusco today announced that the City of Akron has received written, approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for three projects in its proposed Integrated Plan that will help the city use more “green” alternatives--the alternatives proposed by the city to separate storm water from sanitary sewers in areas of Merriman Road in west Akron, the Middlebury area of east Akron, and the North Hill areas won EPA approval.

Referred to as the “Merriman Separation – Green Project,” the “Middlebury Separation – Green Project,” and the “North Hill Separation – Green Project,” the separations will control combined sewer overflows in these three neighborhoods.

“I want to express my appreciation to the EPA and to the dedicated city employees and our consultants who have been working on this request for more than a year,” said Mayor Fusco. “Active negotiations for these three modification requests have been underway for months between the City and the EPA. This is a major step forward in our efforts.”

Discussions on the Integrated Plan continue. The official Integrated Plan proposal was submitted to the EPA in August, 2015 and sought approval to decrease the number of storage basins from ten to five, plus increase the amount of separations from five to 13, while adding green infrastructure. One impact would be to reduce the number from two storage tunnels to a single tunnel, the Ohio Canal Interceptor Tunnel, for which ground was broken in early November.

“Potentially, the Integrated Plan could save the City as much as \$300 million dollars,” said the Mayor. “This has the potential to reduce future rate increases.”

Currently, the City is also seeking approval for a proposal to stretch the timeline for completion of the project from completion in 2027 to completion in 2040.

“The goal we worked toward was to develop a plan that identified projects that met our regulatory requirements while developing alternative projects that provided ‘equal or better environmental protection at a more affordable cost,’” said John Moore, Director of Public Service. “By using ‘green’ sustainable solutions, along with new technologies, we were able to meet our goal.”

Akron’s integrated plan proposal specifically suggests adding green elements, such as constructed wetlands, bump outs, bump ins, green streets and other environmentally-friendly initiatives to help achieve water quality standards.

The Merriman Separation - Green Project (CSO Rack 36) will be the first area to receive the new infrastructure that will include curb and sidewalk bump-ins (bio-retention areas) and a constructed stormwater wetland. This will be followed by construction of the Middlebury Separation – Green Project (CSO Rack 5&7) with a constructed stormwater wetland. The City will then begin work on North Hill Separation – Green Project (CSO Rack 22), where another constructed stormwater wetland will be built.

The City is continuing to discuss the Integrated Plan along with individual projects as needed in order to remain in compliance with the Consent Decree.

For more information, please contact Heather Bolestridge, AWR! Communications Manager, at (330) 375-2949 or by email at [hbolestridge@gstephensinc.com](mailto:hbolestridge@gstephensinc.com).