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**Akron Waterways
Renewed!**

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Akron Waterways Renewed! Program Making Progress

Ohio Canal Interceptor Tunnel taking significant flow volumes

Akron, Ohio, April 13, 2020 – Heavy storms in late March are allowing the City of Akron to measure and highlight the progress made so far through projects within the City’s Akron Waterways Renewed! (AWR!) Program. The AWR! Program was created as a response to the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) mandated Consent Decree related to the City’s combined sewer system.

The major storms, which occurred March 27th through 29th, produced 2.3 inches of rain. The peak 24-hour rain fall during this time period was 2 inches, which is equivalent to what would be typically considered a “one-year storm.” This rainfall allowed the City to see for the first time how well the Ohio Canal Interceptor Tunnel (OCIT) was operating.

The first section of sewer was connected to the OCIT on March 9, 2020 and began receiving combined sewer and storm water flow. During the late March storms, the tunnel, with its capacity to hold approximately 25.6 million gallons per rain event, filled up, was drained and then nearly filled again, preventing 46 million gallons of overflow from going into Akron’s waterways. The remaining sections of sewer will be connected over the next couple of months.

“We have overcome many obstacles with the tunnel construction to get to this point. It is satisfying to see years of hard work beginning to pay off,” said Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan. “Having the OCIT tunnel operational puts us one step closer to completing the massive overhauling of our sewer system. I could not be prouder of our staff and everyone involved with the tunnel project in reaching this important milestone in keeping our waterways clean.”

The Akron combined sewage overflow (CSO) basins and the OCIT were able to store approximately 68.1 million gallons of CSO until the Water Reclamation Facility had the capacity to bring the CSO into the plant and treat it.

“68.1 million gallons is equivalent to either 1 football field that is 158 feet deep, or 16 football fields that are 10 feet deep,” said Pat Gsellman, Akron Waterways Renewed! Program Manager. “We are seeing significant water quality improvements and are able to more effectively manage the CSO’s with every event.”

While the basins and tunnel served their purpose in holding the CSOs until the Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) could treat them, the WRF was also operating at peak performance, treating 415 million gallons of wastewater during the March 27-29th rain event. Peak flow was reached at 250 million gallons a day. The average dry-weather flow at the WRF is 70-million gallons a day.

The WRF completed the [Step Feed Phase 2](#) project in 2018 and has begun work on the [BioCept](#) and Headworks projects to further improve operations. The WRF has instituted significant power-saving initiatives to not only reduce its carbon footprint, but to off-set increasing operating costs. Nearly half

of all power requirements at the WRF are currently being met through on-site generation from renewable energy sources.

As essential infrastructure, these construction projects have been able to continue forward through the current COVID-19 crisis. At this time, design work is also continuing on the Northside Project. Field crews are in the North Hill area (while abiding by proper socially distance and safety precautions) performing survey, flow metering, and other field work in the public right of way.

You can follow the progress of AWR and find more information at www.akronwaterwaysrenewed.com.

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