



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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Skokie improvements highlight power of MWRD's green infrastructure



(L-R) Skokie Park District Commissioner Khemarey Khoeun, MWRD Commissioner Ken Dunkin; Skokie Park District President Susan Aberman; Commissioner Frank Avila; Skokie Trustee Karen Grey-Keeler; Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen; Skokie Park District Board Vice President Mike Reid; Corporation Counsel Michael Lorge; MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore; Skokie Village Trustee Ralph Klein and Skokie Village Manager John Lockerby.



(L-R) MWRD Commissioner Ken Dunkin; Skokie Park District Commissioner Khemarey Khoeun and her daughter; MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila; Skokie Park District President Susan Aberman; Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen; Skokie Trustee Karen Grey-Keeler; MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore; Skokie Park District Board Vice President Mike Reid; Corporation Counsel Michael Lorge; Skokie Village Trustee Ralph Klein and Skokie Village Manager John Lockerby.

A Skokie park and police station will be protected from flooding through the installation of green infrastructure funded through the assistance of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD).

MWRD officials joined the Village of Skokie and the Skokie Park District at Devonshire Park, 4422 Greenwood St., to celebrate the completion of the Skokie projects that will work to mitigate flooding through natural landscaping that can control stormwater and provide environmental and community benefits.

"The installation of this new green infrastructure is a continuation of the Village of Skokie's more than 30-year commitment to improving stormwater management in the community," said Mayor George Van Dusen. "We are grateful for the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's support with the Devonshire Park project and also appreciate the cooperation and ongoing partnership with the Skokie Park District. In addition to improving stormwater management, this project also provides the Devonshire Park neighborhood with beautiful garden areas to enjoy. The Vil-

lage of Skokie hopes to bring more of these innovative sustainability projects to the community in coming years."

The \$400,000 in stormwater management improvements allow for more than 46,000 gallons of water to be retained at the combined sites of Devonshire Park and the Skokie Police Station Headquarters, 7300 Niles Center Rd. Through the use of green infrastructure, the projects prevent or reduce the flow of water from entering the sewer system. Instead, the water is stored and slowly soaks into the underlying soil.

"Our partnerships with the Village of Skokie and the Skokie Park District have led to these critical stormwater management improvements," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "We applaud our partners in Skokie for making a commitment to addressing flooding and bringing these worthwhile projects to our attention. Together, we can make a difference in sheltering future generations from storms and building resilient communities."

In addition to a rain garden and other stormwater management improvements, the Devonshire Park *(continued)*

Skokie improvements highlight MWRD's green infrastructure (cont.)



Commissioner Debra Shore gives remarks as Skokie Director of Marketing and Communications Ann Tennes looks on.



Skokie Park District Board Vice President Mike Reid with MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita.

project will also provide much needed flood relief to properties around Greenwood Street, Kenneth Terrace, Kilbourn Avenue and other areas near Devonshire Park. In total, the Devonshire Park improvements amass a calculated design retention capacity (DRC) of 13,417 gallons that are prevented from entering the local sewer system.

“The Skokie Park District is pleased to provide a site for a new rain garden at Devonshire Park, the sixth rain garden in the park district,” said Skokie Park District Executive Director John Ohrlund. “In cooperation with the Village of Skokie and the MWRD, this rain garden will provide flood relief in the Devonshire neighborhood in addition to being an aesthetic improvement to the park.”

A new naturalized detention area at the Police Station Headquarters also provides a calculated DRC of 33,007 gallons. The projects also provide educational opportunities for local property owners on the benefits of green infrastructure. 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.

“These projects in Skokie demonstrate that through collaboration and green infrastructure we can find cost-effective remedies that municipalities can more easily adopt to prevent flooding and protect us from unprecedented rain events,” said MWRD Commissioner Kari K. Steele. “We look forward to working with other municipalities throughout Cook County to adopt similar practices.”



MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita agreed. “The Village of Skokie, the Skokie Park District and the Skokie Police Department have recognized the value of green infrastructure and I am very proud that the MWRD has been able to assist them all in bringing their projects to fruition,” she said.

Besides limiting flooding concerns, green infrastructure can reduce wet-weather flows to combined sewer systems, reducing combined sewer overflows to local waterways and protecting water quality in these vital waterways. Green infrastructure also reduces runoff volumes and improves water quality in separate sewer service areas and provides social benefits that enhance the livability of communities.

According to terms of an agreement negotiated between the MWRD and Skokie, the MWRD will contribute \$200,000 toward the total cost, while Skokie will continue to operate and maintain the projects.

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.