



Environment

Prince George's County, Maryland

White House and EPA Recognize Prince George's County Stormwater Retrofit Public-Private (P3) Among Most Innovative in the Nation

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County and Corvias Solutions Launch Clean Water Partnership

Largo, MD - Prince George's County and Corvias Solutions announce the launch of the nation's first collaboration for a stormwater infrastructure management public-private partnership (P3) initiative called the Clean Water Partnership (CWP). The community-based project will support local job creation, minority business hiring and boost long-term economic growth, and provide career training and mentoring while linking private businesses and companies in meeting the challenges of large scale green urban infrastructure retrofits.

"In order to comply with the federal Clean Water Act to reduce stormwater runoff pollution, Prince George's County implemented an innovative public-private partnership that will improve our environment and our quality of life, as well as create jobs and a new industry for our small and minority business community," said Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III. "The Prince George's County Department of the Environment and Corvias Solutions developed a robust program that has been recognized and lauded by the business community, faith organizations, environmental organizations, and even The White House. In Prince George's County we rise and respond to our obligations and our challenges with smart and practical solutions – this initiative exemplifies our drive to not just follow best practices, but to create best practices."

The White House has commended the County for its leadership and recognized the Partnership as a best practice for other communities to follow. "With this first-of-its-kind public-private partnership for green stormwater infrastructure, Prince George's County is leading the way for communities across the country. The new Clean Water Partnership supports the goals of the President's Build America Investment Initiative by uniting the public and private sectors to invest in a 21st century American infrastructure," said Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "This innovative approach to managing stormwater has potential to revitalize communities, develop small business and create jobs."

The CWP aligns with President Obama's Build America Investment Initiative to increase infrastructure investment and promote economic growth by creating opportunities for State and local governments and the private sector to collaborate and expand public-private partnerships.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has also recognized the County's unique approach of leveraging a dedicated funding stream for green infrastructure stormwater runoff projects to meet its obligations under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), a comprehensive "pollution diet" that requires significant reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment. According to the EPA, approximately \$635 billion is required to finance improvements for aging water-related infrastructure needs throughout the nation. These funds have traditionally been provided by local government funds or stormwater utilities often included on tax bills and the EPA through its various loan sources.

"The Prince George's County public-private partnership is a great example of the type of activity that EPA's Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center hopes to encourage," says EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. "By providing innovative financing support for sustainable and resilient water infrastructure, this collaboration will help the community improve their drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems." The Water Finance Center is part of the President's Build America Investment Initiative.

In the 1990s, the County pioneered the use of rain gardens, which are now considered mainstream and used around the world as a stormwater management best practice. Through the CWP, the County and Corvias (a national leader in P3 infrastructure projects) will work jointly to install rain gardens and other stormwater filter devices such as bioswales, green roofs, rain barrels and permeable pavement to treat 15,000 acres of existing impervious surfaces over the course of the next decade.

Receiving unanimous County Council support, the Partnership will help the County combine to make significant progress in creating clean and healthy communities that positively contribute to the overall well-being of the environment. "The program underscores the resourcefulness of County Government and the Council is particularly pleased with the priority that the program places on the utilization of local and local minority businesses," commented Council Chairman Mel Franklin. "We are leveraging the efficiency of the private sector and connecting that with the knowledge of County employees, businesses and industry experts to complete a monumental task."

"It's a race against the clock that we are equipped to win," says Adam Ortiz, Director of the Department of the Environment. "The County is unleashing the efficiencies of the private sector for the public good to the Partnership and is dedicating tremendous resources that will result in a state-of-the-art stormwater management center and serve as the benchmark for other Counties, States and Countries trying to accomplish the same."

The County is committed to completing its green infrastructure projects by 2025, as required by the EPA TMDL. During the first phase of the Partnership, the County will invest \$100 million in the initial retrofit phase of 2,000 acres with Corvias to manage the design, construction and long-term maintenance of County property. The benefits of the Partnership will result in a significant cost savings with this long-term project.

"No other stormwater partnership or project has committed to address both the immediate and long-term requirements for sustainable and resilient stormwater infrastructure, which includes the long-term maintenance of all retrofitted improvements," said Greg Cannito, Managing Director for Corvias Solutions. "We absolutely think this is a national game-changer and applaud Prince George's County for taking a lead on this innovative P3."

Roland L. Jones, Director of the County's Office of Central Services adds that this business model will stimulate and expand the County's tax base and increase mentor-protégé networks that will enhance skill levels and participation in the CWP. "This Partnership will provide local, small and minority-businesses the opportunity to compete and secure contracts to help build water infrastructure systems," says Jones. "Through the stormwater management workforce training and minority business development program, the CWP will help create long-term career opportunities in landscaping, construction, engineering and technology."

The educational component of the Partnership includes the Urban Watershed Restoration Contractor Training Course, which is offered at Prince George's County Community College and taught by instructors from the Low Impact Development Center. The Course provides instruction on the construction, operation and maintenance of stormwater management practices, and will assist in developing a robust workforce to advance the County's stormwater infrastructure.

The Department of the Environment is the lead agency charged with managing the County's Partnership projects and ensuring that the program goals are accomplished in a cost-effective and timely manner.

For more information about this program or to find out how to get involved in workforce and minority business training and job opportunities, please contact the Prince George's County's Supplier Development and Diversity Division at (301) 883-6488.

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