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BOSTON ANNOUNCES FIRST POROUS ALLEY PROJECT

Boston Public Works Commissioner Joanne Massaro, Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) Director Bob Zimmerman, and Boston Groundwater Trust (BGWT) Director Elliott Laffer signed an agreement on June 26, 2013 to work collaboratively on the City's first green alley project. This demonstration project, funded in part by a \$298,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, will allow Boston to test new porous pavement technology, which could help reduce flooding, sewer overflows and stormwater pollution, as well as increase groundwater recharge to counter declining groundwater levels—a problem facing building owners in many parts of the City.

"Green infrastructure for our streets is another tool to address a variety of issues including water quality and groundwater recharge and urban heat island effect," says Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "This project demonstrates how the City is moving forward with new innovations with a variety of stakeholders provide solutions to complex problems."

Porous pavement allows rainwater to filter through the pavement into large gravel-filled storage areas below and slowly seep into the ground. This process facilitates groundwater recharge and reduces polluted runoff that normally flows into drains and sewers and discharges into waterways, like the Charles River. Cities like Chicago are making broad use of porous pavement in alleys.

This demonstration project will help Boston determine whether the technology is suitable and cost-effective for its alleys. CRWA has been working closely with Boston for many years to find ways to reduce pollution to the Charles River, and has contracted with Vanasse Hagen Brustlin, Inc., (VHB) the project's design contractor, to develop this demonstration project, which will provide valuable information on the feasibility and benefits of retrofitting Boston alleys. CRWA's water quality monitoring experience, VHB's expertise in porous pavement technologies, and BGWT's detailed knowledge of Boston's groundwater will ensure the project produces valuable information. The project will be monitored for both groundwater levels, and runoff and water quality improvements. The first task is to select a suitable alley, which will depend on many factors including the need for groundwater recharge and the location of existing infrastructure. Construction is expected to take place in 2014.

"This project is a perfect complement to the City of Boston's climate change initiatives," said Bob Zimmerman, Executive Director of CRWA. "We believe this project will show that the use of green alleys will ultimately reduce flooding, increase groundwater recharge, and improve water quality in the Charles River; we commend Mayor Menino and Commissioner Massaro for their leadership on this.



Left to right: Elliott Laffer, Executive Director-Boston Groundwater Trust
Joanne Massaro, Commissioner Public Works Department
Bill Zimmerman, Executive Director-Charles River Watershed Association