

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 260540)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee on the Environment to hold hearings on the implementation and progress of vegetated green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) under the Green City, Clean Waters initiative, and to examine the benefits of expanding Green Stormwater Infrastructure throughout the City.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia faces increasing challenges related to stormwater management, including flooding, combined sewer overflows, and water quality concerns; and

WHEREAS, Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) refers to a range of practices that use vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage stormwater, improve water quality, and enhance community resilience; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia entered into a Consent Order and Agreement that requires the implementation of the Long-Term Control Plan Update, known as Green City, Clean Waters, which is a first-of-its-kind combined sewer overflow compliance approach based primarily on green stormwater infrastructure (GSI); and

WHEREAS, The goal of GCCW is to increase GSI in Philadelphia to make it a significant portion of the Environmental Protection Agency-mandated goal to reduce the amount of polluted stormwater overflows discharging into the creeks, streams, and rivers in and around Philadelphia by 85% by 2036; and

WHEREAS, By 2021, the City successfully met its 10-year Green City, Clean Waters milestone, and many of the GSI opportunities on public property have been completed, meaning future greened acres will require a shift and upscale to private properties which represents substantially more GSI opportunity than public properties; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has been funding private property GSI on commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties through its Stormwater Grants Program which has generated interest in the CII sector but has been funded at relatively low and fluctuating levels because it is being paid for with limited annual operating funds; and

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WHEREAS, As the project timeline progresses, some of the challenges of Green City Clean Waters thus far have included heavier stormwater outflows because of shifting weather patterns, limited public land available for GSI installation, as well as increasing costs for installation and maintenance; and

WHEREAS, Increasing the installation of vegetated GSI on private land will be essential to helping the City reach its 2036 target of approximately 9,564 greened acres; and

WHEREAS, Even with increasing costs for greened acres, private-property GSI remains less expensive than large gray-infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS, Private land offers flexibility for project types, such as rain gardens, infiltration basins, green roofs, or permeable pavements, among many others, all of which would increase the number and spread of GSI installations and help distribute environmental impact across neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, When GSI is installed on private property, maintenance responsibilities can be shared or formalized with appropriate non-governmental organizations or other private agencies thereby reducing the City's cost of long-term maintenance and expanding implementation capacity beyond City staff; and

WHEREAS, Private sites exist in every neighborhood, including communities that have historically lacked access to environmental amenities, making expanded GSI installation on private land an important opportunity to advance environmental justice under Green City, Clean Waters; and

WHEREAS, GSI's benefits can help the City achieve not only its goals to reduce CSOs and manage stormwater, but also to increase the urban tree canopy as outlined in the Philly Tree Plan and to create resilience to climate change as outlined in the City's Climate Action Plan, among other citywide sustainability goals; and

WHEREAS, Reaching Green City, Clean Waters' 2036 target requires additional investment, especially on private properties, to help relieve strain on the sewer system, alleviate harmful runoff into local waterways, and limit the need for more costly gray infrastructure in Philadelphia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the Committee on the Environment to hold hearings on the progress of vegetated GSI implementation under the Green City, Clean Waters initiative, and to examine the financing and co-funding pathways to expand the multiple-benefits GSI throughout the City.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fourteenth day of May, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Gauthier

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Gauthier, Phillips, Gilmore Richardson,
Landau, Brooks, O'Rourke and Ahmad