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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 7, 2013

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MAYOR EMANUEL TO DEVOTE \$50 MILLION OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING TO IMPROVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IN CHICAGO

New technologies will supplement current strategies to reduce potential for flooding in homes and streets by creating 10 million gallons of natural stormwater storage

As part of his ongoing effort to address basement and street flooding throughout the city, Mayor Rahm Emanuel today will announce that \$50 million of current spending on upgrades and improvements to the city's water and sewer infrastructure over the next five years will be dedicated to investments in green stormwater management. The \$10 million in annual funds will reduce the amount of pollution that flows into the Chicago River and Lake Michigan by investing in proven projects, such as permeable pavement and planting of natural plants and trees. These projects will ultimately create an additional 10 million gallons of natural stormwater storage in the city, which could reduce runoff by 250 million gallons each year. This is one of the largest voluntary investments in this type of infrastructure by an American city. Mayor Emanuel will make the announcement to world's largest gathering of water infrastructure organizations, WEFTEC (Water Environment Federation's Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference), held at McCormick Place.

"Flooding can have a devastating effect on families and their homes, and green infrastructure serves as a key piece of reducing risk to Chicago homeowners and residents," Mayor Emanuel said. "By committing to these improvements and policies we will be in much better position to reduce flooding in future storms and protect the environment going forward. This initiative will change the way the city manages stormwater in the future and allow us to continue developing new technologies and approaches on behalf of our residents and businesses."

The Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategy Initiative, as it is known, will contain two major elements:

The first element of the initiative is building capital projects that include green stormwater infrastructure in their plans. An interagency government process will be implemented to review projects, locate priority areas and identify green stormwater management capabilities that can be used during the construction. Potential projects include the use of permeable pavement in sewer

projects to decrease stormwater runoff into the sewer system, tree planting practices will be enhanced by the use of bioswales, and green stormwater installations will be a part of streetscape projects.

The next part of the overall initiative is planning for the future. The city will undertake a number of studies that analyze the impacts of climate change on the frequency of rainfall and the costs and benefits for a larger-scale implementation of green stormwater infrastructure, both of which will inform the development of a comprehensive citywide stormwater management plan.

“In many cases green infrastructure has proven to be cost effective over traditional hard infrastructure, allowing the City to stretch our capital improvement dollars,” said Tom Powers, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Water Management. “Additionally, green infrastructure often has other non-stormwater related benefits, like serving as open space, creating wildlife habitat and improving property values. I am excited we are bringing this program to Chicagoans.”

All of the goals that are outlined in the green stormwater infrastructure strategy fall in line with the goals outlined in Sustainable Chicago 2015, as well as with the commitments made through Building a New Chicago.

WEFTEC 2013 provides more than 17,000 attendees from around the world and more than 1,000 global companies access to cutting-edge technologies in the field. Today’s global water industry is estimated to generate between \$360 billion and \$600 billion in annual revenues. The Great Lakes hold 84% of North America’s fresh water and Chicago’s position as the paramount Great Lakes city places it at the center of traditional water industries, in-demand water management technologies, global goods and services trade relating to water systems, and industries with a strong reliance on water. World Business Chicago (WBC) is working with WEFTEC in order to generate awareness for Chicago’s strong position in the water industry and for opportunities that Chicago holds.

The biggest event of its kind, WEFTC offers water quality professionals from around the world the best water quality education and training available today. The inaugural WEF Stormwater Congress, taking place in Chicago on October 5-9, encompasses all pressing aspects of stormwater management.

The implementation of the green stormwater infrastructure strategy will begin this fall.

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