



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

RECEIVED SEP 10 2012

SEP 05 2012

Mr. Todd L. Ambs
President
River Network
209 SW Oak Street
Portland, Oregon 97204

OFFICE OF WATER

Dear Mr. Ambs:

Thank you for your letter of July 11, 2012, to Michael Shapiro, Deputy Assistant Administrator in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Water, in support of the City of Grand Rapids (City) as a new location for the efforts of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (Partnership). As the senior policy manager responsible for the EPA's role in the Partnership, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your letter.

Your letter requests support for the restoration of the namesake rapids in downtown Grand Rapids and notes that this project is a central to the vision of the City's revised Master Plan which was developed through the *Green Grand Rapids* multi-stakeholder process. You also note that, since Plaster Creek is a tributary that enters the Grand River in the City, the Grand Rapids restoration project will build on the Plaster Creek project which is one of ten Urban Waters "Fellows" supported by River Network through a grant from the EPA. In your letter, you also outline the multiple benefits: water quality, ecological, downtown revitalization, connecting downtown with underserved communities, recreation. Your letter requests that, for these reasons and more, Grand Rapids be considered as a new location for the Urban Waters Federal Partnership.

On July 23, my staff personally met with representatives of the City and other key local partners to discuss this project. Since that time, EPA staff and managers in both our Headquarters and Regional offices have had many substantive discussions with the City's partnership team through a series of site visits, meetings and calls to learn more about the project and to facilitate the involvement of other federal agencies within the Partnership.

Over the past year, the Partnership has been working with a number of pilot locations across the country where it engages local partners through focused federal coordination and assistance. This month, the Partnership will invite applications from a small number of communities in order to identify additional locations for its activities. Based on consultations with the City and its local stakeholders, the Partnership has approved Grand Rapids as one of these locations and will be sending the City an invitation to apply later this month.

Again, thank you for your letter, and I appreciate your support of urban waters restoration efforts in Grand Rapids and across the nation. If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or have your staff call Surabhi Shah of my staff at (202) 564-3833.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy K. Stoner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nancy K. Stoner
Acting Assistant Administrator