Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, Ontario Parks Association, and Landscape Ontario Complete a Green Infrastructure Planning and Evaluation Endeavour Held in Six Communities Throughout Ontario

Toronto, Canada: January 5, 2015. Green Roofs for Healthy Cities (GRHC), the Ontario Parks Association (OPA) and Landscape Ontario are pleased to announce the official completion of a research and community engagement initiative funded by the Metcalf Foundation. The project developed the capacity of communities throughout Ontario to better understand the costs and benefits associated with investing in green infrastructure development.

"In an increasingly urban world it is really easy to lose touch with the benefits of living natural infrastructure. An old Bruce Cockburn tune says 'if you stare at too much concrete you forget the earth is alive'. Supporting the green infrastructure movement is important to improving our quality of life" said Tony DiGiovanni, Executive Director, Landscape Ontario.

The project involved the development of the Green Infrastructure Cost-Benefit Matrix a tool that summarizes fifteen generic forms of green infrastructure within a standardized cost-benefit metric of dollar per square metre valuation of their respective costs and benefits. The project focused on big picture aggregate level estimating to provoke discussions around the tangible benefits of green infrastructure derived from peer-reviewed literature. The values derived in the Cost-Benefit Matrix were all then applied to areas in different communities that are redesigned in a one-day design charrette.

Design charrettes were held in four locations and engaged six participating cities (Vaughan, Oshawa, London, Toronto, Mississauga, and Brampton) in the redesign of eleven neighbourhoods using green infrastructure at the conceptual neighbourhood scale. The full day events drew upon the experience and expertise of selected attendees to re-envision selected sites within their communities using living green infrastructure such as trees, bioswales, green roofs and green walls. The project has resulted eleven conceptual neighbourhood redesigns with a new vision for each community using green infrastructure as the central design intervention, as well as the correlating aggregate level cost and benefit estimates associated with moving forward on implementing that vision.

The official launch of the Green Infrastructure Design Charrette: Making the Business Case for Green Infrastructure Investment in Your Community - Final Report will be Monday, January 5, 2014 as part of the Landscape Ontario Congress. A brief presentation at the congress will outline the project overview as well as a sample neighbourhood redesign example. Hardcopy executive reports will be available for pick up at both the Green Roofs for Healthy Cities and Ontario Parks Association booths. The full report of the project will be made available online to view or download on the day of the official launch.

‘This innovative report provides visual images of intensive Green Infrastructure in more than five Ontario communities as well as estimates of costs, job creation potential and ten additional benefits’ said Steven Peck, Founder and President of Green Roofs for Healthy Cities/Co-Founder of Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition.

By coupling the economic costs and benefits with a solid vision of green infrastructure’s place in future development and redevelopment of our communities this project has made a unique contribution to the understanding of how to make our communities healthier, more resilient and sustainable in Ontario and beyond.

To read the full report visit: www.greenroofs.org/resources/Charrette_Final-Report.pdf

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