FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Buffalo's Willert Park Green Infrastructure Project Earns Envision Bronze Award for Sustainability

WASHINGTON, D.C. – August 17, 2020 – The Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure (ISI) announced today that the Buffalo Sewer Authority's Willert Park Green Infrastructure Project in Buffalo, NY, is the recent recipient of the Envision® Bronze award for sustainable infrastructure.

To earn an Envision award, a project must deliver a range of sustainability and resiliency benefits to the host and affected communities. These benefits are validated through a rigorous third-party review process against the Envision sustainable infrastructure framework.

Project Background and Context

The Buffalo Sewer Authority (BSA) has been a champion of green infrastructure through its "Raincheck 1.0" and "Raincheck 2.0" programs. Green Infrastructure, or GI, is an approach to water management that mimics the natural water cycle and reduces runoff from developed sites. GI includes strategies to reduce runoff such as planting trees, restoring and protecting wetlands, using rain barrels to collect stormwater, and using pervious materials to allow for water infiltration. GI has been shown to be a cost effective and efficient approach to stormwater management compared with other alternatives such as constructing water treatment plants. The Willert Park Green Infrastructure Project was developed in accordance with BSA's Long-Term Control Plan and will have a significant impact on water quality in the city of Buffalo.

BSA worked in close collaboration with Wendel, Joy Kuebler Landscape Architects and Watts Architecture & Engineering to deliver this sustainable project.

"I am grateful for all of the hard work that everyone has done to complete the Award winning Willert Park project. This Green Infrastructure project was truly a community focused effort that involved outreach, engagement, and participation through community visioning walks, meetings, and collaborative design," said Oluwole A. McFoy P.E., General Manager of Buffalo Sewer. Mr. McFoy continued, "I am also proud that this project also included the WaterWorx summer youth camp with education and activities around stormwater management and sustainability and helped contribute to the revitalization of Jesse Clipper Square, which was inspired by the original design by the City of Buffalo's first African American architect John Brent."

"The team did a fantastic job to make the Willert Park Green Infrastructure project a showcase of sustainability and green design. This award is the culmination of years of hard work that led to a project that provided stormwater management, improved parkland, and better community relations/education. I am very proud to have been part of this team." Scott Rybarczyk, PE, LEED AP Project Manager, Wendel.

The Envision sustainable infrastructure framework assesses project sustainability across five categories: Quality of Life, Leadership, Resource Allocation, Natural World, and Climate and Resilience. These key areas contribute to positive social, economic, and environmental impacts on a community during the planning, design, construction, and operation of infrastructure projects. Key factors contributing to the Willert Park Green Infrastructure Project Envision Bronze award include:

Improving community quality of life: The project improves quality of life in the city of Buffalo by reducing the width of an underutilized roadway and adding safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists. It also extends access to the existing city-wide cycling network. The project includes safety improvements such as ADA-compliant sidewalks, clearly marked crosswalks, and new pedestrian crossing signals. The project was also expanded to include improvements to a nearby park based on feedback from neighborhood stakeholders.

Managing stormwater: The total project area is just over 25 acres. Of this, approximately 12 acres contain impervious paving. The remainder of the site includes porous asphalt and GI strategies to reduce runoff and provide water treatment. The final post-development water storage capacity of the site achieves 90% improvement in capacity for greyfields (previously developed land). In addition, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) was created for this project.

Improving community resiliency: The project team and stakeholders referred to *Resilient Buffalo Niagara*, the regional climate change strategy, when planning and designing this project. The strategy identified several long-term changes in environmental conditions that would affect the community, including increased temperatures, precipitation, and flooding. Based on the strategy's findings, the Buffalo Sewer Authority made the determination that traditional approaches to stormwater management would not adequately serve the city of Buffalo. Therefore, the project team selected the Willert Park project site and designed the project to be resilient and adaptive to the expected changes in environmental conditions.

"The Willert Park Green Infrastructure project is in fact a direct response to preparations for long-term adaptability for the community," said Melissa Peneycad, ISI's managing director. "ISI is pleased to award this project with Envision Bronze in recognition of its contribution to sustainability and resiliency for the city of Buffalo and its residents."

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Image Provided:

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PROJECT ORGANIZATION INFORMATION:

About Buffalo Sewer Authority: *The Buffalo Sewer Authority is located in the Great Lakes system at the end of Lake Erie and is situated close to the Niagara River, Black Rock Canal, Cazenovia Creek, and Scajacquada Creek. Each year, Buffalo residents, businesses and visitors use billions of gallons of water for drinking, food, cleaning, health care, industry use and recreation. Before the creation of the sewer system, that water would all be directed to local waterways, which would pollute our water and spread disease. We work every day to prevent and fix that.*

About Wendel:
Wendel is an Architecture, Engineering, Energy Efficiency, and Construction Management Firm that delivers customized solutions and turnkey projects in innovative ways. Wendel provides services to clients across the country, including architecture; interior design; civil, electrical, energy efficiency, environmental, mechanical, municipal, structural, and transportation engineering; construction management; energy management; alternative fuels; commissioning; GIS; landscape architecture; land-use planning; and survey. The firm is headquartered in Buffalo, NY with offices in New York Metro; Rochester, NY; Syracuse, NY; Albany, NY; Minneapolis, MN; Eau Claire, WI; Phoenix, AZ; Atlanta, GA; Richmond, VA; Clarksburg, WV; Columbus, OH; Meriden, CT and Washington, DC areas. Wendel is ISO 9001:2015 certified.

About Joy Kuebler Landscape Architect:
Joy Kuebler Landscape Architect, PC (JKLA) is an award-winning full-service landscape architecture, urban design and urban planning firm with licenses in New York and Massachusetts. Since its inception in 2003, JKLA has proudly focused its work on the human experience in the landscape by working to improve the quality of life for people through the power of the environment surrounding them. The firm's work includes the design and construction oversight of parks, trails, streetscapes, educational and healthcare facilities, and brownfield and waterfront planning – all utilizing its PLAYCE engagement and management techniques. JKLA is a certified WBE and DBE firm in New York and Massachusetts.

About Watts Architecture & Engineering: Watts Architecture & Engineering is a full service, minority-owned architecture and engineering firm with over 100 employees. The firm was founded in 1986 as a sole-proprietorship, environmental engineering firm. Watts has evolved into a full-service architecture and engineering design firm, with three office locations; Buffalo (Headquarters), Syracuse, and New York City.

About The Berkley Group: *The Berkley Group, LLC, is a professional consulting firm with experts specializing in planning, environmental management, sustainable development, public works, community engagement, and more. We are local government leaders who know and understand the challenges and opportunities for adopting sustainable infrastructure practices. The Berkley Group is an east coast company supporting government agencies across the U.S. and internationally. As an ISI member company, we support industry adoption of Envision and have completed numerous project assessments, project verification submittals, and project verifications. Find us online at* www.bgllc.net*, on facebook, and on twitter (@Berkley_Group).*

About Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure and Envision®*: ISI is a non-profit 501(c)(3) headquartered in Washington, DC. ISI administers the Envision sustainable infrastructure framework and rating system. Envision is the product of a joint collaboration between ISI, which was founded by three national engineering associations: American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) and American Public Works Association (APWA), and the Zofnass Program for Sustainable Infrastructure at Harvard University Graduate School of Design: www.sustainableinfrastructure.org.*