

2022–2023 Stormwater Pioneers: Faith-Based Institutions



The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) recognizes private property owners for outstanding stormwater management projects. This award showcases innovation, excellence, and the ability to overcome technical challenges.

Religious institutions often face a unique stormwater challenge

Faith-based houses of worship frequently occupy large lots, which means higher stormwater charges on their water bills.

A win-win

Saving money on operating costs is often a priority for these community hubs. Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) systems help soak up stormwater. These systems can help reduce monthly expenses and beautify the property.

A more sustainable future

Several congregations prioritize the responsible stewardship of natural resources. Installing stormwater systems on their sites positively impacts our region's environment by reducing combined sewer overflows entering our creeks and rivers.

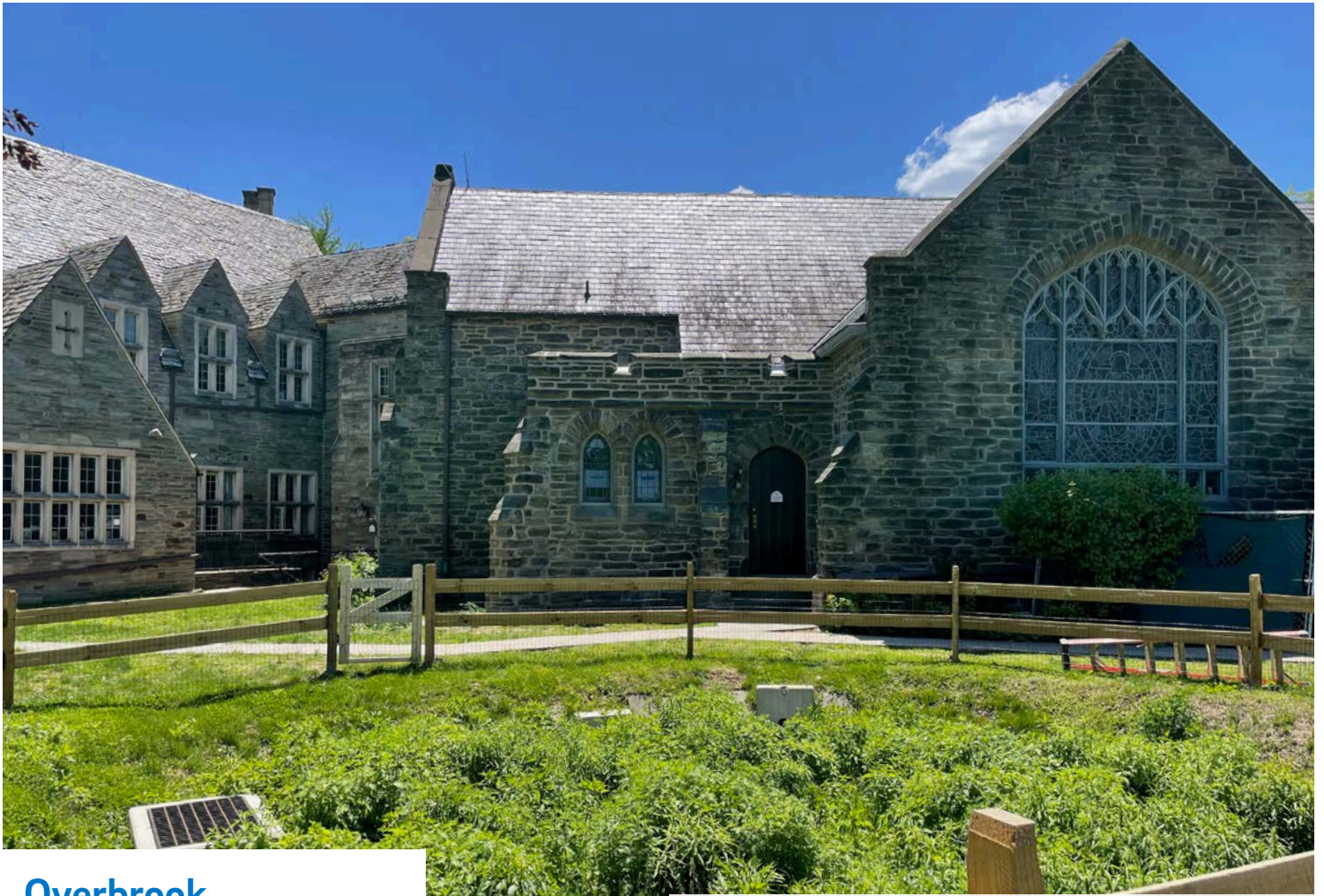


At Congregation Rodeph Shalom, located on North Broad Street between Green and Mt. Vernon Streets, new landscaping and repaved surfaces cover a large subsurface basin managing stormwater. Photo © Philadelphia Water Department

2022–2023 Award Winners:

[Learn more about these institutions >](#)





Overbrook Presbyterian Church

overbrookpresb.org

Overbrook Presbyterian Church is home to a planted stormwater basin that not only beautifies the West Philly property but also helps to keep combined sewer overflows from polluting local waterways.

Photos © Philadelphia Water Department

A West Philly institution grows its green goals

Overbrook Presbyterian Church prioritizes climate and environment-focused practices. The church received its certification as an Earth Care Congregation by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Presbyterian Hunger Program, pledging to integrate green initiatives into its worship, education, facilities, and outreach. The new green stormwater infrastructure aligns with these green goals, keeping combined sewer overflows from polluting local waterways.

Technical highlights

GSI Systems:

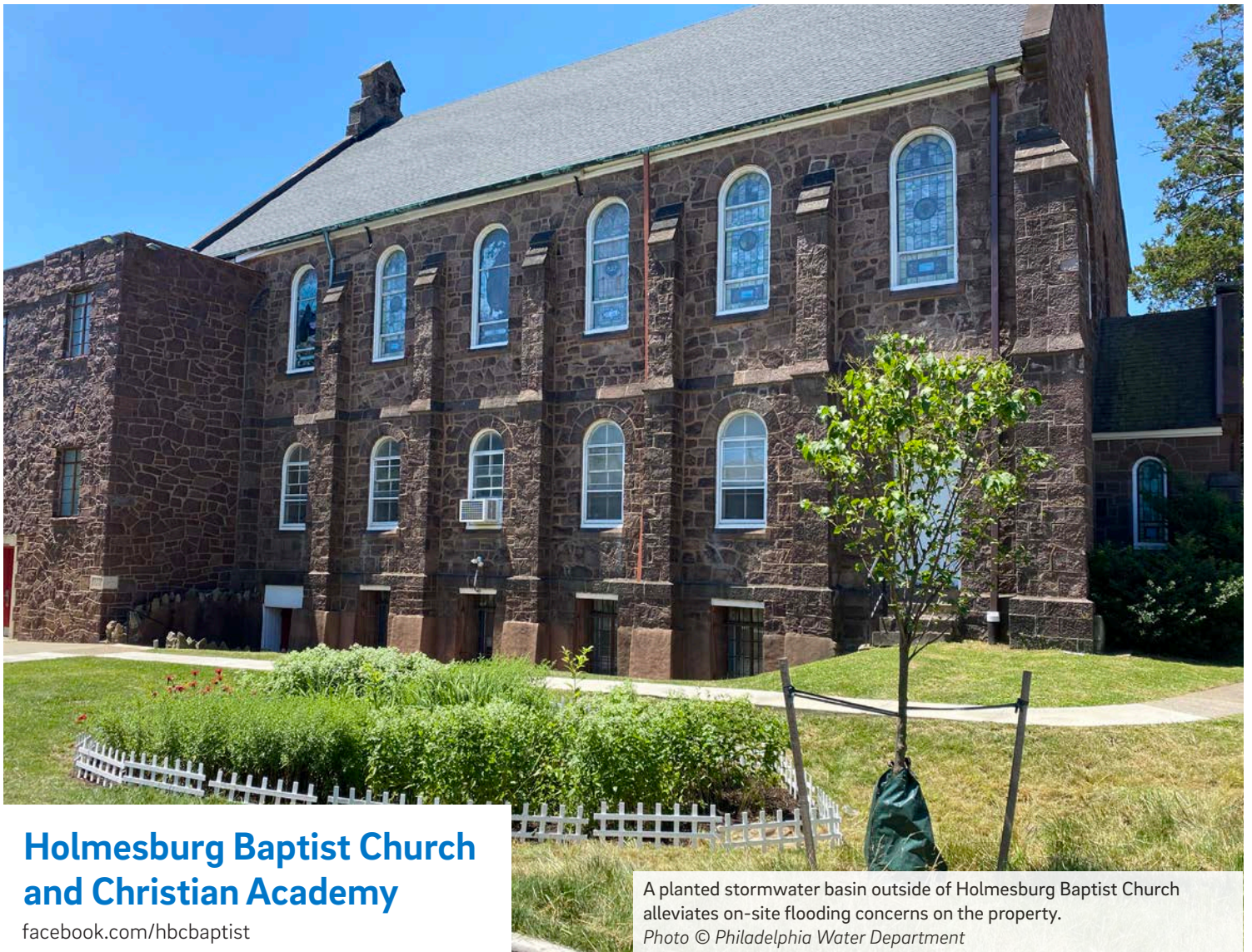
Planted Stormwater Basin, Subsurface Basin, proposed Right-of-way (ROW) Connections

Gallons diverted*:

More than 46,000 gallons per typical storm event!



**What are "Gallons Diverted"? GSI projects prevent significant volumes of stormwater from overwhelming sewer systems. Without this infrastructure, these overflows would pollute our local creeks and rivers. (For scale, one SEPTA bus could hold approximately 30,000 gallons of water!)*



Holmesburg Baptist Church and Christian Academy

facebook.com/hbcbaptist

A planted stormwater basin outside of Holmesburg Baptist Church alleviates on-site flooding concerns on the property.

Photo © Philadelphia Water Department



In mid-2021, crews work on repaving the rear parking area after installing a subsurface basin. Photo © Oak Leaf Media

New green tools serve many purposes at 200-year-old church

Built in the 1820s, Holmesburg Baptist Church has long served the Holmesburg community. For the church and on-site school, Holmesburg Christian Academy, this GSI project is a win on multiple fronts. The new stormwater systems not only keep pollution out of Pennypack Creek, they also have helped resolve on-site flooding and ponding issues previously experienced by the church, originally built over a small stream. In addition, the rain garden of native plants creates habitat for pollinators and provides educational opportunities for students, congregants, and community members alike.

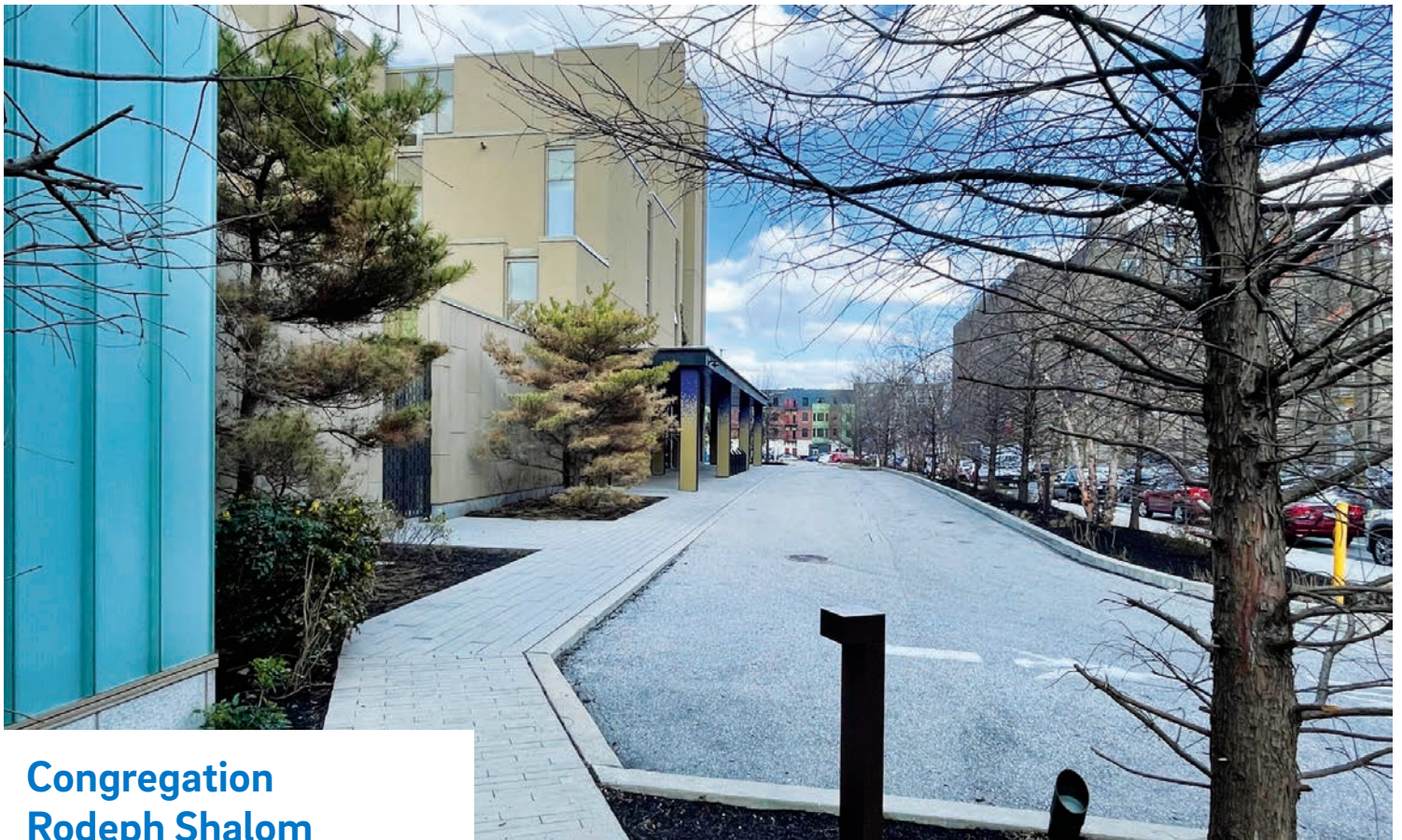
Technical highlights

GSI Systems:

Planted Stormwater Basin, Depaving, proposed Right-of-way (ROW) Connections

Gallons diverted:

More than 25,000 gallons per typical storm event!



Congregation Rodeph Shalom

rodepshalom.org

The 2015 stormwater management project helped to revamp the facade of this historic synagogue. Photo © Philadelphia Water Department

Re-imagining an urban property

Rodeph Shalom's 2015 project redeveloped the space adjacent to its existing synagogue. A constrained site necessitated the placement of stormwater management infrastructure beneath portions of landscaping and the parking lot. The completed subsurface infiltration basin and related drain network reduced the property's earlier impervious surface area by more than 20%.

Technical highlights

GSI Systems:

Subsurface Infiltration Basin

Gallons diverted:

More than 25,000 gallons per typical storm event!



During construction, construction crews install layers of soil, rock, and drains that exist beneath the parking lot to divert sewer overflows away from waterways. Photo © INTECH Construction

Learn more about PWD's Stormwater Programs: water.phila.gov/stormwater