Mayor Announces First City Green Roof Project
City encourages greening government, commercial and residential developments

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard announced plans today to install the first green roof ever to be constructed on a city-owned building. This green roof is part of the city’s efforts to implement a comprehensive green infrastructure plan in Indianapolis.

“The benefits of green roofs are far-reaching,” said Mayor Ballard. “They not only help reduce the amount of water entering our overburdened combined sewer and drainage systems, but they also help improve air quality and insulate buildings. I’m committed to investing in green infrastructure like green roofs to improve the environment and quality of life now and for years to come.”

Green roofs are vegetated roof systems used in place of conventional roofs. They help capture stormwater run-off that otherwise would enter the city’s overburdened combined sewer and drainage systems. Three- to five-inches of soil or vegetation absorb approximately 75 percent of rain events that are one-half inch or less, according to the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. Stormwater that is not captured by the green roof is filtered through the vegetation as it runs off, which helps reduce the amount of pollution that ends up in waterways. In addition to water quality benefits, green roofs also help capture air pollution and carbon dioxide. The vegetation on green roofs creates natural thermal insulation, which saves energy and reduces heating and cooling costs.

In addition to energy savings benefits, green roofs typically last twice as long as conventional roofs, which helps offset the short-term costs of installing a green roof. Mayor Ballard is encouraging area businesses and residents to take advantage of these benefits and consider building green roofs, planting rain gardens and other green practices to keep Indianapolis competitive with other cities.
“We need to keep up with other cities that are using and encouraging green designs and green buildings not only to reduce costs but to protect the environment,” said Mayor Ballard. “The city’s plans to incorporate green designs and infrastructure techniques will help make Indianapolis a leader among the nation’s most sustainable cities.”

The first green roof to be constructed on a city-owned building will be installed on a wastewater, pumping, storage and disinfection facility on the north side of Indianapolis. The project will occur in conjunction with upgrades to the facility that will help reduce raw sewage overflows into the White River.

Mayor Ballard recently launched SustainIndy, the city’s new sustainability initiative. Mayor Ballard also created the Office of Sustainability, which will implement SustainIndy and organize sustainability efforts across the city. The Office of Sustainability is working to incorporate green infrastructure techniques into the city’s stormwater management practices. These techniques not only include planting trees but also planting rain gardens, building green roofs and installing porous pavement.

The city also is implementing a 20-year plan to reduce raw sewage overflows that has been approved and mandated by the state and federal government. Green infrastructure techniques are being incorporated into this plan to assist with reducing the volume and frequency of overflows while reducing costs.

###