THE VILLAGE OF Wilmette EST. 1872

THE COMMUNICATOR

★ FEBRUARY 2017 / MAY 2017 ★

2017 Vehicle Sticker Information

Vehicle stickers will be available for purchase as of March 1st and must be displayed by April 15th. Residents who currently have a Village vehicle sticker will be mailed an application.

Wilmette residents will have the option to pay for their vehicle sticker(s) online with a credit card. The online payment portal will be available from the Village's website, www.wilmette.com. A link to the site will also be included with the vehicle sticker application, along with easy to follow instructions on how to complete the purchase online. Residents will still have the option of mailing in their payment or paying in person at the Village Hall.

Residents who would like to make their purchase at Village Hall may do so from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The fees are $80 for passenger vehicles, $95 for trucks, and $25 for motorcycles. Senior citizens (ages 65 and older) who meet the annual Housing and Urban Development (HUD) income guidelines are eligible for a $10 discount (limit one per person). Any vehicle registered in the Village with the Illinois Secretary of State not displaying a 2017 sticker after April 15th is subject to receiving a violation. **Vehicle stickers purchased after May 15th include a late fee equal to the purchase price of the sticker.** The revenue generated from the sale of vehicle stickers is used to maintain the Village's infrastructure, including streets, alleys and curbs.

★ In This Issue ★

Vehicle Stickers / Election Day 1

Letter from the Village President / Health Beat 2-3

2017 Adopted Budget 4-5

Public Works / Community News 6

Music on the Green 7

Phone Numbers & Upcoming Meetings 8

Election Day Is Tuesday, April 4th

Four Village Board Offices on Ballot

The Consolidated Election will be held on April 4th. The Village has four Village Board offices on the ballot. The following candidate's names will appear on the ballot in the order presented:

★ **Village President (4-year term) (Vote for 1)**

1. Bob Bielinski

★ **Village Trustee (4-year term) (Vote for 3)**

1. Kathy Dodd
2. Joel Kurzman
3. Stephen M. Leonard
4. Reinhard Schneider

The polls will be open on Election Day from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Residents who are unsure of their polling place or precinct may contact the Cook County Clerk's Office at (312) 603-0906 or www.cookctyclerk.com or contact the Village Deputy Clerk's Office at (847) 853-7511 or hirschb@wilmette.com.

Voter Registration

To be eligible to vote in the Consolidated Election, residents must be registered by 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 7th. Residents who are not already registered or have moved or changed their name may register to vote at the Village Hall, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you miss the voter registration deadlines, you may still register to vote during the grace period of March 8th to April 3rd, however, registration locations are limited. Please contact the Cook County Clerk's Office at (312) 603-0906 or www.cookctyclerk.com for one of the limited locations.

Early Voting

Residents who wish to vote early may do so from March 20th to April 3rd at sites selected by the County Clerk. Early voting sites and times will be published by the Cook County Clerk's Office at a later date. Voters who cannot vote at one of the county's sites can still vote absentee by mail by downloading a mail ballot application at the Cook County Clerk's website at www.cookctyclerk.com.

Letter from Village President Bob Bielinski

As I reflect upon 2016 and look forward to 2017, I am happy to report that the state of the Village is strong and the future of Wilmette is bright. Over the past several years, the Village has worked diligently to find efficiencies and advance innovation. Through these efforts, we have reduced personnel and contractual costs, increased capital funding, improved customer service, increased transparency, formulated long-term strategic plans, and continued our commitment to supporting the local business community.

Wilmette is now a top dining, shopping and entertainment destination on the North Shore, and as our downtown's popularity has soared, the Village has stepped up its efforts to ensure a vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere. In 2017, the Village will continue its popular Tuesday night Music on the Green Concert Series and further enhance its downtown beautification efforts.

We are also seeing increased energy and vitality in all of our shopping districts, including Plaza del Lago, Linden Square, the Ridge Road Corridor, West Lake Plaza and Edens Plaza. Next time you go shopping, please consider skipping the mall and instead visiting some of Wilmette's unique retail stores.

Stay Informed

The Village's website, wilmette.com, has a great deal of easily accessible information about your local government.

The Village's commitment to transparency has been recognized with a Sunshine Award from the Illinois Policy Institute (IPI). Wilmette is one of only eight municipalities in the entire State of Illinois to achieve a perfect 100% score from IPI.

Our website's Transparency page (found under the Government heading) includes links to the Village's most important and frequently requested documents. The Stormwater Management page (found under Village Services) provides resources for residents, engineering studies and information on the current proposed stormwater improvement project.

To stay up-to-date, please sign up for the Village's weekly e-news email by clicking on the "Village Mailing List" link on the website's homepage. You can also follow the Village on Facebook and Twitter.

2017 Budget

The Village Board challenged staff to develop a budget for 2017 that maintains all Village services while limiting the need to increase taxes and fees. The Village's portion of a resident's property tax bill is ~11% of the total bill, and the Village Board takes its fiscal responsibility to taxpayers very seriously.

I am pleased to report that the 2017 budget is balanced, maintains all Village services and provides for increased capital spending. Key components of the budget include the lowest level of full-time employee staffing in decades and more than $12 million allocated to critical infrastructure projects, including roads and sewers.

During the course of budget deliberations, the Village Board spent more than 15 hours in five public meetings reviewing staff analyses of the Village's capital improvement needs and discussing different options for funding investments in our public infrastructure. Through this process, the Village Board identified a long-term plan to improve the condition of the Village's streets in a fiscally responsible manner. This spending is necessary to ensure a high quality of life in Wilmette for years to come.

To help keep costs down for our residents, the Village continually seeks ways to leverage our resources and/or partner with neighboring communities. In January of this year, the Village of Kenilworth began purchasing its water from Wilmette. Revenue from wholesale water customers, such as Kenilworth and Glenview, helps to keep water rates for Wilmette's residents among the lowest in the region. Through these efforts, the Village's residential water rate has not increased in five of the last six years. This is just one of the many instances of the Village engaging in intergovernmental cooperation every day with local units of government inside and outside of Wilmette.

Sewer Improvements

In this newsletter you can find a series of Frequently Asked Questions concerning the Village's current proposed stormwater improvement project. While the FAQs provide answers to specific questions, some history of the Village's past sewer improvements and more recent discussions is also helpful for understanding the issues we face as a community.

While much of the discussion today is about the current proposed stormwater improvement project, maintaining and improving the sewer system is an ongoing priority to which the Village allocates funds each year. The 2017 Budget allocates $2.6 million for general sewer improvements, including sewer lining to reduce inflow and infiltration, sewer main repairs, and sewer main replacement. These projects are funded each year through the residential sewer fee and low interest loans from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

In 1991, the Village Board elected to proceed with a $37 million sewer improvement program for the combined sewers east of Ridge Road, an expenditure equivalent to $66 million in today's dollars. The "combined" sewers are very old sewers which carry both sanitary flows (wastewater) and stormwater in the same pipe network. As this project progressed, the improvements were sufficient enough that the program was scaled back, and the total investment in the east side combined sewer system was

$28 million, or $43 million in today's dollars. The majority of the improvements ($24.5 million) took place between 1992 and 1998 when a series of large relief sewers, drainage berms and inlet restrictors were installed. The relief sewers create more capacity for combined sanitary and stormwater flows, and the drainage berms and inlet restrictors temporarily detain stormwater on streets until the combined sewer system can accept the flow. These improvements have dramatically reduced the frequency and severity of basement backups from the combined sewer system east of Ridge Road.

Today, the Village's focus is on the separate sewer system, located west of Ridge Road. These sewers are described as "separate" because there are two sets of pipes, one set for sanitary flows and a second set for stormwater. These sewers are newer than the combined sewer system, but still old as the separate sewer system was built 50-80 years ago. To limit overburdening of wastewater treatment facilities, all new sewer systems are designed as separate systems with sanitary flows and stormwater routed through different systems of pipes to different destinations.

Due to aging infrastructure and inadequate sewer capacity, the sewers west of Ridge Road routinely surcharge during even moderate rain events, resulting in basement backups and widespread street flooding. To formulate a plan to address these problems, the Village engaged an engineering firm in 2009 to execute a screening level assessment of available options for reducing sanitary basement backups and overland flooding. The study called for major improvements to both the sanitary and stormwater sewer systems.

Following the 2009 study, the Village Board determined that the most critical improvements were those required in the sanitary sewer system in order to stay in compliance with state and federal law, and keep sewage out of basements. Accordingly, the Village embarked on a $24 million sewer program to improve the performance of the sanitary sewer system west of Ridge Road and reduce the frequency and severity of basement backups. This program's hallmark project, the West Park Sanitary Sewer Storage Project, has won multiple state, regional and national awards for design and intergovernmental cooperation.

Now, the Village's focus has turned to addressing shortcomings in the stormwater sewer system west of Ridge Road. In 2013, while the sanitary system improvements were being implemented, the Village engaged Christopher B. Burke Engineering to develop and analyze a robust hydraulic and hydrologic model of the storm sewer system, and formulate alternatives to reduce overland flooding and other issues associated with excess stormwater. The Village held a series of public meetings in 2015 and 2016 to discuss the consulting engineer's findings. During this public process, the consulting engineers presented nine different variations of potential solutions, ranging in cost from $40 million to $150 million.

Ultimately, the conclusion reached by the engineers is that the existing storm sewer pipes are simply too small. At this point in time, it appears that the most cost-effective option to reduce flooding west of Ridge Road is building a new system of sewer pipes (next to and connected to our existing sewer pipes), which would create greater capacity to hold stormwater and increase the rate at which stormwater flows out of west-side neighborhoods. The proposed project would include approximately eight miles of new sewer pipes with an estimated cost of $77 million which would be funded primarily through the issuance of long-term bonds by the Village.

The proposed project would be the single largest public works initiative the Village has ever undertaken. Given the scope and cost of the project, the Village Board has engaged a second engineering firm to review the work completed to date, double check cost estimates and provide a second opinion regarding feasible alternatives. The second firm has started its review, and the initial results will be presented at a public meeting in late spring/early summer. Residents are encouraged to learn more about this project at www.wilmette.com and provide feedback by emailing the Village at sewers@wilmette.com.

Finally, I hope you and your family enjoyed a wonderful holiday season, and I wish each of you a happy and healthy 2017!

Bob Bielinski, Village President

Health Department Screenings

- **Cholesterol and Glucose ($20):**
  March 15th and May 17th from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
- **CPR Course ($20):**
  March 15th and May 17th at 6:30 p.m.
- **Adult Hearing Tests (Free):**
  July 7th from 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- **Blood Pressure Checks (Free):**
  Every Tuesday from 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The cholesterol and glucose screening includes tests for total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, Triglycerides, HDL/LDL ratio, and detection of diabetes.

To schedule an appointment for the above offerings contact Health Nurse Dianne Bader at (847) 853-7507 or email baderd@wilmette.com.

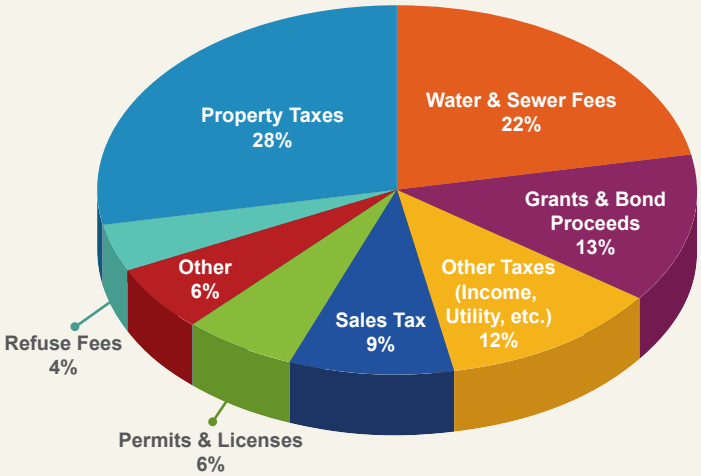
2017 Adopted Budget

The 2017 Adopted Budget maintains and enhances the municipal services that makes Wilmette one of the best places to live and raise a family. The Budget is a planning document totaling more than $72 million and outlines money coming in and going out between January 1st and December 31st. Below are several charts displaying how the Village receives and spends money.

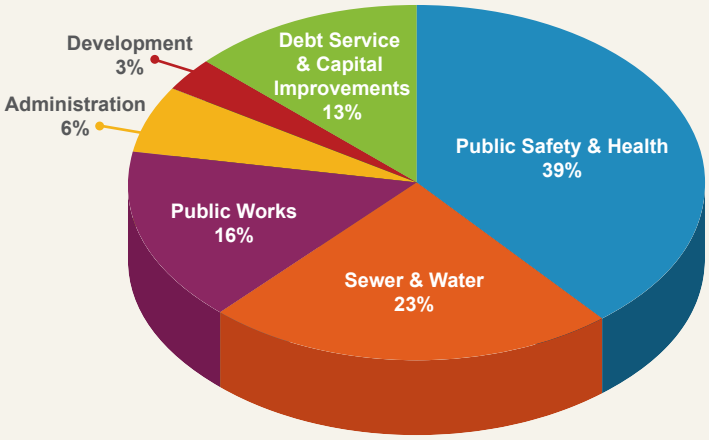
As shown in chart A, property taxes are the single largest source of revenue for the Village accounting for 28% of the revenues. While water and sewer fees are the second largest source of revenue, almost 40% of these fees are generated by customers outside of Wilmette.

As shown in chart B, 82% of the Village's expenditures are related to critical services such as Police, Fire, Health, Sewer and Water, and Public Works.

A — All 2017 Revenues Money Coming In



B — 2017 Expenditures Money Going Out



Where All of Your Property Tax Dollars Go...

The 2017 Budget provides for a property tax increase of 4.97%. This increase equates to approximately $83 for the average homeowner – $1.60 per week and less than 0.5% of the average total property tax bill. The property tax revenue collected by the Village is only a portion of your property tax bill. There are a total of eleven taxing districts that collect property tax and the Village consistently accounts for approximately 11% of the total bill.

School District #39: **$0.38**

Park District: **$0.06**

Village of Wilmette: **$0.11**

School District #203: **$0.25**

Cook Cty. & Other: **$0.16**

Library: **$0.04**

How Do Residents Pay for Village Services?

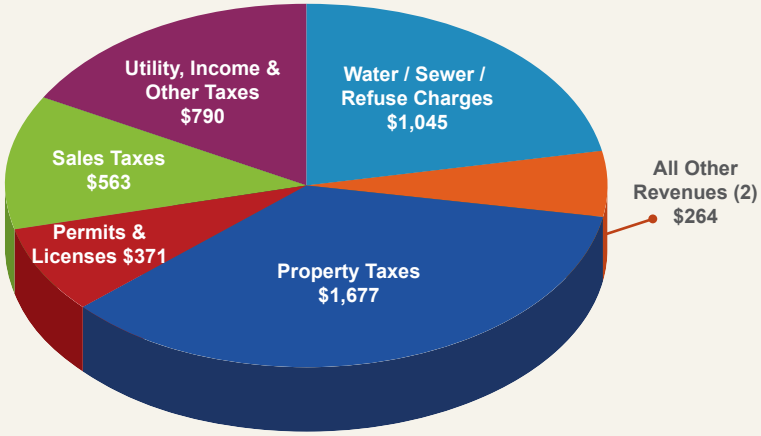
To pay for Village services, the Village generates revenue through various means. To keep property taxes as low as possible, the Village also generates revenues from other sources, such as sales tax and user fees. Chart C is an illustration of what, and how, an average household contributes annually to the Village through taxes, permits, fees, licenses, and other charges.

These sources of revenue generate approximately $54 million. To generate the additional revenue needed to pay for all expenditures outlined in chart B, the Village receives funds from grants, wholesale water sales, intergovernmental agreements, bond proceeds, and other miscellaneous sources.

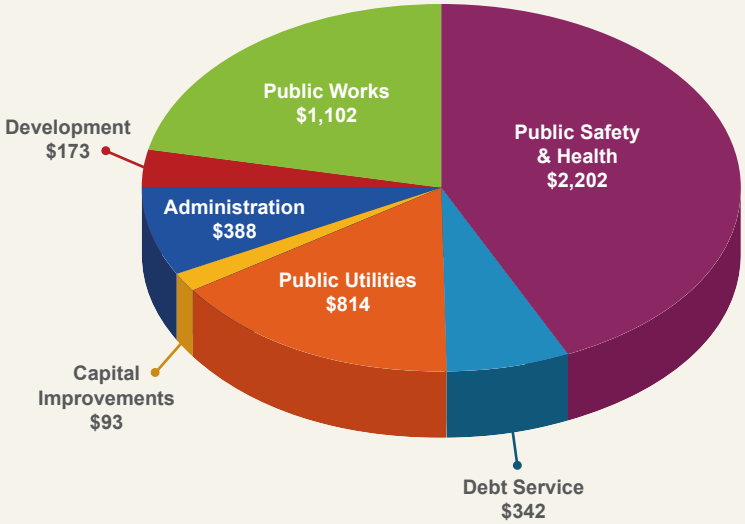
What Services Do Residents Receive?

While the average household contributes $4,710 annually, it receives approximately $5,114 worth of services such as 24/7 police, fire and emergency medical services, public works services such as leaf collection, snow and ice removal, sidewalk snowplowing, street improvements, water and sewer service, tree plantings and maintenance, and more. As chart D illustrates, 82% of your dollars go towards police, fire, public works, and water/sewer (public utilities) service.

C Payments to The Village



D Cost of Services Provided



Water/Sewer and Solid Waste Rates

For the fifth time in six years, there will be no increase to the residential water rate. Additionally, for the second consecutive year, both the solid waste collection fee and sewer rate will not increase.

Below are the combined water/sewer and solid waste rates for 2017.

★ Water / Sewer Rate ★	★ Solid Waste Rate ★
$6.85 / 100 cu. ft. + Water Meter Fee	$23.17 / month

Is Your Lawn Sprinkler System in Compliance?

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Code, Illinois Plumbing Code, and Wilmette Village Code require that cross connection control devices (C.C.C.D.'s) be installed on all lawn sprinkler systems, swimming pools, spas, and other potentially hazardous cross connection locations. All Village of Wilmette residents who have a C.C.C.D. are required to perform an annual test and certification of the backflow assembly. This test is to be performed by a licensed contractor and results must be submitted prior to any system activation in the spring.

The Village of Wilmette has partnered with BSI Online to assist with the administration of the backflow prevention program and, in particular, with accepting test report submittals. Test reports must be submitted by the licensed C.C.C.D. testing contractor online at www.bsionlinetracking.com. BSI can also be contacted via e-mail (bsionline@backflow.com) or by phone at (800) 414-4990 should residents have any questions. Residents may also contact Andy Lazar at the Village of Wilmette Water Management Department should they have any questions via e-mail (lazara@wilmette.com) or by phone at (847) 853-7537.

Spring 2017 Tree Planting

Residents can have a tree planted on the parkway this spring through the Village's Cooperative Tree Planting Program. This is a cost share program in which residents can select the species and the size of the tree to be planted. The cost of the trees, species, and sizes will be available by picking up an application at the Village Hall or downloading it from the Village's web site. Applications are due by Friday, March 31st. There are a limited number of trees, therefore applications will be considered in the order they are received. For questions regarding the program, call the Forestry Division at (847) 853-7587 or forestry@wilmette.com.

Yard Waste Program

The 2017 Yard Waste Collection Program begins on Wednesday, April 5th and extends through the last week in November. The Village's refuse hauler, Advanced Disposal, will collect yard waste materials on Wednesdays. Residents are reminded of the following provisions to ensure timely collection:

- ★ Place yard waste out in same location as recycling toters for collection.
- ★ Materials must be contained in either a bundle tied with biodegradable twine or a 30-gallon biodegradable paper bag (require 1 sicker). 96-gallon toters (require 3 stickers) are also available for lease from Advanced Disposal at (847) 272-4145.
- ★ Bundles and bags are not to exceed 50 pounds.
- ★ Village stickers are available for purchase ($2.25 each) at the Village Hall, Chalet Nursery, Millen Hardware, and both Wilmette Jewel Food Stores.

Wilmette French Market

This year's French Market will be here before you know it! The market will run every Saturday morning (8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.) starting in late spring in Wilmette's Village Center, just east of the Metra station. Stay tuned to the Village's website for the opening date. The market will feature abundant seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables, plants, breads, baked items, cheese, all natural meat, flowers, and olive oils from local and regional vendors.

Going Green Matters

The 11th Annual Going Green Matters Community Fair will take place on Sunday, March 12th from noon to 4 p.m. at the Michigan Shores Club in Wilmette. Attendance at the event is free.

Residents looking for ways to live more sustainably will find practical choices for their home, garden, recreation and transportation needs at this fun fair for all ages. Some highlights include National Geographic's 20 ft. Geosphere, a free LED bulb and household battery recycling.

The fair is sponsored by Go Green Wilmette and the Village of Wilmette. For details see: www.goinggreenmatters.org.

Welcome to New Businesses

The Village welcomes its newest businesses and thanks them for choosing Wilmette. Please remember to visit these and other Wilmette businesses while shopping this winter. We have a strong group of local merchants who are committed to you and appreciate your commitment to them. By supporting our businesses and buying locally, your sales tax dollars help pay for public services.

New Retailers

The Backyard Barbecue, 535 Green Bay Rd, (New Location)

Mattress Firm, 3217 Lake Ave, (847) 256-3040

Mona Lisa Stone & Tile, 601 Green Bay Rd, (847) 920-1620

The Runner's Edge, 1515 Sheridan Rd (New Location), (847) 853-8531

Saint Mickael Gift Shop, 1114 Central Ave, (847) 920-9340

New Restaurants

Thai Inbox, 122 Skokie Blvd (New Location), (847) 853-9898

Torino Ramen, 1162 Wilmette Ave, (847) 920-5075

Thali Bites, 143 Skokie Blvd, (847) 920-5663

Personal Services

Dr. Kenneth Milin, DDS, 411 Linden Ave, (847) 446-5868

The Private Bank & Trust, 255 Green Bay Rd, (847) 512-5155

Music on the Green

A Summer Concert Series

Presented by the Village of Wilmette

THE VILLAGE OF Wilmette EST. 1872

3rd Tuesday of the Month

Have dinner at your favorite Village Center restaurant, grab a bottle of wine and a picnic blanket, and join us for a night of music on the front lawn of Village Hall!

BYOB!

Tuesday, June 20th at 7:00pm

Spoken Four

An energetic and dynamic band playing all of yesterday and today's hits

Tuesday, July 18th at 7:00pm

The New Invaders

The ultimate 60's flashback show from Brit Rock to Woodstock

Tuesday, August 15th at 7:00pm

Chris Karabas and Band

There's more to country music than trucks and beer, and Karabas explores it in poetic fashion

www.wilmette.com

Fire/Police Emergency **9-1-1**

Fire Department
fire@wilmette.com 251-1101

Museum
museum@wilmette.com 853-7666

Police Department
police@wilmette.com 256-1200

Public Works Department
pubworks@wilmette.com
General..... 853-7500
After Hour Emergency..... 256-1200

Water Management 853-7535

Village Hall **251-2700**
Community
Development 853-7550
Engineering 853-7660
Finance..... 853-7609
Health 853-7507
Clerk 853-7511

Village Manager
Timothy J. Frenzer..... 853-7509
frenzert@wilmette.com

Other
Park District 256-6100
Library 256-5025
Comcast ..... (866) 594-1234
AT&T..... (800) 244-4444
NICOR Gas ..... (888) 642-6748

THE VILLAGE OF Wilmette EST. 1872
1200 Wilmette Avenue
Wilmette, Illinois 60091

PRESORT STD.
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WILMETTE, IL 60091
PERMIT NO. 26

Local Postal Customer
Wilmette, IL 60091

Other
Commonwealth Edison .....(888) 334-7661
Advanced Disposal Services (847) 272-4145

Village Board
President
Bob Bielinski / bielinskib@wilmette.com 227-7272

Trustees
Carol Ducommun / ducommunc@wilmette.com 256-5418
Cameron Krueger / kruegerc@wilmette.com 922-2009
Ted McKenna / mckennat@wilmette.com 256-3328
Senta Plunkett / plunketts@wilmette.com 853-7509
Dan Sullivan / sullivand@wilmette.com 853-7509
Julie Wolf / wolfj@wilmette.com 251-7104

www.wilmette.com • Business Hours: Monday through Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Village Holiday
Village offices will be closed on Monday, May 29th in observance of Memorial Day. Additionally, refuse and recycling collection will be delayed by one day during the week of May 29th. For questions, please call Public Works at (847) 853-7500.

Upcoming Meetings

The **Village Board** meets on the second and fourth Tuesday each month at 7:30 p.m.

The **Zoning Board of Appeals** meets on the first and third Wednesday each month at 7:30 p.m.

The **Plan Commission** meets on the first Tuesday each month at 7:00 p.m.

Website: www.wilmette.com

Business Hours:
Monday through Friday • 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Stormwater FAQ

VILLAGE OF WILMETTE
STORMWATER
ACTION PLAN

Q: What problem is the Village trying to solve?

A: The sewers west of Ridge Road routinely surcharge during moderate rain events, resulting in widespread street and overland flooding. This flooding occurs due to aging infrastructure and inadequate capacity of the current storm sewer system to handle rain water from even moderate storms.

The existing storm sewers west of Ridge Road are undersized such that a “2-year” storm event (a storm with a 50% chance of occurring in any given year), which is less than two inches of rain over a three hour period, will cause street flooding in some areas west of Ridge Road.

During intense storms, the street flooding can, in the worst cases, extend to the foundation of a home. An estimated 700 homes west of Ridge Road are susceptible to structure damage during the most intense rain events. In the worst of the more recent storms, some streets west of Ridge Road have experienced standing water as high as three feet.

Wilmette’s consulting engineer estimates that 20% of roadways west of Ridge Road experience standing water during a “10-year” storm event (a storm with a 10% chance of occurring in any given year), 30% of roadways west of Ridge Road experience standing water during a 25-year storm event (4% chance in any given year), and 42% of roadways west of Ridge Road experience standing water during a 100-year storm event (1% chance in any year).

Notwithstanding the historical, statistical definitions of these storm events, Wilmette has experienced nine 10-year storm events, four 25-year storm events, two 50-year storm events, two 70-year storm events, and five 100-year storm events over the past 35 years.

Q: What solution is proposed to solve these stormwater problems?

A: At this point in time, it appears that the most cost-effective option to reduce flooding west of Ridge Road is building eight miles of new storm sewer pipes (next to and connected to our existing sewer pipes), which would create greater capacity to hold stormwater and increase the rate at which stormwater flows out of west-side neighborhoods.

The current proposed project for the storm sewers west of Ridge Road is similar to the sewer improvement program that was implemented for the combined sewer system east of Ridge Road in the 1990’s.

Q: How many homes will benefit from this project?

A: All homeowners west of Ridge Road, even those not directly impacted by overland flooding, will benefit from the project. By increasing the capacity and rate at which stormwater flows out of west-side neighborhoods, many of the negative impacts of excess stormwater should be lessened.

The frequency, severity and duration of street and overland flooding will be reduced as a result of more capacity in the storm sewers and increased rate of flow to remove stormwater from west-side neighborhoods.

Hydrostatic pressure from water absorbed in the ground, which can cause foundation seepage, may be reduced as a result. This is of particular importance during long storms, or consecutive rain events that occur over a short period of time.

In addition, creating more storage for stormwater and removing stormwater more quickly may result in less inflow and infiltration into the sanitary side of the separate sewer system west of Ridge Road during major storm events.

THE VILLAGE OF Wilmette EST. 1872

Q: How did the Village arrive at the current proposed solution?

A: In late 2013, the Village hired an engineering firm as a stormwater consultant to study flooding issues west of Ridge Road. The study began with public engagement to learn about residents' flooding experience and was followed by a comprehensive hydraulic and hydrologic modeling of the storm sewer system.

The goal of the engineer's storm sewer study was to determine the location of critical "bottlenecks" within the system and to identify projects that would eliminate flooding during a 10-year storm event (a storm with a 10% chance of occurring in any given year). This is the same design standard used today when building new residential subdivisions and the same standard used for the combined sewer system improvements east of Ridge Road which took place in the 1990's. The engineer's study included nine different variations of proposed solutions for the Village to consider.

Through the course of 2015 and 2016, the Village Board and its Municipal Services Committee held several public meetings to discuss the study and refine the nine alternatives. During this process, the Village heard testimony from many residents.

Ultimately, the conclusion reached by the engineers is that the existing storm sewer pipes are simply too small. At this point in time, it appears that the most cost-effective option to reduce flooding west of Ridge Road is building a new system of storm sewer pipes (next to and connected to our existing sewer pipes), which would create greater capacity to hold stormwater and increase the rate at which stormwater flows out of west-side neighborhoods.

Q: Will building the current proposed solution mean my street will never flood again?

A: Unfortunately, no. The project under consideration will only eliminate street flooding for a 10-year storm (a storm with a 10% chance of occurring in any given year). Larger rain events will still exceed the capacity of the storm sewers and may result in street and overland flooding. However, there will be less flooding for shorter periods of time than currently experienced. The current proposed solution will result in a 66% reduction of the duration of street flooding in the worst storm events.

It is important to remember that every storm sewer system, no matter how big, has a finite capacity that is always capable of being exceeded by a storm. No one can predict how big a storm may strike in the future, so there can never be a "guarantee" that flooding will not occur.

Q: How much will the current proposed project cost and how will it be paid for?

A: The current proposed stormwater improvement project is estimated to cost $77 million and would take up to five years to complete. Sewer construction is costly because it involves digging up the roads, relocating other utilities as needed, installing new pipes and restoring the street to existing conditions.

The Village would issue long-term bonds to pay for the engineering and construction costs, and the debt would be repaid over 30 years.

In Wilmette, we use a combination of both property taxes and user fees to pay for the costs of our services, including debt associated with these types of projects. If the Village elects to move forward with the project, there will be a public discussion of the appropriate funding method, which may include increasing the current sewer fee, increasing the property tax levy, or creating a new stormwater utility fee.

Q: Are there less costly alternatives?

A: The consulting engineer who performed the stormwater study presented an exhaustive review of options ranging in cost from $40 million to $150 million. They considered above-ground detention, below-ground detention, green infrastructure and even looked at connecting to Glenview's sewer system as a source of relief. All of the options considered had challenges associated with them, but most importantly, the lower cost options did not provide adequate flood relief.

Q: How much will the project cost me as a homeowner?

A: The median water/sewer bill in Wilmette is projected to increase by $98 per quarterly billing cycle. The Village's website includes a water/sewer bill calculator which you can use to estimate the cost to you based on your actual water/sewer bill.

The calculator can be found on the Village website at http://tinyurl.com/jyjbwdo.

Q: Is the cost estimate of $77 million accurate?

A: Given the scope and cost of the proposed project, the Village has hired a second consulting engineer to complete a technical review and value-engineering study of the project. The second firm will also evaluate whether there are other alternatives which the Village could consider. This step is needed to ensure that the Village is building the most cost-effective project that will achieve the best results, and to verify that cost estimates are reliable. As a steward of your tax dollars, it is critical that the Village complete this study before a decision whether or not to proceed with any project is made.

During the first half of 2017, the consulting engineer will review the current proposed solution, determine whether it is the most appropriate solution, and confirm that the cost estimates are accurate. The initial results of this study will be reported to the Village Board in late spring/early summer.

Q: Why can't the Village just use rain barrels or other green infrastructure throughout the Village to solve the problem?

A: Green infrastructure, such as rain barrels and bioswales, will be an important component of any future project, especially as it relates to addressing localized flooding issues in specific blocks or neighborhoods. With the support of grant funds, the Village has already constructed permeable alleys and rain gardens in cul de sac circles as demonstration projects to evaluate their performance. Unfortunately, the magnitude of the Village's stormwater problem is such that green infrastructure alone cannot mitigate the issue. For example, estimates show it would take hundreds of rain barrels on every individual property throughout the Village to reduce street flooding and capture the rain water generated by intense storm events.

Q: I frequently have basement sewer backups during heavy rain events. Will this project help with this problem?

A: Building the current proposed stormwater project will not solve the sanitary basement backup problems many homes in our community experience.

The sewer system west of Ridge Road is separated, meaning there is one set of sewer pipes for sanitary flows (wastewater) and a second set of pipes for stormwater. The proposed project will add capacity to the storm sewer system west of Ridge Road, so street and overland flooding will be reduced during moderate and heavy rain events.

However, a secondary benefit of building larger storm sewers is less inflow and infiltration of stormwater into the sanitary system. During dry days, there is plenty of capacity in the existing sanitary sewer system. During rain events, however, stormwater can enter the sanitary sewers through a number of different sources including private services which are the sewer pipes that connect homes to the Village's main sewers. This excess stormwater puts pressure on the sanitary system by exceeding its capacity and causing it to surcharge. Surcharged sanitary sewers can lead to basement backups.

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STORMWATER
ACTION PLAN

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EST. 1872

Q: How do I prevent basement backups in my home?

A: The only way to prevent basement backups is by installing an overhead sewer system (recommended) or flood control system.

To assist residents in identifying how and why their homes flood, the Village has identified engineering firms that will conduct independent flood assessments for a fixed price. The cost for this assessment ranges from $300 to $625. For a list of engineers, visit the Village website's Stormwater Management page at http://tinyurl.com/h9ydm8h.

Q: Can't homeowners who are experiencing street and overland flooding make investments in their homes to protect themselves?

A: The overland flooding that is addressed by this project is street flooding that extends across yards and in some cases enters into homes. There is little that can be done by a homeowner to protect their property from this type of overland flooding, which results from sewers that were mostly built in the 1950's and 1960's. It is a different problem from basement backups from the sanitary sewer system, which may be addressed by installation of an overhead sewer in a home.

Q: I don't live west of Ridge Road. Can't this be done as a Special Service Area or by Special Assessment so I don't have to pay for a project that will not directly benefit me?

A: In 1991, the Village Board elected to proceed with a $37 million sewer improvement program for the combined sewers east of Ridge Road, an expenditure equivalent to $66 million in today's dollars. As this project progressed, the improvements were sufficient enough that the program was scaled back, and the investment in the east side combined sewer system was $28 million, or $43 million in today's dollars.

All of the many sewer improvements completed in the Village, both east of Ridge Road and west of Ridge Road, have always been funded by all taxpayers even though each sewer project provided direct benefits to only a part of the Village. Localized, neighborhood funding is possible, but would represent a significant policy change in how major infrastructure projects are funded in Wilmette.

General infrastructure improvements, whether they be sewers, road repairs, sidewalks, or alleys, always benefit one group of residents more than others. For example, the residents living on a recently repaved street directly benefit from the improvements, while those living throughout the community indirectly benefit through increased property values and the ability to access the improved street while commuting through Wilmette. While almost every infrastructure project is local in nature, the Village has always funded such projects across all taxpayers in the community.

Q: Has the Village already decided to proceed with this project and what are the next steps?

A: No decision has been made on whether to proceed with the current proposed stormwater improvement project at this time.

In January of 2017, the Village hired a second engineering firm to review the original stormwater study, and to confirm that the alternatives presented and the associated costs were accurate and reliable. This study is ongoing, and initial results will be presented in late spring/early summer of 2017. A series of public meetings will be held to review the value engineering report and continue deliberations. All of these meetings will be open to the public and advertised in the Village's weekly e-news email. To sign-up for e-news, visit the Village website or simply text 'WILMETTE' to 22828.

Residents are encouraged to email their comments on the current proposed project to sewers@wilmette.com. All comments are provided to the Village Board and posted on the Village website.

THE VILLAGE OF Wilmette EST. 1872