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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Community Playfield Selected as Preferred Site for Stormwater Detention; 98% of At-Risk Wilmette Households West of Ridge Road Will Have 10-Year Flood Protection**

WILMETTE, IL. – (February 22, 2019) – Community Playfields has been identified as the preferred site of the first underground storage reservoir for the Village’s Neighborhood Storage Project. The Village Board held a special meeting in February 2019 to continue discussions related to the stormwater improvement project and based on feedback from the community, Park District, and Village engineers, the Village Board identified Community Playfields as the preferred location instead of Centennial Park.

The Village Board unanimously agreed to optimize the Neighborhood Storage Project to provide 10-year flood protection for 98% of at-risk households west of Ridge Road. The initial project, approved in Spring 2018, was estimated to protect 71% of at-risk households at an approximate cost of \$55 million. By adding additional storm sewers and increasing the size of underground reservoirs, the project will now protect additional homes from flood inundation during 10-year rain events.

“Thanks to great work from the Village’s engineering team, we are able to provide 10-year flood protection to more homes west of Ridge Road for \$30 million less than projects with comparable benefits which were previously considered by the Village Board,” said Village President Bob Bielinski. “This validates the Board’s thorough process which identified the Neighborhood Storage Project as the appropriate alternative while having committed to enhancing the project’s benefits in a cost effective manner.”

The Village and Park District continue to work collaboratively on the Neighborhood Storage Project which will provide flood relief to thousands of Wilmette residents and improved park amenities for the entire community. The Park District will now hold a series of public meetings over the next several months to gather community input on amenities that could be incorporated into the three impacted parks, Community Playfield, Hibbard Park and Thornwood Park.

The Park District will hold public hearings at 7:30 pm at the Village Hall Council Chambers on the following dates:

- March 11 (to discuss Community Playfield);
- April 8 (to discuss Hibbard Park); and
- May 13 (to discuss Thornwood Park).

The Park District will host public input sessions at each park at 6:30 pm on the following dates/locations:

- April 3 at Community Playfield;
- April 24 at Hibbard Park; and
- May 22 at Thornwood Park.

In the event of inclement weather, the Community Playfield and Thornwood Park sessions will take place at the Mallinckrodt Center and the Hibbard Park session would take place at the Community Recreation Center.

The Neighborhood Storage Project is anticipated to provide an estimated 42.5 acre feet of underground storage at Community Playfield, Hibbard Park, and Thornwood Park.

### **Background**

Following five years of dedicated study and an intensive public education campaign, the Wilmette Board of Trustees voted on April 17, 2018, to pursue a stormwater improvement project to address overland flooding issues for residents who live west of Ridge Road.

A majority of the Board of Trustees voted to proceed with Neighborhood Storage Project at an estimated cost of \$55 million. The other projects under consideration were sewer expansion at an estimated cost of \$98 million (2018 dollars) and a hybrid approach of sewer expansion and Neighborhood Storage.

**Village of Wilmette:** Contact Wilmette Engineering & Public Works Director Brigitte Berger-Raish at 847-853-7627 or [bergerb@wilmette.com](mailto:bergerb@wilmette.com).