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## Downers Grove Sanitary District

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### **Downers Grove Sanitary District Newsletter**

**May, 2014**

The Downers Grove Sanitary District is a separate unit of local government that provides sanitary sewerage service for you. We operate independently from your city or village. Our Board of Trustees meets monthly at the District office. These evening meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for public comment. The District also continues to evaluate and improve the transparency of its operations through increased reporting to the state and county, along with providing additional information on the District website. We have included a Customer Survey to seek your input on issues of importance to you as a District customer. Please return the enclosed postage-prepaid survey at your earliest convenience. We would appreciate your input!

#### **CUSTOMER SERVICE, OUR FIRST PRIORITY**

District residents should call the District office at 630-969-0664 for information on our services and programs. Normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. Technicians are available at all hours to respond to emergencies, such as backups or sanitary manhole overflows.

Our website, [www.dgsd.org](http://www.dgsd.org), includes more detailed information on all District activities and services.



The District now has a company Facebook page! Follow us at [www.facebook.com/downersgrovesd](http://www.facebook.com/downersgrovesd) for the District's latest news and information direct to you.



As the flushable wipes industry continues to grow, the District reminds residents not to flush any type of wipes. Wipes are clogging sewer pipes and causing issues for sewer pump stations and wastewater treatment centers all over the country, including ours. Even if the label reads "flushable," the District recommends disposing of wipes in a trashcan, not the toilet.

Reporting of all sanitary sewer backups is essential to providing the information necessary for monitoring of sewer system conditions, identification of problem areas and eligibility for assistance programs. District personnel will investigate backups to determine the cause and appropriate corrective action. **Residents should note that charges by plumbers or sewer contractors for work**

performed prior to contacting the District are generally not eligible under our assistance programs. The programs available to assist residents with prevention and correction of problems that may cause sanitary sewer backups include:

#### **Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program**

If a repair to your building sanitary service is necessary, the work may be eligible under the Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program. Under the Program, the District will repair, rehabilitate or replace a building sanitary service under certain conditions. The Program covers the entire building sanitary service from the building to the public sewer.

To qualify for an initial investigation, property owners are usually only required to submit a Program Application and a sewer rodding or televising invoice that occurred within the

previous 12 months. The District will determine if the cause of repeated maintenance activity is a problem eligible for participation and, if so, the appropriate corrective measures. This Program is not a substitute for and does not cover routine maintenance of the building sanitary service such as rodding. This Program also does not transfer ownership of the building sanitary service to the District.

### Reimbursement Program for the Installation of Overhead Sewer or Backflow Prevention Devices

The District requires new construction to include plumbing

features needed to protect property from backups that can occur at any time. Owners of older buildings should consider improvements needed to provide this level of protection. A cost sharing program is available for residents who have experienced sewer backup problems and desire to convert to an overhead sewer system or install backflow prevention devices.

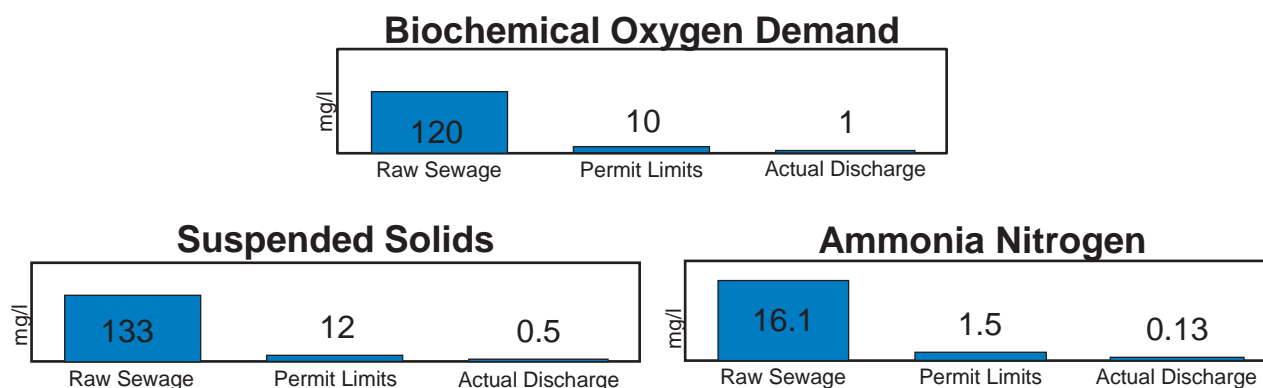
### Reimbursement Program for Sanitary Sewer Backups Caused by Blockages of the Public Sanitary Sewer

If District personnel determine that the sanitary sewer backup was caused by a blockage of the public sanitary sewer, the resident

may be eligible for reimbursement of some costs associated with the backup. Please note that sanitary sewer backups occurring as a result of precipitation related high flow conditions in the public sanitary sewer are not eligible for reimbursement under this Program. Blockages or problems of any nature in the building sanitary service are not eligible for reimbursement under this Program.

## WASTEWATER TREATMENT

The District's Wastewater Treatment Center operates under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. The District facility discharges treated water to the East Branch of the DuPage River that is significantly better than permit requirements establishing stringent protective criteria. The charts below indicate the successful treatment provided by the Wastewater Treatment Center during 2013 for three major NPDES permit parameters. The parameters are indicated in milligrams per liter (mg/l):



The District continues to track regulatory efforts to establish nutrient standards for wastewater treatment plants. With continuing uncertainty about the environmental benefits of nutrient controls, the District is discussing a schedule with Illinois EPA that provides time for the District to develop lower-cost nutrient control technologies. The schedule would also increase our participation with the DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup to better understand the impacts of nutrients in our watershed, and to help fund restoration projects in our receiving stream, with the goal of achieving the most cost-effective environmental improvements with limited available resources.

## CARING FOR OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

The District's most valuable asset is the sewer collection system, including over 250 miles of gravity sewers. Beyond these sewers, there are nearly 300 miles

of privately owned building service pipes connecting buildings to the public mains owned by the District.

The system dates back as far as 1904, and requires a substantial commitment of resources to

maintain in satisfactory working condition, meeting residents' expectations for service and regulatory requirements.

The most significant challenge is the appearance of storm and ground water, known as

infiltration and inflow (I/I), in sewers intended to carry only sanitary waste from plumbing fixtures. This extraneous water can cause backups and overflows by exceeding the capacity to carry sanitary waste, and is costly to transport and treat.

The District has a comprehensive I/I removal and sewer system rehabilitation policy. Priority is given to areas identified through flow monitoring, field observations and backup/surcharge reports. State-of-the-art techniques are employed, ranging from open-cut replacement to various trenchless technologies such as cured-in-place lining and grouting. Ordinances regulating private property I/I sources are enforced, and rehabilitation is conducted on both public and private sources consistent with District programs.

## USER CHARGE SYSTEM

The District's user charge consists of two components: a volume charge based on water consumption and a monthly service fee. The volume charge

remains at \$1.65 per 1000 gallons of water consumption and the monthly fee was increased from \$10.00 to \$11.00 per account effective April 6, 2014. Surcharge and sampling and monitoring charges assessed to commercial and industrial users increased effective April 6, 2014. The user charge is evaluated annually and is set to collect the revenues needed to cover the cost of sewer system and treatment plant operation, maintenance and replacement, and District administration.

## PAYING YOUR BILL

In addition to paying by mail, drop box, or at the District's office, bills may be paid through an automatic debiting of your checking account, a simple way to make sure your bill is paid on time. Enrollment is easy and may be done online at the District's website or by returning the enclosed yellow enrollment form to the District. If you already participate in this program, a new authorization form is not required.

If you wish to pay your bill by credit card or electronic check,

the District participates in an online program offered by the Illinois State Treasurer's office called E-PAY. Please note that convenience fees will apply, and this is only available online, not at the District's office. A link for selecting this payment option is available at the District's website.

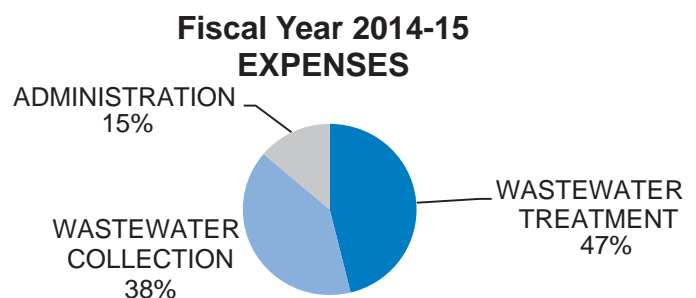
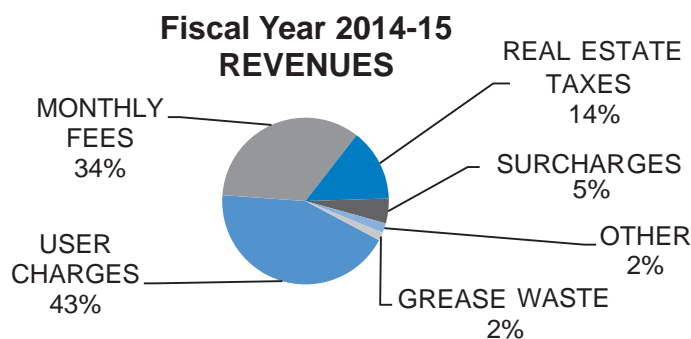
Please note that if you pay by paper check, your check is processed using an electronic check conversion process. Each paper check is processed as an image and securely transmitted to the District's bank for deposit, resulting in a debit from your account through electronic funds transfer.

Should you plan to move, be sure to contact the office to arrange for final billing.

Most District users pay their bills timely, which helps to mitigate rate increases and reduce the resources needed to process the user charge system. However, bills that are not paid timely may result in late fees, collection charges, liens and discontinuance of sewer and/or water service.

## BUDGET AND FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The District has implemented a five-year plan, which projects revenues and expenses for all District activities, available for review on our web site. For the current fiscal year, general corporate revenues are projected to be \$7.625 million and expenses are projected to be \$7.509 million. The expenses include \$2,819,890 for the sewer system, \$3,568,940 for wastewater treatment, and \$1,120,620 for administration. The amount of revenues greater than expenses will result in an increase in the District's operating fund balance. The charts below show the major types of revenues and expenses necessary for operations.



## REAL ESTATE TAXES

This year, the District has levied \$1,111,000 for repairs to the sanitary sewer infrastructure, a 2.52% increase from last year's levy. This levy results in a tax rate of \$0.0436 per \$100 of assessed value. A single-family residence with a market value of \$300,000 will pay \$43.60 in real estate taxes to the District in 2014.

## BIOSOLIDS PROGRAM

The District generates Class A biosolids as a by-product of the treatment process. This product is a high quality fertilizer available to the public free of charge. Biosolids are available for pick-up at our station located at Katrine and Curtiss (west of Belmont), or we will deliver larger quantities. A brochure is enclosed with further information.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The District continues to improve its energy efficiency, leveraging incentive programs to upgrade facilities to reduce energy usage and associated costs. This year we are beginning operation of a newly constructed electrical generation facility that converts digester gas into electricity. We received \$475,000 in grant funds from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to help pay for this project that reduces our treatment plant electricity costs by half, saving over \$150,000 per year.

We will continue our program to upgrade all District lighting fixtures to high-efficiency lighting subsidized by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

The wastewater treatment process generates methane gas that is captured and used for process heating and dehumidification, saving over \$153,000 in natural gas costs in 2013. Successful ongoing operation of other recently constructed improvements continues to reduce our overall energy use.

## WATERSHED CONSORTIUM

The District is a founding member and active participant in the DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup. The Workgroup is a consortium of local governments dedicated to managing the valuable stream resources of the East and West Branches of the DuPage River and Salt Creek. The Workgroup conducts state-of-the-art monitoring of stream biology, chemistry and habitat, using the data to promote projects and activities to cost-effectively restore these urbanized streams for their intended uses. Further information is available at [www.drscw.org](http://www.drscw.org).

## REDUCE INTERNAL PLUMBING PROBLEMS

To reduce the likelihood of internal plumbing problems in addition to service line backups

and blockages in the public sewer, residents are reminded that most everyday use items should not be disposed of into the sanitary sewer. These items include disposable wipes (sometimes labeled 'flushable' which are **not** flushable in our system), personal hygiene products, disposable toilet bowl cleaner brushes and pads, disposable diapers, baby wipes, dental floss, razor blades, cat litter, grease and oil, and large quantities of food through the garbage disposal or toilet. These items are prohibited because they do not dissolve in wastewater, and therefore easily accumulate to cause blockages, equipment damage and sewer backups.

## PROHIBITED DISPOSAL

Pharmaceuticals should be recycled at appropriate facilities. A "Household Hazardous Waste" information sheet listing what should never be disposed of into the sanitary sewer is available from the District office or at the following link: [www.wef.org/PublicInformation/page.aspx?id=90](http://www.wef.org/PublicInformation/page.aspx?id=90).

## RECREATIONAL VEHICLE DUMPING STATION

A recreational vehicle dumping station is available at the District Administration Center located at 2710 Curtiss Street, Downers Grove. The station is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The station is not open on weekends and holidays.

We hope that you will attend the Wastewater Treatment Center Open House on Saturday, October 4, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. until noon. If you have any questions regarding any of the information contained in this newsletter, please feel free to contact the District office or view our web site at [www.dgsd.org](http://www.dgsd.org).

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
DOWNERS GROVE SANITARY DISTRICT**