

**Board of Trustees**

Amy E. Sejnost  
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**General Manager**  
Amy R. Underwood, P.E.

**Legal Counsel**  
Daniel McCormick, P.C.

*Providing a Better Environment for South Central DuPage County*

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Decennial Committee (Amy E. Sejnost, Jeremy M. Wang, Mark Eddington, Amy R. Underwood, Carly Shaw, Kenneth J. Rathje, Robert T. Jungwirth, Mark Scacco and Lawrence C. Cox)

**From:** Amy R. Underwood, General Manager

**Date:** October 18, 2024

**Subject:** October 22, 2024, Decennial Committee Meeting

Copies of documentation for the following agenda items are enclosed:

- Proposed Agenda
- Minutes of the September 24, 2024, Committee meeting
- Draft Local Government Efficiency Act report, including cover letter and the Organizational Service Delivery Review and Analysis report
- Draft Minutes of the October 22, 2024, Committee meeting

The Northern Illinois University (NIU) Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) has addressed comments received on the Organizational Service Delivery Review and Analysis report from the Committee at its September 24, 2024, meeting. I have drafted a cover letter for the Committee's consideration which provides some additional details that the Committee requested but that NIU-CGS did not provide in their revised report. In addition, I added a list of ordinances, policies and procedures and a list of current intergovernmental agreements as these were specifically mentioned in the Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency Act.

Per the Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency Act, the Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency is automatically dissolved upon submittal of the report to the County. In the event that this is the Committee's last meeting, we will need to approve the minutes of the meeting at the end of the meeting. To that end, draft minutes have been started which we will finish writing during the meeting.

cc: DM

**DOWNERS GROVE SANITARY DISTRICT  
DECENNIAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
OCTOBER 22, 2024 – 6:00 PM  
BOARD ROOM**

**PROPOSED AGENDA**

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 24, 2024
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT
- III. APPROVAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT REPORT
  - A. ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW AND ANALYSIS REPORT
  - B. COVER LETTER
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 22, 2024

DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY  
MINUTES

September 24, 2024

A meeting of the Downers Grove Sanitary District Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency was held on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, convening at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the District's Administration Center, 2710 Curtiss Street, Downers Grove. Present were the following Committee members: Trustees Amy E. Sejnost, Jeremy M. Wang, and Mark Eddington; Board of Local Improvements Members Kenneth J. Rathje and Robert T. Jungwirth; General Manager Amy R. Underwood; and Senior Advisor Lawrence C. Cox. Information Coordinator Alyssa J. Caballero and Craig Anderson from the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Center for Government Studies (CGS) also attended. The following Committee members were absent: Board of Local Improvements Member Mark J. Scacco and Administrative Supervisor Carly Shaw.

Minutes of Meeting – July 16, 2024

A motion was made by Trustee Wang seconded by Trustee Eddington approving the minutes of the meeting held on July 16, 2024 and authorizing the President and Clerk to sign same. The motion carried.

Public Comment - None

Organizational Service Delivery Review and Analysis Update

Craig Anderson from NIU CGS presented a draft of the report his team compiled.

Committee members presented their comments on the draft and requested more information and data be added to the report to better highlight the breadth of work the District does for the DuPage County Board and the community. Mr. Anderson accepted the feedback and noted he would revise the report.

The schedule for the final meeting was discussed. General Manager Underwood stated she would coordinate a date for the final meeting with the NIU CGS team once they have reviewed all the Committee members' comments. She will communicate the date to the Committee members once it is set.

A motion was made by Trustee Eddington seconded by Trustee Wang to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m. The motion carried.

Approved: October 22, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chair/District President

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

**Board of Trustees**

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*President*

Jeremy M. Wang  
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*Clerk*



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**DRAFT,**  
**pending approval**

*Providing a Better Environment for South Central DuPage County*

October 23, 2024

Submitted to DuPage County via Local Government Efficiency Act Report Submission Portal

**Re: Downers Grove Sanitary District Local Government Efficiency Act Report**

To Whom It Concerns:

The Downers Grove Sanitary District (DGSD or District) is pleased to submit this letter and its attachments collectively as the District's Local Government Efficiency Act Report as required by the Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency Act, Public Act 102-1088, and as amended by Public Act 102-1136. The DGSD Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency Act approved this report on October 22, 2024. The report is due November 16, 2024.

**Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency Act**

As required by the Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency Act, the District formed a Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency (Committee) on May 16, 2023. A position on the Committee was vacated when then District President Wallace D. Van Buren passed away in January of 2024. Trustee Mark Eddington was appointed to the Committee on April 16, 2024, to fill the vacant position.

The Committee consists of the following members:

- Amy E. Sejnost, Board of Trustees President/Committee Chair
- Jeremy M. Wang, Board of Trustees Vice President
- Mark Eddington, Board of Trustees Clerk
- Kenneth J. Rathje, Board of Local Improvements President
- Robert T. Jungwirth, Board of Local Improvements Member
- Mark Scacco, Board of Local Improvements Member
- Amy R. Underwood, General Manager
- Carly Shaw, Administrative Supervisor
- Lawrence C. Cox, Senior Advisor

Committee meetings were held on the following days:

- July 16, 2024
- September 24, 2024
- October 22, 2024

Meeting minutes for these meetings are provided in Attachment A. In addition, meeting agendas, minutes and packets are posted on the District's website.

### **Organizational Service Delivery Review and Analysis**

The District commissioned the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies (NIU-CGS) to review and analyze the District's service delivery and organization design and to prepare a report to comply with the Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency Act. NIU-CGS prepared the report titled "Organizational Service Delivery Review and Analysis and Illinois Government Efficiency Act Compliance" which is provided in Attachment B. The report was presented to the Committee for review, and NIU-CGS has incorporated the Committee's comments into the report.

In addition to the report prepared by NIU-CGS, the Committee requested that the following supplemental information be provided to ensure that the requirements of the Local Government Efficiency Act are addressed.

### **Ordinances, Policies and Procedures**

District ordinances, policies and procedures include but are not limited to the following:

- An Ordinance Regulating the Use of Sanitary Sewers (Sewer Use Ordinance)
- Pretreatment Ordinance
- Procurement Policy
- Prequalification Policy
- Credit Card and Line of Credit Use Policies and Procedures
- Investment Policy
- Fund Balance/Net Assets Policy
- Capital Assets Policy
- Internal Controls Documentation
- Identity Theft Protection Program
- Employee Policy Manual
- Safety Manual and other miscellaneous safety related programs, procedures and guidelines
- Sewer System Capacity, Management, Operations and Maintenance (CMOM) Plan
- Unsewered Area Plan
- Biosolids Distribution Brochure
- Biosolids Handbook

- Sanitary Sewer Backups and Sewer Rodding Handout
- BSSRAP (Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program) Packet
- I/I (Inflow and Infiltration) Program Packet
- Cost Reimbursement Program for the Installation of Overhead Sewers Packet, including Sanitary Sewer Backup Handbook
- BURP (Back-Up Reimbursement Program) Packet
- Sewer Contractor's Checklist, Sewer Design Manual, sewer construction specifications and standard construction details

These documents are updated as needed to meet current laws and regulations and to ensure that the District continues providing the highest level of service to its customers in a fair and transparent manner, as efficiently as possible and while being good stewards of its customers' investment in the District.

### **Intergovernmental Agreements**

The District has the following long-term intergovernmental agreements (IGA) with other units of local government:

- DuPage County for sharing Geographic Information System (GIS) data
- Village of Downers Grove for sharing of Geographic Information System (GIS) data
- Village of Downers Grove for water consumption records and discontinuance of water service
- Village of Downers Grove for repairs and/or maintenance of public improvements
- Village of Downers Grove with regard to permitting and bonding requirements
- Village of Lisle for water consumption records and discontinuance of water service
- Village of Oak Brook for water consumption records
- Village of Westmont for permitting and bonding requirements
- Village of Westmont for water consumption records and discontinuance of water service

In addition to these ongoing IGAs, the District will execute IGAs with other units of government as individual projects or needs arise. For example, the District currently has an IGA with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County for replacement of a bridge which carries a sanitary sewer pipe over St. Joseph Creek in the Maple Grove Forest Preserve.

### **Financial**

In addition to the information on the District's finances and fiscal practices found in the attached report, it is worth noting the current status of the District's fiscal health. At the end of Fiscal Year 2023-24, DGSD had net fixed assets of \$73,343,023, cash and investments totaling \$10,923,907

and long-term debt of \$3,139,792. The debt is an interest free loan through the Illinois Environment Protection Agency State Revolving Fund program.

### Typical Cost of Residential Service

Downers Grove Sanitary District customers currently pay \$2.75 per 1,000 gallons and a \$20 monthly fee for wastewater collection and treatment services. For comparison, user rates of the other four sanitary districts in DuPage County (i.e., Flagg Creek Water Reclamation District, Fox Metro Water Reclamation District, Salt Creek Sanitary District and Wheaton Sanitary District) range between \$3.25 and \$7.87 per 1,000 gallons. The monthly fees for the other four sanitary districts range between \$0 and \$15.65.

The Downers Grove Sanitary District levies property taxes for sanitary sewer system repairs and replacements. For a home assessed at the median value in the DGSD service area, the District estimates a customer pays \$45.37 per year based on the 2022 final tax rate. DGSD is the only sanitary district in DuPage County that collects property taxes.

The estimated total annual cost to a typical residential customer of the Downers Grove Sanitary District is currently \$549.37, assuming 96,000 gallons per year is used. For comparison, the estimated total annual cost for a typical resident customer of the other four DuPage County Sanitary Districts ranges between \$499.80 and \$760.00.

DGSD user rates and monthly fees, as well as the other rates and fees, are reviewed annually as part of the budget preparation and increased if necessary to ensure that the guidelines of the Fund Balance/Net Assets Policy are met.

### Accountability

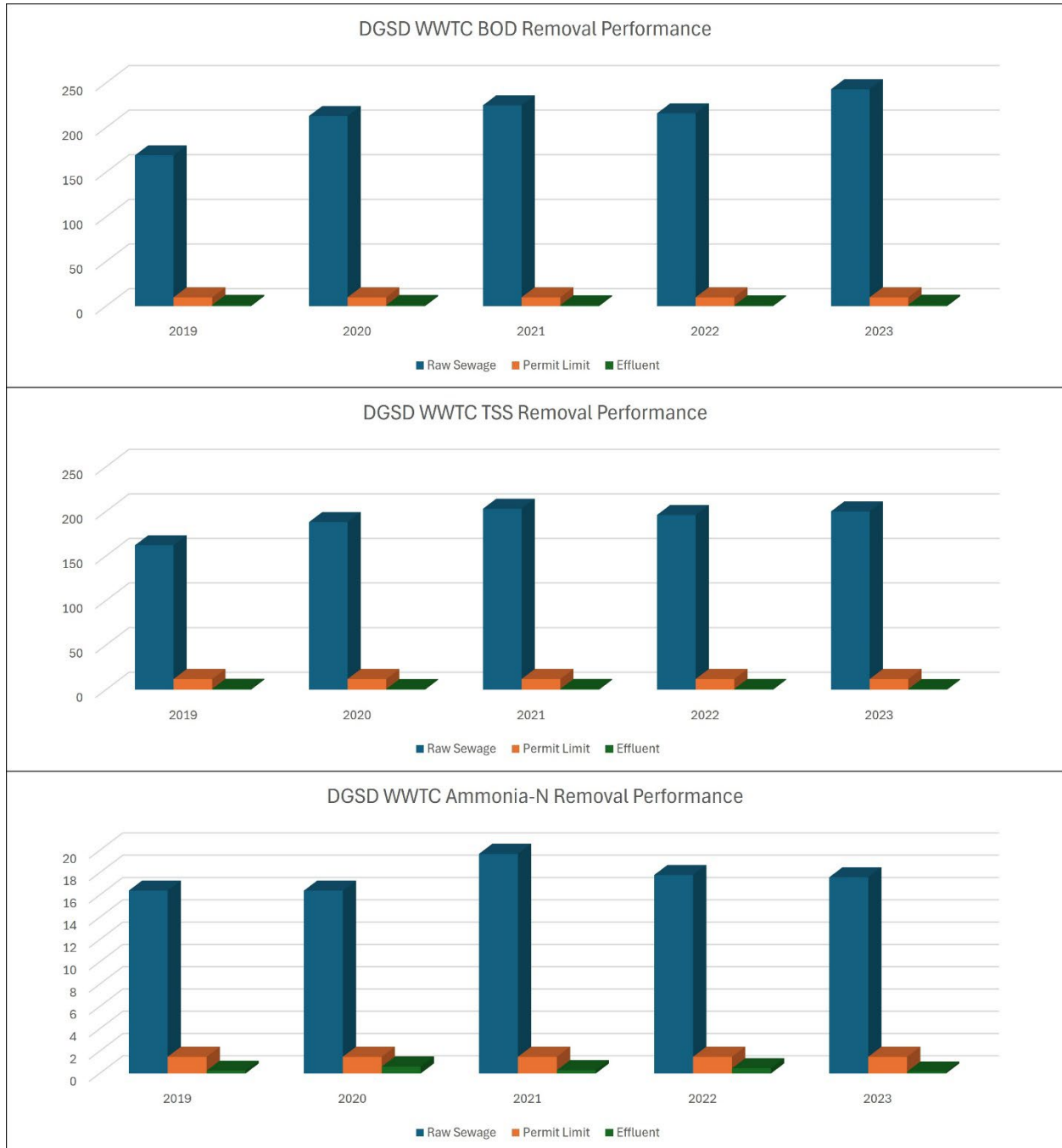
The District submits documents to the DuPage County Board Chair's Office in accordance with County Ordinance OCB-001-11 which requires County appointed bodies to provide specific management information either annually or within 30 days of modifications, depending the on document.

The DuPage County Ethics Ordinance is adopted within the District's Ethics Ordinance. All District Staff as well as the Trustees and members of the Board of Local Improvements complete ethics training through DuPage County annually.

The Trustees, Board of Local Improvements members, the General Manager and all Supervisors submit a statement of economic interest to DuPage County annually.

Environmental Compliance

The attached report mentions that the treated water discharged from the District’s Wastewater Treatment Center (WWTC) is better than the required by its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. The following graphs illustrate the performance of the WWTC over the last five years, comparing the influent and effluent concentrations of the three major pollutants identified in the District’s NPDES permit with the corresponding permit limits.





The District received Peak Performance Silver Awards from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) in 2021 and 2023.

The District's commitment to the environment goes beyond what is required by its permits. The attached report describes the District's voluntary efforts to make its WWTC a net-zero energy facility. For these efforts, the District was recognized in 2016 by NACWA, the Water Environment Federation, the Water Environment Research Foundation and the United States Environmental Protection Agency as a "Utility of the Future." The District was also received an Earth Flag from SCARCE in 2020 to recognize its sustainability and energy efficiency efforts.

### **Conclusion**

The District remains committed to accountable and efficient operations and will fulfill this through implementation of the recommendations and best practices identified in the attached report.

Sincerely,

DOWNERS GROVE SANITARY DISTRICT

Amy E. Sejnost  
President/Committee Chair

Enclosures

cc: DGSD Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency

**ATTACHMENT A**

**DOWNERS GROVE SANITARY DISTRICT  
DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT  
MEETING MINUTES**

DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY  
MINUTES

July 16, 2024

A meeting of the Downers Grove Sanitary District Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency was held on Tuesday, July 16, 2024, convening at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the District's Administration Center, 2710 Curtiss Street, Downers Grove. Present were Trustees Amy E. Sejnost, Jeremy M. Wang, and Mark Eddington; Board of Local Improvements Members Kenneth J. Rathje, Robert T. Jungwirth, and Mark J. Scacco; General Manager Amy R. Underwood; Administrative Supervisor Carly Shaw; and Senior Advisor Lawrence C. Cox. Gregory Kuhn, Craig Anderson, and James Norris from the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Center for Government Studies (CGS) also attended.

Public Comment - None

Organizational Service Delivery Review and Analysis Update

The project team from the NIU CGS introduced themselves and provided an overview of their approach for the organizational service delivery review and analysis. They also provided a status update on the project.

The schedule was discussed. The next Decennial Committee meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 24. The final meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, October 15 before the Board of Trustees regular meeting. Members of the Committee requested that they be provided with the draft report earlier than the usual Friday before the meeting, so they have extra time to review it.

A motion was made by Trustee Eddington seconded by Trustee Wang to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m. The motion carried.

Approved: September 24, 2024

/s/Amy E. Sejnost/s/  
Committee Chair/District President

Attest: /s/Mark Eddington/s/  
Clerk

*<<Insert September 24, 2024, minutes once approved>>*

<<*Insert October 22, 2024, minutes once approved*>>

**ATTACHMENT B**

**DOWNERS GROVE SANITARY DISTRICT  
ORGANIZATION SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW AND ANALYSIS AND ILLINOIS  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT COMPLIANCE**

**Downers Grove Sanitary District  
Organizational Service Delivery Review and Analysis and  
Illinois Local Government Efficiency Act Compliance**



**October 2024**

<b>NIU-CGS Study Team Members</b>	
Gregory Kuhn, PhD - Project Coordinator/Lead	James Norris, MPA - Local Government Management, Development, Finance and Organizational Specialist
Craig Anderson, MPA - Public Works, Public Utilities and Local Government Management Specialist	Jeanna Ballard, MPA - Local Government Management Specialist



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## **I. Organizational Service Delivery Review and Analysis Scope**

The Downers Grove Sanitary District (referred to as DGSD, or the “District”) retained the help of the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies (NIU-CGS) to undertake a service delivery and organization design analysis. This endeavor is intended to help determine systems, resources, approaches, and positional mixes that align with the District’s core service and operational requirements, as well as to strengthen strategies to utilize staff skills, equipment, and other District resources in the most effective manner.

The study includes a review to address compliance requirements of the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act (Public Act 102-1088), effective June 10, 2022, herein called the Illinois Local Government Efficiency Act. This legislation requires a written report at least once every ten years to the County Board summarizing findings on local efficiencies of the District.

Components of the study include interviews with DGSD staff and Board members, evaluation of job analysis questionnaires, a guided tour of the wastewater treatment plant facilities, and review of pertinent information provided by District staff, as well as what is available on the District’s website. Thirty-eight staff members participated in interviews, which included a mix of individual and workgroup sessions. An individual interview was conducted with each Trustee, and an individual interview was conducted with the Senior Advisor. Also, each staff member was invited to complete a job analysis questionnaire to provide more detailed information about their specific job. Moving forward with this project reflects the District’s commitment to effective and efficient service delivery for the benefit of its customers and the larger community.

## **II. Organizational Purpose and Description**

Under the State of Illinois Sanitary District Act of 1917, the Downers Grove Sanitary District was organized in 1921, as a separate unit of local government to provide sanitary sewerage service for incorporated municipalities and other areas within its boundaries. The District’s treatment facilities were first located along Curtiss Street in the Village of Downers Grove. This original location is now the site of Sterling North Park.



Figure 1. Aerial Map of the DGSD WWTC

The District's Administration Center, 2710 Curtiss Street, Downers Grove, is close to the current wastewater treatment center (WWTC), 5003 Walnut Avenue, also in Downers Grove. Construction of the current WWTC began in 1954. Expansion of the Walnut Avenue facility allowed closure of the Curtiss Street plant in the mid-1960s. The Walnut Avenue facility has had many improvements since its opening, including major expansions in the early 1970s and late 1980s. Additionally, the District's sewer system has been expanded by both the District and developers as development has occurred within its service area. It is noted that parts of the sewer system date back to 1904, requiring a dedicated commitment to maintenance of all pipes and structures in satisfactory working condition to meet expectations for service and compliance with regulatory requirements.

regulatory requirements.

The District has begun the process of preparing a plan for updating its facilities to address present, anticipated, and potential needs associated with aging infrastructure, growth, and future regulations. The plan is intended to evaluate alternatives, allocation of resources and space to ensure continued smooth operations and maintenance, help align short-term and long-term goals, set priorities, and enable District eligibility for the IEPA Water Pollution Control Loan Program.

The DGSD is a regional provider of wastewater collection and treatment with a service area that includes most of the Village of Downers Grove, the Village of Westmont west of Cass Avenue, and portions of the Villages of Woodridge, Lisle, Oak Brook, and Darien as well as unincorporated areas. While the District serves some properties in unincorporated areas, most of the unincorporated areas shown in Figure 2 within the District's service area are unsewered. The District has an unsewered area plan available on its website which shows how it would provide sewer service to the unincorporated areas.

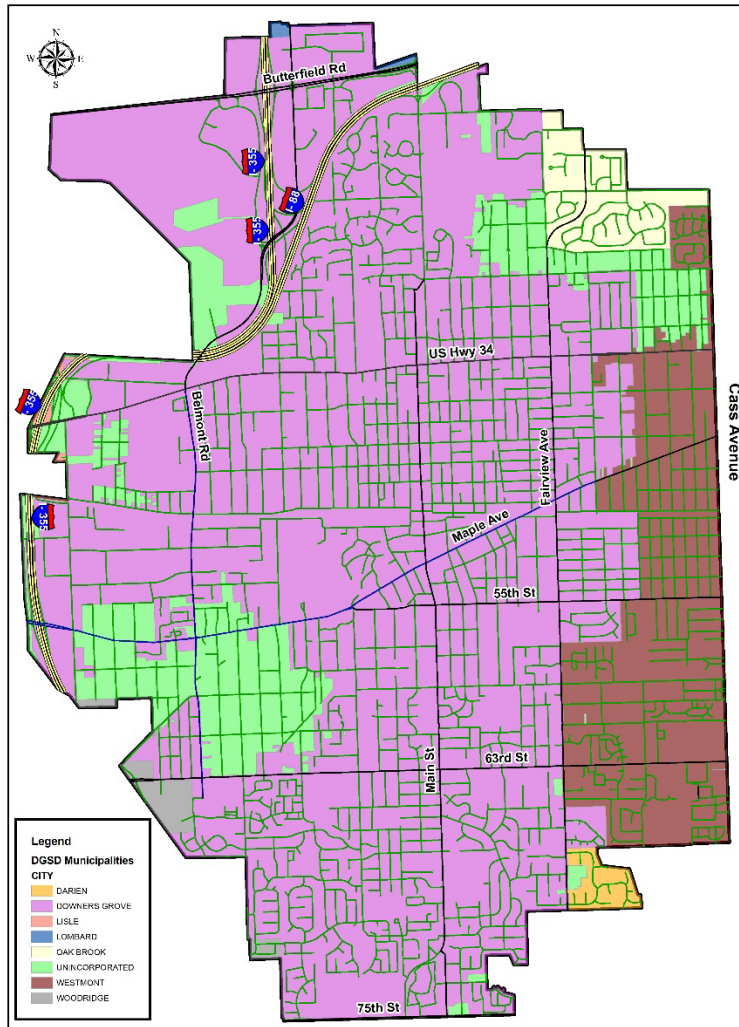


Figure 2. Map of communities served by DGSD

Thorough review of operations and functions reflects the District’s commitment to and emphasis on efficient and effective practices and procedures, including environmental impact and resource recovery.

The primary responsibilities of the DGSD are to provide sewer service, wastewater collection and treatment for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional customers, while meeting the requirements of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The District serves over 60,000 people, which includes more than 20,000 customers. The WWTC has a design capacity for an average flow of 11 million gallons per day (MGD) and a wet weather capacity of 110 MGD.

The treated wastewater or effluent from the WWTC is discharged to the East Branch of the DuPage River and to St. Joseph Creek, as permitted by the State of Illinois with authority from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Effluent is not discharged to the St. Joseph Creek until flows exceed 30 MGD.

### III. Organizational Structure, Facilities, and Operations

The DGSD is governed by a Board of Trustees, consisting of a President, Vice President, and Clerk, each appointed by the DuPage County Board Chair, with the advice and consent of the County Board, for a staggered three-year term. The Board of Trustees has the authority to enact ordinances as needed to define policies, services, and fees for the District.

The DGSD also has a Board of Local Improvements, consisting of a President, Vice President, and Clerk, each appointed by the District's Board of Trustees for a one-year term. The Board of Local Improvements has the authority to review and approve improvements to the sewer collection system, new sewer service, and sewer extensions. Also, it advises the Board of Trustees regarding the annexation of property into the DGSD service area.

The District's daily operations are the responsibility of thirty-nine staff members, most of whom are full-time. An overview of positions is provided below:

- **Management and oversight positions** include the General Manager, Administrative Supervisor, Laboratory Supervisor, Operations Supervisor, Maintenance Supervisor, Sewer Construction Supervisor, Sewer Maintenance Supervisor, Safety Coordinator, and Senior Advisor.
- **Maintenance and operations positions** include Laboratory Analysts, Biosolids Mechanics, Senior Operator, Operators, Senior Mechanic, Lead Mechanic, Mechanics, Electrical Technicians, Inspector, Permit Technician, Sewer System Engineering Technician, Senior Sewer System Technician, and Sewer System Technicians.
- **Administrative positions** include the Information Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, Senior Billing Coordinator, Billing Assistant, Office Clerical, and Accounting Assistants.

The District has an 18-step salary plan with four pay ranges, which include merit and cost of living adjustments. The length of employee retention is good. Human Resources responsibilities are shared by the General Manager and the Administrative Supervisor.

Safety in fulfilling the mission of the DGSD is a priority. The Safety Coordinator, part-time, indirectly supervises employees with respect to work safety. There is focus on procedures, training, documentation, and suggestions for repair and improvement of old infrastructure.

Administrative staff duties necessary for the District's operations include customer service, billing, accounting, record-keeping, payroll, and purchasing. Implementation of new accounting and record-keeping systems is pending, and a new timekeeping system is in place. Customer service includes in-person counter service, along with telephone and electronic communications. Administrative staff review and direct some emergency or urgent service requests. Office personnel are very helpful and conscious of the needs of all customers.

The combined, coordinated efforts of all personnel are required for the District to fulfill its mission in an effective, efficient, and safe manner 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition to the above noted tasks of administrative staff, several examples of duties and responsibilities of the District's wastewater treatment center and sewer system operations personnel are provided below:

- Wastewater treatment system operations are controlled and monitored both at the plant and remotely by a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system. It allows for efficient operations, including timely adjustments and mitigation of problems, 24 hours per day, which exemplifies emphasis on cost efficiency and effective customer service. Treatment operators use data, laboratory results, experience, and trends to make critical process control decisions, including adjustments to handle higher flow.
- The District's senior mechanic and lead mechanic have overall responsibility for care of the wastewater treatment system, including Combined Heat and Power (CHP) generators and buildings, and to address priority situations. There is emphasis on safe, efficient, and effective maintenance and repair by in-house staff.
- As previously noted, parts of the wastewater treatment center date to 1954, with subsequent additions and improvements in the 1970s and 1980s. Its many components are given attention and care by maintenance mechanics, including response to urgent repair needs. Examples of typical tasks include welding, fabrication, pipefitting, and plumbing. In some instances, there is a need to develop innovative solutions to address problems. Other functions include maintenance of the District's lift stations and system valves.
- Electrical technicians address electrical issues, including determination of actual problems and making necessary repairs (e.g., operations, process control, and electrical distribution). Examples of other assignments include lift station inspections, wiring and upgrades for programmable logic controllers, development of policies for safe operations, and planning assistance for some projects.
- Biosolids mechanics assure proper, environmentally sound processing of the biosolids, a byproduct of the wastewater treatment process, and equipment maintenance. Biosolids are dried while being stored for two winter seasons in order to eliminate pathogens before public distribution via in-person pick-up or delivery.

The District's on-site laboratory allows for timely wastewater treatment process quality assurance testing, for which integrity of data entry and meeting the requirements of the NPDES permit are priorities. Reports are provided to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Work is underway to update pre-treatment program standards based on industrial and other users within the service area.

The District's extensive infrastructure includes more than 250 linear miles of gravity sewers, nine lift stations, and approximately 44,000 linear feet of force mains, which are the discharge pipes from the lift stations that carry flow to the gravity sewers. Also, the area served by the District includes about 300 linear miles of privately owned service pipes connecting buildings to public mains and 4.5 linear miles of private mains connected to public mains.

Proactive system maintenance is a priority for the District. Members of the sewer maintenance staff address system care daily, including response to residential sewer issues, planning for repairs, coordination with contractors, handling Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators (JULIE) locates, and cleaning. Additionally, staff conduct home inspections for participation in the lateral sewer service line repair program, respond to sewer back-up calls, and inspect manholes on a regular cycle. The rotating schedule for daily job assignments provides variety and is appreciated by staff. An on-call rotation schedule is in place for District staff to respond to urgent after-hours service calls.

Many substantial and specialized components are required to provide effective and efficient treatment of wastewater from the District's service area and to discharge the resultant effluent. Among the equipment and structures which comprise the District's wastewater treatment center are the climber screens, pump stations, grit tanks, primary clarifiers, aeration tanks, secondary clarifiers, intermediate clarifiers, sand filters, chlorine contact tank, excess flow clarifiers, sludge concentrator tanks, anaerobic digesters, belt filter press, sludge drying beds, sodium hypochlorite building, sodium bisulfate building, sludge pumps, pump station wet wells, sampling chamber, CHP (Combined Heat and Power) equipment, gas cleaning equipment, hauled grease trap waste collection facility, and standby generators for use in the event of electrical power failure.

#### **IV. Finances**

The grand total appropriation for the DGSD for fiscal year May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025, is \$18,910,000. Most revenue is derived from sources other than real estate taxes (e.g., tap-in permits, user fees, trunk sewer service fees, monthly fees, and surcharges). The categories of expenditures include Administration, Wastewater Treatment Center, Laboratory, Collection System, Lift Stations, Insurance and Employee Benefits, and Capital Improvements.

The District has created a five-year fiscal plan which projects revenues and expenditures for all activities. As noted earlier, the aging of the system requires a substantial commitment of resources to maintain pipes and other structures in satisfactory working condition in order to meet regulatory requirements and customers' expectations for service. Infrastructure maintenance and improvement projects for 2024 include Powell Street Sewer Rehabilitation, rehabilitation of approximately 2,000 linear feet of effluent discharge (outfall) pipe, and replacement of approximately 2,300 linear feet of force main from the Venard Lift Station<sup>1</sup>.

For the fiscal year 2024-2025, estimated sources of revenue are demonstrated in Figure 3.

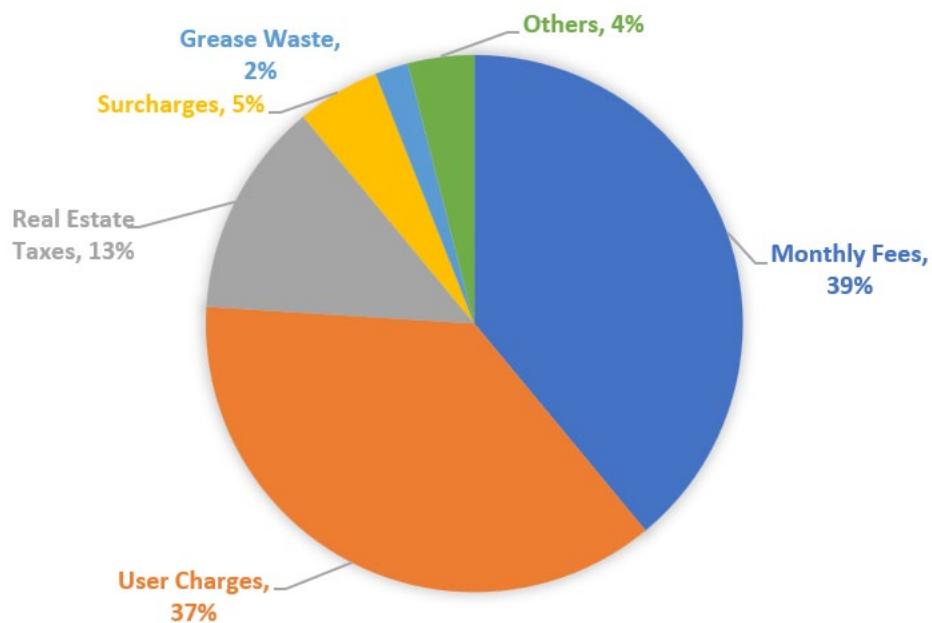


Figure 3. Fiscal year 2024-2025, estimated sources of revenue

For the fiscal year 2024-2025, estimated expenditures are demonstrated in Figure 4. The user charge consists of a volume charge based on water consumption (currently \$2.75 per 1,000 gallons of water consumption) and a monthly service fee (currently \$20.00 per account).

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<sup>1</sup> Downers Grove Sanitary District 2024 Annual Newsletter

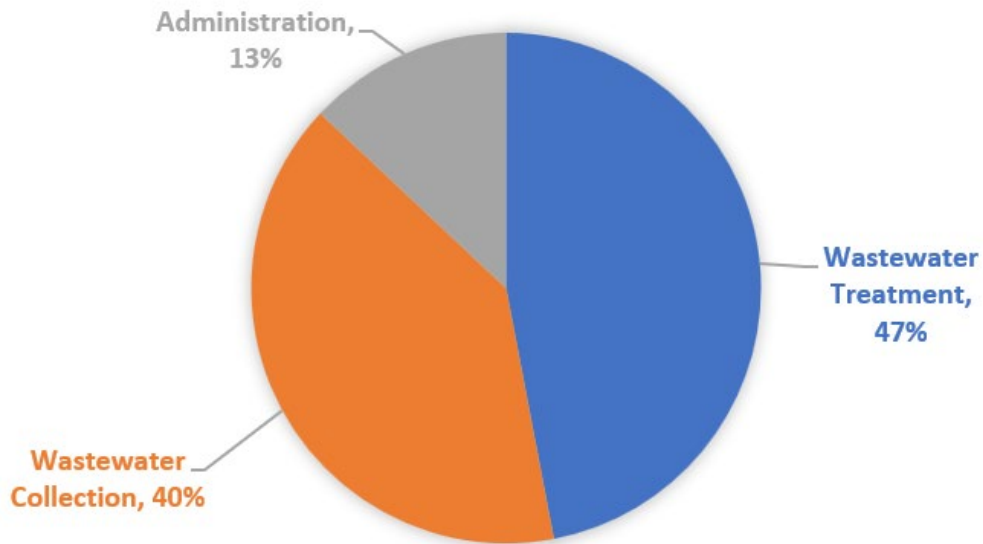


Figure 4. Fiscal year 2024-2025, estimated expenditures

Goods and services are procured in accordance with District’s Procurement Policy which ensures that the District is being a good steward of its ratepayers’ money while allowing vendors to fairly compete for the District’s business and while meeting applicable laws regulating procurement. Where appropriate, the District procures goods and services through public purchasing cooperatives. The District will also work with other units of local government to jointly procure construction services. For example, the District replaced a section of sewer under a Village of Westmont paving contract in 2023. Also, in the past few years, the District’s sidewalk and paving projects have been included in the Village of Downers Grove contract.

Annually, an audit of the DGSD financial statements for the previous fiscal year is conducted. In the opinion of the independent auditor, for the fiscal year ended April 30, 2024, the DGSD financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of its governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information, and the respective changes in financial position in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.



## V. Organizational Chart

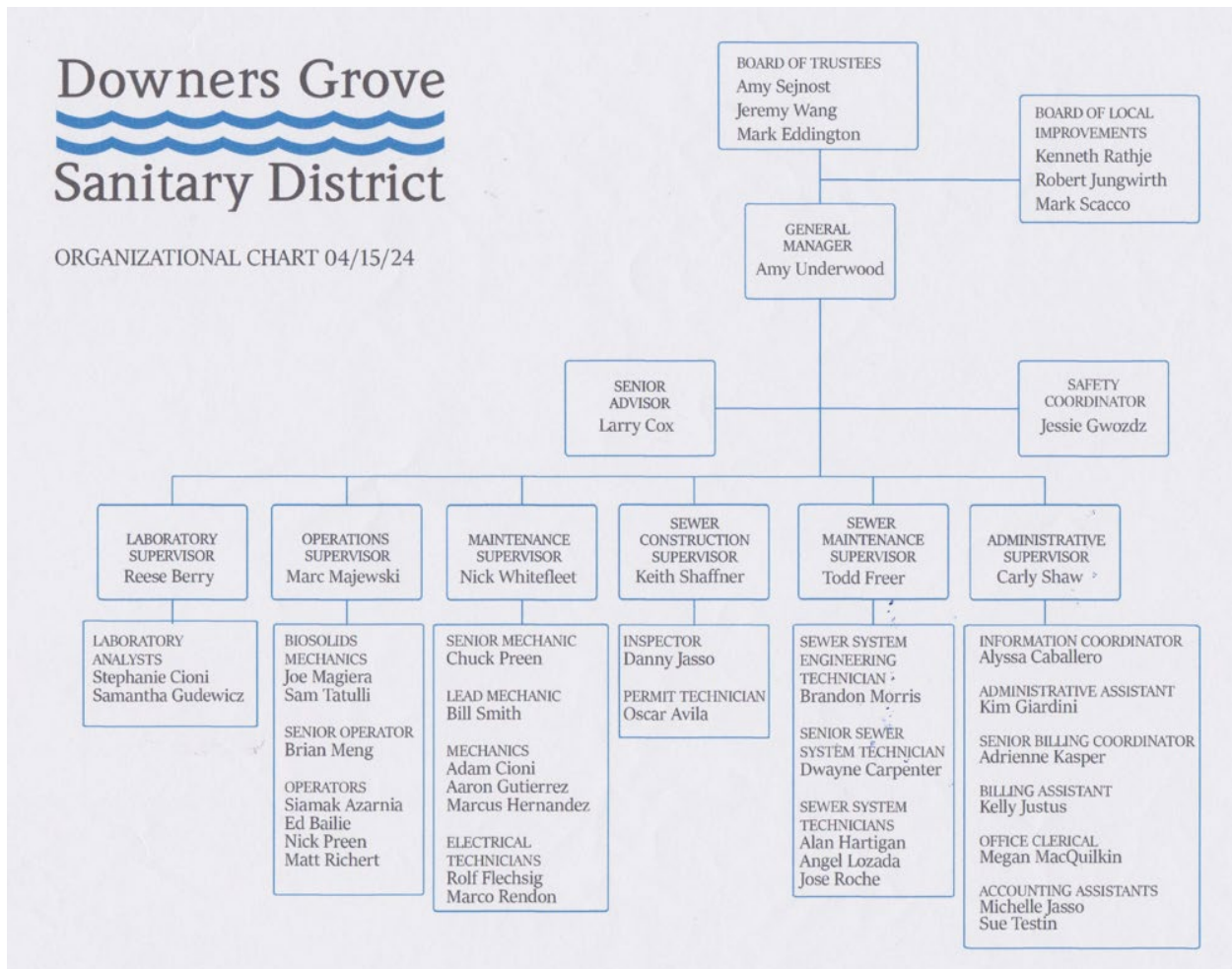


Figure 5. DSGD Organizational Chart<sup>2</sup>

## VI. Illinois Local Government Efficiency Act (Public Act 102-1088) Compliance

The DGSD website<sup>3</sup> provides a comprehensive amount of easily accessible, useful information for customers and other interested persons or entities regarding District operations and history, as well as steps already undertaken to improve, maintain, and enhance efficient, effective, and environmentally sound operation of the District. This approach to operation and communication reflects constant focus on the District's primary purpose to fulfill its mission by providing outstanding service while protecting the health of people and the environment.

It is important to note that staffing for the District includes the position of a part-time Information Coordinator, which has been in place for ten years. Examples of duties associated with this

<sup>2</sup> Downers Grove Sanitary District

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dgsd.org/>

position include responsibility for the District’s website and employee intranet, outreach to schools for presentations and wastewater treatment center tours, assistance with the annual open house, and some work with the media.

The DGSD sets an excellent example of accuracy and transparency for availability and dissemination of information. In keeping with this standard, team communication training at all levels of the organization is planned.

Examples of readily available information include sample bill and payment options; the sewer collection system and a summary of service provided; a facilities planning service area map; sanitary sewer service request and permit procedures; employment opportunities; and facilities locations.

Additionally, the District’s website provides quick links to forms and documents. Some examples are noted below:

- **Public Comment Submission form** – Allows a person who cannot attend a public meeting to submit comments electronically to the Board of Trustees or the Board of Local Improvements.
- **Easy Pay form** – Allows a customer to sign up for electronic automatic bill payment for District sanitary sewer services.
- **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request** – Allows online submission of a FOIA request.

In addition to required statutory transparency, the District provides other mechanisms for its customers to know how revenue is used, including an annual open house which features a tour of the wastewater treatment center and displays highlighting various aspects of District operations (e.g., the laboratory or the sewer system). Annual open houses began in 1990; 277 people attended the 2023 event. Also, an annual newsletter is provided to customers with their late spring / early summer bill.

Along with its annual budget, the District has implemented a five-year plan which includes projected revenues and expenses for all District activities. The plan is available for review on the DGSD website, along with the current fiscal year appropriations ordinance and the current independent financial audit. The District’s commitment to transparency is also reflected in easy access to employee total compensation information, Board meeting agendas, and Board meeting minutes.

Proactive outreach is used to inform the public of the District’s mission. In addition to the annual open house, tours of the wastewater treatment center are provided throughout the year for groups, students, teachers, professional organizations, and wastewater professionals (see Figure 6). The District works with local elementary schools and high schools, in addition to

environmental groups, to provide educational information pertaining to wastewater treatment, the role of the sanitary district in the community, and the value of water. Also, the District has assisted in facilitation of “river sweep,” a community river clean-up project.



*Figure 6. DGSD wastewater treatment center tour with local high school students<sup>4</sup>.*

The District’s wastewater treatment center operates under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. During 2023, the water treated by the District and discharged to the East Branch of the DuPage River was significantly better than the permit limits for three major NPDES permit parameters: Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), suspended solids, and ammonia nitrogen<sup>5</sup>.

The DGSD is a founding member of and an active participant in the DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup (DRSCW), a consortium of local units of government, including DuPage County, and other watershed stakeholders dedicated to management of the valuable stream resources of the East and West Branches of the DuPage River and Salt Creek. These natural streams have been modified over time as the surrounding area has been urbanized. The DRSCW conducts state-of-the-art monitoring of stream biology, chemistry, and habitat, the data from which is used to promote and implement initiatives to cost-effectively restore these streams. In 2015, the DRSCW negotiated with the IEPA to delay phosphorus limits for its wastewater treatment plant members in exchange for funding dam removal and stream restoration projects which would have a bigger impact on aquatic life than a reduction in phosphorus. The efforts of the DRSCW have resulted in significant savings to public ratepayers in these three watersheds.

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<sup>4</sup> Downers Grove Sanitary District 2024 Annual Newsletter

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

In 2016, the District’s Board of Trustees passed a resolution “setting a goal to achieve and sustain operating the WWTC as a net-zero energy facility,” where the amount of energy generated at the facility is as much or more than used. The District was able to attain this goal by investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy generation projects over the last sixteen years. These projects were partially funded by numerous energy related grants and incentives. Biogas produced in the anaerobic digesters fuels the CHP units which generate enough electricity to meet all the WWTC’s power demands under normal operating conditions.

To produce enough biogas to operate both CHP units at capacity, the District must accept hauled grease waste, which is high in energy, into its digesters and co-digest it with solids produced in the wastewater treatment process. The source of the hauled grease waste is primarily restaurant grease interceptors, so this practice also benefits the District by keeping grease out of the sewer system where it could plug the sewer and cause backups. In addition to the savings in power costs, the District’s net-zero energy program also generates revenue from accepting the hauled grease waste, selling excess electricity to the utility, and selling renewable energy credits for one of the CHP units. As shown in Figure 7, the District achieved its net-zero energy goal for calendar years 2021 and 2022. Due to unexpected maintenance on the CHP units, the WWTC was not net-zero for the calendar year 2023. Regardless, the District remains committed to its goal to sustain operation of the WWTC as a net-zero energy facility.

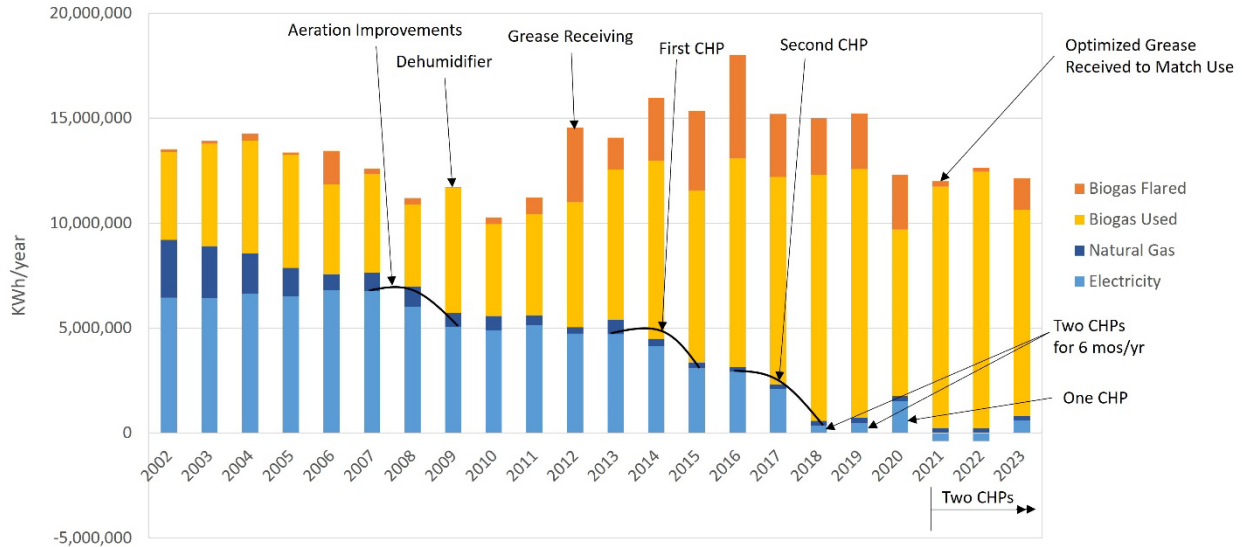


Figure 7. DSGD net-zero energy graph

In partnership with an environmental education non-profit organization, the School & Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education (SCARCE), the District collects and recycles used cooking oil. This program is intended to encourage District customers and residents of the surrounding area to recycle their used cooking oil instead of pouring it down the

drain or disposing of it in the garbage. Used cooking oil can be dropped off at any time at the designated receptacle at the District's administration center<sup>6</sup>.



Figure 8. DGSD Used cooking oil receptacle.

A recreational vehicle wastewater dumping station is available to the public at the DGSD Administrative Offices. This station provides an easily accessible option for environmentally sound disposal of such wastewater.

The DGSD wastewater treatment process produces a Class A biosolids byproduct, which is available to the public, free of charge, for use as a soil supplement (i.e., fertilizer). In addition to being a sustainable practice, it also benefits the District by avoiding biosolids disposal costs. This soil supplement is available at the District's pick-up station. In cooperation with the Village of Downers Grove, the Village's wood chip pile is located on DGSD property adjacent to the biosolids pick-up station, which allows for convenient distribution to the public free of charge. The District can deliver bulk quantities of biosolids to its customers and other entities having needs for this nutrient-rich supplement. Since the District's production of biosolids increased due to accepting hauled grease waste, a portion of the biosolids is not dried and is hauled away by a contractor for application on farm fields.

Intergovernmental cooperation between the DGSD and the Village of Downers Grove is also evident in other ways. The District fills its vehicles at the Village's fueling station. Additionally, the property on which the Village's public works parking lot and salt dome are located is leased from the District.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

The land area occupied by the wastewater treatment center includes a walnut tree grove. In addition to being an attractive feature, it contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing emissions associated with lawn maintenance, as well as related costs. The trees also help offset carbon emissions by absorbing and storing carbon dioxide.

The District routinely employs a state-of-the-art trenchless technique, known as ‘Cured in Place Pipe’ or CIPP, for sewer rehabilitation, without the disruption which otherwise would be required for excavation, removal, and replacement of the old sewer. CIPP allows an epoxy-laden felt liner to be inserted into the existing pipe and heat-cured in place, using the existing pipe as the exterior form for the new pipe. This technology is being used on sewer and outfall rehabilitation projects currently underway<sup>7</sup>.

Since June 2022, the District has participated in the Illinois Wastewater Surveillance System (IWSS), a monitoring network that tracks COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) by measuring the amount of viral RNA (ribonucleic acid) in wastewater throughout Illinois. Twice weekly, District staff collect samples of raw wastewater entering the WWTC, which are then forwarded to the University of Illinois-Chicago for analysis. The data is reported on the IWSS website<sup>8</sup>. This initiative is a collaborative endeavor of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Illinois System’s Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) intended to deliver actionable information to public health decision makers<sup>9</sup>.

Customer service is of the highest priority for the District. Technicians are available to help address sewer problems at all hours, with a call number available on the DGSD website. Also, customers may be eligible for assistance to address sanitary sewer backups or other problems through the Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program (BSSRAP), Cost Reimbursement Program for Installation of Overhead Sewer or Backflow Prevention Devices, and Reimbursement Program for Sanitary Sewer Backups Caused by Blockages of the Public Sanitary Sewer.

The Building Sanitary Service Repair Assistance Program has been in existence since July 1, 2002. Under certain situations the District will repair, rehabilitate, or replace a building sanitary service. Since the program’s inception, 4,265 repairs have been completed, which represents approximately 20% of the connected buildings. District staff indicated that customer feedback on this program has been very positive.

The Cost Reimbursement Program for the Installation of Overhead Sewer or Backflow Prevention Devices offers financial assistance to the building owner by cost sharing with the owner to upgrade their plumbing to current requirements that will protect their building in the event of

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> [DGSD Wastewater Treatment Center | IWSS Dashboard](#)

<sup>9</sup> Downers Grove Sanitary District 2024 Annual Newsletter

surcharging in the public main caused by a blockage or extreme weather. The program also benefits the District by eliminating the potential cost to the District from a damage claim by the owner due to a public sewer backup.

The Reimbursement Program for Sanitary Sewer Backups Caused by Public Sanitary Sewer Blockages provides limited financial assistance to residents who experience a sanitary sewer backup, defined as the discharge of raw sewage from the District sanitary sewer system through a resident's service line into the resident's building, resulting from blockage of a public sanitary sewer.

To reduce the potential for backups and ensure the long-term sustainability of its collection system, the District cleans one fourth of its sewers annually, televises the sewers on a thirteen-year cycle, and invests at least 0.75% of the replacement value of the sewer back into the collection system annually.

The District has been a leader in efforts to reduce infiltration and inflow (I/I), which is unintended and sometimes illegal entry of groundwater and stormwater into the sanitary sewer. Reduction in I/I lessens the amount of water which is collected and treated, which in turn frees up capacity for future development, reduces the potential for backups and overflows, and reduces operating costs. Early in this endeavor, the District recognized that I/I reduction in the public mains alone would not be effective and thus began to address I/I on private property. I/I reduction projects which have included rehabilitation to both public sewers and private building services have successfully removed up to 65% of the excess flow due to I/I in comparison to previous projects which were focused on public sewers only and resulted in no I/I reduction.

The information, comments, and discussion from the interviews conducted during this study noted the District's openness, creativity, accuracy, and transparency. The District is viewed as approachable, environmentally responsible, fiscally responsible, innovative, and resident-focused, with accurate information and answers provided in response to questions from customers.

## VII. Personnel

It is apparent to the study team that the DGSD upholds standards, is a good place at which to work, employees care about their work and each other, management cares about staff, records and equipment are well-maintained, and there is focus on doing things the right way. There is also pride in the high quality of the effluent produced from the treatment process. Furthermore, there is appreciation for jobs which provide variety, for an organization focusing on innovation, and for doing good for the environment.

During interviews, discussions, and visits at the DGSD, the study team was presented with several suggestions and ideas seen as possibly benefiting the District's mission. That input is appreciated by the study team and has been helpful in preparing this report.

## VIII. Recommendations

Based on the results of the organizational service delivery review and analysis, including compliance with the requirements of the Illinois Local Government Efficiency Act, it is evident that the current management and operation of the DGSD are well-focused on the provision and delivery of efficient, effective, fiscally sound, and environmentally aware services to the benefit of its customers and the larger community. In keeping with this commitment to fulfilling the mission of the District, several recommendations are presented below.

- **Recommendation 1** – Continue keeping the District's mission at the forefront of current and future operations regarding immediate, short-term, and long-term decisions, including environmental sensitivity and initiatives.
- **Recommendation 2** – Maintain the paramount importance of customer service, including easily accessible information, transparency, responsiveness, and sewer service assistance programs.
- **Recommendation 3** – If not a part of the contemplated facilities planning study, include review of current and projected office space necessary for efficient, effective, and comfortable delivery of administrative and customer services.
- **Recommendation 4** – Review the types and amount of regular and unexpected employee assignments and tasks to ensure adequate staffing levels to maintain ongoing customer service excellence. In conjunction with this process, consider options for cross-training to provide redundancy and back-up when needed, as well as to enhance a shared work culture among the several departments.
- **Recommendation 5** – Continue emphasis on beneficial technology integration and adjustment to address current and future operational needs of all departments.

## IX. Best Practices

Wastewater collection and treatment is the essential service provided by the DGSD to protect the health and well-being of the public and the environment. The management and operation of the District reflect efficient and effective service delivery in an environmentally sound, fiscally responsible, and innovative manner. An outline of several best practices of the District is presented below.

- **Compliance with Regulations:** Commitment to compliance with wastewater treatment regulations, including amendments and updates, and staff training. The DGSD's



commitment to this practice is evident in its work to assure adherence to the requirements of the Illinois Local Government Efficiency Act.

- **Strategic Planning:** Ongoing engagement in planning is recommended to ensure the consistent and sustainable functioning of the District to fulfill its mission. The District's detailed, comprehensive five-year financial plan, which includes recommendations with respect to expenditures and revenues necessary to meet operations, maintenance, replacement, capital improvement, and debt service requirements reflects the importance of such planning.
- **Outreach and Transparency:** Continue to provide readily accessible information for the District's customers and other interested parties to be informed and learn about operations, have questions answered, and participate in programs in which they have interest and might be qualified. The DGSD hosts an outstanding annual Wastewater Treatment Center open house each October, for which information is available on the District's website.
- **Staff Training and Development:** Encourage and provide for participation in professional development opportunities to enhance employee skills and knowledge.
- **Emergency Preparedness and Failure Response Procedures:** Continue to maintain and revise as needed well-defined and supported plans and procedures to address emergency situations and system failures should they occur.
- **Professional Organizations and Local Government Consortia:** The DGSD is a founding member of and an active participant in the DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup, as well as a member of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies, and Midwest Biosolids Association. Participation in organizations representing the best interests of its members and their constituents with helpful, cost-effective services help address issues of mutual concern.

## X. Conclusion

The findings and results of the comprehensive analysis completed by the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies reflect the ongoing commitment of the Downers Grove Sanitary District to environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, sound resource management, fiscal responsibility, outstanding customer service, and overall operational efficiency and effectiveness.

The District's proactive compliance with the Illinois Local Government Efficiency Act and its focus on innovative practices, transparency, and community engagement demonstrate its ongoing dedication to fulfilling its mission in the best interests of its customers and the surrounding community. By maintaining these core values and embracing continuous improvement, the

District is well-positioned to navigate future challenges, attract and retain top talent, and uphold its reputation as a leader in public service and environmental stewardship.

## **XI. References/Resources**

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Capital Budgeting and Finance: A Guide for Local Governments, J. Marlowe, Riverbank, W., and Vogt, A.J., ICMA Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (2009) Washington, DC.

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*Journal of the American Water Works Association*, (various eds.) John Wiley and Sons and AWWA, Denver, CO.

Nalbandian, J. (1991). *Professionalism in local government*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. *Public Works Management Practices Manual* (8th Ed), APWA, American Public Works Association, Kansas City, MO.

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DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY  
MINUTES

October 22, 2024

A meeting of the Downers Grove Sanitary District Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency was held on Tuesday, October 22, 2024, convening at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the District's Administration Center, 2710 Curtiss Street, Downers Grove. Present were the following Committee members: <<Trustees Amy E. Sejnost, Jeremy M. Wang, and Mark Eddington; Board of Local Improvements Members Kenneth J. Rathje, Robert T. Jungwirth and Mark Scacco; General Manager Amy R. Underwood; and Administrative Supervisor Carly Shaw>>. << Craig Anderson from the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Center for Government Studies (CGS)>> also attended. The following Committee members were absent: <<Senior Advisor Lawrence C. Cox>>.

Minutes of Meeting – September 24, 2024

A motion was made by <<name>> seconded by <<name>> approving the minutes of the meeting held on September 24, 2024 and authorizing the Committee Chair and Clerk to sign same. <<The motion carried.>>

Public Comment - <<Document Public Comment>>

Local Government Efficiency Act Report

<<Document discussion>> A motion was made by <<name>> seconded by <<name>> approving the Local Government Efficiency Act Report <<with any requested revisions>> to be submitted to DuPage County and authorizing the Committee Chair to sign the report. <<The motion carried. (Votes recorded: --)>>

Minutes of Meeting – October 22, 2024

A motion was made by <<name>> seconded by <<name>> approving the minutes of the meeting held on October 22, 2024 and authorizing the Committee Chair and Clerk to sign same. <<The motion carried.>>

A motion was made by <<name>> seconded by <<name>> to adjourn the meeting at <<#:##>> p.m. <<The motion carried.>>

Approved: October 22, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chair/District President

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk