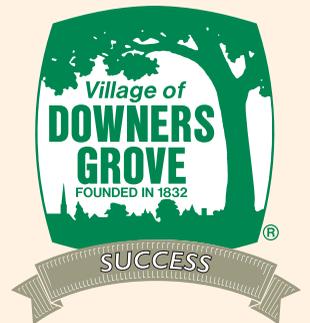


Village of Downers Grove

2012 Annual Report



VILLAGE MANAGER'S MESSAGE

The 2012 Annual Report highlights the results and achievements in support of the Strategic Plan Goals:

- Steward of Financial and Environmental Sustainability
- Exceptional Municipal Services
- Top Quality Infrastructure
- Strong, Diverse Local Economy
- Continual Innovation

I am proud to say that the Village achieved significant results consistent with these goals in addition to being recognized as a leader among municipalities. The many accomplishments of 2012 included, implementation of the Stormwater Utility, \$19 million investment in needed infrastructure, and successful efforts to attract and retain businesses.

The Village was also recognized for outstanding achievement in several areas including a Distinguished Budget Award, Project of the Year award for the 2nd and Cumnor Stormwater Detention Basin, and Best Comprehensive Plan.

The achievements detailed in this report were made possible by the effective leadership of the Village Council, a highly productive staff, and the engaged citizens of Downers Grove. I invite you to read more about these successes in this 2012 Annual Report.

Sincerely,



David Fieldman
Village Manager

VILLAGE LEADERSHIP



*Mayor
Martin Tully*



*Commissioner
Marilyn Schnell*



*Commissioner
William W. Waldack*



*Commissioner
Sean Patrick Durkin*



*Commissioner
Geoff Neustadt*



*Commissioner
Becky Rheintgen*



*Commissioner
Robert T. Barnett*

Mayor
Martin T. Tully

Commissioners:

Marilyn Schnell, William W. Waldack, Sean Patrick Durkin, Geoff Neustadt, Becky Rheintgen, Robert T. Barnett

Directors

Village Manager, David Fieldman, Deputy Village Manager Michael Baker, Village Attorney Enza Petrarca, Village Clerk April Holden, Communications Director, Douglas Kozlowski, Emergency Management Coordinator Mary Pratt, Finance Director Judy Buttny, Director of Community Development Tom Dabareiner, Police Chief Robert Porter, Fire Chief James G. Jackson, Sr., Director of Public Works Naneil Newlon, Director of Information Services Liangfu Wu, Director of Human Resources Dennis Burke

I. STEWARD OF FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Long Range Financial Plan

The Long Range Financial Plan (LRFP) is updated annually to identify financial trends and issues and to develop strategies and solutions to guide financial and operational decisions. The LRFP is a key component to achieving the Village's Strategic Plan goal of Steward of Financial & Environmental Sustainability.

The LRFP has enabled the Village to accomplish the following:

AA+ Bond Rating

- Investment in needed public infrastructure improvements
- Very strong financial reserves
- **AA+ Bond Rating from Standard and Poor's (S&P).** A high rating enables the Village to borrow money at a low cost, affirming the Village's economic stability.

S&P officials indicated that the Village received the highest possible score on management and noted that the Village's financial planning efforts and budget decisions were major reasons for this score. Their Summary Report cites the following as factors which contribute to Downers Grove's economic stability:

- Very strong reserves supported by strong financial management practices
- Diverse local economy consisting of a good mix of residential and commercial properties
- Very strong income levels and extremely strong market value per capita
- Low-to-moderate overall debt burden
- Participation in the Chicago metropolitan area's deep and diverse economy

Issued \$35 Million in Bonds

Pursuant to the LRFP, the Village issued \$35 million in bonds to fund street reconstruction projects and watermain replacements. These bonds will be paid for using existing revenue sources. (See Top Quality Infrastructure, page 6 for more.)

Created Stormwater Utility

In April of 2012, Council adopted a motion implementing a stormwater utility system. The stormwater utility model shifts the funding for this vital infrastructure from property taxes to a fee based system. The driving force behind the shift is the need for a predictable funding source to operate and maintain stormwater infrastructure. Discussion and investigation regarding the concept have been on going in the community for almost a decade.

The Stormwater Utility (SWU), launched in January 2013, is based on the recommendations of a comprehensive stormwater utility study conducted in 2011. Prior to implementation, three community meetings were held with various resident and business stakeholders, in addition to discussion and public input at five Village Council meetings.



Shifting the source of funding to a utility fee based system will result in a reduction in the property tax levy by approximately \$2.48 million, beginning with the 2012 levy (collected in 2013). The Village portion of property taxes will be reduced by approximately 19%.

There are multiple benefits to implementing a fee based system:

- All properties in the Village share in the cost of operating and maintaining the stormwater system.
- Fees provide a predictable and sustainable funding source.
- A heightened sense of awareness of the stormwater management system is created.
- Property owners are encouraged to reduce the amount of run-off from their property by installing rain barrels, rain gardens and detention basins and may be eligible for a credit to their stormwater fee.

Electronics Recycling



As of January 1, 2012, tvs, computers (and laptops), monitors, printers, computer peripherals, VCRs/DVD players, gaming systems, MP3 players and other electronic items were banned from Illinois landfills. In cooperation with the Environmental Concerns Commission, the Village began a monthly electronics recycling program on the first Saturday of each month to help residents properly dispose of items, while reducing the effect of electronics waste on the environment.

In 2012, a total of 361,272 pounds of electronics were collected and diverted from landfills.

Privatized Snow Removal Operations For Downtown & Train Stations

In November, the Village Council approved a contract for snow and ice removal services on walkways within the Downtown Business District, three commuter rail stations, and Village Civic Center (Village Hall and Police Station). These services are labor intensive and require investment in specialized equipment used only for this task.

Privatizing these services allows staff to perform more efficiently and devote additional time to the more skilled job of clearing roadways, as well as:

- Reduce costs of snow/ice removal by \$8,000 per year
- Enable Village crews to complete snow routes more quickly
- Eliminate the need for the Village to own/maintain specialty vehicles



Executed Agreement with PACE



This new partnership with Pace Suburban Bus Systems eliminated the annual operating deficit for the Village bus system. PACE and bus riders now cover all expenses for the system which provides weekday morning and evening feeder service to the Main Street and Belmont Road train stations. As a result, no Village money is being used to fund this bus system.

The new agreement also allowed for the resurfacing of additional streets as \$185,000 of local gasoline tax revenue was shifted from the bus system to the street resurfacing program.

Improved Fire Department Responses

Continuous improvements to operational activities have occurred at all levels of the Village organization including the ways in which the fire department responds to calls for service. By effectively engaging firefighters in the quest for efficiencies, the department achieved the following results:

- 70% fewer call responses by the ladder truck
- Reduced expenses for vehicle operation and maintenance
- Extended life expectancy of the ladder truck and engines



II. TOP QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Completion of Belmont Underpass

The Village celebrated the completion of the Belmont Road Underpass in October. The \$60 million project eliminated a troublesome and dangerous intersection between Belmont Road and the BNSF tracks. No Village funds were used for this project.

Project benefits include:

- Improved vehicular and pedestrian safety
- Enhanced traffic flow
- Increased commuter parking
- Improved access to Ellsworth Business Park

The Belmont Underpass was funded by Metra, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), the State of Illinois, and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF).



Invested \$19 Million in Infrastructure Projects

In 2012, the Village invested \$19 million to improve the infrastructure of streets, sidewalks, the water system, and the stormwater system, broken out as follows:

- **Streets:** \$14.2 million
An analysis of all roads maintained by the Village was conducted *in 2010*, ranking them on a scale from *Failed* to *Good*. The number of streets in *Good* status improved from 25% to 35% of all streets; Streets in the state of *Poor* or *Failed* were reduced from 22% to 16% of all streets.
- **Water System:** \$3.4 million
- **Stormwater System:** \$1.3 million
- **Sidewalks:** \$730,000



Valley View, Knottingham and Grove Street



Two high-profile projects were completed in the Valley View and Knottingham subdivisions. In these neighborhoods, projects to reconstruct the streets and replace water mains were coordinated to take place during the same time period, reducing overall costs and minimizing disruption to residents. Traffic calming measures were included in these projects to reduce travel speeds along these residential streets.

Grove Street was also reconstructed using environmentally sustainable permeable pavers. Several water quality features were incorporated to help clean stormwater runoff from this area before it is discharged into St. Joseph's Creek.

Constructed 2nd and Cumnor Detention Facility

The 2nd and Cumnor Stormwater Facility is one of the best examples of how environmentally sustainable techniques can be used to mitigate flooding. Prior to the project, the homes and roadways in this area often flooded.

Project benefits include:

- Alleviation of structure and street flooding in the area
- Creation of an environmentally sustainable detention facility
- Increased public awareness using a QR code and informational sign



This naturalized basin along with the stormwater improvements earned the Village the **2012 Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award** from the Illinois Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

Improved Neighborhood Traffic Management



The first of what will be many neighborhood traffic studies resulted in recommendations to improve intersection controls and reduce accidents. The study covered the area bounded by Maple Avenue to the north, Fairview Avenue to the east, 55th Street to the south, and Main Street to the west.

The actions implemented in 2012 have:

- Improved traffic management in the Whittier School area
- Reduced average vehicle speeds
- Increased safety with the redesign of pedestrian street crossings
- Improved intersection safety with additional signing at all intersections

III. EXCEPTIONAL MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Arranged For Electricity Supply

Downers Grove voters approved a referendum in the 2012 General Primary Election authorizing the Village to seek a competitive bid to lower the price of electricity for residents and many businesses. The Village partnered with Westmont to reduce program administration expenses and leverage buying power.

The contract awarded to First Energy Solutions in June reduced electric bills by an average of \$350 per year, representing a 42% savings over ComEd's comparable non-summer rate.

The new rate enhances the use of renewable energy sources by purchasing Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) on a one to one match to supplement the electricity purchased. Purchasing RECs at the same quantity as electricity consumption guarantees that the energy used is added to the power grid from a renewable energy facility, thus supporting further development of green energy sources.



Hosted ComEd Town Hall Meeting



The Village hosted the first of these meetings in 2011, to present the findings of a Reliability Report to ComEd in a town hall forum. The report was prepared in response to recurring service outages throughout the community. The meeting did have positive results as ComEd implemented the Village's recommendations which have improved reliability.

A follow-up Town Hall meeting was conducted in 2012. The success of this process and the improved communication with ComEd has made the meeting an annual event.

The positive outcomes occurring as a result of these meetings include:

- Improvements to ComEd's electrical distribution system due to the Village's recommended enhanced tree trimming and equipment replacement
- Improved reliability of the ComEd system
- Improved communication and relationship with ComEd

Implemented Downtown Parking Changes

The Village and the Downtown Management Corporation commissioned a comprehensive downtown parking study in 2011. Extensive data collection and stakeholder input was used to understand current conditions and parking demand.

The Village implemented the following actions in 2012:

- Increased opportunities for shopper and visitor parking
- Increased the number of shopper parking spaces on the north side of the tracks
- Provided 15-minute short-term parking spaces for the convenience of downtown shoppers
- Increased the number of free parking spaces available beginning at 11:00 a.m.
- Increased the number of accessible spaces



Enhanced Communication

The Village began communicating with residents via Facebook in February 2012. With steadily growing followers, the Village worked to keep users engaged with varied content relating to Village actions, as well as interesting community content from the Public Library, Park District, Grade School District 58, and Community High School District 99.

Re-Accredited Police Department



In March 2012, the Downers Grove Police Department was re-accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). This designation formally recognizes the department as being one of the most elite in the field.

In order to achieve this difficult goal, the Police Department's policies and procedures needed to be in compliance with the National Standards established by CALEA.

The benefits of re-accreditation include:

- Reduced risk and liability expenses
- Ensured use of best practices in policing
- 100% compliance with required national standards

IV. STRONG, DIVERSE LOCAL ECONOMY

The Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is an independent, not-for-profit entity supported by the Village of Downers Grove and over 20 private-sector businesses. The Village is committed to strengthening and enhancing the local economy through the EDC's efforts to attract jobs and employers to Downers Grove, as well as retain established businesses.

In cooperation with the EDC, the Village implemented a strategy in 2009 designed to retain existing automobile dealerships and attract new ones. Auto dealerships generate significant sales tax revenue and are a vital component of the local economy. This strategy has proven successful as evidenced by the addition in 2012 of an Aston Martin dealer and the retention of Packey Webb Ford.

Attracted Aston Martin Dealer

- Increased annual sales tax revenue by \$185,000
- Enhances attractive high-end dealership area on Ogden Avenue
- Increases awareness of Downers Grove via Aston Martin national advertising campaign featuring their Downers Grove location



ASGE Headquarters Construction

The Village welcomed the new headquarters of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy to the Esplanade at Locust Point campus with the construction of a 41,822 square foot, two-story office building.

An increased number of physicians and guests contributing to the local economy is anticipated with the arrival of ASGE.



Expansion of Northwestern University



The construction of a 200,000 square foot building to house dental and medical clinics continued in 2012 and will attract new students and additional jobs to the community.

Expansion plans continued when the Village authorized plans for the construction of a new 128,400 square foot auditorium and classroom facility and a 345,000 square foot parking deck. The new building will also serve the community as a performing arts venue for non-profit organizations.

Amended Oasis Program



The Ogden Avenue Site Improvement Strategy (OASIS) is a matching grants incentive program for businesses within the boundaries of the Ogden Avenue TIF District. This program was initiated by the Village, EDC and Chamber of Commerce in 2010 to stimulate the economy by enhancing the appearance of business sites through landscaping, signing and façade improvements.

Funds for OASIS grants are generated by the property taxes paid by the properties in the Ogden Avenue TIF District. The program to date, has resulted in over \$1.32 million dollars in private investment along this vital commercial corridor.

In 2012 the program was amended to increase the funding available for private property improvements. To make participation easier, the matching fund requirement, to complete proposed improvements was reduced.

V. INNOVATION

Transition to Google Apps



In March of 2012, the Village migrated to the Google Apps for Government platform for its existing email calendar and basic office software programs.

Google Apps for Government offers the following benefits:

- Reduced hardware, software and labor expenses through cloud based system
- Lower total cost of ownership
- Improved search capabilities, especially for email searches in response to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests
- Full complement of office-based software programs that offer enhanced features related to document sharing and collaboration in an online environment

Partnered with DuPage County on Social Services Database



The Village of Downers Grove and DuPage County hosted a free training session to show non-profit agencies how to register their organization in the County's Community Resource Information System (**C.R.I.S.**). **C.R.I.S.** is a county-wide, searchable database of non-profit organizations that offers various human services. Agencies registered in the system are better able to connect with those in need.

This training session created awareness of the County database for both service providers and those who could benefit from the services. This effective inter-governmental partnership minimizes costs by avoiding duplication of government services.

Partnered with Grade School District 58 and SEASPAR for Vehicle Maintenance

The Village has partnered with SEASPAR and Grade School District 58 to provide maintenance service for their vehicles. The revenue generated reduces Village costs for fleet maintenance by sharing fixed costs with partners. Additionally, SEASPAR and Grade School District 58 have reduced vehicle maintenance expenses by \$2,800 annually and extended the life of their vehicles.



Launched Interoperable Public Safety Radio System



The Federal Communications Commission's Project 25 is a suite of standards for digital radio communications for use by public safety agencies in North America to enable them to communicate with other agencies and mutual aid response teams in emergencies.

The DuPage County Emergency Telephone Safety Board funded a new interoperable radio system to meet the FCC mandate. This system is an example of an effective intergovernmental partnership which:

- Allows for communication among all public safety agencies in DuPage County
- Improves responses to emergency events involving multiple agencies

VI. RECOGNIZED LEADERSHIP

The Village of Downers Grove has the respect of peers from across the nation as a municipality that leads by example and embraces new ideas. This partial list of awards received in 2012 serves as an example of the Village's commitment to leadership, sound fiscal policy and exceptional municipal services.



- The naturalized basin and stormwater improvements made at 2nd Street and Cumnor Road earned the *2012 Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award* (projects under \$5 million) from the Illinois Section of the **American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)**.
- The Illinois Chapter of the **American Planning Association (APA)** named the Village of Downers Grove the winner of their Daniel Burnham Award for excellence in a Comprehensive Plan.
- **The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)** presented the Village with the *Distinguished Budget Presentation* award for the 2012 Municipal Budget document.
- The Village was named one of the region's *Top Transit Communities* by **DePaul University's Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development**.
- The **Citizens Utility Board (CUB)** named Downers Grove to their list of *Top 100 Energy Saving Communities*. Downers Grove was ranked number 26, according to kilowatt hours saved by residents who participate in CUB's Energy Saver program.
- The **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)** selected Marsha Giesler of the Downers Grove Fire Department as the *2012 Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year*.
- **Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)** honored Officer Nick Linklater with their Hero Award for his commitment to arresting intoxicated drivers.

National Media Spotlight

- In 2012, Downers Grove was twice featured on **NBC Nightly News**, the first time covering Memorial Day celebrations across the nation, the second time giving attention to local non-profit Diveheart.
- **The Golf Channel** came to town to tape *Feherty Live* at the Tivoli Theatre.
- The Tivoli Theatre was also the stage for a **Geico** commercial featuring their gecko mascot.
- The Village was named to **Forbes** list of *Friendliest Communities*.



