



# GATEWAY

OCTOBER 2015

FROM WHERE WE'VE BEEN TO WHERE WE'RE GOING

## WHITE PINES WATER SYSTEM

In recent weeks, there has been some discussion at Village Board meetings regarding the water system that serves the White Pines neighborhood. As you may know, this area is part of unincorporated DuPage County and is not within the boundaries of the Village of Bensenville. We want to share this update with you regarding that system.



The White Pines water system was built in the 1940's and no longer meets national standards for fire protection. In addition, the system experiences frequent water main breaks and is a considerable source of water loss to the Village. The Village's goal for our entire system, including the White Pines area, is to provide a safe, continual water supply to all the users.

The question is not whether the system needs to be replaced. The Bensenville Fire Protection District, DuPage County, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and independent engineers all agree that the system needs to be replaced immediately. The question is who pays for this necessary improvement. The Village staff recommends that the unincorporated users pay for the improvements themselves. The Village will contribute to this project by securing an IEPA loan and managing the engineering and construction of the system improvements. The loan would be paid back through an unincorporated rate increase. The Village Board is considering approval of an engineering contract to start this project at the **Village Board Meeting at 6:30 on Tuesday, October 13th** at Village Hall. All residents are encouraged to attend the meeting and voice their opinion.



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# A LITTLE HISTORY

## NO ANNEXATION

There has been a great deal of discussion, both publicly and privately, about the Village forcibly annexing the White Pines area to Bensenville. These rumors are completely false. The Village never attempted to forcibly annex White Pines. In order to help finance the project initially, the Village offered to allow White Pines the choice of annexation. However, this offer was rejected and is no longer on the table. The choice to move forward with annexation rests solely with the property owners of that area.

The White Pines Area was developed over 70 years ago and is home to approximately 750 residents. The water system which serves White Pines has reached the end of its useful life. The original construction laid the water system through residential backyards rather than through the front easement as is preferred. The pipes are smaller than would be built today and the aging infrastructure creates a substantial amount of water loss in the distribution process. This leakage and associated water loss costs Bensenville taxpayers money as they directly impact the functionality of our water system.

Of greatest concern is that the system does not provide adequate capacity for use by the fire department in fighting fires in the White Pines area. (Bensenville provides fire protection to the area). The Bensenville Fire District formally stated that they cannot and will not hook fire equipment up to that system and as such, may be unable to perform firefighting efforts in the White Pines area.

Village Administration researched this situation for some time in pursuit of a solution that addresses

the long-term water and safety needs of White Pines in a manner that does not place undue financial burden on Bensenville taxpayers. Each time there is a water main break in White Pines the cost for Village staff time and equipment is subsidized by Village taxpayers. With over 150 breaks since 1986, that cost has become an unfair burden for our taxpayers. A portion of the water rates paid by unincorporated residents goes into a fund to be applied to the replacement of the system. We do not access that fund for the continual series of repairs we make. Staff has focused on providing improvements in three areas:

1. **Meeting the fire flow capacity requirements established in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) policies to allow for the Bensenville Fire Department to provide adequate emergency services,**
2. **Relocating the water system from backyard easements to front yard public rights of way for easier, less-costly repairs when needed and,**
3. **Rehabilitating the overall system to significantly reduce water loss.**

We have evaluated three proposals with associated estimated costs ranging from \$5.4 million to \$7.1 million. After detailed review in conjunction with outside consultants, we have determined that the best long term solution requires moving the water system to front rights of way. While this is the most expensive option, it provides the most comprehensive solution, provides the greatest improvements in managing water loss, minimizing future repair costs, and meeting the demands of the ISO relative to fire safety.

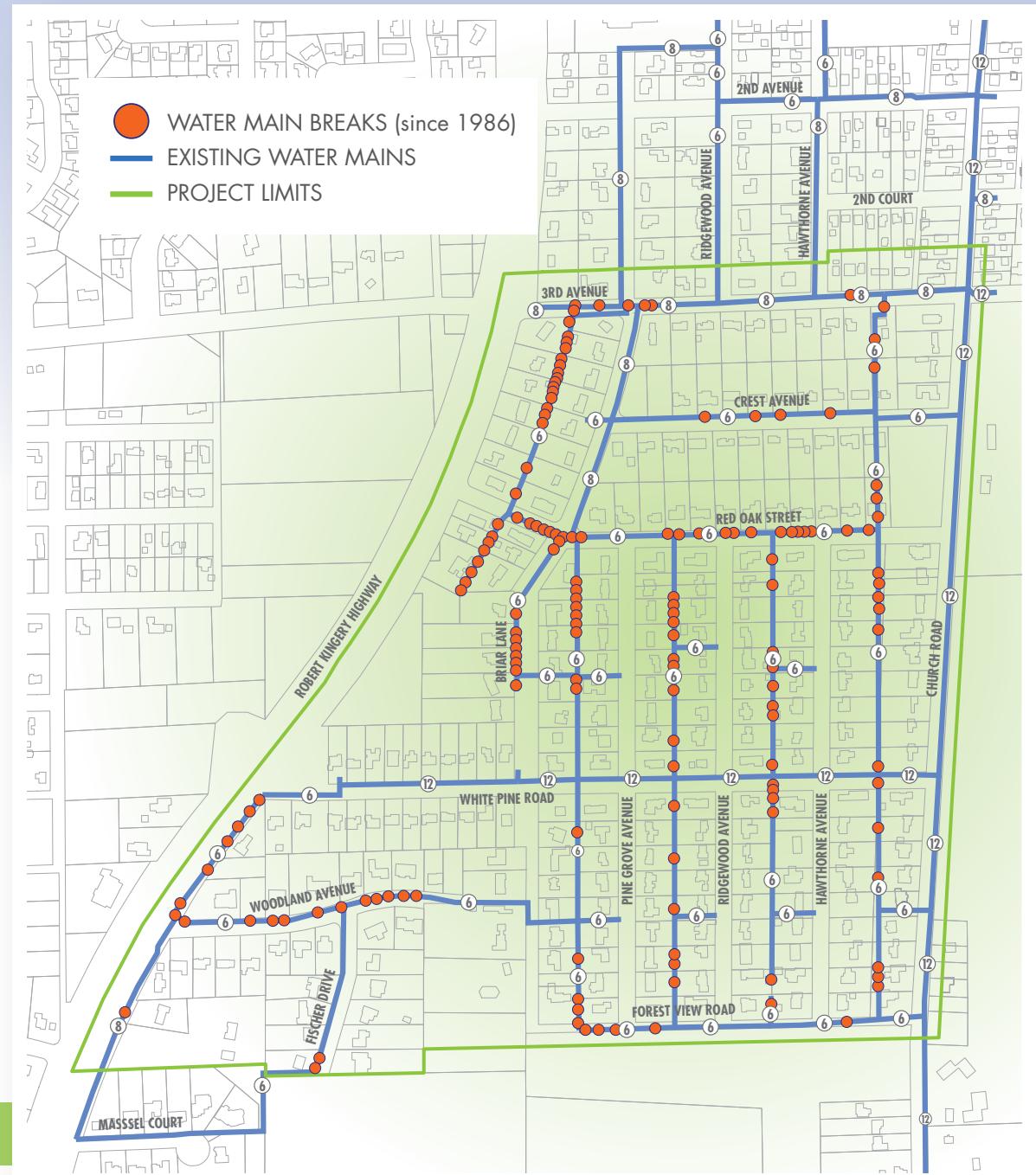
As we pursue a solution, it is our overriding goal to keep Village water rates as low as possible. The Village has worked with state and county agencies to evaluate funding options and have found some preferred methodologies are not eligible for use in this case. As such, we are proposing that the water rates paid by those living in an unincorporated area served by Bensenville be increased by 33%. This increase will provide funding to service the debt on an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Revolving Loan. If the program is enacted quickly, we can take advantage of a 1.86% interest rate beginning in 2016.

We will continue to work with all associated agencies to move this process forward and will keep you apprised of our progress. Be assured, that we will also protect your tax dollars and will not accept any solutions to this or other issues that place an undue tax burden on our residents or business community.



# AVERAGE UTILITY BILL ANALYSIS | Based on 4,500 Gallons/Month

	CURRENT RESIDENT RATE	CURRENT UNINCORPORATED RATE (150%)	RECOMMENDED SOLUTION UNINCORPORATED RESIDENTS PAY FOR THEIR PROJECT
Monthly Utility Bill	\$87.80	\$131.70	\$175.60
Annual Utility Bill	\$1,053.60	\$1,580.40	\$2,107.20



The majority of water lines in White Pines are the original 6" diameter lines installed in the 1940s. They are under-sized by today's standards and have deteriorated significantly. Because they are in back yards, many have structures such as garages built directly on top of them, adding to instability and making repairs and replacements extremely difficult. The system does not allow for sufficient flow capacity to meet fire department requirements. Since 1986, there have been more than 150 water main breaks in the White Pines Area (serving 750 residents) that the Village of Bensenville has had to repair.



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## THE VILLAGE'S PROPOSED SOLUTION

- Abandonment of existing mains
- Installation of new 8" and 12" mains
- Installation of new water valves and vaults
- Installation of new fire hydrants
- Installation of new water service lines and curb boxes to the limit of public rights-of-way
- Relocation of private water services from existing rear yard mains to proposed b-boxes in the public rights-of-way

We are aware that the White Pines Civic Association Board has requested distinct water service options from DuPage County. The County has responded with two options, both considered significantly more expensive than what the Village proposes. The two options included an apples to apples comparison of the Village's preferred project and the second is a system replacement with new connection to DuPage Water Commission (a disconnection of service from the Village). These proposals came in at \$7.4 million and \$10.1 million, respectively. The County will require a signed petition by a clear majority of the unincorporated White Pines residents to move forward with one of the more expensive options. The Village will continue to move forward with system engineering and design to ensure we comply with the IEPA Revolving Loan fund requirements and complete necessary system replacement as soon as possible.



**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC CAN BE FOUND AT [WWW.BENSENVILLE.IL.US](http://WWW.BENSENVILLE.IL.US)**