2022 Budget in Brief

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

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2022 Budget in Brief

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

This 2022 Budget in Brief provides an overview of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (District) formal budget book and provides an overview of the organization's core mission, operations, and budget appropriations. The annual budget is the principal planning device for carrying out the mission of the District and accomplishing our operational goals. As a key communication tool, the budget shows how resources are acquired and allocated for current operations, long-range planning, and financing.

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January 3, 2022

To the Residents of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago:

I am pleased to present the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (District) 2022 Budget, a \$1.3 billion fiscally responsible spending plan that prepares the District for the future, while reflecting current economic volatility and increasing inflationary pressures. The District invests in seven Water Reclamation Plants (WRPs) and addresses flooding, while prioritizing sound fiscal management.

The District serves 129 communities covering nearly all of Cook County, treating an average of 1.3 billion gallons of water each day, with a total treatment capacity of over 2.0 billion gallons per day at seven water reclamation plants. The District controls 76.1 miles of navigable waterways and owns and operates 34 stormwater detention reservoirs to provide regional flood protection. Throughout the pandemic, the District continues to staff seven water reclamation plants 24 hours per day, seven days per week, while permitting staff to work remotely if their jobs allow them to do so. The District has continued normal operation by utilizing virtual meetings and teleconferencing to maintain a commensurate level of productivity.

The District has a long history of proactive and responsible financial management and a strong reserve balance that will stabilize operations through volatile economic conditions and changing weather patterns. The 2022 Corporate Fund Budget is \$438.5 million, an increase of \$39.2 million from the 2021 Budget, reflecting strong revenue performance. During 2021, the District was successful in obtaining statutory authority to transfer lawfully available revenue to the District's Retirement Fund. Based on positive results in 2019, 2020, and projected for 2021, the District will contribute \$30.0 million in Corporate Fund budgetary reserves to the Retirement Fund to maintain the funded ratio.

Consistent, proactive water reclamation plant maintenance is critical to meeting operational goals and fulfilling the District's mission to protect the health and safety of the public and to protect Lake Michigan. In 2022, the District will invest \$6.3 million in technology infrastructure, including a phased replacement of the distributed control systems that are necessary to operate modern water reclamation plants.

The District's vision is to continue to be a world-leading wastewater and stormwater management utility focused on flooding mitigation, resource recovery, sustainability, resilience, and innovation. While we look to the future, we have incorporated lessons learned from the global events of 2020 and 2021 into our Strategic Plan. The 2022 Budget was prepared within the framework of a new 2021-2025 Strategic Plan which will allow the District to remain true to our mission of protecting our water environment and the health of the residents of Cook County. For the complete budget document, please visit www.mwrd.org/finances.

Respectfully submitted,

hari K. Stuli

Kari K. Steele President of the Board of Commissioners

2021 - 2025 Strategic Plan

The District has developed a new Strategic Plan that builds on the accomplishments of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. Outreach was a critical part of the process - including outreach to District staff, local governments, members of the public, and others - to ensure the inclusion of a range of perspectives in the development of the Strategic Plan.

The District's mission, vision, and values serve as a high-level framework for the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The mission statement remains unchanged since the last Strategic Plan. However, the vision has been updated and the core values have been expanded to include equity and diversity.

- VISION: We will continue to be a world-leading wastewater and stormwater management utility focused on flooding mitigation, resource recovery, sustainability, resilience, and innovation.
- VALUES: Excellence, Respect, Innovation, Safety, Equity and Diversity, and Accountability



2021-2025 Strategic Goals

The Strategic Plan is responsive to significant trends that will impact the District and its future success. Further details of the Strategic Plan, including the values, strategies and success measures can be found at mwrd.org/strategic-plan.

Mission & Governance

The District is governed by a nine-member Board of Commissioners (Board). Each commissioner is elected at large and serves on a salaried basis. Three Commissioners are elected every two years for six-year terms. The Board biannually elects from its membership a President, Vice President, and Chairman of the Committee on Finance. The District is an independent government and taxing body operating primarily within the boundaries of Cook County, Illinois. The agency serves an area of 882.1 square miles, including the City of Chicago and 128 surrounding communities. Wastewater is collected from municipalities by the District and conveyed to one of seven water reclamation plants for full treatment. Clean water is then discharged to local waterways. The District is also responsible for Stormwater Management, which includes administering its Watershed Management Ordinance and implementing capital improvement projects with communities to address regional and local flooding issues. The District's commitment to the environmental quality of the region involves protecting Lake Michigan from pollution, maintaining public health and safety, protecting homes and businesses from flooding, and managing water as a vital resource.



The Executive Director, who reports directly to the Board, manages the District's day-to-day operations. Eight appointed department heads report to the Executive Director. The Treasurer of the District, its chief financial officer, is appointed by and reports directly to the Board. General Administration, which includes the Administrative Services Division, Diversity Section, Environmental Justice Section, and Public Affairs Section, are direct staff and support units, reporting to the Executive Director.

Service Area - District Map



The MWRD owns and operates seven water reclamation plants (WRPs), 560 miles of intercepting sewers and force mains, 23 pumping stations, and the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP). Unmatched in size, TARP's 110 miles of tunnels and three cavernous reservoirs mitigate flooding and protect waterways from pollution by holding water until it can be cleaned at the WRPs. The MWRD has the capacity to treat over 2.0 billion gallons per day.

District Fast Facts





Infrastructure:

- Seven water reclamation plants
- 560 miles of intercepting sewers and force mains
- 23 pumping stations
- 34 stormwater detention reservoirs
- Three Tunnel and Reservoir Plan reservoirs
- Controls 76.1 miles of navigable waterways

2022 Tax Rate

37.47 cents per \$100 of assessed property value, 0.18 cent decrease from the 2021 Adjusted Tax Rate





2022 Estimated District Tax \$120.78 for a \$100,000 home

Sources of Revenue

Tax Sources

All District funds, with the exception of the Capital Improvements Bond Fund, derive their revenues primarily from property taxes. Approximately 64.2 percent of the 2022 appropriation is supported by property taxes. Taxes levied in one year are collected in the next year, and Working Cash Funds for the Corporate, Construction, and Stormwater Management Funds provide temporary financing while awaiting property tax receipts.

A personal property replacement tax provides tax revenue from corporations, partnerships, and the invested capital of public utilities to replace the personal property taxes that were once received from these sources. Revenue from this source is estimated at \$60.4 million for 2022, an increase of \$25.8 million from the 2021 Budget. These revenues, received directly from the State of Illinois, typically trend with the economy.

Funding Capital Projects: Bonds, Grants, & Loans

The District's Capital Improvement Program is financed primarily with State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans, grants, and general obligation or alternative revenue bond sale proceeds. State law provides authority to issue debt, but also limits the amount that the District can borrow.

Currently, the District's statutory debt limit is estimated at \$9.8 billion. Actual net outstanding debt applicable to the debt limit totals \$2.7 billion. The debt margin, the difference between issued debt applicable to the debt limit and the statutory limit, is \$7.1 billion, or 72.1 percent of the limit. Taking advantage of historically low interest rates, the District completed a bond sale on December 7, 2021, that provides \$182.5 million in new project funding and will result in \$152.2 million in future levy savings on the refunding bond portion of the sale. The District will also prepay \$43.0 million in SRF loans at a taxpayer savings of \$12.7 million over 15 years.



The MWRD's Sidestream Elevated Pool Aeration station 3 in Blue Island has a capacity of 300+ million gallons of water/day and utilizes 5' waterfalls to pump oxygen into the water to aerate the channel and create a thriving habitat for fish and wildlife.

User Charges, Property, Services, & Miscellaneous

A major revenue source for the District is the user charge system, which imposes a surcharge above property tax payments for commercial, industrial, and tax-exempt users of the sewerage systems. Estimated user charge revenues in 2022 are \$38.0 million. Land rentals, investment income, sewer permit fees, connection impact fees, and other revenues will provide an estimated \$51.4 million in 2022. The 2022 Budget includes a \$30.0 million equity transfer from the Corporate Fund to the Retirement Fund and is the result of holding one-time revenues, primarily excess Tax Increment Financing Surplus distributions from the City of Chicago, in reserve until a statutory change is effective to allow the transfer.



Where District Money Comes From

\$478.8 M	37.0% 🤇	Net Assets Appropriated
\$371.9 M	28.7% 🤇	Net Tax Sources
\$334.6 M	25.9%	State Revolving Fund Loans & Future Bond Sales
\$38.0 M	2.9%	User Charge Income
\$25.0 M	1.9%	Land Rentals
\$22.8 M	1.8%	Miscellaneous
\$19.1 M	1.5%	Grants
\$2.9 M	0.2%	Investment Income
\$0.6 M	0.1%	Sewer Permit Fees
\$1,293.7 M	100.0%	TOTAL

Where District Money Goes



\$341.1 M	26.4% 😑	Construction & Design
\$281.1 M	21.7% 🔴	Bond Redemption & Interest Fund
\$239.6 M	18.5% 🔴	Plant Operation & Maintenance
\$137.8 M	10.7% 🔴	Staff Services
\$118.7 M	9.2% 🔵	MWRD Retirement Fund
\$97.0 M	7.5% 🔵	Stormwater Management
\$44.5 M	3.4% 🔵	Claims & Judgments
\$33.9 M	2.6% 🔵	Monitoring & Research
\$1,293.7 M	100.0%	TOTAL



Capital Improvement Program projects, such as the replacement of primary settling tanks at the Stickney WRP, aim to proactively modernize aging infrastructure.

2022 Appropriations

The 2022 Budget is a \$1.3 billion spending plan that prepares the District for the future while reflecting current economic volatility, increasing inflationary pressures, and shifting weather patterns. The District invests in seven WRPs and addresses flooding, while prioritizing sound fiscal management. The 2022 Corporate Fund Budget is \$438.5 million, an increase of \$39.2 million, or 9.8 percent, from the 2021 Adjusted Budget, reflecting strong revenue performance. The operating budget reflects inflationary cost increases that have been realized or are anticipated. Two of the District's largest non-personnel expenditures, chemicals and electricity, are expected to see price increases in 2022. The District will invest \$6.3 million in technology infrastructure, including a phased replacement of the distributed control systems that are necessary to operate modern water reclamation plants.



Appropriations are allocated to seven separate funds. Each fund maintains a self-balancing set of accounts that are reported separately in their own financial statements. The funds are created to account for the different types of activities and legal restrictions associated with a particular function.

The District's strong reserves and commitment to fiscally responsible management of our resources will aid in overcoming this period of economic uncertainty. During 2021, the District was successful in obtaining statutory authority to transfer lawfully available revenue to the District's Retirement Fund. Based on positive results in 2019, 2020, and projected for 2021, the District will contribute \$30.0 million in Corporate Fund budgetary reserves to the Retirement Fund to maintain the funded ratio.

	Appr	opriatio	ons & Expen	ditures, 20	18-2022	s	
2018			860	291	1,151		
2019	:	:	816	40	7 1,223	Leg	end ditures
2020	:	÷	845	307	1,152	Unex	pended
*2021	i	i	832	373	1,205	Total	priations
**2022	1	I	1	1	,294 1,2	94	
(*Adjusted *Estimated) 0	250	500	750	1,000	1,250	1,500	1,75
Lstimated)			Million \$ (Amo	unts are rounded)			
S	ummary by Fund		2022 Budget	2021 Adjusted Budg		lar Increase Decrease)	Percent Change
Corporate Fu	ind		\$438,501,500	\$399,326,3	700	\$39,174,800	9.8%
Construction	n Fund		19,932,000	15,471,2	200	4,460,800	28.8%
Capital Impro	ovements Bond F	und	293,943,500	310,382,6	500	(16,439,100)	(5.3) %
Stormwater	Management Fur	nd	96,981,700	109,965,9	900	(12,984,200)	(11.8)%
Retirement F	und		118,754,000	98,127,0	000	20,627,000	21.0%
Reserve Claim Fund		44,465,300	39,624,900		4,840,400	12.2%	
Bond Redemption & Interest Fund		281,145,736	232,125,850		49,019,886	21.1%	

Appropriations by Program Objective

The District has a long history of proactive and responsible financial management. The graph below displays the allocation of the 2022 appropriation and the personnel assigned to each operational objective across all funds. In 2022, a total of 1,972 positions are budgeted across all operational objectives. The District's mission is achieved daily through six main operational functions:

Collection \$118,972,631 • 277 Personnel Operation and maintenance of pumping stations, force mains, and intercepting sewers.

Treatment \$263,979,232 • 462 Personnel Treatment of influent at water reclamation plants.

Solids Processing \$84,929,168 • 257 Personnel Processing of primary, secondary, and tertiary sludge.

Flood & Pollution Control \$206,454,132 • 454 Personnel Programs for the design and construction of flood and pollution control projects and waterways control.

Solids Utilization \$29,252,040 • 42 Personnel Drying and beneficial utilization of secondary and tertiary solids from the treatment process.

General Support (Debt Service, Retirement, Reserve Funds, & Support Departments) \$590,136,533 • 480 Personnel Indirect costs essential for achieving operational goals.



2022 Appropriations by Program Objective

Note: Amounts may not add up due to rounding.

Collection & Treatment

The District treats an average of 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater per day, with a total capacity of over 2.0 billion gallons per day. In 2022, the District expects to collect and treat approximately 489.1 billion gallons of wastewater at its seven water reclamation plants. The District's reclaimed wastewater, along with runoff from rainfall, is returned to the Chicago Area Waterway System, which includes local canals, rivers, and streams that serve as headwaters of the Illinois River system.

The District provides reclamation for residential and industrial wastewater, meeting permitted discharge limits virtually at all times. The water reclamation process is protected by a pre-treatment program to guard against hazardous substances and toxic chemicals. These are strictly regulated by federal and state requirements. The District routinely monitors all industry and non-residential sources to ensure that those wastes are disposed of in an environmentally responsible and lawful manner.

The collection and treatment processes are performed in compliance with discharge permits issued by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates the quality of the effluent as it leaves the treatment plants. The District's high level of compliance produces consistently excellent results. This is reflected in a 100 percent overall compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System requirements in 2020 (latest year for which figures are available). In addition, the District was recognized as a Utility of the Future Today, a distinction for water agencies that have increased efficiency in operations, enhanced productivity, and achieved long-term sustainability.

In its continual pursuit of excellence, the District has adhered to a rigorous asset management plan to maintain its facilities at levels in accordance with operational and permit requirements. As with any strong asset management program, project selection is guided by the asset's or system's criticality, condition, and failure risk.



The District is divided into seven service areas, each sending its wastewater to a different treatment plant through the sewer system. The Stickney Water Reclamation Plant is one of the largest wastewater facilities in the world and serves residents in the central part of Chicago as well as 46 other communities within a 260 square mile area.

Biosolids Processing & Utilization

The District's biosolids production operation is one of the largest of its kind in the country. In 2022, the District will remove and process approximately 192,500 dry tons of concentrated sewage through three biosolids handling facilities and produce an estimated 102,950 dry tons of biosolids for beneficial utilization.

Utilization of District Biosolids, 2011–2020				
607,260	52.5% 🦲	Farmland Application		
382,177	33.0% 🧲	MBM Pelletizing Facility		
115,177	10.0%	Class A Exceptional Quality (EQ) Distribution		
24,606	2.1%	Landfill Applications		
11,026	1.0%	Unsuitables		
8,303	0.7%	MWRD Land		
8,229	0.7%	Farmland Application - Injection		
1,156,778	100.0%	TOTAL		

In 2022, the District will continue to promote the beneficial utilization of biosolids, which are produced as a safe and environmentally friendly alternative to synthetic fertilizer. Exceptional Quality (EQ) Biosolids are a product of wastewater treatment that supplies organic matter and improves soils. EQ Biosolids can be effectively used on turf grass at golf courses, athletic fields, parks, and other recreational areas. EQ Biosolids go through an extensive testing regimen to ensure each batch is of the highest quality. The District has successfully provided and used its biosolids product in Cook County for more than 20 years.

Popular biosolids programs sponsored by the District, including the bring-your-own bucket piles, bulk pick up of EQ Compost and Biosolids, and delivery of bulk orders, will resume in 2022. The District will also continue to work with organizations to restore areas that have been degraded/contaminated due to former industrial uses, known as brownfield sites. Activities and initiatives such as these align with and support the District's Strategic Plan Goal of Resource Management.

Flood & Pollution Control

Tunnel and Reservoir Plan

The District's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan is one of the country's largest public works projects for pollution and flood control. The Tunnel and Reservoir Plan has been successful in preventing flooding and pollution caused by combined sewer overflows, by capturing and storing combined stormwater and sewage that would otherwise overflow into waterways in rainy weather.

Phase I, completed in 2006, consists of four tunnel systems totaling 109.4 miles of deep rock tunnels, eight to 33 feet in diameter and 150 to 300 feet underground. The tunnels provide crucial protection and can capture up to 2.3 billion gallons of the first flush of sewage contaminated stormwater from combined sewers that previously flowed into area waterways.

Phase II, the reservoir component, provides an additional 15.0 billion gallons of storage of combined sewer overflows for flood damage reduction and additional pollution control. This phase is composed of three separate reservoirs:

The Gloria A. Majewski Reservoir, located in Elk Grove Village, was built by the Army Corps of Engineers and finished in 1998. It provides 350.0 million gallons of storage. The reservoir was constructed for \$45.0 million, and since its completion has yielded over \$560.0 million in flood damage reduction benefits to three communities.

The Thornton Composite Reservoir was completed in 2015. It provides 7.9 billion gallons of storage and through December 2021, has captured approximately 47.0 billion gallons of polluted water. It is projected to provide more than \$40.0 million annually in benefits to the residents of 14 communities.

The McCook Reservoir is comprised of two stages. The first stage was unveiled on December 4, 2017 and provides an estimated 3.5 billion gallons of storage. The second stage, expected to be completed in 2029, will provide an estimated 6.5 billion gallons of storage. The McCook Reservoir is projected to bring more than \$140.0 million per year in flood control benefits to the 3.1 million residents of 37 communities. Through December 2021, approximately 83.0 billion gallons of polluted water have been captured.

A new 20-foot diameter inflow tunnel and gate shaft is being constructed to connect the existing Des Plaines Tunnel system directly to the McCook Reservoir. The new tunnel will provide a greater benefit to the communities served by the Des Plaines Tunnel than using the inflow/outflow tunnels.



The MWRD Office of Public Affairs turned to virtual outreach when the pandemic prevented in person tours and events. Live virtual tours of MWRD facilities and projects have been attended by thousands of guests from the Chicago region and around the world.

Industrial Waste Monitoring & Pollution Control

The District effectively eliminates offensive or dangerous discharges into the public sewer system through the administration of the Sewage and Waste Control Ordinance. It specifies limits on the quantity and quality of wastes discharged by industrial users as required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The discharges, unless properly controlled and treated, could interfere with the District's treatment processes and adversely impact waterways. Industries and non-residential sources are routinely monitored by the District to ensure wastes are disposed of in an environmentally responsible and lawful manner. The District also operates a user charge system, which imposes a surcharge above property tax payments for commercial, industrial, and tax-exempt users of the sewerage systems.

The District is designated by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency as an official response unit for chemical and hazardous waste spills in Cook County and in that capacity is expected to respond to approximately 140 emergency calls in 2022 from fire and police officials, citizens, and other federal and state agencies. In addition, boat patrols are routinely conducted to locate pollution sources and monitor lakefront recreational events to prevent pollution from entering Lake Michigan. The Citizen Incident Reporting Application, found on the District's website or via a mobile application, allows citizens to report incidents of odors, stream blockages, and other environmental-related issues. Dispatchers monitor both the online reporting system and a telephone hotline 24 hours per day.

The District also conducts chemical and biological monitoring of District service area waterways and has developed, through collaborators in academia, water quality models of portions of the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) to assess the operation of the waterway to continually improve water quality and protect aquatic life. On a daily basis, the District monitors multiple critical control points of the liquid and solids process trains at each of the seven WRPs to improve operations and the quality of effluents and biosolids to protect water quality in the CAWS and ensure safety for public recreation. Nutrient enrichment of the water environment is an increasing national concern and in 2022 the District will begin year three of a four-year CAWS phosphorus assessment and reduction study, to guide future phosphorus reduction planning at the District's three largest water reclamation plants.



No stretch of the main stem of the Chicago River goes untouched when Skimmy Dipper and her sister vessel Skim Pickens ply the waters of the river in downtown Chicago, removing debris and other floatable items.

Stormwater Management

The District's Stormwater Management Program has completed Detailed Watershed Plans (DWPs) for all six major watersheds in Cook County, initiated a Stormwater Management Capital Improvement Program, initiated a Small Streams Maintenance Program (SSMP), and adopted and implemented the Watershed Management Ordinance. Through both green and gray engineered solutions, and flood-prone property acquisitions, the District's Stormwater Management Program addresses flooding problems throughout Cook County.

Some of the program's initiatives include implementing the Volumetric Approach to Stormwater Planning and prioritizing areas identified with additional storage opportunities to address flooding problems, identifying and pursuing opportunities for partnering on multi-benefit projects and for coordination with other agencies to minimize the cost of potential stormwater management projects through grants and other funding resources, and advancing the pilot study for a suburban green schoolyard program. The 2022 Budget includes \$33.0 million in the Stormwater Management Fund for Intergovernmental Agreements for stormwater improvements.

Through the management of the SSMP, the District works to reduce flooding in urbanized areas. The SSMP's top priorities are removing blockages such as log jams, beaver dams, and other material and debris from the streams and preventing future blockages by removing dead and unhealthy trees and invasive species, such as buckthorn and honeysuckle, which choke out native vegetation from the streambanks.

The focus of many of the Stormwater Capital Improvement Program projects is on regional waterways in highly urbanized areas. Project prioritization arises from the DWPs on a countywide basis. Two categories have been established for DWP projects: streambank stabilization, which involves addressing critical active streambank erosion, and flood control, which addresses regional overbank flooding. The \$60.1 million Addison Creek Channel Improvements Project, along with the \$90.5 million Addison Creek Reservoir project, will help alleviate public health and safety concerns by reducing overbank flooding to approximately 2,200 structures. The compensatory storage will be provided with the approximately 600 acre-foot flood control Addison Creek Reservoir project.

The District's statutory authority for Stormwater Management in Cook County allows for the acquisition of flood-prone properties. The District entered into intergovernmental agreements with five communities to acquire 52 flood-prone residential structures. These acquisitions will be completed by 2022.



The Buffalo Creek Reservoir expansion increases the storage capacity and protects structures from flooding impacts. Along with important flood control improvements, the project incorporates several aesthetic and environmental enhancements.

Capital Improvement Program

Capital improvements preserve the useful life or increase the capacity or efficiency of District facilities. Capital projects involve the acquisition, improvement, replacement, remodeling, completion, alteration, construction, and enlargement of District facilities.

Funding for the Capital Improvement Program consists of the sale of capital improvements bonds, general property tax revenues, SRF loans, and federal and state grants. The 2022 Capital Improvement Program appropriation, which includes the Capital Improvements Bond and Construction Funds, is \$313.9 million. A total of 120 projects funded by the Capital Improvements Bond or Construction Funds will be in the planning, design, or construction phases in 2022. The Capital Improvement Program identifies and prioritizes projects to modernize obsolete equipment and facilities to ensure continued efficient and reliable service, protect infrastructure, and meet National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements.

The District's overall Capital Improvement Program includes 2022 construction project awards, land, support, future projects, and projects under construction, with a total cost of approximately \$1,071.5 million, as displayed in the graph below.



Overall Capital Improvement Program



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

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