



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD reservoir expansion to alleviate Burbank and Oak Lawn flooding



In the front row: (L-R): MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila, Commissioners David Walsh, Kari K. Steele, Burbank Mayor Dan Foy, Stickney Township Supervisor Lou Viverito, President Mariyana Spyropoulos, Vice President Barbara McGowan, Oak Lawn President Sandra Bury, Commissioner Debra Shore, Vince Cainkar, and MWRD Executive Director David St. Pierre. In the back row: Contractor F.H. Paschen's Cole Robinson, Jeff Tarnowski, O'Neil Douglas, and Aja Davis.

Shovels are hitting the ground in southwest suburban Burbank where the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) will make way for a major reservoir expansion designed to provide much-needed flood relief.

Construction is officially underway on the Melvina Ditch Reservoir, 6500 W. 87th St., Burbank, which will work to alleviate flooding concerns for residents in Burbank and Oak Lawn. After a comprehensive public process that relied on input from Burbank and Oak Lawn neighbors and various stakeholders to address flooding concerns, the MWRD agreed to design an improved and expanded reservoir. To construct this, the MWRD plans to remove more than 80,000 tons of dirt to increase its holding capacity by nearly 64 million gallons. The \$20-million project, funded primarily by the MWRD, also received a grant from the state of Illinois through its Build Illinois Bond Fund.

"Today's groundbreaking represents the culmination of an engaging public process that relied on the input of Burbank and Oak Lawn residents to work toward a solution to severe flooding in their communities," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "Combining that community outreach with highly skilled

engineering work and funding assistance from our partners in Springfield, we believe we have a project that will make a critical difference in the quality of life for local residents who have in years past dealt with flooded basements and streets. We hope this investment at the Melvina Ditch Reservoir will give that excess stormwater a larger holding place that gives residents much needed peace of mind when it rains."

"This is a great day for my constituents in Oak Lawn, Burbank, Chicago Ridge, and Alsip who have suffered from flooded basements, businesses, yards, and streets," said Congressman Dan Lipinski. "I was happy to work with local officials and the MWRD to make this expansion of the Melvina Ditch Reservoir possible. This type of cooperation on local projects is what helps make our communities better places to live and work."

The Melvina Ditch Reservoir has exceeded its capacity in recent storm events, resulting in flooding in nearby neighborhoods. Through public meetings, consensus was met to expand the reservoir within the existing reservoir footprint on MWRD property and by acquiring 15 nearby properties around the perimeter of the reservoir, based on the alternative configuration sought by residents. *(continued)*

MWRD reservoir expansion to alleviate flooding, *continued*



MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos addresses the crowd.

Now these rain-soaked communities have relief in sight thanks to the expansion of the reservoir.

“The village of Burbank couldn’t be more pleased that we are progressing on this project,” said Burbank Mayor Dan Foy. “There are 430 residential properties that will have a reduced risk of flooding during storms. This is a great day.”

The project more than doubles the existing Melvina Ditch Reservoir storage capacity, expanding it from 54 million gallons to 117.3 million gallons. In addition, the pumping station will be modified to accommodate the reservoir expansion, and a new emergency overflow weir will be installed to reduce the chance of the reservoir overflowing.

“The Southwest Mayors Conference, for years in partnership with MWRD, has made stormwater management in our region a priority for enhancing our residents’ lives and businesses,” said Oak Lawn Village President Sandra Bury.

“Oak Lawn salutes MWRD in the historic groundbreaking for expansion of the Melvina Ditch Reservoir, said Larry Deetjen, Oak Lawn Village Manager. This major capital investment will have a positive regional impact and is part of a systematic and planned set of initiatives by local and regional governments to address real life problems in our communities.”

Lou Viverito, who has been on the Stickney Township Board since the 1960s, is the Township Supervisor. “I’m extremely excited and proud to think the MWRD is going to help Stickney Township, the city of Burbank and village of Oak Lawn solve their flooding problems,” said Supervisor Viverito. “You can’t believe the people who would come to me crying and upset that they were flooded. This is going to be great for the residents and businesses of Burbank and for Oak Lawn.”

Additional work on the reservoir will include the installation of a stormwater chamber and culverts at the outlet of the pumping



Burbank Mayor Dan Foy addresses the audience before the groundbreaking ceremony.



Crews will remove 300,000 cubic yards, or 81,000 tons of dirt in the Melvina Ditch Reservoir by digging down about 11 feet in the current reservoir and another 20 feet down along the new perimeter of the reservoir to build a carefully graded slope that will hold an additional 64 million gallons of water.

station. Construction will extend to 87th Street to install the culverts and replace any disturbed utilities. Storm pumps will also be removed and serviced and impellers will be lengthened. The water from the reservoir is conveyed to an underground culvert that stretches from 87th Street to 95th street where it empties into the Melvina Ditch. Construction on the Melvina Ditch Reservoir improvements are anticipated to be complete by 2020. Downstream communities, such as Bridgeview, Chicago Ridge and Worth will also benefit indirectly from the reservoir.

“F.H. Paschen is proud to be the General Contractor working side by side with MWRD on the much needed Melvina Ditch Reservoir Expansion Project,” said Cole Robinson, Assistant Project Manager, F.H. Paschen. “We understand just how important the improvements are for the entire Oak Lawn and Burbank communities and will do our best to ensure a safe and timely project completion, which we are currently forecasting as the spring of 2020.”

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for used water treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.