

Investment in Fresh Water

- Welcome, thank you.
- I want to spend a few minutes talking about our city's commitment to, and investments in, freshwater -- something the people in this room live every day.
- South Milwaukee was built on water. We have miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, most of that dominated by Grant Park, the jewel of the Milwaukee County Parks system. We have the nationally known Seven Bridges Trail system leading to that shoreline ... the Oak Leaf bike and walking trails ... and a beach that is more energized now than it has been in decades. It's something we're extremely proud of locally ... and it's Grant Park, and Lake Michigan, that we're probably best known for.
- We literally grew up around a grist mill just southeast of here along what is now Oak Creek. While our downtown area later shifted to accommodate industry, we still embrace the creek, the Oak Creek Parkway and the Mill Pond. More on that in a second.
- Yes, water is our heritage. It's in our DNA as a city, and we have a responsibility to make sure we're protecting that resource for our residents today, and preserving it for the future. This is our legacy we're talking about, and we'll be judged based on how we care for this most important of resources.
- And I stand here today proud of the work we're doing to live up to that responsibility.
- I'll start with our work around Oak Creek watershed restoration.
 - <https://southmilwaukeeblog.com/2016/12/27/progress-continues-toward-a-cleaner-oak-creek-watershed/>
- We've also made significant investments in our Water Utility -- more than \$9 million in recent years on the conversion from conventional filtration to membrane filtration and replacement of over 12,000 feet of water main. We're also making plans to invest millions more in new clear wells and pumping station in coming years, ensuring that we're delivering clean drinking for future generations."

But I'm here to talk about our work in wastewater, and our story is good there too.

First some history. South Milwaukee was incorporated as a village in 1892, and we have a map showing a sewer system as far back as 1893 ... and we have an engineering report from 1910 addressing separating the storm and sanitary sewers.

Our original wastewater treatment works were built in the 1920s, in a ravine area just north of here, along the Oak Creek and near Grant Park.

Our current wastewater treatment plant was built in 1937, and expanded in 1970, and we continue to invest in the facility to this day. We have to.

In doing so, we also remain independent. In fact, independence is a significant part of our history in South Milwaukee. Driving here today, you may have noticed that the street names and numbers changed when you entered our city. We're the only community in the county that does that. Confusing? Yes. A sign of our independence, and a nod to our "proud past"? You bet.

We're also independent when it comes to wastewater treatment, as the only community in Milwaukee County not in MMSD.

Is MMSD here today? (Thank them for coming.)

I am so thankful to the sewerage district for their partnership on on the Oak Creek watershed study. We can not do this without them, and I'm so glad they are driving it along with us.

Still, even as work together on the Oak Creek project, we retain our own sewage treatment system, and I'm proud of it because we have been able to deliver a good service at reasonable rates, while also investing for the long term.

We have made more than \$8 million in capital investments in our facility since 2010.

In 2008, as part of \$1.5 million in upgrades, we added a new wet well and submersible raw sewage pumps, and a new Rotomat fine screen machine.

We invested another \$5.4 million in the facility in 2013. This included the addition of an emergency generator, concrete troughs with covers for the final clarifiers, replacement of all WAS and RAS pumps, and a new Trojan Signa UV system.

The new UV system allows us to disinfect our entire flow up to 30 million gallons per day.

And we've invested in the collection system too.

In 2008, we started our sewer televising program with a \$28,000 camera and a retired police department van. In 2010 after our second 100 year flood in two years, we televised 25% of our system in an effort to find significant defects. Since then we have strived to televise 5-10% of our collection system each year. To date, we have televised over 80% of our system with a little more than a \$30,000 investment. Pretty cool.

We also use our new jet-vac truck to address about 50 trouble spots in the system every month ... and clean and/or root cut the entire collection system every two years, part of our ongoing commitment to taxpayers to ensure our system is first-rate and sustainable.

And that's what I'll close with today, sustainability.

As mayor of this city, I need to make sure we're investing in fresh water for the long term, investing in sustainable solutions that will leave future generations proud of what we have done in this most important of areas. This is our legacy.

And this responsibility starts with you. The choices we're making today -- the choices everyone in this room makes every day -- will ensure that we live up to our commitment to protect and enhance the most irreplaceable of resources: fresh water.

Thank you.

Before I turn it back to Ben, I have one last message for everyone here today, and I'd be remiss if I didn't add this as mayor: Before you leave South Milwaukee, make sure you spend all your money.

Thanks, and have a great meeting!