



## Glencoe pays \$70,000 for water plant study

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Glencoe officials have hired a civil engineering firm to conduct a study of the village's water system - a task they say is needed to help determine the future of the village's 85-year-old water plant, pictured here. (Karen Ann Cullotta, Chicago Tribune)

Officials in Glencoe have paid a civil engineering firm close to \$70,000 to conduct a study of the village's water system – a task officials said is necessary before they can begin talking to residents about details of an estimated \$35 million plan to replace the village's aging water plant.

David Mau, the village's director of public works, said the study conducted by Strand Associates will include creating a computerized, hydraulic model of Glencoe's main water system and making recommendations that could help officials determine the future of the village's 85-year-old, beachfront water plant.

"It's a big grid, with the water mains traversing out into the community, and all looped and tied back in," Mau said, describing the model.

"This project is a catalyst, and it serves multiple purposes," Mau added.

While some Glencoe residents have expressed frustration about their perceptions that they've been left out while Glencoe officials debate the future of the village's water plant behind closed doors, Mau said the findings of the consultant's study will help officials launch productive meetings about the issue with residents.

"Until we have something tangible to discuss, we don't have an agenda or a stated timeline," Mau said. "It's a complicated process and involves a long-range plan for the community's water."

Still, some residents say they remain concerned that village officials are waiting too long to include residents in the discussion.

"Glencoe water operations should be focused on the needs of village residents," said Laurie Morse, who lives in Glencoe, in a statement. "We should not be putting our planning, and the future of our public beaches, in the hands of people who are not elected by our taxpayers."

Village President Lawrence Levin confirmed last fall that officials are exploring the possibility of forging a partnership that would allow Glencoe to provide water to the Northwest Water Commission, with the agency potentially helping the village pay for construction of a new water plant.

Northwest Water Commission Executive Director John DuRocher also said last fall that officials were in "very, very preliminary" discussions with Glencoe and confirmed the group was looking for additional sources of Lake Michigan water.

The commission now provides water to Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Palatine and Wheeling, DuRocher said.

Officials in Glencoe said they also are talking with the Glencoe Park District about the prospect of a partnership with the commission and the possibility of relocating the water plant north of its present site.

Village officials said the aging Spanish-revival-style water plant will likely need to be demolished rather than renovated.

But this month, the village's water quality was once again applauded by officials with the Illinois Department of Public Health, which recognized the Glencoe Water Supply System for maintaining perfect compliance with regulations regarding fluoridation.

Water Plant Superintendent Tom Weathers, who will be awarded a certificate at the Illinois American Water Works Association Annual Meeting in Springfield, said in 2008, the village won top honors for the best water in the state, and took second place at a national competition.

"There will be some big decisions to make in the near future about the long-term water supply for the residents of Glencoe," Weathers said.

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