

Wauwatosa Financial Snapshot

2024

Finding Efficiencies: Inspecting Our Sewers

It may not be top of mind, but each time you drive through our city you traverse over miles of pipes. This includes sanitary sewers, sanitary laterals, storm sewers, and storm inlet lead laterals.

Over time, these pipes need to be inspected to confirm their condition and identify pipes that are blocked, and in need of replacement or repair. Inspections are completed by using a remote-controlled tractor with a camera attached, collecting video footage of the sewer pipes.

The collected footage helps city staff make decisions about replacement or repair and is even used in planning capital improvement projects. Sewer inspections are essential to our city.

Breaking Down Inspection Costs

The City of Wauwatosa has previously contracted inspection services from outside vendors, but

this has led to project delays and an increase in costs over time.

After considering the current expenditure amount for this program — \$294,710 annually — the Department of Public Works staff began to research and evaluate what it would take to bring this service in-house.

By allocating the time and expertise of current and future staff, as well as purchasing all the necessary supplies, the City will experience a \$72,907.28 levy reduction annually, reducing the cost of televising per linear foot down to \$4.

More Benefits for Wauwatosa

Besides the annual cost savings, there are many other benefits to this in-house program, including:

- Increased preventative maintenance inspections, inspecting 10% of the sewer system annually
- Inspecting the sewer work of hired contractors to confirm proper installation
- Ability to share collected footage of sewer conditions during the design stage of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)
- Inspect sinkholes in a timelier manner

By bringing this inspection service in-house, the Department of Public Works has found a way to streamline its workflows and find efficiencies to meet levy reductions for 2024 and beyond.

We're grateful to the Department of Public Works team for their commitment to efficiency in both service and cost.

Tax Rates of Comparable Communities

Wauwatosa remains competitive in its tax rate compared to other communities. The 2023 tax rate decreased by 1.8%, from \$21.79 per \$1000 of assessed value to \$21.40.

The rate is calculated by taking the overall tax levy dollars, net of tax credits, plus the tax increment for tax incremental financing districts, and dividing by the total local assessed value of property within Wauwatosa. The city portion of that tax rate increased by 2.9%, from \$7.19 to \$7.39

The average residential property is valued at \$273,000, slightly up from last year's value of \$271,000.

The 2023 tax bill for the average residence in Wauwatosa is \$5,559. In 2022, the tax bill for the average residence was \$5,654.

To the right is a chart showing each comparable community's tax rate per \$1000 of assessed value. This only reflects the city or village portion of their tax bill.

Municipality	Tax Rate per \$1000 of assessed value
Franklin	\$3.94
New Berlin	\$4.37
Brookfield	\$4.43
Oak Creek	\$5.80
Wauwatosa	\$7.39
Sheboygan	\$7.41
Greenfield	\$8.27
Fon Du Lac	\$8.63
La Crosse	\$9.39
West Allis	\$9.94





Wauwatosa Maintains Top Rating for Financial Operations

Moody’s Investor Services has given Wauwatosa the highest bond rating (Aaa), ranking the City of Wauwatosa with the strongest creditworthiness compared to other U.S. borrowers.

Moody’s revised their key indicators, sharing a more holistic view of city funds. Our revenues and fund balances are higher than in previous reports.

Our challenge continues to be increasing revenue to match expenditures, particularly with levy limits. Levy limits restrict the city’s

ability to increase its annual levy by more than the percentage of valuation change driven by net new construction exclusive of increases for debt service.

This strong financial rating is important because our bonds finance streets, water systems, sewerage improvement, and other city projects.

Earning Moody’s top bond rating enables us to secure funding for lending at the most competitive rates.



Where Do My Property Taxes Go?

Wauwatosa property owners received their 2023 tax bill in the mail in December. You can also view your tax bill online (wauwatosa.net/taxes).

Notice that 32% of your total taxes support the City of Wauwatosa. The remaining amount supports Milwaukee County, Wauwatosa School District, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewer District.

See the dollar bill below for the percentages that each of these entities receives from your tax bill.

Some people may not realize that

although you pay your tax bill to the City, not all of it stays with us. The city portion of your tax bill supports an array of services.

For an average Wauwatosa home (valued at \$273,000), the monthly bill for city services is \$168.12.

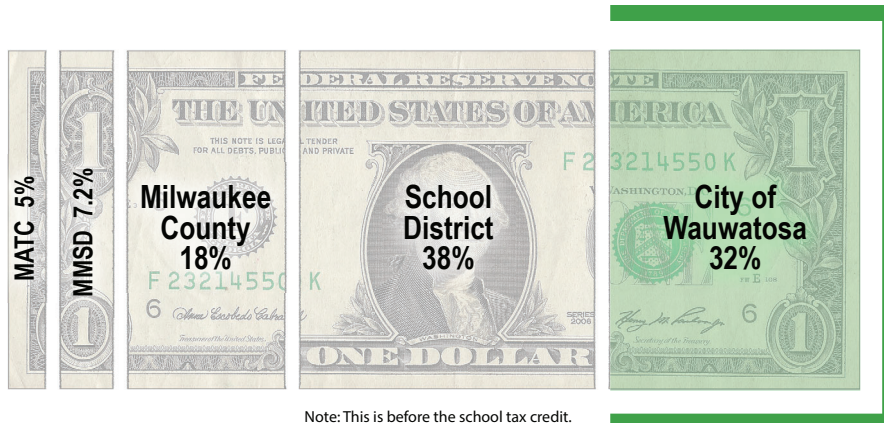
This means for \$168.12 per month, you get fire protection and police response in the event you need it. You get your trash and recycling collected, leaf and yard waste collection (which some other cities don’t offer), public health services, parks to play in, access to books, media, and programming at the library, well-maintained streets to

drive on, and plowed streets to get you where you need to go in the winter.

These services are based on the city’s budget - which is created in conjunction with the Common Council, city staff, and the public considering the fiscal and strategic goals each year.

What’s an Average Tax Bill?

Average Monthly Bill = \$168.12
The average monthly tax bill for city services is \$168.12. Here’s a breakdown of what that supports:



\$15.11	General Government
\$45.15	Police
\$33.02	Fire
\$2.33	Other Public Safety
\$13.71	Public Works
\$3.69	Health
\$7.20	Conservation and Development
\$9.88	Library
\$29.63	Debt
\$3.70	Parks
\$4.70	Capital





Wauwatosa Uses Grant Funds to Ensure Community Enhancement

Like many municipalities, the City of Wauwatosa receives dozens of state and federally-funded grants each year. Some of these grants are annually anticipated or applied for through an application process.

The use of grant funding in the City of Wauwatosa keeps vital city services like public safety and police patrol, emergency medical services (EMS), and vaccination distribution properly funded while not relying on property tax dollars to ensure continued community development.

In 2022, the City of Wauwatosa received over six million dollars in grant funding from different federal, state, and local agencies.

Some examples of funding received include:

- Multiple grants related to COVID-19, such as vaccine community outreach, virus detection efforts, and emergency preparedness.
- The Fire Department received funding for EMS Flex services. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there were more demands for EMS providers,

increased costs in providing the services necessary, and other economic impacts. This Flex grant is assisting the Fire Department with those budgetary concerns.

- The Police Department received several grants for a wide variety of projects and safety features, such as funding to support dangerous driving prevention tactics. These task forces focus on the use of alcohol, aggressive driving, and no use of seatbelts.
- The Public Works Sanitation team received funding from the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

Each department starts the fiscal year with a spending deficit – meaning they need to find ways the cut spending throughout the year to stay within budget.

Receiving state or federal grants is how the City of Wauwatosa stays within departmental budgets and continues to provide excellent service.

Several of the grants received were non-departmental, including

the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The City of Wauwatosa receives this annual grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to distribute in ways that provide housing, safe living environments, and expanded economic opportunities to low- or moderate-income persons.

Organizations that receive CDBG funding from the city must promote local community development. The application for the 2024 Program Year is now open; if you or your organization serves seniors or people with disabilities, or supports public space development, you can find more information at wauwatosa.net/government/departments/development/economic-development/business-finance-opportunities/community-development-block-grant-cdbg-program.

A complete breakdown of how the CDBG funding is distributed year-to-year can also be found at wauwatosa.net/government/departments/development/economic-development/business-finance-opportunities/community-development-block-grant-cdbg-

American Rescue Plan Act Funding Update

In 2023, Wauwatosa received over \$24 million in federal funding intended to support our response to and recovery from the pandemic.

Through a public process, our residents, business owners, and other stakeholders gave input on how to allocate these funds. Ultimately, the Common Council passed a funding package that includes support for Wauwatosa's:

- COVID-19 response (4.4%)
- Infrastructure (47.8%)
- Equity-focused services (8.5%)
- Small business support (5.2%)

- Mental health (6%)
- General government (11.7%)
- Parks (16.2%)

In 2024, one of the most notable ARPA-funded projects you'll see is a new city park located on 116th Street and Gilbert Avenue.

You can see all of the projects and their progress at wauwatosa.net/ARPA.





Wauwatosa Elected Officials

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A TYPICAL YEAR IN CITY SERVICES



Calls for Police Service

30,065



Trees Pruned

2,663



Calls for Fire/EMS Service

8,988



Tons of Materials Recycled

3,998



Water Meters Inspected & Repaired

15,500



Tons of Garbage Collected

11,254



Follow Ups Made by Public Health Nurses

7,430



Tons of Yard Waste Collected

3,083



Library Checkouts

800,000



Fire Department Medical Calls

5,214



Building Permits Issued

4,908



Tons of Asphalt Patch

1,004



Building and Safety Inspections

716



Wauwatosa.net Web views (million)

1.36

