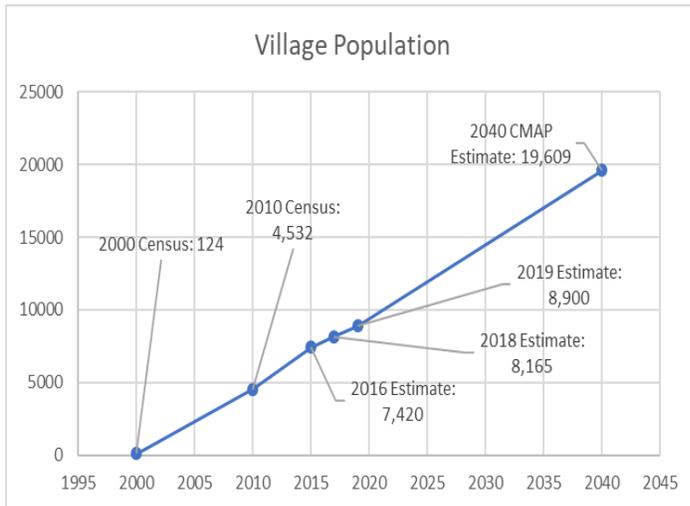


Pingree Grows

We write today to initiate the next stage of public discussion of the Village's future: **Pingree Grows**. On Monday evening, the Village Board will share a public presentation regarding a



proposed expansion of the Village's water plant and wastewater plant. From 2004 to present, the Village has undergone constant, planned growth that has increased our population from 126 people in 2004, to nearly 9,000 estimated population today. Based on current growth and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) growth projections, the Village will reach a population of nearly 20,000 within the next 20 years.

As expansions to utility systems take years to plan, design and construct, and as they are commonly financed over 20-30 years, the Village Board has taken a conservative approach to evaluating utility system needs and to evaluating the potential need for utility system expansions. That process has included extensive internal analysis, review and study by multiple engineering firms, consultation with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), and review of the experiences of many different communities. It has also included several years of public discussion by the Village Board, and a series of public presentations on the Village's utility systems.

Those previous discussions culminate in a public presentation on Monday, July 15, 2019 at the Village Board Meeting, to be held at 7:00 pm at the Pingree Grove Municipal Center, 555 Reinking Road, Pingree Grove, IL. This presentation will outline the Village's roadmap to continued, responsible growth.

In short, the Village's utility systems were designed and constructed contemplating service for 10,000 people. With continued growth in the Village, and with some operational challenges from the way the systems were constructed, the Village is rapidly approaching the point of running out of available capacity. When available capacity is exhausted, the IEPA will not permit the Village to have any further development. As we are rapidly approaching the time of

potential commercial development in the Village, this is a critical time to ensure that the Village has adequate capacity available.

As a reminder, every single member of our Village Board is a resident of the Village, who is affected by the utility system just like every other resident. They share resident concerns on water quality, utility cost and similar issues. To anticipate some of the questions that are likely to arise:

- **The Village has fund balance reserves to pay the design costs for the system.** The design and permitting process takes multiple years to complete. The Village can complete that process and pay for the design costs out of system reserves, without having to borrow any funding.
- **If the Village is to continue growing, the design must be initiated now.** Because the design and permitting takes several years, based on the Village's current use of the available capacity and the Village's continuing growth, action is required now.
- **Because of the creative way the Village is staging this project, the Village is *not required to commit to a plant expansion at present.*** By funding the design costs from reserves rather than borrowing those costs, the Village can complete the design over the next few years and continue to monitor growth trends. If growth continues, the Village can then decide to immediately complete a plant expansion. If growth tapered, the Village could take the completed plans and shelve them until the plant expansion was later required.



- **A plant expansion would also enhance system efficiency and redundancy.** Currently, the Village has a single potable water plant and single water tower. A water system expansion would create redundant systems that would help the Village ensure the water system can stay in service (and taps and hydrants keep flowing), even if one component in the system fails or requires maintenance. In addition, a wastewater system expansion would focus on increasing operating efficiency to reduce cost.

- **If growth continues and a plant expansion is required, the Village still maintains its current utility rates without an increase other than inflationary adjustments.** The Village is aware of resident concerns regarding utility rates, and is committed to holding rates as low as possible. Even with a major expansion to the water system and wastewater system, current projections show the Village can hold the base monthly rate flat, and can hold increases in the “usage” rate to a basic inflationary adjustment tied to changes in the value of a dollar over time, commonly called a consumer price adjustment or inflationary adjustment.
- **A plant expansion would help the Village meet future regulatory standards and help the plant run in a more environmentally friendly fashion.** The Village’s wastewater treatment plant meets current discharge standards, but is not well-equipped to meet likely future standards. In addition, the wastewater plant relies on chemical treatment (use of chemicals to neutralize or treat components of the wastewater). A plant expansion would include preparation for stricter future discharge standards, and would allow the Village to convert to a biological treatment process—essentially using natural processes to break down and treat wastewater, to greatly reduce the need for chemical treatment. This both reduces costs and enhances the environmental friendliness of the system.



For many communities, facing the prospect of a significant project such as this one is daunting. For the Village of Pingree Grove, based on years of careful study by the Village Board, the Board’s commitment to fiscal responsibility and a conservative approach to expenditures, this project represents another step in the Village’s planned pathway to continued growth. Join us for [Pingree Grows](#).