

# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2014-15 Activity Summary  
Morrison Illinois



Photo: Corrine Bender

Submitted by  
City Administrator Barry Dykhuizen

## CITY OF MORRISON: FY15 ANNUAL REPORT

**INTRODUCTION.** This report summarizes activities of the City of Morrison throughout Fiscal Year 2015 (May 1, 2014 – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

Every year vast numbers of residents work together to make Morrison a desirable place to live, raise a family, enjoy a peaceful retirement, or build a business. Morrison's strong social fabric is comprised of dedicated individuals who volunteer their time at art shows, farmers' markets, food drives, 5Ks, school and church events, boards, commissions, and numerous local nonprofits.

City officials recognize and appreciate the civic pride that resonates throughout the community. Officials value building trust with residents, demonstrating a commitment to inclusive long range planning, and proactive responsiveness to the community's needs.

**OVERVIEW.** The City of Morrison is governed by a Mayor and 8 aldermen elected for 4 year terms representing 4 different wards throughout the community. The mayor and council appoint a City Administrator, Treasurer, and City Attorney. The City Clerk is an elected position. The city employs 23 full-time employees. One full-time employee was added to sewer department public works staff and one ½ time position was eliminated. Except for the Police Chief, the 6 member police department is represented by the Fraternal Order of Police. Except for its director, the public works department is represented by Teamsters Local #722. As of the 2010 Census, Morrison's population is 4188.

**INFRASTRUCTURE.** City officials recognize the need for investment in the city's infrastructure. Design work for the new Wastewater Treatment Plant is nearing completion. Project bid opening is scheduled for later this year. The plant is expected to be operable in 2017. The new WWTP site is a parcel of farm ground just south of CONOCO on Route 78. To pay for these needed infrastructure costs, the residents are noticing increases in utility rates. This is the single largest project in the history of the community.

Design work on a small portion of Orange Street between Route 30 and the railroad is underway. This involves street reconstruction, storm sewer improvements, and improvements to the ADA curb ramps. This project is funded with Motor Fuel Tax (MFT).

One year ago the city was faced with an inordinate number of water service line breaks. These were old



worn lines, most, if not all of them, likely original to the home's construction. The frequency of the breaks has significantly subsided.

**FINANCE.** Overall, the city's finances are lean but stable. Focus is on a long term strategy to manage capital expenditures without overburdening the residents. Governor Rauner's proposals to balance the state's budget may significantly impact municipal operations throughout the state. City officials are cautiously monitoring the legislation in Springfield. The city council is committed to finding strategies to continually improve the city's infrastructure.



**REFERENDUM.** In November, Morrison residents overwhelmingly supported imposition of a locally imposed 1% Sales Tax. The tax, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, is designated by the city council for improvements to local roads. The local sales tax is not assessed on groceries, medication, services, agricultural supplies, or automobiles.

**DEBT.** The City's has a \$2.5 million loan from the Illinois EPA incurred for the purpose of improvements to Water Infrastructure. This loan retires in 2032. The city also has a \$2 million debt certificate and a \$1 million debt certificate, scheduled to retire in 2022 and 2029, respectively.

The city uses Utility Tax Revenue to meet the debt certificate obligation. The city currently does not use property taxes to finance debt.

Financing the new Wastewater Treatment Plant requires a \$22,000,000 loan from the EPA. The interest rate on a loan from the EPA is below-market. EPA loans are a common financing method for these types of projects.

**STATE AND FEDERAL RECOGNITION.** Through the extraordinarily committed work of the Historic Preservation Commission, Morrison's downtown was named to the **National Register of Historic Places**. Commission members spent countless hours researching each building's history. This is long over-due recognition of Morrison's excellent examples of Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and High Victorian Eclectic architecture.

Community Volunteers  
**Morrison Main Street  
National Register Historic District**

Named to Register in 2015





**ROCKWOOD TRAIL.** Friends of the Parks brings home the recognition from Springfield! ....appropriately recognized by the **Governor's Hometown Award** program for their effort to complete Phase I of a trail that eventually will connect the City of Morrison with Rockwood State Park.

Although the trail is just outside city limits, the City Council worked closely with Friends of the Parks with financing, planning and design, and trail construction management.

Since the trail opened, Friends of the Parks has added landscaping, artwork, benches, and other amenities. A

great addition to our area!

**FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.** After many well publicized years of vacancy, the prison facility in Thompson is on its way to full capacity. Eventually, the facility will add 1100 jobs to the region. Employees on site today have transferred to northwest Illinois from all over the country.



**ROUTE 30.** Many local area residents took part in public participation and review of the Phase I Design portion of the reroute of Route 30.

Public weighs in on U.S. Route 30 bypass options  
Northwest by north, or south?



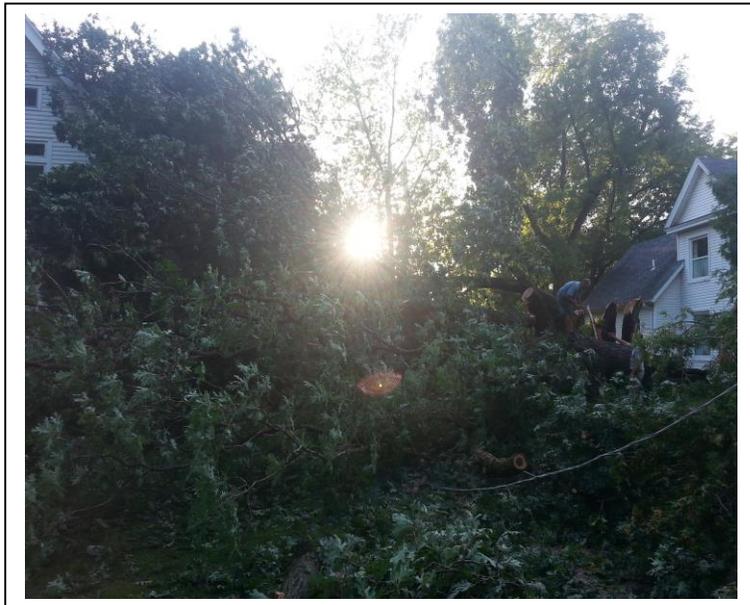
The recommendation is to pursue a southern route around Morrison. The Federal Highway Authority needs to approve the route. Phase II of the project involves finalizing design to create contract documents and acquisition of land. Phase III is construction. Funding

currently is not earmarked for Phase II or III. It is impossible to know when and if this project will occur as conceived. It has tremendous impact on rural farms and homes that will either be demolished or divided to make way for the new road. The goal of the project is to improve safety on Route 30 as well as to facilitate regional economic development. Certainly our area will be watching this project's progress for the next several years.



**ONE WINDY DAY.** Residents will remember August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 as one of the more destructive days in terms of weather.

The strength of the storm took many by surprise. By 3:30pm the damage was done. Crews were on the scene, neighbors were checking on the each other, and the sound of chainsaws filled the air.



The city received valuable help from area townships, Whiteside County, the State of Illinois, as well as from neighboring cities. All this help made clean-up much faster. The city appreciates all the assistance provided by regional agencies.

Finally, over the next year, through a commitment to nurturing partnerships throughout the community and region, City officials look forward exploring new opportunities to improve the livability of Morrison.

Morrison's FY15 Annual City Administrator's Report.

Respectfully,  
  
Barry Dykhuizen  
City Administrator

This concludes the City of

