



A Newsletter for the residents of the City of Darien



LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



As the year draws to a close, it is appropriate to reflect upon the many ways in which the City of Darien continues to strengthen its relationship with our residents through open and transparent communication.

In Darien, we remain steadfast in our commitment to keeping our residents informed about every facet of city government – from the formulation of our annual budget to the development of major infrastructure and community projects. Our intent is not merely to share information, but to foster understanding of how and why decisions are made, and how those decisions contribute to the continued quality of life that defines our community.

In an age when information and misinformation travels quickly, the City of Darien recognizes the importance of addressing inaccuracies directly and providing residents with the facts. We take seriously our responsibility to respond promptly and clearly when false or misleading statements about city matters arise, whether online or within the community. Transparency, accuracy, and accountability will always remain at the forefront of our communications program.

To that end, we continue to utilize a variety of platforms to reach our residents. Our weekly electronic newsletter, Darien Direct Connect, is distributed to more than 5,000 subscribers each Thursday afternoon. It features timely updates on city programs, events, and policies, along with a weekly "Mayor's Message" addressing current topics of interest. Complementing this digital outreach, our printed publication, Darien Connections, which you are now reading, provides a more comprehensive look at important themes such as community development, budgeting, public safety, and ongoing capital projects.

We also make every effort to ensure our public meetings are accessible and well publicized. All meetings are open to the public and announced through our city's digital message board, our official city website, and other social media platforms. Each communication tool we employ is carefully maintained to provide accurate, relevant and concise information to the community.

These collective efforts reflect our enduring commitment to keeping residents informed and engaged in the civic life of our city. When communication is clear and transparent, it strengthens the trust between government and community – a trust that always has been central to Darien's success.

As we look toward the new year, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the dedicated members of our City Council, our professional staff, and the many volunteers who give generously of their time and talent to make Darien a better place to live. Their service, along with the continued engagement and support of our residents ensures that our community remains strong, vibrant and united in purpose.

Together, we reaffirm why Darien will always be a "Nice Place to Live."

Sincerely,

Joe Marchese, Mayor

Citizen OF THE YEAR

The City of Darien conducts a search every year for an individual who has dedicated themselves to enriching our Darien Community through their participation in a social, service, educational or religious organization. The Citizen of the Year Committee asks that you nominate an individual whose service in one or more of these groups goes "above and beyond the call of duty," and demonstrates through their work a true love for the City of Darien. Nomination applications are now available on the city's website, www.darien.il.us, and are due by Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 5 p.m.

The individual selected by the committee will be honored at our "Darien Honors Celebration," scheduled to take place on Friday, March 6 at Alpine Banquets in Darien (check the website for info on how to order tickets).

At the event, we will also be paying tribute to the person of the year of the following service and volunteer clubs/organizations in Darien:

- Darien Business Alliance
- Darien Garden Club
- Darien Lions Club
- Darien Rotary Club
- Darien Woman's Club
- Darien Youth Club

Darien is a "nice place to live," due to the efforts of many of our wonderful volunteers, and we want to acknowledge their efforts at our this wonderful celebration.

Note: Nominees for Citizen of the Year must be a Darien resident and cannot be a current elected official.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

POLICE SOCIAL WORKER PROGRAM	2
COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY RESULTS	2
WHEN WILL MY STREET BE PLOWED?	3
PREPARE YOUR CAR FOR WINTER	4

POLICE SOCIAL WORKER PROGRAM SHOWS EARLY SUCCESS

In July 2025, the Darien Police Department launched a new initiative by hiring the department's first full-time police social worker. The decision followed a steady increase in calls involving mental-health crises, substance-use concerns, homelessness, and other non-criminal issues requiring specialized care. Police leadership also noted a growing need for long-term assistance, resource coordination, and trauma-informed follow-up—services that extend beyond traditional law enforcement responsibilities. The addition of a social worker was intended to improve outcomes for vulnerable residents, reduce repeat calls for service, and strengthen community trust. The initiative also aligns with a nationwide shift toward embedding social services within public safety operations to better meet the complex needs of today's communities.

Since joining the department, police social worker Sabrina, has become an essential resource for residents experiencing mental-health challenges, substance-use issues,

domestic conflict, housing instability, grief, and trauma. In just four months, she has received more than 200 referrals, provided nearly 100 referrals to outside service providers, and offered case-management assistance to more than 50 individuals.

Sabrina's work extends far beyond office hours. She has conducted 10 home visits, held six in-person support sessions at the police department, and responded on scene to six calls—including death investigations, domestic disputes, and mental-health crises—providing immediate care and stabilization during some of the community's most difficult moments.

Officers report that having a social worker embedded in the department has helped close a long-standing gap between law enforcement and social services. Residents who may have been hesitant to contact police in the past are now more willing to seek help through Sabrina, and victims of trauma are receiving follow-up support that extends well beyond the initial response.



The early success of the program highlights the growing role of social workers in modern policing and the long-term benefits for both community health and public safety. Sabrina's work allows officers to focus on enforcement responsibilities while ensuring that individuals facing complex challenges receive the specialized care, resources, and guidance needed to work toward long-term, sustainable solutions.

The City of Darien is proud of the progress made through this program and remains committed to supporting innovative approaches that enhance safety, well-being, and trust throughout the community.

DARIEN COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY 2025

Communication is extremely important to residents in any community. It helps build trust, promote understanding, and ensure that everyone's needs are met. The city conducted a communications survey from June 24th through July 2nd with responses totaling 530, noting that individuals may not have answered some of the questions. Overall, residents seem to be satisfied with the city's communication. Roughly 83% rely on our weekly eNews, Direct Connect.

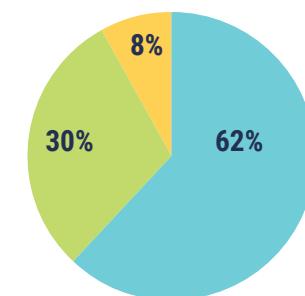
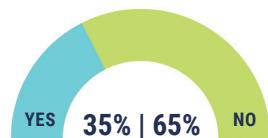
As a reminder, this survey was not designed to be statistically representative. Rather, it was to capture a snapshot of general sentiment and perception from those who chose to respond. As such, the results are best understood as qualitative insights. The value of this survey lies in the patterns and themes that emerged from the responses. The city receives communication feedback throughout the year which helps determine the information we put in Direct Connect and on social media. The city truly appreciated the time residents took in completing the survey. Results of the entire survey can be viewed, including comments and suggestions from residents.

Direct Connect E-news 441



What is your primary source of receiving information from the city?

The city's website contains a community calendar/event board that captures events in and around Darien.



Meets Expectations
Exceeds Expectations
Below Expectations

View complete survey results here:



CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTION

Live Christmas trees are a wonderful sign of the holidays and are an eco-friendly choice. You don't have to throw your real Christmas tree in the trash. Christmas trees are biodegradable and they can be easily reused or recycled for mulch.

Christmas tree collection will occur the first two FULL weeks of January with regular refuse collection at no charge. Trees longer than 7' must be cut in half. **Trees must be completely free of all decorations and may not be in plastic bags.**



HOLIDAY LIGHT RECYCLING

Pulling out the Christmas decorations? Don't throw out those old lights! Christmas light recycling through Elgin Recycling will be available outside the Darien Police Department through mid-February.



DUPAGE COUNTY WARMING CENTERS

Winter weather is here. If you lose your heat unexpectedly, several agencies throughout DuPage County serve as temporary Warming Centers. Call 2-1-1 or visit <https://211dupage.gov/> to find a warming center near you. Availability may change at some locations, so call ahead to verify space.



DARIEN'S WEBSITE HAS A NEW LOOK

If you haven't seen the City of Darien's new website design, check it out! www.darien.il.us

Enjoy the new, easy-to-navigate design, helping to keep our residents informed and connected.



Scan here to visit the site:



GRANT AWARD HELPS CONTINUE THE CITY'S EFFORTS TOWARDS BUILDING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

Congratulations to the City of Darien Public Works Department on their grant award which will support the purchase of one all-electric truck to replace a vehicle that was recently retired. The vehicle will be used for both street and water divisions, and will provide staff with an opportunity to evaluate the functionality and performance of an electric truck and confirm the value experienced in other organizations. The City of Darien has been designated an EV Ready Community. The EV Readiness program helped local governments prepare to meet the growing demand for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure.

This is the second recent environmental-related grant awarded to the city's Public Works Department. In January of this year, the city was awarded a \$100,000 subgrant by The Morton Arboretum's Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) to improve the community tree canopy. Through this subgrant, the City of Darien will plant approximately 200 new trees in eligible areas of the community by the end of Fall 2026. The City of Darien has always been active in promoting and supporting Environmental causes throughout the city. Scan the code to learn more.



WHEN WILL MY STREET BE PLOWED?

The City of Darien follows a priority-based system for plowing streets:

1. High traffic arterial streets are plowed first, and if necessary, replowed until they are safe and passable.
2. Lower traffic collector streets are plowed.
3. When both arterial and collector streets are safe and passable, the plows begin work on residential streets and cul-de-sacs.

Please remember:

- It takes approximately four hours to plow all of the city's streets once.
- Plainfield Road, Cass Avenue and 75th street are DuPage County roads and are not plowed by the City of Darien.
- In order to plow streets efficiently, there is no parking on city streets during a winter event where snow or ice exceeds one inch.

During plowing operations, the city's priority is getting snow off the streets to allow movement of traffic. Unfortunately, during the plowing process, snow will be pushed onto curbs and driveways. As a result, snow banks become higher and driveways can become filled with snow, an unavoidable process. Please do not push snow out onto the roadway or approach a snow plow to prevent snow from being pushed into the driveway. Both of these actions are dangerous. If possible, residents are encouraged to shovel several times throughout a heavy snow period to prevent snow-filled driveways. Your patience and cooperation are appreciated.





1702 Plainfield Road, Darien, IL 60561
630-852-5000 • www.darien.il.us

CITY HALL HOURS:

Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

CITY OFFICIALS:

Joe Marchese, Mayor • 630-353-8108 • jmarchese@darienil.gov

Bryon Vana, City Administrator • 630-353-8114 • bvana@darienil.gov

Dan Gombac, Dir. of Municipal Services/Community Development • 630-353-8106 • dgombac@darienil.gov

Greg Thomas • Chief of Police • 630-353-8351 • gthomas@darienil.gov

Check out the COMMUNITY CALENDAR

www.darien.il.us



IMPORTANT DATES

DEC

24 &
25

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
City offices closed; refuse collection delayed

JAN

1

New Year's Day

City offices closed; refuse collection delayed

JAN

6

Citizen of the Year
Nominations Due

JAN

5-16

Christmas Tree
Collection

JAN

19

Martin Luther
King Jr. Day

FEB

16

Presidents Day

City offices closed;
no impact to refuse collection

PREPARE YOUR CAR FOR WINTER

With the harsh weather, precipitation, low temperatures and unpredictability, winter can be a dangerous time to drive. Safety on the road starts with safety in your vehicle. That's why it's important you know how to prepare your car for winter before the season starts. Before the first snowfall or ice storm, follow this list of tips to winterize your car.

1. Make sure your car has been recently serviced for an oil change and fluid level inspection.
2. Have your battery tested to be sure it can hold a charge. Also, while you're at the service garage, have them remove any battery corrosion.
3. Have a professional check your antifreeze. If needed, have your antifreeze replaced before the start of the winter season.
4. As part of an overall inspection, have a professional check your car's belts, hoses, and spark plugs to help avoid a breakdown in cold winter temperatures.
5. Replace your wiper blades and keep a spare pair in your car. It's also important to ensure your wiper fluid is freeze resistant and that you keep extra wiper fluid in your vehicle.
6. Check your tire pressure. Cold weather can cause tires to deflate.
7. Try to maintain a full tank of gas, especially in freezing conditions.
8. Pack an emergency kit for each car in your household. We recommend having things like blankets, a flashlight and warning triangles on hand.



STAY CONNECTED

The City of Darien uses a variety of communication tools to provide timely and important information to the public. This includes the Direct Connect weekly e-newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, and NextDoor.

Sign up for Direct Connect at
<https://bit.ly/DarienDirectConnect>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CityofDarien/>

X/Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CityofDarien>

NextDoor: <https://www.nextdoor.com/>



nextdoor

