

# Blue**line**

Winter | 2023

NORTHWEST  
HARRIS COUNTY  
**MUD16**

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- What is the GRP Fee?
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# DIRECTOR

# Spotlight



**The Villareal Family  
(left to right; Director  
Raquel Villareal,  
husband Gene, son  
Blue, daughter Jade,  
and son Zion)**



*Raquel Villareal*

In the heart of Northwest Harris County MUD 16, there's a leader whose roots run deep, whose commitment to community is unwavering. Director Raquel Villareal, a 4th generation Houstonian, has been a guiding force for the district since 2010.

Raised in the Northside inner loop area of Houston, Raquel's journey began in the vibrant and diverse neighborhoods that define the city. Her educational path led her to Sam Houston High School, and later, she pursued her studies at the University of Houston-Downtown, a testament to her commitment to learning and personal growth.

In 1994, Raquel embarked on a journey of lifelong partnership, marrying Gene Villareal. Together, they built a family that has been the cornerstone of Raquel's life. Their daughter, Jade, and sons, Blue and Zion, complete a family unit that isn't just a unit; it's a source of strength and motivation.

Since 2010, Raquel has brought her passion for community and service to the role of Director at Northwest Harris County MUD 16. Her tenure has been marked by a commitment to the betterment of the district, ensuring that the community's needs are met with diligence and care.

Raquel's professional journey in the healthcare industry began in 1990, marking the start of an illustrious career. She has contributed significantly to the health and well-being of the community. For the past eight years, she has served as an Executive Assistant at Memorial Hermann Hospital System, showcasing her dedication to the sector.

Beyond the boardroom and hospital corridors, Raquel's creativity finds expression in artistic endeavors. Her custom-designed hand-addressed greeting cards, invitations, and chalkboard murals reflect a keen eye for aesthetics. With husband Gene, she shares a love for travel, exploring the world and cherishing moments of family togetherness whenever their busy schedules allow.

Residing in the Stone Creek subdivision since 1993, Raquel's connection to her community goes beyond the professional realm. She hopes to be a voice for Stone Creek, leveraging her position as a Director to address the community's needs and concerns.

In Raquel Villareal, Northwest Harris County MUD 16 has found not just a Director but a compassionate leader who embodies the spirit of service, family, and community. Her journey from Houston roots to community advocacy paints a portrait of a leader who not only understands the past but is actively shaping the future of the district.

**Director Villareal with  
her son, Zion.  
Go Lobos!**



# WHAT IS THE GRP FEE?

*Northwest Harris County MUD 16 is mandated by the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District to have a Groundwater Reduction Plan. In order to accomplish the State mandated requirement, NWHCMUD16 is a part of the City of Houston Groundwater Reduction Plan to reduce the use of ground water by converting from well water to surface water. The costs associated with building and maintaining the surface water infrastructure are passed on to its customers through the GRP fee on the monthly water bill.*

## What is subsidence?

In the simplest of terms, land subsidence is the sinking of the earth's surface due to subsurface movement. Aquifer compaction from groundwater withdrawal, oil and gas extraction, underground mining, sinkholes, drainage of organic soils, and natural depositional compaction are the most common causes of subsidence in the United States. More specifically for the greater Houston-Galveston region, land subsidence is the decrease in land-surface elevation caused by aquifer compaction due to abundant, long-term groundwater withdrawals.

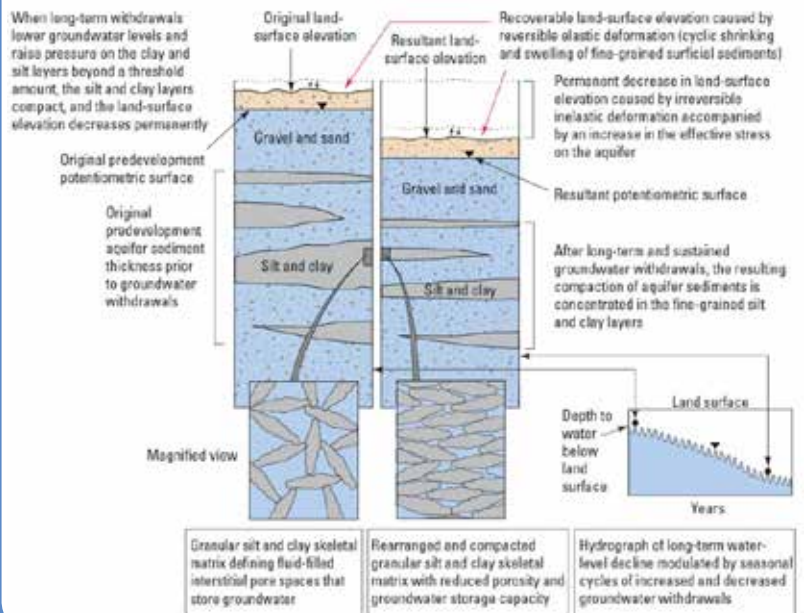
In the greater Houston-Galveston region, groundwater is pumped primarily from the Chicot and Evangeline aquifers as a source of freshwater. The geology of these aquifers includes discontinuous layers of gravel, sand, silt, and clay. The extraction of large volumes of groundwater causes clays to depressurize and compact. Aquifer compaction affects overlying stratigraphic units all the way to the land surface and is observed as subsidence.

## What is the harm in subsidence and why do we need to prevent it?

Flooding is a serious consequence of subsidence especially in the Houston-Galveston area as much of the land is either within coastal zones or has limited green space to absorb surficial water. Other impacts of subsidence include localized faulting and infrastructure damage.

Subsidence can be reduced, stopped in some cases, when the pumping of groundwater is reduced. However, the conversion from groundwater to alternative sources of water (surface water, reclaimed water, etc.) is not as simple. Conversion to alternative water supplies is an ongoing process, with full conversion required to be completed by 2035.

gulf-coast-subsidence



To learn more about the City of Houston GRP and the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District, scan the QR codes below to visit their web sites.



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR MUD TAX RATE



Northwest Harris County Municipal Utility District 16 (NWHCMUD 16) plays a crucial role in providing essential services to the residents within its jurisdiction. The District's tax rate influences the funding available for development and operations.

Northwest Harris County MUD 16 is one of the numerous special purpose districts in the state of Texas. These districts were created to address the unique needs of specific geographic areas, providing water, wastewater, drainage services, recreational facilities, trash collection, and contract additional security and law enforcement. MUDs operate as special-purpose government entities, distinct from city or county governments, with their own boards of directors responsible for decision-making and governance. The primary source of revenue for these districts is the property tax paid by property owners within the district.

**Your Current Tax Rate \$0.899 per \$100 of assessed value**

**Example:**

*Assessed home value of \$200,000 for 2023 would make your MUD tax \$1,798.*

Home Value	\$200,000
Tax Rate	\$0.899
$\$200,000 / 100 \times 0.899$	
Tax Due	\$1,798



## Tax Rate Structure

Each fall the Board of Northwest Harris County MUD 16 sets a tax rate based on the district's financial requirements for the upcoming year. The rate is expressed in terms of cents per \$100 of assessed property value, which is determined by the Harris County Appraisal District.

**Some homeowners qualify for special exemptions** that reduce their tax burden by lowering the taxable value of the property from its appraised value.

Exemptions can include a **Homestead Exemption** (if the home is your primary residence) and **special exemptions for those who are over 65 or disabled, and others.**

Understanding the tax rate of Northwest Harris County MUD 16 is not only about individual financial obligations but also about contributing to the sustainable development of the community. Active collaboration between residents, the board of directors, and other stakeholders ensures that the district's resources are effectively managed to provide reliable and efficient services.

## Participation in Public Meetings

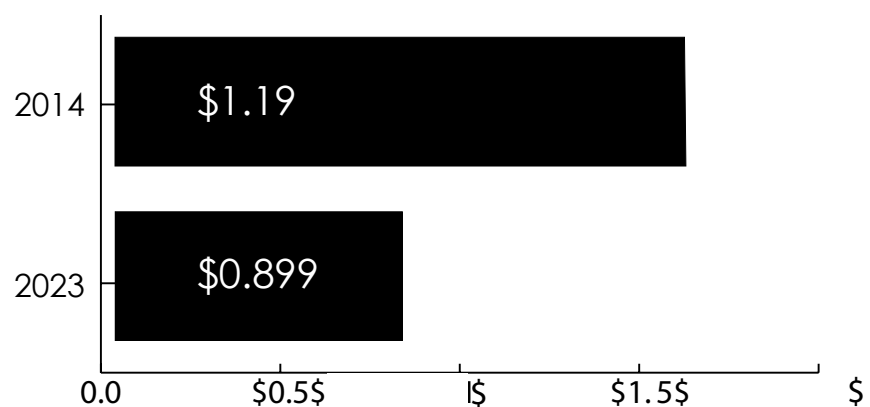
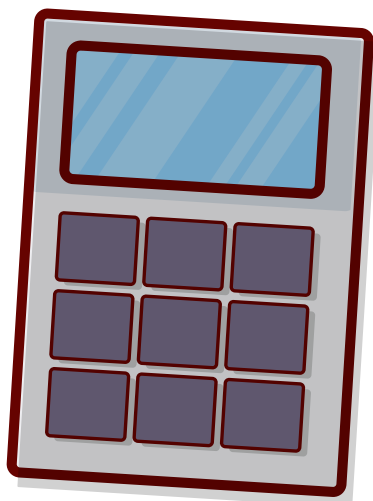
NWHCMUD 16 regularly conducts public meetings where community members can obtain information about proposed budgets, tax rates, and upcoming projects. Actively participating in these meetings provides an opportunity to ask questions and express concerns.

## Engagement with the Board

The board of directors, elected by property owners, plays a crucial role in decision-making. Engaging with board members, attending meetings, and participating in the election process can influence policies related to tax rates.

As Texas continues to experience growth and demographic changes, the role of MUDs in supporting community infrastructure becomes increasingly vital. Residents and property owners within Northwest Harris County MUD 16 can play an active role in shaping the future of their community by staying informed, participating in meetings, and advocating for responsible financial practices. In doing so, they contribute to the resilience and sustainability of their neighborhood, fostering a thriving and well-supported community.

**Northwest Harris County MUD 16 has been committed to reducing the tax burden on our home owners.** Over the past 9 years, the tax rate has fallen from \$1.19 in 2014 to \$0.899 in 2023, a reduction of 25%. The Board continued this trend when it adopted its current \$0.899 rate.





# Don't Clog the Pipes this Holiday Season

When it comes to disposing of food waste, many of us have developed the habit of simply rinsing it down the kitchen sink. However, food items can cause serious problems in our plumbing system, leading to clogs, blockages, and even damage. That's the last thing you want to deal with when hosting family members during the holiday season. We will explore some surprising food items that should never go down the drain and provide alternative methods for disposing of them effectively and responsibly.



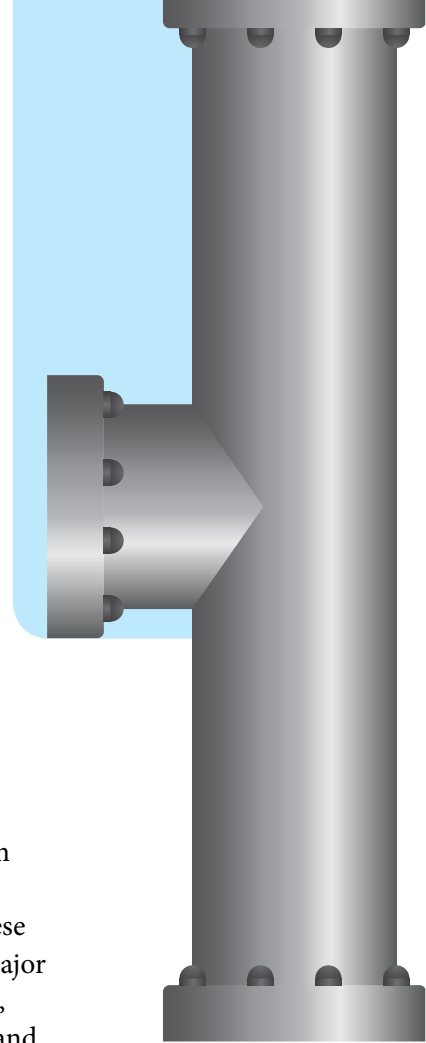
**Fats, Oils, and Grease** – Fats, oils, and grease (FOG) come from meat fats, shortening, butter, margarine, gravy, and condiments like mayonnaise, dressings, sauces, and sour cream. Pouring these items down the drain may seem harmless, but they can cause major issues—especially during the holidays. As these substances cool, they solidify and create blockages in your pipes. Instead, let oil and grease cool then dispose of it in a sealed container for the trash. Or recycle used cooking oil when possible— visit <https://recyclenation.com> to search for a local option. Alternatively, consider waiting until the substance has cooled enough that you can wipe the dish or pan down with a paper towel and throw it in the trash. Don't use a cloth towel to wipe off the dishes as this will just send the FOG to the pipes connected to your washing machine.



**Coffee Grounds** – While coffee grounds may appear harmless, they can clump together and create a thick sludge in your drains. Instead of pouring them down the sink, use them in your garden as compost or add them to your indoor plants for natural fertilization. If you want to get creative, you can use the coffee grounds as a natural exfoliant for your skin and face. You can rub them on your body during a shower to help remove built up dirt and grime. To make a coffee ground face mask, simply add a few drops of micellar water and stir until clumpy. Leave on for about 10 minutes then gently rub and wash off with warm water.



**Fruits & Vegetables** – Peels from fruits and vegetables may seem harmless, but they really are not. Instead, utilize these peels by incorporating them in recipes, making fruit and vegetable stock, or adding them to a compost pile. Fibrous vegetables, such as celery, asparagus, and corn husks, should never go down the drain. The strings and fibers in these vegetables can wrap around your garbage disposal unit or clog the pipes. Add them to your compost bin or wrap them in newspaper and put them in the trash. Using a sink strainer can also help catch these fibers for easy disposal.





**Eggshells** – During the holidays, no single ingredient is used more than eggs. From every dish cooked to every dessert baked, and even for snacks in between, eggs will most definitely be used this holiday season. But what to do with the eggshells? Eggshells are often mistakenly thought to be safe for disposal in the sink. However, they can stick to the pipe walls and contribute to clogs. Dispose of eggshells by adding them to your compost bin or grinding them into small pieces and scattering them in your garden to enrich the soil. But don't limit yourself to just the compost bin, eggshells can be used in various ways. Use an eggshell as a seedling pot and start your garden from an egg carton! Make sure to add a small drainage hole on the bottom to ensure proper water flow. You

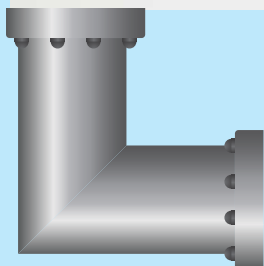
can also make chalk from eggshells. Simply mix together ground eggshells, water, flour, and food coloring. This is great to do with children and safe for them to use daily!



### Helpful Tips to Keep Your Pipes Clean

Curbing the habit of tossing everything down the drain is a great way to make sure your pipes are ready for the holiday season, but maintaining your pipes will ensure they are clear all year long!

To unclog a dirty drain, try mixing a solution of 1 part vinegar to 1 part baking soda and pouring it down the drain immediately. After one hour, pour hot water down the drain to flush the pipe. Doing this on a regular basis will help clear out the accumulation of FOG and prevent further buildup.



Proper disposal of food waste is essential for maintaining a healthy plumbing system. By avoiding the common practice of rinsing food items down the drain, we can prevent clogs, blockages, and potential damage to our pipes. Instead, consider alternative methods such as composting, reusing, or even recycling to dispose of these surprising food items responsibly.

*Let's make mindful choices this holiday season and all year round for the well-being of our plumbing and environment.*



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# NUMBERS TO KNOW



For any other questions or comments regarding the MUD and its functions, please visit our website by scanning the QR Code.



Situation	Number
Emergency (Life Threatening, Eminent Danger)	911
Report a Criminal Act	911
File a Complaint (nuisances & other misdemeanors)	713-221-6000
Water or Sewer Issues (MMA)	281-651-1618
Trash & Recycling Service (Best Trash)	281-313-2378
Animal Control	281-999-3191