



10 Plans, Programs, & Services

AN APPROACH TO COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Two points are important about community facilities in Wood Dale. The first is that while they are spread around the community (there is not a community campus), there are many opportunities for residents to use and enjoy parks and programs. The second point is that these opportunities are available from multiple providers – not only the City—who share a common constituency.

Many of Wood Dale’s community facilities are organized around the Wood Dale Road Corridor, ranging from Oakbrook School and The Cabin Nature Center on the south, to Wood Dale Junior High School and Community Park on the north. This mile and a half corridor includes nearly a dozen schools, parks and community buildings used by the entire community – including the Wood Dale Public Library, Wood Dale Park District Recreation Complex, and Wood Dale City Hall. The Fire Protection District also has a station located along this corridor.

While not formally recognized as any kind of “community corridor” today, this area can be thought of as a linear campus, connected by clear wayfinding signs, safe bicycle/ pedestrian trails, and joint outreach about the opportunities by the City, Schools, Park District and Library. This approach is in keeping with how residents use the community today; they think in terms of community resources and amenities, not legal jurisdictions. The local government agencies should likewise not be constrained by such artificial boundaries.

The benefit of this approach is that sharing of services and facilities is becoming a best practice in local governance. As part of preparing its ON TO 2050 Regional Comprehensive Plan, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has prepared a number of Strategy Papers – including one on Municipal Capacity. A concept advanced in this paper is that shared service delivery is an effective option for providing more community services to residents at a more effective cost. While sharing equipment or other materials is a logical action for these agencies, an opportunity exists to extend this notion to the future of community facilities.³

³ Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (November 2017). *Municipal Capacity*. http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/794571/Municipal+Capacity+Strategy+Paper_November+2017.pdf/923744b1-951a-ce16-609e-724c9e260fb7

All local jurisdictions seek to upgrade, expand, or relocate their facilities as the needs of the community and budget constraints expand. The challenge (particularly in Illinois where these are more often separate taxing jurisdictions) is that an agency looking only at its own facilities is looking at less than the full range of options. As the City, Park District, School District, Library, and Fire District consider relocating or improving facilities, this should be done as a joint effort so that opportunities for joint services (and related savings) are not missed.

While each of the jurisdictions were considered as part of this plan, the planning process did not include an in-depth discussion on shared services. Therefore, a next step in advancing that benefit is to continue and build on the discussions between the jurisdictions that already occur. Each should become familiar with the plans and programs of others to understand goals and objectives of each group; some of these plans may be detailed in a document, while others might be less formal.

The Park District has recently completed a Master Plan that can serve as a tool for discussion on their future efforts. In fact, in keeping with this concept, the first implementation item of that plan is to coordinate with City of Wood Dale Comprehensive and Vision plans. Another item is to partner with the City, School Districts, Forest Preserves, and local developers. The plan identifies a number of priority improvements in the coming years.



The taxing jurisdictions serving Wood Dale already meet regularly to review operations and plans. This is an excellent place to start and the group should continue to do so regarding not just ongoing operations, but unique opportunities for future improvements where resources and opportunities can be joined to the benefit of the community. Other community facility enhancements and opportunities that may merit discussion by the groups include:

- The Beach Water Park is located near the City Hall and vacant commercial properties that are expected to see development pressure in the short term. The Park District Master Plan describes The Beach as having gradually lost its appeal to residents because more active water features are found in nearby communities. The Plan contemplates enhancing the current facilities. In keeping with the theme of joint consideration of facilities, the Park District and City should confer on the future of this area. New developments might create opportunities for improvement or enhanced use of The Beach, or even an opportunity to have the site redeveloped and provide funds for a new facility at another location.

- Enhancements at White Oaks Park (Edge Adventures course, larger community spaces, a new dog area and camping area) are already in the works, presenting exciting amenities for the community. The City and Park District can work jointly to market this new amenity to attract new users and visitors to the City.

- Bicycle/pedestrian connections between these facilities should be a common goal, especially along Wood Dale Road, helping to create the Linear Campus for these facilities. Implementing that concept would require installation of bike paths and trails (as described in the Transportation element of this plan). Further, wayfinding signage is needed to help those using all modes of transportation understand how long it will take to reach various facilities. Lastly, local mapping distributed and posted on websites of each of the jurisdictions can help raise awareness of the campus.
- Balancing administrative and activity space is often a challenge for providers of community programs. Space used for offices might otherwise be available for programming. Likewise, each of the local jurisdictions must maintain individual spaces for conference rooms and material storage, as well as equipment like copiers. An option to consider is merging administrative spaces for multiple jurisdictions to allow sharing facilities and equipment, sharing costs of facilities, and freeing up space for added services to the community. Such co-location can also serve to improve access for residents or businesses using the services of multiple districts.
 - During the period of preparing this plan, the City has begun to evaluate consolidating its Public Works facility – as that effort continues, the City can coordinate with the other local jurisdictions to consider joint spaces for storage of equipment or material, vehicle repair, etc.



ONGOING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The Existing Conditions section of this plan discusses the important programs that the City of Wood Dale currently oversees: the Façade Improvement Program, activities relating to airport and train noise mitigation, and stormwater management. These are assets to the community and should continue to be a priority as the City moves forward with other recommended programs and initiatives.

“I would love to have more dog-friendly parks.”
-Resident Input

