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Appendix





## A Snapshot of Wood Dale in 2017

### **Stakeholder Interview Notes – Teska Associates, Inc. January 31<sup>st</sup> and February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017**

More than 50 Wood Dale stakeholders were interviewed at City Hall. The stakeholders included residents, business owners, City of Wood Dale employees, and taxing districts in Wood Dale. Their opinions and thoughts about Wood Dale are summarized below.

#### **Location**

Wood Dale's location in the Chicago region is an asset. Its proximity to O'Hare, while sometimes a negative due to noise, is a positive for residents and businesses in the City. The City's access to major interstates (290 and the future 390/Elgin-O'Hare Expressway), and major roads (Irving Park Road and Route 83) benefit the community. Wood Dale's proximity to other communities with ample opportunity for additional food, entertainment, and recreational options also enhances the City. The Wood Dale Metra station is a link to downtown Chicago, although the train tracks can cause additional traffic and noise issues. The property tax differences of being in DuPage County versus Cook County are also an asset for people and businesses in Wood Dale. Location was key to almost all of the stakeholder interviewees as a positive for Wood Dale.

Many stakeholders explained that when they tell others that they live or work in Wood Dale, many people do not know where it is until they mention O'Hare, or they mistake it for Woodridge. Some felt that this attributed to the City's lack of identity, while others enjoyed the uncertainty as it made Wood Dale feel like a well-kept secret.

#### **Atmosphere and People**

Wood Dale is a quiet and peaceful, "sleepy" bedroom community – one person described it as Mayberry. It has a variety of housing, multiple green spaces, and connections to nearby areas. Many described it as a small town. Stakeholders enjoy its traditional nature, affordability, sense of community, and being a community of faith.

Wood Dale's ethnically diverse community is seen as an asset; and it considers itself as primarily working class. The community has Polish, Italian, and Latino populations. This diversity draws many people to the City and offers a balanced community that is easy to fit within. The City was described as a place where people say "thank you" to each other. While the City's average age is older than the region and young people tend to leave Wood Dale, the community is very family oriented.

## Attractions

Local residents note that there is a lack of things to do in Wood Dale, especially for families and children. Residents desire additional entertainment and restaurants and the current restaurants serve a large take out business. The Jewel / Osco and Target are used by residents and also attract people from outside Wood Dale. Top Golf is a popular attraction that brings people from around the region. People from outside the region come to local restaurants (White Cottage, Marino's, Sweet Baby Ray's).

## Environment

Flooding is an issue around the Salt Creek.

## Comparison to Nearby Areas

When visiting areas outside of Wood Dale for shopping and entertainment, they tend to visit Itasca, Elk Grove, and Addison. Residents appreciated other areas' downtowns. These included Elmhurst, Naperville, Lombard, Schaumburg, Elgin, and Glen Ellyn. Business owners tend to have Wood Dale residents as customers, as opposed to people from outside communities. Comparable towns for businesses are Elk Grove, Itasca, Franklin Park, and Bensenville.

## Public Services

The Wood Dale community is pleased with their public services, according to those interviewed. Wood Dale has low crime and the Police Department has a good reputation. That the police have high visibility in the City – and do so with a small department – is an asset. Residents are also pleased with service from the Fire Protection District and special services provided by the City – such as brush collection.

## Major Areas

### Wood Dale Road/Irving Park Road Intersection

This intersection is seen as the center of Wood Dale. It has complicated transportation circulation with the two roads and rail road tracks. There is an expectation by some of having a downtown located here for the City, but an acknowledgement that creating a traditional "downtown" may be unrealistic due to roads and rail lines. However, there is a desire for beautifying the area, making it more walkable, and having a variety of things to do. Parking will be important in this area to ease transportation issues and access establishments. People do not make multiple visits to businesses in the area by parking in one spot, typically getting in their car and driving to subsequent locations.

### Irving Park Road

The Irving Park Road commercial corridor is indicated to be where many Wood Dale residents do their shopping and get day-to-day needs. However, it is noted as lacking a sense of identity both for itself and Wood Dale. This results from the differing building designs and site layouts. The typically small buildings often have different owners which can hinder redevelopment. The busy road lacking stoplights and crosswalks makes getting around the corridor complicated; most people tend to go for one reason and then leave as opposed to going to multiple destinations. The Georgetown commercial plaza on the west end of Irving Park often has many vacancies and is dated. Overall, it was noted that aging streetscape features and commercial structures create perceptions that Wood Dale is unattractive and in decline, and that the businesses on Irving Park Road could benefit from enhanced appearance, increased visibility, and a sense of place as a prominent commercial corridor. Lake Street in Addison is considered a more attractive version of this corridor.

### **Elgin-O’Hare Tollway (IL 390)**

The Elgin-O’Hare Tollway (Thorndale corridor) is seen as an opportunity for Wood Dale. Separated from the primary residential areas of the City by the industrial park, the Expressway offers more regional access for residents, as well as a chance for outsiders to stop by Wood Dale. The land surrounding the Expressway has the opportunity to develop / redevelop with industrial uses and other economic development opportunities. The corridor will only be a benefit if people on the Tollway are encouraged to come into Wood Dale instead of just passing through. There is a sense that as a tollway – traffic may be diverted to Irving Park Road.

### **Industrial Park**

The industrial area is considered a significant asset to the City. Wood Dale is seen as having a high image by those looking for industrial real estate due to its location, variety of building types, premium rents, modern industrial park, infill locations, being in DuPage County, and good City zoning processes. Many people just come into this part of Wood Dale to work, though, and do not spend time or money in other parts of town. There are some vacant buildings that need to be repurposed into more modern uses.

### **Public Transportation**

The lack of public transportation in Wood Dale causes issues for both residents and businesses. Although the Metra station is in Wood Dale, there are no other transit (bus) options to get from it to other Wood Dale locations. Public transportation would also offer another opportunity for residents to travel within and outside of Wood Dale, and could bring in more people from other areas.

### **Governmental Organization**

Overall, there is a sense that the City is well run and accomplishing a great deal; also that there has been a positive change in governance and outcomes in recent years. High expectations for the quality of services exist from residents and elected official.

### **Taxing Bodies**

Wood Dale has multiple taxing districts in and around its boundaries. The districts within Wood Dale are listed below:

#### **Fire Protection Districts**

Wood Dale, Itasca, and Addison

The Wood Dale Fire Protection District currently has two stations and twenty-nine full-time employees. The District sees a need to update the stations, get an additional ambulance, and if possible build an additional fire station in the southeast of Wood Dale, which would be helpful for response times due to the railroad tracks. Financial limitations are an issue for improvement plans. The District works well with Itasca and other departments by training together and sharing resources.

## **School Districts**

Grade school districts: Bensenville, Addison, Wood Dale, Itasca

High school districts: DuPage, Fenton, Lake Park

Wood Dale is seen as having good quality schools. Some residents feel that the boundaries of differing school districts divide the community at times. The Fenton School District has a stable enrollment with one building (Fenton High School). A large percentage of its students are low-income. Fenton recently completed a large expansion project and has been improving their education through 1-to-1 Chromebooks for students and having more AP classes. A Wood Dale police school resource officer has worked in the school for many years and the school appreciates having the service.

## **Library Districts**

Wood Dale, Bensenville

The Wood Dale Library District recently began planning a renovation/addition to their building. For the process, they distributed a patron survey. The project will provide more space and functionality for newer types of services and technology. The library has close partnerships with schools as well as the other library districts as they share resources.

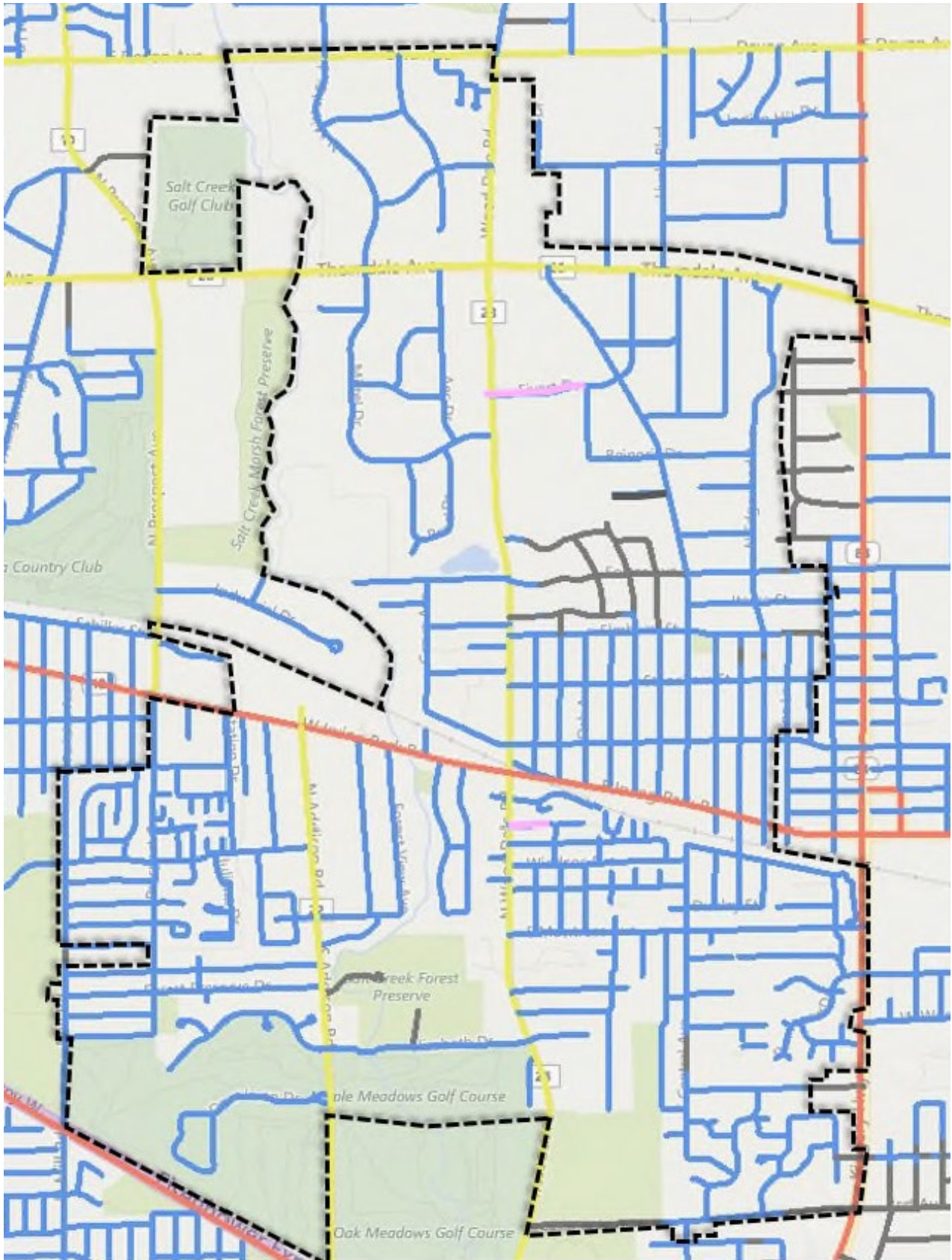
## **Park Districts**

Wood Dale, Itasca, Bensenville

The Wood Dale Park District has a variety of programs and facilities. It recently went through a cultural review, strategic plan, comprehensive plan, and is now working on smaller park plans. Many of its facilities are older and need to be updated. The District also has difficulty attracting both Wood Dale and non-Wood Dale residents to its facilities, as the facilities aren't always as attractive as surrounding communities. The Park District would like more useable land for additional athletic space and playgrounds. It is considering an aerial adventure course to attract more users.

Overall, the taxing bodies work well with each other and the City of Wood Dale – meeting monthly to address issues. A downside is that residents get confused as to which district is theirs due to the varying boundary lines. Multiple districts for a service were noted as also potentially causing issues regarding perceived and real differences between the level and quality of services.

Figure 13.1 | Road Jurisdiction Map



Source: Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)



**Figure 13.3 | Test #1 - Average Daily Traffic (ADT) in Vehicles Per Day (vpd)**

Street and Location	Total ADT	Year	LOS D Capacity	Reserve Capacity
Thorndale Avenue				
West of Wood Dale Road	39,500	2012	36,700	(2,800)
East of Wood Dale Road	28,700	2012	36,700	8,000
Wood Dale Road				
North of Oak Meadows Drive	7,100	2012	16,500	9,400
South of Irving Park Road	8,450	2012	36,700	28,250
North of Irving Park Road	10,800	2012	36,700	25,900
South of Thorndale Avenue	13,100	2012	36,700	23,600
Irving Park Road				
West of Wood Dale Road	20,900	2015	36,700	15,800
East of Wood Dale Road	19,900	2015	36,700	16,800
Addison Road				
South of Irving Park Road	11,900	2012	33,200	21,300
Foster Avenue				
East of Wood Dale Road	5,600	2008	15,200	9,600

**Figure 13.4 | Test #2 - AM Peak Hour Traffic in Vehicles Per Hour (vph)**

Street and Location	AM Peak Hour	Year	LOS D Capacity	Reserve Capacity
Thorndale Avenue				
West of Wood Dale Road	3,393	2012	3,560	167
East of Wood Dale Road	2,363	2012	3,560	1,197
Wood Dale Road				
North of Oak Meadows Drive	642	2012	1,600	958
South of Irving Park Road	751	2012	3,560	2,809
North of Irving Park Road	908	2012	3,560	2,652
South of Thorndale Avenue	863	2012	3,560	2,697
Irving Park Road				
West of Wood Dale Road	1,114	2015	3,560	2,446
East of Wood Dale Road	1,295	2015	3,560	2,265
Addison Road				
South of Irving Park Road	906	2012	3,220	2,314
Foster Avenue				
East of Wood Dale Road	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



**Figure 13.5 | Test #3 - PM Peak Hour Traffic in Vehicles Per Hour (vph)**

Street and Location	PM Peak Hour	Year	LOS D Capacity	Reserve Capacity
Thorndale Avenue				
West of Wood Dale Road	2,928	2012	3,560	632
East of Wood Dale Road	2,131	2012	3,560	1,429
Wood Dale Road				
North of Oak Meadows Drive	742	2012	1,600	858
South of Irving Park Road	846	2012	3,560	2,714
North of Irving Park Road	1,075	2012	3,560	2,485
South of Thorndale Avenue	1,049	2012	3,560	2,511
Irving Park Road				
West of Wood Dale Road	1,303	2015	3,560	2,257
East of Wood Dale Road	1,496	2015	3,560	2,064
Addison Road				
South of Irving Park Road	1,132	2012	3,220	2,088
Foster Avenue				
East of Wood Dale Road	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Sources: a) ADT/Peak Hour Volumes - Illinois Department of Transportation; b) 2010 Highway Capacity Manual; and c) 2009 Florida DOT LOS Handbook  
 \*Values subject to change after completion of the Elgin O'hare Western Access (EOWA) Improvement Projects