

Chapter XIII - Community Facilities and Recreation Plan

Introduction

This *Community Facilities and Recreation Plan* is intended to address unmet infrastructure and service needs of the County and its constituent municipalities. Trends with potential to affect needs may be discerned from the *Community Facilities Analysis* and *Recreation Analysis* (Sections III and V, respectively, of this *Comprehensive Plan*) as well as other background studies. These include the following:

- Although many municipalities have, in recent years, offered additional facilities and services (e.g., parks, sewer systems), the primary function of most municipalities continues to be road maintenance and budgets are often stretched thin in doing so.
- State mandated human services have a major impact on County budgets and make it difficult to provide many additional services, although the County has also pursued recycling, park and other initiatives in recent years.
- Court activity has increased significantly over the last several years, producing additional demands on the judicial system and related County offices (e.g., Prothonotary/Clerk of Courts Office). The County's elongated shape makes it difficult to operate the Magisterial Court system without using satellite offices.
- The County's new correctional facility in Indian Orchard is now operational and has solved a serious problem identified in the original *Comprehensive Plan*.
- Human services provided by the County have now come under the umbrella of a County Human Services Agency. These services are complemented by others offered by a growing array of non-profit providers.
- Public school enrollment is on the decline due to aging of the population. Higher education options within the County have expanded as several colleges have offered courses locally.
- Tele-communications service providers have upgraded infrastructure but some areas remain without adequate cellular phone and internet service due to natural terrain.
- A new public sewage treatment and collection system has been developed at Reflection Lakes



Wayne Highlands Middle School
Source: www.waynehighlands.org

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

and others extended and upgraded. A regional sewer authority has taken over responsibility for the systems serving central Wayne County. However, expansion of these systems to additional areas of need has been made extraordinarily difficult by new state stream anti-degradation requirements.

- The 27 fire departments located in Wayne County are staffed by more than 800 active men and women volunteers. Some 18 non-profit ambulance services with more than 300 volunteers and 70 paid staff provide emergency rescue services. Maintaining volunteer support is among the challenges facing these services.



Browndale Firefighters Station 43 pumper

Source: www.43fire.com

- There are seven public libraries located throughout Wayne County from Northern Wayne to Newfoundland. There are also several other cultural facilities and attractions provided and operated effectively by the non-profit sector.
- The Wayne Memorial Health Care System provides a wide range of health care services and, together with regional institutions in Binghamton, Scranton and elsewhere, provide the County with unusually good access to health care services for a rural area. As Wayne County's population continues to grow older, the need to maintain good quality long-term care options within the County must be a priority. Extended long-term care options for Wayne County residents are limited to three primary facilities within the County.
- School district facilities are a primary source of recreation for both children and adults. These facilities provide students and families with the opportunity to participate in organized and unorganized activities year round. The Wayne County Commissioners also sponsor many youth recreation activities, including basketball, track and golf events.
- There are between 35 and 40 summer youth camps located primarily in central and northern Wayne County. Some camps make their facilities available to the community for banquets, community recreation and other activities, providing a potential additional recreational resource.

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

- Campground facilities are located throughout the County and offer both tent and recreational vehicle camping. They also provide wide ranging recreational opportunities including boating, swimming, biking, hiking, tennis and indoor facilities.
- Some 14 of the County's 28 municipalities have municipal parks. The Wayne County Recreation Complex in Berlin Township is the only County owned facility. The Recreation Complex occupies roughly 40 acres of land. The County has secured a grant to develop a Recreation Master Site Plan for this facility.
- There are two State Parks in southern Wayne County (Gouldsboro and Tobyhanna). A former State Park at Prompton is now essentially operated by citizen volunteers. There is also a Conservation Area in Varden. The Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River also adjoins Wayne County. There are, too, privately operated natural area attractions open to the public, including the Dorflinger and Lacawac Sanctuaries. The former offers, in addition, a cultural program, including a Glass Museum and summer concert series, and the latter is a scientific research site.



Lower Woods Pond



White Oak Pond



Belmont Lake



Long Pond

Source of all photographs: www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us

- The Fish and Boat Commission owns or leases about 1,800 acres of land in the County

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

(see photographs of selected facilities above) and the Pennsylvania Game Commission owns and manages almost 21,000 acres. These facilities, together with the aforementioned State Parks, provide an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities.

- The County is also home to a number of horse stables, resorts and other private recreational facilities including two fairgrounds (Wayne County and Greene-Dreher-Sterling), Lake Wallenpaupack and a vast system of snow and biking/hiking trails throughout Northern Wayne County. These are complemented by two Pennsylvania Bicycle Routes (Routes L and Y).

Public Input

During the process of developing *Goals and Objectives* (See Chapter XI) for this *Comprehensive Plan*, two community surveys were conducted; one of residents and the other of vacation homeowners to ascertain views on the needs of Wayne County. The survey of residents asked respondents to identify the five most important needs with respect to making Wayne County “a better place to live.” The top 20 items from the list generated are summarized in Table XIII-1.

Among the list of top 20 needs were 12 items (highlighted in the table to the right) involving infrastructure, community facilities and services and recreation. Highway maintenance (see Section XIV of this *Comprehensive Plan*) was the highest rated need by survey respondents but cellular phone service ranked fifth and health care was the sixth most important item. Police protection, public transportation and traffic congestion rounded out the top 10 issues.

A number of other needs were also identified by respondents, including youth programs, suggesting support for development of recreation and park facilities. Likewise, listing of educational system improvements and job training as needs lends support for the additional higher education opportunities now being offered within the County.

Vacation home owners surveyed identified similar needs, with cellular phone service ranked at the top, followed by police protection, ambulance service, health care, fire protection, highway maintenance and high speed internet.

Table XIII-1: Wayne County Needs

| Wayne County Needs | % | Rank |
|------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Employment - full time | 33% | 1 |
| Taxes & cost of government | 31% | 2 |
| Highway maintenance | 22% | 3 |
| Economic opportunities | 19% | 4 |
| Cellular phone service | 19% | 5 |
| Health care | 17% | 6 |
| Overdevelopment/sprawl | 15% | 7 |
| Police protection | 14% | 8 |
| Public transportation | 11% | 9 |
| Traffic congestion | 11% | 10 |
| Youth programs | 10% | 11 |
| Illegal trash dumping | 9% | 12 |
| Shopping opportunities | 9% | 13 |
| Crime prevention efforts | 9% | 14 |
| Downtown revitalization | 9% | 15 |
| Elder care | 8% | 16 |
| Poverty | 8% | 17 |
| Overburdening land use regulations | 7% | 18 |
| Educational system | 7% | 19 |
| Job training opportunities | 7% | 20 |

Source: Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Survey

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

Recommendations

Most of the needs discussed in the preceding section are currently being addressed by local officials. Notwithstanding this, there are some specific needs requiring special attention over the next several years. These include the following:

1. There should be continued emphasis on Magisterial District Judge satellite office development as a means of ensuring easy access to the court system by more rural areas of the County.
2. Municipal officials should continue to extend and upgrade sewage collection facilities peripheral to existing treatment plants. Given the difficulty of meeting new stream anti-degradation standards this will demand considerable diligence and lead time but is essential to economic development and protection of water quality from the greater threats of malfunctioning on-lot sewer systems.
3. Continuous upgrading of emergency services through expanded training and financial support for volunteer providers is critical to both residents and vacationers and must be a priority. The existing volunteer system for providing most emergency services is a tremendous cost-saver, ensures high-quality services and promotes community involvement. These are invaluable to the County.
4. Development of new extended care facilities including more long-term (skilled and intermediate levels) care beds for use by Wayne County residents remains important. Additional personal care facilities are also demanded throughout the County but particularly in the under-served central, south-central and far northern sections. Such facilities can and preferably should be provided on a private for-profit basis.



Source: www.wymanor.org

5. The County, through both its Human Services Agency and Hospital and Health Facilities Authority, should continue to work closely with the Wayne Memorial Health System and other health service providers to improve the delivery of health care throughout the County and the access to it by all. Finding new ways to deliver services outside of the hospital itself and bring patients to doctors and the hospital must be priorities.
6. The County and municipalities should continue to examine opportunities for re-use of

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

existing facilities that are undergoing transition (e.g. St. Vincent's School and other public school buildings being abandoned) as a way to reduce costs and ensure existing structures of prominence are retained in productive community use. The County's re-use of the Stourbridge School in Honesdale as a county government center is an excellent example.

7. The County should pursue the potential development of a County transportation vehicle garage and/or maintenance facility.
8. The bulk of recreational facilities should continue to be provided by private enterprise, municipal governments and school districts, although the County should continue the development and implementation of its Master Site Plan for the Wayne County Recreation Complex. These entities are also far better prepared to evaluate and respond to such needs than the County or higher levels of government. The County Parks & Recreation Board should concentrate its efforts on; (a) the expansion of recreational programs for the County's increasing elderly population and (b) the management of the County Recreation Complex in Berlin Township.
9. The emphasis of State and Federal managers of recreational facilities in the County (i.e., the Fish and Boat Commission, the Game Commission, the National Park Service) should be on maintaining their existing facilities and making them more available to meet local needs as opposed to expansion or development of new areas.
10. The County, through its various agencies, can and should play a supportive role in assisting municipalities, school districts and others, including private entities, with the provision of recreational facilities. This support should primarily be technical assistance.
11. The County is opposed to any condemnation of land by the Pennsylvania Game or Fish Commissions or other similar agencies. All land additions should be on a "willing seller" basis. This policy should be affirmed regularly whenever condemnations are proposed.
12. The County should, in its review of new projects, promote the development of private, Borough or Township multi-purpose indoor recreational facilities that can be combined with other municipal or non-profit facilities such as pools and libraries. This will yield greater efficiencies of operation, create better facilities and reduce the redundancy that often exists in government programs.
13. The County should, in its review of school district projects, promote the shared use of school recreational facilities outside of school hours. The Waymart Borough and R.D. Wilson School facilities in Waymart Borough and Canaan Township provide an excellent model for this type of shared recreational facilities program. Other school facilities in Honesdale and Newfoundland also receive extensive community use. Wayne Memorial

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

Hospital, in partnership with area school districts, sponsors public walking programs within school facilities during inclement weather months.



R.D. Wilson School

Source: www.westernwayne.org/rdw

14. The County should encourage municipalities to forge relationships with the summer camp industry to utilize their facilities in the off-season as may be appropriate. There are examples of this both within Wayne County and nearby, where camp facilities have been made available for community recreation events and programs on a regular basis. This makes sense for camps who desire closer relationships with the communities where they operate, as well as municipalities who benefit by access to more extensive facilities at certain times of the year.
15. Land conservancies and other similar organizations should be encouraged to employ their technical assistance, financial resources and management capabilities as vehicles for achieving the preservation of privately owned open space and recreational land of public value on a voluntary basis.