

# Community Facilities and Services

## Summary

Community facilities and services are crucial to meeting the needs of Wayne County's residents and help to define the quality of life enjoyed by all. The Community Facilities and Services Element of the **Comprehensive Plan** addresses in a general way the facility and service needs of Wayne County, and focuses on the approach necessary to improve coordination and cooperation.

## Planning Issues

*The following is an overview of community facility-related planning issues. For a detailed discussion, please refer to the report **Planning Issues**.*

The issues raised relative to community facilities and services focus on assuring that these needs can be met in the future for Wayne County's expanding population. The continuation of public service levels is necessary to protect quality of life. Key issues include seeking alternative sources of funding and avoiding duplication of services among jurisdictions. Specifically:

- **Criminal Justice** - Expansion of the criminal justice system appears necessary to accommodate current and future demands. The search for alternative sources of funding and lowering costs by consolidating duplicative services are options to be considered.
- **Parks and Recreation** - Distribution of recreational facilities and programs relative to the County's growing population should be addressed, as should the ability of existing facilities and programs to meet future needs. New sources of funding need to be identified and utilized.
- **Schools** - The public school system and higher educational institutions of Wayne County should be equipped to handle the increasing student population in regard to capital and operating needs. The possibility of altering the school curriculum to better prepare students for a competitive labor force must be addressed.
- **Health Care** - Health care needs must be met to accommodate a population growing in size and aging. Health care accessibility and affordability must be examined as well.

## Existing Conditions and Trends

*The following is an overview of existing conditions and trends. For a detailed discussion, please refer to the report **Existing Conditions and Trends**.*

Community facilities and services provided in Wayne County are essential to meet the educational, social, health and safety needs of residents. These include the education system, libraries, parks and recreation areas, law enforcement and fire protection, health care facilities, recycling and solid waste management and social services. Data sources used to inventory community facilities included data collected by individual providers, such as school districts, annual reports and interviews.

## Education

Wayne County is served by 10 school districts and approximately 50 public school facilities. Private and parochial education is offered to students as well. Vocational

training is available to high school juniors and seniors at the Wayne County Schools Career Center. Boys Village and Ida Sue School offer programs for students with special needs.

Various higher educational institutions and research centers are located in Wayne County. The College of Wooster offers four-year liberal arts programs and Wayne General, a branch of the University of Akron, provides two-year programs. The Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute (OSU/ATI) is a division of The Ohio State University College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences and offers two-year degrees and continuing education programs. The Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) is a branch of The Ohio State University and conducts extensive agricultural research, serving as a leading national resource in this regard.

### **Libraries**

Two public library systems serve Wayne County: Wayne County Public Library System and Orrville Public Library. The Wayne County Public Library System is comprised of the Main Library and five branch libraries.

### **Park and Recreation Areas**

Nearly 50 parks and recreation areas covering over 7,800 acres of land are located in Wayne County. Of the total about 7,000 acres are set aside as state wildlife areas and the balance of 800 acres comprise active, public recreational facilities. Comparing this supply with national standards of 10 acres per 1,000 residents, the County as a whole is currently short about 250 acres. The Wayne County Park District has been created, but has been unsuccessful in getting voter approval of ballot issues to fund operations. State preserves include Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area, Johnson's Woods, Killbuck Marsh Wildlife Area and Shreve Lake Wildlife Area. Brown's Lake Bog and Izaak Walton League of America preserves (two sites) comprise private wildlife areas. The County also has extensive fairgrounds in Wooster.

### **Law Enforcement and Fire Protection**

Law enforcement services in Wayne County are provided by the Ohio Highway Patrol, Wayne County Sheriff's Department and several municipal police departments. Several fire and rescue departments provide fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) at the township, municipal and village levels.

### **Hospitals and Health Care Facilities**

Wayne County is served by Wooster Community Hospital and Dunlap Memorial Hospital in Orrville. Terminally-ill patient care is offered by the Hospice of Wayne County. Over 10 nursing homes, retirement and life-care communities are located across the County.

### **Recycling and Solid Waste Management**

Wayne County is included in the Stark-Tuscarawas-Wayne Joint Solid Waste Management District. The District provides four solid waste landfills for public use and an additional six out-of-district landfills. County residents are offered the opportunity to recycle at 17 drop-off recycling facilities. The District has recently completed a 20-year Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan.

### **Social Services**

A variety of community services are supported and funded by federal, state or local governments or by nonprofit groups, agencies and volunteers. Services and facilities are available for persons of all ages, with special emphasis on individuals with unique needs

and disabilities. Services range from children's services and education to recreation, housing and home-related services.

## Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Policies are the basis of the Comprehensive Plan and this section presents the Community Facilities and Services Goal and two objectives. Together these policies are the driving force behind this Element. The Implementation section presents actions for each objective. The Community Facilities and Services Goal is:

**Community facilities and services to be expanded and improved, with emphasis on safety and crime control, youth activities, outdoor recreation, educational facilities and programs, public health and social services, and communications systems.**

The objectives and their respective strategies are:

**Objective 1 - Local Coordination - Facilitate coordination among all units of government in Wayne County relative to identifying, prioritizing, funding and implementing community facilities, by:**

- 1.1 Facilitating an annual coordination meeting among all local jurisdictions to coordinate capital improvement planning.
- 1.2 Facilitating an annual coordination meeting among all local service providers to coordinate program planning.
- 1.3 Monitoring development and report on potential demands for improved facilities and services.

**Objective 2 - Mandatory Parkland Dedication Requirement - Provide for additional public parkland through mandatory parkland dedication requirements in County Subdivision Regulations, by:**

- 2.1 Updating County Subdivision Regulations to require parkland dedication or in-lieu fees based on residential density.
- 2.2 Educating land surveyors, subdividers, builders and planning officials regarding the value of parkland and the appropriate site planning principles to create viable parkland sites.

## Community Facilities Plan

### **Establish Cooperation Between Entities**

Several outstanding examples can be found in Wayne County where various interests came together to solve a community-wide problem or created a unique community asset, such as Wooster High School. Cooperation should continue between all units of government, public servants and local public and private service providers to meet facility needs, reduce service or program overlap, and improve service delivery.

In an effort to accommodate this cooperation the County should be involved in the following:

- Facilitating an annual meeting among all local jurisdictions and local service providers to plan and coordinate community facilities and program planning.
- Creating a public/private partnership of all units of government, public servants and local public and private service providers to consolidate

services to reduce costs and monitor development and population changes to forecast potential increased demand levels.

### **Plan for Educational Services**

Public education is crucial to the County's quality of life, ability to retain residents, provide a competitive work force and attract quality companies. Planning for educational services sufficient to meet future demands and the changing career market is also important. The opportunities for accomplishing this task include:

- Seeking state funding and grants for educational and technological improvements.
- Creating a task force to educate the public on the need for adequate educational facilities, technology and staffing to properly prepare students for the workforce (and to provide retraining for those already in the workforce).

### **Funding Alternatives**

Funding for the provision of community facilities and services is an ongoing responsibility of government, the institutional community and private sector. One new tool only recently used in Ohio is the community taxing authority under Revised Code Chapter 349. The tax authority, applicable to a single developer, has the right to tax or impose a community development charge on new development in an effort to compensate for anticipated growth. However a development must be sufficiently large to generate the necessary revenues to support public improvements.

### **Land Dedications**

As a distinct issue under this Element, mandatory land dedication requirements in the County Subdivision Regulations are stressed as a viable tool for meeting park and recreation needs of a growing population. The requirement is standard in numerous cities and counties throughout Ohio and meets a basic need of every subdivision regardless of size - to provide for the recreational needs of the residents of each new neighborhood.

Adding this mechanism to the County regulations will provide for future needs without placing the financial burden on current residents. Acquisition costs will be reduced, although operation and maintenance costs will be necessary. But in the long-term the County and the community benefits. The development community will benefit from better subdivisions that sell at a somewhat higher value, due to integrated park facilities. Open-space subdivisions are an extension of this concept, although most of the greenspace is privately owned.

### **Implementation**

Like many of the other challenges facing Wayne County, meeting the community facilities and services needs of the population will involve partnerships among governments and private organizations. These partnerships should be based on good information and forecasts that anticipate future needs.

### **Capital Improvement Planning**

All governmental entities in Wayne County are strongly encouraged to undertake capital improvement planning as a regular administrative function. A five-year plan anticipating future needs (in accordance with a comprehensive plan) is typically developed, with general cost estimates, identified funding and timetable for implementation. Then a one-year strategy is prepared in more detail for the first year. Thereafter one-year updates are

prepared during the five-year program. CIPs are linked to annual budgets as an important planning tool. CIPs should be prepared by all units of local government.

### **Actions**

A detailed set of recommended actions follows which provide direction relative to the strategies presented earlier in this chapter. Actions are intended to be very defined steps that are necessary to implement individual strategies. Parties are identified that are responsible for implementing individual actions. Recommended timeframes are also provided as a measure of success. A summary of all actions presented in the Comprehensive Plan is provided in the Implementation Element.