



Woodridge Park District Needs Assessment Focus Group Report

Overview

On September 8th-September 10th 2009, Leisure Vision facilitated a series of focus groups for the Woodridge Park District. The focus groups were facilitated by Ron Vine, Project Manager and President of Leisure Vision.

Information gathered from the focus groups will be used throughout the Needs Assessment process and in particular as a key source of information in developing a statistically valid citizen survey that will be administered to residents in the Woodridge Park District.

Three major issues were discussed during the focus groups:

- General Perceptions of Current Facilities and Programs
- Most important issues facing the Woodridge Park District
- Community Survey and Thinking about the Future

Ron Vine started off each focus group meeting by giving a short introduction as to why everyone was there and what they would be accomplishing in the time period allotted. Ron emphasized the importance of having everyone participate and also that there was no right or wrong answer only people's opinions. Ron explained that the focus group would be broken into three sections about the Woodridge Park District. Most importantly, each participant was provided a worksheet to put down their own thoughts on each topic. The worksheets were handed into the facilitator after the focus group.

The following pages contain a summary of the comments that were made by focus group participants during each session.

TOPIC #1: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Once everyone was settled in, the moderator first asked focus group participants to rate on a scale of 5 to 1 with 5 being excellent and 1 being poor how they would rate the outdoor parks, trails, and recreation facilities in the Woodridge Park District. They were then asked to provide the same ratings for indoor recreation, aquatic, fitness, sports, or cultural facilities in the Woodridge Park District.

After a discussion of the ratings, respondents were asked to indicate whether there were any OUTDOOR parks, trails, open space, aquatics, sports, and recreation facilities or programs they feel should be developed or improved in the Woodridge Park District?

Respondents were then asked to provide the same ratings for indoor facilities.

After a discussion of the ratings, respondents were asked to indicate whether there were any INDOOR recreation, aquatic, fitness, sports, or cultural facilities in the Woodridge Park District they felt should be developed or improved in the Woodridge Park District?

The last question respondents were asked to answer for this section of the focus group was whether respondents thought that the most important issue facing the Woodridge Park District was a) maintaining current parks and recreation facilities; b) building new parks and recreation facilities c) acquiring open space; d) a combination of all of what I mentioned; or e) something else?

Listed on the following pages are some of the comments that were provided for each of the focus groups.

On a scale of 5 to 1 with 5 being excellent and 1 being poor, how would you rate the outdoor parks, trails and recreation facilities in the Woodridge Park District?

First Session:

- Zero (0) people rated it a 1
- Zero (0) people rated it a 2
- Zero (0) people rated it a 3
- Ten (10) people rated it a 4
- Four (4) people rated it a 5

Second Session:

Cancelled

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Third Session:

- Zero (0) people rated it a 1
- Zero (0) people rated it a 2
- Zero (0) people rated it a 3
- Twelve (12) people rated it a 4
- Three (3) people rated it a 5

Fourth Session:

- Zero (0) people rated it a 1
- Zero (0) people rated it a 2
- One (1) person rated it a 3
- Six (6) people rated it a 4
- Six (6) people rated it a 5

Are there any OUTDOOR parks, trails, open space, aquatics, sports, and recreation facilities or programs you feel should be developed or improved in the Woodridge Park District?

First Session:

- Lighted fields at Orchard (soccer & baseball), continuously update older parks and maintain newer ones.
- Mile markers on running trails, ball field lighting and drainage improvements.
- Lighting, go green, developing outdoor tournaments: baseball, soccer, volleyball, etc.
- Parks are great with a great trail system to get to most parks!
- Lighting (extend daily use; security) and general maintenance of parks.
- Lighted tennis courts, going green, all sports fields should be updated, mile markers on trails, extend to D.G.
- Expand bike paths, lighting in parks and sports fields.
- Pool is excellent (extend the hours to Labor Day), softball fields are good, soccer fields are nice but needs upgrades, bike paths are excellent.
- Continue to resurface basketball and tennis courts, connect bike paths from Summer Hill or Willow Creek to D.G.
- More basketball courts.
- Night lights at Orchard baseball and soccer fields and Jane's fields, green technology.
- Develop the D-99 property as a park, maintaining and finishing current projects.
- Upgrade baseball/soccer fields-lighting and watering, use green technology, and upgrade aging facilities.
- Address lighting/security problems, green technology.

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Second Session:

Cancelled

Third Session:

- Playground equipment for younger siblings at Orchard because it's no fun for those kids at the ballgame and it's supposed to be a family time.
- Lights at ball fields so you could have night games and easier for families and for practice games.
- Westminster-playground equipment for older kids and additional swings. Good for all kids and swings are used by everyone to relax and enjoy parks which is great.
- Scoreboards at the ball fields would allow more leagues/tournaments in the area (specifically Orchard Hill).
- Most important-practice fields at Orchard. Cannot use existing when games are going on at night when most parents have time to practice.
- Sledding hill, additional lighted fields, winter activities.
- More parking at parks and fields-limited at many locations, forced to walk extended distances to fields.
- Dugouts at all baseball/softball parks. The weather in Chicago is still very chilly in the spring when the season starts.
- Parking to all Park District play areas for safety.
- Additional bathroom facilities by program pool. Current size is not sufficient to support use of program pool as a stand-alone facility.
- Scoreboards at ball fields-primarily at Janes and Orchard. This would provide more enjoyment for the people attending. They would be more involved in the game. Many times when you are watching, you don't know the score.
- Develop 44 acre parcel because you can put a sledding hill, skate park, ice skating, recreation center, indoor soccer facility, etc. there.
- Remove the bike path. The bike path is attracting people that do not react to traffic signals in Woodridge. They go through red lights and stop signs and they drive on the street. They look over their shoulders on Woodridge Drive to actually watch how they are blocking vehicular traffic. The bike path is not saving anything—it is a hazard and so are the bicyclists that use the roads parallel to the bike path. They are immune from traffic laws and bicycling on the roadways should be discouraged in Woodridge. In the five year plan, it is time to consider replacing the asphalt paths with green grass and bushes.

Fourth Session:

- Keep lakes clean, keep paths clean of goose droppings, and add flowers to beautify parks.

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- Bike paths, hiking trails, cross country skiing near bike paths in winter, restrooms that are permanent, clean up the lakes and paths around them, lights at Orchard and on other fields, and parking improvements.
- Trails connect to Argonne. Have lap pool open longer in the season for adult lap swim-when the main pool closes.
- Continue enhancing all parks and trails-maintenance is key.
- Hiking areas with trails, stock fishing areas, continue with bike path expansion and connection, and get rid of geese.
- Orchard Park facility is not being used to its full potential.
- Memorial Park (Janes and Center)-the Central location is perfect, skate park, hockey rink outdoors.
- Develop a program to allow residents to utilize golf carts on Woodridge streets/paths in order to alleviate dependence on cars! Many municipalities are already doing so....we can be "cutting edge" too!
- I would like to see more permanent bathroom facilities at all parks. Less chance for damage and would enhance park.
- Upgrade latrine facilities-improves experience of using the larger parks, develop Town Centre, upgrade bike paths at Castaldo to accept vehicles without being damaged.
- Cross-country skiing rentals, bike repair, clean up and maintenance.
- Lake has excess vegetation and debris in the lake, needs to be maintained and cleaned.
- Concession/washroom permanent facility in Orchard Park, lighted fields in Orchard Park, artificial turf. Heavily used parks need washrooms and lights expand use!
- More swimming area/slides for older kids at Cypress Cove. There are many areas/activities for younger kids.
- Heavily used parks could use more routine maintenance. As the parks age, they are becoming run down a bit.

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On a scale of 5 to 1 with 5 being excellent and 1 being poor, how would you rate the indoor recreation, aquatic, fitness, sports or cultural facilities in the Woodridge Park District?

First Session:

- Two (2) people rated it a 1
- Six (6) people rated it a 2
- Five (5) people rated it a 3
- One (1) person rated it a 4
- Zero (0) people rated it a 5

Second Session:

Cancelled

Third Session:

- Zero (0) people rated it a 1
- Four (4) people rated it a 2
- Seven (7) people rated it a 3
- Three (3) people rated it a 4
- One (1) person rated it a 5

Fourth Session:

- One (1) person rated it a 1
- One (1) person rated it a 2
- Three (3) people rated it a 3
- Five (5) people rated it a 4
- Three (3) people rated it a 5

Are there any INDOOR recreation, aquatic, fitness, sports, or cultural facilities or programs you feel should be developed or improved in the Woodridge Park District?

First Session:

- Field house to include exercise equipment, basketball court, and track.
- Field house with facilities, access to current facilities (subsidized use of Edwards, etc.)
- Actual indoor building is non-existent (See Bolingbrook), volleyball league space, courts for racquetball, walleyball, etc.
- No Park District owned gyms/fitness centers. Always using schools or inadequate space.

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- Provide an indoor facility-field house (Membership? Low cost?).
- Would like to have a center so we don't have to go to another community. Racquetball/walleyball, fitness center, lap pool, tennis.
- Exercise/fitness center (fieldhouse), improve access to current gyms.
- Gym and track, upgrade use to the schools.
- Gym space for basketball/volleyball with open gym time, better access to schools.
- Gym, exercise equipment, racquetball courts (facility like Bolingbrook).
- Field house, access to schools.
- Access to schools' gymnasiums/fieldhouses, exercise equipment in facilities.
- Gym (track, courts, i.e. volleyball & basketball), exercise equipment area.
- Most are school facilities which have very limited public access. Two most important indoor space needs: track and exercise equipment.

Second Session:

- Cancelled

Third Session:

- More gyms with hardwood floors-there is insufficient/no space for kids to play pick up basketball, much less accommodate the current programs (volleyball B&C courts are way too small).
- More wood floors to accommodate other sports and related fitness, i.e. walking.
- Indoor soccer-provides year round play for kids to build and maintain their skills and it's not offered at the YMCA.
- Hard floors in an existing facility or part of a new facility would improve quality and safety of all sports played on it, e.g. basketball, volleyball, etc.
- Indoor pool-many programs can be offered including time slots for adults/seniors to swim, walk, etc. Swim team could also practice.
- More gym space, enhance winter league activities.
- Additional gym space for basketball and indoor soccer. Current facilities are limited and in poor condition.
- A recreation center like Downers Grove has so we would have more indoor space with an indoor pool too.
- Recreation facility for fitness area and activities where seniors can do their exercises in our own Village instead of going elsewhere all year round.
- More gym space. Would be great to have everything but least expensive and most versatile space would be gym space. Could add on other items in the future.
- Fitness center-this would provide an avenue for people to become fit during the winter as well

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as a place during the summer for people who work during the day.

- More gym space for basketball, develop a recreation center with soccer, fitness, etc.
- NEW facility: a restaurant—bar and grill. Breakfast, lunch, dinner. Use and appearance like Bennigans and Lisle Park District. Locate to take advantage of the southeast corner of Lake Carelton and associated views there. Parking is already available and a design would enhance the use of Park District banquet facilities at the Community Center. Employees and residents can walk to this
- restaurant location and it can become a new community focal point. See a schematic plan at 30'=1" scale and a list of design advantages (attached).

Fourth Session:

- Improve (as funding permits) size of facilities to meet growing population, allow clubs to use facility space.
- Indoor recreation center with pool, weights, gym, track, and place for party rentals with sports themes.
- Build indoor facility housing pool, track, gym and continue with proper upkeep.
- Recreation center with full services, especially exercise equipment.
- Indoor facility with turf field.
- Fitness gym for seniors for exercising-gyms, boxing, pool, racquetball.
- I would like to see the WPD partner with the schools to utilize Jefferson's new workout center and to possibly expand gyms/indoor space for utilization by residents.
- Yes-I would like to see an indoor recreation center for basketball, fitness, swimming, etc. Include an indoor track and party rental facilities.
- No first-hand knowledge but I am concerned that if a recreation center is a target objective that it be built in phases/stages over time so as not to be rejected by the voters because the "whole enchilada" is too expensive.
- Create volunteer opportunities, recruit seniors, unemployed, groups of kids, etc.
- No comment-everything looks great.
- Gymnasium space, health/fitness facility or joint venture with Jefferson Jr. High.
- A recreation center on the North side of town with indoor basketball and soccer.
- More gym space. Right now limited time slots are available for residents, i.e. Sunday night basketball. Program pool restroom facility is too small at the Fitness Center for adults.

TOPIC #2: MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING THE WOODRIDGE PARK DISTRICT

Do you think that the most important issue facing the Woodridge Park District is a) maintaining current parks and recreation facilities; b) building new parks and recreation facilities; c) acquiring open space; d) a combination of all of what I mentioned; or e) something else?

First Session:

- 1st Choice:
 - Six (6) people chose A
 - Seven (7) people chose B
 - Zero (0) people chose C
 - Zero (0) people chose D
 - One (1) person chose E
- 2nd Choice:
 - Eight (8) people chose A
 - Six (6) people chose B
 - Zero (0) people chose C
 - Zero (0) people chose D
 - Zero (0) people chose E

Second Session:

Cancelled

Third Session:

- 1st Choice:
 - Five (5) people chose A
 - Five (5) people chose B
 - Two (2) people chose C
 - Zero (0) people chose D
 - Three (3) people chose E: improve programs – attendance is shrinking. Need to hold/increase; relocate and redesign the Jubilee Event to Main Street Seven Bridges.
- 2nd Choice:
 - Six (6) people chose A
 - Seven (7) people chose B
 - One (1) person chose C
 - Zero people chose D
 - One (1) person chose E: health concerns; cleanliness of parks; improve programs.

Fourth Session:

- 1st Choice:
 - Nine (9) people chose A
 - Three (3) people chose B
 - One (1) person chose C
 - Zero (0) people chose D
 - Zero (0) people chose E
- 2nd Choice:
 - Four (4) people chose A
 - Five (5) people chose B
 - Four (4) people chose C
 - Zero (0) people chose D
 - Zero (0) people chose E

Comments:

First Session:

- Maintain what we have-very important, new indoor facility.
- Both building and maintaining: maintain what we have, but build what is needed.
- \$100 question is a good method to prioritize.
- I like the wish list for maintenance/new facilities.

Second Session:

Cancelled

Third Session:

- Open space comes up so rarely, we have to seize any opportunity that comes up when it happens. In the meantime, other things need to be done.
- Building new park and recreation facilities which we could acquire new space for.
- Split funds between maintenance/enhancing and building new facilities.
- We have to maintain what we have first so it doesn't turn into a need later. More economical to maintain instead of buying new.
- The community is lacking a central indoor facility. Winter indoor programs suffer from this.
- It is good to have facilities but must get usage since that is why you have the facilities.
- Maintaining what we already have is fiscally responsible for our community.
- Start clearing the southeast corner of Hawthorne Woods, make a corner park (like Castaldo Park) on the west side of Woodridge Drive, 150' west of existing brush line.

Fourth Session:

- Maintaining facilities is most important due to current economic recession. Difficult to get new tax money to build new facilities.
- Building a new facility will help keep Woodridge residents in Woodridge instead of having to go to other towns to use their facilities.
- Rather have open space vs. businesses/homes. Have a recreation center with a gym, indoor pool, and fitness center.
- Keep the unseen infrastructure a priority as well.
- We spend too much time in other communities using their facilities.
- No more taxes.
- Definitely don't want to see the current parks that have been established to fail-I think Woodridge has done a great job on what we have-we don't want to lose them!
- We have so much good parks, maintenance should be a basic responsibility—no orphans.
- Maintain using more volunteers.
- Partner with WPD for more frequent patrolling of more heavily used/permitted facilities.

TOPIC #3: COMMUNITY SURVEY AND THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

What types of questions should be asked on the community survey?

First Session:

- If an indoor facility was built, would you purchase a gym membership? What would you be willing to pay? Rank your preferences for the fieldhouse: Exercise equipment, basketball court, track, racquetball, turf field, etc.
- Are you satisfied with the breadth and depth of programs offered? Would you be willing to help fund additional indoor space through increased taxes?
- Demographics, use by household, sand volleyball courts.
- Definitely a question about available indoor space for sporting activities and programming activities.
- Compare the necessity for upgrading outdoor facilities vs. the need for indoor parks facilities. Ask people what their level of support would be for any development of parks...will they use it?
- How much of a tax increase and/or fees? Prefer indoor or outdoor facility? When was the last time you used park district offerings?
- What programs/facilities do you currently use? Would you use a fitness center? Would you

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pay a fee to use a fitness center and if so, how much?

- Cost to upgrade and maintain parks before upgrading to a fieldhouse.
- How much are you willing to pay in taxes and/or membership fees? What additional programs would you like to participate in?
- What percentage increase in taxes or what annual dollar amount would be acceptable for new facilities? What do you believe is the #1 most important glaring needs with the park district today?
- Which is more important: indoor or outdoor facilities? How much are you willing to pay for new facilities?
- What do you think would be a good use of our open space at WR and Center Drive?
- What master plan would you look at? What fees for the use of a facility would you be willing to pay?
- Indoor vs. outdoor facilities. Best uses for Woodridge Center Dr. property.

Second Session:

Cancelled

Third Session:

- What percentage of your family's recreational activities are done through the Woodridge Park District?
- Do you feel safe in your community parks? Would you be willing to fund new park facilities through increased taxes and/or program fees?
- Rank the following in order of importance: Mix indoor and outdoor choices, mix new and maintenance choices. Ages of kids? What percent of your recreation is through WPD?
- Would you or your family be interested in a new recreation center? How often would you use it? What percent are you willing to pay? Either tax dollars or a monthly fee?
- Do you think WPD meets the needs of children with disabilities and if not, what improvements could be made to enhance the play of disabled children?
- Do you use the Park District facilities and/or programs?
- Would you be willing to spend a small portion of your time (1 hour or less) at a meeting to help plan the future of your community?
- Would you support a new large Park District facility?
- What additional programs or activities would you like to see the Park District offer?
- Would you use an indoor fitness/aquatic center?
- What can you do for residents 50 and older?
- Would you support building a new community indoor recreation facility and if so, would you support additional taxes to pay for this facility?

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- Are you interested in improving your health? Any question related to that person's use of current park district programs.
- Would you support a tax increase to support a recreation facility?
- Move the Woodridge Jubilee off of Center Drive and over to Seven Bridges/Moon St. with a whole different venue.

Fourth Session:

- Would you like to see a full service recreation center built in the Village of Woodridge?
- Would you be willing to phase in a recreation center with gym, pool, fitness center?
- Are you interested in a village/park district community arts program?
- What do you do or would you like to do as far as recreation that the Park District could provide?
- Is there a way to reconfigure our current parks to maximize use of space? Can we consolidate and organize space by sports to maximize use?
- Cost to acquire more space?
- What programs would you like to see added to the WPD's current offerings?
- Would you vote yes for a recreation center to be built within the next several years?
- How much money would you be willing to approve to spend on a multi-use gym?
- Would you support phasing in a recreation center?
- Would the community consider a tax increase to support any additional facilities/parks?

If today was the year 2014, what are the most important actions that you hope the Woodridge Park District takes as a result of the needs assessment process?

First Session:

- Building an indoor facility and maintaining the current facilities.
- Benchmark and upgrade as necessary to become a top tier Park District within Illinois. Improve indoor facilities.
- Indoor fieldhouse-I now go to Naperville tennis, Bolingbrook walleyball, D.G. volleyball.
- Depends on economy and what bonding issues they have vs. referendum. If economy is still bad, they will need to wait. Most important thing out of needs assessment is direction. What direction should the Park District take.
- Listen to the community and communicate to the citizens so they are clear on what is being done and why.
- Consider use by all citizens of Woodridge, not just the children. Field house would

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accommodate many.

- I would like to see the Woodridge Park District continue to expand and improve on what we have. This will keep the quality and standards high and will attract businesses and keep housing values up.
- Explore the options for the most cost-efficient way to open a fieldhouse.
- New fieldhouse/gym facility, upgrading existing fields, courts, etc.
- Fieldhouse and continued beautification of Village (parks, etc.), maintenance at high level.
- Fieldhouse, lights, green technology.
- Maintain and improve parks within budget. I already said enough about the land at D-99 property at WR and Center Drive. It should continue to be used for Jubilee, but a park should be completed to memorialize the Administration's and citizens' actions to obtain this land.
- Provide an indoor fitness center.
- Every person in this survey rated both indoor and outdoor facilities at a 4 or 5.

Second Session:

Cancelled

Third Session:

- Indoor recreation center and improve programs.
- Increase in open spaces, encourage community policing efforts.
- Build a new recreation facility with lots of gym space.
- How the building took shape, whether it was new or we kept the maintenance up on the existing building along with the grounds.
- Improve indoor spaces for year-round involvement and programming similar to the wonderful Cypress Cove facility for outdoor/summer.
- Expanded facilities, mainly indoor, but also improved existing facilities (new lighting, scoreboards).
- Development of large, full-scale recreation center with a fitness center, indoor pool, hardwood courts, indoor track, and program rooms.
- I hope there is a sled hill. The open space issue of contention with high school is resolved and plans can be made to develop.
- I would hope that an indoor facility/field house would be constructed by 2014.
- Build a new indoor fitness/recreation/aquatic center like Downers Grove has on the District 99 land.
- I would love to see a recreation center by 2014.
- Improve outreach to all of the community and increase participation in programs in the minority community.

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- That the park district invests in an indoor facility that will serve the residents across the board.
- Improved gym and indoor facilities.
- Create an attractive plan for use of the new 44 acre parcel.

Fourth Session:

- That we still lead (within our county) in having the finest parks and recreation facilities, protect from crime and vandalism, guard against health issues like the flu, etc.
- I think one of the most important needs of the community is to have a recreation center that is available to all residents twelve months a year to get children and adults active all year long!
- Open space and new parks and facilities.
- Town Centre is developed (in conjunction with the Village) with a dedicated community arts/performing arts area.
- Well-maintained infrastructures so there are no major expenses for repair due to poor maintenance.
- Outdoor lighting, recreation center with turf field.
- Quality-no more taxes.
- Keep our tax bills as low as possible while serving the recreation needs of the community at large.
- That a recreation facility has been at least tried to be built.
- The average “age” of both new and updated/upgraded/maintained facilities is no older than 5-6 years.
- Build an indoor facility.
- Review and address needs for gym space, review and address needs for lighted ball fields, improvements to Orchard Park.