

## Chapter Four

### Community Facilities, Services and Quality of Life

Community facilities and services are crucial to maintaining the quality of life for all citizens of Huron County. The Community Facilities, Services and Quality of Life section of the Huron County Land use Plan provides a brief overview of some of the various facilities and services that are available throughout the county along with a list of policy statements that are intended to serve as a guideline to enhance the quality of life throughout the county. An overview of the educational systems that serve Huron County, along with libraries, parks and recreation areas, and health care facilities is provided. Data was obtained from various sources including interviews with various public officials throughout the county, annual reports, U.S. Census data and various other data sets.

#### Education

All or part of eleven public schools districts, two joint vocational school districts and various private and parochial schools serve Huron County. Table 4-1 provides a list of the public school systems that serve the County.

Table 4-1: Public School Systems

School District	Area Served
Bellevue City Schools	Bellevue, Lyme Township, Sherman Township
Berlin Milan Schools	Milan, Norwalk, Norwalk Township
Buckeye Central Local School District	Parts of Richmond Township
Firelands Local School District	Parts of Wakeman Township
EHOVE Joint Vocational School District	Bellevue, Edison, Monroeville, New London, Norwalk, St. Paul, South Central, Western Reserve
Monroeville Local Schools	Monroeville, Norwalk, Bronson Twp., Lyme Twp., Norwalk Twp., Peru Twp., Ridgefield Twp.
New London Local School District	New London, Clarksfield Twp., Fairfield Twp., Fitchville Twp., Hartland Twp., New London Twp.,
Norwalk City School District	Norwalk, Bronson Twp., Norwalk Twp.
Plymouth-Shiloh Local School District	Plymouth, New Haven Twp.
Pioneer Career and Technology Center	Plymouth-Shiloh, Willard
Seneca East Local School District	Norwich Twp., Richmond Twp., Sherman Twp.
South Central Local School District	Greenwich, North Fairfield, Fairfield Twp., Greenfield Twp., Greenwich Twp., Ripley Twp.
Wellington Exempted Village	Parts of Clarksfield Twp.
Western Reserve Local School District	Parts of Norwalk, Wakeman, Bronson Twp., Clarksfield Twp., Hartland Twp., Norwalk Twp., Townsend Twp., Wakeman Twp.
Willard City School District	Willard, Greenfield Twp., New Haven Twp., Norwich Twp., Rich. Twp.

Source: <http://www.ode.state.oh>

There are approximately 30 public school facilities located throughout the County. Over the past five years new facilities have been constructed in the Norwalk, New London, South Central and Western Reserve school districts. There are several districts that are in need of additional facilities due to increased enrollment. Several other districts are in need of new facilities due to age and condition of existing structures.

## Libraries

The citizens of Huron County are served by eight public libraries, five of which are full service public libraries and three that are considered branch libraries that are limited in the scope of services and resources that are available. The Greenwich, North Fairfield and Wakeman branch libraries are part of the Willard library system

Table 4-2: Public Libraries

Bellevue Public Library
Greenwich Branch Library
Monroeville Public Library
New London Public Library
North Fairfield Branch Library
Norwalk Public Library
Wakeman Community Branch Library
Willard Memorial Library

Source: The Ohio Public Library Information Network Website  
<http://www.oplin.org/home.php?a=&msg=>

The five full service libraries are facilities that were part of the Carnegie Free Public Library system that was initiated in the early part of the twentieth century. The three branch libraries are much smaller facilities which are also newer. Only one library system, the Norwalk Public Library, has plans for expanding facilities. The library has purchased an adjacent storefront property, and long-term plans may include using that additional space to expand facilities and services.

## Parks and Recreation Areas

There are an abundance of parks and recreation opportunities within the confines of Huron County. Most all of the communities operate and maintain park and recreation facilities. A complete inventory of park facilities is currently not available for Huron County but a number of significant public park facilities are listed in alphabetical order below in Table 4-III.

Table 4-3: Community and Regional Parks in Huron County

Park	Community Location
Baines Athletic Field	Norwalk
Huron County Land Laboratory	Huron County (Norwalk Twp)
Mary Fate Park	Plymouth
McGuan Park	Norwalk
Memorial Lake Park	Norwalk
Mill Pond Park	Bellevue
Monroeville Community Park	Monroeville
New London Recreation Park	New London
New London Reservoir Park	New London
Reservoir Park	Greenwich
Whitney Park	Norwalk
Willard City Park	Willard
Willard Marsh Wildlife Preserve	Celeryville area
Willard Reservoir	Willard
Veterans Memorial Park	Huron County (Norwalk)

Source: Interviews with various City and Village elected and appointed officials

Note: This is not a complete inventory of park and recreation sites within Huron County

It should also be noted that there have been efforts over the past ten years to create a county wide park district. The fledgling organization was created in 1995 and has identified several sites throughout the county that will be developed into passive recreational areas. Two such sites are the Veterans Memorial Park on Shady Lane which is a scenic park area with a walk way, fitness trail and memorials to county veterans located within the County government complex. A second park located on South Norwalk Road has been identified as the Huron County Park District Land Laboratory which is a scenic area of land that was donated to the county that is wooded, has a nature trail system and is utilized by various schools as an area to study science, biology and nature.

## Hospitals

Citizens of Huron County have the benefit of being served by two general hospitals located within the county and a number of other hospitals located in close proximity to the county. Within an hour drive outside the county residents can take advantage of specialized healthcare services. Services at the Cleveland Clinic along with health care services in the Toledo and Columbus area are also available.

The largest health care facility in Huron County is the Fisher-Titus medical campus located on the south side of Norwalk. Fisher Titus Medical Center includes the Fisher Titus Memorial Hospital which is a 112 bed acute care facility. There is also the 69 bed Fisher-Titus Memorial Home nursing facility. The Carriage House of Fisher- Titus is a 48 unit assisted living facility. Fisher -Titus also provides home health care services.

Residents in the southern portion of the county can be served by the Mercy Hospital in the city of Willard. As a part of the Mercy Health Partners based in Toledo accredited health care services are provided at this facility. The fifteen bed facility recently completed an emergency room expansion in 2003. There is a need for additional hospital beds and rooms for additional health care services. This need may eventually result in either a new facility or a renovation and expansion of existing facilities.

Just west of Huron County a new \$36 million dollar replacement facility for the The Bellevue Hospital has been recently completed within the Sandusky County portion of the City of Bellevue north of U.S. Route 20. The new Bellevue Hospital has been constructed on 109 acres of property on the corner of U.S.20 West and Township Road 302. The site is two miles west of the downtown area of Bellevue. The project is a joint effort between The Bellevue Hospital, Firelands Regional Medical Center in Sandusky and Norwalk Area Health Systems, Inc. (Fisher/Titus).

Primarily intended to serve the Bellevue Area and areas to the west as far away as Fremont, Ohio. Residents on the western portion of Huron County can be served by the facility. The hospital has 50 inpatient beds, 35 outpatient beds, 11 exam rooms and two trauma rooms.

## Social Services

A full line of social services is provided by the various agencies both public and private that serve the county. Interviews and overviews of available resources indicate that access to these various services are more of a problem to residents of the southern portion of the county than those to the north. This is typical to most rural less densely populated areas. This is due to the lack of personal transportation options for many of those that need served. Agency representatives continue to make available and explore other ways to make these services available to all residents of the county by bringing services to the public instead of the public having to travel to centrally located offices.

## Policy Statements and Recommendations

The following policy statements were developed and adopted by the Steering Committee that has overseen the development of this plan. They form the basis of the Community Facilities, Services and Quality of Life recommendations made within this plan.

### Public Facilities

1. Continue to develop public facilities that are based on a solid plan.
2. Ensure that all public facilities are easily accessible to all persons, placed in desirable locations, properly maintained and operated in a cost effective manner.
3. Enhance city and county parks, reservoirs, and other surface water. An Effort should be made to conduct a thorough inventory throughout the County.

4. Encourage Intergovernmental collaboration.
5. Facilitate the development of needed facilities, seeking a balance of public and private facilities, based on a needs assessment and inventory of current facilities.

#### Quality of Life

6. Promote Huron County as a place to live, work, shop, obtain services, and pursue leisure activities.
7. Include consideration of all residents in an effort to maintain and/or improve the quality of life in the county.
8. Preserve what truly is a peaceful quality of life.
9. Balance the effect that small town life and affordable land costs will continue to draw people to Huron County with the resulting increased demands on services.

#### Services

10. Consider Outsourcing County services if it would be cost effective and maintain or increase the level of service.
11. Meet the service needs of planned expanded growth areas and industrial areas.
12. Provide the taxpayer with the best quality services at the lowest possible cost.
13. Maintain and/or improve the services provided to the residents of the county.
14. Any new county government facilities should be planned with accessibility to all Huron county citizens in mind.
15. Senior centers currently exist in Willard and Norwalk; Bellevue has its own organization that meets at the Bellevue Community Center. Plans call for a new Norwalk facility to be sited on Shady Lane. Due to changing demographics communities should be encouraged to expand existing and develop new services and facilities.
16. There is a need for meeting facilities that can be used by public and private Organizations for gatherings. Currently, facilities cannot adequately accommodate larger gatherings of several hundred people.