

## 2009 Woodridge Community Needs Survey

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Police**

**Why is there not more police presence in the Village?** There are 53 sworn officers assigned to the Woodridge Police Department. These officers are further assigned to one of two divisions. The patrol division is the most visible component of the police department. Headed by a Deputy Police Chief and supervised by six patrol sergeants, 32 patrol officers are responsible for responding to criminal complaints, traffic complaints, and miscellaneous calls for service in addition to providing high visibility patrol to residential and commercial properties on a daily basis. Staffing levels are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that our authorized number of officers is compatible with the volume of calls to which we respond.

**What can be done about illegal vehicle parking in the Village (parking over sidewalks, parking overnight)?** Parking in such a manner as to block sidewalks is prohibited by Village ordinance. We understand that by moving vehicles off the street at night, some vehicles will be parked in such a manner as to block the sidewalk. Police are directed to exercise tolerance and discretion in enforcing the "sidewalk ordinance" after 10:00 p.m. and before 5:30 a.m. Temporary permission for vehicle parking due to mechanical failure, lack of parking space caused by overnight guests, or driveway repairs may be granted by calling (630) 968-2866.

**What can be done about speeding vehicles in the residential areas of the Village?** We actively monitor the speed of traffic in our community and try to gain motorist compliance through a combination of education and enforcement. Our speed trailers are regularly deployed to warn inattentive motorists so they may adjust their speed accordingly. Speeding is consistently the most frequent traffic violation cited by Woodridge Police. We issued 1,468 speeding tickets in 2008.

**What can be done about unleashed animals?** The Village of Woodridge Ordinance prohibits dogs or cats from running at large off the property of the owner. If you see a violation of this ordinance, you may contact the Woodridge Police Department at (630) 719-4740 to make a report. These violations may be investigated by either a Police Officer or a Community Service Officer. The fine for this offense, if paid in lieu of appearing in court, is \$30.00. The second offense within a twelve (12) month period is \$50.00 and the third offense is \$100.00.

**What can I do if a Police Officer acts in an unprofessional manner?** Police Department employees are expected to conduct themselves professionally. If you have a complaint that an employee conducted himself/herself in an inappropriate manner, you can register a complaint by contacting the on-duty watch commander. It should be noted, however, that the professional demeanor of a police employee is dictated by the circumstances facing that employee. Police brevity and a lack of expression are often the basis for unfounded complaints of discourteous conduct.

### **Why are bicyclists allowed to ride in the street?**

According to the Illinois Vehicle Code, bicyclists are considered vehicles and are permitted to ride in the street. Bicyclists are required to follow the Rules of the Road in the same way as a motorized vehicle, but do have the right to utilize streets for riding.

**What is the Village doing to prevent the use of loud car stereos?** Loud car stereos are a common problem in the spring and summer months when motorists drive with their windows down and the music turned up. Not only is this disturbing to residents, it is against the law. If you hear this type of violation, you may contact the Police Department at the non-emergency number (630) 719-4740. Be prepared to provide the dispatcher with as much information as possible so that the officers may properly respond to your call.

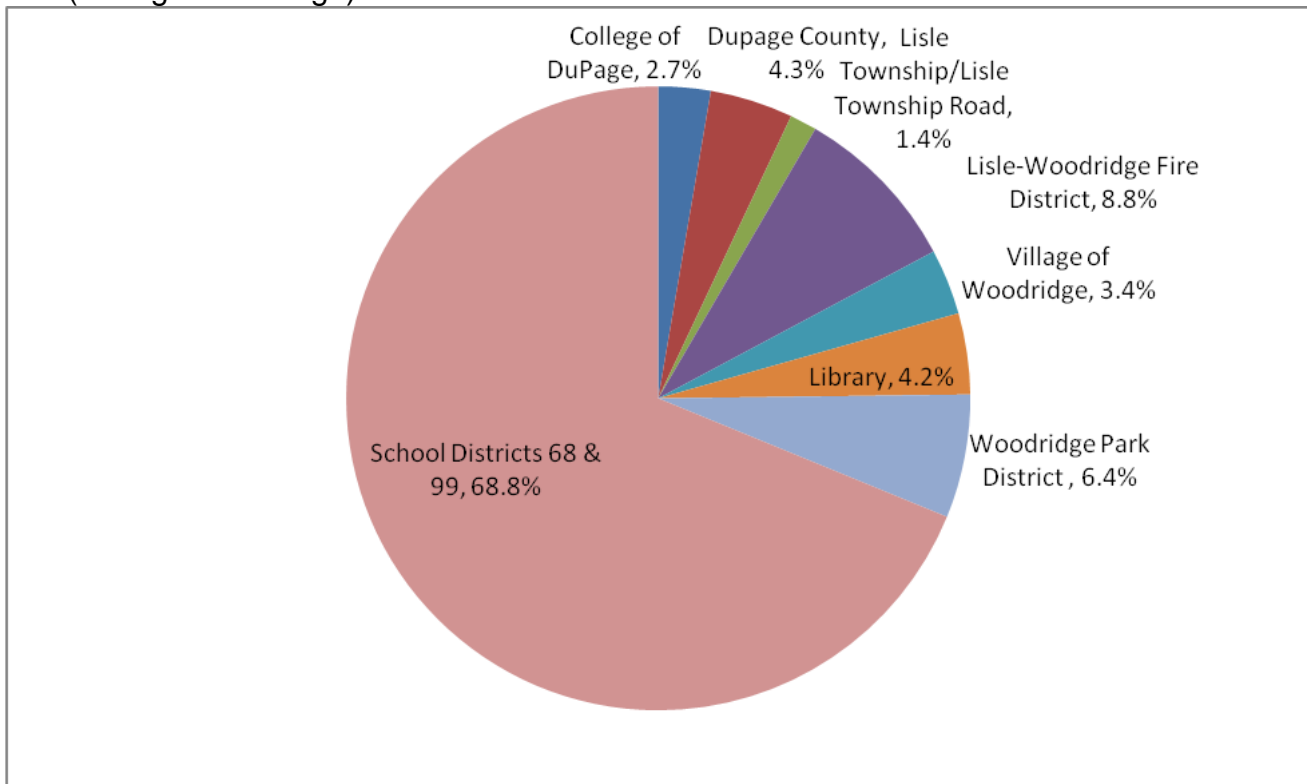
## **Finance**

**How is the Village helping to reduce the residential tax burden?** The Village has a variety of housing types, which result in a variety of market values. The average market value in 2008 was \$292,000 with the Village portion of the average tax bill calculating to \$228 or 3% of the total tax bill. This compares well to the average 1993 home which cost \$132,500, and paid \$231 in Village tax, or 6.5%.

The Mayor and Village Board continue to focus on reducing the residential tax burden as one of their primary goals. Taxpayers have witnessed the Village portion of the tax rate decreasing for the past twenty-three years, while the value of their homes has increased on average 5.6% annually. However, the Village Board recognizes that while it can directly provide property tax relief on the Village portion, taxpayers are impacted by the overall property tax bill. This topic has been previously discussed during Village workshops. While there is recognition that the Village cannot directly influence the other taxing bodies as they do not report to the Village, Village staff has been directed to develop ideas and processes for indirectly influencing the other 97% of the tax bill such as the Intergovernmental Taxing Body Report Card. This report card is a comparison to similar taxing bodies within DuPage County and distributed to provide assistance when setting their tax levy. The Village tax rate ranked the 6th lowest in 2008 and remains in the lowest quartile for DuPage County municipality tax rates. We would also like to remind our senior citizens to make sure they are getting the exemptions they may qualify for. Information is available at the DuPage County Supervisor of Assessments Website, [www.dupageco.org/soa](http://www.dupageco.org/soa) or by calling (630) 407-5858.

## Comparison of 2008 Taxing Bodies by Percent

Includes: Lisle Township, Lisle/Woodridge Fire Protection District, School Districts 68, 99, 502 (College of DuPage).



## Planning and Development

**Open space needs to be preserved.** Woodridge is fortunate to have over 5,272 acres of designated open space controlled by the Woodridge Park District and the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County. While commercial development is necessary for the economic well being of any community, balanced growth preserves Woodridge's quality of life. The Village relies on the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for balanced development in the areas of open space creation/preservation, the provision of appropriate transitions between land uses, and linkages between residential and open space uses. Developers of new residential subdivisions are required to dedicate either land or cash to the Woodridge Park District for recreational purposes to serve the immediate and future needs of the residents of the development. Further, in 2003 the Mayor and Village Board directed staff to identify future open space opportunities in and around Woodridge. The two which received the highest priority were the 45-acre Town Centre property west of Village Hall and the Ide Farm property on 83rd Street.

The Village has been actively engaged in acquiring the Town Centre property from District 99 since 2005. In March 2008, a jury determined the value of the land to be \$14.2 million which the Village and the Woodridge Park District paid in May 2008. The property is now in the possession of the Village and the Park District, but District 99 has appealed the court's rulings. District 99's determination to litigate this matter rather than working together to reach a settlement will ultimately cost the village close to \$800,000. It is expected to cost District 99 over \$3.4 million, \$2 million of which is lost interest.

Staff continues to explore options for the acquisition and preservation of a portion of the Ide Farm.

**There are too many apartment complexes in Woodridge.** Woodridge has a diverse variety of well-maintained housing stock. Our housing stock provides alternatives for all needs and price ranges. A Woodridge resident can purchase condominium units as low as \$80,000 and single-family homes for as much as \$1.3 million. To maintain that diversity, the Village during the past decade focused on high-end single-family residential development.

Now, in response to resident feedback, the Village is also focusing on the needs of seniors in the community. The Plan Commission and Village Board held workshops in 2008 to identify senior housing development opportunities and sought public feedback in 2009. Based on this input, staff is working to promote senior housing opportunities for residents at Pine Ridge on Janes Avenue and the Orchard Hill site located at the southwest corner of 83<sup>rd</sup> Street and Boughton Road.

**What is being done to redevelop the south Janes Avenue area?** The Village Board is dedicated to promoting the redevelopment of the south Janes Avenue area. A number of initiatives have been put in place over the years beginning as far back as 1995 when the Village established the Janes Avenue Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. Since its inception, the TIF District has been generating tax revenue to be spent towards redevelopment of the area. TIF District funds have been used for public improvements such as the streetscape enhancements along the Janes Avenue/83rd Street intersection, as well as private property investment such as the exterior improvements of J&L Fasteners, and assisting in making several management and physical improvements to Waterbury Condominiums. Additionally, the Village Board has committed to providing TIF funding to encourage the redevelopment of Janes Plaza, located at the northeast corner of Janes Avenue and 83rd Street. Outside of TIF funds, over the past 12 years, over \$50 million has been reinvested in the south Janes Avenue neighborhood by single-family, multi-family and commercial property owners.

To further redevelopment efforts, in 2006, the Village Board approved a ¼% sales tax increase for community reinvestment initiatives. In an effort to further diversity the Village housing stock by providing senior housing options, the Village is currently working with the owner of Pine Ridge Apartments to evaluate redevelopment options for the complex that would include the reduction and conversion of existing apartments into condominiums, construction of new townhomes, and the construction of senior housing. Revenues from the ¼% sales tax increase will partially fund this initiative.

The combined efforts encourage private reinvestment in the neighborhood which in turn increases the tax base to help support the Village governmental partners in contributing to a better community.

**Why doesn't the Village have a downtown?** Since the Village is not located along a train route or major waterway that had historically been used for transportation, it was unlikely that Woodridge would develop a traditional downtown area. Woodridge does have a Town Centre for civic and open space uses, which includes the Police and Public Works Departments, the Public Library, Village Hall and the U.S. Post Office. Town Centre property and the Park District Community Center, with its associated paths and parks, are an important part of the Town Centre. The Town Centre remains a focal point for the community, gathering many public-oriented services together amongst parks, walking paths and public plazas.

In the tradition of a more downtown feel, Seven Bridges has developed as a retail and entertainment center for the community on Route 53. This 400-acre mixed-use development began with a vision in 1987 and combines retail, office, entertainment, recreational and residential uses in one location. Main Street at Seven Bridges is a mixed-use, 26 acre commercial development. When complete, Seven Bridges is designed to be a vibrant “urban village” with retail businesses, new offices, restaurants, and a hotel.

### **What is the status of the Seven Bridges Development?**

The Village approved the final phase of the Seven Bridges development in 2007 which included plans for a 120 room hotel on Irving Street, a 150 unit high end condominium project, and office, retail and restaurant buildings along Main Street. Upon completion Seven Bridges will have over 700,000 square feet of retail, office, restaurant, entertainment, and hotel space.

Seven Bridges Development is currently in receivership. CB Richard Ellis, a nationally recognized leader property management and real estate brokerage firm, has been appointed as the receiver of the development. Village staff has been working with CBRE to ensure that the high standards of the development are maintained and to market the development to potential tenants. Existing businesses within Seven Bridges continue to thrive. The most recent additions to the development include several restaurants, such as The Tilted Kilt, Splash of Asia, Cabana Charlie’s, Blu Ginger and Aurelio’s. To find out more about Seven Bridges, contact the Planning and Development Department at (630) 719-4711.

## **Building and Zoning**

**Can anything be done about the “rundown” homes in Woodridge?** In the Spring of each year, the Building & Zoning Department implements the Annual Neighborhood Inspection Program to identify specific properties in Woodridge in need of maintenance improvements, i.e., peeling paint, driveways needing repair or replacement, tall grass/weeds, debris on property, etc. Letters are mailed to each of the property owners requesting them to bring their properties into compliance with the 2003 International Property Maintenance Code. In addition to the annual program, the Department routinely inspects neighborhoods for violations. We want to encourage residents to take pride in their community by reinvesting in their homes.

**What has the Village done to respond to the changing housing market and foreclosures issue?** The Village had taken a proactive approach to the changes in the housing market. A portion of the Village website as well as print publications have been dedicated to resources that help homeowners prevent foreclosure and direct homeowners to resources that help with financing in these difficult times. The Village has also focused efforts on identifying foreclosures in town in order to work with the current owners to keep the properties maintained. If you have additional questions on foreclosures or if you would like to draw the Village’s attention to a specific property, contact the Building and Zoning Department at (630) 719-4750.

**What are the regulations for tall grass and weed control?** The Village must follow State Statutes on notice and abatement of nuisance violations, i.e., weeds and tall grass. When weeds/tall grass are 8” tall, the Village must document the violation with a photograph and send a written notice giving the property owner seven days to comply. If the nuisance is not

abated, a contractor is hired to mow the property, the property owner is billed for the mowing and, if the bill is not paid, a lien is placed on the property. The Village cannot regulate the trimming of bushes unless they overhang the sidewalk or block motorist's vision. The Building and Zoning Department enforces the codes outlined in the 2003 International Property Maintenance Code as it relates to property maintenance.

**What can the Village do to address maintenance issues relating to multi-family and/or rental communities?** In 1993, the Village Board approved the Multi-Family Dwelling License Ordinance to ensure that the multi-family rental complexes in Woodridge are maintained. Inspections of all the common areas and a minimum of 20% of the units are inspected each year. All violations are noted and must be repaired within a specific time frame. In January of each year, a license application is required and a Multi-Family Dwelling License is issued if the building is in full compliance. Owners that do not comply with the Multi-Family Dwelling License Ordinance are issued citations requiring court appearances. The Building & Zoning Department enforces the 2003 International Property Maintenance Code for property maintenance violations noted in multi-family complexes that consist of individually owned condominiums. If Woodridge residents have specific questions or concerns, contact the Building & Zoning Department at (630) 719-4750.

**Can the Village do anything about the overcrowding problem in some homes?** There are two things to consider when determining overcrowding. The first consideration is the definition of family. A "family" as defined by the 1998 International One and Two Family Dwelling Code is "an individual, two or more persons related by blood, marriage or law, or a group of not more than any five persons living together in a dwelling unit. The second consideration is minimum area requirements within dwelling units as outlined by the 2003 International Property Maintenance Code. In the determination of overcrowding there are several factors that need to be addressed such as living space, sleeping quarters, food preparation and eating spaces and personal hygiene facilities. The Building and Zoning Department in conjunction with the Police Department will monitor a home if we suspect that an overcrowding situation may exist. If you have any additional questions regarding overcrowding, you may call the Building & Zoning Department at (630) 719-4750.

## **Public Works Department**

**Can the Village's snowplowing efforts be improved?** The Public Works Department has a snow removal plan which provides for opening up the arterial streets first, then moving to the minor arterials, collector streets, and then side streets along with courts and cul-de sacs. This is necessary in order to open up the most heavily traveled streets first, thereby accommodating the largest number of travelers as early as possible. The snow plan includes making one pass through each court and cul-de-sac to open them up while the other larger streets are being cleared. This provides some relief prior to plows coming back and completing each court and cul-de-sac. As for concerns that snow plows push snow from the street back into the driveway, this is a necessary result of snow plowing. Snow from the street must be removed – it would be impossible for snowplow drivers to lift or re-direct their plows at every intersection with a driveway. Furthermore, there is no other place to efficiently push the snow. Residents can do the following to reduce the amount of snow that ends up in their driveways: **1) When shoveling your driveway apron, place the snow to the left of your driveway (as you face your house). If piled on the other side, it becomes the target for a snow plow that is getting close to the curb, and will end up in your driveway. 2) Clear a few**

*feet of the edge of the street and curb line to the right of your driveway (again, as you face your house). This will help reduce the amount of snow that gets dumped in your driveway as the plow goes by. During the course of plowing, the snowplow may inadvertently damage the parkway adjacent to the roadway. While the Village maintains a listing of areas that need to be restored in the Spring, should you notice an area that has been damaged, please contact the Public Works Department at (630) 719-4753 to ensure it has already been added to the restoration list.*

**How can I acquire additional lighting on my street?** During the early development of Woodridge, the Village (like most other communities) limited neighborhood street lighting to intersections. Newer subdivisions are now built with additional lighting, staggered at several hundred feet between intersections. Some busier streets will have additional streetlights, but generally, those streets are not residential in nature. While some residents indicate a preference for mid-block streetlights, there are others who do not wish to have their neighborhoods lit up at night. Based on direction from the Village Board, a new program was established: "Streetlight Enhancement Resident-Village Participation Program." This program provides an opportunity for residents to partner with the Village in a cost-sharing arrangement in an effort to provide additional street lighting when desired by residents. This program is in place and materials are available on the Village's website:

[www.vil.woodridge.il.us/template\\_departments\\_publicworks.aspx](http://www.vil.woodridge.il.us/template_departments_publicworks.aspx)

**Can something be done about the traffic flow around the Post Office?** The Village has examined the layout a number of times to determine if minor modifications can be made to ease the traffic flow problems. A couple of years ago a change was made at the suggestion of a Public Works employee, relocating a STOP sign near the Post Office to improve traffic flow; traffic flow has improved with this minor change. Significant physical modifications of the parking and driving areas would be necessary to make any notable improvements to the traffic patterns. While the layout can be a source of frustration for those who want to quickly get in and out of the parking lot, there have been few reported accidents. The best solution at this point appears to be for residents to exercise due caution and patience while maneuvering through the lot, while obeying the signage that has been put in place – the delay time is generally no more than a few seconds.

**Where can I go to recycle electronics such as personal computers and televisions?**

The closest resource to Woodridge residents for electronic recycling is located at the DuPage county Green Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant in Woodridge. This facility is located on Route 53 just south of 75<sup>th</sup> Street. They accept electronics for recycling Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For additional information, call (630) 407-6700. For more information on recycling in Woodridge, visit [www.vil.woodridge.il.us/departments/pw/refuse](http://www.vil.woodridge.il.us/departments/pw/refuse).

**What can be done when a power outage is experienced by ComEd?** Report all power outages to ComEd by calling 1-800-Edison1 (1-800-334-7661). Regardless of the duration, frequency, or cause, the outage must be reported immediately to assess the problem and respond appropriately. In addition, please contact the Woodridge Public Works Department (630) 719-4753 to report this information so that we can track ComEd's response to your concerns. Com Ed has implemented a number of improvements that have increased the level of reliability, but the Village continues to monitor ComEd for long term improvement.

**Why do my cable rates keep increasing?** The Federal Communications Commission dictates that the local franchise authority, the Village of Woodridge, is able to regulate only

the cost of Basic Cable Service. Pricing on the other levels of service is not regulated. According to the *FCC's Report on Cable/Satellite TV Competition*, cable rates have steadily increased up to 6% each year, but leveled off in 2006. In raising rates, Comcast explains that they are passing on increased programming charges from popular cable channels like ESPN. Comcast says increases have also been used to pay for investments in new services like video on demand and improved customer service. Recently, satellite TV rivals have been effective in pressuring cable companies to maintain pricing levels. More recently, telephone companies also are putting price pressure on the cable industry. In some states, telephone companies have launched TV service with competitive price packages. AT&T has announced its plans to roll out TV services for 2008 in many areas throughout Chicagoland. Recent legislation at the state level has made this possible. Made effective in June, the Video and Cable Competition Act of 2007 allows tele-communications companies to obtain video service franchise at the state level. The Village intends on planning the system build-out with AT&T once the state franchise is in place. Planning will include the placement and appearance of AT&T video service cabinets in public ways and service availability to residents of Woodridge.