

Chapter 5

Community Facilities and Utilities

Introduction

The types of facilities a community can offer its residents and the capacity and quality of its utilities are important factors affecting a community's growth. For the town of Wheaton, a full range of services are difficult to provide because of low population density and limited budgets. At the same time, the proximity to urban areas may lend itself to the cost effective and efficient extension of some services and utilities that can benefit Town residents.

The Community Facilities and Utilities chapter will provide a general overview of the existing facilities and utilities available to the Town of Wheaton residents and future opportunities to provide expanded services.

Community Facilities

Solid Waste Disposal: Town of Wheaton residents and businesses contract with private solid waste disposal services in the area. The Town does not have any plans to create its own solid waste disposal service.

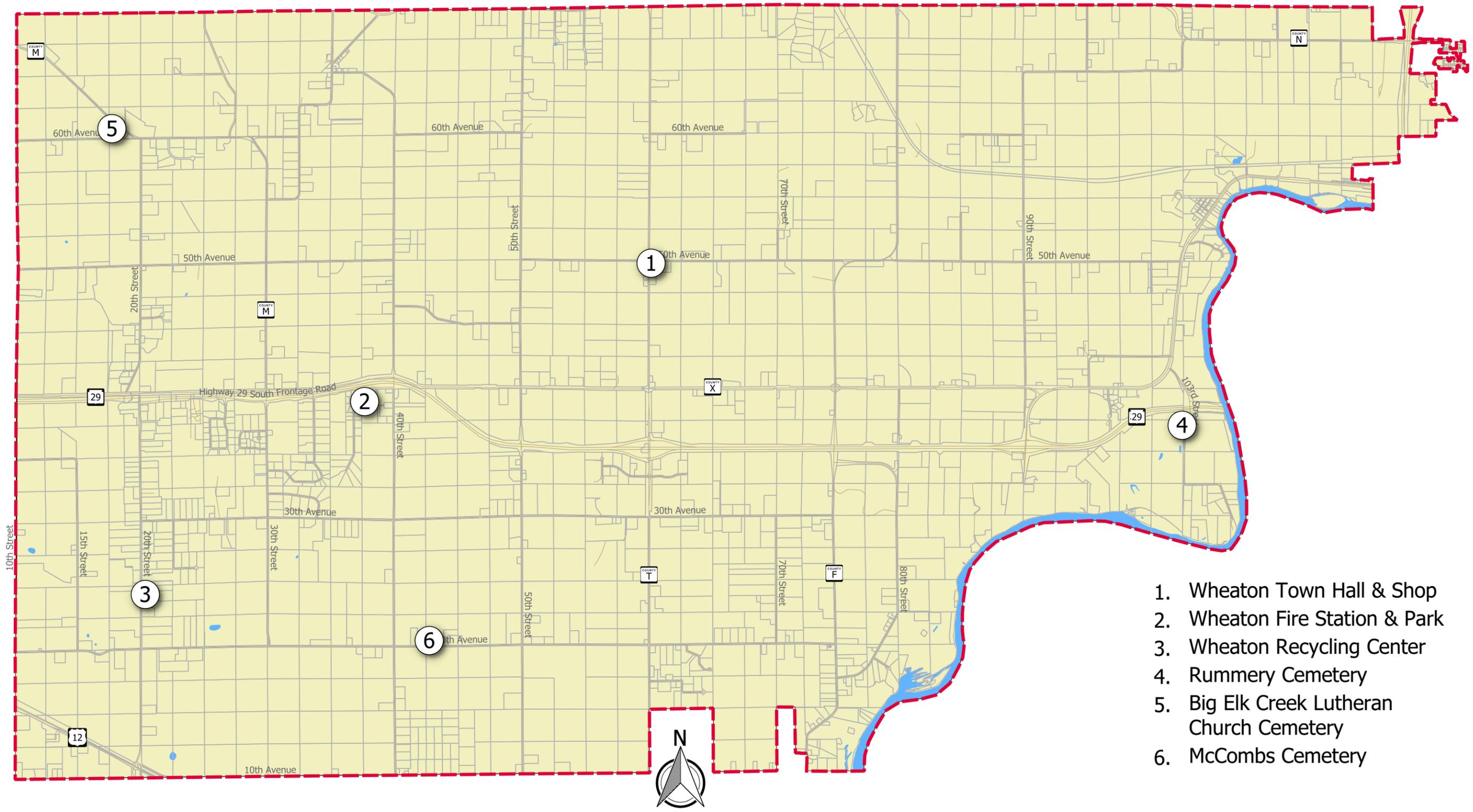
Recycling Center: The Town of Wheaton Recycling Center is located at 2429 20th Street, Elk Mound, WI (see Map 5-1). It is open Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings to mid-afternoons. Residents can take household garbage, recyclables, appliances, demolition materials, metals and tires. Many of these items require a fee. The Recycling Center does not take electronics, hazardous materials or yard waste.

Wheaton Town Hall: The Town Hall is located at 4975 C.T.H. T., Chippewa Falls, WI (see Map 5-1). The building has a restroom, clerk's office, kitchen and conference room. It is used for Town Board meetings, elections and can be rented by the public for functions such as reunions and memorials. The building is in good condition. The Town garage is connected to this facility.



Wheaton Town Hall and Garage





1. Wheaton Town Hall & Shop
2. Wheaton Fire Station & Park
3. Wheaton Recycling Center
4. Rummery Cemetery
5. Big Elk Creek Lutheran Church Cemetery
6. McCombs Cemetery

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Chippewa County Land Records Division. Tax Parcels. 2019.
 OSM. WI Road Data. 2018.
 WI DOA. Municipal Borders. 2019.
 WDNR. Surface Water Features. 2019.

Community Facilities

Town of Wheaton
 Chippewa County, WI



Map 5-1
 Community Facilities

Town Garage: The Wheaton Town Garage is a single-story metal-frame building. The building uses steel panels for façade and roof element protection along with open insulation. This facility is connected to the Town Hall. There are currently no storage space needs.

Law Enforcement: The Chippewa County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency in the Town of Wheaton. Continued cooperation between the Town of Wheaton and Chippewa County regarding local crime will continue to be monitored to address local concerns. In Chapter 8 Intergovernmental Cooperation, there is a recommendation to explore the need for a paid position to enforce ordinances.

Fire and Rescue: The Town of Wheaton relies on a volunteer fire department that is part of the Chippewa Fire District. There are approximately 20 volunteers at the Wheaton Fire Station located at 3900 38th Street, Elk Mound, WI (see Map 5-1). On January 1, 2021, Wheaton Fire and Rescue will come into existence and provide fire protection to Town residents and businesses and mutual aid to surrounding communities. Wheaton Fire and Rescue has a goal to increase the number of volunteers to 30. The Town will explore contracting for EMS protection in specific areas of the community as well.



The current Wheaton Fire Station is a single-story metal-frame building constructed with 8" CMU block and open insulation. The building uses steel panels for façade and roof element protection. Wall insulation is open to the interior. Currently, storage appears to be sufficient but shelving units and secured storage are needed to better organize the equipment. The office and kitchen are could be expanded as well. The building is well maintained. The Fire Commission, Wheaton Plan Commission and Parks Commission use the Fire Hall's conference room for meetings.

Parks and Recreational Areas: The Town has a number of park and recreational facilities. Located around the Wheaton Fire Station, Wheaton Park consists of 63 acres with a large portion being wooded and has many amenities including updated playground equipment, tennis court, basketball court, gaga ball, ball fields, batting cages, sledding hill, an ice skating rink, trails with different terrains, snowmobile trailer parking with trail access, and reservable pavilions. Wheaton Park is located at 3900 38th Street Elk Mound, WI with a second entrance located across the street from 3601 40th Street Elk Mound, WI.

The Wheaton Park Trail System has 1.5 miles of finished trails for hiking, running, walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and biking.

The Elk Creek State Public Fishing Area is in the northwestern corner of the Town of Wheaton. This is an area of over 80 acres that is owned by the State of Wisconsin and open to the public for fishing. Elk Creek is a Class 1 trout stream. The Town also maintains a public boat landing on the Chippewa River.

The Wheaton Parks Commission has a Park Improvement List 2030 that identifies future maintenance and development projects.

Cemeteries: The Town of Wheaton owns and maintains two cemeteries. Rumery Cemetery is located south of S.T.H. 29 off 103rd Street and McCombs Cemetery is located on 20th Avenue between 40th and 50th Streets. Big Elk Creek Lutheran Church also has a cemetery located at 6118 C.T.H. M. (see Map 5-1). There are no current plans to expand the Town cemeteries.

Medical and Health Care Facilities: There are no hospitals in the Town of Wheaton. Residents have several options for medical care nearby including:

- Luther Hospital - Eau Claire
- Oak Leaf Surgical Hospital-Eau Claire
- HSHS Sacred Heart – Eau Claire
- Marshfield Medical Center – Eau Claire
- Mayo Clinic Health System – Eau Claire
- Mayo - Red Cedar Medical Center - Menomonie
- St. Joseph’s Hospital - Chippewa Falls

It is not anticipated that medical facilities will be developed in the Town in the next 20 years.

Libraries: There are no libraries located in the Town of Wheaton. For library services, Wheaton residents may use several libraries including the City of Chippewa Falls Public Library, the Colfax Public Library in Colfax, WI, and the L.E. Phillips Memorial Library in Eau Claire. All these libraries provide internet access, books, magazines, newspapers, videos and books on tape. There is also a Library Books by Mail program that is run by the Indianhead Federated Library System that can send books to residents that have difficulty leaving their homes.

It is not anticipated that the Town of Wheaton will develop its own public library. Continued coordination between the Town and the public libraries is necessary to ensure existing facilities and possibly other options are available for residents and property owners desiring library services.

Schools: The Town of Wheaton is served by a number of educational facilities at the elementary, primary, secondary, vocational, and postsecondary levels. In addition, some facilities offer preschool, kindergarten, special education, religious, business, industrial, trade and vocational training.

Wheaton students are served by three public school systems.

- Chippewa Falls School District
- Elk Mound School District
- Eau Claire School District

Several adult education centers that offer higher education and continuing education classes



and programs are located in the area including the Chippewa Valley Technical College and University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire.

Senior Care Facilities: The Town of Wheaton is served by two senior care facilities. Westridge is located at 3841 96th Street, Chippewa Falls, WI. It is an adult family home with a capacity of four individuals. Aurora Residential Alternative is located at 6939 C.T.H. T and has capacity for four senior adults.

Senior care facilities are becoming an increasingly important regional asset to meet the changing needs of our aging population in a manner that permits residents to age comfortably and in their community. The private sector will be the driving force in establishing senior care facilities. As Town residents age, however, they may wish to remain in the Town, and it will be increasingly important to have adequate facilities to provide care for these members of the community.

Child Care Facilities: Wisconsin law requires a person who provides care and supervision for four or more children under the age of seven for less than 24 hours a day to obtain a license to operate a child care center from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

There are two licensed childcare providers in the Town of Wheaton. Building Blocks Family Daycare is located at 4873 C.T.H. T and has a capacity of eight children. One Two Three Look at Me Learning Center is located at 2964 C.T.H. F and has a capacity of 45 children. There are numerous licensed childcare facilities in the surrounding communities as well.

Over a 20-year planning horizon, the Town does not anticipate the establishment of a large number of childcare providers.

Utilities

Sanitary Sewer Service: The Town of Wheaton does not have a municipally owned sanitary sewer service. At this time, it is not anticipated that the Town will install this type of infrastructure in the near future. However, as the Town of Wheaton continues to develop, the potential for service lines to be extended to serve higher density developments and growing business and industry may occur or be desirable.

The Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of most private on-site sewage treatment systems in the state. Chippewa County regulates on-site sewage treatment systems in the Town of Wheaton through sanitary codes.

Stormwater Management: Because the Town of Wheaton is in a Census-defined urbanized area (the Eau Claire urbanized area), it is required by State and Federal law to develop a storm water program with goals, required permitting, and education efforts for municipal-owned stormwater systems to discharge into public waters. Currently, the Town does not have a



storm water management plan in place but falls under the WDNR jurisdiction for projects that disturb more than one acre of land. Chippewa County also has a stormwater management ordinance addressing construction site erosion control and post-construction runoff.

There is a potential for the amount (quantity) and rate (velocity) of runoff to increase because of additional development. This may adversely affect local water resources as sediment and nutrients are discharged to receiving water bodies. Managing stormwater to reduce or eliminate direct discharge to surface waters is an important step that can be taken to protect surface water quality in the future. County Shoreland Zoning standards provide some level of water quality protection for areas that fall within the Shoreland Overlay Zoning District. However, this overlay district only regulates areas within 1,000 feet of a lake or protected wetland and 300 feet from a navigable river or stream.

Stormwater management is likely to become more of an issue as continued development occurs. The Town of Wheaton must work cooperatively with the WDNR, Chippewa County, the Cities of Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls and Elk Mound, the Village of Lake Hallie, the Towns of Tilden and Howard, and other resource agencies and organizations to mitigate the adverse impacts of storm water runoff and ensure that environmental resources are adequately protected.

Water Supply: Town of Wheaton residents currently receive their water from private wells. Because of this, it is important that the Town's water resources and aquifers continue to be protected from contamination. The Town of Wheaton does not anticipate developing a municipal water system in the next 20 years. Town property owners are encouraged to protect surface and ground waters from contamination. Chippewa County also has a wellhead protection plan in place for public wells. The Town of Wheaton, however, is not affected by the wellhead protection plan. Chippewa County has studied groundwater quality over the past several decades, and it is briefly discussed in the Natural Resources Element.

Telecommunication Services: There is a wide range in the availability and quality of telephone, wireless, and internet services service available to residents and businesses in the Town of Wheaton. Some areas of the Town on the west side have fiber internet connections, while other areas only can receive dial-up internet services at this time. In addition, some areas of the Town can only receive television via satellite. Small portions of the Town near urbanized areas are served by cable television providers. Over the air digital signals are available for Town residents with digital antennas.

Power Plants and Transmission Lines: Dairyland Power Cooperative has a power plant in Wheaton located at the corner of C.T.H. X and 50th Street. Xcel Energies also has a power plant in Wheaton located off 80th Street just east of C.T.H. F. Electrical transmission lines cross several areas within the Town.



Electric Utilities: There are two primary electric companies with territory in the Town of Wheaton. These are Xcel Energy and Dunn County Electric Cooperative. The Town is likely to continue utilizing these providers for electric service in the future.

Natural Gas/LP Gas: Xcel Energy provides natural gas service to some locations in the Town of Wheaton in the west portion of the Town along 40th Street and 20th Avenue. Many residents rely on LP Gas. The Town will likely continue to utilize Xcel Energy for natural gas service in the future.

Survey Results Related to Community Facilities and Utilities

The Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Report, 2019 contained two groups of questions focused on community facilities/services and parks/recreation in the Town of Wheaton. The first set of questions were focused specifically on the level of community facilities and services offered to residents (see Table 5-1).

Substantial numbers of respondents said they had no opinion about the community services asked about in the survey, particularly cemetery services (68%), and storm water management (51%). Town of Wheaton respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with the community facilities and services listed on the survey. Substantial majorities said all the facilities and services are good or excellent: 90% for fire protection, 88% for ambulance, 81% for signage, 81% for recycling programs, 79% for law enforcement, and 64% for stormwater management.

Table 5-1: Opinions About Community Facilities and Services in the Town of Wheaton

| Facilities and Services | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| Fire Protection | 22% | 454 | 42% | 48% | 9% | 1% |
| Recycling program | 13% | 503 | 32% | 49% | 15% | 5% |
| Law Enforcement | 24% | 439 | 22% | 57% | 18% | 3% |
| Signage | 24% | 430 | 17% | 64% | 16% | 3% |
| Cemetery Service | 68% | 185 | 15% | 57% | 24% | 4% |
| Ambulance Service | 24% | 436 | 14% | 74% | 11% | 2% |
| Storm Water management | 51% | 275 | 8% | 56% | 25% | 11% |

Town of Wheaton respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with local recreation facilities and trails though substantial numbers of respondents said they had no opinion about the items on the list.

As shown in Table 5-2, snowmobile trails received the highest rating and was rated excellent or good by 85% of respondents followed by park and recreation facilities (79%) and boating and river facilities access (63%). Ratings for bike trails were relatively low (32% good or excellent). “Other” responses included ATV trails and ball fields.

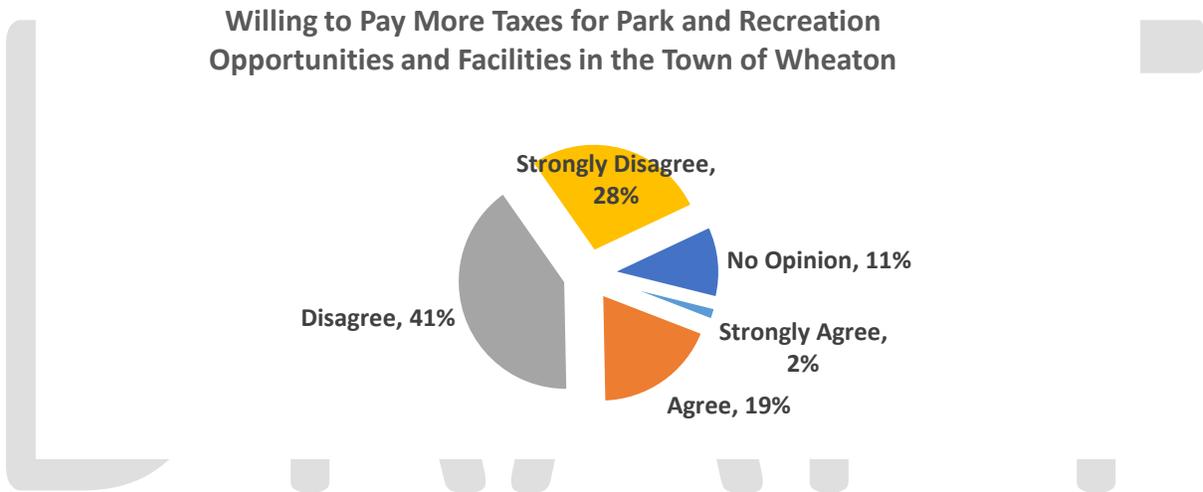


Table 5-2: Opinions About Recreation Facilities and Trails

| | No Opinion | # With Opinion | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| Park and Recreation Facilities | 21% | 450 | 22% | 57% | 16% | 4% |
| Snowmobile trails | 43% | 324 | 22% | 63% | 13% | 2% |
| Boating and River Facilities Access | 39% | 348 | 6% | 57% | 30% | 7% |
| Bike trails | 56% | 254 | 4% | 28% | 34% | 34% |

The last question in the recreation section asked respondents’ opinions regarding respondents’ willingness to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities in the Town of Wheaton. Figure 5-1 indicates that 69% of respondents would not be willing (disagree and strongly disagree) to pay more taxes for park and recreational opportunities and facilities.

Figure 5-1: Willing to Pay More Taxes for Park and Recreation Opportunities and Facilities



Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Goal 1: Support regulations that address stormwater impacts related to new development.

Objectives:

1. Increase communication and education related to stormwater impacts on water resources.

Recommendations:

1. Support WDNR regulations and Chippewa County Stormwater Management Ordinance and their enforcement.
2. Support Chippewa County’s Shoreland Ordinance and its enforcement.
3. Consider the development of a local stormwater management ordinance if the Town of Wheaton develops its own stormwater infrastructure such as ponds and stormwater systems.
4. Support low impact development strategies such as the use of swales, ditches, and rain gardens, to reduce the need and cost of providing stormwater infrastructure.



Goal 2: Identify areas where municipal utilities may benefit the Town of Wheaton.

Objectives:

1. Provide options for utilities for new development that are not currently available in the Town of Wheaton.

Recommendations:

1. Discuss with neighboring communities the idea of extending municipal utilities into the Town of Wheaton where areas of higher density development are appropriate.

Goal 3: Periodically evaluate facilities and equipment to ensure they are safe and meet the needs of residents and the people who use them.

Objectives:

1. Maintain adequate facility space to serve the Town's needs.
2. Maintain safe facilities and amenities that serve Town residents.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct a Needs Assessment for Town buildings and equipment when the need or opportunity arises.
2. Participate in Chippewa County's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan updates or create a separate Town of Wheaton Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan that addresses the park and recreation needs of the community.
3. Identify grant programs that can be used to offset costs of maintaining, expanding or building new Town facilities and amenities.

Goal 4: The Town will encourage increased community involvement to improve public safety.

Objectives:

1. The Town will maintain local fire and rescue services

Recommendations:

1. The Town will support and encourage the formation of neighborhood watch (or similar) groups.
2. The Town will encourage continued training opportunities for local firefighters in cooperation with local universities, technical colleges, and other area fire departments.

