

DuPage Review

DUPAGE COUNTY: A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND RAISE A FAMILY

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Pamela Rion
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DuPage County

421 N. County Farm Road
Wheaton, IL 60187
630-407-6000
www.dupageco.org

JAIL STUDY PROVIDES BLUEPRINT TO MAXIMIZE SPACE AT COUNTY JAIL; NEW FACILITY NOT NEEDED

DuPage County Board Chairman **Robert J. Schillerstrom** says a report conducted on the County's growing jail population, which is part of a nationwide trend, indicates that DuPage County has the means to manage its current jail population without the need to construct a new facility.

The report, released to the County's Judicial and Public Safety Committee, was undertaken by **MGT of America, Inc.**, who were hired by the County Board to determine whether there was an imminent need to build additional capacity at the county jail and make recommendations on how to expand current practices and undertake new initiatives.

"This report shows that the County does not need to construct a new jail in order to address it's growing jail population," said Schillerstrom. "What this report does provide is a blueprint of recommendations that we can undertake to help maximize the space at our jail, institute new pretrial and diversion programing and enhance the relationships between our criminal justice agencies."

MGT's review shows that the DuPage County criminal justice system can effectively manage projected offender population levels within the current jail facility, assuming implementation of specific policy and operational recommendations.

MGT "sees no justification for physical expansion of the jail for at least the next ten years." Their study also indicates:

- The jail can add 36 beds to its existing facilities through moderate use of double celling, without compromising security or operational effectiveness.
- The county justice system under-utilizes program alternatives to incarceration. Investment in proven alternative sanction programs could free up significant additional capacity. Re-establishment of the SWAP program and a supervised pretrial release program could lower the jail population.
- The jail provides good quality medical services while facing challenges in controlling hospital costs and addressing a growing mental health problem. The county should evaluate the feasibility and cost implications of an FHQC medical model of health care delivery at the jail that utilizes existing community providers.

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JAIL STUDY...continued from front page

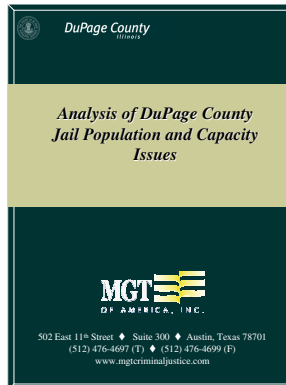
- ♦ The Sheriff's office should develop a system that expands its basic data on jail budgeting, expenditures, staffing and operational performance to other County entities.
- ♦ There needs to be an improved communication system among criminal justice officials, and the establishment of a forum for joint planning for future justice system priorities and programs would benefit the county.

It is important to note that the DuPage County Jail and its medical staff are and have been, since 1986, fully accredited and the DuPage County Sheriff's Office retains the highest national accreditation award, "The Triple Crown Award" since 1990.

"We are fortunate to receive this study after having secured a new revenue source," said Schillerstrom. "This will allow us to examine these recommendations and make the necessary investments that will ensure our jail has the resources it needs to maximize its space."

An important factor in the study is the comprehensive examination of how each public safety office affects the other when it comes to the County's justice system. This report, noted MGT, was not confined to just the County Jail, and its practices, but rather was a thorough review of all the factors that contribute to the jail's population, including sentencing practices and diversion programs.

"This report is a giant step forward for our county," noted Judicial and Public Safety Chairman **Michael McMahon** (District 3). "There are some things we can do in both the short and long term to address the jail's population. In the short term double celling, reinstating SWAP and a pre-trial program are things we may want to consider. It is important to note that these recommendations will take time, and they will take the cooperation of all parties involved."



In order to bring greater cooperation between the county's criminal justice agencies, McMahon announced that he will be consulting with the Chairman and elected officials to gather their input on the creation of a subcommittee, or an interagency working group, that will continue discussions on issues that affect the jail population.

Patrick O'Shea, Chairman of the Finance Committee, said his committee will review the recommendations in the report and make the necessary investments that will not put the burden of a new jail facility on the taxpayers of DuPage County.

"The recommendations in this report are an investment that will allow us to maintain our current facility, as well as provide taxpayers with the most cost-effective services that will maintain public safety in the county," said O'Shea.

This report is a culmination of several months of work involving extensive data analysis and input from different agencies in county government. The report involved the full cooperation of the Sheriff's Office, the Chief Judge, Probation, Courts Administration and the State's Attorney's Office.

"I want to thank Sheriff John Zaruba and his office for their input during this process," said McMahon. "MGT had to spend a great deal of time in the county jail interviewing and working with his professional staff, and their cooperation is greatly appreciated."

MGT of America has worked with more than 2,700 public sector agencies in 49 states, Puerto Rico and several foreign countries. Their expertise provides clients with consulting services that assist in running more efficient and effective operations.

IN THE NEWS

COUNTY APPROVES REVISED FISCAL YEAR 2008 BUDGET

The DuPage County Board has approved a revised Fiscal Year 2008 Budget that addresses only those critical needs facing the County. The Board was able to revise the budget due to a new revenue source secured in January with the passage of the RTA Act.

DuPage County Board Chairman Robert J. Schillerstrom said the revised budget will provide \$1.4 million to begin planning for regional road projects that will improve safety and provide congestion relief and provide an initial allotment of \$1 million for the creation of a strategic reserve.

“Passage of the RTA Act allowed us to fund our critical public safety and human service agencies; prevent layoffs in the Sheriff’s Office, State’s Attorney’s Office, and our Probation office; and continue our efforts to ease the traffic gridlock that chokes transportation in our region,” said Schillerstrom. “I am also pleased we were able to create a strategic reserve that would help preserve public safety and support critical operations in the event of longer-term adverse economic conditions, or emergencies.”

Last month, after the County secured its new revenue source, Board Members worked quickly to maintain headcount and avoid layoffs, which would have interrupted critical services. That action cost \$10.5 million. Revenue projections for Fiscal Year 2008 (December 1, 2007 – November 30, 2008) estimate the County will receive \$20 million, which left only \$9.5 million for critical needs in this budget cycle.

Included in the revised Fiscal Year 2008 budget is the allocation of \$500,000 for Human Service Grants, which the Chairman anticipates will grow to \$1 million annually beginning in Fiscal Year 2009. The Health Department is also picking up the

additional funding amount to bring Access DuPage and Mental Health to Fiscal Year 2006 levels.

The Board also approved pay raises for County employees, some of whom have not had a raise in two-years and which was not included in the budget passed last November.

The \$1.4 million allocated to the County’s Transportation Division will allow planning and design engineering to begin on critical congestion relief road projects in the region. The Division plans to have the engineering conform to federal guidelines, which will make some of these projects eligible for federal funding in the future, especially with the Federal Transportation Bill scheduled to be negotiated in Washington beginning in 2009. Planning engineering is necessary prior to completing contract plans in anticipation of construction activities in the field. With additional revenue coming in next year, the County will look to provide the Transportation Division with \$14 million to continue these projects.

“I am very pleased that this Board took the time to examine and debate the critical needs facing our communities,” said Schillerstrom. “Now, as we begin moving forward with preparations for the next budget cycle, we can continue working together to ensure the programs and services that make our County great receive the funding they need.”

Throughout the budget process, County Board Committees examined each Department and County agency to determine which items were of a critical nature. Those items not deemed critical will be part of the Fiscal Year 2009 budget discussions. That budget cycle, says Schillerstrom, will allow for a more thorough examination of programs and needs given the estimated \$48 million the County will receive via the RTA Sales Tax in the next Fiscal Year.

COUNTY OPPOSES EJ&E ACQUISITION BY CANADIAN NATIONAL

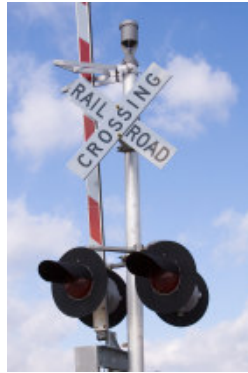
The DuPage County Board, led by Board Members **Pam Rion** (District 6), **JR McBride** (District 4) and **James Healy** (District 5), has passed a resolution formally declaring the county's opposition to the acquisition of the EJ&E railroad by Canadian National.

The proposed acquisition by Canadian National (CN) would transfer and reassign railroad freight traffic that currently runs over CN railroad lines in the City of Chicago to segments of the EJ&E railroad lines north, south, west and east of Chicago, including heavily populated areas in the western portions of DuPage County.

"This acquisition will have a negative impact on our communities and will increase traffic delays, as well as affect our quality of life," said Pam Rion, Chairwoman of the County's Transportation Committee. "Reassigning railroad freight traffic at twenty-two crossings in DuPage County, which is presently used by only four-to-fifteen trains per day, will increase up to forty-two trains per day."

James Healy, who serves as Vice-Chairman of the Transportation Committee, says this merger would

compromise safety, increase the likelihood of railroad-vehicle accidents, increase the movement of hazardous materials through densely populated areas and adversely affect the air quality in the county.



"Naperville and Aurora, both in my district, would be hard hit by this potential acquisition," said Healy. "For example, the Ogden Avenue crossing serves 50,000 cars a day. Shutting down that crossing because of increased freight train traffic will create horrible back-ups and inconveniences."

The Board also approved \$10,000 that will be available to hire a lobbyist to represent a regional coalition of municipalities and counties opposed to the sale of the EJ&E.

"We have great concerns about this acquisition and this is a good investment for the County to make," said McBride, Chairman of the County's Public Transit Committee.

The resolution will now be sent to the Service Transportation Board (STB), which is the federal agency reviewing Canadian National's application.

COUNTY BOARD APPROVES PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

The DuPage County Board has voted to abate the property tax levy by \$1 million dollars, which will provide property tax relief to DuPage County homeowners.

"Providing the residents of DuPage County with property tax relief is simply the right thing to do," said DuPage County Board Chairman Robert J. Schillerstrom. "With our new revenue source, we do not need to rely on the property tax to fund our critical programs and services."

Schillerstrom notes that State Senators Kirk Dillard, Dan Cronin and John Millner, each facing enormous political pressure, helped secure passage of the RTA bill, which allowed the county to abate the property tax and ease the tax burden on DuPage residents.

DuPage County remains one of the leanest counties in the entire nation. Its ratio of employees to population is one of the lowest in the country, and it maintains the highest bond rating possible (AAA), which less than one percent of the counties have been awarded.

2008 HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION EVENT

DuPage County Board Chairman **Robert J. Schillerstrom**, Environmental Committee Chairman **Jeff Redick** and Mayor **Thomas D. Marcucci** invite residents to properly dispose of mercury thermometers, old/expired medicines, expired lawn chemicals and other household hazardous waste at this upcoming collection event.

Acceptable items to bring

Expired/leftover medicines
 Acids
 Thermostats
 Wood stain & varnish
 Pool chemicals
 Fluorescent light ballast
 Poisons
 Household batteries
 Automotive fluids
 Oil based paints
 Insecticides
 Asbestos
 Fertilizers/pesticides
 Mercury
 Fluorescent light bulbs
 Mercury thermometers
 Cleaning solvents

Please DO NOT bring

Electronics
 Fireworks
 Agricultural wastes
 Regular garbage
 Ammunition
 Radioactive material
 Auto batteries
 Compressed gas cylinders
 Propane tanks
 School waste
 Business waste
 Explosives
 Fire extinguishers
 Smoke detectors
 Medical waste
 Latex paint

SATURDAY, May 3, 2008

8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Elmhurst Public Works Office

St. Charles Rd.
 985 S. Riverside Drive
 North of Roosevelt Rd. and south
 of St. Charles Rd. on east side of
 IL RT 83/Kingery
 Riverside Dr.
 IL Route 83 (Robert Kingery Hwy)

Take Riverside Drive east from
 IL Route 83 (Robert Kingery Hwy)

**UNWANTED CELL PHONES WILL
 ALSO BE COLLECTED FOR
 RECYCLING**

UPCOMING DUPAGE COUNTY BOARD MEETINGS

Tuesday, April 22nd
 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, May 13th
 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, May 27th
 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 10th
 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, June 24th
 10:00 a.m.