

# DuPage County committee to consider sheriff's impound lot

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**By Katie Foutz**

STAFF WRITER

Neighbors and local officials will continue to fight a DuPage County Board panel on its plans to place a vehicle impound lot near Greene Valley Forest Preserve.

The Public Works Committee is expected to drop the Greene Valley area as the future site of the county sheriff's outdoor firing range at its Tuesday meeting.

"We're disposing of that as a bad idea," committee Chairman Roger Jenisch, R-Bloomington, said Monday. He did not know of alternate sites being considered.

But the committee might agree to put the sheriff's 250-vehicle impound lot near Greene Valley.

"It's a good location for it," Jenisch said. "There's good access from (Route) 53. It's a vacant property. It's not an intense use, and we've got the property, so why should the sheriff rent someplace else?"

DuPage County Sheriff John Zaruba must keep looking for a place to move the shooting range from DuPage Airport land in West Chicago because the DuPage County Technology Park is being built around it. Sheriff's deputies and officers from 35 area police departments use the facility for weapons training.

The proposed site was near a county-owned wastewater treatment plant in Woodridge, south of 75th Street between Route 53 and the East Branch of the DuPage River. Greene Valley Forest Preserve borders the area on three sides, and a residential area of Woodridge lies across Route 53.

The sheriff also planned to build 250 parking spaces to store vehicles that are abandoned or seized during arrests until their owners pay a fine or the cars are auctioned. A smaller, fenced-in lot now houses impounded cars behind the county Division of Transportation, at 130 N. County Farm Road in Wheaton.

"It's constantly full," sheriff's spokeswoman Carol Roegner said.

Citing public outcry, Zaruba said in mid-December he would no longer pursue the Greene Valley area as a firing range location. DuPage County, the Forest Preserve District and Woodridge officials also opposed the location.

Additionally, the Woodridge Village Board passed a resolution against locating either the firing range or the impound lot at the wastewater treatment site.

Public Works Committee Vice Chairman Thomas Bennington, R-Downers Grove, said the location looks good for the impound lot, though he has questions about the daily traffic it will produce and whether the DuPage County Sheriff's Department can provide enough security for the area.

"My understanding is there would not be a significant amount of traffic in and out," he said.

Woodridge Mayor William Murphy said a village representative would speak against the impound lot proposal at Tuesday's Public Works Committee meeting.

"I'm disturbed Mr. Bennington, who represents this area, would go along with that," Murphy said. "He's out of sync with part of his district."

Murphy said either proposed use would put more burden on neighbors who have lived with the odors from the wastewater treatment plant and truck traffic from the now-closed landfill at Greene Valley.

"As a local official, I know people are quick to say they don't want things in their back yard," he said. "They've had enough things in their back yard."

Environmentalists are worried about the natural areas in the proposed impound lot's back yard. Don Kirchenberg, president of the Illinois Prairie Path and chairman of Friends of the Great Western Trail, also is active with Preserve the DuPage County Forest Preserve District, a group that is fighting the firing range and impound lot.

"The East Branch is already polluted, and having an impound lot with vehicles that are inoperable, those that leak, have bad batteries ... they're going to be dumping Lord knows what into the nearby East Branch of the DuPage River," Kirchenberg said.

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