

DuPage sheriff to propose impound lot to Woodridge

By Katie Foutz

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WHEATON — DuPage County land is off-limits for the sheriff's firing range, but the sheriff's vehicle impound lot may be located at a former county wastewater treatment plant.

The DuPage County Public Works Committee agreed Tuesday a 15-acre site along Route 53 and bordering Greene Valley Forest Preserve in Woodridge is not appropriate for a shooting-practice range for the sheriff's office and 35 municipal police departments.

Sheriff John Zaruba must move the shooting range from DuPage Airport land in West Chicago because the DuPage County Technology Park is under construction there.

The Woodridge site was the only possible parcel of DuPage County land for the range, chief operations officer Greg Wilcox said after the meeting.

"I have nothing to propose," he said. "If this site's not acceptable, no site is acceptable that's known. He's on his own."

The future of the impound lot is undecided. The committee suggested Zaruba talk with Woodridge officials about the proposed 250-car impound lot. The sheriff manages seized vehicles for all municipal police departments in DuPage County, including Woodridge, Wilcox said.

Woodridge officials oppose the lot, saying tow trucks would increase traffic and noise along a residential section of Route 53. Environmentalists are fighting the proposal as an eyesore and a hazard to the adjacent forest preserve and the nearby East Branch of the DuPage River.

County officials insist the impound lot would not be a vehicle dumping ground.

"We are only taking cars that have some value," said committee Vice Chairman Thomas Bennington, R-Downers Grove. "We will not be put in the position to keep a junkyard. Woodridge doesn't want that, and we don't want that."

He said the sheriff will come back to the Public Works Committee with more details about the kinds of cars to be impounded, the exact number of cars, how guarded they would be and how much traffic the lot would produce.

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