

# ADDRESS COMMUNITY FACILITY NEEDS

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## OVERVIEW

Community services and facilities include such governmental functions as education, public works, public safety, and recreational services. Such services contribute significantly to Madison's community character and its quality of life. The Plan reviews these facilities to ensure they are appropriately located and sized to meet community needs during the planning period and beyond.

About 54 percent of residents felt that Madison had enough community facilities. Of the 43 percent that felt Madison needed more facilities, the most common responses were schools, swimming pool, youth center, and recreation fields.

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## Undertake a Facility Planning Process

One of the major findings of the Plan of Conservation and Development is that the Town of Madison needs to do a better job in long-term planning for community facility needs. If the current facility needs were identified and addressed 10 years ago, there is little doubt that some of the current needs would have been addressed already.

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## Recommendations

1. Recognize the need to undertake long term planning for community facilities.
2. Prepare an inventory of town / community facilities (including facilities such as the Veteran of Foreign Wars, the Grange, the American Legion, Old Police Station, and similar facilities).
3. Investigate possible long-term facility needs in Madison and identify what facilities are likely to be needed, where they should be located, when they should be established or provided, and how they will be funded and supported.

Memorial Hall



*Charlotte Evarts Archives*

***Local facilities contribute to Madison's character and quality of life ...***

## Survey Results

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When asked how to accommodate increasing enrollments, Madison residents responded as follows:

- 61 percent favored maintaining class sizes and building more classrooms,
- 24 percent favored increasing class size and not building more classrooms,
- 6 percent favored neither option, and
- 9 percent had no opinion.

## Address Current Facility Needs

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### Education Facilities

As previously mentioned in the Plan, the age composition of Madison is changing and the community is experiencing an increase in births and school enrollments. In fact, enrollments in Madison have been increasing since 1989-1990, especially in elementary and middle school grades.

Enrollment projections prepared for the Board of Education indicate that enrollments are expected to increase in all grade groups through the planning period. As a result, there is a need in Madison for additional school facilities.

	<b>Current Capacity</b>	<b>Estimated Peak</b>	<b>Peak / Capacity</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Elementary Schools (PK-5)</b>	1,367 - 1,467 pupils	1,915 pupils (2005)	135%	Additional space is needed now.
<b>Middle School (6-8)</b>	750 - 867 pupils	1,069 pupils (2005-06)	132%	Additional space is needed in the near future.
<b>High School (9-12)</b>	958 - 1,020 pupils	1,350 pupils (2008 - 09)	137%	Additional capacity needed after the year 2002-03.

### Recommendations

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1. Provide for required school capacity expansion during the planning period.
2. Investigate land swaps with the State for Cockaponsett State Forest if those sites will be better located or configured for educational needs.
3. Allow expanded use of school facilities to meet local recreational and community needs.



## Recreation Facilities

The increase in the youth population and high levels of participation are also resulting in considerable constraints on the availability of local recreation facilities. Maintenance needs increase due to the intensive use and some fields have deteriorated from over-use. Additional recreation facilities are needed.



### Recommendations

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1. Construct additional recreational fields to meet community needs.
2. Consider lighting existing fields to increase recreational hours available.
3. Expand recreational use of school facilities to meet community needs.
4. Acquire land to expand the Surf Club should it become available.
5. Investigate land swaps with the State for Cockaponsett State Forest if those sites will be better located or configured for recreational needs.

## Youth Center

A youth center for youth programs and functions has been established in the Arts Barn at the Town Campus. A five-year agreement for use of the Arts Barn has been completed and fund-raising efforts are continuing.

### Recommendations

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1. Support efforts to maintain a dedicated youth center in Madison.

## **Prepare for Mid-Range Facility Needs**

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### **Public Works**

The public works garage on Fort Path Road is inadequate for current needs and needs more maintenance and storage bays, vehicle lifts, and locker rooms and offices for employees. Additional public works storage or sand/salt storage facilities in North Madison would improve the efficiency of operations.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Expand the existing, or build a new, public works facility during the planning period to facilitate repair and storage of as much equipment as possible.
2. Relocate or regionalize the dog pound to ensure adequate room is available at the public works garage site.
3. Consider locating a remote sand/salt storage facility in North Madison (possibly at the fire house) to facilitate winter snow removal operations.

### **Library**

The Madison Public Library is an “anchor” in Madison Center and contributes significantly to the community and its quality of life. Land area, floor space, access, and parking are issues that limit the library’s ability to meet local needs. While construction of a branch library in North Madison has been mentioned, enhancement of the existing facility (or construction of a new facility in or near the Center) during the planning period is the recommended course of action.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Investigate ways to expand and improve the library during the planning period.
2. Acquire property adjacent to the library in order to provide for expansion and additional parking and encourage shared use of parking and driveways.

## **Public Safety**

Issues related to public safety services (police, fire, ambulance) include:

- adequate fire volunteer staffing, especially during day-time hours,
- space inadequacy at the ambulance facility on Bradley Road,
- expanding the North Madison fire station to provide for additional fire and/or ambulance equipment, and
- providing for additional water supplies (underground water tanks and fire ponds).

## **Recommendations**

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1. Encourage volunteer participation in fire response by providing some compensation (property tax credit, retirement benefits, stipends).
2. During the planning period, address emergency medical response issues by:
  - basing an ambulance at the North Madison fire station,
  - building a new centrally-located ambulance facility, or
  - expanding the existing building (by acquiring the Grange Hall, if and when appropriate).
3. Expand the North Madison fire station during the planning period.
4. Continue to require fire ponds and underground water cisterns as part of proposed developments where desirable (especially in North Madison) and continue the long-term funding for installation of such facilities.

## **Senior Center**

Due to expanded social and recreational programs and an increasing senior population, the current Senior Center facility in Madison Center (known as the Depot) is experiencing space constraints. In addition to program space, more space is needed for offices and storage. A needs assessment study has been completed and issues should be addressed.

## **Recommendations**

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1. Plan for expansion of the senior center facility to meet identified needs.
2. Acquire land adjacent to the Depot, if it becomes available, or find a new site in or near the Center for an improved Senior Center (possibly integrated into a community center or as part of a new or expanded library).
3. Review the needs assessment study and address identified needs in accordance with overall community priorities.

## **Volunteer Assistance**

In order to encourage and maintain local volunteer programs and services, the General Assembly recently passed legislation which allows a community to provide a tax rebate or credit or other compensation to local public safety volunteers.

### **Social Services**

Social services in Madison include food bank, counseling, and other assistance programs. While office space appears to be adequate, additional space is needed for the food bank and other storage.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Investigate convenient storage options for social services (food bank) during the planning period.

### **Community Center**

During the process of preparing the Plan, Madison residents indicated a desire for an expanded library, an expanded senior center, an indoor pool, and another community gymnasium.

Interest has also been expressed in a community center to address some or all of these community/ recreational needs. In the long term, a multi-purpose facility will be more efficient and economical than individual facilities. Such a facility could be a private non-profit (or for profit) facility as opposed to as a municipal facility.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Consider establishing a community center to meet multiple community facility needs.

## Consider Long Term Needs

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Madison's school enrollment ratio (school enrollment as a percentage of total population) declined from 1970 to 1990 and is now increasing again due to the "baby boom echo." This cycle is expected to continue with an enrollment peak around the year 2005, an enrollment drop to around the year 2020 with another enrollment peak around the year 2035.

If Madison reaches an eventual population of about 20,000 people and the school enrollment ratio peaks between 23 and 26 percent of local population, total enrollment might be between 4,600 and 5,200 pupils.

The current school configuration has a capacity of about 3,300 students and the enrollment peak expected around the year 2005 is expected to be about 4,300 students. Thus, it can be seen that additional school facilities will be needed around the year 2030 for future enrollment peaks.

While this is far enough in the future to lead some to conclude that it needs little attention at the present time, few sites large enough to accommodate a new school may be available when needed for a future school site (or sites). Acquisition of a future school site should be considered during the planning period

In terms of other facilities, space constraints are becoming evident in some departments at the Town Campus and building expansion may be necessary during the planning period. Adequate storage of records (space, climate) is also becoming an issue that should be addressed. Expansion of other facilities may also be needed beyond the planning period.

In addition, Madison should also continue to look at ways to consolidate municipal and community functions for better overall communication and coordination. Recent successes have included consolidation of Town/School finances and Town/School facility maintenance. Future opportunities may include facility sharing between the ambulance and the North Madison Volunteer Fire Department.

## Recommendations

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1. Over the long term, consider acquiring any undeveloped land adjacent to existing facilities for possible future building or site expansion needs.
2. Acquire sites for future facilities (such as schools) in advance of future needs.
3. Monitor all Town departments to plan efficiently and economically for possible building expansion.
4. Continue to look at ways to consolidate municipal and community functions for better overall communication and coordination.

### School Enrollment Ratios

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School enrollment ratios look at the school enrollment as a percentage of Madison's population.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Madison</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>1960</b>	22%	20%
<b>1970</b>	30%	22%
<b>1980</b>	23%	17%
<b>1990</b>	18%	14%
<b>2000</b>	22%	16%

Projections in italics

## **Enhance Facility Operations**

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Rather than treat existing facilities and services as dedicated to the current occupants or users, opportunities to share building use or expand the services and activities for residents should continue to be explored. This will improve the efficiency and economy of the existing facilities and services and enhance public usage of all existing programs.

Madison has recently consolidated the maintenance of community facility buildings within the Public Works Department and this will help to ensure consistent maintenance and management. In addition, the consolidated oversight will help ensure prudent planning for needed maintenance and enhancements.

### **Recommendations**

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1. Develop ways to enhance public usage of all existing facilities.
2. Continue to have the Public Works Department oversee the maintenance of all Town buildings on a comprehensive basis in order to:
  - maintain and enhance existing community facilities, and
  - efficiently plan for maintenance and capital improvement needs.
3. Monitor the senior citizen dial-a-ride transportation services to ensure that community needs are being addressed and that services are being efficiently and economically provided.
4. Consider expanding the availability of dial-a-ride services to other Madison residents.