



TENTATIVE A g e n d a
President and Board of Trustees
Monday, March 9, 2009
Village Hall
123 Madison Street

Executive Session at 6:30 pm, To Discuss Property Disposition, Personnel, Litigation and Labor

Special Meeting at 7:30 pm, Room 101

Call to Order

1. User-Friendly Village Hall
 - A Community Survey Action Plan
 - B. BPS Improvements
 - C. Training
 - D. Web Enhancements
 - E. Parking
2. Resolution Authorizing the Village's Acceptance of the City of Chicago's Offer of Limited Indemnification of the Village for Plaintiff's 1983 Attorneys' Fees in the Event that the NRA is Successful in its Lawsuit Against the Village of Oak Park Entitled NRA v. Village of Oak Park - 08-C-3696.

Adjourn

For more information regarding Village Board meetings and agendas, please contact the Village Manager's Office at 708.358.5770.

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FROM DATA TO ACTION**RESIDENT PRIORITIES**

Knowing where to focus limited resources to improve residents' opinions of local government requires information that targets the services that are most important to residents. However, when residents are asked what services are most important, they rarely stray beyond core services – those directed to save lives and improve safety.

In market research, identifying the most important characteristics of a transaction or product is called Key Driver Analysis. The key drivers that are identified from that analysis do not come from asking customers to self-report which service or product characteristic most influenced their decision to buy or return, but rather from statistical analyses of the predictors of their behavior. When customers are asked to name the most important characteristics of a good or service, responses often are expected or misleading – just as they can be in the context of a citizen survey. For example, air travelers often claim that safety is the primary consideration in their choice of an airline, yet key driver analysis reveals that frequent flier perks or in-flight entertainment predicts their buying decisions.

In local government core services – like fire protection – invariably land at the top of the list created when residents are asked about the most important local government services. And core services are important. But by using Key Driver Analysis, our approach digs deeper to identify the less obvious, but more influential services that are most related to residents' ratings of overall quality of local government services. Because services focused directly on life and safety remain essential to quality government, it is suggested that core services should remain the focus of continuous monitoring and improvement where necessary – but monitoring core services or asking residents to identify important services is not enough.

A Key Driver Analysis (KDA) was conducted for the Village of Oak Park by examining the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the Village of Oak Park's overall services. Those key driver services that correlated most highly with residents' perceptions about overall Village service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the Village of Oak Park can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality.

Services found to be most strongly correlated with ratings of overall service quality from the Oak Park Key Driver Analysis were:

- Code enforcement
- Sewer services
- Public information services

VILLAGE OF OAK PARK ACTION CHART

The 2008 Village of Oak Park Action Chart™ on the following page combines three dimensions of performance:

- Comparison to resident evaluations from other communities. When a comparison is available, the background color of each service box indicates whether the service is above the benchmark (green), similar to the benchmark (yellow) or below the benchmark (red).
- Identification of key services. A black key icon next to a service box indicates that service is key (either core or key driver)
- Trend line icons (up and down arrows), indicating whether the current ratings are higher or lower than the previous survey.

Twenty-three services were included in the KDA for the Village of Oak Park. Of these, 16 were above the benchmark, three were below the benchmark and four were similar to the benchmark. Ratings for one service was trending up and one was trending down, while 20 remained similar to the previous survey. The three key drivers are shown.

Considering all performance data included in the Action Chart, a jurisdiction typically will want to consider improvements to any key driver services that are trending down or that are not at least similar to the benchmark. In the case of Oak Park, no key drivers were below the benchmark or trending lower in the current survey. Therefore, Oak Park may wish to seek improvements to sewer services as this key driver received ratings similar to other benchmark jurisdictions. More detail about interpreting results can be found in the next section.

Services with a high percent of respondents answering “don’t know” were excluded from the analysis and were considered services that would be less influential. See Appendix A: Complete Survey Frequencies, Frequencies Including “Don’t Know” Responses (beginning on page 60) for the percent “don’t know” for each service.

Using Your Action Chart™

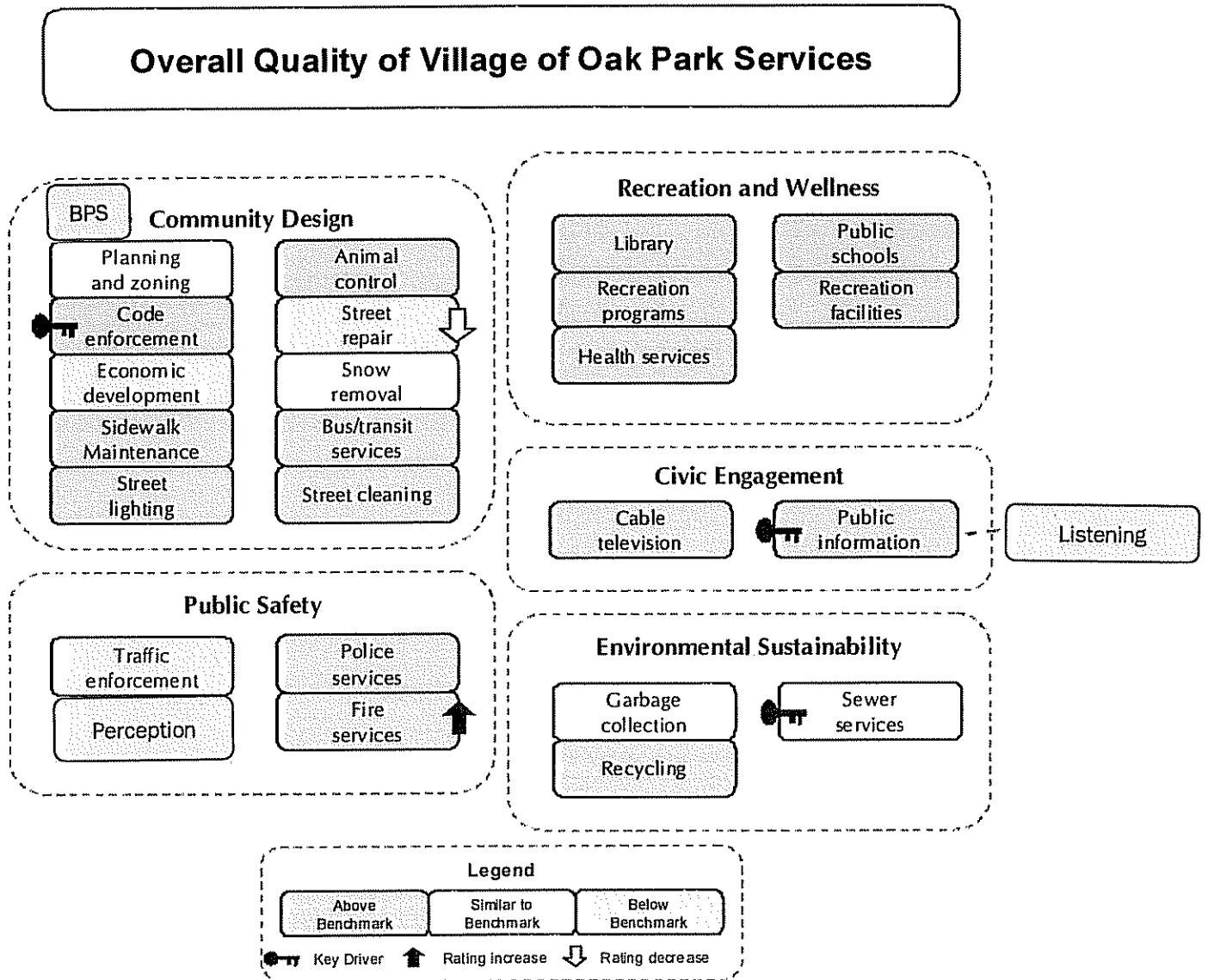
The key drivers derived for the Village of Oak Park provide a list of those services that are uniquely related to overall service quality in the community. Those key drivers are marked with the symbol of a key in the action chart. Because key driver results are based on a relatively small number of responses, the relationships or correlations that define the key drivers are subject to more variability than is seen when key drivers are derived from a large national dataset of resident responses. To benefit the Village of Oak Park, NRC lists the key drivers derived from tens of thousands of resident responses from across the county. This list is updated every three years so that you can compare your key drivers to the key drivers from the entire NRC data set. Where your locally derived key drivers overlap national key drivers, it makes sense to focus even more strongly on your keys. Similarly, when your local key drivers overlap your core services, there is stronger argument to make for attending to your key drivers that overlap with core services. In the following table, we have listed your key drivers, core services and the national key drivers below and we have indicated the Village of Oak Park key drivers that overlap core services or the nationally derived keys.

FIGURE 86: KEY DRIVERS COMPARED

Service	Village of Oak Park Key Drivers	National Key Drivers	Core Services
Code enforcement	✓		✓
Economic development		✓	
EMS			✓
Fire			✓
Garbage collection			✓
Land use planning and zoning		✓	
Police services		✓	✓
Public information services	✓	✓	
Public schools		✓	
Sewer	✓		✓
Storm drainage			✓
Street repair			✓
Water			✓

The Corporation of Oak Park, 11000 W. North Ave., Oak Park, IL 60454

FIGURE 85: VILLAGE OF OAK PARK ACTION CHART™



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**Office of Communications
& Cable Television**

Memo

To: Tom Barwin
From: David Powers
CC: M. Ray Wiggins
Date: Feb. 19, 2009
Re: Web Site Redesign

The 2009 Budget for the Office of Communications & Cable Television includes \$75,000 for the redesign of the Village web site, www.oak-park.us. While I am confident this sum will allow for a new look and improved navigation, I am not certain it will lead to the level of interactivity necessary to eliminate the need for residents to come to Village Hall to conduct business. That level of interactivity will require major improvements in our back-office databases that are managed by the Information Technology Department. However, a new site design can lay the foundation for quickly expanding interactivity as the functions become available.

I have attached a memo I wrote in June that should provide some useful background information for a discussion on proceeding with a site redesign. If the decision is made to proceed with a complete redesign, I would expect to issue a formal Request for Proposals and seek competitive bids, as was done with the current web site. Ideally, the first step in this process is a better understanding of just what the Village Board envisions for the web site. I also would want to gather input from my fellow managers who likely would have to take a greater role in helping maintain a new site.

Personally, and professionally, I think our web site remains very functional and could stay as is for a while longer, given the financial demands we now are facing. I get many more compliments than complaints about site, but must admit it has gotten very large and is tediously difficult to maintain single-handedly. That said, a complete redesign would be a major undertaking in its own right, given the wide range of needs the site must accommodate.

Please let me know if you wish me to proceed with planning for a redesign or would like to discuss the issue further.

(background memo follows...)

Memo

To: M. Ray Wiggins
From: David M. Powers
CC: Tom Barwin
Date: July 16, 2008
Re: Web site navigation/modification

Per your request, I have re-visited information related to the original creation of the current Village web site www.oak-park.us. My goal was to provide you with a greater understanding of what went in to the site's original design and the impact this has on our ability to make changes and improve navigation within the current structure. For the record, however, I would like to say that I receive many more compliments on the web site than complaints. And of the complaints most arise from impatience – users looking for a single item come to the main page and are frustrated that what they want is not there. Our site, like any large site, requires a bit of experience to use properly.

Site Organization

Generally, the Village web site, like most web sites big and small, is built with templates. The templates form the graphic design of the site. They control aspects such as page layout, fonts and colors. The templates also affect navigation. Within the web site design, related sections share navigation tools called libraries, which are listed along the left side of the web pages. A new Public Works page I create, for example, retains the basic Public Works template library functions of the original design. Changing one library, changes multiple pages. The information in the middle of the page, as well as that along the right margin can be changed on each page. New pages also can be created, but they retain the functions of the template upon which they were based.

Beyond the templates, lies the original file naming structure, which dictates how information is stored within the site, and thus accessed by the user. The complexity of the file naming structure affects how easily a particular page or information can be promoted to users, an issue you may have noted if someone has ever sent you a multiple-character link to a story in a major daily newspaper. A link from another web page or e-mail site does not necessarily have to display the entire naming structure to take a user directly to a page. However, publishing a link in a document does require the entire address so that the user can type it into his or her browser. And the longer the name, the less likely the use and the greater the chance of user input error.

Although I am not formally trained in web site development, my education and experience as a news and photo editor have enabled me to maintain, manage and grow the site. I also have learned to change how some files are named. Straying from the original naming structure has risks, however, and can have unintended consequences for users.

To understand fully how the web site got to where it is now, and what resources may be needed to take the next step in usability requires some historical perspective.

History

Purple Monkey Studio's proposal to create the current web site was accepted in October 2000, some four months after I was hired as Communications Director. A competitive bid process had begun prior to my arrival under the direction of then assistant to the Village Manager Pete Dame. Purple Monkey's proposal was to create about 200 pages at a fee of \$19,000. As I became part of the design conversation, it was clear that difficulties meshing the administrative organization of Village operations with a user-friendly interface would be a challenge. Unfortunately, I did not understand the importance of how the information was organized and could only listen and learn.

The site quickly grew to more than 300 pages before its launch. During the creation stages through early 2001, Purple Monkey was paid an additional \$12,000 to create and integrate web site calendars for meetings and construction, \$5,600 for an online service request form and \$6,000 to create the special Farmers' Market section. During meetings with Purple Monkey it was clear from the company's chief executive, an Oak Park resident, that the project had grown far beyond its original scope and was moving from a business deal toward pro bono community service.

From the outset, the decision already had been made that once Purple Monkey had designed and tested the site, all maintenance and management activities would be handled in-house. The site was designed using Dreamweaver, a top-shelf professional web site design/management software. The software was purchased and installed on three computers at Village Hall – Pete's, mine and one in Information Technology. Pete and I had a two-hour tutorial at Purple Monkey's offices and prepared to run the site. We spent much of those early months prior to launch brow beating department directors into providing text for their pages. The site was hosted by a third party company in Chicago.

My Role

As the site became functional in late 2001, my role in its management and maintenance grew. However, it was not until about 2004 that the Village Manager made the site my responsibility. By then, I had spent considerable time working with the software, but making only minimal changes such as adding Board agendas and posting news releases. IT arranged for me to take three off-site classes – one in basic HTML and two in Dreamweaver. These classes, each a single day's experience, helped me to better understand how the site functioned and allowed me to begin experimenting with creating new pages and ways to make navigation easier. At around the same time, the site was brought in-house to reside on a server in Village Hall, where it has remained.

Navigation Changes

By 2006, it was clear to me that I could not address the most basic navigation issues because they were related to how the site was organized to contain the information within the Village's administrative functions. My efforts to integrate the web site with other public information tools, such as the *OP/FYI*, VOP-TV and the wide range of brochures we produced, were often complicated by the organizational structure of the web site. Explaining in text how to find something on the site was difficult. I then hired Purple Monkey at a cost of \$5,400 to create the current drop-down menu function that allows users to find the most requested information from the main site landing page. The drop downs, I believe, represented a major evolution of the site. They used the tab design of the original web site, but greatly enhanced it. Users who spend only a few seconds on the main page, but who move their mouse across the tabs will find direct links to information that is tied to function or role, rather than internal municipal government administration. The drop downs, which I can edit, also allowed me to add direct links to other important organizations within the Village, such as the Park District and both school districts, sites those not familiar to with Oak Park might assume are all part of Village government. I also have added links from the drop down menus to within the site as well, such as to information on bicycling, riding the Oak Park Shuttle, taking public transportation and special events. In addition, I used the drop-down menu under the Departments tab to allow quick links to areas within Village Hall that technically are not departments, such as historic preservation, business services and zoning.

As a former news reporter, I saw a need to have a method for disseminating information that became available after the local news cycle had closed to remind residents of important meetings and events. This led to the creation of the Breaking News page. I also modified the original landing page design to highlight multiple visual links to important information, such as the latest issue of the *OP/FYI* newsletter, vehicle sticker renewals and Police crime maps. These links can be changed as needed, such as to promote the July 4th parade or issue special alerts if needed.

Adding video to the web site is among our latest efforts to expand the functionality of the site within the current design structure. While the templates create some obstacles to the presentations of videos, the system works quite well for shorter videos. Streaming Board meetings on the web was planned for this fiscal year, but pushed back because of financial constraints.

Current Status

A present time, the web site contains some 1,200 pages, about five times what was originally proposed by Purple Monkey. New pages have been added to support each of the many planning projects, to post municipal job openings and provide neighborhood crime maps produced by the Police Department. The IT Department has worked within the site design to offer online payments for vehicle stickers, parking citations and utility bills. Files now number into the thousands, as the site has become an archive for a wide range of documents, including meeting agendas and minutes, not only for the Village Board but also for the citizen boards and commissions. The site averages about 2,500

visitors each day, with Human Resources and the Breaking News pages among the most visited pages.

Accommodating requests for additions to the site have become increasingly challenging. While making additions within the templates is not hard labor, it can be tedious and time-consuming to work within a professional web software application that was designed for web experts. Most smaller municipal web sites allow those with little or no web design background to make some changes, such as posting agendas and news releases. These off-the-shelf web site packages allow a manager to get a site up and running quickly, but have limitations on growth and adaptability. They also tend to have a cookie-cutter look. The companies that provide these packages can do much more, but not at the bargain prices they promote in e-mails and letters, and at conventions for municipal managers.

The Future

The Village's public web site has evolved dramatically since its launch. However, it is nearing the end of its life cycle given the growing demand for more interactivity. A new site most certainly will require an effort exceeding the original design, and likely cost considerably more – especially if more interactive features are involved. Features such as content management also should be considered in a redesign, so that departments can play a larger role in keeping their sections more timely and up to date.

Quite frankly, web site management demands of the current site have taxed the resources of the current staffing level of the Office of Communications & Cable Television. In addition to the Village web site, I also manage the employee intranet site, which is administered by my assistant, Leslie Boehms. Leslie's skills in graphic design have enabled us to do many things in-house that would have required outside assistance in the past. She also has worked with IT to create several special use interactive pages for the public web site, such as registering for the broker tour and submitting anonymous crime tips via the web site. In addition, her graphic and language skills have enhanced the look and ease of use of the online payment functions such as vehicle sticker renewals. But all of these initiatives have been within the current site structure.

Should a new web site design become a subject of discussion stage, it is important to recognize that issues beyond site design and navigation must be addressed if the Village web site is to be the doorway to a 24-hour Village Hall. Data bases must be created and integrated. Business practices must be standardized and documented. And a commitment must be made to allocate sufficient financial resources to bring in outside expertise. Anyone with a computer and a credit card can create a web site in an afternoon through a service such as www.homestead.com. I have done it. But such a site will not allow the level of online communications likely desired by the Village Board. And it will not take us closer to the 24-hour Village Hall goal. That is a bigger goal and it will take a bigger commitment to achieve.

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