
*Village of Oak Park
Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan
Public Workshop #2
January 12, 2010
7-9PM
Hatch Elementary School*

The Village of Oak Park engaged Business Districts, Inc. (BDI) in August 2009 to develop a Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan. The planning effort is being conducted in three phases, and the resulting plan will guide the Village's historic preservation work through the next decade.

The first phase of the Plan process was completed in December 2009. This initial phase included stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions with multiple Oak Park constituencies, including commercial property owners, apartment building owners, residents and homeowners, business owners, business organizations, Village officials, developers, local preservationists and preservation organizations, and institutional property owners. A review of the Village's preservation activities, regulations, and relevant past studies was also conducted. Lastly, initial research on best practices and programs throughout the U. S. was completed by BDI. To conclude this first project phase, BDI completed an interim report, 'The State of Historic Preservation in the Village of Oak Park.' This interim report document is available on the Village's project webpage (located on the Historic Preservation page within the Village website).

A second Public, or Community, Workshop, scheduled as part of the second phase of the Plan process, was held on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at 7PM at Hatch Elementary School. This Workshop represented the public portion of this second phase of the Plan process. As with all plan activities to date, this Workshop's content emphasized a focus on the future of historic preservation throughout the entire Village of Oak Park.

This second Workshop had three key objectives:

- To review the project interim report, 'The State of Historic Preservation in the Village of Oak Park,' and its preliminary strategies with those citizens and stakeholder representatives attending as workshop participants.
- To evaluate these preliminary strategies based upon their potential for achieving short, intermediate, and long-term historic preservation planning goals.
- To generate additional planning ideas and potential action steps for the identified strategies.

Following a brief presentation providing an overview of the project interim report, workshop attendees were divided into three groups to review the three categories of strategic issues identified in the project interim report. These categories were: education about historic preservation, economic development, and Oak Park's historic preservation structure and

processes. Each participant group then examined all three issue categories in 25-minute facilitated discussion segments. At the conclusion of the three discussion segments (and the Workshop), the facilitators summarized the contributions provided by the participants.

For the facilitated group discussion process, BDI prepared sample action plans for each of the three categories of issues. The action plan samples included examples of programs or activities used in other communities with active historic preservation programming from throughout the U. S. In addition, certain programs or activities suggested by Oak Park stakeholders in the first phase of the Plan process were included among the examples.

During this facilitated portion of the workshop, participants were asked to identify specific action steps to enable the Village's historic preservation work in each strategic issue category. All of those suggestions have been compiled and added to BDI's sample action plans. All Workshop suggestions for specific actions are shown below in blue type within the three sample action plans. Where suggested, the timeframe, costs, and responsible entities are noted. BDI will incorporate these action steps into the draft Plan report, completing the Plan process' second phase. This report will be submitted to Village staff and the Plan Steering Committee for review and discussion at the Committee's February 17, 2010 meeting.

To complete the public process for this Plan, Oak Park's citizens and stakeholders will have a third, and final, opportunity to comment on Plan details prior to the completion of the Village-wide Plan document. This final Workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, March 17, 2010 at Beye School. The final Plan remains scheduled for submission to the Village in April 2010.

Objective: Identify programs and activities that can enhance historic preservation education and outreach to Village residents, businesses, property owners, and institutions.			
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)	RESPONSIBLE?	COST ESTIMATE?
Develop an alliance of historical and preservation organizations coordinating education and advocacy to supplement Village and Commission work. (Kings County, WA)			
Organize joint educational programs with outreach to non-traditional preservation constituencies. (Hillsborough, NC with NASCAR fans and Park County, CO with outdoor enthusiasts.)			
Use new media for education and communication, such as 'Preservation Family Album.' (Redondo Beach, CA and others)			
Develop targeted outreach programs to individual constituencies, such as new historic homeowners and realtors, to begin familiarity with local preservation objectives. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Formulate an ongoing program specific to elected and appointed officials to provide information about the Village's historic preservation work. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Develop ongoing materials and communications, applying the citizen perspective. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Identify all points of preservation contact with the Village and Historic Preservation Commission and consider how to use those points pro-actively for education purposes.			
Combine the first 3 actions noted above. (For new media point, be aware of Village e-mail blocks.) Focus would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Preservation is good (advocacy) • Community building • Oak Park Historic Preservation Education Alliance 	ST	Steering Committee Initiates	
Need to identify and create roadmap to organization			
Have an annual education focus that brings groups together			

<p>Focus during Historic Preservation Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-minute success/2.5 PowerPoint • Emphasize new media • What the resources are • 'Green-ness' of Historic Preservation 			
Organized effort can serve as 'clearing house' so Village is not just holding information; not to take stances			
<p>Attend block club meetings (all blocks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and what to know about your house • Serve as boosters for Historic Preservation 			
Identify additional preservation tasks for other groups; too much falls on the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)			
Educate the Village Trustees, particularly newly elected			
'Force feed' information about historic preservation into Village block-mail and electronic distribution			
Conduct outreach and programs development with the schools			
Develop a historic preservation speakers bureau			
Broaden historic preservation to cover more than architecture			
Develop leadership focus or pilot project on 'Green' historic preservation			

Objective: Identify programs, activities, and incentives that can integrate historic preservation into Oak Park’s overall economic development effort.			
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)	RESPONSIBLE?	COST ESTIMATE?
Encourage adaptive re-use of commercial buildings, including mid-century mixed-use buildings. (McKinley Towne Center, Ann Arbor, MI)			
Initiate discussions with Downtown Oak Park and the Business Council to identify possible long-term areas of collaboration to support Village economic success. (Old Pasadena, Pasadena, CA)			
Identify potential re-use projects that enable collaboration between multiple constituencies, including businesses, owners, preservationists and sustainability advocates (Over the Rhine, Cincinnati, OH)			
Develop a program in conjunction with the Village’s new Business Services function to address potential preservation questions for Oak Park businesses. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Enhance existing joint programming with Oak Park Development Corporation. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Identify partnership opportunities with local businesses or institutions, such as the Dominican-Hemingway partnership, that support joint preservation and economic development objectives. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Begin ongoing outreach to Oak Park’s commercial property owners, including apartment building owners, to understand their ownership objectives and their plans for their properties. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Develop reference tools for Village use that examine the cost structure associated with adaptive re-use of commercial buildings. (Oak Park Suggestion)			
Initiate outreach to the Village’s commercial and apartment property owners to begin ongoing conversations about local historic buildings.			

<p>Initiate ongoing conversations with Village Economic Development officials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify the types of information that could be helpful for considering new development and redevelopment projects. • To establish a basis for consensus in considering broader economic development issues and individual projects. • To identify activities or programs that enable historic preservation and sustainability into economic development processes and projects. 			
<p>Identify specific ways to improve communications among the economic development stakeholders.</p>			

Objective: Enhance Oak Park's existing historic preservation structure and processes.			
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)	RESPONSIBLE?	COST ESTIMATE?
Consider commission members selected from different constituencies, such as the business community, organization representatives, or historic district representatives. (Newton MA and Pasadena, CA)			
Identify if such tools as 'Stand Still Agreements' between property owners and the Historic Preservation Commission could enable good preservation results. (New York City)			
Evaluate potential ordinance provisions to address issues, such as 'Non-conforming conditions' and specific application deadlines. (Brookline, MA)			
Consider future local fees to support historic preservation work. (Multiple Communities)			
Work in tandem with the relevant Village departments to adopt the International Existing Building Code, (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Work with environmental advocates to identify potential issues, such as window replacement, and formulate processes and programs that work for applicants under the preservation ordinance. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Consider an ad hoc preservation contractor advisory group to assist the Commission and Village staff as needed, on issues specific to construction on significant properties. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Continue to integrate ongoing planning and zoning work into the Village's preservation structure. (Oak Park Project Suggestion)			
Enable sustainable technology guidelines (i.e. solar panels, windows, retrofits for non-visible features, etc.) to apply to historic buildings, including landmarks, balancing character and flexibility.			
Examine the Historic Preservation Ordinance and other regulations			
Include an educational component about historic windows, incorporating 'green' issues,			

with any educational activities.			
Work with Park District staff to provide information about historic preservation and 'green' technology.			
Provide education to public officials about historic preservation processes and Commission roles and responsibilities.			
Refine the enforcement provisions of the Ordinance to insure clarity, speed of decision-making, and address issues such the inability to grant variances.			
Improve communication with Village officials through training and joint commission sessions that emphasize the benefits of historic preservation.			
Work to better integrate historic preservation into existing Village internal processes, such as the new Business Services function and for certain initial permit requests to provide education and information about historic preservation and potential resources.			
Consider public meetings about historic preservation for education purposes.			
Consider potential outreach to local contactors incorporating 'green' and historic preservation.			
For the Architectural Review Commission (part of the Historic Preservation Commission), enforce a complete application rule as part of preliminary review.			
For the Historic Preservation Commission's advisory reviews, consider the urban fabric and overall character implications for the entire Village.			
Develop a list of historic preservation 'can do's for potential applications and education purposes.			
Consider form-based zoning.			
Develop pro-active tools that inform and help applicants specifically geared to residential and commercial applicants entering the preservation process.			
For landmark properties, consider a program like Elgin's where the landmark status is noted on the property title.			