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**New Marion Street to open on November 20**

**Oak Park to unveil newly transformed shopping district**

The new Marion Street in the heart of Oak Park's central business district is scheduled to open at 5 p.m., Tues., Nov. 20, with an official ribbon cutting, lighting ceremony and parade of vintage cars.

The block-long sections of Marion Street and connecting Westgate Street have been thoughtfully transformed to showcase downtown Oak Park as a shopping, dining and gathering destination not only for the community, but for the region as well. The area was the last remnant of a pedestrian-only mall created in 1974.

Visitors will find the new Marion Street to be much more than a roadway. Brick pavers create a road surface similar to the original early 20th century street, while bluestone sidewalks and granite curbs lend a simple, yet timeless quality in keeping with the historic character of the downtown area.

Sidewalks widths now range from about 10 feet to 18 feet, creating ample room for strolling as well as for outdoor dining, benches and bicycle parking. A water fountain near the convergence of Marion and Westgate is part of the plan, too, along with trees and moveable planters that will provide shade, color and visual interest. Lighting fixtures will announce the gateways to the new Marion Street space, their round globes modern reproductions of the fixtures that lined the street in the 1920s.

Other features include a system to capture and filter storm water for irrigating the trees and plantings, and an under-surface heating system to melt snow and ice from the sidewalks.

The street opening festivities will begin at the south end of the block, near North Boulevard, and extend north to Lake Street. Individual merchants will be offering gifts and samples, and welcoming shoppers, browsers and the curious to share in the excitement of the renaissance of an area that is sure to become Oak Park's outdoor living room.

For more information on the Marion Street project, call 708.358.5648 or e-mail [planning@oak-park.us](mailto:planning@oak-park.us). Information also is posted at [www.oak-park.us](http://www.oak-park.us) – just [click here](#) for a direct link to more information on the project.

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