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**Oak Park seeking architects and builders for green demonstration projects**

Oak Park's Barrie Park neighborhood once was known as the site of a long-defunct, environmentally unfriendly coal gasification plant buried under a park. Now, a short two years since the clean-up, officials hope the same neighborhood will become famous for its environmentally friendly, energy efficient construction practices and technology.

A request for proposals scheduled to be issued Wednesday is seeking teams of architects and builders to transform two homes in a residential neighborhood on Oak Park's southeast side into demonstration projects that will showcase products, ideas and approaches that could be used in remodeling homes throughout the community and region.

The two homes – a one-story at 1030 S. Taylor Ave. and a two-flat at 1100 St. Lombard – were among six homes purchased by the Village from residents during the remediation project. Three of the homes have since been sold and a fourth leased. These final two homes were retained by the Village for green demonstration projects.

Respondents to the RFP will have wide latitude to redevelop or remodel the buildings, with the goal of unveiling the finished projects in February 2009. Village officials say they expect the interest generated by the projects to enhance the position of Oak Park as a forward-looking, environmentally conscious community.

"Oak Park already is in the forefront of the sustainable movement when it comes to public buildings," said Village Manager Tom Barwin. "Our new Public Works Center is the first in Illinois to seek certification through the U.S. Green Buildings Council. Now, we want to extend the concept to our residential neighborhoods. The Village is committed to setting an example that residents can look to for tangible ideas and inspiration."

The RFP is structured to first gauge interest and assess qualifications, abilities and experience of bidders before any specific project concepts are presented. Respondents will have until March 19 to complete this first phase of the process. Property tours will follow, allowing teams to consider proposals for one or both properties, with detailed project plans due on June 2.

For more information on the project, call 708.358.5644 or e-mail [devsvcs@oak-park.us](mailto:devsvcs@oak-park.us). The RFP will be posted at [www.oak-park.us](http://www.oak-park.us) – mouse over the *Departments* tab, click on *Economic Development* and look for the link along the right margin.

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