

Madison Street competition on track

Development interest, opportunities abound in downtown Oak Park

By the time the ribbon was cut to officially open Marion Street, investors already had recognized the growing economic potential of the area.

Now, as cars cruise a street reminiscent of the 1920s and pedestrians stroll along the wide sidewalks, a fierce competition is underway among three, well-funded private companies to develop about 81,000 square feet of property just to the west of Marion along Lake and Westgate streets.

Seven developers responded to a request for qualifications to develop the site, which includes the Colt Building at 1125-33 Lake, 1121-23 Lake, 1145 Westgate and the surface parking lot on North Boulevard across from the entrance to the multimodal public transit station.

Five of the developers were invited to present their credentials and general concepts to the Village Board, which then reduced the field to three. Each of the three developers was given a \$10,000 stipend to further develop their proposals, with final selection expected in early spring.

While the three respondents chosen to advance did not present finished concepts, their approaches were varied and appealing for different reasons. One saw the site as a place for mixed use, with retail on the ground floor and more



An aerial view of a massing study for the downtown development site.

than 280 rental apartments above. Another presented two concepts, each with an urban-style Target — possibly underground — along with retail and residential units above. The third candidate proposed a boutique hotel, apartment complex, retail and family entertainment, such as a bowling alley. Each of the proposals can be viewed at www.oak-park.us/rfq.

The public will get to see and comment on the final concepts proposed for downtown in a meeting scheduled for March 19. The Village Board may consider a final concept in April.

Meanwhile, a similar process underway on Madison Street at Highland Avenue has two developers competing to build along the important east-west corridor.

Both developers would incorporate privately owned property on Madison that would extend the site — one west nearly to Cuyler Avenue, the other east to Harvey Avenue. Each of two proposals recommends a mix of retail, residential and parking. Office space also could be part of the final plan.

The finished concepts for the Madison

Street site are scheduled to be presented to the public on Jan. 16, with a final selection expected on Jan. 28.

Visit www.oak-park.us/agendas for specific details on all Village Board meetings, including times, locations and agendas.

For more information on planning and development in Oak Park, call 358.5425 or e-mail planning@oak-park.us.

OP/FYI returns to bi-monthly publication

With this issue, the community newsletter *OP/FYI* returns to its original bi-monthly publication schedule as part of the effort to trim Village operating expenses and take advantage of the growing reliance of citizens on the internet as a source of the most up-to-date news. In addition to this issue, newsletters are scheduled for March, May, July, September and November. The *OP/FYI* was originally launched in 1989 on a bi-monthly schedule, moving to monthly in 2001. Residents are urged to visit www.oak-park.us/news for breaking news from the Village. Residents also can receive the latest official Village news via e-mail — just go to www.oak-park.us/news and look for the e-news icon to sign up. A new, monthly on-line version of the *OP/FYI* also is being planned. For more information, call 358.5770 or e-mail village@oak-park.us.



Urban-style Target planned for Chicago.

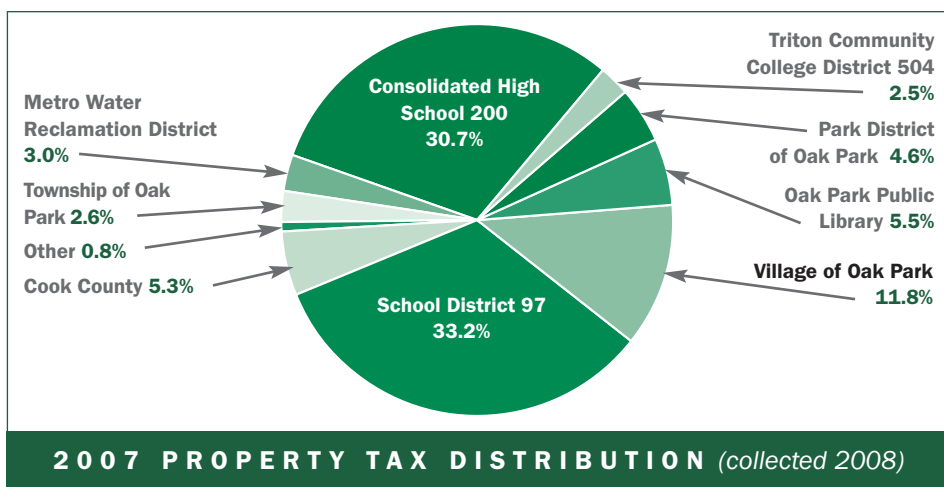
2008 budget retains critical services, begins to rebuild fund balance

Oak Parkers may have to pay a little more for Village services next year, but the 2008 budget has put municipal finances back on track toward the fund balance so critical to strong bond ratings and attracting private investments.

The \$89 million balanced operating budget approved in December includes modest increases in a range of fees, increases that were essential to maintaining the Village's emphasis on public safety and public works. Together, these fundamental municipal government services will account for nearly two-thirds of all 2008 spending.

Oak Parkers will be asked to pay about 3 percent more in property taxes next year, an increase estimated to cost the owner of a \$400,000 home an additional \$35. Even with the increase, the Village's municipal government share of each property tax dollar residents pay will be less than 12 cents.

Property owners also will be asked to pay a little more for water and sewer service in the year ahead, due primarily to a pass-through increase in



what the City of Chicago charges users of Lake Michigan water. The water and sewer service rate increases are estimated to cost the average homeowner about \$7.61 more a month.

Refuse hauling rates will increase slightly as well. Fees will increase \$1.95 a month for large carts and \$1.64 a month for smaller ones. Property owners currently are billed quarterly for water, sewer and refuse hauling services.

Cost reductions are in the budget, too. About \$3.5 million in general fund expenses were cut, in addition to the 5 percent reductions originally recommended by Village staff in October. A

hiring freeze also was put into effect for many departments, and more than 20 positions have been eliminated or deferred for consideration until 2009.

Public safety — especially Police and Fire — will continue to be a priority in 2008. While some vacant positions in these departments may not be filled, no reduction among the ranks of hands-on police officers or firefighters is planned.

For more information on the budget call 358.5460 or e-mail finance@oak-park.us. A link to an overview of the budget is posted at www.oakpark.us/finance — just click on the budget book cover icon.



Medical transport system earns national accreditation

The Oak Park Fire/EMS Department's medical transportation system has once again earned full accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS), a nonprofit organization that encourages and promotes quality patient care in America's medical transportation system. The Oak Park Fire/EMS Department is just one of six agencies nationwide accredited in both fire services and emergency medical services. In addition to the CAAS accreditation for emergency medical services, the Oak Park Fire Department also is accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation

International (CFAI), a non-profit organization that promotes quality improvement in the fire service through a self-assessment process on a five-year cycle. CAAS' national standards address not only patient care delivery, but also total ambulance service operation and its relationships with other agencies, the public and the medical community. Accreditation by CAAS signifies that the Oak Park Fire/EMS Department has met the standards defined by the ambulance industry, standards that often exceed those set by state and local regulations. The CAAS accreditation process is voluntary

and requires a comprehensive self-assessment and an independent outside review of the emergency medical services organization. This is the fire department's third CAAS accreditation. The fire department earned its first CAAS accreditation in 2001 and its first CFAI accreditation in 1999. The department will be working toward its third CFAI accreditation in 2008. For more information on the Fire Department's accreditations and services, call 445.3300 or e-mail fire@oak-park.us.



Online ticket payment, appeal process streamlined

Using the Village's web site to appeal or pay a parking ticket has gotten a little easier. Users no longer have to register and wait for e-mail confirmation before filing an appeal or making a payment. The site also allows a vehicle owner to use the web site to pay to have an immobilization device removed. Directions for contesting and paying online are printed on the ticket as well as on the web site through a link posted at www.oak-park.us/onlineservices. Payment may be made with a Visa, MasterCard or Discover card. For more information on parking ticket payments, call 358.5750 or e-mail parking@oak-park.us. For information on contesting a ticket, call 358.5479 or e-mail adjudication@oak-park.us. Information on the adjudication process also is posted www.oak-park.us/adjudication.

Snowfall triggers emergency parking plan



After a two-inch snowfall, the Emergency Snow Removal Parking Plan goes into effect and the following parking rules are enforced seven days a week, including holidays:

- Main streets posted as snow routes must be cleared of all parked cars. Snow routes include Augusta, Austin, Chicago, Division, Garfield, Harlem, Harrison, Jackson, Lake, Madison, North Avenue, Oak Park, Ridgeland, Roosevelt and Wisconsin from Madison to the emergency entrance of Oak Park Hospital.

- Non-snow route streets allow parking between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. on the side of the street with even numbered addresses (east and north) on even days and the side of the street with odd numbered addresses (west and south) on odd days.
- Designated commercial parking areas follow the odd/even rule between midnight and 8 a.m.

To find out if snow-related parking restrictions are in effect, call 358.SNOW or tune into VOP-TV, cable channel 6. Detailed information on the parking guidelines is posted at www.oak-park.us/snow.

Be cautious with alternate heat sources

High energy costs may tempt residents to use alternate heating sources such as portable and baseboard electric heaters, fireplaces and woodstoves. But fire officials urge caution and recommend following these guidelines:

- Don't leave baseboard heaters unattended, remove nearby objects, keep furniture a safe distance away, do not block the heat flow and never use an extension cord.
- Choose a portable heater with temperature control, an automatic shut off and a seal of approval from an independent testing laboratory.
- Always use a fire screen on a fireplace, never burn trash or paper and don't leave fires unattended.
- When through with the fire, clean out the cool ashes and place in a metal container.

In addition to these guidelines, be sure to have working carbon monoxide detectors, smoke alarms and a family escape plan in the event of a fire. For more information on home fire safety, call 445.3300, visit www.oak-park.us/fire or e-mail fire@oak-park.us.

Time running out to register to vote

Residents who wish to vote in the February 2008 Presidential Primary have until Tues., Jan. 8, to register — including transferring registration information to a new address. Two types of identification are required, at least one with a current address. Acceptable forms of identification include driver's license, state ID card, Social Security card, utility bill, valid passport, employee or student ID, credit card and birth certificate. Residents can register at the Office of the Village Clerk at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., or at the Oak Park Township Office, 105 S. Oak Park Ave. For more information on registration or the primary election, call 358.5670, e-mail clerk@oak-park.us or visit www.voterinfonet.com, a web site operated by the Cook County Clerk.

Early voting offered for February primary

Village Hall will be one of 43 sites in Cook County where any registered voter can vote early or cast an absentee vote for the February 5 presidential primary.

Early voting will be offered Mon., Jan. 14 through Thurs., Jan. 31. Registered voters can cast early ballots at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., during regular hours of 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays, Jan. 19 and 26. Early voting also will be offered at the County Clerk's downtown office and five suburban locations. Anyone registered in Cook County may vote at any early voting site. For more information about the election process, contact the Office of the Village Clerk at 358.5670 or e-mail clerk@oak-park.us. Information, including addresses of all early voting sites, is posted at www.voterinfonet.com.



Holiday tree collections scheduled

Holiday trees will be picked up on regular trash and recycling collection days during the weeks of January 7 and January 14. Please follow these instructions:

- Place tree in regular collection area next to refuse cart — only residents with no alley should put trees at the curb
- Remove all tinsel, decorations and stands
- Do not put tree in plastic disposal bag
- Wreaths and garlands are not recyclable because they are held together with wire — put them in the refuse cart

Call 358.5700 or e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us for more information.



NEWS YOU CAN USE

Don't hesitate to call 9-1-1...Oak Park's community policing approach relies on residents taking an active role. If you see unusual activity, suspicious people or vehicles in your neighborhood, don't hesitate to call 9-1-1 immediately. For more information on the Community Policing Program, or to contact your Resident Beat Officer, call 386.3800 or visit www.oak-park.us/police.

Business license required...All businesses operating in commercial space in Oak Park not licensed by the state are required to have a Village-issued license. Fees vary by type of business. Call 358.5670 or e-mail clerk@oak-park.us.

Saving parking spaces illegal...Saving a parking space by placing items such as furniture in the street after a snowfall makes it difficult for crews to plow. Items found in the street will be removed. Call 358.5700 or e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us.

Stop solicitors...To prevent door-to-door solicitors from knocking, obtain a no-soliciting sticker to place on or near your front door. Call 358.5670 or e-mail clerk@oak-park.us.

Area events calendar...To keep up to date about community events visit www.visitoakpark.com. A free guide also is available from the Convention and Visitors Bureau, 158 N. Forest Ave. Call 524.7800 or e-mail info@visitoakpark.com.

Disabled parking patrol...Volunteers are needed to ticket cars parked illegally in spaces reserved for vehicles operated by individuals with disabilities. Volunteers use their own vehicles, but training, telephones and magnetic vehicle identification signs are provided. Call 358.5545 or e-mail police@oak-park.us.

Crime Tip Hot Line...Citizens are urged to report any suspicious activity to the Police Department's Crime Tip Hot Line at 386.0740. All callers will remain anonymous. In an emergency, always call 9-1-1.

Home-based businesses...Home-based businesses are permitted in any building as an accessory use within the limits of the Zoning Ordinance that allows one non-family member employee if off-street parking is provided. No home business may occupy more than 25 percent of the total floor area. Prohibited home businesses include manufacturing, animal hospitals, barbershops and beauty salons, clinics, repair shops and restaurants. The Office of the Village Clerk registers home businesses and the Zoning Officer checks for compliance. Call 358.5670 or e-mail clerk@oak-park.us.



Daily at 6 a.m., 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., 10 p.m.

- VOP-TV edition of the *OP/FYI*
- New Public Works Facility Ribbon Cutting
- Winter Driving Safety
- School Pedestrian Safety
- Marion Street Ribbon Cutting

Regular Village Board Meetings

Live first and third Mondays. Replayed at 11 a.m., Sunday and Tuesday, and 7 p.m., Wednesday

Study Sessions

Days and times of *live* cablecast vary. Replayed at 11 a.m., Thursday and Saturday, and 7 p.m., Tuesday

Selected original programming can be viewed at www.oak-park.us — including the video version of this issue of the *OP/FYI* newsletter. Just click on the camera icon.

Who to Call at Village Hall

Main Number	383.6400
Village TTY	383.0048
Police/Fire TTY	848.1911
Info Line	445.3340
Adjudication	358.5479
Building and Property Standards	358.5430
Licenses/permits	358.5433
Codes/status of plans	358.5434
Property complaints	358.5443
Inspections	358.5440
Community Planning/Development	358.5425
Business Services	358.5648
Development Services	358.5644
Housing	358.5411
Historic Preservation	358.5417
Zoning	358.5449
Community Relations	358.5400
Graffiti Hotline	358.5429
Neighborhood Programs	358.5423
Finance	358.5460
Utility Billing Inquiries	358.5478
Fire (non-emergency)	445.3300
Human Resources	358.5650
Police (non-emergency)	386.3800
Crime Tip Hotline	386.0740
Public Health	358.5480
Animal Control	358.5680
Public Works	358.5700
Day Parking Passes	358.DAYS
Night Parking Passes	358.NITE
Parking Office	358.PARK
Snow Hotline	358.SNOW
Village Clerk	358.5670
Village Manager's Office	358.5770
Village Web Site	www.oak-park.us

Police, Fire and Medical EMERGENCIES

911

Fire Department offers life-saving classes throughout 2008

The Oak Park Fire Department is offering a variety of life-saving CPR classes throughout the year ahead, including training in how to use an automated external defibrillator, or AED. The classes will be held at the Department's community training center at the main fire station, 100 N. Euclid Ave. Four different classes are offered — infant/child CPR, Heartsaver/first aid, Heartsaver/AED and AED training for health care providers. All courses are taught by an American Heart Association-certified instructor from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Classes are free for Oak Park residents, but a \$10 textbook fee payable by check or money order is required. In-person registration is recommended at least two weeks prior to the date of the desired course. For more details or to register for any of the courses, call 445.3300 or e-mail fire@oak-park.us.

2008 Course Schedule

Infant/Child – Mondays	April 8	Healthcare Provider/AED – Wednesdays
February 11	May 13	January 23
March 10	June 10	February 27
April 21	Heartsaver/AED – Wednesdays	March 26
May 12	January 2 & 16	April 23
June 23	February 6 & 20	May 28
July 14	March 5 & 19	June 25
August 4	April 2 & 16	July 23
September 15	May 7 & 21	August 27
October 6	June 4 & 18	September 24
November 17	July 2 & 16	October 22
December 8	August 6 & 20	November 26
Heartsaver/first aid – Tuesdays	September 3 & 17	December 17
January 8	October 1 & 15	
February 12	November 5 & 19	
March 11	December 3	

Winter tree pruning underway

Tree pruning is scheduled from early-January to mid-March, weather permitting. The 2008 trim area is East Avenue to Harlem Avenue from the expressway to Madison Street, and from Harlem to Austin Boulevard between Madison and the train tracks near Lake Street. Village forestry staff will prune parkway trees under eight inches in diameter and a private contractor working under the supervision of the Forestry Division will prune all trees over eight inches in diameter. Some 4,400 parkway trees are in the 2008 trim area, about 1,400 of which will be trimmed by Village crews and 3,000 trimmed by the contractor. Village crews also will be removing mulch that has been piled up against tree trunks in a configuration called *volcano mulching*, a practice that endangers the long-term health of a tree. Door hangers explaining how to correctly mulch a tree will be left on homes near where volcano mulching is found. For more information on tree trimming and care call 358.5700 or e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us.

Nature museum activities



Cook County's Trailside Museum of Natural History, 738 Thatcher Ave., in River Forest, offers a range of programs for children and adults alike:

- **Winter rangers' camp:** Two mornings of explorations, hiking, crafts and activities inside and outside the Museum. Ages nine – 11. 9:30 a.m. – noon, Thurs. and Friday, Jan. 3 and 4. \$8 per child. Call 366.6530 to register.
- **Nature story times:** Nature-inspired stories, crafts and activities. Ages three – five with adult. 10:30 a.m., Thursdays, Jan. 3, 17 and 31. \$1 per child.
- **Winter wonderland walk:** Naturalist-led winter stroll through the woods, followed by a campfire with toasted marshmallows and hot chocolate. Family program. 1 p.m., Sun., Jan. 6. \$1 per person. Call 366.6530 to register.
- **Owls and bagels:** Early morning walk in the woods to *call down* local wild owls, followed by coffee and bagels. Adults and families with children over 10. 6 a.m., Sat., Jan. 12. \$1 per person. Call 366.6530 to register.
- **Morning fitness walk:** Naturalist-led, one-hour walk on the trails surrounding Trailside Museum. Free adult program. 9 a.m., Sat. Jan. 19. Meet at Museum entrance. Dress for weather.
- **Winter critters:** Learn about winter wildlife through activities and touchable artifacts Children kindergarten – third grade with adult. 1 p.m., Sun., Jan. 27, \$1 per child. Call 366.6530 to register.

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Village President David Pope
Trustees Jon Hale, Greg Marsey, Ernest Moore, John Hedges, Ray Johnson, Jan Pate
Village Clerk Sandra Sokol
Village Manager Thomas W. Barwin

Village of Oak Park
Village Hall
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272



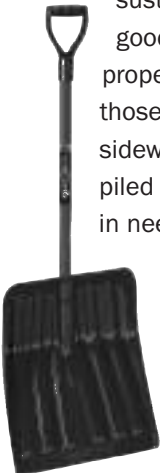
OP/FM

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Presort
Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 26
Oak Park, IL

Shoveling required

Village ordinance requires snow and ice to be removed from the public sidewalk within 24 hours following any snow, sleet or freezing rain. If the snow or ice has become too hard to shovel, then sand, salt or other abrasive material may be used to make pedestrian travel reasonably safe. The shoveling requirement applies to both business and residential property owners. While failure to clear a sidewalk fronting or abutting one's property could lead to a ticket and fine, the Village is counting on the community to comply willingly — especially since so many sidewalks in Oak Park are walking routes to and from neighborhood schools and mass transit stops. Shoveled sidewalks also help keep Oak Park walkable during the winter months, an important step toward being an even more environmentally sustainable community. Being a good neighbor is important, too, so property owners are urged to help those who may need help clearing a sidewalk. The Village also has compiled a list of resources where those in need can turn for help. For more information on the shoveling requirement or help resources, call 358.5700 or e-mail publicworks@oak-park.us.



Citizen volunteers always needed



When it comes to citizen involvement in the process of making public policy, few communities can match the opportunities offered in Oak Park where volunteers serve on more than 25 separate advisory boards and commissions. As part-time lawmakers, the Village president and trustees rely on the boards and commissions to do much of the in-depth investigative work that a single board could never have the time or expertise to complete. These citizen volunteers conduct

in-depth studies, evaluate research and hold meetings that create the public record so critical to Village Board actions. A varied group of volunteers is sought to represent the Village's diversity, and renters as well as homeowners are encouraged to apply. For more information on volunteering to serve on one of the commissions or boards call 358.5670 or e-mail clerk@oak-park.us. To review a complete list of the advisory bodies, visit www.oak-park.us.

Birth, death certificates no longer available from Village

Beginning Jan. 1, birth and death certificates will no longer be available at Village Hall. The County Clerk is the official record keeper for births and deaths that occur in Chicago and suburban Cook County, but the Oak Park Department of Public Health had offered the service for births and deaths that occurred in Oak Park as a convenience to residents. However, with Oak Parkers accounting for only about 12 percent of all record requests made annually through the Health Department, and costs exceeding revenues from fees, the local service has been transferred back to Cook County beginning in 2008. Eliminating the service should have minimal impact since Cook County offers a range of convenient ways to acquire a birth or death certificate, including suburban satellite offices, online and through currency exchanges. Detailed information is posted at www.cookctyclerk.com. Information also is available by calling 312.603.7790.