

Reaching out for community input

Residents urged to participate in surveys for recreation, Ike issues

A desire to more accurately gauge where residents stand on issues has the Village looking to formal research tools and techniques to gather citizen opinions. Two mail surveys will soon begin arriving in residents' homes as part of separate efforts to gather information. The first will focus on parks and recreation and the second on issues associated with a proposed plan to cover the Eisenhower Expressway with a cap through Oak Park.

Parks and recreation survey

Some 2,000 Oak Parkers selected at random will be asked to share their views and desires for the community's parks and recreation facilities and services by completing a survey expected to arrive in mailboxes in early January. The survey is part of a Village and Park District joint effort to draft a comprehensive master plan that will set priorities and determine future programs and capital needs.

Estimated to take only about 15 minutes to complete, the survey should provide a statistically valid measure of residents' views on current programs and facilities, as well as offer ideas on direction for future planning.

For more information on the park survey or the comprehensive plan, call 725.2022 or email parkmasterplan@oak-park.us. Regular updates on the progress of the master plan are posted at www.oakparkparks.com and www.oak-park.us.

Cap the IKE Study survey

Home and building owners who live within two blocks of the Eisenhower Expressway as well as a random sample of residents throughout the Village will be asked this month to provide information on their concerns and priorities associated with a study of covering the Ike now underway.

The information gathered through the survey will provide important background information to the consultants and citizen advisory stakeholder group, which are conducting the Cap the Ike Study as part of a Village effort to address community interests and long-standing problems associated with the Eisenhower's impact on Oak Park.

For more information on the survey or the study, call 358.5778 or email CapTheIKE@oak-park.us. Residents

also can track the study on the project web site at www.captheikestudy.com.

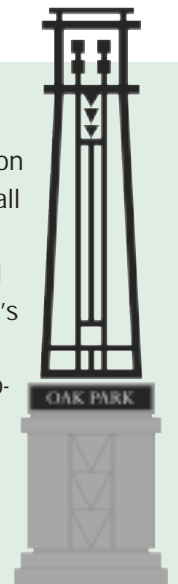
Past Surveys

These two surveys are not the first time the Village has used research tools to gather information from residents. A survey conducted in the late 2000 gathered extensive information on citizen attitudes on a wide range of government services and related subjects. A survey also was conducted in the fall of 2002 to assess resident satisfaction with cable television service as part of the franchise renewal process. Future surveys also are likely as the Village strives to gather timely information on changing attitudes and needs as a way to better allocate municipal resources.

Results of these surveys can be reviewed on the Village website, www.oak-park.us.

New signs to welcome visitors

Four prairie style metal and limestone entry monuments will soon help visitors know they have arrived in Oak Park. The 15-foot tall devices will be installed along Austin Boulevard at Madison Street and Jackson Boulevard, and on Harlem Avenue at Lake Street and Garfield Street. The new monument devices are part of the Village's ongoing wayfinding system, a long-term communications program designed to welcome and guide visitors. Other elements of the program include signs identifying Oak Park's historic districts, maps at transit stations, business district directories and devices at key community entryways that hold banners that can be changed to highlight special events or activities. For more information, call 358.5778 or email village@oak-park.us.



Message from the Manager

When it comes to community issues, ours are good ones to have

Today, Oak Park is a vibrant, healthy community with phenomenal investment occurring in our housing stock and a variety of opportunities for redevelopment in our business districts. As a result, the focus of Village government has shifted away from simply attracting development to identifying what the community defines as the most appropriate development.

Just five or six years ago the Oak Park Village Board was still working to fend off the last vestiges of the '70s and '80s economic decline that had devastated many inner ring suburbs around the country. With a shrinking commercial property tax base, residential property owners in Oak Park had no choice but to assume a growing share of the bill for vital public services.

During that time of economic uncertainty, various civic groups authored reports urging Village government to address this major community concern. The Village Board earnestly pursued the challenge. They updated old programs and policies and created new ones to encourage development and eliminate obstacles to private investment. The Board directed the rewrite of the Village's planned development procedures in 1998 and began a major review of our commercial zoning regulations the following year. The Village also hired experienced development professionals to create and manage programs that would attract investment and nurture the public-private partnerships that had brought prosperity to other communities.

The good news is that these actions have been successful. Today, developers are eager for an opportunity to invest here. With this newfound interest in Oak Park by outside investors, we have entered a new era of increased planning.

Over the past year, and through one of the most extensive community involvement efforts in Village history, plans for the redevelopment of the Harrison Street and Oak Park Avenue-Eisenhower business districts were created with the help of the University of

We must be nimble and confident enough to plan for the future, while, at the same time, making the most of the opportunities we have today.

Illinois-Chicago's College of Urban Planning and Policy. The Village also worked with Berwyn officials, residents and business owners through a significant public planning process to create a detailed new plan to help guide redevelopment along Roosevelt Road. And this year, the Village will work with citizens and business owners to update the development plan for the Downtown Lake Street Business District, the Avenue-Lake Business District and the Downtown TIF (Tax Increment Financing) plan, as well as begin the update of the Village's all-important comprehensive plan.

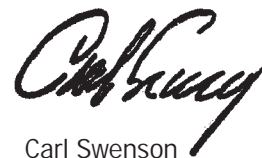
The public discussions surrounding each of these planning efforts offer important opportunities for Oak Park residents to have a say in setting the direction for our community not just today, but for years to come. Through the active involvement of citizens, the community will be in a stronger position than ever before to shape the impact new development will have on the Village.

The Village Board is eager to have citizens take an active role in shaping the policies that will guide future redevelopment in our community. Let's have civil and informed public discourse about the nature and character of development. Let's discuss the value new development brings and how it can help stabilize our residential property tax bills. Let's talk about how we can make certain new development will provide the most financial benefits for our schools and other public institutions.

But as we plan, discuss and debate let us also act. We must be nimble and confident enough to plan for the future, while, at the same time, making the most of the opportunities we have today.

All in all, these are pretty good issues to have.

Happy 2004!



Carl Swenson

New budget focuses on essential services

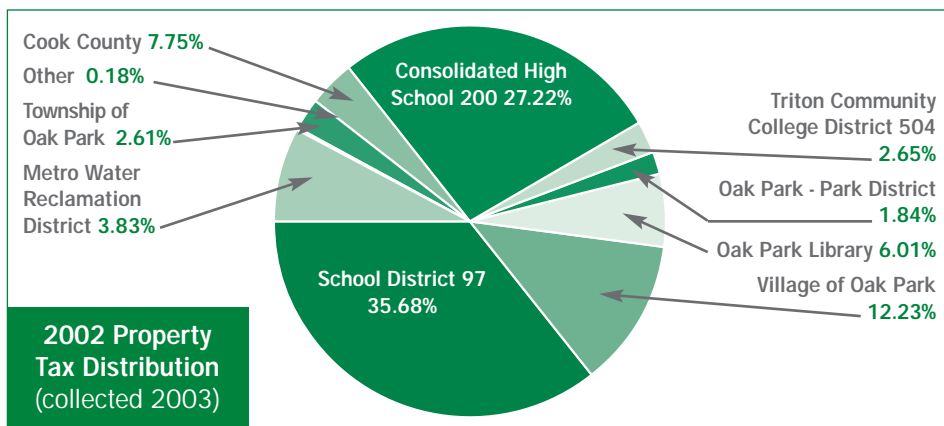
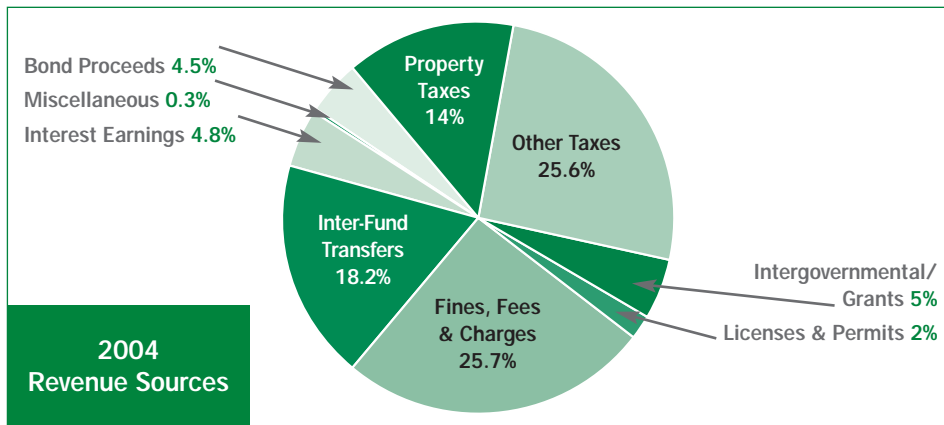
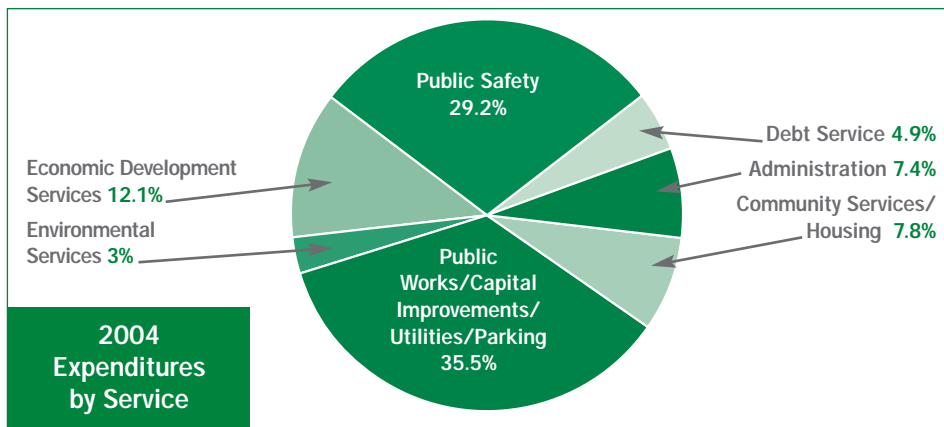
The Village begins 2004 with a budget down some 16 percent from 2003, as reduced debt service and greater focus on essential services translates to the fifth consecutive year with no need to seek an increase in the municipal share of the property tax levy.

The 2004 budget totals \$92.4 million, which includes all costs associated with Village operations supported by local revenue sources, state funds and federal dollars. Nearly a third of the total budget will go to public safety, which includes vital services provided by the Police, Fire and Health departments. Some \$10.1 million is budgeted for capital improvements this year, including resurfacing the entire length of Oak Park Avenue and new streetlights for Roosevelt Road.

Property taxes will remain the single largest source of revenue for municipal services, but still represent less than 15 percent of all locally generated income. Utility taxes will generate approximately 10 percent of local funds, followed closely by sales, state income and real estate transfer taxes. Sales and utility tax revenues are projected to remain relatively steady in 2004, as are revenues from building permits and property transfer taxes which are expected to reflect continued confidence in the community's real estate values.

Increases in certain user fees are part of the 2004 budget, including what the City of Chicago charges for Lake Michigan water, and related fees collected by the Village to maintain water and sewer lines and services. Residential water and sewer rates will increase 23 cents per 1,000 gallons of water used. While the rate for Lake Michigan water increases annually, this increase in the Village's share of the water and sewer bill is the first since the mid-1990s.

Charges for solid waste collection



will rise by \$4 per month for residential properties of five or fewer units on March 1 when the Village's new two-tiered rate system goes into effect. Residents who choose to recycle more and toss less by reducing the size of their garbage cart can limit their increase to \$1.50 per month.

The new budget also includes funds from an additional penny-per-gallon tax on gasoline sold in the Village. Money from the tax will help support an enhanced alley improvement program that has targeted 10 to 12 alleys for reconstruction in the year ahead.

Other highlights of the 2004 budget include creation of a new citizen service assurance position to monitor and improve customer service and satisfaction with Village services, funds to revise the Village's comprehensive plan, a local transit circulator and an enhanced retail grant program.

For more information on the budget, call the Finance Department at 358.5460 or email finance@oak-park.us. A copy of the budget also can be reviewed in Village Hall, 123 Madison St.

Students sought to compete in logo design contest

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students are invited to create a unique logo for the 2004 Day In Our Village celebration that showcases community organizations and their services in an open air trade-show-like environment in Scoville Park. All entries must be submitted on heavy card stock and include three colors and the words: **A Day In Our Village, Oak Park, Illinois**. Entries should be no larger than 9.5 inches wide and 10 inches high. All artwork must be original and not include any clip art. Entries should be mailed or delivered to Village Hall, 123 Madison St., Oak Park, IL 60302. All entries must be received by 5 p.m. Fri., Feb. 20. Meanwhile, Oak Park-based civic, cultural and business organizations that would like to participate in the annual event, scheduled for Sun., June 6, should contact the Village now to ensure a space. For more information on the logo design contest or the event, call 358.5409 or email comsvcs@oak-park.us.

Check out a book and your health at the Oak Park Library

The Oak Park Department of Public Health and the Oak Park Library have launched a health screening and information program for residents 30 to 50 years old – the time of life when disease prevention is most effective, but when finding the time for self-care is most difficult. The new program, called **Know Your Numbers**, is designed to make it convenient and cost effective for busy 30 and 40 somethings to start reducing personal risk for major killers heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Oak Park Department of Public Health nurses will set up shop from 9:30 a.m. to noon the second Saturday of each month in the main branch of the Public Library, 834 Lake St., to offer screenings for blood pressure, total cholesterol, non-fasting blood glucose, high-density lipids (HDL), body mass index, height and weight. Requiring only about 20 minutes from testing to results, the procedure involves just a finger stick to obtain a blood sample. Participants also will receive a brief counseling session with a registered nurse who will explain the test results, answer questions and provide referrals if necessary. The Library will have a display of health publications and local resources. Fees for the screening will be \$5 for just total cholesterol and glucose, or \$10 for all tests, but persons unable to pay may receive free screenings. The goal of the **Know Your Numbers** program is to make it as easy as possible for busy people who feel fine but may be at risk for heart disease, stroke or diabetes without knowing it to check their numbers, and arm themselves with the information and motivation to prevent problems. For more information or to make an appointment call 358.5486 or email health@oak-park.us.

Volunteers needed

REACT (Radio Emergency Associated Communications Team) is seeking volunteers for community service activities such as traffic control at special events and in emergencies and emergency radio communications when normal telephone lines are interrupted. For more information call 358.5545 or email police@oak-park.us.

HOUSING NEWS

First Time Homebuyer's seminar

A free seminar to help prospective first-time homebuyers understand loan programs available in Oak Park is scheduled for 7-8:30 p.m., Wed., Jan. 21 in Council Chambers of Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Financial assistance programs will be explained and participants will receive a free packet of helpful information. Pre-registration is required. Call 358.5408 or email comsvcs@oak-park.us.

Condominium Network meeting

A Condominium Network meeting for association board members and unit owners is scheduled for 7:30-9 p.m., Thurs., Jan. 29 in Council Chambers of Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Reservations are not required. The network is intended to help board members and unit owners better understand their roles and responsibilities. Presentations include condo safety, management's perspective and funding capital improvements. Call 358.5411 or email comsvcs@oak-park.us.

Condo management assistance

The Oak Park Residence Corporation offers a training program to help small condominium associations better self-manage their properties. Residence Corporation staff members provide hands-on technical assistance in developing the management tools and skills critical to being financially successful. To qualify associations must have 12 or fewer units, be less than two years old or be experiencing difficulties such as deferred maintenance or assessment delinquencies. For more information call 386.6061 or email czinanni@oakparkrc.com.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Public comments sought...Discussion of the character plans developed by graduate students and faculty of the University of Illinois-Chicago's College of Urban Planning and Policy for the Harrison Street and Oak Park Avenue-Eisenhower business districts will continue at 7 p.m., Thurs., Jan. 15 in Council Chambers at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Call 358.5418 or email comsvcs@oak-park.us.

Off-leash program...The Park District is temporarily allowing dogs to be off leash from 7 – 9 a.m., on Saturdays and Sundays in Lindberg Park (Greenfield Avenue between Marion Street and Woodbine Avenue) and in Ridgeland Common Park (Lake Street between Ridgeland and Scoville avenues). The schedule also is in effect on legal holidays in Ridgeland Common Park. Dogs must be properly licensed and supervised by their owners. Except for these specific times and places, the leash law will be strictly enforced. Call 725.2020 or email GaryB@oakparkparks.com.

Immunization clinic...Immunization services are available from 3 – 6 p.m. the second Wednesday of every month at the Health Department Clinic, 320 Lake St. The next immunizations will be given on Jan. 14. A parent or guardian must accompany children under 18. No appointment is necessary. Call 358.5491 or email health@oak-park.us.

CPR classes offered...CPR classes are offered from 6 – 10 p.m., the first and third Wednesday of every month at the main fire station, 100 N. Euclid Ave. Classes are free to residents. Registration is required along with a deposit of \$10 for loaned text. Call 445.3300 or email fire@oak-park.us.

Parking office extends hours...The Parking Office will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays, Jan. 5 and 26 for permit renewals. Call 358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Stop smoking groups...A six-week, seven-session program designed to help smokers deal with withdrawal, cravings, weight gain and stress will begin Jan. 20. Fee is \$20 and scholarships are available. Programs for businesses also can be arranged. Learn more at orientation sessions scheduled for noon and 7 p.m., Tues., Jan. 13 in Village Hall, 123 Madison St. To register call 358.5484 or email health@oak-park.us.

January workout...Sample a variety of exercise classes at a free workout from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m., Sat., Jan. 10 in Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Sponsored by the citizen volunteers of Healthy Oak Park, the classes include hip-hop for adults and kids, belly dancing, Tai Chi, body sculpting and more. Call 358.5484 or email health@oak-park.us.

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 Police provide training, telephones and magnetic vehicle identification signs. Call 358.5545 or email 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.

Property management manual...A recently revised Rental Property Management Manual is available in the Community Relations Division at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. For more information call 358.5409 or email comsvcs@oak-park.us.

Who to Call at Village Hall

Main number	383.6400
Village TTY	383.0048
Info Line	445.3340
Building & Property Standards	358.5430
Licenses/Permits	358.5433
Zoning	358.5449
Codes/status of plans	358.5434
Property complaints	358.5443
Inspections	358.5440
Community Services	358.5400
Community Relations	358.5423
Housing	358.5424
Planning/Community Development	358.5425
Information Technology	358.5450
Finance	358.5460
Utility Billing Inquiries	358.5478
Fire Non-Emergency	445.3300
Public Health	358.5480
Animal Control	358.5680
Development Services	358.5640
Human Resources	358.5650
Law	358.5660
Village Clerk	358.5670
Police Non-Emergency	386.3800
Crime Tip Hotline	386.0740
Police/Fire TTY	848.1911
West Suburban Consolidated Dispatch Center	771.9110
Public Works	358.5700
Snow Hotline	358.SNOW
Parking Office	358.PARK
Night Parking Passes	358.NITE
Day Parking Passes	358.DAYS
Village Manager's Office	358.5770
Village Board	358.5784
Village Web Page	www.oak-park.us

POLICE/FIRE/MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

911

JANUARY VOP-TV6 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

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

I Know We Can: Staying Drug Free
Neighborhood Programs Division
1100 Lake Street RFP
Fighting Influenza
Preserving Our Urban Forest

NASA Programming

Tuesday – Friday 4 – 5 p.m.

Regular Board Meetings

Live at 7:30 p.m. first & third
Mondays, rebroadcast Wednesdays
at 7:30 p.m.



Village of Oak Park

Village Hall

123 Madison Street

Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272

OP/FYI

Village President Joanne E. Trapani

Trustees

Diana Carpenter Galen Gockel

Ray Johnson Gus Kostopoulos

Robert Milstein David Pope

Village Clerk Sandra Sokol

Village Manager Carl Swenson

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Oak Park, IL

Permit No. 26

PAID

U.S. Postage

Standard

Presort

Transit service to be tested



A new free transit service will soon begin trolling for riders along a route linking popular Village sites and attractions. The tentative route includes the downtown shopping district and Oak Park Avenue, as well as Oak Park-River Forest High School, the Conservatory and Village Hall. The route may be adjusted based on rider input. Service currently is planned for 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., seven days a week. For more information call 358.5778 or email village@oak-park.us.

Holiday tree collection scheduled

Holiday trees will be picked up on regular trash and recycling collections days during the weeks of January 5 and 12. Please follow these instructions:

- Place your tree in your regular collection area. Only residents with no alleys should put trees at the curb.
- Remove tinsel, decorations and stands.
- Do not put trees in disposable plastic bags.
- Put wreaths and garlands in the refuse cart. They are held together by wire and are not recyclable.

For more information, call 358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

2004 Regular Village Board Meetings

- Monday, January 5
- Tuesday, January 20
- Monday, February 2
- Tuesday, February 17
- Monday, March 1
- Monday, March 15
- Monday, April 4
- Monday, April 19
- Monday, May 3
- Monday, May 17
- Monday, June 7
- Monday, June 21
- Tuesday, July 6
- Monday, July 19
- Monday, August 2
- Tuesday, September 7
- Monday, September 20
- Monday, October 4
- Monday, October 18
- Monday, November 1
- Monday, November 15
- Monday, December 6

The Village Board meets at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Agendas are posted on the official Village website www.oak-park.us. Call 358.5770 or email board@oak-park.us for more information.