

DOWNTOWN OAK PARK SUPERBLOCK PLANNING SURVEY RESULTS

101 surveys were submitted between August 16 and August 30, 2005.

Inside you will find:

- 1. Each question restated with the Agree/Disagree/Neutral responses tabulated, with additional comments listed below.**
- 2. Additional general comments**
- 3. Priorities listed as Votes Per Category (total)**
- 4. Priorities listed as Votes Per Category (priority ranked 1-5)**

Downtown Oak Park Superblock Planning Survey – 100 Results and Comments

A. A “Station Street” providing a new north-south circulation road parallel to and in between Marion and Harlem should be created.

AGREE = 31

DISAGREE = 44

NEUTRAL = 27

- One-way going south.
- Concerned about cost.
- I believe “if you build it, they will come.” Roads and parking will not alleviate traffic problems. MORE people will drive when they could walk.
- This would affect historically significant Tudor Revival structures on Westgate while having little to no effect on Harlem traffic, since the road would be only 1 block away.
- Not needed to improve traffic. Will worsen congestion on Lake Street and negatively (in current location) impact Westgate.
- Why talk about new streets when existing ones are closed?
- Depending on Colt decision.
- A north-south access point into the superblock must be created – either via Station Street or Marion Street.
- This could be either/or. Open Marion Street and/or build Station Street.
- Changing traffic patterns would help traffic flow.
- It depends on the plan.
- This “new” street would cause the demolition of vintage buildings which add character to the DTOP area. I am totally against building demolition.
- Will help facilitate retail and will also help with traffic congestion. Can also be an entry into our downtown.
- There needs to be some increased relationship between shops on Harlem and all eastward to Forest.
- Feeding more traffic north to Lake only makes the bad congestion on Lake even worse.
- Case has not been made as to advantages – traffic analysis inadequate.
- Could contribute to flow, but depends on what would be sacrificed to get space for street.
- What will happen to existing parking?
- For any number of reasons it is important to increase our retail space in the immediate Lake/Harlem area, and Station Street seems the best way to do it.
- This should be a gateway to Oak Park for the thousands of people who use Metra, Pace and CTA. Retail and transit-oriented housing should be on Station Street.
- We need to relieve congestion on Lake and Crandall Arambula says this will do it. We need it.
- I do not want the historic buildings razed.
- Station Street will provide increased retail and life to downtown.
- Certainly not if it plows through Westgate.
- Best idea so far to create new and interesting retail spaces while at the same time improve traffic flow and break the Lake/Harlem log jam.
- Not convinced this will help traffic flow.
- Open Marion Street.
- Any effort to improve the ease of navigation in the downtown should be a priority.

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- Agree, however it should be placed to provide reasonable phasing of the new development, create workable retail and public open space, and protect the viable, significant historic buildings.
- Traffic flow needs to be addressed.
- It's been demonstrated that Station Street won't help traffic problems. The goal of achieving new retail space could be achieved by opening the "Goldberg" (Colt) arcade to pedestrians.
- Current layout is adequate and provides easy access to all areas.
- Only if it improves parking availability and reduces Lake Street congestion.
- It might affect traffic on pedestrian mall.
- Important for increased traffic and pedestrian flow.
- Will create new commercial areas.
- An already compacted area would become unbearable and drive away shoppers.
- I think it could be helpful, but it needs to somehow incorporate the historic Westgate buildings (or facades).
- Station Street will dump large numbers of cars midblock on Lake adding rather than decreasing gridlock.
- A new street will further reduce land available for housing/retail and increase the use of autos instead of pushing for transit-based solutions.
- We have enough streets. Preserve Westgate.
- This area is already too congested with cars driving in circles. People need to walk!
- Not really necessary, but a narrow access way could be beneficial.
- Either Station Street or Marion Street open, not both.
- Have Gap/Pier One to walk through.
- Why?
- But move it to the west a bit, so it goes through a garage on North Blvd.
- Station Street OR opening Marion, certainly not both. Do we want either? Station Street requires demolition, a wide swath simply eminent-domained into a road. Hardy a positive of any sort.
- This is not necessary. It is NOT worth destroying true historic buildings (Colt) just to add a street.
- That plan would just jam up traffic in another additional place and not improve that situation.
- Not necessary and too expensive in destruction.
- I would favor a design for the street that only extended from South Blvd. to Westgate with pedestrian access to Lake Street from that point.

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B. Marion Street should be opened to vehicles from North Blvd. to Lake Street.

AGREE = 43

DISAGREE = 41

NEUTRAL = 17

- Single lane, parallel parking, wide sidewalks.
- One-way going south.
- Probably one-way going south.
- It's a gathering place for pedestrians in summer. The trees are attractive.
- I believe "if you build it, they will come." Roads and parking will not alleviate traffic problems. MORE people will drive when they could walk.
- I believe this would help revitalize businesses on Marion and could still maintain an excellent pedestrian environment.
- Two-way traffic.
- Yes – will improve retail and life of street.
- Only if instead of Station Street.
- Majority of retailers oppose.
- It would likely benefit the businesses and that would be good.
- Access for those traveling west to east off of Lake Street is critical. Station Street and/or a reopened Marion Street is key.
- Among advantages is making the empty lot (owner by the Village) more available for development.
- This is a unique space. An incredible pedestrian friendly space, that would attract visitors could be created from the existing space.
- Either, but not two-way – only one-way.
- Only one-way going south from Lake.
- Marion Street north is open – what advantage have those merchants seen?
- Prefer one-way south.
- You need better stores; not more traffic. A small one-way street will not help Lake Street traffic.
- Prefer the length of the street opened up.
- One way south only when left turn from west-bound Lake can work.
- Marion Street is the "heart" of Oak Park. We need to keep this block as a pedestrian gathering area in addition to retail.
- Only to Westgate Street.
- Opened in such a way as to be pedestrian friendly.
- I'm used to the mall, but know that decades of experience in numerous towns and cities show they just don't work.
- Will ultimately help revitalize Marion Street.
- I have no direct investment. I like the mall as it is.
- Opening the mall will increase visibility of retail on Marion.
- Only if it enhances traffic flow.
- It is dead during the day and dead at night. Re-opening Lake really helped. Re-opening Marion is the best available option.
- We need to market the unique potential of the rare suburban open space mall.

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- In both directions – no one way.
- It would increase ease of navigation and visibility for the businesses.
- I favor one-way south in direction, to support the connection of Westgate.
- I think we should first explore enhancing the Marion Mall for pedestrians as a public square before restoring traffic.
- As Greater Downtown Plan proposes – “European style.”
- Maintain the status quo.
- One small block could not make that much difference.
- If it is a one-way south from Lake Street.
- We need additional traffic circulation options.
- Very important. Improve viability of businesses.
- The street should be opened as a two-way. This can only be good for the businesses.
- Marion Street gives Oak Park a small downtown plaza where children play, people walk, sidewalk cafes bloom. Marion open will form a gridlock producing S curve at Lake unless numerous buildings are torn down to straighten Marion.
- It is a small enough stretch that people can find the business.
- This is an asset – an outdoor area for pedestrians. Leave it alone.
- Keep the mall and utilize it better.
- Why? To get more congestion at Lake/Marion. HA! What we need is outdoor eating – stores to draw people and encourage them to WALK place to place.
- If it could be done, I’d rather have more streets closed.
- Either Station Street or Marion Street open, not both.
- I like the pedestrian mall.
- If this is done, it should be only one way. I prefer it to remain closed for pedestrians to walk, bike, etc.
- Depends on traffic pattern. Do merchants want this?
- I would only open Marion Street to Westgate. This preserves a “mall” feel while at the same time increasing visibility for retail establishments.

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C. Marion Street should be opened to vehicles from North Blvd. to Westgate.

AGREE = 28

DISAGREE = 48

NEUTRAL = 19

- One-way going south.
- Traffic should be one-way south. I can't imagine how difficult it would be making a left onto Lake Street.
- It's a gathering place for pedestrians in summer. The trees are attractive. I like to walk.
- I believe "if you build it, they will come." Roads and parking will not alleviate traffic problems. MORE people will drive when they could walk.
- I am not sure what this would accomplish, since Westgate does not connect to any significant thoroughfare.
- Two-way traffic (as well as to Lake Street).
- Only if instead of Station Street.
- Majority of retailers oppose.
- No matter what – improved circulation with additional parking supply must be created.
- This is a unique space. An incredible pedestrian friendly space, that would attract visitors could be created from the existing space.
- Either, but not two-way – only one-way.
- Westgate should be opened to flow into Marion Street, south.
- Two-way.
- This seems to be a good compromise.
- Only if not opened all the way to Lake.
- Would create traffic problem on Lake.
- If opening Marion from North Blvd. to Lake is rejected and if we can create an alternative public space.
- In both directions – no one way.
- Not as beneficial as Option B.
- Agree, but it should continue to Lake Street.
- I think we should first explore enhancing the Marion Mall for pedestrians as a public square before restoring traffic.
- Maintain the status quo.
- Whatever solution best improves traffic flow, pedestrian access and transit usage.
- Better than closed, but not as good as B above.
- Open the entire street. Make it one-way.
- To do this will destroy the small town plaza feel and limit the amount of space for car-free strolling, children playing, etc.
- It is a small enough stretch that people can find the business.
- Not sure where you are referring.
- Keep the mall and utilize it better.
- Marion Street is beautiful – leave it alone – or better yet add a fountain – enhance its beauty and character to draw people there – to linger and shop.
- If it could be done, I'd rather have more streets closed.

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- I like the pedestrian mall.
- North Blvd. to Westgate would become a no-egress turnaround, and thus could become as congested as the parking lot (North Blvd., Marion to Forest). If opened, what would be the traffic pattern, round-and-round? North on Marion to Westgate, west on Westgate, south to North Blvd.?
- If this is done, it should be only one way. I prefer it to remain closed for pedestrians to walk, bike, etc.
- I don't know but I don't think it would help.
- I would only open Marion Street to Westgate. This preserves a "mall" feel while at the same time increasing visibility for retail establishments.

Downtown Oak Park Superblock Planning Survey – 100 Results and Comments

D. The Colt Building (1125-35 Lake/1144-50 Westgate) should be preserved and restored as part of a redevelopment project or plan.

AGREE = 37

DISAGREE = 31

NEUTRAL = 32

- Modify the building to accommodate new north-south street, preserve what's left.
- The façade only.
- I believe a part of the Colt Building would need to go in order for Station Street to be completed. The revitalization is more important than 25% of any building.
- Why spend money to demolish a good building?
- A well-designed replacement would be acceptable.
- Historic significance is one of the main reasons I moved to Oak Park. Character and age in a structure cannot be faked, substituted or replaced. Not preserving and restoring this structure would be a great mistake in my mind.
- Sketches and cost estimates are needed.
- Depends if it can be worked into redesign.
- The historic value and retail options of this building have to be identified. In addition, trade-offs between Station Street, a pedestrian way, and retail must be understood.
- Don't believe this building has enough historical significance to warrant preservation.
- Would be nice to again be open through center, e.g. Lake Street to the south.
- Preservation would enhance the vintage character of DTOP which in the long term would act to draw more visitors.
- Do not believe this building is one that resonates with the community residents and therefore can be replaced with a building which serves downtown better – retail with office or residential above.
- Has to be part of a larger plan.
- I want modern retail space there, either reconfigured or rebuilt, with office/residential above.
- Depends on the plan.
- Lets do the project right. If done correct the superblock can be a super improvement for Oak Park.
- I believe investment in old buildings pays off over time.
- I would like more information on the cost ability to attract retail and the "Taxman" option.
- Absolutely.
- I am not persuaded that the Colt Building has any historic significance that makes it worth preserving.
- Not enough information. Very difficult and cost prohibitive to retrofit older buildings – too much uncertainty. Developers have better alternatives with less guess work.
- No, and certainly not at any cost.
- It is useless – tear it down.
- Only if it has a viable use for contemporary commerce and tax payers don't have to support the preservation and renovation.

Downtown Oak Park Superblock Planning Survey – 100 Results and Comments

- This is a key development site in the exciting re-development of downtown Oak Park. This site needs to be developed with modern retail on the ground floor with residential on the upper floors and with parking below.
- Knock it down.
- This is an excellent building and would be easy to restore externally. Opening the arcade up would create a pedestrian passage aligned with the new drive/walkway across the street and would create an entire block for new small retail. No new building would likely have the architectural/construction quality of a restored Goldberg (Colt) Building.
- If restoration provides/enhances usability within the context of the environment and goals of redevelopment, then let's go for it.
- If it goes, it goes! It's not important.
- Obsolete building. If you can save the south (Westgate) facade, do so.
- If it can be restored and have viability for retail use then it could be an asset. Economics will be the key.
- The Westgate area with its Tudor appearance adds a real bit of zest and history to DTOP. Long before creative reuse Westgate was just that. Colt Building is a linch pin in this development.
- Buy it back from Taxman.
- I'm all for "adaptive reuse" – get creative not lazy.
- All of Westgate should remain as is.
- Tear down Westgate.
- All of Westgate needs to be preserved.
- It has gone through so many changes, it would have to be completely gutted. Besides, it is ugly.
- At least preserve Westgate part.
- Strongly agree! This building has significant historical significance (according to Historic Preservation Commission) and should be maintained.
- The Art Deco theme on Lake needs to be emphasized.
- This is not a significant piece of architecture in my view.

Downtown Oak Park Superblock Planning Survey – 100 Results and Comments

E. The 1145 Westgate building should be preserved and restored as part of a redevelopment project or plan.

AGREE = 45

DISAGREE = 29

NEUTRAL = 25

- The façade only.
- Little on Westgate right now provides much of an enhancement to Oak Park.
- There seem to be two different parts. The older part (?) closest to Marion should be preserved.
- Why spend money to demolish a good building?
- Historic significance is one of the main reasons I moved to Oak Park. Character and age in a structure cannot be faked, substituted or replaced. Not preserving and restoring this structure would be a great mistake in my mind.
- Need drawings and cost estimates.
- Depends on ability to use it.
- Westgate buildings do not look like they belong in Oak Park. That area needs new development. Right now, it has a lot of vacancies and looks run down and out of place.
- It's a horrible building inside with a cheap façade. It was a garage for cripes sake.
- This building is faux Tudor with office space that is sub-standard. Enhanced office/retail/residential with improved parking supply and parking access is critical.
- Great history connected to this building.
- Not sure of the building. However, if it's the FLW tea house then it should stay.
- Preservation would enhance the vintage character of DTOP which in the long term would act to draw more visitors.
- These Tudor style buildings are very different than the significant buildings on Lake Street. I am concerned about preserving both competing architectural styles and being able to accommodate the larger footprints and traffic counts needed for retail.
- Has to be part of a larger plan.
- To the extent this does not conflict with the two new streets.
- Depends on the plan.
- These buildings were horse stables and then garages. Retail was tried and failed. They are offices by default.
- If parts would be used that would be fine if – and only if – Station Street still goes through.
- I would like more information on the cost ability to attract retail and the “Taxman” option.
- Yes.
- I consider fake Tudor to be inappropriate when it was added and of little historic significance other than as an example of a bad idea poorly executed.
- No, unless owner thinks this is a cost effective way to go.
- It does not lend itself to modern retail use.
- Only if it has a viable use for contemporary commerce and tax payers don't have to support the preservation and renovation.

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- Another key development site in the exciting re-birth of downtown. This site should accommodate modern retail on the first floor with residential levels above.
- This building is part of the original design of Westgate and is fairly intact. Removing pretty historic buildings for parking is stupid.
- If it goes, it goes!
- It is only the façade that has any value. Utilize all or a portion of it in any redesign.
- Obsolete building. If you can save façade, do so. Perhaps turn into parking garage and save façade.
- I don't normally advocate keeping facades only, but this may be a good candidate. Be creative!
- Is 1145 the "Professional Bldg." owned by Taxman, that we visited? It is clean and neat and good for solo practitioners because of small suites. What about rents? If it is structurally sound, keep it. Parking makes it available for access by patients; Metra also.
- This is also part of historic downtown Oak Park. The cost, both financially and environmentally, is not necessary.

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F. Buildings designated as significant for landmark eligibility should be preserved.

AGREE = 65

DISAGREE = 7

NEUTRAL = 27

- Keep the façade and ditch the rest.
- Why spend money to demolish a good building?
- Should be on a case by case basis.
- Every effort should be made to preserve these structures.
- Yes!
- For the most part yes, but the protected buildings should be truly significant.
- Designated by whom? There are preservationists who are zealots, not planners and certainly not reasonable.
- The key is landmark eligibility.
- Certainly not ALL of them.
- If landmark means old, then no.
- Preservation would enhance the vintage character of DTOP which in the long term would act to draw more visitors.
- Concentrate on buildings that many OP'ers identify as "defining" DTOP such as Bank One Building, Lake Theater, Fields Building. HPC has stretched too far in what is defined as significant.
- When economically feasible.
- It is important to try to preserve historically significant buildings, but it is only one factor in a greater decision. Also, not convinced about the historical significance/merit of the buildings with the Tudor facades. That's not how they were originally built, nobody sees them now anyway and they just don't impress me.
- If possible and practical, yes; depends on plan.
- Preserving these buildings is what Oak Park is all about.
- Preservation is good for the local economy.
- This is always a maybe – depends on the reason for the designation.
- In general, yes.
- Some should, some should not.
- Local or national landmark status? Should not be funded by taxpayers.
- I question several buildings on your list as "significant."
- Agree, but a careful public discussion of the merits of each "significant" building needs to be held. Let's select these buildings carefully!
- Oak Park's historic character is one of our greatest assets. Once diminished, this character cannot be recreated.
- Only if it is conducive to retail.
- Only if based on a complete evaluation of the building – including interior relative to reuse.
- Assuming that "landmark designation" is not a ruse to prevent development. What's historically significant besides Drechsler?
- Depends on the level of significance. Simply being old doesn't justify.

Downtown Oak Park Superblock Planning Survey – 100 Results and Comments

- Why would we destroy buildings that are one-of-a-kind and could help save DTOP from being just another cookie cutter shopping area?
- For the most part – perhaps just the façade preserved.
- Some.
- Let's keep as much as feasible; what's being proposed is neither visually nor architecturally interesting. Just the biggest, most overbearing structures, requesting variances, but not including parking (though whining about the lack of parking).
- Depends on the building.
- Maintain historic feel of Oak Park.
- Oak Park has a significant architectural treasury. Let's build on it!
- This designation should be one of several other factors considered – not the predominate factor. There are many such buildings in Oak Park.

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G. Buildings designated as having merit but are not landmark eligible should be preserved.

AGREE = 37

DISAGREE = 27

NEUTRAL = 33

- If everything is historical – nothing is.
- Why spend money to demolish a good building?
- But new designs should not be too “suburban.”
- Pre-1940 structures are one of Oak Park’s greatest assets, whether landmark eligible or not.
- Could be rehabbed or added onto (i.e. lesser degree of preservation).
- In general; case-by-case reasons for individual buildings to be considered for demolition – i.e. overwhelming other benefits that will accrue.
- Some yes, some no. It depends on what might replace it.
- Case by case. No rules can be that universal, especially when those designating merit are so suspect in their judgment.
- The trade-offs must be better understood.
- Should be discussed.
- If landmark means old, then no.
- Historic and buildings having historical merit should be preserved to preserve the historic/vintage character of DTOP.
- Not convinced about the historical significance/merit of the buildings with the Tudor facades. That’s not how they were originally built, nobody sees them now anyway and they just don’t impress me.
- If possible and practical, yes; depends on plan.
- Again this should be a secondary consideration to congestion.
- Whenever possible and feasible.
- Must have a strong cost-benefit analysis to justify rehab. What about fairness?
- They could be contributing even if not landmarks. They help preserve “that small town feel.”
- This is always a maybe – depends on the reason for the designation.
- Not always.
- At what cost? Hopefully not funded by taxpayers?
- There are soooo many of these buildings to preserve all would severely restrict the marvelous development opportunities that are possible.
- Oak Park’s historic character is one of our greatest assets. Once diminished, this character cannot be recreated.
- Conformity and usability should be reviewed in the context of the overall goals of the project.
- But by who’s definition? What’s historically significant besides Drechsler?
- Depends on the level of significance. Simply being old doesn’t justify.
- Every effort should be made to preserve the context – but these buildings are less important individually. Replacements should be compatible in scale and massing.
- It depends.

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- Older buildings lend character.
- Are they still eligible later?
- If the Plan Commission isn't empowered to, or won't, or doesn't know how to, bargain with developers, then the Village Board must. Variances, concessions...it's a two-way street.
- Probably not.
- Maintain historic feel of Oak Park.
- It depends on each case.
- If they are of architectural merit.
- Discuss historical merit one building at a time to determine worth.

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H. The number of parking spaces in the Superblock needs to be increased.

AGREE = 72

DISAGREE = 13

NEUTRAL = 15

- Better distribution if possible.
- That may just attract more cars. Provide a free shuttle bus along Lake Street instead.
- Marion Street should be metered 1-hour parking.
- I always find parking within easy walking distance.
- Maybe not 600!
- In the short term we are going into our busiest season. Parking is our first concern.
- Absolutely! The pedestrian environment must also be improved. And don't forget about those who like to bike.
- Not in block. Need to better utilize Holley Court and corner of Harlem and South Blvd.
- I think better signage is needed so visitors know how to get to the existing parking structure.
- Depends on other parking spaces developed.
- Strongly agree.
- Don't like parking lots and garages, but I fully recognize their need.
- Without this shoppers will keep going!
- Shoppers use cars – get used to it. Let's make it easy for people to shop in Oak Park.
- This is key to getting more use of the Green Line.
- Adding parking will not help if its not accessible or visible.
- I feel a reason for this group is to increase parking and assist retail. Parking is the key to both.
- There needs to be more parking but it does not have to be all surface parking.
- Those who can't park, won't shop. This is a retail area.
- As per Crandall Arambula plan.
- 1500+ spaces need to be added to DTOP, some (half) in the superblock.
- Critical for the survival of retail.
- We should add a minimum of 600 parking spaces accessible from North Blvd.
- The place to put parking is where the existing surface parking lots are, and perhaps above a rebuilt "Shops of Downtown Oak Park."
- A must.
- More parking is a necessity. Parking garage south of Lake Street.
- Should be incorporated in larger projects, not stand-alone parking.
- Instead, leave female-friendly surface parking and build a new bigger better taller Holley Court garage.
- It depends on what happens. More retail/housing needs more parking.
- A nice garage like at OPRF High School.
- Only on the periphery.
- How about diagonal parking?

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- This should be set up so that it is easy to get in and park to go shopping and use the Metra and Green Line and at the same time discourages through traffic to the benefit of the pedestrian.
- Yes to need for more parking, but it has to be inviting. PREFER SURFACE, because more accessible, better for in-and-out, SAFER. Any parking garage should have meters inside on lowest floors to make easier access for shoppers, to send employees and all-day parkers upstairs.
- Promote alternative transportation.
- I do not know if all current parking spaces are used.
- I strongly agree – the parking situation is untenable.

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I. One way streets should be incorporated to improve traffic flow.

AGREE = 45

DISAGREE = 22

NEUTRAL = 33

- Great idea – improves flow and additional parking can be added.
- Within reason.
- Absolutely.
- Marion Street should be one-way south from Lake to North Blvd.
- Two-way only.
- I am open to one way streets if it reduces traffic congestion and enhances traffic flow.
- Especially smaller streets.
- When traffic analysis supports this.
- It will not help.
- Would prefer two-way, but may not be feasible.
- If they are essential.
- I would follow the recommendations of KLOA on this.
- Depends on deployment of parking lot.
- Whatever traffic experts say.
- Service vehicle traffic needs to be carefully examined; turning radii, etc.
- Improving traffic flow should not be the focus – we should try to revitalize the business district.
- Sounds good – need more information.
- These streets should be carefully selected. North Blvd. one way east, South Blvd. one way west. Marion one-way south, Westgate one way east.
- I'm opposed to adding/opening additional streets.
- Marion should be one way. Westgate should be opened one way east.
- One-way streets, while frustrating, do improve traffic flow.
- Traffic improved with two-way streets on North Blvd.
- Don't want traffic flow.
- These may be useful for providing access into and out of the parking facilities, but we should be mindful of the possibility of inadvertently creating traffic with one-way access.
- One-way streets sound good. But how many lanes? Shopper parking allowed? What about truck parking (of what size, for how long)?
- They should be incorporated only if they will improve the traffic flow.
- Not without prior planning.
- The addition of bike lanes would encourage shopping by bike and reduce traffic congestion.

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J. One way streets should be avoided.

AGREE = 21

DISAGREE = 40

NEUTRAL = 36

- Keep to a minimum on an as-needed basis.
- I am open to one way streets if it reduces traffic congestion and enhances traffic flow.
- I think I one way streets can be effective – e.g. North Blvd. – South Blvd.
- It will add confusion and more congestion.
- Avoid if we can provide safe flow for two-way.
- Traffic study should drive.
- I would follow the recommendations of KLOA on this.
- Why?
- Whatever traffic experts say.
- Can serve some purpose.
- Only as a last resort.
- Sounds good – need more information.
- Overall, traffic should be designed to reduce confusion and enhance flow to a redesigned retail area.
- You need to have one-way streets as a way to bleed traffic from Lake Street.
- The area is already a mess – especially coming from the south.
- They should be incorporated only if they will improve the traffic flow.

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Other comments / concerns / ideas:

- Well-designed new development can co-exist with significant historic structures.
- On one of those rare days last spring when the temperature reached into the 60s I decided to do my business on foot. One of my errands was to go to Village Hall in River Forest. On my way back I took Lake Street. What an eye opener. On the River Forest side the parking lot was 80% full, people were walking about with packages in their hands, etc. When I crossed Harlem Avenue the climate changed immediately. After walking ½ a block I was alone on the street. I looked down the Marion Street Mall and it was void of any pedestrians, odd for a pedestrian mall. Our downtown is empty. At this point I decided to make some inquiries. As we all do, I know some of the business owners downtown and went inside to see how things were going. I asked about Station Street, opening the mall, parking – all the issues that are on this survey. The response I got was from “It doesn’t matter nothing positive will happen” to “If things don’t change I will not be able to stay open.” One shop owner said it felt like the Village was trying to make their life even more difficult. These are the mom and pop shops that we are all proud to have in town. I don’t know folks in the corporate structure of the chains that are here to ask them their needs. Does anyone? I don’t believe that there is a win-lose scenario here. We can have a vibrant downtown with an historical feel and be pedestrian and bike friendly. After my informal survey, I went to the meeting at Pleasant Home. One of the options put forward was to make the entire downtown area “historical.” This is truly an insult to the real historical buildings we have in our Village. Please, let’s come to some understanding and not have a winner-take-all approach.
- I am concerned about the nature of our community changing. Development should be with an eye to urban design – not suburban.
- The buildings on Westgate are irreplaceable and should be protected. Station Street would do nothing to help traffic problems and would be a terrible mistake if any of these buildings were affected.
- Something needs to be started sooner rather than later. Historic preservation is fine when approached logically – not emotionally. When all the businesses are shuttered it does not matter how historically significant a downtown is.
- The master plan needs to more thoroughly address appropriate design guidelines for sensitive treatment of historic properties.
- Parking, parking, parking.
- Minutes in a timely fashion. Small surveys. The former Sawyer Building site could be an ideal location for a pocket park.
- Vintage/historic building preservation which will act to preserve the vintage character of DTOP is my #1 priority.
- Preserve key touchstone buildings such as Fields Building and Bank One Building, but not all buildings identified by HPC as significant or structures of merit.
- Focus on building vibrant, inviting space for modern retail, mixed with office/residential above; and parking.
- Recruit stores to come to DTOP to help bring in foot traffic. Make it a “place to meet.” O.P. – not a street to help O.P. relieve traffic.

Downtown Oak Park Superblock Planning Survey – 100 Results and Comments

- Let us not lose sight of the very real need to revitalize retail and increase revenues. Tax pressures on senior citizens and those who stuck with Oak Park in hard times should not be ignored. Do not let other communities pass us by while we fail to progress and adapt.
- For me the most critical aspect is to maintain a “central square” – and that purpose is served by Marion Street. We must not lose that.
- The current master plan should be used!
- Please do something to better utilize Westgate. It is crying out for development. Apply “Main Street” principles of historic reuse.
- The task is to do what is best for all of Oak Park.
- Any development is an iterative process of trade-offs. Difficult to realize with economic predictability in such a short time.
- Parking, parking, parking – most critical.
- Move quickly to develop mixed-use projects. Let’s get on with it. Interest rates have gone 50% and will soon deter development.
- We need to know the financial impact and opportunities on all the scenarios.
- We need to start sketching together in these public meetings in order to test ideas on those in attendance. We need to exchange ideas on paper using actual base drawings and develop many different alternatives.
- I think this process offers a fine opportunity to establish a new, better direction including heritage tourism and making Oak Park a unique regional destination.
- Concerned that the Village is wasting money when we already had a good plan in place.
- What is the goal? Historic buildings are wonderful but who will pay for their restoration? Who will pay for their functional inadequacies? If they are to be saved, it must be part of a larger plan creating an economic framework for their continued use.
- Preservation of these distinctive buildings as part of “Main Street” will enhance – not hurt – viability of DTOP as an exciting place to visit and shop.
- The Westgate streetscape is incredibly unique and has incredible potential to be part of the economic improvement of downtown. New construction/additions could be incorporated behind them. The architecture is significant, especially because the entire block was planned in one style – deliberately to look different than Lake Street. How can a block that has been part of downtown for 70 years not be considered part of Oak Park? Lets be creative here.
- Build parking structures that are handsome and look like buildings, not skeletons.
- The surface parking could become high density housing/retail with parking below ground.
- I don’t think these are really the issues – parking, yes. But not opening streets. Why are people going to come here? To drive y – No to stop and shop. So yes, add more parking but encourage walking. It’s appalling the number of people that drive from Ann Taylor to Whole Foods (then drive to Old Navy). Why? You’re more likely to stop in when walking by then driving by (especially with nowhere to park). Why not look at turning the lot by Competitive Foot into green space with fountain/park. Build a garage at Old Navy and North of Lake and promote foot traffic. Get rid of all parking on Lake to ease traffic – widen the sidewalks and add greenspace and promote healthier lifestyle and economic development together. We don’t need more people or more cars in DTOP we need to focus on more shops – more diversity of shops and developing from that end.

Downtown Oak Park Superblock Planning Survey – 100 Results and Comments

WHY should I come to DTOP? Let's give our teens something safe and healthy to do in DTOP too. Survey the high school – they seem to somehow have disposable income.

- Cute survey. Very confused as independent.
- Sign a redevelopment agreement with Taxman ASAP.
- Initiate a survey through FYI regarding retail stores that residents want.
- Some consideration should be given to pedestrian traffic during foul weather. Especially if retail is to be a primary use of this space.
- Need seating for shuttle stops. Barrier at bus stop Harlem at Marshall Fields for safety.
- Pedestrians walk from Station to Lake now partially exists. Can it be enhanced and reopened? Small shops with windows could be arranged – see Hunter Court and the Pasta Shop at Oak Park Avenue. Chipotle and a dentist benefited opening east window/door to the now vanished parking; Penny's on Chicago Avenue.
- Can lists of businesses to be found in the area be posted? DTOP does folders of lists and a map for special sales events. For DTOP and Avenue/Lake this could be done on several levels: 1) large/visible from a car (as malls do); 2) posted at shuttle stops; 3) folders, sheets (see above). Small or new, or shops with cutesy names could be noticed.
- OPEN UP LAKE STREET. Lake Street used to have four lanes of traffic, including trucks and parking. The space is still there. If shops want car traffic, open it up. Marion Street (southbound at Lake) needs a right turn lane. Lake Street eastbound needs left turn lane at Marion. What a mistake it would have been to disgorge the parking structure traffic at Marion without a better plan for the Marion/Lake Street intersection. 100 Forest Place is tall but not visually obtrusive, because it is ringed with low buildings. Can this be the new measure, rather than “no higher than the Marshall Field building?”
- Would like the process open to other developers other than Taxman. I don't believe this company has Oak Park's best interest in its plans. We don't need more strip malls!
- We should avoid at all costs anything that makes Oak Park more like a city. It is the Village of Oak Park and always has been and always should be.
- Westgate should be “brought back” as a historic community with distinctive restaurants and specialty shops.

PRIORITIES - Votes Per Category (Priority Ranked)

Rank #1	Votes
Revitalize Retail	24
Preserve Historic Small-Town Feel	21
Reduce Traffic Congestion	12
Improve Parking Supply	8
Reutilize Historic Buildings	6
Enhance Pedestrian Environment	5
Revitalize Marion Street Mall	4
Provide High-Quality Design	2
Limit Building Height and Density	2
Identify Project Financial Implications	2
Increase Residential	2
Other*	2
Improve Transit Usage	1
Provide Additional Open Space	0
Increase Office Space	0

*Other category

Create an exciting retail/residential/restaurant/entertainment downtown that celebrates a sense of place
Increase money spent in Oak Park

Rank #2	Votes
Revitalize Retail	17
Improve Parking Supply	16
Reduce Traffic Congestion	10
Reutilize Historic Buildings	10
Revitalize Marion Street Mall	8
Preserve Historic Small-Town Feel	8
Provide High-Quality Design	7
Enhance Pedestrian Environment	7
Limit Building Height and Density	6
Other*	1
Provide Additional Open Space	1
Identify Project Financial Implications	0
Increase Residential	0
Improve Transit Usage	0
Increase Office Space	0

*Other category

Preserve key buildings but not all identified as significant or contributing

PRIORITIES - Votes Per Category (Priority Ranked)

Rank #3	Votes
Enhance Pedestrian Environment	15
Revitalize Retail	14
Improve Parking Supply	13
Provide High-Quality Design	12
Revitalize Marion Street Mall	11
Reduce Traffic Congestion	8
Limit Building Height and Density	4
Increase Office Space	3
Preserve Historic Small-Town Feel	3
Improve Transit Usage	3
Identify Project Financial Implications	3
Reutilize Historic Buildings	2
Increase Residential	1
Provide Additional Open Space	0
Other	0

Rank #4	Votes
Improve Transit Usage	11
Enhance Pedestrian Environment	10
Provide High-Quality Design	9
Improve Parking Supply	9
Revitalize Marion Street Mall	8
Reutilize Historic Buildings	8
Reduce Traffic Congestion	8
Revitalize Retail	6
Limit Building Height and Density	5
Preserve Historic Small-Town Feel	5
Provide Additional Open Space	4
Increase Residential	3
Identify Project Financial Implications	3
Increase Office Space	0
Other	0

PRIORITIES - Votes Per Category (Priority Ranked)

Rank #5	Votes
Preserve Historic Small-Town Feel	10
Provide High-Quality Design	10
Reutilize Historic Buildings	9
Enhance Pedestrian Environment	7
Identify Project Financial Implications	7
Reduce Traffic Congestion	7
Revitalize Retail	6
Revitalize Marion Street Mall	6
Improve Parking Supply	6
Improve Transit Usage	5
Provide Additional Open Space	4
Limit Building Height and Density	3
Increase Residential	3
Other*	3
Increase Office Space	1

*Other category

Move quickly to develop mixed use projects
Create opportunities for small business retention
Limit national franchises downtown