

# Sub-Area Super Block Plan

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The following items include additional detailed information and points to consider when looking at my proposed Sub-Area Super Block map:

## Marion St. Mall

- Preserve the area between Lake St. and Westgate St. as a pedestrian mall. This area could act as a central point for the DTOP area.
- The portion of Marion St. that remains a pedestrian mall needs a complete makeover (new hardscaping and landscaping) to open it up so you get a clear line of sight between Lake St. and South Blvd. The makeover should make accommodations for existing/future businesses (i.e. restaurants) that may want to use outdoor seating.
- Place an “information” kiosk within the Marion Street Mall so that various groups could post information about events in and around Oak Park (similar to what you see in college towns). Bulletins could be removed weekly (by the Village?) so it does not become cluttered with postings.
- Re-locate the Oak Park Visitor’s Center to a storefront along the portion of Marion Street that I propose to keep closed to vehicular traffic (between Lake St. and Westgate St.). The Visitor’s Center could act as a point for drawing visitors and residents alike to the DTOP area. The Visitor’s Center could then disseminate additional information about Oak Park and the DTOP area.
- The space that was opened up along the east side of Marion St. (which is now planted in grass) could be turned into a small strolling/sitting garden to add additional interest to the DTOP area. During Christmastime, the Village Christmas tree could be placed there.

## Westgate Street

- Westgate St. would be turned into a single lane, one-way street heading eastbound towards Marion St.

- I suggest diagonal parking along the north side of Westgate Street only. This would allow the sidewalks to stay wider to accommodate existing/future businesses (i.e. restaurants) that may want to use outdoor seating and to keep a pedestrian-friendly feel to the street. The streetscaping of Westgate should be given a new makeover.

#### Portion of Marion St. Opened up to Traffic (between Westgate St. and North Blvd.)

- Marion Street would be opened up to a single lane of vehicular traffic. Trucks, other than pickup trucks, should be banned from Westgate during business hours.
- I would only allow parallel parking on the west side of the street in order to provide a wider sidewalk on both sides of this section of street and to help maintain a pedestrian-friendly feel and keep visual continuity between Lake Street and North Blvd. Thus maintaining more of a pedestrian friendly environment.

#### New Parking Structure

- Locate a new parking structure in the existing parking lot south of the buildings on the south side of Westgate St. (north of North Blvd.).
- Limit the parking structure to three levels so it does not tower over the nearby buildings. Consider constructing the new parking structure so the 1<sup>st</sup> level is a few feet below existing grade to lower the overall height of the structure.
- Access to the parking structure could potentially be from the west and south sides of the new parking structure.
- Allow space for an alley on the north and east sides for deliveries and trash pickup.
- Consider removing a small portion of the south end of the building located at 1145 Westgate St. to allow better vehicular access to the alley.
- Consider making all or a portion of the upper level of the parking structure for day-long parking for train commuters.
- I think the parking structure should be just that.....for parking. There are enough empty storefronts in this area.
- Access to parking structures (see map).
- Discuss where parking structure should not go and why.

### Pedestrian Pathway (along the west side of the Colt Building)

- A pedestrian pathway, located along the west side of the Colt Building would provide access from Lake Street, Westgate and North Blvd. including the train station. This pathway could also provide a visual link between North Blvd. And Lake Street. Individuals exiting the new parking structure located south of the existing buildings on the south side of Westgate would then have a pathway to help direct them to shops along Harlem, Westgate and Lake Street. This path would also be used by commuters walking to/from the train who live in residential areas to the north. With proper delineation of this pathway, using hardscaping and landscaping, including the intelligent use of signage, this pathway could become heavily used.
- Re-locate the existing information sign at the north end of the pathway (at Lake St.) which acts to block the view of the current, poorly defined pathway..

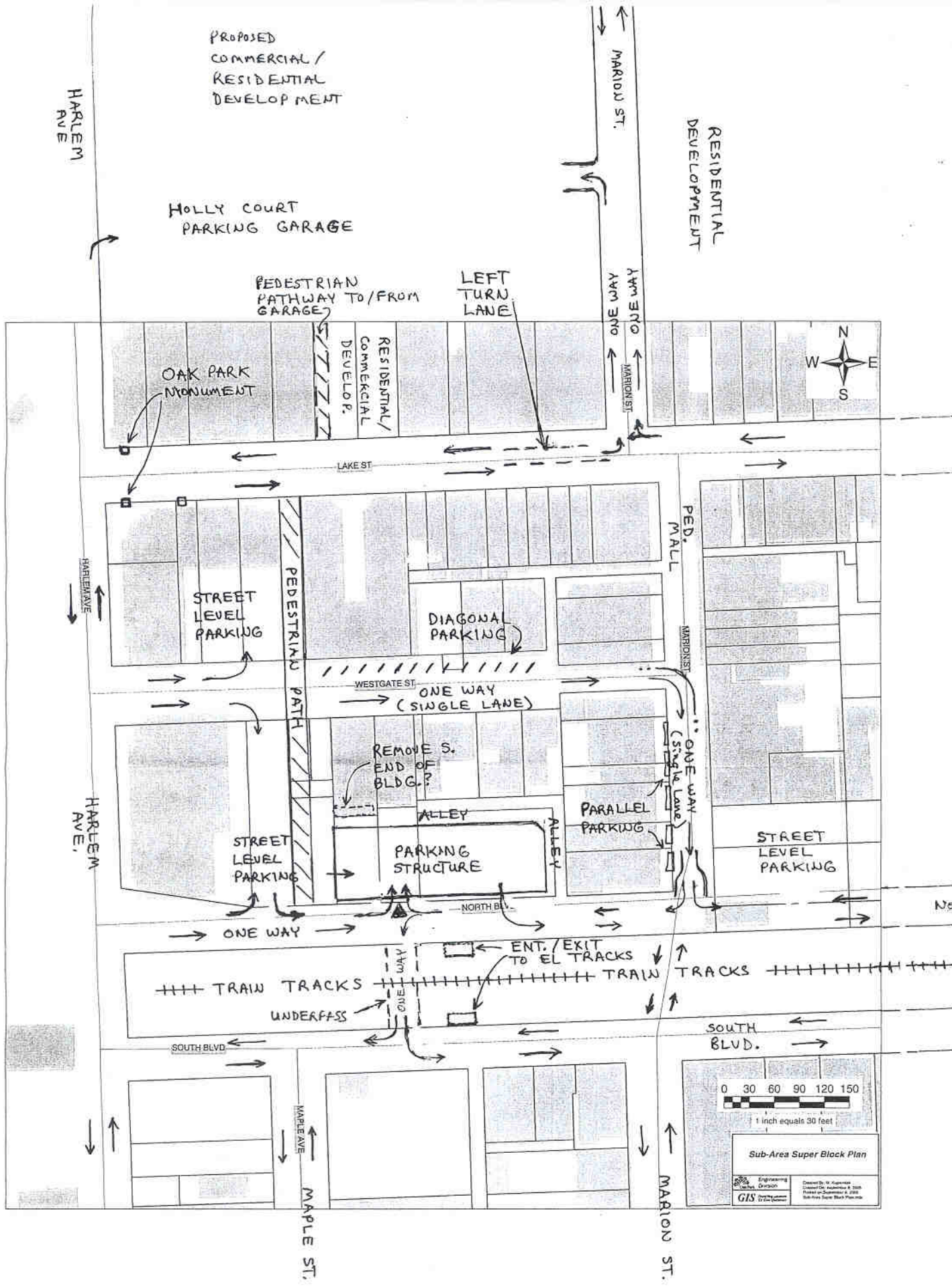
### Lake Street (at Harlem Ave.) “Entrance” to DTOP

- A metal, prairie-style “Oak Park” monument is currently located about 70 feet east of the southeast intersection of Lake and Harlem, along the south side of Lake St. This monument seems very out of place in its current location. I would suggest moving this monument further west, and adding a matching monument to the northeast corner of Lake and Harlem, so it looks as though Lake Street is truly the entrance to DTOP.

### General Comments

- The historic character of the downtown Oak Park area should be maintained to provide character, beauty, and to keep it from turning into just another business area. Existing buildings that can be restored should be restored to add to the historic character.
- The use of plants in landscaping should be incorporated into whatever plan is agreed upon. The use of plants reflect Prairie style and make people slow down just a little to reflect upon their beauty.
- The Village needs to do a better job maintaining this area. The sidewalks are dirty (especially with old chewing gum) and several of the trees are half dead.
- Many of the storefronts in the Sub-Area Super Block are either un-inviting in appearance or generally somewhat dumpy looking due to their storefront design and/or the physical condition of the building (i.e. Abrahamson’s Furs, Shirtworks,

Fantasy Jewelry/Citi Financial, Helix Camera, Hats & Accessories [wig shop], Los Casadores and Rock L's). In addition, the area in front of Jerusalem Café is generally littered with small pieces of trash (very un-inviting). The business owners need to put some thought into how inviting their storefronts really are and the building owners need to put some money into restoring their building's storefronts.



Mike Riewt



0 30 60 90 120 150

1 inch equals 30 feet

Sub-Area Super Block Plan

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