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Proposals Sought for Village-owned Property on Madison Street

Building upon the recent private sector investment and the Village's long-range development plan for Madison Street, development proposals will be sought for an assemblage of publicly owned property in the 200 and 300 blocks along the south side of this important business corridor.

A request for proposals (RFP), to be issued Wednesday, will ask developers for concepts, along with business terms, for the 27,000-plus-square-foot site, which combines the former P.M. Smith Funeral Home property at Madison Street and Highland Avenue, the adjacent Village surface parking lot and a parking lot to the west across Highland that was purchased along with the funeral home in the spring.

"The Village has two options to redevelop public property – issue an RFP or negotiate with those who have made specific proposals," said Village President Joanne E. Trapani. "Both options require public notice and provide ample opportunity for alternatives to be submitted, and for public review and discussion to occur. An RFP is an effective tool for getting developers to look at property that might otherwise go unnoticed."

Legal notices announcing the RFP will be published in both local and Chicago metropolitan newspapers. RFPs also will be sent to developers who have expressed an interest in the Village through their contacts with Village Development Services staff. In addition, copies of the RFP will be available at the Development Services Department in Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Interested parties are urged to call 708.358.5640 or email devsvcs@oak-park.us. Deadline for submitting proposals will be December 27.

"This RFP represents the Village Board's intent to not only nurture the growing development interest along the Madison Street corridor, but also addresses the need to replace the residential parking that has been lost to new commercial developments," said Trapani, noting that the RFP requires proposals to include a minimum of 200 public parking spaces in addition to parking sufficient to meet the demand created by the developer's concept.

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Trapani said that while the Board is encouraging developers to be imaginative, she is confident they will recognize the retail character of Madison Street and propose projects that will help keep that aspect of the area flourishing.

The site is zoned commercial and any project that would require variances from the base code would be subject to the Planned Development process. The Planned Development process includes a comprehensive public review, multiple opportunities for public comment and detailed discussion, and analysis of the benefits to the community and impact on residents' quality of life.

RFP responses will be evaluated on the basis of maximizing the benefits to the community, according to Michael Chen, director of Development Services, the Village's economic development arm. In addition to creating public parking, he said evaluation criteria include impact on property values and tax income, fit within the existing neighborhood and community, ability to serve both residents and consumers from other communities, and the potential to increase activity and energy along the Madison Street corridor.

"Under our commercial zoning code a variety of uses would work along Madison Street," Chen said. "Through the RFP process we hope to generate a range of ideas from which to choose."

Chen said that the number of responses and the credentials of their authors would help set the parameters of the RFP review process. The Village Board will provide ample opportunities for public review and input prior to any final decision, he said.

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