

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2020

# OP/FYI

A NEWSLETTER  
FROM THE  
VILLAGE OF  
OAK PARK

VOLUME 32 • ISSUE 3



## Communications proves vital to meeting challenges of COVID-19

When COVID-19 first began to disrupt business as usual in mid-March, the *OP/FYI* newsletter took an unplanned hiatus.

The rapidly changing impact of a growing worldwide pandemic made a bi-monthly publication distributed by the U.S. Postal Service a less-than-ideal way to keep citizens informed.

Reliance quickly shifted to communications tools that provided ways to reach citizens within hours and even minutes when a rapid response was required.

The Village website, social media and email lists became the primary and most timely ways to share important official news with the community.

COVID-19 continues to dominate much of everyday life in Oak Park for the foreseeable future. But thanks to the vigilance and perseverance of residents and dedicated municipal employees, a certain sense of normalcy has returned to the community.

And so has the *OP/FYI* newsletter.

The challenges of keeping the community informed in the midst of a worldwide pandemic also exposed the weaknesses of the printed word distributed by mail and the need to build acceptance of the Village's electronic communications tools.

The Village's Facebook page now has 13,000 followers, with another 6,600 following the dedicated Police and Fire departments' pages. The Village's Twitter page has 8,000 followers with another 2,000 following the Police feed. And the Village's original direct communications email tool — *enews* — now boasts nearly 5,000 subscribers, which equals the Village's dedicated emergency notification subscription system.

What these electronic tools bring to official municipal communications is speed and timeliness. They also make it easy for citizens to share important information within their own social networks, which means critical messages can spread rapidly far beyond what the Village could ever hope to achieve on its own.

So while the *OP/FYI* newsletter has returned to the Village's 25,000 plus residential mailboxes for now, the pandemic has demonstrated the need for residents to embrace Village social media, sign up for *enews* and emergency notifications, and keep a close eye on [www.oak-park.us/covid19](http://www.oak-park.us/covid19) in case circumstances call for the timely messages that no printed publication could ever deliver.

## Stay informed with the latest COVID-19 information

**Sign up for *enews*...**Receive the latest COVID-19 information from the Village of Oak Park directly to your email inbox by signing up for Village *enews* at [www.oak-park.us/enews](http://www.oak-park.us/enews). Updates include details about Oak Park's daily testing bulletins and the latest local and state guidelines related to coronavirus.

**Follow the Village on Facebook, Twitter...**The latest local coronavirus information is shared on the Village's social media accounts. Follow the Village on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/vopnews](http://www.facebook.com/vopnews) and on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/vopnews](http://www.twitter.com/vopnews). Feedback is welcome and staff strives to respond in a timely manner to inquiries posted on social media.

**Emergency alerts...**Sign up for direct alerts by text, email and/or voice message at [www.oak-park.us/notifyme](http://www.oak-park.us/notifyme). Anyone lacking access to a computer can call 708.358.5489 to be added to the voice message alert list. Email [prepare@oak-park.us](mailto:prepare@oak-park.us) for more information.

**Check Village website...**Oak Park's Public Health Department is working to make sure residents, businesses, restaurants and organizations have the latest information on how best to slow the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus illness. Links to important local, state and federal information have been posted at [www.oak-park.us/covid19](http://www.oak-park.us/covid19) in an effort to create a local information repository. For questions beyond the information posted via links on the Village website, call the state's COVID-19 Hotline 1.800.889.3931 or email [dph.sic@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.sic@illinois.gov).

## Annual leaf collection gets underway

A shortened annual fall leaf collection program for 2020 is scheduled for Nov. 2 – Dec. 10 with six pickups planned for each section of the Village. Leaves should be raked into the street at least 18 inches from the curb the day before the scheduled pickup dates indicated on the map. Leaves raked into the street are pushed into piles by Public Works crews during the night to reduce impact on traffic and parked cars. The piles of leaves are then collected the following day. Residents who miss a scheduled pickup date should keep their leaves on the parkway until the night before the next scheduled pickup. Sweepers will be scheduled to run at the end of the collection program to clean up residue. Cooperation is essential to the success of this operation, so please follow these simple rules:

- Consider composting or using the leaves as garden mulch as an alternative to raking.
- Rake leaves out the day before the scheduled pickup date – inform landscape services of the leaf collection schedule.
- Leaves only – do not add brush, grass clippings or yard waste.
- Do not park on or near a pile of leaves, which can hinder leaf removal operations – heat from a car also could cause a fire.
- Rake leaves onto side streets whenever possible, avoiding major thoroughfares where piles of leaves might create traffic hazards.
- Do not rake leaves into or close to cul de sacs or traffic diverters – the equipment needs room to operate.
- Do not rake leaves into or close to bus shelters or bicycle racks.
- Keep catch basins clear of raked leaves to avoid flooding.
- Obey all parking restrictions – regulations are strictly enforced.
- Dampen piles after raking to avoid wind-blown leaves.
- Drive carefully – wet leaves are slippery and large piles may hinder visibility.
- Watch for work zones and intersections that may be closed temporarily to remove large piles of leaves.

For more information on the program call 708.358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

## Village designated Dementia Friendly Community

The Village has been officially designated as a *Dementia Friendly Community* by the non-profit organization Dementia Friendly America. The designation came after more than a year of work by the Village Board, residents, the Aging in Place Commission, community partners and Development Customer Services Department staff. A dementia-friendly community is informed, safe and respectful of individuals with the disease, their families and caregivers, and provides supportive options that help improve quality of life. More information on the local effort is posted at [www.oak-park.us/dementiafriendly](http://www.oak-park.us/dementiafriendly).

## Memory Café helps residents connect

Individuals living with memory loss and their caregivers have a safe online space to connect, and enjoy recreational and educational opportunities at The Memory Café. Online gatherings are set for 2 p.m., Tuesdays, Nov. 17 and Dec. 15. Call 708.383.8060 or email [memorycafe@oakparktownship.org](mailto:memorycafe@oakparktownship.org) for more information or to register. Volunteer opportunities are also available.

## Answer the phone if health department calls

Anyone who receives a call from the Oak Park Public Health Department or any certified health department may have tested positive for COVID-19 or had close contact with someone who has tested positive for the highly contagious coronavirus. The importance of answering or returning the call can't be overemphasized, officials say, because you could be at risk of becoming ill or spreading the virus unknowingly. Calls from the Oak Park Health Department will most often come from a phone number with the prefix 708.358.xxxx. Officials will leave a voice message if they are unable to connect with you.

NORTH AVE	
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> Nov. 4 Nov. 11 Nov. 18 Nov. 25 Dec. 2 Dec. 9	<b>THURSDAY</b> Nov. 5 Nov. 12 Nov. 19 Nov. 27 (Fri.) Dec. 3 Dec. 10
SOUTH BLVD	
<b>TUESDAY</b> Nov. 3 Nov. 10 Nov. 17 Nov. 24 Dec. 1 Dec. 8	<b>MONDAY</b> Nov. 2 Nov. 9 Nov. 16 Nov. 23 Nov. 30 Dec. 7
ROOSEVELT RD	

2020 LEAF MAP



## Social services referrals available online

Online referral network *The HUB* connects individuals with a broad network of local and regional agencies and institutions that offer free and reduced-cost social services, including senior and youth services, developmental disabilities, medical health care and behavioral/mental health services. The service is available around the clock at [www.healthconnectionhub.org](http://www.healthconnectionhub.org).

## Flu vaccination takes on added importance

Public health officials say it is more critical than ever for residents to get flu shots as soon as possible this season. Flu and COVID-19 each can cause serious respiratory illness, and co-infection could possibly lead to more severe illnesses. Many of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are the same, such as fever and cough, but there are some differences. Both viruses can spread when people who are infected cough, sneeze or talk. While a vaccine for COVID-19 is still in development, a vaccine for flu already exists and is the best protection against flu. Health officials recommend that everyone older than six months get vaccinated every year. Flu vaccine is offered at numerous commercial pharmacies, grocery stores and other retail sites in the Oak Park area. Most sites accept private insurance and Medicare Part B to cover the cost of the flu shot. Search for local flu shot providers at [www.vaccinefinder.org](http://www.vaccinefinder.org).

### Symptom Comparison

SYMPTOMS	FLU	COVID-19
Symptom onset	2 days	2 – 14 days
Body Aches	Common	Common
Cough	Common	Common
Fatigue/weakness	Common	Common
Fever/chills/shaking	Common	Common
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Common	Common
Stuffy nose	Common	Common
Sore throat	Common	Common
Headache	Common	Common
Diarrhea	Sometimes	Sometimes
Loss of taste or smell	Rare	Sometimes
Sneezing	Sometimes	Rare

## Practice the three W's to prevent spread of COVID-19

Until a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 is widely available, public health officials urge everyone to practice the 3 W's to help slow the spread of the highly contagious disease: Wear a mask. Watch your distance. Wash your hands. A person can be carrying the virus and not know it. Masking and physical distancing help prevent germs from spreading if someone talks, coughs or sneezes.

**WEAR** a mask when you cannot safely maintain a distance of 6 feet from others. Masks are required in public settings — indoors and outdoors — when around people who don't live in your household. Be sure to wear your mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin. Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face, and make sure you can breathe easily.

**WATCH** your distance and stay at least six feet away from others who do not live in your household, whether outdoors or indoors. Avoid crowded places and gatherings, and stay home as much as possible, especially if you are sick or feel like you may be getting sick.

**WASH** your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, if soap and water are not available.

For the latest information about ways to protect yourself and others from COVID-19, visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

## State community-based testing sites open to all

The State of Illinois is operating community-based COVID-19 testing sites that are open to everyone regardless of symptoms or other criteria. No appointment, doctor referral or insurance is needed, and testing is free. Public health officials say testing is crucial to identifying new cases and taking immediate action to prevent additional spread. The list of free, community-based testing sites is posted on the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) website at [www.dph.illinois.gov/testing](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/testing).

## Village Hall open, but online services remain best option

Village Hall re-opened to the public in late July with measures in place to help protect visitors and municipal employees from the COVID-19 coronavirus by limiting building hours, access and occupancy. However, developments with the pandemic could change the availability of in-person services, so residents are urged to call 708.358.5700 from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays to seek assistance and to visit [www.oak-park.us/onlineservices](http://www.oak-park.us/onlineservices) for a wide range of services available without a trip to Village Hall. The online services web page also allows residents to schedule an appointment to meet with a specific municipal worker or department. In-person services currently are available only on Mondays through Thursdays, except holidays. The south door at 123 Madison St., and the elevator access for persons with disabilities on Lombard Avenue, opens at 9 a.m. for senior citizens and individuals at higher risk for contracting the virus and 10 a.m. for all others. The building closes at 5 p.m. Any future changes to Village Hall hours will be posted online at [www.oak-park.us/villagehall](http://www.oak-park.us/villagehall). Please check the webpage before coming to Village Hall.

## Police offer tips to prevent package delivery thefts

The Oak Park Police Department is urging residents to take proactive steps to prevent package delivery thefts as the COVID-19 pandemic has substantially increased online shopping, a trend that is expected to continue to grow this holiday season.



The increase in package thefts from porches and homes is not unique to Oak Park. Police say communities across the country are grappling with this crime of opportunity. To protect your purchases from getting swiped from your porch or foyer, Oak Park Police recommend taking the following steps:

- If you are expecting deliveries but know you won't be home, make arrangements with friends, family or neighbors so that packages will not be left out where thieves can get them.
- Request a signature required upon delivery if you are working from home.
- Check with your online retailer about options for delivering packages to an affiliated business or secure location, such as a locker.
- Designate packages be delivered to the post office, if the option is available.
- Sign up for delivery notifications via email or through a smart phone app, being sure not to delay picking up your package when a delivery is made.
- Consider shopping locally at retailers offering curbside pick-up and delivery options with personalized service.

Officers on patrol always are on the lookout for criminal activity. Residents also may report unusual activity to the Police non-emergency number, 708.386.3800. And if you see a crime taking place, or about to take place, always call 911. More information on the Police Department is posted at [www.oak-park.us/police](http://www.oak-park.us/police).

## Sign up for virtual Police neighborhood zone meetings

Oak Park's residential beat officers are hosting their regular neighborhood zone meetings virtually as the need for social distancing continues in response to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Residents who have signed up for notices receive an email with a date and time, as well as the web link and instructions on how to take part in the meeting on a computer, pad or smartphone. Meeting updates include crime prevention tips and neighborhood news. To sign up for notices, go to [www.oak-park.us/rbo](http://www.oak-park.us/rbo) to find your RBO and join your zone email list.

## Shop local, park free during holiday season

Shopping local is more important than ever during COVID-19 whether in person or online. In-person shopping will be easy beginning the Friday after Thanksgiving through Dec. 25 when Saturday parking will be free in public garages and for two hours at pay-by-plate stations and marked meters downtown and in the vicinity of south Oak Park Avenue. Parking in Oak Park is always free on Sundays. The program is intended as a thank you for residents and visitors who shop locally. Retail sales benefit not only local retailers, but the entire Village since 2 percent of every retail sale comes back to municipal coffers to fund vital public services. For many retailers, the holiday season is the most important time of the year. Village officials say they hope this small gesture will increase sales as well as create goodwill among the businesses and their customers. For more information on parking in the Village, email [parking@oak-park.us](mailto:parking@oak-park.us) or visit [www.oak-park.us/parking](http://www.oak-park.us/parking).

Clip and Save

### Who to Call

Dial Direct (area code 708)

Village Hall	<a href="http://oak-park.us">oak-park.us</a>
TTY	711
Adjudication	358.5630
Development Customer Services	358.5420
Business Services	358.5425
Neighborhood Services	358.5410
Housing	option 1
CDBG	option 2
Property complaints	option 3
Permits & Inspections	358.5430
Planning	358.5440
General questions	option 1
Historic Preservation	option 2
Zoning	option 3
Finance	358.5460
Utility Billing Inquiries	358.5478
Fire (nonemergency)	358.5600
Human Resources	358.5650
Job Hotline	358.5650
Mayor & Trustees	358.5784
Police (nonemergency)	386.3800
Crime Tip Hotline	434.1636
Public Health	358.5480
Animal Control	358.5680
Public Works	358.5700
Parking	358.7275
Village Clerk	358.5670
Village Manager's Office	358.5770

### EMERGENCIES 911

Park District	<a href="http://www.pdop.org">www.pdop.org</a>
Administration	725.2017
Customer Service	725.2000
Building & Grounds	725.2050
Business Operations	725.2015

Public Library	<a href="http://www.oppl.org">www.oppl.org</a>
Main Library	383.8200
Maze Branch	386.4751
Dole Branch	386.9032

School District 97	<a href="http://www.op97.org">www.op97.org</a>
Administration	524.3000

School District 200	<a href="http://www.oprfhs.org">www.oprfhs.org</a>
Administration	383.0700

Township	<a href="http://www.oakparktownship.org">www.oakparktownship.org</a>
Senior Services	383.8060
Youth Services	445.2727
General Assistance	383.8005
Assessor Services	383.8005
Mental Health Board	358.8855
Transportation	383.4806

-  [oak-park.us/enews](mailto:oak-park.us/enews)
-  [facebook.com/vopnews](https://facebook.com/vopnews)
-  [instagram.com/oakparkil](https://instagram.com/oakparkil)
-  [twitter.com/vopnews](https://twitter.com/vopnews)
-  [youtube.com/vopnews](https://youtube.com/vopnews)

## Rehab loans available

**Single-family homes** – No-interest loans of up to \$25,000 are available to income-eligible owners of single-family homes to help pay for needed repairs such as correcting building code violations, replacing deteriorated exterior stairs, repairing a leaking roof, upgrading mechanical systems and making accessibility alterations. To qualify, homes must be owner-occupied and household income must be at or below 80 percent of the area median income — for example \$58,250 for a two-person household. No monthly payments are required and loans do not have to be repaid for 20 years or until the property is transferred. The program also offers grants to help pay for correcting peeling or damaged lead paint surfaces separate from rehab issues. For more information, visit [www.oak-park.us/housing](http://www.oak-park.us/housing), call 708.358.5415, or email [housing@oak-park.us](mailto:housing@oak-park.us).

**Rental properties** – Owners of multi-family buildings with seven or fewer units may be eligible for forgivable loans of up to \$5,000 per unit under the Small Rental Rehab Program. Owners need to contribute matching funds of at least 25 percent of the total project cost and agree to rent to income-eligible tenants for two years. Rehab work eligible for funding include general property repairs, unit upgrades and energy efficiency improvements. For more information, visit [www.oak-park.us/housing](http://www.oak-park.us/housing), call 708.358.5415 or email [housing@oak-park.us](mailto:housing@oak-park.us).

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## Landlords required to provide heat

**L**andlords must furnish heat to all Oak Park rental dwelling units from September 15 through May 15. An average minimum temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit must be maintained inside the apartment from 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., and 65 degrees Fahrenheit from 11 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. Complaints may be made by calling 708.358.5410 or email to [housing@oak-park.us](mailto:housing@oak-park.us). More information is posted at [www.oak-park.us/housing](http://www.oak-park.us/housing).

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## Green News

**Yard waste collection ends...**Regular yard waste collection will end on Fri., Nov. 27. Yard waste will be picked up by appointment only during the winter months. To arrange a special yard waste pick-up call 708.358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

**Electronic and hazardous waste...**Residents in single-family homes and buildings with five or fewer units can schedule *At Your Door* special collection of materials such as toxic chemicals and fluids, latex and oil based paint, needles, household cleaners, holiday lights and CFL lightbulbs as well as electronic items like televisions, computers, fax machines, printers and cell phones. The service may be scheduled with a toll-free call to 1.800.449.7587. A collection kit will be mailed that includes instructions on how to package the materials and where to place them for collection. Nearly 90 percent of materials collected are recycled. More information is at [www.oak-park.us/atyourdoor](http://www.oak-park.us/atyourdoor).

**Compostable program...**The Village offers a food scrap composting collection program for residential households of up to five units. Participants receive a gray 96-gallon cart for weekly collection of organics, a three-gallon food scrap kitchen pail and sample of compostable bags for food scraps. Both yard waste and food scraps may be placed in the organics cart, eliminating the need to purchase yard waste stickers. Bags for food scraps must be labeled compostable and meet the ASTM 6400 standards. An organic cart subscription costs \$15.30 per month, and new subscribers receive three months free with a one year commitment. Residents can share an organic cart with one other neighbor reducing the monthly cost to \$7.65 each. More information is posted at [www.oak-park.us/compostable](http://www.oak-park.us/compostable).

## Follow policymaking online, on demand

**W**hile the pandemic may have made in-person meetings unwise, Village municipal government has made remote virtual meetings the tool of choice. Residents interested in keeping up with local municipal policymaking can still follow these remote Village Board meetings at [www.oak-park.us/boardtv](http://www.oak-park.us/boardtv), where meetings are streamed live and archived for on-demand viewing. The online meetings database even offers the option to search the meetings archive using key words to find a particular topic of interest and sign up for alerts by topic. Users also can select a video by meeting date and then choose to view only the portion of the meeting that addresses the topic of interest just by clicking on the agenda item. Village Board meetings continue to be broadcast live on VOP-TV, which is available to Comcast subscribers on channel 6 and AT&T Uverse customers on channel 99. For those residents who want to dig even deeper into the details, complete board packets — the materials trustees use to prepare for meetings — are posted on the board TV web page as well, along with the approved minutes of past meetings, which are the official record of Village Board actions. The page also links to information on how to contact officials by telephone and email. For more information on Village board practices and processes, email [village@oak-park.us](mailto:village@oak-park.us).

**Commission TV...**Residents interested in the details of policy making related to matters such as historic preservation, planning and zoning can watch the process at [www.oak-park.us/commissiontv](http://www.oak-park.us/commissiontv). Meetings of most commissions, including the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, are streamed live and archived via the Village website for easy on-demand access via a computer, tablet or smartphone. While many of the advisory bodies are conducting business remotely during COVID-19, these meetings are streamed live and archived as well. For information on all of Oak Park's citizen volunteer boards, commissions and committees, visit [www.oak-park.us/volunteer](http://www.oak-park.us/volunteer).

View with a smartphone camera.



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



# OP/FYI

**Mayor** Anan Abu-Taleb

**Trustees**

Deno J. Andrews  
Dan Moroney  
Simone M. Boutet  
Jim Taglia  
Susan Buchanan  
Arti Walker-Peddakotla

**Village Clerk** Vicki Scaman  
**Village Manager** Cara Pavlicek

Residential Customer Local  
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier  
Pre-Sort

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

## Snowfall may trigger parking restrictions

**A**fter 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. These include Augusta Street, Austin Boulevard, Chicago Avenue, Division Street, Garfield Street, Harlem Avenue, Harrison Street, Jackson Boulevard, Lake Street, Madison Street, North Avenue, Oak Park Avenue, Ridgeland Avenue, Roosevelt Road and Wisconsin Avenue from Madison Street to the emergency entrance of Rush 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 on even days and the side of the street with odd numbered addresses on odd days.
- Designated commercial parking areas as posted follow the odd/even rule between midnight and 8 a.m.
- Snow parking rules do not override other parking regulations, such as time limitations and prohibitions.
- Vehicles parked in violation of the snow restrictions are subject to ticketing and towing.

Residents are urged to monitor local forecasts and plan accordingly. To find out if snow-related parking restrictions are in effect, call 708.358.7669 for a recorded message. Cable television subscribers can tune into VOP-TV, available on Comcast channel 6 and AT&T channel 99. Residents also can sign up for alerts at [www.oak-park.us/notifyme](http://www.oak-park.us/notifyme). Efforts also are made to post timely information to the Village's social media sites, [www.facebook.com/vopnews](http://www.facebook.com/vopnews) and [www.twitter.com/vopnews](http://www.twitter.com/vopnews). The snow emergency parking rules and a list of frequently asked questions also are posted at [www.oak-park.us/snow](http://www.oak-park.us/snow).

**Sidewalk shoveling required...**Residents and businesses are urged to help improve walking conditions and public safety by removing snow and ice from sidewalks after a storm. 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 so hard that it cannot be removed without damaging the sidewalk, then sand, salt or other abrasive material may be used to make pedestrian travel reasonably safe. Being a good neighbor is important, too, so property owners are urged to help those who may need help clearing a sidewalk. Failure to clear a sidewalk fronting or abutting one's property could lead to a ticket and fine. For more information on the shoveling requirement or help finding resources, call 708.358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).



**SNOW ROUTE MAP**

