



## Village Board meetings moving to Tuesdays

Meetings of the Village Board of Trustees will be conducted on Tuesday evenings starting in 2024. Residents interested in keeping up with local municipal policymaking can follow 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 also 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 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).

## Volunteers needed for 50th annual A Day in Our Village

June may seem like a long way from January, but planning already is underway for the 50th annual A Day in Our Village festival celebrating diversity and community involvement. This year's event is scheduled for Sun., June 2, and organizers are looking to celebrate A Day in Our Village's half-century milestone in style. Volunteers are needed to help promote and staff the event, which includes activity booths, demonstrations, entertainment and food. Anyone interested in volunteering — or more information — is urged to call 708.358.5405 or email [community@oak-park.us](mailto:community@oak-park.us).

## Holiday tree collection schedule

Holiday trees will be collected the weeks of Jan. 1 and Jan. 8 from residential properties of five or fewer units served by the Village refuse hauling contractor. Be sure to remove all decorations and stands, and place the tree in the regular collection area before your regular collection day during these two weeks. Note that regular collection will be delayed by one day the week of Jan. 1–5 due to the New Year's Day holiday. If your regular collection point is in an alley, be sure to place the tree in the alley and not in the parkway in front of your residence. Since the trees are mulched at a licensed composting facility and used for soil enrichment, please do not leave them in plastic disposal bags or they will not be collected. Trees set out after the collection program ends will require a pink bulk refuse sticker to be attached. Stickers are available for \$3.25 each at most local grocery and hardware stores, as well as at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Wreaths and garlands cannot be collected for recycling because they contain wire — place them in the trash container. For more information, call 708.358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

**Holiday light recycling...** Oak Park residents can recycle holiday lights by dropping them off in a bin located in the lobby of the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd. The bin will be available during regular business hours Monday through Friday through Jan. 31. For more information, contact [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us) or 708.358.5700.

# Village budget funds essential services, advances priorities

**D**esigned to support the delivery of essential services to Oak Park community members, while also advancing several key priorities and initiatives laid out by the Village Board, the municipal budget for 2024 is comprised of numerous separate funds totaling \$186.6 million in expenditures, excluding interfund transfers.

Each fund is dedicated to supporting a particular type of outlay, which is typically defined under the Governmental Accounting Standards Board or State of Illinois and local laws.

The most substantial of these separate funds is the \$73.3 million General Fund. This fund aids most day-to-day municipal operations that are critical to the community's quality of life, such as public works and public safety services like roadway maintenance and emergency response. Municipal expenditures from the General Fund are supported by several sources, including property taxes, sales taxes, utility taxes, real estate transfer taxes and user fees.

Property taxes are the largest contributor to General Fund expenditures in 2024 at about 39%. Based on current available data, approximately 15.5% of an Oak Park property owner's tax bill goes toward funding the Village's municipal services and State-mandated Police and Fire pensions.

For the 2024 municipal budget, \$6.1 million will be transferred from the Village's fund balance to accelerate Oak Park's capital improvement plan. The maneuver allows the Village to avoid issuing debt for the third consecutive budget cycle and is made possible because of the Village's significant reserve fund balance that is presently around 45%, exceeding the recommended proportion of 25%.

A large portion of that money, \$5.8 million, is marked for one-time and non-recurring expenses in the year ahead. Some of these significant items include a pilot program for Oak Park's alternative response to calls for service, the develop-

ment of a strategic plan related to economic vitality, long-term financial planning, a review of the Citizen Police Oversight Committee (CPOC), the community's broadening language access needs and more. Only \$300,000 is budgeted from that transferred amount to support day-to-day operations.

There is a variance of more than \$600,000 in the property tax levy as that number remained flat this year. The Board previously approved increasing the property tax levy 3% from the tax year 2022 levy. The police and fire pension levy and debt service increases, and the corporate (general operations) levy decrease, attribute to the primary increase to the Village's levy.

More than 58% of the Village's general fund allocations in 2024 are directed to support the Village's

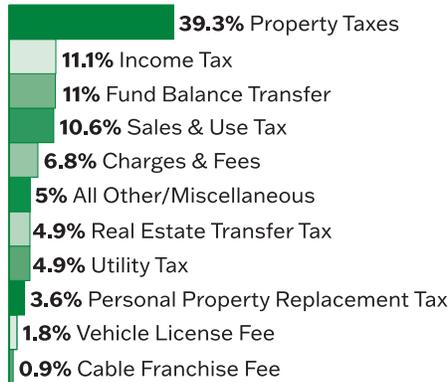
Police and Fire departments. The dedicated men and women who staff these areas are highly trained to serve and protect Oak Park around the clock every single day.

A bit more than 9% of all 2024 General Fund dollars will be directed to the Village's Public Works Department. This devoted unit oversees the maintenance of 100 miles of Village-owned streets, 500 alleys, 18,000 parkway trees, 7,000 lighting fixtures, 104 miles of water mains, 110 miles of sewer mains, eight miles of bicycle lanes and some 4,000 public parking spaces.

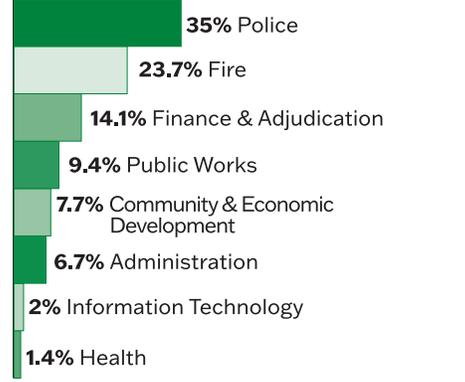
Refuse rates were held flat for 2022 and 2023, though the rates for Lakeshore Recycling services (LRS) waste hauling services increased by 5% this year per contract. The LRS rates are expected to increase by 4.3% in 2024. The

## 2024 Budget at a Glance — General Fund

### WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



### WHERE THE MONEY GOES



### HOW PROPERTY TAXES ARE DISTRIBUTED



Village is currently in the second year of a five-year agreement with LRS, which provides refuse, recycling and yard-waste collection and disposal to owners of residential property containing five units or less. The monthly rates paid by residents in 2024 are set to increase by 4%; a 96-gallon cart will increase from \$29.06 per month in 2023 to \$30.22 next year, while a 64-gallon cart adjusts from a monthly cost of \$26.39 to \$27.45. Yard waste and refuse stickers will be \$3.25 in 2024. Approximately 45,000-yard waste and 30,000 refuse stickers are sold annually.

Water and sewer rates will increase 4% in 2024, as well, in order to maintain a sufficient fund balance for the Village's Water & Sewer Fund. American Water Works Association recommends an operating reserve of 25% of the annual operating expenses. For Oak Park, that approximately equates to an operating reserve balance goal of \$2-3 million.

Information on the budget process and copies of the Fiscal Year 2024 and past year's budgets are available at [www.oak-park.us/budget](http://www.oak-park.us/budget).

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## Pick Oak Park and local businesses

Oak Park is home to more than 1,000 businesses, and these local businesses are owned by



neighbors and friends who care about their customers

and are invested in the well-being of the community. Pick Oak Park is a Village-wide campaign to support local businesses. Visit [www.pickoakpark.com](http://www.pickoakpark.com) and follow Pick Oak Park on Facebook and Instagram to learn more about Oak Park's dynamic business community. The Pick Oak Park website also includes a directory of more than 300 new businesses that have opened in the community over the past three years.

## Finance documents available online

The Finance Department ensures the fiscal integrity of the Village of Oak Park by developing, maintaining and administering all programs related to the accounting of municipal revenues and expenditures. This critical municipal government role results in a wide range of financial documents available for public view online at [www.oak-park.us/financial-reports](http://www.oak-park.us/financial-reports). Among the documents readily assessable online are the following:

- Annual Budgets
- Management Letters
- Bond Rating Service Reports
- Capital Improvements Plans
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports
- Financial Reports
- Single Audit Reports
- Tax Increment Finance Annual Reports
- Tax Increment Finance Historical Reports
- Total Compensation Reports

For more information on the role and duties of the Finance Department, call 708.358.5460, email [finance@oak-park.us](mailto:finance@oak-park.us) or visit [www.oak-park.us/finance](http://www.oak-park.us/finance).

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## Discuss Oak Park's housing vision at Jan. 25 meeting

Come share thoughts and ideas about what should comprise Oak Park's housing vision for the next decade during a public meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thurs., Jan. 25 at the Oak Park Public Library Veterans Room, 834 Lake St. Participants will be asked to weigh in on what housing or housing-related challenges they see in the community, and their ideas on how to address them. The Village has partnered with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to update the Homes for a Changing Region Plan it prepared in 2012. Since Oak Park in 2024 is in many ways different from Oak Park in 2012, fresh eyes, perspectives and ideas are needed. The public meeting will include simple snacks and beverages, along with a kids' table. This meeting follows the public meeting on housing held last September, and organizers hope for a similarly diverse and engaged roomful of participants. In addition, a housing vision-related community survey is still available online at [www.engageoakpark.com/housingsurvey](http://www.engageoakpark.com/housingsurvey). Oak Park residents are asked to please complete the survey if they have not already done so. Input from the public meeting and the survey will help inform this housing study's recommendations to the Village Board. For questions or accommodation concerns, contact [planning@oak-park.us](mailto:planning@oak-park.us).

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## Community assists asylum seekers

Since early November the Village has been coordinating care for approximately 160 asylum-seeking migrants who arrived in Oak Park in search of shelter. Most of the asylum seekers are being temporarily housed at the West Cook YMCA and The Carleton Hotel through agreements with the Village, which is partnering with Housing Forward to provide wraparound services at the two sites. The effort has been aided by the generosity of countless individuals who have volunteered and made donations to support key community partners assisting the Village through the emergency response. The latest official information about the Village's emergency response is available on the Village website at [www.oak-park.us/emergencyresponse23](http://www.oak-park.us/emergencyresponse23).

## Oak Park earns EV Readiness Gold Designation

Oak Park was recently recognized as the only community to earn gold designation in the first cohort of municipalities to complete the EV Readiness Program, an initiative launched by ComEd and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to help local governments prepare for the growth of electric vehicles (EVs) and charging infrastructure across northern Illinois. In total, 12 municipalities were recognized at an awards event in December for their work to achieve the designation of “EV Ready Community.” Municipalities in the program were required to complete several core “EV Readiness Actions” including updated zoning codes to support new charging



infrastructure, new permitting and inspection processes aligned with state and national standards to guide safe installation of charging equipment, and training for first responders on incidents involving EVs. Read more about the recognition at [www.oak-park.us/EVready](http://www.oak-park.us/EVready). For more information about electric vehicles in Oak Park, including resources for current and prospective EV owners, visit [www.oak-park.us/electric-vehicles](http://www.oak-park.us/electric-vehicles).

**Village received high marks for carbon disclosure...** The Village recently received an A from the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), a global environmental disclosure system used to report on planning and progress made toward climate change adaptation and mitigation. Of 939 total cities that reported to CDP this year, 13% received an A score. Oak Park was one of only two municipalities in Illinois to receive an A. Oak Park’s score reflects community-wide planning and implementation efforts made towards the comprehensive sustainability and resilience plan, Climate Ready Oak Park. Last fall the Village published a one-year progress report on the Climate Ready Oak Park plan. The report documents Oak Park’s accomplishments, aspirations and strategies on the one-year anniversary of the climate plan’s 2022 adoption by the Village Board. Read the report at [www.oak-park.us/CROP1year](http://www.oak-park.us/CROP1year) and find more information about Climate Ready Oak Park at [www.oak-park.us/climateplan](http://www.oak-park.us/climateplan).

## Many ways to focus on heart health

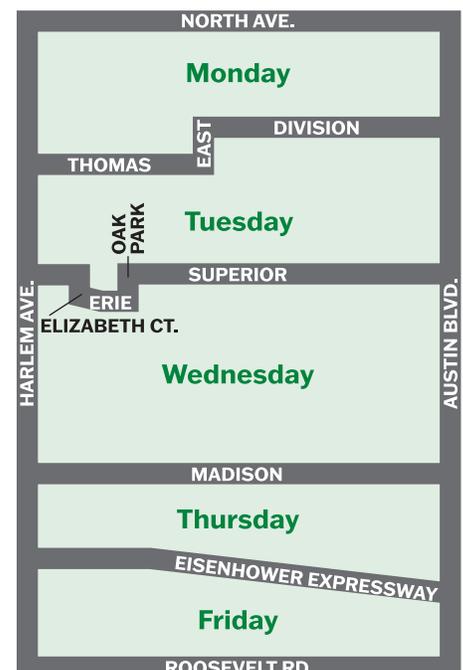
February is American Heart Month, and the Oak Park Public Health Department is spotlighting ways to maintain a healthy heart. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, but you can take steps to reduce your risk of heart disease. One way to increase heart health is to maintain regular physical activity. You can walk and chat with a public health nurse for free, as well as get a blood pressure check, at the Community Recreation Center at 229 Madison St. from 10 a.m. to noon on Wed., Jan. 31, Wed., Feb. 21 and Sat., March 16. For more information, contact the Public Health Department at 708.358.5480 or [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us).

### Heart healthy tips:

- Commit to a walking schedule or other regular physical activity with a friend or family member, even if you can’t do it together. Text or call each other with updates or challenges.
- Try a new heart-healthy recipe each week. Ask friends and family to share their favorite low-sodium or healthy recipe with you, or look up even more recipes at [healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov).
- Make a request to the Public Health Department to give a presentation to your organization about ways to prevent heart disease.

## Refuse and recycling collection schedule

Refuse and recycling is collected each weekday based on the location in the map. Refuse is not collected on New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas, with collection typically delayed by one day for the remainder of a week following a major holiday. Carts should be placed out for collection no later than 7 a.m. on the morning of collection day. Carts placed at the curb must be removed by 10 p.m. Compost is collected on a bi-weekly basis during the winter months and weekly from April through November. The Village provides waste hauling services to single-family homes and multifamily dwellings with five or fewer units. Owners and managers of larger multifamily buildings negotiate separate contracts with private companies. For more information about the Village’s refuse and recycling programs, visit [www.oak-park.us/refuse](http://www.oak-park.us/refuse) or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us). Residents can contact LRS, the Village’s waste hauling contractor, by calling 844.633.3577, emailing [service@LRSrecycles.com](mailto:service@LRSrecycles.com) or visiting [www.lrsrecycles.com/oakpark](http://www.lrsrecycles.com/oakpark).

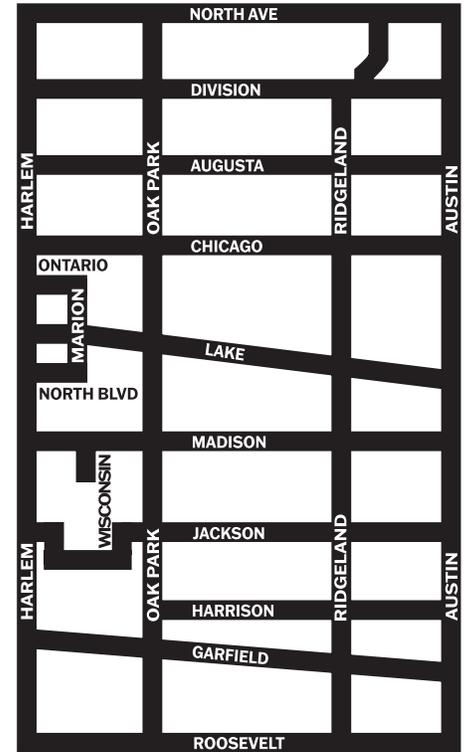


## Make way for tree pruning

A portion of the Village's 18,000-plus parkway trees are scheduled to be pruned this winter. The focus will be trees located between Chicago Avenue and Division Street. Additionally, the Village's Forestry staff will be pruning mainly younger trees in the area between Division Street and North Avenue. Residents are urged to move their cars from the streets when temporary no-parking signs go up to allow private contractors to prune parkway trees quickly and safely during the winter pruning cycle. Crews and staff follow the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) guidelines for tree care to address three key issues — tree health, resident safety, and protecting property from damage. Dead or dying limbs are removed, tree canopies raised to allow for safe vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and appropriate clearances created for adjacent structures and signs. Younger trees will also be pruned to develop good structure to reduce problems as they grow and mature. While the pruning may be more noticeable when no leaves are on the limbs, crews work to ensure that pruning is just right as foliage returns in the spring. With a program that aims to prune every tree on public property once every four years, plans must consider that parkway trees can grow up to two feet each year — or eight feet between pruning cycles. The Village's pruning program has proven successful in minimizing storm damage and reducing ongoing pruning requests. Residents are urged to call 708.358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us) with questions or concerns about the type or quality of work being performed by contractors. More information on the care of the nearly 18,000 trees on public property is posted at [www.oak-park.us/trees](http://www.oak-park.us/trees).

## Plan for parking when it snows

The Village has specific rules that govern parking when it snows — rules that are enforced seven days a week, including holidays. Residents are urged to monitor local forecasts and plan accordingly. When snow exceeds two inches, all parking is prohibited on the main streets posted as snow routes. Parking on other streets is restricted to one side from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. in residential areas and from midnight to 8 a.m. in designated commercial districts, the side determined by the date. Park on the even-address side of the street on even dates and on the odd-address side on odd dates. Residents are urged to monitor local forecasts and plan accordingly. Community members who sign up at [www.oak-park.us/notifyme](http://www.oak-park.us/notifyme) will be alerted when the emergency snow parking rules are in effect. Efforts also are made to post timely information to the Village's social media sites, [www.facebook.com/vopnews](https://www.facebook.com/vopnews) and [www.twitter.com/vopnews](https://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).



SNOW ROUTE MAP

**Sidewalk shoveling required...**Property owners who shovel their sidewalks are doing more than making it safer for pedestrians of all ages — they also are complying with the law. Village ordinance requires snow and ice to be removed from the public sidewalk within 24 hours following any snow, sleet or freezing rain. Being a good neighbor is important, too, so property owners are urged to help those who may need help clearing a sidewalk. And remember to clear the crossing ramps to ensure safe travel by individuals with disabilities, especially those in wheelchairs who face extraordinary challenges navigating snow-clogged sidewalks. For more information on the shoveling requirement or assistance, call 708.358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

## Single-use plastic foodware available only upon request

Were you missing a fork last time you ordered take-out in Oak Park? It was probably not because the restaurant forgot. A new local ordinance went into effect last June requiring food establishments in Oak Park to only provide single-use plastic foodware upon request from a customer in connection with any delivery or take-out order of food or beverage. The change is based on action taken by the Village Board last year to regulate the use of single-use plastics in an effort to reduce waste.

**Polystyrene foam packaging prohibited...**With the arrival of the new year, another sustainability-focused ordinance is now in effect. As of Jan. 1, 2024, food establishments may not sell or distribute a disposable food service container composed in part or in whole of polystyrene foam packaging. Learn more about the single-use plastic foodware ordinance and polystyrene ordinance at [www.engageoakpark.com/single-use-plastics](http://www.engageoakpark.com/single-use-plastics).

View with a smartphone camera.



**Village President** Vicki Scaman

**Trustees**  
 Susan Buchanan  
 Lucia Robinson  
 Chibuike Enyia  
 Brian D. Straw  
 Ravi Parakkat  
 Cory J. Wesley

**Village Clerk** Christina M. Waters  
**Village Manager** Kevin J. Jackson

Residential Customer Local  
Oak Park, Illinois

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



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 Standard  
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 Oak Park, IL



## Share your opinions on racial equity in Oak Park

The Village, in partnership with UIC Great Cities Institute, is conducting a Racial Equity Needs Assessment for Oak Park. In an effort to capture a wide array of perspectives, a survey has been designed to gauge the public's views and perceptions on racial equity. This survey builds on previous community listening sessions and engagements with Oak Park community leaders. The assessment can be most comprehensive when people of all

backgrounds, experiences, ages and circumstances participate. The survey asks all Oak Park residents for their insights and perceptions of racial equity in Oak Park. The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete, and all responses are strictly anonymous. At the end of the survey, participants can provide a phone number or email address to enter a raffle to win one of several \$50 gift cards. Take the survey online at [www.oak-park.us/racialequitys survey](http://www.oak-park.us/racialequitys survey). By filling out the survey, you will be directly contributing to the needs assessment and also helping to shape the Village's racial equity efforts.



Scan to take the Racial Equity Needs Assessment Survey

## Safe Streets Workshop planned for Feb. 3

Do you have ideas for improving traffic safety on Oak Park's streets? What improvements would make you feel safer as a pedestrian, cyclist, driver or transit user? Join Village



staff at the Safe Streets Workshop to share your ideas and learn more about Oak Park's Vision Zero plan. The open-house style meeting will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sat., Feb. 3 in the Rubinstein Room at the Oak Park Conservatory. The event will include crafts for kids, light snacks and beverages, and a raffle for workshop participants. Find more information about the Vision Zero project at [www.engageoakpark.com/visionzero](http://www.engageoakpark.com/visionzero).

## Safe drug disposal available

Residents can safely dispose of expired and unwanted prescription medicines in the lobby of the Oak Park Police Department at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. A disposal box is also in the Oak Park Township parking lot located at 105 S. Oak Park Ave. Needles, liquids and other medical wastes are not accepted. For more information call 708.386.3800 or email [police@oak-park.us](mailto:police@oak-park.us).