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84-3

New Wave Plans

By Gregory Longhini

Be honest. When was the last time you read a comprehensive plan? Not just researched, studied, or reviewed one, but actually read it?

Even better, when was the last time you saw an article discuss one, listened to an inspired speaker praise one, or heard a proud citizen commend one? As the ever-expanding field of planning rushes headlong into new and exciting areas, the comprehensive plan may be ignored as an embarrassing and costly relic of our immediate past.

Yet, despite the cynicism of some planning professionals, the comprehensive plan is still an integral part of many community planning programs. PAS subscribers are still concerned about developments around the country—the number of questions on this subject has not lessened in recent years. These inquiries take a variety of forms: What's new? Who's done some good ones lately? Who's done them cheaply?

These are good questions. With the demise of the HUD 701 program, basic planning grants to help underwrite the costs of developing a plan are more difficult to get. Faced with staff cutbacks and decreasing revenues, many planning departments allocate their remaining resources to current projects and essential administrative services. Citizens and politicians demand economies, yet the same citizens and politicians ask the question: "If planners aren't going to plan for the future, what are we paying them for?"

Lack of money isn't the only problem facing comprehensive plans. Many plans are too long and too boring, besides lacking a clearly defined audience. Short descriptions, written in third-grade prose, can be followed by overly complex tables and graphs—if the subject matter is linked at all. Who are these plans written for? Citizens, technical experts, other planners, or the mayor and city council?

Often they are written for none of the above. Style and substance are determined mainly by whatever requirements funders and state legislators specify. 701 plans had to follow the format devised by HUD. Some states have elaborate requirements for local planning documents. Ken Topping, director of planning for San Bernardino County, sums up the situation in California as follows:

State mandates have increased the scope and complexity of local planning. Now, each city and county must adopt a comprehensive, long-range general plan addressing nine mandatory elements (land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, seismic safety, public safety, and scenic highways) to the extent that each element affects

a particular locality. The required content of certain elements is spelled out in detail and elaborated by guidelines issued by separate agencies.

In light of these restrictions governing the nature and format of the comprehensive plan, creative, innovative plans are extremely rare. It is no wonder that planners continually search for any recent trends in the field pointing to a saner way of doing business.

Responding to this need, the *PAS Memo* last May asked subscribers to send in plans that were new or innovative—"new wave" is the term we used. This term apparently struck a chord in our subscribers, since many planners used the term when sending in their plans.

The term here means those plans that stand out as being different from the norm. In the selection process, greater emphasis was placed on style over substance, design over content, because so much of a comprehensive plan is local policy applied to local conditions. What, after all, can a rural Mississippi county learn from a California megalopolis?

The Traditional Plan: Oak Park, Illinois*

Although it is five years old, this plan is so well organized and professionally designed that inclusion in this list is a must. The plan begins with a short, two-page introductory chapter, "Purpose and Philosophy of the Comprehensive Plan 1979." Besides giving a brief history of the community, the chapter sketches the goals of the plan, the plan's general format, and instructions on how to use it.

Each of the next five chapters—Housing, Transportation and Parking, Public Facilities and Services, Economic Development, and Citizen Participation—is broken down into a major goal, objectives, and policies. What is nice—and different—about the Oak Park approach is that the first page of each of these five chapters lists all of the goals, objectives, and policies. The reader doesn't have to work his way through numerous pages to find out the salient points. Although such an approach seems like an obvious design solution to the complexities of a plan, most plans don't use this helpful device.

The typography and layout of the pages are also excellent. The strong, bold type on sturdy paper, coupled with single spacing and a two-column format, demands to be read. The plan flows smoothly from page to page. These concepts may seem simple, but, judging from the many plans reviewed, these design aspects are largely ignored.

What many plans contain, unfortunately, is double-spaced, single-column typewriter type, poorly reproduced and bound with a cheap spiral binding. The plans

*Oak Park is a fully developed suburb on the western border of Chicago, with a population of 60,000.

TABLE II-5: Changes in Oak Park Population, 1970-1975

Measure	1970	1975	Percentage Change
Total Population	62,511	59,773*	-4.4%
Number of Households	22,620	22,982	+1.6%
Persons per Household	2.76	2.60	-5.8%
Persons 62+ years of age	12,426	14,662	+18.0%
Proportion of persons 62+ years of age	19.9%	24.5%	+23.1%
Number of Households Headed by Person 62+ years of age	7,713	9,285	+20.4%
Proportion of Total Households Headed by Person 62+ years of age	34.1%	40.4%	+18.5%
Number of Persons per Household, Head of Household 62+ years of age	1.61	1.58	-1.9%

*Internal Revenue Service

Source: 1978 Oak Park Housing Needs Study

look and read like bad college term papers. Rather than projecting bold, direct statements in a simple, clear style, many plans look as haphazard as the writing found in the text. Books and reports are only as good as the quality of their typography and design; plans are no different.

The direct, simple style of the Oak Park plan is evident in the charts and graphs used throughout the text. There are no complex multiple-row, multiple-column tables overwhelming the reader with too many facts. The Oak Park plan uses simple, two-column charts, displaying only what information is needed to highlight or illustrate a trend.

The above table is a good example of this clear, simple technique. It lists only a few demographic statistics, compared over a five-year period. An important trend emerges: the city's population is aging. What we don't see is a list of irrelevant facts—such as the number of school children or what percentage of the population is married—that is, demographic statistics thrown in just because they exist. The table highlights only one factor of Oak Park's demographics and hammers the point home. If this information had been presented with a wealth of other data, the reader would have scanned the table and moved on. The data on the elderly would have been

buried, and the table's usefulness would have been diminished.

Because of space limitations, this *Memo* cannot do justice to the other excellent aspects of this plan. A glossary of terms, a bibliography of technical information, and a checklist for compliance with the plan for future developers are other valuable components. Dan Lauber, the principal author of the plan, and Bill Merrill, the town's Director of Community Development, should be proud of both the design and the content of the Oak Park plan.

The Policy Plan: Calvert County, Maryland**

A few years ago, the Calvert County Planning Department started collecting plans to serve as models for their own effort. According to Frank Jaklitsch, the planning director of the county, this process was a waste of time:

We collected many comprehensive plans but were not impressed by any of them. It seemed that more recent plans were worse than earlier plans. They appeared to be getting bigger instead of better, more complicated, more esoteric,

**Calvert County is a rural county of 36,000 people on the fringes of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region.

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and less likely to be understood by most people—thus, less likely to be followed.

Their plan is written in newspaper style, and the very first page is an attention getter. The bold graphics grab the reader and tell him that this plan is vitally important to him. The future—of the community, our grandchildren, our lives—depends upon the care and work the citizens have put into this plan. Some professionals may snicker at such an approach, but, to the planners and citizens of Calvert County, this is no laughing matter. After all, if the plan doesn't take itself seriously, who else will?

Despite the pleas for citizen involvement, this plan is very professional and innovative. Some of the highlights of the plan are as follows:

1. The plan is a policy plan, rather than a land development plan. The principal concept involves the town center and calls for mixed use within certain growth areas of the county;
2. The plan is organized into six primary sections, corresponding to the six divisions of the county government;
3. Each section ends with specific recommendations, concisely written and easy to grasp. If you are pressed for time, you can scan the recommendations and find out what is actually being proposed.
4. Because this is a policy plan, other sections besides traditional planning components—such as energy, health, and public education—are given more weight.
5. Most plans have implementation sections without designating who will be responsible for the implementation. This plan delegates the responsibility to specific county departments.

These progressive innovations, combined with a strong emphasis on citizen participation, make the Calvert County plan a good model for the planning profession.

Separate Documents for Citizens:

Merced, California, and Kane County, Illinois***

Both the Oak Park and Calvert County plans present the required technical information in a readable fashion, accessible to the general public. Combining the two—technical information and readability—is the most difficult task facing the writers of comprehensive plans.

Another way to deal with this problem successfully is to separate the technical reports from the citizens guides. Both Merced and Kane County took this approach in rather unique ways.

In 1980, Kane County updated its 1976 comprehensive plan. Three different products resulted from that effort. One, a typical comprehensive plan, included goals and objectives for the preservation of agriculture, natural areas, and wildlife, among others. The entire plan was produced, printed, and bound in-house. Another product was a

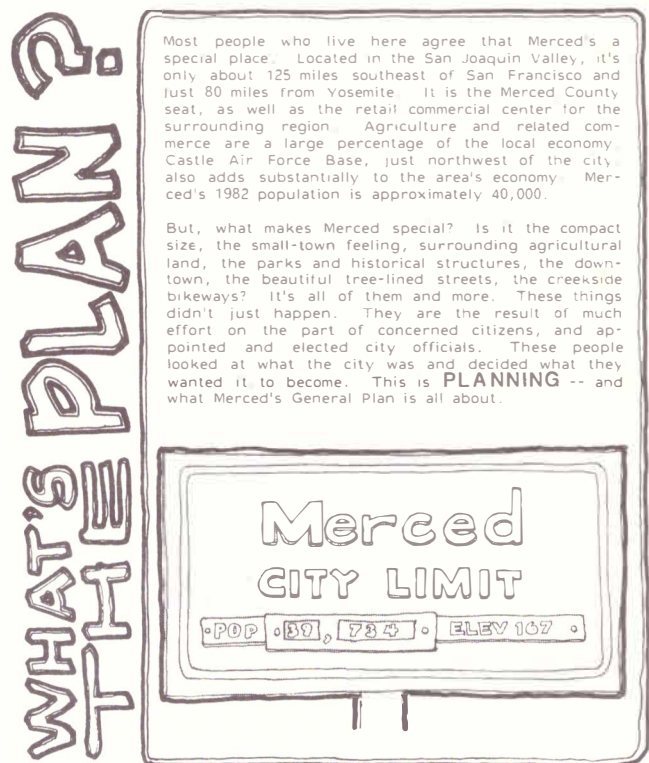
report documenting the research and technical decisions involved in the production of the plan. Only 50 copies of this paper were produced, for the staff and other professionals.

Of special interest is the third product: a plan map with a condensed text of the plan on the back. *Comprehensive Land-Use Plan 1982/2000, Kane County, Illinois*, is a multicolored, nine-foot-square wall map. Based on data from a U.S. Geological Survey Map, scale 1:100,000, the map was produced by cartographers for the county with assistance from Northern Illinois University's Laboratory for Cartography and Spatial Analysis.

On the back of the map are detailed excerpts from the comprehensive plan. The objectives and policies are listed for all the major components of the plan. Also given in tabular form is important demographic information on the county: population growth, population forecasts, and land-use acreage. Broken up by black and white illustrations of tractors and birds and farms, the map does a good job of summarizing the thrust of the plan.

Merced, California, took the same approach using a slightly different format. The city's 1980 *General Plan* is a typical California plan: numerous components, tables, graphs, and planning maps. To simplify the plan for the general public, the planning department produced a cute, 20-page booklet called *Merced: A Special Place, A Summary of Merced City's General Plan*.

At first glance, the booklet seems too simple, as if drawn by crayon for third graders. On further investigation, however, the booklet turns out to be a good summary of basic planning principles in very simple language.



***Merced is a community of 36,000, southeast of San Francisco. Kane County is a rapidly developing county of a quarter of a million people, 50 miles west of Chicago.

The summary asks a variety of questions and then attempts to answer them in simple ways. For example, "Why group all the regional commercial development either downtown, near the mall, or at a new location in southeast Merced?" Or, "If the street I live on is designated as an expressway or major street, how will it affect me?" Although the answers to these questions may be obvious to most planners, they certainly are not obvious to most citizens. By focusing the booklet on significant questions that directly affect the lives of the citizens, the planning department is supplying information the public wants and needs. In the booklet, planning is not simply the production of tables and technical reports, it is a process that improves our lives. As can be seen in the very first page of the booklet (shown on page 3), planning is given as the cause of the good life. True or not, this concept cannot help but give planning a better image.

Conclusion

What do these various examples represent in the development of the comprehensive plan? What really is new and exciting?

Oak Park shows that the traditional plan, professionally designed and executed with the reader in mind, can be a powerful statement for the planning profession. Calvert County, Maryland, shows that a basic plea for attention from the public can be combined with a progressive, innovative planning document. The Kane County example is an excellent reminder that planning publications serve a varied audience. The best approach may be to target different publications to administrators, technical experts, and the general public.

Finally, Merced's planning summary breaks down some of the most complex planning issues into basic, understandable terms.

PAS would like to thank all of the planners who so graciously took the time and effort to send it in their plans. Because of space limitations, only four plans were selected for this *Memo*. From reviewing the many good plans received, however, it is apparent that the death of the comprehensive plan, like the death of Mark Twain, has been prematurely reported.

Downtown Parking: A Better Way

PAS subscribers continually ask for help with their downtown parking problems. Some towns have too much parking; others, not enough. Communities encourage residents to live downtown or close to downtown. These residents then fight with shoppers for the remaining parking spaces.

Vancouver, Washington, has solved this problem by establishing four different parking zones in its downtown and adjacent areas. Each zone has its own characteristics and parking demand. Each requires different solutions.

The 10-square-block downtown core—Zone 1—limits on-street parking to one- and two-hour meters. The purpose, of course, is to serve customers who support the retail businesses of the area.

Zone 1A surrounds the core. Commercial, yet less retail-oriented than Zone 1, this zone contains more two-hour

meters, reflecting the greater distance shoppers must walk.

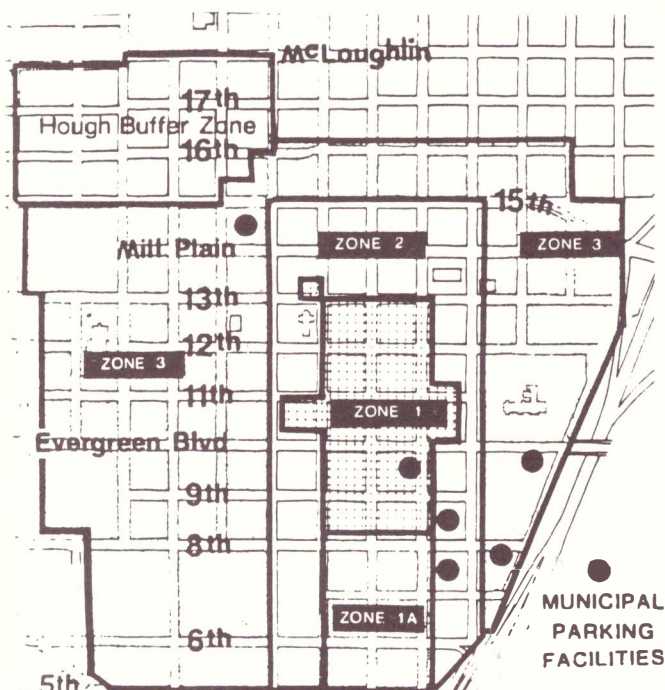
The most innovative approach, however, is in the regulations applied to the next two outlying zones: Zone 3 and the Hough Buffer Zone.

In Zone 3, the land uses are a mix of retail, commercial, and residential. Short-term parking must be provided for shoppers; special permit parking is needed for workers and employees. The city devised a breakdown as follows: 360 one- and two-hour metered spaces, 320 10-hour metered spaces, 660 all-day permit spaces, 30 carpool spaces, and 50 15- and 30-minute free spaces. Almost one-third of the spaces, then, are for shoppers.

Downtown employees seeking one of these all-day parking permits apply to the parking clerk's office in City Hall. The fee for two months is \$25. If the supply exceeds the demand, the rest of the slots are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Residents of the area may apply for these slots, and there is no charge for them.

The last zone—the Hough Buffer Zone—is a buffer between the downtown commercial core and traditional residential areas. All street spaces are signed, not metered, and reserved for residents with residential permits and visitors with visitors' permits. The latter, also free, are usable in both the Hough Buffer Zone and Zone 3 areas. Shoppers and workers are not allowed to park here.

Although this approach may seem overly complex, the purpose makes sense. Make the core area parking short term and metered in order to provide spaces for shoppers. On the immediate fringe, provide special spaces for employees who carpool, and set aside a number of cheap, long-term rentals for other employees. And, finally, reserve spaces in residential areas for the residents. By knowing the rules of the game, each segment of the downtown market feels his interests are being served and protected.



Comprehensive Plan 1979

Village of Oak Park, Illinois

Adopted August 6, 1979



**Village of Oak Park
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Oak Park, Illinois 60302
Phone: (312) 383-6400**

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The Oak Park Comprehensive Plan 1979

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Village of Oak Park Officials

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CHAPTER 1: Purpose and Philosophy of the Comprehensive Plan 1979

A mature, successfully integrated village of nearly 60,000, Oak Park lies immediately west of Chicago. Its proximity to the region's major metropolis affords Oak Parkers the conveniences and amenities of urban living that most suburbanites lack, while its status as an independent municipality gives its citizens a control over their destiny that residents of most large cities rarely enjoy.

First settled in 1835, two years before Chicago was incorporated as a city, Oak Park developed rapidly following the great Chicago fire in 1871. Establishment of rail service to Chicago helped spur development in Oak Park as its population grew from 200 in 1870 to over 10,000 by the turn of the century.

By the 1920s extensive development swelled Oak Park's population to 40,000. By 1930, single-family homes, apartment buildings, and strip commercial development covered most of the village. Population had risen to 64,000, the village was virtually completely developed, and land-use patterns were fully established, generally without the guidance of long-range or comprehensive planning.

Oak Park's first known plan was published in 1925. It was a relatively simple plan that suggested specific projects for a much simpler time. In the 48 years that followed, long-range planning for the village was largely piecemeal. It was only six years ago that the village adopted its first thorough master plan, *Comprehensive Plan: 1973-1992*.

That plan represented the village's first attempt to enunciate its approach to redevelopment and guide future changes in the community. The *Comprehensive Plan 1979* is an outgrowth of the 1973 plan. It presents a statement of Oak Park's goals, objectives, and policies to provide guidance to the village's decision-makers as they consider the many and varying needs of residents, and as they weigh the wise and careful expenditure of tax dollars.

This plan is predicated on the community's commitment to human values: a sense that the village exists for its citizens, that the physical manifestations of the community—its housing, its parks, its businesses, its streets, etc.—are there to serve its residents.

A product of over two years of study, deliberation, and citizen comment, the *Comprehensive Plan 1979* identifies the basic goals of the community and the objectives that will help Oak Park reach those goals. It recommends policies to be pursued to fulfill the objectives and notes different ways to implement these policies. Actions undertaken to achieve these goals will help preserve those aspects of Oak Park that make it a desirable place in which to live, and mitigate characteristics that detract from that desirability. By clearly stating these aims, the plan provides

a foundation upon which decision makers—the village board and appointed commissions, boards, and committees—can more objectively choose between competing interests.

Goals

The *Comprehensive Plan 1979* focuses on six goals in five general areas:

Housing. To preserve and enhance Oak Park's stable residential environment so persons of all ages, races, and incomes can live here in sound, affordable housing.

Transportation and Parking. To preserve the residential character of neighborhoods while achieving the safe, fuel-efficient movement of people and goods within and through Oak Park.

Public Facilities and Services. To provide in the most efficient manner those public facilities and services—public safety, public works, government services and facilities—which maintain Oak Park as a desirable community.

Economic Development. To provide a broad range of convenient retail facilities and service opportunities that Oak Park residents need and desire.

To expand Oak Park's tax base in order to maintain a high level of services, programs, and facilities.

Citizen Participation. To maintain a high level of citizen involvement in village affairs.

To attain these goals, the plan establishes more detailed objectives that further delineate the village's aims in each of these five areas. The plan also specifies policies as means of achieving these objectives.

Policy formulation, however, is a dynamic rather than static process. While the plan's goals and objectives remain constant, the appropriate means of attaining them may change. As the community's understanding of current conditions is enhanced through analysis and experience, it will refine its policies. In its triennial review of this plan, the village will reassess the policies it adopts and abandon those which are no longer applicable, alter those which conflict with emerging needs, and design new policies to address issues of concern not known at the time this plan was prepared.

The village chose this approach for several reasons.

First, carefully worded statements of policy are aids to clear thinking. They serve as an anchor of objectivity to minimize arbitrary decision making in the planning and implementation processes. They provide an explicit guide to those village bodies that must make zoning and development decisions.

Second, when a community is confronted by recurring problems of the same general nature, development of policy statements regarding these critical areas can significantly reduce staff and commission time spent on their consideration without impairing the quality of the planning recommendations. The policy statements provide the groundwork for making the decision.

Third, goal, objective, and policy statements inform the public about the village government's position on issues dealt with in the comprehensive plan. They provide a tool to help make decisions, as well as a basis for public evaluation of those decisions.

Plan Format

Following this introductory chapter, the plan consists of five chapters pertaining to the five general areas listed above, one chapter on development areas, and appendices.

Within each of the next five chapters, statements of goals, objectives, and policies follow discussions of issues and problems that face Oak Park. The goals and objectives are identified as such while each policy is designated by a circled number:

11

The plan also suggests different ways to implement the policies. The relationship among goals, objectives, policies and alternative implementation techniques is as follows:

Goal. A goal is a destination, a final purpose which a community seeks to attain. A goal is the most general level of policy and by itself isn't very helpful to decision makers. It needs further refinement to assist decision makers to reach their selected destination.

Objective. An objective is the route which specifies in general terms the way (route) by which the goal (destination) can be reached. An objective indicates the kinds of actions that should be used to achieve the goal.

Policy. A policy is a means of transportation along the route. It's a course of action which, if followed, will achieve an objective. A policy is more detailed than an objective and can be readily translated into specific action recommendations or design proposals.

Implementation Alternatives. These are the specific action recommendations suggested by policies. Among the more commonly used implementation techniques are zoning and subdivision ordinances, capital improvement programs, and site-specific proposals or programs. This plan will suggest alternative ways to implement policies.

Village officials must make the choice of which implementation techniques to actually use.

The format of the development areas chapter differs from the other chapters of this plan. It presents a map that represents the areas in which different types of development might be undertaken to achieve the goals of this plan. It is essentially the physical manifestation of the rest of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*.

How to Use This Plan

Every governmental decision involves trade-offs between competing interests. The village presents the *Comprehensive Plan 1979* to all elected and appointed village bodies to help them make those difficult choices between competing interests and to serve as a guide for decision making. For example, bodies that hear applications for rezonings, variations, or special use permits should evaluate them not only in terms of specific zoning ordinance standards, but also in terms of how well the proposed action would help attain the goals and objectives of this plan and fulfill its policies.

Similarly, applicants and citizens who wish to make proposals or to testify on an application ought to note in their testimony how the proposed action will or will not contribute to meeting these goals and objectives.

Likewise, when the appropriate village bodies consider development, public works, and program proposals, they ought to determine if the proposal's effects will help achieve the goals and objectives presented in the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*.

To assist village staff and interested applicants in these reviews, Appendix A brings together in one listing all of this plan's goals and objectives. It presents a checklist to identify whether a proposed action complies with the comprehensive plan by providing several columns in which to note whether or not a proposal contributes to meeting the plan's goals and objectives and conforms to its policies (columns 2 and 3). In addition, it provides space (column 4) in which to briefly state, for example, how a proposal contributes to meeting each goal or objective. Copies of this checklist are available from the village planning division, or may be photocopied from this document.

Reviews should, of course, be supplemented with additional supportive material.

Appendix B consists of a glossary of technical terms used in this plan.

Appendix C presents a bibliography of documents used in the preparation of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*. The "Harvard" method of footnoting is used in which references are noted in parentheses within the text as follows: (4,51). The first number refers to the number assigned the source in Appendix C. The second number identifies the page number in the source document. If reference is made to a source in general, rather than to a specific page, only the number of the source will appear in parentheses: (3).

CHAPTER II:

Housing

CHAPTER II: HOUSING

GOAL: To preserve and enhance Oak Park's stable residential environment so persons of all ages, races, and incomes can live here in sound, affordable housing.

OBJECTIVE: To support racial integration throughout Oak Park and prevent resegregation of any part of the village.

- POLICIES:**
- 1 Promote multi-racial demand for housing in all parts of the village.
 - 2 Promote an open, unitary housing market throughout the metropolitan area to relieve resegregation pressures from integrated, open communities such as Oak Park.
 - 3 Support efforts to improve services in, and revitalize the Austin neighborhood.
 - 4 Review all major proposed governmental actions, including, but not limited to zoning, development, and public works proposals, to identify their impacts on promoting integration and preventing resegregation.

OBJECTIVE: To support an economically diverse housing stock for all income and age groups living or working in Oak Park.

- POLICIES:**
- 5 Preserve and expand a variety of housing types to help meet the shelter needs of existing income groups living or working in Oak Park.
 - 6 The village shall maintain a housing assistance plan for the benefit of its residents.

OBJECTIVE: To obtain the quality of housing stock for all income and age groups living or working in Oak Park.

- POLICIES:**
- 7 Continue the housing code enforcement program for multi-family and single-family dwelling units.
 - 8 Continue the village's active role in encouraging the rehabilitation of multi-family and single-family housing.
 - 9 Maintain high quality management practices. The village should continue its aggressive role in this area.
 - 10 Develop educational and promotional programs to encourage the maintenance of houses.

OBJECTIVE: To maintain and enhance the residential character of existing residential areas.

- POLICIES:**
- 11 Promote a visually attractive environment in residential areas.
 - 12 Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible commercial uses.
 - 13 Maintain an atmosphere in which residents feel safe to walk around their neighborhoods day or night.
 - 14 Provide the highest affordable level of village services to all residential areas.

OBJECTIVE: To preserve and maintain structures of significant historical or architectural value and their immediate environment.

- POLICIES:**
- 15 The village should continue to survey and recognize buildings of historic and architectural value.
 - 16 The village should continue to seek private and public funding for use by historic district property owners to restore and rehabilitate their properties.
 - 17 The village should be the major determinant of historic district boundaries.
 - 18 The village should continue to involve the Landmarks Commission in the review of zoning amendments, acquisition of property for public use, and demolition of properties or major changes of sites in historic districts. Such reviews should identify adverse effects on properties in historic districts and recommend alternative actions that mitigate or avoid these adverse effects.
 - 19 Promote historic preservation through educational programs, information on historic preservation matters, and the provision of technical services.
 - 20 Promote tourism of Oak Park's historic architecture.

OBJECTIVE: To stabilize the size of Oak Park's population.

- POLICIES:**
- 21 Encourage the selective construction of multi-family residential buildings. The size of units—in terms of the number of bedrooms—should meet the needs of households not served by existing housing.
 - 22 Permit the development of higher density residential buildings at reasonable intervals in accord with development principles in this plan.

Oak Park offers a wide range of housing of sound construction and frequently outstanding design. The village features single family houses, varying in size from spacious mansions to modest bungalows; townhouses; condominiums; rental apartments; and apartment hotels. As a result of this variety, people of all income levels, races, and ages call Oak Park home. The village's housing policy is geared

Goal **To preserve and enhance Oak Park's stable residential environment so persons of all ages, races, and incomes can live here in sound, affordable housing.**

Racial Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Oak Park is nationally known for its extensive programs that have produced a stable, racially-integrated residential environment. The village has consciously striven

Objective **To support racial integration throughout Oak Park and prevent resegregation of any part of the village.**

Through deliberate community actions, Oak Park has defied the traditional pattern of block-by-block resegregation common to most Chicago-area communities that have integrated. The village has, according to a policy statement adopted by the village board in 1973 and reaffirmed in 1977, "committed itself to equality, not because it is legal, but because it is right; not because equality is ethical, but because it is desirable for us and for our children.

"Housing patterns in large metropolitan areas of this country have worked against equality and diversity. Block-by-block racial change has fostered inequality by creating *de facto* segregation. Efforts to achieve diversity are nullified by the resegregation of neighborhoods from all-white to all-black."

Oak Park continues to disprove myths about integrated communities. Fear of financial loss is the most frequently cited reason for the flight of whites from integrating areas. Many people perceive that property values fall when a community integrates. However, as illustrated in Figure II-1, the average sale price of a single-family house in Oak Park rose 96 per cent between 1970 and 1978.

To allay these unfounded fears, the village began, in 1973, to explore a proposal offered by a community group known as First Tuesday. The proposal was to create an equity assurance plan whereby homeowners would be guaranteed an amount equal to 80 per cent of any difference between their home's appraised value at the time of

entry into the program and its actual sales price (subject to certain restrictions). A village study showed that between 1970 and 1975 there was a steady increase in property values. The increase in property values was greatest in those parts of the village with a higher minority density. The study concluded that there would be a low risk factor to financial underwriters of such an equity assurance plan due to increasing housing market values and neighborhood stability. (8, 29) Based on this recommendation, the village initiated its equity assurance program late in the summer of 1978. Because property values here are so high, and neighborhoods so stable, this program is likely to serve largely as a psychological comfort to most homeowners.

Another myth suggests that a decline in public services characterizes integrating communities. Oak Park, however, continues to provide the same high level of services to all portions of the community as discussed in Chapter IV: Public Facilities and Services.

The village recognizes that it must not relax its efforts to maintain its stable, integrated residential environment. One of the essential steps it will continue to take is to

1 Promote strong multi-racial demand for housing in all parts of the village.

One of the first actions the village took to implement this policy was to become one of the first communities in Illinois to enact a fair housing ordinance. Passed in 1968, this ordinance lays the groundwork for preventing block-by-block racial change and guiding the balanced integration of the whole community by promoting demand for housing throughout Oak Park from members of all racial groups.

Like other fair housing ordinances, Oak Park's outlaws racial discrimination in the sale and rental of residential property, as well as in lending and insurance practices. It also prohibits blockbusting, racial steering, in which a prospective purchaser or renter is shown listings only in areas in which his racial group predominates, and some forms of solicitation.

Oak Park's ordinance goes further than others by providing an effective means of enforcement. The village's Community Relations Division (CRD) is charged with administering the fair housing ordinance. One of its major tasks is to monitor rental buildings to identify patterns of segregation or resegregation before they become pronounced. Monthly reports on the racial composition of all rental apartment buildings provide this information. CRD staff meet with the managers of buildings that evidence segregation or resegregation to discuss ways to remedy the racial imbalance. In addition, the CRD regularly counsels building managers, owners, and real estate agents twice a year to update rental building management practices and review the village's fair housing ordinance.

MAINTAINING DIVERSITY IN OAK PARK

The people of Oak Park have chosen this community, not so much as a place to live, but as a way of life. A key ingredient in the quality of this life is the diversity of these same people; a broad representation of various occupations, professions, and age and income levels; a stimulating mixture of racial, religious and ethnic groups. Such diversity is Oak Park's strength.

Our proud traditions of citizen involvement and accessible local government give us a unique opportunity to show others that such a community can face the future with an attitude of change for the better, and yet preserve the best of the past.

Since the passage of its Open Housing Ordinance in 1968, this Village has tried to abide not only by the letter of the law, but by the spirit of all appropriate legislation and court decisions guaranteeing equal access in the sale and rental of homes and apartments. Oak Park has committed itself to equality, not because it is legal, but because it is right; not because equality is ethical, but because it is desirable for us and for our children.

Housing patterns in large metropolitan areas of this country have worked against equality and diversity. Block-by-block racial change has fostered inequality by creating *de facto* segregation. Efforts to achieve diversity are nullified by the re-segregation of neighborhoods from all white to all black. We, individually and as a community, have worked long and hard on behalf of open housing in Oak Park; we must not succumb to Big-City-style residential patterns.

A free and open community—equal and diverse—can only be achieved through dispersal: a mixture of racial and ethnic groups throughout the Village. Oak Park is uniquely equipped to accomplish this objective. Not only do we possess a varied housing stock at all price levels and in all parts of the Village, but more importantly, Oak Park has the resources of all its people.....a people whose chosen social and ethical goals include integration, not re-segregation.

The President and the Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park reaffirms its dedication and commitment to these precepts. It is our intention that such principles will be a basis for policy and decision making in Oak Park.



This policy statement was presented and unanimously adopted by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park, Illinois, Monday, April 9, 1973.

It was unanimously reaffirmed at the Board of Trustees' meeting April 11, 1977.

When the CRD learns a building is resegregating, it advises the building manager to refer all rental applicants to the CRD for counselling. Staff explains the village's policy of racial diversity to potential tenants; furnishes data on the racial composition of blocks, neighborhoods, and school districts; and provides data regarding state guidelines in connection with minority enrollment in the schools. Staff then refers applicants to the Oak Park Housing Center, a private not-for-profit corporation, for assistance in finding an apartment. The center encourages minorities to seek housing in parts of the village with a relatively low proportion of minority residents. It encourages members of majority groups to seek housing in those parts of the village with a higher proportion of minority residents. In every case, though, the individual applicant makes the final choice of residence on his own.

The CRD also attempts to resolve charges of racial discrimination in housing. It receives about 50 complaints annually, of which only 20 per cent require conciliation efforts by the director of the division. If the director is unable to resolve the complaint, the Community Relations Commission will conduct a public hearing to settle the

dispute.

The CRD maintains a continuous "testing" program to monitor real estate sales and rental practices. Under this program, trained volunteers pose as potential buyers or renters. By comparing the treatment of minority and white testers, the CRD can determine if a Realtor or building manager discriminates against minorities or steers whites away from integrated areas and blacks away from predominantly white neighborhoods.

Because some people would inadvertently interpret even a normal number of "for sale" or "for rent" signs as an indication of instability, Oak Park Realtors and residents have voluntarily cooperated to eliminate these signs from residential properties.

Oak Park is one of the few Chicago-area communities that give both blacks and whites who wish to live in a stable, integrated community, the opportunity to do so. However, the long-term success of Oak Park's efforts to maintain this status is related to achieving a single, unitary housing market throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. A unitary housing market exists when members of all

racers can compete for the same housing, and when housing traffic, demand, and occupancy throughout all parts of the market area reflect the racial composition of all the races' members who desire and can afford the housing that is available.

Currently there is a dual housing market in the Chicago area that separates the housing supply into one virtually all-white market and another separate, but hardly equal, market for members of most other racial groups. Prior to 1968, this dual market, in which blacks and other minority consumers are relegated to limited geographic areas, existed legally throughout the country. In fact, racial discrimination was considered a normal practice in the real estate and lending industries. The result was highly segregated residential markets and communities.

The 1968 Oak Park Fair Housing Ordinance, the National Housing Act of 1968, and the 1970 Illinois Constitution ban discrimination on the basis of race in the sale or rental of virtually all housing. However, the legacy of decades of discrimination could not be wiped out in an instant. A *de facto* dual housing market continues, partially due to unlawful but deeply ingrained patterns and practices of the suppliers of housing, and partially due to the psychological residue of past practices on consumers.

Whatever the reasons, the dual housing market persists. Blacks are steered, or steer themselves, to predominantly black communities or to those few communities like Oak Park which have gained reputations as open to minority residents. Most whites continue to be steered, or steer

themselves, to virtually all-white communities. The long-term effect is a continuation of residential patterns in which blacks and other minorities reside in one community and whites in another. Interracial communities seeking stability continue to find it difficult to remain racially heterogeneous because a disproportionately large share of the minority market is channeled toward them.

A small, but growing number, of municipalities are opening their doors to minorities. This movement away from the dual housing market and toward a unitary housing market will help communities like Oak Park maintain their integrated status. Until a unitary housing market is established throughout the metropolitan area, Oak Park will continue to

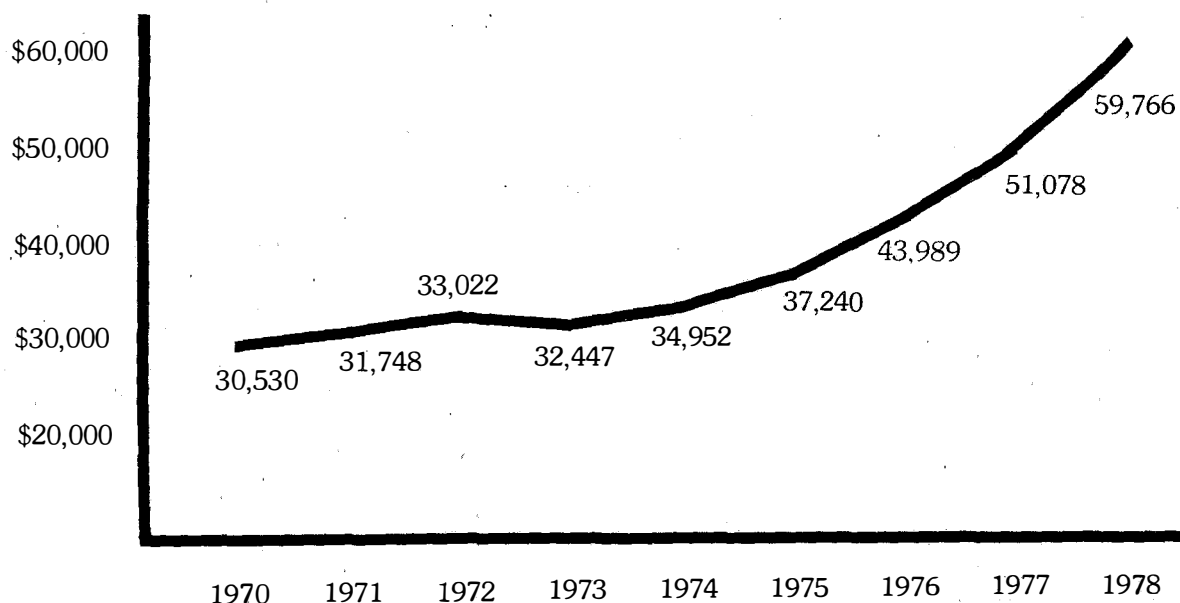
2

Promote an open, unitary housing market throughout the metropolitan area to relieve resegregation pressures from integrated, open communities such as Oak Park.

Oak Park's staff and elected officials participate in two regional groups that actively advocate this aim: the Illinois Municipal Human Relations Association and the Chicago Metropolitan Strategy Group. Both organizations lobby at the local, state and federal levels for regulations and enforcement of laws that will create a *de facto* unitary housing market.

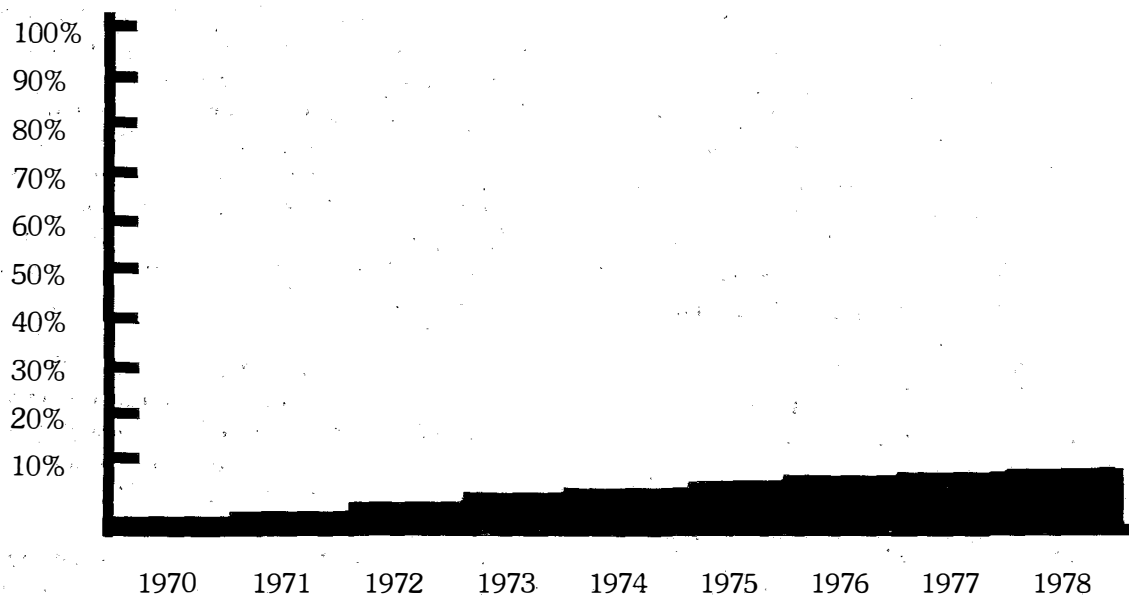
Oak Park also participates in a review process, con-

FIGURE II-1: Average Sale Price of Oak Park Houses, 1970-1978



Source: Oak Park Board of Realtors

FIGURE II-2: Proportion of Black Population, Oak Park, 1970-1978



Sources: Oak Park Community Relations Division estimates

U.S. Bureau of the Census—1970 figure

ducted by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, for federal grant applications from Chicago-area governments in which recommendations can be made to deny federal funds to communities that continue to close their doors to minorities.

While local realtors have generally cooperated to create a unitary housing market in Oak Park, others in neighboring communities have not. In 1976, efforts by Oak Park and the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities resulted in the suspension of 18 real estate agents' licenses in two communities adjacent to Oak Park by the Illinois Department of Registration and Education. Agents representing five firms signed a consent order in response to pending complaints charging unlawful racial steering.

The Oak Park Housing Center, supported in part by the village's share of federal community development funds, also participates in a metropolitan-wide effort to break through the dual housing market. In addition to helping non-whites locate housing in all-white portions of Oak Park, and whites find housing in integrated parts of the village, the Housing Center works with the Fair Housing Network to direct non-whites to housing opportunities in communities traditionally closed to minorities. The 123 agencies that participate in this network provide free hous-

ing information and assistance to people of all races. They engage in joint research, seminars, advertising and public relations, and monthly meetings—all geared to opening other communities to non-whites so integrated communities like Oak Park can stay integrated.

Similarly, conditions in adjacent communities affect Oak Park's ability to maintain stable integration. For example, improvement efforts in Austin, the Chicago neighborhood immediately east of Oak Park, improve the marketability of nearby properties, and create a more pleasing environment along Austin Boulevard for both communities. Accordingly, Oak Park will

3

Support efforts to improve services in, and revitalize the Austin neighborhood.

The village recognizes that as long as a dual housing market exists in the Chicago metropolitan area, Oak Park will have to remain vigilant to protect its unitary housing market. To assure that the village remains alert, it will

4

Review all major proposed governmental actions, including, but not limited to zoning, development, and

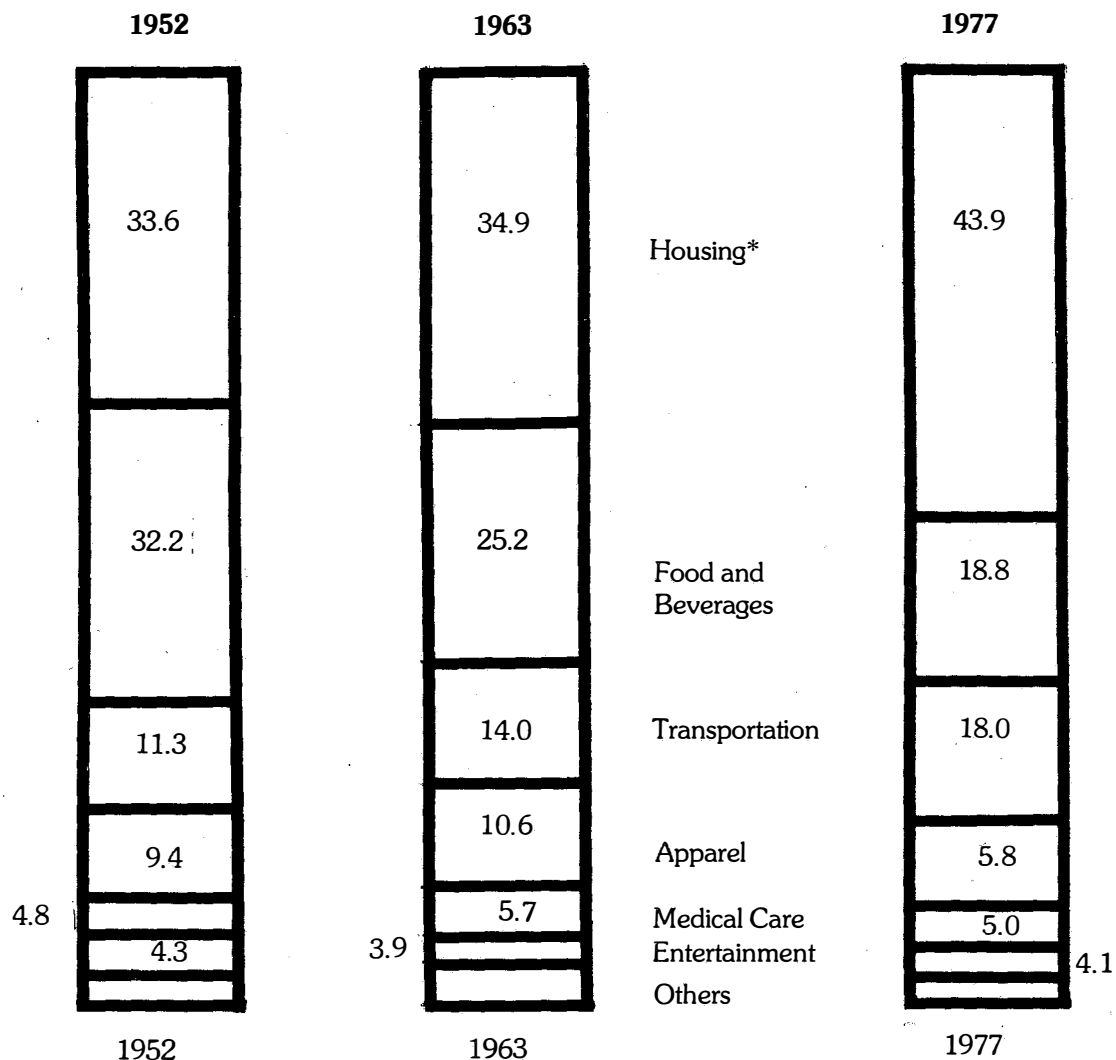
public works proposals, to identify their impacts on promoting integration and preventing resegregation.

For example, the role of schools in maintaining integration is well known. Communities that have stabilized racially have adjusted their school attendance boundaries to promote integration. The village will continue to support

the readjustment of attendance boundaries by Elementary School District Number 97 for the purpose of maintaining the stability of Oak Park's integrated neighborhoods.

In addition to being racially integrated, Oak Park is now, as in the past, economically diverse. Table II-1 illustrates that while a greater than average proportion of Oak Park residents are in the higher income brackets, there are also residents whose incomes relative to the rising cost of hous-

FIGURE II-3: Per Cent Distribution of the Consumer Price Index by Major Expenditure Groups— 1952, 1963, 1977



* Housing includes rent or mortgage costs, property tax, utilities, furnishings, telephone service, and housing-related expenses. This is not the same definition of "housing costs" used to determine need for assisted housing.

Source: Time-Life

**TABLE II-1: 1975 Income Profiles, Oak Park and Chicago Standard
Metropolitan Statistical Area**

Household Income Category	Percentage of Households in Each Category for	
	Oak Park	Chicago SMSA*
Less than \$10,000	22.8%	31.2%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	16.4	19.7
\$15,000 to \$24,999	33.2	30.1
\$25,000 or more	27.6	19.0
Low- and moderate- income (adjusted for household size)	33.3	45.0

* The Chicago SMSA consists of Cook, Lake, DuPage, Kane, McHenry, and Will counties.

Data Sources: Oak Park data from *1978 Oak Park Housing Needs Study*

SMSA data from *Annual Housing Survey, 1975*, published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census

DEFINITION: LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME HOUSEHOLD

A low- or moderate-income household is one that earned 80 per cent or less of the median income for all households in the Chicago SMSA. In 1975, this figure, for an average size household, was \$13,240.

ing, are such that they may no longer be able to afford to remain in the community.

**needs of existing income groups living
and working in Oak Park.**

Objective **To support an economically diverse
housing stock for all income and age
groups living or working in Oak Park**

In this decade, however, rapidly escalating housing costs—a national phenomenon particularly pronounced in high-demand, limited-supply housing markets like Oak Park—coupled with an extremely tight housing market, are making it difficult for many residents of long standing to continue to afford to live in Oak Park. Figure II-3 shows that during the last 25 years, the cost of housing and prices of housing-related goods and services, as reflected in the Consumer Price Index, have risen at a faster rate than the prices of most other goods. Housing costs have risen as a result of increasing utility rates, insurance, interest and other mortgage costs, real estate taxes, and maintenance expenses. Low- and moderate-income households in Oak Park, as elsewhere, are particularly troubled by rapidly inflating housing costs.

To help these households to continue to live in Oak Park, the village will encourage programs and activities to

5

**Preserve and expand a variety of hous-
ing types to help meet the shelter**

There are at least four alternative approaches, which are not mutually exclusive, available to implement this policy. First, the village can carefully monitor its housing stock, perhaps including an examination of the effects of further condominium conversion on displacement of existing Oak Park residents. Second, the village can explore alternative housing opportunities, including, but not necessarily limited to, the feasibility of encouraging the conversion of rental units to low- and moderate-cost limited-equity cooperatives. Third, the village might require that a specific proportion of units, perhaps 10 to 20 per cent, in new multi-family construction, be reserved for low- and moderate-income Oak Park households and that 10 to 20 per cent of the units in any condominium conversion be maintained as rental. Fourth, the village could cooperate with local private financial institutions to enable a wider range of households to afford ownership housing by establishing a low-interest mortgage program, and offer reverse annuity mortgages to enable older households to afford to continue to own their houses.

Finally, the village can continue, and if possible expand, its existing housing assistance programs. As of January 1979, 157 Oak Park households received assistance under the federal government's Section 8 housing subsidy program. One-hundred and one of these households were

elderly. The Oak Park Housing Authority constructed the Mills Park Senior Citizen Residence which houses another 199 elderly households. Heritage House, a private development financed by the Illinois Housing Development Authority, houses an additional 200 senior citizen households. The Oak Park Housing Authority has filed applications for additional assisted units.

Oak Park sets a 20 per cent ceiling on the number of assisted family units that may be provided in any major publicly subsidized new construction or rehabilitation project. This policy is intended to prevent economic segregation.

6

The village shall maintain a housing assistance plan for the benefit of its residents.

The housing assistance plan (HAP) provides a framework for organizing efforts to enable current low- and moderate-income residents of the village to enjoy quality housing at a reasonable cost. In addition, it enables the Village of Oak Park to receive a federal community development block grant which provides funds for street maintenance, economic development, housing rehabilitation, historic restoration, gateway projects, open space development, and other projects of significant benefit to the community.

The 1978 Oak Park Housing Needs Study estimates that 2,700 Oak Park households, including 1,242 elderly-headed households, were in need of housing assistance in 1975. Table II-3 indicates the income limits for assisted housing as established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1978. Under the Section 8 assisted housing program, the federal government pays the difference between the monthly cost of a unit and 25 per cent of the household's gross monthly income.

Existing Housing

Nearly 80 per cent of all Oak Park housing units were built prior to 1940. About 47 per cent of Oak Park's housing units were built prior to 1920. (11, 3) Although the vast majority of these buildings are structurally sound, their age warrants considerable emphasis on maintenance together with construction of replacement housing where needed.

Objective

To maintain the quality of housing units currently meeting village standards and to upgrade units that are not beyond repair.

The village should pursue five policies to achieve this objective.

7

Continue the housing code enforcement program for multi-family and single-family dwelling units.

Since 1973, the village has maintained a policy of annually-inspecting the interior of 10 per cent of the dwelling units, as well as the exterior, public and common facilities, and service areas of all multi-family structures. In addition, the village requires a certificate of compliance for a building of four or more units prior to its sale. All dwelling units, as well as common areas, must meet village housing codes to receive this certificate. In five years these two techniques have resulted in the inspection of the interiors of 80 per cent of all multi-family dwelling units in Oak Park. Every effort is made to have code violations repaired promptly. If necessary, the village initiates legal action to gain code compliance.

Since 1973 the village has inspected the exteriors of

TABLE II-2: Household Incomes, Village of Oak Park, 1975

Income Range	Number of Households	Per Cent of Households
Less than \$7999	3,999	17.4
\$8000-\$9999	1,241	5.4
\$10,000-\$14,999	3,769	16.4
\$15,000-\$24,999	7,630	33.2
\$25,000 or more	6,343	27.6
Totals	22,982	100.0

Note: As of this writing, this is the most recent data available. Please note that the income ranges are in 1975 dollars.

Source: 1978 Oak Park Housing Needs Study

TABLE II-3: Income Range for Assisted Housing for Chicago Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, 1978

Number of Persons in Household	Income Range for Eligibility for Assisted Housing
1	\$7,950-11,150
2	10,200-12,750
3	11,450-14,350
4	12,700-15,900
5	13,500-16,900
6	14,300-17,900
7	15,100-18,900
8	15,900-19,900

over 7000 single-family and two-flat dwellings through its Neighborhood Walk program. Housing inspectors conduct a house-to-house exterior inspection in these walks. Owners receive notices of violations and follow-up visits by an inspector. If an inspector notices deficiencies which are not code violations, the homeowner is sent a "deficiency notice" informing him of the problems. A letter of commendation is awarded if no code violations or problems are found.

Although most property owners are willing and able to correct code violations, some experience personal or financial difficulties in complying with the housing code. The Oak Park Residence Corporation, established in the early 1960s as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of blight, has helped qualified homeowners obtain conventional home improvement loans and provided such loans to persons unable to secure conventional loans. This function is now shared with the village's community development program. Oak Park should

8

Continue the village's active role in encouraging the rehabilitation of multi-family and single-family housing.

Oak Park has assisted the minor and major renovation of nearly 30 apartment buildings with a revolving loan fund generated by a \$1.5 million housing bond issued in 1973. Under this program the village provides loans to building owners, currently at a 6.5 per cent interest rate. The interiors of at least 25 per cent of a building's units must be rehabilitated under this program.

In June 1978, the village initiated an ambitious rehabilitation program using federal community development block grant funds. Under this program, administered by the Housing and Rehabilitation Division, up to 25 per cent

of the cost of rehabilitating a multi-family building can be paid by a direct grant from the village and interest subsidies. The remainder of the cost is financed by a conventional loan from one of eight Oak Park financial institutions that have committed \$1,000,000 to this program.

In return for this grant, 25 per cent of the building's units are maintained at rents within the federal government's standards for low- and moderate-income households for three years. During this period the village also subsidizes the interest rate on the conventional loan so it remains several points below the market rate. Currently the subsidy keeps interest rates down to 6 per cent. At the end of the three-year period—set by a contract signed at the outset—the landlord is no longer required to keep rent levels low. However, the village also stops subsidizing the interest rate on the landlord's loan.

Two hundred thousand dollars were allocated for this program, which will affect 125 units in 1979. The village often acts as the general contractor in this program. It lets bids, makes cost estimates, and supervises renovation work.

Nearly \$60,000 were allocated in 1978 for rehabilitation grants of owner-occupied single-family homes and two- and three-flat buildings. To qualify for assistance under this program, the owner's income must fall within the federal government's Section 8 limits for low- and moderate-income households. A sliding scale is used to determine how much of the rehabilitation cost will be covered by this grant (up to 100 per cent). Another alternative under this program is to accept a deferred payment loan under which the village is repaid the cost of rehabilitation with no interest charges when the property is sold.

The housing bond and community development rehabilitation programs, combined with other factors—changes in ownership or management, and privately-

financed rehabilitation—have reduced the number of apartment buildings that are in urgent need of extensive renovation. Of 40 buildings identified in 1976 as in need of such renovation (7, 12) three-fourths have been rehabilitated, including all of those in greatest need.

Because nearly half of Oak Park's 665 multi-family buildings were built before 1920, the need for rehabilitation, modernization, and upgrading will continue. This need should be regularly quantified and updated and, as long as the need exists, rehabilitation should be a high priority for the use of federal community development funds.

Village code administrators estimate that management practices were a significant factor creating a need for rehabilitation for 60 per cent of the buildings needing rehabilitation. Deferred maintenance and poor landlord-tenant relations frequently led to a need for renovation. (7, 4) The village should make every effort to

9

Maintain high quality management practices. The village should continue its aggressive role in this area.

Under its Apartment Preview and Evaluation Program, the Oak Park Housing Center provides prospective tenants with a thorough evaluation of available units. When examining an apartment, the center's representative will often consult with the owner or manager to establish

realistic rents and discuss improvements that might be made to the unit or building in general, as well as other building management issues.

The Oak Park Residence Corporation provides management assistance to some property owners and has expanded its activities to include, when appropriate, the purchase renovation, and management of large multi-family apartment buildings. In addition, the Community Relations Division conducts seminars twice a year on building management.

To help homeowners better maintain their property, the village should continue to

10

Develop educational and promotional programs to encourage the maintenance of houses.

Both the government and citizens of Oak Park continue to undertake efforts in this direction. Local residents who own "Gunderson" homes banded together in a cooperative effort to share information on the preservation of their houses. The Oak Park Landmarks Commission provides technical assistance to homeowners interested in renovation and distributes a list of trade people experienced in rehabilitation. The Village Clerk distributes information from the Cook County Assessor on the home improvements exemption which postpones for four years any increase in property tax assessments due to home im-

TABLE II-4: Housing Needs by Income Category, Village of Oak Park, 1975

Annual Income Range	Number of Housing Units Needed				
	Elderly	Non-elderly	Total: Elderly and Non-elderly	Female Head of Household*	Large Family (require 3 or more bedrooms)*
Less than \$3000	601	667	1268	328	26
\$3000-\$4999	510	542	1052	456	38
\$5000-\$6999	131	247	378	159	49
Total number of households	1242	1456	2698	943	113

Note: As of this writing, this is the most recent data available. Please note that the income ranges are in 1975 dollars.

"Need" is defined as a household spending more than 25 per cent of its monthly income on housing.

*These two columns represent subsets of the preceding column: Total—Elderly and Non-elderly.

Source: 1978 Oak Park Housing Needs Study

provements. The Lighted Schoolhouse Program includes classes in home repair and maintenance. The Community Design Commission's annual Cavalcade of Pride program recognizes exceptional property maintenance and improvements to homes, apartments, and businesses. These programs and activities should be continued, supplemented, and publicized.

In addition to maintaining the quality of housing structures, Oak Park wishes to retain the residential nature of its neighborhoods.

Objective **To maintain and enhance the residential character of existing residential areas.**

Four policies will help achieve this objective.

11

Promote a visually attractive environment in residential areas.

Simply put, this policy means that a residential area should look like one. Street trees, parkway treatments, cul-de-sacs, and sign control all help to maintain a residential atmosphere. In addition, several "Gateway Projects" have brightened the entries to a number of Oak Park neighborhoods. These projects to beautify business areas on the edge of residential neighborhoods have made the whole areas around Lake and Austin Boulevard, and Chicago and Austin Boulevard, more attractive. They involve beautification treatments, installation of street furniture, landscaping, lighting, brick pavements, and enlarged pedestrian walkways. However, the village should still

12

Protect residential areas from encroachment by incompatible commercial uses.

To implement this policy, the village should use zoning district boundaries to protect residential areas from expansion or replacement by incompatible commercial uses and should issue special use permits for commercial uses very judiciously. However, the village must balance this policy with its need for economic development, as discussed in the fifth chapter of this plan.

Residential areas are also enhanced by a feeling of safety. The village should

13

Maintain an atmosphere in which residents feel safe to walk around their neighborhoods day or night.

In addition, a full range of public services is needed to maintain the physical appearance of residential areas. The village should

14

Provide the highest affordable level of village services to all residential areas.

Means of implementing these last two policies are discussed in detail in Chapter IV: Public Facilities and Services.

Historic and Architectural Preservation

Oak Park is internationally renowned for its outstanding architecture. The village contains over 300 buildings of architectural or historic significance, including 25 structures designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Oak Parkers recognize the importance of this priceless heritage, and appreciate that the preservation of many of these structures is essential to maintain the quality of life here. (6, 1)

The preservation of all historic and architecturally significant buildings is neither possible nor necessarily desirable. Since nearly all of the most significant structures are concentrated in the north-central part of Oak Park, the village established, in 1973, the Frank Lloyd Wright/Prairie School of Architecture Historic District to designate and preserve these buildings. The district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The village's Landmarks Commission maintains an archives file with information on each landmark and continues to search for new techniques to preserve historic and architecturally significant places. It is believed that the identification of a house or apartment building as an historic structure will provide additional incentive for owners to preserve housing quality.

The village recognizes that the immediate environment surrounding an historic or architecturally significant building affects the building's atmosphere. A proliferation of traffic signals, for example, can detract from the appearance of brilliant architecture.

Objective **To preserve and maintain structures of significant historical or architectural value and their immediate environment.**

To help assure the preservation of significant buildings,

15

The village should continue to survey and recognize buildings of historic and architectural value.

As noted earlier, one way to do this is to establish an historic district. Once a building is designated part of such a district, its owner may seek funding for renovation and other repairs.

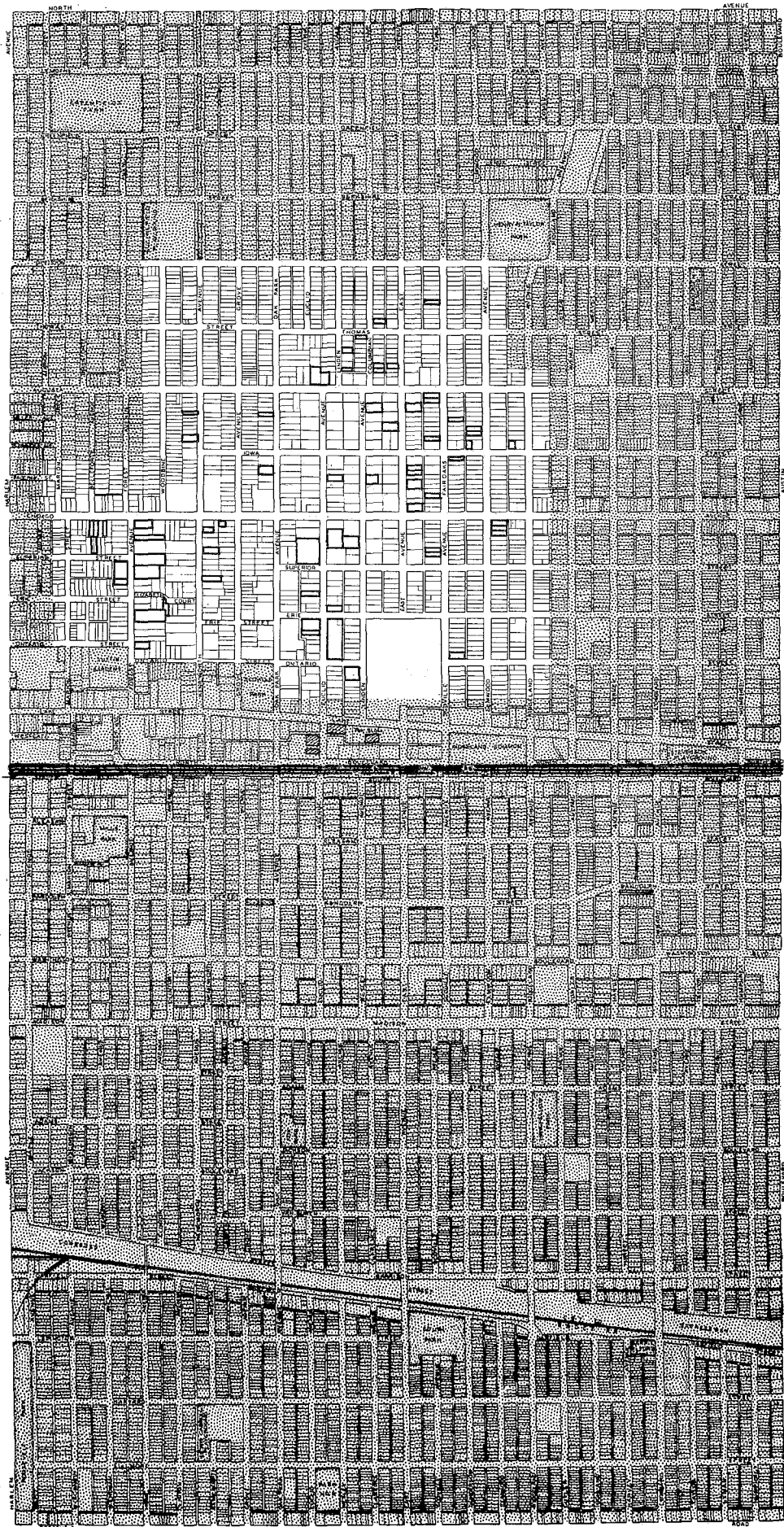
Frank Lloyd Wright/Prairie School of Architecture Historic District

Established:
December, 1973



Indicates a lot with
a building of first significance

Historic District shown in
unshaded area



16

The village should continue to seek private and public funding for use by historic district property owners to restore and rehabilitate their properties.

Since 1974 the village has helped 20 property owners obtain grants under the State of Illinois Preservation Grant in Aid Program. These are matching grants for restoration or maintenance of buildings in historic districts. An average of \$2600 has been awarded each successful applicant. Grants totaling \$87,000 have aided the restoration and maintenance of four public buildings under this program.

17

The village should be the major determinant of historic district boundaries.

After due consultation with experts from the state and federal governments, the village government is the most logical body to make the final determination of boundaries for its historic districts.

A community must remain vigilant to assure that its irreplaceable historic and architectural treasures are not lost. To provide such protection,

18

The village should continue to involve the Landmarks Commission in the review of zoning amendments, acquisition of property for public use, and demolition of properties or major changes of sites in historic districts. Such reviews should identify adverse effects on properties in historic dis-

tricts and recommend alternative actions that mitigate or avoid these adverse effects.

Oak Park currently provides for this kind of review by law. However, such reviews should also take into account the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979* to assure that all relevant factors are considered.

19

Promote historic preservation through educational programs, information on historic preservation matters, and the provision of technical services.

The village's Landmarks Commission will continue to implement this policy. In addition to displaying signs to designate historic district boundaries, it also provides citizens with information on such subjects as the effect of tax laws on properties in historic districts and other reports. The Oak Park Landmarks Commission is investigating the possibility of providing technical services on restoration for homeowners.

20

Promote tourism of Oak Park's historic architecture.

The village actively promotes tourism as part of its economic development program as discussed in chapter V of this plan. In 1976, the village and its Landmarks Commission jointly published a *Guide to Frank Lloyd Wright and Prairie School Architecture in Oak Park* to promote tourism here. The village continues to support the Oak Park Tour Center, which is operated by the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation, a non-profit corporation founded in 1974.

TABLE II-5: Changes in Oak Park Population, 1970-1975

Measure	1970	1975	Percentage Change
Total Population	62,511	59,773*	-4.4%
Number of Households	22,620	22,982	+1.6%
Persons per Household	2.76	2.60	-5.8%
Persons 62+ years of age	12,426	14,662	+18.0%
Proportion of persons 62+ years of age	19.9%	24.5%	+23.1%
Number of Households Headed by Person 62+ years of age	7,713	9,285	+20.4%
Proportion of Total Households Headed by Person 62+ years of age	34.1%	40.4%	+18.5%
Number of Persons per Household, Head of Household 62+ years of age	1.61	1.58	-1.9%

*Internal Revenue Service

Source: 1978 Oak Park Housing Needs Study

New Housing

As a virtually built-up and land-locked community, Oak Park has little vacant land available for new development of any kind. However, the land that is available or will become available through redevelopment should be developed in accord with the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*. New housing, though, can be used to help

Objective **To stabilize the size of Oak Park's population.**

Like similarly situated suburbs, Oak Park's population has been gradually shrinking. Since 1970, trends toward lower birth rates, longer life spans, and the formation of more single parent households have resulted in a declining household size. In addition, as residents grow older, their children leave home, resulting in a smaller household size. Younger couples have often delayed child-bearing until they are older. Consequently, a given housing unit will frequently be found to house fewer persons today than it did in 1970. (9, 64)

A serious consequence of this decline in population is the directly proportionate decline in the size of Oak Park's shopping market. As discussed in detail in Chapter V: Economic Development, a strong market population is essential to support the village's stores and shops. A shrinking population results in a smaller shopping market, and a reduction in sales tax revenues needed to finance village services. To prevent further erosion of the village's tax base, it will need to stabilize the size of its population.

21

Encourage the selective construction of multi-family residential buildings. The size of units—in terms of the number of bedrooms—should meet the needs of households not served by existing housing.

Given the demographic trends discussed above, multi-family housing offers the best opportunity to stabilize the size of Oak Park's population. In addition, subsidy programs discussed earlier in this chapter can be used in conjunction with new construction of multi-family rental housing to help meet the housing needs of modest-income residents. To help accomplish this aim, the village could:

22

Permit the development of higher density residential buildings at reasonable intervals in accord with development principles in this plan.

The village should undertake steps to allow such development and assure that it will conform to the character of the community. Higher density refers to the maximum density limits in the different multi-family zoning districts. See the *Oak Park Zoning Ordinance* for specific density limitations.

The zoning ordinance should be reviewed to ensure that standards for spacing, open space, and bulk requirements assure that such buildings maintain the community's atmosphere. For example, the zoning ordinance could be amended to require a 1,000-foot distance between higher density buildings so a concentration of them could not develop. Oak Park does not wish to develop large concentrations of higher density buildings in any part of the village. It does, however, wish to allow construction of a limited number of scattered higher density buildings to stabilize the size of the population and create opportunities for meeting the housing needs of residents of all income levels.

In addition, the village should investigate several means of facilitating such development including, but not limited to, the use of land write downs, revenue bonds, and street vacations.



CHAPTER III:

Transportation and Parking

CHAPTER III: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

GOAL: To preserve the residential character of neighborhoods while achieving the safe, fuel-efficient movement of people and goods within and through Oak Park.

OBJECTIVE: To maintain the residential nature of neighborhoods while allowing for the safe flow of traffic within Oak Park.

- POLICIES:**
- 1 Encourage through-traffic with origins and destinations outside Oak Park to use primary arterial streets.
 - 2 Encourage traffic that originates or terminates in Oak Park to use arterial and collector streets whenever possible.
 - 3 Maintain village streets in good condition. Highest priority for repair should go to those streets in the worst condition and those which traffic is encouraged to use.

OBJECTIVE: To provide adequate parking for residents, shoppers, employees, commuters, and visitors.

- POLICIES:**
- 4 The parking needs of different types of parkers should be given priority depending upon the nature of the area.
 - 5 Require the provision of an adequate number of off-street parking spaces in all new construction. In areas of high parking demand, encourage the provision of additional off-street spaces beyond minimum requirements.
 - 6 Seek to achieve one-for-one replacement of off-street parking spaces eliminated by new construction.
 - 7 The village should continue its programs to provide additional off-street parking facilities in neighborhoods with extensive multi-family housing built prior to the imposition of zoning requirements for off-street parking.

OBJECTIVE: To enhance the mobility of those residents who, by choice or necessity, are dependent on public transportation.

- POLICY:**
- 8 Expand the taxi fare subsidy program to serve additional needy elderly and handicapped residents.
 - 9 Improve the accessibility to rapid transit stations for the elderly and handicapped.
 - 10 Consider developing a modified internal transit system to serve persons not now adequately serviced by existing, conventional Oak Park transportation systems.

OBJECTIVE: To develop a transportation system that requires less dependence on the automobile and more use of public transportation and other forms of energy-efficient transportation.

- POLICIES:**
- 11 Expand the amount and improve the quality of local public transportation service.
 - 12 Improve transit services within Oak Park to reduce the need for commuters to drive to train stations and to increase the use of public transportation.
 - 13 Improve the current level of rapid-transit rail service and safety provided by the RTA.
 - 14 Accommodate the use of safe, fuel-efficient or manually-powered transportation modes in place of the automobile.
 - 15 Encourage the ownership of more fuel-efficient automobiles.

Oak Park lies at the crossroads of the Chicago region's transportation system. Two rapid transit lines, a commuter railroad, and the Eisenhower Expressway link the village with downtown Chicago. The Chicago and Northwestern commuter railroad, two suburban bus lines, and the region's extensive highway network link Oak Park with western, southern, and northern suburbs as well. The village lies within a half-hour drive of both O'Hare Field and Midway Airport as well as Chicago's rail and bus depots.

But this excellent location brings with it the problems generated by heavy traffic demands. Moving large volumes of vehicular traffic while protecting residential neighborhoods from encroachment by through traffic is a major challenge facing this community.

Much of this heavy traffic is caused by American society's dependence on the automobile. Despite Oak Park's excellent public transportation to Chicago's "Loop," many residents still drive there. The vast majority of Oak Parkers choose to drive to destinations within the village rather than use such alternatives as public transportation, bicycles, or walking. A reduction in the number of automobile trips within the village is desirable not only to alleviate congestion on its streets, but also to help reduce energy demands on the finite supply of fossil fuels—a national problem, the continuing energy crisis—and to reduce exhaust emissions that erode air quality.

Those Oak Parkers who cannot drive or afford to own an automobile are dependent on public transportation for their mobility. An accessible public transportation system within Oak Park is essential for these individuals to be able to function without undue hardship. Such a system is one of the advantages a close-in suburb like Oak Park can offer.

Most of Oak Park's 110 miles of streets were constructed nearly 50 years ago. They were built for a society less dependent on the automobile and for vehicles much lighter than those in use today. When constructed, these streets had a "life expectancy" of 25 years, which could be extended to 50 years by adequate maintenance.

Today many streets need repair or improvement to handle modern traffic demands. The costs of street improvements, though, are high. For example, the reconstruction of Division Street in 1978 cost \$800,000 per mile. Resignalization of a single intersection costs between \$35,000 and \$75,000.

The village has chosen the following goal to guide its efforts to meet its transportation challenges:

Goal **To preserve the residential character of neighborhoods while achieving the safe, fuel-efficient movement of people and goods within and through Oak Park.**

To attain this goal, the village will seek to achieve four basic objectives, the first of which is:

Objective **To maintain the residential nature of neighborhoods while allowing for the safe flow of traffic within Oak Park.**

Today, new developments and communities are designed to separate through-traffic from residential neighborhoods and minimize traffic within residential areas. But because Oak Park's land use patterns were established by the 1930s, before the effects of the automobile were known, the village must be content with street patterns designed for an earlier age.

To protect residential neighborhoods from excessive or high speed traffic, Oak Park should pursue three policies, the first of which are:

- 1** **Encourage through-traffic with origins and destinations outside Oak Park to use primary arterial streets.**
- 2** **Encourage traffic that originates or terminates in Oak Park to use arterial and collector streets whenever possible.**

Any action proposed to encourage or discourage use of a street should be considered within the context of the surrounding neighborhood and street system. Village staff should identify the likely effects on nearby streets and the street system as a whole prior to public hearings on the proposed action.

Many of the following alternatives are expensive and can be accomplished only with county, state, or federal assistance. In addition, the State of Illinois controls some streets in Oak Park. Physical changes to those streets may require state approval and funding.

Definitions of Street Classifications

The street network map identifies these different street classifications. Primary or secondary *arterial* streets are generally located a half-mile apart and connect with the major expressway. They are designed to carry the majority of through-traffic trips. Arterial streets should be direct and continuous through the village.

Collector streets serve as feeders from the less frequently used residential streets to the more heavily-traveled arterials. They intersect arterial streets at quarter-mile intervals. A collector should remain open to traffic for at least one-eighth mile from its intersection with an arterial street. However, it may be closed to traffic at greater distances from the intersections, but only if traffic can be safely reassigned to other streets.

Residential streets provide access to residences. They intersect with a collector or arterial street.

Alternative implementation techniques that **encourage** the use of a street include:

- 1) Street widening;
- 2) Channelization of traffic;
- 3) Provision of left turn bays and signals;
- 4) Restrictions on curb parking;
- 5) Realignment of offset intersections;
- 6) Timing of traffic signals;
- 7) Restrictions on additional driveway openings and removal of existing driveways.

Alternative techniques that **discourage** the use of a street include:

- 1) Use of diverters and cul-de-sacs;
- 2) Curb parking;
- 3) Refrain from making street improvements such as throat widenings, left turn bays and signals, etc.

3

Maintain village streets in good condition. Highest priority for repair should go to those streets in the worst condition and those which traffic is encouraged to use.

Traffic flows more safely and smoothly on streets that are in good repair. In addition, given the choice between two otherwise equal streets, a driver will generally choose the one in better condition.

The first two policies under this objective recommend that drivers be encouraged to use certain types of streets. These are the streets which should be kept in top condition. In addition, the streets in the worst condition can become safety hazards and should be repaired. Together these two types of streets should receive highest priority in assigning street repairs. As noted in Chapter IV: Public Services and Facilities, every attempt should be made to coordinate major street repairs with sewer and other improvements that require major street work.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, nearly all of Oak Park was built before the automobile attained its dominance. Most construction here was completed before the village established off-street parking requirements. Consequently, the village faces severe parking problems particularly in commercial areas, near commuter train stations, and in higher density residential neighborhoods. Oak Park recognizes the need

Objective **To provide adequate parking for residents, shoppers, employees, commuters, and visitors.**

To provide this parking, the village recommends that several policies be followed.

4

The parking needs of different types of parkers should be given priority depending upon the nature of the area.

Flexibility is needed to meet specific conditions. Where land uses that produce different parking needs—such as a business district adjacent to a commuter rail station—interface, and there is insufficient parking available to meet competing demands, priorities should be established in accord with the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*.

For example, adequate parking is essential for the health of local business districts as explained in Chapter V: Economic Development. Therefore satisfaction of the parking needs of shoppers should be assigned the highest priority. Second priority should be assigned to the parking needs of employees of the local businesses. Where spillover from the shopping district into the residential area becomes so great as to interfere with residents' parking, restrictions should be instituted to discourage non-residential parking on residential streets.

Parking needs of commuters, which will exist until desirable public transportation is available, should be met by providing metered lots. Steps should be taken to discourage parking by commuters on the residential streets.

The provision of off-street parking is a key tool for solving Oak Park's parking dilemma. Off-street parking is particularly needed in commercial and higher-density residential districts. The following two policies related to new construction are intended to help alleviate this dilemma.

5

Require the provision of an adequate number of off-street parking spaces in all new construction. In areas of high parking demand, encourage the provision of additional off-street spaces beyond minimum requirements.

Oak Park's zoning ordinance already requires off-street parking for most types of new construction. The ordinance should be reviewed to assure that these requirements produce an adequate number of parking spaces.








To encourage builders to provide additional spaces beyond minimum requirements, the zoning ordinance can be amended to establish overlay zones for areas in which demand for off-street parking is high. The village could offer incentive bonuses or relax other requirements in these zones in exchange for additional off-street spaces.

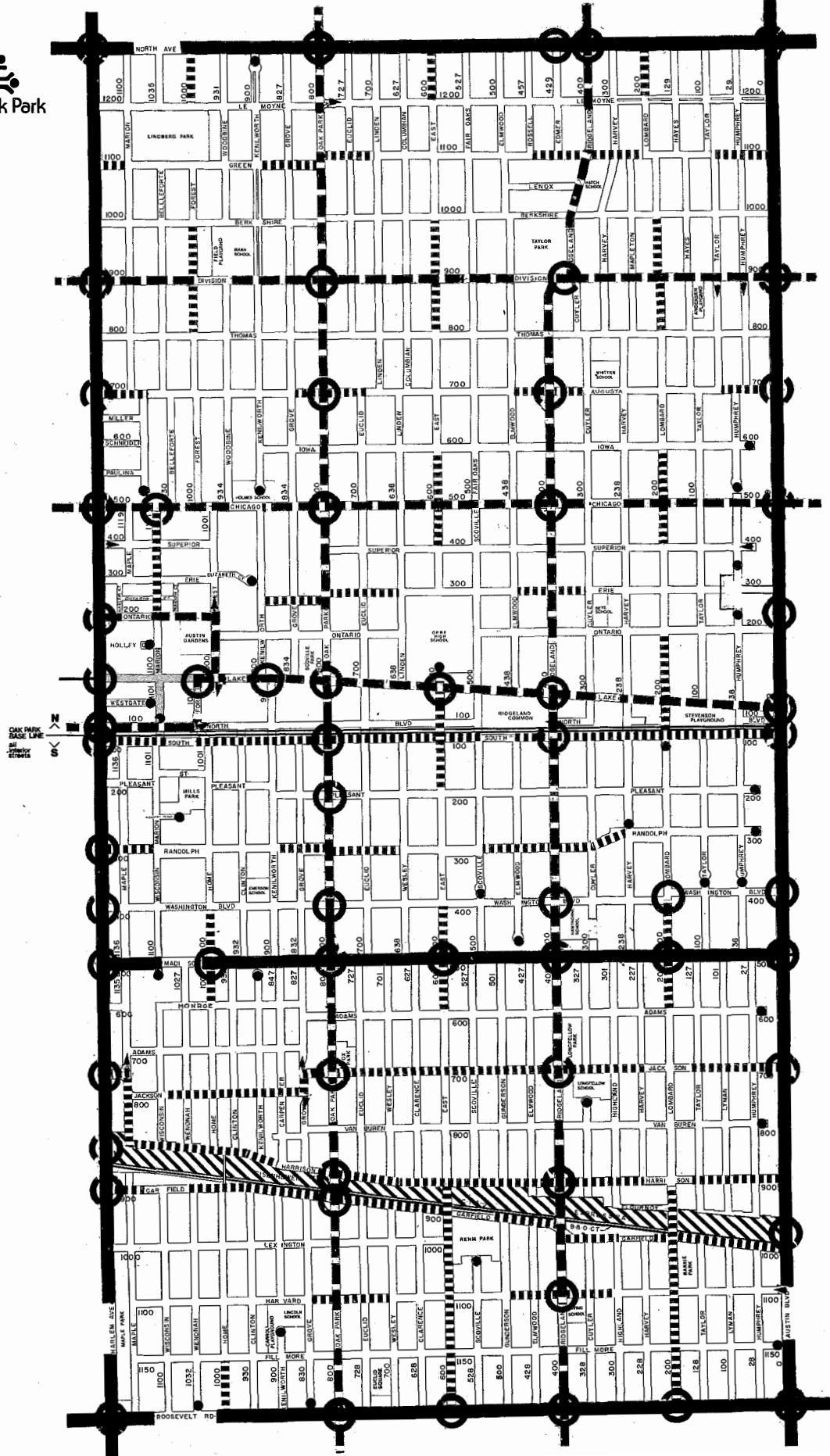
6

Seek to achieve one-for-one replacement of off-street parking spaces eliminated by new construction.

The purpose of this policy is to prevent a loss of parking spaces due to redevelopment. Should new construction result in a net loss of off-street parking, the village should

Street Network Map

-  Limited access expressway
-  Primary arterial street
-  Secondary arterial street
-  Collector street
-  Residential street
-  Existing traffic signal
-  Existing cul-de-sacs and diverters



work closely with the private sector to replace these spaces in nearby locations.

Because so many Oak Park apartment buildings were constructed prior to the establishment of off-street parking requirements, they lack adequate off-street parking for their occupants. Consequently, working with the owners of such buildings,

7

The village should continue its programs to provide additional off-street parking facilities in neighborhoods with extensive multi-family housing built prior to the imposition of zoning requirements for off-street parking.

For many Oak Parkers—the elderly, the handicapped, those under 16 years old, and those unable to afford an automobile—parking is not a problem, simply because they do not own or drive an automobile. For example, more than half of Oak Park's older residents prefer to use some mode of transportation other than the automobile. (14, 20) These individuals make up a large group of people who are dependent on public transportation for much of their mobility. Without it, many of them would be unable to get to work or even shop. For many of them current public transportation facilities are inadequate.

The following objective and policies respond to this situation:

Objective **To enhance the mobility of those residents who, by choice or necessity, are dependent on public transportation.**

8

Expand the taxi fare subsidy program to serve additional needy elderly and handicapped residents.

Since 1977, the Village of Oak Park and Oak Park Township have sponsored a taxi fare subsidy program that reduces participants' fares by 30 per cent. More than 200 elderly and handicapped residents participate in this limited program.

Additional clients could be served, but only if further funding is made available. Efforts should be made to obtain sufficient funding to provide this service to more eligible residents.

9

Improve accessibility to rapid transit stations for the elderly and handicapped.

Steep stairways and narrow turnstiles act as barriers to many elderly and handicapped persons dependent on mass transit for their mobility. If an individual is unable to pass through an elevated station or board a bus, he or she cannot use the transit service.

Elevators, lifts, and ramps overcome these barriers in rapid transit stations. Wide turnstiles permit wheelchairs to pass. Should the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) receive an expected federal grant to modify rapid transit stations to improve their accessibility to the handicapped and elderly, the village recommends that the Harlem station on the Lake Street "L" line be the first Oak Park station to be so equipped because it serves a principle destination, the Oak Park Village Mall, is close to substantial numbers of elderly housing units, and is well-served by bus routes.

Because many transit-dependent persons reside, work, and shop in Oak Park, the village urges the RTA to place Oak Park buses high on the list for replacement with vehicles equipped to serve handicapped and limited-mobility elderly persons. Close cooperation among the village, CTA, and RTA will be necessary to provide a complete public transportation system accessible to the handicapped and elderly.

10

Consider developing a modified internal transit system to serve persons not now adequately serviced by existing, conventional Oak Park transportation systems.

The village should continue to investigate the feasibility of establishing a fixed-route or dial-a-ride bus system for persons unable to use conventional public transportation. Vehicles in this service should be equipped to accommodate individuals confined to wheelchairs or unable to negotiate steps.

The village could incorporate aspects of existing taxicab service in such a system. Government and the private sector could explore working closely together to modify the village's internal transit system to make more efficient use of in-place taxicab systems.

In accord with the village's transportation and parking goal presented earlier in this chapter, Oak Park will pursue the following objective and policies:

Objective **To develop a transportation system that requires less dependence on the automobile and more use of public transportation and other forms of energy-efficient transportation.**

This objective suggests five policies and a number of alternative implementation techniques.

11

Expand the amount and improve the quality of local public transportation service.

12

Improve transit services within Oak Park to reduce the need for commut-

ers to drive to train stations and to increase the use of public transportation.

One possible implementation strategy would be to make changes in the existing system without undertaking major capital improvements. Such changes might include providing bus shelters and more frequent and reliable service by existing transit lines, a more liberal transfer policy between transit systems (the Chicago Transit Authority, Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, and the West Towns bus service), and better coordination of schedules between transit systems.

Responsibility for elevated service and private and public bus routes rests with the Regional Transportation Authority. Oak Park and neighboring communities may have to exert substantial pressure on the RTA to obtain improvements in these services.

West Towns Bus Company provides much needed service to the Oak Park Village Mall. More frequent runs, particularly during rush hour, would be helpful. Even with such improvements in bus service, a need will still remain for the individualized service that taxicabs provide.

Other implementation alternatives could require substantial capital outlays. One approach, if current service cannot be improved, would be to introduce a jitney service along bus routes. Such a system would allow taxicabs or mini-vans to pick up passengers who pay a standard fare along established bus routes.

A more costly scheme would be to initiate a demand-activated-rapid-transit system, i.e., a dial-a-bus. Such a system would pick up riders near their homes and deliver them to their destinations. However, as successful systems in dozens of cities have shown, this approach, whether it serves only Oak Park or neighboring communities as well, is expensive and would probably require subsidies to develop and operate. The village should periodically examine the technology and costs of such systems to see if they have changed sufficiently to make them practical here.

13

Improve the current level of rapid-transit rail service and safety provided by the RTA.

The level of service on the Lake and Congress elevated lines should be maintained. Similarly, efforts to maintain safety, particularly during non-rush hour periods, should be continued. Because some people perceive the safety situation to be worse than it actually is, the RTA should undertake efforts to improve the perception of safety on trains and at rapid transit stations.

14

Accommodate the use of safe, fuel-efficient or manually-powered transportation modes in place of the automobile.

The major alternatives to motor vehicle transportation are walking and bicycle riding. The village will continue to control vehicular traffic to assure the safety of pedestrians. The village will continue to time traffic signals so even the slowest walkers can safely cross all signalized intersections. When replacing obsolete traffic signals at school crosswalks and other intersections with heavy pedestrian traffic, the village should continue to install "walk/don't walk" signals.

The village should also facilitate bicycle riding as an alternative to the automobile. Many communities are able to provide extensive systems of bicycle paths. However, because nearly all of Oak Park's streets are too narrow to safely accommodate a bicycle path as well as automobiles, very expensive street widenings requiring the removal of many irreplaceable mature trees would be necessary.

Nevertheless, there are still many actions the village should undertake to accommodate bicycle riders. Secure storage facilities should be provided at locations where large numbers of bicycle riders congregate: schools, libraries, recreation centers, parks, transit stations, shopping districts. Curb cuts should be made through cul-de-sacs to permit through-bicycle travel. As more cul-de-sacs are established, the streets they are on form a natural bicycle route.

Bicycle riders should be discouraged from riding on sidewalks in shopping areas like the Oak Park Village Mall where cyclists could endanger pedestrians.

To prevent bicycle tires from getting caught in the slats of catch basin inlets, inlet covers should be rotated so that slats are perpendicular to the curb.

Because bicycles and automobiles frequently do not mix safely, local bodies should vigorously promote bicycle safety programs. With the growing popularity of the moped, these same groups ought to prepare similar safety programs to educate moped riders and motorists.

15

Encourage the ownership of more fuel-efficient automobiles.

In accord with this policy, the village already charges a higher vehicle license fee based on horsepower ratings for more powerful, low-mileage cars. The village might examine studies of the effect of such fee differentials on automobile purchasing habits. If these studies show that the differential Oak Park uses is insufficient to encourage the purchase of fuel-efficient automobiles, the village ought to consider widening the differential to the point that it will contribute to a change in automobile buying habits.

Another alternative, certainly not mutually exclusive, would be to provide more and cheaper parking opportunities for smaller, fuel-efficient automobiles. By narrowing some parking spaces in village lots, Oak Park can offer a greater number of off-street spaces exclusively for smaller cars. With no changes needed except for restriping, the number of spaces in an existing parking lot can be increased by 15 to 30 per cent. The village might also

consider charging a lower permit parking fee for fuel-efficient smaller automobiles.

Accordingly, the village should review its off-street parking requirements to provide compact car stalls that are smaller than conventional-sized stalls. Not only would this

approach promote a general awareness of compact cars and encourage their use, it would also provide more parking spaces at minimal expense. The increased number of off-street spaces would be most welcome in Oak Park.

CHAPTER IV:

Public Facilities and Services

CHAPTER IV: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

GOAL: To provide in the most efficient manner those public facilities and services—public safety, public works, government facilities and services—that maintain Oak Park as a desirable community.

OBJECTIVE: To maintain public safety throughout the community.

- POLICIES:**
- ① The police and fire departments should continue to adjust programs and policies to meet changing conditions.
 - ② The village should strive to maintain its favorable fire rating.
 - ③ The village should use intergovernmental agreements to maintain public safety while holding down costs.
 - ④ Planning activities should take into account their effect on operations of the police and fire departments and should involve both departments early in the planning process.

OBJECTIVE: To maintain and improve public works and services consistent with high standards and fiscal constraints.

- POLICIES:**
- ⑤ Capital improvements should be implemented and coordinated through a regular planning process.
 - ⑥ Street and traffic improvements should be evaluated in terms of their likely effect on the surrounding environment as well as in terms of traffic control.
 - ⑦ The village should be vigilant in assuring the protection of its streets, alleys, sidewalks, and parkways from abuse and inadequate restoration.
 - ⑧ Refuse collection and disposal alternatives should be evaluated regularly.
 - ⑨ The village should regularly evaluate its policies and formulas for sharing the cost of public improvements.
 - ⑩ The village should develop uniform standards for vacating rights-of-way for development.
 - ⑪ Street improvements and public facilities should be designed to be accessible to handicapped persons.
 - ⑫ The village should restore and maintain its parkways.

OBJECTIVE: To maintain and improve the high quality of other government services and facilities within fiscal constraints.

- POLICIES:**
- ⑬ The village should continue to foster maximum intergovernmental cooperation and local informational programs.
 - ⑭ The village should promote the conservation of energy and resources in the delivery of public services and information.
 - ⑮ The village should make frequent use of volunteers in government operations.
 - ⑯ Governmental programs and facilities should serve to improve the community's image as a high-quality residential environment.
 - ⑰ Recreational, social, and educational programs should be evaluated regularly and adapted to meet changing needs caused by demographic changes.
 - ⑱ Recreation and open space opportunities should be enhanced by improvements to, and increased cooperative use of existing facilities.
 - ⑲ The village should maintain its high level of public health services.

Public facilities and services contribute significantly to the high quality of life Oak Parkers enjoy. But these services and facilities are expensive to provide. The cost of just maintaining current service levels has been increasing at an annual rate of 6.5 per cent. As discussed in detail in Chapter V: Economic Development, the village has limited financial resources with which to pay for these services. Consequently, Oak Park must undertake efforts

Goal **To provide in the most efficient manner those public facilities and services—public safety, public works, government facilities and services—that maintain Oak Park as a desirable community.**

Public Safety

One of the most important services a community can offer its residents is protection from crime and fire. Residents should enjoy not only actual security, but also its perception—they must not only be safe, but feel safe as well. Many village residents may not realize that the number of violent crimes in Oak Park has fallen more than 10 per cent since 1975.

Objective **To maintain public safety throughout the community.**

By following four policies, the village can achieve this objective.

1

The police and fire departments should continue to adjust programs and policies to meet changing conditions.

Oak Park's police department continues to revise its policies and programs to meet changing conditions. In 1975 it started the practice of "team policing" to combat crime in the east end of the village. This approach was so successful that it has been expanded to cover the entire village.

Under team policing, the village is divided into three geographic areas. A team of more than 30 officers is assigned specifically to each of these areas. By concentrating on one part of the village, individual officers can better cultivate community support and build personal relationships essential to a police-community partnership. Team officers work only in the assigned area and are not given assignments outside it except for emergencies.

A task force team supplements these efforts by working in selected areas where a particular type of crime is concentrated. The team policing and task force approach provides the high visibility that discourages crime and

gives the community a greater sense of security. Youth officers on each of the three teams work closely in a successful coordination effort with the Family Service and Mental Health Center on youngster's drug abuse and indigents' cases.

Between 1973 and 1976, the village provided training in multi-cultural awareness to all employees, including police officers. Because the police officer comes into contact with the general public more than any other village employee, it is essential that each officer understands the lifestyles and cultures of the people with whom he or she comes in contact. The multi-cultural awareness program should be resumed on a regular basis so new recruits can be better equipped to deal with the multitude of cultures they will encounter in Oak Park. Officers and other village employees who participated in previous sessions may find a refresher course helpful.

Oak Park police have initiated a number of other programs to stretch the limited dollars available for safety. Among the most effective is the use of civilians as community service officers to handle such non-emergency tasks as serving summons; investigating minor thefts, property damage, injuries on public property, vandalism, and abandoned automobiles; parking meter enforcement; and assisting citizens locked out of their homes or automobiles. Community service officers free trained police officers for criminal work and crime prevention.

The police department has also established a crime analysis unit to examine crime patterns and predict likely locations of future crimes. Armed with this information, the police teams and task force can patrol their areas more effectively.

The fire department has also undertaken a number of programs to increase its efficiency and maintain safety throughout the community. Many of these efforts implement the following policy:

2

The village should strive to maintain its favorable fire rating.

The Insurance Service Office rates all Illinois municipalities on a scale of one to ten according to the level of fire protection they provide. Chicago, with its Class II rating, is the only Illinois municipality with a higher rating than Oak Park's Class III. Insurance companies base their rates for business fire insurance on these classifications. By maintaining a high rating, the village helps keep down the cost of fire insurance for its businesses.

Many programs and policies contribute to maintaining this favorable Class III ranking. Currently, fire personnel can respond to a call from any location in Oak Park in four minutes or less. The village maintains a fire suppression force of over 90 personnel in three fire stations: the main station at Lake and Euclid, and two branches, one at Lombard and Augusta, and the other at East Avenue and Garfield.

The village maintains a Fire Prevention Bureau within its building and zoning division. Firemen conduct inspections of commercial buildings and districts during normal business hours. These inspections allow them to notify owners of fire hazards and to sketch the structure of the buildings to locate crucial fixtures such as doors, windows, skylights, gas shut-off valves, and electrical service switches that firemen may have to deactivate during a fire. The department also offers voluntary, free inspections of houses to identify fire hazards.

The village conducts within the local schools a vigorous fire prevention program which annually wins accolades from the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry. In addition, the village and telephone company have converted to the "911" emergency dialing system whereby an individual has only to dial 9-1-1 to report an emergency to the police or fire departments.

Further programs can help retain Oak Park's favorable fire protection rating. Some of the village's water mains have deteriorated and have not yet been replaced. The fire department recommends that four inch mains be replaced by eight inch mains, while feeder lines should be 16 inches in diameter. Also, a second source of water supply from Chicago would be desirable. The village should have an emergency generator to pump water should the regular electrical system fail.

Fire fighting equipment should be kept up-to-date and at sufficient levels to provide adequate fire protection to all parts of the village.

The village should consider establishing a fire detection program that includes the use of smoke detectors. A program to educate the public as to their efficacy will encourage their use. One alternative to consider is enactment of an ordinance to require the installation of smoke detectors in new construction and existing multi-family structures.

The village may wish to obtain certification from the Emergency Services Disaster Agency. With an emergency plan approved by this agency, the village will not only be better prepared to deal with natural and man-made disasters, but may also be eligible for federal matching funds for equipment purchases.

A possible long-term approach to save money would be to gradually change the fire department's recruiting system to hire personnel on a contract basis and devise a more efficient method to fund firemen's pensions. Nearly one-fourth of the fire department's 1978 budget went into the pension fund.

A more immediate means of cutting costs and maintaining a high level of services involves cooperation with other municipalities.

3

The village should use intergovernmental agreements to maintain public safety while holding down costs.

In the long-run, the high cost of personnel and equip-

ment can be reduced by consolidating the fire departments of Oak Park and neighboring municipalities. In the meantime, mutual aid agreements between Oak Park, Forest Park, and River Forest provide for needed assistance. The fire departments of all three communities send a truck and engine company to fires involving a school, nursing home, hospital, high hazard area, or high value district in any one of these three villages. Oak Park also maintains an unwritten agreement for aid with Chicago.

Oak Park's police department already uses the Chicago Police Academy and Cook County Sheriff's Academy for in-service training of recruits. Oak Park police frequently use the State of Illinois Crime Lab and Cook County Crime Lab Mobile Unit. They meet monthly with state troopers, FBI agents, and detectives from 25 nearby suburbs to identify local crime patterns and share information. Both the crime analysis unit and the Oak Park team protecting the east end of the village meet daily with police from Chicago's 15th district in adjacent Austin.

4

Planning activities should take into account their effect on operations of the police and fire departments and should involve both departments early in the planning process.

For example, the village will continue to consult the police and fire departments on the location of cul-de-sacs and traffic diverters. As a result of this approach, the village places fire hydrants at each cul-de-sac to assure the availability of water for fire fighting, and the fire department is able to pre-plan its response routes to fires in buildings on streets with cul-de-sacs.

In addition, village departments should continue to involve the fire and police departments early in the pre-planning stages of major developments and village projects so security precautions can be built into the final plans (as was done, for example, with the Heritage House senior citizen housing development).

Public Works and Services

No municipality could sustain a high quality of life without providing those essential services and facilities called public works: refuse collection and disposal, street maintenance and construction, sewer and water supply maintenance, street lighting, traffic devices, and public buildings. Oak Park continues to provide these and other services within budgetary limitations.

Objective

To maintain and improve public works and services consistent with high standards and fiscal constraints.

Most public works improvements are provided for in a

capital improvements program. Sound management practice requires that

5

Capital improvements should be implemented and coordinated through a regular planning process.

The village will continue to coordinate its capital improvements to minimize costs and inconvenience to residents. These improvements include:

Water System. The current program to replace deteriorating four-inch water mains with eight-inch piping continues to proceed slowly. Of the village's 111.5 miles of water mains, more than 14 miles still need replacement. More than six miles of trunk and feeder mains require replacement. In addition, the village needs an emergency generator to pump water as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Sewer System. Of the village's 113 miles of sewer lines, nearly seven miles of deteriorating or obsolete nine-inch sewer lines still need to be replaced by 15-inch lines, and more than eight miles of relief sewers should be installed.

Street Maintenance and Improvements. Ongoing work in this area includes curb and gutter replacement, seal coating, street resurfacing and reconstruction, alley resurfacing and replacement, and sidewalk replacement. Sixty-nine per cent of Oak Park's 110 miles of streets need some form of improvements. As discussed in Chapter III: Transportation and Parking, most of Oak Park's streets were built nearly 60 years ago. They have a life expectancy of 20 to 25 years which can be extended to as much as 50 years with good maintenance practices, including decennial resurfacing and repairs to curbs and drainage struc-

tures as needed.

Approximately 20 miles of Oak Park streets require reconstruction or renovation. Forty-three per cent of these also need water system or sewer repairs. Every effort should be made to coordinate these street improvements with repair and replacement of water and sewer lines to minimize costs and inconvenience to residents.

The village should continue to carefully monitor all street work, including work performed by private contractors, to assure the repaired or replaced street will stand up to traffic.

6

Street and traffic improvements should be evaluated in terms of their likely effect on the surrounding environment as well as in terms of traffic control.

Street widenings or installation of cul-de-sacs, for example, affect the surrounding environment as well as traffic flow. A throat widening sometimes reduces the width of adjacent sidewalks to a point that foot travel is undesirable or difficult.

For example, the village initiated its cul-de-sac program to help shape neighborhood environments. However, the village is aware of the effect of a cul-de-sac on traffic patterns and recommends against installation of a cul-de-sac if it will generate substantially adverse effects on surrounding streets. The village should continue its policy of allowing installation of a cul-de-sac only if the residents of the block will pay its cost.

7

The village should be vigilant in assuring the protection of its streets, alleys, sidewalks, and parkways from abuse and inadequate restoration.

TABLE IV-1: Costs of Street Improvements, 1976-1978

Type of Improvement	Cost per Centerline Mile	
	1978*	1976**
Street replacement	\$700,000	\$490,000
Street reconstruction	500,000	300,000
Street renovation	280,000	145,000
Street resurfacing	70,000	51,000
Seal coating	25,000	20,000

* Estimates by Oak Park Public Works Department, October 1978. Due to widely fluctuating prices of materials, these estimates are only rough estimates very subject to change at any time.

** Source: Village of Oak Park, Public Works Department, Engineering Division, *Street Condition Inventory & Improvement Needs Report*, (Oak Park: Village of Oak Park, 1976), pp. 20-21.

Private contractors and utilities frequently damage portions of public thoroughfares to perform underground work. Every effort should be made to require the firm that cuts into a street or alley surface, or sidewalk, to restore it to an acceptable condition. The village should continue to require contractors to post performance bonds and to inspect their work to assure adequate restoration.

Street Lights. Oak Park has completed a thorough street lighting program that saw the installation of new mercury vapor lights throughout the village in 1973 and 1974. Most of the replacement program retained the rustic and appealing design of the old light standards.

Refuse. The village's current refuse landfill is nearing the end of its life expectancy. Since refuse disposal is a regional problem, Oak Park officials will have to work with other municipal officials to develop a solution. Solutions could include joint purchase of incinerators and resource recovery systems, development of other landfill sites, railroad cartage of refuse, and composting. Whichever approach is chosen, it is likely to require construction of a transfer station to receive and compress the solid wastes before they are carted elsewhere.

8

Refuse collection and disposal alternatives should be evaluated regularly.

Currently the village collects solid wastes from all residential buildings of five units or less. Eighty-five per cent of these pick-ups are made in the alley; the remainder are curbside collections. The cost of servicing some 12,260 units came to over \$900,000 in 1978, or slightly more than \$74 per unit. The village should regularly examine at least the following aspects of refuse collection: frequency of service, types of buildings served, and relative cost of service by municipal crews and private scavenger services.

Parking. As discussed extensively in Chapter III: Transportation and Parking, and Chapter V: Economic De-

velopment, adequate parking is essential for Oak Park businesses to succeed. As the village identifies parking needs, every effort should be made to meet them. See chapters III and V for details.

Public Buildings. Oak Park's main fire station critically needs substantial rehabilitation or replacement. Although the north side fire station at Augusta and Lombard would be better located if moved further west, it is not a high priority project because the fire department provides adequate protection from its three current locations, and the cost would not be warranted under present fiscal conditions.

Construction of the new village hall in 1975 allowed the village to house nearly every municipal department under one roof. It also provided the police department with the sorely needed new facilities discussed in Oak Park's 1973 comprehensive plan. Similarly, the village consolidated its public works facilities in a new building in 1977. A year earlier, expansion of the main library relieved crowded conditions. However, library patrons still need off-street parking. Two branch libraries, which extend library service throughout the community, are currently undergoing renovation.

The implementation of four additional policies will help achieve the village's objective in the area of public works and services.

9

The village should regularly evaluate its policies and formulas for sharing the cost of public improvements.

Currently, the village and property owners share costs for some public improvements according to the schedule in Table IV-2. The village might consider reducing its share until such time as its revenue situation can be improved without increasing local taxes.

TABLE IV-2: Sharing the Costs of Public Improvements, 1978

Improvement	Village Share	Property Owner's Share
Alley reconstruction	15%	85%
Alley resurfacing	50%	50%
Cul-de-sac construction	*	*
Tree removal from private property	50%	50%
Sidewalk replacement	50%	50%

* Village and property owners' shares vary with each project, depending on the cul-de-sac's effect on traffic, the property owners' willingness to pay a special assessment, and the use of property for parking (in which case the parking fund contributes to the cost of construction).

10**The village should develop uniform standards for vacating rights-of-way for development.**

These guidelines should establish a basis for determining the purposes for which a right-of-way may be vacated. Such vacations have been made in the past for schools, stores, and housing. For example, parts of North Boulevard were vacated to make way for Heritage House and for a racquet club. However, the village needs a clear policy on this issue to provide guidance to developers and other applicants for vacations.

11**Street improvements and public facilities should be designed to be accessible to handicapped persons.**

The problems of daily living which confront "handicapped" or "disabled" people are only beginning to be identified in a thorough and systematic manner. Previously, only certain specific categories of disability had been examined and analyzed in any depth. For example, the problems of the blind and those in wheelchairs have received attention, but the solutions to their problems were, more often than not, developed in isolation, with little thought for their overall impact on the rest of society.

Consequently, measures taken to solve the problems for one group of people have often created difficulties and even potential hazards for other citizens. While curb ramps have facilitated the mobility of persons confined to wheelchairs, they have inhibited the mobility of some blind persons. The village and private builders should follow accessibility standards designed by the Illinois Capital Development Board to minimize these conflicts.

12**The village should restore and maintain its parkways.**

Mature trees are vital to the preservation of Oak Park's parkways. However, Dutch elm disease threatens to ravage these parkways. The village should continue to accord a high priority to its Dutch elm program. Currently the village is trying to catch up to the spread of the disease by removing a tree as soon as it is evident it has acquired the disease. If a tree with the disease is removed before the beetles can hatch, further infection of nearby trees may be prevented. While this approach is expensive, the alternative of allowing the disease to spread is even more expensive in the long run.

The village should better publicize the options residents have for replacing trees removed from parkways. Currently, the village will replace trees with a standard size tree. An individual citizen who desires to transplant a larger, more mature tree, must make arrangements with a tree nursery or other contractor. The village contributes only the cost of the standard size tree towards the higher

cost of a larger tree.

To maintain the atmosphere of parkways, the village should limit and coordinate signage.

Other Government Services and Facilities

In addition to public works and public safety, Oak Park provides a wide range of facilities and services to its residents. As with public works and public safety, these facilities and services are maintained within the constraints of limited fiscal resources.

Objective

To maintain and improve the high quality of other government services and facilities within fiscal constraints.

The village can achieve this objective by continuing to implement the following seven policies.

13**The village should continue to foster maximum intergovernmental cooperation and local informational programs.**

Oak Park already pursues this policy, particularly in the area of recreation. The Recreation Department and school districts number 97 and 200 share facilities to jointly offer the Lighted Schoolhouse Program. The village, through representatives of its recreation board, plan commission, and staff, combined with the two local school districts, and the Park District of Oak Park to prepare the open space plan discussed later in this chapter.

The village's numerous social agencies regularly present combined informational programs, as do many village departments and agencies.

Oak Park's Council of Governments, composed of representatives of all government units within the village, meets monthly to inform one another of each unit's activities and plans.

Similarly, local government should strive for closer coordination of programs, services, and facilities to avoid duplication of services and administrative costs. Funds could be used more efficiently by closer cooperation and coordination between agencies.

14**The village should promote the conservation of energy and resources in the delivery of public services and information.**

This policy is in accord with national and state policies of energy conservation. In both the short and long run, such an approach saves money which can be better used to directly service program clients.

15

The village should make frequent use of volunteers in government operations.

This cost-saving technique will also involve more citizens in their local government by supplementing or, in some cases, replacing paid workers with unpaid volunteers. The village demonstrated the viability of this approach when it used volunteers to perform most of the clean-up work for the Avenue/Lake Building. Properly trained volunteers could assist recreation center supervisors, for example.

16

Governmental programs and facilities should serve to improve the community's image as a high-quality residential environment.

Public Library. For example, the Oak Park Public Library functions as a principal cultural center for the village. The library provides a wide range of services for its 30,800 card holders, more than half the population of Oak Park.

The Main Library dispenses the major library services while the Maze and Dole branches serve as neighborhood centers. All three branches share the resources of other municipalities' libraries through the Suburban Library System.

At this time there are no plans to establish additional branches. Future space requirements for the Main Library will depend on the rate of growth of library use and the benefits and requirements of new technology. Parking for users of the Main Library, as discussed prior to policy 9 in this chapter, continues to be an unresolved problem.

Code Enforcement. As discussed in Chapter II: Housing, the village already conducts several code and zoning enforcement programs to encourage maintenance of residential areas. Since 1974, the village has supplemented the fire department's inspections of non-residential structures with its own inspections for compliance with the building, electrical, plumbing, and other relevant codes. Each commercial structure is inspected at least once every two years.

The village should also undertake programs to enhance graphics and signage within Oak Park, particularly in predominantly residential areas.

17

Recreational, social, and educational programs should be evaluated regularly and adapted to meet changing needs caused by demographic changes.

These programs should be flexible enough to accommodate the needs generated by residents of different age groups, income groups, races, and physical mobility,

namely the handicapped. For example, working mothers frequently need day care facilities for their younger children. Local agencies should continue to provide day care programs to meet this need.

In accord with this policy, public school boundaries should continue to be adjusted to help maintain Oak Park's stable, integrated neighborhoods. This approach is discussed earlier in Chapter II: Housing.

As Oak Park's elderly population grows, so do the services it requires. In response to the many services and programs that have been initiated to serve the elderly, 18 agencies recently joined together to form the Senior Coordinating Council. This group will serve as a vehicle for these different agencies to become better acquainted with each other, eliminate duplication of services, and coordinate programs. The council will develop a comprehensive plan for services to senior citizens.

Existing services for the elderly now include the taxi fare subsidy program discussed in Chapter III, the Senior Citizens Information and Referral Center, the Nutrition Center, Meals at Home, the Community Nursing Service, Senior Recreation Clubs, the Geriatric Crisis Service, Home Companion Program, and housing assistance offered by the Oak Park Housing Authority and Oak Park Housing Center.

18

Recreation and open space opportunities should be enhanced by improvements to, and increased cooperative use of existing facilities.

The village and other governmental bodies have already taken steps in this direction. In 1978, the Village Board, Plan Commission, the village recreation department, the Park District of Oak Park, and school districts number 97 and 200, approved the *Comprehensive Open Space Implementation Plan* which seeks to maximize the use of existing recreational facilities and open space. The plan takes into account the lack of available open space here and the high cost of acquiring land to develop further recreational facilities. It also notes that the acquisition of large amounts of land for open space and recreation would remove it from the tax rolls and erode Oak Park's tax base. (See Chapter V: Economic Development, for discussion of the relationship between the village's tax base and the village's ability to provide essential services.)

The *Comprehensive Open Space Implementation Plan* includes specific proposals based on nine principles, including:

- 1) Primary emphasis should be on the maintenance and development of existing recreational open space.
- 2) The lighting of existing facilities offers the greatest gain in recreational open space for the least expenditure of money.

3) Maximum development of school sites should be encouraged.

4) All open space should be developed or modified with the natural environment in mind.

See the *Comprehensive Open Space Implementation Plan* for discussion of these guidelines as well as five more narrowly-focused guidelines.

19

The village should maintain its high level of public health services.

Public health services are essential to preserve the high quality of life in Oak Park. Oak Park's Health Department furnishes a wide variety of necessary services to the community. In addition to attending to fundamental house-keeping functions, such as keeping records of vital statistics

and issuing burial permits, the Health Department provides public health nursing services including health programs in local public schools.

The department's Environmental Health Division provides an extensive inspection program of food establishments, nursing homes, hospitals, day care centers, pre-schools, and grade schools. It also conducts programs in solid waste control and rodent control. The department works closely with the Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park which funds a number of essential programs and services including the Family Service and Mental Health Center. Many of these agencies' mental health programs center around intervention in personal and family crises. Others are specifically geared toward preventative mental health. To assure funding for these programs the village will have to continue to exert pressure on the state to allow flexibility in local mental health programs supported by state funds. Efforts to gain intergovernmental support of mental health programs should be continued.

CHAPTER V:

Economic Development

CHAPTER V: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: To provide a broad range of convenient retail facilities and service opportunities that Oak Park residents need and desire.

To expand Oak Park's tax base in order to maintain a high level of services, programs, and facilities.

OBJECTIVE: To maximize the potential for establishing tax-generating commercial and residential development and redevelopment.

POLICY: ① Review the village's land use controls to allow for more effective reuse of land.

OBJECTIVES: To encourage existing business to remain in Oak Park and expand.

To stimulate increased private investment in Oak Park.

To attract a larger proportion of retail purchases from residents within Oak Park's market area.

To attract and retain stores that fill gaps in the mix of retail establishments in Oak Park.

POLICIES: ② Retain and increase local employment opportunities.

③ The village government should continue its aggressive role as a catalyst to promote economic development by the private sector.

④ The village should expeditiously review both private development proposals and those involving village participation to determine their impacts on the village in terms of the village's goals and objectives.

⑤ The village should utilize private, federal, and state funding sources to their maximum extent to support activities designed to achieve economic development goals.

⑥ Enhance Oak Park's image as a desirable place in which to operate a business and to invest.

Among the many characteristics that make Oak Park such an attractive place to live are the high level of governmental and educational services, and the wide range of services and retail shopping opportunities provided by the private sector.

These characteristics are very interdependent. A thriving business community produces tax revenues that help pay for the services the village supplies to all parts of Oak Park. Conversely, this high level of public services—adequate parking, clean streets and sidewalks, police and fire protection—helps create the kind of atmosphere that attracts shoppers to Oak Park businesses.

Retailing, the largest segment of Oak Park's business community, serves an important role both as a tax producer and as a provider of services and jobs to the residents of Oak Park and its environs. The presence of quality stores that provide convenience and comparison goods and services is a positive attribute that tends to make Oak Park a more pleasant place in which to live. To maintain this atmosphere, Oak Park needs

Goal **To provide a broad range of convenient retail facilities and service opportunities that Oak Park residents need and desire.**

Tax revenues pay for village services. The cost of maintaining current service levels has been rising at an annual rate of 6.5 per cent. The increasing costs of these services can be handled in three ways: (1) place the increased tax burden solely on current residents and businesses; (2) increase the tax base and minimize the tax impact on residents; or (3) reduce the quality of services to all parts of

the village. The Village of Oak Park prefers the second approach.

Goal **To expand Oak Park's tax base in order to maintain a high level of services, programs, and facilities.**

The bulk of Oak Park's tax base rests upon three major revenue sources. The primary source is the real estate property tax. Like other older communities within the inner suburban ring surrounding Chicago, Oak Park has experienced a large increase in its tax rate—28 per cent between 1967 and 1978—while the real estate property tax base has fallen during the last seven years as illustrated in Tables V-1 and V-2.

Village officials fully recognize that this tax burden, which falls very heavily on homeowners, tenants, and business people, cannot be allowed to continue to increase at past rates. Consequently, the only way to increase real estate tax revenues without increasing tax rates is to expand the real estate tax base. The most effective approach to accomplish this end is to establish uses and reuses of land that produce more net revenue. To attain this aim, the village should take steps

Objective **To maximize the potential for establishing tax-generating commercial and residential development and re-development.**

To implement this objective, the village should fulfill the following policy as well as other related policies presented later in this chapter. (To avoid unnecessary repetition,

TABLE V-1: Total Tax Rate for All Oak Park Government Purposes, 1967-1978

Year	County Rate	Village Rate	Township Rate	Relief Rate	Sanitary Rate	Triton Junior College	High School Rate	Grade School Rate	Park District Rate	Forest Preserve Rate	Mosquito Control Rate	T.B. Control Rate	Mental Health	Total Tax Rate
1967	.338	1.050	.028	.010	.288	—	1.876	1.966	.194	.058	.012	.022	—	5.842
1968	.414	1.178	.030	.008	.334	—	2.212	2.236	.204	.068	.012	.014	—	6.710
1969	.422	1.278	.036	.012	.314	—	2.336	2.212	.198	.060	.016	.024	—	6.908
1970	.514	1.230	.052	.028	.232	—	2.226	2.556	.276	.078	.014	.024	—	7.230
1971	.562*	1.606	.050	.030	.304	—	2.392	2.498	.274	.080	.016	.026	—	7.838
1972	.600*	2.028	.046	.022	.342	.214	2.116	2.788	.284	.082	.014	.028	—	8.564
1973	.584*	2.362	.078	.046	.365	.239	2.180	2.990	.312	.091	.010	.022	.081	9.360
1974	.650*	2.684	.113	.066	.370	.238	2.225	2.774	.298	.096	.009	.011	.087	9.621
1975	.556*	3.503	.062	.100	.390	.251	2.317	2.947	.311	.094	.010	.011	.100	10.652
1976	.618*	3.563	.082	.102	.484	.335	3.137	3.874	.422	.095	.017	.021	.102	12.852
1977	.604*	3.842	.118	.085	.534	.365	3.217	3.962	.379	.106	.018	.022	.100	13.352
1978	.681*	4.005	.104	.001	.592	.365	3.237	3.919	.469	.100	.020	.018	.099	13.610

*Includes Cook County Hospital Governing Commission.
Does not include Special Service Area Number One or Special Service Area Number Two.

Sources: *Annual Financial Report 1978*, Village of Oak Park.
1978 Figures—Cook County Assessor.

each policy is stated only once.)

1

Review the village's land use controls to allow for more effective reuse of land.

The ability of Oak Park to meet its fiscal responsibilities will depend largely on its ability to put its land to work at optimum levels. The economic and social survival of Oak Park does not lie exclusively in continued low density development. The key to future growth is selective intensive development that will generate additional tax revenues (primarily property, utility, and sales tax), employment, and shopping opportunities. (5, 62)

As discussed earlier in Chapter II: Housing, Oak Park has a demand for additional higher density housing to meet the needs of current residents of all income groups. Construction of more higher density housing would not only help alleviate the housing shortage, but would also generate desired tax revenues.

Similarly, economic studies show that Oak Park is particularly well-suited for the development of commercial office space.

The village offers many of the amenities that support higher density office buildings: public transportation, a high level of municipal services, a good supply of restaurants, and a plentiful supply of shopping facilities for workers, particularly, in the central business district. (5, xiii, 67)

Oak Park's zoning ordinance should be reviewed to

assure, for example, that land areas and height limits for multi-family housing and office buildings are both adequate and realistic in relation to their surroundings.

Foreseeable national trends toward less energy use will make Oak Park an even more appropriate location for activities that need access to all parts of the metropolitan area, especially downtown Chicago. Oak Park's public transportation connections to downtown Chicago make the village a viable alternative location for many businesses that require ready and convenient access to the "Loop" but prefer to take advantage of the lower locational and energy costs an inner-ring suburb like Oak Park offers. To further assist businesses seeking to minimize energy costs, the village will examine its zoning and building codes as well as applicable federal and state regulations to encourage energy conservation.

Other Major Tax Sources

In addition to the property tax, utility and sales taxes form the other major sources of village tax revenues. The utility tax collection of 2.2 million dollars in 1977 was exceeded only by the property tax collection of over 3.8 million dollars.

Oak Park collects a one per cent sales tax as part of the five per cent tax paid on retail purchases. The village received over 1.9 million dollars through sales taxes in 1977. New or expanded businesses would not only produce increased sales taxes, but due to their increased productiv-

TABLE V-2: Comparative Assessed Valuations, Village of Oak Park, 1967-1978

Year	State Factor	Adjusted Assessments			
		Real Estate	Personal Property	Railroads	Total Assessments
1967	1.44	\$191,554,935	\$31,724,465	\$452,605	\$223,732,005
1968	1.45	194,574,772	30,561,073	444,557	225,580,402
1969	1.52	205,743,718	32,561,024	437,754	238,832,496
1970	1.59	218,409,543	30,279,886	413,873	249,103,302
1971	1.59	217,425,161	30,003,389	393,358	247,821,908
1972	1.59	212,858,557	28,282,884	357,826	241,499,267
1973	1.48	197,291,900	25,941,080	347,182	223,580,162
1974	1.45	193,860,831	26,604,315	446,368	220,911,514
1975	1.45	189,427,484	27,172,097	422,857	217,022,438
1976	1.42	181,345,000	31,642,967	362,048	213,350,015
1977	1.42	178,719,689	34,006,885	151,852	212,878,426
1978	1.50	189,556,324	32,161,941	184,797	221,903,062

Note: Assessments are made by the County Assessor on the basis of 100 per cent of true value. Real estate assessments include reductions to which elderly homeowners are entitled under changes in state tax laws.

Source: *Annual Financial Report 1978*, Village of Oak Park.

ity, the buildings that house them would generate increased real estate tax revenues.

Major sales tax sources include the stores on the Oak Park Village Mall, the village's central business district; strip commercial shopping areas, particularly along Roosevelt Road and North Avenue; the automobile sales- and service-oriented Madison Street; and neighborhood shopping areas. All but the neighborhood shopping areas serve a market area substantially larger than Oak Park. But competition from modern shopping centers and the natural limitations of being located in a built-up, land-locked community have restricted the growth of Oak Park retailers and their possibilities for expansion. Assembling land for development is complicated and expensive. This situation makes it difficult for businesses to retain customers who believe that other major shopping centers offer more convenience and a wider selection of goods.

Prior to the construction of these outlying centers, Oak Park's central business district (CBD) served a regional market area much larger than it serves today. Following

national trends, these massive regional shopping centers have reduced the market areas of CBDs in inner-ring suburbs like Oak Park. As a result, Oak Park's CBD is no longer the only regional shopping center for west suburban Cook County.

To prevent further drain on its market area, Oak Park took actions to make its CBD something special. In 1974, the village began construction of the Oak Park Village Mall.

This open-air mall provides a shopping atmosphere on a human scale, complete with noontime and summer activities including art fairs, sidewalk sales, and entertainment. Village lots provide adequate off-street parking in all seasons and many stores have been modernized.

Creation of the mall bolstered Oak Park's CBD. Sales figures continue to rise faster than the rate of inflation. Several owners of mall businesses have expanded their old stores or opened new ones. A growing number of local business people have purchased a number of previously unproductive buildings and businesses. Much, however,

FIGURE V-1: Oak Park Village Income by Source, 1979*

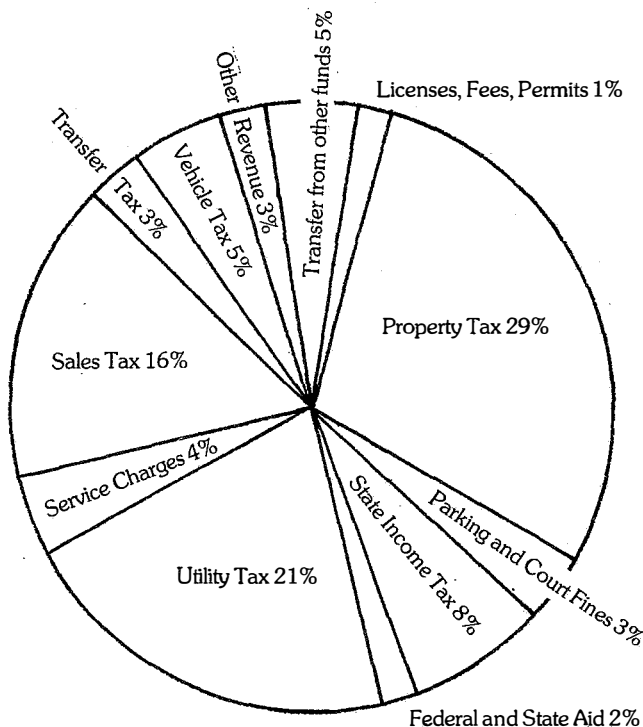
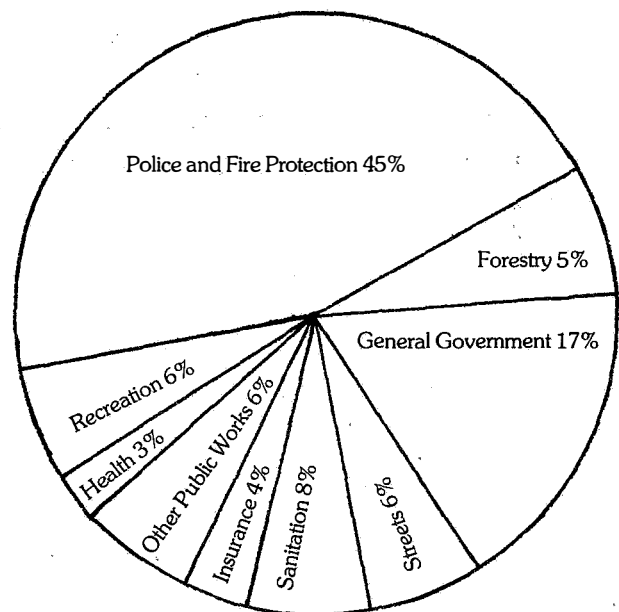


FIGURE V-2: Oak Park Village Expenditures by Function, 1979*



*Estimates provided by the Finance Department, Village of Oak Park, June 1979

remains to be accomplished for the mall to reach its full potential. Better coordination among merchants can produce common hours and more effective advertising—both of which will generate increased sales. Many older buildings still need modernization, and some key vacancies remain.

Oak Park's retail sector, of course, consists of more than its CBD. Most of the village's strip commercial districts offer convenience goods and services. North Avenue offers a relatively large number of quality comparison goods establishments as well as many convenience and other retail operations, including the most complete complement of high fidelity stores in the Chicago region.

Other commercial areas that offer convenience goods and services are the Oak Park-Eisenhower Center, Avenue/Lake Plaza, Chicago/Marion/Harlem, and Roosevelt Road districts. Similarly, the many small neighborhood centers scattered throughout the village provide convenience shopping. These centers should be maintained in good condition not only to maintain the tax base and provide convenient shopping, but also because their deterioration would have adverse spill-over effects on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Madison Street provides a unique agglomeration economy of automobile sales and services. Automobile sales have traditionally provided a major source of sales tax revenue for Oak Park. However, like Oak Park's CBD, the Madison Street auto dealerships no longer serve as large a regional market as they did prior to the establishment of competition in outlying suburbs. Those new dealerships are able to offer larger, more modern facilities; they are able to expand due to the availability of vacant land;

and they are located in rapidly growing communities with easy highway access.

In the early 1970s a number of dealers moved out of the village, but since then Oak Park's automobile industry has stabilized and remains substantial. Comparison shopping opportunities made possible by the close proximity of so many dealers, and the availability of public transportation here (an invaluable aid when one has his or her car repaired), help make Oak Park such a desirable location for automobile dealerships.

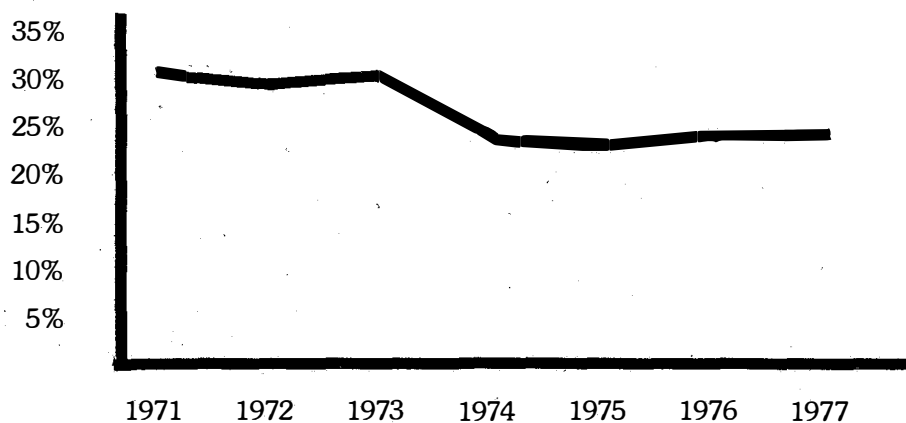
Research indicates, however, that declining automobile sales here (see Figure V-3) have had a negative effect on sales tax income to the village. (5,64) Increased efforts are needed to encourage the local automotive industry in order to generate healthy sales tax revenue.

Further Objectives and Policies

Attainment of both economic development goals rests upon achieving four additional interrelated objectives:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Objectives | To encourage existing businesses to remain in Oak Park and expand. |
| | To stimulate increased private investment in Oak Park. |
| | To attract a larger proportion of retail purchases from residents within Oak Park's market area. |

FIGURE V-3: Automobile Sales and Related Services as a Percentage of Total Oak Park Retail Sales, 1971-1977



Source: Illinois Department of Revenue.

To attract and retain stores that fill gaps in the mix of retail establishments in Oak Park.

These objectives, together with the previously stated objective to maximize tax-generating uses, indicate that the village must assume an active leadership role in promoting economic development. It should take steps to fulfill the remaining policies in this chapter which apply to all four economic development objectives.

Existing Businesses

Because Oak Park's retailing function is now primarily local, the village should help retailers retain this market. More than half the village's shoppers live in Oak Park and adjacent River Forest and Forest Park. If this local market were to spend a greater proportion of its shopping budget in Oak Park, the increase in sales tax would be felt directly in the community's budget.

The village has established an Economic Development Program to help retain local businesses and encourage them to expand. Funded by the village's community development block grant, this program has allowed the village, and now the Oak Park Development Corporation, to subsidize the interest rate on conventional loans to local businesses for renovation of their building interiors and exteriors by providing default reserve accounts. Under the appropriate circumstances, outright grants might also be considered. Interest rates have been reduced to as low as six percent under this program.

This program is designed to help finance renovations that will, in particular, help to:

- (1) expand the sales or service potential of the applicant business, thus creating or preserving jobs;
- (2) improve the delivery of goods or services to residential neighborhoods;
- (3) serve the best interests of the village in terms of improved tax return, improved parking facilities, prevention of blight and elimination of blighting influences, and ability to generate increased traffic to neighboring businesses or adjacent commercial areas.

Other efforts the village can undertake to encourage businesses to remain in Oak Park include maintaining a high level of village services in shopping areas, assisting in "paint-up-fix-up" campaigns, and providing planning and redevelopment services in those areas where owners have indicated a desire to improve their shopping districts.

In addition, the village should help retailers obtain adequate parking for their customers. Off-street parking may range from municipally-financed construction and operation of a parking lot or garage to private operations paid for by commercial establishments. Specific solutions should be geared toward the provision of enough parking spaces

to serve selected shopping areas within the village. The alternative is that some vital businesses might be forced to leave if adequate parking is not available. (3, 69-71) Parking, though, is not necessarily a permanent use of a lot. It is necessary to balance the need for off-street parking with other, possibly more effective, uses of the land.

To provide this off-street parking, the village should examine its zoning ordinance relative to off-street parking requirements and should consider greater use of rights-of-way for parking garage or lot construction. Priorities for shoppers' on-street parking are detailed in Chapter III: Transportation and Parking.

2

Retain and increase local employment opportunities.

One means of implementing this policy is to evaluate each redevelopment proposal to identify its net impact on the job market.

Oak Park offers an excellent location for many kinds of businesses and service industries due to its easy access to the business functions of a major city, Chicago, and the excellent labor market of the immediate area.

A chief beneficiary of this location has been Oak Park's long established health services industry anchored by Oak Park Hospital at the west end of the village and West Suburban Hospital on the eastern edge.

Oak Park's health services industry serves a regional as well as local market. Not only is it the largest employer in the village, but it also attracts other basic activities such as extended care facilities, doctors' offices, nursing homes, and even research and development laboratories. The economic and professional vitality of health-related facilities is important to the village since it increases the village's economic base by providing jobs and services, and the clientele who utilize them.

Some expansion of Oak Park's two hospitals' facilities is expected. Specific areas and criteria for this anticipated expansion are designated in the next chapter of this plan.

Oak Park's many architectural and historical landmarks provide a natural base for the village's growing tourist industry. Development of this industry would produce positive side effects by creating jobs and stimulating business in restaurants, hotels, motels, the CBD, and the growing antique market.

Conversely, there is little manufacturing activity in Oak Park (see Table V-4) and little reason to expect much more. The lack of land for expansion and a lack of supporting services are sufficient to limit the likelihood of additional manufacturing activity. (5, 13-14)

On the other hand, wholesale trade activities create a large and growing number of jobs in Oak Park. Wholesale trade activities are expected to grow largely as a function of the expanding Chicago regional market, continued productivity of the region's manufacturing operations, growth of distribution functions related to Oak Park's favorable

location relative to both Chicago and the western suburbs, and the village's excellent access to the Eisenhower Expressway and the tri-state toll road system. (5, 17-18)

Although increasing automation will limit future employment gains, expansion of wholesale trade activities here will produce significant employment gains in the long run. Wholesaling, if not discouraged, will provide an expanding source of jobs and revenue for the village.

New Business and Investment

To attain its economic development goals and objectives, Oak Park will have to retain existing businesses and attract new ones. Although the discussion that follows is written in terms of attracting new businesses and investment, the policies and principles enunciated apply to efforts to retain existing businesses as well.

3

The village should continue its role as a catalyst to promote economic development by the private sector.

In 1973 the village and its business community jointly

formed the Oak Park Development Corporation (OPDC), a not-for-profit corporation with a capacity to market commercial property. The OPDC has helped businesses, corporations, and organizations locate suitable facilities in Oak Park. Working with the village, Chamber of Commerce, Mall Commission, Housing Center, and Oak Park Residence Corporation, the OPDC has helped to create a climate conducive to business and has publicized this climate throughout the metropolitan area and the nation. In addition to attracting new investment and development, the OPDC continues to encourage the expansion of existing businesses in Oak Park.

4

The village should expeditiously review both private development proposals and those involving public participation to determine their impacts on the village in terms of the village's goals and objectives.

Providing village officials with objective information of this nature should result in more informed decisions on these development proposals. For example, when a prop-

Table V-3: Retail and Wholesale Trade Figures, Village of Oak Park, 1954-1972

	1972	1967	1954
Retail Trade			
Number of establishments	507	462	531
Sales (in thousands)	\$171,100	\$171,676	\$118,961
Annual payroll (in thousands)	\$ 22,521	\$ 19,818	\$ 14,272
Employees and proprietors	4,400	4,537	5,242
Sales per worker	\$ 41,338	\$ 37,839	\$ 22,693
Wholesale Trade			
Number of establishments	125	129	63
Sales (in thousands)	\$182,327	\$153,116	\$43,893
Annual payroll (in thousands)	\$ 16,188	\$ 8,332	\$ 2,228
Employees and active proprietors	1,356	1,091	465
Sales per employee	\$148,113	\$140,345	\$94,390
Merchant wholesalers:			
Establishments	83	77	42
Sales (in thousands)	\$ 48,446	\$ 37,699	\$17,745
Other operating types*			
Establishments	42	52	21
Sales (in thousands)	\$133,881	\$115,417	\$26,148

* Includes manufacturers' sales branches and sales offices, and merchandise agents and brokers.

Sources: U.S. Census of Business, Retail Trade, 1954, 1967, 1972
U.S. Census of Business, Wholesale Trade, 1954, 1967, 1972

Figures for 1977 will be available from the federal government by May 1980.

erty has been unproductive for a substantial period of time, the village, acting as a catalyst should carefully consider the use of incentives to encourage development of the property. Before committing the village to the use of these incentives, officials should identify the benefits and costs of using these measures. (3, 17-18)

When determining specific enterprises and investments to promote or assist, the village should continue to use professional assistance to help make these decisions. In addition, the village should give priority to those proposals which meet the following criteria (not necessarily in this order):

(a) Produce the greatest net positive fiscal impact.

The ability of Oak Park to meet future fiscal responsibilities depends largely on its ability to put the land to work at optimum levels. The fiscal planning of future developments must be related to physical planning aspects. At the same time, sound physical planning can proceed only on the basis of sound fiscal planning within the village.

(b) Enhance the surrounding residential environment.

Actions discussed in this plan to increase the village's tax base will provide the tax revenues necessary to fund the services that have made Oak Park's residential neighborhoods so attractive.

(c) Improve the mix of retail establishments.

By offering the stores that meet the needs of Oak Park shoppers, the village not only retains valuable retail trade, but also makes shopping more convenient for residents.

(d) Provide increased employment opportunities for Oak Park residents.

(e) Best achieve the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*.

Appendix A of this plan offers a checklist to be used for this purpose.

5

The village should utilize private, federal, and state funding sources to their maximum extent to support activities designed to achieve economic development goals.

A whole panoply of funding sources is available to aid Oak Park's economic development. Acquisition of land and buildings could pave the way for substantial economic development. Funds obtained as part of a federal community development block grant can be utilized in a local program for acquisition, grants, and interest-subsidized loans. Additional flexibility is possible by working through the Oak Park Development Corporation, which is recognized as a Section 502 local development corporation by the Small Business Administration. This program involves low-interest loans and loan guarantees for creating or improving retail facilities for small businesses. It also

TABLE V-4: Manufacturing in Oak Park, 1972

Total number of establishments	46
Establishments with 20 or more employees	9
Number of employees in manufacturing jobs	500
Manufacturing payroll	\$4.5 million
Value added by manufacturer	\$10.4 million
Value of shipments	\$18.6 million
Cost of materials	\$8.3 million

Source: *U.S. Census of Manufacturers, 1972*.

Figures for 1977 will be available from the federal government by May 1980.

offers conventional loans and lease guarantees. Historic preservation grants and tax benefits can also be of value.

Illinois law permits several methods for financing economic development projects, including special service district assessments and tax increment financing. Municipalities may raise funds through the issuance of general obligation and revenue bonds.

In addition to the village itself, several local agencies can also seek federal and state assistance: Oak Park Development Corporation, Oak Park Mall Commission, local business district associations, the local Chamber of Commerce, the village's Economic Development Commission, and local not-for-profit neighborhood associations.

6

Enhance Oak Park's image as a desirable place in which to operate a business and to invest.

To combat any possible misconceptions about Oak Park's economic health, the village should identify the factors that contribute to such misconceptions and undertake a campaign to correct this image.

Recent studies show that the most effective actions a community can take to improve its climate for economic growth and development include minimizing bureaucratic red tape, providing adequately for those public services which are essential to efficient operation, helping businesses obtain suitable sites, and, in general, offering an hospitable environment. (3, 17-18)

CHAPTER VI:

Development Areas

1944

1945

1946

As a land-locked, virtually built-up community, Oak Park has little vacant land available for new development. However, as market conditions change, opportunities for redevelopment evolve. Such opportunities give the village a chance to encourage redevelopment that will help achieve the goals and objectives set forth in this plan.

The Development Areas Map presented in this chapter indicates those parts of the village in which new development, redevelopment, or expansion of existing structures is encouraged in accord with the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*, to upgrade some buildings and uses, and to provide an impetus for maintenance and confidence in neighboring areas.

Due to the vagaries of the private market place including the availability of money for investment, interest rates, the availability of land for sale, and the inclinations of private property owners, it is impossible to predict precisely which properties will become available for development, redevelopment, or expansion. Consequently, the Development Areas Map can only designate those general areas of the village in which different types of new construction, redevelopment, or expansion would be most appropriate.

Relationship To Zoning

By themselves, this comprehensive plan and its Development Areas Map do not regulate the use of private property. Illinois law states that such plans are only advisory until implemented by village ordinance (*Illinois Revised Statutes*, Chapter 24, ¶11-12-6). Instead, this plan and map serve as guides for the development, redevelopment, and preservation of different parts of the village.

The zoning ordinance is the major tool through which the comprehensive plan and Development Areas Map are implemented. The zoning ordinance consists of a map which divides the village into distinct zoning districts, and a text which identifies the types and intensities of uses allowed in each district.

The zoning ordinance can be altered to implement this plan only through an amendment process in which the village issues a notice of public hearings on a proposed change, and a zoning commission—usually the plan commission or zoning board of appeals—conducts a public hearing and adopts findings of fact and a recommendation which it forwards to the village board. The village board may then accept, modify, or reject the zoning commission's recommendations, or refer them back to the zoning commission for further revision and hearings. The zoning change goes into effect only if the village board adopts an ordinance—a local law—that amends the appropriate parts of the zoning ordinance.

The *Comprehensive Plan 1979* and Development Areas Map function as guides, not triggers, in this process. While they are not necessarily controlling, they must be considered by the zoning commission and finally the vil-

lage board. For example, following adoption of the 1973 comprehensive plan, all zoning ordinance changes were not made automatically. Most were made in response to specific applications for an amendment to the zoning ordinance.

This plan does, however, provide guides for revising the zoning ordinance. For example, this chapter urges the village to consider lowering the maximum allowable density in planned developments. The plan commission will review this guide and, if it proves feasible, develop ordinance language to implement it. Any amendments of the text or map of the zoning ordinance are reviewed in public hearing before the village board votes on the proposed change.

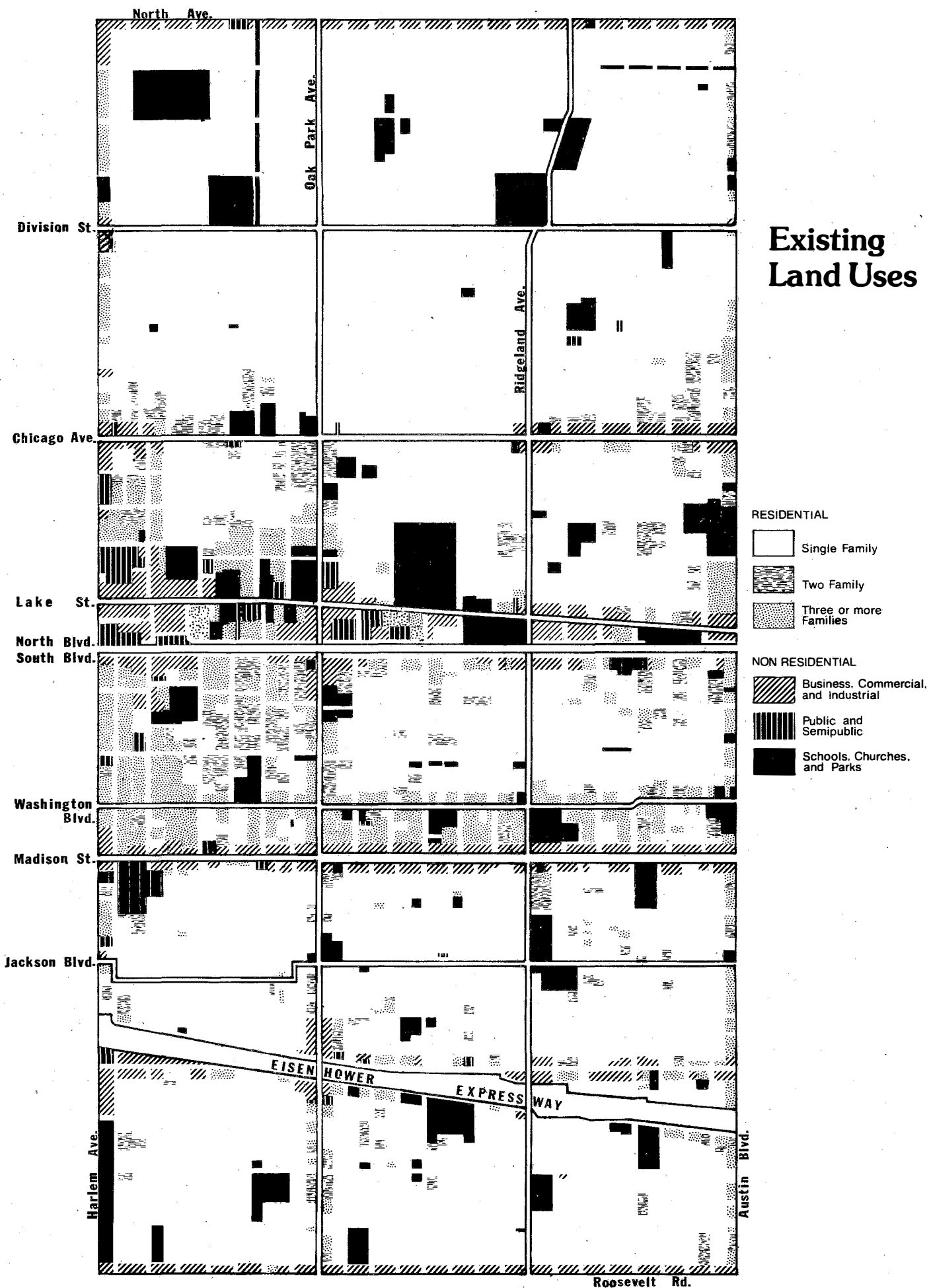
Each of the six kinds of districts depicted on the Development Areas Map identifies only general types of uses to be encouraged. For example, the "residential area" classification encourages retention of existing residential uses. It does not distinguish between densities or type of residential buildings—single-family detached houses, townhouses, apartments, etc. That's one of the functions of the zoning ordinance which currently establishes three distinct single-family districts, a two-family district, and three multiple-family zoning districts. These zoning districts make finer distinctions between housing types, densities, and other detailed requirements. However, these existing districts are consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan 1979* and general designations of the Development Areas Map.

In fact, it should be clearly understood that the existing zoning ordinance already provides for the types of uses envisioned for most of the development areas. Zoning districts that implement the guidelines of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*, and especially the Development Areas Map, are nearly all coterminous with the boundaries of the corresponding development areas. Some of those that are not would require upgrading from a less restrictive zone, such as light industrial, to a more restrictive district, such as multiple-family residential.

In those instances where the change would be to a less restrictive district, even more careful scrutiny must be exercised. Specific guidelines for zoning changes to permit expansion of these zoning districts within the geographic limits of the Development Areas Map are described later in this chapter under "Buffered Parking or Business Expansion" and "Hospital/Medical Complex" development areas.

The Development Areas Map provides guidance for locating different types of uses when demand for them appears. It does not mandate immediately changing the zoning ordinance to allow for these future uses.

The remainder of this chapter provides descriptions of the different development areas of the village as indicated on the Development Areas Map. Except where noted in the description of the Hospital/Medical Complex Development Area, the boundaries of the development areas are



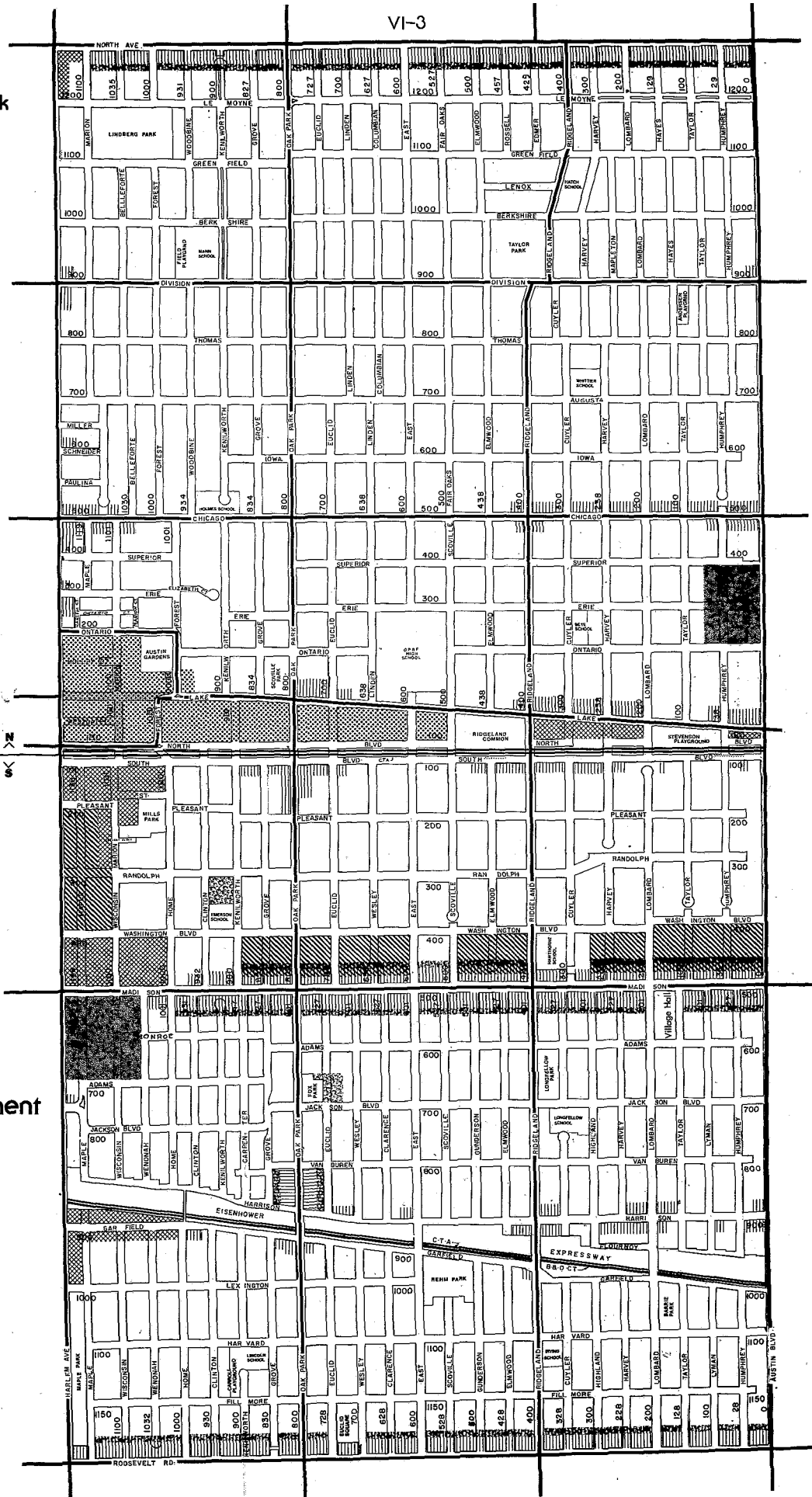


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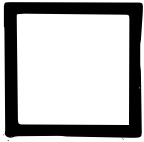
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Development Areas Map

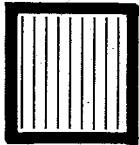
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approximate, not precise. These descriptions also define each of the development areas.



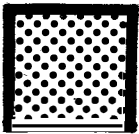
Residential Areas



Business Areas

In these areas the emphasis is on the preservation and upgrading of existing residential and commercial structures. Virtually all the properties in these areas are in good condition, and if properly maintained are unlikely to require substantial renovation or redevelopment in the foreseeable future. In the unlikely event that a building is destroyed, for example; by fire or natural disaster, the current zoning ordinance will assure that densities comparable to existing densities will be maintained when the building is replaced.

New business development or redevelopment or replacement uses in the residential and business areas should be generally confined to the same land area presently occupied by business uses.



Central Business District Development Area

This area covers the village's central business district, including the Oak Park Village Mall, and a corridor leading to it along Lake Street. To fulfill the needs discussed in Chapter V: Economic Development, and to maintain the residential nature of most of the village as examined in Chapter II: Housing, the village should restrict its highest density residential and commercial development to this area. Some high density development here will effectively bolster the village's economic development and tax base. Close proximity of this area to several Lake Street rapid transit stations facilitates the use of public transportation rather than private automobiles as encouraged in Chapter III: Transportation and Parking. This area is a most appropriate and logical portion of Oak Park for new development.

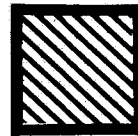
The highest density residential development is possible only within a planned development, which is allowed as a privilege, not a right, under Oak Park's special use permit procedures. Currently the maximum density allowed in the highest density planned development is 240 dwelling

units per acre. This figure, and all planned development requirements, should be re-examined. A more realistic, lower maximum density should be considered.

Existing zoning regulations for this area require a parcel of at least 1.5 acres to apply for planned development status. The difficulty of assembling such a large site clearly restricts the potential for using this device.

Natural market forces necessarily limit the number of parcels that could ever be submitted for planned development status. However, to assure that the Central Business District Development Area cannot be overdeveloped, it is the policy of the Village of Oak Park that such planned developments be adequately spaced—for example, there could be no more than two planned developments at maximum density in any 1500 foot stretch of street frontage—and that the issuance of a special use permit for a planned development be approved only when the cumulative effect will not adversely affect the character of areas surrounding the Central Business District Development Area.

Buildings constructed as part of a planned development are not necessarily highrise structures. Euclid Place, for example, provides a mixture of townhouses, walk-up apartments, and a mid-rise in a planned development.



Multi-Family Residential Development Area

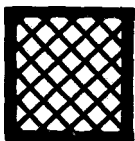
Virtually all of these areas have been zoned for multi-family structures since the 1920s and are now occupied largely by multi-family buildings, many of which were constructed at densities approaching 80 dwelling units per acre. Current zoning provisions limit as of right multiple-family construction in these areas to no more than 57 dwelling units per acre. These areas are designated as Multi-Family Residential Development Areas to show their continued viability and potential for medium density multi-family housing.

Most apartment buildings in the Multi-Family Residential Development Areas are three-story walk-ups. As discussed in Chapter II: Housing, the vast majority of them are in good condition. Some, though, have suffered from deferred maintenance practices and require substantial rehabilitation; others need only minor repair work. At this writing, the economies of the private market place would dictate maintenance of existing structures, including single-family houses within existing multiple-family zoning districts. The cost of acquiring properties in the Multi-Family Residential Development Areas may generally be too high to encourage any substantial amount of redevelopment.

An owner of property zoned multiple-family can redevelop it at densities of up to 57 dwelling units per acre as a

matter of right, that is, without submitting the development proposal for special zoning approval. Densities of up to 120 dwelling units per acre are permissible under the planned development portions of the zoning ordinance, provided a developer can acquire at least a two-acre site on the private market. Since nearly all the structures in the Multi-Family Residential Development Areas are in at least relatively good condition, it is unlikely that a two-acre development tract could be assembled economically.

Planned development provisions for multi-family zoning districts should be reexamined. A lower, more realistic maximum density should be considered.



Business and Multi-Family Residential Development Areas

These areas include most of the focal points of the village in which businesses as well as medium density multi-family housing have clustered. They have been designated Business and Multi-Family Residential Development Areas to encourage reinvestment and expansion of existing businesses to better serve Oak Park residents. The village would like to guide new businesses to these and other business development areas so as to reduce the number of incompatible commercial uses in residential neighborhoods and to strengthen existing business districts.

Many buildings in the Business and Multi-Family Residential Development Areas contain first floor businesses as well as residential units on the upper floors. Current zoning allows such "mixed uses" to continue, but prohibits establishing new ones except as part of a planned development. These provisions should be reviewed to consider allowing new mixed uses to be established in select zoning districts under appropriate conditions.

Densities allowed under current zoning regulations are the same as discussed above under Multi-Family Residential Development Areas, and the same considerations apply here, including re-examination of permitted densities and floor area ratios allowed under current planned development provisions.



Buffered Parking or Business Extension Development Areas

As discussed in Chapter V: Economic Development, many Oak Park businesses lack room for expansion or adequate room for off-street parking to serve their customers. At this time, though, it is impossible to predict which businesses will seek to expand or add buffered off-street

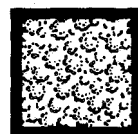
parking during the five to ten year life of this plan. Consequently, the Development Areas Map can only identify those general areas in which such activity might be appropriate.

Such expansion of business uses into other zones is a serious matter not to be allowed automatically. For example, the current zoning ordinance requires a special use permit to establish a buffered off-street parking lot outside a business district. An application for a special use permit is subject to public hearings and careful scrutiny to assure compliance with zoning ordinance criteria.

For a business to expand outside a business zoning district, it must apply for a parcel rezoning. Like an application for a special use permit, this type of application must be approved by the President and Board of Trustees after public hearings are conducted by the appropriate hearing body, frequently the plan commission.

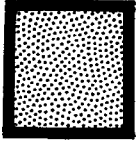
The Development Areas Map provides a guide to decision makers hearing applications for such business expansion or buffered off-street parking facilities. The map illustrates those parts of the village in which such uses could be appropriate if zoning ordinance criteria are met. The zoning ordinance should be reviewed to assure that the following criteria must be satisfied before a special use permit for buffered off-street parking could be granted, or a parcel rezoning for business use could be allowed:

- The proposed use will not substantially increase traffic on adjacent residential streets.
- If the proposed use is likely to generate additional traffic on adjacent residential streets, the applicant will bear the major part or all of the cost of any traffic diverters, traffic signals, channelization, or other street alterations the village deems necessary to accommodate this increased traffic and preserve the residential nature of the surrounding neighborhood.
- The proposed use will be sufficiently landscaped and screened to provide acoustical and visual privacy for residents of adjacent properties. This buffering should be sufficient to maintain a residential atmosphere in the general neighborhood similar to that existing prior to establishment of the proposed use.
- In the case of applications for buffered off-street parking, the applicant must demonstrate that existing parking facilities are inadequate to meet his needs.
- The effects of the proposed use should be consistent with the adopted goals, objectives, and policies of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*. If a proposal is consistent with some goals, objectives, or policies, but inconsistent with others, it is up to the decision makers to carefully weigh and balance these differences when arriving at a decision.
- If a proposal is for more parking or more business space than can reasonably be provided by expanding an existing site, or the proposal would adversely affect the general character of the surrounding neighborhood, efforts should be made to help relocate the business to another site within the village with adequate space for parking or business expansion.



Park and Recreation Development Areas

These designations on the Development Areas Map include the enlargements of park and recreational sites called for in the *Comprehensive Open Space Implementation Plan* examined in Chapter IV: Public Facilities and Services. See Chapter IV for a statement of policies governing site selection.



Hospital/Medical Complex Development Areas

These two areas are anchored by West Suburban Hospital on the east end of the village, and Oak Park Hospital on the west end. Like any institutional use, the hospitals have expanded as demand for their services, and as health care standards, have increased. Creation of a health maintenance organization, enactment of national health insurance, or other changes in the health services industry may generate further needs for expansion of the medical complexes.

The village recognizes the social and economic importance of its hospitals and their supporting facilities. They provide essential health services to village residents. In addition, they have served as stabilizing influences by attracting medical professionals to Oak Park. For example, 30 per cent of West Suburban Hospital's 1200 employees now live in Oak Park. Hospital employees also help bolster the village's tax base by making purchases here.

Still it is essential to carefully balance the needs of the village's hospitals and other large land users with those of the residential community. Consequently, applications for zoning changes to permit large land users to expand should be subject to the same careful scrutiny described in this chapter for the village's medical complexes.

Historically, Oak Park's hospitals have acquired land for expansion on the private market and then approached the village for appropriate zoning changes to allow expansion. Until adoption of the 1973 comprehensive plan, the village had no guidelines for evaluating applications for such zoning changes. The 1973 plan set maximum limits for expansion of the medical complexes. The Development Areas Map in this plan designates a more limited maximum area for development of the medical complexes than in 1973. The boundaries shown on the Development

Areas Map for the Hospital/Medical Complex Development Areas are meant to be precise, not approximate. They represent the maximum area adjacent to existing medical zoning districts in which expansion of these facilities would be considered during the life of this plan.

Currently, the zoning district for medical uses covers a smaller area than the Hospital/Medical Complex Development Area. To expand beyond this zoning district into the larger development area designated on the Development Areas Map, a hospital would have to obtain a rezoning to the medical district which involves public hearings prior to a vote by the village board. To provide guidance when considering such applications, the following requirements should be considered:

- The proposed expansion must be in accord with a written master plan developed by the applicant and reviewed by the village. An application to expand a hospital facility will be considered only after filing such a master plan with the village.
- A full cost-benefit analysis of the proposed expansion should be made. It should demonstrate the probable effects of the proposal on the municipal tax base, including, but not limited to, property tax, corporate taxes, creation or retention of jobs, generation of employee spending within Oak Park, etc., as well as effects upon the delivery of health services.
- The applicant should demonstrate the degree of compatibility of the existing facility and plans for expansion with the surrounding neighborhood.
- The proposed use should be sufficiently landscaped and screened to provide acoustical and visual privacy for occupants of adjacent properties. This buffering should be sufficient to maintain any existing residential atmosphere.
- The applicant should demonstrate that the proposal will help achieve the goals, objectives, and policies of the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*.
- When applicable, approval of the proposal by government agencies responsible for overseeing the health care field should be certified.

Analogous requirements should apply to applications for zoning changes to allow expansion of all major land users—schools, municipal buildings, etc.—not just hospitals. Such applications should undergo careful scrutiny due to their potentially significant impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

The criteria and standards contained in this chapter are guidelines to assist decision makers in their evaluation of applications for zoning changes. They are presented for use by the appropriate village bodies within the legal framework for evaluating applications.

CHAPTER VII:

Citizen Participation

CHAPTER VII: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

GOAL: To maintain a high level of citizen involvement in village affairs.

OBJECTIVE: To maximize opportunities for citizen involvement in the decision-making process.

POLICIES: ① The village should continue to seek out and use the talent and expertise of its citizens on its various commissions and advisory boards.

② Governmental bodies should seek out citizen views on major issues.

③ Village bodies should continue to seek the widest possible publicity for their meetings to encourage citizens to attend and express their views.

④ Village bodies should seek citizen views early in the decision-making process so citizens have the opportunity to initiate, as well as react to, proposals.

⑤ The Village Board should continue to encourage citizens to address it at its regular meetings.

OBJECTIVE: To maximize opportunities for citizen participation in the development, triennial review, and periodic updating of the comprehensive plan.

POLICIES: ⑥ Actively solicit and consider residents' views in the development of the comprehensive plan, its triennial review, and updates.

⑦ Seek residents' views early in the planning process so they have the opportunity to initiate proposals as well as react to them.

⑧ Provide residents full and ready access to all staff reports, technical data, and other professional material related to the comprehensive plan to help them understand the impact of public programs, available options, and alternative decisions.

One of Oak Park's most cherished characteristics is the high degree of citizen involvement in village affairs. No less than 270 residents serve on nearly 40 boards, commissions, task forces, and committees which receive technical assistance from village staff. Many other villagers participate in a large number of neighborhood, cultural, and ad hoc groups.

Citizen input is essential to assure openness, cooperation, and diversity of opinion throughout the planning and decision-making processes. Citizen participation has been, and will continue to be, a hallmark and basic premise of the comprehensive planning process.

Widespread citizen participation in Oak Park's government helps make the village an attractive place to live, particularly in this age in which an increasing number of Americans feel powerless to affect government policy. In Oak Park, citizen participation means developing policies that are responsive to their opinions and needs within a framework of benefiting the whole community.

Goal To maintain a high level of citizen involvement in village affairs.

Fulfillment of two objectives will help Oak Park attain this goal.

Objective To maximize opportunities for citizen involvement in the decision-making process.

Oak Park uses a number of methods to achieve this objective. For example, as part of the village's clearing-house program, summaries of major proposals are sent to citizen groups that might be interested. Responses are communicated to the Village Board before the proposal is brought to a vote.

The village continues to encourage residents to organize grassroots organizations. Community councils and tenant and landlord groups are among the many organizations created with village encouragement.

The village also seeks to involve as many different citizens as possible in local government. It frequently taps citizens with expertise to serve on a body that can use that knowledge. The Village Board established a Citizen Involvement Committee in 1977 to identify residents who had not been involved in local government but would like to become involved. Two pages of the *Village Views*, Oak Park's newsletter, were devoted to descriptions of the village's many commissions, committees, and boards. More than 100 residents returned a coupon from that issue to apply to serve on these bodies. The Village Clerk keeps their names and resumes in a computerized file of over 200 citizens interested in serving on a village body. To broaden membership on these bodies, the Village Board adopted a policy to limit appointees to two terms.

The village also solicits residents' views on major issues.

Citizen opinion is actively sought through *Village Views*, which is distributed to every Oak Park household approximately six times a year. Survey questions on equity assurance, for example, brought more than 300 responses. In addition to seeking responses on specific issues, the newsletter presents information on village activities and services.

To provide additional opportunities for citizens to express their views directly to the Village Board, the trustees solicit comments from the public during the first 15 minutes of each board meeting.

In addition, nearly every village body publicizes its regular and special meetings in the local newspapers and contacts citizens and organizations that have requested to be notified of meetings. Village bodies expect citizens to attend and participate in their meetings as a matter of course.

These activities illustrate several policies that will help achieve the above objective:

1 The village should continue to seek out and use the talent and expertise of its citizens on its various commissions and advisory boards.

2 Governmental bodies should seek out citizen views on major issues.

Implementation techniques include the use of opinion surveys and active solicitation of opinions at public hearings and meetings.

3 Village bodies should continue to seek the widest possible publicity for their meetings to encourage citizens to attend and express their views.

4 Village bodies should seek citizen views early in the decision-making process so citizens have the opportunity to initiate, as well as react to, proposals.

5 The Village Board should continue to encourage citizens to address it at its regular meetings.

Objective To maximize opportunities for citizen participation in the development, triennial review, and periodic updating of the comprehensive plan.

Citizen participation mechanisms used in the preparation of this plan were designed to encourage citizens to help initiate as well as react to proposals.

The process formally started in the summer of 1976 when the Plan Commission scheduled a series of public hearings to elicit residents' ideas on major needs, issues, and goals which should be addressed in the plan.

The Plan Commission notified every household of the three hearings—one each for the central, south, and north sections of the village—in a lead article in the *Village Views*. Letters were sent to the chairpersons of nearly half the village commissions, boards, and committees. More than 40 individuals and representatives of these groups and neighborhood organizations spoke at these hearings.

Plan Commission staff compiled their testimony and presented it in writing for consideration by the Plan Commission in the development of goals and objectives.

Throughout this period, local newspapers listed Plan Commission meetings in their weekly calendars. Notices of hearings on the plan were regularly sent to over 240 groups and individuals, including the local newspapers, community councils and civic groups, business organizations, chairpersons of village bodies, other local governments, parent-teacher organizations, and churches. Oak Parkers often presented their views at these meetings throughout the planning process. During this period representatives of different village departments were asked to address the Plan Commission.

To help determine the village's needs, the Plan Commission studied the findings of citizen surveys undertaken as part of Oak Park's community development program.

Following preparation of working goals, objectives, and policies, the Plan Commission invited the public to comment on them at a public hearing the evening of June 22, 1978. The *Oak Leaves*, the village's most widely circulated newspaper, carried a two-part series on these policies. Complete copies of the goals, objectives, and policies were sent to the Plan Commission's regular mailing list of 240 citizens and organizations as well as to groups and individuals who requested copies.

Comments presented at the June 22 hearing were incorporated into revisions of these goals and objectives and in the determination of policies and implementation programs. Citizens were asked to initiate policy and implementation program proposals which were also incorporated into this plan.

After the Plan Commission completed the first draft of

this plan, it widely publicized the availability of the plan for public review. During the weeks preceding the two public hearings on the draft plan, more than 400 copies were distributed to citizens and community groups.

The Plan Commission incorporated recommendations made at these hearings into its final revision of the plan prior to submitting it to the Village Board in February, 1979.

The Village Board held a series of public meetings at which trustees and citizens discussed the plan and suggested further revisions. A board subcommittee instituted many of these recommendations and presented a revised draft to the full board in July. The President and Board of Trustees unanimously adopted this plan by ordinance on August 6, 1979.

The village expects to follow these policies in the preparation of updates of this plan and in the preparation of the plan that will succeed it:

6

Actively solicit and consider residents' views in the development of the comprehensive plan, its triennial review, and updates.

Implementation techniques include the use of opinion surveying and extensive use of village publications and local newspapers to solicit citizens' views concerning Oak Park's needs, goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs. Public hearings combined with opinion surveys would help provide a picture of citizens' concerns.

7

Seek residents' views early in the planning process so they have the opportunity to initiate proposals as well as react to them.

8

Provide residents full and ready access to all staff reports, technical data, and other professional material related to the comprehensive plan, to help them understand the impact of public programs, available options, and alternative decisions.

Appendix A:

Proposal/Application Checklist

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

PROPOSAL/APPLICATION CHECKLIST FOR COMPLIANCE WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1979

— Oak Park, Illinois

Column 1 Goal (G) or Objective (O)	Column 2 Check appropriate column to indicate if effect of propo- sal/application will help achieve statement in column 1 work against achieving statement in column 1 (If neutral, leave blank.)		Column 3 Using list at begin- ning of each chapter, proposal/application CONFORMS DOES NOT CONFORM to policies number:		Column 4 Comments
HOUSING					
G To preserve and enhance Oak Park's stable residen- tial environment so persons of all ages, races, and incomes can live here in sound, affordable housing.					
O To support racial integration throughout Oak Park and prevent resegregation of any part of the village.					
O To support an economically diverse housing stock for all income and age groups living or working in Oak Park.					
O To maintain the quality of housing units currently meet- ing village standards and to upgrade units that are not beyond repair.					
O To maintain and enhance the residential character of existing residential areas.					
O To preserve and maintain structures of significant histori- cal or architectural value and their immediate environment.					
O To stabilize the size of Oak Park's population.					
TRANSPORTATION & PARKING					
G To preserve the residential character of neighbor- hoods while achieving the safe, fuel-efficient move- ment of people and goods within and through Oak Park.					
O To maintain the residential nature of neighborhoods while allowing for the safe flow of traffic within Oak Park.					
O To provide adequate parking for residents, shoppers, employees, commuters, and visitors.					
O To enhance the mobility of those residents who, by choice or necessity, are dependent on public transportation.					
O To develop a transportation system that requires less dependence on the automobile and more use of public transportation and other forms of energy-efficient transportation.					

<p>Column 1</p> <p>Goal (G) or Objective (O)</p>	<p>Column 2</p> <p>Check appropriate column to indicate if effect of proposal/application will</p> <div> <div>help achieve statement in column 1</div> <div>work against achieving statement in column 1</div> </div> <p>(If neutral, leave blank.)</p>		<p>Column 3</p> <p>Using list at beginning of each chapter, proposal/application</p> <div> <div>CONFORMS</div> <div>DOES NOT CONFORM</div> </div> <p>to policies number:</p>		<p>Column 4</p> <p>Comments</p>
<p>PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES</p> <p>G To provide in the most efficient manner those public facilities and services—public safety, public works, government facilities and services—that maintain Oak Park as a desirable community.</p> <p>O To maintain public safety throughout the community.</p> <p>O To maintain and improve public works and services consistent with high standards and fiscal constraints.</p> <p>O To maintain and improve the high quality of other government services and facilities within fiscal constraints.</p>					
<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>G To provide a broad range of convenient retail facilities and service opportunities that Oak Park residents need and desire.</p> <p>G To expand Oak Park's tax base in order to maintain a high level of services, programs, and facilities.</p> <p>O To maximize the potential for establishing tax-generating commercial and residential development and redevelopment.</p> <p>O To encourage existing businesses to remain in Oak Park and expand.</p> <p>O To stimulate increased private investment in Oak Park.</p> <p>O To attract a larger proportion of retail purchases from residents within Oak Park's market area.</p> <p>O To attract and retain stores that fill gaps in the mix of retail establishments in Oak Park.</p>					
<p>CITIZEN PARTICIPATION</p> <p>G To maintain a high level of citizen involvement in village affairs.</p> <p>O To maximize opportunities for citizen involvement in the decision-making process.</p> <p>O To maximize opportunities for citizen participation in the development, triennial review, and periodic updating of the comprehensive plan.</p>					

Appendix B:

Glossary



1944

1945

1946

5



GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1979

central business district (CBD). The principal area of a city's retail, commercial, and service functions, often called "downtown." Oak Park's CBD is the Oak Park Village Mall.

community development block grant (CDBG). This grant, issued pursuant to the Housing and Community Development Act of 1977 and administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides federal monies to address locally determined needs. This grant program consolidates a number of single-purpose grant programs into a single program. As an "entitlement" community, Oak Park receives a sum predetermined according to a set formula upon approval of the village's application.

The primary objective of the CDBG program is "the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low- and moderate-income." All projects and activities funded with CDBG funds must (1) principally benefit low- and moderate-income persons, (2) help prevent or eliminate blight, or (3) meet urgent local needs. Federal regulations place primary emphasis on benefits to low- and moderate-income persons.

comprehensive plan. A document or series of documents prepared by a plan commission or department setting forth policies for the future of a community. It is normally the result of considerable study and analysis of existing physical, economic, and social conditions, and a projection of future conditions. When adopted by a public body such as a planning commission or governing body, it serves as a guide for many public decisions, especially land-use changes and preparation of capital improvement programs, and enactment of zoning and related growth management legislation.

cul-de-sac. A street closed at one end, generally terminated with a loop in which traffic can turn around.

demand-activated-rapid-transit. This is a customer-oriented, door-to-door transportation service. The customer may place a request for service in advance—such as the evening before a ride is desired—or at the time the ride is needed (like requesting taxi service). The customer gives the operator/dispatcher such information as origin, destination, and number of passengers in the party. The operator then locates an available vehicle nearest the caller. The dispatcher contacts the appropriate vehicle via a two-way radio, and the driver picks up the customer. The entire dispatching process may take no more than 20 to 30 seconds. The vehicle may be called off the passenger's direct route so that other customers may be picked up, but total trip times, including time for waiting, travel, and route deviations are kept to an acceptable level.

density. The number of families, persons, or housing units per unit of land. Usually density is expressed in terms of "per acre." Thus, the density of a development of 200 units occupying 5 acres of land is 40 units per acre. The control of density is one of the basic purposes of zoning.

floor area ratio (FAR). The ratio of floor area permitted on a zoning lot to the size of the lot. Thus, a permitted floor area ratio of 6.0 on a 10,000 square foot lot would allow a building whose total floor area is 60,000 square feet. FAR provisions may be used in combination with other bulk regulations, open space, and building space requirements. When used alone, they give developers great flexibility in deciding whether to build a low building covering only a small part of the lot, or in some places, a combination of buildings, so long as the total allowed is not exceeded.

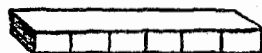
FLOOR AREA RATIO: Using the same floor area ratios, a developer is able to choose from several development options:

OPTIONS

**RATIO
(FAR)**



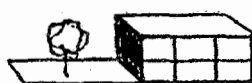
1 story



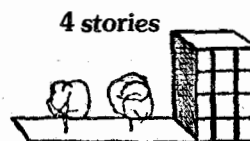
Entire lot area



2 stories

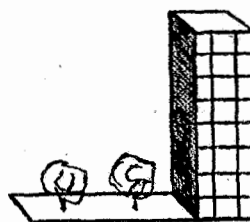
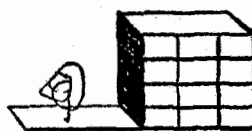
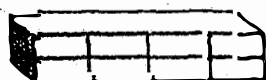


½ lot area



4 stories

¼ lot area



0.5

1.0

2.0

housing assistance plan (HAP). Developed as part of an application for a community development block grant, a housing assistance plan serves as a measure of the condition of the housing stock in a community and of the needs of the low- and moderate-income persons for housing assistance. The HAP is used to establish goals for providing assistance best suited to meeting the needs of low- and moderate-income persons, and to further the revitalization of the community.

incentive (bonus) zoning. A system under which developers are given bonuses in exchange for providing amenities the community feels are desirable. This is in contrast to zoning's traditional, more negative effect of limiting or restricting development. Bonuses granted usually are in the form of higher permitted densities or floor area ratios to improve a development's profitability. Amenities received have been plazas, more open space, certain desired site designs, and access to transit stops. Wider use of the incentive device, for example, to promote the development of low- and moderate-income housing or to protect sensitive natural areas, is only now being explored.

jitney. A public transportation service in which low-capacity vehicles such as an automobile or van, follow a predetermined route.

land write down. A land write down involves a municipality or other public agency selling land at less than its fair market value. To stimulate redevelopment projects, this typically involves buying deteriorated or vacant property, removing the structures or renovating them, and selling the cleared land or improved structure at less than its acquisition value or at a reduced appraisal value.

mixed use zoning. Zoning which permits a combination of usually separated uses within a single development. Many planned development ordinances specify permitted combinations of, say, various residential types and local businesses. More recently the term has been applied in a more limited way to major inner-city developments, often with several high-rise buildings, which may contain offices, shops, hotels, apartment, and related uses, and to smaller buildings with stores at ground level and apartments above them.

While zoning traditionally has separated land uses, improved performance controls and some rethinking of old values on the part of planners and their critics has led to a loosening up of narrowly defined districts to permit appropriate mixtures, such as local shopping in residential areas, and therefore more interesting, livelier neighborhoods.

municipal bonds. Municipal bonds constitute the debt of municipalities. They are interest-bearing certificates sold to the public to raise money, usually to pay for the physical

development (capital development) of an area by spreading the cost over a period of years. This helps to spread the tax burden and insures that no single group of residents will have to pay the complete cost of the project. In general, bonds are not used to pay or meet current operating expenses.

General obligations bonds normally carry the lowest interest rate of any municipal bond. Secured by the commitment of the issuing municipality to levy taxes, such bonds also provide the highest degree of security and the most acceptable marketability. General obligation bonds represent an unconditional pledge by the municipality to repay the obligation.

Revenue bond obligations are payable from revenues derived from tolls, charges, user fees, or rents paid by the services or facilities the bond was used to finance. Rates or charges are imposed on the user of the service or facility in order to recover the costs of financing construction.

Special assessment bonds are issued to finance improvements which are to be paid for on the basis of special assessments against benefited properties. The bond obligations are payable only from the special assessment receipts and, unlike general obligation bonds, are not backed by the "full faith and credit" of the municipality. Consequently, special assessment bonds, like revenue bonds, usually carry a higher interest rate than do general obligation bonds. In Oak Park, a special assessment bond is usually issued to pay for the construction of a cul-de-sac requested by residents. These residents then pay off the bond obligation through a special assessment.

overlay zone. A set of zoning requirements that is described in the ordinance text, is mapped, and is imposed in addition to those of the underlying district. Developments within the overlay zone must conform to the requirements of both zones or the more restrictive of the two. It usually is employed to deal with special physical characteristics such as flood plains or steeply sloping areas, but it has other applications as well.

permitted use. A use by right which is specifically authorized in a particular zoning district. It is contrasted with special permit uses which are authorized only if certain requirements are met and after a public hearing, then review and approval by the village board.

plan commission. The public agency in a community usually empowered to prepare a comprehensive plan and to evaluate proposed changes in land use, either by public or private developers, for consistency with the plan. In Oak Park, the commission consists of nine village residents appointed by the village president.

planned development. A form of development, also known as planned unit development (PUD), usually characterized by a unified site design for a number of housing units, clustering buildings and providing common open space, density increases, and a mix of building types and land uses. It permits the planning of a project and the calculation of densities over the entire development, rather than on an individual lot-by-lot basis. It also refers to a process, mainly revolving around site-plan review, in which public officials have considerable involvement in determining the nature of the development. It includes aspects of both subdivision and zoning regulation and is administered through a special use permit.

While planned development has most commonly been used for housing developments, it also is frequently applied to other forms of development such as shopping centers, industrial and office parks, and to mixed-use developments which may be any combination, depending on local ordinance. Planned development allows the unified, and hence potentially more desirable and attractive, development of an area, based on a comprehensive site plan. Planned development can have a number of advantages over conventional lot-by-lot development including: mixing building types and uses to create more heterogeneous and "alive" communities; combining often unusable yard space on individual lots into larger common open spaces; offering greater opportunities for incentives to build lower-cost housing; lower street and utility costs resulting from reduced frontage; and the possibility of increasing the density of a development while keeping desired amenities.

residential area. Any portion of the village where the primary use of land is for residential purposes, i.e., single-family or multiple-family housing.

right-of-way. The right of passage over the property of another. The public may acquire it through implied dedication—accepted access over a period of time to a beach or lake shoreline, for example. More commonly, it refers to the land on which a road or railroad is located. The pathways over which utilities and drainage ways run are usually referred to as easements.

special service districts. Since 1973, Illinois municipalities have been able to establish special taxing districts to provide special services or facilities to that area. Such districts allow a municipality to offer services or improvements not available in all parts of the jurisdiction, and to tax just the property owners who benefit from them. This tax is administered as a single rate property tax on property within the special service district. Such districts can only be established following a public hearing and after allowing 60 days for voters and property owners who oppose establishment of the district to petition against it. The two Oak Park special service districts encompass the

Oak Park Village Mall and the Lake/Austin area.

special use permit. Some land uses may be appropriate or desirable only in certain zoning districts and only with adequate safeguards. Car washes, helicopter landing stations, utility stations, and planned developments fall into this category. A zoning ordinance will specify the districts where each special use is permitted and provide standards to be met before a permit can be issued. Special use permits are granted by the village board of trustees following a recommendation by the appointed hearing body, frequently the plan commission.

street (alley) vacation. The removal by the municipality of a street, or portion thereof, from its status as a right-of-way. When vacated, the street is divided in half, with ownership of each half reverting to the adjacent properties. The village is usually compensated for the vacated street. Examples of vacated streets in Oak Park, include the 400 block of south Cuyler (for Hawthorne School) and the south end of the 400 block of south Elmwood (for private commercial development).

strip commercial development. Developed area along a thoroughfare characterized by rows of retail stores and similar commercial buildings. Such property generally has a depth of 125 to 150 feet.

subdivision. The process (and the result) of dividing a parcel of raw land into smaller buildable sites, blocks, streets, open space, and public areas, and the designation of the location of utilities and other improvements. Subdivision regulations usually come into play where a subdivision is above a certain number of lots, varying from two to about five, or when a new street is built.

tax base. In real estate terms, a community's tax base is the assessed valuation of all real estate located within the jurisdiction of a taxing authority. In governmental and planning terms, the tax base refers to the above as well as all other tax-producing sources within the community.

tax increment financing (TIF). A method by which municipalities can finance redevelopment by issuing obligations financed by the increased property tax revenues generated by the increased value of the property following redevelopment. Under this financing approach, a municipality can issue bonds to pay for initial redevelopment costs such as land acquisition, demolition, or construction. The bonds are then paid off with the increased property tax the redeveloped properties generate.

transfer of development rights (TDR). A relatively new concept, enacted in only a few locations, in which the development rights are separated from the land in an area in which a community (or state) wishes to limit develop-

ment. It has been promoted as a way to retain farmland, preserve endangered natural environments, protect historic areas, stage development, promote low-and-moderate-income housing, and achieve other land-use objectives. Considerable research currently is underway to determine whether the TDR concept, which appears to offer such vast potential, can be applied to actual situations. A good deal of attention is being focused on the few states and localities which have enacted variations on the scheme. (Also called development rights transfer.) Density transfer within a single property or on adjoining properties has been fairly widely used and serves as the jumping-off point for the long-distance transfers proposed under TDR schemes.

use. The purpose or activity for which a piece of land or its buildings is designed, arranged, or intended, or for which it is occupied or maintained. Land-use planning and control—through zoning and other devices—is a primary concern of planners. With depletion of natural resources, degrading of environmental quality, and shortages of energy, land use is increasingly being recognized as a major national issue.

village board. This is the governing body of a village. Composed of seven elected members including a president, a village board enacts ordinances and establishes policies of the community. The equivalent body in a municipality organized as a city is the city council.

zoning. A technique to implement the comprehensive plan, zoning is a police power measure enacted by the village in which the village is divided into districts or zones within which permitted and special uses are established as are regulations governing lot size, building bulk, placement, and other development standards. Requirements vary from district to district, but they must be uniform within districts. The zoning ordinance consists of two parts: a text and a map. Some flexibility is built into the ordinance by allowing for variances, special use permits, and rezonings.

zoning board of appeals (ZBA). A local appointed body composed of a chairman and six members, whose responsibility is to hear appeals from decisions of the local zoning administrative official (zoning officer) and to consider requests for variances and other matters referred to it by the village board such as applications for special use permits and amendments to the text or map of the zoning ordinance. Decisions of the zoning board of appeals on variations or appeals of decisions of the zoning officer are final administrative determinations subject to judicial review if appealed.

Appendix C: Bibliography

This bibliography contains the sources cited in the *Comprehensive Plan 1979*. References are cited in the text within parentheses, the first number representing the source, as numbered in this bibliography, and the second number indicating the referenced pages. If only one number appears within parentheses, it refers to the source.

Source
Number

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