

Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

Final Plan

The Village of Oak Park, Illinois



BUSINESS DISTRICTS, INC.

JUNE 2010



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Executive Summary



Business Districts, Inc. (BDI) was engaged by the Village of Oak Park in August 2009 to complete this Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan. The planning process was completed in three phases, each including opportunities for participation by Oak Park's citizens and many stakeholders. A fifteen member Steering Committee representing multiple Oak Park constituencies guided the Plan Process.

The first Plan phase concluded with the completion of an interim report on the State of Historic Preservation in Oak Park. This interim report described the fragmented nature of local stakeholder perspectives about historic preservation and considered seven (7) categories of issues identified by those stakeholders. Most important, this same report identified the following common bases for future

preservation work in the Village:

- All stakeholder groups believe that Oak Park's history and identity are important. People live and invest in Oak Park because of the quality of the Village's overall environment—the 'feel' of its commercial districts, the unique housing stock, its accessibility, and its amenities. They may not have any technical knowledge of historic preservation regulations, theory, or practices, but they know that Oak Park is unique and important.
- Owners of all types of property in Oak Park expressed the desire to be good building stewards. They want to understand why historic preservation could be important to them, what historic preservation really means for their properties, and how preservation can support their ownership objectives.
- The local preservation community wants to make important contributions to Oak Park's future, including its economic future. Adaptive re-use of Oak Park's buildings will continue to be an important part of ongoing economic development throughout the Village. They want to sustain those things that ensure the Village's unique environment and to work in a coordinated way to contribute their expertise.

This final Plan document describes an integrated strategy for the Village's historic preservation activities for the upcoming decade. This integrated strategy combined the seven categories of issues into four strategic aspects: education about historic preservation, economic development and incentives, Oak Park's historic preservation structure and process, and national preservation issues. Foremost is education about historic preservation for and among all stakeholder groups. This emphasis on education underlies the remaining three strategic aspects. Economic development will remain an important local issue, and historic preservation can be an important element of local economic success. Local preservation regulations must support good preservation, good building stewardship, and good redevelopment. Finally, Oak Park will need to seek out national ideas for success in its historic preservation actions. Oak Park may be a

unique place, but similar communities elsewhere can be valuable sources of insights and solutions.

Ultimately, the Village's historic preservation work over the next decade will require that the Plan work get done. Historic preservation, as a discipline, recognizes the value of change over time. Oak Park's future preservation programs, activities, and local partnerships can not only protect its many resources but also can contribute to the Village's evolution and vitality.

Introduction

The Village of Oak Park engaged Business Districts, Inc. (BDI) in August 2009 to develop a Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan to guide the Village's historic preservation work throughout the next decade. BDI is an Evanston, Illinois based consulting firm with expertise in historic preservation, market analysis, and economic development. The development of this Plan has been funded by a Certified Local Government grant from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). In addition to Village officials, a fifteen member Steering Committee, representing multiple Oak Park constituencies and local Boards and Commissions, actively led the formulation of this Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan.

The Plan process has been conducted in three phases: an assessment of Oak Park's historic preservation planning activities, the visioning phase to test preliminary Plan strategies, and the development of the final Plan. The specific process activities for each phase incorporated stakeholder and public input, Steering Committee comment, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) comment, and research into national best practices in historic preservation programs and strategies applicable to Oak Park's preservation activities. The Plan process activities are described in detail in the Plan Process and Activities Section of this report. All of the documentation from this Plan process is available via a link on the Historic Preservation page of the Village of Oak Park's website and through the Village's historic preservation staff.



This Plan also serves as an update to the 1994 Long-Range Historic Preservation Plan. (The Village never formally adopted this 1994 Plan.) Oak Park's HPC and Village staff have completed much of the work suggested in the 1994 Plan. This work has included ongoing identification of historic resources, regulatory updates, education and outreach, and incentive development.

Throughout this Plan process, the emphasis has been on what will work best for the entire Village, not just one commercial district or one residential neighborhood. This Village-wide perspective was also focused on common facts and on the future, not on past ideas, misconceptions, or controversies. The resulting Plan will assist Village officials, the HPC, local property owners, and Oak Park's preservationists in becoming even better stewards of their shared legacy and their commitment to Oak Park and its unique urban fabric. This result is both strategic and pragmatic.

In addition to this Introduction, this Plan document has five sections. These sections are described below:

- *Plan Process and Activities*: Describes the meetings and actions completed in the development of this Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan.
- *Historic Resources*: Provides an overview of Oak Park's historic context and historic resources. This section is a slightly expanded version of the same section that appeared in the interim report, or the State of Historic Preservation in Oak Park report.
- *Village-wide Historic Preservation Strategies*: Organizes key categories of strategic issues uncovered during the Plan process into an integrated vision for the next decade. The sections addressing each strategy include national examples of best practices.
- *Summary of Plan Recommendations and Implementation Priorities*: Reviews the Plan's specific strategic recommendations and suggests implementation priorities for HPC and Village staff, officials, and local stakeholders. The implementation priorities specify actions for completion in Years 1 and 2 of this Plan.
- *Action Plans*: Lists those specific action steps necessary to achieve the integrated vision for historic preservation throughout the Village of Oak Park. These steps incorporate the implementation priorities, delineate estimated costs, and serve as an outline for longer-term implementation activities.

Additional Plan materials are provided in this report's five Appendices. The first Appendix is the interim report for this Plan process entitled the State of Historic Preservation in Oak Park. This report, submitted and reviewed in November and December 2009, summarizes issues identified during the first phase of the Plan process and identifies initial strategic implications for consideration in subsequent Plan phases and in the preparation of this final report. This version also incorporates final comments obtained at the February 17, 2010 project Steering Committee meeting. The remaining Appendices include supplemental information noted within the Plan text and all Plan process documents. These Appendices, due to file size constraints, have been provided to and are available from the Village's historic preservation staff.

In describing Oak Park's consensus vision for its preservation future and those actions that can translate that vision into reality, the Village is presented with multiple opportunities to address its ongoing historic preservation activities in methodical and practical, yet exciting, new ways. This vision is comprised of four integrated, strategic aspects, based upon those categories of preservation-related issues identified during the Plan process. The four aspects are:

- Education about Historic Preservation
- Economic Development and Available Incentives
- Oak Park's Historic Preservation Structure and Processes
 - Historic Preservation Ordinance and Guidelines
 - Landmark Designations and Surveys
 - Local Planning, Regulations, and Related Processes
- National Preservations Issues
 - Relevancy and Importance
 - Sustainability

The action plans, based upon this integrated vision, will enable Oak Park's officials to build upon the Village's nearly forty years of historic preservation work, guiding future preservation programming and decisions, and strengthening Oak Park's historic preservation ethic incrementally throughout the next decade.

At its most basic level, historic preservation, as a planning tool and as a profession, examines the built environment and its historic context. This means conserving, revitalizing, and protecting important local resources through local regulation. With some exceptions, most local resources in any community are real property—buildings and land. Residents, business owners, investors, or tax-exempt entities own this real property, and each owner has a very different approach to and objective for their property.

In any community, as in Oak Park, some local resources will prove more important, or significant, than others. Certain resources are important because of how they reflect their context within the community and its story. This issue of what is truly important and how best to preserve is a subject of current national debate among preservationists. This question of what is important may ultimately alter the definition of 'landmark,' and the Village may face this issue sometime in the next decade. Places, or sites, in Oak Park may prove significant for reasons other than great architecture or high design. An example for consideration may be the original location of Oak Park's Housing Center, given its importance to the Village's integration story. These and similar examples will have an impact on how historic preservation decisions are reviewed and determined at the local level over the next decade.

Sustainability is another issue currently subject to national discussion among historic preservation and energy efficiency advocates. Historic preservation and energy, efficient building strategies can sometimes have different objectives for the same buildings. Technologies, such as solar panels or window systems, can have a dramatic impact on the appearance of historic buildings.

Oak Park's HPC and Environment and Energy Commission have already initiated these conversations, and like many communities, are beginning to consider how their points of view can work in partnership.



As was stated when the Village considered undertaking this Village-wide Historic Preservation Plan, Oak Park's most critical challenge, as it considers its historic preservation future, may be an economic one. Attempting to balance the need for redevelopment and revitalization to increase municipal revenues and expand the local tax base with the need to maintain and sustain the community's historic character and distinct urban fabric will continue to present possibilities and challenges. Divergent opinions and occasionally contentious public discourse will be inherent in both the possibilities and the challenges.

Ultimately, final decisions will require a balanced approach. Economic development and historic preservation are not mutually exclusive concepts. In many communities, including many with strong similarities to Oak Park, historic preservation represents a key component of their long-term economic development strategy, encouraging ongoing private investment and continually

improving the community's quality of life. In these same communities, their history, combined with local public-private partnerships, propels their 'attraction power' for residents, visitors, and investors. Several examples of successful communities that have included historic preservation as part of their overall economic strategy are provided in the Strategies section of this report.

Outreach, education, and collaboration, based upon common interests, will be necessary for future success in reinforcing Oak Park's historic preservation ethic and altering local misperceptions about historic preservation and its benefits. Each of these three types of activities must be conducted in new and unconventional ways, directed toward non-traditional constituencies, and done with greater coordination to ensure Plan implementation. Finally, Village staff and officials and the HPC cannot affect implementation on their own; they will never have the necessary resources. Implementation must be a combined and sustained effort by Oak Park's preservation organizations and multiple Oak Park stakeholder groups.

This final Plan also acknowledges Oak Park's past successes in historic preservation and emphasizes those future historic preservation strategies and actions that will maintain the Village's character and can accommodate change over the next decade. Underlying the strategic issues described in this report are two fundamental questions--What does historic preservation mean to Oak Park? How can historic preservation help to shape Oak Park's future during the next decade? The answers to these questions are contained within this Plan's consensus vision and the action steps dictated by this vision for the next decade.

Plan Process and Activities



The development of Oak Park's Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan was conducted in three phases: an assessment of Oak Park's historic preservation planning activities, the visioning phase to test preliminary Plan strategies, and the written documentation of the final Plan. The specific process activities by phase are described below. The Plan process also encompassed three broader considerations:

- Incorporate all points of view about historic preservation and how it currently functions throughout the Village, using a collective public process;
- Understand the economic realities appropriate to Oak Park's built environment;
- Develop a framework for future partnerships and cooperative actions among all of Oak Park's stakeholders in addressing historic preservation issues and enabling Plan implementation.

As noted in the Executive Summary, the project documentation prepared throughout this Plan process is available via a link on the Historic Preservation page of the Village of Oak Park's website and from Village historic preservation staff. This documentation comprises Appendix 5 of this Plan document and is available from Village staff.

Phase 1 Plan Activities

This first project phase was structured as an assessment of the current historic preservation program in Oak Park and began in August 2009.

Project Initiation Meeting (August 7, 2009): Village officials and BDI met to review and confirm the Plan scope of services, establish tentative project dates, and identify prospective stakeholder interviewees and focus groups. Additional background materials were provided to BDI for review. All of Oak Park’s historic districts and designated landmarks were also visited as part of project initiation.

Interviews and Focus Groups (September and October, 2009): Five stakeholder focus groups were scheduled, with group meetings on September 8 and 22. These groups included: Downtown Oak Park Board members and property owners; HPC members and history-focused organizations; Elected and Appointed Officials; Business and Property Owners from Oak Park’s other commercial districts; and representatives from local Financial Institutions and Oak Park Development Corporation. In addition, over 20 interviews with Village Trustees and Oak Park business owners, property owners, developers, tourism officials, and residents (including owners of historic homes) were conducted in late September and early October.

Information Review and Initial Research (September and October, 2009): All relevant historic preservation plans and studies, existing Village community and master plans and documents, historic resources surveys, enabling ordinances, administrative rules, history of Oak Park’s HPC, and descriptions of available incentives were reviewed by BDI. Research was also initiated to identify potential programs, best practices, and other preservation-related approaches used by municipalities throughout the U. S. with characteristics similar to Oak Park and potentially applicable to Oak Park’s future. All of the communities considered have active historic preservation planning programs.

Steering Committee Meeting (September 8, 2009): This initial meeting of the Plan’s Steering Committee included an overview of the Plan development process and a facilitated discussion identifying the Plan project mission. This project mission statement is:

To inspire pride and respect for Oak Park’s unique heritage and resources by promoting preservation through their continual and creative use.

Help Oak Park preserve its past
Get Involved in Creating a Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

The Historic Preservation Commission is leading a community wide effort to create a 10-year Strategic Historic Preservation Plan to help guide efforts to identify and protect historic resources throughout the Village of Oak Park and provide a cohesive vision for future preservation. The first phase developed a comprehensive base line of information for future analysis and decision-making. The second phase will explore ideas and concepts for specific historic preservation planning strategies and initiatives. And the third, plan-making phase will create a formal plan document of strategies to achieve both short and long-term goals.

Meeting Schedule

- Dec. 16, 2009: Steering Committee meeting II
Topic: Pleasant Home, 217 Home Ave.
- Jan. 12, 2010: Community Workshop II
Topic: Park School, 2001 N. Ridgeland Ave.
- Feb. 17, 2010: Steering Committee meeting III
Topic: Oak Park Community, 615 Garfield St.
- March 17, 2010: Community Workshop III
Topic: West Center, 218 N. Center Ave.

For more information, call 708.358.5417 or e-mail planning@oak-park.us.

Community Workshop #1 (October 21, 2009): Based upon the information obtained from interviews, focus groups, and documentation review, workshop participants were asked to identify and prioritize Oak Park’s historic preservation assets, issues, and programming.

State of Historic Preservation in Oak Park Report (November, 2009): The preparation of this interim report completed the first phase of the Plan process, and the draft interim report was submitted for Steering Committee review in November, 2009. (See Appendix 1.) This interim report summarized the assets, issues, and opportunities associated with historic preservation in Oak Park. The strategic implications related to the issues identified in the

project's first phase were refined and incorporated into this final Plan.

Steering Committee Meeting (December 16, 2009): This meeting of the Steering Committee was solely devoted to a detailed discussion of the State of Historic Preservation in Oak Park Report. The Steering Committee's thoughts and comments were incorporated into a final version of the interim report submitted in January 2010.

Phase 2 Plan Activities

With the completion of the first phase, the second Plan phase was designed to test the preliminary historic preservation strategies described in the interim report. Research into best practices, programming, and national perspectives continued during Phases 2 and 3.

Community Workshop #2 (January 12, 2010): This workshop was used to develop consensus among participants on the four suggested integrated strategies noted earlier. Attendees at the workshop identified activities and strategic elements to facilitate the Plan vision.

Draft Final Report (February, 2010): The first draft of the Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan was submitted for Steering Committee and Village staff review. The final Plan was developed from this initial draft over the following months.

Steering Committee Meeting (February 17, 2010): The Steering Committee conducted a detailed review of the first draft of the final Plan. Committee comments were incorporated into the second draft Plan, and the updated draft was submitted to Village staff.

Phase 3 Plan Activities

HPC Meeting and Plan Introduction (March 11, 2010): The second draft of the final Plan was provided for HPC review and comment in early March 2010. BDI provided an overview presentation of the Plan approach and resulting strategies at HPC's regular March meeting. Initial HPC comments were incorporated into BDI's preparations for the final community workshop (March 17, 2010). HPC suggestions, based upon their review and discussion of the Plan draft at their April 2010 meeting, have been added to the Plan document.



Community Workshop #3 (March 17, 2010): This final community workshop reviewed Plan's integrated vision and confirmed and refined the draft Plan's key strategies and implementation priorities. Participants also provided additional historic preservation programming thoughts.

Review of Draft Plan (March and April, 2010): After the March meetings, the draft Plan document was again updated and reviewed by Village staff and HPC. The draft Plan document was available for public comment on the Village's website through April 2010. Additional revisions, based upon public comments and initial HPC member comments, were then incorporated into the draft document.

HPC Meeting and Strategy Review (May 13, 2010): The updated Plan draft was reviewed in detail at HPC's regular May meeting. Members of the Steering Committee also attended this public meeting and provided additional comment. These ideas and suggestions were again integrated into the draft Plan document.

Village Board/HPC Joint Meeting (June 28, 2010): The final Plan was presented at a joint meeting of the Village Board and the HPC for discussion. The Village Board referred to the final Plan for approval and adoption at a future Village Board meeting. Board member comments have been incorporated into this final Plan document and submitted to the Village. (Two electronic versions and one print copy of the final document have been provided to Village staff.)

Historic Resources

Oak Park has some of the most significant historic resources in the U. S. These resources encompass the Village's urban fabric—its buildings, streets and grid pattern, open space, setbacks, and streetscapes. Supplementing its existing urban fabric, or physicality, Oak Park's recent social and cultural history and architecture will increase in importance over time. And



Oak Park will continue to be recognized nationally and internationally for its significant architectural resources, encompassing all styles and types of domestic architecture dating from the mid-1800s through the present.

Oak Park's concentration of residences designed by the Prairie School architects, most notably Frank Lloyd Wright, is internationally recognized and is included in the Frank Lloyd

Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District. Other period residential architectural styles and types are evident throughout the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District. These styles include important residential and commercial examples of the Victorian era styles—Gothic Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Stick Style, and Romanesque. Built in the 1900s and 1910s, both sections of the Gunderson Historic District include single-family, American Foursquare homes, featuring details in diverse architectural styles, and later Gunderson two-flats with similar detailing. Oak Park's residential architecture also includes multiple examples of the various 1920s revival styles, such as colonial revival and Tudor revival.

In addition, Oak Park has been associated with numerous famous people. Nobel Prize winning author Ernest Hemingway was born and raised in the Village, graduating from Oak Park-River Forest High School in 1917. Edgar Rice Burroughs, author and 'Tarzan's' creator, lived in Oak Park in the 1910s. Doris Humphrey, one of the pioneers of modern dance, was born in Oak Park, and two of Oak Park's street names are associated with her family. Dr. Percy Julian, the prominent African-American research chemist, and his family moved to Oak Park in 1951.

In the upcoming decade, Oak Park's social history from the 1960s and 1970s will likely become increasingly important. The story of successful racial integration in the Village will require additional research and interpretation. These resources may not be 'historic' in the conventional sense. Buildings from this same era will begin to reach the 50-year mark, making them eligible for landmark designation under Oak Park's current preservation ordinance. Also, Oak Park's institutions will experience changes in their needs for facilities. Awareness of how these institutional needs evolve over the next decade will require consideration. For example, Oak Park's church buildings, given dwindling congregations and changing attitudes toward religion, could present adaptive re-use challenges.

The Village's history, from its founding by Joseph Kettlestrings after the Blackhawk War of the 1830s to its dramatic population growth after the Chicago Fire of 1871 to its post-World War II sociological changes, has been well documented in previous planning studies and by Village staff. Oak Park's historic, or architectural, resources reflect all of these changes. Given the Village's history, the following historic contexts are suggested:

Settlement (1830s-1870s): Joseph Kettlestrings purchased his 173 acres in what was to become Oak Park in 1835. Joseph Kettlestrings' acreage became the commercial core of the Village, located on either side of Lake Street between Harlem and Oak Park Avenues. At that time, he erected a building near what was then the Galena to Chicago stagecoach route. The Galena & Chicago Union Railroad was constructed westward through the area in 1848, parallel to the stagecoach route. During this era, Oak Park, then known as Oak Ridge, became a small, rural village with a few merchants and a local newspaper.

Growth (1870s-1900): By the 1870s, the Village's boundaries had generally expanded to Chicago Avenue on the north and Madison Street on the south. Oak Ridge became Oak Park in 1872. After the 1871 Chicago Fire, Oak Park's population grew dramatically over the next decades for several reasons. Wealthier Chicago residents chose to move to suburbs near the city, away from Chicago's perceived urban chaos. Transportation options between Chicago and Oak Park improved continuously during this period. Oak Park, like similar suburban communities, began to build the institutions that would assert and reflect their local identities. Residential development via subdivisions also began in Oak Park during this period. Improved infrastructure serving Oak Park's growing residential population was also a key aspect of this new development.

Suburban Enclave (1900-1950): Neighboring, unincorporated Ridgeland merged with Oak Park in



1901, breaking away from Cicero Township after years of contention. The break with Cicero Township resulted in a re-organized municipal government for Oak Park. In addition, the extension of what became the two CTA lines serving Oak Park occurred at the turn of the twentieth century. The Village's population increased to over 60,000 by 1930. During the early years of the twentieth century, most of Oak Park's homes were constructed, as were many of the Village's apartment buildings. Much of the Village's most notable domestic architecture dates from this time period. Downtown Oak Park also

became a regional shopping draw, featuring prominent Chicago retailers, such as Marshall Field's, Montgomery Ward, and The Fair Store. During this period, Oak Park's identity emerged as a prominent, wealthy, and conservative suburban enclave.

Multicultural Community (1950s-Present): After the Second World War, Oak Park faced many of the same social changes as other inner-ring suburbs. Oak Park's demographic changes were also significant. The construction of the Eisenhower Expressway in the mid-1950s bifurcated the Village. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, white ethnics, mostly Catholics, moved to Oak Park in substantial numbers. Dr. Percy Julian and his family moved to Oak Park in 1951, and the events associated with his move to Oak Park reflected the beginnings of the national movement for racial equality. In the late 1960s and 1970s, Chicago's Austin community, Oak Park's neighbor to the east, saw an influx of African-American residents. The Austin neighborhood had been destabilized and re-segregated, primarily the result of predatory real estate practices. However, Oak Park's community vision during this period was different; the Village chose to work to achieve successful integration. As a result, Oak Park is now nationally known as a progressive, diverse community, in addition to being a community with great architecture.

Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

Overview

The Village of Oak Park has had an active historic preservation effort for nearly forty years and is known internationally for its association with the Prairie School of Architecture. The Village's national and local historic districts include nearly 2,900 properties identified as either significant or contributing to the character of those districts. This architectural legacy generates economic benefits and defines the Village's image and market position. Oak Park's long association with both architectural history and historic preservation, in addition to the Village's unique urban fabric, were identified as important community assets during this Plan process. Oak Park's residents and investors are proud of their community, and even historic preservation opponents recognize the importance of the Village's history.

As described in the interim report (Appendix 1), the Village will encounter both opportunities and challenges as it implements the elements of this Strategic Historic Preservation Plan over the next ten years. The implementation of this Plan and its integrated vision will require that Oak Park's stakeholders move beyond the fragmented, and sometimes contentious, opinions and approaches noted in the interim report. This integrated Plan vision initially identifies common activities that will build partnerships focused on solutions. These partnerships should



include local officials, the public and private sectors, and Oak Park's non-profits and institutions. They can be ad hoc or long-term. These initial partnerships will establish the incremental basis for increasingly important future collaborations. Disagreements will inevitably occur, but getting the actual work done cannot happen without many groups, including Village officials, property owners, and preservationists, coming together and pooling their significant expertise and resources to implement. Ultimately, getting the work done will be the determinant of the success of Oak Park's historic preservation effort throughout the upcoming decade.

This Village-wide Strategic Historic Preservation Plan examines the Village's current historic preservation initiatives and presents a series of strategic objectives framing a scope of work. This scope addresses how historic preservation can become an important and relevant component of Oak Park's future successes.

Historic Preservation Strategies for Oak Park

A consensus vision typically describes any community's desired future. In considering the future of historic preservation in Oak Park, improving how historic preservation works for the entire Village will be integral to successful Plan implementation in the upcoming decade. The vision for historic preservation in Oak Park is really comprised of four strategic themes, or those four issue categories identified during this Plan process. These themes have emerged from the Plan's public input, including specific ideas generated at the January 12, 2010 community workshop. These strategic themes are:

- Education about Historic Preservation
- Economic Development and Available Incentives
- Oak Park's Historic Preservation Structure and Processes
 - Historic Preservation Ordinance and Guidelines
 - Landmark Designations and Surveys
 - Local Planning, Regulations, and Related Processes
- National Preservations Issues
 - Relevancy and Importance
 - Sustainability

Inherent in the consideration of each of the four strategic themes is how Oak Park's historic resources can be continually and creatively used and how historic preservation can become more germane to Village policy and processes through Plan implementation. Each of these strategies is examined in depth below. The Action Plans, organized around these themes and



concluding this Plan, provide concrete steps that can be used by Oak Park's stakeholders to consider these historic preservation strategies in different ways.

The integration of these four strategic themes into a visionary Village approach to its historic preservation program will begin with education on multiple levels. Many of the issues and concerns about historic preservation described by Oak Park's many stakeholders can be either addressed or

mitigated by ongoing education and outreach. Greater knowledge of historic preservation facts and program objectives will assist Village officials in their decision-making processes, particularly when considering development and redevelopment proposals. Given that local processes affect both individual applicants and the Village's overall urban fabric, recognizing how these processes and consequent decisions can enable both the integration of Village-wide historic preservation objectives and better development results will prove key during the next decade.

This same vision will require that Oak Park, through its historic preservation work, begin to formulate effective local solutions to historic preservation issues with national implications. Sustainability may be the most notable issue, but this vision must also include a thorough examination of the relative importance of local resources. From a broader perspective, the Village's historic preservation program, given the international significance of Oak Park's resources, should strive to become a national innovator as it implements these strategies over the next decade.

The implementation of this Plan will require much work. This work will need to be methodical and focused on what is worthy of preservation, how historic preservation can be beneficial to Oak Park's future, and how local processes can support both the local resources and a thriving community. Implementation work will require that relationships be built or re-built based upon Oak Park's traditional community pride in its uniqueness and optimism about its future.

Education about Historic Preservation

The Village, specifically the historic preservation planner and HPC, currently conducts some preservation training sessions, produces preservation materials, and consults with potential and actual applicants subject to HPC review. But one full-time historic preservation staff member and HPC's eleven (11) appointed volunteer commissioners can only do so much. Tapping the significant historic preservation expertise that exists locally, specifically in Oak Park's preservation-related organizations, can help with Plan implementation. These organizations can serve as a key resource for developing new educational and outreach programs, in coordination with the Village, and in educating local constituencies compatible with their organizational missions. This issue was discussed in detail at the January 12, 2010 Community Workshop. All of those workshop suggestions are included in the education-related action plans. A similar strategy, identifying residents, Oak Park property appraisers, local contractors, and other members of the local real estate and business communities, would allow Village staff and HPC to develop a group of external experts to provide advice informally in unique situations or in addressing certain issues and to educate new Oak Park property owners.



During this Plan process, many of Oak Park's key stakeholders expressed uncertainty or confusion about historic preservation processes and about what should be preserved in Oak Park. At the same time, a strong sense of good building stewardship and pride in the local urban fabric exists among the vast proportion of property owners of all types, overlapping these more

fragmented sentiments. Educating property owners about historic preservation will require an ongoing, concerted effort and should build upon this sense of stewardship. This effort will also need to be structured differently for each type of property owner. For other stakeholders, such as Village officials, specific educational programs can be developed and routinely conducted to assist in future decision-making. This need for property owner education was reinforced at the final Community Workshop on March 17, 2010.

National Examples

Other communities throughout the U. S. have developed systematic education programs about historic preservation and targeted them to specific constituencies. In King County, WA, the county's preservation-related organizations have joined together to work in tandem to increase public awareness among their local constituencies about historic preservation and heritage issues and for advocacy purposes. The participating organizations conduct their own mission-specific activities but also assume a certain role or task in educating their local community about historic preservation.

Multiple communities are using electronic and social media for communicating information about preservation and local programs. Redondo Beach, CA, with one of the more active historic preservation programs in the Los Angeles basin, has developed a program to engage local residents. Like Oak Park, Redondo Beach has many multi-generational families with deep roots in the community. Via City website links, citizens can upload images of their homes and write about their unique family histories in the 'Preservation Family Album.'

In addition to working with residents, other local preservation programs and organizations have formed alliances with groups not typically engaged with historic preservation-related work. These alliances form generally around one common issue but initiate a relationship that begins to educate a citizen group not typically engaged in historic preservation work. Two local programs provide interesting examples of working with non-traditional preservation groups are in Hillsborough, NC and Park County, CO. Hillsborough was the site of the original NASCAR raceway, prior to the move to Talladega, GA. Local preservationists and NASCAR enthusiasts worked to save the track and have worked jointly to ensure its continued use as a walking track.

In Park County, CO, the local heritage and preservation community conducts a series of heritage education sessions geared to the hikers, hunters, fly fishermen, and climbers that visit the region. Many participants are referred to as the '14-ers,' given that most activities take place at a 14,000-foot elevation. Many of these sessions are now conducted at a historic site, adjacent to a popular shooting range. These sessions have proved popular among these outdoor enthusiasts—they develop a 'sense of place' for the county's significant sites, and the county's preservationists gain an alliance with a constituency important to the local economy and including local residents. While these two examples may not reflect Oak Park's self-image, seeking out partnerships with groups representing other points of view on one issue or multiple issues can initiate both education and partnership opportunities.



Recommended Strategies

Education about historic preservation, its processes, and its issues should be conducted on two levels—internal within Village government, and external to stakeholders and non-traditional constituencies. These internal and external efforts should be coordinated and targeted by audience type. In addition, electronic media and communications methods can be applied at minimal cost to supplement the direct personal outreach and relationship building. Oak Park’s historic preservation focused organizations will have a critical role to play in ongoing educational efforts. Ultimately, all of these strategies are intended to enhance the Village’s overall historic preservation ethic.

Internal: These broader strategic objectives are intended for implementation by Village staff and officials. All can be readily incorporated into existing internal structures. Recommendations specific to the HPC are noted in the Structures and Processes section of this Plan.

- Develop and conduct formal training about Oak Park’s historic preservation program, processes, and the HPC’s roles and responsibilities for new Village Board members and new members of Village Commissions.
- Identify potential cooperative efforts between HPC and existing Boards and Commissions.
- Increase collaborative work among Village departments engaged with one or more parts of the historic preservation process to enhance or improve internal processes and communication.



External: Much of the educational outreach for Plan implementation will require the assistance of Oak Park’s historic preservation-related organizations. HPC plans to initiate outreach to residents living in Oak Park’s historic districts to identify specific education opportunities. Direct outreach to certain stakeholders, primarily commercial, institutional, and apartment property owners, should be conducted by Village officials. The Village can also conduct supplemental educational work through the effective use of electronic and social media. By educating local owners of all property types, Oak Park’s preservation processes, specifically resource surveys, landmark designation and permit review, will become better understood, factual, and continue opportunities for more education.

- As part of HPC’s planned outreach to residential property owners, identify owners of homes critical to the context of Oak Park’s historic districts, and work to engage them in local educational efforts.
- Initiate a coordinated effort with Oak Park’s historic preservation organizations to identify and develop new educational programs for Oak Park stakeholders, consistent with their missions, to supplement current Village efforts. This objective includes ongoing monitoring of program success.

- Initiate a comprehensive, ongoing outreach program to commercial property owners and apartment building owners and managers to understand their objectives for their properties.
- Begin discussions with Oak Park’s major institutional property owners, specifically Rush Oak Park Hospital, West Suburban Hospital, and Districts 97 and 200, to understand their future plans for their facilities and to address any future planning and preservation issues.
- Work with the local real estate and appraiser community to formulate additional educational programs for new Oak Park property owners.
- Consider the role of open space and other elements of Oak Park’s urban fabric, such as parkways or side lots, in educational efforts with all stakeholders.

Economic Development and Available Initiatives

The relationship between historic preservation, economic development, and the application of effective incentives is often complicated. The most successful communities have developed public-private partnerships, recognizing how these three concepts can jointly contribute to local economic growth. These communities have formulated a consensus vision, either formally or informally, for their future, based upon mutual economic interests and market differentiation. Oak Park’s differing perceptions and certain stakeholder suspicions about the value of historic preservation in considering economic development issues has created both fragmentation and wariness among virtually all stakeholders. Key to Oak Park’s combined historic preservation and economic futures will be joint activities through new and renewed relationships among local stakeholders.



In the short-term, the access to and availability of local economic incentive programs will likely diminish due to the long-term effects of the current economic downturn. In Oak Park, access to Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds for historic preservation projects and available incentives from Oak Park Economic Development Corporation (Oak Park EDC) will likely remain at current levels. Permit fee waivers are no longer available, and reinstatement should be considered when fiscally possible. On the national level, President Obama’s Fiscal-Year 2011 Budget proposal either eliminates or severely curtails the Save America’s Treasures and Preserve America programs at the federal level. (Preservation advocates nationally are working to have these programs reinstated in the federal budget, given their respective, strong job creation histories.) One future opportunity in Illinois may be the proposed state Rehabilitation Tax Credit, making Illinois one of nearly 40 states offering such an incentive. In considering broader Plan economic strategies specific to Oak Park, the availability of additional incentives for historic resources and to support historic preservation programming should be considered as mid to long-term options.

Economic development in Oak Park over the next decade will be necessary to increase the local tax base to maintain the high level of municipal services expected by Oak Park’s citizens and

property owners. New projects and economic development initiatives will include both new development (or redevelopment) and the adaptive re-use of existing buildings. Achieving balance between new developments and their consequent revenues without sacrificing those buildings or properties that would diminish Oak Park's identity, market position, and overall urban fabric will require communication and cooperation among Village officials at all levels. Understanding the local economics of building ownership, the value of re-tenanting, and the impact of incentives, such as tax credits, can provide value to the Village in considering proposed projects. (A Rehabilitation Tax Credit Tool was provided as Appendix 3 to Village staff.) Through increased communication and applying local knowledge, historic preservation will become an important component of Oak Park's economic development discussion. To do that, programs and activities to better accomplish this integration are needed.

There will never be complete agreement among local officials and local constituencies about either historic preservation concerns or HPC decisions on economic development issues. Conversely, not every new project described as 'great for economic development' will prove successful economically or fiscally, good for the community, or both. In such circumstances, marginalizing the role of historic preservation eliminates an entire category of ideas, potential economic alternatives, and local talent and expertise that could be useful in the Village's economic development decision-making over the long-term. To enable their inclusion, preservationists also will need to be perceived as emphasizing what can be done versus what cannot and to provide creative solutions.

National Examples

As cited in the interim report, one of the best examples of economic success is Old Pasadena in Pasadena, CA. Pasadena, like Oak Park, has multiple National Register historic districts (seven) and local districts (three). The City's built environment includes one of the region's largest collections of California bungalows, including multiple higher style versions by the architects, Greene & Greene. The most notable Greene & Green design is the Gamble House. Pasadena's civic architecture also includes some of southern California's best examples from roughly the same period, 1900-1925.

For over twenty years, the City of Pasadena, local preservationists, and district business and property owners have worked to create a downtown area that incorporates the preservation of historic buildings and the construction of newer, quality in-fill buildings that complement the



existing urban fabric. Old Pasadena's business mix includes national, regional and independent retailers, a dining and entertainment cluster, and services and professional practices catering to community needs. This twenty-year partnership between public and private sector interests has made money for businesses, property owners, and the City, while saving historic buildings.

Alexandria, VA also has strong citywide economic development program that effectively applies historic preservation in the city's historic commercial districts. Like Oak Park and Pasadena, Alexandria has multiple historic districts (two large National Register and local districts with five additional National Register districts) and individual landmarks. Alexandria has developed a series of public-private partnerships to address multiple economic development opportunities for development and adaptive re-use. Given its proximity to Washington, DC, commercial development supporting federal government offices and employee needs is an obvious strategy. Most important for Oak Park's consideration is Alexandria's aggressive approach to retaining and recruiting small office users to historic buildings throughout the community. In addition, Alexandria's retail districts, including its historic downtown, include a mix of businesses that appeals to residents, proximate day time populations, and to visitors interested in local history.

A smaller community with established, integrated economic development and historic preservation programs is Cape Girardeau, MO. Located along the Mississippi River proximate to Interstate 55, Cape Girardeau has a population of about 40,000, is a regional commercial center, and is home to Southeast Missouri State University. The community was founded in 1793 as a French Canadian trading post, and significant historic resources remain in the community's core. The City's formal historic preservation programming began in the mid 1980s. Typical economic development activities focus on recruiting and retaining additional area employers. Recruitment is primarily a City and regional Chamber and Economic Development Corporation function. Cape Girardeau's leadership partners have actively used local historic preservation results to promote more traditional economic development objectives in their region. The community's history and the historic downtown's commercial success are used to reinforce market image and position and represent key local amenities in recruiting potential employers.

Another example of historic preservation as an integral element of economic development is ongoing in the revitalization of Cincinnati's 'Over the Rhine' neighborhood. Local business owners, property owners, preservationists, sustainability advocates and the City have teamed to identify potential re-use projects on blocks adjacent to the neighborhood's 100% corner (the intersection with the greatest concentration of retail and other businesses). The buildings are currently undergoing rehabilitation, and the total project is just over \$7 Million. Among the project's funding mechanisms is a \$1.1 Million Rehabilitation Tax Credit.

Cities have also engaged their local preservation communities in certain types of re-use projects



to help reinvigorate commercial blocks. In Ann Arbor, MI, local preservationists participated as a partner, providing expertise, in the partial rehabilitation and re-tenanting of a mid-century modern downtown office building. This building was updated to serve the current needs of ground floor retail tenants and upper floor office tenants. Most important, the building remains fully tenanted.

Recommended Strategies

All of Oak Park's many stakeholders want the Village to continue to attract visitors, new residents, and new investors in local businesses and local real estate. The economic benefit of preserving Oak Park's key landmarks brings thousands of visitors annually. To better integrate historic preservation activities into the Village's future economic development activities, HPC, Village staff, and the local preservation community will need to become an important resource for the Village's economic development effort. The strategies to accomplish this integration include:

- Identify and initiate partnership opportunities, either short or long term, with the local business community and institutions supporting joint economic development and historic preservation objectives.
- Initiate ongoing conversations with the Village's economic development staff and officials to establish a basis for future discussions about economic development activities.

In becoming a resource for Village officials, much of the work will be completed by Village staff and HPC. Communication among staff and Commissions will be crucial to Plan implementation. The work with property owners, described in the Education strategies, will enable staff and HPC to gather useful information about local real estate and to develop historic preservation materials that specifically address local real estate economics. Through partnership development, within and outside of the Village's formal structure, the emphasis should be on establishing a holistic approach to considering economic development. This historic preservation knowledge base will also help Village staff and HPC to anticipate potential re-use projects presenting economic development opportunities.



Oak Park's Historic Preservation Structure and Processes

How Oak Park manages its local preservation regulatory process will be crucial during the next decade. Many of the strategies noted in this Plan are dependent on the need to integrate core preservation activities with other Village functions and to coordinate with external constituencies. At the final Community Workshop on March 17, 2010, the Village's need for an applicant perspective throughout the process for more complex historic preservation projects can improve perceptions about both historic preservation and the Village. To best accomplish both integration and outreach, the Village's Historic Preservation Ordinance, related guidelines, and related local regulations and planning processes will need to operate in tandem.

As was noted in the interim report, some Plan process participants indicated that the current Historic Preservation Ordinance presented challenges in its advisory review process and limited demolition provisions. The current ordinance was reviewed and compared to Illinois' model

historic preservation ordinance, and to the 2009 ordinance approved in Brookline, MA. (Sample ordinances have been provided and comprise Appendix 4.) Other local ordinances are cited, where applicable. While certain jurisdictional differences obviously exist, there are seven areas where alterations to Oak Park's existing ordinance could aid HPC in performing its duties.

1. **Commission Member Qualifications:** Oak Park's ordinance describes the qualifications for commission members by profession, similar to those noted in the state model. Commission member qualifications are changing nationally, primarily to obtain different points of view and to represent different constituencies. Brookline, MA, a Boston suburb with four local historic districts and three National Historic Landmarks, has a seven-member Commission including representatives from each of the four local districts, and one commissioner each from nominations provided by Boston's American Institute of Architects (AIA) chapter, the Greater Boston Real Estate Board, and the Brookline Preservation Commission itself. Pasadena, CA includes one representative from each of its seven National Register historic districts (3 are also local districts), one representative from each of their seven aldermanic districts, and one Mayoral appointee. Newton, MA has similar requirements. The goal in each community is to have Commission members with varied expertise and experience and greater accountability to local stakeholders, particularly in historic districts. Brookline also provides for alternate Commission members.
2. **Advisory Review:** Oak Park's ordinance provides for review of projects within historic districts, eligible or designated landmarks, and any planned development within 250' of such a landmark. This review examines two specific issues: the effect of the zoning decision, and the long-term compatibility of the project and its impact on the relevant historic resources. The criteria used are the Secretary of Interior's Standards. Once completed, HPC presents its evaluation or opinion on the effects to the requisite Board or Commission. Some HPC members have indicated that this scope of review may be too narrow and is reactive. In Brookline, the HPC initially determines whether the subject property is historic applying their criteria for significance. Assuming that is determined and reported, the project is then reviewed. If any project modifications are needed, the HPC works directly with the applicant to suggest modifications conforming to local design guidelines. This is done within the decision timeframes specified in the local Zoning Bylaw. If the applicant and HPC do not agree, the Commission makes a recommendation, including their reasoning and expressing their concerns about the design in support of their recommendation.
3. **Expiration of Certificate of Appropriateness:** The Oak Park ordinance is silent about any expiration date for Certificates of Appropriateness. The state ordinance suggests one year, or the term of a building permit issued locally. The Brookline, MA ordinance provides for an initial one-year issuance period with the option for extension by the Commission for additional one-year terms. The Certificate is also deemed expired if the owner sells the subject property.
4. **Process Efficiencies:** One participant suggestion from the January 12 workshop was that HPC, or HPC's Architectural Review Commission (ARC), require that all applications submitted for their review be complete, including all required documentation, prior to the start of their review processes. Most communities have found that complete and thorough applications typically ensure faster processing and review. In the Brookline, MA ordinance, applications for review at an upcoming meeting must be submitted seven days prior to a Commission meeting, and the applicant's written consent and

acknowledgement is required for any process extension. Most ordinances provide for a completed review of all applications within sixty (60) days. These greater process efficiencies can become a kind of applicant incentive, by reducing their costs with a more efficient process. Another January workshop suggestion was to include the ability to grant variances in any future Oak Park ordinance updates, again to increase efficiency for applicants.

5. Demolitions: Illinois' model ordinance provides general guidance about demolitions. The Oak Park ordinance describes the HPC demolition review process and addresses the demolition of nuisance properties and demolition by neglect. The Brookline ordinance addresses 'Demolition by Misadventure,' addressing issues like fires or natural disasters, and the 'Systematic Removal, Effacement, and Destruction of Exterior Architectural Elements on National Register Properties,' specifying those activities considered systematic. It also applies to National Register eligible properties. Other ordinances include provisions for demolition review and delay mechanisms that encompass preservation review of all local demolitions or reviews of all demolition permits for properties fifty years old or older, or of undetermined age. In Newton, MA and other Boston suburbs, all permits are reviewed, and resources can be 'preferably preserved' via demolition delayed for a specific time period. Formal 'stand still' agreements have been used in New York to deter demolitions in lieu of granting formal landmark status.
6. Architectural Review Guidelines: Oak Park's guidelines date from 1999. While thorough, one action step recommends that these guidelines be reviewed and amended, as needed, to address sustainability and open space, such as side yards and parkways. Also, the relationship of these guidelines to review processes described in the ordinance require clarification.
7. Age: Many communities, including Oak Park, use the National Register criterion that any potential landmark should be at least 50 years old prior to designation. Other communities have reduced this age requirement to 25 years, or in some cases, have eliminated age as a criterion. Chicago is an example. Over the long-term, this may permit staff and HPC to focus on a broader range of local assets.



Oak Park's current landmark designation process resembles that of many other communities. The designation criteria are also similar to those used by other communities. Some Plan process participants noted that the age of the resource appears to be the driving criteria for designation, but this is not evident in the ordinance. Village staff and HPC continue to research potential landmarks and districts located throughout the community. These potential districts are noted in the Action Plans. As a short-term task, HPC and Village staff should consider adding landmark designations to individual property titles. By including landmark information in a title chain, buyers are made aware that they are purchasing a historic property. This could trigger an opportunity to expand the preservation education process to interested Oak Park buyers, new property owners, and area realtors about the Village's historic preservation programs and processes. (Ongoing improvements in processes also represent another reason for education and outreach to these same constituencies.)

Through its ongoing series of historic resource surveys, the Village has significant information about Oak Park's extant properties. The key survey issues are: the need to define each survey-

ranking category, and to clarify the impact of alterations on how some resources are ranked. Confusion within the categories and rankings will affect the relative importance of that particular resource. These clarifications present an important short-term priority--to mitigate any confusion about what the surveys mean to make historic preservation better understood by other Village Boards and Commissions and by those property owners. Future surveys also present an opportunity for additional property owner outreach and education.

The Village of Oak Park has engaged in multiple planning processes within the last decade. In addition, the Zoning ordinance was amended and updated in 2009. Four overlay districts are part of the zoning updates. Each of these four existing overlay districts represent areas where the Village's historic preservation program can ultimately provide expertise in addressing the many aspects of properties and the patterns of development identified as significant in those four areas. This also represents an opportunity for HPC and other Village Commissions to address not only discrete projects but to formulate a methodology for addressing more complicated, future issues.

Other communities nationally and in Illinois have used conservation districts and zoning overlay districts to afford protection to potential historic resources and older neighborhoods. While definitions can vary jurisdictionally, both function as an alternative regulatory framework to formal local landmark or district designation in maintaining the character of older buildings and neighborhoods. Depending upon the point of view, conservation districts have been described as 'preservation-lite.' Conservation districts are often originated by local grass roots or neighborhood organizations and provide less restrictive regulation than a local historic district. Design review is typically less structured and is often limited to demolitions and infill construction.

Zoning overlay districts incorporate local historic preservation review requirements into underlying zoning for a defined geography. The underlying zoning, specifically uses and design regulations, conform to local historic preservation regulations. Local Zoning Commissions and Zoning Boards of Appeal typically conduct the review process, with varying levels of local and Historic Preservation Commission participation. From a preservation perspective, the concern with zoning overlay districts is how local zoning review is conducted and that historic preservation becomes one of many factors to be evaluated in any zoning decision. Instead of a formal zoning overlay, some communities have chosen to have their commissions simply review all demolitions and infill construction within the community. As part of that process, resource age restrictions, such as 50 years, have been eliminated.

In addition to clarifying survey categories and definitions and examining overlay opportunities, the most important short-term task of staff and the HPC should be working in tandem with the Village's Buildings and Property Standards department to adopt the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), the companion code to those sections of the International Building Code (IBC) previously adopted by Oak Park. IEBC addresses code issues specific to historic buildings. IEBC encourages and supports the use and re-use of existing buildings. Its provisions address repairs, alterations, additions, and changes in occupancy construction requirements for existing and historic buildings. IEBC recognizes those life safety issues specific to existing and historic buildings versus those of new construction. Applying IEBC, in tandem with IBC, supports good building stewardship, appropriate local enforcement, and ultimately, economic development.

National Examples

In addition to the process examples noted above, several kinds of examples exist for preservation organizing structure and process improvements:

The Brookline, MA example was described. Rockville, MD, a Washington, DC suburb, also provides a series of plain language technical guides written for potential Certificate of Appropriateness applicants to help guide them through the process and provide guidance to their designers.

Los Angeles, CA has used technology to supplement existing survey data collection for its planning and historic preservation functions. Using devices, such as Smart Phones or electronic tablets with GPS capabilities, could provide ongoing, supplemental, and more current data about individual properties for the Village of Oak Park at low cost.



The most prominent regional examples of conservation districts are located in Indiana; Bloomington, IN is a relevant example, given its strong historic preservation program. Bloomington has two residential conservation districts near their locally designated historic districts. Many Connecticut communities, particularly its New York City suburbs, have applied historic zoning overlay districts in multiple ways. Some communities, such as Greenwich, CT, have used historic overlay zoning for discrete commercial and residential locales, enabling both adaptive re-use and local commission review. Adaptive re-use is encouraged via a façade easement. In the Chicago area, the City of Elgin has established a preservation district-zoning overlay. The Elgin overlay examines uses and includes site and design review. Other communities, such as Rockville, MD, a Washington, DC suburb, do not have zoning overlay districts but require that their local commission review all proposed demolitions. The same commission process is applicable to all demolitions.

Finally, two communities, Orchard Park, NY and Elgin, IL, have added landmark designation to local property titles in their communities. These designations are recorded on the titles with the appropriate county office. In Orchard Park, NY, landmark designation is recorded as ‘in perpetuity.’ As noted, this chain of title information can serve as a starting point for owner education.

Recommended Strategies

These general strategies are intended to improve how historic preservation is experienced in Oak Park. These strategies also have an educational component intended to help property owners and Village stakeholders to understand the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ for the historic preservation process. A Village-wide focus will remain necessary.

- Evaluate the historic preservation ordinance and HPC processes to improve efficiency, applying an applicant perspective.
- Continue past involvement in Village planning-related processes, including the Planned Development process, as appropriate.

- Begin to identify other non-architectural resources throughout the Village that may qualify as landmarks within the next decade.

In addition, HPC and Village staff, given their extensive knowledge, should determine if certain changes to local historic preservation-related regulatory environment could enhance the preservation of Village resources. The adoption of IEBC is a key first step. Changing the age for landmark consideration, applying overlay or conservation districts, or continuing to refine the local preservation process will improve the likelihood that more resources will be protected over the long-term.

National Preservation Issues

Two current, national issues were noted as applicable in the interim report for this Plan. The first is sustainability, and the second is a continuing conversation within the historic preservation community about the relative importance of historic resources with the associated concern about the marginalization of historic preservation at the local level. (A third issue, accessibility, is addressed in the action plans. The Village and Oak Park’s HPC continues to address this issue, applying federal, state, and local requirements. It is also addressed in Section 7-9-19 of Oak Park’s Historic Preservation Ordinance.)

While sustainable building practices and historic preservation oppose wasting energy, materials, and buildings, how this can be addressed in historic buildings without altering their appearance



is the underlying issue. The technologies that support energy improvements often can either obscure or require removal of important features on a historic building. Oak Park’s HPC and Energy and Environmental Advisory Commission have already started to discuss these issues. (Oak Park’s sustainability community was well represented at the January 12, 2010 Community Workshop.) Continuing these conversations and jointly developing programs addressing both preservation and sustainability will assist local property owners and future development projects. Working together to address local regulatory conflicts and any prescriptive regulations and working towards ‘net zero’ will also be part of this ongoing work.

The second national issue, relative importance of historic assets and the related marginalization of historic preservation, will be the subject of debate among preservationists during the next few years. For Oak Park, the Village’s historic context and unique urban fabric are the ultimate constants, reflecting the evolution of the community over time. Like many communities with historic preservation planning functions, the regulatory emphasis has been on preserving great architecture, either buildings or sites. This emphasis will continue to be important, and Village staff and HPC will continue to identify historically and architectural resources throughout the Village.

Considering new types of important resources worthy of preservation will become increasingly important for Oak Park over the next decade. During the Plan process, multiple, non-architectural resources were described by process participants. Sites related to Oak Park's recent social history, archaeological resources, and elements of the Village's urban fabric, such as trees, might become worthy of preservation over the next decade. The issue of resource age may also become a factor in these considerations.

Preserving new kinds of local assets will require regulatory and process changes over the next decade. During the same time frame, new regulatory processes must be developed to reflect these changes in preservation thought. Future preservation actions will likely need to address and clarify the relative importance of Oak Park's local assets and how best to preserve them. Again, Oak Park could become a national leader in addressing the importance and relevancy of its resources.

National Examples

Ongoing national examples of how sustainability and the future of historic preservation are being addressed are primarily programmatic, given that both are emerging. The Villa Park, IL HPC recently assembled (2009) a comprehensive list of information, available on their webpage within the City's website, that provides both background and detail about 'green' and historic preservation geared to help citizens better understand the relationship and potential areas of concern.

In multiple communities, local preservation organizations have sponsored seminars for homeowners, realtors, real estate brokers, condo associations, and multi-family property management firms to discuss 'green' buildings, energy efficiency, and historic preservation. One such session on New York City's upper West side, was sponsored by the neighborhood preservation organization, Landmarks West. This seminar included a session on one of the hottest topics, historic and replacement windows. Real estate professionals attending the session also received continuing education credit hours toward New York State's real estate licensing requirements. In Salt Lake City, the Historic Landmarks Commission, local preservation contractors, and the University of Utah architecture and historic preservation program have conducted joint presentations addressing 'green' and preservation topics at regional sustainability conferences.



Recommended Strategies

From a strategic perspective, the underlying recommendation is to monitor and adapt to the changes and emerging technologies associated with sustainability and energy efficiency. This should continue to be a joint effort between Village staff and the relevant Boards and Commissions. The same is applicable to the evolving ideas in historic preservation thought and practice. Village staff and HPC will have the primary responsibility in evaluating these preservation-related changes and applying them to Oak Park's situation and historic places.

Some of this work is related to significance issues noted in the Structures and Processes section. Therefore, the two strategic objectives, based upon national issues, are:

- Continue and expand the joint efforts by Village officials to pro-actively and comprehensively address historic preservation and sustainability issues. This could include the development of energy efficiency guidelines for historic buildings for use by both commissions.
- Monitor emerging national preservation issues and their Village-wide implications.

Summary of Plan Recommendations

“Oak Parkers recognize the importance of their priceless heritage, and they appreciate that the preservation of these structures greatly maintains the quality of life.”

-Oak Park’s 1990 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 2, page 22

The four integrated, strategic themes that comprise the vision for Oak Park’s future each require a new set of partnerships. The strategies necessary to address each theme are really based upon continuing outreach and education to all local constituencies. This education effort recognizes that more knowledgeable stakeholders will ultimately make the Village’s historic preservation work easier over time. The impact of this ongoing education through outreach to key stakeholders cannot be underestimated. It is important to the Village’s economic future, it affects how historic preservation actually works and is perceived locally, and it affects how the Village will address emerging historic preservation issues, such as sustainability.

The Plan’s recommended strategies are as follows and are divided by strategic aspect:

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: EDUCATION ABOUT HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Develop and conduct formal training about Oak Park’s historic preservation program, processes and the HPC’s roles and responsibilities for new Village Board member and new members of Oak Park’s Boards and Commissions.
- Identify potential cooperative efforts between HPC and existing Boards and Commissions.
- Identify potential cooperative efforts between Village historic preservation officials and other Oak Park taxing bodies.
- Increase collaborative work among Village departments engaged with one or more parts of the historic preservation process to enhance or improve internal processes and communication.
- Initiate a coordinated effort by Oak Park’s historic preservation organization to identify and develop new education programs for Oak Park stakeholders, consistent with their missions, to supplement current Village efforts and to monitor to success.
- Initiate a comprehensive ongoing education program for residential property owners.
- Initiate a comprehensive ongoing education and outreach program to commercial and apartment property owners to understand their objectives for their properties.
- Initiate a comprehensive ongoing outreach program for institutional property owners (such as private schools, hospitals, churches, and non-profits) to understand their

objectives for their properties.

- Work with the local real estate community to formulate additional educational programs for new Oak Park property owners.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND AVAILABLE INCENTIVES

- Identify and initiate partnership opportunities with the local business community and institutions supporting joint economic development and historic preservation objectives.
- Initiate ongoing conversations to establish a basis for future discussions about economic development activities.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: OAK PARK'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

- Evaluate the historic preservation ordinance and HPC processes to improve efficiency, applying an applicant perspective.
- Continue ongoing involvement in Village planning-related and zoning processes, including any Planned Development processes, as appropriate.
- Begin to identify other non-architectural resources throughout the Village that may qualify for preservation or as landmarks during the next decade.
- Continue to identify potential landmarks and historic districts throughout the Village during the next decade.
- Continue and expand the joint efforts by Village officials to pro-actively and comprehensively address historic preservation and sustainability issues.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: NATIONAL PRESERVATION ISSUES

- Continue and expand the joint efforts by Village officials to pro-actively and comprehensively address historic preservation and sustainability issues.
- Monitor emerging national preservation issues and their Village-wide implications.



Conclusion

Education and outreach about historic preservation are critical to future successes in Plan implementation. This Plan's education and outreach strategies will begin a dialog about historic preservation between all types of property owners and HPC and Village staff. Education and outreach can make both the processes and the rationale for preservation regulation more relevant to owners. Strategically, by continuing conversations with all types of property owners, historic preservation becomes integrated as one of many aspects of property ownership in the Village. Sustained communication with local property owners can foster support for historic preservation programs and ultimately mitigate uncertainties and contention. These kinds of relationships will also naturally expand the audience for preservation interests and activities. By understanding property owner goals, HPC and historic preservation staff will become a resource

for the Village, providing important background for economic development and other issues. By jointly developing educational programs, Oak Park's preservation-related organizations gain exposure to different local audiences and become partners with HPC and Village staff in sharing Oak Park's important history. Increased outreach to the Village's official structure can change the perception of historic preservation from an impediment to a tool.

Significant outreach and education is recommended, because each of these stakeholder strategies fit together as one—educating as many citizens and investors as possible about historic preservation in Oak Park. Ultimately, the Plan's education and outreach recommendations also recognize that each stakeholder group has a point of view. Property owners have vastly different objectives for their properties. Residents want strong neighborhoods. Merchants want to be profitable. Listening, identifying, and then, addressing common objectives in formal or informal partnerships will result in implementation. Finally, ongoing education and outreach will continue to enhance and reinforce the Village's long-established historic preservation ethic.

As an established, inner ring suburb, Oak Park will continue to face multiple economic challenges. History will also remain an important part of the local economy. By building relationships and initiating partnerships within the business community, historic preservation can continue to enable good building stewardship and develop an economic model for success in Oak Park. Ultimately, how historic preservation can make buildings work for businesses that suit the local market will foster profitable, adaptive re-use projects.

Historic preservation and economic development work in tandem in communities throughout the nation. They are not mutually exclusive ideas. Many of these same communities have markets or characteristics similar to Oak Park. Much of Oak Park's current market position and national image is based upon its significant heritage. Oak Parkers often refers to the Village as being 'unique.' It may be, but the Village does not exist in an economic vacuum. The kinds of integrated, pragmatic, and incremental economic development actions that have been successful elsewhere can work in Oak Park.



Consequently, historic preservation needs to become an important component of Village-wide discussions about economic development—both plans and projects—over the next decade. HPC and Oak Park's larger preservation community have significant and useful expertise that would be very valuable in both discussions and decision-making. To enable greater involvement, the preservation community must become more engaged with the Village's business community—with both businesses and investors. The simple fact is that Oak Park will remain a high operating cost market for commercial entities. Certain issues, such as commercial property tax rates, have a dramatic impact upon how local property owners and developers view real estate investments in Oak Park. Understanding the ongoing impact of these real market factors will become increasingly important over the next decade. Consequently, the kind of education and outreach described above is necessary to establish that foundation for greater involvement.

For the most part, Oak Park's Historic Preservation Structure and Processes are working. Some fine-tuning is required. The key first step is working to adopt IEBC. The application of these code provisions should mitigate any confusion specific to historic structures. As it considers additional landmarks and historic districts, HPC must begin to identify other types of significant resources and places that may be worth of preservation. Part of this process should include clarifying certain existing survey categories. HPC should also begin to examine how to make their project application and approval process friendlier to users. Over the long-term, other methods or processes to protect local places, such as historic zoning overlays, should be studied to determine how they could work in Oak Park. Understanding their regulatory requirements and processes, how they would affect property owners, and assessing the level of resulting protection will be critical considerations.

Throughout this Plan's public process, there has been much discussion about the role of energy efficiency, or sustainability, and the Village's many historic buildings. This issue is part of an ongoing conversation in communities throughout the country. In Oak Park, discussions between HPC and the Energy and Environment Advisory Commission (EEC) should increase in frequency. Also, HPC and EEC should develop a set of joint guidelines to address potential conflicts in applying energy efficient technologies to Oak Park's historic structures. Identifying a local project incorporating these potential conflicts and addressing them jointly could provide a basis for both guidelines and processes. Ongoing joint examination of emerging technologies and their implications for Oak Park's built environment by HPC and EEC can ensure that the Village achieves its energy efficiency objectives.

Historic preservation in the Village, whether wrongly or rightly, has sometimes been characterized as a big hassle, an impediment to progress, or sometimes even considered unnecessary. The reality is that Village's ongoing quality of life, its history, and its urban fabric are inextricably intertwined. They continue to make Oak Park an interesting place to live and to conduct business.

Oak Park's significant local resources, expertise and capacity, as described earlier, present the opportunity to grow its historic preservation program into one of the nation's best. This will require looking beyond Oak Park for those ideas or programs that can translate into success for the Village. Local expertise and capacity are also critical to the sustained implementation of this Plan. Implementation requires much work, in addition to the ability to focus on the future.



Oak Park's overriding opportunity, as it considers the future role of historic preservation, may be to approach historic preservation by moving beyond the past in a positive, new way and by applying new methods and programs. The Village's preservation advocates, Village officials, and local property owners and investors need to communicate more and to build new relationships that establish trust, even in contentious situations. These relationships will serve to educate each local stakeholder group about historic preservation, its processes, why it works, and why it will continue to make Oak Park unique and vital over the next decade.

Implementation Priorities and Action Plans

The following Action Plans are organized by each of the four strategic themes described in the Plan text. The Action Plans provide an overall framework for each set of tasks and timeframes. Each task is assigned a timeframe for completion, and tasks are listed in an incremental order.

Each plan task is noted as short, mid or long-term for implementation purposes, or ST, MT, LT, or Ongoing. As this Plan will guide Village efforts for the next decade, these timeframes are based upon a ten-year program of activities. This also assumes that Village staff and HPC will need some flexibility to respond to local circumstances. The general implementation timeframes are:

- ST: Years 1-4
- MT: Years 5-7
- LT: Years 8-10
- Ongoing: Work on these tasks is either ongoing and should continue, or would represent an earlier Plan task that should continue, once started.

To enable HPC and Village staff to initiate implementation, certain tasks are identified as high priority, or HP. Conceptually, these activities should be completed within Years 1 and 2 of Plan implementation. These tasks represent Implementation Priorities. These activities summarized below include the initial, high priority actions to be taken by Village staff and HPC. These actions also establish the groundwork for the implementation of later Plan action steps.

- Initiate a coordinated historic preservation education effort with Oak Park’s historic preservation organizations. Meet jointly to assess areas of expertise, types of programming, communication strategies, and constituencies, based upon staff and HPC’s experiences and Plan descriptions. Develop an initial one-year schedule of educational outreach, what should be done when, and what entity is responsible.
- Develop a training program about Oak Park’s historic preservation program for new and existing members of Oak Park’s Boards and Commissions. Start with those Commissions that interface regularly with HPC, and incorporate their comments and suggestions. Once refined, this session can be presented to the Village Board, incorporating their comments and questions. Use and adapt this session for all new members of the Commissions and Village Board.
- Work with Building and Property Standards staff, Village officials, and the relevant Commissions to adopt IEBC and ensure that existing regulations support the code when adopted.
- Begin formal conversations with Downtown Oak Park, the Village-wide Business Council, and the Village’s Business Services staff to establish better dialogue. (Oak Park EDC, given their ongoing relationship with the Village, should be included.) As part of these initial conversations, identify any ‘quick fixes’ to Village processes that can be readily implemented, and identify potential joint projects, such as a historic preservation-specific checklist, or reference guide, for use by restaurants and businesses occupying vintage space.
- Engage the most obvious historic preservation constituents first and include them in educational programming and outreach. HPC already plans outreach to residential

property owners. This approach can and should be used to engage the owners and/or managers of current landmark commercial and institutional properties throughout the Village. Other owners familiar to HPC can be added to this beginning. Doing this initial work accomplishes two things—allows staff to obtain the necessary data to support the larger outreach effort, and educates HPC about landmark benefits from the owner perspective. This establishes a basis for the more formal outreach to commercial owners, institutions, and apartment building owners.

- Meet jointly with EEC and establish a working group to formulate initial guidelines to support both historic preservation and sustainability objectives. This should be done with the understanding that these guidelines will necessarily evolve.

Education about Historic Preservation

Recommended Strategy: Develop and conduct formal training about Oak Park’s historic preservation program, processes, and the HPC’s roles and responsibilities for new Village Board members and new members of Oak Park’s Boards and Commissions.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Conduct formal training sessions about historic preservation for new Village Board members and new Board and Commission members before they assume their public role. (Organize, as necessary, to conform to Open Meetings laws.) Such sessions should incorporate at least one case study describing one past preservation issue requiring their deliberation.	HP
Develop a related training program for current Village Board members and Board and Commission members to reinforce prior education efforts. (Organize, as necessary, to conform to Open Meetings laws.)	HP
Conduct follow-up after each session to continuously improve training.	As occurs
Ensure that new preservation programs and information materials developed in Plan implementation are circulated to the Village Board and Board and Commission members. Tailor this information to their needs, as necessary.	As occurs
Consider scheduling joint Board and Commission sessions to focus on mutual education.	ST
Develop a ‘primer’ defining historic preservation terminology in lay terms for use by Village staff and Boards and Commissions.	ST
Develop general education materials and outreach options to explain historic preservation, its local and national importance, and process specifics.	Ongoing
Use monthly and annual reports to the Village Board as ongoing opportunities to continue to inform Village officials.	Ongoing
Encourage Village Board members to attend one HPC meeting annually.	ST

Education about Historic Preservation

Recommended Strategy: Identify potential cooperative efforts between HPC and existing Boards and Commissions.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Meet with existing Boards and Commissions regarding joint review processes and how to best to communicate.	HP
Identify joint areas of interest and concern, particularly for HPC and the Energy & Environmental Advisory Commission, the Plan Commission, Building Code Advisory Council, and Community Design Committee.	ST
Develop a plan to address those joint areas of interest or concern and begin cooperative work.	MT

Education about Historic Preservation

Recommended Strategy: Identify potential cooperative efforts between Village Historic Preservation officials and other Oak Park taxing bodies.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Identify contacts at those taxing districts providing an opportunity for preservation education.	ST
Meet with administrators at each taxing district to discuss joint areas of interest and programmatic options.	ST
Develop and define potential programming, roles and responsibilities, and potential funding sources.	MT
Develop a timetable to implement programming and refine as necessary.	MT
Develop a partnership with Oak Park’s school districts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify current programs in tandem with school officials. • Identify new programs to develop student interest in Village history and its urban fabric and sustainability. • Develop and monitor new and existing programs. 	MT
Continue the existing relationship with the Park District, and apply as a model as appropriate.	Ongoing

Education about Historic Preservation

Recommended Strategy: Increase collaborative work among Village departments engaged with one or more parts of the historic preservation process to enhance or improve internal processes and communication.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Work with the Village’s new Business Services function to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide informal historic preservation consultations; • Provide current historic preservation information to Business applicants; • Meet new business and commercial property owners in the Village. 	ST
Identify new or additional opportunities to cooperate with the Building Department in improving internal processes specific to historic buildings and in discussing issue areas, such as inspector liability.	ST
Identify new communication opportunities for historic preservation information among existing Village departments.	ST
Identify all points of contact for historic preservation processes or programs with any other Village departments, and determine how to use those points of contact for applicant or property owners’ education purposes.	ST
Create a ‘one-stop team, ‘ including all relevant departments or a liaison, to facilitate processing of more complex historic preservation projects.	MT
Create comprehensive materials and/or documentation to support the ‘one stop’ process noted above.	MT
Identify other Village departments, such as Housing, Public Works/Engineering, and Housing for new collaborations.	MT

Education about Historic Preservation

Recommended Strategy: Initiate a coordinated effort by Oak Park’s historic preservation organizations to identify and develop new education programs for Oak Park stakeholders, consistent with their missions, to supplement current Village efforts.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Develop an alliance of Oak Park’s local preservation organizations (Oak Park Historic Preservation Education Alliance) with two objectives: to assist Village staff and HPC in their historic preservation work and to educate the community about historic preservation and its benefits.	HP
Identify each organization’s interest and expertise for education purposes, coordinate with Village public education efforts, and any potential partnerships among local organizations to conduct or enhance educational programming.	ST
Identify existing and non-traditional constituencies for educational outreach.	ST
Consider the role of new electronic and social media and communication methods in conducting all educational efforts.	ST
Develop general education materials and outreach options to explain historic preservation, its local and national importance, and process specifics.	ST
Develop targeted educational programming focused on the needs of individual local constituencies, such as new historic homeowners, or focused on the ‘user’ perspective.	ST
Ensure that this joint effort assists the Village by serving as a ‘clearing house’ for information and education about historic preservation.	MT
Develop specific Historic Preservation Month programming focused on local resources, sustainability, and user-friendly communication methods.	Ongoing
Consider annual historic preservation events that bring multiple stakeholder groups together, such as photo exhibits.	Ongoing
Conduct outreach to other Oak Park stakeholders to identify other groups that could assist with preservation education and supplement HPC efforts.	MT

Organize a historic preservation speaker's bureau structured to speak to individual Oak Park constituencies.	MT
Identify and promote a pilot project incorporating sustainability and historic preservation.	ST
Identify addresses from each organization's memberships, mailing and electronic lists (Oak Park addresses) to communicate about preservation education efforts and increase awareness.	MT
Consider public meetings as part of the larger education strategy.	Annually
Monitor and meet to discuss programming successes, issues, refinements, and new education opportunities.	Annually, at least

Education about Historic Preservation

Recommended Strategy: Initiate a comprehensive ongoing education program for residential property owners.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Apply the action steps noted in the coordinated effort with Oak Park’s historic preservation organizations.	ST
Develop and revise, when appropriate, new and existing preservation communication materials to reflect an applicant perspective.	ST
Continue HPC outreach to existing owners of landmark residential properties to understand their needs as stakeholders, and to identify potential preservation supporters to conduct outreach to other homeowners.	ST
Develop selected outreach to Oak Park residents in potential or future historic districts. Such activities could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend block club meetings. • Provide information about ‘how and what to know about your house.’ • Invite exist landmark homeowners to participate in the process. • Develop a local program, such as a Family Album, to engage long-time Oak Park residents. 	MT
Conduct follow-up with residential applicants to identify ways of improving the historic preservation process and/or regulations.	Ongoing
Continue to develop and improve the local contact list and newsletter on preservation issues.	Ongoing
Convene small groups of new residential owners, based upon property transfer data for important properties, to provide specialized education about historic preservation processes.	MT
Add information to real estate titles for all Oak Park landmarks to ensure that new homeowners are aware of landmark status.	LT

Education about Historic Preservation

Recommended Strategy: Initiate a comprehensive ongoing education and outreach program to commercial and apartment property owners to understand their objectives for their properties.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Use existing Village data to identify owners throughout the Village.	HP
Have data exported into an easy to manage format, such as a spreadsheets.	HP
Prioritize the owners’ list by Village location, by current owner relationship with the Village and/or HPC, survey ranking, and numbers of properties owned.	ST
Determine the list priorities for contact.	ST
After establishing priorities, identify those owners to visit.	ST
Prepare a schedule for visits to unknown or new owners.	ST
Discuss owner objectives for their properties, areas of concern, potential solutions, and provide information or updates about historic preservation activities.	ST, MT
For familiar owners, contact each by phone to identify current property objectives.	Ongoing
Contact new owners for outreach purposes noted above, as information is obtained about ownership changes.	Ongoing

Education about Historic Preservation

Recommended Strategy: Initiate a comprehensive ongoing outreach program for institutional property owners (such as private schools, hospitals, churches, and non-profits) to understand their objectives for their properties.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Use existing Village data to identify institutional owners throughout the Village.	ST
Contact institutions to understand their plans for their properties, areas of concern, potential solutions, and provide information or updates about historic preservation activities.	ST
Identify institutions with plans to expand, move, or disband, and assess impact on the Village and existing landmarks, and work to mitigate any future impact.	MT
Maintain annual contact with each institution.	Ongoing

Education about Historic Preservation

Recommended Strategy: Work with the local real estate community to formulate additional educational programs for new Oak Park property owners.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Identify key local brokers and appraisers in conversations with owners to include in real estate community outreach.	MT
Initiate an expanded program for local realtors to educate prospective buyers and owners about property ownership in local and National Register districts.	MT
Develop and add a web-based tool to the Historic Preservation webpage (with links other sites) for realtor/buyer follow-up review, and work with real estate community, such as the Board of realtors, to establish links from their websites to the Historic Preservation webpage.	MT
Develop education and outreach programming specific to the commercial broker and property management firms serving Oak Park owners.	MT
In cooperation with the local financial community, develop education and outreach programming specific to local appraisers serving Oak Park.	LT
Maintain ongoing communication with the real estate community, particularly as new programs develop.	LT

Economic Development and Available Incentives

Recommended Strategy: Identify and initiate partnership opportunities, either short or long-term, with the local business community and institutions supporting joint economic development and historic preservation objectives.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Initiate new conversations with all of Oak Park’s commercial district organizations and the Oak Park Business Council (BC) to identify possible long-term issues and projects for joint collaboration geared to supporting Village economic success.	HP
Consider developing a historic preservation checklist for use in commercial rehabilitations and for use by Oak Park EDC and the Village’s Business Services function.	HP
Continue and enhance existing programming with Oak Park Development Corporation (Oak Park EDC).	ST
Develop additional visual tools, such as renderings, supporting adaptive re-use by commercial property owners. (Oak Park EDC has certain existing renderings.)	ST
Identify partnership opportunities with local businesses and institutions that support joint preservation and economic development objectives. (Dominican University/Hemingway partnership was cited as an example.)	MT
Develop useful reference tools for Village use that examines the cost structure and economics associated with and encouraging the adaptive re-use or sympathetic improvements for re-tenanting in Oak Park buildings.	MT
Work with business and building owners to ensure that new storefronts are sympathetic. (Currently part of Oak Park EDC processes and could be an education opportunity for Village Business Services.)	Ongoing
Monitor and publicize potential new incentive programs, such as state rehab tax credit.	Ongoing
Identify potential funding sources and future new incentive programs (local) to support historic preservation.	MT/LT

Economic Development and Available Incentives

Recommended Strategy: Initiate ongoing conversations to establish a basis for future discussions about economic development activities.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Initiate additional conversations with Village Economic Development staff and officials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify the types of information that could be helpful for considering new development and redevelopment projects. • To establish a basis for consensus in considering broader economic development issues and individual projects. • To identify activities or programs that enable historic preservation and sustainability into economic development processes and projects. 	ST
Identify specific ways to improve communications among the economic development stakeholders.	ST
Identify future potential projects, based upon the owner relationships and the inclusion of multiple Oak Park partners, that encourage adaptive re-use of commercial buildings.	MT/LT
Use the tools developed, partnership information, and knowledge obtained from education and outreach to become an important resource for Village officials.	LT

Oak Park's Historic Preservation Structure and Processes

Recommended Strategy: Evaluate the historic preservation ordinance and HPC processes to improve efficiency, applying an applicant perspective.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Work in tandem with the relevant Village departments to adopt the International Existing Building Code segment of the International Building Code.	HP
Develop a two-year plan to indicate landmark status on real estate titles for individual local landmarks or significant and contributing structures located in local historic districts.	ST
Consider organizing an ad hoc contractor advisory group to assist the HPC and Staff, as needed, to address unique issues specific to construction on historic properties.	ST
Examine the Historic Preservation Ordinance and its review processes to identify future process efficiencies. (Use information from randomly past applicants.)	ST
In any review of Ordinance provisions, also consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Member Qualifications • Advisory Review • Certificates of Appropriateness Review • Demolition Review, such as review of resources by age • Architectural Review Guidelines • Tools used in other locales, such as 'Grandfathering' 	ST
Require completed applications in advance of any review by HPC, or its Architectural Review Committee (ARC).	ST
Consider the Village's overall urban fabric, design, and historic fabric in the Advisory Review process.	ST
Refine the enforcement provisions of the Ordinance to insure clarity and prevent inconsistencies.	ST, MT
Develop a list of historic preservation 'can dos' for potential applicants. (This should also be considered an educational task.)	ST

Develop specific pro-active tools for each type of applicant (residential, commercial) to help them with the preservation review process.	LT
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Oak Park’s Historic Preservation Structure and Processes

Recommended Strategy: Continue ongoing involvement in Village planning-related processes, included any Planned Development processes, as appropriate.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Continue to integrate the Village’s preservation structure into ongoing planning and zoning efforts.	Ongoing
Use the information gathered as part of the education and outreach efforts to aid Village planning-related and zoning processes.	Ongoing

Oak Park’s Historic Preservation Structure and Processes

Recommended Strategy: Begin to identify other non-architectural resources throughout the Village that may qualify as landmarks during the next decade.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Clarify survey categories per the issues identified in this report.	ST
Identify resources significant to Oak Park’s history since 1950, identify what makes them important, and identify the appropriate treatments for their preservation.	MT
Also, identify other potential significant Oak Park resources, such as archaeological resources, open space (such as side yards), and physical resources (such as sidewalks or signage), and identify appropriate treatments for such resources.	LT

Oak Park’s Historic Preservation Structure and Processes

Recommended Strategy: Continue to identify potential landmarks and historic districts throughout the Village during the next decade.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Continue to conduct research on potential landmarks and historic districts, including such potential districts as the Revival Styles District north of Division Street, the Kenilworth Boulevard Addition, the Hulbert Subdivision south of Madison, the Harrison Street Arts District, and a Bungalow Thematic District.	ST
Work to align boundaries of National Register and local historic districts, for example the <i>Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture</i> districts.	MT
Conduct outreach, as described, with Oak Park’s commercial property owners to identify owners interested in designating their properties and obtaining incentives.	MT
Incorporate an educational component for owners of each type of property in advance of and during future surveys.	MT
Consider specific education and recognition programs for owners in thematic historic districts.	MT
Assess the potential efficacy of other tools for the protection of historic resources in Oak Park.	MT

National Preservation Issues

Recommended Strategy: Continue and expand the joint efforts by Village officials to pro-actively and comprehensively address historic preservation and sustainability issues.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Continue to work with environmental advocates to identify potential issues and formulate processes and programs to work with these applicants under the Historic Preservation Ordinance.	Ongoing, HP
Organize an Energy & Environmental Advisory Commission and HPC joint working group.	HP
Develop sustainable best practices (i.e. solar panels, windows, retrofits for non-visible features, etc.) to apply to historic buildings, including landmarks, balancing character and flexibility.	HP
Develop an educational component about historic windows, incorporating energy efficiency and life cycle assessment.	ST
Formulate a joint outreach program to local contractors to address sustainability and energy efficiency and historic preservation issues to obtain their feedback.	MT
Work in tandem with Park District staff to provide information about historic preservation and ‘green’ technologies. (This represents also another education opportunity.)	Ongoing

National Preservation Issues

Recommended Strategy: Monitor emerging national preservation issues and their Village-wide implications.	
ACTION	TIMEFRAME (ST, MT, LT)
Monitor ongoing and emerging preservation issues for their application to the Village.	Ongoing
Address or develop solutions or programs to ensure that Oak Park's historic preservation program becomes increasingly innovative.	Ongoing

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Appendices

Appendix 1: State of Historic Preservation in Oak Park Report (Interim Report)

The list of Oak Park Landmarks in Appendix 2 was obtained from Village staff. The most current list is available from Village Historic Preservation staff. This information noted for each of the remaining Appendices has been provided to the Village's historic preservation staff and are available for review.

Appendix 2: Oak Park Landmarks List

Appendix 3: 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit Tools

Appendix 4: Sample Historic Preservation Ordinances

Appendix 5: Plan Documentation

Appendix 1: State of Historic Preservation in Oak Park (Interim Report)

The following excludes four sections from the original interim report that have been incorporated into the final report: Executive Summary, Introduction, Plan Process, and Historic Resources. The Plan Process section was updated to reflect all project activities completed.

Oak Park has a long history of historic preservation action. From early work to preserve Frank Lloyd Wright's Home and Studio to more recent historic resource survey efforts, the Village has developed a comprehensive historic preservation program. This program includes dedicated Village preservation planning staff and HPC members, a local Historic Preservation ordinance, thorough historic resource survey data and research, and certain local incentives. The Village was named a Certified Local Government by IHPA in 1994.

Paul Sprague and Wilbert Hasbrouck conducted Oak Park's original survey of its architectural resources in 1970. Since this 1970 survey, multiple surveys of the Village's built resources have been conducted, typically as part of ongoing HPC work or Village planning efforts. These surveys are listed in the Local Planning, Regulations, and Related Processes section of this report. The Village's first Historic Preservation ordinance dates from 1972, with the creation of the Oak Park Historic District. This district became the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture district. The ordinance was most recently revised in 1999 and 2004.

Oak Park currently has three local historic districts, encompassing an estimated 2,900 contributing properties, and 37 locally designated landmarks. (A complete list of current Oak Park landmarks is provided in Appendix 2.) In addition, all three districts are either wholly or partially included in National Register districts. These three local districts are:

- **Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture:** This district includes the most important collection of residences designed by Wright and his fellow architects known as the Prairie School. The district also includes other important examples of 19th and 20th century residential architecture. The original district was created by the Village in 1972 and listed on the National Register in 1973. The Frank Lloyd Wright local historic district is part of a somewhat larger National Register historic district. The boundaries of the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture National Register historic district were expanded in May 2009.
- **Ridgeland-Oak Park:** The Ridgeland-Oak Park historic district was listed on the National Register in 1983 and was designated a local historic district in 1994. The Ridgeland-Oak Park local and National Register districts have contiguous boundaries. The District includes residential, civic, commercial, and religious buildings of significance. Examples of all major residential architectural styles and types from the mid-19th century through the mid-20th century are evident throughout the district. Most of the district's commercial structures are concentrated on or near Lake Street and were built between 1890 and the advent of the Great Depression in 1929.
- **Gunderson:** The Gunderson district, located in south Oak Park, consists of two nearby subdivisions developed by S. T. Gunderson and Sons in the first two decades of the 20th century. The subdivisions were developed initially to encourage middle class home ownership and include single-family homes and two-flats. The Gunderson local district

was designated in 2001 and was listed in the National Register in 2002. The Gunderson local district is smaller than its National Register historic district.

Oak Park's association with Prairie School architecture and, to a lesser extent, with Ernest Hemingway continues to sustain an active cultural tourism market. As documented in the 2008 Heritage Tourism Assessment conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Oak Park's four primary sites attract an estimated 110,000 visitors annually, of which approximately 78% are day visitors. This study identified the integration of commerce and heritage tourism as a key objective in increasing tourism spending in the Village.

In addition to obvious tourism opportunities, the Village can more strategically capitalize on its heritage and resources in differentiating itself to potential residents and investors. Oak Park's more recent stories need to be told and integrated into its well-known past. The Village will continue to have multiple opportunities to incorporate historic preservation thought and actions as it considers the major issues facing the community. These opportunities include economic development and emerging 'green' technologies, and both categories of issues are inextricably linked to historic preservation in Oak Park.



In considering the 'state' of historic preservation in Oak Park, current preservation processes and preservation-related documentation, including survey data, were reviewed. Owners representing all of Oak Park's properties provided multiple perspectives on the future role of historic preservation throughout the Village, as did most representatives of Oak Park's history and heritage organizations. In addition, preliminary research on best practices in other local historic preservation programs throughout the U. S. has been conducted. Also, Oak Park's property owners

contributed financial assumptions to provide greater understanding of building economics and the applicability of available incentives. This initial research was intended to begin framing initial strategies for consideration by Village staff, the Plan Steering Committee, and the larger Oak Park community during the remaining phases of this Plan process.

Issues and Opportunities

Here is a sampling of quotes from Plan project interviews, focus groups, and the first community workshop conducted during the initial Plan phase:

"The entire Village should be a historic district..."

"Tell them to leave us alone..."

"We need greater coordination within the local preservation community..."

"Historic preservation is very confusing..."

"How do we know what's important, what to preserve..."

"In Oak Park, historic preservation generally takes the side of the vocal non-owner who offers suggestions that are then imposed upon the owner..."

“The focus has been residential, what about commercial? Oak Park has some truly significant commercial and apartment buildings...”

“How can preservation and ‘green’ work together...?”

“The Village has limited resources. It has to continue to seek new development or its financial future is bleak...”

“The preservation approval process is convoluted...”

“We need quality in the new and in the old that reinforces Oak Park’s distinctive urban fabric...”

“The incentives promoted by the Village don’t work for our buildings...”

Current community perceptions about historic preservation in Oak Park are fragmented. Mistrust exists between downtown property owners and local preservationists. Some commercial and apartment building owners in other areas of the Village perceive conceptual value in historic preservation. However, these same owners sense that historic preservation processes are cumbersome and could inhibit their ability to maintain and update their buildings and to lease their space. Other commercial property owners are generally unaware of preservation issues. Owners of historic homes believe that the historic preservation process has improved in recent years and that Village staff and the HPC have been very helpful in their suggestions. Developers believe that HPC and other Oak Park official bodies do not follow their own codified procedures, resulting in expensive and exhaustive public processes. Village officials are concerned about the long-term interests of the entire community, particularly regarding economic development issues. These same officials want to understand what buildings are truly important and must be preserved. Current and past members of the HPC feel that existing regulations do not support good historic preservation efforts. These members feel that the ordinance needs greater clarity in describing the review processes and more ‘teeth.’

While these stakeholder perspectives appear divergent, there are many more similarities than differences, after hearing these points of view in their totality. These many similarities can become the ‘common ground’ for Village wide historic preservation strategies. As examples, some commercial owners are not necessarily opposed to having properties designated as landmarks. Their concern is uncertainty about the implications for building improvement costs and on long-term property values. Local preservationists want to maintain and sustain Oak Park’s historic resources because those resources make Oak Park a desirable community for residents, visitors, and investors. They believe that many property owners do not understand the benefits of preservation, and that they, as preservationists, have not communicated a strong enough economic rationale to preserve. Village officials are concerned about future Village revenues and what that means for Oak Park’s taxpayers—both residential and commercial property owners—over the long-term. Helping these officials understand how historic preservation could be part of the Village’s overall economic development effort and how adaptive re-use of individual properties could help to generate much needed sales tax and real estate tax revenue could be key.

Fundamentally, Oak Park’s stakeholders want to be told why historic preservation is important. They know that the history of the community is important. Many also believe that there is a real need to have a constructive community conversation about the role of historic preservation and what that role should be in Oak Park’s future. Consequently, answers to the two questions posed earlier--What does historic preservation mean to Oak Park? How can historic preservation help to shape Oak Park’s future during the next decade? --will help address the many issues and opportunities identified to date. It will also serve to begin what can be an ongoing dialogue

among all stakeholders that focuses on historic preservation initiatives to be implemented in the upcoming decade.

The issues and opportunities generated in this first Plan phase logically fall into the following categories and will be addressed by category. The National Thought section includes recent thinking about the current state of historic preservation nationally and noted in Plan research. These broader trends in historic preservation should be part of Oak Park's Village-wide strategy for the next decade.

- Education about Historic Preservation
- Landmark Designation and Survey
- Economic Development
- Available Incentives
- Historic Preservation Ordinance and Guidelines
- Local Planning, Regulations, and Related Processes
- National Thought on Preservation's Future

Education about Historic Preservation

Education about historic preservation in Oak Park underlies virtually all of the issues and opportunities noted to date. Currently, the Village staff and HPC provide Village-wide training sessions on preservation topics, and produce a full complement of materials about designation, the historic districts, and incentives available in print and electronically. Staff and HPC members also work directly with applicant owners of landmark properties to assist them in project planning and meeting ordinance and guideline requirements.

Throughout the next decade, the outreach to educate local property owners of all property types about historic preservation, local processes, and its benefits will need to become more pro-active. Village officials, including those on Oak Park's Commissions, will need to consider the significance of Oak Park's historic resources when deliberating on numerous issues—economic development, sustainability, housing, and accessibility. Oak Park's local historic preservation-related organizations can play an important role in HPC and staff education work. Each of these entities, HPC, and Village staff has limited resources. Education efforts that reach targeted stakeholder audiences, while furthering each organization's mission, will improve cooperation and coordination and will ensure that effective programming is developed and accessible to multiple audiences. This programming will need to be unconventional, focusing on how these multiple audiences obtain and hear information versus how it is presented.

Organizations Engaged in Historic Preservation

The following local organizations are engaged in historic preservation and heritage education work:

Historical Society of Oak Park-River Forest: The Historical Society presents Oak Park and River Forest's histories through its museum and programming and serves as a research library and repository for local archival materials. As with the Pleasant Home Foundation, the Historical Society operates from Pleasant Home, the landmark 1897 residence designed by George W.

Maier. Recent programming included a panel of authors discussing the story of Oak Park's late 19th century African-American citizens. The Historical Society plans to move its headquarters to the old Cicero Township firehouse, a locally designated landmark, at 129 Lake Street within the next two years.

Pleasant Home Foundation: Pleasant Home Foundation is dedicated to the preservation of Pleasant Home and to the documentation of Oak Park's early 20th century social history. Pleasant Home and surrounding Mills Park are Village Park District facilities. Pleasant Home is both a National Historic Landmark and a local landmark.

Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust (FLWPT): Formerly the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation, FLWPT operates the Home and Studio in Oak Park and the Robie House in Hyde Park and is supervising the Robie House restoration. In addition to these operations, FLWPT provides extensive programming, including the annual Wright Plus event. FLWPT engages the public to encourage an appreciation of Frank Lloyd Wright's designs and legacy. The Home and Studio is both a National Historic Landmark and a Village landmark. FLWPT tours and activities at the Home and Studio attract the largest proportion of visitors to Oak Park. The 2008 tourism study noted earlier stated 70,000 visitors out of the estimated Village total of 111,000.

Unity Temple Restoration Foundation (UTRF): The UTRF focuses on the preservation and restoration of what many consider Frank Lloyd Wright's most influential public building, built in 1909. Unity Temple, like the Home and Studio, is a National Historic Landmark and a locally designated landmark. Recent programming has emphasized a 'creative non-conformist' theme in celebrating the building's centennial. UTRF has received a Save America's Treasures grant and continues to raise funds to support Unity Temple's restoration. Unity Temple's façade was donated to Landmarks Illinois, then Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, or LPCI, in 1987.

Ernest Hemingway Foundation: The Hemingway Foundation focuses on the life and work of Ernest Hemingway, emphasizing his early years in Oak Park and importance to world literature. In addition to Hemingway related programs and conferences, the Foundation has restored Hemingway's birth place home on Oak Park Avenue (a Village landmark) and plans to restore his boyhood home on Kenilworth Avenue. The Foundation recently announced a partnership with nearby Dominican University, accompanied by a \$150,000 state grant, to collaborate in the restoration of Hemingway's boyhood home.

Oak Park Preservation Association/Oak Park Architecture League: These two non-profit organizations include some of Oak Park's most prominent architects and designers. The coinciding missions of both organizations promote both historic preservation and quality architecture throughout the Village.

Strategic Implications for Historic Preservation in Oak Park: Each of these well-established non-profits has access to varied stakeholder groups important for preservation advocacy and education. A regular forum for discussions among these organizations, other potential partners, and the Village and for joint program development about historic preservation by these same groups can serve as part of an integrated education strategy.

Commercial and Multi-Family Rental Property Owners

These two categories of property owners own and often manage their properties. Many of these same owners own multiple properties in either category in Oak Park. Some of these commercial owners are well aware of historic preservation, and some are not. The vast majority of local commercial owners want to treat their historic buildings well. Overcoming the controversy associated with the 2008 discussions about a possible National Register district in downtown Oak Park will be important for HPC and Village staff in the short-term. Aligning owner goals for their properties and the Village's desire for good building stewardship will be key to future program development. An emphasis on the future of the buildings and on re-building and building relationships with both types of owners will help HPC and these property owners in the future.



Residential Property Owners

Residential property owners who buy an Oak Park landmark or buy a home in a historic district do not necessarily know what either really means. These residential owners may appreciate the architecture and the history of their house and any surrounding district. However, they are also likely unaware of what permit review, Certificates of Appropriateness, and other HPC reviews mean for their situation and their property.

Village Officials

The Village Board members and Commissioners want to know what should be preserved and why. Often, their perception is that the only important criterion for preserving any resource is age. Helping them to better understand the criteria, the relative importance of specific historic resources, and why something should be preserved should assist them in making decisions.

Strategic Implications for Historic Preservation in Oak Park: Multiple creative and incremental educational processes about historic preservation basics, landmark designation and preservation process will be needed. All of these processes must emphasize and focus on historic preservation facts and not on emotion, past issues, opinion, or urban legend. The individual educational processes geared to individual constituencies should comprise a broader, integrated education strategy.

For example, commercial property owner objectives are an important component to understanding Oak Park's overall built environment. Individual outreach will be necessary. While education and individual property owner outreach take time, the mutual understanding to be gained--the understanding of ownership economics by preservationists, and the understanding that preservation has legitimate benefits by owners--will help the Village, enable future preservation dialogue, and strengthen Oak Park's preservation ethic.

Education geared to historic homeowners will require distribution through new channels, such as links on real estate listings, introductory meetings for new homeowners, or targeted

information distributed at closings, again providing new types of educational opportunities to different constituencies. Seeking out partnerships with local preservation organizations and with Village Commissions to address joint issues or to initiate joint efforts to address preservation issues represent additional education opportunities for the Village.

Landmark Designation and Survey

Oak Park's landmark designation is included in the Village's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Village Code: Chapter 9, Article 7). Though discussed in greater detail below, it should be noted that Village staff and current and former HPC members believe that the existing Historic Preservation Ordinance requires an update. The current designation process resembles those included in the two model Ordinances developed by IHPA.

Oak Park has completed multiple historic resource surveys as part of recent corridor planning processes and as a result of Village staff efforts. These surveys are detailed and include important data about the buildings in those corridors. Only one concern has been noted with the extant surveys—the meaning of the surveys rankings. The definitions for the rankings appear in the 2005 survey of downtown and the Avenue district. Most of the surveys rank structures in three categories: Significant, Structure of Merit, and No Merit. The 2006 Madison Street survey has a second Significant category to identify potential National Register properties. For structures identified as having been altered one or more times, the difference between an altered Significant building versus an altered Structure of Merit sometimes appears inconsistent in the survey language. The nature of the alterations and their relationship to the ranking is sometimes expressed and sometimes not. The definition for a Structure of Merit seems to indicate the potential for inclusion in any historic district as a contributing structure. Finally, with a few exceptions, such as Village Hall, few potential landmarks built in the 1960s and 1970s are noted for future planning purposes.

Village staff continues to identify other potential historic districts throughout Oak Park. Research has been compiled preliminarily identifying two potential residential districts, one in northwest Oak Park and the second in south Oak Park. Currently, no additional commercial areas beyond those locales (such as Oak Park Avenue and Lake Street) in the existing historic districts are under consideration. The Madison Street plan did identify a potential thematic ('Motor Row') district. A Village-wide bungalow thematic district remains a possibility. Preliminary consideration has also been given to making the local and National Register district boundaries the same for the Frank Lloyd Wright district.

Strategic Implications for Historic Preservation in Oak Park: An update of the Historic Preservation Ordinance will be under consideration throughout the remainder of this Plan process. Additional clarification of the integrity of those historic resources identified in each survey as having had either multiple or substantial alterations should be addressed. Consistency and clear definitions of multiple alterations and substantial alterations is needed. The number of properties requiring clarification is not large, but this clarification will ultimately aid Village officials at all levels in discussion and decision-making. Clarification of this survey concern may also help assuage some commercial property owner concerns. Ongoing updates will be important as Oak Park seeks to avoid similar issues as it addresses economic development issues. At the same time, this type of clarification can ensure that important resources are not lost because of survey classification. For example, an important Class 2 (versus a higher Class 1)

building was recently demolished in Lower Merion Township near Philadelphia based upon survey data from 1981. The data, at that time of the Class 2 designation, was correct. More recent information for that building indicated it was more significant, but the property designation was never changed.

Economic Development

For land locked, inner ring communities, like Oak Park, local officials have limited options to generate sufficient municipal revenues to match increasing expenses and to provide those municipal services that residents demand. This economic challenge is very real and has long-term ramifications for how a community, such as Oak Park, can continue to maintain a desirable quality of life for its citizens. Historic preservation can become an important component of that challenge.

In Oak Park, economic development is a primary responsibility of the Village—the Board, multiple commissions, and staff. The Village recently instituted a Businesses Services function to enhance overall services to the local business community. Village staff also works jointly with business and merchant associations in Oak Park’s many neighborhood commercial districts. (Oak Park has an active group of representatives from each of the local business districts and Downtown Oak Park that meet routinely as the Business Association Council.) In addition to the Village, other major local economic development organizations include:

Oak Park Economic Development Corporation (Oak Park EDC): Oak Park EDC was established in 1974 and is one of the region’s most successful economic development organizations. Oak Park EDC works with developers, property owners, and business owners to encourage business attraction and retention. In addition, Oak Park EDC has developed a series of financial incentives to support their attraction and retention efforts. As noted below, many of these incentives are operated in tandem with the Village. In addition, Oak Park EDC also provides information about available properties and lease space in Oak Park.

Downtown Oak Park (DTOP): Downtown Oak Park promotes the business development and growth of Oak Park’s central business district by providing marketing and collective management services to its members, downtown’s property owners and merchants.

Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce: The Chamber promotes the interests of the business community in both communities through education on local issues.

Oak Park Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB): The CVB is responsible for local tourism promotional efforts for 20 west suburban communities, including Oak Park. The CVB provides visitor information and group tour and meeting planning services.

The Village’s use of historic preservation as a planning tool has enabled the maintenance and retention of its diverse and historic housing stock. The preservation of Oak Park’s most important architecture has resulted in a tangible economic benefit to the Village from tourism. Indirectly, the Village’s image and reputation for great architecture serves to differentiate Oak Park in the marketplace and represents an intangible benefit from local preservation efforts. In addition, the Village’s demographic character continues to make it an attractive commercial location.

In multiple commercial districts nationally, historic districts and sympathetic new development co-exist to the mutual benefit of their business community. Areas in historic communities, such as Old Pasadena, in Pasadena, California, are highly successful examples of commercial districts that include local businesses and national and regional chains occupying vintage and new retail space. Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood is known for its collection of independent businesses with some chain retailers located primarily in vintage space. Some new ground floor space is available there, but most is vintage space. Andersonville fosters strong and profitable retail and restaurant operations, but building ownership is also profitable for the district's property owners. Ground floor rents in Andersonville are typically \$35-\$40 per square foot on a triple net basis. (A triple net lease is a lease agreement on a property where the tenant, or lessee, agrees to pay real estate taxes, building insurance, and repair and maintenance costs for common areas, in addition to a base rent.)

Multiple stakeholders noted a lack of modern ground floor retail space throughout the Village as an issue related to the relevancy of historic preservation in Oak Park. Typically, the success of any retail lease space is determined more by how well that space's inherent market characteristics and location support retail sales rather than by whether it is either new space or vintage space. Characteristics that support and enhance retail sales include high average daily pedestrian and auto traffic counts, store visibility, sufficient nearby resident and employee populations, developer or owner experience, and area retail history. Certain merchants actually prefer to locate their stores in vintage ground floor space to reinforce their brand strategies; Design Within Reach is one example. Design Within Reach, based in San Francisco, is a multi-channel retailer of high design, modern furniture and accessories. The firm operates 68 stores in the U. S. and Canada. Other retailers, such as American Apparel, will locate in vintage space, assuming that space meets their internal site location criteria. Redevelopment can only partially address any need for retail space, assuming the site is suitable for retail success. In new developments, tenant driven retail spaces typically generate the highest sales volume per square foot. The reason is that this lease space is built to accommodate a specific tenant in their desired location. When new ground floor space is constructed in locations with low visibility and not to the specifications of experienced retail operators, owners lease to marginal tenants that turnover regularly. Many times, a critical mass of retail is also lacking in these same low visibility locations. Ultimately, the ongoing evolution of new retail formats over the next decade will determine the space needs of individual retailers in either new developments or existing buildings that meet their specific store size, location and market requirements.

Strategic Implications for Historic Preservation in Oak Park: Historic preservation can be an important part of Oak Park's economic development conversations. The education and outreach to existing commercial property owners about their buildings and ownership objectives will result in information that will be applicable to multiple aspects of this ongoing conversation.

Available Incentives

Oak Park's stakeholders generally agree that current incentives do not match owner needs and objectives, given building economics. Current programs are generally perceived as disincentives because application and approval processes are often complicated. Existing incentives include grants, loans, tax incentives, and regulatory relief. Applicable programs available in and for Oak Park are:

Commercial Property Rehabilitation and Preservation Grant Program: Administered by the Village and Oak Park EDC, this program provides grants per storefront for façade improvements, awnings, and signage.

Commercial Loan Program: Administered by Oak Park EDC, this program encourages the adaptive re-use of commercial buildings throughout the Village by providing low cost loans.

National Trust for Historic Preservation (Trust): The Trust currently offers four matching grants and one loan program. Eligible applicants must be non-profits or governmental bodies. Each program supports a specific historic preservation purpose. The Trust also has a for-profit entity that is one of the nation's largest syndicators of Rehabilitation Tax Credits. In addition, the Trust's website provides detailed information for property owners seeking information about tax credit applications.

Illinois Property Tax Freeze for Historic Residences: Administered by the state, this program freezes property taxes for eligible owner-occupied residential properties (up to 6 units) for a 12-year period after rehabilitation. The property must be either listed in the National Register or a locally designated landmark. The minimum owner investment must be 25% of market value as determined by the County Assessor.

Cook County Class L Property Tax Incentive: Administered by Cook County with Village support, Class L reduces the property tax rate for 10 years for the rehabilitation of a locally designated landmark with a commercial, industrial, or multi-family rental use. The minimum investment is 50% of the building's assessed valuation according to the Assessor's Office.

20% Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit: This credit is administered by the IHPA on behalf of the National Park Service. The credit is for the rehabilitation of an income producing property. The tax credit is equal to 20% of eligible project costs. The minimum project investment is defined as 100% of the building's 'adjusted basis.' The building must be listed on the National Register or become listed as part of the tax credit approval process.

10% Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit: This credit is administered by the IHPA on behalf of the National Park Service. The credit is for the rehabilitation of an income producing, non-residential property built before 1936. The property cannot be a local landmark or listed on the National Register. The tax credit is equal to 10% of eligible project costs. The minimum project investment is defined as 100% of the building's 'adjusted basis.' The credit is obtained via IRS Form #3468.

The rehabilitation grants program, jointly offered by Oak Park EDC and the Village, employs Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds from the existing Downtown Oak Park and Madison Street TIF districts. Village TIF funding priorities will not likely be available for incentive development for the short-term. From a regulatory standpoint, Oak Park has a 'Take No Regulatory Action' option available that relies upon the owner to maintain the building's character without regulation. The Village also permits some building code relief at the discretion of the Director of Building and Property Standards. Permit Fee Discounts were available until recently but have been eliminated due to budget constraints.



Other well-known incentive programs available for governmental entities and certain non-profits include:

Preserve America Grant Program: This program provides funding for projects with heritage tourism opportunities. Grants range from \$25,000-\$250,000 and require a match. Applicants can include State Historic Preservation Offices and local governments.

Save America's Treasures Grant Program: Sponsored by the National Park Service, this program provides grants for threatened cultural resources with national significance. Applicants are typically local governments or non-profits.

Preservation Heritage Fund Grants: Offered through Landmarks Illinois, this matching grant is intended to preserve and protect Illinois resources. Again,

applicants are typically non-profits and local governments.

Preservation Easement Donation: Easements are a one time, charitable tax deduction equal to the appraised value of the easement. The property must be a certified historic structure. The easement is a legal agreement assigning the right to review and approve any alterations on the property to a qualified non-profit in order to preserve the property in perpetuity. Landmarks Illinois and the Historical Society of Oak Park & River Forest can accept easement donations.

Certain incentives are routinely accessed, specifically the Oak Park EDC programs. Other commercial owners expressed an interest in the 10% Rehabilitation Tax Credit. A 'back of the envelope' calculation for a possible Oak Park project scenario is shown below:

10% Tax Credit Scenario	
Recent Purchase Price	\$300,000
Appraised Land Value	\$70,000
Project/Construction Cost @ \$60 PSF	\$240,000
Adjusted Basis Estimate	\$230,000
10% Tax Credit over 5 Years	\$24,000
Oak Park EDC Grant	\$10,000
Income Statement-Estimate	
Rental Income (Retail and Office)	
Retail (1,400 SF @ \$28 PSF)	\$39,200
Office (2,600 SF @ \$22 PSF)	\$57,200
Total Income	\$96,400
Expenses	
Taxes (\$9 PSF)	\$36,000
Debt Service	\$40,000
Maintenance	\$5,000
Depreciation	\$9,000
Total Expense	\$90,000
Net Income	\$6,400
10% Tax Credit-1 Year Benefit	\$4,800

The above chart assumes a typical building in downtown Oak Park purchased within the last two years. This older building was built prior to 1936 but is not located in a historic district. It is assumed to be a Structure of Merit. The hypothetical owner intends to rehabilitate the building façade and completely modernize the interior space. To be eligible under the tax credit rules, the project cost (\$240,000) must exceed the adjusted basis (\$230,000), according to the tax credit rules. The adjusted basis for recent purchases is the actual purchase price less the appraised value of the land. (In this example, \$300,000 minus \$70,000.) Gross rents are assumed to be \$28 per square foot for retail and \$22 per square foot for office, and it is assumed that tenants are signed with certain occupancy dates. Expenses represent typical expenses for an Oak Park building of this type. Taxes are shown at \$9 per square foot in this example; Oak Park’s commercial property owners stated the range at \$7-\$12 per square foot. Comparing the property’s estimated net income with a one-year tax credit (20% of the credit amount, or carried over five years) is favorable in this scenario. The ability to apply the credit to future tax years may be of greater value to individual owners.

The following chart examines the cash outlay to obtain the 20% tax credit. For the 20% tax credit, the timeframe to obtain the credit is assumed to be a year. Construction is assumed to take six months. Costs incurred to include carrying costs (interest) and costs for professional services (such as tax credit document preparation, fees, and accounting) to obtain the credit. Debt service and carrying costs would be similar for the 10% credit. However, actually spending an additional \$20,000 in fees and services to obtain a \$48,000 tax credit makes little sense to a property owner with a smaller project, typically one under \$1,000,000. Often, the fees and services for larger tax credit transactions are well within the \$40,000-50,000 range.

20% Tax Credit Scenario	
Recent Purchase Price	\$300,000
Appraised Land Value	\$70,000
Project/Construction Cost @ \$60 PSF	\$240,000
Adjusted Basis Estimate	\$230,000
20% Tax Credit over 5 Years	\$48,000
Oak Park EDC Grant	\$10,000
Costs to Obtain 20% Credit (1 Year Process)	
Processing/Expertise	\$20,000
Mortgage	\$24,000
Construction Carry for 6 Months	\$10,000
Total Costs	\$54,000

With the estimated costs to obtain the 20% tax credit exceeding the potential value of the tax credit, the transaction and rehabilitation project size need to be much larger to justify incurring the expense for a 20% tax credit. Several tax credit experienced developers have noted that a 20% tax credit (\$100,000) on a \$500,000 rehabilitation project may not be justified, if carrying costs are high. This type of situation has been noted, and federal legislation, proposed in October 2009, would change the Rehabilitation Tax Credit rules to ensure that the tax credits make sense for smaller projects. In addition, individual owner taxation issues regarding passive income and depreciation recapture will need to be considered.

Strategic Implications for Historic Preservation in Oak Park: Developing creative incentives to help the Village achieve its economic development and historic preservation goals can be part of greater outreach to property owners. Additional grants for joint projects either initiated by the Village or by one of Oak Park’s preservation organizations can be used to further preservation objectives. The focus should be what will work for Oak Park. As an example, Preserve America grants, obtained by Port Townsend, WA, have been used for three civic structure rehabilitation projects and a comprehensive way finding system, supporting both local economic development and heritage tourism objectives.

Historic Preservation Ordinance and Guidelines

The Village’s Historic Preservation Ordinance (Village Code: Chapter 9, Article 7) was most recently updated in 1999. The 1999 update primarily changed the definition of demolition. Supplementing the Ordinance is the Village’s Architectural Review Guidelines (ARG), also dating from 1999. HPC, the Plan Commission, the Community Development Commission, DTOP, and the Business Association Council drafted updated Village-wide design guidelines for new development in 2008. These guidelines have not yet been adopted.

As noted above, current and former HPC members believe that the Ordinance and Guidelines require an update. Within the Ordinance, both the landmark and the review processes were

identified as needing improvement. Both governing documents include inconsistencies, such as the definitions of demolition.

The existing ARG should address certain issues more specifically, such as guidelines for building types, energy efficiency, window replacement, and accessibility. The definition of an Oak Park landmark should be more precise. More recent guidelines incorporate more visual examples and include suggestions for well-established alternatives for property owners versus the list of 'Do Nots.' Two examples of guidelines from inner ring suburbs, both with significant historic resources, are those from Pasadena, California and Brookline, Massachusetts, dating from 2009 and 2004, respectively.

Within the Ordinance, the qualifications for potential HPC members are described. Most of those qualified are engaged in design-related fields. Nationally, the trend is to add additional Commission members with historic preservation knowledge but offering different points of view. For example, Pasadena's Commission membership includes representatives from each of their neighborhood plan areas and from each historic district. Many members have traditional experience but represent a certain constituency. Several communities nationally have also added real estate professionals with historic preservation knowledge and experience.

Strategic Implications for Historic Preservation in Oak Park: An update of the local Ordinance and the ARG that specifically addresses Oak Park's building types and makes the designation and review processes more user-friendly may prove useful. For potential applicants, such updates could also integrate recent planning and zoning work and support Oak Park's efforts in sustainability, new technologies, and accessibility and make necessary distinctions by various property, or building, types. Such updates place emphasis on clarity in future decision-making.

Local Planning, Regulations, and Related Processes

The Village of Oak Park has completed eight major planning processes during the last five years. The current Comprehensive Plan dates from 1990. These recent plans are listed below. Those plans including historic resource surveys are underlined.

- East Lake Street (2007)
- Harrison Street Arts District
- Chicago Avenue Neighborhood (2007)
- Greater Downtown Master Plan (2005)
- Downtown Garage and Streetscape
- Roosevelt Road
- Chicago/Harlem District
- Madison Street (2006)
- South Oak Park Character Study (by the University of Illinois at Chicago about two districts: Harrison Street and the Oak Park Avenue/Eisenhower district)

It should be noted that BDI participated on the consultant teams that prepared the Chicago/Harlem District, the Chicago Avenue Neighborhood, and the East Lake Street plans. Most of the plans noted included some mention of either rehabilitation or historic preservation as strategic elements within various report sections. Rehabilitation of existing commercial

buildings in advance of market-supported development was a key strategy for the Chicago Avenue districts.

In addition to these many plan formulation activities, the Village has conducted multiple zoning activities. The Village's 2002 Zoning Ordinance was recently updated and the amendment adopted in March 2009. The Village has also conducted the following recent zoning reviews:

- Review of the Village's two multi-family zoning classifications
- Review of overlay district for Madison Street Planned Development
- Review of overlay district for Downtown's Transit area
- Review of Roosevelt Road overlay

One additional downtown Oak Park zoning overlay exists that defines the height, bulk, density, and character within the downtown area. The zoning update includes the current Historic Preservation Ordinance and review processes.

Oak Park has adopted and is currently using the International Building Codes (IBC) from 2006. Updated 2009 versions were recently released. However, the IBC companion code relevant to historic buildings, the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), has not been adopted. The Building and Property Standards Department has the authority to grant certain modifications as code relief for historic buildings. Most new development of note throughout the Village, as in many communities, is subject to the Planned Development process.

To assist businesses and property owners, the Village recently organized a Village Business Services function to be more responsive to owner needs and to help owners understand rules, regulations, timeframes, and requirements.

Strategic Implications for Historic Preservation in Oak Park: HPC and Village staff have been involved in most of these efforts. This involvement will become increasingly important over the next decade. HPC and Village staff also provides valuable assistance in tandem with new Business Services function. Finally, developing a partnership with Building and Code officials based upon common objectives can improve processes and ensure that regulations support historic preservation in the future.

National Thought on Historic Preservation's Future

Two key, current discussion points within the national historic preservation community are: 1) the marginalization of historic preservation and what to do about it; and 2) the re-establishment of the relationship between why something is important and how it is preserved. In some respects, these two points are inter-related.

Much of the marginalization of historic preservation stems from both the reality and the perception of elitism. Preservationists 'talk amongst themselves' and to others in 'preservation speak,' using terminology that is generally meaningless to local officials, local businesses, and the general public. A key concern of preservationists has always been ensuring the authenticity of historic resources. However, in focusing on individual properties or collections of resources, preservationists have often missed opportunities to apply their expertise to larger issues affecting their communities. Consequently, historic preservation, its benefits, and its objectives

become obscured, and those dealing with local historic preservation regulations become frustrated. Communicating effectively and consistently with property owners of all types and local decision makers can diminish those barriers over time. Not every property rights advocate will transform magically into a preservation advocate, but at least, they will know the facts and better understand the preservation opportunities for their local community.

Donovan Rypkema, one of historic preservation's major opinion leaders, gave a talk at the 2009 National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference entitled "Making Historic Preservation Relevant for the Next 50 Years." The relationship between why something is important and how to preserve it was at the crux of this presentation. Much of what is being preserved today represents places, including buildings and other resources, which are important to the local community. Their importance stems from this local context. These places may be important for reasons that have nothing to do with either great architecture or design or important people or events. As an example, trying to insist on authentic building materials for a place identified for its social importance may be irrelevant to its worthiness for preservation. Also, local preservationists rarely identify the relative importance of their local places; these local important places are all deemed of equal importance, or significance. Often, this results in the expenditure of valuable political capital on preservation fights that cannot be won, further marginalizing the effectiveness of local preservationists to address the community's most important preservation priorities, to be strategic in approach, and to effectively manage, or regulate, important local places.

A third important national theme is the relationship between sustainable, or 'green' technologies, and historic preservation objectives. In Oak Park, HPC has worked with other Commissions to begin to address these emerging issues. At times, for issues, such as windows, there can sometimes be opposing objectives. Certain technologies, such as solar panels and turbines, present basic visibility issues when considering historic buildings. As technologies change, additional questions will emerge. Working toward energy efficiency and sustainability will require new perspectives, creativity, and flexibility in interpreting local codes, with an emphasis on performance outcomes versus prescriptive measures.

Strategic Implications for Historic Preservation in Oak Park: During the next decade, Village staff and the HPC should consider the best approach to addressing places, or resources, of local importance and their relative priority to the Oak Park community. Communication and outreach strategies can begin to mitigate the potential as local issues emerge. However, thinking in new ways about how historic preservation can work best for Oak Park and what kinds of successful strategies or activities from other communities can be applied in Oak Park will be key.

Summary

At the initial Steering Committee meeting for this Plan project, the Committee and members of the public in attendance formulated a vision for this Strategic Historic Preservation Plan. The mission is:

To inspire pride and respect for Oak Park's unique heritage and resources by promoting preservation through their continual and creative use.

The strategic implications, or preliminary strategies, suggested in this interim report conform to this mission. These strategies will be reviewed, discussed and refined during the upcoming months. All of these efforts will continue to focus on the future of historic preservation throughout the Village.

Appendix 2: Oak Park Landmarks

Address	Property Name	Date of Designation
428 Forest/951 Chicago	*Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio/Interior	June 17, 1996
217 Home Avenue	John Farson House (Pleasant Home)	June 17, 1996
460 Lake Street	Pilgrim Congregational Church	June 17, 1996
875 Lake Street	*Unity Temple/Interior	June 17, 1996
339 N. Oak Park Avenue	*Ernest Hemingway Birthplace / Interior	June 17, 1996
123 S. Marion Street	*Plaza Hotel / Interior Lobby	March 16, 1998
710 Augusta Street	Harry S. Adams House	January 7, 2002
515 Fair Oaks Avenue	Rollin Furbeck House	January 7, 2002
313 Forest Avenue	Hills-DeCaro House	January 7, 2002
1027 Chicago Avenue	Thomas Gale House	November 18, 2002
223 N. Euclid Avenue	George Furbeck House	November 18, 2002
1139 Randolph Street	Oak Park-River Forest Day Nursery	November 18, 2002
321 N. Euclid Avenue	Charles Roberts House	December 2, 2002
300-304 N. Grove Avenue	Roberts Building	December 2, 2002
812-818 Harrison Street	Odd Fellows Hall	November 17, 2003
1023 Wenonah Avenue	Albert & Kittie Ernst House	November 17, 2003
615 Garfield Street	Oak Park Conservatory	June 21, 2004
173-181 N. Grove Avenue	Park Grove/Park View Manor	June 21, 2004
605 Lake Street	Bishop Quarter School Addition	June 21, 2004
220 N. Euclid Avenue	C.A. Sharpe House (Dole/Cheney Mansion)	July 6, 2004
408-410 S. Austin Blvd.	Poley Building	December 6, 2004
950 Columbian Avenue	Harold C. Lewis House	December 6, 2004
701 S. East Avenue	Andreas Brisch House	December 6, 2004
1045 Wesley Avenue	George and James Tough House	December 6, 2004
1036 Fair Oaks Avenue	Margaret Morse House	February 22, 2005
553 N. Marion Street	Albert Schneider House	February 22, 2005
424-426 S. Austin Blvd.	Dorothy Manor Apartments	June 20, 2005
324 N. Oak Park Avenue	First United Methodist Church	November 7, 2005
845 Gunderson Avenue	*Maze Branch Library/Interior Main Hall	November 7, 2005
500 Linden Avenue	H. W. Jenkins House	May 1, 2006
705 S. East Avenue	Dr. Harry Bernhardt Cottage	May 1, 2006
625 S. Oak Park Avenue	Charles W. Eils House	November 6, 2006
1033 South Boulevard	Boulevard Arcade Building	June 4, 2007
129 Lake Street	Cicero Fire House No. 2	June 16, 2008
1019 Chicago Avenue	Robert Parker House	July 20, 2009
1139 Woodbine Avenue	Gustaf and Fride Benson House	July 20, 2009
175-181 Linden Avenue	Linden Apartments	October 5, 2009
639 Fair Oaks Avenue	Charles Schwerin House	March 15, 2010
231 N. Euclid Avenue	Edward and Caroline McCready House	March 15, 2010
178 N. Euclid Avenue	Russell Wallace House	March 15, 2010
647 Linden Avenue	Charles S. Castle House	March 15, 2010
228 Forest Avenue	Joseph D. Everett House	May 17, 2010
845 Chicago Avenue	Chester Flitcraft House	June 21, 2010
250 Forest Avenue	Paul Blatchford House No. 1	June 21, 2010

*Also includes Interior Landmark status

Appendix 3: Rehabilitation Tax Credit Tools

The National Trust for Historic Preservation publishes “A Guide to Tax-Advantaged Rehabilitation,” which provides a history and detailed examination of the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits (10% and 20%) and their issues. The guide also provides detailed information about certain tax issues, such as the ‘At Risk’ provision for individual investors in a potential rehabilitation tax credit transactions. A copy of this guide accompanies this Plan.

The Excel spreadsheet tool, developed for Village staff and HPC use, considers some similar information in the guide from a different perspective. The key issue for most 20% tax credit projects, from the developer perspective, is whether the actual costs incurred to obtain the credit match the potential benefits associated with the credit over the permitted recapture period. In most situations, the 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit makes the most economic sense for larger transactions. The economies of scale, given the complexities and potential tax implications, for smaller rehabilitation projects are challenging. Also, the secondary market for the sale of the 20% tax credit is a factor. Though this secondary market has virtually disappeared due to the recent economic downturn, the purchasers of rehabilitation tax credits in past years have been major corporations, particularly oil companies, seeking to reduce their corporate tax liability. Credits purchased by these corporations typically were sold by the developer at a discount in the range of 90-95 cents for every \$1 of tax credit.

For a 20% rehabilitation tax credit project, certain costs are necessary to obtain the credit. Assuming a developer purchases a historic property, intends to rehabilitate it, and intends to apply for the credit, these expenditures will be necessary:

- Professional Services: Several key services are needed for a typical 20% tax credit transaction:
- If the property is not listed on the National Register, the property must be listed as the first part of the certification process for the tax credit requiring an experienced historic preservation consultant.
- Separately, as part of the initial legal and investment organization, most tax credit transactions will include master lease/tenant arrangements to provide the necessary legal vehicles for Internal Revenue Service (IRS) purposes. These legal entities must pass IRS scrutiny for income pass-through and tax credit transaction purposes. In most situations, this requires expertise of both attorneys and accountants familiar with the rehabilitation tax credit process and IRS regulations. The typical range of these three costs is in the \$30,000-\$50,000 range.
- The National Park Service also charges a processing fee. Their sliding fee schedule is based upon transaction size and is readily available on their website (www.nps.gov).

Carrying Costs: Carrying costs are a factor throughout the project timeline, making the ‘time-value of money’ key to assessing the benefit of the 20% tax credit. Carrying costs include:

- Assuming that a property is newly purchased, the developer will need to pay carrying costs on a loan to acquire the property. The acquisition cost can also affect the adjusted basis of the property for tax credit calculation purposes.

- Construction financing represents a second carrying cost, once the work actually begins and until completion (a Certificate of Occupancy or placement in service for tax credit purposes). Until the property is fully leased, occupancy-related costs, such as utilities, represent another carrying cost.
- Acquisition and construction financing will be replaced with permanent financing at project completion, subject to any leasing requirements.

When evaluating a potential tax credit example, the underlying tax credit calculation is rather simple. The key is the cost to obtain the credit. If the cost is too high in comparison with the value of the credit, the developer, or property owner, will not perceive a financial benefit. (The time commitment to manage the process to obtain the credit may be an indirect factor in evaluating the potential benefit.) In most instances, the developer or owner will be holding the improved property for a few years. Other factors, such as depreciation, the value of the leaseholds, and debt service from permanent financing affect any rehabilitation tax credit transaction, are also highly individualized.

In addition to the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit, the State of Illinois is considering a State Rehabilitation Tax Credit. A second work sheet is provided, applying the requirements for eligibility in the proposed legislation. The current proposal specifies a 25% state tax credit for all property types in Illinois, including owner-occupied residential properties. The eligibility criteria differ for these residential properties. Other criteria, incorporated into the worksheet within this Excel file, can be changed and adapted, assuming the state credit is adopted.

Appendix 4: Sample Historic Preservation Ordinances

Historic preservation ordinances from three communities have been provided to Village staff as examples. Elements of two ordinances, Brookline, MA and Rockville, MD, were described in detail within the Plan text. A third, Highland Park, IL, is included as a local example that incorporates several points noted in both the Brookline and Rockville ordinances.

Appendix 5: Plan Documentation

Complete documentation for the development of this Plan was made available through the Plan webpage and can be requested from Village staff.