





Memorandum

TO: Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager 

FROM: Tammie Grossman, Development Customer Services Director 

FOR: Village President and Board of Trustees

DATE: May 17, 2023

SUBJECT: Overview of Economic Development Functions

Attached please find the overview of economic development functions areas of responsibility and focus between the Oak Park Economic Development Corporation and the Village of Oak Park staff. The overview was provided to the Village Board during the May 8, 2023 Board meeting.

Please contact Tammie Grossman, Development Customer Services Director, with any questions at tgrossman@oak-park.us or 708/358-5422.

Attachment

Cc: Lisa Shelley, Deputy Village Manager
Ahmad Zayyad, Deputy Village Manager
Christina M. Waters, Village Clerk
All Department Directors

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONS IN OAK PARK

Oak Park Economic Development Corporation

- **Publicly Owned Parcel Development/Re-Development** - In the past, the OPEDC has helped to issue Request for Proposals (RFP's) for the development/re-development of Village owned property like vacant parking lots, etc. From 2015 to date, the OPEDC staff was tasked with seeking out developers for private residential (Completed = 4) and commercial (Completed = 1) projects on these underperforming Village properties. When private developers submitted development proposals for Village owned properties, the OPEDC staff and Village DCS staff would review said proposals together. If financial incentives were required to move projects forward, the OPEDC staff first vetted those financial incentive requests then presented them to Village DCS staff for review and fine-tuning. After that review, the OPEDC staff presented refined incentive requests to the OPEDC Board which, in turn, made recommendations to the Village Board for consideration. If any land purchase, consolidation or ROW acquisition was required for these projects, Village DCS staff facilitated this work, not the OPEDC staff.
- **Privately Owned Parcel Development/Re-Development** - The OPEDC staff has also reviewed six (6) proposed developments on private, non-village owned parcels. Since January 2020, the OPEDC has brought the following three private-property economic development incentive requests to the Village Board for consideration: Dom's Foods, Polestar and the Mohr Property. The first two proposed developments brought by the OPEDC to the Board have not moved forward.
- **Promotion of Development Opportunities** - The OPEDC staff also meets with private residential and commercial developers to promote available development opportunities on privately owned property within the Village.
- **Vacant Parcel/Vacant Commercial Space Availability** - The OPEDC staff has maintained a limited list of vacant land parcels and some, but not all, vacant commercial spaces available in the Village. Village staff is not aware of instances when OPEDC staff actually retained or filled any commercial space with a business since 2020.

Village of Oak Park

- **Providing Economic Development Guidance to OPEDC** - Village DCS Director and Assistant Director meets weekly with the EDC staff to review their activities and to discuss strategy. Village DCS Director reviews OPEDC monthly meeting agendas and reviews timing related to Village Board meeting dates. Village DCS staff works with OPEDC staff on annual funding proposal, agreement management and required reporting requirements.
- **Economic Development Incentive Agreement Proposal and Project Facilitation** – Village DCS Director prepares all Village Board agenda item consideration documents for any economic

development incentive requests coming to the Board for consideration. After the Village Board approves economic development incentive proposals, DCS Director meets with the developer and negotiates all of the terms and conditions related to any proposed development agreement. Further, the DCS Director then handles the presentation of the negotiated development agreement in front of the Village Board. If approved, the DCS Director and DCS staff monitors the agreement and handles any amendments. The DCS Director is always the primary point of contact for developers after the development agreement is approved and until the project is completed.

- **Economic Development Site Preparation** – The DCS staff coordinates any site acquisition, environmental clean-up and demolition activities.
- **Planned Development Process Management** – The DCS staff manages the Planned Development process of all development projects, including initial considerations, adjustments and proposed revisions. The OPEDC staff does not participate in any of these PD activities.
- **Permitting of Economic Development Projects** – The DCS staff facilitates the review, approval and management of all permitting related to development projects in Oak Park. The Public Works Department and Fire Department also play a primary role. Again, the OPEDC staff does not participate in any of these permit review, approval or management activities. Most development projects in Oak Park are facilitated by DCS staff, with assistance from Public Works and the Fire Department, with no involvement by the OPEDC.
- **Business Walk-Through Economic Development Site Visits** – DCS staff conducts economic development business walk-through site visits to assist prospective commercial property owners/leasers in answering questions about their proposed space in relation to their proposed use. DCS staff also uses these on-site site visits to share, in person, information about permit and license applications and economic development program grants like the Village’s C-FIP. DCS staff has completed 32 of these important walk-through site visits since the program began in 2021.
- **Business Permitting and Licensing Management** - DCS staff manages all Village business licensing activities for all 1000+ licensed businesses in Oak Park. Occasionally, the OPEDC will forward a potential new business to Village staff so that we can help the business manage their permitting and opening process. Usually, the potential business contacts the Village’s DCS staff directly with little or no involvement from the OPEDC staff.
- **Business Code-Compliance Management** – DCS staff conducts business inspections to determine if businesses are in code-compliance. DCS staff looks to find solutions to outstanding code-compliance issues and does not cite businesses unless progress towards compliance is not occurring.
- **Economic Development Grant Administration and Management** – The DCS Assistant Director, with assistance from DCS support staff, has recently administered six (6) economic development focused business assistance grant programs that have awarded 331 grants totaling \$1,208,209.43. In addition, since 2018, those same DCS staff members have administered the

Village's economic development focused Commercial Façade Improvement Program (C-FIP). This program has awarded 21 grants totaling \$91,804.68 for new commercial façade improvements in Oak Park that have totaled \$421,037.82.

- **Business Association Council** – The DCS department staff facilitates the monthly meeting of the Village's long-standing Business Association Council. This Council, made up of business representatives from throughout the community, meets to discuss proposed Village initiatives as a part of the Village's ongoing community outreach efforts. Also, the Council provides business district leadership the opportunity to share ideas and report-out on individual business district programs and initiatives. The OPEDC staff attends these meetings but plays no facilitation role.
- **Business District Assistance** – The DCS Director is on the DTOP business district board of directors and the DCS Assistant Director has attended monthly Arts District business association meetings for almost five years. Currently, the DCS Assistant Director is leading a process with five local business leaders from the Pleasant District in an effort to re-start that business district association. The OPEDC staff attends the DTOP board meetings but does not have a history of attending the Arts District business association meetings.