

Village convenes taskforce to explore response to mental health emergencies

Key stakeholders from across the community are taking part in an Alternative Calls for Service Taskforce as the Village moves into the next phase of its community safety project.

The taskforce was established by Village Manager Kevin Jackson last fall to bring together a wide range of experts, community members and specialists to advise on an alternative call response model to specifically help individuals suffering from a mental health crisis.

Community Collaboration

Find more examples of Oak Park's governing partners working together in the insert included inside this newsletter

The taskforce's sole function is to explore alternative calls for service models and make a recommendation whether one of these alternatives would be suited for Oak Park emergency calls related to mental health crises.

Principles of diversity, equity and inclusion are at the center of the taskforce's work, with a particular emphasis on racial equity, listening and learning, and innovation.

The formation of the taskforce stemmed from recommendations made as part of a comprehensive community safety assessment delivered by consultant BerryDunn (see *related article on this page*).

For more information about the Alternative Calls for Service Taskforce, visit www.oak-park.us/communitysafety or contact communitysafety@oak-park.us or 708.358.5770.

Community safety study examines policing in Oak Park

A comprehensive community safety study aimed at ensuring the Oak Park Police Department is equitably delivering services to all is now complete.

Following a 14-month process, national consultant BerryDunn presented the results from its study to the Village Board this past November. The full report is available online at www.oak-park.us/BerryDunnReport.

The report provides dozens of recommendations related to Police Department staffing, personnel development, policies and procedures, impartial policing and transparency, utilization of technology and training.

Throughout the process, BerryDunn conducted interviews with Police Department staff, Village officials and members of the community. The final report also incorporated feedback gathered through several town hall meetings and surveys conducted online.

The origins of the community safety study trace back to the aftermath of George Floyd's murder in May 2020 when there was a push among community members to examine the Oak Park Police Department's use-of-force policies, training and use of technology.

While the third-party review may be complete, the work of implementing the recommendations in the report goes on for Village officials and members of the Oak Park Police Department.

For more information about the Village's ongoing community safety project, visit www.oak-park.us/communitysafety or contact communitysafety@oak-park.us or 708.358.5770.

The Alternative Calls for Service Taskforce includes representatives from the following community organizations:

- Housing Forward
- Mosaic Counseling Center
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- Oak Park Elementary School District 97
- Oak Park Homelessness Coalition
- Oak Park River Forest High School District 200
- Oak Park Library
- Oak Park Township
- Park District of Oak Park
- PCC Wellness
- Riveredge Hospital
- Rush Hospital

- Thrive Counseling Center
- Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC)
- Village of Oak Park
 - ◆ Citizens Police Oversight Committee
 - ◆ Fire Department
 - ◆ Health Department
 - ◆ Police Department
 - ◆ Village Manager's Office
- Way Back Inn
- West Suburban Consolidated Dispatch Center

Taskforce Co-Chairs:

- Allison Davenport - Chief Executive Officer, Riveredge Hospital
- Cheryl Potts - Executive Director, Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township

2023 budget focuses on affordability and other key priorities

The municipal budget for 2023 was developed with a focus on community affordability while also ensuring the delivery of essential services and furthering the Village's commitment to community safety, leading in racial equity, investing in a sustainable future and supporting vibrant, diverse neighborhoods.

Recognizing the economic pressures community members are facing, Village officials opted to maintain a flat property tax rate for the next fiscal year, resulting in savings for taxpayers in the short and long term. Refuse hauling rates are also unchanged in 2023, and the Village plans to tap into federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to pay for several capital improvement projects rather than issuing additional debt that could lead to future tax levy increases.

The 2023 budget is comprised of dozens of separate funds totaling \$183.9 million in expenditures, excluding interfund transfers. Each fund is dedicated to a particular type of outlay, typically defined under the Governmental Accounting Standards Boards or State of Illinois/local laws. Some examples of fund categories include debt service, insurance, pensions and capital improvements.

The largest of these funds — the \$71.8 million General Revenue Fund — supports most day-to-day municipal operations that are critical to quality of life in the community, such as public works and public safety services like roadway maintenance and emergency responses.

Nearly two-thirds of all general fund allocations in 2023 will

support the Police and Fire departments, which are staffed with highly trained individuals who are on call 24/7, 365 days a year to protect and save lives.

Another 10 percent of all 2023 General Fund dollars will go towards the Public Works Department, whose workers maintain 100 miles of Village-owned streets, 500 alleys, 18,000 parkway trees, 7,000 lighting fixtures, 104 miles of water mains, 110 miles of sewer mains, eight miles of bicycle lanes and some 4,000 public parking spaces.

Additional funds are being devoted to operationalizing sustainability goals throughout the Village's departments. Projects are advancing the actions identified in Climate Ready Oak Park, including building energy efficiency and electrification, traffic safety planning and street improvements, permeable pavement and vegetation, drinking water conservation, and groundwater protection. Reducing building energy and reducing driving of gas cars are two key strategies for lowering community greenhouse gas emissions. Adding pollinator and native plants are key strategies for improving community biodiversity.

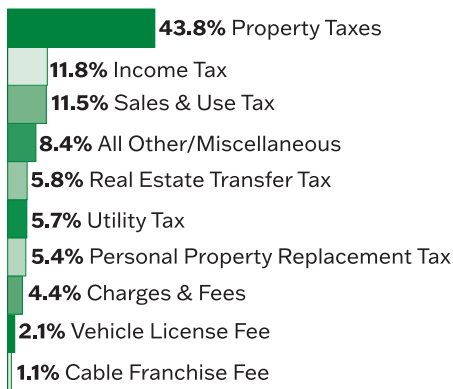
The budget includes funding for the development of the Village's first comprehensive Racial Equity Action Plan that will center diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout Village operations.

When it comes to supporting vibrant and diverse neighborhoods, the budget includes funding to support a comprehensive Vision Zero Plan to address traffic and pedestrian safety throughout the community.

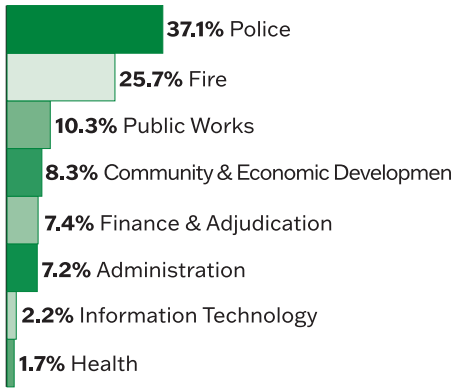
Helping offset any new expenditures in 2023 is a decrease in the Village's required annual contribution into the Police and Firefighters' Pension Funds of a combined \$1.3 million. This unusual one-time reduction is primarily due to a change in actuarial assumptions. For future years,

2023 Budget at a Glance — General Fund

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



WHERE THE MONEY GOES



HOW PROPERTY TAXES ARE DISTRIBUTED



however, it is expected that there will be an increase in the annual contributions for the public safety pensions.

Municipal expenditures from the General Fund are supported by a number of sources including property taxes, sales taxes, user fees, utility taxes and real estate transfer taxes.

While property taxes will fund about 48 percent of General Fund expenditures in 2023, based on the most recent data available, only 9.8 percent of an Oak Park property owner's tax bill goes toward funding Village municipal services. State-mandated Police and Fire pensions comprise another 5.9 percent of the local property tax bill.

Most municipal fees remain unchanged for 2023. Water rates will increase slightly to \$10.40 per 1,000 gallons used, up from \$10.30 in 2022. Sewer rates, which are also assessed based on water usage, are now \$2.98 per 1,000 gallons of water used, up from \$2.95. A portion of water and sewer fees help fund maintenance and improvements to the Village's water and sewer infrastructure systems.

Some rates for public parking were also adjusted. Quarterly and 30-day use permits in the Avenue, Holley Court and Lake & Forest garages will increase by \$25 on April 1, and free parking in Village-owned garages was adjusted from 90 minutes to 60 minutes with the start of the new year. Pay-by-plate parking fees in high demand parking areas are also up 25 cents per 15 minutes for the first three hours of parking and 75 cents for every 15 minutes beyond three hours. In addition, pay-by-plate enforcement has been extended to 8 p.m.

Information on the budget process and copies of the Fiscal Year 2023 and past year's budgets are posted at www.oak-park.us/budget.

Finance documents available online

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

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

For more information on the role and duties of the Finance Department, call 708.358.5460, email finance@oak-park.us or visit www.oak-park.us/finance.

Information about Village waste hauling services

The Village of Oak Park provides waste hauling services to single-family homes and multifamily dwellings with five or fewer units. Owners and managers of larger multifamily buildings negotiate separate contracts with private collection companies, which means the level of services available to residents who live in these buildings may vary widely. Residents not served by the municipal program should contact the property management company or condominium association board to discuss the range of available services. Collection fees for homes served by LRS, the Village's contractor, appear on quarterly water bills. Rates vary by the size and number of garbage carts allocated to specific addresses. Residents served by the municipal hauling program are encouraged to regularly review their water bills to ensure the correct amount is being charged. For more information on the Village of Oak Park's refuse and recycling programs, visit www.oak-park.us/refuse. Residents can call 844.633.3577, email service@LRSrecycles.com or visit www.lrsrecycles.com/oakpark to report a missed pickup or request a waste hauling service.

Workshops planned for non-profits seeking federal grants

Non-profit organizations that serve Oak Park and are interested in applying for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding are required to attend a virtual workshop hosted by the Village. The workshop is scheduled for 10 to 11 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 3. Attendance at the workshop is required to apply for funds during Program Year 2023, which runs from October 2023 through September 2024. The workshops will provide details about the Village's upcoming application process, including an overview of required documents, timelines and reporting requirements. Email grants@oak-park.us to receive the registration link or for more information. Visit www.oak-park.us/cdbg to learn more about the CDBG program in Oak Park.

Police News

Get to know your RBO...The Oak Park Police Department's residential beat officers hold regular neighborhood meetings to discuss issues and crime trends, and answer questions. For more details, including dates and times of the virtual meetings, visit www.oak-park.us/rbo or call 708.386.3800.

Safe venue for transactions...The Oak Park Police Department lobby is always available as a safe venue for finalizing transactions or conducting exchanges. The lobby, located in the lower level of Village Hall, 123 Madison St., is well-lit and staffed 24 hours a day. Residents are encouraged to make use of the lobby if they are buying or selling items online that require an in-person transaction. For more information about the Oak Park Police Department, visit www.oak-park.us/police or email police@oak-park.us.

Police escort...Any resident uneasy about walking to or from a public transit stop, public garage or other site in the community may contact the Police Department for an escort from dusk until dawn. Please consider seeking assistance from friends and family first, since officers may be needed for emergency calls. Call 708.386.3800 for information or an escort.

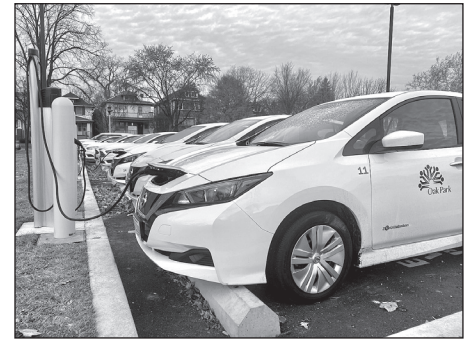
Fire Department offers life-saving CPR/AED classes

The Oak Park Fire Department offers a variety of life-saving classes including CPR and training in how to use an automated external defibrillator, or AED. Classes are held at the Fire Department's certified American Heart Association community training center in the main station, 100 N. Euclid Ave. All courses are taught by an AHA-certified instructor. Fees vary by type of class and residency. Payment must be made by check or cash in the exact amount. In-person registration is required. Class sizes are limited. The 2023 class schedule is posted online at www.oak-park.us/cpr. For more information, call 708.358.5605 or email cpr@oak-park.us.



Holiday tree collection schedule

Holiday trees will be collected the weeks of Jan. 2 and 9 from residential properties of five or fewer units served by the Village refuse hauling contractor. Be sure to remove all decorations and stands, and place the tree in the regular collection area before your regular collection day during these two weeks. If your regular collection point is in an alley, be sure to place the tree in the alley and not in the parkway in front of your residence. Since the trees are mulched at a licensed composting facility and used for soil enrichment, please do not leave them in plastic disposal bags or they will not be collected. Trees set out after the collection program ends will require a pink bulk refuse sticker to be attached. Stickers are available for \$3.10 each at most local grocery and hardware stores, as well as at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Wreaths and garlands cannot be collected for recycling because they contain wire — place them in the trash container. For more information, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.



Village selected for Electric Vehicle Readiness Program

The Village of Oak Park is one of 16 communities in the region selected to participate in the first cohort of the Electric Vehicle (EV) Readiness Program, facilitated by the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus and ComEd. Cohort members will receive free technical assistance and training in a variety of critical areas as they work toward the designation of being an EV Ready Community. Officials anticipate that the EV Readiness Program will help guide future strategic investment in EVs and EV charging infrastructure as expected grant funding from the state and federal governments becomes available. For more information about electric vehicles in Oak Park, visit www.oak-park.us/electricvehicles.

Electric vehicle rebate available...

The Illinois Electric Vehicle Rebate program is accepting applications now through Jan. 31 for all-electric vehicles purchased from an Illinois licensed dealer. The program, administered by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, offers residents a \$4,000 rebate for the purchase of an electric passenger vehicle or \$1,500 rebate for the purchase of an electric motorcycle. Find complete details, including specifics about eligibility requirements, on the Illinois EPA website at www2.illinois.gov/epa.

COVID-19 testing resources available

Health officials say testing remains one of the key tools available to stop the spread of COVID-19. Rapid at-home tests are available at local pharmacies. Oak Park residents who receive a positive result on a home test are encouraged to inform the Oak Park Health Department by filling out a form available at www.oak-park.us/testing. Anyone who reports an at-home positive test will receive information about recovering from COVID-19 and a free at-home test to restock their household supply while Health Department supplies last. Local health officials recommend testing for COVID-19 if you are a close contact of someone who tested positive for the virus, if you are experiencing symptoms or if you plan to gather indoors with friends or family. If you receive a positive test result, you can help stop the spread of COVID-19 among family, friends, colleagues and schoolmates by isolating for a minimum of five days and wearing a high-quality KN95 mask if you re-enter society prior to 10 days post infection. For more information, contact the Health Department at 708.358.5480 or health@oak-park.us. For the latest Information about COVID-19 in Oak Park, visit www.oak-park.us/covid19.

Conservatory offers antidote to winter blues

If you are suffering from cabin fever or the winter blues, the Oak Park Conservatory, 615 Garfield St. (at East Avenue, just south of I-290) could be just what you need. Visitors can indulge in the oxygen-rich air, while listening to the sounds of birds and waterfalls, and enjoying scents of blooming flowers. The Conservatory is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. Admission is free, but donations are accepted. For more info, call 708.725.2400 or visit www.pdop.org/oakparkconservatory.

Reduce spread of common illnesses

The Oak Park Health Department is reminding residents of ways everyone can help reduce the impact and spread of common winter illnesses. Health officials say there has been an increase in respiratory illnesses both nationally and locally, and children have been particularly affected. Cases of RSV among children have increased, and epidemiologists are predicting a significant flu season and increased COVID cases this winter. There are simple and effective practices that can help reduce the spread of illness throughout the community:

- Stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Wash hands with regularity, including before and after preparing food, if a household member is ill, and when you come home after a social gathering, shopping or spending time at work or school.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow, and consider wearing a mask if you have a runny nose, cough or fever.
- Maximize indoor ventilation and air circulation whenever possible.
- Consider wearing a mask when gathering indoors for events and other gatherings.
- Stay up to date on your vaccines, including flu, COVID vaccines and COVID boosters.

The flu vaccine is offered at numerous medical providers, commercial pharmacies, grocery stores and other retail sites in the Oak Park area. Visit www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines to search for a flu vaccine. Contact the Health Department at 708.358.5480 or health@oak-park.us for more information about preventing common illnesses.

Make way for tree pruning

One third of the Village's 18,000-plus parkway trees are scheduled to be pruned this winter.

Crews will primarily focus on trees located between Madison Street and Chicago Avenue. Residents are urged to move their cars from the streets when temporary no-parking signs go up to allow private contractors to prune parkway trees quickly and safely during the winter pruning cycle.

Contractors follow the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) guidelines for tree care to address three key issues — tree health, resident safety and protecting property from damage. Dead or dying limbs are removed, tree canopies raised to allow for safe vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and appropriate clearances created for adjacent structures and signs. Younger trees will also be pruned to develop good structure to reduce problems as they grow and mature.

While the pruning may initially appear excessive when no leaves are on the limbs, crews work to ensure that pruning is just right as foliage returns in the spring.

With a program that aims to prune every tree on public property once every three years, plans must consider that parkway trees can grow up to two feet each year — or six feet between pruning cycles.

Residents are urged to call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us with questions or concerns about the type or quality of work being performed by contractors.

More information on the care of the nearly 18,000 trees on public property is posted at www.oak-park.us/trees.



View with a smartphone camera.



Village of Oak Park

Village Hall

123 Madison Street

Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272

OP/FM

Village President Vicki Scaman

Trustees

Susan Buchanan Lucia Robinson

Chibuike Enyia Jim Taglia

Ravi Parakkat Cory Wesley

Village Clerk Christina M. Waters

Village Manager Kevin J. Jackson

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Permit No. 26
Oak Park, IL

PAID
U.S. Postage
Standard
Presort

Plan for parking when it snows

The Village has specific rules that govern parking when it snows — rules that are enforced seven days a week, including holidays. Residents are urged to monitor local forecasts and plan accordingly. When snow exceeds two inches, all parking is prohibited on the main streets posted as snow routes. Parking on other streets is restricted to one side from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. in residential areas and from midnight to 8 a.m. in designated commercial districts, the side determined by the date. Park on the even-address side of the street on even dates and on the odd-address side on odd dates. To find out if snow-related parking restrictions are in effect, call 708.358.7669 for a recorded message. Cable television subscribers can tune into VOP-TV, broadcast on Comcast channel 6 and AT&T channel 99. Residents who sign up at www.oak-park.us/notifyme will be alerted. Efforts also are made to post timely information to the Village's social media sites, www.facebook.com/vopnews and www.twitter.com/vopnews. The snow emergency parking rules and a list of frequently asked questions also are posted at www.oak-park.us/snow.



Snow Route Map

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

Warming centers offer relief from cold

When dangerously cold temperatures strike, residents are urged to limit time outdoors for themselves and their pets, as well as to check in on friends and neighbors who may need assistance. Anyone in need of a place to warm up as temperatures dip can find a range of options in Oak Park. Local sites include the following:

24-Hour Warming Center

- **Rush Oak Park Hospital**, 520 S. Maple Ave., open 24 hours through March when temperatures dip below 32 degrees

Daytime warming centers

- **Oak Park Public Library**, 834 Lake St., open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday – Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, Noon to 5 p.m. Sundays
- **Oak Park Public Library – Dole Branch**, 255 Augusta St., open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday – Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, Noon to 5 p.m. Sundays
- **Oak Park Public Library – Maze Branch**, 845 Gunderson Ave., open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, Noon to 5 p.m. Sundays

If transportation to a warming center is needed, call the Oak Park Police Department's non-emergency number 708.386.3800.