

Adopted by the Village Board of Trustees on March 17, 2008



CHICAGO / HARLEM AVENUE DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



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PART 1

The District

- Introduction
- Why Plan Now?
- Goals and Objectives





Figure 1.01: Gotsch Building at 1101-13 Chicago Avenue



Figure 1.02: Terra Cotta Building Facade at 1142-46 Chicago Avenue

* Source : 2007 Architectural and Historical Survey, Prepared by Thomason and Associates, Nashville, TN.

Introduction

In 1902, Oak Park separated from Cicero Township and was organized as an independent municipality. The Village limits included large sections of vacant land, much of which was developed in the first decades of the twentieth century. As the Village grew the need for additional business services resulted in the construction of commercial buildings along Chicago and Harlem Avenues. The electric streetcar line along Harlem provided access to shoppers and by the 1910s a number of brick buildings were built along the blocks at the intersection of these two streets.

Construction in these blocks increased as the population of Oak Park soared in the 1920s to over 60,000 residents. While Lake Street continued to be the main shopping district of the Village, several new brick buildings with elaborate terra cotta facades were constructed along Chicago Avenue. These included the Gotsch Building at 1101-13 Chicago Avenue and the building at 1142-46 Chicago Avenue. These buildings housed various businesses such as drug stores, furniture stores and a bank. Another notable building of this period was the North End Tire Shop which occupied several buildings in the 1100 block of Chicago.

Chicago and Harlem Avenues remained busy thoroughfares in Oak Park into the mid-20th century. Commercial building construction continued

to move east into the residential area with several brick and stone veneer buildings constructed in the 1950s on Chicago Avenue. A notable development from these years was the construction of the identical plan Belleforte Apartments at 1030 and 1040 Chicago Avenue in 1958. Additional commercial buildings were constructed along these blocks of Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the mid-20th century Harlem Avenue became one of the more prominent north/south streets in this section of the Village and was the dividing line between Oak Park and the adjacent Village of River Forest. The importance of this street led to the gradual removal of all original dwellings in the project area and their replacement with post-1957 buildings in the late 20th century. No historic buildings were identified within the project area along Harlem Avenue. Today, the project area is composed of modern buildings along Harlem Avenue, both historic and non-historic buildings on Chicago Avenue and historic dwellings built on the side streets such as N. Marion, Erie and Superior.

Why Plan Now?

Now is an optimal time to institute a plan for improving the Chicago / Harlem Avenue Business District (the District). Oak Park has long been recognized for its high quality of life due to great schools, neighborhoods, retail and architecture. The businesses in this district are very neighborhood oriented with a grocer, a variety of services and restaurants all within walking distance. One the primary anchors to the district Petersen's ice cream shop and adjoining restaurant were the landmarks of the neighborhood. The recent closing of Petersen's restaurant has created a challenge to recruit a new business with a compelling identity to fill the void. The available space provides an opportunity to create another neighborhood bistro that would benefit from the inherent neighborhood loyalty in Oak Park.

As timeless as many of these businesses appear they will all benefit from a concerted effort to update the business district and storefront appearance to compete with recent retail additions to downtown and adjoining Village of River Forest. The plan provides insights for keeping current through streetscape, facade and interior renovations. Having an active business association is a major ingredient to establishing a thriving district. This plan provides a framework for improving the business association effectiveness as a marketing and communication tool, as well as a potential project coordination and funding mechanism.

Strategically recruiting the appropriate businesses into the area is a critical element that will impact the success of the Chicago / Harlem Avenue Business District Plan. A thorough market analysis of the neighborhood makes it possible to ascertain the types of businesses that benefit the area and complement the visions set forth as part of this plan. The use of design elements and catalyst retail improvement projects will enliven the area. The plan aspires to create vibrant, thriving business districts which will always offer quality retail options to its residents.

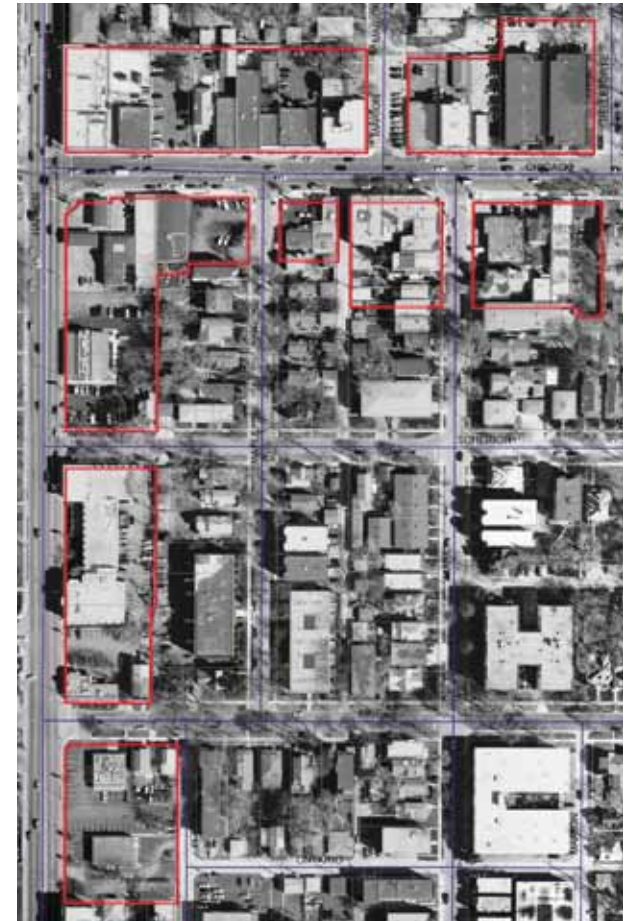


Figure 1.03: Chicago / Harlem Avenue Business District

Goals and Objectives

The Chicago / Harlem Avenue district is a healthy neighborhood retail area that contains all the right attributes to be a thriving and vibrant business district. The goal of this study is to establish a vision for the district that will highlight its image and further its marketability. The focus of this plan will be on enhancing the district's image while improving existing businesses and strategically attracting high quality retail to supplement the existing ones.

Improving Existing Businesses:

Locally based district businesses add to the uniqueness of the district. Improving upon these available community resources will help attract and retain area customers and visitors.

Attracting High Quality Retail to the Area:

Currently there are not many vacant spaces available in the business district and future retail space should be occupied by businesses that complement the existing market base.

Figure 1.04: District Image Improvements



New businesses should serve to attract additional customers to the area and strengthen the business district's character.

Establishing a Compelling Vision:

The Harlem / Chicago Business District has a unique historic setting and its businesses offer a wide array of specialty goods, this is not readily apparent to area visitors. To create a stronger image for the district that capitalizes on its unique individuality is at the forefront of this study. A strong business organization and physical improvements will help achieve this objective.

Creating an Inviting Pedestrian Experience:

Streetscape improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience will provide additional safety and comfort to area customers. This can help increase foot traffic in the area which in turn will benefit all businesses.

Providing Improved and Convenient Parking:

Parking improvements such as the addition of landscape buffers that will complement the streetscape improvements while allowing for better layouts



Figure 1.05: Existing Business Improvements

that will increase parking capacity. Shared parking opportunities for businesses with different peak hour times can help meet additional parking needs arising from new tenants.

Preserve Existing Historic Structures:

The district overlaps with the Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie School of Architecture Historic District which includes the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio. Established in the early 1970's this historic district strives to preserve the historic character of the Village by ensuring that the historical character of building exteriors is maintained. Since some of these structures exist within this business district, they should be preserved as per the regulations of the Village.

Improve the Quality of Harlem Avenue:

The parcels along Harlem Avenue fall under the Perimeter Overlay Zone. The perimeter overlay zone was created primarily to improve the visual quality of the perimeter area by encouraging a mixed-use retail zone. It is also intended to limit undesirable uses and protect the neighboring residential areas.

PART 2

Planning Process

The Team

Planning Process



The Team

A Multi-Disciplinary Team Approach: The approach for creating this Chicago / Harlem Avenue District Neighborhood Plan is a culmination of the work and collaboration of three firms; Solomon Cordwell Buenz (SCB), Business Districts Inc. (BDI) and Fish Transportation Group (FTG). Each firm provided distinct professional expertise required to overcome the major challenges of the district. Solomon Cordwell Buenz., the prime consultant, managed the process, coordinated community participation, established an urban design approach, and created build-out scenarios for the district. BDI provided an in depth understanding of the current retail market and capacity of the district with information on retail types and sizes, as well as the spending power and number of potential customers for this corridor. FTG provided guidance on various transportation issues including parking, traffic counts, road widths and intersection improvement schemes.

Market and Business Model

Establishing a market and business model for the district was the first step in this planning process. The model analyzed the district's current business needs and identified recruitment opportunities for future businesses based on the realities of

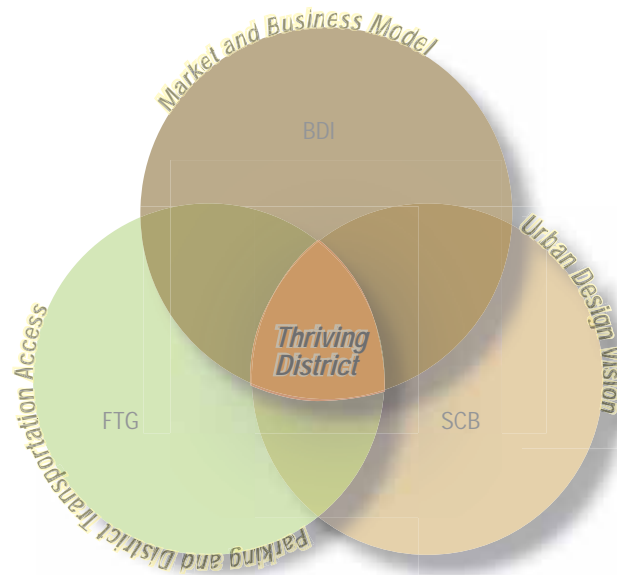


Figure 2.01: Planning Model

• Philosophically our approach identifies and relies on three interrelated elements to create a thriving district.

- *Creating a Market / Business Model*
- *Establishing a Urban Design Vision*
- *Developing Implementation Strategies*

this particular market. Every retail establishment has specific needs such as physical space requirements, visibility and access issues, parking, and signage. When the business goals are clearly articulated for the district then the urban design issues can be tailored to coordinate and enhance the retail plan.

Urban Design Vision

The physical design of the district plays a major role in the identity of the place and can be a significant indicator of neighborhood vitality. Creating a compelling urban design vision is important to changing the perception of any district. The Chicago / Harlem Avenues design elements include, roadways, building configurations, parking layouts, traffic circulation, streetscape, landscape, storefront design, and signage. As an urban design strategy is developed for the district each component needs to be tested for impacts, financial feasibility, and the overall implementation requirements.

Implementation Strategies

Testing ideas for impact in the market place is critical to ensuring the goals and recommendations of the plan are achievable on many levels. Early in the planning process ideas are tested with the community, business owners, residents and potential customers for feasibility and desirability.

The Planning Process



Figure 2.02: Planning Process

I. Existing Conditions and Data Collection & Issue Identification

The initial phase set the stage for understanding the critical issues and concerns of the Village administration, residents and business community. The planning team collected all critical physical planning information including a building and parcel land use inventory and regulatory requirements. While carefully listening to the Village and community regarding their primary goals and objectives of this study an initial district assessment of all existing conditions including a zoning, land use, economic/market assessment, transportation/traffic impacts and site amenities was completed. After compiling the data the team evaluated the criteria for impacts, opportunities and constraints.

Community Session I

This meeting was focused on identifying critical issues in the district. The planning team presented some initial district findings and observations and then engaged the community in dialogue to identify critical issues for the Chicago / Harlem Avenue Business District.

II. Planning Strategies

The consultants examined and analyzed the economic, regulatory and physical design factors impacting the district. BDI analyzed market factors while SCB and FTG assessed the physical design factors by conducting a visual and building utilization assessment. Through these exercises the consultants developed a realistic list of planning goals to guide the marketing and improvement

strategy for the district. These initial goals were presented at a Community Session for public verification or revision.

Community Session II

The team presented a variety of planning alternatives and design ideas for consideration by and feed back from the community. These alternatives included streetscape and facade improvements, gateway and signage for the district and business strategies.

III. District Vision

The consultants with Village input identified and prioritized district improvement opportunities. A graphic overlay of the project area was prepared with a design vision illustrating the types of improvements and enhancements to help existing businesses and attract a wider customer base. This design concept was presented as a visual concept drawing including site plans and perspective views. The design concept was addressed specific goals and characteristics unique to Chicago / Harlem Avenue District.

Community Session III

This final meeting was focused on reaching consensus on the plan recommendations and community priorities. This was an informative presentation by the team which summarized the plan recommendations for feedback and prioritization of key components.



Figure 2.03: Community Meeting 2 Presentation



Figure 2.04: Discussion with Consulting Team

IV. Implementation Strategy

The consultants prepared a District Framework Plan to include site plans, design guidelines, streetscape enhancements and business development goals.

Site Strategies

SCB developed a district site plan and illustrations of parking layouts, streetscape and façade improvements.

Business Improvement Opportunities List

After reviewing the market data and gaining input from the community and village the team identified key businesses to recruit to vacant properties and strategies for business improvements.

Establishing an Action Plan

Motivating businesses to participate in a business association and encouraging the Village to be active in this district will lead to the success of this plan. The plan identifies steps towards improving the district image.

PART 3

Land Use and Zoning

Current Zoning

Current Land Use

Existing Retail and Business Character



PART 3: LAND USE AND ZONING



Figure 3.01: Existing Zoning

Current Zoning

Figure 3.01 illustrates the current zoning for the district. There are 54 parcels within the study area boundary, most of them along the frontage of both Chicago and Harlem Avenues. These properties are zoned under the General Business category (B-1/B-2) with the exception of two small parcels on Belleforte Street that are zoned Two Family (R-5). These two properties serve as a driveway to existing parking areas. Of the properties outside of the study area boundary, just behind the General Business zone, 48 are zoned Two Family (R-5), 45 are zoned Multiple Family (R6 & R7) and only three are zoned Single Family (R-2). Of the 52 parcels zoned General Business, 11 have uses other than retail. The district overlaps with the Perimeter Overlay District which seeks to protect and regulate gateways to Oak Park by improving visual quality, encouraging mix uses, protecting adjacent residential areas, restricting undesirable signage and limiting undesirable uses.

Two-Family District

The zoning regulations for R-5, Two-family residential developments are as follows:

- Maximum allowable height: 35 feet
- Minimum lot size: 5000 square feet
- Lot coverage:
 - Single-Family 35% structure
 - 65% with parking
 - Two-Family 40% structure
 - 70% with parking
- Front yard: 20 feet
- Parking regulations: The parking ratio for R-5 residential depends on the number of units of the development.
 - Single Family = 2 spaces;
 - W/O-Family = 2 spaces per dwelling unit.

General Business

The zoning regulations for B-1/B-2, General Business developments are as follows:

- Maximum allowable height: 45 feet
- Minimum lot size: no minimum for business uses
- Lot coverage including structures and parking: 75% of the land area
- Total coverage dedicated to open spaces (excluding service walks, driveways and parking) : 2 5’%
- Front yard: not required
- Parking regulations: One parking space per 500 SF of retail space; .75 spaces per employee for office space.

Perimeter Overlay District

The zoning regulations for the Perimeter Overlay District, which supersedes any underlying zoning districts, are as follows:

- Bulk and yard regulations: underlying zoning district applies
- Prohibited Uses: Laundromat and laundrettes; second hand and pawn shops; currency exchanges; loan companies; and employment agencies.
- Limited uses: Beauty supply stores permitted but not within 500 feet of similar use.
- Development Standards:
 - Hours of operations between 6 a.m. and 12 a.m. for drive-in businesses other than pharmacies.
 - No neon, illuminated signage or flashing light area allowed
- Window signage limited to 25% or less of window area

Issues with current zoning

Non conformance with Perimeter Overlay District Regulations

Although laundromats and laundrettes are not permitted in the Perimeter Overlay District, currently there are two buildings used for that purpose: the Oak River Cleaners and Quick Wash Coin Laundry. In addition, window signage over the limit of 25% of the window area is being utilized by the Villager Food. The Village should work with business owners on facade improvements programs to phase out signage not permitted by the regulations where possible.



Figure 3.02: Existing Window Signage



 Study Area Boundary

Land Use







-  Commercial
-  Institutional or Community Facility
-  Multi-Family
-  Parking Facility
-  Single Family
-  Banking Facility



Figure 3.03: Existing Land Use

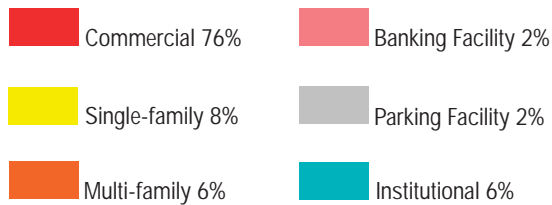
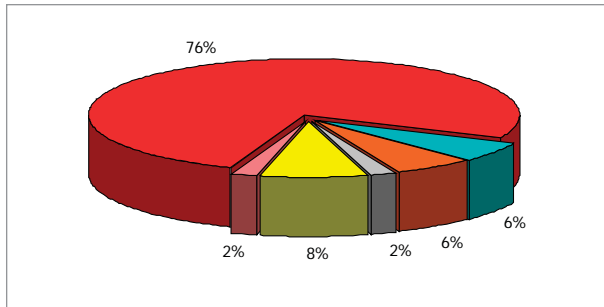


Figure 3.04: Land Use for Parcels Within the Study Area (refer Figure 3.03)

Residential

Of the 54 parcels in the District, 52 parcels are zoned B-1/B-2 and two are zoned R-5. Of these, seven parcels that are zoned for business have residential uses in them. Four parcels contain single family uses (8%) and three have multi-family uses (6%). Figure 3.04 shows the percentages of land use area on the corridor.

Institutional Uses

The district includes one health center facility, the Oak Park Health Center, which has been categorized under Institutional use.

Parking

Parking within the district that are dedicated to a specific business were categorized under land use of the business being serviced. Therefore, only one parcel is identified to be solely dedicated to parking and has been identified as a parking facility (formally known as Lot 7). Metered parking available on Marion Street was not included in the parcel land use category since this parking falls within the roadway right of way.

Banking Facility

During this study, a vacant building was demolished and being rebuilt as a banking facility. This was designated as a separate land use category.

Building Heights

With a few exceptions, most of the buildings in the district are one or two stories high. There are two prominent two story buildings in the district. One is at the northeast corner of the intersection between Chicago and Harlem Avenues and the other is at the southwest corner of the intersection between Marion Street and Chicago Avenue. The health center, the Petersen’s building located on Chicago Avenue and Marion Street and the Village Eye Physicians building are three stories high. The multi family buildings on Harlem Avenue south of Erie Street are four stories high.



Figure 3.05: Non-Conforming Uses on Chicago Avenue



Figure 3.06: Two Story Retail on Chicago Avenue.



Figure 3.07: One-Story Retail on Chicago Avenue.



| Retail and Businesses |

Existing Retail and Business Character

The study area currently comprises a total of 46 businesses of all types. There are 15 stores, 24 service and seven food and beverage businesses. Of the 24 service businesses, 9 are considered personal services including three cleaners and three hair salons. Other service businesses include financial (9) and medical services (6). The food and beverage services in the district include four sit down restaurants, an ice cream parlor, a wine shop and a grocery store.

The majority of retail businesses in the district currently occupy single-story and two-story structures. While many of the existing retail buildings are well maintained and include adequate signage and awnings, there are still some buildings that are in need of facade improvements. There are four auto-related businesses in the district, two restaurants, one grocery store and one gas station. Although not categorized as auto-oriented, many other businesses in the district provide parking which promotes the use of cars in the district. This parking availability adjacent to buildings reduces the amount of pedestrians walking through the district and reduces the amount of potential walking costumers.

In addition, some of the parking lots provided by retailers are in front of their businesses, thereby setting back the building from the edge of the street. This further disrupts any pedestrian activity due to the large number of curb cuts that are associated with this type of development.

Figure 3.08: Existing Businesses in the District

PART 4

Districts Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

SWOT Analysis



SWOT ANALYSIS

In formulating improvements to the Chicago / Harlem Business District, it is important to consider the district's relative strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, or "SWOT." These factors contributed to the district's current situation and influence its business' success.

Strengths: Assets that will most likely continue and remain as key building blocks:

- As the market conditions analysis determined, nearby residents have strong purchasing power.
- Long standing businesses like Dressel's Hardware, the Villager, Alioto's, and the Oak Park Cyclery convey an image of business sustainability that enhances customer confidence in the quality of all area businesses.
- The Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio not only adds its visitor bonus market, it also supports the area's quality image.
- Signalized access off Harlem Avenue provides exposure to over 35,500 drivers who can visit immediately or return in response to something that caught their attention.
- Public transit along Harlem Avenue brings additional customers and makes it easy for employees to commute to work in district businesses.
- The Oak Park Shuttle Service provides free transportation to and from the district. A shuttle stop is located on the southeast corner of Marion Street and Chicago Avenue with shuttle service every half hour. This makes the district very accessible from other areas of Oak Park as well as transit locations.
- A number of the key district buildings are owner occupied making the connection between building and business improvement more direct than when owners must increase rents to see a financial gain from building or landscape improvements.
- New businesses like Rave Wine and the recently purchased

Petersen's keep the attraction fresh for frequent district patrons and bring new customers.

- In project interviews, local business owners reported that Chicago / Harlem Business District rents are more affordable than the rents in other nearby commercial areas.
- The attractive surrounding neighborhoods not only provide customers, they convey an image of safety and prosperity that makes local businesses more successful.
- Chicago Avenue's 14,700 average daily traffic level allows for safe pedestrian crossings.
- Village of Oak Park and Oak Park Development Corporation programs have supported important appearance enhancements to the Chicago / Harlem Business District and offer opportunities to build on that success.

Weaknesses: Liabilities that will most likely remain and must be "worked around":

- Although the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio complex is an important attraction and contains the Ginkgo Tree Gift Shop its connection to the district is weakened by a two block separation from the other commercial businesses.
- Designed before automobiles were as large or numerous, the Chicago / Harlem Business District must fit cars into tight spaces.
- Because the Illinois Department of Transportation controls Harlem Avenue, the Village of Oak Park has little influence over access policies or its appearance.

Opportunities: Positive trends or elements that can become strengths if properly developed:

- The gateways, entry points to this district, are important marketing opportunities that currently do little to improve business volumes. At Harlem Avenue, there could be directional information and a hint of the business quality with high quality landscaping. At the area's easternmost business, The Ginkgo Tree Gift Shop, the opportunity

is to improve the connection to Frank Lloyd Wright tourists.

- Each business in the district has opportunities to connect more strongly to tourism by offering merchandise targeted to visitors and by advertising in Convention and Visitors Bureau initiatives.
- Well-connected neighborhood shopping districts have “Third Places,” alternatives to home and work for meeting people. Those neighborhood businesses are often coffee houses like the Harrison Street Arts District’s Buzz Café. In its heyday, Petersen’s served that function for this district. As Petersen’s is revitalized and other restaurants are sought, it is important to find that business that can connect neighbors.
- Although this project uses the name Chicago / Harlem Business District to describe this area, there is no district logo. Additionally, that is a cumbersome identifier not commonly used by the public to name this cluster. The advantage to a stronger name and image is its power to create a positive association that all district businesses share and transfer to new entrants.
- In business districts like Chicago / Harlem where vacancies are few and opportunities to add new space are virtually nonexistent, growth must come from existing businesses. That growth depends on consistent delivery of the high quality business operations and frequent rejuvenation of store and restaurant appearance and customer offering. The key is careful business monitoring and annual evaluation of opportunities to improve.
- With the limited number of businesses in this district, meetings and joint marketing must be focused and sized to meet the available resources. Two to four content heavy meetings will be more effective than quick monthly meetings. Communication via e-mail can provide timely information between meetings.
- Marketing efforts need to focus on the surrounding neighborhoods and Frank Lloyd Wright tourism visitors. The critical marketing piece is a small, well-designed business directory and map.

Threats: Negative trends or elements that can become a weakness if not addressed:

- As is common in vintage shopping districts throughout the United

States, many study area buildings are in complicated, second generation ownership that results in multi-layer decision making that delays repairs and other management decisions.

- When there are local business organizations, some business owners expect the organization’s efforts to replace their responsibility for individual marketing and contribution to various expenses. Those who better understand the need to participate and contribute to organization program grow to resent their less active peers. As a result, once active business owners do less causing a downward spiral of reduced efforts. The Chicago / Harlem Business District has experienced this problem as a few owners bore the majority of responsibility for holiday decorations.
- Operating an independent store or restaurant in a competitive market like Oak Park’s requires an exhausting level of attention. Good business owners spread that work level seasonally and over well-trained support staff. Still, even the best businesses can suffer setbacks that leave an owner unable to attend to the myriad of details necessary to maintain top performance. The result can be a gradual decline that must be stopped before it is too late to reverse. A few businesses in this district are exhibiting the deferred maintenance and cleanliness problems that signal tired business owners.
- Pedestrian unfriendly Harlem Avenue traffic undermines the appeal of the district by limiting pedestrian access from the west and diminishing the appeal of commercial space fronting on Harlem north of Chicago Avenue. Although improvement options are limited, any changes will impact all businesses by improving the overall pedestrian safety perception.
- Although studies show adequate parking to support district businesses, that parking will never be perceived as adequate because it is curbside and clustered at a few locations that cannot match each business.

SWOT Summary

Although opportunities to improve exist, the Chicago / Harlem Business District offers an enviable business framework. This study’s primary focus on improving the appearance and pedestrian environment promises to address key district improvement needs.

PART 5

Market Analysis

Market Conditions



INTRODUCTION

Oak Park’s Chicago / Harlem Business District is the heart of a prosperous traditional neighborhood where residents value their family oriented lifestyles, architectural excellence, and a long history of quality commercial development clustered to serve residents. This neighborhood asset has always offered residents the convenience of nearby shopping that today’s newest developments seek to provide by mixing stores and restaurants with residential development. The challenge posed to this market review is preserving this valuable resource as buildings age, family businesses transition to new generations, and market conditions change the relationship between nearby residents and the stores and restaurants of Chicago Avenue.

MARKET CONDITIONS

Project Area Description:

The study area currently contains 46 businesses of all types, two vacant commercial spaces, a nursing home / mental health facility, and six residential buildings. Figure 5.01 illustrates the existing business mix:

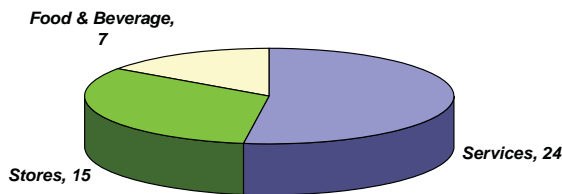


Figure 5.01: Existing Business Mix Along the District

Although services are the dominate use it is important to recognize the neighborhood convenience nature of those services. As Figure 5.02 documents, the district’s services satisfy neighborhood resident’s needs.

Services like dry cleaners, hair care purveyors, dance schools, investment advisors, and medical practitioners, offer convenience to neighborhood residents in the same manner as gift stores, grocers, and hardware businesses. Consequently, these services strengthen the special relationship that this district has with its surrounding neighborhoods. As the public comment sessions associated with this project confirmed, adding more food and beverage businesses would provide more variety and strengthen the clusters draw to the neighborhood and its visitors.

Market Characteristics

Business owners interviewed for this analysis consistently pointed to the high quality market available to businesses in the Chicago / Harlem District. The first column in Table 5-A captures key

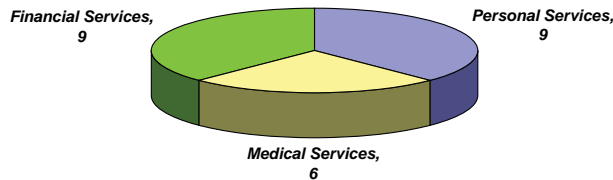


Figure 5.02: District Services

demographic characteristics of the primary market, the five census block groups surrounding this district. Figure 5.03 illustrates the census block groups that comprise this market. As Table 5-B documents, this dense, high-income population has great spending power that can support a variety of businesses.

To understand the quality of this market, it is helpful to consider that all 22 stores could have sales of \$1 million and the Chicago / Harlem Business District would be capturing only 5% of resident spending.



Figure 5.03: Demographic Data

© 2006 by Experian/Applied Geographic Solutions.

	Primary Market	0.5 Miles	5 Minute Drive
Population 2006			
Population	24,389	7,208	54,197
Average Household Size	2.43	2.2	2.2
Population Density per Square Mile	6,019	9,178	8,058
Population in Group Quarters	1,235	601	1,506
Total Population Median Age	40.2	40.7	38.6
Education 2006			
% Population Over 25 College Educated	85.4%	82.2%	77.0%
Household Income 2006			
Household Average Income	\$168,988	\$145,990	\$106,656
Median Household Income	\$96,729	\$76,355	\$62,925
Housing Units 2006			
% In Current Residence 5 Plus Years	40.5	35.0	31.0
Demographic data © 2006 by Experian/Applied Geographic Solutions; BDI.			

Table 5-A: Key Demographics

Total Retail Expenditure	\$434,675,002
Drinking Places	\$2,305,865
Limited Service Restaurants	\$25,169,972
Full Service Restaurants	\$25,566,159
Restaurant Subtotal	\$53,041,996
Grocery Stores	\$72,409,714
Demographic data © 2006 by Experian/Applied Geographic Solutions, BDI.	

Table 5-B: Expenditures

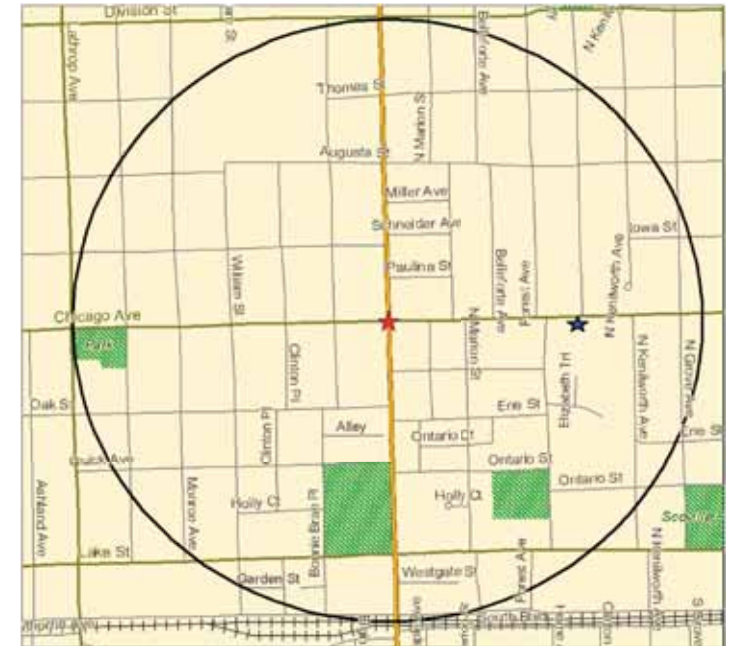


Figure 5.04: 1/2 Mile Radius

Within this larger market is a subset of residents within a 1/2 mile walking distance. Those residents should be the heaviest users of this district. Their demographic character is reported in the second column of Table 5-A. Figure 5.04 illustrates this 1/2 mile radius.

It is important to note that the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, its location identified by the blue star on Figure 5.04, falls well within this walking radius. 80,000 visitors a year tour that important historic property. The Oak Park Convention and Visitor Bureau estimates that the total attraction power of Oak Park's Frank Lloyd Wright building collection is 250,000 visits per year. Many of those visitors are involved in walking tours that lead them into the Chicago / Harlem Business District. This is an especially important bonus market for area restaurants.

PART 6

Transportation and Parking

Existing Traffic Conditions

Transportation and Parking Issues

Existing Parking Counts



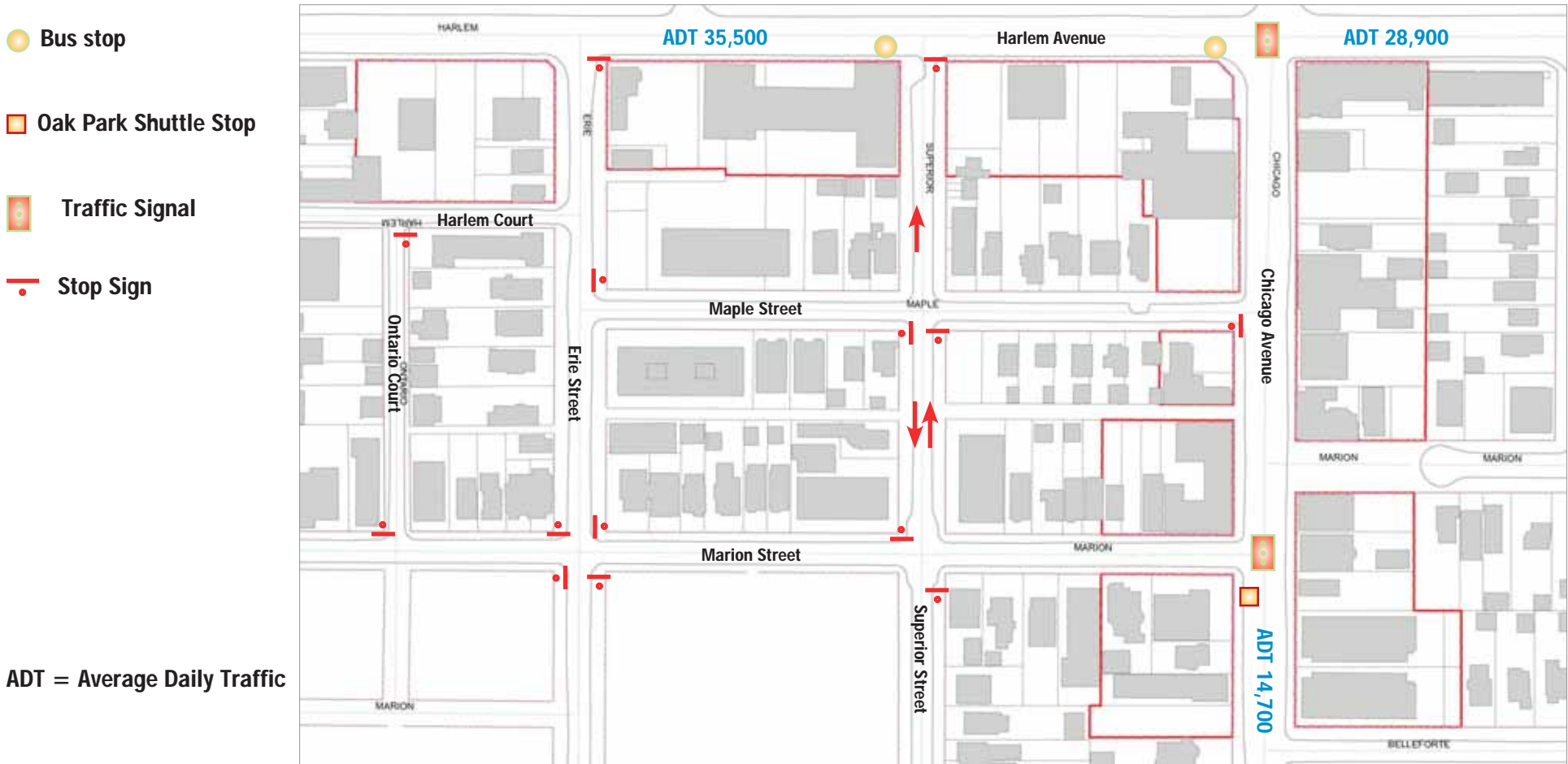


Figure 6.01: Existing Traffic Conditions

Figure 6.01 presents the existing traffic conditions in district. Harlem Avenue (IL RT 43) is under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Average daily traffic volumes (ADT) are slightly higher south of Chicago Avenue with 35,500 vehicles per day, and 28,900 vehicles per day north of Chicago Avenue. Chicago Avenue carries 14,700 vehicles per day. Traffic signals are located at the intersections of Harlem Avenue / Chicago Avenue and at Chicago Avenue / Marion Street. Most other intersections are controlled by stop signs. Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus stops are located on Harlem Avenue at Chicago Avenue and Superior Street. The Oak Park Shuttle stop is located on Chicago Avenue at Marion Street.

Transportation and Parking Issues

Roadways

Chicago Avenue: Chicago Avenue between Harlem Avenue and Belleforte Street is a retail corridor that includes Dressel’s Hardware, Villager Food, professional and medical offices, specialty retail stores, cleaners, restaurants (including a Giordano’s) and some multi-family buildings.

Harlem Avenue: Harlem Avenue (IL 43) between Chicago Avenue and Erie Street also serves as a retail corridor but it is more auto-oriented. It includes the BP gas station, two restaurant chains, the Oak Park Health Center (a nursing home and mental patient facility) and apartment buildings. This corridor is characterized by large parking lots. IL 43 is designated as part of the Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) system, which is a network of major arterials used to supplement to regional expressway system. The Illinois Dept. of Transportation (IDOT) prepared individualized recommendation plans for each SRA. For “urban” SRA routes like IL 43, roadway design must be balanced between traffic service and geometric design within the constraints of limited right-of-way (ROW) and dense adjacent development. Recommended improvements are focused on traffic signalization, access, and parking, rather than widening or new construction. Recommended roadway improvements for the segment that includes the Chicago / Harlem study area includes:

- 66’ – 104’ ROW
- Two 10’-11’ traffic lanes
- 0 – 10’ flush median
- 8’ – 11’ parkways

- left turns at signalized intersections only with all other access being right-in/right-out
- interconnected traffic signals

Frontage Parking: O’Connor’s Cleaner (Figure 6.02) on Marion Street and New Era’s Kitchen and baths on Maple Street have dedicated parking lots along the frontage and the buildings are set back from the street edge. This setback causes a break in the continuity of the retail edge at these locations.

Harlem Avenue Pedestrian Safety: Harlem Avenue provides a connection to downtown Oak Park / Lake Street as well as a bus stop location for transit riders. High traffic volumes, higher travel speeds, and narrow sidewalks along Harlem Avenue give an uncomfortable and unsafe feel for pedestrians. Streetscape improvements such as decorative buffers would improve this environment.

Chicago and Harlem Avenue Intersection: This is the intersection between Harlem Avenue and Chicago Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the Harlem / Chicago Avenue Business District. It is defined by commercial uses in its four corners, including a bank, the BP gas station and other commercial buildings. A bus stop is located at the southeast corner. The east and west approaches to the intersection are offset. It is a congested intersection further aggravated by the multiple entries to the gas station. Left-turning traffic from westbound Chicago Avenue to southbound Harlem Avenue queues up during peak periods.

Located at the western boundary of the Harlem / Chicago Business District, this intersection serves as the entry point to the district along Chicago

Avenue and is an opportunity for the Village to mark the District’s entrance and promote its image (Figure 6.03). The Harlem / Chicago intersection has a high traffic demand of not only vehicular traffic but trucks utilizing Harlem Avenue / State Highway 43. Access to and from the BP gas station increases the vehicular conflicts in the area. The many curb cuts at this corner parcel limit pedestrian access, including safe-standing at a corner bus stop. The right-turn lane onto Chicago Avenue from Harlem Avenue is restricted due to one on-street parallel parking that stops approximately 40 feet short of the intersection.



Figure 6.02: Parking Lot at O’Connor’s Cleaners



Figure 6.03: The Chicago Avenue / Harlem Avenue Intersection

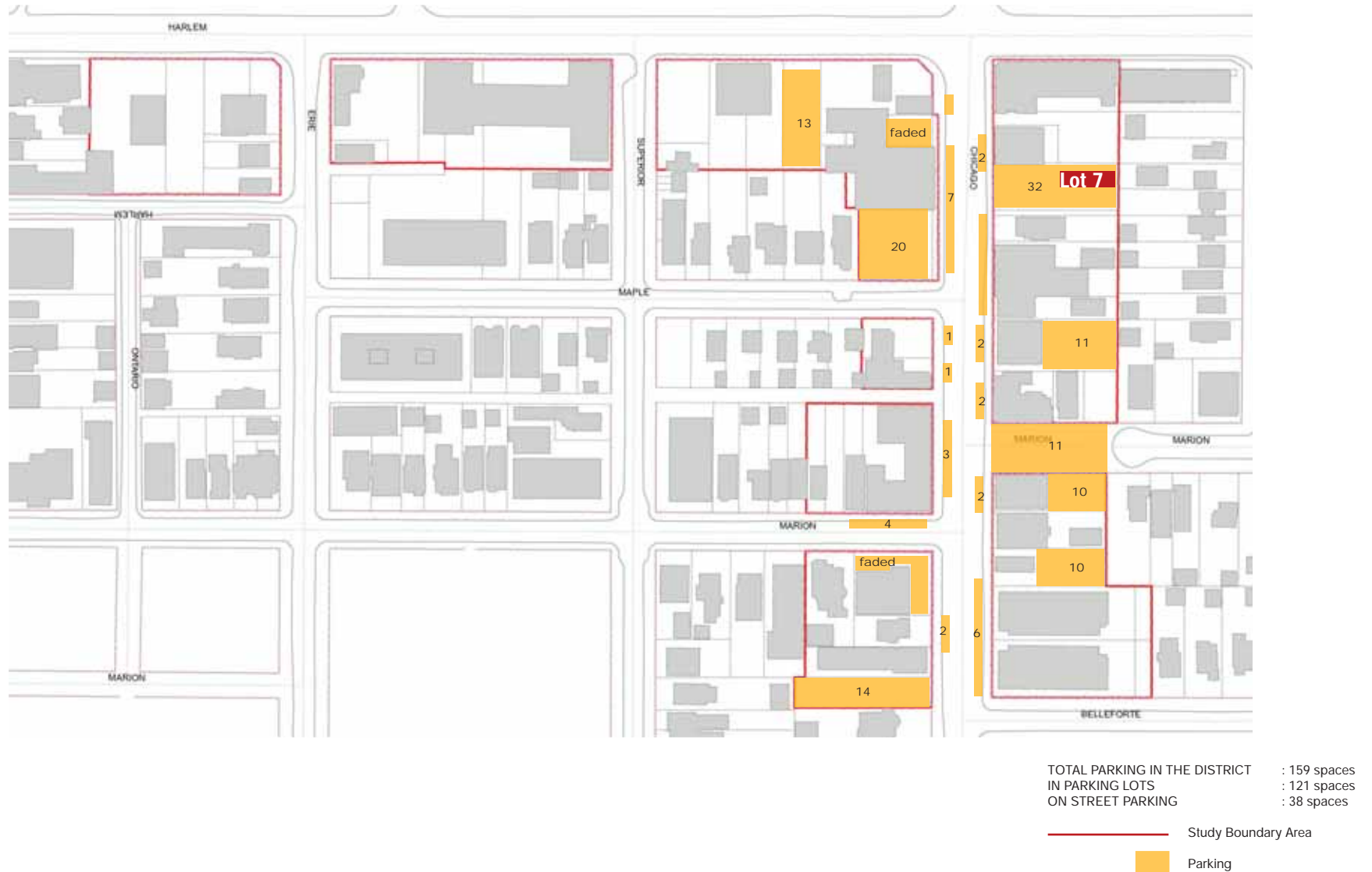


Figure 6.04: Existing Parking Counts

Parking

Parking Supply: As shown in Figure 6.04, different types of parking exist along Chicago Avenue, including public and private, on- and off-street spaces. A total of 159 spaces are available along Chicago Avenue, with just over half (51%) being public spaces (both on- and off-street) and 49% located in private, off-street lots supported by a specific retailer. Of the public spaces, 24% are on-street spaces along Chicago Avenue and 27% are located in Lot 7 and the Marion Street Lot (Figure 6.05). All of the public spaces are metered. Meter time limits along Chicago Avenue and in the Marion Street lot are 2-hours. Lot 7 has a combination of 2-hour and 12-hour meters.

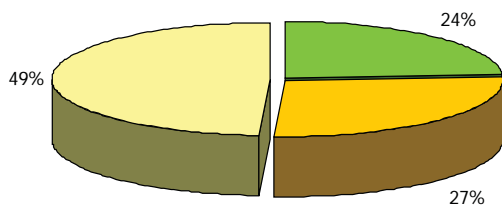
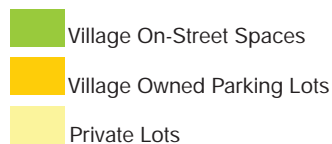


Figure 6.05: Existing Parking on Chicago Ave.



Parking Demand: Recent parking utilization counts combined with data from a previous parking survey indicate that adequate parking appears to be available for the parking demand generated by existing businesses along Chicago Avenue. On a typical weekday, the parking spaces on Chicago Avenue were about half used. Saturday usage was higher,

being nearly full at 11:00 a.m., but dropping off just after 12:00 noon. Overnight parking is allowed in Lot 7. According to the Village of Oak Park Parking Services, a total of 16 24-hour permits are available for Lot 7, of which 13 have been sold.

Parking Turnover: Parking turnover is defined as the number of times a parking space is used per day and indicates how long, on average, a vehicle is parked in a space. Generally, the average time a vehicle is parked in a space is about one hour, below the 2-hour meter limit. However, during the weekdays, the 12-hour parking spaces in Lot 7 have a low turnover rate (very little turnover of the space). Low turnover limits the accessibility to public parking in the area.

Parking layouts: Although many businesses have designated parking areas adjacent to their buildings, the layout of these parking facilities may not take full advantage of the space available. Lack of striping, proper parking lot delineation and organization of vehicular circulation contribute to making these parking facilities operate inefficiently.

Parking planting buffers: A lack of appropriate parking buffers in off-street parking lots creates a negative visual impact on the business district. Planting buffers can delineate vehicular and pedestrian circulation areas as well as provide for a more pleasant environment.

Overall Parking Strategies for the District

Though the current parking supply appears sufficient to meet the demands of the district today, the addition of any businesses in the area (especially restaurants) could require additional parking. Since there are no vacant parcels in the area, no new development is expected in the near future. Future parking needs created by the expansion of existing businesses or the attraction of new businesses in existing locations will have to be fulfilled by a combination of parking strategies, including additional spaces on off-street lots (as possible), additional on-street parking spaces resulting from curb closing or narrowing, the review of parking permit and allowable parking time limits, and coordination of existing parking resources.



Figure 6.06: Villager Food Parking Lot at Chicago Avenue



Figure 6.07: Marion Street Parking Lot

PART 7

District Concept Plans

Overall Streetscape Improvements

District Gateway

Parking Upgrades

Facade Improvements

District Signage and Wayfinding



OVERALL STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS



Figure 7.01: Streetscape Diagram

The District

The Chicago / Harlem Avenue Business District in Oak Park has the potential to strengthen its quality as a unique retail area offering exceptional shopping opportunities alongside a rich cultural setting. Addressing opportunities for improvements in the district can help highlight its distinctive character. Streetscape improvements, the creation and definition of gateways, parking upgrades, façade improvements and additional signage can work together to define and emphasize the neighborhood character, enhance the pedestrian experience, and draw attention to potential customers and visitors.

Overall Streetscape Improvements

A pedestrian friendly environment is important for a successful business district. Streetscape improvements can enhance the district’s image



Figure 7.02: Existing Streetscape Amenities Throughout the District

while providing a better sense of comfort and safety to pedestrians. Planter boxes, benches, trash cans and other streetscape amenities throughout the district can be strategically located and their quality improved to showcase the district’s image. The use of existing flower boxes and planting beds throughout the district can be maximized through planting improvements and appropriate maintenance. Additional street trees and the strategic extension of plantings beds (where appropriate) can help create a consistent landscape. Currently, individual businesses are responsible for the care of planters and landscaped areas in front of their business along with supplemental watering by the Village. The Harlem / Chicago District Business Association can help support the maintenance of existing and any additional landscape improvements. Year round low maintenance plant material can minimize maintenance efforts.

Chicago Avenue is the central spine of the district, but its intensity and impact are not fully taken advantage of. Eight-foot striped medians in the center of Chicago Avenue could be reconfigured to provide planted medians transforming Chicago Avenue into a landscaped boulevard (Figure 7.05). Appropriate line of sight triangles and setbacks at intersections should be taken into consideration during construction. Along with other sidewalk landscape improvements this will make Chicago Avenue a pedestrian friendly landscaped thoroughfare that will better serve the district’s identity and create a better sense of place.

Currently, many customers rely on their automobile to access area businesses. Drivers expect parking to be adjacent to their destination but this is not conducive to a successful business district. Providing for safe intersections and crosswalks can provide confidence as well as enjoyment to area visitors, encouraging them to park once and walk between businesses. Reducing driveway widths and the number of curb cuts will provide for a more continuous sidewalk for better pedestrian circulation and safety. Crosswalks should be better delineated and additional crosswalks should be added across Chicago Avenue from Alioto’s and the former Petersen’s Restaurant building. Bump-outs should be provided at intersections. Brick pavers can be used at bump out and carriage sidewalks throughout the district.

To encourage bicycle use in the Chicago/Harlem Business District, bicycle racks should be strategically placed throughout the district. Currently, a mix of permanent and moveable bike racks are provided at a few locations. Some are too close to planting beds and are obstructed by trash cans and other site furnishings (Figure 7.03). With more people choosing alternate modes of transportation such as cycling, there is a greater need to provide bicycle parking facilities for employees, customers, visitors and couriers. Bike rack design can help add character and identity to the district by providing an ‘artistic’ rather than an ‘industrial’ flare. New bike racks for the district should provide large diameter tubes that curved gently for users’ safety, contain heavy materials for durability, and allow the bicycle

Overall Streetscape Improvements



Figure 7.03: Existing Bike Rack in Front of Villager Food



Figure 7.04: Proposed Stainless Steel Ring Bike Rack



Figure 7.05: Narrow Sidewalk Along Harlem Avenue North of Chicago Avenue



Figure 7.06: Proposed Planters Along Harlem Avenue

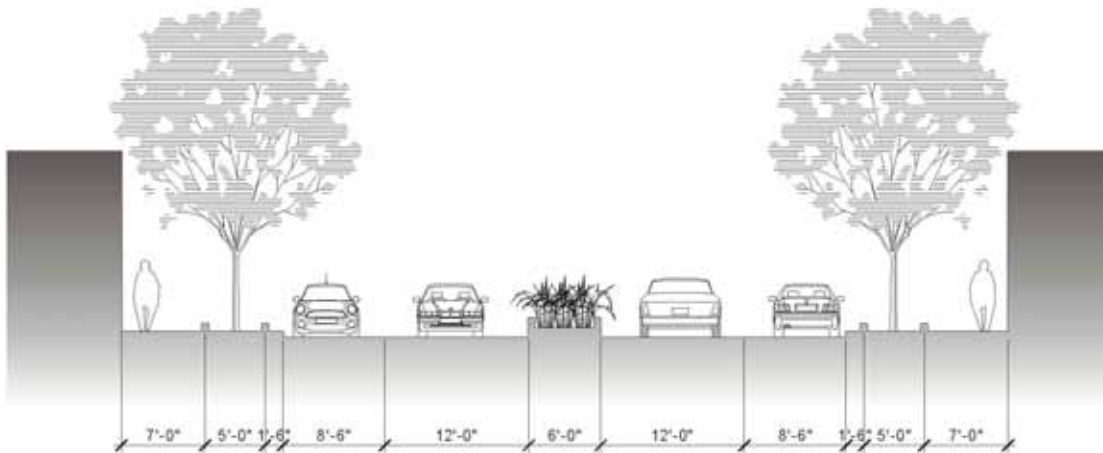
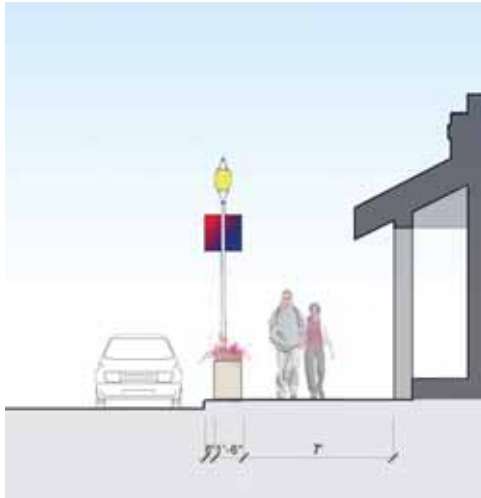


Figure 7.07: Chicago Avenue Section Showing Proposed Planting Medians

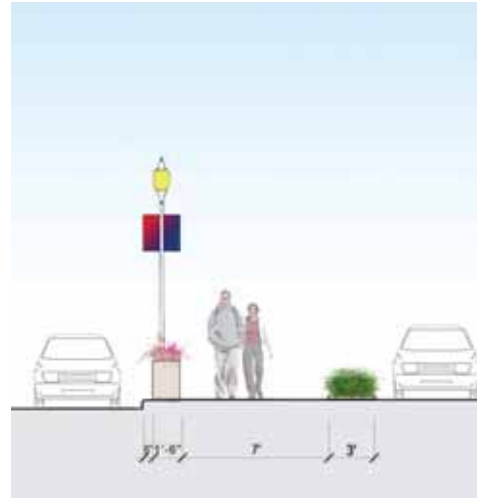


Figure 7.08: Sidewalk Improvements Along Harlem Avenue

Section 1



Section 2



Section 3

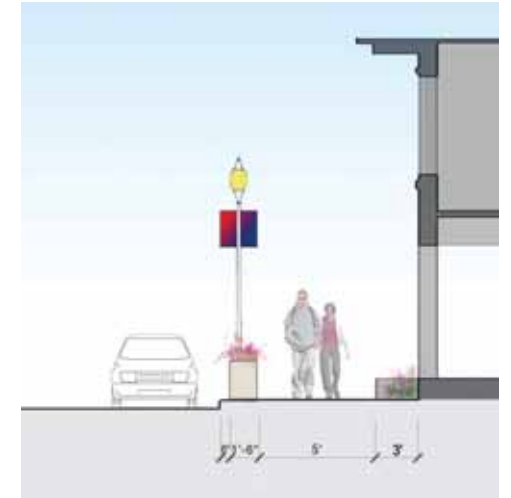


Figure 7.09 Sections 1-3 of Harlem Avenue Streetscape Improvements

frame and either wheel to be secured with a U-style lock. All bike racks should be easily accessible and not be obstructed by other streetscape and pedestrian amenities. In addition, entrances to businesses and sidewalks should not be obstructed.

As described in Part 6: Transportation and Parking, Harlem Avenue is a state owned road connecting the study area to downtown Oak Park and it is known for its high speed traffic and difficult pedestrian conditions. In order to increase pedestrian safety and comfort along Harlem Avenue, raised landscape planters or bollards should be used as a buffer where sidewalk width allows it. A prominent location for planters is on Harlem Avenue north of Chicago Avenue. Businesses along this section

of the Harlem Avenue corridor would benefit by making the sidewalk more comfortable for their customers (Figures 7.06 and 7.08). Other areas that would benefit from the installation of planters and bollards include the section of Harlem Avenue from the Denny’s restaurant location to Erie Street (Figures 7.09 through 7.11).

Site improvements, including landscape buffers between sidewalks and parking areas, planting beds and street trees can help beautify the Harlem Avenue corridor as well as provide a better pedestrian environment. Section 2 above and Section 5 on page 43 show how the use of landscape buffers and wrought iron fencing can better delineate pedestrian and parking areas at both the Denny’s

and Mickey’s parking lots.

Due to its auto-oriented commercial uses and traffic patterns, Harlem Avenue does not have the same character of the rest of the Chicago / Harlem Business District. This difference in character tends to isolate the Harlem businesses from the community. Creating ways to incorporate the Harlem businesses into the image of the district will have many benefits. The integration of Harlem Avenue into the overall identity of the district could be achieved with signage that highlight the Oak Park image. The installation of pedestrian light fixtures with banners would not only bring a more comfortable pedestrian scale to the street but provide an opportunity to showcase the district,



Figure 7.10: Elevation Showing Harlem Avenue Streetscape Improvements Near Superior Street

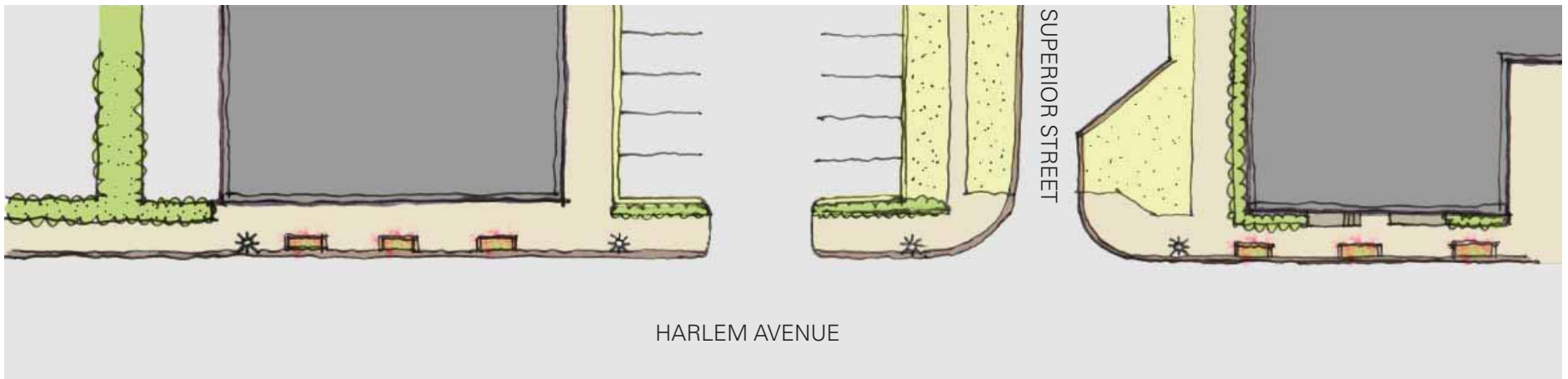


Figure 7.11: Plan Showing Harlem Avenue Streetscape Improvements Near Superior Street



Figure 7.12: Elevation Showing Harlem Avenue Streetscape Improvements from Superior to Erie Streets



Figure 7.13: Plan Showing Harlem Avenue Streetscape Improvement from Superior to Erie Streets



Figure 7.14: Elevation Showing Harlem Avenue Streetscape Improvements South of Erie Street

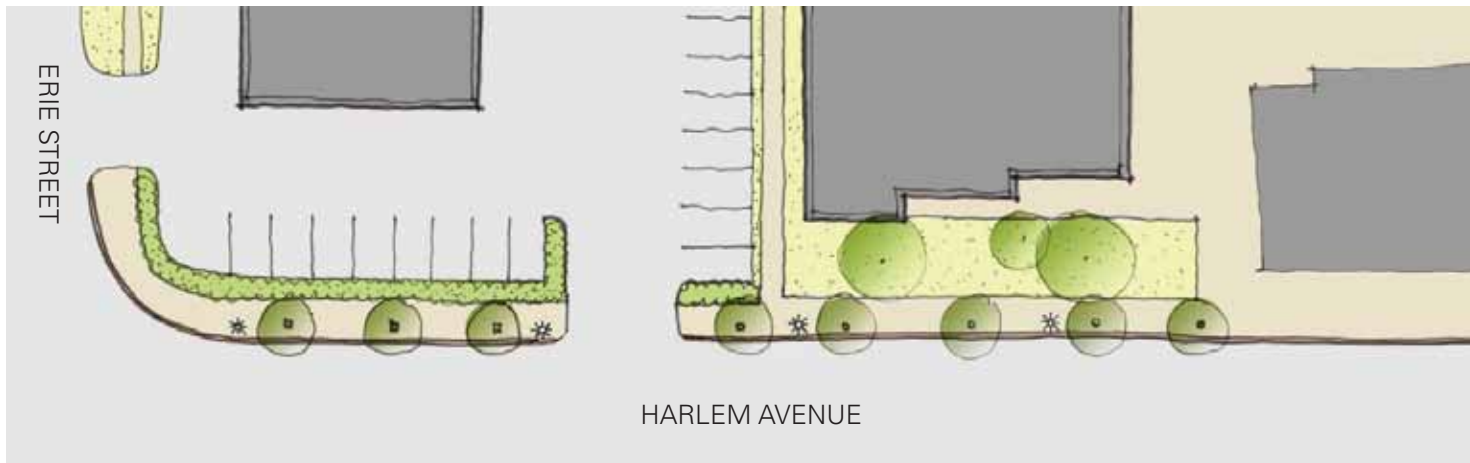


Figure 7.15: Plan Showing Harlem Avenue Streetscape Improvement South of Erie Street

Oak Park, area businesses and special events.

As will be discussed later in the signage section, tall illuminated signs along Harlem Avenue, such as that of the Denny's restaurant, the Oak Park Health Center, Mickey's, and the new Metropolitan Bank, characterize high speed arterial roadways. Although the speed on Harlem Avenue is faster than on Chicago Avenue, there are many pedestrians. There are many traffic lights slowing traffic and negating the need for tall signs that would be visible from fast moving vehicles. Tall illuminated signage along Harlem Avenue should be lowered to fit the desired image for the district and can be incorporated into landscape areas. Attractive and well positioned signs will provide effective signage for area businesses.

Sidewalks along Harlem Avenue south of Erie Street are wider and provide sufficient space for the installation of street trees along the corridor. Street trees can be planted 25' on center and tree grates should be installed to protect them and provide a more comfortable walking area. Street trees chosen for the area should be tolerant of the urban environment and of an appropriate branching form, such as Bradford Pears, to avoid conflicts with truck traffic along the corridor. Salt tolerant and fast growing trees are also desirable.

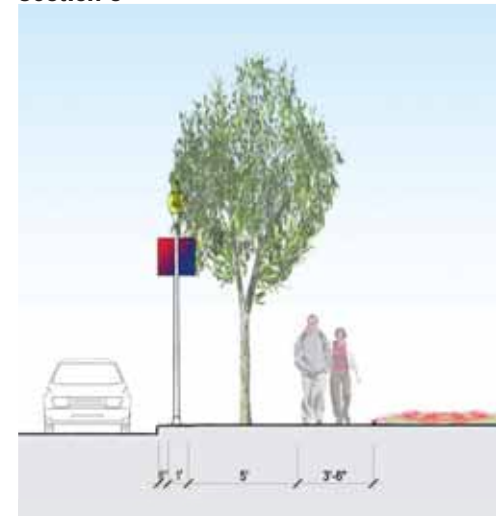
The newly constructed bank and residential building on Harlem Avenue provide a wider setback from the sidewalk edge with a planting zone adjacent to the building. Existing open space along Harlem Avenue could be further improved by installing additional plantings that would also serve as a buffer between private properties and the public right of way.

Figure 7.16 Sections 4-6 of Harlem Avenue Streetscape Improvements

Section 5



Section 6



Section 4

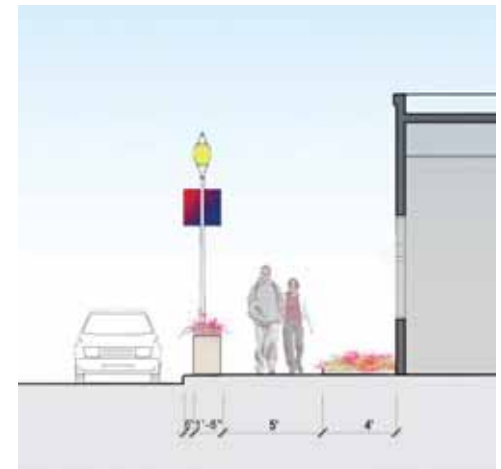


Figure 7.17 New Bank Construction on Erie Street



Figure 7.18: Gateway Improvements

District Gateway

The southeast corner of the Chicago / Harlem Avenue intersection provides the potential for the establishment of a gateway that will foster the district identity and highlight its relationship to the Frank Lloyd Wright (FLW) Historic District through its design. The lack of gateway definition at this intersection leads potential visitors to pass by the business district without notice. There is no signage that clearly indicates the arrival to the Chicago / Harlem Business District. Elements such as low walls, signage, bus stop and landscape in keeping with the FLW design style would be used to communicate this connection.

The many curb cuts adjacent to the BP gas station site impede the movement of pedestrians in the area and increase traffic conflicts. An existing bus stop at the corner does not provide shelter for waiting passengers. The utilization of inviting landscape features such as plantings, brick pavers and identity signage will highlight this area as the District's entry point. Reducing the number of curb cuts from two to one 24' curb cut on Chicago Avenue and one large 30 foot curb cut on Harlem Avenue will accommodate pedestrian improvement and minimize traffic impacts in the area. The existing bus stop will be incorporated into the gateway design and will make the stop more attractive to transit users.

Due to its adjacency to the BP gas station, close coordination of the gateway would be required with the BP corporation. Current trends in gas station design suggest that the layout of the station might change. Since this is a key property that sets the image and identity for the district along Harlem Avenue it is of great importance that efforts from the Village of Oak Park and the business community continue in order to reach agreements regarding the gateway design, construction and maintenance. BP is in a prime location for sales and has the opportunity to upgrade their image and enhance sales potential, which could include BP signage in the gateway with lower monument signs.

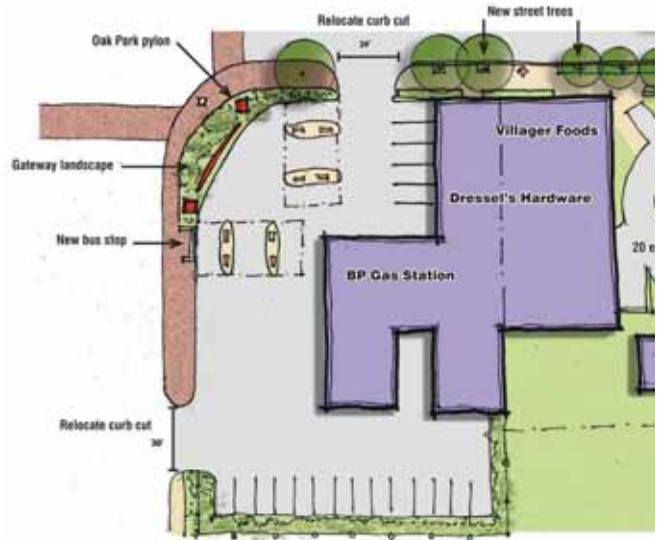


Figure 7.19: Gateway Improvements and BP Site



Figure 7.20: Gateway Incorporating BP Monument Sign



Figure 7.21: Example of BP Monument Sign



Figure 7.22: Existing Conditions of BP Gas Station and Gateway Area



Figure 7.23: New Trends in BP Gas Stations

Parking Upgrades

As discussed in the transportation chapter, the layout of many of the parking facilities adjacent to individual businesses could be designed in a more efficient manner. Improvements including striping and landscape buffers can better organize both vehicular and pedestrian circulation as well as increase parking availability. The following are some potential improvements for individual parking areas:



Figure 7.24: Lot 7 Proposed Improvements

Lot 7

The number of parking spaces in this lot can be increased from 32 to 47 spaces if additional parking area can be obtained from the relocation of two existing ComEd transformers located behind the Penny's Noodle Shop building. Although previous coordination efforts between the Village of Oak Park

and ComEd did not result in any final agreements, it is recommended that the Village pursue the relocation of transformers as a long term goal. With this in mind, when in the future the transformers need to be replaced, a relocation agreement can already be in place. Finally, in order to increase customer parking availability it is recommended that the number of 12-hour meters in this lot be reduced.

Villager Food

The Villager Food has the largest private parking lot in the district with 20 parking spaces. Re-configuring the current parking layout would provide better traffic circulation and additional parking. As shown in figure 7.26, organizing diagonal parking in the area would allow for four additional parking spaces, a formal loading area (the use of parking area for loading and refuse purposes needs to be curtailed) and landscaped areas. Adding a landscape buffer with wrought iron fence along sidewalks on Chicago Avenue and Maple Street would visually improve the area, delineate the street edge and provide additional protection for cars parked in the lot.

A visual assessment of the parking lot usage has discovered that this parking lot is not full at peak times and is currently under utilized. Potential agreements can be made with other businesses for use of this parking lot during the grocery store's off-hours. Another option for consideration is an agreement with the Village of Oak Park for partial use of the parking area for municipal spaces in exchange for a maintenance agreement and potential improvement funds.



Figure 7.25: Villager Food Existing Parking Conditions

New Era Kitchen's & Baths

Parking spaces should be better delineated on this parking lot to organize and improve car circulation. The curb cut to the site from Chicago Avenue should be eliminated. This would provide a continuous sidewalk and additional on street parking. Providing one entrance and exit on Maple Street should accommodate the current parking needs. Refuse bins have been observed on the sidewalk on Maple Street adjacent to this business. A refuse location should be established within the re-configured parking area to eliminate this issue.



Figure 7.26: Villager Food and New Era Kitchen's & Baths Proposed Parking Improvement

O'Connor's Cleaners

The size of the curb cut on Chicago Avenue should be reduced to 24' in order to provide for a more continuous sidewalk and parking bump out. Curb cuts to the parking area can be improved and better delineated. Currently parking to the west side of the building on Marion Street makes unauthorized use of the right of way. Instead, in coordination with the Village of Oak Park, diagonal street parking can be provided on Marion Street. A landscape buffer should be provided where feasible. This should include a landscape feature on the corner of Chicago Avenue and Marion Street to highlight the cleaner's signage and improve its image.



Figure 7.27: O'Connor's Cleaners Existing Parking Conditions



Figure 7.28: O'Connor's Cleaners Parking Improvements - Option 1

Option 2

This alternate improvement option provides tandem employee parking to the west of the property and allows circulation through the parking area as requested by the property owner. Unfortunately, this option does not provide as many parking spaces as Option 1 and creates vehicular conflict at the intersection.

Option 1

This is the preferred option for parking and circulation improvements at this site. It provides a greater amount of parking spaces and better circulation. The proposed traffic pattern minimizes conflicts with the Chicago / Harlem Avenue intersection.



Figure 7.29: O'Connor's Cleaners Parking Improvements - Option 2

Facade Improvements Throughout the Chicago / Harlem Business District there are several buildings in need of facade improvements. Enhancing building facades would add to the district's image and enhance the pedestrian experience, but most importantly it would help to attract customers to businesses in the area. Increasing views into store spaces and allowing views of merchandise through glass windows, allows for pedestrians to view available items and invites them into the stores to purchase goods. The goal is to create a cohesive facade language for the entire district that strengthens its overall image, while providing individual businesses the capacity to highlight their unique character through shop window displays and quality signage.

Storefront Facade Elements

The street level storefront façade has the most impact on a business district. All storefronts should help create an attracting environment and highlight the district's image. Facade elements applicable to the Chicago / Harlem Business District include:

- windows
- awnings
- signs
- lighting
- color and materials.

Figure 7.30: Building Elevation Illustrating the Elements of the Storefront



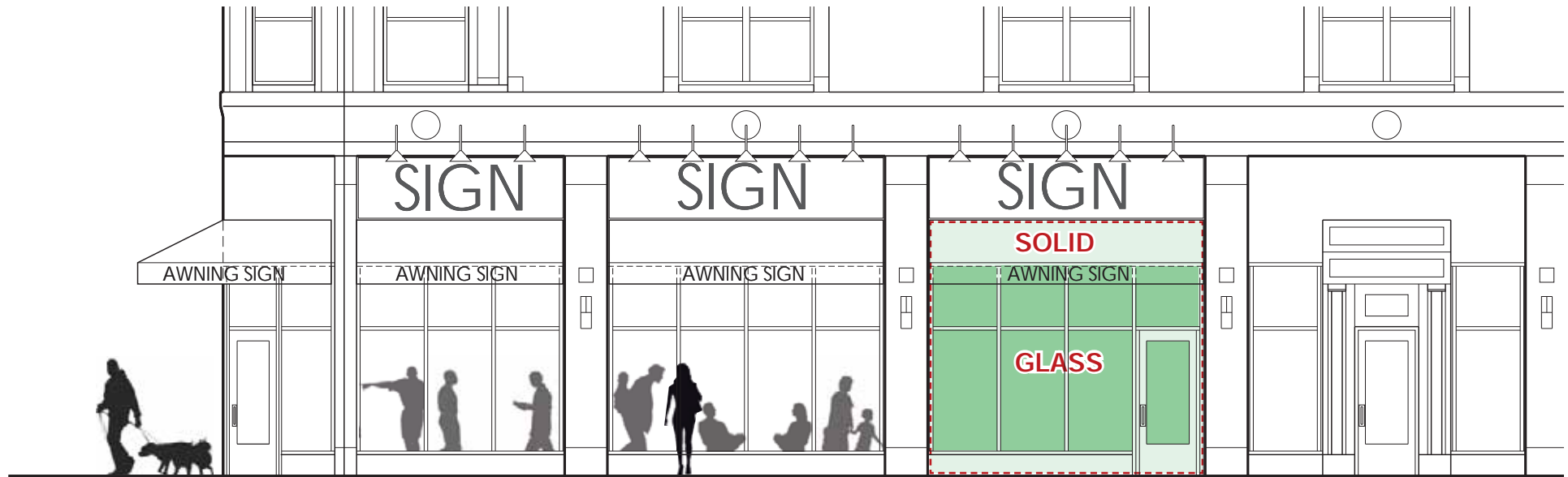


Figure 7.31: Ideal Arrangement for Storefront Windows

WINDOWS

Windows play a crucial role in making a retail environment feel welcoming and interesting. Street-level windows create a “permeable space” along the street - that is, a way for pedestrians to connect the inside of buildings with the outside environment. At night, street level windows provide extra street light and help create an image of safety and vitality.

Buildings facades should be mostly transparent glass at street level (Figure 7.31). Retailers should minimize blocking this glass with interior signs and banners.



Figure 7.32: Existing Conditions of Storefront Windows in the District

GUIDELINES

1. All windows on storefronts should contain minimum of 70% transparent glass
2. Windows should be not be mounted more than 30” from the ground
3. Windows should be transparent up to at least 8'-0” from the ground
4. Business owners should minimize the blocking of windows with interior displays or signage



Figure 7.33: Ideal Arrangement for Awning Placement



Figure 7.34: Existing Awning with Business Signage

AWNINGS

Awnings add color and depth to retail facades helping to positively contribute to the vibrancy of the street. In addition, they provide a place of refuge from the elements to pedestrians and shade the viewing windows from glare. Awnings should be consistent in design across buildings but should vary from building to building. The district should allow for diversity in awning design while adhering to some standards.

GUIDELINES

5. Awnings should be mounted so that the bottom is 8 to 10 feet above sidewalk
6. Awnings should cover roll-down mechanisms of security grilles
7. An awning zone (Figure 7.33) should be established between 8 feet and 12 feet above ground
8. Awnings should extend at least 4 feet from face of building
9. Awnings should not cover architectural elements of building such as piers and facade details
10. Awning signs should not overwhelm the underlying awning color and design
11. Awnings should comply with acceptable materials such as high quality canvas, fabric or metal.



Figure 7.35: Ideal Arrangement for Storefront Signage



Figure 7.36: Upgrading the tall pole sign at O'Connor's Cleaners to a monument sign surrounded by a landscape area at the corner of Marion Street and Chicago Avenue would increase the visibility of the sign to pedestrians and improve the image of the business.

SIGNS

Many undesirable sign issues occur when signs are simply too large or placed on a building in a haphazard way. By respecting a building's architectural features, signs can be both attractive and effective for retailers. The Village's Sign Ordinance should be a starting point for sign guidelines. The ordinance governs sign size and type of allowable signs. To enhance the district's appearance, signs should also adhere to the following:

GUIDELINES

12. Do not place signs above the first level
13. Limit signs to no more than seven words
14. Establish a specific area on a building for signage. Use architectural elements to guide placement
15. Do not cover significant architectural elements or detailing with signage (Figure 7.35)
16. Do not block doors or windows with permanent signs
17. Wall signs should not protrude excessively beyond a building facade's architectural elements
18. All signage should coordinate with building colors and materials



Figure 7.37: Ideal Arrangement for Placement of Entrances

Figure 7.38: Entrance to Local Business in the District

ENTRANCES

Building entrances are important and should be apparent to a pedestrian. Entrance areas should be well lit with transparent glass in doors and windows. (Figure 7.37)

Recessed entry areas offer refuge from bad weather and street activity, but they can also be havens for loitering.

GUIDELINES

- 19. Entrance areas should be obvious
- 20. Entrances should be well lit and accessible, especially side or alley entrances
- 21. Entrance doors and windows should have transparent glass
- 22. Recess entry ways no more than 24"
- 23 As much possible, entrances on major streets should not be blocked or diverted to side streets





Figure 7.39: Ideal Arrangement for Storefront Lighting

LIGHTING

Lighting, like signs and awnings, should strike a balance between diversity and overall district continuity. Lighting should respect and highlight architectural details with appropriate direction, color and intensity. Street and sidewalk lights should be at an appropriate scale for the space.

Lighting is also crucial to safety. Recessed entries and facade elements should be lit to eliminate dangerous blind spots. Special attention should be paid to residential and loading entrances where prolonged pauses are common.

GUIDELINES

- 24. Lighting should be integrated into architectural design
- 25. Junction boxes and conduits should be hidden from view
- 26. Lights should emphasize entrances, signs and displays and architectural elements (Figure 7.39)
- 27. Recessed areas at street level and areas of pause such as loading areas should be well lit.
- 28. Street and sidewalk lights should provide adequate light but be limited in size to respect the scale of the streetscape
- 29. Unless hidden from view, all light fixtures and mechanics should be compatible with building colors and materials



Figure 7.40: Consistent Building Colors and Materials on Retail Facades

COLOR AND MATERIALS

Building colors and materials should be consistent with building architecture and in harmony with other buildings on the street. Colors and materials should reflect a limited palette that allows for expression and diversity while reducing the prevalence of loud or conflicting color schemes.

Wood facades should be limited to historic styles while contemporary storefronts should be metal and transparent glass. Renovations and additions should honor existing building design.

GUIDELINES

34. Building and signage colors should adhere to a limited palette.
35. Materials should be consistent with existing building architecture.
36. A building's color and material should be in harmony with other buildings on the street.
37. Renovations and additions should be consistent with existing building architecture.
38. Wood storefronts should be limited to specific historic architectural styles.
39. Contemporary storefront facades should be metal and transparent glass.
40. Compatible materials should be encouraged on Chicago Avenue and can include brick, terra cotta, stone frame, etc.

Facade Improvements

Based on these storefront facade guidelines, following are examples of potential façade improvements that can take place in the Chicago / Harlem District:

Building on northeast corner of Chicago at Harlem Avenue

- Increase transparency and open storefront
- Remove window coverings and improve window treatments
- Continue awnings and promote signage coordination



Figure 7.41: Existing Facade - Northeast Corner of Chicago and Harlem Avenues



Figure 7.42: Proposed Facade Improvements



Figure 7.43: Existing Villager Facade Conditions



Figure 7.44: Proposed Facade Improvements

Villager Food

- Remove mansard roof
- Higher signage
- Add awning
- Improve to a metal and glass storefront
- Use views through windows to highlight merchandise
- Keep window signage to 25% coverage or less as required by the Perimeter Overlay District window signage regulations



Figure 7.45: Existing Dressel's Hardware Facade Conditions



Figure 7.46: Proposed Facade Improvements

Dressel's

- Use views through windows to highlight merchandise
- Upgrade signage
- Improve and restore siding

District Signage and Wayfinding

Signage can help create a sense of place and provide identity to a business district. Oak Park identity elements such as the pylon sign, pole banners, and parking/vehicular directional signage with the Oak Park emblem will reinforce the district's relationship to the historic district. Existing banners should be upgraded to include those with the Oak Park emblem used in other areas of Oak Park with interchangeable banners replaceable for special events or holiday seasons. Signage will highlight the district's gateway, businesses and the location of public parking areas throughout the district. A business directory with a district map would help visitors.

Business signage should announce the businesses they serve while promoting a cohesive streetscape and an inviting pedestrian environment. Tall illuminated signs tend to be used by businesses in high speed traffic area such as interstate highways to catch the attention of people moving in their cars. Tall signage in the Chicago / Harlem Business District does not fit the community's context and would benefit from being more visible to pedestrians and local traffic. Businesses can take advantage of OPDC programs for signage improvements.



Figure 7.47: Signage and Banners

Part 8

Implementation Plan

Business Development

Concept Plan Implementation



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Oak Park's Chicago / Harlem District serves thriving neighborhoods with useful and cherished businesses. This plan seeks to make this good place better with physical improvements and market enhancements. Implementing these improvements will boost the economic sustainability of Chicago / Harlem District's well-regarded, long-standing businesses.

Business retention is crucial to the Chicago / Harlem District's Success.

Oak Park's Village staff in cooperation with the Oak Park Development Corporation continues to build its retention programming. For the Chicago / Harlem District, it is important that programming occur as intensely as possible because the small number of businesses makes each loss more impactful. Specific recommendations include:

- If possible, use Village staff contacts to seek input on improving the district's business environment;
- Proactively offer Village and OPDC programs when subtle decline is observed and repeat that offer if improvement if it initially is declined and improvement does not occur;
- Offer all businesses university student and retired executive consulting services to improve individual store's accounting, inventory management, marketing, and administration;
- Act quickly to support sale of businesses when the owner expresses interest.

Good businesses have choices and retaining them depends on a strong relationship and quick action to prevent small problems from escalating. Fewer businesses when compared to many other Oak Park commercial districts leaves Chicago / Harlem's business organization with fewer participants to undertake project responsibility. These recommendations highlight existing programs and suggest devoting extra staff time in this district because its long tenured businesses are worth the effort.

Business recruitment opportunities are precious

Property owners in the Chicago / Harlem District have choices when space becomes available. The easy recruitment is a well-capitalized medical or real estate office because those businesses are clean, often have strong credit histories, and are preferred by upper story residential tenants. That choice can be prevented if the property owner knows about experienced store or restaurant tenants who are willing to pay higher rents than office tenants. Those well-qualified retail tenants also should be encouraged to find opportunities to attract Chicago / Harlem's strong market by reconfiguring obsolete buildings to create additional store space. Specific recommendations include:

- Encourage BP and the Villager to consider subleasing space to a coffee shop
- Create and screen a list of restaurants/coffee shops/bakeries that might consider a location in this district
- Contact businesses on the screened list monthly to confirm continued interest
- Maintain a list of business that inquire about space in this district
- Provide lists to property owners monthly

With property owners choosing tenants, the key to Village influence over that choice is a strong relationship with the property owners. These recommendations build that relationship with valuable monthly contacts on potential tenants.

District marketing programs build on individual store efforts

Sophisticated business owners in the Chicago / Harlem district have well designed marketing programs; however, all can benefit from a complementary district marketing program that sells the area's special attributes. Like other aspects of this implementation plan, that program needs to be scaled to fit the relatively small neighborhood draw of the district but also appeal to the tourism bonus market. Specific recommendations include:

- Create a postcard size directory that can be inexpensively printed in large quantities.
 - Distribute to all households in target area
 - Distribute at Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio
 - Update contacts and print twice a year to keep current
- Seek articles in local and regional publications touting the stories of local businesses.
 - Capitalize on the reopening of the former Petersen's restaurant to seek media coverage
 - Build on the contacts of local businesses that are already on TV
 - Highlight the very newsworthy milestone anniversaries of long-standing businesses like Villager Food, Dressel's, Aliotto's, Oak Park Cyclery, and the Ginkgo Tree Shop.
- Create annual event (holiday open house?) and invite neighbors.

Marketing the district focuses on connecting positive feelings toward the individual business to create an overall positive impression in the minds of potential customers. The recommended techniques cost little but reach customers in their homes and during daily travels through the district.

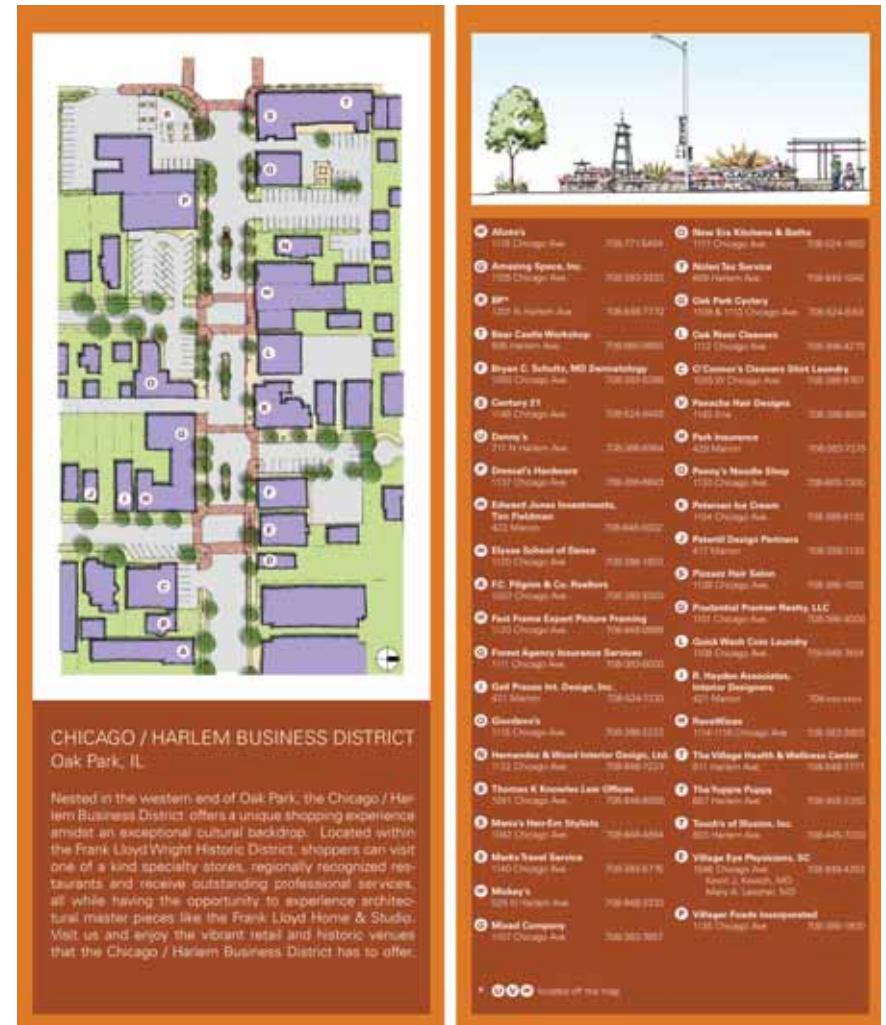


Figure 8.01: Sample Business Directory

A business association scaled to the needs of the district is essential to long term success

Fewer businesses also mean fewer volunteers to manage programming. Recognizing that challenge, these organization recommendations suggest a framework that focuses on doing fewer activities in a very targeted way.

- Establish four volunteer, leadership positions
 - President (Represents District at Village Business Association Council, chairs meetings)
 - Next president (Often know as the vice president but this title promotes transition and makes recruiting a president easier because it suggests a limit to the time commitment)
 - Treasurer (Collects funds and maintains disbursement records)
 - Communication Director (Establishes e-mail contact with all businesses and forwards notices)

- Develop an annual work plan
 - Monthly E-mails,
 - Participation in Village-wide Business Association Council
 - Quarterly Meetings
 - Published Postcard Directory
 - Holiday Lighting/Event

- Seek reliable funding for \$4,500 in marketing expenses
 - 30 businesses could pay \$150 each
 - Larger businesses could pay more to get bigger mention in directory

To achieve even this limited programming, if possible, the Village staff may need to continue the extra support that it has provided to this district. As these programs prove their success and district leaders gain experience, it will be possible to expand programming and reduce Village staff support.

CONCEPT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The following are key strategies that should be part of an implementation plan for the district.

Public / Private Coordination

Streetscape

- **Resolve impacts of proposed improvements on private properties and coordinate public improvement options with private investment needs.** The Village of Oak Park and individual property / business owners need to identify and resolve how public improvements might impact private properties and coordinate appropriately. Streetscape improvements will benefit both the public realm as well as private property / business owners. To this end, coordination of private investment and public support is needed to achieve private property improvements benefiting the general public.

Parking

- **Pursue agreement with Villager Food for partial public parking.** The partial use of the Villager Food parking lot for public use would relieve customer parking issues during high demand periods. Agreements could be reached between the Village and the property / business owner regarding funding and maintenance for parking improvements in exchange for parking area use.
- **Evaluate feasibility of relocating ComEd transformers.** The Village should re-establish contact with the appropriate ComEd representatives to discuss the potential relocation of transformers behind the Penny's Noddle building. Agreements should be pursued regarding the timeline for potential relocation, keeping in mind the replacement schedule of transformers by ComEd.

Facade Improvements

- **Reach agreement for facade improvements with individual property owners.** Although individual property owners have already reviewed and consented to facade improvement concepts, final agreements should be reached regarding specific goals for property improvements by building.

Regulatory Review, Approvals and Enforcement

Streetscape

- **Plan Commission, Community Design Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Village Board approval of improvements, design and phasing.** After completion of the initial study and the development of final plans and cost estimates, appropriate steps must be taken to approve the construction of improvements.

Parking

- Work with Village of Oak Park to enforce parking regulations. Issues regarding the use of public right of way areas for parking, such as the loading area in front of Alioto's and the sidewalk along the east side of Marion Street by O'Connor's Cleaners, need to be resolved to ensure better pedestrian as well as vehicular circulation. In addition, enforcing established times for metered parking will provide for better transition of customer parking.

Funding

Streetscape

- **Identify funding mechanisms.** Private and public funding options are available for streetscape improvements. The Village of Oak Park should review and evaluate available Village resources that can be utilized for improvements.
- **Review option of a Special Service Assessment (SSA) or square footage monetary assessment.** A special assessment, or an assessment based on a businesses's total square footage, is one funding option for improvements and on-going maintenance. Coordination of these efforts and agreements can be made through the Business Association.

Signage

- **Prepare cost estimates for gateway signage and identify potential funding.** Conceptual gateway drawings can be used as a basis to identify specific elements needed for the gateway's construction. Thereafter, either a cost estimate can be made by the Village, or a bid can be set in motion for potential consultants to give an approximate cost for construction as well as installation. Once a final estimate has been reached, private and public funding sources should be identified.
- **Identify funding for district and directional signage.** Review available public budget for directional signage that can be utilized for the district. If additional funding is needed, consider private funding options.

Facade Improvements

- **Prepare facade improvement drawings and cost estimates.** After final agreements have been reached with individual business / property owners, an architect should be brought in to prepare architectural drawings for facade improvements. These drawings should be used as a basis for cost estimates and the costs should be made available to property owners.

- **Identify Village and OPDC funding options vs. property owner costs.** Provide financial assistance for qualified property owners to undertake façade improvement projects consistent with the plan that will improve the pedestrian and shopping experience along Chicago Avenue. The improvements can include new awnings, storefronts, lighting, signage or façade maintenance.

Following is a review of available funding options and requirements

Village of Oak Park

Retail Support Grant Program

- Matching grant – capped at \$35,000
- Assists in remodeling of commercial business space
- New or expanding businesses
- Eligible expenses
 - Floor, wall and ceiling repairs
 - Upgrading / retrofitting mechanical systems
 - Demolition work / space reconfiguration
 - Installation costs of permanent fixtures
 - Finishing work – painting and coverings
 - Soft costs – permits and plans
- Eligibility
 - 51% of gross income from taxable sales
 - Complement retail mix
 - Active membership in business association
 - ADA compliance
 - Landlord or lessee with a minimum 3-year lease

Oak Park Development Corporation

Commercial Property Rehabilitation & Preservation Program

- Administered in cooperation with the Village of Oak Park
- Purpose
 - Encourage commercial rehabilitation and preservation of commercial property
 - Continued revitalization of new and existing businesses
- Grants awarded for up to 50% of an approved project up to \$10,000

- Project types
 - Awning treatment
 - Exterior painting (if part of major rehab)
 - Sign improvement
 - Storefront rehabilitation
 - Façade restoration
 - Window upgrade (if part of major rehab)
 - Security system
- Eligibility
 - Owners and tenants of a designated business district
 - Minimum 3-year lease
 - If a tenant, written authorization by property owner must be provided
 - In good agency standing

Design and Construction

Streetscape

- **Refine conceptual plans and prepare cost estimates.** Detailed plans should be prepared for streetscape elements, crosswalks, special pavers and landscaping, utilizing engineering drawings to sharpen concepts in the plan. The drawings will help prepare cost estimates for public improvements.
- **Determine schedule for survey, final design, construction drawing and phasing.** A schedule for implementation of the proposed improvements should be put in place to keep momentum and maintain community support. Phasing of design and construction elements should be sequenced to allow for adequate coordination of public improvements with local businesses.

Signage

- **Identify location for directional signage to parking areas.** Attractive and informational district signage is very important for directing people to parking areas and providing information about the district businesses.

- **Identify district signage locations, text and design components.** The appropriate location of wayfinding signs, including a business directory, district map, special events signage and other Oak Park identity signs, should be determined. Text and other design components should be reviewed by both the Village and the Business Association in order to reach an agreement on the desired image for the district.

Maintenance and Management

- **Determine maintenance responsibilities for improved landscaped areas.** A maintenance plan for landscape improvements is of outmost importance to upkeep proposed improvements. Maintenance responsibilities can be delegated in many ways: the Village of Oak Park could take the lead in maintaining landscaped areas if public funding is available, businesses and property owners could “adopt” specific areas and volunteer to maintain them, the Business Association could take the leading role in the maintenance of landscaped areas, or financial agreements can be reached between the Village of Oak Park and the Business Association to fund a third party responsible for maintenance.
- **Establish a parking management program for sharing parking.** An analysis and review of available parking resources and collective parking demands for current businesses and residents should be made. Based on the findings, a district wide plan for accommodating future parking needs should be established. There is potential for shared parking between day and night time uses. Valet services could be provided by local restaurants in the Villager Foods parking when the grocery store is closed.

Appendices

- Appendix I - Block by Block Assessment
- Appendix II - Market and Business Feedback Survey Summary
- Appendix III - Stakeholder Interviews
- Appendix IV - Architectural and Historical Survey



APPENDIX I - Block by Block Assessment

Introduction

Blocks 1 & 2 : Chicago Avenue - Harlem to Belleforte

Block 3 : Marion Street at Chicago Avenue

Blocks 4 & 5 : Chicago Avenue - Marion to Harlem

Blocks 6 & 7 : Chicago Avenue & Harlem Avenue

Blocks 8 & 9 : Harlem Avenue - Chicago to Erie

Block 10 : Erie Street - Harlem Avenue to Harlem Court



Introduction

Appendix 1 documents the results of the first community meeting that was held early in the planning process to identify the critical issues in the district. Ten block elevations throughout the Chicago / Harlem Avenue District were presented to the community for their assessments.

The residents and business owners were given a certain number of red, yellow and green dots to place on the elevations to assess facades, signage and uses of existing buildings along the corridor.

The green dots signified community assets that do not need any improvements; the yellow dots signified buildings that were contributing to the district in some way but needed some improvements and the red dots signified buildings that did not directly contribute to the district and required improvements to increase their attractiveness.





BLOCKS 1&2 CHICAGO AVE. - MARION TO BELLEFORTE

General Comments

- No comments

Specific Comments

- #1 Improve facade; this parcel could become a natural parking area for the district



BLOCK 3 MARION ST. AT CHICAGO AVE.

General Comments

- No comment

Specific Comments

- #1 Create parking opportunity at the corner at Chicago Avenue with on-street parking. Remove a portion of the driveway apron.



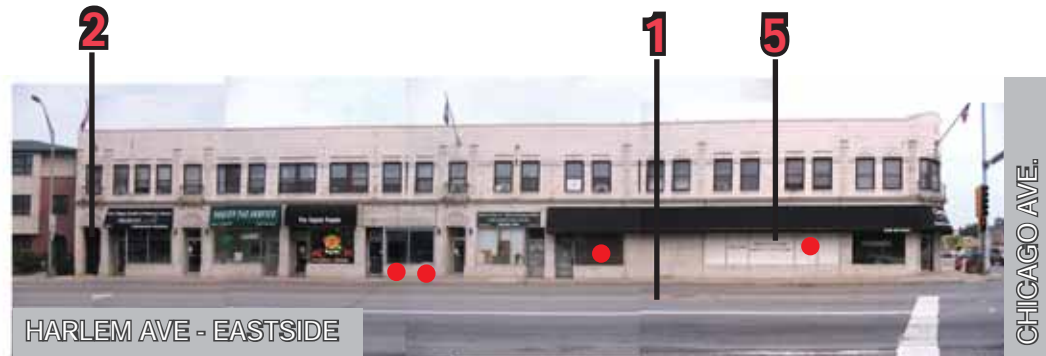
BLOCKS 4&5 CHICAGO AVE. - MARION TO HARLEM

General Comments

- No comments

Specific Comments

- #1 Change color
- #2 Improve corner's look
- #3 Construction traffic will come north up Maple when a condo is built in 400 block. Any chance of regulating construction impact?
- #4 Charming, but looks tired
- #5 Like the retro aspect, goes with the music inside, but could update look a little to attract non-regulars
- #6 If you add anything to empty planter, please don't put tree it will hide the signage
- #7 Pizza delivery parking congestion



HARLEM AVE - EASTSIDE



CHICAGO AVE - NORTHSIDE

BLOCKS 6&7 CHICAGO AVE. & HARLEM AVE.

General Comments

- Bury the transformers
- More parking
- No alley access

Specific Comments

- #1 Harlem Avenue Eastside, long dull stretch from Chicago until Yuppie Puppie, Bear Place is gone, bakery coming in
- #2 Get parking lot in ComEd space or partial space. Use this access to ComEd.
- #3 Get the utility markings cleaned off the sidewalks
- #4 Get this leased to business that will bring traffic
- #5 Improve look of windows
- #6 Get NICOR paint off sidewalks



BLOCKS 8&9 HARLEM AVE. - CHICAGO TO ERIE

General Comments

- No comment

Specific Comments

- No comment



BLOCK 10 ERIE ST. - HARLEM AVE. TO HARLEM CT.

General Comments

- No comment

Specific Comments

- No comment

APPENDIX II - Market and Business Feedback Survey Summary

Community Sessions 1 & 2 Market and Business Feedback Survey



RESPONSES BY 18 PARTICIPANTS OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS 1 & 2

I - What did you purchase the last time you shopped at Chicago / Harlem Avenue District?

- Most purchases included groceries and hardware supplies

II - What could existing stores sell to make you shop in the area more often?

- Coffee shops are most wanted
- Restaurants, bakeries and bars are second most wanted

III - When you shop in the Chicago / Harlem Avenue District, what mode of transportation to you mostly use?

- 1st meeting mostly cars; 2nd meeting mostly walk
- Overall walking is preferred alternative
- No biking by meeting participants



APPENDIX III - Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews Summary



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

Organization

- Historic District is the preferred name
- An assessment to cover extra landscaping would be welcome
- This is not an area where sidewalk sales work
- The challenge to organizing is business diversity combined with small size
- Fair organization dues would be \$50 annually
- Name should be Frank Lloyd Wright Business District and Ginkgo Tree Shop should be Eastern boundary
- There are approximately 30 businesses but only 5 or 6 actively participate in organization

Customers

- Service businesses each bring significant visits per week
- Market is no larger than 2 miles
- Key to success of businesses is easy access from high income Oak Park and River Forest neighborhoods
- To capture high income customer businesses need attentive knowledgeable service
- Businesses
- Dedicated parking brings premium rents
- Oak Park Cyclery and Petersen's are landmarks people use to find the district
- The hardware store and restaurants make this a good location for offices
- Key business need is a signature, full-service restaurant
- Hours are 8-6 hours with the last one the day's lowest volume
- Programs to help business owners buy property would be good

Property

- Lighted exposure to Harlem traffic is important
- Frequently merchants give directions to Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio
- OPDC programs have been very helpful in improving property
- Design needs to accommodate outdoor merchandise display
- Any new landscape should be simple allowing good buildings and businesses to define character

APPENDIX IV - Architectural and Historical Survey

Survey Prepared by Thomason and Associates



February 2008

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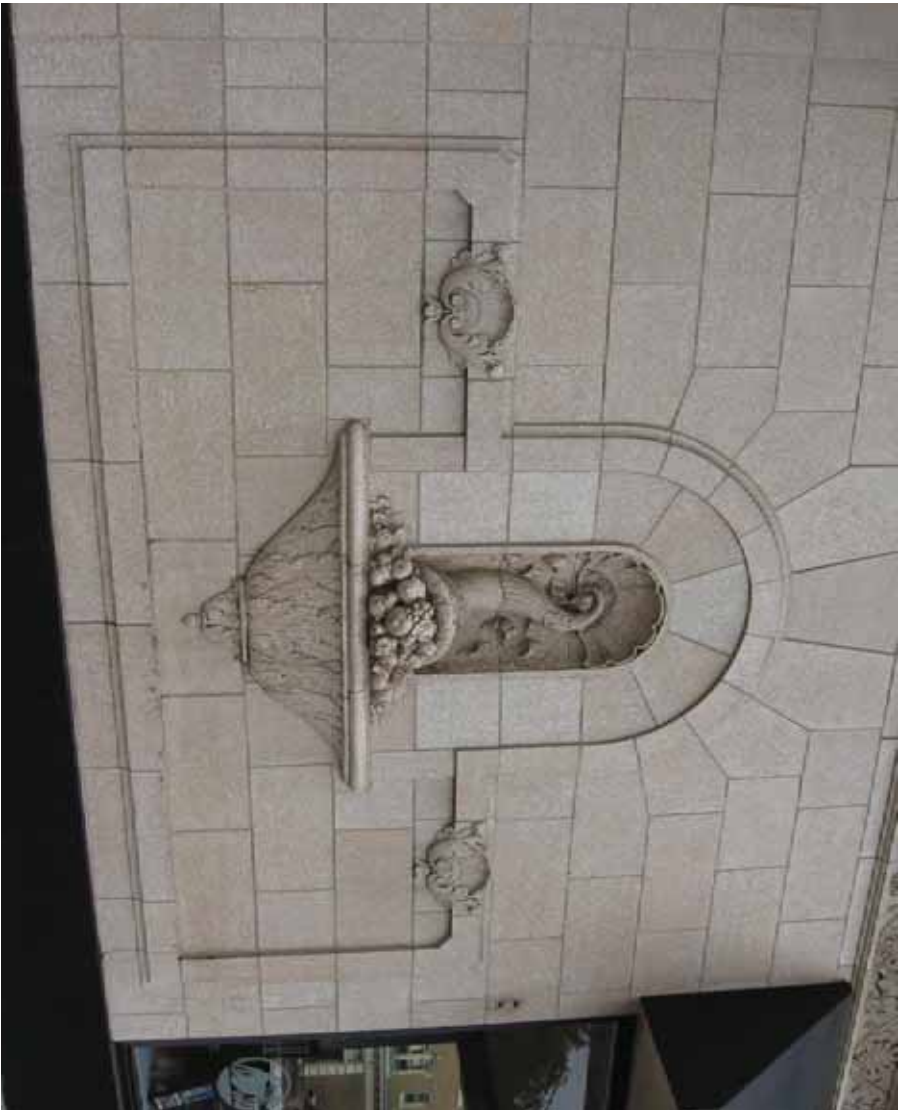
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**Village of Oak Park
Chicago & Harlem Neighborhood Plan**

Architectural and Historical Survey

Prepared by:

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January 2008

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Village of Oak Park began a planning and development study of the Chicago and Harlem Neighborhood. This neighborhood is comprised primarily of commercial buildings in the 1000 and 1100 blocks of Chicago Avenue and the 500-800 blocks of N. Harlem Avenue. The approach to developing a plan for Chicago and Harlem Avenues focuses on understanding the many parameters of the business district. The initial project focus is on existing conditions, current development trends and the design goals and preferences of the Village. Part of this planning effort is to identify buildings with historic character and significance that should be preserved during future redevelopment. This report provides an evaluation of the historic and architectural significance of buildings within the neighborhood study area.

A portion of the neighborhood's boundary lies within the Frank Lloyd Wright – Prairie School of Architecture Historic District which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. This historic district was listed on the National Register for its significance in the history of Oak Park and its association with noted architect Frank Lloyd Wright and other Prairie School architects. Just to the east of the boundary area in the 1000 block of Chicago Avenue are three dwellings designed by Wright in the late 19th century. The historic district was also designated locally in 1972 and revised in 1994.

Three buildings in the neighborhood are a mix of commercial properties, apartment buildings and residences. An architectural survey of the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District was completed in 2006-2007 by volunteers and the consulting firm of Thomason and Associates. This inventory resulted in the evaluation of these buildings as contributing or non-contributing to the district, or structure of merit or no merit if outside the historic district boundaries.



Figure 1: Overall project boundary for the Chicago & Harlem Neighborhood Plan.



Figure 2: Project boundary for the Chicago & Harlem Neighborhood Plan and the western boundary of the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District is shown as the blue dashed line.



Figure 3: The proposed boundary extension Frank Lloyd Wright - Prairie School of Architecture Historic District is shown as the blue dotted line.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The area that is today's Village of Oak Park was first settled by Joseph and Betty Kettlestrings of Yorkshire, England, who came to the area in 1835. The area at that time was a part of Cicero Township. In 1848, the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad (later the Chicago & North Western Railroad) was constructed through the future village on its westward route out of Chicago. After the Chicago Fire of 1871, residential development accelerated in Oak Park, and the population grew to 4,589 persons by 1890. Numerous churches, social clubs, and fraternal organizations were established in the 1870s, and the first high school class graduated in 1877.

Most of the commercial growth and development of Oak Park was along Lake Street adjacent to the railroad line. As suburban residential development continued in the 1880s and 1890s, streetcars and elevated trains supplemented the original main-line steam railroads to connect Oak Park commuters to jobs in downtown Chicago. An extensive streetcar network throughout Oak Park was opened in 1890. This system ran east-west on Madison Street and Lake Street, with a north-south connection on Harlem Avenue.

Oak Park separated from Cicero Township and was organized as an independent municipality in 1902. The village limits included large sections of vacant land, much of which was developed in the first decades of the twentieth century. As the village grew the need for additional business services resulted in the construction of commercial buildings along Harlem and Chicago Avenues. The electric streetcar line along Harlem provided access to shoppers and by the 1910s a number of brick buildings were built along the blocks at the intersection of these two streets.

Construction in these blocks increased as the population of Oak Park soared in the 1920s to over 60,000 residents. While Lake Street continued to be the main shopping district of the Village, several new brick buildings with elaborate terra cotta facades were constructed along Chicago Avenue. These included the Gotsch Building at 1101-13 Chicago Avenue and the building at 1142-46 Chicago Avenue. These buildings housed various businesses such as drug stores, furniture stores and a bank. Another notable business of this period was the North End Tire Shop, which occupied several buildings in the 1100 block of Chicago.

Chicago and Harlem Avenues remained busy thoroughfares in Oak Park into the mid-20th century. Commercial building construction continued to move east into the residential area with several brick-and-stone veneer buildings constructed in the 1950s on Chicago Avenue. A notable development from

these years was the construction of the identical plan Belleforte Apartments at 1030 and 1040 Chicago Avenue in 1955. Additional commercial buildings were constructed along these blocks of Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the mid-20th century Harlem Avenue became one of the more prominent north-south streets in this section of the city and was the dividing line between Oak Park and the adjacent village of River Forest. The importance of this street led to the gradual removal of all original dwellings in the project area and their replacement with post-1957 buildings in the late 20th century. No historic buildings were identified within the project area along Harlem Avenue. Today, the project area is composed of modern buildings along Harlem Avenue, both historic and non-historic buildings on Chicago Avenue and historic dwellings built on the side streets such as N. Marion, Erie and Superior .

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Architectural Survey

The architectural survey of the project area was conducted by Thomason and Associates and volunteers with the Village of Oak Park in 2007. A standard form was used to inventory each property which consisted of descriptions of the buildings and site and setting. In addition to the completion of forms, each property was photographed using digital technology. This information was gathered as part of an overall inventory of the Frank Lloyd Wright – Prairie School of Architecture Historic District and a reevaluation of district boundaries commissioned by the Village in 2007.

Historical Research

Historical research for this project was conducted at the Oak Park Public Library (OPPL) and the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest (HSOPRF). The collection at OPPL includes published books, local newspapers, and village directories on microfilm. The collection at HSOPRF includes extensive and partially indexed local newspapers (Oak Leaves and Wednesday Journal), historic photograph collections, ephemera files organized by street name, and Sanborn maps. Additionally, Village building permit data was used to identify dates of construction. The Village also has on file a list of architects, builders and original owners, which were consulted as part of this study.

Field Survey

The field survey work was conducted in April and October of 2007 by Phil Thomason and Andra Kowalczyk of Thomason and Associates. Each building was photographed using digital cameras and descriptions were completed for each property. For properties located within the Frank Lloyd Wright – Prairie School of Architecture Historic District, survey forms completed by volunteers were reviewed. Historical data on each building was examined at the Oak Park Public Library and Historical Society. All buildings fifty years old or older were inventoried while those less than fifty years of age were noted and photographed.

Terminology

The categories used to designate the historical significance of individual properties are based upon the categories used in the “Architectural Survey of Downtown Oak Park and the Avenue Business District” prepared by the

Village of Oak Park and revised October 2005. The categories of significance used herein are as follows:

Significant: Any property and/or improvement which has special character or significant historical, cultural, architectural, archeological, community or aesthetic value and is worthy of preservation. The property is important enough to warrant individual Oak Park Landmark designation.

Structure of Merit: A building which has historic or aesthetic character but to a lesser degree than a "Significant" building, or that has had alterations affecting its integrity. Such a building may contribute to a broader historic character or provide historic context to a larger group of buildings and is worthy of preservation.

No Merit: A building which is less than 50 years old, or a building which never originally had aesthetic character or significance, or that has had alterations that destroy its integrity. While the Commission is not necessarily advocating the demolition of these buildings, they are not considered worthy of preservation from an architectural standpoint.

Contributing: A property and/or improvement which has retained enough of its original architectural integrity to be able to contribute to the historic and architectural character of an historic district. While it may not be important enough individually to warrant Landmark designation, it is worth preserving as part of the whole. This rank applies to buildings within a Historic District only.

Non-Contributing: A property and/or improvement located within an historic district that does not represent significant historical and/or aesthetic characteristics which qualified that district as an historic district. This rank applies to buildings within a Historic District only.

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

- A. Properties within the Chicago and Harlem Neighborhood Plan boundary which are within the Frank Lloyd Wright – Prairie School of Architecture Historic District



Address: 1030 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1955

Architect: Robert Johnstone

Style: International

Ranking: Non-Contributing

Description: The Belleforte East Apartments was completed in 1955. It is a two-story brick apartment building with a brick-and-stone veneer. Entrances have ca. 1970 aluminum-and-glass doors and windows are original two-over-two sash design. Each floor is separated by a concrete belt course. It retains much of its original design and character.



Address: 1037 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1955

Architect: Robert Johnstone

Style: Commercial (International influenced)

Ranking: Non-Contributing

Description: This is a one-story office building. It has and exterior of brick and wood, large single-light windows and a recessed entrance on the east elevation.



Address: 1040 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1955

Architect: Robert Johnstone

Style: International

Ranking: Non-Contributing

Description: At 1040 Chicago Avenue is the Belleforte West Apartments, which uses an identical plan to the neighboring Belleforte East Apartments. It is a two-story brick apartment building with a brick-and-stone veneer. Entrances have ca. 1970 aluminum-and-glass doors and windows are original two-over-two sash design. Each floor is separated by a concrete belt course. It retains much of its original design and character.



Address: 1041 Chicago Avenue

Date: ca. 1890

Architect: Unknown

Style: Queen Anne influenced

Ranking: Contributing

Description: At this location is a ca. 1890 two-and-one-half-story Queen Anne-influenced dwelling with a stone foundation, vinyl siding and a gable roof of asphalt shingles. The main façade has a partial-width porch with a shed roof and original paired square, wood posts. The main entrance has an original single-light glass-and-wood door and windows are original one-over-one wood sash. Originally built as a dwelling, this property has been converted to offices.



Address: 1042 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1950

Architect: Unknown

Style: Commercial

Ranking: Non-Contributing

Description: At 1042 Chicago Avenue is a one-story commercial building built in 1950. The building has a concrete foundation, a flat roof, brick veneer and a stone-faced façade. The main façade has one large plate-glass window and an original glass-and-wood panel door. Above the door, the roofline has a stepped parapet. The building has been used for various shops and offices since its construction. It remains unaltered.



Address: 1045 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1953

Architect: William T. Herzog

Style: Commercial

Ranking: Non-Contributing

Description: At this location is a one-story commercial building built in 1953. The building has a flat asphalt roof, a brick exterior and a concrete foundation. The storefront has ca. 1980 display windows and aluminum-and-glass doors and original brick bulkheads.



Address: 1046-1048 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1908

Architect: Unknown

Style: Commercial (Tudor Revival influenced)

Ranking: Contributing

Description: This three-story brick building was constructed for owner H.C. Hansen with offices on the first floor and apartments on the upper floor in 1908. It has a concrete foundation, flat asphalt roof and brick exterior. The storefront was remodeled ca. 1960 with stone veneer bulkheads, aluminum-and-glass doors and display windows. Windows on the upper stories are original four-over-one vertical-light sash design. The window surrounds have limestone sills, lintels and corner blocks. The central bay is framed by limestone floral panels. At the roofline is a stepped parapet. The building retains much of its original design.



Address: 1050 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1996

Architect: Unknown

Style: Modernistic

Ranking: Non-Contributing

Description: At this address is a one-story brick building constructed in 1996.



Address: 1100-1106 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1925

Architect: Eben E. Roberts

Style: Colonial Revival

Ranking: Significant

Description: Originally known as the Nicholas Building and owned by Robert Nicholas, this building was designed by architect E. E. Roberts and constructed by the firm of Harper and Butendorf at a cost of \$150,000. This three-story brick building was constructed in 1925 to house retail establishments on the first floor and apartments on the second floor. The building has a concrete foundation, flat asphalt roof and exterior of brick and limestone. The storefront has original single-light glass-and-wood doors, marble bulkheads, copper-and-glass display windows, and original transoms. Entrances on the south facade have limestone surrounds with radiating voussoirs and arched transoms. Over the storefront is a terra cotta cornice. Windows on the upper façade are original one-over-one wood sash with brick header course arches and limestone sills. Below the roofline is a terra cotta cornice. The building retains much of its original design.



**Address: 1101-13 Chicago Avenue /
423-429 N. Marion Street**

Date: 1925

Architect: J. T. Herter

Style: Beaux-Arts

Ranking: Significant

Description: Built in 1925, the Gotsch Building was one of several commercial buildings constructed on Chicago Avenue in the mid-1920s. It was completed at a cost of \$100,000 and designed by architect J.T. Herter. The building's contractors was the Van Sickle, Hilfer Company and it was built for owner E.J. Gotsch. The building was designed with seven storefronts on the first floor and apartments on the second floor. Original occupants

included the E.J. Gotsch Grocery Store and the North Oak Park State Bank. The two-story brick building has a flat asphalt roof, concrete foundation and exterior of terra cotta. The building has a series of storefronts facing both Chicago and Marion. The storefronts have original single-light glass-and-wood doors, painted limestone bulkheads and many original copper-and-glass display windows. Some transoms are original while others have replacement glass. On both first floor facades are recessed terra cotta panels depicting a horn of plenty. Windows in the upper façade are ca. 1990 one-over-one vinyl sash. The façade has ornate terra cotta decoration including a belt course and a floral frieze above the first floor. Dividing the upper façade bays are paired Corinthian pilasters. At the roofline is a floral frieze and cornice of terra cotta. The building has a notable façade of terra cotta and retains much of its architectural design.



Address: 1108-1112 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1915

Architect: Unknown

Style: Commercial

Ranking: Contributing

Description: This one-story brick building was constructed in 1915 with three storefronts. It housed numerous neighborhood-oriented businesses in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1925, it was occupied by the Brundige and Kolb Meat Market, Leo Sutor, Shoe Maker and Frank Pepseh, Baker. These businesses continued to occupy the building into the 1930s. All of the storefronts have ca. 1980 aluminum-and-glass display windows. The upper façade has rectangular tapestry brick panels and a limestone belt course below the roofline. On a side elevation, a painted sign reading "CASH MARKET MEATS POULTRY FRUITS VEGETABLES" remains. All of the interiors have been remodeled. While the building's storefronts have been altered, the overall design and plan of the building remains evident.



Address: 417 N. Marion Street

Date: 1903/ca. 1970

Architect: Unknown

Style: Modernistic

Ranking: Non-Contributing

Description: The original building at this location was constructed in 1903. It was extensively remodeled or replaced ca. 1970 with the existing building.



Address: 421 N. Marion Street

Date: c. 1910

Architect: Unknown

Style: Commercial

Ranking: Contributing

Description: This two-story brick building was constructed c. 1910. The building was occupied during much of the early 20th century by George Eissler and his family; they lived on the second floor and operated a grocery store on the first floor. The storefront retains original cast iron pilasters but was remodeled ca. 1940 with marble bulkheads and copper-and-glass display windows. Windows on the upper façade have one-over-one ca. 1970 vinyl sashes. The secondary entrance on the main façade has a ca. 1970 wood door and an enclosed transom. On the south façade is an added two-story wing built in 1959 with a patio and open courtyard below.



Address: 509 N. Marion Street

Date: ca. 1883

Architect: Unknown

Style: Queen Anne

Ranking: Contributing

Description: At 509 N. Marion Street is a two-story Queen Anne style dwelling built c. 1883. The house has a stone foundation, a clapboard exterior, and an asphalt-shingled roof with an interior brick chimney. On the main façade is a hipped roof entry porch with original milled columns and railing. The main entrance has an original glass-and-wood door and windows have original one-over-one wood sashes. The property retains integrity of design.



Address: 511 N. Marion Street

Date: ca. 1905

Architect: Unknown

Style: Folk Victorian/Gabled Ell

Ranking: Contributing

Description: At 511 N. Marion Street is a one-and-a-half-story gable-and-wing dwelling built ca. 1905 with a poured-concrete foundation, a clapboard exterior, and an asphalt-shingled roof with an interior brick chimney. On the main façade is a partial-width one-story porch with original wood columns. The main entrance has an original glass-and-wood door and windows have original one-over-one wood sashes. The property retains integrity of design.

- B. **Properties within the Chicago & Harlem Neighborhood Plan boundary recommended for inclusion within the Frank Lloyd Wright – Prairie School of Architecture Historic District expansion.**



Address: 1114-1116 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1912

Architect: Unknown

Style: Commercial

Ranking: Structure of Merit (proposed Contributing)

Description: At this location is a one-story brick building built in 1912. This one-story building was occupied by various neighborhood-oriented businesses in the early 20th century. In 1925, occupants included the Safus Patterson Barber Shop and in the 1930s it housed the Vogue Beauty Shop. The building has a flat asphalt roof and a concrete foundation. The storefront has original recessed single-light glass-and-wood doors. The storefront also has ca. 1960 stone veneer bulkheads and aluminum-and-glass display windows. Dividing the storefront display windows is an original cast iron pilaster. The upper façade has an inset brick panel and a stepped parapet at the roofline with limestone coping. While the building's storefront has been altered, the overall design and plan of the building remains evident. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.



Address: 1115 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1924 with 2003 alterations

Architect: J. T. Herter

Style: Modernistic

Ranking: No Merit (proposed Non-Contributing)

Description: This one-story brick building was constructed in 1924 but the existing façade was added in 2003. It was originally the home to the North End Tire Shop and was designed with an elaborate Tudor Revival façade, removed in 2003. Due to the extent of alterations this building does not possess integrity. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a non-contributing building.



Address: 1117 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1924

Architect: J. T. Herter

Style: Spanish Revival

Ranking: Structure of Merit (proposed Contributing)

Description: This one-story Spanish Revival style building was constructed in 1924. This building was originally part of the North End Tire Shop, the main automobile-oriented business along this section of W. Chicago Avenue. The building has a flat asphalt roof, a concrete foundation, and a stucco exterior. The main entrance has an original single-light glass-and-wood door. The original storefront was replaced ca. 2000 with metal casement windows. Other windows in the building also have metal casement designs. The roofline has a stepped parapet with clay tiles. On the east façade is a garage bay with an added shed-roof canopy and door. The building has been somewhat altered but it retains its overall form and plan. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.



Address: 1118 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1930

Architect: J. B. Rocher & Son

Style: Commercial

Ranking: Structure of Merit (proposed Contributing)

Description: This one-story brick building was constructed in 1930. It was originally occupied by the National Tea Company. The storefront was remodeled ca. 1970 with brick bulkheads and aluminum-and-glass display windows and doors. The upper façade has an original limestone-and-terra cotta cornice with dentils. At the roofline is a stepped parapet with limestone coping. The building has an altered storefront but its overall design and plan remain evident and its upper façade detailing is intact. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.



Address: 1120 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1931

Architect: Jens J. Jensen

Style: Art Deco

Ranking: Structure of Merit (proposed Contributing)

Description: Built in 1931, this one-story brick building was first occupied by the H.R. Spoo and Sons retail store. It was designed with Art Deco detailing and has a flat asphalt roof, concrete foundation and exterior of limestone panels. The storefront has original single-light glass-and-wood doors, limestone bulkheads and copper-and-glass display windows. Over the doors are original single-light transoms. The transom panel above the display windows is covered with metal panels. The storefront is framed by fluted piers with floral limestone capitals. Below the roofline is a frieze with chevrons and floral banding. The building retains much of its original storefront and upper façade Art Deco detailing. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.



Address: 1122 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1894

Architect: Unknown

Style: Queen Anne

Ranking: Significant (proposed Contributing)

Description: At this location is a two-story frame Queen Anne dwelling built in 1894. It had various occupants and owners at the turn of the century. By the 1910s it was the home to August E. Schroeder who worked as a clerk in the Oak Park Post Office. The dwelling was later the home to Mary Spellman, and was later converted into offices. The house has a stone foundation, weatherboard siding and a gable roof of asphalt shingles. On the main façade is an original full-width porch with Tuscan columns and a wood railing. The house has two entrances on the main façade with ca. 1990 glass-and-wood doors. Windows are original one-over-one wood sash. At the southeast corner is a two-story elliptical tower. This property is a well-preserved example of the Queen Anne style from the late 19th century and retains much of its original character. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.



Address: 1130 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1956 with 2004 alterations

Architect: Robert Johnstone

Style: International and Modernistic influenced

Ranking: No Merit (proposed Non-Contributing)

Description: At this address is a one-story brick building constructed in 1956 with an original stone veneer on the main façade. A large projecting roof of synthetic stucco was added at the roofline in 2004, and the storefront was remodeled at this time. Due to the alterations to the building, it no longer retains integrity of its original design. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a non-contributing building.



Address: 1142-46 Chicago Avenue / 801-811 Harlem Avenue

Date: 1924

Architect: Hall, Lawrence, Rippel & Ratcliffe

Style: Spanish Colonial Revival

Ranking: Significant (proposed Contributing)

Description: This building was constructed at the northeast corner of Chicago and Harlem Avenues in 1924. It was one of several constructed along Chicago Avenue in the mid-1920s that were noted for their architectural design and expense of construction. The building was originally

owned by George Retrakos, and the first floor was occupied by seven businesses while the upper floor was used for apartments. For many years the corner storefront was occupied by the Latsis Drug Company and adjacent storefronts contained physicians such as Dr. J.J. Haller and Dr. C.W. Carey in the 1930s and 1940s.

The building has a flat asphalt roof, concrete foundation, and exterior of glazed terra cotta over brick. The storefronts on both facades have terra cotta bulkheads and ca. 1960 aluminum and glass display windows and doors. Entrances have terra cotta surrounds with rope and pellet molding and floral and shield panels. Above the first story is a terra cotta cornice with egg and leaf molding. Historic photos show that some cornice elements are missing. The second story windows are original four-over-one vertical light sash with terra cotta cornices decorated with inset urns. The upper façade bays are divided by terra cotta pilasters with inset urn and floral panels. This building is a notable example of a terra cotta façade of the early 20th century. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.



Address: 1135 Erie Street

Date: ca. 1900

Architect: Unknown

Style: Gable Front

Ranking: Structure of Merit (proposed Contributing)

Description: At 1135 Erie Street is a ca. 1900 two-story gable-front dwelling with vinyl siding and a roof of asphalt shingles. The main façade has a partial-width wrap-around porch that was enclosed ca. 1970. Entrances and windows were also altered ca. 1970. The house continues to retain its overall form and plan. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.



Address: 1137 Erie Street

Date: ca. 1900

Architect: Unknown

Style: Gable Front

Ranking: Structure of Merit (proposed Contributing)

Description: This is a two-story gable-front dwelling with vinyl siding, a central interior brick chimney, and asphalt roof shingles. The main façade has a full-width porch with ca. 1980 windows and doors. At the roofline are gable returns. Windows are from ca. 1980 with one-over-one vinyl sashes. This dwelling has been altered but it retains integrity of its original design. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.



Address: 1140 Erie Street

Date: 1894

Architect: Unknown

Style: Italianate

Ranking: Significant (proposed Contributing)

Description: This two-story frame commercial building was constructed in 1894, according to tax records. It has housed numerous businesses. One of the more notable was the art-glass shop operated in the building by W. C. Eiler. He had his shop in the first floor and resided on the second floor with his family from the 1910s to the 1940s. The building has a gable roof of asphalt shingles, a stone foundation and vinyl siding. The building has two storefronts, both of which were altered ca. 1980 with glass-and-wood doors and large multi-light windows. Windows in the upper façade have original one-over-one wood sashes with original wood cornices. At the roofline is an original wood cornice. The property retains much of its original form and plan. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.



Address: 1140 Superior Street

Date: ca. 1900

Architect: Unknown

Style: Gable Front

Ranking: Structure of Merit (proposed Contributing)

Description: At 1140 Superior Street is a ca. 1900 two-story gable-front dwelling with a stone foundation, a roof of asphalt shingles and vinyl siding. The main façade has a full-width porch with original milled wood posts, decorative brackets and railing. The main entrance has an original glass-and-wood door and windows have original one-over-one wood sashes. This property retains much of its original design. Associated with the dwelling is a ca. 1970 frame garage. It is proposed for inclusion into the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District as a contributing building.

C. Other Chicago Avenue Buildings



Address: 1135 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1923 with 1965 alterations

Architect: Unknown

Style: No Style

Ranking: No Merit

Description: Built in 1923, this one-story brick building was extensively modified ca. 1965 with a new façade. This façade has an exterior of glass and wood and upper roof shingles to approximate a hip or Mansard roof. Due to the extent of the alterations, this property does not possess integrity.



Address: 1137 Chicago Avenue

Date: 1922 with 1960 alterations

Architect: Unknown

Style: No Style

Ranking: No Merit

Description: This one-story brick building was built in 1922 and has a storefront with ca. 1960 stone veneer bulkheads and aluminum and glass display windows and doors. The façade around the storefront has unembellished ca. 1960 concrete panels. On the upper façade is a large plastic sign added ca. 1980. This building has housed several businesses and has been the home to Dressel's Hardware Company for a number of decades. Due to the extent of alterations to the building, it no longer possesses integrity.

D. Buildings on Harlem Avenue



Address: 515-517 N. Harlem Avenue

Date: 2005

Architect: Morgante-Wilson Architects

Style: Modernistic

Ranking: No Merit

Description: This is a four-story residential building with a brick exterior. Extending from the exterior walls are roofless balconies and brick Art Deco-style divider components. The condominium building is known as The Tapestry.



Address: 525 N. Harlem Avenue

Date: 1966

Architect: Scott B. Arnold

Style: No Style

Ranking: No Merit

Description: This is a one-story commercial building with a Mansard-like roof and glass windows was originally constructed as a Burger King restaurant.



Address: 601 N. Harlem Avenue

Date: 2007

Architect: Pappageorge/Haymes Ltd.

Style: Commercial

Ranking: No Merit

Description: This one-story brick commercial building was constructed to house Metropolitan Bank.



Address: 625 N. Harlem Avenue

Date: 1962

Architect: Shayman & Salk

Style: No Style

Ranking: No Merit

Description: This two-story nursing home has exposed rafter tails on its projecting front-gabled portion. Concrete vertical elements divide the façade into several bays. Between the two floors are brick segments, and the remainder of the façade has glass windows.



Address: 711 N. Harlem Avenue

Date: 1973

Architect: Richard N. Pierron

Style: No Style

Ranking: No Merit

Description: The design and materials used in this one-story building are typical of all restaurants in the Denny's restaurant franchise.



Address: 727 N. Harlem Avenue

Date: 1970

Architect: Jack D. Pickett

Style: Colonial Revival

Ranking: No Merit

Description: This one-story brick building was constructed to house a Standard Oil service station. It remains in use as a gas station.

SURVEY SUMMARY

During 2006-2007, a comprehensive survey and reevaluation of the Frank Lloyd Wright – Prairie School of Architecture Historic District was undertaken by the Village of Oak Park. As part of this study the existing boundaries of the district were reviewed and recommendations made for expanding the boundary to include additional eligible properties. This reevaluation recommended expanding the western edge of the historic district boundary to include several properties within the Chicago & Harlem Neighborhood Plan area.

On the north side of Chicago Avenue the boundary of the historic district is recommended to extend west all the way to Harlem Avenue. This would result in the inclusion of five contributing and one non-contributing buildings into the district. Of particular importance on this block is the building at 1142-1146 Chicago Avenue. Built in 1926, this two-story building at the corner of Harlem Avenue has a notable terra cotta façade and is one of the most significant commercial buildings in the project area. On the south side of Chicago Avenue the boundary is recommended to extend two additional lots to include the Spanish Revival automobile business at 1117 Chicago Avenue. The remaining buildings along this block from Marion Street to Harlem Avenue have been extensively altered and have no merit.

The proposed boundary revision would also include the addition of several dwellings in the project area into the district. These would be the buildings at 1135, 1137 and 1142 Erie Street and 1140 Superior Street. Three of these buildings continue to be used as dwellings while the building at 1140 Erie Street is a historic commercial building dating from the 1890s.

The blocks along Harlem Avenue in the neighborhood plan area have lost their original architectural and historic character. Most buildings in these blocks are less than fifty years of age and do not possess architectural significance.

Survey Statistics

A total of thirty-five (35) properties were surveyed or noted as part of this project.

By date of construction:

1883-1899: 4 properties
1900-1919: 8 properties
1920-1930: 5 properties
1931-1958: 6 properties
1959-2007: 12 properties

By significance:

Contributing: 6
Non-Contributing: 7
Significant: 5
Structure of Merit: 0
Structure of Merit (proposed Contributing): 7
No Merit: 8
No Merit (proposed Non-Contributing): 2

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