

MARCH/APRIL 2024

OP/FYI

A NEWSLETTER
FROM THE
VILLAGE OF
OAK PARK

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Public Health Department celebrating 75 Years

As part of its celebration of National Public Health Week from April 1–7, the Oak Park Public Health Department is marking 75 years as a state-certified local health department. Oak Park sustains one of only a handful of municipal-level public health departments with this distinction. The Public Health Department was founded in 1905 and led the community through outbreaks of typhoid, influenza and small pox. In 1949, it was certified by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Currently, Oak Park’s Health Department has four divisions: Emergency Preparedness, Environmental Health, Health Education and Nursing. It also manages and operates the Oak Park Farmers’ Market. Additionally, the Health Department has an epidemiologist and a grants coordinator to manage more than a dozen grants that keep the department’s programming running smoothly throughout the year. The Health Department offers a wide variety of services to Oak Parkers to keep the community as healthy as possible, such as restaurant, grocery and bakery inspections, rat abatement, pet licensing, emergency preparedness planning, community health data tracking, communicable disease response, healthcare referrals and free trainings on opioid overdose prevention. The Health Department also enforces state and local health codes. Learn more about Oak Park’s Public Health Department at www.oak-park.us/health, and sign up for its monthly Health Beat e-newsletter at www.oak-park.us/enews to stay up to date on Health Department programming and opportunities.

Incorporating solar panels in historic districts

The Village and its Historic Preservation Commission support sustainable building practices like reusing historic buildings and materials as well as the use of alternative energy sources. However, the incorporation of solar panels in historic districts should be done with care to preserve the historic character for which Oak Park’s historic districts are known. Things to consider when looking at adding solar panels in a historic district:

- Place panels in areas that are not readily visible from the street, such as rear roof slopes, behind dormers, or on garages behind the house.
- Panels should be “readily reversible.” This means that their installation allows for future removal without any damage or alteration to the original historic structure.
- Installation should not entail damage or removal of any historic features of the building.

In most cases, if solar panel installation meets these recommendations, it will not require additional historic review by the Village. For more information, please contact historicpreservation@oak-park.us or visit www.oak-park.us/historicpreservation.

Historic Preservation Speaker Series... Bonnie McDonald, President & CEO of Landmarks Illinois, is the guest speaker for the next installment of the Historic Preservation Commission’s Speaker Series from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on March 14 at Village Hall. McDonald will host a discussion about “The Relevancy Guidebook,” providing ideas and models from innovators intended to make preservation a more relevant, just and accessible solution for the problems we face in a changing world.

2023 By the Numbers:

A look at municipal service delivery

With only 4.7 square miles and 54,500 residents, some may say Oak Park is a small town. But the municipal services that make our community such a great place to live, work and do business are anything but small.

Oak Park has more than 100 miles of Village-owned streets, 500 alleys, nearly 18,000 parkway trees, 7,000 lighting fixtures, 104 miles of water mains, 110 miles of sewer mains and some 4,000 public parking spaces.

Services are delivered by a workforce of about 350 full-time employees who bring a wide range of formal education, experience and expertise to their jobs.

From a highly trained and motivated police force focused on neighborhoods to firefighter-paramedics who routinely eclipse national emergency response times, Oak Park's public safety programs rival those of much larger communities.

The Village's public works programs are at the core of municipal services. They pump the water, maintain the streets, plow the snow, keep the traffic signals operating, maintain nearly 18,000 trees on public property and keep a fleet of roughly 250 traditional, hybrid, compressed natural gas, bio-diesel and electric vehicles running smoothly.

One of only a handful certified by the state, the Health Department keeps our restaurants clean, pets licensed, childcare facilities safe and the community prepared for emergencies.

Other municipal services nurture business investment, foster diversity, equity and inclusion, plan for future development and protect the community's housing stock, one of Oak Park's most valuable assets.

Since approved by voters in 1952, Oak Park has operated under the council manager form of government, in which an elected Village Board hires a professional manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of municipal services and programs.

Though employees are assigned to different departments, and the jobs performed vary, all have the common mission of serving the many needs of the residents of Oak Park. So how did they do in 2023? Here's a snapshot of some of their activities from last year....



SERVING THE COMMUNITY

\$1,553,643 in federal grants distributed to help low- and moderate-income residents and the unhoused

\$484,854 allocated to support affordable housing programs

416,568 mobile parking meter transactions processed

\$149,210 in funding distributed for property improvements through 16 Multi-Family Housing Incentives Program grants

101,210 overnight parking passes processed online

26,735 service requests answered by the Public Works Department Call Center

10,100 COVID rapid antigen tests distributed

6,250 local ordinance and parking citations administratively adjudicated at Village Hall

2,771 requests processed under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act

2,660 graffiti hits removed

1,967 rat cases baited

1,658 free doses of Narcan distributed

1,585 animals licensed

988 LINK transactions completed at the Oak Park Farmers' Market

714 community relations issues addressed, including tenant/ landlord disputes and neighbor conflicts

555 block party requests processed

194 rental dwelling licenses issued

70 short-term rental property licenses issued

42 sewer backup prevention grants approved for \$181,615

24 animals rescued

10 public health visits to homebound residents

5 children with elevated blood lead levels provided with case management

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COMMUNICATING INFORMATION

1,341,445 website page views

361,700 minutes of VOP-TV programming viewed on Village YouTube channel and other social media platforms

192,432 engagements with Village social media posts

29,064 Village, Police, Fire and Pick Oak Park Facebook followers

17,330 minutes of video programming produced

12,330 Village and Police X (formerly Twitter) followers



11,073 Village, Police and Pick Oak Park Instagram followers

5,400 enews listserv subscribers

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC

43,929 police responses, including calls, traffic stops, vacation property checks and alarm/security checks

8,629 fire and emergency calls — 5,091 for EMS

5,759 trees trimmed, 280 removed and 352 planted

4,335 property code violations reviewed

1,679 tons of salt spread during 15 separate snow events

1,161 fire safety building plans reviewed

927 inspections of fire suppression equipment

813 buildings inspected for fire safety

450 public health inspections performed

245 Animals impounded

157 Smoke-Free Illinois Act business inspections completed

136 Village-sponsored COVID-19 testing clinics held

29 Concrete bump outs/pinch points installed at 10 locations

14 Speed tables installed

13 Village-sponsored COVID-19 vaccine clinics held

7 blocks of new neighborhood greenway installed

3 bike intersection improvements installed

3 rectangular rapid flashing beacons crossing installed

IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE

2,480 sidewalk squares replaced and repaired

2,425 potholes patched with 132 tons of asphalt

2,238 lane miles of streets swept

1,525 feet of new water mains installed

848 street signs replaced

747 street lamps replaced

259 sidewalk ramps upgraded to ADA standards

4.54 miles of street rebuilt and resurfaced

4.27 miles of sewer video inspected and cleaned

SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT

\$387,419 in disposal fees saved by diverting 45 percent of all residential waste from landfills

12,949 fewer gallons of fossil fuel used by Village vehicles in 2023 than 2022

9,744 tons of garbage hauled away

3,653 tons of household recyclables collected

2,196 tons of leaves collected

1,945 tons of yard waste and organics collected

33 tons of hazardous household waste materials and electronic waste collected

13 public EV charging stations and parking spaces maintained in Village lots

BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

\$12,150,000 in sales and use taxes generated — \$10,100,000 by local businesses

\$1,919,800 in building permit fees collected

13,268 construction, commercial and residential property inspections performed

4,561 building permit applications submitted — 100% online

1,830 historic preservation property renovation permits reviewed

1,305 business licenses issued, including for 130 new businesses

100 liquor licenses issued, including 7 new licenses

Block party season around the corner

Applications for block parties are now being accepted. Each block is limited to two events per year. The events can be a block party, a block sale or a combination of both. The total number of events across the community is limited to 30 per weekend. Some weekends fill quickly, so residents are encouraged to plan events early to ensure preferred dates. Find more information and the block event application form at www.oak-park.us/blockparties.

Make it green... Oak Parkers are invited to go green at their next block party. Residents who sign up for a green block party via the block party application form receive a kit that includes compostable bags and pop-up waste sorting boxes with signage indicating what waste goes where.

News You Can Use

Plan now for spring, summer remodeling projects... Now is the time to plan for spring and summer remodeling projects, both business and residential. Anyone considering opening a business, designing an addition, finishing a residential basement, building a new garage or remodeling a home kitchen or bath is encouraged to schedule a preliminary construction meeting before finalizing the plans. Village staff will explain what is needed for the permit process and can direct you to resources that can provide additional guidance if needed. To schedule a personal appointment, call 708.358.5434 or email permits@oak-park.us.

Language access survey... The Village's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is conducting a language access survey to better understand the language access needs in the community, particularly as it relates to Village Hall and other municipal facilities. The survey is available in both English and Spanish. Other languages may be provided upon request. Offer your input related to language access at www.engageoakpark.com/language-access.

Construction project on Madison Street... Work is set to begin in early March on a capital improvement project along Madison Street between Oak Park Avenue and East Avenue. While only four blocks in length, the work is expected to impact the regular traffic flow on the east-west thoroughfare through the project's completion date in November. The project includes the removal and replacement of water main, replacement of lead water services, storm sewer improvement, removal and replacement of curb and gutter and milling and resurfacing of the roadway. Visit www.oak-park.us/construction for regular updates about the Madison Street project and other construction work around Oak Park.

Save the date for Eco-Extravaganza... Celebrate Earth Month at Oak Park's Eco-Extravaganza from 10 a.m. to noon on Sat., April 6 at the Oak Park Public Library Main Branch, 834 Lake St. Organized by the Library, Village and local non-profit One Earth Local, the all-ages event will feature a treasure hunt and information fair for community members interested in learning more about local sustainability efforts. Find more information at www.oak-park.us/eco-extravaganza.

Paper shredding and foam recycling event

Oak Parkers are invited to safely dispose of sensitive documents and foam products with the No. 6 symbol at a free paper shredding and foam recycling event scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon, Sat., April 20 at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd.

Paper shredding... Each household is limited to two bags or small boxes of paper items with personal information such as canceled checks, documents containing credit card numbers, social security numbers and medical information. Paper materials that can be placed in the recycling cart or bin, such as newspaper, magazines, chipboard or junk mail, will not be accepted.

Foam recycling... Foam products with the No. 6 symbol are not accepted as part of the Village's single-stream recycling program with waste hauler LRS. To fill the gap, the Village has scheduled Dart Container Corporation to collect foam products. Please follow these guidelines:

- Deposit foam products in a clear or translucent bag.
- Make sure foam has the No. 6 recycling symbol on it.
- Rinse or wipe foodservice containers.
- No straws or lids.
- No foam packaging peanuts.

For more information, contact publicworks@oak-park.us or 708.358.5700.

Textile recycling collection now available

The Village is offering collection of used textiles and small household items as part of its ongoing effort to help

simple recycling 

residents reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills. The

textile service is provided by Simple Recycling and is free to all Oak Park residents. Free pickups can be scheduled online through Simple Recycling's website at www.simplerecycling.com or by phone at 866.835.5068. Recyclables are then placed in a bag or box outside the resident's front door by 7:30 a.m. on the scheduled pickup date. Simple Recycling collects a wide range of textiles and small household items, including used or new men's, women's and children's clothing, bedding, boots, shoes, belts, ties, coats, jackets, hats, gloves, pillows, towels and table linens. The textile recycling program does not target clothing donations to charities but instead is aimed at diverting clothing and home goods placed in curbside trash away from landfills. Simple Recycling sends the material it collects to a facility in Chicago, where roughly 30% of the material is destined to local thrift stores for resale, 30% is appropriate for overseas markets, and the remainder

is shredded and recycled into insulation and fiber for industrial wipers. The Village's agreement with Simple Recycling does not prevent any resident from donating material to their favorite charity and is simply another convenient option available to residents looking to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills. For more information about recycling options in Oak Park, visit www.oak-park.us/recycling, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.





New leadership in Development Services

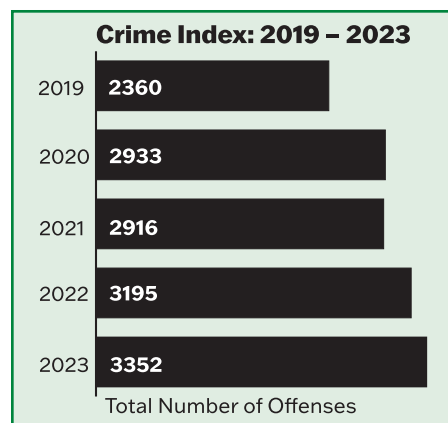
As the Village restructures and lifts up a new Development Services Department, it recently welcomed the arrival of Emily Egan as Development Services Director and Brandon Crawford as Deputy Director of Development Services. Last year the Village Board approved changes to the Development Customer Services Department, including a name change to the Development Services Department. The changes are intended to foster an enhanced focus on economic development and vitality within Oak Park's municipal government. The streamlined Development Services Department will focus on four key areas: economic development and vitality, development and permits, planning and urban design, and parking and mobility services. Egan, a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, comes to Oak Park with extensive experience in municipal government after having previously served as the Director of Community Development for the Village of Brookfield. Egan obtained a Master of Urban Planning and Policy degree at University of Illinois Chicago with a concentration in economic development. She also has a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies from Grand Valley State University. Crawford comes to Oak Park with a strong mix of experience in both private and public sectors. Crawford has a Master of Science in Real Estate Investment & Finance from DePaul University and a Bachelor of Arts in Urban & Regional Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Read more at www.oak-park.us/development24.

Housing choice voucher list to open in March

The Oak Park Housing Authority (OPHA) will accept pre-applications to add 150 new households to the waiting list for the Housing Choice Voucher Program that helps very-low-income households pay their monthly rent. Formerly known as Section 8, the voucher program is a locally administered federal initiative that helps pay the portion of a program participant's rent that exceeds about 30% of their monthly income. The 150 new households added to the Oak Park list will be selected through a random lottery process from all pre-applications received between 8:30 a.m. on Mon., March 4 and 3 p.m. on Fri., March 15. Pre-applications will only be accepted electronically through an online portal at www.oakparkha.org. Assistance completing the online pre-application will be available through social service organizations listed on the same Oak Park Housing Authority website. The federally funded program uses a local preference, with 90% of the households on the waiting list being Oak Park residents or current or newly-hired employees of local Oak Park businesses, so low-income Oak Parkers are strongly encouraged to apply. The program currently provides vouchers to nearly 600 households within Oak Park. More information is posted online at www.oakparkha.org.

Police release 2023 crime stats

Oak Park Police investigated 3,352 crimes in 2023, compared to 3,195 crimes in 2022, according to data compiled by the Police Department for the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System used by law enforcement agencies in the United States for collecting and reporting data on crimes. Thefts and property crimes that historically represent the largest share of lawbreaking in the Village remained the biggest categories in 2023.



2023 Crime Summary

- Thefts increased last year — there were 1,165 reported in 2023 compared to 1,023 in 2022. There was also an upward trend in burglaries with 186 in 2023 compared to 171 in 2022. Police officials say locking garage doors and keeping a watchful eye on personal belongings are among the best deterrents to these crimes against property.
- A significant increase in motor vehicle thefts was recorded, with

cases rising from 263 in 2022 to 351 in 2023. The uptick reflects a continuing trend across the country that has seen thieves target older model Hyundai and Kia vehicles.

- There was a significant decrease in criminal damage to property incidents, with the total dropping from 528 in 2022 to 421 in 2023.
- The number of assault and battery cases decreased slightly in 2023, as police investigated 471 incidents in 2023 compared to 479 in 2022.
- Police investigated 2,042 traffic-related incidents in 2023. Of those incidents, 712 occurred in intersections, 26 involved pedestrians and 38 involved bicycles. By comparison, there were 1,891 traffic-related incidents in 2022.

For more information about the Oak Park Police Department, visit www.oak-park.us/police, call 708.386.3800 or email police@oak-park.us.

View with a smartphone camera.



Village of Oak Park
Village Hall
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272



Village President Vicki Scaman

Trustees

Susan Buchanan Lucia Robinson

Chibuike Enyia Brian D. Straw

Ravi Parakkat Cory J. Wesley

Village Clerk Christina M. Waters

Village Manager Kevin J. Jackson

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Presort
Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 26
Oak Park, IL

Village Hall hosting early voting

Suburban Cook County voters can cast an early ballot for the March 19 Presidential Primary Election seven days a week starting March 4 through March 18 at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays. Village Hall also will offer grace period registration during early voting hours for those individuals who missed the registration deadline. Valid identification is required to register during the grace period and a vote must be cast immediately after registration. A driver's license or picture ID is preferred, along with an additional item such as a lease or utility bill with the current address. More information is available by calling 708.358.5672 or emailing clerk@oak-park.us. Election day polling site information is available at www.cookcountyclerk.com/elections. The Oak Park Library also has helpful voter information at www.oppl.org/about/civic-engagement.

Volunteers needed to help with community events

The Village hosts a series of community events throughout the year to celebrate Oak Park's diversity. These occasions include A Day in Our Village, Juneteenth, Pride Month, Oak Park's July 4th parade and Hispanic Heritage Month. Volunteers are sought to serve on planning committees and assist with logistics the day of the events. Anyone who is up to the challenge of helping bring the community together can sign up to volunteer at www.oak-park.us/CommunityEvents. For more information, contact 708.358.5405 or community@oak-park.us.

Village Board adopts goals

Following local elections, the Village Board typically updates its goals as a way of outlining the priorities, projects and initiatives it intends to work toward during the upcoming term. Earlier this year Village Trustees adopted the following goals for 2024-25:

- Community Affordability
- Community Health and Safety
- Economic Vitality
- Racial Equity
- Sustainability & Resiliency
- Vibrant, Diverse, Connected Neighborhoods

Visit www.oak-park.us/boardgoals for more information, including detailed priorities, projects and initiatives related to each goal.

Yard waste pickup begins in April

Weekly collection of yard waste for residential dwellings of five or fewer units begins in April and continues through the last full week of November. Bundled brush no larger than two feet in diameter and four feet in length and yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, shrubs and vines will be picked up on regular refuse collection days. A green yard waste sticker must be attached to each brush bundle, 32-gallon paper bag and rigid container. Stickers are \$3.25 each. Residents are urged to look for alternatives to bagging yard waste such as mulching mowers, leaf shredders or backyard compost piles. For more information, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Where to buy stickers

- Village Hall, 123 Madison Street
- Sugar Beet Food Co-Op, 812 Madison
- Pete's Fresh Market, 259 Lake Street
- Jewel Food Stores: 438 Madison Street, 7036 Roosevelt Rd. and 7572 Lake Street (River Forest)
- PJ's Ace Hardware, 7 Chicago Avenue
- Schauer Hardware, 7449 Madison Street (Forest Park)