

**AGENDA**  
**PARK FOREST PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Park Forest Village Hall  
Via Conference Call

**7:00 P.M.**

TUESDAY  
**February 9, 2021**

1. Planning and Zoning Commission Call to Order
2. Review of Minutes
  - a. January 12, 2021, Regular Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
3. Petitions - None
4. Audience to Visitors
5. New Business – Workshop on the Comprehensive Housing Plan
6. Old Business - None
7. Communications
  - a. Member Communications
  - b. Trustee Comments
  - c. Staff Communications
8. Adjournment

Due to the public health emergency, individuals who wish to make comments at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting must submit their comments by email to [hkingma@vopf.com](mailto:hkingma@vopf.com) or by US Postal Service to 350 Victory Drive, Park Forest IL 60446, ATTN: Hildy L. Kingma. Mail or email comments must be received no later than 5:00 pm on Tuesday, February 9, to be provided to the Planning and Zoning Commission for their consideration. All comments received by the deadline will be read out loud at the public hearing. Interested parties may also obtain a call-in phone number by contacting Hildy Kingma at the email address above or calling 708/283-5622 prior to 5:00 pm on Tuesday, February 9. If the public has questions, call or email Ms. Kingma.

**Park Forest  
Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes  
Via Conference Call  
Tuesday, January 12, 2021**

**Present:** Vice Chair Marguerite Hutchins; Commissioners: Samuel Brooks, Cynthia Burton-Prete, Kim Elmore-Perkins, Judith Gonzalez, Denise Poston, Doug Price; Trustee Liaison Maya Hardy

**Staff:** Hildy Kingma, Director of Economic Development and Planning

**Absent:** Chair Vernita Wickliffe-Lewis; Commissioner Kyle Brodnick

**Visitors:** None

**Call to Order:** Hutchins called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Review of Minutes December 8, 2020:** On page two under Burton-Prete, where it states “why will we posting on the website.” Change it to “why are we posting on the website.” Motion to approve the minutes was made by Burton-Prete, with a second by Gonzalez. All approved by roll call vote.

**Petitions:** None

**Audience to Visitors:** None

**New Business** – Discussion of possible text amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance

Kingma described the proposed amendment. She stated that the amendment to the UDO would allow some limited kinds of light manufacturing in the C-2 and C-3 zoning districts, and would help Park Forest commercial properties be more marketable and insulate businesses from e-commerce threats. It will allow them to do more e-commerce themselves and not just rely on walk-in traffic at the front counter. It may also make some retail businesses more pandemic proof. There are already some businesses doing some type of light manufacturing in Downtown Park Forest, including Southland Caterers, Poppin’ Plates, and Vintrendi Wines. So, the proposed amendment will make sure existing uses are consistent with the ordinances, and also allow for the expansion of those kinds of businesses.

**Burton-Prete:** One of the areas you talked about was the Norwood Square Shopping area. If we make this amendment, will that impact anyone who wants to develop a cannabis craft growing business because they were not going to sell the product?

**Kingma:** It will not impact cannabis uses because they have their own specific use standards and must have a Special Use Permit in order to operate.

**Burton-Prete:** But if we did have an applicant that was interested in that area, and we change the text amendment, can they still have a facility there?

**Kingma:** A cannabis craft grower without a dispensary cannot operate in the commercial zoning districts. Cannabis craft growers are only permitted in manufacturing zoning district with a special use permit. So, they would have to request a map amendment, just as the approved cannabis craft grower did.

**Burton-Prete:** In order to have a craft grower at the Norwood property, without a retail component, they would have to rezone to manufacturing and have a special use permit. Is that correct?

**Kingma:** Yes. A craft grower does not require a retail component to it in the manufacturing zoning district. In the C-2 and C-3 zoning districts, however, the craft grower must be paired with a dispensary. Those are totally separate use standards than what is being discussed with this proposed text amendment.

**Burton-Prete:** Your proposal is that there has to be a retail component. What if it is a business that doesn't sell to the public but to other businesses?

**Kingma:** The staff proposal is to keep these uses more in the realm of a commercial business so that there would have to be a public facing retail counter. Staff's concern is that, without the retail counter, it could open up the commercial zoning districts to light manufacturing uses.

**Gonzalez:** What type of research has gone into this by the Village that would allow for your square footage recommendation?

**Kingma:** It is simply based on what some of the businesses that are currently doing this type of work have, and what the available commercial space in the DownTown could accommodate without taking up too much room. We didn't want to make the requirement for retail space too high. But we also wanted to make it large enough that there will be room for a real counter or for tables.

**Gonzalez:** Would that 500 square feet be a requirement if a business came in and wanted to use that zoning?

**Kingma:** That is our recommendation - that it have a minimum of 500 square feet of retail space.

**Gonzalez:** If the business wants something smaller? How can they accommodate that request?

**Kingma:** That would have to be a variance.

**Price:** I think the flexibility of economic development will be increased by what the staff have been pushing for a while. I would not be favorable at all of letting someone go under the required 500 square feet. I think the area that we are talking about, the C-2 and C-3 areas, all have residential areas immediately adjacent to them. To open this up where it might increase services to residences is a strong plus for it. But to open it up to light manufacturing alone, that will in effect turn its back to those neighborhoods and would be a negative. So I would be supportive of proceeding if the retail component is an absolute requirement.

**Brooks:** I am in favor of this proposed text amendment. The small business is important because we are land locked. We are not going to have Amazon come and build a big warehouse. If we have this text amendment it could serve to attract traditional businesses. The businesses that Hildy mentioned have been relatively successful. They could attract other small businesses.

**Elmore-Perkins:** The part that concerns me is that other businesses that have been in Park Forest and they have been asked to do more than what they wanted to do in their original planning. They were approached by the Village to do x, y and z and if they can make that a component of their business. People were motivated to be here and they did it but in some of the instances it ended up being kind of the death of their business because they weren't equipped to do it. It wasn't a passion or something that they could uphold to the best of their ability. It brought their business down from where they needed it to be. That has happened in a couple of

situations and I worry where retail may entice them if they are able to do it. But it may also be a deterrent for them to not come here.

**Kingma:** What I would suggest is we are not making a requirement on anyone here. We are opening up an opportunity. We are allowing you to do some light manufacturing with your commercial business.

**Burton-Prete:** I'm not opposed to retail. Like Kim, I have concerns that we have these businesses that have been in Park Forest and they had not succeeded or moved on for whatever reason. So that's why I suggested that in addition to this retail component where you're selling a product to the public, don't rule out the business to business because there are some businesses that still thrive and can be very productive and financially successful if they sold strictly business to business. Maybe at some point they may be willing to open their business to the public and sell to the public.

**Poston:** I'm actually open to the idea. A lot of times when a business first starts, it takes time for them to get their feet underneath them in order to expand. So sometimes it takes a minute to pull things together and to get the kind of exposure that they need. I think to have the opportunity to expand the business will only benefit the community a bit more as opposed to the limitation or not having the option to expand if the business itself is growing.

**Price:** The way this proposal came to the Commission is a bit unusual. Is this a staff request?

**Kingma:** This is something generated by staff.

**Price:** So this will be new to the Board if the public hearing resulted in our approval.

**Kingma:** Yes

#### **Old Business - None**

#### **Communications:**

- a. Member Communications: Brooks inquired about the status of the Jet Foods Supermarket. Kingma stated that Staff has been told that the business is going to happen, but there is not a time frame. Hutchins thanked Kingma for including the zoning map in with the packet.
- b. Trustee Comments: None
- c. Staff Communications: Kingma noted that the February meeting will be an overview/update on an element of the comprehensive plan. Is there a particular element that the Commissioners want to start with? Elmore-Perkins stated that she is interested in the Comprehensive Housing Plan.

**Adjournment:** Motion was made by Elmore-Perkins to adjourn, with a second by Burton-Prete. All approved by roll call vote and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM: Hildy L. Kingma, AICP  
Director of Economic Development and Planning

DATE: February 1, 2021

RE: Update on Comprehensive Housing Plan

The Planning and Zoning Commission has requested periodic updates on the adopted elements of the comprehensive plan. At the February meeting, we will discuss the *Comprehensive Housing Plan*, adopted by the Board of Trustees in February 2018. This memo will provide updated data, as far as it is available, and an update on the activities that have taken place or are underway to implement the Goals and Strategies in the Plan.

Basic Data updated data in blue

### **Park Forest Vacant and Foreclosed Homes**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
# vacant houses	203	223	241	342	423	554	587	554	501	487	526	434
# houses in foreclosure	208	313	384	477	540	780	732	638	568	526	490	322
# foreclosed/occupied	95	194	258	282	338	484	414	373	378	370	346	226
# foreclosed/vacant	113	119	126	195	202	296	318	265	190	156	144	96

All data are annual averages

Source: Park Forest Department of Community Development

### **Park Forest Housing Authority Voucher Program**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Park Forest Vouchers	154	148	148	121	159	157	124	147	133
Portable Vouchers	306	320	406	475	484	473	404	345	258

Source: Housing Authority of Park Forest

### **Average Market Value of all Houses Sold**

Year	Average Value	Year	Average Value
2010	\$54,100	2016	\$48,020
2011	\$46,130	2017	\$50,620
2012	\$39,720	2018	\$68,830
2013	\$47,600	2019	\$69,700
2014	\$39,910	2020	\$82,150
2015	\$47,610		

In January 2021, the average selling price for the month was \$101,840, with 13 of the 25 sales exceeding \$100,000. By comparison, in December 2020, the average selling price for the month

was \$93,530. Further, in January 2021, the occupancy ratio was 73 percent owner-occupancy to 27 percent rental occupancy. The occupancy ratio for the 2020 as a whole was 59 percent owner-occupancy to 41 percent rental occupancy. These higher owner occupancy figures equate to figures from the 1990s.

### Goals and Strategies

#### *Assimilate Park Forest Renters into the Community*

- *Get to know the needs and goals of renters*
- *Provide educational resources targeted specifically to renters.*
- *Create a tool lending library for renters who do not have access to yard equipment and other tools necessary for home maintenance.*
- *Work with landlords to develop a good relationship with the Village*

Village Staff works with the real estate community to conduct a housing expo every year that includes a house tour of homes available for purchase, as well as various workshops on issues of interest to prospective home buyers. Workshops conducted in 2018 and 2019 included how to buy a house, credit repair, and do-it-yourself home repair. Unfortunately, this event could not be held in 2020, but it is expected to continue in 2021.

Village and Park Forest Public Library Staff are working together to create a tool lending library. Tools for yard maintenance and home repair have been purchased and will be available for check-out from the Library, along with a library of “how-to” videos to explain the best and safest use of the tools. This program was scheduled to begin in the spring of 2020, but because the Library has been closed to the public during the pandemic, program roll-out had to be delayed. The new goal for roll-out is Earth Day 2021 (April 21).

The Village worked closely with multi-family landlords during 2020 to promote the 2020 Census and increase participation among renters. The Village also promoted the IHDA COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program to all rental property owners. This program allowed renters to get up to \$5000 in rent paid if unpaid rent was the result of COVID. Data is not available regarding the number of Park Forest renters who were assisted by this program.

#### *Create a Residential Marketing Program based on Specific Niche Populations that already*

##### *Define Park Forest*

- *Attract young adults who cannot afford to purchase a home and want a low maintenance lifestyle.*
- *Promote Park Forest to a new generation of Veterans*
- *Promote the variety of housing types in the Village.*
- *Address the strengths of living in an open and welcoming community.*
- *Educate real estate agents about the benefits of living in Park Forest.*

The primary means of implementing this Goal is through a new web page that is being developed for the Village’s website. The first part of this webpage can be found under the Discover/Living in Park Forest tabs. Additional work is being done to reach out specifically to Millennials and Veterans.

As noted above, the Village hosts an annual housing expo in conjunction with local real estate professionals. In addition, real estate professionals are invited to an annual brunch that features speakers on using social media to grow their customer base; connecting with various elements of housing sales including finance, buyers, sellers, and the community; and techniques to generate leads. These events were also cancelled in 2020, but will be resumed as soon as it is safe to do so.

#### *Focus on Revitalizing the Eastgate Neighborhood*

- *Be proactive about seeking grants to advance redevelopment goals for the Eastgate neighborhood.*
- *Develop a plan for redevelopment of the Eastgate neighborhood.*
- *Engage the neighborhood residents in the future redevelopment of the neighborhood.*

Since 2009, 67 vacant, blighted houses in the Eastgate neighborhood have been demolished using grant funds received from the State and County. Eleven of these demolitions occurred in 2018-2021, since the adoption of the *Comprehensive Housing Plan*. In December 2020, the Village received another grant from the Illinois Housing Development Authority that will allow for additional demolitions, if they are needed. The Village is in the process of acquiring six vacant, tax delinquent properties through the judicial abandonment process. Each house will be evaluated to determine if demolition or sale for rehab is the most appropriate course of action. Because of increasing home values in the Village, it is possible that some homes in Eastgate might be attractive to investors or owner occupants willing to undertake the rehab.

Recent or planned infrastructure improvements in the Eastgate neighborhood include the following:

- The water main that delivers water from Well #2 (located on Algonquin Street) to the Water Treatment Plant was fractured directly under Western Avenue. This water main was repaired through a method called Cured in Place Pipe Lining (CIPP) because it allowed for the repair to happen without trenching across Western Avenue.
- Water main replacement/Street Resurfacing: Arrowhead Street (Allegheny Street to Arcadia Street) and Apache Street. This project is currently being designed, with a projected start of construction July 1, 2021, pending IEPA loan approval.
- Sanitary Sewer Lining to encompass all of Eastgate. The CDBG grant funding has been approved. Construction is projected to start Fall 2021.
- An application was submitted to the Illinois Department of Transportation for an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) grant to construct a 10 foot wide multiuse path along 26<sup>th</sup> Street from the east boundary of the Village to Norwood Boulevard, on the west side of Western Avenue. This terminus will connect to a multiuse path currently being designed along Forest Boulevard.

In June 2019, the PZC conducted a survey of Eastgate residents to get input on how they regard their neighborhood currently, and their vision for the future of the neighborhood. With over 250 houses in the neighborhood, only nine responses were received. These responses focused primarily on code enforcement issues and traffic speeds on the neighborhood streets. A more targeted survey was sent in mid-2020 to get input on the grant application for a multi-use path on 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Less than 10 responses were received, most of which were supportive of the path.

The PZC's Annual Goals and Objectives continue to include the following objective related to the Eastgate neighborhood: "At the time that potential development partners are identified, conduct a planning workshop to update the concept plan in the *Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development*." At this time, there are 84 vacant lots in the neighborhood, representing 25 percent of the total lots. All but 12 of these lots are owned by either the Village or the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA). All SSLBDA properties will be transferred to the Village in 2021. This most likely is still not a sufficient number of lots to attract a developer to begin work on transforming the neighborhood. See the attached map for the location of all vacant lots.

In January 2020, the PZC and EDAG met jointly to receive the report conducted by Development Planning Partners – "Analysis of Development Potentials Eastgate Neighborhood". Based on trends in home sales in the Village and the current taxing structure, the consultants concluded that "the potential for near term new home development within the Eastgate neighborhood is limited. However, opportunities do exist, though strategies must be carefully calibrated to market realities." They recommended using Village-owned land in the next year or two for "new value-priced for-sale housing", specifically two-story townhomes with two bedrooms, 1.5 baths, approximately 1,300 square feet of living space, and a single car garage. In the mid-term (three to five years), the consultant noted that the housing market is likely to get strong enough to support new single family housing selling in the \$150,000-\$175,000 range (in 2019 dollars). The prototype plan for these homes will most likely be a three-bedroom, two bath home with approximately 1,500 square feet of living space.

#### *Encourage New Development in the DownTown Area*

- *Seek a multifamily developer for the Marshall Field parking lot.*
- *Seek a mixed use development for the remaining vacant land on Main Street.*
- *Invest in public infrastructure improvements necessary to attract new development and business to the DownTown.*

The Development Planning Partners market study referenced above also included a "Rental Market Analysis and Development Planning Study" that included an analysis of multifamily rental housing in DownTown Park Forest. The study looked at the 2.25 acre site at the northeast corner of Main Street and Forest Boulevard, the 0.94 acre site at the northwest corner of Main Street and Cunningham Drive, and the 4.8 acre site at the southeast corner of Main Street and Orchard Drive (the former Marshall Field parking lot). After analyzing the market for multifamily rental housing in the primary market area, the consultants concluded that "the DownTown core is a critical starting point in future efforts to strengthen the housing market and the broader economic health of the Village."

Village Staff is working on a sale and development agreement with a developer interested in both the Main Street/Cunningham Drive site and the Main Street/Orchard Drive site. Staff has indicated a willingness to start with the smaller site to gauge the developer's ability to undertake a larger project. The first project will include two buildings and a total of 16 dwelling units. The Planning and Zoning Commission will have to consider a Special Use Permit for residential

development in the C-2, Mixed Use Commercial zoning district. Therefore, more details about this project will be forthcoming in the near future.

In 2020, the Illinois State Legislature approved and the Governor signed legislation extending the DownTown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District another 12 years. The TIF was due to expire at the end of 2020, so this extension provides more time to realize the full development of vacant land in DownTown Park Forest. It will be helpful for installation of public improvements to serve the new multi-family projects, as well as any commercial developments proposed in the near future.

#### *Continue Moving Forward with Planning and Development of the 211<sup>th</sup> Street Metra Station Transit Oriented Development Plan*

- *Seek approval from appropriate agencies to develop a portion of the commuter parking lot.*
- *Seek a multifamily residential developer for a portion of the TOD area.*

After further research and discussion with staff at the Regional Transportation Authority, Village Staff has determined that there are no restrictions on the Village's ability to sell and develop the former commuter parking lot located at the 211<sup>th</sup> Street Metra Station.

Staff is currently discussing a potential multifamily senior building on the former commuter parking lot. This project is in very early stages and would likely require approval of IHDA funding. In order to move forward, the PZC would have to consider a rezoning for the property, as it is currently zoned R-1, Single Family Residence.

#### *Develop a Residential Rehabilitation Program*

- *Work with the high school district to create and expand a construction trades program for students and community members.*
- *Work with local financial institutions to develop financial mechanisms that make housing rehabilitation affordable.*
- *Develop and maintain a resource inventory for homeowners and buyers interested in rehabilitating their homes.*
- *Promote the Architectural Design Program, and expand the program to focus on sustainable rehabilitation.*

After much research and discussion with representatives of the high school and trade unions, it was determined that developing a construction trades program with high school students was not feasible due to the limits on what youth under 18 years of age can do with tools. Therefore, Staff reached out to Prairie State College and South Suburban College, and the South Suburban Trades Initiative (SSTI) was created in 2018 in partnership with those educational institutions. SSTI provides real, on-site construction experience to students in the construction and HVAC programs at the community colleges, and apprentices associated with Plumbers Local 130, Electricians Local 130, Painters District Council No. 14, and the Sprinkler Fitters Union Local 281. From the beginning, the Village has used grant funds from the IHDA Abandoned Property Program grant to fund work done on the exterior of the house (roof, windows, siding, driveway replacement, tree removal), and Village funds for all other work, including the hiring of a project

manager. To date, 305 Sauganash Street and 336 Early Street have been rehabilitated, and rehab at 117 Wilson Street is underway. The house at 305 Sauganash Street sold in December for \$110,000, resulting in net proceeds to the Village of \$23,700, after all Village expenses had been reimbursed. The Village has a contract for sale of the house at 336 Early Street for \$165,000. Net proceeds from the sale of this house are expected to be over \$50,000. The Village owns 74 Marquette Street and intends to use this house for the 2021-2022 SSTI program. The new grant awarded from IHDA in December expands the eligible expenses and will now allow both interior and exterior work to be completed, up to a maximum of \$40,000 per house. Therefore, the Village's investment in each house will be less, making for a larger net profit from the sale of each house.

All proceeds from the sale of SSTI houses will be used to create a forgivable rehab loan program for home buyers who purchase Land Bank or other abandoned houses in the Village. The specific terms of this program are still being developed. However, it is envisioned that it will include the following features:

- Houses must be purchased for owner occupancy.
- The house must be purchased from the South Suburban or Cook County Land Bank, the Village, or otherwise be deemed vacant and abandoned (the Village has been maintaining the property, taxes are owned, water bills are owed, etc.).
- Forgivable loans will be in the range of \$5,000-\$10,000 (still to be determined), with a term of five years. Each year the owner lives in the house 1/5 of the loan amount will be forgiven. After five years of owner occupancy, the loan becomes a grant.
- Loan funds may be used for code and life safety violations, improvements that eliminate a hardship for elderly or physically challenged residents, improvements that will lengthen the useful life of the property, and energy and resource conservation improvements.

At the beginning of the COVID shut-down, it became obvious that many budgeted programs would not be able to occur. Therefore, Staff received permission to redirect \$30,000 from the Economic Development and Planning Department budget towards a program to assist homeowners address code violations at their properties. The initial program is focusing on the removal of dead trees. Homeowners who have received violation notices have been notified that this program is available. Participants must meet income guidelines, be over 65 years of age, or a Veteran. The Village pays 80 percent of the cost of the tree removal, up to a maximum of \$1500. The homeowner is required to get at least two proposals to ensure that the least costly vendor is chosen.

#### *Promote Energy Efficiency Programs*

- *Promote housing upgrades that result in greater energy efficiency.*
- *Ensure that Village codes remain consistent with State Statutes, model codes, and other best practices.*

The Sustainability Office promotes residential energy efficiency in a variety of ways, including posting information on the Village's website <https://www.villageofparkforest.com/875/Green-Living-Tips> and including information in new business welcome packets. They have reached out to each of the multifamily properties (rental and cooperatives) to discuss the opportunities for free weatherization and lighting upgrades.

In 2019, the Ash Street Cooperatives received a nearly \$1 million weatherization grant from ComEd to make improvements on all buildings, including sealing gaps where air (hot or cold) could be released to the outside, rerouting of bathroom vents to prevent moisture from accumulating in places where mold or mildew would grow, and increasing wall and attic insulation from R4 to R49. According to Elevate Energy's assessment prior to completion of these upgrades, the Ash Street Co-op would save 80,617 therms of natural gas and 69,540 kilowatt hours per year. The savings in therms of natural gas is the equivalent of saving 471 tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO<sub>2e</sub>) from the atmosphere and the savings in kilowatt hours is the equivalent to saving 54.2 tons of CO<sub>2e</sub>. The combined total of 525.2 tons of CO<sub>2e</sub> is comparable to the greenhouse gas emissions from 101 passenger vehicles driven for one year, the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 53,612 gallons of gasoline consumed or greenhouse gas emissions avoided by 20,789 trash bag of waste recycled instead of landfilled<sup>1</sup>.

This program has been refunded and Sustainability staff is working with the multifamily property owners to try to get other properties qualified for it.

In November 2018, the Board of Trustees approved the following amendments to the Village's Building Codes: The ICC International Building Code, 2018; the ICC International Existing Building Code, 2018; the ICC International Energy Conservation Code, 2018; the ICC International Green Construction Code, 2015; the ICC International Mechanical Code, 2018; the ICC International Fuel Gas Code, 2018; the ICC International Residential Code for One and Two-Family Dwelling Code, 2018; the ICC International Property Maintenance Code, 2018; and all applicable supplements as published by the International Code Council, Inc., including the National Electrical Code, 2014, the Fifty-Third Edition and all supplements, the Illinois State Plumbing Code, 2014; and the Illinois Accessibility Code, April 24, 1997, and all applicable supplements.

#### *Continue Playing a Leadership Role in Sub-Regional Housing Planning*

- *Maintain an active role in the Chicago Southland Housing and Community Development Collaborative.*
- *Maintain an active role in the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority.*
- *Maintain an active role in the South Suburban Housing Center and the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, and other such groups to promote fair housing strategies and goals.*
- *Consider other opportunities to take a leadership role.*

The Director of Economic Development and Planning continues to participate in all meetings of the Chicago Southland Housing and Community Development Collaborative. She is a Board member of the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority, and the Village takes advantage of their program to acquire vacant, blighted houses through the judicial abandonment process. The Community Relations Coordinator attends all meetings of the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance. The Village continues to be a contributor to the South Suburban Housing Center.

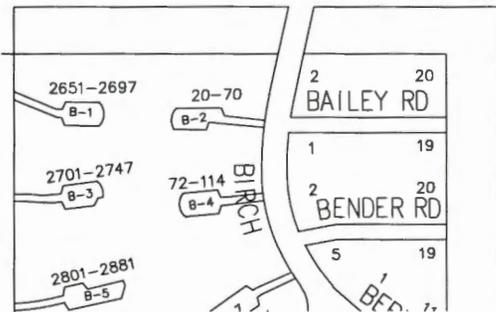
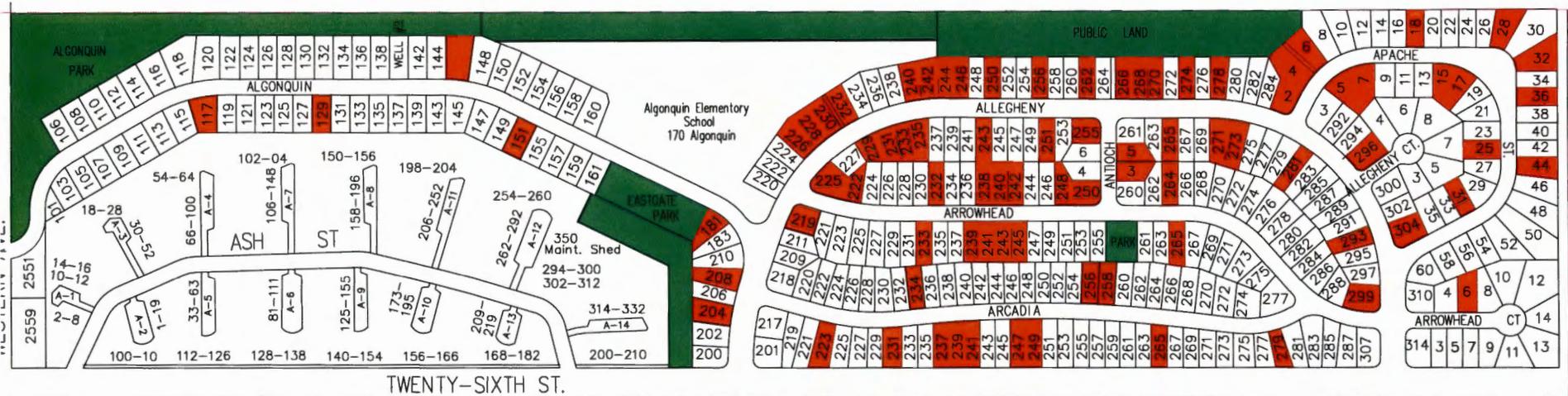
---

<sup>1</sup> "Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator." EPA. October 15, 2018. Accessed April 03, 2019. <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>.

### Housing Rehabilitation

The Village began working on housing rehabilitation during the Great Recession that started in 2008. Grant funds received to support this work include the following:

- Cook County Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grants – two grants totaling \$1,040,000. Habitat for Humanity Chicago South Suburbs was engaged to perform the work and ultimately rehabilitated 18 houses in the Village. Habitat sells properties only to Partner Families that have incomes at or below 50 percent of the Area Median Income.
- Illinois Housing Development Authority's Neighborhood Stabilization Program grant of \$650,000. Mecca Companies was engaged to perform this work and rehabilitated four houses in the Village. These houses were sold to households that had incomes up to 120 percent of area median income, adjusted for family size.
- Illinois Housing Development Authority's CDBG IKE grant of \$525,000. Mecca Companies was engaged to perform this work as well. They rehabilitated four houses, which were also sold to households that had incomes up to 120 percent of area median income, adjusted for family size.
- Illinois Housing Development Authority's Building Blocks Program funding of \$1,801,000 (funding paid directly by IHDA to contractor). Tower Contracting was selected by IHDA to perform this work. They were able to rehabilitate 13 houses with this program.
- Village owned properties – the Village sold two vacant, blighted houses (203 and 209 Indianwood Boulevard) to a private investor who rehabilitated them and sold them to owner occupants. The Village also sold the 12 unit apartment complex formerly known as Illini Apartments to the same investor. He rehabilitated the property.
- South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority – since 2013, the Land Bank has sold 20 single family homes in the Village. They currently have another five homes for sale in Park Forest and they are pursuing Judicial Deeds on another 21 vacant, abandoned houses. All homes acquired by the Land Bank had previously been vacant and severely tax delinquent; many were blighted. Among the houses sold, most have been sold to owner occupants. In six cases, the homes were purchased by investors who rehabilitated the houses and then sold them. This data shows the benefit of the Land Bank's efforts, as these houses were rehabilitated and then sold to owner occupants. The resale prices become comparables to improve the property values of the entire neighborhood. See the data here:
  - House purchased for \$20,000 (10-16-2019) – sold for \$90,000 (10-21-20)
  - House purchased for \$25,000 (10-24-2018) – sold for \$135,000 (12-30-2020)
  - House purchased for \$25,000 (2-4-2020) – sold for \$140,000 (10-2020)
  - House purchased for \$32,000 (3-16-2016) – sold for \$115,000 (8-25-2020)
  - House purchased for \$30,000 (9-3-2019) – sold for \$154,000 (1-8-2021)
  - House purchased for \$29,000 (10-1-2019) – sold for \$123,900 (11-29-2020)



**LEGEND - AS OF JANUARY 2021**

- VACANT LAND (83 LOTS)
- PARK PROPERTY



# COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING PLAN

*Adopted February 2018*



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

The Village of Park Forest gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the following groups, entities, individuals, and elected officials in preparing this report:

## **Village of Park Forest Board of Trustees**

Mayor John Ostenburg

Trustee Mae Brandon

Trustee Tiffani Graham

Trustee Robert McCray

Trustee Georgia O'Neill

Trustee Theresa Settles

Trustee Jonathan Vanderbilt

Sheila McGann, Village Clerk

## **Village of Park Forest Planning and Zoning Commission**

Vernita Wickliffe-Lewis, *Chair*

Doug Price, *Vice Chair*

Marty Hutchins

Cynthia Burton-Prete

Chris Williams

Judy Gonzalez

Kim Elmore-Perkins

Denise Poston

## **South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association**

Lakeshia Wright

Sarah Kobetis

## **Metropolitan Mayors Caucus**

Allison Milld-Clements

## **Metropolitan Planning Council**

Nancy Firfer

## **Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning**

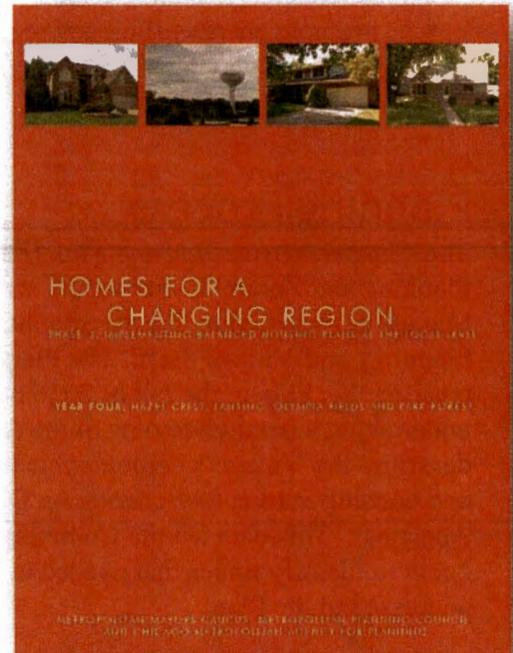
Jonathan Burch

# INTRODUCTION

Park Forest is one of the most interesting and historically significant communities in the Chicago metropolitan region. As the first fully planned World War II suburb, it was developed by American Community Builders to include a unique mix of housing types, schools, shopping, community institutions, and parks. Nearly 70 years after it was first developed, the community continues to offer housing that meets a variety of needs. However, the housing stock and neighborhoods also have some critical issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the high quality of life long enjoyed by Park Forest residents continues to exist.

The Village Board adopted the *Homes for a Changing Region Plan* in 2012. This comprehensive housing plan contains policy recommendations focused on mixed use housing, housing rehabilitation, energy efficiency, and continued work on housing efforts in the Eastgate neighborhood, DownTown Park Forest, and the 211<sup>th</sup> Street Transit Oriented Development area. A great deal of progress has been made in the past 10 years related to addressing housing issues in the Village (see Background). While the *Homes for a Changing Region Plan* was adopted only five years ago, it was developed with data from 2009, predating the housing foreclosure crisis. Therefore, it did not address head-on the issues related to housing foreclosures, vacancies and affordability that have been such a major concern to the community in the past seven years. Therefore, the Plan Commission decided that it was important to re-examine the data and the Strategies included in the *Homes for a Changing Region* plan to address the new set of issues prevalent in the community.

This updated *Comprehensive Housing Plan* will serve as the Village's updated comprehensive plan for housing. Since 2009, the Village Board has adopted the *Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development*, the *211<sup>th</sup> Street Metra Station Transit Oriented Development Plan*, the *Growing Green – Sustainability Plan*, and the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*. Along with the *Comprehensive Housing Plan*, these Plans provide policy direction for Village staff and officials. As with any comprehensive plan, these Plans are intended to be living documents, and they should be revisited and updated from time to time to reflect changing market conditions, Village priorities, and emerging opportunities.



The following Goals are established by this Plan, and described in more detail in the Recommended Goals and Strategies section:

- Assimilate Park Forest renters into the community.
- Create a residential marketing program based on specific niche populations that already define Park Forest.
- Focus on revitalizing the Eastgate neighborhood.
- Encourage new development in the DownTown area.
- Continue moving forward with planning and development of the 211st Street Metra Station Transit Oriented Development Plan.
- Develop a residential rehabilitation program.
- Promote energy efficiency programs.
- Continue playing a leadership role in sub-regional housing planning.

## Planning Process

The *Comprehensive Housing Plan* (Plan) was developed under the guidance of the Village's Planning and Zoning Commission, with staff assistance from the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and Village Staff. The Planning and Zoning Commission started the process of creating this Plan in the fall of 2016 by undertaking a detailed review of the data that describes the Village's demographic trends and housing market (see chapter on Data Analysis). This data led the Commission to begin to identify issues that needed to be addressed in the Plan.

Public input was received through a series of focus group meetings held in March 2017 that included 40 residents, housing professionals, and Village Staff. These focus groups provided the Plan Commission with a wealth of new ideas, as well as confirmation of some of the issues and concerns that were raised by the Commission through their review of the data. Based on this input, the Commission developed the Goals and Strategies that are described in detail in this Plan.



## Background

Since adoption of the 2012 *Homes for a Changing Region Plan* the Village has made significant progress on several of the policy recommendations contained in the Plan. Notably, the Village has amended its zoning ordinance to permit a wider range of housing types. New development in DownTown Park Forest and development proposed in the 211<sup>th</sup> Street transit oriented development area change the amount of housing that is likely to occur in those locations. Also, a significant number of the vacant, blighted houses have been removed from the Eastgate

neighborhood. Further, the Village has been proactive about addressing vacant housing issues, working with public and private partners to rehabilitate vacant homes and get them sold to new owners, and demolishing the worst of the blight from all areas of the community.

In December 2017, the Village adopted a major revision to its zoning and subdivision ordinances. Among the changes included in the new Unified Development Ordinance, the following will have an impact on the type of housing that can be built in the Village:

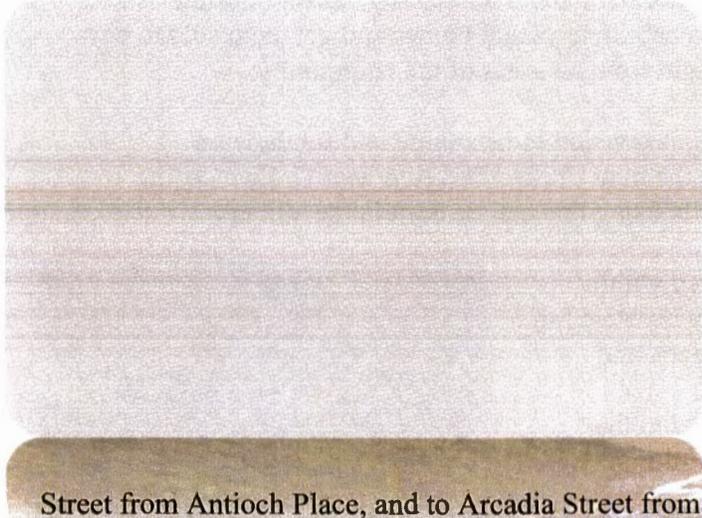
- Accessory dwelling units are permitted within single family houses to provide living quarters for family members, students, home helpers, and others.
- Live/work dwelling units are permitted in the Traditional Multifamily and Urban Multifamily zoning districts as a Use by Right, and the Neighborhood Commercial and Mixed Use Commercial zoning districts with a Special Use Permit.
- Dwelling units above the ground floor are permitted as a Use by Right in all commercial zoning districts.
- The Urban Multifamily zoning district accommodates a mix of housing types, such as moderate-intensity multi-family units, row houses, live/work units, and small-lot single-family and two-family dwellings.
- The Mixed-Use zoning district accommodates moderate-intensity mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development in the Village's DownTown and transit-oriented development areas, as well as within other limited commercial nodes. This district allows a range of retail, service, office, multi-family, and institutional uses.



*Legacy Square Development  
Live/Work Dwelling Unit*

The 2012 Plan called for a mixed use development on Main Street, north of the Victory Center senior apartments. This mixed use development was proposed to include both commercial and multifamily housing uses. In 2014, the Village approved the construction of the Dollar General retail store on a portion of this property, leaving less land for a mixed use development. Additional multifamily development in the DownTown area should also be focused on the vacant parking area at the northeast corner of Indianwood Boulevard and Orchard Drive.

In the Eastgate neighborhood, the Village has received grant funds that have allowed for the demolition of a large number of the vacant, blighted houses in the neighborhood. By the end of 2017, 80 houses have been demolished/deconstructed in Eastgate. A total of 53 vacant lots in the neighborhood are owned by the Village or the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA), with another 14 likely to be publicly owned by the end of 2017. In June 2015, the Village conducted a neighborhood workshop in Eastgate to get the residents' thoughts about interim uses for the growing number of vacant lots.



The two most popular uses suggested were additional park space and community gardens. To that end, a small tot lot was installed on Village-owned parcels at 257-259 Arrowhead Street in August 2017. The park installation was accomplished with the assistance of Village Recreation and Parks and other Village Staff, an AmeriCorps National Civilian Conservation Corps team, and neighborhood residents. The park is centrally located in the neighborhood and easily accessible to Allegheny

Street from Antioch Place, and to Arcadia Street from two adjacent vacant lots that may also be improved to enhance access to the park. Village Staff is also promoting community gardening in the neighborhood.

Over the course of the eight year period from 2009-2017, work has also been underway to remove blighted single family structures and rehabilitate other vacant houses elsewhere in the Village. This work includes:

- Using Cook County, State of Illinois, and Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) grants, the Village has demolished 27 vacant, blighted houses. The Village owns 15 of these vacant lots.
- The Village is a founding member of the SSLBDA. To date, the SSLBDA has sold six single family homes in Park Forest, all of which were rehabilitated after the sale. The SSLBDA has also taken ownership of a vacant commercial property and is marketing that property for sale.
- Approximately 40 homes have been purchased, rehabilitated, and sold to owner occupants, using Cook County and IHDA grant funds.

Other actions the Village has taken to stabilize residential neighborhoods include adoption of a Vacant Property Registration program and a Crime Free Housing program. The Vacant Property Registry requires that all vacant property be registered with the Village's Community Development Department. With registration, the owner must indicate how the property will be maintained and how to contact a responsible person in case of a problem with the property. This program has enabled the Code Enforcement Division to better monitor the status of properties throughout



234 Arcadia Before



234 Arcadia After

the Village and to hold owners accountable when they do not fulfill their responsibility to maintain a vacant property.

The Crime Free Housing program requires that all rental property owners register information with the Village about each of their rental homes, both multifamily and single family. Each lease is required to include a provision that states that the tenants understand the lease will be terminated if any tenant, household member, or guest engages in any criminal behavior anywhere in the Village. The result of these two new programs is that the Village is better able to hold property owners and tenants accountable for the condition of their properties and the behavior of rental occupants. The Police Department, in particular, has noted a marked decrease in Police calls for service based on the requirements of the Crime Free Housing program.

## Data Analysis

As noted above, one of the primary reasons the Plan Commission decided to update the Village's housing plan is the major changes in the housing market that resulted from the mortgage crisis of 2009-2010. The data used for the 2012 *Homes for a Changing Region Plan* largely derived from the U.S. Census 2005-2009 American Community Survey. This data pre-dated the mortgage crisis and the ensuing increase in foreclosures and vacant homes, as well as the decrease in household income as many people were left without jobs.

The *Comprehensive Housing Plan* still references the 2005-2009 American Community Survey data, but compares it to the same source data from 2010-2014. In addition, local data collected by the Village's Community Development Department and the Park Forest Housing Authority was also analyzed. In this way, the Goals and Strategies established by the *Comprehensive Housing Plan* are more reflective of the current housing needs.

### Park Forest Dwelling Unit Types by Tenure

Percentage of Total Units, 2009 & 2014<sup>2</sup>

Park Forest Dwelling Unit Types and Current Figures <sup>1</sup>	Park Forest		CMAP Region	
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
5,680 Single Family Units	52% 2009 42% 2014	7% 2009 14% 2014	48% 2009 48% 2014	4% 2009 5% 2014
1,995 Cooperative Units	14% 2009	6% 2009	6% 2009	1% 2009
700 Condominium Units	16% 2014	7% 2014	6% 2014	1% 2014
1,500 Multifamily Units	4% 2009	17% 2009	12% 2009	27% 2009
420 Senior Citizen MF Units	5% 2014	16% 2014	12% 2014	28% 2014

Source: Village of Park Forest, 2017

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2005-2009, 2010-2014

**NOTE:** The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, and new figures are released annually. ACS data is self-reported, and some responders may classify their housing unit type differently than how the Village would classify it. Because of this, ACS numbers are not always consistent with data collected by the Village. CMAP = Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

As documented in the table above, the percentage of single family rental houses in Park Forest doubled in the period from 2009 to 2014. By comparison, the percentage of single family rental houses in the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) region remained virtually unchanged. This is a result of the number of Park Forest single family dwelling units that ended up vacant and/or in foreclosure, and were subsequently purchased by investors. The Planning and Zoning Commission’s reflections on this data included:

- Are these residents renters by choice or by necessity?
- How can the Village help aspiring homeowners overcome barriers to homeownership?
- What can be done to assimilate renters into the fabric of the community, regardless of whether they remain renters or ultimately purchase a home?
- How can the Village ensure that the increasing number of single family rentals units do not negatively future investment in the Village, or the image of the Village.

The table below demonstrates the scale of the problem the Village has had to address since the Great Recession started in 2008. The number of houses in foreclosure hit a peak in 2013, with 14 percent of all single family homes in foreclosure, and 10 percent of all homes vacant. These housing issues manifested in an increase in code enforcement concerns and calls for Police service as criminal activity is often centered on vacant houses. The proactive steps taken by the Village to address these issues were described in the Background section.

**Park Forest Vacant and Foreclosed Homes**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 <sup>1</sup>
# vacant houses	203	223	241	342	423	554	587	554	501	508
# houses in foreclosure	208	313	384	477	540	780	732	638	568	519
# foreclosed/occupied	95	194	258	282	338	484	414	373	378	358
# foreclosed/vacant	113	119	126	195	202	296	318	265	190	161
All data are annual averages										

Source: Park Forest Department of Community Development

**NOTE:** This data through June 2017.

The Planning and Zoning Commission interpreted the data on vacant and foreclosed homes as indicative of the need for:

- The promotion of resources to assist homeowners with housing and foreclosure prevention counseling.
- The need to develop and maintain partnerships with other organizations and funding sources that can purchase and rehabilitate vacant and foreclosed homes.
- Continued, proactive code enforcement to prevent neighborhood deterioration.

The Housing Authority of Park Forest is a division of the Department of Community Development within the Village’s organizational structure. The Housing Authority administers the Housing Choice Voucher program (formerly called “Section 8”), a federally funded program to assist income eligible families and elderly individuals find safe, sanitary, and decent housing. Park Forest is allocated 177 vouchers, but always has additional, “portable” vouchers from residents who were assigned vouchers from a different housing authority and are using those vouchers to live in Park Forest. As a result, in September 2017 there were 583 households using the Housing Choice Voucher program in Park Forest, a number that has increased significantly over the past five years.

**Park Forest Housing Authority Voucher Program**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 <sup>1</sup>
Park Forest Vouchers	154	148	148	121	159	144
Portable Vouchers	306	320	406	475	484	439

Source: Housing Authority of Park Forest

**NOTE:** Through September 2017

A household is considered “housing cost burdened” if they pay more than 30% of household income on housing costs, including mortgage or rent, insurance, and utilities. Both owner and renter households who were severely housing cost burdened, paying more than 50% of household income on housing costs, increased from 2009 to 2014. This may be due to decreasing household income, or increasing housing costs. It is likely what led to the high number of foreclosures and vacancies in the Village.

**Housing Cost Burden**

	Percentage of Owner Occupied Households with Owner Costs Exceeding 30%				Percentage of Renter Occupied Households with Gross Rent Costs Exceeding 30%			
	Park Forest		CMAP Region		Park Forest		CMAP Region	
	2009	2014	2009	2014	2009	2014	2009	2014
30% - 50% of income	21%	19%	23%	22%	26%	26%	24%	25%
50%+ of income	11%	14%	15%	16%	31%	36%	27%	28%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2005-2009, 2010-2014

The Planning and Zoning Commission is concerned about any households that are housing cost burdened. The increase in the number of households that are severely burdened in this manner is of particular concern. While some strategies may be beyond the scope of this Plan (creation of more local jobs), others are directly related to the cost of housing. To address these concerns, the Village should implement measures to lower housing costs by promoting more energy efficient homes, addressing the high cost of property taxes, and other means addressed in the Recommended Goals and Strategies.

# RECOMMENDED GOALS AND STRATEGIES

---

After carefully analyzing Park Forest's housing challenges and opportunities, reaching out to residents and housing experts for ideas, and examining best practices from other communities in the CMAP area, a number of practical and achievable housing Goals and Strategies have emerged. These Goals and Strategies will lead Park Forest to a stronger housing market, a more stable residential population, and high quality neighborhoods.

## GOAL

### ASSIMILATE PARK FOREST RENTERS INTO THE COMMUNITY.

#### *Strategies*

Get to know the needs and goals of renters. Renters in the Village of Park Forest, as anywhere else, have different housing needs and goals. For some, living in a maintenance-free, multifamily housing development addresses their desire to avoid outdoor maintenance and to be able to move when a job or family situation changes. Other renters choose to live in a single family home for the additional space it provides, both inside and outside. Renters may also like the flexibility of being able to move that an annual lease provides them.



*Autumn Ridge Apartments*

The Village has a variety of housing options to fit the needs and goals of these renters. Developments like Autumn Ridge, Pangea Park Townhomes, and Central Park Townhomes provide multifamily, maintenance-free housing for renters in both a high-rise and a townhome setting. Approximately one-third of the single family homes in Park Forest are renter occupied. So, those households looking for a single family home environment, but who want to rent, can also find many options in the Village.



*Pangea Park Townhomes*

People also rent because they do not have the financial resources to purchase a home. Either they have insufficient funds for a down payment, or their credit history is not good enough to qualify for a mortgage. These renters may need assistance, either financial or credit counseling, to be in a position to purchase a home. To the extent that the Village assists these residents with finding the resources they need, they are

more likely to choose to stay in Park Forest when they are in a position to purchase a home.

The Village should consider creating a tax credit for first time homebuyers to incentivize them to purchase a home in Park Forest, and for investors who sell to renters. This could be backed by a second mortgage that requires the homebuyer to stay in the home for a specified period of time. Once that time is expired, the second mortgage would expire.

#### Provide educational resources targeted specifically to renters.

Park Forest has both multifamily and single family rental opportunities, and each provides its own unique set of living conditions for tenants. Renters have both rights and responsibilities in order to ensure that their living conditions are of the highest quality. Many renters, however, do not know their rights, nor do they know how to fulfill their responsibilities. It is in the Village's best interest to provide resources to renters to ensure that Park Forest homes and apartments are well-maintained and that all residents behave in a neighborly manner. In this way, renters are more likely to become long term, active residents of the Village, regardless of whether they continue to rent or if they choose to eventually purchase a home in the Village.

Possible educational resources that the Village could consider include workshops on landlord/tenant rights, how to maintain property, credit repair, financial literacy, the true financial cost of homeownership, and homeownership classes. The Village should partner with organizations in the Chicago South Suburbs and Park Forest businesses to provide these resources.

Encourage all residents, including renters, to get involved in Village activities. These include recreational and social activities, as well as programs such as the Civic Leadership Academy and as members of Village boards and commissions, non-profit organizations, and other civic leadership positions. The more a resident gets involved in his/her community, the more likely that resident is to stay in the community for the long term, regardless of whether they own or rent their home.



2015/2016 Civic Leadership Academy

#### Create a tool lending facility for renters who do not have access to yard equipment and other tools necessary for home maintenance.

Approximately one-third of the single family homes in Park Forest are renter occupied. The arrangement between the landlord and renter varies from property to property. But, in many cases, the renter is responsible for lawn maintenance, and may want to be capable of handling

small house repairs as well. Because of the often transient nature of renters, however, many may not have lawn mowers, rakes, shovels, drills, and other equipment needed to properly maintain a home. If the Village created a tool lending facility, or worked with a local business to create such a facility, then renters would have the resources needed to maintain their property and many code enforcement issues at single family rental properties could be reduced.

The Village could also partner with local home improvement stores or the University of Illinois Extension Service to provide training on how to operate tools and maintain landscaping and homes. This service would be of benefit to renters and homeowners alike.

Consider creating a beautification program specifically geared towards renters in single family homes.

Work with landlords to develop a good relationship with the Village.

The Village should continue to conduct bi-annual meetings with Park Forest residential landlords to develop and maintain a good relationship with them. These meetings should address a variety of topics of importance to both the Village and the landlords, such as updates on Crime Free Housing, Fair Housing, and Housing Voucher programs, programs to support renters such as the tool lending facility, opportunities to acquire and rehabilitate vacant properties in the Village, and others. Landlords should be provided the opportunity to address issues of most concern to them.

The Village should consider working with single family landlords who have the resources and a good track record to address the continuing issue of vacant and foreclosed homes in the community. In 2016, the annual average of vacant homes was 500, nearly 200 of which were also foreclosures. The Village spends a significant amount of money on property maintenance at these homes. If responsible landlords were in a position to purchase these homes, rehabilitate them, and get them occupied with good tenants, everyone in the Village would benefit. Properties that are at least two years in tax arrears or two years delinquent on their water bills qualify for the abandonment process. In this process, the municipality can seek a declaration of abandonment and obtain a Judicial Deed for the property. This process should be used either to obtain houses that the SSLBDA can sell for rehabilitation and occupancy, that can be sold to responsible investors for rehabilitation and rental, or can be demolished if they are blighted.

## GOAL

**CREATE A RESIDENTIAL MARKETING PROGRAM BASED ON SPECIFIC NICHE POPULATIONS THAT ALREADY DEFINE PARK FOREST.**

### *Strategies*

Attract young adults who cannot afford to purchase a home and want a low maintenance lifestyle.

The Pew Research Center reported in early 2017 that the Millennial generation, those born after 1980 and the first generation to come of age after the year 2000, are significantly less likely to

buy a home than earlier generations of 25 to 35 year old adults. This may be due to the fact that Millennials are having children later than their counterparts from earlier generations, or that student debt has made it harder for them to qualify for a home mortgage. Whatever the reason, the Millennial generation's lack of interest in owning a home may make them prime candidates for one of Park Forest's best housing options – the housing cooperatives. Acquisition of stock in a housing cooperative requires good credit, but a relatively low cash outlay. Further, it is a low maintenance lifestyle that could be marketed easily to these young adults who are predominately employed, but single and childless.



*Area J Cooperative*

#### **Promote Park Forest to a new generation of Veterans.**

Park Forest was built to provide homes for Veterans who had served in World War II, and several generations later there continues to be Veterans in need of housing for themselves and their families. Park Forest has a renewed focus on providing services to Veterans, with a very active Veterans' Commission. The Village should create a new promotional campaign designed to attract a new generation of Veterans to living in Park Forest and becoming active members of the community.

#### **Promote the variety of housing types in the Village.**

Most people know that Park Forest is a good place to purchase an affordable starter home, and it is one of the only Chicago metropolitan suburbs that has housing cooperatives. The housing cooperatives are an affordable, low maintenance way for individuals and families to own a home. But, the Thorn Creek Estates neighborhood, where architect-designed homes sit adjacent to a Forest Preserve, is a well-kept secret. The upscale homes built along Tamarack Street, or the single family attached homes located in the Legacy Square neighborhood in DownTown Park Forest are also unique offerings that deserve better promotion. Park Forest is also a rich repository of mid-century modern homes. The Village should actively promote all of these housing types.

Similarly, the variety of rental options in the Village should be promoted. These include high rise living, town home style living, and housing geared to a senior population. The Village also has four condominium associations, all within town home developments.

The Unified Development Ordinance has created options for new housing types, including accessory dwelling units, live/work housing, and small-lot single family homes. These housing options should be promoted for existing and new neighborhoods.



*Thorn Creek Estates*

In addition, the possibility of buildings tiny homes, as a temporary or permanent housing type should also be explored. If changes to the building codes are needed to allow for tiny homes, these should also be considered. These new housing options are all geared to people who want to live more sustainably, and should be promoted as such, as they provide new avenues for attracting and maintaining residents in the community.

#### Address the strengths of living in an open and welcoming community.

Park Forest is one of the few communities in the Chicago metropolitan area that has never had restrictive covenants that dictate who can live in the community. Early residents represented religious but not racial diversity. However, within ten years of incorporation the Village began a Human Relations Commission, adopted a Fair Housing ordinance, and actively sought racial diversity. Further, the Village did not follow the pattern of white flight and racial re-segregation so prevalent in Chicago's neighborhoods and suburbs. Today, Park Forest's minority population (African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics) represents 69% of the total. With more than 15 churches and synagogues, and a 40 year commitment to fair housing, all ages, races, and religious groups call Park Forest home. This should be a cornerstone of Park Forest's housing marketing.

In addition, Park Forest has a host of high quality amenities and activities that provide a level of service that cannot be found in neighboring communities. The art galleries, Aqua Center, Tennis and Health Center, Park Forest Public Library, over 2,000 acres of parks and open space, and activities such as Main Street Nights, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade and Fireworks, and Tall Grass Art Show all should be highlighted in the Village's residential marketing efforts.

The quality and variety of Park Forest's schools should also be promoted. This could be done with a link to the schools on the Village's website, as well as space for students, teachers and alumnae to comment on the quality of the education they received at one of Park Forest's many schools.

Educate real estate agents about the benefits of living in Park Forest.

Village Staff should continue to meet with Park Forest area real estate agents on a bi-annual basis to share information about new home buying assistance programs, housing financing tools and housing grants available to assist with the sale of homes. These events should also be used to educate real estate agents about the benefits of living in Park Forest, including its programs, facilities and other amenities. Real estate agents should have access to marketing material produced by the Village, such as Freedom Hall programs, community calendars, and the Discover Magazine.

On occasion, the meetings with real estate agents could take the form of a tour of the Village to show off the diversity of housing types available in the community (small, sustainable homes, mid-century modern homes, Lincolnwood neighborhoods, Thorn Creek Estates, Tamarack Street, condominiums, townhomes in School House Manor and Forest Brook). The issue of Park Forest property taxes should also be addressed directly and on a regular basis, in order to provide real estate agents with facts that they can use to discuss the issue with their clients.

Other means of assisting Park Forest area real estate agents with their job of selling Park Forest should be instituted. This would include developing marketing material to promote the Village's focus on sustainability, including the benefits of smaller homes and a walkable and bikeable community.

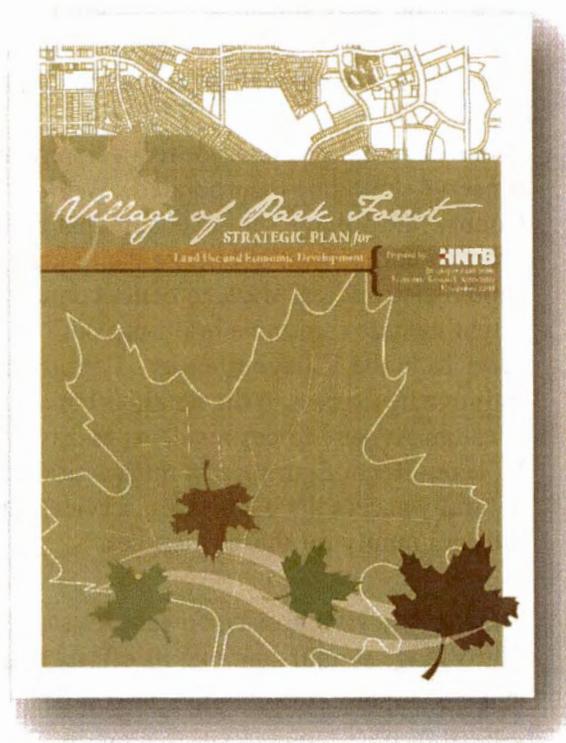
## ➤ GOAL

### FOCUS ON REVITALIZING THE EASTGATE NEIGHBORHOOD.

#### *Strategies*

Be proactive about seeking grants to advance redevelopment goals for the Eastgate neighborhood.

In the period from 2009-2017, the Village has received grants from Cook County, the State of Illinois, and the Illinois Housing Development Authority that have enabled the elimination of 63 blighted houses in the Eastgate neighborhood. Grant funds remain (as of mid-2017) for the demolition of at least 15 additional blighted houses. In total, there are 80 vacant lots in the neighborhood, where vacant, blighted houses have been removed. These efforts are in direct support of the redevelopment plans first established by the *Strategic Plan for Land Use in Economic Development*, adopted as an element of the comprehensive plan in 2009. As long as blighted houses remain in the neighborhood, these efforts should continue.



Grants should also be sought to implement elements of the redevelopment plan for the Eastgate neighborhood, as that plan is developed. These elements might include, for example, installation of a multi-use path along 26<sup>th</sup> Street to safely connect the neighborhood to Western Avenue, and upgrade of sidewalks and installation of bikeways within the neighborhood.

Develop a plan for redevelopment of the Eastgate neighborhood.

Both the *Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development* and the 2012 *Homes for a Changing Region Plan* contain concept plans for future redevelopment of the Eastgate neighborhood. These plans rely heavily on housing types that are permitted by the old Zoning Ordinance. With the adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance, new housing types and zoning districts have been created that may be viable options for incorporation into a new vision for the future of the Eastgate neighborhood. By 2022, the Village should have control of at least 25 percent of the parcels in the neighborhood. This will constitute a “critical mass”, and an optimal time to start seeking a development partner to redevelop the neighborhood. Prior to that time, however, the Village should continue to address the disproportionately high crime rate in the neighborhood, and work with the neighborhood residents to develop an updated redevelopment plan for the neighborhood.

Police calls for service in the Eastgate neighborhood have tended to be disproportionately high, when compared to other neighborhoods in the Village. The efforts documented in this Plan to remove vacant, blighted houses have had a positive impact on Police calls for services. From 2014 through 2016, calls for Police service in Eastgate dropped to 1,756 from 1,990 calls in the two year period from 2012 through 2014, a reduction of almost 12%. Burglaries to vacant properties dropped from 51 (2012-2014) to just 4 (2014-2016). These statistics provide strong evidence that removing vacant properties, either by rehabilitation and re-occupancy, or by demolition when necessary, work to improve the quality of life for residents. A concerted effort involving all Village Departments should be developed to continue this positive trend before work to initiate redevelopment in the neighborhood can begin.

When developing a plan for redevelopment of Eastgate, its proximity to the Sauk Woods Forest Preserve should be incorporated. Working closely with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, the Village should ensure that the neighborhood and the Forest Preserve complement one another, instead of turning their backs on one another as is currently the case. The plan should also address ways to better connect the neighborhood to the rest of the Village. This might include creating a multi-use path along 26<sup>th</sup> Street so walking and biking to shopping and services in the Village is easier. It might also include working with the Pace Bus system to improve bus access to the neighborhood. Finally, the intersection of Algonquin Street and Western Avenue forces residents to drive north on Western Avenue, away from the heart of the Village. Reconfiguring this intersection could enable more Eastgate residents to more easily and naturally access the businesses, services, and amenities in the Village rather than going outside the community for these resources.

Engage the neighborhood residents in the future redevelopment of the neighborhood. The Village should continue its efforts to engage Eastgate residents in the life of their neighborhood. This includes such activities as block parties, community gardening, and

neighborhood clean-up efforts. In this way, the residents will get to know one another and develop a stronger commitment to improving the conditions throughout the neighborhood. Involved, engaged residents will attract new residents with the same interests in their community.



When it comes time to develop an updated plan for redevelopment of the neighborhood, residents should be a vital element in the planning effort. The plan should address their needs for new housing and

rehabilitation programs, safety, transportation, park amenities, and other issues. It should also be sensitive to the financial situation of existing residents, in order to avoid an outcome where existing residents can no longer afford to live in their own neighborhood. As new housing is built in Eastgate, the Village should incorporate programs to assist existing property owners to upgrade their homes. This is important to help market the new housing, and to give existing residents a continued commitment to the area.

## ↳ GOAL

### ENCOURAGE NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.

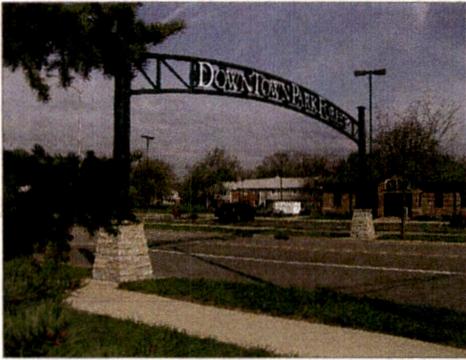
#### *Strategies*

**Seek a multifamily housing developer for the former Marshall Field parking area.**

When the former Marshall Field building was demolished in 2010, the four acre parking area for the store became obsolete. In 2003, the Urban Land Institute Chicago (ULI Chicago) conducted a Technical Assistance Panel on the Village's efforts to create DownTown Park Forest. One of their primary recommendations was to seek a developer to build a multifamily housing development on this property. Their recommendation specifically noted that "the Village should investigate the market for residences with 10 to 15 dwelling units per acre, assuming two- to four-story buildings, with a mix of multi-family mid-rises and townhouses". The newly adopted Unified Development Ordinance actually permits even denser multifamily development in the Mixed Use zoning district. Village Staff should pursue dense multifamily development on this property in order to strengthen the commercial development in DownTown Park Forest.

**Seek a mixed use development for the remaining vacant land on Main Street.**

The ULI Chicago report referenced above made a similar recommendation for multifamily housing on the vacant parcel at the northeast corner of Forest Boulevard and Main Street. In 2017, this parcel is 2.25 acres in size, after development of the Dollar General store in 2013. Both the Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development and the 2012 Homes for a



*Changing Region* plan identified this parcel as the “DownTown Gateway”. The recommendation from those plans is to develop this parcel as a mixed use, commercial and multifamily residential project. A development of this nature would bring more residents into the DownTown area and serve to draw additional customers off Western Avenue and into DownTown Park Forest.

Invest in public infrastructure improvements necessary to attract new development and business to the DownTown.

The Village has invested a significant amount of resources into the creation of DownTown Park Forest, the most recent of which is the expansion of the Village Green in the area that was the footprint of the Marshall Field building. Continued investment into public infrastructure will demonstrate the Village’s willingness to be an active partner in the development of the former Marshall Field parking area and the remaining vacant land on Main Street. It will also help to attract more businesses to the existing commercial buildings in DownTown Park Forest.

Appropriate improvements might include additional landscaping and lighting projects to extend the DownTown environment to the perimeter streets, construction of a major sign at Western Avenue to draw traffic onto Main Street, upgrade of Cunningham Drive from Liberty Drive to Lakewood Boulevard to a true street design, additional parking lot resurfacing, and possible build-out of second floor raw spaces in Buildings #5 and #6A to make them marketable for dwelling units or commercial spaces.

## ↪ GOAL

CONTINUE MOVING FORWARD WITH PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE 211<sup>TH</sup> STREET METRA STATION TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

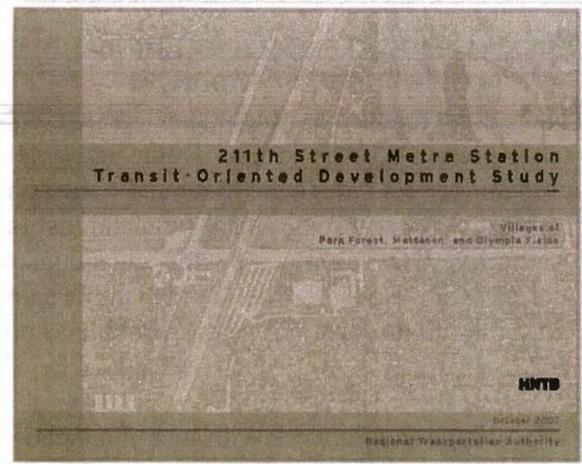
### *Strategies*

Seek approval from appropriate agencies to develop a portion of the commuter parking lot.

The Village-owned commuter parking lot at the 211<sup>th</sup> Street Metra Station was originally acquired with federal funding and built in the mid-1970s. It was resurfaced with a grant from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) in 1985. That grant agreement required a 20 year “use period”, during which the lot would continue to be used as a commuter parking lot. Village Staff will seek confirmation from RTA Staff that the use period has expired and all or a portion of the parking lot can now be used for development purposes.

Seek a multifamily residential developer for a portion of the TOD area.

Since adoption of the 211<sup>th</sup> Street Metra Station Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan in 2007, a number of significant actions have taken place to move this Plan forward. The Village acquired the property at 3200 Lincoln Highway and demolished the blighted commercial structure. This property has been identified as a location for a restaurant and other commercial uses. A new buyer (2017) owns the building at 3250 Lincoln Highway and is marketing it for use. It has been determined that demolition of this building is not in the best interests of the community, primarily because it is still in usable condition and to demolish it would significantly increase occupancy costs and property taxes.



As a result of the actions noted above, the best location for multifamily residential development is likely to be on a portion of what is now Commuter Lot 1, as described in the first Strategy above. In order to take the most advantage of this location, and to support all commercial development that will occur on the two existing parcels in the TOD area, a multifamily residential development should be sought for a portion of this parcel.

## GOAL

### DEVELOP A RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM.

#### *Strategies*

Work with the high school district to create and expand a construction trades program for students and community members.

Rich Township High School District 227 is developing a construction trades training program for its students, and potentially for other residents of the District communities. The Village is currently working with the District to create this program and has received a grant (Abandoned Property Program grant in 2017) from the Illinois Housing Development Authority to fund the rehabilitation of up to three houses.

The Village should continue to support this program so it can expand to assist with the rehabilitation of additional vacant homes. Similar programs that may already be in place, or may be planned, at Prairie State College and South Suburban College should also be invited to work in Park Forest. These programs have multiple benefits for the Village and its residents as houses are rehabilitated and reoccupied, and residents gain skills that can provide them with long term, sustainable employment.

These housing rehabilitation programs could be expanded to provide assistance to senior citizens and lower income homeowners who are still in their homes, but cannot afford to make repairs.

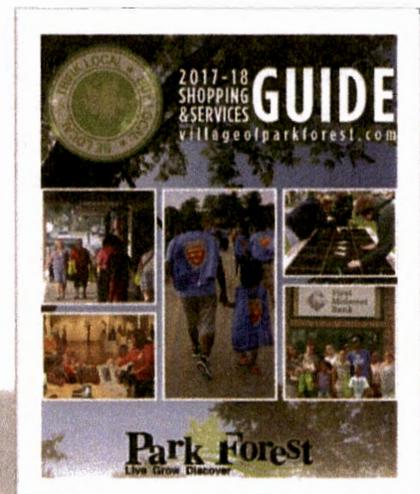
Work with local financial institutions to develop financial mechanisms that make housing rehabilitation affordable.

There are a number of potential financial mechanisms to assist Park Forest home owners with rehabilitation of their homes. Home equity loans are available for existing homeowners. Loan products are also available that bundle the home purchase and rehabilitation costs into one mortgage, either through local financial institutions or through the Illinois Housing Development Authority. One community-wide advantage of these loans is that they establish a home value, and therefore a neighborhood comparable sales price, at the after-renovation value. These financial products should be more viable as property values in Park Forest began to increase in 2017.

The Village should work with local financial institutions to promote these opportunities, and others that may exist, to Park Forest residents and homebuyers.

Develop and maintain a resource inventory for homeowners and buyers interested in rehabilitating their homes.

Homeowners and buyers should know about Park Forest businesses that provide home improvement services. This information is readily available in the annual *Park Forest Shopping and Services Guide*. Home tours could be conducted to highlight especially innovative or cost effective renovations undertaken by Park Forest homeowners and investors. The Village could partner with home improvement stores to conduct workshops about easy, do-it-yourself renovation projects (i.e., maximize your closet space, landscaping, etc.). Programs such as these will demonstrate that Park Forest homes have value and with a minor investment and effort, wonderful improvements can be made.



2017/2018 Shopping Guide

Promote the Architectural Design Program, and expand the program to focus on sustainable rehabilitation.

There is a negative perception that Park Forest has a significant number of small houses (two bedrooms/one bathroom). To combat this problem, and to stimulate remodeling of the existing housing, the Village launched the Architectural Design Program in 2007 to stimulate remodeling of existing homes. An architect was hired to create variations on the original five basic house models built in the Village. These plans create options for master bedroom/bathroom suites, family rooms, and expanded kitchens. These plans are available for only the cost to copy plans. They should be promoted as a means of enabling Park Forest homeowners to continue living in their existing home, and to create modern amenities to meet a family's changing needs.

The Village should also consider launching an updated Architectural Design Program that incorporates sustainable rehabilitation. The Village should partner with local banks to create special financial mechanisms for residents to use the Program. The banks should be partners in the Program marketing as well because they can reach potential home buyers from outside the community.

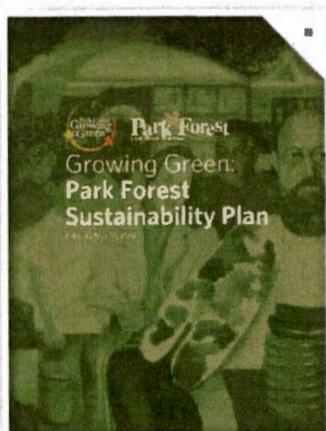
## GOAL

### PROMOTE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS.



### Strategies

Promote housing upgrades that result in greater energy efficiency.



Household energy consumption is impacted by many factors, including house size, age, and the residents' behavior. The Park Forest Sustainability Analysis (2011) showed that average household energy consumption in Park Forest is lower than Cook County and the region's household averages. However, nearly three-fourths of the Village's homes were built before 1970, and therefore, did not benefit from the building technologies and energy codes that new homes utilize. On the positive side, the moderate size of Park Forest homes helps reduce energy consumption, and the common building layout provides a unique opportunity for developing universal plans for capturing energy efficiency. The Growing Green: Park Forest Sustainability Plan outlines 11 Strategies that should be followed to create greater energy efficiency in the homes in the Village.

The Village should ensure that it has adopted the most up-to-date building and energy codes in order to ensure that new home construction incorporates sustainable systems and appliances.

Ensure that Village codes remain consistent with State Statues, model codes and other best practices.

One of the Strategies in the Park Forest Sustainability Plan is to "develop incentives for new building and developments to be built to established green building standards". The Village should ensure that its codes reflect the newest standards in energy efficiency, and offer incentives, such as fast tracked permitting, property tax credits, or fee waivers, to construction and development projects that establish standards for green building.

## ➡ GOAL

### CONTINUE PLAYING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN SUB-REGIONAL HOUSING PLANNING.

#### *Strategies*

Maintain an active role in the Chicago Southland Housing and Community Development Collaborative.

The Chicago Southland Housing and Community Development Collaborative (the Collaborative) was created by the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association in 2009 as a response to the increasing number of housing foreclosures and vacancies. The Village was an early participant in the Collaborative, and continues to be an active member. The Collaborative has been an important source of networking with other communities involved in similar housing issues, and with regional organizations working to provide solutions to the housing issues that confront the South Suburbs. The Village has also been able to access grants to address these housing issues. The Village should continue to be active in the Collaborative to learn from others and to be a resource to other communities that are looking for solutions to issues that the Village of Park Forest is already addressing.

Maintain an active role in the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority.

In 2012, the Village was a founding member of the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA), along with the Cities of Blue Island and Oak Forest. The SSLBDA was created in response to the large number of vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties that resulted from the economic downturn that started in 2008. The SSLBDA works with municipal members, of which there are 21 in mid-2017, to convert these properties into productive, property tax generating use. The SSLBDA's work in Park Forest has focused on both residential and commercial properties, resulting in a number of properties now being renovated and occupied by owner occupants and renters. With more than 500 properties still vacant and/or in foreclosure, the SSLBDA continues to be an important partner in the Village's efforts to get these properties into productive use.

Maintain an active role in the South Suburban Housing Center and the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, and other such groups to promote fair housing strategies and goals.

The South Suburban Housing Center (SSHC) and the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance (CAFHA) are both committed to affirmatively furthering fair housing through housing counseling, fair housing enforcement programs, education and advocacy. The SSHC works closely with the South Suburban Housing and Community Development Collaborative and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association to address fair housing issues in the South Suburbs. In order to continue to be a community that is open and inclusive of all people, the Village should maintain its active participation in these and similar organizations.

Consider other opportunities to take a leadership role.

This Strategy supports one of the Village's five year goals, which is to "sustain the Village's role as a catalyst for innovation change in the region". Village Staff and elected and appointed officials are involved in leadership roles in a number of regional and State-wide organizations. These affiliations further the expertise of staff, enable the continuation of highly professional operations, attract grant funding opportunities, protect and enhance the quality of life in Park Forest, and develop new leaders.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP

### MINUTES

NOVEMBER 18, 2020 VIA GO TO MEETING

**PRESENT:** Chair Phillip Perkins; Vice Chair Bree Breedlove; Members: Mercedes Gross, Michael Jordan (depart 6:57 p.m.); Maurae McCants, John V. Moore; Trustee Liaison Joseph A. Woods; Staff Liaison Sandra Zoellner

**ABSENT:** Members Margaret Banks, Kreshina Ingram

**GUESTS:** None present

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Perkins called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and the roll was called.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 14, 2020:** Member Moore moved to accept the minutes of October 14, 2020 as printed. Second by Member McCants. Motion carried.

#### **STAFF REPORT:**

- **Central Court Plaza** – since the last EDAG meeting, nine calls were generated by the window signs. One of the callers wanted the small space next to Magic Hands. There were two site visits, and another written offer. Consequently, staff provided one prospect to Tushar Pandya as a possible fast food/fried chicken concept tenant. Staff, Mr. Pandya and his attorney have spoken several about proceeding.
- **Grocery Store and Orchard Park Plaza** – Liaison Zoellner spoke separately with Dan Olswang and John Everest Thomas earlier today. Dan indicated that the furniture, fixtures and equipment should be delivered here and their Carol Stream location within seven days. He said that the Park Forest store will open soon. However, John said the store was not happening and that he is going to try to sell the center. He felt the village hadn't done anything for him and the incentives were leftover from Matanky. Liaison Zoellner told him to come up with a plan for sales tax revenue sharing and to figure out how to appeal the value of the occupied space differently.
- **2250 S Western Avenue** – Elegance USA provided swag bags for EDAG members that need to be picked up. Please arrange a pick up time with Liaison Zoellner.
- **LoopNet** – inquiries were received for TOD, Norwood, and lot adjacent to Dollar General. A Zoom meeting is scheduled for Friday with a developer for the TOD site which will probably include housing, but will know more after Friday.
- **Intersect Illinois and Will County CED** shared several leads this month. All were seeking more than 100 acres or existing buildings with 30-foot clear ceiling heights, or the ability to expand to 250,000 sf. Inquiries varied from frozen foods, food products, bio-tech and cannabis gummies production. There were no suitable locations in Park Forest.
- **Blackhawk Tower Plaza** – The Village received an offer of \$15,000 from an out of state firm. They have not yet provided any evidence of their ability to redevelop or turn around the property.
- **DownTown** – This past Saturday there was a ribbon cutting for LemonZone. Marla Dillard is the owner/proprietor.
- The Village has an approved LOI with a Hazel Crest based **multi-family developer and has received an earnest funds check**. Hildy Kingma and staff with DPW, Fire, Police and Community Development are reviewing the site plan. He successfully built apartments in Robbins. The apartments here will be slightly different. We are requiring in-unit washers and dryers (consistent with the multi-family housing study that was completed in 2019) rather than a shared and pay-to-use laundry room. We're also requiring Energy Star appliances, clean air, low HOV paints, low flow toilets, showers and sinks, and other sustainable materials, including roofing, insulation and windows. The Village wants to see that local contractors are involved in the project. The incentive is a reduced sales price,

enterprise zone benefits, and that the Village will not discourage housing choice voucher recipients. The property will return to the tax rolls, and the public will have access to the western half of the parking lot.

- There is a Village economic development sponsored webinar on Monday, December 9, 2020 from 1-2pm regarding small businesses and bankers/lenders. The webinar will be led by Renee C. Stetz, U.S. Bank, and Kirby Ashley, Kirby Ashley & Associates.
- **New businesses since last EDAG meeting:**
  - 3 new Caterers at Poppin Plates –
    - Danie’s Delicious Detox Drinks, Inc. - 100% COLD PRESSED ALL NATURAL JUICE
    - Gourmet Butter Delights, LLC - BAKED GOODS
    - Tasty Love Catering, LLC – CATERING, no details.
  - Two new home based busienseses –
    - Contressa’s Kouture Kollection, LLC ONLINE RETAIL OF WOMEN & CHILDREN CLOTHING
    - Georgia’s House. ADMINSTRATIVE OFFICE FOR NON PROFIT - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER
- **Covid-19 Grant update** - During the past 8 months, national, state, regional, county and non-profits provided access to financial aid for businesses impacted by Covid-19. As a result, staff made numerous phone calls, crafted targeted and general emails, and e-blasts promoting the available programs and assuring business owners of legitimacy and their eligibility.
  - 265 Park Forest businesses received PPP below \$150,000. The average grant \$22,115, total of \$5,860,498.87
  - One Park Forest business received between \$150,000 and \$350,000
  - 1 received hospitality grant - DUNAGAINS INC dba Dunagains Irish Park Forest Cook \$10,000
  - 3 business owners received NHS home mortgage assistance grants \$1,500 each
  - 13 Child care grants totaling \$454,935.00
- A December 9 EDAG meeting is no longer needed because an incentive application was not received. There are still three applications expected: Jiffy Lube, Homewood Disposal and the former Stop ‘n Shop location at 26<sup>th</sup> & Western.
- Incentives subcommittee - Chairman Perkins, Members McCants, Jordan and Gross, and Trustee Woods met via Go to Meeting on October 29, 2020. There was lively discussion. Chairman Perkins created a shared documents folder to encourage communication about the incentives. Chairman Perkins and Liaison Zoellner met again on November 10.
- The Business Person of the year award will be presented on either Monday December 7 or December 14, depending on the recipient’s ability to participate/attend.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Incentive Subcommittee.** The subcommittee discussed immutable vs. negotiable items for incentives. Chair Perkins would like to schedule another meeting for these discussions.
- **2020 Sexual Harassment Prevention Training pursuant to the Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/2-109.** Members should complete the required training by the December 9, 2020 meeting.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Select the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Person of the Year.** Some nominations were more suitable for the Good Egg Award or Park Forest Oscars. Six nominations were received and submissions from previous years were reviewed. Discussion included postponing this year’s award due to COVID and many people working from home. Member Moore questioned if there was a way to recognize all businesses that were able to stay open during the pandemic, and if any business did something innovative to stay open. Chair Perkins said he and Liaison Zoellner are still working on videos and in-person visits to businesses who have stayed open.

**MOTION:** Member Moore motioned to vote tonight to determine the recipient of the Business Person of the Year Award. Second by Member McCants. All in favor; motion carried.

- Member Breedlove excused herself from the discussion as she is one of the nominees. Member Gross remarked that Member Breedlove's attitude shows the true meaning of what it means to be Business Person of the Year. **MOTION:** Member McCants moved to nominate Rick Nesbitt of Vintrendi Wine Company as the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Person of the Year. Second by Member Moore. All in favor; motion carried.
- The trophy can be ready for the December 7 Board Meeting. A suggestion is to order mini cupcakes to be delivered since the presentation will be virtual.

**TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS:**

- Trustee Woods commended the vote for Vintrendi. Mr. Nesbitt has attended ribbon cuttings for other new businesses.
- He also commended 7-Eleven for supplying a pop-up for the census committee.
- Village Hall will be closed on November 26-27 for Thanksgiving.
- The annual tree lighting event has been canceled.
- The Committee on Human Relations is collecting scarves, gloves, coats and toys from December 1-10.
- DPW will begin street sweeping on November 23.
- The LemonZone ribbon cutting was an energetic event. It was a pleasure to see former Trustee Bonita Dillard along with Robin Kelley, the Mayor and other Trustees.
- Trustee Woods had a conversation with former NFL players (Marcus Sullivan and Simon Chandler) who are business partners. He received a call that they would like to discuss business opportunities in Park Forest. He will keep the group informed of future discussions.
- Trustee Woods wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Take care and be safe!

**OPEN DISCUSSION FOR EDAG MEMBERS:**

Member Moore has shot some drone footage but the wind is causing some problems. There are some summer shots that include the wetlands, Central Park and the Aqua Center that may be usable.

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Minutes included for September 8, 2020, October 13, 2020 and October 2020.

**AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS COMMENTS:**

None present.

**ADJOURN:**

Member Moore moved to adjourn; second by Member Gross. All in favor; motion carried. The November 18, 2020 EDAG meeting was adjourned at 7:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dolores DuBois, Recorder