

Citizens for Responsible Leadership: Response to Housing Oak Park

1) What is your slate's vision of the role of the Village of Oak Park in providing affordable housing opportunities to its low-income residents? Please amplify your answer by providing some concrete examples of how the Village can serve in this role.

Village tax dollars fund the programs and partner agencies that have been critical in maintaining the economic and racial diversity that is critical to the identity of the Village. It must be a Board priority to continue financial support for these core programs and services, such as the Oak Park Regional Housing Center and the Housing Authority, and as a line item opposed to issuing bonds. The Village also plays an important role in coordinating and publicizing programs, managing housing grants and loans and providing public education regarding housing issues. Holding the line on taxes, which helps those on a fixed income, is an important affordability strategy. Finally, the Village Board needs to establish an affordable housing goal and benchmarks to monitor progress towards that goal.

2) Does your slate recognize the need for supportive housing, i.e., subsidized housing with attached supportive services for persons with special needs, in our community? If so, what is your slate's position on how the Village can promote this type of housing for its most vulnerable residents?

Citizens for Responsible Leadership recognizes the need for supportive housing. We value a range of housing options that include supportive services, such as group homes or scattered site individual housing. In particular it is anticipated that supportive housing that meets the particular needs of an aging populations must increase. Work with PADS and HUD funded initiatives is critical to advancing the range and depth of supported housing in Oak Park. The Village should continue to support the Housing Department, under the capable leadership of Tammie Grossman, as it looks to increase supportive housing opportunities.

3) If elected, would adoption of an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance be a high priority for your slate? If so, what do you believe should be the key components of this ordinance?

The slate is in favor of exploring the potential of an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance in Oak Park and would charge the Housing Programs Advisory Committee (HPAC) and Village staff with the task of drafting recommendations to the Board. Staff and HPAC should explore: whether and under which conditions inclusionary zoning would be mandatory; what incentives, if any, should be offered to developers to encourage inclusionary housing; how "affordable" is defined in Oak Park; should requirements be limited based on the size of developments; and, should developers have the option of paying into a fund in lieu of including affordable units. This work can build on previous reports and recommendations regarding affordable housing by focusing specifically on inclusionary zoning.

4) *As elected officials, what would you do to increase diversity and integration in the Village? How will you improve Village efforts regarding programs aimed at diversity and integration in Oak Park?*

Much progress has occurred over the past two years with the Village and housing programs working together to define successful housing diversity outcomes and monitor those outcomes. Maintaining a diverse, desirable and affordable Village is a cornerstone of the CRL campaign. Strategies that CRL promotes includes: keeping Oak Park economically assessable by holding the line on taxes; increase diverse representation on Boards and Commissions; celebrate Oak Parks role as a leader in community racial diversity with challenging the community to define diversity in the 21st century; work the Community Foundation of Oak Park and River Forest to support better outcomes for all students; support the Council on Governments as it develops action plans to address diversity outcomes across the Village; grow a more economically diverse tax base; and, foster a range of housing options.

5) *Given current economic conditions, what do you think the Village can do to improve housing conditions?*

The Village has been proactive in addressing the impacts of the current economic conditions on housing. Current efforts include: passage of an Abandoned Properties Ordinance; funding the long dormant single-family loan program; planning a full day Summit on Housing (to be conducted in June); continuing the Garage Loan, Diversity Assurance, First Time Home Buyers and Security Grants programs; passing a Resolution in support of Condominium units that do not have a right of first refusal as part of their by-laws; funding the small condominium associations support program. CRL candidates are committed to continuing and expanding if possible these current efforts. The Village can also explore working with employers in the Village to institute housing assistance for employees and working regionally to secure federal/state supports for housing.