

HOUSING OAK PARK

November 27, 2007

President David Pope &
Village Trustees
Village of Oak Park
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Il 60302

Re: Revisions to the Planned Development Ordinance &
Compensating Benefits

Dear President Pope & Village Trustees:

As the Oak Park Village Board considers implementing revisions to the Village's Planned Development Ordinance and codifying compensating benefits into the Village Code, Housing Oak Park (HOP) respectfully requests that the Village Board also consider adopting an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.

Inclusionary Zoning (or Inclusionary Housing) has proven to be a very popular tool for municipalities interested in promoting affordable housing within their jurisdiction. More than 200 communities nationwide have implemented inclusionary zoning ordinances over the past 25 years. In Illinois, the City of Highland Park has a well established ordinance and the City of Chicago has recently adopted such an ordinance. Several other Illinois communities, including St. Charles and Lake Forest, are currently in the process of adopting inclusionary zoning ordinances.

Most communities that have adopted inclusionary zoning ordinances have done so in response to significant growth that is occurring in their community and a desire to promote development that encourages responsible growth and a sensible mix of housing options. These general principles are well articulated in the Housing Endorsement Criteria promulgated by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (see enclosed copy). The significant growth that is occurring in Oak Park suggests that this is an opportune time for the Village to consider inclusionary zoning. HOP also encourages the Village to adopt the Housing Endorsement Criteria.

Over the past twenty years, Oak Park has seen a significant decrease in rental housing in the community as many of its older rental apartment buildings have been converted into condominiums. We have also seen an increase in developer interest in building condominiums, town homes, and upscale rental apartments in the community. None of these developments, however, has provided for inclusion of any affordable units for persons of low to moderate income. HOP strongly believes that Oak Park should be promoting development of a range of housing options, including rental housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households and also home-ownership opportunities for first-time home buyers such as teachers; municipal employees, such as fire and police officers; and other first-time buyers priced out of the Oak Park housing market.

*A coalition of concerned organizations and individuals formed
to influence public policy on affordable housing and racial and economic diversity*

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Economic and racial diversity have long been core values of this community. We believe that current development trends in Oak Park jeopardize these goals. The development of new housing in the community, much of which is occurring in the western portion of the Village, may lead to further economic and racial segregation in the community. As a result, most of the low income rental housing will be clustered in the eastern portion of the community and the development of higher income housing will be centered in the western portion of the community.

HOP has done research into the issue of inclusionary zoning and would welcome an opportunity to work cooperatively with the Village and/or its Plan Commission in developing modifications to the planned development ordinance that can promote both racial and economic diversity. We can supply several ordinances that could serve as models for an Oak Park ordinance. Our vision is an Oak Park that can continue to realize sensible economic growth without losing its historic character as a diverse community.

On behalf of HOP, we thank you for your consideration of this issue and we look forward to furthering this dialogue.

Sincerely,

Rob Breymaier, Executive Director
Oak Park Regional Housing Center

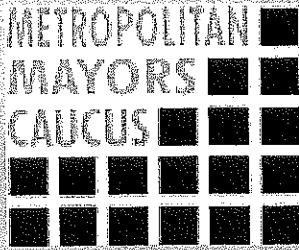
Rick Kuner
Former Village Trustee

Lynda Schueler, Executive Director
West Suburban PADS

Edward Solan, Executive Director
Oak Park Housing Authority
Oak Park Residence Corporation

C: Thomas Barwin, Village Manager
Sandra Sokol, Village Clerk

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Northeastern Illinois **HOUSING ENDORSEMENT CRITERIA**

A variety of recent housing studies document that the median home price in most job growth corridors places homeownership out of reach for many working families. Furthermore, during the 1990s, the six-county Chicago region grew by 11 percent in population and 16 percent in jobs, but lost more than 28,000 apartments. Private sector interest in housing investment is becoming stronger. For our region to remain competitive, we must expand the supply of housing options to meet growing demands. By securing broad-based support for these Housing Endorsement Criteria, municipal leaders, neighbors, employers and community-based organizations can more effectively attract, identify and promote proposals for quality developments.

To promote housing and mixed-use developments that meet community needs while also addressing broader regional sensible growth goals, new housing should meet most of the principles and criteria below:

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Promote Economic Development and Sustainability

Housing, when appropriately located, encourages the expansion of existing and the location of new businesses and industries within the region. The mismatch between where the jobs are and where workers can afford to live has significant costs. Increasingly, employers recognize that local housing for all levels of their workforce promotes stability and productivity for the workers as well as the individual company.

Encourage an Array of Quality Housing Options throughout the Region

Developments with units at price points accessible to a wide range of income levels are needed to provide the local workforce and residents with a housing supply that is critically needed and currently lacking. By the year 2020, northeastern Illinois is expected to increase 25 percent in population, or 1.5 million people, and the housing market must be expanded at all price points to accommodate this dramatic growth.

Support Innovative Community Development and Design

Quality residential and mixed-use developments maintain, enhance, or create livable streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces oriented to the pedestrian. A variety of housing types provides a healthy mix of residents from different age groups, racial and cultural backgrounds, income levels, and household types. New developments foster a sense of community, while promoting people's choice of housing, privacy, and convenient access to nearby amenities.

Provide for Mixed Uses Within a Neighborhood

In order to enhance community livability and decrease auto dependency, a mix of land uses within a neighborhood combine residential with retail, restaurants, schools, and other amenities in close proximity. The location of schools, entertainment districts, parks, businesses, institutions, and recreational facilities will be consciously integrated with new and existing residential developments to encourage ease of pedestrian access.

Minimize Cost of Municipal Services

Clustering housing near existing infrastructure minimizes the per capita costs of municipal services by allowing for more efficiency and economies of scale.

Promote the Use of Public Transit

Housing, together with commercial space and public amenities, should be planned for, and built first, within walking distance of existing or planned transit service in order to strengthen transit ridership and decrease traffic congestion.

Support Sensible Growth

There are ample opportunities within existing service areas of our older cities and suburbs to provide for a portion of projected housing needs over the next 20 years. Infill development and redevelopment within existing municipal areas and conservation developments are of tremendous value. Adhering to development policies that encourage compact, mixed-use development will promote an array of housing types and expand individual choice. This will advance other regional and community needs, such as the protection of open space and the growth of the local tax base.

SPECIFIC CRITERIA

Location

Infill development and redevelopment within existing cities and towns, as well as new conservation developments, will receive preference. In order to maximize compatibility with public transit and minimize auto use, housing within one mile of major transit service, a job hub or town center, provides a future market for transit. The project may be within two miles of a rail transit station if provisions are made to provide ongoing shuttle service to the future residents. Major transit service is defined as a bus or rail stop with peak period wait times of no more than 30 minutes. Major transit service also includes funded, but not yet built, fixed rail stations.

Land-Use

New developments that aim to cluster housing in an efficient manner, in context with the surrounding community, to preserve natural resources and open space will be given priority attention. Higher densities and mixed uses are particularly appropriate near Metra and CTA stations to reduce the growth of traffic congestion on local and regional roads.

Attainability

Mixed-income housing developments, which include units accessible to moderate-income working families and to households with lower incomes, along with market rate units in the same complex, will be given preference. Developments that help balance affordability levels within communities, while assuring consistent quality and design, will receive strong support.

Design

New developments that stress quality design and construction to help ensure its long-term contribution to the improvement of the neighborhood will be given preference. The proposed buildings will fit their setting, complementing and enhancing the existing neighborhood, and promoting a sense of community, pedestrian friendly design and the other principles of good village design. Proposals will address transit use and access and, where appropriate, the potential for mixed use.

Management

The management and maintenance of developments are as critical as the initial design and construction to meeting the goals of enhancing communities. Therefore, the capacity of the development team to successfully address long-term needs, as evidenced by its track record in selling, leasing and managing development properties, and its history with neighborhood and/or tenant relations, will also be considered.



The Housing Endorsement Criteria is a joint initiative of the Metropolitan Planning Council and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Housing Task Force lead by Mayor Zenovia Evans of Riverdale and Mayor Rita Mullins of Palatine. For more information, contact Robin Snyderman, housing director, Metropolitan Planning Council, at 312-863-6007 or rsnyderman@metroplanning.org; or Beth Dever, housing director, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, at 312-201-4507 or Beth.Dever@mayorscaucus.org.