

# **Housing Oak Park**

**November 8, 2007**



For more information contact:

Ed Solan – (708) 386-6061

Rob Breymaier – (708) 848-7150

Lynda Schueler – (708) 338-1724

Rick Kuner – (708) 848-0942

Dear Friend,

We are pleased to present you with a packet of information about Housing Oak Park. We hope you are able to use the information to draw attention to the need for more affordable and diverse housing in our community.

Oak Park residents have long valued our community's open and inclusive nature. As such, we have consistently supported initiatives and organizations that promote racial and economic diversity. Simultaneously, we have supported initiatives that ensure an attractive and marketable housing stock. These efforts have ensured a healthy housing market, a rich cultural heritage, and pride in our village.

However, our work is not complete. Many communities in the Chicago region have experienced increasing or continuing segregation by race and income. These regional forces continue to threaten the core values of our village. Thus, we recognize that there is still an acute need for programs and organizations that will ensure that Oak Park remains an inclusive community of opportunity. As a result, we will continue to enjoy the benefits of our wonderful neighborhoods, excellent schools, top-notch services, and a sense of place.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

## Housing Oak Park

Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago

Family Service and Mental Health Center of Oak Park and River Forest

Oak Park Housing Authority

Oak Park Regional Housing Center

Oak Park Residence Corporation

Peace & Justice Committee of the Oak Park Friends Meeting

West Suburban PADS

<http://housingoakpark.org>

# **Table of Contents**

<b>Proclamation on Affordable Housing Month</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sample resolution supporting National Fair Housing Month</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Need in Oak Park</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Summary of the Evaluation of the Diversity Assurance Program</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Myths and facts about affordable housing</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Action steps—what you can do</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Sample letter to the editor</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Sample press release</b>	<b>19</b>

# Proclamation on Affordable Housing Month

November 2007

**WHEREAS**, over 1 million Illinois households have housing affordability problems. Nearly 800,000 renters and homeowners are paying more than 35% of their income on housing. Over 200,000 households are overcrowded in an effort to afford housing; and

**WHEREAS**, in Illinois, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$829. In order to afford this level for rent and utilities, without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a household must earn \$2,765 monthly or \$33,177 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into a Housing Wage of \$15.95; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2006 more than 40,000 requests for assistance from the state Homelessness Prevention Program went unmet due to a lack of funds. Lockouts, forcible entry, and security deposit disputes are common occurrences for Illinois renters; and

**WHEREAS**, there are approximately 92,521 Housing Choice Vouchers available in Illinois and approximately 52,969 households on Housing Choice Voucher waiting lists. Over half of the waiting lists, 56%, are closed due to the high level of demand. In Oak Park, there are more than 2,000 families on the waiting list maintained by the Oak Park Housing Authority; and

**WHEREAS**, even two-income households are feeling the pinch. The combined salary of a registered nurse and a police officer would still not be enough to afford the median home value in many parts of the Chicago region; and

**WHEREAS**, we all bear the cost of the affordable housing shortage. The jobs-housing mismatch leads to traffic congestion. Data indicates that the Chicago region is not adding new moderately priced housing where thousands of new jobs are being created. The result is increased air pollution and traffic congestion, the cost to the Chicago region is over \$4 billion dollars a year in wasted fuel, delayed shipments, and lost work time; and

**WHEREAS**, housing is a human right, and the talents of grassroots organizations, non-profit housing professionals, financial institutions, elected officials, and government must be combined to address the immense challenge of ensuring that every person in Illinois has access to affordable housing.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I**, David G. Pope, President of the Village of Oak Park and the Board of Trustees, do hereby proclaim the month of November 2007 as AFFORDABLE HOUSING MONTH.

**DATED** this 5<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_  
David G. Pope, Village President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra Sokol, Village Clerk

# Sample Resolution Supporting National Fair Housing Month

## A PROCLAMATION

**TITLE:** A Resolution Proclaiming April as Fair Housing Month in Oak Park.

**WHEREAS**, Oak Park finds that decent, safe, and affordable housing is part of the American dream and a goal of all Illinois residents; and

**WHEREAS**, individuals in the State of Illinois have the right to choose where to live without discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, gender, familial status, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, and/or disability; and

**WHEREAS**, acts of housing discrimination and barriers to equal housing opportunity are repugnant to a common sense of decency and fairness; and

**WHEREAS**, federal and state laws affirm the right of every person to equal housing opportunity; and

**WHEREAS**, fair housing is a positive community good; and

**WHEREAS**, economic stability, community health, and human relations in all communities and the State of Illinois are improved by diversity and integration; and

**WHEREAS**, stable, integrated, and balanced residential patterns are threatened by discriminatory acts and unlawful housing practices that result in segregation of residents and opportunities in our region; and

**WHEREAS**, the talents of grassroots and non-profit organizations, housing service providers, financial institutions, elected officials, state agencies, and others must be combined to promote and preserve integration, fair housing, and equal opportunity.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I \_\_\_\_\_ (mayor/village president) of Oak Park, Illinois do hereby proclaim the month of April 2005 as

**“NATIONAL FAIR HOUSING MONTH”**

in Oak Park to establish Oak Park as an open and inclusive community committed to fair housing and to promote appropriate activities by private and public entities intended to provide or advocate for integration and equal housing opportunities for all residents and prospective residents of Oak Park.

**DATED** this \_\_\_th day of April, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(mayor/village president)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(clerk)

# **The Need in Oak Park**

The organizations and individuals participating in Housing Oak Park (HOP) have identified the following issues as major areas of concern that warrant special attention by the citizens and the elected officials of the Village of Oak Park.

**Issue One:** *The possible loss of the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing units at the YMCA*

**Description:** The West Cook YMCA located in Oak Park has announced its intention of closing the Oak Park facility and building a new facility in Forest Park. The new facility will not contain any housing units, thereby causing the displacement of the residents then residing in the 128 units of SRO housing at the Y building. Since most of these residents are low-income individuals who cannot afford other housing in the area, many will become homeless and contribute to the already large number of homeless individuals and families in our community. HOP is very concerned that these SRO units will not easily be replaced, once the facility is closed.

**Recommended Action:** The Village, its housing partners, including the Residence Corporation and the Housing Authority, and in conjunction with other non-profit organizations that serve the homeless, e.g., West Suburban PADS, should develop a plan to deal with the potential loss of these valuable housing units. This plan should focus on efforts to build a permanent supportive housing facility in Oak Park. The members of HOP strongly believe that it is better to provide appropriate services to the former residents of the Y within a residential setting operated by a service provider with expertise in supportive housing than to allow them to become homeless.

If it is not feasible to develop a permanent supportive housing facility in Oak Park, the Village, its housing partners, and other service agencies should develop a strategy of providing housing support and appropriate services to these residents to prevent them from becoming homeless.

**Issue Two:** *The lack of larger-sized affordable rental housing units and the continued loss of rental housing to condominium conversion*

**Description:** Over the past 20 years, Oak Park has experienced a significant decline in the number of rental housing units as formerly rental units have been converted into condominiums. According to the 2003 Report

of the Ad Hoc Affordable Housing Committee, more than 400 units of rental housing were lost to condominium conversion during the decade of the 1990s. The pace of the loss has accelerated since the year 2000.

The Oak Park rental housing supply contains very few 3-bedroom or larger units. Many of the units that have been converted are 2-bedroom and larger units, putting increasing pressure on this limited supply. For example, out of the approximately 500 units of rental housing in Oak Park Residence Corporation's buildings, only eight are three-bedroom units or larger.

It is extremely difficult for large families, particularly Housing Choice Voucher families, to find rental housing in Oak Park. Because of the limited supply of larger-sized units, the rents on larger units frequently exceed the maximum rents that are allowable under the Federal guidelines for the Voucher program.

**Recommended Actions:** The Village of Oak Park should take affirmative steps to preserve and increase the supply of affordable rental housing in the community. Working in conjunction with its housing partners, the Village should provide incentives to owners who increase the number or size of affordable rental units. One method would be to provide development allowances (e.g., height or density) for developers who include affordable rental units in larger development proposals. Additional incentives can be provided in the form of grants or low-interest loans to developers who convert smaller rental units to larger-sized units by combining units.

The Village should also consider financial incentives to developers who agree to preserve affordable rental housing as opposed to converting rental buildings into condominiums. Income guidelines for this program can be patterned after the tax incentives that are available to property owners through the Cook County Class 9 property tax incentive system. The financial resources necessary to fund these incentives can be obtained through developer impact fees imposed on new construction projects.

### **Issue Three: *Sustaining Racial and Economic Diversity as a Village Priority***

**Description:** Diversity is a core value of our community. Unfortunately in the highly segregated Chicago region, diversity requires effort. Fortunately for Oak Park, we engage in active programs to promote our community as open, inclusive, and tolerant. One such program is the Diversity Assurance Program, which provides two benefits. First, it provides incentives that

promote diversity in our community. Second, these incentives also ensure safe and decent rental housing stock. The program offers a versatile set of incentives that are necessary to meet differing needs throughout our community.

**Recommended Actions:** The Village of Oak Park should work with the Oak Park Regional Housing Center to continue to support a dynamic Diversity Assurance Program that accounts for variability in our vibrant and diverse community. The program should continue to offer options derived from the needs associated with buildings in the community. Please see the attached summary, pages 10 through 13, for more information.

#### **Issue Four:** *Adoption of an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance*

**Description:** Our community benefits from a unique character of diversity, convenience, and quality schools and services that has enhanced the value of our homes. However, this benefit has had an unintended consequence of reducing housing opportunities for poor and working families and individuals in Oak Park. As the housing prices continue to increase, we need to ensure that our community remains accessible to people of all incomes.

**Recommended Actions:** The Village of Oak Park should enact an inclusionary zoning ordinance that will provide affordable housing for working families alongside market rate housing in our community. The ordinance should provide for set asides in larger developments and conversions, an affordable housing trust fund, and other tools that help create and preserve affordable housing.

#### **Issue Five:** *The lack of “permanent supportive housing” available for low-income populations with special needs.*

**Description:** Housing availability for persons with special needs often gets overlooked in planning for affordable housing developments in a community. Permanent supportive housing is affordable rental housing with support services for low-income or homeless people and persons with disabilities, such as severe mental illness, substance abuse, or HIV/AIDS. Some support services are offered in the home, and some are offered in other locations in the community. Permanent supportive housing offers two main benefits: safe, low-cost long-term housing in the community, and support services to help residents live healthy, independent lives.

Oak Park is fortunate to have numerous not-for-profit organizations with the expertise in serving special needs populations. However, the availability of permanent supportive housing is limited.

**Recommended Actions:** The Village of Oak Park should be proactive and promote the need for both project-based and scattered-site permanent supportive housing developments throughout the Village. This would include actively soliciting developers to develop permanent supportive housing projects in the Village, prioritizing the use of Community Development Block Grant dollars for these types of development, and facilitating public-private partnerships to ensure that the most vulnerable citizens are receiving the necessary housing with supports.

# **Summary of the Evaluation of the Diversity Assurance Program**

**Rick Kuner – July 23, 2007**

The Village of Oak Park Diversity Statement starts with, “The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life.” The Diversity Assurance Program is a major part of Oak Park’s success in sustaining diversity. The Diversity Assurance Program has two objectives: (1) Upgrade the physical condition of multi-family rental buildings with four or more units, and (2) Expand the housing choices of renters to encourage diversity. This Technical Memorandum focuses on the diversity objective.

## **A. OVERVIEW**

The Diversity Assurance Program (DAP) is limited to apartment buildings with four or more units. In August 2006, there were 78 buildings with 1,539 units in DAP. The 78 buildings contain 20 percent of the apartment buildings and the 1,539 units contain 23 percent of the total units in apartment buildings in the Village with four or more units.

The Housing Programs Advisory Committee (HPAC) evaluated the Diversity Assurance Program in 1995 (for both objectives) and again in 2005 (for the diversity objective). HPAC’s 1995 report concluded, “The Diversity Assurance Program is an extraordinary program that has made a significant contribution to Oak Park. All of us benefit from multi-family buildings that are in good physical condition and that are marketed in a way to help reach diversity goals.” HPAC’s 2005 report concluded, “A well maintained multi-family housing stock with quality tenants is important to the health of the entire Village and we feel this program contributes to the housing values in Oak Park.”

The Diversity Assurance Program provides incentives in the form of loans and grants to multi-family buildings with four or more units. The intent is to overcome racial steering, discrimination, and a lack of information about housing choices by encouraging rehabilitation of rental units, affirmatively marketing units to people of all races, and expanding choices for tenants. The program has two major options. Option A buildings are eligible for rental reimbursement payments equal to 80 percent of the last monthly rent for any days from Day 31 to Day 120 after a tenant moves out. Option B buildings are not eligible for rental reimbursement payments.

## **B. ANALYSIS OF THE DIVERSITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM**

- Austin and Washington Boulevards account for more than 60 percent of the total units in the Diversity Assurance Program. In 2006, Austin had 500 units and Washington had 348 units in DAP.
- Apartment owners, the Oak Park Regional Housing Center, and the Village have maintained demand on Austin.
- On the eleven apartment corridor streets in the Village, the Diversity Assurance Program is working because it maintains demand from diverse groups of apartment seekers. Comparing DAP and Non-Participant buildings demonstrates the Village and Housing Center are effective.

- Every DAP unit on Austin Boulevard uses Option A. Of the 1,539 units in DAP in August 2006, 500 units (32.5 percent) are on Austin.
- In some cases, building owners have been able to sustain diversity because of the Diversity Assurance Program.
- To cut costs, the Housing Programs Advisory Committee has suggested eliminating Rental Reimbursement Payments. This change, if adopted, would have more impact on Austin Boulevard than any other apartment corridor. It is harder to rent units on Austin. The northern end of Austin is especially hard to rent because of the distance to the CTA Green Line. Prospective tenants often have negative perceptions (safety, crime, drugs) of Austin. Finding parking on Austin is difficult.

### **C. ROLE OF THE OAK PARK REGIONAL HOUSING CENTER AND THE OPAK PARK RESIDENCE CORPORATION (ResCorp)**

The **Housing Center** affirmatively markets vacant apartment units in the Village. For the Diversity Assurance Program, the Housing Center is the Village's designated marketing agent. The Housing Center also markets vacant units for apartment owners in the Village who are not part of DAP. In 2004, the Housing Center encouraged rentals by 817 households in Oak Park, 925 households in 2005, and 994 households in 2006. Affirmative and assisted moves were 82 percent of all moves in 2005 and 84 percent of all moves in 2006. An Affirmative Move is a move by an individual to a location where that individual's group is underrepresented based on Chicago metropolitan averages. An Assisted Move is a move to a non-counseling location by a non African-American. A Counseling Location is a location (building, block, or neighborhood) identified as needing non African-American demand.

As of February 2007, **ResCorp** owned 23 buildings with 507 residential units and 10 commercial spaces. ResCorp is not eligible to participate in DAP, but is strongly committed to diversity and affordable rental units.

### **D. MARKETING APARTMENT UNITS IN OAK PARK**

Rental units are a significant part of the housing market. The Village estimates there are 441 rental buildings with four or more units that contain 6,400 units. Turnover is consistently over 30 percent per year, but higher on Austin. The Oak Park rental market is mostly people between 20 and 35 years old who are in Oak Park for education-related reasons (advanced degree, internship, or residency program). Oak Park's rental housing faces intense competition from apartment owners in other areas. Apartment owners in competing suburbs and Chicago have substantially upgraded their apartments with dishwashers, air conditioning, and laundry in the units. Less expensive and better parking lure apartment seekers to other suburbs. In tough economic times, renters will double up or choose to live at home. When mortgage interest rates are low and there are low down-payment programs, some prospective tenants become first-time homebuyers.

Most rentals are one-bedroom and studio apartments. Many of the vintage apartment buildings were constructed with few two- and three-bedroom units and many of these units are now condos. When vacancy rates are low, good apartments rent quickly because tenants have fewer choices. When vacancy rates are high, there are several impacts that are bad from a public perspective. Diversity suffers. Owners seek property tax relief because their rental income is down. Less desirable apartments rent slowly or

not at all. Bad buildings help rent good buildings because tenants compare units, have more choices, and select the good units. Tenant quality goes down because owners take more risk to keep their units rented. The Housing Center must deal with a mismatch created by fewer clients, but more vacant units to rent. Owners defer maintenance and remodeling because of less rental income. Tenants negotiate concessions from owners.

## **E. STRATEGIES**

The recommendations reflect four strategies:

1. **Regional Approach** – Oak Park cannot survive as a diverse community if we are the only rental option for any group. We need to expand housing options on a regional basis. The Housing Center’s Apartments West Program reflects the need to operate on a regional basis. Every group should have options in all parts of the region.
2. **Cost-Effective Programs** – Evaluating DAP should include a careful consideration of performance as well as costs. A Cost-Effective Strategy is a good way to get the most value (performance) for the money spent on the program.
3. **Communications** –No single person or agency has the housing knowledge to formulate effective housing policies and programs. Therefore, communications among the parties based on mutual respect, good listening skills, and a willingness to compromise is a good approach.
4. **Working Together** – To succeed, we must work together. If we cannot work together, we will fail.

## **F. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The thirteen recommendations fall into two categories: (1) recommendations the Village can implement on its own, and (2) recommendations the Village can implement in cooperation with others

### ***1. Recommendations the Village can implement on its own***

- 1.1: Strengthen apartment building inspections.
- 1.2: Ensure that the Diversity Assurance Program and Code Enforcement work together.
- 1.3: Make sure the Building Improvement Committee (BIC) functions well.
- 1.4: Add parking for renters.

### ***2. Recommendations the Village can implement in cooperation with others***

- 2.1: Ensure the Diversity Assurance Program and Housing Center work together.
- 2.2: Reestablish the Multi-Jurisdictional Committee or something similar.
- 2.3: Update Counseling Locations.
- 2.4: Monitor the Apartment Market.
- 2.5: Develop policies that will work when the apartment market has a high vacancy rate and a low vacancy rate.

- 2.6: Develop Austin Boulevard as a Gateway Corridor.
- 2.7: Encourage Resident Managers.
- 2.8: Monitor the impacts of making most DAP Buildings Option B.
- 2.9: Seek ways to reduce property taxes on apartment units.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Most communities that have tried to maintain diversity over the long-term have failed. Maintaining diversity is hard work. So far, Oak Park has succeeded because diversity is a core value and we work hard. We have come a long way to achieving a vision of a diverse community, but we risk losing our diversity without continuing the effort.

The apartment market and single-family housing market are closely related. What happens to apartment buildings affects what happens to single-family homes. When we do not pay attention, apartment buildings can segregate with surprising speed because of the high turnover rate. It takes extra time to affirmatively market apartment units.

To be successful, we need to be sure apartment owners maintain their units, upgrade them periodically, keep them affordable, and make them available to all. The Diversity Assurance Program and related programs are critical to our success.

*DAP Analysis Summary July 2007*

# **Myths and Stereotypes about Affordable Housing**

## **Affordable housing will drive down property values.**

Repeated research has shown that affordable housing has no negative impact on the price or frequency of sales of neighboring homes. In fact, a recent study of four very-low-income family housing developments in suburban Chicago – Victorian Park in Streamwood, Liberty Lakes Apartments in Lake Zurich, Waterford Park Apartments in Zion, and Brookhaven Apartments in Gurnee - revealed that affordable housing had a positive impact on surrounding property values.

## **Affordable housing will increase crime in the community.**

There is no evidence that affordable housing brings crime to a neighborhood. In fact, affordable housing, as a tool of economic development, can often help to lower crime rates. Whether a development will be an asset or a detriment to a community more often depends on basic management practices: careful screening, prudent security measures, and regular upkeep. Most affordable housing residents are seeking safe and decent housing that will allow them to live self-sufficient lives in a good community. Village code enforcement and conscientious project design such as, for example, courtyard complexes sensitive to the principles of visibility, ensure that the presence of affordable housing can effectively decrease neighborhood crime.

## **Affordable housing will look like “cheap housing.”**

Affordable housing must comply with the same building requirement and design standards as market-rate housing. Because it is often funded in part with public money, sometimes it needs to comply with additional restrictions and higher standards than market-rate housing. In Oak Park, the Oak Park Residence Corporation owns and operates twenty mixed-income apartment buildings. Approximately 20% of the tenants in these buildings are very-low income families. These buildings are indistinguishable from other privately-owned rental buildings in Oak Park and have served as a stabilizing presence in the community. The Residence Corporation also owns and operates two other buildings designed for and serving approximately 100 low-income seniors and special needs individuals. Affordable housing is not affordable because it's built with “sub-quality” materials; it is affordable in the sense that it is less costly to live in because it is supported by additional public and private funds.

## **Affordable housing will bring more traffic to the community.**

Studies show that affordable housing residents own fewer cars and drive less often than those in the surrounding neighborhood. Depending on the size of any proposed project, traffic and parking studies may be necessary.

## **Affordable housing will bring lots of large families to the community, thereby increasing the burden on schools and roads.**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, rental apartments have fewer children per unit on average than owner-occupied, single-family housing; rental apartments contain a lower percent of units with one or more school aged children; and rental units have a lower average number of motor vehicles per unit. Although not all multi-family rental units are affordable, they make up the bulk of affordable housing.

## **Affordable housing represents just another give away to “poor people.”**

The largest housing subsidy program in the U.S. is the federal income tax deduction for mortgage interest paid, and the biggest beneficiaries of that housing subsidy are wealthy Americans. In 2000, this subsidy cost the federal government an estimated \$60 billion. Approximately **50%** of these benefits went to the **top 11%** of all U.S. taxpayers. Meanwhile, the federal government spent approximately one-half as much (\$34 billion) to preserve, maintain, and build affordable rental housing through the entirety of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) budget (\$30.8 billion) and the low-income housing tax credit program (\$3.2 billion).

A lack of affordable housing negatively affects employers, seniors, poor people, immigrants, entry-level and service sector workers, public sector professionals such as teachers, firefighters, and police officers. It also impinges on broader quality of life issues such as the economic development of the region, traffic congestion, commute times, and air quality. In short, it affects us all. Effectively addressing the affordable housing crisis does mean addressing the needs of the poor. However, it also means addressing the needs of the business community, working- and middle-class families, and the broader population.

## **ACTION STEPS: What can you do?**

1. Write letters to the local papers. A sample letter is attached.
2. Ask your clergyman to deliver a sermon about the need for integration and affordable housing in Illinois.
3. Organize a community forum at your church or synagogue to learn more about fair and affordable housing issues.
4. Hold a campaign to write letters to the Village and Village Trustees.
5. Plan an event to promote fair and affordable housing initiatives and alert the media of your activities. A sample press release is included in this packet.
6. Encourage your neighbors to join Housing Oak Park.

**For more information or to get involved,**

**please contact:**

**Ed Solan at (708) 386-6061**

**Rob Breymaier – (708) 848-7150**

**Lynda Schueler – (708) 338-1724**

**Rick Kuner – (708) 848-0942**

# Sample Letter to the Editor

(Date)

To the Editor:

In recognition of the crucial role affordable housing plays in family and community stability, the Village of Oak Park and Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich have declared November 2007 to be Affordable Housing Month. To maintain Oak Park's rich cultural heritage, healthy housing market and the pride we all take in our community, Housing Oak Park (HOP) brings to light several issues that both the citizens and elected officials of Oak Park should be aware of as key to preserving and further promoting our community's open and inclusive character.

Firstly, the Village of Oak Park should work with the Oak Park Regional Housing Center to continue to support a dynamic Diversity Assurance Program in order to keep both racial and economic diversity prevalent and prioritized throughout our community.

Also at issue is the lack of large affordable rental housing and the continued loss of rental housing to condominium conversion, which makes it difficult especially for large families to find rental housing in Oak Park. One way to combat these harmful market trends is for the Village and its housing partners to provide owner and developer incentives to those who increase the number or size of affordable rental units, or those who agree to preserve affordable rental housing as opposed to converting rental units into condominiums.

Another issue is the likely loss of 128 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units with the closing of the West Cook YMCA and its relocation to Forest Park. Many of the residents currently housed at the Y are low-income individuals who cannot afford other housing in the area. Therefore the Village and its housing partners should develop a plan or strategy to provide supportive housing services to these residents to prevent them from becoming homeless.

This speaks to a more general lack of "permanent supportive housing" available in our community to low-income populations with special needs or disabilities such as severe mental illness, substance abuse or HIV/AIDS. Housing availability for individuals and families affected by these conditions is often overlooked, and therefore the Village should actively promote the development of permanent supportive housing projects so that our most

vulnerable neighbors are receiving the housing they require with the services they need.

Lastly, as housing prices continue to increase faster than local incomes, it is important that the Village of Oak Park consider enacting an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance that will provide affordable housing for working families alongside market rate housing throughout our community.

This year during Affordable Housing Month, it is especially important to recognize these barriers to Oak Park's long-standing friendly and inclusive nature, and to work together and with our elected officials to ensure that Oak Park remains a community of opportunity for all our friends and neighbors.

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Organization)

# Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Date)

(Event)

(Event Date)

(Location)

For more information contact:

(Name, Organization)

(Phone Number)

## Local Affordable Housing Event Focuses on Community Awareness and Action

### *Describe the activity*

This Saturday at \_\_\_\_\_ in Oak Park, we will be holding a community forum to discuss the need for affordable housing in our community. The event, hosted by local housing organizations (*or specific organization*), will teach Oak Park residents about the current lack of affordable housing throughout our community, and what we can do to provide more housing options for our friends and neighbors.

### *Give data or local story*

Over 15% of all Oak Park homeowners spend more than 35% of their income on the costs of owning a home. Additionally, over 22% of Oak Park renter households are similarly cost-burdened.

### *Provide an effective quote*

“The supply of rental housing in Oak Park has been decreasing since 1980. There are approximately 2,000 fewer rental units in Oak Park today,” says Edward Solan of the Oak Park Residence Corporation. “In addition, many of the buildings with larger-sized units have been converted into condominiums. As a result, there are few large-sized rental units remaining. The Village of Oak Park should adopt an inclusionary zoning ordinance in order to maintain an adequate supply of rental units of varying sizes.”

### *Describe what you hope the event will accomplish*

The community forum will provide an opportunity to learn about the current state of affordable housing in Oak Park, and where we can go from here.

For more information about the event, please contact...

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