

## **Comments after November 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting – All In Support.**

I have been an Oak Park resident for over 30 years and am in full support of the 7 Van Buren project! As everyone knows: Housing, taxes, and every other cost of living in Oak Park is high and always increasing. I chose to live in Oak Park, in part, because of diversity. I have always seen Oak Park as an example of how the real world is - progressive, diverse, and accessible. At the rate things are going, that will all change. The 7 Van Buren project is a real solution to these changing times.

I am hoping the Planning Commission and the Village Board do everything in their power to make this project happen.

Thank you for your consideration.

Monique C. Behr

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To: The Planning Board and Village Board

I have resided in Oak Park for over 30 years, and, with my wife, have raised 2 children here. Our children attended public elementary, middle, and high school here in our Village. Because Oak Park is both diverse and progressive, my wife and I feel that our children were not faced with any sort of "culture shock" when they ventured out into the world. However, Oak Park has become unaffordable for many, especially young couples just starting out. There has to be more affordable housing opportunities for people here in Oak Park, and the 7 Van Buren Project is the perfect solution.

I hope that both boards will give the thumbs up to the 7 Van Buren Project!

Thank you for your time.

John J. Behr

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Dear Members of the Plan Commission:

I submitted written testimony prior to the October 2021 meeting in support of 7 Van Buren. After hearing from both sides at the November meeting -- particularly the vocal opposition -- I wish to reaffirm my support for this important project. I reside a half block from the property. Simply put, this project brings enormous benefits to Oak Park, and these benefits vastly outweigh any minor inconveniences that might occur. I enthusiastically encourage you to support the application.

I supported this project for many reasons, including: the need to expand and diversify moderately priced housing options in this part of Oak Park, especially for seniors and persons with disabilities; the need to aggressively respond to the climate crisis, something Oak Park has not done to date; and the need to invest in the Austin Boulevard corridor and build bridges to Austin and Columbus Park. For all of those reasons, I still support the project.

Regarding parking: there is not a shortage of parking here, not during the day nor at night (where legal). In addition to neighborhood lots (and lots of street parking), Austin Blvd has block after block of unused permit parking. If residents need to park there, we get the added bonus of calming the speeding traffic on Austin. Building more parking at 7 Van Buren or scaling back the building would be a mistake -- a higher parking ratio would encourage dangerous and environmentally harmful driving, make the units less affordable, and is an economically unproductive investment that will generate no value for our community. This building CAN succeed as a TOD, and Oak Park Residence Corp is to be applauded for seizing that opportunity.

Bottom line, there will always be an endless supply of well-intentioned NIMBY reasons not to proceed with any development. We must focus on the big picture here and the tremendous benefits of a precedent-setting project like this.

Best regards,  
Steve Brown

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To Members of the Oak Park Planning Commission and Village Board

My name is Lawrence Christmas. I was once a member of the O.P. Planning Commission and I also served as Village President. Before that I was the executive director of the Northeastern Illinois Commission and The Metropolitan Housing and Planning Commission. In all of those roles I have consistently advocated for the construction of more affordable housing in both Chicago and its suburbs. The need is indisputable.

Opposition to such housing typically comes from persons concerned with possible adverse effects on nearby property values. Knowing as I do the excellent track record of the Oak Park Residence Corporation and being generally aware of the complaints stated by the neighbors near the project in question, I am not persuaded that this project should be opposed by the Planning Commission or Village Board.

I must note that I live in a 29 unit condominium apartment across the street from the Write Inn Hotel which now houses previously homeless people. In many other communities, such proximity would be bitterly opposed by nearby apartment owners. Yet I have heard no complaints from any of my neighbors, due no doubt to the gratefulness of hotel occupants combined with professional management practices. Too often, housing deterioration results from an over concentration of lower income families, e.g. 100%, combined with unprofessional management practices. .

I like the ratio of 20% of the units being offered at below market rates. I also like having an elevator, something that makes my building especially attractive to older persons like myself. And I like the environmental features being incorporated into the project.. It seems to me that the entire community will come to be proud that such a building has been located in our village.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Christmas

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Dear Planning Committee and Village Board,

I'm writing in support of the 7 Van Buren apartment units:

The building will create 45 brand-new new apartment units, at least **20% of which will be reserved for low-income individuals or families**, as economic integration provides the best life outcomes for all people, and particularly for those who are economically most at risk.

- The building will also become one of the **only elevator buildings in the entire southeastern quadrant of Oak Park**, providing brand new **accessible housing options for seniors, persons with disabilities**, and individuals wishing to be able to remain in their neighborhood and to age in place.
- The building will bring significant new multifamily rental investment to the east side of Oak Park, and specifically to Austin Blvd. for the first time in more than 50 years, thereby helping to strengthen the surrounding Harrison Street Arts District area.
- The building will achieve **net-zero energy performance**, generating more energy from its rooftop solar array than what will be necessary for all building operations and resident uses combined. In turn, from an environmental standpoint, it will immediately become the most significant new multifamily building in the upper Midwest
- With its combination of affordability and sustainability, this building will become one of the most important new buildings in the country, and a model for how others can incorporate more affordable units and can do so in ways that are environmentally sustainable.

The Oak Park Resident's Corporation is advancing affordability and diversity in our community. I support their vision for this project and our community.

Thank you again for your help with this very important effort.

Warm regards,

[Pati Flannery](#)

[901 N. Oak Park Avenue](#)

[Oak Park, IL](#)

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Dear Commission and Board members,

I moved to Oak Park in 1991 to a home at 631 S Harvey Ave. just a few blocks from city hall. I moved here because I wanted to raise my daughter in an integrated community committed to diversity. I am concerned that the very economic and social success of these policies may be eroding this commitment.

I was delighted to learn about the Resident Corporation project planned for Austin Blvd. It would replace an obsolete building with a net-zero sustainable structure at the proper density for the site overlooking Columbus Park. The opposition is fueled by the same old NIMBY concerns that accompany any new development that increases density to appropriate if unfamiliar levels. The activist neighbors mistakenly and misleadingly characterize the building as a high rise. It is not. They ignore the critical need for affordable units and the important benefits to the future residents and the Village.

This is just the kind of project the Village should enthusiastically cultivate and support. I think it is especially important that the Residence Corporation has moved to provide more units in addition to its longstanding success in managing and preserving legacy buildings. I urge you to support these efforts and to envision this as a first step in an innovative long term strategy for improving the affordability and assuring the diversity of Oak Park.

Yours,

Charlie Hoch

Charles Hoch  
Urban Planner  
Professor Emeritus  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
631 South Harvey  
Oak Park, Illinois 60304  
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Dear Members of the Oak Park Village Board and the Oak Park Residence Corporation (OPRC):

I write to express my unconditional support for the proposal to redevelop the property at the corner of Austin Blvd. and Van Buren St., just north of the Harrison Street Arts District , and directly across the street from Columbus Park. One of the reasons we moved to Oak Park, following retirement, from Manhattan, New York, is because of the long term commitment of the village to provide affordable and accessible housing as well as growing diversity in our community. I believe this project will support the values that make Oak Park a very special place. For me, as well as the Oak Park Village Board and the Oak Park Residence Corporation, not to support this community enhancing project would be a travesty. I trust that you will use your best judgement as you consider the proposal before you, and I ask that you do so keeping in mind the pledge that I believe you read together each year – the pledge that you make to promote

diversity and, by implication, provide affordable and accessible housing for all people. Thank you so much!

Charles D. Morris  
319 North Taylor Ave  
Oak Park, IL 60302

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I am writing today to voice my support for the development of property at Austin and Van Buren for the purpose of providing diverse, affordable, and accessible housing—with the bonus of sustainability.

Oak Park has allowed a number of high rises for market rate sales or rentals, but this project provides an opportunity to broaden the housing stock to include housing for the disabled, the elderly wishing to age in place, or low-income families on the east side of town. That it is a net zero energy performance building is *really* exciting.

The enduring reason I'm proud of living in Oak Park is its commitment to affordability and diversity. I applaud the work you, and those going before you, have done to make our village what it is. Oak Park has been on the leading edge of community diversity, and now it can continue that mission and be on the leading edge of affordability with sustainability.

Please approve the Austin/Van Buren project. It's our opportunity to do the right thing in bringing diversity, accessibility, and energy responsibility to Oak Park. A win for our community.

Thank you,

Deborah Morris  
319 N Taylor Ave

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I have lived on the 200 block of S. Humphry since the mid 1970's. It is about time to see investment along the Austin side of the village.

(It is not a high rise)

The Resident Corporation has proposed a much needed and well-designed structure for improving the supply of affordable housing.

And, contrary to critics of the project, it is not a high rise.

I ask that you please support the Residence Corporation in the project.

Rudolph Petrich

Dear Oak Park Plan Commission and Oak Park Village Board,  
I live in the neighborhood surrounding the proposed development at 7 Van Buren. I believe the project will benefit Oak Park in many ways, including providing apartments for low-income individuals and families in a location that is close to public transportation and in a building that is net-zero. These attributes are representative of values Oak Park holds dear. In addition, the project is being led by the OPRC, whose mission is to advance affordability and diversity here in our community. I hope you will approve the proposed development at 7 Van Buren.

Best,  
Kimberly Plaxton  
611 S Humphrey Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60304

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To Planning Commission and Oak Park Village Board Members:

One of the reasons Stevan and I decided to purchase our home in Oak Park (in 1989) and raise our family here for 32 years, was Oak Park's historic reputation for, and goal of, creating affordable housing in support of its commitment to diversity. With this core value in mind, we want you to be aware of our support for the proposed redevelopment of a parcel at Austin/Van Buren, near the Blue Line. We advocate for this development and hope the Planning Commission will lend its support and that the Village Board will approve this development. The redevelopment itself promises to be self-sufficient from an energy standpoint, via rooftop solar, and will have accessibility features that will allow people to "age in place." Not only is this project consistent with Oak Park's mission of diversity and access, but it will help to revitalize the Arts District by bringing in new rental investment (something that has not occurred in this area in many decades).

Sincerely,

Yasmin & Stevan Ranney

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Dear Plan Commission Members and Village Board Members,  
We want to share with you our support for construction of the proposed multi-unit apartment building at Van Buren St. and Austin Blvd. This is an ideal location for such a building with many good reasons for its approval by the Village.

- The area already has several large apartment buildings and thus is not disrupting the status quo.
- Its location just north of the Blue Line provides easy access to public transportation thus reducing the need for car ownership (and parking).
- As an elevator building, which is rare in the SE quadrant of Oak Park, it provides a rare opportunity for seniors and persons with disabilities to accessible housing.
- This is an investment on Austin Blvd, an area often ignored by Oak Park, with collateral support for the Harrison Street Arts District.
- The building has impressive characteristics that Oak Park champions:

- Low-income housing.
- Positive environmental impact-net zero energy use.
- Great architectural design.
- Bottom line, it is an excellent building being built for all the right reasons!

As 40-year residents of Oak Park, we believe we have a good understanding of Oak Park and what it stands for. We thus encourage the members of the Plan Commission and Village Board to support this new project at Van Buren St. and Austin Blvd.

Ken Wylie and Mavis Donahue  
521 N. Euclid Ave, Oak Park

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Dear Plan Commission Members:

I am writing as a resident of Oak Park to express my support for the proposed housing development, 7 Van Buren, coming before Plan Commission for discussion on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Many Oak Parkers pride themselves on their progressive politics and the diversity of incomes and backgrounds represented among the Village's residents, and this is an opportunity for our community to live our shared values.

As an affordable housing developer myself, I am familiar with the opposition to mixed-income, transit oriented developments on the grounds of density and parking. However, I urge you to consider the advantages this housing provides to our community:

- 20% of units will be reserved for low income individuals or families. New, high quality affordable housing stock is critical to ensuring Oak Park is open to residents of all income levels.
- The proposed development will provide critical accessible housing for seniors and persons with disabilities as one of the only elevator buildings in this part of the Village.
- 7 Van Buren is well located to allow residents to take advantage of transit both by bus and train. The site is pedestrian friendly and will allow residents to access amenities and jobs without the need for a car.
- The development will set the standard for sustainable multi-family new construction, achieving net zero energy performance.

It is also important to note that this is being development by Oak Park Residence Corporation, a non-profit whose core mission is to provide high quality rental housing to a diverse population. If this property were sold to a market-rate developer, the focus on affordability, accessibility, sustainability, and design quality may not be the priority. This is a unique opportunity for the Village to be a model for what new multi-family can be.

I respectfully ask you approve the planned development application coming in front of the Plan Commission December 2, 2021. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Beck  
225 S Humphrey Ave

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Dear Planning Commission and Village Board,

I am writing in full support of the proposed 7 Van Buren development. It is the type of development we need in Oak Park: part affordable, environmentally sustainable, suitable for older and physically challenged tenants (with an elevator) and on the east side where no development has occurred in decades.

I currently live in north central Oak Park in a single family house. I formerly lived in a vintage condo in central Oak Park. I live here for many reasons: proximity to airports, downtown, the lake, and – most importantly - for the welcoming and diverse community in our village.

Oak Park is known for its diversity and its architecture. **This project will add to, and sustain, both.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nanette Bellefleur  
Account Manager



Ariat International  
1126 Rossell Ave, Oak Park, IL  
917.657.5834

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Dear Members of the Oak Park Planning Commission and Village Board,

We are writing in support of the Oak Park Residence Corporation (OPRC) proposal to redevelop the property at the corner of Austin Boulevard and Van Buren Street, to create multi-family housing that will include apartments for low income individuals and families.

"The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life and as a place to seek shelter, refuge and acceptance. Oak Park commits itself to equity, diversity, and inclusion because these values make us a desirable and strong community for all people. Creating a mutually respectful, multicultural and equitable environment does not happen on its own; it must be intentional.

" <https://www.oak-park.us/village-services/tenantlandlord-relations/oak-park-diversity-statement>.

It is crucial that Oak Park practices what we preach and support economic integration in multi-family housing. It is shameful that none of the new developments in downtown Oak Park has an affordable component as the developers paid a fee into the Oak Park affordable housing fund to keep their building 100% market rate and make a profit.



We urge you to support this project. We are encouraged that at least 20% of the new apartment units will be reserved for low-income individuals or families, as economic integration provides the best life outcomes for all people and that the building will provide brand new accessible housing options for seniors and persons with disabilities. Also the building will be a model of environmental sustainability, as it will generate more energy from solar energy than necessary for all building operations and residents' needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katharine (Kate) Schutta and Bohdan Gorczynski

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I am in support of the development of the Harrison district and southeast Oak Park. As a resident of east side Oak Park, I am in favor of bringing strong growth to the Austin corridor.

It seems well thought out. Oak Park needs to take a stand for responsible sustainability.

Thank you.

Dr. Gail Petrich  
Attorney and Psychologists

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Dr. Gail Petrich, M.A., J.D., Psy.D.  
Attorney and Psychologist

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Hello,

I am writing in regards to the 7 W Van Buren development in Oak Park and I would hope that my letter of support gets into the hands of the 9 commission members who sit on the committee. As a long time resident, former renter, and now a landlord living on Austin Boulevard - I want to throw as much support from my household as possible behind the development of this building.

Oak Park was noted in a recent New York Times video as an example of 'hypocritical liberalism' where the residents support liberal social and economic policy - but do not follow up on their words and actively oppose the policies they claim to support. Walk by the neighbors who will be 'shaded' by this beautiful proposal and you will see signs that say 'All are welcome here' next to a sign that says 'Stop 7 Van Buren / it will destroy our neighborhood' without residents understanding any of the irony. Reading about the negative reaction by a vocal, small group of wealthy homeowners on Humphrey was deeply disturbing to read.

As a former renter, I must add that the future group of tenants who support this kind of development does not have a voice in our village (understandably), and we cannot take 2 blocks of some homeowners' opposition as reason to not build a building that would allow 100 more residents into our great village. The vocal minority in this case should not be allowed to stomp on the benefits of allowing others the privilege to live here.

While the above should be enough reason alone to think about why this building is critical to our village, I want to add that A) the design is great and forward thinking environmentally, B) adding more parking will induce driving demand in a heavy transit environment where none of the low-income residents in my building even have a car, and C) Austin boulevard is a rougher part of town than most realize and investment at this level has not been seen during my tenure in Oak Park - we cannot reduce the size or proposal in any meaningful way without it hindering any perception of developers for this frankly, blighted stretch of Oak Park.

I sincerely hope you not only consider what you have heard or read, but the voices of the 100 unheard tenants who will be given the ability to occupy this building in the future.

Thanks,  
A. Z. Reder

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Dear Village Board,

I am writing in support of the 7 Van Buren project. I am an Oak Park resident.

I understand the local neighbors are not in favor of change and the new development, but I think the opposition is short sighted. The Austin - Oak Park border near the 290 needs development that is sustainable, affordable, diverse and accessible. It's been 50 years! Our Austin border often feels like the step-child of Oak Park, but this project will breathe fresh life into the community. Let this be an extension of the life and community that continues to grow in the Harrison Art District and let this project extend that spirit to our border with Austin. Let the border become a flagship of our Village's commitment to South East Oak Park.

Thank you,  
Terra Schultz  
700 Clinton Ave, Oak Park, IL 60304

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Good Afternoon,

I wanted to express my support of the 7 Van Buren project that will be further discussed by the Plan Commission. While I don't believe the project is perfect, no project ever is. Indeed, planning is always about finding the balance between the public's need for private investment and private investment's need for government approval. This is a part of Oak Park which has seen very little investment in the past 50 years. Indeed, the building to be replaced is one of the newer buildings along Austin Blvd. And, from my understanding, it does need to be replaced. This is an opportunity to make a statement of Oak Park's values.

The Oak Park Residence Corporation has been a good neighbor and an important part of the Oak Park community for many years. Their commitment to affordable and inclusive housing has been a pillar of Oak Park's integration for decades. The proposal additionally includes elements that address additional Village values. The project will be accessible, sustainable investment in a part of Oak Park that has seen little investment. These are the values we should be championing, not short, car-oriented development.

While I do wish the lot coverage was reduced some- I wish there was some additional landscaping, particularly in light of the creative use of the space above the sidewalk- the building's bulk is not out of character for the corridor. Indeed, most buildings along the corridor provide little landscaping outside of the front yard. I am not concerned about the main complaints, namely parking and height. Most of Oak Park's rental housing stock does not have off-street parking. Indeed, I live in a vintage courtyard building with street parking. Many of my neighbors don't own cars. Of course, people who live in smaller apartments will own fewer cars than single-family houses. The often repeated statistics about cars per household does not account for our large supply of single-family houses. Further, required parking adds to the housing units, forcing residents to rent space they may not have otherwise rented. We cannot both say that we are in favor of affordable housing while driving up costs by forcing renters to purchase something they may not need. To achieve our carbon goals, we must give greater consideration to Transit Oriented Development.

So, the Village faces a choice. If this project is denied, what is the alternative? Is a less dense project even financially viable? Do we really want to continue catering to cars in a world that is suffering from the affects of climate change? Do we want to perpetuate exclusion by prohibiting affordable elevator buildings? This may be the last chance for new investment for some time. I truly believe that the Village should encourage investment, particularly in affordable housing and with good community partners.

Thanks,

Alex Schwartz  
209 Chicago Ave.

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Dear Planning Commission and Village Board,

I am a long-time board member of the Oak Park Residence Corporation (OPRC) and a thirty-year resident of Oak Park. The Residence Corporation is a proud steward of many vintage buildings that provide quality apartments on an affordable basis for a diverse tenancy. As the age of the housing stock increases and the financial accessibility of living in Oak Park decreases, OPRC is actively taking a leadership role in finding innovative ways to complete our mission (affordable, quality apartments for a diverse population in Oak Park). The redevelopments of 7 VanBuren is a big step in fulfilling that mission and in revitalizing a small corner of the Austin corridor.

The vast majority of OPRC's apartments are in the east of Oak Park, and more specifically, along Austin. OPRC has a *unique* opportunity to bring a new midrise, modern apartment building to this corridor. It will have an elevator, making it accessible and desirable for older residents and people with mobility challenges. It will be a Net Zero building – the first of its kind in our area. It is also proximate to the Blue Line, buses and the Eisenhower.

Admittedly, parking is at a premium. The situation at 7 VanBuren is not unique along the Austin corridor. Many buildings have little to no parking. It is an east-side Village issue. One that is bigger than just this building.

I hope the overwhelming positives of this project (affordability, elevator, sustainability, eastside new development) offset the parking negative.

Warm regards,



Jennifer W. Stratman

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Dear Commission and Board,

I am writing to advocate for approval of 7 VanBuren. It is the type of development everyone says they want – attractive, a mix of market and affordable rents, environmentally sustainable. Furthermore, it is spreading the growth and energy that I feel in downtown Oak Park to eastern Oak Park. 7 VanBuren's unique location near the Blue Line, the arts district, the Ike and Columbus Park make it an ideal location to attract new residences to Oak Park. Only the Oak Park Residence Corporation has combination of experience in affordable housing, diversity and Oak Park to imagine this project and bring it to fruition. Being a non-profit, long-term property holder means OPRC has our community at the heart of its decisions – not short-term profit.

Please approve this unique opportunity.

Warm regards,



Tim Stratman

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Dear Plan Commission members and Village Board members,

I am writing in support of approval of the 7 Van Buren project. There are many positives to this project. The Oak Park community has made a commitment to have more affordable housing within it's borders. This is important to have a better community due to it being more diverse. This has been difficult to accomplish because the for-profit building investors will pay to not build affordable units into their buildings as required.

But this building has other positives. It would be built as a sustainable building which is so supportive of what our country needs to do. It would be accessible to seniors and people with disabilities. And a big

point with me is it would have an architectural design much more in tune with Oak Park's residential homes. So many of our recent multiple housing units have no architectural esthetics thus reducing Oak Park's appeal to new residents.

I know there are parking issue questions but I think those can be worked through with creative solutions.

Again I urge that this project be approved and built for our community's benefit!!

Thank you,  
Ed Petrick

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We are giving our support to this proposed new building. In addition to supplying affordable housing, the idea of a net zero eenergy structure will be the most significant and important building in our community, Chicago, the midwest and our country.

Dale and Marilyn Fitschen  
1111 Ontario Street, 1106  
Oak Park, IL. 60302

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I am writing as a close neighbor (600 block S Humphrey) in support of the project at 7 Van Buren. Turning the current, unoccupied building into an accessible multi-family investment will breathe new life into the Arts district.

One of the things my family loves about Oak Park is that it is full of many like-minded individuals who value diversity, sustainability, and inclusion. I believe 7 Van Buren fits into our community. It will be one of the first things that many people see upon entering Oak Park from 290! How wonderful it will be to showcase the Village's commitment to sustainability with this: a net-zero building that is accessible, sustainable, and available to low-income families/individuals.

We have to look past any trivial reasons not to support this project and give 7 Van Buren a chance to shine.

All the best,  
Jen Bulls

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To the Oak Park Planning Commission and Village Board,

My reason for writing to you is to communicate my support for the construction of the 7 Van Buren Net Zero Apartments. I believe this project supports the ideals of our Village as it provides affordability, accessibility, and diversity here in our community. Among the desirable attributes of having a beautiful new project in the village, the project will clearly demonstrate our Village's commitment to supporting investment in ALL areas of town and provide a wider range of affordable housing options.

- The building will create 45 brand-new apartment units, at least 20% of which will be reserved for low-income individuals or families, as economic integration provides the best life outcomes for all people, and particularly for those who are economically most at risk.
- The building will also become one of the only elevator buildings in the entire southeastern quadrant of Oak Park, providing brand new accessible housing options for seniors, persons with disabilities, and individuals wishing to be able to remain in their neighborhood and to age in place.
- The building will bring significant new multifamily rental investment to the east side of Oak Park, and specifically to Austin Blvd. for the first time in more than 50 years, thereby helping to strengthen the surrounding Harrison Street Arts District area.
- The building will achieve net zero energy performance, generating more energy from its rooftop solar array than what will be necessary for all building operations and resident uses combined. In turn, from an environmental standpoint, it will immediately become the most significant new multifamily building in the upper Midwest
- With its combination of affordability and sustainability, this building will become one of the most important new buildings in the country, and a model for how others can incorporate more affordable units and can do so in ways that are environmentally sustainable.

Also, it is important to note that OPRC is a mission-driven, non profit that advances affordability and diversity here in our community (rather than the profit-motivated reasons that are typical among conventional real estate developers).

Thank you again for your attention and consideration to this very important effort.

Sincerely,

**Jennifer M. Tammen**  
**1032 N. Euclid Ave., Oak Park, IL 60302**

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Dear Plan Commissioner,

I am Dick Martens, 1034 Belleforte, Oak Park. I practiced law in the Village for many years, before I retired in 2011. I no longer practice law and write to you strictly as a private citizen to share some words of encouragement and historical perspective on the above matter.

**First, the encouragement.** You have the toughest job in the building. You have heard from many voices on both sides. Everyone is sincere and passionate. How do you sort it all out?

If you have not recently done so, I encourage you to take some time to review the Planned Development Ordinance. Likely you have it in hand, but I found it on the Oak Park website under "Zoning Ordinance." I suggest you review Section 14.5 entitled "Planned Development" in some detail. Check out the Residence Corporation's application and review the requested allowances. Did the applicant meet the standards for the allowances? What are the compensating benefits? Are they sufficient? What does the Comprehensive Plan say about this site? Did the applicant satisfy the planned development standards?

**Now the historical perspective.** According to the newspaper reports, building height and parking are the two major sticking points. This is typical of residential developments in the Village. Consider the following cases:

1. **Mills Park Tower.** Probably the granddaddy of zoning allowances is Mills Park Tower, an apartment building built with federal funds in the early 1970's for seniors with limited income. It is located in a public park, is 228' tall, 19 stories, 198 one-bedroom units with 50 parking spaces. Most of the property around the Tower is zoned R-7 Multi-Family or R-5 Two Family. 45' is the maximum building height in the R-7 District.

2. **Rush Medical Office Building.** This 135,000 square foot building at 600 Maple Avenue is 60' tall; it houses 30 medical offices. There was intense opposition by the neighbors to this development, as Commissioner Hale will no doubt recall. At the time of the hearing, the site bordered R-7 Multi-Family (45' height limit) or R-2 Single Family. The Plan Commission recommended approval of the planned development with conditions and restrictions on a 5-4 vote.

4. **Grove Avenue Apartments** (820-832 Madison Street). This mixed use building contains the Sugar Beet Coop on the first floor and 51 single room occupancy units on the upper three floors. It is 55' 5" in height (50' height limit per MS Commercial District requirements) and has 32 parking spaces (64 required per the District requirements). Once again, there was intense opposition to the proposed development. In a 6-1 vote in March, 2011, the Plan Commission recommended approval of the development, subject to extensive conditions and restrictions.

I think it fair to say that the above developments are now seen as positive additions to the Village.

As I stated earlier, yours is the toughest job in the house. I wish you well in your deliberations.

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Oak Park.

Sincerely,  
Dick Martens

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I support the proposed building that the Residence Corporation wants to build at the above location. I think the experimental nature of it will benefit Oak Park in the long run. I do agree with the neighbors about the parking and feel the number should be limited to the space available. It can be assigned on a first come, first served basis, then allow no more residents with cars or any nearby street parking.

Francis Coe

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Dear Members of the Plan Commission, President Scaman and Village Board:

I am writing as a 13-year community resident and volunteer to voice my strong support for the proposed project at 7 Van Buren.

Affordable housing is a core Oak Park value. This project will create 45 brand-new new apartment units, at least 20% of which will be reserved for low-income individuals or families. This represents a significant opportunity to make progress on an important community objective- increasing the affordable housing supply in our village.

As a former commissioner and chair of our Village's Disability Access Commission, I would be remiss if I did not point out that another important Oak Park value is accessibility. Accessibility can

be a tricky issue in a built out community with largely aging housing stock. Therefore it is important to me that 7 Van Buren will also become one of the only elevator buildings in the entire southeastern quadrant of Oak Park, providing brand new accessible housing options for seniors, persons with disabilities, and individuals wishing to be able to remain in their neighborhood and to age in place.

As a former Village Trustee, I wrestled, along with my colleagues, with the question of equitable investment, and attracting development on the east side of Oak Park with the same level of vitality as development initiatives on the west side and in our downtown area. This challenge is ongoing. The fact that 7 Van Buren will bring significant new multifamily rental investment to the east side of Oak Park, and specifically to Austin Blvd. for the first time in more than 50 years, represents a unique opportunity to increase equitable development in the village and also support one of our finest neighborhood business districts- the Harrison Street Arts District.

Finally, I know all of you are keenly aware of the importance of sustainability as a factor in all major village policy initiatives. Therefore, I would urge you to remember that 7 Van Buren will achieve **net zero energy performance**.

It will generate more energy from its rooftop solar array than what will be necessary for all building operations and resident uses combined.

It is not often that a project offers the opportunity to move the needle in multiple priority areas like this. I hope you will recognize this unique opportunity when you consider this proposal going forward and I urge you to support it.

Thank you all for your dedicated service.

Sincerely,

Adam Salzman  
924 N. Lombard Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois 60302

.....

Dear Members of the Plan Commission and Village Board of Oak Park,

As members of the Oak Park community who have chosen it as home for several decades, we were honored to be given this chance to write in support of the **7 Van Buren Project**. For all the reasons that we've chosen to make this our family's home, we want to champion intentional projects that provide the same opportunity for others.

The fact that this project will create a multi-family building that not only provides affordable, accessible housing but will also achieve net zero energy performance is remarkable. The fact that it will be a physical manifestation of our Village's ethos of being a mutually respectful, multicultural and equitable community is where its true power lies.

When both the Plan Commission and the Village Board integrate the Oak Park Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement (excerpted below) into their decision process, we truly create the community in which we all choose to live. We strongly urge the Plan Commission to recommend its approval for the **7 Van Buren Project** to the Village Board.



Excerpts from: Oak Park Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement - Revision adopted October 7, 2019 (emphasis by sender)

"The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life and as a place to seek shelter, refuge and acceptance. Oak Park commits itself to equity, diversity, and inclusion because these values make us a desirable and strong community for all people. ***Creating a mutually respectful, multicultural and equitable environment does not happen on its own; it must be intentional...***

The Village of Oak Park commits itself to a future ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of local governance and community life. We strive to make these values aspirational and operational, reflected in our everyday practices and priorities. This includes fair treatment, equal access, and full participation in all of the Village's institutions and programs, and the goal of racial equity in all Village operating policies. ***The Village of Oak Park must continue to support its fair housing philosophy that fosters integration and unity in our community.*** Our intention is that such principles will be a basis for policy and decision making in Oak Park. The President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park reaffirm their dedication and commitment to these precepts."

With High Regards,

Your Fellow Oak Park Community Members:

Marrey & Will Picciotti  
1218 N Oak Park Ave.  
Oak Park, IL 60302

.....

As a resident and renter in Oak Park, I support more affordable housing in Oak Park. Thanks.

Michael Wehrley

.....

Plan Commission and Village board members,

I'm writing to express my support for the proposed Oak Park Residence Corporation development at the corner of Austin and Van Buren in Oak Park. This project is the complete package and deserves full support of the Plan Commission and Village Board. The building will add 45 affordable apartment units to Oak Park, will be accessible to a wider population given it's elevator design, will bring investment to Southeast Oak Park and place residents squarely within walking distance of public transit and the walkable Harrison Street Arts District. Lastly the building will achieve net zero energy performance due to its rooftop solar array, a rarity for multi-family residential that can serve as a model for green development in the Midwest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christina Loran  
Oak Park resident

.....

As an Oak Park resident, I support David Pope's proposed experimental building at Austin and Van Buren. I believe the outcome of this enterprise could become a model for other projects to reduce energy use -- and costs -- while also providing additional affordable housing in the Village.

I understand the concerns of neighbors about parking. That problem is real. It might be eased, however, by limiting the number of parking spaces permitted to residents of the new building. The spaces would be provided on a first come, first served basis. Then, no more.

We know that almost all new projects and experiments will be opposed by someone. Nothing is perfect. So while I sympathize with the neighbors' worries, I think this experiment will, on balance, benefit Oak Park and its residents.

Donald Coe

.....

To the members of the Oak Park Plan Commission and Village Trustees:

I am writing in support of the OPRC's proposed development at Austin and Van Buren.

Combining affordable and physically accessible housing with sustainable design, the project offers a model for future residential development in Oak Park--one that I wish could have been followed in the downtown area. It will also support the vitality of the Austin corridor, potentially strengthening the bridge between Oak Park and the Austin neighborhood.

Designed and developed by Oak Park residents, the project reflects our community's best values. I urge the Village Board and the Plan Commission to grant approval.

Wendy Greenhouse  
147 N Euclid Ave, #304

.....

Dear Plan Commission and OP Village Board,

I am a resident of Oak Park and am writing in support of the OPRC project at the corner of Austin and Van Buren. I understand the project will be discussed at Plan Commission and Board meetings this week.

We bought a home and became Oak Parkers seven years ago in part because of our admiration for Oak Park's historic commitment to affordability, accessibility, diversity and sustainability for all in its housing policies. These are the values our family shares with our neighbors, and which we wish to see in the Village's plans for growth.

The project is important in so many ways, not the least of which is that it will provide important access to housing to elders as it will include elevator access in that section of Oak Park. It also will serve as a model for environmentally sound building practices, and may act as a bridge between Oak Park and our Austin neighbors.

I am certain all Oak Parkers will be well-served by this project, and the spirit with which its approval ought to be supported by the Plan Commission and the Board.

Please feel free to contact me for any additional expressions of support which may be of use.

Ann Henstrand  
129 S. Scoville Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60302  
.....

This email is to show support regarding the proposed development at the corner of Austin and Van Buren in Oak Park. The benefits (affordability, accessibility, diversity, and sustainability) greatly outweigh the concerns. Regards,

Nancy Greer  
.....

Dear Oak Park Plan Commission and Village Board of Oak Park,

I am writing in support of the 7 Van Buren Project. I live one block away from the site on Austin Blvd and think the idea of a netzero building focusing on inclusivity and providing low income housing for a diverse group of residents is a positive step forward for the Austin Boulevard corridor. I have lived at my property since 1996 ( my family first purchased the home in 1940) and to date have seen no new construction or improved housing ideas for our area. I feel the Oak Park Residence Corporation has a strong track record for maintaining housing options for varying groups of our residents and this building will continue Oak Park's commitment to affordable housing for all. I support our community's vision of more green building and 7 Van Buren will be a netzero structure, supplying over 100% of the buildings energy needs. The Austin Community needs new life through new developments and this project could be a start to that end.

Michael Tobin  
212 S Austin Boulevard  
Oak Park  
.....

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the referenced proposed development. I have lived in Oak Park for a total of ten years and understand the need for new development on Austin and housing for those who struggle financially and with mobility. This project will provide much needed housing for so many who would love to stay in their neighborhood or find safe, secure and well-maintained residency in our

village. The fact that it has also been designed with the environment and sustainability in mind makes it exactly the type of project Oak Park should support.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Allison Baxter  
910 North Taylor Ave  
.....

Friends:

I support this planned development. Oak Park needs more affordable housing! ResCorps is a known group that monitors the housing and maintains its upkeep.

I have heard there is opposition, just as there was to the affordable housing development on Madison and Oak Park Ave (just west). Once the building was completed and the tenants moved in, the opposition subsided quickly.

I have no doubt the same will happen with this one. Please support it. Thank you.

--

**Pauline Coffman**  
221 N  
.....

To Planning Board Members:

We support the proposed development at the corner of Austin and Van Buren in Oak Park because we feel our community needs more affordable as well as physically accessible housing; the Austin corridor needs support; and net-zero-carbon construction is essential. This development can be a model for other communities on how to achieve a combination of affordability and sustainability. It will also give new accessible housing options for seniors, persons with disabilities, and individuals who want to remain in

their neighborhood as they age. We urge you to support this important investment to the east side of Oak Park, and specifically to Austin Blvd.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bill and Mary Ann Irvine

147 North Euclid Avenue, OP

.....

Dear Members of the Plan Commission:

After careful consideration, I believe the 7 Van Buren project should receive support.

My family and I moved to Oak Park about 15 months ago. The reputation of Oak Park as a diverse, welcoming and progressive area single handedly moved it to the top of our wish list. Being a military family, we know how important a good community is to make a house a home and a neighborhood a community. The Van Buren project is a prime example of what makes Oak Park a special community. It welcomes new people to the area and finds opportunities to continue to diversify the population. Just how more diverse companies do better in business, diverse communities can have the same impact.

Oak Park has a great opportunity to set an example for others to continue to follow. We also has a chance to see an influx of more neighbors that contribute to the diversify our community and make positive contributions to its long term growth.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Herman Bulls  
624 S Humphrey Ave

.....

Hello:

I'm an Oak Park resident writing to voice my support for OPRC and its proposed 7 Van Buren project because we need more affordable, diverse, accessible and sustainable housing in Oak Park.

Thank you,  
Deb Abrahamson  
515 Fair Oaks  
Oak Park

.....

I write to offer qualified support for the OPRC project. If we have zoning guidelines, we should follow them. It is not ok to toss them aside to please developers.

Thanks for your consideration.

Susan Piha  
165 N Kenilworth Ave., Apt 1A  
Oak Park, 60301

Dear Plan Commission,

I'm writing to voice my support for the proposed development of the Oak Park Residence Corporation, 7 Van Buren.

As the leader of an organization providing affordable housing and dedicated to ensuring that all neighbors have a place to live, we are happy to see this development of economically integrated apartments as part of our local community in Oak Park. The combination of affordable units with market rate housing is necessary for future models of housing in the Village and across the country and this project has the opportunity to model that. It's an opportunity to put our values of integration into action with the support of this project.

I hope you will support the OPRC's proposal for 7 Van Buren.

Thank you,  
**Laura Zumdahl, Ph.D**  
President & CEO

**NEW MOMS**

New Moms  
5317 W. Chicago Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60651

To the Oak Park Planning Commission and Village Board,

My reason for writing to you is to communicate my support for the construction of the 7 Van Buren Net Zero Apartments. I believe this project supports ideals of our Village as it provides affordability, accessibility, and diversity here in our community. This project will create 45 brand-new new apartment units, at least 20% of which will be reserved for low-income individuals or families, as economic integration provides the best life outcomes for all people, and particularly for those who are economically most at risk. The building will also become one of the only elevator buildings in the entire southeastern quadrant of Oak Park, providing brand new accessible housing options for seniors, persons with disabilities, and individuals wishing to be able to remain in their neighborhood and to age in place. The building will bring significant new multifamily rental investment to the east side of Oak Park, and

specifically to Austin Blvd. for the first time in more than 50 years, thereby helping to strengthen the surrounding Harrison Street Arts District area.

Also, it is important to note that OPRC is a mission-driven, nonprofit that advances affordability and diversity here in our community (rather than the profit-motivated reasons that are typical among conventional real estate developers).

Thank you again for your help with this very important effort.

Melissa Jordan  
948 N Lombard Ave  
.....

Greetings,

I am writing to share my full support for the Oak Park Residence Corporation's proposal to develop housing on the SW corner of Austin and Van Buren.

This development will support the businesses in the Harrison Street Arts District by adding 45 new tenants as well as incorporate much needed affordable housing. As a single mother in Oak Park, I am fully in favor of economically integrated housing options for our community. We are a strong Village because of our diversity, and affordable housing is an important component of ensuring we retain this strength. Further, this development will achieve net zero energy performance by using a rooftop solar array to power the entire building and will feature an elevator to ensure accessibility.

I hope that you will also support this housing development as a way of standing up for diversity, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability.

Thank you,  
Stephanie Sideman  
421 S. Kenilworth Apt. #1N  
Oak Park, IL 60302  
.....

Subject: Support for Affordable Housing at 7 Van Buren and near the Arts District in Oak Park

Dear Planning Commission,

I strongly support this planned development as outlined by the ORHC at 7 Van Buren for 45 units.

When dense buildings are approved on the Harlem side of central Oak park, I wonder why high rises can't be approved on the Austin side?

It seems that Austin Street would be better able to support such development and there are currently no elevator buildings in the South East quadrant of Oak Park.

For persons with disabilities and mobility issues- this type of support is essential and multi-family residences such as this are much needed towards Austin as well.

Please look at Oak Park with a balanced view and it's commitment to accessibility, affordability, diversity and sustainability in making such decisions.

Thank you,  
Anisha  
Oak Park resident

.....

Dear Oak Park Village Plan Commission:

We are 29-year residents of Oak Park. We are writing to give support of a project being proposed by the Oak Park Residence Corporation for 7 Van Buren.

The 7 Van Buren project plans to have at least 20% of its 45 new apartments be slated for low-income individuals or families. When we were in our 20s (now in our 60s), we spent a lot of time in the Atrium Village, near Cabrini Green, in Chicago. The Atrium Village, similar to this project, was comprised of a deliberate mix of people with widely varying income levels. Blending people of different income levels in one building created friendships that wouldn't otherwise have existed. It was a socially smart design. It worked.

This project will also bring in a number of new multifamily rental units – new construction on Austin Boulevard! Oak Park should always consider mending its borders with new, attractive housing. We don't want to fray at the edges.

Very truly yours,

Jim and Cheryl Wilkes

.....

Hello,

I am writing this email in support of the Oak Park Residence Corporation's proposition to redevelop the property at 7 Van Buren.

As an OPRFHS student who recently attended the United Nation Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland, I know how difficult it is to create effective global action towards climate change and, therefore, how vital local action is to solving the climate crisis.

This project would greatly enhance Oak Park's actions towards a more sustainable and equitable community. I believe this project is exactly the kind of development that I, and other youth, want for the future of the city.

Best Regards,  
Sophie Ball



.....  
Oak Park Planning Commission & Board,

We write to you this evening in support of the proposed housing development project from OPRC to take place at Austin Blvd & Van Buren St, across from Columbus Park.

As our family is newer to Oak Park (1+ year), we have only just recently been able to explore our great town with COVID restrictions being lifted and businesses opening up a bit more.

After living in downtown Chicago for 10+ years, we opted to move to Oak Park for its proximity to Chicago, accessibility to the CTA, and also because it is a rarer suburb that has a historic and open history of cultivating affordability, diversity, and expanding its impact among its residents. With this in mind, we feel like this planned project drives at the heart of what Oak Park represents internally and externally.

It's our understanding that this project, naturally, has a small group of residents opposed to the project with the main arguments being rooted in the proposed building possibly creating additional shade or shadows and/or concerns regarding on-street parking. Personally, these do not seem to be entirely satisfactory points of opposition to completely stall a project that would:

- Create 45 brand new apartment units with at least 20% reserved for low-income individuals/families.
- Function as one of few elevator buildings in the southeastern quadrant of Oak Park, providing accessible housing for seniors, people with disabilities, and expectant mothers and families
- Achieve net zero energy performance and would generate more energy from its rooftop solar array
- Become a model for how other neighborhoods, towns, and cities can incorporate more affordable, environmentally sustainable units into their physical Real Estate and social fabric.

We hope our support provides enough basis to move forward with the proposed project, ensuring additional affordable housing for individuals and families who could truly benefit.

Thank you,

- Brian & Deeya Tarman  
618 Forest Avenue  
.....

Dear Plan Commission,

I am an Oak Park home-owner writing to express very strong support for the Oak Park Residence Corporation's proposed development at Van Buren and Austin. I sincerely believe this building, which proposes quality, accessible, affordable housing in a net-zero energy structure, is nothing less than visionary. This proposal is totally aligned with our village's support for a diverse population. Affordable housing units will allow individuals and families with diverse economic means an opportunity to live in a quality residential building convenient to public transportation and businesses on Harrison. Inclusion of an elevator means people with

mobility challenges will be able access the apartments as well. The proposed net-zero energy efficiency also aligns with our Village's commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability.

This proposal reflects my personal values of equity, inclusion, diversity and environmental responsibility. The building will be one the village can be proud of for all the ways it will put all our collective values into action. It will surely be a model for other cities and once again allow Oak Park to pave the way nationally for civic progress. It certainly deserves to be recommended to the Village Board for approval.

Thank you for your serious consideration.

Yours,

Kristi Dahm

.....

Dear Plan Commission,

I am an Oak Park resident and property owner. Several years ago, my grandfather passed away leaving my grandmother with limited financial resources. She moved to Oak Park specifically because the village provides affordable housing to those in need, like her. She was housed in a second-floor apartment on Austin Blvd just north of Van Buren. Sadly, at age 85, she experienced significant discomfort going up and down the stairs and therefore was confined inside her apartment most of the time, which I believe contributed to eventual depression.

The Oak Park Residence Corporation proposed building at Austin and Van Buren will have an elevator and offer seniors like my grandmother a chance to live with less physical pain, greater mobility and in all likelihood improved mental health. This is a really important and thoughtfully planned building which I hope you will support to the fullest.

Sincerely,

Brian Herman

.....

Dear Planning Commission and Village Board,

For your consideration, here are my thoughts on the proposed 7 VanBuren development. My family believes in living in a place that values diversity of all types. We value have mixed-income and multiracial tenancy in developments. We value having the new *and* the old. We especially value bringing new ideas, creativity and vitality to all areas of Oak Park, not just Downtown and the Hemingway district.

I am especially drawn to the net-zero energy use. The fact that it will have an elevator and therefore be an option for people who cannot manage stairs is a plus.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah F Duffy

.....

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in support of the proposed development at the corner of Austin and Van Buren, a 45-unit, multi-family building that will be accessible and will reserve at least 20% of the units for individuals or families with low income. I am a 12-year resident of Oak Park and a health care worker who serves primarily individuals who have physical disabilities. I appreciate the commitment that this building has to the community's values of affordability and diversity. I like the fact that the building has an elevator and is in close proximity to the Blue Line, making it easy for people who have disabilities or are elderly to access and to use public transportation. The fact that this building will achieve a net zero energy performance upholds Oak Park's commitment to sustainability. This building is forward-thinking and will be an asset to the community.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Michelle Steinman

860 Carpenter Ave

.....

Hello,

I'm writing to voice my unconditional support for the 7 Van Buren project. As an East Oak Park resident, owner of a [sustainable planning and engineering firm](#) and affordable housing advocate, I sincerely believe this project presents an incredible opportunity for Oak Park to be a national leader in its commitment to affordability, accessibility and sustainability. 7 Van Buren would be a precedent-setting project in a part of the Oak Park that has seen limited new multi-family rental investment in decades. It would also drive economic value for the nearby Arts District, my favorite business district in Oak Park.

As a mother with young children and aging parents, I know first hand the benefits an elevator building provides for those with mobility issues or wrangling young children; this building will become one of the only elevator buildings in SE Oak Park. As a sustainability professional working nationwide to bring climate resilient solutions to high impact real estate sectors like affordable housing, having a project like this down the street from my home would be a source of significant pride. I strongly believe that sustainable, transit-oriented living should not be limited to downtown luxury buildings, but available to a broader set of families and incomes.

The Oak Park Residence Corporation's mission of providing middle-market, high quality rental housing and support racial and economic diversity provides incredible value to quality of life for all in Oak Park, and I fully support this project as an exemplar of that mission.

Best,

Nicole Chavas

.....

Dear Oak Park Plan Commissioners and Village Trustees:

I am writing **in support** of Oak Park Residence Corporation's proposed redevelopment at 7 Van Buren Street. This project will increase Oak Park's supply of affordable housing through OPRC's commitment to ensure that at least 20% of the units are reserved for low-income families. As the Chair of the Board of the Oak Park Housing Authority, I am acutely aware of the challenges our Housing Choice Voucher holders face in trying to find housing in the Village of Oak Park. OPRC serves more OPHA voucher holders than any other landlord in the village, and we believe so strongly in their mission, that we have contracted with OPRC to carry out the services of the Oak Park Housing Authority.

One of the aspects I am most excited about in this new development is that it will include elevator access. Many OPHA voucher holders and other low income individuals have mobility limitations or are seniors, making an elevator-equipped building critical to their ability to find housing. While there have been new elevator-equipped buildings constructed in downtown Oak Park in recent years, they often rent well above the rent standards that an OPHA voucher can pay. The accessible nature of this new building combined with OPRC's commitment to maintain at least 20% of the units as accessible will be a lifeline for many low-income individuals with disabilities or mobility limitations.

In addition to my role on the OPHA Board, I work as a transportation planner with a focus in the area of transit oriented development. I am excited to see a project like this proposed for such a transit accessible location. With frequent bus service on Austin, Jackson, and Madison nearby and a station just steps away on one of the only two 24-hour rapid transit lines in the US outside NYC, this is a highly accessible location. In order for business districts like the Harrison Street Arts District to thrive, it's important to have a strong residential base to support restaurants, retail, and other development. Without infill development like this proposal, it is not possible to add new patrons within walking distance of these businesses. The high quality transit network surrounding this project will allow its residents to live car-free or car-lite lifestyles and patronize the surrounding businesses on foot, thereby growing business sales and sales taxes without significantly increasing the need for auto parking.

The sustainability elements of the building are also exciting, but I'll leave it to those who are more expert in those areas than I am to expound on those. Suffice to say that buildings that will last for many decades all need to help us grow greener to respond to the impacts of climate change - it appears that this proposal will do just that. And what better a location to site a green building than across from one of the largest greenspaces in our area: Columbus Park.

In short, **please strongly consider OPRC's Planned Development application for 7 Van Buren Street**. The project will make Oak Park a greener, more transit supportive, more accessible, more affordable community.

Sincerely,  
David Kralik  
526 Highland Ave. Oak Park, IL 60304  
Chair, Oak Park Housing Authority Board of Commissioners  
.....

Hi there.

I wanted to take a minute to send in my support for the Oak Park Residence Corporation's proposed development in the Arts District in advance of the Plan Commission's recommendation.

If Oak Park is to be the diverse and vibrant community that we spend a lot of time talking, hoping and wishing it could be, then it needs all the affordable, integrated housing it can get (not to mention one that's sustainable and accessible).

This is an exciting building that would seem to continue the recent push of investment and growth in the Arts District—which has been great to see over the past few years.

Thank you for your consideration.

warmly,

Brett Burwell  
839 Hayes Ave  
.....

Dear Oak Park Plan Commission,

My name is Liz Lukehart. I've been a resident of Oak Park for almost 7 years and currently serve on the Environment and Energy Commission. I'm writing to express my support for the proposed building at Austin & Van Buren. This is exactly the kind of development we need in Oak Park - buildings that are accessible, affordable, that allow our seniors to age in place, and, importantly, that provide a model for net zero emissions development. The urgency of the climate crisis cannot be overstated, and we have a real opportunity as a community to be a leader in sustainable development that is inclusive and represents all the values we hold dear as a village. Oak Park Residence Corporation's 7 Van Buren project will pave the way for green and equitable development in Oak Park and beyond, and help ensure our community continues to thrive as a diverse, welcoming, and sustainable place to live. I hope you will consider voting to support it.

Thank you,  
Liz

--

Liz Lukehart (she/her/they)  
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To: Oak Park Plan Commission

I strongly urge the Plan Commission to approve the development of the 7 Van Buren project. This proposal embraces many of the deeply-held values of Oak Park residents, including myself.

Of particular interest to me are the characteristics of this project which contribute to the sustainability of our building stock and to the Village's historic and ongoing efforts at economic and racial integration.

Approval of this project will show residents like me that our municipal leaders can "walk the talk" and support the goal of our Village being a forward-looking and just community.

Sincerely,  
Jim Babcock  
Member, PlanItGreen Core Group  
.....

Hello.

My name is Phil Carmody. I am writing to you today in support of the proposed development at Austin and Van Buren. I am writing on behalf of Opportunity Knocks, the Warriors we serve, and the families they belong to as well as the greater community that supports our mission to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they live, work, learn, grow and connect within their community. I am also writing on behalf of myself, a life-long resident of this community and a sibling of a brother who has Down Syndrome. Amongst the many challenges my brother John faces in day-to-day life, he is also faced with the very difficult challenge of finding a place to live in this community, as he prepares to leave the family home. John loves Oak Park. John wants to live in an independent living situation. John has few if any options available to him at this point. We are determined to meet this end, but we see great opportunity in projects like this to help make this end easier to come to for people like John and so many others that need an opportunity.

As a member of an organization that supports people with different abilities and as a family member who supports a brother aiming to find his place in this community, I write to you today in support of the Van Buren Project and all those like it that will develop and protect spaces to live that are affordable, supportive, accessible, and sustainable. Please approve this project so that we can continue to support people who need a little extra measure of support to continue to live, grow, learn and connect in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to these considerations. Good luck with your proceedings.



## PHIL CARMODY

President

8020 Madison St., River Forest, IL 60305

[www.opportunityknocksnow.org](http://www.opportunityknocksnow.org) | [phil@opportunityknocksnow.org](mailto:phil@opportunityknocksnow.org)

C: 708.307.5064 | O: 708.771.6159 x 204

.....

We, Barbara and Bill Coats, fully support the proposal to develop affordable housing at Austin and Van Buren as brought before your body by the Oak Park Residence Corporation.

We moved to Oak Park, voted and have happily paid our taxes for some thirty-nine years because we have believed and trusted that our village is unified in a commitment to assure that there are accessible and sustainable homes that accommodate our racial and economically diverse citizenry.

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Committee members,

We are writing regarding the proposed 7 Van Buren project and want you to know that we totally support it. We are Karen and Glenn Hunter, village residents for over 30 years. Having affordable housing available to all residents is of prime importance for maintaining our community's diversity, accessibility, sustainability and AFFORDABILITY.

Our daughter, Georgia Hunter, has lived here her whole life. Some of you may know her, seen her around town. She is an amazing young woman who happens to have Down syndrome. Oak Park is her town. We are so proud of how she "owns" this village and how much living here means to her. Everything she does is within a two-three mile radius, which she bicycles through daily. Georgia is able to live on her own with supports offered by local agencies. Staying, living, and engaging in the Oak Park community is her dream; having affordable housing available to her within this community is our dream for her. It's about inclusivity, but it's not easy to remain in Oak Park if housing remains out of reach. We support the Oak Park Residence Corporation's proposed re-development at Austin and Van Buren.

=====

Karen Hunter, 739 N Elmwood

.....

Dear Oak Park Plan Commission,

I am writing to voice my support for the proposed development referred to as "7 Van Buren". As a home owner near this site and a person who has worked for years running organizations that provide supportive housing, affordable housing, substance use and/or mental health services to the most marginalized populations, I am proud of Oak Park taking leadership in creating access to affordable and environmentally-sound housing options.

**Our country is in an affordable housing crisis. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition:**

- Nationally, there is a **shortage of more than 7 million affordable homes** for our nation's 10.8 million plus extremely low-income families;
- Seventy percent of all extremely low-income families are severely cost-burdened, paying more than half their income on rent;
- **There is no state or county in our country** where a renter working full-time at minimum wage can afford a two-bedroom apartment;
- In Illinois, a renter making minimum wage **would have to work 80 hours a week to afford** a two-bedroom rental unit.

I chose to move to Oak Park 15 years ago because I wanted to be a part of a community that does better than our dismal national averages. But, when you look at the average rental prices in our community, we are worse than the Illinois statistics overall. In Illinois, on average, one would have to make \$22.11 per hour at 40 hours per week in order to afford a two bedroom rental; in my zip code it requires full-time employment at \$26.15 per hour.

We could continue to pretend that there is not a problem in our community, or we can do something about it. **My vote is that we do something about it.**

7 Van Buren will not fix our housing crisis, nationally nor in my 60304 zip code. However, it moves us in the right direction in many ways. For one, it breaks a terrible trend where for-profit developers would rather pay a small fine rather than set aside units for affordable housing. Oak Park has such rich

offerings through our schools, park district, libraries, restaurants and businesses. We all benefit from increasing diversity (race, religion, and socio-economic) in our neighborhoods.

At the same time as increasing access to affordable housing and increasing diversity, it meets a third goal about which Oak Parkers care deeply: environmental conservation. The net-zero model that this development will employ again provides a model that all new construction in Oak Park should emulate.

I whole-heartedly support the proposed development, 7 Van Buren, in my neighborhood. While one building cannot solve all of the problems of affordable housing; diversity, equity, and inclusion; or global warming, 7 Van Buren demonstrates that we can move in the right direction while being consistent with the values of our Oak Park community.

P.S. And to address the parking concern... when I moved here we had a condo with one parking spot for three cars. This was the case for all of the condo units and no one complained about my building.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Potts  
839 Highland Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60304

.....

Good afternoon,

My name is Chris Meglan, and I am writing today in support of the proposed development at Austin and Van Buren. I am a community member as well as a special educator at Oak Park and River Forest High School who serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The young adults and adults I am connected with face significant challenges to appropriate housing opportunities, regardless of their families means and privilege. These individuals deserve to have opportunity, access, and choice in their living space. The proposed development at Austin and Van Buren would be a step forward in giving all of our community members the ability to continue to live in and support our community under the pillars of diversity and inclusion that we collectively stand by.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

~Chris Meglan

.....

Dear Oak Park Plan Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support for the development known as "7 Van Buren". I live near the proposed site (my house is near the intersection of Harrison and Highland) and I feel that it is our responsibility as a community to create and promote the expansion of affordable housing whenever possible. I reject the NIMBYism that is unfortunately so common in our society, and am proud that Oak Park is doing more to support affordable housing than many other communities have chosen to do. Let's keep doing what we can to make our community and our society a better place for all to live. To me, these are the values that make Oak Park so special.



Sincerely,

Dan Hooper  
839 Highland Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60304

.....

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing in support for the Oak Park Residence Corporation's proposal for the 7 Van Buren property. The proposed redevelopment project would be beneficial for Oak Park and I hope the Planning Commission votes to approve it. The Residence Corporation's proposal does not change the use of the property. The existing use of the property is for a multi-family building. The proposed project would replace an existing multi-family building with a modern multi-family building. The proposed new building would be a clear improvement over the existing building. The existing building is out-of-character with the neighborhood and is outdated and outmoded, most obviously in regard to energy efficiency.

The Residence Corporation's proposal is well thought out and is both strategic and practical. It would provide new, high quality rental housing on the east side of the village, which in turn would support businesses in the Harrison Street Arts District. It also could enhance commercial and residential property values in the neighborhood. It provides additional subsidized housing units in a mixed market-rent and subsidized residential building. It is a "net-zero" energy performance building.

The proposal does not require the use of village funds and relies on conventional bank debt and the Residence Corporation's own equity investment. Because of this, it does not present an unfair advantage to private multi-family property owners. In addition, it is not tax-exempt and will generate more tax revenue for public bodies than the building it replaces.

The project addresses a difficult challenge for our village. Much of the residential rental stock in the village is older and is less competitive. It will be important to avoid a negative cycle of declining property values and subsequent disinvestment. Once again, the Residence Corporation is taking a leading role in addressing an emerging challenge for the whole community. Thank you for your attention and your service to our community.

Richard Van der Molen  
532 Fair Oaks Avenue  
Oak Park, Illinois

.....

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of this project as envisioned by the OPRC. Oak Park needs more affordable housing, period. At 6 or 7 stories, this building would be far under the behemoths previously approved for Lake St. and environs. Also not as tall nor "blocky" as the new senior living building currently going up on Madison. Furthermore,

Austin and other border streets of our village are where I hope to see such structures situated in the future.

I feel the concerns from prospective neighbors about parking are overblown and frankly a canard. I'm not sure why those in opposition think that Res. Corp. can't restrict residents via car ownership when they can. I think that "traffic" has become code for "not wanting low income people in my neighborhood" and I trust that the Plan Commission and the Village Board realize it's time to stop planning for cars and instead for people. Diverse people, people with disabilities especially who have almost no options in Oak Park or elsewhere. *Let's be a leader in housing once again*, by proactively building sustainable, accessible, and yes, dense housing so we have more than our laurels upon which to rest.

Sincerely,  
Deborah J. Wess, SRES, e-Pro  
(she, her, hers)  
708-212-1122 (Mobile) 708-524-1100 (Office)  
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage  
114 N. Oak Park Ave. Oak Park, IL 60301

.....

Hello.

My name is Mike Carmody. I am writing to you today in support of the proposed development at Austin and Van Buren. I am writing on behalf of Opportunity Knocks, the Warriors we serve, and the families they belong to as well as the greater community that supports our mission to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they live, work, learn, grow and connect within their community. I am also writing on behalf of myself, a life-long resident of this community and a sibling of a brother who has Down Syndrome. Amongst the many challenges my brother John faces in day-to-day life, he is also faced with the very difficult challenge of finding a place to live in this community, as he prepares to leave the family home. John loves Oak Park. John wants to live in an independent living situation. John has few if any options available to him at this point. We are determined to meet this end, but we see great opportunity in projects like this to help make this end easier to come to for people like John and so many others that need an opportunity.

As a member of an organization that supports people with different abilities and as a family member who supports a brother aiming to find his place in this community, I write to you today in support of the Van Buren Project and all those like it that will develop and protect spaces to live that are affordable, supportive, accessible, and sustainable. Please approve this project so that we can continue to support people who need a little extra measure of support to continue to live, grow, learn and connect in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to these considerations. Good luck with your proceedings.

--



**Mike Carmody (he/him)**

Executive Director

8020 Madison St., River Forest, IL 60305

[www.opportunityknocksnow.org](http://www.opportunityknocksnow.org) | [mike@opportunityknocksnow.org](mailto:mike@opportunityknocksnow.org)

C: 708.870.2376 | O: 708.771.6159 x 204

.....

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed 6-story multifamily building to be located at 7 W. Van Buren. I support it for all the reasons stated in the Wednesday Journal editorial in their December 1 edition, and in particular because this beautiful, net-zero-energy building follows a model which best serves the interests of its future residents and the village as a whole: it will have an 80/20 mix of market-rate and affordable units. That model is one I hope other developers will follow going forward. I am also excited about the green design of the building. Its net-zero-energy design will be a model for other communities all over the country, and will bring enormous credit to our village.

I understand and appreciate the concerns of a small number of neighbors of the proposed building. I live only a block from Grove Avenue Apartments on Grove and Madison, and that development too faced neighborhood opposition. Now, years after it opened, it is an asset to our neighborhood, with its Sugar Beet Food Coop on the first floor and with only positive impact overall. I can assure the neighbors of this new proposed building that years from now, they too will consider this new development a real asset to their neighborhood.

Alan Goldberg

.....

Dear Plan Commission and Village Board,

I am writing in support of the proposed 7 Van Buren building redevelopment project for a number of reasons.

Like many of you, I chose to move to Oak Park 23 years ago to be part of, and support, a community actively striving to foster a diverse and vital community. I started living in Oak Park in an affordable two-flat for 13 years; I currently live in a single-family home with a four-story condo building diagonally behind me. My children have attended our public schools, benefiting from diverse classmates and their households. This was possible because there has been housing available to families along a broad income spectrum. Increasingly, our housing in Oak Park has skewed toward luxury condos. I want to make sure that Oak Park doesn't become another community where our teachers and firefighters and others can't afford to live here. And, I want to ensure that people transitioning from housing insecurity can get a start here.

As you know, one of the primary benefits of the integration of subsidized and market-rate housing is that low-income residents typically enjoy higher-quality construction and amenities than what is offered in traditional housing. In addition, benefits of mixed-income living have included poverty alleviation, increased property values, an increased tolerance for diversity for residents of all incomes, and improved housing quality, services, and neighborhood conditions for lower-income residents. I would think that Oak Park would want to foster such living environments.

I encourage you to affirm this project. I hope that Bobby Raymond is looking down upon us with a smile on her face and not a tear of disappointment when decisions are made.

With thanks for your service,  
Beth Houle  
306 S. Humphrey Ave.  
Oak Park, IL 60302

.....

I support this project, for the following reasons:

1. I applaud the Oak Park Residence Corporation's courage in initiating a development that is not at this time attractive to the private for-profit sector.
2. It's time for some intelligent development along the South Austin corridor.
3. While it's been good to see development along Madison Street and downtown Oak Park, virtually all of it has been aimed at high-income families and individuals.
4. I applaud the energy efficiency of this development, something that has never been tried in Oak Park.
5. Initially I was troubled by the lack of parking for all residents. My concerns have been assuaged by the argument that many low- and moderate-income renters don't have cars. Today's easy-to-use delivery services and on-demand transportation (cabs, Lyft, Uber) would help those without easy access to personal cars.

When my wife and I moved to Oak Park 14 years ago we were struck by its lack of economic vibrancy. The positive developments of the past few years should extend to lower and moderate-income persons, not just those of us who can afford \$500,000-plus homes.

-- Alan Fox

Alan Fox

747 S Harvey Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60304

.....

## **This building lacks sufficient loading spaces**

I oppose the petitioners request for an allowance to have zero loading spaces. Per the Village Zoning Code, Article 14, section 10.7 and table 10-4, there should be one loading space for a multi-unit apartment building of this size. Importantly, no traffic or parking studies have been conducted nor submitted to the Village of Oak Park that would show the effect of not having a loading zone in this highly trafficked, congested, and busy part of the Village, especially since the alley is only 15.6 feet rather than the standard 20 feet.

Having zero loading spaces means that for the 45 units in this apartment building there will be zero places to park a moving truck when future tenants move in or out of this building, zero spaces in which contractors could park for service calls or deliveries to be made. This then implies that all these vehicles will be forced to:

1) Park behind the building in the alleyway between the 400 block of South Austin Blvd and the 800 block of Humphrey Avenue. The alley between Austin Blvd and Humphrey Avenue is only 15 feet 6 inches. Therefore, if there is not sufficient loading space provided, these vehicles will be forced to park in this alleyway. Given the proposed minimum rear setback and the width of the existing alleyway there would be no room for a vehicle to maneuver around any larger vehicles loading or unloading in the alleyway. By not having a loading space as required these vehicles will be blocking the entry and exit point of the alleyway onto Van Buren. Additionally, if the vehicles stop in the alley to load and unload because there is no designated loading zone, the vehicles will then block the neighbors directly to the west of them at 800 & 804 S. Humphrey Avenue from being able to exit their own garages. It states in Article 15, Section 1- 18, that **“It shall be unlawful for any driver to park a vehicle within an alley in such a manner or under such conditions as to leave available less than eight feet (8') of the width of the roadway for the free movement of vehicular traffic.”** Even the small work trucks, moving vans and delivery trucks would not leave the legally required 8 feet of width to allow other vehicles to pass.

2) The lack of a loading zone would force vehicles onto Austin Boulevard. Austin Boulevard has heavily restrictive parking permits and time allowances and would be putting the safety of the workers at risk by forcing them to park on such a busy street while they attempt to load or unload items. Additionally, trucks are not legally allowed to travel on Austin Blvd. per Village of Oak Park Code, Article 15, Section 1-4.

3) Lastly, by not having a loading zone within the structure, vehicles will be forced into loading on Van Buren which is highly restrictive with parking permits and hours in which they can park. It was discovered that if a vehicle is parked along the south side of Van Buren Street for loading/unloading it only leaves 15 feet between the rear edge of the parking spots in lot 25v on the north side and the loading vehicle. This is functionally not enough space to exit from one of these permitted spots - you are blocked in. The reason that they will be forced onto Van Buren (which does not have a loading zone) is that the garage door is not of adequate clearance height. The height of the garage door is only 8 feet tall. The lack of vertical clearance of this garage door would exclude even the smaller moving vans from being able to enter the garage structure - this is the case for 10-foot and 15-foot U-Haul and similar company moving vans. These size moving vans are the ones recommended for studio, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments per moving companies, which is an accurate representation of the vehicular need of this building for moving purposes based on the types of units proposed. Thus, this building's own tenants would not be able to get their items moved in safely and easily - not only due to a lack of loading space but also due to the lack of proper vertical door clearance. Thus, the petitioners claim that the lack of a loading space is not an issue because tenants could park on Van Buren for this purpose or park in the garage but this is not in fact a viable solution.

This lack of a loading dock will create a regular and consistent traffic and parking problem given the number of units in this building. With 45 units and a typical lease being one year, that is a turnover of 3-4 units per month. This means that every month a total of 6-8 people on average will be moving in and out of this building. **Are the neighbors and surrounding area residents to expect that possibly every week this building will create parking and traffic havoc because there is no loading zone?**

I also oppose this variance request as a matter of tenant safety. By eliminating the loading zone within the structure this development provides no covered, secure area in which to load and unload. This puts the tenants, contractors, and delivery drivers at risk by not having a safe area in which to have vehicles open even for short

periods of time without the potential of theft of personal property or the vehicle itself. This also creates a safety hazard for tenants when they will be loading and unloading in inclement weather that not only can damage their personal property but could injure them. **This should be of particular concern since Petitioner is describing this building as one where people can age in place - I seriously doubt having seniors with possible mobility issues being forced to move their belongings outdoors in winter over snow and ice would be considered ideal.**

Additionally, since there are so very few designated parking spots within this building a loading space becomes even more important as these tenants will need to use that loading space to unload groceries, etc. before they must then go and re-park their vehicle several blocks away and walk back.

I ask that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the request by Oak Park Residence Corporation to eliminate the loading zone because it is not viable or safe for the new tenants and the already existing neighbors.

**Please review our slides for further details**

Graphics Corresponding to Speaking Points Submitted in  
Writing post November Meeting



# Visibility Issues



## Drivers entering the alley won't see vehicles adequately

The "garage door" of this structure was located exactly per the Petitioners architectural plans and to the exact dimensions. The cardboard sheets represent the walls and the opening the garage door in this photo. A vehicle has to extend 6-7 feet out beyond the door in order to have visibility of the alleyway and any oncoming vehicles.

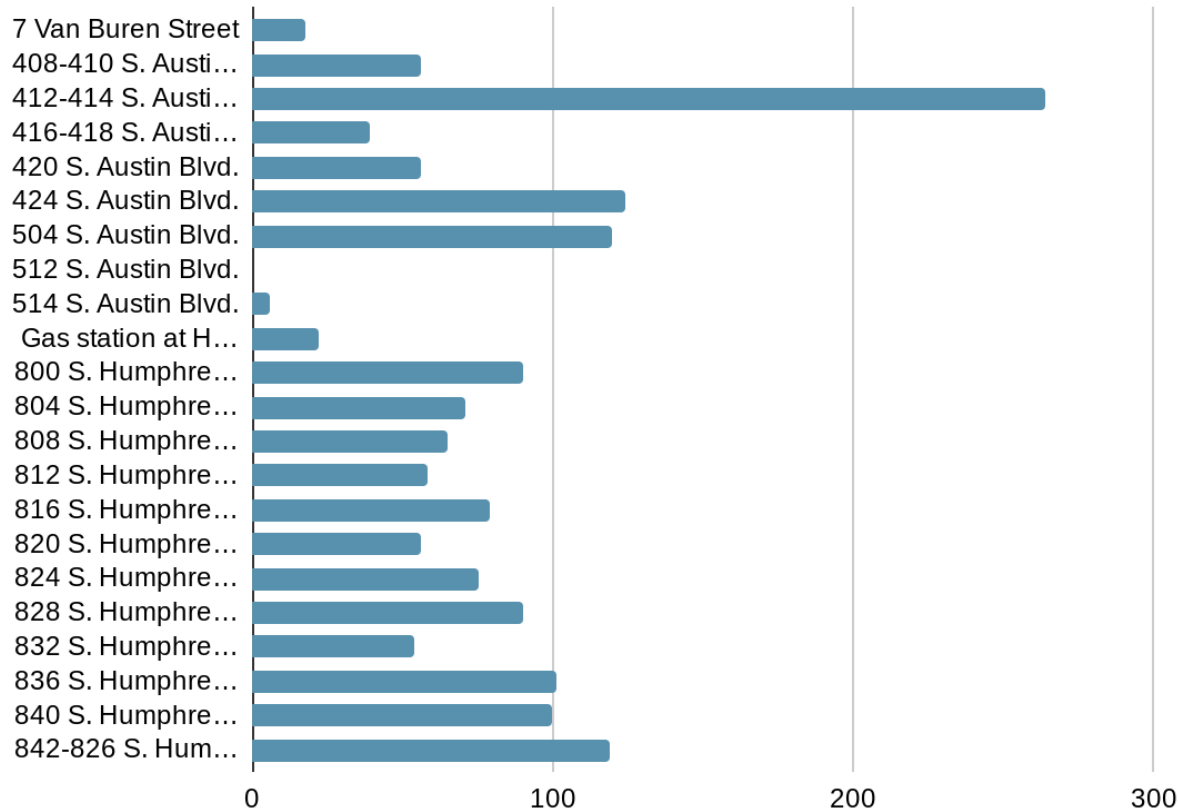
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With the vehicle in the middle of the “garage door” this was the level of visibility available to the driver when projected out 6-7 feet. Please note that even at this point there is still not full visibility for the driver looking northbound up the alleyway - i.e. can not see any vehicle headed southbound from the alley beyond 700 block of South Humphrey Ave.



## Setback of Structures in Inches from alley



As you can see, most setbacks are greater down this narrow alley to provide safe and easy access and better visibility.

## Setback Information for Comparison

[illegible]



# Getting In & Out

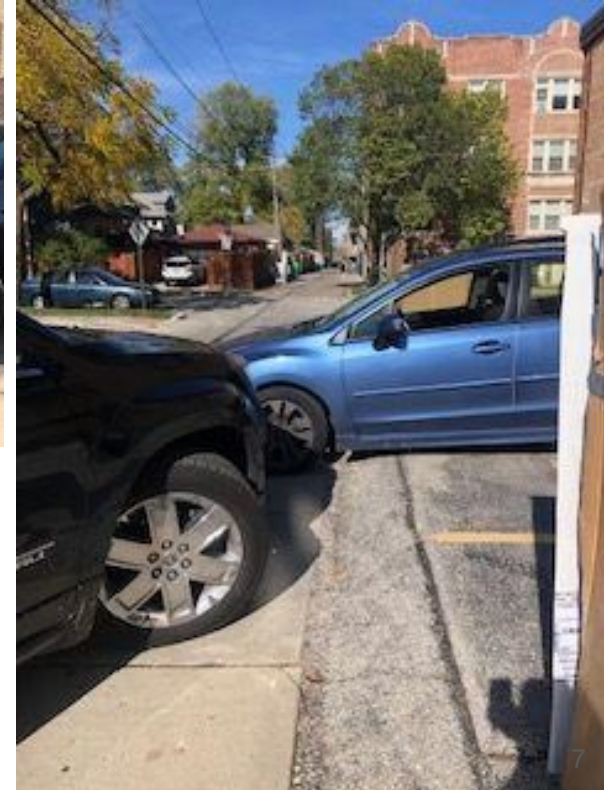


The Petitioner's Application states that available parking would allow two way traffic within the building. The door is 16 feet wide. This is problematic. In these photos we recreated the garage per the exact dimensions and placement of the architectural plans. The blue car is over as far as possible as close to the "garage door" <sup>6</sup>

# Demonstration of two way vehicle Entry & Exit in this “Garage Door”



We tried, tried and tried again but no matter who pulled forward or back within this garage door space there was simply no way we could get two vehicles easily into this garage door space.



November 10, 2021

To: Oak Park Plan Commission

Ref: 7 Van Buren Planned Development

Ladies/Gentlemen:

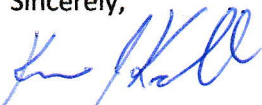
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It was stated at the October meeting that the benefits of the proposed development included resurfacing of Van Buren Street. This is not a benefit, but part of the restoration of disturbed surfaces during construction. Pavement replacement is necessary for the installation of utility services. New curb gutter is necessary due to the elimination of the five parking spots. Resurfacing is being done to repair surface damage due to the crane location and material storage.

Finally, it was stated that a public neighborhood meeting was held on April 13, 2021, to allow for input and questions. However, project renderings and an article appeared the next day in the Wednesday Journal. This information would have had to been provided to the paper prior to the meeting due to publishing deadlines. How does this situation meet the spirit of neighborhood input?

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Sincerely,



Kevin Kell, P.E. (Retired)



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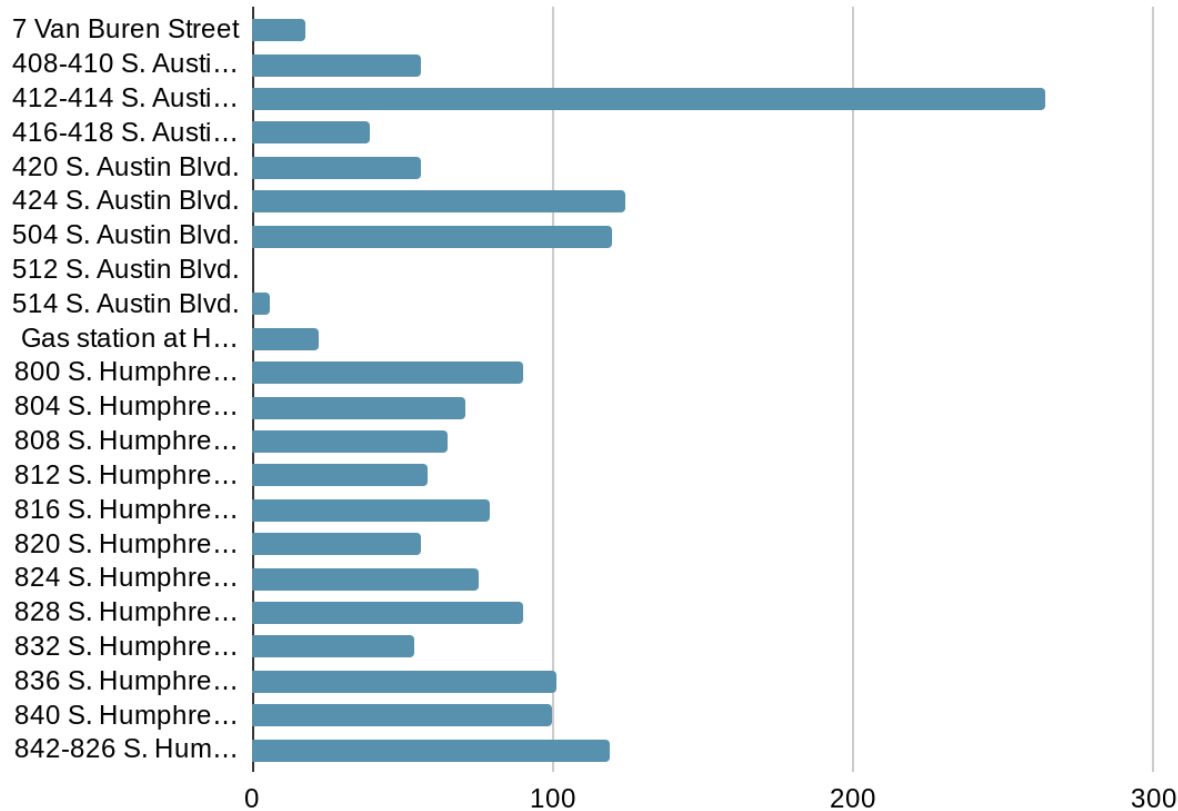
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## Setback Information for Comparison

Address	Type of structure	Setback of structure		Address	Type of structure	Setback of structure
408-410 S. Austin Blvd	multifamily	4'8"		800 S. Humphrey Ave.	Single Family Home	7'6"
412-414 S. Austin Blvd.	multifamily	22'		804 S. Humphrey Ave.	Single Family Home	5'11"
416-418 S. Austin Blvd.	Deattached 5 stall Garage with driveway	3'3"		808 S. Humphrey Ave.	Single Family Home	5'5"
420 S. Austin Blvd.	multifamily	4'8"		812 S. Humphrey Ave.	Single Family Home	4'10"
424 S. Austin Blvd.	multifamily	10'4"		816 S. Humphrey Ave	Single Family Home	6'7"
504 S. Austin Blvd.	multifamily	10'		820 S. Humphrey Ave	Single Family Home	4'8"
Village of Oak Park Parking Lot	surface parking lot with fence adjacent to alley	N/A		824 S. Humphrey Ave	Single Family Home	6'3"
512 S. Austin Blvd.	Single Family Homes	N/A		828 S. Humphrey Ave.	Single Family Home	7'6"
514 S. Austin Blvd.	multifamily owned by ResCorp	6"		832 S. Humphrey Ave	Single Family Home	4'6"
Gas station at Harrison & Austin (NW corner)	Commercial Gas Station	1'10"		836 S. Humphrey Ave	Single Family Home	8'5"
				840 S. Humphrey Ave	Single Family Home	8'4"
				842-826 S. Humphrey Ave	multifamily aptment building	9'11"
<b>The smallest setback of a garage structure with doors opening onto the alleyway is 4'6"</b>						



# Getting In & Out

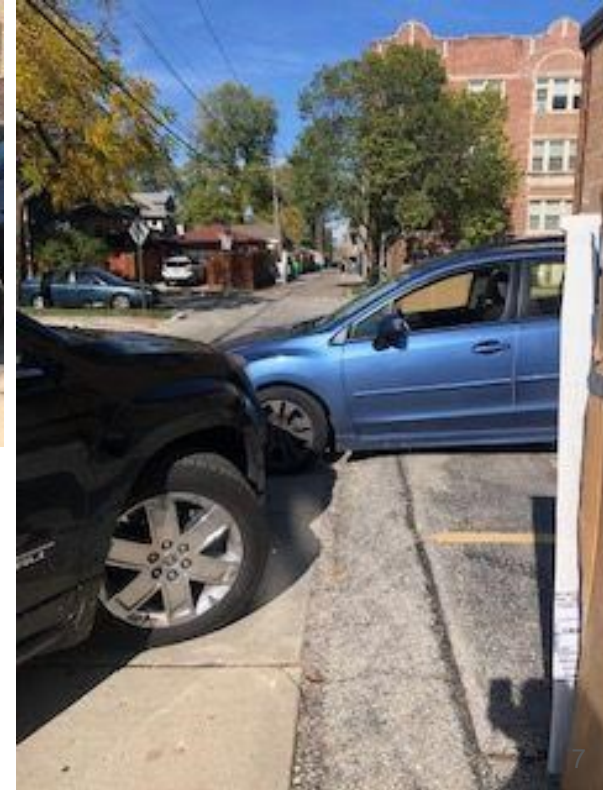


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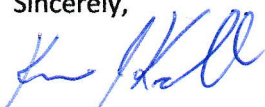
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Sincerely,



Kevin Kell, P.E. (Retired)

Good evening. My name is Terrie Rymer, and I am a retired public interest attorney. I have lived at 804 S. Humphrey for more than 35 years. We bought this home because we wanted to live on a diverse, multi-cultural block located in a diverse, multi-cultural neighborhood.

I would like to thank the chair for your thoughtfulness in postponing the remainder of this hearing to this evening.

I commend Res. Corp. for their aspirations to create a net zero building and to include affordable housing in a new, market rate apartment building, but the building does not fit on this site and will cause harm to its neighbors.

Res. Corp.'s many requests for significant variances plus its request that the Village vacate municipal property are unprecedented and so extreme as to constitute "spot zoning." Spot zoning occurs when a small area is zoned differently from the surrounding area. Illinois courts traditionally find spot zoning to be invalid. See *Concerned Citizens for McHenry, Inc. v. City of McHenry*, 76 Ill.App3d 798, 395 N.E.2d 944, 32 Ill.Dec. 563 (2d Dist. 1979); *Bennett v. City of Chicago*, 24 Ill.2d 270, 181 N.E.2d 270, 181 N.E.2d 96, 98 (1962); *Thomber v. Village of North Barrington*, 321 Ill.App.3d 318, 747 N.E.2d 513, 254 Ill.Dec. 473 (2d Dist. 2001).

**The tail is wagging the dog**, as the justification for a 15 foot raised level of solar panels, the refusal to change the height of the building and to **set back** the upper floors of the building are all based on **the alleged requirements for ICECF funding. Res. Corp. is asking the Plan Commission to approve allowances that will allow a building that is out of proportion to the neighborhood and will cause harm to its neighbors in order to obtain the ICECF funding. But it is Res. Corp.'s choice to pursue this funding.**

The pursuit of net zero energy funding should not be allowed to serve as a compensating benefit for significant allowances in building height, massing and setbacks. A building may achieve LEED certification without needing these allowances.

Res. Corp.'s description of this project as the largest Net Zero multi-family apartment building in the upper Midwest goes to demonstrate that this building is too large for this site. Building the largest Net Zero building in the Upper Midwest on this lot is like trying to squeeze a size 11 foot into a size 7 shoe. The mission of Res. Corp. is to provide quality affordable housing and mixed income housing, not to build the largest Net Zero multi family apartment building in the upper Midwest.

I ask the Plan Commission to view the proposed Garfield Green affordable housing project by the Preservation of Affordable Housing group located at Kedzie and Fifth in Chicago. It is also a Net Zero energy and passive house certified design, with the same mechanical engineer being used by Res.. Corp. Rather than claiming to be the largest Net Zero multi family apartment building in the Upper Midwest, a claim that has no relevance, this project is designed to be an appropriate fit within the scale of its location.

I am perplexed by the Petitioner's discussion of its need for an enormous rooftop solar array for Net Zero energy, a primary driver of the building height and massing; **yet, Petitioner downplays the amount of available sunlight in order to minimize the effect of shadows cast by that very same rooftop solar array on the neighboring properties.**

The developers of the two buildings on Madison Street agreed to setbacks and to move the garage entry, but Res.Corp. has stated it will make no changes to accommodate the very real concerns of the neighbors.

I would like to address one of Res. Corp.'s drawings that shows a crosswalk in front of the building into Columbus Park. There is no crosswalk, and petitioner makes no mention in its documents of any plan to work with Chicago and Oak Park to have one installed.

Also, Res. Corp.'s statement that the use of Chicago common brick on the sides of the Poley building indicates that the builder expected another

apartment building to be erected in very close proximity is incorrect. Chicago common brick was widely used on the side and rear facades of buildings because it was economical. There are plenty examples of Brick two-flats and single family homes with Chicago common brick on three sides that were sited in the middle of their lots and were never intended to have another building close to them. I refer the Commissioners to 808 S. Humphrey as an example.

The Illinois courts review the constitutionality of a zoning decision in the context of the eight LaSalle/Sinclair factors. *LaSalle National Bank of Chicago v. Village of Richton Park*, 19 Ill.2d 370 (1960). The existing use and zoning of nearby properties and the diminishment of property values of nearby properties are the two factors of greatest import. Some of the objectors will address the use and zoning of nearby properties as well as the loss in property values the neighbors will incur.

Finally, the Illinois Supreme Court has held that there is a presumption of validity in favor of the zoning ordinance as written. The burden is on the Petitioner requesting the zoning variances to overcome this presumption by clear and convincing evidence, a very high standard, and to show that the zoning ordinance is without reasonable relation to the public health, safety, and welfare. *Urann v. Village of Hinsdale*, 30 Ill.2d 170, 195 N.E.2d 643 (1964). Res. Corp. does not come close to meeting that burden.

I have provided citations for the legal references in the written copy of my statement.

Thank you for your attention.

Submitted By: Amber Gray

408 S. Austin Blvd. Oak Park, IL

**This proposed development is NOT in a TOD (transit orientated development) zone/area per the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance passed by the Village in 2019 and therefore is not a TOD building.**

**Please see our slides for further information**

The Petitioner referred to this building is a TOD building or is in a TOD district. A TOD is a transit orientated development. Per Article 5, The Inclusionary Housing Ordinance in the Village of Park, Chapter 12, section 5, item 2 that was passed in 2019, it states “TOD Area: The area that has the designation for an identified Chicago Transit Authority or Metra train station located in the Village and within a quarter of a mile from any applicable train station to located contiguous to Madison Street west of Lombard Avenue, EXCLUDING the Austin Blvd. Blue line train station and the Austin Blvd. Green line transit station....”

Again, this ordinance that was passed in the spring of 2019 by the Village of Oak Park explicitly and expressly excludes this area from being a TOD area - this is NOT a TOD building as this is NOT a TOD area.

The 2003 U of I Plan expressly states that it is a guideline - not a standard. should not function as a standard and should not define rules about the design and use of specific features of the building environment. The village code applicable to TOD areas is the standard. This neighborhood is NOT a TOD area.

As part of the presumption that this was a TOD area which it is NOT, the petitioner discussed other modes of transportation to justify the lack of parking provided. However, there are problematic issues in the petitioner’s justifications for the lack of parking.

One of these problematic justifications is the assumption on their part that all trips in Chicago can or should be made via public transit exclusively, no matter how frequent or reliable. That is not realistic. It should be noted that the Blue line “L” station at Austin Blvd. is not handicap accessible and there are physical obstacles to reaching this station. This would be especially concerning seeing as this development is being marketed in part as an aging in place development.

The petitioner also stated that there was easy access to other modes of transportation such as nearby Divvy bike stations, Zipcars, ride-sharing services, rental cars, etc. However, this is not the case.

The nearest Divvy Bike station is located at Madison & Austin Blvd. which is nearly a half mile away, the next closest is a mile away at Lake Street & Austin Blvd.

In their application, Petitioner stated that the closest car rental agency is ½ mile away. However, in our research the closest car rental agency is Avis Car Rental at 414 Madison Street. The distance from 7 Van Buren is .9 miles away - almost a mile, about a 20 minute walk. There is a Hertz rental car at 629 Madison street that is 1.3 miles away, about a 25- 30 minute walk.

The Zipcar location on Taylor near Madison is being promoted as a viable vehicle alternative. First, a ZipCar has a membership fee required in order to to reserve a vehicle in addition to the usage fees, gas fees, etc. Secondly, when we checked the nearest ZipCar site at 438 S. Taylor Avenue (which is a half mile walk away) to see how many zip cars were offered at this location; we found that there is only one zipcar available. This was easily discovered as there was only reserved parking space in the lot for a ZipCar, and for the majority of visits to this lot, the ZipCar was reserved and not available for rental. The next closest location for a ZipCar is at 300 South Blvd. which is 1.3 miles away.

This proposed development is leaning heavily into its tenants' assumed usage of Public Transit, specifically the CTA buses and “L” trains or ride sharing services such as Uber or Lyft. This is interesting to be so heavily relying on these forms of transportation given how drastically COVID -19 has changed peoples methods of transportation and will forever alter those behaviors. The impact on public transit and ride sharing services was widely reported. Many people are afraid to share an enclosed space for an extended period of time sitting or standing next to people whose vaccination status is completely unknown and unregulated. This is corroborated by a Friday October 22nd report by WBEZ of Chicago in the 11 O’Clock hour which noted that the CTA ridership continues to sit at 50% of pre-Covid ridership. Again these feelings of unease and concern for their own health extend to people's decreased usage of taxis, Uber and Lyft rides during this period as well. The cost of many of these rideshare services are at an all time high cost to the users because there is a lack of drivers so the tenants would be paying more than ever for using an Uber or a Lyft ride.

I oppose the allowance for the variation from 45 spaces to 17 spaces as this is NOT per Village of Oak Park ordinances a TOD area. Again, this is not a TOD area - it was in fact explicitly omitted. Additionally, I oppose the allowance for the variance from 45 spaces to 17 spaces because the alternate modes of transportation cited by the petitioner pose very real challenges. I ask that the Planning Commission reject this request for the parking variance and I ask that they do not recommend this development as proposed.

Submitted By: Tim McCoy

805 S. Humphrey Ave. Oak Park, IL

**The proposed building has inadequate parking spaces for vehicles per Village of Oak Park codes, other supportive guidelines and planning documents for this area.**

I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. The request that it be decreased from 34 spaces is incorrect. Per Village of Oak Park Zoning Code 10-2, there should be one parking spot per one apartment unit.

Per Village of Oak Park code there should be a 1 to 1 ratio between dwelling units and parking spaces for multi-family buildings in this area. Therefore, for a 45 unit apartment building there should be 45 parking spaces. However, the petitioner is asking for an allowance for only 17 parking spaces. This is an egregious lack of parking. That is a ratio of only one parking spot per every three units - not people - which equates to only 33% of units having a designated parking space per the parking plan of 7 Van Buren. No other development has been allowed to have anywhere close to this low of a ratio between units and available parking as set forth in the parking plan of 7 Van Buren. The closest is the newly built 801 Apartments on Oak Park Avenue that has a parking ratio of 69%. In fact the next smallest ratio has been nearly twice that - the Albion building with a ratio of 77% or the development at the former Dreshler Brown funeral home of 78%. All three of these other developments are in a TOD district and have grocery stores, banks, doctors offices, and many other needed community support businesses and amenities that are much closer, as well as the "L line", metra and bus lines located nearby. Therefore, these have much more accessibility that would decrease the need for a vehicle and allow for variance. The Petitioner repeatedly referred to the 2003 U of I Plan in support of their proposal. Yet, on page 34 of the 2003 U of I Plan, when speaking to the expectation as to the type of multifamily apartments that would be built in the future it states that "We assume dwelling unit space is 1,650 square feet, which include common areas and one parking spot per unit." This building's average dwelling unit space is far smaller i.e. increasing the density more than anticipated and does not have a 1 to 1 parking ratio. Therefore, this building doesn't meet the expectations of the density and parking of future developments according to the U of I Plan guidelines.

Additionally, this building does not comply with the Illinois Accessibility Code for the minimum number of handicapped parking spots. In the 2018 Illinois Accessibility Code page 39, section with accompanying table 208.2 it states that for 26-50 total number of parking spaces provided in the parking facility, the minimum number of ADA compliant handicapped parking spaces provided is 2. Village of Oak Park zoning ordinances would require 45 parking spaces for the unit. With those 45 spaces, two parking spots should be set aside as ADA compliant handicapped parking. The applicants are asking for a variance for not only the number of spaces but also to decrease the parking so drastically that they are then not providing adequate handicapped parking spaces per Illinois Accessibility Code laws. This building at a minimum should have two handicapped accessible parking spaces per Illinois Accessibility code section 208.2

No other development in the Village of Oak Park has been allowed to have a ratio of 37% parking spaces per unit. This building should be held to the same standards as the rest of the developments have been held to, and 7 Van Buren should be required to have 45 parking spaces per Village of Oak Park Zoning Code, Article 14, Section 10-2. Only providing 17 parking spaces to a multi-family unit building that will contain 45 apartment units with an estimated occupancy of 85-90 people is ludicrous and is an extremely disproportionately low ratio of parking spaces available per the number of units in this building.

Page 32 of the 2003 U of I Plan even states that “New parking will come with the approval of new multi-family and commercial buildings that will need to meet Village parking requirements.” The 2014 Comprehensive Plan also stated “ the need for residential parking policies to be more specifically tailored to local densities and behaviors.” This proposed development thus is not following the very guidelines set forth for this area according to this document but is also not in accordance with the Village of Oak Park Code. Therefore, we ask that the Planning Commissioners not approve the request for allowance in the number of parking spots as part of this development.

**Please review our slides for further details**



Submitted By: Mary Fran Riley

Address: 735 S. Humphrey Ave, Oak Park, IL

**Oak Park Residence Corporation has no basis to support its request to decrease the parking spaces below Village Code requirements.**

**Please see slides for further information.**

I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. There is not sufficient evidence provided by the petitioner demonstrating that there will be less demand for parking than proven otherwise in related studies.

In a study called I-290/ Eisenhower Expressway (from west of Mannheim Road to Racine Avenue) the Environmental Resources, Impacts and Mitigation- dated June 2017, the Illinois Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation investigated the many possible effects, implications, and information gathered by construction and changes done on the Eisenhower Expressway. The project corridor was a specific area near the Eisenhower Expressway. The 7 Van Buren building and the surrounding neighborhood falls within the project corridor that was studied. This study showed that within the project corridor community of Oak Park, only 12.8% of residents had zero cars, 47% of residents had one vehicle, and 34.2% of residents had two cars. If one extrapolates this out to units rather than numbers of tenants (since we don't know how many tenants will be in the building) that would mean if there are only 45 units and 45 people, only 5 units/tenants will NOT need a vehicle parking space, 22 units/tenants will have one vehicle, and need one parking space, and 15 units/tenants will have two vehicles and need two parking spaces. Combined, this adds to a theoretical total demand of 52 parking spaces needed by the tenants, which far exceeds the 17 proposed parking spots provided.

The ITE's Parking Generation 4th edition states that for general parking 1.2 spaces are needed per dwelling unit. It also notes that for affordable housing units an average of .56 spaces are needed as those in affordable housing units generally require fewer parking spaces. Thus, if there are 45 total units, and 36 are market rate and 9 are affordable, the 36 market rate units with an average need of 1.2 parking spots translates to 43.2 parking spaces. Then if we add in the 9 units that only need .56 parking spaces per dwelling unit, that comes to 5.04 spaces. The total need for parking at this building per ITE guidelines is 48.24 or 48 total spaces needed by these tenants for parking in this 45 unit apartment building unit. Their application calls for an exemption down to 17 spaces; this again creates a net deficit of 31 spaces. In other words, this building will create a need for 31 new parking spaces that do not exist.

Again, the need for adequate parking is supported by Oak Park's own information. It is reflected in the Oak Park Community Snapshot under Transportation. That data sheet states that only 13.6% of households do not own a vehicle. It also states that 45.6% of households own at least one vehicle, 34.4% own two vehicles and 6.4% own three or more vehicles. This evidence would demonstrate that in a 45 unit building, only 6 dwelling units would not need a parking

space, 21 dwelling units at this building would need parking for one vehicle, 16 dwelling units would need parking for two vehicles, and three dwelling units could need as much as three parking spaces. Combined this adds to a theoretical total demand of 62 parking spaces needed by the tenants, which again far exceeds the 17 proposed parking spots provided in Oak Park Residence Corporations plan. In fact, when residents of the 400 block of S. Austin Blvd were surveyed, their rate of vehicle ownership was 88%.

Even back in 2003, the U of I Plan noted the traffic and parking issues. Under the Planning Goals and Objectives page 5 it is noted that “Drivers and commercial business owners routinely complain about the lack of parking near shops. Homeowners routinely complain about people parking on residential streets. Renters complain about the lack of on-street parking near their residences.”

If this building is allowed to have only 17 parking spaces for 45 units, this then sets the precedence for all future developments. Other developers will then have the historical precedence to ask and receive only a 37% parking ratio for their building proposal. And if a structure is proposed in an area close to community infrastructure and amenities what will that threshold become - a 10% or 20% ? This request for variance sets a precedent for all future developments that becomes a slippery slope of who gets held to the Village Zoning Ordinance and who does not and to what degree. Why should this building be held to any less of a standard than ones that have had to go through this same process?

I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. There is not sufficient evidence provided by the petitioner to prove that there will be less demand for parking than proven otherwise in related studies. I ask that the Planning Commissioners not approve this allowance.

Submitted By: Colleen Hintz

Current address: 238 W. Ridgeland Ave. Waukegan, IL.,  
longtime resident of 808 S. Humphrey Ave. Oak Park, IL

**The proposed development is already in an area where on-street, permit parking is at a premium.**

I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. There is already a high demand for on-street permit parking in the area and the tenants should not be forced to apply for permit parking nor should neighbors be forced to accommodate overflow parking because the development at 7 Van Buren has failed to provide parking within its own structure.

For tenants who need parking in the area that is not provided by on-site parking, the alternative is to seek permit parking through the Village of Oak Park. The parking permit for this area is considered as “High Demand,” per the Village of Oak Park’s own mapping and table documentation - thus supporting the anecdotal evidence. The 700, 800, and 900 blocks of South Humphrey, the 800 Block of South Lyman, and Austin Blvd from Harrison to Jackson all have time restrictions for parking. That stretch of Austin Blvd has time limits as well for parking. Harrison Street additionally has time restrictions for parking from Austin Blvd west to Taylor.

In the presentation by Oak Park Residence Corporation the Petitioner implied that because of the available permit parking spaces still available that “ample permit parking is currently available within walking distance of the site to accommodate the five total permit parking spaces to be eliminated from Lot 25V and, if necessary, residents from the development that may need permit parking.”

However, according to information received in October of 2021, the Petitioner’s statement is not correct nor current. According to Village of Oak Park information this is the most up to date parking permit lot information: there is a total capacity of 190 permitted spots available within a half mile and 180 of them are active, leaving only 10 spots available or a 95% capacity. Additionally, the proposed building will remove 5 permitted parking spots from lot 25v and displace those 5 permitted parking spot users to another lot. That will bring the total down to 185 spot capacity with 180 spots active. Therefore, that will leave exactly 5 spots available for everyone on the waiting list and everyone in this building and the surrounding neighborhood. If there are 45 units in the building with 17 spots available, leaving minimally 28 units with no onsite parking. Even if this building takes all 5 remaining permitted spots, that still leaves 23 units (not people) without a designated spot in the building or in any permitted parking lot spots available within a half of a mile.

On October 21st 2021 we obtained the current “waiting list” for permitted parking spaces in several lots within a half mile of 7 Van Buren. The following information was found: between permitted parking lots 103, 25v, 25a and 68, there are a total of 18 vehicles/people on the waitlist for available parking. Lot 25V (on Van Buren) has 8 people/vehicles listed on the waitlist - some on the waitlist since as far back as March and April. For lot number 103 - there are 5 vehicles/individuals on the waitlist, again some dating back to April of 2021. Lot 68 has another 5 people/vehicles on the waitlist and again some of those dating back to April. This is further proof that not only is the permitted parking already at its saturation point in these lots, but that the need and demand exceeds the available capacity. The duration of this excess demand is also not short - some of these individuals have been on the waitlist for over 6 months - that is half of a one year lease without a permit for parking at a requested lot.

On October 26th, 2021, we obtained a report from the Village of Oak Park that accounted for the number of parking tickets issued in the area of the 800 block of South Humphrey, and both Van Buren and Harrison from Austin to Lyman. This is a small area which surrounds the proposed development and where on-street parking typically occurs for tenants of this area. Over 550 tickets have been issued since the beginning of the 2021. As you can see this is an area that has a serious parking problem and having a development built without adequate parking as part of its plan will only cause more parking problems for this area.

It has long been recognized, even in the 2003 U of I Plan Document, that this area has been a hotspot of parking shortages. This proposed building is doing nothing to help alleviate the problem. Instead, it is only further contributing to this parking problem. Therefore, I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces.

Please see our slides for additional information

Submitted by Cameron Stingily

Address: 408 S. Austin Blvd., Oak Park, IL

**This is NOT in a TOD (transit orientated development) area per the 2019 Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, this is NOT a TOD building as such and the needed neighborhood infrastructure and amenities are not present to support it as such.**

I oppose the Petitioner's request for a variance to the decrease in parking spaces from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. The proposed building is not in a TOD area per the 2019 Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, this is not a TOD building per that ordinance and the lack of community infrastructure and neighborhood amenities do not support this egregious lack of parking.

The Petitioner referred to the restaurants and boutiques on Harrison Street. While we all enjoy patronizing these local businesses, they do not provide the daily necessities. Trips for day to day necessities should be easily walkable and close enough to walk home with the purchases from such places as pharmacies, Dr.'s offices, cleaners, banks, dentists and grocery stores. A walkable distance that would preclude the need for a car is defined as ¼ to ½ mile. In fact, most of these needs are closer to a mile away, hardly a walkable distance, let alone in the snow, with small children, or with mobility issues, mind you while carrying all of your bags of purchases. Therefore, it should be abundantly apparent that our neighborhood, lovely as it is, lacks the community infrastructure and amenities to support people without a vehicle. These deficits in the neighborhood infrastructure and amenities do not support the Petitioner's rationale to not provide adequate parking for its tenants.

Below is a list of Essential Oak Park services nearest to 7 Van Buren to support our concerns:  
**Neighborhood Community Infrastructure & Amenities in Relation to their distance to 7 Van Buren**

Grocery Stores:

1)Jewel	438 Madison St.	1 mile
2)Carnival Grocery	824 S. Oak Park Ave.	1 mile
3)Pete's Fresh Market	259 Lake Street	1.3 miles
4)Sugar Beet Food Co-op	812 Madison St.	1.4 miles

Banks:

1)U.S. Bank	11 Madison St.	.4 mile
2)Fifth Third Bank	840 S. Oak Park Ave.	1.1 miles
3)Chase Bank	811 Madison St.	1.3 miles
4)U.S. Bank	104 N. Oak Park Ave.	1.4 miles

Pharmacies:

1)CVS	345 Madison St.	.8 miles
2)Walgreens	811 Madison Street	1.1 miles
3)Sears Pharmacy	1003 Madison Street	1.7 miles

General Physicians Office:

1)West Suburban Medical Center	3 Erie Court	1.2 miles
2)Immediate Care of Oak Park	1000 Madison Street	1.3 miles
3)Rush Oak Park Hospital	520 S. Maple Ave.	2.3 miles

Dentist Offices:

1)MW Dental LLC	312 Madison	.8 miles
2)Oak Park Dental Studio	6630 Roosevelt Road	1.4 miles
3)Gentle Dentistry of Oak Park	715 Lake Street	1.9 miles

Target -	1129 Lake Street	2.5 miles
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Dry Cleaners:

1)Oak Cleaners	900 S. Ridgeland Ave.	.6 miles
2)Poly One Hour Cleaners	600 Madison Street	1.1 miles
3)Smart Cleaners	901 S. Oak Park Ave.	1.2 miles

Pet Store:

1)Oak Park Natural Pet & Fish	23 N. Harlem Ave.	2.1 miles
2)Scratch N' Sniff	120 N. Marion St.	2.4 miles
3)Petco	7265 Lake Street River Forest	2.7 miles

Mechanics:

1)Russo's Auto Service	945 S. Oak Park Ave.	1.2 miles
2)Oak Park Auto & Gas Station	333 Lake Street	1.4 miles
3) Auto Experts	6540 Roosevelt Road	1.4 miles

Bakery:

1)Laury's Bakery & Cake	12 Madison Street	.5 miles
2)Oak Park Bakery	904 S. Oak Park Ave.	1.2 miles
3)Spilt Milk	811 S. Blvd.	1.9 miles

Please note that of all of these daily/weekly needed amenities and infrastructure needs there is only 1 bank location & 1 bakery available within a walking distance of a half mile or less. Everything else is over a half mile away - most are over a mile away.

The Petitioner is trying to use the 2003 U of I Plan document to support this project. The document was a broad based, holistic view of the needs, wants and infrastructural support needed in this area. The applicant is putting forth this development as supporting the goal of this

document but does not acknowledge any of the other goals in this guideline - it is trying to operate in a bubble or vacuum. On page 4 of the 2003 U of I plan it states “New development near rail stations does increase densities, but increasing densities ALONE DOES LITTLE to improve a commercial district and surrounding neighborhood. The applicant is only further exacerbating the deficits already existing, noted and pointed out in this document without adding any of the needed infrastructure or amenities that would help support this structure’s tenants and neighborhood. It is only straining the area further instead of alleviating the problems or enhancing the neighborhood. Therefore, I ask that the Planning Commission reject the request for a variance to decrease the number of parking spaces from 45 to 17 spaces.

**Please see sides for more details**

Submitted By: Carol Elazier

Address: 829 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

### **This building lacks sufficient loading spaces**

I oppose the petitioners request for an allowance to have zero loading spaces. Per the Village Zoning Code, Article 14, section 10.7 and table 10-4, there should be one loading space for a multi-unit apartment building of this size. Importantly, no traffic or parking studies have been conducted nor submitted to the Village of Oak Park that would show the effect of not having a loading zone in this highly trafficked, congested and busy part of the Village, especially because the alley is only 15.6 feet rather than the standard 20 feet.

Having zero loading spaces means that for the 45 units in this apartment building there will be zero places to park a moving truck when future tenants move in or out of this building, there would be zero spaces in which contractors could park for service calls, deliveries to be made for appliances, furniture, etc. This then implies that all these trucks, vans, contractor and delivery vehicles will be forced to either

1) Park behind the building in the alleyway between the 400 block of South Austin Blvd and the 800 block of Humphrey Avenue. The alley between Austin Blvd and Humphrey Avenue is only 15 feet 6 inches. Therefore, if there is not sufficient loading space provided, these vehicles will be forced to park in this alleyway. Given the proposed minimum rear setback and the width of the existing alleyway there would be no room for a vehicle to maneuver around any larger vehicles loading or unloading in the alleyway. By not having a loading space as required these vehicles will be blocking the entry and exit point of the alleyway onto Van Buren. Additionally, if the service, moving or delivery vehicles stop in the alley to load and unload because there is no designated loading zone the vehicles will then block the neighbors directly to the west of them at 800 & 804 S. Humphrey Avenue from being able to exit their own garages. It states in Article 15, Section 1- 18 that "It shall be unlawful for any driver to park a vehicle within an alley in such a manner or under such conditions as to leave available less than eight feet (8') of the width of the roadway for the free movement of vehicular traffic." Even the small work trucks, moving vans and delivery trucks would not leave the legally required 8 feet of width to allow other vehicles to pass.

2) Alternately, the lack of a loading zone would force vehicles onto Austin Boulevard. Austin Boulevard has heavily restrictive parking permits and time allowances and would be putting the safety of the workers at risk by forcing them to park on such a busy street while they attempt to load or unload items. Additionally, trucks are not legally allowed to travel on Austin Blvd. per Village of Oak Park Code, Article 15, Section 1-4..



3) Lastly, by not having a loading zone within the structure, vehicles will be forced into loading on Van Buren which is highly restrictive with parking permits and hours in which they can park. It was discovered that if a vehicle is parked along the south side of Van Buren street for loading/unloading it only leaves 15 feet between the rear edge of the parking spots in lot 25v on the north side and the loading vehicle. This is functionally, not enough space to exit from one of these permitted spots - you are blocked in. The reason that they will be forced onto Van Buren (which does not have a loading zone) is that the garage door is not of adequate clearance height. The height of the garage door is only 8 feet tall. The lack of vertical clearance of this garage door would exclude even the smaller moving vans from being able to enter the garage structure - this is the case for 10 foot and 15 foot U-Haul and similar company moving vans. These size moving vans are the ones recommended for studio, 1 and 2 bedroom apartments per moving companies, which is an accurate representation of the vehicular need of this building for moving purposes based on the types of units proposed. Thus, this building's own tenants would not be able to get their items moved in safely, dryly and easily - not only due to a lack of loading space but also due to the lack of proper vertical door clearance. Thus the petitioners claim that the lack of a loading space is not an issue because tenants could park on Van Buren for this purpose or park in the garage for this purpose is not in fact a viable solution.

This lack of a loading dock will create a regular and consistent traffic and parking problem given the number of units in this building. With 45 units and a typical lease being one year, that is a turnover of 3-4 units per month. This means that every month a total of 6-8 people on average will be moving in and out of this building. So are the neighbors and surrounding area residents to expect that possibly every week this building will create parking and traffic havoc because there is no loading zone?

I also oppose this variance request as a matter of tenant safety. By eliminating the loading zone within the structure this development provides no covered, secure area in which to load and unload. This puts the tenants, contractors and delivery drivers at risk by not having a safe area in which to have vehicles open even for short periods of time without the potential of theft of personal property or the vehicle itself. This also creates a safety hazard for tenants when they will be loading and unloading in inclement weather with ice, snow and rain that not only can damage their personal property but could injure them. This should be of particular concern since Petitioner is describing this building as one where people can age in place - I seriously doubt having elderly people with possible mobility issues being forced to move their belongings outdoors in winter over snow and ice would be considered ideal for aging in place. Additionally, since there are so very few designated parking spots within this building a loading space takes on an even more important need as these tenants will need to use that loading space to unload groceries, dry cleaning, and other everyday essentials before they have to then go and re-park their vehicle several blocks away and walk back.

I ask that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the request by Oak Park Residence Corporation to eliminate the loading zone because it is not viable or safe for the new tenants and the already existing neighbors .

**Please review our slides for further details**

Submitted By: Jeb Metric

Address: 820 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The application submitted by the Petitioner Oak Park Residence Corporation does not meet the Villages's required threshold as the following architectural drawing elements were completely missing.**

I noted that there were several items that per the Village of Oak Park's own Zoning Ordinance sub-sections 5, 6, 7,8 in Article 14, Section I, that were not included in the submitted materials. Therefore, I ask that since these materials were not supplied with the application that these items are required to be submitted and also that the Planning Commission and the public have the chance to examine and study these documents before any recommendations or determinations are made.

1.7.a of the Development Plan states that the site plan should include the location of such features as bike racks, benches, trash receptacles, light poles. The plan only shows the gate at the southwest corner of the building, and the notes would imply that the dumpster would go on the sidewalk on the south side of the building. However, there are no trash receptacles explicitly shown in the application plans. This would be important to make sure that they do not interfere with the public right of way in the alley as commercial dumpsters are rather large. With the 18 inch proposed setback of the building these dumpsters if placed behind the building would protrude into the alleyway. Or if they are going to be kept in this locked area to the south of the proposed development, how are waste management services going to access these trash receptacles if behind locked gates.

When Waste Management was consulted regarding how many and what type of trash receptacles would be needed for a 45 unit apartment building that averaged one bedroom units they recommended the following for once a week service as is standard in this area: between two and four 8 yard dumpsters just for garbage, then an additional one to four 8 yard dumpsters for recycling. This is minimally a need of three, 8 yards dumpsters and as many as eight, 8 yards dumpsters. The eight yard dumpsters do NOT have wheels; therefore, they must be placed along the alleyway, per Waste Management, for access. These dumpsters are 6 feet wide, 7 feet tall and 7 feet long. Even placed on its shorter side of the building, these dumpsters will be protruding 4 and a half feet into an alleyway that is only 16 feet wide to start with,

providing a width of 11 and a half feet of alleyway width to drive in. These 8 yard dumpsters in the way they are designed have to be picked up perpendicularly to the alley which logistically simply won't work per the companies. Thus the only viable option for them that has wheels are 2 yard dumpsters.

If the Petitioner suggests using the smaller 2 yard dumpsters as those are the only ones that have wheels and to put them in the interior setback area, this also causes issues due to the lack of setback against the alleyway of only 1.5 feet. The petitioner would need to accommodate room for anywhere from twelve, 2 yard dumpsters up to thirty two, 2 yard dumpsters. These dumpsters measure 45" deep, 78" wide and 4' tall. Per the Petitioners plan, there is a little more than 50 feet that will be a hard surface on the interior setback headed east from the gate on the west facade. The absolute maximum capacity this allows for is 8 of the 2 yard dumpsters; therefore, not allowing enough room for the all trash & recycling receptacles this building would need per Waste Management. Additionally, for security this is supposed to be a locked, gated area so how would waste services access this area? The alternative again is to have these in the alleyway. How can they not think a dozen to almost three dozen 2 yard dumpsters will not cause vehicular safety issues, pedestrian safety issues? These 2 yard dumpsters if lined up in the alleyway will further block the line of sight for vehicles entering and exiting the parking garage as they will be protruding minimally 27 inches into the alleyway if the dumpster is completely pushed against the building. While 27", over two feet, may not seem like a great protrusion but this again is in an alleyway that is already only 16 feet wide; which is narrower than most alleys in Oak Park. This leaves the driving area for traffic less at 14 feet in this portion of the alleyway.

Petitioner stated in its application that there is indoor bicycle storage, however we did not see anywhere in the plans where that is located. I only saw on page 189 where 6 outdoor loop style bicycle racks were located in the colonnade area along Van Buren. If Petitioner is including interior bicycle storage it is not specifically noted in the architectural floor plans, as required by Section I.7.e. Development Plan, Floor Plans. Per Per table 10-2 of Village of Oak Park codes it indicates the following: For multi-family dwelling the minimum number of required total bicycle parking spaces is 1 per 4 units thus the need for a 45 unit building would be 11 bicycle parking spaces. The percentage of required parking spaces for long term spaces is 80% per the table 10-2. Therefore there should minimally be 9 long term bicycle spaces per the Village of Oak Park codes. The floor plan drawings and information provided include plans for exactly zero bicycle spaces that are in a safe and weatherproof storage area. This building is in violation of Village of Oak Park building code 10.4 D. by not providing any long term, safe and weatherproof storage for bicycles. Also see 10.6 of Village code for further information saying that the long term parking spaces must be shielded from rainfall, snow and inclement weather and specifying their location and design. Seeing as this is supposed to be a building marketed towards individuals that may seek alternative means of transportation it seems irregular that they have provided no indoor bicycle storage as they are supposed to per Village Codes and the application process. Having a couple of bike racks outside, exposed to the elements and adjacent to a street in which snow will be piled up in winter is not adequate per Village of Oak Park Codes nor the Application Submittal Requirements.

The construction plan does not show where the construction vehicles will be parked. In addition, there is no remedy for the 12 permit parked vehicles that will be displaced for over a year while

their spaces are used for material staging sites per page 247 of their application. The plan only shows the entrance/exit points for construction traffic; it does not give the location of where construction vehicles will be parked per required in Section I.7.F. Development Plan

Therefore, I ask that all of these materials are submitted to the Village of Oak Park by the Petitioner. The Petitioner is legally required per the Zoning Ordinance to do this and I ask that no recommendations or decisions are reached until these documents are received and examined by the Planning Commissioners and made available to the Public. **Please see the slides for additional details**

Submitted By: Barbara Metric

Address: 820 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

### **Deficits and inconsistencies within the shadow study performed exhibit the need for a new independent shadow study to be performed**

I request that a new shadow study is performed as the study that was submitted by the Petitioner has several crucial problems. I ask that because David Pope was the Village of Oak Park President a mere 8 years ago that an independent, licensed professional be contracted to perform a new shadow study.

The first crucial issue with the shadow study that was performed is that numerous structures were not located properly and therefore the impact of the shadow from 7 Van Buren was not properly assessed. On page 206 of the application - when looking at this overhead - please note the placement of the neighbors garages (800, 804, 808,) on the 800 block of south Humphrey Ave. These garages are placed so as to appear that they are set back 20-30 feet from the east/rear lot line. This is not the case - most of these garages are set about 5- 7 feet from the lot line, this type of setback was even noted by the Petitioner in their presentation and is reflected in visuals provided in their application. By inappropriately locating these structures on their shadow study, Petitioner is not portraying an accurate effect that this building's shadows will have on adjacent property. Please note the same misrepresentation and inaccuracies apply to the homes on the 700 block of South Humphrey Ave. By pushing these structures further into the property, Petitioner makes it appear as though the shadow from 7 Van Buren does not affect these areas to the degree that they would in actuality. This representation did not just occur once this occurred on page 206, 209- 211, 214-216, 219-221, 224-226, 229-231, 234-236, 239-241 and 244-245.

A second crucial problem with the shadow study performed and submitted is that the proposed building itself is not located properly. If you look closely at the shadow study, you will notice that in multiple graphics provided that the building is not located properly. Please refer to pages 208, 209, 213, 214, 218, 219, 223, 224, 228, 229, 233, 234, 238, 239, 243, 244. There are 5 parking spots shown in these images in front of the 7 Van Buren building. This can not be the case as they are asking to vacate a portion of Van Buren. Therefore, these spaces do not exist. The proposed building would be within the footprint of those 5 parking spaces. Additionally, we can tell that this shadow study is incorrect with this building's placement because the sidewalks to the

East and West of the alley on Van Buren line-up. We know and the Petitioner stated as such that if the 15 feet is vacated that these sidewalks will not align and instead the sidewalk in front and under the proposed 7 Van Buren building will be to the North of the adjacent sidewalk on the other side of the alley. Thus, this building is not located as far north onto Van Buren as it actually will be. The shadow study provided is representing this building as being further away from other structures than it actually will be. Therefore, again the impact of 7 Van Buren can not be accurately assessed with such an egregious error.

Another significant issue with the shadow study is the way in which the graphics of the shadow study are exhibited in the Petitioners application. On pages 240, 241, 242, 243, and 244 of the application containing the graphics of a December 22nd shadow study performed at mid-afternoon, the images are cropped. The graphic actually cuts off some of the shadow - we cannot see the furthest termini of the shadow created by this building at this time nor is it indicated. This is true of the overhead view but also of the subsequent directionally orientated facade renderings.

Therefore, I ask the Plan Commission to require the Petitioner to submit a new shadow study conducted by an independent contractor. The new study must accurately reflect where the nearby structures are placed, where the proposed building itself is located, and with the graphics not cropped but show the shadows to their fullest extent. How can the Plan Commission review the impact of the proposed building without an accurate shadow study? Additionally, in order to differentiate the shadow created strictly by this structure, dashed lines or some other denotation should be made on these graphics to fully explain the shadow effect of this building since they provide no other measurements, details or information. The shadow study provided is riddled with so many errors, mistakes and inaccuracies that it should not be used as a basis in which to make any determinants, and I ask that an independent, new shadow study be conducted before the Plan Commission makes any

**Please see our slides for more information**

Submitted By: Donna Rolf

Address: 712 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**I request that a new shadow study be conducted that includes an hourly study of the shadow.**

**In our shadow study, you can see that the shadows extend much farther than in Petitioner's. Ours does not have all of the necessary dates and times, plus it was based on Petitioner's inaccurate portrayal of how far north its building will extend; yet, you can see the real impact of the building on the neighboring residences is much greater than Petitioner shows in its cropped shadow study. We believe that a shadow study based on the true height and mass of the building at the times I will now discuss will show that the impact on the neighbors is drastic and very detrimental.**

I ask that an hourly shadow study be performed for the proposed development at 7 Van Buren. There is merit in asking for an hourly shadow study, beginning at sunrise and concluding at sunset, to be performed in order to get a better sense of the true shadow impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. This is especially important since the current shadow study provided has so many problems. The precedence for our request was set in previous developments, such as the Albion building, where Tom Bassett-Dilley (the Petitioner's Net-zero, passive house consultant) strongly advocated for the need of hourly shadow studies with developments. Better, more detailed shadow study information is needed to properly assess the amount of shadow this building will cast on multiple single family homes, also on other multi-family residences and a very nearby nationally landmarked park. The same concerns that applied to previous requests for an hourly shadow study that was then required also apply to this development and thus warrant a more detailed study as well. We are simply requesting that the same type of information be required that was asked for and required by other developers when

the public raised concerns. Shouldn't the same burden of proof and application expectations apply to this building as it did to other buildings located in more high profile neighborhoods?

Per the shadow report on page 205 that Oak Park Residence Corporation submitted it stated "On average we experience only 45 full sun days (0 % cloud cover) throughout the year. November through January are the three cloudiest months of the year. For example, during January 2020 we experienced only 27% of total potential sunshine due to cloud cover." However, it is important to note that there are variations in sunshine and shadow - there are more than just full sun i.e. clear and fully cloud days - in meteorological terms there are clear, mostly clear, partly sunny/partly cloudy, mostly cloudy or cloudy. Additionally, it should be noted that the level of cloud cover is measured on a scale of the amount of opaque cloud cover. Even on mostly cloudy days there is still  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the sky condition that is transparent i.e. not opaque cloud cover. This is important because on days with clear, mostly clear, partly sunny and even mostly cloudy, the sun is still observed and felt throughout the day. In Chicago, the average percentage of the sky covered by clouds experiences significant seasonal variation over the course of the year. The cloudiest month of the year in Chicago is January, during which on average the sky is overcast or mostly cloudy 59% of the time. In the January of 2020 the example cited by the applicant fell outside the average of cloud cover. If the average amount of clear or partly clear days is 41% and January was only 27%, it is not accurate to use this anomalous lack of sunlight as a reason to discount the effect of the amount of shadow that this building will create for the entire winter season. The petitioner's statement that because essentially the winter months are so overcast that the shadow effect is merely perceived is wholly incorrect. There are plenty of days where the skies are not completely opaque with cloud cover in which the shadow effect will be a real issue and problem.

This shadow study provided the absolute bare minimum and, at that, the information produced was inaccurate, misleading and incomplete. We ask that a new shadow study be performed by an independent professional, since the one submitted by the Petitioner is so blatantly inaccurate and that it include an hourly shadow study as was provided by other developers..

Submitted By: Jerry Hellman

Address: 828 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The Mechanicals for this Building are located inappropriately and in violation of Village of Oak Park Code**

I oppose the proposed development at 7 Van Buren as the location of the mechanicals is in violation of the Oak Park Village Zoning code. Additionally, Oak Park Residence Corporation was derelict in requesting a variance of these Village of Oak Park building codes. The architectural and landscaping plans submitted violate Article 14, Section 9. P. 1. a. & b. Which state:

a. Mechanical Equipment is permitted in the interior side or rear yard only.

b. For multi-family and non-residential uses, ground mounted mechanical equipment must be screened from view by a decorative wall or a solid fence that is compatible with the architecture and landscaping of a development site. The wall or fence must be of a height equal to or greater than the height of the mechanical equipment being screened.

As per the plans submitted by Oak Park Residence Corporation there is a mechanical unit located on the SouthEast corner of the lot. This mechanical unit is therefore on the Austin Boulevard side facing a highly trafficked and highly visible area both on foot and by vehicle. As it is close to the South lot line it runs adjacent to the grass area of the neighboring building at 408-410 S.



Austin Blvd (the Poley building). This is in violation of the Village code - it should be located on the west side of the lot adjacent to the alleyway or on the south side of the lot but not near the eastern corner which is considered the front of the lot. The mechanicals, if to be located on the interior side, would be required to be located further west along the south lot line. As it stands the mechanical unit is essentially in the front yard of the building. This will be visible from the Austin Blvd sidewalk and street, from the front yard and east facing windows of the Poley building and highly visible to this building's own tenants with units on the southeast corner of the building as it will be almost directly in front of them.

The mechanical unit is also in violation of Village of Oak Park codes in that no fence or wall is indicated in the plans. There is only plant material indicated around the mechanical unit. Additionally, some of this plant material is not evergreen. It is partly ornamental grass which will not completely block the mechanical unit especially during cool season months, so from October to March at least the mechanicals will be highly visible from Austin Blvd. The way this large seven foot by seven foot mechanical unit is placed will be mere feet from the sidewalk so it will be very hard to miss an obstruction of this magnitude.

The Oak Park Residence Corporation again did not apply for a variance allowance of this Village of Oak Park code which they are in fact violating with this plan. Therefore, I ask that these allowances for variances not be approved as the Petitioner has not shown due diligence in making sure that their proposed development is in accordance with other Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinances.

Submitted By: Leslie Brown

Address: 800 S. Lyman Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The height definition of this building is portrayed inaccurately**

I oppose the request by Oak Park Residence Corporation for the height variance.. In the proposal and request for variances the Oak Park Residence Corporation has described the building as 6 stories. However, that is an incorrect description based on the true height of the building and the previous judgements made by commissions for the Village of Oak Park. The building as proposed is in truth 7 stories tall. Additionally, the height allowance being asked for is 71.85 feet. The top of the structure of this building (not including the PV panels) is actually 83 feet 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches. Therefore, the application by the petitioner for a height variation should reflect a request to build to 83 feet, 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches.

In a past Village of Oak Park Historic Preservation Committee meeting, former Commissioner David Sokol wanted to know if the plan on a proposed development on Washington Boulevard by Ambrosia Homes would have roof access for residents. Roof access would require a small rooftop lobby and an elevator that goes all the way to the top, as was stated by the developer of that building Tim Pomaville. Those additions would have changed the categorization of the building from five-stories to six-stories and required a steel building frame instead of the planned wood frame.

The 7 Van Buren building has rooftop access with an elevator that goes all the way to the top and, in fact, the plan even mentions and markets a rooftop lobby for social gatherings with seating, grills, views - hardly a minimalist roof of just stairs and an elevator . Additionally the construction of this building is also a steel building frame not wood. These are elements that

would then lead to changing the building technically from 6 to 7 stories per the determination by the Village of Oak Park historic commissioners above.

In the market feasibility that Oak Park Residence Corporation supplied as exhibit 8 starting on page 83, the company that they hired, Kretchmer Associates, referred to the building as 7 stories. See page 89 table 2 with the description of the building as a “7 story, glass, metal and brick building”. Their own contracted market evaluators of this building referred to this as a 7 story building.

The east facade on story number 7 of the smooth ironspot brick lends credence that it visually creates a solid wall that is a permanent structure, therefore reaching the height of 7 stories not 6. Also the southern facade of the proposed building is such that it visually appears as another floor. It is composed of an opaque, continuous run of solar panels without interruption. These vertical beams onto which the solar panels are attached certainly do not appear to be temporary. Thus, this wall is not a temporary or removable one. This is a permanent solid wall facade on the entire southern facade and lends credence to our assertion that this is truly a 7 story building.

Concerning the building height the following Oak Park zoning ordinances excerpts help determine if the roof top plan as presented would be assessed as contributing to a buildings height (i.e. a floor of a building).

In Article 14, Section 2.4 D. Rules of Measurement , item 3 regarding Height Encroachments States that the following structures or parts thereof are exempt from the height limitations of the districts if they are 25% or less of the total floor area of the roof footprint. Part c states that building appurtenances, necessary mechanical appurtenances are exempt.

However, from the rooftop plan this is not just a strictly mechanical area containing the elevator and a set of stairs. There is in fact a sizable vestibule or lobby area which then leads out to outdoor entertainment decks, benches and seating areas.

It was determined from the project development drawings that the rooftop gathering area and walkway to the northwest staircase takes up around 1285 square feet of area, which is 19.9% of the rooftop. If the landscape area is to be included in the calculation, the 25% would be exceeded. The project development plans show an additional rooftop patio area, which would get the numbers up to almost 50%. This rooftop plan must and should be clarified. This is intended as an auxiliary entertainment and living space so there should be dimensions provided. Per I.7.E. Of the zoning ordinance Development Plan.

A dimensional floor plan is required to determine compliance with the ‘less than 25%’ rule.

Additionally, when calculating the less than 25% rule the structure and the solar panels certainly exceed 25% of the roof footprint. They are, in fact, an appurtenance. Because an appurtenance is considered part of the property, it passes to a new owner upon sale or transfer of the property. While one can remove the individual solar panels, the supporting steel structure itself is permanently attached to and indeed part of the building structure.

Another relevant section of the Zoning Ordinance is p. 9-12 section that pertains to roof-mounted solar panels and building height. Section .3 Accessory Structures and Uses, Part U “Solar Panels” states that on flat roofed buildings over 40 feet in height, the roof-mounted solar panel system is limited to 15 feet above the height of such a structure. The solar panels on this proposed building are supported directly on a very high steel structure and are not directly roof mounted. Therefore, the steel structure is an appurtenance exceeding 25% of the roof footprint and represents an encroachment not in compliance with the zoning ordinance.

Therefore, Oak Park Residence Corporations plan calling this a 6-story building is patently incorrect by the Village of Oak Park’s own definition and past determinations of other proposed developments. I oppose the request for height variation by the petition as the very terms by which they describe this building are untrue and misleading. We request that the description of this building be corrected on all documentation from 6 stories to 7 stories and that the height listed for this building be corrected to reflect 83 feet 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches, which does not include the actual solar, but panels only the steel structural system that is integrated into the very design of the building. This is a 7 story building - as corroborated by zoning ordinances, previous judgements by commissioners and the developer’s own marketing team. **Please see our slides for more details**

Submitted By: Julie Samuels

Address: 613 S. Lombard Ave., Oak Park, IL

### **An increase of the Maximum Lot Coverage will prove problematic in managing water run-off.**

I request that the variation by the petitioner to increase the maximum building coverage from 70 to 85.17% be denied by the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners. I ask that it be denied because increasing the maximum lot coverage will result in problems managing water run-off.

In the past few years, managing and controlling the amount of water runoff from properties has become a top priority. As new housing and commercial developments are built, water can no longer be absorbed and flooding issues increase. In an effort to control water runoff and protect private property from upstream water flow, governments at all levels have instituted stormwater management practices including Oak Park. At the local level, each residential lot has a Maximum Lot Coverage, expressed as a percentage, which represents the maximum percentage of impervious surface allowed on a particular lot. Maximum Lot Coverage is computed as the total amount of impervious surface on the lot divided by the total lot area. Impervious surfaces on a lot include, but are not limited to, building driveways, garage, porches, patios, private walks, accessory building, and any other impervious surfaces constructed on the lots. In this proposed development at 7 Van Buren the impervious surface would be increased with this proposed building. By increasing the amount of maximum building coverage it provides less permeable surface area to help mitigate water run off and to help manage in controlling water flow and flooding. By taking up more of the lot with the proposed building there will be less soft permeable surface to help absorb the water and thus prevent flooding issues.

Increasing the maximum lot coverage will also produce a multitude of environmental issues. In creating more impermeable surface area and decreasing permeable surfaces such as soil, and plant materials (trees, shrubs, flowers) this results in less opportunities for the water run-off to be absorbed and for the stormwater run-off to be filtered. Increasing the amount of and less filtered stormwater runoff will result in more contaminated and polluted water entering into our shared water management systems and thus result in less environmentally safe water.

The proposed building at 7 Van Buren will have a much higher water consumption and usage than the current building. There will be 45 units and common areas containing showers, tubs, sinks, dishwashers and washing machines that will all be using water. This significantly increased demand by the building and a greatly increased output of water could overwhelm the current water and sewer system. If the sewer system becomes overwhelmed this will lead to sewer backups into not only this building but any other homes or apartments that share this sewer system. This could mean that not only excess water backing up into basements but also human waste could back up into basement drains - both at this development and to the many surrounding neighbors.

The higher output of water by the proposed development at 7 Van Buren if not supported by the current sewer system could result in neighboring homes and streets being flooded. Yet, the Petitioner has produced no professional evaluation of the impact on the sewer system of the much greater water consumption and output. Additionally, the sewer and water systems under Van Buren are not included in any proposed Capital Development future projects in the Village of Oak Park.

I request that the variance requested by the petitioner to increase the maximum building coverage from 70 to 85.17% be denied. I ask that it be denied because increasing the maximum lot coverage will result in problems managing water run off.

I request that the Planning Commissioners reject the variances requested by the petitioner as they have not provided the necessary studies of the water and sewage systems that would impact the determination of variance requests. We believe that because Mr. Pope was Village President just eight years ago, that these studies must be performed by an independent, outside, licensed Professional Engineer, in order to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

**Please see the slides provided for more details**

Submitted By: Susan Gilchrist  
Address: 808 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The building would negatively affect surrounding historic landmarks**

I request that the Oak Park Planning Commissioners reject the request by the petitioners to allow an increase in height from 45 feet to over 83 feet. I ask that this request be denied because the proposed building at 7 Van Buren will negatively impact one surrounding and one adjacent historic building in an area that does not have a preponderance of historic landmarks.

There are 64 Oak Park historic landmarks. This proposed building would negatively affect two of them, one being the Poley Building next door, which is an historic landmark. The Poley Building is only one of 2 buildings designated as a historic landmark on Austin Blvd from Roosevelt Road to North Avenue. The second building is the Dorothy Manor Building a few buildings south at 424-426 S. Austin Blvd. That building will also be impacted although less so by this new development.

The Poley building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. was designed by architect Charles Kristen. Hopefully, you all saw the wonderful article about this important architect in the Wednesday Journal from October 8th. Charles Kristen was an immigrant, an Oak Park resident, and per the article “While many architects were not formally trained at this time, Kristen was the real deal. He had education, training and was a member of architectural associations.” Charles Kristen was described as “a serious architect” by Frank Lipo the Executive Director of the Oak Park Historical Society. Charles Kristens’s design at 408 S. Austin Blvd., the Poley Building, was billed in the press as a “sumptuous” apartment building in 1929. Former Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission Chairman Christopher Payne shared photos of Kristen’s work on the Preservation Oak Park Facebook page and says Kristen wasn’t known for one specific style, but that his ability to work in many styles produced a lot of homes worthy of esteem.

“This is one of those stories that’s not told enough,” Lipo said. “It’s so easy to focus on the big, celebrated architects, but every generation, there’s a lot of individually talented architects here. The cumulative sum of all of these houses is greater than just one design. ... Even without superstar status, the whole body of work makes it interesting.” Not every building worth protecting in Oak Park is by Frank Lloyd Wright - there are other architects such as Charles Kristen who lived, worked and created beautiful noteworthy structures in this Village that should be protected the same as a Lloyd Wright structure.

The Poley Building is only one of four historic landmarks in the entire area from Roosevelt Road to North Ave and from Austin to Ridgeland. That equates to only 6% of all historical landmarked buildings within the Village of Oak Park lie within the boundaries of Austin Blvd. to Ridgeland Ave., and Roosevelt Road to North Ave. Given that there are 64 historically landmarked structures in Oak Park, having only 4 in this entire area demonstrates why we must protect this building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. from insensitive development. Of the four structures that are historically landmarked in this area, only two are apartment buildings, including this one, and two are single family homes. Thus, there is not an abundance of buildings in this area with historic landmark designation. If this building with landmark status cannot be protected in our neighborhood what building can be? Would this building be allowed next to a Frank Lloyd Wright Building or a Gunderson Home in another part of Oak Park?

Of the 64 buildings given historic landmark status in Oak Park, only five seem to be apartment buildings. Three of them are much more central to downtown Oak Park. The Poley building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. falls into the minority as a historic landmark as the type of structure it is, i.e., apartment building vs single family dwelling, in its location on Austin Blvd. and in the East/Southeast quadrant of Oak Park. A letter by the stakeholders committee that was part of the 2003 U of I Plan document said that “We seek, furthermore, to preserve existing notable architecture and make sure future development is compatible with it. We want to channel future growth and development in ways that are in keeping with the above even as they revitalize and introduce new elements into the district.”

On page 59 in the Envision Oak Park document it states that “Oak Park enjoys a far-reaching reputation for architecture and design. Village government should ensure that historic development is properly preserved, and new development appropriately complements the existing character of the community. This guideline document from 2015 in section 4.2.1 says that supporting the preservation of historical and architectural heritage can be accomplished in part with sensitive development practices. We ask that this proposed development be sensitive to the historically landmarked building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. as recommended in the Envision Oak Park document. This should carry weight as page 22 of this same guideline noted that “The history and character of Oak Park was cited by participants as one of the community’s most important assets & that Historic Preservation Participants identified historic preservation as an important issue and a value that makes Oak Park unique. Many residents mentioned the need to ensure that historic structures are maintained and rehabilitated in order to preserve the character of neighborhoods and commercial districts.”

I ask for the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners to reject the request of the petitioner to increase the height above the zoning requirement as it will impact two historically landmarked buildings in an area that is vastly underrepresented with historic landmarked buildings. The Oak

Park Historic Preservation Ordinance states that the purpose of this article is to “preserve, protect and enhance the distinctive historic and architectural heritage of Oak Park..” Allowing this development to be built as proposed would fly in direct opposition of the stated purpose of the historic preservation ordinance and with multiple stated purposes of the Village of Oak Park zoning ordinances and other guideline documents.

**Please see our slides for further details**

Submitted By: Jeanne McCoy

Address: 805 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**Requests for variances for the proposed building result in a building that is out of scale in relation to 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. and violate the Historic Preservation Ordinances, and the intent of the 2003 U of I document.**

I request that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the requests for variances by the petitioners in relation to the dimensional standards. The sum total of these requested variances will greatly increase the overall size, scale and mass of the proposed building at 7 Van Buren. The effect of this is that the proposed building will be grossly out of scale in relation to the historic building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. and will be built in a manner that is not within keeping of Historic Preservation Ordinances.

Specifically, there are concerns regarding the following Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinances. 7.9-12.9 that states: The historic and architectural integrity of the property and its environment shall be protected by making the new work compatible with the existing structures, surrounding structures, whenever one or more of these elements is affected by such work, with respect to the following design criteria:

g. The scale of the proposed structure.

The scale of the proposed structure at 7 Van Buren is incompatible with the adjacent historically landmarked building and nearby structures as well. By allowing variances for the increasing in maximum building coverage from 70% to 85.17% and by allowing a decrease in lot area from 35,100 square feet to 11,085 feet it, the proposed building will be overwhelming in its scale relative to any other nearby building. It will be a domineering looming structure with this scale to the historic Poley building and others in the area.



The 2003 U of I Plan vision statement “The scale and character of the neighborhood’s buildings and landscaping should maintain strong continuity with the rich historical and architectural traditions of Oak Park.” We believe that this proposed development is out of scale with the surrounding area and therefore does not maintain the continuity of the rich architectural traditions of Oak Park, especially the two historically landmarked buildings within 500 feet of this site. See page 21 for this vision statement.

Overall the purpose of these zoning ordinances was to help provide consistency and congruence of buildings within a neighborhood and area. If the purpose of the Village Ordinances is to make sure that new developments fit within the context of the neighborhood and area, the variances requested by the petitioner are in direct conflict with this purpose. Oak Park Residence Corporation is asking for variances that put the proposed building far outside the scale of Austin Blvd., Humphrey Avenue or Van Buren street. The sum total of these requested variances will greatly increase the overall size, scale and mass of the proposed building at 7 Van Buren.

I request that the Planning Commission deny the Petitioner’s requests for variances because this building does not meet the reasonableness standards to which it must conform. Also, the building is not in keeping with the character of this residential area because of its disproportionate, out of scale dimensions. A neighbor aptly described this situation as trying to squeeze a size 12 foot in a size 6 shoe.

Therefore I ask that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the requests for variances by the petitioners in relation to the dimensional standards. The net effect of these variances will be a building vastly out of scale in relation to the historic building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. and will be built in a manner that is not within keeping of Historic Preservation Ordinances nor the ideas of the 2003 U of I Plan.

Submitted By: Justin Dossiea

Address: 408 S. Austin Blvd., Oak Park, IL

**The proposed development violates the rights of neighbors at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. to adequate privacy and light.**

**Please see our attached slides**

There is great concern about the lack of privacy and the lack of natural daylight the proposed development will cause to the neighbors at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. due to the request to decrease the minimum interior setback from 9.05 feet to 8.30 feet and the request to increase the height from 45 feet to 83 feet 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches. I ask that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commission reject the request by the petitioner for the variances asked. Specifically, I request that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commission deny the allowances to decrease the minimum interior side setback from 9.05 feet to 8.30 feet and to increase the height from 45 feet to 83 feet, 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches.

The Village of Oak Park's own statement as to the purpose of the zoning ordinance in section 1.2 item B is to "To secure adequate light, air, privacy and convenience of access to property". Additionally, in section 7.1.C. it states that it is for "Protecting property rights and values by balancing the rights of landowners to use and improve their land with the corresponding rights of abutting and neighboring landowners to enjoy their property". Also 7.3.1.g states that "Design review applications must consider the following and demonstrate that these were considered...The location, arrangement, size, design and general site compatibility of structures and site elements to ensure...Compatibility with, and mitigation of, any potential impact on adjacent properties." One of the significant purposes of the zoning ordinance is to secure adequate light for one's property, allow homeowners to enjoy their property and that any

proposed structures should be compatible with any adjacent properties. The building at 7 Van Buren is not consistent with any of those stated goals.

The lack of privacy that this development will cause the direct neighbors at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. is significant. As stated above there are 10 windows per each unit that have northern exposure. The proposed development shows balconies and windows that will overlook these four units at a distance of eight feet away. These new neighbors will be looking into their dining room during dinner hour or birthday parties or anniversary celebrations, into their bathrooms while brushing their teeth or bathing their children, into their bedroom while they read at the end of the day, iron their shirts and get dressed for work in the morning and as they tuck in their children at naptime or bedtime. These are all of our precious private spaces. From the moment the residents of the Poley building wake up till the moment they fall asleep their privacy will be invaded. With this new proposed development the Poley building residents can reach out and literally touch their neighbors - this is not what was existing when they purchased their homes, nor should it be expected to have their privacy utterly violated and to have their lives upended by an insensitive, unthoughtful proposed development.

A primary concern is the extreme decrease of natural light to 408-410 S. Austin Blvd that would be caused by the increased height of the proposed adjacent building. The building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd has 4 units composed of a garden level and then the 1st thru 3rd floors. Each unit on the first thru third floor has 17 windows in their unit. Of that number 10 windows per each apartment, for a total of 30 windows, are on the north facade of the building and would be completely blocked or obscured by this building. That is 60% of all available natural light being blocked significantly. This does not include the garden unit whose situation is even worse. The owner of the garden unit will be plunged into darkness. The garden unit only has three East facing windows all the remaining windows face north - all of which will be completely and utterly blocked and all natural light exterminated. The rooms of the first-third floor units of 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. that would have their light blocked in these units include the following: 2 of 3 bedrooms, both (2) bathrooms, and the dining room. This development will block out light to virtually every room of this unit with the exception of one bedroom, living room and kitchen.

The proposed building will tower over the existing structure of 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. by 4 stories. This is a significant height differential that will severely affect the light into the adjacent building. Each story of the building will have more and more of the natural light blocked the closer to ground level due to the overly tall height of the proposed building and the close proximity. This severe decrease of natural light is directly related to the request to increase the height from 45 feet to 71.85 feet, which should truly be defined as 83 feet, 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches. I also ask that the request by the petitioner for the variations to decrease the minimum interior side setback from 9.05 feet to 8.03 feet be denied. Not only would the neighbors' right to privacy be violated but their rights to enjoy their property would be superseded by this development if the petitioner is allowed to build as proposed. Lastly, the plan for this building has demonstrated again that the Petitioner has not seriously considered its impact on adjacent properties. All of these points would be in direct conflict with the purpose of the Village of Oak Parks zoning ordinance.

Submitted By: Jane Campbell  
Address: 800 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The proposed development violates the rights of neighbors on the 700 and 800 block of South Humphrey Avenue to adequate light, air and privacy.**

Article 14, section 1.2-b of Village of Oak Park's zoning ordinance states that some of the purposes of the zoning ordinance are "To secure adequate light, air, privacy and convenience of access to property". Additionally Article 14, section 7.1.C. of the document states that it is "Protecting property rights and values by balancing the rights of landowners to use and improve their land with the corresponding rights of abutting and neighboring landowners to enjoy their property". Also Article 14, section 7.3.1.g states that "Design review applications must consider the following and demonstrate that these were considered...The location, arrangement, size, design and general site compatibility of structures and site elements to ensure...Compatibility with, and mitigation of, any potential impact on adjacent properties."

The neighbors to the west of the proposed development will be affected by this building as it pertains to light and privacy. The rear rooms and the backyards of two houses on the 800 block of South Humphrey will have their privacy greatly impacted. These homeowners will have people looking into their rear bedrooms, living areas, kitchens, etc. and be able to see every action of these homeowners in their own backyard. Every backyard bbq, dog bathroom trip while standing in a robe, gardening work, grandchild visit, and time outside will be observed,

witnessed and on display for the residents of the new development. This is a direct violation of these residents' privacy.

Additionally, the residents of these areas will also have the natural sunlight diminished by the new development towering seven stories over them. This new tall structure will impact award winning gardens that have been featured in magazines, newspapers and in numerous Oak Park Garden walks. Gardens that have been planned and landscaped to include natives and pollinators, all of which are important to the micro and macro ecosystem, would be decimated by not having natural sunlight. These are homes that the Village of Oak Park have given Cavalcade of Pride awards to, homes and gardens in which tens of thousands of dollars have been invested, only to have them devalued by this new structure. We believe that the petitioner's request to decrease the minimum rear setback from 24.5 feet to 1.5 feet should be denied. The alleyway is only 15 feet and 6 inches wide. Thus, if this building was built at a rear setback of 1.5 feet, it would be only 17 feet away from the lot line of the homes at 800 S. Humphrey Avenue and 804 S. Humphrey Ave.

These single family homeowners have a garage apron depth of 6 feet 9 inches. This would mean that anyone entering or exiting their garage behind this building will have very little room in which to maneuver out of their garages and into the alleyway. This would especially be true in winter when snowfall amounts decrease the maneuverability even further. The nearby and adjacent multi-story apartment buildings all have far greater garage rear setbacks with than 1.5 feet.

Lastly, the proximity, height and scale of the proposed building at 7 Van Buren will disrupt the neighbors future land and structure use. This building will create noticeable and definite shadow effects on adjacent properties. As such, they will not be able to use their properties as they legally should be able to. They will not be able to install solar panels on their own garages for such purposes as charging electric vehicles, thus decreasing this area's ability to contribute to sustainable infrastructure and environmentally friendly practices. This is not out of line with what is already occurring and future needs/wants in the neighborhood with rooftop solar panels having already been installed or planned for some of the single family homes.

Also this puts the tenants of 7 Van Buren out on the west facade balconies looking down into these neighbors backyards at a distance of only 17 - 23 feet away- this is highly invasive of their privacy. Not only would the neighbors' right to light, air and privacy be violated but their rights to enjoy their property would be impacted by this development. Lastly, the Petitioner has demonstrated again that it has not seriously considered its impact on adjacent properties by not performing the honest light, wind & shadow studies that should be expected.

**Please see our attached slides for more information**

Submitted By: Frank Vozak  
Address: 804 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The development as proposed violates the existing homeowners' rights to conserve the value of their property.**

I ask that the petitioner's request for a variance to decrease the minimum rear setback from 24.5 feet to 1.5 feet and to reduce the interior setback from 9.05 feet to 8.30 feet should be denied. One of the purposes of the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance is to conserve the values of the properties throughout the village. That is stated in Article 14, sections 1.2 E & 7.1.A of the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, in the Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 7-9-1. B. it states that the purpose of this article is to promote the general welfare of Oak Park by "Conserving and improving the value of properties designated as historic landmarks". Allowing the proposed development to be built closer to existing structures and of a far greater height than current Village of Oak Park codes allow would negatively impact the home value of the surrounding properties but especially for the residents of the adjacent 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. that should be a protected Historically landmarked building. The owners bought their units with knowledge of a low slung two story building existing, built on the far opposite end of the plot to the north of them. It blocks very little light to the Poley building because of the way it is situated and does not impede on their privacy (as the area closest to 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. is

ground level parking). The building being proposed at 7 Van Buren is drastically different; it would be possibly 8 feet away from them, tower over their building at two times its height and run almost to the end of the rear lot line. It would drastically affect their access to natural daylight, air and privacy, all of which would negatively affect the values of their homes. The neighbors to the west of the proposed development of 7 Van Buren on the 800 block of Humphrey Avenue would also have their home values negatively impacted. Again with the building allowance requested of the rear setback be 1.5 feet, it would be overly close to their garages, backyards and homes and with the height of over 83 feet would be a domineering visual presence creating a whole host of issues. It would dramatically decrease the privacy in their homes and yards. It would also prevent them from buying electric cars and installing the requisite solar panels for the electric charging station. All of these negatives will depreciate their home resale values..

If the petitioner is allowed to build as proposed the adjacent and nearby homeowners will have their home values negatively impacted which goes against the written purpose of Village of Oak Park zoning ordinances and the Oak Park Preservation

Submitted By: Amanda Austin

Address: 746 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The request by the petitioner for an allowance to vacate the Van Buren right of way is completely without precedence or merit and would be incongruent with the character of the surrounding structures and area.**

I ask that the Planning Commissioners for the Village of Oak Park deny the request by the petitioner for the allowance to vacate the Van Buren right of way. I ask that they deny this because no other building has ever been granted these exemptions, and it would not maintain the character of the neighborhood .

The request for this allowance is asking to build not only on and over the public sidewalk but to build the development even further over and onto where the street currently is. There is a zoning ordinance that requires the minimum setback from the lot line along this North lot line. This building is not only exceeding the required setback, but the Petitioner is asking to build beyond their lotline and onto the public sidewalk and street. The lack of easement on the north facade per the proposed design is in violation of current Village of Oak Park code and infringes on public space.

A freedom of information act was filed with the Village of Oak Park to see if any other buildings or developments were given allowance to build over an existing sidewalk and to vacate a public street so they could build over it. The response was that no records were found and to the best of our knowledge and research no development or building has been granted permission to build on and over the public sidewalk and street. There is no historical precedent for this type of allowance. Additionally, there are no buildings in the area that have been built over and above the public sidewalk or street. The design to build over and above the street and sidewalk is incongruous with any other buildings in the area and allowing this type of building would run counter to the Village of Oak Parks zoning ordinance that states the purpose of the document is to “ promote the orderly development of Oak Park in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan” see Art. 14, Section 1.2.C.

The proposed development is not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood - no buildings in the area on Humphrey, Austin, Harrison, or Jackson are built on public access sidewalks or streets. This is not an architectural feature found on any buildings in the area. There are no buildings in this neighborhood that are built on and above the public sidewalks. There are no buildings in the neighborhood that are built on and above the public street. This allowance of variation to build on the sidewalk and street in the Village of Oak Park is NOT found in this neighborhood or area of the Village of Oak Park. The design to build on and above the street and sidewalk is incongruous with any other buildings in the area and allowing this type of building would run counter to the Oak Park Village Zoning Ordinance that states its purpose is to “ To protect the character and maintain the stability of the Village’s residential and non-residential areas" as referenced in Art. 14, Section 1.2. D.

Building over public sidewalks and streets is not within keeping in the character of this neighborhood, has no precedence in this area and is simply out of context. Therefore, I ask that the request to vacate 15 feet of public property is not granted.

Submitted By: Jim Gilchrist

Address: 808 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**Actions by the Oak Park Residence Corporation at the existing building on 7 Van Buren are not in line with going through this process in a good faith manner. Additionally, the parking as proposed by the Petitioner is inadequate per ADA guidelines, Village Codes and creates a problematic precedence for the Village of Oak Park. Additionally the ask to vacate the public right of way also creates a serious concern in terms of future precedence.**

I served as the Chair for 17 consecutive years in the Village of Oak Park Buildings and Codes Advisory Committee. I believe that no one prior or since has had a longer tenure as a Chair for that committee. Additionally, I am a third generation plumbing and heating contractor in Oak Park dating back to the early 1900’s having worked likely in many of your homes, in many historic homes, nationally landmarked buildings, churches and apartments including multiple Frank Lloyd Wright Homes including the the Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio.

It should be noted that Oak Park Residence Corporation has taken actions at the existing building at 7 Van Buren that demonstrate their bad faith in going through the planning and permit process.



While the building has been vacant for months over the summer and fall of 2021, multiple calls have gone into the Village of Oak Park concerning issues with the existing structure. There is paint peeling from the ceiling on the front walkway that is not addressed nor cleaned up, there is a very deep hole in the parking lot that poses a safety hazard, there is a broken window that is boarded up that has been repeatedly brought to the Villages attention which Oak Park Residence Corporation fails to address.

Perhaps most concerning is the fact that in the beginning of October Oak Park Residence Corporation had the gas meter locked, and then on Wednesday October 27th in the early afternoon NiCor showed up to cut gas service to the building. This is not mere speculation; neighbors had conversations with multiple NiCor employees confirming what the intent of their visit to the building was. Therefore, the gas is unable to be turned on and the building is unable to be heated and the service into the building will literally be cut in the parking lot. The spray paint from NiCor can be observed in the alleyway currently marking the service to be cut. These actions were taken before any meeting with the Planning Commission, in between meetings, before any variances were approved or permits issued. It is hardly in keeping with the spirit of working through this process in good faith with neighbors, the planning commissioners or the Village of Oak Park to sabotage one's own building in this way.

If the building is unheated and winter arrives with freezing temperatures, the plumbing pipes will freeze and crack or burst. This will cause water damage to the floors and walls and will make the plumbing in need of repair. Additionally it has the potential to create a situation in which dangerous mold and mildew could grow and thus create a health and safety hazard for anyone entering the structure and thus rendering it uninhabitable. As a plumbing and heating contractor for nearly 40 years I have in fact worked in this building and I am familiar with this heating system and the highly detrimental impact shutting of this system will have.

It should also be noted that the building at 7 Van Buren is heated via radiant heating in the floors. If the gas meters are not turned on and the heat kept to the minimally required temperature the entire heating system of 7 Van Buren will be irreparably damaged. If the temperature gets too low in these copper pipes used to heat the building they will crack thus rendering the heating system of this building inoperable and perhaps unrepairable depending on the extent of the damage. These cracked radiant heating pipes could potentially leak causing floor and ceiling damage. Again having worked with these very types of systems I am very knowledgeable about the type of damage this will cause.

I request that the building at 7 Van Buren have these issues addressed, that it be properly winterized and the gas meter reconnected and turned on, so that the building is heated and other issues addressed. The current building should not be sabotaged by its owners in order to justify the need to construct a new development. Additionally I ask that this building and its owners follow the proper vacant property procedures per Village of Oak Park Code. This building will soon be vacant for more than 6 months which would then require them to follow the Vacant Property Ordinances. Lastly, it seems not in keeping with the spirit of this process that such steps have been taken without even the complete review or recommendations made by you the Planning Commissioners, any determinations made by the Village of Oak Park Trustees and no applications approved or permits filed.

Additionally, I would like to address the parking or lack of parking proposed at 7 Van Buren. The Petitioner is asking for 17 parking spots for 45 units. However, we need to look at this closer. For a 45 unit per Village Code there should be 45 parking spaces. Of those 45 spaces per ADA guidelines 2 of those should be handicapped parking spaces. In order to have 2 handicapped parking spaces an aisle way will need to be created in order to be in compliance. Therefore, the real count for non-accessible handicap will decrease from 17 to realistically 15 spaces (an additional handicapped space not including possible space lost for the accessible aisleway). Besides that then there is a need for a loading parking space. The Petitioner is asking to have an allowance for variance however, this building perhaps more than any other needs this loading zone due to the lack of on-site tenant parking and distance to basic need stores. Where are all tenants supposed to unload their groceries, supplies and purchases if they don't want to carry them from blocks away where they hope to find on-street parking? That brings the total parking spots down to 15 parking spaces for non-handicapped, non-loading spaces. I am particularly disturbed that this would be allowed in an area that is not located close to grocery stores, pharmacies, etc that are closer to such daily basic needs, the nearest grocery store being about a mile away.

Another important thing that needs to be considered is that this proposed building includes the 5 spaces from lot 25V as part of the building envelope. Those spaces basically are included within this new building envelope. Thus, the true contribution of parking spaces for this proposed structure is only 10 parking spaces for a 45 unit building. This is a rate of 22%. If this plan is recommended and approved, that sets the precedent for all future builders to expect an allowance of only 22% of parking per unit ratio per Village of Oak Park Codes. If they are more centrally located, etc. this will then set the precedence that these future developers should expect an allowance of 22% , however they may feel confident in asking for only 10% or absolutely zero parking. It should be noted that the developers of any future planned buildings located closer to these basic needs will feel justified in requesting an even lower ratio of parking to unit variances.

Briefly, I am also concerned about the Petitioners request for the allowance to vacate 15 feet of public land. This again sets a dangerous precedence in selling public Village of Oak Park land for the exclusive and private use of developers. They are taking public land and selling it to a developer so that they can turn it into a mostly market-rate apartment building. And while it only is 15 feet to the North, it extends approximately 100 feet almost along the entire lot line from east to west. This is not a small ask of vacating public property in relation to the area.

Again if these multiple parking variances and vacate variances are recommended this then sets the precedence for all future builders and developers and a very dangerous one at that. Oak Park Residence Corporation itself owns at least two other properties on Austin Blvd. that are almost identical to the existing building in size, age and location on cul-de-sac streets off of Austin Blvd. An approval of this building will only act as a template for these other structures and for any other developer who wants to build in Oak Park. This proposed building may be our concern currently, but if this precedent is set then for perpetuity any and every architect, developer or planner can ask for variances and has the historical precedent to be awarded the right to build over public sidewalks and streets.

Never in my 17 years have I ever seen such a thing, I am flabbergasted and astounded that this degree of allowances is even being requested. The very purpose of the Village of Oak Park codes

and ordinances are being jeopardized if these allowances are approved. I spent nearly two decades as the Chair of the Building Codes Advisory Committee and with my professional and Village Code expertise do not believe this plan should be recommended and I do not believe these variances should be approved. I ask you to seriously consider the precedence you will be setting for all future buildings if these variances are allowed and the implications it will have to the Village of Oak Park and its residents.

Good evening,

My name is Anna Winters. I am an African American, senior citizen that has been a member of this community for decades with my family. I have lived on the 800 block of South Humphrey Avenue in the same home for over 45 years. I have raised four children here with my husband. We watched them grow up in this great neighborhood, graduating from Oak Park public schools and then returning with their own families. My family has many concerns about the traffic this development will create on this block and surrounding neighborhood. We live close to Harrison and have many reservations about the increased traffic and parking from the proposed structure at 7 Van Buren. I am concerned that the lack of adequate parking at 7 Van Buren will pose safety risks to its tenants and other residents who would have their parking distance from home extended.

I request that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the application by the petitioner to decrease the required parking spaces from 45 to 17. Not having adequate on-site parking places this building's tenants at undue risk.

This area of Oak Park has zero parking garages for a sheltered, all-weather safe area for tenants to park their vehicles. Having a safe, sheltered parking area generally is important for families with children, the elderly, and people with mobility issues. Shoveling out snow with small children would prove challenging both physically and logistically, especially for a single parent household. An older population ( Petitioner spoke of attracting tenants who want to age in place.), or anyone else who might have physical challenges would be disadvantaged by the lack of on site parking.

The lack of adequate parking also creates a very real safety concern for those residents with occupations or jobs that are not the standard 9-5 hours. Many are in healthcare -such as late shift nurses, construction, the food industry, and other careers or jobs that typically work non-standard hours. Therefore, walking distances in the late or early morning hours to get to distant parking spaces does not ensure the safety of residents of 7 Van Buren or of neighboring residents who also would have to walk further because of the increased number of vehicles and lack of available spaces. This puts especially women, members of any minority, LGBTQ plus or the elderly who might be targeted at an increased safety risk unnecessarily. If the development at 7 Van Buren provided adequate parking, its tenants would not be placed in situations that would risk their personal safety. Again, please refer to the Oak Park Police reports from this area to get a sense of activity and frequency of potentially dangerous situations these tenants might face by being forced into these unsafe parking conditions.

I ask that the petitioner NOT receive the variance to reduce the number of parking spots from the required minimum per Village of Oak Park codes of 45 to 17 spaces. Inadequate parking at 7 Van Buren poses a safety risk to its tenants and its neighbors.

Thank you for listening to my concerns,  
Anna Winters

Greetings,

My name is Sarah Hammer. I am a working mom with two little kids (ages 1 and 4) and a dog owner. My husband and I moved to Humphrey Avenue five years ago when I was pregnant with our first child. We moved to this neighborhood because it was a family oriented, safe and friendly, welcoming neighborhood. I am concerned that the preferred LEED certifications are not being pursued by the petitioner.

The Petitioner has said that the PHIUS + 2018 and 2018 + Source Zero requirements that they will be meeting are more rigorous than the preferred Village of Oak Park standard of LEED certification.

It says that they will meet the PHIUS + 2018 requirements and PHIUS + Source Zero. Is the Petitioner not going for the LEED certification which is strongly encouraged by the Village of Oak Park in their own ordinance? These are two very different standards and look and compare very different aspects of building - this is not an apples to apples comparison, this is apples to oranges.

As I understand with Passive Building the goal is to design for climate specific comfort and performance. However, with LEED builders are to design in a way that increases water efficiency, reduces impacts in energy, waste, and looks at the materials and resources used among others assessed items.

Nor does one preclude the other. Additionally, if I am understanding correctly the developer could actually use some of their Passive House features to earn a credit towards an LEED certification - so why would they not do that?

LEED certification is the preferred method by the Village of Oak Park so why is this not being used? This is perplexing to me since other LEED buildings, including a park district building which was designed by Tom Basset - Dilley, that have been built in Oak Park have been applauded, awarded and advertised as receiving prestigious, rare and highly regarded LEED certifications. If this is the golden standard that other Petitioner's are held to and lauded for, why should this also not be the standard for 7 Van Buren?

Thank you,

Ms. Sarah Hammer

Hello,

My name is Cori McMillan. My husband Jeremy and I moved to Oak Park from Chicago this summer with our child. We moved to this area because it was a friendly, progressive neighborhood. As a multiracial family, racial diversity is extremely important to us. We felt most at home in the Harrison Arts District. We worked from home during the pandemic and got to meet many of our neighbors while out on walk with our child and dog. We were astonished to learn that a 7 story building was to be erected down our block. We have seen this type of construction happen before at our previous street and it caused a great deal of congestion and new problems. We currently live happily right next to a condo building - but it is 3 stories high, not 7! I am concerned because The petitioner's application does not show the true distance between buildings nor does it properly apply for variance.

I oppose the petitioner's request for variance to decrease the minimum interior setback. I oppose this because the Petitioner Has not submitted enough detail about the solar panel installation to determine the true distance between the buildings, and further information needs to be provided by the petitioner.

It should be noted that the architectural plans do not show how close the proposed building would be to 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. after the wall mounted solar panels are installed. The plans only reflect the distance between 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. and 7 Van Buren prior to the wall mounted solar being installed. The plans reflect the distance between the building material walls. This is of great concern as the Village of Oak Park codes allow for wall panel solar units to project from a building up to two feet from the exterior of the building. This means that once the solar panels are installed on the proposed building, the distance between these two structures could in reality be only a distance of 6.30 feet. If the true distance between the buildings after the wall mounted solar panels are installed is less than 8.30 feet, the application for a variation needs to be corrected to show that the petitioner is seeking to decrease the interior setback from 9.05 feet to as little as 6.30 feet. Since the Petitioner is already asking for an allowance on the requested interior setback we need to be doubly sure that the request is correct. When the initial plans for a distance of 8.3 feet are already creating much concern we need to make sure that the true distance is not even smaller and even more detrimental to the owners of 408-410 S. Austin Blvd.

I ask you to deny the request to decrease the interior side setback from 9.05 feet to 8.3 feet. I also ask that the Planning Commissioners request that the applicant submit a more detailed architectural plan in regards to the installation of the solar panels on the southern facade. I ask that before any recommendations or determinations are made that these materials are submitted and reviewed by the Planning Commissioners and made available to the public.

Thank you for your time,

Cori McMillan

Good evening,

My name is Susan Matta. My husband and I have lived on the 800 block of S. Humphrey for nearly 20 years. My husband was born and raised in Oak Park and after spending time in other suburbs we moved back to Oak Park. I have many concerns with the proposed development at 7 Van Buren however I am raising my voice tonight to speak about how the request to vacate a portion of the Van Buren right of way abutting the subject property will restrict the Village of Oak Parks future street and sidewalk planning.

I oppose the request by the petitioner Oak Park Residence Corporation for an allowance to vacate a portion of Van Buren right of way as it will limit future street and sidewalk plans or projects. I request that they deny this request.

This requested variance to vacate a portion of the Van Buren right of way will decrease the overall width of Van Buren from the alleyway between Humphrey Avenue and Austin Blvd to the cul-de-sac. Narrowing the width of Van Buren with this variance allowance would restrict any future street plans or changes. The street of Van Buren would no longer be wide enough to open up the cul-de-sac in the future and allow access to or from Austin Blvd.

Also this requested variance would result in a change of the Van Buren sidewalk alignment. The building as proposed would be built on and over the existing sidewalk thus pushing the proposed sidewalk corridor area out into the existing street where the parking spaces currently exist. Therefore, the sidewalk spanning from the alleyway to Austin Boulevard will not align with the public sidewalk that runs to the west from the alley to Humphrey Avenue and beyond heading west.

There has been no information provided as to what type of sidewalk designs or features will be made to help connect these two disparate misaligned areas. This is important not only for aesthetics of the neighborhood but also more importantly to ensure the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists using this well trafficked sidewalk.

I oppose the request by the petitioner Oak Park Residence Corporation for an allowance to vacate a portion of Van Buren right of way as it will limit future street and sidewalk plans or projects. I request that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the petitioner's request.

Thank you for your attention. Sincerely,

Susan Mattas





Good evening. My name is Terrie Rymer, and I am a retired public interest attorney. I have lived at 804 S. Humphrey for more than 35 years. We bought this home because we wanted to live on a diverse, multi-cultural block located in a diverse, multi-cultural neighborhood.

I would like to thank the chair for your thoughtfulness in postponing the remainder of this hearing to this evening.

I commend Res. Corp. for their aspirations to create a net zero building and to include affordable housing in a new, market rate apartment building, but the building does not fit on this site and will cause harm to its neighbors.

Res. Corp.'s many requests for significant variances plus its request that the Village vacate municipal property are unprecedented and so extreme as to constitute "spot zoning." Spot zoning occurs when a small area is zoned differently from the surrounding area. Illinois courts traditionally find spot zoning to be invalid. See *Concerned Citizens for McHenry, Inc. v. City of McHenry*, 76 Ill.App3d 798, 395 N.E.2d 944, 32 Ill.Dec. 563 (2d Dist. 1979); *Bennett v. City of Chicago*, 24 Ill.2d 270, 181 N.E.2d 270, 181 N.E.2d 96, 98 (1962); *Thomber v. Village of North Barrington*, 321 Ill.App.3d 318, 747 N.E.2d 513, 254 Ill.Dec. 473 (2d Dist. 2001).

**The tail is wagging the dog**, as the justification for a 15 foot raised level of solar panels, the refusal to change the height of the building and to **set back** the upper floors of the building are all based on **the alleged requirements for ICECF funding. Res. Corp. is asking the Plan Commission to approve allowances that will allow a building that is out of proportion to the neighborhood and will cause harm to its neighbors in order to obtain the ICECF funding. But it is Res. Corp.'s choice to pursue this funding.**

The pursuit of net zero energy funding should not be allowed to serve as a compensating benefit for significant allowances in building height, massing and setbacks. A building may achieve LEED certification without needing these allowances.

Res. Corp.'s description of this project as the largest Net Zero multi-family apartment building in the upper Midwest goes to demonstrate that this building is too large for this site. Building the largest Net Zero building in the Upper Midwest on this lot is like trying to squeeze a size 11 foot into a size 7 shoe. The mission of Res. Corp. is to provide quality affordable housing and mixed income housing, not to build the largest Net Zero multi family apartment building in the upper Midwest.

I ask the Plan Commission to view the proposed Garfield Green affordable housing project by the Preservation of Affordable Housing group located at Kedzie and Fifth in Chicago. It is also a Net Zero energy and passive house certified design, with the same mechanical engineer being used by Res.. Corp. Rather than claiming to be the largest Net Zero multi family apartment building in the Upper Midwest, a claim that has no relevance, this project is designed to be an appropriate fit within the scale of its location.

I am perplexed by the Petitioner's discussion of its need for an enormous rooftop solar array for Net Zero energy, a primary driver of the building height and massing; **yet, Petitioner downplays the amount of available sunlight in order to minimize the effect of shadows cast by that very same rooftop solar array on the neighboring properties.**

The developers of the two buildings on Madison Street agreed to setbacks and to move the garage entry, but Res.Corp. has stated it will make no changes to accommodate the very real concerns of the neighbors.

I would like to address one of Res. Corp.'s drawings that shows a crosswalk in front of the building into Columbus Park. There is no crosswalk, and petitioner makes no mention in its documents of any plan to work with Chicago and Oak Park to have one installed.

Also, Res. Corp.'s statement that the use of Chicago common brick on the sides of the Poley building indicates that the builder expected another

apartment building to be erected in very close proximity is incorrect. Chicago common brick was widely used on the side and rear facades of buildings because it was economical. There are plenty examples of Brick two-flats and single family homes with Chicago common brick on three sides that were sited in the middle of their lots and were never intended to have another building close to them. I refer the Commissioners to 808 S. Humphrey as an example.

The Illinois courts review the constitutionality of a zoning decision in the context of the eight LaSalle/Sinclair factors. *LaSalle National Bank of Chicago v. Village of Richton Park*, 19 Ill.2d 370 (1960). The existing use and zoning of nearby properties and the diminishment of property values of nearby properties are the two factors of greatest import. Some of the objectors will address the use and zoning of nearby properties as well as the loss in property values the neighbors will incur.

Finally, the Illinois Supreme Court has held that there is a presumption of validity in favor of the zoning ordinance as written. The burden is on the Petitioner requesting the zoning variances to overcome this presumption by clear and convincing evidence, a very high standard, and to show that the zoning ordinance is without reasonable relation to the public health, safety, and welfare. *Urann v. Village of Hinsdale*, 30 Ill.2d 170, 195 N.E.2d 643 (1964). Res. Corp. does not come close to meeting that burden.

I have provided citations for the legal references in the written copy of my statement.

Thank you for your attention.

Submitted By: Amber Gray

408 S. Austin Blvd. Oak Park, IL

**This proposed development is NOT in a TOD (transit orientated development) zone/area per the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance passed by the Village in 2019 and therefore is not a TOD building.**

**Please see our slides for further information**

The Petitioner referred to this building is a TOD building or is in a TOD district. A TOD is a transit orientated development. Per Article 5, The Inclusionary Housing Ordinance in the Village of Park, Chapter 12, section 5, item 2 that was passed in 2019, it states “TOD Area: The area that has the designation for an identified Chicago Transit Authority or Metra train station located in the Village and within a quarter of a mile from any applicable train station to located contiguous to Madison Street west of Lombard Avenue, EXCLUDING the Austin Blvd. Blue line train station and the Austin Blvd. Green line transit station....”

Again, this ordinance that was passed in the spring of 2019 by the Village of Oak Park explicitly and expressly excludes this area from being a TOD area - this is NOT a TOD building as this is NOT a TOD area.

The 2003 U of I Plan expressly states that it is a guideline - not a standard. should not function as a standard and should not define rules about the design and use of specific features of the building environment. The village code applicable to TOD areas is the standard. This neighborhood is NOT a TOD area.

As part of the presumption that this was a TOD area which it is NOT, the petitioner discussed other modes of transportation to justify the lack of parking provided. However, there are problematic issues in the petitioner’s justifications for the lack of parking.

One of these problematic justifications is the assumption on their part that all trips in Chicago can or should be made via public transit exclusively, no matter how frequent or reliable. That is not realistic. It should be noted that the Blue line “L” station at Austin Blvd. is not handicap accessible and there are physical obstacles to reaching this station. This would be especially concerning seeing as this development is being marketed in part as an aging in place development.

The petitioner also stated that there was easy access to other modes of transportation such as nearby Divvy bike stations, Zipcars, ride-sharing services, rental cars, etc. However, this is not the case.

The nearest Divvy Bike station is located at Madison & Austin Blvd. which is nearly a half mile away, the next closest is a mile away at Lake Street & Austin Blvd.

In their application, Petitioner stated that the closest car rental agency is ½ mile away. However, in our research the closest car rental agency is Avis Car Rental at 414 Madison Street. The distance from 7 Van Buren is .9 miles away - almost a mile, about a 20 minute walk. There is a Hertz rental car at 629 Madison street that is 1.3 miles away, about a 25- 30 minute walk.

The Zipcar location on Taylor near Madison is being promoted as a viable vehicle alternative. First, a ZipCar has a membership fee required in order to to reserve a vehicle in addition to the usage fees, gas fees, etc. Secondly, when we checked the nearest ZipCar site at 438 S. Taylor Avenue (which is a half mile walk away) to see how many zip cars were offered at this location; we found that there is only one zipcar available. This was easily discovered as there was only reserved parking space in the lot for a ZipCar, and for the majority of visits to this lot, the ZipCar was reserved and not available for rental. The next closest location for a ZipCar is at 300 South Blvd. which is 1.3 miles away.

This proposed development is leaning heavily into its tenants' assumed usage of Public Transit, specifically the CTA buses and “L” trains or ride sharing services such as Uber or Lyft. This is interesting to be so heavily relying on these forms of transportation given how drastically COVID -19 has changed peoples methods of transportation and will forever alter those behaviors. The impact on public transit and ride sharing services was widely reported. Many people are afraid to share an enclosed space for an extended period of time sitting or standing next to people whose vaccination status is completely unknown and unregulated. This is corroborated by a Friday October 22nd report by WBEZ of Chicago in the 11 O’Clock hour which noted that the CTA ridership continues to sit at 50% of pre-Covid ridership. Again these feelings of unease and concern for their own health extend to people's decreased usage of taxis, Uber and Lyft rides during this period as well. The cost of many of these rideshare services are at an all time high cost to the users because there is a lack of drivers so the tenants would be paying more than ever for using an Uber or a Lyft ride.

I oppose the allowance for the variation from 45 spaces to 17 spaces as this is NOT per Village of Oak Park ordinances a TOD area. Again, this is not a TOD area - it was in fact explicitly omitted. Additionally, I oppose the allowance for the variance from 45 spaces to 17 spaces because the alternate modes of transportation cited by the petitioner pose very real challenges. I ask that the Planning Commission reject this request for the parking variance and I ask that they do not recommend this development as proposed.

Submitted By: Tim McCoy

805 S. Humphrey Ave. Oak Park, IL

**The proposed building has inadequate parking spaces for vehicles per Village of Oak Park codes, other supportive guidelines and planning documents for this area.**

I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. The request that it be decreased from 34 spaces is incorrect. Per Village of Oak Park Zoning Code 10-2, there should be one parking spot per one apartment unit.

Per Village of Oak Park code there should be a 1 to 1 ratio between dwelling units and parking spaces for multi-family buildings in this area. Therefore, for a 45 unit apartment building there should be 45 parking spaces. However, the petitioner is asking for an allowance for only 17 parking spaces. This is an egregious lack of parking. That is a ratio of only one parking spot per every three units - not people - which equates to only 33% of units having a designated parking space per the parking plan of 7 Van Buren. No other development has been allowed to have anywhere close to this low of a ratio between units and available parking as set forth in the parking plan of 7 Van Buren. The closest is the newly built 801 Apartments on Oak Park Avenue that has a parking ratio of 69%. In fact the next smallest ratio has been nearly twice that - the Albion building with a ratio of 77% or the development at the former Dreshler Brown funeral home of 78%. All three of these other developments are in a TOD district and have grocery stores, banks, doctors offices, and many other needed community support businesses and amenities that are much closer, as well as the "L line", metra and bus lines located nearby. Therefore, these have much more accessibility that would decrease the need for a vehicle and allow for variance. The Petitioner repeatedly referred to the 2003 U of I Plan in support of their proposal. Yet, on page 34 of the 2003 U of I Plan, when speaking to the expectation as to the type of multifamily apartments that would be built in the future it states that "We assume dwelling unit space is 1,650 square feet, which include common areas and one parking spot per unit." This building's average dwelling unit space is far smaller i.e. increasing the density more than anticipated and does not have a 1 to 1 parking ratio. Therefore, this building doesn't meet the expectations of the density and parking of future developments according to the U of I Plan guidelines.

Additionally, this building does not comply with the Illinois Accessibility Code for the minimum number of handicapped parking spots. In the 2018 Illinois Accessibility Code page 39, section with accompanying table 208.2 it states that for 26-50 total number of parking spaces provided in the parking facility, the minimum number of ADA compliant handicapped parking spaces provided is 2. Village of Oak Park zoning ordinances would require 45 parking spaces for the unit. With those 45 spaces, two parking spots should be set aside as ADA compliant handicapped parking. The applicants are asking for a variance for not only the number of spaces but also to decrease the parking so drastically that they are then not providing adequate handicapped parking spaces per Illinois Accessibility Code laws. This building at a minimum should have two handicapped accessible parking spaces per Illinois Accessibility code section 208.2

No other development in the Village of Oak Park has been allowed to have a ratio of 37% parking spaces per unit. This building should be held to the same standards as the rest of the developments have been held to, and 7 Van Buren should be required to have 45 parking spaces per Village of Oak Park Zoning Code, Article 14, Section 10-2. Only providing 17 parking spaces to a multi-family unit building that will contain 45 apartment units with an estimated occupancy of 85-90 people is ludicrous and is an extremely disproportionately low ratio of parking spaces available per the number of units in this building.

Page 32 of the 2003 U of I Plan even states that “New parking will come with the approval of new multi-family and commercial buildings that will need to meet Village parking requirements.” The 2014 Comprehensive Plan also stated “ the need for residential parking policies to be more specifically tailored to local densities and behaviors.” This proposed development thus is not following the very guidelines set forth for this area according to this document but is also not in accordance with the Village of Oak Park Code. Therefore, we ask that the Planning Commissioners not approve the request for allowance in the number of parking spots as part of this development.

**Please review our slides for further details**

Submitted By: Mary Fran Riley

Address: 735 S. Humphrey Ave, Oak Park, IL

**Oak Park Residence Corporation has no basis to support its request to decrease the parking spaces below Village Code requirements.**

**Please see slides for further information.**

I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. There is not sufficient evidence provided by the petitioner demonstrating that there will be less demand for parking than proven otherwise in related studies.

In a study called I-290/ Eisenhower Expressway (from west of Mannheim Road to Racine Avenue) the Environmental Resources, Impacts and Mitigation- dated June 2017, the Illinois Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation investigated the many possible effects, implications, and information gathered by construction and changes done on the Eisenhower Expressway. The project corridor was a specific area near the Eisenhower Expressway. The 7 Van Buren building and the surrounding neighborhood falls within the project corridor that was studied. This study showed that within the project corridor community of Oak Park, only 12.8% of residents had zero cars, 47% of residents had one vehicle, and 34.2% of residents had two cars. If one extrapolates this out to units rather than numbers of tenants (since we don't know how many tenants will be in the building) that would mean if there are only 45 units and 45 people, only 5 units/tenants will NOT need a vehicle parking space, 22 units/tenants will have one vehicle, and need one parking space, and 15 units/tenants will have two vehicles and need two parking spaces. Combined, this adds to a theoretical total demand of 52 parking spaces needed by the tenants, which far exceeds the 17 proposed parking spots provided.

The ITE's Parking Generation 4th edition states that for general parking 1.2 spaces are needed per dwelling unit. It also notes that for affordable housing units an average of .56 spaces are needed as those in affordable housing units generally require fewer parking spaces. Thus, if there are 45 total units, and 36 are market rate and 9 are affordable, the 36 market rate units with an average need of 1.2 parking spots translates to 43.2 parking spaces. Then if we add in the 9 units that only need .56 parking spaces per dwelling unit, that comes to 5.04 spaces. The total need for parking at this building per ITE guidelines is 48.24 or 48 total spaces needed by these tenants for parking in this 45 unit apartment building unit. Their application calls for an exemption down to 17 spaces; this again creates a net deficit of 31 spaces. In other words, this building will create a need for 31 new parking spaces that do not exist.

Again, the need for adequate parking is supported by Oak Park's own information. It is reflected in the Oak Park Community Snapshot under Transportation. That data sheet states that only 13.6% of households do not own a vehicle. It also states that 45.6% of households own at least one vehicle, 34.4% own two vehicles and 6.4% own three or more vehicles. This evidence would demonstrate that in a 45 unit building, only 6 dwelling units would not need a parking



space, 21 dwelling units at this building would need parking for one vehicle, 16 dwelling units would need parking for two vehicles, and three dwelling units could need as much as three parking spaces. Combined this adds to a theoretical total demand of 62 parking spaces needed by the tenants, which again far exceeds the 17 proposed parking spots provided in Oak Park Residence Corporations plan. In fact, when residents of the 400 block of S. Austin Blvd were surveyed, their rate of vehicle ownership was 88%.

Even back in 2003, the U of I Plan noted the traffic and parking issues. Under the Planning Goals and Objectives page 5 it is noted that “Drivers and commercial business owners routinely complain about the lack of parking near shops. Homeowners routinely complain about people parking on residential streets. Renters complain about the lack of on-street parking near their residences.”

If this building is allowed to have only 17 parking spaces for 45 units, this then sets the precedence for all future developments. Other developers will then have the historical precedence to ask and receive only a 37% parking ratio for their building proposal. And if a structure is proposed in an area close to community infrastructure and amenities what will that threshold become - a 10% or 20% ? This request for variance sets a precedent for all future developments that becomes a slippery slope of who gets held to the Village Zoning Ordinance and who does not and to what degree. Why should this building be held to any less of a standard than ones that have had to go through this same process?

I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. There is not sufficient evidence provided by the petitioner to prove that there will be less demand for parking than proven otherwise in related studies. I ask that the Planning Commissioners not approve this allowance.

Submitted By: Colleen Hintz

Current address: 238 W. Ridgeland Ave. Waukegan, IL.,  
longtime resident of 808 S. Humphrey Ave. Oak Park, IL

**The proposed development is already in an area where on-street, permit parking is at a premium.**

I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. There is already a high demand for on-street permit parking in the area and the tenants should not be forced to apply for permit parking nor should neighbors be forced to accommodate overflow parking because the development at 7 Van Buren has failed to provide parking within its own structure.

For tenants who need parking in the area that is not provided by on-site parking, the alternative is to seek permit parking through the Village of Oak Park. The parking permit for this area is considered as “High Demand,” per the Village of Oak Park’s own mapping and table documentation - thus supporting the anecdotal evidence. The 700, 800, and 900 blocks of South Humphrey, the 800 Block of South Lyman, and Austin Blvd from Harrison to Jackson all have time restrictions for parking. That stretch of Austin Blvd has time limits as well for parking. Harrison Street additionally has time restrictions for parking from Austin Blvd west to Taylor.

In the presentation by Oak Park Residence Corporation the Petitioner implied that because of the available permit parking spaces still available that “ample permit parking is currently available within walking distance of the site to accommodate the five total permit parking spaces to be eliminated from Lot 25V and, if necessary, residents from the development that may need permit parking.”

However, according to information received in October of 2021, the Petitioner’s statement is not correct nor current. According to Village of Oak Park information this is the most up to date parking permit lot information: there is a total capacity of 190 permitted spots available within a half mile and 180 of them are active, leaving only 10 spots available or a 95% capacity. Additionally, the proposed building will remove 5 permitted parking spots from lot 25v and displace those 5 permitted parking spot users to another lot. That will bring the total down to 185 spot capacity with 180 spots active. Therefore, that will leave exactly 5 spots available for everyone on the waiting list and everyone in this building and the surrounding neighborhood. If there are 45 units in the building with 17 spots available, leaving minimally 28 units with no onsite parking. Even if this building takes all 5 remaining permitted spots, that still leaves 23 units (not people) without a designated spot in the building or in any permitted parking lot spots available within a half of a mile.

On October 21st 2021 we obtained the current “waiting list” for permitted parking spaces in several lots within a half mile of 7 Van Buren. The following information was found: between permitted parking lots 103, 25v, 25a and 68, there are a total of 18 vehicles/people on the waitlist for available parking. Lot 25V (on Van Buren) has 8 people/vehicles listed on the waitlist - some on the waitlist since as far back as March and April. For lot number 103 - there are 5 vehicles/individuals on the waitlist, again some dating back to April of 2021. Lot 68 has another 5 people/vehicles on the waitlist and again some of those dating back to April. This is further proof that not only is the permitted parking already at its saturation point in these lots, but that the need and demand exceeds the available capacity. The duration of this excess demand is also not short - some of these individuals have been on the waitlist for over 6 months - that is half of a one year lease without a permit for parking at a requested lot.

On October 26th, 2021, we obtained a report from the Village of Oak Park that accounted for the number of parking tickets issued in the area of the 800 block of South Humphrey, and both Van Buren and Harrison from Austin to Lyman. This is a small area which surrounds the proposed development and where on-street parking typically occurs for tenants of this area. Over 550 tickets have been issued since the beginning of the 2021. As you can see this is an area that has a serious parking problem and having a development built without adequate parking as part of its plan will only cause more parking problems for this area.

It has long been recognized, even in the 2003 U of I Plan Document, that this area has been a hotspot of parking shortages. This proposed building is doing nothing to help alleviate the problem. Instead, it is only further contributing to this parking problem. Therefore, I oppose the allowance requested by the petitioner to decrease the automobile parking from 45 spaces to 17 spaces.

Please see our slides for additional information

Submitted by Cameron Stingily

Address: 408 S. Austin Blvd., Oak Park, IL

**This is NOT in a TOD (transit orientated development) area per the 2019 Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, this is NOT a TOD building as such and the needed neighborhood infrastructure and amenities are not present to support it as such.**

I oppose the Petitioner's request for a variance to the decrease in parking spaces from 45 spaces to 17 spaces. The proposed building is not in a TOD area per the 2019 Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, this is not a TOD building per that ordinance and the lack of community infrastructure and neighborhood amenities do not support this egregious lack of parking.

The Petitioner referred to the restaurants and boutiques on Harrison Street. While we all enjoy patronizing these local businesses, they do not provide the daily necessities. Trips for day to day necessities should be easily walkable and close enough to walk home with the purchases from such places as pharmacies, Dr.'s offices, cleaners, banks, dentists and grocery stores. A walkable distance that would preclude the need for a car is defined as ¼ to ½ mile. In fact, most of these needs are closer to a mile away, hardly a walkable distance, let alone in the snow, with small children, or with mobility issues, mind you while carrying all of your bags of purchases. Therefore, it should be abundantly apparent that our neighborhood, lovely as it is, lacks the community infrastructure and amenities to support people without a vehicle. These deficits in the neighborhood infrastructure and amenities do not support the Petitioner's rationale to not provide adequate parking for its tenants.

Below is a list of Essential Oak Park services nearest to 7 Van Buren to support our concerns:  
**Neighborhood Community Infrastructure & Amenities in Relation to their distance to 7 Van Buren**

Grocery Stores:

1)Jewel	438 Madison St.	1 mile
2)Carnival Grocery	824 S. Oak Park Ave.	1 mile
3)Pete's Fresh Market	259 Lake Street	1.3 miles
4)Sugar Beet Food Co-op	812 Madison St.	1.4 miles

Banks:

1)U.S. Bank	11 Madison St.	.4 mile
2)Fifth Third Bank	840 S. Oak Park Ave.	1.1 miles
3)Chase Bank	811 Madison St.	1.3 miles
4)U.S. Bank	104 N. Oak Park Ave.	1.4 miles

Pharmacies:

1)CVS	345 Madison St.	.8 miles
2)Walgreens	811 Madison Street	1.1 miles
3)Sears Pharmacy	1003 Madison Street	1.7 miles

General Physicians Office:

1)West Suburban Medical Center	3 Erie Court	1.2 miles
2)Immediate Care of Oak Park	1000 Madison Street	1.3 miles
3)Rush Oak Park Hospital	520 S. Maple Ave.	2.3 miles

Dentist Offices:

1)MW Dental LLC	312 Madison	.8 miles
2)Oak Park Dental Studio	6630 Roosevelt Road	1.4 miles
3)Gentle Dentistry of Oak Park	715 Lake Street	1.9 miles

Target -	1129 Lake Street	2.5 miles
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Dry Cleaners:

1)Oak Cleaners	900 S. Ridgeland Ave.	.6 miles
2)Poly One Hour Cleaners	600 Madison Street	1.1 miles
3)Smart Cleaners	901 S. Oak Park Ave.	1.2 miles

Pet Store:

1)Oak Park Natural Pet & Fish	23 N. Harlem Ave.	2.1 miles
2)Scratch N' Sniff	120 N. Marion St.	2.4 miles
3)Petco	7265 Lake Street River Forest	2.7 miles

Mechanics:

1)Russo's Auto Service	945 S. Oak Park Ave.	1.2 miles
2)Oak Park Auto & Gas Station	333 Lake Street	1.4 miles
3) Auto Experts	6540 Roosevelt Road	1.4 miles

Bakery:

1)Laury's Bakery & Cake	12 Madison Street	.5 miles
2)Oak Park Bakery	904 S. Oak Park Ave.	1.2 miles
3)Spilt Milk	811 S. Blvd.	1.9 miles

Please note that of all of these daily/weekly needed amenities and infrastructure needs there is only 1 bank location & 1 bakery available within a walking distance of a half mile or less. Everything else is over a half mile away - most are over a mile away.

The Petitioner is trying to use the 2003 U of I Plan document to support this project. The document was a broad based, holistic view of the needs, wants and infrastructural support needed in this area. The applicant is putting forth this development as supporting the goal of this

document but does not acknowledge any of the other goals in this guideline - it is trying to operate in a bubble or vacuum. On page 4 of the 2003 U of I plan it states “New development near rail stations does increase densities, but increasing densities ALONE DOES LITTLE to improve a commercial district and surrounding neighborhood. The applicant is only further exacerbating the deficits already existing, noted and pointed out in this document without adding any of the needed infrastructure or amenities that would help support this structure’s tenants and neighborhood. It is only straining the area further instead of alleviating the problems or enhancing the neighborhood. Therefore, I ask that the Planning Commission reject the request for a variance to decrease the number of parking spaces from 45 to 17 spaces.

**Please see sides for more details**

Submitted By: Carol Elazier

Address: 829 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

### **This building lacks sufficient loading spaces**

I oppose the petitioners request for an allowance to have zero loading spaces. Per the Village Zoning Code, Article 14, section 10.7 and table 10-4, there should be one loading space for a multi-unit apartment building of this size. Importantly, no traffic or parking studies have been conducted nor submitted to the Village of Oak Park that would show the effect of not having a loading zone in this highly trafficked, congested and busy part of the Village, especially because the alley is only 15.6 feet rather than the standard 20 feet.

Having zero loading spaces means that for the 45 units in this apartment building there will be zero places to park a moving truck when future tenants move in or out of this building, there would be zero spaces in which contractors could park for service calls, deliveries to be made for appliances, furniture, etc. This then implies that all these trucks, vans, contractor and delivery vehicles will be forced to either

1) Park behind the building in the alleyway between the 400 block of South Austin Blvd and the 800 block of Humphrey Avenue. The alley between Austin Blvd and Humphrey Avenue is only 15 feet 6 inches. Therefore, if there is not sufficient loading space provided, these vehicles will be forced to park in this alleyway. Given the proposed minimum rear setback and the width of the existing alleyway there would be no room for a vehicle to maneuver around any larger vehicles loading or unloading in the alleyway. By not having a loading space as required these vehicles will be blocking the entry and exit point of the alleyway onto Van Buren. Additionally, if the service, moving or delivery vehicles stop in the alley to load and unload because there is no designated loading zone the vehicles will then block the neighbors directly to the west of them at 800 & 804 S. Humphrey Avenue from being able to exit their own garages. It states in Article 15, Section 1- 18 that "It shall be unlawful for any driver to park a vehicle within an alley in such a manner or under such conditions as to leave available less than eight feet (8') of the width of the roadway for the free movement of vehicular traffic." Even the small work trucks, moving vans and delivery trucks would not leave the legally required 8 feet of width to allow other vehicles to pass.

2) Alternately, the lack of a loading zone would force vehicles onto Austin Boulevard. Austin Boulevard has heavily restrictive parking permits and time allowances and would be putting the safety of the workers at risk by forcing them to park on such a busy street while they attempt to load or unload items. Additionally, trucks are not legally allowed to travel on Austin Blvd. per Village of Oak Park Code, Article 15, Section 1-4..

3) Lastly, by not having a loading zone within the structure, vehicles will be forced into loading on Van Buren which is highly restrictive with parking permits and hours in which they can park. It was discovered that if a vehicle is parked along the south side of Van Buren street for loading/unloading it only leaves 15 feet between the rear edge of the parking spots in lot 25v on the north side and the loading vehicle. This is functionally, not enough space to exit from one of these permitted spots - you are blocked in. The reason that they will be forced onto Van Buren (which does not have a loading zone) is that the garage door is not of adequate clearance height. The height of the garage door is only 8 feet tall. The lack of vertical clearance of this garage door would exclude even the smaller moving vans from being able to enter the garage structure - this is the case for 10 foot and 15 foot U-Haul and similar company moving vans. These size moving vans are the ones recommended for studio, 1 and 2 bedroom apartments per moving companies, which is an accurate representation of the vehicular need of this building for moving purposes based on the types of units proposed. Thus, this building's own tenants would not be able to get their items moved in safely, dryly and easily - not only due to a lack of loading space but also due to the lack of proper vertical door clearance. Thus the petitioners claim that the lack of a loading space is not an issue because tenants could park on Van Buren for this purpose or park in the garage for this purpose is not in fact a viable solution.

This lack of a loading dock will create a regular and consistent traffic and parking problem given the number of units in this building. With 45 units and a typical lease being one year, that is a turnover of 3-4 units per month. This means that every month a total of 6-8 people on average will be moving in and out of this building. So are the neighbors and surrounding area residents to expect that possibly every week this building will create parking and traffic havoc because there is no loading zone?

I also oppose this variance request as a matter of tenant safety. By eliminating the loading zone within the structure this development provides no covered, secure area in which to load and unload. This puts the tenants, contractors and delivery drivers at risk by not having a safe area in which to have vehicles open even for short periods of time without the potential of theft of personal property or the vehicle itself. This also creates a safety hazard for tenants when they will be loading and unloading in inclement weather with ice, snow and rain that not only can damage their personal property but could injure them. This should be of particular concern since Petitioner is describing this building as one where people can age in place - I seriously doubt having elderly people with possible mobility issues being forced to move their belongings outdoors in winter over snow and ice would be considered ideal for aging in place. Additionally, since there are so very few designated parking spots within this building a loading space takes on an even more important need as these tenants will need to use that loading space to unload groceries, dry cleaning, and other everyday essentials before they have to then go and re-park their vehicle several blocks away and walk back.

I ask that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the request by Oak Park Residence Corporation to eliminate the loading zone because it is not viable or safe for the new tenants and the already existing neighbors .

**Please review our slides for further details**



Submitted By: Jeb Metric

Address: 820 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The application submitted by the Petitioner Oak Park Residence Corporation does not meet the Villages's required threshold as the following architectural drawing elements were completely missing.**

I noted that there were several items that per the Village of Oak Park's own Zoning Ordinance sub-sections 5, 6, 7,8 in Article 14, Section I, that were not included in the submitted materials. Therefore, I ask that since these materials were not supplied with the application that these items are required to be submitted and also that the Planning Commission and the public have the chance to examine and study these documents before any recommendations or determinations are made.

1.7.a of the Development Plan states that the site plan should include the location of such features as bike racks, benches, trash receptacles, light poles. The plan only shows the gate at the southwest corner of the building, and the notes would imply that the dumpster would go on the sidewalk on the south side of the building. However, there are no trash receptacles explicitly shown in the application plans. This would be important to make sure that they do not interfere with the public right of way in the alley as commercial dumpsters are rather large. With the 18 inch proposed setback of the building these dumpsters if placed behind the building would protrude into the alleyway. Or if they are going to be kept in this locked area to the south of the proposed development, how are waste management services going to access these trash receptacles if behind locked gates.

When Waste Management was consulted regarding how many and what type of trash receptacles would be needed for a 45 unit apartment building that averaged one bedroom units they recommended the following for once a week service as is standard in this area: between two and four 8 yard dumpsters just for garbage, then an additional one to four 8 yard dumpsters for recycling. This is minimally a need of three, 8 yards dumpsters and as many as eight, 8 yards dumpsters. The eight yard dumpsters do NOT have wheels; therefore, they must be placed along the alleyway, per Waste Management, for access. These dumpsters are 6 feet wide, 7 feet tall and 7 feet long. Even placed on its shorter side of the building, these dumpsters will be protruding 4 and a half feet into an alleyway that is only 16 feet wide to start with,

providing a width of 11 and a half feet of alleyway width to drive in. These 8 yard dumpsters in the way they are designed have to be picked up perpendicularly to the alley which logistically simply won't work per the companies. Thus the only viable option for them that has wheels are 2 yard dumpsters.

If the Petitioner suggests using the smaller 2 yard dumpsters as those are the only ones that have wheels and to put them in the interior setback area, this also causes issues due to the lack of setback against the alleyway of only 1.5 feet. The petitioner would need to accommodate room for anywhere from twelve, 2 yard dumpsters up to thirty two, 2 yard dumpsters. These dumpsters measure 45" deep, 78" wide and 4' tall. Per the Petitioners plan, there is a little more than 50 feet that will be a hard surface on the interior setback headed east from the gate on the west facade. The absolute maximum capacity this allows for is 8 of the 2 yard dumpsters; therefore, not allowing enough room for the all trash & recycling receptacles this building would need per Waste Management. Additionally, for security this is supposed to be a locked, gated area so how would waste services access this area? The alternative again is to have these in the alleyway. How can they not think a dozen to almost three dozen 2 yard dumpsters will not cause vehicular safety issues, pedestrian safety issues? These 2 yard dumpsters if lined up in the alleyway will further block the line of sight for vehicles entering and exiting the parking garage as they will be protruding minimally 27 inches into the alleyway if the dumpster is completely pushed against the building. While 27", over two feet, may not seem like a great protrusion but this again is in an alleyway that is already only 16 feet wide; which is narrower than most alleys in Oak Park. This leaves the driving area for traffic less at 14 feet in this portion of the alleyway.

Petitioner stated in its application that there is indoor bicycle storage, however we did not see anywhere in the plans where that is located. I only saw on page 189 where 6 outdoor loop style bicycle racks were located in the colonnade area along Van Buren. If Petitioner is including interior bicycle storage it is not specifically noted in the architectural floor plans, as required by Section I.7.e. Development Plan, Floor Plans. Per Per table 10-2 of Village of Oak Park codes it indicates the following: For multi-family dwelling the minimum number of required total bicycle parking spaces is 1 per 4 units thus the need for a 45 unit building would be 11 bicycle parking spaces. The percentage of required parking spaces for long term spaces is 80% per the table 10-2. Therefore there should minimally be 9 long term bicycle spaces per the Village of Oak Park codes. The floor plan drawings and information provided include plans for exactly zero bicycle spaces that are in a safe and weatherproof storage area. This building is in violation of Village of Oak Park building code 10.4 D. by not providing any long term, safe and weatherproof storage for bicycles. Also see 10.6 of Village code for further information saying that the long term parking spaces must be shielded from rainfall, snow and inclement weather and specifying their location and design. Seeing as this is supposed to be a building marketed towards individuals that may seek alternative means of transportation it seems irregular that they have provided no indoor bicycle storage as they are supposed to per Village Codes and the application process. Having a couple of bike racks outside, exposed to the elements and adjacent to a street in which snow will be piled up in winter is not adequate per Village of Oak Park Codes nor the Application Submittal Requirements.

The construction plan does not show where the construction vehicles will be parked. In addition, there is no remedy for the 12 permit parked vehicles that will be displaced for over a year while

their spaces are used for material staging sites per page 247 of their application. The plan only shows the entrance/exit points for construction traffic; it does not give the location of where construction vehicles will be parked per required in Section I.7.F. Development Plan

Therefore, I ask that all of these materials are submitted to the Village of Oak Park by the Petitioner. The Petitioner is legally required per the Zoning Ordinance to do this and I ask that no recommendations or decisions are reached until these documents are received and examined by the Planning Commissioners and made available to the Public. **Please see the slides for additional details**

Submitted By: Barbara Metric

Address: 820 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

### **Deficits and inconsistencies within the shadow study performed exhibit the need for a new independent shadow study to be performed**

I request that a new shadow study is performed as the study that was submitted by the Petitioner has several crucial problems. I ask that because David Pope was the Village of Oak Park President a mere 8 years ago that an independent, licensed professional be contracted to perform a new shadow study.

The first crucial issue with the shadow study that was performed is that numerous structures were not located properly and therefore the impact of the shadow from 7 Van Buren was not properly assessed. On page 206 of the application - when looking at this overhead - please note the placement of the neighbors garages (800, 804, 808,) on the 800 block of south Humphrey Ave. These garages are placed so as to appear that they are set back 20-30 feet from the east/rear lot line. This is not the case - most of these garages are set about 5- 7 feet from the lot line, this type of setback was even noted by the Petitioner in their presentation and is reflected in visuals provided in their application. By inappropriately locating these structures on their shadow study, Petitioner is not portraying an accurate effect that this building's shadows will have on adjacent property. Please note the same misrepresentation and inaccuracies apply to the homes on the 700 block of South Humphrey Ave. By pushing these structures further into the property, Petitioner makes it appear as though the shadow from 7 Van Buren does not affect these areas to the degree that they would in actuality. This representation did not just occur once this occurred on page 206, 209- 211, 214-216, 219-221, 224-226, 229-231, 234-236, 239-241 and 244-245.

A second crucial problem with the shadow study performed and submitted is that the proposed building itself is not located properly. If you look closely at the shadow study, you will notice that in multiple graphics provided that the building is not located properly. Please refer to pages 208, 209, 213, 214, 218, 219, 223, 224, 228, 229, 233, 234, 238, 239, 243, 244. There are 5 parking spots shown in these images in front of the 7 Van Buren building. This can not be the case as they are asking to vacate a portion of Van Buren. Therefore, these spaces do not exist. The proposed building would be within the footprint of those 5 parking spaces. Additionally, we can tell that this shadow study is incorrect with this building's placement because the sidewalks to the

East and West of the alley on Van Buren line-up. We know and the Petitioner stated as such that if the 15 feet is vacated that these sidewalks will not align and instead the sidewalk in front and under the proposed 7 Van Buren building will be to the North of the adjacent sidewalk on the other side of the alley. Thus, this building is not located as far north onto Van Buren as it actually will be. The shadow study provided is representing this building as being further away from other structures than it actually will be. Therefore, again the impact of 7 Van Buren can not be accurately assessed with such an egregious error.

Another significant issue with the shadow study is the way in which the graphics of the shadow study are exhibited in the Petitioners application. On pages 240, 241, 242, 243, and 244 of the application containing the graphics of a December 22nd shadow study performed at mid-afternoon, the images are cropped. The graphic actually cuts off some of the shadow - we cannot see the furthest termini of the shadow created by this building at this time nor is it indicated. This is true of the overhead view but also of the subsequent directionally orientated facade renderings.

Therefore, I ask the Plan Commission to require the Petitioner to submit a new shadow study conducted by an independent contractor. The new study must accurately reflect where the nearby structures are placed, where the proposed building itself is located, and with the graphics not cropped but show the shadows to their fullest extent. How can the Plan Commission review the impact of the proposed building without an accurate shadow study? Additionally, in order to differentiate the shadow created strictly by this structure, dashed lines or some other denotation should be made on these graphics to fully explain the shadow effect of this building since they provide no other measurements, details or information. The shadow study provided is riddled with so many errors, mistakes and inaccuracies that it should not be used as a basis in which to make any determinants, and I ask that an independent, new shadow study be conducted before the Plan Commission makes any

**Please see our slides for more information**

Submitted By: Donna Rolf

Address: 712 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**I request that a new shadow study be conducted that includes an hourly study of the shadow.**

**In our shadow study, you can see that the shadows extend much farther than in Petitioner's. Ours does not have all of the necessary dates and times, plus it was based on Petitioner's inaccurate portrayal of how far north its building will extend; yet, you can see the real impact of the building on the neighboring residences is much greater than Petitioner shows in its cropped shadow study. We believe that a shadow study based on the true height and mass of the building at the times I will now discuss will show that the impact on the neighbors is drastic and very detrimental.**

I ask that an hourly shadow study be performed for the proposed development at 7 Van Buren. There is merit in asking for an hourly shadow study, beginning at sunrise and concluding at sunset, to be performed in order to get a better sense of the true shadow impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. This is especially important since the current shadow study provided has so many problems. The precedence for our request was set in previous developments, such as the Albion building, where Tom Bassett-Dilley (the Petitioner's Net-zero, passive house consultant) strongly advocated for the need of hourly shadow studies with developments. Better, more detailed shadow study information is needed to properly assess the amount of shadow this building will cast on multiple single family homes, also on other multi-family residences and a very nearby nationally landmarked park. The same concerns that applied to previous requests for an hourly shadow study that was then required also apply to this development and thus warrant a more detailed study as well. We are simply requesting that the same type of information be required that was asked for and required by other developers when

the public raised concerns. Shouldn't the same burden of proof and application expectations apply to this building as it did to other buildings located in more high profile neighborhoods?

Per the shadow report on page 205 that Oak Park Residence Corporation submitted it stated "On average we experience only 45 full sun days (0 % cloud cover) throughout the year. November through January are the three cloudiest months of the year. For example, during January 2020 we experienced only 27% of total potential sunshine due to cloud cover." However, it is important to note that there are variations in sunshine and shadow - there are more than just full sun i.e. clear and fully cloud days - in meteorological terms there are clear, mostly clear, partly sunny/partly cloudy, mostly cloudy or cloudy. Additionally, it should be noted that the level of cloud cover is measured on a scale of the amount of opaque cloud cover. Even on mostly cloudy days there is still  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the sky condition that is transparent i.e. not opaque cloud cover. This is important because on days with clear, mostly clear, partly sunny and even mostly cloudy, the sun is still observed and felt throughout the day. In Chicago, the average percentage of the sky covered by clouds experiences significant seasonal variation over the course of the year. The cloudiest month of the year in Chicago is January, during which on average the sky is overcast or mostly cloudy 59% of the time. In the January of 2020 the example cited by the applicant fell outside the average of cloud cover. If the average amount of clear or partly clear days is 41% and January was only 27%, it is not accurate to use this anomalous lack of sunlight as a reason to discount the effect of the amount of shadow that this building will create for the entire winter season. The petitioner's statement that because essentially the winter months are so overcast that the shadow effect is merely perceived is wholly incorrect. There are plenty of days where the skies are not completely opaque with cloud cover in which the shadow effect will be a real issue and problem.

This shadow study provided the absolute bare minimum and, at that, the information produced was inaccurate, misleading and incomplete. We ask that a new shadow study be performed by an independent professional, since the one submitted by the Petitioner is so blatantly inaccurate and that it include an hourly shadow study as was provided by other developers..

Submitted By: Jerry Hellman

Address: 828 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The Mechanicals for this Building are located inappropriately and in violation of Village of Oak Park Code**

I oppose the proposed development at 7 Van Buren as the location of the mechanicals is in violation of the Oak Park Village Zoning code. Additionally, Oak Park Residence Corporation was derelict in requesting a variance of these Village of Oak Park building codes. The architectural and landscaping plans submitted violate Article 14, Section 9. P. 1. a. & b. Which state:

a. Mechanical Equipment is permitted in the interior side or rear yard only.

b. For multi-family and non-residential uses, ground mounted mechanical equipment must be screened from view by a decorative wall or a solid fence that is compatible with the architecture and landscaping of a development site. The wall or fence must be of a height equal to or greater than the height of the mechanical equipment being screened.

As per the plans submitted by Oak Park Residence Corporation there is a mechanical unit located on the SouthEast corner of the lot. This mechanical unit is therefore on the Austin Boulevard side facing a highly trafficked and highly visible area both on foot and by vehicle. As it is close to the South lot line it runs adjacent to the grass area of the neighboring building at 408-410 S.

Austin Blvd (the Poley building). This is in violation of the Village code - it should be located on the west side of the lot adjacent to the alleyway or on the south side of the lot but not near the eastern corner which is considered the front of the lot. The mechanicals, if to be located on the interior side, would be required to be located further west along the south lot line. As it stands the mechanical unit is essentially in the front yard of the building. This will be visible from the Austin Blvd sidewalk and street, from the front yard and east facing windows of the Poley building and highly visible to this building's own tenants with units on the southeast corner of the building as it will be almost directly in front of them.

The mechanical unit is also in violation of Village of Oak Park codes in that no fence or wall is indicated in the plans. There is only plant material indicated around the mechanical unit. Additionally, some of this plant material is not evergreen. It is partly ornamental grass which will not completely block the mechanical unit especially during cool season months, so from October to March at least the mechanicals will be highly visible from Austin Blvd. The way this large seven foot by seven foot mechanical unit is placed will be mere feet from the sidewalk so it will be very hard to miss an obstruction of this magnitude.

The Oak Park Residence Corporation again did not apply for a variance allowance of this Village of Oak Park code which they are in fact violating with this plan. Therefore, I ask that these allowances for variances not be approved as the Petitioner has not shown due diligence in making sure that their proposed development is in accordance with other Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinances.



Submitted By: Leslie Brown

Address: 800 S. Lyman Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The height definition of this building is portrayed inaccurately**

I oppose the request by Oak Park Residence Corporation for the height variance.. In the proposal and request for variances the Oak Park Residence Corporation has described the building as 6 stories. However, that is an incorrect description based on the true height of the building and the previous judgements made by commissions for the Village of Oak Park. The building as proposed is in truth 7 stories tall. Additionally, the height allowance being asked for is 71.85 feet. The top of the structure of this building (not including the PV panels) is actually 83 feet 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches. Therefore, the application by the petitioner for a height variation should reflect a request to build to 83 feet, 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches.

In a past Village of Oak Park Historic Preservation Committee meeting, former Commissioner David Sokol wanted to know if the plan on a proposed development on Washington Boulevard by Ambrosia Homes would have roof access for residents. Roof access would require a small rooftop lobby and an elevator that goes all the way to the top, as was stated by the developer of that building Tim Pomaville. Those additions would have changed the categorization of the building from five-stories to six-stories and required a steel building frame instead of the planned wood frame.

The 7 Van Buren building has rooftop access with an elevator that goes all the way to the top and, in fact, the plan even mentions and markets a rooftop lobby for social gatherings with seating, grills, views - hardly a minimalist roof of just stairs and an elevator . Additionally the construction of this building is also a steel building frame not wood. These are elements that

would then lead to changing the building technically from 6 to 7 stories per the determination by the Village of Oak Park historic commissioners above.

In the market feasibility that Oak Park Residence Corporation supplied as exhibit 8 starting on page 83, the company that they hired, Kretchmer Associates, referred to the building as 7 stories. See page 89 table 2 with the description of the building as a “7 story, glass, metal and brick building”. Their own contracted market evaluators of this building referred to this as a 7 story building.

The east facade on story number 7 of the smooth ironspot brick lends credence that it visually creates a solid wall that is a permanent structure, therefore reaching the height of 7 stories not 6. Also the southern facade of the proposed building is such that it visually appears as another floor. It is composed of an opaque, continuous run of solar panels without interruption. These vertical beams onto which the solar panels are attached certainly do not appear to be temporary. Thus, this wall is not a temporary or removable one. This is a permanent solid wall facade on the entire southern facade and lends credence to our assertion that this is truly a 7 story building.

Concerning the building height the following Oak Park zoning ordinances excerpts help determine if the roof top plan as presented would be assessed as contributing to a buildings height (i.e. a floor of a building).

In Article 14, Section 2.4 D. Rules of Measurement , item 3 regarding Height Encroachments States that the following structures or parts thereof are exempt from the height limitations of the districts if they are 25% or less of the total floor area of the roof footprint. Part c states that building appurtenances, necessary mechanical appurtenances are exempt.

However, from the rooftop plan this is not just a strictly mechanical area containing the elevator and a set of stairs. There is in fact a sizable vestibule or lobby area which then leads out to outdoor entertainment decks, benches and seating areas.

It was determined from the project development drawings that the rooftop gathering area and walkway to the northwest staircase takes up around 1285 square feet of area, which is 19.9% of the rooftop. If the landscape area is to be included in the calculation, the 25% would be exceeded. The project development plans show an additional rooftop patio area, which would get the numbers up to almost 50%. This rooftop plan must and should be clarified. This is intended as an auxiliary entertainment and living space so there should be dimensions provided. Per I.7.E.

Of the zoning ordinance Development Plan.

A dimensional floor plan is required to determine compliance with the ‘less than 25%’ rule.

Additionally, when calculating the less than 25% rule the structure and the solar panels certainly exceed 25% of the roof footprint. They are, in fact, an appurtenance. Because an appurtenance is considered part of the property, it passes to a new owner upon sale or transfer of the property. While one can remove the individual solar panels, the supporting steel structure itself is permanently attached to and indeed part of the building structure.

Another relevant section of the Zoning Ordinance is p. 9-12 section that pertains to roof-mounted solar panels and building height. Section .3 Accessory Structures and Uses, Part U “Solar Panels” states that on flat roofed buildings over 40 feet in height, the roof-mounted solar panel system is limited to 15 feet above the height of such a structure. The solar panels on this proposed building are supported directly on a very high steel structure and are not directly roof mounted. Therefore, the steel structure is an appurtenance exceeding 25% of the roof footprint and represents an encroachment not in compliance with the zoning ordinance.

Therefore, Oak Park Residence Corporations plan calling this a 6-story building is patently incorrect by the Village of Oak Park’s own definition and past determinations of other proposed developments. I oppose the request for height variation by the petition as the very terms by which they describe this building are untrue and misleading. We request that the description of this building be corrected on all documentation from 6 stories to 7 stories and that the height listed for this building be corrected to reflect 83 feet 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches, which does not include the actual solar, but panels only the steel structural system that is integrated into the very design of the building. This is a 7 story building - as corroborated by zoning ordinances, previous judgements by commissioners and the developer’s own marketing team. **Please see our slides for more details**

Submitted By: Julie Samuels

Address: 613 S. Lombard Ave., Oak Park, IL

### **An increase of the Maximum Lot Coverage will prove problematic in managing water run-off.**

I request that the variation by the petitioner to increase the maximum building coverage from 70 to 85.17% be denied by the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners. I ask that it be denied because increasing the maximum lot coverage will result in problems managing water run-off.

In the past few years, managing and controlling the amount of water runoff from properties has become a top priority. As new housing and commercial developments are built, water can no longer be absorbed and flooding issues increase. In an effort to control water runoff and protect private property from upstream water flow, governments at all levels have instituted stormwater management practices including Oak Park. At the local level, each residential lot has a Maximum Lot Coverage, expressed as a percentage, which represents the maximum percentage of impervious surface allowed on a particular lot. Maximum Lot Coverage is computed as the total amount of impervious surface on the lot divided by the total lot area. Impervious surfaces on a lot include, but are not limited to, building driveways, garage, porches, patios, private walks, accessory building, and any other impervious surfaces constructed on the lots. In this proposed development at 7 Van Buren the impervious surface would be increased with this proposed building. By increasing the amount of maximum building coverage it provides less permeable surface area to help mitigate water run off and to help manage in controlling water flow and flooding. By taking up more of the lot with the proposed building there will be less soft permeable surface to help absorb the water and thus prevent flooding issues.

Increasing the maximum lot coverage will also produce a multitude of environmental issues. In creating more impermeable surface area and decreasing permeable surfaces such as soil, and plant materials (trees, shrubs, flowers) this results in less opportunities for the water run-off to be absorbed and for the stormwater run-off to be filtered. Increasing the amount of and less filtered stormwater runoff will result in more contaminated and polluted water entering into our shared water management systems and thus result in less environmentally safe water.

The proposed building at 7 Van Buren will have a much higher water consumption and usage than the current building. There will be 45 units and common areas containing showers, tubs, sinks, dishwashers and washing machines that will all be using water. This significantly increased demand by the building and a greatly increased output of water could overwhelm the current water and sewer system. If the sewer system becomes overwhelmed this will lead to sewer backups into not only this building but any other homes or apartments that share this sewer system. This could mean that not only excess water backing up into basements but also human waste could back up into basement drains - both at this development and to the many surrounding neighbors.

The higher output of water by the proposed development at 7 Van Buren if not supported by the current sewer system could result in neighboring homes and streets being flooded. Yet, the Petitioner has produced no professional evaluation of the impact on the sewer system of the much greater water consumption and output. Additionally, the sewer and water systems under Van Buren are not included in any proposed Capital Development future projects in the Village of Oak Park.

I request that the variance requested by the petitioner to increase the maximum building coverage from 70 to 85.17% be denied. I ask that it be denied because increasing the maximum lot coverage will result in problems managing water run off.

I request that the Planning Commissioners reject the variances requested by the petitioner as they have not provided the necessary studies of the water and sewage systems that would impact the determination of variance requests. We believe that because Mr. Pope was Village President just eight years ago, that these studies must be performed by an independent, outside, licensed Professional Engineer, in order to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

**Please see the slides provided for more details**

Submitted By: Susan Gilchrist  
Address: 808 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The building would negatively affect surrounding historic landmarks**

I request that the Oak Park Planning Commissioners reject the request by the petitioners to allow an increase in height from 45 feet to over 83 feet. I ask that this request be denied because the proposed building at 7 Van Buren will negatively impact one surrounding and one adjacent historic building in an area that does not have a preponderance of historic landmarks.

There are 64 Oak Park historic landmarks. This proposed building would negatively affect two of them, one being the Poley Building next door, which is an historic landmark. The Poley Building is only one of 2 buildings designated as a historic landmark on Austin Blvd from Roosevelt Road to North Avenue. The second building is the Dorothy Manor Building a few buildings south at 424-426 S. Austin Blvd. That building will also be impacted although less so by this new development.

The Poley building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. was designed by architect Charles Kristen. Hopefully, you all saw the wonderful article about this important architect in the Wednesday Journal from October 8th. Charles Kristen was an immigrant, an Oak Park resident, and per the article “While many architects were not formally trained at this time, Kristen was the real deal. He had education, training and was a member of architectural associations.” Charles Kristen was described as “a serious architect” by Frank Lipo the Executive Director of the Oak Park Historical Society. Charles Kristens’s design at 408 S. Austin Blvd., the Poley Building, was billed in the press as a “sumptuous” apartment building in 1929. Former Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission Chairman Christopher Payne shared photos of Kristen’s work on the Preservation Oak Park Facebook page and says Kristen wasn’t known for one specific style, but that his ability to work in many styles produced a lot of homes worthy of esteem.

“This is one of those stories that’s not told enough,” Lipo said. “It’s so easy to focus on the big, celebrated architects, but every generation, there’s a lot of individually talented architects here. The cumulative sum of all of these houses is greater than just one design. ... Even without superstar status, the whole body of work makes it interesting.” Not every building worth protecting in Oak Park is by Frank Lloyd Wright - there are other architects such as Charles Kristen who lived, worked and created beautiful noteworthy structures in this Village that should be protected the same as a Lloyd Wright structure.

The Poley Building is only one of four historic landmarks in the entire area from Roosevelt Road to North Ave and from Austin to Ridgeland. That equates to only 6% of all historical landmarked buildings within the Village of Oak Park lie within the boundaries of Austin Blvd. to Ridgeland Ave., and Roosevelt Road to North Ave. Given that there are 64 historically landmarked structures in Oak Park, having only 4 in this entire area demonstrates why we must protect this building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. from insensitive development. Of the four structures that are historically landmarked in this area, only two are apartment buildings, including this one, and two are single family homes. Thus, there is not an abundance of buildings in this area with historic landmark designation. If this building with landmark status cannot be protected in our neighborhood what building can be? Would this building be allowed next to a Frank Lloyd Wright Building or a Gunderson Home in another part of Oak Park?

Of the 64 buildings given historic landmark status in Oak Park, only five seem to be apartment buildings. Three of them are much more central to downtown Oak Park. The Poley building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. falls into the minority as a historic landmark as the type of structure it is, i.e., apartment building vs single family dwelling, in its location on Austin Blvd. and in the East/Southeast quadrant of Oak Park. A letter by the stakeholders committee that was part of the 2003 U of I Plan document said that “We seek, furthermore, to preserve existing notable architecture and make sure future development is compatible with it. We want to channel future growth and development in ways that are in keeping with the above even as they revitalize and introduce new elements into the district.”

On page 59 in the Envision Oak Park document it states that “Oak Park enjoys a far-reaching reputation for architecture and design. Village government should ensure that historic development is properly preserved, and new development appropriately complements the existing character of the community. This guideline document from 2015 in section 4.2.1 says that supporting the preservation of historical and architectural heritage can be accomplished in part with sensitive development practices. We ask that this proposed development be sensitive to the historically landmarked building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. as recommended in the Envision Oak Park document. This should carry weight as page 22 of this same guideline noted that “The history and character of Oak Park was cited by participants as one of the community’s most important assets & that Historic Preservation Participants identified historic preservation as an important issue and a value that makes Oak Park unique. Many residents mentioned the need to ensure that historic structures are maintained and rehabilitated in order to preserve the character of neighborhoods and commercial districts.”

I ask for the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners to reject the request of the petitioner to increase the height above the zoning requirement as it will impact two historically landmarked buildings in an area that is vastly underrepresented with historic landmarked buildings. The Oak

Park Historic Preservation Ordinance states that the purpose of this article is to “preserve, protect and enhance the distinctive historic and architectural heritage of Oak Park..” Allowing this development to be built as proposed would fly in direct opposition of the stated purpose of the historic preservation ordinance and with multiple stated purposes of the Village of Oak Park zoning ordinances and other guideline documents.

**Please see our slides for further details**

Submitted By: Jeanne McCoy

Address: 805 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**Requests for variances for the proposed building result in a building that is out of scale in relation to 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. and violate the Historic Preservation Ordinances, and the intent of the 2003 U of I document.**

I request that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the requests for variances by the petitioners in relation to the dimensional standards. The sum total of these requested variances will greatly increase the overall size, scale and mass of the proposed building at 7 Van Buren. The effect of this is that the proposed building will be grossly out of scale in relation to the historic building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. and will be built in a manner that is not within keeping of Historic Preservation Ordinances.

Specifically, there are concerns regarding the following Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinances. 7.9-12.9 that states: The historic and architectural integrity of the property and its environment shall be protected by making the new work compatible with the existing structures, surrounding structures, whenever one or more of these elements is affected by such work, with respect to the following design criteria:

g. The scale of the proposed structure.

The scale of the proposed structure at 7 Van Buren is incompatible with the adjacent historically landmarked building and nearby structures as well. By allowing variances for the increasing in maximum building coverage from 70% to 85.17% and by allowing a decrease in lot area from 35,100 square feet to 11,085 feet it, the proposed building will be overwhelming in its scale relative to any other nearby building. It will be a domineering looming structure with this scale to the historic Poley building and others in the area.

The 2003 U of I Plan vision statement “The scale and character of the neighborhood’s buildings and landscaping should maintain strong continuity with the rich historical and architectural traditions of Oak Park.” We believe that this proposed development is out of scale with the surrounding area and therefore does not maintain the continuity of the rich architectural traditions of Oak Park, especially the two historically landmarked buildings within 500 feet of this site. See page 21 for this vision statement.

Overall the purpose of these zoning ordinances was to help provide consistency and congruence of buildings within a neighborhood and area. If the purpose of the Village Ordinances is to make sure that new developments fit within the context of the neighborhood and area, the variances requested by the petitioner are in direct conflict with this purpose. Oak Park Residence Corporation is asking for variances that put the proposed building far outside the scale of Austin Blvd., Humphrey Avenue or Van Buren street. The sum total of these requested variances will greatly increase the overall size, scale and mass of the proposed building at 7 Van Buren.

I request that the Planning Commission deny the Petitioner’s requests for variances because this building does not meet the reasonableness standards to which it must conform. Also, the building is not in keeping with the character of this residential area because of its disproportionate, out of scale dimensions. A neighbor aptly described this situation as trying to squeeze a size 12 foot in a size 6 shoe.

Therefore I ask that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the requests for variances by the petitioners in relation to the dimensional standards. The net effect of these variances will be a building vastly out of scale in relation to the historic building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. and will be built in a manner that is not within keeping of Historic Preservation Ordinances nor the ideas of the 2003 U of I Plan.



Submitted By: Justin Dossiea

Address: 408 S. Austin Blvd., Oak Park, IL

**The proposed development violates the rights of neighbors at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. to adequate privacy and light.**

**Please see our attached slides**

There is great concern about the lack of privacy and the lack of natural daylight the proposed development will cause to the neighbors at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. due to the request to decrease the minimum interior setback from 9.05 feet to 8.30 feet and the request to increase the height from 45 feet to 83 feet 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches. I ask that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commission reject the request by the petitioner for the variances asked. Specifically, I request that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commission deny the allowances to decrease the minimum interior side setback from 9.05 feet to 8.30 feet and to increase the height from 45 feet to 83 feet, 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches.

The Village of Oak Park's own statement as to the purpose of the zoning ordinance in section 1.2 item B is to "To secure adequate light, air, privacy and convenience of access to property". Additionally, in section 7.1.C. it states that it is for "Protecting property rights and values by balancing the rights of landowners to use and improve their land with the corresponding rights of abutting and neighboring landowners to enjoy their property". Also 7.3.1.g states that "Design review applications must consider the following and demonstrate that these were considered...The location, arrangement, size, design and general site compatibility of structures and site elements to ensure...Compatibility with, and mitigation of, any potential impact on adjacent properties." One of the significant purposes of the zoning ordinance is to secure adequate light for one's property, allow homeowners to enjoy their property and that any

proposed structures should be compatible with any adjacent properties. The building at 7 Van Buren is not consistent with any of those stated goals.

The lack of privacy that this development will cause the direct neighbors at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. is significant. As stated above there are 10 windows per each unit that have northern exposure. The proposed development shows balconies and windows that will overlook these four units at a distance of eight feet away. These new neighbors will be looking into their dining room during dinner hour or birthday parties or anniversary celebrations, into their bathrooms while brushing their teeth or bathing their children, into their bedroom while they read at the end of the day, iron their shirts and get dressed for work in the morning and as they tuck in their children at naptime or bedtime. These are all of our precious private spaces. From the moment the residents of the Poley building wake up till the moment they fall asleep their privacy will be invaded. With this new proposed development the Poley building residents can reach out and literally touch their neighbors - this is not what was existing when they purchased their homes, nor should it be expected to have their privacy utterly violated and to have their lives upended by an insensitive, unthoughtful proposed development.

A primary concern is the extreme decrease of natural light to 408-410 S. Austin Blvd that would be caused by the increased height of the proposed adjacent building. The building at 408-410 S. Austin Blvd has 4 units composed of a garden level and then the 1st thru 3rd floors. Each unit on the first thru third floor has 17 windows in their unit. Of that number 10 windows per each apartment, for a total of 30 windows, are on the north facade of the building and would be completely blocked or obscured by this building. That is 60% of all available natural light being blocked significantly. This does not include the garden unit whose situation is even worse. The owner of the garden unit will be plunged into darkness. The garden unit only has three East facing windows all the remaining windows face north - all of which will be completely and utterly blocked and all natural light exterminated. The rooms of the first-third floor units of 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. that would have their light blocked in these units include the following: 2 of 3 bedrooms, both (2) bathrooms, and the dining room. This development will block out light to virtually every room of this unit with the exception of one bedroom, living room and kitchen.

The proposed building will tower over the existing structure of 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. by 4 stories. This is a significant height differential that will severely affect the light into the adjacent building. Each story of the building will have more and more of the natural light blocked the closer to ground level due to the overly tall height of the proposed building and the close proximity. This severe decrease of natural light is directly related to the request to increase the height from 45 feet to 71.85 feet, which should truly be defined as 83 feet, 3 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches. I also ask that the request by the petitioner for the variations to decrease the minimum interior side setback from 9.05 feet to 8.03 feet be denied. Not only would the neighbors' right to privacy be violated but their rights to enjoy their property would be superseded by this development if the petitioner is allowed to build as proposed. Lastly, the plan for this building has demonstrated again that the Petitioner has not seriously considered its impact on adjacent properties. All of these points would be in direct conflict with the purpose of the Village of Oak Parks zoning ordinance.

Submitted By: Jane Campbell  
Address: 800 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The proposed development violates the rights of neighbors on the 700 and 800 block of South Humphrey Avenue to adequate light, air and privacy.**

Article 14, section 1.2-b of Village of Oak Park's zoning ordinance states that some of the purposes of the zoning ordinance are "To secure adequate light, air, privacy and convenience of access to property". Additionally Article 14, section 7.1.C. of the document states that it is "Protecting property rights and values by balancing the rights of landowners to use and improve their land with the corresponding rights of abutting and neighboring landowners to enjoy their property". Also Article 14, section 7.3.1.g states that "Design review applications must consider the following and demonstrate that these were considered...The location, arrangement, size, design and general site compatibility of structures and site elements to ensure...Compatibility with, and mitigation of, any potential impact on adjacent properties."

The neighbors to the west of the proposed development will be affected by this building as it pertains to light and privacy. The rear rooms and the backyards of two houses on the 800 block of South Humphrey will have their privacy greatly impacted. These homeowners will have people looking into their rear bedrooms, living areas, kitchens, etc. and be able to see every action of these homeowners in their own backyard. Every backyard bbq, dog bathroom trip while standing in a robe, gardening work, grandchild visit, and time outside will be observed,

witnessed and on display for the residents of the new development. This is a direct violation of these residents' privacy.

Additionally, the residents of these areas will also have the natural sunlight diminished by the new development towering seven stories over them. This new tall structure will impact award winning gardens that have been featured in magazines, newspapers and in numerous Oak Park Garden walks. Gardens that have been planned and landscaped to include natives and pollinators, all of which are important to the micro and macro ecosystem, would be decimated by not having natural sunlight. These are homes that the Village of Oak Park have given Cavalcade of Pride awards to, homes and gardens in which tens of thousands of dollars have been invested, only to have them devalued by this new structure. We believe that the petitioner's request to decrease the minimum rear setback from 24.5 feet to 1.5 feet should be denied. The alleyway is only 15 feet and 6 inches wide. Thus, if this building was built at a rear setback of 1.5 feet, it would be only 17 feet away from the lot line of the homes at 800 S. Humphrey Avenue and 804 S. Humphrey Ave.

These single family homeowners have a garage apron depth of 6 feet 9 inches. This would mean that anyone entering or exiting their garage behind this building will have very little room in which to maneuver out of their garages and into the alleyway. This would especially be true in winter when snowfall amounts decrease the maneuverability even further. The nearby and adjacent multi-story apartment buildings all have far greater garage rear setbacks with than 1.5 feet.

Lastly, the proximity, height and scale of the proposed building at 7 Van Buren will disrupt the neighbors future land and structure use. This building will create noticeable and definite shadow effects on adjacent properties. As such, they will not be able to use their properties as they legally should be able to. They will not be able to install solar panels on their own garages for such purposes as charging electric vehicles, thus decreasing this area's ability to contribute to sustainable infrastructure and environmentally friendly practices. This is not out of line with what is already occurring and future needs/wants in the neighborhood with rooftop solar panels having already been installed or planned for some of the single family homes.

Also this puts the tenants of 7 Van Buren out on the west facade balconies looking down into these neighbors backyards at a distance of only 17 - 23 feet away- this is highly invasive of their privacy. Not only would the neighbors' right to light, air and privacy be violated but their rights to enjoy their property would be impacted by this development. Lastly, the Petitioner has demonstrated again that it has not seriously considered its impact on adjacent properties by not performing the honest light, wind & shadow studies that should be expected.

**Please see our attached slides for more information**

Submitted By: Frank Vozak  
Address: 804 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The development as proposed violates the existing homeowners' rights to conserve the value of their property.**

I ask that the petitioner's request for a variance to decrease the minimum rear setback from 24.5 feet to 1.5 feet and to reduce the interior setback from 9.05 feet to 8.30 feet should be denied. One of the purposes of the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance is to conserve the values of the properties throughout the village. That is stated in Article 14, sections 1.2 E & 7.1.A of the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, in the Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 7-9-1. B. it states that the purpose of this article is to promote the general welfare of Oak Park by "Conserving and improving the value of properties designated as historic landmarks". Allowing the proposed development to be built closer to existing structures and of a far greater height than current Village of Oak Park codes allow would negatively impact the home value of the surrounding properties but especially for the residents of the adjacent 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. that should be a protected Historically landmarked building. The owners bought their units with knowledge of a low slung two story building existing, built on the far opposite end of the plot to the north of them. It blocks very little light to the Poley building because of the way it is situated and does not impede on their privacy (as the area closest to 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. is

ground level parking). The building being proposed at 7 Van Buren is drastically different; it would be possibly 8 feet away from them, tower over their building at two times its height and run almost to the end of the rear lot line. It would drastically affect their access to natural daylight, air and privacy, all of which would negatively affect the values of their homes. The neighbors to the west of the proposed development of 7 Van Buren on the 800 block of Humphrey Avenue would also have their home values negatively impacted. Again with the building allowance requested of the rear setback be 1.5 feet, it would be overly close to their garages, backyards and homes and with the height of over 83 feet would be a domineering visual presence creating a whole host of issues. It would dramatically decrease the privacy in their homes and yards. It would also prevent them from buying electric cars and installing the requisite solar panels for the electric charging station. All of these negatives will depreciate their home resale values..

If the petitioner is allowed to build as proposed the adjacent and nearby homeowners will have their home values negatively impacted which goes against the written purpose of Village of Oak Park zoning ordinances and the Oak Park Preservation

Submitted By: Amanda Austin

Address: 746 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**The request by the petitioner for an allowance to vacate the Van Buren right of way is completely without precedence or merit and would be incongruent with the character of the surrounding structures and area.**

I ask that the Planning Commissioners for the Village of Oak Park deny the request by the petitioner for the allowance to vacate the Van Buren right of way. I ask that they deny this because no other building has ever been granted these exemptions, and it would not maintain the character of the neighborhood .

The request for this allowance is asking to build not only on and over the public sidewalk but to build the development even further over and onto where the street currently is. There is a zoning ordinance that requires the minimum setback from the lot line along this North lot line. This building is not only exceeding the required setback, but the Petitioner is asking to build beyond their lotline and onto the public sidewalk and street. The lack of easement on the north facade per the proposed design is in violation of current Village of Oak Park code and infringes on public space.

A freedom of information act was filed with the Village of Oak Park to see if any other buildings or developments were given allowance to build over an existing sidewalk and to vacate a public street so they could build over it. The response was that no records were found and to the best of our knowledge and research no development or building has been granted permission to build on and over the public sidewalk and street. There is no historical precedent for this type of allowance. Additionally, there are no buildings in the area that have been built over and above the public sidewalk or street. The design to build over and above the street and sidewalk is incongruous with any other buildings in the area and allowing this type of building would run counter to the Village of Oak Parks zoning ordinance that states the purpose of the document is to “ promote the orderly development of Oak Park in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan” see Art. 14, Section 1.2.C.

The proposed development is not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood - no buildings in the area on Humphrey, Austin, Harrison, or Jackson are built on public access sidewalks or streets. This is not an architectural feature found on any buildings in the area. There are no buildings in this neighborhood that are built on and above the public sidewalks. There are no buildings in the neighborhood that are built on and above the public street. This allowance of variation to build on the sidewalk and street in the Village of Oak Park is NOT found in this neighborhood or area of the Village of Oak Park. The design to build on and above the street and sidewalk is incongruous with any other buildings in the area and allowing this type of building would run counter to the Oak Park Village Zoning Ordinance that states its purpose is to “ To protect the character and maintain the stability of the Village’s residential and non-residential areas” as referenced in Art. 14, Section 1.2. D.

Building over public sidewalks and streets is not within keeping in the character of this neighborhood, has no precedence in this area and is simply out of context. Therefore, I ask that the request to vacate 15 feet of public property is not granted.

Submitted By: Jim Gilchrist

Address: 808 S. Humphrey Ave., Oak Park, IL

**Actions by the Oak Park Residence Corporation at the existing building on 7 Van Buren are not in line with going through this process in a good faith manner. Additionally, the parking as proposed by the Petitioner is inadequate per ADA guidelines, Village Codes and creates a problematic precedence for the Village of Oak Park. Additionally the ask to vacate the public right of way also creates a serious concern in terms of future precedence.**

I served as the Chair for 17 consecutive years in the Village of Oak Park Buildings and Codes Advisory Committee. I believe that no one prior or since has had a longer tenure as a Chair for that committee. Additionally, I am a third generation plumbing and heating contractor in Oak Park dating back to the early 1900’s having worked likely in many of your homes, in many historic homes, nationally landmarked buildings, churches and apartments including multiple Frank Lloyd Wright Homes including the the Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio.

It should be noted that Oak Park Residence Corporation has taken actions at the existing building at 7 Van Buren that demonstrate their bad faith in going through the planning and permit process.

While the building has been vacant for months over the summer and fall of 2021, multiple calls have gone into the Village of Oak Park concerning issues with the existing structure. There is paint peeling from the ceiling on the front walkway that is not addressed nor cleaned up, there is a very deep hole in the parking lot that poses a safety hazard, there is a broken window that is boarded up that has been repeatedly brought to the Villages attention which Oak Park Residence Corporation fails to address.

Perhaps most concerning is the fact that in the beginning of October Oak Park Residence Corporation had the gas meter locked, and then on Wednesday October 27th in the early afternoon NiCor showed up to cut gas service to the building. This is not mere speculation; neighbors had conversations with multiple NiCor employees confirming what the intent of their visit to the building was. Therefore, the gas is unable to be turned on and the building is unable to be heated and the service into the building will literally be cut in the parking lot. The spray paint from NiCor can be observed in the alleyway currently marking the service to be cut. These actions were taken before any meeting with the Planning Commission, in between meetings, before any variances were approved or permits issued. It is hardly in keeping with the spirit of working through this process in good faith with neighbors, the planning commissioners or the Village of Oak Park to sabotage one's own building in this way.

If the building is unheated and winter arrives with freezing temperatures, the plumbing pipes will freeze and crack or burst. This will cause water damage to the floors and walls and will make the plumbing in need of repair. Additionally it has the potential to create a situation in which dangerous mold and mildew could grow and thus create a health and safety hazard for anyone entering the structure and thus rendering it uninhabitable. As a plumbing and heating contractor for nearly 40 years I have in fact worked in this building and I am familiar with this heating system and the highly detrimental impact shutting of this system will have.

It should also be noted that the building at 7 Van Buren is heated via radiant heating in the floors. If the gas meters are not turned on and the heat kept to the minimally required temperature the entire heating system of 7 Van Buren will be irreparably damaged. If the temperature gets too low in these copper pipes used to heat the building they will crack thus rendering the heating system of this building inoperable and perhaps unrepairable depending on the extent of the damage. These cracked radiant heating pipes could potentially leak causing floor and ceiling damage. Again having worked with these very types of systems I am very knowledgeable about the type of damage this will cause.

I request that the building at 7 Van Buren have these issues addressed, that it be properly winterized and the gas meter reconnected and turned on, so that the building is heated and other issues addressed. The current building should not be sabotaged by its owners in order to justify the need to construct a new development. Additionally I ask that this building and its owners follow the proper vacant property procedures per Village of Oak Park Code. This building will soon be vacant for more than 6 months which would then require them to follow the Vacant Property Ordinances. Lastly, it seems not in keeping with the spirit of this process that such steps have been taken without even the complete review or recommendations made by you the Planning Commissioners, any determinations made by the Village of Oak Park Trustees and no applications approved or permits filed.



Additionally, I would like to address the parking or lack of parking proposed at 7 Van Buren. The Petitioner is asking for 17 parking spots for 45 units. However, we need to look at this closer. For a 45 unit per Village Code there should be 45 parking spaces. Of those 45 spaces per ADA guidelines 2 of those should be handicapped parking spaces. In order to have 2 handicapped parking spaces an aisle way will need to be created in order to be in compliance. Therefore, the real count for non-accessible handicap will decrease from 17 to realistically 15 spaces (an additional handicapped space not including possible space lost for the accessible aisleway). Besides that then there is a need for a loading parking space. The Petitioner is asking to have an allowance for variance however, this building perhaps more than any other needs this loading zone due to the lack of on-site tenant parking and distance to basic need stores. Where are all tenants supposed to unload their groceries, supplies and purchases if they don't want to carry them from blocks away where they hope to find on-street parking? That brings the total parking spots down to 15 parking spaces for non-handicapped, non-loading spaces. I am particularly disturbed that this would be allowed in an area that is not located close to grocery stores, pharmacies, etc that are closer to such daily basic needs, the nearest grocery store being about a mile away.

Another important thing that needs to be considered is that this proposed building includes the 5 spaces from lot 25V as part of the building envelope. Those spaces basically are included within this new building envelope. Thus, the true contribution of parking spaces for this proposed structure is only 10 parking spaces for a 45 unit building. This is a rate of 22%. If this plan is recommended and approved, that sets the precedent for all future builders to expect an allowance of only 22% of parking per unit ratio per Village of Oak Park Codes. If they are more centrally located, etc. this will then set the precedence that these future developers should expect an allowance of 22% , however they may feel confident in asking for only 10% or absolutely zero parking. It should be noted that the developers of any future planned buildings located closer to these basic needs will feel justified in requesting an even lower ratio of parking to unit variances.

Briefly, I am also concerned about the Petitioners request for the allowance to vacate 15 feet of public land. This again sets a dangerous precedence in selling public Village of Oak Park land for the exclusive and private use of developers. They are taking public land and selling it to a developer so that they can turn it into a mostly market-rate apartment building. And while it only is 15 feet to the North, it extends approximately 100 feet almost along the entire lot line from east to west. This is not a small ask of vacating public property in relation to the area.

Again if these multiple parking variances and vacate variances are recommended this then sets the precedence for all future builders and developers and a very dangerous one at that. Oak Park Residence Corporation itself owns at least two other properties on Austin Blvd. that are almost identical to the existing building in size, age and location on cul-de-sac streets off of Austin Blvd. An approval of this building will only act as a template for these other structures and for any other developer who wants to build in Oak Park. This proposed building may be our concern currently, but if this precedent is set then for perpetuity any and every architect, developer or planner can ask for variances and has the historical precedent to be awarded the right to build over public sidewalks and streets.

Never in my 17 years have I ever seen such a thing, I am flabbergasted and astounded that this degree of allowances is even being requested. The very purpose of the Village of Oak Park codes

and ordinances are being jeopardized if these allowances are approved. I spent nearly two decades as the Chair of the Building Codes Advisory Committee and with my professional and Village Code expertise do not believe this plan should be recommended and I do not believe these variances should be approved. I ask you to seriously consider the precedence you will be setting for all future buildings if these variances are allowed and the implications it will have to the Village of Oak Park and its residents.

Good evening,

My name is Anna Winters. I am an African American, senior citizen that has been a member of this community for decades with my family. I have lived on the 800 block of South Humphrey Avenue in the same home for over 45 years. I have raised four children here with my husband. We watched them grow up in this great neighborhood, graduating from Oak Park public schools and then returning with their own families. My family has many concerns about the traffic this development will create on this block and surrounding neighborhood. We live close to Harrison and have many reservations about the increased traffic and parking from the proposed structure at 7 Van Buren. I am concerned that the lack of adequate parking at 7 Van Buren will pose safety risks to its tenants and other residents who would have their parking distance from home extended.

I request that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the application by the petitioner to decrease the required parking spaces from 45 to 17. Not having adequate on-site parking places this building's tenants at undue risk.

This area of Oak Park has zero parking garages for a sheltered, all-weather safe area for tenants to park their vehicles. Having a safe, sheltered parking area generally is important for families with children, the elderly, and people with mobility issues. Shoveling out snow with small children would prove challenging both physically and logistically, especially for a single parent household. An older population ( Petitioner spoke of attracting tenants who want to age in place.), or anyone else who might have physical challenges would be disadvantaged by the lack of on site parking.

The lack of adequate parking also creates a very real safety concern for those residents with occupations or jobs that are not the standard 9-5 hours. Many are in healthcare -such as late shift nurses, construction, the food industry, and other careers or jobs that typically work non-standard hours. Therefore, walking distances in the late or early morning hours to get to distant parking spaces does not ensure the safety of residents of 7 Van Buren or of neighboring residents who also would have to walk further because of the increased number of vehicles and lack of available spaces. This puts especially women, members of any minority, LGBTQ plus or the elderly who might be targeted at an increased safety risk unnecessarily. If the development at 7 Van Buren provided adequate parking, its tenants would not be placed in situations that would risk their personal safety. Again, please refer to the Oak Park Police reports from this area to get a sense of activity and frequency of potentially dangerous situations these tenants might face by being forced into these unsafe parking conditions.

I ask that the petitioner NOT receive the variance to reduce the number of parking spots from the required minimum per Village of Oak Park codes of 45 to 17 spaces. Inadequate parking at 7 Van Buren poses a safety risk to its tenants and its neighbors.

Thank you for listening to my concerns,  
Anna Winters

Greetings,

My name is Sarah Hammer. I am a working mom with two little kids (ages 1 and 4) and a dog owner. My husband and I moved to Humphrey Avenue five years ago when I was pregnant with our first child. We moved to this neighborhood because it was a family oriented, safe and friendly, welcoming neighborhood. I am concerned that the preferred LEED certifications are not being pursued by the petitioner.

The Petitioner has said that the PHIUS + 2018 and 2018 + Source Zero requirements that they will be meeting are more rigorous than the preferred Village of Oak Park standard of LEED certification.

It says that they will meet the PHIUS + 2018 requirements and PHIUS + Source Zero. Is the Petitioner not going for the LEED certification which is strongly encouraged by the Village of Oak Park in their own ordinance? These are two very different standards and look and compare very different aspects of building - this is not an apples to apples comparison, this is apples to oranges.

As I understand with Passive Building the goal is to design for climate specific comfort and performance. However, with LEED builders are to design in a way that increases water efficiency, reduces impacts in energy, waste, and looks at the materials and resources used among others assessed items.

Nor does one preclude the other. Additionally, if I am understanding correctly the developer could actually use some of their Passive House features to earn a credit towards an LEED certification - so why would they not do that?

LEED certification is the preferred method by the Village of Oak Park so why is this not being used? This is perplexing to me since other LEED buildings, including a park district building which was designed by Tom Basset - Dilley, that have been built in Oak Park have been applauded, awarded and advertised as receiving prestigious, rare and highly regarded LEED certifications. If this is the golden standard that other Petitioner's are held to and lauded for, why should this also not be the standard for 7 Van Buren?

Thank you,

Ms. Sarah Hammer

Hello,

My name is Cori McMillan. My husband Jeremy and I moved to Oak Park from Chicago this summer with our child. We moved to this area because it was a friendly, progressive neighborhood. As a multiracial family, racial diversity is extremely important to us. We felt most at home in the Harrison Arts District. We worked from home during the pandemic and got to meet many of our neighbors while out on walk with our child and dog. We were astonished to learn that a 7 story building was to be erected down our block. We have seen this type of construction happen before at our previous street and it caused a great deal of congestion and new problems. We currently live happily right next to a condo building - but it is 3 stories high, not 7! I am concerned because The petitioner's application does not show the true distance between buildings nor does it properly apply for variance.

I oppose the petitioner's request for variance to decrease the minimum interior setback. I oppose this because the Petitioner Has not submitted enough detail about the solar panel installation to determine the true distance between the buildings, and further information needs to be provided by the petitioner.

It should be noted that the architectural plans do not show how close the proposed building would be to 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. after the wall mounted solar panels are installed. The plans only reflect the distance between 408-410 S. Austin Blvd. and 7 Van Buren prior to the wall mounted solar being installed. The plans reflect the distance between the building material walls. This is of great concern as the Village of Oak Park codes allow for wall panel solar units to project from a building up to two feet from the exterior of the building. This means that once the solar panels are installed on the proposed building, the distance between these two structures could in reality be only a distance of 6.30 feet. If the true distance between the buildings after the wall mounted solar panels are installed is less than 8.30 feet, the application for a variation needs to be corrected to show that the petitioner is seeking to decrease the interior setback from 9.05 feet to as little as 6.30 feet. Since the Petitioner is already asking for an allowance on the requested interior setback we need to be doubly sure that the request is correct. When the initial plans for a distance of 8.3 feet are already creating much concern we need to make sure that the true distance is not even smaller and even more detrimental to the owners of 408-410 S. Austin Blvd.

I ask you to deny the request to decrease the interior side setback from 9.05 feet to 8.3 feet. I also ask that the Planning Commissioners request that the applicant submit a more detailed architectural plan in regards to the installation of the solar panels on the southern facade. I ask that before any recommendations or determinations are made that these materials are submitted and reviewed by the Planning Commissioners and made available to the public.

Thank you for your time,

Cori McMillan

Good evening,

My name is Susan Matta. My husband and I have lived on the 800 block of S. Humphrey for nearly 20 years. My husband was born and raised in Oak Park and after spending time in other suburbs we moved back to Oak Park. I have many concerns with the proposed development at 7 Van Buren however I am raising my voice tonight to speak about how the request to vacate a portion of the Van Buren right of way abutting the subject property will restrict the Village of Oak Parks future street and sidewalk planning.

I oppose the request by the petitioner Oak Park Residence Corporation for an allowance to vacate a portion of Van Buren right of way as it will limit future street and sidewalk plans or projects. I request that they deny this request.

This requested variance to vacate a portion of the Van Buren right of way will decrease the overall width of Van Buren from the alleyway between Humphrey Avenue and Austin Blvd to the cul-de-sac. Narrowing the width of Van Buren with this variance allowance would restrict any future street plans or changes. The street of Van Buren would no longer be wide enough to open up the cul-de-sac in the future and allow access to or from Austin Blvd.

Also this requested variance would result in a change of the Van Buren sidewalk alignment. The building as proposed would be built on and over the existing sidewalk thus pushing the proposed sidewalk corridor area out into the existing street where the parking spaces currently exist. Therefore, the sidewalk spanning from the alleyway to Austin Boulevard will not align with the public sidewalk that runs to the west from the alley to Humphrey Avenue and beyond heading west.

There has been no information provided as to what type of sidewalk designs or features will be made to help connect these two disparate misaligned areas. This is important not only for aesthetics of the neighborhood but also more importantly to ensure the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists using this well trafficked sidewalk.

I oppose the request by the petitioner Oak Park Residence Corporation for an allowance to vacate a portion of Van Buren right of way as it will limit future street and sidewalk plans or projects. I request that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners deny the petitioner's request.

Thank you for your attention. Sincerely,

Susan Mattas



## 7 Van Buren – Written Public Comments.

Hello,

I am a landlord in Oak Park and just want to echo the positive community sentiment around the 7 Van Buren construction project.

Thanks,  
Zack Reder

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please stop the plan to expand the new proposed apartment building beyond the zoning limit of 4 stories if 7 why not 107 stories?  
please stop this plan!

gib schneider  
822 n stone lageange park il 60526

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Fellow Oak Park residents,  
I enthusiastically support plans for 7 Randolph [Van Buren] exactly as presented and look forward to seeing the building in place. Time to shake Austin Ave up for the better-the more stories to capitalize on the unparalleled view, the better.

Thank you,  
Stasia Thompson

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To whom this may concern:

I'm writing in **support** of the new building development proposed for 7 Van Burne street. I know there has been a lot of organizing against this project. I think most of the complaints are unfounded, overblown or could be easily mitigated.

If we want to continue to be an economically diverse community, we have to be open to change. We cannot take the position that our Village or our neighborhoods are "full." We have to make room for new green development and new members of our community.

I respectfully ask you to consider supporting this project.

Thank you  
Dan West  
721 S Humphrey Ave

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Date: October 6, 2021

To: Oak Park Plan Commission

From: Chris Donovan, 733 S Elmwood, Oak Park, IL 60304

Re: **Written testimony submitted for the Thursday, October 7, 2021 Public Hearing pertaining to the Planned Development Application for 7 Van Buren Street, Oak Park; PIN 16-17-131-013-0000**

Commissioners,

Please accept my written testimony in opposition to the Planned Development Application submitted by the Oak Park Residence Corporation (OPRC) for the property located at 7 Van Buren Street.

In short; the proposal is for too much building on too small a property. The proposed structure utilizes the Planned Development process and requested variances to subvert the Zoning Regulations for a R-7 Multifamily District. The proposal does this by decreasing the minimum lot area by 70%, increasing the maximum height restrictions by 62%, increasing the maximum lot coverage by 18%, decreasing the minimum side setback requirement by 8% and the rear setback requirement by 92%.

But, wait, there's more.

The proposed building really exceeds the height restriction even more by including roof-top solar panels which could elevate the top of the structure as much as 15 feet, although the zoning ordinance excludes that additional height from the building. The requested "allowances" would eliminate the buffer yard setbacks, and reduce by half the number of parking spaces required for the proposed 45-unit building. The proposal eliminates a loading area and the existing parkway while vacating a portion the abutting right-of-way. If approved, by vacating the said portion of the abutting right-of-way the proposed development will constrict and vehicle (including moving trucks) from operating on the remaining portion of the Van Buren Street cul-de-sac.

What are the required "Public Benefits"? The existing 12-unit apartment building at 7 Van Buren is not a blighted structure.

Austin Boulevard is not in need of redevelopment unlike other significant streets in Oak Park, predominantly in areas zoned as commercial districts but permit residential buildings, such as Lake Street and Madison.

Tall buildings do not necessarily increase property tax revenue for the Village to the relief of other property owners. Indeed, as exemplified by the Vantage Building, a tall building could increase taxes on single-family residences in Oak Park.

The Oak Park Residence Corporation proposal is not in actuality transit related development. While in proximity to the CTA Blue Line station on Austin, it is removed from shopping and service areas accessible by alternative transportation methods, such as walking or biking.

The proposed building could actually reduce the number of affordable living units at 7 Van Buren Street. When I asked Executive Director David Pope how many of the units are affordable in the existing 12-unit building, he responded that it was the ResCorp's goal to have 20% of the aggregate number of units across all of its buildings to be affordable. But, if all 12 (100%) of the existing apartments are currently affordable, and 9 (20%) of the 45 units in the proposed building would be affordable, then the result would be a loss of 3 (25%) affordable units currently at 7 Van Buren Street.

Finally, I will leave the opposition to the building due for the physical impact it will have on neighbors with homes or buildings within close proximity to the proposed building. However, because ResCorp's proposed project violates all of the zoning regulations for an R-7 District and does not meet the standards required for approval of a Planned Development project, I urge member of the Plan Commission to reject the application from the Oak Park Residence Corporation for 7 Van Buren Street.

If you have any questions regarding my testimony I can be contacted by telephone (708-341-6506) or by email ([cdonovan2@prodigy.net](mailto:cdonovan2@prodigy.net)).

Respectfully submitted.

## ***ARBOR WEST NEIGHBORS***

Arbor West Neighbors (AWN) is a grassroots, intergenerational organization of residents that supports and enriches aging through community building and advocacy in Oak Park, River Forest, Forest Park, and other near-in suburbs, as well as the Austin community of Chicago.

AWN believes that one of the greatest needs in our service area is affordable housing in elevator buildings that can enable older persons to age in place in their home communities. Recently the AWN Advocacy Committee met with David Pope, the President of the Oak Park Residence Corporation, who described the Residence Corporation's development proposed for the intersection of Austin Boulevard and Van Buren Street.

This 45-unit development would represent the first new construction of a multi-family apartment building along the Austin Boulevard corridor in almost 100 years. We are particularly pleased that the building is an elevator building that will be accessible to older persons with mobility limitations. Additionally, we like the concept that it will be a mixed income building with 20% of its units reserved for households below 60% of the area's median income level.

The proximity of the building to Columbus Park will help bridge the division that has separated Oak Park from the Austin community for many years. We hope that the building will also serve as an intergenerational uniting point so that older residents can live next to and mix with younger community residents.

We are also impressed that the development will be the first net-zero energy development to be built in the metropolitan Chicago area. This innovative design will identify our community as a leader in environmental issues, just as our community has been nationally known as a leader in promoting racial integration for nearly 50 years.

We are happy to lend our support to the Residence Corporation as it moves forward with this development and hope that the community will back this initiative.

### **Arbor West Neighbors**

[arborwestneighbors.org](http://arborwestneighbors.org)

## **Additional public comment received October 7, 2021.**

Members of the Plan Commission:

My name is Steven Brown and I live on the 700 block of South Humphrey. I'm also a practicing urban planner. I support the 7 Van Buren proposal. While it's natural for opponents to be the more vocal group, I want the Commission to know that many neighbors see tremendous value in this project, as I do. I'll first explain my support and then respond to some of the concerns I've heard.

First: Oak Park desperately needs this kind of development. The village has become increasingly unaffordable, and most new development is luxury high-rises, single-family teardowns and luxury gut rehabs. I hear from neighbors that they can't afford to retire here or their children can't afford to move here. This project will offer moderately priced housing options to help make Oak Park a place where people of different incomes and household sizes can find a place to live. That makes our community a better place for all.

Second: The project includes an aggressive commitment to sustainability, which the Village says is a priority but which we've done almost nothing to follow through on. If we're serious about addressing the climate crisis, it's time to demand it be reflected in new developments in a meaningful way.

Third: The building is attractive and thoughtfully designed. I especially appreciate that the design enhances our neighborhood's connection to neighboring Columbus Park, such an underappreciated asset in our backyard! This will improve our neighborhood.

Fourth: This is a nonprofit, Oak Park-based developer with a track record of well maintained and affordable housing. I'd much rather they develop this site than a profit-driven developer.

Fifth: I look forward to more neighbors, more customers to support businesses in the Harrison Arts District. More property tax base, without the request for a financial incentive from the Village.

As for the concerns I've heard:

First, neighborhood character: What makes our neighborhood great isn't building heights or parking spaces, it's the people and especially the diversity. The truth is, because of how housing costs and taxes have skyrocketed, the character of our neighborhood has already changed, in ways that aren't all positive. Change happens, and that's OK, especially when it's advancing values that matter to us like affordability and sustainability. And in fact, the charming character of our neighborhood is possible in part BECAUSE we're close together, because we haven't built seas of parking, and because so many of us choose to walk and cycle places instead of drive.

Second, parking and traffic: There seems to be a misconception that everyone in Oak Park needs and owns a car, when in fact thousands of Oak Park households already live without one. According to the Census, 15% of Oak Park households, and 30% of single-person households, have no car. This project

features mostly studios and one-bedroom apartments, it's close to good public transit, and includes low-income set-asides. Those all point to lower car ownership. The proposed parking is in line with that, and it's consistent with the developer's other properties where a majority of tenants don't own cars. Plenty of buildings on Austin and Harrison have little to no off-street parking, and we make it work as a community. Personally, I don't care if someone parks in front of my house anyway. I don't own that space. And let's think long-term: private car ownership is already declining, people are already driving less, and our kids' generations are MUCH less likely to choose to own and store their own vehicle with so many other ways of getting around. In a generation, almost no one will own a private car. Requiring excessive parking is short-sighted and economically wasteful. More parking means fewer apartments, which means higher rents. Parking is a very low-value use, so it'll also mean less tax revenue. Excess parking also damages neighborhood character.

Third, privacy: This building does not materially encroach on anyone's privacy in a way that differs at all from existing development patterns. We have houses crammed close together, and the east side of our street faces apartment buildings already.

Let's live our values and build for the next century, not the last one. I encourage you to support this project.

Regards,

Steven Brown

715 S Humphrey Ave

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Dear Oak Park Plan Commission:

My name is Gary Cuneen, and I'm the executive director of Seven Generations Ahead – a 20 year old sustainable communities non-profit based in Oak Park. I facilitate the PlanItGreen initiative – a project of the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation – designed to implement the ten-year Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest. I'm writing in support of the Oak Park Residence Corporation's 7 Van Buren project.

The project will bring 45 new economically integrated units to the Village (with 20% of them being reserved as affordable units). As an example of new construction, this building will be a notional model and will be one of the most important net zero energy buildings in the country. It will also bring accessible elevator units to southeastern Oak Park in a way that will allow seniors and persons with disabilities to remain in their neighborhoods and to age in place. In an age where the climate crisis and issues around social equity loom large in our community and in society at large, the combination of the project's environmental responsibility and leadership in relation to greenhouse gas emissions reductions, its affordable housing component and accessibility for people with disabilities and older adults makes this project a significant, signature project for our community. As part of a broader Oak Park and national strategy to address the climate crisis, this project puts a stake in the ground for Oak

Park and serves as a model for future projects that will support our collective goal of averting a climate disaster and caring for the well-being of current and future generations. Thank you for your consideration.

Gary Cuneen  
Founder/Executive Director  
Seven Generations Ahead  
P. O. Box 3125  
Oak Park, IL 60303

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

I am submitting this public comment in support of 7 Van Buren and am imploring you to approve this development.

I am an advocate and supporter of affordable, accessible housing for Oak Park. I grew up here and have chosen to move back to this village to raise my family. It is no secret that there is a dearth of affordable housing within our community. Housing prices and rents are pushing people out of Oak Park and affecting the ability for our elders to age in place in the community that they love. Oak Park is in desperate need for more non-luxury, moderately priced housing. Approving this development will ensure that our housing stock is diverse and accessible to individuals and families of all income levels. In order to successfully diversify our community's housing stock, more buildings like 7 Van Buren must be built. Yes, this will change the supposed "character" of our predominantly low-rise and single-family home community. For me, that is a change that I 100% welcome and embrace. The future of sustainable, accessible and affordable communities is built around these mid-rise buildings.

Regarding the number of parking spaces associated with this development, please do not fall victim to the ever-present parking discussion which continually plagues these development conversations. The 7 Van Buren building is considered a transit oriented development, located within walking distance from buses and CTA trains. No, you do not need a car to happily live, work and travel around Oak Park. There are plenty of people who are happy to live without a car. There are also plenty of people who either cannot or do not want to take on the financial burden of car ownership. It is not necessary for every single apartment in our village to have a parking space. The leadership in our village must actively recognize and prioritize building development, and its corresponding infrastructure, so that does **not** center cars or vehicles within its construction. Roughly 15% of Oak Park households do not have a car. This should be celebrated and encouraged. Oak Park roads are clogged with traffic creating dangerous traffic patterns, collisions and injuries on a daily basis. Much of this traffic is local and could be accomplished on foot, on bike or on public transportation. The more people who move to Oak Park that do not need or want a car, the more accessible, safe and pleasant our community will be.

I encourage the Planning Commission to look at not only the zoning components of this petition but also reflect on how this building and its residents can positively impact our overall community. There is an opportunity here for collaboration between other commissions as well, such as the Environment and

Energy Commission and the Transportation Commission. Our Village Board has established clear goals for Oak Park which reflect addressing climate change, creating accessible safe streets, and strengthening our affordable housing stock. The 7 Van Buren development is a perfect reflection of what the future of our community should look like.

Many of the comments that will or have been shared against this development are red herrings and are commonly deployed whenever a new, different development is proposed for our community. The same was done a few years ago with the 801 S Oak Park building a few years ago! Change can be a scary and, at times, an emotional thing to experience. But our community needs to change. Change will allow us to remain true to our values, prioritizing diversity and ensuring opportunity for our most vulnerable residents.

Vote Yes to 7 Van Buren.

Thank you,  
Jenna Holzberg  
Oak Park resident: 800 block south East Ave.

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Dear Members of the Plan Commission,

I am writing to submit comments in support of the proposal for the Planned Development petition at 7 Van Buren in Oak Park. I live down the block from this site on South Humphrey Ave and I also serve as the Natural Area Steward at Columbus Park in Chicago, across the street from the proposed site of development.

I am familiar with the building that is at this site now and know that it needs to be replaced because of issues such as black mold and other problems that have forced previous tenants out. If the building needs to be updated/replaced, I hope to see development on this site that is in line with my values and what are the stated values of Oak Park Village. I believe development is sorely needed on Austin Blvd in Oak Park, this street has been neglected for decades. In my volunteer role at Columbus Park we have been working on cleaning up and restoring a section of woodlands across from this building to create a new nature trail right on Austin Blvd. Some of the board members of the Oak Park Residence Corp showed up and invested their time and hard work to remove at least 100 lbs of glass and bag after bag of litter from this space. These developers have demonstrated to me they are invested in the well-being of this community and they operate as a nonprofit. I would like to see this site improved and I would like to see a local organization with a commitment to community like this like involved in the development in my neighborhood. The proposed project is not likely have an impact on the natural areas (wildlife, including plantlife) at Columbus Park. But this development might encourage more people to utilize this natural area and connect with nature.

As an environmental scientist I also feel that concerns about parking are outdated given the climate crisis we are currently living in. We should be planning for alternative modes of transportation that

alleviate the use of fossil-fuel dependent vehicles. We should be investing in development that understands these priorities. We should be discouraging driving and promoting walking, biking, and public transit. The science has made this crystal clear. One of the primary reasons my family chose to live in this neighborhood was for its walkability. There are numerous nearby restaurants, bakeries, shops, and grocery stores in a walkable distance from our block. Our children can walk to their schools. We have easy access to the blue line and are a short bus ride from the green line or metra stations. Biking improvements in both Oak Park and Chicago are make it increasingly easier to rely on this form of transportation more as well.

I disagree with some of the complaints I have heard about the "character" of our neighborhood changing. We already have several apartment buildings on Austin that share an alley and our neighborhood is a mix of single-family homes and multi-family, multi-story buildings. I think this project will do more to enhance our neighborhood, support local businesses in the Arts District, and offer an attractive update to the Austin face of our neighborhood.

Thank you,

Laura Brentner

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I am writing to support the construction of 7 Van Buren.

I am very excited to see this building constructed as a net zero building, which would be a role model for other buildings.

I am also in support of the construction of additional affordable units and find it very exciting that new development will be built on Austin.

Thank you to the Plan Commission for your consideration of this project and for all the other work you do.

Simone Boutet

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Hello,

I have a prior commitment so rather than speak at the meeting, I am emailing my support for the building at 7 Van Buren. Considering you have received a 122 page document in opposition, I will keep my reasoning short:

- Increased density in Oak Park can help us lower taxes.
- The building is a real improvement over the current building.
- It increases the number of affordable dwellings in Oak Park, and has the opportunity to help more people stay in Oak Park when their kids are out of school.
- It is appropriately sized for the Austin corridor. These main roads through the village (Austin, Roosevelt, North, Harlem, Lake, Madison) are ideal for larger, more dense dwellings.



- The building is excellently styled and the green features are great – the top of development most Oak Parkers seem to say they want.

One last note. Like all major projects in Oak Park that have trade-offs, there will be vocal opposition and I am sure you will consider it. Yet one significant group of people will not have a say – those who will/could live in this building. This building is an opportunity for 44 more families/individuals to take advantage of all Oak Park has to offer, such as good schools, good transportation, diverse and welcoming neighbors, as well as contribute to the community themselves.

All-in-all, I strongly believe & Van Buren will be a net improvement to Oak Park.

Brian Souders

1024 S Elmwood

Chicago Architecture Center Docent, Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park

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To the Oak Park Plan Commission:

As Oak Park residents and affordable housing activists we strongly support the Residence Corporation's 7 Van Buren development proposal.

In Oak Park we need more multi-family elevator buildings and in particular, new construction on the Austin Boulevard corridor. The creative design of these 45 units and their proximity to Columbus Park will help bridge the division between Oak Park and Austin. Also, the attention to net-zero development will in an important way make us leaders in environmental design.

Please support this proposal!

Susan Stall & Charlie Hoch

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Good evening,

My name is Anna Winters. I am an African American, senior citizen that has been a member of this community for decades with my family. I have lived on the 800 block of South Humphrey Avenue in the same home for over 45 years. I have raised four children here with my husband. We watched them grow up in this great neighborhood, graduating from Oak Park public schools and then returning with their own families. My family has many concerns about the traffic this development will create on this block and surrounding neighborhood. We live close to Harrison and have many reservations about the increased traffic from 7 Van Buren without any proper studies.

I oppose the development at 7 Van Buren because there have not been any Traffic Impact Studies. Oak Park Residence Corporation has not collaborated with the Village of Oak Park and nearby Chicago to ensure the safety of their tenants, other pedestrians, or vehicles in the area. It should be requested by the Village of Oak Park Planning Commission that Rescorp conducts and provides the results of a Traffic Impact Study to ensure the safety of surrounding vehicular traffic and pedestrians. Because Mr. Pope was a Village President just 8 years ago, we believe that to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest that this study must be performed by an outside, independent, professional, licensed Professional Engineer.

Per Village of Oak Park code it states that "A traffic impact study, prepared by a professional engineer qualified in traffic analysis, showing the proposed traffic circulation pattern, including counts, within and in the vicinity of the area of the development which includes any pending development projects and an analysis which does not include any pending development projects. The location and description of any public and traffic-related public improvements to be installed, including any streets and access easements must also be provided."

Making sure these roadways are safe is of utmost importance. We want to be able to drive safely on our own block, have our grandchildren here without worry when walking across the street or riding their bikes. There is plenty of traffic here already and we want to make sure that a traffic impact study is done to educate ourselves and the Planning Commission to determine the impact on vehicular traffic, etc. this development at 7 Van Buren will have. We don't want to see more car accidents, pedestrians struck or injuries to our neighbors because a study hasn't been done. We also worry for the new tenants at 7 Van Buren that without a proper traffic study the resulting issues with traffic could potentially

literally hurt them. From what we can find there has been no steps made to make sure that the tenants will be able to make a safe crossing to any areas such as the bus line, CTA line, Columbus Park, Austin Blvd or elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Without having a proper Traffic Impact Study submitted for review by the Planning Commission and subject to viewing by the public I ask that this development proposal at 7 Van Buren be postponed until that information can be reviewed or to have these variances rejected by the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners.

Sincerely,

Anna Winters

Hello,

My name is Cori McMillan. My husband Jeremy and I moved to Oak Park from Chicago this summer with our child. We moved to this area because it was a friendly, progressive neighborhood. As a multiracial family, racial diversity is extremely important to us. We felt most at home in the Harrison Arts District. We worked from home during the pandemic and got to meet many of our neighbors while out on walk with our child and dog. We were astonished to learn that a 7 story building was to be erected down our block. We have seen this type of construction happen before at our previous street and it caused a great deal of congestion and new problems. We currently live happily right next to a condo building - but it is 3 stories high, not 7!

I request that the variation requested by the petitioner to increase the maximum building coverage from 70 to 85.17% be denied. I ask that it be denied as I believe the calculation of this to be incorrect. I would like to see and it should be provided to the Oak Park Planning Commissioners, the formula of how this percentage calculation was created.

Lot coverage means that this percentage of the lot area is permitted to be covered by all buildings above ground level. Did the calculation used include the area that is being asked to be vacated on the Van Buren right of way? If the calculation is being made with only the coverage of the building within its lot lines that is not truly reflective as Oak Park Residence Corporation is asking to build over the lot lines and that additional square footage should be added into the calculation. Otherwise this maximum building coverage percentage is not at all accurate. If the 85% is only including the amount of coverage within its lot lines and does not account for the amount of land the Petitioner asks the Village to vacate so that they can build over the lot line then this percentage should be much higher than 87%.

I ask that the variance being requested by the petitioner be denied until an explanation of how this percentage was calculated can be explained and the true coverage of this building on the lot can be established. Only then can the Planning Commission and neighbors properly evaluate the implications of the building's coverage.

Thank you,

Cori McMillan

Good evening,

My name is Susan Matta. My husband and I have lived on the 800 block of S. Humphrey for nearly 20 years. My husband was born and raised in Oak Park and after spending time in other suburbs we moved back to Oak Park. I have many concerns with the proposed development at 7 Van Buren however I am raising my voice tonight to speak on the front elevation of the building in relation to the surrounding buildings.

I request that the Planning Commissioners for the Village of Oak Park deny the requests for variances by the petitioners. Specifically, there are concerns regarding the following Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinances. 7-9-12 Item #9 that states:

The historic and architectural integrity of the property and its environment shall be protected by making the new work compatible with the existing structures, surrounding structures, whenever one or more of these elements is affected by such work, with respect to the following design criteria:

h. Dominant horizontal or vertical expression of the front elevation.

The vertical concrete band on the front facade of the proposed 7 Van Buren building is overly dark in coloration in comparison to any of the other buildings. The vertical element of this feature does not correlate well or is compatible with the existing structures adjacent or nearby.

Additionally, there is a mass of solid wall on the southeast corner of this building which does not relate at all to the historic Poley building mere feet away. The Poley building is a facade of stone, brick, and plenty of glass in the facade and corner adjacent to the proposed building. The design of this corner is completely incongruous with that of the Poley building because it is overly heavy in its appearance and mass and type of building material. This violates the ordinances of the historic preservation document and compromises the architectural and historical integrity of the Poley building.

I ask that the allowances be denied and that the petitioner is required to make changes necessary to conform to Village of Oak Park Preservation Ordinances.

Sincerely,

Susan Matta

Greetings,

My name is Sarah Hammer. I am a working mom with two little kids (ages 1 and 4) and a dog owner. My husband and I moved to Humphrey Avenue five years ago when I was pregnant with our first child. We moved to this neighborhood because it was a family oriented, safe and friendly, welcoming neighborhood.

I ask that the Village of Oak Park Planning Commissioners reject the request by the petitioner for the variances. I ask this because the proposed wall mounted solar panels on the southern facade of 7 Van Buren do not meet Village Code requirements as a direct result of the petitioners asking for allowances of the dimensional standards.

Per Village of Oak Park Code 9-11. U.2.d. It states "Wall mounted solar panels must be integrated into the structure as an architectural feature". If one looks at the South facade of the proposed building at 7 Van Buren it does not appear that these wall-mounted solar panels are incorporated as any type of architectural feature- instead it is a solid, dark and heavy facade of solar panels.

Additionally, the Village of Oak Park per code 7.4.A has standards of building facades. It states that "a building wall that faces a street must not have a blank, uninterrupted length of more than 20 feet". The south facade containing the solar panels would be highly visible to Austin Blvd with the height of the building proposed at over 80 feet. Given this the solar panel facade does not meet this criteria and has more than 20 feet of uninterrupted lengths of panels on the south facade of the proposed development.

Also per this same code they should be including at least two of the following items: either a change in plane, masonry texture or pattern, windows or an equivalent element that subdivides the wall into smaller sections. Again the southern facade of the proposed building at 7 Van Buren does NOT include two of these features as laid out in Village of Oak Park code. There is a small area for balconies in the middle of this 120 foot span going East to West and two narrow vertical window runs. There are definitely more than 20 feet of panel lengths that are uninterrupted and blank.

Lastly, section 7.4 A. 3. States that "For multi-family developments, large or long facades must be broken up into multiple bays, while medium sized facades must be broken into vertical elements. The development as planned at 7 Van Buren

contains neither of these features in order to comply with Village of Oak Park building design standard codes.

I oppose the allowances asked for by the petitioner because this proposed development at 7 Van Buren is in violation of these ordinances in how it relates to the building's mass and height.

Thank you,  
Sarah Hammes

## Public Comment after last email – October 7, 2021

Hello Oak Park Planning Department. I would like to submit my response to the proposed building at 7 Van Buren. Please see below for my thoughts and thank you for taking the time to read what I have to write.

I would like to voice my opinion that the developer should not be allowed to move forward with the proposed building plan at the 7 Van Buren address. I have lived in the South Oak Park area for many years and I do not think that this development will benefit the current residents of this area in any way and in several ways will make the living experience in Oak Park worse than it is now. Oak Park has decided over the past decade that it would be a good idea to build several large high rise buildings. These buildings inherently lead to more people living in the same area and as such caused a rise in items like car traffic and trash on the streets. Building a large building at this address and removing the cul de sac would lead to increased traffic from Austin which would make it more dangerous for the children living in and around that area. The traffic on Ridgleland and Jackson is already the highest it has ever been and adding more multi-family housing and access points into the neighborhood would only exacerbate this problem. The proposed reduction in parking spaces for the building would force more people to purchase already scarce parking permits in order to park their vehicles. Oak Park already has very limited parking options and adding more cars while taking away existing parking is a bad idea. Finally, I don't think that we need another large, poorly designed "modern" looking building taking away the architectural excellence that makes living in Oak Park nice. A perfect example of this is the senior center building being built on Madison. It used to be a very nice stone and glass building with some decorative reliefs. It is now turning into yet another large, grey monstrosity that is depressing to look at. Oak Park is full of good families who love great architecture and relaxing in a peaceful area that does not have the hustle and bustle of the city. Please stop the trend of packing more families into an already crowded space and do not approve the building plan for this building. A better solution for that area and the families that live here would be to tear down that building and build a nice park with trees to relax under after a long day of work. Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and have a great day. Regards,

Nicholaus O. McKenna

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Plan Commission,

I am writing a letter of support for the proposed development by ResCorp at 7 Van Buren St. I am a strong advocate for more low income/ **affordable** and accessible housing in our village. We need more accessible housing for people with disabilities across the state; this a big concern and we also need more accessible housing for older adults as well as for people who want to stay in their building or age in place. It is essential that we support housing that accommodates people of all ages, abilities and incomes. We need more housing that is inclusive and allows residents to stay in our community.



Thank you,

Betsy Kelly

1007 S. Euclid Ave. Oak Park

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To: Village Planner, [planning@oak-park.us](mailto:planning@oak-park.us).

From: Athena Williams, Executive Director, The Oak Park Regional Housing Center.

Attention Board.

The Oak Park Regional Housing Center is writing this in support of the planned development to be built at 7 Van Buren. We are in support of the accessibility this building will bring to the area that is made up of largely older buildings without elevators. We do get a lot of requests from apartment seekers that are in need of first-floor apartments or buildings with an elevator. These types of apartments are in short supply especially in this area and especially at an affordable rental price range. We are in support of this project that will create more affordable housing for Oak Park.

Oak Park Residence Corporation has been a leader in the rehabilitation and revitalization of vintage apartment buildings for over 25 years. One of the main areas they have focused on are apartment buildings on Austin Boulevard and the east side of Oak Park. It is because of that focus and with our partnership that we have been able to easily continue to support our integration values which is the very foundation the Village of Oak Park has been built upon.

**Michael D. Stewart**

Technical Assistance / Marketing Director

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My name is Thomas Ptacek and I've been a homeowner in eastern Oak Park (on Humphrey) for 15 years. I write in support of the planned development at 7 Van Buren.

The merits of this development have been discussed to death. It adds much needed housing stock, builds density outside of downtown Oak Park, develops a neglected part of the village, is transit-adjacent, accessible, and environmentally sound.

Much more importantly, though, it is time for Oak Parkers to live up to our values of increasing affordability in the village. To do that, we need to add housing units, at all levels of affordability, and in our tiny village that means increasing density, not just in tightly packed areas downtown but also in the far-flung reaches of our village that are a 20-30 minute walk from those downtown areas.

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The following public comment is being submitted regarding the proposed planned development application at 7 Van Buren St., as well as the requested public sidewalk, parkway and street use and vacation. This project exceeds the current Village of Oak Park *Zoning Ordinance* in multiple and significant manners, and request allowances without appropriate compensating benefits. Therefore, based upon the evidence presented in the application, I urge the Plan Commission to recommend a denial of this planned development, explained as follows.

### **Use and Vacation of Public Sidewalk, Parkway and Street is a Legal Precedence.**

If the Village of Oak Park approves the vacation of public property in the form of public sidewalk, parkway and street, it will serve as legal precedence for future prospective developments to request the rights to the same. Despite any language to the contrary in the *Zoning Ordinance*, land use law is based on precedence, which supercedes local zoning regulations.

### **Scale**

*Design Review: design review applications must consider the following and demonstrate that these were considered (Zoning Ordinance, June 16, 2021: Article 7.3 - Design Review / Review Considerations, pp. 7-2, 7-3):*

- a. Relate harmoniously to the scale and architecture of adjacent buildings.
- b. New structures, additions, and alterations should be sympathetic to and complement the scale and design of surrounding historic structures and locally significant buildings of architectural merit.

*A new building in a historic district<sup>1</sup> must be compatible with the size, scale, set-back, massing, material, and character of the buildings which surround it on the same and adjacent blocks (the zone of influence for new buildings is six blocks -- the block on which the building is proposed to be built, the two adjacent blocks on the same side of the street, and the three opposing blocks on the other side of the same street). (Architectural Review Guidelines, Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission, March 15, 1999: P. 1: New Buildings, p. 15).*

*A new building shall not change the historic character of the other buildings which surround it on the same and adjacent blocks. (Architectural Review Guidelines, Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission, March 15, 1999: P. 2: New Buildings, p. 15).*



**Figure 1. 300-400 S. Austin Blvd. Streetscape (Ware Malcomb, September 14, 2021, included in Rescorp Application, p. 204)**

'Scale' refers to how we perceive the size of objects relative to other objects. Our sense of scale determines whether a building is of appropriate scale and proportion in the context of the immediate streetscape. As shown by Figure 1, the proposed building height and massing of the proposed building is significantly out of scale with the adjacent streetscape of the 300-400 blocks of S. Austin Blvd. In fact, the proposed building height of 83.3' is 38.3' (85%) higher than the existing streetscape and R-7 Zoning District. Since the PV panels are part of a permanent structure that covers the entire expanse of the building, the building height is considered to be top of PV panels.

### **Neighborhood Character**

*The proposed design and use or combination of uses will complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood. (Zoning Ordinance, June 16, 2021: 14.5-H.6: Planned Development / Standards for Review)*

The 300-400 S. Austin Blvd. represents a diverse range of architectural building design styles of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Included in the mix are two Oak Park Historic Landmarks, the Poley Building (Tudor Revival, 1928) and Dorothy Manor Apartments (Beaux Arts, 1927). The distinguishing quality of this stretch of buildings on S. Austin Blvd. is that it provides a wide diversity of architectural styles, while maintaining an overall uniform streetscape character composed of height, massing, setback, rhythm and pattern. This complement of individualism and community conformity is aligned with the aspirational goals of Oak Park.

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the 7 Van Buren St. project, the HPC was required to consider the long-term compatibility with and potential effect on the adjacent Landmarks, the Poley Building (408-410 S Austin Blvd) and the Dorothy Manor Apartments (424-426 S Austin Blvd).

This same respect for balance, scale, harmonious rhythms and patterns is exemplified by Columbus Park, just across the boulevard along the east side. Designed by renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen between 1915 and 1920, the park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2003. The 300-400 blocks of S. Austin Blvd. were built immediately after Columbus Park, and modeled after its balance and human-scale hierarchy of landscape design.

In contrast, the proposed 7 Van Buren St. building sets itself apart from the existing streetscape, justifying its out-sized proportions and scale in the name of exceptionalism. Rather than uniquely expressing itself within the accepted confines of community, it essentially claims it is above and beyond regulations and abides only by its own rules. This exceptionalism is expressed by expectation of multiple, significant allowances, as well as the taking of the public domain. In my opinion, the proposed project is the antithesis of Oak Park values.

### **Compensating Benefits**

*Redevelopment often brings with it the need to provide allowances from the regulations but to also make sure that the Village is receiving public benefit in return for providing those allowances by requiring additional compensating benefits to the residents in that area or to the community as a whole. (Zoning Ordinance, June 16, 2021: 14.5-E.2.a: Required Public Benefits / Compensating Benefits).*

The applicant's stated compensating benefits are explained as sustainable design, transit-oriented development and affordable housing. None of these items are valid, explained as follows.

**Sustainable Design:** The claim of a 'Net Zero Energy' building does not include the inherent embodied energy of the existing building to be demolished at this site. Embodied energy includes the energy consumed by all of the processes associated with the production of a building, from the mining and processing of natural resources to manufacturing, transport, product delivery, installation and construction. Neither does the applicant's concept of 'Net Zero Energy' include the inherent embodied energy of the proposed new building that is above and beyond that of the existing building. Until the embodied energy of the existing and new building is included, any claim to 'Net Zero Energy' is unsubstantiated and incomplete.

**Transit-Oriented Development:** The current R-7 zoning district already accommodates increased building height and density due to its proximity to public transportation. Created in 1906, the Oak Park *Zoning Ordinance* is one of the oldest zoning regulations in the U.S. and has always allowed for increased density near public transit. TOD does not represent or advocate for excessive density and building heights, as requested by this application.

**Affordable Housing:** As a compensating benefit, the application states; "Affordability – Consistent with the mission of the Oak Park Residence Corporation, 20% of the units (9 units in total)". In fact, by demolishing the existing building with it 9 affordable housing units, the new project results in a net loss of 3 affordable housing units.

### **Conclusion**

The 7 Van Buren St. planned development project exceeds the current Village of Oak Park *Zoning Ordinance* in multiple and significant manner, requesting allowances without appropriate compensating benefits. Therefore, based upon the evidence presented in the application, I urge the Plan Commission to recommend a denial of the planned development.

Thank you for your time and consideration concerning my public comment.

Michael Iversen, Architect, Planner, Educator, LEED AP

Michael Roy Iversen Urban and Campus Sustainability Consultancy  
144 N. Lombard Ave., Oak Park, IL

Adjunct Lecturer Professor  
Department of Urban Planning and Policy (UPP)  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
UPP 502: Planning Skills  
Urban Studies 230: Sustainable Cities

708-383-1189  
mroyiversen@gmail.edu

## Public Comments after 5PM – October 7, 2021

I am in support of this building. Not all developments need to be on the west side of Oak Park. Some need to be on the east side of Oak Park. Affordable housing should be all over Oak Park. The VOP should listen to all Oak Park residents, not just a vocal minority. NIMBY Oak Parkers should not rule the Village. I like the fact that it will be a transit centered building. It is really ridiculous that those opposed to the 5 story building are calling it a high rise. If they are against high rise buildings why did they not speak more vocally about the much taller buildings on the west side of Oak Park?

Suzen Riley

Oak Park resident for almost 59 years

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Hello,

I'm writing to indicate my support for the construction of the proposed apartment building at 7 Van Buren. I think the scale and the proposed parking provision is appropriate and I hope to see the building come to fruition.

I am also writing to support the Zoning Ordinance text amendment concerning ADUs. ADUs create greater housing diversity, allowing residents to age in place, and allowing multigenerational houses to flourish (among many other reasons to encourage their development!). I hope to see the language become increasingly permissive and welcome this step.

Thank you,

Franny Ritchie

545 S Humphrey Ave, Oak Park

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Good evening,

I'd like to voice my support for the planned development at 7 Van Buren.

I've had the privilege of serving as head of the Village's Parking Division and am very familiar with the parking concerns of our residents. However, as controversial as it may sound, Oak Park does not have a shortage of parking. In fact, compared to communities with similar, high-density transit, Oak Park has one of the highest rates of vehicle ownership in the metropolitan Chicago area, contributing to a perceived lack of parking supply. It is not a shortage of parking - most Village lots, garages, and zones have regular availability - rather an abundance of vehicles that creates the headaches and challenges I've helped many residents in need work through to find a solution.

Encouraging Transit-Oriented-Development within walking distance of the high-capacity Austin Blue Line station signals to future residents that Oak Park is a place where we encourage you to live car-free, if practical, and has many benefits:

- Provides affordable housing options in an increasingly expensive Oak Park
- Provides significant job access, via transit, that rivals that of the most densely populated areas of Chicago
- Supports our local businesses in the Arts District and throughout Oak Park
- Contributes to a more sustainable Oak Park, by attracting residents who prefer not to own a personal vehicle, and giving them an option that doesn't bake-in the cost of parking

I understand there is much opposition to this project, but as a resident, former VOP staffer, and former strategic planner for our region's transit system, I firmly believe this project's future benefits will far outweigh the immediate concerns.

Sincerely,  
William Gillespie

-Will

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Dear Plan Commission,

I write to you as a 33 year resident, general contractor and small real estate developer of some projects in Oak Park over several years. I would consider myself pro-development but with a sensitivity to the character of a development to the neighborhood where it is to reside. I am deeply concerned with the precedent that approving the variances requested by this development would set for the rest of Oak Park. The variances regarding height and parking are a poor fit for this location and this neighborhood. Such buildings as proposed do not belong here, but in the properly zoned neighborhood that is close to multiple retailers including a grocer as well as within no more than a few blocks of mass transit. There are very few merchants and no grocers within close proximity that makes this a walkable location for a residence. Unless you are prepared to redone the entire stretch of Austin from Madison to Roosevelt for the same variances, that which I do not support, then you should vote this down. Further, the use of the public way as proposed by this plan should be uniformly allowed for all developers or it should not be allowed. We have no room for favorable treatment of some developers due to political connections. And if further consideration, while I applaud the attempt to make this building as energy sustainable as they do, it is not fair to count on solar collectors on a wall which would be shaded should they neighboring building to the south be granted the same variances and be allowed to shade this property. Again you need to consider uniformity when you start changing a neighborhood.

For the issues I have presented here. I urge you to vote against this project and reject this application.

Respectfully,

Rick Easty  
832 Gunderson  
Oak Park

Hello,

I'm writing in support of the Oak Park Residence Corporation's 7 Van Buren project.

The project will bring 45 new economically integrated units to the Village (with 20% of them being reserved as affordable units). This building will be a national model as an example of net zero energy buildings in the country. It will also bring accessible elevator units to southeastern Oak Park in a way that will allow seniors and persons with disabilities to remain in their neighborhoods and to age in place. In an age where the climate crisis and issues around social equity loom large in our community and in society at large, the combination of the project's environmental responsibility and leadership in relation to greenhouse gas emissions reductions, its affordable housing component and accessibility for people with disabilities and older adults makes this project a significant, signature project for our community.

Oak Park already has architectural savvy from all of the FLW buildings. Let's add environmentally progressive buildings to that impressive heritage.

Thank you,

Laura Stamp

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## Public Comments Received on December 2, 2021.....

Warm Greetings,

I write to you in support of the Residence Corporation plan to build in Oak Park (at the corner of Van Buren and Austin).

The project is important and would have a positive impact.

Sincerely,

Barbara Hausman

Oak Park resident

.....

November 30, 2021

Dear commissioners and members of the village board:

I am writing **in support of the proposed 7 Van Buren project**. I have at least three qualifications and reasons for commenting on the development:

- I am a neighbor, having lived at 713 South Humphrey with my family for the last twenty years;
- I am a professor of urban planning and policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where I research and teach classes on economic development, public finance, and urban politics; and
- I am a member of the Oak Park Residence Corporation (OPRC) board of directors.

I joined the board of OPRC in 2018 because I was interested in assisting one of Oak Park's "legacy" organizations, associated with the days when the Village made bold moves to prevent White flight, transition to a new era – one where the lack of affordable housing and preventing Black displacement are more pressing issues. OPRC's mission to provide middle-market, high quality rental housing and support racial and economic diversity appealed to me.

As an urban planning professor, I am accustomed to watching "site fights" and resistance to new development projects. Indeed, my own research has often been critical of new construction – mainly for its environmental impacts and its harmful effects on low-income renters. In the case of 7 Van Buren, however, OPRC has considered and sought to mitigate these potential effects from the onset. Let me explain.

First, from its inception, the project was intended to be environmentally sustainable and was designed as a net-zero building, the first of its kind in the area. The project will attract future occupants who rely on public transit and non-motorized forms of transportation, which will lessen its environmental

footprint. Density near transit is a generally accepted “good planning” principle that we teach our students.

Second, 7 Van Buren addresses the issue of low-income renters of color who find Oak Park to be increasingly expensive and out of reach for them and their families. The project reserves a certain number of units for those with Housing Choice Vouchers and is an accessible, elevator building with amenities only available with new construction. Because the landlord is a non-profit, rents can be kept in check. The appreciative impact of new construction and the displacement of people of color that we have witnessed time and time again in cities like Chicago will not occur or will not be as great because OPRC owns many of the other multi-family apartment buildings in the eastern Oak Park submarket most likely to be affected. Rather than signal exclusivity, a new building on Austin Boulevard will send a welcoming message.

Lastly, as a resident, I look forward to welcoming more and new neighbors. We have excellent schools and libraries, small businesses that need customers, and a wonderful park across Austin. Rather than have homeowners “hoard” these benefits, I’d prefer to share them with others. Moreover, my children play on South Humphrey, and I commute to and from work via the Blue Line station on Austin, often after dark. On many occasions I have wished for a) more foot traffic that would make me feel safer as I walk in the neighborhood; b) more parked cars on South Humphrey so that the drivers speeding down the street are forced to slow down; and c) more parked cars on the stretch of Austin south of Jackson so that drivers would neither speed nor pass dangerously on the right.

In sum, I think that the 7 Van Buren project meets not just the needs of the legacy organization seeking to develop it, but also those of the neighborhood and the village as a whole.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Rachel Weber

713 South Humphrey

.....

Dear Village Leaders,

As a leader of an organization serving people with limited financial resources, I have long known the importance of affordable housing. Indeed, rising housing costs are one of the key drivers of food pantry utilization, particularly for those on fixed incomes. If Oak Park is to claim in actuality its revered status of an integrated community, we must create more affordable housing options. The intentional inclusion of units for individuals with low income (rather than purchasing offsets) helps create a more diverse and accessible community for all of us. I support the 7 Van Buren development for these reasons. I urge you to support this project as well.



Sincerely,

Michele Zurakowski, PhD

She/her/hers

Chief Executive Officer

Beyond Hunger

.....

To the Plan Commission and the Village Board,

Thank you for taking the time to read this note of support for the OPRC's 7 Van Buren Project.

As the long-time Marketing Coordinator for the Oak Park Arts District, I'm excited for the additional residential foot traffic the project will bring to Harrison Street. More density means more patrons for our small businesses and more people out on the street makes the neighborhood a safer, more inviting place for everyone. I'm also excited by the project for the attention it will bring to the Arts District. Who knows, maybe some of the architecture enthusiasts who come for FLW events will actually make it to the other side of Oak Park to check out the building, do some shopping, grab dinner. What a positive statement it would be to have a ground-breaking building and an Arts District Gateway Arch announce you are in Oak Park!

As a resident, I was excited by this project the very first time I read about it. Today, I read David Pope's op-ed in the Wednesday Journal and could not agree more with all the benefits that this development will bring to the site and Oak Park in general. I've read letters by those opposed but am quickly turned off as soon as I read the same old, "it's too tall, there's not enough parking" objections. I've listened to my own neighbors voice the same concerns at every single project proposed near my house at Madison and Highland. While I'm pleased that what will finally go in is a Park District facility, I would have happily welcomed any of the other projects over the parking lots I've looked at for too many years.

We've got a lot of old homes and buildings in Oak Park- some good old, but many, mediocre old. Sooner or later, they will all have to come down. Right now, there is the chance to take an aging structure and create something modern in more ways than one. Approve its construction and set a precedent for what can be done to enhance life in Oak Park.

Thank you,

Laurel Wolff

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Dear Oak Park Village Board and Planning Commission:

First, I want to thank you for your service to our community. Your commitment truly is appreciated.

Second, I am writing to you to express my strong support for the Oak Park Residence Corporation's proposed development at the corner of Austin Blvd and Van Buren. This project advances two initiatives that I believe are core to Oak Park values: affordable housing and the environment. Just as importantly, this will represent important development on the east side of our Village. This is exciting stuff!

The design is excellent, and the scale and density are completely appropriate to the area. The development will achieve passive house and net zero energy performance and certification, and it will blend nicely affordable and market-rate units. The development also would replace (let's be honest) a less-than-interesting structure that currently sits at the site. This would be a huge win for Oak Park on multiple fronts.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

All the best,

Bob Tucker

.....

December 1, 2021

Chris and Liz Keys

533 North Cuyler Avenue

Oak Park Plan Commission

Dear Commissioners:

We write in strong support of the proposed redevelopment at Austin and Van Buren in southeast Oak Park by the Oak Park Residence Corporation. As we understand, this project will result in 45 new apartment units becoming available, 9 for low-income housing and 36 for market rate housing near the Blue Line, the Harrison Arts District and Columbus Park. These units will be accessible in an elevator building, rare in southeast Oak Park. This proposal will both address the need for affordable housing, so important in a time of rental increases, and the need for contemporary market-rate rentals. This rental housing will provide entry-level options for young adults, a major source of future homeowners in Oak Park. It will also provide options for seniors looking to downsize their homes and remain in Oak Park. The elevator building will be a resource for people with mobility issues. The building's green plan will place a solar array on the roof, which will yield a net zero energy performance and will be a model for multifamily buildings in the future.

Since the 1960s, the Oak Park Residence Corporation (OPRC) has been a reliable and effective steward of the housing development and the values that make Oak Park distinctive for our affordability and diversity. This visionary project will enable OPRC and the village of Oak Park to continue to fulfill their long-term mission and enact the more recent value of sustainability. As a result, our village will be more able to fully realize its potential as a leader.

Given these many potential benefits, we urge you to support this important project!

Sincerely,

Chris and Liz Keys

.....  
Oak Park Village Board and Planning Commission:

It's almost 50 years since our family moved to Oak Park.

Then, Oak Park was an affordable community filled with vibrant people striving for diversity.

Now, many of those vibrant people are seniors and no longer find Oak Park affordable and accessible.

Then, Oak Park was an ideal village for a young couple with multi-racial children.

Now, those children and their children can't afford to live here.

Vote to promote Oak Park's diversity, affordability and accessibility.

Vote Yes for 7 Van Buren.

Sincerely,

Bunny&Dennis Murphy

Dennis M.Murphy  
339 Home Avenue, 3A

Oak Park, IL 60302-3437

.....  
Hello Planning Commission,

I have been following the conversations regarding the development planned for Austin and Van Buren and I am writing to express my support. I'm happy to see a proposal for affordable, accessible, and sustainable housing in our community. I appreciate investment in all areas of OP and our community has not focused on Austin near 290 at least since I have lived here. I especially understand how important development along Austin is for our community as I live just one block west on Humphrey in NE OP.

I have seen some of the resistance to the development and It appears that the concerns can be problem solved around and should not hold us back from a development with lots of potential to meet many of our community goals for housing.

Thank you for your work for our community and consideration of this project,

Holly Spurlock

643 N Humphrey Ave  
.....

I wanted to express my support for the 7 Van Buren project. As a former Housing Forward board member and Oak Park resident, I think it's important for our community to support affordable and accessible housing to maintain the diversity that makes our community so unique and strong.

This project will help strengthen our community's dedication to that diversity.

Thanks,

Rick Pollock

335 S Humphrey Ave  
.....

December 2, 2021

To the members of the Plan Commission:

As an Oak Park resident for 30+ years I am asking that you support the 7 Van Buren OPRC proposal. The sustainable, accessible housing that is proposed addresses the needs and aspirations of our community.

Sincerely,

Janet Kelenson

616 North Cuyler Ave

Oak Park IL 60302  
.....

I am writing to express my strong support for the 7 Van Buren Development. It is a model of affordability, diversity, sustainability and accessibility which our community so desperately needs for low income, disabled and other vulnerable residents. We state our commitment to these people and the above values and this is a wonderful opportunity to act on our commitment. Thank you for giving attention to this email. I am so blessed to live in Oak Park with fabulous resources and people who care about making the lives of everyone better. Pat Anderson  
.....

Oak Park Board and Planning Commission:

I am a commercial real estate broker focusing on the sale of multi-family properties and a 15 year Oak Park resident.

I fully support the Rescorp's plan to develop their project at Van Buren and Austin as it will be a benefit to the entire community.

I am not involved professionally in this particular development, but I have been hired by the Rescorp to represent them on the sale of another one of their properties that will be closing later this month.

My first hand experience is that they upgrade and maintain their buildings to a quality that is above average compared to for profit housing providers in the area. Also, the professional management and leasing services they provide to their residents is exceptional, especially when you consider that they make sure newly available apartments are made available to the entire rental market across income levels. The mix of market and subsidized residents in their buildings provides the economic and racial diversity that Oak Park is known for and rightfully proud to call one of our main characteristics and strengths. That economic and racial diversity of Oak Park and my family's block is one of the main reasons my wife and I chose to raise our family here even though neither of us are from Oak Park and why many other people continue to be drawn to this community to raise their families.

While I was marketing their property for sale, we had over 20 professional investors tour the building, while all of them were familiar with the Oak Park market, most were not familiar with Oak Park Residence Corp. The unanimous feedback was the conditions of the apartments and building was better than the surrounding inventory and better than they had expected.

I realize you can never make everyone happy all of the time, but I really believe a lot of people have incorrect assumptions on the quality of their buildings, thorough screening process of their residents, professional management, and, perhaps most importantly, empathy they show their residents and prospective residents to make sure everyone gets the opportunity to live in one of their residences and if they run across hard times financially, as many did during the recent pandemic, alternative solutions are given to keep people in their homes.

The ground up development at Van Buren and Austin considered within the mission driven model of Oak Park Residence Corp is an essential component to providing affordable and high quality housing to Oak Park residents.



**Matt Halper**

**Kiser Group**

1628 W Montrose Ave, Chicago, IL 60613

O: 773.293.5092 | E: [mhalper@kisergroup.com](mailto:mhalper@kisergroup.com)

W: <https://kisergroup.com>

.....

I am writing to indicate my support for the proposed housing development project at 7 Van Buren. I live less than half a mile from the proposed development, and I believe this would be a wonderful addition to the neighborhood, as well as an example of exactly the kind of development that should garner more support as we look for ways to responsibly grow Oak Park.

By every measure, this is the kind of project that our community should support: It is energy efficient, adds a responsible combination of affordable and market housing, and is sited to take advantage of Oak Park's close connections to public transit infrastructure. This development would also help support the businesses in the Harrison Arts District, which continue to face many challenges related to the relatively low density of the surrounding area.

I have heard the opposing arguments, and I am unimpressed. So often when a vocal minority of Oak Parkers oppose a project, we hear the same refrain: If only it were more attractive, if only it were more environmentally responsible, if only it addressed affordability, if only the developer were local, then we would support it. The opposition to this projects reveals these objections to be hollow. There is a small slice of Oak Park citizens who will oppose any development, no matter the benefits.

I urge you to approve this project for the good of Oak Park. And I believe it will be good for SE Oak Park, even those residents of SE Oak Park who oppose it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jason Rothstein

701 S. Harvey Ave.

Oak Park, IL 60304

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Dear Oak Park Village Plan Commission and Village Board:

I am writing as an Oak Park resident of 10 years to support the Oak Park Residence Corporation's 7 Van Buren development project. As a Latina who grew up in a household with modest means in a community that was largely disinvested in Chicago, I fully appreciate all that Oak Park has offered my family and especially my two children. In addition to all the programming and community activities available in Oak Park, a key reason I chose to live in this suburban community, above all others, is because of Oak Park's historic commitment to affordability, diversity, and sustainability for all. I did not want my children to grow up in a community where they couldn't see their mother reflected in the faces of others. I wanted them to grow up in a community where they had the opportunity to befriend children from different races, ethnicities, and from families of various socioeconomic means.

I applaud Oak Park every time it allocates a percentage of housing stock to low-income individuals/families in new housing developments. We must do our part in building a just society and individuals/families with low incomes should be a part of our community. Integration of races, ethnicities and income levels provides a richer and better life for all of us.

Finally, I want to commend the Oak Park Residence Corporation for making this apartment building environmentally sustainable.

Best regards,

Gudelia López

.....

**1. Good evening to members of the Plan Commission:**

I am writing to underscore and support the commitment the Oak Park Residence Corporation is making to construct a mixed-income, Net Zero development at 7 Van Buren Street. This building will be the **fourth** commercial and/or public building to set the standard for a Net Zero energy framework--using no more energy than it creates on-site. The Oak Park Park District has the Carroll Building, Austin Gardens--which is almost net zero, and one in development with the Community Recreation Center on Madison. Given the poor performance of national governments at Glasgow recently, I believe we must lift up and celebrate organizations who are committing to real, measurable climate action. The Residence Corporation is an asset in Oak Park and I strongly encourage efforts from the Village to work with them to resolve any outstanding issues it may have with their current proposal.

On December 1, the Village of Oak Park began a comprehensive climate action and sustainability planning process. Aggregating and releasing a comprehensive Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the Village will be a necessary first step in that process. However, we do know that building energy use is one of the largest sources of Greenhouse gases in the Village. Retrofitting our old (and new) housing and apartment building will be time, labor, and resource intensive. I am excited about organizations who are constraint new buildings within our geographic footprint that are already acknowledging that they must ensure climate mitigation before the first cornerstone is put down. In 2006 architect Edward Mazria challenged all new developers and major renovators to be carbon neutral by 2030. Foreseeing that by 2050 6.7 billion people will live in cities and that 2.5 trillion square feet of new and renovated buildings will need to be constructed to accommodate this rapid growth, he and other climate activist architects stated that the time is now to build in GHG mitigation in new construction.

I hope the Plan commission can work with the Oak Park Residence Corporation in applauding their leadership and ensure they can fulfill their goals of providing new, mixed income housing where residents can save hundreds if not thousands of dollars on energy costs, bike, walk and transit to work and fun, and set the example for new construction in Oak Park. I hope the Zoning Commission will soon ask all new developments to meet similar goals. Our village needs such forward thinking and Mother Earth depends on it!

Thank you!

Laura Derks

316 N. Scoville Avenue

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### Oak Park Plan Commission

I am writing to lend my enthusiastic support to the proposed ResCorp development project at 7 Van Buren. I have lived at the corner of Van Buren and Highland Ave for the past 34 years. This project excites me. In addition to the affordability and diversity aspects of this project, I am pleased to see the accessibility and sustainability emphasis.

When I retired from a position at Northern Trust Bank a couple of years ago, I began looking for local volunteer opportunities. I often walked down Van Buren Street to Columbus Park to enjoy this local gem and get some exercise. I got involved in the 400 member "Nature in Columbus Park (Chicago)" Facebook group. We have sponsored multiple work days at the park to clean up litter, increase usage and improve natural areas. One of our projects this year has been directly across the street from 7 Van Buren as we created a new nature trail. It has been fun to see Oak Park and Austin neighbors work together to improve our local resources. This new building is part of the development of the Austin corridor and will contribute to bridging the Austin Oak Park divide.

Another interest of mine has been advocacy for seniors and new housing options. As a member of Arbor West Neighbors, I have worked to improve housing options for those wishing to "Age in Place". This project, with its elevator, hits the mark.

Now retired, I'm spending time and money on many delayed projects in my 100 year old house. I support the village board's "Better Homes, Better Planet" campaign. The 7 Van Buren project fits in perfectly with these goals. It can be inspiring. I can even imagine the day when some who now feel that the project is too BIG can shift their perspective and boast that the building is a BIG asset. We can leverage this innovative project to bring additional resources and initiatives into our community.

Please help make this project a resounding success!

Sincerely,

Don Burk



746 Highland Ave.

Oak Park, IL 60304

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Hello respected members of the Plan Commission and the Village Board.

First, let us thank you all for your tireless and thoughtful service on behalf of our village.

We know you're very busy and you have an important meeting tonight so we'll keep this brief. We are lifelong residents of Oak Park and have been proud homeowners (east of Lombard) here since 2001.

We are writing to express our support for the 7 Van Buren project for all of the reasons stated so clearly in this week's Wednesday Journal editorial: affordable housing, determinedly sustainable construction, transit oriented, east side location, and distinguished design. Please don't let perfect be the enemy of good.

Thank you for letting us share our opinions with you all.

Sincerely,

Maggie and Dave Testore

Oak Park residents

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Dear Planning Commission and Village Board,

I am writing to express my support of the 7 Van Buren Development Project.

No project is perfect, but this one checks many of the boxes I believe in — affordable housing, net zero construction, proximity to public transport, and reduced dependence on cars, among others. I understand and empathize with the closest neighbors' concerns — I live very close to OPRF HS and opposed the installation of lights and night football games — but sometimes neighbors need to sacrifice for the good of the broader community.

I hope you will vote to approve this important, timely, and necessary project.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Affelder

304 North East Avenue

.....

To whom. it may concern: My wife Janice Elkins and I (William Ryan) as long time residents of Oak. Park fully support the

7 Van Buren Project. Sincerely, Bill Ryan

.....

December 2, 2021

Greg Marsey  
1107 Holley Ct., Unit 308  
Oak Park, IL 60301

Dear Plan Commission,

I support planned development PC 21-06 at 7 Van Buren St. I'm hoping you will see fit to approve it at tonight's hearing.

While I understand potential concerns about the building's massing and density, I believe the prospect of new affordable housing units in Oak Park outweighs those concerns.

I would encourage you to make a decision tonight, as the financing for such projects is complex and time-sensitive. If the project is not approved in a timely manner, the process of securing funding would likely have to begin from scratch.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Marsey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Marsey  
former Oak Park Plan Commissioner  
former Oak Park Village Trustee

Craig,

I can't make the Planning Commission meeting tomorrow night so please accept the email below as support for the development from the Oak Park Homelessness Coalition:

Dear Planning Commission,

The Oak Park Homelessness Coalition helps those who are currently homeless--and those who are precariously housed. In short, the Coalition, 50 organizations strong, works to ensure that no one becomes homeless in our community.

Unfortunately, too many people are one rent payment or one mortgage payment away from housing instability. That is why Oak Park needs more affordable housing--and housing that is affordable for a range of people and circumstances.

The 7 Van Buren development will provide a first-rate housing product and be a terrific contributor to Oak Park and the neighborhood. It will be the first significant new investment along Austin in decades, and it will also be 20 percent affordable, filling a need in our community for quality housing for our workforce.

It will be close to two CTA lines, the Eisenhower Expressway and shops and restaurants. Like The 801 on Oak Park Avenue and The Grove on Madison Street, 7 Van Buren will enhance the neighborhood and provide a mix of housing that will help a range of people in our community.

And it will be net zero, an important innovation for our community. Thank you.

John Harris

on behalf of

The Oak Park Homelessness Coalition

**John Harris**  
**Principal**

The following public comment is being submitted regarding the proposed planned development application at 7 Van Buren St. (Relative to the 3-minute time limit on public comment, only the 'Sustainability' section is to be read).

### **Sustainability**

The proposed planned development claims to be a 'Net Zero Energy' building. It's important to keep in mind that there are two types of energy (and associated carbon emissions) in relation to buildings: *Operational Energy* and *Embodied Energy*. Operational energy refers to the energy consumed during post-occupancy operations of a building. This is what the 'Net Zero Energy' claim appears to be based on. Embodied energy (and embodied carbon) refers to the sum impact of all the energy consumed and carbon emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>) attributed to a building's materials and products during its life cycle. This includes activities such as the extraction of raw materials, transport of raw materials to manufacturer, manufacture of building materials and products, transport to site, and building construction, which result in the release of greenhouse gases, such as CO<sub>2</sub>.

As the buildings and construction sector accounted for 39% of energy and process-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2018, 11% of which resulted from manufacturing building materials such as steel, cement and glass<sup>1</sup>, this is an essential distinction to be made when claiming a Net Zero Energy building. In order to start integrating embodied energy and carbon accounting into projects to meet Oak Park's sustainability goals, it is important to consider not only operational energy, but embodied energy and embodied carbon values as well. Relative to the 7 Van Buren St. planned development, its embodied energy and carbon emissions are not only excluded from their Net Zero Energy claim, but also the inherent embodied energy and emissions of the existing on site building, with its materials and products slated to be demolished and destined as landfill waste.

A standardized method of quantifying the embodied energy and associated carbon emissions of buildings is Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). Using a quantitative methodology, the idea is to provide users with the information they need to make more informed decisions about the embodied energy and carbon of new buildings relative to existing buildings. As always, awareness in making decisions and being conscious of the options available are always the best way to make processes more intelligent and sustainable. I recommend that a LCA be completed, that includes the embodied energy and carbon of the new building and that which is lost with the demolition of existing building, relative to that the continued use of the existing building.

It should be noted that the proposed new building makes very significant use of building materials that represent relatively high embodied energy-intensive materials; structural steel for building and solar panels canopy, concrete foundation and floors, and brick, metal panel and glass exterior walls.

Carl Elefante, former president of the American Institute of Architects, said (2007): 'The greenest building is ... one that already exists'. Until the embodied energy of the existing and new building is included, any claim to 'Net Zero Energy' is unsubstantiated and incomplete.

### **Scale**

*Design Review: design review applications must consider the following and demonstrate that these were considered (Zoning Ordinance, June 16, 2021: Article 7.3 - Design Review / Review Considerations, pp. 7-2, 7-3):*

- a. Relate harmoniously to the scale and architecture of adjacent buildings.
- b. New structures, additions, and alterations should be sympathetic to and complement the scale and design of surrounding historic structures and locally significant buildings of architectural merit.

*A new building in a historic district<sup>2</sup> must be compatible with the size, scale, set-back, massing, material, and character of the buildings which surround it on the same and adjacent blocks (the zone of influence for new buildings is six blocks -- the block on which the building is proposed to be built, the two adjacent blocks on the same side of the street, and the three opposing blocks on the other side of the same street). (Architectural Review Guidelines, Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission, March 15, 1999: P. 1: New Buildings, p. 15).*

*A new building shall not change the historic character of the other buildings which surround it on the same and adjacent blocks. (Architectural Review Guidelines, Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission, March 15, 1999: P. 2: New Buildings, p. 15).*

<sup>1</sup> *Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction: Technical Report* (International Energy Agency, December 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the 7 Van Buren St. project, the HPC was required to consider the long-term compatibility with and potential effect on the adjacent Landmarks, the Poley Building (408-410 S Austin Blvd) and the Dorothy Manor Apartments (424-426 S Austin Blvd).

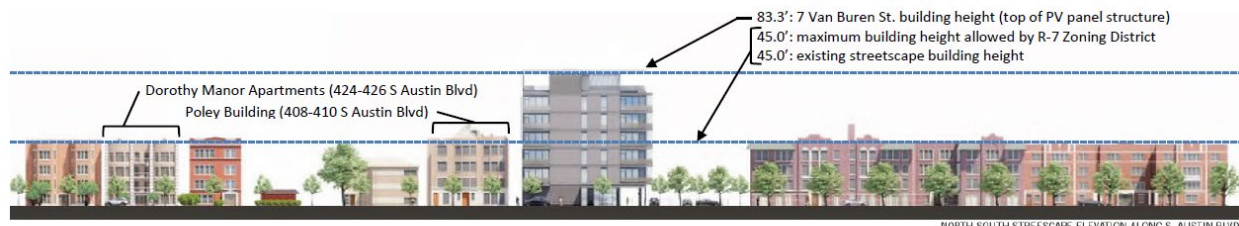


Figure 1. 300-400 S. Austin Blvd. Streetscape (Ware Malcomb, September 14, 2021, included in Rescorp Application, p. 204)

'Scale' refers to how we perceive the size of objects relative to other objects. Our sense of scale determines whether a building is of appropriate scale and proportion in the context of the immediate streetscape. As shown by Figure 1, the proposed building height and massing of the proposed building is significantly out of scale with the adjacent streetscape of the 300-400 blocks of S. Austin Blvd. In fact, the proposed building height of 83.3' (including PV panel structure) is 38.3' (85%) higher than the existing streetscape and R-7 Zoning District. Since the PV panels are part of a permanent structure that covers the entire expanse of the building, the building height is considered to be top of PV panels.

### Neighborhood Character

*The proposed design and use or combination of uses will complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood.* (Zoning Ordinance, June 16, 2021: 14.5-H.6: Planned Development / Standards for Review)

The 300-400 S. Austin Blvd. represents a diverse range of architectural building design styles of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Included in the mix are two Oak Park Historic Landmarks, the Poley Building (Tudor Revival, 1928) and Dorothy Manor Apartments (Beaux Arts, 1927). The distinguishing quality of this stretch of buildings on S. Austin Blvd. is that it provides a wide diversity of architectural styles, while maintaining an overall uniform streetscape character composed of height, massing, setback, rhythm and pattern. This complement of individualism and community conformity is aligned with the aspirational goals of Oak Park.

This same respect for balance, scale, harmonious rhythms and patterns is exemplified by Columbus Park, just across the boulevard along the east side. Designed by renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen between 1915 and 1920, the park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2003. The 300-400 blocks of S. Austin Blvd. were built immediately after Columbus Park, and modeled after its balance and human-scale hierarchy of landscape design.

In contrast, the proposed 7 Van Buren St. building sets itself apart from the existing streetscape, justifying its oversized proportions and scale in the name of exceptionalism. Rather than uniquely expressing itself within the accepted confines of community, it essentially claims it is above and beyond regulations and abides only by its own rules. This exceptionalism is expressed by expectation of multiple, significant allowances, as well as the taking of the public domain. In my opinion, the proposed project is the antithesis of Oak Park values.

**Factual Errors in Reference to Planning Documents:** the following errors were made during the presentation and review of the 7 Van Buren planned development at the previous Plan Commission meeting on Oct. 7, 2021.

**2003 UIC Graduate Student Project, *Planning Together*:** David Pope referenced the UIC Study relative to the site of the 7 Van Buren St. site. Later on, Craig Failor, Village Planner stated that "while existing apartment structures in the immediate area are mainly four stories or less, the business district plan, *Planning Together*, which was mentioned by the applicant, developed by the UIC graduate students in collaboration with citizen working group, suggest that a 6-10 story apartment building would be appropriate located across the street from Columbus Park. This plan was adopted by the village board in 2003, which was a long time ago, but it still folds some applicability today."

**FACT:** The UIC Study did not recommend 6-10 story buildings for the 7 Van Buren St. location. In the Study, the *Harrison Street Retail Business District Character Plan* does not extend to, nor include, the 7 Van Buren St. site. Therefore, any reference to this Plan is not applicable. The Plan only refers to an increased density of six to ten stories south of Harrison St. and within 200' north of the intersection of Austin Blvd. and Harrison St. (p. 29, <https://www.oak-park.us/sites/default/files/planning-documents/2003-10-31-uic-commercial-district-character-plans.pdf>)

### **Comprehensive Plan**

Craig Failor stated: "The Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2014, suggests and supports that multi-family development on the subject site has identified this property as being within a transit-oriented housing development area."

FACT: The Comprehensive Plan ('Envision Oak Park') classifies the 7 Van Buren St. site as 'multi-family housing' (p. 57). While it is barely with a 'TOD Housing Development Focus Area', it is not a designated a 'TOD Housing Development Opportunity Site', and has no increased height and density allowances other than afforded by R-7 Zoning District. (pp. 62-63)

### **Conclusion**

The applicant's claim of 'Net Energy Zero' appears to be based on operational energy only. I recommend that the application also include an LCA for the embodied energy and emissions of the proposed new building and demolished existing site building, so as to allow a more informed review of the planned development relative to Oak Park's sustainability goals.

The 7 Van Buren St. planned development project exceeds the current Village of Oak Park *Zoning Ordinance* relative to scale and neighborhood character, and is contrary to the Architectural Review Guidelines, Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission. Therefore, based upon the evidence presented in the application, I urge the Plan Commission to recommend a denial of the planned development.

Thank you for your time and consideration concerning my public comment.

Michael Iversen, Architect, Planner, LEED AP

Michael Roy Iversen Urban and Campus Sustainability Consultancy  
144 N. Lombard Ave., Oak Park, IL

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We ask that the Plan Commission deny the Petitioner's application. In reviewing the Zoning Ordinance's Standards of Review, we believe that this application does not meet seven of the eight objectives. It fails to provide adequate Compensating Benefits, Village Improvements and no details about the Public Art requirement. Additionally, the petitioner has yet to submit documentation required by the Zoning Ordinance and requested by you, the Planning Commission. The Petitioner's application also has raised concerns by the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Committees.

### **Standards of Review Deficits**

The Petitioner fails to meet the first objective concerning the 2014 Comprehensive Plan as well as the 2003 U of I Plan. The proposed building is not in a TOD area. In the Comprehensive Plan, the block of Austin between Harrison and Van Buren is part of a "housing focus area," but only the gas station on the corner of Austin and Harrison is designated as a "housing opportunity site," just as in the 2003 U of I Plan. Moreover, our neighborhood is not supported by the amenities and infrastructure described in the U of I Plan.

Both documents note the importance of the visual integrity of the neighborhood and the importance of historic preservation in maintaining Oak Park's unique character. Yet, this building is grossly out of scale both in height and mass, and it imposes on the historic Poley Building next door.

The lack of adequate parking has been discussed as far back as the 2003 U of I Plan. We have shown that there are a large number of on-street parking permits and waiting lists for all of the Village parking lots in the area. It is important to note that 17 spaces are being removed and 17 new spaces are being constructed, resulting in a zero net gain for a higher density building. The Petitioner's parking study did not take into account the vehicles that use the alley behind the 700 and 800 blocks of South Humphrey to access the Eisenhower Expressway or the number of parked cars on the streets in the evenings and weekends.

The Comprehensive Plan also points out the importance of the neighborhood perception of new structures vis a vis community character. We have submitted a survey that shows the high level of opposition by the neighborhood residents to this proposed building.

We believe that the building endangers public safety, part of the second objective. The alley is only 16 feet wide, and a setback of one and a half feet poses a safety hazard both to the tenants exiting the garage and to the other vehicles and pedestrians in the alley. The Petitioner's plan for the waste receptacles has created yet another set of issues in their location. By not providing the setback required by the zoning ordinance the waste receptacles will now be located in the interior setback. This location will cause a safety issue as this will now be an unsecured area with no fencing, gate or lock as is needed in this area and is seen on every other multi-family unit, even ResCorp's other building at the opposite end of the alley. The waste receptacle plan creates the additional problem of increased time and thus increased traffic flow problems by the manner in which these waste receptacles must be moved into the alleyway for removal by the haulers. Lastly, the location of these waste receptacles further impedes the right to enjoyment of property by the garden unit of 408 S. Austin Blvd. as these dumpsters will be located outside of their windows and main access door.

The Petitioner has not addressed the third objective of adequate utilities, road access, parking, drainage, as well as access for fire, sanitation and maintenance equipment. The Petitioner has not provided an engineering study of the impact of the increased water demand and the increased water and sewage output from 45 units, as well as the impact on the neighbors in terms of flooding, sewer backup and lower water pressure. With the Petitioner's taking of the public sidewalk and part of the public street, snow plows and leaf pick up equipment will find it difficult to impossible to maneuver.



The building does not provide adequate ingress and egress, the fourth objective, because the Petitioner has made no attempt to address the additional traffic and the safety of its own tenants as well as the safety of the neighbors' vehicles and pedestrians. Additionally, by having no loading space, tenants and delivery vehicles will have to use the alley to park, blocking ingress and egress to the garages of the neighbors at 800 and 804 South Humphrey and making it difficult and dangerous for cars and pedestrians to pass. This will happen frequently with 45 units having groceries delivered, prescriptions delivered, moving in and out with annual rental agreements, etc.

The building certainly fails to meet the fifth objective because it will deny the neighbors the adequate light, air and privacy they now enjoy, as you can see in our shadow study. Furthermore, the building likely will cause a diminishment in their property values.

The proposed building does not complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood, the sixth objective.

Concerning financial capacity, the seventh objective, the Petitioner has not demonstrated financing for the proposed project. As stated in the application, ICECF funding is only partially provided at the project onset with the remainder to be provided upon completion. The financial component of the application is vague and more of a wish list for financing than a finalized plan. There is concern that this project would have to be stopped mid-construction due to cash flow problems or insufficient funds.

Finally, granting the many requested variances will set multiple precedents for future developments in terms of the inadequate parking ratio allowed, the granting of a publically owned sidewalk and part of a street to a private developer, and the allowance of such extreme degrees of each variance that would permit a building of a height and mass that is totally out of character with the neighborhood and that impinges on a historic building.

### **Lack of Compensating Benefits**

In terms of compensating benefits we believe that the Petitioner has failed to provide adequate Compensating Benefits. There are 8 examples of items that could be considered a compensating benefit per the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance for Planned Developments. Those include:

- A. Community amenities including plazas, malls, formal gardens, places to congregate, outdoor seating, and pedestrian facilities - not provided in the Petitioners application.
- B. Preservation of existing environmental features - not provided in Petitioner's application, in fact, the Petitioner proposes to decrease the amount of landscaping that currently exists at the site. Proposed plant material is toxic to both people (particularly children) and animals, not native plant species, not proposing adequate tree and shrub count per Village ordinance.
- C. Preservation of historic features - not provided in Petitioner's Application.
- D. Open space and recreational amenities such as recreational open space, including accessory buildings, jogging trails and fitness courses, and playgrounds, dog parks, skate parks, and similar recreational features - not provided in Petitioner's Application.
- E. Reduction of impervious surface throughout the development below the threshold required by the district- the Petitioner is actually going to increase the amount of impervious surface with this planned development
- F. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings - not provided, wants to demolish the existing building
- G. Provision of public car and/or bike share facilities - not provided in the Petitioner's Application.
- H. Affordable housing set-asides- This is the only compensating benefit that the Petitioner does propose. However, this development is causing a de facto loss of 3 units that are affordable at this location. Additionally, with a market rate of 90-95% of class "A" luxury type units in Oak Park, this multi-family building's rental rates will be much higher than is currently charged at this location and in comparison to

the neighborhood per unit size. Thus this building is not truly creating additional affordable units to this area but only adding luxury type housing and gentrifying a neighborhood.

Listing the building's architecture is not a compensating benefit. They list the colonnade as a means to connect this area to Columbus Park - however there is no existing way in which to cross Austin Blvd. at this location, nor is there a plan for this improvement.

The Petitioner continues to claim that this will be "the most significant net zero energy building in the upper midwest," and then it was claimed in the USA. We argue that this claim has no merit as there are no details or information to substantiate this claim - it is merely a headline, and research to this effect would prove otherwise. The applicant's claim of 'Net Energy Zero' appears to be based on operational energy only. The application does not include an LCA for the embodied energy and emissions of the proposed new building and demolished existing site building, so as to allow a more informed review of the planned development relative to Oak Park's sustainability goals.

The Petitioner cites this building as a TOD building being a compensating benefit. The assertion that proposed building tenants will not need vehicles because of its proximity to some modes of public transportation does not take into account the very basic lack of neighborhood amenities such as grocery stores that are needed. Development without adequate vehicle parking is not supported with the distance between this proposed building and basic needs. Additionally, the current R-7 zoning district already accommodates increased building height and density due to its proximity to public transportation. Created in 1906, the Oak Park *Zoning Ordinance* is one of the oldest zoning regulations in the U.S. and has always allowed for increased density near public transit. TOD does not represent or advocate for *excessive* density and building heights, as requested by this application. The categorization as TOD alone is not a compensatory benefit.

#### **Village Improvements listed are not "True" improvements but rather restorative.**

In regards to Village Improvements required what the Petitioner claims as a Village Improvement is actually merely a restoration of the area as it was prior to construction or the "improvements" are part of the construction of the building and not an improvement to the Village.

The applicant claims the following as Village Improvements:

- A. Street Vacation - this is not a Village Improvement, rather this is solely for their benefit so they can construct this building.
- B. Sidewalk Expansion - the expansion is again solely due to the design of their building - not a Village Improvement.
- C. Curb and Alley Adjustments - again these adjustments have to be made solely due to the design against the zoning ordinance of this building. Merely restorative.
- D. Street Resurfacing - this is restorative not an improvement.
- E. Compensation for Impacts- this is not a long term, permanent improvement.

No roadways, alleys, medians, pathways, bike paths, pedestrian drop off areas, transit stops, bus pull outs or any other actual improvements will be made. They are in actuality merely restorative projects to the roads, sidewalks and curbs as a result of constructing this building.

#### **Public Art Details Not Provided**

The applicant has not provided any detailed information or specifics in terms of the Public Art as has been provided in other applications. Especially due to this proposed development's proximity to the Harrison Arts District, this seems highly unusual. There has been no documentation as to meetings with the Oak

Park Art League or other related groups within the Village, meeting notes with artists, etc. that are typically provided as part of a Planned Development Application.

### **Requested or Required Documentation Absent**

Of concern is that the Petitioner has yet to submit documentation that is required per this process or was requested by Planning Commissioners. Those are as follows:

- A. Landscape Plan as prepared by a licensed landscape architect or licensed arborist.
- B. A Village of Oak Park Services Report by Public Works, Park District & Schools.
- C. An exterior lighting plan with elevations particularly of the South and West facades demonstrating the effect of the two luminaires mounted on the west wall and two luminaires mounted on the south wall on adjacent structures and neighbors.
- D. A corrected plan demonstrating where construction trucks will be located as the previous Petitioner's Plan had them located on Austin Blvd. which is not allowed per Village of Oak Park Codes.
- E. The traffic study did not include areas of access to this development that have long been acknowledged of concern such as Harrison & Austin.
- F. The Petitioner acknowledged that they did not provide required indoor bicycle storage per Village Code. Petitioner stated that has been corrected, but it has not provided new floor plans or specifics..
- G. The new shadow study provided only demonstrates shadows via video format and not in pdf files, which only include a 9 am morning time. Our shadow studies provided by multiple architects show the significant shadows cast on the property of residents on S. Humphrey Ave.
- H. Elevation Renderings of the proposed development from Van Buren and other views as requested by the Plan Commission.
- I. Solar Array Panel installation details or PV array specifications

### **Contrary to the Architectural Review Guidelines and Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission**

The 7 Van Buren St. planned development project exceeds the current Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance relative to scale and neighborhood character, and is contrary to the Architectural Review Guidelines, Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission.

Per the letter submitted by the Petitioner, concerns about the proposed development in relation to the Poley building and area were addressed. However, we cannot find anything that addresses the concerns raised. following are written comments by the the Architectural Review Committee and Historic Preservation Commissions in a letter submitted by the Petitioner expressing areas of concern:

The ARC comments:

- The ARC discussed the height, including that the building is taller than neighboring buildings and the floor-to-floor height is higher. It was recommended that the building be stepped back at the third or fourth floor to minimize visual impact.
- Concern was expressed about the solid wall directly adjacent to the neighboring Landmark. It was suggested that the façade be treated with vertical elements at this location.
- Solar panels were discussed, including whether they have to be solid.
- The decorative features of the neighboring Landmark were discussed and the ARC suggested incorporating elements referencing aspects like the diamond pane windows, materials, or colors of the Landmark building.
- Concern was expressed about the overall massing of the proposed building.

Specific recommendations from members of the HPC included:

- Several Commissioners felt that the southeast corner facing Austin Blvd and adjacent to the neighboring Landmark should be lightened or softened. For example, it could feature a portion of opaque glass.

- Expressed concern about the height and massing of the building and suggested that the upper floors be stepped back.
- Expressed concern that the detail of the Landmarks would diminish in size in comparison to the new building.

Lastly, this proposed development by the Petitioner if approved would set a new set of precedence for development within the Village of Oak Park. It would set a different standard for parking than currently exists within the Village Ordinances and is implied in various Village of Oak Park Planning documents. This would be true of the ratio of parking allowed, the absence of required types of parking (loading zone, handicap spaces) and the overall net parking contribution a proposed development would contribute. The Petitioner's proposed development is so highly variant from what is currently a standard within the Village that it would set precedent for all future developments in what type of variances are allowed and then approved. It would also set a precedent for the degree of vacate rights permitted within the Village of Oak Park. If approved this request for variance to build over both public sidewalk and street would then be the expected allowance of all future development plans.

It appears to us that the Petitioner started out with the result it wanted, a net zero building, then dropped it on this site that does not have enough sunlight to support the solar panels needed to achieve Net Zero if the Petitioner complied with the zoning requirements. So the Petitioner then worked backward by requesting these extraordinary variances in order to achieve its goal.

We ask the Plan Commission to deny the Petitioner's application and that Res. Corp. either rehab the existing building or redesign the project to comply with the existing ordinances and fit within the existing lot and with the character of the neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and attention.

We ask that the Plan Commission deny the Petitioner's application. In reviewing the Zoning Ordinance's Standards of Review, we believe that this application does not meet seven of the eight objectives. It fails to provide adequate Compensating Benefits, Village Improvements and no details about the Public Art requirement. Additionally, the petitioner has yet to submit documentation required by the Zoning Ordinance and requested by you, the Planning Commission. The Petitioner's application also has raised concerns by the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Committees.

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The Petitioner continues to claim that this will be "the most significant net zero energy building in the upper midwest," and then it was claimed in the USA. We argue that this claim has no merit as there are no details or information to substantiate this claim - it is merely a headline, and research to this effect would prove otherwise. The applicant's claim of 'Net Energy Zero' appears to be based on operational energy only. The application does not include an LCA for the embodied energy and emissions of the proposed new building and demolished existing site building, so as to allow a more informed review of the planned development relative to Oak Park's sustainability goals.

The Petitioner cites this building as a TOD building being a compensating benefit. The assertion that proposed building tenants will not need vehicles because of its proximity to some modes of public transportation does not take into account the very basic lack of neighborhood amenities such as grocery stores that are needed. Development without adequate vehicle parking is not supported with the distance between this proposed building and basic needs. Additionally, the current R-7 zoning district already accommodates increased building height and density due to its proximity to public transportation. Created in 1906, the Oak Park *Zoning Ordinance* is one of the oldest zoning regulations in the U.S. and has always allowed for increased density near public transit. TOD does not represent or advocate for *excessive* density and building heights, as requested by this application. The categorization as TOD alone is not a compensatory benefit.

#### **Village Improvements listed are not "True" improvements but rather restorative.**

In regards to Village Improvements required what the Petitioner claims as a Village Improvement is actually merely a restoration of the area as it was prior to construction or the "improvements" are part of the construction of the building and not an improvement to the Village.

The applicant claims the following as Village Improvements:

- A. Street Vacation - this is not a Village Improvement, rather this is solely for their benefit so they can construct this building.
- B. Sidewalk Expansion - the expansion is again solely due to the design of their building - not a Village Improvement.
- C. Curb and Alley Adjustments - again these adjustments have to be made solely due to the design against the zoning ordinance of this building. Merely restorative.
- D. Street Resurfacing - this is restorative not an improvement.
- E. Compensation for Impacts- this is not a long term, permanent improvement.

No roadways, alleys, medians, pathways, bike paths, pedestrian drop off areas, transit stops, bus pull outs or any other actual improvements will be made. They are in actuality merely restorative projects to the roads, sidewalks and curbs as a result of constructing this building.

#### **Public Art Details Not Provided**

The applicant has not provided any detailed information or specifics in terms of the Public Art as has been provided in other applications. Especially due to this proposed development's proximity to the Harrison Arts District, this seems highly unusual. There has been no documentation as to meetings with the Oak

Park Art League or other related groups within the Village, meeting notes with artists, etc. that are typically provided as part of a Planned Development Application.

### **Requested or Required Documentation Absent**

Of concern is that the Petitioner has yet to submit documentation that is required per this process or was requested by Planning Commissioners. Those are as follows:

- A. Landscape Plan as prepared by a licensed landscape architect or licensed arborist.
- B. A Village of Oak Park Services Report by Public Works, Park District & Schools.
- C. An exterior lighting plan with elevations particularly of the South and West facades demonstrating the effect of the two luminaires mounted on the west wall and two luminaires mounted on the south wall on adjacent structures and neighbors.
- D. A corrected plan demonstrating where construction trucks will be located as the previous Petitioner's Plan had them located on Austin Blvd. which is not allowed per Village of Oak Park Codes.
- E. The traffic study did not include areas of access to this development that have long been acknowledged of concern such as Harrison & Austin.
- F. The Petitioner acknowledged that they did not provide required indoor bicycle storage per Village Code. Petitioner stated that has been corrected, but it has not provided new floor plans or specifics..
- G. The new shadow study provided only demonstrates shadows via video format and not in pdf files, which only include a 9 am morning time. Our shadow studies provided by multiple architects show the significant shadows cast on the property of residents on S. Humphrey Ave.
- H. Elevation Renderings of the proposed development from Van Buren and other views as requested by the Plan Commission.
- I. Solar Array Panel installation details or PV array specifications

### **Contrary to the Architectural Review Guidelines and Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission**

The 7 Van Buren St. planned development project exceeds the current Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance relative to scale and neighborhood character, and is contrary to the Architectural Review Guidelines, Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission.

Per the letter submitted by the Petitioner, concerns about the proposed development in relation to the Poley building and area were addressed. However, we cannot find anything that addresses the concerns raised. following are written comments by the the Architectural Review Committee and Historic Preservation Commissions in a letter submitted by the Petitioner expressing areas of concern:

The ARC comments:

- The ARC discussed the height, including that the building is taller than neighboring buildings and the floor-to-floor height is higher. It was recommended that the building be stepped back at the third or fourth floor to minimize visual impact.
- Concern was expressed about the solid wall directly adjacent to the neighboring Landmark. It was suggested that the façade be treated with vertical elements at this location.
- Solar panels were discussed, including whether they have to be solid.
- The decorative features of the neighboring Landmark were discussed and the ARC suggested incorporating elements referencing aspects like the diamond pane windows, materials, or colors of the Landmark building.
- Concern was expressed about the overall massing of the proposed building.

Specific recommendations from members of the HPC included:

- Several Commissioners felt that the southeast corner facing Austin Blvd and adjacent to the neighboring Landmark should be lightened or softened. For example, it could feature a portion of opaque glass.



- Expressed concern about the height and massing of the building and suggested that the upper floors be stepped back.
- Expressed concern that the detail of the Landmarks would diminish in size in comparison to the new building.

Lastly, this proposed development by the Petitioner if approved would set a new set of precedence for development within the Village of Oak Park. It would set a different standard for parking than currently exists within the Village Ordinances and is implied in various Village of Oak Park Planning documents. This would be true of the ratio of parking allowed, the absence of required types of parking (loading zone, handicap spaces) and the overall net parking contribution a proposed development would contribute. The Petitioners proposed development is so highly variant from what is currently a standard within the Village that it would set precedent for all future developments in what type of variances are allowed and then approved. It would also set a precedent for the degree of vacate rights permitted within the Village of Oak Park. If approved this request for variance to build over both public sidewalk and street would then be the expected allowance of all future development plans.

It appears to us that the Petitioner started out with the result it wanted, a net zero building, then dropped it on this site that does not have enough sunlight to support the solar panels needed to achieve Net Zero if the Petitioner complied with the zoning requirements. So the Petitioner then worked backward by requesting these extraordinary variances in order to achieve its goal.

We ask the Plan Commission to deny the Petitioner's application and that Res. Corp. either rehab the existing building or redesign the project to comply with the existing ordinances and fit within the existing lot and with the character of the neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and attention.

## **Process**

As an aside, navigating this process with the Petitioner over the past approximately nine months has been needlessly challenging. In the first informal neighborhood meeting, Mr. Pope made clear that he was not interested in hearing or addressing any concerns or objections.. In the mandated neighborhood meeting held last spring via zoom, Mr. Pope presented some information on this development. All attendees were muted so they were unable to actually speak with Mr. Pope, questions had to be submitted via the chat function only (but he did not ask if everyone knew how to use the chat feature), and lastly he refused to answer some questions. We were not provided with many details, but an article appeared in the Wednesday Journal soon after this meeting, and the article had both pictures and details.

We the neighbors have endured a several months long whisper campaign by the Petitioner in an effort to undermine the credibility of our concerns. He has insinuated that our objections to this specific plan are based on racism, nimbyism, and fear of people with limited financial means. In other words, he implied that we opposed this development because of the 20 percent of low income tenants. This whisper campaign has been spread not only within the immediate neighborhood but elsewhere in Oak Park including at family owned businesses. However, this week Mr. Pope published these insinuations against us in a letter to the editor in the Wednesday Journal - that our objections are factless, baseless, without understanding of this plan and its implication and that our voices of concern are only based in fear. This could not be further from the truth. This neighborhood is one of diversity in every meaning and aspect and has been a bastion of such for decades. This has long been a neighborhood of mixed-income residents. We do not perform wallet biopsies before deciding on who is a "nice" or "good" neighbor. We make decisions based on people's behavior, not their finances.

Opposition to this specific plan is not based on ignorance, misunderstanding or irrational fears. In fact, a great many hours have been spent reading the application and speaking with various and numerous industry experts and professionals. Hundreds of hours of research have all gone into the conclusions drawn and the decision to voice our objections. The narratives and insinuations otherwise only contribute to the erosion of the social fabric of this neighborhood, are incorrect and besides insulting are harmful to the sense of community of this neighborhood and of the Village. The process for planned developments was instituted so that everyone's concerns, questions and thoughts could be expressed in a respectful manner. Unfortunately, ResCorp has not demonstrated this with their actions, and we are deeply saddened and disappointed to see this process carried out in such a manner and are disheartened by the way in which we have been treated.

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