



Village of Oak Park

STAFF REPORT

TO: Plan Commission

REVIEW DATE: August 1, 2024

FROM: Village Staff

PREPARED BY: Craig Failor, Village Planner /
Planning & Urban Design Manager

PROJECT TITLE

PC 24-05/06: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment/Special Use – Community Service Center. The Petitioner, Housing Forward, seeks a text amendment to the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance as follows: An amendment to Article 2 (“Definitions & Rules of Measurement”), Section 2.3 (“Definitions”), by adding a definition for “Community Service Center”, amending Article 8 (“Uses”) to add “Community Service Center” as a special use in the I-Institutional zoning district, and adding in Section 8.4 (“Principal Use Standards”), a new subsection X. Community Service Center, establishing the regulations for said center. The Applicant is also requesting a Special Use permit to allow a Community Service Center to be approved at 38 North Austin Boulevard.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

APPLICANT: Housing Forward – Lynda Schueler, Chief Executive Officer
1851 South 9th Avenue
Maywood, Illinois 60153

PROPERTY OWNER: Archdiocese of Chicago
835 North Rush Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2030

Analysis

Description

The Applicant has two requests;

1. The first request is to amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide for the definition of “Community Service Center” and establish the use as a special use.
2. The second request is for special use approval for a Community Service Center within the I – Institutional Zoning District for the property located at 38 North Austin Boulevard.

Both of these requests will go to the Village Board for final approval. Each request should be considered *separately* and a recommendation shall be made for each application.

Z o n i n g O r d i n a n c e

TEXT AMENDMENT:

Article 2: Definitions & Rules of Measurement: (2.3 Definitions): “Community Service Center”; *An emergency overnight residence for individuals who are unhoused on a short-term basis. Said individuals may reside at a community service center on an overnight-only basis. A community service center may offer; meals for its residents prepared on-site, food products stored on-site to be provided to residents, office space for not-for-profit housing-related agencies, not-for-profit public outreach agencies and counseling and medical and mental health services.*

Article 8: Uses (Table 8-1 Use Matrix)

List “Community Service Center” as a Special Use within the I Institutional Zoning District

Article 8: Uses (Article 8 .4 Principal Use Standards)

X. Community Service Center

1. Overnight hours for the residential portion of a community service center shall be limited to 7:00 p.m. to 6:30 a.m., 365 days-a-year.
2. The maximum capacity of individuals housed within the residential portion of a center shall be 45 individuals or as determined by the Village’s current residential building codes, whichever is less.
3. Counseling and medical services may be offered for overnight residents, school students and families of school students.
4. Community Service Centers must meet all federal, state or local requirements regarding health, safety and building code requirements.
5. All applicants are required to submit a statement of the exact nature of the community service center, the qualifications of the agency or agencies that will operate within the center, including the number and types of personnel who will be employed. No special use permit application shall be accepted by the Village until the required statement is filed with the Village.

The Plan Commission and Village Board must consider the following standards when determining appropriateness of the proposed Zoning Ordinance **Text Amendment**.

Standards for Text Amendments:

- a. The extent to which the proposed amendment promotes the public health, safety, and welfare of the Village.
- b. The relative gain to the public, as compared to the hardship imposed upon the applicant.
- c. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the Comprehensive Plan and any adopted land use policies.
- d. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the intent and general regulations of this Ordinance.
- e. Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or omission, adds clarification to existing requirements, or reflects a change in policy.
- f. The extent to which the proposed amendment creates nonconformities.
- g. The extent to which the proposed amendment is consistent with the overall structure and organization of this Ordinance.

SPECIAL USE:

The applicant requests approval to allow a Community Service Center in the I Institutional Zoning District located at 38 North Austin Boulevard (former St. Catherine/St. Lucy Rectory).

The Plan Commission and Village Board must make findings to support each of the following **Special Use** standards.

Standards for Special Uses:

- a. The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed special use will not have a substantial or unduly adverse impact on the neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare.
- b. The proposed special use is compatible with the general land use of adjacent properties and other property within the immediate vicinity.
- c. The special use in the specific location proposed is consistent with the spirit and intent of this Ordinance, adopted land use policies and the Comprehensive Plan.
- d. The special use meets the requirements for such classification in this Ordinance.

History – Reason for applications.

The applicant approached the Village with a need to establish a permanent site that could provide overnight accommodations for the unhoused population in a manner similar to the former “P.A.D.S.” model abandoned during the Covid epidemic. Since the Zoning Ordinance does not currently provide for the intended use, a zoning ordinance text amendment is necessary. The proposed text language would allow the proposed use only within the I-Institutional zoning districts where the majority of uses are government agencies or private and public school-affiliated institutions.

The second floor of the North Austin Boulevard location has been and is currently being used as a

temporary emergency shelter for relocated migrants and other unhoused populations located in and around Oak Park. In this proposal, the applicant intends to also establish, with the support of The Neighborhood Bridge organization, a social and medical services feature for those housed at this location, in addition to offering the same to current students who attend the St. Catherine / St. Lucy’s Catholic Parish School, their family members and affiliate Catholic schools. As stated, Housing Forward will be partnering with The Neighborhood Bridge a newly created nonprofit to help residents on the West Side of Chicago reach their full potential by connecting them to available human services in the area. The Neighborhood Bridge organization will be partnering with existing providers who deliver a range of services, including but not limited to:

- Primary and mental healthcare
- Housing assistance
- Financial counseling and household budgeting
- Job training
- Computer competency
- Violence Prevention

A particular focus they will have will be on serving families of students from the Austin neighborhood attending partner schools: St. Catherine-St. Lucy, St. Angela, Chicago Jesuit Academy, Catalyst Circle Rock, and Christ the King College Preparatory School.

The floor plans for the north Austin Boulevard location indicate that overnight sleeping accommodations will remain on the second floor with some office use and the majority of office uses plus kitchen use will be on the main floor. The basement will continue to be primarily used for church and school related activities.

The following represents the proposed modifications to the Zoning Ordinance text:

ARTICLE 2. DEFINITIONS & RULES OF MEASUREMENT

- 2.1 RULES OF INTERPRETATION
- 2.2 GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS
- 2.3 DEFINITIONS
- 1.4 RULES OF MEASUREMENT

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2.3 DEFINITIONS

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Community Service Center. An emergency overnight residence for individuals who are unhoused on a short-term basis. Said individuals may reside at a community service center on an overnight-only basis. A community service center may offer: meals for its residents prepared on-site, food products stored on-site to be provided to residents, office space for not-for-profit housing-related agencies, not-for-profit public outreach agencies and counseling and medical and mental health services.

ARTICLE 8. USES

- 8.1 GENERAL USE PERMISSION
- 8.2 USE MATRIX
- 8.3 USE RESTRICTIONS
- 8.4 PRINCIPAL USE STANDARDS
- 8.5 TEMPORARY USE STANDARDS

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8.4 PRINCIPAL USE STANDARDS

Where applicable, principal uses are required to comply with all use standards of this section, whether a permitted or special use, in addition to all other regulations of this Ordinance.

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X. Community Service Center

1. Overnight hours for the residential portion of a community service center shall be limited to 7:00 p.m. to 6:30 a.m., 365 days-a-year.
2. The maximum capacity of individuals housed within the residential portion of a center shall be 45 individuals or as determined by the Village’s current residential building codes, whichever is less.
3. Counseling and medical services may be offered for overnight residents, school students and families of school students.
4. Community Service Centers must meet all federal, state or local requirements regarding health, safety and building code requirements.
5. All applicants are required to submit a statement of the exact nature of the community service center, the qualifications of the agency or agencies that will operate within the center, including the number and types of personnel who will be employed. No special use permit application shall be accepted by the Village until the required statement is filed with the Village.

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TABLE 8-1: USE MATRIX																		
Use	R-1	R-2	R-3 -50 & -35	R-4	R-5	R-6	R-7	DT	HS	GC	MS1	NA	NC1	RR1	OS	I	H	Use Standard § = Section

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Public/Institutional																			
Community Center								S	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Community Garden	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		§8.4.D
<u>Community Service Center</u>																<u>S</u>			<u>§8.4.X</u>
Cultural Facility	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P			
Educational Facility – Primary or Secondary	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							S		P			
Educational Facility – University								S		S	S	S		S		P			
Educational Facility – Vocational								S	S	P	S	P	S	S					
Government Office								P	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P			
Park/Playground	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Place of Worship	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S		P	P		§8.4.M
Public Safety Facility								P	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P	P		
Public Works Facility																P			
Tour House/House Museum	S	S	S	S	S	S	S												§9.3.V
Utility	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	P	S		

Recommendation

Staff supports both requests.

While this will be a relatively new concept in the Village, it is not dissimilar to the previous P.A.D.S. program established within the Village for many years with the exception of providing on-site social and medical services. In this instance, all services and accommodations will take place at one location verse multiple locations. The proposal, if approved, will result in a stable solution to a persistent need in our community.

End of Report.

- c. Plan Commission
Gregory Smith; Plan Commission Attorney
Emily Egan, Development Services Director
Michael Bruce, Zoning Administrator