

Village of Oak Park – Supplemental Information

Village of Oak Park Staff Comments are shown in GREEN all other text is unchanged and provided by Task Force

The Village does not yet have established timetables for when the COVID-19 Pandemic will stabilize in the Village nor in Illinois. All opening of businesses is subject to the Restore Illinois five-phase plan issued by Governor Pritzker. Therefore, it is requested that the Village Board recognize the long term duration of the economic recovery and any planning efforts to support small business may cross more than one fiscal year.

May 12, 2020

As the taskforce investigates the needs and requests of the business community in Oak Park, our goal is to provide short-term, medium-term, and long-term suggestions for consideration by the Village Board. Today's document summarizes the first round of suggestions deemed highest priority by the taskforce. Some of these suggestions are specific while others are somewhat vague. We recognize the need for village staff to assess the financial feasibility and implications of certain suggestions.

Short-Term High Priority Recommendations by Category

Parking

1. Create a mix of 15-minute loading zone parking and longer term metered / non metered parking. Businesses offering curbside pickup can guide their customers to loading zones, while service-related businesses requiring longer customer interactions will still have parking for their clients.
 - a. Areas with public garages nearby may prioritize loading zones on-street.
 - b. Staff to work with businesses to determine best mix in each area.

Staff Comment: Tammie Grossman, Director Development Customer Services

Staff has worked with the business districts to designate certain spaces as priority loading zone areas in the past during construction projects and would be able to accomplish this request using our normal processes.

2. Implement special permit parking override for service-based companies needing to park their vehicles on blocks with restricted permit parking.
 - a. Extend override beyond traditional professional service companies to include home health and wellness care, childcare, etc.
 - b. Use new license plate scanning technology already in use by the village.

Staff Comment: Tammie Grossman, Director Development Customer Services

Village of Oak Park – Supplemental Information

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Prior to the closure of Village Hall, staff had already vetted this concept with the Transportation Commission who was generally supportive of the idea. Staff would be able to design such a program and create a parking pass for this program in the Passport system. It would require a configuration in the Passport program but could be accomplished in a short time frame. Staff would propose to limit it to Oak Park Licensed businesses only.

Right of Way

1. Close of certain streets at designated times and days to allow for restaurants and retail establishments to utilize the street for dining, retail sales, etc., to allow for social distancing as businesses come back online.
 - a. One example is Harrison Street at Lombard- consider closing a portion of the street for designated hours on weekends.
 - b. Staff to assess areas of need and propose a map and schedule.

Staff Comment: Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager

Staff would note that any closing of parking spaces for private business use could only occur in alignment with Restore Illinois. For example, Phase 4 must be achieved in the Northeast Illinois Region, prior to restaurant dining –indoor or outdoor being permitted. In addition, staff would note that such outdoor use should be limited to the existing April thru October time period when outdoor dining is permitted.

This action would require adoption of an Ordinance by the Village Board to either delegate to staff the authority to establish such permits or retain such authority as a responsibility of the Village Board. Access by emergency vehicles, such as police and fire would be a careful consideration at any locations.

2. Promenade Concept- Close off certain streets for bike and pedestrian only use to allow for socially distanced outdoor activities.
 - a. Staff to determine logistics. Possibly tie into street closures for restaurant and other businesses for easier management.

Staff Comment: Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager

Consistent with the prior recommendation, staff would note that any street closure for outdoor activities should only occur in alignment with Restore Illinois. For example, Phase 4 must be achieved in the Northeast Illinois Region, before gatherings of fifty or fewer people are permitted. In addition, staff would note that such outdoor use should be limited to the existing April thru October time period when street closures are allowed for block parties, for example.

This action would require adoption of an Ordinance by the Village Board to either delegate to staff the authority to establish such permits or retain such authority as a responsibility of the

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Village Board. Access by emergency vehicles, such as police and fire would be a careful consideration at any locations.

An additional model could be the development of protected parklets using existing parking spaces. See picture below. This would require a loss of parking spaces.



Financial

1. Business Licensing- Some businesses are open and doing well and can afford to pay their business license fee while others are struggling. Business license fees are a strong source of revenue for the village and generates \$229k annually; restaurants account for \$79k of the total annual amount¹. Consider the following:
 - a. Give businesses the option to defer their license fees to the end of the year 2020.
 - b. Reduce license fees on a pro-rated basis for businesses that are closed during the pandemic.

Staff Comment: Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager
Business License Fees are set forth and codified in Section 8-2-1 of the Village Code. Business Licenses are valid from April 1- March 31 of each year. However, due to the Village Board

¹ According to Village Manager Cara Pavlicek at Taskforce Meeting #2.

Village of Oak Park – Supplemental Information

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Declaration of an Emergency Affecting Public health, a 90 day grace period is in effect, allowing businesses to pay through July 1 without penalty.

To date, 269 businesses have paid total collected \$71,770 in business license fees. There are now 411 businesses licenses pending which total \$119,380 due.

The table below summarizes the Village’s historical combined business & liquor license fees – by business type. It should be noted that all new businesses pay a one-time application fee of \$50.

Business License Category	Fee Range	Number of Licenses	Total Fees
Restaurants	\$670 - \$790	103	\$78,970
General Business	\$100 - \$250	602	\$73,575
Other Business	\$25 - \$2,000	90	\$34,850
Food Establishment	\$250 - \$540	48	\$17,940
Tobacco Sales	\$300	28	\$8,400
Retail Food Stores	\$920 - \$1,700	7	\$8,270
Daycare Center	\$560	14	\$7,840
TOTAL	\$25 - \$2,000	892	\$229,845

Note: There are 806 active businesses of which 65 businesses have either two or three licenses.

2. Loan Guarantee- Oak Park businesses may need access to short-term capital to re-open. In certain instances, businesses may not be able to secure short term loans and are at-risk of closing despite a profitable pro forma. Village should consider a loan guarantee program, which it has done in the past, to help companies quickly secure funding.
 - a. Prioritize companies that did not receive PPP or EIDL funding.
 - b. Prioritize companies that do not already have access to capital and cannot easily secure funding on their own.
 - c. Prioritize businesses that can demonstrate a reasonable plan to remain open so that taxpayer funds are not being utilized to invest in businesses that are planning to close.
 - d. Consider up to \$1M-\$2M total maximum exposure for village, though the amount will be considerably less.

Staff Comment: Tammie Grossman, Director Development Customer Services
 Staff would be able to work with Oak Park EDC to design a program. The model proposed is very similar to a prior program administered the Oak Park EDC with the Village. The old program guidelines could be review and adopted by the Village.

Village of Oak Park – Supplemental Information

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Grants- Consider grants for Oak Park businesses

- e. General grant for businesses not receiving PPP, EIDL, or any other loans.
 - i. Utilize new CDBG funding? (need staff to explain limitations on CDBG funds allocated for business)
 - ii. No consensus on this item on amount.
 - iii. Staff to determine alternative funding and criteria including a reasonable pro forma demonstrating ability to remain open.
- f. Social Media Advertising- help Oak Park businesses by investing matching funds for social media advertising.
 - i. \$50k-\$100k total as a matching incentive for companies to invest in high-impact social media advertising as they begin to re-open.
 - ii. Businesses should take a free social media advertising course before applying to grant program.

Staff Comment: Tammie Grossman, Director Development Customer Services

Staff is preparing draft guidelines for the proposed CDBG program and will be presenting the guidelines and proposed budget to the Village Board. Staff is proposing tying the program to the creation of jobs that will be filled by low-moderate-income persons consistent with the CDBG guidelines.

A social media advertising program would require budgetary authority but could be developed.

PPE Procurement

- 1. Mass purchasing of PPE by the Village for resale businesses at cost.
 - a. Collective procurement ensures availability and reasonable pricing.
 - b. Focus on most common items like masks, gloves, and cleaning supplies.

Staff Comment: Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager

This request requires additional discussion with several Village Departments. The Village under our Emergency Operations Structure is procuring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for our own first responder, Village services and Oak Park health care providers, who are unable to obtain PPE thru the Region 8 distribution process, yet are performing essential health care services during the Stay Home Order. Under our structure, logistics, led by Public Works Director John Wielebnicki is overseeing procurement to supplement police and fire purchasing from vendors. Per John Wielebnicki, we are not yet fully fulfilled with our own needs and we also priorities using procured and obtained materials received from FEMA and IEMA for Independent Living/Long Term Care health care workers and their residents, senior housing, and other healthcare workers (such as group homes)

Village of Oak Park – Supplemental Information

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Secondly, there is a misperception that because we are a government we receive some sort of discount and have easy access to purchasing PPE. That is absolutely not the case. We are competing with everyone else for the purchasing and we are paying retail. In many cases we are paying much different costs for the same items.

Per Fire Chief Ebsen and Interim Deputy Chief Terry, who spoke with the main Fire Department vendor, the vendor is willing to sell to us anything we want, if they have it. However, the limitations are:

- The Supply chain is not there right now and there are government imposed quantity restrictions on numbers that can be sold to one entity, because the thought is everyone gets a little.
- The big medical supply companies that normally sell these supplies should be operating under pre-established ethical norms, hence the above quality restricted allocations.
- The next few weeks will be even shorter on supplies as the US made factories have been closed, that supply is now drying up. First week in June is the anticipated of return in American factory supply chain.

Additionally, we are very mindful of new vendors and we are extra vigilant about “new vendors” promising large deliveries, the supply chain for legitimate vendors is not there are scams are everywhere.

In summary this is a very complex request and requires further discussion with the Task Force. Board action at this time would be premature.

Communications

1. Education – Consider funding a chamber employee who can educate businesses about cash flow, marketing, survival.
2. Boost consumer confidence – Have a promotional campaign around business expectations and customer expectations.
 - a. Village video team produce video content for wide distribution
3. OPEDC to host informative and promotional website to inform the public on which businesses are open.
 - a. Village and Chamber of Commerce can help communicate with businesses.
 - b. OPEDC staff and crowd sourced database similar to CarryOutOakPark.com concept.

Staff Comment: Tammie Grossman, Director Development Customer Services

1. Education – would require budget authority and a partner agency agreement that could be modeled after the prior agreement with the Oak Park River Forest Chamber.

Village of Oak Park – Supplemental Information

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2. Boost Consumer Confidence – a video could be produced and staff would recommend utilizing the Oak Park Where Else? Campaign information previously developed by the Oak Park EDC with the community and business district input.
3. Information – The Village could add this deliverable to the Oak Park EDCs contract for services.