



Applicant:
Oak Park I Housing Owner, LLC
135 S. LaSalle St., Suite 3350
Chicago, IL 60603

Meeting Date: September 6, 2018

Case: PC 18-07

Owner:
Community Bank of Oak Park—River Forest
1001 Lake Street
Oak Park, IL 60301

Planned Development



The Community Builders - A Mixed Use Planned Development (Oak Park Avenue @ Van Buren Street)

The proposed development consists of a mixed-use building with 35 apartments, 2 live/work units and approximately 1,000 square feet of commercial space with the following allowance requests from the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance;

- 1.) Density: 16 dwelling units allowed - 37 dwelling units proposed.
- 2.) Height: 45 feet allowed - 48 feet proposed.
- 3.) Parking: 37 spaces required -23 parking spaces proposed.
- 4.) Bicycle Parking: eight (8) of the ten (10) required to be protected —two (2) will be located outside the building.
- 5.) Landscape Buffer Yard: Seven (7) foot deep yard required - four (4) foot – six (6) inch deep yard at the northwest corner, provided and zero (0) along the interior side extending from the loading space to the southwest corner.

Property Information

Existing Zoning:	NC—Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District
Existing Land Use:	Vacant — gravel lot.
Property Size:	12,500 Square Feet
Comprehensive Plan:	<i>Envision Oak Park chapters;</i> 4. Land Use & Built Environment, 7. Neighborhoods, Housing and Diversity, and 13. Environmental Sustainability
Business District Plan:	Planning Together—Oak Park and Harrison Streets
Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:	NORTH: R3-35-Single Family District (Residential) SOUTH: NC—Neighborhood Commercial District (Commercial) EAST: NC—Neighborhood Commercial District (Commercial) WEST: NC—Neighborhood Commercial District (Commercial)

Analysis

Submittal: This report is based on the documents that have been identified in the submitted proposal binder, which was filed with the Development Customer Services Department in August 2018. **NOTE:** You will notice that not all of the required application documents have been included in your review packet. This is due to your direction during the Zoning Ordinance revision process where it was indicated that only pertinent documents should be provided to the Plan Commission for their review at the public hearing. The documents you did not want included in your packet have been submitted and are available in the Department of Development Customer Services and on the Village's website (www.oak-park.us). Each requested document is listed in the front of the binder. Under Tab 1, the applicant has statements regarding public art, compensating benefits, Village Improvements and the required neighborhood meeting.

Description: The proposed development is located within the NC Neighborhood Commercial District specifically at the southwest corner of Oak Park Avenue and Van Buren Street. The subject site is currently a vacant gravel lot. The development proposal consists of a modern-style multiple use development with dwelling units, commercial space and private parking. The architectural design for this development has been reviewed by Wight and Company (the Village's architectural design consultant) who worked with the developer throughout the process. This project has also been vetted through staff's Project Review Team (a multiple disciplinary group consisting of representatives from the Fire, Police, engineering, planning, zoning, historic preservation, forestry, housing, parking, law, business, health and refuse/recycling). The Applicant's request for approval is accompanied by five (5) allowances to the regulations of the Zoning Ordinance as mentioned on the first page. These allowances are detailed later in this report.

Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance

Planned Development: One of the principal objectives of the Zoning Ordinance is to provide for a compatible arrangement of uses of land and buildings that is consistent with the requirements and welfare of the Village. To accomplish this objective, most uses are classified as permitted or special uses in one or more of the districts established by the Zoning Ordinance. However, it is recognized that there are certain uses that, because of their scope, location or specific characteristics, give rise to a need for a more comprehensive consideration of their impact, both with regard to the neighboring land and the Village in general. Such uses fall within the provisions of the Planned Development section of the Zoning Ordinance and shall only be permitted if authorized as a Planned Development.

It is the purpose of Planned Developments to enable the granting of certain allowances or modifications from the basic provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to achieve attractive and timely development in furtherance of the Village's goals and objectives as stated in the Comprehensive Plan. Site-development allowances (i.e., any zoning relief, including any deviation from the Zoning

Ordinance provisions for the underlying zoning district) may be approved provided the applicant specifically identifies each site-development allowance and how it would be compatible with surrounding development.

The Oak Park Zoning Ordinance states that Planned Developments should generally be limited to those uses or combination of uses currently permitted in the underlying zoning district. However, an applicant may petition for consideration of a use or combination of uses not specifically allowed in the underlying zoning district, if the Village Board finds that the conditions, procedures and standards are met and that such use or combination of uses is shown to be beneficial to the Village.

A mixed-use development is allowed within the NC Neighborhood Commercial District, but because of the zoning relief being sought and the fact that the gross floor area of the structure is over 20,000 square feet, the development falls under the Special Use—Planned Development requirement and regulations.

TABLE 1

	<i>Allowance Type</i>	Zoning Ordinance Requirement	Proposed Request	<i>Need for allowance</i>
1	Density	16 dwelling units	37 dwelling units	21 dwelling units
2	Building Height	45 feet	48 feet	3 feet
3	Landscaping Buffer	7 feet deep buffer	0-4.5 feet	0-2.5 feet
4	Parking	37 parking spaces	23 parking spaces	14 parking spaces
5	Bike Storage—protected	10 spaces protected indoors	8 spaces indoor / 2 outdoor	2 spaces

TABLE 1 lists and the following text details the requested allowances. The proposed development is meeting all other regulations of the Zoning Ordinance.

1. DENSITY: ARTICLE 5: COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS: Table 5-1 Neighborhood Commercial (NC) District: *The Subject Property's lot area is 12,500 square feet allowing 16 dwelling units by code; The Applicant is proposing 37 dwelling units (inclusive of 2 Live/Work Units) which is 21 dwelling units over the allowed number.* The proposed development is offering a mix of dwelling types and sizes. Two (2) dwellings on the ground floor will be Live/Work space dwellings. These are intended to provide a street side commercial space for the occupant. These spaces can be used by artists, or as offices, or even retail stores, whose products or services can be offered to the public. The residential-only units will be located on the upper floors consisting of three (3) studio, thirty (30) one-bedroom and two (2) two-bedroom apartments.

2. BUILDING HEIGHT: ARTICLE 5: COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS: Table 5-1 Neighborhood Commercial (NC) District: *The Maximum Height allowed in this district is 45 feet. The Applicant is proposing a height of 48 feet which is three (3) feet above the allowed height.* The Applicant is proposing an additional height to allow for higher ceilings at each floor. Their rationale is that for smaller apartments, higher ceilings will enhance the atmosphere of the dwelling space by making it feel larger. Staff supports this idea as it was true for the Grove Avenue Apartment complex developed at Madison and Grove.

3. LANDSCAPE BUFFER: ARTICLE 11: LANDSCAPE: Section 11.8 BUFFER YARD REQUIREMENTS *requires a seven (7) foot interior side yard setback for lots over 90 feet in depth. The relief request is to reduced the required setback to four (4) foot – six (6) inches at the northwest corner of the Subject Property and zero (0) feet along the interior side setback extending from the loading berth to the southwest corner.* The landscape area is reduced to allow for required

parking, a loading area, a driveway to the parking area and one parking stall. The proposed landscape area still provides a visual and physical buffer from the parking area. Between the open alley and building setback, the landscape materials will have adequate sunlight and exposure to elements.

4. PARKING: ARTICLE 10: OFF STREET PARKING & LOADING: Table 10-2 Multi-Family Dwellings *have a one (1) on-site parking space per dwelling unit requirement. The Applicant is proposed 23 parking spaces which is 14 less than required, a reduction of 38 percent.* Due to the proximity to public transit, the Applicant believes a reduction in parking is appropriate. The Applicant has indicated that other projects of a similar nature have a parking demand that closely matches that of the proposed development. Staff agrees that the proximity to public transit is important and reduce the need for other modes of transportation.

5. BIKE STORAGE: ARTICLE 10: OFF-STREET PARKING & LOADING: Section 10.6 Bicycle Parking Standards (C) Location: *eight (8) of the ten (10) required "Long-Term Spaces" or "protected spaces" located inside the building will be provided indoors. The remaining two (2) will be located outside of the building. There will be additional bike parking spaces on the public way along Van Buren and Oak Park Avenue which could accommodate any overflow.*

One of the rationale for establishing planned development regulations is the ability to allow flexibility in developments that could foster creativity and provide enhancements of the built environment as well as provide compensating benefits to the community. Any relief sought in this regard must meet the standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and must be justified by those standards before consideration of the request can be determined. Each of the above-mentioned allowances work toward a creative solution to what could be considered a standard or conventional development, but must be weighed against the standards for special use-planned developments.

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses

The development site within the NC Neighborhood Commercial District is surrounded by commercial uses abutting to the south and east across Oak Park Avenue, single family residential to the west across the alley and to the north across Van Buren Street. The proposed use (residential and commercial) and massing are compatible and consistent with the surrounding land uses and building stock. The massing of the proposed building along Oak Park Avenue fits well with those existing buildings along the street even though it is proposed to be slightly taller than those along the corridor. There are some three-story building along the corridor, in fact di-

rectly across the Oak Park Avenue a three-story building exists. Being at the end of the block and just three over the allowed height, the massing is not out of character with this commercial district.

This land use is an appropriate transition between the residential to the north and west and the commercial along the corridor. The inclusion of more residential along this commercial corridor will help to strengthen the variety and vitality of the area, by introducing more mixed-use options which will increase not only pedestrian movement and shopping within this district, but potentially more transit usage.

Compliance with the Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan

The proposed development mainly touches on four chapters (touches on others) within the Comprehensive Plan. They are chapters 4.) *Land Use & Built Environment*, 7.) *Neighborhoods, Housing and Diversity*, 12.) *Economic Health & Vitality*, and 13.) *Environmental Sustainability*.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and objectives which set the standards for development. The Plan discusses the idea of strengthening commercial districts as well as the symbiotic relationship between economic development and the overall quality of the community. Additional residential use supports and strengthens the community and the commercial district through patronizing of businesses and adding vibrancy to the corridor. The proposed development fits the overall goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

In Chapter 4, the Comprehensive Plan discusses opportunities to strengthen the urban fabric by constructing context-sensitive infill development. As stated in the compatibility section of this report, the proposed development fits this objective. The Plan also looks to creating appropriate land use transitions, especially those abutting residential. The proposed mixed-use fits this objective as well.

In Chapter 7, the Comprehensive Plan looks to ensuring the Village's board and commissions commitment to diversity and affordable housing opportunities. With the abundance of vintage housing in Oak Park, new housing that is affordable and accessible increases the opportunity a more diverse population. The proposed development will consist of mostly workforce housing options for individuals earning

between minimum wage and approximately \$17 per hour. Through a Village-initiated RFP process, the Applicant submitted a proposal requesting affordable housing monies from the Village Affordable Housing Fund to support this development. The Village Board has reviewed their proposal and has authorized staff to return with a contract for approval in the amount of \$500,000. This development helps to achieve the Village's goal toward more affordable house options.

In Chapter 12, the Plan emphasizes the need for a diverse and stable tax base. The proposed development will introduce a newer economic model of a live/work unit. Only a few of these currently exist in our community. This model, not only allows an opportunity for commercial sales to the public, but an affordable residential use as well all within one unit. The proposed development is also offering a more traditional commercial space at the corner of this development to help support and stabilize the overall commercial climate along south Oak Park Avenue.

In Chapter 13, the Plan sets out a list of goals and objectives for environmental sustainability opportunities. Since sustainability is increasingly important in our society, the proposed development will be utilizing the IHDA (Illinois Housing Development Authority) Sustainability Design criterion, which a checklist is included in the application under Tab 3A. The Applicant indicates that the requirements are equivalent to the Green Globes Sustainability rating system. They will have to provide proof via a third party verification that they have achieved those intended points/requirements.

Conformance with the Planning Together Plan (South-Town & Harrison St.)

The *Planning Together Plan* was completed in 2003 and adopted by the Village Board in 2005. This plan covers the South Town business district at the Eisenhower and Harrison Street's Arts District. The Plan identifies many goals and objectives, of which enhancing and expanding viable commercial activity and identifying the right mix of residential and retail uses in South Town are included. The Plan makes recommendations for density and intensity of commercial and residential development. For this site in particular, the Plan recommends a mixed-use building up to four (4) stories not taller than 55 feet. The proposed development fits this recommendation as a four (4) story mixed-use building at a height of 48 feet. The Plan identifies the need for

parking and traffic controls. It is inferred that less vehicles produce less traffic and that pedestrian access to public transportation and shopping is important. The proposed development is offering less parking options on-site as shopping and public transportation is readily available in this area. Overall, the proposed development type conforms to the recommendations within the Plan which was prepared in collaboration with citizen stakeholder groups and extensive public and governmental input.

This Plan can be found on-line here: <https://www.oak-park.us/village-services/planning/business-district-plans>

Other

Architectural Design Review: *Wight and Co.* has reviewed the architectural drawings. Their memorandum is included in this packet. A representative from *Wight and Co.* will be in attendance to provide testimony and answer any questions the Commission may have.

Traffic and Parking Review: The Applicant has provided a report on traffic prepared by *Sam Schwartz Transportation Consultants*. In the report they indicate traffic generated from the proposed development will have little impact on current conditions, however, they do recommend "cross traffic does not stop" signs added to existing stop signs at Oak Park and Van Buren. Also, staff is proposing that pedestrian crossing signs with a flashing indicator may be added to both sides of this crosswalk at Oak Park and Van Buren. As part of the redevelopment of the subject property, the existing curb cuts will be eliminated reducing pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. Vehicles accessing the on-site parking area will be made through the existing alley off of Van Buren. The consultant also recommends that on-site stop signs be installed for vehicles exiting the parking lot into the alley.

Compensating Benefits: The Zoning Ordinance lists various opportunities for providing public bene-

fits. The Applicant has included several compensating benefits and village improvements into their development proposal, such as; right-of-way improvements relative to curb cut removal, street repair, installation of parkway trees and grates, as well as alley improvements. The Applicant will also help defray the cost of the crosswalk signage and install a crosswalk bump out along Oak Park Avenue. The proposal will consist almost entirely as an affordable housing project. The Applicant is achieving some of identified options under 'compensating benefits' and some under the 'village improvement' options in the Zoning Ordinance.

Public Art: The applicant is currently working with the *Oak Park Area Arts Council's* executive director on establishing an art program for the subject property. They have agreed on a scope of work which will start with a Call for Artists, selection and possible installation in July 2019.

Neighborhood Meetings: The Applicant held two neighborhood meetings prior to their submission of the Planned Development Application first on May 29th and again on July 12th. Their application contains information on notice, what was presented, comments from the public and a list of participants.

Staff is in support of the proposed development for the reasons mentioned and discussed throughout this report.

Copies:

Greg Smith (KT&J), Plan Commission Attorney
Robert Tucker, Village Trustee—Plan Commission Liaison
Tammie Grossman, Development Customer Services Director

End of Report