

Oak Park Business Recovery Taskforce

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.
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.

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.
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.

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.

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

Oak Park Business Recovery Taskforce

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.
3. Grants- Consider grants for Oak Park businesses
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.

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.

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.

Oak Park Business Recovery Taskforce

Taskforce Members

Deno Andrews, Chairperson
Trustee, Village of Oak Park

Simone Boutet
Trustee, Village of Oak Park

Mike Fox
R.P. Fox & Associates

Christian Harris
Co-Owner, MaidPro Oak Park

Liz Holt
Executive Director, Oak Park and River Forest Chamber of Commerce

John Lynch
Executive Director, Oak Park Economic Development Corporation

Andre Otero
Mulata Kitchen + Coffee

Michele Vanderlaan
Founder & Owner, Sugar Cup Trading, and 16 Suitcases

Cory Wesley
President, Tekvoyant, Inc.

Sam Yousif
Practive Manager, Fuller Health Group

Oak Park Village Staff Designee
May change from meeting to meeting