

Appendix A
Oak Forest Comprehensive Plan
Steering Committee Members

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Appendix B Kick-Off Meeting Summary

The City of Oak Forest began the Comprehensive Plan update process on November 7, 2006 with a Steering Committee kick-off meeting in the City Council Chambers. Mayor JoAnn Kelly opened the meeting by thanking Steering Committee members for their participation, and discussed the importance of creating a new Comprehensive Plan. Committee members, City staff and representatives of HNTB Corporation then reviewed the overall process and schedule for the project.

The current Plan, adopted in 1964, no longer addresses the needs of the community and is seldom used. Phil Hanegraaf of HNTB stressed that the priorities addressed in the new Plan will come from within the community. The new Plan will be a “road map” for growth, development and improving the quality of life for Oak Forest residents. The document will provide a “big picture” perspective within which individual planning decisions will be made in the coming years, and will be subject to review on a regular basis. HNTB’s primary role will be to suggest workable implementation policies and strategies that support the goals expressed by the community.

The Committee and several members of the public who were in attendance then engaged in an “Issues and Opportunities” workshop exercise, to provide staff and the consulting team with an initial understanding of community concerns and priorities. A summary of the outcome of the Committee’s workshop discussion is provided below.

High Priority Issues

Committee members listed planning issues facing the City, and then developed a prioritized list. The first fourteen (14) issues listed below are ranked in general order of Committee priority; those following were mentioned but were not identified as initial priorities during the discussion.

1. Need for 159th Street corridor revitalization
2. Need for a new Metra station
3. Need for commercial development
4. Lack of a useful plan
5. Need for infrastructure renewal
6. Stop trying to make Oak Forest something different
7. Need for zoning ordinance standards
8. Need for “catalyst” projects
9. Need for realistic implementation strategies
10. Congested and dense housing areas
11. Maintaining quality of life (schools, parks, walkability, etc.)
12. Concentrations of low-income housing
13. Need for development of 167th Street corridor (between Cicero and I-57)
14. Clarify zoning map issues



15. Losing sales tax revenue to neighboring communities
16. Outdated, older housing stock
17. Political instability (adversely affects community image)
18. "Hodge-podge" appearance of commercial areas, lack of retail diversity
19. Need for more police patrols
20. Maintaining low density character
21. Create varied housing opportunities
22. Remain a moderate-income community
23. Need for accurate housing data to assess needs
24. Address Cicero south of 149th Street (residential area zoned for business use)
25. Review planned development requirements
26. Unreliable water supply
27. Fit new development into context of the community

High Priority Projects or Improvements

Committee members were each asked to identify three projects they would like to see completed in the City over the next decade. Responses are listed below in no particular order (the number in parentheses indicates a number of similar responses).

1. Maximize the potential of the Metra transportation hub at 159th / Cicero (5)
2. Build a new Metra station (4)
3. Annex and create a plan for the 167th / Cicero area (4)
4. Phased infrastructure renewal plan (2)
5. Maintain a single family residential focus, reduce multi-family residential
6. Create another senior housing development
7. Build a family-oriented pool facility
8. Develop 159th Street corridor with new businesses
9. Plan to develop commercial areas on 159th, Cicero and Central
10. Eliminating vacancies
11. Zoning standards strengthened and enforced
12. Reach a milestone of commercial property tax base increase of 200%
13. Promote redevelopment on the east side of Cicero
14. Create a community gathering space, host more community events

Assets and Advantages

Committee members were asked to list the primary assets and advantages of the City. Responses are listed below in no particular order (the number in parentheses indicates a number of similar responses).

1. Forest preserve trail system and golf course, but difficult to access (4)
2. Access to expressways and downtown Chicago (3)
3. Excellent school systems and facilities, both public and private (3)
4. Transportation options (train, bus, auto) (2)
5. Green space (2)
6. Metra station
7. Restaurants open in the evening
8. Opportunities along 159th Street and Cicero Avenue



9. A sense of community (children return to raise their own families)
10. Small community character, not commercialized like Tinley and Orland
11. Neighbors know one another
12. Nice municipal office complex
13. Nature community
14. Good park district, with well run facilities and programs
15. Oak Fest (July 4th week festivities and fireworks)
16. Gaelic Park
17. "One-sided" commercial corridor on 159th Street (across from forest preserve) is a unique area
18. Events in the forest preserve offer an opportunity to promote Oak Forest businesses



Appendix C

Community Workshop Summary

As an early step in the Oak Forest Comprehensive Plan process, the City and HNTB held a Community Workshop on November 30, 2006. The purpose of the workshop was for the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, City staff and members of the public to 1) participate in a Visual Preference Survey exercise, and 2) identify and prioritize planning "Issues and Opportunities." A summary of the Visual Preference Survey results is provided in the following section. The summary of the results of the "Issues and Opportunities" exercise is provided below.

High Priority Issues and Problems

Workshop participants were asked to fill out written surveys to identify problems and issues facing the City. They were then engaged in discussion and asked to identify what they considered to be the highest priority problems or issues and to rank their top three. The first sixteen (16) issues listed below are ranked in order of priority; those following comprise a comprehensive, but unranked list of all other written comments generated by participants.

1. Cicero Avenue redevelopment
2. Redevelop the Metra station area with mixed use development
3. Upgrade image along 159th and Central Avenue
4. Community-wide pedestrian sidewalk network
5. Conservation versus change in residential neighborhoods
6. More retail
7. Lack of business success/improving business retention
8. Redevelop 167th and Cicero Avenue
9. Small-scale, walkable shops
10. Need to create a unified theme instead of "hodge-podge" business areas
11. Traffic on Cicero Avenue and 159th Street
12. Improve sidewalks and walkability of 159th/Cicero
13. Basic maintenance of parkways and sidewalks
14. Desire to attract a cluster of restaurants with shared parking
15. Linkages to Forest Preserve District pathway system
16. Draw people into Oak Forest from other communities
17. More industrial
18. Re-do the Metra station
19. Difficult access in and out of parking lots
20. Three neighborhoods south of 167th with no linkages
21. Streetscape/median plantings
22. Maintenance of County areas
23. Long-term parking strategies at the Metra station
24. Concentrated low income areas
25. No architectural theme or continuity
26. Apartments and mobile homes on 159th Street
27. Appearance of 159th and Cicero



28. Poor zoning laws: builders get whatever they want
29. Decaying infrastructure, streets, curbs, inadequate water supply
30. Need City-wide planning because the City is spread out and auto-dependent
31. Restricted area for new development due to location of Forest Preserves
32. Political instability has hurt in the past
33. Some public decisions lack supporting facts
34. Trying to hold onto the image as a “blue collar” community
35. Need to clarify commercial and residentially-zoned areas
36. Too much multi-family housing
37. Increased density in single family neighborhoods (keep “R-1” zoning intact)
38. Need for an entertainment area (e.g. sports, theater)
39. City personnel are hard to contact
40. Pawn shop/payday loan stores
41. Houses off of Cicero Avenue
42. Need for more police patrols
43. Getting municipal repairs completed in a timely fashion
44. Lack of openness about proposed new development
45. Weak tax base due to lack of retail uses
46. Aging housing availability
47. There is a need for economic development
48. Land use west of Food4Less/too much parking in this area
49. Metra area for developing a gathering space
50. Trying to increase density without upgrading infrastructure
51. Appearance of the back of homes and broken fences facing on Central and 157th Street.
52. There is a need for a hospital
53. Need for a parks and recreation center with a pool and more spaces for young children to play
54. Need to lower taxes
55. Need a town center (probably at 159th and Cicero)
56. Empty storefronts
57. Poorly maintained buildings
58. Need to attract more people into the community
59. Attract big-box development
60. Gangs-rumors of them in the area
61. With the exception of Oak Forest High School, other high schools are perceived as negatives

High Priority Projects or Improvements

Community Workshop participants were each asked to identify three projects they would like to see completed in the City over the next decade. Written responses are listed as follows; the number in parentheses indicates a number of similar responses, with those following in no particular order.

1. Redevelop commercial areas on 159th, Cicero and Central (9)
2. Build a new Metra station (6)
3. Develop 167th / Cicero area (6)
4. Maximize the potential of the Metra transportation hub at 159th / Cicero (5)
5. Upgrade streets, curbs, and sidewalks (5)



6. Need a design theme along corridors (3)
7. Attract and keep small businesses (2)
8. Develop 159th Street businesses (2)
9. Develop 159th and Cicero with mixed use (2)
10. Build a performing arts center
11. Integrate Forest Preserve paths with City sidewalks and paths
12. Back-up the water supply from a different source and direction
13. Improve connections between neighborhoods and business districts
14. Improve the north end of Cicero Avenue
15. Attract new retail businesses
16. Need storm sewers in residential areas instead of ditches that don't work
17. Need more interconnecting bike paths throughout the City
18. Expand on the "Oakfest" concept to include public concerts
19. Create another senior housing development
20. The proposed gateway at 159th and Cicero
21. Need more senior housing
22. Oak Park Avenue development
23. Need streetscaping
24. Gathering spot at Oak Fest property
25. Need to improve the walkability of 159th Street
26. Turning Central Avenue into a place of pride with walking amenities, parks, city buildings, and the library
27. Need better traffic flow with green spaces
28. Encourage economic development
29. Need more park space
30. Lower the speed limit on 159th from Central west to Ridgeland
31. Better communication with residents and businesses about spending of tax dollars
32. Need a parking garage for Metra

Assets and Advantages

Community Workshop participants were asked to list the primary assets and advantages of the City. Responses are listed as follows; the number in parentheses indicates a number of similar responses, with those following in no particular order.

1. Forest Preserves (12)
2. Access to transportation system (expressways and Metra)(11)
3. A sense of community/people (5)
4. Good schools (5)
5. Good library (3)
6. Good parks (2)
7. Beginning to enforce City codes (2)
8. Ample green space (2)
9. Good government (2)
10. Physical compactness leads to a tight-knit community
11. Industrial park
12. Less congested than neighboring communities
13. Competent administrative staff



Appendix D Visual Preference Survey Summary

Survey results are summarized below for each section of the Visual Preference Survey conducted during the Community Workshop on November 30, 2006. Images are grouped as follows: Positive Images (those that received high ratings overall); Negative Images (those that received low ratings overall); and Neutral Images (those that received neutral or a mixed rating). Following each set of images is a list of verbatim written comments that were provided by participants in response to questions asked on the survey forms. These results are based upon the 22 survey forms that were completed and submitted during the Workshop. Each section concludes with a brief summary list of "lessons learned" from the survey results regarding general development characteristics considered desirable by the community.

COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USE BUILDINGS

Positive Images



Negative Images



Neutral Images



What types of businesses or development would you like to see more of in Oak Forest?

- Coffee shop, restaurants for dinner, a place to buy clothes
- Small shops, coffee shops, bookstores, and a bakery
- Big box anchors, coffee shop, cafes, restaurants, bike store, golf store
- Small retail, convenience stores, not just food, but apparel, coffee shops
- More shopping businesses, we have enough service businesses
- Restaurants-mid-range/mixed residential commercial
- Trade school, satellite college
- Remove unused buildings, replace with restaurants and retail shops; new train station as a focal point
- Shopping (clothing; home improvement), more restaurants clustered in groups, rather than spread out
- Mixed use, services (e.g. coffee/bagel shops), restaurants, and retail stores
- Bakery, shops, outlet stores (Sears, Penneys, Kohls, etc.)
- More family-friendly businesses, restaurants, townhomes
- Family-oriented, after 6 pm restaurants, sidewalk shops
- Small, quaint shopping areas with space to walk
- One or two unique businesses; small quality shop with lots of green space and parks (art stores, bakery, deli)
- Something that brings people from other towns to come shop in Oak Forest; not just quick-stop shopping
- Bakery, coffee shop, nice restaurant/bar; no more auto repair shops
- Book store, coffee shop, hobby store, health food store, places where people can gather and browse

What physical features make a commercial business appealing to customers?

- Open comfortable sidewalks, gables, masonry design features, easy to use parking
- The building appearance, availability or access to entrance, and parking
- Relaxed, not crowded, visually appealing, clean, safe feeling, quaint Main Street feeling, upscale look
- Brick facade-consistent with surroundings
- Clean, fresh, landscaping, not right on busy thoroughfare with parking on edge of street
- Clean appearance, landscaping, parking
- Ease of parking, attractive landscaping, safety, well-lit, not another strip mall
- Different colors-buildings that are not plain
- New businesses that fit in with existing structures
- Bright colors, neat, well-kept, unique designs that are not square or box-like
- Brick structures that look more upscale and create architecturally interesting buildings
- Arches and bricks; clean look with some depth. Don't like the square, box-look
- Parking, landscaping, signage, and building materials
- Design, landscaping, parking
- Small-town charm with contemporary or new business/schemes
- Trees, tables, lighting, small-rural town feeling
- More windows, less signs, easy parking, fresh modern look



- Clean, good design, clear signage, green spaces, good parking-easily accessible, interesting architecture
- Lots of character, awnings, shutters, different structures with different heights-“old town” feel
- Exterior of buildings are taken care of i.e. plants, flowers, art, cut grass, nicely painted, clean
- Interesting architecture, landscaping, gathering/waiting places outside, clear identification of retail store names/locations

Desirable uses and general characteristics of commercial and mixed use buildings considered desirable by the community, based on the survey findings:

- Unique, retail businesses such as coffee shops, restaurants, book stores, bakeries, hobby stores, art supply stores
- Mixed-use development (i.e. developments with retail and residential)
- Educational or cultural uses such as a “satellite” college, trade school, or theater
- Businesses that are “destinations” rather than just serving convenience needs
- A neat, clean, and well-maintained appearance
- Traditional building materials: brick, stone
- Distinctive architectural details: facade articulation, storefront windows, awnings, and attractive signage
- Convenient parking
- Landscaping that softens the appearance of buildings

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING TYPES

Positive Images



Negative Images



Neutral Image



What housing types are preferred within the Metra station area (i.e. within walking distance)?

- Condominiums with indoor parking, high-end apartments
- Upscale townhouses
- Mixed use, townhouses, condos, single family on the periphery
- Close to station: condos with ample green lawn space for residents; a little farther from station: townhomes with green space
- Townhomes-2-3 story condos, mixed use
- Mixed-uses close to Metra with higher end multi-family; condos; townhouses
- Townhouses with interior courtyards
- No more than 3-4 stories tall nearest the station with duplexes and townhouses starting a couple of blocks away
- Condos/townhomes
- Mixed use, townhomes, condos
- No more than 3 story condos and mixed use with stores on ground floor
- Townhomes, apartments, and mixed use
- Townhomes, condos
- Townhomes with green space, apartments that are well-designed with balconies and nice entryways, lower buildings that are 2-3 stories
- Condos, apartments, townhomes, mixed use
- Townhomes, condos with a unique look to them, not a cookie-cutter look as design is important in this area
- High-rise mixed use buildings with their own reduced parking and available open/green space

What amenities are desirable in residential developments?

- Nice landscaping, green common areas, walk to shopping and dining
- Appearance of the building, not overcrowded, parking availability
- Walkability, connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods, parks, fountains, gazebos, green space
- Brick facades, underground parking, attached parking
- Indoor parking, living space, sleeping space, office space, building height sized relative to other buildings.
- Green space, close to parks
- Safety, easy to get to Cicero or 159th Street
- Walkways, gathering areas, "time-out" area to sit and relax
- Good parking
- Parking, walking access, landscaping
- Proximity to stores, bike trails, convenient transportation
- Trees, sidewalks
- Landscaping, architecture, streetscaping, parking, pool
- Fitness center
- Compatibility with surrounding residences
- Attractive buildings, ease of walking, inviting spaces
- Green spaces, parks, sidewalks, fountains, small shops (coffee, card, flowers, deli, or restaurant, bank branch, nice gas station)
- Lighting, indoor parking, sidewalks, gathering spaces



- Greens spaces
- Open space, pedestrian and bike access, public transportation nearby

General characteristics of *multi-family housing types* considered desirable by the community, based on the survey:

- Preferred housing types: condominiums, townhomes, and upscale apartments
- Mixed-use development that gives residents convenient access to goods and services
- Buildings that are two to three stories in height
- Developments that accommodate all modes of transportation including automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles, public transportation
- Landscaped open space and common areas are attractive amenities
- Interior parking is desirable

OPEN SPACES AND PLAZAS

Positive Images



Negative Images

No images received consistently negative ratings.

Neutral Images



What types of public open spaces and plazas should be provided in Oak Forest?

- Gathering areas with room to interact, pedestrian-friendly
- Spaces with trees, greenery, and benches where people can get to easily
- Passive-types that encourage walking, areas that can be used for connectivity between land uses
- Venue for public performances-musicals, plays, outdoor theater, community gathering place
- Major gathering space for community events
- Mature landscaping, safe, well-lit, easy access
- Small, open-air seating area with mid-highlighting for gatherings
- Shade and easy access
- Parks, small gather areas, outdoor-seating areas (near food stores and book stores, etc.)
- Spaces with greenery, large walking areas, benches trees
- Walkways to and from stores, central locations with easy access; would be nice to walk and shop in Oak Forest
- Benches, seating, walking, biking
- Lots of greenery, shade trees, areas for walking and biking
- Large landscaping areas for gathering
- A wide walking space with benches, street lights along Central Avenue



- Ones that invite people to be there with a welcoming environment-benches, greenery, sidewalks
- Trees, flowers on Central Avenue
- Landscaped, open, buffered from buildings, accessible

What urban design features and amenities should be used in these public spaces?

- Parks, gazebos, fountains, bike path
- Accentuate and match the character of surrounding Forest Preserve and golf course
- Brick walkways, consistent lighting
- Passive sitting areas, green space, trees and shrubbery, parks that can be used for theater or concerts
- Landscaped seating, places to walk/bike, upgrade Central Ave. from Highland to 159th, passive spaces, buffers, theme lighting, convenient parking, street art, water features
- Pavers, fountains, green spaces, seating, attractive lighting, parking
- Fountain
- Sitting areas including benches, landscaping, naturalistic water features like ponds, bike racks
- Benches, nice landscaping, lighting
- Street art, banners, hanging baskets, creeks, forest preserves
- Period lighting with a theme, fountains, benches, trees and greenery, ponds, sidewalks, nice parking areas, street art
- Planters, brick sidewalks, benches
- Park and walk in evenings; a reason to leave your house
- Gathering seating areas in close proximity to small shops
- Modern design, flowers, fountains, benches
- Brick pavers, fountains, trees, lighting, parking
- Brick design is nice; possibly designed concrete with wide walkways that are open and lined with trees
- Flowing design where shops are on each side of walkways
- Benches, trees, flowers, statues, fountains

General characteristics of *open spaces and plazas* considered desirable by the community, based on the survey:

- A centrally located community gathering space that can accommodate civic functions such as concerts and performances is desirable
- Family-oriented open spaces
- Open spaces should be designed with substantial landscaping
- Amenities such as benches and seating areas will encourage residents to “linger” in public spaces
- Decorative pavers, ornamental lighting, fountains and public art make public spaces attractive and distinctive
- Establish a common theme along corridors
- Connectivity to other uses and access via walking and biking are important
- Parking should be conveniently located



PARKING AND SCREENING

Positive Images



Negative Images



Neutral Image



What are features of well-designed parking lots?

- Green space breaks, designated walks to businesses, good lighting, safe access
- Lighting, security cameras, sidewalks
- Emergency phones
- Walkways, intelligent parking layout, no tight turns, wide-enough slots, asphalt not directly up to building, well-lit
- Lighting, security/safety, clean, accessible, where needed, traffic flow
- Lighting, safety, wide space per auto, easy access
- Clean, well-lit with nice light fixtures, green trees and bushes, colors (not only concrete)
- Distance between the sidewalk and the nearest row of cars
- Walkways to and from stores, easy access
- Parking should not be the focus, it should be condensed or multi-level
- Green spaces to break up parking lots
- Good design and lighting with nearby buildings, park-like atmosphere, not congested
- Lighting and easy access
- Ease of getting in and out; good lighting
- Islands that break up asphalt areas, lighting which is effective but not glaring, adequate stall/aisle size

What are the preferred methods of screening parking and service areas from view?

- Landscaping, berms, multi-level parking structure
- Landscape buffer, berms
- Trees and shrubbery
- Good structure-mask or minimize pressure of use
- Landscaping trees, bushes, flowers, berms, ornamental features
- Trees, bushes, flowers, berms
- Good landscaping, minor coverage of area with color balance in all flowers and shrubs



- Shrubs, trees, low walls
- Landscaping
- Landscaping, easy access in and out, safety
- Trees, lamps, not as many walls
- Underground, multi-level, not streetside, but behind the business
- Landscaping, trees, flowers
- Trees, bushes, flower pots
- Ample grass areas with trees that don't grow too tall
- Three-foot berm with trees, flower beds, or a short wall defining the parking area
- Bushes and trees

General characteristics of *parking and screening* considered desirable by the community, based on the survey:

- Parking lots should be broken up with landscape islands
- Clearly marked walkways should be delineated through parking lots and directly lead to public entrances
- Well-designed parking lots include wide enough drive aisles and parking spaces
- Parking lots should not be paved right up to property lines
- Sufficient lighting is necessary for security purposes, but it should be designed not to cause excessive glare
- Parking lot screening should include trees, low shrubs, low walls, and/or landscaped berms



Appendix E

Stakeholder Interview Comments Summary

As a key early step in the Comprehensive Plan update process, HNTB staff interviewed several community stakeholders on January 8, 10, 19 and 31, 2007. Over the course of these four days, thirty (30) individuals were interviewed.

A compilation of the comments heard during the interviews is provided below, organized by general topic area or question for ease of reference.

What brings people to Oak Forest, and what keeps them here?

- A small-town character, like Palos Heights or Palos Hills
- Small town feeling
- Great place to live
- It's a family community
- Multi-generational commitment
- Good schools, active PTA
- New development west of Ridgeland is newer and perceived as better
- The community has seen a lot of growth
- St. Damian's is a big draw

Assets and Advantages of Oak Forest

- An abundance of open land
- Less "non-descript" than Tinley Park or Crestwood
- Excellent schools, park district, and library
- Diverse areas and housing is still affordable
- There is a senior commission, that has monthly luncheon
- 10% of St. Damian parishioners live outside Oak Forest, but stay with the parish
- Solid homes; homes do not stay on the market for long
- Good schools
- Good police and fire departments
- Public works is outstanding
- Forest preserve districts
- Quiet streets
- Golf course
- Small town feel
- Great parks and schools
- Access to Metra and I-57
- Affordability
- Housing is a good value
- Stable middle class residents
- Loyal residents
- Strong Chamber of Commerce



- Oak Forest High School is a good size and has good sports that draw strong parental support
- The City is peaceful and quiet
- The golf course is great
- Can go north, south, east, or west easily
- Access to I-294

Weaknesses and Vulnerabilities of Oak Forest

- Other communities are building around Oak Forest; what development opportunities will be left?
- Need to “freshen up” overall
- Codes are not in place to get the kind of development that is desired
- Codes are not in place to address neighborhood changes
- Aging infrastructure
- Does not have a high end image
- There is a need to give seniors something to do
- Need expanded senior bus service: 9:00-3:00 M-F; township has service also
- Safety and security are an issue now, not a “small town” anymore
- There is a need to step up professionalism in local government with respect to returning phone calls, enforcement, etc.
- The City is divided; people on the west do not come east, and people on the south do not come north
- Apartments are an issue
- Perception that crime has gone up
- General overall appearance of the community
- Crime on FPD trail around the golf course
- Need to establish a better relationship with FPD and Bremen Township
- There is a high crime rate and high apartment numbers
- Lack of ordinance enforcement follow-up actions
- Oak Forest has not “spruced up”
- Aesthetic concerns; the City does not draw shoppers
- Excessive spending on upgrading facilities
- Appreciation in housing values
- Markham elementary school district
- Limited opportunities for moving up in Oak Forest (housing options)
- Lack of opportunities for commercial annexation
- Appearance of major corridors
- There is stiff competition with Will County in attracting businesses
- 167th and Cicero: the old plan was never implemented
- Property taxes are high
- Vacant lots/buildings
- It is less expensive to shop in Orland or Tinley
- “Downtown” area is needed
- Kids hanging out at the apartment complexes
- As minorities increase, there is a need for bilingual services
- Poor aesthetics along Cicero



- Tinley and Midlothian each have a town center, Oak Forest has no “center”
- Gingerwood has been forgotten
- Cicero is in bad shape and getting worse

Land Use and Development

- Take things slowly
- Concentrate on Cicero Avenue first
- Residents who live west of Central Avenue tend to travel west to Oak Park Avenue in Tinley Park; established patterns will have to be overcome to lure them east to 159th and Cicero
- Build up 167th and Cicero, maybe with sports or entertainment use if feasible
- 159th is “theoretically” a good location, but high speeds make some businesses hard to notice
- Restaurants and shopping go together; people will shop where they can go out to eat also
- Cicero and 159th need to be less of a “hodge-podge”
- Signs taped up in windows look junky and are a security concern
- Community is broken up by school district boundaries- kids south of 167th attend high school in Tinley Park, a small section of Fieldcrest is in the Markham school district, etc.
- Oak Park and River Forest have proactively embraced diversity, reducing mobility and maintaining a healthy economic environment
- Oak Forest has good median income statistics to support commercial
- Mixed use works in the overall vision; should not be done piece-meal here and there
- The plan needs to be economic development focused
- Focus on business retention; Dominick’s closed and Aldi’s is leaving
- Chamber and the City are trying different things to attract/retain business including the community awareness fair
- Business are not kept up, even if not vacant
- Need to remove Wille Brothers cement plant
- Community anchors are Jewel, Walgreens, and Ace Hardware
- Difficult to change the “bedroom community” pattern
- Lack of commercial including high end restaurants that are open in the evenings; no more auto repair shops
- Once Gateway is under development, other new development will follow
- Harlem business park: multi-tenant buildings have problems filling space
- Crestwood got Wal-Mart and Menards
- Most residents shop in town, even though prices are higher at Jewel
- Orland and Crestwood are convenient for soft goods
- Need for an outlet mall
- Need niche commercial
- Not many destinations to walk to



Commercial Areas

- Too many bars in Oak Forest; creates a negative perception of the community
- Need more restaurants; already have too many breakfast places
- Depth limitations along Cicero; expansion could be carefully done
- No room for a “big box” scale development along Cicero
- No more auto-repair places needed
- Oak Forest has no home improvement, electronics or office supply stores
- Oak Forest residents do not have easy access to a Target store
- Take a coordinated approach so that businesses reinforce one another
- New commercial development to the west and south continues to pull shoppers in that direction
- Business community: need to target new businesses, particularly chains such as Starbucks, Borders, Trader Joe’s, and restaurants
- Pancake house needs a facade upgrade
- There is a need for a cluster of restaurants like at Western and 211th
- There is a need to “tidy things up” especially along 159th and Cicero
- Arbor Park site- mixed use with parking to the north
- There is a need for more community events, including those for children
- Strong Chamber but only so much they can do
- Need for an upscale evening restaurant, especially in the TOD area
- Consider annexation of the hospital property for redevelopment with “big box”
- Need live theater at the “saloon”
- Be aware of the tendency to go west, attract customers on their way to Orland Park
- Lost a gift shop and losing the Hallmark store

Housing

- Need more townhouses, not more condominiums
- Mismanagement of apartment complexes (overcrowded units, etc.)
- Apartments meet an important need in the overall “life cycle”
- Need for senior housing; some residents have moved west to Wolf Road to find senior housing
- Changes in some housing areas are breeding animosity toward the minority population
- Affordable housing is needed but must be well managed
- People move out to find newer, bigger homes; many go to Plainfield, New Lenox or Oswego
- How can housing reinvestment be encouraged- provide renovation plans like Park Forest does?
- Prefer single family homes, there is a need for larger homes
- Interior remodeling is occurring
- Housing stock is becoming outdated
- Subdivisions very separated; breeds resentment
- Need to maintain smaller homes
- Need for senior townhomes and condos
- Replace apartments
- Senior housing could be developed on the Oakfest site



- Do not see teardowns happening
- Low income tenants in three housing complexes are problematic
- Areas that are ripe for redevelopment are west of the high school
- There are a lot of elderly in the trailer park

Access and Circulation

- 159th is a major route from I-57 (U.S. highway route)
- 159th speed limit is higher in Oak Forest than in Tinley
- Sidewalks lacking in the area west of Cicero and south of the railroad
- Sidewalk system along Central Avenue is discontinuous between public uses
- Sidewalks are missing on Central Avenue south of 167th
- Bicycle access to the forest preserve is good
- Forest preserve trails are plentiful, but can be hard to access without having to cross major streets for kids
- Hille School's morning traffic on Central is a problem (drop-off area backs up; afternoon traffic is also bad)
- Sidewalks on the south side of 151st at Central are an issue; only one crossing guard
- Student lot is unpaved gravel; who should pave this?
- Lack of parking at the high school, so students park on adjoining residential streets
- Speed limit on 159th Street
- Careless driving and speeding through neighborhoods
- Sunday AM traffic back-ups near the high school
- Sidewalks on Laramie near 147th and 149th
- Access difficult along Cicero
- Speed limits need to be enforced
- 167th: 1/2 is the City, 1/2 is the County
- Potential extension of 171st west to Harlem
- The senior bus service should be expanded from 9:00-3:00 to 8:30-4:00, and expand the travel area; the township dial-a-bus requires reservations too far in advance
- Need better connections between subdivisions
- Have been able to get from Gingerwood to Jewel on a bicycle
- Sidewalks are missing on the west side of Oak Park Avenue
- Pending bicycle paths at Central and 151st Street
- No sidewalks on one side of Forest
- Pace bus goes down Cicero now
- Kids can walk to St. Damian
- Sidewalk issues on Long and 151st and Laramie
- Motorists trying to exit the Metra lot
- It is difficult to access the walking paths
- No sidewalk on 151st Street
- No way to get to 167th Street



Community Facilities

- Increased demand for language instruction (ESL) is limiting access to special attention for kids with learning disabilities in the schools
- ESL needs should be met through a collaborative approach, but just the schools
- Oak Forest High School is very good, even though it lacks the resources that Lincolnway has
- School District 145 is excellent; schools separated by grade level are working well
- People are happy with and proud of the services the City provides
- The Park District is great, with good programs for seniors
- Lack of open gym facilities for teenagers
- Safety and security issues
- City and School District 146 worked well together recently to implement some landscape improvements
- City relations with other institutions have also been open and good
- School district in Naperville rented out an apartment as a location to provide outreach, to proactively bridge the gap with the community
- Lansing has a community center for upper elementary and high school age groups
- Lincolnway has intergovernmental agreements between school and park districts to share facilities and services
- Need to look at police and fire/ambulance: demands keep rising
- Need more of what already exists
- Fire department is fantastic: answers 3000 to 3500 calls per years (mostly ambulance)
- Police department is improving under Mayor Kelly
- Park district has improved, but should be coordinated with the City
- 3 elementary school districts and 2 high school districts are a big selling point
- Off-street trails in parks and forest preserves
- Oak Forest high school needs parking
- Need larger senior center building, move it from 151st and Kilpatrick to 147th or Central, farther west
- College facility is great
- Need a skate park
- H.S. and Park District “open gym”
- Aging school infrastructure
- Schools are at capacity
- Need for bilingual services: 3 of 4 schools have a bilingual staff person
- Schools are declining slightly

Urban Design / Gateways

- Cicero and 159th gateway is very negative now
- The image of the community is less “vital” than neighboring communities
- An improved image will result in an improved business environment
- There are not enough street lights in some areas
- Primary gateway are corners of 159th and Cicero
- Get the County to let the City develop the east side of Cicero at 159th Street



- Need a gateway at 167th and Cicero
- Need a gateway at 159th and Central
- Need feature at the TOD site

Most Important Issue

- Need more businesses
- Leadership has to bring people together
- Need more commercial and mixed use development
- Issues with apartments and mobile homes
- In Fieldcrest there are small homes and seasonal workers are living in garages
- On the south end of the City most land is marshy and/or floodplain
- If you are in the school district that also serves Markham, most send their kids to parochial schools
- Hold business owners/landlords accountable, clean-up properties and if necessary strengthen code enforcement
- Need an effective marketing plan that highlights schools, services, businesses
- Redevelopment of major corridors
- Aging and obsolete buildings

Other Comments / Suggestions

- The City needs to be open to change
- Need to think long-range
- The plan needs to be implementation focused
- A community's quality of life establishes its reputation
- Crime detracts from a community's image, regardless of whether the crime is real or perceived
- Needs community events throughout the City
- Codes are important, but enforcement is key
- Residents are excited to see Arbor Park school coming down
- Oak Forest is a great community that is looking forward
- Want to keep families in the City
- Influx of young families that are working class and moving into affordable homes; they move up within the community
- People moving from Blue Island (e.g. Hispanics)
- People move to Mokena or Orland Park when they can afford it
- Community is divided unless you have kids in sports
- Boarded up buildings are a major deterrent
- Letting properties just sit unused is not a good thing
- Crime-free rental: background check should be provided and if they do not keep the property up they should be evicted
- Crime task force underway and have been discussing "beat" increases
- FPD: flooding has occurred in the 2nd Ward; creeks need to be cleaned up
- Codes: garage replacement and sprinklers are now required in trailers
- Communicate better with residents when redevelopment is proposed
- Have been on a list for a new sidewalk for 18 years



- There is an ugly racial history under the surface
- Potholes in parking lots
- Annex up to 147th and Cicero to create a “clean” boundary; disconnect some areas east of Cicero
- Facade improvement program
- Consider a business park or upscale housing at 167th and Cicero
- Things have changed negatively over the last 30 years
- Residents do not support good restaurants, they all seem to close
- Issues with boat storage and smoking ban
- Park district has no building, it uses schools
- Taxes are as high as other communities, but Oak Forest does not have the amenities
- Referendums get voted down by seniors



Appendix F

Selected Community Survey Results

The Public Opinion Laboratory of Northern Illinois University conducted a community survey for the City of Oak Forest in 2006. Results were provided to the City in November 2006. The purpose of the survey was for the City to gain insights about citizens' level of satisfaction with community services. Information obtained through this survey provide an indication of the citizen perceptions of quality of life and the value of City services, as well their observations regarding the City's strengths and weaknesses, and problems that the community is facing.

The survey was mailed to a random sampling of residents. The community survey consisted of both multiple choice and open-ended questions. While complete results have been compiled and cross-tabulated in two reports prepared by the Public Opinion Laboratory of Northern Illinois University, this is a summary of survey results that directly relate to community insights about planning and development issues. These will help to provide direction in the development of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan.

Key findings from the survey are summarized as follows:

Quality of Life

- While just over 78% of respondents said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with overall quality of life in the Oak Forest, over 84% of resident respondents are satisfied with their quality of life within their neighborhood. However, over one-third of the respondents rated the quality of life in Oak Forest as "somewhat worse" or "worse" than it was five years ago.
- Over 93.3% of respondents rated the sense of community in Oak Forest as "excellent," "good," or "fair."
- A total of 43.3% of respondents felt that Oak Forest is not "headed in the right direction."
- The survey included an analysis that identified factors that are most associated with quality of life judgments. In order of importance, the top four factors are the following: 1) sense of community, 2) feeling safe and secure in your neighborhood, 3) landscaping and grounds maintenance, and 4) parks and recreational facilities. The survey determined that if Oak Forest wants to improve quality of life for its residents, it should focus on these factors to make the greatest impact.

Community Facilities and Services

Most community facilities and services were to be rated as "excellent," "good," "fair," or "poor." When this section describes the level of satisfaction, responses of "excellent," "good," and "fair" are considered responses of general satisfaction.

- With respect to satisfaction with the police department, over 82% felt safe and secure in their neighborhoods.



- Respondents were asked to rate services provided by the Public Works Department. Only those responses related to public improvements are summarized here. With respect to street and sidewalk maintenance, most respondents were satisfied (83.4% and 71.2%, respectively) however, a significant 28.8% rated sidewalk maintenance as "poor."
- Overall respondents are satisfied with other City improvements, as well. Ratings of satisfaction are as follows: landscape/grounds maintenance-85.2%; street lighting-77.8%; sanitary sewers-87.4%; storm sewers-81.4%; and water system-91.8%.
- Residents were asked to rate the appearance of properties in relation to code enforcement. Over 90% were satisfied with the overall appearance of neighborhoods. The majority also felt that single-family residential and commercial properties generally have at least a fairly good appearance (89% and 85%, respectively), whereas almost 24% rated the appearance of multi-family residential properties as "poor."
- Over 96% of respondents were satisfied with permitting and licensing services provided by the administrative staff.
- The level of satisfaction with local schools is 96.3%, and over 33% rated schools as "excellent."
- The level of satisfaction with parks and recreational facilities is 95.6%.
- There is a very high level of satisfaction with the library of over 97%.
- Senior citizen services received a satisfactory rating of over 94%.

Economic Development

- Just over 75% of respondents felt that services were satisfactory for the property taxes they pay.
- Respondents were asked about their feelings regarding future development in the City. The vast majority, 92.5%, felt that the City should aggressively pursue more business development.
- Of the choices provided in the survey, the top three business uses that most respondents wanted the City to pursue are department stores, restaurants, and clothing/shoe stores.

Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended questions on the survey requested the top three responses to the following questions. The responses that received the largest number of responses include the following:

What do you view as the top three positive attributes/characteristics of the Oak Forest community?

- Forest Preserves and bike paths
- Proximity to transportation (expressways and Metra)
- Good schools
- Sense of community
- Community parks



- Library
- Good mayor and city services
- Access to shopping/grocery store
- Churches
- Cleanliness of the neighborhoods
- Low taxes/affordability

What do you view as the top three negative attributes/problems of the Oak Forest community?

- Need a new Metra station and new development around it
- Apartments on 159th Street near the Metra station, Laramie and LeClaire and the mobile home park
- Flooding in some areas
- Vacant buildings and the need to upgrade Cicero Avenue and 159th Street businesses
- Insufficient tax base
- No downtown
- Lack of quality developments like in Orland Park and Tinley Park
- Poor street, sidewalk, streetlight and curb maintenance
- Lack of a community pool/water park



Appendix G
Selected Condominium Projects



Forest Trails Condominiums

Address: 15100 S. Oak Park Ave.
 Community: Oak Forest

Developer: McCarthy Building Company

Date opened: Midyear 2003 marketing began; February 2004 occupancy; Final phase under construction

Building type: Eight four-story brick masonry buildings (Garages located on 1st Floor)
 No. of units: 133 in eight buildings

Major project amenities:
 Overlooks forest preserve and has easy access to trails
 Extensive landscaping including two ponds with fountains

Significant standard unit features:
 Tile flooring in kitchen and bath
 Carpeting
 Private Laundry
 Oversized balcony
 3rd Floor units include fireplace
 4th Floor units include vaulted
 Ceilings and skylights



Available Upgrades:
 Oak Floors
 Custom Countertops
 Garbage Disposal
 Whirlpool
 Detached garage/storage

Parking: One attached garage space included

Assessment: \$135

Tenant Mix: Most buyers come from the south suburbs and southwest side of the city, mix of young singles, young families and 'empty nesters'

Phase II Unit Mix/Prices*:

Floor	Sq. Ft.		Base Price		Price/Sq. Ft.	
	1 BR	2 BR	1 BR	2 BR	1 BR	2 BR
1	N/A	1,350	N/A	\$215,000-230,000	N/A	\$159-170
2	1,100	1,350	\$205,000	\$220,000-235,000	\$186	\$163-174
3	1,100	1,350	\$215,000	\$230,000-245,000	\$195	\$170-181
4	1,100	1,350	\$225,000	\$245,000-260,000	\$205	\$181-193

*Phase I priced 2BR units at \$150,000



Brookside Place Condominiums of Tinley Park - Brookside East

Address: 7935 Trinity Circle
 Community: Tinley Park

Developer: Blackwater Development Corporation

Date opened: 2003 occupancy; Final phase under construction

Building type: Four, Five-story brick masonry buildings (Garages located on 1st Floor)
 No. of units: 64 in four buildings

Significant standard unit features:

- Fireplace
- Tile flooring in kitchen, bath and foyer
- Carpeting
- Private Laundry with washer and dryer
- Large Balcony
- Refrigerator and Microwave included
- Three large walk-in closets
- Trash chutes on each floor



Parking: One attached garage space included

Assessment: \$150

Unit Mix/Prices:

<u># BR</u>	<u># Baths</u>	<u>Garage</u>	<u>Sq. Ft.</u>	<u>Base Price</u>	<u>Price/Sq. Ft.</u>
2*	2	1	1,600	\$228,900	\$143

** Two models available*



Tinley Pointe

Address: 183rd and Harlem
 Community: Tinley Park

Developer: Hansen Development Corporation

Date opened: Summer 2005 marketing began; July 2006 occupancy

Building type: One, Four-story brick masonry buildings (Plus lower-level garage)
 No. of units: 36, Ground Floor Retail (16 Units sold)

Major project amenities: 17,400 square feet of retail on first floor.
 Retail space is leasing for \$24.00/SF/Year, Triple Net.

Significant standard unit features:
 Fireplace with marble surround
 and hearth
 Tile flooring in kitchen, bath, foyer
 and laundry
 Carpeting
 Private Laundry (Hook-ups for
 stackable washer/Dryer)
 Large Balcony
 Custom cabinets
 Granite countertops
 Trash chutes on each floor
 \$1,500 Appliance allowance
 Garbage Disposal



Available Upgrades:
 Wood flooring
 Crown molding
 Upgraded cabinetry
 White trim package for trim and doors

Parking: One underground garage space included

Unit Mix/Prices:

Floor	2 Bedroom, 2 Bath			Penthouse
	1,300 Sq. Ft.	1,310 Sq. Ft.	1,480 Sq. Ft.	1,750 Sq. Ft.
2	\$231,900	\$227,900	\$242,900- 246,900	
3	\$234,900	\$230,900	\$245,900- 249,900	
4	\$237,900	\$233,900	\$252,900- 248,900	\$295,900-299,900
Price/Sq. Ft.	\$178-183	\$174-179	\$164-171	\$169-171



Springfort Hall

Address: 172nd and Oak Park Avenue
 Community: Tinley Park

Developer: Donlin Builders

Date opened: Late Fall of 2006 occupancy

Building type: One, Four-story brick masonry buildings (Plus lower-level garage)
 No. of units: 14, Ground Floor Retail

Major project amenities: Retail on First floor, walk to the new Downtown Tinley Park Metra station

Significant standard unit features:

- Fireplaces
- 9 Foot Ceilings
- Private laundry with washer/dryer hook-ups
- Granite Counters in kitchen
- Oversized granite-top island
- Custom oak/cherry cabinetry
- Tile flooring in bath and laundry
- Oak flooring in foyer, kitchen and dinette
- Carpeting
- Stainless Steel Appliances
- Penthouse Suites with sunroom and rooftop veranda
- Lighting fixture allowance of \$500



Parking: One underground garage space included

Unit Mix/Prices:

<u># BR</u>	<u># Baths</u>	<u>Garage</u>	<u>Sq. Ft.</u>	<u>Base Price</u>	<u>Price/Sq. Ft.</u>
2	2	1	1,500	\$300,000	\$200
2	2	1	1,530	\$300,000	\$196
2	2	1	1,560	\$300,000	\$192
2	2	1	1,565	\$300,000	\$192
2	2	1	1,575	\$300,000	\$190
2	2	1	2,025	\$400,000	\$198
2	2	1	2,100	\$400,000	\$190

