Appropriate Development at 1000 Lake Street:

An independent citizens' analysis



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Edited by Joshua Klayman and Laura Stamp

For further information, contact Joshua Klayman, JoshK@UChicago.edu

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present Village of Oak Park decision makers with an organized and well-documented analysis of plans for development of the Downtown Oak Park area in general, and of the 1000 Lake Street site in particular. This report includes research and analysis conducted by concerned Oak Park residents with a range of expertise, with backgrounds in architecture, business, local government, education, and other experience. The report draws on information provided by the developer in its public presentation of January 30, 2017, information obtained more recently from the developer, data publicly available from the Village of Oak Park website and other official sources, independent research published in refereed journals of economics and urban studies, and meetings with experts and officials, including the Mayor, the Executive Director of the Oak Park Economic Development Corporation, the Village Planner, the Executive Director of the Park District of Oak Park, several Village Trustees, and a large number of individuals who live, work, and shop in Oak Park.

The contributors to this report are not anti-development. There is a clear need for continued, appropriate development in the Village, and there remain many excellent properties suitable for further development. Appropriate development could produce modest increases in the population of the Village, and that need not be a negative.

We do, however, challenge the current approach of encouraging further large-scale, high-rise development in downtown Oak Park. As will become clear, the contributors to this report are hardly alone in such opposition. This pattern of development stands in direct contradiction to the directives of the Master Plan for Downtown Oak Park and the Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan. Those plans were prepared by experts in architecture and urban planning, with extensive collaboration with citizen groups and the public, and were ratified (and paid for) by successive Village Boards of Trustees and Village Presidents. Those studies cannot be ignored in favor of ad-hoc, piecemeal responses to individual development applications.

Moreover, there is considerable evidence of public opposition to the next large-scale development, proposed for 1000 Lake Street. This is attested to by rallies, petition drives, and, especially, by the results of the most recent Village elections. Petitions opposing the Albion proposal have gathered approximately 1500 signatures to date (about 1000 on-line and 500 on paper), including 300 during a "Don't Throw Shade" rally held on March 19. This is a representative comment from an on-line signer:

> "In 2005 Oak Park citizens participated in community planning forums for the future of downtown Oak Park, resulting in a TIF Master Plan adopted by the Board that set the building height limit on Lake St. at 80' or

> approximately 7 stories. A primary concern of citizens was preserving the historic character of downtown and keeping it affordable for the independent, small shopkeepers that give this area its special character and that attract many shoppers from other towns. By considering another highrise apartment building, elected officials continue to ignore the Master Plan and are betraying the trust of residents who in good faith participated in the development of the Plan."

Appendix A of this report provides the other comments written by on-line petitioners, who were offered the option to describe "why this petition is important to [you], and share your reason for signing."

Most often, when local development issues arise, the developers use their considerable resources to prepare attractive, professional, persuasive presentations of their proposals, including many projections and promises that are unsupported, but unrefuted. Their reports profit from the dedication of company employees and hired consultants who are hired to make the report look and sound good for the developer. In contrast, opponents to those plans are typically unaffiliated and unfunded, and can hardly compete in gathering and presenting their counterarguments. This gives developers a tremendous edge in persuading decision makers to proceed with development proposals. This report hopes to reduce that imbalance as much as possible, given the limited resources available to produce it.

Chapter 2 of this report presents the case for a different, and more appropriate, approach to future development in Downtown Oak Park. The most immediate concern in this regard is the proposal of Village Green Holding LLC to build a mixed-use building of approximately 18 stories at 1000 Lake Street. Therefore, Chapter 3 discusses this site specifically.

A development of anything near the scale proposed by Albion for 1000 Lake St. will have large negative impacts on the community and should not be considered. Austin Gardens is a particular concern: It must be protected. Merely adjusting details of design or construction cannot produce an acceptable development for this site at anywhere near the proposed scale. Chapter 4 pulls together the research and analysis provided in the report, and presents an alternative vision for appropriate future development of Downtown Oak Park.

2. The vision for Downtown Oak Park

2.1 Applicability of zoning laws

Zoning regulations play a central role in community planning, and the threshold for all but minor variations should be set very high. Developers have sometimes attempted to portray zoning rules not as planning tools, but as nothing more than reference points for determining when the Board and Plan Commission become involved. However, the Village's own web-site makes clear that this is an incorrect interpretation.

> Zoning is a tool for achieving several important goals, including conserving property values, protecting the character and stability of the residential, business and commercial areas, and promoting orderly and beneficial development that supports the goals and objectives of the Village's Comprehensive Plan and recommendations from various business district plans. Zoning also is intended to protect residents against incompatible uses, and to fix reasonable standards to which buildings and structures should conform.
> (http://www.oak-park.us/village-services/planning/zoning)

The VOP Zoning Ordinance, section 1.2, states that

> this Zoning Ordinance is adopted for the following purposes:
> A. To promote the public health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the citizens of the Village;
> B. To conserve the values of property throughout the Village and to protect the character and stability of the residential, business and industrial areas;
> C. To promote orderly and beneficial development that supports the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan for the development of the Village;
> D. To provide adequate light, pure air, privacy and convenience of access to property;
> E. To lessen or avoid congestion in the public streets and highways in the Village;

Large-scale developments in Downtown Oak Park massively violate previous zoning standards, in particular the long-standing 80-feet height standard established for the 1000 Lake Street site and neighboring areas. Such developments violate **all** of the stated purposes of zoning regulation. As we will demonstrate in this report, such development will diminish the general welfare of the citizens of the Village, will threaten the character and stability of the area, will violate in almost every respect the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, will interfere with the adequate light of the neighboring Austin Gardens, and will increase congestion in public streets.

Of course the Board has the authority to override zoning regulations in specific cases, through the use of variances and the Planned Development process. However, the bar for doing so should be very high, and exceptions should be kept to a minimum. From the Village website:

> An applicant for a Planned Development typically is seeking relief from some aspect of the Zoning Ordinance such as height or set-back requirements. The applicant must demonstrate that the Village will receive compensating benefits in return for zoning relief. (http://www.oak-park.us/village-services/community-planning)

Sections 2.2 and 3.9 of the Zoning Ordinance specify requirements for any exceptions to zoning codes. (These requirements are also included in the Plan Commission Statute). Stated requirements are similar for Special Uses, Variances, and Planned Developments. Because large-scale developments are normally subject to Planned Development procedures, we cite those sections here.

The Village zoning code clearly sets a high standard for approval:

> 3.9.1.G.5. The burden of providing evidence and persuasion that any planned-development permit meets the standards set forth below shall, in every case, rest with the applicant.

and emphasizes that applicants and property owners have no right to anticipate approval, regardless of any expressions of interest or encouragement that they may have received from committees or individuals associated with Village government.

> 2.2.7.A.6. Neither the determination of application completion by the Village Planner nor any comment made by the Village Planner, staff or the Village Board or subcommittee thereof at a pre-filing conference or as part of the review process shall be construed as a formal or informal recommendation for the approval or denial of a planned-development permit for the proposed development, or component part thereof, and no such determination or comment shall be construed as a binding decision of the Village, the designated hearing commission or committee or any staff member.

The code further makes clear that the fact that zoning codes were waived in a previous instance *is not* valid as an argument for another planned development. Thus, for example, the fact that the Vantage development was approved by the Board (overriding the recommendation of the Plan Commission) does not in any way favor the development of another such project. We argue that, in fact, that proximity to another large-scale

development argues *against* permitting another, similarly-scaled project nearby.

> 3.9.1.G.4. Each planned development shall be presented and judged on its own merits. It shall not be sufficient to base justification for approval or denial of a development upon an already existing planned development except to the extent such development has been approved as part of a site plan.

What are the criteria for approving a planned development? The code specifies that the development must be compatible with the Comprehensive Plan

> 3.9.1.I. Standards for Review:
> 1. Comprehensive Plan Standards
> The proposed use or combination of uses is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan *(see below)*

and that it must not negatively affect the quality of life of current Oak Park residents

> 2. Municipal Services Standards
> a. The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use or combination of uses will not be materially detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals or general welfare of the residents of the Village.
> 3. Neighborhood Standards
> a. The proposed use or combination of uses will not substantially diminish the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity for those uses or combination of uses that are permitted by the Zoning Ordinance of the Village.
> b. The proposed use or combination of uses will not have a substantial adverse effect upon property values in the vicinity.
> c. The proposed design, use or combination of uses will complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
> 4. Economic Development and Feasibility Standards
> …b. The proposed use or combination of uses is economically feasible and does not pose a current or potential burden upon the services, tax base, or other economic factors that affect the financial operations of the Village, except to the extent that such burden is balanced by the benefit derived by the Village from the proposed use.

The designation of a Transit-Related Retail Overlay District in no way relaxes the requirements for downtown developments. The section of the Code concerning the Overlay District re-emphasizes that development must still be within the scale

of the rest of Downtown:

> 3.9.4 Downtown--Lake Street Building Height and Massing Overlay District
>
> A. Purpose
>
> The purpose of the Downtown -- Lake Street Building Height and Massing Overlay District is to protect the unique and representative character of the existing Village streetscape and prevent the construction of buildings which would be disruptive and incompatible with the character of both the street and the Village.

This report will demonstrate that high-rise development on Lake Street, and the prospective development at 1000 Lake Street specifically, fail to meet **any** of the above-stated requirements. On the contrary, such development will enrich the property owner and the developer at considerable expense to the general welfare of the community. It is likely to have a negative impact on Village finances (despite developers' claims to the contrary) and will provide no compensating benefits. It is not plausible to conclude that, for example, an 18-story apartment complex at 1000 Lake Street can be considered compatible with the character of the street and the Village or with the Comprehensive Plan.

2.2 The Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan

The Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2014 with considerable investment in both time and money. It clearly represents a consensus reached by experts, citizens, and political officials. The consulting team for this report (Houseal Lavigne Associates, a5, Active Transportation Alliance, Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., and Seven Generations Ahead) not only applied their own expertise in urban planning, but also conducted hearings and focus groups so that "well over 1,000 individual citizens participated in the process, volunteering thousands of hours throughout the creation of the Comprehensive Plan." Most of the sitting members of the Board of Trustees, the Village President and the Plan Commission also participated in creating this plan. The acknowledgments page lists Village President Anan Abu-Taleb and current Trustees Peter Barber, Glenn Brewer, Colette Lueck, Andrea Ott, and Robert Tucker, as well as current and former members of the Plan Commission.

The Plan repeatedly emphasizes the importance of preserving the character and scale of the Village in all developments[1]. For example:

> p. 46. Oak Park's commercial areas are thriving and walkable, providing a range of businesses offering a vibrant mix of desired goods and services for residents of Oak Park and beyond. **New development is** both

[1] In quoting from other documents, key passages have been highlighted in boldface for the convenience of readers. Except where indicated otherwise, those passages were not bolded in the original.

innovative and forward thinking, **respectful of the existing character, and older buildings of importance have been rehabilitated and adaptively reused wherever possible.** The commercial areas contribute to a strong local tax base and economic engine, providing the revenue necessary to fund public services and facilities. Areas near transit stations have been rejuvenated through increased density and a more intense mix of commercial uses.

P. 47. If properly managed, designed, and constructed, new investment and reinvestment can help strengthen the fabric and vitality of the neighborhoods. **Infill development should be sensitive to the established character, scale, architecture, rhythm, and overall context of each site.**

p. 49. Oak Park enjoys a far-reaching reputation for architecture and design. **Village government should ensure** that historic development is properly preserved, and **new development appropriately complements the existing character of the community.…Village government can help ensure one of Oak Park's defining characteristics, and source of community pride, is not compromised. Context-sensitive development regulations will help ensure private development is compatible with historic character.**

p. 50. **New development** and poorly designed renovations and additions **can place the village's established character at risk. Village government should** consider using a broad spectrum of policies and regulations, from design-oriented development controls to educational resources, to **require, encourage, and create awareness for context-sensitive development**. These may include form-based regulations, development guidelines or pattern books, "how to" guides, a pre-approved list of knowledgeable architects, and other resources that can **provide property owners, developers, and designers with the information necessary to articulate and implement the community's vision.**

p. 53. **In Oak Park, it is also critical to understand, and be respectful of**, the well-established pattern of development. This includes the **architectural and historically significant neighborhoods, established commercial areas**, traditional street grid and block pattern, **and beautiful parks and open space.**

p. 64 Goal 4.1 - Strengthen and protect the character, integrity, and cohesion of the village and its neighborhoods. 4.1.1. Objective: **Establish and strengthen** focal points, such as schools, **parks, commercial districts and other community gathering spaces**, within the village's neighborhoods. 4.1.2. Objective: Strengthen the community's urban fabric through **context-sensitive infill development that is complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential neighborhoods**.

Metrics: Resident perception related to community character.

p. 65. **Encourage redevelopment** and revitalization of underused and underdeveloped property **while promoting the preservation of historical resources and character**.

With regard to the 1000 Lake Street site in particular, the Comprehensive Plan again emphasizes the importance of appropriately scaling development at that site:

P. 61 **Lake/Forest (northwest corner)**. Mixed-use development…**consistent in character to other development in Downtown Oak Park**

The Comprehensive Plan also places special emphasis on parks and public spaces, envisioning a future in which these spaces are enhanced, not diminished. This vision is of particular relevance with regard to the 1000 Lake Street site and neighboring Austin Gardens.

p. 80. Parks, open spaces, and environmental features offer critical links to Oak Park residents; links to nature in an otherwise urban context; links to the community's history and those who shaped it; links to an active and healthy lifestyle; and links to its identity as a place of harmony between the natural and built environments. **Parks, open spaces, and environmental features are critical in defining the character of Oak Park, and they are also the most costly assets to lose since they can take so long to replace.**

p. 82: The vision statement describes Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Features as they exist in Oak Park in 2030. **Parks, open spaces, and environmental features are a distinctive element of** Oak Park's neighborhoods, **commercial districts**, and public spaces... Partnerships among Oak Park, other local governments, and surrounding communities have **maximized the benefits of community open spaces**... This system of open spaces has become more robust as new local parks have been built in order to provide greater local access to recreational and environmental benefits. . .Each residential street is its own picturesque **setting reflective of the character enjoyed by many previous generations, and commercial areas are visited by shoppers who enjoy the attractive environment.**

p. 84. Providing Natural Open Space. Objective 6.1.4. **Provide passive and natural open spaces that support sustained ecosystems and provide an opportunity for residents to interact with nature**. Natural and passive open spaces provide important benefits to Oak Park citizens. …. **Village government could** work with local property owners and regional agencies

> to **identify, sustain, and restore potential natural open spaces**, and provide education and awareness that increases local appreciation for their role within the village.
>
> p. 88. **GOAL 6.4. The village, and its open spaces, should serve as an educational model and strive to highlight its historical heritage.**

It is important to note that the Comprehensive Plan clearly retains and endorses the conclusions of the 2005 Master Plan for Downtown Oak Park. Several of the authors of this report have worked with consultants or are themselves consultants. Our experience is that consultants are not predisposed to validate the work of competing consulting groups. It is thus particularly noteworthy that Comprehensive Plan clearly endorses the Master Plan for Downtown, indicating that the economic and social shifts since 2005 in no way invalidate the Master Plan vision.

> p. 3. Oak Park has a rich heritage of community planning. This document inventories several plans and policies that have been adopted that provide a specific vision for different portions of the community. **The intent of this Comprehensive Plan is not to replace these adopted plans or policies. Rather, it is designed to identify ways that broader Village policies can advance localized goals and objectives.** Since the adoption of the last comprehensive plan, several significant local planning and regulatory initiatives have been undertaken, including: [Great Downtown Plan among them.]
>
> p. 57. The Future Land Use Plan is intended to describe the function of various portions of the community at a village-wide level. However, **many portions of the community have been the subject of previously adopted and more specific sub-area plans. In addition to this Comprehensive Plan, these sub-area plans should be referenced when assessing the appropriateness of development proposals, policies, or strategic actions.**

Accordingly, we next examine the Master Plan for Downtown Oak Park.

2.3 The Master Plan for Downtown Oak Park



Diagram from the Master Plan for Downtown Oak Park[2] which, until recently, illustrated the VOP Community Planning web page, http://www.oak-park.us/village-services/community-planning.

The Master Plan was produced by Crandall Arambula PC, a firm specializing in urban design, planning and architecture, with special expertise in design and planning of downtown areas. Crandall Arambula collaborated on the report with Gilmore Franzen Architects, Inc., with Kenig, Lindgren, O'Hara, Aboona, Inc. (KLOA)—a firm specializing in traffic, transportation, and parking consultation, and with engineering, design, and construction firm URS.

"The master plan was built upon a foundation of extensive public outreach. The series of interviews and small "focus groups" held with a wide range of citizen and government groups throughout the project were of great importance. Approximately 50 separate meetings were held over the months with the following groups:

- Business community – Downtown Oak Park Business Association, Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce, Oak Park Development Corporation, South Marion Street, and The Avenue Business Association.
- Retail community/local business owners – Downtown Oak Park, The Avenue, and Marion Street.
- Neighborhood citizens groups – Harlem-Ontario Community Association, Holley Court neighbors, Neighbors United to Save South Marion Street (NUSS), and REDCOOP.
- Property owners – including those developing Whiteco and RSC projects (and their representatives/architects).

[2] Illustration at http://www.oak-park.us/sites/default/files/styles/content-page-title-image/public/greater-downtown-master-plan-image.jpg?itok=QluU1Mcq

- Design community – Oak Park Architectural League, Community Design Commission, Arts Council, and Arts Advisory Commission.
- Historic preservation – Historic Preservation Commission, and Historical Society of Oak Park & River Forest.
- Local governments and civic organizations – River Forest, Forest Park, Visitor's Bureau, League of Women Voters, Oak Park Housing Center, Oak Park Township, and Cap the IKE Committee.
- Transportation agencies and groups – CTA, Metra, Pace, IDOT, Union Pacific, P/T Commission, Oak Park Cycle Club and Regional Transportation Authority.
- Taxing bodies – School District 97, School District 200, Park District, and Library District.
- Oak Park government – Oak Park Plan Commission, Village Board trustees and Village staff.

"The Master Plan "is a tool that will help Oak Park's leaders proactively plan for the future rather than reactively respond to development pressures. This master plan brings certainty to developers, businesspeople and neighbors during the project review and approval process by providing a clear vision of the community's goals." (p.1) It "ensures ongoing healthy and vibrant downtown development while protecting and preserving the qualities that give Oak Park its distinctive identity….The master plan charts a course for controlling change and enhancing the special qualities that make Oak Park the unique and wonderful place it is today. Based on the community's vision, the Greater Downtown Master Plan sets out a realistic agenda that public officials, private investors and the community can follow and implement." (p. 16)

Given this extraordinary degree of expertise and community consultation, it is distressing to see the number of recent developments that are extremely incompatible with the vision contained in the Master Plan, reconfirmed in the Comprehensive Plan of 2014. "Reactively respond to development pressures" seems a fair description of the current trends in the Village, and the process no longer "brings certainty to developers, businesspeople and neighbors." The large-scale development continuing in Downtown Oak Park does not reflect "a clear vision of the community's goals" and is not "enhancing the special qualities that make Oak Park the unique and wonderful place" it has been.

On p. 6, the Master Plan lists these among the "guiding principles established by the community":

Reduce traffic congestion.
Preserve historic small-town feel.
Address building height and density.
Improve parking supply.
Enhance pedestrian environment.
Provide additional open space.

Developments of the magnitude proposed by Albion for 1000 Lake Street serve none of these functions, and indeed are likely to make many of them worse, including demolishing standards for height and density, increasing traffic, and diminishing the value of existing open space.

The Master Plan "builds upon the downtown's strengths and overcomes or minimizes its weaknesses." (p. 16). The first weakness listed is "Auto congestion along Lake Street, especially at intersection with Harlem Avenue." Among the strengths listed are the rich stock of historic, attractive buildings, and the gardens and parks in the Downtown area (shown below).



The Master Plan offers a straightforward and concrete directive for downtown development compatible with "ongoing healthy and vibrant downtown development while protecting and preserving the qualities that give Oak Park its distinctive identity." The report makes clear that it is essential to limit height along Lake Street.

> An examination of building massing and heights along Lake Street indicates that **buildings higher than Marshall Fields would be disruptive and incompatible with the character of the street.** Since one of the study objectives is to maintain Oak Park's unique character, it is suggested that **no buildings be higher than the Marshall Fields building**. Setting this height standard will help preserve continuity and not erode Oak Park's village character. (p. 44)

For a number of years the Village followed this guideline, limiting development along Lake Street to 80 feet. Obviously, the Vantage development violated

that standard, and the building proposed by Albion would greatly compound the violation of this standard. It would be, in the words of the Master Plan, "disruptive and incompatible with the character of the street."

Within the overall vision for Downtown, the Master Plan specifically addresses the 1000 Lake Street site. The goals and guidelines specific to the 1000 Lake Street site are discussed in Section 3 of this report

2.4 Impacts of large-scale development on quality of life

When a new large-scale development takes place on a privately-owned parcel, who stands to gain and who stands to lose from this project? Too often, the benefits accrue to the property owner and developer, and the costs are borne by the residents, shoppers, and tourists of Oak Park. In the case of 1000 Lake Street, for example, the benefits accrue to Michigan-based Village Green Holding LLC (who created Albion Residential last year) and to the current owner of the site, who bought it on speculation that the Village would approve a massive development there. The residents of Oak Park bear the cost.

What a new high-rise building at 1000 Lake will do:

- It will block Austin Gardens' southern exposure, damaging trees and wildlife and reducing the appeal of what is now the most-heavily wooded of any Oak Park green space, according to experts from the Park District of Oak Park. See further details in Chapter 3 of this report.
- It will increase traffic congestion along Lake Street and push more traffic onto the residential streets that begin just one block away.
- It will add to the inconvenience of parking near Downtown businesses, discouraging customers from outside the immediate area.
- It will put additional strain on Village services and school districts.
- It will be another major step in destroying the character and aesthetics of Downtown Oak Park. As the Village's own master plan states: "Buildings higher than the Marshall Fields would be disruptive and incompatible with…Oak Park's village character."

What a new high-rise building at 1000 Lake will not do:

- It will not be compatible with Oak Park's commitment to diversity. At a January 30 meeting, the developer confirmed that there are no plans to include low-income or subsidized housing units. Albion's website states: "Albion Residential is focused on the acquisition, development and operation of Midwestern urban, luxury rental apartments."
- It will not make any contribution to the betterment of the Village. Unlike many municipalities, Oak Park requires nothing from developers in terms of providing offsetting green space, public space, or pay-back for Village services. The developer's only proposed new "green space" is a narrow alley between 1000 and 1010 Lake St. with permeable pavers.

2.5 Benchmarking with other towns

As authoritative as the Master and Comprehensive Plans are, it is important also to examine the approaches and experiences of other towns and cities with similar goals of improving the quality of life in their jurisdictions.

2.5.1 Downtown revitalizations

One valuable source of wider experience is a letter sent by Royce A. Yeater, AIA, to Village Planner Craig Failor and other Village Officials at the time the Comprehensive Plan was produced. Yeater was at the time the Midwest Director for National Trust for Historic Preservation. Based on the National Trust's extensive experience across the U.S., Yeater points to several important principles: Real estate development itself is not an effective driver of downtown revitalization; diminishing the distinctive character of a downtown area reduces its economic viability; even the proposed Marshall Field's height standard is too tall for this environment. Key excerpts:

> ...We would like to begin by expressing our support for many of the elements in the overall Master Plan as proposed by Crandall Arambula PC, and we encourage the Village to adopt strategies that will result in a more vital, lively, and pedestrian-friendly downtown incorporating public space and amenities, while also promoting the development of new retail opportunities and the use of mass-transit options. However, we are concerned that recommendations in the Master Plan neglect key principles in downtown revitalization by promoting significant and inappropriate new construction over the preservation and rehabilitation of Oak Park's historic building stock. ...As a part of our mission to revitalize commercial districts similar to downtown Oak Park, the National Trust Main Street Center has offered a comprehensive commercial district revitalization strategy for 25 years that has proven itself widely successful in over 1,800 towns and cities nationwide. Main Street has spurred $17.0 billion in public and private reinvestment, and the rehabilitation almost 94,000 historic properties nationwide....Our Main Street programs have proven that an average of ***$40.35*** is generated in each community for every dollar used to operate the local Main Street program.…'
>
> We note that the Master Plan for downtown as now written ... relies only on real estate development techniques to accomplish its goal of a healthy and vibrant central business district. From our 25 years of experience with Main Street, we can state unequivocally that reliance on real estate alone will not yield the results you seek without integration with the other points critical to the generation of retail sales. We can also state that relying heavily on new construction that significantly alters the scale and character of an historic downtown is likely to suffer decline than rejuvenation. The citizens of Oak Park placed their highest priority on the retention of the character defining elements of their small town

> business district. We see the plan as drafted could actually damage the viability of downtown more than it helps.
>
> During a recent meeting between our office, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, and the Oak Park Architectural League, it was determined that there is enough integrity of historic structures in the downtown to create a National Register Historic District. This assessment was confirmed by a letter from Tracey Sculle, the National Register and Survey Coordinator for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, dated February 1, 2005, where she outlines a potential district running "roughly along Lake Street from Harlem to a little beyond Foster Avenue and along Marion from North Boulevard to Ontario Street, possibly including Austin Gardens." The historic districts to the north and south of the downtown have proven very effective at preserving the residential character of the village, and at increasing property values and private investment in those areas. But the downtown has been conspicuously omitted from historic designation to date….
>
> On just one item, for instance, we do not believe the presence of a signature building like the old Marshall Fields store at Lake and Harlem justifies the creation of a six story street wall throughout the commercial core as now proposed. The character and scale of that area is now based on a general two-to-four story height, with limited exceptions. That height constriction can be maintained while still gaining the desired density the Master Plan seeks through the use of façade set backs for new construction sites, as is being employed at the 1120 Lake Street development, but the design guidelines now proposed offer no such consideration.

Comparisons have been made between Oak Park and Evanston, which also pursued a policy of encouraging high-rise development. However, the record of success for this policy in Evanston is not at all clear. Moreover, other towns have demonstrated that economic vitality does not require massive development projects. Examples include Forest Park's successful revitalization of Madison Street, or the continued success of town like Geneva, IL, which have encourage development while maintaining the scale and distinctive character of their towns.

It is perhaps worth noting that it is not only small towns that have chosen to strictly limit heights without limiting their economies. Paris, France is perhaps the best known example. When height restrictions in Paris were relaxed in the 1970's, one tall building, the Montparnasse Tower, was built. It engendered massive public outcry, and height limitations were quickly reinstalled. Forbes magazine reported on January 2016 that "after substantial review, Washington, DC overhauled its longtime zoning code. While much of the code's old laws remain, the changes will minimize certain regulations that have long stifled genuine urbanism in the nation's capital. But these changes pale in comparison

to one remaining external regulation. It is the federal law that limits building heights to 110 feet."

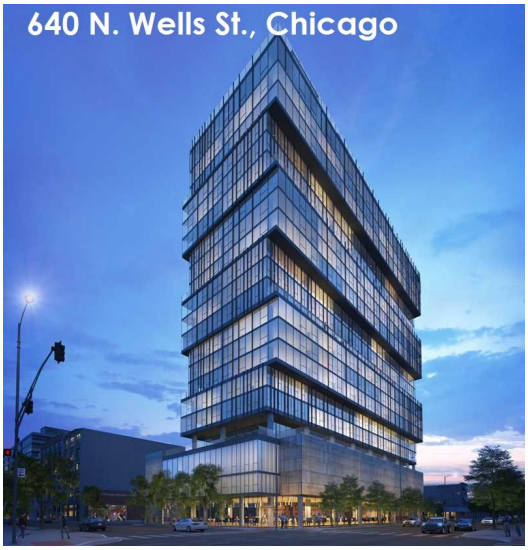
Surely if 110 feet is an appropriate limit for a town the size and density of Washington, construction in a village like Oak Park should be at a much lower scale.

2.5.2 Compensations for the community

Oak Park is unusual in that it has no regulatory structure that requires developers to compensate the Village for the extra demands that new developments place on Village services, and for the increased need for facilities to serve a larger population. One recent example of other towns' response to these stresses is the decision by the Des Plaines council to require developers to either incorporate green space into projects at the rate of 5.5 acres per 1,000 residents, or pay fees to fund the acquisition of new parks (Daily Herald, April 19, 2017). The continued development of Downtown Oak Park has contributed no green space (and as will be documented later, threatens existing green spaces), while greatly increasing local population density.

In this regard, it is important to note that Oak Park is already very short of public green space. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standard for acreage is 10 acres per 1,000 residents. If we met the NRPA standard, we should have 500 acres of parkland for our 52,000+ residents. We have 84 acres currently.

Nor should we ignore aesthetics as a community value. The aesthetic appeal of a community contributes greatly to its attractiveness as a place to shop, to do business, to visit, and to live in. This is particularly true in Oak Park, with its international reputation for both landscape and building architecture, going well beyond Frank Lloyd Wright. Ideally, new construction can extend Oak Park's heritage of innovative and appealing architecture, but new and recent high-rise construction is notable for its lack of architectural interest and appeal. Albion's proposed building also fails to contribute any innovative architecture to the Village: It is essentially a copy of this building at 640 North Wells Street, Chicago, designed by Hartshorne Plunkard Architecture.



2.6 Effect of increasing population density on revenues and taxes

Permitting more and more downtown towers is often justified by saying that increased population density will decrease local taxes. The tax-decrease myth pretends that high-rises are filled with businesses and residents who pay taxes, but who never need the fire department or paramedics, whose cars and garbage trucks do not drive down local streets, who don't send any children to school, and whose toilets don't use water and don't produce sewage.

Are property taxes lower in more densely populated areas (big cities) or in less-dense areas (small towns)? Intuition says that denser areas have *higher* taxes, and peer-reviewed research by economists and urban planning specialists show that increasing population density does not reduce taxes.

Randall G. Holcombe and DeEdgra W. Williams
The Impact of Population Density on Municipal Government Expenditures
Public Finance Review, 2008, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 359-373

> Data from 487 municipal governments with populations greater than 50,000 are examined to see the relationship between population density and per capita government expenditures. There is no statistically significant relationship between per capita total government expenditures and operational expenditures for cities smaller than 500,000, and for larger cities, higher population density is associated with higher per capita government expenditures. Infrastructure expenditures tend to decline with increases in population density for cities smaller than 500,000, whereas expenditures on services tend to increase with population density for cities larger than 500,000. The relationship between per capita total expenditures and population density has policy relevance because it indicates that when all government expenditures are taken into account, **policies that increase population density will not reduce per capita government expenditures** and, in larger cities, will lead to higher per capita government expenditures. (p. 359)

Helen F. Ladd
Population Growth, Density and the Costs of Providing Public Services
Urban Studies, 1992, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 273-295

> Recent policy interest in managing local population growth has drawn attention to the fiscal pressures that population growth imposes on local governments. This paper uses 1985 data for 247 large county areas to determine the separate impacts on local government spending of two dimensions of residential development patterns, the rapidity of population growth and the intensity of land use as measured by gross residential densities. Based on a regression model that controls for other determinants of per capita spending, this study provides careful estimates of the nonlinear impacts of population growth and population density on

three types of local government spending: current account spending, capital outlays and spending on public safety. The study balances the engineering and planning view that greater population density lowers the costs of providing public services by documenting a U-shaped relationship between spending and density; **except in sparsely populated areas, higher density typically increases public sector spending. In addition, the results suggest that rapid population growth imposes fiscal burdens on established residents in the form of lower service levels.** (p. 273)

Helen F Ladd
Fiscal impacts of local population growth: A conceptual and empirical analysis
Regional Science and Urban Economics, 1994, Vol. 24, No. 6, pp. 661–686

This paper examines the legitimacy of concerns of local residents about the adverse fiscal impacts of population growth. The conceptual discussion shows that economic theory provides no clear prediction of the impact of population growth on per capita spending. Based on a national data set of large counties, simple descriptive analysis indicates **that greater population growth is associated with higher per capita current spending** and interest outlays. More detailed analysis both of 1978–1985 changes and of 1985 levels of current spending indicates that higher growth-related per capita spending primarily reflects the combined effects of greater density and increased local spending shares**. In sum, established residents in fast-growing areas may experience declines in service quality as well as rising local tax burdens.** (p. 661 emphases added)

Edward H. Heinze
Community Classification and Growth in Effective Property Tax Rates: A Case Study of Rate Divergence in 39 Rhode Island Towns
American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 1978, Vol. 37, No. 3 pp. 309-324

A multiple regression analysis of cross-sectional data for 39 Rhode Island towns indicates that variation in the level of effective property tax rates among communities can be substantially explained. The determinants are a community's population density, median family income, real property per capita, and the ratio of commercial to total property tax revenue. Population density serves as a criterion for judging the "cityness" (1) of a community, that is, its degree of urbanization. A positive relationship exists between population density and effective property tax rate. **Communities with the highest population density tend to have the highest tax rates**. This relationship is shown in each analyzed year. (p. 309)

William H. Oakland and William Testa
Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
Economic Perspectives, Vol. 19, No. 2, March 1995
Does Business Development Raise Taxes?

> It is noteworthy that new housing capital … is not correlated with any of the [tax] burden measures. This dichotomy with business investment may well reflect the **greater expenditure needs that added population places on local government** relative to its contribution to government revenues. This finding is in harmony with the view that **people "simply don't pay for themselves."** (Page 29)

As a final note, we point out that mixed use developments are also promoted as a way to help save local businesses. This assumption is also without empirical support. The new developments add more retail space, further diluting the clientele for existing local merchants. There are always vacant storefronts in Downtown Oak park, and the net effect of new mixed-use developments on existing businesses is far from obvious.

2.7 Economic risks

High-density development is not only ineffective or counterproductive with respect to taxes. It also entails considerable economic risk to locales that embrace this approach. Overbuilding is a well-known and longstanding phenomenon in the construction industry. Economic research on this phenomenon is summarized in this review by S. M. Wachter, & A. W. Orlando of the Zell/Lurie Real Estate Center at the Wharton Business School:

> Economists of every stripe recognize that real estate plays an important role in recurring business cycles. …More specifically, real estate prices tend to fluctuate beyond their economic fundamentals, first because there is a lag in construction. This was evident in the 1970s and 1980s cycle. Demand increased and was initially unmatched by supply, as building real estate takes time. Prices rose, which made construction even more lucrative. Expecting the prices (and short- term scarcity) to continue to rise and with current prices exceeding construction costs, builders increased supply more than was needed to meet current demands. Eventually, but with delays, the market realized that too much supply had been built, and prices tumbled back to earth. ("Booms and busts in real estate." *Wharton Real Estate Review*, Vol. 15, 2011, p. 77.)

Of course one never knows until after the fact when building becomes overbuilding. But the risk is considerable, and underperforming properties do not contribute to the economic vitality of the community. The risk is different for developers and for communities. Developers invest in properties in a variety of locations. As a result, their overall risk is reduced, because a poor performance in one town may be compensated for by better than expected performance in another—what economists call the "portfolio effect." However, individual communities have no such buffer: If the community is overstocked with housing, then that community bears the consequences. Therefore, it is entirely rational for planners in a given community to be more wary of the risks of overbuilding,

and thus more cautious than developers.

This is particularly worth considering given that the population of Cook County *declined* between 2015 and 2016, and has increased only two tenths of one percent since 2010 (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/RHI805210/17031)

Real-estate reporter Ken Trainor elaborated on these concerns in the Wednesday Journal, April 11th, 2017:

> …I'm not anti-high-rise. There is a case to be made for density in Downtown Oak Park. I was/am in favor of the other four (all of which received variances). Overall, I'm pro-development, and we need other pro-development people to join up — because this battle isn't just about development. It's not entirely about throwing shadows on Austin Gardens either. It's about building one tower too many.
>
> A compelling argument has not been made for a fifth high-rise. The implicit argument is: The more the merrier. If development has benefits (and it does), then it must follow that more development is better. Not necessarily. There's a limit.
>
> It is possible to overestimate the market's demand. We will soon have three luxury rental high-rises up and leasing in a confined area. The first (Whiteco) is reportedly full, but it took a while. Vantage is half full last I heard. The Emerson will open sometime this year. What if we've already reached a glut of high-priced rental with two more high-rises in the works? The developers will argue there is sufficient demand, but that's just an optimistic forecast, based more on hope than evidence. They don't know because no one knows for sure. So the argument for "needing" this building is thin at best.
>
> Oak Park was underdeveloped for decades. We needed development. But do we need as much as we can possibly get? Should we let the market decide? That only happens after the fact, when we've built one tower too many.

Rapid increases in housing density are risky, compared to a moderately-sized, moderately-paced strategy that is more responsive to unpredicted, and unpredictable changes in the market, with much lower downside risks to misprediction.

There is, in fact, evidence that the Chicago area is already reaching saturation in the type of units proposed by Albion. An article by Gail Markus Jarvis in the February 15, 2017 Chicago Tribune reported that "The massive apartment construction boom in downtown Chicago is starting to show signs of saturation, and rents will likely start to decline by fall, Appraisal Research Counselors reported Tuesday. Rents fell about 14.7 percent during the fourth quarter ...
Ron DeVries, vice president of Appraisal Research, said 2018 could represent a peak in Chicago's apartment market.... The supply of rental units "will exceed

demand and keep rents in check," he said....By the first quarter of 2018, DeVries expects "a lot of angst in the market" as there is a sense of "a bubble."

There is a clear connection between the Chicago market and the Oak Park market. Even though no one can predict the future precisely, these analyses certainly raise credible doubts and highlight the risks inherent in overdependence on one type of development (i.e., large, upscale residential construction).

2.8 Conclusions

Let us return to the Comprehensive Plan, p. 16:

> Preserving Oak Park's Exceptional Character
>
> A major challenge for any town is how to manage ongoing change. The task is especially daunting in Oak Park due to its extraordinary architectural character and history. The master plan charts a course for controlling change and enhancing the special qualities that make Oak Park the unique and wonderful place it is today.

The current trend of allowing more and more high-rise, high-density development in Downtown Oak Park is the antithesis of this vision, the importance of which was confirmed by two different, independent teams of experts hired by the Village, by experts with the National Trust for Historic Places, and by the many citizens groups consulted over the years in preparing those plans. It does not make sense to allow the enthusiasm of individual developers and landowners to override the coherent plans that are designed to preserve the long-term health and prosperity of our Village.

3. Development at 1000 Lake Street

3.1 Site-specific directives in the Master Plan

The Master Plan for Downtown Oak Park devotes considerable attention specifically to the 1000 Lake Street site. The Plan calls for an open, public square on that site, Founders' Square—one of the Plan's "key and catalyst projects."

Beyond the specific Founders' Square concept, it is important to recognize that a high-rise development on that site would be the complete opposite of the goals and strategies that underlie the Master Plan's proposal. Any development on that site should accommodate the underlying goals of the Founders' Square concept.

> **"To attract new development, it is essential to create new open space near downtown and maximize the use of existing open spaces such as Austin Gardens** and Scoville Park. The framework:
> - Celebrates and maximizes exposure to Oak Park's existing open space.
> - Provides a continuous system of linked open spaces that organize and create a focus for new development.
> - Accommodates a variety of activities and uses.
> - Links adjacent neighborhoods. (p. 40)
>
> and
>
> - [Provide] a gateway to the Frank Lloyd Wright Historic District to the north (p. 32)

The overarching goal is to "create a setting for reinvestment and improve the quality of life for office workers, neighbors, visitors and tourists." (p. 31)

A high-rise development on this site has entirely the opposite effect. By hemming in Austin Gardens, it *reduces and discourages* use of that existing open space. Rather than linking open spaces, it establishes a formidable barrier, further isolating Austin Gardens and visibly cutting off adjacent neighborhoods off from Downtown. The only use provided for citizens is that was already provided at that site, i.e., a small number of shops. As the Master Plan indicates, the net result will be a *less* inviting setting for reinvestment in Downtown and a lower quality environment for residents and tourists alike.

That said, the Founders' Square concept should still be on the table. We know of no public explanation for why that aspect of the Master Plan was abandoned, and we believe that that use is still viable and would still contribute greatly to the vitality of Downtown.

Recently, two very knowledgeable Oak Parkers have written in the Wednesday Journal urging the Board to seriously re-consider the Founders' Square option for

1000 Lake. The first, Christine Vernon, was invited by the Journal to provide a historical perspective. Vernon is known as an activist on development issues. The second, Ken Trainor, comes from a very different place. He is a staff writer who covers real estate matters for the Journal, and has a history of supporting development in the Village. Despite the divergence in their perspectives, both argue strongly for returning to the Founders' Square concept laid out in the Master Plan for Downtown Oak Park, not only for aesthetic reasons, but also for the continued vitality of Downtown. Excerpts:

Christine Vernon (Wednesday Journal, March 29th, 2017):

> In the past, there was always a good relationship between Downtown Oak Park (DTOP) and the Wright Historic District. If this 18-story, or 8-story, building were put there now, Austin Gardens will be walled off from our Downtown, and Downtown will be walled off from the quiet restorative space that is Austin Gardens. Albion's proposal is the wrong project for a phenomenal site that can serve Oak Park in a better and unique way and would enhance the value of the neighborhood in every direction. …
>
> A wall would be created by the Vantage building, 100 Forest Place, the proposed Albion building, and the mini-Modernist high-rise just to the west of the Lytton building. This little forest of concrete, steel and glass would constitute the "DTOP Wall," cutting off any relationship with the Wright Historic District and creating a distinctly unwelcome barrier….
>
> Rather than separate these two areas with a wall, why not make the Lytton site a plaza — a piazza — leading people from the park and the neighborhood into Downtown Oak Park and giving shoppers a place to rest and move north through the Wright Historic District? Oak Park has had millions of visitors over the years. Why not give them more reason to stay in Oak Park, a meeting place, a place to transition from touring to shopping? Why not make a plaza that is truly a gateway to the Wright Historic District from downtown and vice versa? …a gateway plaza on the Lytton site, leading into Austin Gardens where people can rest in the sunlight and enjoy themselves in a natural outdoor setting?...
>
> How do we pay for the purchase of the Lytton property to create this gateway between Downtown Oak Park and the Wright Historic District Project? How do we accomplish any costly public works project? Lacking a philanthropist donor like the Austin family, the Mills family or the Cheney family, we have to find a way….
>
> There is no place in Oak Park where the addition of such a small parcel will make such a large impact to serve both residents and shoppers. This is both a park project and, now that Austin Gardens has an education center, it is an education project.

Ken Trainor, (Wednesday Journal, April 11th, 2017):

> …Can a compromise be reached — fewer floors? Not likely. It's all or nothing for Albion.
>
> I favor nothing. In 2005, the revised Oak Park Master Plan, coordinated by the consulting firm Crandall Arambula, identified this exact corner as a good site

for an open space, a people plaza. Is there a precedent for open spaces in the midst of a busy business district? As a matter of fact, there is — at our two busiest intersections, Lake and Oak Park Avenue (Scoville Park) and Lake and Harlem (Forest Preserve District headquarters). In each instance, one of four corners is devoted entirely to green space.

Open space at Lake and Forest has real potential. It would need to be innovatively designed, not just a slab of concrete with a perfunctory "water feature." A gathering place needs to draw people. Think of a micro-version of Millennium Park. Concerts and other events could be held there. It could serve as a starting and ending point for tours (we could call it the "Tourist Trap"). Public sculpture on exhibit. Intriguing landscaping. An animatronic Frank Lloyd Wright and Ernest Hemingway having a debate about who's the greatest. I'm just brainstorming here, but the first step is convincing the village board to turn down Albion's zoning variance request. Four new trustees were just elected or appointed. Time to start lobbying.

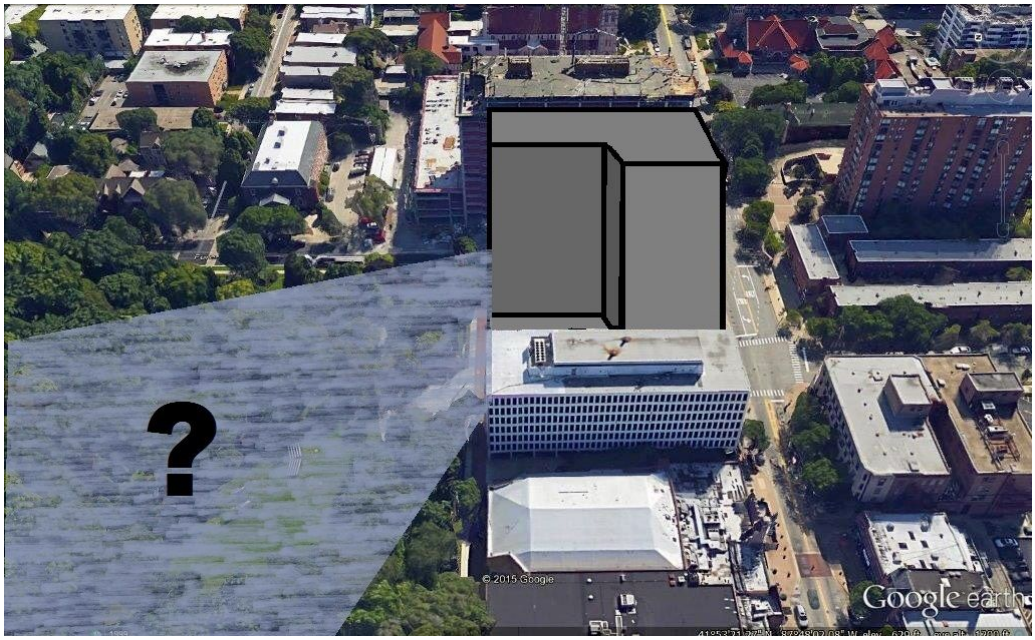
There are drawbacks. We would lose whatever tax revenue is generated by not putting a building there. If the village turns down their request for a variance and Albion pulls out, the owner of the building might stick it to us if the village tries to buy the property (with, yes, our tax dollars). We would also have to pay for the demolition of the building currently on the site, plus the design and construction of the new plaza.

Vantage Oak Park across the street stands to gain from having an exciting people space outside its front doors (and preventing competitors from building there). A plaza would attract renters. Maybe they'll purchase the property and deed it to the village.

…This is about our core values. It also represents a pivotal moment in our village's history. Oak Park of all towns should be about more than mere development. We're also about live-ability, aesthetics, history, humanizing the environment, and pushing the progressive envelope. We have a higher standard. We expect more of ourselves.

And the northwest corner of Lake and Forest is a good place to take that stand and make a statement.

3.2 Threats to Austin Gardens



Discussions of the effect of 1000 Lake development on Austin Gardens have focused largely on the threat that increased shading poses for the mature trees in Austin Gardens. This remains a key concern, as is explained in the next section of this report. However, it is important to recognize that this is only one of several negative impacts on Austin Gardens.

Mature trees are a distinctive and especially valuable asset of Austin Gardens. But they are only one part of the park's ecology. It is necessary to consider the natural, native quality of the entire park. Austin Gardens is one of the few remnants of the area's original oak/hickory savannah, one of the only originally wooded spots in Oak Park. The park entails more than trees--it supports migrating birds, butterflies, bees and other pollinators, and other wildlife for which habitats are disappearing. And of course it also supports the humans who use the park. Urban life is inherently stressful for a habitat like this, and cities are now recognizing their responsibility to protect such pockets of natural environment and to integrate them into the community.

3.2.1 Shade threats for mature trees in the south section of Austin Gardens

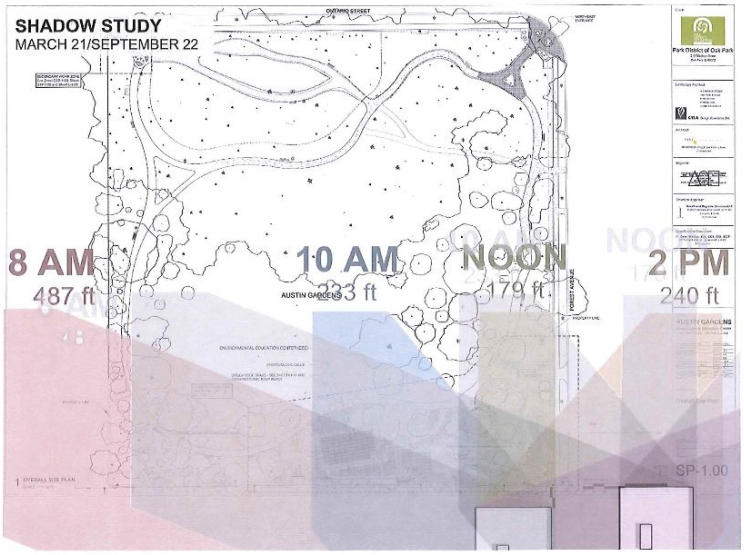
Albion has commissioned its own study of the effects of the shade that would be cast by its proposed tower. There are many reasons to doubt the objectivity of this report. Despite the use of fixed data, such as sun positions at different times of day and year, the report contains many subjective judgments and general conclusions, all of which may be influenced by the obvious goals and desires of the entity funding the report. (For contrasting judgments, see reports by the Park

District of Oak Park at
http://pdop.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2f28e11b17be427896fcc91ad8cef215
and
http://www.pdop.org/assets/1/24/Austin_20Gardens_20Shadow_20Studies.pdf)

It is not necessary to conclude that the author of Albion's report deliberately skewed his findings for this influence to operate. The report's author is subject to even more conflict of interest given that his business is based here in Oak Park, and thus his livelihood is particularly dependent on good relations with local landowners and developers. A truly independent, disinterested analysis of impacts is lacking.

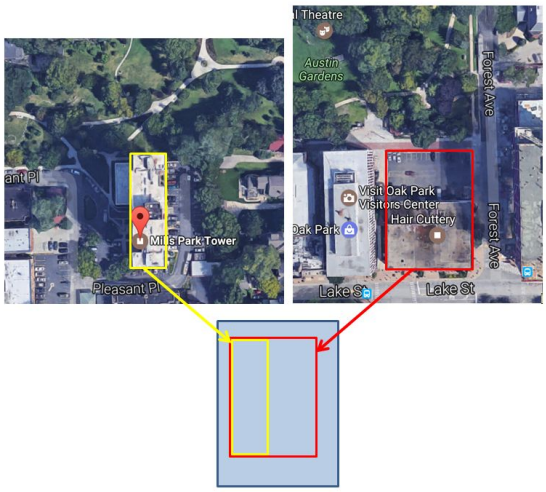
Despite these potential influences, Albion's own report confirms the negative impact of increased shading on Austin Gardens. During spring and fall, between 5 and 20% of the park will be shaded by the building all the way to the crown level of the trees. The Vantage development already contributes to limiting sunlight to the Southeast section of Austin Gardens, so that the margin of error for preserving the ecology is already reduced. For example, Albion's shade study indicates that the Southeast section of the park will receive between 2 and 7 hours of sun during months in which the sun is up for 12 to 14 hours. The Southwest section is reduced to 7 to 9 hours during those months (March, April, August, and September). The pines in the park, and particularly those in the southwest corner, are vulnerable to light deprivation. Not all of this shading will result from the Albion project, but what matters to the ecology of the park is the net effect when added to existing construction.

A shade study commissioned by the Park District of Oak Park is even less sanguine about the development's effects. See the example illustration below.



Albion spokespeople have argued that the L-shape of the building negates the PDOP findings, yet, as this sketch shows, the "notch" in the building is minor compared to the building's mass.





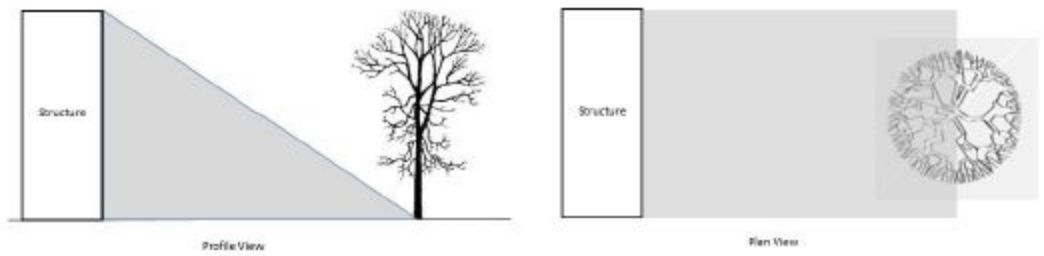
Albion has also compared their project to the Mills Park tower. However, the 1000 Lake Street site is twice as wide as the Mills Park tower, and the L-shape of the proposed building still leaves a wider footprint than the Mills Tower. Moreover, it is not at all obvious that shading of Mills Park by Mills Tower has been harmless. A children's playground that existed near the tower was removed after shade and wind effects rendered the site so unpleasant that no one used it.

3.2.2 Shade threats for other growth areas in Austin Gardens

In the shade-affected section of the park there are young memorial trees that are at least as vulnerable as mature trees are to the reduction in sunlight. Lower shrubs and ground vegetation will struggle, and much of the newly designed Park District plantings will be threatened. Landscape architecture can of course be redesigned and reinstalled, but the choices for that site will be much more restricted if the site experiences increased shading, thus permanently reducing the value of that property.

Albion's commissioned shade study itself points out that shading effects at ground level are much more widespread that at the crowns of tall trees. Figure

2 of the report shows this illustration:

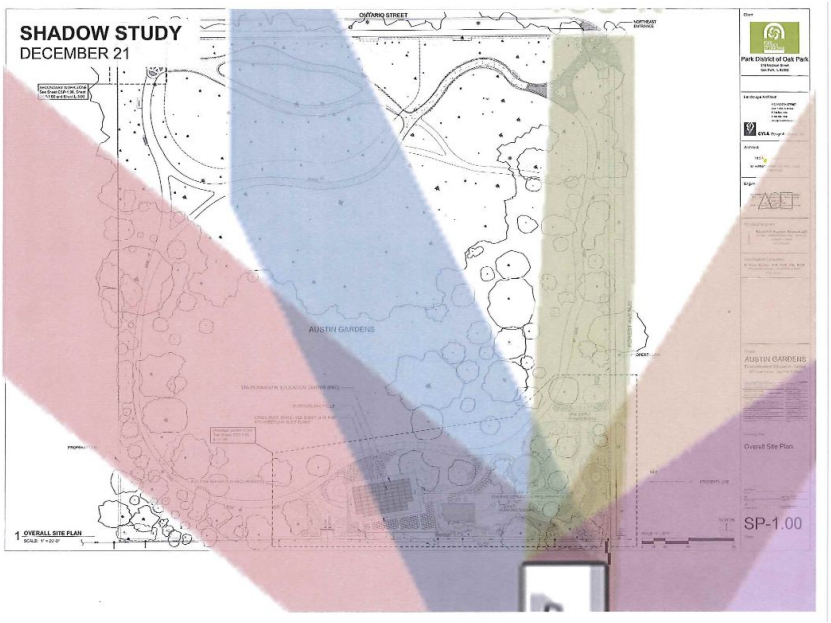


The report considers only the shading at crown level. Thus, the diagram on the left is described as showing no impact, even though, as shown at the right, a large area at ground level is put into hard shade. Thus the report ignores much of the impact of the tower at ground level, where most of the park's activities take place.



Note also that Albion's report makes no mention of shading outside of the main growing season for trees. Residents and visitors use Austin Gardens all year.

During late fall to early spring, the shading effect of the new high-rise would be major across nearly the whole park. This is illustrated by the shading study conducted by the Park District of Oak Park, which shows the following:



3.2.3 Threats other than shading

Wind-tunnel effects are also of concern. Here, too, Albion has commissioned a report from Rowan Williams Davies & Irwin Inc. (RWDI) that seeks to minimize the risks. Their "letter of opinion" contains no data regarding structural effects--only subjective opinions about the end result, with no supporting evidence. That said, the report confirms that

> Buildings taller than surroundings tend to intercept strong winds at high elevations and deflect them down to the grade. Such a downwashing flow is the main cause for increased wind activity at the pedestrian level. Another common wind flow phenomenon is channeling effect, when wind flows accelerate along a gap between two side-by-side buildings.

Although Albion's report suggests that the shape of the building will keep it from having the maximum effect on winds, and might block some, the report indicates that "The southerly and southwesterly winds will still be deflected onto the intersection and along Forest Ave between the existing and proposed buildings…. [and] may cause local wind accelerations around the north end of the development for winds from the westerly directions." And it is worth noting that "blocked" wind does not disappear--it is merely deflected elsewhere.

Wind is a potential problem not only for pedestrians along Lake Street, but also for plantings and wildlife in the vicinity and for those who hope to enjoy the park on the many days that the wind blows in Oak Park.

Other environmental impacts must also be considered. For example, light pollution is also disruptive, and tall glassy edifices kill many many birds. It is

estimated that 900 million or more birds die every year from hitting windows in North America.

These are particular concerns for a development that is adjacent to a wooded park. Austin Gardens is small, only 430 x 420 feet. Birds use the park as a stop on their migration; adding a 190' building to the small park would have a detrimental effect on life not only inside the park, but also on birds as they try to fly to their traditional rest stop.

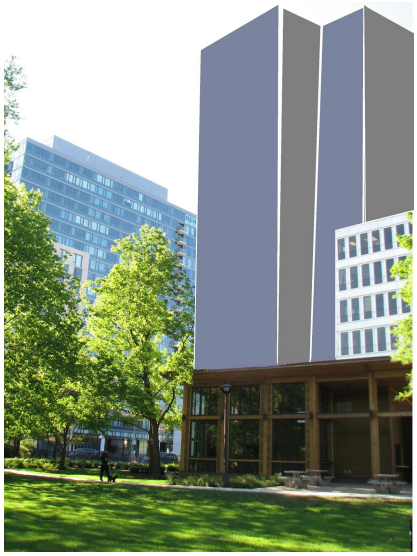
Another important asset in Austin Gardens is its new Environmental Education Center. It may be possible to jury-rig solutions to the problems of interference with the EEC's solar panels, to replant the specialized landscaping elsewhere, and to compensate the Park District for other disruption to the award-winning environmental features of the building. However, there can be no doubt that the value of this asset will be materially diminished by its being overshadowed, literally and figuratively, by a massive new construction just across the alley.

Moreover, any real estate profession can easily attest to the importance of aesthetic surroundings in determining the value of a property. In this way as well a high-rise building looming over Austin Gardens will surely diminish the value of this public asset, in contradiction to the Neighborhood Standards portion of the Zoning Ordinance (see Section 2.1 of this report): "a. The proposed use or combination of uses will not substantially diminish the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity for those uses or combination of uses that are permitted by the Zoning Ordinance of the Village. b. The proposed use or combination of uses will not have a substantial adverse effect upon property values in the vicinity."

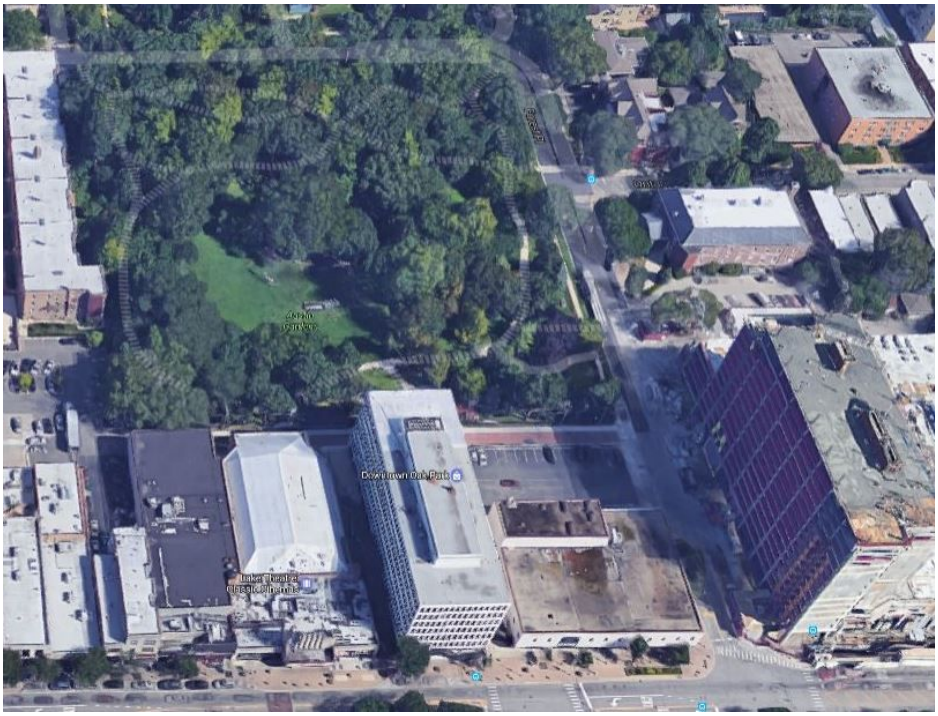
In comparing these two pictures, note that these represent the situation during a time of day and time of year at which shading is not a factor.



vs.



3.3 Value of Austin Gardens to the community



3.3.1 Background

According to national parks and recreation standards, a town with the population of Oak Park should have close to 500 acres of parks. Instead, we have approximately 82.5. Every bit of open space is precious, as recognized by the 2014 Downtown Master Plan: "Parks, open spaces, and environmental features are critical in defining the character of Oak Park, and *they are also the most costly assets to lose since they can take so long to replace*." (p. 82) Austin Gardens is a unique open space in a dense suburb and its positive effects on our health and our environment should not be underestimated. In addition, this park is an integral part of the history of Oak Park and is loved by people of all ages.

3.3.2 Public Health

The benefits of green spaces on public health are well documented:

> Nearly 40 years of research evidence confirms that nearby nature, including parks, gardens, the urban forest and green spaces, support human health and wellness. The research about active living and opportunities to avoid chronic diseases (such as diabetes, heart disease and respiratory problems) is particularly relevant to large parks where

> people can enjoy walking and bike paths, and playing fields. *But, equally as important is the role of small parks and nature spaces for health.*
>
> *In many communities, additional land for large parks is either expensive or difficult to repurpose. Every parcel or easement is ever more valuable. Creating small parks can be a productive public and private joint venture that introduces the spaces for nature encounters that benefit everyone.*" [3] (Our emphasis.)

People of all ages visit Austin Gardens. Residents of nearby Brookdale, a community for senior citizens, regularly walk the paths of the park. In one study, elderly people that had nearby parks, tree-lined streets, and space for taking walks showed higher longevity over a 5-year study period.[4] Toddlers and teens run through the park, climbing trees, finding bugs and exploring natural areas. Nature experiences are important for encouraging imagination and creativity, cognitive and intellectual development, and social relationships. Spending time in green spaces has also been proven to lessen the symptoms of ADHD for children.[5] Research also has shown that the amount of green space in resident's lives has a positive association with their general health, especially in lower socioeconomic groups, according to a study in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

And it's not just during the summer that people enjoy the park. There are people enjoying the colors of the leaves in the fall, ice skating on a crisp, sunny winter day, and watching the wildflowers peek through the ground in the spring.





[3] Wolf, Kathleen L. "The National Recreation and Parks Association." *The Health Benefits of Small Parks and Green Spaces | Health and Wellness | National Recreation and Park Association*. National Recreation and Parks Association, 3 Apr. 2017. Web. 03 May 2017.
[4] Wolf, Kathleen. "Mental Health & Function." Mental Health :: Green Cities: Good Health. University of Washington, 15 June 2016. Web. 03 May 2017.
[5] Dunckley, Victoria L. "Nature's Rx: Green-Time's Effects on ADHD." Psychology Today. Sussex Publishers, 20 June 2013. Web. 03 May 2017.

The park is valued as a year-round natural respite. The shade from an 18 story building would not just affect activities in the summer. Deep shade thrown by a building in the winter would make this park colder and darker at a time when access to sunshine is especially important for both physical and mental well-being.

3.3.3 Environmental Health

The north side of Austin Gardens may be the only part of Oak Park that has not changed since the Kettlestrings settled here. Some of the trees in the woodland area are over 100 years old. Invasive plants have been removed from the understory in order to restore the woodland plants and create an environment that will provide resources for native insects and birds.

There are 285 trees in the 3.64 acre park. Trees in urban areas perform vital environmental services that help keep air and water clean, and their contribution to our village was recognized in both the 2005 Crandall-Arambula plan and the 2014 Comprehensive Plan.

From the 2014 plan:

> Objective 13.4.2*:* Tree-lined streets and beautiful parks are part of what makes Oak Park unique, and our community understands that we are part of a larger ecosystem. *We appreciate the inherent value in preserving and enhancing our green space and infrastructure.* (p. 194)
>
> Objective 6.4.3 Parks, open spaces and environmental areas are living dioramas that illustrate the balance between ecosystems, natural resources and the urban development. Educating residents about how they work and why they are important to the long-term sustainability of the village and planet is an important first step in fostering appreciation for the environment. (p. 89)
>
> Goal 6.5 Maintain and Enhance Oak Park's Urban Forest. Trees are one of the defining characteristics of Oak Park. . .trees complement the built environment *to create an idyllic setting that is truly unique.* Policies and projects related to sustaining Oak park's tree canopy should reflect four primary goals; longevity, health, diversity and total tree canopy. The following objectives describe ways Village government can maintain its urban forest and ensure that it is resilient to disease, climate change *and other local* or global influences. (p. 90)
>
> Objective 6.5.4 Trees are an important component in local ecosystems as they provide food and protection for wildlife. (p. 91)

Metric: Overall tree canopy coverage

Desired Trend: Maintenance or increase in the overall tree canopy coverage. (p. 91)

At a time when 95% of the wilderness of the United States is gone, preserving the 5% that remains is essential if we want the environmental services that nature provides to continue. Native trees and wildflowers provide food for birds that are irreplaceable. An oak tree supports over 500 kinds of caterpillars, while a gingko hosts one species. Having a plentiful supply of native trees is imperative for the survival of birds and insects.

3.3.4 History and Impact on the Community

The land for Austin Gardens was given to Oak Park by the Austin family in 1947 on the condition that it remain a public park. Since then, the park has been an integral part of the lives of the residents of the village. An article about its special history is part of this report. Given that the rich history of Oak Park is what draws many people to visit every year, it is foolish to endanger that heritage by putting a high rise where it will seriously compromise the health of the park and put a wall between downtown and the Frank Lloyd Wright district.

Austin Gardens is considered a the jewel of Oak Park's parks by many residents and community organizations. Oak Park Festival Theater has been performing plays in Austin Gardens since 1976. From their website:

> Each summer we return home to build our stage in Austin Gardens through the generosity of the Park District of Oak Park. Festival Theatre makes a concerted effort to work closely with the dedicated and diligent Park District staff to preserve the beauty of Austin Gardens. . .We work closely with the Park District to minimize any impact on Austin Gardens, a priceless treasure. Festival Theatre is privileged to be a steward of the park and to work with the Park District of Oak Park to bring arts and cultural programing to the Oak Park community.



Residents of Oak Park have been very vocal about their love for Austin Gardens at the first unveiling of the Albion plan at their presentation in January, at the "Don't Throw Shade" rally in March, and at every Village Board meeting since.



March 19 "Don't Throw Shade" Rally in Austin Gardens, showing rally participants marking the boundary of the "dead zone" area that would be damaged by shading.

Residents from students from Brooks Middle School to seniors from Brookdale / Holley Court have appealed to the Board to support "Making memories, not money," as they supported their argument with specific statistics about the number of students who opposed the development.

Residents of Oak Park have made it clear that any development that harms Austin Gardens in any way is unacceptable. The naturalist John Muir wrote, "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks." In our busy village, Austin Gardens is an oasis of quiet green space. Let's keep it that way.

3.3.5 Park District of Oak Park evaluation

The Park District of Oak Park recognizes the value of Austin Gardens and is working to protect it. They have taken the unusual step of issuing an official statement stating their clear opposition to any large-scale development on the 1000 Lake Street site, and offering their assessment of the threats to one of the Park District's, and Oak Park's, most valuable properties. Here is the unedited Park District of Oak Park Board of Commissioners Statement Regarding the 1000 Lake Street Proposed High-Rise Development:

> Committed to protecting Oak Park's parks, green space and tree canopy that contribute to residents' quality of life, the Park District of Oak Park's Board of Commissioners is very concerned with the proposed mixed-use residential development at 1000 Lake Street. The high-rise building would be built directly south of Austin Gardens and west of the 21-story Vantage Oak Park building at Lake Street and Forest Avenue.
>
> The Board of Park Commissioners opposes any development adjacent to the park over the current 80 foot allowance and urges the Village Board of Trustees to honor the current zoning ordinance. The 1000 Lake Street property is currently

zoned for a structure with maximum height of 80 feet. The proposed development, with a height of 200 feet, is unacceptable because it will cause irreparable damage to Austin Gardens' trees, plants and overall beauty. Based on shade studies, the Park Board believes the 18-story proposed building will seriously diminish critical sunlight to Austin Gardens and pose a serious risk to the health and sustainability of the trees and plants in this historic park located in the Frank Lloyd Wright Historic District.

The Board is also concerned with the impact on the park from the increased number of residents and their pets using Austin Gardens. Thousands of additional residents are being added to Downtown Oak Park where the only green space is Austin Gardens. The increased park use will impact the ability to maintain the same level of quality for our residents' pleasure and respite.

While the Park District Board supports continued planning, growth and economic development in our community, we believe this proposal is unacceptable. It is the Park Board's responsibility to protect the very limited and precious green spaces that make Oak Park a desirable place for people to live and play. Committed to being good environmental stewards, the Board believes we must all work together to protect and maintain the limited natural resources in our urban area so we can sustain a high quality of life for all.

The Park District is committed to continuing conversations with the Village of Oak Park and to conducting further studies to determine the impacts of the proposed development on Austin Gardens.

3.4 Other site-specific effects

The risks associated with this development go beyond threats to the health of Austin Gardens.

One important consideration is the effect of increased traffic on Lake Street, and the follow-on effect that will have on nearby residential streets. Note that the Master and Comprehensive plans call for attention to reducing traffic along Lake Street, because a congested "main street" discourages people from outside the local area from coming here to shop, eat, or purchase services. Although mixed-use buildings contain some dedicated parking spaces for residents, and are near transportation to the city, the new residents they bring still use their cars locally. Additional services also mean more garbage trucks, service vehicles, and delivery vans along Lake Street, and detouring through neighborhoods.

Another important consideration is the separation a high-rise at 1000 Lake will create between downtown and the Frank Lloyd Wright district to the north. This barrier can discourage tourists from extending their visit into the Downtown area, which will seem separate both physically and in character. The structure will

also help cut off the area west of Forest Avenue from the area to the east, further segregating Downtown Oak Park from neighboring business districts. The newly-constructed Vantage building sets up a gray monolith that visually cuts off the Hemingway and Oak Park Avenue business districts from Downtown Oak Park. Further out-of-scale development in that area, including Albion's proposed high-rise, would compound this unfortunate effect.

As important as economics may be, it is appropriate to also take aesthetics into consideration. New construction here will add another major interruption to the continuity of the downtown landscape, and will introduce an architectural style that is out of place with its surroundings--except for its neighbor, the Vantage building, which the Village Plan Commision justifiably rejected as unsuitable.

3.5 Lack of compensatory advantages to the community

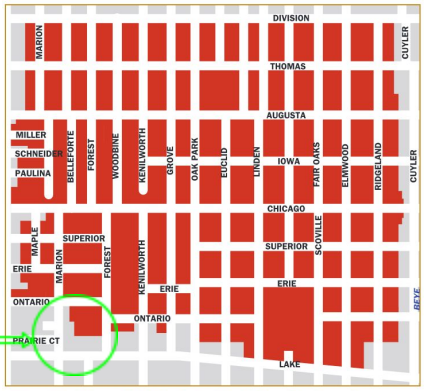
It was pointed out earlier that Oak Park requires little compensation by large-scale developers, and gets little. The case was also made that intended benefits in terms of tax reductions and retail health are dubious. In addition, the specific proposal for 1000 Lake Street lacks even some of the indirect benefits offered by other projects in the Village. The development will not contribute to the socio-economic diversity of the community because it calls for only upscale units and businesses. Focusing the commercial parts of the plan on retail will contribute little to local job opportunities, except perhaps at the level of sales associate. And there are no plans for any additional public space--a lack that is particularly striking given the intent of the Master Plan to locate a public square on that spot, opening up Austin Gardens, rather than closing it off.

3.5 Potential violations of zoning, environmental, and historic preservation codes

The contributors to this report do not have the legal expertise to offer an opinion concerning the legal status of the Albion proposal. However, there are at least three areas of concern that could potentially trigger the involvement of legal and governmental entities beyond Village Government.

One such concern in the proposal's apparent violation of the conditions set down by the VOP Zoning Ordinance regarding the necessary conditions for a Planned Development to be approved. Those are discussed in Sections 2.1 to 2.4 of this report. Another area of concern is how the environmental impacts of the proposed development, particularly with regard to Austin Gardens, might conflict with environmental protection standards. (Although the current situation is different, and regulations change, it is worth noting that in the 1970's the "Stankus" proposal for a high-rise development just south of the 1000 Lake Street site, was cancelled at least in part because of a Federal determination of negative environmental impact.)

Another issue concerns the fact that Austin Gardens is within a district officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places: the **Frank Lloyd Wright/Prairie School of Architecture Historic District**. The contiguity of the 1000 Lake Street site to this historic district entails certain protections that may be relevant to the acceptability of the proposed high-rise construction immediately to the south. The site is also close to two other listed historic buildings along Lake Street, namely the Marshall Field Building and Unity Temple.



Frank Lloyd Wright–Prairie School of Architecture Historic District

3.6 Conclusions

As Ken Trainor, real estate reporter for the Wednesday Journal stated, even those who accept large-scale development in Oak Park have good reason to oppose this project in particular. The specific risks and negative effects associated with building a high-rise development at 1000 Lake Street, because of its location relative to Austin Gardens, the Frank Lloyd Wright district, and Downtown, compound the risks and negative effects common to all inappropriately-sized development within the Village.

4. Final Conclusions:
An Albion-sized development for 1000 Lake must be rejected

A development at 1000 Lake Street of anywhere near the scale proposed by Albion must be rejected. Modest modification to the plan to moderate one or another particular concern cannot make it acceptable. Public opposition is very strong, as manifested by rallies, petition drives, and most significantly, the unprecedented results of the 2017 Village Trustee elections.

Appropriate development in and near Downtown, consistent with the Master and Comprehensive Plans is required by Village of Oak Park regulations. Moreover, appropriate development, is feasible and beneficial, and should be part of a coherent plan to maintain and improve the vitality of the Village. VOP Trustees and the Plan Commission should be responsible to further the goals of the Comprehensive and Master Plans in future decisions, and to move even further than those plans do to preserve and maintain the distinct character of Oak Park that is the reason people move here and the reason they come here as tourists and as customers.

The 1000 Lake Street site is even more sensitive than others with regard to overdevelopment. Austin Gardens is an extremely valuable asset to the citizens of the Village--one far too valuable to risk, even if one accepts a degree of uncertainty about exactly how much damage will be caused to it. Environmental damage aside, the value of Austin Gardens as a pleasant, inviting public space will be damaged.

Christine Vernon wrote a historical perspective on development in the Village that provides a fitting concluding summary. In the Wednesday Journal, March 29th, 2017, she writes:

> Paul "Bear" Bryant (1913-1983) is considered one of the most successful football coaches all time. Famous for his ability to motivate players, Bryant's success with his teams while head football coach of the University of Alabama's Crimson Tide had much to do with sage advice like this: "When you make a mistake, there are only three things you should ever do about it: admit it, learn from it, and never do it again."
>
> The citizens of Team Oak Park would be wise to take Bear Bryant's words under advisement and give some thought to our legacy as current stewards of what we have inherited here. …
>
> The village's value derives from: The quality of the environment — both the earth itself and all living things populating Oak Park…; The sense of community we create…; the priority of diversity…[and] the architectural history, represented in the village's housing stock, a treasure and a living museum. Our housing stock includes the work of over 100 architects, and the most Prairie School of Architecture homes found anywhere in the world. This rich repository draws people from all over the world, brings the world to our door, and into our

> house, so to speak, and has the potential to provide economic perks while attracting future residents, which happens often.
>
> We are responsible for safeguarding the precious and priceless features and commodities that make Oak Park a great place. The thoughtful work of past generations has given us a suburb to be proud of, which also makes it an attractive place for developers to come, invest and make money.
>
> Many of the developers are from out-of-town, though, so it is up to us to make sure they understand those characteristics that are precious and most valued by us. We need to require that they participate in safeguarding our heritage, and that they need to work within specific parameters. Balancing all of this are the taxpayers who stay informed on the proposals and projects, developers becoming informed on what citizens hold sacred, sorting through the competing interests, and recognizing what is in the best interests of the community. This constitutes a formidable challenge.
>
> Four years ago, with the election of Anan Abu-Taleb, Oak Park entered a new era. Village President/Mayor Anan brought new energy and a breath of fresh air into Oak Park. New development has come into Oak Park during his first term. Previous administrations complained about the fact that they couldn't get anyone to come here because of an active electorate that demanded quality projects and high standards.
>
> As a 44-year veteran of the neighborhood adjacent to Downtown Oak Park, and a person who spent years in the mid-1970s advocating for a more appropriate project than a 35-story, lot-line to lot-line high-rise adjacent to the Frank Lloyd Wright Historic District,...I have a strong gut reaction to the news of an 18-story high-rise planned for the Lytton site, 1000 Lake St., on the northeast corner of Forest Avenue and Lake Street. That gut reaction is "Don't build it! That would be an enormous mistake!"

Many Oak Parkers have a similar gut reaction (see Appendix A). This report backs up that gut reaction with data, analysis, and expert opinion. As specified by law, the Trustees should exercise their discretion in considering whether a given Planned Development meets the requirements by which it is eligible for consideration by the Trustees and the Plan Commission. Clearly, a proposal on the order of the one proposed by Albion does not meet those eligibility criteria, and thus the Trustees can and should reject any request to refer a high-rise proposal for 1000 Lake Street to the Plan Commission. Instead, they should demand that any development plan to be sent for consideration be within the guidelines of the Master Plan for Downtown Oak Park. And those guidelines should be regarded as minimum requirements for consideration, The Trustees and Commissioners should then exercise their discretion in demanding that any development must conform to, and enhance, the character of its surroundings and to the quality of life of the citizens of Oak Park.

Appendix A: Petitioners' written comments: Reasons for signing

"See why other supporters are signing, why this petition is important to them, and share your reason for signing (this will mean a lot to the starter of the petition)."

Comments shown are those **from Oak Park only,** as of May 29, 2017. Dozens of others comments came from visitors, shoppers, and former residents. The full set of comments can be found at https://www.change.org/p/oak-park-board-of-trustees-save-austin-gardens/c?source_location=petition_show

Josh Cramer, Oak Park, IL, 1 wk ago: There has been enough development at the Lake Street/Marion area. Start looking for ways to develop/enhance Madison St. so there is more than one vibrant shopping area in Oak Park. Forest Park did it so can Oak Park. Consider making Madison a 2 lane street in Oak Park and look for sensible business/residential development. Jamming more people into the same small area makes no sense. This will also kill Austin Gardens permanently changing the area in a negative way.

Kevin mccarthy, Oak Park, IL, 1 wk ago: Half of Madison is empty, put it there.

Hannah Casimiro, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: Austin Gardens is a respite for our family. My children and I love to "hide out" on a Sunday afternoon and read or rest amongst the trees. Please don't take their sunshine away!! AG is a sanctuary that should be protected.

Kari mccarthy, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: I live in west central oak park and use Austin Gardens with my daughters all the time. This will ruin the sun and foilage in a large part of it. :(

Christine Gould, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: Oak Park's density seems to be exploding overnight and as a resident, I'm concerned about the impact overall and to Ausin Gardens with regards to this specific development. Many are concerned about how this path will impact the community we love.

William Ward, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: Enough is enough already. Save Austin Gardens.

Bill Kopper, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: A monstrosity cloggiing up DTOP and ruining the already compromised gateway to FLW's masterpieces on Forest.

Lisa Zaher, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: Austin Gardens is one of Oak Park's unique treasures with beautiful trees and pathways. It was our backyard playground for 4 years when we lived next door and continues to be a favorite place to walk, sit, or play.

Amber Gallman, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: The prior development has already added noticeable wind and shade to this beautiful park. No more development.

Sue Kehias, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: Austin gardens is more valuable than a hi-rise.

Natasha Neal, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: I love the beauty of Austin Gardens and don't want any of the plants to die.

David Gullo, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: Austin Gardens is one of the jewels in our park systems. The Austin Family and the Park District have spent a lot on maintaining it. Let's be good stewards!

Brigid Sciaccotta, Oak Park, IL, 2 wks ago: The park should not be touched.

Shannon Kenny, Oak Park, IL, 3 wks ago: Development should not come at the expense of the people who live in the community and benefit from these parks! Austin Gardens is beautiful and should be protected!

Judith Warren, Oak Park, IL, 3 wks ago: I went to see The Lorax with two children at the Lake. It affected them to where they felt the need for trees. We walked to Austin Gardens and admired the old growth trees. I promised them the trees would always be there. Don't make me a liar, please. We need trees and empathetic children - not skyscrapers

Zerrin Bulut, Oak Park, IL, 3 wks ago: It's imperative to preserve the nature we do have in the community

for all to enjoy- not tear it down to build yet more high rise expensive condos.!

Jacqueline McEachen, Oak Park, IL, 3 wks ago: Save Austin Gardens! It is a cherished park!

jacky haxkett, Oak Park, IL, 3 wks ago: Our open space is limited, we need to protect this precious resource. We need to right size development so it does not come as a cost to our village.

Cynthia Harris, Oak Park, IL, 3 wks ago: This is a lovely little green space in Oak Park that anyone can enjoy. People over corporations!

mary haley, Oak Park, IL, 3 wks ago: I remember the early days when Austin Gardens was first formed. We need to save our natural spaces occupied by wild flowers.

Daphne Walsh, Chicago, IL, 3 wks ago: I love this park it's a shame to allow a developer take something away from people who enjoy the atmosphere in this park for yet another pile of bricks

Katleen Egan, Oak Park, IL, 3 wks ago: No more high rises in Downtown Oak Park! Austin Gardens is a treasure for downtown (all of) Oak Park.

Patricia Merriman, Oak Park, IL, 3 wks ago: I am very concerned about a building that size ruining the beauty of the park, but also extremely concerned about more housing downtown with more cars on our streets, given the number of units in the two newest apartment buildings. At this point we should not be committing to any additional projects.

Kathleen Gault, Oak Park, IL, 4 wks ago: Protect Austin Gardens! We need more open space in Downtown Oak park. Add a plaza or extend the park!

Mary Ann Jordan, Oak Park, IL, Apr 23, 2017: Do not want another high rise in Oak Park

Maureen Kleinman, Oak Park, IL, Apr 19, 2017: very concerned about all the new buildings around the park and the increased density of people (and their pets) in the immediate vicinity

David Weintrob, Oak Park, IL, Apr 18, 2017: we dont need more high rises when we have plenty that are un-occupied and limited park space.

Wendy Epstein, Oak Park, IL, Apr 17, 2017: We don't need another high rise in the Village!

Sara muriello, Oak Park, IL, Apr 15, 2017: To loose this op gem to yet another high rise monstrosity would be devastating. I moved here in 1988 for many reasons, and decisions are being made that are turning this beautiful village into something it's not and someplace I no longer want to be!

catherine schornstein, Oak Park, IL, Apr 11, 2017: This is one of the most beautiful and peaceful parks in Oak Park and I don't want to see it overshadowed by a huge apartment building.

Mary Dycus, Oak Park, IL, Apr 6, 2017: Green space is more important than the extra floors.

Timothy Sullivan, Oak Park, IL, Mar 30, 2017: Austin Gardens is an irreplaceable part of the fabric of Oak Park. We should not put it at risk for the sake of lining a developer's pockets and greed. What makes Oak Park a special place? More thought needs to be put into that by the board. What do we lose when we build all of these large developments?

Joseph Crump, Oak Park, IL, Mar 30, 2017: Love the gardens and more high tides means even more congestion and traffic

Amy Mcfarlane, Oak Park, IL, Mar 20, 2017: I love having the local parks to walk through.

Linda and Roy Dunlap, Oak Park, IL, Mar 20, 2017: I care about green spaces. Our healthy breathing depends on it.

Monique Slater, Oak Park, IL, Mar 19, 2017: I am not in favor of the proposed building.

Paula Taylor, Oak Park, IL, Mar 18, 2017: We need to save this park and we have way too many high rises in Oak Park. We need a balance

Diane Fascione, Oak Park, IL, Mar 18, 2017: We don't need a concrete canyon - we need a village with a

garden.

Christopher Tedin, Oak Park, IL, Mar 17, 2017: The park is a jewel in downtown oak Park. The trees are beautiful and need to be protected!!

Marcheta Murphy, Oak Park, IL, Mar 17, 2017: Save ALL of Austin Gardens, a fabulous park in the middle of the village should not be damaged for the almighty $$$.

Joan Suchomel, Oak Park, IL, Mar 17, 2017: Our parks are precious. The proposed building is too tall, for lots of reasons.

Alice Ireland, Oak Park, IL, Mar 17, 2017: I believe Oak Park needs to preserve this charming & beautiful green space much more than we need another high rise building.

Emma Langelan, Oak Park, IL, Mar 16, 2017: I care about my community and we need more nature and less building

Terry Mueller, Oak Park, IL, Mar 15, 2017: I thought that park lands were sacred in Oak Park. Do not touch Austin Gardens or any other piece of PUBLIC property! Don't you dare!

Michael Swaine, Oak Park, IL, Mar 14, 2017: The Village needs to stop getting variances to codes to attract businesses. These codes are in place to protect gems like Austin Gardens. I will oppose this additional variance if the Village pushes forward.

Sari Haro, Oak Park, IL, Mar 14, 2017: I don't want anymore condo building in Oak Park!!

Eileen Dambrogio, Oak Park, IL, Mar 14, 2017: Austin Gardens is the heart of Oak Park. This is where it all started. To destroy this park would be to destroy the soul of our community. A park such as Austin Garden is what makes Oak Park unique.

Fran Sampson, Oak Park, IL, Mar 14, 2017: We have very little green space in Oak Park as it is. Shutting out the sun to the lovely and beloved Austin Gardens is unconscionable.

Terry Tennes, Oak Park, IL, Mar 14, 2017: I love Austin Gardens Park!

Bryan Northup, Oak Park, IL, Mar 14, 2017: More development and high rises without greenspace is not the Oak Park we want! Don't touch Austin Gardens!

Eliana Callan, Oak Park, IL, Mar 14, 2017: Parks rock!

Elizabeth Olympio, Oak Park, IL, Mar 11, 2017: I have lived in Oak Park for nearly 40 years and I am so saddened to see the sky in Oak Park become more and more blocked with concrete and metal. And now, another high-rise to be built near Austin Gardens? To put it bluntly, I am disgusted. I can't stand the look of the recent high rises that have taken over downtown Oak Park. Every time, I see the Vantage building blocking the open sky, I get so angry. Oak Park has lost so much of its charm in just a few short years. What is going on!? Let's stop this madness.

Mark Plante, Oak Park, IL, Mar 9, 2017: I'm signing because I am opposed to the negative effects that will result in further high-rise development at 1000 Lake St. Development of the Advantage site has already created a wind tunnel effect, and as a local resident, have seen trash in home and church yards in the area almost on a daily basis. Not to mention the shadow effect that will be created over Austin Gardens, contributing to the deterioration of the plant life there. Why cannot we stick to the original plan for the downtown area which calls for park space to be created at this site?

Christina Loranz, Oak Park, IL, Mar 9, 2017: Austin Gardens is a treasure and a real asset to our village. I'd hate to see it shaded most of the time by a new high-rise.

lawrence christmas, Oak Park, IL, Mar 8, 2017: prefer Austin Gardens over more high rises

Robin Joyce, Oak Park, IL, Mar 8, 2017: I am signing this petition because this little space of green is important to me. I enjoy walking through its green shady splendor. I often sit for a while to read a book on one of the benches. And I enjoy looking to find flowers as an early sign of spring. The area is an oasis for the public surrounded by paved built upon land. Please do not put another high rise here.

Sarah Patton, Oak Park, IL, Mar 8, 2017: Austin Gardens is a beautiful treasure in our rapidly changing downtown area. It should be preserved and protected for present and future generations.

Erin Daughton, Oak Park, IL, Mar 7, 2017: The proposed development will cast a shadow on Austin Gardens, diminishing its ability to generate energy with solar panels and decreasing the outdoor experience for all visitors. Please say NO to this high-rise proposal!

Alexander Seropian, River Forest, IL, Mar 7, 2017: We need to keep the green spaces in our community!

Teresa Carlton, Oak Park, IL, Mar 7, 2017: Enough with high rises

Cheryl Gandolfi, Oak Park, IL, Mar 7, 2017: I want to preserve some of our open space. I am sick of high rises, congestion, impossible traffic, renters who don't care where they walk their dogs and lack of parking. If I wanted this lifestyle, I would move back into Chicago and pay less taxes and visit something more than a restaurant.

Rob Wick, Oak Park, IL, Mar 6, 2017: Austin Gardens is a Oak Park treasure. High rises - especially those that negatively impact places in Oak Park like Austin Gardens are not. Our village board should concentrate on filling vacant and shabby lots on Madison and North Avenues to satisfy their appetite for a larger tax base.

Brigitte Raahauge, Oak Park, IL, Mar 4, 2017: Quality of life is linked to our ability to access green spaces. Please don't sacrifice this for money. Enough with all the developments and corporate greed!

Michelle Cordogan, Oak Park, IL, Mar 3, 2017: We do not need another tall building in this area of Oak Park. There is a park directly behind it and the traffic congestion is already ridiculous. Our Village is becoming a metropolis. We don't need that we need authenticity.

Maggie Shanahan, Oak Park, IL, Mar 2, 2017: I care about the continued well-being of our parks and green spaces as Oak Park grows.

tolo saag, Oak Park, IL, Mar 2, 2017: This park was my childhood

Mary Goetting, Oak Park, IL, Mar 2, 2017: Enough is enough. We have enough high rises in Oak Park. People come to Oak Park because it is not the loop -- please stop trying to recreate the canyon experience. Also, we need a pause on development of concentrated housing to see the impact of the most recent building.

MAGGIE TESTORE, Oak Park, IL, Mar 2, 2017: Please protect our green space and sunshine. No more high rises!

Anna Testore, Oak Park, IL, Mar 2, 2017: I love Austin Gardens!

Erik Larratt, Oak Park, IL, Mar 1, 2017: I love this park! I use it almost every day! I encourage everyone to follow this link. -- http://www.oak-park.us/sites/default/files/historic-preservation/booklets-reports/preservation-guidelines.pdf . It will lead you to a document created by the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission. It will lead you to a document created by the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission. It was approved in 1994 and modified in 1999. It is Entitled: Architectural Review Guidelines. It lays out a New Building Policy. Thanks so much for creating this petition! I am very frustrated with the Oak Park Village Board's approval of the current development of multiple high rise buildings in downtown Oak Park. I had thought that stricter architectural standards would be followed.

Kathy Vest, Oak Park, IL, Mar 1, 2017: I don't like large buildings in my suburban town. Also, I do not want Austin Park to die because it has been in Oak Park my entire life.

Sarah Ungaretti, Oak Park, IL, Mar 1, 2017: I'm in Eco Eagles

Joyce Porter, Oak Park, IL, Feb 28, 2017: Please don't override the will of the people.

Maureen Meshenberg, Oak Park, IL, Feb 24, 2017: I am a resident of Oak Park almost 18 years. It is important to save our landmarks!landmarks in

Brett McNeil, Oak Park, IL, Feb 24, 2017: I'm signing this because Austin Gardens is an irreplaceable

community asset and deserves to be protected. High-rise development can work in Oak Park, just not at the expense of places like Austin Gardens.

Stephanie Gelberd, Oak Park, IL, Feb 24, 2017: I love Austin Gardens. I love that it is a haven and delight of nature. We live two blocks away and walk our dog there daily in the summer, stroll around and see the seasonal growth, watch the squirrels and bunnies, converse on the benches, and enjoy the library.

Madeleine Milan, Oak Park, IL, Feb 23, 2017: Out country has been taken over by people who are greedy and intent on destroying everything good that America stands for. Oak Park is supposed to be different and better than that. I don't know how our Village can pretend to be so if it continues with development for developments sake, with its eyes on nothing but the bottom line, while destroying what makes the Village so unique in the first place.

Peter Olson, Oak Park, IL, Feb 23, 2017: I love the Austin Gardens

Mary Bellmar, Oak Park, IL, Feb 23, 2017: Austin Gardens is beautiful!

Andrea Bartolomeo, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: This is a gem of the downtown Oak Park area. Please don't destroy this treasured green oasis!

Carol Mancini, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: This project or any other of comparable scope will destroy this precious space of the people of Oak Park. We don't need another monstrosity in town.

Oryana Quintero, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: No more high rises or development of/on Lake Street!

Jennifer Gnolfo, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: We have enough high rises in Oak Park, and another large building near Austin Gardens would substantially change the character of this beloved park.

Emma Hunter, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: I grew up in Oak Park and loved Austin Gardens. It's one of the few places I still spend time in when I come back to visit my parents -- the summer's Shakespeare in the Park is a huge draw for returning former Oak Parkers! Oak Park does NOT need more high rises; it does need to protect and preserve its existing green spaces like Austin Gardens.

Pattie Campuzano, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: Enough with the tall buildings and crowding the land in Oak Park. Who wants a New York skyline? LEAVE THE GREEN ALONE AND TAKE CARE OF IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. They are not making it anymore!

Lee Hurlbut, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: Austin Gardens is a beautiful place of nature in the middle of Oak Park. It should not be threatened by shade from construction of another tall building

DAWN HANEY, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: The absence of trees, grass, flowers, and the animals who live in the park diminishes the quality of life for everyone. It's simple. Do we need to show the Board "The Lorax"? Never underestimate the importance of respecting and protecting nature. Austin Gardens is a peaceful, beautiful place. I want it to remain so for myself, my neighbors, my children - for everyone who walks their dog there, studies there, reads there, exercises there, talks to friends there, sees great plays there, takes pictures of their babies there, enjoys a picnic there, sponsors a tree in memory of a loved one there, walks there, prays there. It is worth fighting for.

Joette Higgs, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: No more high rises. We have enough! The down town area is looking so unOak Parrish now.

Ruth Bovey, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: I feel all the tall buildings are ruining the feel of OP plus adding to the congestion and we need to protect all the open green space that we have left.

Katherine Zinsser, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: We have zoning for a reason. I moved here and pay taxes here because of the green space and amenities. If I had wanted a downtown filled with high rises and no sunlight, I would have stayed in the city.

Lynn Thomas, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: We absolutely do not need another high rise in Oak Park! Our village is fundamentally changing before our eyes, and not in a good way. Listen to your constituents!

Sally Urwin, Oak Park, IL, Feb 22, 2017: Oak PARK needs a few parks! We have enough development

going on. Let's keep some of what has made this a great place to live .

Sophia Lyman, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: This is a well used, historic and delightful public space that should be protected in terms of preserving the natural environment for all to enjoy year-round.

Robert Vogler, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: There is not reason Oak Park needs another high rise and especially one that will ruin Austin Gardens.

James Redden, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: I'm sick and tired of all of these high rise buildings destroying Oak Park.

kathryn jonas, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: In 2005 Oak Park citizens participated in community planning forums for the future of downtown Oak Park, resulting in a TIF Master Plan adopted by the Board that set the building height limit on Lake St. at 80' or approximately 7 stories. A primary concern of citizens was preserving the historic character of downtown and keeping it affordable for the independent, small shopkeepers that give this area its special character and that attract many shoppers from other towns. By considering another highrise apartment building, elected officials continue to ignore the Master Plan and are betraying the trust of residents who in good faith participated in the development of the Plan. The Master Plan actually provided for the expansion of Austin Gardens by creating a large open plaza "Founders' Square" on this site that would open into Austin Gardens and provide a beautiful entryway to the Frank Lloyd District. Instead, the proposed 18 story Albion highrise will continue the wall created by the new 21 story highrise, in effect burying the loveliest public garden in Oak Park in ever deeper shade, while visually isolating it.

Camillo Iannaccone, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: We already have enough of that kind of development in the area, along with the fact that there isn't currently growth to rationalize another structure being built.

Elizabeth Rivera, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: Our village is being destroyed by these giant (ugly) structures that only rich people can afford!! Stop selling out and save our green space

Robert Creed, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: This is a beautiful park nestled in the downtown of Oak Park; there is no better place for a respite from walking Lake street, or to sit and discuss the film you just saw at the Lake theater. And who can forget evenings spent watching Shakespeare in the park, or afternoons watching the nearly tame squirrels run up and down the majestic trees, offering their green shade freely to any happy wanderer! Please preserve this park!

Linda Belpedio, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: I am signing for several reasons. I do not want Austin Gardens to be affected by this building. I also do not want another high rise building creating yet another wind tunnel and more traffic in an already heavily congested area. We have the Target building, which hasn't even been completed yet, which will increase traffic. There is absolutely no good reason for this 16 story building. These high rises are destroying the charm of Oak Park and will reduce available parking and increase congestion.

Debbie Fine, Givat Ada, Israel, Feb 21, 2017: I grew up in Oak Park and visit every summer and would hate to see my favorite park ruined by a nearby high rise

LaurA Hartwell Berlin, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: Another tall building on the corner of Forest/Lake will significantly and detrimentally alter Austin Gardens.

Jake Worley-Hood, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: Oak Park is pushing through another major development without a long term neighborhood plan, traffic plan, or plan for green space. We will have to live with these short sited decisions for generations.

Aaron Stigger, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: Stop exploiting The Village of Oak Park with high rise luxury condos. That's not what Oak Park is about.

Charlotte True, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: I am a decent human being.

Rekha Rajkumar, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: We don't need more apartments in DTOP. Let's concentrate on bringing development to some other areas of the village!

Mary Noble, Oak Park, IL, Feb 21, 2017: I believe the current zoning ordinance should be enforced.

Austin Gardens is a valuable section of Oak Park, not only because of the many ways residents use the Park, but because of the positive impression it leaves with visitors. The park truly enhances the experience of living in the Village.

carol olsen, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: We need parks more than High Rise buildings. Austin Gardens should not be destroyed.

Louis Garapolo, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Project will be too tall.

Alma Klein, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Austin Gardens is a treasure!

Julie Samuels, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Nobody in our Village government asked any residents if we wanted or needed this building or any of the highrises in our downtown - they just "PUD"ed away. This latest one will not only be responsible for causing the death of migrating birds, but it will also traumatize and damage the trees and the natural area behind it in Austin Gardens Park. The Village government has no right to damage a park - it's not under their governance . And if they cared about the environment as they pretend they do....they would practice conservation and sustainable development. They don't and they don't care.

Bri Kellogg, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: This is not what we want oak park to look like.

Mindy Brimeyer, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: I want to preserve a beautiful park

Denis Roarty, Oak Pk, IL, Feb 20, 2017: I don't see a need for more density. I do see a need for healthy green spaces in Oak Park.

Carolyn Skipper, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: I love Austin Gardens

Anna Leonard, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: This is a landmark gem of an oasis in the heart of Oak Park. I envision the Forest/Lake NW corner to attach to Austin Gardens creating a more visible green space in the now cavernous area.

denise balish, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: I love Austin Gardens!

Alan Ball, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: As a resident of Oak Park, I don't want to see commercial opportunity kill residential livability.

Kevin Theis, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: I am a great admirer of both Austin Gardens and the Oak Park Festival and would hate to see anything that endangers the natural beauty of the park.

Lynne Beauprez, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: I walk through these lovely gardens and marvel at the ability to feel like you are in the wild while in the middle of a downtown area. We already have more than enough high rises in this block for this decade!

Jodie Schroeder, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Our public spaces are precious few in oak park. They need preserving for the quality of life we moved to oak park for, and th

Caralyn Sheehan, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Save Austin Gardens!

Joseph Crosetto, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: I love Austin Gardens!

Christina Harle, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Saving our natural and historical park land is very important

David Gulbransen, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: The high-rise development in OP is getting a little out of control--with the potential to radically change the character of our Village. The 1000 Lake St parcel is already appropriately zoned for up to 8 stories--if Albion can't make a building work at that height, then perhaps they aren't the right developer for the parcel *or* for our Village.

Adrian Fisher, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Oak Park should be caring for and protecting the limited open space that it has. In fact, I think the village should purchase the site in question and turn it into park space. This would help Austin Gardens and would increase surrounding property values as well as help further village goals of increasing open space whenever possible. Here is a great opportunity to demonstrate village commitment to green infrastructure and open space, as featured in the comprehensive plan and the Oak Park Park District's master plan.

Ruth Cryns, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Oh, come on! You money seeking beauty destroyers! Fight this!!

Jeanine Pedersen, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Austin Garden is a jewel in the OP park system. Trees are already being destroyed by the wind tunnel already created by the other building.

Jocelyne Adkins, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Green spaces are vital to our communities, for residents and visitors to enjoy and to support wildlife. I am reminded of a short film I saw with my young son during the "One Earth Film Festival" approximately 3 years ago... I can't recall the title, however I believe there were 3 monkeys in competition to out-build the others. Blinded by their desire to out-do their neighbors, they didn't realize the total destruction they caused to their environment until it was too late... To Oak Park Trustees and Albion, please reconsider your plans for a 16 story building that would shade and negatively impact 1/3rd of Austin Gardens. Thank you.

Brenda Latzke, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: We don't need yet another tall building in downtown Oak Park! Preserve Austin Gardens!

cecelia bacom, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Please conserve the small amount of green space that we have. The downtown area has already become too dense with large buildings! How about a more modest structure.

Rick F Sabatino, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Are parks help make Oak Park great. We also do not need more stacked residents in that area. We have three large projects in the works. There should be development and large infrastructure charges to go along with them, but the village wants to significantly raise fees And taxes. Stop the craziness.

Dorothy Patinka, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: As a long term resident I appreciate the value and beauty of this special park.

mila tellez, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: We need to maintain our environmental integrity in Oak Park, no shadows on Austin Gardens!!

Judy Dooley, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: Oak Park community needs Austin Garden for its beauty and for its educational opportunities about nature.

Jody Petersen, Oak Park, IL, Feb 20, 2017: This is a beautiful Park, and there are enough buildings in Oak Park. They obliterate views, block the sun, impact parking, crowd our streets, and create more local traffic. Enough already!

Tom Bassett-Dilley, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: Austin Gardens is a tiny piece of much-needed nature in the densest part of Oak Park. It must be protected for the good of all. An 8-story building would not destroy it, but a 16 or 18 story building would, and the only real beneficiary would be the developers, not Oak Park. Don't let greed trump nature, culture, and beauty.

Linda Bonner, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: Too much density in this part of town. We need to protect the park. This is considerably higher than was originally discussed, and much higher than the existing structure.

Mary Eggersdorf, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: I'm very concerned of the overbuilding that is raking place. It threatens the entire ambience of the Village. We need to seriously rethink the overdevelopment going on

Nancy Fong, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: We need a moratorium on high rises in Oak Park! These high rises are changing the face and the heart of Oak Park.

Sally Stovall, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: I appreciate Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center and feel that we should protect its access to sunlight!

Jeffrey Wenzel, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: It's a beautiful park. Needs to stay that way.

Marielle Mershart, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: The rampant over development in downtown oak park is threatening to destroy the defining village character that has distinguished Oak Park over the years. It is utterly reckless to overbuild in downtown oak park and to threaten one of the parks that make the area

special and unique. It is especially ironic that the village would invest in Austin Gardens by constructing a green building with a nature preschool that celebrates nature and the special characteristics of the park to then change the zoning and authorize the development of a high rise which will overshadow and kill off parts of the park, all for short-term monetary gains and profit.

Mary O'Toole, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: This park is necessary in Downtown OP. I'm all fair development, but not at the expense of green space.

Stephanie W, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: Austin Gardens provides important refuge to many other non-human species. Oak Park is a major rest spot for migratory birds that fly thousands of miles, facing so many hazards along the way. Obstructing their flyway with more towers filled with glass that can result in fatal collisions is something that Oak Park as an environmentally thoughtful community should be concerned about and avoid if possible. Many of the local buildings already unintentionally kill many birds. Across the U.S. millions of birds are killed by buildings. Let's try to decrease that number instead of increasing it.

Rhona Taylor, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: Keep Oak Park, Oak Park. Development can be achieved with out loss of the beauty and character that gives us charm. (and tourists and art)

Stephanie Shaw, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: save our green spaces

Peg Sabatino, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: Oak Park's plumbing and other infrastructure cannot handle the increased density AND that park's integrity will suffer. Build elsewhere. Develop Madison St. and North Ave.

Rick Sabatino, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: We need to protect our public lands from private developers - that includes our parks. Build a building that blends with its surroundings rather than literally overshadowing it. Austin Gardens needs air and light. We need to protect it.

Amy Schembari, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: Austin Gardens is a special part of where I grew up. I don't want it ruined with more buildings and infrastructure.

Lucy Carr, Oak Park, IL, Feb 19, 2017: I'm signing because Austin Gardens is a bit of sanctuary in all of the hustle and bustle. And the proposed rezoning and additional building stories threatens to destroy that. Development must compromise so the emotional spirit and history of Oak Park in not lost.

Kerstin Clouser, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: I love Austin Gardens!

Amanda Forman, Chicago, IL, Feb 18, 2017: I've spent my last three summers in this park. It is a beautiful gem located in the heart of Oak Park. This park is a beautiful escape for individuals and families alike.

Isabel Lagos, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: I have lived in oak park for many years and this park has been a relaxing place I can go. This is a save haven for me

Miggy Schuster, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: I feel that's it's only the right thing to do and I personally love Austin gardens

Rose Albrecht, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: I grew up in Oak Park and Austin Gardens has been a huge part of my life. It's one of the most magical places in the entire town. Losing any part of it would be a tragedy.

rosa ayllon, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: because I live in oak Park and I want to preserve our landmarks

Dana Clouser, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: There's already a fair amount of buildings being created in Oak Park right now. Building one more but taking away a beautiful park space is a waste. I would hate to live in a building that took away a beautiful and natural park where people can relax, perform, and play on a nice day.

John Dickens, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: Too much traffic at already congested Lake Street especially with Vantage across the street.

Lorel Janiszewski, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: Austin Gardens is one of the jewels of Oak Park. Its

botanical features provide joy and peace for those who visit here. Building the described structure will make that part of Oak Park unattractive, and will reduce the value of the property in that area... You would just be messing with an area of Oak Park (the business district I mean) that is already having trouble. Please don't be greedy.

Jason Gerace, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: This is not the right place to do this. Build the property tax base elsewhere.

Jason Green, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: There are many locations in oak park for larger scale developments, but preservation of the park and integrity of community are of greater importance to the area.

James Kelly, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: If the projects at Maple and Chicago, and on the old Tasty Dog site can be profitable with 5 stories, why not find a developer who will do that, or for Albion to stay within the zoned height limit. We run a real risk of being over-built, and when developers can't fill or sell the buildings, we're stuck with them just the same.

Randi Woodworth, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: Austin Gardens must be saved! We have very little green space in downtown Oak Park, so we must retain all that we can. A huge building next door will do irreparable damage to the park and the community resources within it (nature center and OP Festival Theater, for example). In addition, there are issues of density, wind tunnel, etc. Rein in your greed and help us keep Austin Gardens healthy.

Lynda Shadrake, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: Please save this park from the obstruction of the sun! We don't need tall buildings here.

Henrietta Atkin, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: Austin Gardens is a treasure and needs to be preserved.

Belinda Bremner, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: Austin Gardens is a treasure, a vital part of what makes Oak Park a unique and wonderful place. Do not let greed triumph over green. Say no to Perfidious Albion.

Frances Figg, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: I fear that this may already be too late what with the 2 existing new high rises and 2 more coming. There is not enough green space to support this, and one of the most iconic residential streets in the world is being destroyed. Our quaint town is starting to look like downtown Evanston, and that is not good.

Bat Ganbold, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: Austin Gardens raw as shit

Maggie Perisho, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: i freaking love this garden

Jamie Everson, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: I played football here with my friends every weekend growing up and now it's just a place full of memories. Please keep it.

Willa Sagal, Oak Park, IL, Feb 18, 2017: We need to save our park! Also we don't need any more stupid high rises. Oak park is a beautiful small(ish) town, we aren't Chicago.

Alonte Williams, Oak Park, IL, Feb 17, 2017: I grew up playing in that park. I've got thousands of memories being there with my friends and family. It's one of our beautiful park and getting rid of a portion of it kills a small part of this town's identity.

Julie Krueger, Oak Park, IL, Feb 17, 2017: I'm signing because I don't want to lose and inch of the peacefulness and tranquility of this park. It's a gem!

Chee-Young Kim, Oak Park, IL, Feb 17, 2017: Love the new Nature Center and the beautiful trees in Austin Garden. The previous owners of 1000 Lake Street were able to build that was in synch with the Garden and so can the new owners.

lena henry, Oak Park, IL, Feb 17, 2017: we've already got enough empty apartments on lake plus a target being built we don't need any more empty constructions blocking out our source of oxygen thank you very much

Jack Duffy, Oak Park, IL, Feb 17, 2017: There are way too many skyscraper's in Oak Park

Christine Koman, Oak Park, IL, Feb 17, 2017: I am signing because OP has so little green we as a

community need to fight to protect every square inch

Nallely Gass, Oak Park, IL, Feb 17, 2017: I want to protect our parks, we have plenty of housing, this is where my children go to preschool, and I want them to have sunshine, gardens, and an opportunity to explore the trees and bushes.

Laura Stamp, Oak Park, IL, Feb 17, 2017: Austin Gardens is habitat to many species of plants and animals, not a courtyard for high rise buildings.

India Soodan, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: This is a part of my beautiful home and childhood that has been here since my dad was here.

Muriel Quinn, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: Green space in the downtown area is essential. Consider adding the property of the 1000 Lake Street building to Austin Gardens instead of building anything there!

Jonathan Banks, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I love Austin!!!

Josh Czuba, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: Austin Gardens is an integral part of Oak Park. It adds so much nature, and beauty to our village and needs to be sustained.

Nicole Cerniglia, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: Because oak park has already put up a lot of new huge buildings, are schools are going to be overcrowded and we don't need any more big buildings. They are ruining oak parks charms. Austin gardens is also a really important part of oak park, and to lose 1/3 of the plants is completely insane. It's crazy that we, as oak park residents are going to give up our beautiful gardens for some big buildings we don't need.

renae tourtellotte, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I do not like the furthering of construction projects in this city. It hurts the environment, costs money, and encourages over population.

Sophie Norton, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I want to protect the plants!!

Glendon Opalski, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I care

Jae Brown, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: Its important to me that we preserve our community charm.

Veronica Coffey, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I like gardens

Emily Moulden, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: We need to persevere the small amount of green life we have

Mira R, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: Austin Gardens is a beautiful park that focuses on wildlife as well as serving the community. We need to preserve it!

Monique Santiago, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: this park is too beautiful to ruin, we don't need sky scrapers in oak park

Galen Ptacek, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: It's also worth considering that another highrise apartment is going to exacerbate the village parking problem! ! !

Alma Bicknese, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: Green space matters

Ada Tikkanen, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: We need Austin Gardens - and no more highrises in our downtown

Robin Cozette, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I love Austin Gardens and our green space forest in Oak Park is the only one we have amid increasing amounts of concrete. We need trees for our souls.

Sean Lowder, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I love the environment.

Emma Wojack, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: It is important to preserve the little green space left in oak park. Also we just built this solar powered center that would become unusable which it just stupid.

Sheila Kunkel, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: Love Austin Gardens! Save it!!!!

Aleah Price, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: Enjoy the beauty we have now! Don't let it die.

Drew Krueger, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I live on the North side of Oak Park and I've been going to

Austin Gardens since I was about 2.

eden saraceno, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: for Austin Gardens!

Serena Daley, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I love my planet :)

Jeanine George, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I love Austin gardens. It's a little oasis in an otherwise urban area.

Lisa Mulligan, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: let the sun shine on Austin Park, not a shadow of a high rise.

annette donlin, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: Oak park gets its charm from its old homes, old trees, scattered neighborhood parks, history and "secret" charms that one stumbles upon while walking through the village. Austin gardens is one of those charms. It seems to me our "village" is slowly turning into a city. Since when did a village have architecture of modern 10+ stories high? Austin gardens is part of our original village. It is like a mini foest in the middle of our town. A sanctuary for animals, trees, plants and people. Let's stop with all the development and stop to consider what beauty lies in the historical pieces already in place in our community.

Carolyn Santos, Oak Park, IL, Feb 16, 2017: I believe that the world should be saved, that it's dying because of us. So therefore we must be the ones to stop ourselves.

Lily Alexandroff, Oak Park, IL, Feb 15, 2017: Oak park needs to continue to commit to diversity, and another high rise with condos starting at 800k will only take us farther from that goal. Economic diversity should be maintained. Aside from that, Austin gardens in a beautiful park, and safe public spaces should not suffer.

Gina Passaro, Oak Park, IL, Feb 15, 2017: Parks are important!!!!!

Kyle Pendleton, Oak Park, IL, Feb 15, 2017: Austin Gardens is a Beautiful, peaceful corner of Oak Park and shouldn't be overshadowed by a large eye sore of a building.

Emily Gage, Oak Park, IL, Feb 15, 2017: No more high rises in Oak Park!

Karen McMillin, Oak Park, IL, Feb 15, 2017: We do not need another high rise. Save Austin Gardens!

Abby Bankes, Oak Park, IL, Feb 15, 2017: Nature > luxury apartments

zaahir hall, Oak Park, IL, Feb 15, 2017: i'm signing because we need more nature and less man made things

Isabel Sevilla, Oak Park, IL, Feb 15, 2017: Environmental justice should not be pushed away for the sake of monetary gain.