

Proposal to Redevelop the Comcast Building into an Apartment Building with 51 One-bedroom Units and Commercial Space on the First Floor

820 and 832 W. Madison
(Corner of Madison and Grove)
Oak Park, IL

December 16, 2010

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Outline

- Overview of the Proposed Development
- Partners in the Development
- Zoning Allowances Requested
- Residents of the Apartments
- Commercial Component of the Development
- Benefit to Oak Park
- Response to Common Criticisms of the Development
- Development Timeline

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Status Quo



- Vacant Building at 820 Madison (empty since 2008)
- Two story structure on Madison and Grove increasing to three stories in the back of the building (northern border)
- Parking lot across Grove at 832 Madison

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

1928

- Historic photo from January 14, 1928 “Oak Leaves”



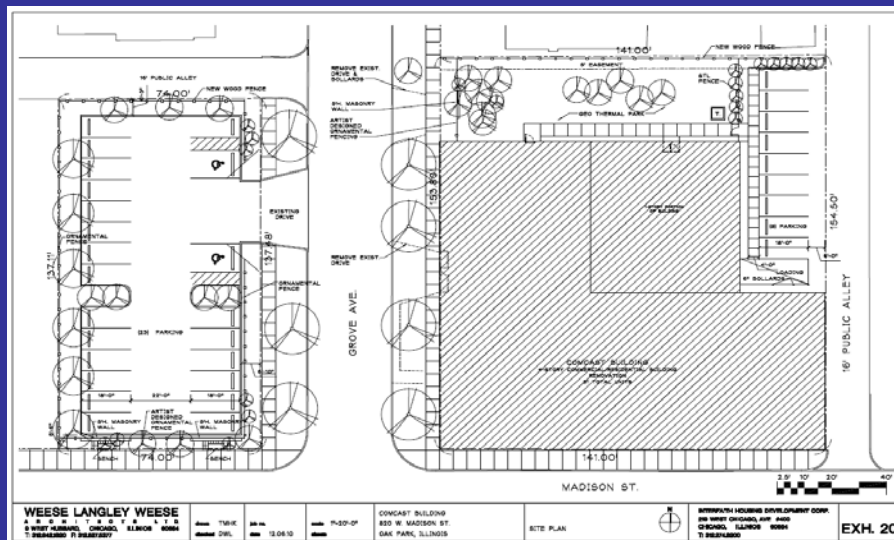
Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

The Proposal

- Renovate Comcast Building into an L-shaped building with a ground floor and three stories above
- Residential: 51 one-bedroom apartments on the second, third, and fourth floors (entry on Grove)
- Commercial: 5,200 square feet of retail space along the first floor (entries on Madison)
- Parking: 23 spaces in the lot across Grove Avenue (832 West Madison) and 9 spaces off the alley next to the bank drive-up window for both commercial and residential use

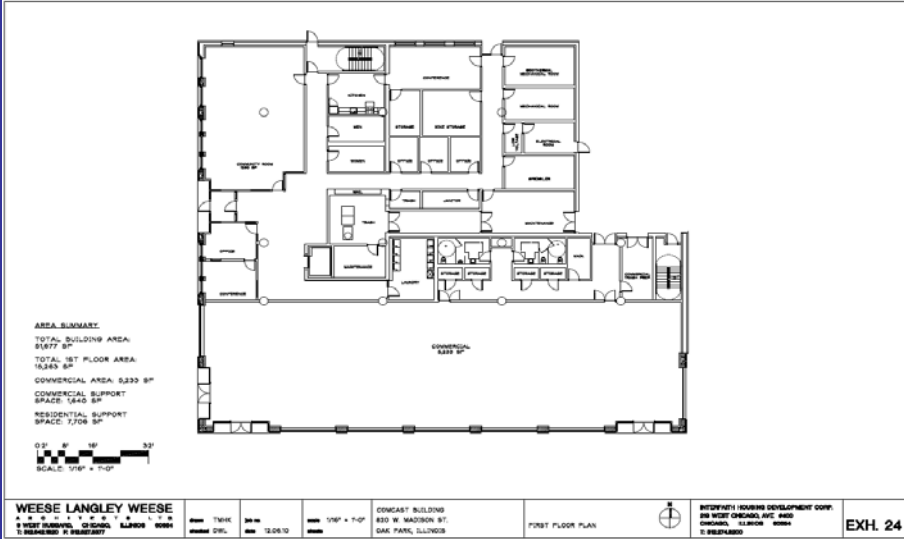
Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Proposed Site Plan



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Proposed First Floor Plan



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Proposed Residential Floor Plan



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Current Perspective on Madison



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Proposed Perspective on Madison



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Current Perspective on Grove



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Proposed Perspective on Grove



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Compensating Benefits

1) Public Access Landscaped Areas at Madison/Grove

- Masonry Garden Wall with Benches
- Artistic Designed Ornamental Fencing between the masonry walls

2) Community Room

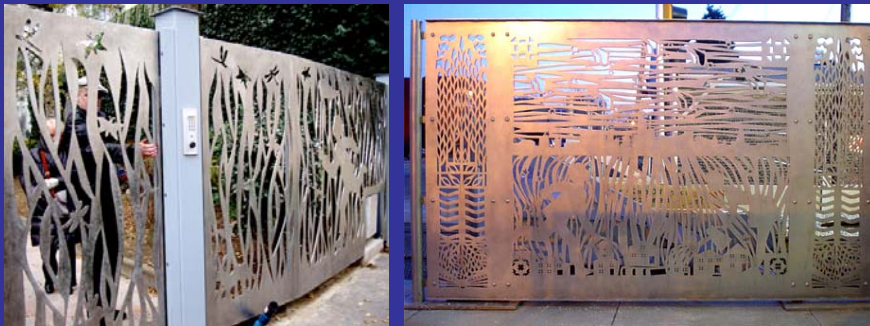
- Large 1,250 square foot room for use by the Oak Park community by appointment without charge

3) Permeable Pavers

- Provided in both parking areas and in the area in and around the decorative walls and benches

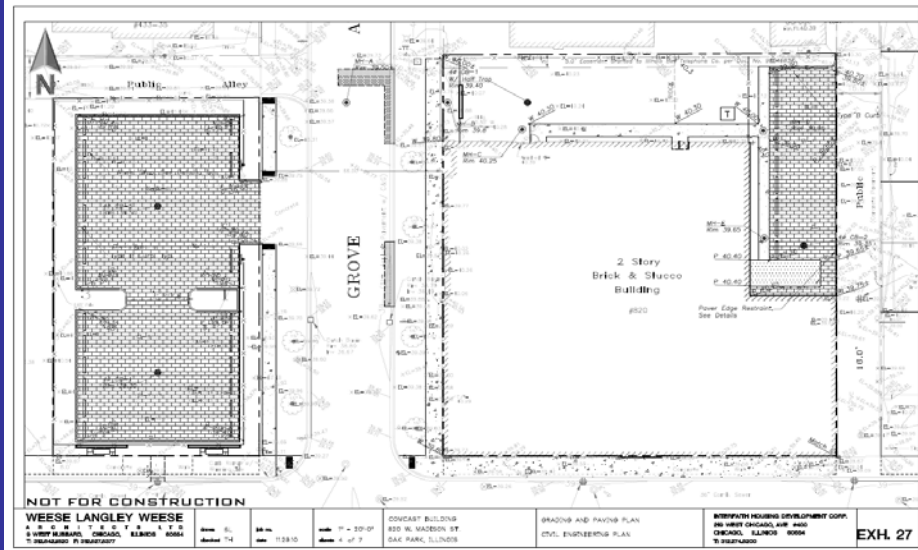
Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Artistic Designed Ornamental Fencing Examples



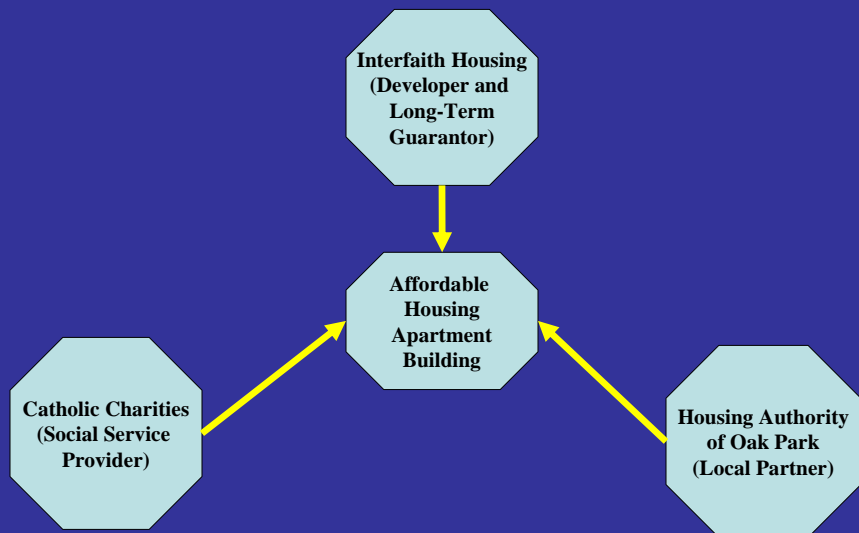
Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Permeable Pavers



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Partners in the Development



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Interfaith's Sankofa House



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Interfaith's Branch of Hope



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

OPHA's Mills Park Tower



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

OPRC's Ryan Farrelly Apartments



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Oak Park Residence Corporation

- Oak Park Residence Corporation to serve as manager
- Community-based not-for-profit housing development corporation formed in 1966
- Manages 36 rental and condo buildings in Oak Park containing over 950 units
- Manages 6 mixed commercial/residential buildings
- Experienced in managing special needs housing:
 - Mills Park Tower - 198 units, seniors and persons with disabilities
 - The Oaks - 76 units, seniors and persons with disabilities
 - Ryan Farrelly Apartments - 21 units, persons with disabilities

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Catholic Charities' St. Leos



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Zoning Allowances Requested

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

1) Front Yard

- 3 to 5 feet required
- Existing building provides 0 feet
- The yard is established by the footprint of the existing building and by the desire for a continuation of the existing historic façade
- Allowance required due of the addition of the 3rd and 4th floors
- Historic Preservation Commission supports this variance
“Maintaining a continual façade plane for the front elevation with the additional floors is vital to the overall appearance of the building. Setting the third and fourth floors back from the existing building façade would visually detract from the overall proportion and balance of the building due to it low height.”

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

2) Lot Coverage (Open Landscape)

- 25 % of the lot area must be landscaped to provide for the absorption of moisture
- Existing site provides 0% (no landscaping)
- Redevelopment provides for 20%, therefore, an allowance of 5% is needed
- The additional 5% is about 1,500 sq ft. The redevelopment incorporates over 9,000 square feet of permeable pavers, in lieu of asphalt or concrete, which gives the water opportunity to infiltrate into the soil
- The permeable pavers far exceed the 1,500 sq. feet of open space, and allow for maximum parking for the project

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

3) Residential Parking

- 64 spaces required for residential (1.25/unit)
- 32 spaces provided for residential
- Per the parking study (and years of experience in operating income restricted housing), the number exceeds the need
- Compliant with the recommendations of Oak Park's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing which addresses barriers to affordable housing (reduction of the required parking for affordable housing to 50% of the number of units)
- Other income restricted properties in the Village received a 50% reduction
- Income restricted residents typically cannot afford cars
- Transit Oriented Design (this location is transit rich)
- LEED certification encourages and provides credit for providing less parking than what the typical zoning ordinances require.
- IGO car sharing space could be provided

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

3) Commercial Parking

- 9 spaces required for commercial
- street/lot parking for commercial
 - Street parking available for commercial use during daylight and evening hours
 - A portion of the parking lot could be set aside for commercial activity during daylight and evening hours

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

4) Number of Units (Density/Intensity of Use)

- 40 units allowed
- 51 units proposed (allowance of 11 units)
- Code treats one-bedrooms the same as three-bedrooms
 - 40 three-bedrooms would be more intensity of use with the potential of 120 residents than the proposed 51 small one-bedrooms
- The approved PD at 827 – 833 Madison sits on a smaller total site (26,436 vs. 31,859 square feet) yet was approved for 36 units containing 63 bedrooms

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

5) Building Height

- 50 feet allowed which can translate into a 5 story building
- 55.5 feet needed for Grove and Madison elevations (allowance of 5.5 feet)
 - Height increasing from 29 to 55.5 feet along the south and west elevations
 - Height decreasing from 62 feet to less than 20 feet along 60% of the border with residential neighbors
- The two existing floors total 29 feet 5 inches. The two additional floors are each 14 feet in height in order to allow for the windows and building features to blend with the architectural character of the existing floors.
- The height of this building is in keeping with height of apartment/condo buildings in this R5/R7 district
- Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) supports this variance. “The added height of 2 floors is not out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. The HPC supports the request for a 5-foot height variance as the proposed height is necessary to maintain the proportion and overall visual balance of the building. Lowering the height of the upper floors would result in the loss of the sense of proportion of the building found in the present design.”

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Bulk and Height on North Elevation



Being Reduced



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

6) Landscaping on Madison

- 1 tree and 10 shrubs required every 40 feet
- Currently, there are no trees or shrubs on the Madison frontage either in front of the building or at the parking lot (the facade comes up to the property line)
- The allowance requested is for no trees or shrubs in front of the building
- The lack of compliance with this requirement is also the result of keeping the existing historic façade in place rather than demolishing the building and creating the required yard.
- Trees and shrubs are being added on all sides of the parking lot in compliance with the Village ordinance.

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Landscape Plan



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

7) Landscaping on Northern Border

- An 8 foot landscaped buffer must be provided in the rear
- The existing building provides no landscaped buffer
- The proposal more than meets this requirement by providing 33 feet of landscaping along 112 feet of the northern border
- The allowance needed is for the 29 feet along the alley parking strip where the green buffer decreases from 33 feet to 5 feet 6 inches, which results in a request for an allowance of 2 feet 6 inches along these 29 feet.
- This smaller buffer along 29 feet was needed in order to accommodate various loading dock requirements at the other end of the parking strip

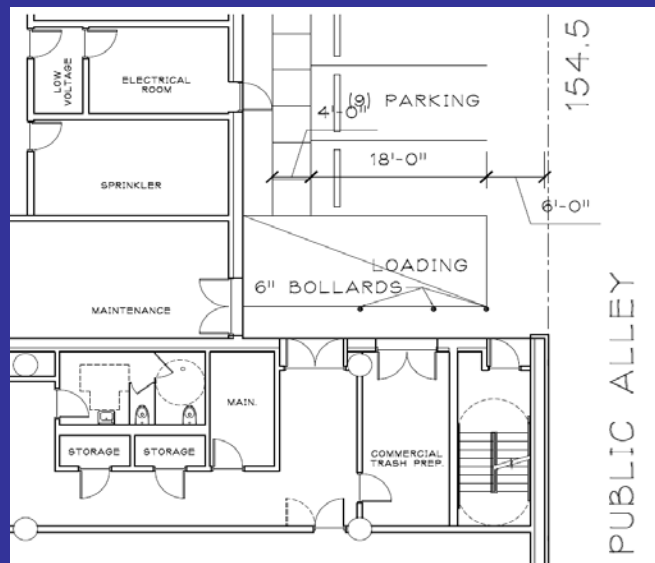
Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

8) Loading Area

- A building that exceeds 50,000 square feet (proposed building is 51,677 square feet) requires two loading docks, while the development proposes one
- The design of the ground floor has allowed for the loading and service requirements for both residential and commercial portions of the project to be combined in one outside area.
- This loading area is adjacent to the interior residential and commercial trash areas which keeps the exterior clear of any refuse containers and allows the loading area to serve these functions as well.

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Loading Area



Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Tenant Profile

- Individual at least 18 years of age with a target for someone who currently lives and/or works in the Village of Oak Park (“working poor”)
- No disability requirement, only requirement is a person at or below 50% of the area median income (less than \$26,300)
- Single adult or a parent with one child under 18
- We anticipate that a mix of veterans, low wage workers (workforce housing) , and persons with physical disabilities will live in this building
- An ability to live independently will be a key factor for acceptance

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Vignettes of Potential Residents

- Young woman who works at a day care center in Oak Park and lives with family in Oak Park
- College educated young adult with a physical disability who works in Oak Park and lives with her parents
- Village employee who works part time as an office clerk and cannot afford to live in Oak Park
- Disabled adult currently living with parents in the neighborhood
- Young woman who graduated from OPRF, has a physical disability, works for a nonprofit organization in River Forest and makes less than \$26,300/year

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Screening of Potential Residents

- Application (property management)
 - Completeness check
 - Verification of income and household size
- Assessment of appropriateness for the housing setting (social services)
 - Social service needs assessment
 - Determination that individual has the capacity to live independently

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Commercial Component of the Development

- 5,200 square feet of commercial space will be available
- Single tenant or possible dual tenant(s)
- Architectural attractive street level identity
- 14 foot ceiling height allows for 7 window bays on 3 sides of the building and dual entrances all with tall windows
- Good visibility for pedestrian and vehicular traffic
- Parking available to retail customers
- Possible tenants for 1st floor commercial space include:
 - Non-kitchen food retailers
 - Product retailers
 - Service firms

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Benefit to Oak Park

1. Will generate tax revenue

- Commercial space on the first floor will pay all business and sales taxes.
- This development will be held by a for profit partnership, therefore it will pay Cook County property tax.

2. Provides new rental units

- Permanent housing for low income adults that live and/or work in VOP
- All 51 units will be accessible, something not common with most rental units in Oak Park

3. Will be very “green”

- This proposal would return a vacant building back to productive use (it would cost over \$1 million to simply demolish this structure)
- This will be a LEED certified building that will include geothermal heating/air conditioning.
- Permeable pavers on all hard surfaces

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Benefit to Oak Park continued

4. Is Consistent with Madison Corridor Plan

- Commercial space with very tall windows being provided on the first floor facing Madison
- The development team is sensitive to the historic character of this property currently covered by a sterile façade and will bring back as many historic elements as is determined to be feasible.

5. Environmental problems will be addressed

6. No funding being requested from the Village (all funding coming from outside the Village)

7. A brand new building will enhance value

8. Green buffer replacing the parking lot north of the building

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Benefit to Oak Park continued

9) Compensating Benefits

- a) public access landscape areas with artist designed fencing and masonry garden walls
- b) use of large community room
- c) permeable pavers

10) Consistent with Village Plans and Studies

- a) Madison Street Corridor Development and Implementation Strategy
- b) Madison Street and Oak Park Avenue Development Study
- c) Village's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing
- d) Report of the Affordable Housing Strategies, Housing Programs Advisory Committee
- e) Village of Oak Park Comprehensive Plan Objectives

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Response to Common Criticisms of the Development

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

“Request for Zoning Relief is Excessive”

- Response:
 - The Comcast building that sits there today requires 4 of the 8 types of relief we are requesting
 - Any developer proposing to repurpose the Comcast building would be asking for the same amount of zoning relief
 - A more compliant building (40 unit hypothetical example) would require the demolition of the existing structure, would be 5 storeys, 8 yard buffer in the back, 55 parking spaces, yet still need several forms of relief

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

“Apartments for singles are currently vacant”

- Response:
 - Most of the units available in the Village are not affordable, and utilities are not included
 - Many are in condo buildings that require owner occupancy
 - Some may be affordable in the economic downtown, but will not be affordable for the life of the property
 - Delivery of supportive services in a scattered site setting are cost prohibitive and not as effective
 - Most apartment buildings in the Village were built prior to 1978 and do not contain an elevator for accessibility

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

“Housing for Singles not Needed in Oak Park”

- Response:
 - Waiting lists of 200+ names at the Oak Park Housing Authority of singles who either live or work in the Village
 - No building in the Village that simply targets low wage workers
 - HPAC study and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing both support the need for affordable accessible housing for single adults

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

“This Development Concentrates Poor People in One Building”

- Response:
 - The building will look and feel like any market rate apartment building. No stigma is attached to the building.
 - Developments that contain a range of incomes are few and far between. Developments such as these are large (at least several hundred units) and involve special funding for the demolition of high rise public housing, not what is proposed for this development.
 - The low income individuals targeted for this development benefit from the sense of community that is inherent in supportive housing (reduces isolation)

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

“The Development will Decrease Property Values”

- Response:
 - No housing developer can be held solely responsible for any one home or neighborhood of homes’ increase or decrease in “value.” Home values are based on a myriad of factors: age of the structure; personal upkeep; and national and even global market fluctuations.
 - A property that is vacant and especially one that has remained vacant for a lengthy period tends to lower the value of neighboring properties. Conversely, properties that transition from vacancy to occupancy tend to increase the value of neighboring properties.
 - If the proposed Comcast building redevelopment has any economic impact on the neighboring properties it will more than likely have a positive one.

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

“The Development is too Dense”

- Response:
 - All the multifamily buildings in the blocks in and around this development are at least 4 stories high
 - 51 units that will contain an estimated maximum of 55 persons is similar in density to the one and two-bedroom condominium buildings at the other end of Grove
 - The Madison and Oak Park Study from 2008 calls for a building of this size at this very site

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

“Children will Occupy the Units and Burden the School System”

- Response:
 - Under the Fair Housing Act, we cannot discriminate on the basis of familial status.
 - The “loft-style” one-bedrooms envisioned by our architect have been designed specifically for single adults.
 - The maximum occupancy of these one-bedroom units will be one adult and one child, but it is unlikely that an adult with a school age child will want to live in the building due to these design factors.
 - Interfaith just leased up a 50 unit building of similarly sized one-bedrooms, and only two children ended up living in the building
 - If any children moved into the building, the property taxes that this new development will pay will more than cover their use of District 97 resources, an entitlement to Oak Park residents.

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

“Parking being Provided is Insufficient”

- Response:
 - Parking study looked at the parking at other similar develops and concluded that 1 parking space for every 2 units was more than enough
 - Commercial parking can be provided both in front of the building at in the lot
 - Village parking manager supports the allowance
 - Other jurisdictions only require 1 parking space for every 3 one-bedroom affordable units

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting

Timeline

- Submit Planned Development Application and Hearings before Plan Commission and Village Trustees
(Fall 2010/Winter 2011)
- Submit Funding Applications
(Late 2010 and Early 2011)
- Complete Construction Drawings and Submit for Building Permit
(Spring 2011)
- Close on Financing and Begin Construction
(Late 2011/Early 2012)
- Construction completed and building leased-up
(Late 2012)

Presentation before the Oak Park Plan Commission Meeting