



Comprehensive Plan

City of Oak Forest, Illinois

February 2008

HNTB

In association with GOODMAN WILLIAMS GROUP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks is due, as well, to many other Oak Forest staff members, governmental bodies, other agencies, and citizens who offered their time, ideas and insights to the development of this Plan.



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I. INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan is the City's official policy guide for future land use, development and conservation within the community. The Plan addresses community character, land use, housing, transportation, community facilities, and economic development from a community-wide perspective. It also provides more specific policy guidance on development, transportation, and urban design issues within the 159th and Cicero Metra Station Sub-Area, and includes design standards for future pedestrian and bicycle mobility improvements throughout the City.

It is important to emphasize that a Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide. Unlike codes and ordinances that are legally enforceable, the Comprehensive Plan is an advisory tool to be consulted by the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council, staff and other officials when land use changes, capital facilities or other projects are considered. It is long-range in orientation and intended to express general community aspirations. Yet, it is specific enough to guide day-to-day activities of the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council and City staff.

THE NEED FOR AN UPDATED PLAN

The City's previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1964. As useful as it once was, community growth and evolution in the interim has rendered this document largely obsolete. Updates to the City's land use map were adopted in 1997, and a plan update addressing the corner of 159th Street and Cicero Avenue was undertaken in 2000. However, a community-wide assessment of all issues impacting the community's future had not been completed since 1964. For this reason, the Comprehensive Plan reflects the changed conditions in and around the City and is intended to provide effective policy guidance for the next ten to fifteen years, or until such time as the Plan is updated again.





I. INTRODUCTION

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The development of the Comprehensive Plan has been guided by a Steering Committee comprised of local officials, residents, representatives of City organizations, and members of the business community (see the Acknowledgments for a complete listing of Committee members). The planning process was facilitated by HNTB Corporation, an urban planning and design consulting firm. HNTB was assisted by Goodman Williams Group, a firm that provides market assessment expertise. At each stage in the process (as summarized to the right), community input was solicited, carefully considered by the Steering Committee and reflected in subsequent work products.

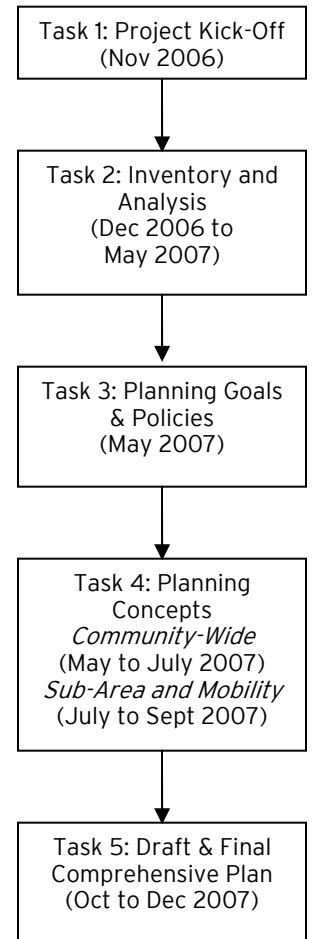
As part of the planning process, an interim report entitled *Background Report: Community-Wide and Sub-Area Conditions, Issues and Opportunities* was prepared by HNTB and Goodman Williams Group. This report, issued in May 2007, is available for review under separate cover.

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth long-range plans and policies for the Oak Forest community-wide systems, including future land use, community facilities and services, and transportation, and complies with all current requirements of the State of Illinois' Local Planning Technical Assistance Act.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Oak Forest is ideally located with excellent access to the regional transportation system, with convenient interchanges to Interstate 57 (I-57) at both 159th and 167th Streets. The Metra station located at 159th Street and Cicero Avenue provides commuters with easy access to downtown Chicago. Residents also benefit from access to high-quality municipal facilities, schools, institutions, and services. Other amenities include an abundance of forest preserve land with trails and bikeways on the periphery of the City and a large number of community parks and other public facilities. There is also a public golf course on the periphery of the City.

Oak Forest Comprehensive Planning Process





I. INTRODUCTION

The community of Oak Forest was incorporated in 1947 as a village, at which time it was populated with 1,618 residents. The area experienced significant growth in the 1960s, and by 1970 had a population of almost 18,000 residents. Oak Forest incorporated as a city in 1971, and since that time, it has continued to grow and in 2000 was comprised of 28,051 residents, according to the U.S. Census.

Like many other south suburban communities, the City of Oak Forest is projected to experience significant population growth over the next 30 years. According to CMAP, the population of Oak Forest is projected to grow to 33,040 persons by the year 2030, nearly an 18% increase in population from the 2000 census. Median household income in census year 2000 was just over \$60,000 annually; according to ScanUS data, the median household income grew to \$69,347 in 2006. More details regarding demographics trends in Oak Forest are available in the May 2007 *Background Report*. Table 1: Population Trends and Forecasts below compares the past and future growth trends in Oak Forest to those of the surrounding south suburban communities and the six-county region.

Table 1: Population Trends and Forecasts

	1990 Population	2000 Population	2030 Population	% Change (1990- 2000)	% Change (2000- 2030)
City of Oak Forest	26,203	28,051	33,040	7%	18%
South Suburban Communities*	158,316	188,663	237,955	19%	26%
Northeastern Illinois (six-county region)	7,261,176	8,091,720	10,034,835	11%	24%

Source: US Census 2000, ScanUS 2006, Goodman Williams Group

*South suburban communities include: Country Club Hills, Crestwood, Markham, Midlothian, Orland Hills, Orland Park, Tinley Park and Oak Forest.





I. INTRODUCTION

THE PLANNING AREA

Planning for the entirety of Oak Forest requires the City to also plan for some adjacent unincorporated areas. These are areas that are outside of the current City boundaries but within its one and one-half (1-1/2) mile extraterritorial planning jurisdiction (ETJ), provided for by Illinois state law. The unincorporated areas within the City's planning area are indicated on [Figure 1: Planning Area](#). It should be noted that the planning area is limited by a boundary agreement that the City has with the neighboring community of Tinley Park. For purposes of this Plan it is presumed that the City does not intend to annex any forest preserve land to the northwest, despite the lack of boundary agreements with Orland Park, Palos Heights, Midlothian or Crestwood.

Oak Forest has clearly stated its land use preferences for these adjacent unincorporated areas to help ensure that any future changes do not negatively affect the City and will be consistent with the goals, policies, and other recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. By stating land use preferences, the City has established a basis for comment during Cook County's evaluation of proposals for rezoning and subdivision requests within its ETJ. These land use preferences also provide the basis for determining appropriate zoning for properties that may be annexed into Oak Forest in the future.

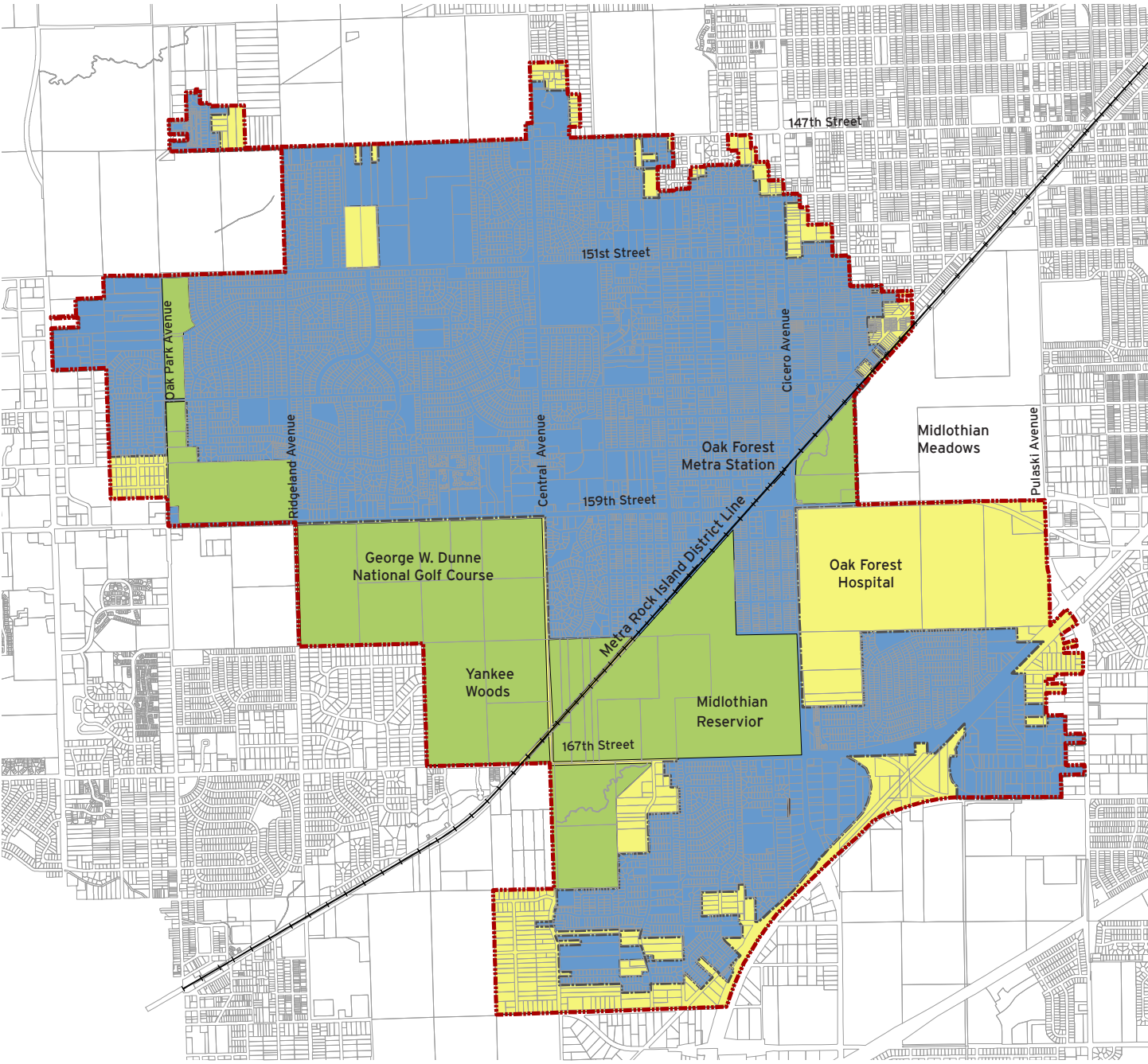
ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is organized in chapters that address the following topic areas:

- **Community Vision**, which summarizes the key issues and opportunities the Plan seeks to address.
- **Community Character**, which describes key existing community assets and resources, and outlines related Goals and Policies.
- **Land Use**, which describes the existing land use pattern in the City, sets forth a Future Land Use Framework, and outlines related Goals and Policies.



FIGURE 1
PLANNING AREA



- City Boundary (Includes Forest Preserve)
- Forest Preserve (Subject to Potential Annexation)
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)

NOT TO SCALE



I. INTRODUCTION

- **159th and Cicero Metra Station Sub-Area Plan**, which provides a more detailed redevelopment framework for the area immediately surrounding and influenced by the presence of the Oak Forest Metra Station, describes redevelopment concepts for both the station area and “typical” Cicero Avenue corridor sites, and outlines related Goals and Policies.
- **Housing**, which includes pertinent trends, needs and strategies identified in two recent reports prepared for the City with regard to housing, along with related Goals and Policies.
- **Community Facilities and Services**, which provides a future framework plan and related Goals and Policies.
- **Transportation**, which provides future framework plans for both vehicular and bicycle/pedestrian mobility, along with related Goals and Policies. Prototype design concepts and standards are also illustrated for an anticipated future off-street trail network.
- **Economic Development**, which describes existing initiatives and outlines related Goals and Policies.
- **Implementation**, which provides a “checklist” of key implementation actions, and discusses ongoing administration, review and updating of the Plan.

Within each chapter, pertinent information on existing conditions and/or initiatives is provided as appropriate. In most instances, additional reference information is also available in the *Background Report*, available under separate cover.

A Note on the Goals and Policies

It is worthwhile to note the intended purpose of the Goals and Policies that are included throughout the Comprehensive Plan. Goals and Policies help to provide focused guidance. These statements transform the collective values of the community into operational statements which can be used as a policy guide by City officials and staff when considering planning proposals or other initiatives.





I. INTRODUCTION

Goals and Policies each have a distinct meaning and purpose in the planning program:

- **Goals** articulate long-range aspirations of the community. They are stated in terms that can promote agreement on major issues or needs, and identify actions and strategies required to realize the community's aspirations. They represent an end to be sought, although some may never be fully realized.
- **Policies** identify the more specific initiatives or courses of action required to achieve the community's goals. Policies are intended to be finite, measurable actions which can be undertaken by various interests in the community. The key implementation actions described in the final chapter of the Plan build directly upon these Policies.

There is intended to be no ranking implied by the order of the Goals or Policies.

