

# RIVER FOREST

*Proud Heritage • Bright Future*

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | April, 2024



## Proposed Commercial Zoning Updates

On April 11, the Zoning Board of Appeals will continue discussion on a proposal to modernize and update the Village’s commercial district zoning regulations. The proposed updates reflect the Village’s history of development approvals over the past 30 years, including assets to our community such as The Sheridan and 435 William.

**So why the update?** The Village Board would like to align the commercial zoning codes with what has already been approved and developed in our commercial districts. Having a clear and concise zoning code will help to attract quality developers and business owners to consider opening or building in River Forest.

This effort supports the Village’s foundational goals to stabilize property taxes for our residents, while ensuring that any proposed development maintains

the character of the community. Appropriate and quality economic development will bring needed revenue to fund schools, the Park District, our Library, Township, public safety and ongoing infrastructure investment.

The proposed updates in our zoning code **DO NOT:**

- Allow for overnight street parking.
- Close off any streets.
- Enable the construction of skyscrapers.
- Diminish the Village Board’s authority to deny or restrict future development.
- Overcrowd our Schools, Parks, or Village infrastructure or services.

For more information, visit [this link](#). If you have any questions, please feel free to call Village Hall at 708-366-8500.

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# From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

The Village is aware that there are concerns from our community members as we consider modernizing and updating our commercial zoning codes. The Village Board is NOT rezoning our precious land. Residential will remain residential, Public Recreational and Institution areas will remain the same, and our commercial districts will remain the same. We are only looking at updating our commercial zoning codes that have not been updated for three decades; it is our obligation to ensure River Forest remains a vibrant community through codes that are consistent with current market standards, and that align with quality developments that have already been approved and built in our town.

This effort is in line with our ongoing goal to stabilize our property taxes and to maintain the quality of life we are all fortunate to enjoy here in River Forest. Our excellent schools (D90, D200), Park District, Library, Township and the Village all provide services and amenities made possible through property tax revenues generated from businesses and new quality developments.

Please review the article regarding proposed updates of our commercial zoning codes in this newsletter for more information. Be assured that the Village remains intent on maintaining and protecting the character of River Forest as it considers any future development proposals. The Zoning Board of Appeals Commissioners, the Economic Development Commissioners, and the Village Board are your neighbors - and we know why we love living here!

The **Fiscal Year 2025 Budget proposal** will be presented at the Village Board Meeting on April 8, with a public hearing to follow. I want to thank the Village's dedicated staff for their tireless efforts to put this together, and the Village Board for their invaluable guidance in accomplishing this important objective. More information on the Proposed Budget can be found in the newsletter cover story.

Congratulations to Mrs. Alexia Filice, a kindergarten teacher at St. Luke School, who has been named the WGN Teacher of the Month! She was featured in a special segment of the WGN News last week. The segment can be viewed on the [WGN website](#).

Lastly, the Passover holiday begins on Monday, April 22 and I'd like to wish our Jewish community members a joyous and kosher Passover!

Sincerely,

Cathy Adduci, Village President  
Village of River Forest

# Village Board Trustees



**Erika Bachner**



**Kathleen Brennan**



**Lisa Gillis**



**Ken Johnson**



**Robert O'Connell**



**Respicio F. Vazquez**

## Village Clerk



**Jonathan Keller**

To contact the Village Board to submit a comment or question, click the button below

[Contact the Village Board](#)

# News Around Town

## Parent University is Wednesday, April 10!

Parent University is an evening of informative presentations to help parents support their teens' and adolescents' positive mental health and will take place Wednesday, April 10, 6 – 8:30 pm at [Oak Park and River Forest High School \(OPRFHS\)](#). All middle and high school parents are invited to attend this free event!

Keynote speaker Dr. Devorah Heitner will present about social media, "Coming of Age in a Digital World". Additional presentations include "Communicating with Adolescents and Teens" and "Students and a Positive Mindset". Registration is requested and you can RSVP [here](#). This event is sponsored by the D200 Mental Wellness Collaborative, which includes River Forest Township, D90 schools, Oak Park River Forest High School, and others. For additional information, contact River Forest Township [Supervisor Carla Sloan](#).

**D200 MENTAL WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE**  
**Parent University Spring '24**  
**REGISTER TODAY**

**April 10th, 6PM-8:30PM**  
 Oak Park and River Forest High  
 201 N. Scoville Ave, Oak Park, IL

Scan for the full program and more info on the speakers

In today's fast-paced world, nurturing our students' mental health is more crucial than ever. Join us for an empowering evening of informative presentations designed specifically for parents seeking to support their teens' and adolescents' mental health.

NAMI Metro Suburban | D200 | Oak Park Elementary School District 90 | Oak Park and River Forest High School

## Reserve the Community Room

The [River Forest Public Library](#) just wrapped up the first phase of construction to add a second multipurpose room to their building. The new Community Room, just off the Children's Room, can hold 26 people and is perfect for meetings and small programs. The room can now be reserved for use by individuals and small groups. Visit the Library's [room reservation page](#) to view the full guidelines for use, as well as make a room reservation.



## 4th Annual River Forest Bike Exchange

District 90 Green4Good is hosting their annual bike exchange on Saturday, April 13 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the [Roosevelt Middle School](#) playground. You can bring bikes and bike accessories you have outgrown and look for ones that may suit your current needs. More information can be found [here](#).

— River Forest Community —  
**BIKE EXCHANGE**

## Pet Licenses

Pet licenses are now available at [Village Hall](#), and are valid from May 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025. Both dogs and cats are required to be registered with the Village. For more information and to download the pet license application - or to purchase your pet license online, please click [here](#).



# Village Department News

## Police Department

### Accessing Public Safety Information

Access to public safety data and information promotes accountability and trust between citizens and law enforcement agencies. By openly sharing information on crime statistics, incident reports, and safety measures, authorities demonstrate a commitment to transparency and collaboration, and foster a sense of partnership in addressing community safety concerns.

In an effort to make public information more easily accessible, the Fire Department has begun sharing their monthly reports on the Village's website. This report is a condensed account detailing important information related to fire incidents and emergency medical services, and is designed to play a vital role in documenting and analyzing information about fires, as well as contributing to fire prevention efforts, emergency response preparedness, and public safety awareness. To view this report, click [here](#).

The Police Department also offers online incident summaries, which are concise reports that provide brief details about incidents or events attend to by law enforcement. These summaries include actions taken by police officers, and the outcome or resolution of the incident. You can view the Police Department incident summaries [here](#).

### Frontline Keyholder Portal for Residents

In the event of an emergency, it may become necessary for the Police and/or Fire departments to reach out to a property owner. Please ensure the contact information on file with the Village is correct by completing an [online form](#). The more information you provide, the better the Village's first responders can serve you. By selecting the "residence has surveillance cameras" button, you are informing the Police Department you are willing to provide access to your camera footage. This can help assist in any investigation if you or one of your neighbors becomes the victim of a crime. The Village will not share any residents' personal information.

AS ALWAYS - FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR COMMUNITY  
IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, **SAFETY SOMETHING.**

## Fire Department

### Spring Fire Safety Reminders

Are you ready to face a potential disaster, such as a fire? The Fire Department wants all residents to take the time to assess risks in the home and identify potential hazards before they become the cause of the fire.

As temperatures fluctuate in early spring, many will use space heaters to help warm a room. The risk of fire from space heaters is much greater than from a central heating system. Space heaters need space, and should be kept at least three feet from anything combustible. Any time that someone leaves a room with a space heater in it, it should be turned off. Other safety tips include:

- Smoke alarms save lives. Follow simple guidelines to ensure your home is adequately protected by working, and properly-installed smoke alarms.
- All newly purchased and installed smoke alarms should have 10-year sealed batteries.
- Smoke alarms should be tested every month to ensure they are working properly.
- All family members should be at home when the smoke alarms are tested so they can hear what it sounds like.
- While the kitchen is often the heart of the home, it's also where two of every five reported home fires start. Keep your stove and

oven clean of any grease build-up and if you have small children, maintain a three foot circle around your stove as a "no-go" zone.

- While extension cords are a convenient way to supply power right where you need it; they can create hazards if not used safely. Do not use an extension cord that has frayed wires or is missing the grounding prong - which is a safety component of the cord. Avoid "hiding" a cord under a rug. Cords need to be in the open so they can dissipate any build up of heat and keep the cord cool. Extension cords should not ever be run through cabinets or walls.

For more safety information, call the Fire Prevention Bureau at **708-714-3562** or like/ follow them on their [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.



## Public Works

### Forestry and Trees

Since 1998, the Village has been named a Tree City USA in honor of the Village's commitment to effective urban forest management. The Village achieves this recognition, through work performed by Public Works, that meet the program's four requirements: having a tree board or department, a [tree care ordinance](#), an annual community forestry budget of at least \$2 per capita, and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation. The Village is also recognized as a [Level 1 Accredited Arboretum](#) by the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and the Morton Arboretum, for achieving particular standards of professional practices deemed important for arboreta and botanic gardens.

The Forestry Division of Public Works includes four certified arborists, and the Division maintains more than 8,000 trees from 90 species in the Village's parkway. The Division inspects, monitors, trims, removes, and plants trees throughout the Village year-round. They also monitor and, every other year, inoculate Ash parkway trees against [Emerald Ash Borer](#), an invasive beetle that feeds on the Ash species and destroys the trees' ability to transport water and nutrients.

Public Works crews proactively trim Village trees on a [four-year pruning cycle](#), which maintains the health of the trees, removes hazardous limbs, ensures fewer limbs fall during periods of high winds and improves traffic and pedestrian sightlines throughout Village streets. Residents can [submit a service request online](#) or call the Village to report work needed on parkway trees.

Each year in observance of Arbor Day, celebrated the last Friday in April, the Village plants a tree for a school or park in the community. In May of each year, the Division begins planting new trees to replace diseased or damaged trees that have been removed. Click [here](#) to see the Village's tree inventory map, which identifies the species of trees in the parkway throughout the Village.

Visit [ArborDay.org](#) to learn more about trees and the Arbor Day tradition to plant a tree.

# Eco-Extravaganza

Celebrate Earth Month at Oak Park’s Eco-Extravaganza from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 6 at the Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake St. Organized by the Library, Village and local non-profit One Earth Local, the all-ages event will feature a treasure hunt and information fair for community members interested in learning more about local sustainability efforts. More than a dozen organizations will be on hand to discuss everyday actions residents can take to help the environment, including the Oak Park Climate Action Network, which will be discussing its new [climate coaching initiative](#).

**OAK PARK**

# ECO-EXTRAVAGANZA

**APRIL 6, 10-NOON**  
**OAK PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**FREE SNACKS** | **TREASURE HUNT & PRIZES** | **FUN FOR ALL AGES: LITTLES, TEENS & ADULTS**

one earth LOCAL | CLIMATE READY COOP | OAK PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY | Oak Park

# Business Spotlight



**Blumen** is a local florist that not only offers custom floral designs, but also workshops and parties so residents can learn to create their own floral arrangements! Blumen’s workshops will return in June for those who would like to learn how to make floral arrangements for special events. Click [here](#) for more information.

Please support local businesses whenever possible! If you have a business located in River Forest with a valid business license, it can be featured in the Village’s business spotlight. If you’d like your business to be featured, please send us an [email](#). You can find a listing of River Forest businesses on the Village’s [Shop River Forest website](#).

# Sustainability



### Recycle More during Earth Month

April is Earth Month and a time to celebrate the planet and take action to protect it. Earth Month continues the awareness of Earth Day, which is celebrated by more than a billion people each year on April 22. By taking part in green activities, we can make our world a healthier place to live. Below are events throughout the month of April that can help reduce waste and protect the planet.

### 2nd Annual Forest Preserve Trash Bash on Saturday, April 6:

Make spring cleaning more sustainable with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County’s 2nd Annual Trash Bash from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at [Miller Meadow Forest Preserve](#). Event partners will be collecting electronics, prescription drugs, books, musical instruments, bicycles, clothing and more. The first 50 donors will receive a free “Don’t be Trashy” t-shirt. For more information, click [here](#).



### Styrofoam Recycling Event on Saturday, April 20:

Foam products with the #6 symbols are not accepted as part of the Village’s single stream recycling program with waste hauler, Lakeshore Recycling Systems. To help keep polystyrene (styrofoam) out of our landfills, District 90’s [Green4Good](#) team has partnered with the Village to host a foam collection event on Saturday, April 20 from 9 a.m. to noon in the West Thatcher Metra Commuter Lot.

### Car Seat Recycling:

In April, Target has an annual program where they take back car seats and work with their recycling partners to create pallets, plastic buckets and construction materials - such as steel beams and carpet padding. From Sunday, April 14 through Saturday, April 27, Target stores will be accepting old car seats. Participants who trade in their old car seats will receive a 20% off coupon toward a new car seat, car seat base, travel system, stroller, or select baby furniture. To learn more, click [here](#).

Please explore the River Forest Sustainability Commission’s [Guide to Sustainable Living](#) for other upcoming events and for further tips on how you can fit elements of sustainable living into your busy lives.

# Organizations Serving River Forest



## Township

To learn more about Township programs and services, [click here](#), visit the River Forest [Community Calendar](#), or email [Supervisor Carla Sloan](#).

### River Forest Township Seeks New Township Clerk

If you're interested in serving your community or looking for part-time work, River Forest Township is currently seeking candidates to fill their clerk position.

The new Township Clerk will be appointed May 21, 2024 and must be willing to run for the office of Township Clerk in the April 2025 election for a 4-year term. Candidates must be registered voters residing in River Forest for a minimum of one year.

Although the position is clerical in nature, the subject matter is interesting and multi-faceted. Township staff and officials are passionate about what they do to fund and deliver general assistance, mental health, senior services and youth & family services in the River Forest community. For more information about the Township and the Clerk position, [click here](#). The Clerk's salary is \$7,035 per year (no benefits), based on a 5-hour, (on average), work week, which consists of in-office work, meetings and community events.

For more information or to apply before the May 1 deadline, please send a cover letter explaining your interest in the position and qualifications, along with your resume [here](#).

[riverforesttownship.org](http://riverforesttownship.org) - 708-366-2029 x11



## River Forest Park District

### Park District

#### Des Plaines River Cleanup April 20

Make a difference this Earth Day by participating in the annual Des Plaines River Cleanup! Volunteer your time to clean up the Des Plaines Riverbank and Thatcher Woods. Clean up bags, disposable gloves, and first aid supplies will be available at both the River Forest Park District and the Trailside Museum of Natural History. Please indicate pick-up location when registering. **This event is rain or shine.**

Click [here](#) for all the event details & to register



[rfparks.com](http://rfparks.com) | 708-366-6660

## Library

Visit the [calendar](#) to see everything happening at the Library. There are events and activities for all ages. Below are some highlights:



**Sunday, 4/7, 2-3:30 p.m., Arabiq: An Introduction to Arab Music, Dance, and Culture, All ages** Celebrate Arab American Heritage Month with this special family-oriented presentation by Egyptian-American musician, teacher, and speaker Karim Nagi. Watch as Mr. Nagi performs on multiple traditional instruments and demonstrates different styles of folkloric dance from around the Arabic-speaking world. The performance also includes geography, language, and interactive enjoyment for adults and kids alike, and has performed in more than 500 schools and libraries around the U.S. over the past 22 years. He is also a [TEDx speaker](#), Kennedy Center TAP Teaching Artist, and parent.

#### Thursday, 4/11, 6-7:30 p.m., Family Trivia, Ages 10 and Up

Families are invited to test their knowledge at a fun evening of competitive trivia and pizza will also be served. **Registration is required**, and when you register, please indicate the number of people on your family's team. Make sure at least one team member has a smartphone to enter your answers and please note the new start time is 6 p.m. This event is for families only. If you are an adult who wants to play trivia with other adults, please register for our Adult Trivia Night on April 25!

**Saturday, 4/13, 2-3 p.m., All Levels Yoga, Adult** Rhonda Fentry of Rhonda's Rhythms returns to lead an All Levels Yoga class. Those who register must bring their own yoga mat. This event is brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township and **registration is required**.

**Sunday, 4/14, 2-3:30 p.m., Pastries & Poetry Around the World, Adult** Indulge in sweet treats and learn about different cultures through poetry! Librarian and poet Stavroula Harissis leads a program in which you can sample pastries from four different countries, read and discuss poems by international poets, and write a poem of your own. It's the tastiest way to celebrate National Poetry Month! This event is brought to you in partnership with River Forest Township. Click [here](#) for more information.

**Thursday, 4/18, 10-10:30 AM, Little Miss Ann, Ages 0-10 years** Join the library and make your Thursday extra fun by dancing and singing along with award winning Chicago kid's musician, Little Miss Ann! This awesome concert is great for families! **Registration required**.

[riverforestlibrary.org](http://riverforestlibrary.org) | 708-366-5205

# Organizations Serving River Forest



Oak Park and River Forest High School



Roosevelt Middle School



Willard Elementary School



Lincoln Elementary School

## District 90

### Kindergarten Registration is Open

River Forest families with a child starting Kindergarten in District 90 Schools in the fall of 2024 can start the registration process by filling out the [Intent to Register](#) form. Students whose registration is complete may participate in the Kindergarten Jumpstart event on Friday, April 26. Please check the [District 90 website](#) for information about residency requirements and registration forms.



### Enjoy an Evening of Live Music on Friday, April 19

Community members are invited to attend "A Little Night Music," at 6 p.m. on Friday, April 19 at **Roosevelt Middle School**. This will be an evening of live music performances by students, staff, and alumni, and will also offer desserts, raffles, and a silent auction supporting the District 90 school music program, organized by PIMA. You can purchase tickets [here](#).

### Senior Citizens invited to "Big Hearts, Little Hands" April 26

River Forest senior citizens are invited to participate in the 36th annual "Big Hearts, Little Hands" event on Friday, April 26 from 9 to 11 a.m. at **Willard Elementary School**. This event is organized by the Willard Parent-Teacher Organization, and all Willard students will participate in honoring seniors in the community through live music, art, tea, and more.

### Share a memory for the Roosevelt Centennial Celebration

The Roosevelt Middle School Centennial Celebration will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, May 19. The planning committee is currently looking for memories from alumni. Did you have a favorite class, teacher, or memorable field trip? What did you bring for lunch when you attended Roosevelt? If you are a Roosevelt alumnus, please respond to a short survey [here](#). Or, do you have another memory, photo or artifact in your attic you'd be willing to display at the event? Please contact [the planning committee!](#)

### Sign up to Run or Walk in the Willard PTO 5K

Community members are invited to run or walk in the Willard 5K on Sunday, May 19, starting at 8:30 am. Organized by the Willard Parent-Teacher Organization, the 5k follows a two-loop course starting at the corner of Greenfield Street and Franklin Avenue. Register by Tuesday, April 30 [here](#).

[district90.org](http://district90.org) | 708-771-8282

## District 200

**You're Invited!**  
Oak Park and River Forest High School  
**Community Block Party**  
**Sunday, May 19, 1-4 p.m.**  
201 N. Scoville Ave. on the OPRF Mall

**Featuring Legendary Alumni Band**  
**The Jade 50's!**  
Food Trucks  
Face Painting  
Bounce Houses  
Family Activities

**Try the New Track!**

Please note:  
Alcohol not permitted



Whatever the cause,  
scan the code and log  
your hours!  
[oprfs/OPRF150](#)

### JOIN THE Sesquicentennial Challenge

Help us log 150,000 hours of service  
by June 30, 2024

Calling all Huskie  
students, staff, alumni,  
retirees, parents &  
supporters around the  
world!

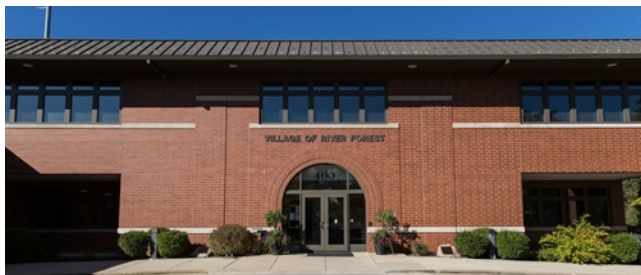


[oprfs.org](http://oprfs.org) | 708-383-0700

# Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Is Ready for Review!

The Village's proposed Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Annual Budget and Capital Improvement Program is now open for public review. The Proposed Budget has three primary objectives: safeguarding public safety, bolstering property values, and ensuring the stability of property taxes within the Village. It continues the Village's investment in critical infrastructure and its maintenance, including the water and sewer systems, sidewalks, and street repairs, as well as larger projects such as the lead service line replacement and officer-worn body cameras. To learn more about the goals within the Proposed Budget, please visit [pages 26 and 27](#).

This marks the 16th consecutive year that the Village has maintained a balanced budget, which is a testament to the commitment to excellence of Village staff, along with prudent financial management practices. The Village Board will initiate discussions on the Proposed Budget, followed by a public hearing on the budget at the [Monday, April 8, Village Board meeting](#).



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS



**Annual Budget  
Fiscal Year 2025**

400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois 60305  
[www.vrf.us](http://www.vrf.us)



Follow the Village on  
Social Media



Sign Up For Email and Alerts



**River Forest Events**



## Village Contact Information

Village Administration  
708-714-3563

Village Administrator  
Matt Walsh

Finance Department  
708-714-3524

Director Rosemary McAdams

Fire Department  
708-714-3560  
Chief Tom Gaertner

Public Works and  
Development Services  
708-714-3551

Police Department  
708-714-3540  
Chief James O'Shea

Emergency  
Services  
Dial 911

400 Park Avenue River Forest, IL 60305  
708-366-8500  
708-366-3702 (fax)  
Monday 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.  
Tuesday- Friday 8a.m. – 4:30 p.m.