

# RIVER FOREST

*Proud Heritage • Bright Future*

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | February, 2025



## Village Invests in Future

Last week, the Village Board reviewed the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), a document that details investment priorities, such as infrastructure upgrades, public safety equipment and facility enhancements. The CIP is meant to help guide investment decisions by the Village Board over the next five years, and some highlights include:

- ◆ Sidewalk Replacement - The Village is pursuing an eight-year program to upgrade sidewalks throughout River Forest to improve accessibility and walkability.
- ◆ Water Main Upgrades - By the end of this year, the Village will have completed all upgrades to the water supply system identified in a 2018 assessment. The focus will now turn toward replacing older, smaller water mains throughout the community to improve water pressure and reliability.
- ◆ Traffic and Safety Upgrades - Washington Boulevard, Thatcher Avenue and Lake Street upgrades are included.

- ◆ Public Works Upgrades - the Public Works garage is adding rooftop solar panels so it can be a “net zero energy” facility. Several Village vehicles will be replaced with EVs.
- ◆ Lead Service Program - The Village continues to fund the reimbursement program to remove lead service lines throughout River Forest. Residents can find the [program application](#) and a brief [Lead Water Service Survey](#) to determine if there is lead in your water service lines.
- ◆ Stormwater Planning – The plan includes funding for additional design of stormwater improvements, preparing the Village for future storms by alleviating flooding. The designs will allow the Village to seek out funding partners to make the large scale projects a reality.

The entire CIP plan can be viewed [here](#).

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# From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

I invite all community members to join me and our Village staff for the annual State of the Village Address, to be presented at the Village Board of Trustees meeting on Monday, February 24 at 7 p.m. This presentation will include a summary of the Village's accomplishments throughout 2024, as well as what is planned by the Village for 2025 to continue to invest in our community.



Last week, I was honored to participate on a panel of other elected officials, including our Village Clerk Jon Keller, at the Oak Park River Forest High School Civics Learning Fair. This annual event aims to help our young people learn more about civic engagement through local government. I enjoyed meeting with and talking to students about area nonprofits, community topics and issues, and sustainability, among others. Thank you to District 200 for inviting me to participate in this wonderful event!

And finally, congratulations to our Fire Department for being recognized with a life-saving training award at the International Meeting on Simulation in Healthcare's (IMSH) January Conference. The Department's recognition is due to a partnership with Concordia University that has included CPR certification training for nursing students, and a training lab that simulates real-life medical emergencies. Our Department is continually training to be ready at a moment's notice to serve our community in times of need, and I want to thank all of our team members for their dedication.

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](#)

# Front Desk FAQs

Answers to the most recent, frequently asked questions from community members.

**Question:** I purchased a new vehicle recently to replace another car. Can I transfer my vehicle sticker from the old vehicle to the new one?

**Answer:** Yes! For a \$2.00 transfer fee, the Village can update records for your vehicle and transfer the sticker to the new one. This can only be done in person at the front desk in Village Hall.

**Question:** How do I get a vehicle sticker for a newly purchased vehicle?

**Answer:** A half-price sticker that is valid through July 2025 can be purchased for \$22.50 in person at the front desk in Village Hall.

**Question:** Will my garbage be picked up on Monday, February 17, the Presidents Day holiday?

**Answer:** Yes! Regularly scheduled waste pick up will occur on Presidents Day.



## RF Team Member Spotlight – Police Chief Jim O’Shea

**What is your job title and what services do you provide for the Village?** It has been an honor to serve the community as a police officer for more than 30 years and for seven years as the Chief of Police. Prior positions have included: Deputy Chief of Police, Commander, Patrol Sergeant, Detective Sergeant, Detective, and Patrol Officer. In short, I work with an amazing team to provide community policing in the areas of traffic enforcement, crime prevention, community sensitive policing, community outreach, criminal investigations, and community caretaking. Working with my leadership team, we ensure training, staffing, fiduciary responsibilities, mission critical equipment, and citizen satisfaction needs are met. Officer health/wellness and resident safety are at the forefront of our mission.

### Chicago Cubs or Chicago White Sox and why?

I am a long time Chicago White Sox fan. I believe spending a lot of time with friends and family attending mostly White Sox games drew me into being a fan. The pinnacle of being a Sox fan for me was attending one of the World Series home games in 2005. I have also enjoyed many Cubs games over the years and still enjoy going to a daytime Cubs game with friends.

### What was your motivation to choose a law enforcement career?

My main influence to work in law enforcement was my father, who came from a military, law enforcement, and teaching background. To put something positive back into society, on behalf of others, is important to me. Serving, helping and protecting the public has always been of interest to me. Growing up surrounded by police officers, firefighters, educators, elected officials, and public service employees allowed me a unique inside perspective of public sector work.



## Village Departments in Action

So much goes on behind the scenes as Village employees deliver services to the community.

### Community Service Officer

Sean Bus, the Police Community Service Officer, has served the Department for three years, working within the Administrative Services Division. His responsibilities include traffic control, animal control, parking enforcement, and various administrative tasks.

Sean assists both the Police and Fire departments by responding to emergency and non-emergency calls. This includes managing accident scenes, ensuring safety with cones and flares on our roadways, and graffiti removal. He also assists in child safety seat inspections and safety measures for school crossings.

When not responding to calls, Sean has a wide variety of other duties, including using the Automated License Plate Reader system to enforce parking rules and to monitor vehicles of concern in high traffic areas and locations where residents have raised concerns. He also serves as a court officer for misdemeanor and traffic cases and attends hearings for disputed parking tickets and local violations. Finally, Sean responds to calls about stray or injured animals, and thanks to a donated microchip scanner, has reunited many lost pets with their owners. If no owner is found, animals are taken to the Animal Care League for care.

Please call 708-366-7125 to contact Sean for help!



## Grants in Review

The Village focuses on stabilizing property taxes by actively pursuing other forms of funding for local improvements and operating costs. In 2024, the Village received grants from state, county, and private foundation funds for a number of projects. Please see the list of this funding provided to the Village below:

- ◆ \$7,650 from the Morton Arboretum for Emerald Ash Borer treatment, to protect the Village’s tree canopy
- ◆ \$13,500 from Canadian National Railroad for parkway tree planting
- ◆ \$370,000 for Electric Vehicle Charging stations from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- ◆ \$60,000 from the Department of Justice for body worn cameras for the Police Department
- ◆ \$8,500 from the Department of Justice for bullet proof vests for the Police Department
- ◆ \$29,000 from IDOT for traffic enforcement campaigns
- ◆ More than \$7,000 in workplace safety equipment for Public Works and Fire Department personnel from the Village’s insurance agency
- ◆ \$100,000 from Cook County to construct accessible crosswalk intersections
- ◆ \$500,00 for C4/Seven Generations Ahead for youth programs driving sustainability change and climate and equity leadership

## 50/50 Lead Program Assistance

The Public Works Department recently notified more than 600 Village residences with lead water supply pipes about the **Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) Subsidy Program**. This program helps with the costs to replace lead pipes by providing reimbursement for the lowest of three required estimates - regardless of the contractor chosen by the property owner. For the Village’s portion of the water service - from the water main to the “buffalo box” (a valve box that allows the water supply to a home to be shut off) - reimbursement is available for the full replacement cost, up to \$5,000, depending on site conditions. Residents can find the [program application](#) and a brief [Lead Water Service Survey online](#).

## The More You Know – River Forest Public Library

The River Forest Public Library operates as an independent entity with its own elected Board of Trustees, which is separate from the Village. The Library Board is responsible for governance and policy decisions, ensuring the Library meets the needs of the community. Board meetings are typically held on the third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m., and the public is welcome to attend. The Library Director oversees the Library’s daily operations, staff, and programs, ensuring a welcoming and resourceful environment for visitors. The Library offers:

- ★ A diverse collection of nearly 50,000 physical materials, including books, magazines, DVDs, board games, and technology such as Wi-Fi hotspots.
- ★ Access to more than 1 million additional items through the SWAN Library Consortium, connecting patrons to a vast network of resources.
- ★ Community services, such as study room reservations, cozy fireplace seating, public computers, printers, a fax machine, and free Wi-Fi throughout the building and garden.
- ★ A variety of programs for all ages, including seasonal reading challenges, story times, craft workshops, gaming events, and movie screenings.

For more details on available services, programs, and resources, visit the [River Forest Public Library website](#).



# Board, Commissions & Committees Updates

## Traffic and Safety Commission

The Traffic and Safety Commission is appointed to review transit, parking, and potentially hazardous traffic matters of the Village that have been referred to them. The Commission meets on the third Wednesday of alternate months at 7 p.m. in the **Community Room of Village Hall**. If there are no agenda items to discuss, the meeting is cancelled. In 2023, the Village Board commissioned a Village Wide Traffic Study, and the Commission reviewed traffic conditions to provide guidelines for reviewing requested traffic changes. Using accepted industry and regulatory standards, the Traffic and Safety Commission uses a Traffic Calming Toolbox to inform and guide the decision making process. The Commission uses these guidelines when determining whether to implement new traffic control measures. Requests will be reviewed by Village staff, and traffic data will be collected to complete a scoring matrix. Staff will then review the traffic data and, if necessary, forward to the Commission for discussion and action. Recommendations by the Commission are forwarded to the Village Board for final approval. Requests must be submitted in writing (email is acceptable) to **Jack Bielak, Director of Public Works & Engineering**.

Want to Get Involved?

Volunteer to Serve  
on a Village Committee



Scan the QR Code to Learn More

# Sustainability

## Sustainability Commission LRS Facility Visit

Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS), the Village's waste removal provider, manages waste and recycling services for single-family homes. Last fall, the Village's Sustainability Commission took a tour of LRS's recycling facility to learn more about the intricacies of waste management services. LRS provided an in-depth look at their state-of-the-art operations, showcasing how recyclable materials are collected, sorted, and processed for reuse.

The facility's intake process starts by separating items to be recycled into categories, such as plastics, metals, glass, and paper. High-tech machinery, including optical sorters and conveyor systems, streamline operations and maximize material recovery. This part of the process highlighted how technology plays a critical role in reducing landfill waste and conserving natural resources.



A major theme of the visit was contamination, which is caused by materials that cannot be recycled, such as food-soiled containers, plastic bags, and non-recyclable plastics - all of which can disrupt the recycling process. These materials entering the process can affect efficiency and cost, and highlight the importance of education about proper recycling habits within the community.

Community members interested in learning more about items that are appropriate (and not appropriate) for recycling can visit **Recycling 101** for educational materials, recycling tips, and a virtual tour of the LRS facility.

# Seniors Corner

## Celebrating Seniors Coalition Lifetime Achievement Award

The Celebrating Seniors Coalition Lifetime Achievement Award honors older adults who have made a lasting impact on their communities. The Coalition is currently seeking nominations for individuals aged 60 and older from Forest Park, Oak Park, and River Forest who have significantly contributed to community life. Nominations are due by Saturday, March 1. The nomination form can be found [here](#). You can join the Coalition in shaping upcoming initiatives by attending a committee meeting at the **Oak Park Township Senior Services Building**. Meetings are scheduled for:

- ★ Wednesday, January 29 at 3 p.m.
- ★ Wednesday, February 12 at 3 p.m.
- ★ Wednesday, February 26 at 3 p.m.

All are welcome to participate! Learn more [here](#).



## Tax Deferral Program for Seniors

Senior homeowners struggling with rising property taxes can benefit from the Senior Citizens Property Tax Deferral Program. The program allows eligible homeowners age 65+ with annual incomes of \$65,000 or less to defer up to \$7,500 in property taxes annually through a low-interest loan. Deferred taxes are repaid upon property sale, transfer, or within a year of the owner's passing. Applications for fiscal year 2024 must be submitted by March 1. Click [here](#) for details and to apply.

# Organizations Serving River Forest

## Township

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



### Winterization for Seniors

River Forest residents 60 years of age and older can participate in the North West Housing Partnership (NWHF) Oak Park River Forest Senior Home Repair Program. This program provides a skilled handyman to assist with minor home repairs, making it easier and safer for seniors to age in place. While not intended for emergency or very large repairs, it's a great way to tackle those small home improvements, and to winterize your home. To learn more about eligibility or to schedule a service, call NWHF at 847-969-0561. Learn more [here](#).

## Township Assessor

### First Installment Tax Bills Due March 4

The 2024 Tax Year first installment tax bills will be due on Tuesday, March 4. You can view your [first installment tax bill online](#). The first installment bill is an estimate that amounts to 55% of the previous year's total tax. Exemptions are only listed on the second installment tax bill.

View and pay your first installment bill online through the [Cook County Treasurer's website](#), or download a PDF of your bill, then take it to any Chase Bank location if you would like to pay in person.

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

## Library



**Calling Local Artists!** The Library is hosting a Local Artisan Fair on April 5 and is currently accepting applications from participants. Read all about the event and submit your application.

**Visit the River Forest Public Library [Calendar](#) to see whats happening at your Library.** They offer events and activities for all ages. Below is a highlight:

### Sunday, 2/16, 1:30-2:30 p.m.: 1619: The Journey of a People, Adult:

**Celebrate Black History Month** with Ted Williams III, a renowned playwright, professor, and performer, in a powerful, one-man show that traces 400 years of history, from the arrival of enslaved Africans in Jamestown in 1619, to modern movements for justice. A passionate advocate for the arts and history, Williams blends his expertise in theater and education to create an unforgettable experience. This program is made possible by Illinois Humanities with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



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

## Park District



Subscribe to the Park Bench E-newsletter to stay up-to-date on program and event details, program registration reminders, and more from the River Forest Park District! Subscribe [here](#).

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

## District 90



### D90 is Award Winning!

All three District 90 Schools, Lincoln Elementary School, Willard Elementary School, and Roosevelt Middle School, were awarded Exemplary Designations by the Illinois State Board of Education. District 90 was one of only two districts in Illinois with three or more schools in which all schools were awarded Exemplary Designations. Review the Illinois School Report Cards [here](#).



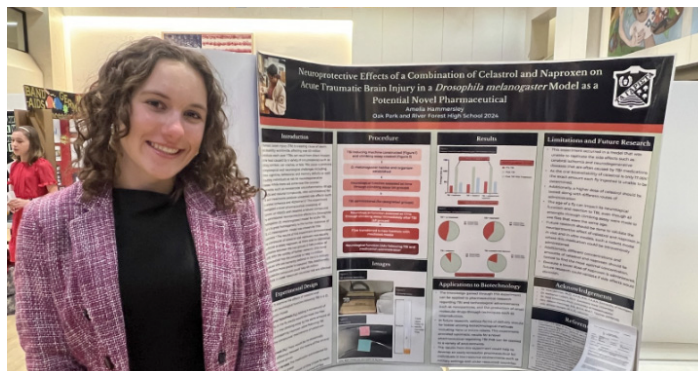
[district90.org](http://district90.org) | 708-771-8282

## District 200



### OPRF Senior Receives Elite Honor

Oak Park and River Forest High School (OPRFHS) senior **Amelia Hammersley** has been selected as a Regeneration Science Talent Search 2025 Scholar in the nation's oldest, most prestigious science and math competition. Amelia is only the second student in OPRFHS history to receive this honor, and one of just 300 scholars selected from a record-breaking 2,500 entrants from 795 high schools around the world.



**Pictured Above: Amelia Hammersley a District 200 student**

Amelia was chosen based on her research using fruit flies to explore how natural compounds can protect the brain after a traumatic brain injury. She developed her project in the OPRFHS Investigational Research, Design, and Innovation class, inspired by the concussion her younger sister experienced when Amelia was in sixth grade. To read more about Amelia's project, click [here](#).

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

# Casual Conversation

**S**ave the Date! Village President Cathy Adduci warmly invites you to the next **"Casual Conversation with the Village President"** on Saturday, February 22 from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at **Willard Elementary School**. This relaxed gathering is the perfect chance to ask questions and share feedback regarding Village operations and initiatives. This is part of the Village's ongoing effort to host a variety of different community engagement opportunities and listen to resident input. Everyone is welcome to join the conversation, with topics ranging from traffic and public safety, to senior services, composting and more!



JOIN US FOR A

## CASUAL CONVERSATION

WITH CATHY ADDUCI

*This informal meet-up is a great opportunity to ask questions, share your thoughts, and get updates on Village initiatives. Everyone is welcome!*

**CATHY ADDUCI**

River Forest Village President

**SATURDAY**

February 22, 2025



**FROM**

9:00AM - 10:30AM



**LOCATION**

1250 ASHLAND AVENUE  
Willard Elementary School



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  
708-714-3551

Director Jack Bielak

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.