

## Senior Services Features of the New Location

### Summary: Greater convenience and improved services for seniors

For more than 10 years, Township officials, at the urging of its staff and many users of Senior Services, have looked for facilities more appropriate for serving Oak Park's growing population of active seniors – many life-long taxpayers – who choose to live independently in their homes and apartments. The new location will provide a large 1<sup>st</sup> floor meeting and activity space for educational, recreational and wellness activities and time to socialize over an optional lunch, 11:30-12:30 each weekday. The second floor will house case manager and service-provider offices and meeting space. The building's street level access, new ADA-accessible elevator and central location near public transportation, will provide a convenience not possible in the current facilities on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Oak Park Arms.

### Background

Township Senior Services moved into its current Oak Park Arms 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floor space in 1994. The relationship with the Arms has been positive and the actual space functioned well. The concern of staff and clients from earliest days of occupancy has been access, which is not remediable within the confines of the current building. The inadequacies were documented in a 2003 professional space study, which concluded: "Meeting current and future space needs is not feasible in the current building, especially given the expense of remodeling a building owned by others (1)."

The major shortcoming is a non-improvable, non-ADA, slow, often unreliable elevator as the primary transportation to fifth and sixth floor service areas. Weekday traffic includes 50-60 seniors\* coming between 9 and 3PM for services, activities, socializing, wellness and recreation. A lunch is available 11:30-12:30. Various delivery persons with food and supplies must access the space along with 20-25 staff, many needing to leave and return to serve homebound seniors. Staff and clients together average 133 round trips per day from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.\*\* The new location will address the access need and allow other program improvements.



**Accessibility.** The 1<sup>st</sup> floor is grade-level, ADA accessible; and a new elevator will give ADA access to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The Township main offices are easily accessible across the street with services including: assessor, voter and financial assistance, pass and coupon sales for transit and cab, and information and referral to other services. The location is within two blocks of Scoville Park and the Oak Park Public Library, important learning and recreational resources for seniors.

**Transportation and parking:** Client parking will be mainly in the 18 on-site spaces and the more than 60 2-hour spaces a 1-3 minute walk from nearby Euclid Avenue and South Boulevards. The Township bus pick-up and drop-off points will be the nearby Pace stop



and the building handicap-drop-off back entrance off the east-west alley. Pace bus and CTA Elevated transportation is conveniently nearby. River Forest seniors, served by an intergovernmental agreement with River Forest Township, will also enjoy the easier access of this new central location.

**Size:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor offices, as currently configured, fit well the current and projected needs of the senior programs and services. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor is larger than the current Oak Park Arms dining and activity space, allowing for more storage and a transportation dispatcher office and driver meeting space.

**Control:** Owning the building will allow modification for the best delivery of services without the uncertainty of lease limitations and owner responsiveness. Service managers will have more flexibility to meet changing needs.

**More senior apartments:** Vacating the Oak Park Arms will allow the owners to use the space in new ways already in the planning stage, such as installing more market rate apartments in what is Oak Park’s largest, most affordable, unsubsidized senior building. A recently completed Township study (2) of affordable housing for moderate-income seniors points to the need for more of this level apartment. It is a good time to move out.

- (1) *Oak Park Township Space Needs Analysis*, Wight and Company, February 2003
- (2) *Oak Park Senior Housing Preliminary Market Review*, Valerie S. Kretchmer Asso., Inc, December 2009.

**\*Senior Services Unduplicated Annual Client Counts and Characteristics – about 50-60 per day visit the site**

(Numbers approximate to the nearest 50)

All programs	2550/ year with 1000 living alone
Social Need	2100 (Need greater socialization)
Economic Need	400 (15% below \$850 mthly inc.)
Case Management	1100 served by 7+ Case Managers.
Home Delivered Meals	250 (Ave: 160/day, 5 days per week); Dine Out serves 300 more.
Senior Lunch on site	450 (Ave: 50/wkday); 65% OP/RF residents; 50% arrive by car, often a passenger; 20% by bus or El; 15% walk, and 15% live in Arms.



**\*\*Round Trips to Senior Services Facilities**

**Oak Park Arms 5th and 6th floors, Monday-Friday, 9AM-5PM**

**Annual RT**

**Routine daily (Monday-Friday) Round Trips (250 days per work year)**

**5<sup>th</sup> floor by staff and clients** in dining and activity program: **17,000**

68 RTs by 8 staff, 3 volunteers, 2 food delivery persons and 51 clients

**6<sup>th</sup> floor by staff, clients and volunteers** to offices, meeting room and home visits:

42 RTs by 17 staff and interns (including home visits) and clients for benefits counseling **15,000**

**Periodic Round Trips to 6th floor for special programs:** Tax Aide and Energy Asst **940**

**Monthly and quarterly Round Trip visits:** Caregiver Support and Money Management **260**

**Total annual Round Trips to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors** **33,200**

**Average RT per day** **133**

**Refusal to deliver to 6th floor:** U.S. Postal Service and UPS driver (leave mail/packages on 1<sup>st</sup> floor)