



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

May 2020

My annual letter to you is usually a celebration of our successes with an optimistic look forward at what the next season will bring. But it seems we are all feeling a different sentiment right now.

At this time last year the Better Lake Street project was our biggest concern for the health of businesses in our district. How quickly things have turned into the unimaginable. But we will get through it. It won't be easy. But we are strong.

We are strong because we are organized and have a staff that is completely focused on finding creative ways to navigate our current challenges.

We are strong because of the tight network and teamwork mentality of our business owners and property owners.

We are strong because our streets are built to accommodate the outdoor experiences that are essential for reopening.

We are strong because our Village board, staff, partner agencies and residents want nothing more than to see our businesses persevere.

And we will persevere. I look forward to writing this letter next year to celebrate our success.

Cindy Summers
President, Downtown Oak Park
Owner, Sugar Fixé Patisserie

2019 SIGNATURE EVENTS



March 2

Jazz Thaw continued to grow in popularity for its fifth year. Presented by Downtown Oak

Park in partnership with 90.9 WDCB "Chicago's Home for Jazz!", participants enjoyed free live music performances inside 11 local restaurants. The Facebook event had a 24K reach.



May 30–August 29

Thursday Night Out 2019 featured cultural music performances and a wine & beer tent.

TNO's signature dine-around program offered menu items from 20+ Downtown Oak Park restaurants. We had a Green Sponsor that provided the opportunity to have staff oversee recycle & compost stations at the event.



June 15

Marion Street was a sea of umbrellas at Uncork Illinois 2019! 13 Illinois wineries provided

participants a variety of wines despite the rain. Animal Care League was the non-profit beneficiary.



August 6

This event offered a variety of French-inspired fun for all. Art vendors, French circus

performers, poodle parades, French wine, crepes, cabaret, cheese, fresh flowers & more! Art dans la Rue continues to grow year to year.



September 20 & 21

Festive fall foods, wine & beer, live music and the Kids' Root Beer Garden all added to the

success of this event. Wine & beer tent volunteers from Oak Park Education Foundation & Beyond Hunger collected tip donations.

The 2019 Kids' Root Beer Garden featured some new activities, as well as old favorites. We also introduced new marketing strategies, launched the new oaktoberfest.net website and had a 60K+ reach on the Facebook event.



December 7

Winterfest returned! The event featured local choirs, carolers, Saint Nicholas, Dickensian Duo, hot cocoa and coffee, cookie walk and more. Advance online purchasing for cookie tins was offered this year. The event was held at a new time from 3-6pm. The Facebook event had a 32K reach.



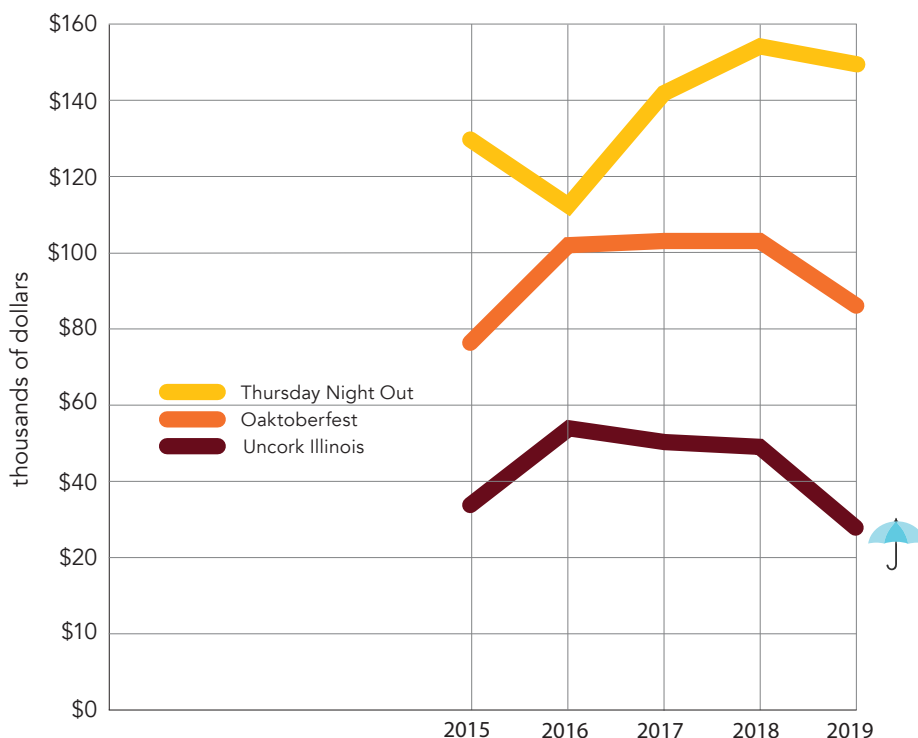
December 21

Home for the Holidays offered cookies & cocoa, as well as horse-drawn sleigh rides. Families

enjoyed seasonal entertainment and last minute shopping at this festive event. Carolers and a visit from Santa also added to the holiday spirit. Housing Forward was the non-profit beneficiary with volunteers overseeing the hot cocoa table.

The holiday season in Downtown Oak Park also brought a free holiday movie at Lake Theatre (Dec. 14), free holiday gift wrapping by local girl scouts at Albion (Dec. 14 & 21) and free holiday parking provided by the Village of Oak Park the Friday after Thanksgiving and every Saturday from Nov. 30 to Dec. 21.

EVENT SALES



**SHOPPER'S
REWARD
PROGRAM**

\$50 REBATE

\$67,030

Shopper's Reward Certificates
Redeemed in 2019

\$27,570

Gift Certificate Sales 2019

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA



- Downtown Oak Park continued to use digital channels to market and promote local businesses and events.
- Social media advertising continued to be a successful tool to promote events.
- Downtown Oak Park utilized Instagram Stories for the first year to promote local businesses and events.
- Professional photos were taken at Uncork Illinois, Thursday Night Out, Oaktoberfest and Winterfest to use for marketing future events.
- New Wordpress event websites developed for Oaktoberfest & Thursday Night Out.

FACEBOOK STATISTICS

Average Post reach: 1,175

People reached for 2019 events: 235.6K

WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

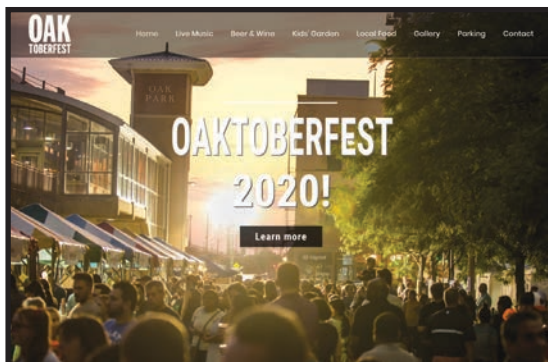
102,692 page views downtownoakpark.net



40,574 page views thursdaynightout.com



38,497 page views oaktobefest.net



2019 NEW BUSINESSES

Currito

Flourish Lounge

Kalamata Kitchen

Personalization House

Tre Sorelle

MERCHANT MINGLE EVENTS



Downtown Oak Park continued our Merchant Mingle series offering members the opportunity to connect with their neighboring merchants. This year we held Merchant Mingle events at Lake Street Kitchen + Bar, Albion Oak Park & Beer Shop with food from Jerusalem Cafe & Nando's Peri Peri.

SPONSOR & NON-PROFIT PARTICIPATION AT EVENTS DOWNTOWN

Oak Park introduced a sponsorship & non-profit organization participation program in 2019 offering opportunities to be involved at our events.

EVENT SPONSOR(S)

BENEFITING THESE NON-PROFIT(S)



Albion Oak Park
Byline Bank

2-3 Local NPOs offered family-friendly activities each week



Cooper's Hawk
Winery
Vantage Oak Park

Animal Care League



Oak Park Place
Apartments

Oak Park Education
Foundation and
Beyond Hunger



Housing Forward received suggested donations at cookie and hot cocoa table in warming tent.

COMMUNITY PERKS PROGRAM

The Community Perks Program was created in May 2019 and will run through December 31, 2020.

- Created to incentivize development residents to shop local before and during construction
- 20 businesses offering "perks"
- 403 Community Perks webpage views

How it works:

1. Residents of Oak Park Place, The Emerson, Vantage Oak Park or Albion Oak Park request a **Community Perks Keycard** from development concierge.
2. Exclusive deals from local businesses are listed on downtownoakpark.net/communityperks
3. Residents visit any of the local businesses listed.
4. Residents show keycard to cashier.
5. Redeem exclusive perks!



THE COMMUNITY PERKS PROGRAM WAS PROMOTED AT THESE EVENTS

Taste of DTOP Parties at Emerson, OP Place & Vantage

Introduced residents to restaurants/merchants and announced Community Perks program.

- Approximately 105 residents attended

Coco and Coffee parties at Emerson, OP Place & Vantage

Introduced Winter events & programs / reminded residents of the Community Perks program.

- Approximately 100 residents attended

TheBulletin Lobby TV Screens

- Feature monthly Merchant Highlights

Oaktoberfest

Offered residents \$5 off their Friday Beer Mug purchase if they showed their keycard

- Approximately 20 residents redeemed

Cookie Walk

Offered downtown development residents \$5 off their cookie tin purchase if they purchased through the CP webpage.



▲ TheBulletin Lobby TV Screens feature monthly Merchant Highlights

▼ Taste of DTOP Parties at Emerson, OP Place, and Vantage



GROUPS AND MAINTENANCE

BANNER PROGRAM

DTOP used artwork created by a5 from our general messaging campaign for the banner program. Each piece was created by head designer Fletch Martin and reflected different vignettes of the district and captured the overall spirit of DTOP. 38 street pole banners were sponsored this year.

AWNING & SIGNAGE GRANT

DTOP continued to administer its successful Awning & Signage grant program throughout 2019. Three businesses applied for the grant. This is a long-standing program, administered and funded exclusively by DTOP and strives to promote attractive and welcoming storefronts throughout the business district.

LANDSCAPING

DTOP for the second year contracted with Woodlawns Landscape Company to install eye-catching planter boxes and planters for spring and summer. Spring showcased Lemon Cypress and Ferns with a combination of annuals. Hydrangeas were also installed in beds as a permanent variety. Summer plantings were filled in with Acorus and Alocasia to showcase an attractive and innovative mix of seasonal annuals and perennials.

Significant improvements were made to several areas in our district. Holley Court Garage, Lot #10 and North Blvd all had improvements made in an effort to further enhance the green areas nearest parking pay terminals and entry and exit points with high visibility.

SUSTAINABILITY

In 2019 we partnered again with Wheel and Sprocket to promote biking by offering free bike valet at our signature events. We continued to manage waste stations at TNO, Art Dans la Rue, Uncork and Oaktoberfest to help divert landfill into recycling and compost.

SNOW REMOVAL

While we were fortunate enough to have had a light snowfall last season, every effort was still made by DTOP and its grounds and maintenance contractor to ensure that primary thoroughfares remained clear of snow and debris.

HOLIDAY LANDSCAPING AND DÉCOR

2019 was the second year we adorned our trees with beautiful soft white LED lights. The trees were strategically chosen throughout the district. The archway on Marion as well as all the lamp posts were decorated with red LED lights and matching ribbon. Nestled amongst the lights all the pots were filled with greenery, white birch poles and red twig Dogwood Branches. individual storefronts as a means of further establishing a more cohesive and welcoming look and feel for the district.

LAKE STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

In 2019, we worked with the Village of Oak Park to coordinate the Better Lake Street Rewards Program. We also worked closely with the Better Lake Street team and Village staff to combine efforts to move marketing initiatives forward for the pending 2020 Lake Street Improvement Project.

Downtown Oak Park also focused on promoting abundant garage parking in 2019. This helped transition customer parking habits and prepare them for 2020 streetscape. We promoted this message on the save the date card inserted in the Wednesday Journal, Forest Park Review and Riverside Landmark, as well as included in event marketing promotions.

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

In 2019, the Downtown Oak Park board of directors commenced a visioning process to reenergize board, staff, and membership around a compelling vision for Downtown Oak Park's work and provide the strategic direction for the next 3–5 years. DTOP also engaged in examination of its governance, seeking to refine board governance policies, procedures, and commitments in order to support the board in meeting its goals and allow the board to better communicate its purpose to potential new board members and its constituents.

Key Findings: The customer and business surveys and the retreat discussion revealed these strategic priority areas for DTOP in the next three years:

1. Marketing and events
2. Business support & training
3. Business attraction/fill vacancies/business mix
4. Parking improvements
5. 2020 construction remediation
6. Governance: board and organizational purpose/structure
7. Panhandling/homelessness

These findings were given year 1, 2, or 3-year priorities.

Year 1 Priorities:

MARKETING

Key priorities identified in Marketing Task Force Meeting

- Develop marketing campaign around construction
- Positive message for downtown parking options
- Draw people downtown "Support Local"

EVENTS

Key priorities identified in Event Task Force Meeting

- Continue event & promotion strategies in 2020 to draw people downtown

BOARD GOVERNANCE

Key priorities identified

- Ensure that the board understands and is in agreement about the roles and responsibilities of board members and officers.
- Plan for board and officer recruitment, including the governance committee's role in nominations.
- Begin the process of developing board orientation materials and a governance policy document.

2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cindy Summers, President / Merchant Director
Judith Lalor, Vice President / Merchant Director
Mike Fox, Treasurer / Owner Director
Jeff Long, Merchant Director
Robbin O'Harrow, Merchant Director
John Linton, Owner/Merchant Director
Nina McCaffrey, Merchant Director
Mary Ludgin, Owner Director
Eric Wagner, Merchant Director
David Schrodtt, Counsel
John Lynch, OPEDC Designee
Tammie Grossman, VOP Representative

DTOP STAFF

Shanon Williams, Executive Director
Anna Kosowski, Marketing Director
Naomi Soto, Marketing & Communications Manager
Jeff Eng, Finance Manager

COMMITTEES

MERCHANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The MAC is comprised of Merchant Members and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors in general regarding promotional activities and grounds maintenance in SSA #1.

Llyn Longwell, Chair, The Jewelry Studio
Willis Johnson, Lake Theatre
Jonathan Kaufman, Wells Street Popcorn
Eric Krzystofiak, Wheel & Sprocket
Karen Morava, Careful Peach Boutique
Karen Pauwels, Sugar Fixe Patisserie
Shivangi Sandal, Wise Cup
Erin Van Buskirk, JAYNE Boutique
Michelle Vanderlaan, Sugarcup Trading & 16 Suitcases

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee started meeting every month in 2019. This group oversees and manages the finances for the organization as well as the annual audit. They meet annually with the Village Manager to present the budget for approval.

Jeff Eng, Finance Manager
Mike Fox, R.P. Fox & Associates
Judith Lalor, The Little Gem Restaurant
Llyn Longwell, The Jewelry Studio
Mary Ludgin, Shops of Downtown Oak Park/Heitman
Cindy Summers, Sugar Fixe Patisserie

2019 FINANCIALS

Income	Jan-Dec 2019
Special Service Area Funds	\$725,000
Program Income (Events)	\$157,931
VOP Plant Agreement	\$25,000
Holiday Décor	\$5,000
Member Dues	\$3,900
Street Pole Banners	\$3,625
Interest	\$82
Miscellaneous	\$1,500
Total Income	\$922,037
Expenses	
Marketing	\$335,405
Operating & Administration	\$317,444
Grounds	\$206,293
Member Services and Programs	\$13,568
Total Expenses	\$872,710
Net Revenue	\$49,328
*On an Accrual Basis as of 5/21/20	
Byline Bank Balances as of 12/31/19	
Operating Accounts	\$24,446
Reserve Account	\$101,063
Snow Reserve Account	30,010
Total Cash	\$155,519

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to promote business development and expansion of Oak Park's central business district. To achieve those goals, Downtown Oak Park undertakes the following efforts:

- Promotional and advertising campaigns
- Cultural events
- Establishment of uniform business standards and property maintenance standards
- Enhancement and maintenance of the public areas
- Support our district's aesthetic environment, working to continually improve our tenant mix

SHOP. DINE. WORK. PLAY. LIVE.



DTOP BY THE NUMBERS



Street Pole Banners
Sponsored



Holiday Trees
with Lights



Planters & Beds
Maintained



Signature
Events



People attended
DTOP Events



Social
Followers

