The Planning Context

The Pull of Convenience, Diversity and Amenity
In the last decade or so, demand for walkable, mixed-use urban-type development near rail transit stops has increased, especially in suburban areas across the entire United States. More single person, empty nester and young couple households want access to smaller dwellings requiring less upkeep and diverse amenities a short walk away from public transit.

The Push of Traffic and Build Out
Bedroom suburbs, once resistant to all things urban, now embrace plans for new rail lines and stations. These built out communities face increasing traffic congestion and few prospects for new peripheral development. Future development must go up and not out. More travel by train and bus must replace auto trips to alleviate impending grid lock.

Path and Pull in Oak Park
Oak Park already enjoys excellent fixed rail and bus transit access. But this excellent capacity remains woefully underutilized. Recent project proposals brought before Village officials by developers provide evidence of demand for urban style mixed use residential living. The commercial aspects of such development remain relatively unplanned, especially for the two districts bordering the Ike. How can the Village best shape the market forces pulling the physical re-development of these two commercial areas toward an uncertain future? How can Oak Park balance the desire for a sustainable residential community with the increasing demand for diversified commercial and residential services?