

# Quick Takes

August 2008 • Volume 10, Issue 3

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## *A Message from Village Manager Al Rigoni*

The Village is offering special business retention and attraction incentives to increase commercial activity in Downtown Skokie that can reach \$100,000 or more per business for renovation and re-use of a Downtown Skokie building. The incentive program is designed to attract and retain high-quality retail, restaurant and entertainment uses to complement the growing employment base at the Illinois Science + Technology Park, the nearby Oakton Community College Skokie campus and the new Skokie Swift Yellow Line station slated for construction just north of Oakton Street and west of Skokie Boulevard. Following is a brief summary of the incentives; for complete details visit [www.skokie.org](http://www.skokie.org). The incentives are available through 2011 and are subject to available funding.

- **Façade Assistance Program** – Assistance is available to owners of existing properties (or tenants with owner's approval) for rehabilitation or replacement of building façades. The property owner can receive 50% of the cost of a complete façade renovation up to \$50,000 per façade, or 15% of limited façade improvements such as signage and awnings.
- **Interior Rehab Program** – Assistance is available to Downtown Skokie properties for interior rehab work on the basis of 50% of cost up to \$50,000 per building, but is limited to restaurant and retail uses. The program only applies to existing properties at least five years old.
- **Design Assistance** – In concert with either the Façade Assistance or Interior Rehab Programs, the Village will rebate 50% of the architectural/design service expenses incurred by a property owner or tenant up to a maximum grant of \$3,000.
- **Change of Use Allowance** – Downtown property owners may change the use of a building without being subject to a different parking requirement. Only in the Downtown core zoning area can commercial uses change between retail, office, restaurant, beauty salon, entertainment or any other zoning-permitted land use without requiring alterations in the amount of required parking.
- **Parking Requirement Waiver** – Additions to existing commercial buildings resulting in buildings of less than 8,000 square feet of total gross floor area are not subject to any parking requirements if used for retail or restaurant operations. All new commercial buildings up to 8,000 square feet also are not required to provide any parking as long as they are occupied by retail or restaurant uses.
- **Broker's Bonus Program** – The Village offers a special bonus up to \$5,000 to licensed real estate brokers earning a professional commission for an arms-length lease or sale of commercial space in Downtown Skokie for a retail or restaurant use. The bonus does not apply to leases or sales for any office, medical, entertainment or commercial services such as banks or hair/nail salons. The primary purpose of the business must be the sale of goods or prepared foods to the general public, with a minimum five-year lease.

The Village is committed to increasing commercial and restaurant activity in Downtown Skokie and believes that these incentives will attract quality businesses to the area. Please view the Village web site at [www.skokie.org](http://www.skokie.org) for full details on the incentives or contact Tom Thompson, the Village's Economic Development Coordinator, at 847/933-8446 or [tom.thompson@skokie.org](mailto:tom.thompson@skokie.org).

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## *Village Acquires Dempster Street/ Skokie Boulevard Property*

The Village recently acquired long-vacant commercial property on the southwest corner of Dempster Street and Skokie Boulevard. In mid-July, the Village landscaped the site and added some decorative trellis work along the southern wall. A sign indicating the property is part of an economic development initiative has been erected and the construction fencing will soon be removed. The Village also is attempting to acquire the property directly west of this parcel and plans to combine both properties when seeking developers.

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Village of Skokie

## Quick Takes



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### Council-Manager Government

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## Quick Bits

### *Village Starts WBBM-AM Radio Advertising Campaign*

In late June 2008 the Village of Skokie began a year-long advertising campaign on WBBM-AM Radio. Skokie's three, 30-second ads focus on economic development and will rotate throughout the campaign. The ads air during morning drive time, the Noon Business Hour show and afternoon drive hours and the Village has established a system to track hits to the Village website in response to the ad campaign.

### *Village Board Approves Vacant Lot Improvement Ordinance*

In an effort to protect the appearance of areas where vacant lots are located, the Village Board recently approved an ordinance that requires owners of vacant lots to seed or sod the property within 30 days of demolition or the commencement of seasonable weather. The ordinance establishes minimum standards for the amount of seed used and stipulates that the owner must continue to seed until grass appears. In addition, the ordinance requires that a sign with the name, address and phone number of the property agent or owner must be erected on the site. The ordinance specifies the minimum and maximum sizes for such signs. For further information on this ordinance, contact the Community Development Division at 847/933-8223.

### *Update – Skokie Police Station Construction*

At the July 21, 2008 Village Board meeting, SRBL Architects gave an overview presentation on the status of plans for construction of a new Police station at 7330 Niles Center Road. The firm outlined project goals, which include using as much of the existing building as possible, achieving a minimum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver Certification, and more. The Village Board viewed preliminary project drawings, and approved a construction management contract with Riley Construction. Hiring a construction management firm in the early stages of a project, also referred to as Construction Manager at Risk construction delivery method, has become a best practice in the industry and offers both potential cost-saving and decreased liability benefits. The project is currently on schedule, with construction expected to begin in April 2009 and conclude no later than October 2010.

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