

# Quick Takes

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## *A Message from Village Manager Albert Rigoni*

There are a number of exciting new development initiatives underway throughout the Village of Skokie. An update on a number of these projects appears below, with details on several other Skokie development projects featured on the following page.

In December 2007 the Village Board approved two new retail developments. Gross Point Crossings is a three-building, 34,412-square-foot retail development on the northwest corner of Gross Point Road and Dempster Street. The buildings on the east and west ends of the new development will each contain space for six retail tenants, with the center building housing a new bank with four drive-through lanes. Kinko's, a tenant in the current site development, will remain as a tenant in the new development. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2008. A new Edens Bank with two additional retail spaces is under construction just west of this property at Dempster Street and Lockwood Avenue.

The Village Board also approved the Touhy Centre development in December 2007. This large retail shopping center, that will be the third-largest in Skokie, will be situated on a 14-acre parcel bounded by Chase Avenue to the north, Touhy Avenue to the south and Saint Louis Avenue to the east. It will consist of 10 buildings totaling 189,176 square feet of retail space. Four existing buildings on the property will be remodeled; the remaining six buildings will be new construction. The new shopping center will include an XSport Fitness Center, Starbucks Coffee with a drive-through lane, a Garden Fresh Market, a bank with four drive-through lanes and retail space for five additional tenants including two limited-service restaurants with outdoor dining spaces. The plan also calls for public sidewalks to be installed around the development along with traffic signals on Touhy Avenue. Construction should begin in spring 2008.

Redevelopment at Westfield Old Orchard continues with the addition of a 26,600-square-foot, two-level L.L. Bean store near the northeast end of the mall and the relocation and expansion of Crate & Barrel. The new 27,400-square-foot, two-story Crate & Barrel store also will be located in the northeast area of the mall

and will have a very contemporary glass and masonry façade. Other activity at the mall includes a new Frontera Fresco Grill on the ground floor of Macy's, Starbucks' expansion and interior remodeling at Banana Republic, Nordstrom and Pottery Barn.

Downtown Skokie redevelopment remains at the forefront of Village staff and officials attention as we seek creative approaches given the current challenges in the real estate development market. On a positive note, Forest City Enterprises recently informed the Village that Evanston Northwestern Healthcare (ENH) plans to expand its operations at the Illinois Science + Technology Park. A little more than a year ago ENH moved approximately 600 administrative jobs to the park, and is currently planning to take additional space to accommodate more employees.

The Village continues to work with the Chicago Transit Authority and other agencies on plans to construct a new Skokie Swift station in Downtown Skokie just west of Skokie Boulevard adjacent to the Illinois Science + Technology Park. To date, the Village has received commitments for over \$10 million in Federal funds to use for the project. Plans for the project are in the design engineering phase. While a construction timetable is not certain, activity could begin sometime in late 2008 or 2009.

Citizens have raised concerns about commercial vacancies on west Dempster Street. The Village Board and staff continue to work on this important commercial corridor. Despite creating flexible zoning ordinances, the private sector has not invested in this key area of the Village. One of the issues is property owners who have an exaggerated sense of their property value. This, in turn, makes it difficult or risky for developers to implement economically viable projects. The Village has interceded in several instances and has filed eminent domain lawsuits in two cases. Attention will continue to focus on redeveloping this area, with new strategies employed as necessary.

*For more information on economic development initiatives in the Village of Skokie please visit [www.skokie.org](http://www.skokie.org).*

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Village of Skokie

## Quick Takes



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### Council-Manager Government

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<b>Manager</b>	<b>Albert J. Rigoni</b>
<b>Counsel</b>	<b>J. Patrick Hanley</b>

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## Quick Bits

**Evanston Subaru Moving to Skokie** - In spring 2008 Evanston Subaru is expected to begin construction of a new 21,460-square-foot building at 3340 Oakton Street, a site that is now vacant. The new building includes a showroom for new vehicles, offices and a two-floor parts storage area as well as a large service area with 14 lifts and five additional work bays. The dealership is expected to move into the new facility in January 2009, and projects \$30 million annually in new car sales alone. This new development has been planned for a number of years, and the Village assisted Evanston Subaru in obtaining a Class 7b property assessment reduction from Cook County, the first such incentive approved for any north suburban property. This special incentive enables Cook County to reduce the property's assessment for a 12-year period and was necessary for the dealership to relocate to Skokie. Even with the Class 7b designation, the Village and school districts will receive significantly higher property taxes than are generated by the currently vacant property.

**Special Service Area Established North of Oakton Street** - In late 2007 the Village Board approved establishing Special Service Area #9 in the east industrial area of Skokie as the fourth phase of a program to upgrade the community's industrial districts. This program will occur in the industrially zoned area north of Oakton Street, west of McCormick Boulevard and east of Hamlin Avenue. The project has been divided into two sub-areas: Sub-Area 1 (Oakton Street/Hamlin Avenue/Cleveland Street/Central Park Avenue) with 96 property owners and approximately 140 occupants and Sub-Area 2 (Oakton Street/Central Park Avenue/Madison Street/McCormick Boulevard) with 49 property owners and about 130 occupants.

The overall project goal is to improve the appearance and functionality of the industrial district through street resurfacing, water and sewer line improvements, curb and gutter replacement, installation of new sidewalks, intersection widening and other parking/loading/access improvements. It also includes upgrades and enhancements to landscaping, street lighting and other items that impact safety, access and the area's aesthetics. The cost of the project is estimated to be about \$7 million and will be split between the Village and area business owners through a special assessment process. The Village also will pay all of the planning, design, construction supervision and legal fees. Construction activities are expected to begin during spring 2008 with completion in 2009. The first three phases of this project occurred from 2000 to 2003 in the industrial area south of Howard Street between Hamlin and St. Louis Avenues.

**Skokie Swift Begins Weekend Service** - The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) has announced that beginning March 30 the Skokie Swift line will offer weekend service every 15 minutes from 6:10 a.m. to 11:15 p.m. for a six-month test period. For more information visit [www.skokie.org](http://www.skokie.org).

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