

Mayor's Message

Harvard professor Tiya Miles wrote, "A condition of apocalyptic anxiety has overtaken us, raising our collective blood pressure and sending us deeper onto a maelstrom of suspicion, conspiracy thinking and pessimism." First, we had COVID, then the war in the Ukraine to shake us up. Change is a stressor and we've had to deal with plenty of change in the past two years.

The answer to dealing with change and the stress it causes, is holding to a spirit of hope and perseverance, ["forming relationships with others who have also been cast into exile... This new tribe of survivors from every race, sex, and previous condition forms a politics of perseverance.

...So let us meet the change ahead by joining together in small acts of mutual humanity, embracing the strategy of gritty hope that Black culture and history make manifest."

Amazing Progress

Reading over the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan Quarterly Report, I was amazed by all that has been accomplished. This detailed plan guides every action of the city. This plan does not gather dust on a shelf, it is a living document that brings about momentum and positive change. Staff members are assigned goals with timelines so there is accountability. Here are a few of our accomplishments.

Oak Park added 22 new businesses this year, developed the Water Tower Social District and created new options in the industrial district allowing for mixed use. We held workshops for existing businesses to help them get an online presence so they can succeed in this new competitive market.

The city planted 116 trees, 15 in the underutilized Lessinger Park where the highly anticipated dog park will break ground this spring. A six-foot fence will enclose areas for big dogs, small dogs and shy dogs. There will be water sources for dogs and their humans. To get a fob to enter for your dog, you need to provide proof of vaccination, watch a training video, and pay a fee to help with upkeep. It will be a great place to socialize for canines and their humans alike.

Beautiful landscaping will be added to enhance the appearance and provide shade to the Nine Mile Linear Park. Art installations selected by the Arts and Cultural Diversity Commission members will be added. Families of all stripes will gather to visit and enjoy the amenities

This past year, residents enjoyed attending the first annual Juneteenth celebration and our first Film Festival. The Farmer's Market was successful in its new home on Coolidge attracting 18 vendors and many customers who enjoyed the music and the unusual offerings.

The city added MOGO bikes as a transportation option and found they were surprisingly well used, so we will pilot a scooter program and look forward to your input. Please take this survey and share your opinions pro or con. {survey}

Communications have greatly improved over time. In 2011 we had 300 email addresses so we could contact residents, now it's up to 8,500 emails and cell phones. We hired Tim Ciechorski to help residents get your questions answered and issues resolved. Email him at tciechorski@oakparkmi.gov or call 248-691-7548.

Northland Chrysler that has been in OP 60 years is expanding and adding a new Jeep showroom on 8 Mile Blvd.

You have heard that funding for cities, schools and roads has been cut, but luckily we have won grants to supplement revenue. The Patronicity program raised \$100,000 for the Linear Park with a \$50,000 match from MEDC. We were awarded a \$50,000 grant for the Linear Park, \$1 million to resurface Nine Mile, \$69,000 for stamped crosswalks on Coolidge, \$6,400 for the library's teen cultural education program, and \$7,000 for new children's computers.

Our City is Amazing

Main Street America was created in the 1980s to combat the harmful nature of urban sprawl and improve business in established cities. The Oak Park Department of Economic Development hosted Dionne Baux, VP of Urban Development with Main Street America. Representatives from city government, Oak Park business owners, residents, and Oakland County economic development professionals met to focus on the many assets of our city. We have one diverse city with mini districts and multiple neighborhoods. It is an entrepreneurial hub and an affordable option for businesses and residents. There is an eclectic business mix focused on unique options, not chains. There is already a public square in our civic center boasting homes with midcentury architecture. City sidewalks and streetlights make it a walkable city. We boast a city staff that presents a warm, inviting face to the public. [use all the photos I sent you]

Celebration Time!

City Council Members approved a contract with Skerbeck Family Carnival for riding devices, midway shows, food and game concessions at the three-day SummerBlast from June 17 to June 19. Mark your calendar and plan to be there!

Pats on the Back

Oak Park Teacher of the Year 2022

It is with great pleasure that I inform you that Desiree Fuller was named the Oak Park Outstanding Teacher of the Year for 2022. Ms. Fuller teaches 9th grade English at Oak Park High School where she is beloved by her students, colleagues and parent community. During second period, Ms. Fuller and her advisory class were surprised with the announcement accompanied with flowers, balloons, a 3x5 sign and cookies for all to enjoy. She was greeted with

congratulatory messages in-person by her administrative team, former students, Cabinet and colleagues. When students were asked why Ms. Fuller is such an outstanding teacher, they immediately shared that she cares for her students whether you're in her class today, or two years ago.

Ms. Fuller has been described as passionate, resourceful, creative and student-centered. She believes in elevating student voice and provides a safe and nurturing culture for all students to be heard. Ms. Fuller has been in the Oak Park School District for four years and an educator for 14 years. In addition to teaching she is the Content Area Leader for the English Department. She models how initiatives should be implemented and does so with fidelity. Ms. Fuller is a certified Restorative Practices trainer and facilitates professional development in the areas of classroom management, student engagement and culturally responsive teaching. She is the co-founder of Anti-Racist teaching organization and student leadership group on campus. Ms. Fuller is highly respected by her leadership team and colleagues, known for being a major contributor to the high school. Ms. Fuller will be honored at the next Board meeting scheduled for March 14, 2022. Please join us in congratulations Ms. Desiree Fuller!

OPPA Data Celebration!

Today, we celebrated the OPPA staff with a luncheon and students with an event as a result of their instructional progress evident in their data. Approximately, 100 students went from yellow (one year below) to green (within or above grade level) on iReady.

This is a significant amount of progress in a very challenging school year! Ms. Raginia, the OPPA staff and students are extremely proud!

[Jason M. Deneau Oak Park Neighbors](#)

I want to take the time to express how lucky we are to live in our city. I presented at a Main Street Oakland workshop (by Oakland County Economic Development), attended by many leaders, politicians, DDA Directors and city employees... the common theme I heard was how amazing our Mayor [Marian McClellan](#), city manager [Erik Tungate](#), and economic director [Kimberly Marrone](#). Thank you for serving our community and doing a great job.

LittleGuideDetroit.com named Oak Park's Shephard Park as one of the dozen best parks in the Metro area. [photo of train] We will be evaluating city assets and talking with residents about recreation programs and amenities they would like to see. We hired ___ to . They will present to City Council Monday March 21 so come by or tune in.

Kudos to Public Safety

Long time resident Wayne Short writes, "I have needed to call 911 on more than one occasion. The response time, and professionalism of the officers, is to be commended. My thanks and appreciation to all who make this service possible."

Kindness

GFL, the new trash hauling company, is just getting used to routes around the city so mistakes have been made. But last Thursday I forgot to put out my trash cans, heard the truck pull up, and ran outside to ask the guy if he'd wait a moment for me to bring them down. Instead, he ran up and got the trash cans I should have put out Wednesday night.

When I called DPW Director Kevin Yee to ask how to tell the supervisor about his kind deed, Kevin said they get many complains but very few positive comments for doing a very difficult job in all kinds of weather. Let's support these guys and make them feel welcome to Oak Park.