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Solving the Roosevelt School Parking Dilemma

The planned renovations to Roosevelt School certainly offer a positive contribution to the community and the school. But as you well know, a great many members of the community have serious concerns about the safety of using 90 degree angle parking on the south side of Oak between Lathrop and Jackson as well as the \$190,000 cost of the angled–parking project.

The renovations to Roosevelt will result in a loss of 29 off-street parking spaces according to the review that TADI conducted for District 90.¹

The alternative proposed here should save District 90 over \$180,000, achieve the goals of all concerned, and leave the door open to pursuing another approach if this alternative does not work out. I’m suggesting that the village and District 90 agree to try this alternative for the 2013–2014 school year with a thoughtful evaluation conducted in spring 2014 that involves both the district and the neighbors.

The Proposal

To replace the off–street parking lost due to the renovation of Roosevelt Middle School, the Village of River Forest would establish permit–only parking for faculty and staff between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m.² on the west side of Jackson between Oak and Quick. That would provide 18 spaces according to TADI. The other 11 spaces and more could be created by establishing the same permit–only parking arrangement on one side of Oak between Lathrop west to Ashland or Franklin and between Jackson and Monroe (or even William).

By limiting the permit-parking to one side of the street on Jackson, residents can still park in front of their homes, all which are on the east side (not that many do on weekdays). On Oak, permit–only parking on one side still leaves parking on the other side for residents. Since these houses also face a north–south street, additional on–street parking is readily available to their occupants and their guests.

We have measured the potential areas for permit–only faculty and staff parking that are designated in green in the figure below and found the maximum number of possible spaces for each block (assuming 22 feet per space as TADI assumes) on Oak. To be on the conservative side, we deducted

¹TADI, Roosevelt Middle School Master Plan Transportation Review (Chicago, IL: TADI, Dec. 2012) 37.

²The exact hours should be determined *after* identifying the time at which faculty and staff arrive in the morning and leave in the afternoon. It is vital to involve faculty and staff in this process.

six feet at the ends of each block and then reduced the number of possible spaces by one for each block.

- „ Lathrop west to Ashland (175 feet): 6 spaces
- „ Ashland west to Franklin (288 feet): 12 spaces
- „ Jackson east to Monroe (276 feet): 11 spaces
- „ Monroe east to Williams (253 feet): 10 spaces

There's room for as many as 57 spaces if all the areas designated in green in Figure 1 are used. Obviously not all have to be used if just 29 spaces need to be replaced. So all of the permit-only on-street parking is not concentrated on one side of the school, it would be fairest to use the Jackson block and the blocks west of Lathrop.

District 90 will still be able to maintain the driveway for deliveries on the south side of Roosevelt Middle School.

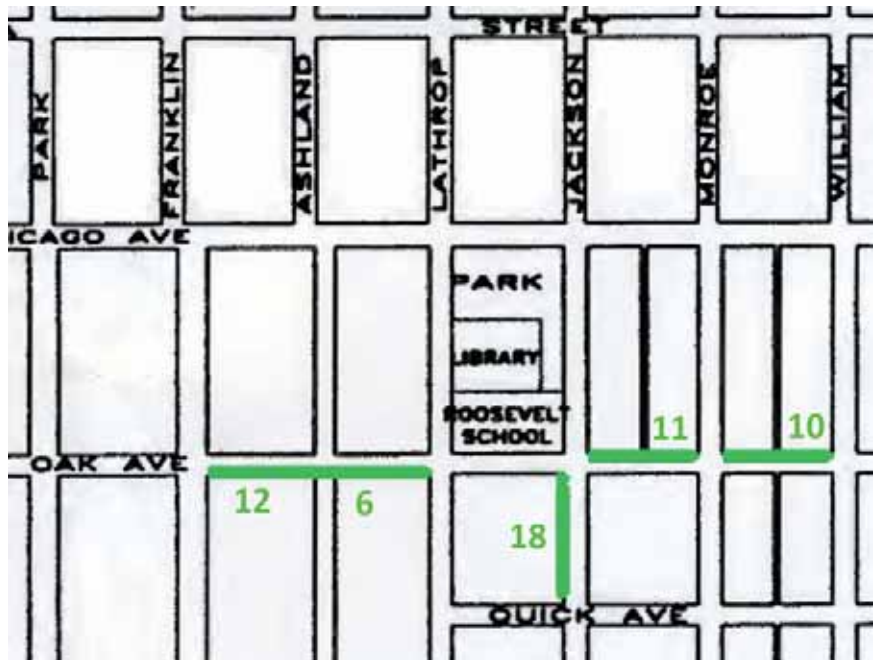


Figure 1: Potential Areas for Permit-Only Faculty and Staff Parking in Green With Number of Potential Parking Spaces

Implementation

This proposal requires “planting” an appropriate number of parkway signs to designate the permit-only spaces, printing parking permits to display in each car, and some administrative costs. Faculty and staff, of course, would not have to move their cars when they work after hours. As noted earlier, the precise hours for the permit-only parking should be determined in consultation with faculty and staff to meet their needs. I would imagine that it would be easiest to issue one permit that would entitle faculty and staff to park in any of the permit-only spaces. I would also suggest that there be more permit-only spaces than permits issued because it's inevitable that some people without a permit will park in a few permit-only spaces each day. The village might want to establish a proper fine if one does not already exist.

Evaluation

Try this for a year. Keep meticulous records of complaints, incidents, etc. Conduct an open and-transparent review with full public participation in the summer of 2014 to determine how well this is working for both neighbors and school faculty and staff.

District 90 officials hope that this alternative works out and can serve as the long-term solution to Roosevelt Middle School's parking needs.

It could turn out that the neighbors will prefer this approach. Or they just might prefer the school district's original proposal of 90 degree parking on Oak between Lathrop and Jackson. And by then creative minds may devise an even better alternative that does not include angled parking.

Costs

District 90 would be very prudent to pay the costs to implement this alternative. Expenses would certainly be at least \$180,000 less than the District's original \$190,000 proposal. The District would be prudent to offer to cover the village's administrative costs for the year as well as for the long-term. Sign posts, permit stickers, and administrative costs should certainly be several thousand dollars *under* \$10,000.

And in Reserve

If this alternative doesn't work out, other possibilities that do not involve angled parking can be considered. If all else fails, District 90 could still pursue its original angle-parking proposal as a last resort.

This proposal would go a long way to strengthening Roosevelt Middle School's relationship with its neighbors.