

Village of Clarendon Hills

1 N. Prospect Ave.
Clarendon Hills, IL 60514
Phone: (630) 286-5400
Fax: (630) 286-5409
Website: www.clarendonhills.us

Press Release

Contact: Jennifer Johnsen, Assistant to the Villlage Manager
Phone: (630) 286-5402

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 19, 2009

CLARENDON HILLS RELEASES RESULTS OF 2009 COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY

Since 2005, the Village of Clarendon Hills has conducted an annual Community Needs Survey to evaluate services, seek feedback on timely issues, and guide budgeting and planning processes. This May, the Village once again randomly distributed 1,000 Community Needs Surveys to households throughout the Village. By the end of June, the Village had received 384 completed surveys and achieved a response rate of 38.4%. Since 2005, the Village has received more than 1,800 completed surveys.

The results of the survey indicate a high quality of life, a feeling of safety and security, and optimism for change within the Village. Respondents believe that key assets of the Village are the convenient location, residential neighborhoods, and top-rated schools. For the fifth year in a row, over 95.0% of respondents rated the overall quality of life in Clarendon Hills as good or excellent. Additionally, 95.1% of respondents reported feeling safe and secure in their neighborhood. Nearly all police, fire, emergency medical, and public works services were rated as good or excellent by a significant majority of respondents.

Although respondents appreciate the quality of life in Clarendon Hills, the number of respondents who are satisfied with the condition of downtown Clarendon Hills has remained low since 2005 and the frequency at which respondents shop downtown has seen a steady decline over the last five years. In fact, respondents listed shopping as one of the major disadvantages of Clarendon Hills, along with housing costs and traffic problems. A key component of the Village's Downtown Master Plan to improve downtown Clarendon Hills is the redevelopment of the Metra Lot. Both the 2008 and 2009 surveys included a question inquiring whether respondents would support this redevelopment consisting of a three-story mixed-use building which would include 6,000 square feet of first-floor retail, 22 condominium units, and 68 first-floor parking spaces. The 2009 survey results indicate that more respondents would support the redevelopment than not (46.9% vs. 32.8%). The Village has secured approximately \$400,000 in grant funding to begin phase I planning and engineering for this project.

Approximately twelve cents (\$.12) of every property tax dollar each household pays goes to the Village. The Village's portion of property tax pays for the following services: Police, Fire, Public Works (street maintenance, snow removal, etc.), Building, Zoning, Planning, and Finance. The remaining \$.88 of your property tax dollar goes to the Township, County, Grade and High School Districts, College of DuPage, Library, and Park District. For the fifth year in a row, the majority of

respondents feel they receive a fair level of service for their property tax dollars (63.0%), which represents an increase of 8.8% since 2005.

Due to a significant decrease in the number of paid-on-call firefighter/paramedics in the Village, surveys from the past three years asked whether respondents would support a tax increase to hire additional fire personnel and sustain minimum service levels. The 2009 results indicate that 36.7% of respondents would support a tax increase and 23.4% of respondents would not support a tax increase for fire services. For the past three years, nearly a third of respondents do not know or do not have an opinion about the tax increase.

Over the years, the Village has been approached about the installation of a Village-wide curb, gutter, and storm sewer system. Last year's survey included a question regarding the replacement of the current gravel shoulder and culvert system with a curb, gutter, and storm sewer system. Unfortunately, estimates indicate that the cost of installing this system would be approximately 50 million dollars, which is cost prohibitive for the Village. Alternatively, the Village is considering the replacement of gravel shoulders with concrete shoulders and recently tested this concept on Grant, Churchill, and the 200 block of Hudson since these roads were due for improvement. Estimates indicate that concrete shoulders extend the life of the roads and therefore result in a substantial cost savings over a 20-40 year period. This year's survey contained a question asking residents if they would favor the replacement of gravel shoulders with concrete shoulders throughout the Village. The results of the survey indicate a majority of respondents support the replacement of gravel shoulders with concrete shoulders (52.1%), and 27.6% do not support the replacement.

The complete results of the survey are available on the Village's website at www.clarendonhills.us/administration.cfm and are on file at the Clarendon Hills Library.

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