

Introduction

In March 1992, the Highland Park City Council established the Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission to develop a long range plan identifying opportunities for improving the economic viability and appearance of the Ravinia Business District. The Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission is comprised of business owners, property owners and neighborhood residents who have a strong desire to preserve the unique qualities of the business district and maintain its economic viability.

The Ravinia Business District is a vital element of the Ravinia neighborhood with a unique zoning classification, "B2 - Ravinia Neighborhood Business District." Redevelopment should occur within the context of this unique neighborhood setting. A plan has been developed identifying long range opportunities for the district using market analysis, recommended amendments to the Highland Park Zoning Ordinance and urban design options. The purpose of these recommendations is to increase the vitality of the district while maintaining a sound residential environment. The following goals and objectives were adopted by the Commission to guide the planning process:

- Goals:**
- Identify characteristics which contribute to Ravinia's charm.
 - Develop educational programs incorporating those characteristics.
 - Assist in the application of character-reinforcing physical and cultural projects.
- Objectives:**
- Request that the City of Highland Park recognize and adopt the 1994 Ravinia Strategic Plan to:
 - Assure continuity of character as renovation and development occurs.
 - Encourage maximum integration of safety and comfort within a knowable neighborhood.
 - Encourage redevelopment while accommodating recognized circulation patterns and street system capacity.
 - Coordinate capital infrastructure improvements and establish review standards that will guide the district to serve as a model for community development and citizen action.
 - Begin an educational program in conjunction with the Park District of Highland Park and School District 112 to create "walkable streets" with identified landmarks to guide the definition of "Ravinia."
 - Produce a long range plan that guides redevelopment of the district while reinforcing Ravinia's character through:
 - Marketing.
 - Planning and zoning.
 - Urban design.
 - Recommend specific programs and activities to enhance the Ravinia Business District.
 - Recognize the Ravinia Festival as an integral part of Ravinia's cultural history, value and character. Retain and build upon this traditional bond in ways meaningful to both the business, residential and festival areas, and to the community as a whole.
 - Study and form recommendations on other relevant aspects deemed advisable by the Commission.

Past Planning Efforts

The Ravinia Strategic Plan represents the most comprehensive planning effort for the Ravinia Business District to date. Prior to the development of this plan, the City of Highland Park commissioned three different studies of the area: the 1976 City of Highland Park Comprehensive Master Plan, which briefly characterized the district as having a weak visual appearance, and a lack of identity clarity and unity; the 1986 Toka Associates, Inc. Ravinia Business District Beautification Study which included recommendations for developing a sense of identity for the business district through landscaping and urban design options; and the 1992 Lambda Alpha International Community Assistance Panel Report which addressed physical and economic issues. The Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission was formed to explore such citizens and recommendations.

Ultimately, the Commission developed its own Strategic Plan for the district, drawing from each of the planning efforts that preceded it. Each of the plans for the Ravinia Business District have made recommendations concerning marketing, zoning tools and urban design guidelines. In formulating the Ravinia Strategic Plan, however, the Commission has developed a detailed action plan to guide the implementation of its recommendations.

Description of the Ravinia Business District

The Ravinia Business District is the only area within the city governed by the "B2" zoning classification. The B2 Zoning District, which encompasses the commercial center established when Ravinia was a separate village, is intended to be broader than a neighborhood commercial district, but limited in scale and traffic to the capacity of the existing street system. Recent years have brought an increase in locally owned businesses, with owners who have chosen Ravinia for its quality of life. These merchants depend on their businesses for their livelihood and have a considerable stake in the success of the Ravinia Business District.

Spanning six blocks along Roger Williams Avenue between Dean and Broadway Avenues, the district contains approximately 45 retail uses, including a grocery store, dry cleaners, a framing shop and a variety of restaurants. Service-oriented businesses occupy about 81,000 square feet of ground-floor space. There are also about 15,600 square feet of medical and professional offices in the district, a 2,500-square-foot service station, a post office, a fire station and a train station. The district also contains multi-family housing units on upper levels of some of the buildings.

The district is intersected by the Chicago & Northwestern commuter rail line. East of the commuter line, the district has historic significance and a consistent streetscape. This portion of the district also contains Jens Jensen Park, owned and maintained by the Park District of Highland Park. The Commission strongly encourages the City and Park District to designate this property as a local landmark to preserve its historic significance in the Ravinia neighborhood. As opposed to the east side of the tracks, development on the west side has been less consistent, with a mixture of ground-floor retail, small office buildings and small strip centers with parking in front.

The only residential use permitted in the B2 District is upper-level residential, with a 3,000-square-foot minimum lot area per unit, about 15 units per acre. This is inconsistent with what currently exists in the Ravinia Business District. Apartments in this district range from about 450 square feet to 1,250 square feet of lot area per unit, yielding an average of 762 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit.

To maintain the character of the business district, residential uses should continue to be allowed only on the upper levels. However, an increase in the density of residential units will enhance the residential aspect of the district and help animate the street. The Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission recommends amending the zoning ordinance so that the minimum lot area per unit is 1,442 square feet or 30 units per acre.

Adjacent Zoning Districts and Uses

Surrounding the Ravinia Business District are both single- and multi-family residential zoning districts, schools, parks and the Ravinia Festival. West of the commuter line, the immediate adjacent residential zoning is low to medium density single family, with a 7,400 square foot minimum lot area, and RM2 high density residential, with a 1,442 square foot minimum lot area for multi-family dwellings. It is important to note that certain Ravinia neighborhoods within RM zoning were developed with lots of about 5,200 square feet prior to the 1978 Zoning Ordinance. The result is a much greater density than what the minimum area per lot in RM currently allows.

East of the commuter line, the immediate adjacent residential zoning includes R5 moderate density single family, with a 12,000 square foot minimum lot area, and RM1 medium-to-high density residential, with a 2,904 square foot minimum lot area for multi-family dwellings. Further east, along the lakefront, is R4 low-to-moderate density single family, with a 20,000 square foot minimum lot area. The residential development on the east side of the commuter line on a whole is therefore less dense than development on the west side.

Parking in Business District

The Ravinia Business District contains six public parking lots as well as on-street parking spaces. A total of 284 parking spaces are available in the public parking lots for customers, employees and commuters. There are also approximately 95 on-street parking spaces available for customer use in or adjacent to the business district.

As in other business districts, there is a perceived lack of adequate parking among merchants and consumers, which may be the result of employees parking in consumer spaces as opposed to purchasing employee parking permits and using the spaces allotted specifically for employees. A comprehensive parking management plan is needed to identify the most appropriate allocation of parking spaces in the business district.

In the fall of 1993, the City worked with Metra (the commuter rail division of the Regional Transportation Authority) to expand the Ravinia Station west parking lot from 45 spaces to 100 spaces. This expansion occurred in anticipation of the addition of express train service from the Ravinia Station. The addition of this express service has not yet been achieved, and the effect of the parking lot expansion on the Ravinia Business District has not yet been evaluated.

Other parking changes will be realized in the business district through the implementation of the Ravinia Strategic Plan. As the existing alleys that run parallel to Roger Williams are redeveloped as Ravinia Square North and South, the business district will see the addition of angled parking along Ravinia Square. It is also proposed that the on-street parking configuration on Roger Williams west of the tracks follow that of Roger Williams east of the tracks, resulting in angled parking on the north side of Roger Williams and a certain drop-off zone on the south side of Roger Williams. The proposed changes in the on-street parking configuration west of the tracks will result in a net gain of about 50 parking spaces throughout the district.

Overlay Zone

To increase pedestrian and business activity in the Ravinia Business District, the Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission is recommending that only retail or retail-oriented service uses be allowed as "permitted uses" in first floor frontage on Roger Williams Avenue. Office uses should be encouraged to locate on the upper level along Roger Williams Avenue. All non-retail or non-retail-oriented service uses that are currently "permitted" under the Ravinia Business District Zoning Ordinance are currently "permitted" under the proposed overlay zone. Office uses should be encouraged to locate on the upper level along Roger Williams Avenue, or in first floor frontage on any other street in the B2 District.

Rather than changing the regulations of the entire B2 Zoning District or creating a new zoning designation, the most efficient way to implement this type of change would be through an "overlay zone" which would require an amendment to the Highland Park Zoning Ordinance. An overlay zone involves a map as well as text containing certain portions of an existing zoning district or districts. Attached to it is a list of the overlay zone regulations beyond those established for the existing zoning district.

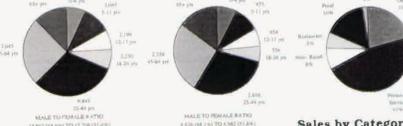
Restrictive zoning has been successfully used in the nearby municipalities of Winnetka, Oak Park and Lake Forest to assure that the Central Business District remains a viable and profitable center for the community. In Winnetka, an overlay zone is used to encourage clustering of complimentary retail and personal service uses, thereby allowing for areas of increased pedestrian activity throughout the district. Oak Park has implemented overlay zoning designed to maintain the retail nature of the area by limiting all ground-floor uses abutting the pedestrian mall right-of-way to retail and retail-oriented service uses. The village adopted these restrictions to maintain the retail nature of the area. Lake Forest uses restrictive zoning to preserve retail parking spaces in its Central Business District by limiting the percentage of total ground floor rentable square footage and street frontage that can be utilized by office uses.

In the Ravinia Business District, the overlay zone would include those properties with first floor frontage on Roger Williams Avenue. The regulations of B2 zoning set forth in the Highland Park Zoning Ordinance would still govern the land within the B2 boundaries, but through the use of an overlay zone, tighter restrictions would be placed on the allowable uses of properties with first floor frontage on Roger Williams Avenue. This would achieve the goal of attracting those uses to the business district that will be most likely to increase street activity.

Ravinia Trade Area

In January 1993, a market analysis for the Ravinia Business District was prepared by Valerie S. Kretschmer Associates, Inc. to estimate the expenditure potential for the Ravinia trade area and sales for the district. The report also recommended identifying types of business that would complement and enhance the existing retail mix. The primary trade area of the Ravinia Business District includes the Ravinia, Braeside and Lincoln School neighborhoods of Highland Park. Boundaries are roughly Lake Cook Road on the south, Lincoln Avenue West on the north, Lake Michigan on the east and the Skokie River on the west. The primary trade area is approximately one mile in a north-south direction, and three quarters of a mile in an east-west direction. The secondary trade area of the business district covers the rest of Highland Park.

According to the 1990 census, the population of the primary trade area was 9,592. The secondary trade area had a population of 22,488. Residents and potential shoppers have an average household income of \$192,271 in the primary trade area and \$118,117 in the secondary trade area. Median household income was \$97,742 in the primary trade area and \$70,016 in the secondary trade area. Most of the housing in the primary trade area is primarily owner-occupied. The median home value in the primary trade area is \$337,150, and that of the secondary trade area is \$268,700.



Residents of the primary trade area are slightly older than those of Highland Park as a whole. The census tracts comprising the primary trade area have a higher proportion of residents between the ages of 45-64 and over the age of 65 than the city as a whole. According to local reports, the Ravinia and Braeside neighborhoods are in the midst of transition. Older residents are moving to smaller houses. Their homes are being purchased by young couples both with and without children. Over the next five years, the number of families in the area with children is expected to increase. While there are proportionately fewer school-age children, there are more 0-4 year olds in the Ravinia primary trade area than the rest of the city. As plans are made for the Ravinia Business District, it is important to consider that the Ravinia area is becoming a primary center for young families in the City.

According to the 1990 census, two-thirds of the women in the entire city worked in 1990, with a slightly lower percentage of women in the Ravinia primary trade area. In both the primary trade area and the city as a whole, however, more than 60 percent of women with children, including children under the age of six, worked. As a result, more than 50 percent of the households in the primary trade area and City as a whole have wage-earners. Understanding this statistic provides a unique opportunity for businesses to attract more customers to the area.

Shopper Profile

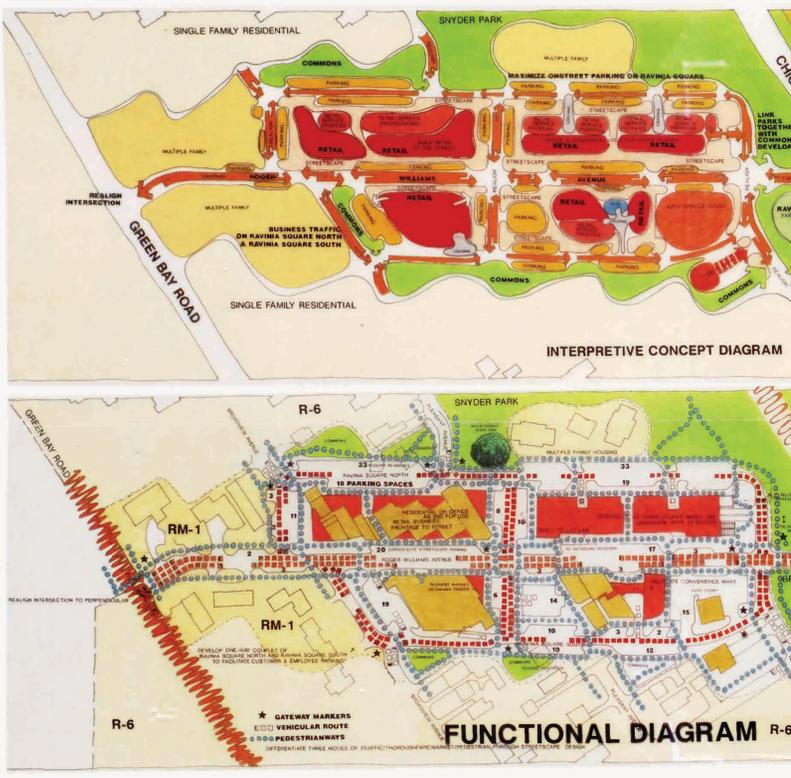
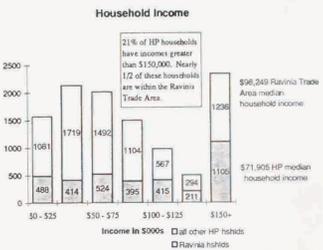
The Ravinia Business District draws from a relatively small geographic area (about one mile), but has a loyal clientele that frequently patronizes a wide range of businesses within the district. According to Valerie S. Kretschmer and Associates, 74 percent of the shoppers live in the Ravinia and Braeside neighborhoods. Shoppers are attracted to Ravinia for the ease in conducting personal business or grocery shopping, proving that convenience plays an important role in the success of the business district. The loyal shopper has a good feeling about this district but would like to see a greater variety of goods. Understanding consumers and their perceptions can provide leasing agents the opportunity to attract those businesses that will strengthen an already-strong customer base.

Because of its small scale, sales tax data is not available for the Ravinia Business District. Valerie S. Kretschmer and Associates has prepared sales estimates for the business district based on the performance of stores in neighborhood shopping districts. The expenditure potential of an area is an indication of the amount of money that could be spent on a given category of goods. The Ravinia Business District captures about 11 percent of the total primary trade area's and 2 percent of the total secondary trade area's expenditure for food, restaurant, apparel, personal service and miscellaneous retail.

Marketing

The Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission believes that the merchants and property owners must meet the challenge of strengthening the Ravinia Business District by working together. The Ravinia Business Association, in conjunction with the property owners, should develop an action plan that incorporates marketing, economic restructuring, and the establishment of a new organization to implement such a plan, to include the following:

- Develop a year-to-year marketing plan that represents both sales and non-sales events targeted to attract customers to the area.
- Create an ongoing dialogue with the key property owners regarding a leasing strategy for the area. Together identify specific retail operations that would be viable for the area and work to aggressively attract those businesses to the area. Ideally, employ a land-use map to decide where certain business should locate in order to complement existing establishments, and work to accomplish the plan.
- If property owners are committed to strengthening the Ravinia Business District, an opportunity exists to establish a Centralized Retail Management program (CRM). CRM is a program allowing landlord and merchants to create a master lease for the area outlining retail criteria that must be agreed to by all parties. The criteria cover leasing strategy, business hours, marketing fund, and so forth. Due to the relatively small size of the Ravinia Business District, the opportunity exists for merchants and property owners to take advantage of this program.



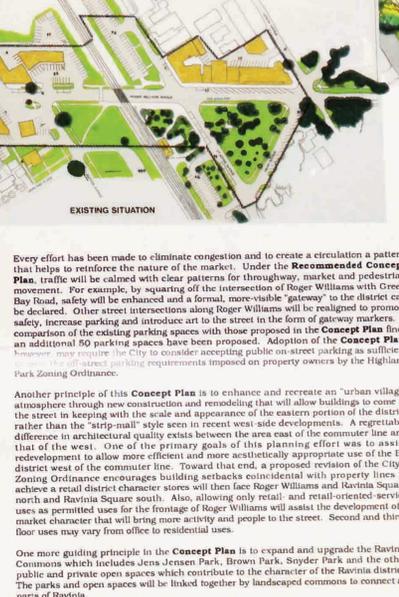
ACTION PLAN

ACTION ELEMENTS	PHASE ONE: SHORT-TERM (yr. 1)	PHASE TWO: MID-TERM (yr. 2-4)	PHASE THREE: LONG-TERM (yr. 5+)
Amendments to Zoning Ordinance/Map • Draft B-2 Overlay Zoning District to encourage 1st floor retail along Roger Williams Avenue frontage • Revise Table of Permitted and Conditional Uses • Revise Minimum Lot Size for Residential Areas Above Retail	Plan Commission Public Hearing and Findings of Fact City Council Action		
Infrastructure/Parking Improvements • Intersection Changes • Maximize Parking Supply • Construction of Ravinia Square North and South • Construction of Pedestrian Paths • Relocation of Utility Lines	Conduct District parking study Evaluate effect of RV3 lot expansion Prepare definitive plans for parking supply expansion Prepare definitive plans for intersection improvements Identify financing options	Prepare definitive plans for construction of pedestrian paths Identify financing options	Prepare definitive plans for construction of Ravinia Square Identify financing options
Streetscape Improvements: Signage; Landscaping	Streetscape Plan Development	City Council Adoption of Streetscape Plan	Identify financing options
Design Guidelines for District/Storefronts	Draft District and Storefront Guidelines, Coordinated Graphic Program	Discussion of Design Guidelines with merchants and DMC City Council action	
Ravinia Commission	Precise Planning Plan for Brown Park; install improvements	Precise Planning Plan for Jensen Park; install improvements Develop more active center at Brown Park	Develop detailed plans for marketplace at Brown Park
Redevelopment Opportunities	Cosideration by BDEC	Develop and maintain inventory of vacant space and list of property for sale Continue promotion of key redevelopment sites Develop Business Recruitment Program	Continue promotion of key redevelopment sites
Management Organization	Discussion of possible options; recommendation to City Council for action Identify and promote redevelopment sites		
Comprehensive Marketing Plan • General Marketing • Sales Promotion • Special Events	Develop Plan with RBA; identify budget issues Approval of Plan by RBA and City Council	Identification of Funding Alternatives by RBA Implementation of Plan	Coordinate marketing with Management Organization
Develop Community Linkages: Merchants; Historic Preservation Commission; Cultural Arts Commission; Schools; Ravinia Festival Association; Community Foundation	Develop Curriculum in partnership with School District 112 and Ravinia School; Landmark Designation of Jens Jensen Park		

RSPC = Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission; BDEC = Business and Economic Development Commission; RBA = Ravinia Business Association; DMC = Design Review Commission



The existing situation of the Ravinia Business District is reminiscent of a village, with its main street, rows of shops and offices, fire station and train station. The district also includes an elementary school, a grocery store, apartments, and several public parks. Roger Williams Avenue serves as the neighborhood's major east-west thoroughfare, carrying a high level of traffic from Green Bay Road through the district toward Lake Michigan. In Ravinia, owners inspired by the principles of the City Beautiful Movement created the attractive multiple use area east of the commuter line including the Jens Jensen Park which acts as a forerunner to the three-acre...
Recent new developments located west of the C&NW railroad tracks have failed to extend the architectural character of the storefronts east of the railroad. The newer developments on the west side with "strip-mall" site plans have created continuous driveways along the sidewalk, resulting in a traffic congestion and depleting the potential for maintaining Ravinia as an enjoyable, walkable shopping area.
Following two years of reviewing a series of continually evolving design concepts, the Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission has endorsed this Recommended Concept Plan and associated Functional Diagram. These drawings illustrate possible changes that have been identified by the Commission as desirable for the future of the Ravinia district. While some of these changes are depicted quite explicitly in the Recommended Concept Plan, it should be emphasized that these drawings only represent the desirable design concepts identified to date and that actual developments may well differ as they win final development approval in future years.
The Recommended Concept Plan yields a picture of a future Ravinia district that is based on several underlying objectives which are broadly illustrated in the Functional Diagram. One principle is to create a safer thoroughfare system for improving traffic and pedestrian movement. One early tentative design showed Roger Williams Avenue as a pair of separate streets bypassing north and south of the western portion of the district which yielded an attractive "Ravinia Market Square." However, as it was recognized that Roger Williams is the only east-west thoroughfare, this early design was abandoned in favor of the proposed Concept Plan that keeps Roger Williams open to traffic but also shifts some traffic to the new routes north and south of the shops. This circuitous system will feature better use of both Roger Williams and the existing alleys, provide more ample parking at storefronts, designate safer pedestrian crossings along Roger Williams, and provide attractive streetscape amenities to create and maintain a more pedestrian-friendly place.



"Ravinia is more than a place. It is a vision nurtured and carried forward by those who have known and loved it. The concerns of those who serve on the Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission reflect every facet of this area, this natural and cultural gem becoming ever more unique as change surrounds it. Vitality, vision, remembrance and continuity; all are mirrored in their views. The common bond they have sought through diverse skills and hopes has been found in Ravinia itself. Enduring yet fragile, tangible beauty and intangible heart: this is the gift the Commission seeks to protect and give to future generations."
MARTY WITTELLE

The block of land between Pleasant and Burton north of Roger Williams offers great potential for eventual redevelopment of a mixed-use, three-story building consistent in scale and character with the existing eastern part of the Ravinia district. South of Roger Williams between Burton and Pleasant Avenues stands a second opportunity for new development to bring this plan into reality. In this plan, the existing retail use in the strip mall development has been moved adjacent to the newly revitalized service station and fire station. It shares a service court/loading area with a remodeled U.S. Post office. Second-floor uses are introduced above the remaining buildings.
North of Roger Williams between Pleasant and Burton stands the historic Woody's Ice Cream building and the one-story Ravinia Associates medical office building. While many alternatives were studied, the design shown on the Concept Plan is different from all others. The owners of the medical building are currently engaged in architectural work to develop in line with this design. This instance proves in advance the worth of this plan. As the owners of the medical building discussed redevelopment ideas with the City, the various design scenarios of the Ravinia Strategic Plan were presented to them. Their willingness to re-examine their initial design may allow this portion of the Concept Plan to become a reality. It is hoped that similar experiences will occur with other future redevelopment opportunities in Ravinia.
The Recommended Concept Plan stems from the original spirit of Ravinia's artistic heritage while stressing preservation and conservation. It envisions a future drawn on the pre-revolutionary language of landscaping, building materials and architectural techniques that are "Ravinian." Gardens and street furniture will carry the style of Ravinia. The Commons, being all of the open public areas, the streetscape, the parks, Ravinia School, May T. Watts Garden, Green Bay Trail and sidewalks will be imprinted with attention to the burgeoning "Ravinia Style."
In order to bring the concepts described above and envisioned in this Concept Plan to fruition, a wide variety of actions will be undertaken by the Ravinia property owners, merchants and residents with the assistance of the City of Highland Park. These actions are outlined in the attached Action Plan and are described elsewhere in this report.

"Ravinia is a unique and special community, rich in diversity. This work of the Ravinia Strategic Planning Commission extends into the future the artistic tradition of the Ravinia Community."
MAYOR DANIEL M. PIERCE

"The unusual preservation of Ravinia's natural look...is a tribute to all Ravinia residents...past, present and future...whose vision and concern will continue the preservation of Ravinia's natural beauty."
MAY THEILGAARD WATTS

"...man does well to study nature's way, and if man is to be successful in city planning, it will be man and nature, not just man."
JENS JENSEN

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PLAN CAN BE DIRECTED TO:
THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Michael J. Kruse, Director of Community Development
Peggy Blanchard, Coordinator of Economic Development
Ellen Berkehamer, Planner
Dennis Orlowski, Urban Designer

Professor Edward J. Dean
Urban Design Consultant





The Character of Ravinia

Ravinia was named for the ravines that thread like the branches of a burr oak across the moraine. Bounded on the east by Lake Michigan, on the south by the Ravinia Festival, on the west by Green Bay Road, and on the north by the Cedar Avenue Ravine, the neighborhood of Ravinia remains a small village within the City of Highland Park. From the air or on the map, Ravinia appears as a park, etched by streets and dotted by houses, centering on a small train station and a main street of shops. The surveyor's grid is present as Roger Williams Avenue, Clavey Road/Blackstone Place and parts of Sheridan Road run due east and west. The diagonal of the lake shore is echoed in the Chicago & Northwestern rail line, Green Bay Road, St. Johns Avenue and neighborhood streets. Ravinia is insulated by the lake, the forest preserves and the Skokie Valley country clubs, and stands against Cedar Avenue, the southernmost platted street of original Highland Park. The landscape includes white oak, red oak, burr oak, hickory, linden, ash, and juniper. It is this landscape which inspired the Prairie School of landscape design. A century after Ravinia was settled, the landscape of networks, infrastructure and landmarks has been maintained.

History

Since its annexation to the City of Highland Park in 1899, the area known as Ravinia has maintained its identity as a distinctive neighborhood. Each stage of Ravinia's development is historically enriching, from the taming of the wilderness by pioneer farmers to the preservation of its natural beauty by succeeding generations. The name "Ravinia" was given to the area situated to the east of what is now the Chicago and Northwestern commuter rail line as early as 1872 when the town was platted, recognizing an extensive ravine system running through the community. The name Ravinia also was used to a post office, established in 1874, which primarily served farmers along this portion of the Green Bay Trail.

Visions of a Baptist community drew a second wave of settlers during the 1880s. A frame church, built at the current intersection of Judson and Dean Avenues, was the nucleus for development of Ravinia's east side. Streets were named for religious leaders, including Roger Williams Avenue, Bronson Lane, Rice Street and Judson Avenue. Artists, architects and naturalists also settled in the area, attracted by its natural setting. Artist/educator Dudley Craft Watson, architect John Van Bergen and naturalist May T. Watts each made Ravinia their home. Perhaps the most famous denizen was Jens Jensen, landscape architect and

conservation advocate. Others, however, came to the area to build summer mansions near the lake, and hoped for some potential growth to Ravinia. Improvements were limited, however, and were too steep an expense for the community. The Ravinia Improvement Society, preferring nature over "progress," reluctantly offered the City of Highland Park 500 acres in exchange for sewer and water systems. The area of Ravinia was finally annexed to the City of Highland Park in April 1899.

Around this time, another significant event occurred in Ravinia: the construction of the Ravinia Amusement Park. The development of the Ravinia neighborhood cannot be separated from that of Ravinia Park. The park was built as a venture to stimulate business for the train station platform built at the west side of the park by the Bluff City Electric Railway Company. The 30-acre Ravinia Amusement Park opened in 1904 and was heralded as a "gateway to the attractions of Highland Park." The Ravinia Amusement Park and its successor, the Ravinia Festival, also brought music lovers to the immediate environment, becoming a summer home to the world's greatest opera stars and musicians.

The prominence of the Ravinia neighborhood as a southern entrance to Highland Park encouraged plans for a business district east of the Ravinia train station. The City Beautification Commission was instrumental in achieving a design which unified architecture and nurtured the concepts of arts and natural beauty. Original plans from 1917 included a fountain square, grand plaza, theater, music and art studios, assembly hall, restaurant and winter garden. World War I delayed the realization of these ideas, but a modified plan was completed in 1929, bringing to the east side eight new stores and 15 apartments. Only one retail establishment ventured into the mostly unoccupied and unincorporated area west of the tracks, which was not annexed to Highland Park until 1927. The Ravinia fire station was built west of the tracks in 1929, and one year later, the Park District of Highland Park acquired property in the area for Brown Park.

While development on the east side occurred in a consistent fashion, development on the west side has been more sporadic. There is a strong desire within the community to preserve and maintain those qualities that give Ravinia its unique charm and natural beauty. Through the adoption of the 1984 Ravinia Strategic Plan, these characteristics will influence current and future renovation and innovation, leading to a resurgence of stylistic traits that have always distinguished Ravinia.

Ravinia Festival

Development of the Ravinia neighborhood cannot be separated from that of the Ravinia Festival. Founded in 1936, the Ravinia Festival is the oldest summer performing arts festival in the nation. Ravinia was originally constructed as an amusement park by the Bluff City Electric Railway Company in an attempt to increase ridership. Opened August 14, 1904, on 36 acres adjoining the railroad, attractions included an electric arm swing, skating rink, toboggan slide, electric fountain, and classical music in the pavilion. Unfortunately, the enterprise was not a financial success and in 1910 the railroad failed and the property went into receivership.

The Ravinia Park Company was formed to continue park operations, and the park enjoyed tremendous success until the depression when financial problems forced its closing in 1932. The park reopened in 1936 as the Ravinia Festival, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation featuring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 1944, the property was deeded to the Ravinia Festival Association, assuring the park's continuance as a cultural institution.

Ravinia's summer schedule is in operation for 12 to 14 weeks each year. For eight weeks each summer, the world-renowned Chicago Symphony Orchestra is in residence. Other orchestras from around the world also visit Ravinia each season, along with celebrated soloists in a variety of programs. Music programs include jazz, popular, folk, contemporary, classical and symphonic "pops" concerts. Features include symphony concerts, rentals, children's programs, chamber music, concert opera, and performances by major ballet and contemporary dance companies.

In 1985, the Steans Young Artists Institute was established at Ravinia, which provides talented young pianists, violinists, violists and cellists with an in-depth program of musical exploration and performance. The institute is held concurrently with the first five weeks of residency of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, giving young artists the opportunity to attend symphony concerts and rehearsals.

Ravinia Festival remains a testimony to those who founded it, rescued it, and sustained it for more than 50 years. Ravinia has become an international center for the performing arts that enhances its reputation with each season.

Uses have developed in the Ravinia Business District which complement the focus of the Ravinia Festival. A violin shop is currently located on the east side of the business district, and previously the district contained a record store. Also, festival patrons frequent the restaurants located in the business district, allowing for the existence of more dining establishments than a neighborhood business district would normally support.



Ravinia was named for the ravines that thread like the branches of a burr oak across the moraine.



- Listed Landmarks**
(NY) National Register
(LJ) Local Landmark
- 1 Bicentennial Burr Oak Tree
 - 2 Snyder Park
 - 3 892 Burton (LJ)
 - 4 441 Cedar/Henry Dohier House (LJ)
 - 5 1050 Wals/Clyford Raymond House
 - 6 295 Cedar/Belle Bernis Duplex
 - 7 290 Cedar/Allen S. & Laura Stockard House (LJ)
 - 8 234 Cedar/John S. Van Bergen House
 - 9 291 Marchman/Dorothy Crafts Watson House (LJ)
 - 10 434 Marchman/Albert Campbell House (LJ)
 - 11 328 Marchman/Lawrence Beck House
 - 12 930 Dean/Jens Jensen Summer House
 - 13 954 Dean/Jens Jensen Studio (NY)
 - 14 945 Dean/Martin L. Straus House
 - 15 111 Cary/John Glass House (LJ)
 - 16 855 Sheridan/Marian Rosenwald & Albert Stern House
 - 17 Cary Avenue Tower (NY)
 - 18 Rosewood Beach
 - 19 John Jensen Bridge
 - 20 Rosewood Park (LJ)
 - 21 85 Roger Williams/Charles Lyman House
 - 22 405 Sheridan Road/A.G. Becker House & Property
 - 23 650 Sheridan Road/Fred Florsheim House
 - 24 401 Woodland/Di Gustave Winfield House
 - 25 & 26 4504/55 Woodland/Mrs. Frank Geyro Houses
 - 27 487 Greenland/May T. Watts House
 - 28 Ravinia Festival Grounds (NY)
 - 29 Murray Theatre
 - 30 33 Ravinia Gates (LJ)
 - 34 545 Green Bay Road/Mildred Goodstein House
 - 35 610 Green Bay Road/D.S. Colburn House
 - 36 Brown Park
 - 37 540 Roger Williams/Ravinia Station
 - 38 John Jensen Park
 - 39 447 Roger Williams/Ravinia Terraces
 - 40 745 Johnson/Old Baptist Church
 - 41 763 Dean/Ravinia School
 - 42 May T. Watts Park

RAVINIA BUSINESS DISTRICT

MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL
MAYOR DANIEL M. HERGE
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RAVINIA STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMISSION
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JERRY FELL
SUSAN MILLESON
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AL RICHMAN
PAT SANDERS
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PHIL STRAUSS
LINO TRAPANI
DAVID WIGNONER
MARVYN WITTELLE
PETER J. KOUKOS, CITY COUNCIL LIAISON

RAVINIA STRATEGIC PLAN

A VISION FOR THE BUSINESS DISTRICT AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS 1994

