

V I L L A G E

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S K O K I E

I L L I N O I S



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Skokie is a northern suburb of Chicago, with a well-balanced economy derived from a firm industrial base, a large shopping center (Old Orchard) and strong downtown and neighborhood shopping areas.

Skokie is 11 square miles in area, 95% built up, and completely surrounded by other towns similarly developed.

Its population contains many races, religions and nationalities, skilled workers and craftsmen, professional people both men and women.

Newcomers find friendly, law-abiding neighbors, 21 houses of worship of 15 denominations, a \$550,000-a-year Park system, and a \$435,000-a-year Library system.





In 1945 the population was 5000. After World War II, the zoning was completely revised to provide single family development for most of the land, and home buyers came by the thousands.

To the 1950 population of 15,000 were added 50,000 people in ten years. Today the population is 70,000.

Zoning and zoning abuses became the major concern of this postwar influx of people, particularly home owners. Instant - and profitable - rezonings were given to speculators, anxious to capitalize on Skokie's skyrocketing land values.

Homeowner concern led to vigorous activity by 12 neighborhood associations. These 12 associations formed the Skokie Home Owners Council to co-ordinate their efforts.

Despite almost continuous citizen protests, the odds remained so greatly in favor of the speculators that citizens finally banded together to take political action.

Beginning in 1957, citizens promoted Council-Manager government, and independent caucuses to choose candidates for school boards and the village board of trustees.





Citizen groups which had formed to oppose certain practices, assumed leadership to attain positive goals.

In rapid succession, voters authorized by referendum, Council-Manager government, the library, the beginnings of the 75-acre park system, and more, and more, and more schools.

New commercial enterprises came during those years, chief among them: our world-famed Old Orchard Shopping Center.

And new industries came to Skokie. Magnificent new plants and offices were built which helped provide a broad base for much-needed tax revenues.

Allstate Insurance Company came. They were In Good Hands in Skokie. International Minerals made Skokie the home of Accent. Standard Rate and Data, and Portland Cement Company's Research Center, and the giant Edens Industrial Park, all located here during the years of rapid expansion.

Although it is not apparent from our burgeoning school enrollments, Skokie is also the home of G. D. Searle & Company, developers of "The Pill".





Unlike a typical bedroom suburb, almost as many people enter Skokie each day to work and to shop, as leave it daily and return.

They all use the several major highways and Edens Expressway which bisect the village. This coming and going gives Skokie its twin headaches: traffic congestion and traffic accidents.

Sparked by citizen groups, Skokie's answer to the high accident rate was the 1965-66 crash program to increase its uniformed police force by 25 (from 92) and a simultaneous drive to enforce "Yield right-of-way" laws.

These two programs produced a 1966 National Police Officers Association Award for progress in traffic safety. At the same time, Skokie's crime rate went down, while all around us both accidents and crime were increasing.

Traffic congestion led to Mass Transportation Demonstration Project # 1: The Skokie Swift. MTD-1 is a high-speed rail shuttle service linking northern suburbs with the elevated terminal at Chicago's city limits.

The Swift carries 7500 passengers daily, more than half of whom do not live in Skokie.





Citizen support produced many other civic improvements.

The Skokie Fire Department jumped from a Class 6 fire rating to a Class 3, is now the finest Department on the north shore.

Into the new Fire Headquarters Building went the village printing shop, expertly manned by firemen in their "leisure" hours.

Into the Police Station went what the American Bar Association, for five consecutive years, has termed the "Outstanding Traffic Court in Illinois". This court was established in 1960 as a result of citizen action.



The Skokie Youth Welfare Commission was responsible for the appointment of an Education Officer to acquaint our young people with all phases of law enforcement.

Also into the police station went a new and modern Communications Center to handle all fire, police and other emergency services.

Every school is connected directly to the Center, and the Skokie Valley Community Hospital works closely with all emergency services.





Citizens, tired of polluted air and fly ash around the village incinerator, applied continuous pressure until the plant was remodeled completely. Today it is a marvel of efficiency.

For five years, the village tried, unsuccessfully, to allay the complaints of homeowners and commercial establishments adjacent to the village dump.

In 1963, citizens rejected, by a 6 to 1 majority, a proposal to extend the dump by doubling both its size and its years of potential use. Today the property is part of the park system.

Continued citizen pressure for flood control measures produced an apparently successful stopgap answer: a simple and inexpensive "cork" which impedes the flow of storm water into the drainage system during heavy rains.

Illinois' first Fine Arts Commission coordinates cultural efforts throughout the village, was helpful in establishing the Skokie Art Guild and the Skokie Civic Theater in two old homes on property purchased by the village, located between village hall and the library.





In our application for an All American City Award, we detailed "The Skokie Plan".

Admittedly it is an incomplete solution to the problem of fair housing, and there is some rather vocal lack of acceptance.

Nevertheless, a first, imaginative step has been taken by our citizens to meet what is probably the most difficult problem facing suburban communities today.

We have furnished you copies of the booklet: "Your Home and Skokie's Future". All 20,000 families in Skokie received copies earlier this year.

The Skokie Plan set a pattern for other towns, many of which are considering, in whole or in part, the educational and practical aspects of the Skokie Plan.

The streets and homes we show you today were not chosen at random. Nor were they chosen to show you only our best and most expensive residential sections.

Every block of homes we have shown is an "integrated" block.





Skokie's citizens are primarily ex-Chicagoans.

Upon arrival in Skokie, they discovered that concern for their homes and families could be translated into direct, political action.

They worked very hard for what they wanted, often against tremendous odds.

For a long time, Skokie was recognized as "The Fastest-Growing Suburb" and "The World's Largest Village".

Now we earnestly seek recognition as one of the World's Finest - an All American Village.

Thank you.





We wish to thank the following for their assistance in preparing this presentation:

Allstate Insurance Co.

Casey Ryback and the Skokie Fire Department

Skokie Board of Trustees and Gordon Thorn, Manager

Skokie Chamber of Commerce, and Karl Schmidt, Manager

Bob Moore, Editor, Skokie News

Herman Bloch
Jean Doney
James Mancuso

Co-Chairmen





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SKOKIE VALLEY
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NORTHWESTERN
SUBURBAN COUNCIL

SKOKIE VALLEY
WELFARE COUNCIL



VISITING
NURSE
ASSOCIATION
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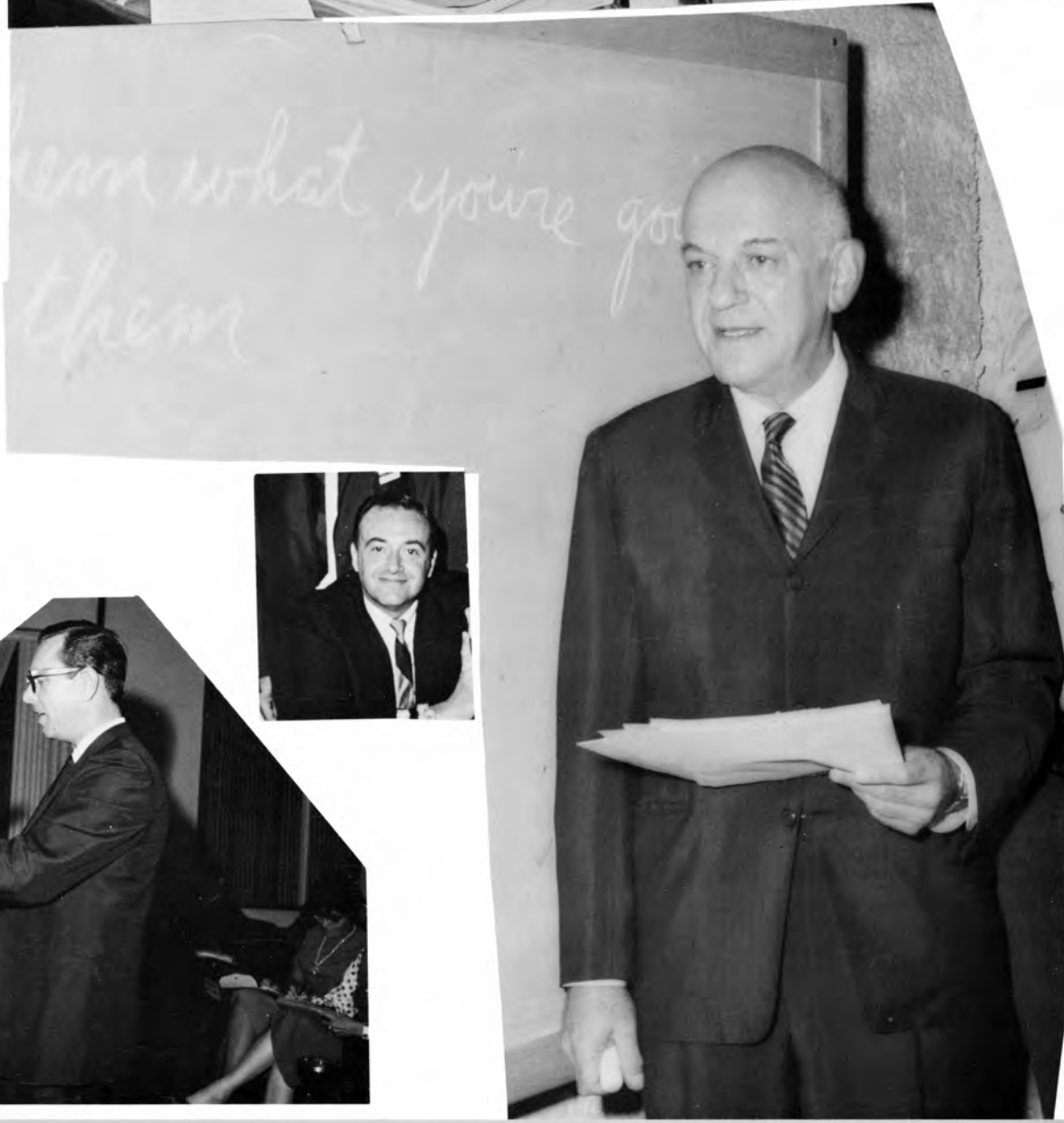
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