



RIVER FOREST

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Online Form Public Comments

The following comments are comments submitted via online form since January 2026, after the proposed project was initially announced

1/14/2026

Lauren Houlne | Lathrop & Thomas

I'm cautiously excited about the prospect of a new development in town. It's disappointing that the village continues to have such a limited selection of retail, dining, art and fitness options, especially when nearby communities like Oak Park, Melrose Park, and Forest Park are consistently welcoming new businesses across many categories. As residents in our early 30s, we would welcome more modern businesses in this building. I would even like more than 2 retail spaces available. Assuming the parking garage can adequately support both residential units and retail traffic, this development could be a positive addition to the area. That said, traffic flow should be carefully considered. Merging onto Madison from many side streets in River Forest is already challenging, particularly from Lathrop, and this should be addressed prior to approvals. A five-story height seems appropriate without feeling overly imposing. Anything shorter would likely not be financially viable for a developer. We moved to River Forest in 2021 and were initially excited about the Lake & Lathrop development, which was presented as a mixed-use project expected to be completed soon at the end of our street. Unfortunately, the site remains undeveloped and has become an eyesore. Based on that experience, it's difficult not to be skeptical that this project could face similar delays.

1/14/2026

Savannah Paul |

I strongly oppose this plan as it will add incredible congestion to an already difficult to navigate intersection at Madison and Jackson. What if anything will be done to make driving from the neighborhood onto madison easier?

1/14/2026

Renee Duba | Madison/Franklin

Hi, So glad to see some movement on this parcel! I am disappointed to see that no meaningful commitment to affordable housing is addressed. I would prefer to see affordable units for OWNERSHIP, rather than rentals. This isn't helping the village meet the state requirements, and doesn't help our lower income residents gain equity.

1/14/2026

Cindy Tegtmeier |

I live in this village because of it's distinctive architecture- to me, this building doesn't live up to that standard- if you close your eyes and open them in front of this building, you could be in any suburb USA.

1/14/2026

Kathleen Shanahan |

River Forest does not need any additional high end housing or rentals.

1/14/2026

Chris Muench |

This lot is directly connected to our alley. With small children living on both connected streets (Lathrop and Ashland), can a park/playground be considered to be added?

1/14/2026

Camille Hoover | Oak & Ashland

As a local realtor deeply rooted in this community, I see a significant and growing need for high-quality, single-level condominium living to serve longtime residents who are ready to downsize. Many of these homeowners raised their families here and wish to remain close as their children return to town and grandchildren put down roots. With the loss of the condominium development at Lake and Lathrop, the demand for upscale, elevator-served condominiums has become even more pressing. Providing this type of housing would allow residents to age in place within the community they love, while also freeing up single-family homes for the next generation of families—a true win-win for our town. On a more personal note, I would love to see additional walkable, grab-and-go food and beverage options in River Forest—places like a casual lunch spot, a neighborhood deli, a wine shop, or another restaurant. Having more everyday dining choices within town would enhance the vibrancy of the community and give residents convenient options without needing to leave River Forest.

1/14/2026

Kent Kreider | 300 block Forest Ave

70+ units and 80+ parking places. How many single person renters with one vehicle are expected to reside here? The ratio of parking spaces to units, especially multibedroom units, is not realistic.

1/14/2026

Erin Cibula | Washington & Franklin)

Concerns with the proposed development: - A 5 story development is too high for this area of Madison St. I realize there are other 5 story buildings in the Village, but we shouldn't keep moving in this direction to keep the integrity of our town. - The number of units will create more congestion in the area that I believe it can't handle. - The number of parking spots isn't adequate, with approximately 1 spot per unit and the remainder as guest parking. Many households, whether

young professionals or retirees, have 2 cars. Where will they park? - There is very little green space on the plan with the building being designed lot line to lot line. - With the impervious surfaces maxed out, how will this development handle its rainwater without overloading the sewers and add to potential flooding?

1/14/2026

Andre Bonakdar | Linden and Keystone

Any estimate of tangible benefit to the village from a tax perspective that may help offset incessant increases to our tax burden.

1/15/2026

Lisa Shanahan |

I am unable to attend the community input meetings. Will a video of the meeting be available to view after the meetings?

1/15/2026

Luanne Peterson | Lathrop and Lake Sts.

The proposed development is too high and too dense for the neighborhood. Despite repeated responses from neighbors that they do not want such a large development in their neighborhood, the Village Board consistently ignores the will of its citizens. The former development at Lathrop and Lake had the same reaction from the residents, but their requests for a smaller development were denied. We all saw how that turned out. Please consider developments that do not negatively impact a surrounding residential neighborhood. What would you want if you lived in the neighborhood? Town houses or maximum three story developments would more appropriately fit the neighborhood.

1/15/2026

John Kelty | William & Oak

We do not need a large apartment complex in our village, especially at Ashland and Madison which is currently very congested with traffic backups on Madison & lack of parking for local businesses most of the day. Furthermore, 72 rental units would bring a need for compromise & Section 8 housing concessions. Lincoln School is at capacity; I believe any future development should benefit our residents at large and focus on families who have a vested interest in our community by contributing to our tax base!

1/15/2026

Rachel | Oak and Bonnie Brae

I don't understand why the village isn't prioritizing building a public pool for residents. Could this space include a public pool instead of just allowing real estate developers to privatize land owned by the Village?

1/15/2026

Takeshi Shimamura |

I respectfully request that the Village Board and the developer give careful consideration to both traffic impacts and architectural compatibility before advancing plans for the proposed 72-unit residential development with commercial space on Madison Street. [Traffic, Transit, and Infrastructure Concerns] Madison Street already experiences severe congestion on weekdays, particularly during the evening rush hours between approximately 4:00 PM and 6:30 PM. During this period, traffic frequently backs up from Des Plaines Avenue westward past the Canadian National (CN) railroad crossing, Forest Avenue, and at times, to Keystone Avenue. I encourage Board members and the developer to observe traffic conditions firsthand during these peak hours. A major contributing factor is the absence of traffic signals along Madison Street between First Avenue and Jackson Boulevard. This extended, uninterrupted stretch effectively turns Madison Street into an alternative commuter route during peak hours, especially when congestion occurs on I-290. Many drivers exit I-290 at Harlem Avenue, drive through Jackson Boulevard to Madison Street, or rely heavily on Madison Street and Jackson Boulevard to enter I-290 at Des Plaines Avenue. As a result, Madison Street routinely carries traffic volumes that exceed what its current two-lane configuration can reasonably accommodate. The proposed addition of 72 residential units, together with associated commercial activity, will inevitably increase daily vehicle trips, deliveries, ride-share usage, and service traffic, further compounding congestion on an already constrained corridor. Public transit users are also directly affected. I commute via the CTA Blue Line from the Forest Park station. Because Madison Street lacks signalized crossings between First Avenue and Jackson Boulevard, the intersection at Jackson Boulevard is effectively the only safe, controlled crossing for pedestrians returning home. This creates a significant access and safety issue for transit riders, particularly during peak traffic hours, and highlights the need for additional pedestrian and traffic control measures along Madison Street. Pace buses serving the Forest Park CTA Blue Line station via Van Buren Street already experience difficulty merging into Madison Street traffic during peak periods, resulting in delays and additional safety concerns for both riders and motorists. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Village to address traffic infrastructure, pedestrian safety, and transit access on Madison Street before approving a large-scale residential and commercial development. This should include a comprehensive traffic impact study and serious consideration of mitigation measures such as: • Installation of traffic signals and pedestrian-controlled crossings between First Avenue and Jackson Boulevard, • Re-evaluation of the current two-lane configuration of Madison Street, • Improved congestion management near the CN railroad crossing, and • Enhanced safety measures for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. [Architectural Compatibility and Fairness] In addition to traffic and transit concerns, I

would like to raise an issue regarding the proposed building design. As currently presented, the design does not appear to conform to the Village of River Forest's architectural heritage, particularly its strong association with Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired principles. As a reminder, my understanding is that, Promenade River Forest, a 29-unit townhome development on Madison Street, was required to undergo multiple design revisions to align with the Village's architectural character and heritage. In the interest of fairness and consistency, I respectfully expect the Village to apply the same design standards and level of scrutiny to the proposed 72-unit development. I offer these comments in the spirit of constructive engagement and responsible planning. I appreciate the Village's commitment to balancing growth with infrastructure readiness, public safety, and preservation of the community's unique character. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

1/15/2026

Sue Kelty |

Has the Village had conversations with D90 regarding the potential increase in students? Condo owners would contribute to the tax base. Apartment rentals do not pay additional taxes to help fund the school district.

1/15/2026

Roberta Borst |

I am supportive of finding the right development for the site but extremely worried about the potential impact on the narrow traffic lane on Madison street between 1st Ave & Harlem especially at Desplaines Ave. Other streets like Lake are already absorbing Heavy traffic at evening rush hour /commute times. Any plan for development should include a plan for increased traffic management

1/15/2026

kristina s | lake & thatcher

please consider including a few low-income or subsidized units within the development in order to create opportunities for all to live in our village!

1/16/2026

Anonymous | North of the tracks, frequent visitor of south of the tracks.

I am fine with the size and scale of the design - although I would like to see more retail on the first floor. The issue I have with the building is the aesthetics. It is generic and could be in any neighborhood in the Chicago area. As one of the first large developments along the corridor, it should make a statement and show the innovative side of RF.

1/16/2026

Lucia Giudice |

1. Could you provide more specifics on the due diligence efforts by the Village and the consultant utilized to support due diligence. What were the components of the due diligence evaluation and the related findings? Were any areas of risk for the Village identified that need to be mitigated? 2. What were the other four proposals that were considered and what was the rationale (for each) for not moving forward with those developers' proposals? 3. During the casual conversation I hosted at my home, several attendees expressed concerns that they wanted a building that fit in with the historical/architectural character of River Forest. The depiction of the building planned seems to lack character. It looks a lot like the building across the street in Forest Park, which the attendees thought did not fit in with the character and charm of River Forest. 4.

Are there just two retail spots in this development? For suggestion for types of retail, I would appreciate some quality, fast casual spots with room to meet/sit. I often go to Publican Quality Bread in Oak Park and would love an "outpost" in River Forest. A coffee place (highly recommend Dark Matter spot) would great too. If you are trying to attract young professionals, the retail needs to be more on par with the city. 5. Not directly related to this development, are there any plans to improve the stretch along Madison specifically the strip mall nearby (same side of street that has the Puffs store) which has a few empty store fronts. I wish our commercial corridors had more charm similar to what North Riverside has done. Thanks for your consideration of these questions.

1/19/2026

Melissa Mitchell |

The proposal is for way too many apartments and parking spots for such a small area. We asked the village to limit the build to three stories. The traffic congestion in the alley due to 72 apartments and 87 parking spaces is ridiculous. Traffic from Madison is already cutting down our alley on a regular basis. I'm all for the building, but it needs to be limited to the three stories we requests, and the volume of units and parking must be reduced. This directly negatively impacts the quality of life and property values of the current residents of South River Forest.

1/20/2026

Marta | Division and Monroe

I have a number of concerns regarding this proposal...It appears that there will have to be numerous zoning amendments to this proposal. Why can't this village get a proposal that follows our codes???? That is a lot of apartments in one concentrated area. What will the impact be on Lincoln School and Roosevelt Middle School? Our schools are already at capacity, where do you propose the overflow of students will go? It seems that District 90's budget is already stretched so adding to the school buildings is not an option. What do you suggest?

1/22/2026

River Forest Township Assessor |

How are the property taxes structured for the building? Is there a delay once occupied, in paying full property taxes on it total assessment? Are the taxes and/or the assessments structured on some units being low income? What do the developers believe the value of the building to be once fully occupied?

1/22/2026

Margaret Kinnare |

Growing up in River Forest I'm very familiar with the area at Ashland and Madison and putting up a 72 unit building not only over taxes the sewer system but is only going to add to the traffic congestion already there. If I lived on Ashland I'd be very upset. I'm very disappointed the village would even consider a building of that size.

1/22/2026

Kelly Hull |

I am excited and hope this goes through. This is just what River Forest needs. It was unfortunate that the Bonnie Brae and Thomas development was stopped and now it is still a vacant lot. People need to support improving our Village and Community.

1/23/2026

Stephen |

I support the Madison & Ashland proposal because it fits this corner and fixes a weak spot on Madison in a way that feels like "River Forest," not like a random suburban project dropped in from nowhere. This is already a mixed-use stretch on a busy street with transit nearby and daily needs close. Putting housing over ground-floor commercial belongs here. It puts more people within walking distance of Madison, supports small businesses with steady foot traffic, and extends the "downtown" feeling west instead of letting it fade out. The height and massing are also doing real work. They help define the street edge, make the block feel more continuous, and create the comfortable enclosure that makes a place feel walkable and lively. Right now the western side of Madison lacks that momentum, but this pushes it one block further. Parking is the one area where this project either works or becomes a constant headache. It is limited here and always will be, and the Village cannot just require more spaces the way it used to because of the people over parking act. That means the building has to be set up to function under those limits, not hope the math works out. My only real critique is that a proper bike room should be a must. A secure, easy-to-use space makes it realistic for some households to be less car dependent. Without it, this project becomes much less attractive to one-car or no-car households, even though the location should be ideal for them. Cargo bikes are not a niche thing anymore. People use them for groceries, short errands on Madison, and getting to transit, the exact trips that cause the most friction at this

intersection. But they are heavy, expensive, and awkward. If you have to wrestle them through doors or cannot store them securely, people will not use them, and people who already rely on them will not choose to live here. That means more households choosing short car trips and more pressure on nearby streets. Not everyone will use a bike room, and that is fine. The point is that every household that can live with one car (or no car) helps. Fewer second cars means less spillover parking and fewer low-value car trips clogging curb space and turns. A bike room is one of the few design choices that actually changes behavior here, and it's far cheaper and cleaner than trying to add more parking at this site. This is a good fit for the location and a strong step for the corridor.

1/23/2026

Mary Hope Griffin |

I am concerned about having such a tall building at the end of the block and how out of character it is with the rest of the block. I worry about the potential shadow and loss of privacy for my neighbors across the street. I am also concerned about traffic congestion and parking. We have recently had a rat problem and I am wondering how this will be mitigated during construction.

1/23/2026

Jamie Neely |

I am pleased with this proposal and support this development. I am excited to see more multi family housing built in River Forest especially along busy commercial streets. There are a few similar sized buildings nearby in Forest Park so I'm glad to see one being built in River Forest. We need more of this type of development in our town to bring in new residents (and those existing residents who prefer multi-family housing). Plus this will help alleviate some of the property tax burden on current residents.

1/23/2026

Anonymous |

Hello! As a member of the River Forest community and a strong advocate for equitable housing across Illinois, I am committed to ensuring that housing opportunities are accessible to all individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, or socioeconomic background. With that commitment in mind, I would like to make the following statement and pose a question. It is my understanding that the Village of River Forest currently requires approximately 39 additional affordable housing units to comply with the Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act (AHPAA). Will the proposed Madison Street development include affordable housing units that would help the Village meet, or make progress toward meeting, its Affordable Housing Plan goals?

1/23/2026

Ed McDevitt |

-Please publish detailed information about the chosen developer, Five Thirty-one Partners. Very little can readily be found about them. - Who are their principals? - Are any of the principals associated in any way, past or present, with any village trustees or staff? - Is the developer also the architect? Was JLL instructed to find a developer who encompasses all phases, including design? - If the developer is also the designer, why did River Forest not seek an architecture firm separate from the developer, as was done, for example, with District House in Oak Park, a somewhat comparable development? - What is the developer's capital position? - Is development funding fully vetted and viable?

1/23/2026

Cathy |

What types of retail stores are being considered? There is a lack of cafes, restaurants and coffee shops in River Forest

1/23/2026

Dan McNamara |

Thank you for sending us (who live on the block of the site) a letter the day AFTER the first open house so we have no time to analyze any of this. It feels like you're trying to act like you care about our input, but going to do what you're going to do no matter what. The fact that so many residents were against the zoning changes last time around and now this proposal is for a very high density building underscores that. Note I've read all of your FAQs and kind of expect the exact same responses, but you should hear and consider the voice of your residents (especially those directly impacted by this). Here are my initial thoughts. My main concerns are I care about being able to park on my street in front of my house, I'm concerned about my street being full of cars all day every day, traffic on my street, and the high density/volume of people coming to my block. What research has been done on any of this and what am I to expect? Also, how long should I prepare to deal with construction on this project?

1/23/2026

Angela Grover |

There are several concerns I have with the proposal as it stands, and I ask that you weigh the path forward more comprehensively as to respect our neighborhood in River Forest. I will touch on each of these concerns very briefly, all which stem from the proposal to change zoning – 1. Height – I do not support increasing the limit on building height by changing the zoning code to allow for a five-story building. There are no buildings that exceed four stories until you are east of Oak Park Boulevard and for miles to the west through Maywood and Hillside. Additionally, the building diagonally across from the proposed site should serve as an example of what not to do. It

overshadows the neighbors to the south across the alley and its commercial space remains vacant. If the Village is expecting anticipated revenue from a commercial space, there is little indication that is guaranteed. 2. Parking – Density and parking go hand in hand. The scale of parking that is necessary to support a five-story building plus commercial needs will have a disproportionate impact on a residential block with families. Approximately 60 residents live in 25 occupied homes on the block where the proposed building will be located. It is currently a setting designed for low traffic volumes and daily family activity. The addition of 87 parking spaces will generate hundreds of additional daily vehicle movements, even under conservative assumptions. These trips will be concentrated in and at alley exits and unsignalized intersections immediately adjacent to homes, increasing exposure risk for children and pedestrians. Urban planning best practice avoids shifting corridor-serving parking demand onto neighborhood streets and alleys. Parking access and circulation should be aligned with Madison Street’s function, not absorbed by a residential block, small alley thoroughfare or constrained intersections without signals – all which are ill-suited for that increase of volume. 3. Setback – the setback on Ashland must be maintained. We chose to live in this part of the Village because it is extremely walkable and to reduce the setback is not in character with the existing development nor would allow for sufficient space for foot traffic. Additionally, when buildings or streetscape elements encroach into required sight triangles near intersections or alley mouths with no signals, drivers exiting at low speeds lose critical reaction time, and pedestrians lose early visual cues of turning vehicles. Conditions of approval should require a sight-triangle and visibility exhibit demonstrating compliance through corner transparency, stepped-back building treatments, and strict limitations on obstructions such as signage, landscaping, or utilities. In 2022, the Village responded to our efforts to slow traffic on Ashland with a stop sign at Ashland and Vine. With more than 40 children in this six-block radius, parking and traffic impacts proposed here cannot be ignored. I would suggest, and did not see, an alley operations and management plan that addresses these volumes, delivery routing, ride-hail protocols, speed controls, raised crossings, lighting and security that will be monitored post-occupancy with defined performance thresholds and corrective actions if traffic or safety impacts exceed expectations. This is not a neutral change. With thoughtful design, enforceable operations, and proportional mitigation, the project can protect the neighborhood residents as well as the safety and livability of the families who already call this block home. Thank you for taking these comments into consideration and prioritizing the impact of your decisions of the people who have chosen to live here.

1/23/2026

Jason Baker |

Instead of starting another project, how about we focus on the mess at Lake and Lathrop? How much longer are you going to allow that eyesore to fester?

1/23/2026

Dan LaBarge |

72 units is a huge increase in the density of this area; why does this need to be 5 stories, the rest of Madison is no more than 4 stories. 87 parking spots for 72 units is not realistic. I understand the need to develop this site, but this is too large of a plan for that piece of land

1/23/2026

Kathryn Jandeska |

More information about Five Thirty-One Partners LLC is needed before I and many others will feel comfortable about this relationship. Online research does not yield a website for this group. Who are they? What's their track record? Do any of the principals have ANY connection to current or past officers in River Forest? This question is particularly pertinent given the current administration's mishandling of the Lake/Lathrop project.

1/24/2026

Paula Record |

Looks great. Good to include all the parking.

1/24/2026

Anita Morgan |

Regarding the Madison Street Development Update that I received in the mail, I think the phrase "...retail space, which should be especially appealing to both young professionals attracted to the quality of life in our village, as well as empty-nesters who want to remain in our community" is as offensive as it is unnecessary. Why not just say "attracted by the quality of life in our village?" Odd to qualify that statement by suggesting one must have children to live here. Many "young professionals" may choose not to have kids and yet still want to live here because of "the quality of life in our village." We moved here thirty years ago, as "young professionals" with no children of school age ever. There are many "empty-nesters" and "young professionals" who simply like to live here regardless of whether they have, or plan to have children. Best to tell the qualities of living in this village, rather than suggesting it is a village best suited for families of school age, and not much more. And now even that is being challenged with teachers who feel they are being unfairly compensated.

1/24/2026

Sara Lisy |

I am in favor of this development proposal. A five story development is perfectly reasonable for one of the main commercial corridors in the village. The 1.25 parking spot per unit ratio is also completely reasonable. My family lives in a single family home with a 2 car garage, but we only had one vehicle for the first four years we lived in River Forest; we didn't add a second vehicle until our second child was a year old. We know many families in River Forest who make good use out of public transit options and only have 1 vehicle.

1/24/2026

Erik Harris |

Congratulations, this is a good development. It fits the use and character of Madison and is something the village needs very much. 87 parking spaces but with 15 dedicated to public/retail parking equals a parking-to-units 1:1 ratio. I think this is good and very appropriate for a multi-family housing project located so close to three commuter train lines, and the current Work From Home job market. Streetscape and street width on Ashland and Lathrop should strongly encourage access and call attention to the alley entrance for parking. I think the street parking spaces on Madison should be reduced or completely eliminated if it's not vigorously enforced. There should be zero permitted off-street loading spaces; retail should load from inside the parking and alley. What sort of planning requirements will be in place to control parcel delivery vans, food delivery, and ride share cars? These services are notorious traffic law violators, constantly double park, and disregard rules of the road. These, far more than the concern about the residents' parking numbers, are the real problem that must be planned for. How will these services be directed to off-street locations for pick up and delivery? Is the area to the east that's shown in the rendering part of this development? Where is the pedestrian entrance for drop off entry? Better that there is an area at the inside parking for drop off and delivery, or clearly marked spot in the alley side near an access door that's convenient for residents. The small resident entrance on Madison is for convenience and street character, but should not be for deliveries. Design and material aesthetics aside, the blank street facade on Madison is unfortunate with the parking behind. This is a good place to direct design attention to maintain a welcome and vibrant street presence (showcase the bike room, retail signage shadow box, display storefront) Are there any affordable housing requirements?

1/24/2026

Ed Pogue |

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed development of a five-story mixed-use building on the empty lot on Madison. While I understand the desire to develop unused property, this proposal significantly exceeds the allowed building height and density for the site and raises numerous issues that will negatively impact nearby residents and the character of River Forest. First, I'm deeply offended that I received information about the Open Houses in the mail one day after the first open house. This is what makes the community have 0 trust in the current administration. Key Concerns Excessive Height and Density A five-story building is inconsistent

with the scale and character of River Forest, which has historically maintained a small-town feel. While neighboring communities may have taller structures, River Forest does not, and this development would fundamentally alter the look and feel of our neighborhood. The proposed height will block natural sunlight to my yard, obstruct our sunset views, and create privacy concerns as residents will have direct views into our backyard. Parking Shortages and Overflow The plan includes 72 residential units but only 87 parking spaces—barely one per unit and insufficient for retail customers. Overflow parking will inevitably spill onto surrounding streets, making it difficult for residents and guests to find parking near their homes. Our alley is T-shaped, and the proposal places parking directly adjacent to my property. This will increase noise, traffic, and congestion in the alley, which was never designed for such heavy use. Traffic and Safety Madison Street is already heavily congested. Adding 72 units and additional retail will exacerbate traffic issues and create safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists. Impact on Neighborhood Character Retail along Madison is already struggling. Adding more retail space raises questions about sustainability—what small businesses can afford new construction rents? The last thing River Forest needs is more banks, mattress stores, or chiropractors rather than vibrant, community-focused businesses. Construction Disruption Based on the challenges with the Lake and Lathrop development, I have little confidence that this project will be completed efficiently. Extended construction will bring prolonged noise, dust, and disruption to our homes and neighborhood. Environmental and Quality of Life Impact The loss of sunlight and increased noise will diminish the quality of life for nearby residents. Additionally, the increased impermeable surface area could lead to stormwater runoff issues. Community Input Your FAQ states that building height was a key issue identified in the 2024 neighborhood dialogues and that developers were informed residents would be “very interested” in this aspect. I can assure you that myself and many neighbors strongly oppose a building of this height. This proposal does not reflect community sentiment. Request for Action I urge the Village to: Deny any proposal that exceeds current zoning limits for height and density. Require developers to present realistic parking solutions that do not burden surrounding streets. Conduct a thorough traffic impact study and share results publicly. Engage in meaningful dialogue with residents before approving any plan that changes the character of our community. River Forest is a unique and cherished community. This development, as proposed, threatens that character and the quality of life for those who live here. Please consider these concerns seriously before moving forward. Violation of Height, Bulk, and Density Regulations According to River Forest’s zoning code, in residential districts (e.g., R1), a building cannot exceed 40 feet or 2½ stories (§10-8-6). While this site is commercial, the spirit of the code clearly favors low-rise development and gradual transitions in scale. [codelibrar...mlegal.com] The project includes approximately 72 residential units on what appears to be a sub-acre site—exceeding permitted units-per-acre thresholds. For example, R1 allows just 2.8 units per acre (§10-8-3). Even in denser C2/C3 zones, River Forest requires careful site plan review to ensure compatibility with adjacent low-rise neighborhoods (§10-17-3.A). [codelibrar...mlegal.com] [zoneomics.com] The proposal effectively requests variations on height, bulk, density, and possibly parking—all of which trigger the Village’s variation process, requiring demonstrable hardship, not convenience (§10-5-4). Extending five stories simply for developer profit is not sufficient to satisfy that standard. [vrf.us]

 Insufficient Parking & Overflow Impact The plan provides 87 parking spaces for 72 units, or roughly 1.2 spaces/unit, well below River Forest’s implied requirement of at least 2.5 spaces per

unit for multi-family or PD projects. [Text of th...ations.com] The Village's own guidelines on commuter and daily permits show that free street parking is limited and controlled. Overflow from this development would overwhelm this system. [vrf.us] Unrestricted alley use also conflicts with River Forest's Traffic Regulations (§9-2-21), and shifting heavy parking operations into the T-shaped alley would create hazard, noise, and safety issues for residents. [codelibrar...mlegal.com]

 **Resource Impact & Neighborhood Character** The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes scaling development respectfully along Madison Street with strong buffering and contextual transitions. A five-story structure would dominate adjacent two-story homes, blocking sunlight, views, and privacy. [River Fore...ations.com] Shadowing from the structure will negatively affect our backyard and lawn, undermining the quality of life that defines River Forest. The bright, sprawling mass will deviate sharply from prevailing residential context. ⚡ **Construction Disruption & Uncertainty** The Village acknowledges ongoing troubles with the Lake & Lathrop development—litigation delays, stalled financing, and litigation have already left the community waiting years for completion. [oakpark.com], [therealdeal.com], [chicagobusiness.com] Subjecting our block to yet another multi-year construction process, with noise, dust, and heavy equipment will profoundly disrupt residents. 🌳 **Environmental Concerns** River Forest requires stormwater detention under Cook County Watershed rules (§4-13) and mandated stormwater pollution prevention plans (§4-17-7). Surface parking adjacent to homes can exacerbate runoff, flooding, and soil compaction. [codelibrar...mlegal.com], [codelibrar...mlegal.com] Displacement of natural ground cover for impermeable surfaces increases stormwater flow during major rain events, potentially impacting surrounding homes' basements and yards. 🏪 **Retail Viability Questioned** Madison Street's existing retail vacancies suggest the market cannot support more speculative retail development. New high-rent storefronts may sit empty or worse, drive out unique small businesses. Who can afford the rents in new construction? Without market analysis supporting robust demand, adding more retail is speculative. 🗳️ **Community Input & Good Governance** Despite FAQ claims that “neighbors would be very interested” in building height, my block (with neighbors I'll speak for) strongly opposes a building taller than two to three stories. [vrf.us] Approving this project without thorough public engagement, accurate impact studies (traffic, parking, shadowing), and guarantee of adherence to Village codes and PD standards, undermines public trust.

1/24/2026

Guillermo Arauz |

I want to know how this will affect the amount of RE tax I pay, will it increase/decrease?

1/24/2026

Anonymous |

Can you provide information as to what the anticipated rent would be for each of the bedroom size categories

1/24/2026

Mitchell Evans |

I am supportive of the new housing development at 7620 w Madison, but wish to see more units created with less parking

1/24/2026

Allison Evans |

I am supportive of the new housing development at 7620 w Madison, but wish to see more units created and fewer new parking spots developed

1/25/2026

Jake Houlne |

1. The village should pay keen attention to the amount of committed green scaping, especially trees. It is too easy for developers to delete 1 tree because of water lines, 1 tree because it utilities, etc. until the project has no trees. The Village should get minimum green scaping, especially trees, committed in writing. 2. The traffic patterns at Lathrop and Madison are already terrible - it is nearly impossible to turn east from Lathop onto Madison with a stop sign. Increased commercial developments will exacerbate that current situation and should be addressed in conjunction with this development. 3. This "commercial" development is majority multi-family at the street level. Over half of the street frontage on what is supposed to be a retail corridor on Madison is just facade for a resident parking garage. If you look at similar style buildings, like many in western River North for example, those areas are not thriving retail districts, but pass-throughs for traffic. If this development is supposed to be for ALL River Forest residents and to promote retail districts, the development must be re-worked to make the entire Madison St frontage into commercial retail. This could easily be accomplished by converting ground-floor indoor resident parking into commercial space, and non-committed outdoor parking into committed resident parking. More retail space is crucial to hit the critical mass required to support a true retail district, rather than just 1 or 2 stores on an otherwise vacant, brick-walled block.

1/25/2026

Lynn Libera |

I attended the 1/24 Open House. The visuals and Five Thirty One personnel, Chuck & Victor, were very informative. Thank you for putting this on. The height, size, apartment and retail layouts seem reasonable, functional and attractively put together. While I'm sure there will be tweaks, I wanted to register my overall support of the project. Thanks.

1/25/2026

Mark Harmon |

I don't think River Forest needs a new building with 72 new units. The developer might want 72 units for their profit margin, but 72 new units is not good for the village.

1/25/2026

Mike and Sheryl Grant |

We have lived here for over 30 years. We attended the open house session Saturday and had several detailed conversations with the Village and project representatives that were present. We support the project in its entirety and look forward to seeing that corner developed. In particular, we liked the parking scheme, unit layout, and soft facade design. We live about 5 blocks from the site and look forward to its development.

1/25/2026

Susan Altier |

1. Will we as the public see more details about the economic viability review of Five Thirty One Partners and of their proposed project? What specifically was reviewed, what were the findings, who at Ryan, LLC conducted the analysis, and is there any relationship between those individuals at Ryan, LLC and principals/managers/investors in Five Thirty One Partners LLC or the Village of River Forest Administration or The Village President, Board of Trustees Members, or any Appointed members of the Economic Development Commission or Development Review Board? 2. Will you share more information with the public about Five Thirty One Partners LLC? From my research using the Illinois Secretary of State's Business Registry - the file id for Five Thirty One Partners LLC is 07693044, the main address of 5205 N. Bernard, Office, Chicago, IL 60625, the manager listed is Stark Holdings LLC (file #06065902 - where Charles R. Westphal is listed as the manager at that same address), and the agent is listed for both as Donna Hyde at 1801 N. Bissell #1F, Chicago, IL 60614. Mr. Westphal is listed in the database as the manager of 65 LLC entities which do not seem to include any of the 85 LLCs for which the applicant, Viktor Jakovljevic, is listed in the database as the manager. And the letterhead that was used by Mr. Jakovljevic to submit the proposal to the Village of River Forest on 1/19/26 shows "531 Partners, LLC" (with 531 in numerals rather than words) and with the 1801 N Bissell #1, Chicago, IL, 60614 address affiliated with Donna Hyde who is the agent listed for Mr. Westphal's LLC entities. I am not finding anything online through all of this research officially/legally connecting Mr. Jakovljevic with the legal entity of Five Thirty One Partners LLC. Considering what this village has been through with the Lake and Lathrop development debacle, the lack of these details and only Mr. Jakovljevic's name and signature on the application with no mention of Stark Holdings LLC, Mr. Westphal, Ms. Hyde, or any other "partners" or investors is very troubling. Will disclosure of these individuals and their legal relationships be enforced via #1 on the application that requires "...names and addresses of...the applicant and all persons having an ownership or beneficial interest in the subject property and proposed development" for which the applicant did not request a waiver? 3. For #13 on the

application regarding all of the economic viability requirements, only one of the “no” boxes was filled in. Do all three of the boxes need to be filled in by the applicant to ensure that all three of the requirements are met as a part of their formal project review? 4. Like many other neighbors, I have concerns about density, traffic congestion, and parking, especially on Ashland that are bound to come from a development with 72 units, many of which are 2-3 (and some noted as 4) bedroom units. In response to my questions about parking concerns at the 1/22/26 Open House, Mr. Westphal mentioned that they “have the capability to install lifts for the indoor parking spots so that two cars can use one spot” and Mr. Jakovljevic mentioned that “the designated parking spots for residents will require that the cars in those spots have a permanent building resident parking sticker in addition to the Village of River Forest registration sticker on the windshield to prevent those residents from letting guests/visitors use their designated spot while they street park on Ashland since they are River Forest residents.” Please ensure that these details are documented in their formal project proposal.

1/25/2026

Matt Nickels |

I am unable to attend the Jan 26th meeting this is a great location to add this apartment building. It matches the characteristics of the neighboring commercial and multifamily district. One of the rare opportunities for River Forest to add housing stock that will support our entire community both those downsizing and those moving into the neighborhood. 5 floors and 72 units is fine as the developer is motivated to make an economical product which subsequently makes it more affordable for the end user. 1:1 parking ratio is good no need to overburden a property with more with close access to the blue line to. I'd be interested in seeing options to offset the building on ashland either with a physical set back or a stepped facade to transition from the 0 lot madison blocking to the residential street.

1/26/2026

Lucia Giudice |

1. Well answers to all the questions submitted by the survey be included in the FAQs? 2. Could you provide more information on the corporate structure for 531 partners. It appears their part of V3, which was not explained in the announcement about the development. It also appears that V3 developed the property directly across the street in Forest Park. Could you confirm that. Any reason why that was not disclosed on the VRF website? 3. Does the village president or any of the trustees have prior business or personal relationship relationships with either V3 or 531 partners? Thanks for your consideration of these questions.

1/26/2026

Trudi Ross |

I attended both open houses and after speaking to the developer, and village employees many of my questions were answered. But I still have concerns, and am not in favor of the proposed 5 story multi-use building on Ashland and Madison. The village had many meetings with residents and we all voiced our opinions for what we wanted to see go there and what we didn't want. The village didn't listen. First of all, the zoning is not for over three stories for a reason. Anything taller does not fit into our neighborhood. Five stories with 72 units packed into that area is extreme. The same developer has a similar project in Elmhurst that will be 40 units. The building right across the street they did, in Forest Park is 4 stories. If this builder can't make something smaller on that lot, it's time to find a different builder. I am concerned about the traffic, the parking and the infrastructure having that many units and residents. The property is also being promoted as multi-use, but the plans are for only one retail space 3380 sq ft, or 2 at 1500 sq ft I was told. That won't make a big difference for tax revenue as it is being sold to us as a benefit. The village wants "the project to align with River Forest standards and represents a sound, sustainable investment that is consistent with our community's quality of life". I don't see how a rental building of this size contributes to any of our qualities of life. We as neighboring residents voiced our desire for something to be built there the entire village could benefit from. A community gym or a restaurant. Or even housing, but not five stories or 72 units. How about townhomes like the ones on Park and Madison, Forest and Madison, or Lake Street between Franklin and Ashland. Those types of housing fit into the community. Lastly, I want to address the parking situation. Eighty-seven parking space, or even more with the lifts suggested won't be enough for that many units. The fifteen outdoor parking spaces off the streets for guests and business parking is not nearly enough. I can see patrons of businesses along Madison Street in Forest Park using all of those. With townhomes, all the parking could be inside parking. The lots that were purchased by the village where parking is now suggested could be nice backyards for the townhomes. That would look so much better and fit into the neighborhood. I am anxious to see what the village will do since they didn't take the neighbors ideas or concerns into consideration. If this project goes through as proposed, it will be another step in taking away River Forest's small town charm.

1/26/2026

Jan Saeger |

Thank you for holding Open Houses to view 7620 Madison St. Plans by V3 Development Group. Thanks to the Village Board for adding this step to Planned Development Process and to Village Staff for coordinating the effort. >I like the Appearance. >Comprehensive Plan recommends 50' for Madison St. (pg. 103) >Why 5 stories when this same Developer built 4 story building across street in Forest Park? >Approx. 5' higher than highest point of The Sheridan – now The Sunrise

Possibly lower ceilings to 9' to decrease overall height? >Provide renderings of Streetscape from various angles >Hold developer to stated 10' "Buffer" >How many units at 7652 Madison St., Forest Park? What % is occupied? >Developer, Please fully answer all questions about finances >What is plan to use Madison St. TIF funds? >Any idea of Real Estate Taxes? >Traffic and Safety Commission weigh-in 1. Current conditions along Madison St. and Ashland need to be addressed now 2. Delivery vehicles like Amazon and FedEx park where-ever they please; in driving lanes without penalty. Will only get worse with any kind of building. I see the small pkg delivery

increase to my building. 3. Where is parking space for Maint. Person; Moving trucks? 4. Where does trash sit until pick-up days? (concern of rats/mice). >Sustainability Commission weigh-in 1. No set backs for Green space. >Thoughts: A Landlord may have more power to manage renters (Eviction), than Condo Assn. has to manage owners. Landlords can manage parking spaces more efficiently than Condo Assn where parking spaces are permanently assigned to the unit, whether used or not. Condo owners may or may not take better care of their units than renters. Individual attitude.

1/26/2026

Bailey Linen | Thatcher and Lake

We don't need more luxury apartments. We need affordable housing. This is, frankly, insultingly out of touch.

1/27/2026

Brian Herbstritt |

Why retail rather than a "white table cloth" restaurant with full bar service? every other suburb in the area has developed full service bar restaurants except River Forest. Residents have to leave River Forest to dine out. Oak Park used to be "dry" but has done a great job of developing a thriving restaurant scene. While River Forest has done nothing to develop any full service bar restaurants.

1/27/2026

Rick Gillis |

I support this development. It is aligned with the character of Madison Street in River Forest. The developer is very reputable, the building method (brick on block) will have the building standing for years to come, and the fact that they build to own means they will be good neighbors. Further, we need the tax revenue that it will bring to support our schools, the Park District and the Village.

1/27/2026

Jennifer Martin | Ashland and Washington

We are in favor of building housing there, but we are not in favor of a rental building this large. If there's not enough parking, how do we know that our street won't eventually fill up if the park requirements change on our block? Why can't these be condo buildings, and why so large? Much of our area is against this as we want residents who buy and stay here. This current plan will add more noise and traffic. This does not benefit us at all. We need a smaller development and ideally condos.

1/27/2026

Margie Cekander |

The development is too big for the lot and its residential, low commercial neighborhood; occupies the entirety of all 3 parcels without setbacks; too tall; too dense; too close to single family homes (SFHs); violates multiple zoning codes. Issues with: sight lines; shadows; lighting; noise; tight parking; balconies looking into SFHs and yards; high neighborhood retail vacancies; tight in/out traffic and on Ashland. Uncreative design; matches 7652 Madison, FP, which Neighborhood Dialogues feedback rejected. Rushed, incomplete and changing details. This giant box maximizes revenues to the developer and Village at the expense of neighbors and residents. The secretive process disregards all River Forest residents and fosters distrust.

1/29/2026

Anonymous |

Clarify the number of units which will be affordable as required by federal law. Also clarify the number which will be able to be quickly made accessible under federal law. If this developer is not doing any of this please have them specifically state why and the village needs to clarify how this unit will support housing needs of older adults or disabled people on fixed incomes. Supporting housing options that are affordable and accessible are how you operationalize your DEI statements into something tangible.

1/29/2026

Alycia McNamara | Ashland & Madison

I disagree with the Village's statement in the FAQ: "Responsible variances are the norm for development in communities throughout the metro area—and have been in River Forest. Without a viable proposal, the site will sit vacant and contribute nothing to the vitality of River Forest." The village has voted down zoning changes. It is not what we want. Why must we bend to the whim of developers? You say that nothing else can go in this space beyond what would make a developer happy; I disagree - many things can go in this space: perhaps some single family homes in the two lots you knocked down; perhaps a dog park or other greenspace in our land-locked village? The developer is there for money; the village should be there for its residents. Shame on you for falling for the almighty dollar, especially during this moment in time. My question is: can you assign a monetary value to the tax income that this residence will bring in, and what will does the village intend to do with the money? Please use quantifiable data.

1/30/2026

R Richardson |

two concerns: one: 5 stories will overshadow that intersection and compete with the beautiful church across the street, suggesting only 4 stories. Two: with only 4 stories the contractor should then be able to accommodate all resident parking within. Too many times parking overflows effect the community, ala retail parking. I would also like to suggest a set back large enough to

accommodate bench seating and proper landscaping with an ample sidewalk. This should continue to RF standard started within that block.

2/2/2026

Beth Vlerick |

Does the developer Five Thirty-One Partners have a website?

2/3/2026

Steve | Lake and thatcher

What is the annual projected tax revenue? How could this no be included?

2/5/2026

Kelly Abcarian |

1. Will the school district invoice the Village or the developer annually for any students who reside in the TIF development and enroll in the district during the life of the TIF? 2.

Can you confirm that the developer—not the school district or the Village—will be responsible for paying those invoices each year? 3. Will the reimbursement amount be based on the district’s actual per-pupil cost of education using the out-of-district tuition rate, currently estimated at approximately \$21,000–\$24,000 per student, with the exact figure varying annually based on the district’s published rate or operating costs? 4. Will these payments be invoiced annually based solely on actual student enrollment, for the full duration of the TIF, without the use of projections? 5. Is it correct that this reimbursement obligation will apply only while the TIF is in effect and will end once the TIF expires? 6. After the TIF expires, will the property be taxed at its full assessed value under the normal tax structure, with the school district then receiving its standard share of property tax revenue—approximately 72% of the total distribution—regardless of rental income or occupancy levels? 7. During the life of the TIF, will the school district continue to receive taxes only on the original pre-TIF assessed value, with all incremental tax revenue directed to the TIF fund? If so, can you please confirm the specific base assessed value and the official expiration date of the TIF?

2/5/2026

Anonymous | Lake & Keystone

I think the proposal is an attractive proposal for the Village. The building does not seem disproportional to the lots size. Relative to other buildings in Oak Park and Forest park, this seems like a reasonable build. It is important to get the project completed and added to the tax rolls for the benefit of ALL Village residents. While I appreciate the concerns of those living near the project, I think the building looks consistent with the value of housing we want in RF. The multiple parking spots per unit is a good path forward. The purchase of the houses behind the alley was a smart

move by the Village and should help provide a buffer. We should not let good be the enemy of perfect.

2/10/2026

Jeff Woll | Lake and Monroe

I support the project. The economic benefits to the Village outweigh my minor architectural/zoning concerns. The process for feedback has been responsible and communication is clear and appropriately timed.

2/12/2026

Judy Lomperis |

Most of my questions were answered on the FAQs page. One question I have is were townhomes considered as an option for the development of this site? They would not provide as many housing units, but would address concerns over the height of the proposed structure. It is a narrow traffic corridor to have a multi-story building blocking light and making the area look congestion while not producing much additional traffic congestion. There are multi story residential housing units right across the street in Forest Park. Having made these comments, I understand the viability and tax benefits of what is proposed and I do not live on this side of town. I have no major objections, except to say it should be a goal to have affordable rental options in River Forest. From the site rendering these units look to be high end. I suggest they should have at least some of the units at a more affordable price point.

2/14/2026

Suzanne Neyenesch |

I would prefer mix use CONDOS. In my humble opinion, young professionals don't want to live in RF. They want to live with other young professionals in the city. Furthermore, there aren't enough modern reasonably priced condos for our aging community. We need opportunity for community members to downsize while still investing in our community.

2/15/2026

Eve Ocasio | Lake/Thatcher

The design of this building looks like something from the 1940s industrial Cleveland or Pittsburgh. It should not be allowed here.

2/23/2026

Anonymous | south River Forest

Overall, the development should balance what is needed to make the project viable for the developer while also preserving and enhancing quality of life for the neighborhood. 1. Ideally the development would: a. include more retail offering amenities to the community. Would like to hear proposals for the types of retail that might go in the space that is currently allocated for retail – something neighborhood residents can enjoy like a bagel or sandwich shop would be appealing. b. Be condos instead of rentals c. Include more affordable/moderately priced units 2. Regarding the specific proposed development a. The development of 72 units is too dense for the area and should be reduced to at the most 4 stories. While the development needs to be viable for the developer, the developer should be required to disclose for public review the math behind their choices (i.e. for a certain amount of density) b. Careful due diligence needs to be done on the developer's finances and ownership as others have commented, especially in light of the developer problems, failure to complete a building, and eye sore of partial concrete structures at Lake and Lathrop c. The proposed rental ranges of \$2000+ to \$3500 are quite high and do not offer any more moderately priced options. There should be a wider range of units offered at a variety of price points; not everything has to be at a premium luxury finish level e. There needs to be a market research study that shows the actual likely demographic to move into a development such as this. The idea that it will be all empty nesters and young professionals with no or few children seems unrealistic. There will only be so many empty nesters who will want to trade in a paid off home for monthly rent; and not that many young professionals who can afford the proposed monthly rent. Everyone knows that families want to get into River Forest for the schools and will find this an attractive option to get into the neighborhood. Instead of denying that possibility, the village should anticipate what is realistic and plan appropriately with the schools and should also plan appropriately for what kind of vehicle traffic there will be and demand for guest parking on neighboring streets. f. Residents should have the opportunity for input into the RFP for the traffic study and choice of vendor. Traffic study needs to be based on realistic market projection of what type of people will move into the development. For example, families with children will have a lot more in and out traffic at certain times of day compared to empty nesters or young professionals; and also more demand for guest parking for friends who want to visit. g. The traffic study and/or planning process should include proposing realistic solutions for managing traffic and parking. As it is, it is impossible to get onto Madison at certain times of day without stoplights/traffic control so some stop lights may need to be added. h. Parking study needs to realistically project what will be needed to support both the residents of the development and guests who will want to visit them and anyone visiting the retail store(s). Overnight parking bans must remain in place. Daytime parking on neighboring streets is tricky if the development doesn't provide enough parking for guests and retail visitors. Those guests/visitors will naturally try to park on Ashland and Franklin so village should keep/add restrictions for resident parking during the day but then it needs to be limited to residents/guests other than those from the new development.

2/24/2026

Hillary Gorin |

Hi! I am very interested in moving into an apartment in the River Forest school district (until the market is right for my partner and I to buy a home in River Forest) so I would be very interested in renting a unit from this new complex in the future! We are currently across the street in the Madison West complex and love the area but want to get into the River Forest school district in the next few years. There are very limited apartment living options in River Forest so I think this development would be an invaluable addition. Offering 3 bedrooms with two garage parking spaces would be very helpful also for families looking to rent. Offering this would be important to my partner and I (and our future family) :)

3/5/2026

Anonymous | Lake & Keystone

We do not need a large apartment complex in our village which would add to the density of the area with 72 rental units. This would attract many new families and Lincoln School does not have the infrastructure for a huge increase in students. These should be condos that contribute to the tax base of our community. Condos would allow people with grown children to move out of their homes while staying the community and make single family homes available for younger families, or allow families that move in to be a more permanent part of our community and schools.

3/5/2026

Mary Lidd |

Concerns About the Development's Size and Lack of Adequate Green Space - I looked at the architectural renderings and site plan on the Village's website and the current site in person. There are two trees located in the parkway on the site. The developer needs to leave those two trees. The village's Public Works Department makes an effort to plant trees in parkways and removing the trees would not make good economic sense. Overall, the development lacks a sufficient amount of green space which does not fit with River Forest's other residential areas. Is it possible to reduce the size of the building to allow for more trees, plants and tall fescue/grass. It feels too urban to me because of its size.

3/5/2026

Tim Jacob |

Thank you for acknowledging that the feedback from residents who live near the parcel should be given the most weight. Every River Forest resident is favorably disposed to the promise of property tax relief due to a broader commercial tax base. When the trade-off to this benefit doesn't personally impact you, it's easy to rubber stamp a 60+% variance for building height or dismiss traffic and parking concerns as trivial concerns that are impeding progress. For the people living in the blocks around this parcel, this proposed project will alter the entire nature of our neighborhood. This is the wrong building for this parcel, and I am strongly opposed.

3/12/2026

Michael Latz |

The design and density of this proposal is not consistent with River Forest as a whole. The size of the lot cannot support parking for 70 units. Congestion at Madison and Ashland during peak traffic times is bad enough now.

3/12/2026

Tamara Minaghan |

I'm very concerned about traffic. Our house sits right on the alley connected to this development. We have many cars cutting through our alley including the UPS truck and Fed Ex truck. I recommend our alley being closed off from the East and South and only the residents sharing the "T" alley are aloud in and out. It's a real problem now and then add 87+ more cars. Also, it is sooooo difficult turning east onto Madison from Ashland. The parked cars on Madison obstructing your view and I'm in a SUV. Accidents waiting to happen.

3/18/2026

Anonymous | Lake & Keystone

Condos are needed in River Forest, not apartments. Older couples looking to downsize would move into condos but don't want the instability of rentals. Plus, rentals don't support our tax base, and would be a large increase to Lincoln School. How much flexibility does Lincoln have for additional students from this development? What sort of tax revenue will we gain and does it outweigh the burden on our schools? I believe any future development should benefit our residents at large and focus on families who will be long term members of our community.

3/23/2026

Thomas Hazinski |

Thanks to the Village Board and the Economic Development Commission for running an excellent and transparent selection process. The proposed development is well planned. It would have a minimal impact on the adjoining neighborhood all the while generating new tax revenue for the Village. It is clearly in the best interest of all of River Forest.

3/26/2026

Anonymous |

Noticing that a traffic study started yesterday, 3/25/26, with the posting of reader boxes only on the NE corner of Lathrop and Madison, and the NE and NW corners of Ashland and Madison, wondering when the following studies commenced or will commence:

- Shadow Study: to assess the impact of new shadows on neighboring properties, streets, and homes, evaluating pedestrian comfort, natural light, and energy consumption. Study should analyze specific dates to represent seasonal extremes: the summer solstice (June 21), winter solstice (December 21), and the equinoxes (March/September 21), usually checking hours like 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m., and 4:00 p.m., and include 2D or 3D drawings or digital models showing how shadows shift from morning to evening as the sun moves, highlighting the incremental impact of a new building.

- Environmental Impact Report /Impact Statement: A detailed survey of the physical, biotic, and socioeconomic effects of the project on the surrounding environment.
- Fiscal Impact Analysis: Evaluates the project's impact on local government services, such as school capacity, police, and fire protection.
- Noise/Vibration Assessment: Measures the potential noise impact during both construction and operation.
- Site Layout and Parking Study: Evaluates on-site circulation, parking ratios, loading dock demand, and access management (not just external traffic).
- Zoning and Land Use Analysis: Ensures the project complies with, or has a clear path for, local zoning ordinances and entitlements.
- Stormwater Management Plan: Evaluates post-construction runoff, erosion, and sediment control, and designs retention/detention systems.
- Water and Sewer Availability/Capacity Study: Confirms if existing infrastructure can support the new demand or if extensions and upgrades are needed.
- Dry Utility Study: Coordinates the availability of electric, gas, cable, and fiber-optic services.
- Utility Infrastructure Mapping: Detailed surveys of existing underground utilities to avoid conflicts during construction.
- Geotechnical Study (Soil Report): Tests soil composition to determine suitability for foundations, building design, grading, and paving.

3/27/2026

Angie Seder |

With regard to this FAQ: 1. When is the traffic study being conducted? When is data being collected? The traffic engineering consultant began the study in early March. As part of the process, the consultant gathers data on traffic volumes, speeds, and accident history, analyzes this information, and prepares a report with projected traffic conditions and recommendations to address potential impacts. Traffic counts (vehicle data collection) will not occur during the local spring break period of March 30 through April 5. Instead, data will be collected on multiple days outside that timeframe to capture a range of traffic patterns and volumes. There are many families in River Forest who have students in the private school and have spring break after D90- the study should not start until after April 13 to reflect true traffic patterns.

3/31/2026

Kathy Corcos |

I would like feedback from someone about the traffic study required. At the presentation meetings, we were told by Public Works that the traffic study would not be done during school spring breaks,

when many people are out of town, thus showing reduced traffic. This means spring break from surrounding communities. I have been informed by multiple people that the traffic study is indeed being done during the school spring break period. How can this data be used when it is not typical and is not representative of normal traffic patterns?

4/2/2026

Patty Henek | Bonnie Brae & Chicago

On Aug. 13, EDC members explicitly requested access to review development proposals before the list was narrowed. By Aug. 25, two developers were chosen without their input. Why was their access denied?

5/26/2026

Jane moore | Augusta and bonnie brae

I don't really understand how this will stabilize the taxes in the village. If the funds are for the tif district, where will the extra funding for village services, parks, police and fire, infrastructure come from? More kids in our already crowded schools. More families using the already inadequate park system. There is not a single tot lot on the entire east side of the village. We've sold all our open land to fenwick and the catholic church. A private paddle club in our public parks. The village paid to bury unsightly power lines at the private tennis club on lathrop. When is this development supposed to start generating \$600,000 in taxes for the community as a whole? When are the majority of villagers going to see some benefit from these astronomical taxes? It is hard to trust this is a project that is going to benefit anyone but a very select few.

5/26/2026

Anonymous |

Per the recent email, "River Forest offers many styles and types of single-family homes. However, for younger people looking to settle down, these options are often limited or beyond their price range." This seems to be a selling point. However, I do not believe that just because River Forest has predominantly more expensive houses, there is an obligation to have low cost housing.

5/27/2026

Thea Tsatsos | Franklin and Hawthorne

In promoting the accessibility of rental units in River Forest as a virtue, while simultaneously limiting the number of ADUs for private owners, this administration presents as an "anointed class" of people who pervert the law merely to advance its own institutional agenda. Please, Come back to Earth!!! This development is a very bad idea for River Forest.

6/9/2026

jake | Lathrop and Thomas

What the Village NEEDS is restaurants and retail. The plans as-proposed proportion less than half of the Madison Street frontage to retail/restaurants and are instead majority resident parking garage. If the Village actually wants to attract new, young residents (one of the stated goals of the project), a vibrant retail corridor is imperative, and this building barely pays lip service to that idea. The building should be amended such that the entire Madison St frontage is restaurant/retail. That likely means less parking spaces, which means fewer and larger units (which addresses another overcrowding concern of many other Village residents). PLEASE don't let this valuable corridor turn into similar stretches of Chicago that aren't commercially active because there are few street-level businesses on the block (i.e. West Loop east of 90/94 and western River North). That would be a total wasted opportunity and exactly the opposite of what Village residents and Administrators have said they want.

6/9/2026

Takeshi Shimamura | Madison and Forest

To the Village President, Trustees, and Village Staff: I am writing in response to the June 9, 2026 Madison Street Development Newsletter, particularly Trustee Lisa Gillis's message about "Sustainable Living in River Forest." The newsletter states that River Forest is working toward "a sustainable, walkable, and transportation-oriented community." I support that goal. However, that goal cannot be taken seriously unless the Village also provides safe, signal-controlled pedestrian access to the transit options it is encouraging residents to use. The newsletter emphasizes that the Madison and Ashland development is near "multiple transit options, including Pace, CTA and Metra," and that River Forest should continue "building a community that relies less on cars for commuting and daily activities." But for River Forest residents trying to reach the CTA Blue Line Forest Park station, the reality on Madison Street is very different. There are very limited signal-controlled crossings available (Jackson and Des Plains only), and in practice pedestrians are often left choosing between a long, inconvenient detour or crossing Madison Street without a protected signal. That is not a "Walker's Paradise." That is a pedestrian safety failure. I am especially frustrated because the Village is asking residents to embrace walking and public transportation while not providing the basic infrastructure needed to make those choices safe. Personally, I have felt forced to cross Madison Street without a signal in order to get to the Forest Park Blue Line station, putting my safety at risk simply to use the public transportation that the Village says it wants residents to use. The newsletter also says that "thoughtful developments that maximize the use of existing transit infrastructure" are part of responsible planning. I agree. But transit-oriented development is not only about placing housing near transit on a map. It is also about making the walk to that transit safe, direct, accessible, and realistic for actual residents. Before the Village continues promoting Madison Street as sustainable, walkable, and transit-oriented, I urge Village leadership to address the contradiction between its public messaging and the lived experience of pedestrians. At a minimum, the Village should study and implement safer Madison Street crossings for residents walking to the CTA Blue Line Forest Park station, including signal-controlled crossings

or other proven pedestrian safety measures. If River Forest wants to encourage residents to walk, bike, and take transit, then pedestrian safety cannot be treated as an afterthought. It must be a core part of the Madison Street plan. Additionally, because Madison Street is not controlled by the State, the federal government, or Cook County, the Village should take responsibility for addressing pedestrian safety along this corridor. In particular, the Village should recognize that there are no signal-controlled crossings on Madison Street between 1st Avenue and Jackson Boulevard, creating a serious safety concern for residents walking to transit. Respectfully, Takeshi Shimamura 7830 Madison St. River Forest, IL 60305

6/9/2026

Anonymous |

Five Thirty One has not managed the 6700 North Ave building well. it was initially managed by Avenue One and they only recently switched over to stark. it was marketed as high-end and with "retail" options. in reality the construction in the units is low grade. the walls are thin (you can hear neighbors flushing, you can hear the garage doors every time they open, etc.), the floors are concrete (not hardwood as claimed), the HVAC has been a serious issue (you can smell everything in the building). there is still no retail on the ground floor and the building has been opened since September 2023... it is important for residents to know what to expect and you have a nearly exact replica some blocks over to help you assess and predict what will actually occur with Five Thirty One at the helm. these issues might fly in Chicago, but this won't work in River Forest and not with River Forest market rates. you will in fact have a lot of transitional tenants once they get in and discover it's not worth the value

6/29/2026

Greg Kostner | 7000 Block of Madison

We operate Gunzo's Sports Center on the block directly west of the proposed development. We have a major concern regarding parking. Since the development at 7652 Madison, across the street in Forest Park was built, parking has diminished drastically. There are 6 parking spots in front of our store on Madison. This is posted as a 2 hour parking zone, but we do not find it patrolled or enforced. We observe several cars parked there for most of the business day and rarely an open spot. The residents on Ashland, north of Madison, rightfully will not want vehicles parked in front of their homes for the majority of the day. If there are restrictions put in place for parking on the residential street there will be precious little parking for the customers of the dentist office, hair salon, and Gunzo's. We don't feel the proposed parking behind the development, for the apartment residents, will absorb the customers of the new retail stores along with guest vehicles for 72 units and the current businesses along Madison. We are also concerned if the development will affect access for delivery vehicles and trucks using the alley behind our store. Gunzo's has done business in River Forest for 56 years. Our hope is to be able to continue to serve the community. We are extremely concerned this development will cause customers great difficulty accessing our store. We welcome development in the area but hopefully this situation can be addressed for the businesses to thrive and the community to benefit. Thank you for your consideration.

6/29/2026

J. Smith | Division and William

I support this development wholeheartedly. First, it presents an opportunity to tangibly impact the aesthetics of the neighborhood by building a modern structure which fits the character of River Forest. It also eliminates the current eyesore which takes away from the community. And lastly, it will generate tax revenue that I trust the village will continue to utilize in productive ways. That said, I also strongly support the project because I believe in the developers' ability to execute the project with excellence. The track record of V3 Development Group and its leader, Viktor Jakovljevic, speaks for itself and given the chance to deliver, all his previous projects have enhanced their respective communities block by block. Furthermore, I have known him as a fellow OPRF parent, as a business proprietor, and even as the property owner of rental units occupied by multiple friends. In each case, his high character, expertise, and ability to deliver excellence is unquestionable. I support this project and hope the fine residents and leadership of River Forest can quickly evaluate the merits of this opportunity and move it forward.

7/02/2026

T | William and Greenfield

I think it's a needed addition to the village. I'm in support

7/02/2026

Courtney | Ashland and Madison

This corner of River Forest happens to be very residential. It's crowded with parking and congested on Madison too with general traffic. I'm very worried about parking solutions you have for the neighborhood. Along with keeping the charm of River Forest intact and giving local businesses and residents growth opportunities with this new development. Make it a great place to walk to, a destination to bike to. The residents will make it thrive. Don't ostracize us by putting an eyesore with no parking and one office firm in the first floor that provides to value to the community, neighborhood or neighbors.

7/06/2026

Jason Rothstein | 200 Block of Gale

I am generally in support of this proposal and hope that the village approves it. My one concern is that the proposal seems to devote all the retail space to a single tenant, which means that in the case of a long vacancy the ground level will give the impression of a failed space. To counteract that,

I hope the village will also permit a wide variety of businesses in that space to improve the chances for its success.

7/06/2026

Tim Jacob | 100 Block of Ashland

I live in the neighborhood that will be most impacted by this development, and I agree with the Village's statement that it's the voices of our friends and neighbors in the immediate vicinity of this proposed development that deserve the most weight at this time. I strongly oppose this plan for a five-story building at the corner of Ashland and Madison. It's been very difficult to watch the development process for these lots narrow to the point where a proposal like this is the only, inevitable outcome. The Village has stated over and over that we need to adjust our community's building height standards to give private developers a profit margin they're happy with. People living in the neighborhood have stated over and over, that despite what has been done elsewhere in the Village, this is not what we want. Who exactly is the Village really going to listen to at this important juncture? Really listening to friends and neighbors means demonstrating a willingness to admit when the result of a process did not produce a solution that works for the people you represent.

7/06/2026

Mary Rose Smith | 1500 Block of William

I am writing as a resident of River Forest to formally oppose the proposed 72-unit rental development at Madison Street. While I understand the appeal of new development and increased tax revenue, I believe this project poses serious problems for our community that outweigh any potential benefits. My specific concerns are:

1. School Capacity: Lincoln school could be at extreme capacity. Adding a development of this size could bring dozens of additional students into a system that does not have the classroom space, staffing, or resources to absorb them without a decline in educational quality.
2. Park and Recreation Space: River Forest's parks are a defining feature of our village, but they are not unlimited. This development would add significant population density without any corresponding increase in park space, putting pressure on facilities that residents already use heavily.
3. Parking and Traffic: Our streets were not designed for the volume of vehicles that a development this size would bring. Residents in the surrounding area already struggle with parking, and this project would make that worse, along with increasing traffic congestion at already busy intersections.
4. Concentration of Density: Placing 72 rental units in one location creates an outsized concentration of density in a single part of the village. This is inconsistent with how growth should be planned, and it places a disproportionate burden on the surrounding neighborhood.
5. Character of the Village: River Forest has long been valued for its low-density, tree-lined, historic residential character. A development of this scale and density is out of step with that identity and sets a troubling precedent for future projects.

I respectfully ask that the Board reconsider approval of this project as currently proposed, and that any future development proposals include a thorough, transparent analysis of school capacity, parking, and infrastructure impact before moving forward. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further at an upcoming meeting.

7/06/2026

Misty Olsonmi | 1300 Block of Park

I have lived next-door to the Developer for 16 years. I know him to be conscientious member of his or community and a quality developer. In terms of the development, I will leave that to the experts in term of design, etc., but do believe we need to increase our tax base with more retail and residential units when possible. Thanks! Misty

7/06/2026

Gerri and John Humbert | 1300 Block of Park

I believe we need a development like this in RF. While I empathize with the nearby neighbors, the reality is Madison Street is a good location for this type of housing. This developer has lived quietly in RF for decades and has no connection to anyone associated with the village government. This is a positive change from the Lake and Lathrop development. I would urge the Village to follow the process to see what changes could be made to satisfy the nearby neighbors and also complete the project.

7/07/2026

Tyler Kirk | 500 Block of Thatcher

I write in support of the development at Madison and Ashland. I support a nice, new, five story apartment building with adequate parking, and the opportunity for two new business establishments to be placed on the first floor. As a local business owner, and lifelong resident of River Forest, I am excited about this opportunity for our village. We will significantly increase tax revenue that is vital for schools and the health of our village. We will bring in more people who will frequent establishments along the Madison corridor, and our larger community. We do not have many opportunities to build in River Forest, and I like the plan here. I believe much of the pushback is ill founded. The size of the project is appropriate and needed. One of the owners of five thirty one partners, the chosen developer, is being smeared by opposition when he is a River Forest resident, whose firm was selected out of a larger search. I find his ownership of the Cigar Oasis has no bearing on his ability to deliver a good result at Madison and Ashland. While there will continue to be vocal opposition, please stay locked on the facts that overwhelmingly show this development will improve our village.

7/07/2026

Kevin Ryan | 300 Block of Thatcher

Here's a form-length version — tight enough to paste, comprehensive enough to land: I support redeveloping the Madison corridor, and I want this project to succeed — which is exactly why it needs safeguards on the record before approval. This is a discretionary approval on Village-owned land requesting an unusually large stack of variances (height of 87 ft where 30 ft is allowed, FAR 4.6

vs. 2.75, ~540 sq ft of lot area per unit where 2,800 is required, and 87 parking spaces against 204 required). A request that large deserves conditions, not verbal assurances. Two things should be resolved on the record before the DRB recommends approval: (1) full beneficial-ownership disclosure — Application Item #1 requires the names of all owners, no waiver was requested, yet the application was signed by a single principal while the entity's own state registration lists others; and (2) a written conflict-of-interest answer from Village officials and the Village's paid review consultants to the questions residents have already asked. Neither costs the Village anything, and both settle suspicion by putting facts on the record rather than asking us to trust the process. Given the Lake & Lathrop history, I also ask that approval be conditioned on completion security (bonding or a letter of credit and proof of financing), no land conveyance until entitlements and financing are in place, an independent shadow/light study, enforceable parking tied to occupancy, and retail-use protections. Finally, on transparency: the confidentiality owed to the other bidders is fully compatible with disclosure. Please release an anonymized "Proposal A/B/C" comparison of the finalists' terms plus the scoring criteria — the identities stay protected; the public still gets to see how the winner was chosen.

7/08/2026

Beth Cheng | 000 block of Franklin

Public Comment for Development Review Board Meeting, July 9, 2026 To Members of the Development Review Board My name is Beth Cheng and I live on the 000 block of Franklin. Given the limited time and notice to review this specific and lengthy application during a two week period that included a holiday weekend, these comments are at a high level. High level comments on the specific application before the DRB: 1. Number/extent of requested variances: The number of zoning variances required is an indicator that the proposed development is not in keeping with the general vision for the neighborhood. While it is understood that some variances will be necessary to attract development, more time is needed to understand and scrutinize the specifics. 2. Density: At a high level, it seems that the feedback residents provided during the concept review period that the concept is too dense for the neighborhood have largely been ignored since the specific proposal is for a five story building, rather than a shorter one as was suggested. In addition, some specific changes like the removal of the buffer next to houses on Ashland and Lathrop and addition of garage building structures that abut those homes are examples of ways that the specific proposal is worse for current residents than the general concept previously shown. The five story building will also cast a long shadow. Some changes are positive such as moving the rooftop deck to the southern side of the building and addition of the drop off lane on Ashland. 3. Impact on traffic/parking. It defies common sense and the experience of residents in the neighborhood to say that the addition of a minimum of 87 cars to a small area will not have a significant impact on traffic. My understanding is that the proposal allows for 87 parking spaces with about 30 of those being allowed to have lifts to allow for a second car. It makes no sense to say that it is a minimal percentage compared to the total volume of traffic on Madison – I can't locate the page in the proposal but I believe it said it would be a 1% increase. A more meaningful comparison is to look at how many cars it adds relative to the number of cars currently associated with houses on Ashland. Assuming 10 houses on each side of the street and two cars per household, that is 40 cars. The

addition of 100 cars associated with that street is a 150% increase. In addition, in reality, streets like Ashland and Franklin cannot operate with two way traffic if and when cars are parked on both sides of the street, as claimed in Section 12, page 61 of the proposal. It is unclear how traffic and parking issues will be handled. The proposal elects to kick this can down the road and the traffic study acknowledges that there are no good solutions that would not just push traffic bottlenecks to different points. Better to just be honest and acknowledge that the proposed development will have a significant impact on traffic and parking, and seek ways to mitigate that – i.e. a less dense development.

4. Number of likely school age children: The projection of about 12 school age children moving into the building seems questionable considering the high interest in getting into the D90 school district though I don't have the expertise or tools to come up with a different estimate.

Asks

1. Rethink scale of the project: Rethink the project to be one that is of a scale that fits the neighborhood while still being viable for a developer. The village has the ability to offer different levels of support/subsidy to any developer with the TIF funds which it should exercise in a manner that gives consideration to residents of the neighborhood.
2. Take more time to allow more careful consideration of the proposal: Allow more than one public Development Review Board meeting and two weeks to study the proposal more carefully before rushing to a make a recommendation to the village board later in July. The village allowed a number of months for the public to comment on general concepts so there should now be plentiful time allowed to evaluate and assess the specific proposal. This is a significant permanent decision for the village.
3. Reduce the proposed building to four stories: If you choose to still proceed with a recommendation to the village board on this specific proposal, then at a minimum the recommendation should be for a a four story building which would at least alleviate some resident concerns.
4. Maintain or add parking restrictions as part of any approval of a development on this parcel. Steps need to be taken to prevent surrounding streets from becoming permanent overflow parking for building residents or guests (i.e. overnight bans, time limits, resident only parking for homes on the street – not from the proposed development)

Conclusion

The saga of development on this parcel began with residents having to demand protection for their neighbors from the village taking their houses by eminent domain when the TIF was first created years ago – something one should not have to do in a place like River Forest. Over the years, my view has been there should be room for compromise and a way to have development that balances village goals whether it is the addition of amenities or tax revenue, the financial interests of developers, and quality of life for nearby residents. However, over the years it has also often felt like neighborhood residents are asked for input but there is somewhat of a foregone conclusion. I would love to be proven wrong and see the Development Review Board and Village make significant changes to reduce the density of this proposed development before proceeding. Thank you for the important work you do as volunteers on the Development Review Board and for your consideration.

7/08/2026

Emily Follas | 100 Block of Ashland

I live a block and a half from the proposed construction site and I object to the granting of the height variance required for this project. I appreciate that my comment will be read, but I wish it felt like more than a gesture in a process where the outcome feels like a foregone conclusion. I

object to the variance from restrictions set in order to preserve the character and feel of our neighborhood. Many residents of River Forest will feel little impact of this change, but some of us live in the immediate wake of this project. Tweaks have been made around the edges of this proposal to address various concerns, but no serious effort has been made to address the increase in traffic, namely for my purposes on Ashland, which apparently we should just wait to address until the project is approved and built and the problem is irreversible. I ask that the Village Board fully consider the disproportionate and negative impact to those of us closest to this project. Make a neighborly decision.

7/09/2026

Maggie Schafer | 100 Block of Franklin

We are in full support of this new development! We recently moved to River Forest, and one of the biggest draws was being so near a walkable downtown with more diverse housing options than the average suburb. We feel that this development will expand and enhance the walkability and diversity of the area.

7/09/2026

Cal Davis | 10 Block of Franklin

Good evening everyone. Just a few comments Inventory in River forest is very low so any project should come with high demand. 1. We may have an increased student for our local schools. Which will lead to school expansion. Or If it is a mainly senior building. We will definitely need another ambulance. There will be more traffic. More traffic than any study will show. The noise. Can we work with forest park about the noise. It may drive reasonable renters away. Will we increase our police force to help manage any ticketing issues in the area. Forest park Nar patrons park illegally in the River forest side all the time. Which all leads to safety. The safety of our children is the most important thing. Last point. Abatement plan and SWPP plan (storm water) Once you start digging there will be issues and the more it rains the more runoff we will get in our sewers. Thank you

7/09/2026

Mary | Bonnie Brae

I live in a two-story condominium building on Bonnie Brae Place. The street's residential properties are a combination of two story buildings (except for one 3 story building), and single family homes. There are many trees in the parkways and in individual spaces. Trees clean the air,

provide shade and homes for wildlife. The low level structures and the foliage create an aesthetically pleasing and healthy environment for the residents. I don't like the developer's proposal for a five story building because it seems too tall for the nearby homes and commercial buildings. I am also concerned with the developer's recent addition of separate parking garages behind the proposed building. There are two beautiful pine trees and a mature deciduous tree located in the space designated for garages. The developer needs to conduct research on how to incorporate the existing trees with the garages by reducing the area of the proposed garages and by creating green oases around the existing trees. This action will improve the health of all residents, help wildlife and serve as an excellent buffer to the homes north of the proposed development.



RIVER FOREST

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Emailed Public Comments

The following comments are comments submitted via email form since January 2026, after the proposed project was initially announced

1/23/2026

Susan Altier|

These are questions and comments that I have regarding the Five Thirty One Partners LLC development proposal for Madison & Ashland that I submitted via the Survey Monkey Village feedback form last night and that I plan to speak to in tonight's meeting so that the full VBOT, Village Administrator, the Planned Development applicant, and the public can hear them.

1. Will we as the public see more details about the economic viability review of Five Thirty One Partners and of their proposed project? What specifically was reviewed, what were the findings, who at Ryan, LLC conducted the analysis, and is there any relationship between those individuals at Ryan, LLC and principals/managers/investors in Five Thirty One Partners LLC or the Village of River Forest Administration or The Village President, Board of Trustees Members, or any Appointed members of the Economic Development Commission or Development Review Board?

2. Will you share more information with the public about Five Thirty One Partners LLC? From my research using the Illinois Secretary of State's Business Registry - the file id for Five Thirty One Partners LLC is 07693044, the main address of 5205 N. Bernard, Office, Chicago, IL 60625, the manager listed is Stark Holdings LLC (file #06065902 - where Charles R. Westphal is listed as the manager at that same address), and the agent is listed for both as Donna Hyde at 1801 N. Bissell #1F, Chicago, IL 60614. Mr. Westphal is listed in the database as the manager of 65 LLC entities which do not seem to include any of the 85 LLCs for which the applicant, Viktor Jakovljevic, is listed in the database as the manager. And the letterhead that was used by Mr. Jakovljevic to submit the proposal to the Village of River Forest on 1/19/26 shows "531 Partners, LLC" (with 531 in numerals rather than words) and with the 1801 N Bissell #1, Chicago, IL, 60614 address affiliated with Donna Hyde who is the agent listed for Mr. Westphal's LLC entities. I am not finding anything online through all of this research officially/legally connecting Mr. Jakovljevic with the legal entity of Five Thirty One Partners LLC. Considering what this village has been through with the Lake and Lathrop development debacle, the lack of these details and only Mr. Jakovljevic's name and signature on the application with no mention of Stark Holdings LLC, Mr. Westphal, Ms. Hyde, or any other "partners" or investors is very troubling. Will disclosure of these individuals and their legal relationships be enforced via #1 on the application that requires "...names and addresses of...the applicant and all persons having an ownership or beneficial interest in the subject property and proposed development" for which the applicant did not request a waiver?

3. For #13 on the application regarding all of the economic viability requirements, only one of the "no" boxes was filled in. Do all three of the boxes need to be filled in by the applicant to ensure that all three of the requirements are met as a part of their formal project review?

4. Like many other neighbors, I have concerns about density, traffic congestion, and parking, especially on Ashland that are bound to come from a development with 72 units, many of which are 2-3 (and some noted as 4) bedroom units. In response to my questions about parking concerns at the 1/22/26 Open House, Mr. Westphal mentioned that they "have the capability to install lifts for the indoor parking spots so that two cars can use one spot" and Mr. Jakovljevic mentioned that "the designated parking spots for residents will require that the cars in those spots have a permanent building resident parking sticker in addition to the Village of River Forest registration sticker on the windshield to prevent those residents from letting guests/visitors use their designated spot while they street park on Ashland since they are River Forest residents." Please ensure that these details are documented in their formal project proposal.

1/23/2026

Andy & Kate Gordon |

Introduction As residents of XXXXX, we are writing to express our concerns regarding the proposed five-story development at 7620 Madison Street. While we support the revitalization of the Madison corridor, the current proposal threatens to undermine the village standards designed to protect residential neighbors. Under Section 10-19-3 of the Village Code, a development must not be "unduly injurious" to neighbors. To ensure this project remains a net positive for River Forest, we ask the Board to mandate the following Conditions of Approval to address the risks identified below.

1. Potential Shadow Impact and Loss of Light

- Concern: The proposed building height of 71' 8" to the parapet with a 0' 0" northern setback from the alley poses a direct threat to the light and air of the first block of Ashland and Lathrop Avenues.
- Justification: River Forest Village Code Section 10-19-3 mandates that variations "shall not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property." At our latitude, a 72-foot building casts a 157-foot shadow in winter (per AI projection). Even with the 48-foot horizontal buffer to the nearest residence, the current design ensures a total winter "blackout" for the two properties directly north of the project and a 75% blackout for the property three houses north (our own). Furthermore, the two properties directly north of the project will also experience significant light disruption in Fall and Spring.
- Mitigation: We request that the Village mandate a formal Shade and Solar Access Assessment, with findings presented for public record to the Development Review Board. If this assessment confirms that the development results in a full winter "blackout" for adjacent residential properties, we request a mandatory 20-foot vertical "step-back" on the 4th and 5th floors of the northern facade to restore sunlight to the residential block.

2. Infringement of Privacy and Acoustic Intrusion

- Concern: The proposal for residential units on the 2nd through 5th floors includes primary window banks and 28 private decks on the north-facing elevation, creating a "fishbowl" effect and a concentrated source of noise directed into our private yards.
- Justification: The Madison Street Development Opportunity Guide mandates that any project must "complement its residential base." In planning terms, "complementing" a neighborhood requires respecting the privacy and quiet enjoyment of existing homes. A sheer 72-foot wall of north-facing windows and balconies at a 0-foot setback creates an "overlooking" and "megaphone" effect that strips our backyards of their private, quiet character.
- Mitigation: We request that the Village conduct a formal Privacy and Acoustic Impact Study, including visibility/sight-line analysis and sound-reflection modeling for the neighboring properties. If this study confirms significant visual or acoustic intrusion into the residential yards, we request the complete removal of all north-facing outdoor decks on the 2nd through 5th floors. Furthermore, we request that all north-facing windows on all residential floors (2nd–5th) feature permanent obscurity to a minimum height of 6 feet or be designed as high-sill clerestory windows.

3. Commercial Use and Neighborhood Compatibility

- Concern: Allowing high-impact commercial tenants threatens to introduce noise, late-night traffic, and safety concerns to a block shared with single-family homes.
- Justification: The Planned Development process allows the Village to set higher standards for land use to ensure a project is not "unduly injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity" per Village Code Section 10-19-3.

- Mitigation: We request that the PD Ordinance explicitly prohibit cannabis dispensaries, tobacco/vape shops, liquor stores, and establishments with "drive-through" or "pick-up window" operation. Furthermore, commercial deliveries must be restricted to 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM to protect residential quiet hours.

4. Traffic and Parking Safety

- Concern: The proposal directs all commercial loading and high-frequency trash collection into the narrow 18-foot residential alley. Furthermore, the proposed parking ratio is insufficient for the neighborhood's density, creating an inevitable "spillover" of residential and commercial vehicles onto the first block of Ashland and Lathrop Avenues.

- Justification: Under Section 10-19-3, the Board must find that "adequate utilities, access roads... and other necessary facilities" are provided. Forcing modern multi-unit parking and delivery demand onto a residential street and alley that was never designed for this volume fails the standard of "adequate" and safe access.

- Mitigation: We request that the Village require an Independent Traffic and Parking Study specifically focused on Alley Operations, Ashland & Lathrop Traffic Volume, and Street Parking Capacity for the adjacent blocks. Furthermore, we request the implementation of Permit-Only Parking for the 10 block of Ashland and Lathrop Avenues as a condition of project approval to ensure adequate supply of street parking for homeowners on these blocks.

5. Preservation of Property Values

- Concern: The introduction of a sheer 72-foot structure with a zero-foot alley setback and 28 overlooking decks poses a direct threat to the market value and desirability of the adjacent single-family residential properties.

- Justification: A primary function of zoning and the Planned Development process is to protect the economic stability of established neighborhoods. An architectural design that imposes a "winter blackout" and a total loss of backyard privacy creates a tangible negative impact on the long-term appraisal value of the surrounding homes.

- Mitigation: We request that the Village mandate a Property Value Impact Assessment. This study should analyze home value trends in comparable Chicagoland suburban blocks where similar mid-rise, mixed-use developments have been built with zero setbacks adjacent to residential lots. This assessment must be reviewed by the River Forest Development Review Board before any final sign-off on the project.

Supporting Evidence & Footnotes

- I. Standard for Light and Air: Per River Forest Village Code Section 10-19-3, variations must not impair the supply of light to adjacent properties.

- II. Privacy and Compatibility: The River Forest Comprehensive Plan emphasizes that new construction must provide a "transition" to residential areas.

- III. Authority to Condition: Under Title 10, Chapter 19, the Development Review Board has the specific authority to recommend approval "with conditions" to mitigate negative impacts on the community

1/23/2026

Angie Grover |

My name is Angie Grover and my family and I have lived at XXXXX in River Forest for the last 13 years. I am writing to raise concerns about the Madison Street Redevelopment Plan proposed by Five-Thirty One Partners. I am excited that the Village is looking to bring vibrant, community-

friendly business and living space to the other side of our block. However, the Village's need to create additional revenue should not outweigh thoughtful, planned development respecting the residents directly impacted by these changes. There are several concerns I have with the proposal as it stands, and I ask that you weigh the path forward more comprehensively as to respect our small corner of the River Forest community. I will touch on each of these concerns very briefly, all which stem from the proposal to change zoning – 1.Height – I do not support increasing the limit on building height by changing the zoning code to allow for a five-story building. There are no buildings that exceed four stories until you are east of Oak Park Boulevard and for miles to the west through Maywood and Hillside. Additionally, the building diagonally across from the proposed site should serve as an example of what not to do. It overshadows the neighbors to the south across the alley and its commercial space remains vacant. If the Village is expecting anticipated revenue from a commercial space, there is little indication that is guaranteed. 2.Parking – Density and parking go hand in hand. The scale of parking that is necessary to support a five-story building plus commercial needs will have a disproportionate impact on a residential block with families. Approximately 60 residents live in 25 occupied homes on the block where the proposed building will be located. It is currently a setting designed for low traffic volumes and daily family activity. The addition of 87 parking spaces will generate hundreds of additional daily vehicle movements, even under conservative assumptions. These trips will be concentrated in and at alley exits and unsignalized intersections immediately adjacent to homes, increasing exposure risk for children and pedestrians. Urban planning best practice avoids shifting corridor-serving parking demand onto neighborhood streets and alleys. Parking access and circulation should be aligned with Madison Street's function, not absorbed by a residential block, small alley thoroughfare or constrained intersections without signals – all which are ill-suited for that increase of volume. 3.Setback – the setback on Ashland must be maintained. We chose to live in this part of the Village because it is extremely walkable and to reduce the setback is not in character with the existing development nor would allow for sufficient space for foot traffic. Additionally, when buildings or streetscape elements encroach into required sight triangles near intersections or alley mouths with no signals, drivers exiting at low speeds lose critical reaction time, and pedestrians lose early visual cues of turning vehicles. Conditions of approval should require a sight-triangle and visibility exhibit demonstrating compliance through corner transparency, stepped-back or chamfered building treatments, and strict limitations on obstructions such as signage, landscaping, or utilities. In 2022, the Village responded to our efforts to slow traffic on Ashland with a stop sign at Ashland and Vine. With more than 40 children in this six-block radius, parking and traffic impacts proposed here cannot be ignored. I would suggest, and did not see, an alley operations and management plan that addresses these volumes, delivery routing, ride-hail protocols, speed controls, raised crossings, lighting and security that will be monitored post-occupancy with defined performance thresholds and corrective actions if traffic or safety impacts exceed expectations. This is not a neutral change. With thoughtful design, enforceable operations, and proportional mitigation, the project can protect the neighborhood residents as well as the safety and livability of the families who already call this block home. Thank you for taking these comments into consideration and prioritizing the impact of your decisions on the people who have chosen to live here.

2/1/2026

Trudi Ross |

After rewatching the Village board meeting from January 26th I have more questions than answers. Here are a few of my questions and thoughts. 1) Why did the Village choose a developer that only does rentals? Viktor (the developer) stated they are not condo builders, only high end rentals. Condos could work for small structures, he said so why not hire a developer to build three story

condos or better yet, a few high end townhomes like the ones I mentioned earlier? 2) Viktor (the developer) also stated at the board meeting regarding rentals “young people don’t want ownership they want the ability to move in a year or two”. So we can expect a lot of turnaround and even more traffic with renters moving in and out in that area. I would prefer ownership where the residents can put down roots and have an interest in the community and neighborhood. 3) The village and builder keep talking about “mixed use” and the retail space there will be. I was told a restaurant is out of the question. So what did they think might go in that space? Answer, ‘Maybe a coffee shop”. We don’t need another coffee shop. Dunkin Donuts is right across Madison St, Black Fodder Coffee is four blocks north on Ashland, and U3 Coffee, Kribi Coffee and Starbucks are all east on Madison in Forest Park before Harlem. Retail space this size won’t gain us the tax revenue the Village and builder are highlighting in this project. 4) If V-3 (or 531 Partners LLC which was the name of the developer I thought before I learned differently at the board meeting) uses their own money, and have no investors as they stated, will this project take priority over the others they are bidding on? What if they have 2 or even 3 projects they are working on? Are we sure they have enough of their own funding to support all of that? I’m concerned since we all saw what happened on Lake and Lathrop. I hope other residents ask questions and attend meetings, not just the residents in town this project will have the most impact on.

2/2/2026

Angie Grover |

PUBLIC COMMENT: Agenda Item #4 Madison Street Development – Commercial Space on 2/4/2026 Members of the Economic Development Commission, As your purview is to foster and promote economic vitality across the Village, I wanted to raise a few critical considerations related to the proposed Madison Street Development and its commercial space. The project introduces meaningful risk to long-term corridor performance if built at the current scale. Economic development outcomes depend less on maximum density and more on fit to market demand, circulation efficiency, and pedestrian viability. Without adjustments, the project risks underperforming commercial space, elevated mitigation costs, and reduced net fiscal benefit. The concerns I want to raise extend beyond neighborhood safety to the well-being of our larger community including: The Height & Scale The proposed height of this building exceeds surrounding market precedent west of Oak Park Boulevard. Comparable nearby projects with oversized scale have experienced ground-floor vacancy which limits the tax yield. This is compounded by a persistent 9% vacancy rate along the Madison Street corridor with nearly 9 months on the market for available space. Absent demonstrated pre-leasing commitments or tenant demand, added height increases downside exposure. Parking & Access The developer has proposed 87 parking spaces plus a possible 40 lifts pushing that to a maximum of 127 total spaces. This introduces hundreds of new daily vehicle movements, concentrated in alleys and unsignalized intersections. Misaligned access compounds existing congestion, reduces retail attractiveness, and increases long-term operational costs. Best-practice corridors place parking access on the primary commercial frontage, not residential infrastructure. Traffic, Walkability & Setbacks The development as proposed extends right up to the lot line. Reduced setbacks undermine foot traffic, which directly correlates to retail sales and lease rates. Encroachment near unsignalized intersections raises liability risk and future retrofit costs that the Village must consider. The Village comprehensive traffic plan clearly identified issues with traffic congestion at Lathrop and Madison but did not include a similar assessment under such density at Ashland and Madison. With no defined alley or circulation management plan, a business would have uncertainty around deliveries, ride-hail, and peak congestion. Bottom line is that traffic congestion and unpredictability negatively affect tenant retention and asset valuation. In this situation, bigger is not better. Maximizing square footage

reduces long-term economic return when circulation and walkability are compromised. Economic development literature and corridor case studies consistently show that high-performing mixed-use corridors share four traits – 1) right-sized density, 2) prioritized primary street access, 3) adequate pedestrian infrastructure that supports safe customer access, and 4) operational predictability such as alley management, specific delivery windows and specific traffic management to reduce friction and protect asset value. We need you to ask the questions and ensure that this project has the highest probability of long-term success to reduce public and private risk and deliver any kind of reliable fiscal outcome. This proposal should be evaluated not on total square footage, but on risk adjusted return so it does not become a future liability. Thank you for taking these comments into the record and for seriously considering the impact of the role you play in ensuring this is the best fiscal decision that respects the people who have chosen to live here. With regard, Angie Grover XXXXXX River Forest 60305

2/15/2026

Scott Loring |

I'm in favor of the proposed redevelopment. Fine with whatever height, whatever number of units. Looking forward to more neighbors, more classmates, more density, and more tax revenue. The TIF stuff is odd. Seems like a poor allocation of county resources to subsidize development in River Forest, but whatever. I'm happy to see a thriving Madison Street.

2/17/2026

Angie Grover |

Members of the Development Review Board, President Adduci and Trustees, My name is Angie Grover. My family and I have lived at XXXXXX Street for 13 years, on the same block as the parcel under consideration. I do not support the Madison Street development proposal as currently drafted. This meeting may be characterized as the beginning of the approval process but initiating this process signals a policy direction and establishes expectations. For that reason, the threshold for moving forward should include transparent evaluation and public comment on infrastructure capacity, zoning, and public safety solutions. It has come to my attention that my written public comments submitted in accordance with Village instructions were not distributed to decision-makers. Transparency in the handling of public record submissions is essential to maintaining confidence in the process so these are being sent to each Village Trustee as well as the Development Review Board. Zoning Context In 2023, during the Zoning Board of Appeals process, I was among the many residents who clearly communicated opposition to a height variance for this parcel. Revisiting that same objection by advancing this proposal completely ignores that lengthy and engaged discussion with the community. Height and Scale The proposed five-story height exceeds the prevailing character on Madison Street until you get west of Oak Park Boulevard and for miles to the west. Increasing allowable height is a material change. Additionally, the building diagonally across from the proposed site should serve as an example of what not to do. It overshadows the neighbors to the south across the alley, and its commercial space remains vacant. This building was constructed by the same developers, Five Thirty-Eight Partners. Traffic, Parking, and Infrastructure Capacity The most significant concern is the redirection of corridor-serving traffic and parking demand into a residential block designed for low-volume family activity. Approximately 60 residents live on the immediate block, with more than 40 children within a six-block radius. The proposed 127 parking spaces (which includes lift capacity) would generate substantial additional vehicle movements concentrated at alley exits and unsignalized intersections adjacent to homes, increasing exposure risk for children and pedestrians. Before this project proceeds further in the approval process, the Village should require:

- An independent traffic study conducted by a firm not

retained by the developer • Alley-level and peak-hour turning movement analysis • Evaluation of cumulative impacts from Washington traffic calming • Pedestrian safety and sightline analysis • Public presentation of findings prior to further advancement This evaluation should also address delivery routing, ride-share staging, speed controls, raised crossings, lighting, post-occupancy monitoring and measurable performance thresholds and corrective mechanisms. The current parking situation on Ashland, when cars are on both sides, restricts the flow to a single center passage. Urban planning best practice avoids shifting corridor-serving parking demand onto neighborhood streets and alleys. Parking access and circulation should be aligned with Madison Street's function, not absorbed by a residential block, small alley thoroughfare or constrained intersections without signals – all which are ill-suited for that increase of volume. Initiating any plan approval without this analysis would leave critical infrastructure questions unanswered and put both current and future residents at risk. Fiscal Context While I am excited that the Village is looking to bring vibrant, community-friendly business and living space to the other side of our block, the Village's need to create additional revenue should not outweigh thoughtful, planned development. The development should respect the residents directly impacted by these changes and it should not be used as an opportunity to recoup, replace or refill the expectations set for the failed Lake and Lathrop development. In 2022, the Village responded to our efforts to slow traffic on Ashland with a stop sign at Ashland and Vine. With more than 40 children in this six-block radius, parking and traffic impacts proposed here cannot be ignored. This current proposal is not a neutral change. A project right sized for infrastructure capacity should be able to both protect neighborhood residents and ensure the safety and livability of all families who would call this their home. Thank you for taking these comments into consideration and prioritizing the impact of your decisions on the people who have chosen to live here. With regard, Angie Grover XXXXXXXX, River Forest

3/20/2026

Tyler Kirk |

I write in support of the development at Madison and Ashland. I support a nice, new, five story apartment building with adequate parking, and the opportunity for two new business establishments to be placed on the first floor. As a local business owner, and lifelong resident of River Forest, I am excited about this opportunity for our village. We will significantly increase tax revenue that is vital for schools and the health of our village. We will bring in more people who will frequent establishments along the Madison corridor, and our larger community. We do not have many opportunities to build in River Forest, and I like the plan here. I believe much of the pushback is ill founded. The size of the project is appropriate and needed. One of the owners of five thirty one partners, the chosen developer, is being smeared by opposition when he is a River Forest resident, whose firm was selected out of a larger search. I find his ownership of the Cigar Oasis has no bearing on his ability to deliver a good result at Madison and Ashland. While there will continue to be vocal opposition, please stay locked on the facts that overwhelmingly show this development will improve our village.

3/20/2026

Jeremy V Fine |

Dear Members of the Board, I am writing as a resident of River Forest who has followed the discussion regarding the proposed Madison Street development with great interest. Like many neighbors, I care deeply about the long-term character, stability, and economic health of our community. In my professional work, I evaluate long-term financial planning and investment decisions, including how institutions approach growth and sustainability. That perspective has

shaped my interest in how the Village approaches reinvestment along Madison Street. I appreciate that residents have raised thoughtful concerns regarding traffic, parking, building scale, and neighborhood character. These are important considerations and should be addressed through the Planned Development process. At the same time, it is important to consider the broader context. Madison Street has faced challenges sustaining consistent retail activity for many years, in part because there are not enough nearby residents to support neighborhood businesses. Restaurants, cafés, and small retail establishments depend on a steady local customer base, and adding residents within walking distance can help create the conditions for a more stable and vibrant mix of businesses. Without that support, commercial corridors often experience higher turnover and difficulty sustaining the types of businesses residents value. The proposed development would introduce approximately 72 households, roughly 150 residents, within walking distance of the corridor. Even a modest increase in nearby residents can make a meaningful difference in supporting local businesses and strengthening Madison Street over time. There is also a fiscal dimension. Based on typical apartment valuations, this project would likely represent approximately \$25 million dollars in stabilized value and generate roughly \$600,000 to \$700,000 annually in property taxes. This is roughly equivalent to the tax base of several dozen River Forest homes. In a largely built-out community, opportunities to add new tax base are limited, making thoughtful reinvestment important for long-term fiscal stability. The proposal also appears consistent with suburban development standards, including approximately 1.2 parking spaces per unit, and market-rate apartments typically generate relatively few school-age children. I also understand the caution resulting from the unfinished Lake and Lathrop project. However, the process used here, including a national developer search and a structured Planned Development review, appears designed to provide stronger oversight and mitigate similar risks. Ultimately, the question is not whether Madison Street will evolve, but whether that evolution is guided thoughtfully. Targeted reinvestment along commercial corridors offers an opportunity to strengthen Madison Street while preserving the character of River Forest's residential neighborhoods. For these reasons, I believe the proposal merits careful consideration and thoughtful refinement through the Planned Development process. Thank you for your service. Sincerely, Jeremy Fine River Forest Resident

3/30/2026

Thomas Hazinski |

Dear Trustees, I am writing to express my support for the proposed development at Madison and Ashland. I believe this project represents an important and meaningful opportunity for economic growth within our Village. • It addresses a long-standing need for revitalization along Madison Street and has the potential to bring renewed activity and vibrancy to the corridor. • A mixed-use development combining residential and retail elements is well-suited to this location, and the retail component would provide convenient services for our residents. • The project's high-quality design and careful site planning appear to integrate well with the surrounding area, helping to create a transition between the busy Madison Street corridor and the adjacent single-family neighborhood. • The project's high-quality design and careful site planning appear to integrate well with the surrounding area, helping to create a transition between the busy Madison Street corridor and the adjacent single-family neighborhood. • Expanding the diversity of River Forest's housing options is important. Apartment residences can help attract both young families and empty nesters, supporting a more inclusive, multigenerational community. • Additionally, the development is expected to contribute valuable property tax revenue to the Village and local schools, which may help ease long-term pressure on tax rates. I also appreciate the Village's efforts to conduct a thorough and transparent process in selecting a qualified development partner, including the engagement of expert advisors and ample opportunities for community input. While public

discussion and constructive feedback are essential, I respectfully encourage that conversations remain focused on the merits of the project. Thoughtful dialogue helps ensure the best outcomes for the community, while maintaining River Forest's reputation as a welcoming place to live and invest. Thank you for your continued service to the Village and for your careful consideration of this important project. Sincerely yours, Tom Hazinski

7/10/2026

Matt Nickels |

I grew up and live in River forest. In fact our kids are 5th generation River Foresters! I support this 72 unit development at 7620 Madison. It offers the housing mix that a healthy neighborhood needs. The location is well suited for it with the surrounding commercial district and transportation. The developers report went into greater depth into the impacts of this development then is typically required. They mitigated shadows and reviewed general impacts. Overall excited to see a multifamily building built with modern amenities as a majority of the local multifamily predates 1970.

A mitigation I could see being meaningful both in impact and aesthetic is stair stepping or offsetting the west side of the building as to ease the transition to the single family scale and provide some shadow relief. Similar developments in Elmwood Park on the northside of North avenue have been barricading their alleyways to prevent cut throughs. I would debate the merit of that for this site but also don't want to push cars down the north south alleyway.

Thanks,
Matt Nickels

7/15/2026

Eduardo Martinez M | 7900 Block of Lake

Quick question on the Madison project: how are we going to fit the elementary kids in Lincoln? 80 condos will have an incredible amount of children!

Has that been answered? They discussed the cost and funding, but not the actual seats. Lincoln is extremely congested.

Thanks for your help,

Regards,

Eduardo Martinez M

7/29/2026

David Erfort | 100 Block of Franklin

We have lived in the neighborhood of the Madison-Ashland development for 43 years, we like our neighbors and neighborhood. We are not against development, but we are against unreasonable development. We understand zoning variances, but 87 feet versus 30 feet? 87 parking spaces versus 140 spaces? 72 units in that confined space is too much. Come back with a more reasonable and realistic plan, you will see the neighbors get behind the project. And we keep hearing about \$600,000 in tax revenue, it sounds like a lot, but when broken down over 4,000 tax paying entities, what does that mean \$175-200 per tax payer? Is it really worth the extra problems?!? David Erfort

7/31/2026

Angie Grover | 7600 Block of Vine

Re: Development Review Board Recommendation – Madison & Ashland Planned Development

Dear President Adduci, Trustees and Village Staff,

I am deeply disappointed by the Development Review Board's recommendation to move forward with the proposed Madison & Ashland development with few meaningful changes despite months of detailed public testimony, written comments, and unanswered questions about its impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

This recommendation is also difficult to reconcile with the Village's recent zoning discussions around variances. Residents spent considerable time participating in discussions regarding proposed zoning changes that would have allowed larger and denser development along Madison Street and in other areas of the Village. Those proposals were ultimately rejected (6 – 1) because of concerns about over-density and neighborhood compatibility.

The Village is now recommending this project and considering variances that would permit a project exceeding the scale residents recently rejected through that public process. If the Village can approve through variances what it declined to permit through changes to the zoning code, many residents are left wondering what purpose those community discussions served and whether the Village's zoning process meaningfully guides future development decisions. In addition to actively participating in the zoning discussions, I have submitted multiple letters requesting that the Village evaluate the impacts this proposed development will have on the neighborhood congestion beyond just Madison Street. My letters did not oppose development. They asked the Village to evaluate specific issues including neighborhood traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety, alley circulation, delivery operations, service vehicles, moving trucks, refuse collection, and the long-term impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and to demonstrate how those concerns were addressed before recommending approval.

Unfortunately, I left the Development Review Board public hearing with the impression that those questions were acknowledged but never truly answered.

The recommendation that was presented relies heavily on the conclusion that Madison Street can accommodate additional traffic and that this development would result in less than 1% impact. Yet that has never been the central concern raised by residents. The concern has always been what happens on Ashland, Vine, Lathrop, the residential alleys, sidewalks, and

intersections where families walk, children play, neighbors bike, and residents already experience congestion.

During the traffic presentation, emphasis was placed on widening the alley to improve turning movements and reduce vehicle conflicts on Madison Street. That may lessen impacts on a state roadway (Madison Street), but it does so by shifting additional traffic and activity into residential alleys. From the perspective of nearby residents, that is not mitigation. It is displacement. Even more concerning was the confirmation by Matt Walsh during the hearing that future residents of the building would be eligible for River Forest street parking. That potential demand does not appear to have been evaluated as part of the traffic or neighborhood impact analysis.

I was also troubled by the disconnect between what was presented publicly and what was included in the written record. During the hearing, another resident noted that documentation referenced in connection with the traffic study had not been made publicly available, yet that concern went unanswered. Regardless of whether those materials informed the recommendation, residents deserve a complete and transparent record of the information used to support this recommendation.

When residents asked what specific mitigation measures would protect the surrounding neighborhood, Matt Walsh's response was essentially that significant impacts were not anticipated and that, if problems emerged after occupancy, the Village could address them then. If no meaningful mitigation is required before approval, what basis is there for concluding that foreseeable neighborhood impacts have been adequately addressed?

The Village's position that traffic and operational issues can simply be revisited after the building is occupied severely limits any remediation options. Once a five-story, seventy-two-unit building is complete and new residents have moved in, meaningful mitigation options largely disappear. The building cannot realistically be redesigned. Access points will not be relocated. Density will not be reduced and parking in the area is finite. At that point, the surrounding neighborhood simply inherits whatever consequences were underestimated or ignored during the review process.

That is precisely why thoughtful planning occurs before approvals are granted, not afterward. This decision will shape our neighborhood for decades. Once approved and constructed, there is no opportunity to undo mistakes or reconsider assumptions that prove incorrect.

I have spent a great deal of time thinking about why this process has been so disappointing.

First, I am concerned the Village prioritizes the developer's timeline over optimizing public engagement. The public hearing was held immediately following the Fourth of July holiday, during the height of summer vacations, and at Trinity High School while another event was occurring on the campus making parking extremely difficult. Whether intentional or not, those circumstances created unnecessary barriers to public participation at one of the most consequential meetings in this process.

Second, good governance requires balancing competing priorities, evidence, property rights, financial realities, and the long-term interests of the community. My disappointment stems from something more fundamental. Public engagement carries an implicit promise that residents' voices will genuinely inform the decision-making process. That does not mean every recommendation becomes policy or every concern changes the outcome. It does mean that residents deserve transparency about how their participation influenced the decision. What did you hear? Which concerns changed your thinking? Which concerns did you ultimately reject and why?

The Development Review Board's recommendation reads less like a response to the concerns raised by residents and more like a justification for proceeding despite them. That is what has undermined confidence in this process. The Development Review Board serves in an advisory capacity. The responsibility for the final decision, and for ensuring that the record supports that decision, rests with the Village Board.

Before voting, I respectfully ask each Trustee to consider the following questions. If the record does not answer them, I urge you to require that they be addressed before taking final action.

Questions I Respectfully Ask the Village Board to Address Before Any Final Vote

1. How did the Development Review Board address the principal concerns raised by residents? Where does the recommendation identify the major themes raised by residents, explain how those concerns were evaluated, and describe why certain concerns were accepted or rejected?
2. What evidence demonstrates that neighborhood impacts—not just traffic on Madison Street—have been adequately analyzed? Where are the impacts on residential streets, alleys, pedestrians, cyclists, deliveries, ride-share activity, service vehicles, resident parking and day-to-day neighborhood operations specifically evaluated?
3. What mitigation measures will be required before construction begins? If none are required, what evidence supports the conclusion that foreseeable neighborhood impacts have been adequately addressed?
4. Why is post-occupancy monitoring considered an appropriate substitute for requiring mitigation before approval? Once the building is occupied, what meaningful options will remain if the projected impacts prove incorrect?
5. How is approving variances for a project of this scale consistent with the Village's recent decision not to adopt broader zoning changes allowing increased density along Madison Street?
6. How did resident participation influence this recommendation? What changed as a direct result of public testimony, written comments, or neighborhood concerns? Which recommendations or concerns resulted in changes to the proposal or its conditions of approval?

River Forest can welcome investment and should demonstrate leadership by insisting on thoughtful planning, meaningful mitigation, transparency, and accountability. Development

should leave both new and existing residents better off. That requires demonstrating not only that the Village listened, but that it carefully considered the evidence, meaningfully weighed public input, and can clearly explain the reasoning behind its decision.

I remain unconvinced that standard has been met.

Respectfully,
Angie Grover

7/31/2026

Brett Blessen |

As the River Forest community continues to debate the newly approved 5-story, 72-unit Madison & Ashland development, it appears to me that there remain critical, measurable questions regarding density and public benefit that have not yet been fully answered in public forums.

As a resident following this issue, and as a builder developer I support development but not at the wrong costs or motivations. However, with respect to this particular proposal, I have been unable to form an informed opinion based on the information currently available. With the clock running down, I believe many residents, myself included, are still lacking important answers.

I thought the proposal for detached senior homes was a much better fit for several reasons, starting with the character of the town, but more importantly because as people age, their incomes often decrease while property taxes continue to rise. That project could have allowed seniors to remain in the community while freeing up larger homes for younger families in their prime earning years, creating a dual benefit.

It is my understanding that the RFP was distributed to approximately 12,000 entities, yet only 12 firms signed NDAs. To me, that raises an important question: if those 12,000 recipients were qualified, why did so few express enough interest to proceed? Some obvious possibilities that come to mind include project economics, project complexity, market conditions, or site-specific conditions. That, in turn, makes me wonder whether River Forest is operating from a position of limited viable options rather than selecting from a broad range of strong development ideas that would be better suited to the community.

As a side note I can attest firsthand to the traffic concerns. What was once a pleasant, quiet street has become a thoroughfare for drivers racing to make the traffic, with a lot of noise on my street as well as downtown style traffic jams and delays at many times of the delays that did not exist in the past.

That said, before I can reach an informed opinion, I would appreciate Village officials providing concrete, data-driven answers to the following questions:

- Why does the Village believe 72 units and five stories are necessary?
- What financial benefit do 72 units provide to the Village compared with a smaller development of 30, 40 or 50 units?

- Has the Village performed a comparative financial analysis of different development sizes or alternatives? If so, will it release it?
- If tax revenue is the justification, what is the projected annual benefit from this project (beyond the frequently cited \$600,000 figure, which appears to lack supporting detail), and how does that compare with reasonable lower-density alternatives? Additionally, what assumptions were used regarding the lease-up period, and how do potential property tax assessment appeals during that period affect the projected tax revenue?
- If housing is the justification, why do 72 luxury rental units better accomplish the Village's housing objectives than other housing alternatives, including the senior prairie-style proposal?
- The developer has indicated that additional height and density are necessary for the project to be financially feasible. With lack of details it feels like the Village concluded that the developer's financial requirements justify departing from the Village's existing planning objectives and the concerns of surrounding residents?
- What is the developer paying for the Village-owned property, what has the Village invested in acquiring and preparing that property, and is any portion of the land or other public financial assistance being contributed to make the project feasible?
- What alternatives were considered, and specifically why were lower-density alternatives rejected?
- Given the unresolved Lake and Lathrop development, has that experience influenced the Village's desire to secure a developer it believes can finance and complete this project?

I think the most important thing is to keep coming back to one question: If the Village is asking residents to accept substantially greater height and density than contemplated by its own plans, what measurable public benefit is gained specifically from that additional density?

If River Forest can demonstrate that benefit, please show us the numbers. If RF cannot, then they still haven't explained why the developer's need for 72 units has become the Village's need for 72 units.

In closing, my impression, based on the information currently available, is that the present developer cannot make the project pencil out under any other scenario. However, that does not necessarily mean it is the right project for the Village.

Best,
Brett

7/15/2026

Eduardo Martinez M | 7900 Block of Lake

Quick question on the Madison project: how are we going to fit the elementary kids in Lincoln? 80 condos will have an incredible amount of children!

Has that been answered? They discussed the cost and funding, but not the actual seats. Lincoln is extremely congested.

Thanks for your help,

Regards,

Eduardo Martinez M