



Village of Oak Park

STAFF REPORT

TO: Plan Commission

REVIEW DATE: September 11, 2025

FROM: Village Staff

PREPARED BY: Mike Bruce, Village Planner

P R O J E C T T I T L E

PC 04-25: Special Use Permit/Alley Vacation/Plat of Subdivision – Gas Station 1141 Garfield Street.

The Petitioner, QuikTrip Corporation, seeks a special use permit to allow the construction of a gas station pursuant to Section 8.3 ("Table 8-1: Use Matrix) of the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance located at 915 S. Maple Street/1137-1155 Garfield Street, Oak Park, Illinois, Property Index Number 16-18-300-002-0000, in the GC General Commercial Zoning District. As part of the development of the property, the Applicant also seeks an alley vacation and a plat of subdivision.

A P P L I C A N T I N F O R M A T I O N

APPLICANT: QuikTrip Corporation
50 South Main Street Ste 200
Naperville, IL 60540

OWNER: SEC Harlem Acquisition
714 Enterprise Dr. Ste 103
Oak Brook, IL 60523

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1137-1155 Garfield Street and 915 S. Maple Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60304

P R O P E R T Y I N F O R M A T I O N

EXISTING ZONING: GC General Commercial Zoning District
EXISTING LAND USE: Vacant/Prior Use HJ Mohr & Son Company
PROPERTY SIZE: Approximately 101,787.5 SF (598.75' x 170')
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Corridor Commercial & Mixed Use & Industrial Use

SURROUNDING ZONING AND LAND USES:

NORTH: Garfield Street followed by GC General Commercial Zoning District (Oak Park Volvo)
SOUTH: Lexington Street followed by OS Open Space Zoning District (Park District Maple Park)
EAST: Maple Street followed by R-3-50 Single-Family Zoning District (Single-Family Residences)
WEST: Harlem Avenue followed by Forest Park (U-Haul, Restaurant, Car Wash Facility)

A n a l y s i s

Submittals

This report is based on the following documents, which were filed with the Zoning Administrator-Development Customer Services Department:

1. Application for Special Use Permit;
2. Special Use Permit Standards Pursuant to Section 14.2 (E);
3. Site Plan;
4. Floor Plans;
5. Landscape Plans;
6. Building Elevations;
7. Proposed Signage for QT Development;
8. Parking Analysis for QT C-Store;
9. Alta Survey;
10. Photometric Plan;
11. Revised QuikTrip Traffic Impacts Study & Site Plan Review dated August 20, 2025;
12. Civiltech Engineering Memo review of revised QuikTrip Traffic Impacts Study & Site Plan Review;
13. Alley Vacation Application; and
14. Plat of Subdivision.

Description

The Subject Property, formerly occupied by HJ Mohr & Son Company, is located at the southeast corner of Harlem Avenue and Garfield Street and bounded to the east by Maple Avenue and to the south by Lexington Street. The property is located in a GC General Commercial Zoning District. The proposal is to demolish all improvements on the site and construct a QuikTrip gas station and an approximately 6,600 square foot convenience store with eight (8) fueling dispensers (16 fueling stations). The site plan shows 48 parking spaces (including 2 handicapped parking stalls) located along the north, east, and south sides of the site. A copy of the site layout is shown in the applicant's plans.

The Petitioner has three requests:

1. The first request is an application to vacate a 16-foot-wide Village alley bisecting the Subject Property. The vacated alley would become part of the newly created Lot 1 per the subdivision application.
2. The second request is for approval of a plat of subdivision to consolidate and subdivide Lots 1 through 12 of the Subject Property, and the alley, into two lots of record associated with the proposed development.
3. The third request is for special use approval of a gas station in the GC General Commercial Zoning District that is proposed to be developed on Lot 1 per the plat of subdivision.

All three requests will go to the Village Board for final approval. Each request should be considered *separately*, and a recommendation shall be made for each application.

Z o n i n g O r d i n a n c e / V i l l a g e C o d e

Village Code - Alley Vacation:

In addition, the Applicant seeks approval to vacate a 16-foot-wide alley. Said alley would become part of the newly created Lot 1 per the subdivision application. The Plan Commission shall forward its Findings and Recommendations, including any conditions it may recommend, to the President and Board of Trustees for Board consideration and action thereon.

On December 14, 1984, The Village of Oak Park and H.J. Mohr and Sons Company entered into an agreement related to the east-west alley. The alley was not vacated to H.J. Mohr and Sons Company.

The following is the general process for vacating public rights-of-way:

1. Application and written request from the property owner(s) submitted to staff.
2. Staff reviews and provides comments to the Applicant.
3. A Plat of Vacation would need to be prepared.
4. Public Notice for a hearing before the Plan Commission will be prepared by staff (Ad at applicant expense).
5. A traffic analysis would need to be prepared; *if applicable*. (Applicant processes; expense by applicant)
6. The Plan Commission would then meet and discuss the issue and formulate a recommendation to the Village Board. The Plan Commission may elect to ask for input from other boards or commissions.
7. An appraisal of the land would be made to determine the fair market value prior to the Village Board meeting. (Village processes request; expense by applicant)
8. Should the Plan Commission recommend vacation, and the Village Board concurs, the Board would then direct staff to draft the necessary legal documents.

9. The Board would then pass an Ordinance vacating the property in question. Said ordinance would include an agreement outlining the terms for the vacation.
10. The staff would then work with the applicant / owner(s) to arrange for a closing and transfer of title.
11. All fees, including the initial appraisal, survey (plat of vacation), legal, recording, and purchase would be paid for by the property owner seeking the vacation.

Village Code – Plat of Subdivision:

A request was filed by the Petitioner as identified above for the Subject Property to subdivide the property for tax and ownership purposes. Pursuant to the Village Code, land divisions (subdivisions and re-subdivisions) must be reviewed and approved by the Village. Section 23-1-3 of the Village Code requires that the Plan Commission approves the plat of subdivision. The plat of subdivision is creating two (2) new lots of record by consolidating Lots 1 through 12, including the alley to be vacated.

The proposed Plat also includes a cross-access easement over newly created Lot 2. This easement is proposed to allow truck access from Lexington Street to the new facility. Plan Commission approval can take the form of a motion authorizing the Plan Commission Chair to sign the Plat. Upon Plan Commission approval, the plat will be forwarded to the President and Board of Trustees for final approval.

LOT 1

Lots 1,2, and 4 through 8, inclusive, part of lot 3, part of lot 9, and the vacated alley would make up lot 1 consisting of 69,438 square feet.

LOT 2

Lots 10 through 12, inclusive, and part of Lot 9 to create Lot 2 consisting of 32,174 square feet.

Zoning Ordinance – Special Use:

Section 8.3 (Table 8-1: Use Matrix) of the Village of Oak Park requires special use approval for gas stations. Section 8.4 (J) (Gas Stations) includes the following special requirements for gas stations.

1. All gas station driveways must be located and designed to ensure that they will not adversely affect the safety and efficiency of traffic circulation on adjoining streets. Gas stations are limited to two curb cuts.

The traffic study's analyses assumed a right-in/right-out driveway would be provided at Harlem Avenue, which is a state route. If the Illinois Department of Transportation approves a full-access driveway, impacts to Oak Park streets would not change. The development proposal includes a northbound right turn lane on Harlem, serving the proposed site driveway. If this right turn lane is

not approved, impacts to Oak Park streets would not change, according to the Civiltech Engineering who reviewed the revised Traffic Impact Study submitted by the developer.

2. Gas stations may offer convenience items for sale.

The Proposal includes a QT convenience store offering items for sale.

3. All sides of a building that is part of a gas station must express consistent architectural detail and character. All site walls, screen walls, pump island canopies and other outdoor covered areas must be architecturally integrated with the building by using similar material, color, and detailing.

The proposed building uses consistent architectural detail, material, and color on all four sides. The building elevations will be sent to the Village's consultant for review during the building permit phase.

4. Gas stations may also include an automatic car wash with one bay.

No automatic car wash facility is being proposed for the gas station and convenience store development.

5. The volume on any audio component must be maintained at a level so as not to be audible in adjoining properties. The volume on any audio component must comply with all local noise regulations. Audio components are permitted only on the gas station pump. Audio components are prohibited as part of any other structure, including canopies and buildings.

The Plan Commission could ask the Applicant to install a volume limiter/control on all audio components as a condition of approval, if the Plan Commission was inclined to recommend approval to the Village Board.

Special Use:

The listing of a use as a special use within a zoning district does not constitute an assurance or presumption that such special use will be approved. Rather, each special use must be evaluated on an individual basis, in relation to all applicable standards of this Ordinance. Such evaluation will determine whether an approval of the special use is appropriate at the particular location and manner proposed.

The Plan Commission and Village Board must make findings to support each of the following **Special Use** standards.

Standards for Special Uses:

- a. The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed special use will not have a substantial or unduly adverse impact on the neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare.
- b. The proposed special use is compatible with the general land use of adjacent

- properties and other property within the immediate vicinity.
- c. The special use in the specific location proposed is consistent with the spirit and intent of this Ordinance, adopted land use policies and the Comprehensive Plan.
 - d. The special use meets the requirements for such classification in this Ordinance.

Compliance with the Oak Park Comprehensive Plan

The proposed development mainly affects three recommendation chapters (touches on others) within the Comprehensive Plan. The chapters affected are as follows: 4.) *Land Use & Built Environment*, 7.) *Neighborhoods, Housing and Diversity* and 12.) *Economic Health & Vitality*. The Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and objectives which set standards for development. The Plan discusses the idea of strengthening commercial districts as well as the symbiotic relationship between economic development and the overall quality of the community. The Plan supports the idea of encouraging a mix of uses and businesses which will assist in diversifying the community's tax-base and providing a variety of choices to consumers and residents. The Plan discusses the active pursuit of businesses that address unmet gaps in the local market demand. The Plan encourages transit-oriented development with all types of housing. The future Land Use map supports more commercial/mixed use development that caters to residents but also attracts visitors from other communities.

The Envision Comprehensive Plan specifically identifies the Garfield and Harlem area as a Development Opportunity Site. The Plan envisions the future development of this area to be a "Mixed-use and multi-family planned development with commercial ground floor uses near Harlem and Garfield, and multi-family residential near Wisconsin Avenue (depending on the ability to implement a large-scale site clean-up redevelopment effort)."

Specific goals and objectives of Chapter 4 in the Envision Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

- 4.1.2 Strengthen the community's urban fabric through context-sensitive infill development that is complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- 4.4.1 Ensure that residential areas have adequate buffering and/or screening from incompatible adjacent land uses.
- 4.3.4 Encourage the growth of transit-oriented development (TOD) in order to provide greater access to local goods and services, expand the variety of housing options, and maximize transit, bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the village.
- 4.4.1 Promote mixed-use development within the village to maximize the use of land and to foster more compact, walkable, and vibrant neighborhoods.

While the proposed development provides adequate buffering and/or screening from the residential area, and the size and scale of the proposed commercial building is sensitive to the residential neighborhood, the proposal is incompatible with the stated goals and objectives of the Envision Plan for the future development of the Garfield and Harlem area.

C o m p a t i b i l i t y w i t h S u r r o u n d i n g L a n d U s e s

The prior use of the property was industrial. The elimination of the industrial structures on the property is positive for the neighborhood. However, gas stations are generally not considered compatible with residential uses and day care facilities. Traffic and noise are factors that could negatively impact the immediate vicinity.

Gas stations generate noise from traffic and late-night hours, which can be disruptive to nearby residents. Please note that the Petitioner is not seeking to change the hours of operation of the gas station and convenience store to 24 hours. According to the Petitioner, the hours of operation would follow Oak Park regulations and close between 12 am to 5 am. 7 days a week.

To mitigate some of the issues, the gas station is designed to meet the standards laid out for these facilities pursuant to Section 8.4 (J) above. The Petitioner has located the gas pumps to the north away from most of the residential residences to the east. In addition, the convenience store building and fence has been designed in an appropriate residential scale and located directly to the south of the gas pumps to shield the residential district. The proposal would include landscaping along all four sides of the property and a screen fence along the eastern portion of the property in an effort to provide a buffer and transition between the commercial district on Maple Street and the residential properties to the east.

The property is in a commercial district known as the GC General Commercial Zoning District. The GC General Commercial District is intended to primarily address those areas of the Village that have a variety of commercial uses, including uses that are more auto-oriented and heavier in nature. GC District standards are meant to allow more intensive uses with design and development controls that manage the impacts of those uses.

The surface parking lot as proposed is designed for 48 parking spaces. Per the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance, the minimum parking supply for the proposed development is 30 spaces based on the requirement of two (2) parking spaces for each pump island plus one (1) parking space for each five hundred (500) square feet of gross floor area. A parking study for the proposed development has been completed to demonstrate the need for additional parking, up to 48 spaces.

End of Report.

- c. Applicant
Plan Commission
Plan Commission Attorney
Craig Failor, Development Services Director