Application form:  
RTA Community Planning Program and  
CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program

DEADLINE: Noon on Thursday, June 29, 2017

This application form is online at www.rtachicago.org/applications. You may submit the form by email to applications@rtachicago.org. Upon receipt of application, you will receive an e-mail verifying that your application has been received.

1. Name of Applicant

Mayor Anthony T. Calderone - Village of Forest Park

2. Main Contact for Application

Name: Anthony T. Calderone
Title: Mayor
Phone number: 708-615-6200
Email: mayor@forestpark.net

3. Type of Applicant (please check any that apply)

__X__ Local government

_____ Multijurisdictional group* Please list the members of the group (including government and nongovernmental organizations):
__________________________________________  
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

_____ Nongovernmental organization* Name of local government partner(s):
__________________________________________  
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

*Applications submitted by multijurisdictional groups and nongovernmental organizations must include a letter indicating support from each relevant local government. See the FAQs for more information.
Nongovernmental applicants are strongly encouraged to contact CMAP or the RTA prior to submitting their application to discuss their project and the demonstration of local support.

4. Project Type (please check any that apply)

Please check all statements below that describe characteristics of your project.

__ X ___ My project involves preparation of a plan.
_____ My project involves updating an already existing plan.
_____ My project helps to implement a past plan.
__ X ___ My project links land use, transportation, and housing.
___ X ___ My project has direct relevance to public transit and supports the use of the existing transit system.
_____ My project is not directly related to transportation or land use, but implements GO TO 2040 in other ways.

5. Local Match Requirement (please initial to indicate you are aware of the local match requirements)

I am aware that a local match will be required for most projects, and understand that if my project is selected it is up to the project applicant to contribute a local match. (See the program guide for further details on local match requirements.)

ATC - Yes, I understand that applicants will be required to contribute a local match.

6. Project Location

Please provide a brief description of the location of your project. You may include a map if that helps to describe location, but this is not required. If your project helps to implement a past plan, please include a link to that plan. Location is along Van Buren St. between the I-290 and Madison Street. See attached map and the pages from the 2014 Village of Forest Park Comprehensive Plan.

7. Project Description

Please tell us what you would like to do in your community, and what assistance is needed. If you have more than one idea, please submit a separate application for each project. Please be specific, but also brief (less than two pages per project idea)—we simply want to have a basic understanding of what you want to do. For plan updates please tell us how you will be building upon (or replacing) the previous work. Program staff will follow-up with you if we need any additional information to fully understand your proposed project. - In brief, we are seeking assistance in funding a feasibility study on a Cultural Music and Art Park to be constructed on 8.5 acres of village-owned land adjacent to the end of the CTA Blue Line (Forest Park) and across from a multi-unit condo/townhome site. See addendum for details. Concept rendering also included.

8. Previous Plan Implementation Efforts

Please describe actions you have taken to implement previous plans in your community — whether your efforts were successful or not — to achieve infrastructure improvements, development investment, policy changes, advocacy, volunteer involvement, or other actions. If you do not have experience implementing previous planning work, please describe what you will do to make sure that your plan is implemented. Illustrating a commitment to implement plan recommendations is very important to both agencies as we consider new planning projects. The Village of Forest Park is well versed in planning many types of projects, from large infrastructure reconstruction/upgrades to organizing street festivals. We utilize many volunteers via our various advisory boards and commissions. This particular project is being developed via an ad-hoc group of local volunteers. See addendum for details.
9. Additional Strategic Partnerships

Please list any additional partners you may want to include in this planning project. Please specify if you have made contact with them in advance of submitting this application. The Cultural Park will serve to benefit other Forest Park Organizations when not being used as a music venue. Those organizations will not be partners per se but will be afforded use of the space to enhance their programs and support their missions. These organizations include The Park District of Forest Park, The Historical Society of Forest Park, Kiwanis Club, and the Forest Park Arts Alliance. Letters of support from the aforementioned as well as from the Village of Forest Park, PACE, and Metra are included herein.

(Please include any additional information that is relevant, preferably by providing links to online documents.)

Please visit our blog and our Facebook site for more information and details:
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/FPForestPark/
Also visit the Village of Forest Park website at www.forestpark.net to learn about our community.
The Local newspaper has done a number of stories on the proposed concept. Please visit http://www.forestparkreview.com/Search/?Search=cultural+park to read the articles published therein.
DEVELOP A MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The Village should coordinate with the Forest Park Chamber of Commerce and Development, as well as local realtors, to attract and retain residents by developing and implementing a marketing campaign. This effort should highlight the Village’s location, transportation facilities, transit services, retail and entertainment amenities, and mixed housing stock.

DEVELOP THE VILLAGE-OWNED ALTENHEIM PROPERTY AS OPEN SPACE OR AS A MIX OF RESIDENCES/OPEN SPACE

Feedback from public meetings, surveys, and workshops indicated the community’s strong desire to redevelop the Village-owned Altenheim property as open space. At the same time, the results of a market analysis of this property suggest that this location would be viable for single family or senior housing development. Each of these options is included herein to allow for the Village to select a development proposal in the future that accounts for public opinion, the residential and commercial market, and Village finances. If an open space alternative cannot be agreed upon or is not financially feasible, providing an alternative ensures that the site must be developed with a significant open space component. The intent is to provide a variety of options that adhere to the purchase agreement and that allow for flexibility given the potential for a change in the social and economic environment of Forest Park.

Open Space

Based upon community survey results, the Village may wish to maintain the Altenheim property as open space. This use, however, comes at a cost. The Village pays roughly $275,000 each year on the purchase of the property and will continue payments until the year 2021. Additional expenses to improve the property as open space would include costs to remove buildings, environmental remediation work, and site improvements, including parking and landscaping.

As mentioned, the Village is deficient in open space and “The Grove” park area to the north has become an identifiable destination for residents’ recreational opportunities. Development of the Altenheim property as open space should capitalize on the success of this existing open space area by providing pedestrian links between the two locations. Gazebos, shelters, seating and picnic areas, water features, and plantings may be built to allow for potential use for public or private events. Parking facilities should be located at the south end of the property, which could potentially be a source of revenue by providing commuters with a parking alternative during times when demand for use of the open space facility is low.
As the “preferred alternative” for this site, but given the insufficiency of information to determine physical and financial feasibility, it is recommended that the Village perform additional detailed analysis of open space alternatives by developing an Altenheim open space master plan. An open space master plan for this area should 1) define what kind of open space is desired by the community (passive, active), 2) define the scope and cost of equipping the open space with identified features and servicing the site with power, water, parking and other public infrastructure improvements, 3) determine costs to demolish abandoned and obsolete buildings, 4) identifying possible partnerships, grants and outside funding alternatives to help pay for the project, 5) establishing a phasing scheduling to spread costs out over time. This process and plan will equip the Village with the information it needs to make decisions about the feasibility of open space on this property and should be completed prior to considering any alternate Residential/Open space plan for this property.

Residential/Open Space

From a strict marketing point of view, the Village may at some point need to consider the redevelopment of its portion of the Altenheim property as a residential mixed use project. While secondary to the preferred option of open space as identified in the survey, the mixed use residential option may become necessary if open space feasibility reports or economic realities warrant otherwise.

If exercised, a residential development option must incorporate open space in a master plan that ties the existing open space located north to a significant amount of new open space within this new project, to the CTA property just south of the Altenheim, which provides access to an open space/pedestrian/bike connection across the DesPlaines River to the west.

Realtor data indicate that the for-sale market is strong for single family detached homes and townhouses in and near Forest Park. This parcel’s proximity to I-290, as well as stores and restaurants on Madison Street, makes it desirable for a variety of residential uses.

A development with single family attached units (townhouses) or zero lot line detached homes would be marketable here. These properties could include small private patios for each home and common open space for residents. This development could be targeted to potential buyers who want a quality home with minimal outdoor maintenance, lower real estate taxes, and a quiet environment, yet be close to shopping, dining, health care, recreation, and transportation.

Another residential alternative includes small lot, one-story single family detached homes that would appeal to empty nesters, or those over the age of 65, looking for one-level living that offers more privacy than a mid-or high-rise buildings. This housing product would be unique to Forest Park and the surrounding communities. While common in outlying suburbs where land is less expensive, this housing type is not typically found in inner ring suburbs and would be a distinctive marketing tool to attract new residents or “bring back” previous residents who may have left the community to seek educational alternatives for their children.
GOAL: Identify, preserve, and revitalize the community’s cultural, historic, and natural resources

Objectives:
- Promote policies and develop plans that focus on the preservation, sustainability, and revitalization of natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Expand upon existing arts and cultural programs in Forest Park to enhance social and educational opportunities.
- Protect open spaces and preserve natural areas, including the Des Plaines River watershed.
- Promote streetscape improvements and maintenance throughout the Village.

GOAL: Create, preserve, and maintain parks, open space, and recreational facilities to meet community and neighborhood needs

Objectives:
- Work with the Park District to create a system of parks, open space, and natural resources that meets the needs of all Forest Park residents.
- Provide recreational programs and facilities that promote healthy lifestyles.
- Evaluate the promotion of sustainable development initiatives and guidelines.
The Village of Forest Park is well versed in planning many types of projects, from large infrastructure construction and reconstruction upgrades to organizing street festivals. We utilize many volunteers via our various advisory boards and commissions. This particular project is being developed via an ad-hoc group of local volunteers appointed by the Mayor and Village Council. The location of the project currently sits as a large unused field across from a 140 unit residential condominium development constructed in 2006 which is situated to the north of the CTA Blue Line (Forest Park). There is a 17 unit Townhome currently being proposed for the property just north of the 140 unit site. Additionally, the project lays directly south of a multi-unit senior citizen complex and a 1/4 mile north of this site lays multiple developments along Madison Street in River Forest currently under construction. Forest Park is home to both the Blue and Green CTA lines, and Metra’s Northwestern stations (Oak Park and River Forest) can be found within a 1.5 mile of the proposed project site. Harlem Avenue, Roosevelt Road, Madison Street, and Lake Street either run through or are adjacent to the community. The location for our Cultural Park is ideal for commuters of public transportation and affords us the ability to encourage attendees’ use of the nation’s greatest public transportation system during events. It will also serve to attract tenants of the aforementioned developments.

The project would consist of transforming the existing green space into a multi-use park. The following uses and design elements are under consideration: Performance Space/Music Venue, Picnic area, Open green space and recreation areas, Playground, Special events, Fireworks, Farmer's market, Walking paths, Fitness trail, Sculpture gardens, Ice skating pond and sledding hill. This site has all of the attributes necessary to be developed into an amazing entertainment and recreation center for Forest Park, Oak Park, River Forest, Maywood and other surrounding communities in the area.

The Cultural Park fits in well with the Villages’ 2014 Comprehensive Plan. The plan recognizes that the most likely future use would be either mix use residential or as open space. The plan stated that “based upon community survey results, the Village may wish to maintain the Altenheim property as open space. This use, however, comes at a cost. The Village pays roughly $275,000 each year on the purchase of the property and will continue payments until the year 2021. Additional expenses to improve the property as open space would include costs to remove buildings, environmental remediation work, and site improvements, including parking and landscaping. As mentioned, the Village is deficient in open space and “The Grove” park area to the north has become an identifiable destination for residents’ recreational opportunities. Feedback from public meetings, surveys, and workshops indicated that the community had a strong desire to redevelop the Village-owned Altenheim property as open space.”
The Cultural Park will support the public’s wishes for open space and would provide an income stream to allow the property to be maintained as such. Page 80 of the Village of Forest Park 2014 Comprehensive plan discusses goals and objectives. One goal is to identify, preserve, and revitalize the community’s cultural, historic, and natural resources. The objectives for this goal are as follows:

- Promote policies and develop plans that focus on the preservation, sustainability, and revitalization of natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Expand upon existing arts and cultural programs in Forest Park to enhance social and educational opportunities.
- Protect open spaces and preserve natural areas, including the Des Plaines River watershed.
- Promote streetscape improvements and maintenance throughout the Village.

Another goal is to create, preserve, and maintain parks, open space, and recreational facilities to meet community and neighborhood needs. The objectives for this goal are as follows:

- Work with the Park District to create a system of parks, open space, and natural resources that meets the needs of all visitors.
- Provide recreational programs and facilities that promote healthy lifestyles.
- Evaluate the promotion of sustainable development initiatives and guidelines.

We believe that the Cultural Park will help the Village achieve the goals and objectives listed above. It will provide cultural enhancement, preservation of open space (especially in the Des Plaines River watershed) and utilize sustainable resources.

The project would also take advantage of the public transportation system such as Pace, Metra and the CTA Blue Line. The project will depend on the use of these transportation systems to support access to this proposed project. Just as Ravinia relies upon Metra’s Union Pacific North line to relieve traffic congestion on their local streets, we would take full advantage of the mass transit system to ensure that our patrons can access the park without the use of an automobile.

In order to achieve this goal, we need to ensure that our patrons can travel to the park by alternative sources of transportation; train, bus, bicycle and pedestrian. The proximity of the park is approximately 100 yards from the CTA Blue line and the RTA bus terminal. It would not only be convenient for Chicago patrons but residents from the Chicago metro area could avoid traffic and parking all together by taking a train or bus ride to arrive yards from the park’s concert entrance.

# 8 – Previous Plan Implementation efforts, continued:

Because we are a municipal government body, we have professional engineers, lawyers, union laborers, administrative support, and marketing support on payroll and available to us daily. We have many staff who are experienced project managers. Projects have included, but are not limited to, the complete redesign and reconstruction of our downtown district; redesigning
and constructing many of our streets and alleys to help mitigate flooding and enhance our walkability, earning us the nationally recognized bronze level “Walk Friendly Community” award; the complete upgrade and reconstruction of Roosevelt Road (in progress); the first community to integrate LED Lighting on our streetlights and alley lights community-wide; hosts to a large-scale annual St. Pats Parade; hosts of Summerfest, Music Fest, Rib Fest and three seasonal free outdoor concerts annually; and many more construction and event related projects.

We have layers of controls in place with respect to fiduciary responsibility, including Village Council Approvals and legal review by our Village Attorney. A Finance Director and Village Administrator manage the day to day financials of the Village after authorization from the Village Council. We are audited annually and our audits are public documents made available via our website. Depending on the findings of a formal feasibility study, the Village Council may enact a Civic Center Authority as prescribed by State Statute (70 ILCS 200/90) to oversee the operations of the park.
June 20, 2017

Michael Horsting, AICP
Manager, Local Planning
Regional Transportation Authority
175 W. Jackson Blvd # 1650, Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Michael,

I am proud to support the creation of a Cultural Park in Forest Park.

I believe that the proposal to transform an open parcel of land, owned by the Village of Forest Park, into a well-designed green space that will serve multiple uses, including an outdoor performing arts space, is a project that will enhance the quality of life for not only Forest Park residents but for the surrounding area as well. This forward thinking and creative concept for enhancing our communities is applauded and supported by the entire Village Council, including myself.

At our August 22, 2016 Village Council meeting, it was agreed that an Ad Hoc committee should be formed to explore and determine the feasibility of such an intriguing and exciting idea. At our November 28th meeting the Village Council appointed nine residents to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee and they have begun the process of making this concept a reality.

The opportunity to receive support from the RTA/CMAP Agencies in the form of a grant would provide necessary resources to study, stimulate and energize this remarkable concept and help bring it to fruition. It is our sincere hope that our proposal and grant application be received by your organization with the enthusiasm and optimism that reflects the Village Council and the Cultural Park Committee own in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Anthony T. Calderone,
Mayor

ATC/sac
Rachell Entler  
Commissioner of Public Property  
Village of Forest Park  
517 Des Plaines Ave  
Forest Park, IL 60130

June 23, 2017

Dear Commissioner Entler,

Please accept this letter as evidence of our strong support for the Village of Forest Park Cultural Center. The Park District owns only one 15 acre park to serve the approximate 16,000 residents. Combined with the 1.5 acres of park space provided by the Village tot lots, this results in an extremely low ratio of 1.17 acres of open space per 1000 residents.

We support the Village in their effort to develop the former Altenheim Property into a cultural center which would include open space for our residents to enjoy whatever amenities the Village provides through this development.

Development of this property by the Village would enhance the quality of life for not only today's residents, but for generations to come. If you need additional information please do not hesitate to contact me at either lpiekarz@pdofp.org or 708 366-7500 x12.

Sincerely,

Larry Piekarcz  
Executive Director
June 23, 2017

Michael Horsting, AICP
Manager, Local Planning
Regional Transportation Authority
175 W. Jackson Blvd # 1650
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Michael,

On behalf of Pace Suburban Bus, we are in support of the creation of a Cultural Park in the Village of Forest Park. Pace believes this planning project will provide the technical assistance to develop improvement plans supporting transit service.

The proposal to transform current open land into a well-designed green space that will serve multiple uses, including an outdoor performing arts center, is a project that will enhance the quality of life for not only Forest Park residents but for the surrounding area as well.

Pace Routes 303, 310 and 317 directly serve the facility operating on Van Buren Street. Maintaining unobstructed bus access along Van Buren during events is important to Pace in providing reliable transit service within the region.

Please feel free to contact me at 847-228-4249 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Snorden
Deputy Executive Director
Strategic Services
June 27, 2017

Michael Horsting, AICP
Manager, Local Planning
Regional Transportation Authority
175 W. Jackson Blvd # 1650, Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Mr. Horsting,

I am writing in support of the creation of a Cultural Park in Forest Park. Our organization is newly formed and has earned tremendous support from residents and businesses alike. Our first event was a hugely successful public art project and we have many future plans which entail all modes of art including theatre, music, sculpture, horticulture and more. A Cultural Park would marry well into our mission and goals.

The opportunity to receive support from the RTA/CMAP Agencies to study the feasibility of this concept would be very valuable towards bringing it to fruition. It is the sincere hope of the Forest Park Arts Alliance that the proposal and grant application be accepted in a positive light and strongly considered as a grant recipient.

Thank you in advance.

Very truly yours,

Sally A. Cody
Forest Park Arts Alliance
forestparkarts@gmail.com
Find us on Facebook!

The Forest Park Arts Alliance is a pending 501c3 organization – its mission is to showcase local artists and educate our community in all things associated with “The Arts.”
June 15, 2017

John Doss  
Director, Public Works  
Village of Forest Park  
517 Desplaines Avenue  
Forest Park, IL 60130

Dear Mr. Doss,

This letter is to express Metra’s support for the Village of Forest Park’s 2017 application to the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Community Planning and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Local Technical Assistance grant programs. The Village is requesting funding to fund the study of the creation of a Cultural Park/Performing Arts Center to serve Forest Park, Oak Park and River Forest residents.

As we understand it, the Village of Forest Park has convened a committee to explore and determine the feasibility of a cultural park that would transform an open parcel of land into a green space serving multiple uses including an outdoor performance art space. The study will have a focus on access to the park by alternative sources of transportation including train, bus, bicycle and pedestrians. The park’s location is 1.5 miles from the Oak Park Metra Station and 1 mile from the River Forest Metra Station. Additionally, it is 100 yards from the CTA Forest Park Station and the terminal for several Pace bus routes.

Metra anticipates that this project would result in benefits for existing Metra riders and encourage greater use of the Oak Park Metra station and should be considered for Community Planning/Local Technical Assistance Program funding. If this project is selected, Metra staff looks forward to participating in the study’s steering committee as technical advisors. Note that Metra support for the implementation of the outcomes of this study depends on the results of the study and is subject to future funding availability. If you have any questions concerning Metra’s support for this application, please contact David Kralik, Department Head of Long Range Planning, at (312) 322-8035 or dkralik@metrarr.com.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Don Orseno  
Executive Director/CEO

cc: Lynne Corrao, Metra Government Affairs  
David Kralik, Metra Long Range Planning  
Heather Tabbert Mullins, RTA
June 21, 2017

Michael Horsting, AICP
Manager, Local Planning
Regional Transportation Authority
175 W Jackson Blvd., #1650
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Michael,

Please accept this letter as an expression of Kiwanis Club support for the planning grant application for the Cultural Park Concept submitted by the Cultural Park Ad Hoc Committee for the Village of Forest Park, IL.

As you may know, Kiwanis International is a global organization of volunteers working to improve the world one child and one community at a time. Since 1923 the Kiwanis Club of Forest Park has supported programs to enhance the intellectual, physical, recreational, social, and artistic quality of life in our community.

We believe the creation of a Cultural Park will be beneficial to our community in all the aforementioned areas.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our support for the Cultural Park.

Sincerely,

Gerald F. Lordan
Secretary
June 20, 2017

Michael Horsting, AICP
Manager, Local Planning
Regional Transportation Authority
175 W Jackson Blvd., #1650
412 South Peoria St, Suite 400
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Michael,

Please accept this letter as an expression of support from the Historical Society of Forest Park, IL for the grant application of the Cultural Park Ad Hoc Committee for the Village of Forest Park, IL.

The Historical Society studies the past to understand the present to shape the future. We balance the sense of continuity and change in our community. We consider the Cultural Park to be an integral part of the evolution of our community from a blue collar, working class Industrial Age Socio-Economic Past to a more inclusive, diverse Information Age Economic Future. We consider the Cultural Park Proposal to be a grass roots expression of this evolution.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our opinion.

Sincerely,

Gerald F. Lordan, President
Historical Society of Forest Park