



VILLAGE OF FRANKLIN PARK

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VILLAGE MOURNS PASSING OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LEAVES A LEGACY OF DEVELOPMENTS THAT IMPROVED FRANKLIN PARK

It is with deepest regret that the Village of Franklin Park announces the passing of John Schneider, its longtime Director of Community Development and Zoning.

“John leaves an unmatched legacy of achievement in the arena of economic development, resulting in new businesses, developments, and investments that have greatly benefited our Village,” stated Mayor Barrett Pedersen. “John used his vast business and government experience to help make Franklin Park into a vibrant manufacturing center, with growing commercial enterprises as well. Most importantly, John’s amazing network of county, state, and regional governmental contacts helped to secure millions of dollars to fund critical transportation, infrastructure, and sustainability projects in Franklin Park.”

John joined the Village in 2012 and quickly developed an aggressive economic development effort that has resulted in Franklin Park receiving \$81 million in grant funding for development projects and infrastructure improvements. John also worked closely with the members of the Village’s Economic Development Commission, Plan Commission, Tree Preservation Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Village Trustee Karen Special collaborated closely with John and his staff. “John accumulated an impressive number of accomplishments during his tenure with the Village,” said Special. “Among the most noteworthy are the development of a strategic plan for growth for Franklin Park, a new zoning code, revitalizing our industrial and commercial corridors, and helping to provide 3.6 million gallons of new stormwater storage to prevent flooding.”

John’s efforts helped to reestablish Franklin Park as an industrial powerhouse, attracting numerous new developments including warehouses constructed by Bridge, Panattoni, Exeter, CenterPoint, and Molto in the eastern and western industrial districts,” said Pedersen. “He assisted local business to expand, attracted prominent corporations, and helped to redevelop the former Motorola site on Grand Avenue which now is home to the Digital Realty Campus, a thriving data complex that continues to expand.”

John loved to collaborate with Village staff to bring projects to fruition. He especially enjoyed mentoring young people and helping them to reach their career potential. Members of his staff learned quickly that John believed it was important to get out of the office and into the community to identify opportunities for future development and to talk to business operators to better understand their obstacles to growth.

“Every morning our staff would meet to discuss progress on Village projects over coffee,” said Nicholas Walny, the Village’s Deputy Director of Community Development. “He had an enormous wealth of knowledge and loved to share his stories from his years working with the City of Chicago and Cook County planning and development offices. But John was also a great listener and he genuinely wanted to learn about our family lives and career aspirations too. Mornings will not be the same without him.”

“John’s vision, influence, humor, and steady leadership will be sorely missed,” added Mayor Pedersen. “We will all miss working with him. With this being the holiday season,

it is an especially tough time to lose a friend. I extend my deepest condolences to John's family, friends, and colleagues.”

A list of John Schneider's most significant accomplishments:

Plans and Ordinances

- Development of a Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Franklin Park (2017)
- Adoption of a new Zoning Code (2022 – last adoption was 1973)
- Adoption of a Downtown Zoning Code (2016 – First ever for Franklin Park)
- Adoption of a Truck Routing Study

Grants and Funding

- Assisted in obtaining \$8 million from USDOT for engineering and design of a grade separation and railroad elimination crossing under the Canadian Pacific and Metra tracks.
- Secured \$26.3 million in IDOT funds to reconstruct Franklin Avenue west of Mannheim Rd. Helped to secure additional funding from Cook County totaling an estimated \$4 million.
- Spearheaded efforts to obtain the IDOT Rail Safety award for \$1.5 million to fund safety improvements required to achieve a Quiet Zone designation in Franklin Park.
- Secured funding from multiple entities totaling an estimated \$2.4 million for the design and engineering of the Des Plaines River Trail. Helped to secure commitments from municipalities that bordered the trail.
- Worked with Engineering and was awarded \$890k for an east-west bicycle trail from the RTA and CMAQ. Construction to begin in 2025.
- Secured \$5 million from IDOT Economic Development and Cook County Economic Development for the establishment of a Special Service Area to reconstruct Cullerton in the Western Industrial district.

Development

- Spearheaded efforts to redevelop the Crossings 2 site in downtown Franklin Park. The site now contains a 110-unit apartment building with ground floor retail which serves as an anchor to attract additional development.
- Attracted and worked with a hotel developer to build a 4-story hotel with 100 rooms in the Franklin Marketplace. The hotel is set to open in late 2024.
- Worked to redevelop the formerly contaminated Castle Metals site with developer Panattoni. The site now contains a Class A industrial building that includes Vital Proteins as a tenant.
- Assisted in redevelopment efforts of the former tank farm in the western industrial area adjacent to Franklin Avenue. The site now contains three Class A industrial warehouses totaling 700k square feet.

- Worked to reestablish the Franklin Marketplace. Three new buildings were constructed within the Marketplace which include Starbucks, Jersey Mikes, AT&T, Chipotle, Pizza Hit and T-Mobile.
- Reestablished Franklin Park as an industrial powerhouse, attracting numerous new developments including warehouses constructed by Exeter, CenterPoint, and Molto in the eastern and western industrial districts.
- Helped to redevelop the former Motorola site on Grand Avenue. The site now contains two data centers from Digital Realty and another data center being redeveloped by Microsoft. A third building was recently approved for Digital Realty at 2553 Edington to expand the campus.

Infrastructure

- Worked to redevelop and beautify the downtown streetscape with pedestrian bump outs, new benches, bike racks, garbage bins, and landscaping.
- Assisted in Village efforts to mitigate flooding issues throughout the Village through the creation of stormwater retention and detention ponds.