



◀ **Quiet Zones** Continued from Page 3.

their February meeting. Because additional safety measures are required to comply with current rules, the length of time necessary to attain approval will be extended into the 4th quarter of 2016.

Once a quiet zone plan is approved by the Village, a Notice of Intent (NOI) will be filed with the Diagnostic Team and it will evaluate the proposed ASM and determine if they meet current

Federal Guidelines and this review will take 8 months or more. Once any issues with the NOI are resolved the Village will design and construct the approved safety measures. Upon completion of the improvements the crossing data will be updated and the quiet zone will go into effect. The target date of implementation of the quiet zone is now late 2016. Watch the Village website and this newsletter for more updates.



### Telephone Town Hall – February 18

The Village will host a Telephone Town Hall on Wednesday, February 18 at 6:30 PM. If you do not receive a call from the Village at that time, you can join the meeting by calling in at no cost by dialing 847-448-0028. Mayor Barrett Pedersen will provide updates about Village programs, including obtaining a train horn quiet zone designation and information on energy home audits which can save you money on heating costs. The Mayor will also answer questions from callers. Check our website for more information.

### Let's Move This Winter!



Don't let the cold winter weather get you down. You can still be active during the winter season which will help improve your health and help us become a healthier community. Bundle up and get out for a walk. Find a trail to enjoy the winter scenery or go for a walk through our neighborhoods. Either way, it will get your heart pumping and the fresh air will do you good! If it's too cold for you outside, then turn up the music indoors and dance the day away. It's a fun way to work off extra calories. Head into the kitchen to try out a healthy recipe for your family. After dinner, take the family to our Community Center or Park District facility to shoot hoops. It's a great way to meet new friends too! To learn more, about the Village's Let's Move program, go to the website at [vofp.com](http://vofp.com) or follow us on Twitter at: [@letsmoveFP](https://twitter.com/letsmoveFP).



▲ Village Trustee Cheryl McLean chairs Franklin Park's Let's Move effort comprised of volunteers who are working to improve the health of our community.

### Budget Hearings Held in February

A series of hearings to present and discuss the FY16 Village budget will be held in February. Residents can attend the hearings and will have the opportunity to comment. All hearings will be held in the Community Room of the Police Station and are scheduled in the evening. For more information, watch our Village website at [vofp.com](http://vofp.com) or call the Comptroller's office at 847-671-4800.



## YOUR FRANKLIN PARK NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 2015



Mayor's Desk

FROM MAYOR BARRETT F. PEDERSEN



The Village of FRANKLIN PARK  
Barrett F. Pedersen  
Mayor

Tommy Thomson  
Village Clerk

Trustees:  
John Johnson  
Cheryl McLean  
Randy Petersen  
Bill Ruhl  
Karen Special  
Andy Ybarra

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Village Hall  
will be closed on  
February 16

# Village Freezes Property Tax Levy for FIVE YEARS IN A ROW!

It is still winter here in the Midwest and I know we are all looking forward to the spring thaw. But we are happy that one thing remains *frozen*- Franklin Park's Property Tax Levy.

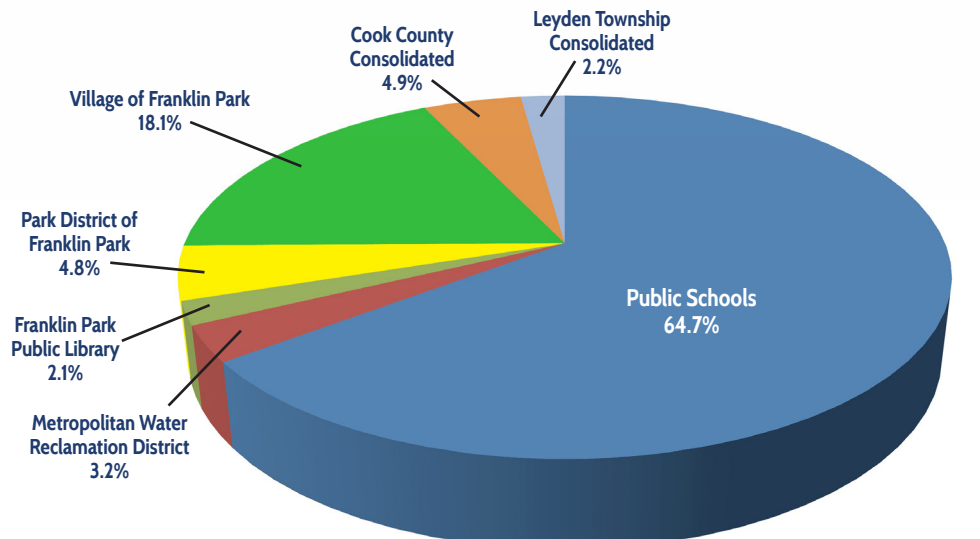
Due to our continued strong financial management, and our adherence to budget discipline we have kept our costs down. Our excellence in financial management was recognized by Standard & Poor's Rating Service when they raised the Village's credit rating two full categories to A+. The Village's strong financial standing has allowed us to refinance existing debt at a lower interest rate, resulting in a substantial savings of over \$1.6 million without extending the payment period.

Putting our financial house in order and stabilizing our Village finances has allowed us to continue to abate taxes, resulting in five years of no increase in the Village's property tax levy. In fact, this year the Village will actually levy less in property taxes.

Attracting new businesses and increasing revenue, as well as utilizing sales tax rather than property taxes to repair and maintain our infrastructure, have helped us to avoid increases to the levy and protect our taxpayers.

So why does our tax bill still seem high? Well, as you can see from the chart below, the Village portion of your tax bill is only 18.1%.

### Property Tax Components for Tax Year 2013





◀ **Mayor's Desk** Continued from Page 1.

Franklin Park has held the dollar level of the Village tax levy flat for FIVE years.

**Property Taxes Support Multiple Taxing Bodies**

By looking at the pie chart, you can see the amount and proportion of your property taxes that go to each taxing district in our area.

The majority of the tax bill goes to our schools, 64.7%. This supports our three elementary school districts, Leyden High School District 212 and Triton College to educate our students. The remainder is distributed to Cook County, Leyden Township, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, the Park District of Franklin Park and our Library.

**One of the Lowest Tax Rates in the Region**

The Village of Franklin Park's Municipal Tax Rate of 2.367 is one of the lowest in the region. It is even lower than many of our neighbors including Rosemont, Elmwood Park and Schiller Park.

Municipality	2013 Tax Rate
Village of Maywood	9.436
Village of Bellwood	7.560
Village of Stone Park	6.116
Village of Hillside	4.425
Village of Rosemont	2.622
Village of Elmwood Park	2.613
Village of Schiller Park	2.392
<b>Village of Franklin Park</b>	<b>2.367</b>
Village of Melrose Park	2.171
Village of River Grove	2.167



▲ Mayor Barrett Pedersen, Village Trustees and Congressman Mike Quigley met with residents at Agave Mexican Grill to discuss their concerns and ideas as part of the Congress on Your Corner program.

Property taxes are used by the Village to provide essential services, including our Police and Fire Departments that serve and protect our neighborhoods and the Public Works Department to maintain our streets and infrastructure.

**Only 18.1%** of your tax bill goes to the Village of Franklin Park to support these important services.

Our Board of Trustees and dedicated staff are committed to our taxpayers. Though we run an efficient and lean operation - - we are careful not to jeopardize public safety or reduce other critical services.

I want to thank our Trustees and our staff for their diligence. Maintaining financial discipline and keeping our taxes low help keep families in our town and allow us to have safe, stable neighborhoods.

**Assistance with Paying Property Taxes**

Many residents have shared their concern over property taxes with my office. In response, the Village sponsored a workshop with officials from the Cook County Board of Review last November. They were able to help residents understand the process of appealing the assessed value of their homes. The property value as assessed determines the amount owed on the tax bill, and residents can oftentimes receive a lower assessment upon appeal, meaning fewer taxes are paid by the appealing homeowner.

We plan to host another workshop again when the assessment appeal period is announced. Watch this newsletter and our website for details.

Remember to check your bill to make sure you are receiving all the exemptions for which you are eligible. If you are over the age of 65, the State of Illinois has a Real Estate Tax Deferral program that allows you to defer your real estate taxes until the home is sold. Information is available at [www.cookcountytreasurer.com](http://www.cookcountytreasurer.com). Also, information regarding the Senior Freeze Exemption and the Senior Homeowner Exemption is available from the Cook County Assessor's Office at the same website or by calling 312.443.7550.

*Barrett F. Pedersen*  
**BARRETT F. PEDERSEN**  
**MAYOR**

**Train Horn Quiet Zone Update**

The Village of Franklin Park, in partnership with the Village of River Grove, is moving forward with establishing a quiet zone from the Scott Street grade crossing to Thatcher Avenue. A quiet zone is a designated section of railroad where train horns are not used. This designation requires specific steps to attain a quiet zone, including completion of safety measures mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to stop the requirement for trains to use their horns as they approach the grade crossings.



▲ An example of a channelization device proposed for use by the Citizens Advisory Board.

**Franklin Park and River Grove Partner to Move the Process Forward**

In 2013, the Village met with the Regional Director of the FRA, to discuss the possibility of both villages attaining a quiet zone designation. Signal improvements have begun at the Ruby Street crossing to reduce the potential for entrapment on the railroad tracks and should be completed later this year. Last October, a Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) was established to assist in developing safety measures that would best work for the Village. Additionally, the Village hired Hancock Engineering to develop the quiet zone program.



▲ This is an example of a 4 quad gate.

In December, the CAB met to discuss safety improvements necessary to obtain quiet zone designation from Scott Street to Thatcher Avenue. Engineers provided data on the current risk index of all the crossings and which improvements would bring the risk down to an approvable level. The CAB agreed that placing the most effort on the three highest risk crossings (Thatcher, Des Plaines River Road, and 25th Avenue) would make the most sense. The CAB also recommended that the Village initiate the lowest cost option of channelization to present to the approving agencies.

The CAB also recommended that the option of installing additional signal gates, or quad gates at Thatcher and 25th be presented to the approving agencies should they not approve the channelization devices. The cost difference between the installation of channelization devices and quad gates is significant. The input from the CAB has been invaluable and will be used in meetings with the approving agencies.



▲ The Illinois Commerce Commission has highly recommended the installation of pedestrian gates at Calwagner and would also like to see installation at Elm Street crossing.

**Village Meets with Agencies to Seek Approval**

On January 22nd, the Village met with the approving agencies, or Diagnostic Team, comprised of representatives from the FRA, Illinois Commerce Commission, Illinois Department of Transportation, METRA and Canadian Pacific, Canadian National and Indiana Harbor Belt Railroads. The Diagnostic Team reviewed proposed improvements and will determine if they are appropriate and if any additional safety measures may be required. They also provided several additional safety measures (ASM) that would be required to attain Quiet Zone status. The Village's Engineer and consultant are evaluating this new information and will present options to the CAB at

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