

A Secret No More

Village of Hanover Park, IL

Situated thirty miles northwest of Chicago, the Village of Hanover Park is based in Cook and DuPage Counties. The U.S. Census Bureau says there were 38,333 people living there as of July 1, 2015. The median age is 32.2 with an average household income of \$82,342. Mayor Rod Craig describes the Village of Hanover Park, Illinois as "the best kept secret in the northwest suburbs" of Chicago.



Written by Nate Hendley

The village is a "family oriented community. We have excellent school districts, I'm very proud to say. We have several parks, a forest preserve district ... we've got exceptional plans for a future downtown ... I also really like the fact we have a multicultural community. There's a variety of cultures that come together ... anybody that has a hint about Hanover Park says it's the place to be," says the mayor.

Hanover Park is home to the the Education and Work Center, which is a collaboration between the IL WorkNet, Elgin Community College and William Rainey Harper College. The village contains over 430 businesses, 4.6 million square feet of industrial development and more than a million square feet of office and commercial retail space. Hanover Park also features a AA bond rating, annual retail expenditures of \$275 million, three business parks and three TIF (Tax Increment Finance) districts to entice economic development.

Shubhra Govind, Director of Community and Economic Development, says Hanover Park's appeal to companies includes location, accessibility and a business-friendly approach. As for the former, the village is strategically situated within the so-called 'Golden Corridor' – a stretch of land near Chicago noted for rapid growth.

Being inside the Golden Corridor
"allows the village to work

with area communities on a lot of regional efforts to improve business opportunities," notes Village Manager Juliana Maller.

As for transportation, the village is served by I-390, several major arterial roads, and three active bus routes, as well as freight and commuter train lines. The Soo Line Railroad, Chicago Central, and Pacific Railroad go through Hanover Park as well. Hanover Park is on Metra's Milwaukee West passenger line, and handles an average of 1,482 riders a day. An express train from Hanover Park can get to Chicago in forty-five minutes, which opens up possibilities for commuters.

"It's a great asset to have such easy access to both highways and trains," notes Govind.

The village is about seventeen miles away from O'Hare International Airport and is close to DuPage County Airport, which handles corporate jets, private, charter and freight planes and provides aircraft storage and maintenance services. Also nearby is Schaumburg Regional Airport, which handles private and charter planes and also does aircraft storage and maintenance. ▶▶

"Hanover Park's appeal to companies includes location, accessibility and a business-friendly attitude."

► In addition to its business parks, which are currently near capacity, the Village has created three TIF districts to serve as a tool to attract businesses to Hanover Park. In these areas, a share of property taxes is reinvested in the area and city officials work hard to enable new development and growth.

"TIF District 3 encompasses the Village Center Area. We have plans for transit oriented development in that center. We also have our newest TIF district, TIF District 5, which features new developments for senior housing and some retail, and has adjacent parcels available for development. TIF District 4 is based along our busiest intersection, Barrington Road and Irving Park Road. It's seen the most development," says Maller.

Major employers in Hanover Park include Maines, a paper and food service firm employing 400; Thermo Fischer Scientific (scientific equipment distribution) with 300 workers; Insight Enterprises (computer hardware assembly) with 250 workers; Camcraft (precision component parts manufacturing) with 225; and Pentair/Everpure (water and food-service products) with 200 employees. FUJIFILM U.S.A., a subsidiary of Japanese photography and imaging company FUJIFILM, has a regional headquarters in the village.

When asked what kind of companies Hanover Park wishes to attract, Mayor Craig says, "in our newer business park, we have been attracting advanced, high-tech manufacturing. Camcraft is a good example of that. They have a lot of robotics and produce parts for larger manufacturers like Caterpillar. Access to highways and roads is important to them."

"Our industrial parks have low vacancy rates. We work to attract businesses that can provide services to residents of our community and our region. [Businesses] that generate retail sales," adds Maller.

As mentioned, Hanover Park officials are eager to build up a downtown called Village Center. The plan is to expand commercial activity, transportation facilities and high-density residential housing in near the Metra Train Station.

The community that is now the Village of Hanover Park can trace its roots to the mid-19th Century. The place was originally known as Ontarioville and was serviced by a stagecoach line.

Hanover Park didn't experience rapid growth until it was incorporated as a village in 1958. At the time, the population was just over 300 people, living in a land area under a single square mile. In 1969, the village borders were expanded

after 750 acres of farmland in the next-door county of DuPage were annexed. The population hit 12,000 people by 1970, then increased to 28,850 a decade later. By 1990, the population had reached 32,895.

Community events are very popular in Hanover Park, with annual activities marking Veteran's Day, Memorial Day and others. Community Service Day, in honour of Martin Luther King Jr. and an event working in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity, was held this spring at a Presbyterian Church, while a Business After Hours: Mardi Gras celebration slated for next year will see local business owners partying it up with New Orleans music and food.

During a summer event called Touch-A-Truck, the village showcases "large equipment and vehicles from public works, fire and police. It's a great event for the family. You can experience what it's like to be on [and in] the large equipment and vehicles we have. We've held Touch-A-Truck for many years and it's one of our most popular events," says Deputy Village Manager David Webb.

Other big draws include an annual Car and Motorcycle Show and the COPS Day Picnic, where residents can mingle with local police officers in a relaxed, fun setting. The village is also actively

putting together celebrations to mark its sixtieth anniversary in 2018.

Hanover Park officials actively promote the village and keep residents informed of local developments online and in-person. "We're very proud of our open and transparent approach to communicationg with our residents," says Webb.

"We have very active Facebook and Twitter accounts, and have everything on our village website that a resident might need – from board information and agendas, to a new residents guide and event listings. We do weekly e-news for residents, recapping all of our events coming up for next seven days or near future and reminding them to come out. We have a multimedia sign on Barrington Road that we're proud of. It's a large video screen sign that we use to put announcements up for residents," he states.

Village of Hanover Park representatives also "attend and participate in local, regional and national trade shows and conferences for direct business recruitment," adds Govind. Business Retention Visits are made regularly to large manufacturers and the small mom-and-pop store to address businesses needs.

The Village's economic development committee, called CONECT (Committee on Networking, Education and Community Teamwork), meanwhile, brainstorms on ways to strengthen local businesses and attract new firms to the fold.

As for attracting new residents, Webb says Hanover Park is "one of the youngest communities in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. If you're a new homeowner raising a family, you will have a lot of people to connect with here. There's a wide variety of events here – a lot of activities for families."

Among other amenities, Hanover Park features a Centre Court Athletic Club with tennis and racquetball courts, a fitness center, pro-shop, locker rooms, whirlpool, sauna and nursery. There is the Seafari Springs Family Aquatic Center, open from early June to the end of August, with slides and other aquatic attractions. The village boasts over twenty park sites, football, baseball and soccer fields, ice rinks and basketball courts. In winter, sledding, skiing and ice skating are popular. Forest preserves offer biking, hiking, horseback riding, fishing and bird watching.

In addition to economic, recreational and cultural opportunities, the cost of living in Hanover Park is relatively low with a median house price of \$207,882. "A dollar goes really far in Hanover Park," says Govind.



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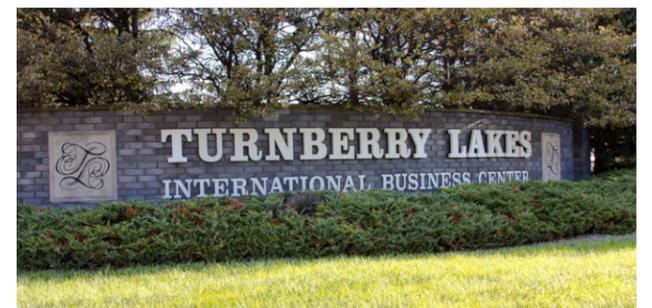
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In future years, Village of Hanover Park planners "envision us at about 50,000 population", says Govind. While officials would like the village to expand, no one wants Hanover Park to lose its small-city appeal.

On the economic front, Govind would like to see Hanover Park become "more vibrant, have additional development under way, open more restaurants and have our businesses continue to be successful."

"From a business perspective, there's lots of development opportunities. Whether highways or Metra or the bus, we're really well connected. We're a very family-oriented community that offers great services for our businesses and our residents," she adds. ■



"Our industrial parks have low vacancy rates. We'd like to keep those full."

MALLARD LAKE
BUSINESS PARK