

ROGERS PARK BUILDER

SPRING 2000

Condo Market Continues Strong and Brisk

When it comes to Condos, it's a seller's market. This much was soon apparent in a random survey of several realtors and developers who are active in the conversion and sale of condos in Rogers Park.

For example, a two-bedroom and two-bath apartment on North Sheridan Road which sold for \$130,000 to \$160,000 last year is now selling for \$140,000 to \$205,000.

Putting it another way, one of the above apartments which sold for \$120 a square foot last year is currently selling for \$150 a square foot, a 25% increase.

Developers reported prices today in the \$150-\$160 per sq. ft range. While sellers are willing to pay more for condos, they are more sophisticated and demanding more for their money.

As Connie Abels of RE/MAX NorthCoast Realty put it: "Developers are comfortable putting more into their properties, including jacuzzis, granite and marble counters and baths. And buyers are getting more for their money."

A movement from higher priced Lakefront areas such as Lincoln Park and Lakeview was also noted by several taking part in the survey.

For the Spring and Summer the market for condos is expected to continue hot and heavy, with a downturn nowhere in sight for the foreseeable future. Here are some typical comments:

Mike Luckenbach, Kassia Realty Group:

"Today, we are getting \$125,000 to \$165,000 for a two-bedroom, two-bath condo, and \$165,000 to \$250,000 for a three-bedroom and two-bath apartment. The median price for a single family home in Rogers Park increased from \$111,000 in July 1998 to \$130,000 in July of 1999. It's been a good market and I don't see any lessening of interest in the foreseeable future."

Connie Abels, RE/MAX NorthCoast Realty:

"There are tons of new conversions, and the prices are substantially higher today than they were last year for similar condo units. Last year we were getting \$175,000 for three bedrooms with two baths. This year for a similar unit at 7446-48 N. Damen, we are getting \$235,000. This market should

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Parking is Seen as Number One RPBG Concern

The Board members of the Rogers Park Builders Group have spoken and their number one concern, as seen in a discussion and tally taken at the January Board meeting, is to "evaluate parking needs for the community." It was felt by many during the discussion that there is a critical need for more parking in the community and parking is a prime concern of nearly all new developments in Rogers Park. Solutions to this problem will enhance new development.

Other concerns as noted in the survey include "revitalizing retail development," followed by a need to "reduce public loitering, and increase law enforcement," and "to consider strategies for relieving density and congestion." Finally, Board members listed as a major concern for the RPBG for the coming year: "to consider the benefits and drawbacks of downzoning."

Density and congestion was seen in the Siemon Scoping Report of 1998 as a major cause of concern for the area, and a negative influence on the resurgence of Rogers Park.

Downzoning was another area of considerable discussion at the meeting. In particular, a project to build an upscale six-flat in place of a single family house has caused quite a debate in the community. Does the community want new construction even if it means tearing down a single family home, or should the community demand redevelopment or construction of a new home even if the latter option may not be economically feasible.

Interestingly, concerns of all members present at the meeting, not only Board members, were almost identical, although the rankings varied slightly. RPBG President Mike Glasser will use this input from the Board to help prioritize projects in months to come.

Theater Party Planned to See "View from the Bridge" April 9th

"A View from the Bridge," Arthur Miller's prize-winning play, will highlight a Theater Party to be held Sunday, April 9th. Following the play, to be held at 3:00 p.m. at the Raven Theater, 6931 N. Clark St., those attending will walk a block north to Tien Tsin Restaurant, 7018 N. Clark, for a multi-course dinner, cocktails, and conversation.

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New Dominick's Fresh Food Store

A heck of a store any way you look at it is the Gateway Center's new Dominick's Fresh Food Store. Congratulating Ted Lazar (left), manager of the eagerly awaited food center, is Mike Glasser, President of the Rogers Park Builders Group.



AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

New Howard Streetscaping and Beautification Project to be Launched This Spring

A new \$2 million streetscaping and beautification project for Howard Street is scheduled to be launched this Spring, according to Ken Govas, Executive Director of DevCorp North. Govas noted the new improvement will make Howard Street look "like one of the premier business streets in the area."

According to Nalini Johnson, DevCorp North's SSA manager, the project will be done in several phases: the first, to cover Howard Street from the CTA terminal to Ridge, will be launched this Spring, while the second phase, from CTA terminal to the Lake, will start this Summer and is scheduled for completion this Fall.

The project's many features, according to Ms. Johnson, include planters and trash bins all along Howard Street, with diagonal parking spaces to be built at a few key intersections to provide more parking space.

To improve access to buses, sidewalks will be narrowed at bus stops along the route, thus providing more space for buses to take on passengers and freeing up the flow of traffic around the bus stop.

Other features include the planting of new trees on both sides of Howard Street, grating around the trees, street benches, bike racks and new light

posts with ornamental fixtures and banners. The project also calls for a new stoplight at Howard and Clark, on the perimeter of the new Gateway Retail/Transit development. In addition, the Metra viaduct west of Clark Street will have a newly designed archway with logo of the streetscaping project.

Banners suspended on all light posts, Ms. Johnson indicated, will feature the new logo.

The project, in the works for the past two and half years, was developed by the Howard Street Redevelopment Committee, with input of both the Chicago and Evanston Planning Departments. The cost is being jointly financed by the City of Chicago and Evanston. The 12-member redevelopment committee was composed of both Chicago and Evanston representatives, including RPBG Board member Al Goldberg (*see profile below*) who was in on the negotiations from inception.

Maintenance for all phases of the project, including emptying of trash baskets, cleaning of streets, and replacing planters and trees as needed will come out of funds supplied by the Howard Street SSA, comprised of merchants on both the Evanston and Chicago sides of Howard Street.

(*"Condo" continued from page 1*)

continue hot for the balance of the year, but nobody can predict with certainty what the market will be like next year."

Sharon Kozak, Coldwell Banker

"We recently sold the last of a 21-unit condo building at Sheridan and Jonquil. Actually, all of the units were under contract within 90 days. Currently, we are marketing a 12-unit condo on the Northeast corner of Sheridan and Columbia. The developer, IDM, also handled the Sheridan-Jonquil conversion and is considering installing a roof top deck. The units, of 900 to 1,500 square feet each, will sell for \$140,000 to \$205,000 each.

Michelle Brown, Barnett & Brown:

"Today's buyers are willing to pay more, but expect to get more for their money. Marble counters, jacuzzis, new plumbing and all of the amenities. Last year, we were getting \$130,000 for two bedrooms and two baths. But this year we are looking for about 20 per cent more for similar condos."

For more on the condo market, see story on page 3

(*"View" continued from page 1*)

"View from the Bridge' has been playing to rave reviews for several months now," said Carla Price, Arts Committee chairman. "Those who attended last year's party at the Raven, know the degree of professionalism which marks all productions of Raven Theater. This combined with the delicious dinner of Tien Tsin and drinks will make for an unforgettable evening."

Cost of the entire event, which is limited to 40 people, is only \$40 per person. Carla Price urged that members send checks made payable to the Rogers Park Builders Group and reservations to her, at 814 Sheridan, Evanston, Illinois 60202 at the first opportunity.

NEIGHBOR PROFILE

A Busy Man Gets the Job Done

They say that if you want to get the job done, give it to a busy man. That would certainly seem to fit the bill of our featured board member, Alan Goldberg. Al, as he prefers to be known, besides being an extremely active and knowledgeable member of the Rogers Park Builders Group, is active in a number of community groups, chief among them perhaps the Howard Street Redevelopment Commission, developers of the new streetscaping program for Howard Street (*see story above*).

Besides his service on the Howard Street group, Al is a director of the Chicago Association of Realtors, a member of the Commercial Committee of the Multiple Listing Service of Northern Illinois and was active in the Southeast Evanston Citizens Planning Committee. Al, just to keep things challenging, is also member of the Morse Avenue Task Force, which is focusing on a streetscaping program for Morse Avenue.

A real estate broker for the past 23 years, Al has been connected since 1983 with Hallmark & Johnson as a Vice President. He specializes in apartment buildings and commercial investment properties.

Al's latest project is the redevelopment of a commercial building on the southwest corner of Morse Avenue and Glenwood, which when completed will have ten retail stores on the ground floor and a series of artist studios and live/work studios on the second floor. It will feature new thermopane windows and doors, lighted signage, new electric service, and all new heating and air conditioning.

Al and his wife, Cookie Gluck, a costume designer, are parents of two daughters, 15 and 21. A firm believer in the future of Rogers Park, Al says that Rogers Park has all of the amenities one looks for in a place to live and work: access to good transportation, proximity to the Lake, and good housing stock. Small wonder that Al is putting his money on the resurgence of Rogers Park. "The resurgence is right now," he says.



Cardinal Group Executive is Bullish on Rogers Park as an Investment

An interview with Tony Marchese, of the Cardinal Group, part of Keller Williams Cardinal Realty, conducted by Tom Heineman, a founding member of the Rogers Park Builders Group.

How long has your company been active in Rogers Park?

About three years. Our first project was an eight-unit building at 1526 W. Birchwood. The highest price at the time was \$150,000 for a third floor, two-bedroom, two-bath unit. We pushed the limit of the Rogers Park market at that point. The unit just resold for \$225,000.

What attracted your brokerage firm to Rogers Park?

The opportunity on Birchwood alerted us to a block of lovely single-family homes, near the lake and surrounded by a neighborhood of beautiful, vintage buildings.

How many condo conversions have you been involved with in the Rogers Park area? How many units?

We have helped market more than 120 units in nine different projects. Most of these have been done in the last two years.

What are you doing right now? What percent of the Cardinal Group's projects are in Rogers Park? What is the price range per square foot? How does this compare to other areas?

Right now, we are marketing six projects with 35 remaining units. More than 50 percent of our projects are in Rogers Park. We are definitely focusing on Rogers Park. We are also active in the South Loop, Lakeview, Wicker Park, Albany Park, Sheridan Park and Margate Park.

What are the current price ranges of your condos?

We have units listed for between \$115,000 (Jonquil and Bosworth) and \$399,000 (Eastlake Terrace). Most units are in the \$150,000 to \$180,000 range.

What are the standard amenities that you find the market expects?

New kitchens with maple or oak 42-inch cabinets and laminate countertops • GE appliances – often upgraded stainless steel • New baths – preferably two • New windows, electrical, plumbing and roofs • Central heating and air • New decks/porches • Security systems • and Jacuzzis are becoming popular

Are parking spaces in demand?

Parking on our first project cost \$5,000 for an outdoor space. Now parking is between \$10,000 and \$20,000. The higher price typically is for a garage. It takes longer to sell without parking; clearly buyers want parking.

Is there a typical buyer? If so, what is the profile(s) of the type of folks investing in the neighborhood?

The typical buyers are 25 to 40 years old, single professional, making their first real estate purchase. There are equal numbers of men and women. Buyers want more space, better values than they can find elsewhere and a good investment. Our clients are very diverse, multi-ethnic and typically Lincoln Park or Lakeview refugees.

Is there a typical developer that you work with? If so, what is the profile of the developers interested in investing in the neighborhood?

There is no typical developer. They are very diverse. However they came here for the same reason: opportunity. They all saw a future in Rogers Park.

What trends do you see in Rogers Park in the condo market?

We are attracting higher income, more sophisticated, discerning buyers who demand quality and value. We will have to match what is being offered in Lakeview and other more expensive areas if we are to continue to attract more affluent buyers at higher prices.

What has been the highest price unit you've sold? What are your highest price developments right now?

The most expensive unit we sold was a two-bedroom, two-bath condo in the Hampton project on Jonquil Terrace. It sold for \$185,000. The highest price now listed is in the Eastlake Gables project on Eastlake, for a third-floor, three-bedroom, two-bath unit facing the lake. It includes a garage, dual fireplace, marble baths and solarium. It is listed for \$399,000.

What are the biggest challenges you see in doing business in Rogers Park?

Parking is the number one challenge. Next would be the lack of viable commercial strips. Finally, we are still challenged by lingering negative and inaccurate perceptions about Rogers Park.

What is the average time a unit is on the market?

About 34 days.

As I See It... by Mike Glasser

President, Rogers Park Builders Group



Where We Stand as an Organization

Rogers Park takes pride in being different. Where else in the city can someone live in a relatively affordable three-story walkup and be only a few blocks from the lake? This didn't just happen by chance; a group of neighborhood visionaries in the 1950s gathered together to protest plans to build highrises. This group later became the Rogers Park Community Council and successfully fought off those proposals and helped retain a vital part of our neighborhood charm.

In this sense, the Rogers Park Builders Group is truly a "Rogers Park" type of organization because our origins differ from similar builders groups elsewhere. Most building owners associations are created to promote networking opportunities for building owners and/or the exchange of information about running or operating specific buildings and developments. But in the case of the RPBG, we engaged a public relations firm to bring a much needed message to Chicago (and the world) about Rogers Park. For several years, we conducted breakfast meetings attended by hundreds of real estate professionals promoting Rogers Park. Finally, we published and distributed our multi-page full-color brochures touting the positives of our community. At monthly board meetings, egos were characteristically checked at the door. There was too much to do and it made little sense to get caught up in personality conflict. Instead, we banded together and looked out for the greater good of our community. I am proud that we still continue to do that.

We devoted this year's January meeting to getting a sense of the neighborhood's big picture. I asked members and guests in attendance to consider what are our community's biggest issues from a real estate development perspective. We listed two top issues: parking/transportation, and the need to promote commercial/retail development (see story on page 1). There are other important issues, but these are our primary priorities.

Of course, one of the most enjoyable aspects of belonging to our organization is the tremendous opportunity it affords us for networking. Many of us do substantial business with people we meet through our work with RPBG. (In fact, we are compiling a list of members, divided by occupation and trade, to promote networking opportunities among existing members). Our monthly board meetings are often terrific idea-generating sessions, where we meet people who have already experienced problems we may be facing, and who can offer solutions. Most important, we form valued friendships with each other and with members of community organizations with which we collaborate. Though our primary task is to consider broad development issues that face our community, the strong personal bonds and invaluable friendships sustain us from year to year. In fact, seven years later, many founding members of our organization remain active, solid members.

If you own or manage real estate in this community, or are a tradesman, contractor or merchant active in the community, and if you share the goals articulated in our mission statement (on page 4), please consider joining our organization. And if you are interested in learning more about our community, we welcome you to check us out at a future board meeting. Contact our membership chairman, Dan Dooley at (773)764-5247, or mail in the form on page 4 to Mary Jane Sacks.

OUR MISSION

The Rogers Park Builders Group's mission is to encourage and support responsible residential and commercial property investment, development, and ownership in the Rogers Park community. Looking far beyond bricks and mortar, the RPBG initiates and supports collaboration on city and community actions to create a destination community.

Tom Heineman, Assistant Editor

Terry Sacks, Writer/Editor

Jim Stoller, Chairman-Communications

Michael Realmuto, Chairman-Planning and Development

Carla Price, Chairman-Arts

Michael C. Luckenbach, Chairman-Outreach

Jim Klutznick, Chairman-Fundraising

Dan Dooley, Chairman-Membership

John O'Leary, Secretary

Tim Flenty, Treasurer

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Michael Walk, Immediate Past President

Mike Classen, President

RPBG Officers



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Please send information about becoming a member of the Rogers Park Builders Group

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (daytime) _____

Phone (evening) _____

I'm interested in: _____

Comments _____

Mail to: Mary Jane Sacks, Administrative Director
Rogers Park Builders Group
1708 W. Jarvis Avenue
Chicago, IL 60626
Phone/Fax: (773)743-7453

The Bottom Line

The Rogers Park Builder is aimed at keeping members, sponsors and prospective supporters up-to-date on both the Rogers Park Builders Group and new developments in the neighborhood.

If you like what you see, please pass it along to a fellow developer or investor.

If you are interested in becoming a member or sponsor, please fill out the form on the left. Feel free to send your comments and suggestions for stories to Terry Sacks, Editor, at the address indicated on the left or send an e-mail to fsacks@aol.com.

Ideas for future newsletters are appreciated. Any of the officers listed next to the mailing label will be happy to discuss the Rogers Park Builders Group and its mission.

Visit us via the Rogers Park community web site: <http://www.rogerspark.com>

THIS MONTH WE SALUTE

We Tip Our Hats

We tip our hats this month to the Rogers Park Community Council, one of the oldest and most distinguished community-based organizations, and one which has played, and continues to play, a major role in the revitalization of Rogers Park. Next month, on May 20th, the Council observes the 10th Anniversary of its prestigious "Spirit of Rogers Park Awards." Over the years, more than 200 community leaders have been recognized for their efforts to make Rogers Park a great community. To attend or to find out what you can do to support the Council in this fine endeavor, contact Cary Steinbuck, Council Executive Director, at (773)338-RPCG.