

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Edison Park

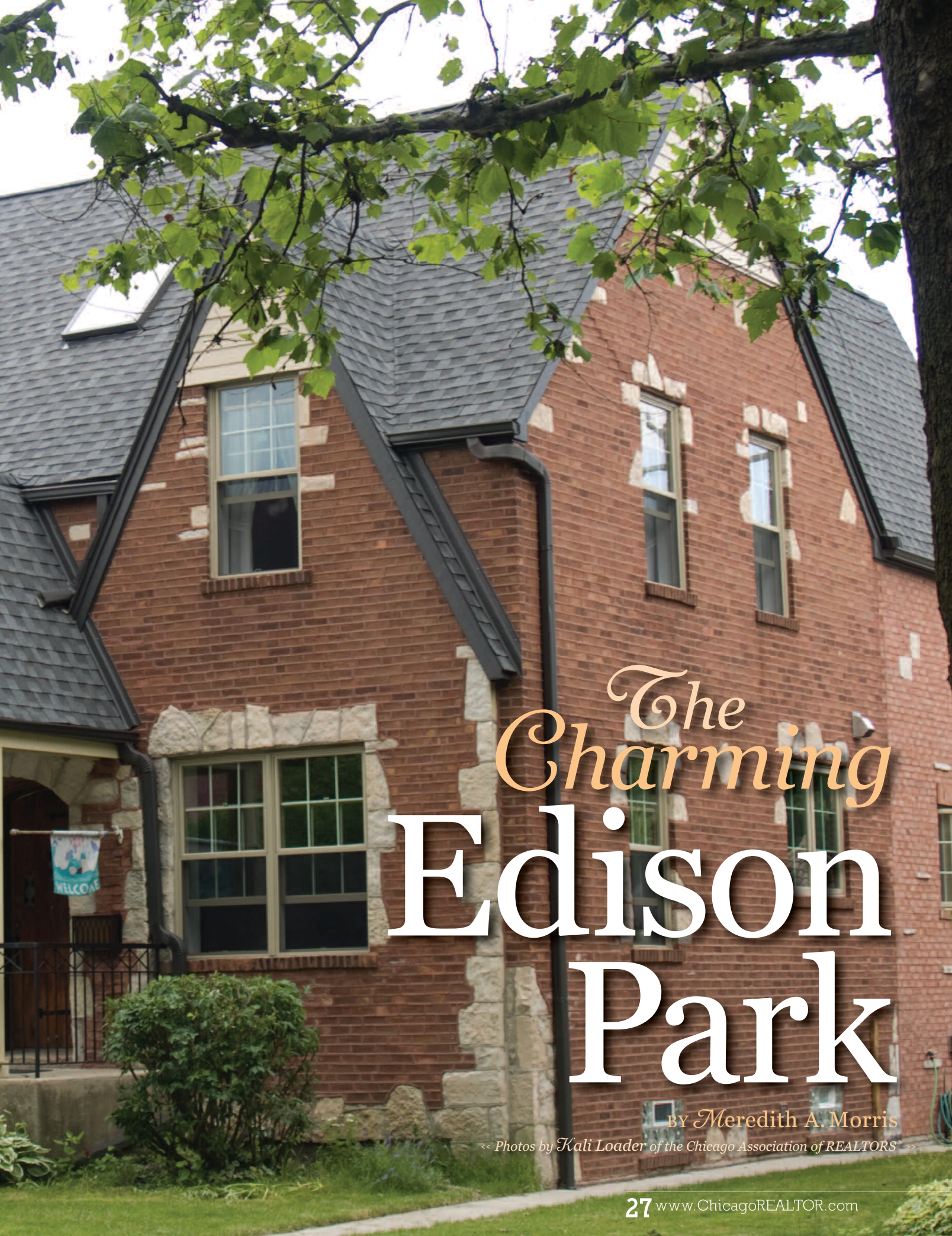
As a village with good roads and a train station, hotel and fire company, one problem with Edison Park was that its children had a long way to travel to high school. Primarily for that reason, Edison Park annexed to Chicago in 1910 and traveled its own road to integration with the city.

Edison Park still maintains the feels of its own community, however. Located in Chicago's farthest northwest region, where Northwest Highway meets the "O" streets such as Ottawa, Olcott and Oriole, Edison Park is bounded by suburbs including Norridge, Park Ridge, Niles and Morton Grove. Walking blocks from downtown Edison Park can land you beyond the city.

Named for Thomas Alva Edison, Edison Park claims to be the first northwest community to acquire electricity. The neighborhood's commercial district, dotting Northwest Highway from Oshkosh to Olympia avenues, is a comfortable, walkable (and bike-able) mix of locally owned restaurants, services and small businesses ranging from hair salons to hardware stores, medical offices and family groceries.

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*The
Charming*
Edison
Park

by *Meredith A. Morris*

<< Photos by *Kali Loader* of the Chicago Association of REALTORS® >>

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Edison Park



Older multi-unit options abound near Northwest Hwy.



Elliott's Steaks from Chicago-area restaurateurs since 1939



Neighborhoods with tree-lined streets

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Edison Park's Metra station has marked the center of town since 1956 and today the community is also served by the CTA Blue Line, several bus routes and ready access to the Kennedy and Edens expressways. "Edison Park is perfect for Chicago employees and others who work in the city but want to live as far out and close to the suburbs as possible," says Barry Paoli, owner of Century 21 McMullen Real Estate in Edison Park and a real estate professional in that area since 1972.

Or, from another perspective: "Edison Park is perfect for folks who work in the suburban O'Hare or Schaumburg area but still want to be in the city," says James Kannookadan, REALTOR®, Jameson Real Estate, who lived and has done some business in the community.

Both professionals agree that suburban ambiance and ease of travel in both directions – to the greater suburbs and downtown -- are the neighborhood's main draws.

"The location is perfect," Paoli says.

"Everything is here: the expressway, public transportation, hospitals, parks, a post office, a good library and restaurants. The Loop is 15 minutes away. O'Hare Airport is a 10-minute cab ride. It's all rolled into one."

The all-in-one benefit also opens the neighborhood to a pool of potential residents sometimes neglected in residential areas: the car-less.

"If you work in the Loop, you don't need a car. I think Edison Park, Jefferson Park and Old Irving are some of the only northwest neighborhoods in which a homeowner can live that way," Kannookadan says.

For visitors, a big draw is "Edison Park Fest," annually featuring a parade, the Taste of Edison, live performances, carnival games and more. This year's fest is Aug. 20-22. The neighborhood also hosts a yearly Art Walk.

Who Lives There?

"Once people move here, there's no reason to leave. We have it all. People want to be here," Paoli says.

Originally settled as a farming community, Edison Park's early developers converted farmland into homes, an elementary school, churches, park district facilities and clubs. Large houses became outnumbered by more modest Chicago bungalows and Colonial-style homes as city workers moved into the area during a post-World War I building boom. A mixed array of modest-sized homes now predominates, with the occasional very large lot.

"The mix of single-family homes, apartments and condos creates a nice small-town feel but also attracts people who want great restaurants, bars and shops," says Kannookadan. "Park Ridge, less than a mile down the road, offers another set of retail and entertainment options."

Many Edison Parkers are long-time community members active in the area's social welfare. The Edison Park Chamber of Commerce meets monthly, provides a college scholarship and

involves citizens in committees advising on issues such as zoning, parks, special events and public relations.

It's not unusual to meet older adults who have lived in the community for upwards of 50 years, or younger people raising families in what had been their grandparents' homes. Nor is it unusual to see people adding onto or modifying their homes to accommodate growing families, rather than moving.

"This is a long-standing community with all different types of homes that are generally well-kept. Families add nice touches to their properties. You see strong evidence of local pride," Paoli says.

Traditionally, Irish heritage figured strongly in the make-up of Edison Park's population. Today the area is slowly diversifying, along with much of the city. In 2000 Edison Park had just over 11,000 residents, Chicago

What's selling in...

Edison Park?

FastSTATS Second Quarter 2010 (8009)

Attached Single Family **Detached Single Family**

Units: 8

Units: 30

Median Price: \$155,500

Median Price: \$282,500

Check out neighborhood stats for all 77 Chicagoland neighborhoods at www.ChicagoREALTOR.com.

FastSTATS consists of average sales price, median sales price, market time, units sold and percent change for Chicago and the suburbs.

Edison Park



Tony's Deli has added Italian flair since 1978



Edison Park condo building



Abundant dining options include Nonno Pino's

Historical Society records show, mostly white but intermixed with a smattering of Hispanics, Latinos and Asians. A visible Italian presence stems from a cluster of popular Italian restaurants in the downtown area that prompted Chicago magazine to refer to “Very Little Italy” in a feature that named Edison Park among the “20 Best Neighborhoods in Chicago and the Suburbs.”

What's Selling?

Current data indicates most Edison Park transactions involve single-family homes with an average sale price in the low- to mid-\$300,000s. Multi-unit attached homes trend closer toward \$200,000.

There is an ample supply of condos, especially close to Northwest Highway.

“Affordability is great in Edison Park. You can find anything from a one- or two-bedroom condo for just over \$100,000 to a nice starter home for about \$300,000,” says Kannoakadan. “There are not many places in the city that offer the same kind of location and access to highways and public transportation for the price.”

Paoli says that because of declining sales prices in Edison Park and throughout the Chicago area, his business has changed to satisfy the strong demand for lower-prices homes. Nonetheless he considers Edison Park a “very stable community” and notes an influx of some young, urban professional buyers with families who are drawn by Edison Park’s good housing values, convenient location and suburban charm.

“There was a time, three or four years ago, when the value here was sky-high. Today, the values are down about 20 percent. Our average home sale is between \$270,000 and \$300,000,” he says. “Three or four years ago it was \$370,000 to \$380,000. Values are very good today and probably closer to reality.” **CR**



Local diners can enjoy outdoor dining in nice weather.

Neighborhood Picks

Café Touché, classic French Bistro, 6731 N. Northwest Hwy.

Don Juan's Restaurante, Mexican and more, 6730 N. Northwest Hwy.

Edison Park Bowl, bar and bowling, 713 North Olmsted Ave.

Edison Park Fieldhouse, Chicago Park District facility, 6755 N. Northwest Hwy.

Elliott's Seafood Grille & Chop House, 6690 N. Northwest Hwy.

Grazie Coffee Café, 6700 N. Northwest Hwy.

Happy Foods, small, convenient family grocery, 6785 North Northwest Hwy.

Moretti's Ristoranti and Pizzeria, Italian restaurant, 6727 N. Olmsted Ave.

Mecca Supper Club, looks like a log cabin, 6666 N. Northwest Hwy.

Tony's Italian Deli & Subs, deli, grocery and café, 6708 Northwest Hwy.

Zia's Trattoria, 6699 N. Northwest Hwy.