

# Chicago parking rates accelerate

If it seems as if the cost to park downtown is skyrocketing, that's because Chicago rates have spiked about 50 percent in the past five years, according to a recent study conducted by **Colliers International USA**, a Boston-based real estate firm.

"Chicago is very expensive and parking rates are rising much faster than in the country overall," said Ross Moore, Colliers' research director.

In the past year, Chicago rates have increased about 12 percent, compared with 4.4 percent for the country as a whole. The city's average monthly rate is \$350 and the daily median is \$28.

"It reflects a strengthening office market," Moore explained. "As buildings fill up, so do garages, and then parking gets more expensive."

But Chicago can be grateful that it's not midtown Manhattan, where the monthly median rate is \$630, according to the study.

**SENIOR HOUSING ATTRACTIVE:** Harrison Street Real Estate Capital, a Chicago-based private-equity firm, is seeking real estate assets that will flourish in tough economic times.

In the past few days, it set up a joint venture with **Kaplan Development Group** of Woodbury, N.Y., to invest about \$80 million in the next two years to purchase or develop \$350 million in senior housing properties on the East Coast.

"We're attracted by the demographics," said Christopher Merrill, a managing director at Harrison. "In the next five

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to 20 years, the demand for independent and assisted living housing will rise dramatically."

Harrison also recently set up a strategic alliance with **180 Development Services LLC** of Gilbert, Ariz., and **Morningstar Properties LLC** of Charlotte to invest about \$40 million to buy approximately \$100 million in self-storage buildings over the next three years in the Southwest.

**MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT:** Retail in Northwest Indiana will be bulking up with construction set to start in September on a \$120 million shopping center in Schererville.

The new center, **Oak Street Commons**, will be a 600,000-square-foot, mixed-use project with retail, dining and offices. The retail will include national and regional apparel and specialty stores, plus as many as six restaurants.

An existing 170,000-square-foot fitness center and day spa will be included in the development, said Bob Super, a

principal with **Precision Development** of Highland, Ind., which is developing the project.

"Our shoppers currently have to drive to Illinois to purchase clothing and fine-quality dining," he said. Now, "we can keep those dollars" in Indiana.

The center at U.S. Highway 41 and Oak Street will open in phases from the fall of 2008 through the spring of 2009.

**HOSPITAL CONCERNS UNMET:** The **Streeterville Organization of Active Residents**, known by its acronym **SOAR**, wants **Children's Memorial Hospital** to further refine its plans for a new \$800 million Streeterville facility before seeking city approval.

After 10 months of negotiations, the residents do not yet have from Children's a definitive plan for parking, the resolution of traffic problems noted in the hospital's own study or a final building design, said Patty Frost, a SOAR director.

On Tuesday, SOAR submitted a request to **Mayor Richard Daley** and the city planning and transportation departments to meet with them and **Ald. Brendan Reilly** to discuss these concerns, Frost said.

"The design will be complete by the time we meet with the Chicago Plan Commission, and we're working with the city and residents to address parking and traffic congestion issues after extensive studies," said a hospital spokeswoman.