



## **Pulaski Elston SSA Study Advisory Committee 2**

March 30, 2021 | Virtual Meeting via Zoom

### **Attending:**

Patricia Eldridge, Wintrust Bank Branch Manager

Nicole Foster, Foster Design

Bob Gecht, Albany Bank and Trust

Nadine Karavidas, Marie's Pizza

Jim Marnos, Tony's Fresh Market

Liz Mills, Carlson Community Services and President of PEBA

Nicole Montgomery, Montgomery Design Studio

Stephanie Morimoto, Owner of Asutra

Terri O'Donnell, O'Donnell's Bar

Nicholas Yassan, Rany Management

Amie Zander, Pulaski Elston Business Association (PEBA)

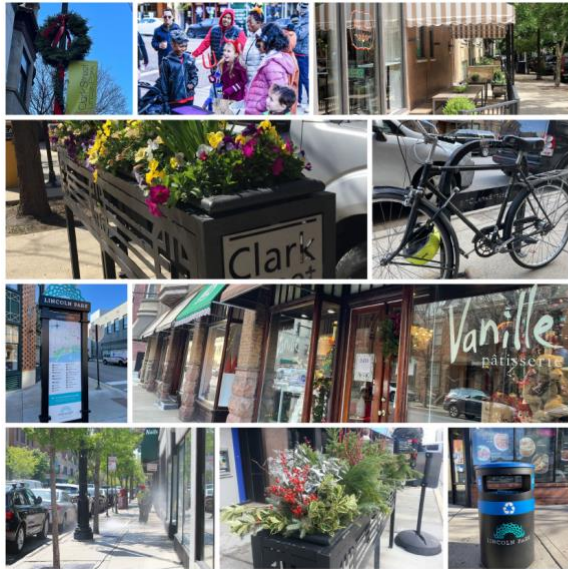
### **Consultant Team**

Scott Goldstein, Teska Associates, Inc.

Francie Sallinger, Teska Associates, Inc.

## Introduction + SSA Overview

Amie Zander, Executive Director of PEBA, opened the meeting welcoming everyone to the second Advisory Committee Meeting of the Pulaski Elston SSA Study. She then handed it off to Scott Goldstein of Teska Associates to do introductions and review: the basics about special service areas (SSAs), the role of the Advisory committee, potential benefits and reasons for establishing an SSA, and the boundaries for the proposed SSA.



### EXAMPLES OF SERVICES

- Customer Attraction
  - Special events
  - Holiday decorations
  - Decorative banners
  - Marketing + Safety Rebate Programs
- Public Way Aesthetics
  - Landscaping (hanging baskets & planters)
  - Facade Rebate Program
  - Wayfinding signage
  - Public art
- Sidewalk snow removal, litter pick up, pressure washing
- Sustainability + Public Places
  - Recycling receptacles, bike racks
- Economic/Business Development
  - Market studies, site marketing
- Safety Programs
  - Security enhancement rebate program



## Rate Options

The primary purpose of this meeting was to set a maximum tax rate – this is the maximum rate at which the SSA could tax over the next 10 years. The SSA can always tax at a lower annual rate, and most SSAs do tax under their maximum rates. The key is to keep this rate as low as possible while still providing enough services that are desired to serve the district.

Scott explained that there are 622 parcels in the proposed SSA area, and presented a range of rate options and the budgets these would produce:

Parcels	2019 Tax Revenue	SSA Levy Options			
		0.75%	1.00%	1.25%	1.50%
622	\$5,448,603	\$173,784	\$231,712	\$289,640	\$347,568

Property owners can calculate how much they would pay under each option by looking up their EAV and multiplying EAV by that rate.

Scott shared how a budget can be used with an example from the nearby Lincoln Square SSA. In 2018 with a total budget of about \$277,000, they were able to: purchase branded bike racks, install murals, put up a holiday tree and other holiday decorations, litter removal, planter baskets, bioswales, pop-ups in parking spaces, sidewalk maintenance, street banners, and more.

**LINCOLN SQUARE**

Est in 2006 | Total Budget: \$277,000 (2018)

**2018 RESULTS**

- Branded bike racks
- Murals
- Giddings Plaza Holiday Tree
- 900 Holiday Light Orbs
- 293 Light poles wrapped with holiday garland
- 766 Bags of litter removed
- 118 Planters filled with springtime flowers
- 162 Planters filled with winter evergreen
- 58 Streetlight planter baskets
- 52 Tree beds mulched to prevent weeds
- 44 New planters placed along sidewalk
- 12 Bioswales landscaped and maintained
- 11 Parking meters converted into pop-up art
- 4.75 Miles of sidewalks weeded / maintained
- 174 Street banners
- Commercial Vacancy Assistance
- Customer Attraction / Media Relations

Another important point is that SSA dollars can be leveraged for other government funds. For example, CDOT will typically only install public plazas with support for future maintenance from an SSA.

It is also important to note that the proposed Pulaski Elston SSA covers a large geographic area. This makes some services more expensive to do across all the corridors (i.e. sidewalk snow removal).

PEBA cannot start the signature collection process until there is agreement on the maximum rate. By June 11<sup>th</sup>, 10% of all PIN owners need to sign on in support of the establishment of the SSA and an additional 10% by August 2<sup>nd</sup> (total of 20% of signatures)

### **Committee Discussion**

- The SSA tax applies to all properties, commercial and residential?
  - Yes, and actually state legislation requires that if the area includes single-family residential you have to include a resident on the committee.
- Can we have a process for reviewing/modifying the rate on a regular basis?
  - Amie – yes, for the annual rate is set each year. But the SSA cannot exceed the maximum rate which is set for 10 years. In past experience with the West Ridge SSA our max rate was very low and all we had budget for was cleaning – when business owners came and wanted to do a street festival we had no funding for that.
  - We want to have flexibility and wiggle room over the course of 10 years, as circumstances can drastically change. Budget is presented annually so every year the tax rate can fluctuate
  - Scott: Anytime you propose increasing the budget more than 5% in a given year, that triggers a public meeting as a built in safeguard.
- Do we have a sense of how much of a burden this would be on residential owners?
  - Scott: Fifteen percent of taxes collected would be from homeowners (single-family, 1-6 unit and condominiums).
- Bob: Very important to get the local chambers on board (Korean business association, Hispanic businesses, etc.)
  - We would all need to reach out and be local liaisons
    - Amie—agreed, and we have been starting those conversations and have a contact in the Korean community
- Bob: also important to show everyone what is the value for the money
  - Amie: point out that a lot of the surrounding areas have SSAs -- Lincoln Square, Sauganash, Albany Park, Rogers Park has multiple, Lincoln Park has two
    - People always say “we want to be like Lincoln Square” –this is a tool to help get us there
  - Market with brochures/flyer to show before and after, power of what you can do

- Nadine – can you explain the situation with parcels in TIF districts?
  - Scott: for any property tax, every district (schools, forest preserve etc.) only gets the amount of money based on the base year of the TIF – any increase goes into the TIF district.
  - On the plus side, a TIF can be used for more expensive infrastructure improvements and the SSA can coordinate with the TIF.
    - Example in Mt Greenwood—TIF there is paying for all intersection improvements, crosswalks but then the SSA is paying for ongoing maintenance
    - City is more likely to make public improvements if there is an SSA to maintain the improvements
  - Patricia – do you know the max rates of the other SSAs we've talked about?
    - Sheridan Road just doubled their max rate to over 1%
  
- Bob—what do we think reaction will be from restaurants, businesses hit hard by COVID?
  - Nadine: initial reaction may be resistance but once we explain all the benefits and specific details they will buy in
  - Scott: typically takes 2-3 conversations with people
  - Nadine: we can say "what could someone trade out that they are paying for now that the Commission could take care of?"
  
- Scott: Pulaski/Elston area is in a great location – people are driving and passing through all the time. Question is how do you get them to stop and spend money.
  - Nadine: having an SSA will attract new businesses and investment in the area
  - Amie: think about how many businesses want to go through the City's SBIF program and renovate their facades – this is one program we could do locally -- Would be great to offer prospective businesses a list of amenities
  - Leveraging Nearby SSAs
    - Albany Park is extending theirs so it will almost connect
  
- Rate proposals
  - Nicholas Yassan proposed: start off first year at .75%, next 2-3 years at 1%, consider any further increase from there → max rate set around 1.25%
    - Has 30-40 buildings across the Lincoln Square and Albany Park SSAs
    - "Yes businesses have to come up with extra few hundred dollars a year; but the positive to keep the streets clean alone is such an important baseline for investment"
  - Nadine – Nick's proposal is practical and he has experience with SSAs
  - Stephanie – I like that too as a phased approach
  - Amie – to have about \$175,000 in year 1 is reasonable as we get started
  - Nicole F. – why wouldn't we go up to 1.5% as a max rate if we are deciding every year what to set it as?
    - Bob—might make it harder to sell because people will assume that's what the rate would be

- Jim – if we go to low and don't show a bang for the buck, then the community doesn't see enough benefit. Have to spend money to make customers want to spend their money, and beautification is important
- Patricia – want to hear more from other small business owners who weren't able to attend this meeting, gives us time to review other SSA rates, see what different budget options would get us
  - Scott: yes, we can ask Lincoln Square if they would share their detailed budget
- Amie/Scott—we will have two community meetings and we definitely want to go into those with a proposed budget and ideas for what services the SSA could provide.

### **Next Steps**

The Committee decided to hold a follow-up meeting to decide on the tax rate in one week on Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 A.M.

Once the rate is decided, the next step is to begin the process of gathering signatures of support from property owners within the SSA boundaries. Teska will provide PEBA and the Advisory Committee with taxpayer information to seek support and prepare a PDF fillable form. DPD will accept forms that are filled and signed electronically. DPD requires taxpayers who own 20% of all PINs to sign in support of the SSA (10% by June 11 and an additional 10% by August 2). As there are approximately 622 PINs in the proposed SSA, this equates to 63 by June 11 and another 63 by August 2. Signatures must come from the taxpayer of record. If a single entity owns more than one property (PIN), they can sign in support of the SSA for each PIN they own.