



Clark Street Special Service Area (SSA) #23 Renewal

April 8, 2021 | Virtual Meeting via Zoom | Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Attendees:

SSA #23 Renewal Advisory Committee

Jennifer Ames, Engel & Volkers

Jen Harman, Reside Living

Sam Hergott, New Castle

***Jim Kroeger**, Lincoln Park Fitness Center

Joana Zaidan, 43rd Ward

***Holly Lodarek**, Big Apple Finer Foods

McKay Murphy, 43rd Ward

Steve Quick, Steve Quick Jeweler

Nada Riley, community member

**Current SSA Commissioner*

Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce (LPCC)

Bryan Biello, Director of Events and Outreach

Robin Hammond, Vice President, Director of Marketing and Communications

Irene Henry, LPCC Staff

Kim Schilf, President & CEO

Jessica Wobbekind, Director of Community Development

Consultant Team

Scott Goldstein, Principal, Teska Associates, Inc.

Francie Sallinger, Senior Planner, Teska Associates, Inc.

On Thursday, April 8th, 2021, the second Advisory Committee Meeting for the Clark Street SSA #23 Renewal was held at 3:30pm via Zoom.

Welcome and Introductions

Jessica Wobbekind of the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce (LPCC) opened the meeting and asked all participants to introduce themselves. Scott Goldstein of Teska Associates began the presentation.

Scott explained that the reconstitution process initiates a 15-year period starting in January 2022 and any funds from the existing SSA will be carried over into the renewed SSA. The purpose of today's meeting is to review some of the SSA's services, share preliminary results from the Needs Assessment Surveys, and discuss a maximum tax rate cap that the Committee will set for the reconstitution of SSA #23.

As reviewed at the first meeting, the SSA provides a wide range of services, some of which are highlighted in the slide below. Those listed here are broken out by budget

category based on the format that the City provides for SSAs. If the SSA is not renewed, all of these services would end because there would be no funding source.



Programs & Services

- Customer Attraction
 - Special events (e.g. Spooktacular)
 - Holiday decorations
 - Decorative banners
 - Marketing + Safety Rebate Programs
- Public Way Aesthetics
 - Landscaping (hanging baskets & planters)
 - Facade Rebate Program
 - Wayfinding signage
 - Public art (Art on Clark)
 - 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

Needs Assessment Survey

The Needs Assessment Survey is important to the renewal process, as it helps LPCC Staff and the Commission develop the budget by understanding the types of services that the area needs, enjoys, or would like to see improved along Clark Street.

Thus far, just seven people have filled out the online survey. LPCC staff is asking for all Committee members to please respond and share the survey with their networks: <https://teska.survey.fm/clark-street-ssa-23-needs-assessment-survey>

Preliminary results show that services around sidewalks got strong support, which reinforces what we have heard about the importance of aesthetics and cleanliness for a successful business district.

- Top priorities:
 - Rebate programs for marketing & external improvements
 - Cleanliness of the area
 - All of the above
 - Food, decoration, vintage shops, antiques
- What additional new services?
 - Sidewalk replacement, repairs
 - This is something that the SSA can consider partnering with other agencies on, given expense



- In a post-COVID world are there specific services needed?
 - Supporting businesses to get them open and ensure vacant storefronts don't fall into disrepair
 - Flowers, art and lighting
 - Beautification with plants and flowers

2021 Budget Summary

The SSA's total 2021 budget is \$520,000, with specific category amounts listed below. The SSA and Chamber are efficient with those dollars and work to maximize impact along the street.

2021 BUDGET SUMMARY						
Budget and Services Period: January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021						
CATEGORY <small>(Funded Categories Comprise Scope of Services)</small>	2020 Levy		Carryover Funds	TIF Rebate Fund #	Estimated Late Collections and Interest	Total All Sources
	Collectable Levy	Estimated Loss Collection				
1.00 Customer Attraction	\$93,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$123,000
2.00 Public Way Aesthetics	\$173,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$183,000
3.00 Sustainability and Public Places	\$8,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$13,000
4.00 Economic/ Business Development	\$56,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$56,000
5.00 Safety Programs	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,000
6.00 SSA Management	\$27,595	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$27,595
7.00 Personnel	\$112,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$112,500
	Sub-total	\$474,095	\$20,000			
GRAND TOTALS	Levy Total	\$494,095	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$519,095

Maximum Tax Rate Options

Part of the renewal process is establishing a maximum tax rate that will be set for the next 15 years. While the annual rate (tax levy) can change each year, the maximum rate cannot.

The SSA includes approximately 1,500 parcels. Clark Street SSA's maximum tax rate is currently set at .309%. Each year, the SSA sets the budget levy, which in turn leads to the County determining the annual rate which must be below the maximum rate cap. This year the annual rate is 0.2701%, which is on the lower end compared to other SSAs around the city. With the current rate so close to the maximum rate, this means there is not much wiggle room in the budget if there were expanded services or future projects/improvements desired in the SSA over the next 15 years.







Current Rate: 0.2701% | Current Maximum Rate Cap: 0.309%

Parcels	2020 EAV	Current Levy	SSA Maximum Tax Rate Levy Options		
		0.2701%	0.309%	0.35%	0.40%
1,498	\$182,955,122	\$494,095	\$557,460	\$629,390	\$719,303

Potential Options: Increasing the tax rate to 0.35% could increase the budget up to \$629,390, or a rate of 0.40% would yield \$719,303.

For reference, both of those would be lower than neighboring SSAs' maximum tax rates—Old Town is at .45% and Lakeview East is .41%.

Right now, for a property in SSA #23, the annual cost is \$270 for every \$100,000 in EAV. Examples of what an increased rate could cost a range of properties are listed below.

Property	EAV	.31%	.35%	.40%
 2000 Lincoln Park West (condominium)	\$73,186	\$226	\$256	\$292
 2411 N. Clark (Hema's Kitchen)	\$77,517	\$240	\$271	\$310
 2715 N. Clark (Screenz)	\$287,159	\$890	\$1,005	\$1,148
 2630 N. Clark (Crossroads)	\$363,873	\$1,128	\$1,273	\$1,455

The takeaway here is that while there would be a marginal increased cost to every taxpayer, when everyone pitches in it adds up to a much larger budget, giving the SSA more flexibility over the next 15 years.

Setting the rate today is important because we need to know the maximum rate in order to begin collecting signatures of support.



Discussion

Jessica Wobbekind – Please keep in mind that we are talking about 15 years and we cannot predict the future but want to think about any large projects down the line. There are other SSAs that have increased their maximum rate but agreed to not increase their levy for a certain number of years – we don't have to use whatever rate we set.

Kim Schilf - We want to hear from all of you about where that tax rate should be and what are the pros and cons of changing the rate. We know that times are hard and raising it could be unpopular, but we can communicate to show that this is about thinking long term and not necessarily raising any rate in the short term.

Jim Kroeger – This empowers us to raise the cap but doesn't obligate us to use that higher rate. If we don't raise it and later on want to do some incredible project that would cost \$100,000/year for the next 4 years, we couldn't do that without removing other existing services. I would advocate for giving us more flexibility and considering a .35% max rate cap.

Steve Quick – Agrees with Jim; 15 years is a long time and as long as we aren't obligated to institute the rate why not take the option for 0.40% to give more flexibility.

Jennifer Ames – IF you increase the max rate now when people are sensitive in post-COVID times, will that create an outcry or make people upset?

- Scott – We will work with the Chamber to make sure the wording in the letter is sensitive to that issue.
- Jessica – Also note that the budget is set each year by the Commissioners who are also taxpayers, so they are sensitive to those concerns as well. You cannot increase the budget more than 5% in a year without holding a public meeting.

Holly Lodarek – Is this something we can change at all in the next 15 years?

- Scott – No, you would have to dissolve the SSA and start over in order to change the rate.
- Holly – I would advocate for the .40% as a max rate but staying where we are now with the levy, unless something calls for us to change it down the line.

Sam Hergott – Flexibility is always a nice thing to have, I don't see a reason not to increase the max rate other than the public perception issue.

Scott – We haven't heard anyone opposed to raising the max rate, and we hear the concerns about communicating the increase. We heard two proposals for .35% and .40%.

Holly – Motion to propose the .40% as the max rate for the next 15 years

Jim – Seconded motion for 0.40%

Scott asked for any opposition to raising the maximum tax rate cap to 0.40%. There were no objections.



Process & Signature Support Forms

Scott gave an overview of the rest of the renewal process. The consultant team is working on updating the PIN list and legal description and will share a draft District Plan in May.

Start-Up + Feasibility	SSA Funding + Visioning	SSA Conditions, Metrics + Survey	SSA District Plan	Application + Adoption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Inventory • Boundary Map • Feasibility Study • Advisory Committee #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Collection • Levy Assessment • Needs Assessment Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory + Metrics • Boundary Legal Description • Small Business Conversations • Advisory Committee #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare/ Review Draft Plan • Advisory Committee #3 • Community Meetings #1 & #2 • Signature Collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Application • Submit to City • Signature Collection • Notice of Meetings • Public Hearing / Adoption
Feb – Mar 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	Apr – Jun 2021	Jun – Dec 2021

A first-class postcard mailing will be sent out to inform all property owners in the SSA about the two community meetings in May. It is important that the SSA Renewal Advisory Committee members are at these meetings to show support and answer questions from businesses or community members who are concerned or don't know about the SSA.

Staff will work on gathering signatures of support. These will be posted on the website and emailed to specific taxpayers and owners and must be signed and emailed or mailed back to LPCC. All signatures will be verified by the City and cannot be tenants (residential or business), as they must be the taxpayer or property owner. We will need Committee members' help in outreach and connecting to property owners to get their support.

Next Steps

- [Needs Assessment Survey](#) – Please complete this as it is helpful for staff as they start preparing a detailed budget
- Community meetings:
 - Tuesday, May 4 at 5:00 PM
 - Friday, May 7 at 9:00 AM
- Signatures of 10% of PIN holders and application are due June 11th