

# SHERIDAN ROAD



## SSA #54 Renewal

March 12, 2020 | 6443 N. Sheridan Road | Advisory Committee Meeting #1

**Meeting Purpose:** The Sheridan Road Special Service Area (SSA) #54 has provided a means to organize services that benefit local businesses, residents, property owners, Loyola students, and customers since 2012. The SSA #54 is due to expire and local businesses and current commissioners have expressed interest in renewing the SSA. Per City of Chicago requirements, the SSA must undergo a renewal process in order to extend the life of the SSA and adjust boundaries, up to a maximum of 15 years.

This meeting is the first of several advisory committee meetings that will be organized throughout the renewal process to provide information about SSAs, the reconstitution process, and gather input from businesses, property owners, and residents about the types of services that are needed and desired to continue to build on the past decade of success along the Sheridan Road corridor. In addition, there will be two community meetings and a public hearing.

**The Advisory Committee will be instrumental in guiding the vision and goals for the renewal of SSA #54.**

### Attendees:

**Chris Bell**, Flatts & Sharpe, SSA #54 Commissioner

**Cindy Plante**, Economic Development Manager, RPBA

**Erin Cigliano**, Teska Associates

**Francie Sallinger**, Teska Associates

**Karen Forte**, SSA Liaison, City of Chicago

**Keith Lord**, Commercial property owner, Lord Companies

**Mark Roschen**, DPD, City of Chicago

**Nicholas Andersen**, Hampton Inn, SSA #54 Commissioner

**Sandi Price**, Executive Director, RPBA

**Sara Lukens**, ChiTown Magpie, SSA #54 Commissioner

**Scott Goldstein**, Teska Associates

**Siraj Asfahani**, RPBA Board Member

**Summer Roberts**, Loyola University

**Cecilia Rodriguez**, Loyola University

**Terry Grant**, Third Coast Comics, RPBA Board Member

**Torrence Gardner**, 49th Ward

The first SSA #54 Advisory Board Meeting kicked off with introductions and then a presentation from Karen Forte, SSA Liaison for the City of Chicago, and Mark Roschen, Assistant Commissioner of the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development. Karen and Mark gave a presentation about Special Service Areas (SSAs) within the City of Chicago.

### Key Takeaways:

- 50+ active SSAs in the City of Chicago
- 2020 Budgets total \$28.7 million
- Median Budget is equal to \$496,524
- Popular services include Landscaping, Special Events, and Holiday Decorations
- Once established, renewals of SSAs can be extended for 15 years
- DPD requires a minimum of two (2) community meetings to discuss the proposed SSA renewal
- Signatures of support from at least 20% of the PINs within the proposed SSA boundaries (taxpayers) are required

**Stay Connected + Learn More about the SSA #54 Renewal Process:** [rpba.org/ssa-54-renewal](http://rpba.org/ssa-54-renewal)

- Minimum of 10% by June 12<sup>th</sup>
- Entire 20% by August 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Up to 2% can be from non-profits located within the boundaries
- Formal public hearing to (re)constitute SSA held during the fall in City Council Chambers

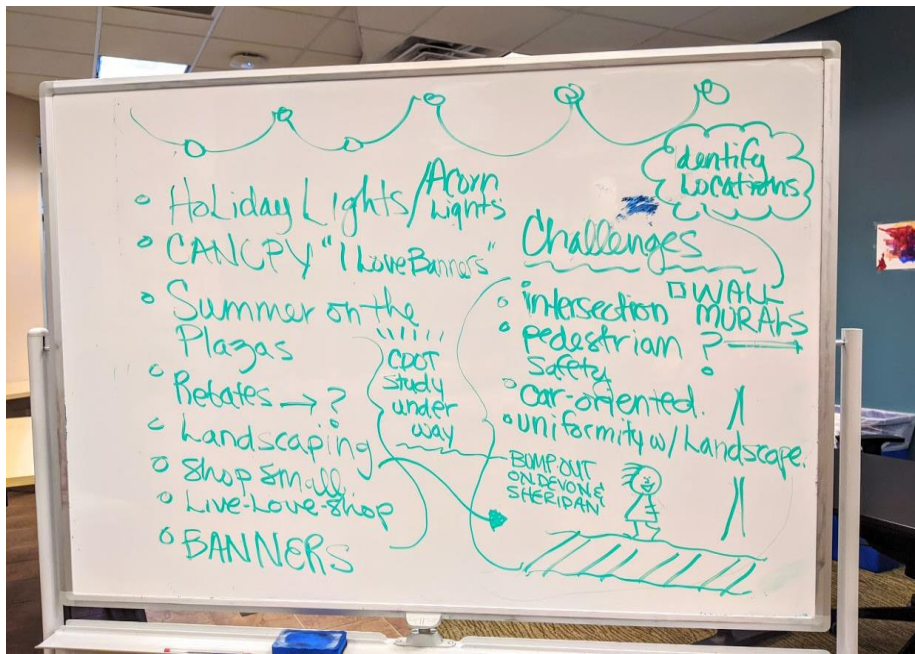
Scott Goldstein and Erin Cigliano of Teska Associates, Inc. presented next. Teska is a community planning and design firm with experience working with SSAs and has been retained by RPBA to help guide both the Sheridan Road SSA and Howard Street SSA Renewal processes. Erin began by reiterating how the renewal is an opportunity to check in, assess current SSA services, and figure out what is needed in the future. The group was asked to share their thoughts on past successes and challenges:

#### Successes:

- Holiday lights
- Canopy lights at the Loyola CTA stop
- Summer on the plaza
- Landscaping rebates
- Live Love Shop Rebate Program
- Rogers Edge street banners
  - “Having businesses on both sides of Devon, I love those banners – they help bridge the divide between Rogers Park and Edgewater and people realize they can cross Devon, it’s not the Rio Grande.”
- Acorn-style street lights have helped to light up the street/sidewalks

#### Challenges:

- Sheridan is generally very auto oriented
  - “Crossing Sheridan Road [at Devon] is a huge challenge, you just don’t do it”
  - Updates from 48th Ward:
    - City is doing street resurfacing along Sheridan between Touhy and Devon in mid-April, also adding bump-outs on Sheridan
    - Removing right turn lanes at Devon
  - Long term planning – could we consider exploring a pedestrian bridge across Sheridan?
- Need a uniform look across the area (partly throughout landscaping)
- Many barren walls which present mural opportunities



Erin explained that these ideas will all be taken into consideration in a more detailed, formal way through the Needs Assessment Survey that will be part of the community outreach process. Other engagement activities include additional meetings with the advisory committee, informal meetings with local business and property owners, and two community meetings. In addition, there is a project website accessible via RPBA's Special Service Area landing page (<https://rpba.org/special-service-area/>) where general information about the renewal process, meeting dates / locations, documents, maps and updates will be posted.

Scott then shifted conversation to the SSA budget. There are approximately 200 pins in SSA #54—though Teska is working with County Assessor's Office to get more precise data—and all are levied at the same rate (currently 0.37%). The benefits of an SSA are the direct result of the collective funding for services that the tax and other sources of revenue provides.

Cindy gave an overview of some of the services/activities behind each budget category and noted that once category totals are submitted to the City each year these can only be changed with a formal budget revision. Budgets for the coming year are due to the City in June.

The established maximum tax rate cap for the SSA is 0.415%, though the SSA only taxed at a rate of 0.37% in 2019, and has been lower than the rate cap over several years.

As part of the reconstitution, the Advisory Committee will recommend a tax rate cap that will be established for the next 15 years. Scott recommended that the cap be established based on the minimum level needed to raise the necessary funds for the services that are requested in the SSA. One of the key purposes of the engagement effort is to find out from property owners and businesses what those services should be. Each year, the SSA Commission must present a budget and recommended tax levy (that would be raised through a tax rate that does not exceed the rate cap) to the City Council for approval.

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General discussion and meeting questions included:

- How many SSAs provide snow removal?
  - About 2/3 of SSAs across the City provide this service

- Should SSA #54 reconsider providing sidewalk snow removal services or rework contracts to be more efficient?
  - This will be considered as part of the Needs Assessment.
- What is Teska's role in this process?
  - Teska was hired to help manage both the outreach process and the technical aspects of renewal. The City of Chicago requires SSA service providers to retain a consultant for reconstitution.
- How does Loyola University contribute to the SSA despite their tax-exempt status as a nonprofit?
  - Loyola makes a voluntary contribution to RPBA as a restricted donation, and RPBA then uses those funds on programs in coordination with SSA services.
- Can we consider a potentially new tax rate cap, and can we calculate the rough dollar amount for the SSA budget if we were to levy 0.415%?
  - Yes, Teska will have exact data from the County and have these numbers by the next Advisory Committee Meeting.
- What are the tax rates in other SSAs?
  - State statute sets the maximum cap rate at 3.0%. The highest levy in Chicago is 2.36%, and the Howard Street rate cap is 0.83%. SSA #54 has a modest levy, and has historically been conservative in spending.

### Timeline & Next Steps:

- Advisory Committee Meeting #2
  - 8:30 am | April 1, 2020 | Location TBD
- Ongoing Data Analysis (Teska)
- Ongoing Outreach & Engagement (Teska)





