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Rogers Park Business Alliance receives AARP grant for *Cross the Street: Art on Clark* new crosswalk art installation near North Clark Street

\$10,000 grant for permanent placemaking art installation supports the Vision Clark Street plan for diverse Rogers Park corridor

CHICAGO (July 28, 2021)—The nonprofit **Rogers Park Business Alliance** (RPBA) is pleased to announce that it has been selected as one of 244 grantees nationwide to receive a **2021 AARP Community Challenge Grant**. The \$10,000 grant will support a permanent placemaking and public art project, ***Cross the Street: Art on Clark***, as part of RPBA's ongoing **Vision Clark Street Master Plan**. Two pieces of crosswalk art will be installed adjacent to Clark Street along the Union Pacific North - Metra Commuter Rail Station, one each at Lunt Avenue and Greenleaf Avenue, by December 2021.

Intended to increase safety, provide a memorable personal experience of the area, decrease crime and enhance the commercial corridor overall, *Cross the Street: Art on Clark* builds on crosswalk art's growing reputation as an effective way to improve safety for people walking in urban and suburban areas (SmartGrowth American, 2019).

"We are incredibly proud that AARP selected RPBA to receive this grant. This project will transform several non-descript intersections by installing vibrant art on the pavement of the crosswalks to instill a memorable personal connection for all, as they walk through the core community area in Rogers Park," stated **Sandi Price, RPBA Executive Director**. "RPBA is currently seeking additional funding to implement art at all crosswalks in the Metra Railway area in the Clark Street commercial core. The goal is that together these interventions will encourage people of all ages to slow down, engage with the businesses in the commercial district, look around, meet each other and experience nature and art. We hope this will build a feeling of economic vitality, warmth, safety and community."

The **AARP Community Challenge** grant program is part of the nationwide **AARP Livable Communities** initiative that helps communities become great places to live for residents of all ages. The program is intended to help communities make immediate improvements and jump-start long-term progress in support of residents of all ages. Since the program's debut in 2017, AARP has awarded more than \$6 million through 560 grants.

Rogers Park Business Alliance worked alongside local businesses and residents for more than a year to develop its key **Vision Clark Street Master Plan** recommendations. The multi-year strategic plan for the North Clark Street business corridor from Devon Avenue to Howard Street includes placemaking efforts such as new landscaping, storefront improvements, streetscape and infrastructure improvements, and the addition of vibrant public art. A full copy of the **Vision Clark Street Master Plan** is available for download at rpba.org/planning-for-the-future. In addition to Vision Clark Street, RPBA has led numerous Rogers Park strategic planning efforts in its 28-year history, including development

guides for commercial corridors along Morse Avenue, Howard Street, Western Avenue and Sheridan Road.

Rogers Park Business Alliance (RPBA) is a nonprofit organization that has served Chicago's diverse Rogers Park neighborhood for 28 years. RPBA works to cultivate and sustain a thriving economic environment in Rogers Park, serving businesses and residents with a variety of public events and business initiatives. RPBA's programs include the GROW/PROGRESANDO entrepreneurial training program, the Illinois Small Business Development Center at RPBA, annual Best of Rogers Park awards, Chalk Howard Street and Taste of Clark Street festivals, and the Glenwood Sunday Market farmers market. For more information, visit RPBA.org.

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