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## **Rogers Park Business Alliance announces new State-Designated Mexican Cultural District **Camino Clark** to boost economic development and preserve cultural identity**

*New and existing community events celebrate the rich Mexican culture of the Cultural District, from the annual Taco Crawl, artisan markets to traditional Mexican holiday celebrations*

CHICAGO (March 27, 2025) – The nonprofit **Rogers Park Business Alliance** (RPBA) is proud to announce a new State-Designated Mexican Cultural District, **Camino Clark**, to celebrate the unique cultural identity of Clark Street in Rogers Park and encourage economic development. Home to over 200 retail, dining, entertainment, and personal service businesses, Camino Clark spans approximately two miles from Howard Street to Devon Avenue. A new district plan will renew and expand RPBA's Vision Clark Street Master Plan (2017), starting with a series of vibrant, culturally relevant events planned throughout this year: **Día del Niño (Children's Day) Celebration** on April 30, a **Mercadito** craft fair on May 3 and November 22, the return of the annual **Taco Crawl** on July 17, and a **Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) Celebration** from November 1- 2. More information about the cultural district and events will be available at [RPBA.org](https://rpba.org) in April 2025.

In 2024, the Camino Clark area was one of ten communities selected for the [State-Designated Cultural Districts program](#) and the only one on Chicago's North Side. State-Designated Cultural Districts are communities, towns, or specific geographic areas that have a distinct shared historical and cultural identity that binds the community together. The State program aims to increase economic development opportunities that help preserve historical districts in Illinois that are at risk of losing their cultural identity due to gentrification displacement or the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Camino Clark is a living manifestation of the broadly diverse Rogers Park neighborhood. The leading cultural identity of Camino Clark is Mexican, which we seek to elevate and support into the future," shared **Sandi Price**, Executive Director of Rogers Park Business Alliance. "Since the creation of RPBA's Vision Clark Street Master Plan in 2017, we have put many significant enhancement and stabilization elements for the District in play while many others are still unfolding. The devastating impact of COVID-19 has resulted in the need for a renewed Plan. There is a critical need for a deeper, more comprehensive emphasis on cultural preservation, retention, and economic activation to be added to the Master Plan. The renewed Master Plan will bring together the interventions identified in the original Master Plan with current critical needs including

anti-displacement strategies, activation of business and residential preservation, promotion of social equity and justice, assurance of food and nutrition justice, and ensure that equity and economic vibrancy through diversity will sustain Camino Clark and its cultural identity now and into the future.”

Two community groups were created to guide and support the planning of the new district. RPBA formed an advisory council of district stakeholders, consisting of community organizations, business owners, residents, educational institutions, faith-based institutions, and elected officials to support and promote the local economy within Camino Clark. In addition, Colectivo Clark, a collective of local Latine business owners within the Camino Clark area, was formed to organize events and promotional campaigns to celebrate the District and empower small business owners.

The Camino Clark Cultural District programming in 2025 includes the following events:

### **Día del Niño Celebration**

Wednesday, April 30, 4 p.m.-7 p.m.

Families can stop by 7056 N. Clark St. to participate in creative, interactive activities offered by Colectivo Clark businesses to celebrate the Mexican holiday Día del Niño (Children’s Day). Businesses will offer hands-on activities for children to learn about Mexican culture, such as making piñatas and learning a nacho recipe.

### **Mercadito**

Saturdays, May 3 and November 22, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

The Mercadito (Spanish for “minimarket”) is a craft fair that showcases artist vendors offering a diverse range of handmade crafts. Visitors will find unique artisanal goods from local talent while supporting small business growth.

### **Taco Crawl**

Thursday, July 17, 3 p.m.-7 p.m.

Over a dozen restaurants lining North Clark Street in Rogers Park—one of the city’s utmost dining destinations for Mexican restaurants—offer their signature menu items for a taco extravaganza. This year, Colectivo Clark businesses will offer promos and giveaway items in newly decorated storefronts for a dynamic and immersive experience.

### **Día de los Muertos**

November 1 & 2

Throughout each day, Colectivo Clark businesses will display their own *ofrendas* (Mexican home altar offerings) to pay respect to the memory of deceased loved ones. This will be an opportunity for the community to learn more about the Mexican tradition and contribute to the making of a community *ofrenda*.

### **About Rogers Park**

Rogers Park Business Alliance is a nonprofit organization that has served Chicago’s diverse Rogers Park neighborhood for more than 30 years, providing services in both English and Spanish to a broad community. 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 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 Festival, Taco Crawl, and the Glenwood Sunday Market farmers market. For more information, visit [RPBA.org](http://RPBA.org).

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