



# WICKER PARK BUCKTOWN

SPECIAL SERVICE AREA #33

# 2018

## ANNUAL REPORT

# Getting it done

*The people behind the magic*

## WPB SSA #33 Commission

Brent Norsman, Chair (Norsman Architects)  
Rebecca Dohe, Co-Chair (WWWT Investments, LLC)  
David Ginople, Secretary (store B vintage)  
Wayne Janik, Treasurer (Janik's Café)  
Joseph Hall, Quick Release Bike Shop  
Marcy Huttas, Resident

## WPB Chamber of Commerce

### Board of Directors 2018

Mike Cho, 2018 President (Anova Properties)  
David Stearns, 2018 Vice President (L&L Development)  
Andrew Balderson, 2018 Treasurer (Balderson & Company)  
Catherine Crews, 2018 Secretary (Canine Crews)  
David Boylan (SERVPRO)  
Mason Cole (Cole Sadkin)  
Tim Gillengerten (Transit Tees)  
Michelle Gomez (Dynamic Salon)  
CK Lo (ENSO Sushi & Bar)  
Ryan Martin (The Den Theater)  
Ann Nolan (State Farm)  
Maren Rosenberg (Escape Artistry)  
Ginna Ryan (Mauge, Inc.)  
Kari Schmidt (HealthSource of Wicker Park)  
Joseph C Spataro (Waddell & Reed)  
Scott Starbuck (City Soles)

## WPB Chamber of Commerce | Staff

Pamela Maass, Executive Director  
Garrett Karp, SSA Program Manager  
Alice Howe, SSA Program Specialist, Farmer's Market Manager  
Sam Choudhury, SSA Program Manager (prior to 8/1/18)  
Hans Kumler, SSA Program Specialist (prior to 6/1/18)  
Gabriela Perez, Membership & Marketing Coordinator  
Debbie Rinella, Special Events Coordinator  
Mark Friedman, Accountant  
Jordan Miller, Arts + Social Media Administrator

*Cover: Artist and Chicago native, Hebru Brantley, puts the finishing touches on a new mural in a familiar location; see page 8 for details. Photo by Garrett Karp, WPB SSA #33*

Annual Report Designed by Teska Associates, Inc.

## WPB SSA #33 Quick Facts

### Q: What is a Special Service Area?

*A Special Service Area (SSA) is an economic development tool that provides neighborhoods with the financial means to create, maintain, and manage clean, attractive and competitive commercial districts. SSAs (also known as Business Improvement Districts) provide a fair and transparent way to finance and manage improvement programs and provide supplemental services. There are over 50 SSAs in the City of Chicago.*

### Q: How does it work?

*A supplemental property tax levy is applied to properties within the SSA and funds collected are used for beautification and enhancements such as sidewalk cleaning, snow removal, art installations, transportation improvements, holiday décor, façade improvements and more. By providing these services year after year, WPB SSA #33 fosters a vibrant, inviting and safe community for all.*

### Q: What informs SSA actions?

*WPB SSA #33 is guided by a volunteer commission of local business owners, property owners, and residents and administered by the Chamber of Commerce. The commission meets monthly to oversee all funding, budgeting and work plans for the SSA. A series of subcommittees meets regularly to advise the commission in more specific areas. All SSA meetings are open to the public. WPB SSA #33 and the Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce follow an award-winning Master Plan, initially funded by the SSA in 2009 and updated in 2016. The WPB Master Plan features innovative recommendations and renderings that will continue to guide our efforts for the next 5-7 years.*

**www.wickerparkbucktown.org**  
**(773) 384-2672**

# WPB Flashback

*A look back at our neighborhood's historic past*



*The Robey Hotel, shown above, is an excellent example of large scale Art Deco architecture! It was first constructed in 1929 as a 203 foot office building called Northwest Tower. It was renamed after Damen Avenue's original name - Robey Street.*



*Wicker Park and Bucktown are home to some of the city's best examples of late 19th century workers' cottages, as shown in the photograph above. Our neighborhoods are home to multiple historic districts that aim to preserve these staples of classic Chicago architecture!*



*Western Avenue was Chicago's westernmost boundary from 1851 to 1869, hence the name! In the photo above from about 1931, looking north at the intersection of Western and Milwaukee Avenues, you can spot a few familiar buildings including Margie's Candies. Margie worked and managed the shop for decades and the business remains family owned.*



*1501 N Milwaukee Avenue, shown above in 1966, was first constructed in 1881 during the major construction boom along Milwaukee. The building has managed to avoid demolition thanks to its designation as part of the Milwaukee Avenue Historic District.*

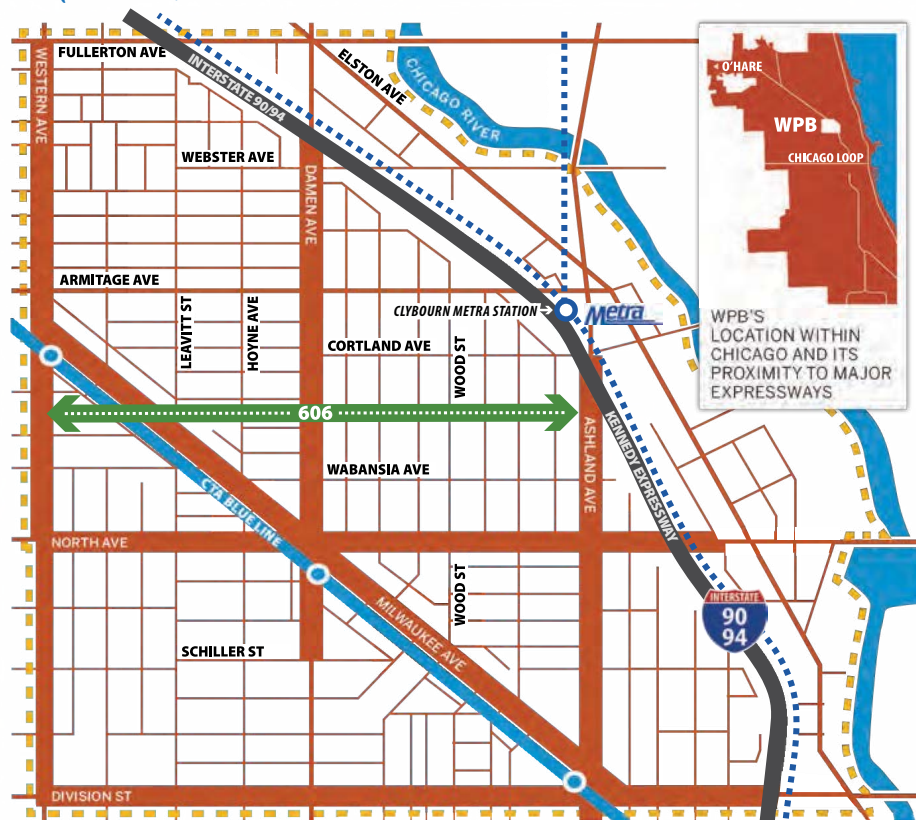


*The architecture surrounding the intersection of Milwaukee and Ashland Avenue changed significantly due to the construction of the Blue Line subway. The photograph above predates the subway and shows some of the striking buildings that were lost over the years.*



# About

Our focus and motivation



Special Service Area #33 (Thicker Lines) Chamber Service Area

## Who we serve

The streets highlighted by thicker orange lines in the map above comprise WPB SSA #33. Our SSA is directed by a commission of awesome volunteers, organized by the five committees noted below. You'll get to know our committees and their 2018 projects a lot better on the pages that follow.

## Committees



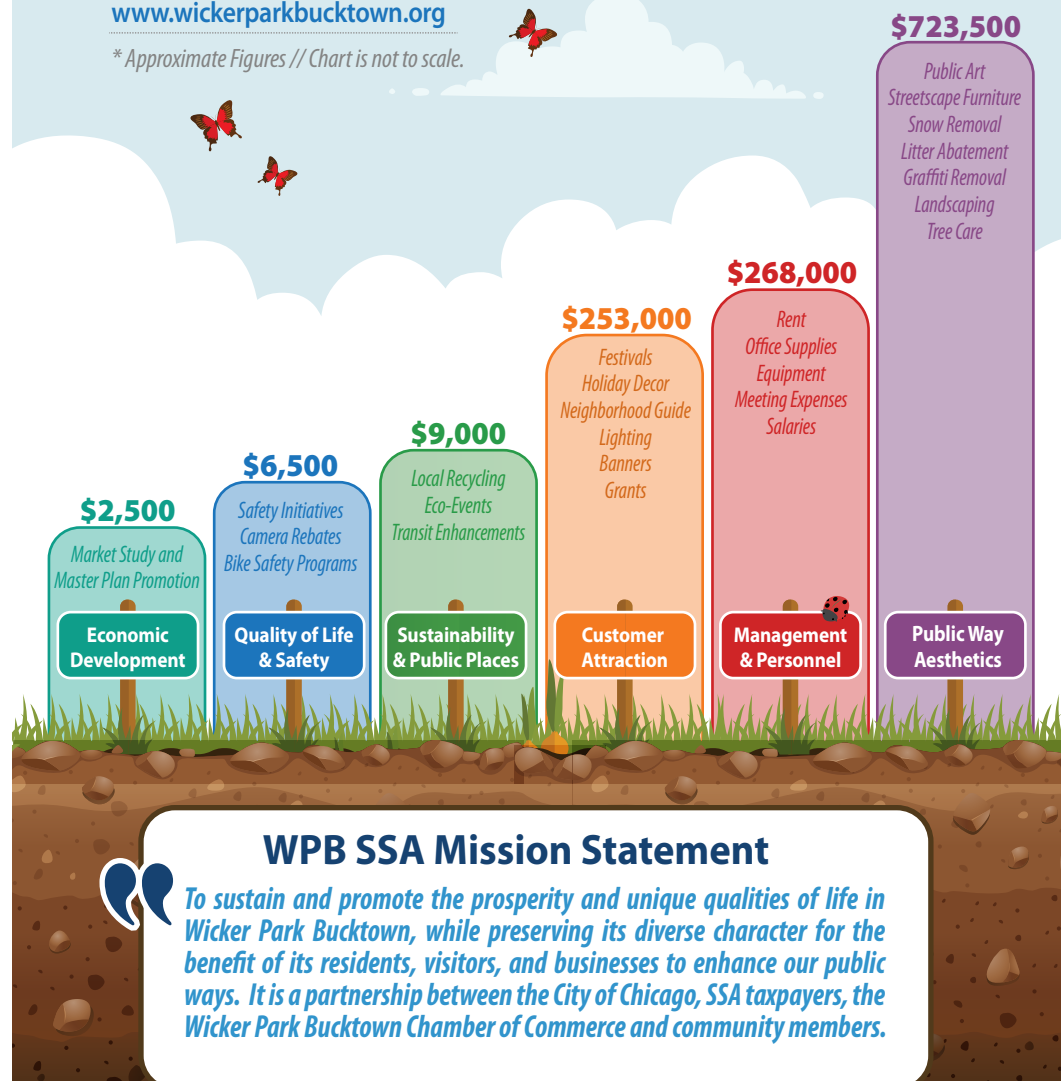
# Dollars + Cents

Where does the dough go?

Our budget is driven by our mission and award-winning Master Plan. In 2018 we applied approximately **\$1,263,000** in funds across our neighborhoods. As highlighted below, 2018 was a big year in the way of "Public Way Aesthetics"! WPB SSA #33 installed not one, not two, but three major art installations and initiated the largest, most visible streetscape campaign to date with the addition of 32 landscaped orange planters along Milwaukee Avenue. Over time, budget categories have shifted; for a detailed look at spending categories, please visit:

[www.wickerparkbucktown.org](http://www.wickerparkbucktown.org)

\* Approximate Figures // Chart is not to scale.



## WPB SSA Mission Statement

To sustain and promote the prosperity and unique qualities of life in Wicker Park Bucktown, while preserving its diverse character for the benefit of its residents, visitors, and businesses to enhance our public ways. It is a partnership between the City of Chicago, SSA taxpayers, the Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce and community members.



# Project Spotlight

Orange planters are sprouting-up all along Milwaukee Avenue!

WPB SSA #33 initiated its largest, most visible streetscape campaign ever with the purchase and installation of 32 large orange planters along Milwaukee Avenue, unveiled in May. Intended to calm traffic and increase safety, the planters are the SSA's contribution to the City of Chicago's "Complete Streets" project for Milwaukee Avenue, making our business district's most iconic street more hospitable to pedestrians and cyclists. Planters are placed inside painted "bump-out" zones and act as reinforcement for plastic bollards. This creates a larger pedestrian area that extends beyond the sidewalk curb, creating both shorter and wider crosswalks and providing a buffer between automobiles and pedestrians.



The large terra cotta planters enhance both safety and aesthetics.

Here a planter, there a planter...



| WPB Planters by Intersection |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| # INSTALLED IN 2018          | # PLANNED FOR 2019 |
| Milwaukee/Ashland            | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Paulina            | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Hermitage          | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Wood               | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Evergreen          | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Honore             | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Damen              | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/North              | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Wabansia           | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Bloomingdale       | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Oakley/Moffat      | ●●●●●●●●           |
| Milwaukee/Western            | ●●●●●●●●           |



Planters provide year-round beautification via seasonal landscaping.





# Arts

Keywords: Create, Innovate, Interact, Infuse

The Arts Committee strives to keep local arts and culture alive and well, and year after year our creative pulse remains audibly strong. Our community is known for being vibrant and fun to explore, peaking curiosities of visitors and residents alike via murals, installations and festivals. Through arts initiatives led by the Arts Committee and the annual Community Grants Program, WPB SSA #33 awards funds to local artists and organizations to enhance quality-of-life, and foster community growth and development within the neighborhood.

## 3 Major Art Installations: 2018 was a great year for public art in WPB!

After years of planning, **Lynn Basa's Worker Cottage Parklet** (at Milwaukee/Wood) and **Mike Helbing's Wicker Tree** (in Wicker Park along Damen Ave.) were both installed and unveiled to the public. And in September of 2018, world renowned artist and Chicago native **Hebru Brantley** returned to the neighborhood to paint a new mural on the east wall of 1401 N. Milwaukee Ave. (at Beach/Wood).

## The Return of Hebru Brantley and Characters Flyboy & Lil Mama

The eastern wall of 1401 N. Milwaukee Avenue holds special meaning to artist Hebru Brantley - it was the site of one of his first murals in Chicago before going on to achieve international recognition. The original mural, which stood for nearly a decade, was painted over by city graffiti crews in early 2018. SSA #33 was fortunate to make contact with Mr. Brantley's team just in time to take advantage of a small opening in the artist's schedule; the mural was completed within 36 hours of his arrival! News crews, fans and hundreds of passersby stopped to observe, waive, honk at and chat one-on-one with Mr. Brantley, making this was one of the most rewarding and exciting initiatives the organization has sponsored.



*"It's very rare to see a popular character that is African-American, Latino, or Asian. I wanted to create that, but in a space of high art and with some historical context."*

*- Hebru Brantley on the origins of Flyboy*

Wicker Tree by Mike Helbing



Worker Cottage Parklet by Lynn Basa



*"It's good to be back," said Hebru. "My main thing is, to put a flyboy back on this wall, keep it simple. It was one of my first incarnations of my characters on walls. That came off in a very good way and created a narrative that people gravitated to."*

*Hebru's first mural at 1401 N Milwaukee Ave. represented a key step in the development of his iconic characters, Flyboy and Lil Mama, inspired in part by the Tuskegee Airmen.*

*Hebru Brantley (left) completing his new mural. Photo by Alisa Hauser*

# Clean and Green

Keywords: Sustainable, Resilient, Viable, Livable

Our Clean and Green Committee is dedicated to making WPB streetscapes cleaner, greener and ever more beautiful. Annually, we strive to become a more environmentally sound, ecologically sensitive community with on-the-ground solutions and practices. In 2018, our SSA removed over 14,000 bags of trash and recycled over 50,000+ lbs of paper. Big thanks to Cleanslate, Christy Webber Landscaping, Brightview, and Bartlett Tree Experts for partnering with us to beautify our stomping grounds.

**Building Social Equity | Cleanslate**, a social enterprise of the Cara Program, provides paid transitional jobs, which have the dual purpose of invigorating our neighborhoods and providing a platform to help individuals build skills and secure lasting careers. As of 2018, Cleanslate was working with 611 participants in transitional jobs and 127 in permanent jobs.



## FLEXING OUR GREEN THUMB 2018 STATS



# Transportation

Keywords: Access, Safety, Flow, Mobility

The Transportation Committee is dedicated to keeping movement around our communities safe, simple and intuitive. Whether you're a pedestrian, cyclist or driver, we are actively planning for you! We continue to enhance our multi-modal environment by implementing complete streets initiatives and supporting a bike-friendly atmosphere via Bike-To-Work Week and the installation of new bike racks. In 2018, WPB SSA #33 helped further beautify and protect our pedestrians by installing large planters at key locations within the streetscape and along corridors - more to come in 2019! **See pages 5 and 6 for details.**

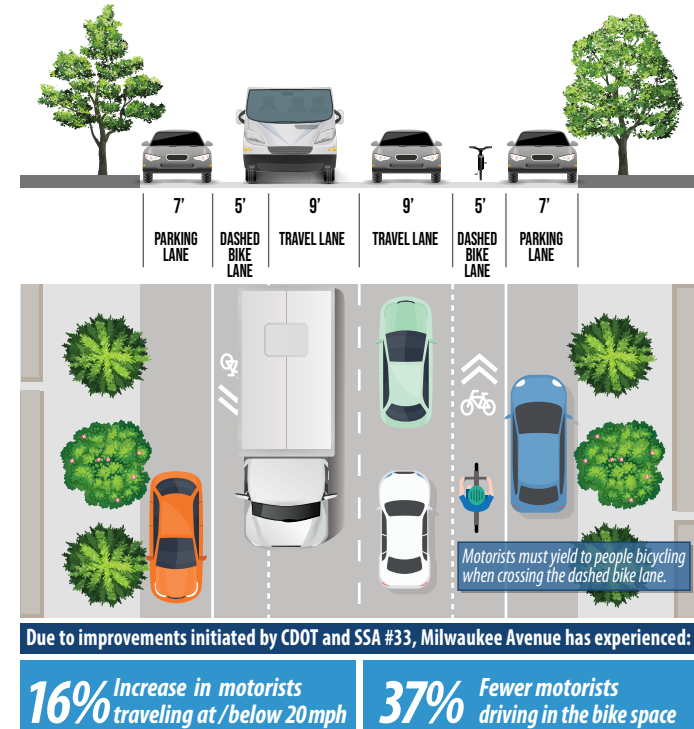
## BREAKING NEWS

### "Numbers Show the Milwaukee Avenue Makeover in Wicker Park Has Boosted Safety"

- Streetsblog Article | December 12, 2018



DATA PROVIDED BY THE CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION





# Guide Development

Keywords: Shape, Impact, Lead, Support

Our Guide Development Committee helps manage change by embracing a proactive role in shaping WPB's unfolding future. In an effort to improve our streetscape, over \$16,000 in rebates for façade improvements were distributed throughout the district. Eligible properties can receive up to \$5,000 in matching funds for façade enhancements. Our Guide Development Committee also distributed \$11,000 in safety rebates! WPB reimburses 50% of the cost of one or more safety measures (see matrix below), to a maximum of \$1,000 per measure annually, per location and will reimburse 75% of the cost of hiring private security, to a maximum of \$5,000 annually, per location.

## Eligible Safety + Facade Rebate Categories

► Visit [wickerparkbucktown.org](http://wickerparkbucktown.org) to learn more!

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|    |    |    |
| EXTERIOR SECURITY CAMERAS   | ANTI-GRAFFITI + ANTI-SMASH WINDOW FILM  | IMPROVEMENTS TO VACANT OR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS                                     |
|   |   |   |
| WINDOW / DOOR REPAIR + REPLACEMENT  | EXTERIOR LIGHTING   | POWER WASHING AND SAND BLASTING   |
|  |  |  |
| TUCKPOINT AND MASONRY   | FACADE RENOVATIONS  | HISTORIC SIGN RESTORATION   |

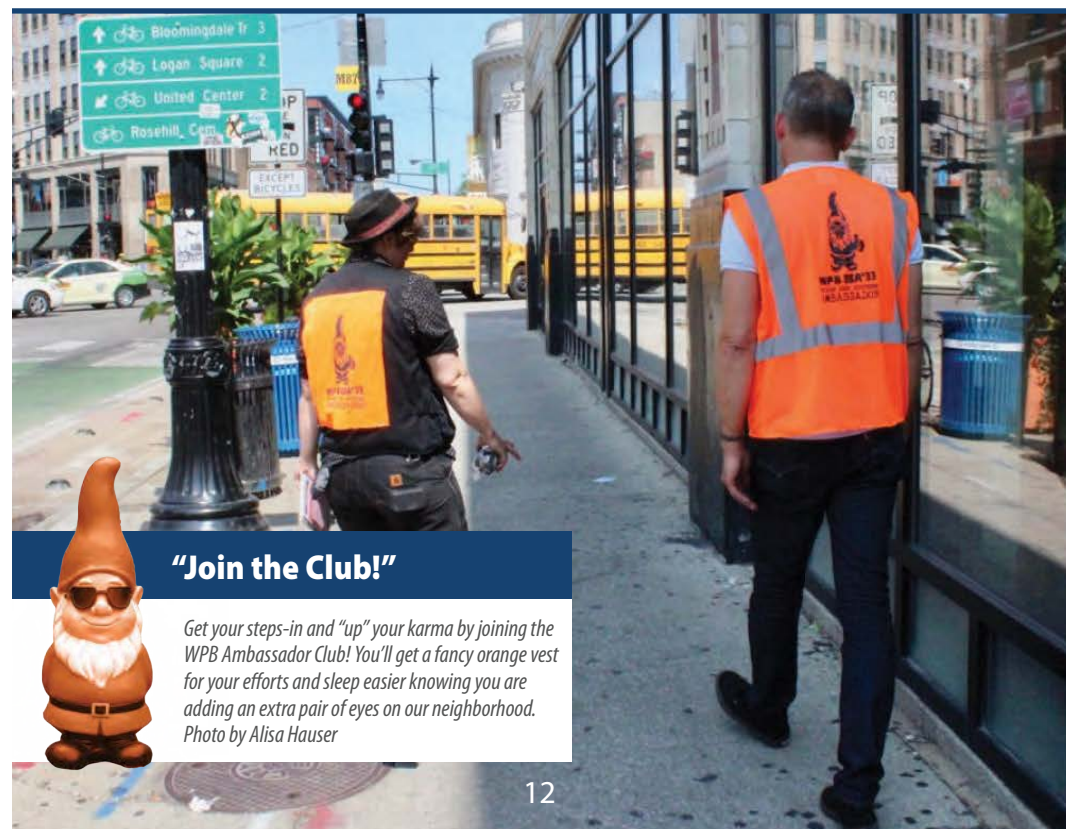


## Walk This Way! WPB Launches Ambassador Program

In 2018 we launched our WPB Ambassador Program, the first of its kind in Chicago! WPB SSA #33 provides rebates incentivizing local business employees to stroll the neighborhood in branded "WPB Ambassador" vests. The goal is to foster a welcoming atmosphere for residents, business owners and visitors through a shared commitment to service and beautification. Our WPB Ambassadors actively engage with pedestrians, provide directions, answer questions, and demonstrate care and WPB pride.

*The WPB Ambassador Program helps keep extra eyes on our SSA, and assists with reporting back on streetscape issues, graffiti removal and suspicious activity.*

Contact the Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber today to learn more!!  
[www.wickerparkbucktown.org](http://www.wickerparkbucktown.org)  
(773) 384-2672



## "Join the Club!"

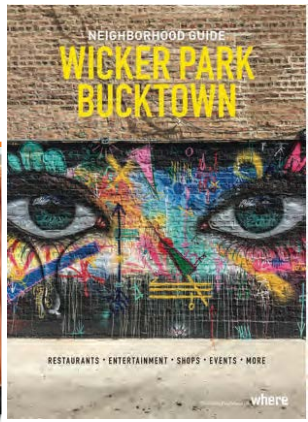
Get your steps-in and "up" your karma by joining the WPB Ambassador Club! You'll get a fancy orange vest for your efforts and sleep easier knowing you are adding an extra pair of eyes on our neighborhood.  
Photo by Alisa Hauser



# Promote

Keywords: Celebrate, Motivate, Buzz, Inspire

The Promote Committee works to generate buzz, intrigue and excitement about Wicker Park Bucktown - its people, businesses and organizations. From working with the Silverman Group on public relations and getting the word out about events, festivals and neighborhood programs -- to partnering with 'Where Magazine' to produce WPB's annual neighborhood guide -- the promote committee supports WPB activities and furthers awareness.



◀ From local culinary hits to must-see attractions and shopping destinations, the WPB Neighborhood Guide helps attract visitors and boost business sales.



ART INSTALLATION AT WICKER PARK FEST 2018 BY SUPERFINE STUDIO

## Putting the "FUN" in Funding

WPB SSA #33 supported community events, programs and creative initiatives to the tune of **\$59,000** in 2018 via the Community Grant Program. This program fosters the creative and independent spirit of WPB! By supporting small, unique events and activities we are able to give our community that extra push that keeps people coming back again and again. The photos below highlight just some of the programs and installations the SSA helped fund. Visit [www.wickerparkbucktown.org](http://www.wickerparkbucktown.org) to learn about eligible grant activities and download an application.

Photo Credits, Left to Right by Row | Top: 1 - @BloomingdaleTrail via Instagram, 2 - Michelle Gomez, 3 - Jordan Miller  
Middle: 1 - Garrett Karp, 2 - Alice Howe, 3 - Rebecca George | Bottom: 1 - Courtesy of Wicker Park Advisory Council, 2 - WPBCC, 3 - Alice Howe

Bicycle Lights on the 606 at Damen



Do Division Fashion Show



WPBCC Chill Fest



WPBCC Chill Fest



Boo-Palooza



Volumes Bookcafe 'Shop Local' Event



CREATE Series



Sidewalk Sale



Music at the Farmers Market







**Wicker Park Bucktown  
Chamber of Commerce + SSA #33  
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