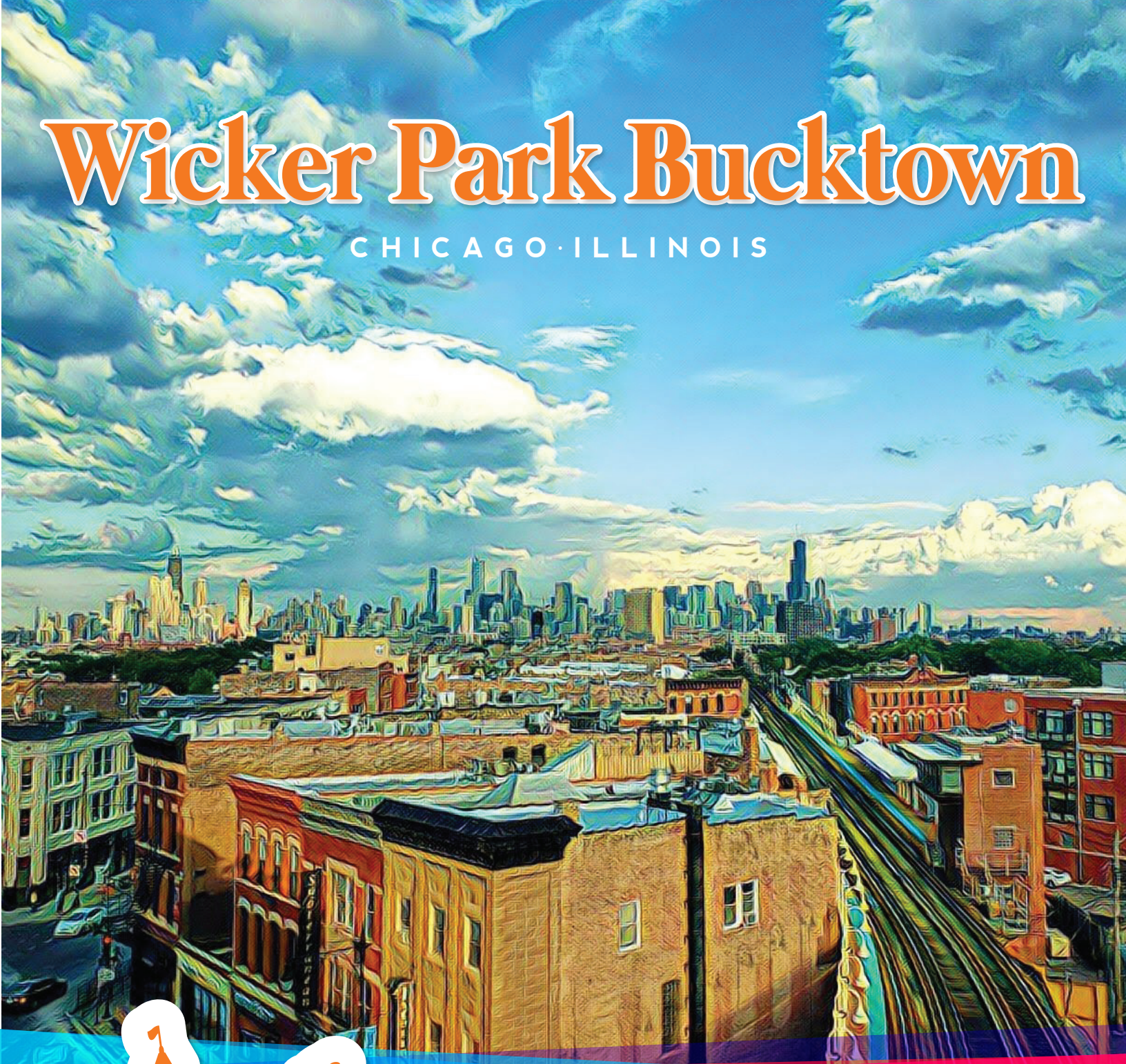


# Wicker Park Bucktown

CHICAGO · ILLINOIS



# 2020

ANNUAL REPORT



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## WPB SSA #33 ANNUAL REPORT

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## FOUR QUICK THINGS ABOUT SSA #33

1

### 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, transparent way to finance and manage improvement programs and provide supplemental services. There are over 50 SSAs in the City of Chicago.

2

### 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, 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.

3

### 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. All SSA meetings are open to the public. Wicker Park Bucktown SSA #33 and the Chamber of Commerce follow an award-winning **WPB Master Plan**, which features innovative recommendations that will continue to guide our local efforts.

4

### WHAT IS THE MISSION OF SSA #33?

The mission of SSA #33 is to sustain and promote the prosperity and unique qualities of life in Wicker Park Bucktown, while enhancing our public ways and preserving its diverse character for the benefit of its residents, visitors and businesses. It is a partnership between the City of Chicago, the Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber, SSA taxpayers, and community members.

[WWW.WICKERPARKBUCKTOWN.ORG](http://WWW.WICKERPARKBUCKTOWN.ORG)  
(773) 384-2672





# Retrospective

## 2020 REFLECTIONS · OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

Like everywhere else, 2020 was an unprecedented year for Wicker Park Bucktown SSA #33 ...

The pandemic, economic crisis, and political climate presented complex new challenges that affected the city of Chicago and its business districts significantly. Special Services Areas, Chambers of Commerce, and neighborhood organizations all over the city scrambled to adapt their operations to best support their communities despite extreme financial uncertainty.

The implementation of stay-at-home orders in March pushed all public meetings virtual, a big change for an organization like SSA #33 which is accustomed to hosting several in-person meetings monthly. Wicker Park Bucktown's SSA #33 Commission made an informal commitment early in the pandemic to prioritize service contracts that provide necessary maintenance for the district, rather than focusing on one-off projects or spending funds on less-essential projects.



PHOTO CREDIT: ALICE HOWE



PHOTO CREDIT: GARRETT KARP



PHOTO CREDIT: CLEANSLATE



PHOTO CREDIT: RON HOLAKOVSKY

## PRIORITIZING ESSENTIAL SERVICES

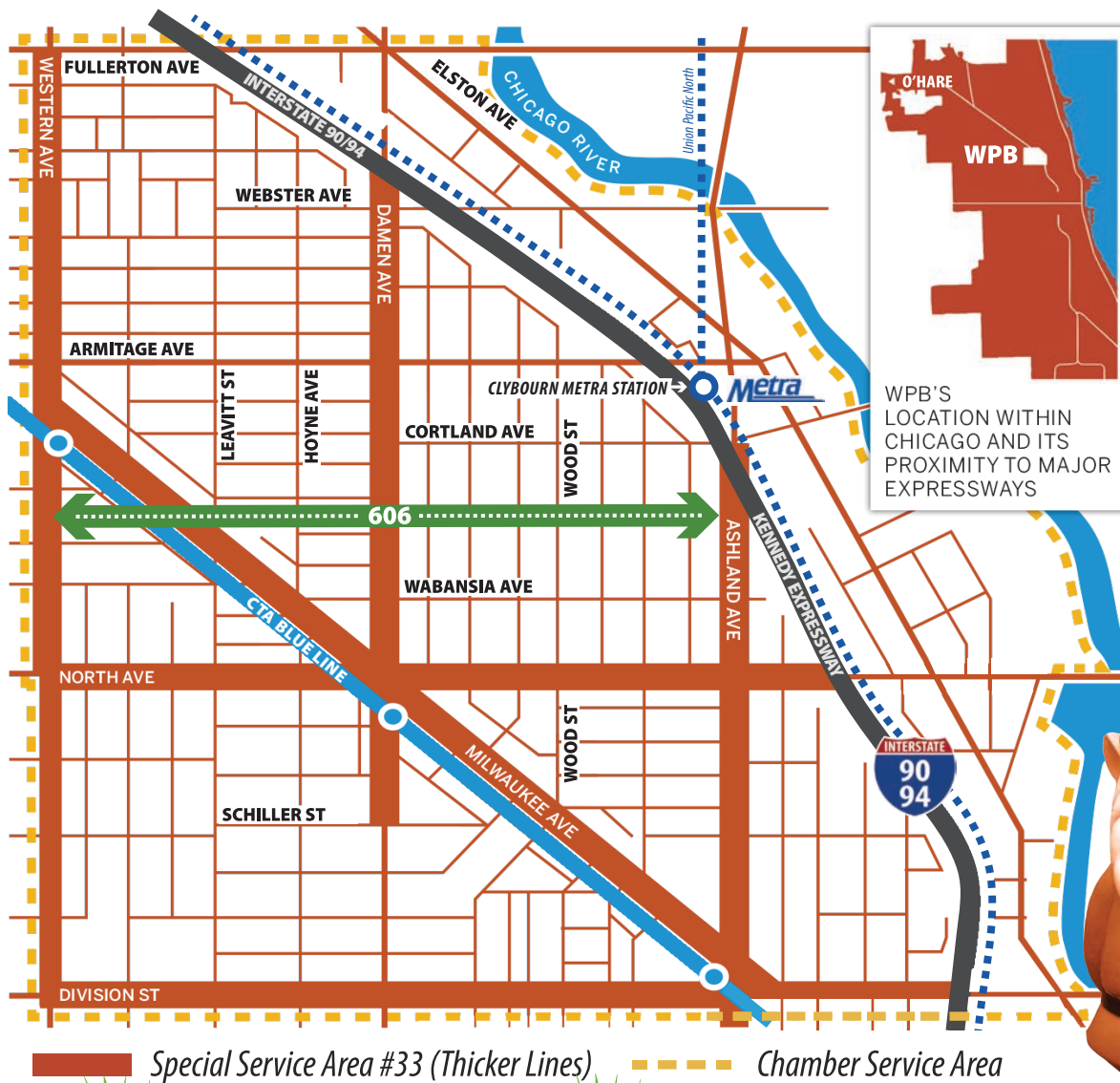
This approach kept the neighborhood clean and attractive while allowing 3rd party vendors to keep staff employed. Sidewalk Cleaning, Litter Abatement, Landscaping, Graffiti Removal, and Tree Care vendors all continued to work at full capacity despite some brief pauses in March. Later in the year funding was still available to perform sidewalk snow removal and install holiday decorations as usual.

2020 may not have resulted in some of the fun, exciting, or eye-catching new projects we often love to reflect on in the annual report. But it became a reminder of all the essential services that SSA #33 sponsors on a regular basis and the strength and resilience of the Wicker Park Bucktown community.

# Boundaries

## SSA #33 SERVICE AREA + LOCAL TRIVIA

With approximately **14 miles of sidewalk along 6 major corridors**, SSA #33 is said to be the 2nd largest SSA in Chicago! As depicted by the thick orange lines in the map below, properties within these boundaries pay into the SSA tax levy and in turn benefit from additional services, programs and rebates.



## THE INSIDE SCOOP

### A CENTURY-OLD ARGUMENT

Longtime residents have heated disagreements about whether the boundary between Wicker Park and Bucktown is Armitage, Wabansia, or North Ave. SSA #33 includes "Wicker Park Bucktown" on all banners, bike racks, and branding no matter where in the neighborhood you are!

### NEIGHBORHOOD NOMENCLATURE

The origin of the name "**Bucktown**" is believed to have been coined in the 1830's, since many of the Polish settlers in the area raised goats (the male is called a buck). - Bucktown.org



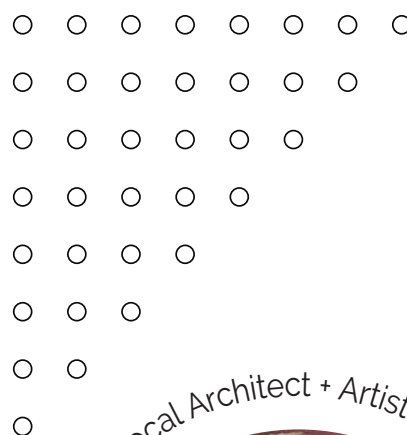
# SUPPORTING THE arts

## SSA #33 FUNDED MURALS + SCULPTURES

The “earth” without “art” is just “eh”...

**WPB SSA #33** partnered with **Chicago Sculpture Exhibit** to sponsor six public artworks throughout Wicker Park Bucktown for 2020-2021, curated by SSA #33's Arts Committee. SSA #33 continues to be one of the largest participants in this annual not-for-profit initiative that brings art into the city's neighborhoods.

The **"Illinois Landscape"** mural on the back (east) wall of the Bucktown Wicker Park Library, completed in the fall of 2020 by local architect and artist **Sam Marts**, was funded in part by a Community Grant to Bucktown Community Organization (BCO) which was initially approved by the SSA #33 Commission in 2018. The 90-foot-long art deco-inspired piece is a nod to The Prairie State's agricultural and architectural heritage.



Sam Marts · Local Architect + Artist · Illinois Landscape



PHOTO CREDIT: SAM MARTS, FACEBOOK

"Illinois Landscape" by Sam Marts at the Bucktown Wicker Park Library





# Chicago Sculpture Exhibit

WPB SSA #33 funded 6 rotating sculptures in 2020 as part of the Chicago Sculpture Exhibit (CSE). The mission of CSE is to bring art to neighborhoods, with the hope that visitors will encounter art while going about their daily lives; walking to the dry cleaners, farmers market, or out for a run/walk.

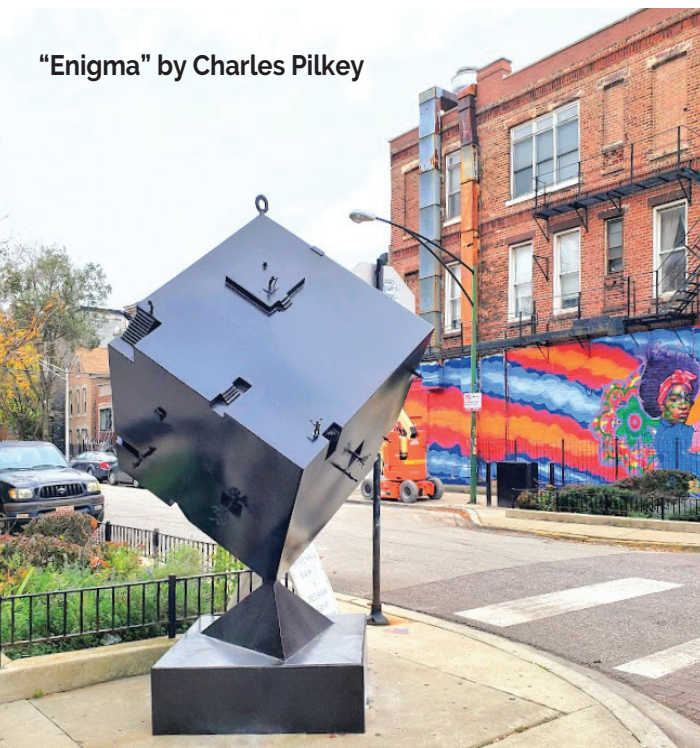
**"Raptor" by Fisher Stolz**



**"Totem V" by Christopher Newman**



**"Enigma" by Charles Pilkey**



"We are proud to bring these new major artworks to Wicker Park Bucktown to encourage people to get outside and safely explore our neighborhoods and patronize neighborhood businesses and restaurants, as nearly all of them are offering curbside pickup and takeout."

- David Ginople, SSA #33 Commission Chair



VISIT THE INTERACTIVE 'WPB ART GUIDE' ONLINE



# Local Impacts

## WPB SSA #33 SUPPORTED IMPROVEMENTS



**\$16,540**

DISTRIBUTED IN  
COMMUNITY GRANTS  
(SEE NEXT PAGE)



**13,600**

BAGS OF TRASH  
COLLECTED



**5,300**

BAGS OF  
RECYCLING  
COLLECTED



**\$10,000**

DISTRIBUTED FOR  
FACADE REBATES  
(SEE BELOW)



**4,400**

GRAFFITI TAGS  
REMOVED



**1,320**

STICKERS  
REMOVED



**\$4,780**

DISTRIBUTED FOR  
SAFETY REBATES



**48**

INCHES OF SNOW  
PLOWED FROM  
SIDEWALKS



**380**

PARTICIPANTS IN  
TRANSITIONAL OR  
PERMANENT JOBS

**FACADE REBATE**  
1302 N. MILWAUKEE AVENUE



**FACADE REBATE**  
1900 W. NORTH AVENUE



PHOTO CREDIT (ALL): GARRETT KARP



# Budget

## FLEXING OUR FUND MUSCLES

SSA #33's budget is driven by its mission and award-winning Master Plan. In 2020 the SSA Commission applied ~\$975,000 in funds to neighborhood and business district improvements, as showcased in the infographic below. In most years, WPB SSA #33 has the 2nd largest SSA budget in Chicago behind State Street in the Loop. But that SSA only covers about one mile. SSA #33 is nearly 14x larger and includes approximately 13.75 miles of sidewalk. This makes SSA #33 arguably the largest SSA in Chicago. For a detailed look at spending from years past, please visit: <http://www.wickerparkbucktown.com>

SSA #33 leveraged nearly \$1 Million in funds to bring essential services and programs to WPB.



\$544,000

### PUBLIC WAY AESTHETICS

Landscaping, sidewalk cleaning, snow removal, graffiti abatement, garbage pick-up, etc.



\$221,000

### SSA PERSONNEL

Full-time staffing, program management, vendor management, marketing, social media, outreach, small business assistance

\$155,000

### CUSTOMER ATTRACTION

Promotional material, holiday décor, grants, events, neighborhood guide, neighborhood branding

\$49,000

### SSA MANAGEMENT

SSA #33 office rent, office supplies, equipment, meeting expenses, accounting, budgeting, compliance



\$5,000

### SAFETY PROGRAMS

Safety initiatives, rebate programs (anti-smash window films)

\$2,000

### SUSTAINABILITY & PUBLIC PLACES

Neighborhood recycling and shredding events, bike racks, bicycle transit improvements

### DEAR VENDORS, WE LOVE YOU...

Special thanks to our partners at **Cleanslate**, **Christy Webber Landscapes**, **Brightview Landscapes**, and **Bartlett Tree Care** for keeping our streets sparkling, trees happy, landscaping colorful, and sidewalks plowed. Nearly 20,000 bags of trash and recycling, and 4 feet of snow were removed from SSA #33 in 2020 alone! SSA #33 contracts with vendors to provide sidewalk litter removal, garbage servicing, supplemental sidewalk snow plowing and salting, tree maintenance, pruning, and landscaping. These essential services keep our neighborhoods looking lush, vibrant, and clean!





# Milwaukee Avenue

## SAFETY REBATES, RECOVERY AND CLEAN-UP EFFORTS

Civil unrest swept across cities around the country in early June... Unfortunately, a few nights were very hard on Milwaukee Avenue through Wicker Park as well as other parts of the neighborhood. But the recovery effort that followed was full of meaning, inspiration, and color!

### THE MORNING OF JUNE 1ST...

Thousands of neighborhood residents, visitors, and Good Samaritans swarmed the neighborhood as early as 5 am to begin cleanup and assist the businesses and residents of Milwaukee Avenue. By 10 am the streets and sidewalks were so clean that SSA #33's sidewalk cleaning and litter abatement crew reported that it "wasn't much different than a normal day."

In the following days, as businesses began to board up their broken windows with plywood, the real magic happened. Artists flocked to the neighborhood to paint vibrant murals in support of racial justice and unity, turning Milwaukee Avenue into an impromptu art gallery. Many of these murals were temporary as businesses reopened soon after, but others remained up well into 2021 and have transformed into symbols of neighborhood pride.



The Wicker Park Bucktown community banded together to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts along Milwaukee Avenue



Maurice Cox, Commissioner of the Department of Planning & Development and SSA Program Manager Garrett Karp

### ON JUNE 9TH ...

SSA Program Manager Garrett Karp escorted a group of city officials including Maurice Cox, Commissioner of the Department of Planning & Development (which oversees Chicago's SSA program) to survey damage and recovery efforts on Milwaukee Avenue. The walk ended up being more of an art tour than a damage tour; see photos on the next page.

After this summer's disturbances, SSA #33 contributed to the replacement of glass with anti-shatter protection for many businesses in Wicker Park Bucktown through the **Safety Rebate Program**. Glass replacement up to \$1,000 or 50% of the total cost is eligible.

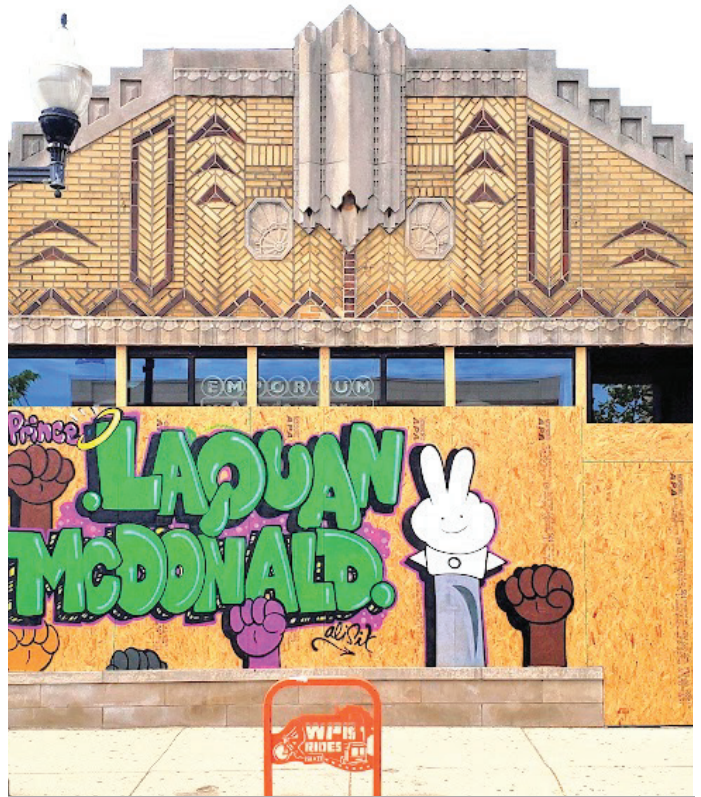


# Unrest Sparks Unity, Inspiration & Color

As businesses began to board up their broken windows with plywood, the real magic happened. Artists flocked to the neighborhood to paint vibrant murals in support of racial justice and unity, transforming Milwaukee Avenue into an impromptu art gallery.



MURAL BY PITIZ



MURAL BY ALI SIX



MURAL BY NICK APPLE



MURAL BY DAMON LAMAR REED AND PUGZ ATOMZ



# Legacy Business Spotlights

WPB SSA #33's **Legacy Business Program** celebrates businesses that have been serving our community for 15 years or more! Storefront windows throughout Wicker Park Bucktown proudly display orange window clings identifying these legacy businesses and recognizing their service. [Visit @WPBSSA33 on Instagram to learn more!](#)



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALMA WEISER

## Heaven Gallery • Opened 1997

1550 N. Milwaukee Ave

Alma Weiser runs Heaven Gallery and has been involved in WPB SSA #33's Arts Committee for many years. "We're a multidisciplinary art space located in the heart of Wicker Park for over 20 years. We had to pivot music and artist talk programming to virtual during the pandemic. In 2020 the gallery was shut down for 3 months but we were still able to present the work of 56 artists safely to the public through its weekly gallery / vintage shop hours Friday through Sunday. The **community grant** from SSA #33 helped our cultural programming stay afloat as we waited for other grant funding."

"The community grant from SSA #33 helped our cultural programming stay afloat while we waited for other grant funding."



PHOTO CREDIT: LYNDON FRENCH

## Subterranean • Opened 1994

2011 W. North Ave

Robert Gomez owns Subterranean, a legendary music venue that serves as a cornerstone of Wicker Park Bucktown. "After 26 years in business, I had to shutter the business and navigate through the pandemic. I restructured my costs by renegotiating with every vendor and bank as well as relying heavily on the support of my family, friends, local and state governments, and every possible grant that has come available. I will continue to find a way through this especially with the support of my fellow venue owners on CIVL (Chicago Independent Venue League) and community organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and SSA #33. I have every intention of re-opening SubT when it is deemed safe to do so."

"I will continue to find a way through this, especially with the support of my fellow venue owners... and community organizations like the Chamber and SSA #33."



# Cast & Crew

## OUR WPB SSA #33 SUPER HUMANS



Special thanks to our super humans, commissioners, board of directors, staff, vendors, local residents, businesses, and artists who made the last 365 days possible.

### WPB SSA #33 COMMISSION

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

### WPB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Catherine Crews, President (Canine Crews)  
 Tim Gillengerten, Vice President (Transit Tees)  
 Andrew Balderson, Treasurer (Balderson & Company)  
 Ginna Ryan, Secretary (Mauge, Inc.)  
 David Boylan (SERVPRO)  
 Ryan Martin (The Den Theater)  
 Ann Nolan (State Farm)  
 Kari Schmidt (HealthSource of Wicker Park)  
 Scott Starbuck (City Soles)  
 Shanita Martha (Byline Bank)  
 Josh Rutherford (Smoke Daddy)  
 Majid Shehade (Hi-Style Furniture)  
 Diandra Lammens (Matty & Lou)  
 Tania Rodriguez (Hyatt Place Wicker Park)  
 Jon Simon (Horizon Payments)  
 Laura Yepez (Wicker Park Inn)

### WPB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE STAFF

Pamela Maass, Executive Director  
 Garrett Karp, SSA Program Manager  
 Alice Howe, SSA Program Specialist, Farmers Market Manager  
 Gabriela Perez, Membership & Marketing Coordinator  
 Debbie Rinella, Special Events Coordinator  
 Mark Friedman, Accountant  
 Jordan Miller, Arts + Social Media Administrator



WICKER PARK BUCKTOWN FARMERS MARKET, SUMMER 2020

PHOTO CREDIT: ALICE HOWE