

April 2, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: All news media
FROM: **Wicker Park Bucktown SSA #33**
RE: **New plan coming for Wicker Park and Bucktown**

It's no secret that Wicker Park and Bucktown are popular.

But can the neighborhood continue to prosper while retaining the funky, artsy ambiance that has given the area its appeal? That's the goal of the local business group that is updating an award-winning 2008 master plan.

Why update the plan now, when business seems brisk? "There have been significant changes over the past several years—including a deep national recession and now an economic recovery—and we want to take advantage of the positive momentum the community is seeing today," said Brent Norman, commission chair for the Wicker Park Bucktown Special Service Area (WPB SSA #33), the plan's sponsor.

For example, the 2008 plan anticipated the possibility of the Bloomingdale Trail, aka "The 606," which is now open and quickly became part of the fabric of the community.

Property values have increased, along with concerns about whether Wicker Park-Bucktown can retain the arts-oriented, bohemian vibe that initially attracted residents and visitors seeking options to neighborhoods like Lincoln Park and Wrigleyville.

"The planning process is a good way to take the pulse of the neighborhood," said Jessica Wobbekind, program manager for WPB SSA #33.

Toward that end, the consultants are meeting with leaders from business and government, as well as neighborhood associations, arts organizations and other interested groups.

The project team is seeking input from all three aldermen whose wards include parts of Wicker Park or Bucktown: Ald. Joe Moreno, Ward One; Ald. Brian Hopkins, Ward Two; and Ald. Scott Waguespack, Ward 32.

Another way to contribute thoughts is through the project website: wpbforward.org. The updated plan is scheduled for completion late this year.

The consulting team is led by Teska Associates, based in north suburban Evanston. The firm is a national leader in business district planning and has worked with other special service areas in Chicago.

The planners understand the importance of their new assignment. “Wicker Park and Bucktown have rich histories, showing continuous change over many years,” said Scott Goldstein, AICP, a Teska principal and project manager for the Wicker Park Bucktown planning effort.

Working with Teska are Sam Schwartz Consulting, a transportation engineering firm, and McElroy Associates, which specializes in public policy communications.

“The hard work of artists, entrepreneurs, historic preservationists, business and civic leaders have created a special cultural, economic and residential center,” he said.

“It’s a great neighborhood, and we plan to help keep it that way.”

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(Note to news media: Jessica Wobbekind can be reached at 773-384-2672 or jessica@wickerparkbucktown.org; Scott Goldstein can be reached at 312-318-3209 (voice/text) or SGoldstein@TeskaAssociates.Com. Visit <http://wpbforward.org>)