

# Mount Greenwood SSA#55 Renewal Virtual Community Meetings



## Meeting Minutes + Participants

Community Meetings regarding the Renewal of the Mount Greenwood SSA #55 were held from via Zoom on April 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm and May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 10:00 am.

### Meeting 1: April 29, 2021 | Virtual Meeting | Zoom Meeting ID: 930 0297 3931

#### Businesses and Public Members:

Garfield Batchelor, DDS Greenwood  
Family Dentistry

\*Keith Brandenburger, Brandenburger  
Plumbing, business owner

\*Brian Griffin, Griffin Studios,  
business/property owner

Margie Olsen, 19<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman's  
Office Representative

Matthew O'Shea, 19<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman

June Eastman, Chicago Pulse,  
business/property owner

Benjamin Soto, Complete Car Care,  
business owner

### Meeting 2: May 6, 2021 | Virtual Meeting | Zoom Meeting ID: 956 4651 7145

#### Businesses and Public Members:

\*Keith Brandenburger, Brandenburger  
Plumbing, business owner

Debbie Devine-Anderson, Joseph's  
Restaurant & Bar, business owner

Joe Esselman, property owner

Mike Grant, Wonderburger, business owner

\*Brian Griffin, Griffin Studios,  
business/property owner

Karina Langle, Lunettes Family Eyecare  
and Optical Boutique

Margie Olsen, 19<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman's  
Office Representative

Matthew O'Shea, 19<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman

Tony Quinn, Face to Face Salon and Spa,  
business/property owner

Joe Shrader, Shrader's Goods, business  
owner

*\*Denotes current SSA Commissioner*

### **MGCBA, City of Chicago and Consultants (attended both meetings):**

Carol Brobeck, Teska Associates, Inc.

Erin Cigliano, Teska Associates, Inc.

Mary Gill, SSA 55 Executive Director, MGCBA

Karen Forte, DPD, City of Chicago

Mark Roschen, DPD, City of Chicago

Scott Goldstein, Teska Associates, Inc.

## **Welcome by Alderman O'Shea**

"Thank you for all your efforts to support our business community. Now more than ever, I'm proud to represent our community. We've really seen folks struggle... especially in our business community... It is important now than ever to consistently shop local and do all we can to support the community."

- Support what we have, to entice what we want to open in our community.
- The SSA area looks much better than it did 10 years ago.
- We've seen reinvestment and demolition of old buildings.... We need to continue these efforts.
- Our neighbors have tax incentives that we don't have. We're always fighting a battle being at the corner of the city.
- It's important to extend this SSA so that we have the ability to reinvest in our business district.

## **What is a Special Service Area (SSA)?**

An SSA is a designated area in which property owners choose to provide additional services for the benefit of businesses, residents, and visitors. A tax is applied to properties within the SSA. The funds collected go directly back into the district based on local priorities.

## **Mount Greenwood SSA #55**

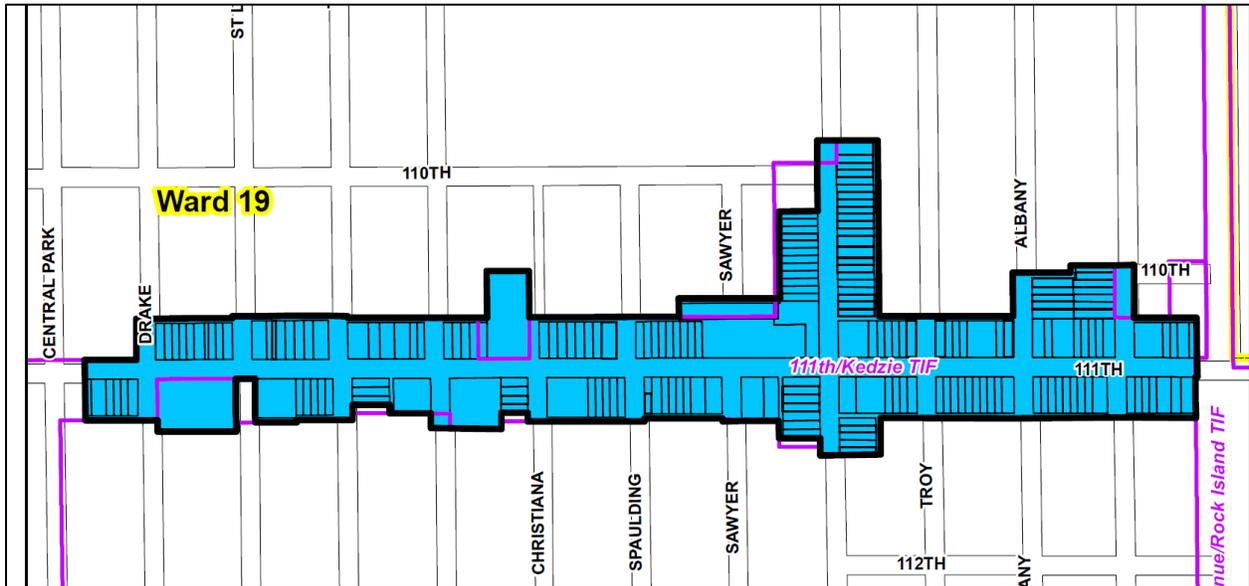
The Mount Greenwood SSA #55 serves the local business community, residents and visitors by organizing events, providing marketing and business support, and enhancing the look, feel and safety of the corridor.

"You know me and you know I love this neighborhood. The best part of my job is meeting all of you. Our business owners work so hard and really care about the neighborhood. It such a beautiful place. Over the last 10 years, 111th St has changed so much. The streetscape looks great and I'm looking forward to expanding it. Every year participants at our events grow. This neighborhood rallies." – *Mary Gill, SSA #55 Executive Director*

## **Map of SSA**

SSA #55 serves properties between 111<sup>th</sup> Street from Sacramento (3000 West) to Central Park (3600 West) and South Kedzie Avenue from 10953 to 11125 (both sides) (see map on next page for SSA boundaries). There are no plans to modify the boundaries.

## SSA #55 Boundary Map



## SSA Service Categories

Customer Attraction	Public Way Aesthetics	Clean and Green	Business Development	Safety
Local Events Promotions 	Streetscape Landscaping Maintenance Banners 	Litter Removal Clean-Up Snow Plowing 	Business Support Grants + Rebates Marketing 	Cameras Security 

- Landscaping + Beautification (planters, hanging baskets, watering)
- Décor + Gateway Signage (holiday lighting, seasonal landscaping)
- Maintenance + Safety (streetscape/crosswalks, sidewalk snowplowing)
- Events (Holiday Stroll, 'The Bucks Stay Here' Shop Local Campaign)
- Local Business Support (assistance with business permits, filling vacancies)
- Marketing (active business promotion, local promotions)

## **Overview of SSA Program, City of Chicago Department of Planning + Development**

Mark Roschen, the Deputy Director of DPD shared general information about the SSA Program, including how establishment and renewal occurs, budget categories, City and local administration, and top SSA services. Main takeaways include:

- DPD is here to facilitate the process and share info about the SSA.
- The community submitted an application to create the SSA 9 years ago.
- If no action is taken, the SSA will expire.
- We received an application requesting a term extension, for 15 years.
- SSA services go above and beyond what the City provides / is able to provide.
- SSA commissions are made up of local property and business owners – they are given authority to make decisions about the area which they know best.
- SSAs contract with a service provider to carry out day-to-day operations.
- 53 SSAs currently, 40 service providers, 450+ volunteer commissioners
- For 2021, SSA budgets total \$29.6 million.
- There are 7 specific authorized budget categories.
- Category 5 has been expanded to include Public Health, not just Safety.
- Most common SSA services are landscaping, events, holiday decorations, and sidewalk sweeping.

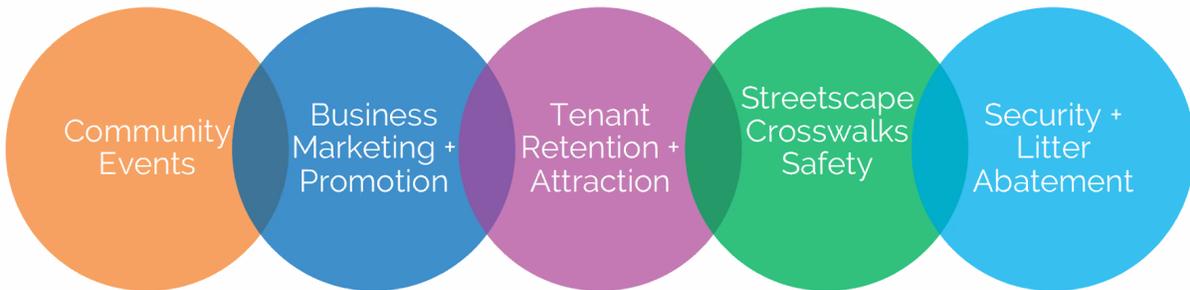
### **Renewal Process**

The SSA Renewal Process began in Fall of 2020 and to date has included three **Advisory Committee Meetings** and an online **Needs Assessment Survey**. The SSA will now be gathering **Signatures in Support** of SSA Renewal. A total of 20% of all property owners must sign in support of the SSA by early August in order for the process to move forward.

The project team will be drafting the **District Plan** which describes the trajectory of the SSA going forward. The Plan will include the input from Community Meetings, Advisory Committee, and the Needs Assessment Survey, which are described in the following paragraphs:

## **Needs Assessment Survey**

The online survey is available on the website [www.MountGreenwoodSSA55.org](http://www.MountGreenwoodSSA55.org). The survey is a required part of the renewal process used to understand what services and programs that the SSA currently provides should continue and what may be needed or desired going forward. The SSA budget is based on service and program priorities. Responses from the survey to date indicate that Mount Greenwood's Top Service Priorities are:



## **What has SSA #55 been doing?**

- Attracting Customers with events
- Marketing + Awareness through business promotion and PR efforts
  - Desire to expand awareness
  - Consider expanding to Instagram – SSAs find great success
- Creating an Inviting Environment through streetscape improvements and maintenance
  - We know more streetscape is coming, creating a more walkable and bicycle friendly area
- Fostering a Sense of Place through branded bike racks, public art/murals, banners etc.

### **SSA #55 Successes:**

- Events, landscaping, streetscape, small business support

### **SSA #55 Challenges:**

- Being surrounded by the suburbs, attracting folks to shop local, the pandemic

### **Spotlight: Efforts During the Pandemic**

- 1) Small Business Super Raffle -- raised \$250,000 for local businesses
- 2) 'The Bucks Stay Here' – created during the pandemic, has raised \$40,000 guaranteed to stay in local businesses

### **SSA Case Studies**

SSAs in and around Chicago have been very creative and many ideas could be applied in Mount Greenwood:

- Downtown Evanston – spin classes in downtown, Oktoberfest
- Howard Street – 3D Chalk Howard art festival
- Marketing via Instagram – can use to profile business owners, used heavily during COVID to share up to date information about shop hours.

### **SSA Commissioner Panel**

**“This is the only way that our 111<sup>th</sup> and Kedzie corridors will continue to be competitive.** We’ve got to do more to support our local business community.” – *Alderman O’Shea*

“All the commissioners have their businesses and homes in Mt Greenwood...our kids go to school here. We’ve invested in what happens here. **We can do some much to draw people to our neighborhood. We have a lot of great ideas....**” – *Keith Brandenburger*

**“I’m a business owner, I’m on the SSA board and I live in the neighborhood.** I’ve been on the board for 4 or 5 years... We businesses have helped bring business to each other. We keep our eyes on each other’s properties. “ – *Brian Griffin*

“The Board is cognizant of tax dollars and since establishment, we value input from everyone... Our record speaks for itself that we’ve never raised the rates. We will continue to be conscious going forward. **This [renewal] is 15 years now -- a lot can change.** With the streetscape we will expand our services and the budget to maintain that. We invite anyone who would consider being on the board to do so – we would love to have others. I hope everyone has trust in what we’ve been doing.” – *Keith Brandenburger*

“We [the SSA Commissioners] have worked together for the past 9-10 years. We have moved forward and accomplished a lot. **We’ve always needed 1 or 2 more people on the board.**” – *Toni Quinn*

### **Future SSA Forecasting**

- TIF has really helped support the area by funding the streetscape improvements.
- SSA is needed to keep the streetscape and landscaping maintained
- The thing to consider is the Return on Investment - are the investments that have been made [through SSA #55] paying off?
- Advisory Committee has recommended a Max Rate to 1.25% and is committed to being fiscally minded and budgeting for services and programs that are needed and desired.
- If the budget is set to increase more than 5% in any given year, the City requires a community meeting so you would always be made aware.

### **Signatures of Support for Renewal of the SSA**

- Signature Support Form up on the website [www.MountGreenwoodSSA55.org](http://www.MountGreenwoodSSA55.org)
- Must be signed by the Taxpayer of Record.
- A total of 20% (46 parcels in SSA #55) of all properties are required to sign in support of the SSA. 10% of signatures are required by June 11<sup>th</sup>, 20% by early August.

### **Next Steps**

- Continued Outreach: Needs Assessment Survey
- Collect Signatures of Support
- Drafting District Plan + Submit Application by June 11<sup>th</sup>
- Public Hearing in the Fall