



Pulaski Elston SSA Study

April 6, 2021 | Virtual Meeting via Zoom | Advisory Committee Meeting #3

Attendees:

SSA Study Advisory Committee

Patricia Eldridge, Wintrust Bank Branch Manager

Nicole Foster, Foster Design

Jim Marnos, Tony's Fresh Market

Pulaski Elston Business Association (PEBA)

Amie Zander, Executive Director, PEBA

Consultant Team

Scott Goldstein, Principal, Teska Associates, Inc.

Francie Sallinger, Senior Planner, Teska Associates, Inc.

Review of Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Scott Goldstein of Teska opened the meeting and reviewed discussion from the previous committee meeting, in which the group discussed local needs and possible services for a future SSA. The committee also reviewed the difference between an annual tax rate and a maximum tax rate cap.

The proposal discussed at last week's meeting was to phase in the SSA tax rate, starting at 0.75% for years 1-2, increasing to 1.0% for years 3-4, and considering an increase to 1.25-1.5% for years 5-7.

Budget Alternatives

In the proposed SSA, there are 622 parcels with about \$5.4 million in total tax revenue. Based on this, estimates for levy options are:

Maximum Rate at which the SSA can tax – set for 10 years

| Parcels | 2019 Tax Revenue | SSA Levy Options | | | |
|---------|------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 0.75% | 1.00% | 1.25% | 1.50% |
| 622 | \$5,448,603 | \$173,784 | \$231,712 | \$289,640 | \$347,568 |

With a budget based on the 1.25% levy, the SSA would collect about \$290,000 annually. What could the SSA do with this budget? The below tables present hypothetical budget options based on real expenses from other existing SSAs in Chicago:

| | | 1.25% Rate: \$289,940 Budget | | 1.5% Rate: \$348,510 Budget | |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|----------------|
| | | Base Programs | | Additional Programs | |
| 1.00 Customer Attraction | Website, events, social media ads, holiday trees, banners | 85,800 | | Holiday shopper rebate, branding, public relations, CTA ads | 17,070 |
| 2.00 Public Way Aesthetics | Landscaping, wayfinding/signage, sidewalk maintenance, snow removal, maintenance | 94,740 | | Business improvements (50% match) | 24,000 |
| 3. Sustainability & Public Places | Dumpsters, garbage & recycling | 2,500 | | Bike racks | 3,000 |
| 4.00 Economic/Business Development | Site marketing - fliers, posters, window clings, outreach | 11,500 | | Plan to fill vacancies | 2,500 |
| 5.00 Safety Programs | Public way surveillance, security rebates | 11,000 | | | |
| 6.00 SSA Management | SSA audit, bookkeeping, rent, utilities, copier | 16,400 | | | |
| 7.00 Personnel | SSA Manager | 68,000 | | Part-time program & events coordinator | 12,000 |
| Subtotal | Base programs | 289,940 | | Additional programs | 58,570 |
| TOTAL BUDGET | | 289,940 | | | 348,510 |

What more could the SSA do if it were to set a higher rate?

- Holiday shopper rebate program
- Branding, ads on the CTA
- Business improvement grants (50% rebates)
- Bike racks
- Plan to fill vacancies

Needs Assessment Survey

The Needs Assessment Survey is important to the SSA establishment process, as it helps PEBA and the Commission develop a budget by understanding the types of services that the area needs and would like to see accomplished by the new SSA.

At the time of the meeting, just three people had filled out the online survey. All Committee members are encouraged to respond and share the survey with their networks: <https://teska.survey.fm/pulaski-elston-ssa-needs-assessment-survey>

Scott reviewed preliminary survey input, which ranked landscaping/beautification, sidewalk maintenance, and crosswalks/streetscape safety enhancements as the "very important" services/programs for the SSA to provide.

Survey comments included:

- "I think that Beautification, Marketing, and crosswalks are crucial. The more walkable the area is, the more attractive it is for retail establishments"
- "Top priorities are maintenance, sidewalk and street cleaning, investment in local businesses, and beautification via greenery and plantings."

Rate Discussion

To begin a discussion on setting the tax rate, Amie read comments from committee members who were not able to attend the meeting:

- Jason of Clark St Sports will go along with what the committee thinks
- Nadine from Marie's would like to vote with tax rate that Nick recommended (1.25%)

Then members present at the meeting shared their thoughts:

- Nicole Foster agrees with phasing in a rate to start to demonstrate what we can accomplish (0.75 or 1%) – this gives wiggle room and if businesses want to see us take it to the next level we should set the max at 1.5% so that we have room for more opportunities over the next 10 years
- Patricia said she would support either 1.25% or 1.5%
- Jim agrees with 1.5% as max rate

Because the committee is not yet a public body, the rate only needs to be decided via consensus and not by an official vote.

Nicole and Jim agreed they are OK with 1.5% as the maximum rate. Patricia stated that she is also comfortable with 1.5% max rate but wants to defer to local/small businesses. She also noted the importance of reminding people that this will be money saved in the long term.

As there were no objections, the group recommended a maximum rate of 1.5%, with the understanding that the rate would be phased in over the first 10-15 years.

Nicole noted that the cover memo to accompany the signature forms should explain where we're starting, how the SSA Commission will need to vote on a budget each year, and that the 1.5% is just a cap but the rate will not be there anytime soon.

Next Steps

- Please take the [Needs Assessment Survey](#)
- Please save the date and attend one or both community meetings if you can – hearing from committee members will help business owners who may not know about SSAs to learn and hear about the benefits
 - Community Meeting 1: May 10 at 5pm
 - Community Meeting 2: May 13 at 12pm
- Signatures of 10% of PINs due June 11 (approximately 30 PINs)