



# SIX CORNERS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ADOPTED BY CHICAGO PLAN COMMISSION, AUGUST 15, 2013

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# SIX CORNERS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Six Corners has a long history as a successful neighborhood shopping and entertainment district. An iconic Sears store, the Portage Theater, the Marketplace at Six Corners, and a number of smaller businesses serve the residents of Portage Park and neighboring communities on Chicago's Northwest Side. In recent decades, however, Six Corners has experienced a loss of retailers along its commercial corridors and is in need of physical improvements to both buildings and infrastructure.

Goodman Williams Group was retained by the City of Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED) to complete an Economic Development Master Plan for the Six Corners Business District in Portage Park. This Master Plan provides the City and Six Corners stakeholders with strategies to enhance the vitality of one of Chicago's oldest and most important neighborhood shopping districts. The boundaries of the Study Area for this Plan are co-terminous with Special Service Area #28, and will be referred to as Six Corners or the District.

The consulting team includes the following experts in a variety of related fields:

- Market research and economic development strategies (Goodman Williams Group)
- Land-use planning and urban design (The Lakota Group)
- Traffic and parking (Gewalt Hamilton Associates)
- Historic preservation (Granacki Historic Consultants)
- Marketing (Findzall Community Marketing - Cathy Maloney)

The team was guided by a Steering Committee whose members included area business and property owners, leadership from the Portage Park and Old Irving Park Neighborhood Associations, the Six Corners Association, representatives from the 45th and 38th Aldermanic wards, and staff from the Department of Housing and Economic Development. Members of the Steering Committee are listed in Addendum A to this Plan.

The planning effort benefitted from extensive community input, which came in the form of key person interviews, shopper intercept and other surveys, and three community meetings. The background research and analysis was summarized in an Existing Conditions Report, which is available on the project website: [www.thelakotagroup.com/6corners](http://www.thelakotagroup.com/6corners).



The Portage Theater (left) and the Klee Plaza at Six Corners building (right)

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE PLAN

The following principles, which were articulated and discussed during the public workshops and various meetings, have guided the recommendations in this Economic Development Master Plan.

### **1. Attract more retail stores and businesses to Six Corners that appeal to the diversity of households in the Trade Area.**

Our inventory of businesses in Six Corners included more than three dozen retail establishments, many of which serve value-oriented customers. During the course of this assignment, individuals and neighborhood groups indicated a desire for additional stores offering a wider variety of merchandise. The market research confirmed potential support for additional retailers and restaurants, which could include both national chains and independent merchants. In particular, restaurants and stores selling specialty food, apparel and accessories, and home decor would be welcome additions to Six Corners.

### **2. Recognize and enhance the cultural and entertainment offerings in Six Corners.**

The Portage Theater is now under new ownership, and completing the Theater's rehabilitation and adding to the number and diversity of its programs, would have a positive impact on businesses in Six Corners, particularly restaurants. Six Corners should recognize and market its growing cluster of cultural and entertainment venues, which now include the Filament Theater, National Veterans Art Museum, and Rico Music and Dance Studio. These and other entertainment venues will help draw people to Six Corners.

### **3. Upgrade building facades and storefronts.**

Six Corners Association, the 45th Ward Alderman's office, and City staff should continue to work with property owners to enhance building facades and existing storefronts. All available financial incentives should be used, including the Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) grants and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits (HPTCs), as appropriate. Best practices for business signage and window displays would enhance the look of the traditional storefronts facing Milwaukee, Irving Park, and Cicero.

### **4. Plan for the redevelopment of key opportunity sites.**

The 4900 block of West Irving Park presents an opportunity to establish an anchor at the western end of Six Corners. New development should also be encouraged in Six Corners southeast sector (south of Irving Park Road and east of Cicero Avenue). With appropriate planning and design guidelines, new commercial and residential development on these sites can strengthen the older commercial core.

### **5. Enhance the pedestrian environment, making it easier for patrons to park their cars and circulate safely around the shopping district.**

According to the parking study conducted for this Plan, the Study Area provides more than 1,900 on- and off-street parking spaces. Of that total, only about 40% were occupied at peak demand on Saturday, March 3, 2012, when the team conducted its survey. In addition to the abundance of spaces, regulations in the various parking lots are inconsistent and often unclear as to how long patrons can park and whether they can visit multiple destinations within the Six

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Corners area. Agreements should be negotiated with parking lot owners to allow shoppers to leave their cars in designated areas while patronizing multiple locations in the District.

The Six Corners intersection can act as a deterrent for pedestrian circulation around the District. Like most six legged intersections in the City and suburban areas, it creates a rather unfriendly pedestrian environment due in large part to the geometry and “space” that a pedestrian has to navigate. Recommended enhancements to the intersection include shortening the crosswalk distances by pulling back the vehicle stop bars where feasible, enhancing or widening the crosswalk striping, and adding pedestrian “bump outs,” bollards, and planters.

In addition to crossing at the major intersections in the study area, mid-block pedestrian crossings and enhanced pedestrian routes should be evaluated and encouraged in select and safe locations. One such notable example is at the location of the right in and right out driveway located along the north side of the Sears building along Cicero Avenue. This location leads to the Marketplace at Six Corners shopping center, the Sears Store, and a future pedestrian way on the west side of Cicero Avenue. The pedestrian way leads to Milwaukee Avenue with new entertainment and shopping.

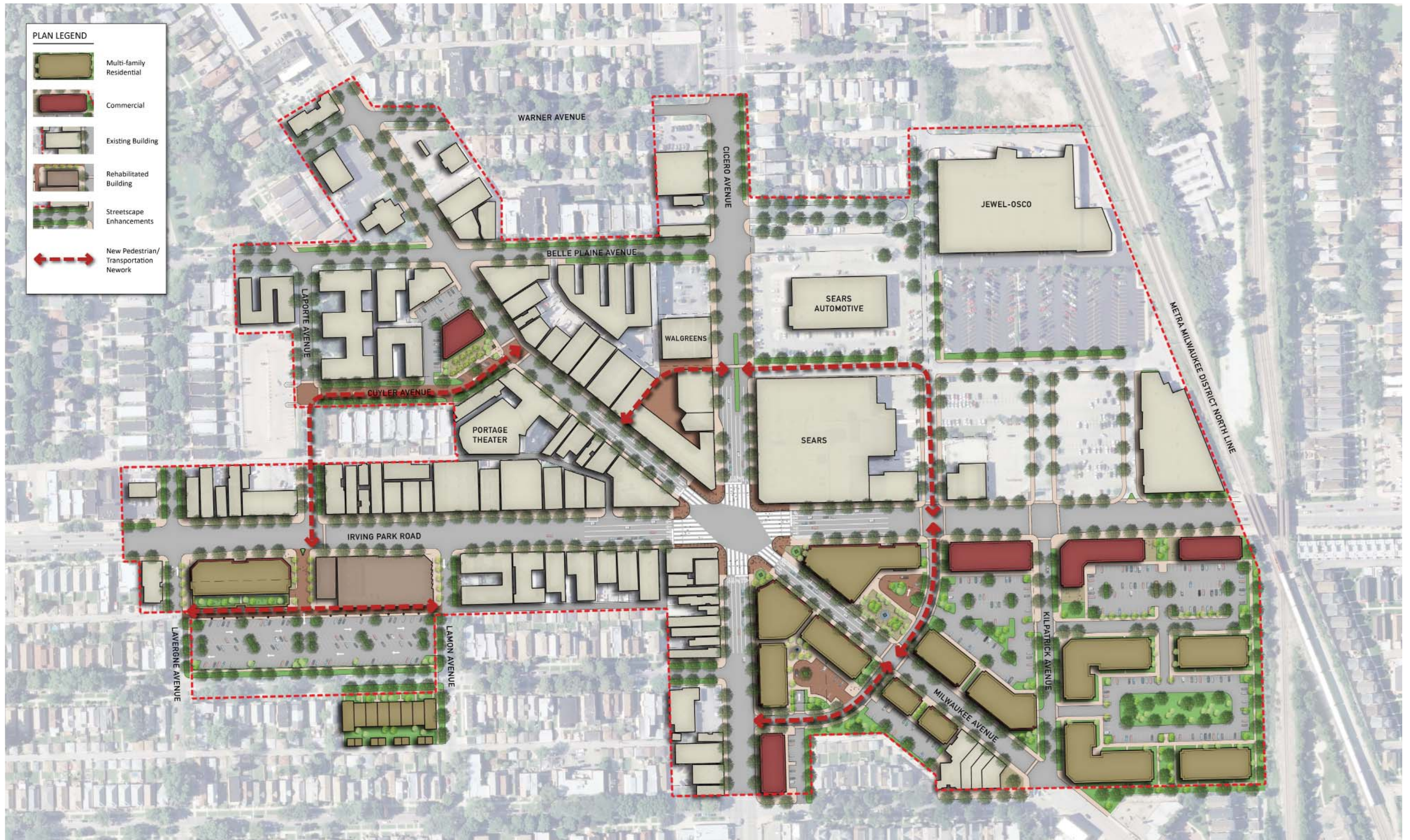
New development in the southeast corner of the Six Corners intersection can include pedestrian and bicycle-friendly routes. Pedestrian circulation can also be enhanced by upgrading certain alleys in the study area, making sure they are clean, well-lit, safe, and attractive. In particular, the alley on the east side of Milwaukee from the Klee Building to Belle Plaine Avenue should be targeted.

## **6. Develop attractive outdoor spaces that encourage patrons to gather.**

Outdoor gathering spots help create a sense of place and encourage more people to come to Six Corners. These outdoor plazas could be on public property or they could be privately owned, such as outdoor eating spaces adjacent to restaurants. Several key locations for attractive outdoor spaces have been identified in this Master Plan.

The discussion and recommendations contained in the remainder of this report are based on these six principles. The Six Corners Illustrative Plan, *Figure 1* in foldout, shows how future enhancements to the business district and new development might look.





CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
 SIX CORNERS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN  
 FIGURE 1: SIX CORNERS ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



NORTH

## SUMMARY OF MARKET FINDINGS

Six Corners serves primarily as a center for neighborhood goods and services. As such, most of its patrons come from nearby residential neighborhoods. Commercial establishments such as Family Fruit Market and Jewel-Osco draw from a relatively tight trade area extending roughly a mile from Six Corners. Other retailers, such as Sears and City Newsstand, draw shoppers from throughout the Northwest side.

For the purpose of this market assessment, we defined a primary trade area for the Six Corners shopping district. A primary trade area typically provides 60% – 80% of the sales revenue spent in a shopping center or shopping district. Factors considered in defining the trade area include the street grid, the diagonal streets like Milwaukee and Elston, competitive shopping centers and districts, and input from the Shopper Intercept Survey.

The following streets form the boundaries of the Primary Trade Area, as shown in the accompanying map (*Figure 2 below*):

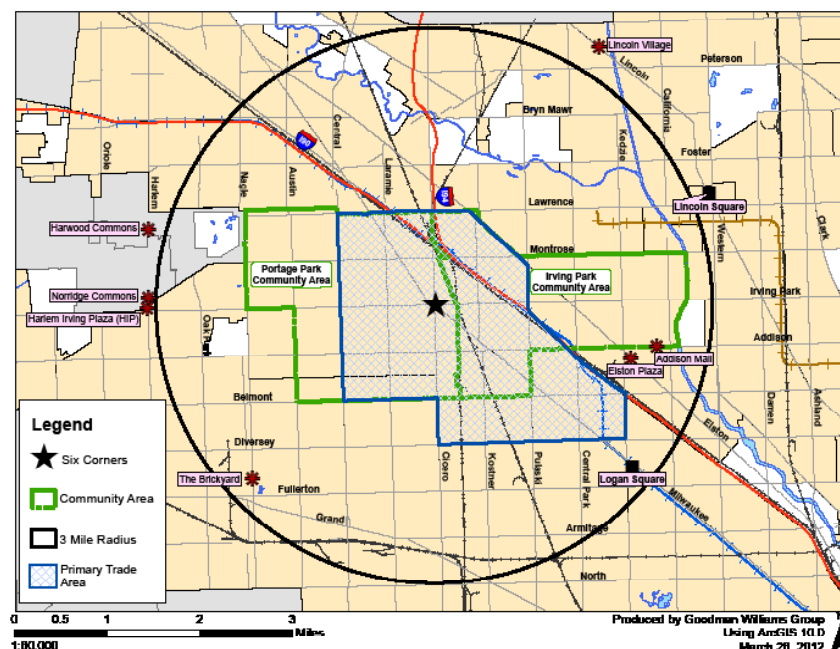
- Lawrence on the north
- Diversey on the south
- The Kennedy Expressway on the east
- Central on the west

This trade area includes portions of several community areas, most notably Portage Park and Irving Park. The population of the trade area in 2010 was 93,912. Of that total, approximately two-thirds identified their race as White alone. Hispanics represent the largest minority group in the trade area, comprising a combined 51.1% of residents. ESRI, a national vendor of business data, estimates the median annual household income of the trade area at \$43,828. This figure is higher than the estimated median household income for the City of Chicago, which is \$41,507.

One method of estimating the potential for additional retail development in Six Corners is to determine the expenditure potential of households within the primary trade area and compare it to estimates of actual sales that take place within this area. If certain categories are “leaking” sales

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FIGURE 2: PRIMARY TRADE AREA AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT



to other shopping districts, it may represent an opportunity for additional stores in the trade area.

Figure 3 (*on following page*) shows household expenditure and sales estimates from ESRI, a national vendor of business data. Households in the primary trade area spend an estimated \$777.9 million annually on retail expenditures including restaurants. Businesses located within the trade area report an estimated \$636.5 million in sales. More than \$141 million of the total potential demand is not captured in the trade area, indicating significant retail leakage.

The following retail categories represent the most promising ones for Six Corners. Businesses in these categories should be the focus of ongoing marketing efforts to help fill vacant spaces and anchor new developments.

- **Restaurants.** Additional full-service restaurants and limited-service restaurants represent a major opportunity for Six Corners. Within the primary trade area, more than \$31 million is being spent on restaurants and bars outside the area. To put that in context, a McDonald's might generate annual sales of \$3 million. A small independent restaurant might do less than \$1 million.

A combination of casual, limited-service establishments oriented to families and teens, as well as full-service restaurants and bars would add to the vibrancy of the Six Corners. Additional restaurants would also complement existing retail, service, and entertainment establishments, including the Portage Theater. Locally-owned restaurants would be appropriate tenants to rehab and occupy the existing vacant storefronts. Chain restaurants would be more likely to choose spaces in the existing shopping centers which offer off-street parking.

- **Grocery Stores.** Six Corners already has two successful grocery stores, the Jewel-Osco and the locally-owned Family Fruit Market. While the leakage analysis does not indicate that the Food and Beverage category is particularly under-stored, several specialty grocers have indicated a strong interest in Six Corners.
- **Small Independent Stores.** Bakeries and specialty food stores selling Polish, Mexican, Middle Eastern, or other ethnic specialties might find a business niche in Six Corners. Local retailers selling a variety of types of merchandise, such as apparel and accessories and home décor, would also be appropriate tenants for the smaller vacant spaces on the north side of Irving Park and along North Milwaukee. Rents in these existing storefronts would be lower than those in newer buildings, providing more opportunities for local merchants and start-up businesses.
- **Larger-Format National Chains.** National or regional retailers in categories such as electronics, sporting goods, lawn and garden supply, furniture, and apparel have specific requirements for the size and configuration of their space. They might be looking for between 15,000 and 35,000 square feet, visibility from high-traffic arterials and ample off-street parking. National retailers would likely pay in excess of \$20 per square foot on a triple net basis (excluding utilities) to get modern retail space with the proper configuration.

Over time, Six Corners could support additional larger-format stores, if appropriate stores or sites were available. These larger stores may be more suitable for sites located east of Cicero, where the development pattern is more automobile-oriented. In addition to these retailers, additional entertainment venues and service businesses would help bring more people to Six Corners and support retail and restaurant venues.

FIGURE 3: PRIMARY TRADE AREA LEAKAGE ANALYSIS

	DEMAND	SUPPLY	RETAIL GAP
	(RETAIL POTENTIAL)	(RETAIL SALES)	(DEMAND - SUPPLY)
<b>INDUSTRY SUMMARY</b>			
TOTAL RETAIL TRADE AND FOOD & DRINK	\$777,890,775	\$636,573,722	\$141,317,052
TOTAL RETAIL TRADE	\$655,813,646	\$545,562,675	\$110,250,972
TOTAL FOOD & DRINK	\$122,077,128	\$91,011,048	\$31,066,081
<b>SELECT INDUSTRY GROUP</b>			
FOOD SERVICES & DRINKING PLACES	\$122,077,128	\$91,011,048	\$31,066,081
FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS	\$56,087,010	\$36,494,067	\$19,592,944
LIMITED-SERVICE EATING PLACES	\$44,079,284	\$29,899,347	\$14,179,937
<b>ELECTRONICS &amp; APPLIANCE STORES</b>			
	\$18,790,891	\$10,478,103	\$8,312,788
<b>FURNITURE &amp; HOME FURNISHINGS STORES</b>			
FURNITURE STORES	\$13,345,883	\$8,775,279	\$4,570,604
HOME FURNISHINGS STORES	\$7,486,484	\$21,224,571	(\$13,738,086)
<b>BLDG MATERIALS, GARDEN EQUIP. &amp; SUPPLY STORES</b>			
BLDG MATERIAL & SUPPLIES DEALERS	\$23,824,995	\$13,650,932	\$10,174,063
LAWN & GARDEN EQUIP & SUPPLY STORES	\$1,260,955	\$251,275	\$1,009,679
<b>FOOD &amp; BEVERAGE STORES</b>			
GROCERY STORES	\$130,360,060	\$124,307,989	\$6,052,071
SPECIALTY FOOD STORES	\$5,157,172	\$19,777,106	(\$14,619,935)
BEER, WINE & LIQUOR STORES	\$7,905,937	\$15,135,060	(\$7,229,123)
<b>CLOTHING &amp; CLOTHING ACCESSORIES STORES</b>			
CLOTHING STORES	\$27,600,085	\$12,915,977	\$14,684,108
SHOE STORES	\$4,178,663	\$2,795,310	\$1,383,353
JEWELRY, LUGGAGE & LEATHER GOODS STORES	\$4,087,997	\$4,034,568	\$53,428
<b>SPORTING GOODS, HOBBY, BOOK &amp; MUSIC STORES</b>			
SPORTING GOODS/HOBBY/MUSICAL INSTR STORES	\$4,790,969	\$1,122,653	\$3,668,317
BOOK, PERIODICAL & MUSIC STORES	\$3,598,406	\$1,513,661	\$2,084,745
<b>MISCELLANEOUS STORE RETAILERS</b>			
FLORISTS	\$821,165	\$184,303	\$636,862
OFFICE SUPPLIES, STATIONERY & GIFT STORES	\$2,532,468	\$2,581,431	(\$48,963)
USED MERCHANDISE STORES	\$705,699	\$219,547	\$486,152
OTHER MISCELLANEOUS STORE RETAILERS	\$7,450,399	\$2,981,634	\$4,468,765
SOURCE: ESRI BUSINESS ANALYST			

## ENHANCEMENTS TO THE TRADITIONAL COMMERCIAL CORE

Six Corners retains a largely intact building fabric along Milwaukee Avenue northwest of the intersection and along Irving Park Road west of Cicero Avenue. On these blocks, first- and second-generation commercial buildings (largely built from the 1910s through the 1950s) were constructed to the sidewalk and aligned next to each other with adjoining storefronts. East of Cicero Avenue, the development pattern changes significantly and is more automobile-oriented, with larger format retail developments set back from the streets and sidewalks, and separated from each other by large parking lots.

Six Corners' traditional commercial buildings contributes significantly to the neighborhood's distinct design character, pedestrian environment, and sense of place. It also provides affordable storefront spaces for small and locally-owned businesses and adaptive use opportunities for new upper floor uses. In these respects, Six Corners is representative of many other successful Chicago neighborhoods that have maintained their traditional commercial buildings as assets for reinvestment and revitalization.

### PORTAGE THEATER

The cultural centerpiece of Six Corners is the Portage Theater. The 1920s movie house shows classic and independent films and hosts other cultural events including live concerts. It is currently home to the Northwest Chicago Film and the Silent Film Societies of Chicago. Since a partial building rehabilitation in 2006, the Portage has typically been active at least three days per week and draws patrons from a wide area. At a Northwest Chicago Film Society screening in February 2012, it was noted that attendees came from communities extending from Evanston on the north to the Beverly neighborhood on the south. In addition to the 1,300-seat theater, the building has 34 apartments on the upper floors and eight storefronts with approximately 7,550 square feet in total facing Milwaukee Avenue.

In September 2012, it was announced that the Portage Theater had been sold. While the plans for the Theater had not been released at the time this Master Plan was written, it is important to re-emphasize the significance of the Portage as a cultural icon in Six Corners and a potential economic engine for other businesses and restaurants in the District. The consultant team recommends the following steps be taken to maximize its positive impact on the Six Corners Business District.

- **Encourage diversity in programming.** Movies, concerts, and entertainment should target a wide variety of disparate audiences, including families with children, independent film enthusiasts, and young concert-goers, among others.



Portage Theater (above) and Milwaukee Avenue (below) with Portage Lofts Building at far right.

- **Pursue National Register landmark designation and Historic Preservation Tax Credits to help finance a more extensive rehabilitation of the Portage Theater, its apartments and commercial storefronts.**

The Portage Theater received a preliminary landmark designation by the City of Chicago in 2012, which makes the property eligible for Cook County Class L property tax incentives. Additional listing in the National Register of Historic Places, landmark designation maintained by the National Park Service, would allow property owners to participate in Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit program. More information on the Portage Theater is included as *Addendum B (page 42)* in this Master Plan.

With the assistance of Alderman Arena’s “Arts Alive 45” initiative, other cultural institutions are establishing themselves in Six Corners. Filling the ground floor of Portage Lofts building at 4041 N. Milwaukee Avenue will be the Filament Theater Ensemble. The Theater has signed a one-year lease to open a black box theater production. Recently, the National Veterans Art Museum announced that it will be relocating from its current Near South Side facility to the second and third floors of the Portage Lofts. The addition of these cultural institutions creates the synergy needed to advance Six Corners as a cultural and entertainment district.

## MILWAUKEE AVENUE FROM IRVING PARK ROAD TO BELLE PLAINE AVENUE

The focal point of this growing cultural district is the block of Milwaukee Avenue from Irving Park to Belle Plaine Avenue. Vacant and/or deteriorated storefronts near the Portage Theater, as well as on Irving Park Road, are suitable for re-tenanting with restaurants, speciality food stores, and other locally-owned businesses. Recently, it was announced that the owner of 4024 N. Milwaukee Avenue has plans for a new restaurant as part of its renovation and two-story addition to this property.

## CUYLER AVENUE

To further the idea of Milwaukee Avenue north of the Six Corners intersection as a cultural destination, this Master Plan proposes to create a public gathering place north of the Portage Theater, and enhanced signage and pedestrian connections via Cuyler Avenue to the Laporte Avenue public parking lot (*See Figure 4: Cuyler Avenue at Milwaukee Avenue Conceptual Plan on following page*).

Cuyler Avenue currently suffers from stormwater drainage problems, broken pavement, and poor lighting. Although some signage exists, it is not clear to many Portage Theater patrons that they are a block from a public parking lot with more than 111 spaces. Short-term enhancements could include special pavement on Cuyler Avenue, new sidewalks, and better signage.

Longer term, the plan for Milwaukee and Cuyler Avenues shows an eventual development of the Belle Plaine Plaza (*see Figure 5: Belle Plaine Plaza Concept Design on page 15*). The building that is currently leased to Athletico remains, while the building with Dollar Tree and Subway is reconfigured to bring the development up to the sidewalk along Milwaukee Avenue, consistent with the rest of the Avenue’s building streetwall. The new building with 7,000 square feet of ground floor space has 20 parking spaces wrapped around the sides. As part of this redevelopment scenario, a public gathering space is constructed on the northwest corner of the intersection, complete with seating, landscaping, and, potentially, a sculpture or noteworthy piece of art.



Cuyler Avenue at Milwaukee Avenue would be a suitable site for a new public space.

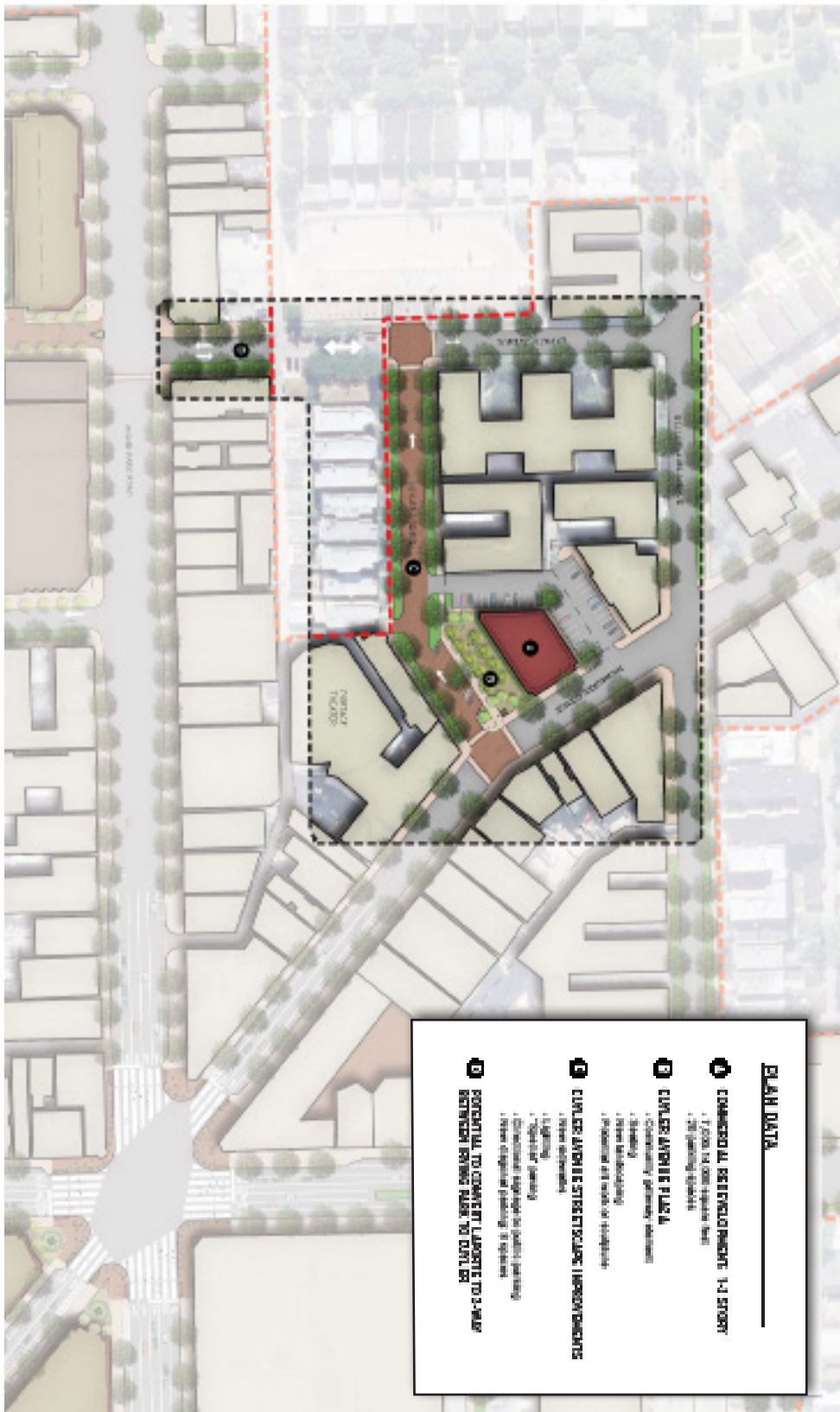


FIGURE 4: CONCEPT PLAN FOR CULYER AVENUE AT MILWAUKEE AVENUE

FIGURE 5: BELLE PLAINE PLAZA CONCEPT DESIGN



## IRVING PARK ROAD

The iconic Sears Store occupies the northeast corner of the intersection of Irving Park Road and Cicero Avenue. The 1938 design by Nimmons, Carr and Wright was starkly modern, with plain concrete facades setting off large display windows intended for the presentation of merchandise. Unfortunately these signature features have been altered from its original design.

This Sears Store is one of six remaining Sears in the City of Chicago, and reportedly is one of its stronger retail outlets. However, the future of Sears Holding Corporation is uncertain, and eventual redevelopment and/or re-tenanting of the building will likely occur. Future redevelopment should ensure the following:

- Active street level storefronts along Cicero Avenue and Irving Park Road with transparent windows and attractive window signage and product merchandising.

- One or more commercial storefronts within the corner lobby frontage housing a coffee shop or other retail establishments. Sears has previously discussed the possibility of adding a small retailer in the lobby space.
- Depending on future upper floor uses, the original two-story window bays along the building's Cicero Avenue and Irving Park Road elevations, as well as other design and architectural features removed during prior renovations, could be restored and rehabilitated to make the building more attractive.

West from the Sears Store along Irving Park Road to Laverne Avenue, there are currently 17 building and storefront vacancies. The largest building is the former Bank of America complex at 4901 West Irving Park Road, which, at 63,502 square feet, occupies nearly a half-city block between North Lamon and Laverne Avenue.





Sears Store at Cicero Avenue and Irving Park Road

The complex also includes two parking lots along Dakin Street, both comprising a total of 180 off-street parking spaces. The upper floor of the former two-story Bank of America building includes a 300-seat auditorium-style theater that is currently being marketed to several cultural organizations.

Other significant vacancies along Irving Park Road west of Cicero Avenue include the former Hancock Fabrics Store (4848 West Irving Park Road) and Integrity Physical Therapy building (4864 West Irving Park). East of Cicero Avenue, there are four identifiable vacancies, two of which are in the commercial building adjacent to Sears. In addition, a portion of the Bank of America building located at the southeast corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Irving Park Road is currently vacant, as is a 12,000 square foot building at North Kilpatrick Avenue and West Irving Park Road.



Existing building vacancies along Irving Park Road.

## BUSINESS SIGNAGE AND STOREFRONT MERCHANDISING

Business signage and storefront displays and merchandising varies significantly in design quality within the Six Corners commercial district. Going forward, along with façade and building improvements, new signage and storefront merchandising should be encouraged and designed appropriately to be compatible with a building's architecture and its surrounding context. Creativity in signage design should also be encouraged — creativity that helps to brand a business effectively while fitting in with the commercial district's overall design character. Signs should be constructed using high quality materials and installed at the storefront level, preferably, or on the lower upper façade if the building is one-story. Neon can be used as sign material if designed appropriately and sensitively to the building's storefront and architecture.



Higher quality signage can make a dramatic difference to commercial buildings in Six Corners.



Facade improvements and effective storefront merchandising can help to promote a business' unique brand image. (Top photo courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency).

As with business signage, awning types and materials must respect and be compatible with Six Corners' traditional commercial storefronts. Fixed or retractable fabric awnings are suitable for most storefronts although fixed metal canopies could be installed for some of the district's Art Deco/Moderne-styled commercial buildings. Beyond awnings and signage, the appearance of the storefront and its display spaces are critically important in providing the right first impression to visitors and shoppers. Well-merchandised display windows also reinforce a store's unique brand image and messaging, which helps it stand out from the competition. The Six Corners Association should undertake an ongoing initiative to help educate and train local merchants on good storefront merchandising practices.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

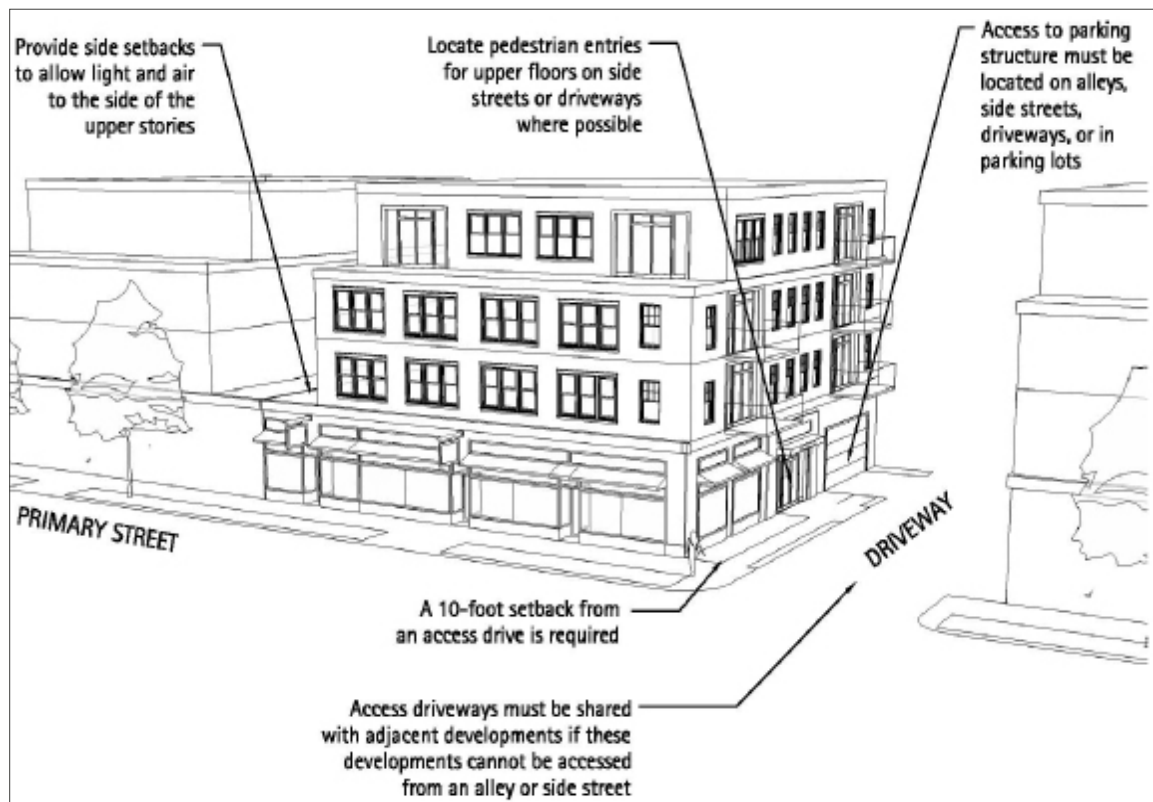
Six Corners' "Pedestrian Street" zoning designation includes basic design standards and requirements for promoting higher quality new development that respects the commercial district's traditional building storefronts. Among other design considerations, the zoning designation requires zero setbacks for new developments and storefronts with recessed entranceways and transparent glass.

Although the Pedestrian Street designation ensures that the basic form of new development fits in with Six Corners' traditional building fabric, an additional set of design standards and guidelines may be necessary to adjust and fine-tune new development design related to massing, architecture, building materials, awnings and business signage. Design guidelines may also be useful in guiding existing building rehabilitation projects so that building changes and alterations are conducted according to good design and historic preservation principles. Design guidelines could be developed as a stand-alone publication that includes pictures, drawings and images, along with text, to describe and illustrate building rehabilitation standards. Both the City and the Six Corners Association can use the design guidelines for reviewing the appropriateness of future new development and for those projects seeking to use Small Business Improvement Funds (SBIF).

## MODEL BLOCK INITIATIVE

The Six Corners Association could spearhead a "model block" initiative in which efforts to improve building and storefront appearances could be focused or concentrated on one particular block along Milwaukee Avenue or Irving Park Road. This approach would not only facilitate multiple building improvements at once, but would also result in a dramatic visual impact within the commercial district. To establish the program, the SCA could retain the services

of an architect or design professional to prepare drawings, schematics and cost estimates for proposed building improvements. The SCA could also work closely with the property owners along the block to solicit contractor bids as part of an overall construction package to reduce costs. In addition, the SCA could assist all property owners in securing SBIF funds to undertake their respective building and storefront improvements.



Example design guidelines for new construction

## OPPORTUNITY SITES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

The future of Six Corners depends both on enhancing existing buildings and storefronts as well as encouraging new developments on key opportunity sites. Future development could include both commercial and residential uses where appropriate. New retail can include both larger-format, automobile-oriented development, as well as smaller-scale independent businesses, depending on the site and context. Additional residents will enhance the vibrancy of the district and help support more retail.

The following sites represent opportunities for new development that will enhance the economic livelihood of Six Corners. Redevelopment concepts are presented in this Master Plan.

### WEST IRVING PARK ROAD — 4900 BLOCK

Situated at the western edge of Six Corners, the 4900 block of W. Irving Park Road can serve as a western gateway and anchor to the District. Bank of America owns the property located at 4901 and 4939 West Irving Park Road, and is currently offering it for sale. The main two-story building at 4901 W. Irving Park has 63,500 square feet and includes a 300-seat theater on the second floor. The 4939 W. Irving Park building is a 6,600-square-foot single story retail building.

An important selling point of this property is the existing surface parking lot located behind the existing buildings. The lot north of Dakin Street stretches from Lavergne Avenue on the west to Lamon Avenue on the east, and has 184 spaces. A public alley separates the Dakin Street lot from the rear entrance to the buildings. A smaller lot with 76 spaces is located south of Dakin at Lamon.

A grocer has expressed interest in opening a store at this location. Additional ground floor commercial uses in the 4901 building are possible, including a restaurant. Several non-profit cultural groups have looked at the upstairs space. At the



The former Bank of America facility at 4901 West Irving Park Road

time of the writing of this Master Plan, no deal to sell or re-tenant the property has been finalized.

A reuse and re-tenanting of the existing two-story building Bank of America complex would be a major contribution to the Six Corners business district, activating a largely vacant and underutilized block. The Master Plan concept for this block includes a complementary three-to-four story mixed-use development on the western portion of this block, which could also take advantage of the alley and off-street parking (*See Figure 6 on following page*). Restaurants would be particularly welcome uses, with appropriate outdoor space likely located along the side streets away from Irving Park Road.

One focal point in this revitalization and redevelopment of this block is the conversion of the current alley into a pedestrian-only zone, necessitated by the Bank of America building's rear entrances (*See Figure 7 on page 21*). During the day, vehicular traffic would be prohibited from accessing the alley though the use of removable bollards, although service vehicles and delivery trucks would be allowed limited access during certain hours. Ideally, the alley would be redesigned and landscaped with special brick pavers or tinted concrete, movable planters or urns, pedestrian-oriented lighting, themed banners

*continued on page 21*



FIGURE 6: CONCEPT PLAN FOR 4900 BLOCK OF WEST IRVING PARK ROAD

and special signage. Parking lot improvements would include the installation of new landscape islands with trees and additional landscape buffering along the perimeter. By adding the alley conversion with outdoor seating and landscaping along Lavergne and Lamon Avenues, an inviting, safe public gathering space has been created for shoppers and nearby residents.

The Master Plan also shows eight townhomes on the site of the smaller parking lot south of Dakin Street, which would continue the existing residential land use pattern of that block. An alternative for this site would be a small neighborhood park or playlot serving the families located south of Irving Park Road.

The Master Plan also recommends converting Lamon and Lavergne Avenues from one-way to two-way streets between Irving Park Road and Dakin Street in order to create better vehicular

access and circulation from the rear parking lot. This will also help to distribute traffic more efficiently so that one intersection or street is not overly burdened.



Outdoor dining space could be gained with the redevelopment of the 4900 block.

FIGURE 7: CONCEPT DESIGN FOR 4900 BLOCK ALLEY IMPROVEMENTS



## IRVING PARK ROAD, CICERO, MILWAUKEE AVENUES — SOUTHEAST CORNER

The southeast corner of the Six Corners intersection has two prominent opportunity development sites bisected by Milwaukee Avenue.

The triangular parcel of between Cicero and Milwaukee currently includes the Six Corners Plaza Shopping Center. LA Fitness (which recently purchased Bally Total Fitness) operates a full-service health club in the basement of the Center. Other tenants include Chicago Eye Institute, LA Tan, CW Price, and GameStop. Several other storefronts are currently vacant.

In the short term, the building's exterior could be improved, and a new 5,000 square foot, one- to two-story development could be added along the Milwaukee Avenue frontage. This addition would fill in the gap in the streetwall and screen the Plaza's service area from view. This concept also recommends reconfiguring the building's main entrance and improving its overall visual appearance.

Over time, the site could be completely redeveloped, with a new four to five-story building replacing the Six Corners Plaza Shopping Center (see *Figure 8 on following page*). As a way to strengthen the aesthetics of the intersection, the new building could be designed to reflect the form, height and architecture of the Klee Plaza and Sears Store buildings north of Irving Park Road. In addition, the new building would add 36,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space and more than 80 to 100 residential units. A new public plaza space could also be constructed in the building's courtyard and over a new underground parking facility serving the development.

In addition to the redevelopment of the Six Corners Plaza Shopping Center, the Master Plan proposes two new mixed-use commercial developments along Milwaukee Avenue between



Potential development character for Irving Park/Cicero and Milwaukee Avenues

the Shopping Center and the traditional commercial buildings to the south at Milwaukee and Kilpatrick Avenues. Each development would be 4,800 square feet at one to two stories, with retail at the ground floor and office or residential in the upper floors. Parking would be located to the rear. Both developments would add new economic activity to the district as well as strengthen Milwaukee Avenue's urban design appearance and streetwall. A one-story, 8,500 square foot commercial building is suggested along Cicero Avenue with parking located to the rear.

Along the corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Irving Park Road, Bank of America occupies a retail banking facility. Reportedly, Bank of America has indicated its interest in maintaining a presence on this corner. The site is large enough, however, to accommodate significant new development. As

*continued on page 24*

FIGURE 8: CONCEPT PLAN FOR IRVING PARK, CICERO, MILWAUKEE — SOUTHEAST CORNER





with the Six Corners Plaza Shopping Center site, the Master Plan proposes a new four-to-five story building on the corner site that would reflect the height and scale of the Sears Store and Klee Plaza buildings (see *Figure 8 on preceding page*). The site is also large enough to include a community gathering space in the courtyard.

As part of the redevelopment schemes for this area, a new access street is suggested as a critical transportation component in the Master Plan. Starting at Cicero Avenue, a new street would intersect Milwaukee Avenue and extend north and east to Kilpatrick Avenue at Irving Park Road. This new connector would divide this area's large blocks into shorter, more walkable city blocks and provide safer pedestrian and bicycle access to stores and business establishments by bypassing the busy Six Corners intersection. Autos and non-motorized modes would also have better access within this area of the commercial district. Depending on future redevelopment plans, consideration should be given to a possible alignment in the future with Dakin to the west of Cicero Avenue.

Two additional mixed use commercial and residential developments along Milwaukee Avenue southeast of the proposed connector street are also shown in the Master Plan. Each development would be two to three stories at 24,000 square feet of total floor space. These developments are intended to enhance the Milwaukee Avenue's feel as a pedestrian-friendly street by replacing underutilized surface parking lots. A one-story, single-use commercial development of approximately 14,000 square feet is suggested along the Cicero Avenue and Irving Park Road frontage, taking advantage of the higher visibility along this heavily trafficked arterial.

## IRVING PARK ROAD — PEOPLES GAS SITE

The 6 ½-acre parcel located the south side of Irving Park Road between Kilpatrick and the Milwaukee District North railroad tracks is owned by People's Gas Company, which has an office and maintenance/service building on the site. At some point in the future, it is possible that this site could be redeveloped. The Master Plan envisions two one-story commercial buildings with approximately 23,000 square feet of space (see *Figure 9 on following page*). Both buildings would continue the streetwall along the south side of Irving Park Road. This commercial development could accommodate automobile-oriented retailers, as well as enhance the pedestrian experience along Irving Park Road by connecting the Six Corners business district with the residential neighborhoods to the east.



Potential plaza space for new residential development

The Master Plan also proposes a cluster of four multi-family residential buildings designed around a central plaza. Access to the residential neighborhood is provided by Kilpatrick Avenue. These three to four-story buildings represent between approximately 168 to 224 residential units, bringing a potentially larger population and neighborhood customer base to Six Corners. As an alternative to this mix of uses, a larger, big-box format retailer with 65,000 square feet could potentially be accommodated on the southern half of this site.

FIGURE 9: CONCEPT PLAN FOR PEOPLES GAS SITE



## POTENTIAL METRA STATION AT IRVING PARK ROAD

Since 1998, some Six Corners stakeholder groups have advocated for the development of a new Metra station on the Milwaukee North Line at Irving Park Road. This station would replace the existing ones at Grayland and Mayfair. A 1998 letter from Metra to the former Greater Northwest Development Corporation indicated that Metra might be interested in an Irving Park station if a significant amount of commuter parking could be developed nearby. The People's Gas Company site was noted as a potential location for a shared parking facility. Metra also stated that funding the new station would be a significant obstacle, and evidence of community support for closing the Mayfair and Grayland stations would be needed.

A new station at Irving Park Road is not recommended as part of this Plan for the following reasons:

- The Milwaukee District North is a commuter line into Union Station. A new station at Irving Park could not be expected to have a major impact on the Six Corners neighborhood shopping district, which is centered ¼-mile to the west.
- A transit station and shared parking on the People's Gas property might be logistically challenging, particularly if new residential and commercial development is planned. A transit station and commuter parking may also be difficult to develop east of the railroad embankment in the adjacent single-family residential neighborhood.
- The closing of two stations at Grayland and Mayfair could have negative impacts on surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The Six Corners commercial district is already well-served by Metra with three stations located within approximately one mile. Bus routes operated by the Chicago Transit Authority along Irving Park Road and Cicero and Milwaukee Avenues also serve the district. The CTA Irving Park Blue Line station is located about a mile east from the Six Corners intersection.

Improvements to automobile and pedestrian circulation around the district would have a greater positive impact on Six Corners than a new commuter train station. The improvements to the intersection, mid-block crossings, and other enhancements in the Plan would make it easier for people to get out of their cars and patronize entertainment, retail, and dining destinations.

# PARKING AND CIRCULATION

## PARKING

The results of a detailed parking study completed by Gewalt Hamilton Associates are included in this Plan as *Addendum C, page 45*. Overall, Six Corners has more than 1,900 parking spaces, only about 40% of which were occupied at peak demand. This abundance of spaces, both on the street and in off-street parking lots, represents a unique advantage for Six Corners, but one that has yet to be fully exploited.

Property owners and retailers underscore the importance of having proximate parking. While shoppers and patrons find it easy to come to Six Corners and find a place to park their car, it may not be directly in front of their destination. More importantly, patrons are not encouraged to park and visit more than one destination. The shopper intercept survey completed in March 2012 revealed that 48.1% of respondents who drove and planned to visit more than one destination were planning on moving their car.

As a first step to encouraging shoppers and visitors to spend more time in Six Corners, regulations for each off-street lot should be clearly posted. Patrons should know:

- How long their car is allowed to remain in that particular parking lot.
- Whether they are allowed to visit multiple locations. (For example, if they are parked and shopping at Sears, can they also shop at Marshall's?)

The consultant team encourages the establishment of a dedicated off-street Six Corners parking area that does not charge its patrons and allows multiple visits over a set period of time. The parking spaces in the Marketplace east of Kilpatrick Avenue are rarely full, and snow removal equipment is occasionally parked there during winter months.

The 3900 block of Milwaukee Avenue north of the intersection is at times fully parked. Additional commercial tenants on the east side of the street would create further demand for on-street parking. As discussed previously, convenient and well designed pedestrian and auto connections to the Laporte Avenue parking lot via Cuyler Avenue should be encouraged.

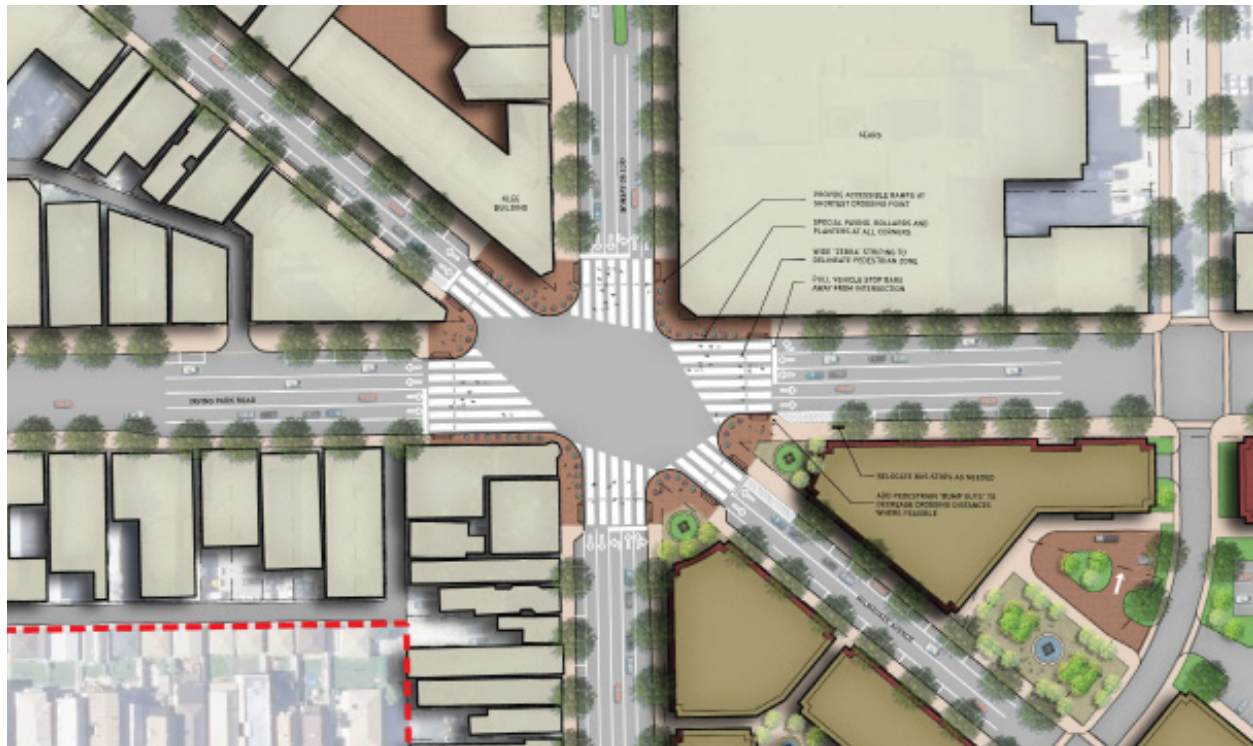
The Six Corners Association should initiate discussions with Inland Real Estate to understand liability, maintenance, and other issues to determine whether a number of these spaces could be dedicated for Six Corners shoppers. Perhaps a parking permit could be issued and validated by local merchants.

## IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SIX CORNERS INTERSECTION

Providing a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment is also critical to the future of the Six Corners business district. The Steering Committee and public workshops suggested that the six corner intersection, which accommodates more than 70,000 vehicles per day, presents the biggest obstacle to pedestrian circulation.

The Master Plan identifies a number of strategies that combine to create an intersection that is easier and safer for pedestrians to cross (*see Figures 10 and 11 on following pages*). The primary aim at enhancing the intersection is to decrease the crossing distances. One realistic way of accomplishing this is by realigning the existing crosswalks in a more perpendicular fashion whereby walking distances are the shortest. This reconfiguration would also require new street marking configurations and possibly some relocation of traffic signals and amenities.

FIGURE 10: CONCEPT PLAN FOR SIX CORNERS INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS



Another method of decreasing crossing distances are curb return “bump outs” which could be added to some of the corners of the six corner intersection. This would allow the sidewalk space to be extended consistent with the existing parallel parking lane. These new improvements would create a very visible “pedestrian zone” in conjunction with new International style cross walk striping and other pedestrian friendly features. In order to channelize and encourage pedestrians to cross within this new “zone” new accessibility ramps and directional bollards would be relocated at the intersection (*see Figure 11 on following page*).

The pedestrian and roadway concepts also show how current roadway vehicular travel lanes would remain unchanged. In other words, no through travel lanes or turning lanes are removed or modified from the existing cross section. There are some modifications which require further technical detail such as the new locations for the stop bars, relocation of some bus stops to the far

side of the intersection, and traffic signal locations and timings. Overall, the goal with the new configuration is to create a safer, more pedestrian-oriented intersection that remains operationally efficient for, bicycles, autos, and trucks that unifies the north and south quadrants of the Six Corners commercial district more effectively.

It is envisioned that other key urban design elements would enhance the safety and aesthetics of this intersection. These may include:

- A combination of bollards and heavy duty movable planters along the curb edges to provide vertical elements and a layer of protection for pedestrians.
- Special brick pavers to delineate the corners and complement the existing streetscape character.

FIGURE 11: SIX CORNERS INTERSECTION CONCEPT DESIGN



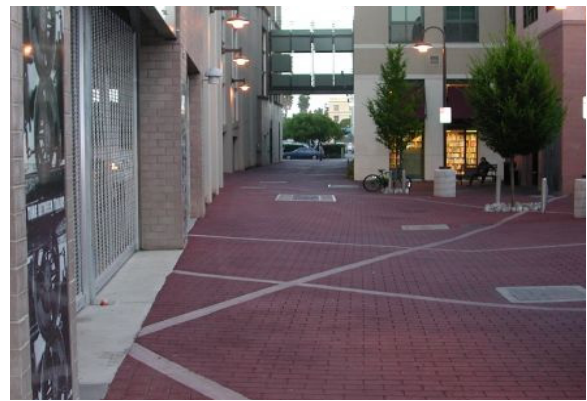
- Pedestrian countdown timers in multiple locations to provide clear and visible direction to pedestrians.
- Additional kiosks and signage to guide pedestrians to their destinations.

The consulting team recognizes the extraordinary widths of Irving Park and Cicero Avenues and the volume of traffic carried by these major commercial arteries. The pedestrian improvements discussed in this Plan will need further review and analysis by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) as well as the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Some technical modifications may ultimately be required to ensure the efficiency of traffic operations as well as an enhanced pedestrian experience.

## MIDBLOCK CONNECTIONS AND ALLEY CONNECTIONS

Creating additional mid-block pedestrian connections will also help shoppers avoid the Six Corners intersection and generally enhance the pedestrian environment. Improved pedestrian walkways are recommended for the new development proposed in Six Corners' southeast quadrant, in the 4900 block of West Irving Park Road, and along Cuyler Avenue from Milwaukee to the Laporte Street parking lot. These improvements include pedestrian alleys, new street pedestrian alleys, new street connections and enhancements to the existing sidewalk frontage through new developments.

The Master Plan also proposes improved connections through the Marketplace at Six Corners parking lot. The red arrows in the Illustrative Master Plan (*see insert foldout*) represent potential pedestrian improvements that would break up the expanse of parking



A mid-block crossing (above along North Avenue in Chicago) could be installed along Cicero Avenue near the Sears Store (below)

Enhancements to certain alleys within Six Corners could transform them into usable pedestrian pathways.

into smaller blocks, allowing pedestrians to feel comfortable walking safely to other destinations (see *Illustrative Plan insert foldout*).

A midblock connection across Cicero Avenue south of the Sears Automotive Center should be considered in the future as additional redevelopment occurs in the Six Corners business district. This new crossing would make it easier for shoppers and diners who park in the off-street lots east of Cicero to cross Cicero safely and walk to destinations further west, including the expanding commercial venues along Milwaukee Avenue. There is evidence that existing pedestrian travel paths are already making this connection. This midblock crossing is a key element in Six Corners' future economic development and cohesiveness as a business district.

A mid-block crossing in this location would most likely have to be tied to the installation of a new interconnected traffic signal to ensure pedestrian safety. If signalized, the geometry and operations of the current Sears right in and right out drive would have to be reconfigured. To increase the effectiveness of this crossing, it is recommended that the Sears Automotive Center's parking lot be reconfigured to add sidewalks that align with any future mid-block crossing.

## WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

The recently completed Six Corners streetscape project included five new information kiosks located in the following locations:

- Southwest corner of Cicero Avenue
- Northeast and Northwest corners of Irving Park Road
- Northeast corner of Irving Park Road and Cuyler Avenue
- Southwest corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Cuyler Avenue.

Other than these, Six Corners lacks a formal wayfinding program that can guide visitors and shoppers to important destinations and parking areas within the district. An effective wayfinding signage program utilizes several signage types, including identity and gateway signs at key entry points into Six Corners, and directional signage pointing visitors to key places such as the Portage Theater. The signage should incorporate a freshly designed brand image or logo that expresses a unique feeling and identity to the Six Corners district. Ideally, wayfinding design concepts should be developed as part of a comprehensive wayfinding program that also determines locations for signage installation and cost estimates for construction.

## BICYCLE MOBILITY/FACILITIES

Milwaukee Avenue is the City of Chicago's primary bike route and is identified as a Spoke Route in the City's Streets for Cycling Plan 2020. The designation as a Spoke Route means the best bicyclist accommodation possible should be considered for the roadway.

Due to the limited right of way and building lot locations, it is not feasible to install dedicated bike lanes. Marked shared lanes can be installed, however, to improve conditions for bicyclists traveling through the district. The recommended intersection improvements and mid-block connections shown in the Plan will also enhance safety and comfort for bicyclists.



Different types of wayfinding could be installed in Six Corners, including directional (top) and gateway (below)

Over the last five years, several new bike racks were installed on sidewalks in the Study Area at major destinations including City Newsstand and L.A. Fitness. Additional bike racks are recommended, including on-street bike corrals, at commercial destinations and public spaces along the major arterials. On-street bike corrals provide high-volumes of bike parking while not cluttering sidewalk space.



# ORGANIZATION, FUNDING, AND MARKETING

## SIX CORNERS SPECIAL SERVICE AREA

The Six Corners Special Service Area (SSA) was established as SSA #28 by the City of Chicago in December 2004. A Special Service Area is a State of Illinois-authorized financing program that delivers a wide range of additional services and physical improvements in a defined geographic area, such as a neighborhood business district or commercial corridor. In Chicago, each SSA is governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Mayor. In turn, the Board enter into an agreement with a separate service provider agency that delivers specific services within the SSA district. The service provider agency can be a chamber of commerce, a commercial district revitalization organization, or other economic development group. The Six Corners Association is currently the service provider entity for SSA #28.

An SSA is funded by a special real estate tax assessment paid by the property owners in the designated SSA district and can finance a variety of commercial district management activities including marketing and special events, trash and snow removal, and sidewalk/public space maintenance. Special Service Areas can also underwrite infrastructure and building improvements. Eligible expenses include:

- Building improvement initiatives
- Wayfinding signage design and installation
- Streetscape design and construction
- Business retention/attraction program
- Salaries related to implementation activities
- Branding, marketing and promotion activities
- Special events
- Streetscape maintenance services
- Staff salaries

The Study Area for this Economic Development Master Plan follows the same boundaries as the SSA #28.

## TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICTS

Two Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts exist within Six Corners. The Irving/Cicero Tax Increment Financing District was established in June 1996 to assist in the creation of new retail and commercial establishments in Six Corners. The irregularly-shaped district encompasses approximately 24-acres along Irving Park Road between Milwaukee Avenue and the railroad tracks and Belle Plaine to the north. The district excludes the Sears store on the northeast corner of Irving Park and Cicero Road. Since its establishment in 1996, two well-known redevelopment projects have occurred within the Irving/Cicero TIF district: the Marketplace at Six Corners in 1997 and Klee Plaza in 2005. As of December 31, 2010, the balance in the Irving/Cicero TIF was \$677,920.

The Portage Park TIF District was established in September 1998 to revitalize this business district and assist older industrial and commercial areas located near the business district. The 190-acre district extends along Milwaukee Avenue from Montrose on the north and Addison to the south, Cicero Avenue from Irving Park on the north and Grace on the south and Irving Park Road from Long Avenue on the west and Kenton Avenue on the east. Since its creation in 1998, no significant projects have utilized TIF funds. As of December 31, 2010, the Portage Park TIF had a balance of \$15,351,560.

## SMALL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT FUNDS

Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) is a City program that uses TIF revenues to help commercial and industrial property owners within a specific TIF to remodel their facilities. Owners can receive matching grants to underwrite up to 75% of costs, with a maximum amount of \$150,000 for industrial properties and \$100,000 to \$250,000 for commercial properties, depending on the number of tenants. Eligible expenses include:

- Roofing and façade repair
- Sign removal and replacement
- Specific beautification efforts located in public way
- New heating, ventilation and air conditioning
- Improvements to accommodate disabled patrons or workers
- Purchase of adjacent property for building expansion or parking

Two SBIFs have been established in the Irving/Cicero TIF district, each with a current balance of \$250,000. The Portage Park TIF also has two active SBIFs, each with a balance of \$500,000. The Portage Park 1 fund was the first SBIF established in the Portage Park TIF and has exhausted its funds.

A number of Six Corners businesses have successfully utilized SBIF grants to upgrade their buildings, including:

- The Portage Theater
- Las Tablas
- Villa Roma
- City Newsstand

Six Corners Bistro, a new restaurant under construction at 3930 N. Cicero Avenue, has also secured SBIF funding.

## PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

In 2008, the Six Corners Association pursued the possibility of listing the commercial district as a National Register Historic District when it prepared and submitted a preliminary eligibility report to the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. At the time, agency staff concluded that Six Corners was not eligible due to a high percentage (26%) of non-contributing buildings within the proposed boundaries. The Association submitted a second eligibility report in 2010 after further

research was conducted by an outside consultant on Six Corners' historic and architectural integrity. The Agency issued another negative staff opinion noting architectural integrity issues as a primary weakness of the proposed district.

Rather than pursue National Register district listing, this Master Plan recommends that Six Corners Association focus its efforts on pursuing individual listings of key historic buildings, especially the Portage Theater. The Theater is currently eligible for listing in the National Register, which would allow the property's owners to take advantage of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit program. Administered in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (HPTCs) provides a 20 percent tax credit to owners and developers of income-producing historic buildings who undertake a substantial rehabilitation project. The HPTC can be a substantial incentive for rehabilitating significant historic buildings for new economic uses.

## MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

Findzall Community Marketing, a member of the consulting team, has offered detailed recommendations on steps to market Six Corners and attract more businesses and patrons to the area. Their memo, which is included in this Plan as Addendum D, focuses on three main areas:

- **Community Marketing.** Area residents and visitors will identify Six Corners as a dining, shopping, and entertainment destination. A consumer-focused website, more events, and email and social media campaigns will help attract more patrons and businesses to Six Corners.

- **Business Retention/Education.** Strengthening existing businesses and helping them to grow is often overlooked while shopping districts focus on attracting new businesses. Critical to the retention strategy is the use of the website as a “go to” resource for Six Corners business information. Providing assistance and training sessions to existing merchants will help them boost sales.
- **Business Attraction.** Six Corners is a mix of national retailers and locally owned independent businesses. Combining the marketing power and traffic generation of the national tenants with the unique appeal of the independent merchants should be a key to the success of the shopping district. Marketing available space to national tenants requires outreach to brokers, and participation in industry events like the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). Attracting independent businesses relies more on site visits and personal outreach.

## SIX CORNERS ASSOCIATION

As mentioned previously, the Six Corners Association (SCA) is the service provider agency for SSA #28, from which it receives the majority of its operating revenues. Its annual budget for 2012 was \$229,177. It is organized as a 501 (c) 6 non-profit business association.

In 2006, the SCA was formally accepted into the State’s Illinois Main Street Program Associates Level, which allowed the Association to gain access to technical assistance services from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. In 2012, the SCA was designated as a full participating member in Illinois Main Street.

As part of its participation in the Illinois Main Street program, the SCA follows the Main Street Four Point Approach™ as developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980. The Main Street Approach stresses a

historic preservation-based economic development approach to revitalizing traditional commercial districts and grass roots, community involvement in the revitalization process through participation in volunteer committees. The committees are structured around four areas: Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring. Over the past few years, the SCA has worked diligently in all four areas to facilitate reinvestment in the business district. Going forward, it must continue to expand its efforts in marketing and promoting the district, thereby supporting entrepreneurial and business development activities. In particular, we recommend that SCA engage in the following additional activities:

- Add additional staff or expertise as necessary to assist with internet marketing and implementing the marketing recommendations included in this Master Plan.
- Serve as liaison between the City, other public agencies, and district property and business owners.
- Meet regularly with property and business owners to inform them of the district’s revitalization progress as well as to discuss specific business needs, marketing opportunities, and available financial incentive programs.
- Encourage a diverse group of neighborhood residents and stakeholders to become involved in implementation committees.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

The concepts and strategies outlined in this Economic Development Master Plan provide a road map for the Six Corners Association and major stakeholders to advance the economic vitality of the Six Corners shopping district. The implementation table included on the following page summarizes the various initiatives, responsible parties, and potential funding sources that have been described in the Plan (*see Implementation Chart on following page*).

Some of the recommendations in this Plan can be implemented immediately, or in the near-term, which we are defining as one to three years. In particular, the marketing recommendations are relatively low cost and can be part of the on-going efforts of Six Corners Association.

Strong public support for the Portage Theater has been demonstrated on several occasions during the past year in response to questions of ownership and use. The eclectic mix of classic and independent films, as well as live entertainment, clearly has broad-based support in the community. New ownership provides an opportunity to stabilize and enhance this cultural asset, which is critical to the identity and economic vitality of the district.

The physical enhancements recommended in the Plan will take longer and will require more public dollars, although district-wide design guidelines and enhanced wayfinding can be near-term initiatives. Close coordination with property owners, SCA, and DHED will be critical to this planning process. Continued investment in building facades and enhanced streetscapes will help existing businesses to thrive and help attract new ones.

Both the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will be partners in future improvements to the Six Corners intersection and other improvements along the public right of way.

While these improvements will take time, interim upgrades to help pedestrians and bicyclists safely circulate throughout the district including further technical analysis should be strongly considered.

The ongoing economic recovery and subsequent revival of the commercial and residential real estate markets will facilitate some of the longer-term development recommendations in this Master Plan. The momentum of a few transactions, new store openings, or announcements may help to establish the “buzz” that will get more investors interested in Six Corners. In particular, the sale of the Bank of America building at 4901 W. Irving Park and the announcement of one or more major new tenants would get the attention of business owners and potential patrons. Similar excitement will be generated by the opening of several of the new restaurants that are planned and the opening of the Filament Theater and National Veteran’s Art Museum.





**ADDENDA**

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# ADDENDUM A: MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

## Six Corners Attendees

Ald. John Arena  
 Rita Sattler  
 John Riordan  
 Ed Bannon  
 Joe Angelastri  
 Marc Sussman  
 Glenn Nadig  
 Vincent Mastromauro  
 Brian Norkus  
 Philip Schwartz  
 Bob Brobson  
 Anna Sobor  
 Gale Fabisch  
 Michael Inglimo  
 Joe Oliveri  
 Nancy Hoffman  
 Robert Murphy

## Affiliation

45th Ward  
 38th Ward  
 45th Ward  
 Six Corners Association (SCA)  
 SCA/City Newsstand  
 SCA/Klee Building  
 SCA/Nadig Newspaper  
 SCA/Villa Roma Salon  
 Resident  
 Portage Park Neighborhood Association  
 SCA/Resident  
 Old Irving Park Association  
 SCA/Clark Fabisch Realty  
 SCA/PC Here  
 SCA/Rico Music & Dance Studio  
 Triangle Neighborhood  
 Forest Glen Community Club

## City of Chicago

Benet Haller  
 Oneida Pate

Department of Housing and Economic Development  
 Department of Housing and Economic Development

## Consultants

Linda Goodman  
 Sarah Wilson  
 Kevin Clark, RLA, AICP  
 Scott Freres, RLA, ASLA  
 Nick Kalogeris, AICP  
 Cathy Maloney  
 Victoria Granacki, AICP  
 Tim Doron  
 Kelly Conolly, PE

Goodman Williams Group  
 Goodman Williams Group  
 The Lakota Group  
 The Lakota Group  
 The Lakota Group  
 Findzall Community Marketing  
 Granacki Historic Consultants  
 Gewalt Hamilton Associates  
 Gewalt Hamilton Associates



# ADDENDUM B: GRANACKI HISTORIC CONSULTANTS PORTAGE THEATER MEMORANDUM

## PORTAGE PARK THEATRE

4044 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL, opened 1920

Designated Local Landmark (rated orange on the Chicago Historic Resources Survey)

Not a National Register landmark; not included in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey.

## DESCRIPTION

The Portage Park Theater building, with addresses on Milwaukee Avenue that span 4042-4060, and on West Cuyler Avenue from 4905-4915, is a three-story, irregularly-shaped structure. It contains on the ground floor a 1,321-seat movie theater with large lobby and eight storefronts facing Milwaukee Avenue, and on the second and third floors, 34 apartments. The principal, nine-bay façade stretches along Milwaukee facing east, with the north façade turning the corner on Cuyler with four finished bays. The south end of the building shares a party wall with the adjacent storefront structure, while the theater auditorium is located in the rear of the property, its exterior seen only from the alleys.

The classically-inspired, red brick building is ornamented with cream-colored, glazed terra cotta with a variety of foliated motifs. Its principal façade is arranged symmetrically with a semi-



circular arch with fanlight window prominently marking the center entry to the theater. Inscribed at the base of this arch are the words, “Portage Park Theatre.” The flanking window bays are outlined with classical piers and engaged columns with terra cotta ornament. Double-hung wood windows are in triples per bay.

The second and third floors retain their original configuration and materials although sections of the cornice on either side of the arch have been removed. The ground floor has been altered many times over the years. The storefronts are now standard, modern aluminum framing. The original box office and lobby entrance were remodeled in 1939 in Vitrolite (seen at left), however none of that material now remains. The existing marquee was restyled from the demolished Tivoli Theater in 1962, replacing the Art Moderne marquee from 1939. The interior lobby is very sleek in design, also dating from 1939, with an oval coved ceiling and streamlined plaster moldings.

Although the theater auditorium had been divided in two during the 1980s-1990s, it was opened up again and currently retains its original, 1920, classical detailing in the coved and paneled ceiling, engaged pilasters, and classically pedimented organ grilles. The stage is a shallow box, reflecting this as a purpose-built movie house.

## HISTORY

The commercial building opened in September 1920, while the Portage Park Theatre opened on December 11, 1920. It was part of the Ascher Brothers movie circuit, one of the largest movie operators of the 1910s and 1920s. The circuit included the once nearby Milford Theater at 3311 N. Pulaski, as well as several others in the city, also now demolished.

Although some sources have cited the theater as designed by Henry L. Newhouse, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in its Preliminary Summary of Information, April 2012 credits Lindley Phelps Rowe as the architect in association with the architectural/engineering firm of Fridstein & Co. The original building permit from September 17, 1919 lists L.P. Rowe as architect and a citation found in the Economist and dated September 20, 1919 names L. P. Rowe, care of Fridstein & Co. Notable works by Meyer Fridstein (1882-1964) include the Belden Stratford Hotel, the Shoreland Hotel, and the Congress Theater.

## LANDMARK STATUS

The Portage Park Theatre has received a preliminary local landmark designation under three of the seven following City of Chicago Landmark Criteria for Designation:

Criterion 1. Value as an example of city, state or national heritage

- A significant “transitional” movie theater in Chicago from 1919-1920
- One of the last remaining theaters in the Ascher Brothers circuit
- An important commercial and entertainment venue in the Six Corners neighborhood

Criterion 4. Exemplary Architecture

- A rare, surviving and significant example of a “transitional” movie theater
- An excellent early example of a theater block combining theater, stores, and apartments
- Elaborately decorated with Classical Revival terra cotta ornament
- A finely-detailed Neoclassical auditorium
- Art Moderne lobbies redesigned in 1939

Criterion 7. Unique or Distinctive Visual Feature

- Established and familiar visual feature at a bend on Milwaukee Avenue

Although local landmark designation ensures that any alterations are reviewed by the Landmarks Commission for compatibility with the building’s historic character, it does not make the structure eligible for federal tax incentives. That requires individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places which is a completely separate designation process through the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the National Park Service.

The following incentives discuss the two types of landmark designation and the incentives available for each.

## TYPES OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION

There are two choices for landmark designation: listing on the National Register of Historic Places and/or designation as a local landmark. Both of these choices apply whether considering an individual building on its own merits, or a collection of historic structures that could form a historic district.

### National Register of Historic Places

The advantage of National Register listing is recognition and prestige for the property owner or for the local district within the larger metropolitan region. There are no restrictions on what kinds of alterations can be made to a landmark property, nor any prohibition against its demolition unless federal or state money would be used in the project scheduled to replace it. Any owner who wishes to make improvements to his property simply applies for a building permit through the normal municipal permit process.

### Local Landmarks

The advantage of local designation is that the city has control over future alterations to a designated property through an expanded permit review process by the Landmarks Commission. This can ensure that the character of a historic neighborhood and of individual significant structures remains consistent. Adjacent property owners are not harmed by inappropriate alterations to landmark properties around them. Most importantly, local designation has the power to prevent demolition of designated structures. These advantages apply whether properties are individually listed as landmarks or are contributing buildings within historic districts.

## TAX INCENTIVES FOR HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Both types of designations, National Register and local, allow property owners to participate in tax incentive programs. There are three major types of tax incentive programs that can be used for commercial buildings that are designated as individual landmarks.

### Federal Income Tax Credit

Owners of an income-producing designated National Register landmark property, whether commercial, industrial, or rental residential, may be eligible for a one-time, federal income tax credit equal to 20% of the cost of rehabilitation. The owner must spend an amount equal to the adjusted basis of the property (original cost less

the value of the land and less depreciation). This rehabilitation must also meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. The owner can take the credits himself or sell them to a tax credit investor.

### Cook County Class L Property Tax Incentive

Owners of an income-producing designated City of Chicago landmark property may apply for a reduction in the assessed value of the property for purposes of calculating real estate taxes. Assessment levels for the building portion of the assessment are reduced to 16% for the first 10 years, 23% in year 11 and back to normal in year 13. The owner must spend at least 50% of the building's market value on a rehabilitation that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings.

### Easement Donation and Charitable Deduction

Owners of any designated landmark property may donate the principal facade(s) to a preservation organization (typically Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois). They can then take a one-time charitable deduction against their federal income tax, which is roughly equivalent to 15% of the current market value of the property. No rehabilitation work is necessary to qualify. The owner must maintain the facade with its historic design and materials in perpetuity; this obligation extends to all subsequent owners.

The Federal Income Tax Credit for owners of income producing landmark properties is administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, with the Federal Tax Credit application being forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. The Class L property tax incentive program is administered by the City of Chicago Landmarks Division and approved by the Cook County Board of Commissioners. Easement Donation/Charitable Deduction can be used for any type of landmark property, and is administered by Landmarks Illinois, a not-for-profit preservation organization.

Victoria Granacki  
3/15/2012; revised 9/28/2012

# ADDENDUM C: GEWALT HAMILTON ASSOCIATES PARKING STUDY

To: Linda Goodman  
Goodman Williams Group

From: Tim Doron and Kelly Conolly

Date: April 30, 2012

Subject: Six Corners Master Plan  
Existing Transportation Conditions

As part of the Six Corners Master Plan (“Plan”) process, Gewalt Hamilton Associates has examined the existing parking, traffic, and pedestrian conditions within the 6 corners commercial district (“Study Area”). The exhibits included with this memorandum are a key component of this effort. More specifically, the transportation analysis addresses the current capacities, concerns and opportunities as they relate to:

- Parking Facilities
- Traffic Circulation
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation/Facilities

## I. OVERVIEW

The study area has strived over recent years to implement and support a multi-modal approach within their commercial district as evidenced by establishment of a Special Service Area (“SSA”), organization of a planning committee, initiation of this study, and perhaps most important recent improvements to the streetscape.

The built environment including limited right of way constrains wholesale improvements to the area. However, as this report suggests, there are some additional opportunities to improve the existing pedestrian, traffic and parking environment. The intent would be to enhance the study area as a more pedestrian friendly, livable commercial area making the shopping experience more pleasant.

## AREA MOBILITY CONTEXT

The study area is primarily located at the confluence of three major arterials, Irving Park Road (IL 19), Milwaukee Avenue, and Cicero Avenue (IL 50) forming the six-legged “Six Corners” intersection which accommodates over 70,000 vehicles per day passing through the intersection. As such, the area lends itself to access by automobile and at the same time experiences a great amount of pass through traffic. There are ample transit opportunities in the area. The Metra Milwaukee District Line stations at Mayfair (3 blocks to the north) and Grayland (2 blocks to the south) are within easy walking distance. However since they are fixed guideway they limit the amount and type of travel into and out of the area. Additionally, CTA provides bus service on Cicero to the north and south via routes 54 and 54 A, as well as route 80 along Irving Park Road and 56 along Milwaukee. Notwithstanding the good transit service, most area shoppers are primarily arriving either by foot (local residents) or by automobile. Some arrive on bicycle as Milwaukee Avenue is a bike route through the study area, but both Irving Park Road and Cicero Avenue are not bike friendly streets having high traffic volumes and limited space for cyclists.

The pedestrian network is relatively complete. Sidewalks are located along all major arterials and enhanced by a recent streetscape project. Pedestrian crosswalks and countdown signals are installed at the key intersections. However large traffic volumes and longer distances between signalized crossing areas leave a challenge for improvements to the overall pedestrian network. Additionally in some cases (Milwaukee Avenue, south of Irving Park.) the sidewalk is next to the street with no separation leaving a relatively unfriendly feeling for the pedestrian. Of note are the rather long pedestrian crossing distances at the Six Corner intersection due to the alignment of the intersecting streets making the intersection

wider than some other six legged ones in the City. Parking in the study area is provided on-street and within public and private off-street parking facilities. Overall, the study area supplies over 1,900 parking spaces of which only about 40 percent are occupied at peak demand. This includes a total of 1,582 parking lot spaces. Most parking lots are underutilized with Jewel being the busiest lot with a maximum occupancy of 65 percent. Approximately 341 on-street parking spaces were inventoried in the study area, 58 percent of which were at most occupied.

### III. CORE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following further defines existing conditions, opportunities and constraints for each of the core mobility issues outlined above.

- Parking
- Traffic Circulation and Operations
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility/Facilities

#### a. Parking (Exhibits 1-5)

Parking conditions in the study area were thoroughly studied as part of the Six Corners Master Plan. Parking counts were conducted on Saturday, March 3, 2012 from 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM. The study's purpose is to document existing parking supply and demand within the study area and to better understand parking dynamics during peak times on a typical weekend. The data will allow for the City and the Six Corners Business Association to better plan for new development, redistribution and improved parking operations in the Study Area.

Exhibit 1 (*on following page*) illustrates the locations of all parking lots and on street parking inventoried and studied. All major parking lots within the Study Area as well as all on street parking were surveyed for supply and occupancy during the study. This included a total of 1,582 parking lot spaces and 341 on-street spaces. On-street spaces were estimated based on linear distances. Exhibit 2 (*on following page*) illustrates the spaces occupied in the various parking lots included in the study as well as their peak occupancy times. Key observations follow:

- Lot 1A (Sears) peaked at 4:00 PM with 109/193 spaces occupied (56%).
- Lot 1C (Jewel) peaked at 1:00 PM with 168/265 spaces occupied (63%).
- Lot 1D (Marshalls) peaked at 1:00 PM with 97/174 spaces occupied (55%).
- The remaining lots had very low parking counts during the rest of the day. The Bank of America lot (Lot 2) peaked at 24% occupancy at 11:00 AM and the Laporte Lot (Lot 7) peaked at 28% occupancy at 9:00 PM.
- No tow trucks were observed towing patrons from any lots in the study area.

Exhibit 3 (*shown on page 46*), illustrates the occupied spaces on each of the various block faces within the study area. Pertinent observations include:

- On-street parking activity peaked at 1:00 PM with 58% of the on-street spaces occupied.
- The peak area of on-street parking activity occurred along Milwaukee Avenue in the vicinity of the Portage Park Theatre.
- Parking occupancies increased in the evening near the Portage Park Theatre and along Irving Park Road, west of Cicero Avenue.

Exhibit 4 (*shown on page 46*), illustrates the occupancy of Dakin Street and Byron Street, which are permit parking streets. Pertinent observations include:

- These areas are permit parking only
- Byron Street and Dakin Street had the highest occupancies of any on-street parking in the Study Area (which were observed) suggesting they are heavily utilized by area residents
- Only a few cars on each block during each hour were observed to park illegally without the required parking permit.

Exhibit 5 (*shown on page 47*), documents the on-street parking signage for each block face surveyed during the study.

EXHIBIT 1. PARKING LOT LOCATIONS



EXHIBIT 2: SIX CORNERS PARKING SURVEY RESULTS; MARCH 3, 2012

Lot #	1A	1B	1C	1D	2	3	4A	4B	5	6	7	Hour Total	Parking Lot Occupancy %	
Lot Description	Sears	Sears Auto	Jewel	Marshalls	Bank of America	Portage Park Shopping Center Parking Lot	Portage Park Shopping Center - Chicago Eye	Portage Park Shopping Center - Chicago Eye Rear	Lamon Lot	Dalton Lot	Laporte Lot			
Total Spaces	193	203	265	174	201	122	37	16	76	184	111	1582		
Time	10:00 AM	55	70	108	14	38	52	10	9	0	0	5	361	23%
	11:00 AM	99	81	193	61	48	51	9	7	0	0	5	554	35%
	12:00 PM	96	93	148	85	43	50	10	7	0	0	5	537	34%
	1:00 PM	106	108	168	97	24	25	22	7	0	0	3	560	35%
	2:00 PM	104	102	134	94	12	25	19	7	0	0	3	500	32%
	3:00 PM	107	68	145	89	2	27	21	6	0	0	3	468	30%
	4:00 PM	109	97	156	84	1	22	17	3	0	0	3	492	31%
	5:00 PM	104	78	127	92	1	18	16	3	0	0	3	442	28%
	6:00 PM	96	64	108	82	2	15	16	4	0	0	3	390	25%
	7:00 PM	84	57	95	65	2	14	15	7	0	0	5	344	22%
	8:00 PM	76	46	90	60	3	12	8	9	0	0	23	327	21%
	9:00 PM	68	39	82	51	0	8	4	9	0	0	32	293	19%

EXHIBIT 3: ON-STREET PARKING SURVEY RESULTS: MARCH 3, 2012

Block Face (See Exhibit 2)	Street	Description	Approx. number of spaces per block face																		Hourly Total	On-Street Occupancy %							
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R			S	T	U	V	W	X	Y
Time		North side of RR from 1st to 2nd St. 1-way	9	12	20	24	16	12	0	12	0	5	6	14	6	7	0	22	24	10	8	0	0	27	27	39	41	341	
	3:00 AM	5	7	8	2	11	6	0	0	0	1	2	5	2	0	0	0	9	12	5	2	0	0	3	1	33	39	153	45%
	6:00 AM	6	10	11	6	16	4	0	0	0	4	2	8	0	0	0	0	16	14	7	1	0	0	2	1	30	36	174	51%
	9:00 AM	4	9	18	4	13	6	0	1	0	2	3	7	0	0	0	0	13	20	7	6	0	0	2	1	33	40	189	55%
	12:00 PM	9	9	16	9	11	6	0	0	0	2	5	10	0	0	0	0	17	21	6	4	0	0	4	1	39	41	198	58%
	3:00 PM	1	8	10	2	11	8	0	0	0	3	3	8	0	0	0	0	12	19	7	4	0	0	9	5	39	41	190	56%
	6:00 PM	0	9	8	6	8	5	0	0	0	3	3	10	0	0	0	0	11	21	4	4	0	0	8	2	39	41	182	53%
	9:00 PM	0	10	6	1	6	1	0	1	0	2	1	10	0	0	0	0	14	18	4	3	0	0	1	1	36	42	157	46%
	12:00 AM	1	12	7	1	7	2	0	0	0	3	3	9	0	1	0	0	15	15	3	3	0	0	1	3	35	40	161	47%
	3:00 AM	4	11	4	3	4	7	0	0	0	1	3	8	0	1	0	0	12	12	1	1	0	0	1	0	36	39	148	43%
	6:00 AM	7	11	2	11	0	7	0	1	0	1	1	8	0	1	0	0	10	10	1	2	0	0	2	1	35	40	151	44%
	9:00 AM	6	12	4	12	4	5	0	0	0	1	5	9	0	0	0	0	13	19	1	2	0	0	2	0	32	45	172	50%
12:00 PM	7	12	5	14	6	1	0	0	0	0	5	11	0	0	0	0	21	20	0	7	0	0	0	0	34	42	185	54%	

EXHIBIT 4: PERMIT PARKING SURVEY RESULTS: DAKIN AND BYRON STREETS; MARCH 3, 2012

Time	Dakin St		Byron St	
	Total Number of Vehicles Observed	Non Permitted Vehicles	Total Number of Vehicles Observed	Non Permitted Vehicles
10:00 AM	33	2	39	2
11:00 AM	30	1	36	0
12:00 PM	33	3	40	0
1:00 PM	39	4	41	0
2:00 PM	39	4	41	6
3:00 PM	39	3	41	0
4:00 PM	36	0	42	0
5:00 PM	35	0	40	0
6:00 PM	36	0	39	0
7:00 PM	35	0	40	0
8:00 PM	32	0	45	0
9:00 PM	34	0	42	0

## EXHIBIT 5: PARKING RESTRICTIONS: SIX CORNERS STUDY AREA

Block Face (See Exhibit 1)	Street	Description	Signage
A	Irving Park Rd	North side of IPR from Leveaux to Laporte	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking when Snow Greater than 2"
B	Irving Park Rd	North side of IPR from Laporte to Lamon	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking when Snow Greater than 2" Loading Zone (ADA) 8AM-8PM M-F, 8AM-3PM SAT (At intersection w/ Lamon) Loading Zone - No Pkg 8AM-11AM. (In front of P&S Liquors)
C	Irving Park Rd	North side of IPR from Lamon to Cicero	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking when Snow Greater than 2"
D	Irving Park Rd	South Side of IPR from Leveaux to Lamon	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking when Snow Greater than 2"
E	Irving Park Rd	South Side of Irving Park Road from Lamon to Cicero	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking when Snow Greater than 2"
F	Irving Park Rd	North side of IPR from Cicero to Kilpatrick	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking when Snow Greater than 2"
G	Irving Park Rd	North side of IPR from Kilpatrick to RR Tracks	No Parking Anytime
H	Irving Park Rd	South side of IPR from Cicero to Kilpatrick	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking 3AM-7AM From 12/1 to 4/1 or when snow is greater than 2"
I	Irving Park Rd	South Side of IPR from Kilpatrick to RR Tracks	No Parking Anytime
J	Cicero Ave	West side from Warner to Belle Plaine	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking when snow is greater than 2" Tow Zone - No Parking 7AM - 9AM Loading Zone - No Parking 8AM-8PM (In front of Family Fruit Market)
K	Cicero Ave	West Side from Belle Plaine to Irving Park	Metered Parking (Adjacent to Walgreens and Newsstand Store) Snow Route - No Parking when snow is greater than 2" Tow Zone - No Parking 7AM-9AM M-F
L	Cicero Ave	East Side from Warner to Belle Plaine	Tow Zone - No Parking 4PM-6PM, M-F Snow Route - No Parking when snow is greater than 2"
M	Cicero Ave	East Side from Belle Plaine to Irving Park Road	Metered Parking (In front of Sears Auto; otherwise no parking) Snow Route - No Parking when snow is greater than 2"
N	Milwaukee Ave	West side from Warner to Belle Plaine	Free Parking (In front of Parkway Bank) Snow Route - No Parking 3AM-7AM Between 12/1 & 4/1 or when snow is greater than 2"
O	Milwaukee Ave	East Side from Warner to Belle Plaine	No Parking Anytime (Bus Stop and Burger King Driveways)
P	Milwaukee Ave	West side from Belle Plaine to Irving Park	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking 3AM-7AM Between 12/1 & 4/1 or when snow is greater than 2" Tow Zone - No Parking Anytime (adjacent to Portage Park Theatre)
Q	Milwaukee Ave	East side from Belle Plaine to Irving Park	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking 3AM-7AM Between 12/1 & 4/1 or when snow is greater than 2"
R	Cicero Ave	West side from Irving Park to Dakin	Metered Parking Tow Zone - No Parking 7AM-9AM Snow Route - No Parking when snow is greater than 2"
S	Cicero Ave	West Side from Dakin to Byron	Metered Parking Tow Zone - No Parking 7AM-9AM Snow Route - No Parking when snow is greater than 2"
T	Cicero Ave	East Side from Irving Park to Dakin	No Parking Anytime
U	Cicero Ave	East Side from Dakin to Byron	No Parking Anytime
V	Milwaukee Ave	West Side from Irving Park to Byron	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking 3AM-7AM Between 12/1 & 4/1 or when snow is greater than 2" No Parking 7AM - 9AM; 4PM-6PM Tow Zone - Loading Zone, NP 9AM-9PM Mon-Sat. (From Kilpatrick to parking lot driveway) Tow Zone - Loading Zone - NP 9AM-7PM M-F. (In front of Chicago Eye)
W	Milwaukee Ave	East Side from Irving Park to Byron	Metered Parking Snow Route - No Parking 3AM-7AM Between 12/1 & 4/1 or when snow is greater than 2" Tow Zone - No Parking 4PM-6PM M-F
X	Dakin St	Both Sides of Street - Lamon to Cicero	Permit Parking Only
Y	Byron St	Both Sides of Street - Lamon to Cicero	Permit Parking Only



### b. Traffic Circulation and Operations (Exhibit 6)

The study area is primarily located at the confluence of three major arterials, Cicero Avenue (IL 50), Irving Park Road, and Milwaukee Avenue (IL 21), forming the six-legged “Six Corners” intersection which accommodates over 70,000 vehicles per day. Cicero Avenue (IL 50) is a Principal Arterial that provides two travel lanes in each direction with a center turn lane and parking on both sides of the street in most areas. It carries over 29,000 vehicles per day through the study area. Irving Park Road (IL 19) is another Principal Arterial that provides two travel lanes in each direction and parking on both sides in most locations. Irving Park Road carries about 28,000 vehicles per day, similar in volume to Cicero Avenue. Milwaukee Avenue is an Urban Collector and provides one travel lane in each direction and parking on both sides. It carries 10,800-14,800 vehicles per day. Other streets in the study area are residential or minor collectors, many of them one-way with parking. Traffic data was collected and the study area’s street network was inventoried and reviewed in order to determine issues and potential opportunities related to automobile travel.

Exhibit 6 illustrates key traffic issues and information in the study area.

- The recent CDOT Streetscape project included several traffic and intersection improvements such as:
  - New right-turn lane on southbound Cicero
  - Reconfigured the Milwaukee/Kilpatrick/Byron intersection and installed a new traffic signal
  - New traffic signal at the Milwaukee/Belle Plaine intersection
  - Traffic signal modernization at Cicero/Irving Park/Milwaukee and Milwaukee/Berteau intersections
  - New median planter on Cicero improves traffic operations by restricting turning movements in and out of the shopping center driveway.

- Six-legged intersections generally operate inefficiently and the many approaches of the Cicero/Irving Park/Milwaukee intersection cause traffic operations to be slow and congested resulting in long queues, especially during the evening peak hour.
- Turning movement restrictions at the Irving Park/Cicero/Milwaukee traffic signal help improve traffic operations and safety at the intersection. Left turns are prohibited for traffic on Irving Park Road and Milwaukee Avenue.
- On-street parking spaces along Irving Park Road and Cicero Avenue are somewhat difficult to park during peak hour due to the high volumes of traffic traveling along the streets.

### c. Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility/Facilities (Exhibit 7)

The Six Corners intersection is considered a pedestrian-oriented shopping district and the legs of the intersection are designated “Pedestrian Streets” because, in part, of its high concentration of existing storefronts that abut the sidewalk. There are special regulations to lots abutting “Pedestrian Streets” which are intended to preserve and enhance the character of streets and intersections that are widely recognized as Chicago’s best examples of pedestrian-oriented shopping districts. The regulations are intended to promote transit, economic vitality and pedestrian safety and comfort. The recent streetscape project helped to strengthen the pedestrian environment at Six Corners. Pedestrian and bicycle mobility throughout the study area was observed and noted as key observations are as follows (*see Exhibit 7, Pedestrian Hot Spots, on page 50*).

- The recent streetscape improvements improve pedestrian crosswalk visibility at the intersections along Milwaukee, especially at the Irving Park/Cicero/Milwaukee intersection. Pedestrian countdown signals have been installed on all legs of the intersection.

EXHIBIT 6: TRANSPORTATION CIRCULATION AND OPERATIONS

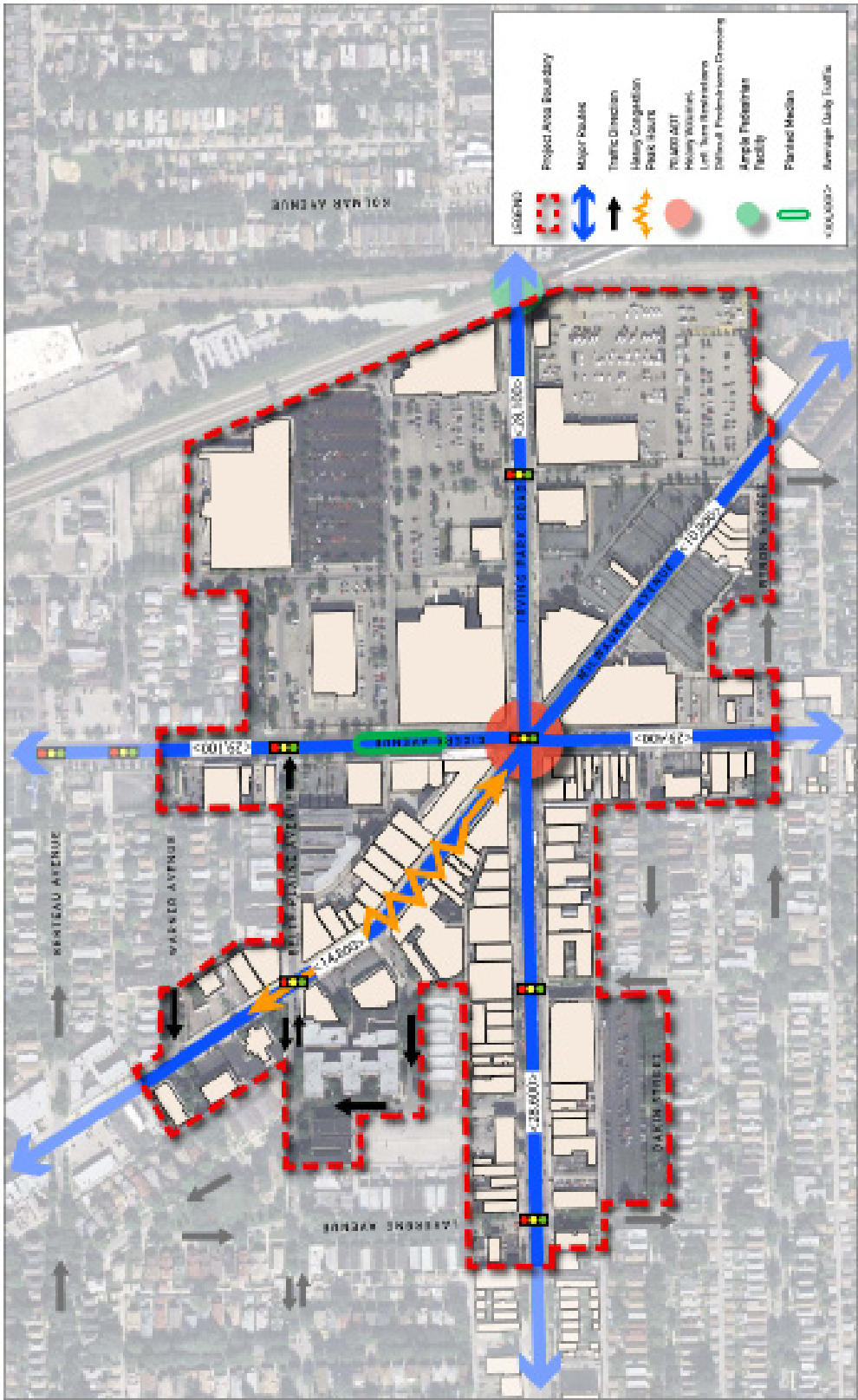


EXHIBIT 7: PEDESTRIAN HOT SPOTS



Median planter on Cicero where pedestrians regularly cross east-west unprotected



Upgraded traffic signal equipment at Cicero/Irving Park/Milwaukee



New sidewalk planters on the east side of Cicero



New high-visibility stamped crosswalks on Milwaukee

- The sidewalk replacement and new sidewalk planters along Milwaukee improve pedestrian safety and experience by buffering the walking zone from the automobile traffic. Other enhancements that strengthen the pedestrian environment include pedestrian lighting, gateway features, and information kiosks.
- There are a significant number of pedestrians that cross Cicero Avenue north of Irving Park Road utilizing the new raised median planter on Cicero as a refuge area. Pedestrians are crossing Cicero as they come out of the north Sears entry and are heading west and south.
- Milwaukee Avenue does not provide designated on-street bike facilities, however it

is a designated bike route with medium traffic speeds and volumes and adequate lane width for bikes to share with automobiles. As part of the streetscape project, several new bike racks were installed in the study area.

**d. Technical Addendum**

The following Exhibits were referenced. They supply support for our findings and recommendations.

- Surveyed parking areas
- Six Corners parking lot survey results
- Six Corners on-street parking survey results
- Permit parking survey results
- Parking restriction information
- Traffic Circulation and Operations
- Photos of Pedestrian Hotspots

# ADDENDUM D: FINDZALL COMMUNITY MARKETING MEMORANDUM

Marketing the Six Corners neighborhood to attract businesses and shoppers begins with a strategic focus on three main areas: Community Marketing, Retention/Education and Business Attraction. These core focus areas overlap in their activities and are dependent upon each other for their success as a whole. Community marketing starts with a consumer focused website that allows locals and visitors to identify the Six Corners neighborhood as a dining, events and entertainment destination. The website serves as a promotional portal that showcases the marketing efforts and highlights special events and sales that drive patrons to Six Corners. Business retention and education work to teach business owners the skills to enhance their internet presence, utilize the many free ways to promote their offerings and ultimately survive and thrive, even in this difficult economy. Business attraction is immeasurably easier when the shopping district has a successful and well executed marketing and business retention/education plan. Recruiting new businesses involves providing easy ways to find available property and neighborhood information online and in the available store fronts. The strategies outlined will enhance the efforts to attract new locally owned independents as well as national and regional shops, restaurants and service businesses to fill vacant spaces.

## COMMUNITY MARKETING

Promoting events, dining, shopping, services and attractions in Six Corners is critical to the success of the neighborhood and a top priority to attract more patrons. The first step is to form a relationship between the shop, restaurant and service businesses and the local residents and visitors to the area. Six Corners has a strong connection through their website, email marketing campaign and Facebook following. Events are unique and engaging, drawing in locals from Portage Park and also from surrounding

neighborhoods. Email and social media marketing campaigns are well established and growing. Strategies for enhancing the marketing of the Six Corners website, events, email and social media campaigns are outlined below.

## SIX CORNERS WEBSITE

Business districts are more successful when they have a consumer focused website to provide event, dining, shopping and entertainment information for residents and visitors. The Six Corners website is filled with local business images, news, event details and a ‘call to action’ that invites visitors to sign up for the email newsletter. Building the list of email and Facebook followers are key to attracting patrons to Six Corners. Including a “Like us on Facebook” icon on the home page will help build this free following that promotes Six Corners events, dining and shopping. The site is consumer focused but also provides much needed “Open a Business” information. The Business Attraction section below will include suggestions to supplement this area of the website. Since many website visitors are seeking information about Six Corners and are unfamiliar with the area, highlighting the Our Location map/directions link would make it easier to find.

Business owners are featured in the slide show at the top of the page and shop, restaurant and service business logos that link to their website are shown throughout. Adding a home page opening paragraph describing the shopping district and the location would define the business district and also enhance search. Stating that Six Corners is located on the Northwest side of Chicago in the Portage Park neighborhood and highlighting some of the local attractions will welcome those not familiar with the area. Prospective business owners often Google neighborhoods when they are considering an expansion and want to see a quick overview of the area on the home page. This would also be

helpful to new residents. The Six Corners website is the “go to” hub of information for locals, visitors and merchants. To enhance business owner education and communication a “Business Resources” section for the website is outlined in the Retention/Education portion below.

The “What’s New” link on the Six Corners website shows visitors current Events and happenings in the neighborhood. Keep the current offerings shown in this section and adding a seasonal list of all major events would provide an overview of fun activities throughout the year. Locals and visitors will mark their calendars with anticipation of the next exciting event. Prospective shop and restaurant owners will see that Six Corners has a very active business community and will consider expanding their business to Six Corners. Major events equal increased foot traffic and this makes the area very desirable for new businesses. Perhaps renaming this link as “Events” would better define the section.

The website Directory provides an alphabetical listing of businesses but does not allow a search by category i.e. dining, spa & beauty, services and retail. Providing a listing similar to the print directory would allow website visitors to explore all that Six Corners has to offer when the business name is not known. Local neighborhood groups including the Portage Park Neighborhood Association and the Old Irving Park Neighborhood Association do so much to enhance and promote the Six Corners business district. Adding a Community Connections category to the directory could give visitors and merchants easy access to local contact information for these neighborhood organizations as well as Alderman Arena and other City of Chicago links.

One area to highlight on the website is Six Corners Attractions. With the frequent happenings at the Portage Theatre, the upcoming Filament Theatre Ensemble and National Veteran’s Art Museum Six Corners has much to be proud of and can easily show off these wonderful venues with an Attractions section

of the website. This could also be an area to highlight Arts Alive 45 initiatives throughout the neighborhood. Calling this section Entertainment would also work.

### Six Corners Website Checklist

- Add a neighborhood overview to the home page
- Display the “Like us on Facebook” icon to build followers
- Show a list of major annual events
- Include directory categories to showcase business niches
- Create an Attractions section to highlight Six Corners destination places
- Provide a Business Resources section
- Enhance the Open a Business section
- Highlight the Our Location map/directions link so it is easier to find

### SIX CORNERS EVENTS

A top priority of every neighborhood organization is to create engaging community events including pleasurable promotions in shops and restaurants that ring the cash register. Businesses that create regular events and promotions such as anniversary sales, holiday promotions, tastings and more that expose customers to new products and services will increase sales and foot traffic. Larger events like the BBQ Fest, the Halloween Treasure Hunt and the Christmas Spectacular showcase Six Corners’ unique qualities and fun image. The email campaign and Facebook promote these activities 12 months of the year, engaging local residents and visitors and inviting them to be a part of the Six Corners community.

The Six Corners Promotions Committee does a good job of planning events and staying organized. Utilizing outside assistance from experienced organizations like the Big Buzz Idea Group lends the expertise and professionalism not to mention the press needed to put on a large event. Adding themed monthly in store promotions to fill in

the gaps would provide something for everyone throughout the entire year. Events to consider include a Restaurant Week, a Family Fitness/Health and Wellness Week or an At Your Service event that focuses on the Six Corners service businesses. A Valentine event could include the flower shops, jewelry stores and the salons/spas. For January and July, try an indoor/outdoor sidewalk sale. The arts, fitness and dance could be worked into the schedule as well. These events could be sprinkled throughout the year whenever there isn't something already going on. They are easier to plan and manage because they occur inside the shops and restaurants. Also highlight promotions businesses already have planned for holidays like St. Patrick's Day and Cinco de Mayo.

Take advantage of national promotions like July Independent Retailer Month and Small Business Saturday presented by American Express that encourages shopping at locally owned independent businesses the day after Black Friday. The key to successful in store promotions is to make sure that the events bring more customers to the Six Corners merchants that increase sales. Business owners will be eager to participate in these events because they will attract new patrons and boost profits.

Teaming up with other neighborhood organizations to promote seasonal events is an excellent way to get the word out about Six Corners happenings along with other fun festivities in the area. Six Corners does a wonderful job working with these local groups. The "Fall Fun in Your Community" poster is a great example of this important collaboration. Continuing the effort in the Six Corners email campaign as well as in social and print media reinforces and enhances this good work and cross promotes events throughout the community.

## SHOPPING, DINING, SERVICES PRINT DIRECTORY

Six Corners provides a very nice printed directory of area dining, shopping and services as well as a map, contact information and a list of upcoming events. Adding this directory to the website as a PDF would allow visitors and merchants to download the document as needed. Adding a screen shot of the directory with a link to the PDF right on the home page would make it easy for customers and merchants to find. Including an invitation to join the Six Corners email campaign and the "Like us on Facebook" icon on the directory further reinforces the shop local message.

## EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

The Six Corners Email Marketing Campaign and Facebook page do a great job inviting followers to events, announcing new business openings and encouraging all to shop and dine locally. Keep readers engaged with the monthly event themes described above that are designed to attract shoppers to Six Corners. Plan to send out one email each month. Introduce the theme in the top paragraph of the email and add specific event and promotional information below. Create email campaign categories featuring Events, Dining, Shopping, Gift Ideas (described below) and New Business Openings. While it's best to keep the email marketing campaign more consumer focused, it wouldn't hurt to add a Neighborhood News category to keep local news separate from the food and fun. The Six Corners leadership could consider replacing the Six Corners Neighborhood Values Page with the monthly email campaign. While the values page is included as a link in the email campaign, the same local offers could be included in the body of the email. While this suggestion is being considered, adding the invitation to sign up for the email campaign and the "Like us on Facebook" icon to this print effort will work to build the list for these other important, less costly marketing vehicles.

The email campaign and Facebook page are great places to provide Gift Ideas for every month of the year for men, women, children and teens. Even in poor economies people still have birthdays, engagements, anniversaries, weddings, christenings and graduations. Buying gifts and planning celebrations would be much easier for local residents if they receive an endless supply of ideas sent straight to their “inbox” and smart phones.

The most significant new marketing opportunities have come with the explosion in social media marketing. Almost a billion people are now using Facebook with more business owners and communities promoting themselves with Facebook than ever before. A properly managed community social marketing effort allows business owners to promote their shops, restaurants and services for free and strengthens their relationship with the local community. Business owners can even post coupons through Facebook for free. Just like the email campaign, Facebook and Twitter need to focus on Six Corners dining, events, shopping and entertainment. Mixing the activities, meeting schedules and duties of the community organization with the Six Corners business association events and promotions will confuse the reader and may turn off prospective followers. It’s always best to keep marketing efforts to attract patrons and communication with local merchants completely separate.

Setting up merchants as Facebook Administrators would allow businesses to post their events and sales directly to the Six Corners Facebook page. This would create more frequent and compelling offers from the neighborhood and ease the burden of posting. Six Corners effectively promotes their Facebook page in their email campaign. The Six Corners Facebook page administrators could also include the local neighborhood associations which do a wonderful job of promoting local businesses. Using a posting tool like Hootsuite would make the job of posting promotions and sales much easier for all.

Another marketing strategy to consider includes Smartphone Apps. They are a nice mobile and high tech compliment to the directory and email campaign. Branded community Smartphone Apps are all the rage and are used in neighborhoods such as Rogers Park, Downtown Evanston, Downtown Oak Park, Champaign and others. Pinterest is also gaining in popularity and provides a compelling visual way to promote local business. You Tube videos are also very trendy and frequently pop up on Facebook. Six Corners has an area on the website that features You Tube videos that would benefit from some fresh content.

### List Building

Placing the “Like us on Facebook” icon and an invitation to join the email list on all print materials will spread the word about Six Corners marketing efforts. This includes the Neighborhood Values flyer, the Six Corners directory and all event posters. A giveaway is a nice touch and can also help build the list. A new follower could be chosen each month to win dinner for two, a manicure/pedicure, tickets to the Portage Theatre or a gift certificate at a Six Corners business. Adding a Share icon to the offers on the email campaign would encourage readers to invite friends to events and provide them with sale and promotional information. Encouraging readers to share the email campaign with a friend and spread the word about the Six Corners Facebook page also helps encourage new users.

### Share Icon



Adding a Facebook widget or “Like” box to the Six Corners website could also promote the page and help build the list. This will allow visitors to be aware of the page and see up to the minute shopping, dining and events information even

if they don't have a Facebook page. If they are already on Facebook, they can "Like" Six Corners on Facebook directly from the website.

### Facebook Best Practices Checklist

- Promote the Six Corners Facebook page on all print materials including posters, directories and Neighborhood Values pages and also post cards and street banners
- Encourage merchants to invite customers, employees and their Facebook Fans to "Like" the Facebook page
- Make merchants and neighborhood associations "Administrators" of the Six Corners Facebook Page
- Encourage merchants to post events, sales, new menu items and more
- Add a Facebook "Like" box widget to the Six Corners website

### Email Campaign Best Practices Checklist

- Build the list by promoting the Six Corners email campaign on all print materials including posters, directories and Neighborhood Values pages and also post cards and street banners
- Encourage merchants to invite customers, employees and Facebook fans to sign up for the email campaign
- Separate offerings by category including: Events, Dining, Shopping, Gift Ideas and Neighborhood News
- Plan 12 monthly marketing themes with a call to action message
- Keep patron emails (events/shopping/dining) separate from merchant emails (meetings/ education/ information)

## SHOP LOCAL CAMPAIGN

Six Corners has recently contemplated the initiation of a Shop Local campaign. The Six Corners shopping district is a mix of national retailers and locally owned independent businesses that we like to call "Indies" (rather than Mom

& Pops). Combining the marketing power and traffic generator of the national tenants with the unique appeal of the local Indies makes Six Corners a more attractive area for new business as well as residential growth. While a Shop Local Campaign is important to give the neighborhood an environmentally and socially conscious image it should continue to pursue national retail for the Six Corners business mix.

The recent recession, housing crisis and high unemployment have hurt sales at our locally owned independent retail shops and restaurants. This along with the popularity and ease of shopping online has had a negative impact on our neighborhood shopping districts. Shop Local Campaigns have recently become quite popular as people are realizing that independently owned businesses are truly what make our communities unique and special. Local First Chicago is a network of locally owned, independent businesses, community organizations and citizens joined together to keep money and character in our neighborhoods and build a thriving local living economy. They provide a number of marketing and networking benefits but do charge to be a member. One popular free effort is the 3/50 Project that encourages everyone to "pick 3 independently owned businesses, spend \$50 among them per month and save your local economy". A number of shopping districts are adopting this free campaign by signing up in support of the project online and displaying the 3/50 Project poster in their store windows. They recently launched a LookLocal iPhone App.

Many of the messages from another shop local group IndieBound and also the Civic Economics study done for the Chicago neighborhood Andersonville are quoted on community websites as a Shop Local message. Implementing a Shop Local campaign in Six Corners could be as simple as adding a Think Local message to occasional posts on Facebook and reminding followers to Shop Local in the Six Corners email campaign. Six Corners could also consider adding some of the messages outlined below as a Shop Local link on



their website with an invitation to Dine, Shop and Play in Six Corners:

### The Economy

- Spend \$100 at a local business and \$68 of that stays in your community. Spend the same \$100 at a national chain and your community only sees \$43. (Civic Economics Andersonville Study, 2004)
- Local businesses create higher-paying jobs for our neighbors.
- More of your taxes are reinvested in your community—where they belong.

### The Community

- Six Corners shop, restaurant and business owners and workers are your friends and neighbors—support them and they'll support you.
- Local businesses donate to charities at more than twice the rate of national chains.
- Local business owners are the volunteers, committee leaders and members that make Six Corners a better place to shop, dine, live and work
- More locally owned, independent businesses mean more choices, more diversity and a truly unique community.

### The Environment

- Buying local means less packaging, less transportation and a smaller carbon footprint.
- Shopping in a local business district means less infrastructure, less maintenance and more money to beautify your community.

## BUSINESS RETENTION/EDUCATION

Business retention is often overlooked while shopping districts focus on business attraction and marketing. All would agree that it's easier to keep or expand/downsize an existing business than it is to recruit a new one. Business retention is a top priority and an essential step to a stronger and more stable Six Corners. The Economic

Restructuring Committee will be the ambassadors of the retention and education strategies whose mission is to recruit new businesses and strengthen current ones. Many progressive initiatives are already being implemented and considered by this group. Critical to the retention strategy, as in the marketing component, is the use of the website as a go to resource for Six Corners business information, online skills, marketing opportunities and more. Adding a Business Resources Link to the Six Corners website will provide everything local business owners need to know to strengthen their shop, restaurant or service business.

The single most important marketing initiative a small business can do is to create a Google Place Page listing. Getting listed on Google and also other search engines including, Yelp, Bing and Yahoo ensures that the Six Corners shops, restaurants and services business will get found on the internet. Listings that include current store hours, pictures, videos and even coupons enhance the searchability of local businesses. Best of all, it's free. The Six Corners leadership can encourage merchants to list their business online with educational seminars, links on the website and even a contest to measure how many businesses are listed on Google with a prize when an appropriate goal is reached.

Merchant education training sessions play a key role in boosting business owner's success rates. Along with creating a Google Place Page and getting listed on other search sites, business owners desire training on topics such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Linked In, You Tube, Search Engine Optimization, Social Coupons (like Groupon) and Email Marketing. Meeting agendas and copies of PowerPoint presentations can be posted on the Six Corners website. Some merchants like to see information tips on the website so those should be provided as well in the form of links to articles and webinars. This could help business owners/marketing staff who can't attend the meetings and for those who might need a quick refresher on information already covered. Often training sessions are conducted on various

topics just one time and not repeated. We believe that training on the subjects mentioned should occur multiple times and repeated often so that all can participate and keep up with new information. The monthly merchant email newsletter will keep all informed and engaged in the business retention strategies.

Below is an outline of what the Merchants Resources section of the Six Corners website could include:

- Advertising and Marketing Opportunities
  - Six Corners Email Marketing Campaign overview and participation instructions including monthly promotion inspiration
  - Six Corners Facebook & Twitter overview and participation instructions
  - A PR list that would include press contacts and free email marketing opportunities with local periodicals (think Chicago Magazine) and local opportunities such as DVTVs.
  - A low cost website design offer
- Business Owner Education
  - A schedule of educational meetings, seminars and webinars offered by local groups such as SCORE, Local First Chicago and others.
  - How to get listed online with links to popular search engines like Google, Yelp, Bing, Yahoo, Metromix, Citysearch and others.
- Understanding review sites like Yelp
- Information about social coupons like Groupon, Living Social and others
- Business Owner Incentives
- Small Business Improvement Fund
- Façade Assistance Program
- Open Sign (to promote new business coming soon in vacant storefront)
- Sidewalk and Landscape Maintenance
- Business Owner Newsletter
  - current and archives of previous newsletters
- Committees/Meetings
  - Description of each committee and when/where meetings are held (this is already on the website)
  - A list of committee members with contact information
- Suggestion Box (a direct email link to Ed Bannon) so that business owners can provide anonymous comments and suggestions to the Six Corners leadership.
- Volunteer and sponsorship opportunities and requests

## BUSINESS ATTRACTION

The most effective way to attract new shops and restaurants is for the existing ones to be strong and healthy. Inviting more customers to the Six Corners neighborhood with engaging events and promotions is what makes prospective business owners take notice. Shop and restaurant owners are customers too and they will want to expand their business to a vital, prosperous community. When a business owner looks at Six Corners to consider a location for their shop or restaurant, they should be able to easily find everything that they need to know about opening a business from who to contact for assistance to what sites are available, demographics, incentives and more.

It's important to note that attracting locally owned independent shops and restaurants is completely different from how national retailers look for available space. National and regional chains have site selectors or real estate brokers that represent their company. They look at websites like CoStar and LoopNet to find available sites. They attend

International Council of Shopping Center events to network with developers and municipalities. While some independents hire a realtor, most do not. When a locally owned independent business is looking to add a new location, the owner or broker spends time analyzing different communities under consideration. The communities they look at are generally not too far from where they live but not too close to their current location. They “Google” different towns and neighborhoods to find out more information about them, they drive around the area to see what properties are available and they visit the businesses near the prospective site to see what the area is like.

An often overlooked prime resource for new business leads is within the community itself. There is no better business than a homegrown business, and every effort should be made to attract from within the Six Corners community. Another place to look is in the existing business community. Are there shops or restaurants who want to expand? What kind of businesses would they like to see nearby? Do they know anyone who would be interested in opening a business in the neighborhood? This could be accomplished with a short survey. Engaging the current business community will make them feel included and involved in the planning of the Six Corners business district.

The Six Corners website already includes an “Open a Business” section which allows prospective business owners and brokers to request a list of available sites and access demographics. The available property list includes demographics highlights, traffic counts and incentives which is a nice feature. More information to consider adding to the “Open a Business” section is listed below:

- **An Opening Paragraph** stating all the reasons why to consider opening a business in the Six Corners neighborhood.

- **Contact Information** with email address (replacing the form) to make it easy for prospective business owners and brokers to reach out to Six Corners staff.
- **A List of Available Properties** right on the website rather than a request form will allow visitors interested in opening a business to browse opportunities at their leisure. Creating the list on a Google map would give prospective shop and restaurant owners a good perspective of where their future business would be located in relation to other businesses and attractions. It also makes it easy to see what’s available on a smartphone which is how most commercial realtors and others look for information. Some do prefer a straight list of properties so both versions could be provided.
- **Business Owner Incentives**
  - Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF Grants)
  - Façade Assistance Program
  - Open Sign (to promote new business coming soon in vacant storefront)
  - Sidewalk and Landscape Maintenance
- **Testimonials** from successful Six Corners business owners along with a picture (many of these are already featured on the website) will make prospective restaurant, service or shop owners feel like if they open a their business then they will be successful too.

It is important to have a website filled with useful information but we also need to drive visitors to the Six Corners site. Below are some ideas to market the website and create new business leads that will ultimately fill vacant store fronts:

- **Create a Post Card** from Alderman Arena to invite prospective business owners to open a shop, restaurant or service business in Six Corners. Provide reasons to locate in

the neighborhood including demographics, local attractions, affordable rents and fun events. Invite them to check out the Six Corners website and to sign up for the shopping, dining and events email/social media campaigns. Post cards can be dropped off at desirable businesses in up and coming neighborhoods or mailed/emailed when a visit is not convenient.

- **Create an Attractive Sign** to be placed in the windows of available properties to encourage prospective businesses and brokers to visit the Six Corners website and contact the staff. Include a QR code that directs smartphone users to the website for a list of available properties. There does not need to be a sign in every vacant store front, but enough should be created so that there is one on each block and on both sides of the street.
- **Identify Progressive Neighborhoods** that are no closer than approximately 5 miles and no farther than 20 miles from Six Corners to identify and analyze target retail/restaurant/service businesses that could be contacted for a proposed expansion. Look for shops and restaurants that have a good website and marketing plan and are at the forefront of current trends. Businesses that are critically acclaimed in “Best of the Best” lists, have regular events, use social media marketing and provide online shopping should be considered. Concentrate on businesses that are missing from the current business mix.
- **Invite Local Artists** through the Arts Alive 45 initiative to display their work in the windows of available store fronts. Identify locations that could feature art work, temporary “pop up” stores and seasonal offerings. This type of shop can start out as temporary and then hopefully grow into a permanent location. Be sure to continue to display the “For Lease” sign throughout the creative effort.
- **Send a Letter** to Six Corners property owners each year to keep them informed about all the business attraction efforts performed by the Six Corners leadership. Ask for email addresses to keep contact information up to date.
- **Create a Quarterly Email** newsletter designed to inform commercial realtors, building owners and developers of available properties and business development news happening in Six Corners.
- **Host an Event** for Six Corners property owners and local brokers to inform them of the new marketing initiatives and ways that the local leadership plans to work with them on attracting new businesses and shoppers. Invite local residents and area entrepreneurs who may be interested in opening a business to encourage homegrown “Indie” (independent) boutiques and restaurants. Have the meeting in a fun environment like a neighborhood restaurant or at the Portage Theatre. Invite local residents who already own a successful business in Six Corners to mingle with the prospective local business owners. Hold the meeting in early spring when thoughts often turn to new business ventures.
- **Create a Survey** that reaches out to residents to ask what they are leaving the neighborhood to do and buy as well as what shops, restaurants and service businesses that they would like to see in Six Corners. Promote the survey on Facebook and in the email campaign. This could be done on an annual basis, the first one taking place one year from the recent shopper intercept survey.
- **Involve Merchants** in business attraction efforts by asking them what kind of shops, restaurants and service providers that they would like to see in Six Corners that would complement their business. Consider rewarding business owners who bring in a

business lead that results in a signed lease with a dinner for two or gift certificate for a local business of their choice. This request could be included in the merchant email on a quarterly basis or sent out as a survey.

- **Plan an Employee Week** for the first or second week of November to encourage local workers to shop and dine in Six Corners and to help them get to know each other. Offer specials meant only for Six Corners business owners and their employees. Consider ending the event with an appetizer/dessert party and some fun prizes for outstanding business accomplishments and volunteers.

The Six Corners leadership has an organized Economic Restructuring Committee that guides initiatives to recruit new businesses and strengthen current ones. This progressive group is already implementing many ways to strengthen the Six Corners business climate. They attend International Council of Shopping Center (ICSC) events that offer excellent education and networking with commercial realtors and developers.

One of the greatest challenges a community faces is creating a team of volunteers to implement innovative strategies that will ultimately empower the shop, restaurant and service business owners to succeed. Six Corners has a dedicated staff and many volunteers in place to assist in planning and implementing the marketing, business retention/education and business attraction recommendations. Adding a staff member with internet marketing experience would enhance the management of the critical community marketing and events activities that attract shoppers to Six Corners. Reaching out to groups like SCORE ([www.scorechicago.com](http://www.scorechicago.com)) and the SBA ([www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)) and adding these links to the Six Corners website will provide business owners with resources and access to training sessions on everything from writing a business plan to social media marketing strategies that enhance business retention and education. Focusing on these

initiatives will work toward achieving the goal of attracting patrons and new businesses to the Six Corners business district.

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