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**WICKER PARK BUCKTOWN SSA RINGS IN NEW YEAR WITH
THREE AWARDS FOR COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN**

APA, CNU, ACEC recognize excellence in planning and outreach

The Wicker Park Bucktown Special Service Area (WPB) has been honored for excellence in Master Planning from the American Planning Association, the Congress of New Urbanism-Illinois Chapter, and the American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois.

WPB was awarded the 2010 National Planning Excellence Award for Public Outreach by the American Planning Association. The award recognizes WPB's innovative and effective community involvement strategies used in the development of the Wicker Park/Bucktown Master Plan.

“The planning process in the Wicker Park and Bucktown (WPB) neighborhoods educated and engaged people, built a stronger sense of community and captured citizen’s imaginations—all while having fun,” said Marie York, FAICP, 2010 National Planning Awards Jury Chair. “The planning process yielded a comprehensive, unique, and high-quality Master Plan for the district that reinforces the community’s collective values and goals.”

The award is especially significant because local Special Service Areas (SSA) rarely create master plans. WPB continues to be a leader in leveraging community assets to enhance quality of life for residents and businesses.

“Wicker Park and Bucktown are Chicago’s centers for creativity and innovation.

As a community organization dedicated to thoughtful and integrated planning, we try to tap these resources to create fresh approaches to the challenges we face now and in the future,” said Jamie Simone, WPB Program Manager.

Congress for New Urbanism Illinois recognized WPB’s Master Plan for its effort to “improve the built environment in Illinois through the employment of CNU principles.” The CNU jury panel applauded WPB’s special attention to detail and the participatory aspect of the Plan.

The **American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois** also recognized WPB’s Master Plan with its Special Achievement Award. WPB enlisted the support of Interface Studio, which served as project leader; Civic Economics, which developed the economic development portion of the plan; and Sam Schwartz Engineering, which surveyed all the transportation, parking and circulation issues.

With soaring real estate prices and shifting demographics, the Wicker Park and Bucktown neighborhoods are becoming more transient, less diverse, and far more affluent. Wicker Park and Bucktown’s six commercial corridors – the neighborhoods’ social spaces – are at risk of losing their beloved “grittiness” and their “edge.” The decision to undertake a plan for WPB’s commercial corridors was part of an effort to address the community’s shifting identity by engaging the public and bringing together the active, but often uninvolved constituency of neighbors, business owners, artists, institutions, investors, and visitors to think about the effects of change and develop a collective vision for the future of these shared spaces.

The plan's outreach was tailored to fit WPB's personality. Humorous attention-getting posters, videos, a photo suggestion box, and a do-it-yourself budgeting exercise engaged residents in the planning process. Residents could also record memories or future wishes for the community at a sound-proof booth. The result was honest public input that yielded a comprehensive, unique, and high-quality master plan that reinforces the community's collective values and goals — to drive less, bike more, buy local, go green, honor the past, welcome a progressive future, and do so as a unified community.

The APA award will be presented in New Orleans on April 12, 2010. The outreach activities also will be featured in an upcoming issue of *Planning* magazine, APA’s flagship publication. ACEC-IL will present their award on February 12, 2010, in

Springfield, Ill. CNU Illinois presented WPB with their award in Chicago on December 11, 2009.

ABOUT WPB

WPB is the Special Service Area (SSA) for the Wicker Park and Bucktown communities. Unique among Chicago's SSAs for its size and eclecticism, WPB encompasses a vibrant yet varied, mixed use urban area home to a diverse mix of people and a rare combination of nightlife, culture, family, and art. WPB's goals are to preserve, encourage, and enhance the qualities of Wicker Park and Bucktown that make the neighborhoods and their corridors distinct; and to balance the needs and desires of all residents, visitors, and businesses in the allocation and expenditure of their tax dollars. More information at wickerparkbucktown.org.

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