



Six Corners News

Milwaukee to be done in early July, all work by end of 2010

If you've gone down Milwaukee Avenue in the past few weeks, you've seen that the 2010 streetscape work is underway.

The focus of work will be moving around the Six Corners through the rest of the year, which will cause a few disruptions. But the good news is that the construction schedule calls for the major work to be done by year's end.

Here's what's in store for the rest of the year. Construction is schedule to continue on Milwaukee until early July. That include sidewalk replacement, new streetlights, street resurfacing and planted trees.

The work will continue on the east side sidewalks and then shift to the west side in April. Parking is ex-

pected to be restored up and down Milwaukee by early July.

The work of filling in the vaults under the sidewalk around the Klee building is scheduled to be done by the end of the month. And the new streetlight at Belle Plaine and Milwaukee is to be installed in July.

About the end of June, work will shift to the west side of Cicero north of Irving and to the north side of Irving west of Cicero. That work will continue through August. In addition to the new sidewalks and streetlights, raised planters and a sidewalk archway will be installed on Irving just west of Cicero.

The next phase of work will move to the south side of Irving west of Cicero and the



Part of the streetscape work includes filling in a vault under the sidewalk on the Cicero and Milwaukee sides of Klee Plaza.

west side of Cicero south of Irving. This work, which is expected to last from August to mid-September, will include new sidewalk and new trees.

Next the work is scheduled for the south side of Irving east of Cicero and east side of Cicero south of Irving during September and

October. The final stage will focus on the east side of Cicero north of Irving and the north side of Irving west of Cicero. This final phase will include the raised planters on the east side of Cicero and two sidewalk archways as well as the median planter on Cicero north of Irving.



IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Upcoming work (subject to change)

April

- West side Milwaukee sidewalks begins

June

- Trees on east side of Milwaukee
- Signal installation on Milwaukee at Belle Plaine and at Kilpatrick

July

- Finish Milwaukee work
- Begin west side of Cicero north of Irving and north side of Irving west of Cicero

[Click here for detailed schedule](#)

Monthly meeting calendar



Please join us for these monthly committee meetings. All meetings are open the public.

April 6: [Design Committee](#) 1 p.m. at Parkway Bank, 4106 N. Milwaukee Ave. Discussion to include 2010 Work Plan and streetscape

April 13: [Organizing Committee](#) Noon p.m. at the Bank of America, 4901 W. Irving Park Road. Discussion to include 2010 work plan, board of directors and hiring.

April 20: [Economic Restructuring Committee](#). 1 p.m., Parkway Bank, 4106 N. Milwaukee Ave. Discussion to include business recruitment, incentives.

April 27: [Promotions Committee](#), 1 p.m. at PC Here, 4055 N. Milwaukee Ave. Discussion to include Six Cornucopia, Six Corners map, Portage theater sign.

Play N Trade opens

A new video game retailer, Play N Trade, opened at Six Corners in March. The new store, 3918 N. Cicero Ave., is a gamer's paradise.

The store shelves are lined with all the latest games from PlayStation, Wii, PS3 and retro models like Atari and Nintendo.

"We welcome everybody. new gamers and old gamers," said owner Ernesto Ayala.

As the name suggests, gamers can test-drive games in a special gaming area before they buy and they can trade in old games. The gaming area is also available for group contests and private parties.

Community involvement will be part of the store's marketing strategy, says Ayala, who lives in the neighborhood. Play N Trade has a Games for Grades program that gives high-performing students extra discounts on purchases.



TOP: At the new Play N Trade, 3918 N. Cicero Ave., Mario and Luigi stopped by help celebrate the grand opening in March. ABOVE: Vincent Mastromauro, Six Corners Association president (left) welcomes Play N Trade owner Ernesto Ayala.

President's Message

Vincent Mastromauro

Villa Roma Hair Designers, 3936 N. Cicero Ave.



Winter is over. It's beautiful weather. Streetscape construction will be a little messy, but it will be short. All the major work will be limited to just this year. Parking will be limited, so I encourage everyone to park on the sidestreets as much as possible. Plus, it's free to park there.

To combat the streetscape messiness, all business should put flowers pots outside. Plant flowers and to let people see we're alive. You don't need a permit. You can get a planter and flowers at a hardware store for \$25. If everyone did it, it would brighten up the whole block.

We have to stimulate people to walk again on the sidewalk. If Six Corners gets bright again, your real estate goes up again.

We want to encourage walk around Six Corners. Soon we will do sidewalk sales for all the businesses. The association will obtain a permit for all over Six Corners. There will be no additional cost for Six Corners businesses. We will announce dates soon.

Speaking of dates, save the date of May 19 for the annual meeting in the evening. We will report on what the association has been doing and what we will do the rest of the year. The invitation is for the entire neighborhood. There will be some food and we'll talk about how Six Corners is coming back. Come with good ideas and see what we are trying to do at Six Corners.

Join Six Corners today

The association supports the economic development of Six Corners through beautification, promotions, business support and advocacy with the city. We understand that you're busy running your business, so we provide services for the area that would not be feasible for an individual business to provide.

2009 Accomplishments

- Growing our mailing list (4,000 postal and 1,500 e-mail) through holiday raffles
- 200+ special requests to Streets & Sanitation for graffiti removal and other clean-up.
- Publication of a Six Corners business directory, listing all local businesses.

Benefits of membership

- Monthly issues of the Six Corners News (packed with invaluable information)
- Access to the Six Corners mailing list (\$150 value)
- 25 tickets to the Portage Theater Christmas Spectacular (\$250 value)
- Acting as a united group when requesting improvements.

To join, click [here](#) for a membership form. Or call (773) 685-9300 for more information.

SCA meeting schedule



1p.m. 1st Tues.	Design Committee Parkway Bank, 4106 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chair: Bob Brobson
1p.m. 2nd Tues.	Organizing Committee SCA office, 4006 N. Milwaukee Ave. #205 Chair: Joe Angelastri
1 p.m. 3rd Tues.	Economic Restructuring Parkway Bank, 4106 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chair: Don Blair
1 p.m. 4th Tues.	Promotions Committee PC Here, 4055 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chair: Michael Inglimo

The SCA is organized into four committees. Anyone is welcome to attend any committee meetings to share their ideas. For newcomers, the Organizing Committee meeting provides a useful overview of all SCA activity. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings at the SCA office, 4006 N. Milwaukee Ave., Suite 205.

Your storefront IS your billboard. Give it curb appeal.

1. Imagine that your storefront is a billboard. Its purpose is to sell. Make sure your window has a "5-second" message, because you only have as much time as it takes to walk past your window to draw a customer in.

2. Keep things clean inside and outside of your storefront. Weeds, trash, worn carpeting, dirty door handles, worn-out or overstuffed garbage containers all damage a customer's impression of your business. Make sure your aisles are clear of boxes.

3. Learn about the Small Business Improvement Fund. This program can pay up to 75% of your façade improvement costs. Call the Six Corners Association to find out more (773) 685-9300.

4. Ask yourself: Does my storefront tell customers what my store is all about and does it reach out to my target market?

5. Put flower planters in front of your store. No city permit is required. Change the plants with the seasons.

6. Light your store up at night. Hang lights in the front window to make your store visible. The lights will attract attention at night and are an inexpensive cheap crime deterrent.

7. Consider tagging prices on a few specials (three perhaps) in the window. Featuring a few deals will draw customers in and give them a general idea of your price ranges.



This storefront from the Chopping Block in Lincoln Square has a clean look, puts merchandise on display and still gives a full view of what's inside.

8. Post your business name and hours on your front door.

9. Change your storefront display with the seasons or with special events. The changes will make shoppers take a second look at your storefront. A window that frequently changes and shows creativity is a crowd pleaser.

To advertise in the Six Corners News

The Six Corners News is distributed via mail, e-mail and door-to-door to 400 business, property owners and community residents four times a year. Advertising in the Six Corners News is an effective low-cost way to reach this market. To advertise, call the Six Corners Association at (773) 685-9300.

Committee Reports



Members of the Six Corners Strategic Plan Steering Committee took a tour of Lincoln Square on a chilly February Saturday morning. The group learned about some Lincoln Square success stories and how they might apply to Six Corners

Economic Restructuring

In addition to taking a tour of Lincoln Square, the committee is working hard on several projects. The committee is working to strengthen the [Small Business Improvement Fund](#) by working out a short-term financing deal that would reduce the upfront costs for a SBIF project. Currently, the program requires property and business owners to pay for the entire cost of improvements before getting reimbursed 4 to 6 weeks later. This financing deal, which is not available anywhere in the city, would eliminate the need to put up the money that will be eventually reimbursed. The committee hopes to make an official announcement soon.

The committee is also working on a recruitment welcome packages and researching economic incentives for more façade improvements.

Organizing Committee

Based on recommendations from a recent report, the committee is undertaking a bylaws revision with a goal toward creating a Board of Directors and other governing structures. As participation in the Six Corners Association increases and is enthusiastically embraced, the bylaws improvements will help us manage the projects, volunteers and priorities.

Be sure to attend the May 19 Annual Meeting at Lydia Home Business Office, 4839 W. Irving Park Road, for a report on all our committees.

Promotions Committee

The Promotions Committee has been enjoying great attendance at its meetings and subcommittee meetings. The members are planning for April's Girlfriends Night Out as well as October's Six Cornucopia. The committee is also working with the Design Committee on new maps for Six Corners.

Design Committee

The Design Committee has been reviewing the streetscape plans to make sure the construction fulfills the planned promises.

The committee members is also working on a façade inventory as well as working with new businesses on façade improvements.

Health care law offers tax credit

I own a small business. Will I have to buy insurance for my workers? What help can I get?

It depends on the size of your firm. Companies with fewer than 50 workers won't face any penalties if they don't offer insurance.

Companies can get tax credits to help buy insurance if they have 25 or fewer employees and a workforce with an average wage of up to \$50,000. Tax credits of up to 35% of the cost of premiums will be available this year and will reach 50% in 2014. The full credits are for the smallest firms with low-wage workers; the subsidies shrink as companies' workforces and average wages rise.

Eventually, firms with more than 50 employees that do not offer coverage will have to pay a fee of up to \$2,000 per full-time employee if any of their workers get government-subsidized insurance coverage in the exchanges. The first 30 workers will be excluded from the assessment.

From the Chicago Tribune

Save payroll taxes on new hires

If you are adding staff, be aware of two new tax benefits now available to employers hiring workers who were previously unemployed or only working part time. These provisions are part of the recently passed [Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment \(HIRE\) Act](#).

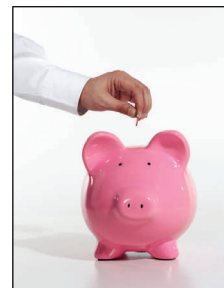
Social Security Tax Exemption

The social security tax exemption applies to employees hired after February 3, 2010, who were previously unemployed for at least 60 days prior to being hired, or who worked less than a total of 40 hours in the 60 day period prior to beginning work for the new employer. Employers will save the 6.2% employer social security tax, up to the wage base limit, on wages paid to these employees after March 18, 2010, and before January 1, 2011. Household employees and family members are not considered eligible employees.

The tax credit is reported when you file your quarterly payroll taxes on Form 941. Consult your payroll service, accountant or the IRS for more information..

Tax Credit

Employers that retain these eligible employees for 52 consecutive weeks after they are hired may be eligible to claim an additional tax credit up to \$1,000 for each retained employee on their income tax return.



U.S. Census is good for business

Please encourage your Six Corners friends and neighbors to submit their U.S. Census forms because a complete count can help your business.

Many businesses use population density as a primary criteria for site selection. So, counting as many people as possible in the area will let businesses know about all the potential for customers.

If a business is trying to decide where to open a new location, it or the demographics companies will refer to population density. If that number is inaccurately low due to an undercount, a business might mist

Also, census figures are used to guide government resources. Getting a complete count ensures that the Six Corners area is getting its fair share of resources.

Six Corners incentives

Rent subsidy

The Six Corners Association will help pay for your first year of rent while you are getting your business established. A grant of \$5 per square foot up is available for new tenants.

Building improvement grants

Drastically cut your up-front costs. This program will pay for up to 75% of your build-out costs. It covers any changes you make to a building such as plumbing, electric, roof and storefront. The association can help you facilitate this process with city agencies and the alderman's office.

Façade Assistance Program

The Six Corners Association will provide a complimentary redesign of your new storefront. An architect will review your façade needs and provide a rendering that you can show to sign designers and general contractors to best convey your vision.

Sidewalk and landscape maintenance

Focus on running your business. Daily sidewalk litter pick-up is provided through the Six Corners area. Snow removal is provided in the winter. Landscapers maintain the flowers, planters and parkways as well as making sure weeds don't sprout in the sidewalk.



Six Corners Association Annual Meeting

When: 6 p.m., Wednesday, May 19

Where: Lydia Home offices, 4839 W. Irving Park Road, in the Chicago Landmark People's Gas & Coke Building

Program

- Vincent Mastromauro, SCA President
- Six Corners Association Committee chair
- 2010 plans and progress report
- Light dinner will be served

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Six Corners Association
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