



*Village President Saviano meets with Kirk in Washington, D.C.*

## **Senator Kirk embraces need for Grand Ave. underpass**

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President Skip Saviano meets with Sen. Mark Kirk in Kirk's Washington office

**ELMWOOD PARK** – U.S. Senator Mark Kirk is throwing his support behind Elmwood Park's efforts to secure federal funding for an underpass at the Grand Avenue rail crossing in the Village. The National Transportation Safety Board has recommended a grade separation as the only way to ensure safety at the crossing, scene of a chain-reaction accident that left seven people injured the day before Thanksgiving in 2005.

"This is a key transportation infrastructure project that we need to upgrade in our state," said Senator Kirk in a special introduction to a video that lays out the need for the underpass. Kirk is working to help find federal dollars in the new Transportation Bill for the project.

"Senator Kirk was the one who initially had the idea to produce a video to tell our story about this unsafe crossing," said Village President Angelo "Skip" Saviano. "This was the first opportunity we had to show the video to the Senator, and he graciously agreed to record a personal introduction, so we appreciate his support."

The video recounts the crash that occurred a decade ago when cars were trapped on the railroad tracks as a Metra train roared through the crossing. Since 1956, as many as 45 accidents and at least six fatalities have occurred at the crossing where the tracks cross Grand Avenue on a diagonal, resulting in a crossing longer than a football field.

"This is a regional problem," Saviano said. "This affects lives not only in Elmwood Park but throughout the area. We're glad we have Senator Kirk on our team."

Back in 2008, the NTSB estimated it would cost up to \$90 million to construct a grade separation. Saviano has been actively pursuing both federal and state funding for the project. In addition to meeting with Senator Kirk, Saviano met with a number of other elected officials, including Senator Dick Durbin, Congressman Mike Quigley and Congressman Dan Lipinski.

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