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Support sought for Sunset Park's tilting sign

By Josh Poltilove | Tribune Staff

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SUNSET PARK -

The leaning tower of Sunset Park has tilted to the west for as long as Marlin Anderson can remember – and he has lived in the neighborhood for 17 years.

The Sunset Park sign at West Shore Boulevard and San Jose Street – which dates to the 1930s – is roughly 15 degrees off angle.

The sign is badly in need of repair, and residents are raising money to fix it, Anderson said.

"We're tired of looking at it," said Carrie Grimail, Sunset Park's neighborhood association president.

Improvements won't be inexpensive, as the sign is atop a jet fuel line and using steel piers to fix the foundation would be too hazardous.

Normally the straightening process would involve drilling underground, but that's not possible with the fuel line in place. So instead, Anderson said, when money is available the sign will be straightened and grout placed beneath it.

"Because of the jet fuel lines they've got to take special care in order to repair the foundation," said Ed Ellsasser, who is leading the campaign to straighten the sign. "You can't just pour concrete in there. You've got to prop it up. The folks that oversee the jet fuel line, they've got to be there and so forth. So it's more costly."

The effort to straighten the sign began in recent months, Ellsasser said.

An initial estimate came in at \$5,000. Sunset Park residents so far have raised \$2,500 to fix the problem.

Ultimately residents would like to raise even more money and light up the sign at night, Anderson said.

Those wishing to help straighten the sign may contact Ellsasser at eellsasser@primegroupins.com.

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